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BETWEEN LOYALTY AND TREACHERY

P. OXY. 2327 fr. 1 + 2(a) col. I = Simonides 21 West<sup>2</sup> – Some Reconsiderations

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## BETWEEN LOYALTY AND TREACHERY

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The new fragments edited in 1992 by P. Parsons as P. Oxy. LIX 3965 made the classicists develop a great interest in Simonides' elegies. This renewed attention, almost exclusively centred on the poem of the battle of Plataea<sup>1</sup>, situates, however, at the periphery of scholars' interest most of the other elegiac pieces composed by Simonides.

Among these 'neglected' compositions is also a sympotic<sup>2</sup> fragment published in 1954 by Edgar Lobel as adespota (P. Oxy. 2327 fr. 1+2(a) col. I = *adesp. el.* 28 West<sup>1</sup> = Sim. 21 West<sup>2</sup>), the Simonidean authorship of which has been lately established by the overlaps of P. Oxy. 3965 with P. Oxy. 2327<sup>3</sup>. Although the remaining fragment of the poem<sup>4</sup> is too small to be definitely interpreted, it seems tempting to look closer at these increasingly broken lines and to try to recover the general sense of the whole. The following considerations hopefully suggest some ideas that might bring about the fulfilment of the wish expressed over 40 years ago by R. Merkelbach<sup>5</sup>.

The text offered below is based on West<sup>6</sup>. The first two lines of the papyrus fragment, however, are omitted as not belonging to the poem<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, neither of West's proposals of restoring the ending of the word ψυχ[ is included into the text at the present moment, since the supplements will be discussed later.

[ο]ὐ δύναμαι ψυχ[.(.)] πεφυλαγμένος εἶναι ὀπηδός·  
 χρυσῶπιν δὲ Δίκ[ην ἄζ]ομαι ἀχνύμενος,  
 [ἐ]ξ οὗ τὰ πρώτιστ[α νεο]τρεφέων ἀπὸ μηρῶ[v]  
 [ἦ]μετέρης εἶδον τέρμ[ατα πα]ιδείης,  
 [κ]υῖ[ον] δ' ἔλεφαντίνεον [τ' ἀνεμί]σγετο φέ[γγος],  
 [ποιήν] δ' ἐκ νιφάδων [ἦν νεοθηλέ' ἰ]δεῖν.  
 [ἀλλ' αἰδ]ῶς ἦρυκε, νέου δ[. .] . ι[ ] ὕβριν  
 [ ] ἐπέβη [ ] νοι  
 [ ] οφύλλοις  
 [ ] <- ? ἀκροπόλοισ[ ]  
 [ ] ιηι

Abbreviation: IEG = *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, ed. M. L. West, editio altera 1992.

<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive review of bibliography on this elegy see G. Burzacchini, Note al nuovo Simonide, *Eikasmos* 6, 1995, pp. 36–38, and I. Rutherford, The new Simonides: Towards a Commentary, *Arethusa* 29, 1996, pp. 174–188.

<sup>2</sup> See M. L. West, Simonides redivivus, *ZPE* 98, 1993, pp. 11–12, who rightly argues for the sympotic theme and context of the fragment.

<sup>3</sup> Its Simonidean authorship has already been suggested by A. Barigazzi, *MH* 20, 1963, pp. 65–67, A. J. Podlecki, *Historia* 17, 1968, pp. 268–269, and M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*, Berlin–New York 1974, pp. 167–168.

<sup>4</sup> Some consider 21 West<sup>2</sup> as belonging to the same poem from which 22 West<sup>2</sup> is drawn – see West (n. 3 above), p. 168, Parsons, p. 49, R. Hunter, One Party or Two?: Simonides 22 West<sup>2</sup>, *ZPE* 99, 1992, pp. 11–14, Rutherford (n. 1 above), pp. 191–192. West has lately corrected his opinion and treats fr. 21 and 22 as parts of two different poems (see n. 2 above, p. 12). On the latter see S. Mace's brilliant article, Utopian and Erotic Fusion in a New Elegy by Simonides (22 West<sup>2</sup>), *ZPE* 113, 1996, pp. 233–247.

<sup>5</sup> R. Merkelbach, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 16, 1956, p. 88: "ich drucke Zeilen 3–8 . . . ab, vielleicht findet jemand den Sinn heraus".

<sup>6</sup> IEG<sup>2</sup> (with the apparatus) and n. 2 above, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> See West (n. 3 above), p. 167 who points out that in a similar way as line 3 of the papyrus fragment begin other sympotic elegies (e. g. *Theognidea* 367, 415, 939). Rutherford, however, (n. 1 above), p. 189 accepts West's opinion with reservations saying: "the only evidence for this is the sense, though the asyndeton supports this somewhat".

It is generally assumed that we have here a confession of a boy who tries in vain to restrain the sexual feelings arising in his soul<sup>8</sup>. His desire for seeking sensory pleasure seems to him to violate the rules of justice. The visible sign of the end of his boyhood and the onset of adolescence, i.e. the time of sexual awakening, is the appearance of his pubic hair. This moment is metaphorically described by means of colours and ‘changing seasons’ imagery<sup>9</sup>. West<sup>10</sup> pursues at first the idea that the speaker announces here his hesitance in form of a poem addressed to his own soul<sup>11</sup> and proposes to read the vocative ψυχή in the first line<sup>12</sup>. His later scepticism about the vocative<sup>13</sup>, based first of all on paleographical reasons (the space on the papyrus allows another letter after η), has resulted in the alternative supplement ψυχῆι<sup>14</sup>, endorsed also by other scholars<sup>15</sup>.

Both restorations of the text are founded on the assumption that the poem’s speaker is going to express the contrast between his body which is beginning to seek sensory pleasure, and his soul which feels such emotions to be shameful and discreditable. It seems, however, that the speaker does not represent himself as a chaste boy who has not had yet any acquaintance with sexual relationships, but as an *eromenos*, the junior partner in homosexual eros, who loses interest in his elder lover. The mention of hair burgeoning on the thighs as well as of beard beginning to grow on the face, builds in Greek love poetry the topos indicating that a young male passes out of the *eromenos* stage into the phase of being an *erastes*, a dominant or active partner<sup>16</sup>. This motif appears very often in erotic epigrams<sup>17</sup>, and the natural change of roles, i.e. from subordinate or receptive into the assertive or dominant, is referred to in *Theognidea* 1327–1334. In the case of our elegy the expression ἡ]μετέρης . . . τέρμ[ατα πα]ιδείης in line 4 suggests that the time of some erotic experience is thought about here<sup>18</sup>, much the same as the noun παῖς denotes the junior partner in the erotic relationship<sup>19</sup>, and by no means an innocent boy.

It seems plausible to assume that we are dealing here with a very striking declaration on the part of an *eromenos* who announces his reluctance to perform favours which his adult lover desires. He presumably declares the willingness to experience other erotic pleasures than he is used to, and expresses his readiness to play the active role. “I can no longer be a watched servant in respect of my feelings”, the speaker seems to say. In other words, he says that he is not going to restrain his natural impulse and that he feels ready to liberate himself from the tyranny of the *erastes*.

It is obvious that the word ψυχή in the lyric poets begins to absorb functions of emotions<sup>20</sup> and denotes the location of a person’s thoughts or feelings<sup>21</sup>. It appears to be identified with the self or the psychic whole of an individual.

<sup>8</sup> West (n. 3 above), p. 167, idem (n. 2 above), p. 11, Rutherford (n. 1 above), p. 189.

<sup>9</sup> On this imagery see admirable notes made by West (n. 2 above), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> IEG<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> As Homeric heroes address their psychic entities. On this subject see S. Darcus Sullivan, “Self” and Psychic Entities in Early Greek Epic, *Eos* 82, 1994, pp. 15–16.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. also West, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Oxford 1994, p. 171: “My soul, I cannot be your watchful guardian”.

<sup>13</sup> West (n. 2 above), p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> The dative is also – in West’s opinion – syntactically more plausible than the vocative.

<sup>15</sup> See Burzacchini (n. 1 above), p. 34, Rutherford (n. 1 above), p. 189: “he can no longer be a faithful companion to his soul”.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, London 1978, p. 85, C. Reinsberg, *Hetärentum und Knabenliebe im antiken Griechenland*, München 1989, pp. 163–170.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. *A.P.* 12,24–27 (beard on cheeks); 12,30 and 12,31,3: ἤδη γὰρ καὶ μηρὸς ὑπὸ τρίχα καὶ γένυς ἡβῆ; 12,36,2: μηροῖς ὄξυς ἔπεστι χνόος.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Theognidea* 1305–1306, 1348.

<sup>19</sup> See Dover (n. 16 above), p. 85, Reinsberg (n. 16 above), p. 163–165.

<sup>20</sup> In Homer it denotes simply the breath, soul that keeps a person alive; see S. Darcus, A Person’s Relation to ψυχή in Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek Lyric Poets, *Glotta* 57, 1979, pp. 30–34.

<sup>21</sup> See *ibidem*, 36.

If the word ψυχῆ presents in the Simonidean elegy the idea of emotional or volitional activity, the supplement ψυχῆν offered by J. Danielewicz<sup>22</sup> appears to be worth recommending. Accusativus respectus<sup>23</sup> seems to make a good reading after the passive participle πεφυλαγμένος<sup>24</sup>. It can specify here the area of the hitherto subordination of the speaker to the will or power of someone else; ψυχῆν πεφυλαγμένος . . . ὀπηδός would then mean ‘an inert attendant’, ‘a person acted upon, not acting, in the matter of his own affections’.

Although there are no clear parallels in early poetry for the ψυχῆ in the sense of love, a wealth of places in which it occurs after Homer and Hesiod contain the general idea about the emotional qualities of a person<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore the context of the word ψυχῆ in our elegy indicates that the speaker’s self-presentation concerns erotic themes, i.e. emotions connected with the love-affair.

The personification of *dike* in line 4 might refer to the homosexual *ethos* accepted by the aristocratic society, which consented to the division of roles and the disparity between male lovers. The noun δίκη in the erotic language of the archaic community denotes the *eromenos*’ obedience to the *erastes*<sup>26</sup>, in the same way as the verb ἀδικεῖν is often used to denote misdeeds of a beloved, his acts of treachery or the refusal to love in return<sup>27</sup>.

To disobey the social convention was treated as the violation of moral rules, as an act of *hybris*, as it were<sup>28</sup>. The Simonidean elegy seems to reflect the perplexity of a young man who is going to break those socially accepted norms of behaviour. At the same time he is aware of the consequences of such an insubordination: the surprising readiness to take sexual initiative, declared by an *eromenos*, i.e. that of lower status in the homosexual relationship, must have been understood as an act against *aidos* (loyalty and respect), i.e. as *hybris* which exposes him to public condemnation.

If this is the sense of the whole passage, we would have a unique example of song belonging to the poetic genre *paidika*, in which the boy becomes, quite unconventionally<sup>29</sup>, the acting subject. The song composed from the perspective of the boy, who rejects his old lover in favour of another kind of passion, would in some way form a counterbalance to the motif well-known from late epigrammatic poetry, in which appear statements of *erastai* bored with their maturing *eromenoi*<sup>30</sup>.

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

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<sup>22</sup> During a private discussion in Cambridge in August 1998. Again I would like to express my thanks for his kind permission to exploit this suggestion.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the same function of ψυχῆν in *Theognidea* 910 and Pind. *Isth.* 4,71b.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Kühner–Gerth I § 410. 6b.

<sup>25</sup> See S. Darcus Sullivan, The Extended Use of Psychê in the Greek Lyric Poets, *La Parola del Passato* 46, 1989, pp. 241–262.

<sup>26</sup> On this subject see M. Vetta, *Theognis. Elegiarum liber secundus*, Roma 1980, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> See Dover (n. 16 above), p. 177 who writes about “the complaint of the *erastes* that his *eromenos* ‘wrongs’ him (*adikein*) - that is to say, does not requite the love of the *erastes* in the manner or to the extent desired by the *erastes*”.

<sup>28</sup> On the *dike* and *hybris* as opposite terms that fuse political and erotic themes see J. M. Lewis, Eros and the Polis in *Theognis* Book II, in: *Theognis of Megara. Poetry and the Polis*, edd. T. J. Figueira, G. Nagy, Baltimore–London 1985, pp. 210–211. On the erotic connotation of *dike* see also E. Pellizer, Outlines of a Morphology of Symptotic Entertainment, in: *Symptotica. A Symposium on the Symposion*, ed. O. Murray, Oxford 1990, p. 180.

<sup>29</sup> He is usually an object of lover’s appeal, love-pursuit or petition, see. e. g. Anacr. 346, 359, 360, 396 PMG, Ibyc. 288 PMGF, *Theognidea* 1259–1262, 1295–1297, 1299–1304, 1327–1334.

<sup>30</sup> See the epigrams enumerated in note 17.