

JAMES HORDERN

AN EROTIC INSCRIPTION FROM MARISA, JUDAEA  
(I. U. Powell, Collectanea Alexandrina 184)

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 126 (1999) 81–82

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn



AN EROTIC INSCRIPTION FROM MARISA, JUDAEA  
(I. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* 184)\*

<Γυνή> Οὐκ ἔχω τί σοι πάθω ἢ τί χαρίσωμαι·  
 κᾶίτα κείμαι μεθ' ἑτέρου, σὲ μέγα φιλοῦσα;  
 Ἄλλὰ ναὶ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην μέγα τι χαίρω  
 4 ὄτ(τ)ι <τοί> σου θοιμάτιον ἐνέχουρα κείται.  
 <Ἀνήρ> Ἄλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν ἀποτρέχω, σοὶ δὲ καταλ(ε)ίπω  
 εὐρυχωρίην πολλήν. <Γυ.> Πρᾶσσε ὄτ(τ)ι βούλητι.  
 Μὴ κροῦε τὸν τοίχον, ψόφος ἐγγίνεται,  
 8 ἀλλὰ διὰ τῶν θυρῶν νευμά σ' ἰκ(ν)εῖται.

2 κᾶίτα Garrod<sup>1</sup> : κατάκειμαι lap. 4 ὄτ(τ)ι Garrod. <τοί> Powell : <ἔνθ'> ἐνέχουρα Garrod 6 Garrod. πρᾶσσε κτλ., mulieri dat Crönert 8 Crönert : νευμασικεῖται lap.

(1) We have here in fact two separate poems, the first a lyric dialogue in trochaic trimeters (1–6), the second a predominantly iambic couplet (7–8).<sup>2</sup> The first six lines contain an argument between a woman and her lover who appears to be trying to leave her. The discussion is brought to an end with πρᾶσσε ὄτ(τ)ι βούλητι, and I can see no other explanation for the disjunction in thought between these lines and the last two. Attempts to introduce a ‘third speaker’ in the dialogue, or to appeal to three different hands in the composition, seem singularly misguided.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we may conclude with some certainty that they were written at the same time by the same person, since it is otherwise difficult to explain the corruption κείται in line 8, clearly influenced by κείται at the end of the line in 4. Both poems are essentially sub-literary compositions, although they may have been influenced by Hellenistic epigram.<sup>4</sup>

(2) Lines 3–4 have not yet been adequately explained. Wünsch compares Theocr. 2.156 παρ' ἐμὶν ἐτίθει τὰν Δωρίδα πολλακίς ὄλπαν, where the fact that Doris leaves his oil-flask with Simaetha no doubt indicates his intention to return.<sup>5</sup> Less happy is his comparison of Lucian. *Dial. Mer.* 4.4 δεήσει δέ τι αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι, οἷον ἱμάτια ἢ κρηπίδας, since there is no question of sorcery in our poem. In an erotic context, ἱμάτιον suggests the use of a cloak by lovers to cover themselves during intercourse, either indoors or out; cf. Archil. 196(a).45 West, S. *Tr.* 539f. with Davies, Pearson on S. fr. 483.2 Radt, E. fr. 603.4 N<sup>2</sup>, Pl. *Symp.* 219b, Theocr. 18.19, Asclepiades *AP* 5.169.3f. = *HE* 814f., Meleager *AP* 5.173.2 = *HE* 4143, Longus 3.24.2f.<sup>6</sup> Hieronymus of Rhodes (fr. 35 Wehrli ap. Athen. 13.604d–f) tells a relevant story about Sophocles: Σοφοκλῆς εὐπρεπῆ παῖδα ἔξω τείχους ἀπήγαγε χρησόμενος αὐτῷ. ὁ μὲν οὖν παῖς τὸ ἴδιον ἱμάτιον ἐπὶ τῇ πόαι ὑπέστρωσεν, τὴν δὲ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους χλανίδα περιβάλλοντο. μετ' οὖν τὴν ὁμιλίαν ὁ παῖς ἀρπάσας τὸ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους χλανίδιον ὤιχετο, καταλιπὼν τῷ Σοφοκλεῖ τὸ παιδικὸν ἱμάτιον. οἶα δὲ εἶκος διαλαληθέντος τοῦ συμβεβηκότος,

\* Editors' note: This contribution was erroneously listed in the index contained in ZPE 125 for Volumes 101–125 as published on pp. 75–76 of the same volume. We apologize for this oversight.

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Garrod, *CR* 37, 1923, 161–2. The text, and the apparatus in an abbreviated form, are taken from I. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina*, Oxford, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> See M. L. West, *Greek Metre*, Oxford, 1982, 149. Line 6 is somewhat irregular, but nevertheless seems to have been intended as a trochaic trimeter. Garrod suggests γ' ὄλην.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. R. A. S. Macalister, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, 1906, 54–62, 158–9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the pre-neoteric, amateur verse inspired by Hellenistic epigram found at Pompeii (*CIL* 4.4966–73); see D. O. Ross, *YCS* 21, 1969, 127–42.

<sup>5</sup> R. Wünsch ap. W. Crönert, *RhM* 64, 1906, 441 n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> See G. Arrighi, *QUCC* 15, 1983, 7ff. for other examples from vase-paintings and literature.

Εὐριπίδης πυθόμενος καὶ ἐπιτωθάζων τὸ γεγονός καὶ αὐτός ποτε ἔφη τούτῳ κεχρηῆσθαι τῷ παιδί, ἀλλὰ μηδὲν προεθῆναι (West: προσθεῖναι codd.), τὸν δὲ Σοφοκλέα διὰ τὴν ἀκολασίαν καταφρονηθῆναι. καὶ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἀκούσας ἐποίησεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐπίγραμμα, χρησάμενος τῷ περὶ τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ Βορέου λόγῳ, καὶ τι πρὸς μοιχείαν αὐτοῦ παραινιττόμενος· (fr. eleg. 4). At Herodas 2.13–4 κεί μὴ ἔστ' ἀληθέα ταῦτα, τοῦ ἡλίου δύντος ἴδεσθ' ἐπ' ὤμων, ἄνδρες, ἦν ἔχει χλαῖνα there may be similar erotic overtones (see Headlam–Knox on the passage, although their supplements are very uncertain). We may surmise that the reference to the cloak in the Marisa poem recalls a previous sexual encounter between the lovers.

(3) The inscription was found on the wall of a tomb at Marisa in Judaea.<sup>7</sup> Thiersch and Powell see a connection with a graffito written on the opposite wall: "Ἥλιος καίῳν Μύρων ἱερεὺς | ἐπὶ νεῦμα Καλυψοῦς. Thiersch implausibly sees the lines as an attempt at verse and, noting the repeated νεῦμα, even speculates that Myron and Calypso might be the lovers of the first inscription. The handwriting shows some similarities, and is presumably of much the same date, but I doubt that there is any close connection. If the reading is correct,<sup>8</sup> the graffito must be a message arranging an illicit erotic meeting, and I take ἥλιος καίῳν to refer either to dawn or midday, both of which were common times for illicit meetings, the latter more commonly for those with prostitutes (see Henderson on Ar. *Lys.* 59–60). For καίῳν used absolutely of the sun, cf. Pl. *Crat.* 413b.

Myron as a man's name is extremely common (9 examples in *LGPN* i, 42 in *LGPN* ii, 14 in *LGPN* iii.A), but Calypso is more unusual. I find it elsewhere only at Lucian. *Alex.* 50 as the name of a θεράπεινα, but it would, of course, be an apt name for a hetaera (for examples of hetaera's nicknames, see the index to Gow's *Machon*, s.v.). Thiersch plausibly suggests that the isolation of the tomb would have made it an attractive spot for illicit meetings, and for tombs as a location frequented by prostitutes, cf. Martial. 1.34.8, 3.93.14–5.

University College Dublin

James Hordern

ZPE 133 (2000) 202

## CORRIGENDUM

Im Kommentar zu den Versen 3–4 muß es heißen: „... Delphis leaves his oil-flask“.

<sup>7</sup> See J. P. Peters – H. Thiersch, *Painted Tombs at Marisa*, London, 1905, 56–61.

<sup>8</sup> R. A. S. Macalister, in the addenda to Peters–Thiersch, p. 3, gives the text as κλω[. .]ιων. I have not been able to examine the inscription myself.