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ONE PARTY OR TWO?: SIMONIDES 22 WEST²

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 99 (1993) 11–14

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Among the new fragments of Simonides' elegies which Peter Parsons has recently published in Volume LIX of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* is 3965 fr. 27 which shows that frs. 3-4 of *POxy.* 2327 (published by Edgar Lobel) are consecutive. The text is as follows (Parsons p. 24):

		]. . ἰεὶ θαλάσσης [
		] . ουσαπορον [
		]μενος ἔνθα περανα[
]	
Fr. 27		]οιμι κελευθο[	5
τορ		]ν κόσμ[ο]ν ἰο[στ]εφάνων	
] . κοσμ[.]μιο[		] ἔδος πολύδενδρον ἰκο[
]εδος [.] . λυδε[		]α νῆσον ἄγαλμα . [
]αγαλμα . [		]δην ξανθότρ[
] . νξανθότρ[		] . ν χεῖρα λαβοι . [	10
] . ειραλαβοι . [		]ων ἰμερόεντα[
] . αποχροσαν[		] . δος ἐν ἄνθε[
] . ἰμεροεντα[		] φαρκίδας εκ . [
] . δος . νανθε[		]α νεοβλαστ[	15
] . αρκιδασεκ . [
] . ν . βλαστ[

Parsons (pp. 46-9) also produces a strong case for combining this text with 2327 fr. 2(a) col. ii and 2(b) to produce the following:

		]. . ἰεὶ θαλάσσης [
		] . ουσαπορον [
		]μενος ἔνθα περανα[
]	
		]οιμι κελευθο[	5
		]ν κόσμ[ο]ν ἰο[στ]εφάνων	
		] ἔδος πολύδενδρον ἰκο[
	ε . [. . . .]ενα . [	]α νῆσον ἄγαλμα . [
	κα[. . . .]εχε . [ . . . . ]	]δην ξανθότρ[ιχ	
	ο . [.] . ν	χεῖρα λαβοι . [	10
	οφρα . ε . [ . ] . [ . . . ]	]ντος ἀπὸ χροὸς αν[
	λείβει δ' ἔκ βλ[εφάρ]	]ων ἰμερόεντα [πόθον	
	καί κενε . [ . . . . . ] .	]δος ἐν ἄνθε[

κεκλιμένος λευκ[.] . . φαρκίδακ εκ. [
χαιτη[.] ν χαριε[]α νεοβλαστ[15
. [.] εὐανθέα πλε[ξ
μο[] δ' ἰμερόεντα λίγυν. [
ἀρτι[επέα] νωμῶν γλῶσσαν α[
[
τῶνδε[20
^π
ευκομ. [

This combined text, with ample supplements and a different numeration (which I have adopted), now stands as Simonides 22 in the second edition of M.L.West's *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*.¹ Clearly, there is here much room for speculation and conjecture, particularly if 2327 fr. 1 + 2 (a) col. i (= Simonides 21 West²) also belongs to the same poem (cf. Parsons p. 49). The purpose of the present note is simply to throw into the ring one possibility which, if it happened to be correct, would have an importance beyond the confines of Simonides' verse.

Parsons tentatively interprets both the journey and the party as a fantasy, perhaps of rejuvenation in the next life: 'The extreme view would be this: The aged Simonides longs to escape (now, or after death), carrying his poetry, across the sea to the place of many trees, the Island of the Blest (Elysium), there to meet again the dead Echekratidas² in all his desirable youth; they will join in the symposium; the wrinkled Simonides too will recover his youth.' (Parsons p. 49). This is an attractive reconstruction, and is accepted by West.³ A rather different hypothesis, however, may be based upon the *propemptikon*⁴ for Ageanax which Lycidas sings in Theocritus' seventh *Idyll*. In this song Lycidas wishes Ageanax a fair voyage to Mytilene if the boy saves him from the burning love which is consuming him. He imagines the rustic 'party' that he will hold on the day of Ageanax's safe arrival; the party, naturally enough, will be accompanied by song (cf. vv. 17ff of the Simonides):

Ἀγεάνακτι πλόον διζημένωι ἐς Μιτυλήναν 61
ᾠρια πάντα γένοιτο, καὶ εὖπλοοσ ὄρμον ἴκοιτο.
κῆγὼ τῆνο κατ' ἄμαρ ἀνήτινον ἢ ῥοδόεντα
ἢ καὶ λευκοίων στέφανον περὶ κρατὶ φυλάσσω

¹ For West's interpretation of the new Simonides cf. now 'Simonides redivivus', *ZPE* 98 (1993) 1-14.

² Based on Parsons' κα[ί κεν] Ἐχεκ[ρατί]δην ξανθότρ[ιχα in v. 9.

³ We inevitably think of Callimachus fr. 1, and hence it may be worth noting λιγύς of the sound of song in v. 17 (cf. Call. fr. 1.29). West, art.cit. (n. 1) 13-14, wonders whether vv. 33-36 of the *Aitia*-prologue might be a memory of this elegy of Simonides; it is certainly striking that τριγλώχιν is a word shared by the two poets (cf. *PMG* 636).

⁴ West too, art. cit. (n. 1) 13, identified Simonides' poem as a *propemptikon*.

τὸν Πτελεατικὸν οἶνον ἀπὸ κρατῆρος ἀφυξῶ 65
 πὰρ πυρὶ κεκλίμενος, κύαμον δέ τις ἐν πυρὶ φρυξεί.
 χά κτιβὰς ἐσσεῖται πεπυκακμένα ἔτ' ἐπὶ πᾶχυν
 κνύζαι τ' ἀσφοδέλωι τε πολυγνάμπτωι τε κελίνωι.
 καὶ πίομαι μαλακῶς μεμναμένος Ἀγεάνακτος
 αὐταῖς ἐν κυλίκεσσι καὶ ἐς τρύγα χεῖλος ἐρείδων. 70
 ἀύλησεῦντι δέ μοι δύο ποιμένες κτλ.

(Theocritus 7.61-71)

Detailed correspondences between the two passages are perhaps less important than the suggestively similar contexts, but are nonetheless noteworthy:⁵

(i)]οιμι κελευθο[(v. 5) suggests vv. 61-2 of the Theocritus. ?ἐθέλ]οιμι κέλευθο[v.

(ii) The Theocritean passage serves to remind us that v. 7 of the Simonides might end ἴκο[ιτο rather than ἴκο[ίμην.

(iii) That two parties should be described in similar language is hardly surprising, but the correspondences between vv. 13-14 of the Simonides and Theocritus 7.63-6 are certainly striking, and would be even more so if λευκοῖς (to be constructed with ἄνθε[σις]) were by chance the correct restoration in v. 14.⁶ As a *very* long shot, it may be worth suggesting - if only to dismiss the idea - that φαρκίδακ (if that indeed is to be read in v. 14) does not mean 'wrinkles' at all, but is an otherwise unattested word for food of some kind, like the 'beans' of Theocritus 7.66. Grammarians attest that the word for 'wrinkle' had a long final syllable,⁷ whereas φαρκίδακ must have a dactylic shape in Simonides; such variation is, however, well paralleled, and the fact that grammarians sternly prescribe the long final syllable⁸ is good evidence that both vowel lengths were in fact used at some period of antiquity. Nevertheless, the possibility that we are dealing with a quite different word may at least be worth entertaining; hence, *exempli gratia*, φαρκίδακ ἐκπ[υριῶν.⁹

(iv) If εὔπομπ[in v. 21 - where εὔκομπ[seems to be a variant reading - is correctly placed here,¹⁰ it certainly acquires new interest in the context of Lycidas' song.

If we can indeed use Lycidas' song to help us understand Simonides, then there seem to be two main possibilities: *either* a wish for X's safe journey to the island and a description of

⁵ I omit some purely *exempli gratia* 'similarities'; thus Theocr. 7.61 suggests διζή]μενος in v. 3 of the Simonides.

⁶ Cf. Parsons p. 48.

⁷ Cf. Arcadius 221.17 Schmidt (= 196.8 Barker); Herodian I.526.23, II.18.24 Lentz; Radt on Soph. fr. 1108.

⁸ Cf. Herodian II.597.27 Lentz; Choeroboscus, περὶ ὀρθογρ. 271.10 Cramer.

⁹ The third letter is uncertain, cf. Parsons p. 48: 'the horizontal trace taken by Lobel as τ, but I am not sure that γ or π are excluded'.

¹⁰ Vv. 20-1 (= POxy. 2327 fr. 2(b)) was placed in the present context by Lobel on the basis of the fibres, but cf. Parsons p. 48 for some caution.

the party X will hold on arrival (vv. 1-12),¹¹ followed by the corresponding party which the poet will hold (vv. 13ff); *or* a wish for X's safe journey to the island (vv. 1-8), followed by the celebratory party which the poet will hold (vv. 9ff). The opening of v. 13 καί κεν ἐγ[ώ] might be thought to make the former alternative more likely, but speculation has perhaps already been carried too far. If any of this on the right track then,¹² the poet, or whoever is speaking, is imagining a party (or parties) in the future, but not a journey for himself.

The question which remains is whether the similarity between the two passages, which does not, of course, depend upon my reconstruction, is fortuitous. Theocritus obviously knew Simonides' poetry well,¹³ and a reworking in 'modern' mode of a passage from such a prominent archaic poet would be just what we might have expected from Theocritus' 'Lycidas'. Here, however, is not the place to add yet one more discussion of the *Thalysia*.¹⁴

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¹¹ This would necessitate λάβοι rather than λάβοιμι in v. 10.

¹² It might be objected - to put it mildly - that Simonides is unlikely to have written a poem in which Echekratidas, the father of his patron Antiochus, was portrayed as an *eromenos* in the present, as opposed to the recollected past. Even this may be thought improbable, and West, art.cit. 13, accordingly makes the παῖς of v. 13 'an unspecified couching-companion'; the 'amorous context' (Parsons p. 47) of the previous lines is, however, hardly to be disguised. It seems at this stage best not to exclude possibilities of interpretation solely on the basis of the uncertain identification of the figure in v. 9.

¹³ It now seems highly probable that *Idyll* 16.34-47 contain detailed, not just general, echoes of Simonides; cf. fr. 11.17 West ἐπόνυμον ὀπ[λοτέρ]οισιν with 16.45-6 ἐν ἀνδράσι ... ὀνομαστούς | ὀπλοτέροις (Parsons p. 31). Theocritus thus describes Simonides as Simonides described Homer; the echo confirms and demonstrates the power of poetry to preserve fame. Cf. further West art.cit. (n. 1) 6.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Peter Parsons and Rudolf Kassel for help with this note.