

THE NEW SIMONIDES: INTRODUCTION

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1992 was an *annus mirabilis* for Simonides studies: first came the publication of *POxy* 3965, edited by P. J. Parsons, followed very soon afterwards (by careful design) by the second edition of the second volume of M. L. West's *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*, which was greatly to increase our knowledge of Simonides' elegies. For the most part *POxy* 3965 contains hitherto unknown elegiac verses, but some few words were shown to belong to literary quotations by Plutarch (15 W²) and Stobaeus (20 W²).¹ Since, moreover, the new papyrus also overlapped in two places with *POxy* 2327, hitherto anonymous (although its editor Edgar Lobel raised the possibility of Simonidean authorship),² this earlier papyrus, languishing in the obscurity which anonymity brings,³ was now able to be added to the corpus of new Simonidean elegy, all of which is available in West's second edition.

Where four and a half pages sufficed for Simonides in West's first edition, this poet now takes up more than 24 pages, and West's original 17 fragments are now 92 (many of course quite scrappy). Both *POxy* 2327 and 3965, it seems, may be copies of but one Alexandrian book which contained either all or part of Simonides' elegiac poetry.⁴ Rutherford's

1 On the latter, doubt had been expressed as to whether Stobaeus was quoting from Simonides of Ceos or Semonides of Amorgos; see Sider and Hubbard below.

2 Lobel 1954.67. Later, Lobel 1981.23 alerted the public to the existence of an as-yet-unnumbered papyrus which established Simonides as the author of *POxy* 2327.

3 Barigazzi 1963 and Podlecki 1968 are honorable exceptions.

4 Parsons 1992a.5. Presumably if his output in this metrical scheme justified two or more papyrus rolls there would have been further classification which might be expected to segregate the erotic-sympotic from the political-military (more on these classifications below). Note, for example, how Theocritus' small epigrammatic output was added to the idylls, rather than being published separately; Gow and Page 1965.2.525. But see Hubbard

commentary describes the physical state of the papyri and the overlaps that were critical in identifying them. What, though, of their contents? It is easy to see—and this surely is the most exciting news of Parsons' and West's publications of 1992—that much of it describes one or more recently fought battles, a type of elegiac poetry for which we had some secondhand evidence and to which we could assign a few literary quotations, but of which we did not possess many continuous lines.⁵ From this σκιᾶς ὄναρ we now may claim to have an ὄψις ἀδύλων. The new battle fragments give us a hymn-like proem (if not to the poem as a whole, at least to an important segment); references to Homer, his heroes, and his Muses (with suggestions as to how Simonides may be compared to his illustrious predecessor); and overall a sense of the shape of a long elegy on an event heroic enough to rival the deeds of epic.

In brief—so as not to anticipate the detailed studies by Obbink, Stehle, and Boedeker, or to suggest that we are all in agreement on every point—it was already known before 1992 that in addition to many inscriptional epigrams ascribed to Simonides, he produced longer poems on recent battles: literary sources, albeit somewhat confused, credit him with both elegy and lyrics on Artemisium, with lyrics on Salamis and Thermopylae, and with an elegy on Plataea (details in Rutherford's commentary). Perhaps we can add an elegy on the battle of Marathon with which Simonides won out over (*inter alios*?) Aeschylus—although the word ἐλεγείον used here more often refers to an inscriptional epigram.⁶

in this volume, who argues that the two Oxyrhynchus papyri represent a post-Alexandrian selection.

- 5 For a review of what was known before the publication of *POxy* 3965, see Bowie 1986, many of whose arguments were validated by the new Simonides material. No doubt the very topicality which now interests us guaranteed that later anthologists would either pass over these poems or excerpt from them only passages of a more general nature.
- 6 ἐλεγείον (sg.) usually refers either to a single distich or to its pentameter line, but there are some few passages which apply the term to two or three distichs (2: Diod. Sic. 10.24.3, 11.14.4; *V. Hom.* 2.77, etc.; 3: Constantine Porphy. *De Sent.* 13). There are, moreover, two passages where the passage quoted as an ἐλεγείον seems to be excerpted from a longer narrative elegy: Athenaeus 699c quoting 10 vv. of Alex. Aetol. fr. 5 Powell; and Dion. Hal. 1.49.2 quoting two distichs of Agathyllus Arcas fr. 15 SH. (LSJ are mistaken to include Diod. Sic. 11.14 and Plut. *Them.* 8; West 1974.4 would count Strabo 14.6.3 and Paus. 7.18.1. But these four passages all seem to quote, in full or in part, short—in some cases inscriptional—epigrams.) Since, moreover, Aeschylus is credited with the composition of elegies (*Suda* αἰ 357 Adler = T 2 TrGF), one of which seems to have been on Marathon (T 12 and [?]13), there may indeed have been a contest for the best elegy; so Barigazzi 1963.61f., Cameron 1995.331.

Should we now regard battle poetry as a distinct genre? Or should we, at least at the beginning of investigation into the new Simonides, compare it more broadly to historical or political elegy? If we do so, the evidence for elegies of Callinus, Mimnermus, Tyrtaeus, Solon, Semonides, Xenophanes, Panyassis, and Aeschylus suggest that poetry of this sort could encompass mythic paradigms, historical events ranging in time from the distant to the immediate past,⁷ and exhortations for the immediate future.⁸ We are far from claiming that every historical-political elegy of every one of these poets contained each of these elements. We merely wish to keep open the question of the nature of these longer poems before we assign to them, and to Simonides in particular, what may turn out to be too rigid categories of genre. This should be kept in mind as the related questions of the aim and performance of the Plataea elegy are discussed below by Stehle and Boedeker.

In addition to the battle poems, there are other fragments among the new Simonides material which—with their references to the mixing of wine, to crowns, Aphrodite, thighs, desires, and journeys to far-off (possibly imaginary) lands—strongly suggest a sympotic context. In line with the cautions expressed above, however, we should not automatically assume that merely because some lines would not be out of place at a symposium they could not belong to a poem which elsewhere celebrates a battle; see in particular what Rutherford, Obbink, and Sider suggest about Simonides' use of the generation of leaves simile. Simonides himself seems to indicate to his audience that they should see similarities as well as differences between his elegiac verses on the one hand and both epic and lyric on the

7 This distinction between myth and history is of course ours and not the Greeks'; cf. Knox 1979.10–24.

8 Where (m) stands for military topics and (h) stands for historical topics (the two not always distinct), note the following breakdown (all to be found in *IEG*, unless otherwise indicated): (i) Historical Myth: (m) Tyr. 2, (h) Panyassis (*Suda* s.v.: Ἰωνικὰ ἐν πενταμέτρῳ; on Codrus, Neleus, and Ionian migrations; cf. Matthews 1974.26–31. Panyassis is inexplicably absent from *IEG*); Mimn. 11, 11a; Archil. 7 (Bowie 1986.34), (ii) Historical: (m) Mimn. 13, 13a, 14; Aesch. T 12 TrGF, t 13 = F 477 TrGF (*contra* West 1972.28); (h) Semon. (*Suda* 360.9 s.v. Συμμίαξ Ῥόδιος; see Hubbard in this volume); Mimn. 3–6; Xenophanes B 3; Ion ? (Bowie 1986.32f.); Sol. 5, (iii) Current and/or immediate future: (m) Archil. 3–5; Callinus 1, 3, 5(a); Tyr. 1, 4–11, 19–23a; Sol. 1–3; Mimn. 9; (h) Mimn. 10; Sol. 4, 4a, 4c, (iv) Generally patriotic: (m) Archil. 1, 2, 6, 15; Adespota Elegica 1, 10, 17 (sung by women), 22; Tyr. 12–14; (h) Sol. 5–7, 9, 30. See further West 1974.14. Mazzarino 1966.37–52 (esp. 38–44) is to be recommended for his insistence that Greek historiography begins as poetry.

other, to say nothing of his appropriation of encomiastic and hymnic topoi; see Stehle and Obbink.

This volume has its origin in a panel on “The New Simonides” presented in Atlanta, Georgia, at the 1994 meeting of the American Philological Association. From the beginning it was a close collaborative effort of the organizer (Sider) and the other panelists (Boedeker, Obbink, Stehle), all at that time on the New York City—Washington, D.C. axis. With the addition of Ian Rutherford as panel commentator, and later of Alessandro Barchiesi, Jenny Strauss Clay, and Thomas Hubbard as contributors to the volume, frequent contact continued, most of it electronically. We also were in touch with Antonio Aloni, who graciously commented on the panel papers and showed us his own work before publication. The frequent cross-references you will see below are not the mechanical additions of the editors then, but rather reflect a process of cross-fertilization that would have been difficult to sustain before the advent of electronic mail, at least among contributors so widely scattered, especially given the short time between panel and submission of articles to the press.

In addition to all of the above, we express our thanks to Karen Lehr for bibliographical and other technical assistance, to John Peradotto, then general editor of *Arethusa*, for his gracious encouragement of this enterprise as well as to his able successor Martha Malamud and her associate Madeleine Kaufman. We are also grateful to the Egyptian Exploration Society, Oxford University Press, and the editors of *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* for permission to publish material.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF *POxy* 2327 AND 3965

The papyrus fragments are identified by both *POxy* fr. and W(est²) numbers. Photographs of 11 and 22 W², each constituted from both 2327 and 3965, have been arranged so that all the pieces of each fragment are on facing pages.

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