

## “NEW SIMONIDES” OR OLD SEMONIDES? SECOND THOUGHTS ON *POxy* 3965, FR. 26

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In an earlier publication I had argued on a number of grounds for a late sixth-century date for the iambic poet Semonides of Amorgos and observed that this dating would make it possible for the disputed elegy on the “leaves and lives of men” (previously identified as either Semonides fr. 29 D, or Simonides fr. 8 W<sup>1</sup>) to be a reply to Mimnermus fr. 2 W, as it seems to be, and still be written by Semonides, as suggested by its close parallels in theme, tone, and wording to the iambic fr. 1 W of Semonides.<sup>1</sup> The new Simonides papyrus (*POxy* 3965), which appeared very soon after the writing (and somewhat before the publication) of this article, clearly necessitates a reconsideration of the authorship question, since *POxy* 3965, fr. 26 of the papyrus contains the remains of what had been vv. 6–13 of that elegy and demonstrates that they were in fact part of a longer elegy than what is quoted in Stobaeus 4.34.28. Although some controversy has arisen concerning the unity of the poem (which West now divides into frs. 19 and 20 W<sup>2</sup>),<sup>2</sup> it seems quickly to have become a matter of established consensus that the authorship controversy has been resolved, since the same papyrus contains other fragments which are unquestionably from works of Simonides.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of my present contribution is to suggest that this

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1 Hubbard 1994.191–93.

2 See Parsons 1992a.43 and West 1993a.10–11, although West speculates that fr. 19 W<sup>2</sup> might indeed have been part of the same poem, following rather than preceding fr. 20 W<sup>2</sup>. The unitarian thesis is ably maintained by David Sider in this volume.

3 West 1993a.10 is quite categorical; Parsons 1992a.43 deems the question resolved only for fr. 20 W<sup>2</sup>, but inclines to Simonidean authorship of fr. 19 W<sup>2</sup> too.

consensus may be premature. What the new papyrus does prove is that Simonides of Ceos produced a wide range of elegiac poetry, including both historical narratives (such as the Plataea and Artemisium poems) and traditional sympotic elegy (such as the poem on the voyage to the happy island = fr. 22W<sup>2</sup>). Advocates of Simonidean authorship of the “leaves” poem thus need no longer resort to the problematic hypothesis that this poem was originally one of the Simonidean funeral epigrams, as Fränkel once proposed.<sup>4</sup> However, the papyrus really adds little to the attribution debate beyond this.

We must bear in mind that ancient tradition, with only two exceptions, uniformly records the iambic poet’s name not as “Semonides,” but “Simonides.” The late grammarian Choeroboscus (ap. *Et. Magn.* 713.17) distinguishes the two names, identifying “Semonides” as an iambic poet, “Simonides” as a melic poet, and the spelling Semonides appears to be confirmed by the Herculaneum papyrus of Philodemus’ *Poetics* (*PHerc* 1074, 20 N = *Tract. tert.*, fr. f, col. III [Sbordone]). Modern scholars have, for the sake of avoiding confusion, adopted this distinction in spelling, but the preponderance of references to “Simonides” of Amorgos suggests that this was probably the name (or at least a name) by which even the Alexandrians knew him. The possibilities for confusion in attribution of works to these two poets are manifold, and it was likely even a conundrum for Alexandrian editors, who often had to make highly arbitrary decisions about where to place a given text. While the iambic poems could easily enough be assigned to “Simonides” of Amorgos and the melic poems to Simonides of Ceos, the issue becomes much murkier with regard to elegiacs. References to historical events or personages connected with the Cean’s life might be of some help. But the iambic poet’s date was apparently unknown to the Alexandrians,<sup>5</sup> and I have suggested that it was probably much closer to the other Simonides’ time than usually recognized, in which case this too could be suspect as a ground for distinguishing them.

The *Suda* tells us with some specificity that the Amorgine “Simonides,” in addition to his iambs, wrote two books of elegy and an *Archaeology of the Samians*.<sup>6</sup> To be sure, the *Suda*’s titles are not always

4 Fränkel 1962.237 n. 14. His view was tentatively endorsed by Davison 1955.129–30 and Lloyd-Jones 1975.97.

5 For a survey of the chronographic evidence, which bases his date on nothing but a false synchronism with Archilochus, see Hubbard 1994.175–81.

6 The *Suda* entry, s.v. Σιμωνίδης (σ 446 Adler), states ἔγραψεν ἐλεγείαν ἐν βιβλίοις β’, ἰάμβους. Under the entry for Simmias of Rhodes (σ 431 Adler) we are given further

reliable. But since Semonides' ties with Samos seem well grounded,<sup>7</sup> the *Archaeology*, presumably in elegiacs,<sup>8</sup> must indeed be his and not the other Simonides'. It is unlikely that this longer work would have been his only venture in elegiac composition; the parallel cases of Archilochus and Solon show that it was common for the same poet to write both iambic and elegiac verse. That we do not have any other Semonidean elegies extant should not trouble us. How much true Simonidean elegy did we have prior to the new discoveries?

Given that the shorter elegiac poems of both Semonides and Simonides are unlikely to have been assembled as collections within their own lifetimes, and that their names and possibly even their floruits were either scarcely or not at all distinguishable, the attribution of any single sympotic elegy with no apparent political references must be regarded as uncertain. Even if we assume that the new papyrus and the earlier *POxy* 2327 were copies of the canonical Alexandrian edition of Simonides of Ceos, it is not safe to take for granted the accuracy of the Alexandrian attributions of individual poems, particularly in the case of shorter, non-historical elegies.

However, it is also not safe to take for granted that our papyri actually were copies of the Alexandrian edition. Parsons raises the possibility of an anthology, only to dismiss it.<sup>9</sup> But little notice has been given to a potentially significant anomaly in our papyri, which is their grouping

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information which must have been from the original entry for Semonides: ἔγραψε κατὰ τινὰς πρῶτος ἰάμβους, καὶ ἄλλα διάφορα, Ἀρχαιολογίαν τε τῶν Σαμίων. No one doubts that the second half of Simmias' entry must indeed have been displaced from the Semonides entry, since neither the archaic date given here nor the Samian/Amorgine nationality (nor the status as "first iambographer") can possibly apply to the Hellenistic Simmias of Rhodes, but they do correspond to information we find elsewhere concerning Semonides. For a fuller discussion of this entry, see my remarks in Hubbard 1994.179–80.

7 The *Suda* entry on Simmias of Rhodes (see n. 6 above) suggests that Semonides led Samian settlers of Amorgos: ἦν δὲ τὸ ἐξάρχης Σάμιος· ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀποικισμῷ τῆς Ἀμοργοῦ ἐστάλη καὶ αὐτὸς ἡγεμὼν ὑπὸ Σαμίων. Proclus (ap. Phot. *Bibl.* 239, 319b28–31 [Henry]), who has a time-reckoning scheme quite distinct from the *Suda*'s, confirms that some sources regard Semonides as Samian: Σιμωνίδης ὁ Ἀμόργιος ἢ, ὡς ἔνιοι, Σάμιος. That Amorgos was indeed partially settled from Samos is firmly established; see Ruppel 1927.313–15; Shipley 1987.51, 118. So far as we know, Simonides of Ceos had no connections with Samos at all.

8 On this poem and its place within a well-developed tradition of political/historical elegy (of which the *Battle of Plataea* is a splendid example), see Bowie 1986.31. This seems to be precisely the kind of poetic work Polycrates might be expected to commission, again suggesting a late sixth-century date for Semonides.

9 Parsons 1992a.5–6.

together of two very different elegiac forms—lengthy historical narrative and shorter sympotic pieces.<sup>10</sup> However fallible the Alexandrians were in matters of authorship and attribution, they were quite careful and deliberate in the classification of works by genre and even subgenre, and had elaborate taxonomies for grouping the works of a given poet into different books: witness the multiple subgenres into which the choral lyric of Pindar and Bacchylides were divided, or the classification of Sappho's lyrics into eight books based on metrical forms, with a ninth book wholly of epithalamia.<sup>11</sup> Even elegy may have been subject to such subclassification, as suggested by the book division of the Theognid corpus: the overtly pederastic poems were segregated into a much shorter second book, though formally no different from the other elegies.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, one is entitled to wonder whether it is really credible that the Alexandrians would have grouped poems like the *Plataea* and *Artemisium* in the same book as shorter sympotic poems. Indeed, the special notice which the *Artemisium* poem receives in the *Suda* entry for Simonides implies that it was of a sufficient scale to be circulated as a book in its own right; our fragments suggest a comparable length for the *Battle of Plataea*. What we have may rather be an excerpted one-volume compilation of Simonidean elegy, taking samples out of the various books available,<sup>13</sup> possibly even including some of what may actually have belonged to the Amorgine "Simonides." If our present collection was not in fact the work of Alexandrian scholarship in its prime, the possibilities for confused attribution are even greater.

10 It seems fairly clear that the papyri contain at least two other sympotic elegies (fr. 21–22 W<sup>2</sup>) and possibly scraps of several others (fr. 27–33 W<sup>2</sup>). See Parsons 1992a.7, West 1993a.11–14, Hunter 1993.11–14.

11 For Pindar's book divisions, see *Vita Ambrosiana* (p. 3, 6–9 Drachmann); for Bacchylides, in addition to the familiar *Epinicia* and *Dithyrambos*, see Stob. 3.11.19 for *Hyporchemata* and 4.44.16 for *Prosodia*, Plut. *De Mus.* 1136f. for *Partheneia*, Athen. 15.667c for *Erotika*. On Sappho, see the discussion of Page 1955.112–19, who demonstrates on the basis of fr. 103 LP that the book-lengths varied greatly, from 1320 lines in Book I to around 130 lines in Book VIII. Adhering to organizational principles apparently took precedence over uniformity in size for the Alexandrian editors. For the arbitrariness and artificiality of the Alexandrian generic subcategories, see Harvey 1955.157–75.

12 The antiquity of this book division has been a matter of controversy. Although the division and title are clearly marked in the one manuscript (A) which contains 1231–1389, Carrière 1948.89–93 and West 1974.43–45 argue, not implausibly, that the second book was the result of a Byzantine bowdlerization of the Theognid collection. However, in favor of the book's antiquity, see Harrison 1902.259–60 and Young 1971.xi.

13 It is clear that such excerpted anthologies existed even long before the date of this papyrus. See Turner 1987.60, for a third-century b.c. anthology of lyric passages from Euripides, and Turner 1987.82, for a second-century b.c. anthology of epigrams.

It may at this point be worthwhile to review the positive grounds for retaining this poem as the work of Semonides. The parallels with Semonides' iambic fr. 1 W are simply too close to deny.<sup>14</sup> In both poems we have all men given over to vain hope:

πάρεστι γὰρ ἐλπίς ἐκάστωι | ἀνδρῶν (Sim. fr. 19.4–5 W<sup>2</sup>)

ἐλπίς δὲ πάντας κάπιπειθείη τρέφει (Sem. fr. 1.6 W).

In both we see overinflated youthful ambitions come to naught:

θνητῶν δ' ὄφρα τις ἄνθος ἔχει πολυήρατον ἥβης,  
κοῦφον ἔχων θυμὸν πόλλ' ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ  
(Sim. fr. 20.5–6 W<sup>2</sup>)

νέωτα δ' οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ δοκεῖ βροτῶν  
Πλούτῳ τε καὶ γαθοῖσιν ἴξεσθαι φίλος (Sem. fr. 1.9–10 W).

In both men aim at the impossible (Sim. fr. 20.6 W<sup>2</sup>: ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ; Sem. fr. 1.7 W: ἄρηκτον ὁρμαίνοντας); in both men know nothing (Sim. fr. 20.9 W<sup>2</sup>: οὐδὲ ἴσασιν; Sem. fr. 1.4 W: οὐδὲν εἰδότες). In both poems, men fail to anticipate old age and death (first term) and disease (second term):

οὔτε γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχει γηρασέμεν οὔτε θανεῖσθαι,  
οὐδ' ὑγιὲς ὅταν ᾗ, φροντίδ' ἔχει καμάτου  
(Sim. fr. 20.7–8 W<sup>2</sup>)

φθάνει δὲ τὸν μὲν γῆρας ἄζηλον λαβὼν  
πρὶν τέρμ' ἵκηται, τοὺς δὲ δύστηνοι βροτῶν  
φθείρουσι νοῦσοι (Sem. fr. 1.11–13 W).

14 A number of scholars (including names such as Wilamowitz, Maas, Schmid, Jaeger, Schadewaldt) have defended Semonidean attribution on these grounds: see the bibliography on the question in Babut 1971.23 n. 36 and Lloyd-Jones 1975.97. It may be worthy of note that this poem is preserved in the same chapter of Stobaeus (4.34) as the disputed elegy. Stobaeus is our principal source for the work of Semonides, and quotes him as often (at least five times: fr. 1–4, 7 W) as Simonides of Ceos (fr. 521–24 PMG, fr. 88 W<sup>2</sup>). At least one other Stobaeian fragment is of disputed authorship (Simonides fr. 525 PMG = Semonides fr. 42W); see Wilamowitz 1913.153 n. 2.

In both poems, men's *nous* is deficient (Sim. fr. 20.9 W<sup>2</sup>: νήπιοι, οἷς ταύτη κεῖται νόος; Sem. fr. 1.3 W: νόος δ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισιν), because they do not recognize the brevity of their life (Sim. fr. 20.9–10 W<sup>2</sup>: οὐδὲ ἴσασιν | ὥς χρόνος ἔσθ' ἥβης καὶ βιότοι' ὀλίγος; Sem. fr. 1.3–4 W: ἀλλ' ἐπήμεροι | ἃ δὴ βοτὰ ζοῦσιν, οὐδὲν εἰδότες | ὅπως ἕκαστον ἐκτελευτήσει θεός). Moreover, both poems seem to respond to the negative and pessimistic reflections on the brevity of human life and joy by exhortations not to dwell on our impending evils, but to let our soul take pleasure in the present goods available to us:

ἀλλὰ σὺ ταῦτα μαθὼν βιότου ποτὶ τέρμα  
 ψυχῇ τῶν ἀγαθῶν τλῆθι χαριζόμενος  
 (Sim. fr. 20.11–12 W<sup>2</sup>)

εἰ δ' ἐμοὶ πιθοίατο,  
 οὐκ ἂν κακῶν ἐρῶμεν, οὐδ' ἐπ' ἄλγεσιν  
 κακοῖς ἔχοντες θυμὸν αἰκίζοιμεθα (Sem. fr. 1.22–24 W).

The elegiac poem puts the encouragement in a more positive form than the iambic text, but the ultimate message seems to be the same. This exhortation to present sympotic enjoyment may be fleshed out in the fragmentary lines which follow in the papyrus, with their mention of song (fr. 20.14 W<sup>2</sup>: Ὀμηρ[ος]), banquets (fr. 20.17 W<sup>2</sup>: θαλίησι), and perhaps garlands (fr. 20.18 W<sup>2</sup>: ἔϋστρέπτων), but it is also possible that these lines begin another poem.<sup>15</sup>

There is no intertextual polemic apparent between these two texts, of the sort we see with the Homeric citation of fr. 19.1–4 W<sup>2</sup> as a response to Mimnermus' use of the same allusion in his poem on naive youth and

15 As restored by West, fr. 20.13–15 W<sup>2</sup> would refer to Homer as an example of poetic immortality. But this restoration is highly conjectural; Parsons 1992a.44 doubts that πανδαμά[τωρ can be the correct reading of v. 15, because the third letter is unlikely to be nu. A Pandora search reveals that West's λήθην] γλώσσης is also without parallel in Greek texts of the classical period: tongues do not elsewhere remember or forget. If fr. 20.13–15 W<sup>2</sup> continues the poem with a lesson about the permanence of the poet's reputation, who is the σύ of v. 12 and how is this lesson supposed to apply to him? Surely the unspecified σύ is a generic Everyman, not someone who is being exhorted to obtain fame by writing poetry like Homer. Parsons is just as likely to be correct in speculating that the passage could refer to Homer *not* escaping something (slander?) or even that the passage does not refer to Homer at all (reading ὁ μὴ ν[όμιμον]).

impending old age (fr. 2 W).<sup>16</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how a poet of the Cean Simonides' originality and intellectual subtlety would have allowed himself to copy so closely the poem of an earlier iambographer. But it is quite conceivable for the Amorgine Semonides to have recast, with a few changes in emphasis, one of his own elegiac poems into one in iambic form (or vice versa),<sup>17</sup> without the least concern over originality.

The close parallels with Semonides fr. 1 W and Mimnermus fr. 2 W may help resolve two significant structural questions which have arisen concerning the poem. The first problem is whether the five lines which manuscript S of Stobaeus (but not M and A) place before fr. 20.5–12 W<sup>2</sup> should indeed be considered part of the same poem, or isolated as a separate fragment (fr. 19 W<sup>2</sup>), since the papyrus shows no sign of them. The themes of youth, vain hope, and ignorance of mortality are common to all four texts, and the evident allusion to Mimnermus in the commonplace Homeric quote "which few have taken to heart, although receiving it into their ears" strongly suggests that fr. 19 W<sup>2</sup> was indeed the polemical opening to a longer meditation on these themes, such as we find in fr. 20 W<sup>2</sup>. Fr. 20 W<sup>2</sup> is just as replete with verbal echoes of Mimnermus' poem as fr. 19 W<sup>2</sup>.<sup>18</sup> But whereas Mimnermus ends in a state of complete negation and despair, fr. 20 W<sup>2</sup> responds with a more positive exhortation, as we have observed.

If we do accept that fr. 19 and 20.5ff. W<sup>2</sup> are part of the same poem, written in response to Mimnermus, we must admit that they were divided by at least four (and possibly more) intervening lines (= fr. 20.1–4 W<sup>2</sup>), of which we have only a few letters, suggesting that something "abides . . . for a brief time." I believe that the content of Semonides fr. 1 W and Mimnermus fr. 2 W gives us a clue to the probable nature of these intervening lines. Both parallel texts contain in their middle section a

16 On this poem as a reply to Mimnermus, see my more detailed discussion in Hubbard 1994.192–93.

17 I suspect that the elegiac poem must have come first, since its frame of reference and direct model appears to be Mimnermus' elegiac fr. 2 W. The iambic poem drops the polemical reference to Mimnermus' poem at the beginning and instead elaborates the theme of the gods' inscrutable will. Its ending is laconic and cryptic, leaving only implied the exhortation to present enjoyment which is developed more openly by the elegiac text.

18 These include v. 3: τυτ]θὸν ἐπὶ χρό[νον (= Mimn. fr. 2.3 W: πῆχυιον ἐπὶ χρόνον), v. 5: ἄνθος ἥβης (= Mimn. fr. 2.3 W: ἄνθεσιν ἥβης), v. 7: οὔτε . . . γηρασέμεν οὔτε θανείσθαι (= Mimn. fr. 2.6–7 W: ἡ μὲν ἔχουσα τέλος γήραος ἀργαλέου, ἡ δ' ἑτέρη θανάτοι), v. 9: οὐδὲ ἴσασιν . . . (= Mimn. fr. 2.4–5 W: εἰδότες οὔτε . . . οὔτ' . . .), v. 10: ὥς χρόνος ἔσθ' ἥβης καὶ βιότοισι ὀλίγος (= Mimn. fr. 2.7–8 W: μίνυνθα δὲ γίνεται ἥβης ἰκαρπός).

catalogue of the ills which may beset men (Sem. fr. 1.11–22 W; Mimn. fr. 2.5–15 W): old age, death, heartbreak, loss of wealth, lack of children, disease, war, shipwreck, suicide. What is it that “abides . . . for a brief time”? One is at first tempted to suppose youth (on the analogy with Mimn. fr. 2.7–8 W: μίνυνθα δὲ γίνεται ἥβης | καρπός), but this idea is already expressed in fr. 20.10 W<sup>2</sup> and would be redundant here. More likely the phrase has to do with wealth and prosperity (thus comparable to Mimn. fr. 2.11–12 W). It is hard to know what other misfortunes and disappointments may have been listed in these lines, but it is understandable why Stobaeus would have left this catalogue section out in favor of the beginning, with its familiar Homeric citation, and the important excerpt which all three Stobaeus manuscripts contain. This scenario seems more likely than to suppose that the excerptor attached similar lines from another poem: the thought of fr. 19 W<sup>2</sup> does not really seem complete by itself.

With the discovery of an important new literary papyrus, there is often, in the rush of scholarly excitement, a tendency to conclude that old controversies have been settled or that the new discovery may be of greater importance for some questions than it actually is. Without in any way downplaying the significance of the Plataea poem or what this papyrus adds to our knowledge of Simonidean elegy and its variety, I would submit that the authorship question concerning the “leaves” poem is still far from settled. Indeed, if this poem is not the work of Simonides of Ceos, it may be the case that much else in our papyrus also is not. While fr. 22 W<sup>2</sup> can be regarded as securely Simonidean, assuming that the restoration Ἐχεκ[ρατί]δην is correct,<sup>19</sup> any other fragment of sympotic elegy might equally well be considered the work of Semonides of Amorgos.<sup>20</sup>

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19 For Simonides’ connections with the Echekratidae, a family of Thessalian princes, see fr. 528 PMG, and the discussion of Molyneux 1992.127–29; Scopas’ mother was named Echecrateia (fr. 529 PMG), suggesting the family’s close connection with the Scopadae.

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