

A CALLIMACHEAN CRUX

(*Ep.* 44 Pfeiffer, 1081–86 Gow-Page, *A.P.* XII, 139)

*Ἔστι τι, ναὶ τὸν Πᾶνα, κεκρυμμένον, ἔστι τι ταύτη,
 ναὶ μὰ Διώνυσον, πῦρ ὑπὸ τῆι σποδιῆι.
 οὐ θαρσέω μὴ δῆ με περίπλεκε· πολλάκι λήθει
 τοῖχον ὑποτρογῶν ἡσύχιος ποταμός.
 5 τῶι καὶ νῦν δείδοικα, Μενέξενε, μὴ με παρεισδύς
 οὔτος † οσειγαρησ † εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα βάλῃ.

2 διόνυσον P 5 τῶ P 6 ουτοσοσειγαρησ P βάλλῃ P, corr.
 Heinsius: βάλῃ(ς) ci. Schneider

(1) Richard Bentley had suggested ὁ σιγέρπης for the transmitted οσειγαρησ with reference to Hesychius σιγέρπης· λαθροδάκτης. This has been widely approved. E.g., by Otto Schneider (Leipzig, 1870); A.W. Mair (Loeb, 1921); Hermann Beckby (*A.G.*, Tusculum-Bücherei, 1958); Robert Renehan (*HSCP* 68, 1964, 376–78); Georg Luck (*GGA* 219, 1967, 54).

(2) Nevertheless, I think those who hesitated to accept Bentley's σιγέρπης were right. So, e.g., Wilamowitz (*Callimachus*, Berlin, 1882 = 1925⁴); *Hellenistische Dichtung*, Berlin, 1924, I, 173); Émile Cahen (*Callimaque*, Budé, 1922 = 1961⁵); Rudolf Pfeiffer (*Callimachus*, Oxford, II, 1953); A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page (*Hellenistic Epigrams*, Cambridge, 1965).

For, (a): Palaeographically the corruption of σιγέρπης into οσειγαρησ is not "readily understandable". (b) By no means is it certain that Hesychius' λαθροδάκτης was intended to be an echo of λήθει and ὑποτρογῶν in our lines 3–4, as Renehan wants us to believe (also in his book *Greek Textual Criticism: A Reader*, Harvard U. P., 1969, 123–26). Finally, (c): ἔρπης, meaning 'creeper', need not carry on the figure of a river 'creeping past'.

(3) Emendations introducing new Greek words must be discarded on methodological grounds. Such are: J. J. Reiske's

ὁ σιγάργης = ὁ σίγα ἐργαζόμενος (*Animadv. ad Graec. auct.*, Leipzig, 1766, V, 753); Eduard Schwyzer's ὁ σιγάργης = ὁ σίγα ἄρνεται, "der schweigend (Boden) gewinnt" (*Rh. Mus.* 75, 1926, 448; 77, 1928, 105).

(4) Giuseppe Giangrande (*Rh. Mus.* 101, 1958, 50-52) suggested this reading of line 6: οὔτος ὁ σεῦ γ' Ἐρμῆς εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα βάλῃ. I think his emendation of σεῖγ into σεῦ γ' is sound. For, (a): Y was misread by some scribe as I. And (b): This σεῦ happily links 6 οὔτος with Menexenus in line 5.

However, Giangrande's emendation of ἀρῆς into Ἐρμῆς is not convincing to me. For, first, the *epiphany* (cf. the οὔτος) of the god Hermes as a personal helper and *leno* of Menexenus is unwelcome and unwarranted. And second, ἀρῆς does not seem to me to be an easy corruption of Ἐρμῆς (*contra* Giangrande 51: "Die Verderbnis ist sehr leicht zu erklären: das tachygraphische Zeichen für ερ über dem γ wurde falsch gelesen und so entstand ein ungewünschtes γὰρ").

(5) I would like to suggest the following reading for the corruption οσειγαρῆς:

οὔτος ὁ σεῦ γ' ἄσ(ι)νῆς εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα βάλῃ.

"This harmless or innocent (fellow) of yours". A long, walking-stick-shaped papyrological C was misread as P. Compare, for instance, the *sigma* in φωτός with the *rho* in ὑπέρβιον of Bacchylides *Dithyr.* 18, 19 Snell in P. Lond. 733, col. 37, 3 (end of II C. A. D.).³ Ἀσινῆς with a living object was used already by Sappho, Fr. 148 L.-P. (ἀσινῆς πάροιχος).

The situation in epigram 44 seems to be as follows. Menexenus, a friend, comes to introduce a quiet, innocent young boy to Callimachus. The boy embraces the poet while greeting him. But Callimachus, apparently overwhelmed by the beauty of the boy, reacts in a strange way: "Embrace me not, since I have no confidence in myself (and you may well become my ἐρώμενος in no time)". Then he explains his behavior to the present friend Menexenus, by adducing the example of the proverbial quiet and therefore dangerous river (πολλάκι), and by applying it to the present situation (τῶι καὶ νῦν)¹. The word 6 ἀσινῆς ("harmless, innocent") resumes the idea of 4 ἡσύχιος ("quiet") from the

1) This was then imitated by Ovid, *Ars amat.* I, 619-20:

Blanditiis animum furtim dependere nunc sit,
ut pendens liquida ripa sube(s)tur aqua,

as E. J. Kenney had suggested (apud B. Axelson, *Hermes* 86, 1958, 128).

river-simile, in the same way in which the word ζ *παρεισδύς* ('*by insinuating himself* into my affections', Gow-Page) resumes the idea of ζ *λήθει* ('unmarkedly, secretly') from the same simile. Both agents, 'a quiet river' (*ἡσυχίος ποταμός*) and 'this harmless man' (*οὗτος ὁ ἀσινής*), produce the same result: a disastrous destruction (4 *τοιγόν ὑποτρύγων* = 6 *εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα βάλλει*).

"By Pan, there is something hidden (in me). By Dionysus, yes: there is some fire beneath these ashes. I have no confidence (in myself): embrace me not. For oft-times a quiet river undermines the wall unmarked. So now too I fear, Menexenus, lest this harmless man of yours find his way into my heart and whelm me into love."

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