

ANTIPATER OF THESSALONICA, A.P. 9.421
(= XXVIII G-P)

- νήσοι ἐρημαῖαι, τρύφεια χθονὸς, ἄς κελαδεινὸς
ζωστήρ Αἰγαίου κύματος ἐντὸς ἔχει,
Σίφνον ἐμιμήσασθε καὶ αὐχμηρὴν Φολέγανδρον,
τλήμονες, ἀρχαίην δ' ὠλέσατ' ἀγλαΐην.
5 ἢ ῥ' ὑμᾶς ἐδίδαξεν ἐὼν τρόπον ἢ ποτε λευκὴ
Δῆλος ἐρημαίου δαίμονος ἀρξαμένη.
5 ἐὼν Heringa: ἕνα P ποτε aogr: τότε P

The desolate condition of Delos, twice ravaged in the Mithridatic wars, made an impression on Antipater, who alludes to the island's barrenness in two other epigrams: A.P. 9.408 (= CXIII G-P) and 9.550 (= XCIV G-P). Gow and Page, whose text is printed above, accepting the interpretation of Boissonade¹⁾ on λευκή (v. 5): "perhaps *glorious*. The word is often glossed λαμπρός." And on v. 6: "i.e. was the first to lie desolate." But Antipater cannot mean to suggest that Delos was the first of the Cyclades to be abandoned. The memory of the island's final disaster in 69 B.C. was too recent, and after the mention of Siphnos and Pholegandros, islands which had long been in that condition, the final couplet would be rendered pointless. Antipater means to say that with the desolation of Delos all the Cyclades learned a new way, one not aptly characterized as her own. In v. 5 read ἐδίδαξε νέον τρόπον, in pointed contrast with ἀρχαίην . . . ἀγλαίην in the preceding verse²⁾; and in v. 6 understand ἀρξαμένη of Delos beginning her own fated desolation³⁾.

As an epithet of one of the Cyclades λευκή should immediately suggest color: cf. *candida Delos*, Ov. Her. 21.82; in particular the whiteness of marble: cf. *niueam Paron*, Verg. Aen. 3.126⁴⁾. And in fact the metaphorical use of λευκός in the sense proposed by Gow and Page is without parallel. Antipater's reference to the color of Delos and her evil doom is better explained as a reminiscence of the oracle which, as Herodotus reports, the Siphnians received at Delphi in response to an enquiry about how long their good fortune would last (Hdt. 3.57.4 = A.P. 14.82):

Ἄλλ' ὅταν ἐν Σίφνῳ πρυτανήμια λευκὰ γένηται
 λεύκοφρῦς τ' ἀγορή, τότε δὴ δεῖ φράδιμονος ἀνδρὸς
 φράσσασθαι ξύλινόν τε λόχον κήρυκὰ τ' ἐρυθρόν.

Herodotus explains that the Siphnian agora and prytaneion were made of Parian marble, while the Samian fleet (ξύλινον λόχον) that sacked the island was painted red (κήρυκα ἐρυθρόν). Once prosperous Delos, Antipater suggests, could have noticed a similar warning.

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1) For which see F. Dübner, *Anthologia Palatina II* (Paris 1888), p. 214. Beckby's translation indicates that he also accepts this interpretation, although he prints the text of P.

2) For the phrase cf. Aesch. Pr. 309–10 μεθάρμοσαι τρόπους νέους, Soph. Ai. 735–6 νέας βουλάς νέοισιν ἐγκαταξέυξας τρόπους.

3) Cf. Antiphon Soph., fr. 49 D.-K. αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα, αὕτη ἡ νύξ καινοῦ δαίμονος ἀρχεῖ, καινοῦ πότμου.

4) Cf. also Hor. Carm. 1.14.19–20 *nitentis Cycladas*, 3.28.14 *fulgentis Cycladas*.