A New Poem of Archilochus: *P. Colon*. inv. 7511

Miroslav Marcovich

A recently discovered second-century papyrus of Archilochus in the collection at Cologne (inv. 7511) has received its first publication by R. Merkelbach and M. L. West in *ZPE* 14 (1974) 97–113 with plate v (= M–W).\(^1\) It is of great importance since it comprises the first known almost complete poem by Archilochus (35 lines), in addition to the beginning of another (5 lines). The text presents some difficulties, but clearly the content and the literary value of the poem deserve the closest attention.

The meter of this epode is a hemiepes sandwiched between an iambic trimeter and an iambic dimeter, and was imitated by Horace in his eleventh epode. The poem contains a dialogue between the younger sister of Neobule, daughter of Lycambes and Amphimedo (lines 1–5; the beginning of the girl’s speech is missing), and the young Archilochus (lines 6–27), and ends with a selective description of a love-affair between them (lines 28–35).

Merkelbach saw in the poem a story of hate, of vengeance by Archilochus on Lycambes and Neobule. I am in strong disagreement with his interpretation. I think we have to do with a fresh and naive love story.

The main purpose of this paper, however, is to improve our text of the poem by offering a somewhat different edition of the papyrus and to provide it a literary-philological commentary. The time for a definitive literary assessment of the poem has not yet come.

**Text**

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... πάμπαν ἄποσχόμενος· ἰεν δὲ τόλμησον ποθεῖν.
εἰ δὲ ἄν ἐπέλγεαι καϊ σε θυμὸς ἡδὺς,
ἐκτιν ἐν ἡμετέρου, ἤ νῦν μέγ' ἴμειρ[ει σέθεν,]
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\(^1\) This is a revised and enlarged version of a paper read at the 106th annual meeting of the American Philological Association. I am indebted to Professors Ludwig Koenen, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, David F. Bright, as well as to three anonymous readers appointed by this journal, for healthy criticism and for several suggestions. For any possible mistake, however, the responsibility is mine alone.
“... while you abstain completely; but engage in a requited [love]. If, however, you are so eager and your heart’s desire drives you on, there is a girl in our house, beautiful and delicate, who now very much yearns for [you]. I would say she has shape without blemish: [make] her [your beloved wife].”
So much she said, but I replied to her: “Daughter of Amphimedo, that noble and [chaste] lady whom now the dank earth covers: there are many forms of pleasure which Aphrodite gives to young men apart from the marriage rite; one such will do now. As for marriage, with god’s help you and I will consider it at our ease some day, when [my cheeks are bronzed].

(13) Shall I obey your request? [Yet] an immense [desire urges] me on to come as first beneath your lintel and through your portal. Do not begrudge me this, my darling, for I shall light upon your garden abounding in grass.

(16) But know this: another man may have Neobule. Alas, she has become overripe. Gone is her maidenly bloom, gone her former charm. For she could not [curb] her desires, and in her madness the woman revealed the scope of her [folly].

(21) Let her begone to destruction! May not [the Lord of heaven] lay a behest on me to take such a wife and become the laughingstock of my neighbors. By far, [my darling,] I prefer you. For you are not faithless or double-dealing, while she is much too sharp and she makes too many [friends]. I am afraid, if I pursue her in reckless haste, [I may beget] children blind or untimely born, like the proverbial bitch.”

(28) I said no more, but took the girl and laid her down amidst the blooming flowers, covering her [body] with a soft [cloak] and encircling her neck with my arms, while she [fell silent in fear] like a fawn [before a wolf?]. Then gently I touched her [breasts] with my hands, and she revealed a part of her young flesh, the harbinger of her prime. And caressing her beautiful body [all] round I released the [white] life-force, lightly touching her fair [hair].

**Commentary**

LINE 1. ἀπο- Ραυt: ἀνα- Ραυt. τόλμην ποιεῖν e.g. M–W. For the phrase λέον... ποιεῖν or πόλεον, ‘to engage in a requited love’, cf. par amor in Ov. Met. 4.192, 12.416; Pont. 3.2.69.

LINE 2. θυμός: there is no need to see in the word a pun (“Worts­piel”) with θυμός=τὸ πέος, as M–W do, referring to Hipponax fr.10 West. It does not seem likely to me that Archilochus would put such a pun in the mouth of an innocent young girl whom he opposes at length to the licentious Neobule in lines 16–27.

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χωρίς οὕτως εὐδαίμων ἔφυ. Sappho fr.49 L-P ἥράμαν μὲν ἔγω εἶδεν: [γάμου] M-W.


LINE 7. Ἀμφιμεδοῦς: The name 'Ἀμφιμεδοῦς is not elsewhere known to me, but cf. 'Ἀμφιμέδους, ἡ Δαναιόι in Scholia minora (D) ad ll. 2.499 Bekker. (Incidentally, the name 'Ἀμφιμέδους occurs twice on inscriptions from Thasos, a colony of Paros: IG XII.2 279.12 and 376.7).


LINE 10. τὸ θεῖον χρήμα: the phrase is puzzling. I take it to mean 'the holy matter', i.e. 'the marriage rite, wedding'. Evidently, so also Snell: “auch ohne kultische Hochzeit.” If so, then ταῦτα in line 11 must refer to this θεῖον χρήμα, implying 'marriage'. So also Merkelbach (“all dies, nämlich die Hochzeit”). West, however, takes the phrase to mean the same as τὰ μέγιστα at Theoc. Id. 2.143 ἐπράγθη τὰ μέγιστα, καὶ ἐκ πὸθον ἦδομεν ἀμφώ. There the phrase clearly implies 'sexual intercourse' (cf. Scholia vetera ad loc.: τὰ μέγιστα· τὰ τῆς εὐνο-ειας). With West's interpretation ταῦτα must refer to something in the lost opening part of the poem.

LINE 11. μελανθη[μοι γένους] M–W. I think this is the most likely restoration in view of Od. 16.175 ἄφ δὲ μελαγχροιής γένετο (sc. 'Ὀδυς-ειν'); Pl. Resp. 474κ1 μέλανας δὲ (sc. φατέ) ἄνδρικος ὴδειν. Cf. also
μελάμπυνος at, e.g., Archil. fr.178 West. I think the phrase means 'when my cheeks are sunburned, bronzed or tanned', which is a sign of full manliness, rather than 'when my chin grows dark with beard'. Both interpretations, however, are possible.

Line 12. cdv τεώ: the fact that this phrase, implying 'with divine aid', along with the phrase in line 21, ἐκ κόρακας, 'begone to destruction', are common only after the fifth century B.C. does not, I think, speak against Archilochus' authorship of the poem nor for attributing it, e.g., to the Anacreontea. As for the former phrase, cf. II. 9.49 cdv γὰρ τεώ εἰλήλογημεν. As for the latter (18 instances in Aristophanes; Lys. 13.8), cf. Theog. 833 πάντα τάδ' ἐν κοράκεσσι καί ἐν φθόραι.


The way we restore this line seems to be the key to the understanding of the whole poem. There seem to be at least three possibilities:

1. [π]εἴκομαι ὡς με κέλεα: πολλόν μ' ἐ[ρως... | ἕπ' ὃφρον]
2. [φ]εἴκομαι, ὡς με κέλεα, πολλόν μ' ἐ[χοντος ἵμερου]|...ὑπο[θάνεω]
3. [π]εἴκομαι ὡς με κέλεα; πολλόν μ' ἐ[ποτρύνει δ' ἔρως]|...ὑπο-φ[θάνεω]

1. The first possibility was suggested by Merkelbach. By restoring [π]εἴκομαι he sees in the line a case for the rape (and, at the same time, for a pun as well). According to him, in the lost part of the poem the girl had suggested to Archilochus: "Let us make peace!" (πεισῶμεθα). To which he replies in line 13: "Yes, let us make peace, but in my own way: by pouring libation into your womb!" (πεισομαι ὡς με κέλεα): "Ich werde Frieden schliessen und die Opferflüssigkeit vergiessen—aber in deinen Schoss"; "Dem Mädchen, das (etwa) gesagt hatte 'πεισομαι, wir wollen uns wieder vertragen', hat er geantwortet 'πεισομαι, ja, aber nur sexuell'; die Versöhnung hat er weit von sich gewiesen" (pp.105, 113).

Accordingly, Merkelbach sees in Archilochus "an extreme psychopath" ("ein schwerer Psychopath"), interpreting the poem as describing Archilochus' own act of violence against the younger daughter of Lycambes. Archilochus did 'have' the girl, and he did so only to take vengeance on Lycambes and his older daughter Neobule: "Das erste der neuen Gedichte zeigt nun, dass Archilochos die Schwester der Neobule, die sichtlich noch ein Kind war, überwältigt hat, offenbar
nur um sich an Lykambes und Neobule zu rächen ... Er hat rück­sichtslos bekannt gemacht, dass er das Mädchen 'gehabt' hatte, um auf diese Weise die ganze Familie des Lykambes zu blamieren ... So hat Archilochos den Lykambes und seine Töchter—die beide seine Geliebten gewesen waren und deren Jüngere ihm gar nichts getan hatte—in den Tod getrieben” (p.113). Merkelbach concludes his commentary on the poem by referring to Maximus of Tyre 18.9: τὸν δὲ 'Αρχιλόχου ἔρωτα, ὑβριστὴς γὰρ, χαίρειν ἐδὸ (p.111).

Fortunately enough, this interpretation of the poem (by itself unlikely to me) falls on palaeographical grounds: there is insufficient space on the papyrus to accommodate two letters at the beginning of line 13 (sigma and pi of [είςομαι])—there is room for only one.

2. The second possibility (which was my first attempt to solve the problem) would yield this meaning: “I will spare you (i.e., your virginity), though an immense desire lays hold on me to come as first ... through your portal.” Archilochus honors the girl’s virginity and eventually comes to his sexual satisfaction while ‘lighting’ upon her mons Veneris (cf. vv.15'εχήσω γὰρ ἐς τοῖς[φόρους] | [κ]ήπους) without deflowering her. The advantage of this interpretation seems to be that it goes well with the fact that the διακόρης is not mentioned in the description of the action itself (lines 28–35), the verb ἀμφαφάσμαι in line 34 implying no more than ‘to touch, feel or caress the body with hands’. But the disadvantages prevail. For one thing, the phrase of line 15: [μ]ὴ τι μέγαμπε, φίλη, remains unclear. “Do not begrudge me this, my darling!” What? Obviously, the penis immissio implied in the previous line.

3. Consequently, I would like to suggest a third possibility, mentioned above, with the following meaning: “Shall I obey your request?,” “Shall I hearken even as you bid me?,” i.e., to refrain from sexual intercourse with the girl, as she asked the poet in the lost opening part of the poem ending with line 1: “while you abstain completely.” As for the restoration [π]είσομαι ὡς μὲ κέλει, cf. ll. 23.96 πείσομαι ὡς σὺ (: δὸς μὲ ἡ ἡ γρ. A U4 ed. Allen) κελευές.

The answer to this deliberative question is a ‘No’, implied by a lost δὲ (‘but, however’) at the end of the same line. And this ‘No’ depends on “the many forms of (sexual) pleasure which Aphrodite gives to young men apart from the marriage rite,” mentioned in lines 9f. One such form, which “will do now,” is the coitus interruptus, saving the girl from premarital pregnancy.
We can now better understand the words of line 15: “Do not begrudge me this, my darling,” ‘this’ implying sexual intercourse. The poet-lover knows a special form of sexual pleasure. The γὰρ in line 15 is of importance: ‘For I shall end my journey by lighting upon your mons Veneris.” That is why the girl should not object to the love-affair.

However, if we accept this restoration and interpretation, how can we explain the fact that the coitus is not explicitly mentioned in the description of the act itself in lines 28–35? I think by an old conventional device of the lyric poets: their description of the sexual act is discreet, selective and intentionally elliptic. Here are some examples. Theoc. Id. 2.140–43:

καὶ ταχὺ χρῶς ἐπὶ χρωτὶ πεπαῦντο, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα
θερμότερ’ ἢ ἢ πρόσθε, καὶ ἐμπυρίσδομες ἄδυ.
ὡς καὶ τοι μὴ μακρὰ φίλα θυμλέομι Σελάνα,
ἐπάρχῃ τὰ μέγιστα, καὶ ἐκ πόθῳ ἡνθομες ἄμφω.

The same euphemistic device (“And to tell thee no long tale, dear Moon . . .”) recurs in the Greek Anthology, 5.128 (Marcus Argen-tarius):

Στέρνα περὶ στέρνοις, μακτῶι δ’ ἐπὶ μακτὸν ἐρείκας
χείλεά τε γλυκεροῖς χείλεις εὐμπιέσας
’Ἀντιγόνης καὶ χρωτα λαβὼν πρὸς χρωτα, τὰ λοιπὰ
ciyώ, μάρτυς ἐφ’ οἰς λύχνος ἐπεγράφετο.

5.252.5f (Paulus Silentiarius):

cτήθεα δ’ ἐζεύχῳ τά τε χείλεα· τάλλα δὲ σιγῆ
κρυπτέον· ἐχθαιρώ τὴν ἀθυροτομίην.

5.4.6 (Philodemus) ἢδη τῆς Παφίνης ἠθι τὰ λεπόμενα. 12.94.4 (Meleager) τον δὲ— τὸ λεπόμενον. Cf. Ov. Am. 1.5.23–25 singula quid referam? . . . cetera quis nescit? The same holds good for Ovid’s description of love-affairs in the Metamorphoses. Consequently, I would take the verb ἀμφαφάσαμαι in line 34 for a euphemism implying the sexual act. Πολλὸν is an adverb, as in line 23.


Line 15. σχῆμα . . . ἐς must mean ‘I shall land on’ (cf., e.g., Hdt. 6.92.1). Right are M–W: “landen bei; nautische Metapher.” As a
matter of fact, if the man’s sexual action is metaphorically envisaged as a ‘rowing process’ (cf. the expression Κύπριδος εἰρείνη at Meleager, Anth.Gr. 5.204.2; περποντα, West, and ναυκή at Semon. fr.7.54 West), then ‘the final landing or lighting’ must imply ‘ejaculation’, and this will take place upon the girl’s mons Veneris. It seems clear to me that coitus interruptus is meant. τοῦτοντικής M–W: τοῦτοντικής Snell.


Line 17. πέπηρα ‘overripe’= γραϊα Hesych.; schol. in Ar. Eccl. 896. Cf. Anac. fr.432 Page; Theoc. Id. 7.120f:

καὶ δὴ μὰν ἄπιοιο πεπαίτερος, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες
“ἀιαί” φαντί “Φιλινε, τὸ τοι καλὸν ἕνθος ἀπορρεῖ”


Line 22. [ἀ] τως Koenen.


Line 25. [ἡ δὲ] M–W. μᾶλ’ ἀγκύρη: in view of the presence of such derogatory words as ‘faithless’ and ‘double-dealing’ or ‘treacherous’
in the previous line, it seems preferable to take ὄξυτέρη to mean ‘sharp’ = ‘cunning, shifty’ than ‘quick to anger’ (= ὃξυχολος, Solon fr.13.26), “allzu leidenschaftlich, allzu rasch” M–W. As for the use of the comparative ὄξυτέρη for ὅξεια, cf. Theog. 366 (almost identical with 1030) West καρδίη ὄξυτέρη, in addition to the instances adduced by M–W. τε scripsi: δὲ P. [φίλους] M–W.

Line 27. ἐπειγομένος Π, M–W: ἐπειγομένη Μ. Gronewald: ἐπειγομένῳ <ι>ς Κoenen and M. Treu. κ[ὗων τέκω] M–W: κ[ὗων τέκηι] Gronewald, Koenen and Treu. τῶς ὀξερή ἡ κύων: cf. line 31: τῶς ὀξετε νεβρ[ός], and Archil. frs.224 (πτάσσουσαν ὀξετε πέρδικαι) and 21.1 (ἢδε δ’ ὀξτ’ δονυρόχις | ἐκήκεν). I think M–W are right in restoring [τέκω] and referring it to Archilochus with the meaning of ‘beget, engender’. M. Gronewald, L. Koenen and M. Treu, however, restore [τέκηι] and refer it to Neobule with the meaning of ‘bring forth, give birth to’, trying to bring the text closer to the proverb hinted at by Archilochus: κύων επειγοδοχα τυφλὰ τίκτει (ἐπὶ τῶν διὰ σπουδὴν ἄμαρτανόντων) Macarius 5.32 (CPG II, p.181); Aesopus 223 Perry = 251 Haurstath. I find the plural ἐπειγομένων weak in sense (I would expect then ἐπειγομένω). and the witness which Dioscorides put into the mouth of Lycambes’ daughters (Anth.Gr. 7.351.7–10, adduced by M–W) most welcome:

‘Ἀρχιλόχον, μὰ θεοῦ καὶ δαίμονα, οὐτ’ ἐν ὄγυιας εἴδομεν οὖθ’ Ἡρας ἐν μεγάλωι τεμένει,

εἰ δ’ ἥμεν μάχλῳ καὶ ἀτάσθαλοι, οὐκ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ἦθελεν ἔξι ἠμένων γνήσια τέκνα τεκεῖν.

Line 28. ἐφώνευν Π: ἐφώνεων M–W.


Line 30. [χλαί]ης Μ–W with reference to Athen. 13, 604De. ἀγκάλης’ M–W: αγκάλης Π.


LINE 33. [ἦ δ' ὑπέφηρε scripsi: [ἣ πα]βέφυνε West: ἤβεφυ. (a corr. in η) P.


LINE 35. [λευκ]όν Merkelbach, with reference to Anth.Gr. 5.55.7f:

µέχρις ἀπεπείθη λευκὸν µένος ἀµφωτέροις,
καὶ Δωρίς παρέτοις ἐξεχύθη µέλει

and to Hes. Theog. 190f λευκός | ἀφρός: [θερμ]όν West. [τριχός] M-W. Most probably this 'fair hair' refers to the hair of the girl's head, not to her pubic hair, as M-W seem to take it in referring to line 16 [κ]ήπους.

Conclusions

1. Since there is not sufficient space on the papyrus for Merkelbach's restoration of [ἐ]εἰκομαι in line 13, I think his interpretation of the whole poem as a hate story, as a vengeance of Archilochus against Lycambes and Neobule ("... offenbar nur um sich an Lykambes und Neobule zu rächen") must be discarded.

2. But if we read in line 13 [π]εἰκομαι ὡς κέλεαι; ("Shall I hearken even as you bid me?") while bearing in mind the phrase πείκομαι ὡς εὖ (or ὡς µε) κέλευεις (Iliad 23.96), then the way may be open for the interpretation of the poem as a love story instead. Archilochus falls in love with the younger daughter of Lycambes and Amphimeido (cf. perhaps Archilochus fr.38 West: οἶνον Λυκάμβεω παῖδα τὴν ὑπερτέρην [sc., e.g., φιλεῖω], "I love only the younger daughter of Lycambes"), and he asks her to satisfy his sexual desire. He treats the girl as an 'honest woman' (ἐθηλὴ γυνὴ: cf. the commentary on line 7), and he claims to know a special form of sexual pleasure given to young men by Aphrodite. This form seems to be coitus interruptus, which will save the girl from premarital pregnancy. The lover will 'light' upon the girl's mons Veneris (v.15f. σχῆκε γάρ ἐκ ... κῆπους). Consequently, Archilochus does show certain consideration for the beloved girl.

3. The description of the sexual act itself in lines 28-35 is selective and euphemistic, due to a conventional device of Greek lyric poets (cf. point 3 of the commentary on line 13).

University of Illinois at Urbana
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