

# The Second Strophe of Philodamus of Scarphea's *Paeon to Dionysus*: A Further Note

*Luca Cadili*

Δὴ τότε βακχίαζε μὲν		(9)
χθῶ[ν μεγαλόλυτος]   τε Κάδ-	15	(9/10)
μου Μινυᾶν τε κόλπ[ος Εὔ-		(10)
βο]ιά τε   καλλίκαρπος·		(10/11)
— Εὐοῖ ὦ ἰὸ Β[άκχ', ὦ ἰὲ] Παιᾶν —		(11)
πᾶσα δ' ὕμνοβρυῆς χορευ-		(12)
εν [Δελφῶ]ν ἱερὰ   μάκαιρα χώρα.	20	(12/13)

And then the far-famed land of Cadmus  
and the Mīnyans' bay  
were driven in frenzied exultation,  
along with Euboea, bestower of beautiful fruits;  
— euhoe, iō Bacchus, iē Paeon —  
with loud-resounding hymns,  
the whole Delphians' holy and blessed country danced.

**P**HILODAMUS' *Paeon to Dionysus* offers an important, if not unique, piece of evidence bearing witness to the changes Greek sacred poetry and the religious beliefs of the Hellenic people underwent in the fourth century B.C. Unfortunately, both the bad state of preservation of its text and, especially, the loss of the fragments of the stone on which the poem was carved often hamper its full appreciation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this topic see L. Cadili, "Poetry and the Stonecutter: Two Notes on the Second Strophe of Philodamus of Scarphea's *Paeon to Dionysus*," *ZPE* 213 (2020) 18–19.

The above-quoted lines are taken from the second strophe of the poem, in which we are given a picture of the joyful welcome Dionysus receives from the Greek people during his travel to Delphi, where his brother, Apollo, and the worshippers are awaiting his arrival.<sup>2</sup> At the end of line 9 (= verse 15) Henri Weil, the scholar to whom we owe the editio princeps of the paean, proposed to restore an epithet, μεγαλώνυμος, linking it with the preceding word (χθῶ[ν μεγαλώνυμος] τε Κάδμου, (Thebes) “the far-famed land of Cadmus”).<sup>3</sup> This supplement has been accepted into the text by all the following editors of the poem.<sup>4</sup> Yet it failed to convince Ernst Diehl

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. L. Bowie, “Time and Place, Narrative and Speech in Philicus, Philodamus and Limenius,” in A. Faulkner et al. (eds.), *Hymnic Narrative and the Narratology of Greek Hymns* (Leiden 2015) 106–110. All the supplements incorporated in the text printed above stem from the editio princeps of the paean, except, in line 10 (verse 16–17), Εὔβο]ια, which has been proposed by Wilhelm Vollgraff. Cf. H. Weil, “Un péan delphique à Dionysos,” *BCH* 19 (1895) 402 (= H. Weil, *Études de littérature et de rythmique grecques* [Paris 1902] 38), and W. Vollgraff, “Le péan delphique à Dionysos,” *BCH* 48 (1924) 112–113. For the first word of line 9 (verse 14) (δῆ), and the dotting of lost and doubtful letters see instead Cadili, *ζPE* 213 (2002) 18 and n.4.

<sup>3</sup> Weil, *BCH* 19 (1895) 402 (= *Études* 38). Verse 15, like the preceding and the following lines, is an anacastic choriambic dimeter (—υυ—υυ—). The paean is monostrophic and consists entirely of Aeolic cola.

<sup>4</sup> A. Fairbanks, *A Study of the Greek Paeon* (Ithaca 1900) 141; H. W. Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets* (London 1900) 525; Vollgraff, *BCH* 48 (1924) 110; J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* (Oxford 1925) 166; R. Vallois, “Les strophes mutilées du péan de Philodamos,” *BCH* 55 (1931) 357; F. Sokotowski, “Kult Dionysosa w Delfach,” *Archiwum Towarzystwa naukowego we Lwowie* 1.8.2 (1936) 286; B. L. Rainer, *Philodamus’ Paeon to Dionysus: A Literary Expression of Delphic Propaganda* (diss. Univ. Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1975) 260; A. Stewart, “Dionysos at Delphi: The Pediments of the Sixth Temple of Apollo and Religious Reform in the Age of Alexander,” in B. Barr-Scharrar et al. (eds.), *Macedonia and Greece in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Times* (Washington 1982) 216; L. Käppel, *Paian. Studien zur Geschichte einer Gattung* (Berlin 1992) 375 (*Pai.* 39), and P. Leven, “Philodamus of Scarpheia,” in D. Sider (ed.), *Hellenistic Poetry: A Selection* (Ann Arbor 2017) 473 (no. 38).

entirely. In the first edition of his *Anthologia lyrica Graeca*, Diehl endorsed Weil's conjecture without any apparent hesitation. But when he edited this anthology anew, though he did not remove the word from the text of the paean, he accompanied it in the critical apparatus with the following remark: “μεγαλώνυμος: *priores*, *sed aptiora* μεγάλη, λιπαρά.”<sup>5</sup>

Diehl's criticism is indeed not unfounded: in classical Greek poetry there is only one instance where a town is styled *μεγαλώνυμος*, and this comes from a poem written during the Imperial Age, Dionysius' *Periegesis* (*μεγαλώνυμος Σέλη*, 860; cf. 542). This usage is instead well attested in Christian authors.<sup>6</sup> In archaic and classical Greek poetry *μεγαλώνυμος* is in fact one of the epithets poets attached to the name of gods or heroes.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, if we consider the phrasing of the passage, there are good reasons for thinking that the lost word in line 9 (verse 15) was an adjective. The whole sentence essentially consists of word sequences constructed out of various noun-epithet combinations. In line 10 (verses 16–17) the noun *Ἐῶβουια* is sided by an adjective (*καλλίκαρπος*), and in lines 12–13 “the country of the Delphians” (*[Δελφῶ]ν χώρα*) is said to be “holy” and “blessed” (*ιερά μάκαιρα*) “amid the loud-resounding hymns”

<sup>5</sup> E. Diehl, *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* II.6 (Leipzig 1942) 120–121 (cf. *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* II.6 (Leipzig 1925) 253). This observation ends in a generic reference to Pindar. The passages here alluded to are probably Pind. *Pyth.* 2.3 (*λιπαροὶ Θῆβαι*; cf. *Ol.* 13.110, 14.3–4), and *Pyth.* 4.48–49 (*μεγάλη Λακεδαιμόνων*), on which see B. K. Braswell, *A Commentary on the Fourth Pythian Ode of Pindar* (Berlin 1988) 129. Diehl's doubts are shared also by William D. Furley and Jan Bremer (*Greek Hymns: Selected Cult Songs from the Archaic to the Hellenistic Period* II [Tübingen 2001] 65).

<sup>6</sup> See for example Con. Eph. *ACO* I 1.1, 121.12 (*Coll. Vat.* 31); I 1.3, 37.11 (*Coll. Vat.* 96); 81.6–7 (*Coll. Vat.* 118.13 = Cyr. *Apol. Thds.*, PG 76.465B); I 1.5, 8.35 (*Coll. Vat.* 143.3); I 1.7, 158.10 (*Coll. Athen.* 120.2); Greg. Naz. *Or.* 5 (= *Contra Julianum II*), PG 35.684C.

<sup>7</sup> Sapph. fr.44Aa.3 Voigt (= Alc. fr.304.3 L.-P.; cf. G. Liberman, *Alcée. Fragments* I [Paris 1999] xciv); Soph. *Ant.* 148; Ar. *Nub.* 569, *Vesp.* 1519, *Thesm.* 315. See also *PGM* 4.1020, 57.19; *Hymn. Orph.* 12.10, 23.3, 32.3, 36.2.

(ὕμνοβρυής). It is therefore very probable that this compositional principle was observed also in the second verse of the strophe.

We propose then to restore the beginning of the passage as follows (v. 14–17 [lines 9–11]):

Δὴ τότε βακχίαζε μὲν	(9)
χθῶ[ν πολήρατος]   τε Κάδ-	15 (9/10)
μου Μινυῶν τε κόλπ[ος Εὔ-	(10)
βο]ία τε   καλλιίκαρπος.	(10/11)

The epithet πολήρατος is actually found beside the name of Thebes in *Od.* 11.275, πολήρατος Θήβη, “much loved Thebes.”<sup>8</sup>

If Homer is really the source of this line of the paean, we would be presented here with an instance of one of the most characteristic features of Philodamus’ art: his fondness for stylistic experiments. On the one hand, in Greek tragic poetry Κάδμου χθῶν, the periphrasis indicating Thebes, is never completed with an adjective;<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, πολήρατος is never attested in extant Greek tragic poetry, being instead quite frequent in Homer and early epic poems, and not wholly unknown also to lyric poets.<sup>10</sup> Philodamus would thus have grafted a non-tragic word into a typically tragic wording. On

<sup>8</sup> According to Weil’s plates (*BCH* 19 [1895], pls. xvi–xvii), which show the original arrangement of the paean on the stone, the number of letters to a line varied from eight (lines 42, 83, 92 = verses 65, 130, 143) to thirty-six letters (line 6 = verses 8–10). The still legible letters in line 9 are twenty, plus the letter that completes the first word of verse 15 (χθῶ[ν]). Since πολήρατος is a ten-letter word, this line would not exceed the length of the longest one.

<sup>9</sup> Eur. *Supp.* 282, 400, 523. Cf. Soph. *Ant.* 1162; Eur. *Tro.* 243 (Καδμεία χθῶν); Aesch. *Sept.* 1015; Eur. *Supp.* 587 (Καδμείων χθῶν). See also Eur. fr. 223.84 Kannicht; *HF* 217, 754, 1389 (γάια Κάδμου).

<sup>10</sup> See for Homer and early epic poets *Lfgre* 20 (2004) 1390.1–20 (J. N. O’Sullivan), and N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) 262. The word occurs only once in both Pindar (fr.52n[a].10 Maehler) and Bacchylides (19.9–10), and is also found in a lyric parody in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (569). Cf. further Sol. fr.4.21 W.<sup>2</sup> (= 3.21 G.-Pr.<sup>2</sup>).

this occasion, the poet's attempt at improving the language and style the poetic tradition has bequeathed to him would not be unsuccessful: this manipulation of the poetic diction would have no bearing on the style of the beginning of the passage, for the insertion of the adjective between the two elements of the periphrasis grants soundness and elegance to the phrasing.

The *Paeon to Dionysus* indeed provides many examples of this peculiar kind of poetic innovation. Although Philodamus is not always successful in his attempts and cannot then be considered as a highly refined poet, his poem certainly does not lack originality.<sup>11</sup>

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