

Introduction

Continuity in the Sympotic Tradition

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Σιμωνίδης τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρχὴν τίθειαι οἴνου καὶ μουσικῆς.

Simonides says that the origin of wine and mousikê is the same.

PMG 647 = T9 Poltera ap. Ath. 2.40f

Whatever the import of this enigmatic dictum—its context, at any rate, may well have been sympotic, given its pithy form and potential for self-reflexivity—there is no doubt that here Simonides touches on something that lies at the heart of Greek poetic history: poetry and symposium seem to flow from the same spring—and they continue to flow in one stream throughout Greek literary history and beyond.

This close relationship has many facets. Poetry is performed at the symposium from the very beginnings of Greek literature through to the fourth century and into Hellenistic times. Even later, echoes of the sympotic setting are incorporated into literary games of generic appropriation. Poetry meant for a different context is often reperformed in the symposium, and conversely poetry often likes to evoke the symposium even when it is not strictly speaking ‘sympotic’; the symposium both shapes and cuts across generic conventions. The symposium is also the privileged site for the competitive display of poetic and musical skill, and the place where something akin to literary criticism first begins. It plays a crucial role in the early institution of corpora, the canonization of texts, and their early transmission. Moreover, the symposium as a setting for the performance of poetry blends with the symposium as an imaginary place which is the product of—rather than the precondition for—this poetry. This volume touches on all these facets of the symbiotic connection of poetry and symposium.

It begins, in Oswyn Murray’s contribution, with the historical emergence of the symposium as the kind of setting (concerned with ‘pleasure’) which inevitably

calls for poetry,¹ and several of its chapters include discussions of the symposium as the real-life context for the performance and transmission of poetry. But taken as a whole, the volume reaches beyond the historical symposium to examine further ways in which different kinds of literary texts engage with the sympotic idea and with sympotic discourse. In so doing, it illuminates the symposium's unique significance to Greek poetic history in its dual role as a formative context for the production, reception, and criticism of poetry on the one hand, and on the other hand as a place of the imagination and a determinant for modes of discourse which continues to be reworked even after the symposium has ceased to be a significant social institution. For all the diversity of sympotic discourse, this process displays remarkable continuity and coherence across the whole of Greek literary history into Latin literary history and beyond.

It is in large part this continuity amid diversity which renders the symposium an extraordinarily useful interpretative tool. The symposium is the setting for poetry encompassing a wide variety of themes, viewpoints, styles, modes of performance, and metrical and musical forms. Indeed it is the venue for a strand of discourse which transcends individual media to manifest itself in images and sights, voices and sounds, gesture and dance, all of which—though in large part ‘submerged’, to use Luigi Enrico Rossi’s felicitous definition—are to some extent reflected in contemporary or later texts.² At once the most voracious and the most appetizing of all performance occasions in Greek antiquity, the symposium is thus irreducible to definite generic notions. And yet sympotic poetry provides a coherent and continuous discourse which is fruitfully investigated as a unit. Though sympotic poetry is not a genre in the same way as, for instance, epic is, it offers an organic category for thinking about Greek poetry: examining texts through the lens of the symposium brings to light connections and contiguities, responses and running threads, and it allows the reader to account for both resemblances and multiformity. All this gives the symposium a special status as a means for interpreting specific texts and their place in the tradition, as well as for making sense of the workings of Greek poetic culture on a large scale.

The essays in this volume flash light on different facets of this symbiotic relation of symposium and poetry across Greek literary history to offer a prismatic view of this process of engagement with, and reworking of, sympotic forms, themes, and associations. The preliminary remarks in this Introduction address the sweep of the continuous development of sympotic poetic discourse.

The earliest directly preserved Greek poetry consists of songs on cups—both in the sense that they are *inscribed on* cups and that they are *about* cups.

¹ See also Murray (2011).

² On sympotic poetry as ‘submerged literature’ see Colesanti (2014) 93–102; on the concept see Colesanti and Giordano (eds.) (2014) 1–2.

The most spectacular example—and one of the very earliest extant uses of the Greek alphabet—is the exquisite drinking vessel well known as ‘Nestor’s Cup’. This Rhodian *kotyle*, datable to ca. 735–720 BC and found in a burial in the Euboean colony of Pithekoussai, bears a metrical inscription comprising an iambic line followed by two dactylic hexameters (*CEG* 454 = M.–L. 1).³

*Νέστορος : ἐ[ίμ]ι : εὖποτ[ον] : ποτέριον
 ἢς δ' ἂν τῶδε πίεσι : ποτερ[ο] : αὐτίκα κῆνον
 ἡμέρος χαιρέει : καλλιτε[φά]γο : Ἀφροδίτες*

I am Nestor’s cup, good to drink from.
 He who should drink from this cup, immediately him
 desire of Aphrodite of the beautiful garland will seize.

This inscribed poem already displays many of the poetic conceits which recur in more developed form in later poetry. It reflects standard inscriptional formulations, which it appropriates and twists to its own sympotic purposes. The opening line is a variation on ownership formulae,⁴ while the second line develops the thought with an equally conventional curse formula. The overall effect subverts the formulaic language in a display of wit, for what else could be expected of a sympotic cup than for it to be passed around and drunk from? The third line takes the joke further by replacing the expected penalty with what can be taken as a punishment only with tongue in cheek: love, just like wine, was the order of the day at the symposion, and ‘Aphrodite’s desire’ is notoriously ‘sweet–bitter’.

But there is arguably a further dimension to this self-conscious use of traditional language in the service of playfulness, for the opening line is probably an allusion to the Homeric cup heirloom of old Nestor, so grand a cup that a man could scarcely lift it (*Iliad* 11.632–7).⁵ In this sense the ‘punchline’ is the cup itself, a small and delicate earthenware vessel which could not be more different from the heroic golden jar of the *Iliad*.⁶ Moreover,

³ There is a large body of scholarship on this little object: see e.g. Murray (1994), Pavese (1996), Catoni (2010) 171–4, Węcowski (2014) 127–39, with the respective bibliographies.

⁴ For the pattern genitive + ἐίμι + name of vessel see Pavese (1996) 6–7; for ownership inscriptions more generally see Catoni (2010) 175–83.

⁵ Though scholarship is not unanimous about the likelihood of epic intertextuality of any kind: for dissenting voices see, among others, Pavese (1996) 10–16, Catoni (2010) 172–4. But even if the name was that of the Euboean owner of the cup, it is unlikely to have escaped the epic association. The relation between the language of the inscription and that of Homeric epic is evaluated by Cassio (1994).

⁶ For the delicacy of Nestor’s cup see Murray (1994) 47 on being allowed to hold it in his hands: ‘Beyond the technical interest of fabric and inscription, I remember especially the physical sensations: no photograph had prepared me for the lightness and delicacy of the cup, the thinness of its walls and the quality of evenness in its throwing. Equally, no drawing or description had revealed the skill and regularity of the incised verses. I had expected something coarser, more casual and more primitive in the earliest western inscribed clay vessel, not such a self-confident marriage of elegance and virtuosity.’

the first line of the poem, by declaring the cup's heroic aspirations, transports its user to that epic setting; the final line, on the other hand, lands the drinker who is about to be struck by the cup's curse back into the more mundane sympotic present. The symposion as an aesthetic locus lends itself particularly well to rehearsing imaginative scenarios as foils for the sympotic present: in this respect also, Nestor's Cup anticipates a tendency of much subsequent sympotic imagery, both visual and verbal.⁷

The sympotic context is a shaping force in other ways too. The metrical units of this text (inscribed continuously) follow each other in a 'capping' sequence: each line develops the previous one in a surprising way. This structure embodies the pragmatics of the performance of sympotic poetry, whereby symposiasts would take turns in playful competition.

This poem on a wine-cup, which plays on conventional inscriptions and echoes another poem, suggests that 'talking poetry' was from the beginning a sympotic activity: symposiasts' talk could take the form of poetry while at the same time taking poetry as its subject-matter. This is one facet of the self-reflexivity that is so characteristic of sympotic discourse. Moreover, the play of allusions already involves an intricate game across several registers: from subliterate magical language to epic, while also implying conversation. Nestor's Cup manifests a self-consciously artful use of language, a knowing display allied to a spirit of competition and one-upmanship vis-à-vis even the most prestigious poetic antecedents. Here we have *in nuce* poetic criticism as well as poetry itself. All the essential traits of sympotic discourse are to be found already distilled into this small cup.

The sophistication of Nestor's Cup betokens even at this early stage a developed sympotic poetic culture whose existence is confirmed by the finds in far-flung places of inscriptions which play similar games. For if Nestor's Cup is (so far) unique for its elaboration and fine state of preservation, its strategies are paralleled elsewhere, and new finds continue to add to the picture of the early poetic culture which accompanied the ritualized drinking of wine. A recent discovery of a sealed deposit in Methoni Pierias in northern Greece, on the other side of the Greek world from Pithekoussai, has brought to light several inscribed vessels dating from the same period as Nestor's Cup. One drinking vessel stands out on account of its beautifully executed inscription evenly spaced along a decorative band (*Methoni Pierias I 2*):⁸

ἡΑκεσάνδρο ἐμ[ὶ c22]εἶτετο[c6]μεκ[c6]ατον στερέ[ετ]αι.

I belong to Hakesandros... will be deprived of...

⁷ Lissarrague (1990a) and Cazzato's chapter in this volume (Ch. 9).

⁸ See Węcowski (forthcoming), to whom we are indebted for discussion of this and the following inscriptions. The inscription starts off in a non-metrical pattern before drifting into iambic rhythm.

Just like the Cup of Nestor, this cup appropriates conventional magical language for a sympotic context. Though the form of this ownership inscription is similar to many others found, for instance, on transport jars, its function on a drinking cup, in a domestic context, implies the circulation of cups among a number of users, as was the custom in the symposion.⁹ The resort to a curse on a cup meant for a convivial setting is best explained as a playful contamination just like the inscription on Nestor's Cup, a piece of drollery for the benefit of the drinking companions. The good-humoured use of ownership statements in a sympotic context seems in fact to be something of a trope. An inscription on a late archaic *skyphos* from Gela starts off as an ownership formula only to subvert its import altogether (SEG XVI 556 = IGASMGI² 10):

Παντάρεός εἶμι | καὶ τῶν φίλων ροινά εἶμι

I belong to Pantares and I am a common property of (his) friends.

This is the sympotic atmosphere of companionship and sharing which is the background against which even curses can be taken as witty banter.¹⁰ And in the sympotic context in particular, 'wit' seems most often to take the form of 'variation on a theme', of giving an unexpected twist to something conventional.

A late sixth-century cup found in an Etruscan tomb in Pontecagnano records a double ownership (SEG XXXIV 1019 = IGASMGI² IV 30):

Παρμένοντός · ἐμι · καὶ Στρίνπονος · ἐμὲ μεδὲς · ἀν<α>κλε<π>τέτο

Parmenon is whom I belong to, and to Strimpon; let nobody steal me.

Was this a *κύλιξ φιλοτήσιος*, as Marek Węcowski suggests, a cup 'symbolically uniting two sexual partners'?¹¹ If so, then the warning at the end might have taken on a double edge as the inscription was read out and the deictic ἐμὲ shifted its reference from cup to drinker: it is not just the cup that should not be stolen, but neither should either man be 'stolen' from the other—an obvious risk in the symposion, where wine and *eros* go hand in hand, and indeed their intoxicating effects are often assimilated metaphorically.¹²

So already in these earliest examples a number of formal qualities stand out which are characteristic of sympotic poetic discourse: playful unexpected twists of thought, the salient use of first-person statements, the implication

⁹ Węcowski (2014) 134–6.

¹⁰ Węcowski (2014) 136, Węcowski (forthcoming), but cf. Raccuia (2000), who argues that this vessel—like other earthenware from late archaic Gela that bear *κοινόε*-inscriptions—was destined for use in *syssitia*.

¹¹ Węcowski (forthcoming).

¹² e.g. Anacr. PMG 376 μεθύων ἔρωτι, 450 ἔρωτα πίνων, cf. 407 ἀλλὰ πρόπινε | ῥαδινός, ὦ φίλε, μηρούς (quoted by schol. Pi. O. 7.5a I 200 Dr. as an illustration of the 'literal' meaning of *προπίνω* as 'to make a gift of the cup along with the mixture of wine'). See also Posidipp. 140 A.–B., quoted in full later this chapter, where wine = love = love poetry, and Xen. *Symp.* 8.21.

of social interaction (with its correlate tension between openness and aggression), competition, a chain-link format (*catena*), the manner in which the poetry seems to be shaped by the physical conditions in which it was performed, a pointed self-reflexivity, and—most fundamentally—that mechanism of variation on a theme. While variation on a theme is the key alchemic principle in classical literature in general, in its specifically sympotic manifestation it takes on a peculiar life of its own and provides endless opportunities for engagement with poetic tradition. This crucial mechanism in the continuity of sympotic discourse—this unbroken line of traditional engagement which can be traced through the whole of Greek literary history and beyond—opens up unique interpretive possibilities and strategies for making sense of the Greek poetic mind on a large scale.

We see this for instance if we trace that basic sympotic utterance that is the invitation to drink and turn from the language of poetry on cups to the language of cups in poetry.

- (a) χαῖρε καὶ πῶ τάνδε
Greetings to you and drink this!
- (b) δεῦρο κύπωθι
Come drink with me!

These fragments are ascribed by the indirect tradition to Alcaeus (fr. 401 V.), but they are of a piece with the toasts which decorate a great number of sympotic cups, such as χαῖρε καὶ πίει εἶ, the most common of such toasts.¹³ These exhortations to drink are elaborations of that basic sympotic utterance which we must imagine as ricocheting across the symposium in all sorts of media: in songs and on cups, but also in conversations and in the codified gesture of handing the cup to one's right, the metasymphotic representations reflecting and being reflected in turn myriad times in the actions of the symposiasts. This inclusive gesture that is the invitation to drink is the basic building-block of sympotic interaction, the irreducible element which can be elaborated into complex compositions. Thus, for instance, Alcaeus' fr. 38a V. begins with such an invitation to a named companion:

πῶνε [... . . .] Μελάνιππ', ἄμ' ἐμοί· 1
Drink with me, Melanippus, . . .

before moving on to a reflection on mortality:

τί [. . .] 1
† ὄταμε[. . .] διννάεντ'† Ἀχέροντα μέγ[2
ζάβαι[ε]λίω κόθαρων φάος [ἄψερων 3
ᾧεσθ', ἀλλ ἄγι μὴ μεγάλων ἐπ[4

¹³ See Wachter (2003) and (2004).

Think you perhaps that once having crossed Acheron's whirling stream you will again see the pure light of the sun? Come, do not aim at great things.¹⁴

This gnomic reflection leads into an extended mythological example involving Sisyphus (named immediately following, in line 5). The 'zero-grade' invitation to drink is the grain of sand in the oyster which accretes around itself other poetic themes, here the topical reflections on the transitoriness of life. The enjoyment of men gathered in conviviality evokes thoughts of its ephemerality almost inevitably in Greek poetry. This connection of themes becomes so established that later on, when the theme of mortality continues, naturally, to be a subject for poetry past the demise of the symposion as a context of performance, the sympotic address continues to provide its natural setting.¹⁵ And Alcaeus' reflection on mortality too is a variation on a theme, for here he declines it in such a way as to emphasize his particular concerns with loyalty within the *hetaireia*. The mythological exemplum is introduced with a warning not to overreach the proper measure of ambition (line 4), and the surprising choice of Sisyphus as a comparandum prompts a combination of associations: he did in fact, 'once having crossed Acheron return to see the sun', but even he ultimately was consigned to the dark underworld and, worse than that, to everlasting torment—and this because of the very wiliness which allowed him to elude death the first time around. So Melanippus is warned to enjoy the present sympotic harmony while he still can because he is alive, but also—implicitly—not to spoil it through his own wiliness. This rich sympotic situation coalesces around that basic sympotic utterance that is the invitation to drink wine. The manner in which it does so can be adapted: this fragment is characteristic of Alcaeus for its particular brand of political engagement, but different pretexts and agendas give rise to different variations.

We see this if we compare a passage of Theognis, where the invitation to drink is again followed by a reflection on the transitoriness of life, but this variation on the theme conjures up a very different political scenario (877–84):

*Ἦβα μοι, φίλε θυμέ· τάχ' αὖ τινες ἄλλοι ἔσονται
ἄνδρες, ἐγὼ δὲ θανὼν γαῖα μέλαιν' ἔσομαι.*

*πῖν' οἶνον, τὸν ἐμοὶ κορυφῆς ἄπο Τηϋγέτοιο
ἄμπελοι ἤνεγκαν, τὰς ἐφύτευσ' ὁ γέρων
οὔρεος ἐν βήρσησι θεοῖσι φίλος Θεότιμος,
ἐκ Πλατανιστοῦντος ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ ἐπάγων.
τοῦ πίνων ἀπὸ μὲν χαλεπὰς σκεδάσεις μελεδῶνας,
θωρηχθεὶς δ' ἔσει πολλὸν ἐλαφρότερος.*

880

Revel in youth, my heart: soon it will be the turn
of other men, when I'll have died and turned into dark dust.

¹⁴ We translate Campbell's more liberally supplemented text: (1982) 250–2.

¹⁵ See Sens' contribution to this volume (Ch. 11).

Drink this wine! It comes to me from vines at the heights of Mount Taygetus;
 An old man, Theotimos, dear to the gods, and pious too,
 planted them on the slopes of the mountain and
 channeled a cool stream from Platanistous.
 Drink the wine then, and shake off any grievous cares;
 once fortified by this wine you'll feel much lighter.

Once more the enjoyment of wine leads the symposiast's persona to reflect on its opposite in death. This is then countered—if we assume continuity between the first couplet and the rest (discussed later on)—by a consideration in keeping with Theognis' different political concerns. The wine comes from his own estate, which is tended by a faithful retainer: all is well in the world of 'Theognis' the landed aristocrat, at least in this poem, though other parts of the Theognidean collection build up a picture of an aristocratic status quo which is under threat from new socio-political developments. Theognis and Alcaeus each offer their variation on the theme of the precariousness of present enjoyment; just as the cup inscriptions were riffing on standard formulations, so these compositions decline a standard utterance for their particular purposes.

Being able to trace this long-term process of variation on a theme built around the zero-grade invitation to drink leads to productive reading strategies even much later in the tradition, when the pragmatics of sympotic discourse have changed in fundamental ways. Asclepiades' epigram 16, composed—whether for performance or not—at a time when the symposion had lost much of its real-life significance, calls into play all the complex associations mentioned above.

Πίν', Ἀσκληπιάδη. τί τὰ δάκρυα ταῦτα; τί πάσχεις;
 οὐδέ μόνον χαλεπή Κύπρις ἐληίσατο,
 οὐδ' ἐπὶ σοὶ μούνωι κατεθήξατο τόξα καὶ ἰούς
 πικρὸς Ἔρωσ. τί ζῶν ἐν σποδιῇ τίθεσαι;
 πίνωμεν Βάκχου ζωρὸν πόμα· δάκτυλος ἄως.
 ἦ πάλι κοιμιστὰν λύχρον ἰδεῖν μένομεν;
 †πίνομεν· οὐ γὰρ ἔρωσ† μετὰ τοι χρόνον οὐκέτι πουλύν,
 χέλιε, τὴν μακρὰν νύκτ' ἀναπαυσόμεθα.

5

Drink, Asclepiades! Why these tears? What's the matter with you?
 You are not the only one who has been despoiled by harsh Cypris,
 you are not the only one against whom sharp Eros has armed himself
 with bow and arrows. Why, still living, do you lie in a heap of ashes?
 Let us drink a stiff drink of Bacchus: dawn is a sliver.
 Are we waiting to see again the lamp that puts us to bed?
 †We drink: Eros is not.† Mark my words: before very long,
 wretch, we shall rest out the long night.¹⁶

¹⁶ 'κατατιθέναι, θεσθαι are so commonly used of laying aside weapons that the ms κατεθήκατο cannot be satisfactorily defended' (Gow and Page, *HE* II p. 127); we have therefore retained the conjecture κατεθήξατο, despite the defence of the transmitted text by Sens (2011) 105.

The key to the vexed question of the identity of the speaker¹⁷ is precisely in the ongoing tradition of elaborating on the zero-grade invitation to drink, a tradition that stemmed from the pragmatic grounding of sympotic discourse but endured beyond the literal truth of its referent. Attempts to identify the speaker purely on internal logic by reducing the opening address to an internal monologue or ascribing it to a *hetairos* do not do justice to the epigram's engagement with the wider poetic and sympotic tradition. When viewed in this light, the opening imperative is absolutely natural. This basic sympotic speech act, whether spoken out loud or embedded in the gesture of handing a cup (with or without a *πίνε* inscription on it), was passed on from one symposiast to his couch-neighbour across the centuries, enriched with the accretion of successive poetic associations up until Asclepiades' time.

Indeed Asclepiades insists on the sense of literary precedent by twice denying that he is *μόνος/μῶνός* (ll. 2, 3) in what is not only a sympotic matter but also a matter for sympotic poetry. This sense of poetic retrospection is reinforced by allusion to Alcaeus' famous fr. 346 V.,¹⁸ and this Alcaic dialogue inevitably brings to mind also fr. 38a V discussed earlier. This is not just an allusion to a 'classic' author, but also a nod to the long-lived practice of quoting that author in symposia, whereby this poetic posing is able to take on an added dimension: in speaking to himself this invitation to drink Asclepiades is accepting the cup, as it were, from an unbroken chain of fellow-symposiasts encompassing the sympotic tradition. Asclepiades' speaker is also the symposiast addressing his couch-mate in words or in gesture, the cup addressing its user, the drinker translating the gesture into words or reading the inscription aloud to himself, and the entirety of this tradition whispering to each symposiast—and poet.

We can further trace this process of continuity in tradition in widening circles, so that if we broaden the focus from the zero-grade sympotic utterance that is the invitation to drink, we find the same mechanism at work in the arrangement of poetic material also. The capping of individual lines that we saw in Nestor's Cup can become a capping chain of poems, replicating textually what must have been the case in practice during performance at a symposium.¹⁹ Thus the elegiac corpus ascribed to Theognis is made up of compositions which can often be seen to follow on from one another, answering each other and occasioning pointed connections, replicating the continuous movement of cup and song from couch to couch. And so the lines of Theognis quoted above might be considered as a unit, but they might also be considered as a couplet followed by a composition of six lines and joined by an

¹⁷ See e.g. Hutchinson (1988) 275–6 and n. 106, Sens (2011) 102–4 with bibliography.

¹⁸ For an allusion to this fragment in Euripides' *Cyclops* see Cazzato's chapter in this volume (Ch. 9, p. 199).

¹⁹ See Liberman's chapter in this volume (Ch. 3).

easy transition; as is well known, the beginnings and ends of poem are frequently a matter of opinion in the *Theognidea*. The way in which the text mimics the performative reality of the symposium is also in evidence in the ordering of the poems, with an initial cluster of songs to the gods standing in place of the prayers recited at the opening of a symposium. The same is true of the collection known as *Carmina convivalia* (Fabbro = *PMG* 884–908), which is preserved by Athenaeus but probably retains much of its original fifth-century shape.²⁰ Like the *Theognidea*, it has a symposium-like structure of divine-themed songs followed by thematically linked secular songs.

We see the pull of sympotic practice shaping the formation of corpora and the processes that led to the canonization of texts on other levels too. The *Carmina convivalia* probably came into being as a performance handbook for the would-be symposiast. A couple of centuries later, in the early third century, the need for a layman's aid arguably lay behind the copying of assorted sympotic poems on a papyrus found at Elephantine (*P.Berol.* inv. 13270 = *PMG* 917, el. adesp. fr. 27 W.).²¹ The papyrus was found together with what seems to be a list of implements for use at banquets or symposia (*P.Eleph.* 5, inventory of an inheritance), suggesting that these objects and the sympotic anthology may have been meant for the same context of use.²²

It is against this background that we must imagine poems being reperformed, appropriated, and absorbed into the mainstream of generic sympotic verse. Alcaeus' fr. 249.6–9 V., with its gnomic warning about the unpredictability of the future, was adapted (and bowdlerized) into *Carm. conv.* 8 (*PMG* 891).²³ Similarly, it has been argued that *Carm. conv.* 4 (*PMG* 887) represents a sympotic reworking of Pindar's fr. 95 Sn.–M., the opening of the *Hymn to Pan*.²⁴

ᾠ Πάν, Ἀρκαδίας μεδέων
καὶ σεμῶν ἀδύτων φύλαξ,
* * *
Ματρὸς μεγάλας ὀπαδέ,

²⁰ On Athenaeus' *skolia* as a *Commersbuch* see Reitzenstein (1893) 13–24 (definition at 13), Wilamowitz (1893a) 316–22 (321), Fabbro (1995) xxv–xxvi, see also xxix, lii–liii. On sympotic collections see Pernigotti and Maltomini (2002); specifically on sympotic anthologies on papyrus, Pordomingo (2013) 155–80; on such documents in the context of reading at the symposium, Del Corso (2005) 114–25.

²¹ On *P.Berol.* inv. 13270 see Pellizer et al. (1983), Ferrari (1988), and Pordomingo (2013) 163–8. Contrary to the *communis opinio* inaugurated by the first editor Wilamowitz (1907) 56–62, Bravo (1997) 43–99 argues that the lyric portion of the papyrus represents a single poem—and a dithyramb, at that—not three; see also Kwapisz (2008) and, in defence of the traditional interpretation, Pernigotti and Maltomini (2002) 67–75.

²² We owe this suggestion to Carla Salvaterra.

²³ See Fabbro (1992), (1995) 120–3, stressing the subtle divergences between the *skolion* and the Alcaic original.

²⁴ Reitzenstein (1893) 16; see further Lehnus (1979) 94–5 and more sceptically Fabbro (1995) 98–9.

Introduction

11

κεμνᾶν Χαρίτων μέλημα
τερπνόν

(fr. 95 Sn.–M.)

O Pan, lord of Arcadia
and guardian of sacred precincts

* * *

attendant of the Sacred mother,
delightful protégé of the holy
Graces

ὦ Πάν, Ἀρκαδίας μεδέων κλεενᾶς,
ὄρχηστᾶ, βρομίαις ὄπαδὲ Νύμφαις,
γελάσειας, ὦ Πάν, ἐπ' ἑμαῖς
εὐφροσι ταῖδ' ἀοιδαῖς κεχαρημένος
(*Carm. conv.* 4)

O Pan, lord of famous Arcadia,
dancer, attendant of the boisterous [*or* Bromian] Nymphs,
may you laugh, o Pan, delighting in
my cheerful songs.

It is uncertain in what sort of context Pindar originally intended this poem to be performed, but it is easy to see how it would lend itself to reuse in the symposion. The *skolion* then prompts recognition of its model and so draws the audience into a knowing conspiracy, this game being underlined by the ostentatious reference to ‘these songs of mine’ in the final distich. In the context of the symposion, an opening invocation to a god has a ritual function, but here it seems to serve a more idiosyncratic purpose in setting the tone for a racy symposion, which is evoked by the image of a laughing Pan with a chorus of appropriately Bacchic-sounding nymphs. A fragment of an early fifth-century krater (Plate 1) shows Pan as a participant in the symposion, a goat playing the double pipes amidst the couches while satyrs dance around him: it is not difficult to imagine what sort of tune he might be setting for these proceedings. Moreover, in a convivial setting the references to *εὐφροσύνη* and *χάρις* in the last line are marked, while the latter also flags the twist on the *skolion*’s hymnic model.

In the Theognidean collection the programmatic statement, the so-called ‘seal elegy’ which follows the poems to the gods and introduces the rest of the compositions, is an authoritative lesson addressed to a younger man, Cynrus. However, the speaker declares that he, in turn, has learned his wisdom from his elders: ‘It is with kind thoughts that I shall give you advice such as I myself, Cynrus, learned from noble men while still a boy’ (27–8). This statement simultaneously authorizes the speaker’s utterances and relativizes his status: anyone who hears him and takes his words to heart can then step into the shoes of ‘Theognis’ and pass on the teachings he has received, in much the

same terms. The reperformance of these couplets thus perpetuates the continuous handing over of wisdom together with the cup, not only between the participants of a symposium but through time from one symposium to the next, amplifying the sympotic community ad infinitum. Thus the format of the symposium becomes a structuring device for Greek *paideia* through the centuries.

We get a glimpse of this process in yet another collection of six short sympotic poems incorporated by the third-century (?) writer Lobon of Argos into his treatise *On Poets* (*SH* 521–6) and preserved individually by Diogenes Laertius.²⁵ Their chief point of interest lies in the fact that each *skolion* is attributed to one of the Seven Sages.²⁶ Despite the misgivings of earlier editors, which led to their unfortunate relegation off most scholars' radar, this series of *skolia* too is likely to be a vestige of a fifth-century collection, subsequently redistributed by Lobon among his subjects' biographies.²⁷ In being unspecific, and therefore eminently reusable, these *skolia* are similar to those of the *Carmina convivalia*; also like them, they are easy to remember and, presumably, to perform.

Lobon's *skolia*—each formulaically presented by Diogenes as one, or as the most celebrated, of the 'things still sung' (*τῶν ἀιδομένων*) of its respective author—consist of gnomic utterances which are naturally ascribed to proverbially wise characters. Plato shows Simonides competing with the Seven Sages and their 'short and memorable utterances', *ρήματα βραχέα αξιομνημόνευτα* (*Protagoras* 343a–b, a passage to which we shall return). The symposium was a prime venue not only for gnomic utterances but also for adopting a speaking persona and rehearsing different identities: compare, for instance, the cup which turns its user into 'Nestor', or the elegy that turns its performer into 'Theognis'. On the one hand, this is intrinsic in reperformance: the symposiast reciting an elegy of Theognis takes up the author's persona and 'becomes' Theognis (a trick most evident in the 'seal elegy', with its explicit reference to the 'words of Theognis' at l. 22), with all the ideological baggage

²⁵ On Lobon and his work see Garulli (2004); on the *skolia* see Pellizer et al. (1981), Garulli (2004) 135–9 (critical text at 173–8).

²⁶ Six *skolia* are cited, rather than the expected seven: either Periander's *skolion* fell victim to an accident of transmission, as was the opinion of Hiller (1878) 519, or perhaps its author's status among the Seven Sages was disputed, as suggested by Garulli (2004) 137–9.

²⁷ A fifth-century date was put forward by Müller (1841) I 342–3 and van Leutsch (1870) 134 and endorsed, among others, by Wilamowitz (1925) 300 and Pellizer et al. (1981) 5 against the opinion of Hiller (1878) 522 and most recently Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (*SH* p. 255), who regard the poems as a Hellenistic product, and of Crönert (1911) 130 and West (1984) 126, who place them in the fourth century. The plausible hypothesis that the poems represent a sympotic prompt-book of sorts is due to Fabbro (1995) xxix, see also Vetta (ed.) (1983) xxxiv–xxxv; Crönert (1911) 130, followed by Garulli (2004) 136, suggests that they originated in a now-lost *Banquet of the Seven Sages* (see further n. 30).

thus implied. In a different vein, Anacreon's persona—no less than his poetry—gave rise to a tradition of 'imitators' that reached throughout antiquity to Byzantium and the modern age. Both traditions betoken the fact that the respective arch-authors were particularly successful personas, not that they were unique for being personas. It is natural, then, to construe *skolia* such as the ones preserved by Lobon as generic sympotic material which allowed symposiasts to assume to some extent the persona of these famous Sages from early times, much as they did when they reperformed 'Solon', one of the Seven whose compositions indeed occasionally got mixed up with the *Theognidea*.

The attribution to the famous sages lends authority to the gnomic sayings, but beyond that, it adds a symbolic layer to their performance: as the cup and the turn to sing went around, a symposiast would assume the mantle of a renowned wise man and claim his place in a hallowed tradition.²⁸ This is not mere play-acting, but a further illustration of the way in which the symposion casts itself as the locus for the performance and transmission of wisdom in explicit connection to an ancient tradition. This is also especially revealing of how the imaginative potential of performative practice in the symposion could with time go on to become a structuring framework for knowledge on a larger scale, as in the development of the tradition of the Seven Sages.

The tradition of the Seven Sages is an early one (though most of our sources are admittedly late), and one with interesting connections to sympotic tradition.²⁹ We find here a contamination of different ways of anchoring wisdom in cultural practice so that the Sages are conceptualized as symposiasts and their dialogues as a sympotic exchange. This is apparent, for instance, in the tradition of the 'meeting of the Seven Sages', which represents the convergence of the Sages in one place of pan-Hellenic relevance and which recurs in several sources from the fourth century onwards.³⁰ In the passage of the *Protagoras* already mentioned (343a–b), Plato locates the meeting in Delphi, where the seven wise men have congregated to dedicate their 'short memorable utterances' as first-fruit offerings to Apollo. The convivial overtones of the Sages' meeting are clearer still in other versions of the story: according to Diogenes Laertius (1.40), an otherwise unknown Archetimus of Syracuse sets it at the court of Cypselus (*FGrHist* 1098 F 1), while Ephorus sets it at that of

²⁸ Cf. Engelbrecht (1882) 99–100.

²⁹ On the Seven Sages see Barkowski in *RE* II/2 (1923) 2242–64, Martin (1993), Busine (2002), and the further works cited in Gagné's chapter in this volume (Ch. 10). Arguing for an early date see esp. Bollansée (1999) and in *FGrHistCont* IVA/1 pp. 112–19, Busine (2002) 37–44, against e.g. West (1984) 126–7, Fehling (1985) 13–18.

³⁰ See Barkowski in *RE* II/2 (1923) 2248–54, Busine (2002) 53–85 (with a handy prospectus at 57).

Croesus (70 F 181). Plutarch's essay on the Banquet of the Seven Sages elaborates on this tradition while also conflating it with the Platonic theme of the sympotic dialogue.³¹

The ascription of *skolia* to the wise men can also be viewed as an alternative to the procedure *epidexia*. According to a folk-etymology ascribed to Dicaearchus, a *skolion* is a song taken up by skilled symposiasts one after the other in a zigzag trajectory.³² In a similar way, Lobon maps the trajectory of his *skolia* onto the pan-Hellenic spread that the Seven Sages represent, in the jagged itinerary that alone can suit a series of formally parallel but disconnected and mutually independent biographies. The poems of the Seven Sages in Lobon's treatise enrich the tradition of their authors' meeting—physical or ideal, explicit or only hinted at by Lobon—with a further sympotic overtone as well as with a performance of the very wisdom that justifies their exalted status; this is a performance that continues well past the Sages' own time, as Lobon's use of the present participle *αἰδομένων* intimates.

In other sources for the tradition of the Seven Sages, a token is passed on from one sage to another to the four corners of Greece; in several versions this token is a cup. As Renaud Gagné illustrates in his contribution to this volume, the travelling cup turns the whole Greek world into a sympotic macrocosm; the circulation of the cup from one wise man to another echoes the orderly circulation of wine as well as poetry and wisdom in the symposium. Thus the sympotic matrix for organizing knowledge is mapped onto the wider Greek world in a manner which inverts the conceit of bringing the Sages into a sympotic gathering as in the various versions of the meeting of the Seven. In Callimachus' version of the story, which he puts in the mouth of Hipponax in the first *Iambos*, once this cup has come full circle it is emblazoned with a dedicatory inscription (ll. 76–7). This dedication can be read as an enactment of the Seven Sages' dedication of their wisdom as an *ἀπαρχή* in *Protagoras* 343a–b (though to a different divinity). At the same time, it brings us back full circle to the playful ownership statements that we have seen on the earliest inscribed cups: each recipient disclaims ownership of the cup but in so doing each also points to the sympotic principle of commonality, just like those earliest inscription on drinking vessels, which subverted ownership formulas and promoted commonality and playfulness.

If it is the dimension of space that is foregrounded in that version of the story, we can see the same principle working itself out diachronically in Simonides' use of another dictum by one of the Seven Sages. In his so-called Scopas ode (*PMG* 542 = fr. 260 Poltera), quoted by Plato (*Protagoras* 339a–347a), Simonides quotes a maxim by the sage Pittacus in order to correct and improve upon it—or to 'cap' it, as it were. Plato's Socrates, in turn, quotes Simonides' poem with the

³¹ On Plutarch's work see Mossman (1997), Busine (2002) 93–102.

³² See Liberman's chapter in this volume (Ch. 3, pp. 51–60).

purpose of discussing whether the maxim is valid or whether it should be ‘capped’ once more. The sympotic procedure is in this way extended beyond the community of those present at one particular gathering to include interlocutors past and future. The exchange of knowledge enacted by the Seven Sages in the story of the ownerless cup which travelled from couch to couch and from city to city across the known world finds a diachronic counterpart in this dialogue among ‘symposiasts’ in successive generations, as they pass on Pittacus’ *skolion*. Each of these new characters, then—Pittacus, Simonides, Protagoras, Socrates, Plato—follows on the previous, building one line of discourse as in an ideal sympotic *catena*.

This ideal *catena* calls into being the next stage of poetic activity: literary criticism. Each poetic restatement incorporates and comments on the earlier one, before correcting it and improving it. This is to all intents and purposes, and in a deeper sense, the sympotic way of ‘doing things with’ poetry. And it is no accident that it is within this ideal sympotic framework that Plato has Socrates give an extended demonstration of practical criticism. As Andrew Ford put it (appropriating a distinguished title), this passage illustrates ‘the function of criticism’, which is, in one important sense, to ensure that poetry is repeated and thus preserved for each new generation to find in it new meaning;³³ this is where sympotic practice and poetic criticism dovetail. And so it is that this global symposion, from the earliest utterances and gestures and inscriptions through poetry and then onto criticism, reaches as far as us and this present volume, only for us in turn now to pass on this *Cup of Song*.

The metaphor of song as wine is one of the most commonly found in sympotic discourse.³⁴ Dionysius Chalcus addresses it to a fellow symposiast with impeccable sympotic demeanour (fr. 1.1–3 W.):

δέχου τήνδε προπινομένην
τὴν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ποιήσιν· ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπιδέξια πέμπω
σοὶ πρῶτῳ, Χαρίτων ἐγκεράσας χάριτας.

³³ Ford (2014); his title alludes to works by Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot, and Northrop Frye.

³⁴ As well as in fr. 1 W. quoted here, Dionysius Chalcus also uses it in fr. 4.1 W. ὕμνουσιν οἰνοχοεῖν ἐπιδέξια σοὶ τε καὶ ἡμῖν, ‘pour a wine-drink of songs to circulate from left to right for you and for us’. Pindar opens *O.* 7 with an elaborate comparison between his song (*νέκταρ χυτόν*, *Μοισᾶν δόσιν*... γλυκὴν καρπὸν φρενός, ‘poured nectar, gift of the Muses... sweet fruit of the mind’, 7–8) and a precious brimming cup gifted to a son-in-law with a toast (1–9); in *O.* 6, the *chorodidaskalos* Aineias is a γλυκὴς κρατῆρ ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοιδᾶν, ‘sweet mixing-bowl of loud-sounding songs’ (91), and in *I.* 5.24–5 a boast is to be blended into the song (ἀοιδᾶι | κιννάμεν) as though it was liquor; at the opening of *I.* 6 the celebration of the victory is likened to the mixing of ‘a second mixing-bowl of the Muses’ songs’ (δεύτερον κρατῆρα Μοισαίων μελέων | κίρναμεν, 2–3), with a third yet to come (7–9). Similarly, *N.* 3 is a πόμ’ ἀοιδίμον, ‘drink of song’, though one made of milk and honey (77–9). See further Athanassaki’s chapter in this volume (Ch. 5). Sympotic discourse is a toast also in the second *skolion* from Elephantine, [ἐ]γκεράσων Χαρίτων κρατῆ[ρ] ἐπιζτ[ε]φέα (...) π[ρ]όπι[ν]ε[]λό[γ]ον (PMG 917(b).1–2).

accept this poem from me as a toast, for I send it circulating from left to right to you first, having measured the mixture of graces and Graces.

A century later the same image is employed to recognize the continuity of the poetic tradition by Posidippus, who refers to his poetic models, including Mimnermus' *Nanno* and Antimachus' *Lyde*, as metaphorical draughts of wine to be poured into the poet's brimming cup (epigram 140 A.-B. = 9 Gow-Page):

*Ναννοῦς καὶ Λύδης ἐπίχει δύο καὶ φιλεράστου
Μιμνέρμου καὶ τοῦ σώφρονος Ἀντιμάχου·
συγκέρασον τὸν πέμπτον ἐμοῦ, τὸν δ' ἕκτον ἐκάστου,
Ἡλιόδωρ', εἶπας ὅστις ἐρῶν ἔτυχεν.
ἕβδομον Ἡσιόδου, τὸν δ' ὄγδοον εἶπον Ὀμήρου,
τὸν δ' ἕνατον Μουσῶν, Μνημοσύνης δέκατον.
μεστὸν ὑπὲρ χεῖλους πίομαι, Κύπρι. τὰλλα δ', Ἔρωτες,
νήφειν οἴνωθέντ' οὐχὶ λίην ἄχαρι.*

5

Pour two measures of Nanno and Lyde and then Mimnermus
fond of Eros and wise Antimachus:
mix in a fifth measure—that is mine—and the sixth,
Heliodorus, you shall say that it belongs to every one who has happened to
be in love.
The seventh call it Hesiod's and the eighth Homer's,
the ninth the Muses' and the tenth Mnemosyne's.
I shall drink each cup full to the brim, Cypris. As for the rest, Cupids,
to be sober having drunk heavily is not an inelegant fate.

We too are aware of following in a long and rich tradition of sympotic scholarship. This volume arose from a fittingly convivial conference in which several generations of sympotic scholars mingled, including two of the participants of that first Oxford 'symposium on the symposium' to which this event followed suit.³⁵ The scholarly sympotic tradition, then, continues to repeat the pattern of the ancient tradition. It remains only for us now in turn to toast the reader and send around this *Cup of Song*—let it be *τὸν φίλον ποινά*.

³⁵ See Murray (ed.) (1990).