

BOOK REVIEW

Simonides Lyricus: Essays on the 'Other' Classical Choral Lyric Poet. Edited by PETER AGÓCS AND LUCIA PRAUSCELLO. Cambridge Classical Journal Supplements Book 42. Cambridge, UK: The Cambridge Philological Society, 2020. Pp. xi + 285. Hardback, \$60.00. ISBN: 9781913701062.

This conference volume, although all the papers are excellent, is a bit odd. The conference, as the introduction helpfully explains, was conceived in 2011 as a response to the publication of Poltera's edition and commentary for the lyric fragments and David Sider's edition of the elegies and epigrams, then planned, now published. The melic poetry has received more attention recently, especially thanks to Richard Rawles' 2018 *Simonides the Poet: Intertextuality and Reception* (Cambridge), and this book is only in part about the melic poetry. The volume helpfully displays various approaches, but the papers do not engage with each other.

The first section addresses transmission and authorship. An essay by Ucciardello provides, first, a survey of all possible Simonidean fragments among the adespota. This very useful information would have been best provided as some kind of wiki, generally available and easily edited to include new publications. The second part is a case study of P. Strass. inv. 1406–9. It demonstrates that the fragment is not lyric poetry at all, but from an anonymous prose work of perhaps the late 2nd century CE called *The Life and Maxims of Secundus the Silent Philosopher*. D'Alessio then offers a fine discussion of the hypochoreme and fr. *107 M=Simonides 255 Poltera—but D'Alessio thinks that the likeliest author is Pratinus. So we begin with not-Simonides and probably-not-Simonides.

In the second section, "Genres and Contexts of Performance, Patronage, and Reception," Poltera argues for dating Simonides later, because there is no real evidence for his activity before 500. The chapter shows very clearly how up-to-date Simonides' style is for the early 5th century. Then Sider proposes that the boundaries dividing melic from elegy and elegy from epigram were not as rigid as we often think—because elegies could include epigrams (imagined inscriptions), bits of elegies could be transmitted as epigrams, and lyric could include invective.

Carey considers the *thrēnoi*, a genre for which Simonides was celebrated, especially for their pathos, although very little remains. Carey contrasts Simonidean lament with Pindar's (there is no sign of Pindaric consolatory eschatology), and uses funeral orations as a way to see some of the available ways to make the death of individuals meaningful in wider contexts. Rutherford looks at PMG 537 = 301 Polterra, which attributes to Simonides' *kateuchai* (a mysterious and debated category) a narrative about how the Achaeans recruited the daughters of Anius from Delos to provide food at Troy. Rutherford analyzes evidence for Athenian interest in Delos and Anius (and considers it plausible that the poem was commissioned by Pisistratus, so he has evidently not been convinced by Polterra). Finally, recent discussions of the Persian War poetry have considered how Simonides balances praise of one polis with that of the entire alliance. Morgan deftly addresses the related problem of balancing praise of leaders with that of the army as a whole and shows how carefully Simonides seems to have balanced individual and collective.

The final section concerns the early reception of Simonides. Ford asks why Simonides rather than other possible candidates among the poets had such a reputation for wisdom. He makes the interesting suggestion that sophists especially admired his care with language and his versatility over genres. I wonder, also, whether the diplomatic skill discussed by Morgan may have been a factor, along with the apparently low salience of erotic themes in his poetry. He may even have been useful as a foil by someone like Protagoras because the fathers of his young students (who must have paid the fees) would have admired him, so that it was useful to assimilate this new education to the old, while the young men could believe that sophistic education was an obvious improvement.

Hunter's paper on the Scopas ode (PMG 542 = 260 Polterra) is difficult to summarize. One subsection deals with Socrates' critical method and the function of the Seven Sages in its structure (with the comment that there are seven active participants in the conversation at Callias' house in *Protagoras*). The second deals with debates about with the poem's (reconstructed) structure. At the conclusion, though, Hunter points to how Socrates assumes that the opening of the poem of Simonides activates the memory of the saying of Pittacus and his saying, creating its imagined agonistic context. A third subsection deals with similar themes in the ode and the *Theognidea*, Theognis at *Meno* 95c9–96a5, and how rarely Theognis appears in Plato, while an appendix considers a possible allusion to the Scopas ode at Pind. *Isth.* 2.6–11 (I did not find this persuasive). Finally, Athanassaki considers how Protagoras in Plato's dialogue is assimilated to Simonides by being portrayed as a *chorodidaskalos*. It also discusses Simonides as an advisor in

Xenophon's *Hieron*, where the poet suggests that the tyrant use choral competition as a model for civic organization generally, delegating and making himself only the giver of prizes and thereby popular. Athanassaki discusses the economics of this proposal; she has treated Xenophon's intentions more fully in a 2015 paper called "ΩΣΠΙΕΡ ΤΟΙΣ ΧΟΡΟΙΣ: Choral Competition as a Model of Government in Xenophon's *Hieron*" (available online).

All the contributions are stimulating and thoughtful, even at their most speculative.

RUTH SCODEL

University of Michigan/UC Davis, rscodel@umich.edu

Peter Agocs and Lucia Prauscello, Introduction: *Simonides Lyricus: A Proem*

Part I. *Simonides's Songs: Transmission and Authorship*

1. Giuseppe Ucciardello, More *Simonides* among the fragmenta lyrica adespota? A survey of the Fragments and a Case Study: P. Strass. inv. 1406-9
2. Giambattista D'Alessio, Dancing with the Dogs: Mimetic Dance and the Hyporcheme (on Pindar fr. *107 M = *Simonides* 255 Poltera)

Part II. Genres and Contexts of Performance, Patronage and Reception

3. Orlando Poltera, *Simonides: A Kind of Janus? Biographical Tradition and Poetical Reality*
4. David Sider, *Simonides lyricus elegiacus epigrammaticus*
5. Chris Carey, *Maestius lacrimis Simonideis: The thr-ēnoi of Simonides*
6. Ian Rutherford, *Simonides, Anius and Athens: PMG 537 = 301 Poltera (Ka-teukhai)*
7. Kathryn Morgan, *Kings and Generals: Simonides and the Diplomacy of Victory*

Part III. *Simonides σοφός: The Early Reception and the Creation of a Poet-Philosopher?*

8. Andrew Ford, *The Wisdom of Simonides: σοφός καὶ θεῖος ἀνὴρ*

9. Richard Hunter, 'Clever about Verses?' Plato and the 'Scopas Ode' (PMG 542 = 260 Poltera)
10. Lucia Athanassaki, Simonides in Athens: Memories of Choral Agonistic Excellence in Plato's Protagoras, Xenophon's Hieron and the 'Simonidean' Epigrams XXVII and XXVIII FGE