

## TWO EPIGRAMS BY MELEAGER

Passages which have puzzled scholars are shown to be sound and indeed pointed, when the epigrams are seen in the context of their genre.

*A.P.* V 172 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4136ff).

Ὅρθρε, τί μοι, δυσέραστε, ταχὺς περὶ κοῖτον ἐπέστις,  
 ἄρτι φίλας Δημοῦς χρωτὶ χλαιομένῳ;  
 Εἴθε πάλιν στρέψας ταχινὸν δρόμον Ἔσπερος εἴης,  
 ὥς γλυκὺ φῶς βάλλων εἰς ἐμὲ πικρότατον.  
 Ἦδη γάρ καὶ πρόσθεν ἐπ' Ἀλκμήνην Διὸς ἦλθες  
 ἀντίος· οὐκ ἄδαῃς ἔσσι παλινδρομῆς.

The epigram takes the form of an aubade, a genre well represented in Hellenistic poetry: cf. *A.P.* V 3 (= Gow-Page, *Garl. Phil.* 109ff, Antip. Thess.), V 173 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4142ff), XII 114 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4390ff), 137 (= *ibid.*, 4636ff) all by Meleager, V 223 (Macedonius)<sup>1</sup>. It begins with the conventional abuse of dawn or its harbingers by the lover who is unsatisfied and wishes to remain longer with the object of his passion, cf. eg. XII 137.1 ὄρθρο-βόας, δυσέρωτι· κακάγγελε, V 3.3 ὀρνίθων ἔρροις φθονερώτατος, Ovid., *Am.* I 13.9 *quo properas, ingrata uiris, ingrata puellis?* (to Aurora). Such an address is accompanied by a request for an extension of the night as here at line 3. Cf. Sappho 197 L.-P. (= Liban., *Or.* XII 99): εἰ οὖν Σαπφῶ τὴν Λεσβίαν οὐδὲν ἐκώλυσεν εὖξασθαι νύκτα αὐτῇ γενέσθαι

<sup>1</sup> The genre has been traced back to Sappho: examples from Classical literature are listed in A. T. Hatto, *Eos: an Enquiry into the Theme of Lovers' Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*, London, The Hague, Paris, 1965. For Greek examples see the discussion of J. H. Mozley, p. 255ff, for Latin J. Lockwood, p. 271ff.

διπλασίαν...<sup>1</sup>. The request is sometimes justified by the case of Zeus: cf. in this epigram lines 5f, a passage imitated by Ovid., *loc. cit.*, lines 45f:

ipse deum genitor, ne te tam saepe uideret,  
commisit noctes in sua uota duas<sup>2</sup>.

So far Meleager is employing traditional motifs. However, at line 2 he achieves a variation in that he admits that he has not spent the whole night with Demo; the key words are ἄρτι... χλιανομένῳ. The present participle χλιανομένῳ and the word ἄρτι emphasize the fact that the poet has not been in bed long: only now is he warming himself on the girl's body. Normally the lover spends the whole night with his beloved, arriving in the evening: cf. Hesiod, *Scut. Herc.* 46 (of Amphitryon)

παννύχιος δ' ἄρ' ἔλεκτο σὺν αἰδοίῃ παρακοίτι  
τερπόμενος δώροισι πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης.

Philodemus, *A.P.* XI 30.2 ἐκ πρώτης νυκτὸς ἐς ἥλιον, Prop. II 22.23 *tota nocte*, Paulus Silent. *A.P.* V 283.2 πάννυχον, also Meleager *A.P.* VI 162.2: (λύχνον) Κύπρι... μύστην σῶν... παννυχίδων. Love-making begins with the appearance of Hesperos, as in the epithalamion<sup>3</sup>; cf. line 3 and Meleager *A.P.* XII 114 (= Gow-Page *Hell. Epigr.* 439of):

Ἡοῦς ἄγγελε, χαῖρε, Φαεσφόρε, καὶ ταχύς ἔλθοις  
Ἑσπερος, ἦν ἀπάγεις, λάθριος αὔθις ἄγων.

The motif is reversed by Paulus Silentarius, *loc. cit.*, 1-4, where the girl cries because the evening star is also the morning star which will separate the lovers:

Δάκρυά μοι σπένδουσιν ἐπήρατον οἰκτρὰ Θεανῶ  
εἶχον ὑπὲρ λέκτρων πάννυχον ἡμετέρων·  
ἐξότε γὰρ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀνέδραμεν Ἑσπερος ἀστήρ,  
μέμφετο μελλούσης ἄγγελον ἡριπόλης.

<sup>1</sup> Mozley, *art. cit.*, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Further examples are cited by Brandt, *ad loc.*; cf. Beckby *ad A.P.* V, 172.5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Viansino, Paolo Silenziario, *Epigrammi*, Torino, 1963, p. 139.



Meleager has not arrived at the accustomed hour, since he is ἄρτι χλιαινομένῳ, not 'eben erst erwarmt' (Beckby), but as Waltz correctly translates 'quand je commençais à me réchauffer à la chair de Demo'. The use of the present participle puzzled Graefe, who remarked<sup>1</sup>, «pro χλιαινομένῳ expectes potius χλιηναμένῳ»<sup>2</sup> but it is deliberate. Meleager is in the same position as Propertius, who did not come to Cynthia until after the symposium, Prop. I 3.9f:

ebria cum multo traherem uestigia Baccho  
et quaterent sera nocte facem pueri.

That this is much later than usual is made plain by the words of Cynthia, lines 35ff:

tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto  
alterius clausis expulit e foribus?  
Namque ubi longa meae consumpsti tempora noctis  
languidus exactis, ei mihi, sideribus?

Meleager has varied the motif of the lover's prayer to the dawn. Usually the lover asks for a double night, twice as much time with the beloved, as in the passages quoted above (p. 83). Meleager however asks Orthros to return as Hesperos not so that he may have a double night, but in order to have a single one. His love for Demo is not particularly great; he blames the morning star although his unsatisfied desire is the result simply of his own late arrival.

At line 4 ὥς of the manuscripts was emended to ὧ by Gruter, whose emendation has been accepted by subsequent editors. However the text is sound, as I shall show. The star's light is described as γλυκὺ... πικρότατον, an epithet which specifically associates it with love, as Meleager employs γλυκύπικρος of love and its attributes, but in no other context: V 163.3f (= Gow-Page, *ib.* 4250f) γλυκὺ καὶ δυσόιστον /

<sup>1</sup> Meleagri Gadareni Epigrammata..., Leipzig, 1811, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> For χλιαίνεσθαι of the lover at night cf. Mel. *A.P.* V 165.2ff (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4255ff): ναὶ λίτομαι, κώμων σύμπλανε, πότνια Νύξ· / εἴ τις ὑπὸ χλαίνῃ βεβλημένος 'Ηλιοδώρας / θάλπεται, ὑπναπάτῃ χρωτὶ χλιαινόμενος; 151.6 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4170) of the mosquitoes (νυκτὸς κνώδαλα διπτέρυγα) which attack Zenophila: καὶ θήρες ἀτεγκτοὶ / τέρπονται τρυφερῷ χρωτὶ χλιαινόμενοι. It is also used of the poet's ψυχὴ Warming itself on the image of a beautiful boy seen in a dream διὰ νυκτὸς: XII, 125.8 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4635) εἰδώλοισ κάλλευσ κωφὰ χλιαινόμενη.

πικρόν... κέντρον Ἔρωτος, XII 109.3 (= Gow-Page, *ibid.* 4310) τὸ γλυκύπικρον Ἔρωτος... βέλος<sup>1</sup>. Therefore the bittersweet light which shines upon Meleager is not that of the day, but that of the only time when he can make love, namely the night. It is the light not of the morning star, but of Hesperos, and line 4 must refer to the light shed by the star when it turns into Hesperos, as the poet prays in line 3. Cf. Meleager *A.P.* XII 114, Paulus Silentiarius V 283 quoted above (p. 84) and Bion XI 1 Ἔσπερε, τὰς ἐρατὰς χρύσειον φάος Ἀφρογενείας. Gruter's ὦ γλυκὺ φῶς βάλλων εἰς ἐμὲ πικρότατον, i. e. «ὦ toi qui verses une douce lumière, pour moi si amère» (Waltz) referring to the present activity of Orthros, is not appropriate<sup>2</sup>. The reading of the manuscripts ὥς is confirmed by *A.P.* V 173. As Waltz (*ad. loc.*) says, «cette pièce est la contre-partie de la précédente». Meleager, ousted by a rival, has reversed the opening motif: he now grumbles at the morning star because it is slow to appear. Note lines 3-4:

ἀλλ' ὅτε τὰν ῥαδινὰν κόλποις ἔχον ὥκυσ ἐπέστης,  
ὥς βάλλων ἐπ' ἐμοὶ φῶς ἐπιχαιρέκακον.

«You rose quickly, as one casting on me a light that gloated over my misfortune.» This is a clear allusion to the poet's prayer at V 172.3-4: «May you turn back your swift course and be Hesperos, as one casting on me a bittersweet light», the light of evening when one can begin to make love. For ὥς with present participle in the sense «als einer der», «utpote qui» see Kühner-Gerth II, p. 90ff; cf. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1971, s. u. ὥς III 1.b: «ὥς mit Ptz. gibt den Grund für eine Handlungsweise an, als einer der, deshalb weil...».

Line 5 has caused difficulty to scholars, who have been unable to account for ἐπ' Ἀλκμήνην. Reiske's conjecture ἐπ' Ἀλκμήνην was accepted by Jacobs, Dübner, Paton and Waltz, the latter rendering it «chez Alcmène»<sup>3</sup>. Beckby takes ἐπ' Ἀλκμήνην Διός together in the sense «bei Kronions Alkmene», translating ἀντίος «der eignen Laufbahn entgegen». Gow-Page, who wish to preserve the reading of the manuscripts, correctly point out that «Ἀλκμήνη Διός is an awkward phrase in this

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also *A.P.* XII 154.4 (= Gow-Page, *ibid.* 4561): οἶδε τὸ πικρόν Ἔρωτος συγκέρασαι μέλιτι, V 177.3 (= Gow-Page, *ibid.* 4192), al. γλυκύδακρυς of Eros, Posidippus *A.P.* V 134.4 (= Gow-Page, *ibid.* 3057) ὁ γλυκύπικρος Ἔρωτος.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Beckby, «du, der sein süßes Licht, ach, mir so bitter entbeut».

<sup>3</sup> See the discussion of Gow-Page *ad. loc.* (line 4140).



context, for its normal meaning would be 'Alcmena daughter of Zeus'<sup>1</sup>, but they are puzzled by ἀντίος: (*ibid.*) «The normal sense of ἦλθες ἀντίος, 'you came to meet' is the reverse of what the context demands which is 'went in the opposite direction', or 'backwards'». The words Διὸς... ἀντίος can only mean 'face to face with Zeus', 'opposite Zeus'; cf. eg. Hom., *Il.* XI 231 Ἀγαμέμνωνος ἀντίον ἦλθεν, V 301 ὃς τις τοῦ γ' ἀντίος ἔλθοι, VII 98 εἰ μή τις Δαναῶν... Ἐκτορος ἀντίος εἰσιν. Meleager, who likes to use Homerisms<sup>2</sup>, has employed the genitive with ἀντίος, which in Homer is more frequent than the dative, although the latter predominates in post-Homeric authors<sup>3</sup>. Ἐπ' Ἀλκμήνην is perfectly sound and is to be taken with ἦλθες: 'you came head-on towards Zeus as far as Alcmena'. It is necessary to bear in mind here the ancient amatory σχήματα. Meleager imagines Zeus and Alcmena in the position favoured by the Greeks<sup>4</sup>. The star, rising from behind Alcmena, comes to overhang her (ἐπ' Ἀλκμήνην) thus facing Zeus (ἀντίος). The word ἀντίος makes it clear that the star cannot have risen behind Zeus, because in that case he would not have seen it. Since it rose behind Alcmena, he saw it and immediately sent it back. We can now see that there is a parallel between lines 1 and 5. In the first line Orthros has come as far as Meleager's bed: περὶ κοῖτον ἐπέστης. In line 5 Meleager reminds him that in the past he went as far as Alcmena. In a standard topos of prayer<sup>5</sup>, the poet asks the morning star to repeat an action performed before. On the earlier occasion the star turned back at the point where it had reached the lovers: line 6

οὐκ ἄδαῆς ἔσσι παλινδρομῆς,

which Waltz<sup>6</sup> correctly understood to imply, «Zeus a bien su te faire reculer, et ainsi tu en as l'habitude». Παλινδρομῆς is an echo of πάλιν

<sup>1</sup> The passage in Herodotus, IV 205 Φερσίμη ἡ Βάττου, which K.-G. (II, 1.334 β) quote in support of the sense 'wife of' is dubious: see eg. Macan, Howells *ad loc.* The only other instance quoted by K.-G. (Ἐκτορος Ἀνδρομάχη) appears to occur solely at Virgil, *Aen.* III, 319 where it accords with normal Latin usage.

<sup>2</sup> See Radinger, *Meleagros von Gadara*, Innsbruck, 1895, p. 62f.

<sup>3</sup> *LSJ* s. u. ἀντίος 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hans Licht, *Sittengeschichte Griechenlands*, Ergänzungsband, Zürich, 1928, pp. 41, 53, 168-9, al. On the Romans see D. W. T. Vessey, *Liverpool Class. Monthly*, 1976, p. 39f. For information on this point I am indebted to Prof. G. Giangrande.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. eg. Hom. *Il.* V 115, Soph., *O.T.* 165 quoted by Kroll *ad Catull*, 34.23.

<sup>6</sup> P. 84, n. 1.

στρέψας... δρόμον in line 3. Since Meleager has alluded to the star's retreat before Zeus in line 6, there is no need to seek such an allusion also in line 5 where it would be superfluous and would destroy the point of the epigram. Gow-Page want to find in line 5 the sense 'you went backwards to Zeus's Alcmena', but this is wholly inappropriate. The day-star comes to lovers, who then demand that it go back from them<sup>1</sup>, as at Musaeus 288 πολλάκις ἡρήσαντο μεθελκόμεν ἐς δύσιν Ἡῶ where Giangrande<sup>2</sup> has shown that «Hero and Leandros... pray that they may be able to draw the Sun backwards, i. e. back where it is coming from».

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Meleager A.P. XII 137.1-4 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Epigr.* 4636-9).

Ὁρθροβόας, δυσέρωτι κακάγγελε, νῦν, τρισάλαστε,  
 ἐννύχιος κράζεις πλευροτυπῇ κέλαδον  
 γαῦρος ὑπὲρ κοίτας, ὅτι μοι βραχὺ τοῦτ' ἔτι νυκτὸς  
 καὶ τὸ φιλεῖν, ἐπ' ἐμαῖς δ' ἀδὺ γελᾷς ὀδύναις.

The meaning of ὑπὲρ κοίτας (line 3) has been the subject of dispute: Gow-Page (*ad loc.*) understand it as referring to «the poet's bed, not (as Paton takes it) the cock's». Beckby, like Paton, takes it to refer to the latter, translating «auf der Stange». However, neither of these meanings is relevant to the genre of the aubade, which Meleager is employing. κοίτας here has the sense 'Beischlaf'<sup>3</sup> as for example at Eurip., *Alc.* 249, *Ep. Rom.* 13.13 κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις. The cock is topically lecherous in ancient literature: cf. eg. Aristotle, *G.A.* 749b τὰ τε ἄρρενα αὐτῶν ὀχευτικά, *H. A.* 488b.4 καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀφροδισιαστικά, οἷον τὸ τῶν περδίκων καὶ ἀλεκτρυσίνων γένος, Colum. VIII 11.9 *masculus pauo gallinaceam salacitatem habet, atque ideo quinque feminas desiderat*<sup>4</sup>. Cf. in Meleager A.P. VII 428.15 of a cock carved on a stele as a symbol of Antipater of Sidon: ὄρνις δ', ὅτι γεγωνὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ που περὶ Κύπριν / πρῶτος...

<sup>1</sup> Παλινδρομία is a technical term: cf. Diog. Laert. VII, 152 τῇ παλινδρομίᾳ τοῦ ἡλίου ἀφ' ἡμῶν.

<sup>2</sup> *Quaderni Urbinati* 9, 1970, p. 145, *ibid.*, notes 2 and 3.

<sup>3</sup> Bauer, *op. cit.*, s. u. κοίτη 2.

<sup>4</sup> D'A. W. Thompson, *Glossary of Greek Birds*, Hildesheim, 1966, p. 34 with further examples; cf. also *Thes. Ling. Gr.* s. u. ἀλέκτωρ, ἀλεκτρυσινωδής.



The words γαῦρος ὑπὲρ κοίτας therefore mean 'arrogant about his mating'. 'Υπὲρ in this sense is frequent<sup>1</sup>; cf. especially its use of boasting, eg. *Ep. Cor.* II 12.5 ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου καυχῆσομαι ὑπὲρ δ' ἑμαυτοῦ οὐ καυχῆσομαι, *ibid.* 9.3 (καύχημα), 7.4 (καύχησις), *Ep. Thess.* II 1.4 (ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι). The hostility of dawn and its harbingers towards the lover is, as we have seen<sup>2</sup>, an essential ingredient of the aubade. Here the cock is *schadenfroh* because Meleager has so little time left for love, while for the cock mating is shortly to begin. Whereas in Greek poetry men can only make love at night<sup>3</sup>, the cock mates in the daytime.

I had already reached this conclusion when I found in Graefe<sup>4</sup> that it had been seen by Meineke. It was however rejected by Graefe (and by all subsequent editors) on the grounds that «si hoc poeta uoluisset, post κοίτην copulam ponere debuisset». On the contrary, for generic reasons this is the only sense possible<sup>5</sup>. The copula καί is not necessary: ὑπὲρ gives the reason for the bird's attitude.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kühner-Gerth I, p. 487, «dem gewöhnlicheren περί c. gen. sehr nahe-kommend»; Bauer, s. u. l. f. περί is a frequent variant.

<sup>2</sup> P. 83.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 100f.

<sup>5</sup> For the same reason it is unnecessary to emend δτι to δτε as did Hermann, who is followed by Gow-Page. A further reason put forward by Graefe is that at *A.P.* IX 286 (Marcus Argent.). 2, κοίτης refers to the poet's bed. However, although Marcus Argentarius is imitating our epigram, he has achieved a variation by combining with the abuse of the bird the motif of the departure of Eros. In line 1f Πύρρης / εἰδωλον κοίτης ᾤχετ' ἀποπτάμενον he is alluding not to *A.P.* XII 137.3 but to *A.P.* V 177.2 ("Ερως) ὀρθινὸς ἐκ κοίτας ᾤχετ' ἀποπτάμενος.