An Interpretation of Simonides 4 (Diehl)

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An incomplete poem is easily misinterpreted. Without the overall context as a guide, one is liable to miss the precise contribution which the extant fragments originally made to the total pattern of the poem. As we have it now, Simonides' famous poem to Scopas (4 Diehl) [1] must be classed as a large fragment. Few commentators are agreed on its exact meaning and significance:

> . . . the interpretation of this poem has excited so many different solutions that we must admit that the critics have been singularly unsuccessful at least in finding agreement with each other . . . so great a divergence of opinion is disturbing in a poem whose words and syntax are far from difficult.[2]

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the poem are to Diehl's text in his *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*, Vol. II (Leipzig 1925). References to other authors most frequently cited in this essay are to the following editions: Theognis, Diehl (Leipzig 1949); Pindar, Turyn (Krakow 1948); Bacchylides, Snell (Leipzig 1949). Also cited is D. L. **Page**, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962).

[2] C. M. Bowra, "Simonides and Scopas," *CP* 29 (1934) 230. The following works will be referred to hereafter by the author's name alone: F. G. **Schneidewin**, *Simonides Cei Carminum Reliquiae* (Brunswig 1935) x–xvi and 15–22; T. **Bergk**, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*, Pars III (Leipzig 1882) 384–89; G. S. **Farnell**, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (London 1891) 197–218; H. W. **Smyth**, *Greek Melic Poets* (London 1900) 309–17; H. **Jurenka**, "Des Simonides Siegeslied auf Skopas in Platons Protagoras," *Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien* 57 (1906) 865–75; U. von **Wilamowitz-Moellendorff**, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 159–91; J. and A. M. **Adam**, *Platonis Protagoras* (Cambridge 1921) 194–200; H. D. **Verdam**, "De Carmine Simonideo, quod interpretatur Plato in Protagora Dialogo," *Mnemosyne* n.s. 56 (1928) 299–310; C. M. **Bowra**, "Simonides and Scopas," *CP* 29 (1934) 230–39, and *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 1961) 326–36; G. **Christ**, *Simonidesstudien* (Freiburg 1941) 13–26; H. **Gundert**, "Die Simonides-Interpretation in Platons Protagoras," *EPMHNEIA: Festschrift Otto Regenbogen* (Heidelberg 1952) 71–93; L. **Woodbury**, "Simonides on ἀρετή," *TAPA* 84 (1953) 135–63; B. **Gentili**, "Studi su Simonide," *Maia* 16 (1964) 278–306. Further discussions will be found in: K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn 1916) 130–32; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (New York 1951) 396–403; A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford 1960) 165–68 and 355–59; W. J. H. F. Kegel, *Simonides* (Groningen 1962) 6–27.

Actually, in view of the fragmentary nature of the piece, such divergence of opinion is not altogether surprising. Simonides' poem is cast in the form of a string of general statements which, perhaps misleadingly, have no specific reference to any known situation. However, there is some reason to believe that a reference to Scopas himself may have occurred in the poem, and I believe that the poet was in any case consoling Scopas, either explicitly or implicitly, for some specific disappointment about which we know nothing. A comparison between the phraseology of this poem and the basic language regularly used by writers of *consolationes* may help us to restore some of the original implications of Simonides' poem.

A growing number of scholars, while sceptical about Plato's particular analysis of the poem in the *Protagoras*, agree that its philosophical implications are primary. I shall argue that an important distinction must be drawn between the *original* significance of the poem and the interpretations to which it was later subjected by the philosophers. A poet writing to praise or console a wealthy patron might well attempt to reassure him by appealing to a familiar ethic, rather than run the risk of distracting him by advancing an unusual or original philosophical argument. He must convince his audience of the truth of his assertions, since the art of praise or consolation is in large part the art of persuasion, δόξα πεισίμβροτος (Bacchyl. 9.1–2); and the aphorisms of popular morality lend credibility to his stance.[3] In short I believe that Simonides, on some unknown occasion of disappointment or failure, attempted to console his patron in the traditional manner, by assuring him that no man on earth is perfect. To support his point, he appealed to the incontrovertible lessons of human experience. At the same time, he was able to insist on Scopas' praiseworthiness by underlining the natural advantages of his birth, his sense of civic responsibility, and his laudable adherence to the mean.

I shall begin my examination of the elusive meaning of Simonides' poem by discussing briefly the history of critical thought on the subject. Then I shall add my own thoughts to the debate, in my analysis first of the individual cruxes within the poem and subsequently of the poem's overall significance as a

[3] Cf. Aristot. *Rhet.* 1395b15.

consolatory piece. Lastly, I shall suggest by way of an appendix that the *Protagoras* as a whole affords a number of interesting and hitherto neglected clues as to the text at the start of the final stanza.

It would seem to be in order to begin with a brief discussion of some of the widely divergent interpretations advanced by others, to indicate how perilous are the reefs of our ignorance when we embark on analyses of fragmented poems.

External evidence for the meaning of Simonides' poem is meagre and at best inconclusive. While Socrates' discussion in the *Protagoras* has its own serious purpose, there are clear indications that he is in part parodying the critical techniques of such sophists as Hippias and Prodicus, and at the same time chiding Protagoras for his ignorance of their methods.[4] Snippets elsewhere of historical and biographical evidence about Simonides indicate only perilously circumstantial links with the poem in the *Protagoras*.[5] As a result of various interpretations of such tenuous evidence the poem has been seen among other things as an epinician ode, a consolation for a heinous but unavoidable crime, an indication of the poet's lack of moral sincerity, and a regrettable case of distortion for the sake of money. Such interpretations are a far cry from the later picture of Simonides as a seeker of truth, and of the poem in question as a landmark in the history of ideas. In the main, critics have been most severely divided on the question of the poem's philosophical implications. We can illustrate the extent of this divergence by noting briefly the conclusions arrived at by two eminent scholars, Schneidewin and Wilamowitz.

In 1885 Schneidewin linked our fragment to an anecdote of Cicero (*De Or.* 2.86.352), and explained the situation as follows.[6] The Thessalians hated the cruel tyrant, Scopas, and were determined to destroy his family but to save Simonides, the popular and sweet-tempered poet—confirmation for Scopas' cruel disposition being found in another anecdote from Eresius, in Athenaeus 10.438c (=*FHG* 2.298). The poem was written to

[4] Adam, 194, refers to Plato's "perverse exposition of the meaning of this particular poem." For other examinations of the Platonic analysis, see: Gundert, 71–74; Verdam, 306; Woodbury, 141–50.

[5] See, for example, the questionable assumptions made by J. Deuschle, *Platons Protagoras* (Leipzig 1871) 19–21; also, Farnell, 199, 203; Smyth, 303, 305; Adam, 200.

[6] Schneidewin, xv–xvi and 21–22.

celebrate Scopas' victory in a chariot-race, but the poet was constrained to include a vindication of some crime committed by his patron and to console him for his all-too-human weakness. Wilamowitz in his study of 1913[7] takes his cue from the discussion of wisdom in Plato, yet at the same time warns us against listening too seriously to Plato's analysis. Since in Wilamowitz's view Simonides was not a mere flatterer, we must suppose that Scopas was tolerant enough to invite a theoretical discussion on the nature of *aretê*; and that the poem is, as Blass first suggested, a *skolion*, employed here as a medium for higher thought. Wilamowitz gleans what he can from excerpts of pre-Simonidean thought in order to evaluate the meaning of *aretê* for an aristocratic society. He finds this meaning still expressed in traditional form in Pindar's odes, which testify to continuing belief in inborn skill dependent on birth—men are born and must remain either *agathoi* or *kakoi*. Scopas therefore could expect a traditional compliment from his bard. But Simonides, believing in an inner ethic independent of birth, had the courage of his convictions to the point of telling his patron the truth: that is, that *aretê* is a purely *moral* ideal. In so doing he refutes Pittacus, who had entertained the old belief that *aretê* is to be equated with success, and that such success was difficult but possible. In Simonides' view the truly blameless man cannot exist.

Clearly a considerable gulf separates Schneidewin's interpretation of the setting and purpose of the poem from that suggested by Wilamowitz. In its general outline the latter's position has formed the basis of most subsequent scholarship on the subject, and the philosophical possibilities of Simonides' poem have now become the favourite source of inquiry.[8] While it is conceivable that his poem may be the most articulate and artful expression of an ethical and moral stance peculiar to late sixth-century Greece, it still would not necessarily follow that the expression of such a

[7] Wilamowitz's first study appeared in 1898 (*NGG* 1898) and was reprinted with revisions in *Sappho und Simonides* (1913) 159–191. Jurenka questioned many of Wilamowitz's assumptions in his article of 1906, but is largely ignored in *Sappho und Simonides*.

[8] B. Lavagnini, *Aglaia* (Turin 1932) 222, n. 2, says of the poem: "Non poesia, ma dialectica. Simonides qui precurre i Sofisti." Salutary comments on the philosopher's approach to literary criticism are to be found in F. Will, "A Book and a Problem," *Arion* 1.4 (1962) 93–94; and on "philosophical" wisdom generally in Greek archaic poetry, see Woodbury, 137–38.

viewpoint constituted the poem's primary *raison d'être*. In an attempt to justify the poem solely on its intellectual merits, certain extravagant claims have been made as to the poet's philosophical stance, claims which can be sustained only with considerable difficulty, if at all. Bowra remarks: "The situation of the poem is clear. Scopas has asked Simonides for his opinion of the saying of Pittacus . . . and the poem is Simonides' answer to him."[9] Snell is of the opinion that Simonides here tries to get round sixth-century disillusionment with human potential by advising mild resignation, and adds: "This is characteristic of his own personality, but is not to be found in any other poet of the time."[10] Yet the occasion of the poem must remain in the realm of pure speculation; and our meagre scraps of the poetry of Simonides and his contemporaries justify few confident statements as to the personality or individual views of these poets (hence the strangely variegated assortment of the views which have been advanced).

The conventional language in which the concepts of the poem are couched scarcely supports the belief that the poet intended to establish an unusual ethical position. For example, that the achievement of *aretê* is difficult recalls passages in Hesiod (*Op.* 286–92),[11] Theognis (336), and Bacchylides (1.181). In his terminology of the "four-square" man Simonides is using old language, whether the original words be Pythagoras' or Pittacus'.[12] If Simonides' salient point is that to be good (or perfect) is impossible, we must note that the acceptance of human imperfection had led poets before Simonides to propound a modest ideal of *aretê*. For example, Theognis (to beg the whole question of the *Theognidea*) had urged that one avoid grandiose hopes of perfection (ἀρετὴν . . . ἔξοχος εἶναι, 129–30; and cf. 335–36, 615–16, and 1177–78, passages which sound suspiciously gnomic). Human imperfections are often justified by a comparison between man's

[9] Bowra (1934) 234.

[10] B. Snell, *Poetry and Society* (Bloomington 1961) 52.

[11] Woodbury, 153–54, relates this passage to another fragment of Simonides' (Page, 74). But Simonides' fragment here is prefaced obtrusively with the statement that this passage records a *logos*. We know nothing of the context in which this elaboration of the *logos* (if elaboration it be) appeared. Our source, Clement of Alexandria, was interested only in the *sententia* itself, and in its useful corroboration of his own religious thinking centuries later. The fragment tells us little or nothing about Simonides' personal attitude—not even whether he agreed with the *logos*!

[12] See Bowra (1934) 232; Woodbury, 139, n.8. For the all-pervasive excellence that extends to a man's actions and thoughts cf. *Il.* 15.642–43, and Pind. *Pyth.* 10.24–25.

debility and the superiority of the gods, a dichotomy as old as Homer (cf. *Od.* 1.267, 16.211–12; *Il.* 24.525–26), and one used frequently in *consolationes* from every period. Simonides devotes six lines (13–18) to the impossibility of finding the blameless man. The emphatic use of the first person here and the strongly negative tone which the poet employs have led some critics to construe these lines as a forcefully expressed personal opinion and significant for that very reason. Yet the kind of language employed in the passage under scrutiny recurs again and again in archaic and post-archaic passages,[13] as writer after writer abjures the pursuit of the impossible (cf. Semon. 1.6–7; Theog. 415–16; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.59–62; Soph. *Ant.* 90–92). To reject the impossible or undesirable with such vigour certainly is indicative of a specific outlook, but it is an outlook shared by a whole people. For this reason, it can be employed with effect in the literary traditions of that people for all sorts of *rhetorical* reasons, without necessarily implying a significantly personal attitude on the part of any particular author. Again, we shall see a little later that such disclaimers are recurrent topics in the *consolatio* genre. And when Simonides insists that he is no fault-finder (26–27, and 22—if that line is authentic), it is unwise to assume that "Simonides fears that he may be misunderstood, and that his new standards be thought too exacting and too difficult to follow."[14] The similar claims made by the encomiast Pindar in such passages as *Olym.* 6.19 and *Pyth.* 2.52–53 suggest that this is another traditional motif, and one particularly useful, for obvious reasons, to the *laudator* and *consolator*.

Much has been made of Simonides' assertion that the man who does nothing wrong willingly (20) is a fit object of praise, and it has even been suggested that there is something new in the poet's distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts. Yet as early as the *Odyssey* (22.351–56) Phemius defends himself against the charge of singing for the suitors on the grounds that he did not do this willingly (ἑκών), but under the constraint of necessity (ἀνάγκη). Telemachus supports his case, and calls him innocent—ἀναίτιος. Dracon's code took some cognizance of a distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts, as all criminal codes must. Are we to think that it was more than a hundred years

[13] See Woodbury's discerning comments, 159, n. 60.
[14] Bowra (1961) 333.

after Dracon before a man of Simonides' perception and honesty could introduce the same idea to those born in the tradition of Homeric *aretê*? This theory is possible, but most unlikely, and certainly unnecessary. The aristocratic Theognis had acknowledged the power of circumstance, to which man can fall an unwilling prey (388–92, 649), and the same poet sang that the man who died before sinning, albeit of necessity, was truly blessed (1013–15). Such phrases can be rhetorically and poetically useful without being philosophically original.

I shall consider two final claims as representative of the kinds of interpretation which have been forced upon Simonides' poem. First, Bowra sees in the words "best are those whom the gods love" (11–12) the moral that traditional aristocratic tests of virtue are wrong.[15] Yet this concept is at least as old as Homer (cf. *Il.* 2.668, 5.61, 10.245, 20.334; *Od.* 10.2: compare 10.74). To be hated by the gods shows in your acts, or even in the acts of those associated with you (as *Od.* 10.73–75). To be loved by the gods (or by a particular deity) can account for a specific skill or a superior quality. After Homer, to be loved by the gods can signify the highest form of *aretê* (cf. Theog. 653–54, a passage expressing a limited ideal). The concept is used at least once in a strongly encomiastic context by Bacchylides (4.18–20), a passage which asserts that it is *because* Hieron is dear to the gods that he receives a share of good things; for Hieron is a prince. In other contexts the expression is used as a consolatory topic, usually in the form of divine endearment bestowed on those whose earthly toils are ended: in this sense it is a late recompense for lack of success and unhappiness in life (cf. Onomacritus [?], *P.Oxy.* 2075, 8; Pind. *Olym.* 2.28–29). If Simonides is thus praising Scopas after this fashion, then he would appear to be conferring a traditional compliment upon, and perhaps reassuring, one who would count himself "beloved of the gods" by virtue at least of his birth and rank.

Secondly, Simonides' description of the healthy man as one who "knows justice which makes the city prosper" (24–25) has been understood variously. Woodbury reminds us of Solon's precedent for the notion of *dikê* as a good for the city, and adds: "It is true that the vogue of the poem at Athens may well have

[15] Bowra (1961) 330.

prepared the way for the advance of democracy. Nevertheless, his (sc. Simonides') idea is not necessarily democratic, since his good citizens need not be in the majority."[16] Again, we must distinguish between the poet's intention and later interpretations of this intention. There is no good reason to believe that Simonides has anything to say about *citizens* in this passage. The poet's words could refer as easily to a tyrant who administers justice to his subjects (cf. Hes. *Op.* 225–27) as to the citizen of a democratic or oligarchic community. Indeed, an autocratic patron enjoyed hearing his services to the *polis* honoured. And as we shall see a little later, Pindar acknowledges, in language closely reminiscent of Simonides', the concern of the tyrant Theron for his city. Even if Simonides' poem was understood later as support for a more egalitarian political system, this would be no proof that originally it was ever intended as such.

One historical fact of which we can be certain is that Simonides was employed by the Thessalian princes, probably regularly, to compose encomia and dirges on their behalf.[17] We shall now examine the possibility that our poem is a commissioned *consolatio*, and that the poet is using familiar motifs, primarily for their rhetorical value.[18] In the following pages I shall first examine some of the more crucial problems of interpretation, including the connexion between the openings of stanzas one and two. Then I shall isolate the consolatory topics which the poet seems to have employed. Lastly, I shall discuss the problem of the text at the start of the final strophe.

The most crucial question is whether Simonides contradicts himself (as Protagoras insisted) by saying in the first stanza that it is difficult (but presumably possible) for a man to be good, and then asserting in the second stanza that only a god may have this prerogative; or whether the opening three lines are Pittacus' dictum, recapitulated in line 6. Before we can attempt to

[16] Woodbury, 161–62, n. 70.

[17] See Theoc. 16.34, and the scholiast's note on this passage.

[18] Indeed, the remarkable parallel in language and concepts between this poem and fragment 541 (Page) should be noted: it is unlikely that the two poems are directly related to one another, but their similarities do suggest that both rely on a common pattern of conventions. C. M. Bowra, "Simonides or Bacchylides?" *Hermes* 91 (1963) 257–67, questions a common authorship for the two poems, on the grounds that they express moral and ethical views that are "ultimately irreconcilable" (259)—an argument which disregards the claims of rhetoric and genre.

answer this question, we must ask whether *agathos* (1) and *esthlos* (7) are synonymous adjectives or have significantly different connotations; and whether or not *genesthai* (1) and *emmenai* (6) are synonymous verbs.

First of all, it is extremely unlikely that a distinction is being drawn between *agathos* and *esthlos*. *Esthlos* had been used as a synonym for *agathos* as early as the *Odyssey* (cf. *Od.* 15.91; and cf. such passages as Hes. *Op.* 119, 295, 634). While it is true that the adjective is used personally by Theognis to describe a political class, it is interchanged with *agathos* at 57, 355–57, and 1109–13. Not even Prodicus, that master of word-splitting, attempted to distinguish between the two adjectives.

Secondly, although Socrates saves Simonides from an apparent contradiction by translating *genesthai* as "become" and *emmenai* as "be," Wilamowitz and others can allow no difference of meaning between the two verbs in this poem. If one believes that Socrates indulges here in some casuistry at the expense of Hippias and Prodicus, one may argue that Protagoras' interpretation is the more commonsensical, since the two verbs are interchangeable in certain contexts (though probably less frequently than is generally suspected). However, Woodbury has persuasively illustrated some of the major difficulties which arise if one treats them as synonymous in the context of Simonides' poem.[19] Two possible means of defending the apparent contradiction should be mentioned here. One might argue that the words "only a god could have this prerogative" mean, not that only a god may be perfect, but that only a god could have the prerogative of conferring the state of goodness upon a man. It would follow from this interpretation that it *is* possible for a man to be good. The sequence of thought would then be: it is difficult to be perfect; but Pittacus is wrong when he says that it is difficult to be good, since the gods can make a man either good or bad (within human limitations). The first objection to this interpretation is that the words "only a god could have this prerogative" seem to understand a repetition of the verb "to be" (from line 6) rather than a new verb "to make." The second objection is that *theos* and *anêr* appear to be juxtaposed in highly conventional and emphatic antithesis. And

[19] Woodbury, 140–41. See, too, Woodbury's comments (*Phoenix* 17 [1963] 227–28) in his review of the 1961 edition of Bowra's *Greek Lyric Poetry*.

thirdly—although of course this in itself is far from decisive—Aristotle does not interpret the words thus (*Metaph.* 982B29). On the other hand, one might defend the contradiction as rhetorically acceptable, and see a legitimate development from "It is difficult to be good" to "No, it is not merely difficult, but impossible." Such an interpretation, too, is fraught with grave and obvious difficulties.

Later critics who agree with Socrates in seeing a difference between *genesthai* and *emmenai* usually quote Pindar's γενοῖο οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών (*Pyth.* 2.72) to substantiate their claim that the verbs may be used distinctively. We should examine Pindar's passage a little more closely. The difference in meaning here between *genesthai* and *emmenai* is rather stronger than merely the distinction between "become" and "be." The first verb means "show what you are," and the sense of the injunction is: "learn your true nature and then act accordingly"—since in this aristocratic context "being" (the god-given potential at birth) and "proving oneself" (the full realization of this potential) are part of the same agonistic process. The phrase *agathon genesthai* often implies the demonstration of bravery in battle (as Hdt. 224.1; Plat. *Lach.* 179B2;[20] and cf. the meaning of *agathos* in Sim. 531 [Page] 6). Jurenka goes so far as to assert that in Simonides' passage *agathon genesthai* means "to win a particular victory"[21]—in this sense the aorist would be used with its usual force of describing the occurrence of an act (and cf. Anacr. 357 [Page] 9–10)—whereas *esthlon emmenai* would imply continuing success. While Jurenka may be too specific in his interpretation, there is reason to believe that some sort of distinction along these lines can be supported. Pindar's words at *Pyth.* 10.21–24 parallel closely, in both terminology and concept, the kind of distinction that Simonides appears to be making:

θεὸς εἴη
ἀπήμων κέαρ· εὐδαίμων δὲ καὶ ὑμνητὸς οὗτος ἀνὴρ γίνεται σοφοῖς,
ὅς ἂν χερσὶν ἢ ποδῶν ἀρετᾷ κρατήσαις
τὰ μέγιστ' ἀέθλων ἔλῃ τόλμᾳ τε καὶ σθένει.

We observe the carefully drawn dichotomy between the lot of the *theos* characterized by the verb to *be*, and the lot of the *anêr*,

[20] Cf. Sim. 519 fr. 80 (Page), where the correct reading may well be ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ γενέσθαι (especially in view of στεφάνων in the previous line).

[21] Jurenka, 866. See also Christ, 18.

described by the verb to *become*. The praiseworthy man here is one who has won a victory (the occasional aorist is used, recalling Simonides' *praxas* in 4.10) through the excellence of *hand*, *foot*, and *mind* (*tolma* being the mental and spiritual daring which must complement the more physical attributes of the aspiring victor). Elsewhere in Pindar (*Olym.* 1.97–100) we learn that although victory can bring a lasting honey-sweet calm after the toils of competition, the highest good for mortals is the best that can occur from day to day. This sobering reflection leads Pindar to hope that even Hieron may not be abandoned by the divinity who is now concerned with his affairs.

If, then, we grant the agonistic nature of Simonides' passage at this point, it is perfectly credible that a distinction is being drawn between the momentary demonstration of *aretê* on specific occasions, which certainly falls within the compass of human achievement, and a permanent (or at least continuing) condition of perfection which can be the happy state only of the gods.[22] There is also the reasonable possibility that the rest of the first stanza developed a little further this momentariness of human achievement. Plato's words at *Protag.* 344B8 may even be a paraphrase of at least part of the content of these lines.

[22] It must be emphasized that any distinction between *gignesthai* and *emmenai* is contingent in this poem (as elsewhere) upon context. Had we the missing lines of the first stanza we might be forced to reconsider our interpretation. In our present (and probably permanent) state of ignorance as to the concluding thoughts of the first stanza, we can do no more than hypothesize; and I believe that fewer inconsistencies emerge if we suppose that lines 1 and 6 express different concepts (particularly in view of Pindar's analogous passage at *Pyth.* 10.21–24). If a distinction between the thought of these lines truly is tenable, then probably it is not so much a simple difference between *genesthai* and *emmenai* as an antithesis dependent upon the quasi-technical meaning of *agathon genesthai*. For this reason, it is not mandatory that any sharp difference between *genesthai* in line 1 and *emmenai* in line 6 be maintained throughout the poem—unless it is similarly defined by context. For example, *kakon emmenai* in line 8 contrasts with *esthlon emmenai* in line 6: yet the aorist tenses which follow (*kathelêi* and *praxas*) seem to indicate a context of momentary achievement (I take lines 7 through 11 to imply that definitions of what a man *is* must, in fact, be restricted to the impermanency of what he does or to what happens to him from time to time: those are best, therefore, who are the most fortunate—those whom the gods love). The more one tries to force the language of this poem into a rigidly consistent philological and philosophical mold, the more difficult it becomes to rescue Simonides from intellectual imprecision. The poet's essential point emerges clearly enough: namely, that *aretê* (or being good) for mortals is confined to the realm of achievement or good luck, since mortals are ever at the mercy of unpredictable circumstances. Many of the problems dissolve if one is prepared to give Simonides credit for the apposite rhetorical flourish.

Before considering the possibility that the particular form which this dichotomy takes here points to a consolatory purpose behind the poem, we should consider one final crux, and say something about Simonides' "race of fools." Lines 27–28 may mean (as Socrates supposed): "I will not blame the average man . . . for the world is full of *fools* who merit censure"; or, "*I* will not blame the average man . . . for there are many misguided people who would." It is tantalizingly difficult to pin down the precise meaning of this sentence in isolation. That *êlithioi* should refer to a host of deluded poets is rendered a little more difficult by the conjunctive "for," where one might perhaps expect "although."[23] However, most frequently in archaic poetry the class of "others" depicted as a body of culpable men is contrasted with the *poet* and his enlightened audience (i.e. other potential critics) rather than with his *subject.* Against the inadequate judgments of lesser minds the poet pits his own claims to truth, and thus establishes credentials for his claims. Often the difference is emphasized through the dichotomy of a single "I" and the undifferentiated "many" (cf. Hecat., *FGrH* 1, F 1a).[24] In encomiastic poetry this kind of credential takes many forms, yet in all cases the poet points up his superiority to those who fail through an act of omission or through erroneous evaluations to do full justice to the object of their praise (or those who are deceived by such evaluations). Early in his *Third Pythian* (19–25), a deeply consolatory ode, Pindar castigates the vain ends pursued by Koronis, and refers to the whole class of foolish men (*phylon mataiotaton*, 21) who behave similarly: in part, at least, this reprehension prepares the ground for the poet's own confessed inability to do more for his patron than to pray for him (61–78), a confession which takes cognizance of reality. In *Nemean* 7.20–30, Pindar announces his belief (substantiated by an emphatic *egô*) that Homer's skill misled men into overestimating Odysseus' worth at the expense of Ajax: those who were so misled constitute the *greater host of men*, and their hearts are blind. Briefer distinctions between the enlightened poet or author and the "others" of misguided opinions are found in such passages as Plutarch *Ad. Ap.*

[23] Yet *gar* here, as often, might introduce a particular reason for the speaker's last statement: "I say this, because . . .". On this usage, see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford 1934) 60, III (1).

[24] See Woodbury, 148, n. 26.

102c17 and Cicero *Tusc.* 3.12. The "fools" may be represented by a single poet (e.g. Archilochus[25] in Pind. *Pyth.* 2.52–56) or by sundry references to the *nêpioi* (cf. Simon. 29 Diehl), the *margoi* (Pind. *Olym.* 2.105–108), the crows (Pind. *Olym.* 2.94–95). Finally, it should be noted that such asseverations, for obvious reasons, occur frequently where *phthonos* or *mômos* is at issue (cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.52–53; *Nem.* 7.61–65, 8.36–39; Bacchyl. 13.199–209). Simonides has just disclaimed any intent to blame the less than perfect man, and he must discredit those who would urge a different course.

We are now in a position to take a larger view of the poem as a whole. Jurenka argued that Simonides' poem was part of an epinician ode, and that the language points to a relativistic ethic suitable to the demands of that agonistic genre. At least we may agree that the poet does praise an ideal, in the words "I praise and love all who willingly do no wrong." It is interesting that the verb *phileô* is coupled here to a specific verb of praising, since Pindar sometimes addresses his patrons as *philoi*, "friends" (cf. *Pyth.* 1.92, 4.1, 10.66; *Nem.* 3.73). The delineation of the perfect man at the start of Simonides' poem recalls directly the description of the Homeric warrior (*Il.* 15.642–43), and similar terminology recurs in agonistic passages[26] (cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 10.23). The phrase *eu prattein* also is found in agonistic contexts (cf. Pind. *Olym.* 11.4).[27] Simonides' description of his ideal man as one who understands "justice which makes the city prosper" reminds one of the occasions on which Pindar praises his patrons for their services to the *polis*: in particular we note that in the *Second Olympian* Theron is described as *ξένων ὀπὶ δίκαιον*[28] and *ὀρθόπολιν*

[25] Attacks on fools in general or on other (usually deceased) poets help to substantiate the author's own argument. In the case of past poets, he may appeal to or reject their authority. Pindar invokes the authority of Homer at *Pyth.* 4.227 (cf. Plut. *Ad.Ap.* 104D), of Hesiod at *Isth.* 6.63 (cf. Bacchyl. 5.191). Yet he implies at *Nem.* 7.20–30 that Homer abused his *sophia* and distorted the truth. The chorus in the *Medea* (420–30) assail the falsehoods of the old poets in order to validate their own "new" truth, the praiseworthiness of women. Simonides' scorn of fools and his attack on Pittacus would seem to be analogous, in this case an attempt to bolster his praise of the average. The subject of the credentials of the *laudator* is definitively examined by E. L. Bundy, in his *Studia Pindarica II* (Berkeley 1962) 60, n. 66.

[26] See Bowra (1934) 232. [27] And see Jurenka, 866.

[28] The text here is disputed. But Theron is being praised for his comprehensive generosity to his own citizens and to strangers—a conventional polarity clearly demonstrated at the opening of *Olym.* 13. Theron is (1) *orthopolis* and (2) *dikaios* to strangers: *opis* must refer to Theron's conduct toward visitors, so that readings other than *opi dikaion* (acc.) give the wrong sense.

(6–7; and cf. 102–105). Simonides eschews carping criticism, and clearly such criticism has no place with the poet whose task it is to praise. In his *Second Pythian* Pindar remarks that gluttonous abuse is useless as well as highly inappropriate for the eulogist (52–56). He reinforces his point with a "vain pursuit" formula (58–61), as does Simonides. In this way he prepares his positive and climactic assertion, namely that he will *praise*, not blame, Hieron (62–63). So too would Simonides' rejection of obloquy prepare the ground for his actual praise.

Granted that Simonides' voice is, in part at least, the voice of a *laudator*, we must still ask why the tone of the eulogy is so subdued. In the words of one critic, "it is difficult to believe that the poet who found mules a possible, if uncongenial, subject for an epinician (19D), could not have found more to praise in even the most unpromising tyrant."[29] The problem may be alleviated if we can discover good reasons to suspect that our poem is primarily paramythetic, and that the ideal of a modest concept of *aretê* is dictated by the circumstances under which the poem was commissioned. Of these external circumstances we know nothing. Yet the language and concepts of the poem betray sufficient affinities with other formal *consolationes* for us to consider seriously whether it is not itself a *consolatio*.

It is impossible to prove that Simonides' fragment is any sort of *consolatio*, but there are a number of points in favour of this hypothesis which cannot be ignored. It is interesting that the scholiast interprets *symphora* at Pind. *Pyth.* 8.91 as agonistic defeat.[30] Certainly, the connotations of failure or disappointment are present in this passage, and Simonides' *amêchanos symphora* (4.9) may well be analogous (and cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 458). In general terms, the peculiar tact required by the would-be comforter is common to all spheres of human disappointment. Praise and consolation frequently are linked: in formal *consolationes* on the occasion of death, consolation is directed toward the living, and it is the dead man on whom praise is bestowed; when a *laudandus* must be consoled for some disappointment, then praise and consolation must converge on the same recipient. Praising the man who still lives is much the more exacting and unenviable task (cf. the words of Pericles at Thuc. 2.45.1). The encomiast who would

[29] Woodbury, 160, n. 162. See Gentili's discussion of the poem's genre, 295–96.
[30] See Jurenka, 866.

praise a man to his face, even for the highest achievements, is confronted by the added difficulty of soothing jealous thoughts in the breasts of his listeners. And if Simonides has to praise a prince who has fallen short, by little or much, of the level of achievement expected of him, then he must seek to comfort his patron and at the same time assure him that, despite his shortcomings, he remains praiseworthy. Disappointment must at all times be treated by the *consolator* with so sympathetic and delicate a touch that the average attainments of the *consolandus* are made to sound the most desirable ends—and indeed the highest of which mortal man is capable.

We must begin by examining some of the regular topics of the *consolatio* genre,[31] and attempt to define the possible extent of their relevance to Simonides' poem. The first major *consolatio* in western literature is Achilles' address to Priam in the *Iliad* (24.518–51). This passage is not eulogistic, but remains informative for our present discussion. Achilles urges the old man Priam to cease lamenting for the death of his son, since such lamentation can accomplish nothing (*οὐ γάρ τις πρῆξις*, 524): we recall Simonides' insistence on the inappropriateness of the vain search, the *ἄπρακτος ἐλπίς* (14). Achilles backs up his injunction with a maxim which asserts the different conditions of gods and men (525–26), a dichotomy which Simonides, too, was careful to stress (7–8). The young warrior then reminds Priam that Zeus has *mixed* the gifts of fate (*ἀμμείξας*, 529), and that the man who has a mingled portion of what is *kakon* and what is *esthlon* is a fortunate man, to be contrasted with the man whose condition is entirely hopeless, the man whom neither men nor the gods love (*οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος*, 533). Priam, however, is to be compared to the man of higher fortune, with whom Fate deals more equitably. We note here that Achilles makes no mention of human perfection, and we recall Simonides' claim that all things are good with which base things are not *mixed*, and that best of all are *those whom the gods love*. Achilles adduces the example of his own father to illustrate the truth of what he says, and thus assures Priam that he is not unique—a most important topic in most *consolationes*. Achilles then turns directly to Priam's own case,

[31] See, above all, R. Kassell, *Untersuchungen zur griechischen und römischen Konsolationsliteratur* = *Zetemata* 18 (Munich 1958). And see Kassell's bibliography, xi–xii, for other studies of the *consolatio*.

and finally sums up by reiterating his injunction that one should not attempt vain pursuits (550).

Homer's passage established the basic conventions of the *consolatio* for centuries to come. We observe the following points. First, the *consolandus* is comforted by the reminder that he is not a god, and therefore cannot expect to enjoy superhuman privileges (cf. Theog. 1031–34, Eur. *Fr.* 1057 N.; Dem. *De Cor.* 289). He must, then, endure with resignation whatever befalls him, while at the same time he will be comforted by the reassurance that the lot of mankind is universal.[32] Simonides too urges that the provinces of human and divine action are strictly separate; and insistence on the universality of his ideal is a marked feature of his poem, in the generic categorization of lines 9, 12, 20, 23, and in the comprehensiveness of "any man" (10), "all we who enjoy the fruits of earth" (16–17), "all things" (29). By its very nature, this assurance creates its own modified level of praiseworthiness. For the *consolandus* must still be made to feel that at the least he has done all that a mere mortal can do—however high or low this level shall be is determined by the tact apposite to the needs of the occasion. It is at least possible that this is the reason for Simonides' emphatic assertion that man is not god; that men are naturally imperfect; that to search for the blameless man is to act upon groundless hopes; that he, the *laudator*, is no faultfinder; and that the praiseworthy ideal must needs be a moderate one.

Secondly, we observe Homer's insistence on the need to bend one's mind to what is practical, and not waste one's time on profitless pursuits. Theognis, recommending patience as a palliative for sorrow, urges the wastefulness of concern for the wrong thing (1031–32). This recommendation is paramythetic and admonitory. Simonides' asseveration, suiting the circumstances, would seem to be paramythetic and encomiastic. Behind this kind of advice lies a further expression of the limit of human expectation. Thirdly, misfortune is man's constant and concrete reminder of the variability of Fortune's gifts. In this context one must seek an optimum code of conduct. For Achilles, the preferable lot is a mingling of *kakon* and *esthlon* (cf. *Od.* 15.488–89; Hes. *Op.* 179). Priam was guilty of no moral failure, just as

[32] Cf. Cicero's discussion of this consolatory topic at *Tusc.* 3.60.

Simonides' *kakos anêr* bows to irresistible fate rather than to his own moral turpitude. In such circumstances, both the highest and the lowest are to be eschewed.[33]

Simonides leaves us in no doubt that he is speaking, in part at least, with the voice of a *laudator*. Turning now to Pindar, we will find it informative to see how another encomiast, a younger contemporary of Simonides, handles the *consolatio* motifs within the framework of a formal eulogy. In the *Eleventh Nemean*, Pindar must attempt to alleviate the discomfort engendered by his patron's inability to attain the highest standard of success. The occasion is the celebration of Aristagoras' election to a term as *prytanis* of Tenedos. The disquieting fact with which the encomiast must grapple is his subject's failure, despite triumphs at home, even to be entered for the mighty contests at Delphi, Olympia, Nemea, and the Isthmus. This is a serious gap in Aristagoras' record, serious enough for Pindar to devote lines 22–32 to an attempt to explain away this shortcoming. He suggests, in mild rebuke, that his parents mistrusted their son's ability; for certainly he would have heaped up honours had not his parents been so diffident. In itself, however, this claim falls short of being adequate solace. It is interesting to note that earlier in the poem (13–16) Pindar had linked all men through the most powerful and embracing of their common sorts—ultimate death. This warning of *memento mori* attenuates the importance of athletic prowess, so that Aristagoras' lack of achievement may be felt the less keenly. When Pindar has exhausted what positive praise is at his disposal, he concludes his ode with eleven lines of a completely non-specific nature. Remembering the predominantly general tone of Simonides' fourth fragment, we realize that the *gnomê* in itself expresses a universal truth. It removes the accent from one man, and merges him into the background of all mankind. In this way, by introducing a note of caution into even the praise of real and substantial achievements, the *laudator* can further praise his man by congratulating him on adhering to the mean, avoiding the perilous heights of greatness, and on surpassing narrowly, but by an all-important margin, the moderate feats attainable by all men. Again, tact demands that a man not

[33] Cf. Stob. 4.4 p. 969 H.; Plut. *Ad. Ap.* 102D. In the latter passage, Plutarch rejects excessive grief, since it is a bar to what is desirable. Like Simonides, Plutarch here delineates his modest ideal in generic terms (102E4–7).

be praised *directly* for being average. Let it be remembered, then, that the *Eleventh Nemean* was an ode sung at a public gathering, convoked to honour Aristagoras. He must, therefore, be in the minds of all throughout its performance. These closing lines are highly relevant to his praise. Praise, in fact, is built upon the foundation of consolation, the two components being skilfully interjoined. Pindar praises by subtle indirection: the *aretê* of a stock varies from generation to generation; like the changing seasons of the fields and forests, so is the lot of *man* (42–43). Zeus gives no clear sign to mortals. Yet we live in hope, and we *can* attain an ideal—the *mean*. And, inevitably in the insistence in such passages upon the dangers inherent in misdirected pursuits, the keenest forms of madness are those engendered by desires turned to unattainable ends (44–48). In view, therefore, of the plethora in Simonides' fragment of topics which are particularly appropriate in consolatory contexts, it is difficult to believe that the poem is other than consolatory.[34]

We may with propriety at this point examine the generally accepted practice in recent times of categorizing our poem as a *skolion*. Relatively few accredited *skolia* survive, but enough for us to draw some conclusion as to their form and content. Simonides does not seem to have been noted by any ancient commentator for *skolia* as such, although *Att. Skol.* 7 (Page 890) is attributed to him by some critics. Athenaeus (15.694c1–3) records that the *Attic Skolia* were drinking songs memorable for

[34] One should mention also the passage in the *Iliad* (5.381–415) where a peeved Aphrodite is consoled for her ludicrous defeat at the hands of Diomedes. The passage starts with a formula typical of the apparatus of the *consolatio*, but since a goddess is being consoled, there is an amusing twist: "Endure, my child—for *many of us who dwell* on Olympus have suffered at the hands of mortals." (For the first person plural here cf. Simonides ὅσοι . . . αἰνύμεθα, 4.16–17; cf. also Pindar's *Third Pythian* 59–60: this whole ode is consolatory, and displays many affinities with Simonides' poem.) Not the least interesting feature of Homer's passage is the progression from πολλοί (383) to σοί (405): I believe that πάντας in Simonides (4.19) prepares the way for a specific or implied reference to Scopas. An interesting parallel is to be found in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, 433–81, where most of the recurrent topics of the *consolatio* are used. In particular, Aphrodite, sexual passion, is to the nurse's mind the very essence of a *symphora amêchanos* (cf. 433, 438, 443, 458, 476). Phaedra's *symphora* is a condition which affects all men, *we who dwell on earth* (450; cf. Sim. 4.16–17). The nurse appeals to wise principles (465–66), where Simonides rejects the wisdom of the *sophos anêr*, to substantiate the value of a modest ideal of conduct in a world where perfection is impossible. Phaedra, being *mortal* (472, 474–75), should accept as the highest ideal a preponderance of good (*chrêsta*) over ill (*kaka*); and on this modest basis she may fare well (*eu prattein*, 472).

their useful admonitions and advice; and the scholiast to Aristophanes, *Aves* 1239, mentions a number of gnomic introductions to *skolia*, of a kind reminiscent of such gnomic wisdom as one finds in Hesiod and Theognis (and cf. the scholia to Plato, *Gorgias* 415E). *Attic Skolion* 10, a simple song of praise to Harmodius, demonstrates that the *skolion* could be the vehicle for eulogy. And in general the spirit of the *skolion* seems to be that of the casual after-dinner song of inconsiderable depth. Simonides' fragment could well be a *skolion* of more serious intent (cf. Pind. Fr. 130, which the poet himself describes as a *skolion* in line 11); certainly the metre supports the possibility, as does the somewhat gnomic nature of the poem's moralizing. It is most probable that Simonides' poem to Scopas was a more intimate affair than the full-blown epinician would be.

To sum up: We need not suppose that the poem itself means all that Plato claims it to mean, and it is certainly not unusual for Plato to overstress the moral implications of literary pieces. Yet I believe that his basic distinction between "being" and "becoming" is present at the beginning of the poem, although once again Plato has Socrates distort the real implications of what Simonides says, on this occasion by ignoring the agonistic context in which the verbs *genesthai* and *emmenai* occur. As I read it, Simonides begins with the assertion that perfect achievement is difficult, and probably went on to spell out in more detail the momentariness of human excellence. Then he dismisses the possibility of continuing excellence by noting that only the gods can be good in any permanent sense. What a *man* "is" depends upon his circumstances, and he is restricted to specific acts of failure or success which define his temporary status. Best, therefore, are those whom the gods love (that is, who are lucky in their birth and, from time to time, in their fortunes). For this reason, any search for the blameless man would be a waste of time. If a man does no wrong within the limits of his free choice, he is most praiseworthy; for not even the gods fight against unavoidable circumstances. The ideal man, then, is he who is neither bad nor overly useless, but who understands how to administer justice so that his city may prosper. It would be the mark of a fool to blame a man like this, for the mean is always best.

It is doubtful that the poet has established any original philosophical position in this poem, or ever intended to—the more so if

I am correct in seeing the poem as a consolation for Scopas of Thessaly. However, Simonides' poem would seem to enshrine in the most elegant and memorable form a concept of man's real potential which, despite the innate frailties of his nature and the necessary limitations of his hopes, made sense in the late archaic world of Greece with its dynamic upheavals, abrupt disappointments, and quite glorious achievements.

Appendix

As an appendix to the foregoing discussion, I would like to consider the text at the start of the fourth stanza (Diehl). It is doubtful that the poem was originally longer than the four stanzas into which it now seems to fall. Protagoras was willing to recite the whole thing (339B4), which he might have been less likely to do had the poem been considerably longer; and when Socrates says, "Let us go over the poem's general outline and intent" (344B3), the implication is that at least part of every stanza is included in his analysis. Assuming, then, that the poem is reasonably complete and that Diehl lists the stanzas in their correct order, our major textual problems are the large omission after line 3 of the first stanza, and uncertainty as to the opening three lines of the final stanza. I have suggested earlier that in the first stanza Simonides probably developed his concept of the momentariness of specific agonistic achievement. Apart from this or other related guesses, we can say little about the content of these missing lines. As to the opening of the final stanza, however, we may have good reason to feel dissatisfied with both phrases used by Plato with reference (one assumes) to its content—*οὔκ εἰμι φιλόμωμος* and *ἔμοιγ' ἐξαρκεῖ*; and there is a possible clue to the real content of these lines which we shall now examine for what it is worth.

Bergk[35] assumed that these two phrases are actually Plato's paraphrases and therefore dispensable. He also believed that Plato does not cite the whole poem in order, and transposed the bulk of the last strophe into the apparent gap in the first strophe (Schneidewin had already attempted to transpose Plato's last stanza between Diehl 18 and 19,[36] yet without removing the two

[35] Bergk, 385–87. See also Gentili's discussion, 285–88.
[36] Schneidewin, 15–17.

awkward phrases; but his creation of a medial epode with its own metrical scheme raises more difficulties than it solves). A case could be made for Bergk's text, yet there is another possibility which seems preferable. First, I would agree with Bergk that both of these initial phrases sound suspiciously Platonic. If Simonides really used the form ἐξαρκεῖ, it would constitute an extremely rare occurrence of this word in archaic poetry.[37] On the other hand, the verb is very common in Plato and the later prose-writers, especially in this third person form; so that with these words Plato may be summarizing rather than quoting Simonides' position (for reasons to be suggested a little later). The words οὔκ εἰμι φιλόμωμος are either Plato's paraphrase or else are in need of emendation. We might suppose, however, that some mention of praise and blame occurred at the start of the stanza. For reasons to be discussed below, I believe that Scopas was probably referred to or addressed at this point in the poem; and it is possible that the context of the *Protagoras* affords us some interesting clues as to the subject matter of these lines.

My reasons for believing that a specific or implied reference to Scopas may well have been made at the start of this fourth stanza are three-fold. First, for reasons of tact, the name of the *consolandus* is sometimes more appropriately delayed (cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 3, where reference to Hieron is withheld until line 69). Secondly, the generalized πάντας of line 19 might anticipate a focussing pronoun or reference (see above, note 34). Thirdly, the possibility that in the words "I praise and love all who willingly do no wrong" Simonides has arrived at a climactic vaunt is strongly supported by the terminal nature of the following phrase, "Not even the gods fight against necessity." Time and again in early Greek poetry we find that what a man can or cannot do is measured in all finality against the unquestionable standard of heaven. And when this divine standard is invoked in order to assert the limits of human potentiality, then the poet is indicating

[37] ἔμοιγ' ἐξαρκεῖ *sounds* Platonic, and, although there is one near parallel in prose at Heraclitus 114.5, it cannot be precisely paralleled in archaic poetry, in forms either of ἀρκεῖν or ἐξαρκεῖν. Pindar has δύναμις ἀρκεῖ (presumably, "is strong enough") at *Paean* 16.5 (Snell), ἄρκεσε ("was strong enough," with the infinitive) at *Olym.* 9.3, and the participle ἀρκέων ("assisting") at *Paean* 2.24. The participle ἐξαρκέων occurs at Pind. *Olym.* 5.25 ("content with") and at *Nem.* 1.32 ("assisting"); only the adjective ἐξαρκής comes close (first at Aesch. *Pers.* 237).

that there can be no more to say on the topic which initially prompted this reflection. Simonides' judgment that "not even the gods fight against necessity" reminds one of a host of similar phrases in archaic poetry which, whatever their ethical or philosophical content, are able to bring an argument to a conclusion or introduce a transition to a new theme or to a specific subject.[38] Simonides' claim adds to his preceding, climactic argument a final and authoritative assertion—for if something is mandatory for the gods, then patently it must be mandatory for mere mortals. Scopas could be linked to a modest ideal most tactfully at this point, but hardly earlier. And if the poet is anxious lest his climactic vaunt should offend real or imaginary critics, this kind of *clausula* may serve also to stifle the voice of such detractors (of those, in particular, who might judge the poet to have been too sparing in the praise of his noble subject).

If I am correct in believing that the end of the third strophe heralds a direct or indirect transition to Scopas at the start of the fourth, we should ask what form the actual transition might have taken. Any suggestion must be highly conjectural. Yet it is interesting to observe that discussion in the *Protagoras* prior to the citation of Simonides' poem has dwelled on the difference between short and long speeches in debate—between *brachylogia* and *makrologia*—and that Socrates has expressed no liking for *makroi logoi* (335B–C). Of course, it is Protagoras who is charged with long-winded ornamental discussion, of a kind that fails to elicit truth, and Socrates begs him not to spread his sails too wide (338A). Later, in what might be a sly dig at his interlocutor, Socrates says that it would be too lengthy a task to enumerate all the beauties of the poem (344B) and that he will therefore confine himself to the poem's general outline and intent. Now, Aristotle notes in a passage in the *Metaphysics* (1091A7) Simonides' disparagement of the *makros logos* as the kind of story that a slave will resort to.[39] In an earlier passage in the same work (982B29) he has linked to an actual quotation from Simonides 4 a reference to the slavish nature of men. Ross in his commentary on the first

[38] For some representative examples cf. Alcman 1.82–84 (Page); Bacchyl. 16.46; Pind. *Pyth.* 2.49–52; 8.79; 10.27–30, 48–50; *Nem.* 4.69; 9.27 ("for even the sons of gods flee where fear is more than mortal"); *Isth.* 5.16.

[39] I am grateful to Mr. Guenter Sieburth for drawing to my attention the possible relevance of this passage.

mentioned passage from the *Metaphysics*[40] is inclined to believe that Aristotle's reference to the *makros logos* of the slave comes from a story by Simonides mentioned by Alexander of Aphrodisias and presumed to belong to a collection called the *Ἄτακτοι Λόγοι* (see Page, 653). However, the fact that Simonides elaborated this concept in one passage does not preclude his having used it more cursorily elsewhere (and cf. Eur. *I. A.* 313). If, indeed, Simonides did begin his fourth stanza of fragment 4 with some disclaimer that he would not be long-winded or overstress his point like a slave, then it would explain why Socrates is so careful to omit the precise phraseology of these opening lines—since so direct a quotation would be a pointed and inelegant way of discomforting Protagoras; as it is, Socrates' audience would appreciate with relish his reason for slurring over these lines. References to the advantages of brevity as the mark of a skilful poet are frequent in agonistic poetry (cf. Pind. *Olym.* 2.105,[41] *Pyth.* 4.247–48; and cf. Sim. 541.2 [Page], where the poet disapproves of those who speak with *ἄθυρον στόμα*); and they are often used transitionally (in Pindar alone cf. *Pyth.* 1.81–82, 9.79–82, 10.51–54; *Nem.* 4.33–34, 5.16–18, 10.19–20). It is conceivable, then, that the fourth stanza of Simonides 4 may have opened with some such idea: "So only a slave, Scopas, with his long-winded arguments, would tire his audience by trying to praise a blameless man. It is the man who is neither bad (perhaps *ὁ δὲ μὴ κακός . . .*) nor overly useless,[42] the man who understands justice which makes his city prosper, who is the healthy man."[43] If this argument is in any way correct, it would follow that in his reference to the *makros logos* Socrates had Simonides' poem already in mind. Such anticipation would be consonant with other echoes of the poem throughout the *Protagoras*. For example, the theme of "becoming" figures prominently in the initial discussion between Socrates and Hippocrates (311c), and

[40] W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Vol. II (Oxford 1948) 482–83. There is no good reason to believe that Aristotle confused Semonides and Simonides in this instance, despite the reference at Semon. 9 to *makroi logoi*. See Diehl's note to Semon. 9 (*Anth. Lyr. Graec.* Fasc. 3, p. 58), and Page's note to Simonides 653.

[41] *Koros* here means, as usually, *excess*, not envy, as many still interpret it (cf. *Pyth.* 1.81–83). On this point see E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* I (Berkeley 1962) 29, n. 71.

[42] On *ἀπάλαμνος* see Christ, 23, and (above all) Woodbury, 161, n. 68.

[43] We observe in these lines how the universalizing concept of mental and physical abilities formulated in lines two and three of the poem is echoed now in a more modified form, together with a more realistic appraisal of human blameworthiness.

Protagoras claims that Hippocrates will "become better" as a consequence of his teaching (318A6–9). Socrates says ironically after Protagoras' defense of his profession that he must have been wrong in the past to believe that men could not become good (ἀγαθοὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται) through human teaching (328E3). And Socrates remarks to Callias, in a nice anticipation of Simonides' fragment, that whereas in the past he had always admired Callias' wisdom, now he praised and loved him (ἐπαινῶ καὶ φιλῶ, 335E1). In the lines which follow he emphasizes the limits of his own abilities in debate and urges Protagoras, as a man of greater flexibility, to argue in the brief fashion congenial to Socrates. Eventually, Hippias begs the two men to compromise, and to adopt a course which is neither too high nor too low, but μέσον τι (338A6; cf. 346D7, where Socrates defines Simonides' ideal man as *mesos*). It is possible, then, that a disparagement of the *makros logos* occurred somewhere in Simonides' poem, and the most likely place for such detraction would be the opening of the fourth stanza.