NOTES • KORT BYDRAES

A NOTE ON ARCHILOCHUS FR. 13W, 1–2

χήδεα μὲν στονόντα Περίκλεες οὔτε τις ἄστων
μεμφάμενος θαλής τέρψεται οὐδὲ πόλις;
τοιούς γὰρ κατὰ κύμα πολυφυλοσβοῦ θαλάσσης
ἐξελευν, οἰδιάλεως δ’ ἁμφ’ ὀδύνης ἔχομεν
5 πλεύμονας. ἀλλὰ θεὸι γὰρ ἀνεχῶστοις κακοίσιν
ὁ φίλ’ ἐπὶ κρατερὴν τλημοσύνην ἔθεσαν
φάρμακαν. ἀλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει τὸδε· νῦν μὲν ἐς ἡμέας
ἐτράπεθ’, αἰματόεν δ’ ἐλκος ἀναστένομεν,
ἐξαῦτις δ’ ἐτέρους ἐπαμείπται. ἀλλὰ τάχιστα
10 τλῆτε, γυναικεῖον πένθος ἀπωσάμενοι.

The negatives in the first two lines of Archilochus Fr.13W have provided scholars with two opposing views. With reference to this problem Gerber writes as follows: ‘The prevailing view has been that the negatives belong to the participle and the verb, i.e. “no citizen will blame ... and no citizen will take pleasure”, but the position of the participle suggests that special emphasis is attached to it. Fränkel (D u P 160), Treu, and Adrados are probably right in taking the negatives only with the participle, i.e. “it is not in disapproval ... that any citizen will take pleasure” or “no citizen will disapprove ... when he takes pleasure”. Archilochus is not making the exaggerated statement that no citizen or state will find pleasure in feasting, but rather that when they do they will not criticize the grief that is felt for those who have been lost at sea. If fr. 10b, οὔτε τι γὰρ κλαίων ἤσομαι
οὔτε κακίον/θῆσον τερπωλῆς καὶ θαλᾶς ἐφέπων, refers to the same event, we learn that Archilochus at any rate sees no point in shunning festivity.’

Gerber’s objection to the prevailing view is thus based on a stylistic (the position of the participle), a logical (his doubt whether Archilochus would have had such an exaggerated view as becomes apparent if we take the negatives with both participle and finite verb), and a thematic argument (the meaning of fr. 10b = 11W).

The purpose of this short note is to provide some additional observations, also of a thematic and stylistic nature, in favour of the view advocated by Fränkel et alii and defended by Gerber.
1. From a thematic point of view we learn from Fr13W and other fragments (128W; 11W) that Archilochus’ concept of life is that of τόλμησονή, which is not merely ‘endurance’, but the active will to stand up and fight against the odds in life (cf. 128W, 2ff). This concept of τόλμησονή is based on the knowledge of the kind of ἕνσμος (schema) that governs human life and according to which man experiences joy and grief alternately (13W, 7–9; 128W, 4–5). So if one now enjoys grief and pain, no one — Archilochus is saying — will disapprove of his grief, so long as he stands up (128W, 2), never surrenders to ‘the enemy’, but fights back immovably positioned (128W, 2–3), using that τόλμησονή the gods gave him as φάρμακον for his κοκά (13W, 5–7), knowing that tomorrow it is his turn to take pleasure in festivities, while someone else will have to cope with grief and pain. If, however, we accept the view that the negatives belong to the participle and the verb, this whole pendulum-concept of Archilochus is nullified and μεμψένενος becomes meaningless. For if the citizens will not enjoy the festivities, why will they not blame Archilochus and his party if the latter are in fact mourning in any case? What would then be the sense of referring to the citizens as οὗ μέψονται?

2. Add to this also some stylistic considerations (in addition to the stylistic argument by Gerber concerning the position of the participle). If we take the pendulum-concept of lines 7–9 seriously, then κήδεα, with its prominent position at the beginning of this poem, has as its natural counterpart θαλίς τέρψεται. If, however, we place the negatives also with θαλίς τέρψεται, we nullify this antithetical positioning of κήδεα — θαλίς τέρψεται, which is essential to the basic meaning of this poem. I suspect that the position of the negative οὔτε at the beginning, i.e. before both participle and finite verb, has confused scholars opting for the first point of view. But in this regard we should note the fact that the position of οὔτε before both participle and finite verb is from a stylistic point of view important: by means of this stylistic feature (οὔτε being balanced by οὔτε in line 2) Archilochus is placing great emphasis on the fact that no one at all of those partaking in the city’s festivity (οὔτε τις = οὔτες) will blame them for experiencing grief and pain at their loss.

To conclude: from a logical, thematic and stylistic point of view the best option is to take the negatives only with the participle. The meaning derived from or based on this point of view ties in best with Archilochus’ overall concept of life’s ups and downs which has found expression in several of his important fragments.

Notes

ARCHILOCHUS FR. 34 WEST

ἀμυσθλ γάρ σε πάμπαν οὐ διάξομεν

The trimeter is quoted by Apollonius Dyscolus because of the short final iota in ἀμυσθλ and he gives no indication of the context. It is not surprising, therefore, that critics have postulated a variety of contexts, and it is the purpose of this note both to assess their arguments and to defend what seems to me to be the likeliest interpretation.

In 1846 Friedrich Schneidewin,1 who has been followed by many others right up to the present, saw in this fragment a reference to the myth of the Centaur Nessus who ferried Deianeira across the river Euenus. Nessus is addressing Deianeira and ἀμυσθλ is said to have a ‘doppelsinnige Bedeutung’. Schneidewin does not elaborate on the nature of this ambiguity, but presumably he means that Nessus, who was accustomed to demand payment (μισθός) for his ferry-service,2 was prevailed upon in this instance to provide his service without a fee and that he spoke this line to Deianeira just before he attempted to violate her: In other words, Nessus is saying that if he cannot have his usual μισθός, he will have Deianeira herself instead.

At first glance, this interpretation looks plausible, since both ἀμυσθλ and διάξομεν are appropriate words in the context of a ferry-service. Consider, for example, the lines on Charon, the ferryman of the dead, in Aristophanes’ Frogs 139–40:

ἐν πλοιαρίῳ τυννουτώι σ’ ἀνήρ γέρων

καῦτης διάξει δό’ ὀβολὸ μισθόν λαβών.

Two objections, however, were raised by Lasserre,3 the plural verb and the necessity of assuming ‘un dialogue entre Nessus et Déjanire que je ne puis me résoudre à admettre, était donné la forme et le propos de l’histoire
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