THEOGNIS' PARAINESIS TO CAVALRY (549-54)

Ἄγγελος ἄφθογγος πόλεμον πολύδακρον ἐγείρει,
 Κύρν', ἀπὸ τηλαυγέος φαινόμενος σκοπιῆς.
ἀλλ' ἵπποισ' ἔμβαλλε ταχυπτέρνοισι χαλινούς·
 δήιων γάρ σφ'ἀνδρῶν ἀντιάσειν δοκέω.
οὐ πολλὸν τὸ μεσηγύ· διαπρήξουσι κέλευθον,
 εἰ μὴ ἐμὴν γνώμην ἐξαπατῶσι θεοί.

The text is that of Young[1]. At first glance a mere pastiche of Homeric words and phrases[2], this poem is one of some complexity, and it provides an insight into the spirit of a certain sort of elegiac composition in the *Theognidea*. This complexity is found not in the individual items of diction, meter, or syntax, which are relatively simple as such, but at the level of their generic affiliations.

The poet has attempted a parainesis to cavalry. It is odd that this kind of poem, of which the only other example in archaic poetry is *Thgn.* 889-90 (cf. 986-88), is so poorly attested. The aristocracy for which Theognis speaks loved horses (1256-57; cf. Sol. *fr.* 23 W), and fighting from horse back was ·normal enough to be used in pederastic imagery (1267-68, cf. 986, which may imply a cavalry attack). The *Theognidea*, however, with various paraineseis to hoplites[3], conform for the most part to the models of Tyrtaeus and Callinus[4], in which the citizen soldiers stand shoulder to shoulder in the line of battle. Nevertheless, Thgn. 549-54 can be shown to belong to a genre of its own. This genre is defineable on the basis of a comparison with Ar. *Eq.* 242-46, a passage that has several elements in common with the Theognis poem. The origin of the genre is an historical institution, a «genre of discourse», to use Tzvetan Todorov's expression[5], which came into existence with the advent of cavalry. The Homeric poems provide no clue to this development: horsemen are acknowledged but suppressed in favor of the archaizing chariot[6]. The bit (χαλινός), the placing of which symbolizes preparedness in Thgn. 549-54, is mentioned only once, in T 393. Not only are the steps by which the historical parainesis to calvary became a poetic genre irrecoverable, it is not even certain in what kind of poetry it was at home[7]. Although comparison with Aristophanes' *Knights* will provide the outline of the generic code of the parainesis to cavalry (section I below), the poet of Thgn. 549-54 was not using the available elegiac models of Callinus and Tyrtaeus. As I shall show, he sought to employ the style of choral poetry (section II below). He thus created a curious interplay of the metrical, dictional and syntactic codes of choral and elegiac poetry as he attempted his parainesis. Even if the demonstration of the choral elements in the parainesis must remain tentative, the freedom of the poet vis-à-vis epic is evident (section III below), and one can even get a sense of the poet's difficulties in harmonizing the various codes at his disposal (section IV below).

I

In the prologue of Aristophanes' *Knights*, Demonsthenes and Nicias, the two slaves of Demos, enlist a Sausage-seller to champion their struggle against their master's steward, Paphlagon/Cleon. At the end of the prologue, the hated steward appears, and the Sausage-seller flees. Demosthenes then summons the Knights, and the trochees of the parodos begin:

ἄνδρες ἱππῆς, παραγένεσθε· νῦν ὁ καιρός. ὦ Σίμων,
ὦ Παναίτι', οὐκ ἐλᾶτε πρὸς τὸ δεξιὸν κέρας;
ἄνδρες ἐγγύς. ἀλλ' ἀμύνου κἀπαναστρέφου πάλιν.
ὁ κονιορτὸς δῆλος αὐτῶν ὡς ὁμοῦ προσκειμένων.
ἀλλ' ἀμύνου καὶ δίωκε καὶ τροπὴν αὐτοῦ ποιοῦ.   242-46

This passage has several elements in common with Thgn. 549-54. The leader sees a sign of the enemy's approach (Thgn. 549 ἄγγελος κτλ. ~ *Eq.* 245 ὁ κονιορτὸς κτλ.)[8]. He says that the enemy are near (Thgn. 553 οὐ πολλὸν κτλ. ~ *Eq.* 244 ἐγγύς). The enemy are ἄνδρες (Thgn. 552 ~ *Eq.* 244)[9]. He calls named individuals to action-Kurnos (Thgn. 550), who appears here for the first and last time as a cavalryman, and Simon and Panaitios (*Eq.* 242-43). The vocative is followed by ἀλλά and an exhortation in the imperative (Thgn. 551 ~ *Eq.* 244)[10].

The resemblance between the passage in *Knights* and Thgn. 549-54 is too close to be a matter of chance and yet not so close that one could speak of Aristophanic imitation of Theognis. The several elements common to the two passages reflect a common origin in a genre of discourse.

II

The poet of Thgn. 549-54 was not content simply to adapt Homeric diction to the elegiac couplet. He has attempted a loftier style, and, although the poem abounds in Homeric diction, the total effect is quite unhomeric.

The phrase τηλαυγέος... σκοπιῆς (550) is a key to the poet's ambition. Both adjective and noun have Homeric parallels[11], but the combination of the two is not Homeric. The combination can be compared with τηλαυγέ' ἀγ κορυφάν (Pind. *fr.* 52g.12 Sn M, from a paean) and with τηλαυγεῖ παρ' ὄχθῳ (Soph. *Tr.* 524, in a choral passage). The stylistic affinities of the Theognidean phrase are with choral lyric, and, in particular, I would suggest, with dithyramb. A passage in Aristophanes' *Clouds* so indicates. The chorus of Clouds, meteorological creatures, are appropriate supporters of those «astronomical quacks» (μετεωροφένακες 333), the dithyrambic poets. These poets apparently liked to think of themselves as flying through the air[12]. When the Clouds sing their first song, they are still aloft, though soon to become visible to Socrates as they descend Parnes (323-24), and their song is suitably airy. They will descend on mountain tops so that they may look down on «vantage points that are seen from afar»

(τηλεφανεῖς σκοπιάς 281). They will look upon the earth «with far-seeing eye» (τηλεσκόπῳ ὄμματι 290). If the Clouds sing in the same style as the poets they favor, then the resemblance of the phrases just quoted to Thgn. 550 suggests that the latter has a dithyrambic ring[13].

Further, the Theognidean poem under discussion begins with the decidely unhomeric phrase ἄγγελος ἄφθογγος, a kenning for beacon fire. Compare «cup of Ares» for «shield», a similar kenning, from the pen of the dithyrambic poet, Timotheos (Ath. 10.433 c). It is possible, however, that the kenning belongs to the genre of discourse. Consider the expression ἄναυδος ἄγγελος in Aesch. *Suppl.* 180[14] and in *Sept.* 81-82, where cavalry are mentioned and the verb φαίνομαι (cf. Thgn. 550) occurs. In both passages, this expression refers to the dust raised by an approaching army[15].

There are other elements in the Theognidean poem that can be taken as dithyrambic. (1) Density of epithets. Each of the first four nouns has an epithet. (2) Compound words. Each of these epithets is a compound. (3) Syntax. Asyndeton occurs twice, in two successive lines[16].

(1) Density of epithets is characteristic of dithyramb. Pickard-Cambridge remarks of an otherwise restrained dithyrambic fragment of Pindar (75 Sn M): «it is noticeable how few substantives go without an ornamental or descriptive epithet, and some have two»[17]. (2) Compound words were the most notorious trait of dithyrambic style[18]. The *hapax* ταχυπτέρνοις (551) is perhaps one of those *nova verba* that Horace associated with dithyramb (*Carm.* 4.2.10-11). (3) Syntax. The two asyndeta express the urgency of the exhortation. Or, in van Groningen's words, «l'inquiétude manifeste du poète explique le style heurté»[19]. Such agitation might be thought characteristic of dithyramb[20]. In any case, unless the text is corrupt, the two asyndeta in two successive lines, a phenomenon unparalleled in the Theognidean corpus and perhaps in all of elegy, suggest a style unusual for this metrical context.

The poet has attempted to cast the parainesis to cavalry in the style of choral poetry and perhaps specifically in the style of dithyramb. The theme of defending the city was, in fact, sung in dithyramb. One of Pindar's dithyrambs begins with an invocation to Alalā, «daughter of War, prelude to spears, to whom men make death on behalf of the city their holy sacrifice» (*fr.* 78 Sn M).

III

The poet has thus reconfigured several items of Homeric diction not simply to fit the elegiac couplet but in order to achieve imitation of another poetic genre. The poet's originality, his freedom with respect to his epic sources, can also be seen at another, deeper level. This is the level of in-

dividual, as distinguished from genre-determined, interference with the various codes, semantic, morphological, syntactic, and metrical, of epic. To take a simple example, δήϊοι ἄνδρες occurs several times in the genitive, dative, and accusative cases in the *Iliad* but never in the same metrical position and with the same degree of hyperbaton as in Thgn. 552.

Consider again the phrase in 550 which I took as a key to the poet's stylistic ambition. The compound adjective occurs here for the first time, if its occurrences in the probably late *h. Hom.* 31.13 and 32.8 are discounted, though its restriction to lyric passages in the fifth century suggests that the poet is borrowing an already existing item of diction from another genre. The foreignness of the word in the *Theognidea* is shown in the morphological solecism — by the standard of elegiac practice — of the ending -εος. Elsewhere in elegy, the genitive singular of -ες nouns is -ους where, as in Theognis 550, the meter requires monosyllabic scansion[21]. The Homeric element in the phrase is apparently σκοπιή 'look-out place', which occurs in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. At Simon. 142.4 D, however, this word occurs in the same metrical position as in Thgn. 550:

῎Οσσα Κιθαιρῶνος τ' οἰονόμοι σκοπιαί.

Although this single comparandum is slender evidence, it may be that the poet of Thgn. 550 is using a formula specific to elegy in placing σκοπιή at the end of the pentameter. The relation of elegy to epic at the level of formulaic composition is not yet understood, but recent articles have suggested that elegy had its own formulaic tradition, independent of epic[22]. The phrase in 550 would then represent a combination of a «foreign» compound adjective with a specifically elegiac formula, and the phrase as a whole would be completely unhomeric.

In line 551 ταχυπτέρνοισι is *hapax*, but the creation, if that is what we have, of a ταχυ- compound would not seem to require great originality. The *Iliad* provided the model of ταχύπωλος (eleven occurrences). The second element of the compound, however, deserves attention. πτέρνη occurs, outside of Thgn. 551, only three times in archaic poetry: X 397, *Batr.* 37, 46. The second of these is a pseudo-formulaic, playful borrowing of the first, and πτέρνη is used in the sense of Latin *perna* 'ham'. The three examples are thus virtually two. In both of these and in later usage, the word means 'heel' and is used of humans. Not until the time of the Septuagint is it applied to horses' hooves (*Jd.* 5.22). The poet of Thgn. 551 therefore deserves some credit for his invention of 'swift-heeled' as an epithet of horses.

Finally, two places in which the diction of Thgn. 549-54 has parallels not with early epic but with the *Homeric Hymns*. (1) ἄφθογγος (549) occurs at *h. Cer.* 198 and 282 in the same metrical slot as in Theognis. The poet of Thgn. 549, however, has used the adjective not literally, as it used of Demeter in the hymn, but metaphorically in the kenning discussed above. His relation to the hymn or the hexameter tradition it represents is thus not

óne of simple borrowing but of independent adaptation. (2) τὸ μεσηγύ (553). This adverb is anarthrous in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but has the article in *h. Ap.* 108, where, as in Thgn. 553, the demonstrative force of the article is weak. In epic, however, the demonstrative value of the article is «more or less sharp»[23].

<div align="center">IV</div>

At the beginning of this article, I spoke vaguely of the «spirit of a certain sort of elegiac composition in the *Theognidea*.» I shall now turn to some indications of improvisation or ineptitude.

The phrase ἔμβαλλε χαλινούς is Homeric (T 393-94) but the present active imperative of ἐμβάλλειν does not occur in early epic. The present middle imperative in a formulaic expression is twice attested (K 447, Ψ 313) — once in a prohibition, where the present tense of the imperative is normal[24]. If, as Chantraine says, the durative aspect of the present is maintained in the epic use of the imperative, then the poet of Thgn. 551 has departed from epic style. In fact, his present imperative conjures up a strange scene: Kurnos is asked, as if he were a servant, «to keep putting the bits on (all) the swift-heeled horses»[25]. σφ(ε) (552) must be taken as the third person plural pronoun (= αὐτούς)[26]. Grammars, including Schwyzer's, confidently list σφ(ε) as such for Homer, but there are only two examples: Λ 111 and 115 (and in the second of these σφ(ι) could be understood as well as σφ(ε)). In elegiac couplets, σφε is found only in the line in Theognis under discussion and in an epigram of Simonides (121.3 D). In Pindar, there are two places in which σφε = αὐτούς (*Pyth.* 5.86, *Isth.* 6.74). The stylistic affinities of the word in Thgn. 552 are thus very difficult to determine. The sense, however, is clear and clearly awkward. As the explanation for his command to Kurnos, the speaker of the poem says: «For I think that they (the horses) will meet enemy men». van Groningen's explanation («se rapporte grammaticalement à ἵπποις qui, par synecdoque, implique ἱππεῦσιν») is in the nature of an apology, since the synecdoche would be incredibly strained.

With the present imperative in 551, an awkwardness begins which pervades the rest of the poem. Kurnos is to put bridles on the horses, which are then expected — although the poem is a parainesis to the cavalry, not the horses — to face the enemy. Then begin the asyndeta, for which the best that can be said has been said above, viz., that they are an imitation of dithyrambic style. If I am wrong, and if at the same time the text is sound, the only remaining interpretation of these lines (552-53) must be that the syntax has broken down. In 553, the subject changes to the enemy, who will «complete their path». Here for the first time, the poet simply lifts a formula out of Homer (cf. A 483, β 213, 429, *h. Merc.* 200). If Hudson-

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Williams[27] and West, who brackets 554 in his edition[28], are right, the excerptor found an unfinished poem in his source and repeated 540 at 554 as a stopgap. The unfinished state of the poem could of course be owing to the manuscript tradition. The rest of the poem, however, provides several indications that a work which started rather grandly (549-50) and then began to deteriorate, found its way into the corpus in antiquity despite its rough condition and, like other odds and ends in the *Theognidea*, won immortality through agglomeration[29].

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[1] *Theognis*, ed. D. Young, Leipzig 1971[2].

[2] See *Teognis: Le premier livre*, ed. B.A. van Groningen, "Verhandelingen der koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen", afd. Letterkunde, 72/1, 1966, 217-218 and Young's apparatus criticus.

[3] 867-68, 889-90, 1003-06 = Tyrt. *fr.* 12.13-16 W, 1043-44.

[4] On which see Joachim Latácz, *Kampfparänese, Kampfdarstellung und Kampfwirklichkeit in der Ilias, bei Kallinos und Tyrtaios*, Munich 1977. (He does not discuss Thgn. 549-54 and 889-90).

[5] *Les genres du discours*, Paris 1978, 44-60. The concept has been applied to problems in Greek archaic poetry by R. Martin, *Hesiod, Odysseus, and the Instruction of Princes*, TAPhA 114, 1984, 29-48.

[6] P. A. L. Grennhalgh, *Early Greek Warfare*, Cambridge 1973, 40-62.

[7] Perhaps parainesis shares in the general indeterminacy of *ainos*. See G. Nagy, *Ancient Greek Epic and Praise Poetry: Some Typological Considerations* in *The Oral Tradition in Literature: Interpretation in Context*, ed. J. M. Foley, Columbia 1986, 91: «It is better to think of the *ainos* as a mode of discourse, not as a genre».

[8] For the dust cloud as the sign of an approaching army, see H. Friis Johansen and E. W. Whittle, *Aeschylus: The Suppliants*, Kóbenhavn 1980, on 180.

[9] ἀνήρ 'enemy' is not recognized in LSJ[9] or its *Supplement*. R. A. Neil, *The Knights of Aristophanes*, Cambridge 1905 comments on τὸν ἄνδρα (222): «a spirited way of speaking of a enemy» and compares Brasidas at Thuc. 5.10.5. This sense of the word goes back to such usages as A 151. Cf. Hdt. 6.112 and J.E. Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus*, Cambridge 1938[2], *s.v.* ἀνήρ II.1; Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.17, 5.4.43 (*bis*), 6.4.5; Pl. *Ep.*7. 324d7 (of the Thirty Tyrants).

[10] ἀλλά is repeated at *Eq.* 246. Cf. J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, Oxford, 1966[2], 15.

[11] See van Groningen, 217-18.

[12] K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds*, Oxford 1970, 133 (on line 333), with reference to *Pax* 829 and Kinesias in *Av.* 1372ff.

[13] Michael Silk, *Interaction in Poetic Imagery*, Cambridge 1974, 220: dithyramh is «almost proverbial for highly wrought language». On *Nub.* 275-90, see Silk, *Aristophanes as Lyric Poet*, YCS 26, 1980, 106-08.

[14] Cited above n. 8.

[15] G. O. Hutchinson, *Aeschylus: Septem Contra Thebas*, Oxford 1985, on 81f. compares *Suppl.* 180 and Thgn. 549 and states: «We may surmise that the use of such language in such contexts was traditional» (p. 60).

[16] M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 14, 1974, 156, the latest in a long history of emendations, would remove the asyndeta and the phrase at the beginning of 553 would be parenthetical.

[17] Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy, and Comedy*, rev. T. B. L. Webster, Oxford 1962², 21.

[18] Pl. *Cra.* 409c; Arist. *Rh.* 1406b1, where compounds are associated with the «noisiness» of dithyramb; *Po.* 1459a8-9, where, however, only nouns are referred to.

[19] Van Groningen, 218.

[20] Pickard-Cambridge, 50-51.

[21] See West, 95.

[22] C. Piedrafita, *Una Posibile Cesura Trihemimeres en el Pentametro de Teognis de Megara*, in *Unidad y Pluralidad en el mundo antiguo*, Actos del VI Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos, Sociedad Española de estudios clásicos, Madrid 1983, 43-53; N. Greenberg, *Language, Meter, and Sense in Theognis*, in Th. J. Figueira and G. Nagy, *Theognis of Megara: Poetry and the Polis*, Baltimore and London 1985, 245-60.

[23] P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, Syntaxe, Paris 1963, 163. The poet of Thgn. 549-54 — we can say at least this much — is working outside the ambit of epic influence.

[24] Chantraine, 229-30.

[26] See van Groningen, 219.

[26] Kurnos' horses are male, not female.

[27] *The Elegies of Theognis*, ed. T. Hudson-Williams, London 1910, *ad loc.*

[28] *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*, ed. M. L. West, Oxford 1972, II.

[29] I am grateful to Robert Mondi for helpful criticism of this article.