

CALLIMACHUS AND MENEXENUS

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Los autores proponen una nueva lectura para el discutido texto de *AP* 12.139.6 (Call.).

The authors offer a new reading for the so discussed text of *AP* 12.139.6 (Call.).

First of all, the text (Call. *Epigr.* 44 Pf.= *AP* 12.139):

Ἔστι τι ναὶ τὸν Πᾶνα κεκρυμμένον, ἔστι τι ταύτη
ναὶ μὰ Διώνυσον πῦρ ὑπὸ τῆ σποδιῆ.
οὐ θαρσέω· μὴ δὴ με περίπλεκε· πολλάκι λήθει
τοῖχον ὑποτρῶγων ἠσύχιος ποταμός.
5 τῶ καὶ νῦν δείδοικα, Μενέξενε, μὴ με παρεισδύς
τοῦτος οσειγαρησι† εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα βάλλῃ.

The interpretation of this epigram has gravely suffered at the hands of Bentley, who conjectured, in line 6, οὔτος ὁ σιγέρτης "ingeniose, cum editorum omnium plausu" (Schneider, *Callimachea* I, 88). The said textual alteration is, in effect, contradicted by the context, because it entails the untenable conclusion that Menexenus was not the boy who sneakily tried to seduce Callimachus. Bentley

wrote (cf. Schneider, *Callimachea* I, 433): "queritur poeta Menexeno, se a puero quodam amplexibus subdole labefactari et in amorem illici". Bentley saw himself compelled to postulate that Menexenus was not the boy who tried to entice Callimachus, because, if "l'invito μή δὴ με περίπλεκε ('non abbracciarmi)" is "rivolto all'amato, che viene apostrofato per nome al verso 5, il passaggio dalla seconda alla terza persona (οὗτος ὁ σιγέρπης si riferirebbe sempre a Menesseno) sarebbe...troppo brusco"¹. Schneider (*loc. cit.*) noted: "Bentleius sine dubio falsus est. Imo Menexenus ipse puer est olim a poeta amatus. Hunc enim et per se decebat nominari et aperte hunc alloquitur poeta v. 3 μή με περίπλεκε. An veri similis est duos diversos homines poetam alloqui, amicum alterum, alterum puerum amatum, at unius tantum nomen apposuisse? Imo utrobique idem puer intelligendus est Menexenus, ad quem referendum etiam οὗτος ὁ σιγέρπης". Yet such was the awe in which Bentley was held, that his conjecture was accepted even by Schneider, who had raised the valid objection we have just quoted. Zanetto-Ferrari go as far as to print in their text Bentley's conjecture, adding (*loc. cit.*): "l'emendazione può venire accettata solo se si intende l'espressione μή δὴ με περίπλεκε nel senso di 'non coinvolgermi', 'non tirarmi dentro'; Menesseno non rappresenterebbe quindi l'έρώμενος, ma un amico che cerca di spingere Callimaco ad affrontare una nuova storia d'amore". This hypothesis by Zanetto-Ferrari is erroneous, because the verb περιπλέκω means "embrace a person" (e. g. Call. *Hymn* 4.110; *AP* 12.250.3), not "implicate a person".

Bentley's proposal ὁ σιγέρπης obliterated, unfortunately, the memory of the efforts made by those scholars who (cf. Jacobs, *Animadv. in Epigr. Anthol. Gr.* I, 1=VII, 258 f.) tried to explain the reading of the *Palatinus* σεσιγαρνης in such a way as to fit it into the context. As we have observed, the context shows Menexenus to be the devious boy who, like a quiet river surreptitiously undermining a wall, was trying to make Callimachus fall in love with him. Anna Fabri, following Salmasius, suggested οὗτος ὁ σ', εἴ γ' ἀρνης, εἰς...², which was, however, rejected by commentators because σε is contextually impossible: the devious boy is trying to seduce Callimachus, not Menexenus.

Salmasius and Anna Fabri were, however, not wide of the mark: they correctly recognized in the reading of the *Palatinus* the verbal form ἀρνης. We think that the text can be restored as follows:

5 τῷ καὶ νῦν δείδουκα, Μενέξευε, μή με παρεισδύς
6 οὗτος ὃς εἴ γ' ἀρνης; - εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα βάλῃ.

"So now I fear, Menexenus, lest this person that indeed (γε) is you³ -do you deny it?- might slip in and make me fall in love".

¹ Zanetto-Ferrari, *Callimaco. Epigrammi* (Milano 1992) 126.

² Cf. Jacobs, *Anthol. Gr.* III (Lipsiae 1817) 764.

³ Liter. "iste, qui profecto tu es" (Cf. Schneider, *Callimachea* I, 433).

The question ἀρνῆς is inserted by Callimachus like εἶδες; in *epigr.* 43.2 Pf.; the form εἶ is of course common in the *Anthology*⁴.

The *pointe* is placed where it must be, i. e. at the end of the epigram: Callimachus, who at first tells Menexenus that he is worried because an unnamed youth is craftily trying to seduce the poet, in the end reveals to Menexenus that the latter's insidious manoeuvres have not remained undetected; Callimachus does know that the covert would-be seducer is none other than Menexenus.

⁴ Cf. *An Index to the Anthol. Graeca* (Amsterdam 1988) s. v. εἶμι.