

ANACREON'S PUBIC HAIR

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Un análisis de Anacr. 13 Gent. demuestra que ἄλλην τινά del verso 8 se refiere al pelo púbico del poeta.

An analysis of Anacr. 13 Gent. demonstrates that ἄλλην τινά in line 8 denotes the poet's pubic hair.

First of all, the text (Anacr. 13 Gentili):

Σφαίρη δηῦτε με πορφυρέη	1
βάλλων χρυσοκόμης Ἔρως	
νήνι ποικιλοσαμβάλῳ	
συμπαίξειν προκαλείται.	
ἢ δ', ἔστιν γὰρ ἀπ' εὐκτίτου	5
Λέσβου, τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμην,	
λευκὴ γάρ, καταμέμφεται,	
πρὸς δ' ἄλλην τινὰ χάσκει.	

In an article which is verbose, unbelievable ill-informed, ruinously misleading, riddled with errors and inconclusive, E. Urios-Aparisi¹ asserts that the interpretation of the poem is “unresolved” (p. 68). The paper by Urios-Aparisi is so full of grave mistakes that I deem it necessary to clarify the issue by correcting them, accurately if succinctly: for a full documentation I refer the reader to my note “Anacreon and the *fellatrix* from Lesbos”, *MPhL* 4 (1981) 15 ff., which is airily ignored by Urios-Aparisi.

The crucial points are the following:

1) According to the ancients, Lesbian girls were *fellatrices*. Urios-Aparisi does not know this: all the relevant evidence (Rosenbaum, etc.) is available in *MPhL* 9 (1992) 24, with footnote 1, and *MPhL* 4 (1981) 17 f.; cf. also *QUCC* 21 (1976) 43 ff.

2) The verb χάσκω, as Urios-Aparisi does not know, “est un *terminus technicus* se rapportant justement aus *fellatrices*” (*MPhL* 9 [1992] 24, with documentation; *QUCC* 21 [1976] 43, quoting Rosembaum; *MPhL* 4 [1981] 18).

3) Incredible though it may sound, Urios-Aparisi asserts (p. 67) that Anacreon “does not say that the girl is a lesbis, adept in the practice of *fellatio*”. Urios-Aparisi has evidently not even bothered to read the poem he would like to understand: in lines 5-6, Anacreon states explicitly that the girl is from Lesbos (ἔστιν γὰρ ἄπ’ ἐὺκτίτου Λέσβου), and in lines 5-8 he no less explicitly underlines that she, as a consequence (on the double γὰρ cf. now *MPhL* 9 [1992] 28 ff.) of her being from Lesbos, wishes to *fellare* (χάσκει).

4) The wording τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμη...πρὸς δ’ ἄλλην τινά, as scholars agree (cf. for instance *MPhL* 9 [1992] 29 n. 2; *MPhL* 4 [1981] 16), indicates, because of the pointed opposition between μὲν and δέ, that Anacreon opposes his own cephalic κόμη to another κόμη, not to a girl. Urios-Aparisi arbitrarily states that Anacreon may here have incorrectly broken “the structure...of symmetries” (p. 63), but Urios-Aparisi is unable to quote any parallels to substantiate his untenable contention, which grossly violates Greek grammar (for details, cf. *QUCC* 21 [1976] 44 f.).

In conclusion: Urios-Aparisi violates Greek grammar, but he shall not do so with impunity. There is, of course, no need to violate Greek grammar in order to make sense of the poem, as Wigodsky, Gentili and I have shown.

5) Which other κόμη (ἄλλην τινά) is being opposed by Anacreon to his own white cephalic κόμη? The emphatic possessive adjective τὴν ἐμὴν necessarily entails an opposition between Anacreon’s cephalic κόμη and someone else’s κόμη. Before it was demonstrated by Wigodsky that the girl under discussion is a

¹ “Anacreon, Love and Poetry”, *QUCC* 73 (1993) 51 ff.

fellatrix, it was assumed that ἄλλην τινά insofar as equivalent to ἄλλου τινός, meant the cephalic “chioma nera di un altro uomo”: this was Smyth’s interpretation, originally followed by Gentili². However, since *fellatrices* are interested in pubic, not cephalic, hair, I argued (*QUCC* 16 [1973] 129 ff.) that ἄλλην τινα cannot but denote Anacreon’s own pubic (not cephalic) hair (we shall see the details below). Because scholars believed that the words τὴν ἐμήν presupposed the existence of “un altro uomo”, Gentili tried to reconcile my argument and Smyth’s by surmising that ἄλλην τινά might mean “diversa (pubica)” and “di un altro” (*QUCC* 16 [1973] 127; cf. Pretagostini, *Annali Istit. Univers. Orient. Napoli* 12 [1990] 229, and Urios-Aparisi, *art. cit.*, 64 f.). In truth, this hypothesis is grammatically indefensible, for two reasons which I have explained in *QUCC* 21 (1976) 45 n. 4, and *MPhL* 4 (1981) 16-17, and which Urios-Aparisi does not even mention, let alone try to refute. The problem is clear: a *fellatrix* is interested in pubic, not cephalic hair. Now, first of all ἄλλην, in Greek grammar, can mean either “diversa” (i. e. different in kind, inasmuch as pubic instead of cephalic) or “di un altro uomo” (i. e. belonging to another person), but cannot have both such divergent meanings at the same time. Secondly, the emphatic possessive τὴν ἐμήν³ (“the cephalic hair that is mine”) allows only, as Greek grammar requires, an opposition between Anacreon’s head of hair and someone else’s head of hair, not between Anacreon’s head of hair and another man’s pubic hair. Who can this someone else be? The dilemma, in other words, was this: the emphatic τὴν ἐμήν κόμην, “the head of hair that is mine”, requires grammatically ἄλλην τινά to denote a head of hair belonging to someone else than Anacreon (cf. e. g. *MPhL* 4 [1981] 17), yet ἄλλην τινά must denote, paradoxically enough, someone else’s head of hair which is, at the same time, pubic, because lesbian girls were interested in pubic, not cephalic, hair. How can we solve this dilemma? The solution was found by me: this someone else is Anacreon’s personified αἰδοῖον, which latter has its own head of hair, just as Anacreon has. Anacreon’s τὴν ἐμήν is exactly paralleled by Skythinus’ ἡμετέρη in *A. P.* 12.232.6.

6) We are thus left with my explanation: “the girl, a Lesbian, prefers, as *fellatrix*, not the poet’s greying κόμη, not the cephalic hair, but another κόμη, the κόμη of his αἰδοῖον, the poet’s pubic hair (Entr. Hardt XIV [Geneva 1969] 112). This explanation is impeccable grammatically (the use of μέν...δέ... shows that two κόμαι are being opposed to each other by the poet), contextually (the girl was ἀπ’ εὐκτίτου Λέσβου, therefore –as the γάρ underlines- she was interested in pubic, not cephalic hair), historically (Lesbian girls were notorious as *fellatrices*, and χάσκω is, as I have said, the *terminus technicus* denoting eagerness to *fellare*) and (we shall soon observe this point) stylistically. What objection can Urios-Aparisi raise against my demonstration? Unbelievable though it may sound, he

² B. Gentili-G. Perrotta, *Polinnia* (Messina-Firenze 1967) 249.

³ “My head of hair”, as rendered by Campbell, *MCr.* 8-9 (1973-74) 168.

asserts (p. 65): “Giangrande’s suggestion does not seem to be logical (*sic*) within the context that the rejection of a lover for someone better should be total (*sic*)”. His assertion is a double logical howler. First of all, the notion that the rejection “should be total” is an arbitrary, i. e. illogical, *petitio principii* by Urios-Aparisi: such a notion is not present in the poem, but exists exclusively in Urios-Aparisi’s mind. The Teian bard nowhere admits, in his Ode 13 Gent., that the girl rejects him totally, which admission would be completely out of character with Anacreon, given the fact that he invariably claimed his amatory prowess to be superior to anybody else’s. Secondly, it is Urios-Aparisi who manifestly suffers from a fatal lack of logic: if Anacreon, in his Poem 13 Gent., complained of his total rejection by the girl in favour of another man, it would follow that the words ἄλλην τινά must mean either the cephalic “chioma nera di un altro uomo”, or “another man’s pubic hair”, both of which meanings are, as I have already made clear, logically and grammatically impossible.

Finally, the stylistic point. Scholars have, as far as I know, fully accepted my findings to the effect that “Anacreon is the harbinger of the Alexandrians” and that “both in spirit and technique, Anacreon shows a notable affinity with Alexandrian epigrammatists” (Entr. Hardt XIV, 117, 119, etc.). So, for instance, E. Degani and G. Burzacchini⁴, following my argumentation, bring into relief the fact that Anacreon was a “prealessandrino”, a “precursore degli Alessandrini”, whilst O. Vox⁵ adopts my conclusions as the basis of his analysis of Anacreon’s poetry, as I show in my review of Vox’s book (to appear in AC). We need not look any further than Urios-Aparisi: he unreservedly accepts my demonstration to the effect that Anacreon’s poems are, both in spirit and in technique, like Hellenistic epigrams (p. 64, n. 67), i. e. that Anacreon’s poems have “a pointed ending (*ibid.*): “the intention of the poet”, writes Urios-Aparisi, diligently following in my footsteps, “is to surprise” (p. 63), by means of an unexpected *pointe* skilfully placed at the end of his ode. Now, Ode 13 Gent. is, as I have underlined, a case in point: the reader at first believes that Anacreon is no longer *idoneus puellis* and is therefore rejected by the girl, but then the *pointe*, aptly placed at the end of the ode, contradicts what the reader had been at first misled into believing: the girl does not reject Anacreon because he is old and white-haired, only she wants to make love with him in the Lesbian manner, as a *fellatrix*⁶. If, in Ode 13 Gent., Anacreon were simply to state that his rejection by the lesbian girl for “someone better” was “total” (Urios-Aparisi, 65), the Ode would be without a *pointe*, that is to say, would be devoid of the very element which Urios-Aparisi admits has been demonstrated by me to be essential to Anacreon’s poetry.

⁴ *Lirici Greci* (Florence 1977) 264 and 262.

⁵ *Studi Anacreontei* (Bari 1990).

⁶ Cf. *QUCC* 16 (1973) 131, and Entr. Hardt XIV, 112, for a detailed analysis of the ode under discussion. “The point, as in the epigrams, comes at the *end* of the poem: the poet, we may infer, is not too old to love, he is still *idoneus puellis*”: Entr. Hardt XIV, *loc. cit.*