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Potnia and the like: the vocabulary of domination in Greek love epigram of the Imperial period

Enrico Magnelli

Enrico Magnelli est professeur associé en littérature grecque à l'université de Florence (Italie). Il se consacre à la poésie grecque d'époque hellénistique, impériale et tardo-antique ainsi qu'à la comédie antique. Il prépare un ouvrage sur l'utilisation d'Homère dans la comédie et le drame satirique et collabore, avec G. Agosti, à l'édition commentée des *Epigrammata Graeca de poetis*. Il est l'auteur, entre autres, de : *Alexandri Aetoli testimonia et fragmenta*. Introduction, édition critique, traduction et commentaire d'E. Magnelli, Florence, 1999; *Studi su Euforione*, Quaderni di SemRom, 4, Rome, 2002; « Omero ironico, satirico, parodico : dal teatro attico alla poesia ellenistica », *La cultura ellenistica. L'opera letteraria e l'esegesi antica, Atti del Convegno COFIN 2001, Università di Roma "Tor Vergata", 22-24 settembre 2003*, R. Pretagostini et E. Dettori éd., Rome, 2004, p. 155-168; « Callimaco, fr. 75 Pf., e la tecnica narrativa dell'elegia ellenistica », *Koruphaiō andri. Mélanges offerts à André Hurst*, A. Kolde, A. Lukinovich et A.-L. Rey éd., Genève, 2005, p. 203-212; « Meter and diction : from refinement to mannerism », dans *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram : Down to Philip*, P. Bing et J. S. Bruss éd., Leiden-Boston, 2007, p. 165-183; « I due proemi di Agazia e le due identità dell'epigramma tardoantico », *Epigramma longum. Da Marziale alla tarda antichità / From Martial to Late Antiquity. Atti del convegno internazionale, Cassino, 29-31 maggio 2006*, A. M. Morelli éd., Cassino, 2008, II, p. 559-570.

Abstract The theme of the beloved woman as a dominant figure and/or a deity (πότνια, δέσποινα) is far better attested in Latin love elegy than in Greek literature. The aim of this paper is to draw a sketch of the development of such a theme, and especially of its vocabulary, in Greek poetry from the Hellenistic period down to Late Antiquity. The influence of pederastic epigram — Dioscorides, Alcaeus of Messene, Meleager, and above all Strato of Sardis — appears to be more relevant than scholars used to assume it is argued that even Paul the Silentary, celebrating beautiful women as both deities and mistresses, possibly owes more to Greek homoerotic tradition than to his alleged knowledge of Latin poetry.

Keywords Greek epigram, erotic poetry, Meleager, Strato of Sardis, Paul the Silentary

Résumé Le thème de la femme aimée comme figure dominante et/ou divinité (πότνια, δέσποινα) est beaucoup mieux attesté dans l'épigramme latine que dans la littérature grecque. Le but de cet article est de décrire dans ses grandes lignes le développement de ce thème, et surtout de son vocabulaire, dans la poésie grecque de la période hellénistique jusqu'à l'Antiquité tardive. L'influence de l'épigramme homoérotique — Dioscoride, Alcée de Messène, Méléagre, et surtout Straton de Sardes — semble être plus importante que les savants n'ont l'habitude de le penser : nous soutenons que même Paul le Silentaire, qui célèbre de belles femmes comme divinités et maîtresses, doit probablement plus à la tradition homoérotique grecque qu'à sa connaissance présumée de la poésie latine.

Mots clés epigramme grecque, poésie erotique, Méléagre, Straton de Sardes, Paul le Silentiaire

Abbreviations

AP = *Anthologie Palatine*.

FGE = PAGE Sir Denys Lionel, *Further Greek Epigrams*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

GDRK = HEITSCH Ernst, *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961.

GPh ou G.-P. = GOW Andrew Sydenham Farrar et PAGE Denys Lionel éd., *The Greek Anthology – The Garland of Philip and some contemporary Epigrams*, 2 vols. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968.

GVI = PEEK Werner, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften. Band I: Grabepigramme*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1955.

HE = GOW Andrew Sydenham Farrar et PAGE Denys Lionel éd., *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic epigrams*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1965, 2 vols.

IGUR = MORETTI Luigi, *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, I-IV (Studi pubblicati dall'Istituto italiano per la Storia antica), Rome, Bardi, 1968-1990.

PMGF = DAVIES Malcolm, *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.

SSH = LLOYD-JONES Sir Hugh, *Supplementum Supplementi Hellenistici*, Berlin - New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2005.

- 1 A graceful, if not very distinguished, quatrain, transmitted by both the *Palatine* and the *Planudean Anthology* (anon. *AP* V 26 = *FGE* 1062-5), celebrates the beauty of an unnamed woman's hair:

Εἶτε σε κυανέησιν ἀποστίλβουσαν ἐθείραις,
εἶτε πάλιν ξανθαῖς εἶδον, ἄνασσα, κόμαις,
ἴση ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων¹ λάμπει χάρις. ἦ ῥά γε ταύταις
θηριζὶ συνοικίησει καὶ πολίησιν Ἔρωσ.

Whether I saw you, milady, with glossy raven locks or again with blond hair,
on both the same charm shines. Truly Love will make its home in your hair
even when it is grey².

- 2 Its most recent editor, the late Sir Denys Page, describes it as "an uncommon sort of epigram". In his view, ἄνασσα (line 2) must refer to a queen or a lady

¹ According to modern editions, *PI*, *i.e.* Planudes' famous autograph of his anthology of epigrams (Marc. gr. 481), reads ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων, accepted by Dübner, Paton and Beckby. Francesco Valerio, who is currently preparing a new critical edition of Agathias' epigrams and other studies on the transmission of the *Greek Anthology*, kindly checked the manuscript (f. 75r) for me and let me know that Planudes first wrote ἐπ', then corrected it into ἀπ'. He also informed me that ms. Q, *i.e.* Brit. Mus. Add. 16409, an early apograph of *PI* copied before Planudes' final corrections (Cameron, *The Greek Anthology*, p. 345-350; the manuscript is also available online: see <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_16409>), reads ἐπ' as well: this proves, as Valerio rightly argues, that ἀπ' is nothing but a trivialization originating as an afterthought by Planudes.

² Translations from the twelfth book of *AP* are those by Paton, *The Greek Anthology*; from the fifth book, those by Paton and Tueller, *The Greek Anthology*; I have introduced minor changes where necessary. Other texts I translated on my own.

from a royal/imperial family; while “all other epigrams addressed to such persons are formal and respectful, *de bas en haut*”, here “the matter and the tone imply an extraordinary degree of familiarity between the poet and the queen”³. In fact, both matter and tone strongly suggest an erotic epigram⁴; the mention of dye⁵ is more suitable to the poet’s darling (εἰς κόρην εὐμορφον: thus the lemmatist J of the *Palatine Anthology*⁶) than to a royal lady, and the last sentence appears to be nothing but another occurrence of the well-known theme ‘I will never cease to love you, not even when you will be old and grey’⁷. The one and only reason why Page held his view is ἄνασσα itself, apparently unattested with reference to a ‘normal’ girl or lady⁸. But does this carry so much weight?

- 3 I think it does not. It would be easy to note that relevant parallels may be found in the language of Latin love elegy (*domina*, etc.)⁹; it would be even easier to reply that we do need Greek parallels, since the influence of Latin authors on Greek poetry from the first Imperial period – Page tentatively dates AP V 26 to the 1st century AD, rightly in my view¹⁰ – is still much disputed¹¹. We cannot make a case of Odysseus calling Nausicaa ἄνασσα at *Od.* VI 149 and 175: he uses such a vocative because he speculates that the girl might be a goddess, and for all the erotic overtones of the episode as a whole¹², it goes without

³ Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, p.313. De Stefani, “Paolo Silenziario”, p.106 n. 20, is inclined to accept Page’s view.

⁴ Waltz & Guillon, *Anthologie*, p.31 n. 3, call it a “madrigal”. Thus also Lieberg, *Puella divina*, p.180, and Yardley, “Paulus Silentiarius”, p.240, as far as we can elicit from his brief mention of this passage.

⁵ Dye, not a wig: see Waltz & Guillon, *Anthologie*, p.31 n. 3, and Page’s detailed analysis in *Further Greek Epigrams*, p.313-314.

⁶ Whom Cameron, *The Greek Anthology*, p.298-328 identifies with Constantine the Rhodian. In favour of his theory see Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, p.84, and *The Anthology*, p.196 n. 5; De Stefani, “Per un’edizione”, p.396 n. 2, and *Paulus Silentiarius*, p. VIII; against it, Orsini, “Lo scriba” (van Dielen, “Zur Herstellung”, also disagrees with Cameron’s evaluation of J, yet accepts the identification).

⁷ See Rufin. AP V 48 = 19 Page, Maced. AP V 227 = 4 Madden, and the renowned Paul. Sil. AP V 258 = 52 Viansino. On the broader topic of aged women being still attractive, see Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.280-281.

⁸ Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, p.314, quoting several parallels for ἄνασσα = ‘queen’ in epigrams (cf. also Call. *Aet.* fr. 112 Pf. = 215 Massimilla, v. 2 ἀνάσσης, referring to either Arsinoe II or Berenice II, see Prioux, “Callimachus’ queens” p.208; Ben Acosta-Hughes points out to me Callimachus’ attitude towards his queens as “a striking combination of reverential and familiar”). “The only misuse of the term known to me”, Page writes, “is Peek 728, an uncouth Armenian rock-inscription of the second or third century A.D.” No misuse at all: the poem – ἐνθάδε κέῖται ἄνασσα Ἀθηναίς, ἦν ποτ’ ἔγωγε / ἠγαγόμην εὖνουν πρὸς γάμον ἡμέτερον, κτλ. – is now re-edited as SGOst 13/02/01, and the editors rightly identify Athenais, daughter of Antonia and granddaughter of a Lucius Antonius, with a descendant of an aristocratic family including kings of Pontus and Armenia in the 1st century AD and tracing back its origins to Marcus Antonius (the Triumvir). On the contrary, I am not absolutely sure that the ἄνασσα mentioned in Antiphil. AP VI 252, 5 = *GPh* 795 was a queen or the like (a similar ambiguity in his use of δεσπότης, AP VI 250, 1 = *GPh* 783).

⁹ The vast literature on this well-known theme includes Copley, “*Servitium amoris*”; La Penna, “Note”, p.189; Lieberg, *Puella divina*, p.177-184; Stroh, *Die römische Liebeslegie*, p.217-226; Nisbet & Hubbard on Hor. c. I 33, 14 and II 12, 13; Lyne, “*Servitium amoris*”; Murgatroyd, “*Servitium amoris*”; Nisbet, “Elegiacs by Gallus”, p.144 = 109; Labate, *L’arte*, p.212-219; Rosati, “*Dominus/domina*”.

¹⁰ Jacobs, *Animadversiones*, p.323 even assigned it to Rufinus. Neither Page, *The Epigrams*, nor Höschel, *Verrückt*, share his assumption.

¹¹ Latin poetry was not unknown in the Greek-speaking world of the first three centuries AD: to what extent, it is hard to say. Recent assessments include Swain, “Arrian”; Rochette, “Bilinguisme” and *Le latin*, p.269-290 (“Auteurs latins dans la littérature grecque”). On Late Antiquity, see below. Adams, *Bilingualism*, deals with the broader topic of contact between Latin and several other languages.

¹² Discussed effectively by Mastromarco, “L’incontro”.

saying that Odysseus is not in love with Nausicaa. Yet Greek poetry indeed offers some relevant parallels, if not for the use of ἄνασσα, for the theme of the beloved woman as πότνια, δέσποινα and the like, i.e. as a dominant figure and/or a deity. Let us try to draw a sketch of the development of such a theme, and especially of its vocabulary, from the Hellenistic period down to Late Antiquity.

- 4 Love as δούλεια is a traditional motif – if not a very widespread one – in Greek literature, at least from the 5th century BC onwards¹³; but this does not imply that a woman be called δέσποινα. Similarly, comparing women to deities is as ancient a device as the Homeric δῖα γυναικῶν, be this in regard to beauty¹⁴ or to any other virtue¹⁵; and the youth calling his girlfriend Κύπριδος ἔρνος in Ar. *Eccl.* 973 testifies to Greek erotic imagery appropriating this theme well before the Hellenistic period. Yet to describe the beloved woman as 'my goddess' is quite another matter. In fact, the *puella divina* is not very frequent in amatory epigrams of the 3rd century BC. The most relevant text is AP V 194, ascribed to either Asclepiades or Posidippus¹⁶:

Αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαλὴν Εἰρήνιον εἶδον Ἔρωτες,
 Κύπριδος ἐκ χρυσέων ἐρχομένην θαλάμων,
 ἐκ τριχὸς ἄχρι ποδῶν ἱερὸν θάλας, οἷά τε λύγδου
 γλυπτὴν, παρθενίων βριθομένην χαρίτων,
 καὶ πολλοὺς τότε χερσὶν ἐπ' ἠιθέοισιν ὀστοῦς 5
 τόξου πορφυρέης ἦκαν ἀφ' ἀρτεδόνης.

The Loves themselves had their eye on soft Eirenion as she issued from the golden chambers of Cypris – a holy bloom from hair to feet, as though carved of white marble, laden with virgin graces. Many an arrow to young men's hearts did their hands then let fly from purple bowstrings.

- 5 The tender Eirenion is "a sacred shoot" (l. 3): the adjective implies that she "is the metaphorical offspring of one or the other of the divine beings mentioned in the poem"¹⁷. She is compared to a marble sculpture (ll. 3-4), which may in turn

¹³ The *locus classicus* is Plato, *Symp.* 183a, on lovers ἐθέλοντες δουλείαν δουλεύειν οἷας οὐδ' ἂν δούλος οὐδεὶς. Brief surveys in Copley, "Servitium amoris", p.286-288; Lyne, "Servitium amoris", p.118-120; Yardley, "Paulus Silentarius", p.240 and n. 8; Murgatroyd, "Servitium amoris", p.590-594 (their different views on the relationship between the Greek origins of this theme and its fuller development in Latin elegy need not detain us here); on *POxy.* 3723 = *SSH* 1187 see Morelli, "Sul papiro", p.402-404. It is the man who usually acts as δούλος of either a woman or a boy, yet the opposite situation, i.e. the woman as slave, is also attested: see Copley, "Servitium amoris", p.289; Esposito, *Il Fragmentum*, p.144-145.

¹⁴ Cf. the praise of Helen's beauty at *Il.* III 156-158 and *Od.* IV 122. A very early variation of this theme is in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, ll. 92ff.: Aphrodite in disguise pretends not to be a deity (l. 109: οὐ τίς τοι θεός εἰμι· τί μ' ἀθανάτησιν εἴσκεῖς;), yet Anchises insists in comparing her to a goddess (l. 153: γύναι εἰκία θεῆσι). See Faulkner, *The Homeric Hymn*, p.173-174.

¹⁵ Lieberg, *Puella divina*, p.13-34, provides a good survey, mainly focusing on early Greek epic and lyric. On postclassical epigram, see Page, *The Epigrams*, p.96.

¹⁶ Ποσειδῖππου ἢ Ἀσκληπιάδου *P Pl* (Ascler. *HE* 968-73 = °34 Guichard = °34 Sens; Posidipp. °23 Fernández-Galiano = °126 Austin-Bastianini).

¹⁷ Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.231. Commentators have pointed out that, if θάλας is a trite metaphor, the phrase ἱερὸν θάλας appears to be quite uncommon (see Ludwig, "Die Kuns", p.325-326; Guichard, *Asclepiades*, p.386-387; Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.230-231). In Arat. *SH* 84-85, ξείνων ἱερὸν θάλας refers to one Ἀγκλείδης and to Antigonos Gonatas respectively – with no erotic nuance at all: see Martin, *Histoire*, p.17-18 and 137-139. Scholars also compare Hedyll. *AP* VI 292, 3-4 = *HE* 1827-8 ἦν γὰρ Ἐρώτων / καὶ Χαρίτων ἢ παῖς ἀμβρόσιόν τι θάλας. Yet ἀμβρόσιος is not the same as ἱερός; and note that in Hedyllus' epigram Niconoë, the παῖς, is not a 'divine girl' but just a

suggest the image of a goddess; and if it is the girl, not the Erotes, who comes from Aphrodite's golden bed-chamber (l. 2)¹⁸, "the phrase may be understood as a way of saying that Eirenion's own home is (figuratively) the house of Aphrodite"¹⁹. All of this conjures up the presentation of the young woman as a second goddess of love. Light-hearted variations on this theme recur more than three centuries later in Rufinus' epigrams²⁰: from the well-known "you are like a goddess, and will make me blessed like a god"²¹, to the entertaining parallel between the Judgement of Paris and a beauty competition of three courtesans displaying their very genitals²², up to the statement that beautiful Melite deserves to be placed in a shrine just like a deity's statue²³. All these are quite conventional themes. Is there any occurrence of a (beloved, or just attractive) woman not being merely compared to deities, but rather acting like them or replacing them in some way?

- 6 I can quote two texts, one from the late Hellenistic period, the other probably belonging to the Imperial age. The former is *AP V 137 = HE 4228-31*, where Meleager declares that Heliodora is "his sole deity":

Ἐγχει τᾶς Πειθοῦς καὶ Κύπριδος Ἥλιοδώρας
καὶ πάλι τᾶς αὐτᾶς ἀδολόγου Χάριτος.
αὐτὰ²⁴ γὰρ μὴ ἔμοι γράφεται θεός, ἄς τὸ ποθεινὸν
οὔνομ' ἐν ἀκρήτῳ συγκεράσας πίομαι.

Fill the cup for Heliodora as Persuasion and Cypris, and again for the same woman as a sweet-speaking Grace. For I describe her as my one goddess, whose enticing name I mix in with unmixed wine when I drink.

- 7 The quatrain has received little attention²⁵, yet it is interesting as one of the very few Greek parallels for the theme of *mea Venus*, well attested in Latin poetry²⁶. The latter text is the only extant fragment of the *Πλοκαμιῶδες*, a lost hexameter poem by the otherwise unknown Menophilus of Damascus (*SH 558*):

sexy courtesan dedicating something to Priapus in gratitude for victory in a beauty-competition (Galli Calderini, "Gli epigrammi", p.83-87).

¹⁸ I agree with Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.227-230, in accepting Martorelli's ἐρχομένην (later proposed by Jacobs as well) for the transmitted ἐρχόμενοι, retained by most editors. See also Tarán, *The Art*, p.42 n. 74. Ludwig, "Die Kunst" p.327, would rather keep ἐρχόμενοι accepting Dilthey's ἦγον at l. 1: "the Erotes themselves led tender Eirenion as they came from Cypris' golden bed-chamber".

¹⁹ Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.230.

²⁰ Probably of Neronian age: see Cameron, "Strato"; Robert, "La date"; recently Hörschele, *Verrückt*, p.49-61.

²¹ *AP V 94 = 35 Page*:

At l. 4 γαμῶν is to be preferred to Planudes' συνών: see Hörschele, *Verrückt*, p.54-55 with n. 141-143 (quoting previous literature).

²² *AP V 36 = 12 Page*, ll. 9-10: ἀλλὰ σαφῶς, ἃ πέπονθε Πάρις διὰ τὴν κρίσιν, εἰδῶς, / τὰς τρεῖς ἀθανάτας εὐθὺ συνέστεφάνου. The last word probably conceals a sexual *double entendre*, as Floridi, *Stratone*, p.146 rightly argues (see also Hörschele, *Verrückt*, p.111; Lapini, "Osservazioni" p.303).

²³ *AP V 15 = 4 Page*, ll. 5-6: ποῦ πλάσται, ποῦ δ' εἰσὶ λιθοξόοι; ἔπρεπε τοίη / μορφῇ νηὸν ἔχειν ὡς μακάρων ξοάνῳ.

²⁴ Gärtner, "Textkritisches (I)", p.106-107 conjectures τρισά, which fits the context but partly spoils the epigram of its point: αὐτὰ stresses the fact that "she herself", a mortal woman as she may be, is Meleager's (sole?) goddess.

²⁵ With the exception of Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p.284, analyzing its function within the Meleagrian sequence of *AP V 134-149*. From this point of view see also Booth, "Amazing grace", p.533-536; Hörschele, "Meleager and Heliodora", p.111-113, and *Die Blütenlesende Muse*, p.204-206.

²⁶ See Lieberg, *Puella divina*, p.194-199. At p.30 he also mentions Meleager's epigram, albeit very briefly.

Εὐρώπην Λιβύην τε καὶ Ἀσίδα πᾶσαν ἀμείψας
 θαύμασα μυρία καλὰ πολυπλαν<ί>ης ὑπὸ λυγρῆς,
 ἀλλ' οὐπὼ τοιοῦτον ἴδον σέλας, οὐδ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
 αὐτοὺς ἀθανάτους <περ> ὀιομαι ἴσον ἰδέσθαι,
 οἷον ἄελπτον ἄπιστον ἔμὸν νόον ἤρπασε φάσμα 5
 καρτερόν, οὐ τι φατειόν· ὑπ' ἀμφασίῃ δ' ἀλεγεινῆ
 θυμὸς ἄδην πεπότητο, λύθεν δέ μοι ἄψα πάντα
 ἐκ κεφαλῆς εἰς ἴχνος, ἀπώλετο δ' Ἑλλάς ἅπασα
 ἐκ στηθέων, καὶ πάντα χαμαὶ πέσεν, ὅσσα περ ἔτλην
 ὕγρῃ τε τραφερῇ τε κυλινδόμενος περὶ νόστον. 10
 τόσσον γὰρ περὶ θυμὸν ἀπείριτον ἴκετο θάμβος.
 < >
 μέλψαι δὲ μνήσειας ἀειθαλέας πλοκαμίδας,
 οἷαις κυδιόωσαν ἀπ' ὀβίστων σε λοετρῶν
 φαιδρὴν εἶδον ἅπασαν ἐειδομένην Χαρίτεσσιν
 ἐρχομέναις πρὸς Ὀλυμπον Ἀκιδαλῆς ἀπὸ πηγῆς. 15

Passing through Europe and Libya and the whole Asia, countless beauties
 I admired in my baneful wandering, but up to now I had not seen such a
 splendour, nor do believe that on the Olympus the immortals themselves saw
 any, like the one that seized my mind, an unexpected, unbelievable apparition,
 mighty and unspeakable. Under a grievous speechlessness my soul kept
 hovering, and all my limbs were loose from head to feet. The whole Greece
 vanished from my heart, and to the ground fell whatever I endured, tossed about
 on land and sea in my homeward journey. Such was the immense amazement
 that invaded my soul. < > and remind me, so that I can sing of them, of the ever-
 blooming locks you were proud of when I saw you coming from your blessed
 bath, full of brightness, similar to the Graces ascending to the Olympus from the
 Acidalian spring.

- 8 The speaking voice describes an unbelievable marvel that remains unknown for the first eleven lines. Only at l. 12 (probably 13 or the like in the original text, since one or more lines must have fallen before it)²⁷ we learn that the marvel was a charming woman's hair, and one line later it becomes clear that the traditional epic invocation μνήσειας, 'remind me of', is addressed not to the Muse(s), as one would expect, but rather to the woman herself (σε, l. 13). This is surprising – and quite unparalleled – in Greek: the replacement of the Muse with the poet's girlfriend is, on the contrary, a well established theme in Latin love elegy²⁸. About Menophilus we know nothing²⁹, but it is likely that he lived in the Imperial age. Ll. 6-7 may have to do with Q. S. VII 539-540 καὶ ἀμφασίῃ

²⁷ The great August Meineke was the first, as far as I know, to postulate a lacuna between ll. 11 and 12.

²⁸ Cf. Prop. II 1, 3-4 *non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo: / ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit* (note the mention of hair at ll. 7-8!); Tib. II 5, 111-112 *usque cano Nemesim, sine qua versus mihi nullus / verba potest iustos aut reperire pedes*; Ov. am. I 3, 19-20 *te mihi materiem felicem in carmina praebe: / provenient causa carmina digna sua*; II 17, 33-34 *nec nisi tu nostris cantabitur ulla libellis: / ingenio causas tu dabis una meo*; III 12, 16 *ingenium movit sola Corinna meum*; trist. IV 10, 59-60 *moverat ingenium totam cantata per urbem / nomine non vero dicta Corinna mihi* (on these and other passages see Miller, "Disclaiming"; Rosati, "Dominus/domina", p. 62-63).

²⁹ The fragment is preserved by Stob. Flor. IV 21, 7 (IV p. 482 Hense). This means that we have just the author's name and the title, according to the use of Stobaeus' anthology.

Ἦστραψε γλυκὺ κάλλος· ἰδοῦ φλόγας ὄμμασι βάλλει·
 ἄρα κεραυνομάχαν παῖδ' ἀνέδειξεν Ἔρωσ;
 χαῖρε Πόθων ἀκτῖνα φέρων θνατοῖσι, Μύσκε,
 καὶ λάμπεις ἐπὶ γᾶ πυρσὸς ἔμοι φίλιος⁴⁰.

It lightened sweet beauty; see how he flashes flame from his eyes. Has Love produced a boy armed with the bolt of heaven? Hail! Myiscus, you who bring to the mortals the light of the Desires, and may you shine on earth, a torch befriending me.

- 13 At l. 2, Eros himself shows that the Myiscus is (or appears to be) endowed with Zeus' thunderbolt. In the following line, the boy "brings to the mortals the light ... of Desire". I wondered whether he has become something of a Prometheus (a witty change after the Jovian imagery of the first couplet): yet ἀκτίς is better used of sunshine than of fire⁴¹, and it is more likely that the allusion is to the Sun – which Myiscus is explicitly compared to in *AP* XII 59 = *HE* 4528-9 ἀβρούς, ναι τὸν Ἔρωτα, τρέφει Τύρος· ἀλλὰ Μύσκοσ / ἔσβασεν ἐκλάμπωσ ἀστέρωσ ἠέλιωσ⁴². The same holds true for l. 4, where "may you shine *on earth*" appears to convey the idea of a source of light (god, sun, or star) descended among men⁴³: Meleager might even have had in mind [Plat.] *AP* VII 670 = *FGE* 586-7 ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἐῶσ / νῦν δὲ θανῶν λάμπεις Ἔσπερωσ ἐν φθιμένοισ⁴⁴. Myiscus, whose seductive power Meleager celebrates in many an epigram⁴⁵, turns out to display the prerogatives of both Zeus and Helios/Apollo. Pretty well for a "Little Mouse" (Μύσκοσ)⁴⁶.
- 14 Another epigram by Meleager is worth quoting here. In *AP* XII 158 = *HE* 4496-4503, the poet is still more explicit in declaring his submission to a divine boy:

Σοὶ με Πόθων δέσποινα θεὴ πόρε, σοὶ με, Θεόκλεισ,
 ἀβροπέδιλωσ Ἔρωσ γυμνὸν ὑπεστόρεσεν
 ξεῖνον ἐπὶ ξεῖνησ δαμάσωσ ἀλύτοισι χαλινοῖσ;
 ἰμεῖρω δὲ τυχεῖν ἀκλινέωσ φιλίωσ·
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν στέργοντ' ἀπαναίνεωσ, οὐδέ σε θέλγει
 οὐ χρόνωσ, οὐ ξυνῆσ σύμβολωσ σωφροσύνησ⁴⁷.

⁴⁰ "One of M.'s more original and imaginative epigrams" (Gow & Page, *HE*, II p.662).

⁴¹ Mel. *AP* XII 63, 6 = *HE* 4489, τοῦ δὲ Πόθοισ τυφόμενον γλυκὺ πῦρ, is quite another matter. On erotic ἀκτῖνες, from Pind. fr. 123, 3-4 Maehler onwards, see Giannuzzi, *Stratone*, p.253-254.

⁴² Pederastic revisitation, as scholars duly note, of a well-known Sapphic image (fr. 34 and 96, 6-9 Voigt): see Floridi, *Stratone*, p.176-178, quoting previous literature.

⁴³ On the erotic use of πυρσὸς, see Sternbach, *Appendix*, p.82; Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.256. Aubreton-Buffière-Irigoien, *Anthologie*, p.113 n. 6, propose a different interpretation: "ce feu qui brille, qu'il soit un signal, tel ceux qui indiquent l'approche d'amis ou d'ennemis (Thuc., II, 94, 1; III, 80, 2)". This is suggestive, albeit finding little support in the context.

⁴⁴ Imitated – as scholars know only too well: see e.g. Kaibel, *Epigrammata*, p.231; Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, p.161 – in an anonymous epitaph of Imperial age from Rome, *GVI* 585 = *IGUR* 1256, v. 4: νῦν δῦνει δ' ὑπὸ γῆν Ἔσπερωσ ἐν φθιμένοισ. Was its author influenced by Meleager's λάμπεις ἐπὶ γᾶ as well?

⁴⁵ *AP* XII 23; 59; 65; 70; 101; 106; 144; 154; 159; 167 = *HE* 4524-49, 4554-71.

⁴⁶ The nickname may have erotic overtones. Taillardat, "Μύσκοσ", has considered the possibility that its use in a number of 4th – century pederastic inscriptions from Thasos be related to the ancient belief that mice were λαγνίστατοι (Ael. *NA* XII 10); and Calame, *I Greci*, p.186 n. 35, wonders whether this has to do with Meleager's *eromenos*.

⁴⁷ A quite unclear phrase: see Gow & Page, *HE*, II p.657. Graefe, *Meleagri epigrammata*, p.10 and 63, proposed to emend into either ξυνῆσ σύμβολ' ὁμοφροσύνησ or συνετῆσ σύμβολωσ σωφροσύνησ (the former is now revived by Gärtner, "Textkritisches (II)", p.203-204, apparently unaware of Graefe; it makes ξυνῆσ quite redundant, though the conjecture may find some support in Alcae. Mess. *AP* XII 64, 6 = *HE* 53, quoted above).

ἴλαθ', ἄναξ, ἴληθι, σὲ γὰρ θεὸν ὤρισε δαίμων·
 ἐν σοί μοι ζωῆς πείρατα καὶ θανάτου.

The goddess, queen of the Desires, gave me to you, Theocles; Love, the soft-sandalled, laid me low for you to tread on, all unarmed, a stranger in a strange land, having tamed me by his bit that grips fast. But now I long to win a steadfast friendship. But you refuse him who loves you, and neither time softens you nor the tokens we have of our mutual continence (?). Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy! For Destiny ordained you a god; with you rest for me the issues of life and death.

- 15 The first three lines depict the lover as both a slave (γυμνὸν ὑπεστόρεσεν / ξείνον ἐπὶ ξείνης)⁴⁸ and a tamed horse (δαμάσας ... χαλινοῖς). The last couplet shifts from human to divine sphere, from the language of servitude to that of liturgy. Theocles is not just δεσπότης but ἄναξ⁴⁹, since destiny ordained him a deity⁵⁰ (note the witty juxtaposition of the ambiguous δαίμων and the unambiguous θεός⁵¹); and the poet implores him 'to be favourable', declaring that the divine youth can determine either his life or his death⁵². 'Master and god' – it is hard to imagine a higher praise of the loved boy.
- 16 Pederastic epigram was the perfect garden to grow such plants. Homoerotic love had boys playing a far less subordinate role than that of women⁵³: this easily accounts for the frequent divinization of *eromenoi* – or better said, for their being depicted not just as young men of extraordinary, divine beauty⁵⁴, but as mighty gods ruling over their lovers. In the Imperial age (probably in the Flavian period⁵⁵) Strato of Sardis, reviving and renewing the tradition of homosexual epigram in a quite light-hearted way, does not miss the opportunity of exploiting this topic. In *AP XII 223 = 66 Floridi* he declares that he used to contemplate beautiful boys just like the statue of a god⁵⁶, while in *AP XII 246 =*

⁴⁸ According to Gow & Page, *HE*, II p.657, the first half of l. 3 "must be taken to imply that M. is actually in a foreign land". I rather think that it just takes up the erotic metaphor of the enslaved man, defenceless and subjected far from his homeland: the first Strasbourg epode (Hippon. fr. °115 West² = °194 Degani²) easily comes to mind. For further, relevant parallels see Degani, *Hipponax*, p.169; Sens, *Asclepiades*, p.274-275.

⁴⁹ "Used primarily for gods, kings, and heroes" (Dickey, *Greek Forms*, p.102). "ἄναξ is a deferential address (whether by slave or freeman) to a king or prince; δέσποτα (with its fem. δέσποινα) the humble address of a slave to his master. Both are used in addressing gods; with δέσποτα the worshipper proclaims his humility as that of slave towards master" (Barrett, *Hippolytos*, p.176, commenting on the well-known E. *Hipp.* 88 ἄναξ—θεοῦς γὰρ δεσπότης καλεῖν χρεῶν: on the Euripidean passage see again Dickey, *Greek Forms*, p.102-103, quoting previous literature).

⁵⁰ According to his speaking name (see Morelli, *L'epigramma*, p.151 n. 107). "It is unprecedented to speak of a mortal in such terms" (Gow & Page, *HE*, II p.657).

⁵¹ The former may be either destiny or another god, possibly Eros mentioned in l. 2. What is certain is that Theocles is not a 'divine entity' (δαίμων), but a true 'god' (θεός).

⁵² Gow & Page, *HE*, II p.657 rightly quote a verse tentatively ascribed to Sotades (fr. 4c Powell = anon. *PMG* 1034; on the ascription see Pretagostini, "Sotade", p.282-283 = 142): Ζεὺς ὁ καὶ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου πείρατα νομῶν.

⁵³ See Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, p.100-109 (still the reference study on this well-known subject).

⁵⁴ As attested in Greek poetry from Ibycus (*PMGF* 288) onwards. Lieberg, *Puella divina*, p.30-32 provides a brief survey on Hellenistic epigram; an interesting 3rd-century passage from a different literary genre is Damoxenus, fr. 3 Kassel-Austin (with Lieberg, *Puella divina*, p.25, and Gallo, *Teatro*, p.131-134).

⁵⁵ See Floridi, *Stratone*, p.1-13. Giannuzzi, *Stratone*, p.41-53, is rather inclined to think that he wrote under Hadrian.

⁵⁶ Ll. 3-4: οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἄγαλμα θεοῦ καὶ νηδὸν ὀρώμεν / ἀντίον, οὐ πάντως καὶ τὸν ὀπισθόδομον. On the sexual *double entendre* of the last word, see González Rincón, *Estratón*, p.234; Floridi, *Stratone*, p.323-324 (Giannuzzi, *Stratone*, p.348 is more cautious).

88 F. a charming youth may become his 'master' (δεσπότης)⁵⁷; divinized boy and submissive lover appear together in *AP* XII 196 = 37 F.:

ὄφθαλμούς σπινθήρας ἔχεις, θεόμορφε Λυκίνε,
 μᾶλλον δ' ἀκτῖνας, δέσποτα, πυρσοβόλους.
 ἀντωπὸς βλέψαι βαιὸν χρόνον οὐ δύναμαί σοι,
 οὕτως ἀστράππεις ὄμμασιν ἀμφοτέροις.

Your eyes are sparks, Lycinus, divinely fair; or rather, my master, they are rays that shoot forth flame. Even for a little moment I cannot look at you face to face, so bright is the lightning from both.

- 17 Like Theocles in Meleager (*AP* XII 158, quoted above), Lycinus is both god and master⁵⁸: δεσπότης, though frequently used in addressing deities, nonetheless declares the lover's submission⁵⁹. There were strong cultural and sociological reasons for the development of such an idea in homoerotic epigram; yet by the time of Strato, whose *Μούσα Παιδική* was a summary – and often a witty revisitation – of themes and motifs related to the love for boys⁶⁰, the divine power of the *eromenos* was a well established literary topic. It is likely that the late Hellenistic and early Imperial occurrences of *puellae divinae* (Meleager in *AP* V 137; possibly Menophilus' poem) were in fact influenced by it.
- 18 Strato was the last remarkable writer of Greek homosexual poetry. After him, it rapidly declined⁶¹, and it is far from surprising that heterosexual literature appropriated – to some extent at least – its ideas and imagery. The young male δεσπότης thus becomes a female δέσποινα. A first step towards this can be found, even before Strato's age, in Rufin. *AP* V 73 = 27 Page⁶²:

Δαίμονες, οὐκ ἦδ' εἶν ὅτι λούεται <ή> Κυθέρεια
 χερσὶ καταυχενίους λυσαμένη πλοκάμους.
 ἰλήκοις, δέσποινα, καὶ ὄμμασιν ἡμετέροισι
 μήποτε μηνίσῃς θεῖον ἰδοῦσι τύπον.
 νῦν ἔγγων· Ῥοδόκλεια, καὶ οὐ Κύπρις· εἶτα τὸ κάλλος 5
 τοῦτο πόθεν; σύ, δοκῶ, τὴν θεὸν ἐκδέδουκας.

⁵⁷ *LI*. 1-2: ζεῦγος ἀδελφειῶν με φιλεῖ· οὐκ οἶδα, τίν' αὐτῶν / δεσπότην κρινῶ· τοῦς
 δύο γὰρ φιλέω. Floridi, *Stratone*, p.379 rightly observes that choosing one's 'master'
 between two boys testifies to Strato's free revisitation of traditional topics.

⁵⁸ For a thorough analysis of the epigram see Floridi, *Stratone*, p.237-241; Giannuzzi,
Stratone, p.251-255.

⁵⁹ See above, n. 49. On the use of δεσπότης, see especially Dickey, *Greek Forms*,
 p.95-98; *Ead.*, "Κύριε", p.3-5.

⁶⁰ See Floridi, "Per un nuovo commento", esp. p.91-94; *Ead.*, *Stratone*, p.22-24.

⁶¹ Greek poetry predictably continued to dwell on pederastic love time and again,
 whether narrating mythical tales (e.g. Euphorbus and Melanippus in the Orphic *Lithica*,
 vv. 436-448, down to the story of Dionysus and Ampelus in Nonnus, *D.* XI-XII), or
 describing Anacreon's erotic frenzy (as often in the *Anacreontica*), or celebrating
 Hadrian's love for Antinous (see Pancrates, *GDRK* 15, 3, the anonymous poets of
PLit. Lond. 36, *P.Oxy.* 1085 and 4352, and the other texts listed by Rea, "Hexameter
 Verses", p.2-3; I am not sure that a mention of Antinous can be detected in *POxy.*
 3723 = *SSH* 1187). All these are traditional themes, sometimes revisited with either
 encomiastic or aetiological aims. Poems mainly devoted to the love for boys, courting
 them and extolling their beauty, apparently were out of fashion.

⁶² Rightly quoted by Floridi, *Stratone*, p.240. On the epigram see Höschle, *Verrückt*,
 p.125-127.

O gods, I did not know that Cytherea was bathing, her hands letting her hair down along her neck. Have mercy, mistress, and do not exercise your wrath on my eyes for seeing your divine form! Now I understand: it is Rhodocleia, and not Cypris. Whence this beauty, then? You, I think, have stripped the goddess!

- 19 Yet ἰλήκοις, δέσποινα at l. 3 – be it reminiscent of ἴλαθ', ἄναξ, ἴληθι in Mel. AP XII 158, 7 (quoted above) or not⁶³ – is *prima facie* due to the poet's statement that he has seen Aphrodite herself: only a couplet later he realizes that the bathing beauty is just Rhodocleia. That she deserves to be called δέσποινα is surely implied, but not overtly asserted⁶⁴. More explicit occurrences of δέσποινα and δεσπόζειν are to be found in novel⁶⁵ and erotic epistolography⁶⁶; in the sixth century AD, when Agathias and his circle revive erotic epigram, Paul the Silentiary proves very fond of this motif. The woman he is in love with he calls δέσποινα and δεσπότης, in two poems declaring her complete sway on him⁶⁷. This has been assumed to directly translate the Latin *domina*, and thus demonstrate that Paul knew and imitated the Augustan elegists⁶⁸: such a theory has been refuted on good grounds by several scholars, including Yardley and De Stefani⁶⁹, the latter aptly pointing out that he was rather influenced by the tradition of homoerotic epigram⁷⁰. Let us add that Paul goes further: his ladies are not 'just'

63 Later, Paul. Sil. AP V 301, 5 = 78, 5 Viansino ἴλαθι, κούρη and Agath. V 299, 10 = 75, 10 V. ἰλήκοις (both in an erotic contest).

64 Another relevant epigram by Rufinus is AP V 22 = 8 Page (often quoted by scholars dwelling on *servitium amoris*). Here the poet declares his complete – and willing – submission to his mistress, yet without any hint at divinization: that her name is Βωῦπις may perhaps evoke the well-known Homeric epithet of Hera (*Il.* I 551 etc.), but has its *raison d'être*, as Page remarks, in the word play between the 'ox-eyed' woman and her lover as 'bull coming on his own accord to be yoked by Eros' (ταῦρον ὑποζεύξας ... αὐτόμολον).

65 See Charit. III 3, 7 ἀπολογοῦμαι σοι, δέσποινα, τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς, Ach. Tat. II 4, 4 δέσποιναν τε καλεῖν καὶ φιλεῖν φιλῆσαι τράχηλον, II 6, 1-2 δέσποινα, ... πέπρακέ με τίς σοι θεῶν ὥσπερ καὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα τῇ Ὀμφάλῃ, V 20, 5 ὦ δέσποινα Λευκίππη, VIII 17, 3 δέσποινα, ... δοῦλον οὖν με σεαυτῆς ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας νόμιζε. On such vocatives, see Dickey, *Greek Forms*, p.99 and 273. Not that the homosexual use of δεσπότης totally disappear: see Ach. Tat. I 14, 1 ἐγὼ μου τὸν δεσπότην ἀπολώλεκα.

66 Aristæen. II 2 ἄχρις ἂν ἐμοῦ δεσπόζειν ἐθέλοις ... ἐρωτικός σοι διατελέσω θεράπων (already pointed out by Yardley, "Paulus Silentiarius", p.240). Drago, *Aristeneto*, p.63-65 sensibly discusses the passage. The pervasive influence of rhetoric on Greek and Latin literature of the Imperial age surely gave a further impulse to that, as well as the frequent overlapping of erotic and encomiastic themes from Ovid onwards (I am grateful to Rita Pierini for her useful remarks on this topic). See Rosati, "*Dominus/domina*" (and also "Luxury and Love", on the re-definition of power in Flavian poetry); most recently Degl'Innocenti Pierini, "Per amore di Basilissa".

67 Paul. Sil. AP V 230, 7-8 = 47, 7-8 Viansino καὶ νῦν ὁ τρισάποτμος ἀπὸ τριχὸς ἡέρτημαι, / δεσπότης ἔνθ' ἐρύση, πυκνὰ μεθελκόμενος, and AP V 248, 7 = 53, 7 V. μῆ, λίτομαι, δέσποινα, τὴσιν μὴ λάμβανε ποινήν. It is worth noting that in papyri from the 5th century AD, as Eleanor Dickey has shown, the vocative δέσποτα is always addressed to important officials or other men whom the writer is treating with high deference (Dickey, "*Κύριε*", p.4-5); and δέσποινα is used in Christian epistolography of the Late Antiquity as a title of great respect (Dickey, *Greek Forms*, p.99, quoting Dinneen, *Titles*, p.76).

68 Thus Viansino, *Paolo Silenziario*, p. XIV, 86, 98-99. In the last passage, he remarkably writes that δέσποινα "ha nella tradizione erotica un solo esempio", viz. Ach. Tat. II 6, 1-2 (where the word does not mean "bride": see Degani, "Paolo Silenziario", p.162-163; "Considerazioni", p.50 = 678); the other texts quoted above, n. 65, do not speak in favour of his view. Schulz-Vanheyden, *Properz*, p.159-169, also believes that Paul was able to read Latin elegy; further bibliography in Yardley, "Paulus Silentiarius", p.239 with n. 1-3.

69 Yardley, "Paulus Silentiarius", p.240; De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p.104-107. See also Cameron, review of Viansino, p.211; Degani, "Paolo Silenziario", p.161-163 (also in "Considerazioni", p.49-50 = 677-678).

70 De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p.106-107, recalling the use of δεσπότης and δεσπόσυνος in Dioscorides and Strato. At p.106 n. 22 he rightly accepts Cameron's

δέσποινα or δεσπότης, but also πότνια, like a queen or a goddess⁷¹. In *AP* V 270, 1-2 = 71, 1-2 Viansino he just celebrates a woman's extraordinary beauty:

Ούτε ῥόδον στεφάνων ἐπιδύεται οὔτε σὺ πέπλων
οὔτε λιθοβλήτων, πότνια, κεκρυφάλων.

A rose requires no garlands, and you, queen, no robes or gem-encrusted hairnets.

20 But in *AP* V 254 = 55 V. he plays a more complex game, using πότνια (l. 8) as a key word:

Ἵμοσα μιμνάζειν σέο τηλόθεν, ἀργέτι κούρη,
ἄχρι δωδεκάτης, ὧ πόποι, ἠριπόλης·
οὐδ' ἔτλην ὁ τάλας· τὸ γὰρ αὔριον ἄμμι φαάνθη
τηλοτέρω μήνης, ναὶ μὰ σέ, δωδεκάτης.
ἀλλὰ θεοὺς ἰκέτευε, φίλη, μὴ ταῦτα χαράξαι 5
ὄρκια ποιναίης νῶτον ὑπὲρ σελίδος·
θέλγε δὲ σαῖς χαρίτεσσιν ἐμὴν φρένα· μηδὲ με μάστιξ,
πότνια, κατασμύξῃ καὶ σέο καὶ μακάρων.

I swore to stay away from you, bright maiden, until — oh dear! — the twelfth dawn. But I, the long-enduring, could not endure it; for even tomorrow seemed to me — I swear by yourself — more than twelve months away. But pray to the gods, dear, not to engrave this oath of mine on the surface of the punitive page, and soothe my heart with your charms. Let me not feel the burning sting, either of your whip, O queen, or that of the blessed gods.

21 The phrase ἀργέτι κούρη at l. 1 is not attested elsewhere, though scholars have long acknowledged that its model is ἀργέτις Ἡώς in Nonn. *D.* V 516 and XVI 124⁷². It is indeed similar to the Latin *candida puella*⁷³, but I think that Paul is more subtle: by transferring to his sweetheart a Nonnian epithet of dawn at l. 1, and then mentioning dawn itself at l. 2 (where ἠριπόλη, a lexical delicacy⁷⁴, replaces the usual ἠριγένεια), he wants to suggest that the girl is a second ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἡώς⁷⁵. He does not explicitly state that she is a deity (*cf.* l. 5 θεοὺς ἰκέτευε, and l. 8 καὶ σέο καὶ μακάρων); nonetheless it is tempting to read

view (*The Greek Anthology*, p.231) that Paul. Sil. *AP* V 293, 1 = 79, 1 V. imitates the anonymous pederastic poem of *App. Anth.* IV 71 Cougny.

⁷¹ Apoll. Soph. p.134, 9 Bekker πότνια· σεβαστή καὶ ἔνδοξος; *schol.* 'D' II. I 357, p.44 Van Thiel πότνια· σεβασμία, ἐνπιμος ~ *schol.* *Od.* I 14a, p.22, 41 Pontani. In Homer it usually refers to deities (especially Hera), with the exception of the widespread formula πότνια μήτηρ. See *LSJ*, *Lfgre*, s.v.; for the postclassical period, Fernández-Galiano, *Léxico*, IV p.554, and Bulloch, *Callimachus*, p.195 n. 3. In Posidipp. 3, 4 Austin-Bastianini πότνια is almost surely a royal lady (see Lelli, "I gioielli", p.133; Kuttner, "Cabinet", p.147-149; Gutzwiller, "The Literariness", p.299; *contra*, Conca, "Alla ricerca", p.22, and Lapini, *Capitoli*, p.195-196), and nothing in the context – lacunose as it may be – suggest that it may have erotic overtones.

⁷² See De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p.108 n. 29; the latter Nonnian passage was already quoted (as De Stefani aptly remarks) by Jacobs, *Animadversiones*, p.142. Both Bruchmann, *Epitheta*, p.119, and Viansino, *Paolo Silenziario*, p.103, add lo. Gaz. I 320.

⁷³ De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p.108-109 was the first, as far as I know, to point this out.

⁷⁴ Used by Paul in *AP* V 228, 6 = 48, 6 V. and V 283, 4 = 75, 4 V. too; apparently unattested elsewhere.

⁷⁵ Another motif derived from Hellenistic love epigram: see Morelli, *L'epigramma*, p.152-154. A similar point in *AP* V 255, 9-10 = 58, 9-10 V.: κούρη δ' ἀργυφῆς ἐπιγουνίδος ἄχρι χιτώνων / ζωσαμένη Φοίβης εἶδος ἀπεπλάσατο.

πότνα, in the final line, as a further hint to such an identification⁷⁶. The same holds true, in my view, for *AP* V 286 = 59 V.:

φράζεό μοι, Κλεόφαντις, ὄση χάρις, ὅππότε διοιὺς
 λάβρον ἐπαιγίζων Ἴσος ἔρωσ κλονέει.
 ποῖος ἄρης ἢ τάρβος ἀπέριτον ἠὲ τίς αἰδῶς
 τούσδε διακρίνει πλέγματα βαλλομένους;
 εἶη μοι μελέεσσι τὰ Λήμνιος ἤρμοσεν ἄκμων 5
 δεσμὰ καὶ Ἥφαιστου πᾶσα δολορραφίη·
 μούνον ἐγώ, χαρίεσσα, τεὸν δέμας ἀγκὰς ἐλίξας
 θελγοίμην ἐπὶ σοῖς ἄψεσι βουλόμενος.
 δὴ τότε καὶ ξεινός με καὶ ἐνθάπιος καὶ ὀδίτης,
 πότνα, καὶ ἀρητήρ χή παράκοιτις ἴδοι. 10

Consider with me, Cleopphantis, what joy it is when the storm of love descends with fury on two people equally, to toss them. What war, or extremity of fear, or what shame can divide them as they entwine their limbs? May I have upon my limbs the fetters that the Lemnian anvil and all the cunning of Hephaestus forged – let me only wrap your body, my sweet, in my arms, and be willingly enchanted upon your joints! Then, for all I care, let a stranger see me, or my own countryman, or a traveller, my queen – or a clergyman or even my wife.

- 22 The poet wishes he and Cleopphantis were bound up in Hephaestus' unbreakable chains, as happened to Ares and Aphrodite in a well-known Homeric episode (*Od.* VIII 267-366)⁷⁷. I think that the use of πότνα in the final line is no more fortuitous than in *AP* V 254, 8 (quoted above): there the unnamed woman⁷⁸ was a second Dawn, here Cleopphantis is a second Aphrodite – πότνια Κύπρις and the like are not infrequent in Greek poetry, especially in epigrams⁷⁹. It is also worth noting that several Late Antique authors had embarked upon an allegorical, and sometimes moralizing, reading of the love story of Ares and Aphrodite⁸⁰: in light of this, playing the (imaginary) role of the two gods was even less indecent – though it surely was from the point of view of the priest (ἀρητήρ) of l. 10, whose funny mention just after πότνα adds a further point to the epigram.

⁷⁶ Note that Paul imitates here an epigram by Maccius/Maecius (*AP* V 133 = *GPh* 2494ff.) featuring in the last line the vocative πότνι(α) addressed to Aphrodite. The Homeric ὦ πόποι was interpreted as ὦ θεοί by some ancient grammarians (see Apion fr. 108 Neitzel and the other passages gathered by the editor); but I would not dare to think that in Paul's epigram l. 2 ὦ πόποι ~ l. 4 ναὶ μὰ σέ is another parallel between the girl and the gods.

⁷⁷ As all commentators but Viansino duly record (Waltz & Guillon, *Anthologie*, p. 125 n. 2, note the play on ἄρης at l. 3 – be it written Ἄρης or not). Paul more specifically alludes to ll. 340-342 of the Homeric passage, where Hermes declares that he would be glad to take Ares' place: δεσμοὶ μὲν τρις τόσσοι ἀπείρονες ἀμφὶς ἔχοιεν, / ὑμεῖς δ' εἰσορόωτε θεοὶ πᾶσά τε θέαιναί, / αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν εὐδοίμι παρὰ χρυσέῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ (Lucian, *Dial. deor.* 21, 2, had already reworked these lines).

⁷⁸ Possibly Galateia? See *AP* V 256 = 56 V.

⁷⁹ Cf. Sapph. fr. 1, 4 Voigt (πότνια); E. *Phaeth.* 229-232 Diggle = fr. 781, 16-19 Kannicht (τὰν ἐρώτων πότνιαν, τὰν παρθένους / γαμήλιον Ἀφροδίταν. / πότνια, σοὶ τάδ' ἐγὼ νυμφεῖ' αἰῖδω, / Κύπρι θεῶν καλλίστα); Ar. *Lys.* 833-834 (ὦ πότνια Κύπρου καὶ Κυθήρων καὶ Πάφου / μεδέουσ'), etc.; in epigram, Theoc.(?) *AP* VI 340, 5 = *HE* 3382; Leon. Tar. VI 293, 1 = *HE* 2301 and possibly VI 300, 6 = *HE* 2188; Macc. V 133, 6 = *GPh* 2499; anon. IX 601, 3 = *FGE* 1440; Iul. Aeg. VI 19, 4 (further passages in Bruchmann, *Epitheta*, p.68; Call. *Del.* 312 is doubtful: see Mineur, *Callimachus*, p.237-238 and 242).

⁸⁰ Agosti, "Due note" p.38-51 (with further literature) provides an excellent discussion of the topic.

23 With Paul the Silentiary, our story comes to an end⁸¹. Like the beautiful boys of Hellenistic and early Imperial pederastic epigram (Dioscorides, Meleager, Strato), his women enjoy both divine status and a dominant role: Cleopantis and others are at the same time deities and mistresses. Needless to say, this is just a literary game. Writing in a Christian (and proto-Byzantine) world, Paul surely did not aim at championing a true ideology of almighty love, such as that of the Roman elegists. But this holds true for Meleager too, and even more for Strato, who constantly updates the topics of homoerotic passion to his own light-hearted, hedonistic perspective. That Paul knew Latin is, in itself, quite likely⁸²; whether he read Propertius and Ovid I am not sure⁸³, but I am confident that, as far as the praise of the beloved woman is concerned, his main source of inspiration was the tradition of Greek epigram⁸⁴ — especially pederastic. There he could find a full exploitation of the 'god-and-master' motif that he adapted to his own celebration of a number of *puellae divinae*⁸⁵. The poets of Agathias' circle, or at least some of them, fiercely (and predictably) blamed homosexual love⁸⁶; yet they owed to its literary exploitation much more than they would have confessed⁸⁷.

⁸¹ I will not venture into Byzantine poetry from the 7th century onwards – at least, not for now. Let me just say that Nicetas Eugenianus, using πόντια in his verse novel (*Dros. et Char.* III 263, 268, 273, 278, 283, 288, the refrain of Barbition's first hexameter song: φίλεε Βαρβιτώνια, εὐχρὸε πόντια Μυρτώ), probably had Paul's epigrams in mind. Note that two blatant imitations of 6th century poems immediately precede Barbition's song (ll. 243-250 are almost a paraphrase of Paul. Sil. AP V 259 = 77 V.; ll. 251-254 rework Maced. AP V 224-225 = 2-3 Madden, maybe with an eye to Paul. Sil. AP V 291, 5 = 65, 5 V. too; see Viansino, *Paolo Silenziario*, p. 124; Conca, *Nicetas Eugenianus*, p. 87-88; Madden, *Macedonius*, p. 118).

⁸² On the knowledge of Latin in the Greek world of the Late Antiquity, see Rochette, *Le latin*; De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p. 101-104 (quoting earlier literature), and now especially Cameron, "Old and New Rome".

⁸³ De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p. 110-111, is inclined to think that he did; other scholars, including Cameron, *Porphyrius*, p. 88 n. 1, and Degani, "Paolo Silenziario", p. 164 (also in "Considerazioni", p. 52 = 680), were more sceptical. On the far more optimistic views of Viansino, Schulz-Vanheyden and others, see above, n. 67. Mary Whitby, "Paul the Silentiary", made a strong case for Paul's knowledge of Claudian's Latin poetry.

⁸⁴ Paul's debt to Greek epigram of the late Hellenistic and Imperial ages is rightly stressed by Corbato, "La poesia", p. 238 = 335; De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p. 106. Morelli, "Sul papiro", p. 418 n. 2 also argues that Paul and the other poets of Agathias' circle derived their erotic themes from Imperial epigram, not from elegy – be it Greek or Latin.

⁸⁵ On this one point I do not entirely agree with my friend and colleague Claudio De Stefani, "Paolo Silenziario", p. 107 n. 24 (see also p. 109 n. 30). He is surely right in stating that Paul followed in the footsteps of earlier erotic poetry on a formal ground, not on an ideological one; but this applies, in my view, to divinization as well, by Paul's time nothing but a widely attested literary motif – just like ancient mythology, to which he and his fellow poets often recur.

⁸⁶ See Agath. AP V 278, X 68 = 52-53 Viansino; V 302, 8 = 54, 8 V.; Eratosth. Schol. V 277 (with Mattsson, *Untersuchungen*, p. 57-58, and Schulte, *Paralipomena*, p. 40). Women preferred to boys appear here and there in late Hellenistic and early Imperial epigram (Mel. AP V 208 = 4046-9; XII 41 = HE 4504-7; Marc. Arg. V 116 = GPh 1345-50, with Sens, "One thing", p. 384-390; Rufin. V 19 = 6 Page; see Floridi, *Stratone*, p. 139-140), but it is only in the Christian world of Agathias' *Cycle* that pederastic love becomes a true sin.

⁸⁷ I am deeply grateful to the conference organizers, Eleonora Santin and Laurence Foschia, for their kind invitation, continuous support, and great patience; to all the participants in the conference itself, for their useful suggestions; and to the participants in a seminar organized by the Associazione Italiana di Cultura Classica (Florence, 12th December 2011), for discussing with me an Italian version of my paper. Warmest thanks are also due to Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, Claudio De Stefani, Lucia Floridi, Alexander Sens, and Francesco Valerio, who read this paper in advance of publication and commented on it. All the remaining shortcomings are mine.

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