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Commenting Anacreon

This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

Published Version:

Camillo Neri (2022). Commenting Anacreon. THE CLASSICAL REVIEW, 72(2), 415-419
[10.1017/S0009840X22000245].

Availability:

This version is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11585/898891> since: 2022-11-02

Published:

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X22000245>

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This is the final peer-reviewed accepted manuscript of:

Camillo Neri, COMMENTING ANACREON in *The Classical Review*, 72 (2), 2022, pp. 415-419.

The final published version is available online at:

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X22000245>

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COMMENTING ANACREON

Anacreon of Teos. Testimonia and Fragments, I (Introduction, Text, and Translation) – II (Commentary). Ed. and transl. by HANS BERNSDORFF, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2020, xii-875 pp., £ 225,00, ISBN 9780199562046 (hardback).

Nec, siquid olim lusit Anacreon, / delevit aetas (Hor. *Carm.* 4.9.9f.). In the battle against the ravages of time, Hans Bernsdorff's Anacreontic commentary represents a worthy weapon.

It is apparent already from the *Preface* (pp. vs.) that the focus of the book will be on the commentary, which indeed occupies pp. 255-861 of the entire work. This is further demonstrated by the fact that B.

a) mostly – although not slavishly – keeps to Page's selections and choices for the melic and iambic fragments (the equivalence of the latter with West, *IEG*, is given only for *PMG* 425 = fr. iamb. *1 W.²) and to West's ones for the elegiac fragments; from Page are derived e.g. the erroneous γένεο in *PMG* 357.9 (obviously to be corrected in γενέο, imperative) and ὀρσόλοπος in *PMG* 393; in *PMG* 402b, instead of using the minor type (which his own criteria calls for), B. adopts Page's textual arrangement, which he himself defines as «misleading» (p. 654 n. 81); in *PMG* 417 he uses Page's line-numbering while adopting a different colometry, and in *PMG* 445 he comments on Page's text (pp. 789-791) while making a more restrictive textual choice; as for the elegiac fragments, in the proposed layout, neither the fr. eleg. 3 (that puts into colometry the prosastic structure of Page, *PMG* 504 or the iambic by Rozokoki 2006:88), nor fr. eleg. 5 (with Θρηκίης) fit in to the elegiac rhythm;

b) has chosen not to reorder and number the fragments;

c) limits himself only to the essential notations in the apparatuses, and collects only the *testimonia* «for Anacreon's life» («but not for the form or content of his poetry», p. 93), without critical apparatus.

The *General Introduction* (pp. 1-56) is very well structured, thoroughly documented and bibliographically up to date (see pp. 59-91). Well-balanced and convincing are the observations concerning *Life* (pp. 1-11), with substantial confirmation of the traditional chronology and the status of Anacreon as a 'wandering' court poet; *idem* for *Themes* (pp. 11-16), with the predominance – perhaps due not only to the choices of tradition – of the erotic theme, alongside the divine and purely symposial ones, and their mingling; *Models* (pp. 16-18), with the right emphasis on the role of the *Odyssey* and Sappho; *Performance* (pp. 18-22); *Language and style* (pp. 22-28): very opportune even if apparently incongruous seems to me the choice of not normalizing the language of Anacreon in a more or less Ionic sense, unless in the presence of a clear documentary attestation (cf. *PMG* 431 μοκλόν but καθεύδει); *Metre* (pp. 29-31), with the obvious exclusion of the elegiacs and iambs κατά στίχον, and with the analysis of the iambo-trochaic, aeolo-choriambic (mostly glyconic based) and ionic metres; *Reception* (pp. 31-45), in which very little space is given to the Byzantine, medieval and modern legacy (p. 45); and *Fate of the text* (pp. 45-54), from pre-Hellenistic times to Alexandrian editions and beyond. The *Introduction* concludes with editorial issues such as *Orthography* (with plausible choices about 'contractions'), *Presentation of the fragments* (p. 54) and *Excluded fragments* (pp. 54-56). Questionable is the choice of using the *circellus* not for *dubia*, but as a signal that a word used in any form by Anacreon is put into the text in the basic form (cf. *PMG* 446A-C, 461, 467-474, 477, 479, 480, 482-485, 487); accordingly, I would have prudently done so also for *PMG* 448, 453-456, 458, 462, 463, 464, 466, 481, 486; otherwise, I might have limited myself to pointing out An.'s words in the quoting context, as B. does in *PMG* 444 (where, however, μύρων ἀνάπλεως καὶ γεγανωμένος is unlikely to be An.'s sequence: cf. Leo

2015, 187s.). Not very convenient, also given the ‘Harvard-style’ adopted for the reference system, is the placement of the *Bibliography* (pp. 59-91: very complete, even though a chronological list of the Anacreontic editions is missing), which is preceded by a *List of Abbreviations* (pp. 57f.), in an internal position, between the *General Introduction* and *Text and Translation* (at about one third of the first volume).

The chapter *Text and Translation* (pp. 103-251) – which is preceded by a concise selection of *Testimonia* (pp. 93-101), with reference to Müller 2010 and to the announced complete collection by L. Bucceroni – offers

a) the mere diplomatic transcriptions (except for *P. Ryl.* 1.35 at p. 157), with apparatuses, of four papyri (*P. Oxy.* 3695, the very large 3722, 4454 and *P. Ryl.* 1.35) not included in *PMG* and *SLG* (pp. 105-157);

b) the text (sometimes preceded by a diplomatic transcription) and translation of fragments included in *PMG* and *SLG* (pp. 159-248);

c) the text and translation of the elegiac fragments (pp. 249-251).

While the notations of the apparatus (which have been suitably updated) are concise, the registration of the witnesses is broader, but most often the relationships of dependence between the witnesses are not indicated (as *e.g.* those between Athenaeus and Eustathius); also, there is no fragment-by-fragment metrical *mantissa*: rather, a metrical section for each fragment can be found in the commentary. The real added value of the work, however, is the translation, which appears consistently after the text (if complete and interpretable) and under the first witness of each fragment (the first two in *PMG* 446A), sometimes immediately after the Greek, sometimes at the end of the witness series (as *e.g.* for *PMG* 348).

After a very extensive commentary, the work ends with a *General Index* (pp. 863-868), an *Index of Greek and Latin Words Discussed* (pp. 869-871), and an *Index of Passages Discussed* (pp. 872-875): the first is very rich and well structured; the second includes combinations of particles such as δὲ δὴ and phrases such as ἐγὼ δέ, but records verbs sometimes in the inf., sometimes in the first person of the ind. pres.; the third is selective, obviously without Anacreon, but with the *Anacreontea*; the editors of the various authors are sometimes indicated and sometimes not, sometimes in brackets and sometimes without. There is no (complete) *Index verborum*, no *Index fontium*, which confirms the exegetical rather than strictly textual framework of the entire work.

Fully correct appears the choice not to include the epigrams among the genuinely Anacreontic texts (cf. p. 35), but perhaps – in these cases – short sections of *dubia* and *spuria* could have been included; different of course is the case of the *Anacreontea* (discussed in pp. 36-39), rightly excluded from the edition.

The habit of systematically publishing only diplomatic transcriptions of the papyri – except *PMG* 346 and 347, for which both the diplomatic transcription and the interpretative transcription are provided, albeit with some inconsistencies between one and the other, because traces or letters uncertain in the first are then given as certain in the second (cf. *PMG* 347 *passim*) – and of offering the *divisiones verborum* and the most reliable integrations only in the apparatus does not always allow one to distinguish at a glance between certain and conjectural elements; also, the apparatuses never give the alternative letters for an uncertain trace (but the commentary most often does), and this does not allow one *ictu oculi* to restrict the integrative choices, or to evaluate the plausibility of certain under-dotted letters and of certain supplements.

The apparatuses are not always rigorously constructed: *e.g.* in *P. Oxy.* 3722 fr. 2, the notations at ll. 4f. (Maehler) and 5 (Henry) should be connected, as they are (partially) alternatives for the same portion of text, while in the notation at ll. 8f. it is necessary to write «παρὰ Πυθομά]γδρου Maehler»; in *PMG* 357 (as in Page), the first, the sixth and the last apparatus notations relate non-homogeneous text segments (see also *PMG* 367,

371, comm. ad *PMG* 374 p. 528, 402c.2, 442, *SLG* 315B, fr. eleg. 2 W., etc.), and the third does not clarify to whom the lesson received in the text (πορφυρή) is to be attributed (Fick), as in *PMG* 361.1 (where ἐγὼ δ' ἄν οὔτ' is *lectio tradita* but with δ' by Casaubon preceding Barnes, who however accepts, perhaps rightly, the transposition δ' οὔτ' ἄν), or in 401.1 (where δηῖτε is by Bergk).

Above all, the habit of indicating supplements without naming the proponent of such a suggestion can be a little perplexing, though some help in attributing the supplements can be found in the commentary. Furthermore, the use of the formula «vd. comm.» (e.g. pp. 118f., 120, where Margaret Maehler's supplements are provided only in the commentary) does not necessarily render the apparatuses autonomous, nor does it facilitate their use, especially since the commentary is part of a separate volume. The same goes for notes such as «cf. Bernsdorff 2011» in the commentary, *passim*.

Conversely, the (attractive) idea that some fragments ought to be considered as part of the same compositions (*P. Oxy.* 3722 fr. 2.1 and *PMG* 454; *P. Oxy.* 3722 fr. 17 c. ii 3 and *PMG* 437; *PMG* 347 fr. 1 and 422; *PMG* 346 fr. 11+3 and 390; *PMG* 433 and 434) is only advocated for in the commentary (pp. 270-273, 287, 355, 607f., 767). Much in same way, the fact that in *PMG* 412 the final question mark was added by Bergk (1834), and that the attribution to Anacreon was proposed by Hermann (1816) is only specified in the commentary (pp. 683 n. 150, 684), without the apparatuses and *mantissae* of the fragments retaining trace of it.

Again, the (interesting) supplement ἀσήμω | [ὑπὲρ ἐρμάτων φορέομαι] χειμάζομαι (Maehler) for *P. Oxy.* 3722 c. i 3f. is proposed (correctly, but s.n.a.) in app. ad *PMG* 403.2, but not ad *P. Oxy. l.c.* (see however the commentary ad *l.* on p. 280). Even the semiography is not always consistent, and denounces B.'s dependence on the editions of the various *testimonia*: this is the case with the brackets that indicate expunctions, sometimes braces (see pp. 190, 194, 195, 203, 205, 245, 246, 247), sometimes square (see pp. 204, 220).

More in detail. *PMG* 349.1: actually Bergk writes δηῖτε Θαλυσίους. *PMG* 350: there are no compelling reasons, it seems to me, to put ἀνασεσυρμένην into text (B. also thinks it may be part of a poem in glyconics and pherecrateans on Baubo); better to space both ἀνασύρειν and ἀνασεσυρμένην in the witness (Phot. α 1687 Th.) or have them preceded by the *circellus*. *PMG* 351, 353 (and elsewhere) *Etymologicum Symeonis* is mentioned (following the example of Page) only for cod. V (ed. by Gaisford). *PMG* 355: I would translate “An. too uses...” (κέχρηται ... καὶ Ἄν-), and unify «Sud» and «Suda» (better in italics, as title). *PMG* 356(b).1: μηκέτ' is Mehlhorn's (1827:107) before Fick's (1888). *PMG* 357: among the witnesses, Hdn. *GG* III/1 79.13, 159.12; 1.10 must be added: the capitalization of Ἔρωτ' reflects an idiosyncratic interpretation of the term and of the infinitive δέχεσθαι, in my opinion unnecessary. *PMG* 377: The presence of δέ does not make immediately necessary the integration of a verb “to say” in the passive (e.g. λέγονται) before ἵπποθόρον δὲ Μυσοί, and the correction of εὔρειν in εὔρον (Bergk) would perhaps be more economical than positing for a complex syntax. *PMG* 379: I would have written παραπετέσθω all in a minor type and a spaced body (not only the ending), since there are many forms of the verb that An. may have used. *PMG* 388: See also (v. 8) Hesych. θ 1004 L.-Cunn. (unnoticed even in the commentary); for the final lacuna I had proposed (2011, 365) ἔκκαρείς (*cl. Ar. Ach.* 849f.), ‘perfectly shaved’. Coherent with the effective synthesis of the Anacreontean meters, undoubtedly consistent with the general approach (but certainly not the only possible one) is the interpretation of *PMG* 388 as composed by variously enlarged anacastic glyconics, rather than as anacastic and polyschematic choriambic tetrameters, as it still seems to me preferable, given the accentuated choriambic *incipit* of all the first two lines of each stanzas. Fr. 396: *Ceteris paribus* (cf. RFIC 144, 2016, 424), the arguments in favor of μή and against δὴ for v. 4 (pp. 632-636) all seem controversial and reversible, and the problem remains unsolved (μή, in any case, detracts *vis* from the image of boxing); asyndetic ἔνεικον at v. 3 is not translated. *PMG* 428: despite the fact that it is testified by Hephaestion and the presence of the incipitary δηῖτε, B. does not affix the beginning-poem sign (so also in *SLG* 315A, where δηῖτε appears and it is also certain that it is an *incipit*). *PMG* 437: the apparatus does not record the (adopted) variant κόκκυξ (*Et. Gen.* [J], *Et. Gud.* 333.22-24 not registered) : κόκυξ (*Et. Gen.* [AB], *Et. M.*).

Spatial limitations prevent me from engaging in a systematic analysis of the commentary, the best and largest part of the work (exemplary of this is the treatment of

PMG 388, on pp. 575-604), even if on occasion the same piece of information is repeated several times; the collection of *loci similes* may seem excessive; and there might be a need for greater conciseness and focus. In any case, B.'s notes are truly excellent, they do not evade textual problems, they are punctual in recognising essential issues (often treated in titled paragraphs, as is almost always the case for the meter, but without a fixed order), scrupulous in Realien's reconstruction, exhaustive in the word-for-word analysis, and refined in the detection of stylistic phenomena (in particular the sound figures): this is undoubtedly a work of high philology.

Only a few marginal remarks: PMG 346: though the commentary is masterful on the whole, the notes on fr. 1.13 λεωφ]όρε λεωφόρ' Ἡρο[τ]ίμη (anaphora can also be significant) seems substantially in dissonance with the ancient exegesis of *Suda* μ 1470 A. and Eust. *II*. 1088.38f., 1329.34f. (which document the offensive character of the epithet); fr. 4: as regards the *interpretatio metrica* (see pp. 330f.), the position of the particles in vv. 1, 7, 8 advises against solution (i) (for which we would have punctuation three times after the first element of the verse) in favor of (ii) or (iii) (in which the punctuation would constitute the central *caesura*); the use of the aorist form ἐκφυγών (l. 4), in my view, contradicts the idea that the verb refers «to a state of liberation from Eros that has not yet been reached» (p. 337). PMG 357: it doesn't seem so obvious to me that «one of the main oppositions of the poem is that between wild nature and civilization» (p. 438): rather, the erotic value is indubitable, especially if one interprets the last infinitive – with a more natural syntax and like the ἐπακούειν of l. 8, in turn connected to ἔλθ', “come and/to listen” – as iussive and as connected (δ') to γενέο σύμβουλος, “advise him and make him accept/to accept” («Be [...] and admit», instead, B. p. 173); all of this advises against «the identification of Cleobulus and Eros» (pp. 438f. and *passim*) as well as his ‘assimilation’ to Dionysus (p. 449 and *passim*), and against the idea that the subject of δέχεσθαι is Dionysus and not Cleobulus (p. 452: Meleag. *HE* 4270, appropriately underlined by B., confirms the traditional interpretation of δέχεσθαι), which also has repercussions on PMG 358, where B. imagines (prudently, but without too much foundation) that the ἄλλη τις (κόμη) of the last verse is that of Eros (p. 456). PMG 395: As for ‘dying at a young age is second-best etc.’-motif, see also Soph. *OC* 1224-1227; certainly too confident is the statement about Sapph. fr. 58 V. that «since the publication of a Cologne Papyrus [...] the poem in almost complete, and we now know where the poem starts and ends» (p. 619), because the question of *P. Oxy.* 1787 fr. 1's additional tetrastic is still open (this also has exegetical consequences for the interpretation of PMG 395, whose similarity with Sappho is a bit overestimated at pp. 619-621). As for the *topos* of the “way of no return”, its origins can be traced back to a near-eastern *koine* that transcends the boundaries of the Greek world: cf. e.g. *Katabasis of Ishtar* (1,5s.: see B.R. Foster, *Before the Muses. An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, I-II, Bethesda, Md. 1993, 403-409), *2Sam* 12,23, *Job* 7.9, 10.20-22, 16.22, etc.

There are more inconsistencies and typos than one might have expected, curiously especially with Greek accents, but they can all be remedied simply enough, and are more than understandable in a work of this size.

Ultimately, Anacreon, the (paid) poetic commentator of the luxurious comforts of the courts of the last archaic age, can now finally enjoy a complete, updated, modern commentary, devised by a competent and intelligent philologist, ἀντ' ἐρατῶν δόρων τῶνδε χάριν θέμενος (*AP* 346,2 = *FGE* 495).

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