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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

ON THE NOBLE AND THE BEAUTIFUL: AN ESSAY IN THE POETRY OF SAPPHO AND TYRTAEUS

This thesis contends that Sappho's Fr. 16 is intended to oppose the definition of the term *καλόν* in Tyrtaeus' elegies 10 and 12. An analysis of Tyrtaeus 10 reveals the poet's attempt to institute a new civic courage in Sparta, one shaped by an understanding of honor and shame centered around the young man's willingness to fight and, if necessary, die in battle. Remarkably, the successful practitioner of this courage will literally come to sight differently in the eyes of his fellow citizens. In Tyrtaeus 12, this courage is more clearly defined as τὸ κάλλιστον, the focus of a new system of virtue that ranks the good of the common above all else, but that provides as much recompense for the warrior and his family as advantage for the city. Sappho's response in her Fr. 16 is to reject any understanding of the *καλόν* that relies on convention, replacing it with the personal predilections of each individual. As she demonstrates, however, this view contains severe limitations and is inherently destructive of the city. The "debate," conducted by both poets partly through Homeric allusions, continues the opposition between public and private begun in Homer.

KEYWORDS: Tyrtaeus, Sappho, Greek Lyric Poetry, Beautiful, Courage

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April 23, 2008

ON THE NOBLE AND THE BEAUTIFUL:
AN ESSAY IN THE POETRY OF SAPPHO AND TYRTAEUS

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April 28, 2008

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THESIS

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University of Kentucky

2008

ON THE NOBLE AND THE BEAUTIFUL:
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THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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Louisville, Kentucky

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2008

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To the memory of my sister,

Cathy Jeanne Dworin

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

*Negat Cicero, si duplicetur sibi aetas, habiturum
se tempus quo legat lyricos.*¹ (Sen. Ep. 49.5)

With this sentiment Cicero surely intended to express more than a distaste for the rhythms of lyric meters. The great orator of republican Rome was hardly partial to the personal themes and private passions in what he termed the “neoteric” poetry of Catullus and others of his own day.² He must therefore have meant to show his preference for writings devoted to the public spiritedness needed in civic life over those that, like many of the Greek lyric poems, bring our most personal longings into public discourse. Though he may well have excluded the stern, martial verses of Tyrtaeus from his embargo, the musings of Sappho no doubt languished unread in his study. Indeed, a contrast between any two poets could hardly be clearer. Separated perhaps by a generation and a few days' sail across the Aegean, they spoke from opposite poles of the poetic universe, Sappho of love and Tyrtaeus of war. On the topic of τὸ κάλλιστον, however, they managed for a single moment to converge. If one poet invoked “the most beautiful” and the other “the most noble” while voicing the same word, this is precisely the point. Not only the word's content but also its meaning was in dispute. It will be our thesis here that Sappho meant her poem οἱ μὲν ἰππήων (Fr. 16 L-P) to respond in opposition to Tyrtaeus 12 (and 10) in virtually every respect.

Of Tyrtaeus himself almost nothing certain is known. He is said to have “flourished” in the second Olympiad (640-637),³ but even his Spartan birth was questioned as early as Plato's *Laws*, in a passage that seems to have originated the widely-repeated claim that he was in fact an Athenian schoolmaster who emigrated or was recruited to Sparta.⁴ His poems, at any rate, appear to commemorate the Spartan victory in the Second Messenian War,⁵ a triumph that consigned the citizens to lives of constant vigilance. The Helots, the newly-enslaved and brutally-treated inhabitants of conquered Laconian and Messenian lands, greatly outnumbered the Spartans themselves and posed an ever-present threat of rebellion. The consequent need for protection of the city, along with occasional forays to expand their holdings within the Peloponnese, led the Spartans to devote themselves thoroughly to training for military combat. Famously, they adopted a program of all-consuming military education for all young men, as well as common meals for adult males. Plutarch portrays for us a remarkable revolution that put these and other reforms into place, and he assigns their origin to the Spartan Lycurgus, whom he describes in somewhat mythical terms.⁶ The resulting city became a model of patriotic unity and the spirited pursuit of honor, both for the occasional Athenian contemporary and for their admirers like Rousseau in later ages.⁷ Tyrtaeus' verses, variously said to have been sung before, during and even after battles,⁸ were an integral part of the new city, and even the few that survive can provide useful insight into Spartan ways.

1 “Cicero declared that even if his lifetime were doubled, he would not have time to read the (Greek) lyric poets.” All translations in this essay are my own unless otherwise indicated.

2 *ad Atticus* 7.2.1.

3 *Suda* 4.610.5 Adler. As Gerber notes, Jerome “dates him to 633-632.”

4 *Pl. Leg.* 629a-b; *Lycurg. in Leocr.* 106, *Diod. Sic.* 8.27.1-2.

5 Tyrtaeus' verses are, as Jaeger puts it (1966, 105), “our only authentic source” for this war.

6 *Plut. Lyc.* 1.1 and *passim*.

7 *Thuc.* 1.18; *Xen. Lac. Pol.* 1.1-2; *Arist. Pol.* 1294b14-33; Rousseau, *Emile* (1966, 39).

8 *Lycurg. in Leocr.* 107; *Ath.* 14.630f.

Sappho's poetic legacy may be slightly more extensive than that of Tyrtaeus and her life a bit more documented, but there is no shortage of controversy over either. She was born on Lesbos, probably around 630,⁹ and had become famous by the time she was exiled to Sicily around 600 during the reign of Pittacus. Her poems were collected into six books by the Alexandrians,¹⁰ though only a few fragments survive. From the verses we have, we gather that she was surrounded by young women. An earlier notion that this arrangement amounted to a kind of “finishing school” for the daughters of wealthy Greek families has been discredited, but whether she might have been the leader of a ritual community or of choruses is unclear.¹¹ The fact that her surviving love poems almost exclusively mention girls suggests this was her preference, though the question is disputed. Since at least one book of her collection was devoted to wedding poems (*epithalamia*), it appears the girls in her circle went on to families of their own elsewhere.

Both poets, along with their lyric contemporaries, stand in a kind of “middle period” in the use of the words καλόν and αἰσχρόν. By the fifth century, the terms were generally used as opposites, the first as the term of highest praise for a man's actions, the second as the concomitant expression of opprobrium. This was not the case in Homer, for while he and his characters both use αἰσχρόν “to decry defeat” in battle or other competition, καλόν praises not victory but actions or speeches that are simply appropriate in a given context.¹² The term καλόν, then, had taken on its role of highest honor at some point during the intervening two or three centuries. As we will see, both Tyrtaeus and Sappho use τὸ κάλλιστον in this latter sense. Their dispute is over how the judgment is to be made. Sappho wishes to oppose Tyrtaeus' establishment of the city's defense and those activities that contribute to it as most praiseworthy. She does not look to actions that are “appropriate” as in Homer, for appropriateness is by convention. She opposes the imposition of any convention at all on our evaluations of actions or of things. In Sappho's eyes, the city or regime is to be replaced as arbiter of praise and blame by one's own, personal desires. The resulting debate thus concerns the very priority of the public over the private. Whether in the indignant protestations of Achilles over Agamemnon's insistence on his own authority or in Paris' dispute with Hector over the value of *eros*, this conflict had never been far beneath the surface even of Homeric thought. Perhaps it was Tyrtaeus' distillation and legitimation, we might say, of Agamemnon's claim that induced Sappho to respond as forcefully and profoundly as she did.¹³ In any case, the controversy she began lived on, underlying every aspect of ancient thought.

It must be admitted that in our age we find something peculiar in speaking of a serious debate between poets. We have come to think of poetry as an expression of emotions or moods rather than of thoughts, and where thoughts intrude we are unaccustomed to press them for evidence of rigorous thought or consistency. Such a medium seems to us more suited to flights of reverie than to debate. Nonetheless, this essay contends that both

9 While the Suda dates her to the 42nd Olympiad, for example, it does not tell us whether this is a *floruit* or a birth date. As a result of similar uncertainties, Winkler (162) reports, Wittig and Zeig “in their *Lesbian Peoples: Material for a Dictionary* devote a full page to Sappho. The page is blank.”

10 See the discussion by Page, 112-119.

11 “Sappho taught [her pupils] that their present experiences of love, enhanced by song and volatilised by memory, would let them recognise beauty later on, in all of its various forms (Burnett 1983, 225).” On Sappho's group as *thiasos*, see Parker (1993); as choruses, see Lardinois (1994).

12 Adkins (1960), 44.

13 Race (1989, 24), comparing Sappho 16 and Alcaeus 42 in the context of Homer, says: “What is held in tension in the *Iliad* is split apart by the two lyricists.” This remark may be even more appropriate to the relation between Sappho and Tyrtaeus.

Tyrtaeus and Sappho wished to convey specific and rather complex arguments through their poetry. Partly because they wrote in verse, these arguments are not as obvious as they might have been in prose. In the execution of their intentions, however, they were able to employ the tools all poets share. And since the poets we are discussing lived a century or more after Homer, they could make allusions to his plots, his characters, his epithets, and even his characteristic or idiosyncratic words in a way that might prompt associations in their listeners or readers.¹⁴

All poets make representations, or images. Some images, in the form of similes and metaphors, are a means of associating “this” thing with “that” one. A poet may apply the characteristics of one member of a species, for example, to another.¹⁵ In Sappho's Fr. 1, the goddess Aphrodite is given many of the attributes that Homer assigns to the goddesses Athena and Hera as they attempt to influence the Trojan War. Sappho speaks, asking Aphrodite to become her “ally” for the purpose of causing her beloved the pain the beloved has caused her in spurning her affections.¹⁶ In the *Iliad*, Athena had authorized the expulsion of Aphrodite from the battle at Troy, she and Hera had ridiculed Aphrodite's wounding by the mortal Diomedes, and Zeus had suggested that she restrict her activity to the realm of marriage.¹⁷ Sappho, we might say, wishes to elevate Aphrodite to the level of Homer's war goddesses, just as she bestows Homer's military gravity upon retaliation in matters of love.¹⁸

In another of Sappho's poems, it is at first unclear to whom certain characteristics are being assigned, but we are aided in resolving this question by a comparison that makes use of a kind of transitive property of equality. Sappho tells us in the first stanza of her Fr. 31 that an unnamed “that man (κῆνος ὄνηρ)” appears to her “equal to the gods (ἴσος θεοῖσιν).” She says this is so because he can sit opposite the woman the poet is addressing without suffering the physical manifestations of fear that the poet herself says she feels when she looks upon the woman. Sappho's symptoms are remarkably similar to those Homer uses in

14 This approach to Homeric allusion has been criticized, e.g. by Fowler (1968, 301): “A simple epic formula does not allow the assumption that allusion is being made to the fixed text of our *Iliad*, nor that the whole context of the *Iliad* in which the formula occurs is relevant to the understanding of Sappho's poem. A personal study of the subject has convinced me that early Greek lyric simply does not work in this two-dimensional way, requiring the audience to recall a foreign context—or indeed, half a dozen contexts—in order to appreciate a poem; nor is it easy to prove that when epic is invoked, Homer in particular is meant.” It is unclear why we should not allow more than one level of “appreciating” a poem, as we often find in Shakespeare and elsewhere. Since Marry (1979), a number of studies have seen allusions where Fowler dismisses them. Adkins (1985, 28-9) decided to “test the hypothesis that there are purposive allusions to Homer . . . in the poems of the early [Greek] elegists,” noting that “one 'allusion' may well be a coincidence, but more than a certain number of instances will render coincidence a less likely explanation than intent.” Even before Fowler, Nagy's analysis (1974, 139) of meter and diction in Sappho and Homer had led him to say that “Sappho was intensely aware of epic diction in general and of the *Iliad* in particular,” and that “structural similarities in the two genres present manifold opportunities for allusion.” Steinrück (“Homer bei Sappho?” 149) finds that some such claims “*ebensogut zum Resultat haben können, dass Sappho auf die jüngeren Epen ihrer Zeit (in diesem Fall die Kypria) anspielt, wie dass sie auf die Ilias Bezug nimmt.*”

15 Arist. *Poet.*, 21.7-10.

16 See Marry (1979), 72-4.

17 *Il.* 5.128-32; 418-30.

18 Bolling (286-7) interpreting Sappho 98a, suggests that Sappho “glorifies the rivalries among women by speaking of them in a way hitherto used of the heroes of the nation.” Winkler (169-72) sees the allusion to *Iliad* 5 here as Sappho's attempt to show a kind of alienation from male standards.

describing Paris' reaction when Menelaos comes forward to take up the Trojan's challenge to fight.¹⁹ In Homer, Paris is berated by his brother Hector for showing such cowardice, yet he responds with a defense of Aphrodite's gifts. Surely Sappho does not intend to compare herself to Paris. Homer's epithet for Paris in this story, "like the gods in looks (θεοειδής)"²⁰ provides us with another clue. If "that man" is godlike and Paris is godlike in a certain respect, could "that man" be Paris, facing Helen? If so, Sappho has raised Paris' status in her characterization of him, dismissing Homer's qualifications regarding his divinity.²¹ She has taken Paris' side in his argument with Hector, just as she has herself replaced him as blameworthy, though on other grounds. Not courage in the face of death but steadfastness while gazing on surpassing beauty would be her own test of praiseworthiness.²²

In these examples, Sappho's dispute is with the portrayal of mores in Homer. We will see that Tyrtaeus uses Homeric allusion as well to criticize and alter the configuration of courage as understood by the Achaeans and Trojans portrayed in epic. Sappho in turn, in her Fr. 16, alludes to both poets while throwing down her gauntlet of rejection to Tyrtaeus. We will not attempt henceforth to characterize each type of metaphor and allusion or the use made of them. It is our aim merely to begin to elucidate a forgotten controversy of the utmost seriousness, carried on by two poets whose worth as thinkers has for too long gone unappreciated.

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19 Sappho Fr. 31.1-9. Compare 31.6, // 3.31; 31.13-14, // 3.34; 31.14-15, // 3.35.
20 // 3.38-57, 65-7; // 3.16.

21 Burnett (238) takes the man's comparison to the gods as a statement of his happiness and the fact that he "caps all the victors, bridegrooms and initiates put forward by the rest of the world as examples of ultimate felicity." She argues further (236) that the woman is deified here as well, due to the "almost Euclidean" proof that "she whom the equal of the gods treats with equality must stand to the immortals just as he does." Robbins (1980, 260) suggests that ἴσος θεοισιν (1) should be contrasted with τεθνάκην (15) as an assertion of the man's virtual immortality compared with Sappho's reaction.

22 Furley (13, 14) comes close to this view, though he does not recognize the allusion to Paris: "The man is 'godlike' because he does *not* succumb to the girl's charms even when exposed to their full force at such close proximity," and "by transferring the standards of epic valour to the subject of love, Sappho creates an ironical effect: the man has heroic stature because he can stand her girlfriend's beauty when close." (Emphasis in original.) Paris and Helen meet face to face in Homer only once, after Paris has failed his test of combat with Menelaos and been rescued by Aphrodite, who whisks him from the battlefield to Helen's bedroom. Helen's reaction is to berate Paris as strongly as had Hector, until Aphrodite assists Paris in seducing his reluctant wife. (// 3.390-4, 373-83, 421-447) In this light, κῆνος ὤνηρ would appear to be Paris sitting across from Helen in her room at that moment. Sappho's elevation of Paris' praiseworthiness thus takes Paris' side in his argument with Helen as well as in that with Hector. Rissman [1983, 7] finds an allusion in Sappho 1 to Aphrodite's role in the *Iliad* passage, where the goddess is called upon to cause someone to love the poet "even if unwilling" (κῶυκ ἐθέλοισα, 24). Steinrück (140), though skeptical (often with good reason) of similar claims by Rissman and Dubois, appears to find this one convincing.

If any such be here—
As it were sin to doubt—that love this painting
Wherein you see me smeared; if any fear
Lesser his person than ill report;
If any think brave death outweighs bad life,
And that his country's dearer than himself;
Let him alone, or so many so minded,
Wave thus, to express his disposition,
And follow Marcius.

Coriolanus I, vi.

As for (the virtue) Tyrtæus praised especially,
though it is καλή and has been arrayed sharply
by the poet, one would most correctly say that it is
fourth in number and fourth in its capacity for honor.

Pl. *Leg.* 630b5

Part I: TYRTÆUS

Chapter 2: The Warrior as καλόν (Tyrtaeus 10W)

τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν περὶ ἧὶ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον·
τὴν δ' αὐτοῦ προλιπόντα πόλιν καὶ πύονας ἀγρούς
πτωχεύειν πάντων ἔστ' ἀνιηρότατον
πλαζόμενον σὺν μήτρι φίλῃ καὶ πατρὶ γέροντι 5
παισὶ τε σὺν μικροῖς κουριδίῃ τ' ἀλόχῳ.
ἔχθρὸς μὲν γὰρ τοῖσι μετέσσειται οὐς κεν ἴκηται
χρησιμοσύνη τ' εἰκῶν καὶ στυγερῆι πενήνῃ,
αἰσχύνει τε γένος, κατὰ δ' ἀγλαὸν εἶδος ἐλέγχει
πάσα δ' ἀτιμίη καὶ κακότης ἔπεται. 10
εἰ δ' οὕτως ἄνδρὸς τοι ἀλωμένου οὐδεμί' ὄρη
γίνεται οὐτ' αἰδῶς οὐτ' ὀπίσω γένεος.
θυμῶι γῆς πέρι τῆσδε μαχώμεθα καὶ περὶ παίδων
θνήσκωμεν ψυχῶν μηκέτι φειδόμενοι.
ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε, παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες, 15
μηδὲ φυγῆς αἰσχροῦς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου,
ἀλλὰ μέγαν ποιεῖτε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἐν φρεσὶ θυμόν,
μηδὲ φιλοψυχεῖτ' ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενοι·
τοὺς δὲ παλαιότερους, ὧν οὐκέτι γούνατι ἐλαφρά,
μὴ καταλείποντες φεύγετε, τοὺς γεραίους. 20
αἰσχρὸν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
κείσθαι πρόσθε νέων ἄνδρα παλαιότερον,
ἤδη λευκὸν ἔχοντα κάρη πολιόν τε γένειον,
θυμόν ἀποπνεῖοντ' ἄλκιμον ἐν κονίῃ,
αἵματόεντ' αἰδοῖα φίλαις ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντα— 25
αἰσchrά τά γ' ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νεμεσητὸν ἰδεῖν,
καὶ χρῶα γυμνοθέντα· νέοισι δὲ πάντ' ἐπέοικεν,
ὄφρ' ἐρατῆς ἤβης ἀγλαὸν ἄνθος ἔχη,
ἄνδρασι μὲν θηητὸς ἰδεῖν, ἐρατὸς δὲ γυναίξῃ
ζωὸς ἑών, καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών. 30
ἀλλὰ τις εὐ διαβὰς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι
στηριχθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς, χεῖλος ὀδοῦσι δακῶν.

To die is καλόν for a good man, to fall
among the front ranks fighting for his country.
But to leave behind his city and rich fields
for a life of begging is the most unbearable thing of all,
Wandering with his dear wife and aged father, 5
his poor little children and his lawful wife.
A hated enemy he becomes to those he is around, wherever he goes,
yielding to poverty and terrible need.
He shames his lineage and undoes its splendid image,
and every dishonor and baseness follow. 10
Since there is thus neither regard for a wandering man,
nor respect even for his line in times to come,
Let us fight for our land and let us die
for our children, no longer sparing our lives.
Fight, young men, while you remain beside one another, 15
Nor begin shameful flight or panic,

But make large and courageous the spirit in your chest;
 and be not in love with life as you fight with men.
 But as for the older ones, whose knees are no longer light,
 do not leave them, the elders, behind and flee; 20
 For this is shameful, to fall among the front ranks
 and lie before the young, for an older man,
 His hair now white and his beard grizzled,
 breathing out his courageous spirit in the dust,
 Holding his bloody genitals in his own hands— 25
 shameful these things are to the eyes and a reproach to see,
 And especially his naked skin. But for the young all is seemly,
 so long as he has the splendid flower of youth,
 A wonder to see for men, desirable to women
 while he lives, and καλός once he's fallen in the front ranks. 30
 Let each now take a stride and stay fixed
 upon the ground with both feet, biting his lip with his teeth.²³

Introduction

The courageous man, says Aristotle, acts for the sake of the noble or the beautiful (καλοῦ ἕνεκα), but the ordinary courage of the citizen is undertaken in pursuit of honor, which is something noble, and for fear of shame.²⁴ Tyrtaeus' tenth elegy, a protreptic for civic courage,²⁵ is in part an exposition on this principle, for at its core are exhortations to courage, buttressed fore and aft with arguments using threats of shame and appeals to the καλόν. The establishment of civic courage in Sparta requires that the individual courage of Homeric warriors be reshaped and refocused for the needs of the city. Tyrtaeus begins that reshaping in this poem through his treatment of shame and honor and their relation to ugliness and beauty. It is thus the very ambiguity between the “ethical” and “aesthetic” aspects of the καλόν and the αἰσχρόν that is essential to the poem's purpose, for Tyrtaeus aims here to create a kind of second nature for Spartan citizens. Yet in order to be effective, such a second nature cannot present itself as such. It must pervade all of experience so thoroughly as to seem like nature itself. This requirement accounts for the difficulty in understanding the poem, as making such an intention overt would have sacrificed the successful immediacy of its desired effect upon the citizens of Sparta. The aims of the poem are therefore stated implicitly and meant to be understood only rarely, while its action is felt, so to speak, insensibly.

The poem divides itself symmetrically into three Sections. The two outer sections consist of seven couplets each (1-14 and 19-32). The central section of two couplets (15-18)²⁶ is a general, abrupt command that applies to the two outer Sections. To better

²³ I have used the Oxford text of M. L. West (1992), with Francke's emendation of εἰ δ' for εἰθ at line 8. For reasons that will become apparent, the term καλόν has been left untranslated where it appears in the poems.

²⁴ Arist. *EN* 1115b23, 1116a17-19, 28-9, 36-7; Eustratius, *Comm. in Arist. Graeca*, 20.165.

²⁵ “If of a truth it be, as Milton says, the function of a poet ‘to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility,’ then Tyrtaeus, less by his specific maxims than by the spirit that his poems breathe, deserves an honored place among the bards whom Aristotle would have classed as ἠθικώτατοι, most serviceable for the formation of a virile and powerful temperament, most suited for the education of Greek youth (Symonds, 242).”

²⁶ It seems at first that lines 11-20, which contain all of the commands and exhortations in the poem, ought to form a section of their own. This is part of the reason that much of the scholarship on this poem has concerned the relation of exhortation to narrative and the division of the poem into sections or “stanzas.” As we show in the Appendix, however,

understand the poem as a whole, we must examine its parts.²⁷ In the process, we will find the need to trace a number of Tyrtaeus' Homeric allusions. As we will see, a brief analysis of the central Section (II) will help to orient us in our approach to the two others.

Section II (15-18): The Poem's Charge and the Task of the Poet

ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε, παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες,
μηδὲ φυγῆς αἰσχροῦς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου,
ἀλλὰ μέγαν ποιεῖτε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἐν φρεσὶ θυμόν,
μηδὲ φιλοψυχεῖτ' ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενοι·

Fight, young men, while you remain beside one another,
Nor begin shameful flight or panic,
But make large and courageous the spirit in your chest;
and be not in love with life as you fight with men.

The commands of the first couplet here, to fight and not to flee, are directed toward visible actions. The commands in the second couplet, by contrast, concern the inner transformation required within each warrior to ensure that the actions of the first are carried out. The spirited impulse (θυμός) in their breasts is to be reshaped, from “anger” as it often appears in Homer, to a disciplined, warlike (ἄλκιμον) courage in battle that places the warrior's fear of shame and love of honor above the natural wish to preserve his own life. The poem thus has no small ambition, and Sections I and III offer reasons to the warrior for undertaking great risk. Yet the transformation urged here, however logical its origin, is not meant to be one of intellect but of outlook.²⁹ Our examination of the two outer Sections and the relation between them will show that Tyrtaeus intends to affect the warriors internally but indirectly: he will transform their insides by changing what is external to them.

αἰσχροῦν γάρ (21) responds not to all of the exhortations in the central section but merely to the preceding couplet (19-20). As the order that governs the explanatory lines that follow, 19-20 thus belong more appropriately with the final section. Similarly, lines 11-12 sum up the preceding four couplets as an “explanation” for the exhortation in 13-14.

27 This is not the usual view of Tyrtaeus' poetry. Fraenkel, for example (1973,158), holds that “The content of Tyrtaeus' war poems are determined rather by will than by thought. Not infrequently the thought proceeds by leaps and the argumentation is vulnerable. In the instructions references to practical advantage are bound up with moral admonitions in a manner which offends our feeling for logical accuracy.” Adkins (1977, 86) comments similarly on the likelihood of intention in T's Homeric allusions. In contrast, we will argue that the emotional content of his surface rhetoric is accompanied by subtle but complex argument. 28 Verdenius (1969, 348) maintains that φόβος, (16) sometimes translated “fear,” is more properly “panic flight.”

29 Bruno Snell (1969, 9-11) adduces a number of Homeric passages in making the claim that Tyrtaeus gives to θυμός here (which he calls “impulse [Regung]” in Homer) the emotional and “moral” connotation assumed by the Homeric ἤτορ, “heart:” “. . . *erhalt . . . der θυμός die unbestrittene moralische Qualität, die ἤτορ bei Homer besitzt.*” While it may well be that, as he says, the warrior's “inside (Inneres)” is to be newly “configured (*gestalten*),” it is not the warrior alone who is to be expected to accomplish this task, nor does Tyrtaeus “intellectualize (*vergeistigt*)” θυμός by locating it in the φρένες. It is surely difficult, as Socrates would later agree, to separate civic courage from opinion (Pl. *Rep* 429c7-d1, 430c3; cf. Arist. *EN* 1115b11-13), but we will see in the next chapter Tyrtaeus' concern that it specifically not be based on intellectual understanding or even involve internal dialog.

The manner in which the commands to visible action in this Section are divided between the two couplets on either side of it indicates how we should interpret the situations in Sections I and III. The first couplet of Section II orders the young men to "fight as you remain in place" (μάχεσθε . . . μένοντες, 15), commands reinforced by their negatives in the next line, "and do not begin shameful flight or fear" (μηδὲ φυγῆς ἀισχροῆς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου, 16). In 19-20, the first couplet of Section III, the men are ordered not to flee and desert their elders: τοὺς δὲ παλαιότερους . . . μὴ καταλείποντες φεύγετε. In 13-14 the poet, speaking as one of them, urges the men to "fight and die for our children, no longer sparing our lives." Clearly, the men addressed in Section I are young enough to have families with small children (πάσι μικροῖς . . . κουριδίηι τ' ἀλόχοι, 6) whom they would not think of leaving behind in flight. Their fear, however, may still cause them to hold back in battle, a problem the poet must address. The unmarried men of Section II, more likely to flee, must be reminded of their responsibilities to their parents. Both groups, however, can appropriately be called νέοι (15).³⁰ We are now ready to look at the two outer Sections in detail.

Section I (1-14)

τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
 ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν περὶ ἧ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον·
 τὴν δ' αὐτοῦ προλιπόντα πόλιν καὶ πίονας ἀγρούς
 πτωχεύειν πάντων ἔστ' ἀνιηρότατον
 πλαζόμενον σὺν μήτρι φίλῃ καὶ πατρὶ γέροντι
 παισὶ τε σὺν μικροῖς κουριδίηι τ' ἀλόχῳ. 5
 ἔχθρὸς μὲν γὰρ τοῖσι μετέσσειται οὓς κεν ἴκηται
 χρησιμοσύνηι τ' εἰκῶν καὶ στυγερῇι πενίηι,
 ἀισχύνει τε γένος, κατὰ δ' ἀγλαὸν εἶδος ἐλέγχει
 πᾶσα δ' ἀτιμίη καὶ κακότης ἔπεται. 10
 εἰ δ' οὕτως ἀνδρὸς τοι ἀλωμένου οὐδεμί' ὥρη
 γίνεται οὐτ' αἰδῶς οὐτ' ὀπίσω γένεος.
 θυμῳ γῆς πέρι τῆσδε μαχώμεθα καὶ περὶ παίδων
 θνήσκωμεν ψυχέων μηκέτι φειδόμενοι.

To die is καλόν for a good man, to fall
 among the front ranks fighting for his country.
 But to leave behind his city and rich fields
 for a life of begging is the most unbearable thing of all,
 Wandering with his dear wife and aged father, 5
 his poor little children and his lawful wife.
 A hated enemy he becomes to those he is around, wherever he goes,
 yielding to poverty and terrible need.
 He shames his lineage and undoes its splendid image,
 and every dishonor and baseness follow. 10
 Since there is thus neither regard for a wandering man,
 nor respect even for his line in times to come,
 Let us fight for our land and let us die
 for our children, no longer sparing our lives.

³⁰ Verdenius (1969), 354. This is one of the questions that originally led to the theory that 10W is in fact two separate poems (6, 7D). See the Appendix.

The poem's first word, τεθνάμεναι (1), may be its most problematic, as we seem forced to choose between two mutually contradictory meanings. The normal idiomatic sense "to die" fits well with the participle at the end of the next line, μαρνάμενον: "It is καλόν to die . . . (while) fighting for one's country." With the aorist participle πεσόντα at the end of the first line, however, τεθνάμεναι becomes the result of this past, completed action; it must therefore have its true perfect sense of "to have died" or "to lie dead."³¹ Our choice between the alternative meanings for τεθνάμεναι presented by the two participles governs in turn the meaning of καλόν (1), the word around which the poem turns, for the first couplet would seem to mean either:

"It is a *noble* thing for a good man to *die* . . . while fighting for his country," or

"It is *beautiful* for a good man to *lie dead* . . . once he's fallen in the front ranks."

Unfortunately, however, since we do not have the option of suppressing one of the two participles as we have done here, each of these versions is ultimately nonsensical. Given the normal meaning of πεσόντα (translated "fallen" here) in a military context as "having died in battle,"³² we ought to translate (i) above as:

"to *die* once he's been killed fighting for his country."

And the dependence of the present participle μαρνάμενον on the infinitive τεθνάμεναι would force us to translate (ii) as:

"to *lie dead* while fighting once he's been killed."

By his use of these two participles, then, Tyrtaeus has so entangled the two "tenses" of τεθνάμεναι that we are forced to hover between the "ethical" and "aesthetic" sides of the term καλόν while allowing neither. Though his purpose in doing so is central to the understanding of the poem, it must await our analysis of all three Sections.

As an alternative (δ', 3) to death in battle, the second couplet (lines 3-4) sets the premise for the next three (lines 5-10). Since the risk in the case of these married men, as we have seen, is less flight than a lack of willingness to expose themselves in battle more than necessary, the danger is that such half-hearted fighting will result in a loss. If, as seems to be the case, the army is fighting a defensive battle, the best such a warrior can expect in a loss to the enemy is expulsion from the city.³³ He would thus be forced to leave behind his means of support (προλιπόντα πόλιν καὶ πίωνας ἄγρους, 3) for a life of begging (πτωχεύειν, 4), which is the most unbearable thing. His begging is presented as the

31 Thus while Verdenius (1969, 337) says the initial verb is "emphatic for die" and Prato (1968, 87) translates it "to lie dead (*giacer morti*)," each cites the corresponding participle and ignores the other. Prato considers τεθνάμεναι . . . πεσόντα here equivalent to πεσόντα κείσθαι in lines 21-2.

32 *Il* 4.463, 3.289, etc. Adkins (1977, 85), referring to the meaning "fall upon" or "attack" as at *Od* 24.526 (ἐν δ' ἔπεσον προμάχοις) suggests Tyrtaeus may wish to leave a hint of that sense here, in addition to the primary sense of "die in battle."

33 "Very probably, Tyrtaeus regarded exile as an inevitable alternative—imposed or voluntary—to slavery, if the enemy should succeed in prevailing (Prato 1968, 89)." As Prato notes, however (88-9), E. Schwartz "thought the exile voluntary in order to avoid military obligation or the risk of war." Verdenius argues (1969, 339) that the young man is not a deserter, but has been forced to leave "after his country has been occupied by the enemy."

inevitable response to his new poverty and general neediness,³⁴ which follows from the necessity of supporting his parents, small children and wife. Such a man can count on little help or guest-friendship from those he approaches, for this state of need will in fact cause him to be "hated" by them (7). His condition of homeless dependence will "shame his lineage" and "belie" what was before its "splendid image" (κατὰ δ' ἀγλαὸν εἰλῆδος ἐλέγχει, 9). Complete dishonor and a reputation for cowardice (ἀτιμίη καὶ κακότης, 10) are the certain result. To prevent such a fate, his only alternative is presented as fighting with abandon and, if necessary, dying to protect his family (12-13).

Section III (21-30)

| | |
|---|----|
| τοὺς δὲ παλαιότερους, ὧν οὐκέτι γούνατι ἑλαφρά, μὴ καταλείποντες φεύγετε, τοὺς γεραιούς. | 20 |
| αἰσχρὸν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα κείσθαι πρόσθε νέων ἄνδρα παλαιότερον, ἤδη λευκὸν ἔχοντα κάρη πολίων τε γένειον, θυμὸν ἀποπνεύοντ' ἄλκιμον ἐν κονίηι, | |
| αἵματόεντ' αἰδοῖα φίλαις ἐν χέρσιν ἔχοντα | 25 |
| αἰσχροῦ τὰ γ' ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νεμεσητὸν ἰδεῖν, καὶ χροῖα γυμνοθέντα· νέοισι δὲ πάντ' ἐπέοικεν, ὄφρ' ἔρατῆς ἤβης ἀγλαὸν ἄνθος ἔχηι, ἄνδρασι μὲν θηητὸς ἰδεῖν, ἔρατὸς δὲ γυναίξιν ζωὸς ἑὼν, καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών. | 30 |
| ἀλλὰ τις εὖ διαβὰς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι στηριχθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς, χεῖλος ὀδοῦσι δακῶν. | |

| | |
|---|----|
| But as for the older ones, whose knees are no longer light, do not leave them, the elders, behind and flee; | 20 |
| For this is shameful, to fall among the front ranks and lie before the young, for an older man, His hair now white and his beard grizzled, breathing out his courageous spirit in the dust, Holding his bloody genitals in his own hands— | 25 |
| shameful these things are to the eyes and a reproach to see, And especially his naked skin. But for the young all is seemly, so long as he has the splendid flower of youth, A wonder to see for men, desirable to women while he lives, and καλὸς once he's fallen in the front ranks. | 30 |
| Let each now take a stride and stay fixed upon the ground with both feet, biting his lip with his teeth. | |

The shame of the unmarried deserter, unencumbered by dependents, will spring not from his need (8) but from the fact that his aged father will have died before him in battle (21-2). This shame, however, quickly takes on a visual character, moving from the father's white hair and grizzled beard (23) to the peculiar description of the aged man holding his bloody genitals in his hands, a sight "shameful to the eyes and a reproach to see" (25-6).³⁵

34 χρημοσύνη . . . πενίη (8). For the distinction between these terms, see Verdenius (1969), 341-2.

35 Verdenius (1969, 353) speculates that such nakedness was regarded as "more disgraceful in the case of an old man," not due to "decency" but because it "depends on the aesthetic point of view, as the corresponding καλὸς (30) shows." As we will demonstrate

The ugliness of this scene is now contrasted with the attractiveness of the young, for whom "all is seemly" (27), so that a young man can be called *καλός* or, given the context (*θηητός ἰδεῖν*, 29), "beautiful" after falling in battle (30).

The terminology of shame and honor, then, looks to us "ethical" in the first Section and "aesthetic" in the third. The married wanderer and his family (3-10) incur shame, while the unmarried deserter of his aged father leaves behind an "ugly" sight that betokens the shame of the son's actions. Because each Section also contains a contrast with the consequences of failing to fight and die in battle, we are led to compare the beauty of the young, fallen warrior who stayed to fight in the third section (30) with the nobility of his action in the first (1-2).³⁶ Yet the parallel is a hollow one and the rhetoric ineffectual if, as we have read it, the honor of his death in the first section depends on his courage in battle, while the "splendid flower" of his youth (28) makes such valor irrelevant to his beauty in the third.³⁷ As a look at the Homeric antecedents of the passage will show, however, the reasons for the courageous warrior's visual description in the third Section as *καλός* both in life and after death are more complex than they appear.

The Beauty of Honor

As we translated the poem above, the series of clauses beginning in the middle of line 27 reads in part, "but for the young *all is seemly*, as long as he has the splendid flower of youth . . ." This considers *πάντ'* the subject of *ἐπέοικεν*. We might take our interpretive cue, however, from *Iliad* 22.62-73, the passage from which this phrase appears to have been adapted.³⁸ In his vain attempt to dissuade Hector from leaving the city to face Achilles, Priam has just foretold the scene of his own death, following those of his wife and sons, when his dogs will "savagely tear" his newly-killed body, then "lap up my blood in a mad fury." He now continues with the half-line that apparently inspired Tyrtaeus 10.27: *νέω δέ τε πάντ' ἐπέοικεν . . . κείσθαι* (*Il.* 22.71-3). Here *κείσθαι* must be the subject of *ἐπέοικεν*, and *πάντα* becomes its adverb: "but for a young man it is altogether seemly (once maimed and killed in battle) to lie (on the ground)."³⁹ The syntax of Tyrtaeus 10.21-2 is similar: "This is shameful, for an older man who's fallen among the front ranks to lie before the young" (*αἰσχρὸν γάρ δὲ τοῦτο, μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα κείσθαι πρόσθε νέων ἄνδρα παλαιότερον*). Here the adjective *αἰσχρὸν* is joined to the subject (the infinitive clause *ἄνδρα κείσθαι*, in apposition shortly, however, other considerations are involved.

36 On the uses of *καλόν* and *αἰσχρὸν* in the poem, Adkins (1960, 163) remarks: "We might be tempted to translate the earlier instances by 'noble' and 'shameful,' the latter by 'beautiful' and 'ugly.' But the point of the poem would be lost: the later instances too, though they are distinguished as '*aischron* to the eyes,' act as motives for and against action in *precisely the same way* as the former ones." (Emphasis in original.)

37 Of the visual description in lines 27-30, Adkins (1977, 96) dismisses Tyrtaeus' claim as "a rhetorical trick, since there is no reason to suppose that a youthful warrior when dead is significantly more attractive to behold than is an old one."

38 Prato (1968, 14) states flatly that 10.21f was "inspired by" *Il.* 23.71. Though the two passages have long been linked, Verdenius (1969, 354) gives a summary of the arguments in favor of the priority of Homer and Tyrtaeus, respectively. His own, "the fact that Tyrtaeus in general is strongly influenced by epic language suggests . . . that in the passage, too, Homer was his model" carries some weight. In any case, more recent attempts at dating Homer would put him a century or so earlier than Tyrtaeus.

39 As Verdenius notes (1969, 354), Leaf took *πάντα* as the subject at *Il.* 23.71, while "it is more natural" in both that passage and Tyrtaeus 10.27 to take "*κείσθαι* as the subject and *πάντα* as an adverb." Prato (1968, 99), taking 10.27 as a "more brisk" imitation of *Il.* 23.71, seems to apply Leaf's reading to Tyrtaeus as well.

to τοῦτο) by the understood verb <ἔστι>: ἄνδρα κείσθαι. . . <ἔστι> αἰσχρόν. Given that the intervening two and a half verses consist of three participial phrases modifying ἄνδρα in line 22, followed by a kind of interjection of a line and a half,⁴⁰ our clause at 26 can be read as parallel with that in 21-2, sharing the infinitive κείσθαι (22) as subject. By this reading, it is shameful (or "ugly") for an older man to lie before the young, dead and maimed by war; but for young men to lie dead in such a state is altogether seemly:

τοῦτο (ἄνδρα παλαιότερον κείσθαι) <ἔστι> αἰσχρόν
 . . . νέοισι δὲ <κείσθαι> πάντ' ἐπέοικεν.

The series of conditions underlined below makes lines 28-30 even more difficult:

(. . . νέοισι δὲ πάντ' ἐπέοικεν,
 ὄφρ' ἐρατῆς ἤβης ἀγλαὸν ἄνθος ἔχηι,
 ἄνδράσι μὲν θηητός ἰδεῖν, ἐρατός δὲ γυναίξι
 ζῶος ἐών, καλός δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών. (27-30)

(. . . but for the young it is altogether seemly,
As long as he has the splendid flower of lovely youth,
 A wonder to see for men, desirable to women
While living, and καλός once he's fallen among the front ranks.

In this neutral translation, it looks as if the second condition, "while living," might govern both characterizations in line 29, "marvelous to see for men" and "lovely to women,"⁴¹ making the combination a counterpart to his status as καλός in death (30). Once again, we must look to the Homeric antecedent. When Achilles had killed Hector and stripped his armor, "the other sons of the Achaians ran up around him, and they wondered at the physique and marvelous appearance (θηήσαντο φυήν καὶ εἶδος ἀγητόν) of Hector" (22.367-370).⁴² The men who gaze at Tyrtaeus' warrior have a similar experience. Considering the implied subject of the second half of Tyrtaeus 10.27 (ἄνδρα . . . κείσθαι), the warrior is "seemly" when he lies dead and covered with wounds, so long as he is young. While death in battle cannot confer such grace upon the aged, neither will youth alone bestow beauty. How, then, can the plain warrior be "desirable to women" (29) before his wounding and death?

After Achilles' maltreatment of Hector's corpse and Priam's lament, Homer has Hecabe contrast her current sorrow with her son's former glory: "Why should I live now?" she wonders aloud in her address to an absent Hector, "who day and night were my pride in the town and a boon to Trojan men and women throughout the city who took you for a god" (II 22.431-5). She continues:⁴³

ἦ γὰρ καὶ σφι μάλα μέγα κῦδος ἔησθα
 ζῶος ἐών· νῦν αὖ θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κίχάνει

for you were indeed a great glory to them as well
While you were alive; but now death and fate have overtaken you.
 As the living Hector's godlike status in the city stemmed from his heroic actions in its

40 ἔχόντα, 23; ἀποπνεύοντ', 24; ἔχόντα, 25. As West's dash at the end of line 25 indicates, a parenthetical statement or interjection extends from 26 to the middle of 27.

41 So Faraone (2005, 320) and Fraenkel (1973, 156).

42 While the adjective θηητός is not found in Homer (Adkins 1977, 93), it appears to have been derived from the Homeric verb.

43 II 22.435-6

defense, so the Spartan warrior's courage in battle accounts for his attraction to women if he survives.⁴⁴ In Tyrtaeus 10, we can now see that the warrior's situation of "having fallen among the front ranks" (μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα, 20) accompanies the infinitive κείσθαι in lines 21-2, the subject of ἐπέοικεν (27), as a condition. The three characterizations in lines 29-30 thus share a dependence on valiant action in war. With such an admixture any young man, however disfigured in death or plain in life, will come to sight in a new way among his fellow citizens: "A wonder to see for men, lovely to women while living, and καλός once he's fallen among the front ranks." His past action, once it is understood as noble, has an effect upon his actual perception by others. We can now see that the paradox of the opening couplet—in which neither the beauty of the dead warrior nor the nobility of his death while fighting can fully be extracted from the poet's words—is not meant to be resolved. Instead, it reproduces in itself a remarkable human phenomenon whose demonstration is one task of the poem. The warrior's noble act, long after it is present to the eye, persists in the minds of those who later see him in a manner that reshapes what their eyes perceive.⁴⁵ By means of this remarkable transformation, his corpse (or he himself if he survives) becomes beautiful to see. In Sparta, at least, the noble is the cause of the beautiful.⁴⁶

We may now be able to understand Tyrtaeus' meaning in the first Section and its relation to the third. Recall that the beggar, wandering with his family in poverty and need, "shames his lineage and belies its splendid image":

ἀίσχύνει τε γένος, κατὰ δ' ἄγλαον εἶδος ἐλέγχει (10. 9)

If the young husband and father is in fact a refugee from his conquered city, it is likely that what remains of his γένος consists of little more than the parents, wife and children with whom he wanders. He himself, after all, has already been described as "hated" by all he meets. It is this family, then, and in particular his children's future, for whom the "splendid image" or its loss will be important.⁴⁷ Yet neither the character nor the origin of this "image"

44 In four of its six other occurrences in Homer at the beginning of the line (// 17.152, 478f, 670f; 22.436), "ζῶος ἐών appears repeatedly in passages which emphasize both greatness in life and lamentation after death" (Adkins 1977, 93; cf. Dawson 1966, 57). Yet in all of these, as in our passage in Tyrtaeus 10, we may observe that the expression of such greatness in life occurs in the context of valiant death. Does this suggest that the effect in regard to the living occurs only in retrospect?

45 In the case of most citizens, of course, the "memory" of the warrior's act is obtained by report. Thus in perception, hearing is inseparable from (and takes precedence over) sight.

46 As Tyrtaeus might put it today, it is in this respect that we are historical beings. If it seems foreign to us that sight itself depends in part on considerations not at the time or at all visible, it may not be because the transformation described no longer occurs but because English has no word comparable in latitude to the Greek καλόν. Note Shakespeare's attempt to recreate the linguistic conjunction by his expansion of the term "brave" in *The Tempest* to mean "handsome," as well as his apparent acknowledgment of the difficulty involved, in Prospero's final apostrophe to the audience: "Gentle breath of yours my sails must fill, or else my project fails." At Rome, Horace felt constrained to separate the two senses by writing *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* (Odes 3.2.13); but Catullus, addressing a former participant in the Civil Wars, played on the double senses of both *manus* and the adverb *belle*: *manu sinistra non belle uteris* (C. 12.1-2). Note also Napoleon's (French) remark in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* on seeing the young, prostrate Andre, who he thought had been killed while bearing the Russian flag in battle: "Une belle morte."

47 This would make ὀπίσω γένεος (12), the result of Ahrens' emendation of τέλος to γένεος, particularly apt. In contrast to this understanding of εἶδος, Fraenkel (1973, 155n) holds that "the 'image' of the Spartan man is intended, which the individual has hitherto

is immediately clear. Considering the Lycurgan proscription of wealth, however, honor in Sparta at this early stage can only have resulted from courageous action.⁴⁸ Indeed, by his parallel placement of the phrases ἄγλαον εἶδος (9) and ἄγλαον ἄνθος (28) in the fifth couplet of Sections I and II (and both in the second half of the line),⁴⁹ Tyrtaeus seems to point to the relation between them. If a youth becomes καλός only by a display of courage—and perhaps death—in battle, his entire γένος in turn seems to merit such a designation only by the continual achievement of its members. The perpetuation of its glory, like the existence of the city, requires of its members in each generation the willingness to risk their own deaths. Courage in battle thus shares with procreation the responsibility of carrying on the illustrious line. The failure, in turn, of any one member to act courageously reflects badly not only on the generation to follow but on the luster of the very flesh used to beget him (25-6).⁵⁰

Hector's Civil Shame

The argument of Section I, as has been observed, is largely adapted from the second half of Hector's speech to his troops at // 15.486-499. Hector's expressed attitude toward risking death as much as the circumstances of his death thus becomes the source of Tyrtaeus' new maxim:

οὐ . . . ἀεικὲς ἀμυνομένῳ περὶ πάτρης τεθνάμεν'

It is not unseemly . . . to die defending one's country.

The choice of Hector as exemplar may seem surprising, given what Homer shows to be the wisdom of attempts by Priam and Hecabe to dissuade their son from seeking an almost certain demise outside the city's walls. Deprived of its greatest defender, Troy will soon fall to the attacking Greeks. Hector, however, is concerned with what his fellow Trojan warriors will think of him if he retreats. Homer thus presents this hero's resolution as based more on the fear of shame than on a broader concern for the city's survival.⁵² Tyrtaeus' rehabilitation of Hector and his decision to fight amounts therefore to an elevation of civil shame as the touchstone of all such deliberation, just as it excludes from the mind of the new warrior any consideration of prudence on the city's behalf.⁵³ This new role for shame is possible now that Tyrtaeus has made its contours congruent with his understanding of the city's good. The resulting rule of action simplifies the options for the young Spartan ἀνὴρ: beauty and honor in the risk of death or shame and ignominy in life.⁵⁴

represented outwardly" by means of dress and "mode of life," constituting "a claim on dignity which he must now justify by his readiness to die."

48 Though some Spartans later became wealthy, the original Lycurgan reforms discouraged even the use of money (Plut., *Lycurg.* 9.1-2; cf. Tyrt. 12.6). See below on Tyrt. 10.6.

49 Although in the hexameter in 9, pentameter in 28.

50 Cp. also ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντα (25) with Hes. *Th* 186: After Zeus cuts off Kronos' genitals, the drops of blood falling to the ground from his scythe become Erinyes and Giants, who have shining armor and "hold long spears in their hands (δολιχ' ἔγχεα χερσὶν ἔχοντες)." Zeus' genitals, falling into the sea, become Aphrodite, described as the αἰδοίη καλή θεός (194). Hesiod's image of bloody genitals thus yields both grim warfare and the divine beauty of love.

51 // 15.496-7. Snell (1960), 172-3.

52 // 22.99-110. See Benardete (2000), 26. Lesky (1966, 118-9) cites Hector's words to Andromache at // 6.487 in his discussion of both Callinus and Tyrtaeus.

53 See Chapter 2 below for more on this matter.

54 Current military tactics also enable a contraction of the sphere in which the soldier operates. Adkins (1977, 80) says that Tyrtaeus' war poems "make it clear that a novel type

Final Note

The poem's final couplet raises an intriguing possibility. The phrase at its end, χεῖλος ὀδοῦσι δακῶν ("biting (their) lip(s) with (their) teeth"), appears three times in the *Odyssey*, always describing the suitors' reaction to the young Telemachus' newfound boldness of speech. Of these, the first follows his announcement that he will convene an assembly the following morning to proclaim that, if they do not leave his house, he will pray to Zeus that they be killed.⁵⁵ Some ten lines earlier, Telemachus had begun this same address to the suitors by asking that they quiet down and listen to the song being sung in the hall, since

... τό γε καλὸν ἀκουέμεν ἔστιν αἰδοῦ
τοιοῦδ' οἶος ὄδ' ἔστί, θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιος αὐδῆν*

... it is καλὸν to listen to a singer
Such as he is, like the gods in voice.

It would be curious indeed if, in the final words of the poem, we should find Tyrtaeus presenting such an oblique reflection of those at its beginning,⁵⁷ couched in terms that offer just as subtle an allusion to his own art. The poet would have carefully but discreetly pointed out his decision to hide himself.⁵⁸

Regardless of our interpretation of the final couplet, however, the unthinking Spartan warrior implied by the peculiar character of Hector's rehabilitation presents us with a difficult paradox, for we have tried to show that anything approaching a comprehensive understanding of this poem requires at the very least a close attention to its arguments. There is in addition the detailed familiarity with Homer needed in order both to notice and to recognize the significance of Tyrtaeus' poetic allusions, a requirement we must contrast with the almost certainly meager Spartan education in this regard.⁵⁹ We are driven to wonder, then, for whom Tyrtaeus could have meant the more programmatic aspect of his verses if he systematically excluded from understanding them those most affected by them. This is no idle question, for his tenth elegy is hardly considered his most theoretical. That distinction is reserved for Tyrtaeus 12.⁶⁰

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of fighting, approximating to hoplite warfare, in which it is necessary to stand fast in close order, is being enjoined upon warriors used to, as in Homer, a more fluid mode of fighting."
55 *Od.* 1.381. The other occurrences are at *Od.* 18.410 and 21.468.
56 *Od.* 1.370-1.

57 The construction καλὸν + infinitive occurs a total of four times each in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (*Il.* 9.615, 17.19, 19.79, 21.440; *Od.* 1.370, 18.287, 20.294, 21.312).

58 For another instance of this, see the last part of Chapter 2 below.

59 Spartans apparently knew something of Homer's poetry (Pl. *Leg.* 680b-c), probably from hearing it recited. As Cartledge (2001, 44; 82-5) makes clear, their brief and utilitarian schooling in letters gave way at the age of twelve to full-time military training.

60 It was due to what he saw as its complexity and theoretical character that Fraenkel (1973, 337) assumed 12 must have been written by a contemporary of Xenophanes, roughly a century after Tyrtaeus. Adkins (1960, 82-3n) remarks that, while Wilamowitz considered its highly "schematic" form a sign of an origin in the sophistic period, "form by itself . . . gives insufficient grounds for such a radical redating of the poem."

Chapter 3: Tyrtaeus' Noblest Virtue (12W)

οὐτ' ἂν μνησαίμην οὔτ' ἐν λόγῳ ἄνδρα τιθείην
οὔτε ποδῶν ἀρετῆς οὔτε παλαιμοσύνης,
οὐδ' εἰ Κυκλώπων μὲν ἔχοι μέγεθος τε βίην τε,
νικώϊη δὲ θεῶν Θρηίκιον Βορέην,
οὐδ' εἰ Τιθωνοῖο φυὴν χαριέστερος εἶη, 5
πλουτοῖη δὲ Μίδεω καὶ Κινύρεω μάλιον,
οὐδ' εἰ Τανταλίδεω Πέλοπος βασιλεύτερος εἶη,
γλώσσαν δ' Ἀδρήστου μελιχόγηρυν ἔχοι,
οὐδ' εἰ πᾶσαν ἔχοι δόξαν πλὴν θούριδος ἀλκῆς·
οὐ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίνεται ἐν πολέμῳ 10
εἰ μὴ τετλαίη μὲν ὄρων φόνον αἱματόεντα,
καὶ δηίων ὀρέγοιτ' ἐγγύθεν ἰστάμενος·
ἦδ' ἀρετῇ, τόδ' ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον
κάλλιστον τε φέρειν γίνεται ἀνδρὶ νέωι.
Ξυνὸν δ' ἔσθλὸν τοῦτο πόλῃ τε πάντι τε δήμῳ, 15
ὅστις ἀνὴρ διαβὰς ἐν προμάχοισι μένη
νωλεμέως, αἰσχροῦς δὲ φυγῆς ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθηται,
ψυχὴν καὶ θυμὸν τλήμονα παρθέμενος,
θαρσύνῃ δ' ἔπεισιν τὸν πλησίον ἄνδρα παρεστῶς·
οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίνεται ἐν πολέμῳ. 20
αἶψα δὲ δυσμενέων ἀνδρῶν ἔτρεψε φάλαγγας
τρηχείας· σπουδῇ δ' ἔσχεθε κύμα μάχης,
αὐτὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσῶν φίλον ὤλεσε θυμὸν
ἄστῳ τε καὶ λαοῦς καὶ πατέρ' εὐκλείσας,
πολλὰ διὰ στέρνοιο καὶ ἀσπίδος ὀμφαλοέσεως 25
καὶ διὰ θώρηκος πρόσθεν ἠληλάμενος.
τὸν δ' ὀλοφύρονται μὲν ὁμῶς νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες,
ἀργαλέωι δὲ πόθῳ πᾶσα κέκηδε πόλις,
καὶ τυμβὸς καὶ παῖδες ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀρίσημοι
καὶ παίδων παῖδες καὶ γένος ἐξοπίσω· 30
οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἔσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ' ὄνομ' αὐτοῦ,
ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γῆς περ' ἑὼν γίνεται ἀθάνατος,
ὄντιν' ἀριστεύοντα μένοντά τε μαρναμένον τε
γῆς περὶ καὶ παίδων θούρος Ἄρης ὀλέσει.
εἰ δὲ φύγη μὲν κῆρα τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο, 35
νικήσας δ' αἰχμῆς ἀγλαὸν εὐχὸς ἔληι,
πάντῃς μιν τιμῶσιν, ὁμῶς νέοι ἠδὲ παλαιοί,
πολλὰ δὲ τερπνὰ παθῶν ἔρχεται εἰς Ἄϊδην,
γηράσκων δ' ἀστοῖσι μεταπρέπει, οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
βλάπτειν οὔτ' αἰδοῦς οὔτε δίκης ἐθέλει, 40
πάντες δ' ἐν θώκοισιν ὁμῶς νέοι οἳ τε κατ' αὐτὸν
εἴκουσ' ἐκ χωρῆς οἳ τε παλαιότεροι.
ταύτης νῦν τις ἀνὴρ ἀρετῆς εἰς ἄκρον ἰκέσθαι
πειράσθω θυμῷ μὴ μεθιῖς πολέμου.

I would not memorialize a man nor set him in speech,
neither for excellence of foot nor of wrestling,
Not even if he had the size and strength of the Cyclopes
and defeated the Thracian North Wind, at running,

Not even if he were more pleasing in appearance than Tithonus 5
 and wealthier than Midas and Cinyras,
 Not even if he were kinglier than Pelops, son of Tantalus,
 and had the honey-voiced tongue of Adrastus,
 Not even if he had a reputation for everything but furious war-valor;
 For one does not become a good man in war 10
 Unless he endures while looking at bloody death
 and reaches for the enemy while standing near.
 This is virtue, this is the best and κάλλιστον prize
 among human beings for a young man to win.
 This is a common good for the city and the whole populace, 15
 whenever some man takes a stride and remains among the front fighters
 Steadfastly, and forgets shameful flight and fear completely,
 putting his life and his enduring spirit on the line.
 And he encourages with words the man standing next to him.
 This one becomes a good man in war. 20
 Right away he turns back the rough battle lines
 of the enemy's men, and with dispatch he stems the tide of battle.
 But he himself falls in the front ranks and loses his life,
 having cast glory on his city, people and father,
 Many times wounded through the chest 25
 and breastplate from the front.
 Him they mourn, young and old alike;
 the whole city laments with grievous longing.
 His tomb and children are clear reminders
 and his children's children and his line in time to come. 30
 Neither his good fame nor his name perishes,
 but even while underground he becomes immortal,
 Whoever showing his great skill, standing and fighting
 for his land and children, furious Ares slays.
 But if he flees the bane of woeful death 35
 and wins the splendid spear-boast through victory,
 Everyone honors him, young and old alike.
 He experiences many pleasures before reaching Hades,
 And in his old age he stands out among the citizens, nor does anyone
 dare deprive him of his due of respect or justice. 40
 All those in the seats, young and old alike,
 yield him their places—even the elders.
 Of this virtue let each man now try to reach the height
 in his spirit, not slacking off from war.

Introduction

On its surface, Tyrtaeus 12 differs markedly from the poet's other extant martial poems. Unlike 10 or 11, this elegy contains no hortatory subjunctives, and its lone imperative appears in the final line (44). The remaining verbs consist of optatives (11), non-hortatory subjunctives (6) and indicatives (8). While in 10 and 11 the poet urges men to fight and enjoins them not to flee from battle, here he merely speaks of the rewards of the ἀρετή that is "the best and most noble prize for a young man to win" (13-14). In accord with this tone is the near absence of shame from the poem.⁶¹ Even more surprising, however, is the

61 "Shameful flight" (αἰσχρῆς δε φυγῆς, 17) is mentioned only in the case of a warrior's

use of the first-person singular (twice in the first couplet). In elegies 10 and 11 Tyrtaeus barks orders to his men (ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε, 10.15; cf. 11.1-3) as well as exhorting himself to action along with them (θνήσκωμεν, 10.14). Here he speaks at a remove, bolstering the argument of those who find a "reflective" tenor in the work.⁶² Even the one imperative is set in third-person singular, with the impersonal τίς as subject and battle relegated to a genitive of separation: "Let each now try to reach the height of this virtue, not slacking off from war (μεθιείς πολέμου)." (43-4) The poem is in fact the announcement and explanation of a new understanding of virtue for Sparta, one that he expects will amount to a new and beneficial ordering of the city. While his tenth elegy offered a glimpse of the personal rewards that might accrue to the Spartan warrior if he fought with courage as well as of the horrors that might follow his failure to do so, this poem reveals the grounding of all such benefits in the good of the whole. Although we will see that Tyrtaeus' innovation is indeed presented as an improvement on the situation of the Homeric warrior, this aspect of the poem and its implications will become clearer if we begin by examining the poem more or less on its own.

Like 10, the poem divides itself, this time into two outer Sections of seven couplets each (Section I: 1-14; IV: 31-44) and two inner sections of four couplets each (II:15-22, III, 23-30).⁶³ Yet finding unity in the last seven couplets is not easy. Though the beginning of line 31 could signal a break (οὐδέ ποτε) with the preceding Section, it remains for us to see why 31-34, with their promise of κλέος for the fallen warrior, do not belong with the discussion in 23-30 of his remembrance in the city.⁶⁴ As in our analysis of Tyrtaeus 10, we will first examine each Section in detail.

Section I (1-14): The New ἀρετή in Light of the Old

οὐτ' ἂν μνησαίμην οὐτ' ἐν λόγῳ ἄνδρα τιθείην
οὔτε ποδῶν ἀρετῆς οὔτε παλαιμοσύνης,
οὐδ' εἰ Κυκλώπων μὲν ἔχοι μέγεθος τε βίην τε,
νικώϊη δὲ θέων Θρηίκιον Βορέην,
οὐδ' εἰ Τιθωνοῖο φυὴν χαριέστερος εἶη, 5
πλουτοίη δὲ Μίδεω καὶ Κινύρεω μάλιον,
οὐδ' εἰ Τανταλίδεω Πέλοπος βασιλεύτερος εἶη,
γλῶσσαν δ' Ἀδρήστου μελιχόγηρυν ἔχοι,
οὐδ' εἰ πᾶσαν ἔχοι δόξαν πλὴν θούριδος ἀλκῆς·
οὐ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίνεται ἐν πολέμῳ 10
εἰ μὴ τετλαίη μὲν ὄρων φόνον αἱματόεντα,
καὶ δῆϊων ὀρέγοιτ' ἐγγύθεν ἰστάμενος·
ἦδ' ἀρετῆ, τόδ' ἀεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον
κάλλιστον τε φέρειν γίνεται ἀνδρὶ νέωι.

rejection of it. Cf αἰδους ("respect," 40).

62 Jaeger, "Tyrtaeus on True Arete," 115.

63 The division is suggested in the following way: The first lines of the two inner sections are marked in counterpoint (ξυνόν δ' ἔσθλον, 15 and αὐτός δ', 23) as a sign of their contrast between public and private benefits of the new virtue. The first Section (I), then, can extend no further than verse 14. This means that, if the division is to yield a symmetrical structure as in 10, we require a corresponding, final section of fourteen lines (31-44). Faraone (2006, 37), attributes the departure here from what he sees as Tyrtaeus' normal five-couplet stanza to evidence of "re-performance" of the poem.

64 Thus Jaeger (1969, 122-3) groups lines 31-34 with 23-30 as the first part of the second "half" of the poem.

I would not memorialize a man nor set him in speech,
 neither for excellence of foot nor of wrestling,
 Not even if he had the size and strength of the Cyclopes
 and defeated the Thracian North Wind at running,
 Not even if he were more pleasing in appearance than Tithonus 5
 and wealthier than Midas and Cinyras,
 Not even if he were kinglier than Pelops, son of Tantalus,
 and had the honey-voiced tongue of Adrastus,
 Not even if he had a reputation for everything but furious war-valor;
 For one does not become a good man in war 10
 Unless he endures while looking at bloody death
 and reaches for the enemy while standing near.
 This is virtue, this is the best and κάλλιστον prize
 among human beings for a young man to win.

Tyrtaeus presents his highest virtue by means of what has been called a priamel, a catalog of qualities that are eventually discarded in favor of the one preferred by the author.⁶⁵ As others have observed, each of the qualities listed in lines 3-8, while neutral or even desirable under most circumstances, is vitiated in this case by the particulars of a presentation in which Tyrtaeus makes use of well-known but flawed or even dangerous mythological characters.⁶⁶ While size and strength (3), for example, would appear to be an asset in war, no one would recommend that they be used as they were by the Cyclops against Odysseus' men. Similarly, speed may be essential in pursuing the enemy, but its association with Boreas could recall for us the wind god's abduction of the maiden Oreithuia, a crime aided by his swiftness.⁶⁷ As we move down the list, we notice that a pleasing physique (5), wealth (6), kingliness (7) and fine speaking ability (8) all have advantages, but that their embodiments here do not serve as the best exemplars. If Tithonus' beauty (5) was so pleasing to Eos that she begged Zeus to have him made immortal, the grim fruits of her forgetfulness in failing to secure for him eternal youth no doubt overshadowed any benefit to them both.⁶⁸ The tragedy that nearly resulted from Midas' "golden touch" was as well known in the ancient world as to us, and Cinyras' wealth (6) did not hinder his fathering Adonis on his own daughter. Of all the kings one might choose, Pelops and his relationship to Tantalus (7) do not recommend him as a model. Finally, although the particulars of any eloquence the Argive king Adrastus may have had (8) are now obscure, Euripides has Theseus denounce him for leading the Argives to attack Thebes despite the warnings of divine seers.⁶⁹

65 The "priamel of values (*wertepriamel*)," as defined by Schmid, is a literary or rhetorical technique in which "a series of commonly esteemed or desired values," considered exemplary, is opposed to "a single value that for some reason lies close to his heart and which he therefore promotes as the highest value (*Hochswert*)." See Schmid (1964, ix) and Dornsieff (1933, 3). As Race shows, priamels were common in ancient poetry and prose. Rather than offer his own definition, he supplies a list of five elements generally present in the figure (1982, 13).

66 See Snell (1969,) 34-5) Prato (1968, 125) reports that Treu first noticed the technique. Shey (1976, 8-9) carries the analysis of the mythological characters as mere rhetoric considerably further: "The *aretai* Tyrtaeus asks his countrymen to consider less important than a fighting spirit are naturally very desirable. Tyrtaeus' main task is not to prove a proposition, but to win his audience's emotional acceptance of something that is naturally repugnant . . ."

67 Ovid, *Meta.* 6.682-722. Shey (1976), 9.

68 Hom. *H. Aphr.*, 218-38; *Mimn.* 4.

69 *Suppl.* 229-31. See Shey (1976), 11. Snell suggests Tyrtaeus alludes to the lost *Thebais*.

Tyrtaeus' virtue appears to be an intensified statement of the traditional view of courage, what Aristotle will later call facing a noble death (καλόν θάνατον) without fear. This is in turn a reformulation of the Homeric hero Idomeneus' remark that ἀρετή is shown by the ability to face the enemy in an ambush without flinching or shuddering in terror. Tyrtaeus' version requires that one endure "while looking at bloody death" (11). It is unclear whether the φόνος to which he refers is the actual slaughter of the enemy or the thought of one's own, but the two may be difficult to separate.⁷⁰ At least one modification of tradition is made necessary by the logistics of hoplite warfare, in which each soldier must remain in formation.⁷¹ Rather than advancing far in front of his own lines as Diomedes' father Tydeus was wont to do, Tyrtaeus has his man hold his ground but "reach out for the enemy while standing near (12)."⁷² In general, however, we will see that Tyrtaeus' innovation lies not so much in the virtue itself as in its relation to all others.

Section II (15-22): Virtue and the City

ξυνὸν δ' ἔσθλόν τοῦτο πόλιι τε πάντι τε δήμῳ,
 ὅστις ἀνὴρ διαβάς ἐν προμάχοισι μένη
 νωλεμέως, αἰσχροῦς δὲ φυγῆς ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθηται,
 ψυχὴν καὶ θυμὸν τλήμονα παρθέμενος,
 θαρσύνηι δ' ἔπεισιν τὸν πλησίον ἄνδρα παρεστῶς·
 οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίνεται ἐν πολέμῳ.
 αἴψα δὲ δυσμενέων ἀνδρῶν ἔτρεψε φάλαγγας

This is a common good for the city and the whole populace,
 whenever some man takes a stride and remains among the front fighters
 Steadfastly, and forgets shameful flight and fear completely,
 putting his life and his enduring spirit on the line.
 And he encourages with words the man standing next to him.
 This one becomes a good man in war.
 Right away he turns back the rough battle lines
 of the enemy's men, and with dispatch he stems the tide of battle.

On a first analysis, these lines appear to portray the defective goods of Section I in a new light, "corrected" by the demands of the new virtue. If, as we saw in line 3 above, "size and strength" can be employed in a savage way, planting one's foot after a stride for balance⁷³ (διαβάς, 16) and remaining steadfastly in place (16-17) could be an example of their proper use from the point of view of the new ἀρετή, while the act of encouraging one's nearby comrade "with words" (19) sounds like a salutary function for a honeyed tongue (8). The new virtue, presented one couplet earlier as a "prize" for the individual young warrior despite the enormous risk it requires, can now be understood as directed toward an outcome that yields "a common good for the whole city and people" (13-15).⁷⁴ All actions, Tyrtaeus suggests, are to be evaluated in a new way. Size and strength will henceforth deserve no praise unless martially courageously; and speech can be called καλόν only if it encourages actions and attitudes that are ἀλκιμα,⁷⁵ or useful in what is most important for the whole. By

70 EN 1115a6-10; // 13.275-91; cf. // 21.280.

71 See Adkins (1977, 80) and note 55 above.

72 // 4.372-3; cf. 13.262-3.

73 For the meaning of εὖ διαβάς at Tyr. 10.31 and elsewhere, cf. MacQueen (1984, 453-7).

74 "ξυνὸν ἔσθλόν is the Homeric expression for κοινὸν ἀγαθόν. It is the first time in Greek history that this thought appears (Jaeger 1966, 120)."

75 "The poet does not . . . repudiate the *aretai* previously enumerated. They are merely not

analogy, it appears that any possessions (wealth, good looks) or skills (rhetorical ability, footspeed) are to be judged similarly. Only the man who directs his life and his abilities in this manner can be called ἀγαθός (20), and only he will deserve honor (37). In the scheme laid out by Tyrtaeus, then, what is κάλλιστον in a city is what it considers the highest quality or the perfection of its citizens.⁷⁶ This quality, τὸ κάλλιστον, governs all evaluations in the city in which it holds sway, and Tyrtaeus with this poem intends to inaugurate or strengthen a fundamentally new understanding of it in Sparta.⁷⁷ But since such an agreement is what Aristotle would later say constitutes a city,⁷⁸ Tyrtaeus could be said to be involved in a refounding of Sparta. He is either bolstering and strengthening a recent refounding or he is accomplishing such a thing himself. His words, particularly considering his report of the Spartan *rhetra* from Delphi, are the closest we have to the speech of someone like Lycurgus.⁷⁹

Section III (23-30): Virtue and the Warrior

| | |
|--|----|
| αὐτὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσῶν φίλον ὤλεσε θυμόν ἄστῃ τε καὶ λαοῦς καὶ πατέρ' εὐκλείσας, πολλὰ διὰ στέρνοιο καὶ ἀσπίδος ὀμφαλοέσσης καὶ διὰ θώρηκος πρόσθεν ἐληλάμενος. | 25 |
| τὸν δ' ὀλοφύρονται μὲν ὁμῶς νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες, ἀργαλέωι δὲ πόθωι πᾶσα κέκηδε πόλις, καὶ τύμβος καὶ παῖδες ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀρίσημοι καὶ παίδων παῖδες καὶ γένος ἐξοπίσω· | 30 |

enough to make the man who possesses them an ἄνηρ ἀγαθός in war (Jaeger 1966, 118)."

76 On the terms ἀγαθός and ἀρετή as used in Homer, Adkins (1960, 31) calls them "the most powerful words of commendation used of a man" and says that "they imply the possession by anyone to whom they are applied of all the qualities most highly valued at any time by Greek society."

77 On the priamel and Tyrtaeus' new virtue, Jaeger (1966, 120) comments that the poet "does not deny that the ancient ideals of strength and agility, of beauty, rank and possessions are *aretai* in the traditional sense. However, when he cries out ἠδ' ἀρετή, he is transforming this value." Jaeger is, if anything, insufficiently aware of just how radical and even Nietzschean in other respects Tyrtaeus' revolution is. Snell (1969, 51) finds in the poems four "theses" (the notion of *thumos* as a "mental strength," the "common good" as the goal toward which all of the warrior's actions are to be directed, the nobility of dying for one's country, and fame as the city's recompense for such courageous action) that together "almost" form "*ein einheitliches System.*" What Snell misses, in what is after all a study of Tyrtaeus' use of Homeric language, is the crucial role of the effect of the poet's new configuration of speech on the entire world in which Spartans will live. This may be due to Snell's denial of "full intention (*voller Absicht*)" or "conscious reflection (*bewusster Reflexion*)" on the part of Tyrtaeus (52). Making such an assumption at the outset as he does, rather than testing for it first, narrows unnecessarily the scope of his inquiry.

78 "It is peculiar to human beings among the other animals that they alone have the perception of good and bad and just and unjust and other things. And the commonality of these things makes a house and a city." (Arist. *Pol.* 1253a15-18) If the action of Tyrtaeus can be called a founding, we might say that Sparta was previously a mere collection of human beings with needs. cf. *Pl., Rep.* 369b-c; Rabel (1997, 120).

79 *Tyrt.* 4; *Plut. Lyc.* 6. "This poem," observes Jaeger (1966, 120), "brings us back to the moment of transition when the aristocratic Sparta of the archaic age turned into the classical Sparta of the sixth century."

But he himself falls in the front ranks and loses his life,
 having cast glory on his city, people and father,
 Many times wounded through the chest 25
 and breastplate from the front.
 Him they mourn, young and old alike;
 the whole city laments with grievous longing.
 His tomb and children are clear reminders among human beings,
 as are his children's children and his line in time to come. 30

In addition to its obvious usefulness for the common security (ξυνὸν δ' ἔσθλόν, 15), the selfless action required by the new virtue supplies private benefits (αὐτὸς δ', 23) to the warrior even after death. Just as we saw in Chapter 1, his actions provide glory to him as well as to his line and family (23-4). Each couplet in this Section, in fact, responds to its correlative in II.⁸⁰ As such, they are a personal recompense to the warrior for his participation in the new virtue. The warrior's decision to stand and fight rather than flee results in his wounding from the front not from behind, a testament to his courage (16-17, 25-6; 11.17-20). The ensuing cries of mourning made by young and old alike are a verbal consequence in the city of the encouraging speeches made by the good warrior to his comrades in battle (27-8, 19-20). Due to his courageous actions, holding back the "waves" of the oncoming enemy, his tomb, his family and even his descendants will long bespeak the courage of his actions, providing glory for him and his family through succeeding generations (21-2, 29-30; cf. 10.9, 12).

Section IV (31-44): The Warrior and the City

οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἔσθλόν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ' ὄνομ' αὐτοῦ,
 ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γῆς περ' ἑὼν γίνεται ἀθάνατος,
 ὄντιν' ἀριστεύοντα μένοντά τε μαρναμένον τε
 γῆς πέρι καὶ παίδων θυῖρος Ἄρης ὀλέσει.
 εἰ δὲ φύγη μὲν κῆρα ταηλεγέος θανάτοιο, 35
 νικήσας δ' αἰχμῆς ἀγλαὸν εὐχος ἔληι,
 πάντες μιν τιμῶσιν, ὁμῶς νέοι ἠδὲ παλαιοί,
 πολλὰ δὲ τερπνὰ παθῶν ἔρχεται εἰς Αἴδην,
 γηράσκων δ' ἀστοῖσι μεταπρέπει, οὐδέ τις αὐτόν
 βλάπτειν οὔτ' αἰδοῦς οὔτε δίκης ἐθέλει, 40
 πάντες δ' ἐν θώκοισιν ὁμῶς νέοι οἳ τε κατ' αὐτόν
 εἴκουσ' ἐκ χωρῆς οἳ τε παλαιότεροι.
 ταύτης νῦν τις ἀνὴρ ἀρετῆς εἰς ἄκρον ἰκέσθαι
 πειράσθω θυμῶι μὴ μεθιεῖς πολέμου.

Neither his good fame nor his name perishes, 31
 but even while underground he becomes immortal,
 Whoever showing his great skill, standing and fighting
 for his land and children, furious Ares slays.
 But if he flees the bane of woeful death 35
 and wins the splendid spear-boast through victory,
 Everyone honors him, young and old alike.
 He experiences many pleasures before reaching Hades,
 And in his old age he stands out among the citizens, nor does anyone

⁸⁰ Note that the symmetry in Tyrt. 12 appears to be parallel, not chiasmic as in 10. See Appendix.

dare deprive him of his due of respect or justice.
 All those in the seats, young and old alike,
 yield him their places—even the elders.
 Of this virtue let some man now try to reach the height
 in his spirit, not slacking off from war.

40

Looking to the previous Section, we now note that Tyrtaeus listed the prizes won by the courageous, fallen warrior in order of increasing permanence: The mourning of the city's inhabitants surely outlasts the moment of his wounding but is itself evanescent compared with the tangible evidence of a tomb and descendants. Here in lines 31-4, the "immortality" of his fame is either a restatement of the continuing glory contained in the third prize (29-30) or the next step beyond it. For this reason these two couplets appear, as we mentioned earlier, to belong in Section III rather than IV. As we shall see, however, the type of fame they offer, like the other goods of this Section, is of a different order than its predecessors.

For the courageous warrior who survives battle (35-6), three couplets (37-42) describe his rewards in the city: honor and pleasure (37-8), high status along with respect and justice (39-40), and great deference from all (41-2). At least one of these advantages corresponds to the rejected goods in lines 5-8 of the first Section: The honor and pleasures that might have been expected to flow from appealing looks and wealth (5-6) are now supplied to the warrior as a reward for his courage.⁸¹ The extent to which something similar applies to all of the virtues or goods in the priamel, and how Tyrtaeus intends his new system to rival or even improve upon their benefits, will become clear if we look again at those virtues and the Homeric heroes lurking behind them.

Tyrtaeus and the Epic Heroes

Beyond the explicit mythological references in the priamel, Tyrtaeus has embedded associations between at least some of the rejected goods and specific Homeric warriors. From the language of the hexameter lines 3, 5 and 7, we can identify allusions to Ajax, Paris and Agamemnon, each excellent in some way but deeply flawed in another. After their duel ended in a draw, Hector honored the Greek warrior Ajax by declaring to him "a god gave you size and strength (μέγεθος τε βίην τε)" and calling him "the best of the Achaians at spearmanship." While the Cyclopes, however, refused to give the gods their due, Ajax openly resented their intrusion into human affairs.⁸² When Hector's brother Paris earlier showed terror at the sight of Menelaos accepting his challenge to fight, it was Hector as well who upbraided him with contempt. Paris might be indeed "the best as far as looks (εἶδος ἄριστε)" at Troy, but the Achaeans would laugh at those same "handsome looks (καλόν εἶδος)," since there was no strength or courage (βίη . . . ἀλκή) in his breast (φρέσιν).⁸³ Perhaps most obviously, the questionable "kingliness" of Agamemnon is thrice asserted before and during the famous embassy to Achilles in *Iliad* 9, first by Nestor, then by Agamemnon himself, and finally echoed by Achilles in rejecting the rewards offered in the attempt to persuade him to rejoin the fight.⁸⁴ As we can see in the following table, each of the warriors so far alluded to in the priamel had been considered outstanding in Homer with respect to some quality:

⁸¹ See Chapter I above.

⁸² *Il.* 7.288-9; *Od.* 9.275-7; *Il.* 17.629-32.

⁸³ *Il.* 3.39, 44-45. The injunction at the center of Tyrt. 10, to "make the θυμός in your chest great and warlike" (μέγαν ποιεῖτε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἐν φρεσὶ θυμόν, 10.17) can now be seen as in part a correction of Paris' character. The Spartan warrior is to have beauty without softness.

⁸⁴ βασιλεύτατος, *Il.* 9.69; βασιλεύτερος, 160, 392; cf. 3.170.

| Homeric Hero | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tyr. 12 | Quality in Priamel | Alluded to in Priamel | Excellence in Homer |
| Line 3 | μεγεθός τε βίην τε | Ajax | spearanship (<i>Il</i> 7.288) |
| 5 | φυή | Paris | looks (<i>Il</i> 3.44-5) |
| 7 | βασιλεύτερος | Agamemnon | kingliness (<i>Il</i> 9.69) |

If we look once again at the benefits that accrue to the surviving warrior who fights in accordance with the new ἀρετή, it now appears that they supply to him all that the corresponding Homeric hero might have expected from his qualities in the priamel:

| Tyr. 12 | Benefit to the Warrior (Section IV) |
|---------|---|
| 35-6 | Victory and "splendid spear-boast (ἀίχμης ἀγλαὸν εὐχος)" |
| 37-8 | Pleasure for the balance of his life (τερπνὰ παθῶν ἔρχεται εἰς Ἀΐδην) |
| 39-40 | Preeminence, αἰδῶς and δίκη in old age |

By following the strictures of Tyrtaeus' new virtue, then, Spartan warriors can expect both the glory of Ajax and the pleasures of Paris. No longer will such rewards be restricted to those blessed with natural ability or looks. Nor will the prerogatives of respect and justice due to a king depend on royal lineage: To receive αἰδῶς and unchallenged δίκη one need not, like Agamemnon, be a descendant of the royal Pelops (7).⁸⁵ Tyrtaeus thus implies that his new virtue makes possible a fully egalitarian system of honors for Spartan citizens, with rewards that stem from courage in battle rather than the contingencies of birth.⁸⁶ Just as importantly, the city can be seen to supply the needs of three types of men, without the most dangerous consequence of excess in each: glory without hubris for the spirited; pleasure without softness for the appetitive; and justice combined with respect—but without the cruelty of despots—for those who might desire to rule.

Achilles

Still, Tyrtaeus was all too aware that in the extraordinary warrior whose abilities and demands encompassed all three of these types, the desire to rule could reach extraordinary heights. If the new Sparta failed to provide for such men, the resulting danger could be as great as it proved to be in Homer. Indeed, the character of this new meritocracy brings to mind the most famous claim of injustice among the Greeks at Troy. After Odysseus in *Iliad* 9 begged Achilles to return to the battle and listed the many prizes offered by Agamemnon should he do so, Achilles responded with the claim that Agamemnon would never persuade him, since his efforts had gone unrecognized and unrewarded:⁸⁷

οὐκ ἄρα τις χάρις ἦεν
 μάρνασθαι δηίοισιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσι νωλεμές αἰεὶ.
 ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι, καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι;
 ἐν δὲ ἴ τιμ' ἡμὲν κακὸς ἦδ' εἰ καὶ ἐσθλός·
 κατθαν' ὁμῶς ὁ τ' ἀεργὸς ἀνὴρ ὁ τε πολλὰ ἔοργῶς.
 οὐδέ τί μοι περικείται, ἐπεὶ πάθον ἄλγεα θυμῶ,
 αἰεὶ ἐμὴν ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος πολεμίζειν.

⁸⁵ As a guarantor of such qualities, the city is an answer to the depredations of the Iron Age (Hes., *OD* 192-3). Note the allusion to Hesiod's king (cf. μεταπρέπει 12.39, Hes. *Th.* 92).

⁸⁶ "War wipes away all privileges," and the resulting "desperate need" in the city "is a greater equalizer than any democracy" and "calls into being a new kind of nobility for all citizens that is only bestowed by heroic courage in battle against the enemy (Jaeger 1966, 119)."

⁸⁷ *Il* 9.317-22.

. . . there is after all no gratitude
 for always fighting relentlessly with the men of the enemy.
 There is an equal fate for the one who remains, even if he battles well.
 Both the brave and the base come into honor;
 Both die, the idle and accomplished man alike.
 Nor is anything extra reserved for me, when I suffered pains in my heart,
 Always risking my life in battle.

Tyrtaeus 12 now looks to be a reply to Achilles' complaint. The poet makes the connection clear, adopting much of the language of Achilles' speech and of other parts of *Iliad* 9:

| <u><i>Iliad</i> 9.308-429 (Achilles' Speech)</u> | <u>Tyrtaeus 12</u> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Αἴδην, 569 (cf. 312) | Αἴδην, 38 |
| δηίοισιν, 317 | δηίων, 12 |
| νωλεμές, 317 | νωλεμέως, 17 |
| θυμῶ, 321 | θυμῶ, 44 |
| ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος, 322 | ψυχὴν . . . παρθέμενος, 18 |
| μαρνάμενος, 327 | μαρνάμενος, 33 |
| τέρπεσθω, 337; cf. 400) | τερπνά παθών, 38 |
| βασιλεύτερος, 392 (cf. 69, 160) | βασιλεύτερος, 7 |
| κῆρας . . . θανάτοιο, 411 | κῆρας . . . θανάτοιο, 35 |
| ᾠλετο . . . κλέος ἔσθλόν, 415 | κλέος ἔσθλόν ἀπόλλυται, 31 |
| | |
| <u>Elsewhere in <i>Iliad</i> 9</u> | <u>Tyrtaeus 12</u> |
| φύζα, 2 | φυγῆς, 17 |
| βορέης, 5 | βορέην, 4 |
| ἀλκή, 34, 231 | ἀλκῆς, 9 |
| νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες, 36, 258 | νέοι νδέ παλαιοί, 37 |
| ἀέθλια, 124, 127, 266, 269 | ἄεθλον, 13 |
| κάλλισται, 140, 282 | κάλλιστον, 14 |
| κῆδειν, κῆδει 615 | κέκηδε, 28 |

What is more, Achilles' rhetorical weapon of choice here is the priamel. He proceeds to point up his disdain for the gifts Agamemnon offers by constructing the first of three such lists:⁸⁸

οὐδ' εἰ μοι δεκάκις τε καὶ εἰκοσάκις τόσα δοίη
 ὅσα τε οἱ νῦν ἔστι, καὶ εἰ ποθεν ἄλλα γένοιτο,
 οὐδ' ὅς' ἔς' Ὀρχομενὸν ποτινίσεται, οὐδ' ὅσα Θήβας
 Ἀιγυπτίας, ὅθι πλεῖστα δόμοις ἐν κτήματα κεῖται,
 αἱ θ' ἑκατόμυλοι εἰσι, διηκόσιοι δ' ἀν' ἐκάστας
 ἄνερες ἔξοιχνεῦσι σὺν ἵπποισιν καὶ ὀχέσφιν·
 οὐδ' εἰ μοι τόσα δοίη, ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε,
 οὐδέ κεν ὥς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει" Ἀγαμέμνων,
 πρὶν γ' ἀπὸ πᾶσαν ἐμοὶ δόμεναι θυμαλγέα λῶβην.

Not even if he gave me ten or twenty times as much
 As he now has, even if more came from elsewhere,
 Not even as much as is brought to Orchomenos, nor as much as to
 Egyptian Thebes, where houses have the most possessions,

88 // 9.379-87. Noted by Race (1982), 37.

And twenty men with horses and chariots
 Venture forth from each of its twenty gates.
 Not even if he should give me as much as the sand and dust,
 Not even then would Agamemnon persuade my heart,
 Before he undid all the heart-paining outrage to me.

Part of his contempt thus springs from anger at what he considers his unjust treatment by Agamemnon. His second priamel, however, weighs the cost of accepting material goods in the bargain he has been offered:⁸⁹

οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸι ψυχῆς ἀντάξιον οὐδ' ὅσα φασὶν
 Ἴλιον ἐκτῆσθαι, εὐ ναιόμενον πτολίεθρον,
 τὸ πρὶν ἐπ' εἰρήνης, πρὶν ἔλθειν υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν,
 οὐδ' ὅσα λάϊνος οὐδὸς ἀφήτορος ἐντὸς ἔεργει,
 Φοίβου Ἀπόλλωνος, Πυθοῖ ἐνὶ πετρηέσσῃ. 405
 λήϊστοι μὲν γάρ τε βόες καὶ ἴφια μῆλα,
 κτητοὶ δὲ τρίποδες τε καὶ ἵππων ξανθὰ κάρηνα·
 ἀνδρὸς δὲ ψυχὴ πάλιν ἔλθειν οὔτε λείστη
 οὔθ' ἔλετή· ἐπεὶ ἄρ κεν ἀμείψεται ἔρκος ὀδόντων.

For they're not worth my life, not even the things they say
 Troy, that well-founded city, possessed
 In the past when it was at peace, before the sons of the Achaians came,
 Not even as much as the stone doorstep of Apollo the Archer
 Holds within it in rocky Pytho. 405
 For oxen and fat sheep are only booty,
 And tripods and chestnut-headed horses mere stuff;
 But the life of a man is no booty or "take"
 That can go back again once it passes the fence of one's teeth.

The righteous indignation in Achilles' first priamel gives way in the second to a consideration of the value of his life. If living up to his end of the offered bargain requires flirting with death, he calculates that no quantity of gifts can make the risk worthwhile.

In the case of Achilles, the choice is even more clear-cut than these lines make it seem. From the predictions of his divine mother Thetis, he knows he can expect either a long life without fame or a brief life of great accomplishment in war, with undying fame following his death. Achilles' plans for a quiet life at home in Phthia are short-circuited when the death of his friend Patroclus impels him into battle despite himself; perhaps as a result, he famously recants his decision to fight and renews his preference for a life of serfdom on earth over lordship in Hades.⁹⁰ If Tyrtaeus' new warriors are to make the similar sacrifice he now requires of them, they must have a sense that such risks are worthwhile. This must include both the guarantee of rewards and the acknowledgment that, however deserving of them they may be, their personal recompense⁹¹ in terms of honor and pleasure is bound inextricably with the good of the whole city or of the common. Accordingly, the highly-spirited, indignant (and prudent) Achilles is the test case for Tyrtaeus, the "best of the Achaeans" whose θυμός he must persuade, so to speak, with his poetry.⁹²

89 // 9.401-9

90 // 9.410-416; 17.88-93, 114-125; *Od* 11.489-91.

91 Note Achilles' complaint that he received no "gratitude" (χάρις, // 22.319) for his sacrifices in war, a commodity often sought by Homeric warriors. See Rabel (1997, 125n).

92 Cf. // 9.321, 386 and Tyrt. 10.17. Note the dispirited θυμός of the Achaeans at // 9.8.

Hector

Achilles' Trojan counterpart, governed not by honor but by fear of its opposite, would seem already the embodiment of the new virtue.⁹³ The prospect of certain death, however, is a harsh crucible. We saw in the last chapter that Hector's own appreciation of the city's good in Homer was overtaken only by his sense of shame, and that in his tenth elegy Tyrtaeus sought to make Hector's resulting decision to stand and fight regardless of the consequences a model for his new warrior. Nonetheless, within the the priamel of Tyrtaeus 12 is an implied critique of Hector and his circumstances. The hexameter lines (3, 5, 7) of the priamel's "list" of goods, as we saw, contain allusions to the three Homeric heroes who act as models for the types of men who will be benefited and improved by the new Spartan regime. Lurking in the pentameter lines of those same couplets (lines 4, 6, and 8) lie both a criticism of Hector's lack of resolve and a response to the bitter limitations of mortality as portrayed in the *Iliad*, brought out here through allusion to his final encounter with Achilles.

Of the goods or qualities mentioned in these lines, no one at Troy is more closely associated with speed of foot (4) than Achilles, whose most common epithet in Homer is πόδας ὠκύς.⁹⁴ One episode stands out in this regard. When Achilles chased the terrified Hector around the walls of Troy, Homer tells us they did not compete for an oxhide, a common prize for the winner of a footrace, but "they ran for the life of Hector (περὶ ψυχῆς θεῶν Ἑκτορος)."⁹⁵ Once caught, Hector did his best to ensure proper burial for himself should he lose his life. He first tried to strike a deal with his opponent so that the victor of the contest between them would hand over the loser's corpse to his family.⁹⁶ Achilles would have none of it, ordering him to "pronounce no agreements with me (μή μοι . . . συνημοσύνας ἀγόρευε)." Later, after receiving his fatal wound, Hector begged his conqueror to accept bronze and gold from his parents in exchange for returning his corpse, but this approach succeeded no better.⁹⁷ When confronting the warrior who wishes at the final moment to escape death, Achilles renders useless his running ability as much as he despises his wealth and the ineffectual blandishments of his tongue. Hector's attempts to rely on any of these qualities for his survival, Tyrtaeus suggests, could never be successful in the absence of "furious valor" (θούριδος ἀλκῆς, 9).⁹⁸ For the warrior who cultivates this one excellence, however, the city will guarantee what no mortal can accomplish on his own, his treatment after death.

93 Thus Jaeger (1966, 121): "Hector . . . is radically different from those truly aristocratic Greek heroes who fought only for their own personal glory." And Redfield (1975, 104): "Hector has placed his life at the service of others."

94 // 1.58, 84, 148, 215, 364, etc.

95 // 22.136-7; 160-1. In an earlier episode, Priam's youngest son Polydorus, who "had defeated everyone with his footspeed (πόδεσσι δὲ πάντας ἐνίκᾳ)" at home, was caught in the back by Achilles' spear when, "foolishly showing off his running ability," he "ran through the front ranks." (// 20.410-14) With the phrase νικωίη θεῶν in line 4, then, Tyrtaeus appears to have united ἐνίκᾳ from // 20.411 with θεῶν from 22.161 in a way that combines allusions to both. Speed of foot will never outrace a well-thrown spear nor, as a substitute for courage, can it guarantee that its possessor will avoid the enemy. Compare Tyrtaeus 11.14: τρεσσάντων δ' ἀνδρῶν πᾶσ' ἀπόλωλ' ἀρετή.

96 // 22.254-61; Cf. 7.79-80, 84-5.

97 // 22.340-45; 356-7; 125-28.

98 cf. // 22.251-2, 268-9. Note also the "micropriamel" at 349-54.

Odysseus

At least one more Homeric warrior to whom Tyrtaeus alludes would be easy for us to miss, but his silent presence in the first Section of the poem may point the way to our understanding the unity of the last. The quality of ποδῶν ἀρετῆς ("speed of foot," 2) looks so much like a doublet for νικωίη θέων (4) that line 2 slips by almost unnoticed.⁹⁹ The collocation there of footspeed and παλαιμοσύνης ("wrestling"), however, seems to direct us to Homer's accounts of athletic competition. In the funeral games that Achilles held on behalf of Patroclus, the third and fourth competitions were, respectively, wrestling (παλαιμοσύνης) and a footrace (ταχυτήτος). Odysseus won both contests, his running aided by the intervention of Athena and his wrestling assisted by his own guile.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps this reliance on sources apart from his own courage and physical ability accounts for the proximity of these allusions to the poet's denunciation in this elegy (1-2). Regardless of the utility of cleverness in battle, Tyrtaeus' phalanx apparently has no room for the warrior who weighs prudential considerations, however wisely, or pauses to consult his θυμός when confronting a difficult scenario.¹⁰¹ Odysseus and the μήτις he represents will not be allowed to mingle with the inhabitants of Tyrtaeus' new city. For the most part, the Sparta that offers honor, pleasure and justice to its warriors is to be a reservoir of courage devoid of mind.¹⁰²

99 This was among the reasons that led Jacoby (1961, 300) to question the authenticity of lines 3-9.

100 // 23.701, 740 (cf. ποσσίν 792); 768-74, 725. Running (πόδεσσι) and wrestling (παλαιμοσύνης) were also the first two competitions in the games on Phaiakia. In his response to Laodamas' taunting challenge to participate, Odysseus first mentions the "gift" (χαριέντα) some men have from the gods: physique (φυήν), brains (φρένας) and speaking ability (ἄγορητήν). He then contrasts Laodamas' "obvious good looks" with his "worthless mind" (σοὶ εἶδος μὲν ἀριπρεπέες . . . νόον δε ἀποφώλιος ἔσσι) and, after demonstrating his own skill at discus throwing, boasts of his abilities in war. (*Od.* 8.120, 126; 167-77; 186-98; 215-29)

101 Odysseus is, in fact, the first warrior in the *Iliad* to do so (*Il.* 11.403f), though three others carry on similar internal dialogs over the question whether to fight in the face of great opposition: Agenor (21.562-70), Hector (22.122-30) and Odysseus decide to fight, while Menelaos (17.97-105) decides to look for help. Eventually, however, Hector retreats, Odysseus is rescued and Agenor is lifted off the battlefield by Apollo. (See Fenik 1968, 97f). Hainsworth (1993, 270) calls this "a type-scene" since the hero always answers affirmatively the question he poses. As Williams phrases it (1993, 38), "the character pulls back from a course of action he has been considering in favour of a course of action with which he has been identified." With some variation, of course, such characteristic courses of action in the *Iliad* are developed by response to incentives of shame and honor. The internal dialog in these examples thus appears to show the operation of character formed in this way, as tested under great external pressure. Tyrtaeus' virtue seems designed to strengthen the web of incentives so that no resort to calculation is needed or even conceivable. The warrior's response to a given situation is to be automatic and oriented toward a good that underlies the entire edifice of honor and shame. Note that the Athenian Stranger's reformulation of ἀρετή following his criticism of Tyrtaeus includes a σώφρων ἔξις ψυχῆς rather than the enjoyment of pleasure, and that he calls δικαιοσύνη a combination of this quality with ἀνδρεία and φρονήσις (*Pl. Leg.* 631c5-d1). In modern terms, Tyrtaeus may be said to have removed "morality" from the sphere of the warrior (See Williams, 184n). He supplies the element of mind externally, in the form of custom or νόμος.

102 Cf. *Pl. Leg.* 630b5. Similarly, the constancy of determination required in this new way of battle excludes any reliance on the gods, as well as the thought that they might even momentarily have switched sides. Of the four Homeric warriors who address their θυμός in

Yet the famous Ithakan is not completely absent from the poem. Known for weaving tales both true and false,¹⁰³ Odysseus had a certain affinity for poetry. Indeed, its practitioners once evoked his highest praise, when he declared to his banquet host Alkinoos:¹⁰⁴

I tell you it is καλόν to listen to a singer
Such as this one is, like the gods in voice.
I say there is no consummation more charming 5
Than when good feeling holds sway throughout the whole populace,
and diners sitting in rows in the house listen
to the singer. . . 8

This seems to my mind the κάλλιστον thing there is. 11

What is more, though Achilles sang κλέα ἀνδρῶν in his tent and once aspired to hear them filled with his exploits, Odysseus was able to listen to his own sufferings sung alongside his accomplishments. The poet, he therefore knew, had discretion to choose whom he might memorialize, in what way and for what purpose. Perhaps this accounts after all for his presence in this poem closest to the first-person speech of the poet.¹⁰⁵

Achilles had been told he would receive imperishable fame (κλέος ἄφθιτον) if he chose to continue fighting. Only in Hades, however, did he learn that his name failed to die with him (οὐδὲ θανῶν ὄνομ' ὠλεσας) and that his fame would last forever among all men (ἀεὶ πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους κλέος ἔσσεται ἐσθλόν) due the gods' affection for him.¹⁰⁶ In Homer, the difference between such undying fame of divine origin and the lesser immortality afforded by a tomb, however significant a marker it might be in later ages,¹⁰⁷ is the difference between a mound of earth subject to the vicissitudes of nature and the imperishable κλέος conferred by the poet and his godlike connection to the Muses.¹⁰⁸ Where all six epic heroes are concerned, Tyrtaeus' refusal to "set their names into speech" (1) is thus a sign of how much more demanding are his standards than those of Homer. At the same time, it opens the way for any Spartan warrior to strive for a kind of fame that would have been available only to a few of his Homeric forebears.

the *Iliad*, Odysseus (11.406), Agenor (21.553) and Menelaos (17.100-1) consider divine interference the greatest obstacle. In Tyrtaeus, however, as Adkins puts it (1977, 84), "there seems to be no question of a god personally intervening to save an individual." (See also Adkins 1960, 14 and 1972, 17-18.) The phrase θούρος Ἄρης ("furious Ares"), much more common in the *Iliad* than θούρις ἀλκή ("furious war-valor") appears in Tyrtaeus' elegies as we have them only at 12.34, apparently to make a warrior's death seem inevitable after the fact. 103 *Od.* 9.36-7; 13.253-86.

104 *Od.* 9.3-11.

105 *Il.* 9.189; *Od.* 8.486-520; see *Il.* 9.524. Cf. Prato (1968), 124.

106 *Il.* 9.413; *Od.* 24.92-4. On the meaning of κλέος ἄφθιτον, see Nagy (1974, 244-52; 1979, 16).

107 Compare τύμβος (Tyr. 12.29) with σῆμα (*Il.* 7.86); and σῆμα (*Il.* 7.89) with ἀρίσημοι (Tyr. 12.29).

108 *Il.* 7.459-63; Tyr. 12.32, 34. In its only appearance in Homer (*Il.* 9.413), κλέος ἄφθιτον is part of the larger κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται. This, according to Finkelberg (1986, 2-3), is a metrical and semantic equivalent for κλέος οὐ ποτ' ὀλεῖται. We note that, of the three appearances of the latter phrase in Homer, the promised immortality appears questionable or worse when living mortals speak it (*Il.* 2.325, 7.91). When Agamemnon utters it in Hades, however (*Od.* 24.196), he seems to have been apprised of the gods' plans to make undying song (*Od.* 24.198-9). Cp. οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται (Tyr. 12.30).

We are now ready to appreciate the overall structure of the poem. While Sections II and III as we have drawn them describe the benefits to the new warrior and his city flowing directly from his deeds, Section IV restricts itself to the character of the new regime fashioned and made possible by Tyrtaeus' art. Lines 35-42 describe the benefits of the new virtue to the surviving warrior and the regard in which he is held by the citizens, as part of the new way of looking at things instilled in them by this very elegy and others like it; lines 31-34 describe the kind of imperishable fame that in Homer depends upon the poet and his divine inspiration.¹⁰⁹ In Tyrtaeus' city, the poet and only the poet has such power, for his twelfth elegy never mentions the Muses.¹¹⁰

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109 Jaeger (1969, 122-3) understands this undying fame to be a result of the city's veneration.

110 Compare μνησαίμην (Tyr. 12.1) with Homer's second invocation of the Muses in the *Iliad* (μνησαίαθ', 2.492). See also Pl. *Leg.* 629b5. The irony is that no poems survive in which a Spartan warrior is named. (A similar phenomenon occurs in Pericles' funeral oration.) If we are to believe the story that Spartan soldiers were regularly called to hear Tyrtaeus' verses recited prior to battle (Lycurg. *in Leocr.* 107), memory may serve another function as well. Such a quality, a requirement in those who recite (and perhaps compose) might well conduce to the uncommon ability to comprehend the political and other subtleties contained within each poem. It is all the more interesting that the story places such recitations before the tent of the kings.

Solon of Athens heard his nephew sing a song
of Sappho's over wine and, since he liked the
song so much, he asked the boy to teach it to him.
When someone asked him why, he said,
"So that I may learn it, then die."

Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 3.29.58

Idleness, Catullus, is troublesome for you;
In idleness you let yourself go and become extravagant;
Idleness has ruined earlier kings
and blessed cities.

Catullus 51.13-16

Part II: SAPPHO

Chapter 4: "The Most Beautiful Thing" (Sappho Fr. 16)

οἱ μὲν ἰππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ί] γὰν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δε κῆν' ὅτ-
τω τις ἔραται· 4

πά]γχυ δ' εὐμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἄ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων' Ελένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [πανάρ]ιστον 8

καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
κωῦδ[ε] παῖ]δος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
]σαν 12

]αμπτον γὰρ [
] . . . κουφως τ[]οησ[]ν
. .]με νῦν' Ανακτορί[ας ο])νέμναι-
σ' οὐ] παρεόισας· 16

τᾶ]ς κε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμαρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα καὶ πανόπλοις
πεσδομ]άχεντας· 20

Some say an army of horsemen, some say of
footsoldiers, and some say of ships is the
κάλλιστον thing on the black earth; but I say it's
whatever one loves.

Altogether easy it is to make this understandable
to everyone, for she who far surpassed
all human beings in beauty, Helen,
the most full-valiant man

Left behind and sailed off to Troy
without a thought for her children or
her dear parents; but [
] led her astray.

. . . which has now reminded me of the absent Anactoria.

Whose lovely step and the bright
flash of whose face I'd rather see
than Lydian chariots and footsoldiers
in full armor.

111 I have used the text of Lobel and Page (1963).

Everyone agrees that Sappho understands love. Her poems are filled with every facet of the experience, from desire to trembling apprehension to the wish for revenge. Yet if her poetry comprehends matters of the heart, its meaning presses far beyond them, moving swiftly to the heart of things. This is part of the difficulty of Sappho, for so smooth and enchanting are her verses that we easily overlook the depth of her thought or, in Fragment 16, the radical character and enormous sweep of her intention. Most recent attempts to interpret the poem have looked to the place of Helen in Sappho's argument. If she is meant to demonstrate the principle that what one loves is most beautiful, then why is it she, described as the most beautiful of mortals, who is shown to act out of love?¹¹² Of the proposed explanations, none accounts for this bit of illogic.¹¹³ Either, then, we must suppose Sappho unable to see the elemental flaw in her attempt to "make understandable" the first stanza, or we must ourselves look again at just what it is she wishes to explain. This, in turn, becomes apparent only in light of her response to Tyrtaeus.

Like Tyrtaeus, Sappho makes a pronouncement on what is κάλλιστον, and like him she does so with a priamel (1-3). Her mention of three types of military force (horsemen, footsoldiers, and ships) as κάλλιστον to "some" makes us think she must mean that each of three groups thinks such forces are "beautiful" to look at, particularly considering her last stanza, in which the sight of Anactoria's face is preferable to Lydian chariots or fully-armed footsoldiers (17-20). Each to his own taste, she seems to say, and though some may prefer the dazzling sight of armies,¹¹⁴ she appears simply to have her own, differing opinion (ἐγὼ δ', 3). But who are these unnamed holders of such views?¹¹⁵ Due to Sappho's rather pointed echo of his poetic and rhetorical devices, the first place to look may be Tyrtaeus. In his poems 10 and 12, as we saw, the distinction between the "aesthetic" and "ethical" aspects of the term καλός turned out to be difficult and complex, for the two were shown to influence one another inherently. Indeed, Tyrtaeus meant to change what Spartans might consider beautiful by changing what they considered noble. In shifting and focusing the end of the regime toward victory in war and security from attack, he made those actions and those men who contributed to that end at once deserving of honor and desirable for women to see. Tyrtaeus' revolution in Sparta sought to accomplish its goal by establishing an agreement among all its inhabitants concerning the highest ideals of Spartan life, which is to say the highest ideals of human life as far as any Spartan was concerned. Tyrtaeus' "refounding" of Sparta, we saw, amounted to the establishment or re-establishment of a Spartan πόλις.¹¹⁶

The structure of Sappho's priamel (οἱ μὲν . . . οἱ δὲ . . . οἱ δὲ, 1-2), makes it appear that there are three separate groups, each of whom prefers one type of military force. Perhaps she refers to three different cities: Thebes, Sparta and Phaiakia,¹¹⁷ for example.

112 Page (1955), 53. Koniaris (1967, 267) points out that not Helen herself but Paris, the man for whom she left her husband, should be described as τὸ κάλλιστον. Most (1981, 11) asks "why specifically Helen is chosen by Sappho instead of other mythic figures: Zeus, for instance, who, under Aphrodite's influence, forgets the beauty of Hera and yearns instead for mortal mistresses." Race (1989, 18-19; 24n) compares Sappho's argument to the sophist Gorgias' later appeal to eros to justify Helen's action.

113 Most (16) suggests the possibility that "Sappho's language did not allow her to distinguish systematically between the ethical and aesthetic aspects of καλός and here she is saying that if Helen was really καλή, she could not have been κακή." As we will see, the distinction lies at the core of her critique.

114 // 4.431-2. cf. Hdt. 7.45, Th. 6.31.1,6.

115 "The seventh century had evidently debated much over the finest form of military equipment, islanders holding out for fleet, main-landers for foot, Lydians for horse, and this arrangement spawned many little lists (Burnett 1983, 282)."

116 Arist. *Pol.* 1253A15-18; cf. *Od.* 9.181-5. See Chapter 2.

117 Athens had of course not yet built its great fleet. For the preference for sailing in

Another alternative, which need not exclude the first, is that she refers to Tyrtaeus and two other poets, along with those influenced by their poetry. If we were to speculate, we might guess that she refers to Mimnermus for horsemen, Archilochus for ships and Tyrtaeus for footsoldiers.¹¹⁸ The fact that of this group only Tyrtaeus, so far as we know, sought to make his preference shared by the public need not concern us, for it is reasonable to assume that simply by admiration for military things people express their acknowledgment of the importance and perhaps even the nobility of like pursuits.

Sappho's next move is a surprise, for rather than declaring her own specific κάλλιστον to oppose the three she mentions, she announces a kind of principle, "whatever one loves" (κῆν' ὅττω τις ἔραται, 3-4).¹¹⁹ Her response to all such preferences as in her examples is to renounce them. It is not simply that she happens to find no beauty in military matters but that she severs the connection between the beautiful and the noble. Sappho replaces the noble or the honorable as the source of beauty with the desires of the observer. Yet once such a determination is based on the varying passions of individual human beings, there can no longer be sameness of thought or agreement among them concerning the highest things. The agreement that Tyrtaeus sought to establish among Spartans would have made possible the system of honors and just desert for those who risked their lives in behalf of the city's defense. In the absence of such an agreement, the situation described by Achilles, in which each man loves his wife¹²⁰ and might compel others to go to war for his own private purposes (and others to rebel), would once again prevail. Sappho's new principle, in other words, would dissolve the city. This crisis is the subject of the third stanza. Before dealing with it, however, Sappho must address another.

"It is altogether easy to make this understandable to everyone,"¹²¹ writes Sappho (5), referring no doubt to the sense of her pronouncement on τὸ κάλλιστον. Though her meaning in the first stanza was complex, as we saw, the pronouncement here responds as well to a deeper problem of her own making. When Tyrtaeus focused the admiration of Spartan citizens, he sought to promote a broad agreement among them about what was to be praised and blamed. This agreement was not limited to the evaluation of people or of actions that led to the achievement of certain goals but involved a reinterpretation of the meanings of words. Not only were the notion of ἀρετή and the concept of what is κάλλιστον now given a highly circumscribed understanding, but what constituted a praiseworthy use of footspeed or the effective use of speech, to name only two, had been redefined. What is more, they were redefined for all inhabitants at once, in a way that constituted a common agreement about the use of speech and the fundamental meaning of words.

Sappho's new principle, in moving the determination about the highest things from an agreed-upon standard to individual desire, or from the public sphere to the private, threatens to undermine the basis for communication of thought. If each individual now determines the meaning or even the nuances of meaning in the words he or she speaks, the meaning expressed by one will by no means be comprehended by another, unless their preferences and their resulting interpretations of terms happen somehow to match precisely. Her vow,

mythical Phaiakia, see *Od.* 8.190-1, 246.

118 e.g., *Mimn.* 17, *Arch.* 5a.6, *Tyrt.* 10.27-30. The various choices she offers, similar as they may seem, call attention to the parochial character even of shared preferences. Thus Fraenkel's observation (1973, 186) that "Sappho finds the highest beauty . . . not in the qualities which *all men alike* admire, but in what everyone loves and wishes for himself" (emphasis added) ignores the boundaries of the city.

119 "The proposition and the specific items exist on such different planes as to make their comparison seem almost clumsy (Wills 1967, 436)." See also Schmid (1964), 54.

120 // 9.340-1. See Chapter II above.

121 Commentators generally overlook this remark or, like Fraenkel (1955, 92), find it simply pedantic: "ein umständlich lehrhafter Übergang."

then, is to make not only her argument but even her speech “understandable” to all.¹²² The introduction of Helen to the poem is intended to demonstrate both the near impossibility of any such agreement occurring under these circumstances and the means of bridging the resulting gap between one human being and another.

How can the example of Helen, the woman who surpassed all others in beauty, be the proof of Sappho's proposition that this very excellence is determined by each individual's desire? When Homer first presents Helen in the *Iliad*, there is no doubt that the old men of Troy who see her at the city's wall agree on the desirability of her charms.¹²³ Yet as Homer's readers eventually come to realize, his description of her goes no further than her "white arms." "Helen was of godlike beauty," said Lessing, "but he is nowhere betrayed into a more detailed description of these beauties. Yet the whole poem is based upon the loveliness of Helen." "How did Helen look?" Lessing goes on to ask. "No two readers out of a thousand would receive the same impression of her."¹²⁴ The color of her hair, her eyes, the look of her face, the shape of her limbs are all left blank on the canvas Homer paints, to be filled in by our own imaginations. The *Iliad's* Helen is at once a cipher and a protean model of perfection who fits automatically the specifications of the individual reader. With her limitless variety of possible forms, she seems the exemplar not of Sappho's new principle but of the very radical subjectivity that makes its explanation impossible.¹²⁵ If no two human beings can agree on what constitutes the contours of what is most beautiful, they disagree on what is most worthy of praise. Such a basic disagreement seems to prohibit agreement even on the meaning of terms with which to express it.

Sappho's answer to this dilemma is simple and remarkable. Her choice of Helen, while pointing to the absence of consensus, makes us realize what our own responses to Homer's most beautiful heroine have in common. Although the object of our love may differ from one person to another, each of us has acquaintance with the experience of love. Like Paris or the old men of Troy or even like Sappho, we know what it means to desire one person above all, and to see this object of our desire as the most beautiful. Our common familiarity with the pleasures or the pains or the anticipations of love permits us to comprehend Sappho's meaning when she puts into words her own experience of these things. This agreement, based on shared but private passions that flow from but may not be limited to desire, becomes for us the new basis of public communication. What was tacitly understood in Homer as a common denominator among all human beings but deprecated by Hector and Tyrtæus as less worthy than military courage, is for Sappho the highest standard of judgment. It is to her enduring credit, then, that she does not for a moment shrink from recognizing the dire consequences of this idea.

If Helen herself and her description here demonstrate for us both the problem of intersubjectivity and Sappho's solution to it, the actions of Helen described in the third stanza do not bode well for the practical success of Sappho's new teaching. In leaving Menelaus for Paris, Sappho says Helen chose the most beautiful of men over the man Sappho calls *πανάριστον*.¹²⁶ We may therefore infer that she elected to follow the promptings of some

122 Note the use of both *πάγχυ* and *πάντι* (5, 6) to emphasize universality. The term Sappho chooses here for “understandable” (*ξύνετον*, 6) takes its original meaning from the coming together of roads (see *συνίημι*, *σύνεσις*). The original verb is used in Homer by extension to mean comprehension of speech or of another's thought (e.g., *Il.* 1.273, 2.26, 182; *Od.* 6.289, 8.241, etc.)

123 *Il.* 3.156-7

124 G. E. Lessing (1957), 127-8.

125 Burnett (1983, 280), while drawing the conclusion from the first stanza that “men perceive with a chaotic subjectivity,” does not press the consequences.

126 Though the first half of this word must remain a conjecture, it is clear that *κάλλιστον* would fit neither the meter nor the sense. For Paris' beauty, see Introduction above.

“natural” desire rather than a passion conjured by the dictates of convention or νόμος.¹²⁷ In the city Tyrtaeus sought to bring about, even an otherwise ordinary man would become “wondrous to see” in the eyes of men and “desirable” to women, so long as he was brave in battle.¹²⁸ The political project embodied in Tyrtaeus’ poems, we can now see, sought to ground not just looks but desire as well on a common understanding of ἀρετή. Whether looks engendered desire or vice-versa, neither sprang simply from unmediated perception of the object. While in Sappho’s case her equation of desire and beauty as characteristics leaves us similarly uncertain which she considers prior to the other, it is clear that no agreement at all about common ends, let alone those of a military sort, plays any role in the judgment. Perception is mediated for Sappho, if at all, only by the mysterious lens of individual desire. Certainly no concept of public good can be allowed to impinge on our decision of whom to love. Following Sappho’s principle, then, Helen chose the man whose universal beauty made him most desirable to all, in preference to the man whose universal ἀρετή might have made him most desirable to those in Tyrtaeus’ new Sparta (or indeed anywhere else similar preferences reign).

Helen’s choice is momentous, however, for if the more physically or “naturally” beautiful is always the more desirable, then desire can hardly be constant. In the case of the Spartan warrior, an act or a series of acts of courage continues to follow him throughout his life in the eyes of his compatriots, helping to guarantee that he continues to enjoy pleasure and honor. Natural beauty, however, is a frail determinant of lasting love. There is both the constant likelihood that someone more beautiful will come along and the certainty that any natural beauty will fade with time. When Helen leaves behind her husband and her family, then, her action symbolizes the certainty that by her principles many if not most men and women will eventually each leave their beloved for another.¹²⁹ In most such cases, they will leave their children behind as well. If, once again, Helen is the model, the danger exists that those deprived of a wife or husband or parent will take violent action to recover what they have lost.¹³⁰ The result could be war, as in the case of Menelaus and his powerful brother Agamemnon, or political dissension as in the case of Achilles, which can make the city less able to remain strong against its enemies. Sappho seems to acknowledge that her principle when applied leads to political instability or even destruction.¹³¹

127 Back in Sparta, in the passage to which this stanza seems to allude (*Od.* 4.260-64), Helen claims in front of her husband to have been under the thrall of Ἄτη when Aphrodite led her from her husband, who was himself “lacking neither in mind (φρένας) nor looks (εἶδος).”

128 See Chapter 2 above.

129 Thus Burnett remarks (226) that, for a woman no longer inside Sappho’s circle, “desire, unless she chanced to feel it for her husband, would be destructive of the household, as Helen’s model proved.” Race (1989, 20) compares the place of Helen here with the “sophistic” use by the *Adikos Logos* in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* of various mythological exemplars to “justify a ‘natural’ . . . indulgence of the passions.”

130 In contrasting this passage with Alcaeus 42.15-16, Race (1989, 23) asserts that “Sappho avoids confronting the moral implications of Helen’s abandonment of family and husband (and *polis*) by omitting the dread results.” Yet it is the very mention of Helen’s actions that prompt this association: Most (1981, 15) observes of Helen’s place in the poem: “beautiful she certainly was, but consider all the trouble her beauty got her into . . .” Similarly Pfeiffer (2000, 4): “. . . that Helen chose to follow Paris with the consequence of war gives rise to the idea that she followed him in spite of the consequence of war.”

131 Cf. Cat. 51.13-16. Sappho may suggest the fatal implications of marriage within the context of her understanding of love when, in her Fr. 44a, an account of Hector’s wedding procession, she uses much of the language of his funeral. Burnett (1983, 220n) quotes a remark of Gentili (from *QU* 8 [1969], 12): “*l’episodio mittico deviene l’esemplificazione di una norma, di u aforisma, o di un aforistico preambolo poure in rapporto all’occasione e alla*

For this problem Sappho appears to have a solution as well. If the relation between the family and the fleeting character of desire can yield violent consequences, Sappho suggests a kind of love that does not produce families and that is therefore less likely to weaken the bonds that hold the city together. The beloved of whom she is reminded by the example of the passions experienced by Helen in the presence of the beautiful is not a man but Anactoria (12), a woman. Sappho's rejection of the conventional beauty or nobility of military forces in favor of the face and walk of a woman may be as short-lived and painful as any love between men and women on such grounds, but because it produces no family it threatens the stability of no lives other than those of her beloved and herself.¹³² The kind of love that she is said by many to have promoted on Lesbos could in this respect not be considered a threat to the common. By its nature, however, this kind of love can never be practiced by more than a small minority in the city. Most obviously, the same characteristics that make this love innocuous to individual citizens would provide no means for the natural continuation of the city.¹³³ Without a continual influx of foreigners, the city would die out in a few brief decades, and any such constant renewal of the city's members would make all the more difficult an agreement about the highest things, which is in the view of Tyrtaeus the basis upon which the city can expect military sacrifice on its behalf. Sappho's rejection of the common, then, cannot be intended as a common principle. As an expression of personal predilection, it can never present itself as more than a beautiful¹³⁴ but carefully qualified critique.

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situazione del canto la videnda esemplare di un'azione lodevole o nefasta." Burnett resists the view that the song "must be ominous." Rissman (1983, 123), noting the allusions, calls 44a merely a poem "of female heroism and marriage." Schrenk (1994, 149-50), saying "one should not underestimate the connection drawn between the marriage and the return of the corpse," calls it "an ironic poem which gathers its force from the juxtaposition of the increasing naïve joy of the participants with the building horror of the enlightened reader." Nonetheless, he sees in the poem the more general observation that "Like love, marriage must involve both pleasure and pain."

132 Sappho, Fr. 1.25-6, 31.5-16, 94.1-5. Of the relations between any two members of Sappho's circle, Burnett (1983, 226) observes that "because this love was open and non-reproductive, an easy promiscuity was the rule, allowing love to follow always, wherever beauty was perceived."

133 Cat. 61.71-4.

134 Sappho's description of her beloved Anactoria in the final stanza, using the relatively rare βᾶμα (15) and ἀμάρυγμα (16), recalls the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, where βῆμα twice (222, 345) describes the steps of the inventor of song, and ἀμαρυγή (45) along with its verb ἀμαρύσσω (278, 415) refer to his darting looks. In fact, a man's flashing glances (45) and "swift thought" (ὠκὸν νόημα, 43) function in the hymn as twin similes for Hermes' "planning word and deed together" (46). Since ἐρατός and its cognates are used there repeatedly of the loveliness of song (52, 421, 423, 434, 449, 455), Sappho's application of it to Anactoria and the rhythm of her "step" (15) may lead us to a kind of image of her beloved's ἀμάρυγμα in the flashing currents of thought beneath her own verses (cf. *h. Herm.* 482-5). Sappho would thus have found a way to translate Anactoria's beauty, just as she could make (ποήσαι, 5) her principle understood through the example of Helen.

Chapter 5: General Conclusion

At some time between the early eighth and later seventh centuries, the term *καλόν* underwent a change in meaning from its use in Homer to that in Tyrtaeus. Originally a label for what is “appropriate,” it became in Sparta a term of great praise and honor, bestowed in return for actions that display or contribute to courage in battle. The sense of what was *καλόν* had been both raised and narrowed: raised because courage in battle was presented by Tyrtaeus as the highest virtue, narrowed because the specifications of that courage allowed little room for variation. These specifications appeared to have been developed out of a consideration of what would be useful for the city's survival. In the course of their implementation in the city, however, the term *καλόν* took on a much more central role in the city's life. It was the power of this role that Sappho recognized and in opposition to which she spoke in her Fr. 16.

It would be hard to question the utility of courage in any city, even more so a city in seventh-century Greece, and especially one under the constant threat of Helot revolt. While the warriors of epic might offer some protection to their city and its inhabitants, their pursuit of personal pleasure could amount to a serious conflict in loyalty, and their concept of honor entailed little more than the desire to be “best.” The new virtue announced by Tyrtaeus was intended in part as a corrective to these drawbacks of the *Iliad's* so-called “warrior code.”¹³⁵ Carefully circumscribed to match the requirements of hoplite warfare, it was also a response to the necessities of time and place. As we saw, however, the new virtue and the city's regard for its practitioners were intended to bring about positive good for both the warrior and his city. Within the lines of Tyrtaeus' twelfth elegy, the city itself could be seen to change its shape, from something approaching a conglomeration of inhabitants and mercenaries to an association of individuals unified in their pursuit of common goals. It was to be made better by internal concord and harmony of opinion as well as by security from attack. Its soldiers, by their more chastened pursuit of pleasures and honors sanctioned by the city, would be worthy of high standing among their fellow citizens. This new *πόλις*, now devoted to its purpose as an incubator of virtue, deserved that designation even if Tyrtaeus himself never used it.¹³⁶ Such a profound transformation, however, was made possible by the use of another term, *καλόν*.

Though the fear of shame can be a weighty counterbalance to terror before the enemy, it is the love of honor that impels men to wish to put themselves in that position. The road to virtue, after all, is steep.¹³⁷ For the young man unencumbered by family, however, perhaps nothing is a stronger inducement to action than what might enhance his attraction to the opposite sex. Tyrtaeus' remarkable achievement in his tenth elegy was to recognize the power of *λόγος* to affect what is before our eyes and to incorporate that power into his new foundation of the city. The term *ἄισχρόν* in Homer could be applied to both the shame and the ugliness of base action, yet it had no counterpart for noble acts of virtue.¹³⁸ That the term *καλόν* does not appear to have carried this quality before Tyrtaeus may thus be more than a happy consequence of linguistic change over the century or so since Homer's day. Given the evidence, there appears a strong likelihood that Tyrtaeus began the use of *καλόν* in such a manner.

Radical as the transformation wrought by Tyrtaeus' poetry was, it might have been lost on us but for Sappho's reaction to it. Her Fr. 16 has long puzzled commentators for the

135 Such a “code,” as scholars have termed it, was in fact a matter of dispute in the *Iliad*. See Rabel, 79.

136 Arist. *Pol.* 1252b28-30.

137 Hes., *OD* 289-92; Tyrt 10.31-2.

138 // 2.216, etc. Adkins (1960), 44.

apparent “inconcinnity”¹³⁹ of examples in the first stanza, as well as the curious status of Helen in the poet's argument. As we have seen, these difficulties are not Sappho's but our own, for they begin to be removed once we follow the signposts she offers us by her adaptation of Tyrtaeus' priamel and her implicit correction of his definition of τὸ κάλλιστον. As Sappho well understood, Tyrtaeus meant far more than to declare a personal view by his use of the term. It was his transformation of the very perceptions of the citizens that amounted, in her eyes, to a deformation of beauty and an intolerable compromise of true longing. Whether this is in fact the case is beyond the scope of this essay, for it would require us to examine both what lies behind our determination of what we love, and the character of what we see. Nonetheless, our recognition of Sappho's argument opens up for us the extraordinary depth of thought of both poets. And not least of all, it turns us toward what might lie within the verses of the poet who was also their common teacher, Homer.

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139 Wills (1967), 435-6.

Appendix: The Structure of Tyrtaeus 10

Although the poem is quoted to us as a continuous work of 32 lines, the notion that those lines actually consist of two separate poems has persisted almost since its first suggestion nearly 200 years ago.¹⁴⁰ Those who would divide the poem in two (ending the first after line 14) make two principal arguments to support their view. Like Prato, they contend that the poet addresses different groups in the two sections: middle-aged, married men with children in the first, and much younger men (νέοι, 15) in the second.¹⁴¹ To this argument Verdenius replies in his commentary that Callinus (1.2) clearly addresses married men as νέοι, and that the “young” men in the second half of Tyrtaeus 10 have elderly parents (10.19, 22), just as do those in the first.¹⁴² Next, the “separatists” point to the shift from the “we” of μαχώμεθα (13) to the “you” of ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε (15) as inexplicable coming from the mouth of the same speaker. Once again, the sober Verdenius dismisses the apparent inconsistency with a simple explanation,¹⁴³ and subsequent scholarship hardly raises the question of separation at all.¹⁴⁴

More recently, Faraone has revived an earlier observation that the poem (or most of it) may have a tripartite internal structure. Following Rossi, he detects a series of three, five-couplet “strophes” in lines 1-30. There is, indeed, much to recommend such a structure. As he notes, lines 1 and 21 (the opening lines of the first and third “strophes”) are both introduced by γάρ; αἰσχρόν in line 21 appears to respond to καλός in line 1, which is itself reflected in the καλός of line 30, a fact that adds credence to the theory that line 30 closes the poem.¹⁴⁵ These and other arguments for such an implicit division, however, require us either to excise the final two lines of Lycurgus' quote or, with Faraone, to suppose the existence of at least a fourth “strophe” in the original.¹⁴⁶ As we shall see, such drastic measures are unnecessary. Yet the fact that they have been seriously proposed gives us some idea of the compelling reasons for this means of dividing the poem, as well as of the great difficulty involved in accepting it.

Certainly, the poem invites a neat division between its exhortations on the one hand

140 Lyc. in *Leocr.* 107. According to Prato (1968, 81), C. H. Heinrich first put forward the “separatist” thesis in 1821. It was not until Wilamowitz, however, that the suggestion was taken seriously.

141 Prato argues vigorously for separation in his edition and commentary on the fragments. On this question, however, he scarcely acknowledges a dispute: “*Non v'e dubio,*” he writes, “*come del resto riconosce la maggior parte degli studiosi, sia separatisti che unitari, che il poeta si rivolge nella prima elegia a uomini diversi da quelli della seconda.*” (Prato 1968, 86n)

142 The term νέοι, he suggests (1969, 345), is expansive enough to encompass all of those under the age of fifty.

143 Prato (81-3) summarizes the arguments of the χωριζόντες (most notably Jacoby), with whom he agrees. Verdenius, however (346-7), maintains that “both parts refer to the same situation, the first being a reflection, the second an exhortation,” adducing *Il* 6.70-1 to bolster his point. “The fact that the poet includes his own person in the reflection does not imply that he ought also to have included himself in the exhortation,” he adds, calling the speaker's use of the first person analogous to the common practice of schoolmasters.

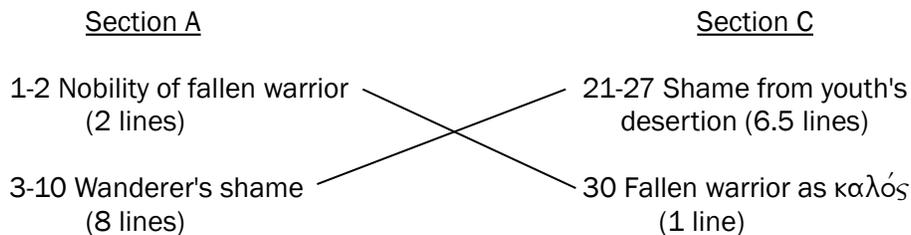
144 Both West's and Gerber's editions treat the poem as a unit, as does Adkins (1970, 79). Faraone (2005, 318n) refers to this as “the current *communis opinio.*”

145 To these points he adds the near-repetition of ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα, the ending of line 1, in lines 21 and 30. (Faraone 2005, 320-1.)

146 Faraone (2005), 323-3.

and its discussions of shame and honor on the other.¹⁴⁷ Verses 11-20 contain an extended exhortation consisting of two hortatory subjunctives: μαχώμεθα (13), θνήσκωμεν (14), followed by five imperatives (μάχεσθε 15, ἄρχετε 16, ποιεῖτε 17, μηδὲ φιλοχψυχεῖτ' 18, μὴ φεύγετε 20). If we include the three supplementary participles depending on these (φειδόμενοι 14, μένοντες 15, μὴ καταλείποντες 20) we have a total of ten exhortations, commands or prohibitions laid out by the poet in the ten lines of the central section. Surrounding this center are two more sections of ten lines each, 1-10 and 21-30, in which verbs appear only in the indicative mood. The explanatory γάρ following the first word in lines 1 and 21 seems to confirm the impression that each of these outer sections offers reasons supporting the exhortations.¹⁴⁸ Together, these sections contain eight references to shame or dishonor.¹⁴⁹

Shame and honor, then, constitute the background of the commands in the center third of the poem, so that the relation between those commands and their explanatory foundation appears to define its shape. Yet, as we have seen, the appealing symmetry of this structure depends on an assumption that the poem is complete at line 30. In fact, the awkward presence of lines 31-2 in the continuous transmission of of Lycurgus is the first outward sign that the perceived structure of three five-couplet "strophes" is inadequate. A bit of closer inspection reveals further flaws: If γάρ at line 21 is meant to correspond to γάρ at line 1, we have a parallel structure in the two outer sections rather than a more fully chiasmic one. This is at odds with the sequence in the sense of these two sections, for the first couplet of Section A (1-2) shows the fallen warrior's nobility, followed by four couplets (3-10) detailing the shame of the wanderer. By contrast, the shameful sight resulting from the young man's desertion in Section C takes up its first three and one-fourth couplets (lines 21-middle of 27), while the fallen warrior is called καλός in its next to last (30):



The new, chiasmic symmetry revealed by this brief, internal look at Sections A and C leads us to a better understanding of the poem's structure as a whole. We can now see that αἰσχρὸν γάρ ("Because it is shameful . . ." 21) responds not to all of the exhortations in the central section, but merely to the preceding couplet (19-20) ordering the young men not to flee and leave their elders behind. As the order that governs the explanatory lines that follow, 19-20 thus belong more appropriately with the final section. Similarly, lines 11-12 ("Since there is no regard for a wanderer . . ."¹⁵⁰) sum up the preceding four couplets as an "explanation" for the exhortation in 13-14 to fight and die for one's children. Though placed

147 So Faraone (2005a, 318-321), following Rossi.

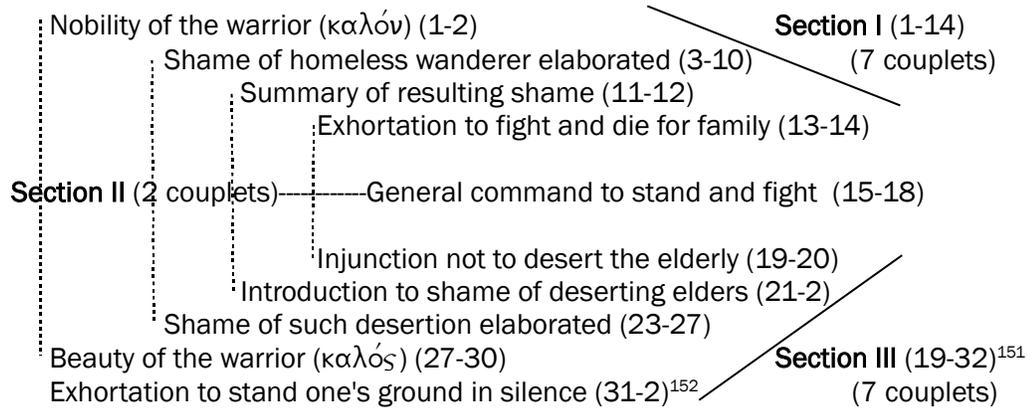
148 Thus Jaeger remarks on this and Tyrtaeus' other elegies (1966, 114): "The imperative . . . furnishes the thought sequence with its frame, the indicative . . . with its contents."

149 Five in 1-10: ἀνιηρότατον (4), αἰσχύνει and ἀγλαὸν εἶδος ἔλέγχει (9), ἀτιμίη and κακότης (10); three in 21-30: αἰσχρὸν (21), αἰσχρά and νεμεσητόν (26). By contrast, καλόν appears in the poem only twice, once in each argument (10.1, 30). As Jaeger (1966, 114) remarks, "in the exhortations of early Greek ethics . . . the αἰσχρὸν motive plays a dominant part, and the καλόν takes second place."

150 Reading Francke's emendation of εἰ δ' for εἴθ' (11). See Adkins (1977), 78.

after them, their function in regard to the first twelve lines is thus analogous to that of the “introductory exhortation” (19-20) in relation to the lines that follow it, and lines 13-14 thus belong to the first group of couplets.

The poem's division into three main Sections may be outlined schematically as follows, with a much more detailed symmetry that accounts more fully for the inner structure of the poem:



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151 While Dawson (1966, 51-2) sides with the separatists, he nonetheless recognizes the unity of the final seven couplets, within what he considers the second poem: “Four lines of exhortation to show courage are followed by verses which support the exhortation by both immediate and traditional arguments (19-32).”

152 In this view, the more general exhortation that ends the poem (31-2) now appears to be a kind of balance to 13-14. At the end of Chapter I, we explore another possible reason for the poem's inclusion of these final lines.

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