

The Theognidea in Reperformance: A Rhetorical Rereading

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
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2023

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The Theognidea is the most significant work of archaic Greek elegy, but questions of its origins have long dominated its study. This dissertation reads the Theognidea as the product of widespread, rhetorically motivated sympotic performance and gives equal interpretive weight to each performance, whether it be the putative “original” or a reperformance. I find that many features that had been regarded as cruxes would have instead been assets for symposiasts hoping to repurpose the poetry.

In the first chapter, I take up the problem of poem divisions. There is no authoritative scheme of poem divisions. Indeed, there are almost as many different schemes of poem division as there are versions of the texts, as I show in the results of a survey of the poem divisions made by 16 manuscripts, 21 editions, and two schemas proposed in a monograph. I argue that this variation is not a problem, but instead a reflection of the malleability of the text, a feature that would have been useful in sympotic reperformance. In the second chapter, I argue that the doublets are demonstrations of the adaptability of the poetry to new contexts, whether or not they are actual transcriptions of reperformance. I argue that the change in medium from dynamic, sympotic performance to fixed, page poetry has created interpretive problems which can be solved with the introduction of a born-digital edition of the collection.

In the third chapter, I discuss the use of five value terms (*agathos*, *esthlos*, *kalos*, *kakos*, and *deilos*) which occur with notable frequency in the collection. I find that the status of “good” or “bad” described by these terms is a matter of discernment rather than the result of objectively identifiable indicators like birth or wealth; moreover, the status is regarded as impermanent. The frequent use and inconsistent application of these terms is a reflection of the fact that these terms were both valuable and contestable in reperformance. In the fourth chapter I build upon the unsettled social picture of the third chapter with an examination of the use of friendship language in the Theognidea. I find that friendship is predominantly described on a one-on-one level and characterized by a lack of trust. If organized friend groups (*hetaireiai*) did exist, they do not seem to have held much sway over the interpersonal relationships of the symposiasts who performed this poetry.

The final two chapters are concerned with how this new reading ought to affect our understanding of author and audience in the poetry. In the fifth chapter, I examine passages in which the speaker of the poetry makes claims to authorship. I find that these claims are consistent with the immediate rhetorical needs of the symposion and do not preclude reuse. I argue that Theognis, as identified in previous readings, is best understood as an implied author. I close with an examination of how the implied authors of the collection have been understood. In the sixth chapter, I describe the differences between the ancient and modern audiences of the poetry. I survey the

extensive use of address in the collection to show that the audience is quite literally an element of the poetry, and I discuss how these vocatives could be used in reperformance. I conclude with a rumination on the role that modern readers play as audience members. I find that it is ultimately impossible for readers now to fully inhabit the role of audience envisioned when it was performed in the symposium.

Dedication

To Madhu

πολλοί τοι πόσιος καὶ βρώσιός εἰσιν ἑταῖροι,
ἐν δὲ σπουδαίῳ πρήγματι παυρότεροι.

To Mom and Dad

οὐδὲν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς ἄμεινον
ἔπλετο, οἷσ' ὅσῃ, Κύρνε, μέμηλε δίκη.

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went out of his comfort zone to teach Latin and thus made my continued journey on this path possible. Sharon James convinced me that I was capable of research at this level. I sincerely wish that I had space here to thank each and every one of the other teachers who helped me reach this point.

A different kind of thanks is owed to Francis Wong. If I were to stoop so low as to respond in kind to the nonsensical insults leveled at my scholarship in his dissertation, *Essays in Public Finance and Consumer Financial Behavior*, I would say that the most serious bit of “information friction” is found between the author and his data. One simply cannot draw conclusions about homeowner behavior based on data that spans the Great Recession. I am tempted to say such things and more, but I will refrain because Francis’ dissertation did teach me an important lesson. His calumnies showed me, by reverse example, the importance of being generous to one’s fellow scholars, else I make a fool of myself. We cannot reach our longest-running goals without each other.

Finally, I am grateful to the Graduate School at Duke University for their fellowship support, including funding to examine manuscripts in Europe last summer.

1. Introduction

παῖσιν τοι κίνδυνος ἐπ’ ἔργμασιν, οὐδέ τις οἶδεν
πῆι σχήσειν μέλλει προήγατος ἀρχομένου.
(585-586)

1.1 *The Theognidea*

The *Theognidea* is a document without parallel. Quantitatively, it singlehandedly contains over two-thirds of all surviving archaic Greek elegy.¹ Qualitatively, it is the only archaic Greek elegiac poetry to survive via its own independent manuscript tradition.²

The *Theognidea*’s unique status alone would merit periodic reexamination. In anglophone scholarship, that reexamination has long been overdue: the last independent edition with a complete commentary is over 120 years old, and the last book devoted in full to the collection will soon turn 40.³ In other modern languages recent years have seen important work. Henrik Selle’s *Theognis und die Theognidea* represents an invaluable account of the history of the scholarship and the *status quaestionis* at the time of its publication in 2008. Italian scholarship on the collection is currently flourishing: three monographs⁴ and myriad articles, chapters, and reviews have been published since

¹ Adkins 1985, 133.

² Ferreri 2021, Aleotti 2019, Young 1953.

³ Hudson-Williams 1910, Figueira and Nagy 1985. Important smaller scale work devoted to the *Theognidea* has been published in English in recent years—Spelman 2021, De Martin 2020b, Bakker 2017, Bakker 2016, Bowie 2012, and Lear 2011—but there have been no book-length projects (with the important exception of dissertations).

⁴ Colesanti 2011, Ferreri 2020, Ferreri 2021.

2010.⁵ The time has come for a new generation of anglophone scholarship on the Theognidea.⁶

Looking back to the late 19th and early 20th century, the extraordinary worth of this collection was met with a correspondingly sizeable scholarly output.⁷ Its focus was the “Theognidean Question.” Modeled after the Homeric Question, it was in truth multiple questions posed in hopes of determining the origins of the text as transmitted.⁸ The state of the collection inspired these questions. The manuscript tradition preserves what appears to be a complete collection of poetry, but what survives is not a logically arranged collection of discrete elegies. Instead, it consists of over 1,400 couplets collected with no clear principles of arrangement.⁹ Lines in the collection are repeated, sometimes with slight modifications, sometimes verbatim. Verses elsewhere attributed to other authors are included—sometimes lightly modified, never with any mode of attribution.

⁵ The vast majority of this scholarship has been written by three scholars: Giulio Colesanti, Federico Condello, and Luigi Ferreri. For an account of the shorter works, see their entries in the bibliography. See also Ercolani 1998.

⁶ The future indeed looks bright. Sara De Martin recently published a dissertation devoted to the ancient reception of Theognis (2020a). In 2021, for the first time in 40 years, a conference entirely devoted to the Theognidea was held: *Theognis and the Theognidea*.

⁷ For thorough histories of Theognidean scholarship from that period, see Ferreri 2013, 50-69 and Selle 2008, 4-16.

⁸ Holger Friis Johansen presents a helpful catalogue of these questions: “Who was Theognis, and where and when did he live? Did he exist at all, and was there ever a boy called Cynrus? Is the whole corpus by Theognis, and if so, in what sense? If not, when, where, and to what purpose did it come into existence? Did it, or did it not, pass through several stages of genesis before it acquired the form it has now? If an affirmative answer is given to this last question (as has most frequently been the case), how can we distinguish such stages, and more particularly, how can we distinguish the genuine Theognis from the rest of the corpus? What part, if any, did orality play in the creation and transmission of the Theognidean corpus?” (1991, 5-6).

⁹ The one exception is the fact that the second book is almost entirely pederastic elegies, which are absent from the first book. This has led some to view the entire work as the product of Byzantine scholars, who excerpted the pederastic elegies (first proposed by Friedrich Welcker 1826, cx-cxii).

Moreover, even the identity and integrity of the individual poetic units is unclear. The collection is unquestionably made up of many short poems, but the most authoritative manuscripts give no indication of where those poems begin and end. Finally, not only is the structure inconsistent: the ideological content itself is markedly inconsistent.¹⁰

There have been many proposals for the collection's origins. Only a few of them have been content to attribute the collection as transmitted to a single author named Theognis.¹¹ Some have attempted to restore a lost, original order by rearranging the collection.¹² Others have sought to identify the seams along which multiple gnomic collections—by Theognis and others—have been stitched together.¹³ Still others have traced the origins of the collection beyond written anthologies back to sympotic performance. This particular approach arose at the turn of the 20th century but fell out of favor for decades.¹⁴ In the introduction to his edition of the second book,

¹⁰ These contradictions have been pointed out as early as Plato's *Meno* (95c-e). N.b. Kurke 1999, 27-28. *Contra* De Martin 2020b.

¹¹ These so-called unitarians are primarily represented by Ernest Harrison (1902) and Douglas Young (1971). Cf. Chapter 5.

¹² Welcker's edition (1826), which reorders the entire collection (without the doublets), is the most extended effort along these lines. Epkema (1803) proposes select rearrangements. Frese (1842) rearranges the poetry in order to construct a biography of the poet. More recently, Steffen (1968) has also proposed that the corpus be rearranged. Gerber (1991, 190) rather cruelly calls the latter: "surely the ultimate example of misplaced ingenuity."

¹³ Martin West (1974) divides the collection into an authentic *florilegium purum* (19-254), *excerpta meliora* (255-1022), and *excerpta deteriora* (1023-1220). His remains the most prominent of this approach, at least in anglophone scholarship, and is followed with some modification by Bowie (2012) and Spelman (2021). West's theory is sometimes regarded (e.g. by Ferreri 2013, 54) as a simplification of Jacoby's (1931), who divides the corpus into four sections: the "Kurnos book" (1-254), "Athenian book" (255-756), "Megarian Book" (757-1220), "Second Book" (1231-1389). Previously, Friedrich Nietzsche (1867) proposed that the arrangement was based on the alignment of key words (the so-called *Stichwörter* theory).

¹⁴ Reitzenstein 1893; Wendorff 1902.

Maximus Vetta has resuscitated the sympotic approach by arguing for the presence of sympotic dialogic structures (*coppie*) in the work.¹⁵ Vetta's intervention represents a turning point,¹⁶ and in the years since much scholarship has sought to identify sympotic sequences in the collection.¹⁷ Giulio Colesanti took this work to its logical conclusion by arguing for a *pansympotic* hypothesis: the entire collection is a straight recording of sympotic proceedings.¹⁸ The universality of Colesanti's hypothesis has not been universally accepted, and some still attribute elements of the arrangement to later gnomological reordering.¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is now generally accepted that elegy like the Theognidea was originally composed for, and performed in, the symposion.²⁰

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will treat the question of the Theognidea's origin as settled: the Theognidea is a sympotic text. I acknowledge that this premise is not irrefutable. Even so, I regard it as sufficiently plausible to use as the foundation for my investigation into the operation of the poetry, both within the symposion and as a

¹⁵ Vetta 1980 (n.b. xxvii-xxxvii). The same year, Rösler (1980) situated monodic performance in the symposion, with specific emphasis on Alcaeus.

¹⁶ Ferreri goes as far as to compare Vetta to F.A. Wolf's role in the Homeric Question (2013, 45).

¹⁷ "Sympotic sequence" is the preferred terminology of Federico Condello (2017, 64). The sequences identified range from a pair of couplets or group of couplets (a *coppia*) to long chains (*catenae*). For examples, see the monograph by Ferreri (2020) and Condello's articles on the subject (2019, 2017, 2009).

¹⁸ Colesanti 2011. Vetta adopted a similar position in a late work (2000).

¹⁹ On this question see especially the reviews of Colesanti's monograph (Ferreri 2013 and Condello 2015).

²⁰ In anglophone scholarship Bowie's article (1986) situating elegiac performance in the symposion is considered seminal.

text for modern readers.²¹ To support this investigation some background in the symposion is needed.

1.2 The Symposion

The symposion was more than just a drinking party; in the archaic period it was a key venue for elite self-definition. This self-definition took two forms. First, the definition of values: symposiasts determined how each symposion was to be conducted,²² and their choices reflected the broader values of its participants.²³ Besides embodying them in deed, participants used the symposion as a privileged venue to articulate their values explicitly, in hopes of convincing the larger group to embrace them. Thus, the seemingly platitudinous maxims of Theognidean poetry were, in truth, high-stakes arguments for distinct visions of what the group ought to value.²⁴ A symposiast's ability to establish himself as an authority in this regard held the promise of benefitting him beyond the symposion, as a citizen of the polis.²⁵

The second element of elite self-definition had even higher stakes: it concerned the very definition of who was elite. The two critical conditions of sympotic participation were the ability to contribute equally to the considerable expenses of the

²¹ I follow here in the footsteps of Romney (2020), who on the premise that this poetry was sympotic explores how its social dynamics operated.

²² Hobden 2013, 45-52.

²³ "By watching symposiasts in action, intratextual and extratextual audiences...could identify political attitudes and intentions within their sympotic style" (Hobden 2013, 118). *Contra* Hammer 2004, 493.

²⁴ Kurke 1999, 27-28. The debate as to whether the symposion was "anti-polis" reflects this tension. For a helpful, if not unbiased, summary of the debate, see Corner 2010, 353-354.

²⁵ Hobden 2013, n.b. 63. Cf. Romney 2020, 16-24.

symposion, and the ability to participate skillfully in the various tasks that made up its proceedings, chiefly the poetic contests that could divide its attendance into winners and losers.²⁶ Invitation to the symposion offered an institutional mechanism by which new members (i.e. those who had newly gained access by marriage or wealth) could be integrated into the elite. Reciprocally, those who had proven unworthy or could no longer afford to contribute would cease to be welcome.²⁷ The symposion was thus a “segregative integrative feast”²⁸ by which the Greek elite defined itself in performance.²⁹

Performance of elegiac poetry like the Theognidea served both critical functions of self-definition.³⁰ Elegy was performed by the symposiasts in a recitative style with a reduced melody between song and speech.³¹ The typical length of a sympotic elegy has not been securely established given the fragmentary form of what survives (the Theognidea does not help because its poem boundaries are not defined in the authoritative manuscripts).³² The dynamics of the symposion demanded that (whatever their length) performances be part of an active exchange in which later symposiasts responded to previous ones with the expectation of being responded to in turn.³³ The

²⁶ Wecowski 2014, 69 and 50-55 respectively.

²⁷ Wecowski 2014, 75-76.

²⁸ Wecowski 2014, 80.

²⁹ For the performative definition of the Greek elite, see also Duplouy 2006.

³⁰ Other poetic genres like iambos were also at home in the symposion, but their performance does not affect the conclusions concerning elegy that follow.

³¹ Budelmann and Power 2013.

³² See Bowie 2016, Faraone 2008, and Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

³³ Wecowski 2014, 50.

symptotic sequences in the Theognidea are the manifestation of that dynamic of exchange.³⁴

The performance of symptotic poetry had to meet on the spot the demands of the moment. This format gave highly skilled symposiasts ample opportunity to demonstrate their ability to improvise new compositions.³⁵ The structure of elegy was especially suited for such improvisations.³⁶ But for those who were less skilled, either for lack of experience or for lack of talent, the demands of improvisation must have been a source of considerable anxiety.³⁷ It is therefore not surprising that symposiasts would turn to memorizing poetry before the symposion and, if necessary, would slightly adjust it for the occasion. Some of this poetry might have been composed by the symposiasts themselves away from the time pressures of the symposion. Symposiasts must have also memorized and recited poetry not their own. This implies that symptotic poetry will have been frequently reperformed, sometimes verbatim, sometimes with modifications.³⁸

There is clear evidence within the Theognidea for these subsequent performances. There is first the explicit and repeated mention that the poetry will be

³⁴ Vetta 1980, Ferreri 2020, Colesanti 2011, and Condello 2017.

³⁵ Those who demonstrate *sophia* (see Nagy 1985, 24-26, Gladigow 1965, Bollack 1968).

³⁶ See Garner 2011 for formulae in elegy.

³⁷ This anxiety was likely a motivating factor for the increasing professionalization of musical performance in the symposion of the late fifth and early fourth century.

³⁸ On reperformance in antiquity, see Hunter and Uhlig 2017 and Spelman 2018. Neither, unfortunately, deal with elegiac reperformance.

performed again.³⁹ Additionally, a few couplets repeat—sometimes with slight modification, sometimes verbatim—others found in the collection (these are called *internal doublets*) or in poems elsewhere attributed to other authors (*external doublets*). Whether these couplets are recordings of actual sympotic reuse is still a matter of debate,⁴⁰ but it is unquestionable that they model the sort of reappropriation and slight modification that would have characterized the practice. Finally, the poetry itself is malleable. On the level of diction, the Theognidea prefers generalized, allusive language over specifics that could not be easily transferred to a new context.⁴¹ Proper nouns are exceedingly rare outside of named addressees, and even these when used do not refer to the immediate circumstances.⁴² On a structural level, as demonstrated in my first chapter, the fact that the manuscripts and editions divide the collection into different individual poetic units demonstrates that symposiasts could have fruitfully taken the same poetic material and put it into new contexts.

Although modern scholars do not dispute that Theognidean elegy was reperformed, they often subordinate subsequent performances to a putative original one. This position is to be expected among those who attribute either all or at least a core of the poetry to “Theognis,” and who treat the poetry as one would treat the works of

³⁹ N.b. lines 20-23, 239-243, 369-370.

⁴⁰ Colesanti (2011) argues that they are.

⁴¹ For a brief summary of generalization in Theognidean language, see Ferreri 2020, 20-21 (citing Condello 2010).

⁴² For example, the use of city names on lines 1103-1104. A rare counterexample is the use of the specific term “Medes” to describe the invading force at line 775.

any other individual. But even those who emphasize the broad temporal and spatial scope of the poetry's reperformance often attempt to determine its significance for the first performance among "the Megarian elite"⁴³ or a given sympotic group.⁴⁴ Every sympotic performance had the potential to play a defining role for the performer and his audience. Doubtless some symposia may have had higher social or political stakes for the participants, but those stakes would have been determined by external factors: perhaps a symposiast was seeking to gain access to the elite or to keep his elite status; or the political circumstances were growing uncertain and the symposiasts were debating the best course of action. Whether the poetry performed was an original composition, a modification, or a verbatim reperformance would have had no bearing on the rhetorical stakes or success of the utterance. Interpretation of Theognidean poetry ought to give subsequent sympotic performances equal weight to the original performance.

Happily, the choice to place widespread sympotic reperformance at the center of my interpretation makes the Theognidea even more important. Seen through this lens, the collection captures the voices of generations of Greek elite, who used poetry to navigate the social and political upheavals that characterized the archaic period. It truly is a document without parallel.

⁴³ Nagy 1985.

⁴⁴ Colesanti (2011) situates this *hetaireia* in Megara; Vetta (2000) in Athens.

1.3 Methodology

I approach my reading of the Theognidea with two premises. First, that it reflects widespread sympotic reperformance. Second, that the performance of Theognidean poetry was a rhetorical act. These premises shape my aims for this project. In short, I seek to identify and explore the utility that the text's many ambiguities and apparent contradictions presented to sympotic reperformance. Unlike previous scholars, I am not interested in resolving them.

I am more concerned with the possible range of uses than with determining a single definitive use. This informs my reading of the very identity of the poetry (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), its ideological content (Chapters 3 and 4), and the identity of its authors and audiences (Chapters 5 and 6). My choice to marginalize the first performance also entails that the specific historical process by which the collection reached its current form is not fundamental to my argument. Whether there were ever individuals named Theognis or Kurnos is not my concern. Also immaterial to my study is whether the Theognidea, as we now read it, originated as a sourcebook for symposiasts in need of poetic material,⁴⁵ as a recording of notable performances,⁴⁶ or as the product of anthologization derived from sympotic poetry.⁴⁷ In each case the poetry itself reflects widespread sympotic reperformance, and for this reason I remain agnostic

⁴⁵ As first proposed by Reitzenstein (1893).

⁴⁶ Colesanti 2011.

⁴⁷ See note 13 above.

on the question of the text's origins. How that poetry functioned in reperformance is the focus of my study.

I regard the performance of Theognidean poetry in the symposion as a rhetorical act. I therefore conduct my analysis in rhetorical terms. I read the Theognidea as both poetic and practical because that is how the poetry would have been viewed by its creators: not as lofty literature that transcended utility, but neither as merely useful. It was literature with practical goals.

These goals would have been manifold: from the concrete (setting the ratio of water to wine in the *krater*) to the intangible (gaining access to the elite or authority among them). I make every effort to illustrate potential goals and the poetry's effectiveness in reaching them, but I cannot claim to exhaust the possibilities, given the extensive recirculation of this poetry and my chronological and cultural distance from it.

My rhetorical approach does not stop with the archaic symposion. I also investigate how modern readers experience it—specifically, how reading the Theognidea as a reflection of sympotic reperformance affects its operation. Modern readers can only access the original performance circumstances by conjecturing them in their reading of the text.⁴⁸ The Theognidea presents them with rather complex rhetorical dynamics. For this reason I resort to the rhetorical theory of narrative, a framework for

⁴⁸ This is the case whether one adopts my approach or reconstructs a putative first performance.

the analysis of complex texts developed in the 20th century.⁴⁹ Originally designed for the study of novels with unreliable narrators, this framework developed precise vocabulary to distinguish competing rhetorical operations within the same work. This particular narrative theory is well suited to clarify the complex rhetorical operations found in the Theognidea across time.

1.4 Structure

The rhetorical approach of my dissertation informs its structure. Every rhetorical act consists of three essential elements: its content, its context, and the actors involved. These three elements correspond to the three parts of my dissertation, each consisting of two chapters. They are as follows.

1.4.1 Section One: The Text

The first two chapters demonstrate that the malleable text of the Theognidea lent itself to reperformance.

In the first chapter I argue that the indeterminate nature of the text's poem divisions is evidence for that malleability. It is universally accepted that the over 1,400-line corpus consists of many short poems. But the most authoritative manuscripts do not mark poem divisions. The later manuscripts which do contain poem divisions exhibit different ways to divide the collection. Modern editions neither follow these nor have

⁴⁹ The foundation for this approach is *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Booth 1983). It has since been elaborated upon considerably (see in particular, Rabinowitz 1977 and Phelan 2017).

settled on any one scheme among themselves. There are almost as many different ways of dividing the Theognidea into poems as there are manuscripts and editions. I have gathered this data from a first-hand survey of the poem divisions found in 39 editions and manuscripts of the Theognidea, the first published survey of its kind. I attribute these widespread discrepancies to the dynamics of reperformance: editors have not settled on definitive poem divisions because there was never a definitive archetype. In fact, the varying arrangements of couplets into poems by different editors vividly suggest corresponding rearrangements by ancient symposiasts.

In the second chapter I reassess the significance of internal doublets, i.e., couplets which appear twice in the collection (in some cases with slight modification); and of external doublets, i.e., poems which appear elsewhere attributed to other poets. Instead of trying to determine which version is authentic, I show how a new context or modified phrasing could artfully meet the changing rhetorical needs of symposiasts. These couplets demonstrate that the same malleability that hinders modern agreement on poem divisions was an asset to ancient performers.

The first two chapters demonstrate how the fixed nature of the modern text obscures the vitality of its sympotic use. I thus close this section with a proposal for a digital edition of the collection that would give modern readers a clearer idea of its flexibility in reperformance. This edition would allow them to rearrange and modify the

text under chosen constraints. With this edition they could experience the poetry as a living body, just as symposiasts did over two millennia ago.

1.4.2 Section Two: The Context

The third and fourth chapters demonstrate that the ideological texture of the symposion was subject to the same malleability as the text itself. I explore the contestation of elite self-definition via Theognidean poetry, both of the values of the group and of its very identity. In centering reperformance, I embrace the indeterminacy of the poetry's value language and the unstable identity of the sympotic groups in which it was performed.

The third chapter focuses on five key adjectives (*agathos*, *esthlos*, *kalos*, *kakos*, and *deilos*) pervasively used to express praise and blame (they appear in 33% of the couplets in the corpus). While their very frequency signals their importance, their use is both indeterminate and inconsistent. I regard the imprecise and inconsistent deployment of these terms as a feature of their sympotic utility. This leads me to reframe perceived inconsistencies as evidence of the divergent rhetorical aims of different performing symposiasts. I argue that the effort to harmonize perceived contradictions and to construct a coherent, unitary worldview is misleading and misguided. Boundaries between "good" and "bad" were contested. A symposiast who persuaded his audience to subscribe to his value system would wield immense influence over the group. Once

again, the malleability of the poetry (this time ideological) presented important opportunities to a wide variety of performers.

The fourth chapter challenges the long-held assumption that symposiasts formed stable associations (*hetaireiai*) with shared social and political goals. While such groups existed in the Classical period, I show that this model of participation fits poorly with the group dynamics of the archaic symposion. The language of collective friendship, action, and trust is largely absent in the Theognidea. Instead, friendship is chiefly described in terms of one-on-one relationships. Trust must be constantly earned and is often betrayed. Theognidean symposia do not presuppose stable clubs, but individuals who choose their associations individually and solely with their own best interests in mind.

1.4.3 Section Three: The Actors

Every rhetorical act consists of someone telling someone else something.⁵⁰ In these two chapters I examine how reading the Theognidea as a reflection of widespread reperformance affects our understanding of the identity of those “someones.” In both chapters I begin by analyzing how those roles are manifest in the text; I then consider how we reconstruct those roles, and even how we play a part in them as readers.

In the fifth chapter I argue that the often-cited claims to authorship in the Theognidea are actually more concerned with wielding authority in the symposion.

⁵⁰ Phelan 2017.

Using the framework of the rhetorical theory of narrative, I then argue that the debate over the identity of Theognis is best circumvented by describing “Theognis” as an implied author. Finally, I argue for a transfer of that implied authorship to the widespread collective of symposiasts in reperformance. This attribution allows us, as readers, to embrace the inconsistencies of the text. There is no need to smooth them out. The symposiasts need not elaborate and portray a single ideology or worldview in their role as a collective implied author. Instead, the Theognidea displays the concerns, hopes, and complaints of generations of elite men who shared and repurposed the couplets.

In the sixth chapter I demonstrate the importance of the sympotic audience in attendance to the success of the rhetorical act. I show that the audience’s near constant presence in the poetry is articulated by the frequent use of address. Finally, I consider how our understanding of the role of the sympotic audience affects our own position as a modern reading audience of the text.

1.5 Conclusion

My ultimate aim is to demonstrate the fruitfulness of reading this poetry as a rhetorical act in reperformance. The benefits of this approach to reading are evident from a sociohistorical perspective: when read in this way, the Theognidea reflects high-stakes utterances made by members of the Greek elite about their society, their ideals, and their way of life during a critically formative period of history. But I submit that this reading also enhances the aesthetic enjoyment of the text. The Theognidea is often

maligned. Even—one might say, particularly⁵¹—by those who study it: it is “monotonous” and “seldom strikes the true note of poetry.”⁵² A reading that embraces reperformance, on the contrary, shows that the Theognidea consists of dynamic poetic material that could be shaped to meet the needs of the moment. Its monotony is only a result of its current presentation, as a fixed text on the page rather than slung from the mouths of symposiasts at just the right time. When performed well, the Theognidea will have struck true indeed.

⁵¹ Cf. A.E. Housman’s characterization of Manilius, the poet to whom he devoted his life’s work: “I adjure you not to waste your time on Manilius. He writes on astronomy and astrology without knowing either. My interest in him is purely technical. His best poetry you will find in I 483-531...He has nothing else so good, and little that is nearly so good” (Burnett 2007, 572).

⁵² Selle (2008, 3) and Woodbury (1951, 1) respectively. Spelman’s comment that “in reading and re-performing Theognis, one befriends an elite loser and joins his sad symposium” (2021, 145) is not necessarily about the quality of the poetry, nor even against the poetry’s own aims. Nonetheless it is rather mean.

2. Poem Division in the Theognidea: A Historical Review

...οὔποτε σεῖο
λήσομαι ἀρχόμενος οὐδ' ἀποπαύομενος (1-2)

2.1 Introduction

The first act of interpretation is definition. Before scholars can interpret, discuss, or fruitfully disagree about a text, they must first agree on a shared version of that text. In the case of most modern works, the process of publication renders this task trivial.¹ The nature of the transmission of texts from classical antiquity, on the other hand, is not so straightforward. Students of ancient works must take a more active role in defining their text.²

Textual criticism as a discipline arose to meet this need.³ Philologists create standard editions of ancient works in order that a secure version of the text might be studied in common. They do so first by identifying manuscripts with authority, culling away derivative manuscripts. Next, they determine which words or lines in the authoritative manuscripts are genuine and which are later additions or mistakes. Finally, they make their own corrections and emendations where necessary and so arrive at the final text.

¹ While this is most often the case, it is certainly not always the case. See, for example, the various, very different editions of *Ulysses*.

² On which, see Reynolds and Wilson 2013.

³ *Ibid*, 208-212.

Textual criticism aims to construct a text as similar as possible to the original under the assumption that there is a single, correct text to reconstruct. This assumption does not hold for the Theognidea, whose poetry was subject to widespread reperformance. This entailed reuse, recontextualization, and modification to suit each symposiast's needs. Since these performances would have taken place in symposia, each with its own rhetorical stakes, there is no reason to privilege one performance, even the first performance, over another. Thus the sympotic nature of the Theognidean poetry conflicts with a core assumption of the traditional practice of textual criticism.

This incompatibility manifests itself in the unresolved matter of poem division. In addition to the usual word- and line-level choices, the Theognidea also presents the challenge of how to define the individual poetic units. The Theognidea is not a single, continuous poem; that much is abundantly clear to anyone who attempts to read it as such.⁴ It is no surprise that it has been divided into short poems by the majority of its manuscripts and editions. What is more surprising, however, is that the earliest, most authoritative manuscripts do not divide the corpus into individual poems, nor does the earliest edition.⁵

There are no useful guides for the division of the corpus into poetic units. The manuscripts that divide the corpus are not considered authoritative guides to the task.

⁴ See the frustration expressed by Epkema: "Non raro autem et abruptus Elegiarum tenor, et continuata fine ullo ordine diversorum fragmentorum series, legenti moras objecerant" (1803, 39).

⁵ These manuscripts are A and O. The edition is that of Cammerius Pabepergen (1551).

As I will show, they do not seem to have shaped the approaches of the modern editions. Ancient *testimonia* about the work are not substantial enough to guide the task.⁶ Only three brief papyrological fragments have been discovered; of these, only one may contain a poem division.⁷ Looking further afield, there are no useful *comparanda* from other poets of the genre, as other archaic Greek elegy only survives in fragments.⁸ In lieu of ancient authority, the division of the Theognidea into individual poems has been considered a matter of modern editorial discretion.⁹

These editorial choices have a fundamental impact on the way its poetry is understood by readers and scholars; nevertheless, the topic of poem division has not yet received sustained attention. In this chapter I address this gap in the scholarship by reviewing the historical practice of division of the corpus into poems.

I begin with a review of how poem division has been done in the past. Editors have rarely, and then only briefly, discussed the methodologies applied to the task of

⁶ For a complete list of *testimonia* see Selle 2008, 394-423. The earliest quotations of the poetry in complete works are brief excerpts in Plato (Meno 95c-e, Lysis 212d-e, Laws 629a-630c), Xenophon (Symposium 2.4-5, Memorabilia 1.2.20), and Aristotle (Metaphysics 1015a; Nicomachean Ethics 1099a, 1129b, 1172a; Eudemian Ethics 1223a, 1230a, 1237b, 1243a; Politics 1256b, 1370a; Athenian Constitution 11.2-12.2). These include external doublets which are typically attributed to other authors. Stobaios presents much larger units of the Theognidea, but these often conflict with those in the manuscripts and the editions. For example, lines 183-190, 497-508, 619-622, 963-968, and 1029-1034 are all cited as discrete units in Stobaios. These articulations diverge from the ones found in the majority of the texts I have surveyed. Selle calls this phenomenon “merkwürdig” (“strange”) in his discussion (2008, 91).

⁷ On the papyri, see Lobel 1956, Gronewald 1975, Kotansky 1993, and Selle 2008, 106-107.

⁸ The question of the typical length of archaic elegiac poetry has been taken up recently in Bowie 2016. See also Faraone 2008.

⁹ Condello has already observed this fact and goes so far as to criticize that discretion: “C[olesanti] appare talora troppo rispettoso di ‘unità’ editoriali tradizionali sì, ma non perciò meno dubbie, perché fondate su una *divisio* delle elegie che non ha né solido appoggio documentario esterno, né – in molti casi – ragioni interne davvero cogenti” (2015, 214-215).

dividing the corpus into poetic units. Thus, I have supplemented my review of that literature with analyses of the data I gathered in a survey of poem divisions in thirty-nine different texts of the Theognidea: sixteen manuscripts, twenty-one editions, and two catalogues of poem divisions suggested in a monograph.

The manuscripts I examined were: X, v, d, h, b, f, c, Ur, n, q, r, z, Ap, m, Va, and I.¹⁰ The twenty-one editions are Bekker 1815, Welcker 1826, Sitzler 1880, Ziegler 1880, Bergk 1882, Hiller 1890, Harrison 1902, Hudson-Williams 1910, Diehl 1922, Edmonds 1931, Korres 1948, Garzya 1958, van Groningen 1966, Carosi & Najilis 1968, Young 1971, Carrière 1975, Adrados 1981, Ferarri 1989, West 1989, Gerber 1999, and Hansen 2005.¹¹ I have also included the two schemes from Hendrik Selle's 2008 monograph *Theognis und die Theognidea*, which details poem divisions under the categories "Secure" or "Probable."¹² Although not a freestanding edition of the poetry, these schemes were included as the most recent (and the only methodologically self-conscious) poem divisions of the corpus.¹³

¹⁰ I follow the nomenclature of the manuscripts which is now standard among the critical editions. These do not represent all of the manuscripts with poem divisions, but only those which I was able to examine via autopsy in May of 2022 on a trip to London, Paris, Rome, and Venice generously funded by the Graduate School of Duke University. My findings frequently conflict with the catalogues of Ferreri and West. As a result, I have decided not to include in my data those manuscripts which I was not able to examine personally. Much work has been done lately on these later manuscripts: see Ferreri 2021, Aleotti 2019, and Condello 2018-2019. Young's codicology (1953) is still an important source.

¹¹ The dates given are those of the most recent edition which I was able to survey.

¹² "Sichere Trennung" and "wahrscheinliche Trennung" (Selle 2008, 425-426).

¹³ Where necessary I have noted that these schemes are outliers. Selle's appendices contain what is essentially an edition without the text: in addition to marking his own poem divisions, he also includes a

My analyses are both statistical and comparative. The statistical analysis reveals an important trend: a consistent tendency among the modern texts to divide the Theognidea into poems that are shorter than those in the manuscripts. I propose that this trend suggests a fundamentally different understanding of what the corpus represents: the manuscripts approach the Theognidea as a collection of poems, while the articulation of modern texts suggests a view of the corpus as a collection of fragments. The comparative analyses confirm the conclusions of the statistical ones, but they go further to show that there is a high degree of variance within the manuscripts and a smaller, yet still significant, level of variance among the modern texts. I recognize that my work is only the beginning of what can be done with this data.

In the second part of this chapter, I seek to understand the origins of the widespread disagreement across the texts through a series of case studies. In these I examine poetic units that are characterized by a high degree of variance among the versions in order to understand the motivations for dividing them as they have. Sometimes editions with commentaries aid my reconstruction of the editors' motivations, but in many cases I am forced to guess at the reasons for the different divisions. In the case-studies I also discuss how the different divisions affect the reading

comprehensive listing of where he would deviate from West's text. The editorial work has been done, all that is left is to follow the instructions and print the text.

of the poetry. Finally, I also anticipate the second chapter and discuss how a new approach to dividing the text might recover the original rhetorical potential of the poetry by accessing a wider range of meaning.

As the survey and the case studies will show, the division of the Theognidea into poems is characterized by indeterminacy. Independent manuscripts vary widely among themselves. Of the twenty-one editions surveyed only two follow the divisions of a previous edition; both explicitly drew their Greek text from their predecessors.¹⁴ None of the texts which follow a previous division scheme came to those conclusions independently.

In terms of traditional philology, the variation among the different versions is a problem in need of a solution. I propose, however, that the scholarly disagreement points the way to a catalogue of the varying poems that could be made out of the raw material of the Theognidea.¹⁵ In other words, in their effort to identify a definitive division scheme the editors and scribes of the Theognidea have unintentionally recreated the sympotic dynamics of reperformance. The current, fluid state of the poem divisions, with its many versions of the poetic units across the text, is a better reflection of the circumstances of its ancient performances than a single fixed text could ever be.

¹⁴ Carosi & Najlis 1968 repeats the divisions made in Carrière. Hansen follows those from West. Hansen explicitly mentions that he follows West "in wording" ("im Wortlaut") with variations drawn from Young and from West's apparatus (2005, 175-178). It is noteworthy that these variations did not affect the scheme of poem divisions.

¹⁵ This is a variation of New Philology as espoused by Lardinois (2020, 41): "all variants of a text ought to be examined and appreciated in their own right and not only as possible witnesses to the original text."

This holds whether or not these versions record particular ancient performances—a determination which we cannot hope to make.¹⁶ There are many modern Theognideas because there were many ancient Theognideas.

2.2 The Survey

In order to understand better the issue of poem division in the Theognidea, I have surveyed where the divisions were made in thirty-nine different texts of the corpus. This is the first published survey of its kind.¹⁷ That fact should be no surprise given the silence of the editors on poem division. Most editions do not acknowledge that the poem divisions are the result of editorial choice without ancient authority. The four exceptions are Harrison,¹⁸ van Groningen,¹⁹ West,²⁰ and Gerber.²¹ These editions

¹⁶ I am less confident than Vetta, who claims: “Oltre alle consuete divergenze di tradizione, il corpus documenta vere e proprie varianti di esecuzione, per difetto mnemonico o intenzionali” (2000, 124).

¹⁷ Luigi Ferreri has compiled a survey of the poem divisions made by thirty-two manuscripts (2021, 536-547), and Martin West of four manuscripts (1989, 171-172). I find both to be in error in multiple places. The editions have never been surveyed.

¹⁸ “More delicate is the task of fixing the divisions between the poems. In A and O and K there are no divisions, and the beginning of a new piece is not even marked by a capital letter. The divisions which appear in some of the inferior manuscripts are not older than their common ancestor, which has been called a ‘durch und durch interpolierter Codex.’ Accordingly recent editors of Theognis have felt themselves free to fix divisions where they thought fit, and I have availed myself of this liberty in full” (1902, xi-xii).

¹⁹ “A tout moment se pose la question s’il faut, oui ou non, établir une connexion étroite entre deux passages contigus. En réalité, le problème se présente sous deux aspects différents: il y a l’unité compositionnelle voulue par le poète original, et il y a celle des rapprochements réalisés par le formateur du recueil. En d’autres termes, deux passages peuvent, dès leur origine, avoir été conçus comme un ensemble; ou bien c’est dans le recueil qu’ils ont été rapprochés pour la première fois, soit par pur hasard, soit en vertu d’une ressemblance d’idées ou d’expression, voire même en vertu d’une contradiction. La première alternative implique une étroite relation de fond et de forme; dans la seconde ce rapport peut être beaucoup plus vague, si indécis qu’il est très souvent difficile à prouver. Nous touchons ici au problème excessivement ardu de la composition du recueil, que nous n’avons pas à envisager ici; mais nous avons à choisir entre les deux alternatives. La prudence oblige à préférer la première. Je n’ai donc accouplé que les morceaux dont ils est vraisemblable qu’ils se sont toujours succédés immédiatement et sont dûs au même auteur” (1966, 4).

acknowledge, however briefly, the fact that poem division is a matter of editorial discretion, but there is no broad discussion of the methodology applied. Ironically, the only methodological discussion of poem division in print is not found in an edition but in a monograph: Selle discusses the topic, but even this treatment is short, a mere two pages.²²

Faced with this silence, I have turned to the texts themselves to ascertain their underlying approaches. My survey includes thirty-nine texts from two distinct eras. The first era consists of sixteen manuscripts that mark poem division.²³ The second era is the “modern,” a category mostly made up of modern editions. I surveyed every modern edition of the corpus that I was able to acquire: a total of twenty-one editions, ranging in date from 1815 to 2005.²⁴ For texts that have gone through multiple editions I have only included one entry—the most recent I was able to examine.

²⁰ West’s brief introduction discusses his notation system for poem division (which is the most elaborate of all of the editions) and presents a list of where the four Planudean manuscripts mark their divisions (173-174).

²¹ Gerber comments with a brief footnote on nine poems whose articulation has been a source of controversy.

²² Selle 2008, 114-115; 157-158. Selle’s methodological discussion is limited to a set of four criteria applied to the corpus. First, enjambment is a sure sign of connection. Second, connective particles can be helpful but are not foolproof. Third, addresses tend to come at the beginnings of poems and poems do not usually have more than one. Finally, when in doubt, separate couplets. While these criteria are certainly helpful, they are not sufficiently thorough or comprehensive to be considered a sustained examination of the problem, nor do they fill the gap left by the silence of the editions.

²³ See above.

²⁴ I am aware of the existence of a 2010 edition of Adrados, but I have been unable to check if it is identical to the previous one (Adrados 1981).

I have only included texts that provide the complete Greek of at least the first book.²⁵ Some editions also include translations or commentaries, but these were not required for inclusion. Unfortunately, the contemporary Italian scholars who work on sympotic sequences have yet to publish an edition. Giulio Colesanti works his way through the entire corpus in his monograph, with notes for each instance in which a sympotic sequence had been proposed, but he does not present the complete text.²⁶

2.2.1 Methodology

While the vast majority of the poem divisions are unambiguous, the methods used to mark them did leave some cases of ambiguity. To signal the beginning of a new poetic unit the manuscripts use indentation, capitalization, rubrication, and even dashes at the ends of poems. Rubrication was the clearest indicator, but not always entirely straightforward. Sometimes the rubricator failed to insert the initial letter, which had been left blank in the original black ink.²⁷ I counted those as indication of new poetic units. In other cases the rubricator wrote over a letter that had already been written in

²⁵ This excludes considerations of Stobaios' excerpts, editions such as Brunck 1817 (which contains most but not all of the couplets in the edition I examined), Vetta 1980 (only includes Book 2), accounts of sympotic sequences like Colesanti 2011, collections such as Campbell 1982 (only selections), and translations such as Fraccaroli 1910 (without the Greek). This rule has also excluded Manuscript Ur from being used in my statistical analyses. I have decided that Manuscript Va, which contains the first 1114 lines, is close enough to being complete to merit inclusion.

²⁶ Colesanti 2011, 177-219.

²⁷ For example, lines 281-486 and lines 617-1220 of manuscript I are all missing rubrication, but the missing initial letter makes the intended divisions clear.

black ink.²⁸ Those were evaluated on a case by case basis, since either ink may have been added later; typically, I counted these too as new poetic units.

Editions use a variety of devices to mark division, usually a combination of increased spacing between couplets, capitalization of the first word, and/or some type of dividing line. Sometimes the lines of the poem are numbered either in the text or in the commentary. There are occasional instances of ambiguity: for instance, it was not always clear if a new poem was intended in editions that mark division by spacing. More commonly, however, ambiguity arose when capitalization was the method used and a proper noun started a line on a new page. In these cases I was forced to exercise my best judgment. On the whole, these ambiguities are both unfortunate and meaningful: the carelessness with which some scribes and editions treat the indications of poem division shows how little division mattered to them.

In addition to the general ambiguities noted above, some of the editions presented special challenges. I note them here.

2.2.1.1 Ambiguities

While Welcker (1826) is not alone in theorizing that the Theognidea as found in the manuscripts does not reflect its original ordering, his edition is the only complete text which rearranges the corpus.²⁹ He nonetheless preserves a structure of shorter

²⁸ For example, manuscript D, line 295 on the verso of page 212.

²⁹ Others propose smaller scale rearrangements: n.b. Epkema 1803 and Steffen 1968.

individual poems in his rearrangement and includes the entire Theognidea.³⁰ It is thus possible to note where these poems begin and end using the traditional line numbering. The extent to which the act of rearranging affected his choice in poem division is impossible for me to determine. This edition should thus be treated as an outlier.³¹

Sitzler's edition (1880) contains a confounding combination of capitalization, indentation, and spacing. The indentation and spacing seem to be meant as an indication of authenticity, an issue with which I am not concerned in this chapter. Because it appears from the notes in the apparatus that only capitalization is meant to mark a new poem, that was the only distinction I regarded. This edition contains the most distinct readings of any modern edition (25).

West (1989) also includes multiple different types of notation for poem division. In the left-hand margin, where the lines would be, he uses thick horizontal lines or notes on authorship (e.g. *Theognidis* for a poem he believes to be authentic to Theognis). In the right-hand margin he places x's that are both open (X) and encircled (⊗). These right-hand markings are not discussed in the 1989 edition, but they are in his *Studies* of 1974. There he explains that the open x (X) indicates where there are "possible divisions or connexions between excerpts"; the encircled ⊗ marks where he believes "a poem began

³⁰ He does, however, remove the doublets.

³¹ The data back up this conclusion. Welcker has more outlying couplets (couplets which he positions differently than every other edition) than all but one modern edition.

or ended in its original form.”³² I have only marked the poem divisions when they are indicated in the left-hand margin because the right-hand markings appear only as supplements to those divisions.

As noted above, Selle (2008) includes two catalogues of poem divisions in his appendix: one of “secure” and another of “probable” ones.³³ For the purposes of my survey I counted them as two different versions: one which only marks a new poem where the secure divisions are noted, and another which marks a new poem at both the secure and probable divisions. These are identified as “Selle (Secure)” and “Selle (Secure and Probable).”

2.2.2 Statistical Analyses

The statistical analyses present comprehensive information about each version of the corpus: the number of couplets, the number of poems, the average poem length, and the frequency of poems of various lengths. These statistics give an overview of the tendencies of each text and paint a broad picture of the trends in poem division.

2.2.2.1 The Length of the Corpus

Perhaps the most basic fact of the corpus—its length—is not identical across every text.³⁴ It is possible, however, to determine a baseline for each book that is close to

³² West 1974, 60.

³³ Selle 2008b, 425-426.

³⁴ Selle begins his monograph with a discussion of this fact (2008b, 1).

a consensus. While the first book of every edition is numbered 1-1220,³⁵ the typical modern edition actually contains 628 couplets because editors, starting with Hiller, have included couplets excised by Bekker, Welcker, Sitzler, Ziegler, and Bergk.³⁶ Most modern editions also include four more couplets labeled 1221-1229. Cited by other authors, these are tacked on at the end and not subject to the editor's discretion in poem division. I have therefore left them out of my analyses.

The manuscripts show much more variation, either because of scribal error,³⁷ damage,³⁸ or stemmatic variance.³⁹ The number of couplets among the complete manuscripts range from 620 to 599, with almost every number in between represented.⁴⁰

None of the manuscripts that divides Book 1 into poems includes Book 2. One modern text also does not include it: van Groningen's edition. The same six shorter editions also remove couplets from Book 2.⁴¹ Otherwise every edition has 83 couplets in Book 2. The typical total for the entire corpus is thus 711 couplets.

³⁵ Colesanti proposes a new system of numbering which reincorporates the doublets (2011, xv-xx). While I agree in principle, to change the numbering of the text now is simply not practical.

³⁶ Bekker 1815, Welcker 1826, Sitzler 1880, and Ziegler 1880 each have 610 couplets in Book 1. Bergk 1882 and Korres 1949 each have 611.

³⁷ E.g. manuscript r, lines 791-794.

³⁸ E.g. manuscript m, lines 37-43.

³⁹ E.g. manuscripts z and Va are the only missing lines 1081-1082f.

⁴⁰ Ur and Va are both incomplete. Ur only contains 136 couplets, while Va contains 552.

⁴¹ Welcker 1826, Sitzler 1880, Ziegler 1880, and Bergk 1882 each have 80 couplets in Book 2, while Korres has 81.

2.2.2.2 The Number of Poems and Average Poem Length

The number of poems found within the different texts of the corpus offers perhaps the broadest available overview of the approach that each version takes to articulating the corpus: the more poems a text contains, the greater its inclination to separate rather than connect couplets. The range of values for this metric thus gives a baseline for the level of variance that exists among approaches. Because of the disagreement among the texts about the number of couplets in the corpus, however, the number of poems in each version is not on its own a reliable metric for comparing the texts. It is necessary to look also at the average length of the poems within each version in order to ensure that the discrepancies reflect a difference of approach rather than a difference of material.⁴² Furthermore, because that difference chiefly arises from the fact that modern texts include an entire additional book (albeit one that is significantly smaller than the first one), I have included both the complete data for each text and the data for Book 1 alone. This ensures that the results are not skewed by outliers in Book 2. Indeed, the results show that the picture that emerges from Book 1 alone is quite similar to the view gleaned from the combined data. That excluding Book 2 makes little

⁴² I calculate the average poem length by dividing the number of poems by the number of couplets in the text. While it is certainly the case that differences among what is left out subtly affect these numbers, I am confident that they are still accurate, given the much larger size of the corpus compared to what differs.

difference given that its size, 83 couplets (in most editions), accounts for just over a tenth of the combined work.⁴³

These analyses show a divide between the way that the manuscripts cut up the corpus into poems and the way that modern editions do the same, going back to the earliest texts from the 19th century. The manuscripts divide the corpus into poems that are on average almost an entire line longer than the average poem in the modern editions.⁴⁴ While this might not seem significant, it means that the editions, on average, contain almost one hundred more poetic units than the manuscripts,⁴⁵ a fundamentally different approach to poem division in the Theognidea. Selle's embodies well the practice of modern editors with his dictum to separate couplets when in doubt.⁴⁶ The division schemes of the manuscripts, on the other hand, are more inclined to keep such couplets together.

These data also support two important conclusions about the manuscripts. First, they show much more variation among themselves than the editions. Within the manuscripts, the range in average poem length is significantly higher than among the editions, even when one includes Selle's "Secure" division scheme, which was intended

⁴³ To be precise, 11.67%.

⁴⁴ The average poem length for the manuscripts is 2.43 couplets. In the modern texts the average length is 2.00 couplets over both books and 2.03 in Book 1 alone.

⁴⁵ The mean for the complete manuscripts is 255 poems, for the editions 350. The median is 263 for the manuscripts and 315 for the editions.

⁴⁶ Selle 2008, 158.

as an outlier.⁴⁷ When Selle's schemes and Welcker anomalous edition are removed, the range of average poem lengths among the manuscripts is over double the range among the editions.⁴⁸

2.2.2.3 Poem Length Frequency

The total number of poems in each version and their average length offers an overview of how each version breaks up the corpus. But averages of this sort can be misleading. This metric would not differentiate between a text entirely comprised of two-couplet poems and another, half of whose poems were made up of a single couplet and the other half three couplets each. For a more nuanced view it is therefore necessary to consider the frequency of poems of different lengths.

Extremely short poetic units predominate, as might be expected from the average poem length data. Monodistichs make up the majority of all poetic units in the editions.⁴⁹ The manuscripts have fewer monodistichs, but they are still by far the plurality (43% on average). The longer poems are not much longer. On average, among the editions 80% of all poetic units are two couplets or shorter and 90% are three couplets or shorter. Among the manuscripts, 70% are two couplets or shorter, and 83% three couplets or shorter.

⁴⁷ The difference between the longest and shortest average poem length among the manuscripts is 0.79 couplets, whereas in Book 1 of the editions it is 0.59

⁴⁸ 0.79 couplets among the manuscripts vs. 0.36 couplets among the editions.

⁴⁹ I.e. 51%. Harrison, Young, Welcker, and Selle (Secure) are the only editions in which monodistichs do not comprise the majority of all poetic units.

The rare longer poems are not particularly long. With only one exception, every poem in every version of the Theognidea is 15 couplets or less.⁵⁰ On average, over 99% of all poems in the Theognidea are 10 couplets or less.

A few topline conclusions are in order. First, the poems of the Theognidea, regardless of version, skew heavily toward brevity, as would be expected in the give-and-take of sympotic exchange: a single couplet is the most common length in every version and single-couplet poems are the majority in all but four modern texts. Second, while all texts tend to break the Theognidea into short poems, manuscripts and modern texts exhibit a clear discrepancy: the former consistently divide the corpus into poems that are longer than those found in the latter. This discrepancy is consistent both for the mean poem length, which was almost an entire couplet longer among the manuscripts, and for the frequency of various poem lengths.

This consistency points to a fundamentally different conception of what the articulated units of the Theognidea represent. We see a differentially higher preponderance of single-couplet poems in modern editions. While many stand on their own, one should note that a good number of these “single-couplet poems” contain clues that they were not conceived as self-standing, independent poetic expressions. Many begin with connective particles that encourage us to think of further context for their utterance; others use pronouns that are intriguingly vague without more context.

⁵⁰ Lines 695-729 are read as an eighteen-couplet poem in Manuscript X.

Although scholars have long debated whether the Theognidea is a collection of fragments or not, it is notable that their disagreement has not been reflected in the length of the poetic units marked for study.⁵¹

Poetic units of this type could represent an individual contribution to a larger sympotic exchange, as part of a *catena* or as a kind of elegiac *skolion*, but the editions rarely note such possibilities.⁵² The fact that modern editors find these incomplete units acceptable without considering them sympotic suggests that they regard the Theognidea as containing a considerable number of fragments alongside complete poems. They do not hesitate to make poem divisions that create individual couplets which do not make sense as independent units. In the case studies below I discuss some such instances.

The length of the units in the manuscripts, on the other hand, suggests that their authors had more complete poems in view. By stitching together couplets in places where the editions do not, the manuscripts are more willing to trade an easy grasp of a poem's overall consistency for a deeper, less readily accessible coherence that might only emerge on closer scrutiny. In some instances they may not cohere at all. In either case, their vision of the poetic units of the Theognidea is one in which the poet is freer to

⁵¹ For a review of the 19th century controversy, see Harrison's aptly named chapter, "Are the Poems Fragments?" (1902, 211-226). For a more up-to-date discussion, see Selle (2008, 74-75, 157-158, 341-348). With the possible exception of Young, among the editors who do take a position in this issue there is no obvious correlation between their stated position and their approach to poem division.

⁵² The exception is Ferrari, who frequently notes these possibilities in his commentary (cf. his discussion of 91-92) (1989, 86).

jump from topic to topic, connecting thoughts and images that are not anticipated by the audience. In the editions these connections are broken by the tendency toward division.

In order to understand better the differences in approach, we must turn to a qualitative analysis. This will take the form of the case studies in the next section of this chapter. But those case studies are not the only way to nuance the data. Before I turn to them, I will conduct a comparative analysis of the statistics gathered above.

2.2.3 Comparative Analyses

While they display the fundamentally different approach to the task of poem division in the manuscripts vis-a-vis the modern texts, the statistical analyses do not illuminate how those differences manifest themselves on a couplet-by-couplet level. In this section I conduct this couplet-by-couplet comparison.

I start with an examination of the extent of agreement among the texts on a number of different levels: complete poems, the position of couplets within a poem, and first lines. I then turn to an analysis of the level of equivalence among versions. The results allow for a more nuanced look at the different approaches to the corpus and identify sites of agreement and dispute between them. This review of the data also indicates where fruitful case studies might be conducted. I take up a few of these as the final section of this chapter.

2.2.3.1 Complete Poems

For the first analysis I consider two texts of a poem identical only if they begin and end with the same lines. As the voltas of Shakespearean sonnets amply demonstrate, the removal or addition of even a single couplet can drastically change the way one understands a poem. And yet the change need not be as dramatic as these famous “turns” —even a subtle reinforcement or reframing of what was previously stated makes for a different poem. Therefore, two texts that do not begin and end at the same line, even if they otherwise share verses, are no longer the same poem.

It is important to keep in mind these perhaps uncontroversial claims when comparing Theognidean poem divisions, for which consensus about poetic units is exceedingly rare. There are only 20 poems in Book 1 for which every version begins and ends on the same couplet.⁵³ Together, these poems comprise 30 couplets. In other words, only 30 out of the 628 couplets of Book 1 (4.7%) are grouped into the same poems by every version. The remaining 598 couplets are divided into poems whose total number ranges from 175 to 334 depending on the version.

This divergence can be attributed in part to the divide between the ancient and modern eras uncovered by the statistical analyses. If the comparison is limited to the three manuscripts, the number of unanimous complete poems grows to 40, totaling 72 couplets (11.4%). Among the twenty modern editions there are 118 consensus poems in

⁵³ That number grows to 33 if we include 1160a-1160b, regarded as a complete poem by all the texts that have it, but not contained in every text.

Book 1, which total 200 couplets (31.80%). These data show just how much more the manuscripts vary among themselves than the editions, even considering the outlying editions. Even among the editions, however, the vast majority of couplets do not enjoy unanimity. The variation among the versions of the Theognidea is widespread.

2.2.3.2 Couplet Position

Although one might reasonably consider complete poems the only true metric of agreement, the strictness of that metric obscures the fact that at many places the different texts do agree. It also fails to draw attention to those instances where all of the versions agree on a poetic unit's beginning but disagree on its end. The data show that there are 97 couplets unanimously agreed across all thirty-nine versions of the text to mark the beginning of poetic units. A further 40 couplets are thought to begin a poetic unit by every text but one. On the other hand there are 230 couplets never found at the beginning of a poetic unit, and 25 that only begin a poem in one version. All in all, this means that there are 392 couplets in the 628 couplets of Book 1 (62.4%) that are either unanimously agreed to begin or not to begin a poetic unit, or that have one outlier on either side. Stated otherwise, versions disagree whether 236 couplets in Book 1 (37.6%) begin a poem or not.

2.2.3.3 Equivalency of Texts

The final comparative metric I examine is equivalency. I calculate equivalency based on positioning: where each couplet is found within its poetic unit. For example, if

two texts agree that a certain couplet is the second in a poem, they agree on its position. If one text places a couplet as the first, another as the second of a poem, they disagree on its position.

I find that the manuscripts demonstrate close equivalency along stemmatic lines, but extreme variance in cases where manuscripts are not as closely related.⁵⁴ At one extreme, manuscript X aligns with only 66% of the divisions made by other manuscripts on average, and never more than with 74%. At the other extreme, the divisions in manuscript H are identical to those found in its apograph, manuscript D.⁵⁵ Most editions on the other hand agree on the vast majority of divisions. On average these modern texts disagree on the position of between 11% and 12% of the corpus.⁵⁶ This difference, while not substantial, is pervasive. As illustrated by the data above on poem beginning, disagreement is not found in just a few controversial sections.

While the overall numbers are important to identify broader trends, this metric also shows how the texts relate to each other on an individual level. Most simply, but also most importantly, this metric allows me to state conclusively that no two

⁵⁴ The poem divisions of these manuscripts have previously concerned scholars only to the extent that they can inform stemmatic relationships (n.b. Condello 2018-2019, Aleotti 2019).

⁵⁵ None of the other alleged apographs—B from D, M from B, Q from B, Va from Z—make identical poem divisions. This is likely the result of scribal error, but the number of errors in some cases is striking.

⁵⁶ It is interesting that this number holds true whether we are referring to Book 1 alone (11.1%), Book 1 without the three outliers (11.7%), the entire corpus (11.9%), or the entire corpus without the outliers (11.3%).

independent texts are identical.⁵⁷ It also reveals which two texts are the most similar: Garzya and Carrière disagree on only 8 couplets.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the two most divergent texts are manuscript X and Welcker 1826, which agree on only 331 couplets (52.7%). Among the modern versions the most divergent are Selle (Secure) and Welcker, which agree on the position of about three-quarters (73.73%) of the couplets in the first book (463 couplets). Withdrawing those as outliers, the two most divergent are Sitzler 1880 and Young 1971, which agree on the position of 502 couplets in the first book (79.9%) and 571 overall (80.3%). Among the manuscripts, X and Z agree on only 346 couplets (55.1%).

2.2.4 The Survey: Conclusions

These quantitative data cannot hope to tell the complete story of poem division across the different versions of the Theognidea. They do however point to topline conclusions that further, qualitative study can elaborate upon. First, the Theognidea across all thirty-nine versions which I have surveyed is comprised of extremely short poetic units. These poetic units would have been well suited for sympotic use and reuse,

⁵⁷ Hansen's edition follows the poem divisions of West exactly, but he acknowledges that he has taken the Greek from West (2005, 175). He mentions that aberrations come from Young, but these do not make it into his poem divisions. Even Carosi & Najilis 1968, which claims to be based on the text of an earlier edition of Carrière (1948), disagrees over a couplet (399-400) with Carrière (1975).

⁵⁸ Those couplets are: 169-170, 193-196, 889-890, 1083-1084, 1181-1182, 1278a-1278b, and 159-1360. I have excepted Carosi & Najilis (1968) and Carrière (1975) because the former is explicitly drawn from the latter (see above).

whether or not that process is the direct cause of their being passed down to us in this state.

Second, it is possible to state with confidence that the manuscripts have not served as a model for the poem division of modern texts. Furthermore, the evidence strongly points away from any sort of common source or privileged knowledge shared among them, despite the fact that they all are believed to be members of the same Planudean family.⁵⁹ No one manuscript has been adopted as a model by modern editions;⁶⁰ they are all seemingly ignored when it comes to poem divisions. Since the goal has implicitly been to identify the “authentic” division scheme, their divisions have been ignored. Their very divergence, both from each other and from the modern versions, means that each manuscript provides a distinct model for the dividing of the Theognidea into poetic units. For this same reason these alternative schemes of division are valuable to an examination of the Theognidea that does not privilege first performance, and thus dismisses the preeminence of a “definitive” version.

The picture among the modern versions is less clear. There is significant agreement from version to version—any two modern versions, on average, only

⁵⁹ Indeed, Planudes himself is thought to be the first to have divided the corpus into poems (Condello 2018-2019, 51).

⁶⁰ Brunck’s edition, the first to make poem divisions, does follow the model of manuscripts B and H. However, the data show that these divisions do not seem to have influenced later editions. I did not include Brunck’s edition because it is incomplete.

disagree on the position of about 12% of couplets across both books.⁶¹ But if one looks at the problem from the perspective of the entire poetic unit—which is after all the way that the divisions are presented in the text—the lack of consensus is significant. Editions place over two-thirds of all couplets in different poetic units.⁶² Thus, while not nearly as pervasive as in the manuscripts, disagreement among modern texts is noteworthy.

In the next section I conduct a qualitative study to flesh out the quantitative conclusions drawn above. Specifically, I conduct five case studies of sections with significant variation among the poem divisions in order to examine why these divisions are made. I also consider how competing articulations affect readers' understanding of the poetry. Finally, I indicate how reading with reperformance in mind affects our understanding of the different versions. Most importantly, these case studies demonstrate that the divergence of opinion uncovered by the quantitative analyses above is not the result of a failure to find the true boundaries of the text, but rather of a malleability inherent to the nature of the corpus.

2.3 The Case Studies

The quantitative survey of the articulation of the Theognidea shows that the variation among the different versions is far too widespread to allow for a detailed review. Instead, I have chosen five case studies for analysis and included for reference

⁶¹ 11.82% to be precise.

⁶² 68.4%.

an unbroken text of the passage because no edition prints the text without divisions. These passages were chosen because they are sites of significant disagreement among the versions. By determining the principles applied to their articulation I hope to establish the broader principles applied to the work.

Where possible the editors speak for themselves through their commentaries. Unfortunately, this is rare: some editions, and all of the manuscripts, lack commentaries. Of those which do have them, van Groningen is the only one who reliably comments on poem division. In the many cases that lacked explicit justification I inferred the reasoning on the grounds of likelihood and by looking at other passages with similar articulations.

The primary motivations for articulation can be divided into two categories: grammar and theme. The grammatical rationales mostly regarded the presence or absence of connective particles. On their own, however, these particles are not determinative, especially in the editions: editors will separate couplets that particles seem to connect and, more rarely, connect asyndetic couplets. The manuscripts, with their stronger inclination to connect, often seem to take connective particles as sufficient to warrant connection; they also seem more open to asyndeton. Pronouns also provide grammatical clues for poem division: when suitable antecedents can be found in previous lines, couplets are more likely to be kept together.

Modern editors often require an exceptionally strict thematic coherence (subjectively ascertained) to group couplets together, one that demands not only the same theme but the same perspective and approach to it. Therefore passages that the manuscripts regard as longer meditations on a single theme are often broken up by the modern texts into clusters of smaller poems. In fact, grammatical indications of connection are subordinated to thematic ones, and modern editors will even ignore connective particles when couplets are deemed thematically unfit for connection. Couplets may then be left essentially fragmentary, for example with an opening γάρ unsuitable for a first line.

Finally, the use of these two factors (grammatical and thematic) depends somewhat on the rhetorical mode in which the passage is operating. While these modes are not distinct or conventional enough to merit the label of “genre,” the case studies show how the standards of connection—especially thematic connection—seem to depend on whether the poetry is purely gnomological, a hymn, or a report of events.

In this section I also discuss how poem division affects our understanding of the poems and, in particular, of their rhetorical structure. I find that the comparatively shorter poems of modern editions often cannot sustain complex rhetorical structures and are unlikely to offer unexpected associations between thoughts. As a result, Theognidean poetry comes across as necessarily staccato and straightforward. The manuscripts, by contrast, present more interesting rhetorical structures, with

connections that surprise and provoke thought. Trade-offs, of course, come with this more permissive articulation: the longer poems sometimes feature abrupt transitions or seem to wander. In other words, these longer poetic units do not always meet the highest standards of elegance. Each scribe or editor has been faced with these choices. In modern editions subjective aesthetic considerations seem to have been given pride of place.

One final element of these studies should be mentioned: in each case I not only attempt to understand the principles that have been applied by previous scribes and editors but also show how a symposiast might approach the disputed passages, and how that approach might affect our own understanding as modern readers.

2.3.1 Case Study One: 19-38 “The Seal Poem”

19 Κύρνε, σοφιζομένωι μὲν ἐμοὶ σφρηγίς ἐπικείσθω
τοῖσδ' ἔπεσιν, λήσει δ' οὐποτε κλεπτόμενα,
21 οὐδέ τις ἀλλάξει κάκιον τοῦσθλοῦ παρεόντος·
ὧδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ· 'Θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη
23 τοῦ Μεγαρέως· πάντας δὲ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ὀνομαστός·'
ἀστοῖσιν δ' οὐπω πᾶσιν ἀδεῖν δύναμαι·
25 οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν, Πολυπαῖδη· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ Ζεὺς
οὔθ' ὕων πάντεσσ' ἀνδάνει οὔτ' ἀνέχων.
27 σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ εὖ φρονέων ὑποθήσομαι, οἷά περ αὐτός,
Κύρν', ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν ἔμαθον·
29 πέπνυσο, μηδ' αἰσχροῖσιν ἐπ' ἔργμασι μηδ' ἀδίκουσιν
τιμὰς μηδ' ἀρετὰς ἔλκεο μηδ' ἄφενος.
31 ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι· κακοῖσι δὲ μὴ προσομίλει
ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔχεο·
33 καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν
ἴζε, καὶ ἀνδανε τοῖσ', ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις.
35 ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἅπ' ἐσθλὰ μαθήσεται· ἦν δὲ κακοῖσιν
συμμίσγηις, ἀπολεῖς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα νόον.

37 ταῦτα μαθὼν ἀγαθοῖσιν ὀμίλειε, καὶ ποτε φήσεις
 εὖ συμβουλεύειν τοῖσι φίλοισιν ἐμέ.⁶³

Kurnos, let a seal be placed on these verses for me,
exercising my skill, and they will never be stolen without notice,
nor will anyone trade out something worse for the good present,
and any and everyone will say: "These are Theognis' verses,
the one from Megara, famous among all people."
but I cannot yet please all the townspeople.
It's no wonder, Polupaides. Even Zeus doesn't please everyone,
when he sends rain or withholds it.
But with good understanding I will teach you the sorts of things I myself,
Kurnos, learned from good men when I was still a boy.
Be wise, don't seize honor and glory
and wealth with shameful or unjust deeds.
But know this well, and don't associate with bad men,
but always cling to the good men.
Drink and eat with them, and sit with them,
and please those who have great power.
For you will learn good things from good men, but if you
mingle with bad men, you will destroy even the sense you have.
Learn these things and associate with good men,
and someday you will say that I advise friends well.⁶⁴

The passage that begins at line 19 is the most widely discussed section in the corpus, both in ancient and modern times.⁶⁵ In fact it is one of the few referred to by a title: "The Seal Poem." This conventional name conveniently glosses over a remarkable fact: there is no scholarly consensus as to what lines constitute the "Seal Poem." The

⁶³ The Greek is from Young 1971, unless otherwise noted. I have adjusted capitalization so as not to privilege his divisions. I have also left off quotation marks where they are not generally agreed upon, but otherwise the punctuation is unchanged.

⁶⁴ All translations are my own.

⁶⁵ Almost every modern extended work or introduction to the Theognidea has some discussion of the seal poem, For shorter works devoted exclusively to it see Bakker 2017; Bakker 2016; Condello 2009-2010; Hubbard 2007; Fain 2006; Edmunds 1997; Friis Johansen 1996, 1993, 1991; Pratt 1995; Giannini 1993; Cerri, 1991; Ford 1985; Perotti 1985; Nenci 1963; Woodbury 1952; Immisch 1933; and Galli 1913.

manuscripts, editions, and modern analyses of the poem consider as many as five different endings: lines 24, 26, 28, 30, and 38.

The fame of this poem requires that this case study operate somewhat differently from the subsequent four. First, I focus exclusively on the “Seal Poem” as read in the various versions. I only analyze the part of the poem which contains line 19, rather than all of the poetic units up to line 38. In the other case studies I will consider all of the poems created by the various divisions. Second, as the reading of the seal poem has received such scholarly attention, I discuss at greater length how these divisions result in fundamentally different readings and give less attention to possible motivations for articulation.

What the seal signifies and how it operates is the subject of great scholarly controversy. Because the potential theft and degradation of the poetry are mooted right before mention of “the verses (ἔπη) of Theognis the Megarian,” it is generally agreed that the seal relates to the author’s activity *qua* author.⁶⁶ It is therefore no surprise that this poem, coming as it does so early in the corpus, is typically regarded as the key to resolving the controversies over authorship, authenticity, and purity that have dominated Theognidean scholarship for over a century. The dispute over the function of the seal has thus reached well beyond the passage itself and embraced the formation of

⁶⁶ It is often regarded as an early stage in the development of Greek thought about authorship. For a recent example, see Peirano 2013.

the entire corpus. Such concerns will not guide my analysis. I aim instead to understand how these verses might be interpreted within the rhetorical context of discrete sympotic performances.

Every single version of the poem begins at 19. The shortest one, proposed by Welcker, is only three couplets long (19-24). Even at this length the poem contains the features for which it is famous: the seal (19), the corresponding protection of the poetry (20-22), and the announcement of the speaker's name and origin (22-23). These elements require the inclusion of line 24, but do not reappear thereafter. These six lines are what makes the seal poem "The Seal Poem."

The shortest version found in more than one text is four couplets long and concludes at line 26. This is also the most common division among modern editions⁶⁷ but it is not found in a single manuscript. At this length the poem consists of three interlocking movements: first, the poet calls for the placing of the seal and describes its benefits (19-21); second, he offers a third-person statement of his future fame (22-23); finally, he contrasts that future standing with his current, much sorrier state (24-26). The final couplet (25-26), though not vital to the sense (as seen from its removal in Welcker's version) must be included because of context: it follows smoothly from what precedes and does not make sense on its own or as the beginning of a new poem. This rationale

⁶⁷ This division is found in Bekker 1815, Sitzler 1880, Ziegler 1880, Bergk 1882, Hiller 1890, Harrison 1902, Hudson-Williams 1910, Diehl 1922, Garzya 1958, Carosi & Najlis 1968, Young 1971, Carrière 1975, Adrados 1981, Ferarri 1989, Selle 2008 (secure & probable).

explains why it is left out only by Welcker, who takes the liberty of putting couplets into new contexts and allows for divisions that the transmitted placement would prevent.

The rhetorical structure of this concise poem is at once clear and subtle. The sequence inverts the expected order of things: the speaker presents the solution (the seal, at line 19) and its benefits (the protection of his verses at 20-22, his universal fame at 22-23) before acknowledging the problem (his current status among the townspeople, at line 24). Moreover, this recognition is bounded by couplets that show how the speaker thinks more highly of himself than his fellow townspeople currently do: not only will his true worth soon be acknowledged (24), but he even takes the liberty of dismissing his current situation with reference to Zeus' similar predicament (25-26).

The concrete problems that the seal solves—that his poetry may be stolen unawares or its verses replaced by others that are worse—are only implicitly raised by the expression of their anticipated solution (20-22). The poem does not detail how the speaker expects the seal to function, let alone what precisely it prevents.⁶⁸ This subject is certainly of interest, especially to those who want to use the poem as evidence in broader arguments about the corpus or the nature of authorship at the time of its composition, but determining how the seal functions is not vital to understanding these lines within the scope of the poem. To appreciate their rhetorical force it is sufficient to note that these problems are anticipated rather than present. This very anticipation

⁶⁸ As the longstanding scholarly controversy around these lines indirectly proves.

shows clearly that the speaker is confident in the quality of his words, even without the later prediction of future fame and the comparison with Zeus. For now, however, the speaker's biggest problem is not the stealing or denaturing of his verses, but that not all of his townsmen appreciate them or him.

The next proposed division, after line 28, is found only in the manuscripts and in Korres' 1949 edition.⁶⁹ This five-couplet poem has the same basic structure as the four-couplet version which is more popular in the editions, but with a closing movement introduced by the final couplet (27-28). There the focus shifts back to the addressee. By telling him that he will teach him everything he himself has learned, the speaker frames the previous self-description as an effort to win the addressee over: the speaker is the sort of person one would want as a mentor. The addition of this couplet gives added significance to the presence of the addressee, who in the four-couplet poem seems little more than an introductory device. Besides fleshing out this relationship, the final couplet further reinforces the themes introduced earlier. The speaker's confidence in his own worth as a poet addresses his need to convince the potential pupil of his value as a teacher. This circling back also has an obvious rhetorical advantage: it motivates the couplets that precede it much more compellingly than the shorter version. It is therefore somewhat puzzling that only one modern text has adopted this division. Two possible explanations come to mind. The first is aesthetic: the use of the vocative *Κύρνε*, already

⁶⁹ All manuscripts but X propose this unit.

used at the opening of line 19, might lead some to conclude that this belongs to a different poem.⁷⁰ Second, the introduction of the speaker in the role of a mentor may be thought to contrast with his previously stated role as poet. By the strict standards of thematic coherence applied to articulation in modern editions, this alone could justify dissociation.

The next proposed division, found only in West's edition (and in Hansen's, after West), comes after line 30. Thus divided, the poem is still dominated by the description of the speaker's circumstances, but the additional couplet gives the final movement more weight. The first of these two couplets (27-28) establishes the relationship that the speaker envisions between himself and the addressee: he offers sage advice. The second (29-30) distills that advice: do not seek good things in the wrong way. The statement of the lesson reflects the speaker's own situation. By encouraging his addressee not to seek *τιμαί, ἀρεταί,* and *ἄφρονας* with unjust deeds the speaker might be subtly justifying his current lack of these goods. This advice closes the six-couplet poem. If there is a shortcoming to this version it is this rather abrupt ending, especially when compared to the longest version, discussed below.

Five of the texts surveyed, representing a full chronological range of modern texts and spanning both eras, read one continuous poem that ends at line 38.⁷¹ This

⁷⁰ Selle mentions that vocatives should come at the beginning of poems and not be doubled (2008, 158), but this rule is violated in other poetic units generally accepted by the editions (n.b. 237-254).

⁷¹ Manuscript X, Edmonds 1931, van Groningen 1966, Gerber 1999, and Selle 2008 (Secure).

articulation is also shared by a few of the most frequently cited studies of this passage.⁷² Understood within the context of a symposiastic interaction rather than as the marker of a collection, the longer poem has a clear purpose: it advertises the virtues of the speaker and expresses his hope to take on the addressee as his mentee.

This more expansive presentation has two movements which (not coincidentally) break along the lines of the most common poem divisions discussed above: one from lines 19-26 and another from lines 27-38. In the first movement, as discussed above, the speaker introduces himself as a skillful but underappreciated poet. The future acclaim (22-23) is contrasted by the adverb οὐπω with present disrespect (24). The implication is clear: the speaker seeks to convince the addressee that his stock will rise soon. If that were too subtle, his comparison to Zeus (25-26) suggests how far he seeks to elevate himself. In the longer poem this promotion serves a greater purpose: it is an ethical argument to convince the addressee to adopt the speaker as a mentor. After setting out the argument the speaker makes his pitch. He, who will be soon be famous, will teach the addressee what he has learned. The couplets that follow (29-36) distill the advice he will give. Not coincidentally, this advice recalls the speaker's description of himself and further recommends his services: do not seek fame prematurely but go about things the right way (29-30) and make sure to learn from the right kind of people (31-36). The poem

⁷² Jacoby 1931, Friis Johansen 1991, Hubbard 2007, and Ferreri 2013.

culminates with the speaker's prediction that the addressee will come to recognize the quality of his counsel (37-38).

Everything in the poem encourages the addressee's acceptance of the speaker's mentorship, even if that goal is never explicitly stated. While the same rhetorical goal is already present in the shorter versions that end at 28 and 30, this extended version has the advantage of a much more satisfying conclusion. Rather than dropping off abruptly after the newly stated goal (28) or a single couplet of advice (30), it ends with a satisfying coda that circles back to the beginning of its movement (38).

Thus far I have only considered the traditional articulations of the seal passage. A symptotic approach to articulation dismisses the necessity of adhering to the received order of the text and allows for the rearrangement and rewording of the material. The possible options are countless and cannot be systematically explored. It is worth considering instead how the practice of symptotic reuse and repurposing might affect a poem that ostensibly forbids it.

But first we must determine how the speaker's guarantee in lines 20-21 operates. Scholars have usually sought to explain how the seal might function as the guarantee and to identify a mechanism that could achieve such ends. Assuming that the guarantee covers the entire corpus of authentic Theognidean poetry, scholars have proposed that

the seal is Kurnos' name or Theognis' name, or a style peculiar to Theognis.⁷³ Even if one of these proposals might be thought more effective than others none is infallible. In fact, no device internal to the poetry can prevent its theft and corruption in the culture of reperformance the poem self-consciously places itself in.⁷⁴ Instead of looking back to the seal in line 19, I propose it is more fruitful to look forward to the direct speech reported in 22 to explain the guarantee in 20-21. The imagined direct speech in lines 22-23 suggests that it is the universal fame of the speaker's words, not an ingenious device, that will protect them. The speaker is envisioning that his words will become so famous that, if anyone tries to steal or corrupt them, *πᾶς τις* ("any and everyone") will be able to tell what is authentic and declare, "These are the words of Theognis of Megara" (22-23). It is this statement that will check the behavior Theognis condemns, not some ingenious device hidden within the poetry.

The wording of the guarantee confirms this reading. The speaker does not promise that his verses cannot be stolen. Instead, he says that no one will steal them without other people knowing. The very fact of their theft is presumed in their identification as *κλεπτόμενα* (20). The guarantee that they will not be stolen unawares

⁷³ For a brief overview of the controversy see Selle 2008b, 289-291. A more thorough review, and more thorough bibliography, can be found in Condello 2009-2010.

⁷⁴ I am not the first to abandon hope in the efficacy of any seal. Colesanti calls the seal a joking dissuasion from theft and notes that it could not prevent it (2011, 257 & 260). The proposal of a physical seal placed on a physical book roll would come closer to guaranteeing the poetry's purity, but it is unclear how such a "sealed" poetry book would serve the widespread fame that the speaker of the poem seems to envision for himself. What's more, that device is external to the poetry.

is only possible if there is widespread knowledge of what might be stolen—if any and every audience will know that the words are his. Furthermore, the speaker does not claim that his words will not be reformed; on the contrary, reperformance is presupposed by the notion that no one will dare to substitute in worse poetry for his own. Rather than obscurely teasing an anti-plagiarism device, the speaker's confidence in his seal displays his confident expectation of future acclaim. Textual purity, often viewed as the ultimate aim of the poem, is here actually subservient to the larger goal of universal fame.

How does such a reading interact with the idea of playful sympotic rearrangement? First, it reaffirms the practice. The possibility of covertly stealing or making adjustments to the poetry would not be mentioned in this way if it did not have currency with its audience. The reading does not, however, confirm whether these very words were subject to this practice.⁷⁵ If anything, the presence of the seal might encourage such behavior: those who did not already know these couplets would have no way of telling whether they had been stolen or adjusted; those who knew that they had been adjusted might find the fact ironic and clever. In fact, given the ambiguous referent of ἔπη in these couplets (20, 22), these lines could serve as a ready-made “seal”

⁷⁵ Portions of the seal poem are quoted in many ancient sources, oftentimes with variations from the text of the manuscripts. For example, both Plato (Meno 95D) and Xenophon (Memorabilia 1.2.20) read διδάξαι for μαθήσασθαι in line 35. It is impossible to prove whether this divergence arose sympotically or from a later divergence in transmission, but at the very least it gives the lie to the inviolability of the poetry supposedly protected by the seal.

of any other elegiac output. In this sense, any poem could be a “Seal Poem” if this couplet were added at the beginning or end. While ostensibly opposed to the desires of the speaker, this use may not in fact be so. To the extent that audiences recognize it as drawing from a Theognidean source, the speaker’s chief aim has been met.

I close with a more general observation on the nature of poem division as illustrated by this case study: in practice, a couplet’s position is as much dictated by the couplets that precede and follow it as by its own intrinsic potential. A good illustration of how this decision-making operates is West’s division between lines 30 and 31. While there is certainly a logic to the six-couplet poem, as noted the ending at line 30 is abrupt. It seems that West chose this division because, as he states in his *Studies*, “ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι is surely the summation of a larger paragraph than 29-30.”⁷⁶ In other words, he separates the two not because he finds line 30 to be a satisfying ending, but because he is not convinced that line 31 refers to line 30. Furthermore, the practice of dividing the collection into poems is bound by the need to find the best possible division of the verses in their transmitted sequence and so fails to consider rhetorically useful ways of combining the material when the sequence is altered. Line 24 and the poetry that precedes it does not depend on the couplet at 25-26 for sense—it would be a suitable final couplet—but lines 25-26 would be orphaned without those that precede them. Only

⁷⁶ West 1974, 150.

Welcker's ambitious attempt at reordering the corpus allows for this type of reading, and even he is limited by the need to preserve all of the received text.

Traditional poem division thus reads in two directions. Editors do not simply proceed from beginning to end, marking divisions after couplets that seem to be suitable conclusions. They also work backwards from couplets, like 25-26 and 30-31, which they view as demanding connection or separation. Many divisions have been inserted because these demands work in both directions, and a need perceived in either direction will yield a division.

A sympotic approach offers the freedom to consider all possible combinations within a passage and rejects the imperative to find a single "optimal" version. If we avail ourselves of this freedom it becomes evident that each of the ten couplets could serve as the final one. No single couplet, at least through line 26 and possibly through 38, needs the following one to make sense. Even in the case of the enjambment "θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη / τοῦ Μεγαρέως" (22-23), line 22 is syntactically and semantically complete without 23, but 23 needs 22. A poem could end with "ὦδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ· 'θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη'." An audience unfamiliar with the verses that follow need not have expected any addition.

Verses strung like this could be seen as evidence for a type of poetic game in which each participant wants to have "the last word" and each subsequent performer

seeks to cap the preceding couplets.⁷⁷ While this famous statement of individual authorship is not the most likely candidate for poetry so composed or performed, perhaps there was an element of ironic playfulness at play here.

2.3.2 Case Study Two: 79-100

79 παύρους εὐρήσεις, Πολυπαῖδη, ἄνδρας ἑταίρους
πιστοὺς ἐν χαλεποῖς πρήγμασι γινομένους,
81 οἵτινες ἂν τολμῶιεν ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχοντες
ἴσον τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῶν τε κακῶν μετέχειν.
83 τούτους οὐ χ' εὐροῖς διζήμενος οὐδ' ἐπὶ πάντας
ἄνθρώπους, οὐς ναῦς μὴ μία πάντας ἄγοι,
85 οἷσιν ἐπὶ γλώσσηι τε καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἔπεστιν
αἰδῶς, οὐδ' αἰσχρὸν χρῆμ' ἐπι κέρδος ἄγει.
87 μὴ μ' ἔπεσιν μὲν στέργε, νόον δ' ἔχε καὶ φρένας ἄλληι,
εἰ με φιλεῖς καὶ σοι πιστὸς ἔνεστι νόος.
89 ἦ με φίλει καθαρὸν θέμενος νόον, ἦ μ' ἀποειπῶν
ἔχθαιρ' ἀμφιδίην νεῖκος ἀειράμενος.
91 ὅς δὲ μῆι γλώσσηι δίχ' ἔχει νόον, οὗτος ἑταῖρος
δεινός, Κύρν', ἐχθρὸς βέλτερος ἢ φίλος ὢν.
93 ἂν τις ἐπαινήσῃ σε τόσον χρόνον ὅσσον ὀρώης,
νοσφισθεῖς δ' ἄλλην γλώσσαν ἱήσι κακὴν,
95 τοιοῦτός τοι ἑταῖρος ἀνὴρ φίλος οὐ τι μάλ' ἐσθλός,
ὅς κ' εἴπηι γλώσσηι λῶια, φρονῆι δ' ἔτερα.
97 ἀλλ' εἴη τοιοῦτος ἐμοὶ φίλος, ὅς τὸν ἑταῖρον
γινώσκων ὀργὴν καὶ βαρὺν ὄντα φέρει
99 ἀντι κασιγνήτου. σὺ δέ μοι, φίλε, ταῦτ' ἐνὶ θυμῶι
φράζεο, καὶ ποτέ μου μνήσεται ἐξοπίσω.

You will find, Polupaides, that few men
prove faithful companions in difficult circumstances,
who, one with you in thought and feeling, will have the courage
to share equally in the good and the bad.
You would not find those, not even if you searched among all men,
whom a single ship could not carry all together,
those on whose tongue and eyes is proper shame,
and whom profit doesn't drive to a shameful deed.

⁷⁷ Given its perceived emphasis on singular authorship, this poem has not previously been considered as a possible symptomatic sequence.

Do not show me affection with words but keep your mind and heart elsewhere,
if you love me and the mind in you is faithful.
Either make your mind pure and love me or tell me off,
stir up a quarrel, and hate me openly.
But the man with a double mind and a single tongue is a frightful companion,
Kurnos, better as an enemy than a friend.
If someone praises you so long as he sees you
but hurls another tongue, an evil one, when apart,
such companion certainly is not a good friend at all,
who says rather agreeable things with his tongue but has other things in his mind.
But may this sort of person be dear to me who, knowing
his companion, bears his anger, even when it's heavy,
like a brother. Consider these things I've said
in your heart, dear one, and you will remember me sometime hereafter.

This passage treats two different aspects of the theme of companionship: first, whether companions support you in difficult times (79-84); second, whether they say the same about you when you are not around and when you are (87-100). Over the course of these ten couplets the scope of the theme narrows from all of humanity (79-84) down to a general warning to the addressee (87-99) and then to a specific request of him (99-100).

Despite its perceptible thematic unity and logical structure, no text has read these ten couplets as a single poem. The choice to break them up has several possible motivations. First, the message is repetitive; while the repetitions add color, they seem not to contribute much nuance. Second, there are three different addresses in the poem (79, 92, 99). We remember that Selle considers the introduction of a vocative a good reason to separate.⁷⁸ The final reason may be the inclusion of lines 85-86, which seem to break the thematic unity.

⁷⁸ Selle 2008, 158.

This couplet illustrates well the impact of articulation on meaning and clarifies how a reading mindful of reperformance differs from standard editorial practice. It serves as a specification of the preceding one, but in a manner that does not seem to stay on message: it is men with a proper sense of shame, not those who stick with you through thick and thin, that are too scarce to fill a ship. For one who reads through the corpus sequentially, this seems a reversal of expectations. The notion that you could not fill a single ship with “those men” (83-84) seems to restate vividly the perception that men who will stick with you through hard times are difficult to find—the notion already expressed at 79-80 and reinforced by 81-82. Only with the introduction of αἰδώς at 86 does the reader realize that a thematic variation has been introduced. This calls for backtracking.⁷⁹ Once we connect lines 85-86 to 83-84 we are led to conclude that the theme of respect had already been presupposed in line 83.

Sixteen modern editors have separated these verses into two two-couplet poems: lines 79-82 and 83-86. This division preserves straightforward thematic unity: both poems just happen to use a similar structure to communicate two different ideas. The reader of their editions would have no reason to consider line 83 as part of the thought introduced in 79-82: the poem division makes clear that it is a new idea. On the other hand, all of the manuscripts except Va and seven of the editors have connected all four

⁷⁹ The need for such backtracking is what makes the corpus so frustrating to read without poem divisions, as Epkema noted (1803, 39). A near analogy is the experience of hiking in places where the paths are poorly marked. Enjoyable as the scenery is, eventually the feeling of being lost overtakes you.

couplets into a single poem.⁸⁰ A superficial impression of thematic dissonance provokes the reconsideration of how αἰδώς might be connected with loyalty. Shamelessness could be understood as the desertion decried in 79-82.

It is hardly surprising that modern texts, with their tendency to split the corpus wherever possible, should tend to avoid poem divisions whose connections demand reexaminations like this. But this practice has an important consequence: Theognidean thought is flattened and comes across as a monotonous collection of rather straightforward aphorisms. When thought-provoking connections like these are dissolved by poem divisions, the corpus is bound to provoke less thought.

There is another option which a sympotic reading permits but editorial practice does not: simply leaving lines 85-86 out of the poem. As noted earlier, lines 83-84 are not dependent on the relative clause of 85-86. Without 85-86 the preceding couplet unproblematically adds poetic color to 79-82. An editor cannot easily insert a poem division between line 84 and 85 because the relative clause in 85 needs the antecedent that only the preceding couplet supplies. The editor's hand is forced: unable to orphan 85-86, she is forced to append it to 83-84. Indeed, no edition deems 79-84 as a unit without 85-86. A symposiast, however, is under no such restrictions. If he wanted to stop at 84 lines 85-86 are no object. This couplet is never in play. Furthermore, he may

⁸⁰ Bekker 1815, Sitzler 1880, Ziegler 1880, Bergk 1882, Hudson-Williams 1910, Korres 1949, and Selle (Secure).

continue his performance with line 87. If he knows 85-86 he can simply ignore it. This illustrates the freer scope enjoyed by a sympotic reappropriation.

The second block, lines 87-92, demonstrates another important phenomenon: the difficulty of parsing the unity of a sequence of similar gnomological statements. Three texts include these couplets in a single longer poem running from 87 to 100.⁸¹ Otherwise, eighteen texts treat them as a single poem while seven break the unit: manuscript Va, Bekker, Welcker, Hiller, Ziegler, and Diehl break it after line 88; Ferrari, West, Gerber, and Hansen after line 90.⁸² No one suggests that each individual couplet is its own poem, and lines 89-90 are always part of a longer poem.

Unlike the four couplets above, not one of these three depends grammatically on any other. They offer essentially three different statements on the same theme. Each may stand on its own; all could be joined together. The choice to group them or not opens a window into the proclivities of the editor.

With that in mind, it is regrettable that the discussion of these choices is rather limited. Only one commentary addresses them. At the end of his line-by-line notes on the section, van Groningen affirms that leaving these three couplets connected is the only sensible view because of the unity and development of the idea.⁸³ He argues

⁸¹ Manuscripts X and Va and Sitzler 1880.

⁸² Selle notably does not include either division among his list of "Probable" ones.

⁸³ "Il y a très grande probabilité, vu l'identité et le développement des idées, que le sixain forme un ensemble et qu'il ne faut pas séparer le premier distique des deux suivants" (1966, 43).

against a division after 88 but nowhere anticipates the possibility of separating the final couplet as do later editions.

None of the editors who break after line 88 comments on their reasoning. That an important motivation may be the asyndeton may be inferred from van Groningen's defense of its connective logic: "The abrupt asyndeton marks the passionate conviction of the poet, and perhaps at the same time a certain indignation at Kurnos, who disillusioned him."⁸⁴ The thematic coherence of the lines suggests that if the motivation is not grammatical it must lie in the view that gnomological poetry is best represented by brief aphorisms.

The division proposed between 90 and 91 enjoys a little more discussion. Ferrari is the only editor with a commentary who inserts this break. He calls the poem from lines 87-90 a bridge between two broader sections, a preceding one on *πιστός* and a succeeding one on *φίλος*.⁸⁵ Of 91-92 Ferrari remarks that the initial *δέ* suggests it may represent a corrective sympotic intervention.⁸⁶ Apparently his decision to mark this couplet off as a separate poem is intended to call attention to its status as a distinct unit, even though the break with the preceding couplets hinders our understanding of how such a unit can be used. Ferrari thus offers a sympotic reading, but only a careful reader of his commentary could tell this division from any other. For West, as often,

⁸⁴ "L'asyndète abrupte marque la conviction passionnée du poète, et peut-être même une certaine indignation à l'égard de Cyrnos qui le désillusionne" (van Groningen 1966, 42).

⁸⁵ Ferrari 1989, 86.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

authenticity and transmission override concerns with the internal logic of performance. His marginal notes suggest that he separates the last couplet because 87-90 is a doublet of 1082c-f and because (unlike 87-90) he regards 91-92 as genuinely Theognidean.

The next and final section of this case study is lines 93-100. Only three texts—manuscript X, manuscript Va, and Sitzler’s edition—connect 91-92 to 93-94. The sense of these two is essentially identical. The sense of repetition could be an argument in favor of separation, but then this would lead us to expect 87-88, 89-90, and 91-92 to be separated too, and no text does so. The division evidently follows from the asyndeton in 93 explicitly cited by van Groningen.⁸⁷

There are four different articulations of lines 93-100. The most common one, adopted by twenty-nine of the texts, is to leave this section undivided as a four-couplet poem. Of those who divide the text, Welcker, Bergk, and Selle (Secure & Probable) insert a break after 96,⁸⁸ while Ferrari, West, and Hansen insert breaks after 94 and 96.⁸⁹

The decision to insert a break after 94 is an illuminating instance of editorial flattening of Theognidean thought. In his “Commentary on selected passages” West writes that he perceives a difference in the way τοιοῦτος is described in 95-96 vis-à-vis 93-94.⁹⁰ There is indeed a difference: lines 93-94 describe someone who says one thing in

⁸⁷ Van Groningen 1966, 45.

⁸⁸ Colesanti sees 93-100 as a sympotic sequence with 93-96 representing one voice and 97-100 another (2011, 133-134).

⁸⁹ West (1989, ad loc.) includes a lacuna after 94 to indicate that the poem appears to be incomplete.

⁹⁰ West 1974, 150.

the addressee's presence and another when apart, while 95-96 describe someone who says one thing but thinks another. But as the decision of twenty-nine texts confirms it is hardly a stretch to connect the behavior in 93-94 to that in 95-96. A reader of West could not make this connection without consulting another edition and would deem these distinct sentiments. The editorial enforcement of strict thematic coherence has a detrimental effect on a reader's grasp of the potential in Theognis' thought: its conception of human motivation is flattened into facile correspondences.

From a sympotic perspective, the most notable feature of the final section is the enjambment which opens 99. Just like the enjambed line 23 in the previous case study, lines 99-100 are not necessary for what precedes it. Thus, the same discrepancy between sympotic and editorial practice applies, and it is therefore unsurprising that no text separates 99-100 from 97-98. A further interesting feature of this enjambment is the way it affects sympotic repurposing. If it were not for the enjambed ἀντὶ κασιγνήτου, lines 99-100 could be useful as a conclusion to almost any gnomological poem. While far from impossible, a symposiast hoping to reuse this conclusion would need to either substitute another phrase that metrically fits or find another couplet that could smoothly precede it.

We finally come to the end of this passage. While lines 101 and following continue on the same theme of the proper objects of friendship, the concluding force of the last phrase in 100—καὶ ποτέ μου μνήσεται ἐξοπίσω (“and you will remember me

sometime hereafter”)—is so clear that line 101 is unanimously regarded as the beginning of a new poem. This break is clearly made on the merits of line 100 alone, without corroborating thematic or grammatical traits that show 101 to be a first line: this is the converse of the dynamic of dependence seen above.

In conclusion, an examination of lines 79-100 has illustrated some of the fundamental concepts of poem division in the Theognidea. Manuscript X, manuscript Va, and Sitzler contain ambitious readings that break the text into only two poems. While most of the other texts print three poems, there are several who make additional divisions within them. The reasons for these divisions, and the places where the divisions are not made, are illustrative of the various techniques that can be applied to the text. Those who tend to break it up seem more sensitive to asyndeton and to subtle shifts in the framing of the concepts. Their choices affect how readers experience the Theognidea. Connectives affect how we understand the structure of Theognidean poetry and its performance: if each couplet must be explicitly joined to the previous one, we have poetry that is smooth but risks monotony—transitions never surprise the audience. Intolerance for subtle thematic shifts has even more serious implications: by discounting developments that are not immediately obvious, editors rob the poetry of its ability to challenge the audience. A poem’s capacity to surprise and provoke thought is arguably a mark of its excellence. This case study demonstrates how divisions of the Theognidean

corpus into separate poems have fundamental and wide-reaching implications for the perception of the poetry itself.

2.3.3 Case Study Three: 283-294

- 283 ἀστῶν μηδενὶ πιστὸς ἐὼν πόδα τόνδε πρόβαινε
μήθ' ὄρκωι πίσυνος μήτε φιλημοσύνη,
285 μηδ' εἰ Ζῆν' ἐθέληι παρέχειν βασιλῆα μέγιστον
ἔγγυον ἀθανάτων πιστὰ τιθεῖν ἐθέλων.
287 ἐν γὰρ τοι πόλει ὧδε κακοψόγωι ἀνδάνει οὐδέν·
† ὠσδετοσωσαιεὶ † πολλοὶ ἀνολβότεροι.
289 νῦν δὲ τὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν κακὰ γίνεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν
ἀνδρῶν· ἠγέονται δ' ἐκτραπέλοισι νόμοις·
291 αἰδῶς μὲν γὰρ ὄλωλεν, ἀναιδείη δὲ καὶ ὕβρις
νικήσασα δίκην γῆν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἔχει.
293 οὐδὲ λέων αἰεὶ κρέα δαίνυται, ἀλλὰ μιν ἔμπης
καὶ κρατερόν περ ἐόνθ' αἰρεῖ ἀμηχανίη.

Don't take a step forward trusting any of these townsmen,
rely in neither an oath nor friendship,
not even if he is willing to proffer Zeus, the greatest king
of the immortals, as security in his desire to establish trust.
For in this city so censorious nothing pleases
[??] many wretched.
But now the misfortunes of the good prove good
for the bad, and they rule with devious laws.
For reverence is dead, and shamelessness and insolence
have conquered justice and hold the entire land.
But even the lion doesn't always feast on meat, but
powerful though he be helplessness seizes him all the same.

The next case study is the six-couplet passage that spans lines 283-294. Whereas the previous one was in the gnomological mode, this other reports what the speaker sees as the state of his community. While the division of poems in the reporting mode is less open to editorial discretion than is the gnomological, the content is nonetheless general

enough to allow for flexibility. As we will see, this flexibility allows room for controversy over poem division.

This passage is not as self-contained as the two previous ones. Every text ends a poem at 294, but manuscript X starts a poem before line 283, on line 279. If one were to search for the closest couplet whose position every text agrees upon, one would need to go all the way back to 255—an additional burden of dubious benefit considering the comparatively fewer disagreements that exist between lines 255 and 283.

Manuscripts other than X treat 283-294 as a single poem.⁹¹ No modern edition agrees, but Harrison and Edmonds, together with Selle's secure division, divide the six couplets into two poems: a five-couplet one (283-292) and a single-couplet one (293-294). The remaining modern texts offer three divisions within these six couplets. The most common carves four poems: 283-286, 287-288, 289-292, and 293-294.⁹² The other two reflect different approaches that result in three poems. The first—283-288, 289-292, and 293-294—is more common, but has not been adopted since Carrière's 1975 edition.⁹³ The second—283-286, 287-292, and 293-294—has been adopted by three of the most recent editions (West, Hansen, and Gerber).

⁹¹ It is interesting that Condello (2003a, 10-11) proposes three possible sympotic sequences for 283-294. One with the constituent sections 283-286, 287-290, 291-292, and 293-294; another with 283-286, 287-288, 289-290, 291-292, and 293-294; a third with 289-290, 291-292, and 293-294.

⁹² Bekker 1815, Welcker 1826, Ziegler 1880, Bergk 1882, Hiller 1890, Diehl 1922, van Groningen 1966, Adrados 1981, and Ferrari 1989.

⁹³ Unless one counts Selle 2008 (Secure and Probable).

All divisions have a few elements in common. The couplets in lines 285-286 and 291-292 are never treated as individual poems. With only one exception⁹⁴ modern texts treat 293-294 as its own poem, whereas the manuscripts always connect it to the preceding verses. Analysis of this section can thus be narrowed down to two issues: the dispute that arises among the modern texts about the two couplets in 287-291, and the discrepancy between modern texts and manuscripts in their treatment of 293-294.

The first disputed couplet, at lines 287-288, presents an immediate problem: the first thirteen letters of line 288, *ωσδετοσωσαιει*, are a crux. Emendations are almost as many as modern editions, but the most recent works leave the crux in place.⁹⁵ The uncertainty about its sense surely plays a part in the disagreement over this couplet's placement. But because poem divisions do not align with particular emendations, this crux cannot be the sole contributing factor.

Leaving the crux aside, 287-288 would seem to connect the censoriousness of the city to the wretchedness of many. The *γάρ* at the opening of the couplet suggests that this state of affairs bears on the previous two couplets. Lines 283-288 thus all deal with language misused in social interaction: forswearing and misdirected blame. But for some editors this connection seems too loose. The particle alone is not enough to justify

⁹⁴ Ziegler 1880.

⁹⁵ The following emendations are made in the editions I have surveyed: *ωσθ' οί σωες αιει* (Welcker 1826), *ως δε το σωσαι οι* (Bergk 1882), *ες δε το σωσ' αιει* (Hiller 1890), *ως δε τι σωσ' αιει* (Harrison 1902), *ωστε δε σωιζεσθαι* (Hudson-Williams 1910), *ως δι' οτι ζωειν* (Edmonds 1931), *ως δ' ετος ως αιει* (Garzya 1958), *ως δε τος' ως αιει* (Young 1971), *ως δε τοςως αιει* (van Groningen 1966), *ωστε το σωιζεσθαι* (Carosi & Najilis 1968), *ως δε τος' ωσαιεν* (Carrière 1975).

the attachment of the couplet at 287-288.⁹⁶ Perhaps a sounder understanding of 288 would solidify the connection, but none of the suggested emendations clearly do so.

If one isolates this couplet, how should we understand it? Editors who do render it a fragment, not a poem. It is hard to imagine how it could be effectively delivered on its own. The particle γάϙ signals that it must be connected to, or said in response to, some preceding thought. This dependence does not mean, however, that it is a part of a lost whole, a useless remnant: instead of seeing it as a broken remnant—an idea necessarily implied by the word “fragment”—a sympotic approach would regards this couplet as part of the available poetic store, a potentially effective response to another symposiast under suitable thematic and syntactic circumstances. Unlike the enjambed verses at 23-24 and 99-100, it is not hard to devise couplets it might follow (leaving the crux aside).

The fact that sympotic practice allows the monodistich to function does not demand, however, that the couplet must be treated as a monodistich. Separating 287-288 from what precedes it breaks a thematic connection seen by those who keep the passage together. As I highlighted in the previous case study, dividing ideas whose connection is not immediately obvious risks flattening Theognidean thought. In this case, the risk seems small because the crux obscures the logical flow.

⁹⁶ Both van Groningen (1966, 117) and Ferrari (1989, 120-121) explicitly comment that the γάϙ alone cannot sustain the connection.

The second key couplet of the passage is 289-290. No text isolates it or marks it as its own poem. No text marks it as a final couplet either; it is always connected to 291-292. Thus, the question is simply whether it should be the beginning or the continuation of a unit.

Although once again the crux in 288 makes definitive answers impossible, the connectives are worth examining and make for an interesting *comparandum* to lines 287-288. Line 289, like 287, begins with a connective particle, the weaker δέ with a temporal qualifier νῦν. The pragmatics of δέ still suggest some sort of response, but a looser one compared to the connective force of γάρ. Editors have not taken this looser logical connection as licensing more flexibility in the connection of ideas; instead (with only West, Hansen, and Gerber excepted) they have taken it as an opportunity to separate the couplets, despite the fact that both are concerned with a city that has taken a turn for the worse.

The temporal indication of νῦν adds an extra wrinkle: it suggests a contrast with past circumstances that are not clearly described in 287-288. This potential temporal snag motivates van Groningen's division: "νῦν δὲ: opposes the present reality to a more favorable ideal situation from before, or an imaginary ideal. The quatrain is therefore almost certainly a fragment."⁹⁷ There is one way in which the temporal problem could be resolved in favor of connection: if δέ is continuative rather than adversative, the

⁹⁷ Van Groningen 1966, 117.

temporality need not be oppositional. This option is never presented, nor is an inceptive δέ.

Finally, Ferrari makes an interesting suggestion that does not fit neatly into a discussion of either couplet. He regards 287-288 and 289-292 as two separate sympotic replies to 283-286. While his acknowledgment of sympotic use is welcome, as with his treatment of 90-91, a reader would have to search his commentary for this view of the matter—the text itself prints three different poems (283-286, 287-288, 289-292) without a hint that the sequence hides a potential connection. Moreover, as is ever the case, this particular reading is still bound by the state of the corpus as handed down by the manuscripts. These poems are considered alternative replies only to 283-286. The broader potential of the true sympotic usefulness of these couplets—what a performing symposiast could do with these same couplets by putting them in other contexts—is not in view.

This case-study concludes with the final couplet, lines 293-294. Every manuscript makes it the end of a longer poem, while every modern text regards it as a self-standing poem. Much like lines 287-288, this couplet uses a connective (here οὐδέ) to mark the sequence. Thus, isolating it renders it incomplete.⁹⁸ Again the question is whether there is a discrepancy in theme that demands breaking it off as a fragment.

⁹⁸ Carrière 1975 acknowledges this incompleteness with an ellipsis before 293 (ad loc.).

This couplet is in the riddling mode: a gnome illustrated via animal metaphor.⁹⁹

As is often the case with riddles, the thematic connection to the context is not straightforward. Riddles are designed to provoke thought, to make a point that is not immediately obvious. By separating the couplet from the preceding ones, modern editors prevent readers from reflecting on the text more deeply.

It is easy to connect the example of the lion to the couplets that precede it. These bemoan the evil state of the city: the worthless benefit from the ills of their betters, the laws have been perverted, and shameless insolence has won a resounding victory over reverence. The riddling couplet acknowledges the fact that even that most powerful beast, the lion, is sometimes helpless and unable to enjoy its preferred diet. In the face of moral turmoil perhaps this riddle seeks to reassure good and modest men—here compared to the lion— that theirs is a temporary state. Just as the lion will eat meat again, the good will prevail in time. The use of the proverbially violent lion to represent the good and the reference to its “feasting on flesh” could well contain an implicit threat for any bad and shameless people in the audience who currently have the upper hand.¹⁰⁰

One might object that the tone recommends separation: the preceding couplets are pessimistic, if not hopeless, about the state of the city, while I read 293-294 as confidently comforting. But, far from disqualifying, this discrepancy makes the

⁹⁹ Riddles were one of the known genres of sympotic poetic performance (Weçowski 2014, 51). On the centrality of riddling language in the Theognidea see Nagy 1985, 24-29.

¹⁰⁰ On the possibility of *kakoi* and *deiloï* in the sympotic audience see Chapters 3 and 4.

connection all the more desirable. It is moments of distress and apparent hopelessness that call for comfort. An encouraging shift in tone could come from the same speaker or could be interjected by another. In either case it is fruitfully read with the previous couplets. This joint reading does not, of course, prevent us from also seeing the usefulness of this gnome as a reattachable couplet. This context is perhaps only one of many in which it would be useful.¹⁰¹

This case study has drawn special attention to the role of particles in editorial considerations. In short, couplets with particles that suggest or entail a connection create problems for editors who deem the material thematically unsuitable for connection. By separating these couplets from their preceding context as fragments, editors consign them to the potsherd pile. But like the potsherds which become ostraka, these seemingly broken pieces of poetic material could have been useful for ancient practitioners in the very state in which we find them—in this case as quick retorts or add-ons during a lively symposion. As my analysis of lines 293-294 shows, these possible connections may already be present in the text in a way that modern editions have missed. Furthermore, a reading mindful of reperformance and not bound by the existing sequence would further unleash the inherent ability of the poetry to provoke connections and new meanings by allowing us to place couplets like the riddling 293-294 into new contexts.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Olsen (2019, 336) for a similar discussion of detachability with regard to Pindar *Paean* 6.

2.3.4 Case Study Four: 373-400

373 Ζεῦ φίλε, θαυμάζω σε· σὺ γὰρ πάντεσσιν ἀνάσσεις
τιμὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων καὶ μεγάλην δύναμιν·
375 ἀνθρώπων δ' εὖ οἶσθα νόον καὶ θυμὸν ἑκάστου·
σὸν δὲ κράτος πάντων ἔσθ' ὑπάτον, βασιλεῦ.
377 πῶς δὴ σευ, Κρονίδη, τολμᾷ νόος ἀνδρας ἀλιτρούς
ἐν ταύτῃ μοίρῃ τόν τε δίκαιον ἔχειν,
379 ἦν τ' ἐπὶ σωφροσύνην τρεφθῆι νόος ἦν τε πρὸς ὕβριν
ἀνθρώπων ἀδίκαισ' ἔργμασι πειθομένων;
381 οὐδέ τι κεκριμένον πρὸς δαίμονός ἐστι βροτοῖσιν,
οὐδ' ὁδὸν ἦντιν' ἰὼν ἀθανάτοισιν ἄδοι.
383 ἔμπης δ' ὄλβον ἔχουσιν ἀπήμονα· τοὶ δ' ἀπὸ δειλῶν
ἔργων ἴσχοντες θυμὸν ὅμως πενίην
385 μητέρ' ἀμηχανίης ἔλαβον τὰ δίκαια φιλεῦντες,
ἦτ' ἀνδρῶν παράγει θυμὸν ἐς ἀμπλακίην
387 βλάπτουσ' ἐν στήθεσσι φρένας κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης·
τολμᾷ δ' οὐκ ἐθέλων αἴσχεα πολλὰ φέρειν
389 χρημοσύνηι εἴκων, ἦ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ διδάσκει,
ψεύδεά τ' ἐξαπάτας τ' οὐλομένας τ' ἔριδας,
391 ἀνδρα καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλοντα· κακὸν δέ οἱ οὐδὲν ἔοικεν·
ἦ γὰρ καὶ χαλεπὴν τίκτει ἀμηχανίην.
393 ἐν πενίῃ δ' ὅ τε δειλὸς ἀνὴρ ὅ τε πολλὸν ἀμείνων
φαίνεται, εὐτ' ἂν δὴ χρημοσύνη κατέχη·
395 τοῦ μὲν γὰρ τὰ δίκαια φρονεῖ νόος, οὐτέ περ αἰεὶ
ἰθεῖα γνώμη στήθεσιν ἐμπεφύη·
397 τοῦ δ' αὐτ' οὐτε κακοῖσ' ἔπεται νόος οὐτ' ἀγαθοῖσιν.
τὸν δ' ἀγαθὸν τολμᾶν χρῆ τά τε καὶ τὰ φέρειν,
399 αἰδεῖσθαι δὲ φίλους φεύγειν τ' ὀλεσῆνορας ὄρκους,
ἐντράπελ' ἀθανάτων μῆνιν ἀλευάμενον.

Zeus, my friend, I'm amazed at you. For you rule over all,
alone having honor and great power,
and you know well the mind of men and each one's heart,
and your power is the highest of all, king.
How then, son of Kronos, does your mind bear to hold wicked men
and the just man in the same esteem,
whether the mind is turned to prudence or to insolence,
when men are persuaded by unjust deeds?
Is there nothing that has been decided for mortals by the *daimon*,
nor a road one could walk to please the immortals?
But all the same they have wealth free from harm, while, mark you,
those restraining their heart from wretched deeds get poverty,
mother of helplessness, although they are lovers of justice,

poverty that leads the heart of men astray to error,
 when it impairs the heart in their chest under forceful necessity,
 and, although not willing, a man submits to bearing many shameful things,
 yielding to need, which indeed teaches many evils,
 deceptions, tricks, and cursed strife,
 although the man was not a willing party; and no evil is fitting to him.
 For it gives birth to difficult helplessness.
 But in poverty, the wretched man and the one who is
 better by a lot is revealed, whenever need takes hold.
 For the mind of the latter thinks on justice and his judgment
 is always implanted straight in his chest;
 whereas the mind of the former neither goes with bad or good.
 But it is necessary for the good man to bring himself to bear both this and that,
 to respect his friends and shun oaths ruinous to men,
 scrupulously avoiding the wrath of the immortals.

The ten-couplet passage from lines 373-400 is a rare instance in which the difficulties of poem division are so evident that they are acknowledged by modern editors.¹⁰² The passage has two basic movements, each in a different mode. It begins as a hymn (373-382), with some of the conventional formulaic elements of that genre: direct address (373, 376, 377) and catalogue of powers (373-376). But it is an unconventional hymn. The familiarity of the opening phrase, Ζεῦ φίλε, has struck commentators.¹⁰³ The subject is a complaint that questions divine providence. The speaker asks Zeus why he allows evil men to flourish (374-382). The complaint does not culminate in a request, as one might expect of a hymn. The speaker merely bemoans the unjust state of affairs

¹⁰² The discussion takes up almost two entire pages in van Groningen's commentary (1966, 153-155), which consistently discusses poem division but rarely at this length. Only lines 19-38 are given comparable attention. Gerber 1999 and Edmonds 1931, who rarely broach the topic, comment ad loc. Condello offers an extensive discussion (2009, 193-207). He proposes two different schemata of sympotic sequences: one with three voices and three sections (373-382, 383-392, 393-400); another with four voices and as many sections (373-382, 383-387, 388-392, 393-400). The second option is notable in that it breaks up a couplet.

¹⁰³ Harrison (1902, 192).

without explicitly pressing for action. The second movement is gnomological in nature: an account of the evils of poverty, specifically, the way in which it pushes men toward wicked deeds (383-400).

The sequence of two modes have an important effect on the approach to division. The hymnic opening of the first movement suggests an extended poem (by Theognidean standards) with a clearly discernable structure. The gnomological section, however, is inherently more ambiguous for the purposes of division.¹⁰⁴ These competing thrusts have resulted in broad disagreement about the proper division of this passage.

The transition between the two movements is of particular interest. Thematically, it is artfully handled. The first couplet of the second movement (383-384) notes that some people are allowed to amass wealth, while those who check their worse urges only have poverty to thank for it. The theme of the first movement—that just men do not fare well—is thus seamlessly connected to the theme of poverty explored in the second. The grammatical connection between 382 and 383, however, leaves much to be desired. While there is a connective particle (δέ), the subject of the main verb in 383 (ἔχουσιν) is implied and cannot be readily supplied from the preceding verses.¹⁰⁵ The inference that in view are evil men who do not check their impulses and yet reap rewards can only be drawn from the implied contrast with the subsequent clause. Furthermore, the adverb

¹⁰⁴ See the second case study above.

¹⁰⁵ There are two longshot candidates—βροτοῖσιν (381) and ἀνθρώπων (380)—but each has a serious shortcoming: βροτοῖσιν refers to all men, not just the evil; while ἀνθρώπων does refer to the correct sort of person but is over a couplet away and in an oblique case (van Groningen 1966, 155).

ἔμπης is puzzling, as it implies a tighter logical connection with the preceding couplet than is actually apparent. It is perhaps possible to connect the despairing tone of 381-382 with the complaint that evil men enjoy wealth unharmed, but this does not seem forceful enough to motivate ἔμπης. The sequence jars.

The tenuous thematic continuity and an awkward grammatical connection complicate poem division. The manuscripts, consistent with their inclination to connect, feature a single unit until at least line 398. Only two editions leave the passage unbroken without comment;¹⁰⁶ twelve insert a poem division after 382.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, of these only Welcker does not also include a division after 380. Diehl includes a division after 380 but not 382. These divisions create two or three thematically related poems, of which one seems to end prematurely (in many cases leaving a single couplet between them) and another seems to lack a beginning—that is to say, we end up with two or three fragments. Van Groningen finds this result necessary but “disappointing.”¹⁰⁸ A third solution is popular with more recent editions: a lacuna is assumed between 382 and 383 and the entire passage is left together.¹⁰⁹ This solution preserves the thematic momentum while acknowledging the discontinuous transition between 382 and 383. The merits of this choice are evident and leave one wondering why this tactic is not

¹⁰⁶ Harrison 1902, Young 1971.

¹⁰⁷ Bekker 1815, Welcker 1826, Ziegler 1880, Bergk 1882, Hiller 1890, Korres 1949, Garzya 1958, van Groningen 1966, Carosi & Najilis 1968, Carrière 1975, Adrados 1981, Selle 2008 (“Secure and Probable”).

¹⁰⁸ “Lé résultat est décevant” (1966, 155).

¹⁰⁹ Carosi & Najilis 1968, Carrière 1975, West 1989, Ferrari 1989, Gerber 1999, Hansen 2005, and Selle 2008 (“Secure”).

employed more frequently throughout the corpus. West does posit other lacunae,¹¹⁰ but in every other case but one (later in this poem) he marks a poem division after the lacuna. Thus, these lacunae only stand for missing endings, they do not mark the loss of internal transitions. The reasons for this discrepancy may be generic. Editors seem to regard shorter poems with abrupt endings more acceptable in the gnomological and reporting modes prevalent in the Theognidea, and so do not typically posit lacunae then.¹¹¹ In this case, the conventional requirements of the hymn, with its more extended mode, dictate the need for a lacuna.

The second major site of controversy is the transition between 392 and 393. Unlike the previous disputed juncture, which sat between the two movements, this one is squarely within the second, gnomological movement on poverty. For the majority of the 20th century no edition kept these lines together,¹¹² but recent editions connect the two couplets.¹¹³ Grammatically there are no objections. There is a connective particle (δ') and no abruptness disrupts the sense of the new couplet. What motivates the break is a perceived change in the speaker's attitude. Lines 383-392 focus on the helplessness (ἀμηχανία) of the just man beset by poverty and seem to excuse the wrongs poverty forces him to commit; the discussion after 393 makes no excuse and regards poverty as a

¹¹⁰ Other lacunae in his 1989 edition are placed after lines 58, 94, 188, and 399.

¹¹¹ For example, a lacuna between 288 and 289 might solve some of the problems noted in the third case study above (although the crux would still present difficulties).

¹¹² Harrison posits a lacuna between 391 and 392, i.e. within a couplet, but does not posit a new poem like other contemporaneous commentators. Editorial intervention within a couplet is exceedingly rare.

¹¹³ West 1989, Ferrari 1989, Gerber 1999.

test of character that a good man will pass. While it may be possible to reconcile these two perspectives, the speaker does not do so.

The decision to connect these couplets depends on one's conception of unity one may expect in an extended elegiac poem. Those who divide expect a connection to be explicitly motivated: because the author does not show how these contrasted ideas may be held together, they are by default considered dissimilar. If the speaker is thought to adhere firmly to one straightforward notion, a shift in perspective indicates the beginning of a new poem; this view trumps arguable verbal and thematic connections between the passages.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, those who posit a single passage are not discomfited by multiple points of view within a single presentation, or even by multiple speakers within a single poem. West's discussion of the passage (it has "the same kind of unity as in Solon fr. 13, with a progressively changing perspective") has been cited by two editors who leave the couplets connected.¹¹⁵ The Solonian poem is an illustrative example of this issue. Despite its "rather rambling" train of thought,¹¹⁶ it is almost unanimously considered a single poem and was cited in antiquity as such. If it had been found in the *Theognidea* instead, it would probably have been split into multiple poems by many 20th century editors.

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of these parallels see Ferrari 1989 ad loc.

¹¹⁵ West 1974, 154; Ferrari 1989 and Gerber 1999 ad loc.

¹¹⁶ West 1974, 181. Colesanti (2003) questions the unity of this elegy.

The final point of controversy is the last couplet (399-400). Modern editions are evenly split as to whether it ought to be the last couplet of the preceding unit or its own poem. All of the manuscripts except for X, v, and I treat it as its own poem. Manuscripts v and I treat it as the conclusion to a poem that spans 373-400. Manuscript X treats it as the opening of a poem that extends to line 406. Textual difficulties complicate the choices. The meaning of ἐντραπέλ' is unclear.¹¹⁷ This led Hudson-Williams (followed by West, Ferrari, and Gerber) to posit a lacuna between 399 and 400. The rest is not problematic. When the couplets are connected the infinitives can be made to depend on the χορή at 398. The trouble, as before, is thematic. In this case the tension is not one of perspective but of relevance: discussion of the effects of poverty make way to general advice about how to behave. This connection is certainly possible—the need for honoring friends, shunning baneful oaths, and avoiding the wrath of the immortals can be construed as a sort of ring composition, warning against wrongdoing motivated by poverty. But, if so, the speaker leaves it to the audience to make the connection.

Texts that prefer separation make the couplet the opening of a new poem or its own unit. As the opening of a longer poem it would introduce a string of imperatival infinitives that culminate in the command of 401—the only one expounded in the remainder of the poem. The thematic connection between 399-400 and 401-402 is by no means impossible (friends, oaths, and the gods are involved in the undertakings

¹¹⁷ I take it as an adverbial neuter following the *Diccionario Griego-Español*.

described), but admittedly it is more tenuous than that of 397-398 and 399-400. The alternative, adopted by the vast majority of the manuscripts and eight modern editions,¹¹⁸ is to isolate the couplet. While this does not create an orphaned fragment (δέ does not have the connective force of γάρ in 287), the remaining unit would be a mere aphorism: three pieces of advice with no discernible movement or perspective.

As a case study, the passage from 373 to 400 illustrates how hard it is to draw the boundaries of an extended poem with rough transitions and shifts in perspective. Editors have tackled the challenge with text-critical tools like brackets and the insertion of lacunae. These measures are common in other texts but rare in the Theognidea. A reading mindful of symptomatic reuse can also embrace these tools in pursuit of its own distinctive aims: it envisions a symposiast free to invent new verses to smooth out transitions, free to cut out couplets that he deems inconsistent with his message. Inventions and removals would target future rather than past use, new creation rather than reconstruction.

2.3.5 Case Study Five: 1079-1086

- 1079 οὐδένα τῶν ἐχθρῶν μωμήσομαι ἐσθλὸν ἐόντα,
οὐδὲ μὲν αἰνήσω δειλὸν ἐόντα φίλον.
1081 Κύρνε, κύει πόλις ἦδε, δέδοικα δὲ μὴ τέκοι ἄνδρα
ύβριστήν, χαλεπῆς ἡγεμόνα στάσιος·
1082a ἄστοι μὲν γὰρ ἔθ' οἶδε σαόφρονες, ἡγεμόνες δέ
τετράφαται πολλήν εἰς κακότητα πεσεῖν.
1082c μή μ' ἔπεισιν μὲν στέργε, νόον δ' ἔχε καὶ φρένας ἄλλας,

¹¹⁸ Welcker 1826, Ziegler 1880, Bergk 1882, Hiller 1890, Edmonds 1931, Korres 1949, Carosi & Najilis 1968, Adrados 1981.

- εἶ με φιλεῖς καί σοι πιστὸς ἔνεστι νόος,
 1082e ἀλλὰ φίλει καθαρὸν θέμενος νόον, ἢ μ' ἀποειπὼν
 ἔχθαιρ' ἐμφανέως νεῖκος ἀειράμενος.
 1083 οὕτω χρὴ τὸν γ' ἐσθλὸν ἐπιστρέψαντα νόημα
 ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἔχειν ἐς τέλος ἀνδρὶ φίλωι.
 1085 Δημῶναξ, σοὶ πολλὰ φέρειν βαρὺ· οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστη
 τοῦθ' ἔρδειν, ὅ τι σοὶ μὴ καταθύμιον ἦι.

I will not find fault with any of my enemies when he is good,
 nor will I praise a friend when he is bad.

Kurnos, this city is pregnant, but I am afraid it may give birth
 to an insolent man, a leader of harsh discord.

These townsmen are still of sound mind, but the leaders
 have taken a turn so as to fall into great evil.

Don't show affection for me with words but have a different mind and heart,
 if you love me and the mind in you is faithful,
 but make your heart pure and love me or tell me off,
 stir up strife, and hate me openly.

The good man must turn his purpose in this way
 and hold it ever steadfast to the end for a dear friend.

Demonax, it is grievous for you to bear much, for you don't know
 how to do what does not suit your heart.

The final case-study is notable in that it contains three internal doublets¹¹⁹ and illustrates how they affect poem division. The most obvious outcome is their absence in six modern editions: four (Bekker, Welcker, Sitzler, and Ziegler) leave out all three (1082a-f), two (Bergk and Korres) leave out the latter two (1082c-f). The doublets are present in all of the manuscripts except Z and Va, which lack lines 1081-1082f. The editions that excise all three print the remaining four couplets as four individual poems. Those that retain 1082a-b group it with 1081-1082 as a two-couplet poem and read the rest as three one-couplet units.

¹¹⁹ Internal doublets are couplets that either repeat verbatim or near verbatim other couplets in the corpus. I discuss them in Chapter 2.

Of the texts that include all seven couplets, all manuscripts (except I) and one edition (Young) read a poem longer than three couplets. Young prints the first six as one poem (1079-1084) and the final one on its own (1085-1086). All the manuscripts read 1079-1080 as one unit, followed by a two-couplet poem from 1081 to 1082b and a four-couplet one from 1082c-1086. Like the manuscripts, all of the editions (except Young) that include all seven couplets divide the first three into one-couplet poems (1079-1080) followed by a two-couplet one (1081-1082b). This near-consensus breaks down, however, with the final four couplets. There are three basic groupings. Seven editions read a two-couplet poem (1082c-1082f) followed by two single-couplet ones (1083-1084, 1085-1086).¹²⁰ The other nine read a three-couplet poem (1082c-1084) followed by a one-couplet unit (1085-1086).¹²¹

Young acknowledges that his grouping is an outlier with a note in the apparatus: “1079-1084 *continuavi*.”¹²² While this does not illuminate his motivation, his punctuation may. He puts quotation marks around 1081-1082b and again around 1082c-1082f. This suggests that the speaker is adopting the voice of one or two others (1082a-f) to support the veracity of his first claim and summarize the message.

Young makes a bold choice with important implications. Nothing in 1080 or 1081 signals the transition to direct speech, nor does 1082c explicitly mark a transition

¹²⁰ These editions are Hiller, Hudson-Williams, Edmonds, van Groningen, Carosi & Najilis, Carrière, and Adrados.

¹²¹ Harrison, Diehl, Garzya, Ferrari, West, Gerber, Hansen, and both Selles.

¹²² Young 1971, 65.

between speakers (or two independent statements). Direct speech is inferred from the recognition that what is being said has been said before. This poem division thus presupposes an audience familiar with the Theognidea, which can recognize it when repurposed. In addition, the logical connection of the first couplet to the two subsequent “quoted” passages is not immediately evident. The connection to the first may be that, by praising the sound-mindedness of the ἀστοί over against the ἡγεμόνες, the speaker calls it as he sees it, irrespective of personal relationships. The value of frank speech can also be seen as the connection to the second passage: the speaker values it in a friend and would rather have open enmity than false friendship. But, even if we accept the connective power of this thin thread, it is difficult to see how the final couplet, which extols the value of sticking with a friend, can avoid breaking it.

Young regards these changes as the result of the poet self-consciously borrowing from previous poetic production in order to make a new point.¹²³ This is in keeping with his practice, as observed by van Groningen: “Young often strives to integrate the repeated passages into new contexts in order to explain their presence.”¹²⁴ For his part, van Groningen is dissatisfied with leaving these passages on their own but sees no

¹²³ Young 1964, 368-369. He calls 1082 the only “substantial change”: “all the other changes are merely stylistic variants, of the type common in Theognis’ borrowings and self-adaptations.”

¹²⁴ “Yo[ung] s’efforce souvent d’intégrer les passages répétés au nouveau contexte afin d’expliquer leur présence” (van Groningen 1966, 400).

possible alternative. At best they might be “excerpts” from a larger unit.¹²⁵ He notes that 1083-1084 is best understood in connection with 1071f. but can only wonder what has been lost.

The controversy here points to a deeper dispute: the origin and nature of the corpus. Young presumes the repeated sections are “borrowings and self-adaptations.”¹²⁶ Taken out of the hands of Theognis, these are the borrowings and adaptations that make up reperformance. The use of quotations further implies a gradual development of the Theognidea, whether oral or written, with earlier formulations known well enough to encourage the sort of engagement envisioned here. Van Groningen’s approach also assumes multiple stages. But whereas Young focuses on internal development, van Groningen focuses on external transmission. He envisions the mangled remnants of a lost original. This view supports the stance adopted by editors demanding close connections: where lacking, the ravages of transmissions are at fault. The corpus becomes a collection of fragments with occasional whole units. It is no wonder, then, that he often pronounces a poetic unit unsatisfactory but necessary.

Setting aside Young’s version there are still two additional points of controversy. First, the disagreement whether to insert a break between 1082f and 1083. The case for connecting 1083-1084 to the preceding two couplets is clear: 1083 is introduced by a

¹²⁵ “On se demande si nous ne nous trouvons pas ici en présence de quelques **extraits** d’un ensemble cohérent plus considérable” (ibid., emphasis mine).

¹²⁶ Young 1964.

connective (οὐτῶ) and the themes are close enough to make the connection unobjectionable. The case for separating the couplets is more subtle. There are two possible rationales. First, a thematic one: while all three couplets deal with friendship, the first two (1082c-f) are in the form of a direct command to an addressee (be transparent about what you are thinking). The speaker would rather have the addressee as an open enemy than as a false friend. The final couplet, on the other hand, is concerned with loyalty rather than transparency. This is just the sort of fine distinction that often motivates poem divisions in modern editions; nevertheless, even by these strict standards it seems oversubtle.

With the thematic argument possible but weak, breaking 1082c-f away from 1083-1084 almost certainly hinges on how doublets ought to be handled. Some modern editors perhaps isolate them because they think that doublets are more likely to have been misplaced than intentionally repeated in a new context. If doublets are not authentic, there is no use trying to determine original boundaries. Though speculative, this explanation is supported by the attention paid to how precisely the doublets mirror or diverge from each other at the expense of any consideration of the poetry in its new context. Here again the treatment of the doublets defers to one's prior views of the corpus' formation. To be sure, the separation cannot be motivated by the perception that these two couplets are self-sufficient: 87-90 is isolated by none of the same editions that

isolate the near repetition at 1082c-f. Moreover, separating 1083-1084 leaves a poem that begins with an unaccountable connective (οὐτῶ). In other words, it creates a fragment.

One can easily imagine sympotic situations in which a couplet like the final one might be used on its own as part of a lively repartee. The presence of the name Demonax, an emendation, complicates but does not preclude its reuse: other names that fit the meter could be easily inserted, or a nickname could be used.¹²⁷ Additionally, the final line of this couplet is repeated verbatim in the second book (1238), but it follows a completely different first line. This shows that the flexibility of the Theognidea as poetic material operates on the scale of individual lines, not just of couplets or phrases. The status of the doublets is of the utmost interest, and I discuss them at length in the second chapter. For now, I simply observe that they are a possible manifestation of the sympotic nature to the corpus in action.

2.4 Conclusion

The Theognidea has long been read as a collection of discrete poems, but there has never been a settled agreement as to where those poems begin and end. Poems are the fundamental units for reading the Theognidea, and, as the survey of texts has shown, the poems one reads as “The Theognidea” in one edition can be quite different from those encountered in a different edition. There are not just dozens of different

¹²⁷ See the discussion in Chapter 6 on these name substitutions.

schemes used to divide the Theognidea into poems, there are dozens of different Theognideas.

The problem of poem division remains as understudied as it is fundamental. While this chapter represents the first attempt ever to understand its history at length, it only can only offer an introduction. With that limitation in mind I have taken two distinct approaches: the survey and the accompanying analyses offer a data-driven overview of the treatment of the entire corpus, while the case-studies offer a philologically oriented, in-depth look at a few key passages. I have surveyed the terrain by looking at snapshots of the whole field from a distance and deep explorations of some select areas. Much ground has been necessarily left uncovered: an exhaustive commentary of the entire corpus could follow the model of the case-studies, and each edition could be studied comprehensively for its choices. But such an exhaustive treatment is beyond the scope of this dissertation, which ultimately aims at a new treatment of the problem rather than at an exhaustive catalogue of the old ones.

The results of the survey can be summed up briefly: poem division in the Theognidea is characterized by a lack of consensus. This topline conclusion could certainly have been reached without a comprehensive survey of thirty-nine texts, but the survey has generated valuable data that both objectively confirm and nuance this conclusion. Not only does it show that the lack of agreement is stark on the level of the poem, but also that disagreement is not concentrated in a few problem areas. Most

importantly, it reveals that there is a fundamentally different approach between manuscripts and modern editions. Finally, it shows that any two modern editions are bound to agree on the placement of a vast majority of the couplets, but that the agreement dissipates as more editions are compared.

Beyond establishing the comparative trend of disagreement over poem boundaries, the survey data also offer insight into the basic features of the corpus. While the individual choices that lead to these statistics vary, shared trends can form a loose idea of what might be called “traditional” poem division. First and foremost, single-couplet poems are the most frequent length in every text, and in most modern editions they make up a majority of poems. Among the modern editions the average poem length is about two couplets. No poem in any text is longer than 18 couplets and no poem in any modern edition is longer than 15 couplets. Awareness of these basic quantitative features provides a firm foundation for the analysis of the case studies.

The case studies resist an easy summary, but this very resistance holds its own lessons. Having identified grammatical and thematic factors as underlying the particular choices of poem division, we learn that these factors do not furnish hard and fast rules. The lack of consistency across editions exhibits the resistance of the text to any sort of

systematic approach to division. The only published attempt to develop explicit rules yielded only four, none of which its author envisioned as hard and fast.¹²⁸

Each new couplet presents unique choices to the editor, even doublets. Often the choice is clear. But in many cases one factor or another complicates the choice—perhaps a connective particle appears to link the thought too closely or too loosely, or else connectives are lacking; sometimes there is a subtle shift in theme or a change in the form of address. The sum total of these difficult choices produces the variation seen among the editions. After examining just five different passages totaling 44 couplets, I am skeptical of the possibility—let alone the desirability—of ever settling all of these disputed transitions. Instead, the malleability is a feature of the poetry that symposiasts would have found especially useful.

The elusive hope of arriving at a consensus scheme of poem division is predicated on the premise that there is one single correct way of dividing the corpus into poems—presumably, one based on the original text or the first performance of the corpus. The intransigence of the problem of poem boundaries suggests that this is a faulty premise. There is no one correct scheme of poem division.

Disputes about divisions are ultimately disputes about how to read the *Theognidea*. In the status quo, a reader aware of the problem can either read whatever edition is at hand with a skeptical eye to the divisions it makes or acquire as many

¹²⁸ Selle 2008, 158.

editions as possible and compare each individual treatment of the given passage. Both tactics have obvious drawbacks. The latter is too burdensome for the average reader. The former, as Selle notes, risks putting too much trust in the poem divisions of the edition at hand.¹²⁹ Selle's proposal is a text without any poem divisions. While perhaps useful for research, such an edition is unlikely to encourage a wide readership.¹³⁰ It is not far removed from reading the transcription of a manuscript: at every turn the reader would be forced to do the job of the editor. An alternative is needed. In the next chapter I lay out my own proposal.

¹²⁹ Selle 2008, 158.

¹³⁰ Cf. note 4 above on Epkema's frustration with undivided editions.

3. Double(t) Image: Reflections of Reperformance in the Theognidea

πολύπου ὀργήν ἴσχε πολυπλόκου, ὃς ποτὶ πέτρῃ,
τῇ προσομιλήσει, τοῖος ἰδεῖν ἐφάνη.
(215-6)

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explained why the shifting poem boundaries different scribes and editors draw within the same corpus should be embraced rather than resolved. Alternative poem units in different manuscripts and editions reflect the malleability of the poetry, the very feature vital to its reperformability and sympotic use. In this chapter I discuss another textual reflection of the same reperformability: couplets which are either repeated within the corpus or otherwise attributed to other authors (and sometimes independently transmitted under their names). These repeated couplets are often called “doublets.”

Unlike the question of poem division, doublets have received considerable scholarly attention.¹ They have been regarded as one of the key pieces of evidence for the Theognidean Question.² But ultimately their usefulness to clarifying the origin of the text is limited, as their own origin too is unknown. Doublets have therefore accommodated each scholar’s scheme for the origins of the text: Young and Harrison see

¹ Selle’s monograph gives a characteristically robust bibliographic account of the history of scholarship up to the time of its publication (2008, 196-205). For recent work Colesanti’s examination is indispensable (2011, 35-175, on which, see Ferreri 2013, 69-89 and Condello 2015, 205-206).

² For a review of the Theognidean Question, see Ferreri 2013, 50-57 and Selle 2008, 4-16. Friis Johansen summarizes it in seven questions (Chapter 2 note 7).

them as repetitions by the same poet at different points in his career;³ West as evidence for different collections that came together to form the sylloge;⁴ Nagy as the logical result of formulaic composition;⁵ and Colesanti as genuine recorded instances of sympotic reuse and modification.⁶ I submit that the value of the doublets does not lie in their potential to settle the question of the text's origin: they are valuable because they embody the tension inherent in Theognidean poetry as written text that reflects the dynamics of reperformance.

What makes doublets puzzling is the written medium in which we encounter them. The reader does not expect to see the same poetry (with no, or only minor, modifications) repeated within the collection. Sympotic practice, however, leads us to expect this form of reuse.⁷ In this chapter I model how reading with reperformance in mind shifts our perspective on the doublets. As with shifting poem divisions, I argue that the anxiety over the doublets results from the transition from sympotic to fixed, written poetry. I close by considering how the transition to the medium of digital publication might cause a productive shift in perspective.

³ Young 1964 and Harrison (1902, 135ff., n.b. 137).

⁴ West 1974, 46-55.

⁵ Nagy 1985, 48-50.

⁶ As Colesanti argues throughout (2011, 35-175).

⁷ Even if reuse is not always welcome (cf. the complaint at lines 20-21).

3.2 Doublets

The term “doublets” is itself double. Two different types of textual irregularities fall under it: internal and external. Internal doublets are couplets that appear twice in the corpus. These sometimes feature variations within the couplet. Even when they are identical, they are embedded in different surroundings. While the first instance (or *lectio prior*) has typically been deemed the better reading, this tendency has been disputed.⁸ This disagreement is a step in the right direction. But the view that the later couplet may actually be older, or more authentic, still operates under the assumption that one is “original” and the other “derivative.” Not so. Both instances may equally be of symptotic origin, and thus have similar potential for performers and audiences. Take, for example, the doublet at lines 39-40 and 1081-1082. These share the hexameter but diverge in the pentameter (differences bolded):

Κύρνε, κύει πόλις ἦδε,
δέδοικα δὲ μὴ τέκνη ἄνδρα /
εὐθυντήρα κακῆς ὕβριος
ἡμετέρης. (39-40)

Kurnos, this city is pregnant,
and I fear that it will give birth
to a man, / **a chastiser of our
evil insolence.** (39-40)

Κύρνε, κύει πόλις ἦδε,
δέδοικα δὲ μὴ τέκνη ἄνδρα/
ὕβριστήν, χαλεπῆς ἡγεμόνα
στάσιος. (1081-1082)

Kurnos, this city is pregnant,
and I fear that it will give birth
to an **insolent** man, / **a leader
of harsh discord.** (1081-1082)

Arguments could be made for the primacy of either couplet. For lines 39-40, its position in the corpus is its strongest case for primacy: it appears not only first, in the so-called

⁸ So, e.g., Condello criticizes Colesanti for his “unfounded” preference of the *lectiones priores* (2015, 206).

Florilegium Purum, but also at the head of what many editors think an extended poem on the subject (39-52).⁹ But these considerations are not undisputed. A good number of editors end this poetic unit after two couplets (39-42), in which case it is no longer than its corresponding doublet (1081-1082b).¹⁰ And adducing its presence in the *Florilegium Purum* to argue for its priority risks circular logic. The case for the second couplet rests on its content: the man described in 1082 is arguably a worthier object of fear (δέδουκα) than the one at 40. A chastiser of the people might seem what the speaker actually hopes for, not what he fears: a productive evil, as opposed to the plainly evil “insolent...leader of harsh discord” (ύβριστήν, χαλεπῆς ἡγεμόνα στάσιος) (1082). Perhaps the positioning of 39-40 within the corpus is an accident of transmission; perhaps its content is preferable as a *lectio difficilior*. No argument seems decisive.

Since we cannot know which came first, or if their similarity is traceable to formulaic composition, we cannot identify the precise dynamic of reuse at play. We can, however, explore how this internal doublet, and others like it, might offer a clever repurposing of existing material (whatever the direction of such repurposing). The potential rhetorical applications of each couplet are clear, even if the exact circumstances of transmission are opaque. Both couplets warn of painful changes coming to the city by the hand of a single man; but while the first seems supportive, the second decries the

⁹ Twelve editions and all of the manuscripts read a poem from line 39 to line 52. The only exception is manuscript X, which reads a poem from line 39-68.

¹⁰ Eleven versions divide the passage this way, including eight of the ten earliest editions I have catalogued.

prospect: “straightening” is painful but beneficial, *stasis* is not. Given the intensity of the rhetoric, both represent high-stakes utterances, not likely to be thrown around lightly in just any symposion, but instead perhaps delivered in light of an impending crisis. If one was a repurposing of the other, this does not devalue either as an object of study. In fact, a reuse may have borrowed from the authority of an existing couplet known to the audience. But, even then, neither the original nor its reuse should take precedence. If one was authoritative and malleable, the other was able to take advantage of that malleability and authority.

Not every pair of internal doublets, however, consists of variations that are so evidently the result of rhetorically driven modification. In many cases there is only a slight change in wording. An example of this type of doublet is the one found at lines 209-210 and 332a-b (differences bolded).

οὐδείς τοι φεύγοντι φίλος
καὶ πιστὸς ἑταῖρος· / τῆς δὲ
φυγῆς ἔστιν τοῦτ'
ἀνιηρότερον. (209-210)

Indeed no one is a friend and
trustworthy companion to an
exile. This is more painful than
the exile. (209-210)

οὐκ ἔστιν φεύγοντι φίλος καὶ
πιστὸς ἑταῖρος· / τῆς δὲ
φυγῆς ἔστιν τοῦτ'
ἀνιηρότατον (332a-b)

There is no friend and
trustworthy companion for an
exile. This is more painful than
the exile. (332a-b)

This change does not seem to affect the meaning of the couplet in any appreciable way.

But adjustments like these could affect how a couplet was used sympotically. Even as a

standalone,¹¹ the small variation could have made a rhetorical difference: potentially, οὐδεὶς and οὐκ ἔστιν offered different ways to follow up the couplets of an immediately preceding symposiast.

In a related consideration, there is also the possibility, obscured by their present context, that in performance these couplets might have been connected with others. If in their present location they are best left isolated, this does not mean they must have been performed in isolation. The connective force of the particle τοι¹² suggests the use of 209ff. within a longer poetic unit.¹³ We may never know whether these or other internal doublets were ever used as elements of greater poetic wholes, but by the same token it is impossible to rule this out. The very presence of the doublets in the corpus exhibits the dynamic potential of Theognidean sympotic poetry.

The second type of doublet, external doublets, are those elsewhere attributed to other authors. Sometimes these attributions are made in ancient sources that quote the text in question.¹⁴ Sometimes the attribution is a modern conjecture.¹⁵ In the face of this double attribution, most scholars regard the non-Theognidean sources as the original

¹¹ This is how they have been interpreted, at least for 209-210, in all the editions but one, as well as in all the manuscripts except X and Ur. None of the manuscripts with poem divisions contains 332a.

¹² See my discussion of the use of this particle in Chapter 1.

¹³ Indeed Colesanti suggests a possible *coppia* here (2001, 469-470).

¹⁴ E.g. Solon fr. 6.3-4 W² is found in Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* (12.2.5), and Tyrtaios fr. 12.13-16 is quoted in Stobaios 4.10.1 (lines 13-14) and 4.10.6 (lines 15-16).

¹⁵ Both poems addressed to Simonides (472ff, 667ff., and 1345ff.) have been attributed to Evenus, based on the attribution to him of a variant of 472 in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1015a). Bowie goes as far as attributing the entire Theognidea to two collections originating with Evenus (2012, 126ff.). Capra (2016) accepts and builds upon this hypothesis, as does Catenacci (2017). Vetta 1980 (122-123), (Condello 2009, 208-209 n54), Colesanti (2011, 102-107), and Ferreri (2013, 69 n48) reject the attribution.

ones.¹⁶ When the presence of these couplets in the Theognidea is acknowledged as evidence of sympotic repurposing, scholars conclude that the Theognidean instances are posterior.¹⁷

The external doublets point to the issue of authority in sympotic repurposing. Sympotic reappropriation of authority could take many forms. It might be as simple as the memorization of a famous poem used in lieu of one's own contribution. Symposiasts capable of their own contributions might hope to raise their own image either by assimilation of a highly regarded authority or by a more combative assertion of their superiority over that authority.¹⁸ The dynamic of authorship and authority is discussed at length in the fifth chapter. Here I will limit my discussion to illustrating how it is manifested in the external doublets.

External doublets can take two forms. The first are extended passages. Examples of this type include lines 467-496 and 667-682 (both speculatively attributed to Evenus),¹⁹ as well as 719-728 (Solon fr. 24 W²). While it is possible that the inclusion of these poems is a result of later textual transmission,²⁰ the very fact that they were felt to be at home with other poetry recognized as Theognidean suggests that they would have been at

¹⁶ Nagy is the notable exception in this regard (1985, 48-50).

¹⁷ Colesanti 2011, 35-107.

¹⁸ This is what the speaker seems to be warning against in lines 20-21.

¹⁹ The attribution to Evenus has been called into question (see note above). Either way, the fact that the two passages were close enough for scholarly conjecture is itself revealing of the potential dynamics I illustrate here.

²⁰ Some form of this theory, typically building on West (1974), holds sway in anglophone scholarship (e.g. Bowie 2012, De Martin 2020b, Spelman 2021).

home too in a symposion that performed this poetry. These longer passages admit of a few different types of use. They could have been modified by adding or subtracting couplets at its beginning or end to put a new spin on an old favorite. Indeed, the Theognidean instance may have already been modified: without greater knowledge of the transmission of the other quoted poets, it is difficult to know if any extant poems are complete. Even when they were not modified, these passages admit of a variety of uses. A symposiast inexperienced or lacking confident improvisation skills could have memorized a long passage for performance. If the memorized material was not famous, he might attempt to play it off as his own. Even a well-known passage, when apropos, would demonstrate a symposiast's skill and knowledge.

The second type of external doublets are shorter segments. Examples include lines 153-154 (Solon fr. 6: 3-4 W²), 1003-1006 (Tyrtaios fr. 12: 13-16 W²), 315-318 (Solon fr. 15 W²), and 795-796 (Mimnermos fr. 7 W²). This type often features modifications—some minor (τοι vs. γάρ in 153), some that shift the entire message (σοφῶι vs. νεῶι in 1003). Within the corpus of the other authors, these couplets sometimes appear in longer poems, sometimes they stand alone. In reperformance these couplets could easily be repurposed within a longer poem. An example of this recontextualization can be found in 1003-1006.

ἦδ' ἀρετή, τόδ' ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον
κάλλιστόν τε φέρειν γίνεται ἀνδρὶ σοφῶι.
ξυνὸν δ' ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληί τε παντί τε δήμῳ,
ὅστις ἀνήρ διαβὰς ἐν προμάχοισι μένει.

This is excellence, this is the best prize among men
and the finest for a wise man to win.
But that is a good for the city and all of the people in common,
a man who remains firmly planted among the forefighters.

Only one change is made between the Tyrtaian version and the Theognidean: the Theognidea reads σοφῶι, while the Tyrtaian version reads νέωι. This slight change marks a significantly different range of possible uses.²¹ In Tyrtaios lines 1003-1004 refer to the specific virtues of a soldier, a thematic focus explicit in 1005-1006. The Theognidean version, on the other hand, contrasts warlike virtues with those of a wise man—very likely a poet.²² If the Tyrtaian version came first, the contrast in the Theognidea of the soldier's virtue with the speaker's *qua* poet, operative at the level of couplet juxtaposition, would have been reinforced by the replacement of νέωι with σοφῶι (doubtless striking to anyone familiar with the original). If the Theognidean version came first, we should see in Tyrtaios an erasure of the opposition in favor of a single-minded focus upon warlike virtue.

Thirteen of the manuscripts and three modern versions group these two couplets into larger poems.²³ In the case of the manuscripts, the poem spans lines 997-1006, beginning earlier and concluding at the end of the doublet. In the case of the two modern

²¹ Harrison 1902, 102 (see below).

²² If we follow the idea that σοφός is a term of art in reference to skillful poetic production (Nagy 1985, 24-26).

²³ Every manuscript except v, z, and Va. Of the modern versions: Harrison 1902, Young 1971, Selle (Secure).

editions, the connection runs in the opposite direction: lines 1003-1012.²⁴ Colesanti suggests a sympotic sequence from lines 993-1021. In the manuscripts' extended poem, the very celebration of the symposium itself seems to be the reward that is celebrated:

τῆμος δ' ἠέλιος μὲν ἐν αἰθέρι μώνυχας ἵππους
ἄρτι παραγγέλλοι μέσσατον ἦμαρ ἔχων,
δεῖπνου δὲ λήγοιμεν, ὅπου τινὰ θυμὸς ἀνώγει,
παντοίων ἀγαθῶν γαστρὶ χαριζόμενοι,
χέρνιβα δ' αἶψα θύραζε φέροι, στεφανώματα δ' εἴσω
εὐειδῆς ῥαδιναῖς χερσὶ λάκαινα κόρη.
ἦδ' ἀρετῆ, τόδ' ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον
κάλλιστόν τε φέρειν γίνεται ἀνδρὶ σοφῶι.²⁵
ξυνὸν δ' ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληί τε παντί τε δήμωι,
ὅστις ἀνὴρ διαβάς ἐν προμάχοισι μένει.

Then let the sun urge on his single-hooved horses,
right when he's holding the middle of the day,
and let us stop feasting, having gratified our stomachs
with all manner of good things, to the extent his heart bids anyone,
and let a beautiful Spartan girl of slender hands
quickly bear out the washing bowl and bring in the garlands.
This is excellence, this is the best prize among men
and the finest for a wise man to win.
But that is a good for the city and all of the people in common
a man who remains firmly planted among the forefighters.
(997-1006)²⁶

In the version of Harrison and Young we see a more abstract poem centered on a juxtaposition of value-systems:

ἦδ' ἀρετῆ, τόδ' ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον
κάλλιστόν τε φέρειν γίνεται ἀνδρὶ σοφῶι.
ξυνὸν δ' ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληί τε παντί τε δήμωι,
ὅστις ἀνὴρ διαβάς ἐν προμάχοισι μένει.
ξυνὸν δ' ἀνθρώποις ὑποθήσομαι, ὄφρα τις ἦβης

²⁴ Selle (Secure) sees a single unit from lines 993-1012.

²⁵ I have here varied from Young's text by removing the em-dash before σοφῶι.

²⁶ Perhaps a perceived infelicity of τῆμος as the beginning of a poem is what dissuaded any edition from following the manuscripts in reading this unit.

ἀγλαὸν ἄνθος ἔχων καὶ φρεσὶν ἐσθλὰ νοῆι,
τῶν αὐτοῦ κτεάνων εὖ πασχέμεν· οὐ γὰρ ἀνηβᾶν
δὲς πέλεται πρὸς θεῶν οὐδὲ λύσις θανάτου
θνητοῖσ' ἀνθρώποισι. κακὸν δ' ἐπὶ γῆρας ἐλέγχει
οὐλόμενον, κεφαλῆς δ' ἄπτεται ἀκροτάτης.

This is excellence, this is the best prize among men
and the finest for a wise man to win,
and that is a good for the city and all of the people in common
a man who remains firmly planted among the forefighters.
And I will offer all men a common counsel: while
one is in the glorious bloom of youth and thinks of fine things with his heart,
let him enjoy his possessions. For to be young again
comes not from the gods nor release from death
for mortal men. But evil and cursed old age
brings contempt and grabs the top of the head.

(1003-1112)

In exploring the logic behind this second option, we have the benefit of extended discussion by Harrison: “The intelligent reader or hearer of Theognis would of course be aware that the poem was adapted from Tyrtaeus, and having in his mind the word which σοφῶι replaced he would be prepared for the explanation: ‘(Valour is well enough for the wise man,) but let the *young* man take his pleasure while he may, since youth is short and from death is no escape.’ This sentiment is quite in place in Theognis, whose teaching is often the cynicism of the man of the world. Tyrtaeus counsels patriotism, Theognis selfishness.”²⁷ With the caveat that Tyrtaean primacy is not necessary for the effective use of the two couplets, Harrison’s explanation gives a lucid picture of how this extended poem might flow together.

²⁷ Harrison 1902, 102. Note that Harrison’s text differs from Young’s in two important ways on line 1004: he inserts no em-dash and reads a comma rather than a period.

The fact that a convincing connection in either direction can be made with the poetry immediately surrounding this doublet reinforces the probability that even more flexibility is possible. In crafting new contexts for these couplets, a symposiast not bound to a written text would only be limited by his creativity.

While I have discussed two possibilities for external doublets in extended poems, it is worth highlighting that not all sympotic contributions were necessarily extended. Shorter external doublets could also have been performed on their own, just as a quotation from a book or a movie can be used as a *bon mot* in conversation. Given how little archaic poetry survives, there are surely many external doublets of this sort in the collection whose outside correlatives are lost.

The treatment of both forms of doublets reflects the anxiety of authenticity. For internal doublets, it is anxiety about the originality of one couplet over the other; for external doublets, about “correct” attribution. In each case, one instance ends up being treated as textual evidence rather than studied on its own merit. This idea of primacy does not reflect sympotic practice. I do not take the doublets as evidence for textual transmission, but as reflection of sympotic reperformance. I am not the first to make this argument, as Harrison’s discussion of 1003-1012 shows.²⁸ But unlike previous scholars, I do not seek to determine the primacy of one version over another or even attempt to situate either couplet in any one specific performance. Whether or not they were ever

²⁸ Harrison 1902, 100-103.

uttered is unverifiable and ultimately immaterial. The doublets are best understood not as evidence of historical contingencies, but as vivid reminders of the dynamic potential of Theognidean poetry.

If this conclusion seems frustratingly speculative, it is worth noting that it is no more speculative than those which posit a single definitive version of a couplet composed for a single definitive edition or performance. The Theognidean corpus, as instanced in modern editions via the manuscript tradition, does not lend itself to firm conclusions about its origins or uses. In the absence of new evidence we simply cannot know whether the poetry is attributable to a single person, a single *hetaireia*, generations' worth of poetic activity, accidents of written transmission, or some combination thereof. We cannot know for certain when the poetry was first written down, how many different versions contribute to the corpus as we know it, or how many authors should be credited for those versions, let alone how much of what we now possess is a result of the vagaries of written transmission rather than sympotic practice. As the last chapter showed, there is little hope of determining with any certainty how to divide—and thus read—the text that we do have. In the face of all this uncertainty, speculative reconstruction is necessary. The aim cannot be solid proof, but plausibility.

In light of this ultimate unverifiability, we must consider to what end we examine the poetry. If we are trying to understand precise performance circumstances or precise authorship, we set ourselves up for disappointment. If, instead, the goal is to

understand how this poetry and other poetry like it could have operated in a hypothetical symposion, we can realistically expect to reach it. The result is a picture of a vibrant culture of use, modification, and reuse that could have capitalized on the dynamism identified in these first two chapters.

3.3 *The Importance of the Medium*

Among the many questions raised by the doublet, one of the most fundamental is when the Theognidea was written down. Some argue it could have been written down by Theognis himself and thus be an authentic product of a singular poet.²⁹ Others suspect it was written down by symposiasts directly after their performances, whether that be Megarian or Athenian.³⁰ Still others, including the majority of anglophone scholars, believe the writing down of the corpus happened in stages, resulting in different parts only some of which are truly Theognidean.³¹ In other words, the answer to when the Theognidea was written is itself inseparable from the stance one takes on the authenticity of the various elements of the corpus.

As with the other questions that surround the doublets, there are significant obstacles to resolution. The collection never mentions the writing down of the words spoken. On the contrary, there are clear pointers to an oral poetic dynamic: the audience

²⁹ Harrison 1902, 135ff. Young 1964.

³⁰ Colesanti 2011 (Megarian); Vetta 2000 (Athenian).

³¹ West 1974 is the seminal work. Bowie 2012, De Martin 2020b, and Spelman 2021 variously build on West. West in turn builds on Jacoby 1931.

is told to “keep this in mind” or that “you will remember” (πέπνυσο and μνήσεαι).³²

But those comments alone are not sufficient to preclude the contemporaneous writing of the collection.

The lack of contemporary testimonial evidence adds uncertainty to this question. Early knowledge of a collection has been alleged, but the evidence for this is inconclusive. Some interpret Socrates’ transition in Plato’s *Meno* 95d-e (ἐν ἄλλοις δέ γε ὀλίγον μεταβάς) to refer to movement within a collection of poetry (“in other verses, advancing a little bit”) and others to refer to a shift in the ideological position of the poetry itself (“in other verses, he changes his tune a little bit”). How one translates these lines all but determines whether or not Socrates is describing a collection like we have it, since the “little bit” is a jump from quoting lines 33-36 of the *Theognidea* to a quotation of lines 434-438. Xenophon writes of the ἀρχὴ...τῆς ποιήσεως, seemingly in reference to the poem beginning at line 183.³³ The latter passage led Welcker to posit that line 183 headed a written collection, and thus he opens his rearranged edition with it.³⁴ This conflicts with the transmitted text and suggests that there were multiple written versions of the *Theognidea* in circulation³⁵ or else that line 183 could be considered at “the beginning” of a collection. Others have suggested that Xenophon is referring not to

³² Lines 28 and 99, 1164c respectively.

³³ The passage is quoted in Stobaios (4.19^c.53), the supposed work (*On Theognis*) is otherwise lost.

³⁴ Welcker 1826.

³⁵ West 1974, 56.

priority of placement within a book but to the basic or thematic principle of Theognis' poetry.³⁶ There is no other indication in the passage that the work is written.

The earliest testimony thus allows for, but does not require, the possibility of either one or more written editions of Theognidean poetry by the early 4th century. While we cannot reach secure conclusions as to medium, we can as to existence: Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Isocrates all attribute verses to Theognis as existing within a broader array of other poetry by him. Moreover, the poetry they cite as Theognis' is still extant in the surviving Theognidea.³⁷

Thanks to a papyrological discovery, we can say with absolute certainty that Theognidean poetry was written down by the 2nd or 3rd century CE, and the lines uncovered follow the order we are familiar with (254-278).³⁸ The fact that this fragment extends beyond 254 means that, if the so-called *Florilegium Purum* existed, it had already been supplemented by this time. In any case, the 2nd to 3rd century CE is a rather late *terminus ante quem*. No one to my knowledge claims that P.Oxy. 2380 represents the first written copy of the Theognidea. The evidence for the date on which the Theognidea was written is thus inconclusive.

³⁶ West rejects this reading (1974, 56), but José González has noted that the use of ποιήσεις rather than ἔπη or βιβλίον supports it.

³⁷ For a thorough discussion of the evolution of citation of Theognis, see De Martin 2020b.

³⁸ There is even seemingly an indication of poem division between 254-255, a division unanimously agreed to by all surveyed versions.

This date is less significant, however, than the fact that it was written down at all. The page imposes strictures that sympotic poetry could not accommodate. The rules of writing, foreign to this oral poetry, were unable to force it into stability. The change in medium from oral sympotic poetry to page-bound written poetry is largely responsible for the current state of the corpus. Neither the ravages of time nor the introduction of impurities are to blame, even if they could have played a role. Instead, to blame is the incapacity of a static text to capture the dynamic workings of the symposion.

If the printed page cannot accommodate the dynamism of Theognidean poetry, we, the readers, need not remain bound by it. In the final section of this chapter I propose a new, born-digital edition of the Theognidea. In making this proposal I hope to demonstrate just how much a new medium can change the way that we experience a text. Thus, by looking to the future we can better understand the past.

3.4 A New Medium

A new English edition of the Theognidea is a *desideratum* of the highest order. Not only because there has been no standalone edition of this text with a commentary in English since 1910, but also because the advent of digital media offers previously unthinkable possibilities for the presentation of the text. For this reason I propose the publication of a new, born-digital edition of the Theognidea. For this edition really to take advantage of the new medium, it cannot be simply a “digitized” version of the printed edition. Instead, it must tap the flexibility of the digital medium to exhibit the

dynamic malleability of the source material. Such an edition should allow modern readers to engage actively and playfully with the text, giving them a level of agency with creative composition not seen since the end of sympotic performances. These possibilities will surely revolutionize not only the way the Theognidea is read but also the way it is understood. In the remainder of this chapter I lay out how such an edition would operate and detail its advantages and drawbacks.

Some features of this edition would be typical of digital publications, others would be unique. A digital text would have three basic advantages: searchability, connectivity, and variability. The first is shared by most digital editions. Searchability, however, is usually limited to the text itself: readers can query word forms or lemmata. A digital Theognidea should have its couplets tagged by theme, genre, and focalization, and allow the reader to query those too. The variability feature, elaborated below, would build on this richer taxonomy of information. The second feature, connectivity, means that the text, where possible, would be hyperlinked to commentary *ad loc* and to relevant external scholarly discussions.

Finally, the most revolutionary feature of this new text would be its variability. There will be multiple levels of variability. First is the level of individual words: a variable text will allow the reader to view alternatives from the apparatus, selected from a given manuscript or modern editor. These variant readings will be promoted to the

text itself. Textual adjustments could be made on a case-by-case basis or for the whole text.

Next is variability of poem division. The reader will be able to select how to divide the text into poems and to view how various adjustments affect the division of passages. One might wish to see the divisions adopted by various modern editions or by the manuscripts; or choose to divide the text according to various a priori principles (e.g. to yield the longest or shortest poems possible, or by placing boundaries wherever there is asyndeton). A reader might prefer to divide the collection into units as he reads along. The digital edition could furnish suitable notation to tell a new unit meant as a symptotic response from one that stands alone. The use of hard poem divisions in current editions reinforces a binary view foreign to ancient performance circumstances.

The final level of variability is the order of the verse lines. This feature would allow readers to rearrange the text and create new poems. Readers could do this manually or by availing themselves of the rearrangements made automatically by the edition upon prompting. To facilitate these rearrangements, each couplet would be tagged by its ability to receive new text above and below.³⁹ After readers input their desired length, theme, genre, and focalization, the edition would produce a text that fit these conditions.

³⁹ For instance, a couplet that began with an enjambed phrase would not receive a new couplet above it, nor could it be the first line of a poem. A couplet that began with a connective particle, however, would be a good candidate for a new couplet above. See my discussion in the case studies from Chapter 1.

A few additional features are worthy of discussion. The edition should be as accessible as possible. With this in mind, it will offer a facing translation that accompanies the Greek text. Adapting the translation to the new contexts created by the variability of the source text will pose a formidable challenge. The interpretation of certain words and phrases will undoubtedly change, and anticipating these changes will be daunting. I also envision the ability to listen to recordings of the poetry. These recordings would exploit the potential of the digital platform to reinforce the vitality of the poetry and make its rhythms and soundscapes accessible to those not yet sufficiently versed in the original language.

This digital edition was inspired by a reassessment of how the Theognidea should be read. But the picture of sympotic elegy that gave rise to it is one that may have some applicability to other contemporary authors in the same meter and genre. As the external doublets demonstrate, the boundaries between these traditions were already porous in the texts as we have them. Eventually, the digital Theognis ought to include all of archaic sympotic elegy. These new entries would need additional tagging by authorial tradition, not to enforce boundaries but to implement and modulate permeability. Readers would be allowed to imitate archaic symposiasts in combining poetry from various traditions. This would clarify how juxtaposition shapes the reappropriation of poetry. For ease of reference I will continue to speak of a “digital

edition of the Theognidea," but the eventual inclusion of these other texts ought to be kept in mind.

An edition with these features would drastically change the experience of reading the Theognidea, both for readers who pursue a particular aim (typically research or study of ancient Greek) and for those who read for pleasure. Most readers come to the Theognidea with a specific purpose or passage in mind. Toggling between different approaches to poem division would free scholars to examine the corpus with greater nuance and to appreciate anew the rhetorical potential of Theognidean poetry. Those who read for pleasure encounter a text whose editorial shape has the potential to adulterate their engagement with the ancient material. They are, moreover, unlikely to be aware of this fact. The proposed digital one would instead encourage active, self-conscious engagement. Before they start reading, users would have to choose their approach to poem division and textual emendations. Playing with the variability will enhance their enjoyment.

Ultimately, my hope is that even those who do not come to the text with this end in mind will find themselves exploring and enjoying the possibilities the digital edition opens up. The static, silent reading practices common with a printed text are foreign to this poetry. The ultimate goal of this edition is to create a text to read and play with. Only so does one come to understand fully the sympotic spirit of the poetry.

3.5 Conclusion

For the last few centuries, within the traditions that classical philologists have tended to inhabit, the vast majority of poetry was composed to be read in solitude off the page or read aloud at a gathering for the purpose. The common fact that contemporary poems are often created with print publication in mind means that they usually exist in a single, definitive version. Furthermore, contemporary poetry, at least in the popular imagination, is not primarily functional. Occasional poetry is still being produced, as is political poetry, but these genres do not enjoy primacy, and often their functionality is itself an aesthetic stance. The value of poetry, especially lyric poetry, is thought to be intrinsic, not concerned with its effect on the audience. While close biographical readings are no longer in vogue, the figure of the poet looms still large over poetry. It is therefore not surprising that this lens has affected the way the poetry of the past is approached. To search for *the* definitive version of the Theognidea—attributable to Theognis, read as an expression of Theognis' inner feeling—is to make this ancient collection fit modern ideals of short-form poetry.

In this chapter I have demonstrated the need for a different approach. The performance practices and social uses for which poetry was composed ought to be reflected in our understanding of it. This poetry was created for symposia, where it was used as a rhetorical tool to serve the social and political purposes of its performers. Thus, its value is not restricted to its aesthetic qualities or ineffable excellence but also lies in its

ability to help the performer secure his aims. The performance circumstances allowed for virtuosic borrowing and repurposing that is reflected in the text as transmitted. It seems clear that a degree of authority, or even of authorial credit, was operative, but it was not the modern binary that opposes “authentic” to “fraudulent.”

In the first half of this chapter I illustrated the shortcomings of an obsession with authenticity as manifested in the study of the doublets. Freeing ourselves from our hermeneutical obsession with first performance opens up new, more fruitful realms of interpretation. But in order to complete the overhaul of our interpretive practice, we must also overhaul the way in which the text is read. In the second half of the chapter I offered an aspirational model for a new, born-digital edition of the Theognidea and detailed the advantages it should offer. In the next chapter I explore how the full application of these new reading practices changes our understanding of the ideological positioning of the corpus.

4. The Struggle Between Good and Evil: Contestability in Value Terminology in the Theognidea

γινώσκει δ' ἄν τις καὶ κακόν, ἄν σοφὸς ᾖι (681)

4.1 Introduction

Five value terms—*agathos*, *esthlos*, *kalos*, *kakos*, and *deilos*—dominate the language of the Theognidea. A third of all couplets contain at least one of these words in some form.¹ The frequent use of this value terminology, both in an absolute sense and relative to other contemporary poetry, has received prolonged scholarly attention.² The first printed edition of the corpus already commented on the use of these terms,³ and they have been the object of study since at least the time of Welcker's 1826 edition.⁴

The pervasive use of these terms shows their importance in expressing not only personal but, pointedly, social approbation and condemnation. For this reason scholars have attempted to pinpoint their meaning and the specific qualities they were meant to evoke. In his recent literature review Selle distinguishes scholars who emphasize the terms' moral dimension (reading them as "good" and "evil") from those who emphasize their social valence (and read them as "noble" and "low-born").⁵

¹ This count includes the *Fragmenta Adespota* from Young's edition. The total is 240 couplets (33.05%). By far the most common term is *kakos*, which appears 163 times in 142 different couplets. Next are forms of *agathos* (84 appearances in 81 couplets) and *esthlos* (52 in 49), followed by *kalos* (35 in 33) and *deilos* (34 in 33).

² Donlan 1968, 122.

³ Cammerarius 1551.

⁴ Welcker 1826, xx-xxx.

⁵ Selle 2008b, 265 n158. To Selle's sources add Adkins 1960, Adkins 1972, and Donlan 1968.

Even as a basic organizing principle, this dichotomy is simplistic. Most scholars agree that the usage is both moral and social. Those in Selle's "moral" camp tend to read them as distinctly aristocratic moral terminology inseparable from the social prejudices of its users.⁶ Indeed, Selle eventually rejects his own dichotomy: "In general, the terms ἀγαθός, ἐσθλός, κακός, δειλός combine social and moral meaning in the *Theognidea*, with the social meaning usually predominating; the terms are seldom understood in a purely moral sense."⁷ Even this assessment of the relative weight of the meanings is risky when the two senses are so intertwined.

With this in mind, I propose a slight modification to Selle's schema. The true distinction is between scholars who think the adjectives are rigid, technical terms of class distinction and those who regard them as value terminology. The former tend to analyze the *Theognidea* as historical evidence rather than study it on its own terms.⁸ With the *agathoi-esthloi* and the *kakoi-deiloi* as discrete classes they are able to connect the events described in the poetry to conflicts known from later historical accounts of Megara. This

⁶ This is Cerri's conclusion: "In this passage it is quite evident that ἀγαθός-ἐσθλός and κακός are at the same time a value judgment of a single individual and a social qualification, in an inseparable unity of meaning" ("In questo passo risulta evidentissimo che ἀγαθός-ἐσθλός e κακός sono nello stesso tempo un giudizio di valore sul singolo individuo ed una qualifica sociale, in una inscindibile unità di significato") (19, 1968).

⁷ "In general, in the *Theognidea* the social and moral meaning of *agathos*, *kakos*, *esthlos*, and *deilos* flow together, with the social meaning generally predominating; rarely are the terms to be understood as purely moral" ("Allgemein fließen in den *Theognidea* bei den Begriffen *agathos*, *kakos*, *esthlos*, *deilos* soziale und moralische Bedeutung zusammen, wobei die soziale Bedeutung in der Regel überwiegt; selten sind die Begriffe rein moralisch zu verstehen") (Selle 2008, 265 n.158).

⁸ Robu 2014, 89-96. Lane-Fox 2000, 44-45. Mitchell 1997, 141-143. Legon 1981, 112. Patzer 1981, 210. Oost 1971, 188-189. Cf. Edmunds, who builds his theory of the meaning of the seal around the idea that the *agathoi* are a discrete class (1997).

“simplistic”⁹ approach to the terminology is not found among its more extended evaluations and lacks uniformity even across such historical accounts.¹⁰

In this chapter I demonstrate that an understanding of these terms as technical is not consistent with the Theognidea’s internal inconsistency. Because of the interpretive priority given to the first performance, this inconsistency has been regarded as a problem to be solved rather than a feature of the poetry that would have been useful for its various performers.¹¹

Among those who do not see these words as technical terms with single, consistent uses, there has nonetheless been a search for an ideological consistency underlying their use. Indeed, rather elegant solutions have been proposed that incorporate these seemingly disparate statements into a single coherent perspective.¹² These efforts acknowledge—explicitly or implicitly—that poetry not written by Theognis may be present but assert that the worldview put forward is nonetheless consistent.¹³ While no longer the work of a single author, the Theognidea is still the

⁹ “A rather simplistic division of Greek society...is a universal theme that constitutes the backbone of Theognis’ political ideology and philosophy of life” (Papakonstantinou 2004, 7).

¹⁰ N.b. van Wees 2000, which is much more nuanced in its understanding of the terms than it sometimes seems to be read. Wecowski dismisses this rigid view of the archaic aristocracy as outdated but notes that a new *communis opinio* has not arisen in its place (2014, 19-20).

¹¹ Selle puts it succinctly: “A meaning that is consistent throughout the entire corpus is not to be expected” (“Eine durch das ganze Corpus konsistente Bedeutung ist nicht zu erwarten”) (2008, 265 n.158). See also, Cerri 1968, 11.

¹² Cerri 1968 is still the seminal article in this regard.

¹³ Adkins is representative: “Whether or not the passages quoted here are from the hand of one author is irrelevant. It is sufficient that they should be of the same general period and provoked by similar situations: which seems to be the case” (Adkins 1960, 76).

work of a single ideological stance. Hence the desire to pinpoint specific meanings for these terms is still informed by an approach that assumes a single point of view.¹⁴ While it is generally acknowledged that as non-technical terms *agathos*, *esthlos*, *kalos*, *kakos*, and *deilos* are subjectively applied, that subjectivity has been limited to a single authorial perspective. The context of widespread reperformance opens the possibility that these terms, as manifested in the corpus, could have been used by different speakers in vastly different ways.

The inconsistency of the application (and applicability) of these terms is already seen in the corpus as it survives. This inconsistency, I argue, is a reflection of the fact that their use would have been subject only to the judgment of the immediate sympotic audience. The status of someone or something as *good* or *bad* was in the eye of the beholder, and the performance circumstances of the Theognidea represent far more than one such set of eyes. If we accept that subsequent performances should be given interpretive weight comparable to the first performance, our understanding of these terms no longer requires the synthesis of every use into a single perspective. Indeed, the inability to settle on a single definition for these terms of highest praise or condemnation is itself the very source of their usefulness.

¹⁴ Even Colesanti limits his analysis of the use of *agathos* to how it would have been understood among the single, Theognidean hetaireia of 6th-BCE Megara (2011, 262ff.).

The range of use for these words was subject only to the limits of their user's rhetorical ability and the audience's credulity. As such, I will not conduct a traditional analysis of the terms that concludes with a coherent vision of how they would have been used. Although their variability stems from the fact that these terms are quite general,¹⁵ they would have been used in rather specific interpersonal and political situations which can be reconstructed only in the imagination. I will therefore limit myself in this chapter to confirming that these terms were indeed subjectively applicable.

Before I begin, two features of these terms should be noted. First, their interchangeability: without exception, the pairs *agathos/esthlos* and *kakos/deilos* are treated by scholars as synonymous.¹⁶ My own analysis confirms this view. There is no discernable difference, for example, between a person who is called an *esthlos aner* and one who is called an *agathos aner*. There are only a few instances (discussed below) in which that interchangeability might be called into question. Second, as is evidenced by the pairs above, scholars tend to leave out a discussion of *kalos*. It is true that *kalos* does in some cases carry a distinct meaning ("beautiful") not present in the other two positive adjectives.¹⁷ In other cases, however, *kalos* carries a sense of general approbation and is

¹⁵ Cf. Selle, who writes of the political use of these terms: "[they are] applicable always and anywhere" ("die immer und überall zutrifft" (2008, 272).

¹⁶ A partial explanation of the interchangeability of these terms is found in a discussion of their use in Homer: "There is no question of separate 'meanings'. Agathos and esthlos denote and commend all these qualities together because the needs of the oikos demand that all are united in certain individuals" (Adkins 1972, 12).

¹⁷ As in lines 242 and 257.

indistinguishable from the other two.¹⁸ Indeed, there is only one instance in which it is paired with another term of approbation in a way that implies different meanings for the different terms.¹⁹ I will thus be treating these instances of *kalos* as fitting within the same paradigm of value terminology as *agathos* and *esthlos*. For ease of reading, in my discussions throughout the chapter I will use “good” as a stand-in for *agathos/esthlos/kalos* and “bad” as a stand-in for *kakos/deilos*, but I will keep the terms in my translations.

The main uses of this value terminology in the Theognidea can be divided into two basic categories: those that describe circumstances and those that describe people. In the first section I discuss the former and establish that these adjectives did not describe one’s membership in one discrete group or another but generally point to “good times” and “bad times” as we use these expressions today. In the second section I turn my attention to uses that describe people. I show that the application of these terms to people was disputed. As evidence I point to the fact that a person’s true status was the subject of discernment rather than established common knowledge; I also draw attention to the shifting evaluation of birth and wealth as standards of judgment, and to the speaker’s attribution of impermanence to the status that derives from them. At each point it is clear that the speaker strives to convince his audience that his own definition

¹⁸ As in lines 17 and 255.

¹⁹ At lines 651-652: αἰσχρὰ δέ μ’ οὐκ ἐθέλοντα βίηι καὶ πολλὰ διδάσκεις / ἐσθλὰ μετ’ ἀνθρώπων καὶ κάλ’ ἐπιστάμενον (“and you teach me, unwilling, by force many shameful things/, me who know what is *esthla* and *kala* among people”).

of these critical terms is the one which they ought to follow. In the final section I point out that this type of argument is critical to a speaker's standing, because who symposiasts choose to associate with is as contestable as the terms themselves.

4.2 In Good Times and in Bad

When describing circumstances, forms of "good" and "bad" are often paired. Neuter plurals of *agathos* and *kakos* are typically used, but *esthlos* can also denote circumstances when paired with *kakos*.²⁰ In this section I show that these make a universalizing pair that encompasses the whole of human experience, not unlike the wedding vows "in good times and in bad." As in wedding vows, most uses in the Theognidea assume that a person will experience both, and impermanence of either state is emphasized throughout. Perhaps because of their impermanence, a person's status as either good or bad is not defined by his circumstances. Nevertheless, bad circumstances are not to be taken lightly. They can be detrimental to one's status, especially in the way that one is perceived among peers. In short, these are not technical uses for class status—one is not simply good because he is doing well or *vice versa*—but simply denote that one is faring well or poorly.

The truth that good people can experience hard times is the clearest indicator that the use of good and bad in this connection does not correspond to status. It is

²⁰ Forms of *agathos* and *kakos* appear paired in lines 60, 82, 136, 166, 172, 320, 342, 398, 443, 593, 1114, 1162c, FD5.2. Forms of *esthlos* to denote circumstances appear at 355, and arguably at lines 137, 138, and 289. There is no obvious distinction in meaning when *esthlos* is used instead of *agathos*.

explicitly stated that a good man can find himself in bad circumstances.²¹ In fact, how one handles hardship can actually prove them good: τοῦ δ' αὐτ' οὔτε κακοῖσ' ἔπεται νόος οὔτ' ἀγαθοῖσιν. / τὸν δ' ἀγαθὸν τολμᾶν χρὴ τὰ τε καὶ τὰ φέρειν (“the mind [of the *deilos aner*] results from neither good nor bad times, but it is necessary for the *agathos* to have the courage to endure both”).²² If we accept that the speaker considers himself to be good, as seems fitting in most rhetorical contexts, the multiple occasions on which he describes his circumstances as bad are further evidence that circumstances are not tied to status.²³

The sources to which these circumstances are attributed further argue against their connection to distinct social classes. Hardship often arises from causes beyond the sufferers' control, including, prominently, the divine.²⁴ The gods are not said to grant good things to good people as their due. Instead, a man's providential lot (*daimon*) is independent of, and even counter to, his personal worth:

πολλοί τοι χρῶνται δειλαῖς φρεσί, δαίμονι δ' ἐσθλῶι,
οἷς τὸ κακὸν δοκέον γίνεται εἰς ἀγαθόν.
εἰσὶν δ' οἱ βουλήι τ' ἀγαθῆι καὶ δαίμονι δειλῶι
μοχθίζουσι, τέλος δ' ἔργμασιν οὐχ ἔπεται.

Indeed many have *deilos* sense, but an *esthlos* daimon,
for whom an apparent *kakon* turns to *agathon*.
But there are those who toil with an *agathos* plan and a *deilos*

²¹ Instances of people described as good in bad circumstances include lines 397-398, 441-442, 1162a-b and FD 5.1.

²² Lines 397-398. Another instance is at lines 319-320, on which see below.

²³ Instances of the speaker bemoaning his bad circumstances include lines 343-344, 1029-1030, 1107-8, and 1123-1124.

²⁴ Lines 161-166, 171-172, 341-342.

daimon, and the final product is not commensurate with their work.
(lines 161-164)²⁵

Good sons are also said to suffer for the sins of their fathers, which implies both that good sons *can* be born of bad fathers and that their own goodness is unconnected to their circumstances.²⁶

On this view faring well or poorly is not tied to either moral or social identity. Consequently one's circumstances are not permanent. Shifting fortunes are to be expected in life. Evidence for such impermanence accompanies advice concerning how best to handle them. This advice is not consistent throughout the corpus. Sometimes the speaker urges the addressee to take on his circumstances.²⁷ Sometimes the ability to endure (characteristic of a good man) is all that is needed.²⁸ One such call to endurance summarizes these ideas about good and bad circumstances: Κύρν', ἀγαθὸς μὲν ἀνὴρ γνώμην ἔχει ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ, / τολμᾷ δ' ἔν τε κακοῖς κείμενος ἔν τ' ἀγαθοῖς ("Kurnos, an *agathos* man always has steadfast wisdom, and he has courage whether in *kakos* or *agathos* times") (319-320).²⁹ In this one couplet we see that a good man can do well and

²⁵ If a performer should choose to connect the next couplet, οὐδείς ἀνθρώπων οὔτ' ὄλβιος οὔτε πενιχρός / οὔτε κακὸς νόσφιν δαίμωνος οὔτ' ἀγαθός ("no one is rich or poor, *kakos* or *agathos* apart from a [his?] daimon"), it could be taken to imply that one's circumstances *do* in some cases define one's status. Only two versions do so. This is an important example of the potential impact of the addition of a single couplet, on which see Chapter 1.

²⁶ Lines 735-740. For more discussion of birth, see below.

²⁷ Lines 303-304, 357-358 (if one considers prayer an action), 1103-1104.

²⁸ Lines 355, 441-444, 1029-1030, 1162a-d, FD5.

²⁹ A performer might also use ἐν + dative to denote accompaniment: "among *kakoi* and *agathoi*." The performance context would dictate the intended sense (or ambiguity).

poorly, that his circumstances are not connected to his traits (here, his wisdom), and that he must be steadfast in either case. The implication is that fortunes are always shifting.

There are instances, however, in which the actions of some affect the circumstances of others, and those circumstances do seem to tar them in the eyes of others. These instances often feature the noun *kakotes* to describe the state of being *kakos*. One must be vigilant in order to ward off *kakotes*.³⁰ Whom one chooses to associate with can lead to *kakotes*.³¹ We will see later in this chapter, and more fully in Chapter 4, that this choice of association is consistently a concern in the use of value terminology. Other sources can be more internal: force, profit, and *hubris* are said to cast many into *kakotes*.³² But who is being cast into *kakotes* is disputed in this instance. Is it the case that formerly good men have fallen into bad habits or is it their victims who are good?

The relationship of *kakotes* to wealth is inconsistent. In one instance the speaker ties the choice not to spend money to *kakotes*, implying that spending money wards it off.³³ In another, a surfeit is the surest source of *kakotes*.³⁴ Perhaps most significantly, *kakotes* is a status that money can hide (but not really do away with):

οἱ μὲν γὰρ κακότητα κατακρύψαντες ἔχουσιν
πλούτῳ, τοὶ δ' ἀρετὴν οὐλομένην πενίῃ.

For there are some who keep their *kakotes* hidden

³⁰ Lines 1309-1310.

³¹ Lines 1377-1378. See further my discussion on association below.

³² Line 835-836.

³³ Line 913.

³⁴ Lines 1175-1176.

with wealth, while others their excellence with baneful poverty.
(lines 1061-1062)

Here the distinction between appearance and reality separates *kakotes* from other instances which seem purely circumstantial. This approaches the value judgments that will be prevalent in my discussion of people. Interestingly, these value judgments do not necessarily align with appearances or reputation (hence *kakotes* can be hidden), as we will see in the case of people.

Thus, even if we take *kakotes* into account, one's circumstances still do not determine one's membership in one stable class or another—unless one chooses to speak of classes as impermanent groupings contingent on external factors.³⁵

4.3 The Agathoi and the Kakoi

The second major use of value terminology is to describe people. This category has received more attention because (as noted above) some scholars think they make technical class distinctions at a discrete moment of history: archaic Megara in the time of Theognis.³⁶ This approach reads the text through the lens of a reconstructed first performance and dismisses the potential for reuse in subsequent performances. Even if granted *ex hypothesi* the validity of their studies for the first performance, the fact remains that these poems would have been reperformed in other symposia with new

³⁵ See the discussion of lines 165-166 above.

³⁶ See note 8 above. While Nagy does remark on the poetry's "pan-Hellenic" ambitions (1985, 30-36), we must note that he places its performance within the relatively strict temporal and chronological bounds of 6th-century Megara, as does Colesanti (2011).

referents for these terms. Their very lack of specificity is thus a crucial feature of the poetry that allows for a wide-ranging reappropriation.

The only necessary condition for my thesis of reperformability is that the poetry not treat the good and the bad as universally identifiable members of discrete groups. Instead, I argue that these labels were clearly understood to depend on the speaker's judgment. The internal context of these claims shows them to be contested. The same individual could be called *agathos* by a symposiast with the aid of one couplet and *kakos* by the next with the aid of another. By identifying certain people or their behaviors as worthy of these labels, the speaker vindicated his judgment of who or what deserved approbation or condemnation.³⁷

The multiplicity of performers, audiences, and rhetorical contexts of the Theognidea render useless the traditional project of identifying a univocal definition of good or bad. The sympotic practice of adjusting and rearranging lines renders hopelessly inadequate any attempt to identify the complete range of possibilities presented by the uses of this text. On the other hand, one may definitively show that the use the Theognidea makes of this value terminology fits with a schema of subjective application. Indeed, while value judgments may be inconsistent in their subjectivity,

³⁷ Colesanti defines this as a major element of this language, which he calls "ethical," but situates it at a single place and point in time (2011, 265). Cf. Skarbek-Kazanecki: "The Theognidean tradition, together with its constantly repeated question about the criteria of being a true ἀγαθός ('good | (aristocrat)'), does constitute an effort to not only defend the *status quo* of the aristocrats, but also to re-define the identity of the whole socio-political class and to reinforce social boundaries" (2021, 29-30).

they are framed by three consistent presuppositions: it takes discernment to determine whether someone is good or bad; the indicators of one's status are not fixed; and one's status as good or bad is impermanent (at least in the public's perception). These three, taken together, entail the contestability of the terms, despite the confidence with which they are bandied about.

4.3.1 The Role of Discernment

The most important indication of the subjectivity of one's judgment whether someone is good or bad is the need to discern the actual condition carefully. In a passage twice repeated in the corpus, the speaker warns of the difference between someone's reputation and his true qualities: δόξα μὲν ἀνθρώποισι κακὸν μέγα, πείρα δ' ἄριστον· / πολλοὶ ἀπείρητοι δόξαν ἔχουσ' ἀγαθῶν ("reputation is a great *kakon* for people, but testing is best; many untested men have the reputation of *agathoi*") (lines 571-572; 1104a-b).³⁸ The fact that a person may appear worthy but not actually be so underlines the need to test their merit: εἰς βάσανον δ' ἔλθων παρατριβόμενός τε μολύβδω / χρυσός ἀπεφθός ἐὼν καλὸς ἅπασιν ἔσθι ("If having come to the touchstone and being rubbed beside lead, you are refined gold, [then] you will be *kalos* in the eyes of all") (lines 1105-1106).³⁹ Variations on the idea that one must probe outer appearances to determine inner realities occur throughout the corpus, often with similar analogies to metals and

³⁸ In Young's edition the only difference between these two passages is the way they are punctuated. 1104a-b has a full stop.

³⁹ The use of *kalos* rather than *agathos* may here be motivated by the possibility of inuendo.

counterfeits.⁴⁰ When the speaker counsels the addressee to deceive others, or at least to hide his true thoughts, he shows why such testing is necessary.⁴¹

The notion that someone's reputation may not reflect one's true goodness or badness makes straightforward sense if "good" and "bad" denote moral value, but not if they are rigid markers of status objectively derived from birth or wealth. The fact that they may be used when the speaker draws attention to an undeserved reputation shows that their validity can be disputed. If the *agathoi* or *kakoi* were incontestable social classes, membership in either class would require and sufficiently justify the application of the corresponding label. If the claim that someone's true status is different from their apparent status is plausible, then everyone's true status is up for debate.⁴²

4.3.2 The Indicators

Subjective value judgments are necessitated by the lack of objective standards. While one might have expected birth and wealth—the two most prominent factors cited in the Theognidea—to command universal agreement as identifiable traits, their treatment shows otherwise.

⁴⁰ Lines 77-78, 415-418, 499-502. False reputation reoccurs without any metal analogy at line 655-656. The need for testing is emphasized at lines 125-126.

⁴¹ Lines 117-128, 213-218, 423-424, FD6.

⁴² Cf. the Roman classes, where one's status (patrician or plebian) was declared by the censor and so known to all.

4.3.2.1 Birth

Because birth is included as a determinant of one's status as good or bad,⁴³ one might reasonably assume that it would have been considered an objective marker. This is not the case. Several passages make it clear that, even though valued, good lineage alone does not infallibly predict whether one is good or bad.⁴⁴ Even when one's goodness or badness is definitively stated, the speaker's judgment is framed by disputation and is not an objective datum.

The example par excellence is an extended complaint about mixed marriages that begins with an analogy to animal husbandry.

κριοὺς μὲν καὶ ὄνους διζήμεθα, Κύρνε, καὶ ἵππους
εὐγενέας, καὶ τις βούλεται ἐξ ἀγαθῶν
βήσεσθαι· γῆμαι δὲ κακὴν κακοῦ οὐ μελεδαίνει
ἐσθλὸς ἀνὴρ, ἦν οἱ χρήματα πολλὰ διδῶι,
οὐδὲ γυνὴ κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀναίνεται εἶναι ἄκοιτις
πλουσίου, ἀλλ' ἀφνεὸν βούλεται ἀντ' ἀγαθοῦ.
χρήματα μὲν τιμῶσι· καὶ ἐκ κακοῦ ἐσθλὸς ἔγγημε
καὶ κακὸς ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ· πλοῦτος ἔμειξε γένος.
οὕτω μὴ θαύμαζε γένος, Πολυπαῖδη, ἀστῶν
μαυροῦσθαι· σὺν γὰρ μίσγεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖς.

We seek rams, donkeys, and horses, Kurnos, that are
well born, and anyone wants to mount one from the *agathoi*.
But an *esthlos* man does not mind marrying a *kake* woman
from a *kakos* father if he gives him a lot of money,

⁴³ Donlan calls the collection, “the strongest assertion in the literature up to this point that the aner agathos (esthlos) bases his claim to superiority on birth and breeding” (1968, 124 emphasis his). Cf. Nagy, who argues: “*agathos* and *kakos* ... originally had the genetic connotation of high-born and low-born, respectively—but ... are used in the diction of Theognis to designate one who is intrinsically noble or base, regardless of birth” (1985, 54).

⁴⁴ Colesanti is firm in his assertion that in the Theognidea “the *agathos* is not born, but becomes” (2011, 265). Donlan, too, acknowledges that family alone is not sufficient, but does not go so far as to say it is meaningless (1968, 125). See also Nagy 1985, 54.

nor does a woman refuse to be the wife of a *kakos* man
who is rich, but she prefers a wealthy one to an *agathos*.
They honor money. And the *esthlos* man marries one from a *kakos* father
and a *kakos* from an *agathos* father. Wealth has mixed lineage.
Thus don't be amazed, Polupaides, that the lineage of the townspeople
is weakened. For *esthla* things are being mixed with *kaka*.
(lines 181-192)

The speaker of these lines regards good and bad as clearly defined categories determined by birth—in the past. In the present, he complains that the lack of regard for these categories in choosing partners is blurring their erstwhile clear boundaries. From the passage it is clear that the speaker's schema no longer prevails. Indeed, the very lines that underscore the importance of birth also exhibit the extent to which it is disregarded by others. This blasé attitude reflects a faltering commitment to these categories on the part of the townspeople.⁴⁵ One may also see in these lines, however, proof that the speaker and the townspeople do not apply the label of good or bad to the same individuals. In either case, the status of *good* or *bad* as the speaker defines it does not inform the decisions of others. The labels are either weak or contestable.

The passage which immediately follows that poem in the collection, and which is connected to it in three editions and every manuscript,⁴⁶ makes the relative valuation of birth and wealth more explicit:

αὐτός τοι ταύτην εἰδὼς κακόπατριν εὐῶσαν
εἰς οἴκους ἄγεται χρήμασι πειθόμενος
εὐδοξος κακόδοξον, ἐπεὶ κρατερὴ μιν ἀνάγκη

⁴⁵ There is possible evidence for this sort of attitude elsewhere in the corpus if ἀγαθῶν and κακῶν refer to people in line 1114. See discussion below.

⁴⁶ The editions are Sitzler 1880, Korres 1949, and Garzya 1958.

ἐντύνει, ἤτ' ἀνδρὸς τλήμονα θῆκε νόον.

Although he knows personally that this woman has a *kakos* father, he leads her into his home, persuaded by money — a wife regarded as *kake*, although he is well-regarded, since strong necessity, which makes the mind of a man tolerant, gears him up for it. (lines 193-196)

Whether we think the speaker of this passage sympathetic to the husband's choice or not,⁴⁷ he at least does not challenge the sentiment that the need for money can prevail over considerations of lineage. He also intimates that his values are no longer dominant. Otherwise, marrying outside of one's class would not be considered expedient, as it clearly is.

That one's status as good or bad must be discerned is here explicitly recognized: αὐτός ... εἰδὼς κακόπατριν ἐοῦσαν ("knowing personally that she has a *kakos* father") (193). The speaker seems to be saying about the target of his censure, "He should know better." Telling his audience that someone should know better implies that others too do not know better.⁴⁸ It is unclear if the woman's "breeding" (to extend the speaker's grotesque analogy) is known only to a select few, or if its determination is the outcome of proper judgment. In either case status as good or bad is considered to be assessed differently, or at least valued differently, by different people.

⁴⁷ Donlan 1968, 126. The tone of the poem would depend on its performance, itself dependent on the symposiast's inclinations.

⁴⁸ If we connect them to the previous couplet, lines 1113-1114 may suggest that this is not universal knowledge.

No discussion of the offspring of such marriages is offered in these two passages, as one might expect from the sort of speaker who would concern himself with the so-called purity of bloodlines. There is one statement of consequences: οὕτω μὴ θαύμαζε γένος, Πολυπαΐδη, ἀστῶν / μαυροῦσθαι (“thus don’t be amazed, Polupaides, that the lineage of the townspeople is weakened”) (lines 191-192). That the most likely, and most commonly used, translation of μαυροῦσθαι is “weakened” or “dimmed”⁴⁹ suggests that family status is not binary but a matter of degree. This is supported by the recurring idea of mixture. This notion of a difference of degree rather than kind is not a common one in the use of this terminology, but this is not its only appearance.⁵⁰

In other passages children are discussed. In these there can be no question that birth and status are totally unrelated. In the first case, the distinction regards *kakoi* and is stated positively:

τοὶ κακοὶ οὐ πάντες κακοὶ ἐκ γαστρὸς γεγόνασιν,
 ἀλλ’ ἀνδρεσσι κακοῖς συνθέμενοι φιλίην
 ἔργα τε δειλ’ ἔμαθον καὶ ἔπη δύσφημα καὶ ὕβριν
 ἐλπόμενοι κείνους πάντα λέγειν ἔτυμα.

Kakoi are not all born *kakoi* from the womb,
 but establishing friendship with *kakoi* men
 they learn *deila* actions and shameful words and *hubris*
 supposing everything those men say to be true.
 (lines 305-308)

⁴⁹ The other option is a more definitive “ruined,” seen in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*: δεινὸν δ’ εἴ κ’ ἐπ’ ἄμαξαν ὑπέρβιον ἄχθος ἀείρας ἄξονα κανάξαις καὶ φορτία μαυρωθείη (“it is also terrible if, lifting an excessive load upon your cart, you break the axle and the freight is ruined”) (line 693).

⁵⁰ N.b. lines 615-616: οὐδένα παμπήδην ἀγαθὸν καὶ μέτριον ἀνδρα / τῶν νῦν ἀνθρώπων ἠέλιος καθορᾷ (“no man is entirely *agathos* and moderate of those whom the sun now looks down on”).

In another case, the distinction takes the form of a contrafactual conditional, which unmistakably implies the same disconnect between birth and status that is stated positively above: εἰ δ' ἦν ποιητόν τε καὶ ἔνθετον ἀνδρὶ νόημα, / οὐποτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς ἔγεντο κακός (“if it were possible to make a mind and put it in a man, a *kakos* would have never been born from an *agathos* father”) (lines 435-436). Once again, the boundaries between the different terms are permeable, and this permeability does not evince objective causes like compromised ancestry. It is people’s actions and words, shaped by their education and associations, that determine their status instead.

4.3.2.2 Wealth

The relationship of wealth to one’s status as good or bad is notably inconsistent in the Theognidea.⁵¹ It is positively affirmed that bad people can be rich and good people can be poor.⁵² *Arete* and wealth are then treated as near alternatives—the former steadfast, the latter changing.⁵³ Such passages have led some to posit a rather tidy picture in which the bad are new-money upstarts and the good are landed gentry on the

⁵¹ The most extensive discussion of wealth in the Theognidea is in Cerri’s seminal article (1968, 19-23). Cerri untangles the seeming contradictions in order to derive a single coherent attitude toward wealth: it is good, but only when paired with virtue. His ability to resolve these inconsistencies with nuanced analysis does not, however, rule out the possibility that symposiasts whose interests were not so synthetic could have exploited them.

⁵² πολλοί τοι πλουτοῦσι κακοί, ἀγαθοὶ δὲ πένονται (line 315). This line is an external doublet with Solon (frg. 15.1). These doublets should be treated no differently than any other couplets from the Theognidea. On this, see Chapter 2.

⁵³ ἀλλ’ ἡμεῖς τούτοις οὐ διαμειψόμεθα / τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸν πλοῦτον, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ, / χρήματα δ’ ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει (lines 316-318).

decline.⁵⁴ This idea depends, however, on tidier hierarchies of birth than are seen in the poetry, as discussed above.⁵⁵ It is the constraints of poverty that drive the good to marry bad people and their children. As I have already noted, this would not be so if the incentives of class prerogative held firmer sway.⁵⁶ Moreover, the agricultural imagery we would expect in a celebration of landed wealth, though used in the most cited example (lines 183-192, discussed above), is relatively rare in the collection.⁵⁷ Certainly the good men could have been landed gentry and have used “bad” to denote up-and-coming competitors making their wealth via commerce, but the treatment of wealth in the collection does not clearly indicate that these were the only ways to understand the terms.

Wealth is an unstable indicator. Sometimes it is said to have a direct effect on status. A *kakos* can become an *esthlos* when he acquires wealth: Πλοῦτε, θεῶν κάλλιστε καὶ ἰμεροέστατε πάντων, / σὺν σοὶ καὶ κακὸς ὧν γίνεται ἐσθλὸς ἀνήρ (“Wealth, you most beautiful and most desirable of all the gods, with you, even though he be *kakos*, a

⁵⁴ Legon 1981, 111-112.

⁵⁵ Pace Legon: “For Theognis and many like him, men were judged good (*agathos*) or bad (*kakos*) according to their birth and lineage, rather than by any personal qualities; goodness was an inherited attribute of the nobility” (1981, 112).

⁵⁶ See lines 191 and 194. It is perhaps worthy of note that every time a good person is paired with a bad one in the breakdown of order a form of *esthlos* is used. In the entire corpus not once is an *agathos* paired with a *kakos*. This may imply a subtle elevation of *agathos* over *esthlos* as a term of approbation, because an *agathos* would not stoop to this level (or would no longer be *agathos* if he did). But, if so, that distinction is not clear elsewhere.

⁵⁷ Legon is only otherwise able to cite lines 1200-1201 (1981, 111 n28). One should also include lines 125-126. Perhaps Legon did not mention this couplet because it argues that *agathoi* are only known through testing.

man becomes *esthlos*") (lines 1117-1118).⁵⁸ A man who has fallen into poverty can be described as "no longer the same *agathos* man" — at least in the eyes of his friends.⁵⁹ Whether that is accompanied by a change in his true status is left for the audience to decide. In other cases wealth is a false indicator. Wealth can obscure that someone is bad, and poverty that someone is good.⁶⁰ No objective wealth requirements, positive or negative, determine membership in the respective categories.

Neither is poverty a foolproof test of character. The ability to endure it without wrongdoing can tell apart the good and the bad.⁶¹ But even that test is fallible: the speaker acknowledges that good men can do evil under the compulsion of poverty.⁶² Poverty can lay low a good man worse than old age and disease.⁶³ It is unclear from the context if this humbling entails a loss of status, but at the very least it is not considered a trivial circumstance. In one instance the speaker goes so far as to say that death is preferable to living in poverty.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Van Groningen wonders if this passage is serious or ironic (1966, 409). The answer, of course, is that both views are possible. The choice depends on the performer and the interpretation of his audience. It is notable that we nowhere read that a *kakos* can become an *agathos*.

⁵⁹ ἦν μὲν γὰρ πλουτῆς, πολλοὶ φίλοι, ἦν δὲ πένηαι, / παῦροι, κούκέθ' ὁμῶς αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός ("for if you are rich many are your friends, but few if poor, and you are no longer like yourself, an *agathos* man") (lines 929-930).

⁶⁰ Lines 1061-1062. See discussion above.

⁶¹ Lines 393-394.

⁶² Lines 383-392. While this sentiment is moderated by the couplets that follow, since nothing requires their joint performance its meaning in isolation may be allowed to stand.

⁶³ Lines 173-174.

⁶⁴ Lines 181-182.

Whether or not a poor man is necessarily a *deilos*, Poverty as a divine power is twice qualified as “*deile*.”⁶⁵ But poverty is not the only source of ills. Satiety (*koros*), which one might consider synonymous with wealth, is called “the most *kakos* thing.”⁶⁶ Wealth is particularly dangerous to bad men, who do not know how to manage it,⁶⁷ but it can be ruinous for anyone.⁶⁸ Arguably it is not always ruinous, however, because elsewhere the speaker wishes the good the blessing of wealth and considers the bad underserving of it.⁶⁹ Wealth is certainly a good thing when it is called the easiest way to get out of *kakotes*.⁷⁰

The frequency with which these value terms coincide with discussions of wealth makes it clear that these two concepts were indeed seen as related, but that the exact nature of this relationship seems to have been hotly contested in the symposia in which these poems were performed. Performers with a variety of attitudes towards wealth and its relationship to status would have all found material in the Theognidea useful to their rhetorical position.

4.3.3 Impermanence

Impermanence is another element that contributes to the subjectivity of the value judgments. Because birth does not guarantee status and the role of wealth is disputed, it

⁶⁵ Lines 351, 649.

⁶⁶ Lines 1175-1176.

⁶⁷ Lines 153-154, 321-322.

⁶⁸ Lines 523-524.

⁶⁹ Lines 525-526.

⁷⁰ Lines 523-524.

is possible for a person's status to change.⁷¹ While the speaker seems often unhappy with the idea of impermanence, it is this concept that most openly exhibits the contestation of value judgments.

References to the impermanence of status can be bitterly ironic. Sometimes the immediate context suggests that the speaker believes the exact opposite of what he is saying:

ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ πλευραῖσι δορᾶς αἰγῶν κατέτριβον,
ἔξω δ' ὥστ' ἔλαφοι τῆσδ' ἐνέμοντο πόλεος.
καὶ νῦν εἰς ἀγαθοί, Πολυπαῖδη· οἱ δὲ πρὶν ἐσθλοί
νῦν δειλοί. τίς κεν ταῦτ' ἀνέχοιτ' ἐσορῶν;

But they used to wear out goatskins around their ribs
and they made their habitat outside of the city like deer,
and now they are *agathoi*, Polupaides. But those who before were *esthloi*
are now *deiloi*. Who could endure seeing this?
(lines 55-58)

Are we meant to understand that these once sartorially-challenged citizens are actually *agathoi*? Or is this meant sarcastically? The fact of reperformance relieves us from the need to choose. Either way, as with marriage above, it is clear that the speaker challenges the common perception of these peoples' status. His public dismissal that these new *agathoi* are truly so in turn implies the expectation that others might think so, or at least tries to head off that possibility.

How the couplet is performed would affect its interpretation. If the symposiast emphasizes his bitterness, he could work a sympathetic crowd into a frenzy. No one in

⁷¹ In addition to the passages cited below, see lines 557-558 and 661-662.

the audience ought to accept the legitimacy of the change. The alarming possibility remains. If, on the other hand, he performs the passage mournfully, he might be ceding the point. It would then follow that the change in status is illegitimate but none the less real. The latter interpretation is possible because the language of perception is absent from the passage. The speaker does not assert that those who used to wear goatskins now “seem to be” *agathoi*; he merely says that they are so. At any rate, there is here a recognition that some believed status could change. And if this was so, whether any one symposiast should be still regarded as retaining his status was open to challenge.

A very similar passage shows how context can have a major impact on meaning:

Κύρον', οἱ πρόσθ' ἀγαθοὶ νῦν αὖ κακοί, οἱ δὲ κακοὶ πρόν
 νῦν ἀγαθοί. τίς κεν ταῦτ' ἀνέχοιτ' ἔσορῶν
 τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς μὲν ἀτιμοτέρους, κακίους δὲ λαχόντας
 τιμῆς; μνηστεύει δ' ἐκ κακοῦ ἔσθλος ἀνήρ.
 ἀλλήλους δ' ἀπατῶντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι γελῶσιν,
 οὔτ' ἀγαθῶν μνήμην εἰδότες οὔτε κακῶν.

Kurnos, those who were *agathoi* before are now *kakoi*, and those who were *kakoi* before are now *agathoi*. Who could bear seeing the *agathoi* more dishonored and the worse [i.e. more *kakoi*] obtaining honor? But the *esthlos* man courts [the daughter] of a *kakos*. And deceiving each other they laugh at each other, and they have no memory of what (or who?) is *agathos* and *kakos*.
 (Lines 1109-1114)

Taken by itself, the couplet that begins this passage is a straightforward statement of a great reversal of status. This couplet could be performed on its own, as its doublet above shows, which lacks a direct object for ἔσορῶν, thus leaving much room for each new

performer to add material that suits his own needs.⁷² The next couplet illustrates its potential and adds an important nuance. The speaker makes it clear that he does not regard this reversal as a true change in status, but as an illegitimate misdirection of honor. At the end of this same couplet, however, we see that even those whom the speaker regards as *esthloi* choose to court those who are born from a *kakos* father. If we add the final couplet, this choice is explained by a forgetfulness of what (or who) is *agathos* and *kakos*. Even as the speaker holds on to his own more rigid view of who is good and bad, he explains how the once clear boundaries have been blurred by the very people he deems good.

4.4 Conclusion

Whether the speakers like or even accept the state of affairs, it is evident that the Theognidea takes for granted that status as good or bad is subject to change. The pervasiveness of value terms is rhetorically inexplicable unless there was an audience for whom they carried a measure of social weight. Nevertheless, the speaker complains that moral status is disregarded. These complaints should not be taken to mean that the terms no longer held currency. The problem facing the performers was not to convince their audiences that being *agathos*, *esthlos*, and/or *kalos* mattered, but that they and their value systems really were objectively *agathos*, *esthlos*, and/or *kalos*.

⁷² Lines 57-58.

The stakes of this persuasion were not just approbation but also influence. The one who could convince his audience to subscribe to his definition of good and bad, and to agree with his assessment of who merited those labels, could persuade the audience to associate with him in future endeavors. The addressees' choice of social relations was as negotiable as the view of a person's moral status. The implications of this fact will be more fully explored in the next chapter, but a brief survey is necessary to close the present one.

A contested application of these terms makes good sense if we allow that sympotic groups may have consisted of what some would call mixed company: the good and the bad both in attendance.⁷³ Indeed, that the *agathoi* and *kakoi* drink together is strongly implied.⁷⁴ Perhaps the clearest proof that the acceptable boundaries of social intercourse were disputed is furnished by the speaker's repeated admonition not to associate with bad people.⁷⁵ In the passage quoted above the speaker even warns that associating with bad people is the very thing that has corrupted some.⁷⁶ Reiterated warnings suggest the hearers' potential failure to heed them. Frequent warnings to choose carefully one's social circles and whom to trust make best sense if those associations are not predetermined.

⁷³ The view of symposia as devices for social integration put forward by Wecowski (2014, 74-77) requires that membership be permeable.

⁷⁴ *Kakoi* could not beat *agathoi* at a drinking contest if they were not drinking together (lines 971-972).

⁷⁵ Lines 31-32, 101-102, 1165-1167.

⁷⁶ Lines 305-308.

This picture of the makeup of sympotic *hetaireia* is more fluid than what is often assumed among scholars of the *Theognidea*,⁷⁷ but it is in keeping with the fluidity of the most important value terms used to describe symposiasts. If one's status as good and or bad is a matter of debate and subject to change, it should be no surprise that membership in a *hetaireia* should also be disputed. If the members argued over who merited the name "good," they would surely argue over who they ought to continue to associate with.

In conclusion, who deserved to be called good or bad must have been up for debate at the symposia in which the *Theognidea* was performed. The pervasiveness of value terminology has therefore a double source. First, the terms held currency within the social circles of the symposia despite the disagreements about their proper use. Second, precisely because there were no agreed upon objective standards to settle these disputes, they were frequently deployed in an effort to settle their meaning and reach. The speaker's confident assertions were a projection rooted in rhetorical necessity rather than a reflection of actual agreement on the subject.

⁷⁷ Figueira and Nagy 1985, Vetta 2000, and Colesanti 2011, the most influential sympotic readings of the corpus, assume relatively stable membership in the *hetaireia* as they construct its ideology. Caciagli's recent study, discussed in the next chapter, paints a picture of archaic *hetaireiai* as highly organized units whose membership were clearly defined (2018). The idea of highly variable sympotic groups, however, is not unprecedented in sympotic scholarship: "it should be emphasized that numerous groups of *philo*i and potential fellow-feasters coexisted and their composition was fluid and unstable in every known Greek political community of the archaic period" (Wecowski 2014, 74-5).

5. A Good Friend is Hard to Find: Friendship and the Symptotic Group in the Theognidea

ὅτι καλόν, φίλον ἐστί· τὸ δ' οὐ καλὸν οὐ φίλον ἐστί (17)

5.1 Introduction

It has been taken as fact that symposia were celebrated by members of a fixed, stable group called a *hetaireia*.¹ Scholars debate whether these groups were kinship based,² and whether symposia were celebrated by the entire *hetaireia* or subgroups.³ But with those differences aside, participants of any given symposium are typically thought of as members of the same stable friendship circle. This picture of stability directly conflicts with the fluidity I identified in the Theognidea's use of terms of approbation and condemnation.

This chapter presents an analysis of the language of friendship in the Theognidea. Three factors suggest the need for this analysis. First, the subjectively determined and contestable use of those terms, as laid out in the previous chapter, conflicts with their objective use in the most focused previous analysis of friendship in the Theognidea.⁴ Second, the external evidence on which the current picture of *hetaireiai*

¹ Examples are widespread. N.b. instances in the two most important recent monographs on the Theognidea: Selle 2008, 258-259 and Colesanti 2011, 12.

² Murray, situating these groups as *Männerbünde*, argues against kinship ties in favor of a peer-group model (Murray 1982). Caciagli disputes this, arguing that family ties played an important role (Caciagli 2018, 109).

³ Romney 2020, 193 n14.

⁴ Donlan 1985, 223-244.

is based is late and indirect. Finally, a new model of how the symposium operated implicitly challenges that current picture.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fact that the commonly used value terms cannot be understood as objective labels of group status calls for a wider reexamination of the language of groups in the Theognidea. As for external evidence, our secure knowledge of archaic *hetaireiai* is minimal. Substantive, contemporary evidence for the activity of *hetaireiai* does not appear until the second half of the fifth century BCE in Athens, and then explodes in the Hellenistic period throughout the Greek world.⁵ Any conclusions about the nature of these organizations before the classical period thus draws on a combination of Homeric poetry, archaic poetry, and later historical accounts.⁶ Among archaic poetry, other major lyric figures like Alcaeus and Archilochus have exercised a greater influence, despite the comparative paucity of material by them.⁷ Given this scarcity and the difficulty of using Homer as historical evidence, much of our understanding of these groups implicitly depends on a retrojection of later models onto the archaic world and across its various *poleis* (especially the classical Athenian one, which is the closest in time among those that are

⁵ For Athenian *hetaireiai* see Gottesman 2014, Jones 1999, Sartori 1957, and Calhoun 1913. For Greek voluntary associations more widely see Kloppenborg and Wilson 1996. The earliest inscription in a recent sourcebook for Greco-Roman associations is from the late 4th BCE, and the earliest literary source is by Aristotle (Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg 2012).

⁶ The most extended reconstruction of *hetaireiai* in this period is found in Caciagli 2018, 43-112.

⁷ E.g. Rösler 1980. More recently, see Romney 2020, who cites Theognis only in the conclusions of chapters as support for arguments made based on the poetry of Alcaeus, Solon, and others.

well documented). For some archaic sympotic poets like Alcaeus this model can be made to fit smoothly.⁸ But we should not assume that this fit is universal.

By emphasizing that the symposium is not only a manifestation of social status but also the very means by which that status was gained and kept, recent scholarship presents a challenge to the rigid model of *hetaireiai*. Wecowski's approach to the symposium identifies two important functions: it served as a proving ground of social status and as an engine of social integration.⁹ In this sense, the ability to participate satisfactorily in the symposium proved that the new symposiast truly belonged among the elite. The correlate was that some would fail at it—a possibility that raises the rhetorical stakes of the event significantly. This test operated in several ways. It is not just prospective members who might fail to secure their place among the elite, but even those who until then had enjoyed that status (and who would remain convinced they still deserved it). After all, full participation in the symposium was not just a matter of learned skill: it required significant means to contribute to it.¹⁰ This social function of introducing new elites and dismissing old ones must have made sympotic circles remarkably dynamic. Some measure of instability is thus a characteristic feature of

⁸ As Rösler has shown in his investigation of Alcaeus' audience (Rösler 1980, n.b. 33-36).

⁹ Wecowski 2014, 55-65. It is notable that Wecowski refers to symposiasts as *hetairoi* (34) but nowhere refers to the group as members of a *hetaireia*. He may be anticipating my argument when he writes "numerous groups of philoi and potential fellow-feasters coexisted and their composition was fluid and unstable in every known Greek political community of the archaic period" (2014, 74-75), but he does not directly elaborate on the point.

¹⁰ Wecowski 2014, 62.

symptotic groupings in Wecowski's model, and that instability has been picked up by recent discussions of the symposion.¹¹ In this chapter, I will show how the poetry of the Theognidea reflects this same instability.

This chapter presents a reassessment of the language of friendship in the Theognidea drawing only from its own text. I find that friendship in the Theognidea is described in terms of one-on-one, interpersonal relationships that are motivated by individual preference and assessment rather than by common membership in a larger group. Furthermore, I find that Theognidean friendship is itself unstable: disappointment with one's friends is expressed far more often than satisfaction. These conclusions have broad consequences for our understanding of the dynamics of archaic symposia. If one were to ignore the prevalence of reperformance, it would be easy to dismiss the way that "Theognis" talks about his friends as the result of personal grievances and failures. But the acceptance of the Theognidea as suitable and useful for reperformance implies that the concerns it expresses are features of the social system rather than accidents of an idiosyncratic experience.

It is important to stress that I am concerned here with functional rather than nominal distinctions as they appear in the text.¹² I do not claim to disprove that *hetaireiai*,

¹¹ "As property and social status were in permanent flux, there were no clearly defined closed circles that were part of these groups of symposiasts, or were excluded from them. Whoever had the necessary wealth to lead a life of leisure and to contribute his share to these social events was welcome to join" (Stein-Holkeskamp 2018, 135).

or sympotic groups of some sort, were a concept in the period in which the Theognidea flourished. Instead, I show that if these groups did exist, they held little sway over the behavior of their members. Friendships are individualized and choice-driven, and symposiasts had to be constantly vigilant of betrayal and abandonment.

This chapter will consist of four sections. In the first, I look for evidence of stable sympotic groups in the corpus. Next, I present the evidence that friendship in the corpus is a matter of personal choice rather than predetermined association, and I discuss the qualities on which that choice is based. Even those who choose their friends wisely must continue to be wary of them: in the next section I discuss the prevailing concern with trust, deception, and betrayal in the corpus. Finally, I consider how the attitudes toward friendship expressed in the poetry of the Theognidea might have affected its performance.

5.2 Hetaireiai in the Theognidea

The absence of the terminology of friendship groups in the Theognidea is noteworthy, especially in comparison to the frequency of terms of individual,

¹² In a sense, I am following a different path than Caciagli, who chooses to focus on the ideal: “Lo scarto fra l'ideale e il reale, fra la rappresentazione poetica e le effettive modalità con cui gli aristocratici agivano, doveva essere spesso notevole” (“The gap between the ideal and the real, between the poetic representation and the actual ways aristocrats acted, often must have been notable”) (2018, 110).

interpersonal friendship. The word *hetaireia* does not appear in the Theognidea.¹³ This does not seem to be an accident of poetic vocabulary. Synonyms such as *sunomosia* (“club”) and the various combinations of *hoi peri/meta/amphi tina* (“those around so and so”) also do not appear.¹⁴ If the *agathoi* and *kakoi* do not refer to discrete groups¹⁵ (as I argue in the previous chapter) there is no label in the corpus for any fixed group.

Reference to a group of friends is noticeably absent from the Theognidea. Friends and enemies can be referred to in a collective manner, but these can easily be interpreted as the speaker’s personal friends and enemies rather than formal groups.¹⁶ Where there is indisputable language of groups, it is often described using a modifier that focalizes their relationship to the speaker.¹⁷ Indeed, there is only one instance of a group being referred to by a collective first-person plural: “our friends.”¹⁸ The rarity of the first-person plural in general suggests that this poetry does not place a high priority on collective action.¹⁹

The Theognidea may not be concerned with a group of companions, but it is frequently concerned with companions as individuals. The word *hetairos* (companion)

¹³ There is one possible exception: the use of the compound in the phrase ἐκ καχεταίρης “from a bad *hetaireia*” at line 1169. See van Groningen 1966, *ad loc.* and Caciagli 2018, 117-118.

¹⁴ On the use of these synonyms, with sources and examples, see Caciagli 2018, 37-38.

¹⁵ *Contra* Selle 2008, 259.

¹⁶ E.g. lines 561-562 and 1032-1033.

¹⁷ E.g. line 1133: Κύρνε, παροῦσι φίλοισι κακοῦ καταπαύσομεν ἀρχήν (“Kurnos, let’s put a stop to the beginning of evil **with those friends who are present**”) and line 871: εἰ μὴ ἐγὼ τοῖσιν μὲν ἐπαρκέσω οἷ μὲ φιλεῦσιν (“unless I help **those who love me**”).

¹⁸ Line 1271.

¹⁹ By my count there are only 30 third-person plural verbs, 18 first-person plural pronouns and 17 first-person plural possessive adjectives in the entire corpus, which consists of 1,422 lines.

appears 21 times. These uses, however, predominantly refer to a single *hetairos* and describe a relationship between two individuals. They are never used to describe a collective of companions acting in a way the speaker approves of. The term appears only five times in the plural, and one of those is clearly referring to an individual relationship between the speaker and the addressee.²⁰ These five uses are brief enough to be catalogued below:

παύρους εὐρήσεις, Πολυπαῖδη, ἄνδρας ἐταίρους
πιστοὺς ἐν χαλεποῖς πράγμασι γινομένουσ...

You will find that few men prove trustworthy companions, Polupaides,
in difficult business...
(79-80)

πολλοὶ τοι πόσιος καὶ βρώσιός εἰσιν ἐταῖροι,
ἐν δὲ σπουδαίῳ πράγματι παυρότεροι.

Many are companions of drink and meat,
but few in serious business.
(115-116)

ἄνθρωπ', ἀλλήλοισιν ἀπόπροθεν ὦμεν ἐταῖροι·
πλὴν πλούτου παντὸς χρημάτων ἐστι κόρος.

Man, let's be companions to each other from afar
there is too much of every thing except wealth.
(595-596)

πολλοὶ παρ κρητῆρι φίλοι γίνονται ἐταῖροι,
ἐν δὲ σπουδαίῳ πράγματι παυρότεροι.

Many happen to be dear companions around the krater
but fewer in serious business.
(643-644)

²⁰ Line 595.

παύρους κηδεμόνας πιστοὺς εὗροις κεν ἑταίρους
κείμενος ἐν μεγάλῃ θυμὸν ἀμηχανίῃ.

You can find few trustworthy and caring companions
when your spirit is in great helplessness.
(645-646)

Two elements of these passages are worthy of note. First, an important distinction is drawn between convivial companions and companions in serious business. This establishes a clear distinction between the type of companionship one could expect at the symposion and when one is engaged in serious, outside business. Second, when one needs a support system, so-called *hetairoi* rarely prove to be loyal. The speaker does not question that a true *hetairos* will be loyal but suggests that most *hetairoi* prove false at a time of need. Warnings of this sort undercut the model of stable, cohesive, and politically active *hetaireiai*.

It is feasible that these couplets could have been performed before a tight-knit *hetaireia*. But, if so, to avoid eroding the cohesion of that group these performances would need to be followed by reassurance that the speaker deems his present companions among the rare true ones. A rhetorical maneuver of that sort is certainly possible, but there are no such reassuring couplets anywhere in the corpus. What is more, the mere use of these lines presupposes that the idea of untrustworthy *hetairoi* has some cultural cachet. It is at least possible that these couplets were performed in an accusatory manner.

If there was a *hetaireia* to which the speaker and his *hetairoi* belonged, he has no confidence that they will stick together in moments of crisis. These fraught moments are often denoted by *pragma*: this word either stresses the uncertainty of the outcome²¹ or underlines that few *hetairoi* will pass the test they pose.²² While the implication is that some *hetairoi* will indeed “pass the test” and provide the speaker support in “difficult circumstances” or “serious business,” nowhere does the speaker explicitly remark on the reliable support of a group (or even individuals) at critical moments. The focus is instead squarely on those companions who fail the test.

There is another situation in which you cannot assume the support of your companions: when you fall on hard times. Sympathy, when present, is described as short-lived.²³ Friends, even siblings, will abandon you.²⁴ A scene like this is shown in vivid detail in the couplet from lines 857-858: τῶν δὲ φίλων εἰ μὲν τις ὄραϊ μέ τι δειλὸν ἔχοντα, / ἀυχέν’ ἀποστρέψας οὐδ’ ἔσορᾶν ἐθέλει (“But if one of my friends sees me in some bad situation, / he turns his head and isn’t even willing to look at me.”) Even in the cases in which friends are steadfast, the speaker loudly bemoans his position, as in the couplet at lines 1107-1108: οἱ μοι ἐγὼ δειλός· καὶ δὴ κατάχαρμα μὲν ἐχθροῖς, / τοῖς δὲ φίλοισι πόνος δειλὰ παθῶν γενόμεν (“Oh me I am wretched, and indeed I have become a laughingstock to my enemies and a burden to my friends in my wretched

²¹ Lines 69-70, 203-204, 585-586, 659-660, 1075-1076.

²² Lines 79-80, 115-116, 641-642, 643-644.

²³ Lines 655-656.

²⁴ Lines 299-300, 697-698, 929-930.

suffering”).²⁵ The strong language that the speaker uses to bemoan his situation could certainly have been a polite acknowledgment of his friends’ sacrifice on his behalf, but it could also express a concern that the support will not continue. All in all, a friend’s loyalty can be lost in difficult or burdensome situations, and in any case should not be assumed to last.

5.3 A Choice in Friends

The fact that friends can abandon you whenever they deem fit shows that friendship is a choice in the Theognidea.²⁶ Moreover, it is a choice that is continually made and can be reversed at any time.²⁷ That entering into a friendship is nevertheless a high-stakes decision²⁸ is made clear by the language of passages like 115-116: μήποτε τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρα φίλον ποιῆσθαι ἑταῖρον, / ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ φεύγειν ὥστε κακὸν λιμένα (“never make a bad man a dear companion, but always flee him like a bad harbor”).²⁹ It is notable that here and throughout this choice is framed individually. One must decide whether to enter into (or remain in) a relationship with another individual, not whether to join a collective.³⁰

²⁵ The same sentiment is expressed in the doublet of this couplet (lines 1318a-b).

²⁶ *Contra Caciagli* (2018, 40).

²⁷ Lines 109-110.

²⁸ Van Wees 2000, 54.

²⁹ For more discussion of warnings against friendship with *kakoi*, see Donlan 1985.

³⁰ There is one instance, however, which is perhaps more ambiguous: οὐποθ’ ὕδωρ καὶ πῦρ συμμίξεται· οὐδέ ποθ’ ἡμεῖς / πιστοὶ ἐπ’ ἀλλήλοις καὶ φίλοι ἐσσομεθα. (“water and fire will never mingle with each other. Neither will we ever be trustworthy friends to each other”) (1245-1246). Here the first-person plurals could be referring to larger groups, but it could just as well be referring to two individuals (like the plural in lines 595-596).

The preeminence of interpersonal relationships is reinforced by the frequency of passages in which the speaker addresses a potential or former friend. In these, he discusses the decision to enter into, or leave, a friendship on purely individual terms.³¹ A possibly erotic passage from the second book illustrate the dynamics at play in these relationships:

καλὸς ἐὼν κακότητι φίλων δειλοῖσιν ὀμιλεῖς
 ἀνδράσι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' αἰσχρὸν ὄνειδος ἔχεις,
 ὦ παῖ· ἐγὼ δ' ἀέκων τῆς σῆς φιλότητος ἀμαρτῶν
 ὠνήμην ἔρδων οἷά τ' ἐλεύθερος ὦν.

Although *kalos*, under the bad influence [*kakotes*] of your friends you associate with *deiloi*, and because of this you incur shameful reproach, boy. Although I lost your friendship unwillingly, I have benefitted acting as a free man should.
 (1377-1380)

Here, we see a friendship between the speaker and a boy (possibly more than just a friendship) dissolved because the boy has started to associate with the wrong sort of people, whom the speaker describes as *deiloi*. Here the subjective assessment of who is *deilos* affects our understanding of the passage. If we believe that there is a group that is simply called “the *deiloi*,” this couplet would make sense as addressing someone who is switching allegiances between set groups. But this cannot be the case. The boy’s association with the *deiloi* results from the badness of his friends, with whom (it is heavily implied) the speaker does not associate. Evidently, the speaker and the boy did,

³¹ Lines 323-328, 1099-1100, 1102-1103, 1151-1152, 1238a-b, 1245-1246, 1278a-b, 1361-1362 (here evidently erotic), 1363-1364, and 1377-1380. The uses of the singular imperative, and the context of their use, suggest that 73-74, 87-88, and 89-90 should also be included in this catalogue.

however, have a relationship which preceded the boy's relationship with those called *deiloi* (hence the need for the speaker to let the friendship go). Friendship with the speaker could not ensure on its own that the boy would only associate with those deemed "good." If friendship with the speaker had entailed a network of attendant relationships (as we expect a formal *hetaireia* would have), such disappointment would not have been likely.³² Moreover, if friendship was purely a matter of group allegiance, there would also be no place for the speaker to credit himself alone for letting the friendship go. But we see just this sort of language when the speaker celebrates his actions as befitting an *eleutheros* (a "free man") (1380). Whether this poem describes an actual or imagined scenario, the terms of friendship it describes are unmistakably interpersonal.

The idea in 1377-1380 that those whom you associate with will define who you are is found elsewhere throughout the corpus. It appears as a warning in lines 305-308:

τοὶ κακοὶ οὐ πάντες κακοὶ ἐκ γαστρὸς γεγόνασιν,
 ἀλλ' ἄνδρεσσι κακοῖς συνθέμενοι φιλίην
 ἔργα τε δειλ' ἔμαθον καὶ ἔπη δύσφημα καὶ ὕβριν
 ἐλπόμενοι κείνους πάντα λέγειν ἔτυμα.

Kakoi are not all born *kakoi* from the womb,
 but establishing friendship with *kakoi* men
 they learn *deila* actions and shameful words and *hubris*
 supposing everything those men say to be true.
 (lines 305-308)

³² Unless the *hetaireia* was subdivided to the point that some members considered other subdivisions "the bad men." If so, the *hetaireia* would have essentially lost its claim to be a single group of companions.

This passage clearly establishes that one can be considered *kakos* (“bad”) on the basis of actions, not birth, as discussed in the previous chapter. But more interesting for my present purposes is its implication that those who became bad did not associate with people the speaker considers bad under compulsion. Instead, they entered into those friendships out of misplaced trust in what those men claimed. Here we see that one’s associates are the result of choice and that bad company corrupts good morals.

If 305-308 is a warning, similar sentiments are elsewhere offered as advice. In 1165-1166 it is business advice: τοῖσ’ ἀγαθοῖς σύμμισγε, κακοῖσι δὲ μήποθ’ ὀμάρτει, / εὖτ’ ἂν ὁδοῦ τελέηις τέροματ’ ἐπ’ ἐμπορίην (“associate with good men, and never work with the bad, whenever you reach the end of a journey for trade”). Another, more famous instance of advice on this subject is found at lines 31-38:

ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἴσθι· κακοῖσι δὲ μὴ προσομίλει
ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔχεο·
καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν
ἵζε, καὶ ἀνδανε τοῖσ’, ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις.
ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἅπ’ ἐσθλὰ μαθήσεται· ἦν δὲ κακοῖσιν
συμμίσγηις, ἀπολεῖς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα νόον.
ταῦτα μαθὼν ἀγαθοῖσιν ὀμίλει, καὶ ποτε φήσεις
εὖ συμβουλεύειν τοῖσι φίλοισιν ἐμέ.

Know these things are so. And don’t associate with bad men, but always cling to good men.
And drink and eat with them, and sit with them, and please those whose power is great.
For you will learn good things from good people, but if you mix with bad people, you will destroy even the sense you have.
Having learned these things associate with good men, and someday you will say I advise friends well.
(31-38)

This passage advises its addressee about who he should associate himself with at symposia.³³ The very fact that this advice is given implies two possibilities, both of which support a model of individual choice in friendship and sympotic attendance: either symposia had mixed company, or the symposium one attended was a matter of choice. Moreover, the speaker underlines the importance of associating regularly with the right people. The addressee must “always” cling to good men. This betrays the anxiety that the addressee could at any point stray from those the speaker thinks *agathoi*.³⁴ The concern for constancy and regularity in friendship arises elsewhere in connection with abandonment and betrayal by those once considered friends.

Even if these verses could perhaps be heard as a recruiting pitch to join a stable sympotic group, the need to be constantly vigilant about the company you keep does not seem consistent with a stable association with a single group of symposiasts. Furthermore, the people one should please are very pragmatically described at 34: “those whose power is great.” That was an unstable category during the social and political upheavals of the archaic period.³⁵ The likelihood of a recruiting pitch to a single, stable group is further diminished by the notable absence of the first-person plural. If we view these lines as a single poem, the advice is presented as an exchange between the

³³ A similar connection between associating with good men and being in a symposium is also present in 563-566 and 791-792.

³⁴ Cf. lines 1377-1380.

³⁵ This is a fact which van Wees (2000) illustrates well. His article is not promoting a model of *hetaireiai* akin to mafia organizations (*pace* Selle 2008, 259 n130); rather, he is comparing the use of virtue language in the Theognidea to that used by the mafia.

speaker and the addressee. And nowhere does he frame the desired outcome as joining “us” or “our group.” Instead, the speaker aims to advise and to be appreciated. If there is recruitment involved, it is that the speaker hopes to recruit the addressee as his personal mentee, as the final line emphasizes.

The benefit this relationship will bring the addressee is right thinking rather than a stable identity. This benefit is progressively acquired or lost: the addressee will learn good things from good people, but he can lose what good sense he has if he associates with bad people. The performance of these couplets would make little sense to an audience who thought of friendships as predetermined by membership in a certain *hetaireia*, especially if that membership was not driven by choice. At the very least, they imply that a much more independent alternative was possible.

The fact that friendship was a matter of individual choice has another important corollary: individuals’ perceptions of each other’s qualities and actions drive the formation of those relationships. This is illustrated by passages like 115-128:

πολλοί τοι πόσιος καὶ βρώσιός εἰσιν ἑταῖροι,
ἐν δὲ σπουδαίῳ πρήγματι παυρότεροι.
κιβδήλου δ’ ἀνδρὸς γνῶναι χαλεπώτερον οὐδέν,
Κύρν’, οὐδ’ εὐλαβίης ἔστι περὶ πλέονος.
χρυσοῦ κιβδήλοιο καὶ ἀργύρου ἀνσχετὸς ἄτη,
Κύρνε, καὶ ἐξευρεῖν ῥάϊδιον ἀνδρὶ σοφῶι.
εἰ δὲ φίλου νόος ἀνδρὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι λελήθηι
ψυδρὸς ἐών, δόλιον δ’ ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ ἔχη,
τοῦτο θεὸς κιβδηλότατον ποίησε βροτοῖσιν,
καὶ γνῶναι πάντων τοῦτ’ ἀνηρότατον.
οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰδείης ἀνδρὸς νόον οὐδὲ γυναικός,
πρὶν πειρηθείης ὥσπερ ὑποζυγίου,
οὐδὲ κεν εἰκάσσαις ὥσπερ ποτ’ ἐς ὤριον ἐλθῶν·

πολλάκι γὰρ γνώμην ἐξαπατῶσ' ἰδέαι.

Indeed many are companions of drink and food,
but in a serious matter there are few.
Nothing is more difficult to recognize than a counterfeit man,
Kurnos, nor is anything of greater worth than caution.
The ruin brought on by counterfeit gold and silver is enduring,
Kurnos, and it is easier for a wise man to discover.
But if the mind of a dear man is hidden in his chest,
being false, and he has a deceitful heart in his midriff,
the god made this the most counterfeit thing for mortals
and this is the most painful of all to recognize.
For you will not know the mind of a man or woman,
until you have tested it like a beast under the yoke,
nor could you make a guess, just as ever coming right on time,
for often appearances deceive judgment.
(115-128)

These verses, whichever view of their unity one takes, share a common concern: not everyone who acts friendly is a friend. The concern, bordering on paranoia, emphasizes how critical it is to determine who is really your friend and who is just pretending. The stakes are made clear when the pain brought by a counterfeit friend is implicitly called unendurable in comparison with the “endurable ruin” (*ἀνοσχετὸς ἄτη*, 119) of counterfeit gold.³⁶ The feeling is intensified later when a false friend is called “the most painful thing of all to recognize” (*γνώμην πάντων τοῦτ' ἀνηρότατον*, 124). The urgency in these lines better fits a scheme of friendship that operates on individual association than one which is dominated by formal associations. A member of a rigidly organized social group would not need to take this level of care in determining who his

³⁶ On the use of counterfeit here, see Kurke 1999, 53-55.

true friends are, unless that group was so characterized by internal conflict as to be a group in the most formal sense only.

For couplets like these to make rhetorical sense within a symposion, the large social superstructures or formal associations, if they existed, must have been characterized by shifting sub-alliances and sub-rivalries. It is the relationship among individuals, not any association as an entity, that most concerns the speaker. If there were *hetaireiai*, there were few true *hetairoi*. Hence, the constant concern with betrayal and abandonment in the Theognidea. Given how frequently these concerns are expressed in proximity to the language of friendship, a deeper analysis of the language of trust in the Theognidea is merited.³⁷

5.4 Trust

The Theognidea does not take for granted that one may trust his friends. On 11 occasions the speaker bemoans deception or otherwise untrustworthiness in those who were supposed to be friends.³⁸ This cynical stance towards trust in the corpus fits poorly with the harmonious picture of the symposion painted recently by Caciagli and Romney.³⁹

³⁷ Bakker has already called trust “a dominant theme” of the Theognidea (2017, 113).

³⁸ Lines 87-90, 91-92, 93-96, 415-6, 813-814, 831-832, 851-852, 963-970, 1080c-1084, 1164e-h, and 1243-4. Deception or lack of trust is strongly implied in line 598 and it is unclear whether lines 1219-1220 bemoan deception or advise its practice.

³⁹ Romney goes so far as to claim that the symposion is in itself a unifying force: “The shared social status and sympotic participation of the symposiasts created a small, tightly bonded group for the duration of the symposion” (2020, 11).

It should be no surprise, then, that trust is a topic of frequent advice. This advice goes in two seemingly opposed directions. On the one hand, the speaker counsels the addressee not to put too much trust in friends; on the other, he often advises him to practice to various degrees the same deception he bemoans. Both sides of this dynamic appear in lines 73-74: *πρῆξιν μηδὲ φίλοισιν ὅλως ἀνακοινέο πᾶσιν· / παῦροί τοι πολλῶν πιστὸν ἔχουσι νόον* (“don’t entirely share a matter even with any of your friends, indeed few out of many have a trustworthy mind”). Here we see both the concern that few friends have a *pistos noos* (“a trustworthy mind”) and the advice to hide one’s own dealings—a form of discretion that, if followed, might reasonably lead others to call the addressee untrustworthy too.

The *locus classicus* of advised deception is a pair of passages that are similar enough to be considered doublets (lines 213-218 and 1071-1072):

θυμέ, φίλους κατὰ πάντας ἐπίστρεφε ποικίλον ἦθος,
 ὀργὴν συμμίσγων ἦντιν’ ἕκαστος ἔχει·
 πουλύπου ὀργὴν ἴσχε πολυπλόκου, ὃς ποτὶ πέτρῃ,
 τῇ προσομιλήσῃ, τοῖος ἰδεῖν ἐφάνη.
 νῦν μὲν τῆιδ’ ἐφέπου, τοτὲ δ’ ἄλλοῖος χροά γίνου.
 κρέσσων τοι σοφίη γίνεται ἀτροπίης.

Heart, turn a variegated disposition to each friend in turn,
 mingling with it whatever mood each has.
 Adopt the temperament of the wily octopus, who, clinging to the rock
 he associates with, appears to look like it.
 Now follow this way, then become otherwise in skin.
 Indeed, cunning proves better than inflexibility.
 (213-218)

Κύρνε, φίλους πρὸς πάντας ἐπίστρεφε ποικίλον ἦθος,
 συμμίσγων ὀργὴν οἷος ἕκαστος ἔφυ.

Kurnos, turn a variegated disposition toward all of your friends,
mingling a mood whichever sort each is by nature.
(1071-1072)

Lines 73-74 may be best categorized as urging discretion rather than deception.⁴⁰ But here it is one's disposition (*ethos*) that the addressee should adapt to his audience.

Advising the addressee to seem different to different people treads awfully close to counseling direct deceit, an impression reinforced by the adjective *poikilon*, elsewhere associated with deception in the corpus.⁴¹

The speaker only advises against practicing deception once.⁴² Covert behavior bordering on deception, on the other hand, is suggested again in the passage at 309-312:

ἐν μὲν συσσίτοισιν ἀνὴρ πεπνυμένος εἶναι.
πάντα δέ μιν λήθειν ὡς ἀπεόντα δοκοῖ.⁴³
εἰς δὲ φέροι τὰ γελοῖα—θύρηφιν καρτερὸς εἶη—
γινώσκων ὀργὴν ἥντιν' ἕκαστος ἔχει.

In the *syssition* a man should be fully aware,
but everything should appear to escape his notice, as if he is absent.
Let him contribute jokes—but outdoors be firm—
recognizing what temperament each person has.
(309-312)

The fact that the speaker urges this behavior in a symposiac setting is striking,⁴⁴ but it is in keeping with the treatment of trust in friendships elsewhere in the corpus.

⁴⁰ Other examples include lines 283-286, 611-614, 633-634, 1030, 1185-1186, and 1221-1222.

⁴¹ See lines 222, 224, and 602.

⁴² At lines 607-610. In the right rhetorical circumstances even this passage could be a threat and not advice, namely, if the performer is subtly hinting that he perceives someone's deception, which will not be successful.

⁴³ I have here followed West in reading *δοκοῖ* rather than *δοκεῖ*.

⁴⁴ Although I am mindful that some disagree, I assume that the *syssition* here is interchangeable with the symposion, (see Rabinowitz 2009, 113-116).

More deception is seen in lines 365-366, which advise holding back from one's tongue what is on one's mind—the very behavior decried at 91-92. Another instance of duplicity counsels the addressee to be friendly toward everyone in word but not to associate with anyone in serious business.⁴⁵ This is not too far from the fair-weather friendship the speaker complains about in lines 115-116 and 645-646. The most striking passage of this type is found at 363-364: εὖ κώτιλλε τὸν ἐχθρόν· ὅταν δ' ὑποχείριος ἔλθῃ, / τεῖσαι νιν πρόφασιν μηδεμίαν θέμενος (“Flatter the enemy well. But whenever you have him under your thumb, / take revenge on him and give no pretext”). The fact that the victim is an “enemy” might be thought to excuse the deception. But this characterization is itself complicated. It is critical to the efficacy of the advice that the enemy thinks he is the addressee's friend: he is at least in a position to be flattered. Surely it would have been reasonable for a symposiast in the audience to hear these lines and wonder, “What if I am the enemy?” Perhaps the relationship between an actual performer and his audience would be so strong that this advice could not be understood as an implicit threat, but that would have to be a strong relationship indeed.

The Theognidea suggests that trustworthy relationships are hard to find and dangerous when found. On multiple occasions the speaker draws attention to the fact that friends can be more dangerous than enemies because you make yourself vulnerable

⁴⁵ Lines 63-64.

to them.⁴⁶ On the whole, the use of the adjective *pistos* in the corpus reveals a negative attitude toward trust. Of 20 uses only two can be interpreted as someone actually demonstrating the quality. The first even highlights its rarity: πιστὸς ἀνήρ χρυσοῦ τε καὶ ἀργύρου ἀντερούσασθαι / ἄξιος ἐν χαλεπῇ, Κύρνε, διχοστασίῃ (“a trustworthy man is worth weighing / in gold and silver, Kurnos, in harsh divisive strife,” 77-78). In the second, the speaker states his own and his companions’ trustworthiness in a way that seems to be protesting a charge: οὐδὲ ἓνα προῦδωκα φίλον καὶ πιστὸν ἑταῖρον, / οὐδ’ ἐν ἐμῇ ψυχῇ δουλίον οὐδὲν ἐνι (“I have not betrayed a single dear and trustworthy companion, / nor is there anything servile in my soul,” 529-530). More typically, uses of *pistos* range from warning the addressee to demonstrate trustworthiness to complaining about its rarity, even claiming that it has disappeared entirely (the speaker himself of course excepted): οὐδέν’ ὁμοῖον ἐμοὶ δύναμαι διζήμενος εὐρεῖν / πιστὸν ἑταῖρον, ὅτῳ μὴ τις ἔνεστι δόλος (“although I search, I cannot find anyone similar to me, / a trustworthy companion in whom there’s no deceit,” 415-416).⁴⁷

While *pistos* is often best rendered “trustworthy,” in keeping with the general concern with betrayal in the corpus, its sense sometimes approaches “loyal”:

παύρους εὐρήσεις, Πολυπαῖδη, ἄνδρας ἑταίρους
 πιστοὺς ἐν χαλεποῖς πρήγμασι γινομένους,
 οἵτινες ἂν τολμῶιεν ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχοντες

⁴⁶ Lines 575-576, 813-814, 831-832, and 1219-1220.

⁴⁷ See also lines 1164e-f, an exact duplicate of this couplet.

Ἴσον τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῶν τε κακῶν μετέχειν.

You will find, Polupaidēs, that few men
prove loyal friends in difficult circumstances,
who, one with you in thought and feeling, would dare
to share equally in the good and the bad.
(79-82).

As we have already seen at lines 115-116 and 643-644, the failure to prove *pistos* is common in important undertakings. The scarcity of *pistoi* among the speaker's companions is not the result of lack of status but lies rather in the very nature of "serious business" (*spoudaion pragma*).⁴⁸ In fact, forms of *spoudaios* are only used when mistrust and the potential for abandonment looms large.⁴⁹

What was "serious business"? Caciagli proposes that most likely it is the installation of the head of a *hetaireia* as a tyrant.⁵⁰ While this could be consistent with the use of the term in the Theognidea, the uncertainty surrounding these coups does not reflect well on the groups that make them. How cohesive is the group that cannot reliably call on its members to support its most important actions? In keeping with my emphasis on reperformance, I suggest that there is no need to settle on a single meaning for *spoudaion pragma*. Caciagli's proposal could well be right on occasion. But it is the very ambiguity of the expression that would have made it useful to various sympotic performers. "Serious business" could describe any matter the speaker deemed of consequence, whose importance he was trying to impress upon his audience. That a

⁴⁸ Lines 70, 116, 642, 644.

⁴⁹ The lines cited above, with the addition of 65 and 1374.

⁵⁰ Caciagli 2018, 96-100.

negative outlook so consistently accompanies these otherwise ambiguous uses reinforces the perception that concerns about betrayal and mistrust pervaded the atmosphere of symposia.

The idea that companions might abandon you when you need them most—or, worse, betray you—reinforces a social arrangement in which relationships are ultimately based on individual choice and driven by perceived self-interest rather than by a socially-binding group superstructure. It also reinforces the essentially personal stakes of being able to support the symposion by hosting in turn as a key to continued participation.⁵¹ Formal or informal group membership, if it exists, does not have its own power to hold people together. It is only a proxy for having the continued means to participate in the communal activities, and the willingness of that community to continue to associate with you. Theognidean friends are fair-weather friends.

5.5 Uncomfortable Performance

What are the rhetorical circumstances in which one would perform couplets that are so critical of friends and their trustworthiness? If symposiasts were among those “friends,” such performances would surely risk provoking strong feelings and upsetting the cheerful attitude that is supposed to have pervaded the symposion.

One possibility is that these uncomfortable performances are not meant to target their audience at all. In her recent monograph Romney argues that the very nature of the

⁵¹ See lines 667-678 for a possible reference to the need to contribute monetarily or be the subject of shame.

symposion encouraged unity among the symposiasts in attendance, at least for the duration of the symposion.⁵² Based on this fundamental assumption, she argues that passages like those above cannot have targeted the symposiasts present; to do so would have undermined the sympotic bond.⁵³ Instead, the complaints must have been understood as directed at others who were outside of the sympotic space.

While this interpretation is certainly possible in many cases, I am not convinced by its premise. A close reading of the corpus exhibits ample precedent for sympotic disunity.⁵⁴ In addition to those passages that directly involve deception in the symposion, there are also many that refer to the risks wine presents. Wine can affect someone's judgment: ἄφρονος ἀνδρὸς ὁμῶς καὶ σώφρονος οἶνος, ὅταν δὴ / πίνῃι ὑπέρ μέτρον, κοῦφον ἔθηκε νόον ("wine dizzies the mind of the wise and the unwise alike, whenever / one drinks beyond measure," 497-498).⁵⁵ While a *kouphos noos* ("light-headed mind") could refer to innocuous drunken foolishness, other instances make it clear that something more damaging to relationships is possible. Wine can act as a sort of truth serum, as seen in lines 499-500: ἐμ πυρὶ μὲν χρυσόν τε καὶ ἄργυρον ἴδριες ἄνδρες / γινώσκουσ', ἀνδρὸς δ' οἶνος ἔδειξε νόον ("skilled men recognize gold and silver / by fire. But wine reveals a man's mind"). Someone's *noos* can refer to their true feelings

⁵² Romney 2020, 11 (quoted above). Weçowski too proposes that certain uncomfortable performances could not have targeted attendees (2014, 60).

⁵³ Ibid. 122.

⁵⁴ For more on strife in the symposion, see Pellizer (1983, *n.b.* 35) and Miller (2018, 141).

⁵⁵ See also lines 483, 505-506.

about someone, as seen in line 413-414, where the very denial that drunkenness could make the speaker say something disparaging about his friend implies that the opposite can occur: *πίνων δ' οὐχ οὕτως θωρήξομαι, οὐδ' ἐμέ τ' οἶνος / ἐξάγει, ὥστ' εἰπεῖν δεινὸν ἔπος περὶ σοῦ* (“while drinking I will not get so loaded, and wine does not so carry me away, that I say something terrible about you,” 413-414). Finally, and most importantly for my purposes, is the couplet at 841-842: *οἶνος ἐμοὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα χαρίζεται, ἐν δ' ἀχάριστον, / εὖτ' ἂν θωρήξας μ' ἄνδρα πρὸς ἐχθρὸν ἄγηι* (“wine is welcome to me in all other respects, but unwelcome in one: / when after loading me up it leads me to an enemy”). While it is possible that the risks of drinking expressed here refer to drinking done outside of the symposion, sentiments like this, read alongside general statements of mistrust and warnings against trusting everyone in the symposion, suggest that the speaker perceives genuine risk in the way he comports himself among his drinking companions, who might eventually prove enemies lying in wait.⁵⁶

Uncomfortable topics arose in sympotic performance. In particular, sometimes performers seem willing to risk (or, when drunk, were unable to stop themselves from risking) the disintegration of jovial appearances in order to speak their minds about their frustrations. The realities of social, political, and interpersonal life in the archaic period were simply too fraught to be kept out of the revelry. The performance of poetry

⁵⁶ N.b. lines 73-74, as discussed above.

expressing complaint may have provided a distancing mechanism that facilitated the freer articulation of socially fraught sentiments. This offered a rare opportunity for some symposiasts to raise their concerns, however passive-aggressively.

Might there have been a rhetorical purpose beyond the obvious (if short-lived) pleasure of passive-aggressively attacking one's enemies—or, even better, telling them to their face what you really thought of them? While more diplomatic symposiasts could use advice to express frustration and anger indirectly, there are also copious examples of outright complaints about friends. A skillful performer might even be able to garner enough sympathy to ensure continued participation. This sympathy would be especially important if he needed to be subsidized by a patron or a group of supporters in order to continue attending the gatherings.

Some rhetorical uses of this poetry of betrayal and mistrust do not depend on the despondency of its speaker. A firebrand could use it to sow discord within the group and elevate himself in the subsequent strife. The possibility of such a divided symposion is alluded to in lines 493-496:⁵⁷

ὕμεις δ' εὖ μυθεῖσθε παρὰ κρητῆρι μένοντες,
ἀλλήλων ἔριδος δὴν ἀπερυσκόμενοι
εἰς τὸ μέσον φωνεῦντες ὁμῶς ἐνὶ καὶ συνάπασιν·
χοῦτως συμπόσιον γίνεται οὐκ ἄχαρι.

While you remain by the krater perform well,
long warding off strife with each other,

⁵⁷ This passage is cited by Pellizer as evidence of “fear that the friends’ aggression can degenerate into aggressive or transgressive manifestations” (1983, 39).

speaking openly alike to one and all.
In this way a symposion does not become unpleasant.
(493-496)

By urging his addressees to perform nicely, avoid strife, and address the whole group in order to have a pleasant symposion, the speaker implicitly acknowledges that the opposite occurred in other, unpleasant symposia; otherwise, there would be no need for such exhortations. It is not difficult to picture what it would look like for someone to perform in a way that was not good, that welcomed strife, or that singled out symposiasts: one need look no further than the complaints and divisive advice about deception, betrayal, mistrust, and bad friendship reviewed in this chapter.

The final possibility for these uncomfortable performances is pedagogical. Many of these passages take the form of gnomic advice, and sometimes its very status as advice is noted explicitly.⁵⁸ Even those that are not obviously pedagogical (i.e. personal complaints and reports) could be used by a performer to embody a down-on-his-luck persona as a warning to those in the audience he hopes to instruct.⁵⁹ Even as advice these lines undercut the notion of the symposion as a gathering of friends to the extent that a high level of skill would be needed to convince one's fellow symposiasts that these complaints were purely pedagogical, with no ulterior motives. A careless performer would risk causing the sort of strife the speaker urges against in lines 493-496.

⁵⁸ N.b. 37-38.

⁵⁹ Cf. Spelman 2021. Colesanti suggests that we think of Theognis and Kurnos in the context of such role playing (2011, 219-241). This possibility will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

5.6 Conclusion

It is possible that each symposiast belonged to a fixed group with whom he celebrated the symposion. But there are no clear indications of such groups in the Theognidea. Instead, we find high-stakes discussions of interpersonal relationships. If fixed groups did exist, they do not seem to have restricted the way their members conducted their own personal relationships. Additionally, the prevalence of negative behavior explicitly situated within the symposion weighs against the notion that negative attitudes toward friendship could not apply to the symposiasts present.⁶⁰ Since a negative view of friendship is pervasive, one would have to imagine that outside friendships dominated the discussion while inner friendships were ignored. This seems unlikely. The absence of any comparison of “those bad friends” with “you, my true companions” would also be striking. Absence is not proof, but it is nonetheless safe to assert that the model of friendship most consistent with the text of the Theognidea is one based on personal choice, motivated by self-interest, and not particularly stable.

The findings of this chapter call into question existing sympotic models of the Theognidea’s origins.⁶¹ These accounts have taken a step in the right direction by attributing the Theognidea to a more collective authorship, but they focus on their putative original performance in a single *hetaireia*. The definition of the collective needs to be taken further. Those models rely on sympotic groups that were stable enough to

⁶⁰ *Contra* Romney 2020. As shown in lines 115-116 and 643-644.

⁶¹ *N.b.* Colesanti (2011, 219-241), Vetta (2000, 138-141), and Nagy (1985, 22-81).

give rise to their own poetic traditions and maintain the memory of those traditions over generations, either orally or recorded in writing. That picture of a stable group of friends imbued with tradition is inconsistent with friendship as described by the poetry itself. For this reason, the idea of the authorship of the collection must be revisited. That is the work of the next chapter.

6. These Verses are Theognis^(?): Ancient Authority and Modern Authorship

θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη (22)

6.1 Introduction

The performance of Theognidean poetry in the symposion was a rhetorical act.¹ Symposiasts used the poetry not simply to please but to persuade.² As an act of rhetoric, a poem was successfully performed if it achieved its performer's aim. The effect sought could be something tangible, like the group agreeing upon whether to continue the revelry,³ or it could be something more abstract, like whether the audience takes the performer's advice to heart and considers him wise.⁴ Each rhetorical act consists of three elements: somebody telling (1) somebody else (2) something (3).⁵

In the case of sympotic poetry, the rhetorical dynamic is concrete and immediate. All three elements are physically present in the symposion: a symposiast performing (1), symposiasts listening (2), and the poetry being orally performed (3). When the Theognidea is experienced as a collection of written text, however, these three elements are no longer present together. The audience is present, but as a reader temporally and physically removed from the performance. Part of the poetry is also lost: the totality of what had been voiced and heard is distilled down to the words alone, losing any

¹ I am not the first to observe this; see Walker (2000, 129ff.) and Hobden 2013.

² To be sure, the ability to please played an important part in that persuasion (see line 24).

³ E.g. lines 469-497.

⁴ N.b. lines 27-38.

⁵ I take this model from Phelan (2017).

nuances that delivery or performance context might have provided. Finally, the sympotic performer is absent entirely. These absences force modern readers to reconstruct basic elements of the rhetorical exchange as abstractions.

Previous attempts to reconstruct the performance circumstances of the Theognidea have focused on the original performance of the poetry, whether that performance is imagined to be by Theognis or by a specific sympotic circle. This is a valid choice. But it is not the only choice. As I have shown in chapter four, different symposia would have had different attendees. For this reason they could have had different stakes—from the truly casual gatherings of friends to fraught political showdowns. There is no reason to believe that the rhetorical stakes of any given verse's first performance were higher than those of subsequent performances. What's more, original performances do not enjoy more secure evidence than reperformances; both are accessible only in imagined reconstructions from the text. Original performances are thus neither more rhetorically significant than subsequent reperformances nor more readily accessible to study.

Every sympotic performance is a valid rhetorical act. This includes reperformances. While this statement may seem self-evident, it is in direct contrast to the way that reperformance is treated as inherently secondary to the original performance.⁶

⁶ One need look no further than the drive to settle which is the *lectio priora*, which the *lectio altera* in the doublets. For a discussion of Colesanti's approach to this topic, see Ferreri's review (2013, 80 n55). In the wider scholarship on lyric, a good recent example of this phenomenon is Romney's discussion of Solon's

In this chapter I propose a reconstruction of the Theognidean rhetorical circumstances which centers on reperformance rather than original performance. The “somebody telling,” rather than a single individual, is drawn from the totality of sympotic performers across the archaic Greek world who used this poetry to their own rhetorical ends.

The reconstruction of the abstracted elements in the rhetorical exchange is guided by plausibility, as defined by the text and our historical knowledge. In the first section of this chapter, I show that the presence of widespread reperformance is readily acknowledged by the poetry of the Theognidea itself. Moreover, I show how the position taken by the speaker in some of the most commonly cited instances of Theognidean authorship is actually more concerned with the dynamics of authority than authorship, which is in keeping with my picture of sympotic dynamics.

Next, I examine the historical evidence for Theognis and argue that “Theognis” is best described as an implied author. This terminology is from the rhetorical theory of narrative. Originally developed to specify the different positions taken by authors and narrators within complex narratives, this vocabulary is well-suited for the complex situation facing readers of the Theognidea.

manipulation of reperformances of his poetry (2020, 129-156). Vetta’s idea of the symposion as “dialectic” also subtly reinforces the primacy of the original (2000, 129ff). Cf. Spelman’s discussion of the reperformance of Pindar (2018) and Hunter and Uhlig’s companion on the topic (which, sadly, does not include any lyric) (2017).

Finally, I argue for a transposition of that implied authorship to the collective symposiasts. In attributing the collection to the symposiasts as a whole, I seek to embrace its seeming inconsistencies rather than smooth them out. The symposiasts do not need to represent a single ideology or worldview to share in their role as a collective implied author. Instead we see the concerns, hopes, and complaints of many shared, stolen, and repurposed.

6.2 Authorship and Authority in the Theognidea

The poetry of the Theognidea seems to settle the question of its author's identity. After a brief collection of opening hymns (lines 1-18), the so-called seal poem contains a confident assertion of who can lay claim to the poetry:⁷

Κύρνε, σοφιζομένωι μὲν ἔμοι σφρηγίς ἐπικείσθω
τοῖσδ' ἔπεσιν, λήσει δ' οὐποτε κλεπτόμενα,
οὐδέ τις ἀλλάξει κάκιον τοῦσθλοῦ παρεόντος·
ὧδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ· 'θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη
τοῦ Μεγαρέως· πάντα δὲ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ὀνομαστός.'

Kurnos, let a seal be placed on these verses for me,
exercising my skill, and they will never be stolen without notice,
nor will anyone trade out something worse for the good thing which is present,
but any and everyone will speak in this way: "These are Theognis' verses,
the one from Megara, famous among all people."
(19-23)

This is the only mention of the name "Theognis" in the text. But elements of this passage suggest that the claim of authorship is not as straightforward as it might appear. First,

⁷ All of the different versions of the seal poem contain these lines. For more on the different endings that this poem has been given, see Chapter 1.

Theognis' claim is mediated through another's voice. The speaker does not say "I, Theognis, composed these verses" or state himself, "These are the verses of Theognis," but instead "Any and everyone will speak in this way: 'These are Theognis' verses...'" (ὧδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ· 'θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη, 22).⁸ Moreover, this claim is not made during a performance in the present. Instead, a future performance, in which audience members are responding to a transgression by a performer who isn't Theognis, is imagined in these lines. Theognis, in the speaker's imagined future, is so famous (literally "named") that no one can attempt to "steal" his poetry without everyone noticing. This claim of authorship is, markedly, not a statement of the present fact—as the speaker bemoans in the following couplet⁹—but a hope for the future declared as a fact.

The circumstances of this declaration are the culture of sympotic performance that I have illustrated throughout this dissertation. All of the symposiasts work to assert that they belong in the symposium,¹⁰ and all must carefully associate with the right people.¹¹ The performance of poetry is used to those ends. The poetry itself is malleable and easily taken up and repurposed by others.¹² The bold claim of lines 19-24 is an

⁸ Compare the seal of Phocylides, which begins five of his verses: καὶ τόδε Φωκυλίδεω. Farther afield, in terms of genre and time, compare the first lines of the historians: Herodotus: "This is the demonstration of the inquiry of Herodotus of Haliarnassus..." (Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέως ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦδε...) and Thucydides' "Thucydides of Athens wrote..." (Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε...).

⁹ "But I am not able to please all of the townspeople" (ἀστοίοισιν δ' οὐπω πᾶσιν ἀδεῖν δύναμαι, 25).

¹⁰ See Chapter 3.

¹¹ See Chapter 4.

¹² As I demonstrate in Chapters 1 and 2.

attempt to claim authority with an eye to those rhetorical circumstances. If we read the following couplets (lines 26-38) as part of the same poetic expression, we see the speaker trying to use the prospect of future authority in place of his present lack of respect in order to convince the addressee that he is someone whose advice is worth taking. Someday, he claims, everyone will immediately recognize and praise the wisdom of my verses: get in on the ground floor.

These verses illustrate the role that authority could play in a culture of widespread reperformance, even accepting that all performances are rhetorically valid, no matter how “derivative” by modern standards. A symposiast’s aim could be to claim authority as a masterful composer of original poetry, as is the case in lines 19-26 and 237-254. In those cases, being caught plagiarizing, as some have interpreted lines 22-23 describing,¹³ would lead to sure rhetorical failure. In other circumstances, however, a symposiast might showcase skill by modifying a known poem, or even repeating a known poem wholesale at the right moment.¹⁴ There might be times when someone interjecting “These are the words of Theognis” is welcomed by the symposiast! And yet, rhetorically speaking, at the heart of the matter is the fact that it is the performer who succeeds or fails at his rhetorical aims, not the original author, whoever that may be. Each poetic utterance is thus a new rhetorical act when it finds itself in a new sympotic

¹³ Selle 2008, 392-393.

¹⁴ I discuss one example of this in Chapter 2.

context, even if some, or all, of the words of that utterance are “stolen.” Whether a symposiast composed a poem originally, modified an existing poem, or engaged in wholesale plagiarism mattered only to the extent to which it affected that performance’s ability to achieve its rhetorical aim.¹⁵

There is also a delightful irony at play. These lines, which purport to be a claim of single authorship, are perhaps our best evidence for the pervasive culture of reperformance. After all, they do not claim that these verses will never be stolen (that is, reperformed by someone else), but only not stolen “without notice.” Even modification is imagined to be detected rather than wholly prevented. The seal poem’s prohibitions, regardless of how we evaluate their efficacy, should thus be understood as evidence for the very phenomena they are hoping to prevent.¹⁶

Surely it is not coincidental that another notable claim of fame is also framed in terms of reperformance. The widespread notoriety (lines 237-240) and even immortality (lines 243-246) that the speaker gives the addressee are the product of the fact that others will sing him (that is to say, sing about him):

θοίνης δὲ καὶ εἰλαπίνησι παρέσσημι
ἐν πάσαις πολλῶν κείμενος ἐν στόμασιν,

¹⁵ Cf. Colesanti 2011, 107: “[The ancient symposiasts], with great practicality, reused what they needed for the specific moment of their sympotic performance, without thinking of its origin” (“[gli antichi simposiasti], con molta praticità, riusavano ciò di cui avevano bisogno per lo specifico momento della loro *performance* simposiale, senza pensare alla sua origine”).

¹⁶ See also line 369-372, discussed below.

καί σε σὺν αὐλίσκοισι λιγυφθόγγοις νέοι ἄνδρες
εὐκόσμως ἔρατοὶ καλά τε καὶ λιγέα
ἄισονται.

You will be present in the festivals and banquets,
all of them, lying on the lips of many,
and lovely young men will sing you
with clear-voiced flutes, orderly,
beautiful, and clear.
(lines 239-243)

Futurity still pervades. But in this case, direct reperformance is the goal. The speaker frames himself as the one who sets the reperformance in motion, but he does not appear concerned about whether those νέοι ἄνδρες who repeat his verses give him credit.

Unlike in lines 19-24, however, the aspiration is that the addressee, not the speaker, will achieve fame. We are given no indication as to whether those young men even know the verses are his. The verses are “you,” not “mine.” The speaker is still frustrated, but in this case he complains about the addressee for treating him disrespectfully (lines 253-254), not the young men for performing his verses. As in the seal poem, the lofty vision of future fame in this prolonged poem (237-254) serves as an elaborate argument for why the speaker deserves more respect from the addressee in the immediate sympotic circumstances.

The most secure example of the speaker asserting his poetic skill in the present takes a confrontational tone: “Many blame me, the bad and good alike; but none of these fools can imitate me.” (μωμεῦνται δέ με πολλοί, ὁμῶς κακοὶ ἤδὲ καὶ ἐσθλοί· / μμεῖσθαι δ’ οὐδεις τῶν ἀσόφων δύναται, 369-370). Taking ἄσοφος as a reference to

lack of poetic skill,¹⁷ the use of μιμέομαι is an attempt to assert the speaker's poetic authority by calling other performers imitators. Here again, reperformance is present, if bemoaned. As in line 23, the speaker universalizes (ὁμῶς κακοὶ ἤδὲ καὶ ἐσθλοί), but here it is the reperformers who are universal rather than the universal audience (πᾶς τις) who will call out the offenders. What's more, the context of this couplet also mirrors the previous expression of poetic authority: contrast with a lack of approval by the townspeople (ἄστοι).¹⁸ Here, it is the previous couplet rather than the following that expresses that lack of approval. The speaker, however, does not look forward as in the previous poem to a future when everyone will appreciate his poetic authority; instead, he focuses on a present time of confidence in his own poetic authority and does not seem bothered that others do not appreciate it. This vision of poetic authority differs from the one in the earlier passages in that the audience and reperformance are not an important element. While this could still be an argument on the part of the speaker to other symposiasts ("I'm doing the best at this"), it is one that comes with an acknowledged lack of support (including from those the speaker calls "the good").

The final example of the speaker claiming poetic authority is almost a direct rebuttal to that vision of poetic authority:

χρὴ Μουσῶν θεράποντα καὶ ἄγγελον, εἴ τι περισσόν
εἰδείη, σοφίης μὴ φθονερόν τελέθειν,

¹⁷ Nagy 1985, 24-26.

¹⁸ Every manuscript that contains the couplet connects it to 367-368. Of the editions, only Bekker, Welcker, and Ziegler separate them.

ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν μῶσθαι, τὰ δὲ δεικνύεν, ἄλλα δὲ ποιεῖν·
τί σφιν χρήσεται μούνοσ ἐπιστάμενοσ;

It is necessary for the servant and messenger of the Muses, if he knows something excellent, not to be jealous with his skill, but to aspire to some things, point out some things, and compose others. What use is it to him, if he's the only one who knows?
(lines 769-772)

It is notable that, unlike Archilochus,¹⁹ the speaker does not directly claim this role for himself. This poem could have been performed as a flattering exhortation to another symposiast to share his poetic skill with the group. In any case, the role of “servant and messenger of the Muses” is divinely privileged. The Muses are mentioned elsewhere in the collection, including in direct connection to the speaker’s poetic activity, as a reminder to be mindful of them when performing,²⁰ but nowhere else does the speaker claim that anyone has privileged access to them. The couplet at line 15 evokes the Muses toward the beginning of the collection,²¹ but rather than calling upon them to speak through the poet, the couplet reports an enigmatic statement that they made of their own accord. The idea that the Muses are the source of poetic authority is distinct from the vision seen above of authority derived from reputation (lines 20-23) or self-confidence (lines 369-370). At times complementary, at times competing, these different sources of poetic authority are all tools in the rhetorical toolbox available to symposiasts as they seek to establish their role in the symposion.

¹⁹ Fragment 1.

²⁰ Line 1055-1058.

²¹ Cf. Iliad 1.1, Odyssey 1.1, Solon frg. 13.2.

Having discussed the ways that the speaker deploys different sources of authority in the text of the Theognidea, an important question remains. Who is the speaker according to the text? As mentioned above, “Theognis” as a name has only the slightest presence in the poetry itself. Paratextually, the name is well-attested in the manuscript tradition. Each of the authoritative manuscripts call the Theognidea by a different name, but each iteration preserves the name Theognis.²² Within the corpus itself, however, the name “Theognis” is mentioned only once.²³ The speaker calls himself Aithon of Thebes as many times as he calls himself Theognis of Megara.²⁴ What’s more, the speaker is a woman more often than she is specifically identified as Theognis.²⁵

The single appearance of Theognis’ name is not itself unusual—authors like Hesiod and Herodotus also mention their names only once²⁶—but it does stand in stark contrast with authors like Phocylides, the composer of gnomic hexameters, who is particularly regarded as Theognis’ peer.²⁷ Five of his fragments begin “καὶ τόδε Φωκυλίδεω” (“This is also by Phocylides”). Given the ease with which gnomic poetry can be mixed and matched, phrases which are integrated into the poetry can

²² West 1989, 174.

²³ Line 22.

²⁴ Line 1209.

²⁵ Lines 579-582, 861-4, 1211-1216.

²⁶ Hesiod’s name even appears in the same line of the Theogony as Theognis’ does in the Theognidea (line 22).

²⁷ The modern practice of including Theognis and Phocylides in the same edition (Young 1971, West 1978) draws from ancient sources which mention the poets together (Dio of Prusa (ii 5), Athenaeus (632d), and Cyril (*c. Iul.*, Patrol. lxxvi 841d, as cited in West 1978). Another notable poet who uses the same device is Demodocus, although this usage has been regarded as a parody (West 1978, 165). Demodocus himself, given his Homeric name, is even regarded as a possible pseudonymous/parodic name (Selle 2008, 367).

serve to guarantee authorial credit. But, more importantly, they also serve to guarantee the authority of others who perform them because the words come from a respected source.²⁸ Indeed, the value of this naming phrase for authority supersedes its value for authorship. It would be easy enough for someone else to craft a new poem with the phrase “καὶ τόδε Φωκυλίδεω” in it,²⁹ but someone would only do so because it added rhetorical value to the poem by its authority.

The fact that no equivalent device appears in the Theognidea is illustrative. There are many possible explanations for the absence of this naming device, none of which excludes another. It could be that only the seal poem, which mentions his name, is really Theognis’.³⁰ Or it may betray a lack of desire to claim credit on the part of Theognis. This explanation seems unlikely, given the concern for renown expressed in lines 22-24. It could also indicate that Theognis’ status as an authority operated differently from Phocylides’ (i.e. his name did not carry the same weight). This hypothetical relative lack of authority would conflict with the status he enjoyed in the fourth century,³¹ but that is not in itself prohibitive.³² A fourth, more fruitful potential explanation is the performance circumstances. The constant repetition of a seal like Phocylides’ would

²⁸ For a catalogue, see West 1978, 164.

²⁹ Selle goes so far as to claim that this motivation is the very source of the phrase and that none of the poems should be attributed to Phocylides (2008, 367).

³⁰ Selle argues that this poem is the only one which can be attributed to Theognis without any doubt (2008, 376).

³¹ De Martin 2020b.

³² Authors can gain authority after their demise. Melville died in obscurity.

interrupt the flow of sympotic performance. What's more important, it severely limits the verses' malleability. The presence of the seal calls attention to the gnome's identity as a quotation rather than as a part of a sympotic composition.³³ In this sense, the phrase "καὶ τόδε Φωκυλίδεω" in its very utterance creates an explicit divide between the performer and the author, even in direct oral performance.

There is no such explicit divide in the gnomological poetry of the Theognidea. In the absence of this device, any performer hoping to cash in on Theognis' authority (if such a thing existed) would have relied on the audience's recognition of the Theognidean authority behind it. This more subtle dynamic of recognition is certainly possible, and it would carry with it an esoteric quality that might be attractive to an elite symposiast.³⁴ Indeed, the speaker of lines 22-23 imagines just this sort of recognition. As noted above, he projects this dynamic into the future. There is no way of knowing if that imagined future ever became a historical reality. Even if it did in some cases, the necessity of prior knowledge renders the Theognidean authority vulnerable to disappearance. In those cases where there was no prior knowledge of Theognis' verses, the audience would not perceive any distinction between the performer of the poem and its author. If that distinction disappears, so does Theognis. Even if we should grant the

³³ Condello argues, "proprio la ripetizione del sigillo in capo a ogni gnome depone a favore di una circolazione virtualmente e direi vocazionalmente autonoma degli enunciati" ("specifically the repetition of the seal at the head of every gnome argues in favor of a circulation of the statements that is virtually and I would suggest vocationally autonomous") (2011, 505).

³⁴ This is, in a way, the dynamic imagined by those who position Theognis as a persona; n.b. Nagy 1985, 33-34.

primacy of first performance by the true Theognis, the lack of a repeated seal suggests either that he is not as concerned with credit as he otherwise claims, that the performance dynamic does not allow for such a mechanism, or that not all of the verses are his to begin with.

The various claims to “authorship” in the Theognidea are best understood as attempts to assert individual authority within a crowd of sympotic voices. If we accept that one of those was a man named Theognis, his claim was eventually successful: the collection is attributed in all of the manuscripts to him and referenced as belonging to him in the testimonia. But that success is not universal. In the cases of the external doublets, the authority of the other authors (Solon, Tyrtaeus, Mimnermus) has prevailed over Theognis’, so his collection is said to have “stolen” their verses. An even more serious challenge to Theognis’ authority has arisen as analytical philological approaches have been applied to this text. Now only a few scholars grant Theognis authorship of the entire text. Many scholars say: “Only some of the verses are by Theognis of Megara.” Others have gone as far as to say, directly or indirectly, that none of them are.³⁵ Each of these approaches relies upon evaluating the claim made in lines 20-23. In doing so, they abide by its terms: focusing on the individual claim to authority rather than the crowd of voices. This choice is strange, given how little is actually known about Theognis.

³⁵ See my discussion of these positions below.

6.3 Theognis the Historical Figure

Theognis may well have existed, but we have no way to be certain. There is no corroborating epigraphical or archaeological evidence for his existence or that of his addressees, as is so fortunately the case with Archilochus.³⁶ There is no evidence for Theognis in the histories of Megara, both local and Aristotelian.³⁷ Theognis is mentioned frequently in ancient testimonia, but almost exclusively in order to describe his poetic activity.³⁸ This is also the case for the ancient *vita* preserved.³⁹ Already in the earliest 4th-century testimonia, the ancients disagreed over which Megara he was from.⁴⁰ By that time he was regarded as a “common authority on virtue,” especially in Socratic circles.⁴¹ Plato quotes him multiple times but gives no more biographical detail than the fact that he was from the Sicilian Megara.⁴² As with his Megara of origin, the dating of his life is an open question.⁴³ Xenophon may have written a work “On Theognis,” but again no historical detail survives, only discussion of his choice of poetic subject matter and

³⁶ Swift 2019; Clay 2004.

³⁷ Okin attributes both of these absences to Aristotle’s choice to follow Plato by placing Theognis in Megara Hyblaia, as Aristotle was also the source of the preserved local histories (1985, 18).

³⁸ Selle collects 193 ancient testimonia (2008, 394-423). A new digital collection of the testimonia is coming from Federico Condello, according to his website (<https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/federico.condello/publications>).

³⁹ Among other places, before Manuscript V.

⁴⁰ If we are to trust Harpocration (150.13 as quoted in Photius θ 83.20). Plato explicitly situates Theognis in the Sicilian Megara, Isocrates does not comment.

⁴¹ De Martin 2020b, 118. Her entire chapter is an excellent source on the 4th-century reception of the poet.

⁴² Plato, *Laws* 629a-630c.

⁴³ Figueira’s dating is now widely cited (1985b).

poetic activity.⁴⁴ The short note in the *Suda* is limited to a catalogue of his poetic works, some of which seem to have been lost.⁴⁵

There is no evidence that even the earliest testimonies had access to more concrete proof of his existence than we do. In response to this criticism, Selle writes: “If one wanted to move Theognis into the realm of fairy tales for this reason alone, one would have to do the same with Hesiod, Solon, Archilochus and most of the other characters of the archaic period.”⁴⁶ But moving Solon into the realm of fairy tales is rather different from doing the same with Theognis. Solon is an important historical figure in addition to being a poet. Removing Solon’s authorial role from the poetry that is attributed to him, as Lardinois suggests,⁴⁷ removes a key element of its significance. As far back as our evidence can take us, Theognis only existed within the poetry.⁴⁸ In this sense, Theognis is an implied author.

⁴⁴ As quoted in Stobaios 4.29c53

⁴⁵ *Suda*, Θ 136-137.

⁴⁶ Selle 2008, 20. “Wenn man freilich schon deswegen Theognis ins Märchenreich verpflanzen wollte, so müsste man mit Hesiod, Solon, Archilochos und den meisten anderen Gestalten der archaischen Zeit ebenso verfahren” (2008, 20).

⁴⁷ Lardinois 2006.

⁴⁸ My position on this matter is much the same as Nagy’s with regard to Sappho: “when we speak of a ‘historical Sappho,’ we are imagining the existence of a person who lived in a historically identifiable era. I say ‘imagining’ because for me the existence of such a historical person is not at all proven to be a fact if we rely simply on the words that are attributed to Sappho in the texts ascribed to her. What she says about herself and about anyone and anything else in her songs is a function of her songmaking: it is not some kind of reportage about her historical circumstances. In terms of my argument, the words of Sappho can be used as evidence for understanding the history of the songmaking attributed to her, but I insist that whatever the persona of Sappho says about herself cannot be used as factual evidence about the life and times of Sappho” (2019, 38). Cf. O’Connell 2021.

6.4 *The Implied Author*

The idea of the implied author was introduced by Wayne C. Booth in his landmark narratological work “The Rhetoric of Fiction.” This work, originally published in 1961 and republished in an updated second edition in 1983, outlines an approach to narrative as a complex rhetorical act. There is some debate about the usefulness of this term, especially outside of the most extreme cases of misalignment.⁴⁹ For my purposes the debate is inconsequential: I believe that for modern readers the *Theognidea* is precisely such a case of misalignment.

As a rhetorical act, narrative, according to Booth and those who follow him, involves a spectrum of authors and audience. A similar model can be identified in the rhetorical act of sympotic poetry. The implied author sits between the flesh-and-blood author and the “I” of the text (whom Booth calls the narrator, but I call the speaker). The narrator is a textual phenomenon and does not exist outside of the text. The flesh-and-blood author is a living, breathing human being and cannot exist within text. As a textual image of an extratextual entity, the implied author bridges this gap. In other words, the implied author is “the picture the reader gets” of the author when engaging with the text.⁵⁰ This picture is based on the authorial choices that went into the creation

⁴⁹ On the controversy, see Kindt and Müller 2006, to whom Shen 2011 responds, and the entire issue of *Style* devoted to the subject (Richardson 2011).

⁵⁰ Booth 1983, 71.

of the text—the norms and values that undergird it—but it must ultimately be decoded by the reader.⁵¹

In many cases the distinction between the narrator, the implied author, and the flesh-and-blood author is immaterial: what the narrator says aligns with the position of the implied author, which is itself identical to the position the flesh-and-blood author inhabits. In a complex literary work, however, a correct reading can depend on making careful distinctions between the postures of these entities. On the one hand, narrators can be unreliable and personae can be ironically adopted. Parody relies on the possibility of such distinction, as do novels like *Lolita*. On the other hand, the identity of the flesh-and-blood author can be irreconcilable with that of the implied author. This irreconcilability can arise from known historical facts like pseudonyms. The distinction between implied author and author can also arise from a lack of known historical facts. The most vivid modern example is the case of Elena Ferrante, whose true identity has been carefully kept hidden. Elena Ferrante does not exist in flesh-and-blood, but many readers feel they know her in the same way that they might know any other author. She is an implied author in the purest sense, a purity that may indeed be the flesh-and-blood author's motivation for maintaining anonymity.⁵² The *Theognidea*, by an accident of the historical record, also falls into this case. The poetry of the collection reflects the poetic

⁵¹ Ibid, 75.

⁵² Hill 2020.

activity of countless flesh-and-blood symposiasts, all of whom have been subsumed under the name of a single implied author: "Theognis."

6.5 Theognis as Implied Author

Discussion of the historical figure of Theognis has already gestured at his status as a textual phenomenon. In his introduction to his 1971 edition West writes: "In the unarranged sylloge which has come to us under the name of Theognis, Theognis himself lurks, a man brilliant and passionate, engaged with his city, whose nature and fortunes are worthy of contemplation."⁵³ While West surely imagines himself to be describing the values of a flesh-and-blood human being, the language points to the fact that this person is found nowhere but the text. Vetta points to this fact directly when he describes, "the personality of Theognis as it emerges from the elegies."⁵⁴ Later, Nagy makes the most direct statement to this effect: "the poetry itself actually creates the integral and lively personality of one man."⁵⁵

In the absence of substantive evidence for Theognis' character outside of his poetic activity, when scholars have discussed his values, norms, and even personality they are describing the picture of the author they get as readers of the text. The formation of the idea of Theognis is the formation of an authorial presence behind the

⁵³ "In sylloge indigesta quae sub Theognidis nomine ad nos pervenit *latet ipse Theognis*, vir clarus atque ardens in republica versatus, cuius indolem fortunasque seorsum contemplari operae pretium est" (West 1978, 1).

⁵⁴ "Personalità di Teognide come emerge dalle elegie" (Vetta 2000, 128).

⁵⁵ Nagy 1985, 34.

poems.⁵⁶ He is a textual feature rather than a flesh-and-blood historical figure, and one that has allowed for a coherent reading of the collection. Every description of Theognis' personality,⁵⁷ and even history,⁵⁸ is best understood as a description of the implied author of the *Theognidea*.

6.6 The Implied Author of the *Theognidea*: Four Approaches

The concept of the implied author provides a vocabulary for describing Theognidean authorship, but it does not unify the various approaches to identifying Theognidean authorship. The approaches are so numerous as to necessitate typologies to organize them. In the past, these typologies have used the different models of the text's origin as their defining factor (i.e. gnomological vs. sympotic).⁵⁹ While there is obvious value in understanding these different models, this organizational principle equates process with product and obscures the fact that some accounts which differ in their approach to the text's origins share a similar vision of its implied author, and *vice*

⁵⁶ This process is described by Budelmann as "mentalizing," a cognitive term which he prefers to the narratological implied author (2018, 245). There is no need for a preference, however, as the implied author is the product of the process of mentalizing. Because I am here interested in the picture of Theognis rather than the cognitive process by which it has been created, I will speak only of the implied author.

⁵⁷ E.g. Campbell: "One forms a clear impression of this personality, sometimes high-spirited but more often despondent, and cynical even in his love poetry; a man of strong feelings and candid in their expression" (1982, 347).

⁵⁸ Podlecki aptly writes: "In spite of the dangers involved in such an enterprise, given the uncertainty of attribution of many of the excerpts, a reader of the *Theognidea* is inevitably drawn to an attempt to reconstruct details of Theognis' own career" (1984, 148). He proceeds to sketch out his own reconstruction (1984, 148-151). Even a careful statement like Gerber's presumes to make historical fact out of the poetry: "Almost nothing is known about Theognis the man, except that he was an aristocrat living in Megara during a period of political turmoil when class distinctions were breaking down" (1999, 7).

⁵⁹ The most recent account of this type is Ferreri's, which sees four approaches: gnomological juxtaposition, gnomological polygenesis, sympotic, and mixed sympotic and gnomological (2011, 269). See also Lear, who refers to "anthologists" and "oralists" (2011, 378), a dichotomy criticized by Spelman (2021, 150 n52).

versa. In what remains of this chapter I present my own typology, which focuses instead of the different approaches to the identity of the Theognidea's implied author: unitarian, analytical, neo-unitarian, and pluralist.

6.6.1 Unitarian

The first approach, the unitarian, is the most straightforward. These scholars posit that there is a single author, who is none other than Theognis himself. Perhaps the most vivid characterization of this camp comes from Young's memoir of his time doing manuscript research: "[During the course of collating manuscripts] the conviction grew more and more strong with me that what we have is in fact the remains of the versification of a single poet."⁶⁰ Every couplet, including external and internal doublets, can be attributed to Theognis. This position takes a capacious view of the implied author: the various textual and ideological inconsistencies are reconcilable with a single authorial figure and can be explained by the effects of maturity or the whims of a moment.⁶¹ Nietzsche, Harrison, and Young are the most prominent scholars to adopt this view.⁶² Scholars who subscribe to this view tend to see not only the work of one poet in these words, but also the facts of that poet's life. Harrison ends his study with a brief

⁶⁰ Young 1964, 307.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Harrison 1902. Young 1964 and 1971. For Nietzsche, see Cristi and Velásquez 2015. Other unitarians include Highbarger (1927), Dornseiff (1939), and van der Valk (1956). Stobaios also seems to have taken this position (see Vetta 2000, 126 citing Peretti 1953, 335).

biography of Theognis.⁶³ Nietzsche goes as far as to give a specific itinerary of Theognis' exile and a specific age of death.⁶⁴ This biographizing is not a secondary by-product of this course of study, but its primary form of proof. By building a coherent life that encompasses all of seemingly contradictory information in the Theognidea, these scholars hope to show that the pursuit of separating out verses as interpolations is misguided.

The adherents of this philosophy are the only who approach the Theognidea as a simple text. For them, the implied author is an unnecessary obfuscation between the reader and Theognis himself. Indeed, the idea of the implied author would certainly be anathema to those who consider themselves to be "Chasing an Ancient Greek"⁶⁵ in a literally historical sense. But taken in the context of a complex text, their work is a sketch of the implied author of the whole of the Theognidea in its most vivid and complete form. A great virtue of the unitarian position is that none the poetry of the collection is considered secondary, even if they come to this conclusion from an opposing direction.⁶⁶

⁶³ Harrison 1902, 304-305.

⁶⁴ Cristi and Velásquez 2015, 11-14. Nietzsche was not the only scholar to attempt to reconstruct a detailed biography of the poet using the poems, see also Frese 1842.

⁶⁵ Young 1950.

⁶⁶ Namely, the unitarians believe that all of the poetry is authentic and traceable back to the original poet and his performance, and thus worthy of study on equal footing. I, on the other hand, argue that the first performance should not be given any priority over subsequent sympotic performances, and thus all of the sympotic poetry that we see in the collection is equally valid.

6.6.2 Analyst

Another approach is taken by the analysts. They operate under the assumption that there was a single, flesh-and-blood Theognis, who had a consistent set of values set forth in genuine Theognidean poetry, but not all of the Theognidea is genuinely his. Under this approach, the seemingly disjointed arrangement of the corpus and its ideological inconsistencies arise from the fact that a core of authentically Theognidean poetry has been contaminated by other, inauthentic poetry. In short, the analysts see two implied authors at work in the Theognidea: Theognis and Anonymous.

West attributes this contamination to the combination of an oldest, genuine book with later anthologies. He traces the vast majority of genuine lines to the so-called *Florilegium Purum* (lines 19-254), which he dates to the third century BCE; the rest of the collection results from the insertion of two different excerpts from a gnomological collection, the *Excerpta Meliora* (255-1022) and the *Excerpta Deteriora* (1023-1220), dated the second and first century BCE respectively.⁶⁷ These collections contain some genuine passages of Theognidean poetry, but they are rare among those which should be considered anonymous. West's approach is the most commonly cited in anglophone

⁶⁷ Both excerpts were drawn from a hypothesized third century BCE *Florilegium Magnum*, which contained poems from Theognis, Solon, Mimnermos, Tyrtaeus and others. These two excerpts were interpolated into the *Florilegium Purum* in two stages—first the *Meliora* and then the *Deteriora*—resulting in the collection as we now see it with its doublets (West 1974, 55-59).

scholarship to fall into this camp: endorsed by Bowie, Gerber, and Spelman as the *communis opinio*.⁶⁸ Its reputation is more mixed outside of anglophone scholarship.⁶⁹

Selle has taken the most extreme position in this camp when he states that the seal poem can be attributed to Theognis without any doubt, but it is the only poem that is certain to be authentic.⁷⁰ Other earlier models that fall into this camp include Carrière's and Jacoby's.⁷¹ Carrière proposes a bipartite model, in which a Theognidean collection is interspersed with a much later collection. Of the first collection, he writes "il est...sinon authentique, très proche sans doute de l'authentique Théognis" ("It is...if not authentic, without doubt very close to the authentic Theognis," 1948, 93). Jacoby proposes four books pieced together based on proposed proemia and epigrams: the "Kurnos book" (1-254), "Athenian book" (255-756), "Megarian Book" (757-1220), "Second Book" (1231-1389).⁷² He subscribes to the view that the seal was Kurnos' name, and thus only those poems which bear his name are genuine.⁷³ The so-called book K is thus thought to be genuine because it contains the preponderance of such poems, and those missing the seal may be a result of later editing. The others are considered later

⁶⁸ West 1974, 40-61; cf. Bowie (2012, 122), Gerber (1999, 7), and Spelman (2021, 147). Before West

consolidated opinion, the contributions of Edmonds (1931) and Hudson-Williams (1910) were influential.

⁶⁹ Selle calls it "[ein] anerkannte[r] Bezugspunkt für wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit den *Theognidea*" ("a recognized reference point for the scholarly use of the Theognidea") (2008, 13). Ferrari, on the other hand, dismissively calls it "una variante troppo semplificata" (a very simplified version) (1989, 9) of Jacoby's thesis. Ferreri says West's theory "in realtà ha avuto più seguito di quanto meritasse" (in reality has had more following than it deserved) (2013, 54).

⁷⁰ Selle 2008, 376.

⁷¹ Carrière 1948. Jacoby 1931.

⁷² Jacoby 1931, 156-167.

⁷³ Jacoby 1931, 159.

and mostly inauthentic.⁷⁴ While both of these models enjoyed prominence, neither enjoys adherents today.⁷⁵

Those who see a sympotic origin of the text can also be analysts, at least in terms of the implied author. Federico Condello, gives the most direct expression of this sympotic position when he writes of “the progressive formation or aggregation of a corpus which is at the same time precious testimony of lively symposial practice - made up of incessant uses and reuses, often eternalized in performative 'fossils' or 'snapshots' - and perennial homage to the Megarese Theognis, everywhere and perennially ὀνομαστός.”⁷⁶ By attributing the seal poem to Theognis but attributing the strange textual features to others, Condello marks himself as a different sort of analyst. But the combination of the sympotic approach and the analyst position is as old as the sympotic approach itself. Reitzenstein, whose *Epigram und Skolion* gave birth to the modern sympotic approach to elegiac poetry, read several authors in the corpus, one of whom was none other than Theognis as evidenced by the presence of the seal poem.⁷⁷

Massimo Vetta, perhaps the most significant proponent of the sympotic hypothesis since Reitzenstein (at least until his protégé Colesanti), also is best considered

⁷⁴ Jacoby 1931, 160.

⁷⁵ Ferreri describes these two proposals as “definitivamente tramontate” (definitively waned) (2011, 270).

⁷⁶ “E proprio questo, in larga parte, è accaduto: la progressiva formazione o agglutinazione di un corpus che è insieme testimonianza preziosa di una viva pratica simposiale – fatta di usi e riusi incessanti, spesso eternati in ‘fossili’ o ‘istantanee’ performative – e omaggio perenne al megarese Teognide, ovunque e perennemente ὀνομαστός.” (2009-2010, 135).

⁷⁷ Reitzenstein 1893, 267.

an analyst. His outright rejection of the idea of gnomological pericopes in the sylloge has led to him being grouped together with Colesanti as the two adherents of the *pansimposiale* hypothesis, but the two have a very different picture of the implied author.⁷⁸ Vetta proposes that the sylloge contains “a little pure Theognis, and then Theognis and others filtered into an environment of anonymous works.”⁷⁹ Vetta’s “charismatic figure, very careful of the paternity of his doctrinal verses”⁸⁰ is an implied author named Theognis, obscured among the *anonimi* just as the Theognis of West is, although by different means.⁸¹

6.6.3 Neo-unitarian

The next group are those who attribute the Theognidea to a single implied author, but do not identify that implied author as the flesh-and-blood Theognis. Condello refers to our time as one of “Unitarianism reborn,”⁸² but this is a new birth rather than a rebirth. While there are obvious affinities between the Unitarians and Neo-unitarians, the latter represent a fundamentally different approach to authorship in the Theognidea. Neo-unitarianism does not consider the flesh-and-blood Theognis to be identical to the implied author. Quite to the contrary, neo-unitarians believe that many

⁷⁸ Ferreri 2011, 127. For the most detailed account of the relationship between the two’s work, see Ferreri’s (2013) review of Colesanti (2011). N.b. 59-60, where he speaks to the fact that both Vetta and Colesanti attempt to preserve a Theognidean core of the poetry.

⁷⁹ “Un poco di Teognide integro, e poi Teognide e altro filtrati in un ambiente di elaborati anonimi” (Vetta 2000, 132).

⁸⁰ “Una figura carismatica e ben attenta alla paternità dei suoi versi dottrinali” (Vetta 2000, 129).

⁸¹ West explicitly calls the non-Theognidean poetry “anonymous” (1974, 40).

⁸² “In tempi di rinascite unitarismo” (Condello 2017, 63-64). He specifically cites Rösler 2006, but I argue that the others I discuss fit the bill.

flesh-and-blood authors actually composed the poetry. In this, they are actually closer to the analysts. What makes them unitarians, however, is that they propose that those individuals should be understood to inhabit a collective authorial identity.

This collective identity can be identified as a collective in flesh-and-blood: a single *hetaireia* or all of the adherents of a single ideology in a certain time at a certain place. Most commonly, the term “persona” is often used to describe this figure.⁸³ While persona may seem interchangeable with implied author, they operate on different levels of authorship. The difference is in performance. Personae are adopted by the performers as characters, whereas implied authors are the product of readers who build an idea of an author from the material given in the text. To call “Theognis” a persona is to claim that any time the poetry of the collection was performed, the symposiast took up the role of “Theognis” and was recognized as such by his audience.⁸⁴ This is certainly possible, but it is not the only possibility. There are, as mentioned above, cases when the speaker refers to himself as Aithon of Thebes⁸⁵ or refers to herself using feminine pronouns.⁸⁶ While these could be cases of a persona himself adopting personae, it is simpler to say that these are different personae that can be governed by the same implied author.

⁸³ Nagy is probably the most noted on this account, but he is not alone (see Nagy 1985, 33-34). For an extensive bibliography of Theognis as a persona, see Selle 2008, 275 n192.

⁸⁴ As Selle articulates directly: “Der mittellose und verstoßene Weise, der sein Schweigen nur in der gnomischen Sprache elegischer Dichtung bricht, ist eine Rolle, in die jeder schlüpfte, der diese Gedichte vortrug.” (275).

⁸⁵ Line 1209.

⁸⁶ Lines 579-582, 861-4, 1211-1216.

Likewise, it could be the fact that every couplet of the corpus is performed in the persona of an “indigent, outcast sage,” but that would seem to conflict with some of the passages in which the speaker is happily taking part in communal revelry.⁸⁷

The Theognidea is a complex text. Attributing the authorial position to a single persona risks smoothing out its nuances. Personae are inherently simplified, recognizable by a few features. Implied authors, as ideations, cannot embrace the full complexity of human reality, but they are much closer than personae. The Neo-Unitarians in their discussion of “a cumulative synthesis of Megarian poetic traditions” and “a composite author figure” are already embracing this complex picture.⁸⁸ The vocabulary of the implied author would allow them to communicate it.

6.6.4 Pluralist

The final approach to the implied authorship of the Theognidea is pluralism. Like analysts and neo-unitarians, pluralists attribute the historical authorship of the collection to a multitude of authors. Unlike the analysts, however, the pluralists do not make the contributions of any one individual (“Theognis”) central, and, unlike the neo-unitarians, they do not attribute the collection to a single implied author via a historical collective, overarching ideology, or persona.

⁸⁷ E.g. lines 469-497.

⁸⁸ Nagy 1985, 33. Walker 2000, 141.

The two major proponents of this theory are Wendorff and Kroll. In his dissertation,⁸⁹ Wendorff sees the collection as consisting of the work of innumerable ancient convivial poets. He proposes that we imagine an ancient grammarian who deceitfully positioned the name of Theognis at the outset of the collection in order to trick posterity into thinking that it could all be attributed to that single man.⁹⁰ Although the sylloge has elements in common with Theognidean poetry, “it must not be confused with genuine Theognidean poetry.”⁹¹ Like Vetta, Wendorff sees Theognidean traces in the sylloge, but he does not imagine a Theognidean core. Instead, the sylloge as we have it is the result of any number of reuses and variations by later symposiasts on the “little Theognidean flowers.”⁹² These later reuses are sympotic uses for their own sake, rather than dialectic. Kroll, for his part, sees no hints of authorship within even the few places where a logical arrangement can be found.⁹³ Like Selle, Kroll is willing to allow the seal poem to be attributed to Theognis, but there is an important distinction. Selle attributes outsized importance to the seal and chooses to close his work with a discussion of its lasting historical significance;⁹⁴ Kroll bemoans the same poem as the source of a centuries-long misunderstanding. For Kroll, the seal poem is just another poem, rather

⁸⁹ Very helpfully titled with its thesis sentence: “Ex usu conviviali Theognideam syllogem fluxisse demonstratur” (1902).

⁹⁰ Wendorff 1902, 65.

⁹¹ Wendorff 1902, 66.

⁹² Wendorff 1902, 79.

⁹³ Kroll 1936, 272-273.

⁹⁴ Selle 2008, 392-393.

than the heart of the collection. Indeed, he regards the name's general application as obscuring the identities of a multitude of anonymous poets.⁹⁵ In this way, although he comes to precisely the same conclusion as Selle with regard to which poems can be ultimately deemed safely Theognidean, he cannot be said to read the collection with the same framework of implied authorship.

6.7 Conclusion

The identity of the flesh-and-blood author(s) is a historical fact, but the identity of the implied author is the product of the reader's choice (within the constraints of what is provided in the text and what is known beyond it). The text, as I show in the opening of the chapter, provides a vision of how authority operated vis-à-vis claims to authorship among widespread reperformance, but it does not offer definitive proof of authorship. Outside of the text we have no real knowledge about the flesh-and-blood author(s) of the Theognidea. For this reason, each of the four different models for implied author is plausible. The question, then, is which to adopt.

The poetry of Theognis has long been held up as an important piece of evidence for the social attitudes and anxieties during a critical time in Greek history. Young, for instance, calls him a spokesman for "the aristocratic particularist age." He adds: "As such a spokesman he is a social and historical 'document' of the first importance."⁹⁶ This

⁹⁵ Kroll 1936 (on which see Selle 2008, 10-11).

⁹⁶ Young 1950, 2.

importance holds no matter which approach one takes. But the reach of this position differs. Among unitarians, we see only the attitudes of a single, legendary man; or, according to analysts, that man with some superfluous material added on. Among neo-unitarians the reach expands, but only to a single group, be it a *hetaireia* or the adherents to a specific ideology.

If forced to choose among these plausible options—and that is the reality of reading—I would adopt the pluralist position. Theognis is nothing to us but his verses. To attribute the poetry to a Panhellenic crowd of sympotic performers, rather than to this man who is but a name, actually increases its value as a cultural document. The Theognidea, as I see it, reflects centuries' worth of anxieties, aspirations, and contested value judgments by members of the Greek elite about their society, their ideals, and their way of life. That is a social and historical document of the first importance, indeed.

7. Drink and Eat with Them, and Sit with Them: The Audience in the Theognidea Then and Now

σὺ δέ μοι κλῦθι (4)

7.1 Introduction

The performance of Theognidean poetry was a rhetorical act. Indeed, keeping in mind the widespread reperformance of sympotic poetry, the text reflects many rhetorical acts, none of which should be given definitive interpretive weight over another. The Theognidea is a collection of raw poetic material that was iteratively performed by various symposiasts for various ends. But that iterative nature did not last forever.

As discussed in Chapter 5, every rhetorical act involves somebody telling somebody else something. Two developments have altered fundamentally the way that dynamic plays out for Theognidean poetry. First, the social realities of the institution of the symposion changed, as did the role of poetry within it.¹ Second, the collection was written down.² These changes reconfigure the identities of the actors (the “somebodies”) in the rhetorical exchange. Thus, while there is no fruitful distinction between the first

¹ Wecowski (2018, n.b. 268-269) dates this shift to the late 5th to early 4th century. The precise date is ultimately not as important to my argument as the fact that the shift did happen.

² The collection and writing down of the Theognidea is perhaps the aspect most prolifically covered in Theognidean scholarship. Because it is tied up with the question of authorship, I offer an indirect discussion of it in my review of the implied author in Chapter 5. In Anglophone scholarship, see in particular West 1974, Friis Johansen 1993, Lear 2011 (on Book 2), Bowie 2012, and the appendix of Spelman 2021. Italian scholarship on the question is copious. See in particular, Peretti 1953, Vetta 1980, Vetta 2000, Colesanti 2011, and Ferreri 2020. As with the change in the institution of the symposion, the specific date (and even the process) of the poetry’s writing is less important to my formulation than the fact that it happened at all.

performance and subsequent performances within the original performance circumstances of the poetry, there is a crucial distinction between the original performance circumstances of the poetry and the current form in which we receive the corpus.

The distinction between the original and the modern performance circumstances of the Theognidea is at its starkest in the disparate nature of the audience, then and now. The archaic, sympotic audience was physically present for the *live* poetic act, while the modern audience is separated from the poetry's enactment by chronological and cultural distance. Those different circumstances yield fundamentally different experiences of the poetry. The sympotic audience did not just listen to poetry: it played an active role in the immediate rhetorical act of the poetry's performance. The modern audience is still part of the rhetorical act, to be sure, but we are necessarily more passively positioned. In the previous chapter I discussed the effect that the transition has had on the authorial element of the poetry (the "somebody telling"). In this chapter, I turn my attention to its audience ("somebody else").

In what follows, I illustrate how audience operates within the poetry of the Theognidea, then and now. I begin by demonstrating the importance of the immediate, sympotic audience to the success of the rhetorical act. I then show how the audience is manifest in the poetry itself, in the form of the frequent use of address. Finally, I close

the chapter by considering how the understanding of the role of the sympotic audience affects the modern reader's encounter with the text.

7.2 The Audience Then: Approval and Blame

The sympotic audience determined the success of the poetic act *qua* act of rhetoric. This role is alluded to throughout the Theognidea in its stated concern with praise and blame.

A primary model for the praise that poetic performers seek is found in lines 37-38, which have often been regarded as the conclusion of the "seal poem."³ In these lines, the speaker hopes that the addressee will praise his wisdom to others in the future: *καί ποτε φήσεις / εὖ συμβουλεύειν τοῖσι φίλοισιν ἐμέ* ("And sometime you will say that I advise friends well"). The framing of this statement reflects concern with authority that can extend into the future; importantly, that authority only extends via the addressee.

This dynamic is part of a traditional cycle by which each generation learns from the previous and then shares it with their successors. The speaker explicitly states that he has himself derived his authority from the fact that he was once a former audience member to authoritative performers: "But with good understanding, I will teach you the sorts of things I myself, / Kurnos, learned from good men when I was still a boy." (*σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ εὖ φρονέων ὑποθήσομαι, οἷά περ αὐτός, / Κύρν', ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν παιῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν ἔμαθον*, 27-28). This advice is specifically in the context of the symposium: "drink and

³ For the various divisions of the seal poem, see Chapter 1.

eat with them, and sit / with them" (καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν / ἴζε, 33-34).⁴ Moreover, the fact that this cycle is reported in poetry suggests that poetry was also the medium in which it was learned. As such, the addressee's role in extending the authority of the speaker may be conceptualized as reperformance with credit. The speaker all at once positions himself as exceptional and squarely within the wisdom tradition. The speaker's own vague crediting practices (he only refers to learning "from the good" (ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, 28)) enhance the utility of the poetry in reperformance, but also suggest that the specific notoriety he can expect might also be limited. Whether or not his identity endures, the dynamics of succession are telling for our understanding of the audience's role in the rhetorical cycle.

While approval is clearly the goal, there is also the eminent possibility of sympotic disapproval. Indeed, disapproval dominates the poetry of the Theognidea. The speaker often complains about the fact that he is not receiving the approval that he thinks he deserves.⁵ A prime example of this complaint is found in line 367-370:

οὐ δύναμαι γνῶναι νόον ἀστῶν ὄντιν' ἔχουσιν·
οὔτε γὰρ εὖ ἔρδων ἀνδάνω οὔτε κακῶς·
μωμεῦνται δέ με πολλοί, ὁμῶς κακοὶ ἤδὲ καὶ ἐσθλοί·
μιμείσθαι δ' οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀσόφων δύναται.

I cannot understand the mind of the townspeople, if they have any.
For I don't please them whether I act well or poorly.
Many blame me, the bad and the good alike.

⁴ The use of "τοῖσι φίλοισιν" might suggest that this act of praise is itself situated within the symposium, but I am less certain than others about this claim (see Chapter 4).

⁵ N.b. lines 25-26 and 253-254.

But none of these fools can imitate me.
(lines 367-370)

These *astoi* are most likely blaming the speaker's poetic performance in the symposion. Here, the prospect of reperformance is weaponized rather than sought. The *kakoi* and *esthloi* seem to be attempting it, but are unable to "imitate" the speaker because they lack *sophia*.⁶ The speaker here is acknowledging the fact that his poetic activity has been criticized, but he tries to undermine that disapproval by comparing his poetic acumen to the incompetence of his detractors.

Scholars have usually distinguished the *astoi* from the symposiasts: they are the "townspeople" who are not invited to the symposion.⁷ This may be true in the most literal sense. But, if so, this meaning may be twisted into an insult: by calling them *astoi*, the speaker downgrades symposiasts to the status of outsiders.⁸ He intimates that those who disapprove of him do not deserve to be present. A similar, if less heated, statement can be seen in lines 24-26. After noting that he cannot please all of the *astoi* (ἄστοιῶσιν δ' οὐπω πᾶσιν ἀδεῖν δύναμαι, 24), the speaker brushes the thought off with cool megalomania: "This is nothing to wonder at, Polupaides. For even Zeus cannot make everyone happy when he rains or holds up" (οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν, Πολυπαῖδη· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ Ζεὺς / οὐθ' ὕων πάντεσσ' ἀνδάνει οὐτ' ἀνέχων, 25-26). Given the context, what the

⁶ A term which refers to technical, poetic skill (Nagy 1985, 24-26).

⁷ Romney 2020, 146.

⁸ A similar dynamic might be at play with the use of ἐν...πόλει...κακοψόγωι (287), but the crux makes it difficult to analyze the couplet with any certainty.

astoi withhold in this passage is very evidently their approval of the speaker's poetry. If we accept that the performance of this poetry was sympotic, these *astoi* could thus be none other than unappreciative symposiasts. Here, the unappreciative audience is not present. Instead, the speaker is attempting to win over his audience by flattering them implicitly: "Those rubes did not appreciate my work, but you, a much more sophisticated audience, will."

While we cannot expect the poetry to record all of the ways in which the audience registered their reaction, there are poetic formulas for brief reactions within the Theognidea. An ambivalent one could be satirized in lines 873-876: "Wine, I praise you in some respects and blame you in others; I can never wholly hate you nor love you." (οἶνε, τὰ μὲν σ' αἰνῶ, τὰ δὲ μέμφομαι· οὐδέ σε πάμπαν / οὔτε ποτ' ἐχθαίρειν οὔτε φιλεῖν δύναμαι). A skilled symposiast could easily adjust this line for a human addressee.

Another passage may register what poetic disapproval could look like:

πολλοῖσ' ἀνθρώπων γλώσσηι θύραι οὐκ ἐπίκεινται
ἀρμόδιαι, καί σφιν πόλλ' ἀμέλητα μέλει.
πολλάκι γὰρ τὸ κακὸν κατακείμενον ἔνδον ἄμεινον,
ἐσθλὸν δ' ἐξελθὸν λώιον ἢ τὸ κακόν.

For many men, folding doors that fit do not lie over their tongue
and they concern themselves with many things they shouldn't.
For often it is better if the bad lies stored up inside,
and better if the good comes out rather than the bad.
(lines 421-424)

While this is framed as playful advice rather than a reproach, it is not difficult to imagine it delivered passive-aggressively as a dismissive response to a fellow symposiast's composition.

These poetic formulas represent direct instances of praise or blame, but they are relatively rare. The Theognidea gives advice on how to praise or blame far more often. For example, the speaker explicitly models that praise and blame should be meted out as each instance merits, regardless of the relationship.⁹ One should also not be too quick to blame, despite the fact that it is always easy to praise yourself and blame whoever is sitting next to you: to do so is the mark of a *deilos*.¹⁰ Indeed, one can get a reputation as a "blamer" (ὄ...μωμεύμενος) (169), but even those fault-finders cannot censure someone whom the gods dote upon. Because the memory of praise and blame lasts, one should be careful. The proof of this memory is laid out in lines 963-970. If praise were purely ephemeral, the speaker would not be so concerned with an incident in which he had praised the wrong person. Here he all at once insults the unnamed addressee, whom he now claims to avoid, and gravely warns the other symposiasts present not to make the same mistake he did.¹¹ Finally, the speaker advises skepticism towards people who

⁹ Lines 1079-1080.

¹⁰ Lines 611-612. I take the use of τὸν πλησίον ("the one nearby") here to be metasympotic--literally the one who is sitting nearest to you at the symposion--in comparison to the use of the same term at line 221, which fits within the scheme of sympotic deception. τὸν πλησίον also contrasts with the use of γείτων ("neighbor") in line 302.

¹¹ This could have been the case of an addressee who was not actually present (see below) or an especially uncomfortable sympotic confrontation (see Chapter 4).

praise you effusively, as you never know what they are saying about you behind your back.¹² Indeed, he seems to confront a flatterer of this sort via poetry,¹³ suggesting that such false praise (and its confrontation) can take place in the symposion.

The approval of the sympotic audience was a key concern for the Theognidean speaker. Because of the role audience praise and blame played in the success of poetic acts, the proper behavior of the sympotic audience in allocating praise and blame was a key concern in the precepts of the Theognidea.

7.3 The Audience in the Poetry

The sympotic audience played an integral role in Theognidean poetry. This fact is manifest in the very language of the poetry. Address, in one form or another, is a defining feature of it. Of its 731 couplets, 145 contain a direct addressee using the vocative.¹⁴ The average version of the Theognidea divides the corpus into 301 units. Of those that contain a vocative, the vast majority contain only one. Therefore, nearly half of all the units use direct address.¹⁵ These fall into three categories: addresses to Kurnos/Polupaidēs, addresses to other named individuals, and addresses to unnamed

¹² Lines 93-100.

¹³ Lines 87-90; identical to 1082c-f.

¹⁴ An additional 17 address the gods, but as those are straightforward apostrophes I have not included them here. I am also counting the dislocated couplets from 1221-1229 and the *Fragmenta Dubia*, which I left out in my discussions of poem division because they are ever only included as addenda.

¹⁵ The number of iterations make more precision impractical.

people.¹⁶ I will now discuss how the dynamics of the symposion shape how we should read an address.

7.3.1 Kurnos

Addressing Kurnos is a foundational element of the Theognidea. Of the 145 instances of direct address, more than half (80) name Kurnos specifically. But the significance of this particular address goes beyond its prevalence. The vocative 'Kurne' appears repeatedly in passages regarded especially significant.¹⁷ That frequency increases if we include the 8 addresses to Polupaides.¹⁸

The address to Kurnos has been studied primarily with a view to clarifying the origin and arrangement of the corpus. Although it appears throughout the corpus, it is more frequent at the beginning: forty of the eighty instances are found in the first 400 lines of 1422. This fact led Jacoby to identify lines 1-254 as the *Kurnosbuch*, alleged as one of the original components of the corpus.¹⁹ The idea has been held, with slight modification, down to recent times.²⁰ The boundaries of the *Kurnosbuch* do not, however, best reflect the section of the corpus in which the address to Kurnos most frequently

¹⁶ See above for my exclusion of the addresses to the gods.

¹⁷ N.b. the uses at lines 19, 39, 53, 183, and 247.

¹⁸ Welcker (1826, c-ci) considers them two different individuals; few follow him. Addresses to Kurnos and Polupaides are generally regarded as synonymous.

¹⁹ Jacoby 1931, 156-167. The observation of the fundamental importance of Kurnos to the Theognidea does not originate with Jacoby. In fact, he notes a "famous typo" in which Wilamowitz accidentally referred to these elements as the "youngest" rather than the oldest (1931, 167 n3).

²⁰ It coincides completely with West's *Florilegium Purum* (1974), which Bowie has adopted as the standard unit for the true work of Theognis (2012). Friis Johansen argues for 19-254 (1996, 17). Colesanti calls the idea the "gnomologio di Teognide a Cirno."

appears. Ending at line 254 appears motivated by the conclusive nature of the poetic unit from 237-254.²¹ While lines 1-254 do contain the highest concentration, this concentration is not so marked as to constitute a clear discontinuity.²² The first 254 lines contain 28 uses of “Κύρνε,” compared to 15 in the 254 lines that follow. If we divide the corpus into 100-line units, we see that lines 301-398 contain more uses (12) than lines 201-300 (5).²³ Indeed, from a purely quantitative perspective a more logical *Kurnosbuch* would comprise 1-412, which feature 42 of 80 instances in only 412 of the total 1422 lines.²⁴

In any case, while the early concentration of addresses to Kurnos is notable, the fact remains that even this more capacious *Kurnosbuch* only contains half of them. Kurnos is addressed throughout the work. Raising these addresses to an organizational principle demands either that we rearrange the work²⁵ or that we explain why half of the instances were not in the *Kurnosbuch*. As evidence of an authentic arrangement, the address to Kurnos is imperfect at best.

²¹ On its conclusive nature, see van Groningen 1996, 101 with citations.

²² Contra West, who writes in the Oxford Classical Dictionary (“19-254: contain nearly all uses”). Lines 1-254 do, however, contain a clear majority of the uses of Polupaidēs: six out of eight.

²³ Note that lines 301-398 contains 100 couplet because of the numeration of 332a-b. Cf. Jacoby's table (1931, 160). Jacoby counts not by the relative frequency of “Kurnos” but by the relative frequency of “Kurnos-poems.” As I show in Chapter 1, “poems” is not an objective unit of measurement in the Theognidea. For this reason I look only at use per couplet, despite the potential incommensurability due to differing length of poetic units.

²⁴ In other words, 52.5% of the uses appear in only 28.9% of the lines of the corpus.

²⁵ This is precisely what Spelman does when he creates his own, much purer *Kurnosbuch* (“Category I”) that ignores the present arrangement of the corpus and instead consists of all of the “pieces addressed to Kurnos/Polupaidēs” (2021, 147).

Addressing Kurnos has also been considered as helping to authenticate Theognis' authorship.²⁶ Any flesh-and-blood author who sought to ensure the authenticity of his work by affixing this address should have expected to fail. Any symposiasts with basic compositional skills could have inserted it into their own verse. Likewise, the proposal that we place our own faith in this device as a guarantor of authenticity seems misguided.

The use of Kurnos cannot tell us about the physical facts on the ground. It neither suffices to show if a poem was composed by an alleged flesh-and-blood Theognis, nor can it establish the historical reality of an alleged Kurnos.²⁷ Happily, the model of widespread reperformance renders the identity of both Theognis and Kurnos moot. Many must have been the occasions in which no one named Kurnos was present and yet couplets with addresses to him were performed. Likewise, an alleged original author would not rule out subsequent imitative uses of his poetry. Even more importantly, no

²⁶ For a robust bibliography of the very frequent idea of "Kurnos as the seal," see Selle (2008, 291 n254). In the years since the publication of that catalogue, Bakker (2017) has joined the ranks.

²⁷ A similar conclusion holds for the identity of Polupaidēs. Whether the two names referred to one flesh-and-blood individual or two is unknowable and irrelevant to widespread reperformance. Of greater relevance, however, is whether the names refer to the same notional person. In three instances, the addresses to Polupaidēs follow an address to Kurnos in a way that clearly suggests that one and the same individual is being addressed, twice within the same poetic unit. The instances in 61, 143, 541, 1197, however, stand on their own. It seems that Polupaidēs could be used with Kurnos or independently. Whether addressing Polupaidēs alone would have evoked the connotations of a Kurnos address would depend on the reach of Kurnos as a well-defined character. The instances of joint uses suggest that a sufficient reach did exist. The complementary metrical shape of Polupaidēs' vocative would have facilitated its use to refer to Kurnos where 'Kurne' did not fit. As a patronymic, it would have been a natural stand-in for a proper name. Patronymics in addresses outside of epic and tragedy is rare, making the use of Polupaidēs striking. Finally, its length and the fact that it is found nowhere else suggests that its use could hardly have been incidental.

performances, even early ones, could claim greater authority than later ones, because each sympotic event possessed its own immediate rhetorical stakes.

That Kurnos' actual existence is ultimately unknowable does not, however, render addresses to him inconsequential. The sheer frequency of this phenomenon demands further investigation. The likeliest clue to its significance is the meaning of the name itself. According to Hesychius, "Kurnos" means "Bastard." Nagy has illustrated convincingly the resonance of this meaning within the context of Theognidean poetry: a man who, despite (or because of) being born to a rich father, has become a bastard because of the supposed degeneration the speaker often decries.²⁸ A name with this meaning could point to invention from whole cloth. But even if it once was the name of an actual individual, its meaning shows that no previous knowledge of him is needed for the conventional use of his name. "Bastard" carries clear resonances and is ripe for exactly the sort of widespread and varied use we see in the corpus. Paradoxically, the ease with which this address can be incorporated into a couplet may be its greatest strength.

Possible resonances of Kurnos as "Bastard" are manifest in the poetry.

Nonetheless, the historical evidence for "Kurnos" as "Bastard" is not robust. This meaning appears only in Hesychius, and then only in the plural. Nevertheless, names

²⁸Nagy 1985, 54-59. The specific, Megarian historical circumstances within which Nagy situates his reading, and the grand narrative of Theognis "showing his love for Megara through the ages, however debased it may become" (1985, 56) are not necessary for his conclusion to hold.

can acquire a clear, specific meaning within a culture, even when nothing in the name suggests it.

Recent evidence for this phenomenon is copious on social media, where the name “Karen” has come to signify a white woman who weaponizes her privilege.²⁹ How this came to be is not clear and there is no etymological motivation. Indeed, locating the first use of “Karen” is less meaningful than understanding the circumstances under which it came to be widely used: the COVID pandemic and the racial reckoning spurred by George Floyd's death. While the concept of “Karen” predated that period of turbulence, the heightened sense of vulnerability of that period surely contributed to the “emergent typologization of recognized social figures...whose potentially lethal selfishness has become a subject of urgent public concern.”³⁰ Social networks facilitated the rapid dissemination of this typology and gave people across the world a vocabulary for describing their own experiences while demonstrating their relevance to broader trends.³¹ Perhaps the use of Kurnos can be described in similar terms. While perhaps not as acutely unsettled as 2020, the archaic period was known to be a time of widespread social disruption.³² The elites who bore the brunt of these (or at least perceived themselves to be doing so) had a well-established social medium within which to voice

²⁹ For a primer on the term Karen and its origins, see Greenspan 2020. Negra and Leyda 2021, 352.

³⁰ Negra and Leyda 2021, 352 citing Weiner 2020.

³¹ Negra and Leyda point out that it was front-line service workers who were primarily having these experiences. Unlike previous social networks, digital platforms give those who are not elite a platform to share these experiences.

³² For the reflection of this disruption on the symposion, see Wecowski 2014 and Hobden 2013.

their complaints: the symposion, with its performance of elegiac poetry.³³ Much like “Karen,” the use of the name “Kurnos” could be seen as a meme that gained traction because it identified a type immediately recognizable to its audience.

The position of authority a speaker adopts when addressing Kurnos could be specifically defined if, as with “Karen,” the role of Kurnos was well-known. Kurnos would lend his addresser a more specific ideological alignment than that of “teacher,” perhaps (but not necessarily) in the role of “Theognis.”³⁴ A fictive Kurnos would then allow a symposiast to communicate his values to the entire group in a manner appropriate to the social dynamics of the symposion—both explicitly, in his words, and implicitly, in his ethical positioning.³⁵

Unlike “Karen,” however, Kurnos is not typically the subject of direct vitriol. While occasionally Kurnos is greeted with disdain, this is rare.³⁶ Most often the attitude of the speaker towards Kurnos is ambivalent. In 75 out of the 80 addresses (and all eight instances of Polupaidēs), Kurnos himself is not explicitly regarded as worthy of praise or

³³ The symposion is of limited usefulness as a social network under the widely accepted model of the *hetaireia*. It would be difficult to spread the word if symposiasts typically performed with the same people. The model changes drastically if, as I propose in Chapter 4, symposia were of varying attendance. A shifting mix of participants would allow for a much quicker dissemination of sympotic “memes” like Kurnos. Cf. Nagy (2020, 99) who argues against the symposion as the means of the dissemination of the poems of the lyric nine.

³⁴ Selle 2008, 280.

³⁵ Ferreri 2013, 93.

³⁶ n.b. 371-372, 1103-1104

blame.³⁷ In these passages the speaker often expresses strong feelings of commendation and condemnation, but toward other unspecified individuals who practice certain behaviors. Only very rarely does the speaker actually tie to Kurnos' own experience or character his advice, warnings, and general addresses.³⁸ When he does, he can be negative (1103), but Kurnos is never reproached in the uncertain terms used towards Demonax (1085) or the unnamed addressees of lines 597-602. Indeed, with the exception of the almost ubiquitous imperative, second-person forms appear in only 2 of the 80 couplets where Kurnos is addressed, and first person plurals only appear four times.³⁹ There seems to be much less attention paid to what Kurnos has done, is doing, or will do; when the speaker is interested in him, his goal is to tell him what to do (or, even more likely, what not to do).⁴⁰

Although Kurnos is often addressed as the recipient of advice, the lessons addressed to him are not typically based on his own behavior, but someone else's. This indirectness allows for flexibility. Without a direct tie to a specific person's behavior or

³⁷ The only exception is the couplet at 1103. Lines like 371 could easily be performed as direct reproach, but as they command rather than report on behavior, they could also just be advice. See also the reproach beginning at line 253, which is universally considered to be connected to the address at 247.

³⁸ The exceptions that I identify are the uses in the couplets beginning at 235, 247, 355, 359, 549, 819, 833, 1103, 1133, 1177.

³⁹ 1103, 1177. First person plurals: 235, 655 (although he does not seem quite included here), 819, 833

⁴⁰ Cf. the 17 instances in which an imperative is used in the same couplet as an address to Kurnos: the couplets beginning at 69, 71, 75, 77, 159, 219, 323, 335, 355, 359, 371, 409, 1071, 1161, 1179, 1225, and *Fragmenta Dubia* 4.1.

experience, “Kurnos” could be anyone. Indeed, “Kurnos” need not even be present.⁴¹

Addressing a conventional “Kurnos” would have allowed the speaker to adopt a pose of authority without asserting himself over other, explicitly named symposiasts present.⁴²

The value of expressing an idea in the form of advice can be seen in the internal doublets of lines 213-214 and 1071-1072.

θυμέ, φίλους κατὰ πάντας ἐπίστρεφε ποικίλον ἦθος,
ὀργὴν συμμίσγων ἦντιν' ἕκαστος ἔχει

Heart, turn a variegated character to every friend,
mingling with it whichever temperament each has.
(213-214)

Κύρνε, φίλους πρὸς πάντας ἐπίστρεφε ποικίλον ἦθος,
συμμίσγων ὀργὴν οἷος ἕκαστος ἔφυ.

Kurnos, turn a variegated character to each friend,
mingling with it a mood according as each one is by nature.
(1071-1072)

These couplets differ slightly in multiple ways, most of which are not determinative of the meaning (κατὰ vs. πρὸς, the changed order of ὀργὴν συμμίσγων, and ἦντιν' ἕκαστος ἔχει vs. οἷος ἕκαστος ἔφυ). The exception is the change in addressee from θυμέ to Κύρνε, which changes the orientation of the couplet from inward to outward, from rumination (spoken aloud for the sake of others, it must be noted) to advice. The former, as an open admission of the speaker's deception, is more difficult to imagine

⁴¹ Apostrophe to an absent figure is possible. Cf. the 17 instances of apostrophes to the gods in the couplets beginning at 1, 5, 11, 13, 341, 373, 375, 377, 731, 737, 743, 773, 781, 1087, 1231, 1323, and 1386. This count does not include seemingly deified abstractions.

⁴² As proposed and discussed at length in Romney 2020, 30-32.

performed in the symposion.⁴³ The latter couplet, on the other hand, is easily recognizable as advice to a young symposiast. More importantly, the latter shows clearly that the speaker is not so much admitting to disingenuousness as acknowledging that a guarded rhetorical approach to sympotic behavior is necessary.

While “Kurnos” could be useful when not directed at any one individual, it could also be repurposed for a targeted performance. The rhetorical potential of identifying a fellow symposiast as “Kurnos” need not be limited to the restrained uses in the corpus. Even if the focus of blame is another’s behavior rather than Kurnos’, a symposiast addressed as “Kurnos” need not have escaped blame. Because the advice for Kurnos leans heavily toward warnings and prohibitions, the tone and context of the performances would carry great weight. An audience who knew of an individual’s behavior would hear a note of reproach in warnings against that very behavior. For example, the right context could make into a serious reproach lines 631-632, which seem to be innocuous, even goodhearted: ὤτινι μὴ θυμοῦ κρέσσων νόος, αἰὲν ἐν ἄταις, / Κύρν’. ἧ καὶ μεγάλαις κεῖται ἐν ἀμπλακίαις (“He whose mind isn’t stronger than his heart is always in ruin, Kurnos, and caught up in great faults”). If the other symposiasts know that “Kurnos” has recently found himself ἐν ἄταις, they will interpret this as a

⁴³ This does not mean, however, that these couplets were not performable in the symposion. See my discussion of such passages in Chapter 4.

reproach of the addressee's behavior rather than helpful advice. Even for those who do not know the backstory, tone could tell them all they need to know.

In closing, the name Kurnos may just have been someone's name. But it may also have borne deeper meanings across varied reperformances. Its concentration in the Theognidea as transmitted suggests that it had some special currency at the time(s) and place(s) the poetry was written down (at the very least). By addressing a formulation to Kurnos, a symposiast would put his performance in conversation with other known instances in which that addressee had been used. Whether or not these known instances would include all of those we know of, or more that we do not, would surely affect on a case-by-case basis the way each performance was received. These cases are, unfortunately, impossible to reconstruct without speculation. In this very limited sense we might say that "Kurnos" had the potential to act as a seal in the right circumstances. Nevertheless, it would not be a seal of literal, individual authorship but of inheritance (and manipulation) of an addressee who has been addressed by many predecessors. To perform poetry addressed to Kurnos is to make it, if not Theognidean, at least "Kurnosian," a definition which perhaps stretches the usefulness of the term "seal."

7.3.2 Named Individuals (Whose Names are not Kurnos)

While Kurnos takes the vast majority of the instances of address, he is not the only one addressed by name. Twelve verses address nine named individuals.⁴⁴ In order of appearance, they are: Simonides, Onomakritos, Klearistos, Skuthes, Demokleis, Akademos, Timagoras, Demonax, and Arguris. These names have been identified as the poet's acquaintances, even the members of his *hetaireia*.⁴⁵ Colesanti goes as far as identifying these men as the members of the Megarian *hetaireia* to which he attributes the origin of the corpus.⁴⁶ In other words, according to Colesanti, these are the actual names of (only some of) the authors of the Theognidea.⁴⁷ As tantalizing as the idea may be of identifying these names as authors in the corpus, it is ultimately both impossible and unnecessary. The same holds for their role as real members of the audience. While these may be flesh-and-blood addressees, these names could stand for others that shared the same metrical shape across reperformance.⁴⁸

Little can be asserted about the historical reality behind these names. Whether there were people of these names addressed in the first performance is significant only

⁴⁴ In the couplets beginning with lines 469, 503, 511, 513, 667, 829, 923, 993, 1059, 1085, 1211, and 1349.

⁴⁵ Of the scholars who draw this conclusion, van Groningen is the most cautious (1966, nb 400). Vetta first calls them "recipients in the poet's circle" ("destinatario qualunque della cerchia del poeta") (1980, 123) and then later formalizes them as "members of his *hetaireia*" (1998, 20). This *hetaireia* differs from that of Colesanti's formulation (2011) because it consists entirely of exiles.

⁴⁶ Colesanti 2011, 233-241.

⁴⁷ He notes that the names represent only a few out of the whole *hetaireia*, and the individual contributions of each can only rarely be identified (2011, 239).

⁴⁸ As happens with player names in British football fan song culture. For example, see the substitution of "Mezut Ozil" (<https://www.fanchants.com/football-songs/arsenal-chants/weve-got-ozil-mesut-ozil/>) and "Dele Alli" (https://www.fanchants.com/football-songs/tottenham_hotspur-chants/r09_0074h_f/) for the original "Dmitri Payet" (https://www.fanchants.com/football-songs/west_ham-chants/weve-got-payet/).

for those first performances. For subsequent ones, the presence of someone so named at the first performance matters only to the extent that the name is significant to the rhetorical effectiveness of its use.⁴⁹ For subsequent performances where participants by these names did happen to be present, the use is self-explanatory. The use when no one by that name was present, however, is worthy of investigation.

As with the use of Kurnos, these addresses could have been directed at no one in particular. But if someone was being addressed, the question of an ulterior meaning to the deployment of the names arises. Carrière compares the names to the aliases common in comedy, Alexandrian idyll, and later in modern satire.⁵⁰ The performance circumstances of those forms allow for a level of remove, which the use of aliases playfully engages with. Symptotic address, on the other hand, engages its audience more directly. Applying these names in the symposion as aliases need not have created distance between the addressee and reality; instead, it could have served to shape the group's perception of the symposiast being addressed.⁵¹ If the paideutic mode is a fiction,⁵² it is one with real-world consequences.

⁴⁹ It is curious that almost all of these names are rare. Harrison already has observed this fact for Akademos, Arguris, and Klearistos (1902, 265-267). My own search of the Lexicon of Greek Personal Names (http://classlgpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/lgpn_search.cgi) shows the following hits: Demonax x33, Onomakritos x7, Klearistos x14, Demokles x127, Akademos x3, Timagoras x23, Simonides x47, Arguris x5, Skuthes x48.

⁵⁰ Carrière 1975, 187.

⁵¹ Romney 2020, 32.

⁵² Ferri 2013, 93.

The contextual specificity of such roleplay means that we cannot hope to reconstruct their usage with certainty. With “Kurnos” the sheer frequency at least suggested a pattern of use. Nevertheless, we are not without any clues. First, we have the meaning of the names themselves. Seven have discernible meanings which could serve particular aims in performance. The three “-demos-” names (Demokleis,⁵³ Akademos, Demonax) might associate the addressee with a popular or populist element.⁵⁴ It is probably not a coincidence that two of their three uses are quite combative.⁵⁵ In both, the speaker looks down on the addressee and attempts to put him in his place. Likewise, the meaning of Skuthes (suggestive of foreignness) has resonance in lines 825-830, where the speaker mourns the alienation of himself and his audience from his polis.⁵⁶ Other names seem to be plain honorifics (Onomakritos, Klearistos, Timagoras) and are used, in all four instances, in an arguably neutral or positive light.

⁵³ Carrière (1957, 204-205) argues for the identification of Demokleis with the parasite by the same name in a play by the 4th century comedian Anaxandrides. This type of identification is worth noting, because it is exemplary of the pitfalls inherent in an emphasis on first performance. While a consistent pattern of use for this name might demonstrate that it was a sort of stock character (a fact of obvious interest to a study of reperformance), two uses show nothing other than coincidence. There is indeed some overlap in the use, in that both discuss gluttony, but the Demokleis of the Theognidea is also warned against excessive frugality, as Carrière himself acknowledges. Even if we set all of this aside and accept that the two Demokleis are one and the same, the name could easily have been inserted at a later point to fit this known character. As van Groningen beautifully puts it, there is not a shadow of proof (1966, 350).

⁵⁴ Van Groningen points out that the name Demokleis, for example, was “very typical of a citizen of a democratic city.” (Il est plutôt caractéristique du citoyen d'une ville démocratique) (1966, 350). The epigraphic evidence which he cites, however, is later, from the late 5th/early 4th BCE.

⁵⁵ Lines 993ff., 1085-1086

⁵⁶ It is notable that Skuthes is not included in the list of possible members of the hetairaia by Vetta or Colesanti, perhaps because the perceived foreignness of his name, although his address is self-evidently convivial (ἀλλ' ἄγε δῆ, Σκύθα, ... ἀπόπαυε δὲ κῶμον “Come on already, Skuthes, stop the komos” 829). Harrison (1902, 266 n7) has argued convincingly for the possibility of Skuthes (Skythes in his transliteration) as a name for a Greek.

Finally, Arguris, the only female name in the corpus,⁵⁷ has a clear meaning ("silver cup").⁵⁸ Gerber notes that it is a likely name for a *hetaira*.⁵⁹ Even if no *hetaira* of that name were present, the fact that cups were passed around at the symposium gives this name potential for use in wordplay and visual gags. The circumstances of its use within the Theognidea ("the day of slavery is upon you" σοὶ μὲν γὰρ δούλιον ἦμαρ ἔπι) suggest that it could be used as a derogatory nickname.

The final name, Simonides, does not present any etymological keys to its use. Instead, its most likely external resonance is as a reference to one of the multiple poets of that name.⁶⁰ The very fact that there are multiple candidates makes this address even more suitable for widespread reperformance. Notably, these uses are not directly metapoetic, despite the frequent references to poetic activity in the corpus. Nevertheless, while they do not contain direct contestations of poetic authority, each use contains the possibility for correction—from the direct command of line 469 (μηδ' εὔδοντ' ἐπέγειρε, Σιμωνίδη, "Don't wake the sleeper, Simonides")⁶¹ to the more figurative command of line 1349 (οὔτω μὴ θαύμαζε, Σιμωνίδη, "Don't be amazed, Simonides"). Even lines 667-668, which do not contain an imperative, present a future less vivid conditional used as an alternative to the present situation. In each case, the speaker could have used the

⁵⁷ The mention of goddesses is here excepted.

⁵⁸ I follow van Groningen in rejecting the proposal that the poem is addressed to an actual silver cup and not a person (1966, 437).

⁵⁹ Gerber 1999, 357. Van Groningen 1966, 437.

⁶⁰ Harrison identifies five possible candidates (1902, 299-300).

⁶¹ The fact that this disagreement is metasympotic gives it additional weight. Cf. Hobden 2013, 34.

couplet to disagree with a previous statement (either implied or actually made) in the same manner that Solon's poem answers Mimnermus' regarding the proper life span of human beings.⁶² Unlike Solon's fragment, no surviving verses of Simonides lend themselves to this type of interplay, but that may be an accident of preservation.

One can therefore conjecture viable motivations for the use of these names other than the unverifiable fact of their literal use in address. But these reconstructions should not distract from the more important fact of their infrequency. The use of an addressee's first name was the baseline use of address.⁶³ It is remarkable then, in a corpus with 145 addresses, that only 12 are directed to named humans other than Kurnos or Polupaidēs. In terms of reperformance, however, their infrequency is beneficial. These sorts of addresses would have been more difficult to adapt to reperformance, either because the name does not resonate or is not easily changed to that of another symposiast present. Their very infrequency yields a corpus that lends itself better to reuse.

7.3.3 Unnamed Address

The second most common group of addressees after Kurnos/Polupaidēs are those directed to something other than a name. There are 34 of these, almost three times as numerous as named, non-Kurnos addressees. Half of these, 17 of 34, are to boys (παῖ).

⁶² As quoted in Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Solon* (1.60). For more on archaic response poems, see Burton 2011.

⁶³ Cf. Dickey 1996, 49.

Every one of these are found in the 81-couplet second book.⁶⁴ The other 16 use a variety of descriptions of, and evidence a range of attitudes toward, the addressee: from the favorable φίλε (3 uses)⁶⁵ to the neutral ἄνθρωπ' (2 uses)⁶⁶ and γύναι (once)⁶⁷ to the antagonistic νήπιος (once) and even θεοῖσιν τ' ἐχθρὲ καὶ ἀνθρώποισιν ἄπιστε (once). The addresses to θυμέ ("my heart")—three of these 34 instances—is of particular note.⁶⁸ Whereas the other addresses serve to direct the utterance at someone else (either within the audience or imagined), the addresses to θυμέ turn the utterance inward. In doing so, these addresses ironically indicate the importance of the audience's involvement in the poetry: even contemplation is given the form of address. Indeed, these uses are not particularly contemplative: they are directives to the speaker's own heart much in the same way that the addresses to Kurnos are directives. The language of these directives mirrors quite closely similar advice given to Kurnos,⁶⁹ at times even close enough to be considered a doublet.⁷⁰

The obvious advantage of this type of address in the context of sympotic performance is its easy repurposeability. A symposiast would need to make no

⁶⁴ On the use of παῖ in later address, see Dickey 1996, 65-72 (n.b. 70). Bowie, in an address to "Theognis and the Theognidea: A Conference" (held April 2021) proposed that the passages which began ὦ παῖ were all taken from lost poems of Simonides (author's notes).

⁶⁵ Lines 99, 1137, 1164c. See Dickey 1996, 107-138.

⁶⁶ Lines 454, 595.

⁶⁷ Line 1213. If connected to the use of Arguris in the previous couplet, this is an antagonistic use of an otherwise neutral address. See Dickey 1996, 86-88.

⁶⁸ These are found in the couplets that begin at lines 213, 695, 1029.

⁶⁹ Cf. 355 for both 695 and 1029.

⁷⁰ 213 and 1071, as discussed above.

adjustment to this couplet before performing it to whichever addressee he had in mind. The relative frequency of these types of address is yet another aspect of the corpus which lends itself to varied and widespread reperformance. Given this malleability, it is somewhat surprising that addresses to Kurnos outnumber these addresses so drastically. This could be motivated by the ideological explanations offered above, or the corpus may have simply happened to be written to reflect the performance circumstances wherein a specific, flesh-and-blood person was addressed. In any case, when the poetry came to be written down, the advantages of the address to Kurnos triumphed over any concerns about the poetry's comparative loss of malleability.

7.4 The Audience Now

Perhaps nothing distinguishes the Theognidea more from most modern poetry than this extensive use of address. With rare exceptions, modern poetry restricts address to apostrophe, a device which is itself considered Romantic and out of fashion.⁷¹ Compare this to the near-constant presence of address in the Theognidea, on the other hand, which vividly paints the sympotic performance circumstances. Whether the vocatives were used literally or as invitations to play certain roles, the audience is present in the poetry as written.

⁷¹ Robin Reames characterizes modern thought about apostrophe: "an antiquated device of oratory or poetry...a relic of a former age, a curiosity for the classicist or literary historian, but not a concept that impinges on the history of ideas or animates thought today" (2022, 69-70).

The use of address in the sympotic circumstances of the Theognidea might have ranged in complexity from the straightforward (symposiasts being addressed by their own true name) to the abstract (specific symposiasts addressed by names not their own, or the performer addressing an imagined addressee). But, in any case, the symposiast performed with the goal of convincing the physically present audience.⁷² Address, as an abstraction or otherwise, was a tool used to that effect.

It is a basic tenet of the rhetorical theory of narrative that each writer writes with an “authorial audience” in mind.⁷³ The level of specificity can vary considerably, but every piece of literature makes assumptions about its audience: what background information their audience will know (both general and hyper-contextually specific), what their audience values and what it despises, and why it would read this work. The authorial audience are those people (real or imagined) who meet those criteria.

In the typical terms of the rhetorical theory of narrative, it is the responsibility of the flesh-and-blood audience to inhabit, as much as is possible, the role of the authorial audience. In other words, if we do not have the correct background knowledge to understand the poetry, it is our responsibility as readers to acquire it to the extent that

⁷² Depending on his goals, that audience may consist of every symposiast present or it may consist of an individual symposiast whom he wants to convince individually, with the other symposiasts as onlookers. Romney (2020, 30) notably does not allow for the latter possibility.

⁷³ For the authorial audience, see Booth (1983, with updates from his first edition in 1961). Rabinowitz (1977) added further nuance to the model. As with the other aspects of the rhetorical theory of narrative, James Phelan has been a prolific propagator of the idea (n.b. 2018, but also 1996, 2017, and (with Sarah Copland) 2022). Shen (2013) defends the concept from modern criticism exemplified by Nünning (2004).

we can. Symptotic performances, however, mirror the dynamics of other direct forms of rhetoric. As with a court speech or a political speech, if the symposiasts did not have the correct background knowledge or if the composition did not appeal to their values, that was a failing on the part of the performer, not the audience.

Indeed, inhabiting the authorial audience is more difficult with the Theognidea than with other types of direct rhetorical composition. The stakes at play in judicial or deliberative speeches are at least clear to modern readers. When we read a judicial speech, we imagine ourselves as jurors or assemblymen deciding upon a binary vote. In Theognidean poetry, on the other hand, the stakes are more subtly displayed. Indeed, an important tactic of the rhetoric was to position the claims not as part of a dispute but as an obvious statement.⁷⁴ The confidence of these statements, especially the value statements, has led some to read them as unanimously held values stated only for mutual reinforcement rather than arguments.⁷⁵ In terms of circumstances, ostensibly at least, the aim of each judicial or deliberate speech is essentially the same: to win a binary vote. What's more, the specific context of surviving speeches is typically established in the speeches themselves. Symptotic poetry, with its tendency toward general maxims, does not lend itself so easily to reconstruction. Even if it were, the rhetorical

⁷⁴ E.g. lines 1109-1110.

⁷⁵ Romney 2020, 6.

circumstances of sympotic poetry would be much more difficult to master, governed as they were by the nuances of social and political dynamics.

The importance of the rhetorical stakes to the audience of the poetry extends beyond the difficulties of their reconstruction. The very presence of these stakes meant that, as with other acts of rhetoric, the audience determined whether or not the performance met its goals.⁷⁶ The audience's approbation was not secondary to the act of sympotic performance, it was its very *raison d'être* as a rhetorical act. As discussed above, the sympotic audience had a direct say in determining whether its performance was successful. In other words, while modern page poetry succeeds on terms that are defined by its author, ancient sympotic poetry succeeds on terms defined by its audience. In this way the audience was a critical element of the poetic act.

In each individual performance of sympotic poetry, the authorial audience was thus not an abstraction: it was the symposiasts who made up the flesh-and-blood audience. In the case of many symposia, the values, knowledge, and aims of members of the audience would have been known to the performer because of personal relationships outside of the symposion (or frequent encounters within it).⁷⁷ We, as modern readers,

⁷⁶ This is fundamentally different from the way that modern literature positions itself. Most modern poets are unlikely to admit openly that they write to gain the approval of their readers. Even if it is true, to make such an admission would risk cheapening their art in the eyes of their readers. But this situation could not be further from the case of the sympotic poets who composed, modified, and performed the poetry of the Theognidea.

⁷⁷ We should not overstate the familiarity of symposiasts, nor ignore the possibility of deception in the symposion. On this, see Chapter 4.

cannot fully inhabit that authorial audience. We can take steps to align ourselves better with that role, but we simply cannot give the poetry on the page the immediate socio-political significance it had in the symposion.

And yet, modern readers are not wholly removed from the Theognidean audience as envisioned in the Theognidea. Although we cannot fully inhabit the role of the symposiast,⁷⁸ much of the Theognidea can still serve its function of advising readers to this day. In the long, iterative history of Theognidean reperformance a passage like lines 73-74 (“Don’t share all matters entirely with your friends; indeed, few friends have a trustworthy mind”)⁷⁹ could have served as advice for many different specific situations. Indeed, its generality leaves it so malleable that it can still serve the same role for modern readers.

As mentioned above, an important element of the authorial audience is not just what you know and believe, but your own aims as an audience member. Readers who come to the text looking for wise advice are thus inhabiting the authorial audience. Whether it is advice worth taking is another matter entirely. I certainly would not endorse that course of action. The lines worth holding on to are far outnumbered by those which I found outright distasteful.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ I.e. we cannot physically “drink and eat with them, and sit with them.”

⁷⁹ *πρῆξι μὴ δὲ φίλοισιν ὅλως ἀνακοινέο παῖσιν· / παῦροί τοι πολλῶν πιστὸν ἔχουσι νόον.*

⁸⁰ These are too numerous to catalogue, but *n.b.* 183ff.

For better or worse, this type of reading has fallen out of vogue in the academy.⁸¹ The Theognidea is not read now as a source of wisdom (or even as a claim of wisdom to be critiqued) but instead as evidence for various reconstructions (of the original text, of the performance circumstances, of the customs and values of the performers). This dissertation is no different. I am not modeling good behavior, at least in terms of a flesh-and-blood reader attempting to inhabit the authorial audience.

As promised, the name Kurnos is still uttered, even if not accompanied by tender-voiced *auloi*. The symposiasts who performed the poetry which addressed him were mindful of the possibility of continued reperformance, and of its benefits for their own immediate rhetorical aims.⁸² They could hardly have imagined the long, varied history of the poetry that would follow. How the evolution of the institution of the symposion and the transition to written text affected the rhetorical positioning of the various players within the poetry, as manifested in those periods, is of great interest. It is unfortunately beyond the scope of my investigation.⁸³ I chose to focus on reconstructing authorship and audience in the original performance circumstances, and on how a reconstruction that emphasizes reperformance ought to affect our own position vis-à-vis the text. I chose this approach as a corrective to the focus on first performance pervasive

⁸¹ See Alder 2020 for the departure from moral education in the aims of classical education.

⁸² As I demonstrate in Chapter 5.

⁸³ De Martin 2020b does just this, with a focus on the authority of the figure of Theognis. A model of what an investigation might look like, albeit about much later reading communities, can be seen in the case studies of Johnson 2010.

in the scholarship. But I, too, have looked at the origins of the text to aid in its understanding; my definition of origins is simply more broadly defined.

8. Conclusion

μήποτε, Κύρν', ἀγορᾶσθαι ἔπος μέγα· οἶδε γὰρ οὐδεὶς
ἀνθρώπων ὅ τι νῦξ χημέρη ἀνδρὶ τελεῖ.
(159-160)

There is an old phrase from coding that has worked its way into the modern lexicon: “It’s not a bug, it’s a feature.”¹ Reading the Theognidea as the product of rhetorically motivated reperformance shows that many aspects of the Theognidea that seem to be bugs are actually features. The indeterminacy of the poem divisions and the puzzling presence of the doublets are no longer textual problems, they are assets. The malleability of the poetry would have suited the needs of symposiasts. Likewise, seemingly inconsistent use of general value terminology is no longer something that needs to be smoothed over or explained away, it is a demonstration of the ideological conflicts of a turbulent era. That turbulence even broke through into the symposion, where the complaints of betrayal and false friendship are no longer restricted to a single man, they are reflections of an entire class’ anxieties. The controversy over the collection’s authorship and authenticity is not a controversy at all, simply different ways of reading. Finally, the frequency of address challenges us to consider our own role as participants in the rhetorical exchange.

I read the Theognidea as the product of widespread reperformance because it makes the most sense when I read it this way. But granting authorial credit to

¹ Its use is traceable back until at least 1975 (Carr 2018).

generations of symposiasts does not just explain some of the strangest features of the poetry, it also gives the collection the most historical significance. We do not know anything about the historical figure Theognis besides the fact of his authorship. While his authorship is certainly plausible, so too is a much wider authorship as the result of constant modification and reuse. In light of those competing plausibilities, I choose the latter: a unique social document. I make no claims that it is exhaustive, or even entirely genuine, but even if what we are seeing is only the tip of the iceberg, an almost random sample, a demonstration of what might have been as much as what was, it is remarkable.

In the first two chapters, I demonstrate that Theognidean poetry was a malleable raw material and thus would have been well-suited to sympotic reuse. Nowhere is that malleability more evident than in the “problem” of poem division. That there is no agreed upon scheme of poem divisions for the 711-couplet corpus has been treated primarily as an inconvenience for readers and editors (which it certainly is!). In the first chapter, I argue that it is also a reflection of how the poetry could have been rearranged and modified to suit various symposiasts’ rhetorical needs in reperformance.

Traditional philology, motivated by the needs of the page, calls for a single, definitive scheme of poem division. Ironically, scribes and editors, bound by the received order and verbiage of the corpus, have created many different coherent poetic units in that pursuit. One can only imagine the poetry’s potential in the freer hands of

symposiasts. Whether the poetic units catalogued in the first chapter were actually performed by symposiasts in the archaic period is ultimately unknowable, but there can be little doubt that it is plausible that any one of these units deemed sufficient for publication by a scribe or editor would have also been deemed sufficient for performance by a symposiast. When we no longer grant interpretive primacy to the imagined first performance, we see that there is no need to settle on one scheme of poem divisions. To do so would obscure one of the great assets of the collection.

The choice to grant all archaic sympotic performances the same interpretive weight affects our understanding of the text itself. To better understand that effect, I conducted five case studies of passages where the poem divisions. But these case studies cover only a small fraction of the text.² Each of the remaining couplets presents new opportunities to understand how the Theognidea operates. If we set aside the given order of the text, the possibilities are almost endless. My approach in these case studies was holistic. It would be fruitful to take a more individualized approach: to dive into the choices made by specific editions or manuscripts. The divisions made by the manuscripts, which have largely been ignored, should be of particular interest moving forward, especially in those cases where they diverge from the editions and sympotic sequences as identified by recent scholars.

² 6.75%, to be precise.

Centering reperformance also reframes a notoriously puzzling textual feature of the Theognidea: the doublets. The opening of the second chapter is devoted to reexamining a selection of the doublets on their own terms. The question of which of the two readings is preferred is wholly incompatible with my reading. I reject it. I also reject the need to pinpoint the doublets' origins. Whether they resulted from oral or textual transmission, the fact remains that they serve as a direct demonstration of how the poetry of the Theognidea could be repurposed in different contexts. I find that even slight variations drastically affect how these verses operated, and that all could easily have found a home in the symposion. Given the scope of the project, however, I only briefly demonstrate what a more thorough examination of the doublets through this lens would look like. There is much more work to be done.

My approach to the poem divisions and the doublets highlights the importance of medium. A reading which grants all iterations of the poetry as valid will always be at conflict with a medium that can only present one. The malleability that would have made this poetry particularly useful for symposiasts presents at best irritations and at worst irreconcilable cruxes on the page. Happily, print is no longer the only medium of mass publication. The second half of the second chapter presents an ideal born-digital version of the Theognidea, which I hope to someday make a reality. We as readers will only be able to appreciate its full textual capabilities when it is published in this way.

Having established the malleability of the text, I then move to the ideological content and context of the poetry. I find it almost equally malleable. In the third chapter, I examine the use of five value terms (*agathos*, *esthlos*, *kalos*, *kakos*, and *deilos*), which reoccur in the Theognidea with an almost obsessive frequency. I find that these terms evade discrete, specific definition. They certainly do not refer to objectively identifiable classes of people. Instead, their application is considered a matter of personal discretion, birth or wealth do not clearly determine their application, and once applied the status is impermanent. The result: the terms of highest approbation and condemnation were the subject of contestation within the symposion.

For readings which privilege first performance, the poet is either inconsistent or other, inauthentic perspectives have crept into the text. Both would be a fault in the poetry. My approach instead treats the contestability of these terms as a two-fold asset. First, it allowed the symposiasts shape the group's values on their own terms, using widely accepted terms. Second, it has left us with a document that captures a range of different perspectives attempting to assert themselves. While my findings certainly muddy the previously clear binaries of some historical accounts, the significance they lend to the Theognidea as a historical snapshot of that turbulent time more than makes up for the loss of clarity.

The implications of the third chapter lead directly to the fourth. If the *agathoi* and *kakoi* do not represent distinct groups of people, there is little language to describe

groups left in the text of the Theognidea. Instead, we see a social picture in which every person is left to fend for themselves. Unlike the value terminology of the previous chapter, language concerning relationships is remarkably consistent: relationships are interpersonal and fickle. There may have been larger social groups within which these interpersonal dynamics played out, but they do not seem to have had any discernible effect. The scope of this project is restricted to the Theognidea. A more sweeping assessment of *hetaireia* in light of these findings is a *desideratum*.

As the frequency of advice makes clear, each person had to decide for themselves whom they would befriend. It was an important choice, but never a final one. Betrayal was a constant threat, and one should always be ready to move on from a bad friend. The bitterness of the complaints shows that some hesitated until it was too late. In the traditional reading, a single, pitiful individual makes these warnings and complaints. But my embrace of reperformance expands their scope. They speak to an unsettled world creeping its way into the symposion. Much has been made in recent scholarship of the symposion as a clean break from the outside world, a safe space apart.³ This poetry suggests that some were willing to break down that barrier and mar that tranquility to make their feelings known.

The final two chapters reassess the role of author and audience in the collection. In both, I address the same two questions. How can we square the model of widespread

³ E.g. Romney 2020, 11.

symptotic reperformance (1) with the words of the poetry itself and (2) with the way the poetry is read now? In Chapter 5, I show that while language which has been interpreted as asserting authorship can also be described as claiming poetic authority within the immediate rhetorical circumstances of the symposion. Poetic immortality can be a means to present ends. Throughout, there is open acknowledgement of reperformance: many identical declarations of unique talent were likely made over the years.

An individual named Theognis might have aspired to rise above the din of other symposiasts' voices, and his efforts might be recorded in the poetry we have. I find no reason why we should grant his hopes primacy in our interpretative schema. Theognis is no more than a name in a poem to us. He is, as we know him, an implied author. The idea of the implied author, adopted from the rhetorical theory of narrative, is a key to understanding the battlelines of the centuries-long controversy of Theognidean authorship. I close the chapter by demonstrating that the different approaches to authorship of the Theognidea are best organized according to the different approaches to the implied author's true identity. I find four camps: unitarians, analysts, neo-unitarians, and pluralists. While each reading has its merits, I align with the pluralists. Much of the work of this dissertation can be described as showing the merits of that approach.

By framing the Theognidea as rhetoric, I emphasize that the audience plays a vital role in its success or failure. In the sixth and final chapter, I show that the audience is not only a direct participant in the rhetorical act, but also a constituent part of the poetry itself in the form of address. The first half of this chapter reads the various addresses of the Theognidea to understand how they might operate in reperformance. The use of unnamed addressees is the most intuitive in this frame: anyone could be “dear one” if the symposiasts performing wanted them to be. For the specific names, I analyze how the use of these names might have operated in performance if no one by that name was present. In this case, address gestures at the importance of the concrete audience to the rhetorical act of sympotic poetry while also introducing an abstraction with the potential for nuanced sophistication. The repeated use of Kurnos shows how those roles might have been developed and deployed in reperformance. Nevertheless, I also leave open the fact that their presence in our text might be an accident of survival. Within the long history of use, modification, and reuse, it is certainly possible that these names, even Kurnos, were one of many and just happened to be the ones preserved in writing.

Whether or not their names are actually recorded in the poetry, my reading of the Theognidea presumes the presence of symposiasts as active members of the audience, listening and reacting to poetry being performed in their presence, determining its success with their approval or rejection. That is not our experience of the

poetry as modern members of its audience. To describe that gap, I show that the authorial audience—those who possess the assumed background knowledge, values, and aims that are needed to appreciate the work—is an abstraction that we aspire to as modern readers instead of an identifiable group of physically present fellow symposiasts. As such, there is an inversion of roles: the sympotic audience determined the poetic act's success by deciding whether it fit their fancy; the modern audience determines its success by fitting themselves as best as they can to the idea of that ancient audience.

I set out to write about the Theognidea without concerning myself with the same old questions of its origins. I wanted to read the poetry on its own terms rather than as evidence for a historical reconstruction or as a means of settling scholarly disputes. In that sense, this dissertation has failed. I have reframed what “origins” means, but I have still essentially concerned myself with them. That is partially out of an inability to cut the old knot, but also out of a new appreciation for what thinking about its origins can bring to the reading of this text, especially when those origins are understood not as a single moment of genius from a single man, but instead as generations worth of poetry in action. Without a doubt, the richest experience of this text would be as living poetry in the archaic symposion. That experience is lost to us now. The next best thing is to read it with those original circumstances in mind.

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Biography

Alexander Karsten attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received his B.A. in May of 2014. He then attended the University of Georgia, where he received his M.A. in May of 2016. He is a recipient of the James B. Duke Fellowship, the Provost's Reimagining Doctoral Education Fellowship, and was a member of the Society of Duke Fellows. He is also a Morehead-Cain scholar and a member of the Order of the Golden Fleece.