NOSTALGIA, EXPULSION AND THE POETIC I:
THE POETICS OF DIASPORA IN THE *CORPUS THEOGNIDEUM*[1]

J Skarbek-Kazanecki (University of Lodz)

In the anthology of archaic elegiac poetry called the *Corpus Theognideum*, the poetic I often eludes traditional approaches to the 'poetic authority'. Instead of presenting itself as a citizen of a particular 'city-state' or at least a prominent member of an elitist circle who came to have a position of authority, the *persona loquens* situates himself as removed from the community: as impoverished, expelled from his *polis*, despised, embittered and thirsting for revenge. The purpose of my paper is to consider how the tension between the alienation of the poetic I and the unity of the audience might function during the act of (re)performance. Applying considerations of Edward W Said on 'diasporic temporality' to the political and economic conflict between the ideologies of *polis* and anti-*polis* in archaic and classical Greece, I show that the poetic I in the Theognidean tradition, by presenting itself as an exile and a victim of the democratic movement, expresses the temporally distant position of the so far privileged aristocracy, situated in dialectical opposition to the democratic institutions of *polis*.

Keywords: Theognis of Megara; *symposion*; homesickness; alienation; collective memory.

The *Corpus Theognideum* (*Theognidea*), a collection of 1389 elegiac verses attributed to Theognis of Megara, has long posed questions about its authenticity (the so-called 'Theognidean question').[2] Until the 1980s, researchers tended to treat textual anomalies and features which are difficult to explain from the perspective of 'classical textual' criticism as the basis for the view that someone, an unknown copyist or a compiler, had used pieces of Solon, Mimnermus, and Tyrtaeus to create a new collection, subsequently assigned to the archaic poet Theognis.

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[1] This paper draws to some extent on material previously at the student conference *2ᵒ Συνέδριο Μεταπτυχιακών Φοιτητών και Υποψηφίων Διδακτόρων Κλασικής Φιλολογίας (Λόγοι περί Ετερότητας: Όψεις του 'άλλου' στην αρχαία ελληνική και λατινική γραμματεία)*, 15–17 October 2020, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. I am grateful to the participants of the conference, as well as the editor of this volume for his invaluable assistance in preparation of the final version of this paper.

[2] One of the principal problems encountered in this case is the similarities between Theognis' poems and fragments which are elsewhere assigned to other poets, as well as the repetitions of the same or similar verses which are appearing in different parts of the *sylloge*. See Selle 2008.

However, the modern emphasis on the context of oral communication and on the performative character of archaic Greek poetry enables philologists to approach this issue in a new light, from *a performative-pragmatic point of view*, to borrow Felix Budelmann's term):[3] using the evolutionary model of poetic development and treating the *Corpus Theognideum* as the product of deep-rooted tradition and a long-term process of re-performance adapted for different performative occasions. Simultaneously, this methodological revision has shown how strongly archaic poetry was embedded in a specific social context, and so opened up studies of the song culture of ancient Greece to a wider socio-political dimension. Elegy as a key element of the aristocratic *symposion* came to be depicted in the context of communication, as an important medium of rhetoric and ideology that allowed its audiences to negotiate their own identity and to emphasise group membership.

By these theoretical points of departure, I would like to examine the ways in which the image of a *persona loquens* in the Theognis' tradition is created. I will treat first-person statements as an expression of public sentiments and point of reference for negotiating the identity of a given audience or, more broadly, of the interpretative community gathered around the Theognidean tradition and some of the sympotic practices that the *Theognidea* reflects. However, instead of focusing — as usually happens — on the authority of the poetic I and its heroic characteristics (see below, section 1), I will try to highlight the features that run counter to the image of the hero-poet; above all, the condition of an exile, inscribed in Theognis' image (see section 3), and the particular temporality that this (self-) dramatisation implies.

1.   Creation of the poetic I: heroisation, authority, identity

The revised methodological perspective in classical studies influenced not only how the author and the concept of authorship in ancient poetry are to be understood, but also the function of the *persona loquens* presented therein. In this view, the figure of the poet ceases to be a historical character and a hypothetical writer of the text; rather, it becomes a textual function or a 'traditional authority' (Edmunds 1997:30) which binds altogether the whole poetic tradition: the voice which serves as a permanent point of reference for the next performers, a 'semi-mythical' figure,[4] manifested and dramatised through the text itself.[5]

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[3]   Budelmann 2009:15; *cf.* Bowie 2012a and Lardinois 2020.

[4]   On the false biographies of ancient poets in terms of mythology see Lefkowitz 1978 and 2012 (Preface); *cf.* also Nagy 1985, 1994, 1996 and esp. 2009:171, where the researcher emphasises the uselessness of a distinction between 'legend' and 'biography'.

[5]   Nagy 1985 and 1996:207–225; *cf.* Slings 2000:13: '(…) most first-person statements express views and feelings that were probably or obviously shared by the audience: the

Simultaneously, it reveals a consistent rhetorical strategy, closely related to the performative occasion and the relationship between participants — more specifically, between the performer and its audience — and to the different social, political and economic factors which have an influence on the organisation of a given community.

The poetic I in the *Theognidea* in many ways belongs to this broader poetic strategy of the archaic age. Through authoritative statements, as with the voice of the poet in the Hesiodic *Works and Days*, it depicts itself as an authority, as a sage and a teacher, a man with the moral right to lecture others, to deliver a public talk and to promote 'good behaviour' amongst participants of the symposium (*Theogn.* 19–23):

> Κύρνε, σοφιζομένωι μὲν ἐμοὶ σφρηγὶς ἐπικείσθω
> τοῖσδ' ἔπεσιν, λήσει δ' οὔποτε κλεπτόμενα,
> οὐδέ τις ἀλλάξει κάκιον τοὐσθλοῦ παρεόντος·
> ὧδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ· ΄Θεύγνιδός ἐστιν ἔπη
> τοῦ Μεγαρέως· πάντας δὲ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ὀνομαστός΄.

> Let the seal of the wise man, Cyrnus, be set upon
> these lines, and they shall never be filched from him,
> nor shall evil ever be changed with their good,
> but every man shall say: 'These are the lines of Theognis
> of Megara, famous throughout the world'.[6]

This fragment is located at the beginning of the collection, right after the *prooimion* invoking Apollo, Artemis, and the Muses (*Theogn.* 1–18). It is also the only place in the entire *Corpus Theognideum* where the poetic I reveals its name and refers in such a clear manner to its own work.[7] Taking into account the

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poet's I (ego) is first and foremost a representative I, especially in elegy'; also Tsagarakis 1979:1–9.

[6] All quoted Greek texts from the *Corpus Theognideum* are from Young 1961, with translations adapted from Edmonds 1931.

[7] As Selle 2008:176–178 notes, the localisation of the elegy cannot be a coincidence; the question remains, however, whether it is the result of the intervention of the poet, or of a compiler who, through the 'self-presentation' (*die Selbstvorstellung*) of the alleged author, was trying to make the collection coherent. This doubt intersects with the unclear meaning of the concept of σφρηγίς, 'poetic signature', which causes many interpretational difficulties: many would grant, with Otto Immisch (1933:298–299, see also Young 1961:x; Rösler 1980:81–89; Cerri 1990; Giannini 1993), that the reference to a 'seal' is an unambiguous indication of the physical nature of the 'book' which Theognis, inasmuch as he has created it by himself, was trying to protect against 'thieves' or distortion (κλέπτειν, v. 20) of its original meaning and his own scope. A more promising approach views it more metaphorically and stresses its traditional character.

rhetorical dimension of archaic poetry, one could easily explain this self-interest of the poetic I by reference to the *paraenetic* purpose, explicitly communicated through authoritative statements. As is emphasised by the participle σοφιζομένωι, closely related to σοφίη[8] — the *persona loquens* (whether or not associated with the poet) occupies a position of knowing. In the next couplets, by addressing Cyrnus, his listener, pupil and the object of his affection, it also gives expression to the intention to teach and speak out publicly (*Theogn.* 27–30):

Σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ εὖ φρονέων ὑποθήσομαι, οἷά περ αὐτός,
Κύρν', ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν ἔμαθον.
πέπνυσο, μηδ' αἰσχροῖσιν ἐπ' ἔργμασι μηδ' ἀδίκοισιν
τιμὰς μηδ' ἀρετὰς ἕλκεο μηδ' ἄφενος.

But 'tis with good intent to thee, Cyrnus, that I shall give thee the counsels
which I learnt from good men in my own childhood.
Be thou wise and draw to thyself neither honours nor virtues
nor substance on account of dishonourable or unrighteous deeds.

Therefore, the *persona loquens* is aware of its own skills and values, convinced that it is the sole distributor of the truth. It remains of some significance that the relationship with a broad-based poetical or political tradition is particularly emphasised by presenting itself as a 'good thinking' (εὖ φρονέων, v. 27) aristocrat who can 'give good advice' (εὖ συμβουλεύειν) to friends (*cf.* v. 38). At the same time the poetic I stresses its own dependence on the expertise of many lifetimes, the wisdom acquired from previous generations of aristocrats (ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν ἔμαθον, v. 28).[9] In other words, the poet is presenting himself as a

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From this point of view, the σφραγίς motive is interpreted as a convention, a *topos* of the heroisation of the poet common in archaic poetry, which cannot prove either the authenticity of the passage or the existence of the historical Theognis. See, *e.g.*, Edmunds 1997 and Bakker 2017.

[8] The term is traditionally translated as a 'wisdom', but in archaic poetry often used to designate musical skills. Pindar *Pyth.* 6.49; Xen. fr. 2 West, v. 9; *cf.* also *Corpus Theognideum* 789–794. On the possible ways of understanding the verb σοφίζομαι in the above fragment, see Edmunds 1985 and Condello 2009–2010:71–78. On σοφία/ σοφίη in archaic poetry as a general term indicating both poetic skills and the authority of the poet-sage; see Nagy 1985a:29–30; for the political significance of σοφίη, see Xen. fr. 1 West, where the political significance of the term is emphasised by the fourfold repetition of the word πόλις 'city-state' (verses 9, 19, 20, 22), *cf.* Skarbek-Kazanecki (forthcoming), see also Solon 13.52 West; commentary in Podlecki 1984:134–135.

[9] *Cf.* the definition of Greek aristocracy proposed by Starr 1992:4, as 'those who shared a cultured pattern of life and values *consciously* conceived and upheld from generation to generation'; *contra*: Węcowski 2014:23–25, who problematises this aspect, *viz.* the multigenerational continuity in regard to the elitist (aristocratic) identity.

representative voice of the whole community and the expression of the aristocratic value system (Nagy 1985).[10]

      Given this background, the seemingly autobiographical remarks in the *Theognidea*, as well as the outline of the relationship between the poet (understood as a textual persona) and his addressee, are more likely to be generic and therefore problematic as a historical source. From the performative-pragmatic point of view, it seems that they justify — as in the case of the Hesiodic *I*, at least in accordance with the most recent interpretations[11] — the didactic enunciation of the tradition; they serve to allow the next performers to claim or strengthen their authority or even to exalt the Theognidean elegies above the other 'poetic schools'.[12] Moreover, since elegy in recent years came to be viewed as a key element of the aristocratic *symposion*,[13] we could treat this strategy of 'self-dramatisation' of the poetic I as an important medium of rhetoric and ideology: the name of the poet — which unifies the whole tradition, transmitted, after all, among Panhellenic audiences (*cf.* Nagy 1990a) — allows the performer to become a co-creator of the public discourse, to actively negotiate the identity of his own community, to emphasise group membership, and to diagnose social issues.

      Thus, as we can see, the issue of the self-creation of the poetic I converges with questions about the authority of a given poetic tradition. This is also how the foreignness of the figure of an archaic poet is often explained. Two articles which attempt to outline the 'stance of an outsider' in the Hesiodic *Works and Days* by studying the rhetoric of this tradition, are good examples of the approach. Mark Griffith (*Personality in Hesiod*, 1983), compares Hesiod with the *Corpus*

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[10]   Contrary to Homeric epic (see Ford 1997:408–409 and Bakker 2018:151–152), both the Hesiodic and the Theognidean traditions are characterised by the permanent presence of the apostrophic address to someone, some mute listener — to Cyrnus, Theognis' pupil, or to Perses, Hesiod's brother — integrated into narration perhaps in order to establish the rhetorical space and a relationship with the audience (*cf.* González 2018:163–167). Moreover, by using such a didactic claim as ὑποθήσομαι ('I will teach' v. 27, 1007, 1049, see also v. 1237 and 1365–1366), the Theognidean poetic I effectively situates itself within the poetic tradition associated with Hesiod's *Works and Days*. This convention can be narrowed down by the term ὑποθῆκαι, see Friedländer 1913 and Kurke 1990:90: 'The genre of *hypothekai* would be characterized by a proem, an address to a specific addressee, sometimes by mythological material, but mainly by a collection of injunctions and traditional wisdom, loosely strung together with gnomic material'.

[11]   See Stoddard 2004, esp. Chapter 1, for the history of research and the main research trends concerning the interpretation of the Hesiodic *I*; see also Nagy 2009 and Bakker 2018:146–147.

[12]   For a more detailed discussion of the intertextual (or 'inter-performative') dimension of archaic Greek poetry see Skarbek-Kazanecki (forthcoming).

[13]   *Cf.* West 1981:125: 'Elegy was everyday poetry, mainly composed for the symposium of other particular settings'; see also Bartol 1993:51–57 and Slings 2000.

Theognideum to show that presenting the poet as a stranger may contribute to the authoritative strategy of the poem (1983:40): '[b]y characterising himself as the famous sage whose wisdom is admired throughout Greece yet neglected at home, and by addressing a young disciple and friend whose mind is also susceptible to the claims of rivals, Theognis provides a contextual background and human interest that add depth and warmth'. Richard Martin (*Hesiod's metanastic poetics*, 1992=2020:259–284) follows a similar course, arguing that the image of the poet as 'authoritative outsider' constitutes a broader phenomenon, 'an archaic poetic *topos*' (1992:18=2020:269) typical of didactic poetry in particular. Therefore, according to this explanation, both Hesiod and Theognis are presented as outsiders not without reason: since they are located on the margin of the community, they are also enabled to speak more freely. Moreover, their 'immigrant' condition brings them closer to the figures of prophets or legendary lawgivers: authorities that come from the outside of a given community, therefore, by giving advices or resolving conflicts they stayed impartial.[14]

2.   Poetic performance as 'guest-friendship' and the transmission of poetry

At this point it is worth noting that the images of archaic poets are often based on the theme of the ξε(ί)νος ('guest').[15] Already in Homeric epic, the singer-*aoidos* is depicted as a stranger: an outsider and a guest of the court, different from everyone else, who observes the events and the feasting-community from a distance.[16]

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[14]   Martin 2020:263: 'Most striking is the way in which Hesiodic poetry assumes the stance of an outsider who happens to be allowed inside, exposing the narrator as one who has learned intimately the language of the group but still speaks with the viewpoint of one whose special experiences, emerging from a certain solitude and isolation, locate him on the margin of the community'. See also Bowie 2007 and 2009. Osborne 2009:177 with further references to 'the number of stories in which the lawgiver is made an outsider to the community to which he gives laws'. On the poetic I in archaic Greek poetry presented as a lawgiver or a mediator-arbitrator (διαλλακτής, αἰσυμνήτης) see Humphreys 1988:468; Schmitt-Pantel 1992:35–37 and D'Alessio 2009, especially pp. 156–158.

[15]   *Cf.* Miralles 1996, esp. pp. 858–859, 865–867; see also Hunter and Rutherford 2009.

[16]   See the descriptions in the *Odyssey* of Phemius (court-poet on Ithaca) and Demodocus at *Od*. 1.326–327, 22.347–348, 8.44–45 and 105–111, as well where Odysseus is presented or compared to a bard   at 11.362–376, 17.382–387, 21.406–409; *cf.* Scodel 1998. The *topos* of the travelling singer is also evident in the reception of Homer, see Lefkowitz 2012:14–29; Graziosi 2002:9–14, 49 and Hose 2016:317; moreover, see the *Hom. Hymn to Apollo*, esp. vv. 174–175: ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ὑμέτερον κλέος οἴσομεν, ὅσσον ἐπ᾽ αἶαν | ἀνθρώπων στρεφόμεσθα πόλεις εὖ ναιεταώσας ('Yours is a fame (*kléos*), in turn, I will carry around as I wander / over the earth to the well-inhabited cities (*póleis*) of mankind', trans. Merrill https://chs.harvard.edu/, with commentary in Graziosi 2002:62–66.

This element can be easily explained from the perspective of the transmission of archaic poetry, which by its nature targets a Panhellenic audience and goes beyond the framework of a single and local performative occasion (*Theogn.* 237–254):

> Σοὶ μὲν ἐγὼ πτέρ᾽ ἔδωκα, σὺν οἷς ἐπ᾽ ἀπείρονα πόντον
> πωτήσηι, κατὰ γῆν πᾶσαν ἀειρόμενος
> ῥηϊδίως· θοίνηις δὲ καὶ εἰλαπίνηισι παρέσσηι
> ἐν πάσαις, πολλῶν κείμενος ἐν στόμασιν,   240
> καί σε σὺν αὐλίσκοισι λιγυφθόγγοις νέοι ἄνδρες
> εὐκόσμως ἐρατοὶ καλά τε καὶ λιγέα
> ᾁσονται. καὶ ὅταν δνοφερῆς ὑπὸ κεύθεσι γαίης
> βῆις πολυκωκύτους εἰς Ἀίδαο δόμους,
> οὐδέποτ᾽ οὐδὲ θανὼν ἀπολεῖς κλέος, ἀλλὰ μελήσεις   245
> ἄφθιτον ἀνθρώποισ᾽ αἰὲν ἔχων ὄνομα,
> Κύρνε, καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα γῆν στρωφώμενος, ἠδ᾽ ἀνὰ νήσους
> ἰχθυόεντα περῶν πόντον ἐπ᾽ ἀτρύγετον,
> οὐχ ἵππων νώτοισιν ἐφήμενος· ἀλλά σε πέμψει
> ἀγλαὰ Μουσάων δῶρα ἰοστεφάνων·   250
> πᾶσι δ᾽ ὅσοισι μέμηλε, καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν ἀοιδὴ
> ἔσσηι ὁμῶς, ὄφρ᾽ ἂν γῆ τε καὶ ἠέλιος·
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ὀλίγης παρὰ σεῦ οὐ τυγχάνω αἰδοῦς,
> ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ μικρὸν παῖδα λόγοις μ᾽ ἀπατᾶις.

> I have given thee wings to fly with ease aloft the boundless sea and all the land. No meal or feast but thou'lt be there, couched 'twixt the lips of many a guest, and lovely youths shall sing thee clear and well in orderly wise to the clear-voiced flute. And when thou comest to go down to the lamentable house of Hades in the depths of the gloomy earth, never, albeit thou be dead, shalt thou lose thy fame, but men will think of thee as one of immortal name, Cyrnus, who rangeth the land of Greece and the isles thereof — crossing the fishy unharvestable deep not upon horseback mounted but sped of the glorious gifts of the violet-crowned Muses unto all that care to receive thee; and living as they thou shalt be a song unto posterity so long as Earth and Sun abide. Yet as for me, thou hast no respect for me, great or small, but deceivest me with words as if I were a little child.

This passage, often referred as the epilogue of the Theognidean collection (Selle 2008:178–181), contains a unique description of the transmission of a poetic work. As the poetic I assures, along with the spreading of his poetry, his addressee Cyrnus will also travel all over Greece; about him the ἐρατοί (v. 242) will 'sing

loudly and beautifully'. In this particular case, the figure of Cyrnus and his name (v. 246) seem to have a metonymic function, pointing to the song itself (ἀοιδή, v. 251, relative to the Theognidean tradition as a whole).[17] This direct mode of transmission of elegies, passed down orally (ἐν στόμασιν, v. 240) 'throughout the whole Greek land' (v. 247) during various θοῖναι and εἰλαπίναι (v. 239, which most probably means private banquets),[18] is emphasised by the first verse of the elegy and the metaphor of 'wings' (πτέρα), v. 237): a figure that goes back to Homer[19] and suggests that Theognis' elegies exist in their own way as entities independent of the author and capable to expand on their own.[20]

Of course, the promises of 'eternal fame', the success of the work (expressed in the work itself), as well as the journey that this ἀοιδή will undertake all over Greece, are not uncommon themes in archaic and late archaic Greek poetry. The same poetic *topos* occurs, for example, in Pindar's odes.[21] Here,

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[17]   *Cf.* Walsh 1984:10, who — on the basis of *Od.* 8.44–45 (also 1.347) — states: '*aoidê* is a collection of songs among which the singer chooses one song when he performs'; a little further (p. 30), however, he notes that '*aoidê* indifferently signifies 'song' and 'subject of song' in the *Odyssey*'; *cf.* Ford 1997:404: '(...) κλέα ἀνδρῶν is clearly a traditional term for oral heroic traditions' (see Hesiod *Theog.* 32, 100; *Hom. Hymn* 32, 18–20). It is worth emphasising, however, that the mention of κλέος ('fame') in Theognis' elegy (v. 245), as Van Groningen 1966:117 notices, does not indicate the existence of a coherent and closed poetic work, nor does it refer to the merits of the addressee of these words: The poetic I only says that the auditory of the song will remember the boy's name, and Cyrnus will exist as long as the elegies mentioning him are sung. As Culler 2015:313–314 writes in a short summary of this elegy: 'The promise of immortalization in words assumes, of course, the performance of this poetry of praise for multiple audiences at feasts, where the boast is performatively fulfilled again and again'.

[18]   See Schmitt Pantel 1992:270–271 and Nobili 2016:51: 'εἰλαπίνη seems to refer more specifically to a private, large-scale feast such as a wedding or a funeral'. Both terms are interpreted as close to the convention of sympotic feast (Hobden 2013:23), although they may also indicate public celebrations (see Budelmann and Power 2013:4).

[19]   What I have in mind is the recurring Homeric formula ἔπεα πτερόεντα (translated, in a simplified way, as 'winged words'), appearing in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* 123 times (Parry 1971:414–418) and introducing on the narrative and communicative level a 'strictly defined' type of discourse (Martin 1989:30–31, 35): a speech act distinguished by its rhetorical qualities, adequacy, authority and partially overlapping with another metapoetic term, μῦθος. On the other hand, on the imaginary level, wings imply lightness of communication and poetic artistry (Kirk 1985:74: 'Words are "winged" because they fly through the air rapidly, like birds', *cf. Corpus Theognideum* 729–730), having implications for effectiveness in evoking emotions (Parry 1971:417) and persuasiveness.

[20]   Independence and directness of the speech acts described in the epic tradition as ἔπεα πτερόεντα is emphasised by Vivante 1975 and Martin 1989:29–35.

[21]   *Olymp.* 9.91–96; *Pyth.* 1.90–98 and 3.110–115; *Nem.* 5.1–5 and 7.11–16; *Isth.* 4.40–1.

references to 'fame' or 'craftsmanship', thanks to which a given song will be performed again in the future, also in private sympotic spaces,[22] serve the poet as a rhetorical ploy and become the basis for assurances about the persistence of memory around the occasion at which the performance has taken place.[23] Moreover, in Pindar we also find the *topos* of (προ)ξενία ('guest-friendship' or 'hospitality').[24] Pindar's odes often 'style themselves as guest-friend gifts to their patron' (Hubbard 2004:83), thereby framing the relationship between the poet and his principals as based more on true friendship than on financial benefits.[25] The poetic performance thus becomes an act of χάρις, a manifestation of the friendship and solidarity with a patron,[26] as well as an expression of elitist ethos which takes the form of ἄγραφοι νόμοι ('unwritten rules'): the law of hospitality or the principle of reciprocity.[27]

The status of Pindar as a ξένος, on the one hand, seems to be based on the *topos* — already established by Homer (see above) — of a poet engaged in a relationship with his patron, and refers to the aristocratic ethos of hospitality; on the other hand, a recognition of the poet's status as a ξένος may establish the 'international reputation' of the whole poetic tradition.[28] This comparison might

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[22] See Athanassaki 2009:46–47, 165–252.

[23] Thereby also the guarantee of the fame of the celebrated athlete. On Pindar's κλέος in the context of the transmission of poetry, see Hubbard 2004, esp. p. 80 and Kampakoglou 2019:89–90, 179–180. On the song-journey motif in Pindar see Currie 2004:51–52 and Sigelman 2016:53–85.

[24] As pointed out by Giambattista D'Alessio 1994:133, προξενία in Pindar may be a technical term; *cf.* Hubbard 2004:83: 'In some cases, the role of *proxenos* may have been as much that of a cultural attaché as of a consul, sponsoring the city's itinerant artists and intellectuals in foreign locales and distributing their works to music teachers, poets, and potential patrons'.

[25] *Olymp*. 1.103 and 4.4, *Pyth*. 3.69–72, 4.30 and 233, 10.64–66, *Isth*. 6.18, *Nem*. 7.61–65, *cf.* D'Alessio 1994:133. See Pelliccia 2009:241–247 and Bowie 2012b, who consider the Pindar's χάρις as the real intention of Pindar and an illustration of the actual relationship between him and his patrons; see also Schenker 2016:313. *Contra*: Spelman 2018:221–222, 235.

[26] On ξενία — a 'ritualised friendship' — as an exchange of goods and services, see Herman 1987.

[27] *Cf.* Kurke 2013:119–139, 148–150. The first of these 'unwritten laws' (νόμοι or θέμιστες) is expressed by the attitude towards guests who come to the house (οἶκος), both expected and unannounced (see Schmitt Pantel 1992:40–41); the second deals directly with the issue of exchange (ἀμοιβή), making amends for what we have experienced from others, both in the case of positive (gift for a gift, hospitality for hospitality, etc.) and negative behaviour (*e.g.*, revenge evoked by an insult). On the elitist character of the institution of ξενία, see Kurke 2013:120–123 and once again Herman 1987:34–40.

[28] *Cf.* Hubbard 2004:84 and Power 2016:67–68.

facilitate the interpretation of the poetic I in the *Theognidea*: given the Panhellenic ambitions expressed explicitly in the elegy *Theogn.* 237–254 cited above, it appears reasonable to view the figure of the poet as a stranger who tends to circulate around the feasts of the Greek aristocracy just like his own fame and poetry.[29]

3.   *Beyond the picture of the poet-hero: Theognis as an expellee*

It should be noted, however, that the poetic persona in the *Corpus Theognideum* outlined in this way — as an authoritative figure, a sage, and a paragon of aristocratic virtue who travels across Greek lands — breaks down in many places. As some elegies clearly show, the poetic I often presents itself as an impoverished member of an elite circle, expelled from his *polis*.[30] In particular, there is an extensive passage at *Theogn.* 337–364 which refers to 'the exile of the oligarch Theognis', who is 'bitter with hate and longing for requital'.[31] The *persona loquens* is presented here as despised, embittered and revengeful (*Theogn.* 337–340, *cf.* also 575–576):

> Ζεύς μοι τῶν τε φίλων δοίη τίσιν οἵ με φιλεῦσιν,
> τῶν τ᾽ ἐχθρῶν μεῖζον, Κύρνε, δυνησόμενον·
> χοὕτως ἂν δοκέοιμι μετ᾽ ἀνθρώπων θεὸς εἶναι,
> εἴ μ᾽ ἀποτεισάμενον μοῖρα κίχῃ θανάτου.

> Zeus grant me to repay the friends that love me, and mine enemies
> that have proved stronger than I; then shall I seem a God among
> men, if the destiny of death overtake me with all paid.

Moreover, in picturing debasement of the poetic I, one of the elegies even goes as far as to evoke an image of a dog that passed through the stream and 'snapped out

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[29]   Martin also emphasises this point (2020:283): 'If the metanastic fiction underlying these personae survived, perhaps it was because it also suited the needs of later rhapsodes as well as it may have a composer from an earlier generation'. Finally, this feature could make the tradition more attractive to potential recipients, thirsting for a Panhellenic performance.

[30]   See 1209–1216 and 1197–1202 (commentary in Tsagarakis 1977:91–98 and Podlecki 1984:150), 209–210 ~ 332a–b, also the elegy 143–144 and 793–796 where the principle of the respect for strangers and suppliants is emphasised, in this regard, *cf.* Herman 1987:125. More generally on the image of expulsion in Theognis, see Roisman 1984–1986:24–27 and Bowie 2007, 2009:115–118. On the difficulties inherent in the definition of 'exile' in antiquity see Gaertner 2007:2–3, who also stresses the terminological differences between this modern term and the ancient Greek φυγή and Latin *exilium*.

[31]   Murray 1965:277–278; *cf.* Condello 2013:7.

of all of it', and now is hoping to 'drink the black blood' of his enemies (*Theogn.* 341–350).[32]

　　At this point, a sociologically and anthropologically oriented philologist might wonder why the poetic I in the *Theognidea*, instead of presenting itself as a citizen of a particular *polis* or at least an accepted member of an elite circle, often situates itself outside of the community, thereby weakening its image as an authority. After all, Theognis as a *persona loquens* is not so much an honoured and recognised guest of feasts, but rather an impoverished aristocrat expelled (or forced to escape) from his own city-state,[33] a poor man who cannot even count on the right place at the feast (Schmitt Pantel 1992:38–39). He is powerless, deprived of his authority, no longer capable of organising a symposium of his own and receiving guests (*Theogn.* 511–522) or even forced, due to his poverty, to remain silent (ἄφωνος) during the banquet to which he has been invited.[34] As I believe, this strategy of self-dramatisation and self-deprecation, which in many ways eludes existing poetic conventions, requires going beyond the accepted model of the 'heroisation' of a poet. To understand this 'un-heroic' aspect of the Theognidean self-creation, we must turn briefly to its social context and carry out a careful analysis of the meaning and importance of the Theognis' tradition, with particular emphasis on the specificity of its potential audience.

*4.   The Theognidean audience and the anti-*polis *ideology: The temporality of diaspora*

As the example of Pindar shows, during the 6th century BC institutions which represent the official authority of a given *polis* willingly supported musicians and organised music and poetry events for propaganda purposes. Apart from the context of external policies and the promotion of a given city-state abroad, a poetic performance could also serve internal interests: the formation of identity through a certain ideological narration,[35] the democratisation of poetry and poetic-related events that had so far remained inaccessible for a wider audience, and, finally, the

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[32]　For a detailed examination of the elegy 341–350, see Napolitano 1996 and Condello 2013.

[33]　See 209–210 ~ 332a–b, 1209–1216 cited above. The comparison to 'some dishonoured refugee' (ὡς εἴ τιν᾽ ἀτίμητον μετανάστην) is used by Achilles (*Il.* 9.648, also *Il.* 16.59) to describe his anger and the shame caused by the insulting and disrespectful behaviour of Agamemnon. See Martin 2020:269: 'as we can discern from Achilles' phrase, the *metanastēs* was typically and understandably 'without honour' (*atimētos*)'; also Ulf 2009:88–89, who emphasises that a refugee in Homer 'cannot attain the same status as full members of society'.

[34]　See 419–420, 669–670, 815–816, *cf.* Węcowski 2014:57, 62–63.

[35]　*Cf.* Nagy 1990b:157–162; D'Alessio 2009, esp. p. 148.

institutionalisation of collective feasts and celebrations. In this perspective, Greek poetry seems to be an important political instrument and a manifestation of the complex social phenomena of the times, a symbolic articulation of the interests of a given group, and an expression of tensions between various social circles.

As Ian Morris and Leslie Kurke argue, the main line of the ideological *stasis* ('conflict') in Greece of the late archaic and classical eras ran around the opposition *polis* — anti-*polis*.[36] The first component of this polarisation is about the prodemocratic ideology, represented by the 'majority' δῆμος or the middling-class and related to the institutions of *polis*. In the second case, it is about the elitist ideology of conservative anti-democratic groups, composed of privileged descendants of the former aristocracy. Despite the obvious limitations of such a simplifying explanatory scheme, the meaning of the symposiastic elegiac tradition in the archaic age and its reception in the classical epoch in many respects fit into the axis of tension between the two so defined 'ideologies', *polis* and anti-*polis*.

Poetic and prose traditions of the 6th and 5th centuries BC are 'often situated outside the traditional structures of the city-state' (Humphreys 1978/2004:220–224).[37] Thus, they can be interpreted as evidence for political crisis and the ideological tensions between different models of *polis* organisation. In the *Corpus Theognideum*, in opposition to the Homeric image of the aristocrat as a rich man and landowner, 'aristoi'[38] suffer poverty as a result of injustice. This state of affairs is presented as the reversal of the natural order. The figure of the poet, a paragon of the whole social class, is a victim of this injustice, who was kicked out or decided to leave his own city-state infected with ἀδικία 'injustice'.[39] This self-dramatisation

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[36] See Morris 1987:40–42 and 138–139, 1996, 2000 and Kurke 1997:145–156, 1999:181–187; *cf.* Hammer 2004; also Irwin 2005:55–64, where attention is paid to the necessity of greater nuance of the political and social meaning of selected poetic traditions.

[37] *Cf.* also Sassi 1991:23–24.

[38] Literally the 'best' members of a given community, people who ascribe to themselves a high social status based on birth, education and many cultural and symbolic competencies. As Giovanni Cerri 1968 showed, in the elitist discourse of archaic Greece such categories as 'good' and 'bad' are related not only to ethics, but also to the social order: 'bad' means both morally despicable and badly born, good is noble in character and well-born, *i.e.*, born into an aristocratic family.

[39] As Debrunner Hall 1996:78–85 proves, expulsion — both in Athens and outside this *polis* — was the primary form of punishment imposed on the 'well-born' in the event of violation of civic duties such as not paying taxes or the judgment of ἀτιμία ('disenfranchisement') — an ambiguous legal category closely related to the infringement of τὰ πάτρια (traditional rights or customs) and often used as a political tool against opponents of people or groups exercising power in a given *polis*.

of the poetic I can be seen, then, as a manifestation of the anti-*polis* discourse and an attempt by the aristocrats to reconstruct their own identity.[40]

In this regard, a strong indication is given by the considerations of Edward W Said presented in his essay *Reflections on exile* (2000:173–186). Said links the literary motif of expulsion with wider social phenomena and emotions constituting communities known as 'diaspora',[41] emphasising that 'a state of exile' can unite a given group in a common experience (Said 2000:178) based not only on spatial disjunction and homesickness, but also on temporal fissures and longing to go back to the times 'before'.[42] In other words, being an exile implies a special temporality that valorises the past and serves as a point of reference for self-determination — not only in the case of individuals (Cho 2007), but also of an 'imagined community' that the diaspora undoubtedly constitutes (Edwards 2003:115–118).

Let me return to the issue of the ideological properties of the Theognidean poetic and its link with social life. As many scholars maintain, the *Corpus Theognideum* already on a semantic level reflects this ideological polarisation in times of loss by aristocrat-oligarchs of the dominant social, political and economic position.[43] Thus, the *Corpus Theognideum* seems to be a voice against changes in the (pre-)existing social structure (see *Theogn.* 77–78 and 209–210), as well as an attempt to respond to them and to negotiate the identity of the elite audience in new circumstances (see, *e.g.*, *Theogn.* 393–400). Since the traditional value system of the hitherto privileged group had been subsumed by the mass of citizens 'into a communal ideal', the aristocrats 'had reacted by altering its frame of values in an attempt to prove its superiority and maintain its position of natural leadership' (Donlan 1999:75). The Theognidean tradition, together with its constantly repeated question about the criteria of being a true ἀγαθός ('good

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[40]   In this respect, we could compare Theognis' elegies with Alcaic poetry which, as Nagy 1985:81, n. 170 observes, has a lot in common with the Theognidean tradition, especially regarding the motif of a painful exile and the hope (expressed in the form of a prayer, *cf. Theogn.* v. 341, see above) for taking vengeance against the poet's enemies (Alcaeus 129 and 130 V / LP). See Morris 1996:27 and Kurke 1994:69, 83–92, who identify Alcaeus as the prototypical or even generic figure (with a Panhellenic impact) of the anti-*polis* ideology, portrayed as a victim of Pittakos, populist and tyrant; see also Burnett 1983:179, who emphasises the anti-heroic dimension of the Alcaeus' creation as an exile: 'he has been driven from town and he hides alone in backwoods wretchedness. The effect is satiric, and it prepares for further self-denigration to come, for the exile's occupation of the shrine is explicitly labelled as anti-heroic'.

[41]   See Edwards 2003:11–15; Boym 2002. Both authors emphasise the link between 'the condition of exile', 'nostalgia', 'desire to go back', and 'group solidarity'. See also the famous essay of Brodsky 1990 (under the revealing title, *The condition we call 'exile'*).

[42]   See Boym 2002:4: 'the spread of nostalgia had to do not only with dislocation in space but also with the changing conception of time'.

[43]   See, *e.g.*, Cerri 1968; Donlan 1999, esp. 77–95.

(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. In this aspect, the creation of the *persona loquens* as an exile deprived of its former property can be understood as an attempt to identify new symbolic distinguishing features of elite class membership in the face of losing old economic privileges.[44]

Without going into further details about the political reality of the archaic and late-archaic epochs, I would like to analyse further the possible meaning of the image of expulsion for potential recipients of the Theognidean tradition. Assuming that Theognis' elegies were transmitted through *symposia* — the feasts that became an occasion to consolidate social and political groups hostile to institutions of the democratic *polis*, — we can treat this locus for the preservation of the tradition also as a space for shaping collective memory, of resentment, or even as a kind of collective 'aesthetic therapy'.[45] This interference of memory with poetic performance can be seen especially in attitudes towards the past:

> Μήποτέ μοι μελέδημα νεώτερον ἄλλο φανείη
> ἀντ᾽ ἐρατῆς σοφίης τ᾽, ἀλλὰ τόδ᾽ αἰὲν ἔχων
> τερποίμην φόρμιγγι καὶ ὀρχηθμῶι καὶ ἀοιδῆι,
> καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐσθλὸν ἔχοιμι νόον.

> I would not have any new pursuit arise for me in the stead of delightful art; rather may I have this for mine, evermore rejoicing in lyre and dance and song, and keeping my wit high in the company of the good (*Theogn.* 789–792, see also 1129–32).

The preceding elegy is directly related to the importance of performative and musical practices. The poetic performance is here opposed to worry (μελέδημα), and is thus presented as a cure or an escape from the anxiety of the disappointing present. What is more, the adjective νεώτερον, 'newer', emphasises the specific temporality of the sympotic and poetic experience, which runs somehow counter to the passing time: singing poetry becomes a platform for protection against changes, functioning in opposition to what is new, unknown, different.[46]

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[44]   See, *e.g.*, *Theogn.* 155–158, 173–178, 351–354, 667–668. A further aim is to transform or renegotiate the model image of an aristocrat and remove the close relationship between being an *aristos* and wealth and politic power.

[45]   On collective memory: Calame 2009:12, 16; on aesthetic therapy: Boym 2002:251–253.

[46]   D'Angour 2011:20: '[w]hen Theognis rejects any "newer concern" (*neōteron meledēma*) in favour of the pursuit of poetry, he is rejecting the thought of a different pursuit, not one that is more up to date'. *Cf.* Burnett 1983:108, who emphasises a similar attitude to 'novelty' in the case of the Alcaeus tradition.

It is worth emphasising here especially the role of nostalgia, which, as Hutton (2013:1) notes, 'may be understood historically and collectively, not just psychologically and individually', an expression of collective memory (Boym 2002:351) and 'an emotion that sensitised exiled or displaced people to an understanding of the realities of historical change' (Hutton 2013:3)[47]. Moreover, as Dames (2010:273) observes, '[n]ostalgia implicitly recognises loss, but it gives us form — or at least the desire for form — as compensation'.[48] The *Theognidea* has repeated exhortations to drink, be merry and to sing together,[49] and calls to forget about problems and to enjoy the present moment; at other times, these are overridden by the need to share memories and difficult experiences (see, *e.g.*, *Theogn*. 825–830). There is, however, no reason to treat this as an inconsistency;[50] rather, it seems that the 'compensative' nostalgia plays an important role not only in the process of creating the poetic I, but also as an essential element of a broader poetic strategy linked to audience's expectations.[51] The potential recipient of the Theognidean elegies — even if he did not personally experience a similar fate to that of the poet — during the performance becomes an accomplice in a nostalgic mood, connected with others in a shared desire for an impossible return to the past.[52]

[47] On the concept of nostalgia and the history of its use, see Boym 2000:3–10 and Dames 2010.

[48] See, *e.g.*, the image of the drinking feast in *Od.* 15.398–401 (commentary in Dames 2010:269) as an occasion to share memories between refugees.

[49] This kind of exhortation seems to constitute a traditional motif of the sympotic elegy, see Reitzenstein 1893:20; Giangrande 1969:102–103.

[50] See, *e.g.*, the elegy at 879–884, which seems to combine both themes of a peaceful atmosphere and nostalgia; also 1045–1048, where the first-person plural statements clearly indicate that 'the poet shares a common experience', as Tsagarakis 1977:97 notes.

[51] On the auditory's expectations as an important genre-distinguishing feature in archaic poetry, see Rossi 1970, esp. pp. 70 and 75–86, and Calame 1976. See also Nagy 1994:13 for the correlation between 'occasion', 'genre' and 'speech act' in poetry: ' a speech act is a speech act *only when it fits the criteria of the community in which it is being used*'.

[52] Suggestive commentaries on the performative dimensions of exile in archaic poetry in MacLachlan 1997:139, in regard to the Alcaeus tradition: 'while he [sc. Alcaeus] knew on a deeply personal level the loneliness of exile which he described (fr. 129), these were shared experiences. His songs would have provoked a resonance in others, accounting in part for their success, and the "I" is to be read also as "we"'. Bowie 2007:43 presents a quite different interpretation and explains the motif of expulsion in archaic poetry by the presence of exiles at the elitist banquets: 'That exiles were to be found in the symposia for which such poems as this were composed, and that consequently some reflections on exile became part, albeit a small part, of the wide range of possible subjects for sympotic song, is, nevertheless, clear from some other elegiac lines from the *Theognidea*'.

In conclusion, assuming that ancient oral poetry, as a fictional imitation of personal utterance (Culler 2015:111–112), is constantly being formulated in dialogue with its audience, we must also recognise that the gap between the idealised past and the disappointing present determines not only the temporality relevant to the *Theognidea*, but also the temporally distant position of its receivers, that is, the hitherto privileged group of aristocrats situated in dialectical opposition to the democratic institutions of *polis*. By privileging old times and cultural practices which have become of relatively little importance, the figure of an exile expresses the diasporic condition of the whole circle gathered around this poetic tradition: deprived of power 'by force', impotent to regain its former political influence, finding itself in opposition to the official 'city-state' and civil obligations, and therefore metaphorically placed outside the *polis*.[53] This loss of political authority — up till then the defining feature of the Greek aristocracy — even if it constitutes a trauma, becomes under the new circumstances a reference point for negotiating a new identity as 'aristoi'.

Moreover, as a community of interests and values, centred on the *symposion* and united by a shared ideology, Theognis' audience may be integrated during the performance also by shared sentiments. By presenting itself as an exile and acting on feelings of nostalgia, the *persona loquens* establishes the 'diasporic' intimacy of its own receivers. The poetic performance thus becomes a playful performance of nostalgia: the spatial disjuncture of the poetic I on the performative level restates the stigma of being an outsider into an 'exaggerated sense of group solidarity' (Said 2000:178); thus, the pathos of exile becomes a *topos* of the elitist condition in times of loss by aristocrats of the dominant political position, as well as an occasion to collectively experience the nostalgic desire to return to an 'ordinary' life and to the 'normal' reality of a *polis* governed in accordance with δίκη, 'justice'.

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[53] See Said 2000:184, where the exile's opposition to the 'mass institutions' is emphasised: 'I speak of exile not as a privilege, but as an alternative to the mass institutions that dominate modern life'. Herzfeld 2016:141–146 calls this kind of temporality 'predicated on an image of earlier social life grounded in reciprocities of respect and affect' (141) by the term 'structural nostalgia', at the same time pointing to its use both 'in' and 'against' official religion institutions or state.

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