WHILE THESEUS WAS SAILING AWAY…

*PSI* XV 1468 (= *Fr*. 37 *APHex*): A FEW THOUGHTS

**Abstract.** Bartol Krystyna, *While Theseus Was Sailing Away...* PSI XV 1468 (= fr. 37 APHex): a Few Thoughts (Gdy Tezeusz odpływał... Kilka myśli na temat PSI XV 1468 (= Fr 37 APHex).

The article presents a new proposal to supplement v. 12 of the anonymous hexametric piece containing, most likely, the lament of Ariadne abandoned by Theseus on Naxos. The suggestion offered here (οὐκ or, better, οὐδ’ αἰδὼς ἐν ὀνείρῳ instead of δήλωσεν ὀνείρῳ or ὡς ἐν ὀνείρῳ developed by other scholars) allows us to guess that the piece may have expressed Ariadne’s contradictory feelings and her moral dilemma.

Keywords: anonymous late Greek poetry; Ariadne’s lament; Theseus; soliloquy

The heavily damaged end sections of sixteen hexametric lines preserved on the verso of a papyrus of unknown provenance dated to the 4th century CE contain the remnants of a female character’s speech.1 An additional marginal line with the words ἐπλεε Θησεύς visible, written by a different hand,2 strongly suggests that the speaker is Ariadne, awakened from her sleep on Naxos. She is lamenting her fate,3 as she realises that she has been abandoned by Theseus.4 The

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1 The text was edited in 1979 by V. Bartoletti and M. Manfredi under the reference number 1468 (Bartoletti Manfredi 1979). See also C. Pernigotti (2003: 64). The recent commented edition by Perale (2020: 352–356) includes the critical overview of scholars’ positions and new suggestions for reading the text.

2 See McNamee (2008: 455): “written at a right angle to the text”, Miguélez-Cavero (2008: 49): “a marginal line written from the top to the bottom”, Perale (2020: 352): “a second, larger hand added one line written at a right angle to the main text, placed at about 1.5 cm from it”.

3 Ariadne’s lament was called by Schoess (2022: 224) her literary attribute because of the frequency with which ancient authors took up this theme.

4 One has to agree with Perale’s diagnosis (Perale 2020: 352) that the text preserved on the verso “seems indeed to bear no connection” with the text written on the recto of the papyrus (fr. 94 APHex) on Odysseus’ deeds during the expedition to Troy. See also Miguélez-Cavero (2008: 49), who cites approvingly the opinion of the editores principes on the possible topic: “potrebbe trattarsi … di una ‘storia’ di Arianna … A meno che non si narrasse il ratto di Elena bambina da parte di Teseo … O ancora la storia di Ulisse … che aiuta Tindaro a risolvere il problema dei
marginal line, similar to the phrase used later by Nonnus in his tale of Ariadne (άμείλιχος ἐπλεε Θησεύς, D. 47.270), may suggest that the author of our passage is telling the story of the sleeping girl abandoned on the island of Naxos in a similar way to Nonnus, perhaps using the same earlier source as the famous Panopolite poet.\(^5\)

The remains of the verses in Perales’s edition are as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{επαίθονη}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{δαήμων}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{μιαν ὥρην}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{ον ἐδέγμην}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{αποκροτων}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{επι λέκτρωι}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{ερτῶν}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{επεε Θησεύς}
\end{array}
\]

Scholars are rightly inclined to conclude that this is a part of Ariadne’s lamenting monologue, in which she recalls her dream about her marriage to Theseus. They suppose that the treatment of the theme here must be similar to that of Nonnus,\(^6\) who takes up the version of the myth in which Ariadne remains a virgin and did not lose her virginity either in “reality”\(^7\) or in a dream, since she wakes up mid-way through it and is not even allowed to imagine the longed-for scene of consummating her relationship with Theseus in any details.\(^8\) ἀλλά μὲ

\(^5\) Perales (2020: 352) with bibliography.

\(^6\) Ariadne’s lament in Nonnus (D. 47. 295–418) is called by Fayant (2003: 45) “particulièrement brillant tant par sa composition que par la complexité des mouvements psychologiques qu’il exprime”.

\(^7\) Inverted commas are used deliberately here and below with reference to Ariadne’s “life”. As a warning and reminder, I quote Webster’s words (Webster 1966: 23): “Greek myth are so vivid that we think of the figures in them as real people and argue about their characters and what made them do what they did. We forgot (…) that the people never existed”.

\(^8\) As Shorrock (2014: 322–324) vividly put it. See also Rose’s remark (Rose 1940: 395 n. a): “A bit of orthodoxy on Nonnos’ part; a god’s bride must be virgin”; he is obviously referring to the nuptials of Ariadne and Dionysus.
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φεύγων / ὁχετο καλλείψας ἔτι παρθένον (D. 47.328–329). Decipherable words and their parts on the verso of the scrap of the papyrus entitle us, I think, to be tempted to see a slightly different treatment of the theme of Ariadne’s dream and her subsequent lamentation in this anonymous piece of poetry.

In the version of the myth alluded to in the fifth century by Nonnus, Ariadne appears to be disappointed that she has remained a virgin and asks Hypnos to spread a sweet dreamy erotic vision over the departing Theseus so that he will decide to return to her. In our adespoton, however, the case seems to be quite different.

Let us start our considerations with Perale’s brilliant suggestion ἀδαήμων, inexperienced, in v.6, suggesting Ariadne’s lack of amorous or erotic experiences. She confesses or even underlines it, perhaps in the context of self-presentation as a person who has retained αἰδώς (v. 8) a sense of shame, modesty, a coyness regarding the dealings with the opposite sex, so she still will be able to be perceived by people as virtuous (perhaps βροτοῖσιν in v. 5 refers to people Ariadne hopes to socialise with in the future, not, as Manfredi proposes, to her being the most beautiful among people). However, what follows in lines 9–14 suggests some love matters: there are references to her receiving (ἐδέγμην, v. 9) someone/something, for a short while (μιαν ὥρην, v. 10), bed (ἐπὶ λέκτρωι, v.13), her falling (perhaps into someone’s arms) – πεκοῦσα, v. 14, and not excluded that to wedding (ναιους, v. 15, with Bartoletti’s supplement ὑμε].

Verse 12 may be crucial to understanding the sense of the fragment. It seems most plausible to recognise an omega in the first decipherable letter of the line, not eta, as postulated by Meliadò. Perale considers two possibilities: δήλωσεν ὀνείρωι with the instrumental dative perhaps referring to Hypnos, who would send, at Ariadne’s request, an erotic dream upon Theseus, forcing him to return.

9 Shorrock (2014: 322) nicely captures the ambivalence of references contained in these verses when translating: “Ah, what a sweet dream I had – but it/he has escaped my grasp and left me still a virgin”.

10 Cm 4.6 x 7.5, see Bartoletti Bastianini Messeri Montanari Pintaudi (2008: 36) - n. 1453–1574.

11 Let us recall at this point Miguélez-Cavero’s opinion (Miguélez-Cavero 2016: 555–556) that the use of dreams of love and marriage in late poetry, especially in Nonnus, belongs to the novelistic ‘type-scenes’ to which poets often resorted.


13 Perale (2020: 354): “ἀδ- malim” (in apparatus); “I take this to be feminine (see τεκούση in the following verse) and referred to Ariadne”.

14 See Cairns (1993: 120): “category aidos is concerned with the social role of men and women, while in the latter it relates to a coyness regarding sex” and von Erffa (1937: 155–156), who stresses that the aidos in relations to women’s behaviour means scheue Zurückhaltung, Keuscheit.

15 See Perale (2020: 354).

16 Meliadò (2013: 54): “Leggerei ἡσεν in luogo di ἥσεν dato come sicuro da Pernigotti (J. σεν Manfredi)”. 
to Naxos,\textsuperscript{17} or ὡς ἐν ὀνείρωι introducing a simile.\textsuperscript{18} It does not, however, seem unreasonable to consider yet another possibility, namely something like οὐκ or οὐδ’ αἰδὼς ἐν ὀνείρωι, which would introduce into Ariadne’s soliloquy the theme of contradictory feelings\textsuperscript{19} or the motif of polarisation of her attitudes towards \textit{aidos} – this in “reality” and that in the dream. In “real life”, she remains a modest young woman who has not experienced an erotic relationship with a man. The rejection of \textit{aidos} in her sweet dream that lasted only for a short while might imply that she dreamt that she acquiesced to Theseus’ advances, and having no compunction about \textit{aidos}, she lost her virginity. Thus what happened in the dream, did not happen (and will not happen) in “reality”. The idea of Ariadne’s confession might be in a way similar to Achilles’ declaration of being not ashamed to say something\textsuperscript{20} in Aeschylean \textit{Myrmidons} (ἀφεῖναι τὸν πὸς ὁ ὁ \textit{αἰδὼς μ’ ἔχει})\textsuperscript{21} except that she also was ready and not ashamed to do something\textsuperscript{22} in a dream (and then to reveal it). Perhaps we are dealing here with one of many treatments of Ariadne found in Greek and Latin literature,\textsuperscript{23} a treatment that exposes the moral dilemma of this character.\textsuperscript{24} Adherence to \textit{aidos} rules in “reality” and breaking them in a dream vision creates an interesting psychological construct that must have intrigued the reader.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, Ariadne’s speech gives a profoundly disturbing, provocative and paradoxical answer to the question of what happened to her at the very moment when Theseus was sailing away. This was the kind of not-so-obvious treatment of the topic that readers of Late Antiquity were very fond of. If the term \textit{aidos} and contrasting contexts of its use

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] Perale (2020: 356).
\item[19] As in Medea’s famous monologue in Apollonius, often juxtaposed with the lament of Ariadne, see Calzascia (2015: 453): “Medea, la figura che nel poema di Apollonio è per molti aspetti parallela all’Arianna”.
\item[20] See von Erffa (1937: 156) who argues that \textit{aidos} refers “nicht nur” to “das Geschehnis selber”, but also to the act of “davon zu sprechen”.
\item[21] Aesch. Fr. 132c.1 Radt = 225.12 Mette.
\item[22] This \textit{something} does not seem right according to the social rules of the society in which she was brought up. Cf. the phrase \textit{nec pudor} signifying the absence of shame in love-related activities in \textit{Ov. Ars} 2. 251, 3. 203; \textit{Rem. 352}.
\item[23] For an overview of ancient literary images of Ariadne and their modern reception see Brunel (1996: 118–127). The lament uttered by Ariadne in misery on Naxos is, next to the motif of her gazing out to the sea, one of the most frequently cited elements of the story of her abandonment by Theseus. For Ariadne’s gaze motif see J. Elsner and his two nearly identical texts of 2007, Elsner (2007: 20–33) and Elsner (2007a: 67–109).
\item[24] For the soliloquies as rhetorical or ephrastic ethopoeiae in the poetry of Late Antiquity see Verhelst (2017: 221–225).
\item[25] For readers of this text Ariadne appears as an amalgam “of a number of versions made in a handbook of mythology”, as Webster 1966, p. 23, diagnosed late representations of mythological characters. “She is at the same time clothed and naked” – the viewers in Late Antiquity, who knew the mosaics with images of Ariadne on Naxos, could say; for the mosaics devoted to this theme see Shorrock (2014: 314–318).
\end{footnotes}
is indeed the keyword here,\(^{26}\) this time-crippled anonymous piece of late Greek poetry should be considered more sophisticated and meaningful than it might appear at first glance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions


Studies


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\(^{26}\) As the *somnum* repeated in Ovid’s *Letter* 10.

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**Summary**

The fragment of the anonymous hexametric poem preserved on the papyrus from the fourth century CE deals with the myth of Ariadne abandoned by Theseus on Naxos. It contains a monologue by the heroine. The article offers a new reading of verse 12 (οὐκ or, better, οὐδ᾽ αἰδός ἐν ὀνείρῳ) and develops an interpretation of the text as Ariadne’s confessions about *aidos* and her attitude to it. The adherence to the rules of *aidos* in “real life” and its rejection in the dream creates a dynamic image of her inner turmoil and sets up an interesting treatment of a woman in love.