

Brill's New Jacoby

Gorgos of Kolophon

Ceccarelli

Paola

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English

Ancient Greek

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Inscription from Notion

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Τὸν πάσης πο<λ>ύβυβλον | ἀφ' ἱστορίας μελεδωνὸν |
πρέσβυν ἀοιδοπόλων δρε | ψάμενον σελίδα,
τὸν σοφίην |5 στέρξα<ν>τα νόωι μεγαλ<ό>φρο | να Γοργόν,
τὸν Κλαρίου {τρι} | τριπόδων Λητοίδεω θέρα | πα
Κεκροπὶς ἐν κόλποις | κρύπτει κόνις· εὐσεβίης |10 δὲ
εἵνεκεν εὐσεβέων | χῶρον ἔβη φθίμενος.

Translation

He, the old keeper who gathered a work

Of many books from all the narratives of the poets,

He who loved wisdom, the noble-minded Gorgos,

He who served by the tripods of the Klarian son of Leto,

The earth of Kekrops holds him now in her lap; but because

Of his piety, when he died he went to the land of the pious.

Apparatus criticus

l. 1: stone has A.

l. 5: the lapicide omitted N and O.

l. 6/7: the lapicide carved at the end of line 6 the beginning of the word τρι (for τριπόδων), but then wrote again the word at the beginning of the following line.

Commentary on the text

Gorgos had, it would seem, composed a work, whose character, owing to the difficulty of interpreting the first two verses, is disputed. The structure of the epigram as a whole is very elaborate: the emphatic repetition of the article τὸν (at the beginning of ll. 1, 3 and 4) guides the reader along until l. 5, which provides a subject while at the same time disclosing the death of the hero; the personal name, Gorgos, is given at the end of l. 3, while the two geographical centres of his life, Klaros and Athens, are mentioned respectively at ll. 4 and 5; lastly, the end of l. 5 prepares for the final pentameter, in which the piety of the dead man is again underlined, and his going into the land of the blessed opposed to his body remaining in Attica. In keeping with this remarkably organised structure, the meaning of ll. 3-6 does not pose a problem. It is not, however, clear whether ll. 1-2 should be taken as a syntactical unit with πολύβυβλον qualifying σελίδα, as in the translation proposed above (so already G. Pasquali, 'I due Nicandri', *SIFC* 20 (1913), 86-7, who noted 'Le parole sono intrecciate in modo singolare, ciò che prova le pretese letterarie, ma altra costruzione non pare possibile'), or whether each line stands on its own, taking πολύβυβλον with μελεδωνόν. The second one is the interpretation favoured by R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* 1 (Stuttgart 1998), 363, who render the first distich thus: 'Den in allem Wissen kundigen Mann, der viele Bücher nutzte, den Alten, der aus den Seiten der Dichter pflückte'. Even more distant from the translation proposed above is that offered by W. Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Darmstadt 1960), 97, no. 134: 'Den Liebhaber vieler Bücher, den Alten, der jegliche Erzählung der Sänger Seite um Seite sorgfältig und emsig studierte'. In this way, any reference to the composition by Gorgos of a work in many books is lost – it is only Gorgos' wisdom which is underlined. In view of the fact that nothing else is known of Gorgos' oeuvre, making away with a multivolume work might seem a good option. But there are difficulties with this interpretation: to refer πολύβυβλον to a human being strains the Greek, just as it is strained to interpret μελεδωνόν ἀπὸ πάσης ἱστορίας as 'expert in all wisdom, keeper of all wisdom' – with μελεδωνόν we would expect a genitive. Moreover, in favour of the first reading is the repetition of the article τὸν at the beginnings of ll. 1, 3 and 4, which seems to divide the epigram into units of meaning.

Granted that Gorgos had composed a work in many books, what was its subject? The main possibilities are: a mythographical work, a poetical anthology, a collection of biographies of poets, or a collection of oracles. The use of δρεψάμενον ('plucked, gathered') points to a collection made on the basis of other materials rather than to a poetic composition (cf. however Pasquali, 'I due Nicandri', 87-8, who thinks that Gorgos may have authored poetic compositions). H. Mutschmann, 'Ein unbekannter Mythograph', *RhM* 72 (1917-18), 150-3, assumed that Gorgos had collected the material for his work from the stories, the mythoi, told by poets (αἰδοπόλων); his work would thus have been a compilation of mythographic character. Mutschmann then proceeded to compare his work to the κύκλος ἱστορικός of Dionysios of Samos, *FGrH* 15, and to the works of other literati such as Menekles of Teos, honoured by the Cretan city of Priansos around 170 BC because he composed a cycle on Crete and the gods and goddesses born in the island, collecting material from many poets and historians (Menekles *FGrH* 461 T1 = *Inscriptiones Creticae* I 24.1 ll. 9-13), and Demoteles son of Aischylos from Andros, a poet active in the first half of the

third century, honoured by the Delians because 'he has written on the history of the sanctuary and the city of the Delians and has written down the local myths' (Demoteles *FGrH* 400 T1 = *IG* 11 4, 455 = *Syll.*³ 382, ll. 6-8). That Gorgos was a mythographer has been accepted by Jacoby (*FGrH* 1 a 496), and is restated (surprisingly, in view of their translation) in Merkelbach and Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* 1, 363. A. Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford 2004), 29 also sees in Gorgos a mythographer. In this case, the term *historia* should be interpreted as 'mythical story': for other instances of this, see Cameron, *Greek Mythography*, 90-3.

Only slightly different is the position of those who see in Gorgos the compiler of a poetical anthology (so Gow, in A.S.F. Gow and A.F. Scholfield, *Nicanor. The Poems and Poetical Fragments* (Cambridge 1953), 5 n. 6). W. von Christ, in O. Stählin and W. Schmitt (eds.), *W. von Christ's Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* 2, (Munich 1920-24)⁶, 170, preferred to stress the didactic character of Gorgos' work. Yet another line (already explored by Mutschmann, 'Ein unbekannter Mythograph', 152) has been pursued by G. Fogazza, 'Gorgo di Colofone, mitografo o biografo?', *PP* 26 (1971), 128-9: Gorgos would have composed a biographical work, drawing on all sort of sources concerning ancient poets (taking *ἰστοροπόλων* as an objective genitive, which is possible, even though slightly difficult).

A completely different interpretation has been advanced by I. Cazzaniga, 'Gorgos di Klaros e la sua attività letteraria', *PP* 29 (1974), 145-52: remarking that the main import of the epigram is the piety of Gorgos and his role as a priest of Apollo, Cazzaniga has suggested that the word *ἰστοροπόλων* may refer not to older poets, but to the composers of the verse oracles of Klaros (instances are collected in R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, 'Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros', *Epigraphica anatolica* 27 (1996), 1-54). Gorgos would have carried out research in the archives of the temple – something for which his position as priest of Apollo would have made him particularly appropriate – and would have collected a corpus in many volumes of the oracular pronouncements of Apollo Klarios. The difficult *μελεδωνόν* could then be understood in the sense that he acted as the guardian and keeper of the records of the sanctuary of Apollo, while *ἀπὸ πάσης ἱστορίας* would refer to the activity of research in collecting documents. In this case, Gorgos' work should be seen against the background of antiquarian activity in the Greek sanctuaries during the Hellenistic period. This interpretation has been accepted by R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London - New York 1986), 180, and most recently by C. Oesterheld, *Göttliche Botschaften für zweifelnde Menschen: Pragmatik und Orientierungsleistung der Apollon-Orakel von Klaros und Didyma in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (Göttingen 2008), 577, who mentions Gorgos as the composer of an anthology of Klarian oracles and dates his activity to the first century BC (at 437, however, an earlier date, to the second century BC, is mentioned with a question mark). A difficulty might lie in the fact that *ἰστοροπόλος* (a fairly rare term) does not seem to be attested with the meaning of 'prophet'. However, already in Pindar there are links between poetic activity and prophecy: see I. Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans. A Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre* (Oxford 2001), 174-5. Particularly interesting is the comparison with Nikander's use of the term *hymnopolos* at the end of his *Alexipharmaka* (v. 629-30), because Nikander too was a priest of Apollo Klarios; because of the remarkable closeness between the beginning of the *Alexipharmaka* (v. 11, the end of the dedication of the work to Protagoras, runs: *ἐζόμενος τριπόδεσσι παρὰ Κλαρίοις Ἐκάτοιο*) and v. 4 of the epigram; and because even though it is difficult to assign them precise date, Gorgos and Nikander must have been *grosso modo* contemporaries. Interestingly, the opening verse of the epigram is very close to a line of another Kolophonian poet, Hermesianax, in which the latter refers to Hesiod as 'the keeper of all

wisdom' (7.22: Ἡσίοδον πάσης ἥρανον ἱστορίας; cf. also 7.16, Mousaios keeper of the Charites): ἥρανον corresponds to the μελεδωνόν of our text, and if indeed there is a connection between the two texts, then it is interesting that the poet ultimately referred to is the author of a Theogony. This would in turn speak for a mythographical work of sacred character.

It is difficult on the basis of the data we possess to decide between the composition of a mythographical work and a collection of oracular pronouncements in verse; if the former, as on balance seems to be most probable, then the work had a close connection with the sanctuary of Klaros — and such a work would surely also have contained oracular pronouncements. Thinking along these lines, Chaniotis *Historie und Historiker*, 311 and I. Petrovic, *Von den Toren des Hades zu den Hallen des Olymp* (Leiden 2007), 161, list Gorgos with other local historians who were honoured for having written about local cults, and consider him as a collector of oracles, who might have embedded them into a historical local work, potentially of mythographic character (see above). Gorgos' activity, however we look at it, fits in a rich cultural context: Kolophon (and the sanctuary of Apollo at Klaros) had strong poetic and scholarly traditions, reaching back to the archaic period: see J. Lightfoot, 'Sophisticates and Solecisms: Greek Literature after the classical period', in O. Taplin (ed.), *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds: a New perspective* (Oxford 2000), 248-9; the name of Gorgos has also been mentioned in connection with a seated statue of an intellectual from Klaros (probably a poet?), whose identification remains however uncertain (R. Robert, 'Le poète de Claros', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 143.1 (1999), 173-188).

Commentary on T 1

Gorgos is known only through the funerary epigram in elegiac distichs inscribed in eleven lines (the division disregards the metre), in a rather irregular and affected writing, on his cenotaph in Notion (the harbour of Kolophon). The inscription, carved on a block of limestone 0.82 cm. high, 0.55 cm. wide and 0.32 cm. thick, has been dated by the first editor, C. Schuchhardt, 'Kolophon, Notion und Klaros', *MDAIA* 11 (1886), 426, to the beginning of the second century BC; this is the date accepted by Jacoby, *FGrH* 1 a 496. Gorgos would thus have been active between the end of the third and the beginning of the second century BC, and he would have been a contemporary of Nikander (on the traditional dating of the latter). U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Callimachos* 1 (Berlin 1924), 106 n. 3, preferred for the epigram a lower date, and proposed the first century BC; more recently, a dating to the second or first century BC has been suggested for the stone by D.F. McCabe, *Notion Inscriptions*. Texts and List Packard Humanities Institute CD no. 6 1985, n. 19; this is accepted by A. Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften* (Stuttgart 1988), 310 and Merkelbach and Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* 1, 363.

Biographical Essay

The only information on Gorgos derives from this epigram. We learn that he lived a long life, that he served in the sanctuary of Apollo Klarios (as did Nikander, see BNJ 271-272 T 2: the similarity has been more than once remarked upon), and that he died in Athens. It would be interesting to know why he went there. H. Mutschmann, 'Ein unbekannter Mythograph', *RhM* 72 (1917-18), 151, inferred from l. 3 (ὁ σοφίην στέργας, which he interpreted not as a conventional compliment, but as the poetic version of ὁ φιλόσοφος) that Gorgos was member of a philosophical school, and that he died in Athens not accidentally while travelling, but because he had elected to live there. This seems to attach too much importance to the mention of wisdom, which is after all a common topos for poets and writers, and

which moreover could be considered a reasonable attribute for a priest of the oracular sanctuary of Klaros, as Gorgos was (l. 4). There are in fact better possibilities: Athens and Kolophon (of which Notion was the harbour) were linked by a *sungeneia*, a kinship which went back to mythical times (according to Pausanias 7.3.3, Kolophon was founded by a son of the Attic king Kodros, Promethos); also, as is shown by two Attic decrees, *IG ii²* 456 and 470, respectively dated to 307/6 and 306/5, the Kolophonians sent at least two embassies at the end of the fourth century BC to renew this *sungeneia* (see the discussion in J. Robert and L. Robert, *Claros I. Decrets hellénistiques* (Paris 1989), 67). The connection between Athens and Kolophon is again evident in the very first lines of a decree of the Kolophonians for a Menippos (J. and L. Robert, *Claros I*, 63, 67-8) which can be dated at the end of the second century BC. It is thus possible to assume that Gorgos visited Athens to represent his own city. A priest named Gorgos, whose origin is unknown, is mentioned in a very fragmentary Athenian inscription dated to c. 125 BC (*IG ii²* 1171, l. 11; cf. SEG 30, 90, and M.J. Osborne and S.G. Byrne, *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names: 2, Attica* (Oxford 1994), s.v. Γόργος 10). Nothing of Gorgos' work remains.

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