

ΓΕΡΑΣ IN THE HYMN OF CLEANTHES ON ZEUS

ἀλλὰ Ζεῦ πάνδωρε, κελαινεφές, ἀργικέραυνε,
ἀνθρώπους (μὲν) ῥύου ἀπειροσύνης ἀπὸ λυγρῆς,
ἦν σὺ, πάτερ, σκέδασον ψυχῆς ἄπο, δὸς δὲ κυρῆσαι
γνώμης, ἧ πίσυνος σὺ δίκης μέτα πάντα κυβερνᾶς,
ὄφρ' ἂν τιμηθέντες ἀμειβώμεσθ' ἀ σε τιμῆ,
ὑμνοῦντες τὰ σὰ ἔργα διηγεκές, ὡς ἐπέοικε
θνητὸν ἔόντ', ἐπεὶ οὔτε βροτοῖς γέρας ἄλλο τι μεῖζον,
οὔτε θεοῖς, ἧ κοινὸν αἰεὶ νόμον ἐν δίκῃ ὑμνεῖν.

The traditional rendering of γέρας in Cleanthes 'Hymn on Zeus' (see H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Stuttgart 1964, I, 537, p. 121–123) verse 4, p. 123 SVF is 'privilege', from Wilamowitz onwards (Vorrecht), Festugière (priviège), Neustadt (Ehrenrecht), Meerwaldt/Verbeke (Voorrecht) down to the most recent commentator Dirkzwager (Gabe) with the exception of Pohlenz ('kein höheres Amt ward Göttern und Menschen verliehen')¹). The datives βροτοῖς/θεοῖς were taken for granted by most commentators as pure and simple *dativi commodi*.

But a doubt may arise if we take the hardly recognized fact into account that γέρας even when it means 'privilege' (which is not its most frequent meaning) entails a connotation of merit or dignity in the recipient as a ground for endowment with a privilege. It is to Gods and Kings, i.e. to superiors, that γέρας is offered. In Homer γέρας means a gift of honour in terms of a piece of meat or slaves (Od. 4,66; 11,543), a demonstration of honour for the dead with their special status (Il. 16,457; 23,9; Od. 4,197), a special task (which explains Pohlenz' 'höheres Amt') or privilege (Il.

1) von Wilamowitz, *Reden und Vorträge*, Berlin⁴, 1925, 327; A. J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, II, Le Dieu Cosmique, Paris, 1949, 313; E. Neustadt, *Der Zeus-Hymnus des Kleantes*, *Hermes* 66 (1931) 389; G. Verbeke, *Kleantes van Assos*, Brussels, 1949, 235; A. Dirkzwager, *Ein Abbild der Gottheit haben und Weiteres zum Kleantes-Hymnus*, *Rhein.Mus.f.Phil.* 123 (1980) 360; M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa I (and II), Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*, Göttingen, 1948, 110.

4,323). So it was Nestor's γέρας in the Trojan War to offer advice because of his venerable age. H. E. Ebeling's lemma on γέρας in his *Lexicon Homericum*, Leipzig 1885, no. 3, deserves special mention in connection with the Hymn: honor praecipuus dis oblatas (cf. Il. 4,49; 24,47: τὸ γὰρ λάχομεν γέρας ἡμεῖς).

We thus find γέρας with the above mentioned implications in Herodotus, e.g. II,168 where we are told that the warriors in Egypt were endowed with γέρας (land), because of their profession, which was regarded with deference. In IV,143 we read that Megabyzos received γέρας in terms of a charming compliment from Dareios, because Dareios considered him to be a man of particular merit and he wanted as many subjects like him as there are seeds in a pomegranate. So we find the word in Aeschylus, Prometheus 82 (see also 107, 231, 439). We do not want to go so far as to declare that the connotations of merit or dignity are always implied, although it is in the majority of occurrences, nor that γέρας always means a *gift* of honour (in the case of Megabyzos it was a compliment).

Since we have to be sensitive to the connotations and overtones of merit or dignity as to the recipient in γέρας, we are curious to know what merit or dignity on the usual interpretation man is supposed to be provided with in order that he is worthy of the greatest gift or privilege to be bestowed on him: the ability of striking up a hymn. I do not know of any particular merit or dignity of the kind according to Stoic thought, which makes it appropriate to offer a special gift to mankind. Therefore it seems justified to assume that a different explanation for Cleanthes' usage of γέρας is required.

In verse 2, p. 123 SVF we are told that man has received from the godhead a special honour (τιμηθέντες). Τιμή does not imply a notion of dignity or merit in the recipient, although it may do. What exactly the contents of this honour are, is hidden in the hotly debated verse 37 on p. 121 – and presumably will remain hidden. In this verse we find the hardly understandable words ἤχου μίμημα λαχόντες, which I regard as an almost insoluble problem (ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμεν ἤχου μίμημα λαχόντες). How this formula is to be understood, I do not propose to discuss, although a suggestion may be found in a note²), but I shall concentrate on

2) This notoriously difficult phrase has been discussed over and over again, without there being a convincing and widely accepted solution; cf. above all G. Zuntz, *Zum Kleanthes-Hymnus*, *Harv.Stud. of Cl. Phil.* 63 (1958) 392–394; G.

the fact that this formula is echoed by *τιμηθέντες* in v. 2, p. 123. What we are fairly entitled to conclude is that the meaning of the controversial words has something to do with the Logos, i.e. the faculty of articulated, sensible speech and singing. For in v. 36, p. 121 SVF it is man's duty (*θέμις*) to raise his voice in order to speak

Verbeke, Kleanthes, 240–242 and A. W. James, *The Zeus Hymns of Cleanthes and Aratus*, *Antichthon* 6 (1972) 30/31. The reading of ms F is incorrect because of its metrical impossibility: *ἔσμεν ἤχου* – – –. There are two types of solution. Either one changes *ἔσμεν* into *εἰσί* (von Arnim, SVF) or one alters the odd *ἤχου* which has to mean in the context 'articulated speech' for which it is not suitable, because it means: 'unarticulated noise or sound'; see Liddell and Scott s.v. I would suggest we retain *ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος* in view of the parallel with Cleanthes' contemporary Aratus, who has in his hymn on Zeus: *τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν*. Meineke's proposal to read *ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γενόμεσθ'* does not seem to be too drastic an operation on the original text, but results in a not quite acceptable concept. For man is not born from Zeus; we only originate from him where our *γένος* is concerned. So we do find that the solution has to be found in changing *ἤχου*. This has to be replaced by a word – because of the metre – beginning with a short vowel (unless we accept von Arnim's beautiful conjecture *εἶσ'*). Lots and lots of proposals have been brought forward. In my view the fact that the word has to express *the reason for our use of our voice* (*προσαυδάν*, cf. Pohlenz, *Kleanthes' Zeushymnus*, *Hermes* 75 (1940) 118) is decisive for the choice. We must bear in mind what has been forgotten by so many interpreters, the word *x* has to distinguish man from the other animals. These considerations rule out *ἄλου* (Bergk and Wilamowitz, approval of James), *ἄχου* (Scaliger), *μόνου* or *ἐκ σοῦ* (Gedicke), *ἴσου* (M. Marcovich, *Hermes* 94 (1966) 245–250), and also the most recent proposals of Zuntz (*Vers 4 des Kleanthes-Hymnus*, *Rhein.Mus.* 122 (1979) 97/98) and of Dirkwzager (*Abbild*, 359/360) who independently suggest: *σέθεν μίμημα λαχόντες*. The above mentioned considerations admit *λόγου* (Meineke) and *ὀπός* (Meerwaldt). For the case of Meerwaldt (*ὀπός*) I see no cogent reasons. For Meineke's *λόγου μίμημα* considerable support is to be derived from Epictet, *Diatribe* I, 16,20. Epictet there stresses the *λόγος* as a feature distinguishing man from animals like the swan or the nightingale, who both sing. Observe the parallel with Cleanthes, who also views man in contrast to animals, SVF p. 122, 1. According to Epictet the possession of Logos invites us to sing: *Νῦν δὲ λογικός εἰμι· ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν*.

There is a text to testify to the community of Gods and man both sharing the Logos, SVF II, 528, p. 169, 29: *κοινωνίαν δ' ὑπάρχειν πρὸς ἀλλήλους διὰ τὸ λόγου μετέχειν* which can be quoted as support for Meineke.

Zuntz, however, discussing Meineke's solution (*Zum Kleanthes-Hymnus*, 293) quotes von Wilamowitz who rightly observes that we have no 'Nachbildung des Logos' but the Logos itself. Therefore it makes sense to accept Wachsmuth's *τίμημα* which can mean honour, Aeschylus, *Choeph.* 511. *Τίμημα* may be aptly defended by *τιμηθέντες* and *τιμῆ* of line 2 of p. 123 SVF, which according to the ring-shaped composition of the Hymn, must refer to v. 37 on p. 121, *λόγου* (?) This can make an excellent basis for *τίμημα*. But we have to bear in mind that strong objections can be raised to *λόγου*. For later on in the Hymn we come across the *κοινὸς λόγος*, which permeates everything. A possible answer could be to consider the *λόγος* in *λόγου τίμημα* as the *λόγος προφορικός* the faculty of speech, a special type of Logos. Be this as it may, each interpreter-

(sing) to Zeus. In view of the ringshaped composition of the poem and the correspondence of 28, p. 122 – 5, p. 123 to the opening 34, p. 121 – 4, p. 122 we may expect v. 2, p. 123 to mirror the situation of the beginning (ἤχου μίμημα λαχόντες). As I said earlier, v. 2, p. 123 says that we are honoured (τιμηθέντες) and also that we are under the obligation of returning (ἀμειβόμεσθα τιμῇ) honour to our benefactor. I do not agree with Festugière's explanation³) of the τιμή in τιμηθέντες as γνώμη. For we are already in the possession of this τιμή and it is precisely γνώμη that Cleanthes prays for. The τιμή involved refers to ἤχου μίμημα λαχόντες. We should observe the correspondence ἀμειβόμεσθα/λαχόντες. So what we got, was a basis for the faculty of singing a hymn. The only way to express our gratitude (ἀμειβόμεσθα) is to sing a hymn. What else can we return? For the faculty of speech and singing – our specific part of the Logos, which distinguishes us from the other animals – is no merit of our own: it is only the *activity* of this faculty that may be considered something in our power. Interpreted along these lines the implications and overtones of γέρας get their due. Γέρας is *our* gift of honour to the God, who was our benefactor, worthy of veneration. So γέρας is not to be looked upon as a gift or privilege given *to us* as the traditional interpretation has it.

Our explanation is not merely in line with the common Greek notion of γέρας, but it is also clearly confirmed by *Stoic* thought about τιμή and γέρας. In Chrysippus – and there is no need whatsoever to deny that Cleanthes would agree⁴) – the following circumscription of both words and their interrelation is found (SVF III, 563, p. 149,25/26): τὴν γὰρ τιμὴν εἶναι γέρας ἀξίωσιν, τὸ δὲ γέρας ἄθλον ἀρετῆς εὐεργετικῆς. Honour is to be worth (ἀξίωσις) a γέρας and in its turn γέρας is the reward (ἄθλον) of beneficial virtue. Notice the word ἄθλον meaning the prize you get in a game as a reward for your merits as a sportsman. Transposed to the religious domain ἄθλον implies: God treated us well (τιμηθέντες) by giving us a special share in the Logos. What is more natural and convenient than rewarding (ἄθλον) him for his boon (ἀρετῆ εὐεργετικῆ) in terms of the greatest gift (γέρας) we are

conjecturist can have his own reading provided that it is in line with the condition that the word x must be the basis for our προσαυδάν, as we mentioned above.

3) A. J. Festugière, *La Révélation*, 324.

4) Cleanthes himself wrote about the subject (SVF I, 481, p. 107, 21 περι τιμῆς).

able to offer, singing a hymn of praise and veneration of Zeus' superb administration of this world?

We may now return to the question of typology of the datives βροτοῖς/θεοῖς. They may be considered as rather loose examples of the possessivus-type: 'the greatest gift Gods and men possess to offer'.

I shall conclude my contribution by pointing to the striking end of the Hymn, an ending which could not be more appropriate: ὑμνεῖν as the last word, which sounds like an invitation to join in. It was precisely to this that Epictet in his treatment of ὑμνεῖν (Diatribes I,16,21) invites his readers: καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ᾠδὴν παρακαλῶ.

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