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## Fabrication and Execution: The Lycambids and their Iambic Aptitude

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William Bruckel, FCRH '11

# Fabrication and Execution

## The Lycambids and their Iambic Aptitude

The Lycambids were a family believed to have personally known the archaic poet Archilochos of Paros. Tradition tells of their collected suicide being motivated by criticisms launched at them in his Iambic verse, and this is sometimes mistaken for historical fact. However, analysis of the conventions of the Iambic genre reveals that it is not sincere invective that Iambus is composed but rather humorous mockery. Inconsistencies in the characterization of the Lycambids in these verses, and the aptitude of those verses for sympotic ritual, are considered in light of this understanding to demonstrate that this tragic family is most likely a figment of Archilochos's verse designed to increase the breadth of his art.

Accounting for the nature of his work and underscoring his reputation as the prototypical artist of his genre, it is said that the Iambic poet Archilochos loved the daughter of an individual named Lycambes, who denied the couple marriage, and so ridiculed him with his poetry that he and even his children hanged themselves out of shame. Some consider these characters to be figures of historical fact. However, this supposition relies on a misconceived notion of the nature and intended ends of Iambic poetry as sincere in its ferociousness. Rather, Iambus directs its force toward the generation of humor, often by combining it with lewd imagery or crude subject matter. Since these elements manifested themselves in vituperation, the more abuse a poet could issue, the better the quality of his Iambus. Therefore, to better his art he would need to extend his invective range so that it might be as diverse as possible. In order to do this, an Iambic poem should be able to chastise either the same individual for more than one thing or more than one individual for the same thing. At the same time, it should cast some individuals as good for the sake of comparison. Archilochos does this when he intends to chastise, but then he instantly reverts to vituperation of his former subject.

Compositions about an enemy that would facilitate such diverse blame are a requirement of generic quality. The construction of Lycambes's family, as reflected in the Archilochos fragments, is deliberately designed to meet this condition. The plot of the family's relationship to the poet, the composition of the family itself, and the characterization of each member therein form a network of premises that can be used to ridicule its figures by conjunction or contrast in any combination of ways. This gives Archilochos ample fodder for creative insult, and marks his place as an Iambic poet. This ethos is reflected in discrepancies in the characterization of some members of the Lycambids, which indicates that concerns for consistent illustration were subjugated to interests in maximizing blame and casts doubt on their historical personhood. Furthermore, this varied characterization illustrates a performative as well as aesthetic motive, helping Archilochos's work conform to the varied ritual demands of poetry in symposia.

Though the Iambic genre is associated with a collection of meters, it can best be recognized by its humorously satirical telos and vulgar content. This diminishes the sincerity of Archilochos's

attack on the Lycambids. The Greek ear was extremely sensitive to meter. Different meters were utilized to achieve different ends. For example, Homer and Hesiod both write for different reasons, yet each is considered an epic poet since each uses hexameter. Since hexameter is also the meter of choice for Herodotus's Pythic decrees, it emerges as the meter of the learned and instructive. According to West, however, Iambus is not categorized this way since poems using both Iambic trimeter and trochaic tetrameter, as well as epodes, have all been considered Iambus in antiquity.<sup>1</sup> The term *iambus* seems to have been more indicative of purpose and content since, in the tradition of ancient literature, it and its various grammatical uses were all associated primarily with the practice of ridicule. Indeed, West notes that, the verbs *λαμβάνω* and *λαμβάνειν* come to signify satirization.<sup>2</sup> Such an instance can be found in Aristotle's *Poetics*: "For these the Iambic meter was fittingly introduced and that is why it is still called Iambic, because it was the meter in which they lampooned each other."<sup>3</sup> According to Rosen this notion, which Aristotle refines into a sort of "Iambic idea (*ἰαμβική ιδέα*),"<sup>4</sup> "denotes the many features that recur in poetry and help to define it... Whether the poet sings of real, fictional, or even semi-fictional people, he must conform to the demands of [the] literary tradition."<sup>5</sup> This component of Iambus becomes the first basis of the virtue (*ἀρετή*) of the poet. The quality of the Iambic poet was determined in part by how well he could lampoon his subjects. Generally, the effect of blame that results from Iambic poetry is known as "ψογος." The successful and artful application of "ψογος" to one's (supposed) enemy<sup>6</sup> is one of the two virtues of Iambic poetry, "the outstanding feature of the genre," according to West.<sup>7</sup> Archilochos "know[s] how to repay love with love and hatred with hate and biting abuse,"<sup>8</sup> and thus embraces the *ἰαμβική ιδέα*.

The second virtue, the one that governs content, is the artful use of vulgarity. Indeed, according to the *Cambridge Companion to Lyric Poetry*, "[other] archaic verse lacks the explicitness of Iambus.... The three major archaic exponents of Iambus also share and interest in details and incidents from everyday life ... in particular, food and sex."<sup>9</sup> This is clear when one considers that a great deal, perhaps even the majority, of the Archilochean body is either explicitly vulgar or can only make sense by reading it as

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metaphorically referring to sexual behavior. Also illustrative of the typical vulgarity of iambus is Archilochos's reputation in antiquity. Examining his *dubia*—works attributed to but most likely not written by Archilochos—affords one an idea of this reputation. A number of these works are not only vulgar in that they deal with matters of sexuality, but are explicit in a way that is uncharacteristic of works we know to authentically Archilochos. The works scholars attribute to him tend to be artful and metaphorical. For example, prostitutes are known as “[γυνή] δῆμος (public woman),”<sup>10</sup> rather than πόρνη (whore); and instances of explicit sexual action are described metaphorically. In the *dubia*, however, references to sexual behavior are more vulgar, with lewd language and explicit references to male genitalia and sexual intercourse. The *dubia* is nearly stylistically antithetical to the authentic Archilochean fragment. However, its attribution to Archilochos illustrates the ancient conception of iambus as being characterized by vulgarity, since he is seen as its inventor and finest artist.<sup>11</sup>

The Mnesiepes inscription, which was found on Paros and relates myths about Archilochos devised by his hero cult located there, understands vulgarity not only as characteristic of the iambic genre, but also as one of its virtues. Archilochos, it says, having recently been given the lyre and its gifts by the muses, improvises a poem at a Dionysian festival on Paros. For this Archilochos is exiled as his verses are deemed “too iambic.”<sup>12</sup> Since it is unlikely that meter would offend a group of Parian citizens celebrating the festival of Dionysus, one can conclude that the use of “iambic” refers to the content of the poem and implies that its audience found such subject matter immediately scandalous. The inscription goes on to describe a plague that descends onto the Parian citizenry. This pestilence is sent by Apollo, who, associated with the muses, prizes Archilochos as their servant, underscoring his skill with verse and lyre. The “iambic” nature of the poetry, thus, is seen as a virtue because Archilochos's verses are protected by a divinity, casting the vulgarity as a virtuous aspect of the genre. Moreover, even if Archilochos had been exiled in historical fact and the inscription does no more than offer an etiology, his penchant for the artful rendering of vulgarity is still cast as pleasing to Apollo; thus, it is one of the virtues, if not the primary one, of his work. Furthermore, if his exile is a fabrication, then the inscription bares a narrative that resembles hero cult myth in that he is deified and his invective skill is celebrated as a divine attribute, thus illustrating the importance of such content to the genre.

To suppose the tradition of the Lycambids as historically factual relies on the supposition that iambic poetry is genuinely vicious, owing to its satirical nature and vulgar content. However, closer examination of the genre and Greek religious and literary tradition reveals that the intended effect of the amalgamation is humor. The mix of an abusive attitude and a loquacious yet vulgarly concerned vocabulary can serve, it seems, only two possible primary purposes: either the intentional derision of its object or the elicitation of humor from the audience by way of this derision. That a poet would set out to unleash genuine anger at another person is not inconceivable. However, it is unlikely that such a poet would be considered virtuous and that this effect would become the defining characteristic of a genre that later developed its own meter. Furthermore, there is concrete reason to believe that humor was indeed the goal and characteristic effect of iambus. Besides the fact that Archilochos literally tells us via comparison,<sup>13</sup> this evi-

dence comes in the form of a passage in the etiological Homeric Hymn to Demeter:

τὴν δ' αἰδώς τε σέβασ τε ἰδὲ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν•  
εἶξε δέ οἱ κλισμοῖο καὶ ἐδρίασθαι ἄνωγεν.  
ἀλλ' οὐ Δημήτηρ ὠρηφόρος ἀγλαόδωρος  
ἤθελεν ἐδρίασθαι ἐπὶ κλισμοῖο φαεινοῦ,  
ἀλλ' ἀκέουσα ἔμιμε κατ' ὄμματα καλὰ βαλοῦσα,  
πρὶν γ' ὅτε δὴ οἱ ἔθηκεν Ἰάμβη κέδν' εἰδυῖα  
πηκτὸν ἔδος, καθύπερθε δ' ἐπ' ἀργύφειον βάλε  
κῶα<<>.  
ἐνθα καθεζομένη προκατέσχετο χερσὶ καλύπτρη•  
δὴρὸν δ' ἀφθογγος τετιμημένη ἦστ' ἐπὶ δίφρου,  
οὐδέ τιν' οὐτ' ἔπει προσπτύσσοετο οὐτέ τι ἔργωι,  
ἀλλ' ἀγέλαστος ἀπαστος ἐδητύος ἠδὲ ποτήτος  
ἦστο, πόθωι μινύθουσα βαθυζώνοιο θυγατρὸς,  
πρὶν γ' ὅτε δὴ χλεῦθις μιν Ἰάμβη κέδν' εἰδυῖα  
πολλὰ παρασκώπτουσ' ἐτρέπατο πότνιαν ἀγνήν  
μειδῆσαι γελᾶσαι τε καὶ ἴλαον σχεῖν θυμόν•  
ἦ δὴ οἱ καὶ ἔπειτα μεθύστερον εὐάδεν ὄργαις

(The queen was seized by awe and reverence and  
sallow fear; she gave up her couch for [Demeter],  
and invited her to sit down. But Demeter, bringer  
of resplendent gifts in season, did not want to be  
seated on the gleaming couch, but stood in silence,  
her lovely eyes downcast, until dutiful Iambe set a  
jointed stool for her and laid a shining white fleece  
over it. There she sat, holding her veil before her  
face, and for a long time she remained there on the  
seat in silent sorrow. She greet no one with word or  
movement, but sat there unsmiling, tasting neither  
food nor drink, pining for her deep-girt daughter,  
until at last the dutiful Iambe with ribaldry and  
many a jest diverted the holy lady so that she smiled  
and laughed and became benevolent—Iambe who  
ever since has found favor with her moods).<sup>14</sup>

The first and most obvious point to be made about the passage is the character whose behavior, which seems jocular and witty, is named Ἰάμβη. While the exact etymological roots of the terms ἴαμβος, Ἰάμβη and ἰαμβίζειν have yet to be demonstrated, the connection between the figure of Ἰάμβη and the poetic genre are undeniable. Furthermore, almost her entire name is contained in “Λυκάμβη,” which itself seems to merely to be the result of a combination between Λύκος (wolf) and Ἰάμβη, preserving even the first declension and cementing the connection (mythological, religious, or otherwise) between the two characters. And, while it is unclear whether this section of the hymn is either an etiology for the practice of iambic poetry, as the whole hymn serves for Eleusinian cult practice, or an indication that worship of the goddess gave rise to the genre, it is hardly deniable that τῆς Ἰάμβης behavior serves as a model for iambic execution. Thus her motive, the generation of humor and levity in her audience, is a model for the ideal iambic effect. Indeed, Ralph Rosen confirms this inclination:

Since Iambe herself is emblematic of the iambus, one might appropriately look to the episode for commentary on the ways in which the literary genres of this sort, genres of abuse and mockery, behave. The Iambe/iambus connection, in short, allows us (and ancient audiences likewise) to read the episode as programmatic of the entire genre, and to analyze the mockery of Iambe in terms of the poetic performance to which she lends her name.<sup>15</sup>

As Rosen further explains, “an awareness of the mediating force of representation ... mitigates the aggressiveness of the mockery and transforms the target into an accomplice for the sake of the audi-

ence's pleasure."<sup>16</sup> This awareness, according to Rosen, is betrayed both by Iambe's confidence in mocking the goddess and Demeter's unexpectedly positive reaction. *Ἰάμβη*, he postulates, had to have some reason for confidence in mocking the goddess, assurance that her mockery would return the desired result, i.e. to delight rather than provoke. This, he suggests, is the unexpectedness and extremity of Iambe's mockery. According to Rosen, these elements combine to push her behavior over the bounds of the plausibly sincere and into that of performance. That Demeter senses this is obvious, since her reaction to Iambe's display is positive; indeed, it distracts her from such a severe loss as the death of her daughter, Persephone. The knowledge that what she is seeing is a performance allows Demeter to appreciate the audacity of it, and thus humor is manifest.<sup>17</sup> Just as Demeter and Iambe's conduct illustrate this awareness to modern scholars, so too does its depiction illustrate the existence of this awareness in Greek society. Though it is instrumental to the plot, Iambe's performance does not seem to stand out as extraordinary or miraculous. This indicates that such a phenomenon, the recognition of the ridiculousness of the performance as humorous, is as commonplace for the archaic Greek man as it seems in the hymn. Thus, because iambus is lyric poetry and so a performed art, one can only conclude that an archaic audience would react in the matter of Demeter, with laughter, and that the extremes in satirical and artistic use of vulgarity are composed to that end. If, then, the Lycambids were members of this audience, as the tradition posits, it is unlikely they would have been so moved to suicide.

The method and goal of iambus are clear: to elicit humor via harsh blame in vulgar yet artfully-wrought language. Thus the goal of an iambic poet like Archilochos is to widen the range of his invective ability against his subjects to produce as much abuse as possible. The combination of this understanding with inconsistencies both between the common tradition of the Lycambids and their depiction in the fragments of Archilochos and between the extant fragments themselves illustrates the Lycambids's character as dynamic and flexible, designed to maximize the range of Archilochos's attack. Though the Archilochean corpus is fragmentary, scholars have arranged Archilochos's fragments into groups that seem to depict certain episodes. Relative to the daughters of Lycambes, who figure into most of these episodes, not only does moral quality waver, but often the reason for immorality or general knavery varies from youthful lasciviousness to the aesthetic grotesqueness of old age. This betrays the inconsistencies that signify a lack of historical personhood and demonstrates Archilochos's tactic for maximizing the breadth of his invective.

The number of Lycambes's daughters is somewhat uncertain. From Archilochos's fragments, we are aware of at least two:<sup>18</sup> one who remains nameless and will be referred to as "Soror," and the primary female subject of his poetry and thus object of his invective, Neoboule. Because Soror is mentioned so infrequently, and most times in passing, discussion of her character and its consistency are brief. Though she is not mentioned often, Soror figures in what is perhaps the most narrative-rich fragment of the Archilochean corpus, "The Cologne Epode."<sup>19</sup> A figure, who may or may not be Archilochos, propositions Soror for sexual intercourse and, by extension, marriage. However, Soror, refuses on the grounds—this is only a presumption, but a near-universal one—that she is not ready. Here, set up against the typically

(though far from always) morally corrupt Neoboule, Soror is depicted as virtuous and pure. "[σὺ], Archilochos writes of her, "μὲν γὰρ οὐτ' ἄπιστος οὐτε διπλόη/ ἢ δ]ὲ μάλ' ὄξουτέρη/ πολλοὺς δὲ ποιεῖται[ι φίλους (since you are neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy, whereas [Neoboule] is quite precipitous and makes many her lovers)."<sup>20</sup> Archilochos refers to her as "Ἀμφιμεδοῦς θυγάτηρ (daughter of Amphido)," and thus characterizes her as a worthy heir to the moral estate of "ἔσθλης τε καὶ γυναικός, ἣν νῦν γῆ κατ' εὐρώσσ' ἔ[χει (a worthy and prudent woman whom now the earth holds)."<sup>21</sup> These verses depict not only a virgin, but also a timid one, who, though beautiful, is afraid of sexual intercourse. This characterization is markedly different, if not completely opposite, to Soror's character in the rest of the corpus where she joins her sister in rampant explicit sexual behavior. She is implicated by the phrase "οἴην Λυκάμβεω παῖδα τὴν ὑπερτέραν (only the superior daughter of Lycambes)."<sup>22</sup> This fragment is grouped in the context of several other fragments that all contain references, both explicit and subdued, to sexual behavior.<sup>23</sup> Surrounding phrases create an orgiastic scene, and so it is not unreasonable, according to West,<sup>24</sup> to suppose that "ὑπερτέραν" signifies a dichotomy wherein one Lycambid is on top of the speaker, and her counterpart is elsewhere. This surely situates Soror in the orgy with her sister and drastically reverses the chaste character traits by which we came to know her in the "Cologne Epode." This character discrepancy not only indicates a clear lack of historicity, which would not allow for someone to be characterized in opposite ways by the same author, but it also demonstrates the iambic utility of character fluidity. In the "Cologne Epode," Soror's virtues are described almost exclusively in contrast to an extended poetic description of Neoboule's vices. The epode, then, is something of a show of Archilochos's abusive abilities, with Soror acting as a contrasting agent.

Archilochos's verse is scathing enough on its own, but it is not until he offers up an example of the virtues missing from Neoboule that the lack seems real and the invective all the more vivid. However, Neoboule is not the only object at which the criticism in the epode is directed. Lycambes himself is the object of insult if, indeed, Archilochos's figure is able to take even the stunted advantage he does of Soror. First, by using a metonymic instead of the more common patronymic in introducing Soror, whom he connects with virtue, Archilochos implies that her father is without virtue. Second, by having his way with Soror, an object that is not only Lycambes's possession but also his responsibility, Archilochos mocks Lycambes's impotence as a father, guardian, and respectable man of archaic Greece. Honor (τιμῆ), after all, was represented materially, and daughters were no exception. While the inconsistency indicates the absence of a concrete historical character, it illustrates deliberate framing of the narrative's circumstances and manipulation of Soror's characteristics, thus reflecting Archilochos's ownership of his characters' identities.

In no other Lycambid, however, is there as much variation and inconsistency as in the character of Neoboule. In the corpus as a whole, she is the object of Archilochos's most intense emotions. Indeed, one fragment finds Archilochos "δύστηνος ἔγκει[μενος] πόθῳ ἄψυχος, χαλεπήσι ... ὀδύνησι ... πεπαρμένος (lying in the throes of desire ... pierced through the bones with grievous pangs)."<sup>25</sup> In many fragments, Neoboule is not the objective of abuse, but of affection: "εἰ γὰρ ὡς ἐμοὶ γένοιτο χεῖρα Νεοβούλης θιγεῖν (would that I might touch Neoboule on her hand)."<sup>26</sup> Ar-

chilochos characterizes Neoboule as very beautiful, reveling in her “ἔσθριχμμένας κόμας καὶ στήθος, ὡς ἂν καὶ γέρον ἠράσσατο (scented hair and breasts so that even an old man would have been enamored with them).”<sup>27</sup> She is depicted not only as beautiful, but also a credit to her household and, thus, honorable. For Archilochos, Lycambes is “τρισμακάριος (thrice blessed)” for having “τοιαῦτα τέκνα (such daughters as these).”<sup>28</sup> However, Archilochos uses the full brunt of his powers against her. His iambs contain a multitude of fragments issuing a constant attack against Neoboule.

While this sudden reversal signifies a larger character inconsistency, it gives birth to a host of discrepancies within the character of Neoboule after her transformation from chaste to morally corrupt. Fragments chastising Neoboule appear grouped, with each group featuring one of her character traits that either is *a priori* objectionable or accounts for the deterioration of her form and her loss of beauty. These grouping patterns, resulting ultimately in the total illustration of four distinct versions of Neoboule, suggest that her character was included in different narrative episodes and that her character was manipulated to fit the circumstances of these episodes to maximize Archilochos’s invective range. Because of iambus’s concern with sex, a favorite method for chastising Neoboule is to describe in detail her illicit sexual behavior. This method of castigation, directly highlighting Neoboule’s lasciviousness, is not always explicitly stated. West places fragments 34–37 in the context of the Lycambids’s orgiastic behavior.<sup>29</sup> Accepting West’s context and bearing in mind his other sexual animal metaphors, such as “πολλὰς δὲ τυφλάς ἐγγέλυας ἐδέξω (you received many blind eels),”<sup>30</sup> it becomes clear that Archilochos is referring to Neoboule when he says “βοῦς ἐστὶν ἡμῖν ἐργάτης ἐν οἰκίῃ, / κορωνός, ἔργων ἴδρις (we have in the stable a work-ox, proud, a skilled worker).”<sup>31</sup> Using metaphor to induce the images, smells, and sounds of a cow, and then referring to “work” as a metaphor for the labor of sexual performance, Archilochos attacks Neoboule’s chastity while associating her with beastly sensations. The narrative cohesion and satirical integrity of the fragments directly attacking Neoboule’s chastity signify the first invective episode. However a different motif is on display in fragment 188, where Archilochos exclaims:

Οὐκέ[ ] θ’ ὁμῶς θάλλεις ἀπαλὸν χρῶα• κάρφετα[ι  
γάρ ἦδη  
ὄγμο]ς• κακοῦ δὲ γήραος καθαιρεῖ  
.....] ἀφ’ ἡμεροῦ δὲ θορῶν γλυκὺς ἡμερος  
π[ροσώπου  
.....]κεν• ἢ γὰρ πολλὰ δὴ σ’ ἐπήϊξεν  
πνεύματα χειμερίων ἀνέμων

(No longer does your skin have the soft bloom that it  
Once had; now you furrow is withered the...of  
Ugly old age is taking its toll, and sweet loveliness  
(has gone?) with a rush from your lovely face. For  
In truth many a blast of wintry winds has assaulted  
You.)<sup>32</sup>

Here Archilochos diverges from his favorite diatribe to explore the possibilities of a different one. It is possible that this fragment is linked with another reading, “οὐκ ἂν μύροισι γρηῦς εὐοσ’ ἠλείφω (an old woman, you would not be anointing yourself with perfume),”<sup>33</sup> since it too makes light of Neoboule’s age without regard for her lasciviousness, and thus we can understand this motif as signifying a second abusive episode.

A third invective episode is clear in a grouping of fragments that take Neoboule’s physical figure as being ugly, fat, and worn out from engaging in prostitution: she is “περὶ σφυρὸν παχεῖα, μισητὴ γυνή (a revolting old woman fat about the ankles).”<sup>34</sup> This is distinct from the first episode in two ways. In the first episode, Soror is implicated as a figure of the narrative; here, however, the object of the tirade is categorically singular. Also, there is a difference between being lascivious and being a prostitute. According to Herennius Philo, μισητὴ lacks an oxytone accent, which would have caused it to mean “one deserving of hatred”; instead it has a grave accent on its ultima, causing it to mean “lewd.”<sup>35</sup> This consideration strengthens Eustathius’s supposition that “Archilochos [spoke abusively of a prostitute] as ‘fat (παχειαν),’ and a ‘public woman (δημον)’ ... and a ‘worker for hire (εργατιν)’ in addition to the ‘froth of defilement (μυσαχνην)’ on the analogy of the froth of the sea, and such like.”<sup>36</sup> This supposition connects fragment 206W with a series of others that describe “δημος (a public woman),”<sup>37</sup> “εργατις (a worker for hire),”<sup>38</sup> and “μυσαχνη (froth of defilement).”<sup>39</sup> Though it is unclear from the fragments, Hesychius insists “ἐργάτις• τὴν Νεοβούλην (-λιαν cod.) λέγει καὶ παχεῖαν (a worker for hire: the reference is to Neoboule; she is also called fat).”<sup>40</sup> If Archilochos were trying to imply prostitution in fragment 36W, one would expect some of the terminology understood by Eustathius to be characteristic of prostitutes to be present. However, it is absent, and nothing else about the first episode suggests that Soror and Neoboule are acting as prostitutes. The mention of “work” would suggest such a thing were it not for the combined nature of the metaphor. In it, Neoboule is compared to an ox, and her lover is compared to an ass, connecting them via use of αἶνος (animal fable), wherein both are animal characters. This also works to categorize the sexual act as “work” by exaggerating the size of the lover’s genitalia.

Like the stark inconsistency that characterizes the description of Soror, the moral polarity of Neoboule that results from the plurality of her character evidences her manipulation for the sake of composition and casts sizable doubt onto the likelihood of her historicity. The poetic utility in a good (morally or otherwise) Neoboule figure limits Archilochos to emphasizing the lack of virtue in Lycambes by contrasting his virtue with hers and embellishing the cruelty of Lycambes’s traditional affront. Instead, Archilochos ignores the character traits he bestows on her in his other poems to benefit the artistry of his body of iambus and the vituperative diversity of the poems therein. The episodic nature of his derision against her presents four different narratives, and thus four different Neoboules: the beautiful and virtuous, the whore (who delights in her exploits), the old, and the fat prostitute. Each of these in turn represents, instead of the passionate raving of a scorned bridegroom, a deliberate<sup>41</sup> attempt by an iambic poet to widen the range of his art, and thus the potency of his skills. Each of these characters is distinct from one another. Instead of being limited to embellishing his Lycambes invective, Archilochos can directly display his talent for blame against three new objects since the end of iambus is humorous ridicule: a greater number of enemies constitutes a greater and more diverse range of satirical possibility. For example, West points out that many elements of Archilochos’s first invective motif, especially the image of Neoboule performing fellatio, can be traced to Mesopotamian culture, especially images on pots and vessels.<sup>42</sup> Archilochos would have had

access to this iconographic tradition during his military career, and finds occasion to use it only after having cast Neoboule as a lascivious orgiast, as he does in fragments 30W-48W. Preserving the character of Neoboule as virtuous and beautiful would have precluded such an inclusion and thus limited his art.

While these discrepancies are illustrative enough on their own to indicate the Lycambids were more likely literary characters than historical figures, consideration of both the perfection in their familial construction to fulfill various functions of poetry and the ridicule during symposia indicates another reasons for Archilochos to have characterized them the way he does. He thus erodes their historicity all the more. In the sympotic context, we see an Archilochos who, attempting to maximize his anger against Lycambes, establishes a familial construction that magnifies and multiplies the force of his invective, while simultaneously fulfilling the objectives requisite of quality sympotic poetry. The combined variation and contextual perfection signify manipulation of the characters to meet the demands of the context. The symposium is not a setting in which it is hard to imagine Archilochos; in fact a number of his fragments strongly suggest his participation.<sup>43</sup> Bowie claims that some of the major functions of poetry during symposia are: reflections of good and bad conduct, praise directed at those not present, declaration of one's own likes and dislikes pronouncements of erotic attraction, descriptions of erotic experience, criticism of those present, and vilification of enemies.<sup>44</sup> Each of these rhetorical goals is met singly by the "Cologne Epode"—the starkest example of character variation for the sake of increased verbal assault in the Archilochean corpus. Soror's comparison with Neoboule is a prime example of the first function, moral reflection, and the third, expression of one's likes and dislikes. However, this is impossible without manipulating the characters

of both Soror, otherwise portrayed as an orgiast, and Neoboule, whose character wavers between positive and negative. Soror's manipulation in this instance, as demonstrated above, enhances the abusive force of the epode against Neoboule and Lycambes and satisfies yet another sympotic goal, the vilification and bitter rebuke of one's enemies. Archilochos's invocation of Amphido both meets the second function of sympotic poetry, praise of the dead or those not present, and embellishes the virtue of Soror.

This, also, is impossible without manipulating Soror's character. For a possible attack on someone present, one need only look at Archilochos's inclusion of premature ejaculation. Since it is unlikely that he would imply that he himself had prematurely ejaculated and because such a phenomenon is a unique poetic topos yet explicitly stated, that he refers to someone present to chide them for an event to which they admitted or are otherwise framed is quite likely. The last two goals remaining, profession of erotic attraction and description of sexual activity, are particularly revelatory because they, were it not for the manipulation of the characters of Soror and Neoboule, would have been mutually exclusive for Archilochos. For Archilochos to chide Lycambes with full force, he must debase Lycambes's children, which he accomplishes through the description of Neoboule. However, this affects his options both sympotically and abusively: he cannot, if Neoboule is base, profess sexual attraction or activity since it would drag him down and destroy the potency of his diatribe. Furthermore, it eliminates the invective possibility of the implication of absconding with the pure. Archilochos resolves this problem in Soror, who creates the possibility of sexual attraction, completing his obligation to sympotic function, and enhances his derisive abilities against both Neoboule by means of comparison, and against Lycambes by means of straightforward insult.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> M.L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1974), 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, vol. 23, trans. by W.H. Fyfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) 1448b.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Waitz, *Aristotelis Organon Graece*, vol. 2. (1846, repr., Lipsiae) 407.

<sup>5</sup> Ralph M. Rosen, "Hipponax, Bupalos, and the Conventions of the Psogos," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118 (1988): 29-41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>7</sup> West, *Studies in Greek*, 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Chris Camery, "Iambos," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*, ed. Felix Budelmann, (Cambridge University Press: 2009) 150.

<sup>10</sup> Archilochus, frag. 207 West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum Cantati* (Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> Marius Victorinus, *Grammar*.

<sup>12</sup> Mnesiepes Inscription, B(E<sub>2</sub>) col. I

<sup>13</sup> Archilochus, frag. 215 West, *Iambi et Elegi*: "I have no interest in iambi or amusements." This statement seems to equivocate Iambus with amusement.

<sup>14</sup> *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, ll: 190-205

<sup>15</sup> Ralph Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire*, (Oxford University Press: 2007) 52.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid* 53ff.

<sup>18</sup> Neoboule's sister refers to only one other in her house prepared to be married ("Cologne Epode," 196aW).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-38.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> Archilochus, frag. 38 West, *Iambi et Elegi*.

<sup>23</sup> West, *Studies in Greek*, 123.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Archilochus, frag. 193 West, *Iambi et Elegi*.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 118.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 48.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 60.

<sup>29</sup> West, *Studies in Greek*, 123.

<sup>30</sup> Archilochus, frag. 189 West, *Iambi et Elegi*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 35.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 188.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 205.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 206.

<sup>35</sup> Herennius Philo, *On the Different Meanings of Words* (p. 194 Palmieri, 83 Nickau Ammonius).

<sup>36</sup> Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*. 25.775 (iv.836.1 V.d. Valk).

<sup>37</sup> Archilochus, frag. 207 West, *Iambi et Elegi*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 208.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, frag. 209.

<sup>40</sup> Hesychius, *Lexicon*.

<sup>41</sup> Archilochus, frag. 23 and 126 West, *Iambi et Elegi*: both fragments 23 and 126 make it very clear that Archilochos wielded his bitter words proudly.

<sup>42</sup> M.L. West, "Some Oriental Motifs in Archilochus," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 102 (1994): 1-5.

<sup>43</sup> Archilochus, frag. 196, 168, et. cetera West, *Iambi et Elegi*.

<sup>44</sup> Ewen L. Bowie "Greek Table-Talk before Plato," *Rhetorica* 11 (no. 4): 355-371; Rhétoriques de la conversation, de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne, *Actes de la table ronde de Paris*, 4 juin 1993 (Autumn, 1993): 355-373.