



# 'Death', Doxography, and the 'Termerian Evil' (Philodemus, Epigr. 27 Page = A. P. 11.30)

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‘DEATH’, DOXOGRAPHY, AND THE ‘TERMERIAN  
EVIL’ (PHILODEMUS, *EPIGR.* 27 PAGE = *A.P.* 11.30)\*

The text of this poem, already corrupt in the Palatine, has had a turbulent history over the last two centuries. Here is Page’s version, the translation in Gow–Page,<sup>1</sup> and my own somewhat expanded apparatus:

ὁ πρὶν ἐγὼ καὶ πέντε καὶ ἑννέα, νῦν, Ἀφροδίτη,  
ἐν μόλις ἐκ πρώτης νυκτὸς ἐς ἥλιον.  
οἴμοι καὶ τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ κατὰ βραχὺ, πολλάκι δ’ ἤδη  
ἡμιθαλές, θνήσκει τούτο τὸ Τερμέριον.  
ὦ γήρας γήρας, τί ποθ’ ὕστερον ἦν ἀφίκηαι  
ποιήσεις, ὅτε νῦν ὠδε μαραινόμεθα;

I who in time past was good for five or nine times, now, Aphrodite, hardly manage once from early night to sunrise. The thing itself, – already often only at half-strength, – is gradually dying. That’s the last straw. Old age, old age, what will you do later when you come to me, if even now I am as languid as this.

3 οἴμοι καὶ τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ Jacobs: φθίνει μοι καὶ τοῦτο Reiske: οἴμοι καὶ ποτε τοῦτο Kaibel: οἴμοι μοι καὶ τοῦτο Beckby: οἴμοι καὶ τοῦτο P 4 ἡμιθαλές Page: -θανές P Τερμέριον Pauw: -μόριον P

In 1982 D. Sider responded to Gow–Page.<sup>2</sup> First, whereas the latter had said of τὸ Τερμέριον [κακόν] in line 4 ‘proverbially = “a great disaster”, “the last straw”’,<sup>3</sup> Sider attempted to specify the exact sense, for which the ground had already been laid:<sup>4</sup> ‘as Kaibel and others have recognized, Philodemus’ reference is to the Termeros who used to kill people by butting them with his head until he had his head broken by Theseus [in fact it is Heracles] (Plut. *Thes.* 11) ... a *Termerion kakon* is the punishment that fits the crime, as is certainly the case in Philodemus where that which has done the butting [the phallus] has had its κεφαλή “die”’.<sup>5</sup> We shall return to this explanation later. Sider’s second line of approach came from his belief (correct, I think) that Page’s ἡμιθαλές ‘cannot be allowed to stand unchallenged’.<sup>6</sup> Gow–Page were chiefly troubled by the repetition: ‘ἡμιθανές repeats both the wording and the sense of κατὰ βραχὺ θνήσκει much too closely; substitute the quite different ἡμιθαλές, “at half-strength” (cf. Heraclitus 7.465.2 = 1936, ἡμιθαλείς P: -θανεῖς P1), and the lines run well’.<sup>7</sup> Sider did not agree, keeping ἡμιθανές, but repunctuating the couplet:

οἴμοι καὶ τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ κατὰ βραχὺ. πολλάκι δ’ ἤδη  
ἡμιθανές θνήσκει. τούτο τὸ Τερμέριον.

\* I thank my colleagues, Professors Albert Henrichs, Ian Rutherford, Calvert Watkins, and Mr Alex Sens, and my former colleague, Professor Hayden Pelliccia, for comments on earlier drafts. They are responsible neither for remaining errors nor for adherence to any specific interpretation here espoused.

<sup>1</sup> A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams*, i (Cambridge, 1968), p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> D. Sider, ‘Notes on Two Epigrams of Philodemus’, *AJP* 103 (1982), 208–13; cf. pp. 211–13.

<sup>3</sup> Gow–Page ii, op. cit. (n. 1), p. 399.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. by Kaibel, quoted by Gow–Page: ‘iam ego uere patior Termerium illud malum’. They did not quote him further, but should have: ‘Nam non quoduis malum est Termerium sed quod quis ea corporis parte patitur qua antea peccauerat’, *Philodemi Gadarensis Epigrammata, Index Scholarum in Universitate Litteraria Gryphiswaldensi per semestre aestiuom anni 1885 a die 15 mens. April. habendarum* (Greifswald, 1885), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Sider, op. cit. (n. 2), 212–13, and 213 n. 15 for parallels for a play on κεφαλή/φαλλός.

<sup>6</sup> Sider, op. cit. (n. 2), 212.

<sup>7</sup> Gow–Page, op. cit. (n. 1), p. 399. At *A.P.* 7.465.2 there is a clear vegetative metaphor at work, which is not the case here.

Now his paraphrase of the first four lines: ‘What he used to do up to nine times before he now does only once, with difficulty (μόλις); and the thing itself, the act from start to finish, lasts but a short time (κατὰ βραχύ); and already half-dead his member often dies altogether.’<sup>8</sup>

This seems to me to complicate things even further for at least two reasons: (1) in normal usage κατὰ βραχύ means ‘gradually’, ‘little by little’, even ‘slowly’ – virtually the opposite of ‘a short time’;<sup>9</sup> and this sense ‘gradually’ would in any case already be represented by the words μόλις ἐκ πρώτης νυκτὸς ἐς ἡέλιον in line 2, which strongly suggests that ‘the act from start to finish’ now takes all night; (2) πολλάκι does not easily qualify θνήσκει from which it is separated by both ἤδη and ἡμιθανές. Put another way, πολλάκι δ’ ἤδη surely goes together most naturally as an adverbial cluster.<sup>10</sup> So far, then, we have two possibilities, neither entirely satisfactory, for the second couplet: a stop after θνήσκει with πολλάκι ... ἡμιθανές parenthetical, or stops after βραχύ and θνήσκει.

There is a further problem: what is a *Τερμέριον κακόν*? Is it, as Sider takes it, the same as a *Τερμέριος τίσις*? ‘Termerian trouble’ seems in fact to refer primarily to trouble not for Termerus, but for the people Termerus butted. Plutarch, *Thes.* 11 needs to be quoted in its full context. The subject is Theseus:

ἐν δὲ Ἐλευσίνι Κερκύονα τὸν ἐξ Ἀρκαδίας καταπαλαίσας ἀνείλε· καὶ μικρὸν προελθὼν Δαμάσπην ἐν Ἐρινεῶι τὸν Προκρούστην, ἀναγκάσας αὐτὸν ἀπισοῦν τοῖς κλυτῆρσιν ὡσπερ τοὺς ξένους ἐκείνος. ἔπραττε δὲ ταῦτα μιμούμενος τὸν Ἡρακλέα. καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνος οἷς ἐπέβουλεύετο τρόποις ἀμυνόμενος τοὺς προεπιχειροῦντας, ἔθυσσε τὸν Βούσιρην καὶ κατεπάλασε τὸν Ἄνταϊον καὶ τὸν Κύκνον κατεμονομάχησε καὶ τὸν Τέρμερον συρρήξας τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπέκτεινε. ἀφ’ οὗ δὴ καὶ τὸ Τερμέριον [sic] κακὸν ὀνομασθῆναι λέγουσι· παίων γάρ, ὡς ἔοικε, τῆι κεφαλῇ τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας ὁ Τέρμερος ἀπώλλυεν. οὕτω δὴ καὶ Θησεὺς κολάζων τοὺς πονηροὺς ἐπεξῆλθεν, οἷς μὲν ἐβιάζοντο τοὺς ἄλλους, ὑπ’ ἐκείνου καταβιζομένους, ἐν δὲ τοῖς τρόποις τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀδικίας τὰ δίκαια πάσχοντας.

The entire paragraph draws a parallel between Theseus and Heracles, specifically in their common mode of punishing wrongdoers with the same fate those wrongdoers had inflicted on others – a system of punishment elsewhere known as *Νεοπτολέμειος τίσις*.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Sider, op. cit. (n. 2), 212.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Thuc. 1.64.2; 4.96.4; 7.79.5; Anaxagoras fr. 33 Diels–Kranz; Aristot. *H.A.* 692b15; at *Prot.* 329b4, *Gorg.* 449b8, and elsewhere, Plato uses it to describe the gradual progress of Platonic dialectic. The Ibycus (which produced the above examples) reveals that the phrase, rather rare before the Roman period, becomes very common in the medical writers and is often used to describe the gradual progress of disease, etc.

<sup>10</sup> The Ibycus supports this, showing πολλάκις ἤδη frequently in Theognis, Euripides, Thucydides, Plato, Theophrastus, Menander, in the orators, and constantly in later Greek. When the cluster occurs (forming a single unit) with a post-positive particle, that particle always comes between the two adverbs (as here), and is never postponed to follow ἤδη: so πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη at Plato, *Gorg.* 508d5; Thuc. 3.37.1; Men. *Perik.* 267; Galen, *De sanitate tuenda* 6.190; πολλάκις δὲ ἤδη at Theophr. *Hist. Plant.* 8.10.3; Arrian, *Cyn.* 16.3.1; Oppian, *Halieut.* 3.510; πολλάκις γὰρ ἤδη at Gorgias *T.* 22 (Diels–Kranz); Plato, *Gorg.* 456b1; Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 15.12; Galen, *de usu partium* 3.157, 359, 900 (in each of these categories I have omitted further examples from later Greek).

<sup>11</sup> The expression, which does not appear in Plutarch, is explained and defined aetiologically by Pausanias at 4.17.4: it was the fate of Neoptolemus, after killing Priam on the altar of Zeus Herkeios at Troy, to be slain himself by the altar of Apollo in Delphi. He concludes: καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου τὸ παθεῖν οἰοῖόν τις καὶ ἔδρασε Νεοπτολέμειον τίσιν ὀνομάζουσι. It is hard to say whether ἀπὸ τούτου is temporal (‘thenceforward’ – so the Loeb), temporal/causal (‘from this occurrence’), or even refers to Neoptolemus himself (‘they name it after him’). In fact, there may be more than one nuance to the words. I am evading the very difficult issue concerning competing versions and details of this myth, within the Pindaric corpus and elsewhere, since it

Is a 'Termereian evil, or trouble' the same as a 'Neoptolemeian punishment'; for that is more or less how it has been taken by critics of Philodemus (who may well have had this latter proverb in mind as they dealt with *τοῦτο τὸ Τερμέριον*)? I think it is not, and although the inference *may* proceed from Plut. *Thes.* 11, it is not the easier one. Let us look at the temporal and logical sequence in Plutarch: Theseus defeated Cercyon and Damastes (Procrustes), in which actions he imitated Heracles, for Heracles had used the methods of wrongdoers against the wrongdoers themselves, sacrificing Busiris, wrestling with Antaeus, fighting Cycnus in single combat, and breaking Termerus' head. Plutarch proceeds with the aetiology of Termereian trouble, in which Heracles has no part: It is from Termerus (*ἀφ' οὗ*)<sup>12</sup> that Termereian trouble is named; for (*γάρ*) it seems he killed those he met by butting them with his head. Like Heracles, then (*οὕτω δὲ καί*), Theseus went about punishing wrongdoers with the same fate they meted out to others. The *aition* on Termerus attaches most easily to the account of how Termerus killed people, while the final sentence relating the actions of Heracles to those of Theseus brings the focus back to the latter and concludes the entire chapter.<sup>13</sup> But in Philodemus' epigram, from the words *τοῦτο τὸ Τερμέριον*, Kaibel and Sider first extract *πάσχω τὸ 'Τερμέριον κακόν'* (whose natural meaning would be 'I suffer a great evil [such as being butted to death]'), and must then supply the sense *πάσχω τὴν 'Τερμέριον τίσιν'* (= 'punishment for the "butter"').

If you look up *Τερμέριον* in LSJ<sup>9</sup> you will find first a sense ostensibly derived from Plutarch, *Thes.* 11 ('*Τερμέριον* or *Τερμέριον κακόν*, τό, *prov.*, a misfortune one brings on oneself'), and second the following: 'τὸ τ., = *membrum uirile*, *dub.* in *A.P.* 11.30 (Phld.)'. This second gloss is incomprehensible to a reader of any edition, apparatus, translation or discussion of the epigram from this century – that is from Sider (1982), Page (1975), Aubretton (1972), Gow–Page (1968), Becky (1958), or Paton (1918). But here is the second distich in the 1872 edition of F. Dübner:

*οἴμοι καὶ τοῦτ' αὐτὸ καταβραχὺ· πολλάκι δ' ἦδη  
ἤμιθανές θνήσκει τοῦτο τὸ τερμέριον.*

A third possibility, then: a stop after *κατὰ βραχὺ*, but none after *θνήσκει*: 'hei mihi! et hunc [*sc.* coitum] breuem: saepius uero jam | semimortuum prorsus – moritur hoc malum'. In this Dübner was accepting Pauw's *Τερμέριον* [*sc.*] *κακόν*) and following Jacobs' supplement *το<ὕτ' α>ύτό*.<sup>14</sup> And stops are likewise present after *κατὰ βραχὺ*,

does not directly affect the status of the proverb. On this subject, see H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Modern Interpretation of Pindar: the Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes', *JHS* 93 (1973), 109–37; cf. pp. 131–2; and most recently L. Woodbury, 'Neoptolemus at Delphi: Pindar, *Nem.* 7.30ff.', *Phoenix* 33 (1979), 95–133; the matter will be treated by I. Rutherford in a forthcoming book on Pindar's *Paeans* (Oxford University Press).

<sup>12</sup> The Loeb so takes the phrase, and in this is supported by the following *γάρ*.

<sup>13</sup> Most other references to Termerus or 'Termerian trouble' (Philippus of Theangela *FGrHist* 741 F 3 ap. Schol. Eur. *Rhes.* 509; Jul. *Or.* 7.210d; Lucian, *Lex.* 11; Suidas s.v. *Τερμέρια κακά*; *Paroem. Graec.* i.162, ii.215) give no explanation, but in those instances which deal with the actual *κακά*, we are dealing with huge (though generally unspecified) problems or troubles, not punishments. For some other late references, not very relevant to the present discussion, see G. Türk, 'Termeros', *RE* 5A (1934), 731.

<sup>14</sup> Dübner (*Epigrammatum Anthologia Palatina*, ii [Paris, 1872], p. 364) quotes Jacobs for the correction *τοῦτ' αὐτό* and the following explanation: 'referas *τοῦτ' αὐτό* ad *ἐν*: *et illud unum momento temporis exiguo*. Nam debiles uiri uel non possunt, uel, si forte possunt, rem breui tempore absoluunt, uix percepta et imperita uoluptate'. F. Jacobs made the correction in his *Animadversiones in Epigrammata Anthologiae Graecae* 3.2 (Leipzig, 1803), p. 471 (in the section 'Addenda et Emendata'). In his edition of 1814 (*Anthologia Graeca ad fidem codicis olim Palatini nunc Parisini ex apographo Gothano*, ii [Leipzig, 1814], p. 328) he merely obelizes, *οἴμοι, καί*

but absent after *θνήσκει* in the other earlier editions, of Tauchnitz (1829), and Brunck (1772–6).<sup>15</sup> What is astonishing is that this eighteenth- and nineteenth-century consensus is not preserved in the notes or apparatus critici of any subsequent edition or commentary, only in LSJ<sup>9</sup>, where it is fossilized in the form of a gloss which is incomprehensible without a research library.<sup>16</sup>

In 1885 there appeared Georg Kaibel’s edition and commentary of the epigrams of Philodemus;<sup>17</sup> he printed a second distich which is in essence that inherited by Page:

οἴμοι καὶ ποτε τοῦτο κατὰ βραχὺ (πολλάκι δ’ ἤδη  
ἡμιθανές) θνήσκει· τοῦτο τὸ τερμέριον.

‘Alas and this one (often already half-dead) is gradually dying. I am suffering the Termerian ill.’ The *τοῦτο* of line 3 now refers to the penis, rather than the act, while that in line 4 (together with *τὸ τερμέριον*) is part of a separate exclamation (*sc. νῦν πάσχω*), and refers to the poet’s actual condition.

Why the change, and what new problems does it create? Kaibel came up with three structural or contextual objections to Jacobs’ and Dübner’s punctuation and restoration: (1) the *ἔν* of 2 is already qualified by *μόλις* and further qualification (*κατὰ βραχὺ*) is impossible; (2) *κατὰ βραχὺ* means ‘gradually’ (*paullatim*), not ‘soon’ or ‘quickly’;<sup>18</sup> (3) the first distich constitutes a separate thought to which nothing further can be added. Each of these points is well-taken, and two have already been shown to work against Sider’s repunctuation, as well as that of Jacobs and Dübner.

In dealing with the end of the couplet, Kaibel proceeded to compare Ovid, *Amores* 3.7, an amusing expansion of Philodemus’ epigram, which dwells at great length on the poet’s inability to perform.<sup>19</sup> Much of the humour of Ovid’s poem derives from the fact that it takes him 84 lines to tell us that nothing happened, and he does so fairly explicitly, referring more than once to the offender: 13 ‘*mea membra*’; 65 ‘*nostra membra*’; 69 ‘*quin istic pudibunda iaces, pars pessima nostri*’.<sup>20</sup> But Kaibel was concerned to keep such explicitness to a minimum. In rejecting Brunck’s *τοῦτο τὸ τερμόνιον* and Dübner’s tentative suggestion *τοῦθ’ ὅτι περ μόριον* he notes: ‘*non solum brevior [sc. quam Ovidius], ut par est, sed uerecundior etiam longe Philodemus, ut u. 1. 2 docet uerbum omisum. Cauebimus igitur ne spurca uocabula inferamus secundo disticho corrupto et impedito*’; and a little later: ‘*procul habendi ei sunt qui proprium membri nomen restituebant*’.<sup>21</sup> He then distinguishes between Strato,

*τοῦτο \*καταβραχὺ*. And in his edition of 1794 (*Anthologia Graeca sive Poetarum Graecorum Lusul ex recensione Brunckii*, i [Leipzig, 1794], p. 73), as the title suggests, he had printed the text of Brunck, who accepted Reiske’s *φθίνει μοι καὶ τοῦτο*.

<sup>15</sup> Brunck, however (*Analecta Veterum Poetarum Graecorum*, ii [Strasburg, 1773], p. 86), printed *φθίνει μοι καὶ τοῦτο καταβραχὺ*. My colleague, Ian Rutherford, without awareness of these editions, had also thought *τοῦτο τὸ Τερμέριον* might be the subject of *θνήσκει*.

<sup>16</sup> It was introduced in the sixth edition of 1869; Kaibel’s edition, or more likely Paton’s Loeb of 1918, led to the addition of ‘dub.’ after ‘*membrum uirile*’ in LSJ<sup>9</sup> (1940).

<sup>17</sup> G. Kaibel, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 21–2.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. above, p. 131; Sider refers elsewhere to Kaibel, but does not address his objection to so taking the phrase.

<sup>19</sup> Ovid’s source is unmistakable: 17–18 (‘*quae mihi uentura est, siquidem uentura, senectus, | cum desit numeris ipsa iuuenta suis?*’) is virtually a translation of Philodemus’ third distich, while the first and second are represented respectively by 23–6 (‘*at nuper bis flaua Chloide, ter candida Pitho, | ter Libas officio continuata meo est; | exigere a nobis angusta nocte Corinnam, | me meminero numeros sustinuisse nouem*’) and 65–6 (‘*nostra tamen iacuerunt uelut praemortua membra | turpiter hesterna languidiora rosa*’). Cf. also Gow–Page ii, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 398–9.

<sup>20</sup> For ‘*pars pudenda*’ (of which this is a poeticising) = ‘penis’, cf. J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), p. 45; also *particula*.

<sup>21</sup> Kaibel, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 21.

Martial, and the Priapic poets on the one hand (who do name the penis) and on the other 'omnes elegantioris iudicii poetae' such as Philodemus, who must not be charged with actually doing so.<sup>22</sup> He then enlists Pauw: 'has igitur sordes prudenter euitavit, qui prouerbii memor scripsit *τούτο τὸ τερμέριον*'. What Pauw meant, as is clear from the translation of Dübner, and from Kaibel's discussion,<sup>23</sup> is that the Termerian evil (i.e. the 'penis') is 'dying', but as Kaibel noted 'potuit fortasse poeta suam calamitatem *Τερμέριον κακόν* appellare, non potuit membrum ipsum'. Hence his punctuation after *θνήσκει*, which removes any reference to the penis other than the vague *τούτο* in line 3. And his treatment has so convinced other scholars that the earlier punctuation and meaning was expunged from the record.

There are, I think, at least two immediate problems with this reconstruction: (1) The *τούτο* in line 3 and that in line 4 have different referents – as they do in all the other interpretations. This is not an overwhelming obstacle, but it seems rather wanting in an epigrammatist of Philodemus' elegance. (2) More telling, other usage in the *Anthology* strongly militates against taking *τούτο τὸ τερμέριον* as syntactically independent from what precedes. In poets both before and after Philodemus, when we find *τούτο* τό+noun or adjective, beginning at the medial caesura of the pentameter, the phrase always functions as either subject or object of an expressed preceding verb:<sup>24</sup>

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>ἄνθετο... τῷγαλμα...    τούτο τὸ μαρμάρινον</i>  | Theoc. 6.338.1–2 <sup>25</sup> |
| <i>ἡμῖν οὐ πέτεται    τούτο τὸ παιδάριον [Ἔρως]</i> | [Plato] 9.39.3–4 <sup>26</sup> |
| <i>ἔλαχεν Μούσας    τούτο τὸ βαιὸν ἔπος</i>         | Ant. Sid. 7.713.2              |
| <i>εἰς ὄξυ τρέπεται    τούτο τὸ λειπόμενον</i>      | Anon. 9.127.2                  |
| <i>ἄγγελον    τούτο τὸ κούφον ἔπος</i>              | Leon. Tar. 9.563.2             |
| <i>πῶς ἀνέβη    τούτο τὸ δαιμόνιον</i>              | Strato 12.191.2                |
| <i>οἰόμενος παύσειν    τούτο τὸ πῦρ ὕδατι</i>       | Zenodot. 16.14.2               |
| <i>οὐκ ἦν Ἀλκείδew    τούτο τὸ δωδέκατον</i>        | Apollon. 16.50.2 <sup>27</sup> |

In five of these cases we see not only this general syntactical parallelism, but also rhythmical or prosodic parallelism, as the pattern of choriambic clausulae suggests what is a virtually 'formulaic' system: *μαρμάρινον / παιδάριον / λειπόμενον / δαιμόνιον / δωδέκατον*. Any critic who approaches *θνήσκει* and *τούτο τὸ τέρμεριον* unaware of these patterns, and then proceeds to isolate the two from each other, is treading dangerously.

<sup>22</sup> For support he refers to various epigrams where there is no actual word for 'penis': *A.P.* 12.216 (Strato) where it is called *ὄρθη* (with *πόσθη* or *σάθη* understood); 12.232 (Scythinus) *ὄρθον νῦν ἔστηκας, ἀνώνυμον*;

<sup>23</sup> No editor or commentator tells where Pauw published his emendation, and I have simply been unable to find the reference.

<sup>24</sup> The instances were provided by the Ibycus. In two cases (*A.P.* 9.618.2, 680.4) we find *τούτο τὸ λουτρόν*, also beginning at the medical caesura of the hexameter, as the subject of a following *ἔχει*.

<sup>25</sup> The text is that of Beckby, accepted from the Palatine. The MSS of Theocritus have essentially a different poem, and Gow–Page, *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams*, i (Cambridge, 1965) print that version, as Gow did at *Theocritus*, i (Cambridge, 1965), p. 244 = *Epigr.* 10 (with *ἐννέα* for *ἄνθετο*, and *θήκε* for *τούτο*). It looks as if we could be dealing even with two genuine but slightly different epigrams, and should not choose between the two.

<sup>26</sup> The poem is assigned to Plato by Diogenes Laertius (3.33), while the Palatine has the lemma *Μουσικίου*, the Planudean *Μουσικίου οἱ δὲ Πλάτωνος*. Its relationship to Philodemus 27 is uncertain: cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Epigram und Skolion* (Giessen, 1893), p. 182 'seinem Charakter nach könnte es sehr wohl erst um Beginn der Kaiserzeit oder kurz vorher entstanden sein'; id., 'Platos Epigramme', *NGG* (Berlin, 1921), p. 54.

<sup>27</sup> This is parallel in the rhythm it sets up, if not exactly in syntax, since *δωδέκατον* is in fact a predicate adjective.

Why must we assume, as all editors who print *Τερμέριον* do, that *κακόν* is to be understood with it? Philodemus’ use of the adjective is the first attested, and although the proverb presumably predates Plutarch, it need not follow that every use of the adjective specifically presupposes the actual proverb. Why should we not take *τοῦτο τὸ Τερμέριον* as meaning (as it does most naturally) ‘this Termerian one’, ‘this thing that exhibits the qualities of Termerus’. What is distinctive about Termerus, at least in the most extensive surviving treatment of the myth in Plut. *Thes.* 11, is his method of killing, by butting. A ‘Termerian thing’, then, will be a ‘butter’, a penis, which can now be allowed to serve as the subject of *θνήσκει*. This is in line with the formulaic parallels quoted above, and also removes the problem regarding the repetition of *τοῦτο*. Here is a new version, with Beckby’s *μοι* (Gow–Page: ‘deserves consideration’) supplementing line 3:

οἶμοι <μοι> καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ βραχὺ (πολλάκι δ’ ἤδη  
ἡμιθανές) θνήσκει τοῦτο τὸ Τερμέριον.

‘Ah me, and this thing gradually (often already  
half-dead) is dying on me – this Termerian thing.

The couplet now consists (for the first time in its editorial history) of a single sentence, as do the one preceding and the one following, and (also for the first time) the second *τοῦτο* merely resumes the first, specifying its meaning as an almost embarrassed postscript. We find a more or less parallel phenomenon at Theoc. *A.P.* 6.338.1–2: ‘Υμῖν τοῦτο, θεαί, κεχαρισμένον ἄνθετο πάσαις | τῷγαλμα Ξενοκλήης, τοῦτο τὸ μαρμάρινον, | μουσικός. Although the first *τοῦτο* here modifies *τῷγαλμα*, it is similarly resumed (as object) by the *τοῦτο τό* phrase.

We are not quite done with τὸ *Τερμέριον*. It is, I think, possible to view it not just as a nominal adjective, but rather as an actual diminutive noun – ‘little butter’.<sup>28</sup> Such a diminutive of a proper name would in origin be of the hypocoristic type suggesting endearment<sup>29</sup> and would be parallel with terms of address such as *Γλυκέριον* from *Γλυκέρα*, which are formed on an *ad libitum* basis where the context calls for them.<sup>30</sup> There are six other instances just in Philodemus’ epigrams (8.1 *Φιλαίνιον*, 9.3 *Καλλίστιον*, 14.6 *Ξανθάριον* [from *Ξανθώ*, 14.1], 16.1 *Θέρμιον*, 16.5 *Δημάριον* [from *Δημώ*, 16.1], 26.2 *Τρυγγόνιον*). Indeed, Philodemus may even have gained some notoriety for his use of these diminutives.<sup>31</sup> We could also see in τὸ *Τερμέριον* an appropriate diminutive of the deteriorative type whose real diminutive force

<sup>28</sup> For parallel forms in *-ριον*, see Kretschmer-Locker, *Rückläufiges Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*<sup>2</sup> (Göttingen, 1963), p. 166: *διφθέριον*, *κρησέριον*, *πατέριον*, *πτέριον*, and *χέριον*, and the Ibycus adds *μητέριον* at Heliod. *Aeth.* 7.10.3.

<sup>29</sup> W. Petersen, *Greek Diminutives in -ιον* (Weimar, 1910), pp. 173–8.

<sup>30</sup> So Aristoph. *Ach.* 404–5 *Εὐριπίδην*, *Εὐριπίδιον*, | *ὕπακουσον*. Philostratus (*Epist. Erot.* 38) refers to the well-known Glycera of Menander as *Γλυκέριον*, and at *Misog.* fr. 280 Kö. Bentley suggested *χαῖρ’ ὦ Γλυκέριον* where Priscian (18.251) has unmetrical *χαῖρ’ ὦ γλύκερα*. Meineke and Körte, however, accept Porson’s *ὦ χαίρε*, *Γλύκερα*. On this type of diminutive, cf. Petersen, *op. cit.* (n. 29), p. 175. There is clearly flexibility in the formation of these diminutives which, given their intensely colloquial nature, must have been far more numerous than our surviving texts can indicate. Philodemus may even have formed it (without strict linguistic accuracy) after, e.g., *Τιμάριον* (Meleager, *Epigr.* 59–62 Page), or *παιδάριον*, which occurs at [Plato] *A.P.* 9.39.4 in the same position, and with *τοῦτο τό* (for the chronological issue, see above, p. 134).

<sup>31</sup> That is, if we accept, as many do, the suggestion of G. Friedrich concerning the ‘Socraton’ addressed in Cat. 47 (*Catulli Veronensis Liber* [Leipzig and Berlin, 1908], p. 228): ‘Wir haben nach dem Wortlaut unseres Gedichtes keinen Grund, uns den Socraton anders vorzustellen als den Philodemus von Gadara, der auch bei Piso in Macedonien war, *Graecus facilis et ualde uenustus* (Cic. *in Pis.* 70)’. If this is so, then the name will have perhaps been for Catullus and his group a fine coterie nickname: ‘Little Socrates who was fond of nouns in *-ιον*’.

(reflecting the ultimate fate of the mythical Termerus) aptly describes the present condition of the poet.<sup>32</sup> Now with the possible exception of *Τρυγόγιον*, the identity of Philodemus' -ιον characters is female,<sup>33</sup> but that is no obstacle: first, that is often the gender of such words (cf. *A.P.* 12.216.1 ὀρθή [sc. ?πόσθη, ?σάθη]; Lat. *mentula*,<sup>34</sup> etc.), and second, such a transformation suits the reduced condition of the 'butter': what once was a Termerus is now a Termerion. Here we may invoke a precise parallel from *TSchol. II.* 2.235, which characterizes Thersites' taunting of the Greeks (Ἀχαιῖδες, οὐκέτ' Ἀχαιοί): Ἀχαιῖδες παρονομασία, οἷα "οὐ Φίλιππος, ἀλλὰ Φιλίππιον κεκράτηκεν δις Ἑλλάδος."<sup>35</sup>

To return to the text of *Epigr.* 27, what are we to say of the repetition in ἡμιθανές θνήσκει to which Page (and others before him) objected? It will become unobjectionable if it does not constitute a real repetition, that is if the *type* of 'death' in ἡμιθανές is distinct from that in θνήσκει.<sup>36</sup> There are two possibilities: (1) the 'frequent half-death' refers to the flaccidity which occurs in the course of the one all-night event. This is then succeeded by the actual death of impotence; but better, I think, (2) ἡμιθανές belongs to the vigorous stage, for this is the post-coital 'half-death' that already used to occur often – five to nine times a night, to be followed by four to eight resurrections. Hence πολλάκι δ' ἤδη which far from being mere filler now strengthens the contrast between the first and second couplets: the poet's temporary 'half-death' is a very different one from the progressive death of impotence which the poem laments.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Given the nature of Greek society, we will not often find diminutives for 'penis'; exceptions are found at Aristoph. *Thesm.* 254, 515 πόσθιον (where the actual diminutive force is also felt), and *Clouds* 197 πραγμάτιον (where the diminutive is perhaps more affectionate, 'my little thing'); on these see J. J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New Haven and London, 1975), pp. 109, 116. Those who so wish will add to these two ληκύθιον, for the controversy on which see most recently and conveniently (with further bibliography) J. J. Henderson, 'Κωδάριον: a Reply', *Mnemosyne* 27 (1974), 293–5, and R. J. Penella, 'Κωδάριον: a Comment', *Mnemosyne* 27 (1974), 295–7. We could add μόριον (in Latin perhaps = 'particula', for which see Adams, *op. cit.* (n. 20), p. 45), which is properly if not effectively a diminutive, and Latin 'mentula' is also worth mentioning.

<sup>33</sup> Trygonion is an interesting name, perhaps related to our subject. It means 'little dove' and has erotic associations: *Epigr.* 26 Page is a difficult poem, but Gow–Page accept Paton's view (rendered sensible by his emendation of ἀμφὶ γυναικῶν to ἡμιγυναϊκῶν [another ἡμι-compound] in line 5) that is an epitaph for his Trygonion, an emasculated priest of Cybele (*Gallus*) who, when he was 'alive', 'alone among the effeminate adored the Cyprian's rites and took to the seductions of a Laïs' (trans. Gow–Page). Are we dealing with a 'dove' that has become reduced in the same way as Termerion in *Epigr.* 27? For *columba* = 'penis', cf. G. Giangrande *ap. P. Howell*, *A Commentary on Book One of the Epigrams of Martial* (London, 1980), pp. 122–3; Y. Nadeau, 'Catullus' Sparrow, Martial, Juvenal and Ovid', *Latomus* 43 (1984), p. 862; R. F. Thomas, 'Sparrows, Hares and Doves: "Source Criticism" and the limits of plurality' (forthcoming issue of *Helios* on Catullan criticism).

<sup>34</sup> In the name *Mentula* in Catullus 94, 105, 114 and 115, we perhaps have an inverted parallel for Termerion.

<sup>35</sup> Virgil's reworking of the Homeric lines is tantalizing: Numanus Remulus' taunt of the Trojans at *Aen.* 9.617 ('o uere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges') is set in the context of reminiscence of *Cat.* 63 and its treatment of the emasculation of Attis; cf. 617–18 'ite per alta | Dindyma' etc.

<sup>36</sup> On the artistic desirability of such distinct repetition, see D. R. Shackleton Bailey on Horace's 'rura ... rura' (*Odes* 4.5.17–18) in *Profile of Horace* (London, 1982), pp. 137–8.

<sup>37</sup> In other poems treating impotence as the death of the penis, the death has actually occurred: Scythinus, *A.P.* 12.232 (νεκρὸν ἀπεκρέμασο); Automedon, *A.P.* 11.29.3–4 (ἡ πρὶν ἀκαμπῆς | ζῶσα, νεκρὰ μηρῶν πάσα δέδυκεν ἔσω); here cf. the proximity of the language to that of Philodemus (ὁ πρὶν / ἡ πρῶν) – and the two epigrams are juxtaposed in the *Anthology* (11.29–30). For these, and for Latin parallels, including Ovid, *Am.* 3.7.65 'praemortua membra' (above, n. 19), see G. Giangrande, 'Catullus' Lyrics on the Passer', *Mus. Phil. Lond.* 1 (1975),

There is no surviving instance of ἡμιθανές with this precise force, but that is not very surprising given the subject. We have already cited *Ov. Am.* 3.7.65, from a poem acknowledged as influenced by Philodemus 27: ‘nostra tamen iacuerunt uelut praemortua membra’ (see above, p. 133). This clearly responds to lines 3–4 of the Greek (and ‘praemortua’ refers to premature impotence), but it also looks to a prior Latin tradition, which is conflated with the ultimate Hellenistic model. I have in mind Catullus 50.14–16, where the poet uses erotic language (but not the language of impotence) to describe the effect on him of Calvus’ poetry: ‘at defessa labore membra postquam | semimortua lectulo iacebant, | hoc, iucunde, tibi poema feci’. ‘Semimortuus’ is first found here and is surprisingly rare.<sup>38</sup> Did Catullus coin or use it after Philodemus’ use of ἡμιθανές? If so, both could refer to post-coital exhaustion, real for Philodemus, figurative for Catullus.<sup>39</sup> Although it cannot be known beyond doubt whether Catullus had access to Philodemus’ poetry, it is assumed by many that Poem 32.7–8 (‘sed domi maneat paresque nobis | nouem continuas fututiones’) may refer to this same *Epigram* 27 of Philodemus (cf. I ἐννέα).<sup>40</sup>

I conclude by representing the temporal scope of the epigram with reference to *past*, *present* and *future* in the following version, which reflects the epigram’s careful play with time, and its juxtaposing of past vigour (1–2) and present dysfunction (3–4), with the latter anticipating the permanent impotence of old age (5–6):

ὁ πρὶν ἐγὼ καὶ πέντε καὶ ἐννέα, νῦν, Ἀφροδίτη,  
 ἐν μόλις ἐκ πρώτης νυκτὸς ἐς ἥλιον.  
 οἴμοι μοι καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ βραχὺ (πολλάκι δ’ ἤδη  
 ἡμιθανές) θνήσκει τοῦτο τὸ Τερμέριον.  
 ὦ γῆρας γῆρας, τί ποθ’ ὕστερον ἦν ἀφίκηται  
 ποιήσεις, ὅτε νῦν ὡδε μαραινόμεθα ;

I who in time past was good for five or nine times, now, Aphrodite, hardly manage once from early night to sunrise. Ah me, and this thing gradually (often already half-dead) is dying on me – this little ‘Termerus’. Old age, old age, what will be left for you to do later if you arrive, when already now we are as languid as this?

Harvard University

RICHARD F. THOMAS

p. 140. I have suggested elsewhere (op. cit., n. 33) that in Meleager 65 Page (= *A.P.* 7.207), where Phanion’s hare uses θνήσκω = τέθνηκα, there may be an obscene level of the same sort. For θνήσκω in this sense see Gow–Page, op. cit. (n. 1), p. 374, on Leonidas of Tarentum 70.4; also Smyth (*Greek Grammar*) §1887a.

<sup>38</sup> *OLD* s.v. otherwise has only *Sen. Con.* 1.7.9; *Apul. Met.* 6.26, and the Ibycus adds only a second instance from *Apuleius, Met.* 1.14.6.

<sup>39</sup> For Catullus’ clear use of erotic language in Poem 50 (whether metaphorical or otherwise matters not for the present purposes), see most recently D. L. Burgess, ‘Catullus c. 50; the Exchange of Poetry’, *AJP* 107 (1986), 576–86.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. W. Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus*<sup>3</sup> (Stuttgart, 1959), p. 60, where the connection to Ovid, *Am.* 3.7 is also made. I will perhaps be forgiven a sortée into the realm of the biographical fallacy if I note that *Epigr.* 27 is likely to have a lower terminus of c. 60 B.C. (since Philodemus, born c. 110, presents himself as not yet old; cf. 5–6), while Catullus’ poetic production (even if Lesbia is Clodia Metelli and Poem 83 therefore predates the death of Metellus in 59) is confined to the decade of the 50s. From *In Pis.* 68–72 it is clear that Philodemus had produced a considerable corpus of epigrams by the year 55.