

Bartol, Krystyna

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Organon 34, 21-29

2005

Artykuł umieszczony jest w kolekcji cyfrowej Bazhum, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych tworzonej przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego.

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie ze środków specjalnych MNiSW dzięki Wydziałowi Historycznemu Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.



Krystyna Bartol (Poznań, Poland)

THE INTERTEXTUAL TRANSFORMATION OF SIMONIDES' DICTUM
IN PLUTARCH'S *MORALIA*.
CONSIDERATIONS ON THE VALUE OF SOME THEORETICAL IDEAS
FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF CLASSICAL TEXTS

*Wir können nicht wählen Theorie zu betreiben oder nicht,
nur zwischen guter und schlechter Theorie wählen.*
(Th. A. Schmitz, *Moderne Literaturtheorie und antike Texte.*
Eine Einführung, Darmstadt 2002, p. 228)

Theoretical approaches to literary texts are booming and classicists tend to apply to Graeco-Roman works theoretical premises developed elsewhere¹. Using tools associated with modern theory, classical scholars often focus on problems already examined in the traditional studies². The reassessment of old questions with concepts and terms drawn from a broad range of modern literary theory has been successful in many instances and has produced new results in the interpretation of classical literature³. The effectiveness of the application of modern ideas is observable in various domains of classical studies. Its value outweighs the jarring jargonising, not infrequent among some literary scholars enthusiastically inclined to make use of the modern devices designed by the theorists for the interpretation of verbal communication⁴.

¹ One of the commendable recent examples of the effectiveness of theoretical approaches in the interpretation of classical literature is the volume edited by S. J. Harrison, *Texts, Ideas, and the Classics. Scholarship, Theory, and Classical Literature*, Oxford 2001.

² Though it might be sometimes argued that we have to do with *neuer Wein in alten Schläuchen*, as Th. A. Schmitz, *Moderne Literaturtheorie und antike Texte. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt 2002, p. 17, describes the essence of some scholars' sceptical approach towards the application of modern theories to classical texts.

³ For instance, the theoretical concerns in the analysis of Homer's poems have produced a number of important results. For a survey of them see J. Peradotto, *Modern Theoretical Approaches to Homer in: A New Companion to Homer*, (ed.) I. Morris, B. Powell, Leiden 1997, pp. 380–395.

⁴ The use of *Fachsprache* is, generally speaking, a delicate matter. Harrison, treats *jargonising* as a marker of an initial stage of developing a certain position (see his *General Introduction in: Texts, Ideas ...*, p. 8 where he speaks of research of the Pisan school). But see Schmitz's clear conclusion (*Moderne Literaturtheorie ...*, p. 20): *Jede Zunft hat ihre Fachsprache, die es oft erlaubt, Dinge knapp und präzise auszudrücken, die man in Alltagssprache weitläufig umschreiben müsste. Auch klassische Philologen benutzen eine solche Fachsprache und reden etwa von 'Präsumptivvarianten'; da sollten sie sich auch an zunächst sperrige Begriffe wie 'heterodiegetisch' oder 'Signifikat' gewöhnen können. Man sollte ferner bedenken, dass manche Gedanken sich nicht nur in unmittelbar anschaulicher Sprache nicht ausdrücken lassen, sondern dass sie auch dem 'gesunden Menschenverstand' zunächst absurd vorkommen mögen (...). Solche scheinbare Absurdität solle in moderner Philosophie und Literaturwissenschaft ebenso wenig befremden wie in der modernen Physik. Wer unanschaulich und schwierig Formuliertes ohne nähere Prüfung als inhaltsleeren Jargon ablehnt, der müsste konsequenterweise auch etwa die Metaphysik des Aristoteles oder die meisten Werke des Platonikers Plotin verdammen.*

A thought-provoking sample of combining a contemporary way of thinking about literary artefacts (in a relation of dependence to earlier texts) with traditional Plutarchean interpretative problems are Gennaro D'Ippolito's investigations¹ of Plutarch's *Moralia*. This well-known Italian scholar undertakes a viewing *corpus Plutarcheum* as it refers to other texts. This attitude toward the literary output of the writer – with varying degrees of emphasis – has already been taken by several Plutarchists². D'Ippolito develops, however, his analysis of Plutarch's macrotext³ into a coherent system of intertextual strategy. His intertextual reading of Plutarch (which includes also instances of the *internal* intertextual relations between certain passages within the *Moralia* itself⁴) seems to be a very productive way to understand the dynamics of an artistic composition and to explore into the cultural values of literature. D'Ippolito's intertextual practice corresponds – as he himself points out⁵ – to the conceptual environment of ancient Greek *mimesis*, the common concern of which was not only the imitation of reality but also the reproduction of artistic (literary, figurative or musical) models⁶.

Demonstrating the intertextual relation between Plutarch's *Moralia* and Plato's concept of divine madness, D'Ippolito illustrates how an intertextually based approach can enrich the interpretation of ancient texts⁷. In this paper I propose to take under consideration the problem of Plutarch's intertextual play with the literary tradition as illustrated by the example of his use of Simonides' famous dictum promoting the link between poetry and painting⁸.

There are five points of contact between Plutarch's *Moralia* and the notable Simonidean apophthegm. They can be found in the following works:

- text 1: *How the Young Should Listen to Poetry* (*De aud. poet.* 17F–18A);
- text 2: *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* (*De adul.* 58B);
- text 3: *The Fame of the Athenians* (*De glor. Ath.* 346F);

¹ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica della intertestualità* in: *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch*, Acta of the IVth International Congress of the International Plutarch Society, Leuven, July 3–6, 1996, (ed.) L. Van der Stockt, Louvain 2000, pp. 543–562.

² For stimulating exposition of the problem see papers included in the volume *Strutture formali dei "Moralia" di Plutarco*, Atti del III Convegno plutarco, Palermo, 3–5 maggio 1989, (ed.) G. D'Ippolito – I. Gallo, Napoli 1991.

³ The idea of macrotext as a hermeneutic key in the interpretation of Plutarch's literary output has been presented by G. D'Ippolito, *Il corpus plutarco come macrotesto di un progetto antropologico: modi e funzioni della autotestualità* in: *Strutture formali dei "Moralia"*, pp. 9–18.

⁴ In D'Ippolito's terminology – autotestualità, cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 543.

⁵ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, pp. 544–545.

⁶ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, pp. 544–545: *Restringendone il significato all'ambito letterario-artistico, il termine μίμησις mostra una duplicità di accezioni principali: la prima, e più generale, è quella di riproduzione della realtà; la seconda, più specifica, è la riproduzione, da parte di uno scrittore, della "cosa letteraria". La prima, più antica, già platonica e aristotelica, va sotto il nome di mimesi filosofica, la seconda, che concerne i modelli testuali e comprende ogni tipo di riferimento a testi anteriori, viene chiamata mimesi retorica.*

⁷ G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, pp. 557–562.

⁸ For interesting attempts to situate the theme of the correspondence of the arts against the background of Plutarch's literary theory and practice cf. K. Korus, *Poezja a malarstwo w literackich poglądach i praktyce Plutarcha z Cheronei* in: *Eos* 66, 1978, pp. 203–212.

– text 4: *Table Talks (Quaest. Conv. 748A)*;

– text 5: *The Life and Poetry of Homer (De vita et poesi Hom. 216)*¹.

If we consider the aspect of dimension of these intertextual references², we should take all of the five instances as presenting a so-called partial relationship³: it regards – in contrast with the global relationship – only one saying of the Cean poet, not the whole poem or a longer statement. If we take into account the strategical aspect of these references⁴, we have to classify all five instances as explicit relationship: in all five passages within the *Moralia* Plutarch expresses clearly – not in an opaque way – the idea of the correspondence of the arts:

– text 1: *Poetry is articulate painting, and painting is inarticulate poetry*⁵;

– text 2: *... some have defined painting as silent poetry*⁶;

– text 3: *Simonides calls painting inarticulate poetry and poetry articulate painting*⁷;

– text 4: *... one can transfer Simonides' saying from painting to dancing <rightly calling dance> silent poetry and poetry articulate dance*⁸;

– text 5: *... as one of sages said: 'Poetry is painting which speaks and painting is silent poetry'*⁹.

In two places (texts 3 and 4) he directly names Simonides as the author of this saying, once (text 5) attributes the apophthegm to an unnamed sage, and twice (texts 1 and 2) suggests that it is a very common opinion¹⁰ or belief popular among some people¹¹. Despite the lack of Simonides' name in three of the passages, it seems that Plutarch favoured the Cean's authorship of the saying¹². His treatment of the apophthegm in other places of his works as a

¹ Some scholars deny the Plutarchean authorship of this work. On this problem see R. Lamberton, *Plutarch*, New Haven – London 2001, p. 210 and G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 547, n. 15.

² G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 546: *L'aspetto dimensionale*.

³ For *un rapporto parziale* as opposed to *un rapporto globale* cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 546.

⁴ G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 546: *L'aspetto strategico*.

⁵ Translated by F. C. Babbitt: Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 1, Cambridge (Mass.) – London 1937 (repr. 2000), p. 93. In Greek: ζῳγραφίαν μὲν εἶναι φθεγγομένην τὴν ποίησιν, ποίησιν δὲ σιωῶσαν τὴν ζῳγραφίαν.

⁶ Translated by F. C. Babbitt: Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 1, p. 311. In Greek: ἔνιοι τὴν ζῳγραφίαν σιωῶσαν ἀπεφήναντο ποιητικῆν.

⁷ Translated by F. C. Babbitt: Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 4, Cambridge (Mass.) – London 1936 (repr. 1999), p. 501. In Greek: ὁ Σιμωνίδης τὴν μὲν ζῳγραφίαν ποίησιν σιωπῶσαν προσαγορεύει τὴν δὲ ποίησιν ζῳγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν.

⁸ Translated by F. H. Sandbach: Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 9, Cambridge (Mass.) – London 1961 (repr. 1993), p. 295. In Greek: μετάθεσιν τὸ Σιμωνίδειον ἀπὸ τῆς ζῳγραφίας ἐπὶ τὴν ὄρχησιν λαμβάνει. ταυτὴν γὰρ ὀρθῶς ἔστι λέγειν ποίησιν σιωπῶσαν, καὶ φθεγγομένην ὄρχησιν πάλιν τὴν ποίησιν.

⁹ Translated by J. J. Keane, R. Lamberton: [Plutarch], *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, (ed.) J. J. Keane, R. Lamberton, Atlanta 1996, p. 307. In Greek: καὶ γὰρ εἶπέ τις τῶν σοφῶν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἡ ποιητικὴ ζῳγραφία λαλοῦσα, ἢ δὲ ζῳγραφία ποιητικὴ σιωπῶσα.

¹⁰ ἐκεῖνο θρυλούμενον.

¹¹ ἔνιοι.

¹² Cf. A. Manieri, *La terminologia 'mimetica' in Simonide* in: *Rudiae* 2, 1990, p. 80: *Plutarco (...) ci induce a pensare che Simonide sia stato il primo a mettere a confronto i metodi della poesia con quelli della*

common saying does not produce any discrepancy or inconsistency¹. It might be aimed at highlighting the widespread approval of this saying. And the attribution of the saying to one from among the *sophoi* does not contradict the Simonidean authorship, since the tradition credited this poet with particular wisdom².

If we focus on the axiological aspect of the intertextual references³, we can see both types of relationships here – the purely imitative and the creative one⁴. In two of Plutarchean passages (text 2 and 5) the Simonidean saying serves as a means of illustrating other problems or as a simple parallel between two things. E.g. in *De adulat.* (text 2) Plutarch uses – quite fortuitously, as it seems – the image of painting as silent poetry when speaking of silent flatterers gaining in this way the best hold with their praise. He concludes: *Just as some have defined painting as silent poetry, so there is a kind of praise that is silent flattery.*

In the *De vita et poesi Hom.* (text 5) the connection between the main subject of the work and Simonides' apophthegm is made by a sort of free association. We read: *If one were to say that Homer was a teacher of painting as well, this would be no exaggeration, for as one of the sages said: 'Poetry is painting which speaks and painting is silent poetry'*⁵.

In three other places (texts 1, 3, 4), however, Plutarch makes Simonides' observation a starting point for drawing attention to several points of the relationship between the arts, making his own contribution to the issue. It happens in the passage from *De glor. Athen.* (text 3), much discussed in modern

pittura. From among ancient authors Cicero is uncertain who was the first to express this opinion (*De or.* 2.87: *sive Simonides, sive alius quis invenit*). Also the results of modern scholars' discussion did not bring definitive solution of the problem. Simonides' authorship has been accepted e.g. by F. A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, London 1955, p. 28: *It is significant that the comparison of poetry with painting is fathered on Simonides, for this has a common denominator with the invention of the art of memory (...) the latter invention rested on Simonides' discovery of the superiority of the sense of sight over the other senses (...). The theory of the equation of poetry and painting (...) rests on the supremacy of the visual sense.* M. C. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry: From Alcman to Simonides*, Oxford 1961, pp. 363–365 seems to suggest that the pictorial powers of Simonides' poetry, acknowledged also by the ancients, might support the idea of attributing to him this illuminating statement, see esp. p. 363: *When we examine his poetry, we see that he often appeals to the mind's eye, often creates an effect which is certainly visual, if not actually visible.* See also S. De Angeli, *Mimesis e Techne* in: *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 28, 1988, p. 29, B. Gentili, *Poesia e pubblico nella Grecia antica. Da Omero al V secolo*, Roma 1984, p. 7. This opinion has been contested by J. C. Thioliér: Plutarque, *De gloria Atheniensium*, édition critique et commentée par J. C. Thioliér, Paris 1985, p. 73: *L'attribution de cette double définition à Simonide est probablement abusive*, G. Lanata, *Poetica pre-platonica. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Firenze 1963, p. 69, M. Del Carmen Barrigón, *Plutarco y Simonides de Ceos* in: *Estudios sobre Plutarco: aspectos formales*, Actas del IV Simposio Español sobre Plutarco, Salamanca, 26 a 28 de Mayo de 1994, (ed.) J. A. Fernández Delgado, Francisca Pardomingo Pardo, Madrid 1996, p. 456. See also n. 1 and n. 2 on p. 7.

¹ One should, however, not forget that there are some inconsistencies and contradictions in Plutarch's voluminous output. On this question see A. G. Nikolaidis, *Plutarch's Contradictions* in: *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42, 1991, pp. 153–186.

² Cf. D. A. Gerber, *A Companion to the Greek Lyric Poets*, Leiden 1997, p. 246.

³ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 546: *L'aspetto assiologico*. This aspect pertains to the evaluative activity of an author who refers to others' words.

⁴ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 546: *Un rapporto riproduttivo* as opposed to *un rapporto prosecutivo o addirittura opositivo*.

⁵ Translated by J. J. Kearney, R. Lamberton, [Plutarch], *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, p. 295.

scholarship¹, where – after the description of Euphranor's painting representing the cavalry battle against Epameinondas at Mantinea and saying that his portrayal shows *the stout resistance abounding in boldness and courage and spirit* – Plutarch makes a generalising statement that the picture might be judged a success only when it imitates the actual deeds well, and he extends this principle also to poetry or in general to literature². The Simonidean apophthegm and some comments on it function here as a link of argumentation and at the same time as a digression here³. The whole passage is aimed at supporting Plutarch's main thesis presented within this strongly rhetorically oriented work that the fame of Athenians rests more on their military accomplishments than on their intellectual or artistic achievements⁴.

It seems very important for our investigations also to examine the context or generic rules observed within the whole work in which an intertextual reference occurs. If we look at the problem from this perspective, we find one Plutarchean passage extremely interesting. The development of the Simonidean idea of the association of the arts in the *Quaest. Conv.* (text 4) appears to be conditioned by the principles of the genre to which the work belongs. In the last talk of Book IX, devoted to dance, Plutarch alludes to the Cean's dictum in order to transform it. He proposes to transfer the saying from painting to dancing and to call dance silent poetry and poetry articulate dance. He continues: *There seems to be nothing of painting in poetry or of poetry in painting, nor does either art make any use whatsoever of the other, whereas dancing and poetry are fully associated and the one involves the other.* As an example of such an association he quotes *hyporchema*, in which – as he says – *the two arts taken together effect a single work, a representation by means of poses and words.* Plutarch's polemical approach to Simonides' dictum is caused by the fact that he tries to detect here the association of painting and poetry only in one individual artistic artefact, not on the general level of the aim both arts are intended to achieve. Plutarch acts here as if he were unaware of the core of the Simonidean idea. It seems, however, that in the case of the passage

¹ Cf. A. Manieri, *L'immagine poetica nella teoria degli antichi. Phantasia ed enargeia*, Pisa – Roma 1998, pp. 162–164, L. Van der Stockt, *La peinture, l'histoire e la poésie dans De Gloria Atheniensium (Mor. 346F–347C)* in: *Estudios sobre Plutarco: obra y tradicion*, Actas del I Simposion Español sobre Plutarco, (ed.) A. P. Jimenez, G. Calderon, Malaga 1990, pp. 173–177.

² He values the communicative capacity of literature even more highly than that of painting. On this question see A. Manieri, *Il rapporto poesia–pittura nella teoria degli antichi* in: *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 50, 1995, p. 136: *Il riconoscimento di una tale supremazia (...) sembra già racchiuso nella prima affermazione di poetica che utilizza il confronto tra poesia e pittura, la nota espressione simonidea riportata da Plutarco.* Although the outstanding place seems to be awarded by Plutarch to descriptive literature, one should remember that the application of the *speaking picture* idea to the province of dramatic literature has also been made. On this problem see V. Kostić, *Ut pictura comoedia* in: *Živa Antika* 21, 1961, pp. 174–178.

³ Cf. R. Hirsch–Luipold, *Plutarchs Denken in Bildern*, Tübingen 2002, p. 62 on *De glor. Athen.* 346F–347A: *Der Leser findet sich mitten in einer poetologischen Diskussion wieder, die vom eigentlichen Thema wegzuführen scheint. Plutarch geht aus von dem bekannten Spruch des Simonides über Malerei und Dichtung, weitet diesen aber auf die Schriftstellerei insgesamt aus.*

⁴ Both types of arts, painting and poetry, are imitative, and their splendour arises from greatness of *praxeis* which they imitate. Cf. I. Gallo, M. Mocchi, *Plutarco: La gloria di Atene*, Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento, Napoli 1992, p. 9: *Solo in virtù di queste [imprese degli Ateniesi] ed in funzione di queste scrittori e artisti operarono e conseguirono fama.*

in question, we are dealing with the mark left on it by the background against which it is placed. *Quaestiones convivales*, the work born of aesthetic conceptions of the literary symposium, keeping most of the characteristics of this genre, adopts in some places the agonistic tone of the learned *zetesis*. Since witty interludes and playful interruptions are not only acceptable but necessary in entertaining sympotic media, Plutarch stays within the bounds of sympotic literature, when he puts forward his idea about the relationship between dance and poetry, competing with the time-honoured saying of Simonides¹.

The *proper* interpretation of the apophthegm is presented by Plutarch in the *De aud. poet.* (text 1) where he makes use of it in the sequence of didactic instructions concerning the education of young boys. The overwhelming didactic outlook of this work adequately explains why Plutarch does not content himself with the mention of the apophthegm here, but takes up the issue within his comment. He highlights the importance of the imitation² in painters' and poets' art, and argues that an imitative act, in painting and in poetry, is successful when imitates things fittingly and properly³. He teaches then that the likeness⁴ is the essence of the good imitation.

When we return to the aspect of dimension concerning the intertextual references to the Simonidean dictum in the *Moralia*, one matter requires investigation: what kind of partial relationships do the five points of contact between both texts constitute? According to the modern taxonomy of intertextual references, each case of intertextual relation can be defined either as a mention or as a testimony or as a quotation⁵. When we look at the passages under examination in this regard, we must not forget that there is no extant direct evidence for Simonides' text. We cannot compare Simonides' dictum as presented by Plutarch with an independent version of the original. So it is extremely difficult to state whether Plutarch employs Simonides' words or discusses the Cean's dictum introducing his own lexical variants and modifications.

We may safely assume that Plutarch came quite close to the verbatim quotation of Simonides in the *De vita et poesi Hom.* (text 5). By ὅτι he makes it clear that he is quoting⁶. It might be a kind of direct quotation introduced by

¹ But see Z. Abramowicz's opinion, *Plutarchs "Tischgespräche"* in: *Altertum* 8, 1962, pp. 80–88, who did not find in the *Quaestiones* any traces of sympotic elements of *geloion*; cf. p. 88: *Besonders auffallend ist der Unterschied zwischen diesem Werk und den literarisch gestalteten Gesprächen, wie sie uns z. B. im "Gastmahl der Sieben Weisen" (...) begegnen, wo Plutarch zeigt, wie er Abwechslung, Witz, lebhaftige Charakterdarstellung einzuführen (...) vermag.*

² For the interpretation of this passage see L. Van der Stockt, *L'expérience esthétique de la mimésis selon Plutarque* in: *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 34, 1990, pp. 24–26.

³ Cf. E. Valgiglio, *Il tema della poesia nel pensiero di Plutarco* in: *Maia* 19, 1967, pp. 337–338.

⁴ The likeness as a source of recipients' satisfaction in their contact with painting and poetry has been also pointed out by Plutarch in *De aud.* 16C. On this see A. Manieri, *La terminologia 'mimetica' in Simonide*, p. 80, n. 5, who, however, wrongly assigns the passage to the essay *The Education of Children (De liberis educandis)*.

⁵ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548: *tre modalità di riferimenti specifici: menzione, testimonianza e citazione.*

⁶ Cf. W. W. Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verbs*, Bristol 1998 (1st ed. 1889), p. 285 (§ 711).

ὄτι without further change in the construction. There is, however, one serious obstacle preventing us from treating the Plutarchean citation as genuine Simonidean words. What makes it less likely to be a literary quotation is the fact that poetry is called *poietike* here. It is completely unsuitable for the poets of the early period. At the early stage of linguistic development the term *poietike*, like *poiesis*, did not have such a sense¹. Perhaps Plutarch altered the vocabulary² pertaining to poetry in order to abolish the distance between past and present ways of making discourse on artistic production.

The reference to the dictum which appears in the *De glor. Athen.* (text 3) seems to be the explicit quotation of the paraphrastic³, not literary, type. On the level of the structure of the text Plutarch puts the Simonidean saying into the construction with two – predicate and object – accusatives introduced by the verb of naming⁴ *prosagoreuei*. The paraphrastic approach of Plutarch is suggested by the use of the term *poiesis* which – like the *poietike* – does not occur in Simonides' time as describing poetic composition⁵.

The case of *Quaestiones convivales* (text 4) is more problematic. Plutarch shows how one might use the famous saying preserved under Simonides' name to produce something fresh from it. He indicates the words which should be changed (*zographia* should be replaced by *orchesis*), and gives a new version of the saying: dance is silent poetry, and poetry is articulated dance. Plutarch's fault-finding must be regarded as very closely related to the original reading of Simonides' apophthegm⁶ (it is only in this case that Plutarch achieves his goal). It forms then a kind of a hidden quotation, although the source of quotation (*to Simonideion*) is given.

When one compares the participles qualifying the term *poiesis/poietike* in the three passages presented above, one can see that twice it is described by the word *lalousa* (texts 3 and 5), twice (texts 1 and 4) by *phthengomene*. This is not to say with absolute certainty which of them reflects the original version of the saying. It may be helpful in this regard to point to the results of Cannatà Fera's investigations⁷, who demonstrated that Plutarch scrupulously quoted

¹ See G. Lanata, *Poetica pre-platonica ...*, pp. 68–69, C. R. Harriott, *Poetry and Criticism Before Plato*, London 1969, pp. 93–94.

² Cf. M. Del Carmen Barrigón, *Plutarco y Simonides de Ceos*, p. 456, who summarises the opinion of modern scholars: *La autenticidad simonidea de esta breve sentencia ha sido puesta en estrechido por Birt al no creer que Simonides utilizase el término ποιησις en el sentido absoluto de poesia. En este sentido Lanata piensa que puede tratarse de una <<rielaborazione verbale>> de Plutarco, porque es precisamente en época de Semónides cuando las artes figurativas (...) ven reconocida una mayor dignidad creativa y por tanto era posible establecer un paralelismo entre poesía y pintura.*

³ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548, who distinguishes – with reference to the structure of the text quoted – three types of quotations: *compendiaria, parafrastica, letterale*.

⁴ Cf. W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, Bristol 1997 (1st ed. 1891), p. 228 (§ 1077).

⁵ Cf. n. 12 on p. 3 and n. 1 on p. 7.

⁶ The disputed passage causes, however, some textual problems. The proposals of reading the passage has been discussed by S. T. Theodorsson, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Table Talks*, vol. 3 (Books 7–9), Göteborg 1996, pp. 383–384; see also Plutarque, *Œuvres Morales*, t. 9, p. 3: *Propos de table, t. VII–IX, texte établi et traduit* F. Frazier et J. Sirinelli, Paris 1996, p. 174 & p. 266.

⁷ M. Cannatà Fera, *Plutarco e la parola dei poeti* in: *Estudios sobre Plutarco: aspectos formales*, p. 421: *Lo scrupolo della citazione letterale è limitato quasi esclusivamente alla polemica.*

predecessors' texts only when he was going to question something presented within these texts. If so we are presented with the genuine version of Simonides' saying in the *Quaest. Conv.* where poetry is referred to articulate (*phthengomene*) painting and later to articulated dance. Moreover, the term *lalousa*, which suggests not so much *speaking* as *chatting* or *prattling*¹, does not possess so accurate antonymous meaning in respect to *siopan* as *phthengesthai* does.

It is, however, far from certain which version was genuine, all the more since Plutarch in the testimony from the *De adul.* (text 1) tells us – without any polemical intention – that the saying includes the form *phthengomene*, and uses the verb *siopan* instead of *siopan*. In the light of what has been said above, the assertion seems justified that in Plutarch's time the saying of Simonides was circulating as a well-known gnome or aphorism, and that the author of the *Moralia* quoted it from memory² without consulting the text or drawing it from an intermediary. It could explain the discrepancies in the *lectiones* of the quotation.

Going on to the specific matters of functions performed by the intertextual references examined above, one must say that the most striking thing to emerge from these intertextual instances is the wide variety of purposes served by them. It is very noticeable that the relations between Simonides' dictum and Plutarch's *Moralia* function as a broad-ranging framework of communication between Plutarch and his readers on various levels. The famous apophthegm, diversely contextualised for the consumption of the recipients of the Second Sophistic Period, obsessed with the past and focused on its heritage as a source of authority, creates an emotive means of psychagogic impact on people nostalgically looking into the mirror of the past³. Simultaneously it serves as a cultural link between past and present times⁴: Dwelling on the saying ascribed to the famous figure of the past, Plutarch reinforces the cultural consciousness of his recipients. In this way he assigns the social functions of his intertextual activity. The occurrence of Simonides' dictum in *Moralia* also goes to quenching Plutarch's desire for displaying his own erudition⁵. The

¹ Cf. LSJ. s. v. λαλέω. On the shade of meaning of λαλέω in this context see K. Bartol, *Korespondencja sztuk. Simonides i inni* in: *Konteksty* 59, 3/2005, p. 23 and p. 16, n. 13 & n. 14.

² Which was the common practice of his time. On this problem see G. Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire*, London – New York 1993, pp. 69–85. Cf. also D. A. Russell's remarks on Plutarch's method of quoting, *Plutarch*, Bristol 2001, p. 46: *It might seem that a quotation used not for its content but as a (...) stylistic variation has a somewhat better chance of coming from a memory of actual reading. But even this is a perilous path.* See also C. Pelling's conclusions on historians' and biographers' methods of quoting in the Second Sophistic Period, *Fun with Fragments. Athenaeus and the Historians* in: *Athenaeus and His World. Reading Greek Culture in the Roman Empire*, (ed.) D. Braund, J. Wilkins, Exeter 2000, esp. p. 557, n. 17: *Plutarch, like other authors, would naturally have only one text open before his eyes as he composed, but could supplement this from memory, often a memory re-primed by recent reading.*

³ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548 on the psychological function of a quotation: *funzione psicologica (fondata sulla forza emotiva, psicagogica, determinata e dal poeta quale autorità culturale e/o dal mezzo stesso della poesia).*

⁴ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548 on social function of a quotation: *funzione sociologica (fondata sul vincolo culturale col destinatario, al quale ci si assimila usando gli stessi codici per rispetto).*

⁵ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548 on the display aspect of using quotations: *funzione erudita (fondata sulla mera, compiaciuta esibizione di dottrina).*

intertextual references made by him are unmistakable signs of aesthetically oriented procedures practised by him during the act of creating literary works¹. The ludic function also plays an important role in at least one place (text 4): Plutarch must have been confident that his readers would recognise in his confrontational statement a witty strategy resembling that of sympotic entertainment, in which the competitive imitation is one of the essential qualities².

The Simonidean aphorism, however, attempts first of all to be an integral part of the complex system of thoughts presented in the individual works. It functions then as a kind of logical supplement or development of the main discourse.

I have taken up a certain amount of space in capturing the techniques of intertextual strategy adopted in Plutarch's *Moralia*, using the example of Simonides' apophthegm as a marker of this strategy. A survey of five places where the apophthegm is referred to has shown that the intertextual effects achieved thereby by Plutarch are neither monotonous nor limited. The presence of diverse contextual association between the text of *Moralia* and the famous Simonidean saying or in other words the occurrence of the dictum aimed at illustrating various specific points within the *Moralia* acknowledges a plurality of valid potential responses to the Greek literary heritage in post-classical times. Plutarch placed the easily recognisable quotation from Simonides strategically in his compositions to accomplish subtle and wide-ranging effects. The intertextual approach towards the practice of quoting, which becomes emblematic of the culturally junctural position of Plutarch, can offer us an effective set of tools. The results of their use can exceed – at least in some points – the limitations of traditional research methods.

To conclude (intertextually): it seems that one would not be wrong, if he/she – following D'Ippolito's idea of Plutarchean macrotext – would use in relation to Plutarch's transformation of the Simonidean dictum Horace's words from *Ars poetica* (v. 365), which themselves form a part of the poet's reflection on Simonides' thought: *haec deciens repetita placebit*. Horace suggests that certain poems, like certain paintings, delight the recipients through repeated inspection. Not because they are so well made that satisfy more than once³, but because, repeatedly examined and contemplated, reveal the depth of their meanings⁴. In the case of Plutarch's treatment of Simonidean dictum we are surely dealing with an analogous situation.

¹ Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548 on the aesthetic function: *funzione estetica (fondata sull'elemento esornativo, decorativo)*.

² Cf. G. D'Ippolito, *Plutarco e la retorica ...*, p. 548 on the ludic function of using quotations: *funzione ludica (fondata sull'uso in chiave parodistico-ironica di versi noti)*.

³ Such interpretation of Horace's point has been proposed by C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry. Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles*, Cambridge 1963, p. 258.

⁴ Cf. A. Manieri's remarks on Hor., *Ars. 365, Pittura e poesia in Hor. Ars poet. 361–365 in: Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 47, 1994, p. 114: *altre opere, invece, realizzate per essere sottoposte a ripetute ispezioni, per essere lette o osservate più volte (...) non mirano all'applauso estemporaneo, ma si sottopongono al giudizio razionale e ponderato di un pubblico selezionato ed esperto, che si propone di valutare (...) elementi come, ad es. la coerenza narrativa e la levigatezza formale in un'opera letteraria*.