Τὸν Ἀνακρέοντα µιµοῦ  
Imitation and Enactment in the *Anacreontics*  

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1 Imitating Anacreon  

In the manuscript that preserves most of the transmitted *Anacreontics* (Paris. Suppl. gr. 384; saec. X, ca. 930-950),¹ the last poem (60[b]) seems to have been designed, by its language, form, position, and themes, to provide a fitting closure and culmination for this whole collection of lyric verse.² This is not a self-evident feature: most of the poems in the compendium itself are characterized not by a very high degree of verbal finish nor by the manifest evidence of thoughtful formal organization but precisely by their opposites – the carefully contrived appearance of a relatively careless, easy, almost spontaneous composition: art (not necessarily of the highest level) disguising itself as nature (not necessarily of the most sober variety). And if, as will be argued here, the last poem displays the unmistakable traces of specific inter-textual relations to earlier masterworks of Greek literature, especially of the Classical and Hellenistic periods,³ then it differs strikingly in this regard as well from most of the poems in the collection, whose relations to earlier texts are for the most part vaguer and more superficial. It is very tempting to assign this last poem hypothetically to the hand of a somewhat

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¹ The fact that the *Anacreontics* are transmitted for the most part together with the epigrams of the *Palatine Anthology* suggests that at least someone, at some phase in the course of their transmission, most likely in late antiquity or during the Middle Ages, recognized their generic link with the symposium.

² After CA 60.36 (60[b].13) the manuscript transmits, presumably erroneously, CA 58.23-36 (these lines were transferred to the end of CA 58 by Barnes); after the last line we find the indication, τέλος τῶν Ἀνακρέοντος συµποσιακῶν, and a final asterisk. This neither proves nor disproves that the same poet wrote this poem as any (let alone all) of the preceding ones. For the problematic nature of the personal identity of the individual poet in the Anacreontic tradition, see below.

³ See the discussions, below, of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (on lines 1-2), of Meleager (on lines 5-6), and of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* and Alcaeus (on lines 11-13).
more sophisticated poet than the ones responsible for the earlier poems – to someone who treats the poems collected together here not as a congeries, but rather as a corpus, upon which he can reflect with a relatively refined meta-literary taste. That is, he seems to be imitating the genre not so much from within as from outside and above. Might he not himself have been not only an author, but also the collector and editor of at least some, or perhaps even of all, of these poems?

In exactly the middle verse of this final poem’s thirteen verses, and exactly in the middle word of that middle verse, its author places the name of Anacreon himself: 4

ἄγε, θυμέ, πή μέμηνας
μανήν μανείς ἀρίστην;
tό βέλος φέρε κράτυνον,
σκοπόν ὡς βαλὼν ἀπέλθης,
tό δὲ τόξον Αφροδίτης
ἄφες, ὡς θεοὺς ἐνίκα.
tόν Ἀνακρέοντα μυκοὶ,
tόν αἰολίμον μελιστήν.
φιάλην πρόπινε παισίν,
φιάλην λόγων ἑρανήν·
ἀπὸ νέκταρος ποτοῖο
παραµύθιον φλογερὸν
φύγωµεν ἄστρον. (CA 60[b])

4 West (21993: 47 ad loc.), following the manuscript, does not divide this poem from the preceding one; but in that case its link to what precedes is extremely unclear, and most other scholars, rightly on my view, take 60(a) and 60(b) to be two separate poems. Moreover, some scholars, beginning with Barnes (1734: ad loc.), have suggested that this poem might not be complete as it is transmitted, see West (21993: 48 ad loc.). This is, to be sure, not impossible; and indeed a possible lack of closure might well be suitable for the ending of a collection that was designed to continue to be reused and reelaborated, see below. But it would be a remarkable coincidence indeed if Anacreon’s name happened by pure chance to have come to be located in the exact center of a defective text; it is probably better to accept Mehlhorn’s φύγωµεν in line 13.

5 ὡς is Portus’ easy emendation of the transmitted ὡς; the manuscript reading is printed by West (21993: 47 ad loc.). While ἄφες can certainly mean “shoot” (LSJ s.v. A I), suggesting the poet should shoot his own missile in the same way as Aphrodite shot hers, that would require that it take a direct object indicating the missile that is shot; but in the singular, τόξον indicates not the arrows, nor the bow and arrows together, but only the bow alone (LSJ s.v. A vs. II). So ἄφες here more likely means “reject, set aside” (LSJ s.v. A II.2, III), and the two references to weapons are to be understood as being in contrast with, not in parallel to, one another: it is not “do with your missile, just as Aphrodite did with hers” but instead “do with your missile not as Aphrodite did with hers.”
Come, my heart, why are you mad with the best madness of all? Come, throw your weapon strongly, that you may hit the target and depart; give up the bow of Aphrodite with which she overcame the gods. Imitate Anacreon, the famous singer. Drain your cup to the boys, your lovely cup of words. Let us take comfort from a draught of nectar and avoid the flaming dogstar. (trans. Campbell [1988: 245])

To understand why the poet has chosen to make such a conspicuous central reference to Anacreon, we must recognize its function within the structure of his poem. The poem begins with a riddle: the speaker is insane with the best kind of insanity – but what exactly is that kind and what makes it the best kind? The speaker’s emphatic repetition of three etymologically connected words for madness in immediate sequence (μέμηνας, μανίην, μανείς) proclaims his insanity as an indisputable fact; but neither does he tell us just which is the best kind of insanity that is his nor does he at first reveal an answer to his opening question, in what way or to what end (πῆι) he is mad. Of course, the riddle is not hard to solve for the kind of moderately well educated man who has composed this poem and whom the poet presupposes as its listeners and readers (the very easiness of the solution flatters his recipients and builds a bridge of shared cultural values between them and him): the comparison of kinds of madness and the distinction of a best one immediately recalls Plato’s Phaedrus and the definition, according to a celebrated passage in that dialogue, of erotic madness as the best kind of madness.6 So the answer to the opening riddle is that the speaker is experiencing the best kind of madness because it is as a lover that he is mad.

But there are many kinds of erotic madness: which is or should be his? The speaker urges himself to hit the mark with the strong shaft of his poetic and erotic missile (3-4);7 but in the immediately following lines he goes on to qualify any possible implication of excess or violence by explicitly rejecting the weapons of Aphrodite with which she defeated the gods (5-6).8 Not only is the speaker conscious that he is a mere mortal and cannot vie with a goddess; moreover, he does not imagine he can subdue the gods as she was able to do – this would mean an aspiration to a superhuman degree of power quite alien to the typically modest and limited ambitions of the Anacreontics. The name of Anacreon puts the seal then upon this generic definition (7-8): Anacreon is the paradigmatic singer

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6 Plato, Phaedrus 265b: so West (1993: 47 ad loc.). Campbell (1988: 245 n. 1) cites this same passage but, oddly, explains the best kind of madness meant here as that of poetic inspiration. For other possible cases of allusions to Plato or the Platonic tradition in the Anacreontics see Rosenmeyer (1992: 190-208).

7 Campbell (1988: 245 n. 2) interprets this line in one-sidedly poetological terms with reference to a well attested, especially Pindaric metaphor; but is it only to a modern sensibility that the image used here seems inescapably to have phallic connotations as well?

8 The image of the armed Aphrodite does not seem to occur otherwise in the Anacreontics (elsewhere it is Eros who uses the bow, CA 13 and CA 33); it is Hellenistic in inspiration.
but at the same time he is much sung (ἀοίδιµον 8) – not only in the usual sense of the adjective that there are many songs about him, that he is much sung of and hence is celebrated or renowned, but also in the different and much rarer sense that his own songs are often sung, that his own compositions are much sung and hence are often performed.\(^9\)

The name of Anacreon closes off the first movement of the poem, which had been focused upon images of erotic missiles, and marks the beginning of its second movement, which is focused instead upon images of drinking (9-13). By imitating Anacreon, by composing and performing moderately erotic songs, the speaker will derive solace by means of his drink (11-12) and he will avoid the blazing heat of the star (13). There can be little doubt that this reference to the Dog Star is not merely astronomical nor calendrical in its import: it also denotes a withering intensity of passion which the speaker of this poem prefers, perhaps not unreasonably, to shun. The allusion to the sympotic poetry of Alcaeus is unmistakable;\(^11\) but the underlying warning against the dangers posed to men by parching desire at the season of the Dog Star ultimately goes back to a famous passage in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*.\(^12\)

And yet in fact what the Hesiodic passage warns men against is specifically female desire; and if we bear this in mind, perhaps we can interpret in a different way the specific form of the speaker’s madness in this poem. For surely at least some of the recipients who recognized the Platonic allusion in the first two lines will also have been reminded of the well-established Platonic preference for love of men for boys over love of men for women;\(^13\) in the Platonic tradition, it is this madness that is most truly the noblest one. So perhaps an answer to the speaker’s initial question might be that if his erotic desire is indeed of the best kind, this can only be because it is, or should be, directed towards boys, and not women. If so, then the speaker might be urging himself in the following lines to set aside the bow of Aphrodite (5-6) not only as a topos of modesty but also because Aphrodite’s arrows could be understood, at least occasionally, as a symbol of specifically heterosexual love.\(^14\) That is, the speaker, rather than engaging in love for

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\(^9\) The form is rare and perhaps unparalleled (LSJ s.v. μελιστής), though its meaning and etymology (< μελίζω) are evident. The speaker displays his poetic skill by applying a recherché noun to Anacreon (and also by using the adjective ἀοίδιµος in a novel way, see the following note): he thereby demonstrates himself to be a worthy follower of the great poet. On the paradigmatic status of Anacreon see also Rudolph pp. 140-141 in the present volume.

\(^{10}\) LSJ s.v. ἀοίδιµος A.

\(^{11}\) Alcaeus fr. 347(a), 352 Voigt.

\(^{12}\) Hesiod, *Works and Days* 582-588.

\(^{13}\) Cf. for a general discussion Dover (1978: 153-168).

\(^{14}\) Dover (1978: 63) writes: “the notion that the female deity [scil. Aphrodite] inspires heterosexual passion and the male deity [scil. Eros] homosexual appears (…) as a Hellenistic conceit, in Meleagros 18”; on this poem (AP 12.41) see Gow/Page (1965: 2.658). But of course it should be noted that elsewhere the Anacreontics can direct their desires to women too (e.g., CA 16, contrasted with CA 17; and CA 22, 24, 51), and that
women, should devote himself to love for boys: it is to them alone (παισίν) that he should drink his toast (9); and it is only if he does so that he will manage to indulge in gentler, less painful pleasures (scil. than heterosexual poets can expect to experience).

Whether or not we decide to adopt this interpretation in terms of the opposition between heterosexual and homosexual desire, in any case one thing is certain: if the Dog Star is being invoked in the closing words of this collection, as stars so often have been, not only as a celestial body but also as a symbol for certain kinds of human emotions and actions, so too is the drink which is said here to be capable of providing a refuge from it. For this is a drink consisting not only of wine but also of words (λόγων) and of desire (ἐραννήν 10). Evidently, the three fundamental Anacreontic activities – drinking, loving, and singing – are being thought of here as being so closely inter-connected with one another that they can all come to form a single imagistic complex, in such a way that all three kinds of actions can blend metonymically into one another, by a kind of symbolic συγκράσις much like the actual blending of wine and water typical of the Greek symposium, so that each one can take on at least some of the features of the other two and therefore can by itself connote both of them. This literary figure of a specifically symposiastic blending runs throughout the whole collection of Anacreontics as a foundational leitmotif; in one particularly brief poem it achieves a programmatic incisiveness, at the same time broadening the canon of sympotic love poetry to include Sappho and Pindar.15

Anacreon is a sweet singer, Sappho a sweet singer; let them be mixed with song of Pindar and poured in my cup. I think that if Dionysus came and the Paphian with her gleaming skin and Love himself, they would drink down this trio. (trans. Campbell [1988: 191])

To return to the final poem of the collection, with which we began: Anacreon, the much-sung singer (CA 60[b].7-8) functions as a kind of label for precisely this mixture of moderate desire, drinking, and poetry. By imitating him, the speaker will be able to achieve success and, having done so, go away (3-4). Go away from elsewhere Aphrodite’s domain often includes homosexual desire. On Aphrodite as responsible for heterosexual desire, see Dell’Oro in this volume.

15 Presumably it is above all Pindar’s sympotic poetry that is meant, on which see van Groningen (1960).
what? The verb ἀπέλθης is studiedly vague. Bearing in mind the athletic metaphors, we might think of leaving a sports competition as victor; but for this meaning we would seem to require the participle νικῶν or a similar word.16 Alternatively, we might think of that favored symposiastic game, the κότταβος, which the speaker might leave after having won the competition to toss drops of wine lees most accurately—though the phrasing of line 3 certainly seems far too massive and military to bear such a playful meaning. But perhaps another meaning for line 4 can be suggested: recalling that this is the last poem and concludes this collection, we might take the verb to mean “so that you can go away successfully [sicl. from these very poems], so that you can close off with success this collection of Anacreontics.” And given that in these poems drinking, singing, and desiring are metonymically interchangeable, it is not difficult to see that what the speaker is hoping to leave with success is not only a collection of poems but also the specific social situation of drinking, singing, and desiring that is intrinsically bound up with these poems— the symposium.17 With this last poem, the symposium constituted by this whole collection of Anacreontics is proclaimed to have come to a successful conclusion—both the imaginary symposium we readers and listeners have been enacting in our fantasy in the course of attending to these poems, and also—why not?—the real symposia at which these poems and ones like them were sung over and over in the course of antiquity. After all, the questions at just what point, and in just what condition, one should best take leave of one’s fellow symposiasts and depart for home from the drinking party, much occupied ancient theoreticians of the symposium and was often discussed:18 evidently, the risk of an unsuccessful departure from the symposium was something that many Greeks worried about. All the more reason for the speaker to try to avoid this risk by choosing to imitate Anacreon.

But what does it mean to “imitate” Anacreon? Mimesis is of course one of the fundamental structures and techniques of ancient Greek culture, as of those other cultures influenced deeply by it;19 but the kind of mimesis directed by the Anacreontics towards Anacreon seems to be almost unparalleled elsewhere in Greece. In general, when the Greeks imitate Greek heroes, they attempt to make the pattern of their behavior correspond to that of their model; but when they imitate Greek poets, they copy or imitate not larger or smaller actions or modes of conduct, but instead larger or smaller passages and stylistic features of their literary texts. Thus when they imitate Achilles they try to attain a high level of military prowess in their action but they do not emulate his speeches (let alone the songs he sang when he sulked in his encampment); when they imitate Homer or Sappho they strive to remind readers of specific or more general aspects of their...
famous poems, but they do not at all pretend to be blind bards or Lesbian women.  In short, Greek *mimesis* is almost always directed either ethically towards a way of life in the case of non-literary figures, or discursively towards a set of texts in the case of literary ones; when it is a question of *mimesis* of a poet, this is naturally directed towards his poems.

What then of the imitation of Anacreon in this Anacreontic lyric? The Anacreon it imitates is a singer of poems (8) and the imitation it recommends takes the form of composing and singing poetry that possesses some of the very same features for which Anacreon himself was celebrated (9-10). But the speaker is not interested in composing poetry for its own sake or simply reminding his readers of Anacreon; rather, he seems to want to partake of an Anacreontic way of life consisting of a certain kind of drinking, singing, and desiring, one for which these activities are forms of expression and means to an end. That is, he wants not only to write like Anacreon, but also to live like Anacreon, and he writes like Anacreon only in order to live like Anacreon: his discursive *mimesis* is a means in the service of what can be called, in a loose sense, an ethical *mimesis*. The speaker seems to consider Anacreon not so much as a poet who produced certain texts but rather as a heroic exponent of a particular way of life (call it ‘Anacreontic’) that was (also but not only) manifested in certain kinds of texts; for this later poet, imitating those texts now is instrumental towards his participating in that Anacreontic way of life.  In other words, this is not so much a literary kind of *mimesis* for its own sake but instead an ethical kind of *mimesis* to which the literary mode is instrumentally subordinated.

But if that is so, then the Anacreontic poet’s injunction, τὸν Ἀνακρέοντα μιµοῦ, must be understood as an exhortation to himself to imitate Anacreon not only in the sense of copying the features of his poetry, but also in that of modeling his behavior upon the poet’s. How can we specify more precisely the relationship that the Anacreontic poet aims for with regard to Anacreon? Perhaps we can turn to CA 1 for help. For as we have seen, CA 60(b) closes the collection of Anacreontic lyrics by bringing to a conclusion the (real or putative) symposium at which they were performed. So it will not be surprising to see that the very first

20 Among the titles of lost plays of Old Comedy are Cratinus’ *Archilochoi* and Telecleides’ *Hesiodoi*. Did these plays show people imitating Archilochus and Hesiod, and if so in what way and to what effect? Unfortunately, far too little survives of these plays to provide even hypothetical answers to these intriguing questions.

21 This must be distinguished sharply from the recommendation found in various ancient poetological texts that the poet should himself feel the emotions he represents if he is to convey them effectively (Aristotle, *Poetics* 17.1455a30-34; Horace, *Ars Poetica* 102-105): for in such texts what is involved is an ethical *mimesis* for the sake of a literary one, while in the *Anacreontics* exactly the reverse seems to be happening. Different modes of *mimesis* are considered, sometimes critically, in a number of the *Anacreontics*, for example CA 2 and CA 13. On modes of *mimesis* of the heroic life of Anacreon, see Bing and Gutzwiller in this volume.

22 The closest parallel to this Anacreontic conception of *mimesis* is the comic figure of Agathon in Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 148-167.
poem, CA 1, corresponds precisely to CA 60(b): it opens the collection by initiating a (real or putative) symposium – one in which, by a typically Anacreontic σύγκρασις, wine, song, and desire are intimately connected with one another – and thereby, in an evident ring-composition with CA 60, names Anacreon in its very first word, as a kind of title.\(^{23}\)

Anacreon, the singer from Teos, saw me and spoke to me in a dream: and I ran to him and kissed him and embraced him. He was an old man but handsome, handsome and amorous; his lips smelled of wine, and since he was now shaky Love was leading him by the hand. He took the garland from his head and gave it to me, and it smelled of Anacreon. Fool that I was, I held it up and fastened it on my brow – and to this very day I have not ceased to be in love. (trans. Campbell [1988: 163])\(^{25}\)

As has frequently been noted, the Anacreontic speaker stages here a familiar kind of self-legitimating poetic investiture: Anacreon singles him out, addresses a greeting to him, and gives him a physical token of the poetic vocation which he assigns to him. From Hesiod and Archilochus through Callimachus and the Roman poets, such scenes lend dignity to the later poet – here, to be sure, the seriousness is attenuated by a deftly light, almost comic touch appropriate to this genre – and justify his claim to our attention (if this new poet is good enough for

\(^{23}\) No cogent evidence is available that could decisively support or refute the possibility that it was the same poet who wrote both CA 1 and CA 60b.

\(^{24}\) This is Baxter’s emendation of the transmitted λέγων; while it is not strictly necessary, the accumulation of participles in the manuscript’s version of the text is clumsy and unattractive. West (\(^{2}1993: 1\) ad loc.), accepts the conjecture; Campbell (1988: 162 ad loc.) does not.

\(^{25}\) On this poem see Bartol (1993); and Bing, and Rudolph, pp. 139-141, in the present volume.
Anacreon, surely he will be good enough for us).\footnote{See in general Kambylis (1965).} But the relationship between the older poet and the younger one is not merely professional and collegial in nature: Anacreon figures as the aged and bibulous but still lusty ἔραστής to the naively enthusiastic and evidently much younger speaker-ἐρώμενος – younger above all because he was born centuries after Anacreon (though this does not in the least prevent him in other Anacreontic poems from playing the older ἔραστής himself to still younger ἐρώμενοι, who will eventually go on themselves to become Anacreontics in their turn for even younger boys). As soon as the speaker sees the older poet, he runs in boyish eagerness to kiss and hug him, while Anacreon trembles with age (and wine) and needs a slave boy (here figured as Eros himself) to guide his tottering steps.\footnote{See Rudolph p. 140, n. 43 in the present volume: Rudolph sees the trembling as a symptom of erotic excitement but I prefer to stress the poet’s weakness, old age, and drunkenness.}

So the scene is not only a poetic initiation but also an erotic encounter – fittingly, given that this is a kind of poetry that is characterized as being essentially erotic. But Anacreontic poetry is also essentially symposiatic: so it is also fitting that this scene is characterized as belonging to a symposium. The garland that Anacreon takes off of his head and gives the speaker to place on his own is the conventional attribute of the symposiast; here the speaker’s authoritative role makes him the symposiarch who will go on in this and the following poems (especially in the immediately following CA 2) to perform the usual functions of the master of ceremonies, determining the strength of the wine to be drunk, deciding the events of the evening to be performed, and defining the topics of the songs to be sung – with this one conspicuous defect, that his own infatuation with Anacreon makes him quite incapable of singing about anything other than love. In symposiastic terms, CA 1 announces a series of convivial drinking songs that, as in all drinking-parties, presuppose wine and sociability, but that in this one, unusually, do not move through a variety of entertaining topics but instead are directed to only a single subject matter, love. The (imagined or real) symposium of the Anacreontics is thus an exact counterpart, even if in verse and not in prose (and perhaps also at a rather lower level of artistic and conceptual refinement) of Plato’s Symposium.

2 Enacting Anacreon

What exactly does it mean to imitate Anacreon? The more one reflects upon this question, the more complex it becomes. My suggestion is that, within the poetic context and the social reality of the Anacreontic lyric genre, the Anacreontic poet seems to have imagined himself, and seems to have been taken by his listeners, to be in some sense no longer only the person who he actually happened to be and with whom his fellow symposiasts were acquainted outside of the symposiastic
context – but also, in a certain specifiable sense, had become, at least to a certain degree, Anacreon himself. For the Anacreontic poet, Anacreon seems to be not only a historical person to be recalled or the author of a set of texts to be imitated but also a role to be enacted. By composing Anacreontic verses and engaging in an Anacreontic way of life, by desiring and drinking and singing, the later poet could be thought to be not only imitating the earlier one, in such a way that the differences between the two persons involved (the ancient dead poet and the contemporary living symposiast) remained visible, but also enacting him, performing him in a quasi-dramatic manner – and, in a certain sense, ultimately almost becoming him, so that the line of division between the two persons could blur and in the end even become virtually effaced. The central line in the final poem of the collection, τὸν Ἀνακρέοντα μιμοῦ (CA 60[b].7), now turns out to have a deeper and more programmatic sense even than at first suspected: for it suggests that the Anacreontic poet is being urged to represent or impersonate Anacreon in a quasi-theatrical dimension.

To be sure, it is important to keep in mind that this is only a quasi-dramatic or quasi-theatrical feature. I am not suggesting that the Anacreontic poet dressed up in a costume and wore a mask so that he would look like Anacreon or that he engaged in any kind of full-fledged theatrical comedy with a fictional plot in which Anacreon, as played by himself, would have been one of the principal characters.28 Surely the only props that were available to the Anacreontic poet were the cup of wine in his hand and the garland around his head – indeed, he names these himself: ἐγὼ δ᾽ἔχων κύπελλον / καὶ στέμµα τοῦτο χαίτης (CA 9.16-17), “I have my cup and this garland on my hair” (trans. Campbell [1988: 173]). But by the same token no other props were necessary. Just as every lovely boy present at the symposium or prominent in the speaker’s mind could be figured as Bathyllus (CA 4(i).21; 10.10; 15.8; 17.1, 44, 46; 18.10) – and not as being merely like Anacreon’s Bathyllus or being as beautiful as Bathyllus was or being reminiscent of Bathyllus but as being Bathyllus himself – so too the speaker, by singing poems reminiscent of Anacreon’s own poetry, could take on the role of Anacreon himself. He could become, for the present symposium, as effective a blend of poetry, wine, and desire, as Anacreon himself had once been for symposia in ancient times. In the world of the Anacreontics, every attractive slave boy can be Eros himself (CA 1, 32, 43), the members of the symposium can be the god Dionysus (CA 40.8-9, 42.1-2, 43), a lovely girl can be Aphrodite herself

28 Though I would hesitate to exclude on principal that something like this might ever have happened in the ancient world. No limits can be set to bad taste. It is controversial whether the so-called Anacreontic vases, which were astonishingly popular in Athens from the last decades of the 6th century until the mid-5th century, reflected symptic or theatrical practices, or both, or neither: see e.g. Price (1990) and Bing, pp. 27-34 in the present volume. But in any case no direct line of continuity could possibly have connected these practices with the much later and non-Athenian Anacreontics.
The specific case of the dramatized enactment of Anacreon by the Anacreontics must be understood within the context of the general phenomenon of quasi-theatrical spectacle in the ancient Greek symposium, especially in the Archaic and Classical periods. This is the specifically Anacreontic version of a fundamental feature of the institution of the symposium that has occasionally been recognized but deserves further exploration. There is of course no doubt that dramatic arias and speeches from comedies and tragedies were often recited at Greek symposia; and it is attested that hired actors sometimes performed mimes for the entertainment of the symposiasts. But the former are simply recitations of recent or celebrated verses not necessarily different in kind from the lyric or elegiac poetry so often quoted in performance at Greek symposia, while the latter are genuinely dramatic spectacles performed by outsiders. The Anacreontic poet is not doing either of these. Instead, by singing Anacreontic poems, he is pretending to be Anacreon; and at least to a certain extent he seems to be convincing himself and his fellows that he was Anacreon (for if he had failed to convince anyone, these poems would not be so many, and they would not have been transmitted).

As West has pointed out, the Anacreontic singer is almost always alone, in the sense not that he is drinking by himself, but that he presents himself to others, addresses them in the singular or plural, but rarely if ever engages in concerted actions together with them. Indeed, the collection contains far more second person singulars and plurals than first person plurals. This is because the Anacreontic poet is representing Anacreon before an audience, persuading them momentarily by a kind of quasi-dramatic mimesis that he is Anacreon. To risk oversimplifying a highly delicate and complex psychological process, we might speculate that the Anacreontic singer, like the rhapsode at a recitation of Homer, seems to take on certain aspects of the personality of the characters whose words he pronounces, thereby making those words more effective and transmitting to his audience emotions that are truer, precisely because they have been more successfully fictionalized. To be sure, when the rhapsode dramatized the words of Achilles or Hector by declaiming them in character, the spectators, if asked, could...
doubtless recognize that it was the rhapsode they saw, not the Homeric warrior. But in the moment of performance, to the extent that the rhapsode was convincing, no one will have asked them and they will not have asked themselves: instead, they will have imagined, at least to a certain extent, that what they saw before themselves was indeed the ancient hero. And how much likelier was it that such a dramatic illusion would be successful if it was being performed not in the light of day at a public recitation, but instead late in the day at a private symposium, where both the singer and his audience were becoming increasingly befuddled by wine and less and less capable of making such nice discriminations!

Perhaps these considerations can help us to understand what would otherwise seem a very odd feature in the opening poem of the collection. Why does the speaker characterize Anacreon in the second line of this poem as “the singer from Teos” (CA 1.2)? At first glance, this might seem to be nothing more than a piece of superfluous pedantry, the proud ostentation to his audience by some middle-brow poet of a fact that is being displayed as though it were a triumph of erudition but which is instead a rather rudimentary item of literary culture. But the line can be read differently, and more interestingly, as specifying the one Anacreon whom the speaker saw in his dream – that one, namely, who came from Teos – and differentiating him from all the other Anacreons who did not come from Teos and whom he did not see. In other words, the Anacreon that the speaker saw in the dream was the “real” one, the one we call Anacreon, who came from Teos and lived in the 6th cent. BCE, a contemporary of Polycrates and Hipparchus; and it was this genuine Anacreon himself who legitimated the poem’s speaker as his erotic beloved and poetic successor. But if this is true, it can only mean that for the speaker and his audience there could be many Anacreons, and that this particular speaker was claiming that he had been granted the very great good fortune to be vouchsafed a vision of the only real one.

If we view the Anacreontics in this light, it is easy to identify in them a number of features that could have made some contribution to this quasi-dramatic dimension:

Often the poet addresses in the second person singular people or other beings who could not have been (or were not likely to have been) physically present at the symposium: a painter (CA 3, 16, 17), Hephaestus (CA 4), a silversmith (CA 5), a swallow (CA 10, 25), a woman (CA 22, 51), a cicada (CA 34), a teacher of rhetoric (CA 52[a]), gold (CA 58). By invoking an absent and hence imagined interlocutor, the poet exercises his own fantasy and that of his listeners, who must all create in their imaginations a highly specific dramatic situation in which the words sung by the poet might actually have been uttered. Thereby the Anacreontic poet opens up a fictional dramatic space for the entertainment of himself and of his audience.

Thus Rosenmeyer (1992: 65) complains, understandably, that “the poem” is “unnecessarily (in purely informational terms, that is) adding ‘the Teian poet’”.

35
The next step is actual dialogue reported within an Anacreontic poem (CA 15, 28, 33): now the poet takes on both voices and stages a conversation between himself and some other character so that his listeners seem to be witnessing a dramatic representation of a scene of verbal interchange. Particularly striking in this regard is CA 7, in which women are quoted who accuse Anacreon of being old, and the speaker responds that what matters is not whether or not he is old but rather the fact that the closer he is to death the more appropriate it is that he enjoy himself. For here the identification of the Anacreontic speaker with Anacreon himself is explicit. When these women accuse an Anacreon of being old they are not referring to the ancient Anacreon who was long dead, nor is the Anacreontic poet thinking of women in those ancient times who were contemporaries of the famous Anacreon; instead, he surely means himself, and the women mean him too – but in both cases he is designated not as being merely some Anacreontic poet but as being Anacreon ‘himself’.

Besides these quasi-dramatically represented scenes of imagined verbal exchange there are other fantasized episodes in which an absent, imaginary situation is called to the attention of the listeners present at the symposium: for example, the poet sitting under Bathyllus like a shady tree with a nearby spring (CA 18); scenes of nature in the springtime (CA 46); Zeus as a bull carrying off Europa, perhaps on a painting (CA 54); a silversmith’s portrayal of the birth of Aphrodite (CA 57); a grape harvest (CA 59). Or the scene represented can be absent because it belongs not to a different space but to a different time, the more or less remote past, in which an episode once happened that is now being reported and that must be imagined dramatically by the listeners (CA 6, 11, 13, 15, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37).

Even the meters of the Anacreontics tend to have a quasi-theatrical coloring. For the meter these poems use most often, the hemiambus, is in fact identical with an iambic trimeter in which the hephemimeral caesura (a frequent one in drama) now becomes the end of the line and can therefore be brevis in longo; while the so-called Anacreontic meter, which is used in a number of other poems and is named after Anacreon himself, is this very same verse, simply modified slightly by being preceded now by another short (which provides as it were a running start to the verse). But what is even more striking than the meters favored by the Anacreontics is the fact that these poets almost always use them stichically rather than grouping them in stanzas as do most Greek lyric poets (and almost all Greek lyric poets of the Archaic and Classical ages). Anacreon himself, to be sure, sometimes uses these meters, and occasionally (at least to judge from the frag-

36 For details of the meters of the Anacreontics, see West (1993: xiv-xvi).
37 The only possible exceptions are CA 9 and 50; but in the former poem a final three-line stanza can be created only by deleting a line, while in the latter one a first four-line stanza may be postulated but can only be created by major editorial supplementation.
mentary evidence) seems to have composed stichically. But within the heterogeneous and highly diverse panorama of the many meters Anacreon used, these semi-iambic ones are not especially conspicuous; and of his surviving fragments, most are non-stichic. As with Anacreon’s themes and motifs, so too with his meters: the Anacreontics seem to have made a drastically simplifying selection out of his own rich variety and concentrated upon only a few elements adapted to their own social and literary setting. In the case of his metrical forms, their selection favors a verse form in which every line, one after another, begins more or less like the iambic trimeter familiar from tragedy and comedy. The Anacreontics are the only corpus of Greek lyric that as a whole is versified entirely or almost entirely κατὰ στίχον.

The Anacreontics are simple not only in their meters and subject matters. The fact that their syntax tends to be very uncomplicated and that very many of the lines are end-stopped means that they could be expanded or shortened at will. We can easily imagine that one Anacreontic poet, endowed with a vaguer memory, or one somewhat more clouded by wine, could sing an even shorter version of these poems (which are short enough to begin with); and that another Anacreontic poet, one with greater ambitions, or a clearer mind, could easily expand a transmitted poem by applying his own inventiveness or transferring parts of some other one to it. Any confidence in the wholeness and integrity of most of these poems is clearly quite misplaced; it is not accidental that when these poems happen to be transmitted by different sources (CA 4, 8) there tend to be considerable differences in text and length among the various versions. The festive atmosphere of alcoholic inebriation doubtless blurred the boundaries between one poem and another and between one version of a poem and another – and it was this same atmosphere that also permitted the Anacreontic poet to be, at least briefly, for himself and for others, both Anacreon and himself. It is appropriate that the Anacreontics are always cited in antiquity as the works of Anacreon and not as the product of some follower of his – not necessarily because the authors in question are making an elementary historical mistake by assigning to the earlier poet works by his later imitators, but perhaps because, for the Anacreontics, it does not really matter. All of them are playing at being Anacreon, and are deliber-


39 Hellenistic poetry typically makes stichic use of earlier non-stichic lyric meters; cf. West (1982: 149-152), as do later Latin and Christian poets, like Seneca in the choral odes of his tragedies and Boethius in the verses of his Consolatio Philosophiae. See on this phenomenon Fassino/Prauscello (2001), here especially p. 12 n. 9 (with further bibliography); and more generally Prauscello (2006).

40 This is noted by Labarbe (1982: 169).

41 For the details, see West (1993: ix-xi). So too, in a number of cases the manuscript presents as continuous poems groups of lines that modern scholars tend to separate into different texts: CA 26/27, 28/29, 52a/b, 60a/b. On rewriting and elaborating of earlier Anacreontics by later Anacreontics, see Baumann in the present volume.
ately blurring the boundaries between Anacreon and themselves. After all, is not Dionysus, the god of wine, also the god of the theater?  

I conclude with three brief hypothetical reflections. First, can we be entirely certain after all that the Anacreontics were in fact as unparalleled a case of ethical imitation of a poet’s way of life as they seem to us to have been? Might not similar sympotic practices have flourished in the Hellenistic and Imperial Greek world and imitated not Anacreon but some other archaic Greek poet or poets? And might therefore our impression of the uniqueness of the Anacreontics be merely an optical illusion deriving from the fact that only in this case has a corpus of such poems been transmitted, while other such corpora might have been composed but lost? Of course this is not impossible: but the fact that we do not ever hear anything about such practices directed in antiquity to other poets, whereas there are various surviving testimonia referring to the Anacreontics apart from the direct transmission of the poems themselves, suggests that these poems and the practices they reflect probably were unique after all. Second, if indeed Anacreon was unique (or even if he was only especially popular), what was it about him that made him so attractive to later Greek symposiasts, and more attractive than other archaic or classical Greek sympotic poets? Presumably the answer lies in the extraordinary popularity Anacreon enjoyed already during the 6th and 5th centuries in Athens: even if later Greek symposiasts knew nothing of the Anacreontic vases (see above, n. 28), anyone who knew anything about Athenian poetry and comedy of the 5th century will have been cognizant of the fact that Anacreon was the heroic paradigm of the Athenian symposium at its height. For later Greeks who idealized the Classical period of Athens as the most glorious moment in their national history, the aura shed by 5th century Athens upon all its cultural institutions must inevitably have rendered the symposia of that century, and Anacreon in particular as their most celebrated participant, objects of irresistible veneration and emulation. So the later Anacreontics, in imitating Anacreon, are taking part après la lettre, as far as is possible for them, in the Golden Age of Athens. And third, if the Anacreontics wanted to imitate Anacreon, why did they not simply sing Anacreon’s own genuine poetry rather than going to the trouble of composing their own pseudo-Anacreontic verses? But perhaps if a later symposiast sang Anacreon’s own poetry he would be thought to be merely performing that classical author’s celebrated verses rather than imitating the behavior of that author by composing and performing his own creations: he would be citing Anacreon, not enacting Anacreon. If so, then this was a form of mimesis which, strangely enough, depended precisely upon avoiding any direct verbal replication of the imitated texts. Perhaps the only way a later poet could imitate Anacreon’s way of life was not by quoting Anacreon’s own poetry but by creating his own Anacreontics.

42 On blurring boundaries in enacting, see Rudolph in this volume.