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Krinagoras and Imperial Glory: An Interplay Between Irony, Mockery, and Flattery

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Abstract

This paper examines two epigrams of the Mytilenean poet Krinagoras (AP 9.562 and 9.224), traditionally interpreted as court flattery examples. Krinagoras was a poet close to the Augustan court, and many of his epigrams praised members of the imperial house. However, a closer examination of these epigrams reveals a discreet dose of irony towards the glory of Augustus, a seemingly strange choice on the part of a court poet of the Augustan circle. It seems that Krinagoras, who travelled from his native island Mytilene to the westernmost part of the Roman Empire in Tarragona as a member of the embassy to meet Augustus, used irony as a stylistic instrument to insinuate his discontent for the hardships he had suffered. The paper contributes to a growing literature that examines the ways literary works functioned as instruments of flattering the ruler but also concealed resentment or mockery, even against the Roman emperor. Krinagoras' irony is merely one instance among many where subtle mockery and satire of the imperial family were exercised in the early Augustan period.

Keywords

Krinagoras; Augustus; imperial court; court poets; Greek epigrams; irony, flattery; mockery; imperial ideology

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Introduction

Krinagoras, son of Kallippos, was born in Mytilene around 70 BCE to a family of high social rank, as his participation in embassies sent to Julius Caesar and Augustus indicates (see below). He was next in a line of Mytilenaeen elite members and writers associated with Roman power. Before him, Theophanes was an *amicus* of Pompey, and Potamon was an ambassador to Caesar and Octavian and also wrote encomia for Brutus and Octavian.¹ In his lifetime, Krinagoras became one of the poets supported by the *domus Augusta*. His works (he is attributed with the authorship of 51 epigrams in total) span a rich thematic range of themes well-represented in the Hellenistic epigrammatic tradition, including sepulchral (ἐπιτύμβια), erotic (ἐρωτικά), dedicatory (ἀναθηματικά), and epideictic (ἐπιδεικτικά) epigrams.² However, the most characteristic feature of the poetry of Krinagoras is his inspiration from personal experiences and observation as material for his epigrams.³

After his last embassy to Augustus in 26–25 BCE (see below), Krinagoras resided for many years in Rome. Though details of his residence are lacking, it can be presumed from many references in his epigrams that he was connected with the highest social circles in Rome and enjoyed the support of the Augustan family. Indeed, the poet praised and bestowed fame in his epigrams to Augustus and members of the imperial family, such as the future emperor Tiberius, Marcellus, Germanicus, and Antonia the Younger.⁴ Many of his poems celebrate fortunate events in the *domus Augusta*, such as the first shave of Marcellus and the forthcoming birth of a child by Antonia,⁵ while others glorify military victories, like those of Tiberius in Germany and Armenia.⁶ Epigram AP 9.224, which is discussed below, reveals Krinagoras' knowledge of Augustus' private habits when he travelled, while in AP 9.239 the poet offers an intellectual gift to Antonia. Some of these poems were probably written during his residence in Rome and offer insight into his experience of contemporary events during his stay. More specifically, these epigrams reveal his direct knowledge of events associated with the imperial family and his close contacts with many members of the

¹ For Potamon as an ambassador to Caesar, together with Krinagoras in 48 BCE and 46–45 BCE (see below on Krinagoras' embassies): *RDGE*, n. 26, ll. a, 3–5 and b, ll. 13, 16, respectively. To Octavian, together with Krinagoras in 26–25 BCE: *IG XII*, 2, 44, cf. the discussion in Arrayás Morales, 2010: 144–148. *Encomia: FGH II*. B. 147. On the figure of Potamon, see Parker, 1991; Thériault, 2011.

² These categories were already established by Meleager, although more existed; Argentieri, 2007: 153; discussion in Ypsilanti, 2018: 3–6. Cogitore (2010: 257) adds a category she styles as 'imperial epigrams' ('épigrammes impériales') and estimates that around 40 epigrams of this kind exist in the 'Garland'.

³ On an introduction to Krinagoras' life, works and style, Ypsilanti, 2018: 1–14, cf. Cichorius, 1888: 47–61; Bowersock, 1965: 36–37; Labarre, 1996: 99. On the poets' inspiration from personal experiences, Bowersock, 1964: 255; 1965: 36–37; Ypsilanti, 2018: 13.

⁴ *AP* 61 (Tiberius), *AP* 6.161 (Marcellus), 9.283 (Germanicus), 9.239 (Antonia).

⁵ *AP* 6.161 and 6.244 respectively. According to Cogitore (2010: 255, 266–268) such epigrams demonstrate Krinagoras' closeness to certain members of the Julio-Claudian family and single him out from the other court poets by his proximity to the imperial court. The praise of rulers was rooted firmly in the Hellenistic tradition of kings' flattery by court poets, and especially the Alexandrian one, where poets like Kallimachos flattered the Ptolemies with their works, e.g., the famous *Lock of Berenike* and the *Deification of Arsinoe* (Clayman, 2014 on Berenike; Carney, 2013 on Arsinoe, both with detailed discussions of the poems). For an examination of Krinagoras' poetry against the backdrop of flattery to Hellenistic rulers by writers, but in new imperial contexts, Buraselis, 2020: 4–6. On the influence of Kallimachos' *Hecale* in Krinagoras' poem addressed to Marcellus (*AP* 9.545), Bowie, 2008: 231; Höschle, 2019: 479–482.

⁶ *AP* 61, cf. Bowie, 2008: 232.

Augustan house and Augustus himself. Therefore, some researchers have reasonably concluded that Krinagoras was a *cliens* of the imperial court.⁷

Krinagoras' case can be compared to other Greek writers who stayed in Rome close to the Augustan house and other powerful Romans of the time. Presumably, he became acquainted with some of them, for example Parthenios of Nicaea, a freedman of Cinna who was also active in Rome during that time and wrote an elegy entitled *Κριναγόρας* (Krinagoras). As one of the most famous members of a large circle of Greek writers and poets who lived in Rome and enjoyed the benefits coming from a court that appreciated highly the various fruits of the rich Greek literary and epigrammatic tradition, Krinagoras influenced in various ways the poets Antipatros, Philip (the anthologist of the 'Garland'), the later Leonidas of Alexandria, even the Latin epigrammatist Martial.⁸

However, in epigrams AP 9.562 and 9.224, Krinagoras seems to have employed a curiously ironical tone to negotiate Augustan glory. This paper examines these two epigrams and investigates the reasons behind this seemingly strange choice on the part of a 'court poet' of the Augustan circle and interprets Krinagoras as a talented poet who employed both irony and flattery when addressing imperial glory.⁹ The sense of irony in these two epigrams has been noticed but not studied by other researchers,¹⁰ but, most importantly, the interpretation of these epigrams as extremes of flattery remains prevalent.¹¹ Therefore, a thorough analysis of these poems is necessary to challenge this view.

My elaboration on the skillful deployment of those two instruments, that is, irony and flattery, supplements earlier and recent analytical works of others and aims at exploring the reasons behind this stylistic choice by Krinagoras.¹² The present paper discusses some aspects of Krinagoras' life and works going beyond his interpretation as merely an Augustan court poet or flatterer. The aim is to contribute to a growing literature that examines the ways literary works function as instruments of flattering the ruler that also concealed resentment or mockery, even against Augustus himself.¹³ Indeed, scholars now acknowledge the complexity in the interpretation of Augustan poets that was previously lost

⁷ Dimopoulou-Pelioune, 2015: 519; Ypsilanti, 2018: 8–9. Bowersock (1965: 36) thinks that he took residence in Rome immediately after his journey to Tarragona. Bowie (2008: 232) remarks that Krinagoras' stay in Rome perhaps was not uninterrupted. On the relationship between epigram and 'political power' in the ancient Greek and Roman world, see the assessment of Coleman, 2019.

⁸ On the numerous Greek poets and writers who were active in early imperial Rome, Syme, 1978: 107; Bowie, 2008; Cogitore, 2010; Ypsilanti, 2018: 6, 8–14 (with a discussion of similarities between the poetry of Krinagoras, Archias, and Philodemos, the acquaintance of Krinagoras with Parthenios and the influence of Krinagoras on other poets). Notably, among others, was Nicolaos of Damascus, who enjoyed the patronage of Augustus; Strabo, who was protected by Aelius Gallus; Dionysios of Halicarnassos, favoured by Q. Tubero; Antipatros of Thessalonica, who was under the protection of L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi. According to Gow and Page (1968: 210), the impact of Krinagoras' personality is marked more than that of any other epigrammatist since Kallimachos.

⁹ It seems that Krinagoras used poignant *double entendres* in his poems. For example, in an epigram dedicated to Marcellus (AP 6.161), the phrase *ἄνδρα λαβεῖν* [s.c. ἡ Ἰταλία] means that Italy will receive Marcellus as an adult, but may also signify that the *patria* will take him as husband in a symbolic union between Italy and the heir-apparent of Augustus; cf. Höschele, 2019: 476–477.

¹⁰ Ypsilanti, 2018: 10, 243; Buraselis, 2020: 5. Likewise, Bowie (2008: 234–235; 2011: 194–195) expressed doubts over the interpretation of these poems as solely products of flattery.

¹¹ E.g., Albiani, 2002: 943; see also Cogitore, 2010: 265, n. 43.

¹² The epigrams of Krinagoras have been analysed by Gow and Page, 1968: 210–260; Bowie, 2008: 230–235; 2011: 186–195; Ypsilanti, 2018.

¹³ Ahl, 1984; Pittore, 2004 (who discusses irony in the epigrams of the *Anthologia Palatina*, but not Krinagoras); Bertini Conidi, 2012 (on Juvenal's third Satire); Pandey, 2018. Case-studies of irony in Greek and Latin literature are collected in Reinhold, 2009; among them, Hamm (2009) discusses the use of irony by poets in the Ptolemaic court, such as Kallimachos. In contrast to Krinagoras, Ovid is often labelled as an anti-Augustan poet, mainly because of his exile at the orders of Augustus, but modern research has revealed the intricacies of his case, Philips, 1983; Pandey, 2018.

because of simplistic dichotomies and designations as pro- or anti-Augustan poets.¹⁴ In this way, new interpretations can be ventured beyond those focusing on mere flattery or opposition to the *princeps*.

In the next section, I discuss an important event in the life of Krinagoras, namely his embassy to Augustus in 26–25 BCE, in which he travelled from Mytilene to the other edge of the Mediterranean Sea, to the remote community of Tarragona in Spain. I argue that this mission was a significant event for Krinagoras because the reasons behind his stylistic choices in the two epigrams lie in the many hardships he had experienced. Finally, in the third section, I examine the two epigrams of Krinagoras together with AP 9.419, where irony and flattery of the Augustan glory intermingle and illustrate the intricate negotiation of imperial glory in the poems of Krinagoras, essentially an interplay between mockery, irony, and admiration.

Reaching for the Emperor across the Mediterranean Sea

In this section, emphasis will be placed on Krinagoras' journey to Augustus in Tarragona as a member of the Mytilenean embassy and the personal sufferings he endured on his long journey. I argue that the poet's experiences significantly influenced his conscious decision to employ irony in two epigrams that treated Augustan glory. In contrast, otherwise and elsewhere, he had nothing but praise for the emperor and his family. Indeed, the journey to Spain served as inspiration for Krinagoras to compose several other poems, such as AP 7.376 (the death of Seleukos), 9.516 (a practice of Ligurian bandits), and 9.419 (on the Baths of Augustus at the Pyrenees).¹⁵ Arguably, his journey across the Mediterranean Sea left him a lasting impression, which is worth analysing in depth here.

The connection of Krinagoras with Roman power began in the period of the first triumvirate when he was a member of the embassy sent by Mytilene to bestow honours upon Caesar after his victory at Pharsala (September 48 BCE).¹⁶ He also participated in a second embassy to Caesar, which succeeded in renewing *φιλία* and *συμμαχία* between Mytilene and Rome (between April 46 and January/February 45 BCE).¹⁷ However, as illustrated below, the most challenging embassy in terms of distance and hardships was undoubtedly the third one of 26–25 BCE, concerning the seal of the *foedus aequum* between Mytilene and Rome.¹⁸ Krinagoras and his last embassy travelled from the far eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea to the westernmost, to Tarragona—an undoubtedly long and harsh adventure.¹⁹ The ambassadors made their way there because Augustus was in Hispania at that time, personally commanding the Roman legions in the war against the Cantabri and the Astures (25 BCE); he had to withdraw to Tarragona to recuperate from a severe illness.²⁰

In AP 9.559, Krinagoras asks for the professional help of a renowned geographer to ensure safety for his trip to Italy. The epigram reveals parts of the itinerary of the third embassy: the ambassadors sailed through the Cyclades and Corcyra (“περίπλοον”, ὅς μ' ἐπὶ νήσους Κυκλάδας ἀρχαίην τ' ἄξει ἐπὶ

¹⁴ For example, Philips, 1983: 780–782; Griffin, 1984; and especially Miller (2009: 5): ‘In response to the language of Augustanism, poets of the stature of Horace and Ovid not only mirror or incorporate that language but also, if to varying degrees, contest it in their private visions of the world. [...] (Augustan) [p]oets both collaborate and resist’.

¹⁵ The first two poems will be commented in the present section, while the last one in the following one, cf. also Ypsilanti, 2018: 3 for the connection of these poems with the journey to Spain.

¹⁶ IG 12.2.35a.

¹⁷ IG 12.2.35b.

¹⁸ On this treaty, RDGE, n. 26; Labarre, 1996: n. 20D; Arrayás Morales, 2010: 138–140.

¹⁹ Cf. Gow and Page, 1968: 211–212; Labarre, 1996: 105; Cogitore, 2010: 255; Dimopoulou-Pelioune, 2015: 542; 2017: 407; Ypsilanti, 2018: 9.

²⁰ Suet. *Aug.* 26.3, 59, 81.1; Plin. *HN* 25.38, 29.5; Hor. *Carm.* 3.14; Flor. *Epit.* 2.33.51; Cassius Dio 53.25.5–7.

Σχερίην). He then must have landed at Brundisium and continued to Rome.²¹ The two *senatus consulta* connected with the treaty between Mytilene and Rome are dated between May and June 25 BCE,²² so we can assume that the Mytilenean ambassadors travelled to Rome in the late spring of 25 BCE. Then, they continued their journey to the remote Tarragona in Spain to reach the emperor, either because they decided to submit their request to Augustus himself before the decision of the Senate or to thank him for his approval.²³ According to calculations on ORBIS,²⁴ the journey from Mytilene to Rome via Corinth, Corcyra, and Brundisium in early spring could take about 20 days, and the second part of the embassy's itinerary, from Rome to Tarragona seven days (seaborne) or 25 days (on land and by horse). The entire journey, therefore, must have comprised a total of 27 to 45 days of travel time alone, excluding rest periods, dead times, and possibly a stay in Rome.

Around the same period, another embassy to Augustus in Tarragona left from Asia Minor led by a person named Chaeremon. Ambassadors from Tralleis reached the emperor to petition support in ameliorating the damages inflicted on the *polis* by an earthquake; the later historian Agathias stressed the difficulties of such a long journey. It is worth citing his testimony in full because it allows us a glimpse into the hardships Krinagoras may have faced on his trip to Tarragona:

² οὕτω δὲ τοῦ ἄστυος οἰκτρότατα κειμένου, ἄγροικόν τινά φασι τούτων δὴ τῶν γεηρόνων, Χαίρημονα τοῦνομα, σφόδρα τὴν ψυχὴν ἀλῶναι τῷ πάθει, καὶ οὖν οὐκ ἐνεγκόντα θαυμάσιόν τι ἠλίκον καὶ ἄπιστον ἔργον ἀνύσαι. ³ μήτε γὰρ τῆς ὁδοῦ τὸ μήκος ἢ τῆς πρεσβείας τὸ μέγεθος κατορρωδῆσαντα μήτε ὅτι μεγίστοις, ὥσπερ εἰκός, ὀμιλήσειν ἤμελλε κινδύνους, καὶ ταῦτα ἐπ' ἀδήλω τῇ τύχῃ, μήτε τῶν οἴκοι τὴν ἐρημίαν μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν ὁπόσα διανοούμενοι ἄνθρωποι μεταμανθάνουσι τὰ δοκηθέντα, ἀφικέσθαι μὴ ὅτι ἐν Ῥώμῃ, ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἐς τῶν Κανταβαρηνῶν τὴν χώραν ἀμφ' αὐτὰς δὴ πού τας τοῦ Ἰωκεανοῦ ἠϊόνας (ἐτύχχανε γὰρ αὐτοῦ που ὁ Καῖσαρ ἐν τῷ τότε πρὸς τι τῶν ἐθνῶν διαμαχόμενος).

² The story goes that, when the city [sc. Tralleis] lay in a tragic heap of ruins, a certain rustic, a tiller of the soil by the name of Chaeremon was so deeply moved by the calamity that he could bear it no longer and so set out to accomplish an incredible and extraordinary feat (θαυμάσιόν τι ἠλίκον καὶ ἄπιστον ἔργον ἀνύσαι). ³ Deterred neither by the distance involved (τῆς ὁδοῦ τὸ μήκος), nor by the magnitude of his petition, nor by the dangers he was likely to face (ὅτι μεγίστοις, ὥσπερ εἰκός, ὀμιλήσειν ἤμελλε κινδύνους), nor indeed by his doubtful chances of success, nor, for that matter, by the fact that he would be leaving his family to fend for themselves, nor by any of the other considerations that lead men to change their minds, he went not just to Rome but to the land of the Cantabri on the very shores of the Ocean. For Caesar was there at that time conducting a campaign against some of the local tribes.²⁵

Agath. *Hist.* 2.17.2-3 (Trans. by Frenndo, 1975: 50)

²¹ On the connection of this epigram with the third embassy, Gow and Page, 1968: 243; Ypsilanti, 2018: 328–329. Eilers (2009) collects essays that discuss aspects of embassies to the emperor and diplomacy in the Roman world. On the sea route from the Aegean Sea to Italy via Corinth, Steinhauer, 2009: 722–723; cf. Strab. 8.6.20 on the importance of Corinth for maritime trade and communications. Bowie (2008: 233–234; 2011: 190) thinks that Krinagoras took the route Corinth – Corcyra – Brundisium. The route Corinth – Buthrotum (opposite to Corcyra) – Brundisium is depicted in the Antonine and Bordeaux Itineraries, Cuntz, 1990.

²² *RDGE*, n. 26, p. 155.

²³ Dimopoulou-Pelioune, 2015: 542, cf. *RDGE*, n. 26, pp. 156–157; Arrayás Morales, 2010: 147–148.

²⁴ <https://orbis.stanford.edu/>

²⁵ My italics for emphasis. The testimony of Agathias is partly based on the 'traditional history' (*patria*) of the city, as Jones (2011: 109) argues.

Krinagoras himself described the difficulties and dangers he went through in his quest to find Augustus. During the journey from Italy to Spain (or vice versa), the embassy made its way through Liguria and over the Alps. In *AP* 9.516, Krinagoras reproaches a common practice of Ligurian bandits to evade watchdogs while stealing sheep. The poet likely learned of this practice on his way to meet Augustus in Tarragona, as Liguria lay on the main land route from Italy to Spain, or at least heard about it while travelling through the land.²⁶ Indeed, this trick of Ligurian bandits is otherwise unknown, so it can be presumed that knowledge of it was not diffused enough for Krinagoras to have known about it indirectly. By describing the ferocity of the Ligurians, whose territories he most likely traversed, the poet implicitly enhances the dangers of the trip.

Moreover, in the course of the long journey to meet the emperor, Krinagoras lost one comrade, Seleukos, to whom he dedicated a moving epigram, the first of the three I discuss in detail.²⁷

δείλαιοι, τί κεναῖσιν ἀλώμεθα θαρσήσαντες
 ἐλπίσιν, ἀτηροῦ ληθόμενοι θανάτου;
 ἦν ὄδε καὶ μύθοισι καὶ ἤθεσι πάντα Σέλευκος
 ἄρτιος, ἀλλ' ἤβης βαιὸν ἐπαυρόμενος
 ὑστατίοις ἐν Ἰβηρσι, τόσον δίχα τηλόθι Λέσβου
 κεῖται ἀμετρήτων ξείνος ἐπ' αἰγιαλῶν

Poor fools, why do we wander thus heartened by empty
 hopes, forgetful of baneful death?
 Once there existed Seleukos, so perfect in speech and character,
 yet partaking in youth's prime for brief,
 among the outermost Iberians he lies, sundered so far from Lesbos,
 a stranger on uncharted shores

AP 7.376 (Trans. by Gow-Page, with emendations)²⁸

In the epigram, Seleukos, most likely one of the Mytilenean ambassadors to Tarragona,²⁹ is buried on a coast far away from Lesbos, to the 'outermost Iberians' in Spain and Krinagoras vividly expresses his sorrow and pain for losing one charismatic young compatriot in this remote place, far away from their πατρίς ('a stranger on untrodden shores'). The poem's emphasis lies precisely on the fact that the death

²⁶ Gow and Page, 1968: 211, 241; Ypsilanti, 2018: 307. Gow and Page (1968: 241) suggest that it was a result of personal observation, while Ypsilanti finds it more likely that Krinagoras heard about this practice while travelling through Liguria. The embassy probably travelled through Marseille, as discussed below. The Ligurians are otherwise mentioned in Roman contexts as opponents in Roman campaigns (e.g., Liv. 40.27.9–13).

²⁷ On the connection of the epigram with the third embassy, Gow and Page, 1968: 224; Labarre, 1996: 105; Dimopoulou, 2015: 542; 2017: 407. On the dangers of embassies on their way and back, Arrayás Morales, 2010: 147, n. 67. Pawlak (2020: 185) unnecessarily rejects the connection between the epigrams of Krinagoras that mention Iberia and this particular journey. It is much more likely that Seleukos passed away during this journey and not in an otherwise unknown trip to Spain.

²⁸ I chose Patton's translation over that of Gow and Page in two cases. 'Speech and character' in line 3 is closer to the original Greek (μύθοισι καὶ ἤθεσι) than Gow and Page's 'words and ways'. The same reasoning led to the selection of 'uncharted' (l. 6) over 'untrodden', as the adjective ἀμέτρητος means 'unmeasured' and 'uncharted' conveys this on geographical terms too, since Krinagoras had an interest in geography (cf. *AP* 9.559).

²⁹ Gow and Page (1968: 224) observe that the pairing of μύθοισι καὶ ἤθεσι (words and ways) in l. 3 implies the skills of Seleukos as a diplomat and likely a member of the embassy who died either on his way to meet Augustus in Tarragona or on the way back.

of the young diplomat occurred far from Lesbos.³⁰ In my view, the first two lines of the poem, and specifically the wanderers trusting in empty hopes, refer to the embassy itself, that long wander across the Mediterranean when the hope to gain benefits from the emperor led to simply 'let aside' the fact that death lies everywhere in such a perilous journey. Indeed, Krinagoras uses the first plural person, referring obviously to his companions in the embassy (ἀλώμεθα, θαρσήσαντες, ληθόμενοι). In fact, it may not have been the first time Krinagoras lost a travel companion during state service. Twenty years earlier, during the second embassy of Krinagoras to Caesar at Rome, a boy named Eros, probably the servant of a fellow ambassador, also passed away and was buried on an island east of Ithaca. The poet dedicated a moving epigram to his honour (AP 7.628). Therefore, Seleukos was at least the second casualty of a Mytilenaeon embassy in which Krinagoras participated, but the epigram dedicated to him has a much more personal and dramatic tone.

Krinagoras does not elaborate on the circumstances of Seleukos' death. However, the phrase κείται ... ἐπ' αἰγιαλῶν is attested in sepulchral epigrams after losses in shipwrecks.³¹ If a shipwreck did indeed occur and Krinagoras did not simply employ a common expression, then we must presume that the embassy travelled partly by sea from Rome to Tarragona.³²

The philosophical introduction in the first two lines is a common motif in funerary poems preserved in the *Anthologia Palatina*, and it has been interpreted as an expression of Krinagoras' pessimistic approach to life.³³ However, it is clear that this one draws on his personal experiences. The wanderers' futile trust in potentially empty imperial assurances, 'forgetful of ruinous death' is a lesson Krinagoras painfully experienced in this adventure. He employed a common *topos* to express his suffering, the death of Seleukos on the way to Tarragona. Indeed, the reference to personal experiences is a characteristic feature of the poetry of Krinagoras.³⁴ The poet gave prominence to subjects deriving from his everyday experiences and often coloured his poems with his sentiments, even at the expense of traditional *topoi* of the genre.³⁵ Therefore, Krinagoras effectively brings out the sadness of the death of a young Greek in a distant land that has only been introduced into Mytilenean horizons not simply by Roman conquest but by the search for the emperor himself.³⁶ All the hardships endured by the embassy and the death of Seleukos were unfortunate events on their way to the emperor. This is an important point to bear in mind for what follows.

³⁰ Krinagoras makes this clearer by calling Seleukos ξείνος, not the land which is more usual (κείται ἀμετρήτων ξείνος ἐπ' αἰγιαλῶν). Death away from the fatherland is a common topic in sepulchral poems, as also seen in these of Krinagoras (AP 7.371, 7.628, 7.645).

³¹ E.g., Antipatros, AP 7.286 (l. 2), cf. Xenokritos, AP 7.291 (l. 6). On travel in the Roman period, Casson, 1974: 115–329, cf. the contributions in Niehoff, 2017 on travel in literary works of Roman-period writers.

³² According to Ypsilanti (2018: 187–188), 'shores' (ἐπ' αἰγιαλῶν) stand here for 'land' generally, so it essentially means that Seleukos is lying in a foreign country. But this interpretation does not agree with the overall context of line 6 (ἀμετρήτων ... αἰγιαλῶν) that states clearly that Seleukos was buried 'at the shores', most likely on a shore of Tarragona, cf. rightly Dimopoulou-Pelioune, 2015: 542.

³³ Ypsilanti, 2018: 180–181. Similar introductions appear in AP 7.420 (Diotimos, in which the motif of 'light hopes' also appears), 7.519 (Kallimachos), 7.534 (Automedon). Krinagoras' AP 9.516 also opens up with a *gnome*, presumably referring again to the events during the trip of the third embassy (Ypsilanti, 2018: 306). Δελαιος and κενὴ ἔλπις are also attested in 9.234, l. 1, again in a personal context (Krinagoras addresses his heart). More examples in Ypsilanti, 2018: 182.

³⁴ Bowersock (1964: 255) notes that most of his poems are inspired from real-life events and refers to named or nameable personalities, e.g., AP 9.559 (preparations for Krinagoras' trip to Italy), 9.560 (an earthquake stroked his new house), 6.161 (Marcellus), 9.283 (Germanicus), 9.239 (Antonia), 9.81 (the tyrant Nikias of Kos).

³⁵ Ypsilanti, 2018: 13.

³⁶ Here, I adapt Bowie, 2008: 234: 'Krinagoras effectively brings out the sadness of the death of an epebic Greek in a distant land that has only been brought into Greek horizons by Roman conquest'.

Eventually, the *foedus aequum* ('equal treaty') between Rome and Mytilene was agreed.³⁷ After the return of the embassy, a decree was issued, according to which divine honours were bestowed upon Augustus.³⁸ Copies of the decree were set up at the temple of Augustus in Pergamon, Actium (the site of the emperor's victory against Mark Antony and Kleopatra), but also in Brindisium, Marseille, and Tarragona (Il. 12–14). The only reason these copies were set up in Brindisium and Marseille could have been because the embassy travelled through these cities.³⁹ The great honours of Mytilene to the benevolent emperor were proclaimed at important stations along the route of the embassy and at its final destination.

There can be little doubt that Krinagoras participated in the shared joy for imperial favour and divine honours. Indeed, he resided afterwards in Rome, composed many epigrams in honour of numerous members of the imperial family, and became one of the most important Greek poets in the Augustan court. How is it then explained that a pair of his poems express irony against Augustus?

Mocking Flattery: The Parrot and the She-goat⁴⁰

After examining the difficulties Krinagoras experienced in his embassy to Augustus, we can proceed with the analysis of the irony and mockery against the imperial glory that manifest subtly in two Krinagorean poems, and the role the journey to Tarragona may have played in the poet's stylistic choices. These poems stand in contrast to another epigram of Krinagoras that celebrates the glory of Augustus, also dated after the journey and making reference to Spain. The analysis reveals the literary relationship of the Mytilenean poet with Augustan glory as a complex interplay between irony and flattery.

An elegant tone of satirical irony can be traced in the elegiac poem AP 9.562 that Ypsilanti dates after 25 BCE, during the residence of the poet in Rome (that is, after his embassy to Augustus in Tarragona), but attributes it to Philip, the anthologist of the 'Garland', *except* if humour was the purpose of the poem.⁴¹ As I argue below, humour and irony are traced in the epigram, and thus, the ascription to Krinagoras can be maintained:

Ψιττακὸς ὁ βροτόγηρυς ἀφείς λυγοτευχέα κύρτον
 ἤλυθεν ἐς δρυμοὺς ἀνθοφρεῖ πτέρυγι,
 αἰεὶ δ' ἐκμελετῶν ἀσπάσμασι Καῖσαρα κλεινόν
 οὐδ' ἂν ὄρη λήθη ἤγαγεν οὐνόματος·
 ἔδραμε δ' ὠκυδίδακτος ἅπας οἰωνὸς ἐρίζων
 τίς φθῆναι δύναται δαίμονι 'χαῖρ'' ἐνέπειν.
 Ὀρφεὺς θήρας ἔπεισεν ἐν οὖρεσιν, ἐς σὲ δέ, Καῖσαρ,
 νῦν ἀκέλευστος ἅπας ὄρνις ἀνακρέκεται.

A parrot, who speaks in human voice, left its wickerwork cage
 and came to the forest with flower-like wings.
 As he was always practising ways to embrace glorious Caesar,

³⁷ IG 12.2.35c.

³⁸ IG XII 2, 58, a.1 (ca. 25 BCE).

³⁹ Rightly, Dimopoulou-Pelioune, 2015: 543, n. 317.

⁴⁰ Texts and English translations of the poems in this section are derived from Ypsilanti, 2018, with emendations.

⁴¹ Ypsilanti, 2018: 3, 250, 254, if so, that 'would make it comparable to the epigram on the goat' (see immediately below on the latter), cf. Bowie, 2008: 235. The ascription to Krinagoras remains prevalent, cf. also Gow and Page, 1968: 232.

he did not forget them even while living in the mountains.
 And all birds, newcomers to this art, hurried to quarrel 5
 over who would be the first to say 'hail' to the god.
 Orpheus bid beasts obey him in the mountains; but to you, Caesar,
 now all birds, unbidden, squawk their addresses.

AP 9.562

Krinagoras narrates the adventures of a parrot with a human voice: having learnt to repeat the salutation *Ave Caesar* (χαῖρε Καῖσαρ), the bird escaped from its cage and taught the exact phrase to all the other birds who then repeated it enthusiastically. The parrot functions as an apostle of Augustan divinity to the natural world.⁴² The animal kingdom is a simile for humankind, further elevated because it participates in the glorification of Augustus.⁴³

Except for the apparent flattery and glorification of the emperor by Krinagoras, a hint of satirical irony traverses this epigram. Firstly, the parrot is described as a person who speaks in a human voice, has studied extensively and did not forget its learnings (βροτόγηρυς; αἰεὶ δ' ἐκμελετῶν; οὐδ' ἄν' λήθη ἤγαγεν οὐνόματος). It left its cage and escaped to the mountains but still pays allegiance to the emperor. It stands in a superior position to the rest of the birds but remains a servant. A paradoxical interplay is formed between lofty and base, human and animal, that imbues the poem with a dose of fascinating levity.⁴⁴ The parrot stands in the middle between the human and the animal world and between pomposity (e.g., ἀνθοφυεῖ πτέρυγι) and servility. Furthermore, the adjectives employed for the description of the use of the parrot and its cage are unique or rare (βροτόγηρυς, λυγοτευχής, ἀνθοφυής).⁴⁵ The use of flowery language for them emphasises the underlying satire. It should also be underlined that the talking parrot became a symbol of the flattering court poet in Latin literature, to describe those who merely recited whatever may benefit them.⁴⁶ Therefore, another irony of Krinagoras can perhaps be traced to poets of the imperial court, possibly even to himself.

Moreover, there is a clear antithesis between the parrot with the human voice (βροτόγηρυς) as described in the first line of the poem and the final en-masse cries of all birds (ἅπας ὄρνις ἀνακρέκεται) that supposedly repeated the salutation addressed to Augustus, that is, in imitation of the Roman people who performed the morning *salutatio* to the emperor.⁴⁷ Indeed, ἀνακρέκειν, a unicum and a compound of the verb κρέκω, is used to describe the sharp noise ('squawk').⁴⁸ That said, the word was intentionally coined to mock the rest of the birds that merely reproduced (ἀνα-κρέκειν) the initial salutation to the emperor taught to them by the parrot with the human voice. The use of this verb explicitly sets the rest of the birds in an inferior position to the parrot. Opposite the leading

⁴² Analysis in Buraselis, 2020: 4–5. This is the earliest example of what later became a *topos* in Latin literature, the theme of birds saluting the emperor. Cf. Whitmarsh, 2013: 152, n. 49 with examples.

⁴³ Ypsilanti, 2018: 253. Augustus is characterised as κλεινός ('glorious', l. 3) and in 9.419 as πούλυσεβαστος ('most eminent', l. 3; see below), a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον.

⁴⁴ Cf. the similar remarks in Newlands, 2005: 162 on the parrot in Statius, *Silvae* 2.4. Similar to Krinagoras, Statius has also been characterised as mere court flatterer, but the poem *Silvae* 2.4 in which a parrot features again reveals a more complex poetic personality, see Newlands, 2005.

⁴⁵ Βροτόγηρυς and λυγοτευχής do not appear elsewhere, while ἀνθοφυής once more in an inscription from Chalkis, *IG* 12, 9, 954 (l. 13). Ypsilanti, 2018: 252–253, also observes the infrequency of the adjectives.

⁴⁶ Dietrich, 2002: 105–108 (for the parrot in Statius' *Silvae* 2.4); Newlands, 2005: 162–165.

⁴⁷ Buraselis, 2020: 9, n. 12 (comment of Massimo Nafissi); Whitmarsh (2013: 152–153), who also spots irony in the poem and finds it 'a perfect embodiment of the conflicted approach to the poetic gift dramatised in the patronal poetry of the late Republic and early Empire', but he did not elaborate on the causes of this stylistic choice.

⁴⁸ *LSJ*, s.v. κρέκω, esp. AP 7.191: κίσσα κρέξασα (Archias); Aristoph. *Orn.* 772: βοῖν πτεροῖς κρέκοντες, cf. the verb κράζω.

parrot stands a multitude of birds of unspecified species competing with each other in repeating and crying their salutations to Augustus, a mocking simile of the imperial *clientes*.⁴⁹ Therefore, it seems that the poem is intended to satirise the flattery and flatterers of Augustus. The use of lofty language for the birds (ὠκυδίδακτος, ἀνακρέκεται) mocks those new students of high praise taught by a parrot. The poem was composed after the third embassy, in which Krinagoras travelled to Spain to reach the emperor. Arguably, Krinagoras employs irony as a stylistic instrument to insinuate his discontent with the hardships he suffered. The glory of Augustus stretched across the entire natural world, but imperial omnipresence had certain practical drawbacks, as Krinagoras had to chase Augustus to the westernmost part of the Roman Empire.

An underlying sense of irony can also be discerned in AP 9.224, a poem about the favourite she-goat of Augustus:

Αἰγά με τὴν εὐθηλον, ὅσων ἐκένωσεν ἀμολγεὺς
οὐθατα πασάων πουλυγαλακτοτάτην,
γευσάμενος μελιηδὲς ἐπεὶ τ' ἐφράσσατο πῖαρ
Καῖσαρ, κὴν νηυσὶν σύμπλοον ἠγάγετο.
Ἥξω αὐτίκα που καὶ ἐς ἀστέρας· ᾧ γὰρ ἐπέσχον 5
μαζὸν ἐμὸν, μείων οὐδ' ὅσον Αἰγιόχου.

Me, the goat with the heavy udders, of all whose breast
the dairy-pail has drained, the richest in milk,
Caesar, after tasting and praising my honey-sweet cream,
took me on his ship as his shipmate.
Soon I shall perhaps reach the stars; for he to whom I offered 5
my breast is no lesser to the Aegis-bearer.

AP 9.224

The poem demonstrates that Krinagoras knew about the private habits of Augustus when travelling. The Mytilenean poet had personal knowledge that the emperor took his she-goat with him in his travels outside Rome, even onboard his vessel, always to enjoy her milk.⁵⁰ Hence, also considering that most of Krinagoras' poems derive from his personal experiences, it is very likely that the poet accompanied Augustus on this trip (see below for possible destinations).⁵¹

The emperor's affection for the animal is impressive, and Krinagoras has her claiming (in the first person) that she will become a constellation at the order of her divine companion.⁵² Perhaps the

⁴⁹ Whitmarsh (2013: 152–153) views AP 9.562 as an allegory of patronage. The *salutationes* by *clientes* became a target of mockery in Greek and Latin writers, as for example Plut. *Mor.* 814D, where it is stated that provincials who sought offices in Rome 'grew old haunting the doors of other men's houses' (οἱ πολλοὶ γηράσκουσι πρὸς ἀλλοτρίαις θύραις); cf. Saller, 1982: 129 for more passages. Other Latin authors sometimes described *clientes* as parasites, e.g., Juv. *Sat.* 1.139, 5.1–5; cf. Damon, 1995.

⁵⁰ Cf. Buraselis, 2020: 5. Bowie (2008: 235; 2011: 194) traces similarities with Kallimachos' *Lock of Berenike*, another famous case of court flattery, in which the lock of queen Berenike II was also catasterised and spoke in the first person (frag. 110), cf. Ypsilanti (2018: 242–243), who also takes note of the similarity. On Kallimachos' poem, Clayman, 2011; 2014: 97–104.

⁵¹ Bowersock (1965: 36 with n. 5) argues that Krinagoras wrote AP 9.224 and 9.419 (on the Baths of Augustus at the Pyrenees) when accompanying the emperor on his travels and Ypsilanti (2018: 9, 243) regards it highly probable for 9.224 too, accordingly; Buraselis, 2020: 5.

⁵² The she-goat compares her master with the Aegis-bearer, who is Zeus himself.

most striking element of the epigram is that the favourite animal of the *princeps* will follow him in his ascension to heaven; a telling example of court flattery and homage to the emperor's affection to the she-goat, which will provide him with milk even in the divine world.⁵³ However, a subtle irony is also detected in this animal *apotheosis*.⁵⁴ The image of a she-goat 'reaching for the stars' cannot but cause amusement to some readers of the poem, both ancient and modern. Irony towards divine honours for the emperor can be detected here, and this should not confuse modern researchers, as the criticism of ancient authors against ruler worship was an already established tradition since the Hellenistic age.⁵⁵ Moreover, even the later imperial-age writers and Roman emperors themselves satirised the imperial cult.⁵⁶ One recalls the famous satire *Apocolocyntosis* of Claudius, written by Seneca, or the famous last words of Vespasian in his dying bed: *Vae, puto deus fio*.⁵⁷

Moreover, as Ypsilanti justly remarks, the excessive boasting of the goat in different parts of the poem (e.g., 'I am the goat with the heavy udders, the richest in milk of all whose breast the dairy-pail has drained', ll. 1–2) 'slyly subverts the ostensible purpose of the epigram, that is court flattery'.⁵⁸ Indeed, the goat lays claims to a life parallel to that of Augustus in several ways: she will follow him to heaven; she is superior to any other (πασάων, l. 2) in terms of the richness of her milk, as Augustus excels everyone else in superiority; she is πούλυγαλακτοτάτην (l. 2), which is ironically close to Augustus πούλυσέβαστος in Krinagoras' AP 9.419 (l. 3);⁵⁹ she is a σύμπλοος (fellow shipmate) of Augustus, a term which implies equality with the emperor in an ironical tone.⁶⁰

Ypsilanti notes that both poems AP 9.224 and 9.562 involve an animal whose activities are suggestive of the divinity of the emperor.⁶¹ In my view, these affinities between the poems and the interpretation offered here for the causes of Krinagoras' irony are sufficient for the attribution of AP 9.562 to Krinagoras. This pair of epigrams constitutes an elegant embroidery of irony, mockery, and flattery, prompted by the sufferings of the poet on his long trip to Tarragona.

Unfortunately, the epigram of the she-goat cannot be dated with certainty, and the voyage of Augustus mentioned in this poem cannot be identified. However, suppose Krinagoras accompanied the emperor on this trip, as I argue. In that case, it must have occurred most probably after 25 BCE, when he resided in the imperial court in Rome. Indeed, earlier scholarship identified this journey with the emperor's visit to Greece and Asia Minor in 21–19 BCE. This would have been interesting, as Krinagoras would have returned to familiar places in this case. Krinagoras may have been reminiscent of his hardships during the long journey to Tarragona that claimed the life of a young comrade, Seleukos, while the emperor enjoyed all comforts in this voyage, including the milk of his favourite

⁵³ Likewise, the lock of Berenike ascended to heaven in Kallimachos' poem, as did the goat that fed Zeus, the lion of Nemea, and the golden ram that carried Phrixos and Helle, Ypsilanti, 2018: 242–243. The catheterisation of Augustus himself was described by the Augustan poets, Hor. *Od.* 1.2.45 (*serus in caelum redeas*), cf. Virg. *Georg.* 4.562 (*viamque adfectat Olympo*).

⁵⁴ Buraselis (2020: 5) characteristically ended his analysis on the poem with this remark: 'One is tempted to comment: an apotheosis of and on four legs'.

⁵⁵ E.g., Plut. *Mor.* 360D on the witty retort of king Antigonos Gonatas to claims of his divine nature from his courtier Hermodoros. Plutarch (*Alex.* 28) also records Lysippos' accusation against Apelles, because he painted Alexander the Great holding a thunderbolt, an attribute of Zeus. Alexander the Great was also said to have expressed irony and concerns over his own divinity on various occasions (Ath. 6.251C).

⁵⁶ Buraselis, 2020 on approaches to the imperial cult by Greek intellectuals.

⁵⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 23.4.

⁵⁸ Ypsilanti, 2018: 243; cf. 245, 247.

⁵⁹ Cf. above, n. 43.

⁶⁰ 'Σύμπλοος' as 'fellow-voyager' in Hdt. 2.115, 3.41; Ephor. 27J, Plut. *Mor.* 2.148a.

⁶¹ Ypsilanti, 2018: 254, n. 6.

animal. The she-goat would have followed him in the stars after death, while the body of Seleukos was buried on a beach in a foreign place far away from his homeland (κεῖται ἀμετρήτων ξείνος ἐπ' αἰγιαλῶν).

It should be underlined here that the ironic tone in both poems is subtle and tactful. These epigrams served to flatter and praise the patron of Krinagoras, and the poet exalted the emperor's superiority and divinity in these literary works.⁶² Crucially, another poem (AP 9.419), also inspired by the journey of the third embassy (25 BCE) as the reference to the waters of the Pyrenees in Spain illustrates (Πυρήνης ὕδατα μαρτύρια), Krinagoras used nature again (the aforementioned waters) to praise Augustus:⁶³

Κῆν μυχὸν Ὀρκυναῖον ἢ ἐς πύματον Σολόεντα
 ἔλθη καὶ Λιβυκῶν κράσπεδον Ἑσπερίδων
 Καίσαρ ὁ πουλυσέβαστος, ἅμα κλέος εἶσιν ἐκείνῳ
 πάντη· Πυρήνης ὕδατα μαρτύρια.
 Οἴσι γὰρ οὐδὲ πέριξ δρυτόμοι ἀπεφαιδρύναντο
 λουτρὰ καὶ ἠπείρων ἔσσεται ἀμφοτέρων. 5

Whether to the depths of Ercynaeen nooks or to the outermost Soloeis
 and the fringes of Libyan Hesperides should
 most august Caesar travel, glory follows him
 everywhere; the waters of Pyrene are my witness.
 These, wherein not even the native woodcutters ever bathed,
 will become baths of both continents. 5

AP 9.419

The poem conveys the remoteness of the places where Octavian travelled – and of which Krinagoras had personal knowledge – as among the places mentioned are the baths in the Pyrenean mountains, close to Tarragona where Augustus withdrew to be cured from his illness.⁶⁴ No sense of irony is detected in this testimony and praise of the long-reaching glory of Augustus. Krinagoras draws again on his experiences from his journey, but this time to glorify the emperor without any shade of irony. So, how should we interpret the discreet employment of irony and humourous skepticism in Krinagoras' poems AP 9.562 and AP 9.224 in relation to Augustan glory and divinity?

Krinagoras was a skilful master of the Greek language and knew well how to express complex notions elegantly. Accordingly, he employed his poetic talents to praise the imperial house, including Augustus, 'without becoming cheap in his praise'.⁶⁵ But at the same time, deeply embodied in the Greek cultural tradition, Krinagoras did not hesitate to compose poems expressing an almost anti-Roman spirit, melancholy, and nostalgic glory of Greek independence. In AP 9.284, Krinagoras expresses sorrow for the settlement of Italian *libertini* (παλίμπρητοι, 'slaves') in Corinth, the ancient city of the Bacchiadai. Elsewhere (AP 9.235, ll. 5–6), hope is expressed that the kingdom of Cleopatra

⁶² For example, the elegant ironic tone of this poem does not preclude another function as imperial praise; the *apotheosis* of the she-goat can also refer to Augustus' sign, *capricornus* (Αἰγόκερως) and Augustus is compared explicitly to Zeus in the last lines.

⁶³ AP 9.419, dated c. 25 BCE: Ypsilanti, 2018: 300, 303.

⁶⁴ Suetonius (*Aug.* 81.1) states that Augustus tried first hot and then cold baths, most likely those mentioned in the poem; cf. Cassius Dio (53.25.7) for Augustus' retirement in Tarragona due to an illness.

⁶⁵ Buraselis, 2020: 4.

will rise again through the adverb *πάλι* (again);⁶⁶ resentment against the Romans through the adjective *ὄθνῆοι* (foreign) for them (*AP* 7.645, l. 5); and there is also the ironic tone in *AP* 9.224 and 9.562 analysed here. The poetic world of Krinagoras is decisively Greek, as his poems are full of references to the geography, myth, and history of Greece and his topics are derived mainly from the Greek cultural tradition, for example, the Eleusinian Mysteries (*AP* 11.42); the poems of Anakreon that Krinagoras offers as a gift to Antonia (*AP* 9.239); or Kallimachos' *Hecale* that he offers to Marcellus (*AP* 9.545).⁶⁷

However, in the two epigrams discussed here that subtly mock specifically the Augustan glory and divinity, except for whatever role the poet's 'patriotic' sentiments may have played (if any) and the wish to display an independent artistic spirit, the hardships Krinagoras personally suffered in the long and dangerous journey to Tarragona and the loss of a young countryman while wandering 'κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν' could also be an important factor for his choice to adopt this seemingly strange style. The influence of sufferings when travelling for long, from one side of the Mediterranean Sea to the other, and through unknown and perilous lands in search of the emperor should not be underestimated. A talented poet like Krinagoras, who largely anchored his writings on personal experience, would take advantage of topics, such as the praise of Augustan glory even in the animal world (*AP* 9.562) and the luxuries Augustus indulged during his travel – in which Krinagoras probably accompanied him (*AP* 9.224) –, to formulate a distinct, yet subtle ironic tone. Surely, then, it is not a coincidence that both epigrams seem to have been composed after the events of 25 BCE.

We must keep in mind that being a keen supporter of Augustus, as Krinagoras was, did not mean obsequious flattery (*adulatio*): praise does not necessarily imply servility, and irony does not equal opposition or to an 'anti-Augustan' stance.⁶⁸ The poet could praise the emperor, but he could also subtly, skilfully, and carefully insinuate irony for his glory; epigrams were useful for both purposes, especially scoptic epigrams.⁶⁹ Indirect irony and wordplay could express complaints and bitterness elegantly. Indeed, many passages of Latin poets, especially Ovid, on the Augustan monuments and symbols (such as the *sidus Iulium*, the Danaids of the portico on the Palatine Hill, and the triumph) are ambiguous and often on the knife's edge between flattery and criticism (including irony as a technique of criticism). In this eloquent way, the poets elicited sympathy from like-minded readers while avoiding retaliations from the imperial house.⁷⁰ Moreover, Augustan court poets encouraged their readers to apply critical thinking to symbols linked to Augustus to allow some discussion and reflection on aspects that the fear of retaliation, or excessive respect for Augustan authority, might otherwise exclude.⁷¹ For example, the paradox, which we have already pinpointed in Krinagoras' epigrams (the talking parrot or the she-goat ascending to the heavens), was consciously used by poets

⁶⁶ *AP* 9.235, ll. 5–6: Ἐκ πατέρων εἴη παισὶν πάλι τοῖσιν ἀνάκτων | ἔμπεδον ἠπείροις σκῆπτρον ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρας (trans. Let the children of kings hold from their fathers a strong rule over both lands again).

⁶⁷ For the Greek poetic world of Krinagoras, Bowie, 2011.

⁶⁸ Clearly, flattery served to the glorification of Augustus and his achievements, as is the case, more straightforwardly, with Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, excerpts of which were even inscribed on marble. However, open *adulatio* was viewed negatively by contemporaries (Griffin, 1984: 205–213). Ahl (1984: 187–208) discusses figured speech as a way to safely and effectively express veiled criticism of tyrants in terms that rely on reader conclusions, e.g., through double-edged discourse (cf. Pandey, 2018: 28 with a collection of ancient sources). Ahl discusses figured speech in Roman poetry and oratory, although with a different focus (mainly Quintilian against the 'tyrant' Domitian). In his opinion, figured speech is an intermediate stage between direct criticism and flattery. There were surely many more intermediate stages, such as the elegant combination of irony and flattery in these epigrams of Krinagoras.

⁶⁹ Coleman, 2019: 65–69.

⁷⁰ Pandey, 2018: 27–29. Pandey supports that Ovid encouraged his audience to read his texts and search for veiled meanings that criticized Augustus, Pandey, 2018: 24–26, with analysis of specific Ovidian passages.

⁷¹ Contemporary audiences, both Greek and Roman, were educated in the critical study of literature, Konstan, 2006.

as a tool to engage the readers actively with the poem and encourage them to interpret it as they wished.⁷²

Roman writers were keen to use satire and irony in their works; one example is Horace in his *Satires* and *Ode* 2.4.⁷³ Ovid is also a typical case. Many passages can equally be read as flattering or ironic. For example, it has been argued that *Ars Amatoria* 1 parodies the Augustan militaristic values espoused by the *Forum Augustum*, and that Ovid gently satirises Augustan legislation on morality in *Amores* 2.2. Moreover, it is stated that the description of the deification of Caesar in *Metamorphoses* 15.745–851 almost parodied Augustus' hegemony.⁷⁴ In many passages of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid compares Augustus to Jupiter and insists that he is a 'god on earth', presumably intending to flatter the emperor.⁷⁵ Yet, some of the very ideas satirised by Ovid continued to be circulated, precisely because these passages could equally be understood as 'pro-Augustan' as well as ironic.

Therefore, the epigrams of Krinagoras contain a long-lasting literary *topos*, where animals provide a humourous, subtle, and safe way to convey social and political criticism.⁷⁶ By using animals and their relationship to the emperor, their undisputable master, Krinagoras comments indirectly and carefully on the omnipresent imperial glory and the unequal power relations between emperor and subjects, matters that surely dramatically came into his mind during the embassy to Tarragona and the death of Seleukos. Krinagoras, like many other poets and orators of the imperial age, could tweak imperial noses as much as they liked so long as what was said could be interpreted in another, safer way.⁷⁷ Indeed, the line between flattery and irony is sometimes very thin, and this explains sufficiently why the epigrams treated are still interpreted as 'extremes of flattery'. After all, the line between flattery and irony sometimes confused even ancient writers.⁷⁸

On his part, Augustus generally demonstrated tolerance against verbal criticism coming from his political opponents so that he would have accepted the indirect and well-hidden irony in a pair of epigrams of one of his court poets.⁷⁹ More than that, many anecdotes illustrate the emperor's good sense of humour, even his ability and tendency for self-mockery.⁸⁰ After all, Augustus himself does

⁷² Cf. Pittore (2004: 15, 33–35, esp. 35), who argues that the world created by writers distorts reality in ways that correspond and react to the existing social system. Among literary texts, the ironic one possesses most this characteristic attribute of systematic re-invention of facts and values. For example, it assigns people and objects functions that are not normally theirs. In the fictitious world of the ironic text, the atypical, the unexpected, the unorthodox, appears as normal. On their part, readers can decide whether and how much they will accept of the new image of reality the text offers.

⁷³ Hejduk, 2018 and Pelliccia, 2018, respectively.

⁷⁴ Pandey, 2018: 31, 116 and 74–75, respectively. Cf. also Pandey, 2018: 77–78 on the treatment of the Julian paternity of Augustus by Ovid.

⁷⁵ Feeney (1991: 219–224) collects and discusses the relevant passages of *Metamorphoses*, and comments that the comparisons between Augustus and Jupiter elegantly criticised the absolute power of Augustus (Feeney, 1991: 222–223).

⁷⁶ Newlands, 2005: 153–157 on animal fable, among which features Aesopos in a prominent position.

⁷⁷ As Pittore (2004: 14) puts it, the ironical discourse 'è così costruito per essere ambiguo'. Pittore (2004: 50–52) discusses the role of ambiguity in ironical discourse and argues that ambiguous irony can be more effective than direct language. In this regard, characteristic is the flattery of the fisherman who suggested to Domitian that the fish he caught purposefully swam in his net to honour the emperor's table, an obvious irony to the rest of us (Juv. 4.69–71; Ahl, 1984: 197–198).

⁷⁸ See for example the assessment of the so-called Demetrius on the treatment of Aeschines on Telauges as being poised ambiguously between praise and irony, Demetr. *Eloc.* 291: *πᾶσα γὰρ σχεδὸν ἢ περὶ τὸν Τηλαυγῆ διήγησις ἀπορίαν παρέχει, εἴτε θαυμασμὸς εἴτε χλευασμὸς ἐστί. Τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτον εἶδος ἀμφίβολον, καίτοι εἰρωνεία οὐκ ὄν, ἔχει τινὰ ὁμῶς καὶ εἰρωνείας ἔμφασιν.* According to the author, this ambiguity cannot be defined exactly as irony, but it possesses a clear affinity to it.

⁷⁹ Sources collected in Yavetz, 1990: 34–35, as for example Augustus' advice to Tiberius to tolerate criticism in Suet. *Aug.* 51.3. According to Pandey (2018: 27–28), Augustus allowed a certain degree of freedom of speech to writers that ultimately confirmed his domination (what Herbert Marcuse termed 'repressive tolerance').

⁸⁰ E.g., Suet. *Aug.* 85.2; Macrobius *Sat.* 2.4.1, 14; and characteristically Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.77 on his reaction for the neglect of his cult in Tarragona (cf. Yavetz, 1990: 36–38 for a discussion of Augustus' sense of humour).

not play an active role in these poems. He is praised in the epigram of the parrot, and in the she-goat epigram he merely boards the she-goat on his vessel to enjoy her milk while travelling. He is a distant figure that appears to be glorified and revered by the natural world. Therefore, also considering his intensive contact with Greek and Latin writers and poets and his affinity with poetry,⁸¹ he might have enjoyed the elegantly satirical pun in those epigrams of Krinagoras.⁸² The fact that Augustus took no issue with that ambiguity of flattery and irony adds him to the list of Hellenistic rulers who oscillated between indulgence and realisation of absurdity – but they did indulge in those praises nonetheless.

Conclusions

In this paper, I argue that Krinagoras drew inspiration from and anchored his epigrams on his personal experiences. The long and hazardous trip from his native home in Mytilene to Tarragona and the death of a young compatriot along the way would have profoundly impacted him. Something evident in numerous epigrams that can reasonably be associated with this journey and convey the sufferings Krinagoras and the other ambassadors endured.

Having established this as a starting point, I interpret the distinct but delicate tone of irony in two epigrams of Krinagoras addressing Augustan glory as a poetic way of conveying criticism. In this regard, it is important to note that the epigrams of the parrot and the she-goat were written after the embassy, and the latter perhaps when the poet accompanied Augustus in one of his travels. The parrot and the she-goat represent flatterers of the emperor, animal symbols that revere Augustus willingly and disseminate his glory. At the same time, both poems undoubtedly praise the emperor. Especially Krinagoras' epigram of the talking parrot seems to be the earliest exemplar of a tradition of talking birds praising emperors, an eager poetic attempt to flatter them via nature's indisputable acknowledgement of and submission to their greatness. However, Krinagoras differentiated his work from courtly and slavish speech. The two epigrams provide a form of 'safe speech' in which Krinagoras could subtly satirise the excessive efforts of others to flatter Augustus. Though light-touch and discreet, there is an underlying tone of irony in these epigrams; not everyone was meant to understand it fully, and this probably offered sufficient self-protection.

Krinagoras took the opportunity to make a personal, not overly positive, comment on the omnipresent Augustan glory and divinity, contemplating and acknowledging his hardships during the long and calamitous journey to the remote Tarragona and the loss of a young compatriot in his task to meet the emperor. There is no reason to interpret these epigrams exclusively as flattery *or* as covert irony – both apply, as they do in other passages of Augustan poets. Therefore, the paper offers new perspectives on the differentiated interpretations of Augustan glory and the interplay between irony and flattery in the approach of imperial grandeur by a renowned Greek epigrammatist who lived in the imperial court. From this aspect, it would be interesting to examine how far and in which contexts Greek writers of the imperial period employed irony when they referred to Roman *principes*. Krinagoras' irony is merely one instance among many where subtle mockery and satire of the imperial family were exercised in the early Augustan period.

⁸¹ Suet. *Aug.* 85.2 (on the composition of poems by Augustus), 89.1 (on his affinity with Greek poetry), cf. Griffin, 1984: 204 on the emperor's affinity with poetry.

⁸² Cf. the remark in Hamm (2009: 103–104) that irony in the right mixture and dose in literary works gave the ruler a certain freedom to react and ensured that he could still laugh, and maybe he even had to laugh ('der Herrscher trotzdem lachen konnte, ja vielleicht lachen musste').

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Abstract (Greek) | Περίληψη

Ο Κριναγόρας και η αυτοκρατορική δόξα: Μια αλληλεπίδραση μεταξύ ειρωνείας, σάτιρας και κολακείας

Ο Κριναγόρας ήταν ένας Έλληνας ποιητής που καταγόταν από την Μυτιλήνη (γεννήθηκε γύρω στο 70 π.Χ.). Έζησε επομένως κατά την Αυγούστεια περίοδο και ήταν μέλος επιφανούς οικογένειας. Του έχουν αποδοθεί συνολικά 51 επιγράμματα που χωρίζονται σε διάφορες κατηγορίες, όπως «ἐπιτύμβια», «ἐρωτικά», «ἀναθηματικά» και «ἐπίδεικτικά». Όμως, το πιο χαρακτηριστικό στοιχείο της ποίησης του Κριναγόρα είναι η έμπνευσή του από προσωπικές εμπειρίες και παρατηρήσεις, που συχνά χρησιμοποιεί ως υλικό για τα επιγράμματά του.

Ο Κριναγόρας συμμετείχε ενεργά στα δημόσια θέματα που απασχολούσαν τη Μυτιλήνη. Χαρακτηριστικά, πήρε μέρος σε συνολικά τρεις πρεσβείες προς Ρωμαίους πολιτικούς ηγέτες: δύο στον Καίσαρα (κατά τα έτη 48 και 46/5 π.Χ.) και μία στον Οκταβιανό – Αύγουστο το 26/5 π.Χ. προκειμένου να επισφραγιστεί το *foedus aequum* μεταξύ της Μυτιλήνης και της Ρώμης. Μετά από την τρίτη πρεσβεία, ο Κριναγόρας έμεινε στη Ρώμη για πολλά χρόνια, όπου συνδέθηκε στενά με τον αυτοκρατορικό κύκλο και ίσως έγινε ποιητής της αυλής του Αυγούστου. Πράγματι, σώζονται πολλά επιγράμματά του, τα οποία είναι αφιερωμένα σε μέλη της αυτοκρατορικής οικογένειας, όπως στον Τιβέριο, τον Μαρκέλλο και την Αντωνία.

Σε αυτό το άρθρο, επιχειρώ να ερμηνεύσω ένα παράδοξο φαινόμενο. Ενώ τα περισσότερα επιγράμματα του Κριναγόρα που απευθύνονται ή σχετίζονται με τον Αύγουστο και την οικογένειά του χαρακτηρίζονται προφανώς από έπαινο και κολακεία των αναφερόμενων προσώπων, δύο επιγράμματα φαίνεται να διέπονται από έναν διακριτικό και λεπτό τόνο ειρωνείας. Πιστεύω πως αυτή η ειρωνική χροιά ερμηνεύεται βάσει των δυσχερειών που αντιμετώπισε ο Κριναγόρας κατά την πρεσβεία του προς τον Οκταβιανό, όταν ταξίδεψε από τη Μυτιλήνη στην άλλη άκρη της Μεσογείου, στην Ταρραγόνα της Ισπανίας, όπου βρισκόταν ο αυτοκράτορας. Στη διάρκεια αυτού του μακρινού και δύσκολου ταξιδιού, ο Κριναγόρας έχασε έναν συμπατριώτη του, τον Σέλευκο, τον οποίο θρήνησε σε ένα επίγραμμα. Επομένως, αντλώντας έμπνευση από τις δύσκολες συνθήκες του ταξιδιού, ο Κριναγόρας προχώρησε στη συγγραφή δύο επιγραμμάτων στα οποία στοιχεία ειρωνείας και κολακείας της αυτοκρατορικής δόξας και θειότητας συμπλέκονται στενά.

Στο πρώτο μέρος του άρθρου εξετάζω το ταξίδι της πρεσβείας από τη Μυτιλήνη στην Ταρραγόνα. Γνωρίζουμε από επιγράμματα του Κριναγόρα πως η αποστολή διέσχισε τις Κυκλάδες και τη «βάρβαρη» περιοχή της Λιγουρίας, όπου ο Κριναγόρας συνάντησε ή πληροφορήθηκε για μια πρακτική των ντόπιων ληστών, την οποία επίσης περιέγραψε σε ένα επίγραμμα. Κατά τη διάρκεια του ταξιδιού ή στην επιστροφή, πέθανε ο Σέλευκος, την απώλεια του οποίου θρήνησε ο Κριναγόρας. Σύμφωνα με το κείμενο, ο νεαρός άντρας τάφηκε σε μια παραλία της Ισπανίας, «πολύ μακριά από τη Λέσβο» (τόσον δίχα τηλόθι Λέσβου). Έτσι, παίρνουμε μια εικόνα των κινδύνων και των δυσχερειών που αντιμετώπισε η πρεσβεία. Μάλιστα, γνωρίζουμε ότι περίπου την ίδια περίοδο μια πρεσβεία από τις Τράλλεις στάλθηκε στην Ταρραγόνα και ο ιστορικός Αγαθίας (Ιστορίαί 2.17.2–3) επίσης ανέλυσε τις δυσκολίες ενός τέτοιου ταξιδιού προς αναζήτηση του αυτοκράτορα.

Στο δεύτερο μέρος του άρθρου αναλύω τα επιγράμματα AP 9.562 και 9.224 του Κριναγόρα. Το πρώτο επίγραμμα περιγράφει έναν παπαγάλο που αφήνει το κλουβί του και διδάσκει στα πουλιά του δάσους πώς να απευθύνουν χαιρετισμό στον Αύγουστο, ενώ στο δεύτερο επίγραμμα η αγαπημένη κατόικα του Αυγούστου αναφέρει περήφανα ότι αυτή προμηθεύει τον αυτοκράτορα με γάλα ακόμα

και κατά τη διάρκεια των ταξιδιών του και εκφράζει την ελπίδα της ότι σύντομα θα αποθεωθεί, ακολουθώντας τον στον ουρανό. Τα δύο επιγράμματα χρονολογούνται μάλλον μετά από το ταξίδι της τρίτης πρεσβείας (25 π.Χ) και έχει υποστηριχθεί ότι ο Κριναγόρας μπορεί να συνόδευε τον Αύγουστο στο ταξίδι που περιγράφει η κατσίκα του επιγράμματος AP 9.224.

Τα δύο επιγράμματα έχουν χαρακτηριστεί ως «αποκορύφωμα της κολακείας», αλλά υπάρχουν ευδιάκριτα, αν και λεπτά, ίχνη ειρωνείας. Ειδικότερα, δεν σατιρίζεται άμεσα ο ίδιος ο Αύγουστος, αλλά ο Κριναγόρας χρησιμοποιεί δύο ζώα για σχολιάσει με ασφάλεια την πανταχού παρουσία και δόξα του Αυγούστου. Αυτό το γεγονός δεν πρέπει να μας παραξενεύει. Υπάρχουν και άλλοι ποιητές, όπως ο Οράτιος και ο Οβίδιος που χρησιμοποίησαν έντεχνους τρόπους για να ειρωνευτούν πτυχές της ιδεολογίας του Αυγούστου χωρίς να θέσουν σε κίνδυνο τόσο το έργο τους όσο και τους ίδιους. Επιπλέον, γνωρίζουμε πως ο ίδιος ο Αύγουστος ήταν γενικά ανεκτικός με την σάτιρα και πολλές ανεκδοτολογικές αφηγήσεις μαρτυρούν την αίσθηση χιούμορ που τον διακατείχε, ακόμα και τον αυτοσαρκασμό του.

Επομένως, δεν θα πρέπει να ερμηνευτούν τα επιγράμματα AP 9.562 και 9.224 είτε ως απόπειρες κολακείας του Αυγούστου, είτε ως προσεκτική ειρωνεία. Ισχύουν και τα δύο ταυτόχρονα, όπως συμβαίνει και σε άλλα έργα Αυγούστειων ποιητών. Συνεπώς, το άρθρο αυτό προσφέρει νέες οπτικές πάνω στην διαφοροποιημένη ερμηνεία της Αυγούστειας δόξας και την αλληλεπίδραση μεταξύ ειρωνείας και κολακείας στην προσέγγιση του αυτοκρατορικού μεγαλείου από έναν φημισμένο Έλληνα ποιητή που έζησε στην αυτοκρατορική αυλή. Η ειρωνεία του Κριναγόρα αποτελεί μόνο ένα παράδειγμα μεταξύ πολλών όπου χρησιμοποιούνταν ο διακριτικός σαρκασμός και η σάτιρα της αυτοκρατορικής οικογένειας σε έργα της πρώιμης Αυγούστειας περιόδου.