

Solon's Horse and Verbal Echoes: The Metaphorical Grooming of the Soul in Fr. 27 (W.)

Solon's artistic voice has received limited attention over time (e.g. Lardinois 2006; Blaise 2006; Irwin 2005; Anhalt 1993). This paper explores Solon's deft display of repetition and verbal play in his definition of the human soul in the "Ages of Man" (Fr. 27 W.). I argue that the narrator defines the human lifespan by using two carefully placed, yet previously unexplored, horse metaphors to describe human physical and intellectual growth.

In the poem, the narrator describes seven major phases in the life of a man. It has puzzled some that Solon does not incorporate into his poem more social markers that typically defined human development in Archaic Greece. Instead, the vocabulary he uses is biological rather than political (Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010; Falkner 1990). Recognizing the two horse metaphors, however, reveals the poem's harmonious composition and didactic message.

My interpretation hinges on Solon's artful repetition of the word ἄρετή. I build on Faraone's recognition of the poem's structure as comprised of two elegiac stanzas (Faraone 2008). I argue Solon begins each stanza using language that pertains to horse grooming to draw dramatic differences between youthful ἄρετή, which is physical, and mature ἄρετή, which is intellectual.

In the first stanza, a reference to tooth loss focuses the audience's attention exclusively on human physical development. Tooth loss had little importance for measuring human maturation elsewhere in discourses regarding *paideia* but did pertain to horse maturation (Xen. *Eq.* 2-3.). In the second stanza, the word καταρτύεται, which literally indicates horse-grooming, metaphorically describes the taming of the human mind and anticipates language used to describe human development in later Greek literature (e.g. Pl. *Leg.* 808d- 808e; Aesch. *Eum.*

473). The recurrent horse language in the second stanza transforms the poem from one about the human claim to physical excellence to one about the emergent claim to the mental excellence that accompanies old age.

This study intends to contribute to a reassessment of repetition and verbal artistry in the works attributed to Solon. Furthermore, this argument advances the research of animal imagery and its relationship to ancient discourses of the human body.

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