



Simonides of Ceos

The Fragments

DELPHI  CLASSICS

Ancient Classics Series

The Fragments of

SIMONIDES

(c. 556-468 BC)



Contents

The Translations

The Fragments of Simonides

The Greek Texts

List of Greek Texts

The Biography

Simonides of Ceos (1844) by William Smith

The Delphi Classics Catalogue



© *Delphi Classics* 2025
Version 1

The Fragments of
SIMONIDES OF CEOS



By Delphi Classics, 2025

COPYRIGHT

The Fragments of Simonides



First published in the United Kingdom in 2025 by Delphi Classics.

© Delphi Classics, 2025.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form other than that in which it is published.

ISBN: 978 1 80170 236 2

Delphi Classics

is an imprint of

Delphi Publishing Ltd

Hastings, East Sussex

United Kingdom

Contact: sales@delphiclassics.com

DELPHI  CLASSICS

www.delphiclassics.com

The Translations



Simonides' birthplace — Ioulis, present-day capital of Kea (Ceos in Ancient Greece), including remnants of the ancient acropolis. Like most Cycladic settlements, it was built inland on a readily defensible hill as protection against pirates.



Ancient ruins of Ceos

The Fragments of Simonides



Translated by J. M. Edmonds, Loeb Classical Library, 1924

One of the nine canonical lyric poets, Simonides (556 – 468 BC) was born in Ioulis on Ceos. Many legends survive concerning this colourful character compared to the other great lyric poets of Greece. He was widely revered as one of the wisest of men, famous for being a greedy miser, celebrated as an inventor of a system of mnemonics and the inventor of some letters of the Greek alphabet (ω, η, ξ, ψ). He also exerted influence on the sophistic enlightenment of the Classical era. His fame as a poet rests largely on his ability to present basic human situations with affecting simplicity. In the words of the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (35–100 AD):

“Simonides has a simple style, but he can be commended for the aptness of his language and for a certain charm; his chief merit, however, lies in the power to excite pity, so much so that some prefer him in this respect to all other writers of the genre.”

He is also popularly associated with the famous epitaphs commemorating fallen Spartans at the Battle of Thermopylae:

Ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῆδε
κείμεθα, τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

Tell them in Lacedaemon, passer-by
That here, obedient to their word, we lie,

Sadly, only fragments of his poetry have survived, either in the form of papyrus fragments or quotations by ancient literary figures, though new fragments continue to be unearthed by archaeologists at Oxyrhynchus, a city and archaeological site in Egypt.

According to the Byzantine encyclopaedia *Suda*, Simonides was born in the 56th Olympiad (556/552 BC), while other sources suggest the 62nd (532/528 BC). He flourished until the 78th Olympiad (468/464 BC), “having lived eighty-nine years.” Modern scholars generally accept 556-468 BC as the span of his life. He was the son of Leoprepes of Ioulis on Ceos, the outermost island of the Cyclades. The innermost island, Delos, was the reputed birthplace of Apollo, where the people of Ceos regularly sent choirs to perform hymns in the god’s honour. Carthaea, another Cean town, included a choregeion or school where choirs were trained and Simonides is likely to have worked there as a teacher in his early years. In addition to its musical culture, Ceos enjoyed a rich tradition of athletic competition, especially in running and boxing, making it fertile territory for a genre of choral lyric that Simonides pioneered — the victory ode.

Ceos lies only fifteen miles south-east of Attica, to where Simonides was eventually drawn at about the age of thirty, lured by the opportunity of patronage at the court of the tyrant Hipparchus, a noted admirer of the arts. His rivalry there with another chorus-trainer and poet, Lasus of Hermione, became something of a joke to Athenians of later generations — it is mentioned by the comic playwright Aristophanes, who presents Simonides as a miserly type of professional poet.

After the assassination of Hipparchus in 514 BC, Simonides withdrew to Thessaly, where he enjoyed the protection of the Scopadae and Aleuadae. These were two of the most powerful families in the Thessalian feudal aristocracy. Thessaly at that time was a cultural backwater, remaining in the 'Dark Ages' until the close of the fifth century BC. Among the most colourful of his Thessalian patrons was the head of the Scopadae clan, named Scopas. Fond of drinking and vain displays of wealth, this aristocrat's proud and capricious dealings with Simonides are demonstrated in a traditional account related by Cicero and Quintilian, according to which the poet was commissioned to write a victory ode for a boxer. Simonides embellished his ode with so many references to the twins Castor and Pollux (heroic archetypes of the boxer) that Scopas told him to collect half the commissioned fee from them — he would only pay the other half. Legend then tells that Simonides was called out of the feast hall to see two visitors that had arrived and were asking for him — presumably the god-like twins Castor and Pollux. As soon as he left the hall, the building collapsed, killing everyone within. During the excavation of the rubble of the dining hall, Simonides was called upon to identify each guest killed. Their bodies had been crushed beyond recognition, but he completed the gruesome task by correlating their identities to their positions (*loci* in Latin) at the table before his departure. He later drew on this experience to develop the 'memory theatre', a system of mnemonics widely used in oral societies until the Renaissance.

Simonides then returned to Athens during the onslaught of the Persian Wars, where he became a prominent international figure, particularly as the author of commemorative verses. According to an anonymous biographer of Aeschylus, the Athenians chose Simonides ahead of Aeschylus to be the author of an epigram honouring their war-dead at Marathon, which led the tragedian (who had fought at the battle and whose brother had died there) to withdraw sulking to the court of Hiero of Syracuse.

Simonides' ability to compose tastefully and poignantly on military themes resulted in him being in great demand among Greek states after their defeat of the second Persian invasion, when he is recorded as having composed epitaphs for Athenians, Spartans and Corinthians, a commemorative song for Leonidas and his men, a dedicatory epigram for Pausanias and poems on the battles of Artemisium, Salamis and Plataea. According to Plutarch, Simonides had a statue of himself made about this time, which inspired the Athenian politician Themistocles to comment on his ugliness. The *Suda* mentions a feud between Simonides and the Rhodian lyric poet, Timocreon, for whom Simonides apparently composed a mock epitaph that mentions the issue of the Rhodian's *medism* — an issue that also involved Themistocles.

The final years of Simonides' life were spent in Sicily, where he became a friend and confidant of Hiero of Syracuse. According to a scholiast on Pindar, Simonides once acted as peace-maker between Hiero and another Sicilian tyrant, Theron of Acragas, ending a war between them. Scholiasts are the only authority for stories about the rivalry between Simonides and Pindar at the court of Hiero, traditionally used to explain some of the meanings in Pindar's victory odes. Perhaps Simonides' experiences at the courts of the tyrants Hipparchus and Scopas afforded him a competitive edge over the proud Pindar and enabled him to promote the career of his nephew, Bacchylides, at Pindar's expense. However, Pindar scholiasts are generally considered unreliable and there is little reason to accept their accounts. The Hellenistic poet Callimachus reveals in one of his poems that Simonides was buried

outside Acragas and that his tombstone was later misused in the construction of a tower.

Simonides is the first poet of Western literature to connect his art directly with the making of money and acquiring wealth. Poets before him were always distant from the actual earning of their bread, but Simonides seems to have openly championed the use of his verses to earn large funds. In the play *Peace*, Aristophanes imagines that the tragic poet Sophocles has turned into Simonides: "He may be old and decayed, but these days, if you paid him enough, he'd go to sea in a sieve." A scholiast, commenting on the passage, explains: "Simonides seems to have been the first to introduce money-grabbing into his songs and to write a song for pay," and, as proof of it, quotes a passage from one of Pindar's odes ("For then the Muse was not yet fond of profit nor mercenary"), which he interprets as covert criticism of Simonides. According to Athenaeus, when Simonides was at Hiero's court in Syracuse, he used to sell most of the daily provisions he received from the tyrant, justifying himself thus: "So that all may see Hiero's magnificence and my moderation." Aristotle reports that the wife of Hiero once asked Simonides whether it was better to be wealthy or wise, to which he replied: "Wealthy; for I see the wise spending their days at the doors of the wealthy." According to an anecdote recorded on a papyrus, dating to around 250 BC, Hiero once asked the poet if everything grows old: "Yes," Simonides answered, "all except money-making; and kind deeds age most quickly of all." Another legend tells how the poet once rejected a small fee to compose a victory ode for the winner of a mule race (not a prestigious event), but according to Aristotle he changed his mind when the fee was increased, resulting in this magniloquent opening: "Greetings, daughters of storm-footed steeds!" In a quote recorded by Plutarch, he once complained that old age had robbed him of every pleasure, but making money.

Simonides composed verses almost entirely for public performances and inscriptions, unlike previous lyric poets such as Sappho and Alcaeus, who composed more intimate verses to entertain friends. It would appear with the art of Simonides the age of individualism in lyric poetry has passed. He wrote a wide range of choral lyrics with an Ionian flavour and elegiac verses in Doric idioms. He is generally credited with inventing a new type of choral lyric, the encomium, in particular popularising a form of it that what would be known as the victory ode. These were extensions of the hymn, which previous generations of poets had dedicated only to gods and heroes. In 1905 the scholar R. C. Jebb explains:

"But it was Simonides who first led the Greeks to feel that such a tribute might be paid to any man who was sufficiently eminent in merit or in station. We must remember that, in the time of Simonides, the man to whom a hymn was addressed would feel that he was receiving a distinction which had hitherto been reserved for gods and heroes."

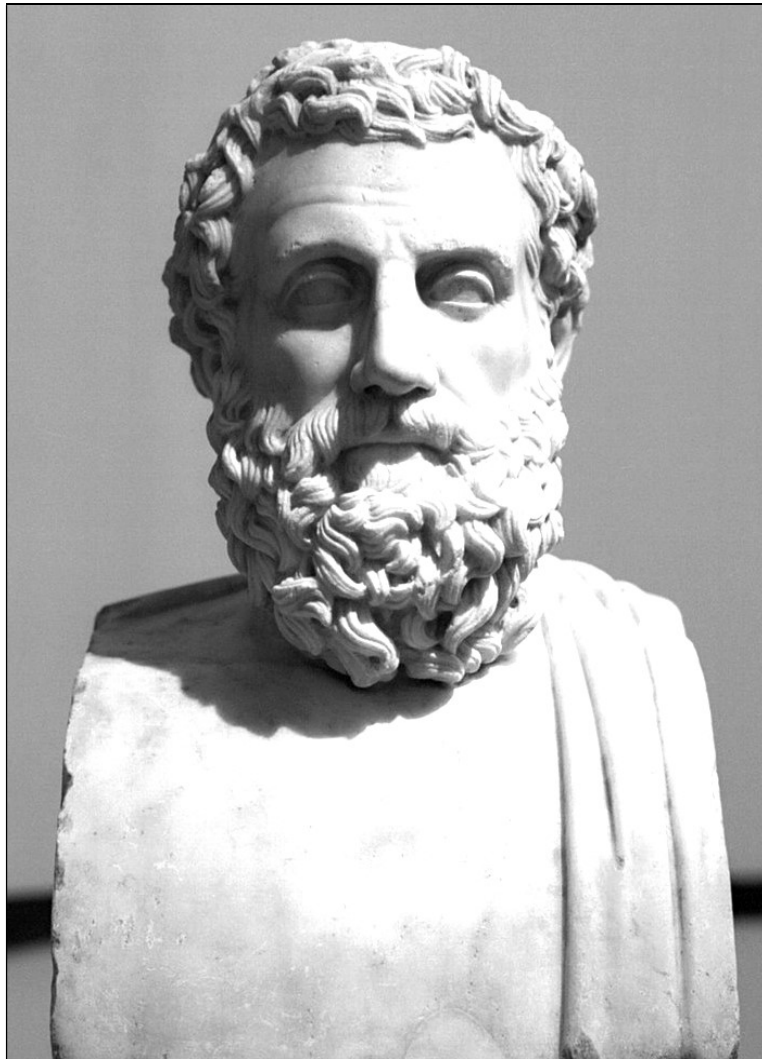
The poet was also the first to establish the choral dirge as a recognised form of lyric poetry, as testified by Quintilian, Horace, Catullus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. He was also adept at lively compositions suited to dancing (hyporchema), for which he is commended by Plutarch. Simonides was highly successful in dithyrambic competitions according to an anonymous epigram dating from the Hellenistic period, which credited him with 57 victories, possibly in Athens. The dithyramb, a genre of lyrics traditionally sung to Dionysus, was later developed into narratives illustrating heroic myths; Simonides is the earliest poet known to have composed in this enlarged form.

Like other lyric poets of the late Archaic period, Simonides makes notable use of compound adjectives and decorative epithets, yet he is also remarkable for his

restraint and balance. His poetic expression is clear and simple, relying on straightforward statement. He champions a tolerant, humanistic outlook that celebrates ordinary goodness and recognises the immense pressures that life places on human beings. One of the most celebrated lyric poets of the classical period, Simonides was the perfecter of elegy and epigram and a feared rival of Pindar and Aeschylus. He lived at the close of an era when lyric poetry had advanced from the earliest musical improvements of Terpander to the high stage of development attained by his own verses, paving the way for the crowning glory of Sophocles' works.



The slaughter of Hipparchus at Athens — Hipparchus was a tyrant of the city of Athens from 528/527 BC until his assassination by Harmodius and Aristogeiton in 514 BC. He had invited Simonides to Athens as a young man.



Roman marble herma of Aeschylus dating to c. 30 BC, based on an earlier bronze Greek model, dating to c. 340 BC — Aeschylus was a bitter rival of Simonides.

CONTENTS

FRAGMENTS CONCERNING THE LIFE OF SIMONIDES

THE POEMS OF SIMONIDES

BOOK I. HYMNS

BOOK II. PAEANS

BOOK III. PRAYERS

BOOK IV. DITHYRAMBS

BOOK V. EULOGIES

BOOK VI. DIRGES

BOOK VII. VICTORY-SONGS FOR RUNNERS

BOOK VIII. VICTORY-SONGS FOR FIVE-EVENT-CHAMPIONS

BOOK IX. VICTORY-SONGS FOR WRESTLERS

BOOK X. VICTORY-SONGS FOR BOXERS

BOOK XI. VICTORY-SONGS FOR THE FOUR-HORSE-CHARIOT-RACE

BOOK XII. VICTORY-SONGS FOR THE MULE-CAR-RACE

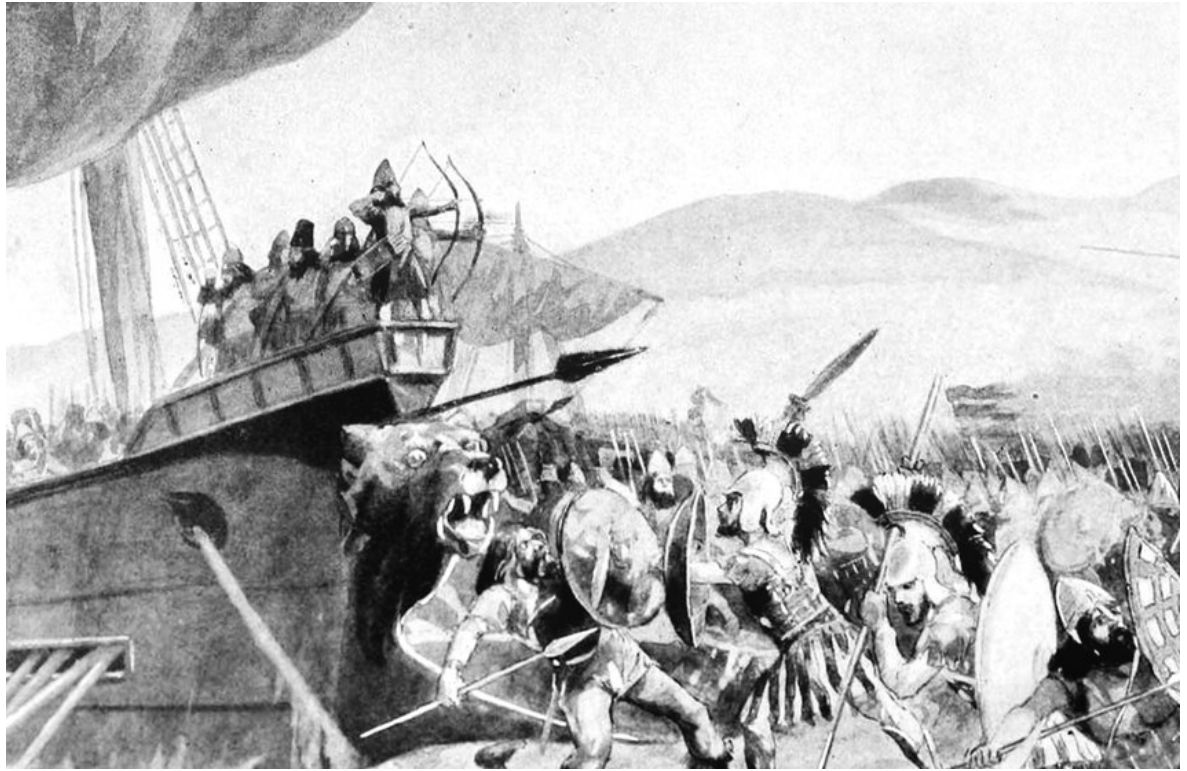
BOOK XIII. ELEGIACS

BOOK XIV. INSCRIPTIONS

1 EPITAPHS

2 DEDICATIONS

DETAILED TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE FRAGMENTS



A 1900 depiction of the Battle of Marathon



The plain of Marathon today — Simonides was commissioned by Athens to write a celebratory verse after the victory at Marathon against the Persian Empire.



Pentonkion of Hiero I of Syracuse, Simonides' final patron

FRAGMENTS CONCERNING THE LIFE OF SIMONIDES



STRABO *GEOGRAPHY*: CEOS was originally a tetropolis, but only two of the four remain as separate cities, Iulis and Carthaea, the former having absorbed Coresia and the latter Poicëssa. Iulis was the birthplace of the lyric poet Simonides and of his nephew Bacchylides, and later of the physician Erasistratus and the Peripatetic philosopher Ariston... There appears to have been a law here, mentioned by Menander in the lines 'The Ceian custom takes my fancy still, / The man who can't live well shall not live ill,' whereby, in order to make the supplies go round, all citizens who had reached the age of sixty should drink the hemlock. [hence partly perh. S.'s voluntary exile after middle-age; had the law been enforced in his case, much of his finest extant work would never have been done]

Herodotus *Histories*: Following upon their track, the Persians came up with the flying Ionians at Ephesus, and when they turned and showed fight inflicted upon them a severe defeat, after which they put to the sword a number of well-known men, including the Eretrian commander Eualcides, who had taken the prize at crown-contests in the Games and been highly eulogised by Simonides of Ceos.

[Plato] *Hipparchus*: ... Hipparchus, the eldest and wisest of the sons of Peisistratus, who among other fine ways showed his wisdom... in inducing Simonides of Ceos by high pay and valuable presents to be in continual attendance upon him.

Aelian *Historical Miscellanies*: Leoprepes of Ceos, the father of Simonides, was sitting one day in a wrestling school, when some boys who had formed mutual friendships asked, the grown-up man how they could best make their friendship last; to which he replied: 'By making allowance for one another's dispositions instead of rousing one another's anger by a challenge of spirit.'

Parian Chronicle: From the time when the Ceian Simonides son of Leoprepes, the inventor of the system of memory-aids, won the chorus-prize at Athens, and the statues were set up to Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 213 years (B.C. 477).

Suidas Lexicon: Simonides (1st notice): — Son of Leoprepes, of Iulis, a city of the island of Ceos; a lyric poet; coming next to Stesichorus; called, because of the sweetness of his style, Melicertes; originator of the art of mnemonics. He also invented the signs for the long vowels, H and Ω, and the double letters Ξ and Ψ, [as well as the third note on the lyre]. He was born in the 56th Olympiad (B.C. 556-553) — or according to some accounts in the 62nd (532-529) — and lived till the 78th (468 — 465), attaining the age of eighty-nine. He wrote the following works in the Doric dialect: — *The Kingdom of Cambyses and Darius*, *The Sea-fight with Xerxes*, *The Sea fight of Artemisium*, these in elegiacs; *The Sea-fight at Salamis* in lyric metre; *Dirges*, *Eulogies*, *Inscriptions*, *Paeans*, *Tragedies*, etc. This Simonides had a very remarkable memory...

Life of Aeschylus: According to some authorities, Aeschylus was defeated by Simonides in the competition for an elegy on those who fell at Marathon. For the elegiac metre requires the fineness of detail which is associated with the rousing of sympathy, and that, as we have said, is foreign to Aeschylus.

Aristophanes *Birds*: POET: I've written some lyrics to your Cloudcuckooborough, a lot of fine dithyrambs and some maiden-songs, and — you know, the Simonides trick.

The Same Wasps (see on Lasus p. 223).

The Same *Peace* (HERMES and TRYGAEUS):

H. She (Peace) first asked after Sophocles.

T. He's all right; but there's something remarkable happening to him.

H. What's that?

T. He's changing into Simonides.

H. Simonides? What d'ye mean?

T. I mean that now that he's old and off colour he'd go to sea on a hurdle to earn a groat.

Scholiast on the passage: Simonides seems to have been the first to connect poetry with meanness of disposition and to write it for pay; which is what Pindar hints at in his Isthmians (2. 10), where he says, 'For the Muse was no seeker of gain then, nor worked for hire....'

Scholiast on the passage of Pindar: He means that nowadays they compose victory-songs for pay, a custom begun by Simonides...

Plutarch *Should Old Men Govern?*: Simonides said to the friends who accused him of penuriousness, that the pleasure of making profit was the one and only pleasure he had left to tend him in his old age.

Stobaeus Anthology: When Simonides was asked why at his advanced age he was so careful of his money, he replied, 'It is because I should rather leave money for enemies when I die than stand in need of friends while I live; for I know too well how few friendships last.'

Plato *Republic*: 'But still,' said I, 'I find it difficult to disbelieve a great and inspired artist like Simonides.'

From a Papyrus of the 3rd Century B.C.: On Expenditure: — Simonides: The following sayings of his are also esteemed for their truth to nature. When asked by the wife of Hiero if all things grew old, he replied 'Yes, all, except love of gain; and acts of kindness sooner than anything else.' Again, when he was asked why he was so penurious, he answered that it was because he got more vexation from debit than from credit; either was really negligible, though both derived importance from the passions and unreasonableness of men; and so neither of them did him any harm, or, strictly speaking, any good; but it was irksome to use another man's staff instead of one's own; moreover, borrowed money might cost little at the moment, but in the end it cost twice as much; and so we ought to count every penny. Lastly he declared that when he consumed only the necessary and natural food of man, simple food like that of the animals, he was borrowing from himself.

Introduction to Theocritus 16 (cf. 1. 10): The story goes that Simonides kept two boxes, the one for fees and the other for favours; and whenever any friend came asking a favour, he had the boxes brought in and opened before him, and cut short his importunity by discovering the favour-box to be empty and the fee-box full. [cf. Stob. Flor. 10. 39 where the story is told of a man who asked for a eulogy and said he would take it as a favour]

Theocritus: Many indeed were the bondmen earned their monthly meed in the houses of Antiochus and King Aleuas, many the calves that went lowing with the horned kine home to byres of the Scopads, and ten thousand were the fine sheep that the shepherds of the plain of Crannon watched all night for the hospitable Creondae; but once all the sweet wine of their life was in the great cup, once they were embarked in the barge of the old man loathsome, the joyance and pleasure of those things was theirs no more: and though they left behind them all that great and noble wealth, they had lain among the vile dead long ages unremembered, had not the great Ceian cried sweet varied lays to the strings and famed them in posterity, and had not the coursers that came home to them victorious out of the Games achieved the honour and glory which called the poet to his task.

Scholiast *on the passage*: ... By this he implies the possession of great riches, so as to be able to feed many retainers. 'But all the same,' says he, 'their wealth would have been of no avail for the preservation of their glory, had their praises not been sung by Simonides.'... The Scopads were Crannonians by birth, and Crannon is a city of Thessaly, birthplace of Scopas son of Creon and Echecrateia. Compare Simonides in the *Dirges*... By 'the great Ceian' he means Simonides, who wrote victory-songs and dirges for the aforesaid great Thessalians.

Plutarch *On Listening to Poetry*: And that is why, when they asked Simonides why the Thessalians were the only people he never cheated, he replied 'They are too great dunces.'

Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers*: According to Aristotle in the 3rd Book of his *Treatise on Poetry* (fr. 65)... Antimenidas and Alcaeus had a feud with Pittacus, Sosibius with Anaxagoras, and Timocreon with Simonides.

Plato *Republic* (SOCRATES and POLEMARCHUS): What do you say, said I, that Simonides rightly says about justice? — That justice is to give every man his due.

Stobaeus *Anthology*: Simonides: — When a friend of his once told Simonides that he was hearing a great deal of slander about him, he replied 'Be so good as to stop defaming me with your ears.'

Plutarch *Garrulity*: In all things and for all these reasons we ought to bear in mind the saying of Simonides, that he had often repented speaking but had never repented holding his tongue.

Plutarch *Dinner-Table Problems*: One evening over the wine, when the poet Simonides saw a guest sitting absolutely silent, he exclaimed 'If you're a fool, my good sir, you're wise in what you do; and if you're wise, you're a fool.'

The Same *The Glory of Athens*: Simonides calls 'painting silent poetry and poetry painting that speaks'; for the actions which painters depict as they are being performed, words describe after they are done.

Aristotle in Stobaeus *Anthology*: We are told that when Simonides was asked what was meant by good birth, he replied 'ancestral wealth.'

Michael Psellus *The Function of Daemons*: ... According to Simonides the word is the image of the thing.

Aristides *On the Extempore Addition* [how epitaphs prove that states are guilty of self-praise]: So you may laugh at the fallen [for praising themselves] and call them underground babblers who cannot keep still; and some disciple of Simonides will retort 'you are more dead above ground, my good man, than those are below it.'

Theon *First Course in Grammar*: ... Simonides gives harmful advice when he says we should play all our lives and never be entirely in earnest.

Aristotle *Physics*: In time everything comes into existence and passes out of it; and that is why some writers called Time wisest of things; though Paron the Pythagorean says it is foolishest, because we also forget in it — which indeed is more correct.

Ath. 2. 40 a [on wine]: Simonides ascribes wine and music to one and the same origin.

Plutarch *Consolation to Apollonius*: One day when the Spartan king Pausanias, who was suffering from swelled head, had the lyrist Simonides tell him a wise tale with a jest in it, the poet, fully appreciating the king's conceited humour, advised him to remember that he was human.

The Same *Life of Themistocles*: All the same he ingratiated himself with the people by calling every citizen by his name, and by putting his sure judgment at their disposal in matters of business. Indeed, when Simonides of Ceos made an improper request of him during the time of his command, he retorted that he would not be a good minister of state if he put favour before law, any more than Simonides would be a good poet if he sang out of tune.

Aristotle *Rhetoric* [on wealth]: Thus when Simonides was speaking of wisdom and riches with the wife of Hiero, and she asked him which was better, to get wise or to get wealthy, he replied 'To get wealthy; for I see the wise sitting on the doorsteps of the rich.'

Cicero *The Nature of the Gods*: If you were to ask me the nature and attributes of God, I should reply in the words of Simonides, who when asked this very question by the despot Hiero asked for a day's notice of it, and when it was repeated the next day, requested two days more, and so on, doubling every time, till at last, when the wondering Hiero asked him to explain his strange behaviour, he replied that it was because the longer he thought about it, the more obscure it became. I believe that the truth is that Simonides, of whom tradition speaks not only as a delightful poet but in all respects a wise and learned man, despaired of the true answer because so many subtle definitions occurred to him that he could not decide among them.

Athenaeus *Doctors at Dinner*: If we may believe Chamaeleon, Simonides' niggardliness is a real fact. For instance at Syracuse, where Hiero was in the habit of sending him daily a portion of food, Simonides used openly to sell most of it and keep only a small part for himself; and once, when he was asked the reason, replied that he did so as a testimony to Hiero's munificence and his own moderation.

Plutarch *Life of Aratus*: Even if it be a terrible thing: to deal thus with one's fellow-clansmen and kinsfolk by anger, still in Simonides' words 'In time of necessity even harshness is sweet,' healing as it were and restoring the spirit when it is sick and fevered.

Timaeus quoted by the Scholiast on Pindar: Thus Theron took umbrage on behalf both of his daughter (Demaretè) and her husband (Polyzelus), and made war upon Polyzelus' brother Hiero, advancing to the Sicilian river Gela.... But not a blow was struck, and the war came to nothing. For we are told that the lyric poet Simonides came up in the nick of time and reconciled the two kings.

Aristotle *Metaphysics*: All these things are irrational, and inconsistent both with one another and with what is rational, and we may apply to them the term 'a long story' as it is used by Simonides, a long story in that sense being the kind of account given by a slave when he will not talk sense.

Alexander of Aphrodisias on the passage: These words will be clear to any reader who has been told what is meant by the *λογος* of Simonides. This writer, in what he calls his 'Ατακτοί Λόγοι or Prose Conversations, [meaning doubtful; apparently some sort of Mime] imitates [that is, gives a literary representation of] the answers erring slaves will generally make when their masters are enquiring why they have blundered, and makes them give extremely long and verbose excuses which have no sense — that is, plausibility — but are entirely off the point. This would seem to be characteristic of foreign birth and lack of education.

Pindar *Olympians*: Skilled is the man who knoweth much by nature; they that have but learnt — even as a pair of crows, gluttonous in their wordiness, these chatter vain things against the divine bird of Zeus.

Scholiast on the passage: He hints at Bacchylides and Simonides, calling himself an eagle and his rivals crows.

Scholiast on Pindar: ... Simonides often employs digression.

Eustathius *Introduction to the Commentary on Pindar*: It is said that Pindar was a pupil also of Simonides.

Plutarch *Music*: Pancrates usually avoided the chromatic scale, though he used it occasionally, thus showing that he did not avoid it from ignorance. Indeed he tells us himself that he imitates the musical style of Pindar and Simonides and, generally, what is now called the ancient style.

Longinus the Rhetorician: Simonides and many after him have pointed out paths to remembrance, counselling us to compare images and localities in order to remember names and events, but there is nothing more in it than the concatenation and coobservation of the apparently new with what is similar to it.

Cicero *On the Chief Good and the Chief Evil*: Is it in our power to remember or to forget? When Themistocles was once promised — by Simonides I think it was — a handbook of mnemonics or guide to remembrance, 'I should prefer,' he exclaimed, 'a guide to forgetfulness; for I remember things I would not and cannot forget what I would.'

Scholiast on Dionysius of Thrace [on the Alphabet]: As for the inventors of the remaining eight letters, namely the two long vowels, the three double letters, and the three aspirates, it is clear that Simonides of Ceos invented the Η, the Ω, the Ξ and the Ψ, and Palamedes the Θ, the Φ, the Χ, and the Ζ, though some authorities ascribe these last four (?) to Epicharmus of Syracuse.

Plutarch *Should Old Men Govern?* Simonides won the chorus prize in his old age.

Lucian *Longevity*: Simonides of Ceos lived to be over ninety.

Suidas *Lexicon*: Simonides (3rd notice): ... There was an Agrigentine General named Phoenix who, in the course of a war with Syracuse, with cynical ruthlessness pulled down the tomb of Simonides and made a bastion of the stones. At that spot the city was taken. [context implies Acragas; S. then apparently died there and not at Syracuse] This story would seem to be confirmed by Callimachus of Cyrene, who deploras the outrage and makes this writer of delightful verse say: 'neither had he respect for the writing thereon which declared that beneath lay the son of Leoprepes of Ceos'; and a little further on: 'nor yet had he any fear of you brethren, O Polydeuces, who made me, alone of all the guests, pass out ere the roof fell, when the house at Crannon came down alas! upon the mighty Scopadae.

Athenaeus *Doctors at Dinner*: Compare the author of the play called *The Helots*: 'It's old-fashioned to sing Stesichorus, Alcman, or Simonides; but we can hear Gnesippus...

Scholiast on Aristophanes *Wasps* ['mind you take up the catch properly']: It was an old custom for guests at table to continue where the first singer left off. The guest who began held a sprig of bay or myrtle and sang a lyric of Simonides or Stesichorus as far as he chose, and then handed the sprig to another, making his choice of a successor with no regard to the order in which the guests were seated. His successor then continued the song, and in turn passed on the sprig at his own caprice.

Athenaeus *Doctors at Dinner*: ... according to Chamaeleon in his treatise *On Simonides*.

Suidas *Lexicon*: Palaephatus: — An Egyptian, or according to some authorities, an Athenian; grammarian; wrote *Arguments* or introductions to the works of Simonides.

Palatine Anthology: The Garland of Meleager: ... and a fresh young spray of the vine-buds of Simonides.

Catullus: ... a word of talk as sad as the tears of Simonides.

Suidas *Lexicon*: Tryphon: — Son of Ammonius; of Alexandria; grammarian and poet; flourished in the reign of Augustus and earlier; wrote... on the Dialects in Homer and in Simonides, Pindar, Alcman, and the other lyric poets.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Critique of the Ancient Writers*: — You should note in Simonides his choice of words and his nicety in combining them; moreover — and here he surpasses even Pindar — he is remarkable for his expression of pity not by employing the grand style but by appealing to the emotions.

Quintilian *Guide to Oratory* [the Nine Lyric Poets]: Simonides, though in other respects not a commanding figure, may be praised for his choice of expression and for a certain sweetness; but his chief excellence lies in his pathos; indeed some critics consider that in this quality he surpasses all other writers of this class of literature.

THE POEMS OF SIMONIDES

DELPHI  CLASSICS

End of Sample