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Leonides and Love

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A.P. 9, 344:

ἦν ὅποτε γραμμαῖσιν ἐμῆν φρένα μούνον ἔτερπον,
οὐδ' ὄναρ εὐγενέταις γνώριμος Ἰταλίδαις·
ἀλλὰ τανῦν πάντεσιν ἐράσμιος· ὄψ' ἔγνων
ὀππόσον Οὐρανίην Καλλιόπη προφέρει.

Translation by Paton (*The Greek Anthology*, Loeb edition, vol. 3, page 187):

"There was a time when I gave pleasure to myself
alone by lines, and was not known at all to noble
Romans. But now I am beloved by all, for late in
life I recognised how far Calliope excels Urania."

In this epigram, Leonides of Alexandria mentions that he has become famous because of his poetry. D.L. Page noted² that the phrase Οὐρανίην προφέρει, in line 4, "awaits explanation". I would like to point out that the transmitted text is perfectly sound. The word Οὐρανίην refers to the goddess Aphrodite: cf. LSJ *s.u.* Οὐρανία II. Thus Leonides means that in the past he used to please only himself with his poetry (γραμμαῖσιν). However, now that

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²Cf. *Further Greek Epigrams*, Cambridge, 1981, p. 526.

he has become famous he has made many erotic conquests. Therefore he states that he has learnt how much Calliope (i.e. poetry) helps (*προφέρει*) Urania (i.e. Aphrodite). In other words, fame has brought him many lovers³.

That *προφέρει* means, here, "promotes", "fördert", had already been seen by Stadtmüller (*cf.* Page, *ad loc.*); the well known *topos*, according to which poetry furthers the amatory successes of the poet is frequent in Latin elegy, as Stroh has demonstrated, and is commonly attested in Hellenistic poetry, as G. Giangrande has shown⁴.

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³Cf. PASSOW, *Handwört*, s.u. *προφέρω*, 2, b "met...fördern".

⁴Cf. Lastly his "Topoi ellenistici nell' *Ars amatoria*", in *Cultura, poesia, ideologia nell' opera di Ovidio*, Napoli, 1991, p. 64 ff.; 91 ff.