

Simonides fr. 520

ἀνθρώπων ὀλίγον μὲν
κάρτος ἄπρακτοι δὲ μεληδόνες,
αἰῶνι δ' ἐν παύρῳ πόνος ἀμφὶ πόνῳ·
ὁ δ' ἄφυκτος ὁμῶς ἐπικρέμαται θάνατος·
κείνου γὰρ ἴσον λάχον μέρος οἱ τ' ἀγαθοὶ
ὅστις τε κακός.

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VOCABULARY

αἰών, ὤνος, ὄ: life, lifetime
ἄπρακτος, -ον: incurable; without remedy
ἄφυκτος, -ον: inescapable, inevitable
ἐπικρεμάννυμι: overhang; (*pass.*) be suspended
above; (*metaph.*) threaten
ἴσος, -η, -ον: equal
κάρτος, -εος, τό: strength

λαγχάνω (2 *aor.* ἔλαχον): to obtain by lot; get,
receive
μεληδόν, -όνος: sorrow; pain
ὀλίγος, -η, -ον: small, little
ὁμῶς: alike, likewise; equally
παῦρος, -ον: (*of time*) short

COMMENTARY

TEXT: *PMG* 520

METRE: dactylo-epitrite (but the analysis and the
division of lines is disputed)

2. κάρτος: Epic and Doric form of κράτος
3. πόνος ἀμφὶ πόνῳ [*sc.* ἐστίν]: (*i.e.*, '...*there is* toil upon toil')
4. ὁμῶς: *i.e.*, 'inevitable death is hung over <*all*> alike.'

5. κείνου: demonstrative pronoun with the function of
a relative (*i.e.*, 'of that...'); the antecedent is
θάνατος in v. 4.

λάχον (2 *aor.* 3rd *pl.*): omission of the augment (the
usual form would be ἔλαχον) is a poetic feature.
The aorist is *gnomic* (*i.e.*, though strictly a historic
tense, it expresses a general truth and in English is
best translated by a present tense).

6. ὅστις τε κακός: '...and whoever is a coward.'

VH.