

The Sound Shape of Greek Lyric: Sound and Semantics in Alcaeus fr. 129

1) Alcaeus fr. 129 (Voigt 1971)¹

[]ρα.α τόδε Λέσβιοι
...]... εὐδιελον τέμενος μέγα
ξυνον κά[τε]σσα,ν, ἐν δὲ βώμοις
ἀθανάτων μακάρων ἔθηκαν

...the Lesbians established this here
conspicuous precinct, great,
common (to all), and in it they made
altars of the blessed immortals

κά.πωνύ.μασσα.ν ἀντίλον, Δία, (5)
σὲ δ' Αἰολίαν [κ]υδαλίμα,ν θέον
πύλων γενέθλαν, τὸν δὲ τέρτο,ν
τόνδε κεμήλιον **ὦ.ν.ύμα.σσ[α]ν**

they *named* Zeus of suppliants
and you, glorious Aeolian goddess,
origin of all, and him they *named*
third, this here Kemelian

Ζώνυsson **ὠμήσ.ταν.** ἄ[γ]ιτ' εὐνοον
θῦμον σκέθοντε,ς ἀμμετ,έρα[ς] ἄρας (10)
ἀκούσατ', ἐκ δὲ τῶν[δ]ε μόχθων
ἀργαλέας τε φύγας ῥύεσθε·

Dionysos, *eater of raw flesh*. Come,
have a favorable heart and hear our
prayer, and save us from hardships
and bitter exile;

τὸν Ἰρραον δὲ πα[ῖ]δα πεδελο,έτω
κῆνων Ἐ[ρί]νυς ὡς πο,τ' **ἀπόμ.νυ.μεν** (15)
τόμοντες ἄ..[]ν.]ν.
μηδάμα μηδ' ἓνα τῶν ἐταίρων

May the Erinyes of those men pursue
the son of Hyrrhas since once *we swore*,
cutting...
nothing to any of the companions

ἀλλ' ἢ θάνοντες γὰν ἐπιέμμενοι
κείσεσθ' ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν οἱ τότε ἐπικ,ήν
ἦπειτα κακκάνοντες αὐτοῖς (20)
δάμον ὑπέξ ἀχέων ῥύεσθαι.

but either die and lie covered with earth,
(killed) by men who then ...
or when we had cut them down
to save the city from pains.

κῆνων ὁ φύσγων οὐ διελέξατο
πρὸς θῦμον ἀλλὰ βραϊδίως πόσιν
ἔ]μβαις ἐπ' ὀρκίοισι **δάπτει**
τὰν πόλιν ἄμμι δέδ[.]..[.]ί.αις

Those the pot-bellied one did not take
to heart but recklessly with his feet he
trampled on the *oaths and eats*
the city (not fearing?) us.

οὐ κὰν νόμον [.]ον..[][] (25)
γλαύκας ἀ[.]..[.]..[]
γεγρά.[]
Μύρσιλ[ο]

not according to custom...
grey...
written (?)...
Myrtil(us)

...].[]
[] (30)
[]
].[]
(ends at 32)

¹ All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

2) Horace *Carmen* 2.13.21-32: Alcaeus resounds

quam paene...vidimus...
 Aeoliis fidibus querentem
 Sappho puellis de popularibus,
 et **te sonantem plenius** aureo,
 Alcaeae, plectro **dura** navis,
dura fugae mala, **dura** belli! 30
 ...pugnas et exactos tyrannos
 densum umeris **bibit aure** vulgus.

How I nearly saw...Sappho lamenting on
 Aeolian strings about the girls of her town,
 and you, Alcaeus, singing more resonantly
 with your golden plectrum about the
 hardships of the sea, the bitter hardships of
 exile, the hardships of war!...The crowd,
 shoulder to shoulder, drinks with their ears
 the (stories of) battles and expelled tyrants.

3) Ovid *Her.* 15.29-20: Sappho to Phaon

nec plus Alcaeus consors patriaeque lyraeque
 laudis habet, quamvis **grandius ille sonet.**

Nor does Alcaeus, my partner in fatherland
 and the lyre, / possess more praise, though
 he resounds more abundantly.

4) Alcaeus fr. 72.8-10: alliterative meaning

ὦνηρ ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτον ὀνέτροπε,
 παίσαις γὰρ ὀννώρινε νύκτας,
 τῶ δὲ **πίθω πατάγεσκ' ὀ πύθμην.**

When indeed first that man stirred things
 up, / for he kept all nights up, / and the
 bottom of the wine-jar would clatter.

5) Pindar *Pyth.* 1.23-4: alliterative meaning pt. 2

ἀλλ' ἐν ὄρφναισιν **πέτρας**
φοίνισσα κυλινδομένα **φλόξ** ἐς βαθεῖ-
 αν **φέρει πόντου πλάκα** σὺν **πατάγῳ.**

But in times of darkness / a rolling red
 flame carries rocks into the deep expanse
 of the sea with a crash. (trans. Race)

6) Alcaeus fr. 130b.1-5 Voigt: exiled from sound

...ὀ τάλαις ἔγω
 ζῶω μοῖραν ἔχων ἀγροῖωτίκων
 ἡμέρων ἀγόρας **ἄκουσαι**
 καρυ[ζο]μένας ὄγεσιλαΐδα
 καὶ β[ό]λλας· **τὰ πάτηρ καὶ πάτερος πάτηρ** 5

Wretch that I am, having the rustic life as
 my portion, I long to hear
 the assembly being called to order,
 Agesilaidēs, and the council. The property
 my father and father's father...

7) Alcaeus fr. 130b.33-35 Voigt: ululation in the temenos

περὶ δὲ βρέμει
 ἄχῳ θεσπεσία γυναικῶν
 ἴρα[ς ὀ]λολύγας ἐνιαυσίας

And all round rings the wondrous sound of
 the yearly sacred shout of women.

8) Sappho fr. 2 (ed. Lobel, Page): sounds of the temenos and symposium

δευρυμ†μεκρητασ.π[]. ναῦον (1)
 ἄγνον ὄππ[αι] χάριεν μὲν ἄλσος
μαλί[αν], βῶμοι †δεμιθυμιάμε-
 ___νοι [λι]βανώτοι·
 ἐν δ' ὕδωρ ψῦχρον κελάδει δι' ὕσδων (5)
μαλίνων, βρόδοισι δὲ παῖς ὁ χῶρος
 ἐσκίαστ', αἰθυσσομένων δὲ φύλλων
 ___κῶμα †καταγριον·
 ἐν δὲ λείμων ἰππόβοτος τέθαλε
 †ττωτ...ιριννοισ† ἄνθεσιν, αἰ δ' ἄηται (10)
μέλλιχα πνέοισιν [
 ___[]
 ἔνθα δὴ σὺ στέμ<ματ'> ἔλοισα Κύπρι
 χρυσίαισιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἄβρωσ
ὄμ<με>μείχμενον θαλίαισι νέκταρ (15)
 ___οἶνοχόαισον

“Hither to me from Crete to this holy temple, where is your delightful grove of apple-trees, and altars smoking with incense; therein cold water babbles through apple-brances, and the whole place is shadowed by roses, and from the shimmering leaves the sleep of enchantment comes down; therein too a meadow, where horses graze, blossoms with spring flowers, and the winds blow gently . . .; there, Cypris, take . . . and pour gracefully into golden cups nectar that is mingled with our festivities.” (trans. Campbell, prim. ed. M. Norsa)

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