The Cologne Fragment of Alcaeus

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REINHOLD MERKELBACH has lately published a new fragment of Alcaeus which is of great interest. Following the civilised practice of Girolamo Vitelli and his Florentine successors, Merkelbach has shown the piece to many scholars before its publication, and the first edition contains suggestions by many experts, including the two leading authorities on Lesbian poetry, Edgar Lobel and Denys Page. The first publication is admirably done and is accompanied by a good photograph of the manuscript, which probably dates from the first century of our era; Merkelbach compares the writing of POxy. 2295. I have little to contribute in the way of new readings, and owe much of the material here presented to Merkelbach’s publication and to the commentary on a fragment of the same poem given by Page in Sappho and Alcaeus; readers will find it useful to have Merkelbach’s publication in hand while studying this article. Still, I hope a rather fuller commentary on this important piece may be found useful.

TEXT

2 utrum ān]/dýka (Merkelbach) an ān]/dýka (Page) incertum 3 αὐτῷ[χεῖν]

Merkelbach

THE COLOGNE FRAGMENT OF ALCAEUS

TRANSLATION

"... (putting to shame?) those who (had acted?) unjustly. We must put a (noose?) about his neck and destroy him by stoning... it would have been far better for the Achaeans if they had killed (the man who offended against the gods); then as they sailed past Aegae
they would have found the sea (more gentle) . . . the daughter of Priam in the temple (clasped) the image of Athene, giver of much booty, holding its chin, while the enemy were besetting the city. (They killed) . . . and Deiphobus, and a wail of grief (went up) from the wall, and the cry of children filled the whole (Dardanian) plain. (Ajax) came in deadly madness to the temple of holy Pallas, her who of all the immortal gods is (most terrible) to sacrilegious (mortals). And with both hands the Locrian seized the girl as she . . . stood by the image and (ravished?) her, not fearing (the daughter of Zeus) who gives strength in war, (her of the fearful eyes?). But she went and (her eyes burned?) terribly beneath her brows, and she (darted) over the wine-dark sea and suddenly stirred up the hidden blasts of the storm . . . "

I

When he discussed the Oxyrhynchus fragment at S&³A p.283, Page classed the piece among the "Non-Political Poems." We now see that although it narrates a story from ancient myth, it does so in order to furnish an example that is meant to illustrate a modern happening. The citation of examples from past history to throw light on actual events is common already in the Iliad; among many instances, it is enough to recall how Achilles in urging Priam to eat with him reminds him that even Niobe in the hour of her deepest sorrow was persuaded to eat (24.602). Choral lyric took over the practice from the epic; in Alcman's Louvre Partheneion (fr.1) the story of the defeat of the sons of Hippocoon is used to point a moral (36f), and in later poets of this genre there are innumerable instances. In monodic lyric there are naturally fewer cases, but even here the practice is attested. Sappho in a famous poem (fr.16) illustrates her declaration that the most beautiful thing on earth is what one loves by pointing to the case of Helen, who sacrificed everything for the sake of Paris. Alcaeus (fr.38) supports his advice to Melanippus to

³ Many instances are listed and discussed in the invaluable Basle dissertation of Robert Oehler, a pupil of Von der Mühll, Mythologische Exempla in der älteren griechischen Dichtung (Aarau 1925). See also Ed. Fraenkel, Aeschyus, Agamemnon II (Oxford 1950) 461, 470.

⁴ H. Patzer, Die Anfänge der griechischen Tragödie (Wiesbaden 1962) 104f, makes some good observations about Alcman in this connection, and about the history of this topos in choral lyric and in tragedy. On Pindar see C. M. Bowra, Pindar (Oxford 1964) 290f, 304f.

⁵ See Page, S&³A p.129, for other possible instances in Sappho.
drink and enjoy life while it lasts by recalling the example of Sisyphus, whose cleverness earned him a respite from death, but not for long.\textsuperscript{6}

If we had more long fragments of Alcaeus, I suspect that other mythological narrations in his poetry would turn out to be there in order to furnish examples; for instance, the story of how Helen left her husband and caused the Trojan War in fr.283 and the comparison between Helen and Thetis in fr.42 both look as if they were meant to point a moral. Had we more long fragments, the gap between "political" and "non-political" poems might be bridged in other instances also, as it has been in this. As in Sappho fr.16, this poem seems to have returned towards its end to the modern instances which the example was meant to illustrate, for at v.47 there seems to be an undoubted reference to Pittacus. That seems not to have been Alcaeus' invariable practice in such cases; the poem partly preserved in fr.42 ends with the end of the myth, as the coronis shows.

**Commentary**

1. The poem begins in the middle of a sentence, and the first line cannot be restored with safety while we remain ignorant of what went before it. I see no need to assume the existence of a superlative form άσχυντός (Merkelbach, p.85); what stood in the text was most probably a participle, either active or, less likely, passive.

2. Merkelbach thinks that the first word of the second line meant something like 'a muzzle' or 'a halter'.\textsuperscript{7} Unfortunately neither φιμών, πάσσαλον nor κλοῦν nor any of the commoner words meaning 'yoke' fits, and he can only offer φορβήν, supposed to be a form of φορβειάω, which means a horse's feeding muzzle which is attached to a manger. Merkelbach takes αναγκα to stand for the dative, and supplies the main verb of the sentence from what precedes. This may be right, but ανάγκα as nominative would make sense; at fr. 249 it is taken in this way by Page, S\&A pp.196–7, and this is how Page prints it here. Merkelbach seems to think that the puzzling scholion indicates that αναγκα here means 'noose' or 'fetters'; but even if he is right in taking the word to be a dative, this sense is not necessarily relevant here, even if the author of the scholion thought so. It is quite possible that the scholion referred not to this word at all but to whatever word is missing at the beginning of v.2. Note that in the scholion δειμον (Page) and not δεῖμα (Merkelbach) seems to


\textsuperscript{7} Hirzel, op.cit. (infra n.12) 243–44, points out that victims of stoning were sometimes tied up so that they could not escape; thus in Philostr. *Heroicus* 7, Palamedes has his hands bound.

\textsuperscript{3—G.R.B.S.}
have been written. At the beginning of the scholion Page prints τὴν
αισχυνήν: he tells me he would now accept τὴν αἰχμήν.

2-3 If Merkelbach is right in taking the sense to be "We should place a halter
about his neck and stone him," the verb at the end of v.3 must have meant
'to crush', 'to punish', 'to kill', or else have been a verb that together with
λαβολύω would yield the sense 'to stone'. The only verb that occurs to me
that might do is πολοίαν. ἀπολοίαν occurs at Iliad 4.522 of the severing of
tendons and at Callim. fr.260.1 of breaking off a horn (see HSCP 72 [1968] 125f),
but is used by Nonnus, Dionys. 9.320 in the sense of 'destroy'. But I do not feel
confident that Alcaeus would have used the epic form of this verb, and offer
it only with many reservations. λαβολύω (glossed by λευσμῶ) is new, but in
view of λάβολος in fr.68.3 (where it is used with gerundival sense, like λιθο-
λευστὸς at Callimachus, Epigr. 41.5 Pf. and Alexander Aetolus fr.3.12 Powell)
it is not surprising.

4 Kassel's ἦ μᾶν κ'[ ] suits the space, and also, I think, the style, better than
Merkelbach's καὶ μᾶν κ[ ]: the latter combination of particles is not so far
attested in the Lesbian poets. Clearly the sense is that the Greeks would have
been better off if they had stoned Ajax the son of Oileus for having violated
Cassandra in the temple of Athene, for they would not then have encountered
the famous storm which scattered their returning fleet, leading to the death of
Ajax and delaying the return of many others. See below, pp.136-8.

5 Page's αἵ τὸν θεολύοντα suits the sense; for this verb, compare Aesch.
Pers. 831 λήξαι θεολαβοῦνθ' ὑπερκόμπωθ θράσει, where Broadhead is right
against Groeneboom in taking the sense as active, 'damaging the gods', rather
than passive.

6 Page suggests ἵσσως κε but I slightly prefer ἐπικε κε: the simplicity of the
latter seems to me more like Alcaeus than the irony of the former. On Aegae,
see below, p.138; Merkelbach must be right in thinking that a place of that
name in Euboea is in question.

7 Whether we adopt Page's πραίτερας or Merkelbach's (somewhat less
attractive) λητοτερας, a usage is in question which is not uncommon in prayers
as when the Chorus of the Oedipus Colonus (1482) say to the unknown daimon
whose wrath they fear, ἐναισίον δὲ σοῦ τῶν χοίμοι. One implores a divinity that
one may find him ἐναισίον, λες, πραίσως: which inclines me to prefer Page's
guess.

8 Cassandra was not a priestess, so I do not like the suggestion ἔση. Sappho
fr.44.16 has the form Περάµοιο and Alcaeus fr.42.2 has Περάµοι, but it
would not be safe to conclude that Alcaeus really wrote Περάµοι in this place.
Alcaeus might well use the epic as well as the vernacular form of such a name;
at fr.42.11 he has Νηρείτων, though Sappho (fr.5.1) has Νηρήιδες.8

8 See I. Kazik-Zawadzka, De Sapphicae Alcaicaque elocutionis colore epico (Wrocław 1958)
43-44.
9 πολυλάδος looks back to Athene’s Homeric epithet of ἀγελείη; cf. λήτεσ in the Doloneia (I. 10.460).

10 ἀπαπτένα glossed by ἀφημμενή is surprising. First, Lobel (ap. Merkelbach, p.87) must surely be right in suggesting that ἐπαπτένα instead of ἀφημμενή was intended; in similar contexts one often finds such verbs as ἀπαρτωμενή ‘hanging from’, but a compound of ἐπιμοια ‘I touch’, would have ἐπι- and not ἀπο-. Next, Merkelbach explains the form by comparing ὀπατία the Lesbian equivalent of ὀμματα. But that is a noun, and here we are dealing with a verbal ending, which we should not expect to suffer this mutation; none of the forms set out by E.-M. Hamm, Grammatik zu Sappho und Alkaios (AbhBerl 1951) p.21 §30, which Merkelbach refers to, is parallel to this, nor do fr.130.10 and Sappho fr.24(b).5 serve to confirm it. Lobel and Page both think the word must be corrupt for the form with double μ, and it is hard not to agree with them. Or was this form an analogical absurdity forced into the text by the grammarians?

The Lesbian form is γενήνω as Merkelbach remarks (cf. Alcaeus fr.120.9); γενείω is probably an error. “The word must, on this evidence, mean ‘chin’ in Lesbian, not ‘beard’,” says Page (ap. Merkelbach, p.7). In other dialects also it can mean either ‘chin’ or ‘beard’, as LSJ rightly say; but I know no other place where it is used of the chin of a female person.

11 The lengthening of the iota of πολὺν is surprising. Lobel suggests πολὺ<δ’>, thinking, presumably, of the two places in the Iliad where the expression ἐφένων κρατερώννχας ἱππόνες has the indirect object Πάντροκλων. But these do not prove that ἐφένω can be treated as if it were a verb of motion; in this place the sense must be ‘the enemy were besetting the city’, and πολὺνδ’ will not do. Page suggests inserting after πολὺν a τ’ which would couple it with ΔαΦροβοῦν in v.12; but even if we leave out of account the gap which precedes that name, the sense favours a strong stop after ἐπηνοῦν. Merkelbach quotes K. Strunk for two attempts to explain the lengthening by linguistic arguments; but supposing either could be accepted (and I find neither compelling), why do we find this isolated instance? I am baffled by this phenomenon, but observe that a poet who uses the genitive form πολὴς (fr.41.18) might be capable of using the accusative form πολη which occurs at [Hes.] Scut. 105. Callim. 43.60 must have taken it from early epic.

In view of the occurrence of ἐφηνοῦν here, the supplement ἐπετ[οιασα] at fr.45.5 becomes more plausible.

12 What stood at the beginning of this line? Merkelbach interprets the traces at the beginning as ντ but says that the apparent ν may be a grave accent and the apparent τ perhaps α; in the gap, there may be room for only one rather than two letters. Before ας there is a small circle in the middle of the line, “rather small for β or ρ.” I should expect to find here the names of Trojans killed together with Deiphobus; perhaps ας was the end of
the accusative plural of a patronymic, or else παίδας followed a genitive in -οιο.

13-4 Merkelbach suggests δήδας, Page ὅρος; neither will do, since a perfect of this kind is equivalent to a present, and the historic present is not used in early lyric: see J. Wackernagel, Vorlesungen über Syntax I (Basel 1926) 163, and other literature recently listed by R. Führer, Formproblem-Untersuchungen zu den Reden in der frühgriechischen Lyrik (Zetemata 44 [Munich 1967] 93–4). I find it hard to think of an adequate supplement; one might consider ἔλαιμψε, if only the word were used in this way in lyric as it is in tragedy.

Lobel and Page quote ll. 22.447 κωκυτόδ δ' ἤκουσε καὶ οἶμωγῆς ἀπὸ πόργου. One is also reminded of Xenophon’s memorable account of how the news of Aegospotami reached Athens: ἐν δὲ ταῖς Ἀθήναις θῆς Παράλου ἀφικομένης νυκτὸς ἐλέγετο ἡ συμφορά, καὶ οἶμωγῆ ἐκ τοῦ Πειραιῶς διὰ τῶν μακρῶν τειχῶν εἰς ἄστυ διήκεν, ὁ ἔτερος τῶν ἐτέρων παραγγέλλων. Did the thing really happen, or did Xenophon remember what he knew from the poets ought to happen?

14-5 Kassel well compares ll. 16.78ff οἱ δ' ἀλαλητῶν | πάν πειδών κατέχουσι and Aesch. Pers. 426ff οἴμωγῆ δ' ὀμοὶ | κωκύκμασσι κατείχε πελαγίαν ἄλα: note also Eur. Τρ. 556β βοᾶ κατείχε περγάμων ἔδρασι καὶ Ηδ. 1.111 κλαυθμώι κατείχετο οἶκος. αὐτῇ in the Iliad regularly refers to the cry of fighting warriors. Behind the present passage seems to lie Od. 14.264–8 = 17.433–7:

αἴθα μάλις Ἀἰγυπτίων ἄνδρών περικάλλεσας ἄγροις πόρθεν, ἐκ δὲ γυναίκας ἁγόν καὶ νήπια τέκνα αὐτοῖς τῇ ἐκτεινον. τάξα δ' ἐς πόλυν ἕκετ' αὐτῇ. οἱ δὲ βοῆς ἀτόντες ἁμάρτοι ἀφι μιᾷ φαιομένην ἥδον πλήτο δὲ πάν πειδὼν πεζῶσι τε καὶ ἵππων χαλκοῦ τε στεροπῆς.

Δαρδάνων πειδῶν will do well to signify what in the Iliad is called πειδῶν Σκαμάνδριον (2.465), or πειδῶν Ἡλητόν (21.558), or Τρωϊκῶν πειδῶν (23.464; cf. 10.11). In the Iliad the Dardanians are a special people, the subjects of Aeneas and Anchises, but later the word is a mere synonym for ‘Trojan’.

16 Compare ll. 9.304–5:

νῦν γάρ χ' Ἐκτόρ' ἔλοις, ἑπεὶ ἄν μάλα τοι σχεδὸν ἔλθοι λύσασαν ἔχον ὀλοήν.

In the case of Ajax, as in that of Hector, the ‘madness’ in question was to prove even more ‘deadly’ to its possessor than to others.

17 It is odd that elsewhere the epithet ἄγνα does not seem to be applied to Athene before the paean of Lamprocles (PMG 735). It is not a prerogative of virgin goddesses, for in the Odyssey it is applied to Persephone (11.386) as well as Artemis, and in the Demeter hymn it is applied both to Persephone (337)
and to Demeter (203, 429). Both Lesbian poets use it of the Charites (Alcaeus fr.386, Sappho frgg. 53, 108.8). It is often applied to temples, as in the Elean hymn to Dionysus (PMG 871.1–3) and at Alcman fr.14(b); here it is obviously appropriate.

18 Lobel, POxy. XXI p.87, points out that θεοσύλης is shown to be an old Ionic word by Hipponax fr.118.1 Masson (= POxy. 2176.1), where line 14 of the commentary supports his supplement θεό[συλ]ν against θεο[σεχθήν] (Ed. Fraenkel, Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie I [Rome 1964] 242–3); cf. Alcaeus fr.59(b), where ἰερόσυλος probably glossed the same word. The synizesis, rare as it is in Alcaeus, is not abnormal; cf. Lobel, Σαπφοῦς Μέλη (Oxford 1925) pp. Ixiii f.9 συλάω is the vox propria for the spoliation of the gods; see K. Latte, Kl. Schr. (Munich 1968) 416f. Apart from the regular use for the robbing or seizing of property, it is also used of the seizure of persons (as in the Delphian manumission inscriptions quoted by W. Schulze, Kleine Schriften [Göttingen 1934] 163), so that the seizure of Cassandra, just as much as a robbery from the temple, could be accounted an act of θεοσύλης. Still, this word, like ἰεροσύλια doubtless served as a general term for sacrilege.

Among the various possible supplements φώτευσις is specially attractive because of its contemptuous note, but it is far from certain.

19 Alcaeus fr.327.1 calls Eros δεινότατος θεόν. In Homer the verb φύω, even in the perfect, always conveys the suggestion of growth; this seems to be the earliest place in which πέφυκε means little more than 'is'.

20 Lobel, POxy. XXI p.87, shows that the dual is not abnormal. To the Lesbian instances of παρθενίκα given by Page (Alcaeus fr.45.5, Sappho fr.44.15) add now Sappho, POxy. 2357 fr.4.4.

21 παρεστάκουσαν is the normal Lesbian equivalent of παρεστηκών: see Page, S&A p.284.

22 Verbs meaning 'drag' are regular in this kind of context; note ll. 6.465 ἐλκηθμός and 21.62 ἐλκηθέως ... θυγατρα. Eur. Tr. 70 uses ἐκεῖνω of this very incident, and Lycothron’s Cassandra says of herself ἐλκυθήθομαι (358). Still, I favour ἱσχύον or ἱβρισο’. With ὁδ’ ἐδείσεον compare ll. 13.623–4 and Od. 22.39. In Quintus, Ajax ‘shames’ Cassandra (ἣσχυνέν 13.422) and Athen says of Ajax ὁδ’ ἐδείσεον ἐμον μένοι (14.438).


24 Perhaps it is fortuitous, but γοργυστός and γοργύσως are so far attested in no author earlier than Aeschylus. With ὑπ’ ὀφρυσὶ compare ll. 15.607 τῷ δὲ
THE COLOGNE FRAGMENT OF ALCAEUS

οἱ δοσε | λαμπάθθην βλοσυρῆσαν ὑπ' ὄφρυσιν. The context seems to demand that the word following ὄφρυσιν should be a verb, and the only verb beginning with σμ- that seems at all likely to be suitable is σμ[εχεν which Treu has suggested; note κενειά γάρ υποσμύχυνται ὑπωπαί at Ap. Rhod. 2.445. But see pp.134-5 below.

25 The Suda s.v. ὑποδράξ quotes

η δὲ πελεδνωθείσα καὶ ὄμμασι λοξὸν ὑποδράξ
dοσομένη
tουτέστων ὄχρισσα καὶ ὑποβλεψαμένη διὰ τὴν ὄργην. Pfeiffer rightly prints the quotation as Callim. fr.374; Hecker’s conjecture that all hexameter fragments quoted in the Suda without an author’s name belong to the Hecale has not been controverted in a single instance, despite the large amount of new material discovered since his time (see R. Pfeiffer, ed. Callimachus II [Oxford 1953] Prolegg. ad Fragm. pp. xxxiii–xxxiv and on fr.238.21). Reitzenstein and Wilamowitz thought the person referred to was the angry Medea (see Pfeiffer ad loc.). But the great rarity of the word πελεδνωθείσα, together with the fact that Alcaeus applied it to the angry Athene, supports Pfeiffer’s suggestion that the passage comes from the crow’s description of Athene’s anger with her; see HSCP 72 (1968) 141–2.

26 ἀίξε is conjectured here by Page. ἀίσοω is, as he observes, often applied to the movements of the gods in Homer. He cites II. 4.78, where it is said of Athene that ἕξεν ἐπὶ χθόνα: four times (2.167, 4.74, 7.19, 22.187) her action is described in the formulaic line βῆ δὲ κατ’ Ὀδυσσέως καράτων ἀξισα. οἶνοπα πόντον— in Homer usually preceded by ἐπὶ, once by ἐσ— is yet another Homeric expression.

26–7 Compare Od. 5.292.3 πάσας δ' ὀρθύνεν ἀέλλας | παντοῖαν ἀνέμων; 11.400 ὀρασα ἄργαλέων ἀνέμων ἀμέγαρτων αὐτήν; 14.254 ὀρασα ἄργαλεων ἀνέμων ἐπὶ πόντον ἀγίας; 24.110 ὀρασα ἄργαλεως ἀνέμους καὶ κύματα μακρά. For ἐξαπίνες compare Od. 12.288 ἢν πως ἐξαπίνης ἐληθὶ ἀνέμου θύελλα; II. 9.6 Βορέης καὶ Ζέφυρος . . ἐλθόντι ἐξαπίνης; 17.57 ἐλθὼν ἐξαπίνης ἀνέμος σὺν λαίπαπι πολλῆι.

ἀφάντο[ι]ς is taken by Page to mean ‘dark’; he compares Parmenides 9.3 φάεος καὶ νυκτός ἀφάντον. This may be right, but I think it likelier to mean ‘invisible’, ‘lurking’, like the Latin latentes; compare Soph. Phil. 296–7, where Philoctetes, describing how he rubbed two stones together to make fire, says ἐν πέτροις πέτρον ἐκτρίβων μόλις | ἐφην' ἀφαντον φῶς.

κυκάω is not used of winds in Homer, but it is applied to the action of Achilles upon the Scamander at II. 21.235, 240, 324 and to the sea inside Charybdis at Od. 12.238, 241; Sappho has it in a different sense at fr.137.4.

25–31 Vv.25–31 have the obelus against them, and Merkelbach points out that it probably stood against v.24 also. Page infers that the lines obelised were wrongly placed and guesses that vv.32–7 represent the stanza that should have
followed vv.20–3. “We may have to suppose,” he writes, “that 32 was one of the obelised lines, or that 32 represents a second writing of 24, after the error involved in 25–31 had been detected” (ap. Merkelbach, p.91). “This is supported,” he argues, “by the fact that there is no Greek word beginning αμ which could have made sense between ἄ δέ δείνων ὑπ’ ὀφρυαί and πελίδνωθεισα: σμέρδονοι could not stand together with δείνων and σμέδναις (for -αιαι) would be contrary to the dialect.”

30 The word following Αίας must, as Merkelbach remarks, have been some case of the word Ἀχαιόι. Perhaps the sense was that Athene brought ruin upon the Achaeans for the sake of one man’s crime. Note the scholion that stands below v.24, and compare Lycoph. Alex. 365–6:

ἐνός δὲ λάβης αὐτί, μυρίων τέκνων
Ελλὰς στενάζει πᾶσα τοὺς κενοὺς τάφους.

and Triphiodorus 650

ἀνθ᾽ ἐνός Ἀργείοιοιν ἐξώσατο πᾶσιν Ἀθήνη.

34–5 Page observes that vv.34–5 might well follow v.25, thus:

[ ἄ δὲ δείνων ὑπ’ ὀφρυαί
] πελίδνωθεισα, κατ’ οἴνοπα
ἐβασκε πόντον, ἐκ δ’ ἄφάντους
παννυχίαις ἐκόκα θυέλλαις.

Although the simple verb βάσκεω occurs elsewhere only in the imperative, Sappho fr.21.7 has ἀμφιβάσκει, so that the articulation appears probable. But the conjecture is not recommended by the fact that, if it is accepted, θυέλλαις has to carry two epithets. According to most authorities, Athene was helped by Poseidon, who raised the storm which scattered the Achaean fleet. Did vv.34–5 refer to his action?

37–9 Merkelbach (p.93) suggests “e.g. [κατ’ οἴνοπα] ἀξιὲ πόν[τον], ἐκ δ’ ἄφαντων] ἄροε βιγ[ν ἀνέμοιο. . . .]” Perhaps; but the repetitions in the text are not so startling as to compel us to believe that something like this has happened. Still, ἄροε is just the verb in which we should expect the action of raising the winds to be described. See above, on 26–7, and compare ll. 12.253 ἄροεν . . . ἀνέμοιο θυέλλας and Od. 5.109; for the winds, cf. Od. 5.478 and 19.440 ἀνέμοιο . . . μένοι ὤγρον ἄντων; note also Hes. Op. 625, Theog. 869.

41 πάσαι occurs at Sappho fr.44.28 and fr.65.9.

47 ὠχραδὸν is puzzling. Pittacus is called τὸν Ὡρραον . . . παίδα at fr.129.13. Callim. Epigr. 1.2 Pf. calls him παίδα τὸν Ὡρράδιον and this form occurs so often in the grammarians (see Pfeiffer ad loc.) that it must have been found in Alcaeus (so A.S.F. Gow, in The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams, ed. Gow/Page [Cambridge 1965] 205, on his Epigr. 54.2). Perhaps ωχραδὸν is a mistake for ὠχραδίον. But in that case what is the initial omega doing?
Merkelbach recalls that the boat (ἀκότιον) supplied by Mnemon for the return of Myrsilus occurs in a commentary on Alcaeus (fr.305 col. i 17–8). But that can have nothing to do with this passage, and we cannot know whether κέλυτοι here means 'boat' or 'horse'. For all we know, Ajax as he swam to the rock on which he eventually perished may have bestridden a plank as Odysseus did: ἀμφὲ ἐνὶ δοῦρατι βαίνε, κέλυθος ὃς ἵππον ἔλαυνον (Od. 5.371).

II

The commentary shows the pervasive influence of the epic on the poem’s style and diction; “the Epic theme, here as elsewhere, brings features of Epic style with it,” as Page wrote with only the Oxyrhynchus fragment before him (S& A p.285). The rape of Cassandra had been described in the Iliou Persis and the storm in the Nostoi, as well as in the Odyssey (4.495f). The crime of Ajax led to the greatest catastrophe that befell the Achaeans during the whole Trojan episode; by transforming their chief helper among the gods into a deadly enemy, it plunged them in the very moment of their triumph into disaster. Alcaeus could have chosen no more signal example of the general truth that it is often better for a community to destroy a member of it who has incurred the anger of the gods, in order that its other members may not share his fate.

The punishment of stoning, which according to Alcaeus the Achaeans would have been wise to apply to Ajax, was particularly appropriate to the perpetrators of crimes likely if unpunished to bring disaster upon the whole community. Rudolf Hirzel in a masterly paper showed that its origins go back to an early period of society, and that its special aptness for punishing such crimes lay in the fact that every member of the community could take a part in it, so that the collective guilt could easily be purged by its infliction. Originally, indeed, it was not so much a means of inflicting death as a means of extruding a member from his share in the community, as in the Ionian ceremony the φαρμακοί were extruded. In the Iliad Hector tells Paris that he deserves stoning (3.56–7), and epic and tragic poetry abound with references to that punishment.

11 For the rape of Cassandra in literature, see Juliette Davreux, La Légende de la prophétessse Cassandre (Bibl. Liège 94, 1942) 42f; for a short bibliography, see Page, S& A 285 n.1.
There can be little doubt that in the *Iliou Persis* the Achaeans came near to stoning Ajax for his offence against Cassandra. The famous painting of the scene soon after the sack of Troy with which Polygnotus decorated the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi showed Ajax standing by an altar with a shield, ὄμνυμενος ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐς Κασσάνδραν τολµήματος. Cassandra was sitting on the ground and holding the image of Athene, and Agamemnon and Menelaus, wearing helmets, were administering the oath to Ajax (Pausanias 10.26.3). A few chapters later, Pausanias mentions that Ajax and Odysseus were enemies because Odysseus advised the Greeks to stone Ajax for his crime against Cassandra (10.31.2).

What oath was Ajax swearing? Carl Robert was certainly wrong in thinking that he was swearing to redeem his offence by instituting the famous tribute of the maidens whom his native country of Opuntian Locri later used to send to Troy. In a trial according to Homeric justice the defendant would deny his guilt on oath; thus during the quarrel that arose out of the chariot-race during the funeral games of Patroclus, Menelaus challenges Antilochus to deny on oath that he has cheated (*Il. 23.581f*). Ajax presumably took an oath of this nature; such an oath might be seconded by friends of the swearer, who would take a similar oath on his behalf.

It seems that some standard account described a trial of Ajax for his crime against Cassandra; perhaps Odysseus was the prosecutor. Carl Robert long ago made it probable that the main authority followed by Polygnotus in his *Iliou Persis* was the cyclic epic of the same name. On the Cypselus chest Pausanias (1.15.3) saw “the kings assembled on account of the crime of Ajax against Cassandra.” That too indicates that an early standard authority described a trial scene, and this was in all probability the *Iliou Persis*. The most detailed account of the episode which we possess occurs in a work more than a thousand years later than the *Iliou Persis*, in the second of the *Refutationes* ascribed to Libanius and in the reply to it contained in the third of the *Confirmationes* attributed to that author. Calchas

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14 Hallisches Winckelmannsprogramm 17 (1893); see pp.74ff, esp. p.79.

15 Libanius, ed. Forster, VIII (BT, Leipzig 1915) pp.128f and 150f. The author was probably the fifth century sophist Nicolaus of Myra; see *RE* 12 (1925) 2520 s.v. *Libanius* and 17 (1936) 448 s.v. *Nikolaos* 21.
tells the Achaeans that Athene is angry with them, and Ajax is put on trial; Odysseus prosecutes (Ref. 2.9), but Ajax escapes by taking refuge at an altar. An assembly is held, and Menelaus insists on sailing for home at once, while Agamemnon stays behind to attempt to placate Athene. That last detail is given also in Proclus’ summary of the Nostoi attributed to Agias, and it seems probable that the account given in the Iliou Persis and the Nostoi is being followed.

Further there is an indication that the story of Ajax’s trial was told by a commentator on the particular poem of Alcaeus which we are now discussing. In Classical Review N.S. 15 (1965) 72 I combined frgg. 108 and 84 of the work on early lyric published as POxy. 2506 (in Part XXIX of the series) to give the following result:

\[
\begin{align*}
\alpha\]\alphaλα καὶ τὸν ἃντα κατητιμένον ἃντι
\alpha [ἐπὶ] τὴν Κασσάνδρα[ι]
καὶ γὰρ τὸν ἄλμητι
\end{align*}
\]

It seems likely that Ajax was said to have been ‘accused’ by the Achaeans for having committed a crime (e.g. παρανομησαντα) against Cassandra, and that the writer went on to describe how he seized her as she clasped the image of Athene. The word ‘accused’ indicates that this author knew the story of the trial of Ajax, which as we have seen probably occurred in the Iliou Persis.

The storm struck the fleet as it was passing Aegae (v.6). Merkelbach must be right in taking this to be the place in Euboea variously called Aige, Aigai and Aigaia and identified by Stephanus of Byzantium with Carystus. In the Towneleian Scholia to the Iliad (13.21), this is said to be the Aegae to which Poseidon repairs from Samothrace to harness his chariot before travelling to Troy; the same view is taken by Strabo 386 (cf. 405). The unidentified author of a work called Nesias, ‘the book of islands’, cited in the scholia to Apollonius 1.1165 (p.105 Wendel) takes this to be the place from which the name of the Aegean Sea derives.

In the Odyssey Ajax meets his end at the ‘Gyraean rocks’, which are

17 See W. Spoerri in Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos (Göttingen 1955–) 241f s.v. Alyal.
regularly located in the neighborhood of Mykonos, Delos and Tenos. But Proclus in his summary of the Nostoi puts the storm and the death of Ajax near Caphereus, the southern promontory of Euboea; and most later authorities either give this version only or contaminate this version with the other in which the neighborhood of Delos is involved. Bethe in his book on the Trojan epics assumes that Euboea came into the story only with the legend of Nauplius, who avenges the death of his son Palamedes at the hands of the Achaeans by lighting the beacon which lured them onto the jagged cliffs of the coast near Caphereus; he supposes that Proclus wrongly stated that the Nostoi mentioned Euboea through an accidental memory of the other version. But now that we know that Alcaeus mentioned Aegae, it becomes virtually certain that Proclus is correct. In the Odyssey the storm overtakes the Greek near Mykonos; but what is true of the Odyssey is not necessarily true of the Nostoi. If in later writers the location in Euboea is found together with the Nauplius story, that does not prove that the two went together from the start; the Nostoi might have made the storm strike near the Euboean coast without bringing in Nauplius. In fact Bethe himself (p.132) observes that Nauplius was mentioned in the Nostoi; Pausanias (1.22.6) mentions that his sons helped Aegisthus against Orestes, which Bethe (p.132) thinks he may have found in that epic. Although Athene and Poseidon caused the storm, so that Nauplius’ wrecking activity is superfluous, the two stories are by no means inconsistent. For all we know, the story that the Achaeans, buffeted by the storm, saw what seemed to be a welcoming light and were lured straight onto the most dangerous rocks of the Mediterranean may be as old as the Iliou Persis.

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March, 1968

18 See F. H. Sandbach, CR 56 (1942) 63f.
19 op.cit. (supra n.16) II.131 (= Homer, Dichtung und Sage II.279). The reprinting of this work, invaluable for its edition of the fragments of the epics in question, makes it necessary to remind the reader that Bethe’s thesis that ‘The Little Iliad’ was simply a name for the Aethiopis, Iliou Persis and Nostoi together was refuted by Severyns, RevPhil 49 (1925) 162f.