

Asius and the Samians' Hairstyle

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ATHENAEUS, discussing the usages of the various Ionians, has occasion to cite some verses of the poet Asius (525 E–F):

περὶ δὲ τῆς Σαμίων τρυφῆς Δούρις ἱστορῶν παρατίθεται Ἀσίου ποιήματα, ὅτι ἐφόρουν χλιδῶνας περὶ τοῖς βραχίουσιν καὶ τὴν ἐορτὴν ἄγοντες τῶν Ἑραίων ἐβάδιζον κατεκτενισμένοι τὰς κόμας ἐπὶ τὸ μετάφρενον καὶ τοὺς ὤμους. τὸ δὲ νόμιμον τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖσθαι καὶ ὑπὸ παροιμίας τῆσδε “βαδίζειν (εἰς) Ἑραίων ἐμπελεγμένον.” ἔστι δὲ τὰ τοῦ Ἀσίου ἔπη οὕτως ἔχοντα:

*οἱ δ' αὐτῶς φοίτεσκον ὅπως πλοκάμους κτενίσαιντο
εἰς Ἑρας τέμενος, πεπυκασμένοι εἴμασι καλοῖς,
χιονέοισι χιτῶσι πέδον χθονὸς εὐρέος εἶχον
χρύσειαι δὲ κορύμβαι ἐπ' αὐτῶν τέττιγες ὥς
χαῖται δ' ἠωρεῦντ' ἀνέμῳ χρυσέοις ἐνὶ δεσμοῖς,
δαιδάλεοι δὲ χλιδῶνες ἄρ' ἀμφὶ βραχίουσιν ἦσαν,
..... τες ὑπασπίδιον πολεμιστήν.*

In this article I shall support a change in the verses of Asius quoted above which was first proposed by A. F. Naeke in 1817 and occurred independently to me as I read the transmitted text. Naeke said little in favour of his conjecture¹ and, though adopted by Kinkel,² it has in general been ignored by later scholars.³ The change seems to me to be entirely necessary and it is time that the case for it was put.

C. M. Bowra, in his full discussion⁴ of the Asius fragment, translates it as follows:

¹ *Choerili Samii quae supersunt* collegit et illustravit . . . A. F. Naekius (Leipzig 1817) 75: “Mox quo referatur αὐτῶν, vel quod aliquanto melius iudico, αὐτέων, non dubium est, instaurato, ut a me factum est, versuum ordine. Qui quod perturbatus fuerit, non mirum in fragmento poetae antiquissimi, et ipsa antiquitate obscurati. Τὸν παλαιὸν ἐκεῖνον appellat Asium Athenaeus III. p. 125. C. Thucydidis testimonio, quod Casaubonus attulit, illud addiderim Suidae enotatum in v. κόρυμβοι: κόμην τρέφω χρυσῶ στρόφω κεκορυμβωμένην. Quae ex Nicolao Damasc. desumpta esse docuit me Schneiderus in v. κορυμβόω.”

² G. Kinkel, *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* I (Leipzig 1877) 206 fr. 13.

³ E.g. M. Bieber, *RE* 11(1922) 1455 s.v. “Korymbe”; F. Jacoby, *FGH Hist* 76F60; Gomme (*infra* n.6); Bowra (*infra* n.4); Huxley (*infra* n.9); the most recent editors of Athenaeus, Kaibel (Teubner, 1890) and Gulick (LCL, 1933).

⁴ *Hermes* 85 (1957) 391–401, reprinted in *On Greek Margins* (Oxford 1970) 122–33.

In the same way, when they had combed their hair, they used to march to the precinct of Hera, wrapped closely in fine clothing, and filled the floor of the wide earth with their snowy garments. On them were golden fastenings like cicadas; their hair, in golden bands, was tossed by the wind, and about their arms were bracelets finely wrought . . . a warrior under his shield.

Apart from the half-obliterated last verse, the chief problem is in verse 4. *τέττιξ* of 'ornament', 'fastening' *vel sim.*, is elsewhere used only in connection with hair;⁵ and *κορύμβαι* seems definitely to be related to *κόρυμβος* and *κρωβύλος*, words that denote a kind of hairstyle.⁶ But since *ἐπ' αὐτῶν*, 'on them', could not refer to the Samians' hair, mentioned in the *following* verse,⁷ and *golden κορύμβαι* can hardly refer to a hairstyle, and a hairstyle could hardly be compared with cicadas, Bowra takes *αὐτῶν* as referring to *χιτῶσι* and *κορύμβαι* as denoting ornaments or fastenings on the Samians' garments. As the text stands, Bowra is certainly right that *αὐτῶν* would have to refer to the garments, and he is also right that *golden κορύμβαι* 'like cicadas' can hardly denote hairstyles. But his attachment of *κορύμβαι* to dress, which ignores the constant association of *τέττιξ* with hair *and* with *κρωβύλος* and *κόρυμβος* in contexts in which hairstyle is in question,⁸ is far from secure. His citations from *Etym. Magn.* 311 (*ἐγκόμβωμα· ὁ δεσμός τῶν χειρίδων, ὃ λέγεται παρ' Ἀθηναίοις ὄχθοιβος. ὑπὸ δὲ ἄλλων κοσύμβη*) and Hesychius (*κορυμβάσι· περιδρόμοις δι' ὧν συσπᾶται γύργαθος καὶ κεκρύφαλος καὶ δεσμοί*) cannot be regarded either as connecting *κορύμβη*—a cognate of *κοσύμβη* and *κορυμβάς*, both fastenings of sorts—specially with *χιτῶνες* or as excluding a possible association of it with hair. But the Hesychius entry is, as we shall see, probably of significance for the interpretation of the Asius fragment.

Before presenting the solution I favour to the problem in Asius' verses, it is necessary to consider G. L. Huxley's recent attempt to interpret them.⁹ He translates them as follows:

⁵ LSJ *s.v.* *τέττιξ* I.2; E. Schuppe, *RE*² 5 (1934) 1111–13 *s.v.* "Tettix."

⁶ See A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* I (Oxford 1945) 101ff (on Thuc. 1.6.3).

⁷ *πλοκάμους* in v. 1 is of course too remote to be referred to here.

⁸ See Gomme (*supra* n.6) 102f.

⁹ *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis* (London 1969) 96. Cf. Gulick's translation (LCL): "And they, even so, when'er they had combed their locks, would hie them to the precinct of Hera, swathed in beautiful vestments, with snowy tunics that swept the floor of wide earth; and golden head-pieces surmounted them, like cicadas; their tresses waved in

Even so they used to walk, whene'er they had combed their locks, to the precinct of Hera, swathed in fair garments; with snowy tunics they swept the floor of the broad earth; and golden brooches like cicadas surmounted their topknots as their hair in its golden bands waved in the breeze; and delicately wrought bracelets encircled their arms . . . a warrior sheltered beneath his shield.

'Swept' is hardly right for *εἶχον* (lit. 'occupied', 'covered') as against Bowra's 'filled'. The inclusion of both 'brooches' and 'topknots' seems to be an impossible attempt to combine Bowra's interpretation of *κορύμβαι* with the older view; a word denoting hair for *αὐτῶν* is, as the text stands, impossible, and in any case 'topknots' cannot be right: it is clear from verse 5 and from the words that introduce the Asius fragment in Athenaeus/Duris (*κατεκτενισμένοι τὰς κόμας ἐπὶ τὸ μετάφρενον καὶ τοὺς ὄμους*) that the Samians' hair was not done up in topknots. Huxley's suggestion that "the writer [Asius] is perhaps not so much looking far back in time as looking at an event in Samos from elsewhere and describing his countrymen . . . for foreigners" is hard to reconcile with the imperfects *φοίτεσκον*, *εἶχον*, *ἤωρεύντ'*, *ἦσαν*, and the temporal *ὅπως* . . . *κτενίσαιντο*, all clearly referring to a repeated event in the past.

Now the proposal I support. We should, as we have seen, expect ornaments or fastenings called, or compared with, *τέττιγες* to be for the hair and this expectation is strongly reinforced when we find that word in association with a close linguistic relative of *κόρυμβος*/*κρωβύλος*, even when that relative cannot have quite the same sense as those words (see *infra* n.13); and in this context, where hair is so prominently mentioned, there seems to me to be no likelihood that *κορύμβαι* and *τέττιγες* are not to be connected somehow with hair. As the text stands, however, this connection is disrupted. The solution is to change the text, by transposing verses 4 and 5:

*οἱ δ' αὐτως φοίτεσκον ὅπως πλοκάμους κτενίσαιντο
εἰς Ἥρας τέμενος, πεποκασμένοι εἵμασι καλοῖς·
χιονέοισι χιτῶσι πέδον χθονὸς εὐρέος εἶχον*

the breeze mid their golden bands, and bracelets wrought with cunning circled their arms . . . a warrior sheltered beneath his shield." The original appearance of 'swept' here may have had little enough to do with *εἶχον* (which both Gulick and Huxley print): *cf.* the information in Schweighäuser's *Animadversiones* VI (Strasbourg 1804) 404: "Tertium versum latine sic reddiderat Dalecampius: *terraeque late niveis tunicis solum radebant: quasi legisset εὐρὸν ἔσαιπον*, ut monuit Jacobs, Exerc. Crit. T. I pag. 121."

χαῖται δ' ἤωρεῦντ' ἀνέμῳ χρυσεῖσι ἐνὶ δεσμοῖσι,
 χρύσειαι δὲ κορύμβαι ἐπ' αὐτῶν τέττιγες ὡς·
 δαιδάλοιοι δὲ χλιδῶνες ἄρ' ἀμφὶ βραχίουσιν ἦσαν,
 τες ὑπασπίδιον πολεμιστήν.

In the same way, when they had combed their locks, they would go into Hera's precinct, wrapped closely in beautiful garments: with snow-white tunics they filled the floor of the broad earth; their manes of hair waved in the wind in golden bands, and on them were golden clasps (?) like cicadas; and around their arms were finely wrought bracelets . . . a warrior under his shield.

Verses 3, 4, and 5 all begin with the letter χ ; a scribe omitted either verse 4 or 5, thinking he had already written this verse beginning with χ , and then added it in the margin; a later scribe wrote it back into the text in the wrong place.

It is not clear exactly what kind of hairstyle is described. The hair was long (see the words that introduce the verses, quoted above) and it waved in the wind (v. 4 of my text),¹⁰ but at the same time it was ἐνὶ δεσμοῖσι, and Athenaeus tells us that the Samian practice described in the verses was also attested by the byword *βαδίζειν* (εἰς) Ἑραῖον ἐμπεπλεγμένον. It seems very probable that the Samians had some of their hair flowing down free at the back (κατακτενισμένοι τὰς κόμας ἐπὶ τὸ μετάφρενον καὶ τοὺς ὤμους) and the rest bound, perhaps in plaits (ἐμπεπλεγμένον). Compare the statuettes (one of them of ca 600 B.C. from the Heraeum) mentioned by Bowra,¹¹ and the description in Xenophon of Ephesus (1.2.6) of Antheia's hair as she leads a procession of maidens at the Ionian festival of another goddess, Artemis: κόμη ξανθή, ἡ πολλὴ καθειμένη, ὀλίγη πεπλεγμένη, πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνέμων φορὰν κινουμένη. In the Gallus relief referred to by Gow and Page in their discussion of *Anth.Pal.* 6.219.3–4, the four thin plaits one can see, two on either side of the face, hardly contain all of the Gallus' hair; the rest should perhaps be thought of as flowing free at the back.¹² The bound hair in Asius was in golden *δεσμοί*. The *κορύμ-*

¹⁰ We should expect loose-flowing hair in connection with trailing garments at a religious festival: see N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) 203 (on lines 176–81).

¹¹ Bowra (*supra* n.4) 395–96 (127 of reprint): "A bronze statuette of c. 600 B.C. from the Heraeum shows a young man whose hair falls on his shoulders at the back and is dressed in front in two sausage-like ringlets [A. Buschor, *Altsamische Standbilder* I (Berlin 1934) Taf. 5, 7, 8], while another statuette has two such ringlets on each side in front [Taf. 29, 31, 32]."

¹² *Hellenistic Epigrams* II (Cambridge 1965) 85; *JHS* 80 (1960) pl. 8.

βαι will have been ornamental fastenings¹³ on the *δεσμοί*, and *ἐπ' αὐτῶν* will probably refer not generally to the hair but specifically to the *δεσμοί*. This is supported by the words Bowra cites from Hesychius: *κορυμβάσι περιδρόμοις δι' ὧν συσπᾶται γύργαθος καὶ κεκρύφαλος καὶ δεσμοί*. Not only is *κορυμβάς*—perhaps even a synonym of *κορύμβη*—a kind of fastening, but it is used somehow to fasten *δεσμοί*, and is moreover associated with *κεκρύφαλος*, which often means 'hair-net' and occurs (in pl. of a single hair-style) together with *κορύμβοις* in *Anth.Pal.* 6.219.3–4.

Though the evidence does not allow quite confident statements about the exact nature of the hairstyle, or the *δεσμοί*, or the *κορύμβαι*, it seems certain that verse 4 of the transmitted text has to do with hair and that the transposition I favour is necessary. It is worth making the stylistic observation that in the new text the repetition *χρυσέοις . . . | χρύσειαι δὲ . . .* gives a pleasing rhetorical effect, whereas the repetition of 'golden' in the transmitted text is somewhat awkward.

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¹³ With the difference in meaning that this involves between the closely related *κόρυμβος* (hairstyle) and *κορύμβη* (ornamental fastening on hairstyle) compare *e.g.* the two related meanings of the one form *ἐμπλόκιον*, 'a fashion of plaiting womens' hair' (LSJ *s.v.* 1) and 'hair-clasp' (2). On the use of gold to ornament the hair see Bowra (*supra* n.4) 396–97 (127–28 of reprint).