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ALCAEUS FR. 130 B, 1–2 VOIGT

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ἄγνοις [δ]υσβίοτοις . . ις ὁ τάλαις ἔγω
 ζῶω μοῖραν ἔχων ἀγροιωτίκων
 ἡμέρων ἀγόρας ἄκουσαι
 καρυ[ζο]μένας ὠγεσιλαίδα

καὶ β[ό]λλας . . .

In l. 1 supplements based on the idea that ἄγνοις is an adjective and means ‘holy’ or ‘chaste’ have not been a success. E. Diehl, *Rh. Mus.* 92 (1944), 1f. conjectured ἄγνοις [εἰ]ς βίοτοις [βα]ίς, which F. Ferrari, *La porta dei canti: antologia della lirica greca* (1993), 180 modified to ἄγνοις [δῆ] ’ς βίοτοις [βα]ίς: ‘having gone into holy, chaste lives’ is as odd in Greek as it is in English, and why on earth should the poet use the plural? G. Burzacchini, *QUCC* 22 (1976), 42f. (cf. *Gnomon* 54 [1982], 117), believing that the ι of ἄγνοις had been cancelled ‘con un deciso tratto’, suggested ἄγνοις [τοῖ]ς βίοτοις, of which he ingeniously suggested that the *Integer vitae scelerisque purus* of Horace, *carm.* 1,22,1 was an imitation; this view was accepted by Renzo Tosi, *Studi sulla tradizione indiretta dei classici Greci* (1988), 39. E. Flores, *Vichiana*, n.s. 9 (1980), 300 conjectured ἄγνοις [τοῖ]ς βίοτοις [πα]ίς, which Burzacchini, *Eikasmos* 5 (1994), 31, in an article on the poem containing a full bibliography, has called the best supplement. Lobel and Page were not unaware of the mark on the iota of ἄγνοις which Burzacchini takes to be a cancellation, for Lobel wrote ‘litt. ι partem med. transfigit h. h., eiusdem litt. a pede sinistrorsum extenditur h. h. paulo a dextra descendens’, but they did not regard it as a cancellation. I find it strange that Alcaeus should say that he is or that he is like a child, and again I do not see why βίοτοις should be plural.

Surely there is little doubt that ἄγνοις in this place is a noun, meaning the chaste-tree, or agnus castus, in Greek called also λύγος and in Latin *vitex*. ‘Above the initial α’, writes Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (1955), p. 202, speaking of l. 1, ‘is written λ followed by what most resembles ί’. He goes on to quote a suggestion of Lobel that ‘since ἄγνος = *agnus castus*, the chaste-tree, otherwise known as λύγος, the interlinear letters may be intended to give λυ(γο-) as a variant for ἀγνο-’. ‘δυσβίοτοις’, Page continues, ‘would be a suitable epithet, since the chaste-tree could be used to typify that which lives in uncomfortable surroundings’. He cites Chionides fr. 2 K.–A. οὐδὲν ἔτι γέ μοι δοκῶ ἄγνου διαφέρειν ἐν χαράδραι πεφυκός, and Dioscurides i.103,1 Wellmann ἄγνος ἢ λύγος παρὰ ποταμοῖς τραχέσι τε τόποις καὶ χαράδραις φούμενος. Thus Page translates ‘I, poor wretch, live a rustic’s life’ and Campbell (*Greek Lyric* i [1982], p. 301) ‘I, poor wretch, live with the lot of a rustic’.

Leslie Kurke, *QUCC* 47 (1994), p. 91, with n. 44, to whom I am indebted for having redirected my attention to the problem, has lately suggested that ‘the imagery of scape-

goating provides reasonable context', since φαρμακοί were scourged with branches of the chaste-tree. In order to show how this might be got out of the words, she assumes that frs. 130 a and 130 b belong to the same poem, a highly questionable assumption, since the metre indicates the opposite; see Page, *op. cit.*, on vv. 16ff., and Voigt, p. 237, l. 6f.

But even if the view that fr. 130 a and fr. 130 b come from the same poem is accepted, this suggestion does not convince. Fr. 130 a ends thus (l. 13–15):

περ . [.] . . . [. .] . εν κ . ὕθυ κατασσάτω
 αὐτο . [. . . .] ε καπέτων
 ἐχέπ[. .] . [.] α τεῖχος βασιλήιον.

Dr. Kurke writes: 'If we assume that ὡς vel sim. occurred somewhere in the preceding lines, we get "(Like one) cast down . . . (beyond?) the royal wall . . . a slave . . . miserable branches of *agnus castus*, I . . ." Dr. Kurke has translated only where a complete word can be made out; but the other letters make it very hard to see how this can have been the meaning; what, for example, does Dr. Kurke make of ἐχέπ[? And even if this was the meaning, it is not easy to see how the allusion to the plight of the φαρμακός could have been understood.

[δ]υσβιότοις, indeed, is scarcely avoidable; the word recurs at Leonidas, A. P. 7,648,4 = Gow–Page *HE*, 2007. But unless the word between δυσβιότοις and ὁ τάλαις is accounted for, the construction of the sentence remains a mystery. As Dr. Voigt (p. 239) observes, one would expect a participle. She has tentatively suggested [δῦ]ις, which has found favour with West, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (1993), 54, who translates 'plunged in the wild chaste-woods'. The notion that Lesbos contained whole woods of this agreeable shrub, into which Alcaeus could sink, seems to me not especially probable.

Almost the only word I can think of that makes any kind of sense in this place is [θε]ις. Supposing one were to read this, what would be the meaning?

I do not think that Page's quotations from Chionides and Dioscurides, or Dr. Kurke's suggestion about φαρμακοί, draw attention to the function of the chaste-tree¹ which is in question here. The point is rather that the chaste-tree is often a constituent of the στιβάς, the bed of leaves or plants which a man may make for himself when he is living rough. Such beds, according to Plato, *Rep.* 372 B, were slept on by the earliest city-dwellers²; at a later stage of civilisation (373 A) they will be replaced by proper beds (κλῖναι). At *Od.* 9, 427–428, Odysseus ties some of the rams of Polyphemus together with branches of the same tree, λύγοι, of which the Cyclops makes his bed:

τοὺς ἀκέων συνέργον εὐστρεφεέσσι λύγοισι
 τῆισ' ἐπι Κύκλωψ εὐδε πέλωρ, ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς.

¹ For detailed information about this plant and its functions, see H. Von Staden, 'Spiderwoman and the Chaste Tree: The Semantics of Matter', in *Configurations* (1992), 1: 23–56 and H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion II: Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (2nd edn., 1994), chapter 4.

² James Adam in his commentary (1st edn., 1902; often reprinted) rightly warns against the idea that this means 'mattresses'; 'the whole point of the passage', he writes, 'is that instead of reclining on manufactured couches they lie on natural ones of bryony and myrtle boughs'.

Nicaenetus, fr. 6 Powell (CA p. 3) = Gow–Page, *HE*, 2705f., planning a picnic in the neighbourhood of the Samian temple of Hera, will make his bed out of this plant:

Ἄρκεῖ μοι λιτὴ μὲν ὑπὸ πλευροῖσι χάμευνα,
 ἐγγύθι γὰρ προμάλου δέμνιον ἐνδαπίης,
 καὶ λύγος, ἀρχαίων Καρῶν στέφος.

There was a famous agnus castus tree at the Samian Heraion (see Pausanias vii 4,4 and viii 23,5, and further literature mentioned by M. Blech, *Studien zum Kranz bei den Griechen* (1982), 248, n. 15, and in all likelihood garlands made from it were worn at such festivals as the Tonaia (see Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* [1906], 46f.); but it would seem that in this passage, despite the mention of the Carians' use of this plant for garlands, the reference is to its use for στιβάδες.

In Plutarch's treatise on Socrates' *Daimonion* (578 E), the Pythagorean Theanor, camping by the tomb of his long-dead companion Lysis, to whose grave he has made a pilgrimage, is seen κατηυλισμένον ἐπὶ στιβάδων· φαίνεσθαι γὰρ ἄγνου καὶ μυρικής χαμεύνας . . . On the second day of the Athenian Thesmophoria, the Νηστεία or Fasting, the women prepared their beds on the bare ground, usually with twigs and leaves of the chaste-tree. During the observance of the Syracusan Demeter festival, says Diodorus 5,4,7, 'they imitate the ancient manner of life' (μιμούμενοι τὸν ἀρχαῖον βίον).³ That life is proverbially uncomfortable. In later times, στιβάδες were slept on principally by soldiers on active service. The Chorus of Aristophanes' *Peace* (347) complains of having endured πράγματά τε καὶ στιβάδας, ἅς ἔλαχε Φορμίων (cf. Chionides fr. 1,2 K.–A.). Of Chionides fr. 2 K.–A., quoted by Page and cited above (p. 35), Meineke wrote 'dici haec videntur ab homine contempto et in nullo pretio habito'. The Chorus of the *Plutus* (540–541) complains that Poverty gives one instead of a bed a στιβάς full of bugs. Young Spartans, Plutarch says (*Inst. Lac.* 237 B), slept ἐπὶ στιβάδων, which they made themselves by breaking off the tops of the reeds that grew by the Eurotas.

I suggest that θεῖς is used 'in local sense', the first meaning for the verb τίθημι given in L.S.J.; the sense is equivalent to that of ὑποστορέσας. With this supplement the sense will be 'I have put down, poor wretch, branches of the uncomfortable chaste-tree, and am living a rustic's life'.⁴

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³ Whether or not Von Staden and Versnel (see n. 2 above) are right in arguing that the supposed antaphrodisiac qualities of this plant were responsible for its use on this occasion does not at present concern us. What matters with regard to the poem of Alcaeus is that to lie on a στιβάς made of the branches of the chaste-tree was a feature of the ἀρχαῖος βίος and was uncomfortable.

⁴ I would like to thank Professor Rudolf Kassel for what he has done to improve this article.