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Stesichorus, P. Oxy. 3876 (PMGF I App.) fr. 67(b)


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A passage including in the space of a few lines ἀμφιβρότα[2] (3), no doubt of a shield, as always in Homer[3], ἀργυρομον[4] (4), perhaps περὶ χρ[ο]τι(5) (5), and τῆλοθε χαλ[κ]-[6] (6) with ἐλάτ[ο] (7), is naturally taken to belong to a description of preparations for battle. It is surprising then to find at l. 8, according to the articulations proposed by the first editor, ἀλός or καλός ὀρτο[5]: καλός is hardly a suitable subject for this verb, and while εἰς ἀλός ὀρτο[9] might be defended by comparison with B. 17.76f. ὀρνυ ἐκ βαρύβρομον πέλαγος, it will not be easy to devise a connection between ‘dived into the (?wave(s)) of the sea’ and what precedes. I suspect that κο[ν]τι(7), a word found in military contexts in Homer[11], is to be restored: cf. for its use with this verb II. 3.13f. τῶν ὑπὸ ποσί κονίςαλος[12] ὀρνυτ ἐκελήθετο | ἐρχομένων, 11.151f. ὑπὸ δὲ φισίν ὀρτό κονίθ | ἐκ πεδίου.[13]

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1 The placing of fr. 67(a) in relation to fr. 67(b) doubtfully accepted by the first editor, M. W. Haslam, is not supported by comparison of the cross-fibres: I am indebted to Dr R. A. Coles for a demonstration of this point using digital images prepared by G. Nisbet. I have examined the papyrus.

2 Haslam (commentary) considers this reading to be ‘excluded by the initial trace’, but the traces in question seem quite compatible with the tops of the second upright and second oblique of µ written as in fr. 67(a).2: abrasion has left blank papyrus below the top of the oblique, and the apparent cross-stroke is on a lower layer. Haslam’s suggestions, ν, ο, and η (the last made in his commentary), are unattractive.


4 Suppl. Haslam.

5 περὶ χρ[ο]τι of rejected by Haslam on metrical grounds. His χρο[ις]- is another possibility.

6 Suppl. Haslam: cf. II. 11.43-5 (Agamemnon) εἶλητο δ’ ἄλκιμα δοῦρ θόω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῷ | ὀξέα· τῇλε δὲ χαλκοῖς ἀπ’ αὐτόφυρν οὐρανὸν εἶσα | λάμπτ’. 10.152-4 ἐπὶ δὲ φιν | ὑπὸ δ’ ἐπὶ παραστῆρος ἐκλάτατο, τῆλε δὲ χαλκός | λάμφῃ ὑπὸ τε στροφή πατρός Διός. Haslam writes that the gap between ε and χ contains ‘perhaps a low-middle stop’, but the mark in question appears to be merely a stain. I should say that the specks he mentions between ε and ο[4] in l. 7 and the ‘doubtful’ stop in l. 9 are also fortuitous.

7 Haslam compares II. 19.379 ἀπ’ ἀχληλήσοις κάσεοι κέλας αἰθήρ’ ἵκανεν.

8 ‘Or a name, but none attested’, he adds.

9 So W. Luppe, Gnomon 64 (1992), 298.

10 The first trace is compatible with ν, being the upper part of an upright.


12 -νευς- pap. 553 West (ZPE 46 (1982), 71; iii AD); -νερ[ι]- pap. 886 (P. Oxy. ined.).

13 In the marginal note, if Haslam is right to recognize a phrase of the form ἱοντως· ἰδιντ[ο]ς, the latter explaining the former, one might restore δρας[η]። cf. Stes. $135.9 δραςκοίςος, Hsch. δ 2307 δραςεῖν· ἰδίως, βλέπων.

I take this opportunity to record the following pair of corrections in other fragments. Fr. 35.7 ἔγα: the supposed ‘long’, of which Luppe, ZPE 95 (1993), 58, attempts an explanation, being gently curved (contrast the ‘longs’ at fr. 8.1, 26.14, 32.3, 35.10, 70.2, 72.2: little survives of that at fr. 64(b).4), is to be interpreted rather as a hyphen relating to the previous line: other possible hypsens at l. 17, fr. 46.4. Fr. 60: a blank line is to be inserted between ll. 3 and 4.