

EXHORTATION AND MEDITATION:
ALTERNATING STANZAS AS A STRUCTURAL DEVICE
IN EARLY GREEK ELEGY

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IT IS A FAIRLY well-established notion that vigorous exhortation and sober meditation are two of the basic rhetorical functions and linguistic actions of the elegiac genre, especially in its earliest phases.¹ It has not been noticed, however, that early elegiac poets do not deploy these two modes randomly, but that in the longer extant fragments, at least, they often show a tendency to organize their thoughts into stanzas of equal length, which alternate back and forth between advice in the imperative and rumination in the indicative. The idea that elegiac poets composed by stanzas is not entirely new. Around the time of the American Civil War, Heinrich Weil floated the hypothesis that many of the early elegists divided their poems into “strophes” that occasionally displayed a kind of responsion similar to that found in ancient Greek choral poetry.² Weil did not suggest, however, that these elegiac “strophes” lent any special rhetorical pattern to the poems in which they appeared. Although his contemporaries quickly rejected the main argument of his brief study—that Solon 13 was primarily composed of four-couplet “strophes”—they paid scant attention to some of his other, passing observations, most notably that Tyrtaeus seems to use a five-couplet “strophe” to lend structure to all three of his longer fragments (nos. 10–12), and that Xenophanes 1 and 2 both seem to be composed as a pair of six-couplet “strophes.”³

Although Weil’s overall thesis about elegiac strophes was ultimately rejected, Rossi, in a detailed study nearly a century later, confirmed that the

1. See, e.g., Jaeger (1966, 113–14), who discusses the “imperative” and “indicative” components of elegy, or Gerber (1970, 91), who labels the two foci of elegy as “hortatory” and “philosophical.”

2. Weil 1862. His ideas were rejected by subsequent editors and pointedly refuted by Clemm 1883. Linforth (1919, 242–44) provides a concise overview of the controversy. To avoid the misleading connotation of triadic structure invoked by Weil’s term “strophe,” I use the word “stanza” throughout to refer to the uniformly sized units of metrically equivalent verses, just as scholars are accustomed to speak of the units of Greek monodic poetry as, e.g., a Sapphic stanza. In the case of the elegiac stanza, of course, the verse form is stichic. In English and Italian poetry, whence the term evolves, “stanza” also involves a regular and often complicated scheme of rhymes, a feature that is extremely rare in Greek poetry, although—as we shall see—elegiac poets do employ, albeit rarely, a special kind of internal “Leonine” rhyme in the pentameter (the second half of an elegiac couplet) to signal the end of a stanza.

3. Weil (1862) devotes the first eight pages of his thirteen-page study to Solon 13, a page and a half to Xenophanes 1 and 2, two pages to Tyrtaeus 12, one page to Tyrtaeus 11, and one-and-a-half pages to Tyrtaeus 10.

first thirty lines of Tyrtaeus 10, at least, were plainly composed in three five-couplet units. He noted, in addition, that the first and last of these units were “discursive” in nature, while the middle one exhorted the audience to action.⁴ Tyrtaeus 10, in short, displayed a pattern of alternation between units of meditation and exhortation. Rossi, however, was concerned solely with proving the unity of Tyrtaeus 10, and thus made no effort to generalize his findings to other early elegiac fragments. In this essay, then, by combining Weil’s intuitive sense of the wider generic use of compositional units in elegy with Rossi’s specific insight into how Tyrtaeus uses alternating five-couplet units to organize fragment 10 rhetorically, I argue that both Tyrtaeus and Callinus seem to compose by five-couplet stanzas that alternate between exhortation and meditation, and that Xenophanes shows this same tendency, but uses stanzas of six couplets instead of five.

This kind of regular stanzaic architecture seems strongest in the extant fragments of Tyrtaeus, who as both Weil and Rossi saw, makes regular use of the elegiac stanza in his fragment 10, the first thirty lines of which divide up quite easily into three coherent segments of five couplets each.⁵ The first provides a meditation on the choice between two radically different paths, one of bravery and one of cowardice (10.1–10):⁶

τεθνάμεναι γάρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοις πεσόντα
 ἄνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν περὶ ἧ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον,
 τὴν δ’ αὐτοῦ προλιπόντα πόλιν καὶ πίνοντας ἀγροὺς
 παωχεύειν πάντων ἔστ’ ἀνιηρότατον,
 πλαζόμενον σὺν μητρὶ φίλῃ καὶ πατρὶ γέροντι 5
 παισὶ τε σὺν μικροῖς κουριδίῃ τ’ ἀλόχῳ.
 ἐχθρὸς μὲν γάρ τοῖσι μετέσσεται οὓς κεν ἵκηται,
 χρησιμοσύνη τ’ εἴκων καὶ στυγερῇ πενίῃ,
 αἰσχύνει τε γένος, κατὰ δ’ ἀγλαὸν εἶδος ἐλέγχει,
 πᾶσα δ’ ἀτιμία καὶ κακότης ἔπεται. 10

It is a fine thing for a brave man to die when he has fallen among the front ranks while fighting for his homeland, and it is the most painful thing of all to leave one’s city and rich fields for a beggar’s life, wandering about with his dear mother and aged father, with small children and wedded wife. For giving way to need and hateful poverty, he will be treated with hostility by whomever he meets, he brings disgrace on his line, belies his splendid form, and every indignity and evil attend him.

These verses provide an extended gnomic reflection introduced by γάρ,⁷ which first describes the brave warrior and then the craven or defeated one,

4. Rossi 1953/54: “i primi 30 versi si lasciano disporre in tre gruppi di 10 versi ciascuno; il gruppo centrale contiene una serie di esortazioni all’azione, i due laterali ciascuno una tesi e un’antitesi di carattere discorsivo.”

5. Weil 1862, 11; and Rossi 1953/54, 414–15. Until fairly recently, editors separated this fragment after line 14 into two poems of roughly equal length, taking as their primary clue the vocative ὦ νέοι in line 15 and the switch from first-person plural hortative subjunctives to second-person plural imperatives, an approach succinctly summarized by Fränkel (1975, 154). West (1992) prints them as a single fragment; see Verdenius 1969, 347, and Gerber 1970, 72–73, for the current *communis opinio* that the fragment is a single poem.

6. I print the text and translation of Gerber (1999) throughout.

7. There is some disagreement whether the first line of Tyrtaeus 10 is the beginning of a poem. Traditionally it was thought that the γάρ explained some previous expression or thought, but Verdenius (1969, 337–38) and Adkins (1977, 75–89) suggest that γάρ, δέ, and other so-called continuative particles are sometimes placed at the beginning of elegiac poems.

who takes his family into exile. Although no obvious signs of ring composition or repetition mark these five couplets internally as a complete unit, we are made aware of their autonomy when the poet continues in line 11 in a very different manner (10.11–20):⁸

εἰ δ' οὕτως ἀνδρός τοι ἁλωμένου οὐδεμί' ὄρη
 γίνεται οὐτ' αἰδώς, οὐδ' ὀπίσω γένεος,
 θυμῷ γῆς πέρι τῆσδε μαχώμεθα καὶ περὶ παίδων
 θνήσκωμεν ψυχέων μηκέτι φειδόμενοι.
 ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες, 15
 μηδὲ φυγῆς αἰσχρῆς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου,
 ἀλλὰ μέγαν ποιείσθε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἐν φρεσὶ θυμόν,
 μηδὲ φιλοψυχεῖτ' ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενοι·
 τοὺς δὲ παλαιότερους, ὧν οὐκέτι γούνατ' ἐλαφρά,
 μὴ καταλείποντες φεύγετε, τοὺς γεραίους.

But if there is no regard or respect for a man who wanders thus, nor yet for his family after him, let us fight with spirit for this land and let us die for our children, no longer sparing our lives. Come, you young men, stand fast at one another's side and fight, and do not start shameful flight or panic, but make the spirit in your heart strong and valiant, and do not be in love of life when you are fighting men. Do not abandon and run away from elders, whose knees are no longer nimble, men revered.

This second group of five couplets is plainly distinguished from the first by linguistic mode and rhetorical purpose. From beginning to end these lines exhort an audience of young men (15: ὦ νέοι) to fight bravely, whereas the first five couplets are simply descriptive and evaluative ("X is a fine thing . . . the most painful thing is Y") and focus exclusively on the situation of two hypothetical soldiers, each of whom chooses a different path.

The poet, moreover, sets off in high contrast the language of the second stanza—seven exhortations in the plural—from that of the first, which contains none.⁹ In both stanzas, however, he uses participles densely and in prominent positions. In the first, he deploys single participles, primarily in the accusative case, to describe how one generic soldier falls bravely in battle (πεσόντα) while fighting (μαρνάμενον), but another cowardly one abandons (προλιπόντα) his city, wandering (πλαζόμενον), and eventually giving way (εἰκὼν) to poverty. In the second stanza, on the other hand, the participles are all plural and nominative and alternate between active and middle forms: μηκέτι φειδόμενοι at the end of line 14; μένοντες at the end of line 15; μαρνάμενοι at the end of line 18; and μὴ καταλείποντες at the beginning of the final verse (20). The last two participles in the second stanza (18: μαρνάμενοι and 20: μὴ καταλείποντες), moreover, plainly recall and in some sense reply to the pair of participles placed near the beginning of the first stanza (2: μαρνάμενον and 3: προλιπόντα), the first of which describes the brave warrior

8. At the beginning of line 11, West (1992, ad loc.) prints εἴθ' οὕτως with a dagger, but I follow Verdenius (1969, 347), Gerber (1999, ad loc.), Adkins (1977, 78–79), and others, who print Francke's simple emendation.

9. Rossi 1953/54, 415. Note how Tyrtæus artfully distributes the seven exhortations evenly over the ten lines: two first-person plural hortative subjunctives (13 and 14) followed by five second-person plural imperatives (15, 16, 17, 18, and 20). In every case but one the verb lies directly before or after the mid-line caesura.

fighting in the thick of battle and the second the craven one in the act of abandoning his city in disgrace.

It seems, then, that Tyrtaeus composed the first twenty lines of fragment 10 as a pair of stanzas, the first of which—by means of generic description, comparison, and evaluation—meditates on the two different choices set before a soldier in time of war, while the second exhorts the audience to follow one of these paths (that of the noble warrior) and avoid the other. In addition to the subtle ring composition created by the repeated participles at the beginning of the first stanza and the end of the second, Tyrtaeus also links these two sections together by the protasis at the start of the second (“But if there is no regard or respect for a man who wanders thus, nor yet for his family after him . . .”), which recalls the pathetic scene described in the first: “wandering about with his dear mother and aged father, with small children and wedded wife.”

Tyrtaeus continues on in the same fashion in the third stanza of this fragment, which, like the first, offers a meditation introduced by γάρ (10.21–30):¹⁰

αἰσχρὸν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο, μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
 κεῖσθαι πρόσθε νέων ἄνδρα παλαιότερον,
 ἤδη λευκὸν ἔχοντα κάρη πολίων τε γένειον,
 θυμὸν ἀποπνεῖοντ' ἄλκιμον ἐν κονίῃ,
 αἱματόεντ' αἰδοῖα φίλαις ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντα— 25
 αἰσχρὰ τὰ γ' ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νεμεσητὸν ἰδεῖν—
 καὶ χροὰ γυμνωθέντα· νέοισι δὲ πάντ' ἐπέοικεν,
 ὄφρ' ἐρατῆς ἡβῆς ἀγλαὸν ἄνθος ἔχῃ,
 ἀνδράσι μὲν θηητὸς ἰδεῖν, ἐρατὸς δὲ γυναιξὶ
 ζῶος ἑὸν, καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών.

For this brings shame, when an older man lies fallen among the front ranks with the young behind him, his head already white and his beard grey, breathing out his valiant spirit in the dust, clutching in his hands his bloodied genitals—this is a shameful sight and brings indignation to behold—his body naked. But for the young everything is seemly, as long as he has the splendid prime of lovely youth; while alive, men marvel at the sight of him and women feel desire, and when he has fallen among the front ranks, he is fair.

As in the first stanza of this fragment, here Tyrtaeus explores and compares the appropriateness of men falling in battle, a theme that he once again examines in two hypothetical and diametrically opposed cases, which are neatly bracketed and contrasted by the repetition—in nearly identical phrases—of the aorist participle of the Greek verb “to fall” at the end of the first line (21: αἰσχρὸν γὰρ . . . μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα / κεῖσθαι πρόσθε νέων ἄνδρα παλαιότερον) and the last (30: καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών).¹¹

And as he does at the start of the second stanza, Tyrtaeus picks up a theme that appears at the end of the previous stanza (do not abandon older warriors in the fray) and begins this new stanza by explaining why it is so shameful for older men to die in battle while the younger men hang back

10. Barron and Easterling (1999, 92) discuss these verses as if they were a discrete and coherent unit.

11. Weil 1862, 12–13.

(21–27 mid-line). He then ends with the alternate case: a young man is desirable and beautiful both alive and dead—in the latter case, if he falls in the first ranks of the warriors. The poet heightens the contrast first by repeating at the beginning of lines 21 and 26 the adjectives αἰσχρόν and αἰσχρά, and then by focusing our attention almost voyeuristically on the sight of the two different bodies, in each case filling up an entire verse and using a similar construction: αἰσχρὰ τὰ γ' ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νεμεσητὸν ἰδεῖν (26) and ἀνδράσι μὲν θηητὸς ἰδεῖν, ἐρατὸς δὲ γυναιξὶ (29).¹² Tyrtaeus unifies this stanza as well by its linguistic consistency. Just as in the previous two stanzas, where he weaves together a series of descriptive and emotive participles into a rich fabric of detail (with singular, mostly accusative participles in 1–10 and then plural nominative ones in 11–20), here he deploys five singular accusative participles to describe the shamefully abandoned older man (21: πεσόντα; 23: ἔχοντα; 24: ἀποπνεύοντ'; 25: ἔχοντα; and 27: γυμνωθέντα) and two in the nominative case to describe the young man who dies nobly (both in 30: ἑὼν and πεσών).¹³ The shift, moreover, from the accusative case in construction with an infinitive (21–22: αἰσχρόν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο, μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα / κεῖσθαι πρόσθε νέων) to a similar infinitive construction with the nominative case (29–30: ἀνδράσι μὲν θηητὸς ἰδεῖν, ἐρατὸς δὲ γυναιξὶ / ζωὸς ἑὼν, καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών) follows the pattern established in the first stanza (1–2: τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα / ἄνδρ' ἀγαθόν and 8: χρησιμοσύνη τ' εἴκων καὶ στυγερῇ πενίῃ).

There emerges, then, a significant pattern of alternating stanzas in the first thirty lines of Tyrtaeus 10:

[10 lines] Meditation introduced by γάρ

(indicative verbs and singular participles, primarily in the accusative but then ending in the nominative)

[10 lines] Exhortation to fight

(plural hortative subjunctives and imperatives with plural nominative participles)

[10 lines] Meditation introduced by γάρ

(indicative verbs and singular participles, primarily in the accusative but then ending in the nominative)

Scholars have also noted how the last line of the third stanza recalls both the first line of the same stanza as well as the very first line of the fragment:

τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα (1)

αἰσχρόν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο, μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα (21)

ζωὸς ἑὼν, καλὸς δ' ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών. (30)

Line 30, therefore, “constitutes the conclusion of, if not quite an argument, the movement of Tyrtaeus’ thought.”¹⁴ This triple resposion of nearly

12. Adkins (1977, 95) stresses the special use here and elsewhere in Tyrtaeus 10 of the visual or aesthetic range of Greek moral vocabulary (i.e., καλός = “beautiful”) to urge young men to fight. Stehle (1997, 120–21) rightly notes that the young male bodies are eroticized as well.

13. Like the participles in the previous stanza, most of these participles are set in emphatic positions in the line: three just before the midline break (23, 24, and 27) and two at line end (25 and 30).

14. Adkins 1977, 96; see also Weil 1862, 11, and Rossi 1953/54, 415.

identical verse-ending phrases at the beginnings of both meditative stanzas and the end of the second one emphasizes important differences in their moral evaluation: it is a fine thing, Tyrtaeus asserts, when brave men fall fighting in the front ranks, but a shameful thing when elderly warriors fall in the same position, while the young hang back. Elegiac responsion in Tyrtaeus 10, therefore, serves two important functions: similar line endings articulate the stanzaic architecture of the fragment by calling attention to the beginnings and endings of individual units, while at the same time the very different terms at the start of the lines (καλόν . . . αἰσχρόν . . . καλός) highlight the great moral differences between these choices.

Is it the case, then, that the first thirty lines consist of a complete three-stanza elegiac poem? Perhaps, but there remains one difficulty. According to our primary source for this fragment—the manuscripts of the fourth-century Athenian orator Lycurgus (*Against Leocrates* 107)—Tyrtaeus 10 continues on with a single couplet:

ἀλλά τις εὖ διαβάς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι
στηριχθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς, χεῖλος δόδοσι δακόν.

Come, let everyone stand fast, with legs set well apart and both feet fixed firmly on the ground, biting his lip with his teeth.

These words would seem to introduce yet another round of exhortation, but some editors, beginning with Brunck, have traditionally dismissed them as a scribal intrusion or mistake of some sort, since an identical couplet also appears in Tyrtaeus 11.21–22, where it does, in fact, introduce a much longer unit of exhortation (see below). Others have suggested to the contrary, however, that this final couplet provides a fitting peroration for an elegiac poem of this sort, which ideally should end with a final call to battle.¹⁵

The stanzaic structures outlined above clearly isolate the final couplet in an awkward manner, and at first glance they might encourage us to follow Brunck's lead and excise lines 31–32. This final couplet is not so easily dismissed, however, since it has not one, but two perfectly good fourth-century Athenian witnesses: in addition to Lycurgus, Plato seems to have known a version of this fragment that included these two final verses.¹⁶ If, then, we accept the fact that in the fourth century Plato knew a version of the poem that continued onwards with verses 31–32, and the fact that (as has been argued here, following Weil and Rossi) the preceding lines were very artfully composed as three stanzas that alternate between meditation and exhortation, I suggest that we add a third hypothesis to the two debated by scholars: the thirty-two line fragment quoted in the manuscripts of Lycurgus is incomplete and Tyrtaeus 10 was, in fact, originally composed as a series of at least *four* five-couplet stanzas, articulated by the regular alternation of stanzas of equal length, but of different linguistic type and rhetorical purpose:¹⁷

15. For a detailed survey of both sides of the argument, see Prato 1968, 100–101.

16. Fragment 10 is paraphrased—albeit in an erratic fashion—by Plato at *Laws* 630b. His use, however, of the phrase διαβάντε δ' εὖ plainly shows that he knew a version that included this final couplet, which begins ἀλλά τις εὖ διαβάς; for discussion, see Verdenius 1969, ad loc.

17. Rossi 1953/54, 414–15 (see n. 4 above).

[10 lines] Meditation introduced by γάρ
(indicative verbs; singular participles)

[10 lines] Exhortation to battle
(hortative subjunctives/imperatives; plural participles)

[10 lines] Meditation introduced by γάρ
(indicative verbs; singular participles)

[10 lines?] Exhortation to battle
(τις + third person singular imperative; singular participles)

The final couplet (31–32), moreover, with its three vivid aorist participles—“with legs set well apart” (εὖ διαβάς), “firmly fixed” (στηριχθείς), and “biting” (δακών)—seems to continue Tyrtaeus’ practice throughout this fragment of deploying densely and prominently placed participles, here (as in the second stanza) closely linked with an imperative verb.

In fragment 11, Tyrtaeus deploys five-couplet stanzas in similar fashion to shift back and forth in function (between exhortation and meditation) and in linguistic mode (between the imperative and the indicative),¹⁸ with one initial difference: Tyrtaeus 11 begins with advice rather than rumination, at least in the fragment that has been transmitted to us (1–10):

ἀλλ', Ἡρακλῆος γὰρ ἀνικτήτου γένος ἐστέ,
θαρσεῖτ'—οὐπω Ζεὺς αὐχένα λοξὸν ἔχει—
μηδ' ἀνδρῶν πληθὺν δειμαίνετε, μηδὲ φοβεῖσθε,
ἰθὺς δ' ἐς προμάχους ἀσπίδ' ἀνὴρ ἐχέτω,
ἐχθρὴν μὲν ψυχὴν θέμενος, θανάτου δὲ μελαίνας 5
κῆρας <ὁμῶς> αὐγαῖς ἡελίοιο φίλας.
ἴστε γὰρ ὥς Ἄρεος πολυδακρύου ἔργ' αἶδηλα,
εὖ δ' ὄργην ἐδάητ' ἀργαλέου πολέμου,
καὶ μετὰ φευγόντων τε διωκόντων τ' ἐγένεσθε
ὦ νέοι, ἀμφοτέρων δ' ἐς κόρον ἠλάσατε.

Come, take courage, for your stock is from unconquered Heracles—not yet does Zeus hold his neck aslant—and do not fear throngs of men or run in flight, but let a man hold his shield straight toward the front ranks, despising life and loving the black death-spirits no less than the rays of the sun. You know how destructive the deeds of woeful Ares are, you have learned well the nature of grim war, you have been with the pursuers and the pursued, you young men, and you have had more than your fill of both.

This initial stanza falls into two parts: the first three couplets contain a stream of imperatives, nearly all of which encourage the spirits or mental attitude of the young men, rather than reiterate (as we have seen in fragment 10) the details of hoplite warfare: “be brave,” Tyrtaeus implores in this stanza, “hate life,” “love death,” and so on. The reasons for this somewhat abstract approach are, however, given in the final two couplets, where the poet continues to use second-person plural verbs to acknowledge that these men already know about the grim mechanics of war and have, in fact, experienced both victory and defeat many times. Although only half of these

18. Weil 1862, 11–12.

verses actually exhort—lines 1 and 7–10 use the indicative throughout—this stanza is nonetheless knit together by its consistent attention to the performative context: a series of eight second-person plural verbs, which exclusively address or describe the audience of young Spartan men.¹⁹ The stanza is, moreover, framed with presumably specific references to their particular circumstances (paraphrase): “Since [γάρ] you are of Herakles’ race [1] . . . since [γάρ] you know [i.e., personally] the horrors of military rout from both perspectives [8–10].”

But as in Tyrtaeus 10, the boundaries of this individual stanza are best illuminated by the stark contrast with the stanza that follows. Indeed, in the second stanza Tyrtaeus changes gears entirely and in a meditation once again introduced by γάρ he examines the moral choice between alternatives—just as he does in the two gnomic stanzas in Tyrtaeus 10. The change of focus in this stanza is likewise signaled by the switch to third-person verbs, here both plural and singular, which shift the focus away from this specific performance before a Spartan audience “of the stock of unconquered Herakles” to a generic description of any man involved in any war (11.11–20):²⁰

οἱ μὲν γὰρ τολμῶσι παρ’ ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες
 ἔς τ’ αὐτοσχεδίην καὶ προμάχους ἰέναι,
 παυρότεροι θνήσκουσι, σαοῦσι δὲ λαὸν ὀπίσσω·
 τρεσσάντων δ’ ἀνδρῶν πᾶσ’ ἀπόλῳλ’ ἀρετή.
 οὐδεὶς ἄν ποτε ταῦτα λέγων ἀνύσειεν ἕκαστα, 15
 ὅσσ’, ἦν αἰσχροῦ πάθη, γίνεται ἀνδρὶ κακά·
 ἀργαλέον γὰρ ὅπισθε μετάφρενόν ἐστι δαΐζειν
 ἀνδρὸς φεύγοντος διήϊφ’ ἐν πολέμῳ·
 αἰσχροὺς δ’ ἐστὶ νέκυς κατακείμενος ἐν κόνιῃσι
 νῶτον ὀπισθ’ αἰχμῇ δουρὸς ἐηλόμενος.

Those who dare to stand fast at one another’s side and to advance towards the front ranks in hand-to-hand conflict, they die in fewer numbers and they keep safe the troops behind them; but when men run away, all esteem is lost. No one could sum up in words each and every evil that befalls a man, if he suffers disgrace. For to pierce a man behind the shoulder blades as he flees in deadly combat is gruesome, and a corpse lying in the dust, with the point of a spear driven through his back from behind, is a shameful sight.

In this second stanza, Tyrtaeus sets up a formal contrast in the first three couplets between those (11: οἱ μὲν) who stand fast in the battle line, and others (14: δ’) who break the hoplite line and flee.²¹ The same comparison is then expressed differently in the final two couplets, which seem to reiterate again the contrast—described at the end of the previous section (lines 9–10)—between fleeing and pursuing a rout. This stanza also displays an effective

19. Of the eight verbs, two appear at the start of the line (2 and 6), four at the end (1, 3, 9, and 10), one after the midline break (3) and one before it (8). The third-person imperative at the end of line 4 (ἐχέτω) should also be added to this list, since in martial elegy and elsewhere it is the functional equivalent of the second-person plural imperative.

20. Few scholars would agree that these lines form a discrete unit. Bowra (1969, 56–57) and Fowler (1987, 81), however, both treat 11–20 as a discrete unit, and Adkins (1972, 81) in finding the transition between lines 10 and 11 to be “rough,” may have intuited the stanzaic boundary there.

21. Fowler 1987, 82.

bit of ring composition: the spondaic genitive phrase that takes up the first half of the fourth pentameter (18: ἀνδρὸς φεύγοντος) echoes darkly the sense, words, and prosody of the first half of the second pentameter (14: τρεσσάντων δ' ἀνδρῶν). Tyrtaeus, therefore, in this nicely balanced final pair of couplets shows his distaste for both options and we are clearly to understand that face-to-face battle in the forefront is the only honorable option.

Tyrtaeus 11 continues for another nine couplets, which I print—for reasons that will quickly become clear—as a four-couplet unit followed by a five-couplet stanza (11.21–38):²²

ἀλλὰ τις εὖ διαβάς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι
στηριχθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς, χεῖλος ὁδοῦσι δακόν,
μηρούς τε κνήμας τε κάτω καὶ στέρνα καὶ ὦμους
ἀσπίδος εὐρείης γαστρὶ καλυψάμενος·
δεξιτερῇ δ' ἐν χειρὶ τινασσέτω ὄβριμον ἔγχος, 25
κινεῖτω δὲ λόφον δεινὸν ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς·
ἔρδων δ' ὄβριμα ἔργα διδασκέσθω πολεμίζειν,
μηδ' ἐκτός βελέων ἐστάτω ἀσπίδ' ἔχων,

ἀλλὰ τις ἐγγὺς ἰὼν αὐτοσχεδὸν ἔγχεϊ μακρῷ
ἢ ξίφει οὐτάζων δῆϊον ἄνδρ' ἐλέτω, 30
καὶ πόδα πᾶρ ποδὶ θείς καὶ ἐπ' ἀσπίδος ἀσπίδ' ἐρείσας,
ἐν δὲ λόφον τε λόφῳ καὶ κυνέην κυνέῃ
καὶ στέρνον στέρνῳ πεπληγμένος ἄνδρὶ μαχέσθω,
ἢ ξίφεος κόπην ἢ δόρυ μακρὸν ἐλών.
ὕμεις δ', ὧ γυμνήτες, ὑπ' ἀσπίδος ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος 35
πτώσσοντες μεγάλοις βάλλετε χερμαδίους
δούρασι τε ξεστοῖσιν ἀκοντίζοντες ἐς αὐτούς,
τοῖσι πανόπλοισιν πλησίον ἰστάμενοι.

Come, let everyone stand fast, with legs set well apart and both feet fixed firmly on the ground, biting his lip with his teeth, and covering thighs, shins below, chest, and shoulders with the belly of his broad shield; in his right hand let him brandish a mighty spear and let him shake the plumed crest above his head in a fearsome manner. By doing mighty deeds let him learn how to fight and let him not stand—he has a shield—outside the range of missiles,

but coming to close quarters let him strike the enemy, hitting him with long spear or sword; and also, with foot placed alongside foot and shield pressed against shield, let everyone draw near, crest to crest, helmet to helmet, and breast to breast, and fight against a man, seizing the hilt of his sword or his long spear. You light-armed men, as you crouch beneath a shield on either side, let fly with huge rocks and hurl your smooth javelins at them, standing close to those in full armour.

Most editors do not recognize the break that I have marked in the text after line 28, and they suggest instead that the poem continues on into line 29 with a mere pause for a comma.²³ It is clear, moreover, that in the final nine

22. Fowler (1987, 81) suggests that the ἀλλά in line 21 starts a new section. Stobaeus, in fact—as van Groningen (1958, 128) stresses—transmits Tyrtaeus 11 in two sections, first lines 1–20 and then 21–38, suggesting that he, too, sensed an important boundary after line 20.

23. E.g., Gerber 1970, Adkins 1972, and West 1992, all ad loc.

couplets of this fragment Tyrtaeus has abandoned entirely the regular alternation between stanzas that was so evident in all of Tyrtaeus 10 and the first half of 11: although he begins line 21 with vigorous advice in the imperative, just as we would expect him to do after five couplets of meditation, all of the verses that follow use the same rhetorical mode (third-person imperatives entwined with nominative participles).

But, if we set aside for the moment the problem that lines 21–28 contain only four couplets, we can, I think, identify a different kind of stanzaic structure in the final part of this poem—one that I describe elsewhere as a “co-ordinated pair of stanzas”²⁴—by noting the pattern of interaction between the two units laid out above. I limit myself to two observations, one about content and another about responsion. Although all of lines 21–38 exhort young men to battle, there are some important differences in the content of the two stanzas. The first (21–28) advises them how to withstand an attack from the enemy, for example: by standing firm, covering themselves with their shields, and shaking their spears and helmet-crests vigorously. Tyrtaeus emphasizes his concern for a strong defensive posture, by exhorting them twice to use their shields (24 and 28) and by beginning and ending the section with pleas regarding their static position: “let him wait” (μενέτω) and “let him not stand [μὴ ἐστάτω] beyond the range of missiles.” In the second stanza, however, Tyrtaeus exhorts the warriors to approach the enemy aggressively and kill them by stabbing with their spears and swords and by pressing their full bodies against them. Likewise, he urges the light-armed troops in the last two couplets to take the offensive and hurl their stones and javelins. Now there is no waiting or covering up with the shield: the poet strenuously urges all to move forward and attack.

One might object, of course, that these differences between defensive and offensive warfare are too subtle, but Tyrtaeus has, in fact, prepared us for this distinction by a series of responsions between the opening couplets of the last three stanzas of this poem:

οἱ μὲν γὰρ τολμῶσι παρ’ ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες
ἔς τ’ αὐτοσχεδίην καὶ προμάχους ἰέναι, (11–12)

ἀλλὰ τις εὖ διαβάς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι
στηριχθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς, χεῖλος ὁδοῦσι δακύν, (21–22)

ἀλλὰ τις ἐγγὺς ἰὼν αὐτοσχεδὸν ἔγχεϊ μακρῶι
ἦ ξίφει οὐτάζων δῆϊον ἄνδρ’ ἐλέτω, (29–30)

In the first couplet of the second stanza (a meditative one), Tyrtaeus sums up the behavior of the hypothetically best fighters as “those who dare to stand fast [μένοντες] at one another’s side and to advance towards the front ranks in hand-to-hand conflict [ἔς τ’ αὐτοσχεδίην καὶ προμάχους ἰέναι].” This distinction between waiting and plunging into battle may puzzle the

24. We often find such pairs of stanzas (but meditative ones, not as here, exhortative) in more philosophically oriented poems, such as Tyrtaeus 12 or Solon 4. Weil (1862, 9–10), for instance, noted the regular use of five-couplet stanzas in Tyrtaeus 12. For the use of “coordinated pairs” of five-couplet meditative stanzas in Tyrtaeus 12, Solon 4 and 27, and the *Theognidea*, see the third chapter of Faraone forthcoming.

modern reader, but it sums up neatly the difficult discipline of hoplite battle formation: the individual soldier must never break the line in which he is stationed, because the shield in his left hand protects not only his own body but also that of the soldier to the left. In his compact description at the start of the second stanza (11–12), therefore, Tyrtaeus urges two different but equally important modes of fighting: at times the soldier is to wait bravely in proper formation and withstand the assaults against the line, but at other times he is to move forward and attack aggressively.

As he begins his third stanza, Tyrtaeus seems to recall these dual strategies of hoplite fighting and he devotes one stanza of exhortation to defensive techniques and another to offensive ones. He makes explicit the organization of these last two stanzas by placing in parallel construction the words *μενέτω* and the phrase *ἰὼν αὐτοσχεδὸν* prominently in the first lines of the third and fourth stanzas, so that they echo (as shown above) the vocabulary he used at the start of the second stanza to sum up these two different arts of war. The close verbal responsion at the beginning of the last two stanzas (*ἀλλά τις εὔ* and *ἀλλά τις ἐγ-*) further emphasizes this division of military labor into two different categories, for we have seen how responsion between elegiac stanzas performs two tasks: the repetition of phrases helps mark the beginnings and ends of stanzas, but also allows the poet to highlight differences by placing the contrasting words in similar positions in verses that are otherwise nearly identical. Thus we noticed earlier in fragment 10 that Tyrtaeus places the adjectives *καλὸν* and *αἰσχρόν* in the first half of the closely responding hexameters to emphasize their difference:

τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα (1)
αἰσχρόν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο, μετὰ προμάχοισι πεσόντα (21)

He does the same thing here in fragment 11 by placing the two different military actions, “waiting” (21: *μενέτω*) and “charging into hand-to-hand combat” (29: *ἐγγὺς ἰὼν αὐτοσχεδὸν*) at mid-line directly after the nearly identical opening words of the hexameters.

I suggest, therefore, that in the first three sections of Tyrtaeus 11 the poet uses the same architecture of alternating stanzas that he deploys in Tyrtaeus 10, but that when he swings into his third stanza (this one of exhortation), he decides, for the reasons discussed above, to double the length of it in a tightly controlled manner to reflect his dual perspectives on hoplite combat:

[10 lines] Exhortation to the right attitude
(second-person plural verbs focused on immediate performance)

[10 lines] Meditation introduced by *γάρ*
(third-person indicative verbs)

[8 lines] Exhortation to defense
(*τις* + third-person singular imperative)

[10 lines] Exhortation to attack
(*τις* + third-person singular imperative and then second-person plural imperative)

If I am correct in my analysis here, the third stanza (transmitted in the manuscripts of Stobaeus as four couplets) is missing a couplet, not an uncommon

hazard for the survival of poems composed in stichic meters, especially in one like Tyrtaeus 11, which has so many end-stopped couplets, and especially in a section of the poem that provides a repetitive catalogue of war-time actions.²⁵ But clearly the most powerful argument for assuming a lacuna here rests on the fact that Tyrtaeus uses, as we have seen, the five-couplet stanza throughout Fragments 10 and 11, with this one exception.²⁶ In this case, moreover, where we can easily trace the wider architecture of a poem with its carefully constructed responsion at the start of the final three stanzas, we are in a much better position to see where an individual couplet has indeed dropped out—much as we can identify a lacunose passage of choral lyric by noting where the metrical responsion between strophe and antistrophe breaks down in the transmitted text.

This pattern of stanzaic structures in Tyrtaeus 10 and 11 prompts a close examination of two other Archaic poets who also seem to use alternating stanzas to similar effect, Callinus and Xenophanes. Callinus 1, the oldest extant example of martial elegy, runs as follows:

μέχρις τέο κατάκεισθε; κότ' ἄλκιμον ἔξετε θυμόν,
 ὃ νέοι; οὐδ' αἰδεῖσθ' ἀμφιπερικτιόνας
 ὧδε λίην μεθιέντες; ἐν εἰρήνῃ δὲ δοκεῖτε
 ἦσθαι, ἀτὰρ πόλεμος γαῖαν ἄπασαν ἔχει

 καί τις ἀποθνήσκων ὕστατ' ἀκοντισάτω. 5
 τιμῆν τε γάρ ἐστι καὶ ἀγλαὸν ἀνδρὶ μάχεσθαι
 γῆς πέρι καὶ παίδων κουριδῆς τ' ἀλόχου
 δυσμενέσιν· θάνατος δὲ τότ' ἔσσεται, ὅπποτε κεν δῇ
 Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσ'. ἀλλὰ τις ἰθὺς ἴτω
 ἔγχος ἀνασχόμενος καὶ ὑπ' ἀσπίδος ἄλκιμον ἦτορ 10
 ἔλσας, τὸ πρῶτον μειγνυμένου πολέμου.
 οὐ γάρ κως θανάτον γε φυγεῖν εἰμαρμένον ἐστὶν
 ἀνδρ', οὐδ' εἰ προγόνων ἢ γένους ἀθανάτων.
 πολλάκι δὴ ἰοτῆτα φυγῶν καὶ δοῦπον ἀκόντων
 ἔρχεται, ἐν δ' οἴκῳ μοῖρα κίχεν θανάτου. 15

25. See, for example, the textual transmission of a five-couplet epigram of Leonidas of Tarentum, the last three couplets of which are all end-stopped and begin with the same verb in the same form. As a result, the middle couplet has completely disappeared in the Palatine recension, a fact that would have been lost on us entirely were the full text not preserved in the Planudian recension. For discussion, see Gow and Page 1965, on Leonidas 11. And in Theocritus *Idyll* 8 two complete elegiac couplets have dropped out of the manuscript after line 52, an omission that might have gone unnoticed were it not for the antiphonal architecture of the poem.

26. As Weil (1862, 9–10) noted nearly 150 years ago, Tyrtaeus 12, the third and last of the poet's longer fragments, is also organized almost entirely by five-couplet stanzas. But since that fragment is entirely meditative and descriptive I do not discuss it here. Following the lead of Jaeger (1966, 119), Tarditi (1982, 62), and Fowler (1987, 82), I show (Faraone, 2005) how the first five couplets form a complete priamel, a different kind of example of a complete rhetorical unit fitted to the confines of a stanza. Plato (*Laws* 629a–30b) paraphrases lines 1–20 of the fragment as if they were a complete rhetorical unit, suggesting that they were composed as a pair of stanzas, a suggestion that is confirmed by the fact that they display obvious responsion (10: οὐ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίνεται ἐν πολέμῳ and 20: οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γίνεται ἐν πολέμῳ). Jaeger (1966, 125–26) calls this repetition “a beautiful archaic feature,” and Fowler (1987, 82) remarks on the “verbal echo” and also notes in passing that the last ten lines of Tyrtaeus 12 form an independent unit as well. In Faraone 2006, I build on and combine these individual insights into a comprehensive argument that Tyrtaeus 12 preserves four clearly defined five-couplet stanzas: 1–10, 11–20, 21–30, and 35–44.

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὐκ ἔμπευ δῆμῳ φίλος οὐδὲ ποθεινός,
 τὸν δ' ὀλίγος στενάχει καὶ μέγας, ἦν τι πάθη·
 λαῶ γάρ σύμπαντι πόθος κρατερόφρονος ἀνδρὸς
 θνήσκοντος, ζῶων δ' ἄξιος ἡμιθέων·
 ὥσπερ γάρ μιν πύργον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρῶσιν·
 ἔρδει γὰρ πολλῶν ἄξια μοῦνος ἐών.

20

How long are you going to lie idle? Young men, when will you have a courageous spirit?
 Don't those who live round about make you feel ashamed of being so utterly passive?
 You think that you are sitting in a state of peace, but all the land is in the grip of war

even as one is dying let him make a final cast of his javelin. For it is a splendid honour
 for a man to fight on behalf of his land, children, and wedded wife against the foe.
 Death will occur only when the Fates have spun it out. Come, let a man charge straight
 ahead, brandishing his spear and mustering a stout heart behind his shield, as soon as
 war is engaged.

For it is in no way fated that a man escape death, not even if he has immortal ancestors in
 his lineage. Often one who has escaped from the strife of battle and the thud of javelins
 and has returned home meets with his allotted death in his house. But he is not in any
 case loved or missed by the people, whereas the other, if he suffer some mishap, is mourned
 by the humble and the mighty. All the people miss a stout-hearted man when he dies
 and while he lives he is the equal of demigods. For in the eyes of the people he is like a
 tower, since single-handed he does the deeds of many.

The final ten lines of this fragment (12–21) form a rhetorically complete stanza: a long reflection on heroism that explains (γάρ) why a generic hoplite should fight hard. The infinitive construction at the start of this section (οὐ γάρ . . . φυγεῖν εἰμαρμένον ἐστί), moreover, recalls (at least superficially) the beginning of both meditative stanzas in Tyrtaeus 10 (1: τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλόν and 21–22: αἰσχρὸν γάρ . . . κεῖσθαι), raising the possibility that the use of such infinitive constructions at the beginning of a meditative stanza may have been a generic feature of early elegy and not an idiosyncrasy of Tyrtaeus.

Unlike the lines that precede it, where only two of six couplets are end-stopped, each of these couplets forms a single sentence. Callinus increases this sense of order in the final stanza by inserting a series of identical internal rhymes in the first, fourth, and fifth pentameters (13: προγόνων . . . ἀθανάτων; 19: ζῶων . . . ἡμιθέων; 21: πολλῶν . . . ἐών)—a sonorous effect that is heightened by the use of five long syllables (so-called spondaic hemiepes) at the beginning of each of the last four lines,²⁷ and by the repetition—in close proximity to the second of the rhymed words—of the adjective ἄξιος after the mid-line caesura of lines 19 (ἄξιος ἡμιθέων) and 21 (ἄξια μοῦνος ἐών).²⁸ The clustering of all these poetic features in this stanza is all the more notable when we realize how greatly they contrast with the rest of the extant fragment, in which there are no other internal rhymes and no other verses with purely spondaic first halves.

27. Van Raalte (1988, p. 148, n. 8) notes that this is a rare phenomenon that also occurs at the very end of Tyrtaeus 12, suggesting that it is a device used to slow the pace and bring a longer poem to closure.

28. Gianotti 1978, 421.

In addition to marking out this final stanza linguistically and metrically as a separate section of the fragment, Callinus knits it together by various thematic repetitions. The Greek stem θάνατ- is repeated thrice in the first four lines (12: θάνατόν; 13: ἀ-θανάτων; 15: θανάτου) and then recalled near the end by the close verbal cognate that stands at the beginning of line 19 (θνήσκοντος).²⁹ Likewise, the verb “to flee” appears in the same prominent line position (after the mid-line caesura) in two successive hexameters (12: φυγεῖν and 14: φυγών). These repetitions of words for “death” and “flight” are highly significant, of course, because Callinus seems to bind these five couplets together with the same comparison that we saw in Tyrtaeus 10 and 11, between the man who flees death on the battlefield and dies at home without honor among his people (14–16) and the one who dies heroically in battle (17–21). Callinus also makes a wonderful contrast—emphasized by the rhymes mentioned above—between the initial impossibility of a warrior’s fleeing death “even if he has immortal ancestors” (13: προγόνων . . . γένος ἀθανάτων) and the war hero, who although presumably not of divine descent nonetheless is by virtue of his actions “equal of the demigods” (19: ἄξιος ἡμιθέων). We have no way of knowing for certain, of course, whether these last verses of Callinus 1 mark the end of a complete poem, but if they do, these five couplets are powerfully composed and would have provided a stately conclusion to the poem.³⁰

Does Callinus 1 show signs of any other five-couplet stanzas? This is impossible to say, of course, since a lacuna of unknown length after line 4 hampers our appreciation of the overall structure of the remaining lines. The seven verses between the missing hexameter (after line 4) and line 12 (the beginning of the complete elegiac stanza discussed above), do not, as I have said, reveal any pentameter rhymes or any signs of repetition or ring composition. They begin and end with exhortations rendered in the third-person singular imperative (“Let each man . . .”), suggesting that the stanza preceding lines 12–21 was primarily exhortative and that Callinus may have employed the Tyrtaean technique of alternating between passages of command and passages of rumination like lines 12–21. The four opening lines of this fragment—those that lie before the lacuna—neither advise nor exhort the audience, but, like the opening stanza of Tyrtaeus 11, they nonetheless focus tightly on the here-and-now of the performance, in this case abusing the young men for their sloth or indifference rather than praising them as Tyrtaeus does in the first stanza of his Fragment 11. It is possible, therefore, that these four verses were also part of a stanza of exhortation, but given the lacunose state of the text, the only assertion I can make with confidence is that the last five couplets of Callinus 1 provide a very clear example of a complete and well-rounded meditative stanza that is differentiated both linguistically and rhythmically from the verses of exhortation that precede it.

29. The tense of the participle does not, in this case, avert our eyes from the finality of death, as Gerber (1970, ad loc.) notes: “The present participle θνήσκοντος is presumably used for the aorist or perfect because of the general nature of the statement.”

30. E.g., Adkins 1985, 61: “a powerful conclusion”; or Gerber 1997, 100–101: “. . . the poem may well be complete. It has an effective opening and a satisfying ending.”

Up to this point I have discussed how two martial elegists, Tyrtaeus and possibly Callinus, use stanzas of five couplets each to provide a regular structure to their longer fragments. I shall close this study, however, by suggesting that alternating stanzas of this sort may have been a more widely generic technique, not necessarily limited to a five-couplet unit. There is to my knowledge only one example, but it is a telling one. Xenophanes 1 apparently uses a six-couplet stanza in a manner quite similar to the way Tyrtaeus and Callinus appear to use the five-couplet one:

νῦν γὰρ δὴ ζάπεδον καθαρὸν καὶ χεῖρες ἀπάντων
 καὶ κύλικες· πλεκτοὺς δ' ἀμφιτιθεῖ στεφάνους,
 ἄλλος δ' εὐώδες μύρον ἐν φιάλῃ παρατείνει·
 κρητὴρ δ' ἔστηκεν μεστὸς ἐυπροσούνης·
 ἄλλος δ' οἶνος ἐτοῖμος, ὃς οὐποτέ φησι προδώσειν, 5
 μείλιχος ἐν κεράμοις, ἄνθεος ὁσδόμενος·
 ἐν δὲ μέσοις ἀγνὴν ὀδμὴν λιβανωτὸς ἵησιν,
 ψυχρὸν δ' ἐστὶν ὕδωρ καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ καθαρὸν·
 πάρκεινται δ' ἄρτοι ξανθοὶ γεραρὴ τε τράπεζα
 τυροῦ καὶ μέλιτος πίονος ἀχθομένη· 10
 βωμὸς δ' ἄνθεσιν ἂν τὸ μέσον πάντῃ πεπύκασται,
 μολπὴ δ' ἀμφὶς ἔχει δώματα καὶ θαλίη.
 χρὴ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν θεὸν ὕμνεν εὐφρονας ἄνδρας
 εὐφήμοις μύθοις καὶ καθαροῖσι λόγοις,
 σπείσαντάς τε καὶ εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι 15
 πρήσσειν—ταῦτα γὰρ ὦν ἐστι προχειρότερον,
 οὐχ ὕβρεις· πίνειν δ' ὁπόσον κεν ἔχων ἀφίκαιο
 οἴκαδ' ἄνευ προπόλου μὴ πάνυ γηραλέος.
 ἀνδρῶν δ' αἰνεῖν τοῦτον ὃς ἐσθλὰ πῶν ἀναφαίνει,
 ὥς ἢ μνημοσύνη καὶ τόνοος ἀμφ' ἀρετῆς, 20
 οὗ τι μάχας διέπειν Τιτίνων οὐδὲ Γιγάντων
 οὐδέ <τι> Κενταύρων, πλάσμα<τα> τῶν προτέρων,
 ἣ στάσις σφεδανὰς—τοῖς οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστιν·
 θεῶν <δέ> προμηθεῖην αἰὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν.

For now the floor is clean and clean the hands of everyone and the cups; [one servant] places woven garlands round [the heads of the guests], and another offers sweet-smelling perfume in a saucer; the mixing-bowl stands filled with good cheer; on hand is additional wine, which promises never to run out, mellow in its jars and fragrant with its bouquet; in the middle incense sends forth its pure and holy aroma and there is water, cool, sweet, and clear; nearby are set golden-brown loaves and a magnificent table laden with cheese and thick honey; in the center an altar is covered all over with flowers, and song and festivity pervade the room.

For men of good cheer it is meet first to hymn the god with reverent tales and pure words, after pouring libations and praying for the ability to do what is right—for in truth this is a more obvious thing to do, not deeds of violence; it is meet to drink as much as you can hold and come home without an attendant unless you are very old, and to praise that man who after drinking reveals noble thoughts, so that there is a recollection of and striving for excellence; it is not meet to make an array of the wars of the Titans or Giants or Centaurs, creations of our predecessors, or violent factions—there is nothing useful in them; and it is meet always to have a good regard for the gods.

As many scholars have noted, this poem splits very easily (as I have indicated above) into two equal pieces, each six couplets long.³¹ In the first half, Xenophanes describes in some detail the preparations for a feast. We expect a continuous list of the activities of the servants, but after describing the placement of the garlands and perfume, the subjects of the main verbs shift from servants to the objects themselves, which are to some degree anthropomorphized, for example: the mixing bowl “full of good cheer” or the additional wine, which “promises never to run out.”

The second half of the poem is, however, linguistically and poetically quite different and clearly marked off as a new stanza. Whereas the first was purely descriptive, this one is filled primarily with exhortations using the formula of *χρή* plus the infinitive. It falls into three parts: the first pair of couplets (13–16) stresses the religious aspects of the symposium, beginning with the hymns; the second pair (17–20) suggests rules about excessive drinking and proper conversation; and the third pair (21–24) provides a counter-example of a poor choice of conversation: mythological battles and strife. The fragment closes with a final command to have a good regard for the gods. This stanza, moreover, begins and ends with the gods: *θεόν* after the mid-line caesura of the first line (13) is echoed by *θεῶν* at the beginning of the final pentameter (24).³² A threat of violence, however, hangs over this second half of the fragment: the participants are asked to pray for the ability to do just things rather than acts of *hybris* (17), and they are prohibited from reciting tales about battles or violent factions (21–23). These three words are, in fact, placed emphatically at the beginning of the third, fourth, and fifth hexameters, in the first and last case enjambed: οὐχ ὕβρεις . . . οὐ τι μάχας . . . ἢ στάσις σφεδανάς. The effect here is, I think, to emphasize the prohibitions, both in action and in words: “no violence, no fighting, no factions!”

Although Xenophanes is pushing a very different agenda here, the architecture of fragment 1 is similar to that of the martial elegies discussed above:

[12 lines] Description of the banquet room just before the symposium
(indicative, mainly predicate sentences)

[12 lines] Exhortation to good behavior at the symposium
(mainly exhortation in the form of *χρή* + the infinitive)

The initial stanza is entirely descriptive and seems to provide some kind of explanation, for it begins with *γάρ*, precisely like all of the meditative stanzas discussed earlier: Callinus 1.12–21, Tyrtaeus 10.1–10, 10.21–30, and 11.11–20. The second stanza, however, exhorts the audience to noble behavior at the symposium, just as the martial elegists encourage noble behavior on the battlefield. And as in the Tyrtaean fragments, the second stanza, with its

31. Weil (1862, 7–8), for example, claimed in passing that Xenophanes composed by six-couplet units (“strophes”). For the consensus on the rhetorical division of the fragment into two equal halves, see, e.g., Gerber 1970, 243; Adkins 1985, 177; Marcovich 1978, 1–12; and Leshner 1992, 50–51. They all follow Bowra in believing that we do not have the beginning of the poem, on the grounds that a poem cannot start with *vñ γάρ δῆ*.

32. Marcovich 1978, 13.

repetitive exhortations using seven infinitives, distinguishes itself quite dramatically from the first, which uses a stream of third-person verbs and predicate constructions to describe the scene of the symposium.

Xenophanes, again like Tyrtaeus, has plainly composed his alternating stanzas as fit companions for each other. The first couplet of the second stanza (13–14) strikingly echoes in parallel position the qualitative language used in the first two couplets of the first stanza, thereby translating it from the physical world of sympotic preparations to the more abstract realm of human behavior. The exhortation to pure words (14: καθαροῖσι λόγοις), for instance, echoes the alliterative description of the clean floor, hands, and cups in the first line (1: ζάπεδον καθαρὸν καὶ χεῖρες ἀπάντων / καὶ κύλικες),³³ just as the “men of good cheer” and the “stories of good omen” (13–14: εὐφρονας ἄνδρας and εὐφήμεις μύθοις) recall the “good-smelling perfume” and the “mixing bowl filled with good cheer” in the second couplet of the fragment (3–4: εὐώδες μύρον and κρητήρ . . . μεστὸς εὐφροσύνης). Xenophanes also places internal rhymes in the pentameters in a significant pattern that suggests symmetry: in the second stanza one rhyme appears at the beginning (14: μύθοις . . . λόγοις) and two appear at the very end (22: Κενταύρων . . . προτέρων and 24: προμηθεῖην . . . ἀγαθὴν), that is: at the same points in his six-couplet stanza—the first, penultimate, and final pentameters—where Callinus places the rhymes in his five-couplet stanza (13: προγόνων . . . ἀθανάτων, 19: ζῶων . . . ἡμιθέων, and 21: πολλῶν . . . ἐόν). If scholars are accurate in their shared sense of closure at the end of Callinus 1 (see n. 30), we might speculate that the triple rhymes in the second stanza of Xenophanes 1 also point to the end of an elegiac poem composed of alternating stanzas of meditation and exhortation. There is also a pentameter rhyme in the first couplet of the first stanza, which—given its position parallel to the rhyme in the first couplet of the second stanza—seems designed to underscore the contrast between the physical objects described in the first half of the poem (2: πλεκτούς . . . στεφάνους) and the prescribed human actions in the second (14: μύθοις . . . λόγοις).

Scholars have long noted the existence of generic themes in martial elegy, for example: the contrast between brave fighting and craven flight that appears in at least three of the fragments discussed above. We have seen here, however, traces of a generic structure as well: Tyrtaeus, Xenophanes, and probably Callinus seem to compose their elegies in stanzas that alternate at regular intervals between vigorous exhortation and thoughtful meditation, the latter typically accomplished by generic description and moral evaluation. These alternating stanzas, moreover, give the fragments a formal and logical structure, especially when a meditative stanza refers to and provides a defense for the exhortation, or the exhortation is based on the logic of the preceding meditation. The meditations surveyed here, moreover, are always introduced as explanations—perhaps this is another generic feature—signaled

33. Campbell (1983, 40) notes that the repetition of the adjective *καθαρός* “contributes to the pleasing balance between the two twelve-line sections of our poem: the preparations for the symposium are to be matched in beauty and order by the songs and stories.”

by the word γάρ, and all but one of them use an impersonal infinitive construction to explore in abstract evaluative terms various human values or courses of action, for example (to paraphrase): “For it is a fine thing to die fighting, but a most painful thing to abandon one’s city” or “For it is a shameful thing when an older man lies dead with the young behind.” But regardless of the precise linguistic form, these meditative stanzas generally use third-person indicative verbs to describe the choices or futures facing any soldier on any battlefield or—in the case of Xenophanes 1—the pleasures awaiting any man at any symposium.

The stanzas of exhortation, on the other hand, all focus tightly on the here-and-now of the poem’s performance, generally using imperatives that occasionally alternate with hortative subjunctives (to express solidarity with the audience) or second-person plural indicative verbs, which continue to focus attention on the audience of young men, either by abusing them (Callinus 1: “How long will you lie there? Young men, when will you have a courageous spirit?”) or by encouraging them (Tyrtaeus 11: “For you are the race of Heracles!”). Tyrtaeus, moreover, seems to vary his approach linguistically—perhaps for the simple sake of variation—either by using one form of imperative (e.g., the second-person plural) in one stanza of exhortation and another form (e.g., the third-person singular) in another, or by shifting his attention from a list of specific military actions (stabbing or shaking the spear) to the internal thoughts of the individual soldier (loving death and hating life).

Although Tyrtaeus clearly favors the five-couplet stanza in his extant fragments, and Callinus produced at least one sterling example of one, we have seen that five couplets may not necessarily have been the fixed or canonical length of an elegiac stanza. Indeed, Xenophanes shows us that this technique was, in fact, transferable to stanzas of six couplets, when he alternates a descriptive stanza of the feast ready at hand with a second one that issues his commands for sympotic decorum.³⁴ Tyrtaeus shows a different kind of flexibility at the end of fragment 11, when he seems to interrupt the ongoing pattern of alternation by doubling the stanza of exhortation to tease out the differences between defensive and offensive tactics in hoplite warfare. When we take a long historical view of the extant fragments of elegy, we see that the alternating pattern favored by Tyrtaeus does, in fact, become less popular over time and there is growing use of the other kind of elegiac architecture that he deploys at the end of fragment 11: coordinated pairing. It is, of course, upon the meditative or descriptive potential of elegy that both Tyrtaeus himself (in his fragment 12) and later poets like Solon and Theognis tend to focus, and we find evidence (see n. 24 above) that these poets also compose their poems with pairs of meditative stanzas that employ responsion and parallel structures to make thoughtful distinctions, evaluations, and arguments—

34. At the end of chapter 3 of Faraone forthcoming, I follow Weil (see n. 31 above) and argue that Xenophanes 2, which survives as a 22-line fragment, was also composed originally as a pair of six-couplet stanzas.

a perfect medium, one might say, for philosophical inquiry. But that is, as they say, another story.³⁵

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35. This essay is part of a much longer ongoing study (Faraone forthcoming), in which I argue that the five-couplet stanza was a regular structural device in the earliest elegists. My colleagues Danielle Allen, James Redfield, Laura Slatkin, and Peter White read early and tentative versions of this larger study and offered penetrating but encouraging comments, and Deborah Boedeker, Edward Courtney, Mark Edwards, Douglas Gerber, Jim Marks, David Sansone, David Sider, Greg Thalmann, and Mark Usher all provided helpful criticism of subsequent drafts. Each of them, in one way or another, has helped to make this extract better. I am also thankful to the anonymous readers for *Classical Philology*, who challenged me in several places to express myself with greater clarity.

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