

## SOME TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN BACCHYLIDES XVII\*

In the Snell-Maehler edition of Bacchylides there is a very comprehensive bibliography, listing almost 300 items concerned with Bacchylides' poems.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that 80 per cent of these were written in the first twenty years following Kenyon's publication of the Bacchylides papyri in 1897. Of the articles which have appeared since the First World War, many are concerned with more recent papyrus discoveries and a few are stylistic discussions. For most of the poems dealt with in the pioneering days of Bacchylidean scholarship certain readings of the text and interpretations of it have become canonical. This article aims to show in just one poem, XVII, a few instances in which the accepted interpretations should be re-examined. In some cases new interpretations are offered, but in others older views have been resurrected and bolstered by further argument.

8–10:

κνίσεν τε Μίνωϊ κέαρ  
 ἱμεράμπυκος θεᾶς  
 Κύπριδος (ἀ)γνὰ δῶρα·

The two suggested supplements of the text here, αἰνὰ and ἀγνὰ, proposed respectively by Kenyon and Blass, would both make some sense and are suitable palaeographically. Ἀγνὰ, however, has become the accepted reading and is printed by Snell-Maehler, along with the comment that the size of the gap in the papyrus favours it. This is misleading. An inspection of the papyrus reveals that there are traces of the bottom of the vertical strokes of I or Γ and N. Given the generally wide spacing of the letters in the papyrus, one might think in fact that a Γ would be too close to the N; but the distance is the same as that between the verticals of Γ and K in verse 24, παγκρατής, where the two letters are closer than normal. Conversely, although Snell clearly thought the traces were a little too far apart for I followed by N, comparison with -ΙΓ- in verse 7, πελεμαίγυδος, and -ΙΚ- in verse 4, Κρητικόν, shows exactly the same distance between the verticals. Argument from the size of the gap, therefore, favours neither supplement.

What of the sense then? D. Gerber has argued for connotations of sacred awe in a number of instances of ἀγνός.<sup>2</sup> His examples include Pindar *P.*1.21, πυρὸς ἀγνόταται . . . παγαί, used of the streams of lava from Aetna (which has κρουνοὺς δειωτάτους in verse 26); Lamprocles fr. 735 (Page), Παλλάδα περσέπολιν κληίζω πολεμόδοκον ἀγνάν; and Homer *Od.*5.123, where Artemis is called ἀγνή while she is killing Orion. One suspects, however, that these examples do not show ἀγνός as having the sense 'awesome, dreadful', but rather that someone or something which can normally be regarded as having an element of 'sacredness' can

\* I would like to thank Professor H. Lloyd-Jones for the valuable discussions I have had with him about Bacchylides, including the points raised in this article. I am also grateful to Professor A. A. Long for reading over an initial draft and suggesting a number of changes.

<sup>1</sup> *Bacchylidis Carmina cum Fragmentis*

ed. H. Maehler, post B. Snell (Leipzig, 1970). I have used their text as the basis for discussion. The following editions of Bacchylides will be referred to by the name of the editor: F. G. Kenyon (London, 1897); R. C. Jebb (Cambridge, 1905); F. Blass (Leipzig, 3rd edn. 1904).

<sup>2</sup> *Phoenix* 19 (1965), 212–13.

have this quality referred to even when the person or object is seen to be having a deleterious effect on human beings. He is therefore right in rejecting Jebb's qualms about the application of *ἀγνός* to the lust inspired in Minos by Aphrodite,<sup>1</sup> but he probably goes too far in claiming that *ἀγνά δῶρα* means 'gifts inspiring dread'. He is then swayed by Snell's palaeographical note to accept *ἀγνά*.

In fact the sense given to *ἀγνά* by Gerber emphasizes an aspect of the gifts of Aphrodite which would be brought out by *αἰνά*, which Gerber himself admitted would be perfectly suitable in the context (p.212). The adjectival use is found mostly in Homer,<sup>2</sup> but is also found in fifth-century poets, including Pindar and Sophocles.<sup>3</sup> It has the sense, 'terrible, powerful', and is synonymous with *δewός*, for which it seems to be used sometimes for reasons of metrical convenience. It can describe both the harm or horror inspired by an object or person and the strength of an emotion or feeling. It is a commonplace of Greek erotic description to speak of lust as *δewός*, and to describe Aphrodite's terrible power over men and the harm she brings. For the initial onset of lust, compare S. *Tr.* 476 f., *ταύτης ὁ δewός ἕμερος ποῦ* 'Ἡρακλῆ / δῦλθε, and E. *Hipp.* 27 f., where Aphrodite says of Phaedra, *κατέσχετο / ἔρωτι δewώι τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλευμασιν*. Aphrodite herself is described as *δewός* in E. *Med.* 640, and in E. *Hipp.* 557 ff. the description of her disastrous effect on Semele is followed by the comment, *δewά γάρ πανταῖ ποτιπνεῖ, μέλισσα δ' / οἷα τις πεπόταται*.

Implicit in all these instances are the sense of the irresistible power of love and the fact that it brings sore distress. For the application of *αἰνός* in the latter type of situation, we might note the etymology of Aineas' name in *b. Aph.* 197–8, where the goddess has the tables turned on her,

τῶι δὲ καὶ Αἰνείας ὄνομ' ἔσσεται, οὐνεκα μ' αἰνόν  
ἔσχευ ἄχος, ἔνεκα βροτοῦ ἀνέρος ἔμπεσον εὐνῇ.

Given these and other uses of *δewός* and *αἰνός*, and the fact that the two aspects of love, irresistibility and distress, are hinted at by Bacchylides in the words *οὐκέτι . . . ἐράτνευ* (implying he had tried to restrain himself) and *κνίσεν*, it seems most likely that Bacchylides wrote *αἰνά* here. It gives an ominous tone to the description of the onset of Minos' passion, which adds to the irony of the description of its manifestation as a simple touch of Eriboea's cheek.<sup>4</sup> It also forms a nicely ironic variation of the standard epic expressions for Aphrodite's visitations, *δῶρ' ἐρατά* and *μείλισσα δῶρα*.<sup>5</sup>

36-8:

χρύσεόν  
τέ οἱ δόσαν ἰόπλοκοι κά-  
λυμμα† Νηρηίδες.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that in his edition of Bacchylides Jebb always translates *ἀγνός* as 'holy'; cf. 10.29, 11.25, 15.54, 19.28 (all in the numbering of Sn.-M., as opposed to Jebb's).

<sup>2</sup> See H. Ebeling, *Lexicon Homericum* (Leipzig, 1880–5).

<sup>3</sup> Pi. P.1.15, 5.61, 11.55; S. *Aj.* 706. The adverbial use of it is more common in fifth-century poetry, and is found in Bacchylides fr.62a.13.

<sup>4</sup> For an appreciation of the humour of the scene, cf. J. Stern, *Rev. Belg. Phil.* 45 (1967), 41 f., and G. J. Gieseckam, 'The Portrayal of Minos in Bacchylides 17', *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 1976 (*Arca* vol. ii, Liverpool, 1976), pp. 237–52.

<sup>5</sup> See especially H. *Il.* 3.64; *b. Hom.* 10.2; and cf. Mimnermus 1.3 D and Anacreon 96.3 D, and Anacreon 96.3 D, ἀγλαὰ δῶρ' Ἀφροδίτης.

The papyrus has ΙΟΠΛΟΚΟΙ / ΚΑΛΤΜΜΑ, leaving verse 37 a syllable short, with a short syllable for a long at the beginning of verse 38.<sup>1</sup> Various attempts to insert a syllable at the end of verse 37 have been unconvincing.<sup>2</sup> Platt therefore suggested that κα- should end verse 37, providing the required short syllable there and a long to begin verse 38. He proposed that we read κά/λυμμ' εἶμα.<sup>3</sup> But this apposition of the two nouns is very strange and has not found much acceptance. Nor has Ludwich's suggestion, κά/λυμμ' ἀδύ,<sup>4</sup> since ἡδύς is hardly an epithet for an item of clothing.

I would argue that εἶμα does in fact hold the answer, and that Bacchylides wrote καλὸν εἶμα; the nymphs gave Aithra 'a beautiful golden cloak'. Εἵματα καλὰ is a common Homeric phrase (e.g. *Od.* 6.3, 16.79, 18.550), and the singular, with the meaning 'cloak' is found in Homer and later poets (e.g. *Pi.* P.4.272; *E.Hec.* 342). What may seem to the modern reader a descending adjectival sequence, χρύσειον . . . καλόν, may be paralleled by verses 60 ff., χρύσειον . . . ἀγλαόν . . . κόσμον. There is also a further similarity to the language of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, verses 85 ff., where Anchises marvels at the goddess' beauty and her εἵματα σιγαλόεντα; for she was wearing a peplos which was καλόν, χρύσειον.

It may be objected that this reading provides a short syllable at the beginning of verse 38. But, as I point out in note 1 below, such an anceps at the beginning of an iambus is not impossible in this metre. In any case, -όν may have been regarded as a long syllable, by the process of epic lengthening which is often found in Bacchylides and again in this poem.<sup>5</sup>

The corruption of the text could easily have come about because of itacism or simply omission of the E, combined with assimilation of the resulting NI to form M. The meaningless result of such a scribal error, ΚΑΛΟΜΜΑ, would then have been changed to the meaningful, but unmetrical, ΚΑΛΤΜΜΑ. Similar paths of corruption, in which an orthographic error is followed by attempts at 'correction' which consist of changing or omitting a single letter, occur elsewhere in the papyrus. One such example is 11.54, where ΕΜΒΑΛΕΝ ΝΟΗΜΑ produced the papyrus' ΕΜΒΑΛΕΝ ΟΜΜΑ.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The latter phenomenon may be permissible. The metre of this poem and *Pi.O.2* has been the subject of much discussion and little agreement (see A. E. Housman, *CR* 12 (1898), 134–6, repr. in *Collected Papers*, Cambridge, 1972, ii.455–8; P. Maas, *Die neuen Responsionsfreiheiten bei Bakchylides und Pindar* (Berlin, 1914 and 1921; *Greek Metre*, trans. H. Lloyd-Jones (Oxford, 1962), p.42; R. Merkelbach, *ZPE* (1973), 45–55), but the use of an elementum anceps at the beginning of a line is found in half-a-dozen instances, listed by Sn.-M., p.XXXV. B. Gentili's article on the metre of this poem, in *Serta Turyniana*, ed. J. Heller (London, 1974), pp.86–100, came to my attention after this paper had been written and submitted in late 1975. A full discussion of

his radically new colometry and the liberal responson he allows is not possible here. In this particular instance Gentili avoids the textual problem by allowing responson between iambic and cretic metra, thus keeping κάλυμμα.

<sup>2</sup> Jebb suggested γε, translating, 'she was the bride of Poseidon, aye, and the Nereids gave her a golden veil.' But apart from the feeble sense, γε in this position could not emphasize the relationship with Poseidon.

<sup>3</sup> *CR* 12 (1898), 63.

<sup>4</sup> Reported by Jebb, p.489.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. line 100, δόμδν· ἔμολεν, and Sn.-M., p.XXI, for further examples. See also C. M. Bowra, *CQ* 24 (1930), 86–7.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Jebb, p.130, for similar paths of corruption in the papyrus.

109-13:

εἶδέν τε πατρός ἄλοχον φίλαν  
 σεμνὰν βοῶπιω ἐρατοῖ-  
 σιν Ἀμφιτρίταν δόμοις·  
 ἃ νυν ἀμφέβαλεν αἶονα πορφυρέαν,  
 κόμαισί τ' ἐπέθηκεν οὐλαιοι  
 ἀμεμφέα πλόκον.

Theseus has been carried to the depths of the sea and is here welcomed by Amphitrite. But what exactly happens? The problem lies in the interpretation of αἶονα. K. Latte argued that it is derived from an Egyptian word for an expensive linen cloak.<sup>1</sup> It was identified by Diels with αονας in a third-century A.D. letter,<sup>2</sup> and the suggestion has been supported also by an entry in Hesychius, ἐλυμα· . . . καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ ἡ αἰών.

Some might find it odd, however, that Bacchylides, writing in the early fifth century and describing an everyday item such as a cloak, should use an obscure Egyptian word, which does not recur until seven centuries later and then in Egypt, and which is even emended or queried by the editors of the texts involved.<sup>3</sup> If we accept that Amphitrite does in fact clothe Theseus, Tyrrell's emendation, αἰόλαν πόρφυραν, might seem attractive.<sup>4</sup>

I would suggest, however, that the text is sound, but that it has been misinterpreted. We should note first that neither Pausanias nor Hyginus, our two other literary sources for this story, make any mention of a cloak.<sup>5</sup> Nor is there a whit of evidence for such a gift on any of the vases which deal with Theseus' reception by Amphitrite, although all show the wreath.<sup>6</sup>

In view of this, what action is Bacchylides describing here? J. Schöne reported G. Vollgraff's interpretation of αἶονα as Doric for ἡῖονα, which can be used to describe the lower half of the face.<sup>7</sup> H. van Herwerden also accepted this sense of the word,<sup>8</sup> but it was nowhere supported by anything like a proper argument, and it has since been ignored by scholars.

Such a metaphorical meaning for ἡῖών is found reported in the grammarians; Pollux, 2.71, and Hesychius (on ἡῖονες and ἡῖον<sup>9</sup>) describe it as applying to the lower half of the face below the eyes, or παρείαν ἢ γυνᾶθον.<sup>10</sup> If this is the

<sup>1</sup> *Phil.* 87 (1932), 271; *Glotta* 34 (1955), 192; *Kl. Schr.*, pp.708 ff.

<sup>2</sup> U. Wilcken, *Chrestomathie*, p.126, col.2.

<sup>3</sup> In the letter there are textual difficulties in any case, and ὁθόνα has been suggested as the correct text. We should also note that Hesychius himself was writing in Egypt.

<sup>4</sup> *CR* 12 (1898), p.83.

<sup>5</sup> Paus. 1.17.3; Hygin. *Poet. Astron.* 2.5. Although it is probable that Hyginus made use of Euripides' *Theseus*, or at least a summary of it, in his account (cf. *TGF* frgs. 381-90; for Hyginus' general use of the Εὐριπίδου Ἱστορίαι, see G. Zuntz, *Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester, 1955), pp.136-7.), certain details suggest that he also made use of Bacchylides' version: e.g. the reference to Eriboea's 'candor corporis' may pick up Bacchylides'

λευκὰν παρηδων, and the description of the quarrel, especially the comments, 'cum iam non de puella, sed de genere Thesei controversia facta esset' and 'sine ulla precatone', seems to have Bacchylides in mind. This makes it all the more striking that he does not mention a cloak, if Bacchylides did so.

<sup>6</sup> For illustrations and discussion of these, see A. H. Smith, *JHS* 18 (1898), 267-80. For a more recent discussion of the exact relation between these and the poem, see E. Wüst, *Hermes* 96 (1968), 527-38.

<sup>7</sup> *De Dialecto Bacchylidei*, Leipzig *Stud.* 19 (1899), 205.

<sup>8</sup> *Mnem.* 27 (1899), 32.

<sup>9</sup> The gloss on ἡῖον, παρείαν ἢ γυνᾶθον, must apply to ἡῖονα two lines below.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also *E.M.* 423.5.

meaning in Bacchylides, ἀμφιβάλλω will then have the meaning 'embrace', which it commonly has, governing the accusative. Πορφυρέαν will mean 'bright' or perhaps 'ruddy'; for its use in describing the bright flush of cheeks, compare Phrynichus frg.13 (*TGF*), λάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυρέῃσι παρειαῖς φῶς ἔρωτος. This and Simonides' πορφυρέου ἀπὸ στόματος / ἰεῖσα φωνὰν πάρθενος (*PMG* 585) were obviously famous for their use of πορφυρέος, as we see in Athenaeus' account (13.604), in which Sophocles says they seemed εὖ εἰρησθαι to the Greeks. For a similar description of a young man's cheeks, see also the use of οἰνώπος in *E. Ba.* 236 and Theocritus 22.36, applied to Dionysus and Polydeuces respectively.

The literal meaning of the present passage would then be: 'she embraced the lower half of his ruddy face.' This gesture is in fact a standard welcoming one on ancient vases, and is discussed and illustrated by G. Neumann.<sup>1</sup> He reproduces a vase (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 579.1) which shows Theseus, wearing a wreath, being welcomed by Aegeus and a woman (Aethra or Medea), with Poseidon in the background. Aegeus clasps his hand, while the woman, with arms outstretched, fondles the lower half of Theseus' face with both hands. It is exactly the sort of gesture which might precede Amphitrite's placing of the wreath on Theseus' head in the present passage.<sup>2</sup>

117-18:                    ἄπιστον ὃ τι δαίμονες  
                                 θέλωσιν οὐδὲν φρενοάrais βροτοῖς.

The papyrus text, printed by Snell-Maehler, introduces an unparalleled extra syllable at the beginning of line 118. Richards and Blass therefore suggested that we read θέλωσιν,<sup>3</sup> while Crusius suggested the Ionic form θέλωσιν, which would be closer to the given text.<sup>4</sup> Such a verb of action is exactly what we should expect in this type of statement, rather than a verb of wishing. For the sentiment of the comment, Snell-Maehler follow Jebb in rightly comparing 3.57 and *Pi.P.*10.48, although their text takes no account of an important element in both passages. In them and in *Pi.O.*13.83, another of the transitional formulae of the type, 'nothing the gods can do is incredible', and in Archilochus 74.1-4, which has a similar statement of the incredible power of the gods, the emphasis is always on what the god or gods have *achieved*, not what they wish. It is after all the transition from a miraculous *action* which is achieved by the comment. This is further illustrated by the parting words of the Euripidean chorus, where the formula receives its fullest expression:

πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαμονίων,  
πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί.  
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,  
τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἡὔρε θεός.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin, 1965), fig. 24, and his discussion of it.

<sup>2</sup> In view of the strong element of balancing actions and speeches in the poem, which has been discussed by J. Stern, art. cit., pp.40-7 (cf. also my discussion of ἴσχευ in the article cited in n.4, p.250), it seems likely that this friendly touch of the cheek is intended to contrast with the lecherous cheek-touching of Minos in line

12, which brought about the subsequent train of events.

<sup>3</sup> *CR* (1898), 77.

<sup>4</sup> This form of the aorist subjunctive is used frequently in Herodotus, and is found in Sappho, frgs. 26.3 and 51 L.-P.

<sup>5</sup> The final words of *E. Ba., Alc., Andr., and Hel.* This aspect of the gods is also seen in the popular derivation of θεός from τλήμι (cf. *Hdt.* 2.52).

Given the frequency of the topos in lyric poetry and tragedy, and its nature as a reaction to incredible action, I would find it truly *ἄπιστον* if Bacchylides wrote *θέλωσω* here, in contravention of sense and metre.

I append here a note on the translation of *λειρώων* in line 95, partly for its own sake and partly because of the light it throws on Bacchylides' use of adjectives. The adjectives *λειρώς* and *λειρώεις* and their connection with the word for 'lily', *λειρόν*, have provoked much discussion, in view of their application to such disparate objects as a man's skin and the singing voice of cicadas and Muses.<sup>1</sup> Most scholars would be prepared to accept a common element of 'brightness' in all the passages, although not all would agree with van Leeuwen's conclusion that the adjective's existence preceded that of the noun, with the simple meaning 'helder' or 'clarum', and that the lily derived its name from this.

In the present case, scholars have been satisfied with concentrating on the element of brightness, so that van Leeuwen refers to the 'nativum fulgor' of the young people's eyes, while Jebb alludes to their 'bright young eyes' showing the delicate beauty of youth, and Fagles resorts to 'exquisite' as his translation.<sup>2</sup> Irwin extends the meaning considerably by emphasizing a sense of 'delicateness' in the adjective, and considers Bacchylides meant it to imply 'bewildered' or 'helpless' looks from the Athenians' eyes here.<sup>3</sup>

No one seems to have commented on the obvious implication of the 'lily' reference of the adjective in the context of tears. There are many words which Bacchylides could have used more naturally to allude to the brightness of the eyes, but in choosing *λειρώς* I suspect he had in mind the particular dewy brightness of the lily which has been remarked upon by many a poet,<sup>4</sup> and is found again in a later Greek poet's description of a tear-stained face,

Her lily-face like dew-wet ivory gleamed in light,  
As though a beating rain or tears had drenched it through.<sup>5</sup>

Bacchylides then has used the adjective proleptically, and the sentence might be translated, 'they poured forth tears from their eyes which glistened like lilies'. For parallels to this observation of the brilliance of tear-filled eyes in ancient poets, see E. *Hipp.* 738–41: *ἔνθα πορφύρεον σταλάσσουσ' εἰς οἶδμα . . . δακρύων τὰς ἡλεκτροφάεις αὐγὰς* and V. *Aen.* 1.288, 'lacrimis oculos suffusa nitentes'.

For those who persist in believing that Bacchylides' deployment of adjectives is rather crude, and consists of merely using stock Homeric or epic-sounding epithets, without particular potency in their individual contexts, this may seem an over-subtle or romantic interpretation of *λειρώων*. In recent years, however, a few scholars have begun to illustrate in detail how consciously Bacchylides

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Il.* 13.330; 3.152; Hes. *Tb.* 41; Ap. Rhod., 4.903; *GVI* i. 2027.10; and for discussion of these, J. van Leeuwen, *Mnem.* (1903), 114–16; M. Leumann, *Homeriche Wörter* (Basel, 1950), pp.27–8; E. Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto, 1974), pp.205–13.

<sup>2</sup> R. Fagles, trans., *Bacchylides* (London, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> Op.cit., p.212.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Shelley, *The Question*:

And the floating water-lilies, broad  
and bright,  
Which lit the oak that overhung the  
edge,  
With moonlight beams of their own  
watery light.

<sup>5</sup> N. Kazantzakis, *The Odyssey, a Modern Sequel*, trans. K. Friar (New York, 1958).

manipulates his language and particularly the wealth of adjectives found in his work.<sup>1</sup> This poem especially is full of a careful symmetry of language, as, for example, in the balancing of *μενέκτυπον* to describe Theseus in line 1 and *μεοεπτόλεμος* used of Minos in line 73, and of Minos' *ἄμεμπτον* prayer (67) with the *ἀμεμφέα* wreath of Theseus (114). In the article cited in note 4, p.250 above I have discussed the particular relevance of *πελεμαίγδος* applied to Athena in line 6, and have also illustrated the way in which Bacchylides orchestrates Minos' intimidation of Theseus in his challenge, especially in the pointed use of such grandiose epithets as *ἀναξιβρέντας* and *βαρύβρομον*.<sup>2</sup> With these instances in mind, the above interpretation should surely not be reading too much into Bacchylides' use of *λειρίων* here.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Stern, art. cit.; M. Lefkowitz, *HSCP*, 73 (1969), 45–96, and D. S. Carne-Ross, *The Gaiety of Language, Arion* (1962), pp.65–88.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also my discussion of *θάρος* and *θράσει* in that article, and E. Irwin's treatment of *μέλαν* in line 17, op.cit., p.155.