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Notas e información

A Neglected Fragment of Alcaeus: Fr. 369 Voigt=369 Liberman

Un fragmento desatendido de Alceo: el fr. 369 Voigt = 369 Liberman

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Alcaeus fr. 369 Voigt (= 369 Liberman) has received scarce attention. Athenaeus of Naucratis has preserved it, and its content is summarized by Eustathius of Thessalonica. These two witnesses take this fragment to mean that sometimes drinking wine sweetens our temper, sometimes it makes it sour. But neither Athenaeus nor Eustathius are likely to have ever read the complete poem from which the fragment is extracted. Interpretations put forward by modern scholars (Page, Liberman) are to be rejected too, because they do not take into account the alternation expressed by the parallel $\delta\lambda$ 000 Δ 000

Key words: Alcaeus fr. 369 Voigt/Liberman; wine; temper; allegory; law of alternation.

Alceo fr. 369 Voigt (= 369 Liberman) ha recibido poca atención. Ateneo de Náucratis lo conservó y Eustacio de Tesalónica sintetizó su contenido. Estos dos escritores suponen que el fr. 369 significa que a veces beber vino suaviza el carácter y a veces lo exacerba. Pero es probable que ni Ateneo ni Eustacio leyeran nunca el poema completo de donde proviene el fragmento. Hay que rechazar tambien las interpretaciones que han propuesto los estudiosos modernos (Page, Liberman), porque no tienen en consideración la alternancia expresada en el paralelo $\"{\alpha}\lambda\lambda$ 070 μ 200..., $\"{\alpha}\lambda\lambda$ 070 $\ddot{\alpha}$ 30.... Además, hay que rechazar una interpretación literal del fragmento, ya que es absurdo imaginar que hombres del ambiente de Alceo pudiesen beber vino malo o vinagre. El autor del presente artículo sugiere una interpretación alegórica a la luz de la «ley de la mutación eterna» o «ley de la alternancia»: a veces se encuentran días afortunados, a veces días infaustos.

Palabras clave: Alceo fr. 369 Voigt/Liberman; vino; carácter; alegoría; ley de la alternancia.

1. The interpretation of the fragment by Athenaeus

In a section devoted to the dangers connected with excessive consumption of wine (and unmixed wine, especially) Athenaeus writes (II 38e-f):

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Απὸ τοῦ κατὰ μέθην δὲ καταστήματος καὶ ταύρφ παρεικάζουσι τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ παρδάλει διὰ τὸ πρὸς βίαν τρέπεσθαι τοὺς ἐξοινωθέντας. Άλκαῖος·

άλλοτα μὲν μελιάδεος, ἄλλοτα

δ'όξυτέρω τριβόλων άρυτήμενοι [fr. 369].

Είσὶ δ' οῖ καὶ θυμικοὶ γίνονται· τοιοῦτος δ'ό ταῦρος. Εὐριπίδης· ταῦροι δ'ὑβρισταὶ κὰς κέρας θυμούμενοι [*Ba.* 743].

f Διὰ δὲ τὸ μάχιμον καὶ θηριώδεις ἔνιοι γίνονται· ὅθεν καὶ τὸ παρδαλῶδες¹.

This passage from the second book of Athenaeus has been preserved (as all the two first books, the beginning of the third, some parts of the eleventh, and the end of the fifteenth) only in the abridged version, the *Epitome*, dating back to the tenth or eleventh century². But our other witness for Alc., fr. 369, i. e. Eust., *Od.* 1910.16-24, offers some more detail, while commenting on XXI 296:

Ορθῶς δὲ καὶ ταύρφ παρά τε ἄλλοις καὶ Λυκόφρονι, ἔτι δὲ καὶ παρδάλει ὁ Διόνυσος εἰκάζεται διὰ τὸ πρὸς βίαν τρέπεσθαί, φασι, τοὺς ἐξοινωθέντας. Κατὰ γὰρ τὴν Ἀλκαίου μοῦσαν ἄλλοτε μὲν μελιαδὴς ὁ οἶνος, ὃ δὴ ἔφη καὶ Ὅμηρος, ἄλλοτε δ' ὀξύτερος τριβόλων. Καθότι μὲν οὖν θυμικὸν ὁ ταῦρος, ὡς Ἐυριπίδης δηλοῖ ἐν τῷ, ταῦροι δ' ὑβρισταὶ εἰς κέρας θυμούμενοι, ταύροις εἰκαστέον τοὺς ἐξοίνους· καθὸ δὲ μάχιμοι καὶ θηριώδεις ἐκ μέθης ἔνιοι γίνονται, παρδάλεις ἄλλως οἶον οἱ τοιοῦτοι, διὰ τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς, φασὶ, παρδαλῶδες. Οὖ σύμβολόν τι καὶ ἡ παρδαλῆ, ῆν ἡ αἰνιγματικὴ σοφία φόρημα

¹ All translations are mine and fragments are quoted according to Liberman 1999, to whom the reader is referred for the textual emendations of fr. 369: Bloomfield corrected ἄλλοτε into ἄλλοτα, and ὀζυτέρου into ὀζυτέρω, and Bergk ἀρητυμενοι into ἀρυτήμενοι. The Greek text of Athenaeus is quoted from Olson 2006. Here is my translation of Ath. II 38e-f:

[«]Owing to the conditions produced by drunkenness they compare Dionysus to a bull and a leopard because those who have drunk too much are inclined to violence. Alcaeus:

[&]quot;Sometimes drawing from honey-sweet (wine),

But sometimes from that which is sourcer than caltrops" [fr. 369].

There are some who even become furious; that is the way a bull behaves. Euripides:

[&]quot;Violent bulls, with rage mounting in their horns" [Ba. 743].

Because of their desire to fight some even get wild like beasts; that is why they are likened to leopards».

Now, a word about τριβόλων. The metaphor of the thorns indicating moral pain is obviously common: cf. Cat. LXIV 72 (*spinosas curas*); Hor., *Epist.* I 14, 4-5 (*spinas animone ego fortius an tu / evellas agro*). LS(J) s.v. τρίβολος believe that sour wine is being compared with a thorny shrub (*Tribulus terrestris*); Desrousseaux 1956, p. 95 («chardons»), Campbell 1990², p. 399 («thistles»), and Olson 2006, p. 221 («brambles»), think of some plant too; according to others, a spiked implement thrown on the ground to lame the enemy's horses is meant: so, for instance, A. Marchiori in Canfora 2001, I, p. 116 n1. Again, others prefer to leave the question open. The comparison with sour wine suggests that a shrub, as a part of nature, is likelier to have been referred to than an artificial device.

² On the manuscript tradition of the *Deipnosophistae* and the *Epitome* see Arnott 2000.

τῷ Διονυσίῳ³ δίδωσιν. Όρα δὲ καὶ τὸ, ὀξύτερος τριβόλων, δι'οὖ δηλοῦται, ὡς ὁ λεγόμενος κοινῶς ὀξὺς οἶνος τῷ μελιηδεῖ ἀντιδιαστέλλεται. Χρῆσις δὲ τοιούτου ὀξέως, ὡς φησιν Ἀθήναιος, παρὰ Ἡρακλέωνι ἐν τῷ, τὸ οἰνάριον πάνυ ἦν ὀξὺ καὶ πονηρόν⁴.

It is evident that Eustathius, who was keen on reading Athenaeus, has drawn his information from him: many sentences are identical or very similar⁵, and the sense of the two passages is obviously the same. Eustathius even quotes Athenaeus at 1910.23-24, in order to explain the meaning of the adjective $\dot{o}\xi\dot{o}\zeta$ as applied to the wine. And this, if necessary, confirms that Eustathius has drawn from the *Deipnosophists*.

And why is it, then, that he can refer to Lycophron as one of those, unmentioned by name in our text of Athenaeus, who compare Dionysus to a bull, in addition to the references to Alcaeus and Euripides⁶? Given Eustathius' interest for Athenaeus, one possible explanation might be that he had a copy of the complete text of the fifteen-book edition of the *Deipnosophists* at his disposal⁷.

But Eustathius' knowledge of Athenaeus is not really my concern here. The reason why I am interested in the comparison between the two passages that I have reported at the start is that they show how Athenaeus and Eustathius worked. If my idea that Eustathius was drawing from a complete edition of the *Deipnosophists* (and even summarizing it, as suggested by the $\varphi\alpha\sigma$ i, twice repeated only in the few lines reported

³ Διονυσίω looks like a mistake for Διονύσω.

⁴ «Rightly is Dionysus likened to a bull by Lycophron among other authors, and to a leopard, because – they say – those who have drunk too much are inclined to violence. In fact, according to Alcaeus' muse, sometimes wine is honey-sweet – which Homer said too – but sometimes it is sourer than caltrops. In the same way as the bull is an irascible animal – this is what Euripides shows in his line "Violent bulls, with rage mounting in their horns" –, so the drunk are to be compared to bulls; and in so far as some become warlike and wild like beasts out of drinking strong, they are leopards in a way because of the leopard-like element in them, as they say. This is symbolized by the leopard-skin, which the riddling wisdom ascribes to Dionysus (see n. 3 above) as a dress. Beware the words "sourer than caltrops", which show the opposition of what is commonly called sour wine and the honey-sweet wine. Use of such sour wine is mentioned in Heracleon, according to Athenaeus, in the line "that dubious wine was very sour and bad"». This fragment of Heracleon of Ephesus, a grammarian on whom see Fornaro (2005), is to be found in Ath. III 76A. Heracleon himself quotes Apollod.Car., fr. 30 K.-A. from the Προικιζομένη < $\hat{\eta}$ > Τματιόπωλις.

⁵ Cf., for instance, the first sentences in the two passages. As to the following lines, the same quotations from Alcaeus and Euripides occur in both passages, and so do adjectives like μάχιμος, θηριώδης, παρδαλώδης.

⁶ The passage alluded to is Lyc., *Alex.* 206-210; cf. A. Marchiori's commentary in Canfora 2001, I, p. 115 n. 6.

⁷ That Eustathius had both the complete text of the *Deipnosophists* and the *Epitome* at his disposal is maintained by van der Valk 1986. Canfora 1982 and others even believe that Eustathius was the author of the *Epitome*.

- a verb whose subject is not specified) is right, it is likely that neither Athenaeus nor Eustathius knew much of the poem by Alcaeus from which the two lines of fr. 369 came.

First of all, as to the bishop of Thessalonica, he even gave up quoting the fragment literally, but simply alluded to it, which again suggests that he had obtained knowledge of the fragment from Athenaeus. Secondly, both authors wanted to comment upon the violence which arises from indulgence in drinking (Athenaeus while discussing benefits and risks of drinking wine; and Eustathius while commenting upon *Od.* XXI 296, where Eurytion is pushed to violence by drunkenness). On his part, Athenaeus must have found the passage from Alcaeus in some anthology: otherwise, he would have made a neater extract from the Alcaic poem, and one that would fit better in the structure of his sentence, in order to give a better illustration of his thesis that drinking may be dangerous; and, then, if Athenaeus had done so in the unabridged text of the second book of the *Deipnosophists*, lost for us, Eustathius who, in the case of Lycophron, made a quotation not included in the *Epitome*, would probably have made a wider reference also to Alcaeus⁸.

If this is true, neither Athenaeus nor Eustathius could have any idea whatever of the meaning of the two lines in their original context. By the way, although in a contribution concerning elegy and iambus and not Alcaeus, E. L. Bowie pointed to the scarce interest of Athenaeus for the context of the quotations he made⁹.

It may be objected that my conclusion is to some degree the result of speculation. But ancient authors were accustomed to drawing from older writings with great liberty in order to support their argument, without bothering to take into account the meaning which was originally attached to the words they quoted or referred to. Let me take for instance Lycophron's lines alluded to by Eustathius in the passage above:

205 στερρὰν ἐνοπλίσουσιν ἀλέναις πλάτην, σωτῆρα Βάκχον τῶν πάροιθε πημάτων Σφάλτην ἀνευάζοντες, ῷ ποτ' ἐν μυχοῖς Δελφινίου παρ' ἄντρα Κερδῷου θεοῦ Ταύρῳ κρυφαίας χερνίβας κατάρξεται
 210 χιλίαρχος τοῦ πολιρραίστου στρατοῦ¹⁰.

⁸ Nor – as it seems – was it possible for Eustathius to have access to a complete text of the poem by Alcaeus from direct tradition; or, if it was, he did not care to do so. Liberman 1999, I, p. LXVI remarks: «Rien ... ne nous assure de la survie du texte de l'édition alexandrine d'Alcée au delà du VI^es.».

⁹ Bowie 2000, p. 128.

¹⁰ «They (i.e. the Greeks) will fit the strong oar to their arms, / invoking Bacchus as the one who saved them from their former woes, / him, the Overthrower; for Him, who is the Bull, / the chief (i.e. Agamemnon) of the city-wasting army will one day start the secret purifications / in the recess near the cavern of the Delphinian God, the gainful».

As will hopefully be elucidated by the translation below, Lycophron is here referring to Agamemnon and the Greeks preparing their first expedition against Ilium, which will be brought against Mysia by mistake (this story is already told in the *Cypria*). The epithet of «Bull» given to Dionysus evidently has no connection with the pugnacious disposition ascribed by Athenaeus and Lycophron to drunken people¹¹. The unreliability of the ancient explanations of the relationship of the god with the bull is confirmed by the fact that elsewhere (XI 476a-e) Athenaeus gives a quite different one – the link, this time, is indicated in the fact that in oldest times people were accustomed to drinking wine from bull-horns. Nor does Eustathius realize that he implicitly contradicts himself by recalling that Homer mentions the οἶνος μελιηδής like Alcaeus, inasmuch as in *Od.* XXI 293-294 «wine as sweet as honey» is regarded as a cause of loss of self-control, while in Alcaeus a negative effect would ensue from a metaphorical consumption of wine ὀξυτέρω τριβόλων, «sourer than caltrops», and not «as sweet as honey».

2. Modern interpretations

So, Athenaeus thought that our fr. 369 described the dangerous effects of wine when it induces the drinker to violence (instead of sweetening his temper). And how do modern scholars interpret this fragment? Although never deemed worthy of a proper investigation as far as I know, fr. 369 has been understood in more than one way.

On his part, Page kept himself very far from Athenaeus' (and Eustathius') psychological and ethical interpretation; in his opinion, «the reference may be to the fact that «the wine, as the π (θος is progressively emptied, turns sour from exposure and becomes vinegar, ὄξος»¹². Now, it is not progression that Alcaeus is speaking of, but alternation: ἄλλοτα μὲν..., ἄλλοτα δ'....

Liberman's commentary is better because it rules out progression: «... Alcée pourrait opposer simplement le bon vin à la piquette ..., sans qu'il s'agisse d'un vin puisé à la même jarre»¹³. But even such commentary does not take alternation into account.

Besides, literal interpretation of a fragment of Alcaeus' cannot always be satisfying – on the contrary, metaphor and allegory play a great role in his poetry. This results from many fragments, which express feelings generally concerning political

¹¹ On the relationship of Dionysos with the bull see *h.Bacch*. 2; Alc., fr. 349a; S., fr. 959.2 Radt; E., *Ba*. 100, 1017; Io, fr. 5 Page; Nonn., *D*. IX 24; cf. Jeanmaire 1951, pp. 45 and 50; Cassola 1975, pp. 463-464 (εἰραφιῶτα), and Burkert 2011, pp. 104-107.

¹² Page 1955, p. 313, who is on his turn quoting Gow 1973⁴, p. 195.

¹³ Liberman 1999, II, p. 247.

life: Liberman quotes as examples frr. 6, 72, 73, 208, 306i¹⁴. Alcaeus' keen interest for allegory, sometimes noticed by the witnesses of the fragments, has been widely recognized by scholars¹⁵. And, if one wants to stick to a literal interpretation of our fr. 369, one will find it difficult to imagine that men of high social standing as Alcaeus' *hetairoi* or his enemies might drink –as likely as not– bad wine.

3. Allegory and my interpretation of fr. 369

Page¹⁶ in his short note to the fragment refers the reader to Gow's commentary on Theoc. 10.13: ἐκ πίθω ἀντλεῖς δῆλον· ἐγὰ δ'ἔχω οὐδ' ἄλις ὅξος¹⁷. In the Syracusan poet the destiny of one of the two harvesters, who is rich enough to afford the folly of falling in love, is contrasted with the sad lot of the other, who has not even enough vinegar.

This reference is useful in order to understand our fr. 369, but not for the reason suggested by Page and reported above. The point is the comparison of life with wine: in fr. 369 a hard life is compared to vinegar (and, implicitly, a happy one to good wine). For the purposes of this paper is also relevant Antiph., fr. 250 K.-A.:

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σφόδρ' ἐστὶν ἡμῶν ὁ βίος οἴνῷ προσφερής· ὅταν ἢ τὸ λοιπὸν μικρόν, ὅξος γίγνεται¹8.
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The comparison between good / bad life and good wine / vinegar is confirmed.

On the other hand, the image of «drawing» or «draining» for «facing one's lot» (often, a bad lot) is much older than Antiphanes¹⁹. See the examples from A., *Pr.* 377 (ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν παροῦσαν ἀντλήσω τύχην: Prometheus declares to be ready to meet with Zeus' terrible vengeance), and *Ch.* 748 (τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τλημόνως ἤντλουν κακά: the nurse recalls that she has so far bravely suffered all the evils that have befallen her); or from E., *Hipp.* 898 (ξενὴν ἐπ' αἷαν λυπρὸν ἀντλήσει βίον: Theseus describes the sorrowful life which Hippolytus will have to bear in his exile).

¹⁴ On all this see Liberman 1999, I, p. XXXI, and his introductions to the fragments indicated.

¹⁵ See Rösler 1980, pp. 117 ff., 126 ff., 135 ff., 219; Gentili 1984², pp. 257-283; Porro 1996, pp. XXXVII-XL.

¹⁶ Page 1955, p. 313.

¹⁷ «It is obvious that you drain dry a cask (i. e. of wine); but I have not even enough vinegar». Cf. the expressive (although not literal) translation by Gow 1973⁴, p. 81: «Belike then you've the cask to draw from. My drink's sour, and scant at that».

¹⁸ «Our life is just like wine: when just a little is left, it becomes vinegar». Human life is compared with wine also by Alex., frr. 46 and 280 K.-A. (= Ath. II 36e-f).

¹⁹ According to Konstantakos (2000), Antiphanes lived about one hundred years from the end of the fifth to the end of the fourth century BC.

I think that the passages quoted up to this point show that wine was considered a good metaphor of life and its ups and downs; and that one could be said to «draw» goods and evils from life.

So, what? Before introducing my own attempt at an interpretation of fr. 369, I will briefly refer to a way, well attested in Homer, Hesiod and in many lyric poets, of summarizing human experience – both in its variety and in the alternate recurrence of good and evil: the so-called «law of eternal change». Snell and, in his wake but in more detail, Krause²⁰ have dwelt on the matter, and this allows me to abstain from dealing with it here. I can confine myself to one of the clearest examples – the one offered by a certain number of Archilochus' fragments. The variety of this «theory» which is proposed by this latter poet considers change from good times to bad times and viceversa in life to be completely independent from good or bad personal behaviour. In fact, ill fate strikes now one now another (Archil., fr. 13 West), and the value of each man is proportional to his capacity of resisting the temptation of exalting himself or getting depressed because of good or bad luck: what man has to do is simply to acknowledge Necessity – γ ίνωσκ' οἶος ῥυσμὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔχει (fr. 128.7 West)²¹.

It is in order to notice that, strangely enough given the wide number of authors in whose work Snell and Krause thought to be able to find traces of such «law» of alternation, no example occurs in Alcaeus in their opinion.

In my opinion, there occurs at least one. In fact, I regard the case of fr. 369 as peculiarly clear: the antithesis ἄλλοτα μὲν ... ἄλλοτα δὲ ... can be easily compared to Archil., fr. 13.7-9 West:

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... ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει τόδε· νῦν μὲν ἐς ἡμέας ἐτράπεθ', αἰματόεν δ' ἔλκος ἀναστένομεν. ἐξαῦτις δ'ἐτέρους ἐπαμείψεται ...²².
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Here the alternation concerns the people struck by misfortune: now it is we, tomorrow it will be others; whereas in Alc., fr. 369 the same people (human beings at general, or «we» or «our friends» or «our enemies», etc. – it is impossible to know) meet once with goods and once with ills – provided we accept a metaphorical interpretation of Alcaeus' fragment, reckoning «honey-sweet wine» to allude to good

²⁰ Snell 1953, pp. 43-70, Krause 1976.

²¹ Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of ὑυσμός (shape? flux?). The «law of alternation» in Archilochus is to be recognized also in different personal tastes (fr. 25), in the humiliation of the great or the exhaltation of the small (fr. 130), and in the exclusive influence of circumstances on our ideas (frr. 131-132 West).

²² « ...Now one now another meets with this (i. e. mishap); now it has come to us, and we bemoan the bloody wound. Next time, in turn, it will befall others».

times, and «wine sourer than caltrops» to bad times: as already said, I cannot fancy that either Alcaeus or people of his environment drank (also) bad wine.

En passant, it may be interesting to say a word on Alc., fr. 306B ll. 6-7, unfortunately a much less clear case. The fragment seems to suggest that both evils and goods are bound to pass, but we do not know if there is any periodical switch from good to evil and back to evil, etc.:

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τὰ κ]ακὰ ἐκτρεπομε- [ καὶ τάγαθά
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It is impossible to grasp the exact meaning of these words owing to the bad conditions of the papyrus²³.

And now back to fr. 369, and to the connection between wine and human destiny. The participle ἀρυτήμενοι, in evidence at the close of this fragment, leads us on to another fragment, 305a, which offers scanty remnants of a poem and of an ancient commentary about it. I quote a few lines – the safely understandable part of the text – which concern my discussion²⁴:

δκτ.[..]ται τὰ
ὑ]πὸ [σ]οῦ κεκερασμ[έν]α, τοῦτιν, οὐδέποτε ἐ[πιλ]είψει
ὁ ἐξ ἡμῶν πόλεμος. ὡς ἄλος ἐκκ πολίας ἀρυτήμεν[·] ὡς ἐκ θαλάσσης ἀντλο[ῦ]ντες ἀνέκλειπτον πόλε[μο]ν ἔξετε.

It is interesting to notice that the equivalence of meaning between the verb ἀντλέω as used by Aeschylus in the examples quoted above and the verb ἀρύτημι²⁵—from which ἀρυτήμεν(οι) is supposed to come – is confirmed by II. 11-12 of this commentary.

²³ Cf. Porro 1995, pp. 360-364. On this papyrus (*POxy*.35.2733) see also Porro 1994, pp. 123-130.

²⁴ On this fragment (*POxy*.21.2306) see Porro 1994, pp. 33-57; cf. Liberman 1999, p. 105. This is my translation (it is not clear how the incomplete word ἐκτ.[..]ται should be filled in, and what does it mean): « ...? "what you mixed", that is, never will the war brought by us cease. "As though drawing from the grey sea": as though you were draining water from the sea, you will have endless war».

²⁵ The verb ἀρύτημι is recorded by *DGE*, not by LS(J).

Barner has rightly underlined that «ὡς ἄλος ἐκ πολίας ἀρυτήμενοι steht als Zitat fest». The metre of fr. 305a is the same as employed in our fr. 369^{26} . If Barner is right, fr. 369 should be understood as a single long line («Langvers»), and the metre can be referred to as 8da. The fact that «ἀρυτήμενοι steht in der Kadenz» might well underline the metaphorical employ of this verb, at least in fr. 369.

Although the text of fr. 305a is sadly lacunose, it is clear that some serious offences committed against Alcaeus and his party $(\tau \dot{\alpha} \ \dot{\nu}]\pi \dot{\nu} \ [\sigma]o\tilde{\nu} \ \kappa \kappa \kappa \epsilon \rho \alpha \sigma \mu [\dot{\epsilon} \nu]\alpha)$ are compared to wine poured out. As the commentator explains, the sentence (the greatest part of which is lost) meant «we will wage endless war against you». Then, the endless war that the poet's enemies will obtain as result of their ill conduct is likened to the action of endlessly drawing water from the sea – and the participle $\dot{\alpha}\rho \nu \tau \dot{\mu} \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu$ points to the act of those who meet with their destiny, just like in fr. 369²7. This confirms my allegoric interpretation of fr. 369 itself.

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²⁶ Barner 1967, p. 74, with more discussion of the metre.

²⁷ It is also interesting to compare the war as endless as the sea – a picture of the evils which have been poured out like wine by Alcaeus' enemies – with the potentially endless series of cups of wine, regarded by the poet as remedy (fr. 346.5). Wine stands mainly (although not exclusively) for consolation and joy.

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