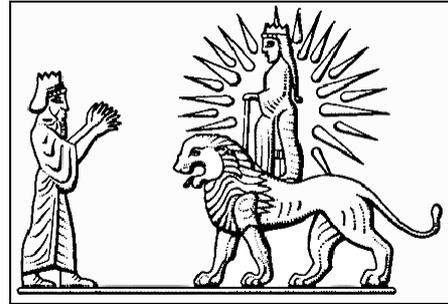


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TRADE AND COMMERCE IN ARCHILOCHOS, SAPPHO, AND ALKAIOS¹

David Tandy

Κρής γενεάν Βρόταχος Γορτύνιος ἐνθάδε κείμεαι
οὐ κατὰ τοῦτ' ἐλθὼν, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἐμπορίαν.

Here I lie a Cretan by race, Brotachos of Gortyn;
I didn't come for this, but for trading (Simonides 138 Diehl).

There are many kinds of evidence for archaic Greek trade and commerce. This paper is about the written evidence found in Archilochos, Sappho, and Alkaios. The early lyric poets have tended to be overlooked; Lin Foxhall on consumption is an admirable, recent exception (Foxhall 1998). Identifying production location archaeologically is important, but we have ignored often accidental evidence that may help us better understand the formations and institutions within which goods moved, and also help us perceive the nature of economic development and the political economies of the archaic Aegean. Archilochos, Sappho, and Alkaios individually but especially collectively bring light to the nature of archaic Greek trade, as well as to the role of trade in local economic development in the seventh and sixth centuries.

The eighth century saw an enormous increase in population density on the mainland of Greece. This contributed to the need for expansions to the west and carried over into the seventh century, where we can see clear indications of redirection to the northern Aegean and into the Black Sea. In the late seventh century we see new action at Kyrene, at Naukratis, at Sigeion. The Parian effort that Archilochos participated in to colonize and exploit Thasos and its *peraia* can be defined as partly an imitation of earlier western efforts of larger, non-island poleis, and partly a competitive move against eastern neighbors (Miletos, Samos).

One heuristic tool here is to look at the broad phenomenon of outward movement as to some extent a product of extra-man management and management policy. Let us look at a taxonomy of extra men (figure 1). Wherever they are, A-men, because they are *in* (often called *agathoi*), always have a share in the incremental advantage that comes to the town, controlled by those who are *in*, from the fields.² If they stay home I propose that we call them A1; if they leave they would be A2. Wherever they are, B-men, who are *out* (often called the *kakoi*), do *not* share in the town increment. B1 seems an uneconomic but perhaps frequent arrangement, but exceptionally unattractive when avoidable, since the economic

1 I wish to thank Drs. Rollinger and Ulf for inviting me to participate in the MELAMMU conference in Innsbruck. The spirited discussion that followed the papers on Archaic Greece was very helpful and I am especially grateful for suggestions from Walter Burkert, Walter Donlan, and Kurt Raaflaub. This paper is a small portion of a longer project, an economic history of the Archaic Period. Archilochos is cited from West 1989, Sappho and Alkaios from Lobel and Page 1955 with several supplements from Voigt 1971.

2 On the increment that comes to the town, see Tandy 2001.

formation of the polis within which production is undertaken presumably does not allow the B1-man to himself share in the domestic increment through full polis membership. This fact would lead, routinely I believe, to a conversion of certain members of affected families into B2-men, as I hope this paper will show.

IN	A1	stay home
	A2	go away (to fight, to trade)
OUT	B1	stay home
	B2	go away (to fight, to trade)

Figure 1. A taxonomy of extra men

Archilochos

We are able to situate Archilochos into two places of the taxonomy, A2 early in his career and (with less certainty: see below) B2 later on. Testimonia indicate that Archilochos of Paros went to Thasos to help support a settlement there that had been founded by his father Telesikles, probably in about 680 (cf. Steph. Byz., s.v. Θάσος); the archaeological material is in keeping with this date. Archilochos joined the Parians on Thasos perhaps between 660 and 650. We are told that he left Paros for Thasos because of poverty and desperation (διὰ πενίαν καὶ ἀπορίαν), a sure sign that he was an extra man and needed to shift from A1 to A2. Further testimony narrates that he outstayed his welcome at Thasos, as well, thus moving from A2 to B2 (295 = Kritias 88 B 44 Diels-Kranz).

At any rate, in his Thasos phase Archilochos serves the polis of Paros as citizen, *polites*, and as soldier, *hoplites*. What does he reveal about commerce and trade? It is clear that he is familiar with moving freight between Thasos and its peraiia and Paros, which we see in fragment 93a:

παῖς Πεισιστράτου
 ἄνδρας . . . ὠλεῦντας αὐλὸν καὶ λύρην ἀνήγαγεν
 ἐς Θάσον κυσὶ Θρέξιιν δῶρ' ἔχων ἀκήρατον
 χρυσόν, οἰκείωι δὲ κέρδει ζύν' ἐποίησαν κακά.

The son of Peisistratos brought these men (who enjoyed) the pipe and the lyre back to Thasos, bearing gifts for the Thracian dogs, pure gold, and they made public harm with their private gain (93a.4-7).

He can refer in passing to a cargo (φ[ο]ρτίων δέ μοι μέ[λ]ει, “I am concerned about the cargo” 24.8). Archilochos is certainly familiar with sailing and with reading the weather. We see the former clearly:

ἀλλ' ἄγε σὺν κώθωνι θοῆς διὰ σέλματα νηὸς
 φοίτα καὶ κοίλων πώματ' ἄφελκε κάδων,
 ἄγρει δ' οἶνον ἐρυθρὸν ἀπὸ τρυγός· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡμεῖς
 νηφέμεν ἐν φυλακῆι τῆιδε δυνησόμεθα.

Come on and make the rounds with the cup along the benches of the swift ship and draw out some gulps from the hollow casks and

seize the red wine from the lees. You know that we will not be able to stay sober on this watch (4.6-9).

And he seems to speak of the weather at sea with ease:

Γλαῦχ', ὄρα· βαθὺς γὰρ ἤδη κύμασιν ταρασσεται
πόντος, ἀμφὶ δ' ἄκρα Γυρέων ὀρθὸν ἵσταται νέφος
σῆμα χειμῶνος, κιχάνει δ' ἀελπίτης φόβος.

Look, Glaukos: the deep sea is being stirred up by the waves, and a cloud stands straight up around the heights of Gyrai, the sign of a storm. It is from the unexpected that fear comes (105).

ἴνται νῆες ἐν πόντῳ θαλάσσι
πολλὸν δ' ἰστίων ὑφώμεθα
λύσαντες ὄπλα νηός· οὐρίην δ' ἔχε
ἴρουσ, ὄφρα σεο μεμνεώμεθα
ἴπισχε, μηδὲ τοῦτον ἐμβάλῃς
ἴν ἵσταται κυκώμενον
ἴχης· ἀλλὰ σὺ προμήθεσαι
ἴνυμος

Swift ships on the sea. . . Let's loosen the ship's sheets and lower most of the sails. Pray keep the wind fair, so that we will remember you. . . keep it off, and don't throw this [storm at us]. . . [the] swollen [wave] stands before us. But do be mindful of us (106).

Even if these are metaphors for political difficulties, Archilochos cannot use sailing language without knowledge of it. He knows about shipwrecks (8, 12, 13) and that there are fifty oars on a big boat (192). He unequivocally decries his life on the sea (ἔα Πάρον καὶ σῦκα κείνα καὶ θαλάσσιον βίον, "Let Paros be, and those figs and the life of the sea" 116), and he does it so unequivocally that we should be tempted to reread his ἐν δορί couplet as a declaration of his dependence not on his spear so much as on his boat:

ἐν δορὶ μὲν μοι μᾶζα μεμαγμένη, ἐν δορὶ δ' οἶνος
ἴσμαρικός· πίνω δ' ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος.

The usual rendering of this couplet is

On my spear depends my kneaded bread, and on my spear depends my Ismaric wine; I drink it leaning on my spear.

But does it not seem just as likely that δορί means "boat"?

On my boat depends my kneaded bread, and on my boat depends my Ismaric wine; I drink it reclining on my boat (2).

I am certain that if editors regularly printed the ἐν δορί couplet next to fr. 116 instead right after fr. 1, in which he refers to himself as soldier and poet, we would start thinking of the δορί as a boat sooner than a spear.³

One last observation about Archilochos in the north. Let us return to fr. 93a, in which the son of Peisistratos has brought gold to buy off Thracians, and the

3 δόρυ νήιον means a ship's plank in Homer (e.g., *Il.* 15.410, 17.744; *Od.* 9.384, 498; also *HH3.403*); δόρυ by itself means ship as early as Aeschylus (*Pers.* 411, *Aga.* 1618). This was proposed and later argued by J.A. Davison (1954: 1960).

result has proven negative, for the son of Peisistratos has created public harm for the sake of private gain. I read this as a comment by an A2-man observing the actions of B2-men. It is also an epiphany of the conflict between the *demos* and polis on one side and aristocratic households (*oikoi*) on the other.

After Archilochos wore out his welcome in the north, his own subsequent B2 career may have taken him south. Herodotos and Near Eastern sources indicate that in the mid-seventh century Ionians and Karians were in Egypt in support of Pharaoh Psamatik (Herodotos 2.66.12-67.2; Haider 1988, 153-84), and now we may be finding their seventh-century barracks at Tell Defenneh, east of Naukratis (Möller 2000, 34-5).⁴ Among these Ionians we might surmise Archilochos's presence, for he knows about mercenaries in a remark to his friend Glaucus:

Γλαῦκ', ἐπίκουρος ἀνήρ τόσσον φίλος ἔσκε μάχεται.

Glaukos, a mercenary man is a friend only as long as he is fighting (15).

And he reveals knowledge of Karian mercenaries as well:

καὶ δῆ' πίκουρος ὥστε Κάρ κεκλήσομαι.

Indeed, I will be called a mercenary, like a Karian (216).

So we can venture the guess that he himself was a mercenary, an ἐπίκουρος,⁵ at this point. Archilochos died fighting as an A1- or A2-man in a land-battle against the Naxians.⁶

A review of Archilochos's geographical knowledge should tell us something about his movements. He makes clear a knowledge of Aiolis (Lesbos (98.11, 121.1), Imbros (142.3)), Ionia (Miletos (192), Priene (43.2)) and further inland there (Magnesia (20.1), Lydia (19.1)) and south (Karia (216.1)). He is familiar with many islands (Mykonos 1224a.1), hated Naxos (89.7), Karpathos (248), Tenos (105.2), Gortyn on Crete (24.2)), and from his days at Thasos he is familiar with the north Aegean coast from Torone (89.20) in the west over to Stryme and Maroneia (6) in the east and over to Phrygia (42.2), too. One fragment alone (89) weaves together Naxians, Paros, Thasos, and Torone. If fr. 79a is Archilochos's and not Hipponax's, his knowledge of Salmydessos inside the Black Sea may be

4 On the various ways to see how scholars have gone about dating Archilochos as well as the Ionian/Karian ἐπικουρία, see Lavelle forthcoming.

5 There are two questions that arise here. First, were ἐπίκουροι necessarily mercenaries? Second, how certain can we be that Archilochos was an ἐπίκουρος for Pharaoh? ἐπίκουροι in Homer are not mercenaries, but it is clear that by the mid-seventh century the outsider Ionians and Karians who helped Pharaoh were exchanging the uncertainties of border-skirmish fighting for the more predictable (and presumably more lucrative) service in Egypt (Lavelle 1997, esp. 258-61). As for the second question, whether Archilochos was in their number, we cannot be sure, for it may be a character/persona speaking fr. 216, in which case it is not literally Archilochos who is out fighting for Pharaoh. But it means that the audience understands that men are doing in real life what Archilochos's verse articulates. I think it makes sense, for the broader inquiry into who is doing what and when, to pursue this as Archilochos *ipse*, but it really doesn't matter.

6 Herakleides Lembos 8 (F.H.G. 2.214); Plutarch *Sera Num. Vind.* 17 p. 560e; Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 33.12.

derived from his mingling with Milesians or other Ionians in Egypt, and his references to Syracuse (293) and the Siris river (22.2) in southern Italy may be similarly explained (Siris was founded by Colophonians: Malkin 1998, 30). But it may also be the case that Archilochos traveled to many of these places ἐν ὄρεϊ.

What we see so far is that Archilochos served the state's interest when in the north by playing *polites/hoplites*, bringing goods home and supplying protection for production and extraction and taking extra stuff from the Parian foothold in Thasos. If we may surmise that up to 5% of Parian total product was generated abroad (as opposed to the impossibly low 1-2% that is usually rolled out for pre-industrial trading states (e.g., Cartledge 1983, 11), we can assert that Archilochos and those with him in the north were important to the building of economic security for (type A) Parians at home. Now if Archilochos spent time, later, in Egypt before returning home, we may speak of him as abetting the interests, including the trading interests, of Pharaoh, not to mention that he is not making any contribution to the Parian polis increment by producing goods for market at home. In short, Archilochos when in the south does not compete directly with Parian interests as others did in the north (93a), but his service to Pharaoh may impinge negatively on the success abroad of Parian representatives, while his absence from home must reduce the amount of Parian domestic product. Thus as a B2-man, Archilochos works in two ways against the economic best interests of his polis. This is a good indication of how precarious archaic local economic development was.

Sappho

Sappho knows about sailing:

]ε, γάνος δὲ και..[

τ]ύχαι σὺν ἔσλαι
]ενος κρέτησαι
]ας μελαίνας

]έλοισι ναῦται
] μεγάλαις ἀήται[ς
]α κὰπὶ χέρσω

]μοθεν πλέοι. [
]δετα φόρτι' εἶκ[
]νατιμ' ἐπεὶ κ. [

]ρέοντι πόλλ.. [
]αιδέκα[

]ει

]ιν ἔργα
] χέρσω [

The surface of the sea...with good fortune...to repair the black [ships?]...Sailors...with great windblasts toward the land. They are sailing...cargo...chores...toward the land (20.2-21).

The Parian Marble (ep. 36) indicates that she spent time in exile in Sicily, during which time her husband might be characterized as at least a passive B2-man through his absence from Mytilene. But we don't know what he was doing when abroad (although the Suda (s.v. Σαπφώ) says he was a trader based in Andros: ὁρμωμένωι ἀπὸ Ἰανδρου).

Sappho's geographical knowledge is not particularly extensive. No actual traveling is needed to explain her references to Troy, to Cyprus, to Kythera. She appears to have some sort of potentially lucrative relationship with people in power in Lydia, to whom her young girls go. She mentions Phokaia (101.3), just south of Lesbos in Aiolis. Her reference to Panormos (35) is unlikely to be to Sicilian Palermo (Panormos is an extremely common toponym, "safe haven for all"), but her mention of Cape Geraistos (96), an excellent and important harbor at the south end of Euboeia, a regular first landfall near the mainland for those traveling from the east, may reveal her savvy about moving around the Aegean.

Most of all Sappho supplies us with her brother Charaxos, who is apparently on the sealanes carrying wine from Mytilene to Naukratis,⁷ and presumably carrying something back out from Naukratis to somewhere else. Astrid Möller compares Charaxos to Plato, who sold olive oil that he brought to Egypt to finance his sojourn there. This does not strike me as a good comparison. Möller rejects Charaxos's status as a trader, insisting that he is a traveler or adventurer instead (Möller 2000, 55, 86, 212-13). Herodotos testifies that Mytilenians were present at Naukratis early and contributed to the building of the Hellenion there (2.178); we have inscriptions made by Mytilenians discussed at length by Möller, among which we may have a dedication from Nearchos to the Dioskouroi,⁸ the protector of sailors, to which we will have reason to return. Herodotos also tells us of Sappho's brother's relationship with Rhodopis (1.135), whom Sappho herself calls Doricha:

Κύ]πρι κα[ί σ]ε πι[κροτέρ]αν ἐπεύρ[οι
μη]δὲ καυχάσ[α]ιτο τόδ' ἐννέ[ποισα
Δ]ωρίχα τὸ δεύ[τ]ερον ὡς πόθε[ννον
εἰς] ἔρον ἦλθε.

7 Herodotos 2.135; Strabo 17.1.33; Athenaios 13.596c-d; *P. Oxy.* 1800, fr. 1.

8 Νέαρχος με κά[θηκε το]ς Δ[ι]οσκόροις: "Nearchos de[dicated] me to the D[ioscuri]." See Möller 2000, 173.

Kupris, and may she find you harsher (this time) and let not Doricha boast this, saying that on this second time she came to a longed-for love (15b.9-12).

Sappho prays for his safe return by sea:

Κύπρι καὶ Νηρήιδες ἀβλάβη[ν μοι
τὸν κασί]γνητον δ[ό]τε τυίδ' ἴκεσθα[ι
κῶσσα φ]οῖ θύμωι κε θέλῃι γένεσθαι
πάντα τε]λέσθην,
ὄσσα δὲ πρ]όσθ' ἄμβροτε πάντα λῦσα[ι
καὶ φίλοις]ι φ]οῖσι χάραν γένεσθαι
κώνιαν ἔ]χθροισι, γένοιτο δ' ἄμμι
μηδ' εἷς·
τὰν κασιγ]νήταν δὲ θέλοι πόησθαι
]τίμας, [ὄν]ϊαν δὲ λύγραν
]οτοισι π[ά]ροιθ' ἀχεύων...

Kupris and the Nereids, grant that my brother arrive here unhurt and that everything he desires be fulfilled, and that he pay for all the mistakes he made in the past and that he be a blessing to his friends and a pain for his enemies; and let no-one be a grief for us. Let him wish to bring honors to his sister and bitter pain . . . formerly grieving. . . (5.1-11).

Given the at least one-time exile (κακότης) of Sappho's husband (however he handled it) and the clear presence of Mytilenians at Naukratis, I conclude that Charaxos is at sea as a B2-man at Naukratis κατ' ἐμπορίαν, for trading. A review of Alkaios's activities will make this clearer.

Alkaios

Let me begin by referring to Alkaios's role, as an A2-man, in the battle between Mytilene and Athens at Sigeion, near Troy, perhaps in the last decade of the seventh century. There we see him, a Mytilenian *polites* at Sigeion (428 = Hdt. 4.94-95), parallel to Archilochos *polites* at Thasos. But he is most of the time if not all of the time out of power. The life of Antimenidas his brother seems parallel to Archilochos's; Alkaios's own life has important similarities, we just saw to Archilochos's, but more pertinently, to Charaxos's.

Let us begin with his geographical knowledge. He refers to many unsurprising places: Hebros river at Ainos polis in Thrace (45), Kyzikos on the Propontis (440), Antandros opposite Lesbos (337), Teos just to the south (322). He seems to have some familiarity with Boiotia (325, 425). Fr. 388 mentions "shaking a Karian helmet-plume" (λόφον τε σείων Κάρικον). This is in keeping with the tradition that Alkaios claims to have gone to Egypt (432 = Strabo 1.2.30), for it is not in Aiolis that Alkaios will encounter Karians but in Egypt. So I am willing to presume that Alkaios's activities, at some time during the course of three

exiles, included going to Egypt and behaving like Charaxos. To call these men travelers and adventurers prevents us from seeing the economic roles they must have been playing through their presences abroad and their absences from home. Charaxos and Alkaios are B2-men and as such they are through their actions competing with their own and other states and individuals on the trading scene. What it means specifically for Mytilene, which has made Charaxos and Alkaios into B2-men, is that Mytilene's ability to gain 1%, 2%, 5% of national product from trading abroad is diminished; Mytilene's success abroad is compromised by her domestic policy.

Also B2 is Antimenidas, Alkaios's brother, who is said to have served the King of Babylon as ἐπίκουρος:

ἦλθες ἐκ περάτων γᾶς ἐλαφαντίναν
 λάβαν τὸ ξίφος χρυσοδέταν ἔχων. . .
 <τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἄντιμενίδα. . . φησιν Ἄλκαῖος
 Βαβυλωνίοις συμμαχοῦντα τελέσαι>
 ἄεθλον μέγαν, εὐρύσσαο δ' ἐκ πόνων
 κτένναις ἄνδρα μαχαίταν βασιληίων
 παλάσταν ἀπυλείποντα μόναν ἴαν
 παχέων ἀπὸ πέμπων. . . .

You have returned from the ends of the earth with an ivory and gold-worked hilt of a sword (Alkaios says that his brother Antimenidas completed his mercenary service with the Babylonians)... a great achievement, and you rescued them from their travails by killing a fighter man who lacked only one palm's breadth from five royal cubits (in height) (350).

His brother is perhaps the source of Alkaios's knowledge of Ashkelon (48), north of Gaza, destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar in 604. He is perhaps the source of Alkaios's knowledge of Karian helmet-plumes, and almost certainly the reason Alkaios knows what a cubit is. Antimenidas may even have been an ἐπίκουρος for Pharaoh in the Ashkelon region until Egypt's withdrawal in 605 and then stayed on and joined up with Nebuchadrezzar. But he may also have served Babylon many years later; Alkaios's knowledge of Ashkelon might then be explained by his own alleged trip to Egypt.

Let us stay with Alkaios and his claim that he went to Egypt. It is possible to speak of Alkaios as the B2-man *par excellence*. Alkaios uses a lot of seafaring language in his poems, much of which is allegorical, of course. I repeat my remark about Archilochos, that one need knowledge of nautical language to use that diction metaphorically or allegorically.

τὸ λαῖφος
 the sail (33c.4)
 πᾶν φόρτι[ο]ν...δ' ὅττι μάλιστα...καὶ κύματι
 πλάγεις[α]...ὄμβρωι μάχεσθαι...φάϊσ' οὐδὲν
 ἰμέρρη[ν. ἀσάμι] δ' ἔρματι τυπτομ[ένα

all the cargo. . . [the boat] says that she has no desire to be hit by a wave and to fight against the storm, struck by a hidden reef (73.1-6)

πόντ[ο]ν κάτελκε

drag a ship down to sea (118.2)

[ἄ]σφάλτω

asphalt (124.7)

Finally, Alkaios's perhaps best known verses are a nautical commentary on local political affairs:

ἄσυν<ν>έτημι τῶν ἀνέμων στάσιν·
τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔνθεν κῦμα κυλίνδεται,
τὸ δ' ἔνθεν, ἄμμες δ' ὄν τὸ μέσσον
ναὶ φορήμ<μ>εθα σὺν μελαίνοι

χείμονι μόχθεντες μεγάλω μάλα·
πὲρ μὲν γὰρ ἄντλος ἱστοπέδαν ἔχει,
λαῖφος δὲ πᾶν ζάδηλον ἤδη,
καὶ λάκιδες μέγαλαι κατ' αὐτο,

χάλαισι δ' ἄγχυρ<ρ>αι, τὰ δ' ὀή[ια]...

I cannot read the lie of the winds. One wave rolls in from this side, another from that, and we are carried through the middle of it with our black ship, much distressed by the great storm. Bilge-water covers the mast-footing, and we can see through the entire sail now, and there are huge tears through it. The anchors are loosening, and the rudders...(326).

This last fragment is now generally perceived as introductory to fr. 208 (and so printed in Campbell 1982, 320-22), which follows and will serve as my last point:

τοὶ πόδες ἀμφοτέροι μένο[ισι]
ἐν βιμβλίδεσσι· τοῦτό με καὶ σ[άον]
μόνον· τὰ δ' ἄχματ' ἐκπεπ[.]άχμενα
]μεν [.]ρηντ' ἔπερθα. τῶν[

Both feet remain in the ropes; this alone keeps me safe. The cargo is carried overhead. . .(208.ii.5-8).

I begin with ἄχματα, which is derived from ἄγω, and therefore clearly a synonym for φορτία (φόρτια in Aiolic) and other terms for cargo. But it made me become curious when a TLG search revealed that Alkaios is the only author in whose work this word survives (Alkaios has it again in the very flimsy fr. 167.7); I noted, too, that here in fr. 208, he features it in a *figura etymologica*, ἄχματα...ἄχμενα (as if a Greek auditor needed ἄχμα to be explained!). What my curiosity has led me to conclude is that in spite of its simplicity ἄχμα is part of the sailor's specialist vocabulary, drawn from the lexicon of those who work the sea seriously. A look right above the ἄχματα in 208 brings us closer to understanding what I mean by the specialist lexicon: τοὶ πόδες ἀμφοτέροι μένο[ισι] ἐν βιμβλίδεσσι. "Both feet remain in the ropes" is how I translated

this above but there is no certainty about ἐν βίμβλιδεσσι. I think that people with an opinion on this agree that these feet are Alkaios's feet and that they are still tangled (μένοντι) in the ropes (ἐν βίμβλιδεσσι). These βίμβλιδες are a *hapax*. (From Hesychius we can see that βίμβλ = βιβλ = βυβλ; but at this early date it is difficult to be certain what the word ought to mean.) They are logically sheets of some kind, part of the rigging of a sailing vessel, and Alkaios's feet are tangled up in them, which is a bad thing, allegory or not. There are at least two other possible interpretations of this locution. One is that the feet are the feet or bottom two corners of the sail (*LSJ*, s.v. πούζ, Π.2) and that the βίμβλιδες are the ropes or sheets that hang from them and that are used to pull in or let out the sails. If the feet are still on the sheets, that is a good thing, but if they have been introduced as a topic then perhaps the feet and sheets will be soon separated from each other. Holding onto these ropes is the only thing that saves Alkaios. Another interpretation, for the sake of an example, is that the πόδες are Alkaios's but that the βίμβλιδες are not ropes of any sort but rather mats of papyrus used to improve the footing of the seamen and perhaps especially of the steerer. So Alkaios is saying that he still has his footing (but perhaps not for long). βίμβλιδες only appear in Alkaios and I conclude that it is drawn from the specialist lexicon.⁹

My point here is not that I have got a new interpretation of this passage but that the presence of specialist diction betrays Alkaios's experience on the sea, which is substantial. To all the references to seafaring and to the specialist language we can finally add Alkaios's *Hymn to the Dioskouroi*:

δεῦτέ μοι νᾶσον Πέλοπος λίποντε[ς
 παῖδες ἴφθιμοι Δίος] ἠδὲ Λήδας
 εὐνόω]ι θύ[μ]ωι προ[φά]νητε Κάστορ
 καὶ Πολύδευκες,
 οἳ κατ' εὐρεαν χ[θόνα] καὶ θάλασσαν
 παῖσαν ἔρχεσθ' ὠ[κυπό]δων ἐπ' ἵππων
 ῥῆα δ' ἀνθρώποι[ς] θα[ν]άτω ῥύεσθε
 ζακρυόεντος
 εὐσδ[ύγ]ων θρώισκοντ[ες]. ἄκρα νάων
 π]ήλοθεν λάμπροι προ[]τρ[]ντες
 ἀργαλέαι δ' ἐν νύκτι φ[άος φέ]ροντες
 νᾶι μ[ε]λαίνοι·

Come to me, leaving behind the island of Pelops, strong sons of Zeus and Leda, with kind spirit appear, Kastor and Polydeukes, who travel over the broad land and all the sea on swift-footed horses, and you easily rescue people from cold death, leaping to the tops of their well-benched ships, shining afar ... bringing light to the black ship in the arduous night (34).

9 Fr. 305, a second-century CE commentary to fr. 208, glosses βίμβλιδεσσι with a common word for ropes, σχοινία. That βίμβλιδεσσι needs a gloss is perhaps more telling than the content of the gloss itself. Charlton (1996) associates all matting with cargo.

What a fine after-dinner song for Nearchos (see note 8) and his other fellow Mytilenians and other Greeks at the Hellenion or its predecessor at Naukratis!

In short and in conclusion, Alkaios betrays an expertise that is eye-catching; his work on the sea is not what he wants to write about but he reveals what he knows nevertheless. He and other poets point to an enormity of competition between polis and other interests, including independent households. Poleis are no doubt sponsoring their own trading abroad, but the characteristic *stasis* of the polis, as political behaviors play themselves out, is economically self-defeating or at least self-restricting, just as policies that discourage peasant producers, which I've written about elsewhere (Tandy and Neale 1996; Tandy 1997, 2001), are counter-productive, development-wise. This indicates, I think, an immaturity of vision by these early states that will only be overcome by time. Eventually city-states will understand the importance of expanded inclusions both of excluded elites and of other classes, and extra men will play less of a competitive role against the polis.

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