

## Greek and Latin Metre IX

### Greek Lyric II; 'Latin Lyric'

#### Aeolic: the two major stanzas

The two ancient Aeolic (Lesbian) poets Sappho and Alcaeus used a rich variety of Aeolic metres, as the surviving fragments of their poetry amply attest. However, each has a (four-line) stanza named after them, because both such stanzas were a particularly common (and famous) vehicle for their own poetry. We may consider these metres in the context of both their original authors and their subsequent adoption in Latin:

#### (a) The Sapphic Stanza:

$$\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
 - & \cup & - & \times & | & - & \vdots & \cup & \vdots & \cup & - & | & \cup & - & - \\
 - & \cup & - & \times & | & - & \vdots & \cup & \vdots & \cup & - & | & \cup & - & - \\
 - & \cup & - & \times & | & - & \vdots & \cup & \vdots & \cup & - & | & \cup & - & - & \int \\
 & & & & & & & \cup & \cup & - & | & - & & & & 
 \end{array}$$

- The stanza consists of three instances of the Sapphic hendecasyllable (= cretic + hagesichorean) followed by the adonean. This can be repeated *ad lib.* as a complete quatrain.
- The caesura in the hendecasyllable (lines 1-3) typically falls after the fifth or sixth syllable, but it can also occur after the seventh syllable – or not at all in the central choriamb, e.g.:

μειδιάσαισ' ἄθανάτω προσώπω Sappho *fr.* 1.14

- The third and fourth lines, though conventionally written on separate lines, form a single metrical unit, i.e. synaphea is allowed between them; at this point syllables can be lengthened by position and words divided between the two cola.

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν  
 ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι  
 ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδου φωνεῖ—  
 σας ὑπακούει Sappho *fr.* 31.1-4

A boast too far: Hor. *Carm.* III.30.13-14 [*dicar*] *princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos | deduxisse modos.*  
 ...cf.:

ille mi par esse ï deo uidetur,  
 ille, si fas est, ï superare diuos,  
 qui sedens aduersus ï identidem te  
 spectat et audit

Cat. 51.1-4

- Catullus appears to have been the first Latin poet to adopt the Sapphic stanza, and poem 51 is one of his most famous poems, translating the Sapphic original (*fr.* 31).
- On occasion, he does not observe the typical caesura in the hendecasyllable, although such exceptions still seem to place a morphological break at the point of a caesura, e.g.

siue in Hyrcanos Arabesue molles,  
 seu Sagas sagittiïferosue Parthos,  
 siue quae septemïgeminus colorat  
 aequora Nilus

Cat. 11.5-8

- By the time of Horace, who used the Sapphic stanza in 25 of his *Odes* (*Carmina*), the metre had become more regularised such that (i) the anceps in the fourth syllable is regularly long; (ii) the caesura always falls after the fifth or sixth syllable (in Horace *Carm.* I-III, the penthemimeral caesura is regular).
- Although synaphea is not generally observed in Horace's Sapphics, hiatus is rare between the third and fourth lines; on two occasions, a word is divided between these two lines in Horace: e.g. *Carm.* I.25.11-12 *Thracio bacchante ï magis sub inter|lunia uento.*
- The Sapphic stanza later crops up in Statius (*Silu.* IV.7) and in certain Senecan odes (e.g. *Med.* 579-606); both these poets only employ the caesura after the fifth syllable.

### (b) The Alcaic Stanza:

x - u ï - x ï | - u u - | u -  
 x - u ï - x ï | - u u - | u -  
 x - u ï - x | - u ï - x ∫  
 - u u | - u u - | u - -

- The Alcaic stanza consists of two Alcaic hendecasyllables (= ionic metron + telesillean), followed by an Alcaic enneasyllable (perh. iambic in nature) and an Alcaic decasyllable.
- There is no fixed caesura in the Greek form of the hendecasyllable, although one often falls after the third and/or fifth syllables (the latter perhaps being treated as diaeresis).

οὐ χρῆ κάκοισι θυμὸν ἐπιτρέπην·

προκόψομεν γὰρ οὐδ' ἔν ἀσάμενοι

ὦ Βύκχι, φάρμακον δ' ἄριστον

οἶνον ἐνεικαμένοις μεθύσθην Alcaeus *fr.* 91

- Although the stanza was apparently not adopted by Catullus, it is the most common lyric metre of Horace, who employed it in 37 of his *Odes*.
- Horace regularly replaced the initial aneeps of lines 1-3, as well as the aneeps in the fifth syllable, with a long. Furthermore, a caesura after the fifth element of lines 1-2 becomes regular, and after the sixth element of line 3. This is consistent with Horace's general strengthening of Greek rhythms in his lyric metres. E.g. Hor. *Carm.* III.5.1-4:

caelo tonantem credidimus Iouem

regnare: praesens diuus habebitur

Augustus adiectis Britannis

imperio grauibusque Persis. Hor. *Carm.* III.5.1-4

- Synaphea is not observed.
- To judge from extant evidence, Alcaics seem to have been used rarely after Horace, although Statius experimented with them in *Silu.* IV.5:

parui beatus ruris honoribus,

qua prisca Teucros Alba colit lares,

fortem atque facundum Seuerum

non solitis fidibus saluto. 1-4

### Glyconics and Pherecrateans:

Glyconic            × × – ∪ ∪ – ∪ –

Pherecratean      × × – ∪ ∪ – –

γουνουμαί σ' ἔλαφηβόλε  
ξανθὴ παῖ Διός, ἀγρίων  
δέσποιν' Ἄρτεμι θηρῶν

Anacreon *H. Art. fr.* 1

Dianae sumus in fide  
puellae et pueri integri:  
Dianam pueri integri  
puellaeque canamus

Cat. 31.1-4

collis o Heliconii  
cultor, Vraniae genus,  
qui rapis teneram ad uirum  
uirginem, o Hymenae Hymen,  
o Hymen Hymenae;

Cat. 61.1-5

- In Latin, the spondaic form of the Aeolic base becomes increasingly common.
- In Seneca, the glyconic could be employed in a simple stichic fashion, e.g. *Her. F.* 875-9:

Thebis laeta dies adest:  
aras tangite supplices;  
pingues caedite uictimas;  
permixtae maribus nurus  
solemnes agitent choros ...

- In Latin poetry, a special pairing of these cola becomes associated with ribald and lewd verses, often addressed to Priapus. Such 'Priapean' verses are constructed by following the glyconic with the pherecratean; although these two elements could be placed on separate lines (since diaeresis is regular between them) the convention is to place them together on a single line, e.g.:

hunc lucum tibi dedico consecroque, Priape *Cat. fr.* 2.1

O Colonia, quae cupis | ponte ludere longo,  
 et salire paratum habes, | sed uereris inepta  
 crura ponticuli axulis | stantis in rediuiuis,  
 ne supinus eat cauaque | in palude recumbat:           Cat. 17.1-14

**Phalaeian Hendecasyllable:**

o o | - ∪ ∪ - | ∪ - ∪ - -

- This verse is named after Phalaeus (poss. 4<sup>th</sup> cent.), of whom only one poem in this metre survives (*Anth. Pal.* XIII.6: τοῦτ' ἐγὼ τὸ περισσὸν εἰκόνισμα | τοῦ κωμωδογέλωτος εἰς θρίαμβον. [vv. 1-2]). It consists of the glyconic extended by a bacchiac rhythm (∪--).
- The opening 'Aeolic base' can be made up of - -, - ∪ and ∪ - (in decreasing order of frequency).
- The caesura generally falls after the fifth or sixth syllable but need not.
- The metre was used very regularly by Catullus (42 poems) but not by Horace. E.g.

quoī dono lepidum nouom libellum  
 arida modo pumice expolitum?           1.1-2

- It was employed often by both Statius and Martial, who made three refinements: the opening Aeolic base was always a spondee; elision was generally avoided throughout the line; and caesura after the fifth or sixth syllables became almost essential. E.g.:

Lucani proprium diem frequentet  
 quisquis collibus Isthmiae Diones  
 docto pectora concitatus oestro  
 pendentis bibit unguulae liquorem.           Stat. *Silu.* II.7.1-4

Pliny the Elder lays down the Law:

libros Naturalis Historiae, nouicium Camenis Quiritium tuorum opus, natos apud me proxima fetura licentiore epistula narrare constitui tibi, iucundissime Imperator; sit enim haec tui praefatio, uerissima, dum maximi consenescit in patre. namque tu solebas | nugas esse aliquid putare meas, ut obiter emolliam Catullum conterraneum meum (agnoscis et hoc castrense uerbum): ille enim, ut scis, permutatis prioribus syllabis duriusculum se fecit quam uolebat existimari a Veraniolis suis et Fabullis.

(*H.n. praef.* 1.1)

## Latin Choral Odes

- Leaving aside these metres of Aeolic origin, we find two rather different lyric environments in which choral odes are found in Latin, both drawing upon the Greek tradition in different ways, and both doing so indirectly. Leaving aside occasional fragments of Republican drama, these two contexts are (i) the so-called *cantica* of Plautus and Terence, and (ii) the choral odes of Senecan tragedy. Each may be given brief consideration:

### The *cantica* of Early Roman Comedy:

- Broadly speaking, songs between episodes (~ ‘acts’) of Roman Comedy were either of a single metrical form repeated or of two different forms combined. Strophic respension and the triadic structure (Lecture VIII) are not features of Plautine and Terentian metre.
- Unlike their Greek counterparts, the dramatic *cantica* of Early Roman Drama were intended as solos not choral performances. Music was, if anything, of greater importance than in Greek.
- Because there are few direct correspondences with Greek choruses, it is thought that an indirect tradition, involving other early phases of quantitative metre in Roman culture, lies behind Plautus’ selection of metrical forms. Unfortunately, evidence to aid the study of this problem is extremely scant.
- Particularly common are anapaestic cantica, either in dimeters or tetrameters, which can include catalectic (as well as acatalectic) forms, whose schema was treated at the end of Lecture VIII. The only significant difference from the Greek schema is that an anapaestic foot can be resolved into a proceleusmatic (◡◡◡).
- Diaeresis is regular between the two metra but is not essential, e.g.:

“nunc mihi si uis | dare dimidium,  
indicium domin|o non faciam.”  
is mihi nil eti|am respondit.                      Plaut. *Rud.* 958-60

- Sequences of cretics and bacchiacs are both relatively common, although cretic sequences are not particularly common in Greek, and bacchiac sequences very rare. As an example of a cretic run – more common in Greek comedy than tragedy – Ar. *Eq.* 324-5 will suffice:

ἄρα δῆτ’ οὐκ ἄπ’ ἀρχῆς ἐδήλους ἀναι–  
δειαν, ἥπερ μόνη προστατεῖ ρητόρων

- Unlike several cretic sequences in Greek, almost the full scope of resolutions and substitutions were available of the cretic foot in Plautus and Terence:

– ◡ –                      – – –                      ◡ ◡ –                      – ◡ ◡                      (– ◡ –                      – – ◡)

E.g.

ut tuo recipias tecto seruesque nos  
miseriarumque te ambarum uti misereat                      Plaut. *Rud.* 276-7:

- One of the few good examples of a bacchiac sequence in Greek drama is provided by [Aesch.] *PV* 115:

τίς ἀχώ, τίς ὀδμὰ προσέπτα μ' ἀφεγγής

- Unlike this and many other bacchiac sequences in Greek, almost the full scope of resolutions and substitutions were available of the bacchiac foot in Plautus and Terence:

υ - -      - - -      υ ω -      υ - ω      (ω - -      - ω -      - - ω)

E.g.

dum serui mei perplacet mi consilium,  
dum rursus haud placet nec pater potis uidetur      Plaut. *Merc.* 348-9

### Seneca:

- On the Greek model, Seneca the Younger divided the episodes (in iambic trimeters) of his tragedies by choral odes; only in the case of *Phoenissae* are these missing (probably due to incompleteness not experimentation).
- However, the complicated choral constructs of Attic tragedy were not taken as his basis but rather Horatian lyric, which he applied as he desired, following no pre-established principles but his own (not particularly sophisticated) preferences. It will therefore be worthwhile here to mention here some simpler rhythms, before we tackle other Horatian lyrics in Lecture X.
- Senecan lyrics consist of several stichic forms – especially glyconics, anapaests and the Sapphic hendecasyllable – as well as the occasional Sapphic stanza.
- Glyconics and the Sapphic hendecasyllable (occasionally closed with the adonean as a clausula) we have treated. The anapaestic form, which we have observed in Early Comedy, is also attested in several (pre-Senecan) tragic fragments, e.g.:

simul et circum merga sonantibus

excita saxis saeua sonando

crepitu clangente cachinnat

Acc. *fr.* 571

- In these earlier instances, diaeresis is likewise not essential, and the paroemiac can serve as a clausula.
- In Seneca, the resolution of the first longum of a metron into two shorts is permitted but not in the case of the second longum, i.e. υ υ υ υ υ υ - is acceptable but not υ υ - υ υ υ υ, in either half of the dimeter.
- Seneca does not employ the catalectic form of the anapaestic dimeter as a clausula but rather an anapaestic monometer (i.e. a single metron), e.g.:

alius raras ceruice graui

portare plagas, alius teretes

properet laqueos.

Sen. *Phaedr.* 44-6

- Hiatus and *brevis in longo* are rare since synaphea is generally observed between lines.
- N.B. H.E. Butler on Senecan choral odes: "Their inherent dullness is not relieved by metre... At the end of such choruses we feel as though we had jogged at a rapid trot for long miles on a very hard and featureless road."

"Why is it so that this longing for you follows wherever I go? In the roaring sapphics' boom, in the silence of my lonely room, I think of you night and day." (C. Porter)

### Why not scan the following?

heu me miserum, misere perii,

male perditus, pessime ornatus eo:

tantum gemitu et mali maestitiaeque

hic dies mi optulit, famem et pauperiem.

perditissimus ego sum omnium in terra;

nam quid mi opust uita, [qui] tantum auri

perdidi, quod concustodiui

sedulo? egomet me defraudaui

animumque meum geniumque meum;

Plaut. *Aul.* 721-6 (sic)

nulla uis flammae tumidiue uenti

tanta, nec teli metuenda torti,

quanta cum coniunx uiduata taedis

ardet et odit;

non ubi hibernos nebulosus imbres

Auster aduexit properatque torrens

Hister et iunctos uetat esse pontes

ac uagus errat;

Sen. *Med.* 579-86