The choice of examples in Heraclitus' *Quaestiones Homericae* 5 and its implications for the understanding of Alcaeus' poetics (frr. 6 and 208 V.)

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CHAPTER 5 of Heraclitus' *Homeric Problems* is both a source of the text of Alcaeus' frr. 6 and 208 V. and a direct indication of their allegorical character. Let me recall its content: in the 5th Chapter Heraclitus sets out his elementary definition of allegory: a trope which says one thing but signifies something other than what it says.[1] What I want to discuss now is not the appropriateness of allegorical interpretation of Alcaeus' fragments, but the question whether the context of the 5th Chapter helps us to understand better the quality of images usually considered as allegorical. But a few words about the allegorical approach to sea imagery in these two Alcaeus' fragments are still necessary.

Most scholars nowadays agree that this imagery is allegorical, though now they tend to see Alcaeus' ship rather as a symbol of his *hetaireia*, not of the city. External evidence is indeed in favour of this view: Heraclitus, fragments of ancient commentaries, more explicitly allegorical parallel passages in other Greek poets and the reception of Alcaeus' ship topic in Horace. The overall weight of this evidence is big, but each piece of it taken separately might somehow be dismissed.[2] Denys Page, an authoritative supporter of an allegorical interpretation of both fragments, admitted that the choice between accepting and rejecting their literal meaning depends ultimately on whether one is ready to admit that the poet could re-enact in the present tense the past events having to do with a ship and a storm. Page, like many others, thought that he could not, and called attempts to interpret Alcaeus' words as recreating past dangers "a futile procedure discordant with the practice of ancient poets".[3] In the present tense Alcaeus is supposed to sing only of the things

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[1] Heraclitus' Greek text and its English translation are cited from the edition of Russell and Konstan 2005.

[2] For a summarizing discussion see Lentini 2001.

[3] Page 1955, 185.

going on at the moment of the first performance, i.e. of political troubles (here covered by the veil of nautical allegory).

Still, some scholars, including Ewen Bowie (1986, 17), do not reject the possibility of re-enacting past in present, and I am pleased to join them in this assumption. Lesbian poetry was by no means a lyric tradition *in statu nascendi*; many things had happened before its acme and were happening during it. In fact, some of Archilochus' and Alcaeus' pieces are hard to interpret without admitting that various kinds of situations were recreated in the present tense. The question is whether Heraclitus' context gives us sufficient grounds to regard the fragments in question as looking really and explicitly allegorical.

I want to stress it once more: I do not reject the allegorical interpretation and even think it to be highly probable. But does this allegory really show? Does it, for example, affect the integrity of the poetical image? I think it does not. Perhaps Heraclitus' context will help us to see it more clearly.

Let us look briefly through the symptoms which can generally indicate the allegorical mode. We shall skip one of the most common cases: when the literal sense is at odds with certain ideological premises, such as requirements of piety or decency. Such were often the reasons for allegorical interpretation in early Christian biblical exegesis. Heraclitus' exegesis proceeds from similar premises in the main part of the book when he saves Homer from accusations of impiety, but in the 5th chapter this is not the case.

Symptoms of the allegorical mode that may apply to Alcaeus' case may be derived from the internal indicators of an allegory briefly described by Michael Silk (1974, 122 ff.). These are:

— "accumulation of analogical pointers, all tending in one direction"; this means that the tenor may be introduced by more than one vehicle: *we must come back from the turbid floods to the pure springs; we must pull down the decrepit building and erect on its firm foundation a new edifice*. Such accumulation may result in confusion of vehicles and, thus, produce catachresis: *we must come back to the pure springs and erect upon them a new edifice.*

— "the use of neutral terminology in its explanatory function": *we must come back from the turbid floods to the clear sources.*

— intrusion: "a tenor term has displaced a term belonging both to tenor and vehicle": *we must come from turbid floods to elucidating sources.*

The use of neutral terminology is important for identifying allegory, but it does not establish its use, and I would treat it with much reserve.

Instead, I must add one more case, typical for riddles, which can be seen as a subclass of allegory: there is no real catachresis, but elements of the vehicle, otherwise homogenous, are combined in an unnatural way: *I am drinking from an unquenchable spring and cannot drink enough.* Such incoherence should count as well.

Let us begin from the last example cited in Ch. 5. It is taken from Homer's *Iliad* (T 221-224) and provides Heraclitus with an unquestionable proof that the device he calls allegory is indeed present in the text he is going to explore. The words cited by Heraclitus are printed in bold; Odysseus is speaking:

> αἶψά τε φυλόπιδος πέλεται κόρος ἀνθρώποισιν,
> **ἧς τε πλείστην μὲν καλάμην χθονὶ χαλκὸς ἔχευεν,**
> **ἄμητος δ' ὀλίγιστος, ἐπὴν κλίνῃσι τάλαντα**
> **Ζεύς,** ὅς τ' ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται.

> "Quickly have men surfeit of battle, **wherein the bronze streweth most straw upon the ground, albeit the harvest is scantiest, when so Zeus inclineth his balance,** he that is for men the dispenser of battle". (Transl. by A.T. Murray)

It is worth noting that the citation does not include adjacent lines that could easily decode the allegory. "Τὸ μὲν λεγόμενόν ἐστι γεωργία, τὸ δὲ νοούμενον μάχη", Heraclitus explains. He adds then: "πλὴν ὅμως δι' ἐναντίων ἀλλήλοις πραγμάτων τὸ δηλούμενον ἐπιγιγνώσκομεν".

This is a disputable passage in Homer, and I take it with Edwards and partly with Moulton as referring to wastefulness of war (Edwards 1991, 260-262; Moulton 1979, 285-286). But the question is what Heraclitus saw as the δηλούμενον of the passage, and what the ἐναντία were that allowed the reader to recognize it. Two possible solutions were suggested: the ἐναντία might be either much straw vs poor harvest, or straw and harvest vs bronze and Zeus' scales normally belonging to the war topic (Russell & Konstan 2005, 11, n. 5). I think the first opposition is more evident. If Heraclitus speaks of this opposition, this is the only case among his examples in Ch. 5 when incongruence points to allegory. But even if it does, the vehicle itself does not include any heterogeneous terms: harvest, straw and bronze instruments do belong to the same field. Moreover, the opposition of "most" and "least" could be explained otherwise: there is indeed always more straw than grain. Among the examples used by Heraclitus this one is in fact more like a riddle. It is perhaps not irrelevant that this example is his last one.

The last but one example in the chapter is also obviously allegorical: this is Anacreon's fr. 417 *PMG* about the Thracian filly:

πῶλε Θρηικίη, τί δή με
λοξὸν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ
   μ᾽ οὐδὲν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
ἴσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἄν τοι
   τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλοιμι,
ἡνίας δ᾽ ἔχων στρέφοιμί
   σ᾽ ἀμφὶ τέρματα δρόμου·
νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκεαι
   κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶσα παίζεις,
δεξιὸν γὰρ ἱπποπείρην
οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.

"Thracian filly, why so sharply
shy away with sidelong glances,
thinking I've no expertise?
Be assured, I'd put your bit on
smartly, hold the rains and run you
round the limits of the course.
But for now you graze the meadows,
frisk and play, for want of any
good experienced riding man". (Transl. by M.L. West)

It is a question worth pondering why we do not need Heraclitus' testimony to understand that the poem is not about taming of a horse but about overtures to a woman. I shall mention only the main guidelines of possible argumentation: girls are compared to horses in Alcman; Anacreon himself (frr. 346, 408 *PMG*) uses similar metaphors connecting love topic with taming or hunting (cf. the use of δαμάζω applied both to women and horses in various authors, cf. LSJ s.v. δαμάζω I and II); this kind of imagery took roots in European poetry and may be found from Horace through Thomas Wyatt, which makes it quite understandable to us. It is also important that we expect Anacreon's frivolous mind to take interest rather in courtship than in horsemanship.

But if we turn from our expectations to the picture drawn by the poet, we can see that all its details fit very well into the image of an unbroken horse and nothing is out of line in this respect, or at least not so much out of line as to make referring to a horse impossible. I am far

from thinking that the poet *is* describing a filly. But there is no denying that the horse is depicted rather realistically and can at least seem to be a horse. Characteristically, Wilamowitz, arguing against Heraclitus that Anacreon is speaking not to a proud courtesan but to a young inexperienced girl, puts stress on the vividness with which the unbroken filly is depicted. He points out that in the poems it looks exactly as it would be seen by anyone trying to approach it in reality, and exclaims not without pathos: "Nur das Leben lehrt vergangenem Leben nachfühlen" (Wilamowitz 1913, 117).

There may seem to be some dissonance in Anacreon with what we usually take a mare for: she is spoken to, her mind and mood is discussed with her as though she were a human. But speaking to animals and discussing their behaviour is not absent from Greek archaic poetry. One may add that it has been present in poetry up to our own day and perhaps is as characteristic of humans as anything. Even within the Greek archaic poetry we can observe that, while Achilles' speaking horse in the *Iliad* T (404-418) looks more like a fairy-tale character, Hector's admonition to his horses in Θ (184-197) and Antilochos' to his in Ψ (403-416) look quite true to life and both are no less eloquent than Anacreon's reproaches uttered to a filly. Neither episode in the *Iliad* calls for allegorical interpretation, unless a reader is so staunch an adept of the procedure as to enjoy it for its own sake.

Anacreon's words addressed to the filly are also quite within what is expected from talking to a horse. I do not see any incoherence or intrusion here. It is true that the filly is said to flee ruthlessly (φεύγεις νηλεῶς), a fact that did not escape Wilamowitz: "das geht nicht das Fohlen an, sondern das Mädchen" (Wilamowitz 1913, 119). But should we really think this "human" adverb is instrumental in unveiling the tenor? If a horse may be spoken to, it may definitely be called ruthless.[4] Those are phenomena of the same order, endowing the object of human attention with human features. I would rather describe this adverb not as interpreting intrusion but as a metaphor that gives life to the image and therefore supports its coherence. I agree with Gentili, who, though he understood perfectly well the allegorical character of Anacreon's poem,

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[4]   Imagine you are writing a poem addressed to your dog or cat. In the poem you may reproach the pet for running away from you and stigmatize it as ungrateful, perfidious and cruel thing. This procedure will surely make the animal look more human-like, but will not automatically make it just an allegorical representation of your human friend who betrayed you.

wrote that νηλεῶς is a "parola omerica in chiave parodica: l'enfasi epica fa sorridere applicata alla scontrosità superba della puledra" (Gentili & Perrotta 1965, 269). In other words, the metaphor here enhances the image rather than intrudes upon it from another level.

The fragment cited by Heraclitus from Archilochus (105 W.) gives fewer grounds to speak of allegory, so Heraclitus' testimony is of special importance in this case:

Γλαῦχ᾽, ὅρα· βαθὺς γὰρ ἤδη κύμασιν ταράσσεται
πόντος, ἀμφὶ δ᾽ ἄκρα Γυρέων ὀρθὸν ἵσταται νέφος,
σῆμα χειμῶνος, κιχάνει δ᾽ ἐξ ἀελπτίης φόβος.
"Glaucus, see, the waves are rising and the deep sea is disturbed,
All about the hights of Gyrae stands a towering mass of cloud –
That's a sign of storm. I fall a prey to unexpected fear".
(Transl. by M.L. West)

Only having learned from Heraclitus that Archilochus, "caught up in the perils of Thrace, compares the war to a surge of the sea", can a modern scholar indulge in fruitful speculation on how the allegory originated, as did Adrados (1955). He combined this fragment with fr. 106 W. (words addressed to a helmsman[5]) and then resorted to the same kind of argument which Page applied to Alcaeus: addressing the helmsman in the present tense on board is inconceivable in literal sense, for one cannot think of the first performance on board.

Both Heraclitus' testimony and Adrados' guess-work deserve great attention (and perhaps full trust). At the same time the fragment itself contains nothing that would be incompatible with literal understanding. Nor do other authors citing the poem (such as Theophrastus in *de sign. temp.*) mention anything in the same line. M. Silk (1974, 123) spots two

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[5]   The text is rather fragmented:

[   ]νται νῆες ἐν πόντωι θοαί
[π]ολλὸν δ᾽ ἱστίων ὑφώμεθα
λύσαν]τες ὅπλα νηός· οὐρίην δ᾽ ἔχε
[   ]ρους, ὄφρα σεο μεμνεώμεθα
[   ]ἄπισχε, μηδὲ τοῦτον ἐμβάληις
[   ]ν ἵσταται κυκώμενον
[   ]χης· ἀλλὰ σὺ προμήθεσαι
[   ]υμος

"… fast ships at sea… let's untie the sheets and slacken sail of the ship… hold our wind fair… so that you may have our thanks, and keep away… do not hurl upon us… is in turmoil… take thought (on our behalf)". In M.L. West's translation the poet addresses Zeus from the end of the third line on.

neutral terms here (ταράσσω, νέφος), but within the description of land-scape they hardly evoke war imagery or make the allegory discernible.

I think it is quite logical that Heraclitus put this example on the first place: nothing at all reveals allegory in it, so this is the best specimen of saying *other things* than those that are meant.

This is where our Alcaic fragments are placed: between two citations in which the vehicle image remains consistent and not disfigured by intrusion. Perhaps that was how Heraclitus chose his examples: an allegory must say *other things*. This is its essential feature, while self-interpretation is not. For this very reason, perhaps, he breaks off his citation from Homer after the first word of the verse: after that Zeus is called ταμίης πολέμοιο, which undermines the allegorical mode.

But Alcaeus' fragment 208a, the first citation from the poet in Heraclitus, does, in all probability, say *other things*. Heraclitus himself describes it in the following way: Τίς οὐκ ἂν εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς προτρεχούσης περὶ τὸν πόντον εἰκασίας ἀνδρῶν πλωιζομένων θαλάττιον εἶναι νομίσειε φόβον; ("Who would not conclude, from the image of the sea preceding this passage,[6] that what was meant was the fear of the sea felt by a party of sailors?") In his popular book on Alcaeus Hubert Martin Jr. takes the passage as referring to a "hasty reader" (Martin 1972, 55). But a deeper analysis he proposes is based upon the same scheme which we have already come across with in Page: the poet could not describe in the present tense but what was simultaneous with the first performance, so the storm is not real but allegorical. To avoid being labelled as hasty readers, Heraclitus' audience of the imperial period, therefore, should have shared certain modern views of the performance and pragmatics of archaic poetry, views that are sometimes not unquestionable.

But if one is not as demanding as that, it would be logical to acknowledge that the rhetorical question "τίς οὐκ ἂν… νομίσειε…" amounts to no more than "everyone would think so". And why would not everyone think that the poem describes people suffering distress at sea? What prevents anyone from doing so within the limits of the προτρέχουσα εἰκασία? Perhaps someone will be confused by the word στάσις, which Silk (1974, 123) classes again among neutral terms. I doubt whether neutral terms can make allegory discernible at all, but even that is not the point. The point is that we cannot be sure that both its meanings (direction of wind / uprising) could be realized simultaneously. But if

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6   I would rather translate "from the preceding image", implying that the image precedes the explanation.

the meaning that was realized was "direction of wind", then the vehicle image is absolutely homogenous. If, on the contrary, the word made the listener think of "uprising, rebellion, strife" (a meaning better attested for Alcaeus' time, and in particular in Alc. 130b.11 V.), then why cannot we take "the strife of winds" as a metaphor presenting winds as animate objects in order to make the picture more vivid, and not to point to the tenor of the allegory in which winds are no longer winds? Such hints can be understood only when we know about the allegory from the beginning, but since the εἰκασία is προτρέχουσα, the listener or reader has not yet been warned of the allegorical mode. This allegorical picture – if allegorical it is – seems to me to be a fully consistent picture, which is supported by a metaphor, not deconstructed by it.

The second citation from Alcaeus is introduced as just one more example of speaking in an indirect way by means of nautical imagery. For, as Heraclitus says, ὁμοίως δὲ τὰ ὑπὸ τούτου αἰνιττόμενος ἑτέρωθί που λέγει ("He gives a similar enigmatic hint of the actions of this man [Myrsilus] in another passage"):

> τόδ' αὖτε κῦμα τὼ προτέρω †νέμω†
> στείχει, παρέξει δ' ἄμμι πόνον πόλυν
> ἄντλην, ἐπεί κε νᾶος ἔμβα…

"This wave in turn comes like (*or* on top of) the previous one, and it will give us much trouble to bale out when it enters the ship's…" (Transl. by D.A. Campbell)

I assume that, like other examples in the series, this one draws quite a convincing picture: here comes a wave, the ship may take it, bailing out will cost the seamen dear… But some scholars saw what can be called decoding intrusion in the second line. Gentili, following Silk, saw it in the verb στείχει (Gentili 1984, 266; cf. Silk 1974, 144). Why? Because before Alcaeus the verb was applied to animate objects, such as warriors on the offensive in Homer, Gentili says. This is generally true, though of course στείχει could be applied not only to warriors, but to anyone who could "march", even to Helios, the Sun (λ 15-17). But let the metaphor be military, let the approaching wave be compared with marching warriors. Does that mean that the metaphor is really intrusive? As far as I can understand, intrusion would be real if the wave really meant military formation. This, however, would break the last line of defense of the allegorist party: if the poet must speak in the present tense only of the things taking place at the moment of the first performance, then singing

in front of enemies' phalanx on the offensive is as out of place as is singing on board the ship to be overflowed by a wave. But if the poet does not mean a real line of warriors, but just takes the military metaphor by association with what is usually implied by civil discords, I must confess I find such metaphor based on metonymy too vague to be convincingly intrusive and, in fact, indicative of anything at all. In my opinion, if this is a metaphor, its function is not to hint at the veiled sense by ruining the picture of a disastrous storm, but to purvey the poet's emotion more vividly: he is as scared by the wave as he would be in front of an advancing military formation. Another detail supporting the metaphor is the verb ἐμβαίνω in the next line.

I mention this point particularly because of the fact that now a second generation of classical scholars studies archaic Greek poetry with the aid of Gentili's otherwise important book *Poeta e pubblico nella Grecia antica*, in which the analysis of the ship-fragments verges on over-reading and is sometimes based upon inconclusive arguments, repeated both in the English translation and revised Italian edition of 2006. Thus, the statement that the verb τρέχω is not applicable to ships in early poetry (Gentili 1984, 266-267) has no probative value. The verbs like τρέχω predictably can be used to describe quick movement of various things (including an auger in ι 386 and a spinning top in Ξ 413, cited by Gentili himself); moreover, in the *Odyssey* διατρέχω is used twice to describe sailing (γ 176-177, ε 100). The call for running into a secure harbour in the 8th line of the same fr. 6 (ἐς δ' ἔχυρον λίμενα δρόμωμεν) is not, therefore, another case of a decoding intrusion. If the phrase ἐς δ' ἔχυρον λίμενα δρόμωμεν contained a metaphor, it must have been a very tired one.

Coming back to the citation in Heraclitus, I would doubt that both readers' first glance and hearers' first hearing of it could perceive more discernible hints at allegorical meaning than we can see in other examples cited in the 5th chapter, and I conclude that the verb στείχει did not change the situation.

To sum up, I must admit that the choice of examples in Heraclitus is perhaps not very telling. Nevertheless, the examples, including those taken from Alcaeus, seem to have been chosen so as to present coherent images which may in all cases be taken at their face value. What seems to be intrusion can be easily explained otherwise. Within this ensemble Alcaeus' images seem to be not explicit allegories unmasked by intrusive elements, but vivid and true-to-life pictures enhanced by metaphors.

Certainly, Alcaeus could produce allegory of other kinds. Thus, the allegory of the vine in fr. 119 V. was apparently so constructed that every element of it called for deciphering, and deciphering was supposed to take into consideration the complicated correlation of the elements.[7] But should the allegory of ship – if allegory it is – be deciphered in the same way? Do the contradictory waves indicate that civil, rather than foreign, wars are in question?[8] Can the loose cargo signify the danger of confiscation?[9] Can bailing out mean driving enemies out of the city?[10] Pushing the allegory thus far seems to me to be a procedure more futile than admitting that Alcaeus could, once in a while, describe past adventures in the present tense.

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[7] Alas, since we have no extant commentary on the piece written by an ancient erudite like Heraclitus, modern scholarship fails to come to an agreement about the meaning and bearing of the allegory and hesitates even choosing between political and erotic sense of the metaphors. With LENTINI 1999 I think erotic sense to be more probable.

[8] This is what was tentatively proposed by BURNETT 1983, 155.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Cf. TRUMPF 1958, 49, supported by LIBERMAN 1999, 205.

_____, 2001. La nave e gli ἑταῖροι: In margine ad Alceo frr. 6, 73, 208a V. *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testiclassici* 46: 159-170.

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Η επιλογή παραδειγμάτων στο 5ο κεφάλαιο *Ομηρικών προβλημάτων* του Ηρακλείτου και η σημασία της για την κατανόηση της ποιητικής του Αλκαίου

Sergey STEPANTSOV

Περίληψη

Η ΕΞΕΤΑΣΗ των παραδειγμάτων με τα οποία ο Ηράκλειτος (*Ομηρικά προβλήματα* 5) διευκρινίζει τον ορισμό της αλληγορίας, αποδεικνύει ότι αυτά δεν περιέχουν στοιχεία που θα παρουσίαζαν παρεμβολή (intrusion) στις ποιητικές εικόνες. Αυτές οι εικόνες μπορούν να ληφθούν στην ονομαστική τους αξία, γεγονός που είναι σύμφωνο με τον ορισμό της αλληγορίας («ὁ ἄλλο μὲν ἀγορεύων τρόπος, ἕτερα δὲ ὧν λέγει σημαίνων»). Αυτό ισχύει και για τα αποσπάσματα που αναφέρει ο Ηράκλειτος από τον Αλκαίο (6.1-3 και 208a. 1-9 Voigt). Οι εικόνες του πλοίου και της καταιγίδας μπορεί να είναι αλληγορικές, αλλά δεν περιέχουν λεπτομέρειες που θα αποκωδικοποιούσαν το περιεχόμενο της αλληγορίας, υπονομεύοντας την οργανικότητα των εικόνων.

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