

Simonides 543
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Quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus to show that if lyric poetry is written out as prose it is impossible to tell where the strophe, etc., will end. He's done a fine job showing that with this poem, but some suspect he left lines out to strengthen his argument.

Scholars have made many valiant attempts to reconstruct the meter, but there is no clear pattern. The manuscript tradition is equally muddled, and hasn't helped much. The meter appears primarily choriambic with dactylic expansions mixed with occasional cretics and single iambic dipodies. Beyond that, there is nothing to say for certain. I've modified Tyler's formatting a bit, more for sense than for meter. The charm of the poem hardly rests on the meter.

Several readings given by Campbell have been inserted. I have also consulted the article "Simonidea" by D.L. Page in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 71 (1951), 133-142.

The language is Epic with a Choral Doric coloring. The word order is quite free in places, and below I make note of surprising phrasing and Doric forms.

Acrisius, having heard a prophecy that his grandson would kill him, has just dumped his daughter Danae and her infant son Perseus into a chest and sent them to sea. This is Danae's lament.

ὄτε λάρνακι
ἐν δαιδαλέῳ
ἄνεμος τέ μιν πνέων κινηθεῖσά τε λίμνα
δείματι ἔρειπεν, οὐκ ἀδιάντοισι παρειαιῖς,

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¹λάρναξ -ακος ἢ *coffer, box, chest; ark; coffin.*

²δαιδάλεος -η -ον *cunningly or curiously built.*

³ἄνεμος ὁ *wind.* μιν enclitic 3rd person accusative pronoun, *him, her, it;* here refers to Danae herself. πνέω, πνεύσομαι, ἔπνευσα, πέπνευκα *blow; breathe; pant, gasp;* metaphorically, *live.* κινέω *set in motion;* middle, passive: *move;* here a feminine singular passive aorist participle. λίμνη ἢ *pool; marshy lake; the sea* here a Doric 1st declension nominative.

⁴δείμα -ματος τό *fear; object of fear, terror or horror.* ἐρείπω, ἐρέψω, ἤρειψα (ἤριπον) *throw down, dash down.* ἀδιάντος ὄν *unwettered.* παρεία ἢ *cheek.* Take οὐκ ἀδιάντοισι παρειαιῖς to be a dative of manner rather than means, "with tears streaming" or something similar.

- 5 ἀμφί τε Περσείῃ βάλλε φίλαν χέρα
 εἶπέν τ', "ὦ τέκος, οἶον ἔχω πόνον·
 σὺ δ' ἄωτεις γαλαθηνῶ
 δ' ἦθει κνωώσσεις ἐν ἀτερπέι
 δούρατι χαλκεογόμφῳ
- 10 νυκτιλαμπεῖ κυανέῳ τε δνόφῳ ταθείς·
 ἄλμαν δ' ὑπερθε τεᾶν κομᾶν βαθείαν
 παριόντος κύματος οὐκ ἀλέγεις,
 οὐδ' ἀνέμου φθόγγον,
 κείμενος ἐν πορφυρέῳ χλανίδι, καλὸν πρόσωπον.
- 15 εἰ δέ τοι δεινὸν τό γε δεινὸν ἦν,

⁵ἀμφι-βάλλω *embrace* with dative of person, accusative of thing embraced with. *Περσεύς* the infant Perseus. *φίλος* η *ον* *dear, beloved; friend*; of parts of the body *own*. *χείρ, χειρός* ἡ *hand; arm*; alternate stem *χερ-* is poetic. Here *φίλαν χέρα* is "her own arm."

⁶εἶπον (aorist) *say, tell, speak*. ὦ "oh," vocative particle. *τέκος* εος, *τό* *child*. οἶος η *ον* *such, such a; of what sort/kind*. *πόνος* ὁ *labor, toil, work; trouble, hardship, suffering*

⁷ἄωτέω *to sleep well*. *γαλαθηνός* η *ον* *sucking; young, tender*.

⁸ἦθος εος *τό* *abode; customary place; character, disposition, temper*. *κνωώσσω* *sleep*; here distracted to *κνωωσ-*. *ἀτερπέης* ες *joyless, melancholy; unpleasing*.

⁹δορύ δούρατος *τό* *beam, pole; plank; spear; ship*. *χαλκεογόμφος* *ον* *bronze-bolted*.

¹⁰νυκτιλαμπής ες *illuminated by night*; a striking word, the exact meaning of which isn't quite clear; nor is it clear if the word modifies "boat" or "gloom", though the bronze-bolted arc seems most likely. *κυανέος* η *ον* *dark-blue; dark, black*. *δνόφος* ὁ *darkness, dusk, gloom*. *τείνω, τενῶ, ἔτεινα, τέτακα, ἐτάθην* *stretch, extend, lay out, lengthen*; intr., *tend to, strive*; pass. *lie stretched, lie out*; here a passive participle referring to Perseus.

¹¹ἄλμη ἡ *sea-water, brine, salt spray; the sea*. ὑπερθε(ν) (*from*) *above; yet more; preposition with genitive over, above*. *τέός* ἅ ὄν *Doric your (σός)* *κόμη* ἡ *hair*. *βαθύς* εἶα ὕ *deep, thick; high; wide*. First note the -ᾶν is the choral Doric first declension genitive plural. Note also *ἄλμαν ... βαθείαν*, accusative singular.

¹²πάρ-εμι (εἶμι) *go by, pass by, go past; overtake, surpass*. *κύμα* *ματος* *τό* *wave; surge*. *ἀλέγω* *care about, attend, trouble oneself*, with gen. or acc. Take *παριόντος κύματος* as genitive absolute, "while the surge goes by." *οὐκ ἀλέγεις* goes with the accusatives *ἄλμαν ... βαθείαν* in the previous line and *φθόγγον* in the next.

¹³φθόγγος ὁ *voice, cry; sound*.

¹⁴κείμει *lie, remain; be*. *πορφύρεος* η *ον* *shining, glittering; purple, dark-red*. *χλανίς* ἴδος ἡ *a woolen garment*. *πρόσωπον* *τό* *face; likeness, look, appearance*. Only the child's face is showing from his *chlanis*. It is a bit difficult to work in the phrase *καλὸν πρόσωπον*, but is like "(you) lying, a pretty face, in your purple *chlanis*"

¹⁵τοι here, 2nd singular dative, *to/for you*. *δεινός* ἡ ὄν *venerable, fearful; terrible, unheard of; τὸ δεινόν* *danger, terror, distress*. "But if this terror were a terror to you, ..." Notice also the effect of all those dental sounds: *ei De Toi DeiNoN To ge DeiNoN e:N*

- καί κεν ἐμῶν ῥημάτων
λεπτὸν ὑπεῖχες οὐδας.
κέλομαι δ' εὔδε βρέφος,
εὐδέτω δὲ πόντος,
20 εὐδέτω δ' ἄμετρον κακόν·
μεταβουλία δέ τις φανείη,
Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἐκ σέο·
ὅττι δὲ θαρσαλέον ἔπος εὔχομαι
ἢ νόσφι δίκας,
25 σύγγνωθί μοι.”

¹⁶καί here, even. κεν = ἄν, Epic. ῥῆμα -ματος τό word; saying, phrase; that which is spoken.

¹⁷λεπτός ἢ ὄν thin, fine, delicate; narrow, small; clever. ὑπ-έχω hold, put under; lend, grant, allow. οὔδας -ατος τό (Epic) ear; ὑπέχω οὔδας means hear with the thing heard in the genitive, “lend an ear.” The sense of lines 15-17 is “if this terror were a terror to you, you would lend your little ear to my words.” That is, the child is worrying about neither the waves nor his mother’s laments.

¹⁸κέλομαι, κελήσομαι, ἐκεκλόμην command, order; beseech; permit; here followed by imperatives rather than the usual acc. + infinitive construction for indirect commands. εὔδω sleep βρέφος εος τό newborn child; colt.

¹⁹πόντος ὁ the sea. εὐδέτω is a 3rd person imperative.

²⁰ἄμετρος ὄν immense, boundless; excessive, immoderate. Here κακόν is acting as a noun, “evil.”

²¹μεταβολία ἢ change. φαίνω, φανέω, ἔφηνα, πέφηνα, πέφασμαι, ἐφάνην transitive, make to appear, display; make known; intransitive, appear, be seen, be manifested; φανείη is a 3rd person singular (intransitive) aorist passive optative. Optative of wish: “let some change appear.”

²²πάτερ the vocative of πατήρ “father.” σέο = σοῦ Epic 2nd singular genitive of σύ, you.

²³ὅττι whatever; goes with ἔπος. θαρσαλέος ἢ ὄν bold, daring; insolent, presumptuous. ἔπος ἔπος τό word, utterance, speech. εὔχομαι boast, assert; pray, wish; vow.

²⁴ἢ, ἠέ or νόσφι(ν) adverb, (far) away; apart, aloof, by oneself; preposition with gen. far from, apart from. δίκη ἢ custom, usage; right, justice; judgement; plea, claim; Here δίκας is Doric, genitive singular.

²⁵συγ-γινώσκω concur, agree + dative; concede, yield; excuse, pardon, forgive. The sense will be easier if you think of line 25 coming at the beginning of line 23, “forgive me whatever bold word I say, or word far from justice.”