

Alcaeus: Fragments 335 and 338

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Both of these small fragments come to us from quotes in Athanaeus. Both are in the Alcaic stanza:

υ-υ:~υ:~υ-υ-
 υ-υ:~υ:~υ-υ-
 υ-υ:~υ-υ-υ:
 ~υ-υ-υ-υ-

The stanza is usually printed this way, with four lines, but it's best to consider 3–4 one long line.

Like Sappho, Alcaeus writes in the **Lesbian Aeolic** dialect. I'll identify the forms in the notes.

335

οὐ χρῆ κάκοισι θῦμον ἐπιτρέπην,
 προκόψομεν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀσάμενοι,
 ᾧ Βύκχι, φαρμάκων δ' ἄριστον
 4 οἶνον ἐνεικαμένοις μεθύσθην.

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¹οὐ χρῆ *one must not*. κάκος ἢ ὄν *bad*, here substantive “trouble(s), woe(s);” Aeol. dat.pl. θῦμός ὁ *spirit, soul, heart, courage*. ἐπι-τρέπω *allow; entrust something (acc.) to (dat.)*; Aeol. pres. inf., subject unexpressed.

²προ-κόπτω, -κόψω *progress, advance forward*. οὐδὲν here adverbial, “not at all.” ἀσάομαι *be disgusted, vexed*, pres.part., (ἀσάμενοι ἄσα).

³Βύκχισ *Bycchis*, named in a few other poems. φάρμάκον *τό drug; medicine, remedy, cure; poison, potion*. ἄριστος *η on best*. “it is the best of remedies to...”

⁴οἶνος ὁ *wine*. φέρω, οἶσω, ἦνεκα *carry, bring, bear; middle win, carry of (to one's home), fetch*; Aeol. aor.mid.part. acc.pl.m., agreeing with the implied subject — Aeol. ἄμμε (= ἡμᾶς) — of the following verb. μεθύσκω, μεθύσω, ἐμέθυσα, aor.pass. ἐμεθύσθην *make drunk*, pass. *drink freely, drink until drunk*; Aeol. aor.pass.inf.

338

ὔει μὲν ὁ Ζεὺς, ἐκ δ' ὀράνω μέγας
χειμῶν, πεπάγαισιν δ' ὑδάτων ῥοαί

< ἔνθεν >

4 < >

κάββαλλε τὸν χειμῶν', ἐπὶ μὲν τίθεις
πῦρ, ἐν δὲ κέρναις οἶνον ἀφειδέως
μέλιχρον, αὐτὰρ ἀμφὶ κόρσα

8 μόλθακον ἀμφι[βάλων] γνόφαλλον

¹ὔω (*v*) to rain. ὁ Aeol. = ὁ. Ζεὺς Zeus, in his role as god of weather. οὐρανός ὁ heaven, sky; Aeol. gen.sg. μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα large; great.

²χειμῶν ὄνος ὁ winter storm, winter. πήγνυμι, πήξω, ἔπηξα, πέπηγα fasten, build; of liquid to freeze; πεπάγαισιν = πεπήγασι 3pl.perf.act. ὕδωρ ὕδατος τό water. ῥοή ἡ stream, river. Those commentators who worry about the occurrence of frozen streams and rain at the same time have evidently never experienced winters in the midwestern or northeastern United States.

⁵κατα-βάλλω throw down; reject, defy; 2sg.pres. imper., with assimilation κατ-βα- > καβ-βα-. After this imperative, the remaining clauses contain participles elaborating how to defy the storm. χειμῶν' = χείμωννα, acc.sg. ἐπὶ up here adverbial, or perhaps with an implied hearth. τίθημι put; pres.act.part. nom.sg.m.

⁶πῦρ πυρός τό fire. ἐν often adverbial in ἐν δέ combination, and within, but and moreover; further is also possible. κέρνημι = κερνάω mix, esp. of mixing water and wine; pres.part.act. nom.sg.m. οἶνος ὁ wine. ἀφειδέως (from ἀφειδής ἑς) unsparingly, lavishly.

⁷μέλιχρός ἄ ὄν honey-sweet, sweetened. αὐτὰρ moreover, further, but. κόρση ἡ temple, side of the head; head.

⁸μόλθακον = μαλθακός ἡ ὄν soft, mild; weak. ἀμφι-βάλλω throw around, of clothing put on. The verb here missing, with both -βάλων and -τίθεις suggested fixes. γνόφαλλον = κνέφαλλον τό pillow, cushion.