

AN ANCIENT GREEK LAMENT FORM

CHARLES H. COSGROVE

*Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary**

Abstract: An unusual ancient Greek lament form, hitherto overlooked by students of the subject, displays the following syntax: parallel sentences with verb in initial position (Vi) expressing the loss, followed by the grammatical subject (S). Sometimes the same verb was used in each of the parallel lines. ViS parallelism is a subliterary syntax reflecting a very old style. A number of Greek authors adopted this syntax to represent or allusively echo the form. Examples, although relatively scarce, are spread through a diverse range of ancient literature spanning at least six centuries, from the second century BC to the fourth century AD, with earlier echoes as far back as Homer.

Keywords: ancient Greek lament, ritual lament form, syntax of Greek lament, parallelism in Greek lament, verb-initial in ancient Greek lament

Among the epigrams of Antipater of Sidon is the following representation of a mother's lament, in which three striking parallel formulations appear:

Τοῦτό τοι, Ἀρτεμίδωρε, τεῶ ἐπὶ σάματι μάτηρ
ἴαχε δωδεκέτη σὸν γοόωσα μόρον·
Ὕλετ' ἐμᾶς ὠδίνος ὁ πᾶς πόνος †εἰς πόνον, εἰς πῦρ†,
ὄλεθ' ὁ παμμέλεος γειναμένου κάματος,
ὄλετ' ἀπευθῆς μοι τέρψις σέθεν · ἐς γὰρ ἄκαμπτον,
ἐς τὸν ἀνόστητον χῶρον ἔβης ἐνέρων,
οὐδ' ἐς ἐφηβείην ἦλθες, τέκος, ἀντὶ δὲ σεῖο
στάλα καὶ κωφὰ λείπεται ἄμμι κόνις.

AP 7.467¹

This a mother cries over your tomb, Artemidorus,
lamenting your death at the age of twelve:
'Lost is the whole of my labour pains – to ash, to fire!
Lost is the totally useless² effort of a father!
Lost is my vanished³ delight in you! For you departed to the
place of no return, to the land of those below from which no one comes back.
You did not reach young manhood, my child; and, instead of you,
a block of stone is left to us, and silent dust.'

The three parallel declarations of grief have the same syntax: verb (ὄλετο) in initial position expressing loss followed immediately by the grammatical subject, a noun phrase designating what has been lost. For convenience, this can be termed Verb-initial – Subject, or ViS, parallelism.⁴

* charles.cosgrove@garrett.edu. I wish to thank Leanna Boycheko, Anna Silvas, Gwendolyn Compton-Engle, Douglas Cairns and two anonymous reviewers for their assistance.

¹ Gow and Page (1965) 29; but following *API* for εἰς πόνον, εἰς πῦρ in line 3 and ἀπευθῆς μοι in line 5; following *P in ras.* for παμμέλεος in line 4 (instead of the emendation ὁ πᾶς μέλεος). On these choices, see White (1983).

² 'Totally useless' is Heather White's translation of παμμέλεος: White (1983) 124.

³ White (1983) 125 (arguing that ἀπευθῆς means 'disappeared without a trace'); perhaps 'unknown', meaning no longer known to the mother.

⁴ The ViS form, further documented below, is an argument against taking εἰς πῦρ in line 3 with the sentence in line 4.

Antipater's poem also exhibits features that Margaret Alexiou, in a classic study, identifies as common to ancient Greek lament: second-person address to the deceased; statements of what the deceased will never experience/achieve; and first-person declarations of what the mourner suffers as a consequence of the death.⁵

Another epigram by Antipater, this one an epitaph for the poet Anacreon, also employs ViS parallelism:

Εὔδεις ἐν φθιμένοισιν, Ἀνάκρεον, ἐσθλὰ πονήσας,
 εὔδει δ' ἡ γλυκερὴ νυκτιάλως κιθάρῃ,
 εὔδει καὶ Σμέρδις, τὸ Πόθων ἔαρ, ᾗ σὺ μελίσδων
 †βάρβιτ' ἀνεκρούου† νέκταρ ἐναρμόνιον ...
 AP 7.29⁶

(You) sleep among the dead, Anacreon, having done your work well.
 Sleeps, too, the sweet night-talking cithara.
 Sleeps as well Smerdis, the springtime of the Loves, for whom you
 used to strike up the barbiton(s), making music like melodious nectar ...

This is not a lament, but it borrows features of lament style: second-person address and references to what the deceased will no longer do. Here and in some of the translations to follow, I sacrifice graceful English and literal rendering to represent where Greek verbs are in first position followed by subjects. The second-person address in the first line of this epigram required a variation of the form: vocative (Ἀνάκρεον) referring to the subject, instead of an express subject. One can think of the prepositional phrase in this line as part of the verbal idea.

The preceding two examples make it easier to spot other instances. An anonymous epigram in the Palatine Anthology announces itself as a lament with an opening φεῦ, φεῦ, and it echoes dirge-like ViS parallelism with a pair of asyndetic clauses:

Φεῦ φεῦ, τὴν δεκάτην Ἑλικωνίδα, τὴν λυραοιδὸν
 Ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης ἦδε κέκευθε κόνις.
 ὤλετο φορμίγγων τερετίσματα, λήξαν ἀοιδαί,
 ὥσπερ Ἰωάννη πάντα συνολλύμενα ...
 AP 7.612⁷

Alas, alas, the tenth Muse, the lyric singer
 of Rome and Alexandria, this dust has covered.
 Lost are the twitterings of the lyres, gone silent are the songs,
 as if perishing altogether with Joanna ...

The style is also embedded in Electra's lament for Orestes in Sophocles' *Electra*:

νῦν δ' ἐκλέλοιπε ταῦτ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ
 θανόντα σὺν σοί. πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας,
 θύελλ' ὄπως, βέβηκας. οἷχεται πατήρ·
 τέθνηκ' ἐγὼ σοί· φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἶ θανών·

⁵ Alexiou (2002) 33, 165–84 and *passim* (describing the recurring features of lament as part of a common tradition spanning many centuries). An overview of ancient Greek lament, with analysis of women's lament in tragedy, is also given in Holst-Warhaft (1992) 82–137; see further Dué (2006). Studies of ancient Mediterranean

lament more broadly include the essays in Suter (2008a) and, with a focus on lament for fallen cities, those in Bachvarova et al. (2016).

⁶ Gow and Page (1965) 16.

⁷ Beckby (1965) 2:358.

γελῶσι δ' ἐχθροί· μαίνεται δ' ὑφ' ἠδονῆς
 μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἧς ἐμοὶ σὺ πολλάκις
 φήμας λάθρα προὔπεμπες ὡς φανούμενος
 τιμωρὸς αὐτός.

Electra 1149–1156⁸

But now these things have vanished in a single day,
 having died with you. Snatching up everything
 like a whirlwind, you have gone away. Gone is father;
 dead am I to you; gone are you yourself in death.
 Laughing are our enemies; going mad with delight is
 our unmotherly mother, about whom you often
 sent messages to me in secret that you would appear
 yourself as avenger.

Second-person address to the deceased suggests lament,⁹ and some of the syntax shows ViS patterns and parallelism.

So does the following set of sentential declarations by Oedipus to Theseus in *Oedipus at Colonus*: φθίνει μὲν ἰσχύς γῆς, φθίνει δὲ σώματος / θνήσκει δὲ πίστις, βλαστάνει δ' ἀπιστία ('Perishes the strength of the earth; perishes (the strength of) the body. / Dies trust; born is distrust').¹⁰ The echo of ViS lament style imparts richer resonance to these platitudes.¹¹

ViS parallelism also shows up in a lament from a very different cultural-linguistic environment. The Hellenistic-Jewish *Testament of Job*, composed sometime near the beginning of the Common Era, depicts a public lament for its subject in a closing funeral scene. Job's brother, seven sons and various needy people helped by his generosity grieve for his loss in the following words, according to the Paris manuscript (P):

Οὐαὶ ἡμῖν [σήμερον, διπλῶς τὸ οὐαὶ]
 ὅτι σήμερον
 ἦρται ἡ δύναμις τῶν ἀδυνάτων,
 ἦρται τὸ φῶς τῶν τυφλῶν,
 ἦρται ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὀρφανῶν,
 ἦρται ὁ τῶν ξένων ξενοδόχος,
 ἦρται ἡ ἐνδυσίς τῶν χηρῶν.

Τίς λοιπὸν οὐ κλαύσει ἐπὶ
 τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦ θεοῦ;

Testament of Job 53.2–4¹²

Woe to us [today, a double woe],
 for today:
 Taken is the power of the powerless!
 Taken is the light of the blind!

⁸ Finglass (2007) 72.

⁹ The reference to gloating enemies recalls the revenge theme that is occasionally found in ancient laments and lament-like passages. See Alexiou (2002) 22, 24 (citing Aesch. *Cho.* 327–31), 179 with n.48 (citing further evidence from the classical dramatists).

¹⁰ *OC* 610–11 in Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990) 383.

¹¹ Helma Dik draws attention to this passage as an example of an 'all-new' sentence, whose verb-initial constructions can be analysed according to Functional Grammar: Dik (2007) 54–59. Applying her interpretation

of classical word-order to the ViS lament style suggests that the verb is the Topic, and the subject as Focus makes the sentence's most important statement about the Topic. The fact that in some instances of ViS parallelism the same verb is repeated is best explained as a function of ritual lament's expressive interest in stressing the inalterability of the loss.

¹² Brock (1967) 59 (brackets added). This is essentially the text of P (Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, grec 2658). Brock (1967) gives variants for other witnesses. The Kraft (1974) edition is an S (Messina San Salvatore 29) and V (Vaticanus gre. 1238) text.

Taken is the father of the orphans!
 Taken is the host of strangers!
 Taken is the clothing of widows!
 Who then will not weep over
 the man of God?

An opening woe introduces a series of five exclamations. In the first line, there is a minor variation of the ViS form with an introductory *ὅτι σήμερον* in first position.¹³ All five lines use the same verb, and the subject is always a noun phrase that extols the character of the deceased. The SV text has a less repetitive form and some variations of wording. After the introduction, it reads as follows:

ἦρται ἡ δύναμις τῶν ἀδυνάτων, τὸ φῶς τῶν τυφλῶν, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὀρφανῶν·
 ἦρται ὁ < τῶν > ξένων ξενοδόχος, τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἡ ὁδός·
 ἦρται τῶν γυμνῶν ἡ ἔνδυσις, τῶν χηρῶν ὁ ὑπερασπίστης.¹⁴

Taken is the power of the powerless, the light of the blind, the father of orphans.
 Taken is the host of strangers, the way of the powerless.
 Taken is the clothing of the naked, the protector of widows.

A fourth-century Coptic version – much older than P and SV, and closer to P than to SV but probably representing an independent textual tradition – shows four lines of ViS with repetition of the same verb.¹⁵

Another example of the style, this one from the late fourth century, turns up in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*:

Ἐσβέσθη τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν ὁ λύχνος·
 ἀπῆρθη τὸ φῶς τῆς τῶν ψυχῶν ὁδηγίας·
 διελύθη τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν ἡ ἀσφάλεια·
 ἦρθη ἡ σφραγίς τῆς ἀφθαρσίας·
 διεσπάσθη ὁ σύνδεσμος τῆς ὁμοφροσύνης·
 συνετρίβη τὸ στήριγμα τῶν ἀτονούντων·
 ἀφηρέθη ἡ θεραπεία τῶν ἀσθενούντων.
 Ἐπὶ σοῦ ἡμῖν καὶ ἡ νύξ ἀντὶ ἡμέρας ἦν
 καθαρᾶ ζωῆ φωτιζομένη·
 νῦν δὲ καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα πρὸς ζόφον
 μεταστραφῆσεται.

Life of Macrina 26.23–29¹⁶

Extinguished is the lamp of our eyes!
 Carried off is (our) souls' light of guidance!
 Dissolved is the security of our life!
 Taken is the seal of immortality!
 Broken is the bond of concord!
 Crushed is the support of the weary!
 Taken off is the care of weak!
 When you were with us, even night was like day,
 by (your) pure life illumined.
 And now even day will be turned into gloom.

¹³ The words in brackets are found only in P, S and V, supported by Slav, have a single *σήμερον*: see Kraft (1974) 84; also the collation of V in Mai (1833) 191.

¹⁴ Kraft (1974) 84.

¹⁵ Schenke and Schenke Robinson (2009) 188.

¹⁶ Maraval (1971) 230, 232.

The second word of this passage is an introductory λέγουσαι (sc. παρθένοι), which I have omitted because it is not part of the form. The subject of the lament is a real historical person, Gregory's sister Macrina, and the lament is embedded in an account of her death and funeral. Gregory was present at the death scene, and he describes how the women of Macrina's monastic community lamented 'in dirges' (θρήνοις). Here ViS parallelism is sustained for seven lines, with variation of the verb; and the women laud the deceased, as in the lament for Job.

Another example, also from Gregory of Nyssa, appears in a funeral address occasioned by another actual death, the premature demise of Pulcheria, daughter of Emperor Theodosius and the Empress Flacilla:

ὅταν ... καλυφθῆ δὲ τοῖς βλεφάροις ἢ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἀκτίς, μεταπέση δὲ εἰς ὠχρότητα τῆς παρειᾶς τὸ ἐρύθημα, κρατηθῆ δὲ τῆ σιωπῇ τὸ στόμα, μελαίνηται δὲ τὸ ἐπὶ τοῦ χεῖλους ἄνθος.

*Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam*¹⁷

When ... covered by the eyelids is the beam of the eyes; sunk in paleness is the flush of the cheek; held in silence is the mouth; blackened is the bloom upon the lip.

Here the style is varied by a prepositional phrase modifying the verb in each clause. The speech is an example of what Menander Rhetor terms παραμυθητικὸς λόγος, 'consolatory oration', one of three types of grave-side address.¹⁸ According to Menander, the body of the consolatory address has a lament section that mixes praise and lament, followed by the consolation proper. It is not clear that the rules he sets forth represent actual practice at every point, but the types have *topoi* in common. In any case, Gregory's consolation lacks a lament section. Yet, as Ulrike Gantz points out, it features a brief reference to lament – the lines just quoted – at the beginning of the consolation (using the *topos*, 'the state of the body').¹⁹ Gregory presents this lament as typical of the non-Christian, 'one of the small-souled' folk (a contrasting allusion to Aristotle's 'great-souled man') who cannot understand or obey Paul's words, 'Do not grieve over those who have fallen asleep' (2 Thess. 4.13).²⁰ The lines resemble the stock example given by Menander for this *topos*,²¹ but, unlike Menander, Gregory formulates with a variant of ViS parallelism.

Lines from Gregory's funeral oration for Empress Flacilla also have a flavour of ViS parallelism, but the passage is longer and shows greater variety overall:

- 1 ἐκεῖ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ λύχνος,
- 2 ἐκεῖ κατεσβέσθη τὸ φέγγος,
- 3 ἐκεῖ αἱ ἀκτῖνες τῶν ἀρετῶν ἡμαυρώθησαν.
- 4 οἴχεται τῆς βασιλείας τὸ ἐγκαλλώπισμα,
τὸ τῆς δικαιοσύνης πηδάλιον,
ἢ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας εἰκῶν,
μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον.
- 5 ἀφηρέθη τῆς φιλανδρίας ὁ τύπος,
τὸ ἀγνὸν τῆς σωφροσύνης ἀνάθημα,

¹⁷ Spira (1967a) 464, lines 21–26.

¹⁸ Men. Rhet. 2.413.5–414.30 (consolatory address), 2.418.5–422.4 (funeral oration), 2.434.10–437.4 (monody).

¹⁹ Gantz (1999) 158. Menander assigns this *topos* (τὸ τοῦ σώματος εἶδος) to the funeral monody (2.436.15–21), but Gregory has it in his consolatory oration, illustrating that Menander's types may be more prescriptive than descriptive. In the *topos* of the body, one draws contrasts between the once lovely and healthy appear-

ance of the deceased's physical body and its present collapsed state in death. Although the rhetoric of the *topos* may entail parallelism, one typically sees naming of a body part in first position, for example in Aelius Aristides' funeral oration for Eteoneus (*Or.* 31.12 in Keil (1898) 2.214).

²⁰ *Orat. consol. in Pulch.* in Spira (1967a) 464, lines 12–19; cf. Gantz (1999) 158.

²¹ Men. Rhet. 2.436.15–21. Menander assigns this *topos* to the monody.

- ἡ εὐπρόσιτος σεμνότης,
 ἡ ἀκαταφρόνητος ἡμερότης,
 ἡ ὑψηλὴ ταπεινοφροσύνη,
 ἡ πεπαρησιασμένη αἰδώς,
 ἡ σύμμικτος τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄρμονία.
 6 οἴχεται ὁ τῆς πίστεως ζῆλος,
 ὁ τῆς ἐκκλησίας στῦλος,
 ὁ τῶν θυσιαστηρίων κόσμος,
 ὁ τῶν πενομένων πλοῦτος,
 ἡ πολυαρκῆς δεξιά,
 ὁ κοινὸς τῶν καταπονουμένων λιμήν.
 πενθείτω ἡ παρθενία, θρηγείτω ἡ χηρεία,
 7 ὀδυρέσθω ἡ ὄρφανία. γνώτωσαν τί
 εἶχον ὅτε οὐκ ἔχουσιν.

*Oratio funebris in Flacillam*²²

- 1 Here, darkened is the lamp.
 2 Here, extinguished is the light.
 3 Here, the rays of the virtues are dimmed.
 4 Gone is the ornament of kingship,
 the rudder of righteousness,
 the icon of philanthropy,
 or rather, the archetype itself.
 5 Taken is the model of wifely love,
 the pure offering of modesty,
 the approachable dignity,
 the gentleness not to be despised,
 the exalted humility,
 the confident modesty,
 the blended harmony of good things.
 6 Taken is the zeal of faith,
 the pillar of the church,
 the adornment of altars,
 the wealth of the poor,
 the much-helpful right hand,
 the common harbour of the distressed.
 Mourn, O virginhood! Lament, O widowhood!
 7 Groan, orphanhood! Know what
 you had now that you no longer have it.

Unlike the lament in the funeral sermon for Pulcheria, these lines are not an illustration of grief born of pagan ignorance and frailty. Gregory speaks sympathetically on behalf of the mourning populace (composed of both Christians and non-Christians but treated rhetorically essentially as Christians). The passage contains unmistakable echoes of the lament style we have observed elsewhere, but the parallel syntax in the sentences numbered 4–6 breaks the monotony of ViS parallelism by stringing noun phrases in apposition to subjects.

I have two last examples. In *Iliad* 9, Achilles, addressing Odysseus, who wants him to return to the fighting, ponders his options, the two alternative ways his mother has told him he might die:

²² Spira (1967b) 480, lines 13–25.

εἰ μὲν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχουμαι,
 ὄλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται·
 εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ' ᾄκωμαι φύλην† ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
 ὄλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν
 [ἔσσεται ...]

Iliad 9.412–16²³

If I remain here and wage war on the city of the Trojans,
 lost is my homecoming, but undying my fame shall be;
 yet if I should return home to my dear fatherland,
 lost is my noble fame, but long my life [will be ...]

The chiasmic syntax in lines 413 and 415 explains why a verb is placed in first position but not why ὄλετο is that verb in both instances. Positing an allusion to ViS lament style accounts for these features. Echoes of self-lament²⁴ intensify the contrast in each pair of alternatives.

Many centuries later, in his epic poem *Posthomerica*, Quintus of Smyrna (perhaps third century AD) has Agamemnon address a long speech to the fallen Achilles, whose death is not narrated in the *Iliad* but is adumbrated multiple times, the just-cited lines in *Iliad* 9.412–16 being one such foreshadowing. At one point in this speech to Achilles, Agamemnon wails a lament, which Quintus formulates in words that seem to be inspired by *Iliad* 9.412–16:

ᾄμωξεν δ' ὀδύνησι μέγ' αἰθόμενος κέαρ ἔνδον·
 ὦλεο, Πηλεΐδη, Δαναῶν μέγα φέρτατε πάντων,
 ὦλεο, καὶ στρατὸν εὐρὺν ἀνερκέα θῆκας Ἀχαιῶν·
Posthomerica 3.492–94²⁵

He wailed, burning greatly with pain in heart,
 'Lost are you, son of Peleus, best of all Danaans,
 Lost are you, and you have left the whole Achaean army defenceless.'

The verb ᾄμωξεν evokes lament, as does the second-person address to the deceased, which in the first 'lost' statement²⁶ means that a vocative stands in place of the subject (*cf.* the lament for Anacreon in the Antipater epigram). The following parallel line has only the verb. Yet the clear resemblance to other examples of ViS parallelism suggests an echo of the style. One can imagine that Quintus recalled the ὄλετο lines from *Iliad* 9.412–16, found it appropriate to have Agamemnon lament Achilles using Achilles' own verb of self-lament, and, influenced by his familiarity with ViS lament style, constructed parallel clauses.

A ritual style?

Was ViS parallelism a ritual lament style? Alexiou and other students of ancient Greek lament do not mention this pattern. Perhaps they overlooked it because it is uncommon and so widely dispersed.

²³ West (1998) 1.271. I wish to thank Gwendolyn Compton-Engle for this example.

²⁴ The self-lament was well established in the ancient Greek tradition, for example Antigone in Soph. *Ant.* 858–71, 876–82; Cassandra in Aesch. *Ag.* 1256–94; Ajax in Soph. *Aj.* 317–27 (Tecmessa describing his lamenting), 330; Oedipus in Soph. *OC* 1670–76. On men's laments, see Suter (2008b).

²⁵ Vian (1963) 1.114–115. I have this example from White (1983) 123.

²⁶ Ordinarily when the subject of the passive form of ἄλλυμι is a human being, one renders the verb with forms of 'die' or 'perish', but here I translate 'lost are you' to reinforce the parallel with the other laments that use ἄλλυμι in the passive.

All the examples surveyed here – like the rest of the surviving Greek laments of antiquity – appear in polished poetry and literature of one kind or another, and almost all of it is fiction. Epic, drama, epigram, novel, satire and apocryphal history predominate over nonfictional biography and funeral oration. Even in the latter cases, where we know that a real death and a real lamenter occasioned the lament (all of them happen to be in Gregory of Nyssa), we do not hear the lamenter’s own voice but only an author telling us what the lamenter said. Unless there are compelling indicators to the contrary, we can assume that these laments, along with ‘quotations’ of dirges in other genres, are authorial compositions – *prosopopoeiae*. Moreover, since they serve purposes such as plot summary, narrative drama or an interest in eloquence, it cannot be taken for granted that the authors also aimed at verisimilitude, which is possible but difficult to prove.²⁷

In the Antipater examples and those from the *Testament of Job* and Quintus of Smyrna, the same verb is repeated line after line in simple statements. This lack of variation is surprising from a stylistic point of view and is perhaps easiest to explain if these authors aimed to imitate a subliterate style. Repetition is common in folk diction, and one can imagine that folk lament sometimes assumed a repetitive ViS form: short statements of loss with the same verb at the beginning of each line.

ViS parallelism also occurs in other genres without any lament or lament-like aspect. An example is the following fragment from Alcman:

εὔδουσι δ’ ὄρεων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες
 πρώονές τε καὶ χαράδραι
 φῦλά τ’ ἔρπέτ’ ὅσα τρέφει μέλαινα γαῖα
 θῆρες τ’ ὄρεσκώιοι καὶ γένος μέλισσᾶν
 καὶ κνώδαλ’ ἐν βένθεσσι πορφυρέας ἄλός·
 εὔδουσι δ’ οἰωνῶν φῦλα τανυπτερύγων ...²⁸

(They) sleep, the mountain-peaks and valleys
 the headlands and mountain streams,
 the creeping tribes and whatever the black earth produces,
 the mountain beasts and the race of bees,
 and the wild creatures in the depths of the surging brine.
 (They) sleep, the tribes of long-winged birds ...

This passage may have continued with further ViS parallelism using the same verb (εὔδουσι) or other verbs. David Campbell points out that the lines probably prepare for an eventual negation (for example ‘But X does not sleep’) or mention of a god’s epiphany.²⁹ Since there is no reason to imagine that Alcman echoes lament style here, ViS parallelism must be a pattern that lament shared with other genres.

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²⁷ It is indeed a scholarly commonplace that ancient biographers embellish, invent and, in the case of quotation, fashion speeches-in-character, sometimes with the sole purpose of showing off their own rhetorical or literary skill (see Lucian *Hist.* 58).

²⁸ Alcman no. 89 in Page (1962) 62. I owe this example to Douglas Cairns, who points out an echo of it in Simonides 543.21–22 in Page (1962) 282, a passage conventionally referred to as ‘Danae’s lament’.

²⁹ Campbell (1988) 455.

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