

Archaic oral epos and ritual manufacture of musical instruments

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(as delivered at “The Ties that Bind and Build: Networks of Production in the Ancient Mediterranean” USC Graduate Student Conference, 2/25/2006)

[Abstract Submitted: That the tortoiseshell *lyra* was a culturally important instrument in archaic Greece is apparent from sources like pottery paintings, but we actually know very little about its manufacture. Here as elsewhere our texts are reticent on details about such mundane industries. But the coordination of poetic texts (*Odyssey*, *H.h. to Hermes*, *Theognidea*, and others) with some clues from archaeology allows one to hypothesize about a possible context for its production. I propose that the ritual context of male rites of passage, which included musical pedagogy, is important to understanding both the symbolic meaning and the production process for the tortoiseshell *lyra*. It is probable that in at least some times and places (e.g., the archaic Peloponnese) young boys hunted their own turtles, built themselves a *lyra*, learned to play and sing to it, before depositing these “playthings” as an offering to Apollo in a ritual of ephebic initiation.

The model helps to make sense of many features of the treatment of music and musical instruments in archaic epos, the oral medium in which cultural repertoires of production were integrated and infused with religious import and normative significance. This instance of ritual production also serves as an example of a general pattern of industry and production at least in the archaic period (though no doubt into the classical period also): small-scale local production of cultural objects being integrated into the symbolic system in ways that look very foreign and peculiar through the eyes of the modern industrialized world.]

The tortoiseshell *lyra*, or *chelys*, was among the predominant musical instruments in archaic and classical Greece. Its high cultural prestige is quite evident from texts like the *Homeric hymn to Hermes*, Sophocles’ fragmentary satyr play *Ichneutae*, as well as discussions in Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws*. But, as may be expected, the literary and historical texts from the time do not generally dwell upon all the nitty-gritty details of social and economic history that we, in an age with different agendas and interests, have come to want. Fine details of manufacture and production of musical instruments like the *lyra* are included in this documentary silence. In fact, the greatest textual evidence we have of the mundane details of how living turtles were transformed through craft into chordophone instruments comes not from any prose author but from a crucial text of

archaic epos, the *Homeric hymn to Hermes*, which in lines 41-51 describes how Hermes cobbled together the first *chelys* out of a tortoiseshell, some reed stocks and oxhide, a string-frame (probably of wood or horn) and some sheep-gut strings. These ten lines ([1C on the handout](#)), combined with plentiful vase-paintings of tortoiseshell lyres and a few lucky archaeological finds, have provided enough evidence for more or less faithful reproductions of the Greek originals (as Helen Roberts [1981] did in the early '80s).

But product is one thing, process another, and what is still unknown, and more interesting—at least to modern historians and for the key questions raised by conferences like this one—is the larger social context of production for the tortoiseshell lyre, a context about which we will want to ask, in particular: what was the symbolic complex of meanings ascribed to the instrument that animated and motivated its production and use? If we can recover and concentrate on the symbolic functions of the lyre, then this should contribute to a reconstruction of its production context. In this paper I hypothesize a scenario of production, namely, young boys themselves made lyres as a lesson in practical *technē* in the longer socialization process of coming of age. And while this suggestion still is wanting archaeological evidence (either it does not exist or I haven't lit upon it yet), I think the model may help interpret such evidence if and when it does come to light.

One thing is clear about the *chelys* from the literary and vase-painting evidence alone, a point that's been noted by Greek musicologists for decades but one that serves as a convenient starting point for delving deeper into the instrument's cultural significance: the lyre was primarily conceived of and used as a paideutic instrument, a tool for teaching and training the young (especially young boys) in traditional songs and song-craft. Even

in the 4th century the highly literate Plato judged *mousikē* to be the finest basis for educating the soul, and the lyre, with its wooden-framed bigger brother the kithara, was the sole instrument accepted into the purged and moderate city developed in the *Republic*.

Plato, *paideia*'s classic theorist, was hardly innovating in this respect; his commitment to musical practice as the basis of education is radically traditional. (So for instance, when proposing the education of music and gymnastic Socrates asks, is there a “better one than that discovered over a great expanse of time” *Rep.* 376e). Archaic and classical vase-paintings confirm the centrality of the lyre in musical training [first example, Louvre MNE 961]. The importance of this musical training is really only appreciated when we bear in mind its onus of cultural transmission. Traditional knowledge, thought, wisdom, morality and humor were all expressed and conveyed in the songs learned by the young; knowledge of the gods, demigods and heroes; ethical norms and models; traditional wit and wordplay; norms of sex, gender and ethnic identity; knowledge of natural history and of traditional handicrafts; in short, much of the sum of traditional knowledge, accumulated over centuries and even millennia, was carefully imparted to the minds and bodies of the young through music and song.

This pedagogical social context is, again, crucial to reconstructing what the industry of lyre production may have looked like, I propose. And I think the details of this educational context, especially the cultural meanings imputed to the lyre, are ultimately suggestive of the lyre's mode of production. First of all, I should say that I don't suppose that the making of lyres was a uniform industry either across Greece or diachronically. On the contrary, just as social practices, cult configurations, and religious ideas varied widely among the scattered and often isolated villages and poleis of archaic

Greece, so too it is unlikely that any single nexus of social practices involving the lyre will describe the reality on the ground over the whole of the archaic or classical world. To describe the model I propose, pieced together from various hints in laconic texts, as representing any “traditional practices” only suggests that they were old and inherited patterns of action. I think the pattern, if it has any basis in reality at all, very likely did hold, *mutatis mutandis*, in many parts of Greece. That it underwent change, and more quickly in some places than in others, is obvious, especially as literacy spread and transformed the content and privileged media for education, and as urbanization gave rise to greater wealth stratification and the development of more intensive craft specialization and the commodification of cultural objects.

So it is, of course, feasible that artisans built and supplied lyres as commodities for sale, but this is most likely to have been the case in developed urban contexts (like 5th-4th cent. Athens), and is far less likely I think, in the archaic period and in more rural areas.

And from all available evidence, the lyre was not primarily a commodity, that is, a product made for purposes of commercial exchange. Its use-value was paideutic and aesthetic; its symbolic value was not principally economic, but ritual, religious and social. It was an operator in the larger process of male initiation into manhood, which entailed ritualized trials and passages out of a boyhood state into the state of young adult male citizen-warrior. Vase paintings provide us well-known evidence for the lyre as a paideutic instrument [show examples]. Not only do we get glimpses of training sessions where a boy or young man faces an adult male learning to play the lyre; we also have scenes of boys or young men apparently sitting to play solo [like Wurzburg L 481]. In the

Laws (810; 812-13) Plato prescribes training on the lyre for children between 13-16 years old (after spending the previous three years on writing and reading); in times and places before writing had penetrated local *paideia* it is reasonable to suspect that cultivation of lyre-playing may have begun earlier than 13. Polybius, describing the Arcadian musical culture as late as the second century, says that “sons from infancy are taught to sing the traditional tunes of hymns and paeans,” and that even up to the age of thirty young men were required to make music a constant habit (Polybius 4.20.5 ff.).

At this point I would like to turn to the *Hymn to Hermes* and argue that it presents an aitiology for ritualized practices of lyre manufacture as well as lyre playing. The hymn itself is part of that ritualization, in as much as it projects a divine paradigm for understanding where the lyre comes from and what it means. By making Hermes the lyre’s inventor, makers and users of specific copies of that divine model in the here and now are beckoned to appreciate the sacred and relatively occult dimensions of origin and power that inhere in the sounding lyre and its marvelous song. Upon hearing the lyre Apollo declares it to have a “marvelous newly uttered divine-voice” (*thaumasiēn neēphaton ossan*). This final scene of the hymn, in fact, lines 417-512, presents us with a paradigmatic image of lyre instruction: Hermes shows off for Apollo the lyre’s music, charms his angry heart, then teaches his older brother how to play before giving him the lyre in exchange for the stolen cows. “When she speaks she teaches all sorts of things that delight the mind,” he says (**at line 484, [handout 1E](#)**). I will return at the end to suggest the possibility of ritual paradigmatic resonances in this scene.

The lesson of the lyre as symbolic artifact seems to be one of general significance to the Greek religious sensibility: the mysterious creativity of sacrifice and death. When

Hermes first meets and sizes up the technological potential of the live turtle he says, “alive you’ll be a charm against grievous binding spells, but if you die, then you would sing most finely” [[handout 1B](#), ll. 37-38]. Thereupon he promptly kills the turtle and makes a lyre of her glittering shell. The idea that killing the turtle makes her an organ capable of beautiful song seems a specific instance of the general view of sacrifice as necessary for the finest things in life, not least, human communion with the gods. [As Burkert (1983: 39) says, “Any new creation, even the birth of music, requires ritual killing”]. This paradox of the dead singer was apparently a popular one: Sophocles repeats it in the *Ichneutae*. Kyllene is assuring the satyrs that it is a dead turtle making the sound they hear; she says: “Believe it, for dead it has a voice, though alive the beast was speechless.” [[handout 2](#)] A riddling sympotic couplet in the Theognis collection [[handout 3](#)] turns the same theme about a conch shell: “Already it has called me home, a corpse from the sea, though dead it speaks with a living mouth.” A related example comes from the Palatine anthology, a riddle that the Loeb editor pronounced unsolved, but which I strongly suspect is describing the lyre [[handout 4](#)]. “A ram I have as father, to him a turtle bore me; once born, I killed both my parents.” The turtle’s shell and the ram’s horn here are playing father and mother, which are “killed” by the lyre in its coming to birth. The Oedipal undertones are intriguing, especially when we think of the context of children passing out of the strict care and control of parents into a freer status of young adulthood.

Thus, whether we view these riddling paradoxes as playful or serious—or as serious play, in a Geertzian sense—the lyre was a physical symbol of a death-transcending sort of life as manifested in sounding song. That Hermes was the first-finder

of this sort of lovely voice from the beyond makes sense also in light of his role as psychopomp and mediator of existential boundaries.

Moreover, the riddling nature of the theme points to a particular social setting, the sympotic shared feast, which was one of the positive privileges of young men coming of age, a point which the *hymn to Hermes* also models when it compares Hermes' first lyre-song to "young men (*kouroi hēbētai*) at feasts mocking with sly innuendos (*paraibola kertomeousin*)" (ll. 55-6). [\[handout 1D\]](#) And again at line 454, not on the handout, Apollo refers to the "passing to the right at young' men's feasts" (*neon thalieis endexia erga*). These lines suggest, I think, that the lyre is a gateway for youths to the male realm where the scurrilous and licentious speech of iambos is sanctioned and encouraged.

The values of the hunt (*zētein*) are also important in discourses about male pedagogy, whether in poetry [e.g. the Satyrs hunting for Apollo's cattle in Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, or again the interaction between Odysseus and Neoptolemus in his *Philoctetes*] or in theoretical texts [e.g. in the *Republic* the guardians are often compared to hunting/guard dogs]. Important also are notions of craft and skill (*technē*). [A good instance of this in epic is Nestor instructing Antilochus in the skills of chariot racing in *Iliad* 23]. Both of these spheres of value, the hunt and *technē*, predominate in the narrative of the *hymn to Hermes*. The theft of the cattle has a blatant paradigmatic significance for hunting (whether real or symbolic) as a transitional rite. But less noticed is that the discovery and killing of the turtle is also drawn into this semantic and symbolic field. Hermes "finds" (*heuren*) the turtle while setting out to "hunt" (*zētein*) Apollo's cattle. [\[handout 1A-C\]](#) She becomes his first catch and first victim. From her shell, harvested from her dead carcass, he makes his powerful and divinely sounding playing

(*athurma*). The lyre was, in the terms of the hymn, basically a toy, one which the divine child of the hymn makes for himself promptly upon emerging from the womb-like cave of his mother. But the process of production is being ritualized to convey important cultural lessons of hunting and craft.

This toy, however, is also a *symbolon*, a lucky omen, for Hermes, one he interprets as betokening advantage and profit (30-35). The lyre is a profitable instrument through its song, which brings Hermes (as it did young men) both the material wealth of prizes and the symbolic wealth of *kleos* for singing and performing well in musical competitions.

The value of this hymn as positive evidence for concrete practices of production otherwise unknown to us is strengthened when we take into account the generic aitiological function of the sacred narratives recounted in archaic *hymnoi*. As is well-known, the other long hymns present many instances of aitiologizing for very specific rituals; the most salient examples are the appearance of the Eleusinian ritual drink *kykeon* in the *hymn to Demeter*, and the aitiological history of the Delphic oracle and its exclusive priesthood presented in the *hymn to Apollo*. If, then, the generic expectation for the *hymnos* form was to articulate the divine origins and bases for human patterns of action in the here and now, we are justified in thinking about the *hymn to Hermes* in this light as well. Returning to its narrative, we consider the pattern anew: the divine child emerges from the sheltering realm of its mother into the dangers of the outdoors (as he says to the turtle: “it’s dangerous outdoors”, 36); there he finds a turtle, kills it, and fashions it into a lyre before going off on his more dangerous exploit of stealing cattle from his older brother in the dark of night. So again, considering the aitiological function

of the *hymnos*, we are prompted, I think, to suspect that this narrative presents a sacred paradigm for a real practice of young boys hunting turtles and crafting their own lyres for paideutic instruction in music.

Admittedly, this inference is liable to doubts. Indeed, recently it has become fashionable (again) to problematize the relation between myth and ritual. However, we know that the hymns are particularly aitiological, and they are so by casting divine characters as instrumental in the discovery and emergence of cult objects and institutions relevant to their own ritual complexes. Thus we are forced to ask about the narrative of the lyre's first-fashioning by Hermes: why exactly does the hymn devote so much time and attention to the lyre's fashioning (some 47 lines) and then later to its music (some 95 lines)? Either it relates to ritual practices, as I propose, or it does not. The former interpretation lacks solid evidence to back it. The latter interpretation, however, is unsatisfying; we are left thinking that these musical themes in the hymn are simply meaningless and lacking in concrete referents. I will just recall at this point that all previous commentators on the hymn have seen in the hymn's other narrative focus—the theft of the cattle—mythic aitia for male rites of passage or patterns of initiatory, as well as other sorts of ritual [Strauss Clay, Shelmerdine, Johnston, Nanno Marinatos, Lonsdale (230, *passim*), and elsewhere I have further analyzed the hymn thus (Fox 2004), following hints in Burkert 1983: 83-130]. Interpreting the lyre-fashioning episode as aitiological, then, further serves to integrate the hymn's narrative trajectory into a single coherent pattern as opposed to viewing its scenes as loosely episodic and nonintegrated. Fashioning a lyre is a ritual gateway into the status and appropriate activities of young adulthood.

It remains to suggest one further ritual possibility for the paideutic instrument of the lyre. It is actually unrelated to the hypothesis that boys made their own lyres and that this act of production itself held important ritual symbolic significance. I only add it because certain archaeological evidence has suggested it and it also makes good sense in light of general ritual patterns of action in early Greece. I am speaking of the possibility that lyres may have also functioned at the terminal point of status transition rites for boys, by way of votive offerings of the lyres they have used to learn their music lessons at the local shrines of ephebic divinities, which usually would have been Apollo.

First of all, we know that the offering of votives was the predominant mode of symbolic interaction with divinities in Greek religion. An alternate form of the logic of sacrifice, dedicating votive objects, which were usually figurines or other artifacts of everyday use, symbolized a giving up of something of personal significance if not strict material value which also very often suggested the kind of benefit expected in return (e.g., the offering of votive body parts at shrines of healing). Archaeological finds indicate that musical instruments were indeed offered at shrines. At the important Laconian cult-shrine of Artemis Orthia, for instance, the plethora of votives unearthed include several *auloi* (double reed-pipes) made of bone (Dawkins 1929). And in fact tortoiseshell lyres have been found in at least two excavations in the Peloponnese; at the theater in Argos, and at the temple of Apollo Epikourios in Arcadian Bassai. Of course, while it seems likely that such finds are traces of votive offerings, one cannot assume directly that the offerings were dedicated within adolescent initiatory settings. The famous temple of Apollo at Bassai was an active cult site throughout the archaic and classical period (Cooper 1970/1978: 69), and the tortoise plastrons found there were with

other artifacts dating to the late archaic and the first half of the 5th century (Phaklares 1977 [shore up translation]). Two lyre shells have also been found in Argos, in what seems to be a foundation deposit in the theater, dating approximately to the end of the 6th century BC (Courbin 1980). These two lyre shells seem to have been disassembled before they were deposited. Finally, just yesterday Phil Horky brought to my attention a lyre recently discovered in a grave at Metapontum in South Italy.

In this context I'd like to present one further piece of evidence, an evocative Attic lekythos which shows a young girl and a young man at a tomb, the girl apparently offering a liquid libation and perhaps a food offering, the young man extending a lyre out towards the grave. He is bending down, and to me he looks to be depositing the lyre as an offering at the tomb. I note also, without putting too much stress on it, that the lyre does not seem to be strung. Most vase depictions of lyres in use clearly show strings; this one just as clearly has not been marked by the painter as having strings. If Courbin is correct in interpreting the tortoiseshells found in the Argos deposit as having intentionally been taken apart prior to deposit, then perhaps we might draw a connection with this representation of an unstrung lyre in the process of being offered at a tomb. But again, I won't lay too much stress on this connection, and I leave it to you to draw your own conclusions.

In conclusion, I have suggested that the likely producers of tortoiseshell lyres in some locales in the archaic and classical period, which we know were used for ritualized social processes of musical paideia, were the boys themselves who would have been learning to play the lyres. The playful sport of finding and crafting a lyre would have been among the earlier stages in the long process of coming to be an ephebe, and it may

have served as a symbolic marker of that process' commencement even as it imparted practical lessons in self-sufficient *technē* which Greek males were expected to learn. Once made, of course, a young man had a fascinating instrument which he no doubt treated with the love and care that millions of boys and girls lavish on guitars or other instruments today. Finally, having mastered the lyre and perhaps performing (and for some, perhaps winning) in local or more regional musical contests, as well as playing at local and familial ritual activities, these playthings of adolescence may have been deposited in various ritual contexts that signified the passage out of ephebe status into adulthood. When Hermes finally gives over his lyre to Apollo at the end of the *hymn to Hermes*—a scene I said before I would return to—I would propose here (as I have elsewhere) that a ritual putting away of the childish lyre is one way to read this scene. As the Attic lekythos here might suggest, one possible recipient of an offered lyre is a dead parent (in Greece usually the father) or other ancestor. And as we know from tragedy, the cult of the dead father is itself highly charged with initiatory themes and meanings. And a votive dedication of one's lyre of childhood, if it did occur, would have been one potent symbol both to mark one's completion of adolescence and emergence into adulthood, as well as a fitting honorific to the recipient god and/or shade of the deceased ancestor.

1. *H.h. Hermes* 20-67

A. Leaving Mother's Cave, Finding Turtle

ὄς καὶ ἐπεὶ δὴ μητρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτων θόρε γυίων (20)
οὐκέτι δηρὸν ἔκειτο μένων ἱερῶ ἐνὶ λίκνῳ,
ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἀναίξας ζήτει βόας Ἀπόλλωνος

οὐδὸν ὑπερβαίνων ὑψηρεφέος ἄντροιο.
ἔνθα χέλυν εὐρών ἐκτήσατο μυρίον ὄλβον·
Ἐρμῆς τοι πρῶτιστα χέλυν τεκτήνατ' ἄοιδόν, (25)
ἢ ῥά οἱ ἀντεβόλησεν ἐπ' ἀυλείησι θύρησι
βοσκομένη προπάροιθε δόμων ἐριθηλέα ποίηνη,
σαῦλα ποσὶν βαίνουσα· Διὸς δ' ἐριούνιος υἱὸς
ἄθρησας ἐγέλασσε καὶ αὐτίκα μῦθον ἔειπε·

B. Hermes addresses the turtle

σύμβολον ἤδη μοι μέγ' ὀνήσιμον, οὐκ ὀνοτάζω. (30)
χαῖρε φυὴν ἐρόεσσα χοροϊτύπε δαιτὸς ἑταίρη,
ἀσπασίη προφανεῖσα· πόθεν τόδε καλὸν ἄθυρμα
αἰόλον ὄστρακον ἔσσο χέλυς ὄρεσι ζώουσα;
ἀλλ' οἴσω σ' εἰς δῶμα λαβῶν· ὄφελός τί μοι ἔσση,
οὐδ' ἀποτιμήσω· σὺ δέ με πρῶτιστον ὀνήσεις. (35)
οἴκοι βέλτερον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ θύρηφιν·
ἦ γὰρ ἐπηλυσίης πολυπήμονος ἔσσεαι ἔχμα
ζώουσ'· ἦν δὲ θάνης τότε κεν μάλα καλὸν αἰείδοις.

C. Hermes slays the turtle and fashions the lyre

ὣς ἄρ' ἔφη· καὶ χερσὶν ἅμ' ἀμφοτέρησιν αἰείρας
ἄψ εἴσω κίε δῶμα φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα. (40)
ἔνθ' ἀναπηλήσας γλυφάνω πολιοῖο σιδήρου
αἰῶν' ἐξετόρησεν ὀρεσκῶοιο χελώνης.
ὥς δ' ὀπότ' ὠκὺ νόημα διὰ στέρνοιο περήση
ἀνέρος ὄν τε θαμιναὶ ἐπιστρωφῶσι μέριμναι,
ἢ ὅτε δινηθῶσιν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἀμαρυγαί, (45)
ὥς ἅμ' ἔπος τε καὶ ἔργον ἐμήδετο κύδιμος Ἐρμῆς.
πήξε δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέτροισι ταμῶν δόνακας καλάμοιο
πειρήνας διὰ νῶτα διὰ ῥινοῖο χελώνης.
ἀμφὶ δὲ δέρμα τάνυσσε βοὸς πραπίδεσσι ἐῆσι,
καὶ πήχεις ἐνέθηκ', ἐπὶ δὲ ζυγὸν ἦραρεν ἀμφοῖν, (50)
ἐπτά δὲ συμφῶνους οἴων ἐτανύσσατο χορδάς.

D. Hermes plays the lyre

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεύξε φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα
πλήκτρως ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος, ἢ δ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε· θεὸς δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν αἶδεν
ἔξ αὐτοσχεδῆς πειρώμενος, ἠύτε κοῦροι (55)
ἠβηταὶ θαλίησι παραιβόλα κερτομέουσιν,
ἀμφὶ Δία Κρονίδην καὶ Μαιάδα καλλιπέδιλον
† ὄν πάρος ὠρίζεσκον † ἑταιρείη φιλότητι,
ἦν τ' αὐτοῦ γενεὴν ὀνομακλυτὸν ἐξονομάζων·
ἀμφιπόλους τε γέραιρε καὶ ἀγλαὰ δώματα νύμφης, (60)
καὶ τρίποδας κατὰ οἶκον ἐπηετανούς τε λέβητας.
καὶ τὰ μὲν οὔν ἦειδε, τὰ δὲ φρεσὶν ἄλλα μενοίνα.
καὶ τὴν μὲν κατέθηκε φέρων ἱερῶ ἐνὶ λίκνῳ
φόρμιγγα γλαφυρήν· ὁ δ' ἄρα κρειῶν ἐρατίζων
ἄλτο κατὰ σκοπιὴν εὐώδεος ἐκ μεγάροιο, (65)
ὀρμαίνων δόλον αἰπὺν ἐνὶ φρεσὶν οἶά τε φῶτες
φηληταὶ διέπouσι μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἐν ὥρη.

E. Hermes "trains" Apollo on the lyre (entire passage ll. 417-512)

σοὶ δ' αὐτάγρετόν ἐστι δαήμεναι ὅττι μενοινᾶς.
 ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὖν τοι θυμὸς ἐπιθύει κιθαρίζειν, (475)
 μέλπεο καὶ κιθάριζε καὶ ἀγλαΐας ἀλέγυνε
 δέγμενος ἐξ ἐμέθεν· σὺ δέ μοι φίλε κῦδος ὄπαζε.
 εὐμόλπει μετὰ χερσίν ἔχων λιγύφωνον ἑταίρην
 καλὰ καὶ εὖ κατὰ κόσμον ἐπιστάμενος ἀγορεύειν.
 εὐκηλος μὲν ἔπειτα φέρειν εἰς δαῖτα θάλειαν (480)
 καὶ χορὸν ἱμερόεντα καὶ ἐς φιλοκυδέα κῶμον,
 εὐφροσύνην νυκτός τε καὶ ἡματος. ὅς τις ἂν αὐτὴν
τέχνη καὶ σοφίη δεδαημένος ἐξερεεῖνη
φθεγγομένη παντοῖα νόῳ χαρίεντα διδάσκει
 ῥεῖα συνηθείησιν ἀθυρομένη μαλακῆσιν, (485)
 ἐργασίην φεύγουσα δυήπαθον· ὅς δέ κεν αὐτὴν
 νῆϊς ἐὼν τὸ πρῶτον ἐπιζαφελῶς ἐρεεῖνη,
 μὰς αὐτῶς κεν ἔπειτα μετήορά τε θρυλίζοι.
 σοὶ δ' αὐτάγρετόν ἐστι δαήμεναι ὅττι μενοινᾶς.

2. Sophocles *Ichneutae*

Chorus: καὶ πῶς πίθωμαι τοῦ θανόντος φθέγμα τοιοῦτον
 βρέμειν;

Kyllene: πιθοῦ· θανῶν γὰρ ἔσχε φωνήν, ζῶν δ' ἀναυδος ἦν ὁ
 θήρ. (300)

“How am I to believe such a sound is ringing from something
 dead?”

“Believe it; for dead it has a voice, though alive the beast was
 speechless.”

3. Theognis 1229-30

Ἦδη γάρ με κέκληκε θαλάσσιος οἴκαδε νεκρός,
 τεθνηκῶς ζωιῶι φθεγγόμενος στόματι.

For already a corpse from the sea has called me home,
 having died it speaks with a living mouth.

4. Palatine Anthology XIV.30 (Loeb vol. 5)

κρίον ἔχω γενετῆρα, τέκεν δέ τῳδε χελώνη·
 τικτομένη δ' ἄμφω πέφνον ἐμοὺς γονέας.

A ram I have as father, to him a turtle bore me.
 Once born, I killed both my parents.

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