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LYDIAN METRE

Enno Littmann, who published the first of the Lydian inscriptions in 1916¹, realized from the beginning that some of them were in verse, distinguished by the fact that the last syllable of each line contains the same vowel throughout the piece. He makes some useful observations on the technique of this verse². He sees that it contains about twelve syllables, the last of which, as it carries the assonance, will not have been unemphatic. He mentions that it might be pressed into a sort of iambic trimeter scanned by stress without regard for quantities; but he then rejects this idea, and suggests as the most likely account that the line consists of two halves separated by caesura, each half containing three arses with a variable number of syllables between them, as in the Latin Saturnian. He does not claim that this is more than a provisional hypothesis, given the uncertainties prevailing about the nature of the Lydian accent and the principles of the prosody. "I shall leave the discussion of Lydian metrics", he writes, "to those scholars who are more versed than I in Greek and Latin metrics".

No such person, so far as I know, has taken up the invitation; nor does the study of Lydian metre appear to have advanced much beyond Littmann's results. Some further observations have indeed been made by E. Vetter: that the abnormal order of *Sivāmlλ Saroλ* in inscr. 12. 1, "of Sivam's son Saros", implies some metrical constraint³, and that two poems show signs of being composed in stanzas⁴. But his assertion that the spelling *aa*, though also occurring in prose, represents a metrical lengthening of *a* to two syllables

¹ Sardis. Publications of the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis, VI. 1

² op. cit. 58—61

³ Sitz.-Ber. Wien. Ak., phil.-hist. Kl., 232 (3), 1959, 29, 47—8. Cf. R. Gusmani, *Lydisches Wörterbuch*, 1964, 197. Similar inversion of the usual Indo-European name-patronymic sequence occurs in Homer, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος etc., and in one of the Scipionic epitaphs; cf. J. Wackernagel, *Philologus* 95, 1943, 13f. = *Kl. Schr.* i. 198f. = R. Schmitt (ed.), *Indogermanische Dichtersprache*, 1968, 96f.

⁴ op. cit. 54—7

is rightly queried by Gusmani⁵. Littmann's (rejected) idea of the verse as a "sort of iambic trimeter" is sometimes repeated as if it were the best that could be said⁶, and otherwise we seem to be where we were.

In what follows I discuss the inscriptions 11—15 and 44 as a group, and afterwards 10, which for several reasons requires separate treatment. I follow the text as given by Gusmani unless otherwise noted, but depart from his transcription system in using θ for c (cf. G. Neumann, *Kadmos* 6, 1967, 86) and \acute{n} for ν (which is too liable to be confused with v).

The first question to be tackled is the number of syllables in the verse. It rather depends on the value of the sonants, but we can make a start by counting the number of clear vowels. If *aa* is taken to represent one vowel (as its graphic alternation with *a* suggests), we find that it is common for a line to show twelve vowels, but quite often it shows eleven, ten, or nine, in one case as few as eight. Only once do we find thirteen, namely in 13. 1,

ilim ānas iśaś kudmāk θēnsidñ alarmaś.

But here *alarmaś* (otherwise unattested) is an anaptyctic spelling of *alarmś*, which can be substituted without affecting the assonance. Making certain reasonable assumptions about the syllabic value of sonants, we find that most lines readily disclose enough extra syllables to make up the norm of twelve, while a few still only reach eleven. If *aa* represented two syllables, no such degree of uniformity would be attained: the minimum would remain at eleven syllables, the maximum would rise to fourteen.

The prosodic principles assumed are as follows:

(i) λ , \acute{n} and r have syllabic value when they occur between two consonants. Note that *aśturko-* is written for the usual *aśtrko-* in 44. 12.

(ii) λ and perhaps r also have syllabic value when followed by two consonants of which the second is l or λ : *qalmlad* 11. 8, *vrolt laafθñ* 12. 8; perhaps *ēntarflod* 12. 1, *savkarbloś* 12. 3, *tarblaś* 13. 6, *sitarflōś* 14. 7 (but not *savkorfl[ol* 14. 3).

(iii) m has syllabic value in the clusters *kmś* 11. 2; *kmλ* 11. 10 (but not in *fak-mλatañ* 11. 12, where *mλ* is quasi-initial); *kmθ* 14. 6; *smñ* 44. 2.

⁵ Vetter p. 48; Gusmani p. 30

⁶ G. Deeters, *Pauly—Wissowa* xiii 2155; Vetter p. 47, who however also finds longer and shorter lines, including "fünffüssige Jamben".

(iv) *ś* has syllabic value in the clusters *kśb* 11. 4; *svśt* 13. 2; but not in *alarmś* followed by initial *τ*, 12. 6.

(v) In inscr. 13, the clusters *bτ*, *dτ*, *kτ* appear to generate an anaptyctic syllable (verses 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; so perhaps *tτ* in 4 and 10, see notes). A similar assumption about *kt* and *dt* is helpful in 44. 2, 14, 15. In inscriptions 11 and 12 no such phenomenon appears with *dt* 11. 5, *kτ* 11. 6, 12. 5, *kt* 11. 11; nor with *kt* in 14. 3, though it is worth considering with *tτ* in the next line.

Every line has a caesura before the fifth or sixth syllable from the end, except 13. 13. In 13. 10 (see note) it is possible that the caesura falls before a double enclitic suffix.

The next question concerns the rhythm. We do not know in advance whether the scansion is done by stress, quantity, or simple syllable-counting. Whichever is the case, it will be useful to determine, if possible, the distribution of long and short syllables; it will not be random unless the principle is simple counting, for quantity plays a part even in stressed verse. This may easily be illustrated. "Jack and Jill went up the hill" is metrically much preferable to "Jack Jones-Mill strolled up Church Hill", where long syllables have been put in all the unstressed positions.

We may confidently identify as long any syllable containing *aa*, now that we have rejected the view that it represents two syllables. It occurs as follows:

Position	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Instances of <i>aa</i>	—	—	5	3	—	1	—	—	7	—	—	4

This suggests an analysis of the line into four metra, in each of which the third syllable is the heaviest and the second the lightest. This agrees, of course, with the final syllable carrying the assonance.

Having got so far, I decided to examine the distribution of the nasal vowels *ā* and *ē*, thinking it possible that it might be in their nature to be long. I found that they occur in nearly all positions, but show a marked preference for the third place in the metron, and an aversion to the second.

Position	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Instances of <i>ā</i>	4	—	5	1	—	3	1	1	5	—	1	—
Instances of <i>ē</i>	2	—	3	4	1	4	4	1	4	3	2	—

I omitted eleven-syllable lines from the count, since we have not yet learnt how to analyse them. The absence of instances in position 12 is due to the fact that inscr. 13, which has *a*-assonance,

evidently does not admit \tilde{a} as equivalent to a , and the other poems we are at present considering have o - or i -assonance. The figures add up as follows.

First place in metron (four possible positions): 19 instances.

Second place in metron (four possible positions): 6 instances.

Third place in metron (three possible positions): 24 instances.

I next considered the occurrence of syllabic λ , m , n , r and \acute{s} , thinking that they might be short. This seems to be confirmed by their distribution, which is the converse of that of aa , \tilde{a} and \tilde{e} .

Position	1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12
Instances	1	5	1		—	8	—		6	3	1		11	10	—

The only instances in the strong third element of the metron are at 12. 3 in the cluster $\acute{m}\lambda v$ (third position) and at 13. 9 in the cluster $\acute{t}\lambda t$ (ninth position): in both cases, then, the sonants are double.

I also studied the distribution of the other vowels in open syllables, not expecting them all to be short, but thinking that any preponderance of shorts among them might show in the table. The vowels e and o occurred too few times in open syllables to be of use. My figures for a , i , u are:

Position	1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12
a	8	5	4		6	7	5		6	21	8		9	14	—
i	10	7	2		8	2	4		2	6	1		2	1	—
u	1	5	—		1	3	—		1	1	—		—	4	—

A tendency to fall in the weak positions is shown most clearly by u , and in the second half of the line by a . The figures for the strong positions are relatively low throughout.

I have been speaking of long and short, but it should be borne in mind that there may be more than two quantity-categories. So far I have identified some types of syllable that are favoured in strong positions and some that are favoured in weak. But the very common type in which a vowel is followed by two or more consonants appears to be equally acceptable in either. There must have been some variety in their length according to the number and nature of the consonants and the origin of the vowel, but for us this remains imponderable. I therefore propose the following three categories for present use:

∪ (short): λ m n r s u.

× (in theory = intermediate, in practice includes indeterminate): a e i o in either open or closed syllables.

— (long): aa ā ē; doubled sonants.

The verse in its standard twelve-syllable form may be represented thus:

		3			6				9			12
∪	∪	×	∪	∪	×	:	∪	:	×	∪	∪	×
—	×	—	—	×	—	:	×	:	×	—	×	×

The two symbols for each position mark the limits of quantity-variation normally admitted.

In the eleven-syllable lines, the second half of the verse takes its ordinary form; it is in the first half that metra of the usual shape cannot be recognized, and these lines may accordingly be described as *acephalous*⁷. The scheme for the first five syllables that the scanty evidence suggests is

∪	∪	×	×	∪
—	×	—	—	—

but I doubt if that is very accurate. It would be interesting to know whether the five syllables in aggregate had to attain a basic minimum length in order to satisfy the ear of the poets.

All verse is designed for the ear, except in the most sophisticated circles, and we may take it as certain that this Lydian form — which, to preclude inapposite use of Greek metrical terminology, I will christen the *est mruvaad* — lived on the lips of men as well as on marble. It can sound splendidly sonorous if recited in solemn, rolling tones, fairly loud. Assonance is not confined to end-rhyme. Alliteration is sometimes noticeable within the verse, especially within the limits of the metron, e. g. 11. 2 *vānras viθn areλ*, 12 | *višsis vaars* |; 12. 4 *θinal qis qiral*, 5 | *ninin nid* |, 7 | *nirat nān* |; 13. 10 *kotrin kothvid kanθat*. In Old Norse poetry any vowel is regarded as alliterating with any other, and the Lydian poets too may have been sensitive to this effect; cf. 11. 10 *fakir est inal adalλ aksaakmλ iskod*, or 12. 7 *ēn ān ismēnlis*, or 13. 1 *ilim ānas išas*.

There remains the question raised by Vetter of the grouping of verses into larger units. We shall see that inscr. 10 is certainly

⁷ The term was invented in antiquity for certain Homeric verses with abnormally light beginnings. I believe it to be a general characteristic of stichic verse that it is freest at the beginning of the line and most closely regulated at the end; cf. Glotta 44, 1967, 137 n. 1.

composed in three-line units. The twelve-line poem of inscr. 11 is divided by Vetter into two six-line stanzas, on the ground that a new sense-period begins at 7. There is sentence-end at 9, so that the possibility of three-line stanzas should be considered here too; lines 3—4 are obscure. Inscr. 12 is complete in ten verses, so that stanzas would have to be of two or five verses, or unequal. Inscriptions 13 and 15 are incomplete at the end, and we cannot tell how many verses they had; if they are composed in stanzas it does not show. 14 was apparently complete in nineteen lines, ruling out any equal division. 44 is broken at the top and may continue in the second column, so the length is uncertain; Vetter posits stanza-end after 6, 12, 18, on the ground that the curse upon the violator of the grave appears to begin in 13. Clearly, no general rules can be laid down.

I now give the texts divided into metra and with a metrical commentary. Syllabic pronunciation of sonants and mute clusters is indicated by λ , $k\tau$, etc.

11. *est mruvaad| Saristro|šl šfarvad| aštrkol*
vāntas viθñ arel| katared|kmš iskoš
añis qi|dad savñ vra|tuλ arštān|srs kasnod

?—

- kšbλtalks| atrgo|lλ tafaaλ| fabalkol*
 5 *avkañ ē|tamñ uved|mas vared|tal šfatos*
kotas θat| qedktad θfi|šad isaa|lal umñod

?—

Saristrošl Srkastuš Katovalis šuloš
datrošis| qaλmlad| qis labtā|nal atrokl
Šfardak Ar|timuλ dāñ| θaqrlal| aštrkol

?—

- 10 *fakir est| inal a|dalλ aksaa|kmλ iskod*
vāntakt es|ñañ ifrol| qis fakor|fid katofn
buk mruvaal| fak-mλatañ| viššis vaars| nið kantrod.

1. The placing of *Saristrošl*, with $-\lambda$ in the seventh position and caesura after it, is typical, cf. 11. 4, 12. 3, 13. 9. *aštrko-* at the end also in 11. 9; 44. 12; filling a metron also in 13. 4, 14. 2.

2. Acephalous.

3. Note that \acute{n} is not syllabic in *savñ vratuλ*.

6. *qedktad* perhaps an etymological spelling, in pronunciation *gekktad*. Cf. Gusmani p. 35.

7. One expects *Saristro|śl Syrkaś|tuś*, but then six syllables remain. The need to accommodate three proper names in the line is no doubt the cause of the irregularity.

8. *datrośisk* in the same position at 13. 3.

9. *θaqrlāñ* filling a metron at 14. 5.

10. *iskod* at the end of the verse at 14. 6; cf. 11. 2.

12. *est mru Sivāml̥| Sarol̥ ēn|tar̥flod*
dumlis nid| qaasl̥ veś|faś arar|m̥ θavloś
akañ m̥|vēs̥is vñi|s̥l̥ lēñ sav|karbloś
θinal̥ qis qiral̥| fētvintat| tutr̥lo
 5 *ninin nid| qaaslis vā|nal̥ ak̥tal̥| favkufot*
isās il| alarmś te|śaś kudāk| islukol
nirat nāñ| sirmal̥ ēn| ān ismēn|lis śfatos
bilik eśś| śfat̥r̥taś| vro̥lt̥ laaf|θñ tulod
kot lumbaaś| dummlit̥ koθ|vid̥ nigas|l̥l̥ tatrot
 10 *nin linēd| vñis̥l̥ lēñ| fēntasē|nañ lafod.*

1. Acephalous as it stands, but perhaps *mru<vaad>* should be written as in 11. 1. The form *mru* is anomalous (cf. Gusmani p. 168), and in 10. 23 *mr* is written as a compendium for *mru*. The word order *Sivāml̥ Sarol̥* (cf. above, p. 165) was necessary for the caesura. Alternatively: *est mru<vaad> Sivām|l̥ Sarol̥| ēntar̥flod* (acephalous again), the inversion to avoid $\times - \sim$ in the third metron, and perhaps for extra length in the first half.

3. In line 10 *vñis̥l̥ lēñ* more comfortably occupies a metron. This could be right here, if the line is acephalous and *savkarbloś* trisyllabic.

4. Acephalous. *fētvintel̥* in the same position at 44. 12.

6. *kudāk* in the same position at 15. 4.

9. The engraver left no space between *dummlit* and *koθvid*. He was pressed for room.

13. *ilim ā|nas isās| kudmāk θēn|sid̥n̥ alarmas̥*
amuk nā|sik ēmis| istamin|lis v̥staas̥
datrośisk| saryś nāñ| isqasān|vñ qiraad
kot̥tin̥ aśfāk̥ θesv|ñ aśtr̥kōt| Midatad
 5 *kud̥tin̥ at̥ñāñ| nak̥ fasiv|ñ afḁlḁlk̥*
nik̥-tas̥| bitat̥ ul|tin̥ kottis̥| tar̥blas̥
fak̥tin̥| davi̥θil̥| istamin|lañ qiraal̥
ēnat̥ fas̥|fēnv̥ñ lēm|k̥-tala|lañ ahat̥ñ
akad̥ vra|toś aśē|m̥l̥ vot̥l̥l̥| tar̥b̥-tad̥

- 10 ...]ēn sivrēnit| kotrin koθ|vid kanθat
] ān| tenuŋ ni|tin vratoš| sikimlañ
]stolñ qednak volñ kibrad
]a[.] a|šēmis e|loš islaas

1. The last word is to be read *alarmś*, cf. above, p. 166.

4. Acephalous, if *kotrin* is not trisyllabic.

5. Acephalous.

6. Or: *nik·taś bitat| ul·tin kot|tiś tarblaś*.

7. *istamin-* in the same position at 13. 2, 44. 13.

10. There is only room for one syllable before]ēn, so acephalous. Alternatively scan *kot·rin*, with caesura between *kot·* and the particles *-r-in*. Cf. below on 10. 2.

12. If *kib·rad*, then]*stolñ qed*| makes the second metron; but the weak *-ñ* of *volñ* will be badly placed. Perhaps rather acephalous, × × ×]*stolñ| qednak vo|lñ kibrad*.

13. No caesura, apparently.

14. *mrumit baal| dumis qλ[.....]ś faθtot*
astryko|tak savtaars| eλfk [.....]lak taśok
nām bal·taś| ist savkorf|λ[oλ sav]taa|rλk arktoλ
fakmat telmdañ śñālañ ē[.....]śakoś
 5 *θaqrlāñ| akum a|dēnñ alar|mññ ētolt*
faśqñ ni|qaaslad a|km θira|lād iskod
istañ qlaś|tānu nik| mṛslaś si|tarflos
dākum est sikr[...(.)] saralλ taktod
kotiś famrasi|dñ[] qiralλ ēnvñatolē
 10 *lēmsum taada[]ēst karflads| qλ satrot*
ānś qλ nśa[]ararmś| faθato[.]
kib·tama[]ankāñ[...]strol
qalmk θ[]fam qiralλ [....]trol
dumñit []ot|rañ ada|lλ fartol
 15 ...]ś[]tartas| fakmis θol
]famlad taa|daś ēntrol
]faθa|til kukok
]sid fabad| ēntavloλ
 |..]s sivra|laλ karftoś.

2. Perhaps *eλfk*.

3. *savkorf|λ[oλ* (Brandenstein), see Gusmani p. 192. The end may also be taken as *sav]taarλk| arktoλ*, or *ark·toλ*.

4. If only one syllable is lost, *jakmat telmdań* makes the first half of the line; *km* or *tr* or *λ* might be syllabic. If two syllables are lost, the caesura falls after *śńālań*.

5. Between *adēńń a*[and]*larmlń* there is a break in the stone sufficient for six letters and a word-space. From here downward the inscription is divided in the middle to make room for a relief figure. Buckler states that in line 5 the writing was still continuous. But the metre shows that nothing is missing; *alarmlń* is what is wanted. Since words are not otherwise divided by the relief, the explanation may be that *alarmlń* was erroneously written twice.

7. If *sitarfłoś* is trisyllabic, possibly *mṛślaś*, or acephalous.

8. Perhaps *tak·tod*, though that would leave *λ* in the strong ninth position.

9. There may have been no more writing in the gap; then acephalous. *qira(a)λ* at end of metron in 13. 7, 14. 13, cf. 12. 4.

13. I would guess that *qalmk* was disyllabic, at least before *θ*[.

15.

] *mlilś* | *nid kafoλ* | *θń jadil*

] *kolθis* | *tarblaś* | *fēnanil*

] *stil āńś koθ* | *vid qis tfil*

] *kudāk* | *fasivlidń*

5

] *śad* | *tarbla* | *til mari* [...]

] *is irē* | *ńń sanil*

] *mń fis* | *trodń a* [...]

] *qel* | *qil siviś*

] *vā* | *naλ ba* [...]

10

] *θagr* [...]

2. *tarblaś* or *tarblaś*, cf. 13. 6, and 5 below.

3. *koθvid* in the same position at 13. 10.

9. *vā* | *naλ* also at 12. 15.

10. Probably *θagr*[, cf. 11. 9, 14. 5.

44.

] *ētsa* [

trismń a | *dēńń sa* | *tiś um θa* | *k· trfnod*

lavl arśmavad [] *asnāntol*

irēl k [...] *arl* [] *qλ dakrod*

5 *θivad armird* [] *tid fatros*

es [] *s* [...] *sedś fedtroś*

ēminas [] *tol*

sok [

giro [

volk [

qis [

	<i>fara</i> [<i>siva</i> [
	<i>le</i> [<i>]nod</i>	<i>brafr</i> [
10	<i>a</i> [<i>fatrol</i> [
	<i>ed</i> [<i>]lokr</i>	
	<i>etlāl[.....] fētvintel ašturkoš</i>		
	<i>edsin sub[. .]tañ istamin nid fatrod</i>		
	<i>ed·tin Kumlo lλ B[.]rsfan tuš fasāo[d]</i>		
15	<i>ēnē bat nēds fati nēd· tētr[</i>		
	<i>qis fašaknakil bukt alēl[</i>		
	<i>edλtin nivišva θivs f[</i>		
	<i>dumñum arš[</i>		

2. Or acephalous, with *θak trfnod* as the last metron.

6. Perhaps *fed·troš*.

13. Acephalous; 14 too, unless *B[.]rsfantuš* was a tetrasyllable (but then *λ* would stand in the sixth position).

15—17. Gusmani makes these lines too short; there is certainly more than one syllable missing at the ends.

17. Or acephalous, *edλtin niviš|va*.

I come finally to inscr. 10. It has long been thought that liens 5—10 contained verse; scattered assonances were noticed, but could not be followed for more than a couple of lines. It has not been realized that the verses (down to 18, at any rate) are of the same nature as in the other inscriptions, but inscribed for the most part without regard to the metre. They make up four three-line stanzas (or poems). The first is inscribed with correct lineation, in a different hand from the rest. The second differs from the others in having *ē*-assonance. It is marked off from the third, and the third from the fourth, by a triangular emblem. After the fourth come two further lines which may be verse but resist analysis.

Here are the stanzas written out as verse.

	<i>estit qid trodñ sēs vad qisto ridñ kaštāñ</i>	
	<i>mrulit trodñ fēl la·kin ta mñ trfāñ</i>	
	<i>faš katul fakit mrulē ēn sarb·tat.</i>	
	<i>ak θēnal nārš qλ serš θivñālis karraadmēs</i>	
5	<i>fakmit ēnūd ist Katova lλ sadmēl</i>	
	<i>fakmšad a mu kov θi vard kot slē θad lalēns. ▷</i>	
	<i>θivñ fadofi dñ tavšēñ akum nā</i>	
	<i>qid kol fakmit el eds vaštñun lis gasaas</i>	
	<i>nām qid kot altokad akmlad slē θad qirad. ▷</i>	

- 10 *išqkum qardolθñ| faθasidñ| fakum ãn*
islodaλ alar|mñ kaštaλ|θñ kud nak
ēnaś amāś qe|dm bis ē|tamñ unadñ.
ak ebad inānidñ šfarvad
ak θēnu ēnak taadak sivettris santol.

Certain peculiarities of technique deserve notice.

(i) For purposes of assonance *ã* is admitted as equivalent to *a*, as it was not in 13.

(ii) If the second stanza is not an independent poem, the change of assonance-vowel is unparalleled.

(iii) Acephalous lines are preferred (eight out of twelve, if I have scanned right).

(iv) Final *-dñ* before an initial consonant is not treated as syllabic in lines 1 and 10; nor is *m* in *fakmśad* (6) and *akmλad* (9).

(v) The caesura is allowed to fall before the enclitic particles *-k-in* (2; cf. on 13. 10), and the compound *nã-qid* is even divided between verses. (The stonecutter ignores this and writes it as one word.)

6. *slēθad*, cf. 9.

8. The stonecutter had room for at least *nãm* on the same line as *qasaaś*, but chose to leave a wide space.

12. *ē|tamñ* also in 11. 5.

13—14. There is a wide space after *šfarvad*. 14 makes a passable verse, but 13 would only go with it if a trisyllabic word ending in *-o-* were added. Against the idea that verse is to be seen here is the fact that no such concourse of vowels as in *θēnu ēnak* occurs in known verse texts; in prose it appears in 2. 11; 5. 3; 7. 1/2; 23. 8 twice, 14, 15; 49?; 54. 1.

