

In his *Quaestiones convivales* Plutarch cites four Simonidean verses as evidence that sound carries best in a ‘windless calm’ (νηνεμία γὰρ ἠχῶδες καὶ γαλήνη; *Mor.* 722c). These four verses—our Simonides *fr.* 595 *PMG* (40 D; 41 B)—make the rather vague statement that, at a certain time, there was no wind to prevent a sweet voice from reaching mortal ears. Until very recently, this fragment had long been treated in isolation and had motivated little comment: editors and commentators note Homeric comparanda for some of its diction (e.g., Page 1962, Campbell 1982); Bowra (1961: 364–365) regards it as evidence of Simonides’ smooth style, while Carson (1999: 101) cites it for its negativity. But, in fact, as long ago as 1835, Schneidewin had combined the fragment with our *fr.* 508 and 567 *PMG*, and West (2005: 46) has recently been tempted to follow him in assigning these three fragments to a narrative describing Orpheus’ encounter with the Sirens while aboard the *Argo*. Führer (2007) has since confirmed the combination of *fr.* 508+595 *PMG* on metrical grounds, but hardly certain is the addition of *fr.* 567 *PMG*, the only fragment in which Orpheus is guaranteed. Poltera (2008: 312) allows that the sweet voice in *fr.* 595 *PMG* could be either Orpheus’ or the Sirens’, but suggests that it must form part of the Argonaut myth in either case.

In this talk I first show that Plutarch makes it clear in the context of his quotation that the fragment describes the Sirens’ song, if not Odysseus’ encounter with the Sirens in particular. For, although a fair wind bore Odysseus and his men to the island of the Sirens in the *Odyssey*, as they approached there was indeed a ‘windless calm’ (γαλήνη | ἔπλετο νηνεμίη; *Od.* 12.168–9), just as in Plutarch’s quotation. Having thus discarded the presupposition of the Argonaut myth, I propose that our best course in interpreting these fragments is the examination of their syntax and style. Specifically, *fr.* 595 *PMG* has discursive characteristics that we might expect from a mythological *exemplum*: the fragment begins with οὐδὲ γάρ, a particle string that commonly introduces *exempla* in Archaic Greek poetry (e.g., *fr.* 523 *PMG*; *Il.* 6.130 with Öhler 1925: 9). This fragment’s combination with *fr.* 508 *PMG*—the *Wiestück* of a simile belonging to an *epinikion*—further complicates that comparison, for it is itself one part of a simile likening something to the way in which Zeus creates a period of winter calm known as the halcyon days. Thus the fragments represent two views of winds being allayed, and their relative placement in the strophic structure of the *epinikion* suggests considerable attention to this comparison and to the image of the storm.

In the course of my analysis, which considers meter, dialect, and style alongside the nature of Plutarchan quotation, I shall attempt to address a few of the long-standing textual issues in the fragments. More importantly, however, I shall reexamine prospects for the interpretation of *fr.* 508+595 *PMG* in terms of the Archaic Greek *exemplum* and the Simonidean corpus.