

Phorminx. Forthcoming in Finkelberg, M. (ed.), *The Homer Encyclopedia* (Blackwell, in press).

Φόρμιγξ, Homer's usual word for "lyre", having two symmetrical arms (πήχεις, *Merc.* 50, Mycenaean/Geometric representations), joined by a crossbar (ζυγόν, *Il.* 9.187, *Merc.* 50) and inserted into a hollow (γλαφυρή, formulaic, verse-initial: *Od.* x 2, cf. 8.257, *Ap.* 183, *Merc.* 65) resonator; this was round-based until c.600 and generally wooden, although tortoise-shells, typical of amateurs (*Merc.* 25–61, 453–5, 485f.), are known from Mycenaean times (Phylakopi). Strings (χορδαί) were of (female?) sheepgut (*Merc.* 51), bound at the yoke around pegs/leather strips (κόλλοπες: *Od.* 21.406 with Eust.), and secured to the resonator by a tailpiece (χορδοτόνον [Arist.] *De audib.* 803a41) of metal (excavated iron remains). Easily replaced (*Od.* 21.406–9) their sound, struck by a pick (πλήκτρον, *Merc.* 53) of bone, ivory (Menidi *tholos*) or even metal (gold, *Ap.* 185), was bright (λίγεια: formulaic, verse-final: *Od.* x 7, cf. *Merc.* 478), almost metallic (καναχή, *Ap.* 3.185; κονάβησε, *Merc.* 454), carried a distance (βοή, *Il.* 18.495; ἰωή, *Od.* 17.261, ἠπύει *Od.* 17.271), and held its own amidst revellers, choruses, and double-pipes (*αὐλός) — yet was still lovely (ἰμερόεσσαν, *Ap.* 185; ἔρατόν, *Merc.* 515). String-number remains controversial: a palatial heptatonic tradition (*Merc.* 51) may have coexisted with epic song on a few pitches (Terp. 4 Gostoli remains crucial); Geometric representations with three- or four-strings need not be taken literally for that hypothesis. Depending on context (see below), a φόρμιγξ-player could sit (*Od.* 8.65, 473, 22.341, Pylos fresco, Geometric vases, figurine), march (*Ap.* 3.182, 514–8 [leading procession], Minoan frescoes, Geometric vases), or dance (ὑψι βιβάς, *Ap.* 202, Geometric vases); he was often centrally positioned (*Il.* 18.569, *Od.* 8.65 f., 473), and as a chorus-leader impressively robed (*Ap.* 184, 203). Incised ivory remains from LBA Mycenae/Menidi confirm Homer's testimony that the φόρμιγξ could be an elaborate work of beauty (περικαλλέος, *Il.* 1.603, cf. *Od.* 1.153; καλῆ δαιδαλέη, *Il.* 9.187). Achilles' silver-yoked lyre was worthy royal plunder (9.187f.). Such precious instruments were doubtless typically "professional" — broadly speaking: Phemius and Demodocus may play instruments belonging to the hosting palace (*Od.* 1.153, 8.255–7). A lyre might hang from a peg between songs (*Od.* 8.67 f., 105, Classical vases). Phemius carefully stows his on the ground before begging mercy from Odysseus (22.340f.).

Φόρμιγξ is of uncertain but somewhat musical etymology (σάλπιγξ, "trumpet" *Il.* 18.219; σῦριγξ, "panpipe", *Il.* 10.13, 18.606a). Homer's preference is striking, since he must have known λύρα (already Mycenaean Thebes: TH Av 106.7). Presumably this was generically motivated: epic song, and its patron Apollo, are almost always connected with φόρμιγξ (*Il.* 1.603 [Apollo]; 9.186–9, 194 [Achilles]; *Od.* 1.155 [Phemius]; 8 *passim* [Demodocus]). The occasional κίθαρις is apparently synonymous (*Il.* 18.569f. φόρμιγξι . . . κιθάριζε; *Od.* 1.153–5: κίθαριν . . . φορμίζων), but cross-generic nuances may lurk: Hector ranks κίθαρις among the "gifts of Aphrodite" when rebuking Paris (*Il.* 3.54; cf. later contrast with "warlike deeds", 13.730f.), while κιθαριστῶν applies to Muse-offending Thamyris (*Il.* 2.600). Yet what of Hesiod's κιθαριστής (*Theog.* 95, fr. 305.2)? Φόρμιγξ itself, like αἰοδός/αἰοιδή, occurs in non-epic contexts. On the Shield of Achilles φόρμιγγες, together with double-pipes, accompany young men's choral dance at a wedding (*Il.* 18.490–5); it supports the Linus-song at harvest, alongside impromptu dancers (561–72). Apollo's Muse-chorus (*Il.* 1.603f.) evokes terrestrial maiden dances, παρθένεια; compare the goddess-dance of *Ap.* 182–206, and Artemis' love of φόρμιγγές τε χοροί (*Aphr.* 5.18f.). Hence the φόρμιγξ-singer at Hermione's wedding (*Od.* 4.15–19), and Apollo at Peleus' (*Il.* 24.63), probably imply choral performance: thus Phemius accompanies a chorus of palace-maids in a mock wedding-dance (*Od.* 23.132–48), while bridesmaids dance to the φόρμιγξ at *Asp.* 280. But on other celebratory occasions the φόρμιγξ was often played alone. At Homeric feasts epic song is specified (*Od.* 1.155, 8.73) or may be presumed. So too on Geometric vases, where funerary feasts are sometimes probable: Hesiod performed at the games of Amphidamas (*Op.* 654–9), and that context underlies Achilles' moody epic reflections (9.189). The φόρμιγξ is the divinely-appointed "companion of the feast" (δαιτὶ θεοὶ ποίησαν ἑταίρην, *Od.* 17.271, cf. 8.99, 21.430); Hera reverses the festive trope by calling Apollo "companion of evils, with your lyre" (ἔχων φόρμιγγα, κακῶν ἑταρ', *Il.* 24.63). The tortoise-shell lyre is equally a ἑταίρη at *Merc.* 31, 478, but this — and a sexual double-entendre (it arouses ἔρος . . . ἀμύχανος in Apollo, 434) — reflects the changing conventions of the Archaic symposium (Apollo was previously disinterested in young men's sympotic improvisations, 453–5).

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