CHAPTER THIRTY

CRITICAL STUDIES IN THE CANTICA OF SOPHOCLES II. AJAX, TRACHINIAE, OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

Ajax and Trachiniae, with Antigone, are probably the earliest extant plays of Sophocles, followed by Oedipus Tyrannus. Lyric passages in Antigone were considered in a previous article (ch. 29 above), with some general prolegomena and touching on some issues in the other six plays.

AJAX

172–81 (~ 182–91)

1 CQ 52 (2002), 50–80. 'The vulgate' for Aj., Tra. and O. T. includes the editions with commentary of A. F. Garvie (Aj.), P. E. Easterling (Tra.), M. Davies (Tra.) and R. D. Dawe (O. T.); also O. Longo, Commento linguistico alle Trachinie di Sofocle (Padua 1968). Newly relevant for Ajax is A. Pardini, 'Note alla colometria antica dell’Aiace di Sofocle' in CATPG, 95–120. On the chronological issue see especially Easterling, 19–23. If Antigone is assigned to 442–1 (so Griffith), I incline to the sequence Aj.—Ant.—Tra.—O. T. rather than Aj.—O. T. (a fortiori Tra.—Aj.—Ant.—O. T.), finding the lyrics of Tra. closest of the three in metric on the one hand to O. T., on the other to Eur.'s early plays (Alc. to Hipp.). —As in ch. 29 the siglum LJ/W embraces the Oxford Text of Lloyd-Jones/Wilson and their discussions in Sophoclea (1990); LJ/W refers to their Second Thoughts. For references to West (GM, AT), Stinton, Parker (1966, etc.), Itsumi (1982, etc.) and others, see the Abbreviations at p. xvi above. As in comm. Or., to West’s metrical symbols I add ba (baccheus), sp (spondee), T (~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~), A (~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~) and (diaeresis), and for his ‘gl and gl’ I prefer respectively ch ia and wil (wilamowitzianus). 'Enopl i an' is used in an adj ectival sense (comm. Or. xx, cf. p. 351 n. 13 above). I am again indebted to Prof. C. Collard and the anonymous CQ referee for their criticisms and corrections.

I have discussed elsewhere the rhetorical structure of this strophe, defending ή ῥα 'either' in 177 against Hermann’s ήρα (accepted by LJ/W). I abstained there from colometric discussion, but I take this opportunity of affirming, against L and most edd., my lineation of 176–8 as above (~ 186–8 καὶ Ζεὺς κακὰν καὶ Φοίβου Ἀργεί-/ον § φάτιν' εἰ δ’ ύποβαλλόμενοι | κλέπτουσι μόθους οἱ μεγάλοι βασιλῆς): i.e. as – e – e – D² (with symmetrical word-overlap), not the vulgate – e – e – e || D. There is indeed a symmetry here between 177 ... χάριν and 187 ... φάτιν; and one might compare the certain period-end at Medea 416–17 ἔρχεται τιμὰ γυναικεῖωι γένει || οὐκέτι ... But two considerations favour the run-on here: the rhetorical unity (as argued of 176–8, and the unusual absence of penthemimeral or hephthemimeral caesura when 176/186 is lineated as an iambic trimeter.

The concluding verse 181 (~ 191, see below), following two iamb-elegi (~ e – D), is not 'alien' (Dale, Pohlsander), but still enoplian (e ∼ d –), the stanza ending like O. T. 895–6 ei γάρ αἱ τουσίδε πράξεις: τίμιαι, : τί δεὶ με χορεύειν ~ 909–10 κούδαμον τιμαῖς Ἀπόλλων: ἐμφανής, : ἐρρεῖ δὲ τὰ θεῖα (e – e – : e: = d –); cf. also Aj. 408–9/426–7 and Hipp. 564 (~ 554) μέλισσα δ’ οἴά τις πεπόταται. Terminal – ω – – often invites recognition as the catalectic correlate of – ω – – ω – (D), and the colon – ω – – – is variously rz, tl, and × D. It is irrelevant that – ω – – ω – might, in a different context, be better taken as an aeolic hippedonactean (West's hi’).

The choice is close between μαχ- and μηχ- in 181.

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3 P. 269 above.
4 Cf. Andr. 789–91 πειθομαι καὶ σῶν Δαπίθαισί ce Kενταύ/･/οις: ομολήκαι δορί κλεινότατοι (e – D – ε – D), where the vulgate division after δορί with brevis in longo is more obviously incorrect.
5 Cf. Diggle, Euripidea 475 n. 158.
6 Sic (not οία); I have discussed Hipp. 563–4 (~ 553–4) in ch. 21 above (p. 279). [For – ω – – ω – – ο –, cf. also Alc. 595/604, Erechtheus fr. 369. 4.]
7 μηχαναίς Ἡ (conj. G. Wolff; 'fortasse recte', Dawe); cf. Björck 178. All mss have μηχαναίς at Ant. 349 (μαχ- Bergk, Erfurdt); cf. Ant. 363 ομηχάνων, 365 μηχανόν. μηχαν- is similarly the norm, if we believe the mss, in Euripidean lyric, as a hybrid like φήμα etc. (cf. Barrett on Hipp. 155–8). The position is similar in Aeschylus, with μαχαν- attested only at Septem 134, against Persae 113, etc.