SOPHOCLEA VIII: NOTES ON THE PHILOCTETES

BY

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29. τόδε ἐξύπερθε, καὶ στίβου γ' οὐδεὶς κτύπος
γ' Τριχ., τ' ΛΑ, δ' GR: κτύπος ΛΑGR, τύπος Α.

The text is read as quoted above by Jebb, Campbell, Dain-Mazon. Pearson has τύπος. But this is improbable. Neoptolemus has announced, δοκά ... ὀλον ἐπαχ ἀντρον εἴσοραν (27) and on Odysseus’ question ἁνωθεν, Ἦ κάτωθεν; he answers τόδε ἐξύπερθε: he cannot as yet see whether there are traces of footsteps. If καὶ is sound τ’ is impossible and δ’ nearly so. But if we venture to alter καὶ into ,ναί, (cf. Reiske’s emendation of El. 1445, universally accepted), τ’ is excellent and δ’ possible. ναί would be fairly colloquial, but that would be in keeping with other idioms in the Philoctetes.

91. ἐξ ἕνος ποδός
‘with only one foot to rely on’, Campbell, and similarly Jebb and Mazon. Webster (“we should say ‘single-handed’”) follows Schn.-N.-Radermacher (and, probably, v. Wilamowitz), in denying that the phrase has anything to do with Philoctetes’ lameness, implausibly in my opinion. How can the spectator, on hearing the phrase ἐγὼ ἐν τοίς ποδοῖς, be expected not to think of the hero’s lameness?

126, 7. τοῦ χρόνου δοκητέ τι / κατασχολάζειν
Radermacher’s explanation, ‘müsstig sein zum Schaden der Zeit’ (τι adverbal or internal accus.), approved by Groeneboom ad Herod. 1, 17, seems preferable to taking χρόνου as a partitive genitive with the object τι. I cannot understand ἐτι (codd.), approved by Webster.

146, 7. ὅποταν δὲ μάλη / δεινὸς ὀδίτης τῶν ἐκ μελάθρων,
These words contain the strongest argument in favour of Dale’s and Webster’s assumptions about the cave, sc. that “on stage one mouth is the central door of the skene so that we know that we
must imagine a corresponding rear door, through which Philoctetes
may return" 1). For if we connect the words τῶν ἐκ μελάθρων with
μέλητι—by far the most natural way of taking them—it follows that
Neoptolemus is supposed to think that the now absent Philoctetes
will enter his cave by way of the off-stage entrance and will appear
to them coming out from its visible entrance. This is the more
probable since between 201-218 no mention is made of seeing his
approach from afar, as for instance on the approach of Creon in
O.T., or of Heracles’ litter in Trach. Cf. also 211 οὐκ ἔζηδρος, ἀλλ’
ἐντοπος. To connect τῶν ἐκ μελάθρων with the main sentence, does
not yield a satisfactory sense (τῶν μελάθρων ἀποστὰς Σ); Campbell’s
interpretation ‘who inhabits here’—to be connected with the
temporal clause—is impossible without the altering of ἐκ into οὐκ,
conjectured by Linwood and Jebb (and in the latter’s text). If we
follow Webster, there is no difficulty and no need for emendation.
The comma has to be put after μελάθρων. Dawe’s scornful objections
against this idea (Studies in the Text of Sophocles, III [1978], 123, 4)
and also against διίτης are not justified, in my opinion. As to the
latter, δείνος διίτης seems to me impressively suggestive of Philoc-
tetes’ fear and pity inspiring gait, such as it is imagined by
Neoptolemus.

271-73. τῶν ἄσμενοι μ’ ὡς εἶδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου / εὐδοντ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς,
ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρᾳ / λιπόντες ὄχυρον’

‘Then, when to their joy they saw me lying asleep on the shore,
they …’ I prefer to put the comma after ἀκτῆς, not after εὐδοντ’
(Webster), and certainly not after πέτρᾳ (or πετρῷ)—many edd.,
but not Radermacher—and I assume the Achaecans to have lifted
Philoctetes, sleeping, into the cave. I am convinced that the words
bear this interpretation (κατὰ τὸ σιωπόμενον), and even that it is
necessary: (i) it would be strange, if the poet’s intention was to
express that Philoctetes was lying asleep in the cave,—at any rate
some distance above the shore—, to use the words ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς ἐν
κατηρεφεῖ πέτρᾳ—in that order. Nor can ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς mean: ‘above

1) Webster’s comment ad vs. 16. See W. J. Woodhouse, The Scenic
Arrangements of the Philoctetes of Sophocles, J.H.S. 32 (1912), 239 sqq.,