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SOPHOCLES' *PHILOCTETES* AND THE HOMERIC EPICS*¹

Among the ancient critics Sophocles was called the «most Homeric of poets»; he was the tragic Homer just as Homer was the epic Sophocles, as Polemo put it; or «he delighted in the epic style», as Zoilus put it in the *Deipnosophistae*; he was regarded as an imitator of Homer and his only genuine disciple², while Aristotle had compared the art of Sophocles with that of Homer (*Poet.* 1448a 26).

Forty-three of Sophocles' one hundred and twenty-three plays were on Trojan themes, and of the seven extant plays *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* are on Trojan themes, and include prominent Homeric characters. Among modern scholars Pearson argued that Sophocles «laboured to create afresh the heroic figures of ancient legend, and to present under new conditions the majesty of life which Homer had first portrayed»³, and Haigh had observed that regarded from a wider point of view «the dramas of Sophocles may be said to reproduce, in more ways than one, the old Homeric spirit»⁴. There are, indeed, important similarities: as P.E. Easterling put it «Sophocles seems more interested than either of his great rivals in heroic behaviour and (in the extant plays at any rate) characteristically chooses models of human experience that are very like those of the epic». «Moreover», she continues, «he sets these patterns against a background of thought which is close to that of Homer and archaic poetry, portraying man as frail, helpless, vulnerable, and at the same time capable of

* The present article has benefited both in English and the argument expressed from the reading and the illuminating criticisms of Dr A.J. Gossage and Professor P.E. Easterling who read a previous draft of it; I am grateful to them. Any inadequacies or errors that remain are of course my own.

1. Selected bibliography see at the end.

2. Diog. L. 4.20, Athen. 277e and *Life* 20; cf. now in Radt pp. 75, 39.

3. *The Fragments of Sophocles* I (Cambridge 1917) p. xxiv.

4. A.E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks* (Oxford 1896) p. 203.



great achievements»¹. Webster, too, connects Sophocles with Homer not only in his depicting of the plots, but also in the technique of contrasting characters and borrowing vocabulary².

The degree of Sophocles' dependence on epic stories for his plots has its bearing on the comprehension of Sophoclean tragedy, but, as Kirkwood pointed out, «it gives no evidence about the playwright's dependence on the poetry of Homer in his portrayal of the majesty of life»³. Besides by comparison with Homer's heroes the actions of Sophocles' heroes are far less involved with the gods «so that however profoundly Sophocles may have been moved by his reading of Homer he was surely tackling new problems and offering new sorts of answer»⁴.

Therefore, regarding Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, the problem of ends and means, Odysseus' sophistic arguments, or the sophistic study of civilization and language as a possibility of communication, are clear departures from his epic models; and these matters were contemporary issues, though he is less obvious than Aeschylus or Euripides in his acknowledgement of contemporary life.

Nevertheless *Philoctetes*' dependence on Homer and the examination of Homeric passages and qualities in it has its bearing on the comprehension of this tragedy, and probably will reveal what Sophocles means, by shedding some light especially on disputed topics of the play. Easterling observed in conclusion, on Sophocles' response to Homer when composing *Ajax*, that «we have the paradox of an author's distinctive originality finding expression through his reading of another's work»⁵. The present study may be justified if it can show that this principle is valid, too, for *Philoctetes*, or if it may be seen as contribution to this literary principle, if regarded as a general one.

The obvious Homeric features of *Philoctetes* are the characters of Odysseus (though he is a character rather contemporary to Sophocles), of Neoptolemos as son of Achilles, and of Philoctetes; but the two last-mentioned, though Homeric in most ways, are not active characters in the Homeric epics. The Trojan camp is present as a kind of background to the play, but only at a distance.

1. «The Tragic Homer», p. 1.

2. Cf. pp. 49, 87, 145, etc.

3. Kirkwood, «*Ajax*» p. 55. -

4. Easterling, *ibid.* p. 1.

5. *ibid.* p. 8.



There are eighteen quotations of Homer, most of them lexical, in the Teubner text of the *Scholia* to the *Philoctetes*. Modern critics of the *Philoctetes* make references here and there to Homer. Portraying Achilles, B. Knox in his influential analysis of *Philoctetes* as the ideal figure of the Greek aristocratic tradition cites *Il.* 9.312, quoted appositely by the scholiast on *Phil.* 94¹. Fuqua connects the same lines, *Phil.* 96-9, with *Od.* 3. 120-3, in his general attempt to connect *Philoctetes* with *Odyssey*². Commenting also on Neoptolemos' lies, Knox adds: «Achilles withdrew from the battle and threatened to sail home to Phthia; Neoptolemos claims he has withdrawn from the battle and is on his way home to Scyros (240)». Analysing *Philoctetes* and discussing the hero's stubbornness, A. Lesky differentiates Philoctetes from Achilles in the Homeric Embassy³. Commenting on Philoctetes' refusal of engagement, Harsh argues that the Greek spectator must immediately have thought of Achilles in the *Iliad* and especially of the great and deliberately verbose speech by which Nestor fires Patroclus to action while Achilles stands inactive⁴. Rose's article will be referred sometimes in its relation to Homer. K. Valakas' dissertation, investigating «the Homeric epics and Sophocles», especially *Ajax*, sheds some light on a number of points of *Philoctetes*⁵. And E. Schesinger offers a detailed analysis of Neoptolemos' role in the deception and adds a suggestive analysis of the Embassy in *Iliad* 9 as a parallel to the drama⁶. But it was Charles Beye who dedicated a whole article on the relation of the *Philoctetes* to the ninth book of the *Iliad*⁷. The similarity between the two scenes extend «to the spiritual and social dilemmas of the two heroes, or to the motives of the participants and their personal qualities». Beye notes many similarities and differences between the *Philoctetes* and the Em-

1. pp. 121, 123.

2. p. 52; cf. also pp. 29, 34, 49-50 (and n. 46).

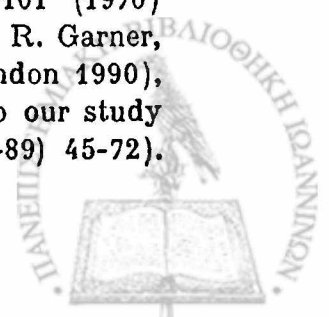
3. Lesky, pp. 173-4.

4. p. 410.

5. *Homeric «Mimesis» and the «Ajax» of Sophocles*, pp. 38-44 (Ph. D., Univ. of Cambridge 1987; I acknowledge my thanks to the author for allowing me read the thesis).

6. «Die Intrige», pp. 103-5.

7. «Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the Homeric Embassy» (*TAPA* 101 (1970) 63-75); the citation is from p. 64. Some other allusions are found in R. Garner, *From Homer to Tragedy. The Art of Allusion in Greek Poetry* (London 1990), pp. 146-8. For a thorough analysis of S'. *El.* from a prospect similar to our study see J. F. Davidson, «Homer and Sophocles' *Electra*» (*BICS* 35-36 (1988-89) 45-72).



bassy in the *Iliad*, but he makes an analysis of the tragedy from a wider perspective, not in close examination of the *Iliad* or the epics.

My argument presupposes most of the recent criticism on the *Philoctetes*. It reinforces some interpretations already brought out, or justifies some decisions made by Sophocles. Its main points are concentrated on Sophocles' treatment of the oracle, the controversial persuasion theme, on friendship and on Heracles' epiphany as a *deus ex machina*, as well as on the drawing of the characters; that is, on the main problems discovered in *Philoctetes*. Some other minor points, especially in the first epeisodion, are connected with Homeric passages or topics. And all these themes are considered in an ongoing examination of the play, the whole argument being thus run 'vertically' (in three sections) and 'horizontally' (in five main topics).

PROLOGUE: Odysseus-Neoptolemos and Odysseus-Achilles

At the very beginning of the play —before Neoptolemos' name is mentioned— Neoptolemos is addressed as a child of *κατίστων πατρὸς* (v. 3) which recalls the well-known adjective of Achilles, *ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν* (*Il.* 1.244, 412, 16.274), with all its connotations, while Odysseus' obedience to the orders of the Atreidae, as it appears e.g. in *Il.* 2.173-277, 9.165 ff., 19.154 ff., is expressed by *ταχθεῖς* (v. 6, repeated indirectly at v. 53, cf. *ἰπηγετεῖς* 1024). As in the *Iliad*, Odysseus is an instrument in the *Philoctetes*; he describes himself as the servant of Zeus (990). Achilles disobeys Agamemnon in the epic, as Philoctetes does in the tragedy, while Neoptolemos moves from his alignment with Odysseus to the polar opposite with his father and Philoctetes.

In the prologue of his plan Odysseus asks Achilles' son to be *γενναῖος* (v. 61). Commenting on *γενναῖος* Jebb cited Aristotle's definition of it in (*HA* 488b 19) *τὸ μὴ ἐξιστάμενον ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως* and Knox rightly argues that Aristotelian context does not favour Jebb's explanation¹. But, I think, there is no need to follow with Knox Aristotle's technical discussion of the word. It is obvious that Sophocles uses the word as a synonym of *εὐγενής* (cf. 336, 475, 799, 874, 1402, etc.)². And each author may have favoured one word or another to

1. pp. 125, 187 (n. 18). On the word see also Calder, «Apologia» pp. 170 ff., G.M. Kirkwood, *Sophoclean Drama* pp. 242-3; etc.

2. See e.g. F. Ellendt's *Lexicon Sophocleum s.v.*



express the most valued excellence in society, as e.g. Herodotus who used the word *δόκιμος* in the traditional meaning of *ἀγαθός* (9.93.1, 5.62.3).

Therefore M. Nussbaum is right observing that the word *γενναῖος* etymologically and synchronically is recognized as closely connected with one's nature and heritage, even as emphasizing consistency and fidelity to nature, and that being *γενναῖος* is being true to one's genetic heritage and being true to what is one's own essential nature (*φύσις*)¹. A man's actions should be in accord with and expressive of his character. She also rightly relates the adjective with the word *φύσις* in a Pre-socratic cosmological usage²: «substantial character, substance of a thing, existence», which must constitute the more usual meaning of the word in relation to its other meaning «development». The importance of *φύσις* on the *Philoctetes* has been recognized rightly by the critics³. But it is important to realize that it must be seen not only in relation to Neoptolemos, as it is usually examined, but also in relation to Philoctetes himself.

But probably Nussbaum is not right in arguing against Adkins that the opposition between competitive and cooperative values is a spurious one⁴. Adkins rightly, I think, maintains that Greek morality of the period of Sophocles is characterized by a tension between these two groups of virtues; he frequently cites *Philoctetes* to illustrate the confusion of values of which Sophocles here makes use as a part of the moral scene of this period⁵. At any rate, P. Rose in his excellent paper discussing the influence of the sophistic views of the origin and development of human society and values on Sophocles' *Philoctetes* many times investigates heroic terminology, Homeric 'shame culture' vocabulary⁶. And there is no doubt that in depicting *Philoctetes* Sophocles used behavioral patterns and values of the Homeric world, as described by Dodds and Adkins; as for the drawing

1. pp. 32 (and note 21), 40.

2. Citing Ch. Kahn's *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (N. Y., Columbia Un. Press 1960), pp. 200-3 (and notes).

3. R. Myth examines the role of the theme of *φύσις* in the *Philoctetes*, «Gottheit und Mensch im *Philoktet* des Sophokles» (*Studi in onore di Luigi Castiglioni* (Firenze 1960) pp. 641-58; K. Alt, «Schicksal und *φύσις* im *Philoktet* des Sophokles» (*Hermes* 89 (1961) 141-74); D. Holwerda, *Physis* (thesis, Groningen 1955); Rose pp. 82, 87, 88, 89.

4. p. 47.

5. *MR* pp. 189, 183, on vv. 119f., 1234, 1248; etc.

6. pp. 64 ff., esp. 68, 73, 74, 76, 77. Cf. vv. 1234, 1247, 1251, 475-6.



of Neoptolemos' character, the values applied to him are meant in accordance with the character speaking, and therefore in the most of the cases these values are seen ambiguously, depending on the stage of the plot.

In a moment of the play crucial for Philoctetes in the third episodion, Odysseus addressing Neoptolemos says: *μη πρόσλευσσε, γενναῖός περ ὦν* (v. 1068), which recalls the well-known Homeric formula *ἀγαθὸς περ ἑών* (*Il.* 1.131, 275, 24.52, 15.185, etc.). Odysseus and Neoptolemos are about to leave the stage and Philoctetes has asked the latter: «Your voice has no word for me, son of Achilles? Will you go away in silence?» (vv. 1066-7; D. Grene's transl). The possible meanings of *περ* here («as», «in the manner in which» or «since»¹) makes much more ambiguous the passage. Finally, when Neoptolemos expresses the crucial decision: *εἰ δοκεῖ, στείχωμεν*, Philoctetes exclaims in delight: *ὦ γενναῖον εἰρηκῶς ἔπος* (1402). And in this way the cycle from the beginning of the deceit to Neoptolemos' recovering his real nature closes with the same word.

But most important for our study is the dialogue (54ff.) in which Odysseus develops his plan and persuades Neoptolemos to undertake to deceive Philoctetes, especially lines 79 ff. The first words Neoptolemos says of himself 86-91:

*ἐγὼ μὲν οἷς ἦν τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων,
Λαερτίου παῖ, τούσδε καὶ πράσσειν στυγῶ·
ἔφην γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆς,
οὔτ' αὐτὸς οὔθ' ὡς φασιν, οἰκφύσας ἐμέ.
ἀλλ' εἴμ' ἔτοῖμος πρὸς βίαν τὸν ἄνδρ' ἄγειν
καὶ μὴ δόλοισιν*

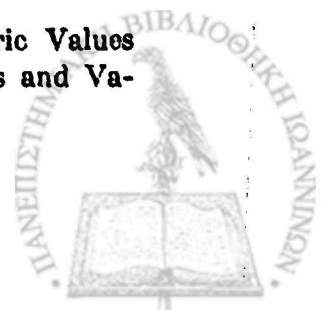
are a reply to Odysseus' words, especially vv. 79-82:

*ἔξοιδα, παῖ, φύσει σε μὴ πεφνκότα
τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν μηδὲ τεχνῶσθαι κακά·
ἀλλ' ἠδὲ γὰρ τι κτήμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν,
τόλμα· δίκαιοι δ' αἰθις ἐκφανούμεθα.*

Odysseus replies in 96-99:

*ἔσλοῦ πατρὸς παῖ, καὐτὸς ἦν νέος ποτὲ
γλῶσσαν μὲν ἀργόν, χεῖρα δ' εἶχον ἐργάτιν·
νῦν δ' εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξιὼν ὄρω βροτοῖς
τήν γλῶσσαν, οὐχὶ τᾶργα, πάνθ' ἠγουμένην.*

1. See the controversy: A.W.H. Adkins, *MR* pp. 37-8; *id.* «Homeric Values and Homeric Society», *JHS* 91 (1971) 1-14, pp. 8-9; A.A. Long, «Morals and Values in Homer», *JHS* 90 (1970) 121-39, pp. 127-8.



Lines 86 ff. recall unanimously from antiquity Achilles' famous lines to Odysseus in the *Iliad* 9.312-4:

ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Ἄϊδαο πύλησιν
 ὅς χ' ἔτερον μὲν κεύθη ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἶπη.
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω ὅς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα.

In these lines Neoptolemos in fact makes three points: (i) he speaks the truth (ii) he prefers deed to deceit and (iii) he prefers *καλῶς δρῶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ νικᾶν κακῶς* (94-5), which, one may observe, seems to be a retreat from competitive excellence. Achilles too appears to prefer straightforward words and hate diplomatic language, and Odysseus has found by experience that everything can be made to succeed by speech- and its abilities.

Of Achilles' rhetorical ability (i.e. to use the right argument) we are told again in *Il.* 19.217-9, where Odysseus, addressing Achilles, says:

κρείσσων εἰς ἐμέθεν καὶ φέρτερος οὐκ ὀλίγον περ
 ἔγχει, ἐγὼ δέ κε σεῖο νοήματί γε προβαλοίμην
 πολλόν, ἐπεὶ πρότερος γενόμην καὶ πλείονα οἶδα.

Achilles himself confesses that he was not the first in the speech in the assembly (*Il.* 18.105-6, cf. 11.788-9). On the other hand, of the Odysseus' rhetoric we are told by Antenor in the *Teichoscopyia* (*Il.* 3.221-24):

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὅπα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος εἶη
 καὶ ἔπεα νηφάδεσσιν εἰκότα χειμερήσιν,
 οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆϊ γ' ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος.
 οὐ τότε γ' ὠδ' Ὀδυσῆος ἀγασσάμεθ' εἶδος ἰδόντες.

Explaining his plan, Odysseus had already told Neoptolemos to try to deceive Philoctetes' mind with *λόγοισιν* (55). Odysseus speaking false or using *δόλος* is, of course, a commonplace in the Homeric epics. But one reference is particularly significant, the preface of Odysseus' speech to Achilles in the Odyssean *Nekyia* when after Achilles' question about his son and father he answers: *αὐτὰρ...πᾶσαν ἀληθείην μυθήσομαι* (507).

These three passages 79 ff. 86 ff. and 96 ff., express the contrast between *μητις* (artifice) and *βίη* (heroic virtue, might) the first being represented in the Homeric epics by Odysseus in the *Odyssey* and the second by Achilles in the *Iliad*. In the fifth century the characters of Achilles and Odysseus had become «mythical and literary prototypes of two entirely different worlds of thought and feeling», the first being the type of *ἀληθής τε καὶ ἀπλοῦς*, and the latter of *πολύτροπός τε καὶ ψευ-*



δής¹. One may say from the beginning that the first part of *Philoctetes* is governed by *μητις* and the second by *arete*, as we will see at the exodos. In the so-called first ending Achillean *arete* triumphs over *μητις*, but in the real ending *arete* is fused or conflated with *μητις*, since Philoctetes chooses to go to Troy where symbolically he is incorporated into the community.

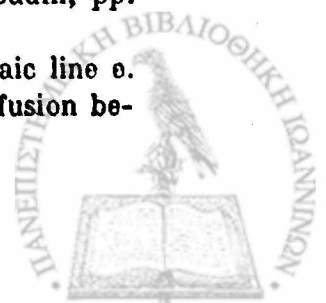
A Homeric hero must be *μύθων τε ῥητῆρ' ἔμεναι προηκτῆρά τε ἔργων*. This is what Phoenix is to teach Achilles. (*Il.* 9.443, cf. 11. 783-4) And Menoitios advises Patroclus *εὖ οἱ* (: Achilles) *φάσθαι πυκινὸν ἔπος ἢδ' ἵποθέσθαι καὶ οἱ* (: Achilles) *σημαίνειν*, and Achilles will *πέισεται εἰς ἀγαθὸν περ*. (*Il.* 11. 788-9). There are better speakers in the assembly than Achilles; he better performs deeds and Odysseus words. Neoptolemos as he appears in the lines above prefers deeds, too, but during the deceit he exercises words and prefers results and success to deeds, when he decides to take Philoctetes to Malis. Philoctetes always is, like Achilles, a man of deeds. It is characteristic that in the moment of Neoptolemos' most important decision, to bend to Philoctetes' supplication to take him home (i.e. an act), Philoctetes uses the most heroic language (475-6). And Odysseus, as he says openly, is a man of words. Therefore the double task of the Homeric hero is bisected into its components, *λόγος* and *ἔργον*².

And this theme can be traced through the whole play: Sailors coming to Lemnos may pity Philoctetes *λόγοις* but none of them take him home, i.e. act in accordance to their words (307-11, cf. 497 ff.) Cf. 407 ff., 555-6, 1306-7. Besides, the *logos* and *ergon* distinction constitutes part of what we would call «the language of Philoctetes» (see *infra*).

Achilles and Odysseus are contrasted within the epic tradition. In the cyclic epics it appears there is a rivalry between might and trickery, as the *Ὀπλων κρίσις*, narrated in the *Little Ilias*, concerning who was *ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν* after Achilles, suggests. No doubt one is reminded of the two heroes confrontation in the *Nekyia*. Their dialogue *Od.* 11.473-537, which is between the respective heroes of the two epics, constitutes a contrast between *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

1. Knox p. 121 and 186 n. 5. On the characters of the play cf. Craik, «Melodrama» pp. 23 ff, Blundell, *passim*; «Character» pp. 320-1, 328-9; Nussbaum, pp. 29 ff., 39 ff., 45 ff.

2. Cf. Taplin, p. 71. Taplin sees word and deed joined in the formulaic line e. g. *Il.* 1.211 (but cf. 204) and in *Phil.* 895-924 he finds an extraordinary fusion between the language of words and of deeds.



In answer to Achilles' asking after his father and son in the *Nekyia*, Odysseus gives an account of Neoptolemos' deeds in Troy, touches upon the two heroic activities of Neoptolemos, βουλή and πόλεμος, especially in relation to the wooden horse, and ends with his departure (11.504-37). Achilles' special interest in his son was to know whether he was ἐς πόλεμον πρόμος (493). In this account it was Odysseus who fetched Neoptolemos from Scyros to Troy (508-9), and Neoptolemos

ἦ τοι ἔτ' ἀμφὶ πόλιν Τροίην φραζοίμεθα βουλάς,
αἰεὶ πρῶτος ἔβαζε καὶ οὐχ ἡμάρτανε μίθων
Νέστωρ ἀντίθεος καὶ ἐγὼ νικάσκομεν οἴω.
αὐτὰρ ἔτ' ἐν πεδίῳ Τρώων μαρναίμεθ' Ἀχαιοί,
οὐ ποτ' ἐνὶ πληθυῖ μένεν ἀνδρῶν οὐδ' ἐν ὁμίλῳ,
ἀλλὰ πολὺ προθέεσκε, τὸ δὲ μένος οὐδενὶ εἶκων
πολλοὺς δ' ἀνδρας ἔπεφνεν ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτήτι (510-16).

And when the best of the Argives were inside the wooden horse and they were wiping their tears away and the limbs were shaking under each man of them (523-27),

κεῖνον δ' οὐ ποτε πάμπαν ἐγὼν ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
οἷτ' ὠχρήσαντα χροῖα κάλλιμον οἷτε παρειῶν
δάκρυ' ὁμορξάμενον...
...ξίφεος δ' ἐπεμαίετο κώπην
καὶ δόρυ χαλκοβαρές, κακὰ δὲ Τρώεσσι μενοίνα.
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ Πριάμοιο πόλιν διεπέρασαμεν αἰπήν,
μοῖραν καὶ γέρας ἔσθλὸν ἔχων ἐπὶ νηὸς ἔβαινε
ἀσκηθῆς, ... (528-35).

Analysing Achilles' position in the *Odyssey*, A. Edwards concludes that «In his second speech, Odysseus presents a Neoptolemos who equals the achievement of his father as a spearfighter, but submits to Odysseus as his mentor. For Achilles' son also distinguishes himself in the council, and fights successfully from the ambush by which Troy is finally conquered... Yet at the same time the *Odyssey* preserves the λόχος as the privileged mode of fighting and promotes Odysseus as its preeminent strategist. Ultimately this contrast of spearfight and ambush must be viewed in its ethical dimension, a contrast of force with cunning. The first *Nekyia* presents a direct confrontation between these heroes... Once again the *Odyssey* accepts the *Iliad* on its own terms, presenting an Achilles familiar from the poem. Yet through a subtle manipulation of theme and diction Achilles is so situated in the poem as to yield almost willingly



to a reinterpretation and revaluation within the *Odyssey's* priorities and value system. The *Odyssey's* strategy here is one of *μητις*. It lays a verbal, poetic ambush for Achilles and the tradition which promotes him as an ethical and spiritual model»¹.

The quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles in Demodocus' first song, *ρεϊκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλεΐδew Ἀχιλλῆος*, when *ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων χαῖρε νόω, ὃ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο* (*Od.* 8.73-82)², may be seen in terms of *μητις* and *βίη*. The first *Nekyia*, a postscript to the whole Trojan War, comments upon the previous quarrel implied in *Od.* 8.73-82 and constitutes Odysseus' final justification. In this sense, the Trojan prisoners' choice of Odysseus in the *Little Iliad*, is a choice of *μητις* over *βίη*, and thus a choice of the centuries.

The quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus in the first song of Demodocus dramatizes the antithesis of two different traditions of composition, the antithesis of two inherited central themes built into the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, namely the qualifications of Achilles and Odysseus respectively for the title «best of the Achaeans». The contrast apparently took the form of a quarrel between the two heroes over whether Troy would be taken by might advocated by Achilles or by artifice advocated by Odysseus. The *scholia* to *Od.* 8.75 and 77 point to such an epic tradition. We can say that the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus is an alternative traditional theme that would have been suitable for testing the heroic worth of Achilles in a different dimension: the conflict of Achilles in the *Iliad* contrasts martial with social superiority, the conflict in *Odyssey* 8 is based on a different axis, i.e. might against artifice³.

But the epic theme of such a conflict is also maintained as an undertone in *Iliad* 9, by means of including Odysseus in the Embassy to Achilles. The *scholia A* to *Il.* 9.347 take verses 346-52 as an allusion to the same tradition. And this is most important for our study, which relates *Philoctetes* especially to the ninth book of the *Iliad*. We begun this investigation with *Il.* 9. 312-4, in which Achilles replies to Odysseus with an *ad hoc* definition of *ἐχθρός*, that applies to the epic behaviour of Odysseus. Therefore the words of Achilles in the *Iliad*, the epic character of Odysseus, and the first song of Demodocus in the *Odyssey* show a traditional enmity between these two pre-eminent heroes of Greek epic. The *Nekyia* appears as a convenient future of the *Iliad*.

1. A. Edwards, pp. 68-9.

2. Edwards, pp. 38 ff.; Macleod Colin, *Collected Essays* (ed. by O. Tapin, Oxford 1983), pp. 1ff.

3. Cf. G. Nagy, *The Best*, chs 1-4.



From the contrast between Achilles and Odysseus' in the epic tradition, and especially in the Homeric epics, Sophocles appears in the prologue to choose Odysseus in preference to Achilles and substitute Odysseus in the latter's position towards Neoptolemos, following, in his construction, material from the *Odyssey*. Besides, we must take into account Achilles' plans regarding Neoptolemos and the role planned for Patroclus, in case he himself had no νόστος from Troy (*Il.* 19.326-37; cf. 24.486-92): σέ δέ τε Φθίηνδε νέεσθαι, / ὡς ἄν μοι τὸν παῖδα θοῆ ἐνὶ / νηϊ μελαίνῃ / Σκυρόθεν ἐξαγάγοις καὶ οἱ δείξεις ἕκαστα / κτῆσιν δμῶάς τε καὶ ἔγχεροφές μέγα δῶμα. Achilles in Homer had substituted Patroclus, his *alter ego*, for himself. We may say that in *Philoctetes* Sophocles makes Odysseus substitute himself in the place of Patroclus, besides that of Achilles.

Nostos, of course, is a major theme of the epics: Achilles' potential *nostos* is an important theme to which he refers frequently in the *Iliad*; Achilles' fear for Peleus and his desire to defend him is an important feature of the *Iliad*; it constitutes an important theme in crucial parts of the plot. *Nostos*, too, occurs, as we will see, in the *Philoctetes*; it refers to Philoctetes' coming home (no matter if via Troy). In the *Nekyia* Achilles himself is portrayed as preferring *nostos* over heroic κλέος. And Odysseus dwells on Neoptolemos' coming back ἀσκηθῆς (535ff.). Another *nostos* is at stake in the *Philoctetes*: if direct from Lemnos, an unaccomplished one, if via Troy, a victorious and real *nostos*.

The audience must have had in mind this interpretation of Achilles - Odysseus - Neoptolemos' relationship. Using Homeric material Sophocles has substituted Odysseus for Achilles in his relation to Neoptolemos. The lines under discussion, 79ff., 86ff., and 96ff., repeat the well-known contrast of the two heroes in the Homeric epics. Odysseus has won Neoptolemos over from Achilles (and Philoctetes). The first part of the *Philoctetes* is seen in this spirit; it is an ambush brought about by the co-operation of Odysseus and Neoptolemos. Philoctetes' invincible bow, almost magical for the conquest of Troy, is another trial Odysseus has to win. In the *Odyssey* all those who try to prevail are against justice and the social order; the only weapon of all those who try to resist and overcome them is their μῆτις.

Therefore the deceit (δόλος) in the *Philoctetes* is a kind of ambush. The λόχος is δόλος¹. The merchant's scene, too, and Odysseus'

1. Cf. its elements in Edwards, pp. 22-3, On the emphasis on θηρώμενος see Machin, pp. 264-5; Vidal-Naquet, *passim*.



waiting for Neoptolemos is another one. All three parts of the ambush may be traced in our play: the planning in the prologue of the play, in the discussion between Odysseus and Neoptolemos; the concealment in the false stories of Neoptolemos; and the attack in the case of Odysseus' appearance and his quarrel with Philoctetes. Besides, Philoctetes from ἀπηργιωμένος becomes, like Helenos, θηρώμενος (609, 616, 630). Even Heracles' epiphany as a *deus ex machina* seems visually like a 'peaceful' ambush. Heracles himself had set two ambushes, as in the case of Augeas' stable (Pi. O. 10.26-34) and in the *Garyonais* of Stesichorus (181-86 P). After all, Heracles' toils, hardships etc. belong equally to Odysseus' πολύτλας character. Nevertheless, Achilles parallels himself to Heracles in *Il.* 18.117 ff. saying that not even he escaped from destruction; and there is a strong relationship, as we will see, between Philoctetes and Heracles.

The most obvious analogy between *Philoctetes* and the *Iliad* is that the whole play constitutes an embassy like the ninth Book¹. Sophocles from the very beginning of Odysseus' plan calls the enterprise which he and Neoptolemos are undertaking together as λιταί (60), recalling verbally in this way the famous allegory in the *Iliad* (502 ff.), which gives the name to the ninth Book. In the false merchant scene Diomedes and Odysseus, a Homeric pair, are said to have sailed to fetch Philoctetes to Troy (570ff.) and Phoinix and the sons of Theseus are also said to be pursuing Philoctetes, while, according to the plan, another embassy to Neoptolemos was undertaken by Odysseus and Phoinix (343 ff.); thus there are three embassies within one, modelled on the Homeric one. Notice, also, that Philoctetes refers to the message he used to his father to fetch him home as λιταί (495). And as in the *Iliad* 9.165-6 the ambassadors, like those who participate in an ambush, are eminent members of society (κλητοί).

But the most striking similarity between *Philoctetes* and the *Iliad* is Philoctetes' position in relation to Achilles' position during the μῆνις. The most often repeated feature of Philoctetes is his loneliness and isolation. His wild condition and solitude has been interpreted emphatically and connected rightly with civilization and Philoctetes' joining the community². When Philoctetes introduces himself in a Homeric way indeed (219-21, cf. *Od.* 3.70-4, 9.252-55, 1.170; cf. *Phil.* 643)- he describes himself as ἀπηργιωμένον,.... μόνον, ἐρημον

1. Cf. Beye, . pp. 63-5.

2. Cf. esp. P. Vidal-Naquet; Rose passim; antithesis of polis vs. individual is a reaction to epic individualism, Beye, pp. 68 ff. C. Segal, *Tragedy*, passim. T.



ὦδε κάφιλον κακούμενον (226-8). These characteristics are repeated many times: αἰσχροῶς ὦδε ἐρῆμον (265, cf. 269), ἐρῆμον ἐν κακοῖσι (47 cf. 182-3), ὦδ' ἐρῆμος (1070). Philoctetes was cast ἄφιλος ἐρῆμος ἄπολις ἐν ζῶσιν νεκρὸς (1018; cf. 1028 ἄτιμος), to which Jebb compares the Homeric ἀφρήτωρ, ἀθέμιστος, ἀνέστιος (*Il.* 9.63)¹. Achilles himself describes his position in *Iliad*: ὡς μ' ἀσύφηλον ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἔρεξεν / Ἀτρεΐδης, ὡς εἶ τινα ἀτίμητον μετανάστην (9.647-8; cf. 1.412, 356, 9.110-11). Achilles' tragedy is measured in the terms of τιμή: the best of the Achaeans has been an ἀτίμητος μετανάστης, the most miserable creature in the scale of honour in human society².

Philoctetes, also, is ἀπηγριωμένος in double sense: he lives like a wild animal isolated from any civilization, which Sophocles takes to mean horror, far from any romantic image of a peaceful life in the friendly company of beasts (cf. 183-6), and, as a result, he had become tough, harsh and stubborn because of the injustice done to him. The first meaning underlines the first part of the play, while in the exodos the second meaning is more obvious. Because of his hatred of Agamemnon Achilles had an ἄγριον θυμὸν (*Il.* 9.629). Neoptolemos in his sincere attempt at persuasion addresses Philoctetes (1321): σὺ δ' ἠγρίωσαι- a most striking both textual and thematic echo.

Achilles, too, had come to loneliness after he had been deprived of his γέρας (*Il.* 1.348 ff.)³ and after this scene the ambassadors find him in 9.186 f. singing to a lyre. The ambassadors do not find Philoctetes singing - probably in a stark contrast - but his loneliness, both internal and external is the same; and the reason for that loneliness is the injustice done by Agamemnon (or Atreidae and Odysseus in the case of *Philoctetes*). It has been observed that Achilles rests rather than acts, in contrast e.g. to Aeneas in the *Aeneid*⁴; and Philoctetes suffers rather than acts as other tragic heroes do; their weapons are inactive- at least, deprived of their proper use, in the case of *Philoctetes*; the heroes' prowess is abrogated. The tragedy of both characters lies in their loneliness and suffering. The euphemistic δυσ-

A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought* (London 1967), pp. 53-4, shows how the loyalty of a citizen to the polis-community can be reconciled with the individualism which esp. Protagoras seems to proclaim.

1. Cf. Kamerbeek on v. 1028; cf. Schlesinger, p. 150, emphasizes the use of ἄφιλος, μόνος ἐρῆμος.

2. A.W.H. Adkins, «'Honour'» and 'punishment' in the Homeric Poems» (*BICS* 7 (1960) 23-32).

3. Cf. καὶ πον πόντου θωὸς ἐφήμενος of Odysseus (1123-4).

4. H. Clarke, *Homer's Readers* (N. Jersey, London, Toronto) pp. 110-20.



όλοτων πόρων ἀθλ(α) (508-9) from this aspect constitutes a meaningful ambiguity.

Furthermore, the similarity between these two heroes and their conditions are extended to their response to the embassy and their restoration into society. The first is connected with the oracle and the various stages of 'persuasion' and the second with the dénouement of the play.

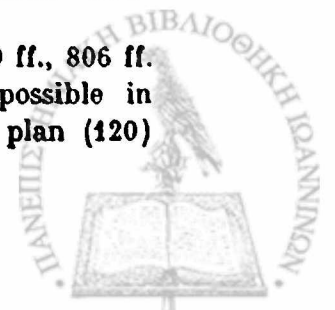
FIRST EPEISODION: Philoctetes-Achilles and Neoptolemos-Achilles.

In the first epeisodion (219-675) Neoptolemos speaks to Philoctetes and develops Odysseus' instructions. Philoctetes' arrival speech and Neoptolemos' introduction of himself and the news about the rest of the Achaean heroes at Troy portray both Philoctetes and Neoptolemos with Homeric colouring¹. According to Odysseus' plan Neoptolemos should say to Philoctetes that he was Achilles' son: «no need to lie about that» (57). But that was his fatal mistake. Neoptolemos appears to Philoctetes, and speaks to him, as a real son of Achilles, but this allows his real nature to undermine Odysseus' lies. Little by little he abandons Odysseus' plans and finds his true self in the later part of the play. The first epeisodion gives the opportunity for working out of the problems in Neoptolemos' soul, and thus constitutes a continuing irony throughout the scene and a contribution to the verbal ambiguity. In his narrative of his hatred of the Atreidae he matches up to both Achilles and the Achillean character of Philoctetes.

Neoptolemos' words in the second epeisodion «I have been in pain for your sorrow for a long time» (806), repeated three more times (906, 913, 966), signify the turning-point of the play and may be seen as a reference to this work out². Line 812 especially is one of the most significant ambiguities of this sort in the play: «I may not go without you, Philoctetes». Neoptolemos means in accordance with the oracle; Philoctetes means in accordance with his request to Neoptolemos; both finally serve the ambiguity. Also, Neoptolemos' ascertainment that «Odysseus is a cunning wrestler, but even the cunning are sometimes tripped up» (431-32) is a clever combination of the *λόγος-ἔργον* theme, as it is related to Odysseus' famous wre-

1. The *Scholia* on vv. 334-5 cite *Il.* 21. 278. Cf. also 16. 700 ff., 790 ff., 806 ff.

2. I am not investigating hints of Neoptolemos' pity as early as possible in the play, but it seems that Neoptolemos' acceptance of Odysseus' plan (120)



stling ability (*Il.* 23.700 ff.) and his profession of speech; but also the couplet prepares for the failure of Odysseus' plan and constitutes a double irony both to Odysseus and Neoptolemos himself. The same couplet may point to Neoptolemos' words in 1244, σοφὸς πεφυζὼς οὐδὲν ἔξανδᾶς σοφόν, which constitutes another irony of the play.

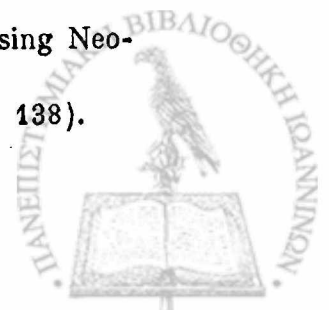
When, introducing himself, Philoctetes mistakenly believes that his name had never been heard by Neoptolemos (249 ff.), he is by heroic standards at the worst point of his loneliness and isolation: he is indeed in the place of ἀτίμητος and ἀσύφηλος μετανάστης. Homer's readers of course have Achilles in mind even when the Achaeans win; but Philoctetes' equivalent position is 'out of the play'. And when Neoptolemos says that he is sailing home (240, cf. 58) he puts himself in the first stage of Achilles' various stages of departure home from Troy in the *Iliad* (1.169-71, 9.357 ff.) or in his desired but never fulfilled *nostos* in the *Odyssey*. And the *hybris* of the Atreidae to Neoptolemos (342) puts the latter again in Achilles' position. Neoptolemos' hate is called χόλος (328, 374, 368 ὀργή), another word for μῆνις (*Il.* 9.675, 553). Neoptolemos' similarity to Achilles (357-8; cf. *Od.* 11.522)¹ works symbolically to link the Odyssean Neoptolemos of the prologue with the Achillean one of the later part of the play. Notice also that Neoptolemos, like his father, is ready to refute the Atreidae (374, 363, 369). All this quarrel is modelled on the quarrel scene in the first book of the *Iliad*. Neoptolemos may like quarrels like his father (*Il.* 1.187, cf. 9.255 ff., 699, etc.). On the other hand Odysseus is called οὐ δύσοργος (377) echoing probably Odysseus' ἀγανοφροσύνη in the *Odyssey* (11.203). Neoptolemos' ἐκδακρύσας (360) may correspond to Achilles' δακρύσας in the *Iliad* (1.349; cf. *Od.* 11.530 for Neoptolemos). Neoptolemos' loss of Achilles' arms, except that it refers to the well-known motif of the "Ὀπλων κρίσις, corresponds to Achilles' own loss of Briseis.

Philoctetes in his first long speech complains that it was the Atreidae and 'Ὀδυσσέως βία (314) that left him at Lemnos. A. Long notes four uses of the periphrasis with βία, three of them in the first part of *Philoctetes* (314, 321, 592)². This Homeric periphrasis and its

must always be kept in mind; cf. Winnington-Ingram, pp. 283-4. Segal, *Tragedy* p. 341. Cf. Steidle, who detects early hints of Neoptolemos' distress, pp. 174-81, Schmidt, pp. 168 ff., Alt, p. 160; for a contrary view see Erbse, pp. 189-93, esp. the last.

1. Cf. fr. ad. 363R (=363N²) where Philoctetes (probably) is addressing Neoptolemos: οὐ παῖς Ἀχιλλέως, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸς εἶ.

2. *Language and Thought in Sophocles* (London, 1968), p. 102 (n. 138).



repetition has an ironic ring after Odysseus' profession of allegiance to the tongue¹. The irony may be placed in the *λόγος-ἔργον* antithesis, but the irony also may be more intensive if we think that, though being Odysseus' feature, this periphrasis prepares for the final joining of Odysseus and Philoctetes, since *βία* is characteristic of Achilles and Neoptolemos. This Iliadic periphrasis of Odysseus and his role in relation to Philoctetes may echo Odysseus' nature of causing or suffering pain (*Od.* 19.407-9). Sophocles had played, after Homer, with Odysseus' name (fr. 965, *Vita* 20, Radt p. 39). Philoctetes, too, suffers pains and sorrow. But another man, Achilles, causes pains both to Trojans and Achaeans, but at the same time himself suffers pains and sorrow, as his very name suggests (cf. *Il.* 1.1-2)². Odysseus and Philoctetes are in a polar relation. Odysseus' higher position corresponds to Philoctetes' lower place in their story. Odysseus' *βία* corresponds to Philoctetes being *ἐοῆμος* and unknown. But, as it appears, it must be changed. Odysseus' yielding to Philoctetes (1052-53) and their final joining must be seen from this perspective.

The supposed embassy to Neoptolemos (343 ff.) is an embassy within the real embassy to Philoctetes. One also has to observe that its pretence, because of its place in the deceit epeisodion, is undermined by the concession of *εἴτ' ἀληθές εἴτ' ἄρ' οἶν μάτην* (345), which, though said to contribute to the truth of the message, in fact contributes to ambiguity and irony. In the false merchant scene the mission of Diomedes and Odysseus gives more ambiguity (570 ff.; cf. *Il.* 19.331-3, *Od.* 11.508-9). What the embassy said to Neoptolemos (345 ff.) continues in fact Thetis' oracle in the *Iliad* (see *infra*). After Achilles' choosing the alternative of glory and premature death it was god's decree that Troy should be taken only by Neoptolemos. This doom of Troy must be seen in connection with vv. 196 ff. and the plan of the gods for the coming of its fulfilled time. It has also been overlooked by critics that this oracle for Neoptolemos is a model of the oracle for Philoctetes. The conquest of Troy either by Neoptolemos or by him together with Philoctetes is called *καλὸν* (352, 1344). In both oracles nothing is said of Odysseus' role, but by putting Odysseus as the eminent member of the embassy Sophocles legitimately advances Odysseus' role in the capture of Troy, (after all his *τέχνη* is

1. Cf. M. Blundell, «Moral Character» p. 327.

2. Cf. the one-paragraph exposition in L. R. Palmer, *The Interpretation of*



always necessary for Troy's fall), thus expressing his affirmation of Odysseus' spirit in his age.

Neoptolemos repeats that he is sailing to Scyros in 383. I am suggesting that Neoptolemos' going home echoes Achilles' threat to leave Troy (see above). The dialogue between Philoctetes and Neoptolemos concerning the Achaean heroes in Troy offers more evidence. Given the replacement of Patroclus by Odysseus in Achilles' position towards Neoptolemos (see above), Philoctetes' question about Patroclus (433-4) may be seen as another irony on the part of the poet. But a striking irony of the play is Neoptolemos' answer to Philoctetes' question about a man «quite unworthy but dexterous and clever with his tongue»: *ποίου δὲ τούτου πλὴν γ' Ὀδυσσέως ἐρεῖς;* (438-41). Odysseus would never be undermined better¹.

Neoptolemos' words that «war never takes a bad man but by chance, the good man always» (436-7) supplemented by his assurance that he «will never abide the company of those where the worse man has more power than the better and the good are always on the wane and the cowards rule» (456-8) probably refer to Achilles' words in the *Iliad* 9.318-20: *...ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι, και εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι· | ἐν δὲ ἰῆ τιμῇ ἡμὲν κερκός ἠδὲ και ἐσθλός· | κάτθαν' ὁμῶς ὃ τ' ἀεργός ἀνὴρ ὃ τε πολλὰ ἐοργῶς* (cf. 1.576. *ἐπεὶ τὰ χερεῖονα νικᾷ*). In the same context Neoptolemos advancing his 'potential' friendship with Philoctetes says: *ἀλλ' ἡ πετραία Σκύρος ἐξαρκούσα μαι ἔσται τὸ λοιπόν, ὥστε τέρπεσθαι δόμῳ* (459-60), which may be modelled on Achilles' speech to Odysseus in the same ninth book 393 ff.: *ἦν γὰρ δὴ με σαῶσι θεοὶ και οἴκαδ' ἴκωμαι, ...κτῆμασι τέρπεσθαι τὰ γέρον ἐκτῆσατο Πηλεΐς*. Notice that suggestions of home occur twice in the same context: *Il.* 9.393, 414 (*οἴκαδ(ε), πατρίδα γαῖαν*). One is tempted to say that we may see Sophocles working on Achilles' speech to Odysseus from his *Iliad*.

Finishing his false story in vv. 461-67 Neoptolemos speaks of his departure for a third time. In the same passage he mentions his *πλοῦς* and *καιρός*. It is a common belief that the play is full of stops and starts, and D. Seale has emphasized the element of surprise and the repeated pattern of departures that become non-departures, which exploit the audience's ignorance and uncertainty². In 639-40

Mycenaean Greek Texts (Oxford 1963) p. 79, and G. Nagy's relevant chapter in *The Best* pp. 67 ff.

1. On Thersites cf. Huxley G., «Thersites» pp. 33-4.

2. 94 f., 98 ff.



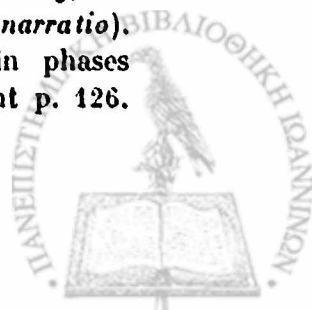
once more (cf. 464-5) Neoptolemos repeats that he will sail when the wind at his prow falls. And the theme of fair weather follows elsewhere in the play (855, 881, 1402). At the very end Heracles himself advises departure, using the words *καιρός* and *πλοῦς* (1451-2). All these proposed departures together with other actions (such as entrances to the cave 674, *ἐπίσχετον* 539, postponement 1075, etc.) constitute the well-known Homeric feature of *μέλλησις*¹. In *προσκύσας* (1408) another stop is planned; Heracles «exploits» it, and after his appearance Philoctetes in fact continues, in the *στείχων* of 1452, the *στεῖχε* of 1408, so as to make the two endings coincide. But all these cases may have been coined from Achilles' emphasis on *εὐπλοίη* (*Il.* 9.362), which is in accordance with his first decision to depart. In all these cases one also has to observe the ambiguity of the destination of the *πλοῦς*: in 529 the journey is «where we choose to go»; in 781 the voyage is «to where god sends us»; even in 1402 *στείχωμεν* is left without destination. Only at the end in Philoctetes' farewell to the island, and only after his acceptance of Heracles' message, *Μοῖρα* (1466 ff.) and the previous ambiguities (cf. 627) become one-way.

Another ambiguity in Neoptolemos' farewell may be seen in his wish *καί σε δαίμονες νόσον μεταστήσειαν* (462-63) which may prefigure Heracles' epiphany and Philoctetes' final *μετάστασις* and restoration. Of the same ambiguity are Philoctetes' profane questions (451-2), repeated with less uncertainty (1036), which prefigure the ending of the play and Heracles' epiphany restoring justice. The chorus's words especially, *θεὸς ἔγεται* (843), refer to the god's appearance.

The supplication scene is an important part of the *Philoctetes* plot: in this scene Odysseus' plan reaches its culmination. And this is one of the differences between Philoctetes and Achilles: both these heroes are supplicated, but Philoctetes also supplicates; Achilles does not supplicate, at least in person. But what is important from our point of view is that in the supplication scene Sophocles uses the Homeric (and epic) theme of *nostos*. First the supplication is made in terms of the heroic values (475-8) and Philoctetes' return is always related to his father and his *οἶκος* (492, 488, cf. 58, 240). It has been observed² that Philoctetes' land has been placed in the land

1. as the whole *Νεῶν Κατάλογος*, *Διὸς ἀπάνη*, *Teichoscopy*, *Theomachy*; cf. *scholia vetera* ad. 14. 153, 6. 392 and Erbse, *Scholia Vetera*, vii (under *narratio*). Philoctetes' entrances from his cave, in particular, correspond to the main phases of his relationship with Neoptolemos (219 ff., 730 ff., 1263 ff.), cf. Tarrant p. 126.

2. Avery, «Heracles» pp. 290-3; Taplin, «Mapping» pp. 73-4.



of Heracles and that means that Sophocles could always keep Heracles in his audience's consciousness. Through the association of Heracles with Ojta the impression line 453 ᾧ γένεθλον Οἰταίου πατρός would give to an audience would be that Philoctetes is somehow Heracles' son, or a descendant of Heracles (1131-2), in addition to being the possessor of his bow. Philoctetes' services to Heracles on Mt. Ojta can be regarded as similar to those which Philoctetes wants from Neoptolemos. Philoctetes is a benefactor of Heracles (670), just as Neoptolemos could be a benefactor of Philoctetes. From the very beginning of the play (v. 4) Malis, to the south of Thessaly, is placed close to Achilles' Phthia (in *Iliad* 9 and elsewhere), from geographical and textual point of view. Spercheios is a river god of Peleus' territory (16.174 ff., 23.142 ff.). It appears as if Sophocles tries to narrow the distance from Scyros to Malis and from Malis to Phthia and to make Philoctetes and Achilles-Neoptolemos neighbours, just as they share the same heroic code (479, 488 ff.).

It has also been observed¹ that Philoctetes sometimes thinks of his father as dead and other times as alive and the answer offered is that Philoctetes thinks his father is dead when he is depressed and alive when he is more cheerful: 493-7 doubt, 665 alive, 1210-1 dead, 1371 alive. And this must be right. But one could add that this again is modelled on Peleus' condition in the *Iliad*, which varies in accordance to Achilles' feeling and situation, which again is formed in accordance with the development of Thetis' *θεοπροπίη* (see infra, oracle section). Fathers and the care of fathers in their old age constitute a standard *nostos* theme². Achilles speaks of his father's fortune at length in *Il.* 9.393 ff., 18.329 ff. (cf. 434 ff.), 19.321 ff., 24.534 ff. (cf. 486 ff.). Achilles will be unable to nurse his father in his old age, in spite of his good fortune when he was young. Poias shares Philoctetes' potential homecoming and he will thank Neoptolemos for his help. Therefore two *nostoi* are referred to in the *Philoctetes*, that of the homonymous hero and that of Neoptolemos. Neoptolemos will fulfil his father's *nostos*, never materialized, from Troy; if Philoctetes comes straight home from Lemnos his *nostos* will be not a real, fulfilled one, but incomplete and without the due spoils, but if he comes through Troy he will come victorious and he will dedicate the spoils from the campaign on Heracles' pyre in memory of his bow

1. Jebb, note to 1209 f. and Avery, «Heracles», p. 293 (n. 1).

2. Cf. B.C. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* (1968), passim; J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford) 1980 ch. iv. pp. 108, 123 ff.



(1431-3). The false *nostos* of Neoptolemos corresponds to the desired *nostos* of Achilles in the *Odyssey* (11.501-3, see above); it is as if Achilles were to fulfil his threat (in the *Iliad*) to leave Troy. Neoptolemos' (and Philoctetes') actual journey to Troy corresponds to the real deeds of Achilles. If, obeying to the call of friendship, Neoptolemos brings him to Malis, according to the so-called first end, he will lose what his father lost in obeying the call of friendship to Patroclus and staying at Troy.

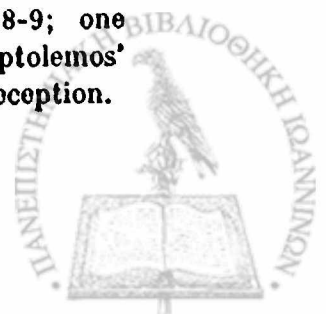
One has also to observe that the supplication scene is reminiscent of Thetis' supplication to Zeus in the first book of the *Iliad*. *νεῦσον* (484) is actually Philoctetes' plea to Neoptolemos, just as *κατάνευσον*, in a close correspondence, is Thetis' plea to Zeus (1.514). The fact that Zeus *νεῦσε* (1.528) corresponds to Neoptolemos' willingness to help Philoctetes. Philoctetes's appeal to Neoptolemos is about a plea to Zeus- *πρὸς αὐτοῦ Ζηνὸς* (484). Philoctetes addresses the chorus (and Neoptolemos) as *ξένοι* and Neoptolemos addressed him as *ξένος* after his appearance on the stage (219, 232). Philoctetes' position, no doubt, does not allow him to exercise the duties of friendship: at least they should learn each other's name (231-3). Philoctetes, like Achilles, has been placed in the position of an *ἀτίμητος, ἀσύφηλος μετανάστης*, that is that of a beggar. And Zeus is *ἐπιτιμῆτωρ ἰκετάων τε ξείνων τε* (*Od.* 9.270). And as J. Gould had observed *αἰκετεία* and *ξενία* are social institutions which permit the acceptance of the outsider within the group and which create hereditary bonds of obligation between the parties¹. Apart from any other reason which makes Neoptolemos stand by his oath (1367, 1398, 526, 811 ff. - it appears e.g. that Philoctetes' words are in the end stronger than deeds-)² it is also this obligation imposed on the person supplicated which makes Neoptolemos respond to Philoctetes. Besides, what Philoctetes seems to claim from Neoptolemos is that through *φιλία* Neoptolemos has been bound to him and this binding has been sanctioned through the taking of oaths (cf. *Il.* 7.302, 22.265-7).

Sophocles presents Odysseus' conception of success, as P. Rose observes, in terms of commercial profit and a markedly unheroic victory. Odysseus' materialism has a less anthropological flavour³. He

1. «Hiketeia», *JHS* 93 (1973) 74-103, pp. 92-3.

2. Cf. Taplin, «Mapping» pp. 71, 72 and «Significant action» pp. 38-9; one would use Euripides' famous line from *Hippolytos* (612) to describe Neoptolemos' obligation both to Odysseus in the prologue and to Philoctetes in the deception.

3. p. 92; cf. also Alt, pp. 155-6, and Steidle p. 170.



tells Neoptolemos that victory is a sweet possession (81) and uses 'profit' as an argument against hesitation (111). Philoctetes himself describes the island in which he lives as a place where no merchant can find profit (303), he calls Odysseus the «bought» son of Laertes (417), while when he recognizes Odysseus he exclaims «I have been bought and lost!» (978). The merchant scene is prepared in a similar materialistic spirit (584, 552, 579) and reproduces Odysseus' well-known materialism from the *Odyssey* (cf. esp. 8.159-64). Neoptolemos, too, speaks of sack of Troy in materialistic terms: «It is a glorious heightening of gain» (1344, cf. 352-3). One could say that he uses Odyssean language for Achillean deeds.

Perhaps this possessive language is connected with the name of Philoctetes itself. J. Daly has emphasized the linguistic interplay concerning the name of Philoctetes in vv. 670-73¹. These lines put double emphasis on Philoctetes' name, not only retaining its traditional sense «fond of gain» (670-1), but bearing also the connotation that «the best κτήμα is a φίλος» (673). Besides, these lines are ironic both for Philoctetes, for his thankless treatment by the Greeks, and for Neoptolemos. For it is only through his association with the suffering Philoctetes that Neoptolemos comes to understand fully the burden of his words. The changes of heart he undergoes are central to Neoptolemos' development as a character and to the development of the play. And it is this burden of friendship under which he will try to persuade Philoctetes. Last, but not least, under this meaning of friendship finally Philoctetes will bend- having been persuaded by Heracles. Line 673 is ironic, too: he will exercise what he himself said about the bow: he will show once more kindness, like Heracles, while Neoptolemos by showing kindness to Philoctetes will be in Philoctetes' position when he kindled the pyre for Heracles.

Therefore, the episode began with Philoctetes in absolute isolation and solitude and its end finds him in a position of friendship on which I would say the rest of the play rests. Neoptolemos matures in the course of the play, as Telemachus does in the *Odyssey*. Neoptolemos appears to have departed from his «imposed task»: the merchant scene serves in this direction; through the false merchant he has alienated himself from his mission. In 249 ff. Philoctetes' name was unknown to Neoptolemos; in 673 it is the basis of the plot. Probably these lines (670-73) are the turning-point for Neoptolemos'

1. «The name of Philoctetes»; cf. Clare Campbell, «A Theophany» pp. 81-2



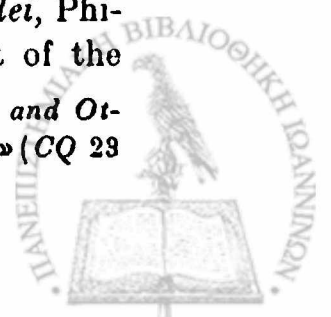
sincerity to Philoctetes. These are in the middle: the reciprocal giving of the bow is based on them. Furthermore, the whole episode and the prologue draw on the Odysseus-Achilles speeches in *Iliad* 9, which fail both to persuade Achilles and to make him leave. The first, since Odysseus does not offer what Achilles really needs, the second because Achilles, like Philoctetes, is not yet ready to decide about his own nature. They do not speak the same language.

EXODOS (1218-1471)

Philoctetes, too, uses his own language: one must speak of «the language of Philoctetes» in the same sense as A. Parry spoke of «the language of Achilles»¹. Achilles has no ready-made language, no terms, with which to express his disillusionment with society and the external world. Yet he expresses it, and in a remarkable way; i.e. by misusing the language at his disposal. Offers to Achilles are not enough to restore his offended honour: to undo what has been done (*Il.* 9.374 ff. 387); hence his stubbornness, similarly with Philoctetes. The alternatives of the prologue, i.e. force, guile or persuasion are absolute human behaviours, but they are alien to Philoctetes; his otherness and disillusionment with society is shown by his response to them. Constructions like that with the 'redundant' *πρὶν* of the *Iliad* (9.387, 651-2, etc.), are not found in the tragedy, but they may correspond to Philoctetes' persistence in not going to Troy. On the other hand, Achilles' concessive clauses «not if he gave me- or gave all- not if he gave me- not even so» (*οὐδ' εἰ, οὐδ' ὄσα, οὐδ' εἰ, οὐδέ, Il.* 9.379-85) may be echoed in expressions like that of vv. 624-5: «I shall be persuaded to go to Troy as much as it is likely that I shall come back from Hades after my death, as his father did». Philoctetes' final change of heart does bring him back from Hades-metaphorically-, but one may see the ambiguity and the irony underpinning the whole play, the character of Philoctetes included, in spite of the audience's sympathy. Also Philoctetes' curse on Ilium (1200), apart from the fact that it is part of his language, may echo Achilles' curses in the *Iliad* (9.377, 1.158 ff.).

Furthermore, the word-versus-deed, or the truth-versus-falsehood antitheses are part of the language of Philoctetes. An examination of the play shows that Odysseus characteristically uses *dei*, Philoctetes *chre*, while Neoptolemos' usage shifts at a crucial point of the

1. (*TAPA* 87 (1956) 1-7); now in A. Parry, *The Language of Achilles and Other Essays* (Oxford 1990). Cf. also M.D. Reeve, «The Language of Achilles» (*CQ* 29



play. The agent who uses *chre* emphasizes the importance of some action, which is his own action, whereas the agent who describes his position with a *dei* seems to be emphasizing instead the importance of some state of affairs. The precise meaning of Odysseus' *dei* certainly embraces duress and perhaps divine destiny¹.

The difficulty of communication is not due to the formulaic language, but to the heroic code of excellence; Philoctetes lives entirely alone. As Podlecki puts it, *Philoctetes* is a case-study in the failure of communication, involving three individuals who fail to come to terms with one another because they are, in effect, speaking with different voices².

1. The Oracle

The prophecy of Helenos is one of the major issues of the play; though it is not referred to explicitly in the prologue, it takes some length in it, since Sophocles uses this prologue in a Euripidean way explaining the plot of the play. Almost all critics agree that there is a progressive revelation of the terms of the prophecy³. Speaking of the poetics of Greek tragedy M. Heath uses the prophecy of Helenos to illustrate what he calls 'definition', according to which the «more clearly defined something is in a play, the easier it will be for an audience to detect inconsistencies». He goes on to argue that «Sophocles never needs to tell us clearly and unequivocally the terms of the prophecy, so he leaves it ill-defined and draws on it in unobtrusively inconsistent ways at different points in the play: its vagueness makes possible its fluidity»⁴. One may also say, with Gill, that Sophocles does not allow Neoptolemos to state the terms of the oracle un-

(1973) 193-5); J. Hogan, «Double *πρὶν* and the Language of Achilles» (*CJ* 71 (1975-76) 305-310); D.B. Claus, «*Aidos* in the Language of Achilles» (*TAPA* 105 (1975) 13-28); P. Friedrich - J. Redfield, «Speech as a Personality Symbol: The Case of Achilles» (*Language* 54 (1978) 263-88), to mention only some of the subsequent literature.

1. Cf. Nussbaum, p. 30 who cites S. Benardete's, «*Chre* and *Dei* in Plato and Others» (*Glotta* 43 (1965) 297); cf. also Blundell, «Character», pp. 316-7.

2. pp. 233-4, 245, 246 ff. The *Philoctetes* and the Sophists from the point of view of their teaching on *logos* and language, apart from what already has been said by scholars (Rose, E. Craik, Schlesinger pp. 122-4, Segal, *Tragedy* pp. 333 ff., etc.), is the subject of another paper.

3. Hinds, p. 170.

4. p. 114.



til he responds both in action and feeling to its spirit. The direct revelation of divine will by Heracles comes as a reward of Neoptolemos' response to the oracle¹.

Sophocles' revealing of the oracle is modelled on Homer's handling of Thetis' *θεοπροπίη* in the *Iliad*. Achilles in 9.410 ff. is at a neutral position: he is fated either to die at Troy with everlasting glory or to live a long life in Phthia but without glory. From this position on, as he is guided to choose the first alternative, Thetis' *θεοπροπίη* becomes clearer, so that after Patroclus' death, mourning in fact her own son's death, Thetis describes herself with the excellent adj. *δυσσασιστοτόκεια* and says that she will never again receive Achilles as he returns home to the house of Peleus (18.52 ff.). And it was this motif which Nestor used to urge Achilles, through Patroclus, to join the war (*Il.* 11. 794 ff., 16.36 ff.): i.e. the name of *nostos*, or suggestions of it, is used ironically for the no-*nostos* of Achilles. Furthermore, when the future has already been decided, Thetis «was mourning the death of her blameless son, who so soon was destined to die in Troy of the rich soil, far from the land of his father» (24.85-6, cf. 131-2; R. Latimore's trans.). Apart from Helenos' prophecy, the *nostos* theme and the supposed oracle to Neoptolemos follow the function of Thetis' *θεοπροπίη*².

Also, Sophocles' handling of the prophecy reminds us of Homer treatment of the terms of the embassy. Nestor establishes the need for an embassy on grounds never understood completed by Agamemnon (*Il.* 9.109-13). Odysseus in his speech does not repeat Nestor's arguments, nor does he convey what Achilles said to Phoinix and Aias, the second and the third stage of his decision-making (677 ff.). And this is important for the plot not only of the ninth Book but of the whole plot of the *Iliad*. Sophocles similarly reveals the truth little by little and leaves his audience to digest it little by little in accordance with his plan.

Sophocles uses the prophecy in the prologue —not explicitly— (68-9, 101-16), in the parodos (191-200), in the first epeisodion (in the false merchant scene, 604 ff.), in the second stasimon (vv. 839-42), and in the exodos (in 1324 ff., and 1418 ff.). The first adequate statement of the terms of the prophecy is in vv. 1324 ff., when Neoptolemos has found himself and speaks of his genuine *φύσις*, arguing

1. pp. 144, 144.

2. One could follow the prophecy of Thetis in the *Iliad*: 1.352, 414 ff., 505-6: Achilles and Thetis appear to know and use the prophecy in respect of one of its



on the grounds of the «helping-friends» theme; this stage of the plot corresponds to the embassy scene in the *Iliad*, to which we will come later. The prophecy in the disguised-merchant scene (604 ff.), like the whole scene itself, serves some other purposes: it has been designed to increase the audience's anxiety through the ambiguity of the word, and to initiate developments or explain the behaviour of all three principal characters of the play. Sophocles appears to follow the same technique that Homer had already used to create tragic effect. The revealing of the prophecy goes parallel to the plot and the poet's intentions. Sophocles had a parallel for such a technique in Homer.

One of the terms of the prophecy is that Philoctetes must come to Troy, and he must come willingly, and another that together with Neoptolemos he will sack the city. To the whole argument on this point offered by such studies as those of Hinds, Garvie, Buxton, Knox, Bowra, Kitto, etc., I would like to draw attention to some usages of the verb *πειθομαι* and add another meaning of the verb reinforcing Easterling's point that «the Greeks after all used *πειθομαι* for both ideas» (i.e. obedience to a command and compliance in response to argument)¹.

In his long elegy on the Muses after speaking about god-given, permanent wealth, Solon adds:

ὅν δ' ἄνδρες τιμῶσιν ὕψ' ἕβριος, οἱ κατὰ κόσμον
ἔρχεται, ἀλλ' ἀδίκους ἔργμασι πειθόμενος
οἷκ' ἐθέλων ἐπεταί (13.11-13W).

Also, in his *Eunomia* Solon says again

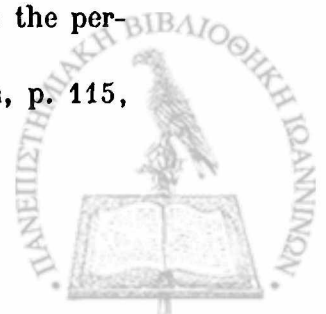
αἰτοὶ δὲ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἀφραδίησιν

ἄστοι βούλονται χρήμασι πειθόμενοι (4.5-6W; cf. v. 11, and

Theogn. 194, 380). In LSJ⁹ both these cases are classified under *πειθω* B. 2 with the meaning «listen to one, obey», «yield, succumb to, comply with». In the second quotation in a kind of personification *χρήματα* appear to 'persuade' the leaders of the *asty* to undertake arrogant deeds. In the first case in a personification again wealth appears to

alternatives, that of the short life, while Achilles is called (505) from his being short-lived (*ὠκυμορότατος ἄλλων*); cf. also 11.794 ff., 16.36 ff., 49-51 (where ironically the fuction of the oracle shapes Achilles' fortune), 18. 95-6 (which seems to be the turning-point of Achilles' fortune in the *Iliad*), 115-6, 19.408 ff., 21.108 ff., 275-8, 22. 359-60, etc. For an analysis of the Homeric use of Thetis in the perspective of her mythology, see L.M. Slatkin.

1. pp. 33-4. Cf. Garvie, pp. 220 ff.; Buxton, pp. 118-32; cf. Linforth, p. 115, Knox, 119 f.



'be persuaded' by *ἀδίκους ἔργομασι*, i.e. by deeds which are not in accordance with *dike*, with what is due to someone traditionally. In both cases we may say that we have the beguiling or fauning action fo *ate*, which seduces man to undertake an arrogant action which in its turn destroys him. It is important that this wealth *οὐκ ἐθέλων ἔπεται*, but it is a result of disapproved actions. Thus, *πείθομαι* may mean «obey or be persuaded or be obliged as a sequence of actions performed, though without one's will, or at least, without prior deliberation, without considering the consequences».

Iliad 9 gives a parallel to such a condition. Agamemnon indeed had fallen into *ate* (116, 119) and Nestor is looking for ways to persuade Achilles: *δώροισίν τ' ἀγανοῖσιν ἔπεσσί τε μελιχίοισι* (112)- of which Agamemnon forgot the latter. But the closest parallel to such a condition is Achilles' position in *Iliad* 18.113. Achilles participates in the war, at the same time willingly and unwillingly; willingly because he wants to avenge his friend and obliged just because of that. Philoctetes is in a quite similar condition, and, as we will see, their condition has some analogies, which constitute a major argument of this study.

Philoctetes' position may be that described by Dio Chrysostom (52.2) that Philoctetes «was led off to Troy, *τὸ μὲν ἕκων τὸ δέ τοι καὶ πειθοῖ ἀναγκαίᾳ*». The passage is taken to mean that the holding of Philoctetes' bow as a hostage by Odysseus is a predominant pattern to the plays of the three writers and the phrase «the persuasion by compulsion» is applied adequately to the Sophoclean play as well, though perhaps in Euripides Philoctetes was persuaded both by rhetorical devices and by the fact that his bow was being held hostage¹. A survival of this motif may be seen in Odysseus' threats in vv. 983 ff., 1003 (see *infra*).

But *ἀνάγκη* may be seen from the point of view of the Greeks at Troy; Euripides may have exploited the patriotic motif to persuade Philoctetes to come to Troy, but the Greeks certainly are in *ἀνάγκη* in this play (1039, cf. 601, 1340). Notice also the reverse of the situation between Odysseus and Neoptolemos: Odysseus was taken by constraint and trickery when he sailed to Troy (1025), while Philoctetes who originally came of his own free will (1027), is now to come to Troy, according to Odysseus' plan, by deceit, or, according to the oracle, again of his own free will. At this place one should notice with regard

1. M. C. Hoppin, p. 6 and n. 14; cf. Kieffer, *Arete* p. 39.



to the three possibilities of Philoctetes being taken to Troy, deceit, violence, persuasion (102-3), that Philoctetes himself, from the other side of the coin, begs Neoptolemos not to give up his bow to anyone willingly or unwillingly or through any deceit (700-2)¹.

Neoptolemos' words in the parodos (191-200) sound like a continuation of Agamemnon's passionate tone in *Iliad* 4.163-5, repeated by Hector in his speech to Andromache in 6.447-9: ἔσσεται ἡμαρ ὄτ' ἂν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἰοῆ (cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 126: χρόνῳ μὲν ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἴδε κέλευθος). Agamemnon in particular adds: τὰ μὲν ἔσσεται οὐκ ἀτέλεστα (168). One feels that in the parodos we are within the ἔσσεται ἡμαρ, with all its sinister connotations. Notice also the optative of past sequence in Neoptolemos' speech (199), because the gods arranged this long ago, as Webster observes *ad loc.* The preposition ἐξ(-ήκοι) means «intensively, to the end of, completely, thoroughly». Helenos' prophecy that Troy must fall this summer accords with this interpretation (ἀνάγκη, 1340; cf. 922). Thus, the oracle and the ἐξήκοι mean that the fullness of time will come within the (plot of the) play, and so they prepare for the end. From this point of view, too, Neoptolemos appears to continue in many verses of the play (1347, 114, 346-7) his father's aim of capturing Troy.

One also has to observe, following Winnington-Ingram, that the hexameters in vv. 839-42 do not suggest the sudden insight of an oracle, as most critics following Bowra understand them (implied also by Jebb *ad loc.*), but heroic action². There is a discord between the Homeric metre and the unheroic enterprise in which the son of Achilles has allowed himself to be engaged. And this suits very well the other shame-culture terminology represented in the play by Philoctetes, and by Neoptolemos after his change.

As we shall see, Neoptolemos' speech in 1314 ff. echoes Ajax's speech to Achilles in *Iliad* 9.624 ff. Neoptolemos speaks with εὐνοία (1322) as a hetairos would have done, and as Ajax does, using the «helping-friends» argument, which Achilles has already accepted in his speech to Phoinix (9.612-16). Philoctetes' cure from the disease is one of the oracle's terms. μαλαχθῆς (1334), which may be taken metaphorically, too, is a term that one might have used in speaking generally to a hero when he was angry. θυμὸς ἰάνθη (a synonym of μαλαχθῆς) is also said of Menelaos by Homer himself in an apostrophe,

1. Lines usually overlooked, cf. Garvie, p. 214 n. 7.

2. «Tragica» pp. 48-50; Bowra p. 281; with very few exceptions, e.g. Rose p. 73, this suggestion has been neglected.



when his anger against Antilochos was softened, after the latter gave back the mare he had won wrongly (*Il.* 23.597-600; cf. 24.119). These lines in which merit is recognized and rewarded may be seen as foreshadowing Achilles' overcoming his grief and showing pity to his enemy's body in the final book of the *Iliad*, after his presiding at the ceremony and rising to magnanimity among his peers in book 23¹.

The bow is an important element of the oracle and constitutes an important theme in some parts of the play: an especially controversial one in the second stage (974 ff.). After Odysseus has been cursed by Philoctetes, he abruptly changes his mind and goes off saying «We do not need you, since we have these arms; there are good archers with us like Teucer and myself who know how to use the bow» (1054 ff.)². It has been much disputed whether or not at this point Odysseus is bluffing³, but I follow those critics who find that Odysseus pretends to leave Lemnos as a stratagem to make Philoctetes agree to come.

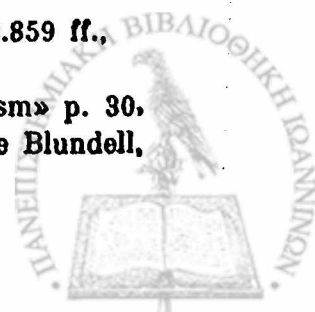
The whole scene and Philoctetes' desperate cry «Will you appear before the Argives in the glory of my arms?» (1063-4) may echo the famous *Hoplion Crisis* of the *Little Iliad*. I would also suggest that Sophocles may have built this scene on Patroclus' request to Achilles (according to Nestor's advice) to send him to participate in the combat: «Give me your armour to wear on my shoulders into the fighting; so perhaps the Trojans might think I am you, and give way from their attack» (*Il.* 16.40-3; cf. 11.796 ff.). The circumstances, of course, are not the same; but the basic idea is similar.

On the other hand, Odysseus and Philoctetes have some features in common. First, lines 1052-3 are significant: «It is my nature to seek to win in everything, except regarding you: I willingly yield to you now». Here the heroic competitive values yield to the co-operative excellence in favour, as it appears, of the social community. Odysseus' cunning strategy does not hesitate to sacrifice itself in order to achieve its purpose. Later in the exodos (1253) he threatens Neoptolemos that *οὐ τάρτα Τρωσίν, ἀλλὰ σοὶ μαχόμεθα* which is reminiscent of both Nestor's and Achilles' words in the *Iliad* (1.254-8, 19.

1. Cf. C.W. Macleod, *Iliad Book xxiv* (CUP 1982), pp. 31-2.

2. On Teucer's ability see: *Il.* 8. 273-334, 12.350, 363, 15.437 ff., 23.859 ff., and *Od.* 8.215 ff. (on Odysseus).

3. Hinds, pp. 177-8 and n. 4; Garvie, p. 220; Easterling, «Criticism» p. 30. «Character» p. 126; Erbse, p. 184; Kitto, pp. 98, 124. Opposing views see Blundell,



63-4, respectively) that Achilles' anger was sorrow for the Achaeans and happiness for the Trojans and Hector. Odysseus' threat, too, *χειρα δεξιάν ὄρῃς κόπης ἐπιψάουσαν* (1254-5), though typical in such conditions, may recall Achilles' position in *Iliad* 1.194, 219-20, when he starts to draw his sword against Agamemnon. Both, Achilles and Odysseus, retreat, but for opposite reasons: Achilles is moved by competitive values (1.213-4) and Odysseus by cooperative ones.

Also, Odysseus and Philoctetes are known in epic tradition as skilled archers. And the bow, as Gill observes¹, is the visible symbol of the capacity for heroic action and carries with it the obligation to exercise that capacity in action. The *ὀφείλεται* (1421) implies both that glory «is owed» to Philoctetes in return for his labours and that he is «obliged» to accept the chance of glory that his labours have given him. For this reason it is against the bow's original nature to be used against the Greeks as Philoctetes promises to Neoptolemos (1406); it was given to Heracles by Apollo as a reward for his *arete* (D. Sic. iv, 14,3) and Heracles presented it to Philoctetes for noble deeds. On the other hand, Odysseus' famous bow comes from Eurytos, given to him as a gift from Iphitos, and in some way connected with Heracles (*Od.* 21.31 ff.).

Achilles was killed by an arrow and it is the bow again by which Troy must fall - in fact, for a second time (1439 f.)- in a kind of «ὁ τρώσας ἰάσεται» concept, as the whole embassy to Philoctetes may be interpreted. With Troy's fall are related (i) Odysseus' skill at archery and cunning strategy; and (ii) Philoctetes' skill at archery and Neoptolemos' (continuing his father's) prowess. For this reason all these three heroes must take part at the same time in the siege of Troy. Therefore with Philoctetes' and Neoptolemos' (ultimately) heroic nature, Odysseus' intelligence and revolutionary spirit is united. The bow rather helps in a kind of reconciliation between these two heroes. They must measure up to the ideals symbolized by the bow. The fall of Troy may simply symbolize the co-existence and combination of these tensions, the past heroism and the present technology and spirit, in the fifth-century city.

p. 208, «Character», p. 315; Rose, pp. 92-3; Robinson, pp. 45-6; Knox, pp. 134-5; Schmidt, *Philoctetes* pp. 188-9; Steidle, p. 171, Odysseus means what says; Bowra, pp. 286-7. Cf. also on the bow, Harsh, pp. 412-4, Rose, pp. 69-70; Musurillo, pp. 121-2.

1. pp. 139, 145 (n. 6).



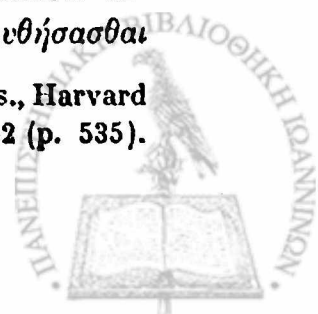
2. Friendship-*Deus ex machina*

Neoptolemos' speech in 1314 ff. is an excellent contribution to the persuasion issue, and it has been modelled mainly on Ajax's speech to Achilles in *Il.* 9.624 ff. Neoptolemos' argument is based on the «helping-friends» concept (1383) as Philoctetes himself acknowledges (1351, cf. 1322). Achilles had pronounced in the opposite direction (9.612-16). Persuasion, after all, is expected to benefit those who are persuaded (1268-9, 1351, 1383). Phoinix had suggested to Patroclus that he could persuade Achilles to participate in the war: ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραίφασις ἐστὶν ἐταίρου (*Il.* 11.792-3); an *agathos* may be persuaded by an *agathos*. Φιλοφροσύνη is the way to persuasion, ἔρις is its polar opposite, according to Peleus' advice to Achilles (*Il.* 9.256-8). Odysseus and Ajax try to excite Achilles' sense of honour and make him participate in the war: *Il.* 9.237 ff., 300 ff., 624 ff. Neoptolemos, too, tries to stimulate Philoctetes: 1344-47. Trying to bend Achilles, Ajax in *Il.* 9.628 ff. observes that he has made ἄγχιον the proud-hearted spirit within his body; Neoptolemos observes of Philoctetes: σὺ δ' ἠγχιώσαι (1321).

Also, both Odysseus and Phoinix have used the friendship argument. Odysseus has asked Achilles to take pity on all the other Achaeans- note especially Παναχαιοὺς (301)- and Phoinix mentioned in his argument the importance of friendship (585 ff.). Ajax especially has based his argument on φιλία and ξενίη (630, 640 ff.). Friendship is a means of persuasion and serves the «helping-friends» theme; but it has another dimension to be discussed below.

But most important of these echoes is the position in which Philoctetes finds himself after Neoptolemos' friendly speech; it is equivalent to Achilles' position after the end of Ajax's speech. It is well-known that after Achilles' outspoken declaration that he will leave for Phthia, in the first and the ninth books of the *Iliad* (169-70, 356-63, respectively), after Phoinix's speech he retreats to a second stage of his decision to withdraw to Phthia: we shall decide tomorrow, as dawn appears... (618-9); and after Ajax's speech he retreats to a third stage of his decision: I shall not think again of the fighting until Hector comes to the ships of the Myrmidons (650-55)¹. Philoctetes' desperate exclamation οἴμοι τί δράσω; πῶς ἀπιστήσω λόγοις τοῖς τοῦδ' (1350-51, cf. 1376-7) corresponds to Achilles' position after Ajax's speech to him; πάντα τί μοι κατὰ θυμὸν εἴσω μνησασθαι

1. Cf. C.H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge Mass., Harvard Univ. Press 1958), pp. 188 ff.; *Scholia Vetera* on vv. 309 (p. 461), 651-2 (p. 535).



(645). Both of them are in perplexity; they have yielded from their previously irrevocable decision but still they are not in a position to do what is proper according to the values of their society. They fail to yield as they bear in mind the injustice done to them or the pains they have suffered. Philoctetes' words in 1354 ff. (how can his eyes endure to see him living with his destroyers?) correspond well to *Il.* 9.646 ff., when Achilles' heart swells up in anger as he remembers the disgrace that Agamemnon wrought upon him before the Argives (cf. 16. 52 ff.).

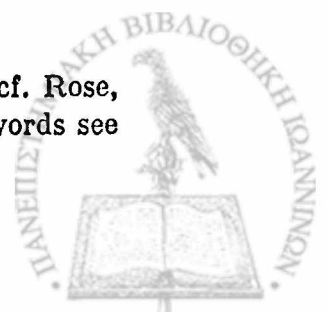
It has been observed that there are three stages in the action of the tragedy, in which each method is tried in turn, but without clearly defined frontiers. Each slides naturally into the next, and each is carefully prepared in the one which precedes¹. Sophocles likes triadic composition. One may add that Sophocles put deceit first so as to have latitude for manoeuvring in the case of failure, as it was planned. There was no hope for violence from the beginning. If persuasion had failed, Sophocles would have had no other alternative; I take the epiphany of the god to serve this theme. Neoptolemos, like Achilles, moves from stage to stage in his decision making towards the end of the play. From the statement «I shall sack Troy» (114, cf. 343, 353), he moves to «I shall sack Troy with you» (920), next to the opposite «You will sack Troy with me» (1335) to the final «You will sack Troy» (1345),² which may echo Achilles' advice to Patroclus not to take Troy and make him *ἄτιμον*, and his unfulfilled wish that only he and Patroclus should emerge from the slaughter and take Troy (*Il.* 16. 80-100). Also, in these successive stages Neoptolemos' transformation takes place.

The relationship of Heracles to Philoctetes embodies the type of friendship of the benefactor to the benefited in a heightened form, and develops the friendship theme from a higher level. Heracles' persuasion differs from that of Neoptolemos in the special authority conferred by Heracles' immortality. His *philia* is different, too. It antedates the present crisis and has never been marred by deception. Heracles, like Neoptolemos before him, is helping a friend and returning favour for favour with Philoctetes; Philoctetes ends by being persuaded by one friend and thereby helping another³. As M.

1. Garvie, p. 215; Kitto, pp. 122, 124; etc.

2. Cf. Blundell, *Helping Friends* p. 224 (n. 136).

3. *Ib.* p. 222; cf. also, Gill, «The Bow» p. 143. On friendship in the play cf. Rose, pp. 69-70, 76, 77, 98, Segal, *Tragedy* pp. 331-2; for Odysseus' lack of *φιλ-* words see



Blundell puts it, «it is of crucial importance for success at Troy that Neoptolemos and Philoctetes work together as friends and allies... The significance of this partnership is underlined by the Homeric lion simile with its use of the dual (1436 f.). Friendship is to be rooted in reciprocity of mutual protection (1434-7)»¹. This duality is suggested, too, by the partnership of Achilles and Patroclus, when Achilles calls on Zeus, Athene and Apollo to let him capture Troy only in combination with Patroclus (16.97-100).

After explaining who he is Heracles uses a polite Homeric injunction for sympathetic hearing *ἐπάκουσον* (1417), which as Rose suggests does not mean «obey» (as in LSJ⁹) but expresses the usual confidence conveyed by the word that a careful hearing will win agreement. After all, Heracles' speech is described by the heroic term *μῦθοι* (1410, 1417, 1447), instead of *λόγοι* used for Odysseus and Neoptolemos: that means that Philoctetes needs another kind of «λόγος» to be persuaded². Philoctetes' response to Heracles *οὐκ ἀπιθήσω* (1447), which means not obedience but acquiescence in persuasion, combines the double motivation of authority, obeying a *philos* with superior status, with that of persuasion. It echoes the *ὡς ἔφατ'*, *οὐδ' ἀπίθησε* formula (cf. e.g. *Il.* 24. 120). The vocabulary used is political and so the oracle is incorporated in political terminology. The intervention of Heracles counts as the final triumph of persuasion which brings Philoctetes willingly to Troy³. Under the divine pronouncements of Heracles we can see an ironic truth in Odysseus' claim for the primacy of the tongue.

The fact of Heracles' arrival is in some ways more significant than what he says. But the *deus ex machina* has been disputed as one of the anomalies or inconsistencies of the play. It has been observed e.g. that the second conclusion of the play does nothing to destroy the effects of the first conclusion, that it in no way weakens or

Nussbaum, p. 36, Rose pp. 89-90, Blundell, «Moral Character» pp. 308 ff. J. Redling, *The Dramatic Function of Philia in the Later Plays of Sophocles* (Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Michigan 1971), analyzing the importance of friendship in *Philoctetes*, offers a good outline of reversal situations, p. 84.

1. *Ib.* p. 224. On the famous simile cf. also Wolff, A Note, pp. 149-50; Segal, «Imperishable piety» p. 158. Jebb cites *Il.* 10.297, 5.548, Aesch. *Cho.* 938 Eur. *Or.* 1401.

2. p. 101; cf. Machin, p. 275 (n. 25); Winnington-Ingram, pp. 299-300; Segal, *Tragedy* pp. 338-9.

3. Blundell, *Helping* p. 221; cf. also Easterling, «Criticism» pp. 31, 33 ff.



cancels any of the dramatic points that have been made in the first conclusion, and that its lightness does much to emphasize that it is the first conclusion which is the true one that Sophocles wishes to leave dominant in our minds; Sophocles added the second conclusion simply to suggest that history and theology had not been left out of account, without altering the true focus of the play. Another observation is that the zigzag development of the plot and its arbitrary solution is deliberately framed for effect, an effect best described as melo-dramatic¹.

The *deus ex machina* does indeed form a fitting climax of the play². Apart from the observation that divine and heroic epiphanies may have been more common in the Sophoclean corpus than is usually supposed. Heracles appears as the visible standard against which man is measured. The *deus ex machina* represents the mental change of Philoctetes³. Heracles has been viewed not as an external emissary from Olympus, but as the divine impulse of Philoctetes himself; almost a mere symbol of Philoctetes' thought. The god is a part of the hero, a kind of inner divinity. In the tragic outlook of Homer and Sophocles the gods frame the hero's sufferings in the dimension of eternity⁴. Heracles' appearance may correspond to Athene's epiphany in the first book of the *Iliad* (193 ff.). One may also observe that while Euripidean epiphanies serve to cut the knot of the plot, the *deus ex machina* in *Philoctetes* does not appear necessary for the play; the god serves friendship. In the *Iliad* it is the friend's death that moves Achilles to the fighting.

In the *Philoctetes* it is the friend's appearance that «persuades» Philoctetes to participate in the war. Therefore Philoctetes' going willingly to Troy is equivalent to Achilles' participating, of his own will, in the war: he acts willingly, as he would not wish, and unwill-

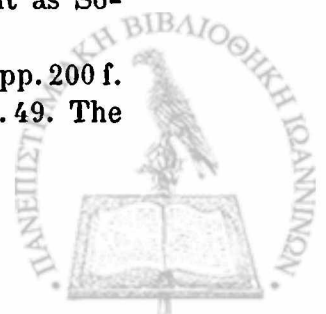
Rose p. 101, Buxton, *Persuasion* pp. 128f, Rickert, pp. 160-4. Contra Podlecki, «Word» p. 245, Robinson, «Topics» p. 53.

1. Robinson esp. pp. 52 ff. Cf. also Craik, «Melodrama» pp. 22, 28-9. For an interpretation of the Sophoclean endings see D. H. Roberts.

2. Bowra, pp. 301-6, Whitman, *Sophocles* p. 187, Seale, «Surprise», pp. 98 ff. Gill, «Bow» pp. 142-4, Blundell, *Helping* p. 221. On the *deus ex machina* see also: Linforth, «Philoctetes» pp. 152-54; Alt, pp. 173 f.; Schmidt, pp. 243 ff; Machin, pp. 270, 275 (n. 25); Beye, pp. 74-5; Segal, *Tragedy* p. 339; L. Pearson, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* (Stanford 1962) pp. 198-9; Schlesinger takes it as Sophocles' third major innovation; etc.

3. Reinhardt, *Sophocles* pp. 190-91; cf. Fuqua, «Studies» p. 45; Erbse, pp. 200 f.

4. Whitman, *Sophocles* 177, 187-88; Bowra p. 302; Kieffer, «Arete» p. 49. The



lingly, though he wants it! Of course Philoctetes does not avenge any friend's death, but nevertheless the motif works. Achilles does not fight for the sake of gifts, though they are not neglected (*Il.* 19.146-8; 9.602 ff., 24.594-5); the gift for Philoctetes may consist of his healing. *Kleos* is common for both. Homer had Patroclus to move Achilles to battle. Sophocles had «to invent» the *deus ex machina* on the same grounds of friendship which was the motive for Achilles in the *Iliad*; and this was Heracles. For this reason Heracles' appearance had been prepared carefully throughout the play. If Sophocles had felt any difficulty in his dramatic technique to have Philoctetes persuaded *κατὰ τὸ εἶκός*, after all, he would not have made him some fifty verses earlier say «never, if of my will I must see Troy» (1392). The reconciliation at the end of the play is modelled upon the *μήνιδος ἀπόρρησις* of the nineteenth Book of the *Iliad* (56 ff., 35, 75). The ὦ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν (1445) exclamation sounds like Achilles' surprise after the appearance of Patroclus' soul (*Il.* 23.69ff., 94 ff.); or Heracles' epiphany in the tragedy sounds like a mythological exemplum in the Homeric epics.

Above all, however, it is the *θεράπων*-relationship between Achilles and Patroclus which we may investigate between Heracles and Philoctetes (and Philoctetes and Neoptolemos, too), which justifies the epiphany of Heracles. The meaning of *θεράπων* as an adjective of Patroclus goes beyond the dimensions of a warrior's companion; it denotes the ritual substitute of Achilles. Patroclus and Achilles are two irreconcilable aspects of the same character; the failure of his own *nostos* is equated with the death of his *θεράπων*, as the death motif is stressed during Patroclus' *aristeia*. In Achilles' words, Patroclus and Achilles are equivalent warriors, so long as Patroclus stays by Achilles' side; once he is on his own, however, the identity of Patroclus as warrior is in question (*Il.* 16.241-45). The fatal impersonation of Achilles by Patroclus reveals that the *θεράπων* is no longer the equivalent of Achilles, once he leaves his side and goes beyond the limits Achilles had set for him (16.87-96)¹. I am suggesting that Philoctetes and Heracles, too, are found in the *θεράπων* function, both in heroic and cult / ritual relationship, i.e. Heracles' friendship with Philoctetes is built on Achilles' ritual relationship to Patroclus and Philoctetes is Heracles' ritual substitute.

function of the gods, esp. in the Homeric epics is a large theme in literature, cf. e.g. W. Willcock, «Some aspects of the Gods in the *Iliad*» (*BICS* 17(1970) 1-10).

1. In the sense D. S. Sinos, examines Achilles-Patroclus' *φιλία* in *Achilles*, chs. 2, 3, 5; Nagy, *The Best* pp. 33, 292-3.



That means that Heracles persuades Philoctetes, his *alter ego*, just as Patroclus persuades Achilles to allow him to participate in the war. In fact it is about the same kind of *πειθῶ* and for similar action through the duality of both heroes; or each hero, in each action persuades the converse side of himself. The very epiphany of Heracles corresponds to Achilles' sending Patroclus into battle to help the Achaeans. Neoptolemos, like Ajax, has just failed to persuade Philoctetes (: Achilles); Heracles succeeds. Patroclus, too, persuaded Achilles in double way: first to allow him to participate in the war and second to make Achilles himself participate, as a result of Patroclus' death. And we know that in both these cases it is about Achilles' own fortune. Heracles had become immortal - on which perhaps we may see an attempt of the poet to distinguish the two faces of the same hero. But the emphasis on the invincible bow is an aspect of the heroes' identity. Sophocles could not ignore the legend that Heracles was immortal, that Neoptolemos was killed, etc. But this last gave him the opportunity to transfer the Heracles-Philoctetes duality to Philoctetes-Neoptolemos, with all its consequences: Neoptolemos' death, lion simile, etc.

Besides, the end of the play may echo another situation at the end of the *Iliad*. Both Achilles and Philoctetes need a moving emotional experience to convert them¹. Achilles needs to accept ransom for the body of Hector; Thetis brings Zeus' message to Achilles (24. 133 ff.), whatever Thetis' function may be. Sophocles employs the being closest to Philoctetes, Heracles - who is almost substituted for Poias' relationship to Philoctetes - to build his plot. This dictates Philoctetes' *οὐκ ἀπιθήσω* statement. The poetic material available, it appears, suggests to Sophocles the proper treatment, which fits both his reading of the epic and the plot of the tragedy. As with Achilles, who supplanted the anger which he felt for the death of Patroclus with the *φιλότης*, which is evident in his own gesture to Hector's father at the final book of the *Iliad*, so Philoctetes softens (or ignores) his anger to the Atreidae and participates in the war. *Φιλία* is the cause of Achilles' situation, and his attitude to Priam is due to his *φιλότης*. *Φιλία* is the cause of Philoctetes' persuasion, and his attitude to Atreidae is due to his *φιλότης*. One may say that as in Homer with Achilles the appearance of divinity broadens the mortal's vision, so too Philoctetes sees the whole matter in a wider range.

1. Cf. Harsh, «The Role», p. 413.



Therefore, the appearance of Heracles may be the most self-consciously archaizing aspect of the play: heroic, ritual, aristocratic and religious¹. It also reconciles the heroes, the two ways of heroic behaviour, that of Neoptolemos-Philoctetes and that of Odysseus. *Arete* has been emphasized in one heroic moment of the play *par excellence*: Neoptolemos is allowed to touch the bow in return for his *arete* and his beneficence (669). Heracles has enjoyed the glory of immortality (*arete*) (1420)². And he foretells that Philoctetes will sack Troy *ἀρετῇ τε πρῶτος ἐκκροθεῖς στρατεύματος* (1425), which cannot but remind us of the *ὀπλων κρίσις* in the epic cycle and consequently of Ajax and mainly of Odysseus, and goes back to Odysseus' words in 1052-3; note also that Achilles was *ἄριστος* of the Achaeans.

But Heracles won *arete* through trials and sufferings. One aspect of the play is the question of Philoctetes' guilt³ or what happens to a man who has been subjected to evil; Philoctetes is the paradigm of the hero who fulfils his allotted rôle despite his suffering. One may say with Adams that, as far as one can tell, Philoctetes had no Athenian cult, which may invalidate this emphasis on the heroes as an approval to an understanding of the play⁴, but the *εὐκλεῖ θέσθαι βίον* which is also due to Philoctetes in return for his beneficence, tasks and sufferings (1421-22) may point to an aetiological myth, as vv. 1431-32 seem to do; such aetiological myths are often put in the mouths of *dei ex machina*, as Kamerbeek argues *ad loc.* The *θεράπων*-relationship may reinforce such a possibility in cult or ritual.

But this must bring us to the «future of Neoptolemos», which may constitute the only disturbing irony of the play (1440 ff.), as Easterling puts it⁵. Sophocles likes making these ironical refer-

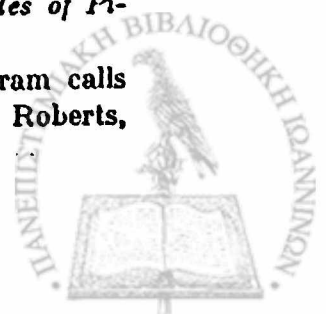
1. Cf. Rose, p. 100.

2. Kieffer sees Platonic colour in this *arete*, cf. esp. pp. 49-50 and Pratt, «Orthodoxy» p. 288.

3. Cf. Linforth, pp. 153 ff. Philoctetes' position is similar to that of Oedipus in *O.T.* Neoptolemos seems to express Philoctetes' fortune: it is necessary for men to bear their given fortunes, but no one can pity or forgive those who suffer willfully (1316-20, 1326-7; cf. 1094-100). On Philoctetes' relationship to Oedipus in *O.C.* see Erbse, p. 178.

4. Cf. *Sophocles* p. 135. On Heracles' cult see recently T.C.W. Stinton, «The apotheosis of Heracles from the pyre» (*Papers given at a Colloquium on Greek Drama in honour of R.P. Winnington-Ingram*, London 1987), pp. 1-16; A Neoptolemos cult is not impossible cf. Ch. Carey, *A Commentary on five odes of Pindar* (New Hampshire 1981) pp. 145, 153-4.

5. «Criticism» p. 39; Taplin, «Mapping» pp. 75 ff. Winnington-Ingram calls these references «windows on a tragic future», p. 302 with note 70. Cf. Roberts, pp. 179, 186 ff.



nces to other stories at the very end of his dramas (cf. *O.C.* 1769 ff., *Eletra* 1498, as Easterling notes, *ib.*). This is a well-known Homeric technique, too: In the neo-analytic approach Homer foretells Achilles' death; the death of Patroclus inside the *Iliad* foreshadows the death of Achilles outside the *Iliad*. Paris' mention by Sophocles, especially in relation to the τῶνδε (1326), seems to point to the *Iliad* and the epic material in front of him. The end of the play may finally, not be happy, but stands suspended and rather unhappy in the prospect of what happened afterwards, as is the situation in the *Iliad* regarding Achilles' fortunes. Sophocles had in mind, as Jebb comments ad ταῦτ(α) (1433), the rest of the legend which ascribed the capture of Troy to Neoptolemos, the hero of *Iliou Persis* by Arctinus; πέρσεις (1428, cf. 114) refers, probably, to that epic. Besides, σκέλα and ἀριστεῖα (1428, 1429) may contain a reference to Achilles' purpose, which never materialized, of capturing Troy and the spoils from it (cf. *Il.* 9.135 ff.) and once more to the *nostos* theme. It is the reverse of the prophecy of Thetis to Achilles and his final choice.

The θεράπων-relationship between Achilles and Patroclus is transferred to Philoctetes-Neoptolemos through Heracles' epiphany and his θεράπων-relationship to Philoctetes. In this perspective the lion simile gains more sense and the dual is completely justified, since the two heroes constitute in ritual the two sides of the same coin. Like Patroclus, Neoptolemos, too, is sent to help the Achaeans, and when he goes beyond the limits Heracles sets for him, he will meet *hybris* and death, just what happened to Patroclus when he transgressed his limits. From this perspective, Heracles' warning to be reverential may gain some deeper sense for us.

Through Pindar's *Paeon* 6 (but also *N.* 7), referred by most critics¹, the allusion to «the future of Neoptolemos» (1440-41) justifies and makes more consistent the analysis suggested both in the prologue in terms of the conflict between Achilles and Odysseus and the substitute of Odysseus for Achilles in his position towards Neoptolemos, and in the parodos in terms of the θεράπων-relationship between Patroclus and Achilles transferred to Philoctetes and Heracles in his appearance as a *deus ex machina* (but to Neoptolemos and Philoctetes, too). And through the first song of Demodocus in the *Odyssey* 8, which features the *menis* of Achilles and Apollo and, following another Iliadic tradition, pictures Odysseus as the prime offender of

1. E.g. Jebb *ad* 1440 f., Nagy, *The Best* pp. 59 ff., Roberts, p. 187.



Achilles, the same allusion to «the future of Neoptolemos» constitutes an irony from another perspective. Sophocles knows this Iliadic tradition from the Homeric Cycle and seems to amalgamate and exploit the whole Homeric tradition. What is out of the *Philoctetes* reconciliates the pro-Achillean with the pro-Odyssean tradition, concerning heroic moral patterns, might or artifice and the strategies for the fall of Troy.

Another last similarity between *Philoctetes* and the *Iliad* is the aspect from which the whole play is seen. Heracles subordinates his words to the accomplishment of Zeus' will, recalling in this way the famous Διὸς βουλή of the *Iliad* (1. 5): ἴκω...τὰ Διὸς τε φράσεων βουλευμάτα σοι (1413-5; cf. 990, 555 (not those of Zeus)). Therefore the plot of the play itself, like that of the *Iliad*, is subject to the approval of Zeus. It is also important that both Διὸς βουλή, and Διὸς βουλευμάτα are found (or implied) in similar contexts in the *Iliad* and the tragedy: cf. e.g. in *Il.* 1.212 and *Phil.* 1468 (δαίμων... ἐπέκρανεν). Besides, the solution of the tragedy is viewed under the word-versus-deed relationship. And Sophocles appears to continue Homer, as an author himself of the «post-Homeric» tradition.

The problem of *physis* is an important aspect of *Philoctetes*, but usually it is regarded in relation only to Neoptolemos, while it is essential to apply the same question to Philoctetes himself. What C. Whitman has argued about the *nomos-physis* antithesis in *Antigone* speaking of «Antigone and the Nature of Nature»¹ is valid of *Philoctetes*, too, only by substituting society in the place of *nomos*. By placing his heroes on the side of nature Sophocles raised the question of human potential at its fullest, as a phenomenon born of nature and nurtured on it and therefore committed to all that could be meant by man. Philoctetes' final choice, like that of Antigone's in the storm of dust, frames a powerful ontological symbol of man, great in its love and self-sacrifice. This moment is both the moment of true identity for Philoctetes and the moment of true nature and society. In it the problem of heroic *physis* versus society has ceased to be an antinomy, it has found resolution and unison in the heroic moment, where the intellectual and the instinctual are made one.

The distinction between heroism and morality in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is somehow bridged over. The tragic hero must save himself as the embodiment of those values that preserve society; he asserts what is the basis of society. And this basis is a kind of new uni-

1. *The Heroic Paradox* pp. 105-131, esp. the last.



on of the idea of heroic self-assertion with what we call morality. The heroic paradox is solved. «In the midst of increasing chaos, to seek the source of order in the structure of the individual soul is to frame heroism in an image of moral selfhood, an image that combines moral, human, and social commitment, with large heroic self-assertiveness»¹.

In summing up, it has been suggested that in the *Philoctetes* there are many allusions in particular to the *Iliad* but also to the *Odyssey*, most important of which are: Philoctetes and Odysseus in the prologue have been pictured in terms of the Achilles - versus - Odysseus antithesis, as it is described in the *Iliad* but mainly in the first *Nekyia* of the *Odyssey* and Demodocos' first song (8.73-82); the whole tragedy reminds us of the ninth book of the *Iliad*; the oracle of Helenos is treated on the model of Thetis' prophecy in the *Iliad*; Philoctetes' going willingly to Troy is modelled on Achilles' eventual participation in the war, both of his own free will, because he wants to avenge his friend, and yet unwillingly, just because of his friend's death; Philoctetes, just like Achilles, fulfils the oracle, though they behave of their own will; Neoptolemos' sincere attempt to persuade Philoctetes echoes Ajax's attempt to persuade Achilles in the ninth book of the *Iliad*; the various stages of the successive attempts to persuade Philoctetes echo Achilles' three stages in making his decision about leaving Troy or being persuaded to participate in the war; the *nostos* theme in the tragedy and the stops and departures of the play correspond to Achilles' *nostos* and «departures» in the *Iliad*; Philoctetes' persuasion corresponds to the *μήνιδος ἀπόρρησις* in the nineteenth book of the *Iliad*; the *deus ex machina* is invented as a consequence of the friendship-theme, corresponding in a way to Achilles' being persuaded by Patroclos; the epiphany of Heracles is built up on the *θεράπων*-function, i. e. Philoctetes is the ritual substitute for the god, just as Patroclos is Achilles' *alter ego*, and Philoctetes' being persuaded by the god is, after all, the reverse side of the same coin; finally the «future» of Neoptolemos and his relationship with Philoctetes is built up on the same *θεράπων*-relationship, as if it were transferred through Philoctetes to Neoptolemos. And therefore, this interpretation solves some «illogicalities» in *Philoctetes* through Homer's work, which thus has its bearing on the comprehension of the tragedy, and may have shown that the paradox of Sophocles' originality finding expression through his reading of another author's work is justified.

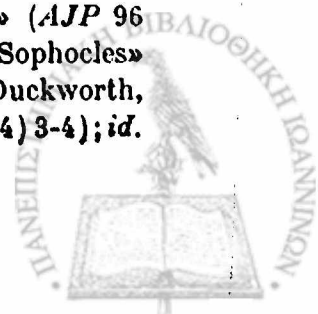
1. *ib.* pp. 19-43, esp. pp. 20-1, 37; Whitman cites C. M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (London 1957), ch. 2 «The Heroic Outlook», esp. pp. 22-3.



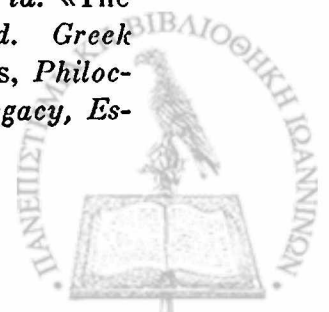
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The following works, which have contributed to formulation of my views, are cited throughout the notes by the author's name alone or by abbreviated title in cases where an author has written more than one relevant work. Some few cited works may not been referred to, but they have contributed to a better understanding of *Philoctetes*. The text cited is from Lloyd-Jones H. - Wilson N.G., *Sophoclis Fabulae* (OCT, Oxford 1990) and the translation is that by D. Grene, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies, Sophocles ii* (Chicago and London 1969):

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