

THE END OF SOPHOCLES' *O.T.* REVISITED *

During the period of time that has elapsed since an article of mine with almost the same title as above was printed (1), a number of important and interesting studies of this topic have appeared (2), most of which favour (or at least are highly compatible with) the idea that the end of Sophocles' *OT* has suffered large-scale interpolation. But these more recent studies fail to take into account all the arguments that could be (and have been) raised against authenticity (3), because they ignore earlier expositions of this view (4). It therefore seemed a good idea to re-examine the issue, devoting much more space to the question of authenticity than was possible (5) in my earlier

* Throughout this article I quote the *OT* and other Sophoclean plays from the new Oxford text of Sophocles (Oxford 1990) by H. Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson. I am grateful to these scholars for having allowed me to see the final proofs of this edition and also of their accompanying volume of notes *Sophoclea* (Oxford 1990), which I quote when apposite below.

(1) *The end of Sophocles' OT*, "Hermes" 110, 1982, 268 ff.

(2) To wit Dawe's commentary on the play (Cambridge 1982) pp. 245 ff., the closing section of Taplin's essay *Sophocles in his theatre* in *Sophocle*, 'Entretiens Hardt' 29 (1983), pp. 166 ff., D. A. Hester's *The banishment of Oedipus* in "Antichthon" 18, 1984, 13 ff., and J. R. March, *The Creative Poet*, "BICS" Suppl. 49 (1987), 148 ff. All these works are henceforward referred to by author's name alone.

(3) For a general bibliography of treatments of the end of the *OT* see Hester p. 13 n. 1. The best-known (though see below n. 4) argument against authenticity is P. L. W. Graffunder's article *Über den ausgang des 'König Oedipus' von Sophokles* in "NJPhP" 132, 1885, 389 ff., henceforward abbreviated as «Graffunder».

(4) Alois Patin, *Die Exodos im König Oedipus in Festgabe für M. Schanz* (Würzburg 1912), pp. 63 ff. raises several difficulties about the passage in question without doubting its authenticity. But I am thinking in particular of Eva Eicken-Iselin, *Interpretationen und Untersuchungen zum Aufbau der Sophokleischen Rheseis* (Diss. Basel 1942) pp. 275 ff. This study, by a pupil of (*inter alios*) Eduard Fraenkel and Gunther Jachmann (by whose attitudes to interpolations she has clearly been influenced) is in general very little-known. (It might have been cited, for instance, in several places within M. D. Reeve's *Interpolations in Greek Tragedy III*, "GRBS" 14, 1973, 160ff.: e.g. p. 227 n.1 could have been cited on p. 161 à propos of the deletion of Aj. 966-970). In fact, opponents of the end of the *OT*'s authenticity have hardly read up on each other. Dawe fails to refer to Graffunder. Dawe and everyone else fails to refer to Eicken-Iselin, who in turn fails to mention Graffunder. For Fraenkel's view of Eicken-Iselin see "MH" 20, 1963, 103=Kl. Beitr. I.409 n.3.

(5) As I explained at the end of this article (p. 278 n. 26), I had originally appended a detailed refutation of Graffunder's theory. The editors of "Hermes", however, were reluctant to include it on grounds of space and this was by no means unreasonable of them: at the

article. I begin with what one opponent (6) of authenticity has termed "Einzelanstöße", minor causes for concern on the syntactical level, and then turn to wider problems of dramatic technique and the like. My conclusion will be that, although the arguments against the genuineness of the *OT*'s end are more numerous and potent than any scholar (myself included) has yet appreciated, they still do not suffice to establish the case.

I

Scholars have disagreed as to how extensive the tampering with the end has been (7). The net has been cast most widely by Eva Eicken-Iselin (p. 276) who finds cause for concern as early as 1419-23, that is, in effect, with the entrance of Creon. But her remarks on this earlier portion are unhelpfully vague (1419-23, "zum grössten Teil schwächlich, matt, unanschaulich und von nichtssagender Breite in der Formulierung"... "Besonders unschön ist Vers 1440 und die erste Hälfte von 1442") and only at 1455-1514 does she settle down to really specific comment. Graffunder (pp. 403 ff.) detects oddities in 1424-31 so we had better begin there.

1424 ἀλλ': Graffunder insists that the particle here must not mean "sondern": rather it strengthens αἰδεῖσθ' in 1426. This interpretation leads him to find in 1422-3 an awkward and incomplete insertion. He declines to follow Schenkl and Bonitz in placing a lacuna after 1423, and Nauck in transposing 1424-31 to the end of Oedipus' *rhesis* (after 1415), and prefers to discover in the transmitted text evidence of reworking by an alien hand. His negative verdicts are surely correct, but the problem he detects is largely imaginary; ἀλλ' carries on from the negatives οὐχ... οὐδ' in 1422-3 ("I have come *not* to mock *nor* to reprove, *but* to tell you to withdraw") though the construction changes with a Sophoclean anacolouthon (8).

time of writing, Graffunder's article was rarely cited, so that refutation would have first entailed resurrection of what might have seemed a deservedly neglected theory. Admittedly, a brief remark by Hester ("PCPS" 23, 1977, 46) apparently promised a revival of Graffunder's case. But this in itself might seem good reason to postpone consideration of the issue until the new assault could also be evaluated. This postponement has, in fact, also had the advantage of enabling me to consider the other recent treatments listed in n. 2 above.

(6) Eva Eicken-Iselin. But I have not limited myself to the features she finds objectionable.

(7) Cf., for instance, Hester p. 22 f.: "If we are dealing with a mixture of Sophoclean and non-Sophoclean phraseology, rather than with a passage inserted *en bloc*, that would well explain the unevenness noted by Dawe" [see p. 6]. "... The interpolator wished to make the smallest possible changes" to both *OT* and [see p. 16] *OC*.

(8) Cf. Pearson, "CQ" 24, 1930, 162.

1446 καί: here too a particle causes Graffunder concern about a point of transition. "And" he finds the wrong word: following on Creon's remark in 1445 it produces a misleading implication that Oedipus has previously doubted the oracles and an apparent concession (contradicted by 1449-50) to Creon's wish that he remain in Thebes. But again the worry is unnecessary: we are dealing not with καί alone but with καί... γε which, as Dawe *ad loc.* observes, "are progressive (Denniston, *GP*² 157) as Oedipus switches from something that the *god* will decide to something else, a request made to *Creon*."

1455 καίτοι: yet again a particle is a source of grief, this time to Eicken-Iselin, who extracts from it (coming as it does straight on the heels of the verb θάνω) an inference on Oedipus' part that death on Cithaeron is unlikely because neither disease nor anything else could destroy him. Once more, Dawe's commentary explains the particle adequately: "a reflective afterthought, qualifying [Oedipus'] preceding sentence". When Eicken-Iselin proceeds to demand to know whether the misfortune for which Oedipus claims he is reserved is a different mode of death or something he will survive, she is raising an important issue, but not one that need reflect on authenticity (9).

1459-60: see below on 1466.

1462 ff.: Eicken-Iselin observes that these lines combine two different modes of expression: (i) my daughters have never eaten apart from me and (ii) I have never eaten without sharing the food with my daughters. So they do, but that hardly seems sufficient ground to dub the verses "impossible" or for interposing a caustic "wie rührend!" in parenthesis after (i). Dawe notes the combination of (i) and (ii) and observes that it would be eliminated by Schenkl and Arndt's ἄλλη for ἡμῆ in 1463. He also notes how difficult

(9) Although if Dawe's further gloss on 1455-6 were correct, it might: "Fate has some stranger end in store for [Oedipus]: what end that was Sophocles describes in *Oedipus at Colonus*". This is certainly the *communis opinio*; but it seems to me highly unlikely that Sophocles would already have mapped out in his mind the main features of the *OC*, including the highly original and unorthodox notion that he died in Attica. To detect an allusion here to the events of the *OC* is therefore to play into the hands of Graffunder *et al.* who suppose that the *OT*'s end has been altered to bring it in line with the *OC* (see p. 16, though Graffunder does not in fact cite 1455-6). But the concession is as unnecessary as it is dangerous: in the circumstances, what could be more natural (or rhetorically effective) than for Oedipus, having survived this grim concatenation of events, to suspect that he has been preserved for further (undefined) suffering? Cf. Hester p. 19 on vv. 1519-20: "Oedipus reasonably suspects that Apollo may still have some dirty trick in store for him (*which he said clearly in 1456-7*)" [my italics]. Not clearly enough for everyone.

βορᾶς / τράπεζ' at 1463-4 is to parallel (10).

1466 τοῖν μοι μέλεσθαι: Eicken-Iselin finds the ethical dative here (like that in 1459-60: παίδων δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀρσένων μή μοι, Κρέον, / προσθῆ μέριμναν in view of the first two words of 1460) "irreführend" due to the proximity of μέλεσθαι. Given the contexts, I fail to see how there can be the slightest ambiguity in either passage.

1467-8 ἴθ', ὄναξ, / ἴθ', ὃ γονῆ γενναῖε: to Eicken-Iselin the occurrence here of ἴθι, "als Aufforderungspartikel" without a following imperative is "singulär". The obvious parallels at *Phil.* 733 (ἀλλ' ἴθ' ὃ τέκνον) and 750 (ἴθ' ὃ παῖ) are dismissed (p. 276 n. 1) as "abgerissenes, zusammenhangloses Klagegestammel" where the entreaty has an independent effect without an appended amplification. This is surely hair-splitting, and besides our passage supplies imperative enough at 1467 (ἔασον). Eicken-Iselin further objects to the abruptness of the present entreaty and claims its effect to be diminished by the repetition of ἴθι, but these complaints are too subjective to carry much weight.

1477: by contrast, Eicken-Iselin's question about this line ("was soll es... heissen, dass Kreon die gegenwärtige Freude kannte, die den Vater schon lange beherrscht?") deserves an answer. But the solution lies not in further detecting an interpolator's hand. Rather one must suppose either (a) as Dawe *ad loc.*, following Hermann and Wunder, that πάλαι here refers to the immediate past and that the tense required is ἦ σ' ἔχει πάλαι where the final word is taken with γνούς. Or (b) – with the new OCT – that ἦ σ' εἶχεν πάλαι is a legitimate way of describing Oedipus' affection for his children (11).

1478 τῆσδε τῆς ὁδοῦ: Eicken-Iselin queries whether ὁδός can refer to the bringing of the children to Oedipus and implies dissatisfaction with the genitive, whether it be defined as one of thanks or as dependent on 1479's ἄμεινον. Dawe *ad loc.* takes the genitive as causal comparing *OT* 48, *Tr.* 288 and (?) 339 (12).

(10) See now the remarks of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson in *Sophoclea* *ad loc.* (p. 112): "though it might be supported by the considerations adduced by Barrett [on Eur. *Hipp.* 802], it is hard to resist the suspicion that ἡμῆ conceals an adj. agreeing with βορᾶς. Kennedy, *Journal of Sacred and Classical Philol.* 1 (1854) 325 conjectured ἀμῆς... 'for whom the table where I ate was never set up separately without me'".

(11) See *Sophoclea* p. 112 f. for the argument that delight in his children may "hold" a man over a long period, just as a man may be 'held' by old age (*Il.* 18.515), good reputation (*ibid.* 17.143), or life (*El.* 225)".

(12) My commentary on Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (Oxford 1990) treats 288's gen. as one of exchange; but see my note on 339 for other Sophoclean causal genitives.

1481: Eicken-Iselin objects that ὡς is elsewhere used only of persons. But since χέρες here is *pars pro toto*, with “my hands” equivalent to “me”, the extension is perfectly legitimate.

1482-3 προϋξήνησαν: that the verb should mean “cause” or “bring about” is certainly as surprising as Eicken-Iselin finds it, but *Tr.* 726 ἐλπίζ, ἥτις καὶ θράσος τι προξενεῖ is a good Sophoclean parallel.

1484-5: deleted by Todt, “*Zeitschr. f. Gymnasialwesen*” 1, 1867, 225.

1484 οὐθ' ὄρων οὐθ' ἱστορῶν: denounced by Eicken-Iselin as “reines Füllsel” (cf. below on 1517) and also as contradicting by their two negatives the general sense of the passage. Whether we adopt Herwerden’s ἀροτήρ for πατήρ in 1485 (as does Dawe) or retain πατήρ (as do the editors of the new OCT) there is no real difficulty. “οὐθ' ὄρων οὐθ' ἱστορῶν suits the *action* of sowing seed much better than the *fact* of being father to Antigone and Ismene” says Dawe *ad loc.* Rather, we have characteristic fusion of *illustrans* and *illustrandum* (13) whereby ὄρων goes better with sowing seed and ἱστορῶν with begetting children

1494-5: Eicken-Iselin refers to the dissatisfaction felt by critics over these lines. They are certainly corrupt – see Dawe *ad loc.* and now Lloyd-Jones and Wilson in *Sophoclea* p. 113, the latter deeming Herwerden’s ἄ τοισί τε (for τοῖς ἐμοῖς) / γονεῦσιν the most plausible emendation so far – but that tells us nothing about their authenticity.

1507: Eicken-Iselin castigates this line as displaying “besondere Unschönheit”, but since she declines to be more specific there is no way of answering her.

1512-13: the ambiguity of μοι here – is it an ethic dative or are the children really to pray for something for Oedipus? – rouses Eicken-Iselin’s ire and she cannot see how the prayer fits with the phrase οὐ καιρὸς ἀεὶ ζῆν. If we read not εὐχεσθέ μοι but εὐχεσθ' ἐμὲ (Deventer: εὐχεσθέ με DXr) all these problems vanish. Alternatively, with Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (14) we may prefer Jebb’s explanation “I would have this be your prayer”.

1515-30: ironically enough, after her previous exertions Eicken-Iselin has nothing to say against these lines. But others more than compensate for her silence: “dem überarbeiter zuzuschreiben sind” (Graffunder p. 405); “it may be that everything from 1515 to the end of the play is spurious” (Dawe

(13) See my commentary on *Tr.* 32 and my remarks in “*Hermes*” 114, 1986, p. 403 n. 21.

(14) As they observe, “What follows perfectly applies” to his daughters “since Oedipus has just said that they will never be able to marry”.

ad loc.); “spuriousness... obvious” (Hester p. 22). Graffunder conceded that there was no syntactical evidence for revision. Dawe claims that there is no clear proof of the employment of trochaic tetrameters in Greek tragedy between the end of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* (from 458) and that of Euripides’ *Troades* (in 415). The use of them here would be quite similar to what we find in Aeschylus’ play, where they convey the clash of personality and standpoint between Aegisthus and the chorus, a clash unresolvable except by the brute fact of Aegisthus’ assumption of power. The position between Creon and Oedipus is not very different.

1517 λέξεις καὶ τότε εἶσομαι κλύων: Creon’s reply is “abject line-filling” according to Dawe. It has often been taken to characterise the speaker: e.g. “Creon, who always thinks before he speaks and then says less than he means, who is content, parasitically, to enjoy the fruits without the risks of power, a cautious man”(15). The contrast with Oedipus’ impetuosity could hardly be clearer.

1519: “On hearing the words τοῦ θεοῦ (sc. Apollo) μ’ αἰτεῖς δόσιν Oedipus ought to have replied ‘in that case we may proceed at once with my expulsion, since Apollo’s wishes in the matter have been well known to everyone since you announced them yourself at 96-8, a point you have already conceded at 1442 above, though you immediately tried to fudge the issue there by lapsing into a vague and unsatisfactory bid for extra time’”: Dawe *ad loc.* Appreciative connoisseurs (like myself) of the styles of Sophocles and Dr. Dawe will have no difficulty in deciding which of the two the passage quoted more closely resembles. More to the point, the composer of these tetrameters has decided to split each one between the two speakers so that there would be no room for the rather luxuriant fullness of Dawe’s sentence. The technique of dividing the lines entails rather elliptical thought-sequences and extremely compressed Greek. When this is born in mind I wonder whether the Greek of the present and following line is really as incompetent as Dawe finds. ἀλλὰ θεοῖς γ’ ἔχθιστος ἦκω of course implies, in the expansion Dawe himself provides, “But I am hateful to all the gods <, of whom Apollo is one, and in that case they, and he, are sure to favour my expulsion>”. Why are the lines thus divided between speakers? Surely to bring out, as vividly as possible, the irreconcilable clash of personalities and positions alluded to above and more fully argued in my earlier article.

1524-30: most scholars (16) seem now united in regarding these lines

(15) So Winnington-Ingram, “JHS” 91, 1971, 135 = *Sophocles An Interpretation* (Cambridge 1980) p. 204.

(16) Lloyd-Jones earlier seemed convinced (*Justice of Zeus*, [1983²], p. 247) but the

as spurious (with the ironical exception of Graffunder (p. 405) who thinks they must "als echt betrachtet werden, da gar keine bedenken gegen dieselbe vorliegen"): see Dawe *ad loc.* and March p. 152. This in itself proves nothing either way about the authenticity of the preceding hundred or so lines.

II

(i) *Mt. Cithaeron: expectation cheated*

The most frequently voiced objection to the end of the *OT* is its defeat of our carefully nurtured expectations that Oedipus will depart in exile to Mt. Cithaeron. Graffunder, Taplin, Hester (to name but three) have all stressed, in the light of numerous references earlier in the play, that such a conclusion is what the audience must expect (17). Defeat of audience expectation is, of course, a common and legitimate dramatic device, but if we detect such a device here we must provide a reply to the question posed by, for instance, Graffunder (p. 395): "was würde dadurch für unser drama gewonnen werden?". There are several ways in which this question might be answered.

(ii) *Permanent incarceration*

Graffunder (p. 394) was eager to stress that this (rather than merely temporary retirement to the palace) is what Creon envisages for Oedipus at the end of the *OT* ("nicht bloß für den augenblick in der palast eintreten solle [Ödipus], sondern fortdauernd dort bleiben solle"). If not merely Creon but the audience as well anticipates such a future, various types of explanation are to hand.

In the first place, the question of tradition might be considered. Earlier epic treatments (18) had Oedipus stay on in Thebes (Homer certainly: *Il.*

new Oxford text actually leaves the lines unbracketed and the editors' discussion (*Sophoclea* p. 114) issues in the conclusion that "a case can be made against them, but it cannot be regarded as established".

(17) It is also argued that (quite independently of what we may call the Cithaeron motif) the whole logic of the play points in the direction of exile. So Graffunder p. 393 f.: "den zürnenden manen des Laios ist nur dann genugthuung geleistet wenn der mörder aus der heimat hinausgestossen wird" – self-blinding is not punishment enough. Similarly Hester p. 15: "Oedipus will go at once into exile, and in doing so save his city (as he himself foretold 443)". But against the latter we might observe that the entire drama illustrates the inadequacies of Oedipus' perceptions of the future and his own position. And to the former we could reply that Laius' anger would be still better appeased should Oedipus stay on in the city and (ultimately) by cursing his sons, complete the absolute extirpation of the house of Labdacus. See note 20.

(18) For a recent investigation of these see my *The Theban Epics* (Göttingen 1991). Graffunder himself, be it noted, is far too sanguine about what can be inferred as to the lost epics in question (following Schneidewin).

23.679 f. and *Od.* 11.271 ff. where he continues to *rule*; the *Thebais* probably: frs. 2 and 3 Davies) so that such an ending would be compatible with this. And an archaic and primitive-looking feature of this pre-Sophoclean tradition was that, before dying, Oedipus cursed his two sons, thus ensuring their quarrel, the attack of the Seven against Thebes, and the final mutual slaughter of Polyneices and Eteocles. Now it is well-known that "the curse of Oedipus upon his sons... does not enter, even by hint or inference, into" our play (19), but the audience will have been familiar with the motif, and may have found nothing at all disturbing about the final picture of Oedipus re-entering the palace where, after the lapse of several years, he will curse his offspring (20).

Then again, the closure thus produced might be supposed dramatically effective in its own right: to quote Taplin (p. 172) "in terms of stage geography Creon refuses to let Oedipus escape down the *eisodos* that leads abroad, away, elsewhere... the easy ending... is refused... escape would be some sort of release..." [Oedipus must] "live on in the same house with his past". Instead of the return to his place of exposure which Oedipus wills, the hero is forced to return to an even earlier part of his existence, the very building in which he was conceived contrary to Apollo's command. "In his end is his beginning". There is something awesome in this, and something consistent too. The whole history of Oedipus in this play has been that of a man striving to avoid his fate and running all the more surely into the net he is struggling to escape. Now, even after the catastrophe, he continues to be thwarted.

There is a further propriety to such a conclusion, for incarceration would be fitting punishment for one guilty of Oedipus' crime. A recent study by Dr. Richard Seaford (21) has shown that *Ant.* 966 ff., on the fate of the blinded and imprisoned sons of Phineus, is a particularly close parallel.

(19) Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles An Interpretation*, p. 205.

(20) Whereas if Oedipus were to wander off to Cithaeron for ever in permanent exile, no cursing (and therefore no fraternal quarrel, assault on Thebes, or mutual slaughter?) would be possible. Since these motifs lie beyond the drama, we must be careful not to lay too much emphasis upon them (see below n. 29). But the curse is otherwise an omnipresent and resilient motif in the story of Oedipus (as witness Sophocles' artificial postponement of it in the *OC* until shortly before Oedipus' final removal): the possibility of its relevance in the modified manner stated above (i.e. as another reason for the audience not to be surprised at Oedipus' detention in the city) should not be underestimated. See in general *The Theban Epics* (above note 18)

(21) See his remarks in "JHS" 110, 1990, 82 ff. on imprisonment and blinding as punishments for incest.

(iii) *Final uncertainty*

In spite of all the above, I still incline to the view (22) that the play ends not with a clear picture of indefinitely extended imprisonment, but with a carefully contrived uncertainty and suspension. As written, the play's concluding scene leaves open the question of Oedipus' fate, with Creon apparently anticipating Oedipus' exile after all, should Apollo's oracle so decree. Even Graffunder seems to have felt the force of this, for, despite his insistence (quoted above) that a permanent imprisonment is envisaged for Oedipus, he also complained (p. 399) that the drama ends, in an unacceptably odd manner, with total uncertainty as to the fate of its hero. It was this uncertainty which he found indicative of reworking (he compared the – to him equally unacceptable – uncertainty as to the fates of Antigone and of Polyneices' corpse which we find at the end of the *Seven against Thebes* as it now stands). Indicative too of the motive behind the interpolation: by the eccentric device of a seemingly doubtful exile, the *OT* was brought into line (more or less) with the presuppositions of the *OC*'s plot, whereby the hero is exiled but only after considerable delay (see below p. 14).

But how eccentric *is* the notion of an unresolved ending to the play? Must it indicate reworking and nothing else? A case can be made out, on the contrary, for the extremely Sophoclean nature of such an ending. Consider, for instance, the close of the *Trachiniae*, where the hero's fate is not fully clarified: Heracles' death is envisaged by Hyllus and the chorus, but the prospect of his apotheosis cannot be excluded (23). Consider the close of *Electra*, where Orestes' fate after the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus is not disclosed (24), though we have a disconcerting reference to (v. 1498) τὰ τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα Πελοπιδῶν κακά. In a different but comparable way, Antigone at the end of the *OC* announces that she will try to dissuade Polyneices from his assault against Thebes; the play itself contains no comment on the likelihood of her success, but what we know of the story from other sources must colour our reaction to the enterprise (25). And at the end of the *Philoctetes* does the hero set off to a glorious expedition or a sordid and tainted enterprise? The question is left unresolved (26). Of

(22) As expressed on p. 273 of my article. Similarly now March p. 153 ("the question of exile [remains] an open one") etc.

(23) See the introduction to my commentary on the *Trachiniae* (pp. XVII ff.), which independently comes to much the same conclusions as those more elaborately set out by P. Holt, "JHS" 109, 1989, 69 ff.

(24) Cf. Winnington-Ingram, "PCPS" 183, 1954/5, 20 ff. = *Sophocles An Interpretation* pp. 227 ff.

(25) Cf. the remarks on p. 271 n. 10 of my article.

(26) Cf. Mrs. Easterling in "ICS" 3, 1978, 27 ff.

course, most of the interpretations thus summarised are open to disagreement. They cover so many plays, however, that the possibility of an instance of genuinely Sophoclean dramatic technique must remain a very real one.

(iv) *The daughters of Oedipus*

Those critics who doubt the integrity of the drama's last scene must make up their minds about the (silent) rôle played by Antigone and Ismene. But here too disagreement is all too evident. Hester, for instance, finds Oedipus' farewell to his daughters "heart-breaking" (p. 13) (27). On the other side stands Eva Eicken-Iselin who finds the scene "unnatural, contradictory and tasteless" (p. 276: "unnatürlich, widerwärtig, geschmacklos"; cf. p. 277: "die Verse 1481 ff. sind nicht nur unklar, sondern auch geschmacklos"; p. 275: "die melodramatische Szene mit den kleinen Mädchen"). Such divergence is too massive (and also too subjective) for debate to be very fruitful. But the issue is an important one, for Eicken-Iselin is of the opinion that (as with the spurious end of the *SCT*) Antigone and Ismene have been intruded from the *OC*, with vv. 310 ff. and 1099 ff. of that play the source for *OT* 1466 ff. and *OC* 1611 ff. and 1631 ff. the source for *OT* 1460 ff.

Fortunately there is scope for slightly more objective evaluation of some of the arguments that have been advanced. For instance, Alois Patin (without denying a Sophoclean origin of sorts for the scene) found it pointless that Oedipus should bid so long and tender a farewell to his daughters if at the end of the play he simply re-enters the palace (28). The objection is independently raised by Hester (p. 15), who thinks the farewell genuine, but the exit into the palace not. But is this type of realistic assessment really appropriate? A parallel, if one be needed, could be cited in the form of the moving farewell between Hector, Andromache and Astyanax at the end of Book Six of the *Iliad*. Scholars have long realised that, if one solemnly computes the relevant hours and days, this cannot be the final farewell, for Hector has one further night in which to visit Troy. But Homer placed the "farewell" where it would have maximum effect, and who can deny Sophocles the same right? In this latter case, the alleged discrepancy is smaller still, since we are dealing with (hypothetical) events that lie outside a *drama*, and though it is something of an exaggeration to claim (as some have) that such events "do not exist" in any meaningful sense (29), it must surely be allowed that they exist in a very different way (and on a very different level)

(27) See too his remark in "PCPS" 23, 1977, 45 ("this intensely pathetic scene").

(28) P. 74 f. of the article cited in n. 4.

(29) See, for instance, A. J. Waldock, *Sophocles the Dramatist* (Cambridge 1951) pp. 11 ff.

from events within the play. Precisely the same consideration will suffice to meet Graffunder's complaint (p. 396f., followed closely by March p. 149f.) that Oedipus' speech at 1466-1514, especially the lines addressed to the daughters, reads like the pronouncement of someone not expecting to encounter city or children again (30).

There is also scope for a relatively objective assessment of the dramatic effect of the daughters' introduction so late within the play. And the effect transpires to be Sophoclean. The closest parallel one could cite comes at the end of the *OC*, where the self-same daughters exemplify the continuation of suffering beyond and after the personal catastrophe of the hero. But since it has been argued that the girls have been interpolated from precisely that play (see above p. 10), one should ideally quote a different work. And the *Ajax* supplies a sufficiently close analogy, with Tecmessa, Teucer and Eurysaces, the hero's widow, brother and son, illustrating the persistence of human woe and agony even when the individual who has done most to set the tragedy in motion has been removed from the scene. Sophocles, as Winnington-Ingram (31) has well put it, "several times opens a window upon fresh tragedy towards the end of a play".

The introduction of the daughters can be shown to be Sophoclean in another way. We are all familiar with this poet's technique of prefacing the tragic climax with a choral ode of premature and misleading joy, a false dawn before the catastrophe. The *Ajax*, *Antigone* and *Trachiniae* all furnish instances of this general phenomenon, and it is recognised that the *OT*'s third stasimon (1086-1109) is another example. It is not so widely recognised that within this overall pattern, more detailed and specific counterpoints occur. For instance, within the *Trachiniae*'s second stasimon occurs a prayer that Heracles may return "all-gentle" (πανάμερος). The tragic irony of the contrast between this epithet and the brutal, savage, and pain-racked hero we eventually see on stage should not be overlooked (32).

Something similar may be detected in the *OT*. Scholars have often found

(30) Graffunder's further observation (p. 397) "wäre Oedipus in Theben geblieben, so hätte er ja noch immer für Antigone und Ismene sorgen können, da die Blindheit allein ihn daran noch nicht hinderte" would also fall foul of this consideration, if it were not already ruled out of court by its incompatibility with any natural reading or performance of vv. 1460 ff. Frs. 2 and 3 of the epic *Thebais* imply an Oedipus dependent on his sons for maintenance.

(31) Sup. cit. [n. 15] p. 205 f. n. 4.

(32) The case for retaining the MSS' πανάμερος with the meaning "all-gentle" at v. 660 is given in my commentary *ad loc.* Even if Mudge's popular emendation πανίμερος ("full of desire" or "strongly desired") could be proved correct, the ironical contrast with Heracles' actual behaviour when he finally does appear will still obtain.

its stasimon of fordoomed rejoicing remarkably ill-motivated. Dawe *ad loc.* talks of “baseless optimism” while R. Coleman goes so far as to describe its joy as “hysterical and fantastic” (at least in comparison with *Ant.* 1115 ff.) (33). “Who is your father”, sing the chorus at 1097 ff. “Can it be Pan, or Apollo? Or perhaps Hermes or Dionysus?”. In a sense the cue for this over-excited speculation was given by Oedipus himself at 1080 where, in lines that have elicited remarkably little comment from critics (given the difficulty of producing an adequate parallel), the hero refers to himself as ἐγὼ δ’ ἐμαυτὸν παῖδα τῆς Τύχης νέμων and continues by identifying the months as his sisters. The sequel, of course, shows all too clearly who the parents of Oedipus actually are, and the grim and ghastly truth has no room for such conceits and fancies as those offered earlier by the chorus. The scene with Antigone and Ismene performs the same service: in place of the unreal abstractions of παῖς τῆς Τύχης we see with all too immediate poignancy what the reality of the situation is, who the sisters actually are.

(v) *Inconsistencies of presentation: Oedipus and Creon*

Graffunder was of the opinion that the Creon of the end of the *OT* sometimes displays behaviour incompatible with the nobler Creon depicted earlier in the play and also implied by v. 1476f. (ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμ’ ὁ πορσύνας τάδε κτλ.). Whenever he speaks of the need to consult the oracle a second time, and requires Oedipus to re-enter the palace until the further consultation is complete, this Creon displays “tyrannisch-hartes und barsches Wesen” (p. 400) quite inconsistent with his previous presentation. This, thinks Graffunder, is the Creon of the *OC*, and he acts in a manner that implies (what is announced abruptly and without preparation at 1418) that he has now assumed control at Thebes. Whenever Creon acts harshly as newly-installed ruler of the city, Oedipus is correspondingly subdued and submissive, crushed by his misfortunes. But elsewhere (e.g. v. 1446) Oedipus displays resilience and resistance: despite the external shattering of his world he has retained (internally) a spiritual wholeness. This (according to Graffunder) was how Sophocles originally portrayed Oedipus at the end of the play, a lofty and impressive figure also found in early epic (34), a figure

(33) “PCPS” 18, 1972, 24. For a further possible instance of this type of irony see Winnington-Ingram [sup. cit. n. 19] p. 115 f. on the *Antigone*’s Fourth Stasimon (and in particular the appeal to Dionysus at 1115 ff.) and the final catastrophe: “what the messenger relates is an outbreak of pathological violence which it would be vain to hope that Dionysus would cure, since it springs from mad emotion. That is the epiphany, that is the dispensation”.

(34) Where, in the *Oedipodeia*, he seems to have married again after the catastrophe (fr. 2 Davies). But both that specific deduction and the more general picture of a much more resilient ‘epic’ Oedipus are, in fact, highly dubious: see my *Theban Epics* (note 18).

who would never accept Creon's assumption of power as a *fait accompli*. Therefore, Graffunder concludes, the two-fold presentation of a tyrannical Creon and unresisting Oedipus must be a later addition: vv. 1424-31, 1435-45 and 1515 ff. (where Creon is already in charge) constitute this revision, inserted piece-meal into the original context and inconsistent in particular with 1432-4, which imply a resistant Oedipus still in command and transferring, actively and of his own free will, power to Creon *for the first time*.

Later scholars, while not subscribing entirely to this complex reconstruction, have been swayed by the remarks about Creon or have independently reached very similar conclusions. Thus Hester (p. 20) finds that "it is as if the Creon of the *OC* has made a belated entry, to contaminate our understanding of the Creon of the *OT*". Or Calder (35) can discover "no reason aside from sheer sadism for Creon to prevent the girls from leading their father into the palace". And Dawe sees in v. 1522 f. (στεῖχέ νυν, τέκνων δ' ἀφοῦ... πάντα μὴ βούλου κρατεῖν) a "needlessly sharp rebuff" to Oedipus' "mild and pathetic request" and in the text line (καὶ γὰρ ἀκράτησας οὐ σοι τῷ βίῳ ξυνέσπετο) a clumsily phrased jibe.

Now most of these scholars would acknowledge the co-existence of a more generous Creon (which is why they find the inconsistencies so indicative and illuminating). But is the search for consistency reasonable? These divergences remind me of the dissension that has been manifested over the significance of Oceanus in the *PV* (contemptible time-server or well-meaning friend?) and they have the same explanation: an inappropriate and anachronistic insistence on supplying a "character" (in terms of a modern standard of consistency) where the dramatist was only interested in offering a "foil" to the main figure. Oceanus, of course, only appears once in his play, whereas Creon features on three separate occasions, and is thus required to counterbalance a hero who is behaving differently in each of the separate scenes. Now, while there is no reconciling the "kind/cruel" interpretations of Creon outlined above, it is no crude rationalisation that sees Oedipus in the final scene as initially crushed by disaster (as argued in my first article) and then reasserting his strength of will only to finally find himself thwarted by reality and Creon's new position as ruler. For this pattern to operate, Creon must finally assert his authority, but he can do so without being "tyrannical" or "cruel" (such refinements would distract the audience's attention away from the central interest, the continuation of Oedipus' tragedy beyond the revelation and self-blinding). The notion that there is any "sadism" in Creon's behaviour can easily be dispelled, by conjuring up the closing scene that would be created if the only alternative mode of presentation were fol-

lowed: "don't take them away" begs Oedipus. "All right, you may keep them with you" replies the solicitous Creon, and Oedipus is led into the palace by his two daughters under the kindly gaze of the city's new regent. Hardly an appropriate ending, and certainly not a tragic one.

Creon's final intervention, then, is indispensable, but any misreading of it as "sadism" should have been precluded by his extreme caution and sensitivity to Apollo's decree. It is a timidity which, approached in an inappropriately realistic or literal-minded manner, can lead a scholar like Graffunder to demand (p. 394 f.; cf. p. 398) whether Creon really expects a different answer from the oracle the second time around (if not, why ask again? Does he not trust the oracle? Does he not trust Tiresias?). Since this second consultation and second response both lie beyond the actual framework of the drama, these considerations are by no means so pressing as Graffunder would have us believe (cf. above p. 10), and the impression of snail-like forward movement which the demand for further proof creates is deliberately at odds with the slightest hint of tyrannical self-will on Creon's part.

(vi) *OT and OC reconciled?*

As we have already seen, those scholars who suspect a revision of the *OT*'s final scene assume that its motive was a desire to bring into line its presuppositions about Oedipus' exile with those of the *OC*. Schneidewin (36), influenced (see below p. 16) by his reading of Seneca's *Oedipus*, wrote that he wondered if the latter's ending may not reflect that of the original *OT*, but whether "wenigstens dem letzten Theil nach, vom Dichter später ungemodelt sein sollte, um zu dem Ödipus auf Kolonos in ein engeres Verhältniss zu treten. Wir legen kein Gewicht auf diese Muthmassung, wollten sie aber nicht unterdrücken", and this hypothesis of later revision by the poet himself has found an echo in the writings of more recent scholars.

Graffunder and Hester prefer to attribute the later rewriting to some hand other than Sophocles', while maintaining the same motivation behind it. And why should anyone thus wish to reconcile the Sophoclean dramas about Oedipus? A posthumous production of both, followed by the *Antigone*, to form an artificially connected trilogy of Sophocles' Theban plays, is the hypothetical background to the rewriting proposed by Graffunder and followed by Hester. We know that Aeschylus' dramas were revived after his death (37), and Euripides' son masterminded the production of his father's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, his *Alcmaeon in Psophis* and his *Bacchae* in 403 after his

(36) "Abhandl. d. Kön. ges. d. wiss. zu Göttingen" 5, 1853, 206. He proceeds to raise the possibility that Sophocles himself revised the ending in order to bring it into line with the *OC*.

(37) See Radt, *TrGF* 3 (Aeschylus) pp. 56 ff.

father had died (*Σ. Ar. Ran.*). May not something analogous be inferred for the three Sophoclean tragedies in question? The fit between *Antigone* and *OC* as they left their author's hands is already almost perfect, but that between *OT* and *OC* (on this hypothesis) left something to be desired, so someone stepped in to reduce the original gap. Sophocles' son Iophon was credited with this revision by Graffunder.

Two classes of objection to this hypothesis suggest themselves. First and most blatant, is that the alleged revision lamentably *fails* to reconcile the two plays it supposedly aims at uniting. Their "basic assumptions", as Hester (p. 22) observes, "are, of course, irreconcilable: the [*OT*] requires that Oedipus should be banished at the direct command of Apollo, the *OC* by an arbitrary and unjust political decision". Even when we bear this *caveat* in mind, the reconciliation seems to have been carried out in a very careless and incompetent manner (38). As Hester is obliged to admit, it "did not bother to tidy up such minor matters as the exact interval between Oedipus' self-blinding and exile". It presupposes a new type of inconsistency, quite as deplorable as those types castigated above in the *OT* itself, to picture someone tracking down contradictions between the two plays (of which the interval between blinding and exile is surely crucial) and then so helplessly failing to resolve them (39).

Secondly, there is a distinct absence of exact parallel for the process envisaged. The posthumous performances of Aeschylus' dramas has always been considered a special case. As for Euripides, it is one thing for the son of a newly-deceased playwright to produce his father's masterpieces (or even to bring them to a state of completion, though this is a nowhere attested). It is quite another for Sophocles' son (or an anonymous reviser) to mutilate (a) one newly-finished play and (b) another that had been completed and performed some considerable time earlier, in the interest of achieving a connected and continuous trilogy of a kind not attested for Sophocles since his earliest theatrical endeavours.

(38) Hester himself (p. 16 f.) gives a very clear summary of the widely fluctuating accounts which the *OC* provides in different places as to the circumstances in which Oedipus left Thebes. According to March (p. 153), "The [*OT*'s] resultant sense of irresolute petering-out would not matter in the slightest if the *OC* followed directly afterwards, to affirm *conclusively* [my italics] what was the final fate of Oedipus". But the *OC* itself is anything but conclusive as to this final fate, as Hester has shown.

(39) March p. 153 f. prefers to speculate that when Sophocles' homonymous grandson produced the *OC* in 401, four or five years after its author's death (*Tr.G.F.* 1 Did. C. 23 = *Tr.G.F.* 4 T 41 Radt) one of the accompanying two tragedies will have been the (suitably emended) *OT*, with the *OC* forming the grand climax (and the *Antigone*, therefore, *not* the third tragedy).

(vii) *Sophocles' OT and Seneca's Oedipus*

Historically speaking, dissatisfaction with the ending of Sophocles' play has very close connections with the different conclusion found in the Senecan tragedy. About the middle of the last century, Schneidewin (36) wrote: "sieht man endlich auf den Ausgang des römischen Stückes, so wird dieser die Frage entschuldigen, ob nicht Sophokles' Ödipus in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt ähnlich geendet haben". Graffunder in 1885 referred to this notion, and his own treatment begins with an assessment of the relationship between the Greek and Roman pieces. It is basic to his theory that, in spite of a few concessions to Roman taste (or lack of it) – exemplified by the postponement of Jocasta's suicide until it may be carried out in front of Oedipus, and the mixture of rhetoric and superstition which characterises Tiresias' function – Seneca followed Sophocles very closely, changing motifs but not substance. As Graffunder says in summing-up (p. 392), Seneca's alterations affect "die äuszere form einzelner motive, ohne die fabel anzutasten". More recent scholars (40) are also of the opinion that the Senecan *Oedipus* is as a whole closely indebted to the *OT*.

But does it follow that Graffunder was further right in supposing that the end of Seneca's play shows us how Sophocles originally proceeded? Hester, though impressed by much of Graffunder's argument, concedes that the earlier scholar "leans rather too heavily on Seneca's play" (p. 22). As we have seen, Sophocles certainly prepares us for an exit to Cithaeron, and Seneca seems to show us an Oedipus setting off alone into exile. Graffunder is so excited about this apparent fit (p. 406: Mt. Cithaeron is near enough for even a blinded Oedipus to reach it without a guide) that he somewhat misrepresents the conclusion of Seneca's drama.

For it comes as rather a shock to turn from Graffunder's article to the actual last lines of Seneca's *Oedipus* (1059-61):

*violenta Fata, et horridus Morbi tremor,
Maciésque et atra Pestis, et rabidus Dolor,
mecum ite, mecum; ducibus his uti libet.*

Not a word as to Mt. Cithaeron (41). Rather, a lurid (though undeniably effective) recapitulation of a theme that must originate with Seneca himself.

(40) See e.g. O. Zwierlein, *Die Rezitationsdramen Senecas* ('Beitr. z. kl. Phil.' 20, 1966), p. 96: "Seneca hier [= vv. 630 ff.] wie zu Beginn und in den späteren Teilen seines Dramas eng der Handlungsführung folgt, die Sophokles bietet". See in general R. J. Tarrant, *Senecan drama and its antecedents*, "HSCP" 82, 1978, 216, 219 f., 227 f. Cf. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, *Sophoclea* p. 109 on v. 1276: "in an episode of this kind Senecan parallels may well be relevant, particularly when it is a case of two plays about Oedipus".

(41) Which, in fact, is not mentioned anywhere near the end of the play.

Several scholars (42) have observed that these verses refer back to a Senecan scene involving Laius' ghost which Sophocles' play does not contain. Furthermore the verses complete a characterisation of Oedipus which is incompatible with the Sophoclean hero: "the last word of this play brings clear assertion of what the last chorus implies and what Oedipus himself has hinted in choosing blindness and exile: the Stoic's positive acceptance of his own destiny... The austere yet exalted note struck in this closing scene... is quite alien to Greek Tragedy and also to Greek Stoicism" (43).

III

Conclusion

If, then, the play's ending is genuine, we must still ask why the earlier references to Cithaeron were included and why audience expectation has been so strikingly thwarted. Dramatists do engage in such strategems of course (one thinks of the significance of the concept of Moscow in Czekhov's *Three Sisters*). The best Sophoclean parallel for the device seems to me to occur at the start of his *Trachiniae*. There Deianeira rejects the common opinion that one should never judge a life happy or sad until it be over: she can already say that hers is miserable. The tragic irony here is that, as Mrs. Easterling has observed (44), Deianeira "has much greater unhappiness to come; in the end the 'old saying' is indeed justified". The *OT*'s early allusions to Cithaeron serve a like purpose. Oedipus supposes that he knows enough to conclude that punishment will involve exile and Mt. Cithaeron. That might indeed seem suffering enough to mortal eyes. But the gods, as in *Trachiniae*, have a different end in view, misery and frustration that Oedipus cannot even guess at.

Now March is right to stress (p. 150 f.) that "the parts which Apollo and Tiresias play" seem to demand Oedipus' exile. A literal-minded critic would shrink from supposing that Apollo's oracles or Tiresias' prophecies are as fallible as Oedipus' supposed knowledge. In context Apollo's oracle, as reported at 96-101 and 305-9, and Tiresias' speech at 413 ff. undoubtedly presuppose exile as punishment. But prophecies and oracles, when ex-

(42) So, for instance, O. Regenbogen, "Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg" 7, 1927/8, 204 f. (p. 42 f. of separate printing) = *Kl. Schr.* p. 448 "Er erfüllt damit die Prophezeiung des Laios". Similarly G. Müller, "Hermes" 81, 1953, 448 = *Senecas Tragödien*, 'Wege der Forschung' 310 (1972), 378.

(43) The quotation comes from D. Henry and B. Walker's essay *The Oedipus of Seneca: an imperial tragedy in Ramus Essays on Seneca's Drama* ed. A. J. Boyce (Victoria 1983) p. 146. Cf. Regenbogen sup. cit. [n. 42]: Oedipus "überhaupt ganz anders als bei Sophokles und ganz eigen gezeichnet ist".

(44) "PCPS" 20, 1974, 43.

plotted by Sophoclean dramatic technique, are slippery things, as we all know. A similarly literal-minded critic would be puzzled at the changes in the oracles manifested within the *Trachiniae* (45) – is fifteen months or twelve years the key period specified? – and the *Philoctetes* – is it Philoctetes himself and his bow, merely his bow, or the bow *with his consent* that is required for Troy's fall? Sophocles doubtlessly believed in oracles, but in his dramas preferred to employ them flexibly to convey differing dramatic effects in different scenes. Thus in the *Trachiniae* the oracle's open form at vv. 76 ff. changes to closed inevitability in vv. 1159 ff. because Sophocles in the first passage wishes to stress tension and uncertainty, in the second acceptance of fate. Likewise in the *OT*, when Oedipus (early in the play) seems to have freedom of action and to be in charge of events, the stress is on the certainty of Apollo's (and Tiresias') pronouncements. When (at the end of the play) Oedipus' powerlessness is to be shown, the oracle's *contents* have not changed but their *persuasiveness* has. Put together the two attitudes to the oracle form an incoherent whole (as would be the case in *Trachiniae* or *Philoctetes*). Considered each in the context of its relevant scene, the oracles play a powerful (and typically Sophoclean) rôle (46).

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(45) See in general Appendix A to my commentary on the *Trachiniae* for the flexibility of that play's oracle.

(46) The disappearance of the plague-motif at the *OT*'s end (well stressed by Dawe) makes it easier to accept this change in attitude to the oracle.