



*THE SUDA'S LIFE OF SOPHOCLES (SIGMA 815):
TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY WITH SOURCES* Wm.
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Table of Contents

Preface

Introduction

The Suda sigma 815: Translation and Text

Index to Notes and Sources

Texts, Translation, and Commentary

Appendix: Text and Translation of Family and Life of Sophocles

Bibliography

4 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Preface

This project is offered as a resource for those interested in the life of Sophocles. Sigma 815 of the Byzantine lexicon, *The Suda*, forms its core. *The Suda* entry is annotated with thirteen notes which treat discrete subjects and around which are organized the sources for Sophocles' life. An index to the notes has been provided. The sources are presented with the Greek and accompanying English translation. Commentary is interspersed among them where it is useful. The commentary does not attempt to build up a biography of Sophocles, for in the present condition of the sources none is possible.

Ada Alder's monumental edition of *The Suda* is currently being translated by numerous scholars under the direction of Suda On Line, published by the Stoa Consortium. The author's translation of sigma 815 forms part of this effort.

I have used T enclosed in parenthesis with a number in the reference line of a source to designate the number of the source, where available, in the list of testimonia collected by Stefan Radt in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. Vol. 4: *Sophocles*. A bolded number in parenthesis designates a source in the present work.

Introduction

Ἡ Σοῦδα, *The Suda*, perhaps *The Fortress* or *The Stronghold*, denotes the title, not the author as long thought, of a Byzantine lexicon.¹ *The Suda* was compiled after the time of Photius (ninth century) whom it cites and Eustathius (twelfth century) who cites it. This lengthy work, five stout volumes in Ada Alder's monumental Teubner edition, is generally assigned to the late tenth century, making it a product of the effort to preserve and classify knowledge by contemporary scholars. Nothing is known about its authors who were probably monks working at a library in Constantinople.² They consulted directly the works of Homer, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and the *Palatine Anthology* but, for everything else, relied upon compilations of compilations that were often corrupt and inaccurate. *The Suda* includes explanations of difficult words and forms and proverbs but mainly provides historical and literary information. It also favors military and theological subjects that interested Byzantines. It remained popular as the interpolations and number of manuscripts indicate.

The Suda, sigma 815 covers the main points of an ancient biography of a tragedian. It identifies Sophocles' time of birth and death, his fatherland and deme, and the name of his father. It lists his contributions to the art of tragedy and records the number of

¹ F. Dölger ("Der Titel des sog. Suidaslexikons." *Sitzb. Bayer. Akad. Phil.-hist. Kl.* 1936/6) first identified *Suda* as a title and inspired a vigorous debate over its meaning. For bibliography, see Lemerle 343 note 91, who notes that Eustathios, in referring to the title as *Soudias*, did not understand it. For the *The Suda*, see Lemerle 343–345 and Forbes and Browning, *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1970) 1019-1020.

² Alder 681.

6 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

his plays and victories. It positions him chronologically in relation to other notables, namely, Socrates and Euripides. Except for one word, the text is straightforward and mostly in agreement with the *Life of Sophocles* included in the Codex Parisinus (xxxii, 9) and other manuscripts. It differs from the *Life* in the date of Sophocles' birth, the spelling of his father's name, and the number of victories, although the latter may be reconciled with the number given in the *Life*. The twenty-three chapters of the *Life of Sophocles* are included among the sources and, for convenience, a translation with text is appended.

The commentary does not attempt a biography of Sophocles, for none can be written. Two unimpeachable facts stand for Sophocles' life: he was elected Treasurer of the Greeks for the Delian League in 443/442 B.C.E.,³ and he won eighteen victories in the tragic contests at the City Dionysia. These are unimpeachable because there is evidence, the Athenian tribute lists (37) and an inscription (217), independent of the ancient biography about him that derives from his poetry and that of others, especially the comedians. This narrative aspires to sift the testimonia for Sophocles' life and *oeuvre* for nuggets of historical worth and traces of the methodologies of their authors. These sources offer what is now known about Sophocles the man and poet apart from his extant plays and fragments. They undoubtedly contain elements of historical value. Sophocles, for instance, served as a general with Pericles during the Samian Revolt from the Athenian league in 441 B.C.E. T. B. L. Webster regards Sophocles' tutelage with Lampros as historical and that his teacher had lasting influence on Sophocles: "[Lamprus'] music was sober and restrained rather than wild and realistic. We can see the same

³ The Athenian year extended from the fall to the summer. In modern terms, a year began in 443 B.C.E. and ended in 442, and so the year is marked as 443/442.

contrasts between the choruses of Sophocles and the later choruses and arias of Euripides.”⁴ Mary R. Lefkowitz, on the other hand, points out that such anecdotes are meant “as representations of the poet’s heroic status.”⁵ Study with Lampros may have been devised to explain Sophocles’ style, and that his style is therefore the source of the detail. Webster himself finds confirmation of Lampros as Sophocles’ teacher in the latter’s poetry. Once doubts are raised whether a source testifies to, or is derived from, Sophocles’ life, it falls into the aporia of the chicken-and-egg.

The following may be regarded as historical in the evidence for Sophocles’ life:

1. His first victory came in 468 B.C.E. with *Triptolemos* and three other plays (82–89).
2. He did not compete in the City Dionysia in 467 (91).
3. He held the office of Hellenotamias in 443/442 B.C.E. (37).
4. He held a generalship during the Samian War (38–43).
5. He won first prize in 438 (95).
6. He won second prize in 431 (96).
7. His *Oedipus Tyrannus* was defeated by Philokles (98).
8. He served as *proboulos* on a committee of elders in 412/411, appointed to advise concerning the present circumstances (48–49).
9. He won first prize with *Philoctetes* in 409 (100).
10. He entered the Proagon of 406 in mourning for Euripides (101).
11. He died in 406 B.C.E. (102–103).
12. He produced plays for presentation at the festival of the City Dionysia and won eighteen victories (217).

⁴ Webster 1–2.

⁵ Lefkowitz 77.

8 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

13. He married Nikostrate (165) and had a son Iophon who became a tragedian (166–173) and who had a son, Sophocles, Sophocles' grandson, who became a tragedian (180–184).

14. He invented the third actor (136–137).

15. He was devoted to Asclepius (53–58; 160–163).

16. His *Oedipus at Colonus* was produced in 401 posthumously by his grandson, Sophocles (104).

The Suda sigma 815
Text and Translation

Σοφοκλῆς, Σωφίλου, Κολωνῆθεν, Ἀθηναῖος, τραγικός, τεχθεὶς κατὰ τὴν οὔτῳ Ὀλυμπιάδα, ὡς πρεσβύτερος εἶναι Σωκράτους ἕτη ιζ'. οὗτος πρῶτος τρισὶν ἐχρήσατο ὑποκριταῖς καὶ τῷ καλουμένῳ τριταγωνιστῇ, καὶ πρῶτος τὸν χορὸν ἐκ πεντεκαίδεκα εἰσήγαγε νέων, πρότερον δυοκαίδεκα εἰσιόντων. προσηγορεύθη δὲ Μέλιττα διὰ τὸ γλυκύ. καὶ αὐτὸς ἤρξε τοῦ δράμα πρὸς δράμα ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ μὴ στρατολογεῖσθαι. καὶ ἔγραψεν ἐλεγείαν τε καὶ Παιᾶνας καὶ λόγον καταλογάδην περὶ τοῦ χοροῦ, πρὸς Θέσπιν καὶ Χοιρίλον ἀγωνιζόμενος. παῖδας δὲ οὓς ἔσχεν οὗτοι· Ἰοφῶν, Λεωσθένης, Ἀρίστων, Στέφανος, Μενεκλείδης. τελευτᾷ δὲ μετὰ Εὐριπίδην, ἐτῶν C'. ἐδίδαξε δὲ δράματα ρκγ', ὡς δέ τινες καὶ πολλῶ πλειῶ, νίκας δὲ ἔλαβε κδ'.

Sophocles,¹ son of Sophilos, from the deme Colonus, Athenian,² tragedian,³ born during the seventy-third Olympiad,⁴ and thus he was seventeen years older than Socrates.⁵ Sophocles was first to employ three actors and the so-called tritagonist, and he was first to bring forth a chorus of fifteen young men.⁶ Before then, choruses consisted of twelve youths. He was called Bee because of his sweetness.⁷ He himself began competing with a play against a play but not conducting the levy.⁸ He wrote elegy and paeans and an account in prose of the chorus in rivalry with Thespis and Choirilos.⁹ The sons whom he had were Iophon, Leosthenes, Ariston, Stephanos, and Menekleides.¹⁰ He died at ninety years,¹¹ outliving Euripides.¹² He taught 123 plays and was victorious, taking the prize twenty-four times.¹³

10 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Index to Sources (S.)

NOTE 1. MAN AND CITIZEN	
A. Education and Youth	S. 1–3
B. Character	S. 4–5
C. Political Career	S. 36–9
D. Piety	S. 50–9
NOTE 2. FATHER, DEME, POLIS	
A. Father	S. 60–68
B. Deme	S. 69–73
C. Polis	S. 74–75
NOTE 3. TRAGEDIAN	
A. Student of Aeschylus	S. 76
B. Early Tragedian and Actor	S. 77–81
C. <i>Triptolemos</i> , First Victory	S. 82–89
D. Career in Brief	S. 90–104
E. Style	S. 105–109
F. And Actors	S. 110–120
G. And Aeschylus	S. 121–127
NOTE 4. YEAR OF BIRTH	S. 128–133
NOTE 5. SYNCHRONICITY WITH SOCRATES	S. 134–135
NOTE 6. INNOVATIONS IN DRAMA	S. 136–144
NOTE 7. THE BEE	S. 145–156
NOTE 8: A TEXTUAL PROBLEM	
NOTE 9. OTHER WRITINGS	S. 157–164

NOTE 10. SON AND GRANDSON

- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| A. Son, Iophon | S. 165–173 |
| B. Lawsuit | S. 174–179 |
| C. Grandson, Sophocles | S. 180–184 |

NOTE 11. DEATH

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| A. Age at Death. Year of Death | S. 185–193 |
| B. Manner of Death | S. 194–199 |
| C. Funeral and Grave | S. 200–206 |

NOTE 12. AND EURIPIDES S. 207–213

NOTE 13. NUMBER OF TRAGEDIES AND VICTORIES
S. 214–217

12 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Note One Sophocles, Man and Citizen (1–59)

A. Education and Youth (1–3)

1. *Life of Sophocles* 1 (T 1)

Καλῶς τε ἐπαιδεύθη καὶ ἐτρέφη ἐν εὐπορίᾳ.

Sophocles was well educated and raised amid prosperity.

2. *Life of Sophocles* 3 (T 1)

Διεπονήθη δὲ ἐν παισὶ καὶ παλαίστρῳ καὶ μουσικῇ, ἐξ ὧν ἀμφοτέρων ἐστεφανώθη, ὡς φησὶν Ἰστρος. ἐδιδάχθη δὲ τὴν μουσικὴν παρὰ Λάμπρῳ, καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχίαν Ἀθηναίων περὶ τρόπαιον ὄντων μετὰ λύρας γυμνὸς ἀληλιμμένος τοῖς παιανίζουσι τῶν ἐπινικίων ἐξῆρχε.

Sophocles trained among the boys both in the wrestling and in music and poetry; according to Ister [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 35], he received crowns in both. He studied music with Lampros. While the Athenians were gathered around the victory monument after the naval battle at Salamis, Sophocles, naked and anointed with oil, led the chorus that sang the victory songs, accompanying himself on the lyre.

3. Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 1.20 E (T 28)

Σοφοκλῆς δὲ πρὸς τῷ καλὸς γεγενῆσθαι τὴν ὥραν ἦν καὶ ὀρχηστικὴν δεδιδαγμένος καὶ μουσικὴν ἔτι παῖς ὢν παρὰ Λάμπρῳ. μετὰ γοῦν τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχίαν περὶ τρόπαιον γυμνὸς ἀλημιμένος ἐχόρευσε μετὰ λύρας· οἱ δὲ ἐν ἱματίῳ φασί.

Besides being beautiful during the prime of his youth, when he was a boy, Sophocles learned the arts of choral dance and music from Lampros. After the sea battle at Salamis, naked and anointed with oil, he led the chorus, accompanying himself on the lyre. Some say that he wore a cloak.

COMMENTARY

Scant as the evidence is, it suffices for a realistic (though not necessarily historical) picture of Sophocles as a beautiful youth who early on displayed exceptional musical talent. His selection to dance in the victory celebration at Salamis confirms his physical appearance and grace of foot. Study with Lampros whom Plutarch (*Moralia* 1142 B) ranks in the company of “Pindar, Dionysios of Thebes, Pratinas, and others who excelled in composing music for the cithara” suggests his precociousness, while tutelage by so prominent cithara player and composer implies the high status and wealth of his family. Yet, it is characteristic of the biography of tragic poets that their talent should be recognized early. Euripides’ father received an oracle that his son would receive crowns in contests (*Life of Euripides* 5); an oracle directed Aeschylus to compose tragedy (Pausanias *Geography of Greece* 1.21.2).⁶

⁶ Lefkowitz 1981.93–94.

14 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Plato's remark in the *Menexenos* (236 A) that Lampros was inferior to Socrates' teacher, Konnos, reproduces the biographical tradition of comparing Sophocles and Euripides unfavorably to Socrates (20–23).

B. Character (4–35)

4. *Life of Sophocles* 7 (T 1)

Καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν τοσαύτη τοῦ ἥθους αὐτῷ γέγονε χάρις ὥστε πάντη καὶ πρὸς ἀπάντων αὐτὸν στέργεσθαι.

Simply put, there was such charm to his personality that he was beloved everywhere by everyone.

5. *Life of Sophocles* 10

Οὕτω δὲ φιλαθηναϊότατος ἦν ὥστε πολλῶν βασιλέων μεταπεμπομένων αὐτὸν οὐκ ἠθέλησε τὴν πατρίδα καταλιπεῖν.

Sophocles was such a lover of Athens that, even though kings summoned him, he did not want to leave his fatherland.

6. Phrynichus fr. 31 (Kock) (T 105)

Μάκαρ Σοφοκλέης, ὃς πολὺν χρόνον βίους
ἀπέθανεν εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ καὶ δεξιός·
πολλὰς ποιήσας καὶ καλὰς τραγωδίας
καλῶς ἐτελεύτησ', οὐδὲν ὑπομείνας κακόν.

Happy Sophocles, who lived a long time

and died a happy and clever man,
wrote many fine tragedies
and ended well without suffering any evil.

7. Aristophanes *Frogs* 67–82 (T 101 with the addition of lines 67–70)

Δι.: κούδεῖς γέ μ' ἂν πείσειεν ἀνθρώπων τὸ μὴ οὐκ
ἐλθεῖν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνον.

Ηρ.: πότερον εἰς Ἄιδου κάτω;

Δι.: καὶ νῆ Δί' εἴ τί γ' ἔστιν ἔτι κατωτέρω.

Ηρ.: τί βουλόμενος;

Δι.: δέομαι ποιητοῦ δεξιού·
οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐκέτ' εἰσίν, οἱ δ' ὄντες κακοί.

Ηρ.: τί δ'; οὐκ Ἰοφῶν ζῆ;

Δι.: τοῦτο γὰρ τοι καὶ μόνον
ἔτ' ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἄρα·
οὐ γὰρ σάφ' οἶδ' οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦθ' ὅπως ἔχει.

Ηρ. εἴτ' οὐ Σοφοκλέα πρότερον ἀντ' Εὐριπίδου

μέλλεις ἀνάγειν, εἴπερ γ' ἐκεῖθεν δεῖ σ' ἄγειν;

Δι. οὐ, πρὶν γ' ἂν Ἰοφῶντ', ἀπολαβῶν αὐτὸν μόνον,

ἄνευ Σοφοκλέους ὃ τι ποιεῖ κωδωνίσω.

κἄλλως ὁ μὲν γ' Εὐριπίδης πανοῦργος ὢν

κἂν ξυναποδρᾶναι δεῦρ' ἐπιχειρήσειέ μοι·

ὁ δ' εὐκόλος μὲν ἐντάδ', εὐκόλος δ' ἐκεῖ.

Dionysus: No man could persuade me not
to go fetch the man [Euripides].

Herakles: Go below? To Hades?

Dionysus: Yes, and even if there is somewhere below that.

16 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Herakles: Why? What do you want?

Dionysus: I need a clever poet.

“For some are not, and those that are are bad.”

Herakles: What’s this? Is not Iophon alive?

Dionysus: Yes, this is the only good thing left, if it is good.

I don’t know for sure whether it’s a good thing.

Herakles: You don’t intend to bring Sophocles if you must bring someone up from there? He ranks before

Euripides. Dionysus: Not until I take Iophon by himself

without Sophocles and test the ring of his poetry.

Besides, Euripides is a scoundrel.

He’d be up to deserting that place for me.

Sophocles was easy-going here, and he is easy going there.

8. Aristophanes *Frogs* 786–794 (T 102)

ξα. κάπειτα πῶς
οὐ καὶ Σοφοκλέης ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου;

Αια. μὰ Δί’ οὐκ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ’ ἔκυσε μὲν Αἰσχύλον,
ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθε, κἀνέβαλε τὴν δεξιάν,
κἀκεῖνος ὑπεχώρησεν αὐτῷ τοῦ θρόνου·
νυνὶ δ’ ἔμελλεν, ὡς ἔφη Κλειδημίδης,
ἔφεδρος καθεδεῖσθαι· κἂν μὲν Αἰσχύλος κρατῆ,
ἔξιν κατὰ χώραν· εἰ δὲ μή, περὶ τῆς τέχνης
διαγωνιεῖσθ’ ἔφασκε πρὸς γ’ Εὐριπίδην.

Xanthos: Certainly Sophocles
laid claim to the Chair in Tragedy.

Aeacus: By Zeus, he did not. He kissed Aeschylus
when he arrived and clasped his right hand
and yielded the chair to him.

Now, as Kleidemides said, he is going
to sit aside as an alternative. If Aeschylus wins,
he'll stay put, but if not,
he says that he will compete against Euripides
for the sake of the art.

58 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

9. Aristophanes *Frogs* 1515–1519 (T 103)

Aeschylus is speaking:

Σὺ δὲ τὸν θᾶκον
τὸν ἐμὸν παράδος Σοφοκλεῖ τηρεῖν
καὶ διασώζειν, ἦν ἄρ' ἐγὼ ποτε
δεῦρ' ἀφίκωμαι· τοῦτον γὰρ ἐγὼ
σοφία κρίνω δεύτερον εἶναι.

You, Pluto, give this chair
of mine to Sophocles to watch over
and preserve. If ever I come this way again,
since I consider him to be
second to me in our art.

COMMENTARY

Ancient biographers lacked the primary materials like diaries and personal papers available to their modern counterparts. They turned to their subject's poetry and poetry about him for anecdotes and judgments on his character which they believed to be factual.⁷ They drew heavily on Aristophanes' *Frogs* for the *Life of Aeschylus* with influences appearing in the *Lives* of Sophocles and Euripides. In *Frogs*, Sophocles is a recent arrival to Hades. He yields the "chair of tragedy" to Aeschylus without a contest and is contented to sit as a bye in the contest that Aeschylus undertakes against Euripides. Aeschylus champions the old ways, traditional piety and education by music and athletics. Euripides espouses the newfangled sophistry, airy morality, and effeminate of foreigners. The scenario leaves no place for Sophocles, hence he becomes "easy-going" "courteous," to account for his own lack of

⁷ Lefkowitz 1978.

competitiveness, and his style of poetry, with the extremes claimed, strikes a middle ground. From the Sophocles content in Hades it is no great leap to a “very patriotic” Sophocles who, in contrast with Aeschylus and Euripides, disdains invitations from powerful foreigners to remain in Athens. This Sophocles gains some support from man who, while eschewing a political career, ardently served the demos when called upon and left Athens only on its business. The real Sophocles, of course, had to be competitive: he competed all his adult life in the tragic contests and surely expected to win each time he entered the fray—the timeless mentality of the successful athlete.

10. Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 13.603 E–604 F (T 75)

Φιλομειραξ δὲ ἦν ὁ Σοφοκλῆς, ὡς Εὐριπίδης φιλογύνης. Ἴων γοῦν ὁ ποιητὴς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιγραφομέναις Ἐπιδημίαις γράφει οὕτως· “Σοφοκλεῖ τῷ ποιητῇ ἐν Χίῳ συνήνητσα, ὅτε ἔπλει εἰς Λέσβον στρατηγός, ἀνδρὶ παιδιῶδει παρ’ οἶνον καὶ δεξιῶ. Ἐρμησίλεω δὲ ξένου οἱ ἐόντος καὶ προξένου Ἀθηναίων ἐστιῶντος αὐτόν, ἐπεὶ παρὰ τὸ πῦρ ἐστεῶς ὁ τὸν οἶνον ἐγγέων παῖς . . . ἐὼν δῆλος ἦν εἶπέ τε ‘βούλει με ἠδέως πίνειν;’ φάντος δ’ αὐτοῦ, ‘βραδέως τοίνυν καὶ πρόσφερε μοι καὶ ἀπόφερε τὴν κύλικα.’ ἔτι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐρυθριάσαντος τοῦ παιδὸς εἶπε πρὸς τὸν συγκατακείμενον· ‘ὡς καλῶς Φρύνιχος ἐποίησεν εἶπας “λάμπει δ’ ἐπὶ πορφυρέαις παρῆσι φῶς ἔρωτος.”’ καὶ πρὸς τότε ἡμείφθη ὁ Ἐρετριεὺς ἢ Ἐρυθραῖος γραμμάτων ἐὼν διδάσκαλος· ‘σοφὸς μὲν δὴ σύ γε εἶ, ὦ Σοφόκλεις, ἐν ποιήσει· ὅμως μέντοι γε οὐκ εὖ εἶρηκε Φρύνιχος πορφυρέας εἰπὼν τὰς γνάθους τοῦ καλοῦ. εἰ γὰρ ὁ ζωγράφος χρώματι πορφυρέῳ ἐναλειψεῖ τουδὶ τοῦ παιδὸς τὰς γνάθους, οὐκ ἂν ἔτι καλὸς φαίνοιτο. οὐ κάρτα δὴ <καλὸν> τὸ καλὸν τῷ μὴ καλῷ φαινομένῳ εἰκάζειν.’ ἀνγελάσας δ’ ἐπὶ τῷ Ἐρετριεῖ Σοφοκλῆς· ‘οὐδὲ τότε σοὶ ἀρέσκει ἄρα, ὦ ξέने, τὸ Σιμωνίδειον, κάρτα δοκέον τοῖς Ἕλλησιν εὖ

60 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

ειρήσθαι· “πορφυρέου ἀπὸ στόματος ἰεῖσα φωνὰν παρθένος,” οὐδ’ ὁ ποιητής” ἔφη <ὁ> λέγων “χρυσοκόμαν Ἀπόλλωνα”· χρυσέας γὰρ εἰ ἐποίησεν ὁ ζωγράφος τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ κόμας καὶ μὴ μελαίνας, χειρὸν ἂν ἦν τὸ ζωγράφημα. οὐδὲ ὁ φᾶς ῥοδοδάκτυλον· εἰ γὰρ τις εἰς ῥόδεον χρῶμα βάψει τοὺς δακτύλους, πορφυροβάφου χειρᾶς καὶ οὐ γυναικὸς καλῆς ποιήσειεν <ἂν>.’ γελασάντων δὲ, ὁ μὲν Ἐρετριεὺς ἐνωπήθη τῇ ἐπιραπίξει, ὁ δὲ πάλιν τοῦ παιδὸς τῷ λόγῳ εἶχετο. εἶρετο γὰρ μιν ἀπὸ τῆς κύλικος κάρφος τῷ μικρῷ δακτύλῳ ἀφαιρετέοντα, εἰ καθορᾶ τὸ κάρφος. φάντος δὲ καθορᾶν, ‘ἀπὸ τοίνυν φύσησον αὐτό, ἵνα μὴ πλύνοιτο ὁ δάκτυλός σευ.’ προσαγαγόντος δ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ πρόσωπον πρὸς τὴν κύλικα ἐγγυτέρω τὴν κύλικα τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ στόματος ἤγεν, ἵνα δὴ ἡ κεφαλὴ τῇ κεφαλῇ ἀσσοτέρα γένηται. ὡς δ’ ἦν οἱ κάρτα πλησίον, προσλαβὼν τῇ χειρὶ ἐφίλησεν. ἐπικροτησάντων δὲ πάντων σὺν γέλωτι καὶ βοῇ ὡς εὖ ὑπηγάγετο τὸν παῖδα, ‘μελετῶ’ εἶπεν ‘στρατηγεῖν, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἐπειδήπερ Περικλῆς ποιεῖν μὲν <με> ἔφη, στρατηγεῖν δ’ οὐκ ἐπίστασθαι. ἄρ’ οὖν οὐ κατ’ ὀρθὸν μοι πέπτωκεν τὸ στρατήγημα;’ τοιαῦτα πολλᾶ δεξιῶς ἔλεγεν τε καὶ ἔρησεν ὅτε πίνοι ἢ τπράσσοιτ. τὰ μέντοι πολιτικὰ οὔτε σοφὸς οὔτε ῥεκτήριος ἦν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἂν τις εἰς τῶν χρηστῶν Ἀθηναίων.”

Καὶ Ἰερώνυμος δ’ ὁ Ῥόδιος ἐν τοῖς Ἱστορικοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν φησιν ὅτι Σοφοκλῆς εὐπρεπῆ παῖδα ἔξω τείχους ἀπήγαγε χρησόμενος αὐτῷ. ὁ μὲν οὖν παῖς τὸ ἴδιον ἱμάτιον ἐπὶ τῇ πόα ὑπέστρωσεν, τὴν δὲ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους χλανίδα περιεβάλοντο. μετ’ οὖν ὁμιλίαν ὁ παῖς ἀρπάσας τὸ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους χλανίδιον ὄχετο, καταλιπὼν τῷ Σοφοκλεῖ τὸ παιδικὸν ἱμάτιον. οἷα δὲ εἰκὸς διαλαληθέντος τοῦ συμβεβηκότος Εὐριπίδης πυθόμενος καὶ ἐπιτωθάζων τὸ γεγονός καὶ αὐτὸς ποτε ἔφη τούτῳ κεχρησθαι τῷ παιδί, ἀλλὰ μηδὲν προσθεῖναι, τὸν δὲ Σοφοκλέα διὰ τὴν ἀκολασίαν καταφρονηθῆναι. καὶ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἀκούσας ἐποίησεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐπίγραμμα, χρησάμενος τῷ

περὶ τοῦ Ἥλιου καὶ Βορέου λόγῳ, καὶ τι πρὸς μοιχείαν αὐτοῦ
παραινιπτόμενος·

Ἥλιος ἦν, οὐ παῖς, Εὐριπίδη, ὅς με χλιαίνων
γυμνὸν ἐποίησεν· σοὶ δὲ φιλοῦντι, τάλαν,
Βορῶς ὠμίλησε. σὺ δ' οὐ σοφὸς, ὅς τὸν Ἔρωτα,
ἄλλοτριαν σπείρων, λωποδύτην ἀπάγεις.

τάλαν West 166. ἑταίραν mss.

Sophocles was a lover of youths as Euripides was of women. The poet Ion wrote the following in his work entitled *Sojournings* [*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 392 F 6]: “I met Sophocles the poet on Chios while he was sailing as general to Lesbos, a playful man and clever over wine. Hermesilaos, Sophocles’ host and proxenos of the Athenians, was entertaining him. There appeared by the fire the boy who was pouring the wine. Sophocles said to him, ‘Do you wish for me to drink with pleasure?’ The boy said yes, and Sophocles then said, ‘Bring me the cup slowly, and draw it away slowly.’ The boy blushed even more deeply, and Sophocles said to the man sharing his couch, ‘How aptly did Phrynichus put it when he said, “There shines on crimson cheeks the light of eros”’ [*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 3 F 13]. A teacher of grammar from Eretria or Erythrai interrupted: ‘You are wise in poetry, Sophocles, but Phrynichus was off the mark when he said that the cheeks of a beautiful boy are crimson. If a painter dabbed this boy’s cheeks with crimson paint, he would no longer appear beautiful. Surely, it is not a beautiful thing to compare the beautiful with that which is not beautiful.’ Sophocles laughed at the Eretrian and replied, ‘This line of Simonides [*Poetae Melici Graeci* 585] doesn’t suit you either, although it seems to the Greeks to be well said: “From her crimson mouth the maiden sent forth her voice,” or the poet who said “golden-haired Apollo” [Pindar *Olympian Odes* 6.41; 7.32; *Paeanes* 5.41]. If the painter had made the

62 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

hair of the god golden instead of black, his painting would not be as good. If the painter dipped his fingers into a rose-colored paint, he would have the hands of a dipper in rose-colored paint and not those of a beautiful woman.' A laugh went around the company at this. The Eretrian was crushed by Sophocles' retort, and Sophocles returned to talking with the boy. In the meantime, the boy had been trying to remove a piece of straw from the cup with his little finger. Sophocles asked whether he saw the straw. When the boy said yes, Sophocles said, 'Blow it off, then, so you won't get your finger wet.' As the boy drew his face toward the cup, Sophocles drew the cup nearer to his own mouth so that his head came nearer to the boy's. When the heads were close, Sophocles embraced the boy and kissed him. Everyone rippled with laughter and shouts of glee over how Sophocles led on the boy. 'I am practicing,' he said, "my generalship, gentlemen, since Pericles said that I know how to write poetry but not how to be a general. Didn't this piece of generalship come out alright for me?' Sophocles said and did many clever things while he was drinking wine. He was neither wise nor active in the affairs of the city but conducted himself as would one of the respectable Athenians."

Hieronimos of Rhodes says in his *Histories* [fr. 35 Wehrli] that Sophocles led a comely boy outside the wall in order to enjoy him. The boy spread his cloak on the grass, and they threw Sophocles' mantle over themselves. After their intercourse, the boy absconded, stealing Sophocles' mantle and leaving Sophocles his boy's cloak. As was likely, the incident made the rounds of the gossips, and Euripides heard about it. He scoffed at what happened and said that he had the boy but did not make a contribution, but Sophocles had let his self-indulgence in matters of the flesh make a fool of him. Sophocles heard what Euripides said and wrote the following epigram [fr. eleg. 4 West = 3 Diehl] which refers to the story of the Sun and Boreas [Aesop *Fables* 46; Babrius *Fables* 18] and indirectly to Euripides' adulterous ways:

Helios, not a boy, Euripides, left me naked
without my mantle. Boreas joins you, poor thing, when
you are making love. You're not smart. While sowing the
fields of others, you bring Eros to court for stealing clothes.

COMMENTARY

The dinner party at Hermesilaos' house on Chios could have happened. Sophocles had to have been acquainted, at the least, with Ion, a fellow tragedian and bon vivant. Ion first produced plays for the City Dionysia in 451; at least twelve and as many as forty followed. He lost to Euripides' *Hippolytus* in 428 but later gained a victory in tragedy and dithyramb. Overwhelmed with joy, he gave every Athenian citizen a jar of Chian wine.⁸ Nor is it improbable that Sophocles put into Chios where, as a general and famous poet, he was entertained by a local celebrity and habitué of Athens at the house of the man who represented Athenian interests. Nevertheless, Ion could have invented Sophocles' campaign to kiss his host's pretty cupbearer and his withering squelch of the pedantic grammarian.⁹ His characterization of Sophocles seems to capture—as it helps create—the essential Sophocles: he was neither wise nor active in the affairs of the city but conducted himself as would any of the good

⁸ First victory and number of plays: *The Suda* iota 487. Defeat: *Argumentum* to Euripides *Hippolytus*. Gift of wine: Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 1.3; *The Suda* iota 487.

⁹ On the other hand, Lefkowitz (1978.465) points out concerning Ion's *Epidemiai* (*Sojournings*): "the surviving fragments of his *Epidemiai* provide little reassurance that he is a historian in our sense: they consist of dinner-table conversations, comparisons of generals and poets with one another, famous name-dropping." Yet, Ion cannot be faulted for not being a modern historian, nor Athenaeus for considering a gossip-monger a source of memorable information.

64 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Athenians. Unlike most Greeks, the poet Ion distinguishes between *chrestos* as “good” and as “useful to the community,” its etymological meaning. Sophocles, a good aristocrat but not an active politician, is not useful in Ion’s opinion. Perhaps the tragedian was too close to the man to see the usefulness that Albin Lesky discovers in “happy” Sophocles:

The poet who knew the tragedy of human life and the very depths of sorrow as no other did, lived his outward life in a warm and peaceful light, and served his fellows as an example of a happy man.¹⁰

Although one upmanship between verbally clever men is not impossible, Sophocles did not write the epigram preserved by Athenaeus from Hieronymus of Rhodes because it draws upon Hellenistic biographies. It implies a reader familiar with the Sophocles and Euripides developed by biographers writing long after their deaths, among them, Satyrus of Callatis Pontica (floruit *ca.* 300 B.C.E.), Hieronymus of Rhodes (*ca.* 290–230), and Ister of Cyrene (*ca.* 250–200). Further, the epigram deals with images of the poet created by the implied author of the epigram.¹¹ The “I” develops a personality for Sophocles by erecting differences from his antipode, Euripides. The premise of the epigram is that Sophocles and Euripides resemble, respectively, Helios and Boreas of the fable The North Wind and the Sun:

A contest like this arose between Boreas and Helios over which one could strip the goatskin cloak from a traveling bumpkin. Boreas, first up, blew as he blows from Thrace.

¹⁰ Lesky 272.

¹¹ For the concept of the “implied author,” see Booth 71–76. On the epigram, see Tyrrell 2005.

His idea was to rob the wearer of his cloak by force. But the man did not let go his cloak, but, shivering, he clutched it by the edges all around him. He then sat down, leaning his back against a jutting rock. Then Helios peeped out sweetly at first and drove off the cold of the raw wind. He turned up the heat more. Suddenly, a burning heat gripped the farmer, and he threw off the cloak of his own accord and was stripped. Boreas, matched against Helios, was defeated. The fable means: "Strive for gentleness, son. You will accomplish more by persuasion than by using force" (Babrius *Fable* 18).

Euripides reproaches Sophocles for losing his cloak to the thievery of a boy whom Euripides had without making a contribution, that is, without removing his cloak and allowing it to be stolen. Sophocles replies that Euripides is accustomed to wearing his cloak in times of passion, because, like Boreas, he uses force. Euripides resorts to force since his lovers are other men's wives, and adultery is a cold business because of the penalties that conviction carries. On the other hand, Helios persuaded Sophocles to remove his cloak. He was hot from passion for the boy. The boy who aroused such passion (that is, eros) instantiates Eros, the primeval arouser of passion who, Hesiod says, is among the first gods to be born:

Then was born Eros, the most beautiful among the
immortal gods,
loosener of limbs, who subdues the mind and prudent
counsel
in the chests of all gods and of all men. (*Theogony* 120–122).

In Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* (2.3–5), Philetas tells how he tried to entice Eros in the form of a boy into giving him a kiss:

66 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

And so, I asked him to come into my arms without fear. I swore more than once that I would let him go and give him a dowry of apples and roses and the right to harvest my plants and pick my flowers for all time, if only I received one kiss from him (4).

Philetas' Eros escapes without bestowing a kiss or compensating him for his flowers. Sophocles' Eros, embodied as it were in the boy, leaves with his cloak—no motive given much less that of thievery. When Euripides alleges to all that the boy stole the cloak, he brings Eros into the danger of being charged with stealing clothes, a capital offense when perpetrated in a *gymnasion*: "If anyone purloined a cloak or small oil flask or any other trivial thing from the Lyceum or the Academy or from Kynosarges, or if he purloined any article of clothing valued at more than ten drachmas from the gymnasia or from the harbors, Solon legislated a penalty of death" (Demosthenes *Against Timocrates* 114). Thus we may suppose that Sophocles stepped out with his *erômenos* into an open area of a *gymnasion* that bordered the city walls, and there, Eros, denizen of *gymnasia*, pilfered his cloak.¹²

11. Plutarch *Pericles* 8.8 (T 74a)

Καί ποτε τοῦ Σοφοκλέους, ὅτε συστρατηγῶν ἐξέπλευσε μετ' αὐτοῦ, παῖδα καλὸν ἐπαινέσαντος "οὐ μόνον" ἔφη, "τὰς χεῖρας, ᾧ Σοφόκλεις, δεῖ καθαρὰς ἔχειν τὸν στρατηγόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ὄψεις.

Once when Sophocles was a member of the board of generals and was embarking on ship with Pericles, he praised a beautiful boy.

¹² For Eros in the *gymnasion*, see Scanlon 211–219. On the epigram, see Tyrrell 2005

Pericles said, "Sophocles, a general ought to have not only hands that are clean but also eyes."

12. Cicero *De Officiis* 1.144 (T 74c)

Turpe enim valdeque vitiosum in re severa convivio digna aut delicatum aliquem inferre sermonem. bene Pericles, cum haberet collegam in praetura Sophoclem poetam iique de communi officio convenissent et casu formosus puer praeteriret dixissetque Sophocles "O puerum pulchrum, Pericle!", "at enim praetorem, Sophocle, decet non solum manus sed etiam oculos abstinentes habere." atqui hoc idem Sophocles si in athletarum probatione dixisset, iusta reprehensione caruisset: tanta vis est et loci et temporis.

It is bad manners and in extremely poor taste to intrude matters into a serious discussions that belong to a party or risqué talk. Pericles had Sophocles the poet as his colleague in the praetorship. When they met concerning official business together, by chance a beautiful boy walked by, and Sophocles said, "O, what a beautiful boy, Pericles!" Pericles replied, "A praetor ought not only to have hands that abstain but even eyes." And yet, if Sophocles had said the same thing in approving athletes, he would have been free of just blame. Such is the effect of place and time.

13. Stobaeus *Anthology* 3.17.18 (T 74b)

Περικλῆς Σοφοκλέους εὐπρεπῆ παῖδα δεικνύντος αὐτῷ, "ὦ Σοφόκλεις," εἶπε, "τὸν σὺφρονα στρατηγὸν οὐ μόνον τὰς χεῖρας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἔχειν παρ' ἑαυτῷ δεῖ."

68 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

When Sophocles pointed to a comely boy, Pericles said to him, "The self-controlled general ought to keep to himself not just his hands but also his eyesight."

14. Valerius Maximus *Factorum ac Dictorum Memorabilium Libri IX* 4.3 ext. 1 (T 74d)

Pericles Atheniensium princeps, cum tragoediarum scriptorem Sophoclem in praetura collegam haberet atque is publico officio una districtus pueri ingenui praetereuntis formam inpensioribus verbis laudasset, intemperantiam eius increpans dixit praetoris non solum manus a pecuniae lucro sed etiam oculos a libidinoso aspectu continentis esse debere.

Pericles, foremost man of the Athenians, had as a colleague in the praetorship the writer of tragedies Sophocles. When Sophocles, distracted from his official duties, too eagerly praised the beauty of a well-born boy who passed by, Pericles chided him for his lack of moderation and said, "Not only should a praetor's hands be kept from greed for money but also his eyes from lustful glances."

15. [Plutarch] *Moralia* 838 F (T 74e)

Σοφοκλέα δὲ τὸν τραγικὸν θεασάμενος ἐπόμενον ἐρωτικῶς παιδὶ εἶπεν "οὐ μόνον δεῖ, Σοφόκλεις, τὰς χεῖρας ἔχειν παρ' αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς."

Isocrates, having watched Sophocles the tragedian following a boy with erotic purposes, said "Not only must one keep one's hands to oneself, Sophocles, but the eyes also."

COMMENTARY

Plutarch seems justified in accepting Pericles' remark to Sophocles as genuine. The prudish Pericles, a dignified and aloof man,¹³ could easily have been offended by behavior like that Sophocles displayed at Hermesilaos' dinner party and felt forced to remind Sophocles of his dignity as a representative of the Athenians in a time of crisis. Sophocles' lack of qualifications as a general was never in doubt and deprived Pericles of a commander, which had to have irked a man who sought calm efficiency in managing the public and its affairs.

16. Aristophanes, *Peace* 693–699 (T 104a with the addition of lines 693-694)

Ερ. ὦ, ὦ,
οἷά μ' ἐκέλευσεν ἀναπτυθέσθαι σου.
Τρ. τὰ τί;
Ερ. πάμπολλα, καὶ τὰρχαῖ' ἃ κατέλιπεν τότε.
πρῶτον δ' ὅ τι πράττει Σοφοκλέης ἀνήρετο.
Τρ. εὐδαιμονεῖ· πάσχει δὲ θαυμαστόν.
Ερ. τὸ τί;
Τρ. ἐκ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους γίγνεται Σιμωνίδης.
Ερ. Σιμωνίδης; πῶς;
Τρ. ὅτι γέρον ὦν καὶ σαπρὸς

κέρδους ἕκατι κἂν ἐπὶ ῥιπὸς πλέοι.

¹³ Ion contrasts the “lordly and aloof” Pericles with the “easy Cimon who goes with the flow” (Plutarch *Pericles* 5.3).

70 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Hermes: Oh! Oh! What stuff Peace asked me to find out from you.
Trygaeus: What stuff?
Hermes: All sorts as well as the old stuff she left behind at that time. First, she asked how Sophocles is faring.
Trygaeus: He's happy, but something strange happened to him.
Hermes: What?
Trygaeus: From Sophocles he's turned into Simonides.
Hermes: Simonides? How?
Trygaeus: Now that he's old and musty he'd put to sea on a mat of rushes for money.

17. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Peace* 697 (T 104b)

Ὅτι ἐπὶ μισθῶ ἔγραφε τὰ μέλη· καὶ γὰρ Σιμωνίδης δοκεῖ πρῶτος . . . γράψαι ἄσμα μισθοῦ.

Because he wrote poetry for pay, for Simonides seems to have been the first . . . to write songs for money.

18. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Peace* 697 (T 104c)

Ὁ Σιμωνίδης διεβέβλητο ἐπὶ φιλαργυρία. καὶ τὸν Σοφοκλέα οὖν διὰ φιλαργυρίαν εἰκέναι τῷ Σιμωνίδῃ. λέγεται δὲ καὶ ὅτι ἐκ τῆς στρατηγίας τῆς ἐν Σάμῳ ἠργυρίσατο.

Simonides was criticized for his love of money. Because of the love of money, Sophocles seems to be like Simonides. It is said that Sophocles also received money from the campaign in Samos.

19. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Peace* 697 (T 104d)

Ἄλλως. μήποτε ἐδόκει Σοφοκλῆς περὶ τοὺς μισθοὺς καὶ τὰς νεμήσεις ὀψέ ποτε φιλοτιμότερος γεγονέναι.

Otherwise. Sophocles seemed to never have been too worked up at length about wages and settlements.

COMMENTARY

The joke is that Sophocles is so desperate for money that he goes to sea in a basket. Hesiod says of sailing for profit:

I do not speak in praise of sailing,
for it does not make my heart leap for joy.
It is dangerous, and you would hardly escape its evils. But
men undertake sailing out of the folly of their minds.
But for wretched men, wealth becomes their very life
existence. To die among the waves is dreadful (*Works and
Days* 682–688).

The joke arose in 421 B.C.E., twenty years after Sophocles' generalship in the Samian Revolt and the year when Aristophanes produced *Peace*. Simonides reportedly was the first poet to write for money (Scholiast to Pindar *Isthmian Odes* 2.9a). The combination of Sophocles as poet and as public official, a conventional target for jibes about bribery and corruption, occasioned the joke. The author of the *Life of Sophocles* omits the allegation from disbelief or to give "a favourable picture of the poet."¹⁴ One Scholiast deemed interest in profits beneath Sophocles. The joke says more about Aristophanes' willingness to

¹⁴ Lefkowitz 1981.83.

72 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

harpoon anyone for a laugh, even a member of his own *thiasos* or group of comrades.¹⁵

20. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Clouds* 144 (T 106a)

Τούτω καὶ ἡ Πυθία δοκεῖ τὸν περὶ τοῦ Σωκράτους χρησμὸν εἰπεῖν·

σοφὸς Σοφοκλῆς, σοφώτερος δ' Εὐριπίδης,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος.

τοῦτον Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ Μόλων ἐν τῷ κατὰ φιλοσόφων ἐψεῦσθαί φησιν· τοὺς γὰρ Πυθικοὺς χρησμοὺς ἕξαμέτρους εἶναι.

To this one [Chairephon] the Pythia seems to have told the oracle about Socrates:

Wise is Sophocles. Wiser is Euripides.
Wisest of all men is Socrates.

Apollonios Molon says in his treatise *On Philosophers* that is false, for Pythian oracles are in hexameters.

21. Scholiast to Plato *Apology* 21 A (T 106b)

Χρησμὸς περὶ Σωκράτους δοθεὶς Χαιρεφῶντι τῷ Σφηττίῳ·

¹⁵ Lefkowitz 1981.83 note 3 observes that Aristophanes abuses fellow members of his *thiasos* (*Inscriptiones Graecae* II² 3.2343) in *Clouds* 351 (Simon) and *Arcarnians* 46 (Amphitheos). For *thiasos*, see on 144.

σοφὸς Σοφοκλῆς, σοφώτερος δ' Εὐριπίδης,
ἀνδρῶν δ' ἀπάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος.

An oracle concerning Socrates given to Chairephon of Sphettos:

Wise is Sophocles. Wiser is Euripides.
Wisest of all men is Socrates.

22. *The Suda* sigma 820 (T 106c)

Σοφὸς Σοφοκλῆς, σοφώτερος δ' Εὐριπίδης,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτερος.

Wise is Sophocles. Wiser is Euripides.
Socrates is wiser than all men.

23. *Origin Against Celsus* 7.6 (T 106d)

Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἀπάντων Σωκράτην εἶπε σοφώτατον εἶναι, ἤμβλυσε τὸν ἔπαινον αὐτοῦ τὸ πρὸς τούτου λεγόμενον περὶ Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους ἐν τῷ “σοφὸς Σοφοκλῆς, σοφώτερος δ' Εὐριπίδης”. τραγωδιοποιῶν οὖν σοφῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ λελεγμένων κρείττων εἶναι νομισθεὶς ὁ Σωκράτης, τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τῆς ὀρχήστρας τοῦ τυχόντος ἄλλου ἕνεκεν ἀγωνιζομένων καὶ ὅπου μὲν λύπας καὶ οἴκτους τοῖς θεαταῖς ἐμποιοῦντων ὅπου δὲ ἀσέμνους γέλωτας (τοιούτων γὰρ τι βούλεται τὰ σατυρικὰ δράματα), οὐ πάνυ τι τὸ διὰ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ἀλήθειαν ἐμφαίνει σεμνὸν καὶ διὰ σεμνότητα ἐπαινετόν.

If the Pythian said that Socrates was the wisest of all men, he blunted the praise of Socrates by comparing him to Euripides and Sophocles with “Wise is Sophocles. Wiser is Euripides.” For

74 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Socrates is considered to be better than writers of tragedies who compete on the stage and in the orchestra for an ordinary prize and who make up grief and weeping for spectators and indecent laughter (for such is the intention of satyr plays). Perhaps he did not make him seem august on account of his philosophy and truth or praiseworthy on account of his augustness.

COMMENTARY

The Scholiasts link Chaerephon of Aristophanes' *Clouds* 144, "A flea bit Chaerephon's eyebrow," with an oracle. Chaerephon is known for an oracle but not this one. This oracle is a prosaic comparison of great men. Chaerephon's oracle as related in Plato's *Apology* (20 E-21 A) poses a quandary that puzzles Socrates. Chaerephon, a friend of Socrates from youth, "went to Delphi and had the effrontery to ask the oracle. . . if anyone was wiser than me [Socrates]." The response, "no one is wiser," corresponds to an oracle's usual riddling style of speech and implies a subtextual meaning which Socrates must discover for himself, namely, "in this oracle, the god is saying that human wisdom is worth little or nothing at all" (23 A).¹⁶

24. Plato *Republic* 329 B (T 80a)

Cephalus is speaking:

Καὶ δὴ καὶ Σοφοκλεῖ ποτε τῷ ποιητῇ παρεγενόμενην ἐρωτωμένῳ ὑπὸ τινος "πῶς" ἔφη, "ὦ Σοφόκλεις, ἔχεις πρὸς τὰ φροδίσια; ἔτι οἶός τε εἶ γυναικί συγγίγνεσθαι;" καὶ ὃς "εὐφήμει" ἔφη, "ὦ ἄνθρωπε, ἀσμενέστατα μέντοι αὐτὸ ἀπέφυγον, ὥσπερ λυττῶντά τινα καὶ ἄγχιον δεσπότην ἀποφυγών."

¹⁶ On the oracle of the Scholiast, see Parke-Wormell 2.170.

I was once with Sophocles the poet when he was asked by someone, "How, Sophocles, are you disposed towards sex? Are you still able to lie with a woman?" And he replied, "Hush, my man, most gladly did I escape sex, as if a slave escaping a raging and savage master."

25. Plutarch *Moralia* 5.525 A (T 80b)

Ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἐρωτηθεὶς εἰ δύναται γυναικὶ πλησιάσειν, "εὐφήμει, ἄνθρωπε," εἶπεν· "ἐλεύθερος γέγονα λυττῶντας καὶ ἀγρίους δεσπότης διὰ τὸ γῆρας ἀποφυγών."

Sophocles, asked whether he could be with a woman, replied, "Hush, my man, I have become a free man, as if a slave who escaped, raging and savage masters through old age."

26. Plutarch *Moralia* 8.788 E (T 80c)

Ὁ γὰρ Σοφοκλῆς ἄσμενος ἔφη τὰ ἀφροδίσια γεγηρακῶς ἀποπεφευγέναι καθάπερ ἄγριον καὶ λυσσῶντα δεσπότην.

Sophocles said that he gladly escaped sex by having gotten old, as if a slave escaping a savage and raging master.

27. Plutarch *Moralia* 12.1094 E (T 80d)

Διαπορεῖ . . . εἰ γέρον ὁ σοφὸς ὦν καὶ μὴ δυνάμενος πλησιάσειν ἔτι ταῖς τῶν καλῶν ἀφαῖς χαίρει καὶ ψηλαφήσειν, οὐ τὰ αὐτὰ μέντοι Σοφοκλεῖ διανοούμενος ἀσμένως ἐκφυγόντι τὴν ἡδονὴν ταύτην ὥσπερ ἄγριον καὶ λυττῶντα δεσπότην.

[Epicurus] raised the question whether a man of good sense but old who was unable to be with a woman still delighted in the

76 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

touch and feeling of beautiful women. He did not think the same as Sophocles who, like a slave, gladly escaped this pleasure as if it were a savage and raging master.

28. Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 12.510 B (T 80e)

Καίτοι Σοφοκλῆς γ' ὁ ποιητής, τῶν ἀπολαυστικῶν γε εἷς ὢν, ἵνα μὴ κατηγορῇ τοῦ γήρωσ, εἰς σωφροσύνην ἔθετο τὴν ἀσθένειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν περὶ τὰς τῶν ἀφροδισίων ἀπολαύσεις, φήσας ἀσμένως ἀπηλλάχθαι αὐτῶν ὡσπερ τινὸς δεσπότηου.

Sophocles the poet, a man extraordinaire for pleasures, lest he blame old age, attributed his weakness to moderation concerning the pleasures of sex, saying that he gladly was quit of them as if from some master.

29. Philostratos, *Life of Apollonius* 1.13 (T 80f)

Αὐτὸς δὲ μήτ' ἂν γῆμαι μήτ' ἂν ἐς ὁμιλίαν ἀφικέσθαι ποτὲ ἀφροδισίων, ὑπερβαλλόμενος καὶ τὸ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους· ὁ μὲν γὰρ λυττῶντα ἔφη καὶ ἄγριον δεσπότην ἀποφυγεῖν ἐς γῆρας ἐλθόν, ὁ δ' ὑπ' ἀρετῆς τε καὶ σωφροσύνης οὐδ' ἐν μειρακίῳ ἠττήθη τούτου, ἀλλὰ καὶ νέος ὢν καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐρρωμένος ἐκράτει τε καὶ λυττῶντος ἐδέσποζεν.

Apollonius himself said that he neither married nor engaged in sexual intercourse, surpassing even what Sophocles did in this matter. For Sophocles said that, by having reached old age, as if a slave, he escaped a raging and savage master, but out of goodness and moderation, he himself was never defeated by this master even as a youth but, although young and sound of body, he kept control and mastered the raging master.

30. Stobaeus *Anthology* 3.6.42 (T 80g)

Σοφοκλῆν ἤρετό τις πρεσβύτην ὄντα, εἰ ἔτι πλησιάζοι γυναικί·
ὁ δ' "εὐφήμει," ἔφη· "ἀσμενέστατα ἀπέφυγον ὥσπερ λυττῶντα
καὶ ἄγριον δεσπότην."

When Sophocles was an old man, someone asked him whether he still got up close with a woman. "Hush," he said, "most gladly did I escape as if a slave from a raging and savage master."

31. Ammianus Marcellinus *History* 25.4.2

Ita inviolata castitate enituit ut post amissam coniugem nihil umquam venerium taugis larenst, illud advertens, quod apud Platonem legitur, Sofoclen tragoediarum scriptorem, aetate grandaevum, interrogatum ecquid adhuc feminis misceretur, negantem id adiecisse quod gauderet harum rerum amorem ut rabiosum quendam effugisse dominum et crudelem.

Julianus struggled with a chastity so inviolate that after the loss of his wife . . . nothing ever of sex, alluding to what is said in Plato. Sophocles, the writer of tragedies, on being asked at an advanced age whether he still had intercourse with women, said no and added that he was overjoyed that he had escaped the desire for those things as if a slave from a furious and savage master.

32. Cicero *On Old Age* 47 (T 80i)

At non est voluptatum tanta quasi titillatio in senibus. Credo, sed ne desideratur quidem; nihil autem est molestum quod non desideres. Bene Sophocles, cum ex eo quidam iam adfecto aetate

78 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

quaereret uteretur rebus veneriis, “di meliora!” inquit, “libenter vero istinc sicut ab domino agresti ac furioso profugi.”

No such a great urge, as it were, for sexual pleasures exists in old men. I suppose, but it is not missed. What you do not miss does not bother you. Sophocles put it well. When someone asked him—he was already of an advanced age—whether he had sex, he replied, “Gods forefend! Gladly have I escaped from that as if a slave from a wild and raging master.”

33. Valerius Maximus *Factorum ac Dictorum Memorabilium Libri IX* 4.3 ext. 2 (T 80k)

Sophocles autem aetate iam senior, cum ab eo quidam quaereret an etiam nunc rebus veneriis uteretur, “di meliora!” inquit, “libenter enim istinc tamquam ex aliqua furiosa profugi dominatione.”

Sophocles, already older in age, when someone asked him whether he still now had sex, said, “Gods forefend! Gladly have I escaped from that as if a slave from some raging master.”

34. [Aeschines] *Letter* 5.5 (T 80l)

Ὅτε μὲν ὑπεραγαπῶ τὰ παρόντα καὶ, ὅπερ φασὶ Σοφοκλέα ἤδη γέροντα ὑπὲρ ἄλλης ἡδονῆς εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ κυνὸς λυττώσης ἀπηλλάχθαι ποτὲ τῆς τοῦ πολιτεύεσθαι ἡδονῆς δοκῶ

When I really am enjoying the present, I seem to have escaped the pleasure of taking part in government as if from a raging dog, something they say Sophocles by then an old man said about the rest of pleasure.

35. *The Suda* sigma 816

Ὅτι Ἀπολλώνιος ἐς σωφρονσύνην ὑπερβάλλετο τοῦ Σοφοκλέους· ὁ μὲν γὰρ λυττῶντα ἔφη καὶ ἄγριον δεσπότην ἀποφυγεῖν, ἐλθόντα ἐς γῆρας· ὁ δὲ Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ Τυανεύς ὑπ' ἀρετῆς τε καὶ σωφρονσύνης οὐδ' ἐν μειρακίῳ ἠττήθη τούτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ νέος ὢν καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐρρωμένος ἐκράτει τε καὶ λυττῶτος ἐδέσποζεν.

They say that Apollonios [of Tyana] surpassed Sophocles in self-control for this reason. Sophocles said that he escaped, as if a slave, from a raging and bestial master when he arrived at old age. Because of his virtue and self-control, however, Apollonios of Tyana was not overcome by this master even as a youth, but, although young and physically vigorous, he exerted control and mastery over the beast.

COMMENTARY

The opening scene of Plato's *Republic* prefigures the discussion of pleasure found in books Five and Nine. Cephalus observes to Socrates how, as his body decays, he finds greater enjoyment in good conversation. For his part, Socrates says, he enjoys talking with the elderly, because they have gone farther down the road of life and have much to tell others who may follow them. Cephalus eagerly shares his wisdom. He tells how his contemporaries frequently complain about old age, yearning for the pleasures of their youth and recalling sex, drink, parties, and everything else that goes with them (*Republic* 329 A). But he thinks differently and quotes something Sophocles once said as confirmation of his view. For Cephalus, "much peace and freedom from the such pursuits accrue from old age" (329 C).

80 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Cephalus cites Sophocles as an expert because he would have been about seventy-five in 421 B.C.E., the generally accepted dramatic date of the *Republic*.¹⁷ Plato, on the other hand, knows that Sophocles lived another fifteen years, and his extraordinary longevity secured an unshakeable foundation for his expertise. There may also be a Platonic jibe at the poet's lack of philosophical insight, for like common men, Sophocles considers pleasure solely in physical terms, not gleaning the existence of pleasure apart from the senses.

The anecdote derives from its function in the dialogue. Someone had to sound the clarion of the escape from sexual frenzy as a bonus of old age. Who better than Sophocles who lived more than most men? The anecdote, not likely to be historical, inspired a string of sources that adds nothing to its historicity.

C. Political Career (36–49)

36. Pliny *Natural History* 37.40 (T 15)

Sophocles poeta tragicus, quod equidem miror, cum tanta gravitas ei cothurni sit, praeterea vitae fama alias principi loco genito Athenis et rebus gestis et exercitu ducto.

Although Sophocles, poet of tragedy, possessed much importance in the sphere of the cothurnus, something that I admire, his life is marked by birth at a high station, public accomplishments, and generalship of an army.

¹⁷ Taylor 263–264; Guthrie 437–438.

37. Benjamin Merrit/Wade-Gery/McGregor, *Athenian Tribute Lists* 2.18 (T 18)

Σ]οφοκλῆς Κολο[νῶθεν ἠελλενοταμί]ας ἐν [i. e. ἦν].

Sophocles from Kolonos was Hellenotamias (443/442 B.C.E.).

COMMENTARY

It may seem strange to describe Sophocles as having a “political career,” but he apparently enjoyed serving the demos, and the city and Pericles took advantage of his name and integrity for a figurehead. Sophocles belonged to two boards whose members the Athenians elected and was elected chairman of one of them.¹⁸ He first appears in the sources as a public figure in the service of the demos in 443/442 B.C.E. at the age of fifty-three. An eager citizen, he may have carried out other tasks before becoming a Treasurer of the Hellenes. By the time he stood for election in the late winter month of Anthesterion (roughly February/March), he had gained the confidence and respect of the Athenians and the begrudging approval, at least, of their emergent leader, Pericles.

The board of 443/442 undertook a new assessment of the monies paid as tribute by the Athenians’ subject allies. Reassessment, not due to be carried out in 442/441, was moved up at Pericles’ initiative. Pericles wanted these treasurers to undertake an extensive reorganization, and, with his hand on their activities, he must have seen Sophocles as an asset. Victor Ehrenberg who

¹⁸ Ehrenberg points out that during the years of Pericles’ ascendancy, only one man besides Sophocles, Demodokos of Aragyros, can be identified as an *hellenotamias* who held a generalship (133).

82 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

examines the function of these *hellanotamiai* in detail, reaches this conclusion concerning Sophocles' place among them:

He had no special personal responsibility, and he was not elected for any particular knowledge or efficiency of his own. He was to represent the board, and the intelligence as well as the name and social standing of the poet were prominent enough, and his personal integrity sufficiently trusted, to serve that purpose well.¹⁹

38. Scholiast to Aristides (485.28) (T 19)

Τῶν δέκα στρατηγῶν ἐν Σάμῳ τὰ ὀνόματα κατὰ Ἀνδροτίωνα· Σωκράτης Ἀναγυράσιος, Σοφοκλῆς ἐκ Κολωνοῦ ὁ ποιητής, Ἀνδοκίδης Κυδαθηναίεύς, Κρέων Σκαμβωνίδης, Περικλῆς Χολαργεύς, Γλαύκων ἐκ Κεραμέων, Καλλίστρατος Ἀχαρνεύς, Ξενοφῶν Μελιτεύς, Λαμπίδης Πειραιεύς, Γλαυκέτης †Ἀθηναῖος†, Κλειτοφῶν Θοραίεύς.

The names of the ten generals in Samos according to Androtion [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 324 F 38] are Socrates of the deme Anagyrous, Sophocles of the deme Kolonos, the poet, Andokides of the deme Kydathenaion, Kreon of the deme Skambonidai, Pericles of the deme Cholargos, Glaukon of the deme Kerameis, Kallistratos of the deme Acharnai, Xenophon of the deme Melite, Lampides of the deme Peiraieus, Glauketes †Athenian†, and Kleitophon of the deme Thorai.

¹⁹ Ehrenberg 134.

39. Strabo *Geography of Greece* 638 C (T 20)

Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ πρότερον μὲν πέμψαντες στρατηγὸν Περικλέα καὶ
σὺν αὐτῷ Σοφοκλέα τὸν ποιητὴν πολιορκίᾳ κακῶς διέθηκαν
ἀπειθοῦντας τοὺς Σαμίους, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ κληρούχους
ἔπεμψαν δισχιλίους ἐξ ἑαυτῶν

Athenians who earlier sent Pericles as general and with him the
poet Sophocles laid siege to the Samians who were in revolt and
treated them badly. Later, the Athenians sent to Samos two
thousand of their own citizens to take possession of portions of
land on the island. . . .

40. Justinus *Historiae Philippicae* 3.6.12 (T 23)

Athenienses adversus tantam tempestatem belli duos duces
deligunt, Periclen, spectatae virtutis virum, et Sophoclen,
scriptorem tragoediarum, qui diviso exercitu et Spartanorum
agros vastaverunt et multas Asiae civitates Atheniensium imperio
adiecerunt. his malis fracti Lacedaemonii in annos XXX
pepigerunt pacem.

Athenians elected two generals in response to the adverse storm
of war, Pericles, a man of demonstrated bravery, and Sophocles,
the writer of tragedies. With their army divided, these men
devastated the fields of the Spartans and added many cities in
Asia to the Athenian empire. Broken by their setbacks, the
Lacedaemonians concluded peace for 30 years.

84 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

41. Aristodemus *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 104 F
1.15.4 (T 21)

Τῷ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῳ δὲ ἔτει Ἀθηναῖοι Σάμον
πολιορκήσαντες εἶλον στρατηγούντος αὐτῶν Περικλέους καὶ
Σοφοκλέους.

In the fourteenth year [of the Thirty Years Peace], Athenians
besieged and captured Samos under the generalships of Pericles
and Sophocles.

42. Σ Hermogenes in C. Walz *Rhetores Graeci* 5.388 (T 22)

Ἄς τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτῳ ἔτει ἔλυσαν Ἀθηναῖοι, Σάμον
πολιορκία ἐλόντες Περικλέους καὶ Σοφοκλέους
στρατηγούντων

In the fourteenth year, the Athenians broke it [the Thirty Years
Peace] and captured Samos by siege. Pericles and Sophocles were
generals. . . .

43. *Life of Sophocles* 1 (T 1)

Οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς τὸν ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦτου γενόμενον στρατηγίας
ἀξιωθῆναι σὺν Περικλεῖ καὶ Θουκυδίδῃ, τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς
πόλεως.

It was not likely that someone born of a tradesman father would
be thought worthy of a generalship with Pericles or Thucydides,
foremost men of the city.

COMMENTARY

Athenians elected Sophocles to the board of ten generals for 441/440, a year during which nothing eventful was expected. “He was elected for the highest office,” Ehrenberg notes, “but not for the Samian War.”²⁰ Although he became with Pericles the most famous of the generals of that year, he accomplished nothing of military worth. He may have accompanied a small squadron of ships to raise reinforcements around Lesbos and Chios (Thucydides 1.116.1). This duty would have entailed attendance at social gatherings like that at the house of the *proxenos* Hermisilaos. Twenty-five ships from the Chians and Lesbians later joined the Athenian fleet (1.116.2).

44. *The Suda* mu 496 (T 24)

Μέλητος: . . . οὗτος ἔγραψε περὶ τοῦ ὄντος. καὶ ἀντεπολιτεύσατο δὲ Περικλεῖ. καὶ ὑπὲρ Σαμίων στρατηγήσας ἐναυμάχησε πρὸς Σοφοκλῆν τὸν τραγικὸν Ὀλυμπιάδι πδ’.

Meletos: . . . this man wrote about Being. And he was a political opponent of Pericles. He was a general for the Samians and fought a naval battle against Sophocles the tragedian in the eighty-fourth Olympiad (444-441 B.C.E.).

COMMENTARY

The Suda records a defeat that Sophocles suffered from the philosopher Melissos whom the lexicon’s compilers misidentify as Meletos. Plutarch refers to this engagement in defending philosophers against the charge of unworldliness: “Melissos, one

²⁰ Ehrenberg 117.

86 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

of his fatherland's generals, fought a naval battle against the Athenians and defeated them" (*Moralia* 1126 B). He recounts the battle in his *Pericles* (26.6). The Athenians had been besieging the city of Samos for some time when Pericles withdrew with sixty ships to intercept a Phoenician fleet as far from the island as possible. It proved to be a mistake

after Pericles had sailed away, Ithagenes' son Melissos, a philosopher and one of the generals of the Samians, expressing nothing but contempt for the small number of Athenian ships and their generals' lack of experience, persuaded the Samians to attack the Athenians. A battle ensued, and the Samians emerged the victors. They captured many of the enemy and destroyed many of their ships. They gained dominance over the waters and imported the supplies they needed for the war that had been lacking. Aristotle says that Pericles had been defeated once before by Melissos.

The Phoenician fleet never appeared. Pericles, learning of the disaster, returned to Samos and defeated Melissos at sea (*Pericles* 27.1). *The Suda* probably puts Sophocles in command because, with Pericles absent, his is the only name known to its compilers and their sources. Yet, Sophocles had to be somewhere, and weathering a blockade would be a reasonable and safe, if uncomfortable, place for him, especially when the fleet was at full strength. Melissos' contempt for the inexperience of the Athenian generals suggests that he capitalized on Sophocles' ineptitude as general to stir up the Samians.

The counter-evidence, however, weighs against Sophocles' presence. Plutarch surely would have mentioned Sophocles, had his name appeared among the several sources he consulted for the incident. For the compilers, however, as we have seen, Sophocles

was the only name associated with the Samian Revolt besides that of Pericles who was known to be elsewhere. Sophocles added a dimension to the battle that now pitted two famous men, the philosopher and the tragedian, against one another.

45. *Argumentum* I to Sophocles *Antigone*

Φασὶ δὲ τὸν Σοφοκλέα ἡξιῶσθαι τῆς ἐν Σάμῳ στρατηγίας εὐδοκμήσαντα ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῆς Ἀντιγόνης. λέλεκται δὲ τὸ δράμα τοῦτο τριακοστὸν δεύτερον.

They say that Sophocles was deemed worthy of the generalship in Samos, because he distinguished himself in the production of the *Antigone*. The drama is recorded as the thirty-second.

COMMENTARY

Aristophanes, scholar and head of the library at Alexandria (ca. 194–180 B.C.E.), contends in the first *Argumentum* to Sophocles' *Antigone* that the poet was rewarded with the generalship for producing *Antigone*. The synchronicity, deeply rooted in Sophoclean lore, raises problems by assigning the production of the drama to 442/441. Aristophanes apparently assumed that since a poet gained a generalship around the time when his series of plays won first prize at the City Dionysia, the Athenians elected him because of the play.

Athenians held elections for generals in the seventh prytany in Anthesterion, the month before the celebration of the City Dionysia in Elaphebolion. The Athenians could hardly have elected Sophocles to a generalship in appreciation for a play that they had yet to watch. Moreover, the *Parian Marble* (92) has Euripides victorious for the first time at the festival in 441, the

spring of the year 442/441. The competitive Athenians would not have rewarded second place. Thus, the production of the *Antigone* must be set back to the festival of 443/442 held in the spring of 442. This dating requires Sophocles to be working upon the *Antigone* and its companion pieces at the same time he was conducting his tenure as *Hellannotamias*. Athenians recalled his *Antigone* and, out of gratitude for the experience, elected him general. The unknowns in this synchronicity are the onus of Sophocles' obligations as treasurer, the ease with which he composed verse, and ability to juggle responsibilities to the demos, the Muses, his family, and himself.

Despite rejecting the connection between the play and election, Ehrenberg accepts that *Antigone* was produced in spring 442 on the basis that moving the play "One more year further back would make it unlikely that the story of the reward could ever have arisen."²¹ His view depends upon the assumption, created by the Aristophanes' claim in his *Argumentum*, that the *Antigone* preceded the generalship. If, in Ehrenberg's language, the *propter hoc* must be rejected, then the *post hoc* that occasioned the *propter hoc*, is assumption disguised as chronological fact.²² R. G. Lewis

²¹ Ehrenberg 136.

²² In speaking of the Sophocles who "owed his *strategia* to the success of *Antigone*," Ehrenberg (120) decides: "However, the whole story, beautiful as it is, is hardly true. It is more likely that one of the later pseudo-scholars, to whom we owe the material of the *hypothesis*, inferred from the coincidence of dates to a causal connection— *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*." Then again (135): "We have mentioned the story in which Sophocles' *strategia* in 441/0 is described as a reward for that play; we have discarded the *propter hoc*, but we believe that we have to accept the *post hoc*; that is to say, the performance must have taken place shortly before Sophocles became *strategos*." Ehrenberg opts for spring 442.

offers a chronology that has Sophocles write the *Antigone* as a consequence of things that he saw in the Samian War.²³ Sophocles was not elected for the war, but he could have found the inspiration for the play in Pericles's actions in the agora of Samos. Plutarch (*Pericles* 28.1–2) reports that Pericles subjected the leaders of the revolt to *apotympanismos*. He bound them to boards until they were nearly dead. He then had them released, clubbed to death and exposed without funeral rites. Plutarch found the incident in the Samian historian and sensationalist Duris and does not believe the report because it is not mentioned in other sources. If this vengeance occurred, Sophocles would have known about it.

The Sophocles of the sources presents a happy bon vivant who paradoxically knows the lot men have been dealt by being neither beasts nor gods. The characterization leaves no room for the poet who exercised his craft by learning the work of others and struggling to frame his own ideas. The “before the elections” scenario requires a poet who made this verses, on a guess some 4600, with the “ease of gods.” He was serving as treasurer and financial overseer for the Delian League in 443/442 and in the next year he was with Pericles around Samos until the war ended in late spring or early summer of 439 B.C.E. These activities would have deprived most writers of the time and energy for the hard task of converting thought to writing. If so, then perhaps the *Antigone* was written after the war with it in mind and was performed at the festival of 438 when it won Sophocles the first place reported in the *Hypothesis* to Euripides' *Alcestis* (95). Without further evidence from the sands of Egypt, however, the chronology will remain at 442 because scholarship is fixated on the “before the war” scenario.

²³ Lewis 1988.

90 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

46a. *Life of Sophocles* 1 (T 1)

Οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς τὸν ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου γενόμενον στρατηγίας ἀξιωθῆναι σὺν Περικλεῖ καὶ Θουκυδίδῃ, τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς πόλεως.

It was not likely that someone born of a tradesman father would be thought worthy of a generalship with Pericles or Thucydides, the first men of the polis.

46b. *Life of Sophocles* 9 (T 1)

Καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ αὐτὸν ξε΄ ἐτῶν ὄντα στρατηγὸν εἴλοντο πρὸ τῶν Πελοποννησιακῶν ἔτεσιν ζ΄, ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ἀναίους πολέμῳ.

Athenians elected him general in his sixty-fifth year, seven years before the Peloponnesian War, in the war against the Anaioi.

COMMENTARY

This evidence for a second and even a third generalship for Sophocles is tenuous, the probable product of his Samian fame and longevity.

If, as the *Life of Sophocles* states, he had been a colleague of a Thucydides, it could only have been the son of Melesias, Cimon's brother-in-law and mortal enemy of Pericles. Thucydides was in exile for the period from 443 to 433 and could not have participated as general during the Samian Revolt. Ehrenberg suggests that the compiler, knowing of Sophocles' generalship during the Samian War and reading of a general Thucydides in

the same war (Thucydides 1.117.2), “fused all his knowledge together in one brief but utterly mistaken sentence.”²⁴

The people from Anaia were probably exiles from Samos (Thucydides 3.32.2, 4.75.1) who settled there, vowing implacable hostility toward Athenians. The *Life's* statement cannot be correct as it stands, for Sophocles was sixty-five in 431, and the Aenean War happened in 428.²⁵

47. Plutarch, *Nicias* 15.2 (T 26)

Τοῦ δὲ Νικίου καὶ διὰ τᾶλλα μέγας ἦν καὶ διὰ τὸν πλοῦτον καὶ διὰ τὴν δόξαν ὁ ὄγκος. λέγεται δ' ἐν τῷ στρατηγίῳ ποτὲ βουλευομένων τι κοινῇ τῶν συναρχόντων κελευσθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πρῶτος εἰπεῖν γνώμην Σοφοκλῆς ὁ ποιητής, ὡς πρεσβύτατος ὢν τῶν συστρατῆγων, “ἐγώ” φάναι “παλαιότατος εἰμι, σὺ δὲ πρεσβύτατος.”

Eminent was the stature of Nicias for many reasons but in particular because of his wealth and reputation. Once when Nicias and his fellow generals were consulting together, Sophocles the poet was asked by Nicias to give his opinion first, since he was the eldest of the generals. Sophocles replied, “I am the oldest, but you are the most senior.”

COMMENTARY

Nicias held generalships and conducted campaigns during 426–423 B.C.E. without notable success or failure. He became

²⁴ Ehrenberg 117 note 1.

²⁵ Webster 12; Gomme 3.280.

92 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

worthy of being *presbys* after 421 when he secured from the Lacedaemonians the Peace that bears his name. The anecdote uses the wide-spread knowledge of Sophocles as general to bring together two famous men.²⁶ It derives its punch, however, from Sophocles' longevity and deference to higher authority à la the Aristophanic Sophocles of the *Frogs*. On the other hand, Webster combines Aristophanes' joke in the *Peace* (16) about Sophocles' enriching himself by putting to sea with Plutarch's encounter with Nicias to assume that "Sophocles was general in one of the years in which Nicias was general, 426–3."²⁷

48. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1419 a 25–31 (T 27)

Καὶ συμπεραινομένου, ἐὰν ἐρώτημα ποιῆ τὸ συμπέρασμα, τὴν αἰτίαν εἰπεῖν (sc. δεῖ). οἷον Σοφοκλῆς ἐρωτώμενος ὑπὸ Πεισάνδρου εἰ ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ ὥσπερ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις προβούλοις, καταστήσαι τοὺς τετρακοσίους, ἔφη, "τί δέ; οὐ πονηρά σοι ταῦτα ἐδόκει εἶναι;" ἔφη, "οὐκοῦν σὺ ταῦτα ἔπραξας τὰ πονηρά;". "ναί" ἔφη "οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἄλλα βελτίω.

If the conclusion is put in the form of a question, then the reason for the conclusion should be stated. For example, when Sophocles was asked by Peisander whether it seemed a good thing to him, as it did to his fellow committee members, to establish the Four Hundred, Sophocles replied, "Why? Do these measures strike you as repugnant?" Peisander replied, "Then you did things that were repugnant?" "Yes," admitted Sophocles, "for there were no better alternatives."

²⁶ Lefkowitz 1981.80.

²⁷ Webster 12–13.

49. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1416 a 13 (T 165)

Ἄλλος τόπος, ὡς ἔστιν ἀμάρτημα ἢ ἀτύχημα ἢ ἀναγκαῖον· οἷον Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη τρέμειν οὐχ ὡς ὁ διαβάλλων ἔφη, ἵνα δοκῆ γέρον, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης· οὐ γὰρ ἐκόντι εἶναι αὐτῷ ἔτη ὀγδοήκοντα.

Another topic [that of doing away with a verbal attack is to assert] that the act is a mistake or bad luck or necessity. For instance, Sophocles said that he was not trembling for the reason his accuser said, so that he seem to be an old man, but from necessity. For eighty years were not something he had willingly.

COMMENTARY

The news of the defeat in Sicily arrived at Athens in the fall of 413 B.C.E. In 412/411, the Athenians appointed a committee of elders “who would advise concerning the present circumstances whenever the occasion arose” (Thucydides 8.1.3) This board consisted of ten members (Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 29.1). The only known members were of an advanced age, Sophocles about eighty-three, and Hagnon who had been a general in 440 (Thucydides 1.117.2) and a founder of Amphipolis in 437 (4.102.3), in his seventies at the least. Aristotle may, however, be speaking of another Sophocles, perhaps the politician he mentions in *Rhetoric* 1.14.3 and 3.18.6.

D. Piety (50–59)

50. Scholiast to Sophocles *Electra* 831 (T 107)

Τελέως ἀμηχανεῖ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς βλασφημῶν· καὶ γὰρ εἷς ἦν τῶν θεοσεβεστάτων.

94 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Sophocles was utterly incapable of speaking ill of the gods, for he was one of the most pious men.

51. Libanius *Letters* 390.9

Ἀνὴρ σωφρονέστερος μὲν Πηλέως, θεοφιλῆς δὲ οὐχ ἥττον ἢ Σοφοκλῆς.

A man more moderate than Peleus and not less pious than Sophocles.

COMMENTARY

For Greeks, piety, *eusebeia*, was reverence and admiration for the gods and things divine (*sebas*) in a good (*eu-*)—moderate and sensible—way. Walter Burkert includes among its qualities the fear of changing what is customary, the things left behind by the ancestors; restraint; and freedom from meddlesomeness toward the gods and all things connected with them such as “festivals, temples, sacrifices [which] are *semna*, revered, grand, and august, and so too are clothes, manner of speech, and behaviour at the festivals of the gods.”²⁸

52. *Life of Sophocles* 12 (T 1)

Γέγονε δὲ καὶ θεοφιλῆς ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ὡς οὐκ ἄλλος, καθά φησιν Ἰερώνυμος . . . περὶ τῆς χρυσῆς στεφάνης. ταύτης γὰρ ἐξ ἀκροπόλεως κλαπίσης κατ’ ὄναρ Ἡρακλῆς ἐδήλωσε Σοφοκλεῖ, λέγων τὴν τμῆ οἰκοῦσαν† οἰκίαν ἐν δεξιᾷ εἰσιόντι

²⁸ Burkert 273.

ἐρευνῆσαι, ἔνθα ἐκέκρυπτο. ἐμήνυσε δὲ αὐτὴν τῷ δήμῳ καὶ
τάλαντον ἐδέξατο· τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν προκηρυχθέν. λαβὼν οὖν τὸ
τάλαντον ἱερὸν ἰδρύσατο Μηνυτοῦ Ἡρακλέους.

Sophocles was devout as no other, as Hieronymos says [fr. 31 Wehrli] . . . about the episode of the golden crown. After the crown was stolen from the Acropolis, Herakles appeared to Sophocles in a dream, telling him to look for a house on his right as he was walking where the crown had been hidden. He revealed crown to the demos and received a talent, the reward decreed before this event. He took the talent and founded a shrine for Herakles the Revealer.

COMMENTARY

Sophocles was known for his exemplary piety from both his hospitality to Asclepius (53–55) and priesthood of the hero Halon (56) as well as from his plays. His praise of Eros (*Antigone* 781–805) and Ajax's boastful rejection of Athena's aid (*Ajax* 770–775) and its aftermath, come readily to mind. Biographers sought to illustrate such character traits with anecdotes. The dream sent by Herakles shows the hero's respect for Sophocles, while Sophocles' expenditure of the gold underscores the piety that attracted Herakles' attention.

53. Plutarch *Moralia* 1103 A (T 68)

Τὸν Ἀσκληπίον Σοφοκλῆς ξενίζειν αὐτός τε πειθόμενος καὶ
τῶν ἄλλων οὕτως ἐχόντων διὰ τὴν γενομένην ἐπιφάνειαν.

Sophocles himself, persuaded by a vision that appeared to him with the others concurring, acted as host for Asklepios.

96 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

54. *Etymologicum Magnum* 256.6 (T 69)

Δεξίων: οὕτως ὠνομάσθη Σοφοκλῆς ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν. φασὶν ὅτι Ἀθηναῖοι τελευτήσαντι Σοφοκλεῖ βουλόμενοι τιμὰς αὐτῷ περιποιῆσαι ἡρώιον αὐτῷ κατασκευάσαντες ὠνόμασαν αὐτὸν Δεξίωνα, ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δέξεως. καὶ γὰρ ὑπεδέξατο τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ οἰκίᾳ καὶ βωμὸν ἰδρύσατο· ἐκ τῆς αἰτίας οὖν ταύτης Δεξίων ἐκλήθη.

Dexion: Sophocles was so named by the Athenians after his death, they say, because Athenians wished to assert cultic honors for the dead Sophocles. They built a hero shrine for him and named him Dexion, the Receiver, from this reception of Asklepios. He received the god into his house and founded an altar. For this reason, he was called Dexion.

55. Plutarch *Numa* 4.8 (T 67)

Σοφοκλεῖ δὲ καὶ ζῶντι τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν ἐπιξενωθῆναι λόγος ἐστί, πολλὰ μέχρι νῦν διασώζων τεκμήρια, καὶ τελευτήσαντι τυχεῖν ταφῆς ἄλλος θεός, ὡς λέγεται, παρέσχεν.

The story is that Asclepius stayed with Sophocles as his guest while Sophocles was alive, many proofs of which still remain, and that when Sophocles died, another god, it is said, took care of his burial.

56. *Life of Sophocles* 11 (T 1)

Ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ἄλωνος ἰερωσύνην, ὃς ἦρως μετὰ Ἀσκληπιοῦ παρὰ Χείρωνι . . . ἰδρυνθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰοφῶντος τοῦ υἱοῦ μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν.

Sophocles also held the priesthood of Halon, a hero who with Asklepios at the side of Cheiron . . . founded after his father's death by his son Iophon.

57. *Inscriptiones Graecae* II/III² 1252 (T 70)

Κλειαίνετος Κλεομένους Μελιτεὺς εἶπεν· δεδόχθαι τοῖς ὀργεῶσι· ἐπειδὴ εἰσιν ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεῶνων τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξίου καὶ τοῦ Καλλιᾶδης Φιλίνου Πειραιεύς, Λυσιμαχίδης Φιλίνου Πειραιεύς, ἐπαινέσαι αὐτοὺς ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνης τῆς εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεῶνων καὶ στεφανῶσαι αὐτῶν ἑκάτερον χρυσῶ ἀπὸ Γ' δραχμῶν· εἶναι δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀτέλειαν τοῦ χοῦ ἐν ἀμφοῖν τοῖν ἱεροῖν καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐγγόνοις· δοῦναι δὲ καὶ εἰς θυσίαν καὶ ἀνάθημα αὐτοῖς ὅ τι ἂν δόξει τοῖς ὀργεῶσιν. ἀναγράψαι δὲ τόδε τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν στήλαις λιθίναις δυοῖν καὶ στήσαι τὴν μὲν ἐν τῷ τοῦ Δεξίου ἱερῷ, τὴν δὲ [ἐ]ν τῷ τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ Ἀσκληπιοῦ· δοῦνα[ι] δὲ καὶ εἰς τὰς στήλας αὐτοῖς ὅ τι ἂν δόξε[ι] τοῖς ὀργεῶσι, ὅπως ἂν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι φιλοτι[μῶντα]ι περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεῶνων, εἰδό[τες] ὅτι χάριτας ἀποδ[ώ]σουσι τοῖς εὐεργετοῦ[σιν] ἀξίας τῶν εὐεργετημάτων].

Kleianetos, son of Kleomenes, of the deme Melite, moved this measure. It has been decided by the priests: since Kalliades, son of Philinos, of the deme Peiraieus, and Lysimachides, son of Philinos, of the deme Peiraieus are good men regarding the association of the priests of Amynos and Asklepios and Dexion, to commend them for their merit and righteousness toward the gods and concerning the association of the priests, and to award each of them a crown of gold worth 500 drachmas; to extend to them and their descendants exemption from the *chous* in both sacrifices; to give them both for sacrifice and offering whatever should seem

98 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

best to the priests. To record this measure on two stone pillars and to erect one in the shrine of Dexion and the other in the shrine of Amynos and Asklepios; to give to them for the pillars whatever should seem best to the priests so that others may be supportive of the association of the priests, knowing that they will repay favors to the benefactors worthy of the benefactions.

58. *Inscriptiones Graecae* II/III² 1253 (T 71)

Θεοί ἔδοξε τοῖς [ὀργεῶσιν·] Ἴππομάχου Με[λιτεὺς εἶπεν· ἐπειδὴ . . .]δώρος καὶ Ἀντ[.]ἄν]δρες δίκαιοι γεγόνασι περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεῶνων τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξίου, ἐπαινέσαι αὐτοὺς δικαιοσύνης ἕνεκα καὶ στεφανῶσαι αὐτῶν ἑκάτερον χρυσῶ στεφάνῳ. τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε ἀναγράψαι ἐ[ν] τῷ[ι] ἱερῶ ἐν στήλει λιθίνει.

Gods; It was decided by the [priests;] of Hippomaches, of the deme Me[lite moved. Since . . .]doros and Anti[.] have proved to be just men concerning the association of the priests of Amynos and Asklepios and Dexion, to commend them because of their righteousness and to award each of them with a gold crown. To record this measure in the shrine on a stone pillar.

COMMENTARY

Asclepius came to Athens from Epidaurus, his major center in southern Greece, during a lull in the hostilities between the cities secured by the Peace of Nicias. G. R. Dodds surmises that the plague of 431 undermined trust in the efficacy of traditional religion, and Athenians set out “looking for a new and better magic.”²⁹ Plutarch (53) speaks of a dream that appeared to

²⁹ Dodds 193. For the Asclepius, see Edelstein and Edelstein; Parke 63–65. For the Eleusinian Mysteries, see Parke 59–72.

Sophocles in which, Dodds imagines, "Asclepius . . . said, 'Fetch me from Epidaurus,' whereupon they [Athenians] fetched him δράκοντι εἰκασμένον [in the shape of a serpent] in the way of the Sikyonians:³⁰

The Sikyonians say that the god was conveyed to them from Epidaurus on a wagon drawn by a brace of mules. The god took the shape of a serpent, and Sickyonian Nicagora, mother of Agasikles and wife of Echetimos, brought him (Pausanias *Geography of Greece* 2.10.3).

According to a fourth-century inscription, Telemachos the Athenian arranged for Asclepius' journey, and it was in his chariot, drawn presumably by war horses, that the god in serpentine form, accompanied by his daughter Hygieia (Health), mounted the Acropolis.³¹ Perhaps Hygieia was represented by her cult statue. Father and daughter were temporarily installed in the

³⁰ Dodds 203 note 86.

³¹ *Inscriptiones Graecae* II² 4960a [beginning of the fourth century B.C.E.]:

.....
..... Having come from Zea,
at the time of the great mysteries,
[the god] put in at the Eleusinion
and summoned from home a serpent,
he brought it here on a chariot
of Telemachos
. . . . At the same time came Hygieia
and thus this whole temple was founded
in the archonship of Astyphilos of Kydantidai. . . .

100 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

shrine of Eleusinian Demeter on the slope of the Acropolis. For this, devotees of Asclepius undoubtedly had the cooperation of the priests of Demeter.

The god arrived on the eighteenth of Boedromion (roughly September), during the festival of Demeter's mysteries. The goddesses' Holy Things were still in the shrine, awaiting their escort by procession back to Eleusis on the nineteenth. On the eighteenth, the *Mystai* (initiates) were sequestered inside across the city, collecting and preparing themselves for the procession and the revelations on the twentieth that climaxed the initiation. The god's timing later became the *aition* for a festival, the *Epidauria*, that readied late-comers to the mysteries for its final days.

Also waiting its new home was the serpent whom Sophocles had accepted into his. The tragedian's hospitality, as often stated, has relevance for his poetry, but the observation leads more to speculation than to Sophocles' religious beliefs. Sophocles, however, was closely associated with Asclepius. The *Life* reports that he belonged to the priesthood of the hero and healer Halon who was himself connected with the god. After Sophocles' death, Athenians recognized his piety toward Asclepius by heroizing him under the name of Dexion, Receiver. An inscription found in the shrine of the healing god Amynos on the west slope of the Acropolis testifies to the historicity of the shrine and cult of Dexion.

59. *Life of Sophocles* 17 (T 1)

Ἰστρος δέ φησιν Ἀθηναίους διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν
ψήφισμα πεποιθέναι καθ' ἕκαστον ἔτος αὐτῷ θύειν.

Istros says [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 38] that the Athenians passed a decree to offer sacrifice to Sophocles annually because of his excellence.

COMMENTARY

After his death, Sophocles was extended the honors and sacrifices of a hero. He received offering once a year on a day fixed by the sacred calendar when a feast was held.

Note Two
Father, Deme, Polis
(60–75)

A. Father (60–68)

60. *Life of Sophocles* 1 (T 1)

Σοφοκλῆς τὸ μὲν γένος ἦν Ἀθηναῖος, υἱὸς δὲ Σοφίλλου, ὃς οὔτε, ὡς Ἀριστόξενός φησι, τέκτων ἢ χαλκεὺς ἦν, οὔτε, ὡς Ἰστρὸς, μαχαιροποιὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν, τυχὸν δὲ ἐκέκτητο δούλους χαλκεῖς ἢ τέκτονας· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς τὸν ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου γενόμενον στρατηγίας ἀξιωθῆναι σὺν Περικλεῖ καὶ Θουκυδίδῃ, τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς πόλεως· ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν κωμικῶν ἄδηκτος ἀφείθη τῶν οὐδὲ Θεμιστοκλέους ἀπεσχημένων. ἀπιστητέον δὲ καὶ τῷ Ἰστρῷ φάσκοντι αὐτὸν οὐκ Ἀθηναῖον ἀλλὰ Φλιάσιον εἶναι· εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀνέκαθεν Φλιάσιος ἦν, ἀλλὰ πλὴν Ἰστρου παρ' οὐδένι ἑτέρῳ τοῦτο ἔστιν εὐρεῖν. ἐγένετο οὖν Σοφοκλῆς τὸ γένος Ἀθηναῖος, δήμου Κολωνῆθεν, καὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ τῇ ποιήσει περιφανῆς, καλῶς τε ἐπαιδεύθη καὶ ἐτρόφη ἐν εὐπορίᾳ, καὶ ἐν πολιτείᾳ καὶ ἐν πρεσβείαις ἐξητάζετο.

Σοφίλου codd. corr. Westermann Περικλέους Buecheler

Sophocles was an Athenian, son of Sophillos who was not, as Aristoxenos [fr. 115 Wehrli] says, a carpenter or bronze smith or, as Ister [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 33] claims, a manufacturer of knives and swords by trade, but Sophillos perhaps owned slaves who were bronze smiths or carpenters. It was not likely that someone born of such a father would be thought worthy of a generalship with Pericles or Thucydides, the first men of the polis. Sophocles would not have been left unscathed by the poets and free of their abuse, [had he been of low birth], seeing how they did not restrain from attacking

Themistocles. Ister [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 34] must not be believed when he says that Sophocles was not an Athenian but a Phliasian. Even supposing that he was originally from Phlios in Argos, it is not possible to find this claim in anyone else except Ister. Sophocles was an Athenian, of the deme Kolonos, distinguished for his life and his poetry. He was well educated, raised amid prosperity, and proven in the exercise of his citizenship and embassies abroad.

61. *Marmor Parium*, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 56 (T 33)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ Σοφίλλου ὁ ἐκ Κολωνοῦ

Sophocles, son of Sophillos, the Sophocles from Kolonos

62. *Simas Palatine Anthology* 7.21 (T 177)

Τόν σε χοροῖς μέλψαντα Σοφοκλέα, παῖδα Σοφίλλου

You, Sophocles, who sang with choruses, son of Sophillos

63. *Diodorus Bibliotheca* 13.103.4 (T 85)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ Σοφίλλου

Sophocles, son of Sophilos

104 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

64. Aelian *On the Nature of Animals* 7.39 (T 7)

Ὁ τοῦ Σοφίλλου ἐν τοῖς Ἀλεάδαις
The son of Sophillos in Aleadae

65. Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* 7.74.2 (T 8)

Ὁδὲ τοῦ Σοφίλλου Σοφοκλῆς
Sophocles, son of Sophillos

66. Tzetzes *Epistles* 6 (T 9)

Ὁ Σοφίλλου παῖς . . . Σοφοκλῆς
Son of Sophillos . . . Sophocles

67. Tzetzes *Chiliades* 3.274 (T 10)

Ὁ τοῦ Σοφίλλου Σοφοκλῆς
Sophocles, son of Sophillos

68. Tzetzes *Chiliades* 6.650 (T 11)

Ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τραγικὸς υἱὸς τελῶν Σοφίλλου
Sophocles, the tragedian, legitimate son of Sophillos

COMMENTARY

The name of Sophocles' father is variously spelled. Σοφίλλος is found in the *Parium Marble* and Simias. *The Suda* has Σωφίλος, and Σοφίλος appears in Diodorus and *Inscriptiones Graecae* II¹ 2674. The form Σωφίλος appears in an Athenian inscription of 333 B.C.E. (*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* 962.185) and another of 329/328 (298.25).

The *Life of Sophocles* 1 provides the only evidence for Sophocles' father. Sophillos was an owner of slaves skilled in metal and woodworking who may have produced knives and swords. The *Life* correctly rejects the claim that Sophillos was a artisan himself on the grounds that his son never would have been accepted at the levels of society he traversed. Themistocles attracted the attention for supposedly having a non-Athenian mother (Plutarch *Themistocles* 1) which, at the time of his birth, was neither unusual nor subject to derision. Buecheler emends Θεμιστοκλέους to Περικλέους, but the reading of the manuscript is to be preferred, since Pericles' parentage was undoubtedly Athenian and of the highest station of Athenians.

B. Deme (69–73)

69. *Life of Sophocles* 1 (T 1)

Ἐγένετο οὖν Σοφοκλῆς τὸ γένος Ἀθηναῖος, δήμου Κολωνῆθεν.

Sophocles was an Athenian, from the deme Colonus.

70. *Argumentum* to Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* (T 12)

Τὸ δὲ δράμα τῶν θαυμαστῶν· ὁ καὶ ἤδη γεγηρασκῶς ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἐποίησε, χαριζόμενος οὐ μόνον τῇ πατρίδι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ δήμῳ· ἦν γὰρ Κολωνῆθεν· ὥστε τὸν μὲν δῆμον ἐπίσημον ἐπιδείξει.

[*Oedipus at Colonus*] is a drama about amazing things. Sophocles, already in advanced old age, produced it to the delight not only of his fatherland but also to that of his deme, for he was from Colonus, and, in this way, he rendered his deme famous.

71. Eustathius, *Commentary on Homer's Iliad* 351.8 (T 13)

Ταὐτὸν δὲ πάντως κολωνὸν κἀνταῦθα καὶ κολώνην εἶπειν. νικᾷ δὲ ὅμως τὸ Ὀμηρικόν, ᾧ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἀκολουθῶν “κολώνην ἄκραν τάφου,” ἔφη, εὖ ἄλλως εἰδὼς τὴν ῥηθεῖσαν ταυτότητα, καθότι Κολωνὸς μὲν δῆμος αὐτῷ ἐν Ἀθήναις, ὁ δὲ ἐκεῖθεν δημότης, ὁποῖος καὶ αὐτός, Κολώνηθεν (sic) ἐλέγετο φῦναι, οὐ Κολωνόθεν.

Everywhere the word is *kolōnos* [mound of stones, hill]; here [Homer, *Iliad* 2.811] there is also *kolōnē*. Still, the Homeric expression won out. Even Sophocles followed it [*Electra* 894] in saying “lofty *kolōnē* of a tomb.” He surely knew the same thing was pronounced differently [that is, as *kolōnos*]. His deme in Athens is Kolonos, and he was a demesman from there, and as such, he himself is said to be “from *Kolōnē*,” not “from *Kolōnos*.”

72. Cicero, *De Finibus* 5.3 (T 14)

Me ipsum huc modo venientem convertebat ad sese Coloneus ille locus, cuius incola Sophocles ab oculos versabatur, quem scis quam admirer quamque eo delecter.

Just now I [Quintus] was coming here myself when that place Colonus diverted me to it whose inhabitant Sophocles is gone from our sight. You know how much I admire him and how much I delight in him.

73. Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* 668-693

Εὐίππου, ξένε, τᾶσδε χώ-
ρας ἴκου τὰ κράτιστα γᾶς ἔπαυλα,
τὸν ἀργῆτα Κολωνόν, ἔνθ'
ἀ λίγεια μινύρεται
θαμίζουσα μάλιστ' ἀη-
δῶν χλωραῖς ὑπὸ βασσαῖς,
τὸν οἰνωπὸν ἔχουσα κισ-
σὸν καὶ τὰν ἄβατον θεοῦ
φυλλάδα μυριόκαρπον ἀνάλιον
ἀνήνεμόν τε πάντων
χειμώνων· ἴν' ὁ βακχιώ-
τας ἀεὶ Διόνυσος ἐμβατεύει
θείαις ἀμφιπολῶν τιθήναις.

θάλλει δ' οὐρανίας ὑπ' ἄ-
χνας ὁ καλλίβοτρος κατ' ἡμαρ αἰεὶ
νάρκισσος, μέγαλοιν θεοῖν
ἀρχαῖον στεφάνωμ', ὃ τε
χρυσουγῆς κρόκος· οὐδ' ἄν-
πνοι κρῆναι μινύθουσιν
Κηφισοῦ νομάδες ῥέε-

108 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

θρων, ἀλλ' αἰὲν ἐπ' ἡματι
ὠκυτόκος πεδίων ἐπινίσεται
ἀκηράτω σὺν ὄμβρῳ
στερνούχου χθονός· οὐδὲ Μου-
σᾶν χοροὶ νιν ἀπεστύγησαν, οὐδ' αὖ
ἄ χρυσάνιος Ἀφροδίτα.

You have come, stranger, to the best place to live
in this land far-famed for its horses,
white Colonus, where
the melodious nightingale
ever sings, sheltered
by the verdant valleys
and clinging to the god's wine-dark
ivy and inviolate
foliage that abounds in berries
and lies unreached by the sun
and the blasts of storm winds.
Here the reveler Dionysus always
walks in the company of the divine nymphs of Nysa.

Wetted by the dews of the heavens,
the narcissus ever flourishes by day
with its beautiful clusters, ancient
garland of the twain goddesses,* and, with it,
too, the saffron-gold crocus. The ranging
springs of Kephisos' streams
slumber not nor fail to flow,
but ever and for the day
the river swiftly bears returns
and with its undefiled waters
traverses the plains of the breasted earth.
The choruses of the Muses
Aphrodite of the Golden Reins

shun not this land.

* Demeter and Persephone

COMMENTARY

Colonus Hippios, one of the demes (townships) of Attica, embraced a hill about a 1.25 miles north of the Acropolis. The hill, about 186 feet high (56.7 meters), was sacred to the horseman and hero Kolonos (Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* 59). It was on the roads around Colonus that Poseidon first showed men how to use his gift of the horse (715; Pausanias *Geography of Greece* 1.30.4). Sophocles' *Antigone* describes the grove at Kolonos as she looks southeast toward the walls and Acropolis of Athens:

Father, abject Oedipus, the towers
that shelter the city, as my eyes can see, are far off,
but this place is sacred, to guess with certainty, pregnant
with laurel, olive, and grape vines. Within, well-feathered
nightingales utter soft, sweet sounds (Sophocles *Oedipus at
Colonus* 14–18).

"The *many* nightingales, heard to warble from the thick covert, argue the undisturbed sanctity of the inner grove."³² Old uncut trees near water could mark a copse as sacred. Some were open to the wayfarer for rest and haven; the grove Oedipus approaches, dedicated to the Eumenides, is not to be tread upon by humans (*Oedipus at Colonus* 126). When Oedipus enters and declares that "I will never depart from this resting place" (*Oedipus at Colonus* 45),

³² Jebb *Oedipus Coloneus* 70. For the sacred grove, see Burkert 85–87 and the appreciation (Fox 41–45) of the sanctity of the countryside among pagans for whom "the triumph of Christianity was accompanied by the sound of the axe on age-old aboreta" (44).

110 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

it becomes a crossroads where sacred and profane overlap. Sophocles may have embellished the sacredness of the grove, but of its role in *Oedipus at Colonus* Charles Segal observes:

[Sophocles] makes it the emblem not only of the ambiguity of Oedipus but also of the mysterious place of tragedy on the confines of structure and chaos, the familiar and the unknown, civic order and the infinities of death and the gods. Sunless and silent, the grove suggests the nothingness of death. Yet it is also alive with the vital movements of nature. Both physically and metaphorically it stands between the polis and the hidden sources of energy that give Athens its special strength and its favored relation to the gods.³³

C. Polis (74–75)

74. *Life of Sophocles* 1 (T 1)

Ἀπιστητέον δὲ καὶ τῷ Ἰστῶ φάσκοντι αὐτὸν οὐκ Ἀθηναῖον ἀλλὰ Φλιάσιον εἶναι· εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀνέκαθεν Φλιάσιος ἦν, ἀλλὰ πλὴν Ἰστῶ παρ' οὐδένι ἑτέρῳ τοῦτο ἔστιν εὐρεῖν. ἐγένετο οὖν Σοφοκλῆς τὸ γένος Ἀθηναῖος, δήμου Κολωνῆθεν.

Ister [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 34] must not be believed when he says that Sophocles was not an Athenian but a Phliasian. Even supposing that he was originally from Phlios in Argos, it is not possible to find this claim in anyone else except Ister. Sophocles was an Athenian, of the deme Kolonos.

³³ Segal 371–372.

75. Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 604 D (T 75)

Τὰ μέντοι πολιτικά οὔτε σοφὸς οὔτε ῥεκτήριος ἦν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄν τις εἰς τῶν χρηστῶν Ἀθηναίων.

He was neither wise nor active in the affairs of the city but conducted himself as would one of the respectable Athenians.

COMMENTARY

The inscription from the Athenian Tribute Lists (37) alone proves Sophocles' status as an Athenian from Colonus. Invective against a man's morality, family, origins was grist for the comedians. Since the author of the *Life* did not find the imputation that Sophocles was not an Athenian elsewhere, Ister or his source probably invented it. Writers of biography were not above the invective practiced in the theater and courts as the charge that Sophocles' father was a craftsman and Euripides' a shopkeeper (instead of a land owner) and his mother a peddler of vegetables (*Life of Euripides* 1-2).

Note Three
Tragedian
(76–127)

A. Student of Aeschylus (76)

76. *Life of Sophocles* 4 (T 1)

Παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ δὲ τὴν τραγωδίαν ἔμαθε.

Sophocles learned tragedy at the side of Aeschylus.

COMMENTARY

The contention that Sophocles was Aeschylus' student puts Sophocles in a succession of student-becoming-master, a narrative strategy used by ancient biographers that is based, in this instance, on the fact that Aeschylus was the older man and poet. A similar alignment of notable men as master and student forms part of the chronology of the doxographical tradition, the collected opinions of philosophers.³⁴ See also on 105.

B. Early Tragedian and Actor (77–81)

77. *Athenaeus Deipnosophists* 1.20 E (T 28)

Καὶ τὸν Θάμυριν διδάσκων αὐτὸς ἐκιθάρισεν· ἄκρως δὲ ἐσφαίρισεν, ὅτε τὴν Ναυσικάαν καθῆκε.

³⁴ Kirk and Raven 4; Fairweather 263.

While he was producing his *Thamyris*, he played the cithara; he played ball exceedingly well when he did his *Nausicaa*.

78. Eustathius *Commentary on the Iliad* 381.8 (T 29)

Ὅτι δὲ τὸ σπουδαίως κιθαρίζειν ἐφιλεῖτο τοῖς παλαιοῖς . . . μαρτυρεῖ . . . καὶ ἡ τραγικὴ (ποίησις), ἐν ἣ προλάμπων Σοφοκλῆς περιάδεται οὐ μόνον δεινὸς εἶναι σφαιρίσαι, ὡς ἡ κατ' αὐτὸν ἐδήλωσε δραματικὴ Ναυσικάα, καθὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς εἰς τὴν Ὀδύσειαν δηλοῦται, ἀλλὰ καὶ κιθαρίζειν ἄκρος· οὕτω δὲ καὶ ὀρχεῖσθαι καὶ χορεύειν.

That the ancients enjoyed playing the cithara seriously is shown by the tragedy in which brilliant Sophocles moved about, singing. Not only was he clever at throwing a ball, as the Nausikaa of the drama showed about him just as Nausicaa is shown in the *Odyssey* [6.100–101], but also top-notch at playing the cithara. He was also this way in dancing in a row and in a chorus.

79. Eustathius *Commentary on the Odyssey* 1553.63 (T 30)

Ὅς καί, ὅτε, φασί, τὰς Πλυντρίας ἐδίδασκε, τὸ τῆς Ναυσικάας πρόσωπον σφαίρα παιζούσης ὑποκρινόμενος ἰσχυρῶς εὐδοκίμησεν.

They say that when Sophocles produced *Plyntriai*, he became really famous for acting the part of Nausicaa playing with a ball.

80. Life of Sophocles 5 (T 1)

Φασὶ δὲ ὅτι καὶ κιθάραν ἀναλαβὼν ἐν μόνῳ τῷ Θαμύριδι ποτε ἐκιθάρισεν, ὅθεν καὶ ἐν τῇ ποικίλῃ στοᾷ μετὰ κιθάρας αὐτὸν γεγράφθαι.

They say that he took up the cithara and played in the play *Thamyris* alone, and that, for this reason, he was depicted among the cithara players on the Stoa Poikile.

81. Life of Sophocles 4 (T 1)

Καὶ πολλὰ ἐκαινούργησεν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι, πρῶτον μὲν καταλύσας τὴν ὑπόκρισιν τοῦ ποιητοῦ διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν μικροφωνίαν (πάλαι γὰρ καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς ὑπεκρίνετο αὐτός).

Sophocles introduced many innovations in the contest. He was first to separate the role of actor from that of poet on account of his weak voice (for in olden times, the poet himself performed as actor).

COMMENTARY

During tragedy's formative period, the poet acted in his own plays. According to Plutarch, Solon once watched Thespis himself performing, "as was the custom among the ancients."³⁵ Sophocles delivered a virtuoso performance as Nausikaa in the play *Plyntriai*, enlivening with athletic grace Homer's plain description of Nausicaa and her slaves who "threw off their scarfs and played with a ball" (*Odyssey* 6.100). This play is also called *Nausicaa*, a name that sounds like a biographer's shorthand or a compilers

³⁵ Plutarch *Solon* 29.6; Aristotle *Poetics* 1403 b 23.

trick for remembering the play or distinguishing it from another of the same title.³⁶

The poet displayed his minstrelsy in *Thamyras*, the Attic spelling (e.g. Plato *Republic* 620 A) for the hybridic bard, Thamyris. The fragments of the play do not permit a reconstruction of Sophocles' treatment, but, given his Homeric proclivities (105), he probably began with Homer's account of Thamyris' challenge to the Muses:

[At] Dorion . . . the Muses,
 encountering Thamyris of Thrace, made end to his singing
 as he was traveling from Oichalia and Oichalian Eurytos.
 He strutted and boasted that he would prevail even if
 the Muses themselves should sing, the daughters of Zeus
 of the aegis. The Muses, roused to anger, made him lame
 and, further, took away his marvelous singing and caused
 him to forget his craft with the cithara (*Iliad* 2.594–600).

Pollux preserves a detail of a mask worn by an actor playing Thamyris that can only be Sophocles' actor: "The special masks: . . . Thamyris having one gray eye and one black."³⁷ The pioneering German literary critic, G. E. Lessing, explained the convention of this mask by referring to a passage in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (11.3.74):³⁸

³⁶ Pearson 1.xviii–xxi.

³⁷ Pollux *Onomasticon* 4.141: ἔκσκευα πρόσωπα· Ἀκταίων ἐστὶ κερασφόρος, ἢ Φινεύς τυφλός, ἢ Θάμυρις τὸν μὲν ἔχων γλαυκὸν ὀφθαλμόν, τὸν δὲ μέλανα (Special masks: Actaeon is the bearer of horns or blind Phineus or Thamyris having one gray eye and one black eye). *Glaucoma* denotes the vision impaired by a cataract (Aristotle *Generation of Animals* 80 a 17).

³⁸ Lessing 291–292.

116 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

In comedies, the father whose role is important, because he is sometimes aroused and other times calm, has one eyebrow raised and the other in normal position. Actors customarily show that side as much as possible that agrees with the part they are acting at the time.

A gray eye is the conventional way to depict blindness. Lessing noted that the actor, since he could not change masks, held the black eye toward the audience while *Thamyris* was sighted, and the gray eye after he had been blinded.

Sophocles did not win first prize with *Thamyras* and its companion pieces, but the popularity from the role, or his friendship and connections with the noted painter Polygnotos, may have led to his inclusion among the cithara players in Polygnotos' painting in the Stoa Poikile. The porch was built by Peisianax, an Alcmaeonid and relative of Cimon's by marriage. It was an open row of columns, enclosed at the ends by a short wall and paralleled by another. It proved to be a popular spot in the life of the city. Polygnotos used Epinice, Cimon's sister, as the model for Priam's daughter Laodice in his "Capture of Troy" in the stoa (Plutarch *Cimon* 4.6). Whether he used Sophocles similarly or the many folks who lingered there imagined resemblances is a question. Janet Fairweather, noticing that it was "unusual for a tragedian, as opposed to a lyric poet, to be shown holding a lyre in a painting on the Stoa Poikile, the standard attributes of a dramatist being the scroll and the mask," wonders whether the anecdote originated "as a piece of impressive bluffing on the part of an imaginative art-gallery guide."³⁹

³⁹ Fairweather 252–253.

Sophocles' acting in *Plyntriae* and *Thamyras* bears witness to his physical strength and coordination and leaves no grounds for accept a weak voice as a motive for giving up acting in the light of the rise of professional actors and the increased demands upon the poet in the production of four plays.

C. *Triptolemos*, First Victory (82–89)

82. *Marmor Parium*, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 56 (T 33)

Ἀφ' οὗ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ Σοφίλλου ὁ ἐκ Κολωνοῦ ἐνίκησε τραγωδία ἐτῶν ὦν ΔΔΓΙΙΙ, ἔτη ΗΗΓΙ, ἄρχοντος Ἀθήνησι Ἀψηφίωνος.

From when Sophocles, son of Sophillos, the Sophocles from Colonus, won with a tragedy at the age of 28, 206 years, in the archonship of Apsephion at Athens (469/468).⁴⁰

83. Eusebius *Chronicles* Ol. 77.2 (471 B.C.E.) (T 32a)

Sofocles tragoediarum scriptor ingenii sui opera publicavit.

Sophocles, writer of tragedies, first presented works of his genius.

84. Eusebius *Chronicles* Ol. 77.4 (469 B.C.E.) (T 34 a)

Sofocles et Euripides clari habebantur.

⁴⁰ The compiler of the inscription known as the *Parian Marble* calculated dates from the number of years separating an event from 264/263 B.C.E. Thus 206 years from 264/263 yields a date of 470/469.

Sophocles and Euripides were considered famous.

85. Pliny *Natural History* 18.65

Haec fuere sententiae Alexandro Magno regnante, cum clarissima fuit Graecia atque in toto orbe terrarum potentissima, ita tamen ut ante mortem eius annis fere CXLV Sophocles poeta in fabula Triptolemo frumentum Italicum ante cuncta laudaverit, ad verbum tralata sententia “et fortunatam Italiam frumento cānēre candido.”

Such were the opinions [concerning the kinds of wheat among the Greeks] that during the kingship of Alexander the Great, when Greece was most famous and powerful in the whole world, that, still, Sophocles in his *Triptolemus* 145 years before Alexander’s death praised Italian grain. A literal translation of his thought is “fortunate Italy is whitened with white grain” [fr. 600 Radt; 543 Nauk].⁴¹

86. Plutarch *Cimon* 8.7 (T 36)

Ἔθεντο δ’ εἰς μνήμην αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν τραγωδῶν κρίσιν ὀνομαστὴν γενομένην. πρώτην γὰρ διδασκαλίαν τοῦ Σοφοκλέους ἔτι νέου καθέντος Ἀψεφίων ὁ ἄρχων, φιλονικίας οὔσης καὶ παρατάξεως τῶν θεατῶν, κριτὰς μὲν οὐκ ἐκλήρωσε τοῦ ἀγῶνος, ὡς δὲ Κίμων μετὰ τῶν συστρατῆγων παρελθὼν εἰς τὸ θέατρον ἐποίησατο τῷ θεῷ τὰς νενομισμένας σπονδὰς, οὐκ ἐφῆκεν αὐτοὺς ἀπελθεῖν, ἀλλ’ ὀρκώσας ἠνάγκασε καθίσει καὶ κρίναι δέκα ὄντας, ἀπὸ φυλῆς μιᾶς ἕκαστον. ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀγὼν καὶ διὰ τὸ τῶν κριτῶν ἀξίωμα τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ὑπερέβαλε.

⁴¹ 145 years before Alexander’s death in 325/ 324 B.C.E. yields a date of 469/468.

νικήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους λέγεται τὸν Αἰσχύλον περιπαθῆ γενόμενον καὶ βαρέως ἐνεγκόντα χρόνον οὐ πολὺν Ἀθήνησι διαγαγεῖν, εἴτ' οἴχεσθαι δι' ὀργὴν εἰς Σικελίαν, ὅπου καὶ τελευτήσας περὶ Γέλαν τέθαιπται.

Athenians remembered him [Cimon] and his judgment of the tragedians that became famous. Sophocles, still a young man, was producing his first plays. In view of the rivalry and partisanship among the spectators, the archon Apsephion [469/468] did not choose the judges by lot for the contest. After Cimon entered the theater with the other generals and offered the customary libations to the god, Apsephion did not let them leave. He bound them with an oath and forced them to sit down and make the judgment, since they were ten, one from each tribe. Because of the prestige of the judges, the rivalry in the contest was intensified. When Sophocles won, it is said that Aeschylus became very upset and grieved and did not remain for long at Athens but went out of anger to Sicily where he died and was buried near the city of Gela.

87. Sophocles *Triptolemos* fr. 596 Radt (539 Nauck) in *Etymologicum Magnum* 395.11

Δράκοντε θαιρὸν ἀμφιπλιξ εἰληφότε

Dragons holding astride the pole of the chariot with their coils

88. Sophocles *Triptolemos* fr. 598 Radt (541 Nauck) in Dionysios of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 1.12.1

Οἰνώτρου δὲ κομίσαντος αὐτοῦς εἰς Ἰταλίαν Οἰνώτροι χρόνον τινὰ ἐκλήθησαν. ματυροεῖ δέ μοι τῷ λόγῳ Σοφοκλῆς μὲν ὁ τραγωδοποιὸς ἐν Τριπτολέμῳ δράματι πεποιήται γὰρ αὐτῷ

120 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Δημήτηρ διδάσκουσα τὸν Τριπτόλεμον, ὅσῃν χώραν ἀναγκασθήσεται σπείρων τοῖς δοθεῖσιν ὑπ' αὐτῆς καρποῖς διεξελθεῖν· μνησθεῖσα δὲ τῆς ἐώου πρῶτον Ἰταλίας, ἣ ἔστιν ἀπ' ἄκρας Ἰαπυγίας μέχρι πορθμοῦ Σικελικοῦ, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο τῆς ἀντικρῦ ἀψαμένη Σικιλίας, ἐπὶ τὴν ἐσπέριον Ἰταλίαν αὖθις ἀναστρέφει καὶ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν οἰκούντων τὴν παράλιον ταύτην ἐθνῶν διεξέρχεται, τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Οἰνώτρων οἰκήσεως ποιησαμένη. ἀπόχρη δὲ ταῦτα μόνον λεχθέντα τῶν ἱαμβείων ἐν οἷς φησι·

τὰ δ' ἐξόπισθε, χειρὸς ἐς τὰ δεξιὰ
Οἰνωτρία τε πᾶσα καὶ Τυρσηνικὸς
κόλπος Λιγυστική τε γῆ σε δέξεται.

After Oinotros had brought them [Lykaonians] into Italy, the Lykaonians were called for a time Oinotrians. Sophocles the tragedian testifies to the story for me in his play *Triptolemos*, for Demeter is depicted instructing Triptolemos how much land he would be compelled to traverse and sow for the fruits she had provided. Demeter, recalling first eastern Italy which extends from the promontory of Iapygia to the Strait of Sicily, and next touching upon Sicily on the opposite side, she turns back to western Italy and narrates the most important of the peoples dwelling on this shore, beginning from the settlement of the Oinotrians. This quotation of iambic lines suffices in which Sophocles says:

Next after this, to the right of my hand,
all Oinotria and Tyrrhenian
Gulf and the land of Liguria will receive you.

89. Sophocles fr. 837 Radt (753 Nauck) in Plutarch *Moralia* 21 E

Δεῖ δὲ τῷ Διογένει καὶ πρὸς τὸν Σοφοκλέα χρήσασθαι· πολλὰς γὰρ ἀνθρώπων μυριάδας ἐμβέβληκεν εἰς ἀθυμίαν περὶ τῶν μυστηρίων ταῦτα γράψας·

ὡς τρισόλβιοι
κεῖνοι βροτῶν, οἱ ταῦτα δερχθέντες τέλη
μόλωσ' ἐς Ἄιδου· τοῖσδε γὰρ μόνοις ἐκεῖ
ζῆν ἔστιν, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοισι πάντ' ἔχειν κακά.

Διογένης δ' ἀκούσας τι τοιοῦτον “Τί λέγεις;” ἔφη· “κρείττονα μοῖραν ἔξει Παταικίων ὁ κλέπτης ἀποθανὼν ἢ Ἐπαμεινώνδας, ὅτι μεμύηται;”

We must use Diogenes against Sophocles, for Sophocles has brought countless thousands of men into depression over the Mysteries by writing the following:

Thrice blessed are
those of mortals who, having beheld these rites,
go to Hades, for to these alone is it possible
to live there, but to the others all evils pertain.

On hearing these lines, Diogenes expostulated: “What are you saying? Pataikion the thief, when he dies, will have a better lot than Epameinondas because he has been initiated?”

COMMENTARY

Lessing first combined the disparate sources, Pliny's *Natural History* and the Eusebius' *Chronicles*, to conclude that Sophocles' maiden victory at the City Dionysia came with *Triptolemos* in 468

122 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

B.C.E.⁴² The festival for that year proved memorable on account of the intense rivalry over the prize in tragedy. The archon Apsephion aborted the usual procedure for selecting the ten judges when Cimon, premier Athenian of the day, entered the theater with his colleagues in the generalship. Since each had been elected by his tribe, Apsephion observed the rule of one tribe, one judge, when he swore them in as judges. They awarded first place to Sophocles in preference to Aeschylus, mainly it seems, for *Triptolemos*.

Webster sees in the judges' decision the possibility that "Sophocles was one of Cimon's friends or, considering their relative positions, that Cimon was the patron of Sophocles."⁴³

Triptolemos, reduced now to fragments, many consisting of single words preserved by the Alexandrine lexicographer Hesychius, was still available in the late first century B.C.E. when Dionysios of Halicarnassus cited it as evidence for the Oenotrians, early inhabitants of southern Italy. Fragments 596 and 598 Radt (539 and 541 Nauck) suggest that its plot was similar to that summarized by Apollodorus, although Sophocles confines the inhabited world to Magna Graecia:

For Triptolemos, the elder of Metaneira's sons, Demeter outfitted a chariot with winged dragons and gave him wheat with which he sowed the inhabited earth while being borne through the heavens (*The Library* 1.5.2).

⁴² Lessing 287.

⁴³ Webster 8: "The inference becomes more plausible when we remember that Cimon and Sophocles had three common friends—Archelaus, Polygnotus, and Ion," whose relations with Sophocles Webster develops (9–10).

Fragment 837 Radt (753 Nauck) cannot be definitively attributed to the *Triptolemos* but its subject is amenable, the benefits that beholding the Mysteries confer upon their initiates.

Sophocles struck a cord among Athenians in 468 when he brought them a tetralogy that included the *Triptolemos*. They were familiar with the deeds of Triptolemos, and the mysteries at Eleusis had long been part of their religious calendar. Sophocles put into the form of his medium the claim made by orators at public funerals that their land was the source of the fruits for mankind.⁴⁴ Their topos held that

our earth, moreover, did not begrudge her fruits but distributed them to others. After this, she produced for her sons the vine, relief from toils. Nurturing gods and bringing them to maturity, she brought them to men to be their leaders and teachers (Plato *Menexenos* 238 A).

Athenians who were growing in power and influence from the operations of their Delian League against the Persians saw themselves and their land in the deeds of the goddess and her hero and rewarded Sophocles accordingly.

D. Career in Brief (90–104)

90. *Life of Sophocles* 19 (T 1)

Συνηγωνίσατο δὲ καὶ Αἰσχύλῳ καὶ Εὐριπίδῃ καὶ Χοιρίλῳ καὶ Ἀριστίᾳ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς καὶ Ἰοφῶντι τῷ υἱῷ.

⁴⁴ For the public funeral and its *epitaphios logos*, see Loraux 17–76.

124 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

He competed against Aeschylus, Euripides, Choirilos, Aristias, and many others, including his son Iophon.

COMMENTARY

Unless Thespis, first prize winner at the first presentation of tragedies in 535, 534, or 533 B.C.E., survived to reach his nineties, Sophocles did not compete against him as the *The Suda* alleges.

The *Life of Sophocles* lists among his competitors Choirilos and Aristias. Choirilos began competing during the sixty-fourth Olympiad (523–520 B.C.E.) and among the one hundred and sixty plays he reputedly produced, he won thirteen victories. He also changed the masks and the effects of the costumes (*The Suda* chi 594).

Aristias, son of Pratinas (*Suda* pi 2230) who was first to write satyr plays, became with his father a fine writer of this form, second in popularity only to Aeschylus (Pausanias *Geography of Greece* 2.13.7).

82–89. First victory in 468 B.C.E. with four plays, one of which is *Triptolemos*.

91. *Hypothesis to Aeschylus Seven Against Thebes*

Ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Θεαγένου ὀλυμπιάδι σή. ἐνίκᾳ Λαίῳ, Οἰδίποδι, Ἐπτά ἐπὶ Θήβας, Σφιγγὶ σατυρικῇ. β (δεύτερος) Ἄριστίας Περσεῖ, Ταντάλῳ . . . Παλαισταῖς σατύροις τοῖς Πρατίνου πατρός. γ (τρίτος) Πολυφράσμων Λυκουργείᾳ τετραλογία.

The *Seven Against Thebes* was produced in the archonship of Theagenes [467 B.C.E.] during the 78th Olympiad. Aeschylus won with *Laïos*, *Oedipus*, *Seven Against Thebes*, satyric *Sphinx*. 2nd (second) was Aristias with *Perseus*, *Tantalos* . . . *Palaistai*, a satyr play, those of his father, Pratinas. 3rd (third) was Polyphrasmon with *Lykourgeia*, a tetralogy.

COMMENTARY

Sophocles did not submit an entry or, less likely, was denied a chorus, for the contest of the following year (467 B.C.E.). The *Argumentum* to Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* lists the names of the victors. Aeschylus took first place; Aristias second, and Polyphrastos, third.

The dates of the productions of the extant plays, except for *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus Coloneus*, are uncertain. The *Ajax* is usually considered to be the oldest, produced between the years 460 and 450.

In 443–442, Sophocles served as Hellanotamias (37) and in 441–439 as general in the Samian War (38–43).

92. *Marmor Parium, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 60

Ἀφ' οὗ Εὐριπίδης ἐτῶν ὧν ΔΔΔΔΙΙΙΙ τραγωιδία πρῶτον ἐνίκησεν, ἔτη ΗΓΔ[ΔΓΙΙΙ], ἄρχοντος Ἀθήνησι Διφίλο[υ].

From when Euripides, being 44 years old, first won with a tragedy, 178 years with Diphilos archon in Athens.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ 178 years before 264/263 B.C.E. yields a date of 442/441.

93. *Life of Sophocles* 8 (T 1)

Νίκας δὲ ἔλαβεν κ', ὡς φησι Καρύστιος, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ δευτερεῖα, τρίτα δὲ οὐδέποτε.

Sophocles won twenty victories, as Karystios [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 4, 359] says, and frequently took second place but never third.

The *Antigone* was presumably produced and awarded first place in 442, as commonly held. See on 45. In 441, Euripides won first prize (92). It is questionable whether Athenians would have awarded Sophocles with a generalship for placing second. Sophocles never took third prize. *Antigone* is said to have been the thirty-second play. The reason for the designation is unknown. It may be a call number. The verb *lelektai* suggests that its source was a catalogue, perhaps that of a library.⁴⁶

94. Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 14.638 D (T 31)

Κρατῖνος ἐν Μαλθακοῖς . . . σκώπτει δ' αὐτὸν εἰς τὰ ποιήματα καὶ ἐν Βουκόλοις·

ὄς οὐκ ἔδωκ' αἰτοῦντι Σοφοκλέει χορόν,
τῷ Κλεομάχου δ', ὄν οὐκ ἂν ἤξιον ἐγὼ
ἐμοὶ διδάσκειν οὐδ' ἂν εἰς Ἀδώνια.

Kratinos in *Cowards* [fr. 97 Kock] . . . and in *Herdsman* [fr. 15 Kock] makes fun of [Gnesippos] for his poetry [by criticizing the archon]:

⁴⁶ Pearson xvi–xvii.

Who did not assign a chorus to Sophocles who applied but to the son of Kleomachos whom I would not deem worthy of producing songs for me or for the Festival of Adonis.

COMMENTARY

Under what circumstances Sophocles was denied a chorus and what he did with the plays is not known. The comic poet Cratinus was active in the theater from the mid-fifth century until about 423. The date of the *Herdsmen* is not known.

Marcel Detienne says of the festival of Adonis: "The Adonia, an exotic festival tolerated by the Athenian city on the periphery of the official cults and public ceremonies, were a private affair. This was so in two aspects, first in that they took place in the house of a private individual and not in a sanctuary or other public place, and secondly in that those who took part, whether men or women, were lovers, courtesans and those who frequented them."⁴⁷

95. *Hypothesis* II to Euripides *Alcestis*

Ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Γλαυκίνου ἄρχοντος τὸ λ.† πρῶτος ἦν Σοφοκλῆς, δεύτερος Εὐριπίδης Κρήσσαις, Ἀλκμαίωνι τῷ διὰ Ψωφίδος, Τηλέφῳ, Ἀλκήστιδι.

Alcestis was produced in the archonship of Glaukinos. Sophocles was first; Euripides, second with *Kressai*, *Alcmaion in Psophis*, *Telephos*, *Alkestis*.

⁴⁷ Detienne 65.

COMMENTARY

In 438, Sophocles won first place with plays unknown.

96. *Hypothesis* of Aristophanes the Grammarian to Euripides *Medeia*

Ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Πυθοδώρου ἄρχοντος ὀλυμπιάδος πζ' ἔτει α'.
πρῶτος Εὐφορίων, δεύτερος Σοφοκλῆς, τρίτος Εὐριπίδης
Μεδεία, Φιλοκτήτη, Δίκτυι, Θερισταῖς σατύροις.

Medeia was produced with Pythodoros archon in the first year of the 87th Olympiad [431 B.C.E.]. First was Euphorion, second Sophocles, and third Euripides with *Medeia*, *Philoktetes*, *Diktys*, and *Theristai*, satyr play.

97. *Argumentum* to Euripides *Hippolytus*

Ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Ἐπαμείνου ἀρχοντος ὀλυμπιάδι πζ' ἔτει δ'.
πρῶτος Εὐριπίδης, δεύτερος Ἴοφῶν, τρίτος Ἴων.

The *Hippolytus* was produced in the archonship of Epameinon in the 87th Olympiad, the fourth year. Euripides was first; Iophon, second, and Ion, third.

COMMENTARY

In 428, Sophocles did not apply for a chorus or, less likely, was denied a chorus since Euripides garnered first prize with *Hippolytus*, and Iophon, second prize, and Ion, third. Sophocles may have been serving as general in the Anaeon War.

98. *Argumentum* II to Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannus* (T 39)

Χαριέντως δὲ Τύραννον ἅπαντες αὐτὸν ἐπιγράφουσινκ, ὡς ἐξέχοντα πάσης τῆς Σοφοκλέους ποιήσεως, καίπερ ἠττηθέντα ὑπὸ Φιλοκλέους, ὡς φησι Δικαίαρχος.

Everyone kindly endorsed Sophocles' *Tyrannus* standing out from all his work, although it was defeated by Philokles, as Dikaiarchos says [fr. 80 Wehrli].

99. Aristides 46.256 (T 40)

Σοφοκλῆς Φιλοκλέους ἠττᾶτο ἐν Ἀθηναίοις τὸν Οἰδίπουν, ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοί, πρὸς ὃν οὐδ' Αἰσχύλος εἶχε λέξαι τι. ἄρ' οὖν διὰ τοῦτο χείρων Σοφοκλῆς Φιλοκλέους; αἰσχύνη μὲν οὖν αὐτῶ τοσοῦτον ἀκοῦσαι, ὅτι βέλτιων Φιλοκλέους.

Among Athenians, Sophocles with *Tyrannus* was defeated by Philokles. O Zeus, and gods, not even Aeschylus had anything to say. Why was Sophocles inferior to Philokles? There was shame in hearing this much, that he was better than Philokles.

COMMENTARY

If, as often suggested, Aristophanes parodied *Oedipus Tyrannus* with "O polis, polis" (*Acharnians* 27) at the Lenaia in Gamelion (roughly January) of 425 B.C.E., Sophocles' play would have been produced a few months before at the City Dionysia of 426 or at an earlier festival. Seeing the plague of 429 as a subtext of the first scene is inevitable, and Sophocles' original audience probably did so. But the nothing decisive for the play or its dating has ensued from the insight. The *Oedipus Tyrannus* is generally placed in the years 429–425.

130 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Despite the fascination that the *Oedipus Tyrannus* aroused during the twentieth century, Sophocles lost to Philokles, Aeschylus' nephew, whose bitter style earned him the nickname Chole (Bile) (*The Suda* phi 378).

Sophocles may have been shamed, as Aristides assumes, but he frequently won first and second prizes.

The *Women of Trachis* is usually dated to the period 429–425 B.C.E. and the *Electra* to 418–410.

100. *Argumentum* II to Sophocles *Philoctetes*

Ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Γλαυκίππου· πρῶτος ἦν Σοφοκλῆς.

Philoctetes was produced in the archonship of Glaukippos [409 B.C.E.]; Sophocles was first.

101. *Life of Euripides* 44–47 (T 54)

Λέγουσι δὲ καὶ Σοφοκλέα ἀκούσαντα ὅτι ἐτελεύτησεν, αὐτὸν μὲν ἱματίῳ φαιῷ προελθεῖν, τὸν δὲ χορὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς ἀστεφανώτους εἰσαγαγεῖν ἐν τῷ προαγῶνι, καὶ δακρῦσαι τὸν δῆμον.

COMMENTARY

They say that when Sophocles heard that Euripides had died, he entered the Proagon wearing the dark cloak of mourning and led in his chorus and actors without garlands, and the people burst into tears. Sophocles entered plays for the City Dionysia of 406 B.C.E. because he participated with his actors and choristers in the

Proagon of that year. The Proagon or Preliminary to the Contest was held in the Odeion on the ninth of Elaphebolion, the day before the procession that opened the festival of the City Dionysia. Dramatists showed to the public for its inspection the actors and choristers who wore neither costumes or masks. At the same time, the subjects of their plays were announced, although how this was accomplished is not known.⁴⁸ Sophocles took the occasion to mourn publicly Euripides who had died recently.

102. *Marmor Parium, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 64 (T 3)

Ἀφ' οὗ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ ποιητὴς βιώσας ἔτη ΓΔΔΔΔΠ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ Κῦρος ἀνέβη, [ἔτη ΗΔΔΔΔΠΙ, ἀρχ]οντος Ἀθήνησι Καλλίου τοῦ ἑπιπροτέρου†.

From when Sophocles the poet, who had lived 92 years, died, and Cyrus went up, [143 years, the arch]on at Athens being Kallias the first† [406/405].

103. *Diodorus Siculus Library* 13.103.4 (T 85)

Περὶ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον ἐτελεύτησε Σοφοκλῆς ὁ Σοφίλου, ποιητὴς τραγωδιῶν, ἔτη βιώσας ἐνενήκοντα, νίκας δ' ἔχων ὀκτωκαίδεκα.

⁴⁸ For the Proagon, see Aischines *Against Ctesiphon* 66–68 with scholia, available in Pickard-Cambridge, 63; also 67–68; Parke, 132–133.

132 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

About the same time [406/405], Sophocles, son of Sophilos, composer of tragedies, died. He lived ninety years and had eighteen victories.

COMMENTARY

Sophocles died in 406 B.C.E. between the celebration of the Great Dionysia in March 406 and the Lenaia in January.

104. *Argumentum* II to Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus*

Τὸν ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ Οἰδίπουν ἐπὶ τετελευτηκότι τῷ πάππῳ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ υἱδοῦς ἐδίδαξεν, υἱὸς ὦν Ἀρίστωνος, ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Μίκωνος, ὅς ἐστι τέταρος ἀπὸ Καλλίου.

Sophocles, grandson of Sophocles and son of Ariston, produced the *Oedipus at Colonus* after the death of his grandfather in the archonship of Mikon [402–401], who is fourth from Kallias.

COMMENTARY

Oedipus at Colonus was produced in 401 posthumously by his grandson, Sophocles.

E. *Style* (105–109)

105. *Life of Sophocles* 20 (T 1)

Τὸ πᾶν μὲν οὖν Ὀμηρικῶς ἠνόμαζε. τοὺς τε γὰρ μύθους φέρει κατ' ἴχνος τοῦ ποιητοῦ· καὶ τὴν Ὀδύσειαν δὲ ἐν πολλοῖς δράμασιν ἀπογράφεται. παρετυμολογεῖ δὲ καθ' Ὀμηρον καὶ τοῦνομα τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως·

ὀρθῶς δ' Ὀδυσσεύς εἰμ' ἐπώνυμος κακῶν·
πολλοὶ γὰρ ὠδύσαντο δυσμενεῖς ἐμοί.

ἤθοποιεῖ τε καὶ ποικίλλει καὶ τοῖς ἐπινοήμασι τεχνικῶς χρῆται, Ὀμηρικὴν ἐκματτόμενος χάριν. ὅθεν εἰπεῖν Ἰωνικόν τινα† μόνον Σοφοκλέα τυγχάνειν Ὀμήρου μαθητήν. καὶ ἄλλοι μὲν πολλοὶ μεμίμηνται τινα τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν ἢ τῶν καθ' αὐτούς, μόνος δὲ Σοφοκλῆς ἀφ' ἐκάστου τὸ λαμπρὸν ἀπανθίζει καθ' ὃ καὶ μέλιττα ἐλέγετο. ἤνεγκε δὲ τὰ μικτὰ· εὐκαιρίαν, γλυκύτητα, τόλμαν, ποικιλίαν.

Sophocles generally used the language of Homer and fashioned his plots in the footsteps of that poet. In many of his plays, he drew upon the *Odyssey*. He gives the etymology of the name Odysseus in the Homeric way [*Odyssey* 19.406–409]:

Rightly for my sufferings am I called Odysseus,
for many unfriendly men have caused me pain [fr. 965].

He delineated characters, embellished diction, and skillfully introduced solutions external to the plot, attaining the charm of Homer. From this a †certain Ionian† said that only Sophocles was Homer's student. Many others imitated one of their predecessors or contemporaries, but only Sophocles plucked the brilliance from each. For this he was said to be the Bee [145–153]. He combined various elements, timing, sweetness, daring, and variety.

COMMENTARY

In biographical discourse, the claim that Sophocles is Homer's student indicates that he imitates the style of his predecessor.⁴⁹ The large percentage of titles of his plays whose myths are taken

⁴⁹ Fairweather 263.

134 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

from the epic cycle as well as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* confirm Sophocles' penchant. He did not merely borrow but recast the story to his vision of the tragic. For example, Sophocles surely meant for his audience to hear in Tecmessa's plea to Ajax not to leave the hut (*Ajax* 485–524) Andromache's appeal to Hector to stay within the protection of the walls (Homer *Iliad* 6.407–439). Andromache speaks with her husband who shares her concerns and listens and is moved. Tecmessa's words fall in vain before Ajax, and after they do reach him, he speaks to deceive her into thinking he will live although he has already planned his death. In Sophocles' version, words do not communicate, and language fails Tecmessa and Ajax. Sophocles' scene may be Homeric, but it is not Homer.

106. *Life of Sophocles* 21 (T 1)

Οἶδε δὲ καιρὸν συμμετρῆσαι καὶ πράγματα ὥστε ἐκ μικροῦ ἡμιστιχίου ἢ λέξεως μιᾶς ὅλον ἠθοποιεῖν πρόσωπον. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο μέγιστον ἐν ποιητικῇ, δηλοῦν ἦθος ἢ πάθος.

Sophocles knew how to proportion timing and events so that from a short half-line or a single speech, he constructed a whole character. This is the most important aspect of the poet's art, namely, to reveal character or suffering.

107. Plutarch *Moralia* 79 B (T 100)

Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἔλεγε τὸν Αἰσχύλου διαπεπαιχῶς ὄγκον, εἶτα τὸ πικρὸν καὶ κατὰ τεχνὸν τῆς αὐτοῦ κατασκευῆς, τρίτον ἤδη τὸ τῆς λέξεως μεταβάλλειν εἶδος, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἠθικώτατον καὶ βέλτιστον, οὕτως οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες, ὅταν ἐκ τῶν πανηγυρικῶν καὶ κατατέχνων εἰς τὸν ἀπτόμενον ἦθους

καὶ πάθους λόγον καταβῶσιν, ἄρχονται τὴν ἀληθῆ προκοπὴν καὶ ἄτυφον προκόπτειν.

As Sophocles used to say, only after he played around with the grandiloquence of Aeschylus and the sharpness and artificiality of his own, did he change to the third manner of speaking which is one most concerned with character and is best. So those who pursue philosophy begin to make authentic and unaffected strides when they change from pompous and artificial language to a discourse that deals with character and emotions.

108. Aristotle *Poetics* 1460 b 32 (T 53a)

Ἐὰν ἐπιτιμᾶται ὅτι οὐκ ἀληθῆ, ἀλλ' ἴσως <ὡς> δεῖ, οἷον καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἴους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἰοῖ εἶσιν, ταύτῃ λυτέον.

If the objection is brought that [a poet's description of something] is not true but perhaps as it must be, the poet may reply that things are as they ought to be just as Sophocles said that he drew men as they ought to be, but Euripides as they are. In this way, the objection may be met.

109. *Vatican Gnomology* 518 (T 53b)

Ὁ αὐτὸς ἐρωτηθεὶς διὰ τί αὐτὸς μὲν ποιεῖ τὰ ἥθη τῶν ἀνθρώπων χρηστά, Εὐριπίδης δὲ φαῦλα, “ὅτι” ἔφη, “ἐγὼ μὲν οἴους ἔδει εἶναι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποιῶ, ἐκεῖνος δὲ ὅποιοί εἰσιν.”

When asked why he makes the character of his people useful, and Euripides makes his worthless, “because,” Sophocles said, “I

make the people as they should be, and that one makes them as they are.”

COMMENTARY

G. M. A. Grube admirably summarizes older views of character in Sophoclean tragedy:

The gods are taken for granted in Sophoclean tragedy which centres upon human characters. His men and women, though they thus occupy the centre of the stage, themselves accept the pattern of the virtues. They are human, they fail and are punished, and they accept the punishment. The fault is not always their own, there are insoluble problems, but it is a curious feature of Sophoclean tragedy that the general impression of serenity is not broken by the cruel fate of an Oedipus, the clash of irreconcilable loyalties in *Antigone*, even the matricide of Orestes.⁵⁰

Charles Segal offers a contemporary view of character in tragedy. Although the audience “must identify” with the hero as a human being (lest the drama become a dramatized intellectual exercise), “character” in Sophocles, Segal points out, is not a “human personality.” The conventions of the theater, “the mask, the special boots or *kothornoi*, the stylized gestures, the artificial and often difficult poetic language,” function to defamiliarize the hero and distance him from the audience:

The individuality of the Sophoclean hero appears not in small personal details but, as in Homer, in a few large essential gestures. It is revealed not so much through

⁵⁰ Grube 5.

the free play of idiosyncratic personality as in the vision of an idealized heroic self and the realization and resolution of the conflict between that self and the restrictions imposed by the world of men and the world of the gods.

To be an individual in Sophocles is to have a special destiny apart from other men and to suffer a potentially dangerous, indeed fatal, isolation from the community and its secure values. That destiny stamps his life with moral significance. Only if he fulfills that destiny can the hero realize himself, and not relinquish something essential to his nature. To have such a destiny also means to have a place within the larger order of the gods. The play of divine forces about the hero's life is the mark of such tragic individuality. Conversely, that individuality brings the gods, with the disturbance that their presence always involves, crashing into his life. The hero stands at the point where the divine and human spheres intersect, where the separation between them becomes difficult and mysterious, where the intelligible order of life meets with darker levels of existence.⁵¹

Sophocles appears to have been aware of what he was hoping to accomplish and conscious of how he went about it. His assessment of his characters—men as they ought to be—has conditioned the reception of his plays. It was viewing Antigone as a personality who willingly lays down her life for her brother that roused the distaste and misapprehension of the importance of her decision not to oppose the citizens on behalf of a husband or son (904–910). Critics have approached *Antigone* as a play about Antigone rather than one about social issues in which Antigone is a player, namely, the rent in the cultural fabric caused by the

⁵¹ Segal 8.

138 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

demos' appropriation of the remains of those Athenians, husbands and sons, killed in its wars for its public funeral.⁵²

F. And Actors (110–120)

110. *Life of Sophocles* 6 (T 1)

Φησὶ δὲ καὶ Ἰστρος . . . πρὸς τὰς φύσεις αὐτῶν γράψαι τὰ δράματα.

Istros [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 36] says that . . . he wrote plays with a view to the qualities [of his actors and choristers].

111. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Clouds* 1266 (T 42)

Ἄλλοι δὲ τραγικὸν ὑποκριτὴν εἶναι τὸν Τληπόλεμον, τὸν συνεχῶς ὑποκρινόμενον Σοφοκλεῖ.

Others say that the tragic actor is Tlepolemos, who acted lots of times for Sophocles.

112. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Frogs* 791 (T 43)

Κλειδημίδης: Καλλίστρατος ὅτι ἴσως Σοφοκλέους υἱὸς οὗτος· Ἀπολλώνιος δὲ ὅτι Σοφοκλέους ὑποκριτῆς.

Kleidemides: Kallistratos says that this may be Sophocles' son; Apollonios, that he is Sophocles' actor.

⁵² Tyrrell and Bennett 112–117.

113. *The Suda* nu 170

Νεμήσεις ὑποκριτῶν: οἱ ποιηταὶ ἐλάμβανον τρεῖς ὑποκριτὰς κλήρῳ νεμηθέντας ὑποκρινομένους τὰ δράματα, ὧν ὁ νικήσας εἰς τοῦπιὸν ἄκριτος παραλαμβάνεται.

Distributions of actors: the poets received three actors, chosen by lot, to play the parts; the victor among them was accepted automatically for the next year.

114. Demosthenes *On the False Embassy* 246 (T 44)

Ἀντιγόνην δὲ Σοφοκλέους πολλάκις μὲν Θεόδωρος, πολλάκις δ' Ἀριστόδημος ὑποκέκριται, ἐν ἡ πεποιημέν' ἰαμβεῖα καλῶς καὶ συμφερόντως ὑμῖν πολλάκις αὐτὸς εἰρηκῶς καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἐξεπιστάμενος παρέλιπεν. ἴστε γὰρ δήπου τοῦθ' ὅτι ἐν ἅπασιν τοῖς δράμασιν τοῖς τραγικοῖς ἐξαίρετόν ἐστιν ὥσπερ γέρας τοῖς τριταγωνισταῖς τὸ τοὺς τυράννους καὶ τοὺς τὰ σκῆπτρ' ἔχοντας εἰσιέναι.

Theodoros frequently acted the part of Sophocles' Antigone as Iso did Aristodemos frequently. In this play, there are lines in iambic verse [175–190] that are well and profitably composed. Aeschines himself has repeated these lines to you frequently and has them memorized, but he omitted them. To be sure, you know that the role of tyrants and those with scepters, as if a prize, falls to tritagonists.

115. Demosthenes *On the Crown* 180 (T 45)

Βούλει ἐμαυτὸν μὲν ὄν ἂν σὺ λοιδορούμενος καὶ διασύρων καλέσῃς, Βάτταλον, σὲ δὲ μηδ' ἦρω τὸν τυχόντα, ἀλλὰ τούτων

140 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

τινὰ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς, Κρεσφόντην ἢ Κρέοντα ἢ ὄν ἐν
Κολλυτῶ ποτ' Οἰνόμαον κακῶς ἐπέτριψας;

Do you wish me to Battalos [Stutterer], a name you call me when you ranting and raving and chopping me to pieces? But you don't want any ordinary hero for yourself but someone from the stage, a Kresphontes or Creon or Oinomaos whom you once mauled badly in [the deme] Kollytos?

116. Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 6.5 (T 46)

Histrion in terra Graecia fuit fama celebri, qui gestus et vocis claritudine et venustate ceteris antistabat: nomen fuisse aiunt Polum, tragoedias poetarum nobilium scite atque asservate actitavit. is Polus unice amatum filium morte amisit. eum luctum quoniam satis visus <est> eluxisse, rediit ad quaestum artis. in eo tempore Athenis Electram Sophoclis acturus gestare urnam quasi cum Orestis ossibus debebat. ita compositum fabulae argumentum est ut veluti fratris reliquias ferens Electra compleret commisereturque interitum eius existimatum. igitur Polus lugubri habitu Electrae indutus ossa atque urnam e sepulcro tulit filii et quasi Orestis amplexus opplevit omnia non simulacris neque imitamentis, sed luctu atque lamentis veris et spirantibus. Itaque cum agi fabula videretur, dolor actus est.

There was in Greece a very famous actor who, endowed with clarity of voice and personal charm, stood before the rest. His name, they say, was Polos. Skillfully and earnestly he acted the tragedies of distinguished poets. This Polos lost his son whom he loved with a love like no other. Since he seemed to have sufficiently mourned his loss, he returned to the pursuit of his art. At the time in Athens, he was going to act the role of Sophocles' Electra and had to carry an urn filled supposedly with the bones

of Orestes. The plot of the play is so written that Electra, as if carrying the remains of her brother, weeps and laments his reputed death. Therefore, Polos, wearing the mourning costume of Electra, carried the bones and urn from the tomb of his son and embraced them as if they were Orestes'. He completed the scene not with imitation and semblance but with real grief and laments. Therefore, although the play seemed to be being acted, it was Polos' grief that was being enacted.

117. Epictetus *Dissertations* fr. XI (T 47)

Ἦ οὐχ ὀρᾶς ὅτι οὐκ εὐφρονότερον οὐδὲ ἥδιον ὁ Πῶλος τὸν τύραννον Οἰδίποδα ὑπεκρίνετο ἢ τὸν ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ ἀλήτην καὶ πτωχόν;

Do you not see that Polos did not act the role of Oedipus the tyrant more melodiously or euphoniouly than the wanderer and beggar at *Colonus*?

118. Scholiast to Sophocles *Ajax* 846 (T 48)

Δεῖ δὲ ὑπονοῆσαι ὅτι περιπίπτει τῷ ξίφει. καὶ δεῖ καρτερόν τινα εἶναι τὸν ὑποκριτήν, ὡς ἄξαι τοὺς θεατὰς εἰς τὴν τοῦ Αἴαντος φαντασίαν· ὅποια περὶ τοῦ Ζακυνθίου Τιμοθέου φασίν, ὅτι ἤγε τοὺς θεατὰς καὶ ἐψυχαγῶγει τῇ ὑποκρίσει, ὡς Σφαγέα αὐτὸν κληθῆναι.

It must be assumed that Ajax falls on his sword. The actor must be a strong fellow so as to draw the spectators into the presentation of Ajax. They say this about Timotheos of Zacynthus, namely, that

142 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

he drew the spectators and seduced them with his acting so that he came to be nicknamed Sphageus.⁵³

119. Plutarch *Moralia* 841 F

Εἰσήνεγκε δὲ καὶ νόμους . . . τραγωδίας αὐτῶν ἐν κοινῷ γραψαμένους φυλάττειν καὶ τὸν τῆς πόλεως γραμματέα παραναγινώσκειν τοῖς ὑποκρινομένοις· οὐκ ἐξεῖναι γὰρ παρ' αὐτὰς ὑποκρίνεσθαι.

Lycurgus introduced laws [among them] . . . that the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides be written out and kept in a place of public record and that the clerk of the city read and compare the copies with the actors, for it was not permitted to act apart from the copies.

120. *Life of Aeschylus* 12

Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ τοσοῦτον ἠγάπησαν Αἰσχύλον, ὥς ψηφίσασθαι μετὰ <τὸν> θάνατον αὐτοῦ τὸν βουλόμενον διδάσκειν τὰ Αἰσχύλου χορὸν λαμβάνειν.

Athenians so loved Aeschylus that they decreed after his death that whoever wished to produce the plays of Aeschylus receive a chorus.

COMMENTARY

This evidence for Sophocles' actors may be illuminated by reference to the first three of Pickard-Cambridge's four-stage model for the development of actors in tragedy.⁵⁴

⁵³ Butcher/Priest, Ajax' address to his sword before he falls upon it (*Ajax* 815).

In the first stage, the poet acted in his own plays as Sophocles did in *Plyntriai* and *Thamyras*.

The rise of the professional actor ushered in the next stage when poets, stepping back, began hiring their own actors. Sophocles frequently employed Tlepoemos and perhaps Kleidemides. The competition among poets for the best actors must have been keen, and a man of Sophocles' wealth and reputation would have enjoyed a distinct advantage. It would have been during this time, when he knew beforehand who his actors would be, that he wrote tragedies to suit the speaking or singing abilities of his actors.

This situation started to give way when the demos, to redirect competition among individuals to its own benefit, followed its customary strategy of converting an aristocratic practice into a public institution. It took over paying the protagonists and inaugurated a competition among them alone for a prize. The contest was undoubtedly administered by the archon eponymus, the official in charge of the City festival, who distributed actors to tragedians by lot. (The lot assured the formal equality, at least, of the democracy in a characteristic way.) An actor plays the primary role which could change in the course of a play through all four of his tragedian's dramas. As an added bonus, the winner of the contest was invited back to perform the following year without having to audition (113).

This system, Pickard-Cambridge's third stage, ended as actors became more famous than poets. In order that one poet not dominate through the exclusive use of a notable actor, actors appeared in one tragedy of each poet.

⁵⁴ Pickard-Cambridge 93–94.

144 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

The careers of Theodoros, Polos, and Timotheos a.k.a. Sphageus do not belong to this fourth stage but to the theater of the fourth century when, after 386 B.C.E., the tragic festival welcomed revivals of old plays.⁵⁵ During this period, actors altered the scripts of the venerable classics so notoriously that Lycurgus had a law passed forbidding the practice (119). Sophocles' plays remained popular without the encouragement extended to those of Aeschylus.⁵⁶

Aeschines opened himself to Demosthenes's venom by acting in a company that toured the demes and appeared in the festival of Rural Dionysus.⁵⁷ The actors Smylos and Socrates organized and ran the company, probably sharing the lead roles in old plays, among them Sophocles' *Antigone*.

⁵⁵ Pickard-Cambridge 99.

⁵⁶ *Life of Aeschylus* 12: "The Athenians so loved Aeschylus that they decreed after his death that whoever wished to produce the plays of Aeschylus receive a chorus."

⁵⁷ Demosthenes *On the Crown* 262: "You hired yourself out to those famous actors, Simylos and Socrates, everybody calls the Groaners [*Barystonoi*]. You gleaned fruit, figs, grapes, and olives, like a fruit peddler swiping his wares from the fields of others, and you made out better from that than from the contests you waged over your life. It was war between you and the spectators—no truces, no heralds—and you received many a blow. No wonder you make fun of us who have no experience of the sorts of dangers you incur." Pickard-Cambridge 52 on this company of actors and tragedy in the fourth century.

G. And Aeschylus (121–127)

121. *Life of Sophocles* 4 (T 1)

Παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ δὲ τὴν τραγωδίαν ἔμαθε.

Sophocles learned tragedy at the side of Aeschylus.

122. *Life of Sophocles* 19 (T 1)

Συνηγωνίσατο δὲ καὶ Αἰσχύλῳ.

He competed against Aeschylus.

123. *Life of Aeschylus* 8 (T 37)

Ἀπῆρε δὲ ὡς Ἱέρωνα, κατὰ τινὰς μὲν ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων κατασπουδασθεὶς καὶ ἡσσηθεὶς νέῳ ὄντι Σοφοκλεῖ. . . .

Aeschylus left to go to Hieron [tyrant of Syracuse], according to some, because he was mortified by the Athenians and defeated by Sophocles who was a young man

124. Athenenaeus *Deipnosophists* 10.428 F (T 52a)

Πρῶτος γὰρ ἐκεῖνος . . . παρήγαγε τὴν τῶν μεθύντων ὄψιν εἰς τραγωδίαν . . . ἃ δ' αὐτὸς ὁ τραγωδιοποιὸς ἐποίει, ταῦτα τοῖς ἥρωσι περιέθηκε· μεθύων γοῦν ἔγραφε τὰς τραγωδίας. διὸ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς αὐτῷ μεμφόμενος ἔλεγεν ὅτι “ὦ Αἰσχύλε, εἰ καὶ τὰ δέοντα ποιεῖς, ἀλλ' οὖν οὐκ εἰδῶς γε ποιεῖς,” ὡς ἱστορεῖ Χαμαιλέων ἐν τῷ περὶ Αἰσχύλου.

146 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Aeschylus first introduced the spectacle of drunkards into tragedy . . . What the tragedian did himself he attributed to his heroes. In fact, he wrote his tragedies while drunk. Thereupon even Sophocles reproached him, saying that “Aeschylus, even if you write what is necessary, you do not do so knowingly,” as Chamaeleon writes in his work on Aeschylus [fr. 40 Wehrli].

125. Athenenaues *Deipnosophists* 1.22 A (T 52b)

Μεθύων δὲ ἐποίει τὰς τραγωδίας Αἰσχύλος, ὡς φησι Χαμαιλέων. Σοφοκλῆς γοῦν ὠνείδιζεν αὐτῷ ὅτι, εἰ καὶ τὰ δέοντα ποιεῖ, ἀλλ’ οὐκ εἰδῶς γε.

Aeschylus used to write his tragedies while drunk, as Chamaeleon says [fr. 40 Wehrli]. Sophocles in fact criticized him because even if Aeschylus wrote what is necessary, he did not do so knowingly.

126. Eustathius *Commentary on the Odyssey* 1598.58 (T 52 c)

Αἰσχύλος . . . ἐν τῷ μεθύειν γράφων ἐπαινετὰς τραγωδίας ἤκουσε παρὰ Σοφοκλέους τὸ “ὦ Αἰσχύλε, εἰ καὶ τὰ δέοντα ποιεῖς, ὅμως οὐκ εἰδῶς γε ποιεῖς.”

Aeschylus . . . while writing praiseworthy tragedies in a state of drunkenness heard from Sophocles “Even if you compose what is necessary, nevertheless you do not do so knowingly.”

127. Plutarch fr. 130 (T 52d)

Σοφοκλῆς ἐμέμφετο Αἰσχύλῳ ὅτι μεθύων ἔγραφε· “καὶ γὰρ εἰ τὰ δέοντα ποιεῖ,” φησι, “ἀλλ’ οὐκ εἰδῶς γε.”

Sophocles criticized Aeschylus because he wrote while drunk: "for even if he writes what is necessary," he says, "he does not do so knowingly."

COMMENTARY

These sources are pertinent for the way in which ancient writers invented the lives of poets, but they offer nothing historical for the life of Sophocles. The claim that Sophocles was Aeschylus' student, as noted (76), is a formula for relating poets and philosophers and recognizing imitation.

Sophocles could hardly escape being influenced by the elder poet who was at his prime when Sophocles won in 468/467 with *Triptolemos*. Since Sophocles' extant plays belong to his mature period, they offer few clues, while the early *Triptolemos* exists only in fragments.

Lefkowitz attributes Aeschylus' drunkenness to the comment by the Aristophanic Euripides (*Frogs* 945) that Aeschylus says whatever pops into his mouth.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Lefkowitz 1981.68, 71.

Note Four
Year of Sophocles' Birth
(128-133)

128. *Life of Sophocles* 2 (T 1)

Γεννηθῆναι δὲ αὐτόν φασιν οἱ Ὀλυμπιάδι κατὰ τὸ δεύτερον ἔτος ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Ἀθήνησι Φιλίππου. ἦν δὲ Αἰσχύλου νεώτερος ἔτεσι ζ', Εὐριπίδου δὲ παλαιότερος κδ'.

They say that Sophocles was born in the second year of the seventy-first Olympiad [495/494] in the archonship of Philippos at Athens. He was 7 years younger than Aeschylus and 24 years older than Euripides.

129. *Marmor Parium, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 56 (T 33)

Ἀφ' οὗ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ Σοφίλλου ὁ ἐκ Κολωνοῦ ἐνίκησε τραγωδία ἐτῶν ὦν ΔΔΓΙΙΙ, ἔτη ΗΗΓΙ, ἄρχοντος Ἀθήνησι Ἀψηφίωνος.

From when Sophocles, son of Sophillos, the Sophocles from Colonus, won with a tragedy at the age of 28, 206 years, in the archonship of Apsephion at Athens [469/468].

130. *Marmor Parium, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 64 (T 3)

Ἀφ' οὗ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ ποιητῆς βιώσας ἔτη ΓΔΔΔΔΙΙ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ Κῦρος ἀνέβη, [ἔτη ΗΔΔΔΔΙΙΙ, ἄρχ]οντος Ἀθήνησι Καλλίου τοῦ ἑπρωτέρου.

From when Sophocles the poet, who had lived 92 years, died, and Cyrus went up, [143 years, the arch]on at Athens being Kallias the †first† [406/405].

131. Eusebius *Chronicles* Ol. 93.1 (408 B.C.E.) (T 6a)

Euripides apud Archelaum et Sofocles Athenis moritur.

Euripides dies at Archelaus' court [in Macedonia], and Sophocles at Athens.

132. Diodorus Siculus *Library* 13.103.4 (T 85)

περὶ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον ἐτελεύτησε Σοφοκλῆς, ὁ Σοφίλου, ποιητῆς τραγωδιῶν, ἔτη βιώσας ἐνενήκοτα, νίκας δ' ἔχων ὀκτωκαίδεκα.

About the same time [406/405], Sophocles, son of Sophilos, composer of tragedies, died, having eighteen victories.

133. [Lucian] *Macrobius* 24 (T 90)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τραγωδοποιὸς ῥᾶγα σταφυλῆς καταπιὼν ἀπεπνίγη πέντε καὶ ἐνενήκοντα ζήσας ἔτη.

Sophocles, composer of tragedies, choked to death while swallowing a grape at the age of ninety-five.

COMMENTARY

The Suda sets the year of Sophocles' birth in the seventy-third Olympiad (488–485 B.C.E.) which would have Sophocles in his eighty-third year at the oldest in 406/405, the year of his death. This date is too early for a man who lived to "extreme old age" (174). *The Suda's* number oz' should be amended to oa', the seventieth Olympiad (496–493).⁵⁹

According to the *Parian Marble* 56, Sophocles was twenty-eight years old in 469/468 B.C.E. when he won his first victory at the City Dionysia. Accordingly, he was born in the fourth year (497/496) of the seventieth Olympiad (500 B.C.E.). On the other hand, *Parian Marble* 64 says that Sophocles was ninety-two years at the time of his death in 406/405 B.C.E., an unshakable date in the life of Sophocles. Jacoby neatly reconciled the discrepancy by noting that *Parian Marble* 56 counts exclusively and 64 inclusively.⁶⁰ Both sections agree on 496/495 as the year of Sophocles' birth, and this date has become the standard.

The synchronism with Aeschylus and Euripides reported in the *Life* is mistaken. Sophocles was about twenty-nine years younger than Aeschylus (b. 525/524 B.C.E.) and eleven years older than Euripides, born about 485.

⁵⁹ Jacoby 1980.182.

⁶⁰ Jacoby 1980.181.

Note Five
Synchronicity with Socrates
(134-135)

134. Plato *Apology* 17 D

Νῦν ἐγὼ πρῶτον ἐπὶ δικαστήριον ἀναβέβηκα, ἔτη γεγονὼς ἑβδομήκοντα.

At this time I have come to the court for the first time, being in my seventieth year.

135. Plato *Crito* 52 E

Socrates is quoting the Laws:

“Ἄλλο τι οὖν,” ἂν φαίεν, “ἢ συνθήκας τὰς πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς καὶ ὁμολογίας παραβαίνεις, οὐχ ὑπὸ ἀνάγκης ὁμολογήσας οὐδὲ ἀπατηθεὶς οὐδὲ ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ ἀναγκασθεὶς βουλευσασθαι, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἔτεσιν ἑβδομήκοντα, ἐν οἷς ἐξῆν σοι ἀπιέναι, εἰ μὴ ἠρέσκομεν ἡμεῖς μηδὲ δίκαιαι ἐφαίνοντό σοι αἱ ὁμολογίαι εἶναι.”

“What else are you doing,” the Laws would say, “than breaking your covenant and agreements with us after agreeing upon them without any pressure or deception and under no duress to make a decision in a short time. You have had seventy years during which you could have left, had we not suited you or the agreements not seemed just to you.”

COMMENTARY

According to Plato, Socrates was seventy years old in 399 B.C.E. when he was indicted by Anytus and his cohorts. Socrates was thus born in 369 and was twenty-seven years, not seventeen as *The Suda* contends, younger than Sophocles. As often suggested, *The Suda's* number iz' should be amended to kz'.

Synchronism of this sort is a device of biographers to relate famous men in the absence of other evidence. The historical Sophocles and Socrates were probably acquainted with another; the circle of aristocrats was small. Plato's Socrates refers to Sophocles in the *Phaedrus* (268 C) and Sophocles' name comes up in conversation at the beginning of the *Republic* (329 C).

Note Six
Innovations in Drama
(136-144)

136. *Life of Sophocles* 4 (T 1)

Καὶ πολλὰ ἐκαινούργησεν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι, πρῶτον μὲν καταλύσας τὴν ὑπόκρισιν τοῦ ποιητοῦ διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν μικροφωνίαν (πάλαι γὰρ καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς ὑπεκρίνετο αὐτός), τοὺς δὲ χορευτὰς ποιήσας ἀντὶ β' ἰε' καὶ τὴν τρίτον ὑποκριτὴν ἐξεύρε.

Sophocles introduced many innovations in the contests. He was first to separate the role of actor from that of poet on account of his weak voice, for in olden times, the poet himself performed as actor. He increased the number of choristers from twelve to fifteen and invented the third actor.

137. Aristotle *Poetics* 1449 a 15 (T 95)

Τό τε τῶν ὑποκριτῶν πλῆθος ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς δύο πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος ἤγαγε καὶ τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ ἠλάττωσε καὶ τὸν λόγον πρωταγωνιστεῖν παρεσκεύασεν· τρεῖς δὲ καὶ σκηνογραφίαν Σοφοκλῆς.

Aeschylus was the first to take the number of actors from one to two and lessened the part of the chorus, making speech the first performer. Sophocles introduced three actors and scene-painting.

154 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

138. Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 3.56 (T 97)

Τὸ παλαιὸν ἐν τῇ τραγωδίᾳ πρότερον μὲν μόνος ὁ χορὸς διεδραμάτιζεν, ὕστερον δὲ Θέσπις ἕνα ὑποκριτὴν ἐξεῦρεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ διαναπαύεσθαι τὸν χορὸν, καὶ δεύτερον Αἰσχύλος, τὸν δὲ τρίτον Σοφοκλῆς καὶ συνεπλήρωσεν τὴν τραγωδίαν.

In antiquity, the chorus alone acted throughout the play; later, Thespis invented one actor in order to allow the chorus to rest. Aeschylus introduced a second actor, and Sophocles, a third one and brought tragedy to its full compliment.

139. *Life of Aeschylus* 15 (T 98)

Τὸν δὲ τρίτον ὑποκριτὴν αὐτὸς ἐξεῦρεν, ὡς δὲ Δικαίαρχος ὁ Μεσσηνίος, Σοφοκλῆς.

Aeschylus himself invented the third actor, but according to Dikaiarchos of Messana [fr.76 Wehrli], Sophocles did so.

140. *The Suda* tau 1012

Τριταγωνιστής: ἀπὸ Σοφοκλέους, ὃς πρῶτος ἐχρήσατο τρισὶν ὑποκριταῖς καὶ τῷ καλουμένῳ τριταγωνιστῇ.

Tritagonist: from Sophocles, who was first to use three actors and the so-called tritagonist.

141. *Life of Sophocles* 6 (T 1)

Σάτυρος δέ φησιν ὅτι καὶ τὴν καμπύλην βακτηρίαν αὐτὸς ἐπενόησε. φησὶ δὲ καὶ Ἴστρος τὰς λευκὰς κρηπίδας αὐτὸν ἐξευρηκέναι, αἷς ὑποδεσμεύονται οἳ τε ὑποκριταὶ καὶ οἱ χορευταί· καὶ πρὸς τὰς φύσεις αὐτῶν γράψαι τὰ δράματα· ταῖς δὲ Μούσαις θίασον ἐκ τῶν πεπαιδευμένων συναγαγεῖν.

Satyros says [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 3.161] that he designed the crooked staff himself, while according to Ister [*Die Fragmente der griecssshischen Historiker* 334 F 36], he invented white boots that the actors and choristers wore, and that he wrote plays with a view to the nature of the actors and that he organized a *thiasos* for the Muses from cultivated people.

142. Servius to Vergil *Eclogue* 8.10 (T 99)

Cothurnus autem calciamentum tragicum, cuius usum quidam Sophoclem primum scaenae intulisse volunt.

The cothurnus is the shoe of tragedy whose use some maintain Sophocles first introduced to the stage.

143. *Life of Sophocles* 23 (T 1)

Φησὶ δὲ Ἀριστόξενοσ ὡσ πρῶτοσ τῶν Ἀθήνηθεν ποιητῶν τὴν Φρυγίαν μελοποιίαν εἰσ τὰ ἴδια ἄσματα παρέλαβε καὶ τοῦ διθυραμβικοῦ τρόπου κατέμιξεν.

Aristoxenos [fr. 79 Wehrli] says that he was the first of poets from Athens to introduce Phrygian melody into his songs and mix in the dithyrambic style.

144. Themistius *Oratio* 26.316 D (T 96)

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ σεμνὴ τραγωδία μετὰ πάσης ὁμοῦ τῆς σκευῆς καὶ τοῦ χοροῦ καὶ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν παρελήλυθεν εἰς τὸ θέατρον; καὶ οὐ προσέχομεν Ἀριστοτέλει, ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ χορὸς εἰσιῶν ἦδεν εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς, Θέσπις δὲ πρόλογόν τε καὶ ῥῆσιν ἐξεῦρεν, Αἰσχύλος δὲ πρῶτον ὑποκριτὴν καὶ ὀκρίβαντας, τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων Σοφοκλέους ἀπελαύσαμεν καὶ Εὐριπίδου;

Has not stately tragedy along with all its equipment and chorus and actors come into the theater? Do we not heed Aristotle (137) that at first the chorus on entering sang to the gods, and that Thespis invented the prologue and set speech, and that Aeschylus, the third actor and the platform? And did we not benefit from more of such things from Sophocles and Euripides?

COMMENTARY

Ancient scholars held that tragedy developed incrementally until it attained its mature and final form. Their belief probably owes much to Aristotle's *Poetics* (e.g. 1449a 14–31). They were also interested in discovering what innovations were made and by whom and consulted books on the history of each genre and on inventions generally.⁶¹ In the event that the inventor was unknown, they were not above fabricating a name, usually that of a famous practitioner of the art. Diogenes Laertius, for instance, rejects Aristotle's attribution of the invention of the dialogue to the obscure Alexamenos of Styra or Teos in favor of Zeno the Eleatic (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 3.48). Satyros of Callais Pontica, the source for Sophocles' invention of crooked staff, composed his *Life of Euripides* by accepting whole cloth as factual. Aristophanes' view of Euripides in the *Thesmophoriazousae*. Ister of Cyrene undermines his own authority for Sophocles' invention of

⁶¹ Fairweather 264.

white boots for his choristers and actors by asserting that the tragedian was not an Athenian.

Most claims of these biographers cannot be verified or unequivocally rejected. Though devoid of value for the history of Sophocles, they contribute toward the ancient portrait of Sophocles as a tragedian, namely, by depicting him as an artist who not only produces the objects of his craft, dramas but also adds to the form of tragedy itself. He is a culture hero whose actions change the world by bringing tragedy to fruition.

Sophocles' invention of the third actor is more problematic in that it rests upon the authority of Aristotle. From another writer, the statement would be suspect: Thespis invented the actor, Aeschylus added a second, Sophocles added a third, and Euripides added none, because the number of actors in tragedy attained is *summa forma* with three. Aristotle authored studies on tragedy and the victories at the City Dionysia and Lenaia and deserves the benefit of the doubt. Sophocles would have added the actor during the period after his first victory in 468 and Aeschylus' use of the actor in the *Oresteia* of 458. In his *Antigone*, for example, Sophocles capitalizes on the exchange of dialogue allowed by the third actor to develop the character of Creon in dialogue with the terrified Watchman and defiant Antigone, and in *Electra* of Clytemnestra jubilant at the Pedagogus' news of Orestes' death that crushes Electra.

Aistoxenus seems a reliable source for Sophocles' introduction of Phrygian melodies because of the research conducted by Aristotle's school of which Aristoxenos was a prominent member (*The Suda* alpha 3927). Aristoxenos wrote extensively on music, biography, and history, accumulating an opus of 453 pieces according to the *The Suda*. One of these dealt with song writing (*melopoiia*) in four books.

Sophocles may have organized a *thiasos* or group of cultured men for the Muses. He was devoutly religious and, as the dinner party reported by Ion (10) shows, interested in discussion things literary. Lefkowitz demurs, however, pointing out that biographers who mainly consulted literary sources were more likely to have derived the “fact” from a representation in comedy or a dialogue.⁶²

⁶² Lefkowitz 1981.79.

Note Seven
Nickname "Bee"
(145-156)

145. *Life of Sophocles* 20 (T 1)

Καὶ ἄλλοι μὲν πολλοὶ μεμίμηνταὶ τινὰ τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν ἢ τῶν καθ' αὐτοῦς, μόνος δὲ Σοφοκλῆς ἀφ' ἑκάστου τὸ λαμπρὸν ἀπανθίζει· καθ' ὃ καὶ μέλιττα ἐλέγετο. ἤνεγκε δὲ τὰ μικτὰ· εὐκαιρίαν, γλυκύτητα, τόλμαν, ποικιλίαν.

Many others imitated one of their predecessors or contemporaries, but only Sophocles plucked the brilliance from each. For this he was said to be the Bee. He combined various elements, timing, sweetness, daring, and variety.

146. *Life of Sophocles* 22 (T 1)

Φησὶ δὲ Ἀριστοφάνης ὅτι "κηρὸς ἐπεκαθέζετο . . .", ἄλλη δὲ "Σοφοκλέους τοῦ μέλιτι τὸ στόμα κεχρισμένου."

Aristophanes [fr. 580 A Edmonds] says that "a honey comb sat on him . . ." and on another occasion (147), "Sophocles was anointed on the mouth with honey."

147. Aristophanes fr. 581 (1.540 Kock) (T 108)

Ὁ δ' αὖ Σοφοκλέους τοῦ μέλιτι κεχρισμένου ὥσπερ καδίσκου περιέλειχε τὸ στόμα.

He licked the mouth of the dear ballot box

160 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

as if it were Sophocles' smeared with honey

148. Flavius Philostratos *Imagines* 3.2 (T 108a)

Ὁ δὲ τῶν ἀηδόνων χορὸς καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὀρνέων μουσεῖα
σαφῶς ἡμῖν τὰ τοῦ μελιχροτάτου Σοφοκλέους ἐπὶ γλῶτταν
ἄγει·

πυκνόπτεροι δ'
εἴσω κατ' αὐτὸν εὐστομοῦσ' ἀηδόνες.

The chorus of nightingales and the melodious haunts of the other
birds clearly bring to our tongue the words of honey-sweet
Sophocles:

Thick-feathered
nightingales sing sweetly within this place (*Oedipus at
Colonus* 17–18).

149. Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.598 C

Ἄτθις δ' οἶα μέλισσα πολυπρήωνα Κολώνην
λείπουσ' ἐν τραγικαῖς ἤδε χοροστασίαις
Βάκχον καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα Θεωρίδος Ἐριγόνης τε
ἄς ποτε γηραιῷ Ζεὺς ἔπορεν Σοφοκλεῖ.

How the Attic bee, leaving Kolone of many ridges,
sang in many tragic choruses
of Bacchus and his passion for Theoris and for Erigone
whom once Zeus bestowed upon Sophocles in his old age.

150. Hesychius Milesius *de viris illustribus* 61 (T 109)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τραγικὸς μέλιττα ἐκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ ἠδύ.

Sophocles, the one of tragedy, was called Bee because of his sweetness.

151. Scholiast to Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* 17 (T 110)

Ἐκράτησε δὲ μέγਾਲως τῇ φράσει, ὥστε μέλισσαν αὐτὸν ἐκάλεσαν οἱ κωμικοί.

Sophocles greatly excelled in expression [or, turn of phrase] that the comic poets called him Bee.

152. Scholiast to Sophocles *Ajax* 1199 (T 111)

Sophocles, being the sweetest, reflected his own character in his songs whence he was also called Bee.

Ἡδιστος δὲ ὢν ὁ Σοφοκλῆς πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἦθος ἔκλινεν ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν· ὅθεν καὶ μέλιττα ἐκλήθη.

153. Scholiast Aristophanes *Wasps* 462 (T 112)

(Ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί' οὐ ῥαδίως οὕτως ἂν αὐτοὺς διέφυγες,
εἴπερ ἔτυχον τῶν μελῶν τῶν φιλοκλέους βεβρωκότες [*Wasps*
462—463])

ὡς τοῦ Φιλοκλέους ἀγρίου ὄντος ἐν τῇ μελοποιίᾳ. ὁ γὰρ Σοφοκλῆς ἠδύς· διὸ καὶ μέλιττα ἐκαλεῖτο.

162 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

(By Zeus, you wouldn't have gotten away from them so easily
if they had consumed the songs of Philokles)

since Philokles is savage in composing songs. For Sophocles is
sweet, and for this reason, he was called Bee.

154. Aristophanes *Peace* 530–532, 535–538 (T 113a)

Ταύτης δ' ὀπώρας [sc., ὄζει], ὑποδοχῆς, Διονυσίων,
αὐλῶν, τραγωδῶν, Σοφοκλέους μελῶν, κιχλῶν,
ἐπυλλίων Εὐριπίδου—

...

—κιττοῦ, τρυγοίπου, προβατίων βληχωμένων,
κόλπου γυναικῶν διατρεχουσῶν εἰς ἀγρόν,
δούλης μεθούσης, ἀνατετραμμένου χοῶς,
ἄλλων τε πολλῶν καγαθῶν.

Peace smells of the prime of life, parties, festivals of
Dionysus, flutes, tragedies, songs of Sophocles, thrushes,
and the itsy-bitsy verses of Euripides—

.....

—of ivy, straining new wine, lambs ableating,
breasts of women dashing across the fields,
a tipsy slave girl, and overturned wine jars,
and many other good things.

155. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Peace* 531 (T 113b)

Ἵτι ἡδέα τὰ μέλη Σοφοκλέους.

Because Sophocles' songs were sweet.

156. Photius *Bibliotheca* 101 b 4 (T 133)

εὐκρινουῖς δὲ καὶ καθαροῦ καὶ Ἀττικοῦ λόγου κανόνας καὶ στάθμας καὶ παράδειγμά φησιν ἄριστον Πλάτωνά τε καὶ Δημοσθένην . . . , τῶν μέντοι κωμωδῶν Ἀριστοφάνην . . . καὶ τῶν τραγικῶν Αἰσχύλον τὸν μεγαλοφωνότατον καὶ Σοφοκλέα τὸν γλυκὺν καὶ τὸν πάνσοφον Εὐριπίδην.

Phrynichus [in *Sophistike Proparaskeue*] gives as the standard and measure and paradigm of pure, uncorrupted Attic speech Plato and Demosthenes best . . . , moreover, of the comic poets, Aristophanes, . . . and of the tragedians Aeschylus the loudest, and Sophocles as sweet, and Euripides as all-wise.

COMMENTARY

The author of the *Life of Sophocles* interprets the Bee as referring to Sophocles' eclecticism in borrowing from others as a bee takes pollen from many flowers.

W. B. Stanford points out how skilled the Greeks were in "describing sounds in terms of other sense-experiences by means of what are now called synaesthetic or intersensal metaphors." A favourite analogue for pleasant-sounding voices," Stanford notes, "was honey, meli."⁶³ In pronouncing the word, Greeks replicated the muscle movements of tasting something sweet.⁶⁴ Homer draws upon "this kind of kinaesthetic mimesis" to introduce Nestor whose function in the *Iliad* derives from his speech and the soothing-effect it should, but does not always, have on the hot-headed youths around him: "The clear-sweet speaker of the men of Pylos from whose tongue flows a voice sweeter than honey"

⁶³ Stanford 34.

⁶⁴ Stanford 109.

164 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

(*Iliad* 1.248–249). With *audê* (voice), Homer stresses the sounds, that is, the combinations of syllables in words as opposed to the meaning of the words. They flow on the Nestor's voice and charm the listener. Similarly, the Sirens entrance whoever listens to them with "their clear song" (Homer *Odyssey* 12.44) and take away his homecoming. It is the sound of the words, not their meanings which vary with the occasion, that ensnares the listener. Sophocles' *lexis*, his way of putting words together, flowed smoothly and clearly without the prickly burrs of discordant sounds and so mesmerized the audience.

Poets were said to have honey-sweet lips or mouth by virtue of their craft. The poet Euripides, accused of bad breath, retorted: "Hush, my mouth is sweeter than honey and the Sirens" (*Life of Euripides* 87–88). Sweetness, then, is independent of the poet's particular style.

Note Eight
A Textual Problem

καὶ αὐτὸς ἤρξε τοῦ δραῖμα πρὸς δραῖμα ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ μὴ
στρατολογεῖσθαι.

στρατολογεῖσθαι AVM	στρατολογία G
στρατολογία B	τετραλογία Scaliger

He himself began competing with a play against a play but in not
conducting the levy

As Pickard-Cambridge points out, this sentence does not mean
that Sophocles presented one play at the festival of the City
Dionysia where tragedians produced plays in groups of four.⁶⁵

What it does mean, however, is unclear. It seems to be a criticism
of Sophocles as a general by asserting that he would rather
compete as a poet in the dramatic contests than conduct the duties
of a general in recruitment and calling citizens for military service.
The jibe could be historical and, in any case concurs with Pericles'
judgment (and apparently Sophocles' own) concerning his
ignorance in military matters (10).

Scaliger (1568) wrote τετραλογία in the margin of his text of
Sophocles, but Meursius⁶⁶ first formally suggested emending
στρατολογεῖσθαι with τετραλογία: "Sophocles began
competing play by play but not by a tetralogy." With the
emendation, the sentence states that Sophocles began the practice
of competing with separate plays complete in themselves instead

⁶⁵ Pickard-Cambridge 81 note 3.

⁶⁶ *Rheinisches Museum* 2 (1843): 196.

of plays united by the common theme of the tetralogical format. Evidence for this development, supported *ex silentio* by the plays themselves, rests shakily on this sentence and its emendation.

The corruption of the readily understood τετραλογία into στρατολογεῖσθαι boggles the imagination. The term τετραλογία, originally designating a group of four speeches on a single case, is not known to have been used of tragedies until the Alexandrine period. The emendation not only removes the zest of the manuscript reading; it also encounters a historical difficulty. In 472 B.C.E., Aeschylus presented the *Persians*, an individual play having a historical subject, along with three others, *Phineus*, *Glaukos of Potnia*, and *Prometheus* whose mythological topics were unrelated to it or to one another.

Note Nine
Other Writing
(157-164)

COMMENTARY

The Suda reports that Sophocles “wrote . . . an account in prose of the chorus in rivalry with Thespis and Choirilos.” Wolf Aly points out that “chorus” in the title of Sophocles’ book *On the Chorus* is an “official term” for tragedy.⁶⁷ Sophocles’ treatise would have covered all aspects of tragedy. It is often thought to be the source for Sophocles’ pronouncements on his style such as that paraphrased by Plutarch in *Moralia* 79 B (107). Nothing can be said with certainty about the content of this work or even that Sophocles composed such a work.

157. Hephaestion *Enchiridion* 1.5: *de correptione interna* [on internal shortening]

Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἔπεσι σπανιώτερον, οὕτως ὥστε τὸ τοῦ Ἀρχελάου ὄνομα Σοφοκλῆς ἐν ταῖς ἐλεγείαις οὐκ ᾔετο ἐγχωρεῖν οὔτε εἰς ἔπος οὔτε εἰς ἐλεγεῖον. φησὶ γοῦν·

Ἀρχέλεως· ἦν γὰρ σύμμετρον ᾧδε λέγειν.

[The common syllable *is*] is rarer in dactylic hexameters, so that Sophocles in his elegies did not think the name of Archelāos should be admitted either for hexameter or elegeion. At any rate, he says:

of Archeleōs, for it was in good measure to say his name this way.

⁶⁷ Aly 93 n. 95a.

COMMENTARY

A common syllable is one whose vowel may be made either long or short. For a preceding long syllable to become short, it must be in the same word. Sophocles preferred that the name be pronounced Archeleōs rather than Archelāos, following the Attic tendency to shorten vowels internally.

158. Harpocration *Lexicon of the Ten Attic Orators* 60-61 (Dindorf)

“Ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείκνυσι”· Δημοσθένης προοιμίῳις δημηγορικοῖς. Σοφοκλῆς μὲν οὖν ἐν ἐλεγείαις Σόλωνός φησιν αὐτὸ εἶναι ἀπόφθεγμα, Θεόφραστος δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ παροιμιῶν καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης Βίαντος.

“Ruling shows a man”: Demosthenes relates this proverb in *Proems to Public Speaking* [48.2]. Sophocles says in his elegies that this is a saying of Solon. Theophrastus says the same in *On Proverbs*, and Aristotle that it belongs to Bias [*Nicomachean Ethics* 1130 a 1).

159. Erotianus *Collection of a Glossary of Hippocrates* chi 2

Χάριτες· αἱ χαραί, ὡς καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἐν ἐλεγείᾳ μέμνηται.

Charites [Graces]: the Charai as Sophocles also mentions in an elegy.

COMMENTARY

Sophocles' elegies did not fare well in memory. The sources did not necessarily read the works themselves.

160. Inscriptiones Graecae II² 4510. Text that of James H. Oliver, 112.

Σοφοκλέους [Παι]άν

[Φλεγύα] κούρα περιώνυμε, μάτερ ἀλεξιπό[ν]ο[οἰ] θεοῦ,
 [.] \ς ἀκειρεκόμασ~ [·] εναρξομαι [ὔμ]νον
 ἐγερσιβόαν
 [----]νεσι[ν] [----] ~ [. . .]/\[.] αν[. . .] οβρα
 [-----] συρίγμασι μιγνύ[μεν]ον
 [-----]σι Κεκροπιδῶν [έπ]ιτάρροθον
 [-----] μόλοις τὸν [χρυσο]κόμα[ν] (?)
 [-----]ν αὐτόν [-----]
 [-----]
 [-----]
 [-----] Ὀλύ]μπιον
 lacuna of six lines
 [-----] ιερα

Sophocles' Paeon

Much-renowned daughter of Phlegyas, mother of the god
 who wards off pain
 [Apollo] of the uncut hair. I shall begin my loud-
 cried hymn

 ----- -mingled with pipes
 ----- -helper of the sons of Kekrops
 ----- may you come the golden-
 haired
 [-----]n him [-----]
 [-----]
 [-----]
 [-----] Oly]mpian. . . .

170 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

161. Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 3.17 (T 73a)

Οἱ δὲ ἤδον ᾠδὴν, ὅποῖος ὁ παιᾶν ὁ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους, ὃν Ἀθήνησι τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ ᾄδουσιν.

[The Indians] sang a song like the paeon of Sophocles which they sing at Athens for Asclepius.

162. Philostratos, *Imagines* 13

Ἀσκληπιὸς δὲ, οἶμαι, οὗτος ἐγγὺς παιᾶνά που παρεγγυῶν γράφειν καὶ κλυτομήτης οὐκ ἀπαξιῶν παρὰ σοῦ ἀκοῦσαι βλέμμα τε αὐτοῦ πρὸς σὲ φαιδρότητι μεμιγμένον τὰς παρὰ <σοὶ> μικρὸν ὕστερον ἐπιχενώσεις αἰνίττεται.

Aesclepius, I think, is nearby, urging you to write a paeon. Though renowned for skill, he does not disdain to hear a paeon from you. His gaze upon you, mingled with joy, hints at the hospitable reception soon to come in your house.

163. [Lucian] *Praise of Demosthenes* 27 (T 73b)

Οὐδὲ γὰρ τὰσκληπιῷ μεῖον τι γίγνεται τῆς τιμῆς, εἰ μὴ τῶν προσιόντων αὐτῶν ποιησάντων ὁ παιᾶν, ἀλλ' Ἰσοδήμου τοῦ Τροιζηνίου ἢ Σοφοκλέους ᾄδεται.

No less honor accrues to Asclepius if the paian is not that of his worshippers' making but one of Troezenian Isodemos or Sophocles is sung.

COMMENTARY

The word *paeon* refers not only to the hymn to a god but to the dance performed for the deity and to the deity himself. As a hymn, the paeon was metrical in form and contained the epithets and names of the god or goddess addressee and a narrative of the deity's deeds, ending with a short prayer. Originally offered to Apollo in his capacity as Healer, the paeon was extended to others, particularly, Asclepius and those associated with him.

A fragment of a paeon attributed to Sophocles was found in 1932 in the Athenian agora, engraved on Pentelic marble. The stone came from a monument erected in the first half of the third century C.E. by Q. Staius Glaucus in honor of his grandfather, Q. Staius Sarapion, a descendant of a prominent family in Roman Athens. The monument "originally consisted of a large triangular base surmounted by an overlapping triangular cap which supported a tripod, not centered on the monument but located toward the front as appears from the cuttings on the stone."⁶⁸ The monument was inscribed on the front with a paeon to Asclepius written by Sarapion, on the right side with a catalogue of the singers who sang his paeon in his day, and on the left with a hymn entitled "Sophocles' Paian." According to *The Suda*, Sophocles wrote more than one paeon. The questions arise whether this is a copy of the paeon to Asclepius mentioned in the sources and was it *still* in use in the third century C.E.

According to Flavius Philostratos (b. ca. 170 C.E.), Sophocles' paeon was sung at Athens in the late second and early third centuries. His statement, however, does not justify the inference that the hymn had been part of the rites of Asclepius from Sophocles' time; it could have been revived as part of the contemporary interest in antiquity. Philostratus Lemnius, son-in-

⁶⁸ Oliver 92.

law of Flavius, implies that Sophocles called Asclepius *klytomêtis*, “renowned for cunning.” The letters ΟΠΛΑΑΝΑΛΙΣΟΔΗΜΟΥ in 163 have been recovered as ὁ παιάν ἀλλ’ Ἴσοδήμου. By reading ἦ (or) instead of the ligature for καὶ (and), the problem of explaining the cooperation between Sophocles and an obscure Troezenian vanishes.⁶⁹ Pseudo-Lucian testifies that two paeans were notable in the second century C.E. and chides modern writers against rivaling the old masters with their own pedestrian attempts

James H. Oliver, author of the fundamental study of Sarapion’s monument, suggests that Philostratos’ reference to *klytomêtis* indicates that he had in mind, not the paeon on Sarapion’s monument, but another paeon that was famous at the time. Philostratos, it seems, remembered the adjective used of Apollo in this hymn and applied it to Asclepius who, in turn, brought Sophocles to mind as a famous author of paeans to, and devotee of, Asclepius.⁷⁰ Extant in four copies, the hymn containing *klytomêtis* is best known from the version found at Erythrae and published by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf.⁷¹ Glaucus would have invited an unsavory comparison, Oliver assumes, had he inscribed next to his grandfather’s paeon a famous and time-honored paeon by the immortal Sophocles.⁷² Rather, Oliver surmises from another Athenian monument of the period that

⁶⁹ Oliver 113–114.

⁷⁰ Oliver 121–122.

⁷¹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorf with P. Jacobsthal, “Nordionische Steine” in *Abhandlungen d. königl. preuß. Akad. d. Wissensch.* 1909. For a text and translation, see Oliver 116–117.

⁷² Oliver 119.

contains three hymns, each to a different addressee, namely, Asclepius, Hygieia, and Telesphoros,⁷³ that Glaucus inscribed two paeans on the Sarapion monument, the honoree's to Asclepius and a second paean written by someone else for another figure. The opening address,

Sing, youths, Paeon renowned for cunning,
far-darting son of Leto, ie Paeon,
who produced a great joy for mortals,
after mingling in intercourse with Koronis in the Phlegyian land,
ie Paeon, Asclepius,
spirit most renowned, ie Paean,

points to Koronois, mother of Asclepius (*Homeric Hymn* 16.1–4), as the addressee. According to Pindar (*Pythian Ode* 3.8–46), Koronis, while pregnant with Apollo's seed, lies with the Arcadian Ischys, and for this act, Apollo dispatches Artemis to slay her. Unwilling for his son to perish for his mother's folly, Apollo rescues him from the funeral pyre and entrusts him to Cheiron to rear and educate in healing.

Glaucus may have rightly attributed to Sophocles the paean to Koronis, but, as Philostratus' confusion indicates, Sophocles' devotion to Asclepius was legendary. It made him an apt author for a paean to the hero's mother, especially one for an elaborate and expensive monument.

164. Plutarch *Moralia* 785 B (T 163)

Τουτὶ δ' ὁμολογουμένως Σοφοκλέους ἐστὶ τὸ ἐπιγραμμάτιον·

⁷³ *Inscriptiones Graecae* II² 4533; Oliver 119.

174 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

ὠδὴν Ἡροδότῳ τεῦξεν Σοφοκλῆς ἐτέων ὦν
πέντ' ἐπὶ πεντήκοντα.

This by common consent is an epigram of Sophocles:

Sophocles at fifty-five years wrote an ode for Herodotus.

COMMENTARY

Sophocles states that he was fifty-five when he wrote his poem for Herodotus. The poem, it has been suggested,⁷⁴ may have been a *propemptikon* or poem for a friend who was about to embark on a voyage, perhaps, to Thurii. The two became friends during Herodotus' stay in Athens, the fruits of which can be traced in their works. *Electra* 417–423,

There is a story that she [Clytemnestra] saw father's,
yours and mine, second coming into the light. Then,
he took the scepter that he used to carry and Aegisthus
now does and fixed it at the hearth. From it grew a
burgeoning shoot by which all the land of the Mycenaeans
became shaded,

is taken to recall Herodotus 1.108.1:

When Mandane had been married to Cambyses for a year,
Astyages had another dream. A vine seemed to grow from
his daughter's genitals, and the vine took hold of all Asia.

There are other intertextualities (e. g., *Oedipus at Colonus* 337–341 and Herodotus 2.35; *Oedipus at Colonus* 698 and Herodotus 8.55; *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1528–1530 and Herodotus 1.32.7), but the most famous, or notorious, one is that between *Antigone* 905–912:

⁷⁴ Schmid and Stålin 318.

Not even if I were the mother of children,
not if my husband were dead and rotting on me,
would I take up this task in violence of the citizens.
For the sake of what law⁶⁵ do I say this?
A husband dead, there would be another for me,
and a child from another man, if I lost this one,
but with mother and father both hidden in the house of
Hades, there is no brother who would be produced, ever.
I honored you [Polyneikes] by such a law;

and Herodotus 3.119.4–5, in which Itaphernes' wife responds to Dareios' offer: "Woman, King Dareios grants that you may save the one of your arrested kinsmen whom you wish" with:

If the king gives me the life of one, I choose of them all my brother. Dareios pondered her answer and amazed by what she said, sent a messenger and asked: "Woman, the king asks you by what opinion do you abandon your husband and children and choose him to survive who is more distant than your children and less dear than your husband." She replied: "King, there may be another husband for me, and if heaven complies, other children, if I should lose these. But with my father and mother no longer living, there would not be another brother for me. With this opinion I said what I said."

Those who fervently crave to dagger the passage as spurious are thwarted by its inclusion in Aristotle's text of the *Antigone* (*Rhetoric* 3.8.9, quoting lines 911 and 912). Sophocles, although he borrowed from Herodotus, thoroughly worked the story into the warp of his play.⁶⁶ These correspondences speak to the closeness

65. Also "custom."

66. Murnaghan 1986; Tyrrell and Bennett 112–118.

176 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

of the men's friendship and their shared views of the world and religion, especially oracles.



Note Ten
Son and Grandson
(165–184)

A. Son, Iophon (165–173)

165. *Life of Sophocles* 13 (T 1)

Ἔχων γὰρ ἐκ μὲν Νικοστράτης Ἰοφῶντα, ἐκ δὲ Θεωρίδος
Σικυωνίας Αῤῥίστωνα, τὸν ἐκ τούτου γενόμενον παῖδα
Σοφοκλέα τοῦνομα πλέον ἔστεργε.

Sophocles had a son, Iophon, by Nikostrate, and another, Ariston, by Theoris of Sikyon. Sophocles loved the son of Ariston, also called Sophocles, more.

166. Aristophanes *Frogs* 71-79 (T 101)

Δι. δέομαι ποιητοῦ δεξιῶ.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐκέτ' εἰσίν, οἱ δ' ὄντες κακοί.

Ηρ. τί δ'; οὐκ Ἰοφῶν ζῆ;

Δι. τοῦτο γὰρ τοι καὶ μόνον

ἔτ' ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἄρα·
οὐ γὰρ σάφ' οἶδ' οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦθ' ὅπως ἔχει.

Ηρ. εἶτ' οὐ Σοφοκλέα πρότερον ἀντ' Εὐριπίδου
μέλλεις ἀνάγειν, εἶπερ γ' ἐκεῖθεν δεῖ σ' ἄγειν;

Δι. οὐ, πρὶν γ' ἂν Ἰοφῶντ', ἀπολαβῶν αὐτὸν μόνον,
ἄνευ Σοφοκλέους ὅ τι ποιεῖ κωδωνίσω.

178 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

κάλλως ὁ μὲν γ' Εὐριπίδης πανοῦργος ὦν
κἄν ξυναποδοῦναι δεῦρ' ἐπιχειρήσειέ μοι.
ὁ δ' εὐκόλος μὲν ἐντάδ', εὐκόλος δ' ἐκεῖ.

Dionysus: I need a clever poet.

“For some are not, and those that are are bad.”

Herakles: What's this? Is not Iophon alive?

Dionysus: Yes, this is the only good thing left, if it is good.

I don't know for sure whether it's a good thing.

Herakles: You don't intend to bring up Sophocles if you must
bring someone up from there? He ranks before
Euripides.

Dionysus: No, not until I take Iophon by himself,
without Sophocles, and test the ring of his poetry.

167. Scholiast on Aristophanes *Frogs* 73 (T 64)

υἱὸς Σοφοκλέους ὁ Ἰοφῶν. ἠγωνίσαστο δὲ καὶ ἐνίκησε λαμπρῶς
ἔτι ζῶντος τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ.

Iophon was the son of Sophocles. Iophon competed and won
brilliantly while his father was still alive.

168. Scholiast on Aristophanes *Frogs* 78 (T 16)

Νικοστράτης δὲ υἱὸς ἦν. φασὶ δὲ ὅτι καὶ Ἀρίστων τοῦ
Σοφοκλέους νόθος υἱὸς ἐγγεγόνει ἔκ τινος Θεωρίδος Σικυωνίας.

Iophon was the son of Nikostrate. They say that Ariston was the
illegitimate son of Sophocles by Theoris of Sikyon.

169. Scholiast on Aristophanes *Frogs* 78 (T 65)

Κωμωδεῖται γὰρ ὁ Ἰοφῶν ὁ υἱὸς Σοφοκλέους ὡς τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς λέγων. οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς τραγωδίαις ἐπιγράφεσθαι κωμωδεῖται, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ καὶ ψυχρὸς καὶ μακρὸς εἶναι.

Iophon, son of Sophocles, was satirized for saying that his father's works were his own. Otherwise. Not only was he satirized for inscribing his name on his father's tragedies but for also being cold-hearted and tedious.

170. *The Suda* iota 451 (T 17)

Ἰοφῶν, Ἀθηναῖος, τραγικός, υἱὸς Σοφοκλέους τοῦ τραγικοῦ γνήσιος ἀπὸ Νικοστράτης· γέγονε δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ νόθος υἱὸς Ἀρίστων ἀπὸ Θεοδωρίδος Σικυωνίας. δράματα δὲ Ἰοφῶν ἐδίδαξε ν', ὧν ἔστιν Ἀχιλλεύς, Τήλεφος, Ἀκταίων, Ἰλίου πέρσις, Δεξαμενός, Βάκχαι, Πενθεύς, καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς Σοφοκλέους.

Iophon, an Athenian, tragedian, legitimate son of Sophocles the tragedian by Nikostrate. A bastard son, Ariston, was also born to Sophocles by Theodoris of Sikyon. Iophon produced 50 dramas, among which are *Achilles*, *Telephos*, *Aktaion*, *Sack of Iliion*, *Dexamenos*, *Bacchai*, *Pentheus*, and some others with his father, Sophocles.

171. *Argumentum* II to Euripides *Hippolytus*

Ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Ἐπαμείνονος ἄρχοντος Ὀλυμπιάδι πζ' ἔτει δ'. πρῶτος Εὐριπίδης, δεύτερος Ἰοφῶν, τρίτος Ἴων.

180 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Hippolytus was produced during the archonship of Epameinon in the fourth year of the eighty-seventh Olympiad [429/428]. Euripides was first, Iophon second, and Ion third.

172. *Life of Sophocles* 11 (T 1)

Ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ἄλωνος ἱερωσύνην, ὃς ἦρως μετὰ Ἀσκληπιοῦ παρὰ Χείρωνι . . . ἰδρυνθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰοφῶντος τοῦ υἱοῦ μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν.

Sophocles also held the priesthood of Halon, a hero who with Asclepius at the side of Cheiron . . . founded after his father's death by his son, Iophon.

173. Valerius Maximus *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri* 8.7 ext. 12 (T 168)

Sophocles quoque gloriosum cum rerum natura certamen habuit, tam benigne mirifica ille opera sua exhibendo quam illa operibus eius tempora liberaliter sumministrando: prope enim centesimum annum attigit, sub ipsum transitum ad mortem Oedipode ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ scripto, qua sola fabula omnium eiusdem studi poetarum praeripere gloriam potuit. idque ignotum esse posteris filius Sophoclis Iophon noluit, sepulcro patris quae retuli insculpendo.

Sophocles also waged a glorious contest with the Nature of Things in that he produced generously his magnificent works and Nature liberally furnished the time for his works: for he nearly reached his hundredth year, when at the very verge of the transition to death, he wrote his *Oedipus at Colonus*, a play which by itself snatched the glory away from all those poets who practiced his

craft. His son, Iophon, did not wish for this to go unknown and engraved on his father's tomb what I have reported.

COMMENTARY

Sophocles had a son, Iophon, by the Athenian Nikostrate, and Iophon had a son, Sophocles. Both Iophon and the younger Sophocles became tragedians and presented plays at the City Dionysia. In 401 B.C.E., Sophocles produced his late grandfather's *Oedipus at Colonus*. This remains all that can be said with confidence about Sophocles' family.

Some authorities have accepted the historicity of a second son, Ariston, by the Sikyonian hetaira Theoris.⁷⁵ Ariston was supposedly born to an elder Sophocles, and since his mother was a foreigner, could not have been a citizen himself. The younger Sophocles is considered Ariston's son. A son born late in life to an elderly man is not impossible, but the story of Ariston turns on Sophocles' age. To speculate, the younger Sophocles was, let us say, twenty-five when he produced his grandfather's *Oedipus at Colonus* in 401; he would have been born in 426. If his father Ariston were twenty-five years at the time of his son's birth, he would have been born in 451, when his father Sophocles was in his mid-forties, years from the threshold of old age. Without an aged Sophocles, the story loses its *raison d'être*, and Ariston some, if not all, of his historicity.

There was talk that Iophon depended upon this father and passed off his father's work as his own. It is the kind of defamation favored by comedians, and Aristophanes who probably knew

⁷⁵ v. Blumenthal 1042; Schmid-Stählin 321; Lesky 275. On the other hand, Webster insists that "The only members of the Sophocles' family for whom there is any evidence are Iophon and Iophon's son the younger Sophocles" (15).

182 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

better was not above any invective (16–19). Iophon appears to have won in 435,⁷⁶ placed second in 428, and produced some fifty plays. Concerning his relations with his father at the end of Sophocles' life, Webster observes that Aristophanes' public admission that Dionysus "wants to see what Iophon can do without his father . . . proves that father and son were working happily together till the end."⁷⁷

B. The Lawsuit (174–179)

174. Cicero *On Old Age* 22 (T 81)

Sophocles ad summam senectutem tragoedias fecit. quod propter studium cum rem negligere familiarem videretur, a filiis in iudicium vocatus est, ut quem ad modum nostro more male rem gerentibus patribus bonis interdici solet, sic illum quasi desipientem a re familiari removerent iudices. tum senex dicitur eam fabulam quam in manibus habebat et proxime scripserat, Oedipum Coloneum, recitasse iudicibus quaesisseque num illud carmen desipientis videretur, quo recitato sententiis iudicum est liberatus.

Sophocles composed tragedies until extreme old age. Because of this pursuit, he seemed to neglect his family's affairs and was summoned into court by his sons so that the judges could remove him from his family estate for incompetence. In much the same

⁷⁶ *Inscriptiones Graecae* II² 2318: Ἰοφῶν ἐ[δίδασκειν] (Iophon produced). For the inscription, see Pickard-Cambridge 105.

⁷⁷ Webster 15.

way, in our custom fathers who were managing the family estate poorly are wont to be debarred from their property. Then the old man is said to have read aloud to the judges that play which he held in his hands and which he had written most recently, *Oedipus Colonus*, and asked them whether it seem to be the song of an incompetent. After it was read aloud, Sophocles was acquitted by the decision of the judges.

175. Plutarch *Moralia* 785 A (T 82)

Σοφοκλῆς δὲ λέγεται μὲν ὑπὸ πολλῶν παρανοίας δίκην φεύγων ἀναγνῶναι τὴν ἐν Οἰδίποδι τῷ ἐπὶ Κολωνοῦ πάροδον, ἣς ἔστι ἀρχή·

Εὐίππου, ξένε, τᾶσδε χώ-
ρας ἴκου τὰ κράτιστα γᾶς ἔπαυλα,
τὸν ἀργῆτα Κολωνόν, ἔνθ'
ἀ λίγεια μινύρεται
θαμίζουσα μάλιστ' ἀη-
δῶν χλωραῖς ὑπὸ βάσσαις,

θαυμαστοῦ δὲ τοῦ μέλους φανέντος ὥσπερ ἐκ θεάτρου τοῦ δικαστηρίου προπεμφθῆναι μετὰ κρότου καὶ βοῆς τῶν παρόντων.

Many say that Sophocles, while being prosecuted for senility, read the ode of *Oedipus at Colonus* whose beginning is:

You have come, stranger, to the best place to live
in this land far-famed for its horses,
white Colonus, where
the melodious nightingale
ever sings, sheltered

184 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

by verdant valleys [668–673].

Because the song seemed marvelous, he was escorted from the court as if from the theater amid the applause and cries of those present.

176. Apuleius *Apology* 37 (T 83)

Sophocles poeta Euripidi aemulus et superstes—vixit enim ad extremam senectam—cum igitur accusaretur a filio suomet dementiae, quasi iam per aetatem desiperet, protulisse dicitur Coloneum suam, peregreiam tragoediarum, quam forte tum in eo tempore conscribebat, eam iudicibus legisse nec quicquam amplius pro defensione sua addidisse, nisi ut audacter dementiae condemnarent, si carmina senis displicerent. ibi ego comperior omnis iudices tanto poetae adsurrexisse, miris laudibus eum tulisse ob argumenti sollertiam et coturnum facundiae, nec ita multum omnis afuisse quin accusatorem potius dementiae condemnarent.

The poet Sophocles, rival and survivor of Euripides, for he lived to extreme old age, when he was accused by his very own son of senility, as if he were by that time foolish because of his age, is said to have brought forth his *Colonus*, a superb tragedy, which he happened to be writing at the time, and read it to the judges and did not add anything more as a defense except to say boldly that they were to convict him of senility if the poems of the old man displeased them. I understand that all the judges rose to their feet before such a great poet and, amid marvelous praise, bore him on their shoulders because of the ingenuity of the plot and tragic quality of the language. I also understand that the all judges were not far from condemning the prosecutor of senility.

177. [Lucian] *Macrobius* 24 (T 84)

Οὗτος ὑπὸ Ἰοφῶντος τοῦ υἱέος ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ βίου παρανοίας κρινόμενος ἀνέγνω τοῖς δικασταῖς Οἰδίπουν τὸν ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ, ἐπιδεικνύμενος διὰ τοῦ δράματος ὅπως τὸν νοῦν ὑγιαίνει, ὡς τοὺς δικαστὰς τὸν μὲν ὑπερθαυμάσαι, καταψηφίσασθαι δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ μανίαν.

Sophocles, brought to trial on a charge of senility by his son Iophon at the end of his life, read his *Oedipus at Colonus* to the judges, showing them through the drama that he was of healthy mind, so that the judges were very impressed and convicted his son of madness.

178. Libanius *Oration* 4.3 (T 84a)

Τί δεῖ . . . νομίζειν τὸ γῆρας ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ληρεῖν κομίζειν; ἢ σὺ τολμήσεις εἰπεῖν ὡς ἐλήρει μὲν Πλάτων, ἐλήρει δὲ Ἰσοκράτης, ἐλήρει δὲ Σοφοκλῆς;

Why it is necessary to think that old age in itself implies being foolish? Or will you be so bold as to say that Plato was foolish, that Isocrates was foolish, that Sophocles was foolish?

179. *Life of Sophocles* 13 (T 1)

Φέρεται δὲ καὶ παρὰ πολλοῖς ἢ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Ἰοφῶντα γενομένη αὐτῷ δίκη. ἔχων γὰρ ἐκ μὲν Νικοστράτης Ἰοφῶντα, ἐκ δὲ Θεωρίδος Σικυωνίας Αῤῥίστωνα, τὸν ἐκ τούτου γενόμενον παῖδα Σοφοκλέα τοῦνομα πλέον ἔστεργε. καὶ ποτε † ἐν δράματι† εἰσήγαγε * * * τὸν Ἰοφῶντα αὐτῷ φθονοῦντα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς φράτορας ἐγκαλοῦντα τῷ πατρὶ ὡς ὑπὸ γῆρας

παραφρονούντι· οί δὲ τῷ Ἰοφῶντι ἐπετίμησαν. Σάτυρος δὲ φησιν αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν “εἰ μὲν εἰμι Σοφοκλῆς , οὐ παραφρονῶ· εἰ δὲ παραφροντῶ, οὐκ εἰμι Σοφοκλῆς,” καὶ τότε τὸν Οἰδίποδα παραναγνῶναι.

The law-suit against his son Iophon is reported by many. Sophocles had a son, Iophon, by Nikostrate, and another, Ariston, by Theoris of Sikyon. Sophocles loved the son of Ariston, also called Sophocles, more. At one point Sophocles portrayed Iophon in a play† . . . as envying him and bringing an action against him before the phratry brothers for mental incompetence due to old age. The brothers fined Iophon. Satyros [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 3.162] says that Sophocles said, “If I am Sophocles, I am not incompetent. If I am incompetent, I am not Sophocles,” and then he read from the *Oedipus*.

COMMENTARY

Iophon’s lawsuit against his elderly father for incompetence surely derives from the conflict between Oedipus and his sons in the *Oedipus at Colonus*. Nor is credible that Sophocles depicted Iophon in a tragedy. The source of the lawsuit, Satryos, was given to finding biography in the fantasies of comedians. Sophocles’ pronouncement to his phratry brothers, “If I am Sophocles, I am not incompetent. If I am incompetent, I am not Sophocles,” “has the ring of the Old Comedy.”⁷⁸ The whole cast of Sophocles’ family, real and fictitious, apparently appeared in the farce that is modeled after familial disputes over property.

⁷⁸ Jebb xli.

C. Grandson, Sophocles (180–184)

180. *Life of Sophocles* 13 (T 1)

ἔχων γὰρ ἐκ μὲν Νικοστράτης Ἰοφῶντα, ἐκ δὲ
Θεωρίδος Σικυωνίας Ἀρίστωνα, τὸν ἐκ τούτου
γενόμενον παῖδα Σοφοκλέα τοῦνομα πλέον
ἔστεργε.

Sophocles had a son, Iophon, by Nikostrate, and another, Ariston, by Theoris of Sikyon. Sophocles loved the son of Ariston, also called Sophocles, more.

181. Hesychius *Synagoge* θ 446 (T 76)

Θεωρίς· κύριον ὄνομα. καὶ θεωρία. καὶ ἡ Σικυωνία τὸ γένος,
<Σοφοκλέους> ἐρωμένη.

Theoris: proper noun. Also a viewing. A woman, Sikyonian by birth, Sophocles' lover.

182. Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 13.592 A (T 77)

Σοφοκλῆς δ' ὁ τραγωδιοποιὸς ἤδη γέροντων ἦράσθη Θεωρίδος
τῆς ἐταίρας. ἰκετεύων οὖν τὴν Ἀφροδίτην φησὶν·
κλυθὶ μὲν εὐχομένου, κουροτρόφε, δὸς δὲ γυναῖκα
τήνδε νέων μὲν ἀναίνεσθαι φιλότητα καὶ εὐνήν,
ἢ δ' ἐπιτερπέσθω πολιοκροτάφοισι γέρουσιν,
ὧν ἰσχὺς μὲν ἀπήμβλυνται, θυμὸς δὲ μενοινᾷ.

ταῦτα μὲν ἔστιν ἐκ τῶν εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀναφερομένων. τῆς δὲ
Θεωρίδος μνημονεύει λέγων ἔν τινι στασίμῳ οὕτως· “φίλη γὰρ

188 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

ἡ Θεωρίς.” ἐπὶ δὲ δυσμαῖς ὧν τοῦ βίου, ὡς φησὶν Ἡγήσανδρος, Ἀρχίππην ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἑταίραν καὶ τοῦ βίου κληρονόμον κατέλιπεν. ὅτε δὲ γηραίῳ ὄντι τῷ Σοφοκλεῖ συνῆν ἡ Ἀρχίππη, ὁ πρότερος αὐτῆς ἐραστὴς Σμικρίνης ἐρωτώμενος ὑπὸ τινος τί πράττει Ἀρχίππη, χαριέντως ἔφη· “ὥσπερ αἱ γλαῦκες ἐπὶ τάφῳ κάθεται.”

Sophocles, the writer of tragedies, in his old age loved Theoris the hetaira. He said the following by way of entreating Aphrodite:

Hear me, Nurturer of Youths, as I pray, and grant that this woman spurn the love and bed of young men. Let her commit herself to old men with gray temples whose vigor has dulled but whose desire craves.

This comes from verses attributed to Homer ([Herodotus] *Vita Homeri* 30). Sophocles recalls Theoris in a stasimon in this way: “Truly Theoris is beloved” [765 Radt; 698 Nauk]. At the setting of his life, as Hegesandros says [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 4 418 F 27], he loved Archippe, the hetaira, and left her as an heir to his estate. When Archippe was with Sophocles in his old age, her former lover Smikrines was asked by somebody what Archippe was doing. He wittily replied, “She sits, like the owls, on his tomb.”

183. *Argumentum* II to Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus*

Τὸν ἐπὶ Κολωνῷ Οἰδίπουν ἐπὶ τετελευτηκότι τῷ πάππῳ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ ὑδοῦς ἐδίδαξεν, υἱὸς ὦν Ἀρίστωνος, ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Μίκωνος, ὅς ἐστιν τέταρος ἀπὸ Καλλίου.

Sophocles, grandson of Sophocles and son of Ariston, produced the *Oedipus at Colonus* after the death of his grandfather in the archonship of Mikon, who is the fourth from Kallias.

184. *The Suda* sigma 817

Σοφοκλῆς, Ἀθηναῖος, τραγικός καὶ λυρικός, ἀπόγονος τοῦ παλαιοῦ. γέγονε δὲ μετὰ τὴν Πλειάδα, ἥτοι μετὰ τοὺς ζ' τραγικοὺς οἵτινες ὠνομάσθησαν καὶ Πλειάς. δράματα αὐτοῦ ιε'.

Sophocles, Athenian, tragedian and lyric poet, descendant of the old [Sophocles]. He was born after the Pleiades, that is, after the 7 tragedians who were called Pleias.⁷⁹ His plays are fifteen in number.

COMMENTARY

What is known of this Sophocles comes from the article in *The Suda* and the *Argumentum* of the *Oedipus at Colonus*.

⁷⁹ Pleias is the name used for the seven best Alexandrine poets.

190 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Note Eleven
Death
(185–206)

A. Age at Death. Year of Death (185–193)

185. *Marmor Parium, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 239 A 64 (T 3)

Ἀφ' οὗ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ ποιητὴς βιώσας ἔτη ΓΔΔΔΠ ἐτελεύτησεν
καὶ Κῦρος ἀνέβη, [ἔτη ΗΔΔΔΠΙ, ἀρχ]οντος Ἀθήνησι Καλλίου
τοῦ ἑπιπροτέρου†.

From when Sophocles the poet, who had lived 92 years, died, and
Cyrus went up, [143 years, the arch]on at Athens being Kallias the
†first† [406/405].

186. Diodorus Siculus *Library* 13.103.4 (T 85)

Περὶ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον ἐτελεύτησε Σοφοκλῆς ὁ Σοφίλου,
ποιητὴς τραγωδιῶν, ἔτη βιώσας ἐνενήκοντα, νίκας δ' ἔχων
ὀκτωκαίδεκα.

About the same time [406/405], Sophocles, son of Sophilos,
composer of tragedies, died. He lived ninety years and had
eighteen victories.

187. *Argumentum II* to Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus* (T 41)

Τὸν ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ Οἰδίπουν ἐπὶ τετελευτηκότι τῷ πάππῳ
Σοφοκλῆς ὁ υἱοῦς ἐδίδαξεν, υἱὸς ὢν Ἀρίστωνος, ἐπὶ ἀρχοντος

Μίκωνος, ὃς ἐστὶ τέταρτος ἀπὸ Καλλίου, ἐφ' οὗ φασιν οἱ πλείους τὸν Σοφοκλέα τελευτῆσαι. σαφὲς δὲ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐξ ὧν ὁ μὲν Ἀριστοφάνης ἐν τοῖς Βατράχοις ἐπὶ Καλλίου ἀνάγει τοὺς τραγικούς ὑπὲρ γῆς, ὁ δὲ Φρύνιχος ἐν Μούσαις, ἃς συγκαθῆκε τοῖς Βατράχοις, φησὶν οὕτως·

μάκαρ Σοφοκλέης, ὃς πολὺν χρόνον βιοῦς
ἀπέθανεν εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ καὶ δεξιός·
πολλὰς ποιήσας καὶ καλὰς τραγωδίας
καλῶς ἐτελεύτησ', οὐδὲν ὑπομείνας κακόν.

τραγικούς Clinton

στρατηγούς L.

Sophocles, grandson of Sophocles and son of Ariston, produced the *Oedipus at Colonus* after the death of his grandfather in the archonship of Mikon [402/401]. Mikon was the fourth archon from Kallias [406/405] in whose archonship the majority say that Sophocles died. This [date] is clear from the fact that Aristophanes in the *Frogs* in the archonship of Kallias leads the tragedians up to the earth, and Phrynichus (6) in the *Muses* which he brought on stage at the same time as the *Frogs* says the following:

Happy Sophocles, who lived a long time
and died a fortunate and clever man,
wrote many fine tragedies
and ended well without suffering any evil.

188. Scholiast to Aristophanes *Peace* 698 (T 4)

Μετὰ <ταῦ>τα <ι>ζ' ἔτη βεβίωκε· πῶς οὖν γέρον;

After <this>, he lived 17 years. In this case, how is he an old man?

192 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

189. *Life of Euripides* 44–47 (T 54)

Λέγουσι δὲ καὶ Σοφοκλέα ἀκούσαντα ὅτι ἐτελεύτησεν, αὐτὸν μὲν ἱματίῳ φαιῷ προελθεῖν, τὸν δὲ χορὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς ἀστεφανώτους εἰσαγαγεῖν ἐν τῷ προαγῶνι, καὶ δακρῦσαι τὸν δῆμον.

They say that when Sophocles heard that Euripides had died, he entered the Proagon wearing the dark cloak of mourning and led in his chorus and actors without garlands, and the people burst into tears.

190. Aristophanes *Frogs* 76-77 (T 101)

Εἴτ' οὐ Σοφοκλέα, πρότερον ἀντ' Εὐριπίδου,
μέλλεις ἀνάγειν, εἴπερ γ' ἐκεῖθεν δεῖ σ' ἄγειν;

You don't intend to bring Sophocles if you must bring someone up from there? He ranks before Euripides.

191. Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 17.21.42 (T 5)

Consulibus <C.> Claudio Centhone, Appii Caeci filio, et M. Sempronio Tuditano primus omnium L. Livius poeta fabulas docere Romae coepit post Sophoclis et Euripidis mortem annis plus fere centum et sexaginta.

In the consulship of C. Claudius Centhon, son of Appius Caecus, and M. Sempronius Tuditanus [240 B.C.E.], the poet L. Livius was the first of all to begin to produce plays at Rome, slightly more than one hundred-sixty years after the death of Sophocles and Euripides.

192. Eusebius *Chronicles* Ol. 93.1 (408 B.C.E.) (T. 6a)

Euripides apud Archelaum et Sofocles Athenis moritur.

Euripides died at Archelaos' court, and Sophocles, at Athens.

193. [Lucian] *Macrobius* 24 (T 90)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τραγωδοποιὸς . . . πέντε καὶ ἐνενήκοντα ζήσας ἔτη.

Sophocles, the writer of tragedies, . . . lived ninety-five years.

COMMENTARY

Athenians celebrated the City Dionysia in Elaphebolion (February/March), and the Lenaia during Gamelion (January/February). The year ended with Skirophorion (May/June). Thus the City Dionysia of 406 was followed ten months later by the Lenaia of 405. Sophocles was alive in Elaphebolion of 406 when he took the occasion of the Proagon to mourn publicly Euripides who had died recently. He died before Aristophanes presented the *Frogs*, and Phrynichus the *Muses*, at the Lenaia of 405.

Sophocles died at ninety years and in his ninety-first year during the archonship of Kallias (406/405 B.C.E.).

The Scholiast to Aristophanes' *Peace*, presented at the City Dionysia of 421, dates his death to 404. If reckoned inclusively (17 for 16 years), his dating gives 405. The Scholiast is commenting on *Peace* 698 where Sophocles is said to be old (16).

Phrynichos' *Muses* was presented at the time as Aristophanes' *Frogs* and apparently included a contest between tragedians, to

194 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

judge from a fragment preserved by Harpocration (*Lexicon of the Ten Orators* 165.6):

Here, take this pebble. The voting urn is there for you,
the latter one to acquit, the former to condemn.

In most instances, the biographical statements of the comic poets cannot be considered reliable. The poets followed Thalia, their Muse, in other directions than that chosen by later writers for Kleio. But Aristophanes and Phrynichos addressed an audience who knew Sophocles, if only by reputation and were aware that he had died not long ago. What they say is accordingly reliable to the fact of Sophocles' death and, at the least, to his reputation and the news of the day.

B. Manner of Death (194 –199)

194. [Sotades] fr. 15.12–16 in Stobaeus 4.34.8 (T 89)

Πουλύποδα φαγών ὁ Διογένης ὤμον τέθνηκεν.
Αἰσχύλῳ γράφοντί <τι> ἐπιπέπτωκε χελώνη.
Σοφοκλῆς ῥᾶγα φαγών σταφυλῆς πνιγείς τέθνηκε.
κύνες οἱ κατὰ Θράκην Εὐριπίδην ἔτρωγον.
τὸν θεῖον Ὅμηρον λιμὸς κατεδαπάνησεν.

Diogenes ate a raw squid and died.

A tortoise fell on Aeschylus while he was writing something.

Sophocles ate a grape and choked and died.

Dogs in Thrace mangled Euripides.

Hunger wasted away the divine Homer.

195. *Life of Sophocles* 14 (T 1)

Τελευτῆσαι δὲ αὐτὸν Ἰστρός καὶ Νεάνθης φασὶ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον· Καλλιππίδην ὑποκριτὴν ἀπὸ ἐργασίας ἐξ Ὀποῦντος ἦκοντα περὶ τοὺς Χόας πέμψαι αὐτῷ σταφυλὴν, τὸν δὲ Σοφοκλέα λαβόντα ῥᾶγα εἰς τὸ στόμα ἔτι ὀμφακίζουσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν γήρως ἀποπνιγέοντα τελευτῆσαι. Σάτυρος δὲ φησι τὴν Ἀντιγόνην ἀναγινώσκοντα καὶ ἐμπεσόντα περὶ τὰ τέλη νοήματι μακρῷ καὶ μέσσην ἢ ὑποστιγμὴν πρὸς ἀνάπαυσιν μὴ ἔχοντι, ἄγαν ἐπιτείναντα τὴν φωνὴν σὺν τῇ φωνῇ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφεῖναι. οἱ δὲ ὅτι μετὰ τὴν τοῦ δράματος ἀνάγνωσιν, ὅτε νικῶν ἐκηρύχθη, χαρᾷ νικηθεὶς ἐξέλιπε.

Istros [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 334 F 37] and Neanthes [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 84 F 18] say that Sophocles died in this way: Kallippides, an actor, coming from a workshop in Opos around the time of the Festival of the Choes, sent him a cluster of grapes. Sophocles put an unripe grape in his mouth and, because of his advanced age, he choked and died. Satyros [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 3.162] says that he was reading *Antigone* and coming upon a long passage near the end that did not have a break or a comma to make a pause, he stretched out word after word and lost his life. Others say that after a reading of the play, when he was announced the victor, he departed, overcome with joy.

196. [Lucian] *Macrobius* 24 (T 90)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τραγωδοποιὸς ῥᾶγα σταφυλῆς καταπιὼν ἀπεπνίγη. . . .

Sophocles the tragedian ate a grape and choked to death. . . .

196 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

197. Diodorus Siculus *Library* 13.103.4 (T 85)

Φασὶ δὲ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον τὴν ἐσχάτην τραγωδίαν
εἰσαγαγόντα καὶ νικήσαντα χαρᾶ περιπεσεῖν
ἀνυπερβλήτῳ, δι' ἣν καὶ τελευτῆσαι. Ἀπολλόδωρος δ' . . .
φησι καὶ τὸν Εὐριπίδην κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐνιαυτὸν
τελευτῆσαι.

They say that the man entered his last tragedy and, when he won,
collapsed from unsurmountable joy and died because of it.
Apollodorus [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 244 F 35] . . .
says that Euripides also died about this same year.

198. Pliny *Natural History* 7.180 (T 87)

Gaudio obiere . . . Sophocles et Dionysius Siciliae tyrannus,
uterque accepto tragicae victoriae nuntio.

Sophocles and Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, died from joy, each
on receiving the news of a victory in tragedy.

199. Valerius Maximus *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri*
9.12. ext. 5 (T 86)

Sophocles ultimae iam senectutis, cum in certamen tragoediam
demisisset, ancipiti sententiarum eventu diu sollicitus, aliquando
tamen una sententia victor causam mortis gaudium habuit.

When Sophocles by now of advanced old age had entered a
tragedy in the contest, he was troubled for a long time over the
doubtful outcome of the voting. Nevertheless, he was declared
victor by one vote and received joy as the cause of his death.

COMMENTARY

Lefkowitz characterizes the three ways of Sophocles' death: "Like Aeschylus' death, each of these deaths is particularly appropriate for a poet, but at the same time degrading."⁸⁰ The ways of Sophocles' death exceed humiliation: they seek to deny his greatness and his connection with Dionysus, the god of his craft, and with his craft. Sophocles chokes on a grape. An olive pit would have been more credible, but the grape is sacred to Dionysus. Similarly, Aeschylus dies when his head is crushed by a falling tortoise shell, the shell used to make the lyre. Both deaths imply the god's hostility toward the poet. Sophocles' death from the loss of breath from reading his victorious *Antigone* or from joy over its success attributes his demise to his craft, the very thing that made him Sophocles. These stories parallel those of athletes who, after remarkable careers in the period games, commit transgressions. Kleomedes of Astypalaia slays his opponent in a boxing match, goes mad, and kills sixty boys in their school in his home town. Euthykles of Locri, a pentathlete, is executed wrongly for betraying an embassy for his polis. Oibotas of Dyme, a stadion runner, curses his fellow Achaeans to perpetual defeat at Olympia for not rewarding his victory in the games there. Theagenes of Thasos, winner of over a thousand victories in boxing, pankration, and the long race (*dolichos*), cheated in a contest, was fined, and his image cast into the sea after it killed a man.⁸¹ The poets, not the men of violence that are athletes, suffer as deeply by having their god and their craft turn against them as the athlete's strength and prowess turn against him. Lefkowitz explains: "The explanation lies once again in the Greeks' ambivalent attitude toward extraordinary achievement. A great man, envied, hated and feared

⁸⁰ Lefkowitz 1981.86.

⁸¹ Fontenrose 73–76.

at the height of his power, becomes loved and respected once he has fallen."⁸² The same thinking, the Greek notion of a hero, unites both figures: outstanding good linked to outstanding evil that approaches the divine and demands to be worshiped. Sophocles received the honors of a hero after his death (59) presumably at his grave marked off as a precinct.

C. Funeral and Grave (200–206)

200. Pliny *Natural History* 7.109 (T 92)

Sophoclem tragici cothurni principem defunctum sepelire Liber pater iussit obsidentibus moenia Lacedaemoniis, Lysandro eorum rege in quiete saepius admonito ut pateretur humari delicias suas. Requisivit rex, qui supremum diem Athenis obissent, nec difficulter ex his quem deus significasset intellexit pacemque funeri dedit.

Liber ordered the Lacedaemonians who were besieging the walls of Athens to bury Sophocles, the deceased master of tragedy. Their king Lysander was advised in his sleep to allow Liber's favorite to be buried. The king inquired who had encountered his last day at Athens. Lysander had no difficulty in learning from his informants whom the god meant. Lysander and gave leave for the funeral.

⁸² Lefkowitz 1981.97.

201. *Life of Sophocles* 15 (T 1)

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πατρῶων τάφων <εἰς τὸν τάφον> ἐτέθη τῶν παρὰ τὴν ἐπὶ Δεκέλειαν ὁδὸν κειμένων πρὸ τοῦ τείχους ἰα' σταδίων· φασὶ δὲ ὅτι καὶ τῷ μνήματι αὐτοῦ Σειρῆνα ἐπέστησαν, οἱ δὲ Κηληδόνα χαλκῆν. καὶ τοῦτον τὸν τόπον ἐπιτετειχικότων Λακεδαιμονίων κατὰ Ἀθηναίων Διόνυσος κατ' ὄναρ ἐπιστὰς Λυσάνδρῳ ἐκέλευσεν ἐπιτρέψαι τεθῆναι τὸν ἄνδρα εἰς τὸν τάφον· ὡς δὲ ὠλιγόρησεν ὁ Λύσανδρος, δεύτερον αὐτῷ ἐπέστη ὁ Διόνυσος τὸ αὐτὸ κελεύων· ὁ δὲ Λύσανδρος πυνθανόμενος παρὰ τῶν φυγάδων, τίς εἶη ὁ τελευτήσας, καὶ μαθὼν ὅτι Σοφοκλῆς ὑπάρχει, κήρυκα πέμψας ἐδίδου θάπτειν τὸν ἄνδρα.

Sophocles was placed in the paternal tomb which lies along the road to Dekeleia eleven stades from the city wall. Some say that they put a Siren on his tomb, others, a bronze Keledon. Since the Lacedaemonians were fortifying the district with a wall directed against the Athenians, Dionysus appeared to Lysander in a dream and ordered him to allow the man to be placed in the tomb. Lysander paid no attention to the dream. Dionysus appeared to him a second time and issued the same order. Lysander inquired from runaways who it was who died, and when he learned that it was Sophocles, he sent a herald and gave permission for the burying of the man.

202. Pausanias *Geography of Greece* 1.21.1 (T 94)

Λέγεται δὲ Σοφοκλέους τελευτήσαντος ἐσβαλεῖν ἐς τὴν Ἀττικὴν Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ σφῶν τὸν ἡγούμενον ἰδεῖν ἐπιστάντα οἱ Διόνυσον κελεύειν τιμαῖς, ὅσαι καθεστήκασιν ἐπὶ τοῖς τεθνεῶσι, τὴν Σειρῆνα τὴν νέαν τιμᾶν· καὶ οἱ το ὄναρ <ἐς> Σοφοκλέα καὶ τὴν Σοφοκλέους ποιήσιν ἐφαίνετο ἔχειν.

200 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

εἰώθασι δὲ καὶ νῦν ἔτι ποιημάτων καὶ λόγων τὸ ἐπαγωγὸν
Σειρήνι εἰκάζειν.

There is a story that after the death of Sophocles the Lacedaemonians invaded Attica. Their leader saw Dionysus standing before him and telling him to honor the new Siren with those rites that were customary over the dead. The dream seemed to refer to Sophocles and to Sophocles' poetry. Thus even now men still attribute whatever is alluring in poetry and prose to a Siren.

203. Solinus *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilia* 1.118 (T 93)

Cumque Lysander Lacedaemonius Athenas obsideret, ubi Sophoclis tragici inhumatum corpus iacebat, identidem Liber pater duces monuit per quietem, sepeliri delicias suas sineret, nec prius desistit quam Lysander cognito qui obisset diem et quid a numine posceretur, indutias bello daret, usque dum congruae supremis talibus exequiae ducerentur.

When Lysander the Lacedaemonian was laying siege to Athens, the body of the tragic poet Sophocles was lying unburied. Liber repeatedly advised the leader in his sleep to permit his favorite to be buried. The god did not stop until Lysander, finding out who had encountered his day and realizing what the deity demanded, allowed a truce for the war for such time as rites suitable for a funeral to be conducted.

204. *Life of Sophocles* 16 (T 1)

Λόβων δέ φησιν ἐπιγεγράφθαι τῷ τάφῳ αὐτοῦ τάδε·

κρύπτω τῷδε τάφῳ Σοφοκλῆ πρωτεῖα λαβόντα
τῆ τραγικῆ τέχνῃ, σχῆμα τὸ σεμνότατον.

Lobon says that the following is written on the tomb:

I am concealing by this tomb Sophocles who took first
place in the tragic arts, a most august figure.

COMMENTARY

The Athenian fleet was finally defeated at Aegispotami in September 405 B.C.E. by the Lacedaemonian Lysander. Immediately upon the arrival to Lacedaemon of the news of his victory, Pausanias, king of the Lacedaemonians, invaded Attica with an army and camped in the Academy. Within the month, Lysander dropped anchor in the Piraeus and shut off the harbor to shipping. Accordingly, Athens was blockaded by land and sea by the end of September. It fell seven months later in April (Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.1.1–29; 2.5–9).

When the siege was erected, Sophocles had been dead at least eight months. He died sometime between March of 406 and January of 405. These stories of Sophocles' funeral illustrate the care of the gods, especially the god of tragedy, for Sophocles even in death.

The specificity of the location of Sophocles' tomb, eleven stades from the city, and its decorations, a Siren or bronze Keledon, a mythical songstress, leads Lefkowitz to the suggestion that "in late antiquity a tomb was identified as Sophocles' and pointed out to tourists."⁸³

⁸³ Lefkowitz 1981.86.

205. Valerius Maximus *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri 8.7*
ext. 12 (T 168)

Sophocles quoque gloriosum cum rerum natura certamen habuit, tam benigne mirifica ille opera sua exhibendo quam illa operibus eius tempora liberaliter sumministrando: prope enim centesimum annum attigit, sub ipsum transitum ad mortem Oedipode ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ scripto, qua sola fabula omnium eiusdem studi poetarum praeferere gloriam potuit. idque ignotum esse posteris filius Sophoclis Iophon noluit, sepulcro patris quae retuli insculpendo.

Sophocles also waged a glorious contest with the Nature of things in that he produced generously his magnificent works and Nature liberally furnished those times for his works: for he nearly attained his hundredth year, when at the very verge of the transition to death, he wrote his *Oedipus at Colonus*, a play which by itself snatched the glory away from all those poets who practiced his craft. His son, Iophon, did not wish for this to go unknown and engraved on his father's tomb what I have reported.

206. [Simonides] *Palatine Anthology 7.20* (T 88)

Ἐσβέσθης, γηραιὲ Σοφόκλεες, ἄνθος ἀοιδῶν,
οἰνωπὸν Βάκχου βότρυν ἐρεπτόμενος.

Revered were you, aged Sophocles, flower of poets,
and garlanded with the dark cluster of Bacchus.

COMMENTARY

Fairweather observes concerning the biographer's practices:

The epitaph is the type of inscription most frequently found in the *Lives*. To quote an epitaph after one's account of a man's death was a neat way of rounding off a biography and this became standard practice among Greek biographers.⁸⁴

Pseudo-Plutarch's *Lycurgus* offers an egregious example of the biographer's ingenuity that has the Athenian Lycurgus descended from Erechtheus, son of Gaea and Poseidon (*Moralia* 843 E). We cannot expect historicity in the epitaphs given in the sources. Lobon of Argos (3rd B.C.E.?) wrote a book *On Poets* in which he attributed his verses to literary figures. Most likely he is the author of this epitaph as is Pseudo-Simonides of the epitaph in the *Palatine Anthology*. Valerius Maximus cites Iophon as the author of an epitaph he neglects to quote.

⁸⁴ Fairweather 254.

204 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Note Twelve
And Euripides
(207–213)

207. *Life of Sophocles* 19 (T 1)

Συνηγωνίσατο δὲ καὶ Αἰσχύλῳ καὶ Εὐριπίδῃ καὶ Χοιρίλῳ καὶ Ἀριστίᾳ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς καὶ Ἰοφῶντι τῷ υἱῷ.

He competed against Aeschylus, Euripides, Choirilos, Aristias, and many others, including his son Iophon.

208. Dio Chrysostom *The Fifty-Second Discourse* 3 (T 50)

Σοφοκλέους μὲν πρὸς Αἰσχύλον νέου πρὸς γέροντα καὶ πρὸς Εὐριπίδην πρεσβυτέρου πρὸς νεώτερον ἀγωνιζομένου μετέσχον τινές· Εὐριπίδης δ' ἀπελείφθη κατὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν Αἰσχύλου.

Some shared the experience of Sophocles' competition against Aeschylus, a young man against an old man, and his competition against Euripides as an older man against a young man. Euripides was completely removed from the life span of Aeschylus.

COMMENTARY

Euripides first received a chorus in 455 B.C.E., but first prize at the City Dionysia eluded him until 441 (92). He surely competed against Sophocles on numerous occasions. The first that is known came in 438 when he placed second behind Sophocles with *Kressai*, *Alcmaion in Psophis*, *Telephos*, and *Alcestis* (95). In 431, he

won third prize with *Medea*, *Philoctetes*, *Dictys*, and *Theristai* behind Aeschylus' nephew Euphorion, first, and Sophocles, second (96).

209. *Life of Euripides* 44–47 (T 54)

Λέγουσι δὲ καὶ Σοφοκλέα ἀκούσαντα ὅτι ἐτελεύτησεν, αὐτὸν μὲν ἱματίῳ φαιῷ προελθεῖν, τὸν δὲ χορὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς ἀστεφανώτους εἰσαγαγεῖν ἐν τῷ προαγῶνι, καὶ δακρῦσαι τὸν δῆμον.

They say that when Sophocles heard that Euripides had died, he entered the Proagon wearing the dark cloak of mourning and led in his chorus and actors without garlands, and the people burst into tears.

210. *Vatician Gnomology* 517 (T 57)

Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τῶν τραγωδιῶν ποιητῆς ἀκούσας Εὐριπίδην ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ τεθνηκέναι εἶπεν “ἀπώλετο ἡ τῶν ἐμῶν ποιημάτων ἀκόνη.”

Sophocles, the poet of tragedies, on hearing that Euripides had died in Macedonia, said, “The whetstone of my poems has perished.”

COMMENTARY

The public mourning by Sophocles and the people for Euripides at the Proagon of 406 B.C.E. is commonly accepted as historical. Still, it could be a biographer's invention meant to confer a heroic death upon Euripides. Sophocles' description of Euripides as his

206 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

“whetstone” may also hold some truth. Sophocles could have used Euripides as an inspiration to sharpen his own composition.

211. Scholiast Euripides *Phoenician Women* 1 (T 56)

Παλαιά τις φέρεται δόξα ὡς Σοφοκλῆς μὲν ἐπιτιμήσειεν Εὐριπίδῃ ὅτι μὴ προέταξε τούτους τοὺς δύο στίχους, ὁ δὲ Εὐριπίδης ὅτι μὴ προέταξεν ἐν Ἠλέκτρᾳ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς τὸ “ὦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτέ.”

An ancient report has it that Sophocles criticized Euripides, saying that he surely did not put those two verses at the beginning of his play [*Phoenician Women*]. Euripides replied that Sophocles surely did not put “Of him who once was general in Troy” at the beginning of his *Electra*.

COMMENTARY

The exchange over first lines begins with Sophocles’ observation. He seems to have been aware and interested in the technical aspects of his craft and eager to express his views. Some scholars have attributed this type of anecdote to Sophocles’ work *On the Chorus* (Note Nine), others to comments voiced to friends that were somehow recorded.

212. Stobaeus *Forilegium* 2.30.10 (T 59)

Εὐριπίδης ὁ ποιητής, ἐπεὶ ὀψωνοῦντος αὐτοῦ ἐπελάβετό τις λέγων ὅτι Σοφοκλῆς τοῦτο διὰ δούλου ποιεῖ, “τοιγαροῦν” <ἔφη> “Σοφοκλῆς ἐσθίει ὄψον ὅποῖον τῶ οἰκέτῃ αὐτοῦ ἀρέσκει, ἐγὼ δ’ ὅποῖον ἂν ἐμοί.”

When someone accosted the poet Euripides who was buying fish and remarked that Sophocles had a slave for that task, Euripides retorted, “Yes, and so he eats the fish that satisfies his servant, and I eat whatever satisfies me.”

COMMENTARY

This anecdote comments upon the ways that the tragedians were imagined to make their dramas. A slave buys Sophocles' fish. A slave depends upon his master's favor for his survival and comfort and is eager to please him. Sophocles, it follows, gives his audience what he thinks his audience wants and delights them with fare that does not challenge their assumptions. As Sophocles' slave is unlikely to bring home strange fish, Sophocles does not serve up strange characters, that is, he shows his audience men as they ought to be without the warts of reality (108–109). That Euripides, on the other hand, buys his own fish implies that he is too poor or feckless to manage a proper household and must go to market himself. This is the man of the cave who composes facing the sea to avoid the demos and gives them what he sees fit, whatever the consequences.

213. [Euripides] *Epistle* 5.5 (T 60)

Καὶ μὴν εὐμετάβολόν γέ με οὔτε εἰς τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα οὔτε εἰς ὑμᾶς τοὺς φίλους καὶ οὐχ ἦσσαν εἰς τοὺς ἐχθροὺς σκοπῶν εἶποι τις ἄν, οἷς ἅπασιν ἐκ νέου μέχρι τοῦ νῦν τοῖς αὐτοῖς κέχρημαι πλὴν ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς, Σοφοκλέους· πρὸς γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον μόνον ἴσασι με τάχα οὐχ ὁμοίως αἰεὶ τὴν γνώμην ἔχοντα. ὃν ἐγὼ ἐμίσησα μὲν οὐδέποτε, ἐθαύμασα δὲ αἰεὶ, ἔστερξα δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίως αἰεὶ, ἀλλὰ φιλοτιμότερον μὲν τινα εἶναί ποτε δόξας ὑπεῖδον, βουλευθέντα δὲ διαλύσασθαι τὰ νείκη προθυμώτατα ὑπεδεξάμην. καὶ ἀλλήλους μὲν, ἐξ ὅτου συνέβη, στέργομέν τε

208 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

καὶ στέρομεν, τοὺς δ' ἐμβάλλοντας ἡμῖν πολλάκις τὰς
ὑπονοίας, ἵνα ἐκ τοῦ ἡμᾶς ἀπεχθάνεσθαι τὸν ἕτερον
θεραπεύοντες αὐτοὶ πλεῖον ἔχωσι, διαβεβλήμεθα.

Someone on observing me, may say that I am unchanging regarding my habits and toward you, my friends, and no less toward by enemies, everyone with whom I have had relations from my youth until the present, with the exception of one man, Sophocles. Regarding him alone, they know that I am not always of the same opinion. I have never hated him. While I have always admired him. I have not always been equally fond of him. Yet, I would sooner suspect anyone of being ambitious for glory. I accepted most eagerly when he wanted to reconcile our differences. From the time that happened, we have been and will remain fond of one another. We discredit those who cast suspicions on us in order that from our personal enmity, they themselves may gain something by paying court to one or the other of us.

Note Thirteen
Number of Tragedies and Victories
(214–217)

214. *Life of Sophocles* 18 (T 1)

ἔχει δὲ δράματα, ὡς φησιν Ἀριστοφάνης, ρλ', τούτων δὲ
νενόθευται ιζ'.

He has, as Aristophanes says, 130 plays of which 17 are spurious.

COMMENTARY

According to *The Suda* (sigma 815), Sophocles' *oeuvre* consists of 123 plays, while the *Life*, citing the authority of Aristophanes of Byzantium, gives the number as 130, of which seventeen are spurious. By emending ρκγ' (123) to ριγ' (117) or, the paleographically easier change ιζ' (17) to ζ' (7), the *Life* can be made to agree with *The Suda*.

215. *Life of Sophocles* 8 (T 1)

Νίκας δὲ ἔλαβε κ', ὡς φησι Καρύστιος, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ
δευτερεῖα, τρίτα δὲ οὐδέποτε.

He won 20 victories, as Karystios says [*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 4.359], and frequently took second place but never third.

210 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

216. Diodorus Siculus *Library* 13.103.4 (T 85)

Περὶ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον ἐτελεύτησε Σοφοκλῆς . . . νίκας δ' ἔχων ὀκτωκαίδεκα

About this same time [406/405 B.C.E.], Sophocles died . . . having eighteen victories.

217. Inscriptiones Graecae II² 2325

Σοφ]οκλῆς ΔΓΙΙΙ

[Soph]ocles 18.⁸⁵

COMMENTARY

The Suda sets the number of Sophocles' victories at 24, and the *Life* at 20. Diodorus and the inscription listing victors at the City Dionysia and Lenaia agree at 18. The difference between the totals has been explained by privileging the number given by the inscription and assuming, despite the unimportance of the Lenaia for the performance of tragedy, that the discrepancies are victories gained at the Lenaia.

There are titles for more than 123 plays, the number Aristophanes pronounced as genuine. Two titles for the same work swell the number, *Plynthriai* rather than *Nausikaa* and *Mykenaiiai* instead of *Atreus* may be the actual title, if Sophocles followed Aeschylean practice in naming dramas after the chorus. Grammarians became another source of double-titles by referring to a play by the name of a character to distinguish like-titled works by different

⁸⁵ Pickard-Cambridge 112.

dramatists.⁸⁶ Fragments range from the extensive remains of the *Ichneutai* (*Trackers*), a satyr play from Sophocles' early career, to a dozen to twenty lines, individual lines, phrases, and single words. The myth treated in the lost plays can usually be identified but not how Sophocles treated it in his plot.

Albrecht von Blumenthal lists 123 titles of lost plays, A. C. Pearson, 125, and William Nickerson Bates, 109.⁸⁷ The following outline condenses that of Pearson who organized the titles of Sophocles' plays according to the sequence of myths developed in the fifth century.⁸⁸ Pearson points out that of the 112 plays included in the outline forty-three or about thirty-eight percent belong to the Trojan cycle, a percentage that underlines Sophocles' penchant for finding subjects in Homer (105).

I Theogony or Birth of the Gods

- a. *Pandora* (satyr play): making of Pandora by Hephaestus under Zeus's orders.
- b. *Kedalion* (satyr play): plot unknown.
- c. *Triptolemos*; spreading knowledge of grain throughout the world.
- d. *Thamyras*: plot unknown.
- e. *Ixion*: plot unknown.

II Sons of Deucalion

- a. *Oineus*: uncertain whether Sophocles wrote a play by this name.
- b. *Meleager*: plot unknown.

⁸⁶ Pearson xviii–xxi.

⁸⁷ v. Blumenthal 1050–1079; Pearson 3.190–191; Bates 164–281 who offers a useful overview of the lost plays drawn from Pearson.

⁸⁸ Pearson 1. xxviii–xxxi.

212 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

- c. *Hipponoos*: king of Olenus attempts to have his pregnant daughter Periboea slain.
- d. *Sisyphos*, plot uncertain.
- e. *Athamas*: two plays of the same name; plots unknown.
- f. *Phrixos*: plot unknown.
- g. *Salmoneus*: plot unknown.
- h. *Eumelos*: plot unknown.
- i. *Lemniai*: women of Lemnos murder Argonauts.
- k. *Amykos* (satyr play): king of Bebrycians in Bithynia defeated in boxing match by Polydeukes during the Argonauts' quest.
- l. *Phineus*: two plays; perhaps follow the outline at *Antigone* 966–987.
- m. *Tympanistai* (*Tambourine Players*): plot unknown; perhaps part of Phineus myth.
- n. *Kolchides* (*Women of Colchis*): named from chorus. Medea prominent.
- o. *Skythai*: expedition of the Argonauts; slaying of Aspertos, Medea's brother.
- p. *Rizotomoi* (*Sorcerers*): Medea's poisoning of Pelias.

III Sons of Inachos

- a. *Inachos*: plot unknown; may have concerned Io.
- b. *Akrisios*: Akrisios' death at hands of grandson Perseus
- c. *Danae*: Danae's casting of Perseus into the sea.
- d. *Andromeda*: plot unknown.
- e. *Larisaioi*: death of Akrisios at the hands of Perseus during athletic games.

IV Herakles, son of Amphitryon, son of Perseus

- a. *Amphitryon*: plot unknown.

- b. *Herakleïsdos* (satyr play).
- c. *Heraklê̄s epi Tainarô̄i* (*Herakles at Tainarum*) (satyr play)
- d. *Trachiniai* (*Trachinian Women*), extant.

V. Europa, daughter of Agenor and mother of Minos

- a. *Daedalos*: plot unknown.
- b. *Kamikoi* (*Men of Kamicus*): plot unknown; death of Minos at Kamicus in Sicily on his search for Daedalus.
- c. *Minos*, probably an alternative title for *Kamikoi*.
- d. *Polyidus* or *Manteis* (*Prophets*): Polyidus restores Minos' son Glaucus to life and saves his own.

VI. Cadmus, brother of Europa, founder of Thebes and its dynasty

- a. *Dionysiskos* (satyr play): infant Dionysus introduces satyrs to wine.
- b. *Niobe*
- c. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, extant.
- d. *Oedipus at Colonus*, extant.
- e. *Amphiaraios*: plot unknown.
- f. *Antigone*, extant.
- g. *Epigonoï* or *Eriphyle*: second expedition against Thebes.
- h. *Oicles*: plot unknown. Oicles, father of Amphiaraus and participant in Herakles' expedition against Troy where he was killed.
- i. *Alcmeon*: plot unknown.

V. Arcadian Myths

- a. *Aleadai*: Telephus' slaying of his mother Auge's brothers; first play in a *Telepheia* trilogy.

214 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

- b. *Telephos*, satyr play in a *Telepheiia* trilogy.
- c. *Mysoi* (*Mysians*): plot unknown; perhaps second play of a *Telepheiia* trilogy.

VI. Attic Myths

- a. *Tereus*: plot unknown.
- b. *Prokris*: plot unknown.
- c. *Kreusa*: daughter of Erechtheus and wife of Xuthus; plot probably similar to that of Euripides' *Ion*.
- d. *Aigeus*: plot probably similar to Euripides' *Aegeus*; arrival of Theseus to Athens, recognition as Aegeus' son, thwarting of Medea.
- e. *Theseus*: plot unknown.
- f. *Phaidra*: plot probably similar to Euripides' *Hippolytus Crowned*.

VII. Myths of Sons of Tantalus

- a. *Tantalos*: plot unknown.
- b. *Oinomaus* or *Hippodamia*: plot unknown.
- c. *Atreus*: plot unknown; perhaps another title for a *Mykenaiiai*.
- d. *Thyestes*: three plays by this name; plots unknown.

VIII. Trojan Myths

- a. *Alexander*: plot unknown; perhaps similar to that of Euripides' *Alexander*.
- b. *Eris* (*Strife*): strife may be that introduced by golden apples at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis.
- c. *Krisis* (*Judgment*): plot unknown; judgment of Paris.
- d. *Momos*: plot unknown.

- e. *Helenês Gamos* (*Marriage of Helen*): plot unknown.
- f. *Odysseus Mainomenos* (*Odysseus Madden*): plot unknown; Odysseus' feigning of madness to avoid the expedition to Troy.
- g. *Achaiôn Syllogos* (*Muster of Achaeans*): plot unknown; story that of Telephus and Achilles.
- h. *Iphigenia*: plot unknown; bringing of Iphigenia to Achilles.
- i. *Syndeipnoi* (*Banqueters*): feast of chieftains before Troy when Philoctetes is bitten by serpent.
- j. *Poimenes* (*Shepherds*): plot unknown; a shepherd first sees Greeks arrive at Troy.

IX. *Iliou Persis* (Sacking of Troy)

- a. *Laocoon*: plot unknown.
- b. *Sinon*: plot unknown.
- c. *Priamos*: plot unknown.
- d. *Antênoridai*: plot unknown; fate of Antenor and his sons during and after the sacking of Troy; leopard skin on Antenor's house as sign that it was to be spared (Strabo *Geography* 13.1.53).
- e. *Locrian Ajax*: ploy unknown; son of Oileus.
- f. *Aichmalôtides* (*Captives*): plot unknown.
- g. *Aegisthos*: title based on two doubtful fragments.
- h. *Electra*, extant.
- i. *Aletes*: son of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.
- k. *Erigone*: plot unknown; daughter of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.
- l. *Chryses*: plot unknown; son of Chryseis and Agamemnon.
- m. *Hermione*: plot unknown; daughter of Helen and Menelaus.
- n. *Tyndareus*: plot unknown.

216 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

o. *Teucer*: plot unknown; return home to Telamon's anger over Ajax's absence; banishment of Teucer.

p. *Eurysaces*: plot unknown; son of Telamonian Ajax.

q. *Odysseia*: a trilogy to which belong *Nausikaa* and *Phaeaces* (*Phaeacians*).

r. *Telegonia*: a trilogy to which belong *Euryalos* and *Odysseus Akanthoplêx* (*Odysseus Stung by a Fish Bone*); events leading to Odysseus' death.

Appendix

Family and Life of Sophocles

Σοφοκλέους γένος καὶ βίος

1. Σοφοκλῆς τό μὲν γένος ἦν Ἀθηναῖος, υἱὸς δὲ Σοφίλλου, ὃς οὔτε, ὡς Ἀριστόξενός φησι, τέκτων ἢ χαλκεὺς ἦν, οὔτε ὡς Ἰστρός, μαχαιοποιὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν, τυχὸν δὲ ἐκέκτητο δούλους χαλεῖς ἢ τέκτονας· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς τὸν ἐξ τοῦ τοιοῦτου γενόμενον στρατηγίας ἀξιωθῆναι σὺν Περικλεῖ καὶ Θουκιδίδῃ, τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς πόλεως· ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν κωμικῶν ἄδηκτος ἀφείθη τῶν οὐδὲ Θεμιστοκλέους ἀπεσχημένων. ἀπιστητέον δὲ καὶ τῷ Ἰστρῷ φάσκοντι αὐτὸν οὐκ Ἀθηναῖον ἀλλὰ Φλιάσιον εἶναι· εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀνέκαθεν Φλιάσιος ἦν, ἀλλὰ πλὴν Ἰστρου παρ' οὐδένι ἑτέρῳ τοῦτο ἔστιν εὐρεῖν. ἐγένετο οὖν Σοφοκλῆς τὸ γένος Ἀθηναῖος, δήμου Κολωνῆθεν, καὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ τῇ ποιήσει περιφανῆς, καλῶς τε ἐπαιδεύθη καὶ ἐτρέφθη ἐν εὐπορίᾳ, καὶ ἐν πολιτείᾳ καὶ ἐν πρεσβείαις ἐξητάζετο.

Sophocles was an Athenian, son of Soophillos who was not, as Aristoxenos says, a carpenter or bronze smith or, as Ister claims, a manufacturer of knives and swords by trade, but Sophillos owned slaves who were bronze smiths or carpenters. It was not likely that someone born of such a father would be thought worthy of a generalship with Pericles or Thucydides, the first men of the polis. Sophocles would not have been left unscathed by the poets and free of their abuse, [had he been of low birth], seeing how they did not restrain from attacking Themistocles. Ister must not be believed when he says that Sophocles was not an Athenian but a Phliasian. Even supposing that he was originally from Phlios in Argos, it is not possible to find this claim in anyone else except Ister. Sophocles was an Athenian, of the deme Kolonos, distinguished for his life and his accomplishments. He was well educated, raised amid prosperity, and proven in the exercise of his citizenship and embassies.

218 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

2. Γεννηθῆναι δὲ αὐτόν φασιν ὀλίγον Ὀλυμπιάδι κατὰ τὸ δεύτερον ἔτος ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Ἀθήνησι Φιλίππου. ἦν δὲ Αἰσχύλου νεώτερος ἔτεσιν ζ', Εὐριπίδου δὲ παλαιότερος κδ'.

They say that Sophocles was born in the second year of the seventy-first Olympiad in the archonship of Philippos at Athens. He was seven years younger than Aeschylus and twenty-four years older than Euripides.

3. Διεπονήθη δὲ ἐν παισὶ καὶ περὶ παλαίστραν καὶ μουσικὴν, ἐξ ὧν ἀμφοτέρων ἐστεφανώθη, ὡς φησὶν Ἰστρός. ἐδιδάχθη δὲ τὴν μουσικὴν παρὰ Λάμπρω, καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχίαν Ἀθηναίων περὶ τρόπαιον ὄντων μετὰ λύρας γυμνὸς ἀλληλιμμένος τοῖς παιανίζουσι τῶν ἐπινικίων ἐξῆρχε.

Sophocles applied himself among the boys in the palaestra and in the study of music and, according to Ister, received crowns in both. He was educated in music by Lampros. After the naval battle at Salamis, while the Athenians were at the victory monument, he, naked and anointed with oil, led the victory songs for those singing the paeon, while accompanying himself on the lyre.

4. Παρ' Αἰσχύλω δὲ τὴν τραγωδίαν ἔμαθε. καὶ πολλὰ ἐκαινούργησεν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι, πρῶτον μὲν καταλύσας τὴν ὑπόκρισιν τοῦ ποιητοῦ διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν μικροφωνίαν (πάλαι γὰρ καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς ὑπεκρίνετο αὐτός), τοὺς δὲ χορευτὰς ποιήσας ἀντὶ ἑβ' ἰε' καὶ τὸν τρίτον ὑποκριτὴν ἐξεῦρε.

Sophocles learned tragedy from Aeschylus. He introduced many innovations in the contests. He was first to separate the role of actor from that of poet on account of his weak voice, for in olden

times, the poet himself performed as actor. He increased the number of choristers from twelve to fifteen and invented the third actor.

5. Φασὶ δὲ ὅτι κιθάραν ἀναλαβὼν ἐν μόνῳ τῷ Θαμύριδι ποτε ἐκιθάρισεν, ὅθεν καὶ ἐν τῇ ποικίλῃ στοᾷ μετὰ κιθάρας αὐτὸν γεγράφθαι.

They say that he took up the cithara and played in *Thamyras* alone, and that, for this reason, he was depicted among the cithara players on the Stoa Poikile.

6. Σάτυρος δὲ φησὶν ὅτι καὶ τὴν καμπύλην βακτηρίαν αὐτὸς ἐπενόησε. φησὶ δὲ καὶ Ἴστρος τὰς λευκὰς κρηπίδας αὐτὸν ἐξευρηκέναι, αἷς ὑποδεσμεύονται οἳ τε ὑποκριταὶ καὶ οἱ χορευταί· καὶ πρὸς τὰς φύσεις αὐτῶν γράψαι τὰ δράματα· ταῖς δὲ Μούσαις θίασον ἐκ τῶν πεπαιδευμένων συναγαγεῖν.

Satyros says that he designed the crooked staff himself, while according to Ister, he invented white boots that the actors and choristers wore, and that he wrote plays with a view to the nature of the actors and that he organized a thiasos for the Muses from cultivated people.

7. Καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν τοσαύτη τοῦ ἤθους αὐτῷ γέγονε χάρις ὥστε πάντη καὶ πρὸς ἀπάντων αὐτὸν στέργεσθαι.

Simply put, there was such charm to his personality that he was beloved everywhere by everyone.

220 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

8. Νίκας δὲ ἔλαβε κ', ὡς φησι Καρύστιος, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ δευτερεῖα, τρίτα δὲ οὐδέποτε.

He won twenty victories, as Karystios says, and frequently took second place but never third.

9. Καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ αὐτὸν ξέ ἔτων ὄντα στρατηγὸν εἶλοντο πρὸ τῶν Πελοποννησιακῶν ἔτεσιν ζ', ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ἀναίους πολέμῳ.

Athenians elected him general in his sixty-fifth year (in the seventh year before the Peloponnesian War) in the war against the people of Anaioi.

10. Οὕτω δὲ φιλαθηναϊότατος ἦν ὥστε πολλῶν βασιλέων μεταπεμπομένων αὐτὸν οὐκ ἠθέλησε τὴν πατρίδα καταλιπεῖν.

Sophocles was such a lover of Athens that, although kings summoned him, he was unwilling to leave his fatherland.

11. Ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ἄλωνος ἱερωσύνην, ὃς ἦρως μετὰ Ἀσκληπιοῦ παρὰ Χείρωνι . . . ἰδρυνθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰοφῶντος τοῦ υἱοῦ μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν.

Sophocles also held the priesthood of Alkon, a hero who with Askepias at the side of Cheiron . . . founded after his father's death by his son Iophon.

12. Γέγονε δὲ καὶ θεοφιλὴς ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ὡς οὐκ ἄλλος, καθά φησιν Ἰερώνυμος . . . περὶ τῆς χρυσοῦς στεφάνης. ταύτης γὰρ ἐξ ἀκροπόλεως κλαπίσης κατ' ὄναρ Ἡρακλῆς ἐδήλωσε

Σοφοκλεῖ, λέγων τὴν τμή οἰκοῦσαντ οἰκίαν ἐν δεξιᾷ εἰσιόντι ἐρευνῆσαι, ἔνθα ἐκέκρυπτο. ἐμήνυσε δὲ αὐτὴν τῷ δήμῳ καὶ τάλαντον ἐδέξατο· τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν προκηρυχθέν. λαβῶν οὖν τὸ τάλαντον ἱερὸν ἰδρύσατο Μηνυτοῦ Ἡρακλέους.

Sophocles was devout as no other, as Hieronymos says about the episode of the golden crown. After the crown was stolen from the Acropolis, Herakles appeared to Sophocles in a dream, telling him to look for a house on his right as he was walking where the crown had been hidden. He revealed crown to the demos and received a talent, the reward decreed before this event. He took the talent and founded a shrine for Herakles the Revealer.

13. Φέρεται δὲ καὶ παρὰ πολλοῖς ἢ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Ἰοφῶντα γενομένη αὐτῷ δίκη. ἔχων γὰρ ἐκ μὲν Νικοστράτης Ἰοφῶντα, ἐκ δὲ Θεωρίδος Σικυωνίας Ἀρίστωνα, τὸν ἐκ τούτου γενόμενον παῖδα Σοφοκλέα τοῦνομα πλέον ἔστεργε. καὶ ποτε τὸν δράματιτ εἰσήγαγε . . . τὸν Ἰοφῶντα αὐτῷ φθονοῦντα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς φράτερας ἐγκαλοῦντα τῷ πατρὶ ὡς ὑπὸ γήρωσ παραφρονοῦντι· οἱ δὲ τῷ Ἰοφῶντι ἐπετίμησαν. Σάτυρος δὲ φησιν αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν “εἰ μὲν εἰμι Σοφοκλῆς, οὐ παραφρονῶ· εἰ δὲ παραφρονῶ, οὐκ εἰμι Σοφοκλῆς,” καὶ τότε τὸν Οἰδίποδα παραναγνώσαι.

The law-suit against his son Iophon is reported by many. Sophocles had a son, Iophon, by Nikostrate, and another, Ariston, by Theoris of Sikyon. Sophocles particularly loved the son of Ariston, also called Sophocles. At one point he portrayed Iophon in a play as envying him and bringing an action against him before the phratry brothers for mental incompetence due to old age. Some of the brothers fined Iophon. Satyros says that Sophocles said, “If I am Sophocles, I am not incompetent. If I am

222 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

incompetent, I am not Sophocles,” and then he read from the *Oedipus*.

14. Τελευτῆσαι δὲ αὐτὸν Ἴστρος καὶ Νεάνθης φασὶ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον· Καλλιππίδην ὑποκριτὴν ἀπὸ ἐργασίας ἐξ Ὀποῦντος ἦκοντα περὶ τοὺς Χόας πέμψαι αὐτῷ σταφυλὴν, τὸν δὲ Σοφοκλέα λαβόντα ῥᾶγα εἰς τὸ στόμα ἔτι ὀμφακίζουσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν γήρως ἀποπνιγέοντα τελευτῆσαι. Σάτυρος δὲ φησι τὴν Ἀντιγόνην ἀναγινώσκοντα καὶ ἐμπεσόντα περὶ τὰ τέλη νοήματι μακρῷ καὶ μέσσην ἢ ὑποστιγμὴν πρὸς ἀνάπαυσιν μὴ ἔχοντι, ἄγαν ἐπιτείναντα τὴν φωνὴν σὺν τῇ φωνῇ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφεῖναι. οἱ δὲ ὅτι μετὰ τὴν τοῦ δράματος ἀνάγνωσιν, ὅτε νικῶν ἐκηρύχθη, χαρᾷ νικηθεὶς ἐξέλιπε.

Istros and Neanthes say that Sophocles died in this way: Kallippides, an actor, coming from a the workshop in Opos around the time of the Festival of the Choes, sent him a cluster of grapes. Sophocles put an unripe grape in his mouth and choked because of old age and died. Satyros says that he was reading *Antigone* and coming upon a long passage near the end that did not have a break or a comma to make a pause, he stretched out word after word and lost his life. Others say that after a reading of the play, when he was announced the victor, he “left,” overcome with joy.

15. Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πατρῶων τάφων <εἰς τὸν τάφον> ἐτέθη τῶν παρὰ τὴν ἐπὶ Δεκέλειαν ὁδὸν κειμένων πρὸ τοῦ τείχους ἰα' σταδίων· φασὶ δὲ ὅτι καὶ τῷ μνήματι αὐτοῦ Σειρήνα ἐπέστησαν, οἱ δὲ Κηληδόνα χαλκῆν. καὶ τοῦτον τὸν τόπον ἐπιτετειχικότων Λακεδαιμονίων κατὰ Ἀθηναίων Διόνυσος κατ' ὄναρ ἐπιστὰς Λυσάνδρῳ ἐκέλευσεν ἐπιτρέψαι τεθῆναι τὸν ἄνδρα εἰς τὸν τάφον· ὡς δὲ ὠλιγόρησεν ὁ Λύσανδρος, δεύτερον

αὐτῷ ἐπέστη ὁ Διόνυσος τὸ αὐτὸ κελεύων· ὁ δὲ Λύσανδρος
πυνθανόμενος παρὰ τῶν φευγάδων, τίς εἶη ὁ τελευτήσας, καὶ
μαθὼν ὅτι Σοφοκλῆς ὑπάρχει, κήρυκα πέμψας ἐδίδου θάπτειν
τὸν ἄνδρα.

Sophocles was placed in the paternal tomb which lies along the road to Dekeleia eleven stades from the city wall. Some say that they put a siren on his tomb, others, a bronze Cheledon. Since the Lacedaemonians were fortifying the district with a wall directed against the Athenians, Dionysus appeared to Lysander in a dream and ordered him to allow the man to be placed in the tomb. Lysander paid no attention to the dream. Dionysus appeared to him a second time and issued the same order. Lysander inquired from runaways who it was who died, and when he learned that it was Sophocles, he sent a herald and gave permission for the burying of the man.

16. Λόβων δέ φησιν ἐπιγεγράφθαι τῷ τάφῳ αὐτοῦ τάδε·

κρύπτω τῷδε τάφῳ Σοφοκλῆ πρωτεῖα λαβόντα
τῇ τραγικῇ τέχνῃ, σχῆμα τὸ σεμνότατον.

Lobon says that the following is written on the tomb:

I am concealing by this tomb Sophocles who took first
place in the tragic arts, a most august figure.

17. Ἴστρος δέ φησιν Ἀθηναίους διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν
ψήφισμα πεποιηκέναι καθ' ἕκαστον ἔτος αὐτῷ θύειν.

Istros says that the Athenians passed a decree to offer sacrifice to Sophocles annually because of his virtue.

224 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

18. Ἔχει δὲ δράματα, ὡς φησιν Ἀριστοφάνης, ρλ', τούτων δὲ νενόθευται ιζ'.

He has, as Aristophanes says, 130 plays of which 17 are spurious.

19. Συνηγωνίσατο δὲ καὶ Αἰσχύλῳ καὶ Εὐριπίδῃ καὶ Χοιρίλῳ καὶ Ἀριστίᾳ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς καὶ Ἰοφῶντι τῷ υἱῷ.

He competed against Aeschylus, Euripides, Choirilos, Aristias, and many others, including his son Iophon.

20. Τὸ πᾶν μὲν οὖν Ὀμηρικῶς ὠνόμαζε. τοὺς τε γὰρ μύθους φέρει κατ' ἶχνος τοῦ ποιητοῦ· καὶ τὴν Ὀδύσειαν δὲ ἐν πολλοῖς δράμασιν ἀπογράφεται. παρετυμολογεῖ δὲ καθ' Ὀμηρον καὶ τοῦνομα τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως·

ὀρθῶς δ' Ὀδυσσεύς εἰμ' ἐπώνυμος κακῶν
πολλοὶ γὰρ ὠδύσαντο δυσμενεῖς ἐμοί.

ἤθοποιεῖ τε καὶ ποικίλλει καὶ τοῖς ἐπινοήμασι τεχνικῶς χρῆται, Ὀμηρικὴν ἐκματτόμενος χάριν. ὅθεν ἐπεῖν Ἰωνικόν τινατ' μόνον Σοφοκλέα τυγχάνειν Ὀμήρου μαθητήν. καὶ ἄλλοι μὲν πολλοὶ μεμίμηνταί τινα τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν ἢ τῶν καθ' αὐτούς, μόνος δὲ Σοφοκλῆς ἀφ' ἐκάστου τὸ λαμπρὸν ἀπανθίζει· καθ' ὃ καὶ μέλιττα ἐλέγετο. ἤνεγκε δὲ τὰ μικτά· εὐκαιρίαν, γλυκύτητα, τόλμαν, ποικιλίαν.

He generally used the language of Homer and fashioned his plots in the footsteps of that poet. In many of his plays, he drew upon the Odyssey. He gives the etymology of the name Odysseus in the Homeric way:

Rightly for my sufferings am I called Odysseus,
for many unfriendly men have caused me pain.

He delineated characters, embellished diction, and skillfully introduced solutions external to the plot, attaining the charm of Homer. From this a certain Ionian said that only Sophocles was Homer's student. Many others imitated one of their predecessors or contemporaries, but only Sophocles plucked the brilliance from each. For this he was said to be the Bee. He combined various elements, timing, sweetness, daring, and variety.

21. Οἶδε δὲ καιρὸν συμμετρῆσαι καὶ πράγματα ὥστε ἐκ μικροῦ ἡμιστιχίου ἢ λέξεως μιᾶς ὅλον ἡθοποιεῖν πρόσωπον. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο μέγιστον ἐν ποιητικῇ, δηλοῦν ἦθος ἢ πάθος.

He knew how to proportion timing and events so that from a small half-line or a single speech, he constructed a whole character. This is the most important aspect of the poet's art, namely, to reveal character or suffering.

22. Φησὶ δὲ Ἀριστοφάνης ὅτι “κηρὸς ἐπεκαθέζετο . . .”, ἄλλη δὲ “Σοφοκλέους τοῦ μέλιτι τὸ στόμα κεχρισμένου.”

Aristophanes says that “a honey comb sat on him” and “Sophocles was anointed on the mouth with honey.”

23. Φησὶ δὲ Ἀριστόξενος ὡς πρῶτος τῶν Ἀθήνηθεν ποιητῶν τὴν Φρυγίαν μελοποιίαν εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἄσματα παρέλαβε καὶ τοῦ διθυραμβικοῦ τρόπου κατέμιξεν.

226 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

Aristophanes says that he was the first of poets from Athens to introduce Phrygian melody into his songs and mix in the dithyrambic style.

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228 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

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230 Electronic Antiquity 9.1

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