

SOPHOCLES, *TRACHINIAE* 94–102*

ὄν αἰόλα νῦξ ἐναριζομένα
 τίκτει κατευνάζει τε φλογιζόμενον,
 "Ἄλιον, "Ἄλιον αἰτῶ
 τοῦτο καρῦξαι τὸν Ἀλκμή-
 νας, πόθι μοι πόθι μοι παῖς
 ναίει ποτ', ὦ λαμπρᾷ στεροπᾷ φλεγέθων,
 ἧ ποντίας αὐλῶνας, ἧ
 δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθεῖς,
 εἴπ', ὦ κρατιστεύων κατ' ὄμμα.

98 παῖς T: μοι παῖς tell.

I

Some years ago, Sir Kenneth Dover suggested a new interpretation of *καρῦξαι*.¹ *Prima facie*, the chorus ask the sun to proclaim where Heracles is, and this sense is supported by such passages as *Il.* 3.277 'Ἡελίος θ', ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς, *Od.* 9.109 'Ἡελίου, ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷ (cf. A. *PV* 91, S. *OC* 869), *Od.* 8.270–1 ἄφαρ δέ οἱ ἄγγελος ἦλθεν | 'Ἡέλιος, and especially ('a passage... which comes very close to Sophocles in spirit') *h. Cer.* 69ff., where 'Demeter visits the Sun and implores him, "you who look down on all earth and sea... tell me truly of my dear child, if you have seen her anywhere, who has gone off with her..."'.² This is the way *καρῦξαι* in *Trach.* 97 has always been taken. Dover points out, however, that *κηρύττειν* also has a special, technical sense: to make proclamation *inquiring about* a missing person's whereabouts, as the town-crier used to do a century ago in England and elsewhere, and the media do now. The model is not that of *h. Cer.* 69ff., but rather S. *Aj.* 845ff.: 'Sun, when you see my native land, draw near and tell (*ἄγγειλον*) my aged father... of my fate.'

The examples he cites are enough to demonstrate the 'interrogative' use of *κηρύττω*, though his first example, *Ar. Ach.* 748 ἐγὼν δὲ καρῦξῶ Δικαιοπόλιν ὄπα, will not do: if sound, it means not 'I will find out by *κηρυξ* where Dicaeopolis is' (he is present in the next line), but 'I will summon Dicaeopolis to where (the sale is)'.³ The normal 'interrogative' use is to enquire by herald (town-crier) the whereabouts of a criminal (*Andoc.* 1.112, D. 25.56, Antiphon ii γ 2 with *ib.* δ 6) or a runaway slave (*Lucian, Fug.* 27). Dover rightly points out that in *Moschus* 1 (*AP* 9.440) Aphrodite's enquiry by herald about the missing Eros is not, despite *δραπετίδας* (v. 2), for a runaway slave, but for her son: he has played truant. Similarly, I think, *Meleager* 37.1

* To the great distress of the editors and all who knew him, Mr Stinton died not long after submitting this note. The editors have supplied some missing references but made no changes of substance.

¹ *Miscellanea tragica in honorem J. C. Kamerbeek* (1976), 49–53. I am indebted to Sir Kenneth for detailed and generous criticism.

² This passage, which I did not cite, reinforces my argument (*JHS* 96 [1976], 127–9) that 100ff. means 'on land and sea'.

³ See Starkie ad loc. But in view of the special use of *κηρύττειν*, noticed by Dover, 'announce, advertise' (one's wares) for sale (cf. Antiphanes fr. 125.11, of fish; *ib.* 168.31), the conjecture ἐγὼν δὲ καρῦξω Δικαιοπόλις δὲ πᾶ; adopted by Rennie, q.v.) is tempting. I owe this criticism of Dover's example to Dr Malcolm Davies.

(*AP* 5.177.1) *κηρύσσω τὸν Ἐρωτα*, which alludes to ‘interrogative’ *κήρυξις* and to Moschus l.c. in particular, is neither for a criminal (Gow-Page ad loc.) nor for a runaway slave;⁴ it is for the truant boy who has left the lover’s bed, thus depriving him of his partner.

Dover takes *Trach.* 97 to be an allusion to a *κήρυγμα* for a missing child. He finds no real-life examples, but reasonably argues that this is how a Greek family would have gone about such an enquiry. He confirms this by a story in Plutarch (*Alc.* 3.1, from Antiphon fr. 66), where Pericles advises Alcibiades’ father, when the boy runs off (in fact to a lover), not to make enquiry about him (*ἀποκηρύττειν*) for fear of scandal. His analysis of the passage is doubtless correct, though the prefix *ἀπο-* makes some difference and complicates the issue. What matters is that there can be no doubt about the practice of ‘interrogative’ *κήρυξις*, and that its application to missing children is very probable. But is *Trach.* 97 *καρύξαι τὸν Ἀλκμήνας*, as Dover maintains, modelled on an enquiry about the whereabouts of a missing child?

He reinforces his arguments by three points. (1) ‘The agonised repetition of *πόθι*’; (2) ‘the syntactical isolation of *παῖς*, which superimposes a suggestion of “Where is the child?” upon, “Where is the son of Alcmena?”’ (3) the phrase *τὸν Ἀλκμήνας*: ‘we must remember that in any small community such as an Attic deme a young child is more likely to be identified as his mother’s than his father’s’, cl. *P. O.* 1.46f.

These arguments are clearly not strong. Dover himself allows that the repetition of *πόθι* ‘is perhaps too common a Sophoclean phenomenon to bear much weight’; true: cf. Wunder ad loc. and on *OT* 1216 (his 1192). Whether the syntactical isolation of *παῖς* (even if it is correct)⁵ would have the effect Dover suggests is unclear; but if it does, (i) the emphasis on *παῖς* that he posits is inappropriate – Heracles is not a lost toddler, but the greatest man on earth; (ii) this would make the chorus’ request more urgent, but would not tend to show that the proclamation is to be interrogative. As to the periphrasis *τὸν Ἀλκμήνας*, ‘this is so common that by itself... it tells us nothing’. True, and for the reason given I do not think it at all likely that this familiar designation of Heracles as the son of his mother would have suggested to Sophocles the special, everyday sense of *κηρύττειν* that is so alien to the heroic context.

Dover finally states, and meets, two objections, which I will take in inverse order. Firstly, since in real life a herald (or town-crier) would repeat his interrogative proclamation, we might expect *καρύσσειν* rather than *καρύξαι*. But ‘there is quite a difference between hiring a herald to plod from one agora to another and asking the Sun to proclaim in a divine voice, once and for all, a question which will reach to the ends of the earth’. True enough; it does not quite fit the picture of *S. Aj.* 845ff, where the sun is to draw rein in order to address Telamon, but he might equally well have quoted *E. Hcld.* 748–54:

*Γᾶ καὶ παννύχιος κελά-
να καὶ λαμπρόταται θεοῦ
φαεσιμβρότου ἀνγαί,
ἄγγελίαν μοι ἐνέγκαι,
ἰαχῆσατε δ’ οὐρανῶι*

⁴ ‘I cannot tell who the father is’ (v. 5) is doubtless a learned joke; cf. Plat. *Symp.* 178b. Still, giving the parentage implies a missing free-born child, not a slave: *ἔστι δ’ ὁ παῖς γλυκύδακρυς*, κτλ. (v. 3) means ‘the boy’ in the former sense.

⁵ In op. cit. (n. 2) 127 I argue that *παῖς* has no precise syntactical parallel, but that *μοι* was likely to be wrongly repeated, and therefore preferred *πόθι [μοι] παῖς* after all. I now think *παῖς* is more likely to be the intruder; *Σ λέιπει τὸν παῖδα*, which may well refer to *τὸν Ἀλκμήνας*, shows how it could have come in. There is some attraction in Schneidewin’s *πόθι μοι πόθι [μοι] γᾶς*, read by Dawe (cf. 68 *ποῦ*... *χθονός*); but not enough to warrant the further change.

καὶ παρὰ θρόνον ἀρχέταν
γλαυκάς τ' ἐν Ἀθάνας·

The divine voice, if loud enough, will reach the king of Athens.

The second and as he observes the more important objection is εἰπέ in 102. If the proclamation is interrogative, this should mean either 'utter' (*sc.* the question I have asked you to utter) or 'tell me' (*sc.* when the question I have asked you to utter has been answered). Since, as he points out, εἰπέ or εἰπέ μοι often follows a direct question in comedy, neither interpretation is easy. But the second is, he says, acceptable, if with Lloyd-Jones⁶ we take 100ff. to refer to the far east and west (as in the scholia), rather than to land and sea, and δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθεῖς to mean 'leaning on the two continents', i.e. on the pillars Heracles himself has built. The chorus follows up its request to the sun to seek for Heracles' whereabouts by itself speculating about them; this is 'a fresh stage in their thought and dissociates εἰπέ from καρῦξαι', a word which, given that the passage is to be understood in the order in which it is uttered (and this is all-important), is most naturally taken in the way he takes it.

Dover's interpretation is certainly not impossible. But whether or not we accept Lloyd-Jones' explanation, the argument founders on one vital point. The chorus begin Ἄλιον, Ἄλιον αἰτῶ... What should we expect their request, in elevated poetry, to be? There seems to me no doubt: the all-seeing sun is to *tell* them something. I give one other example, A. Ag. 632–3 (is Menelaus alive or dead?):

οὐκ οἶδεν οὐδεὶς ὥστ' ἀπαγγέλλαι τορῶς
πλην τοῦ τρέφοντος Ἥλιου χθονὸς φύσιν.

This interpretation is confirmed, though the confirmation is not needed, by the end of the stanza: εἴπ', ὦ κρατιστεύων κατ' ὄμμα, 'tell me, you who are supreme in eye', emphasises the sun's powers of sight.⁷ If the chorus is asking him merely to inquire, in the course of his journey, where Heracles is, these powers would be irrelevant. But clearly they *are* relevant: the sun can say where Heracles is, because he can see as other beings cannot. This confirms the analogy with *Il.* 3.277 Ἡέλιός θ', ὅς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς, etc.: the model is not S. Aj. 845ff. or E. *Hcl.* 748ff., but *h. Cer.* 69ff., as Erfurdt saw.

I add a corollary. As in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the parodos of the *Trachiniae* has echoes of the prologue (e.g. 119ff. of 88f.). Deianeira, at the close of her opening monologue, says (44–5): 'but already it is fifteen months that Heracles ἀκήρυκτος μένει', that is, no word, no message has come from him. If καρῦξαι in 97 is given its normal interpretation, it echoes ἀκήρυκτος in 45.

II

My conclusions about 97–101, that κλιθεῖς is corrupt and that we should read δισσαῖς ἐν ἀπείροις κυρφεῖς,⁸ have since come under fire from various quarters,⁹ so perhaps I might briefly reply. Dawe says, à propos of my suggestion that the αὐλῶνες,

⁶ *CQ* n.s. 4 (1954), 91ff.

⁷ Dr Davies refers me to D. Korzeniewski, *Rh. Mus.* 105 (1962), 150, 'who observes that it is an example of Norden's "dynamische Prädikationsart"' (*Agnostos Theos* [1913], 221). As such, it is equivalent to δύνασαι δὲ or *namque potes* in hymnic contexts.'

⁸ *Op. cit.* (n. 2).

⁹ R. D. Dawe, *Studies on the text of Sophocles*, III (1978), 79–80; M. L. West, *BICS* 26 (1979), 110; H. Lloyd-Jones, *CR* n.s. 31 (1981), 171. On G. Giangrande, *Corolla Londiniensis*, IV (1983), 61–2, see *JHS* 106 (1986, forthcoming).

'creeks', may have something to do with the *μυχοί*, 'far corners', in Euripides' *Peirithous*,¹⁰ 'we do not want a Heracles up the creek'. Wit is always welcome, but he might more usefully have told us how he does understand *αὐλώνας*, a problem Lloyd-Jones and I have at least tried to face. His own conjecture *δισσὰς ἄν' ἀπείρους συθείς*, cl. *OC* 118 *ποῦ ναίει; ποῦ κυρεῖ ἐκτόπιος συθείς* . . .; does not convince. It is true that there and in *OT* 445–6 *ὥς παρὼν σύ γ' ἐμποδὼν | ὄχλεις, συθείς τ' ἄν οὐκ ἄν ἀλγύναις πλέον, συθείς*, as Easterling (on 100–1) points out, means not 'rushing' but simply 'departed', 'vanished', which, she continues, 'would be appropriate here if the context made it clear enough'. But *συθείς*, though opposed to *παρὼν* in *OT* l.c., does not mean simply 'absent' but implies *abrupt* departure. Oedipus was here just now; where has he gone? Teiresias' presence is irksome; let him be off and kindly trouble Oedipus no more. Heracles departed, with due formality, fifteen months before; it is his continued absence, not his departure, which prompts the chorus' question. So 'where has Heracles vanished to?' is not a plausible paraphrase, and *συθείς* would not in fact be appropriate.

West defends *κλιθείς*, 'lying down', as meaning that Heracles is thought of as resting or feasting between his labours. But this restricts the generality of the chorus' question in a manner verging on bathos: why should they ask where he is only in the circumstances? For the locative *δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις* he relies on *Trach.* 1152 *Τίρυνθι* . . . ἔχειν ἔδραν, *OT* 20 *ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ*, ib. 1266–7 *γῆ | ἔκειτο* and ib. 1451 (*ἔα με*) *ναίειν ὄρεσιν*. The first two, being particular places, are irrelevant; 'he lay on the ground' and 'let me live in the mountains', i.e. anywhere in the mountains, in the wilds, are as far removed from 'reclining in/on the two continents' as they would be from 'reclining in/on the Old World and the New'. His alternative explanation of the dative as instrumental, governed by 'leaning on', cl. *Il.* 3.134–5 *ἔαται* . . . | *ἀσπίσι κεκλιμένοι*, makes sense only in Lloyd-Jones' interpretation.¹¹ He reasonably queries, by implication, my claim that *κλιθείς* is 'an easy phonetic error' for *κρυφείς*, since the likeness in sound extends only to the vowel (etacism). I would now say that the similar shape of the words, assisted by etacism, would make the corruption an easy one.

Mrs Easterling (on 100–1) says of *δισσαῖς ἐν ἀπείροις κρυφείς* that, though possible, it 'perhaps lays too much stress on the concealment of Heracles'. This is a fair point. I can only reiterate my previous arguments: (i) that the word *αὐλώνας*, 'creeks', seems to be used elsewhere in a context of concealment (Medea's from Aeetes in S. fr. 549, if Hermann was right to refer it to that situation), and that in Euripides' *Peirithous* Heracles says of the Cerberus labour that it took him 'to the furthest ends (*μυχούς*) of Europe and all Asia' (if Page's interpretation is right¹²); more importantly (ii) that emphasis is laid on the sun's powers of sight: only he can tell of Heracles' whereabouts.

Lloyd-Jones simply asserts his confidence in his own interpretation. 'None of these learned men [Dawe, West and Stinton] will allow that, if the rocks of Gibraltar [*sic*] were known as the "Pillars of Heracles", a poet might speak of Heracles as leaning on them; their objections to my treatment of the passage . . . make as little impression on me as the words of Oceanus did upon Prometheus. Have they never seen the Olympia metope with Heracles holding up the heavens?' His Promethean imperviousness to argument is a pity, *σοφοῖς γὰρ αἰσχρὸν ἐξαμαρτάνειν*, and the implication that we poor pedants do not understand how poets work cannot be allowed to pass.

¹⁰ *GLP* I (1942) = *SLP* III (1950), 124, 30–1; cf. *JHS* 96 (1976), 129.

¹¹ Op. cit. (n. 9) n. 6. On *δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις* as a locative see further *JHS* 106 (1986).

¹² Cf. n. 10.

The reference to the Olympia metope (inserted *monente Stinton*) is relevant, but hardly conclusive. There seems in fact to be an underlying *ignoratio elenchi*. Of course there are miraculous, fantastic, fairy-tale elements in Greek myth, and poets wrote about them. But how far they were allowed to obtrude on a life-like presentation is a complex question of genre and context. In the narrative of Homer, which strains the credulity without dispensing with it, they obtrude very seldom.¹³ Heroes are bigger and stronger than ordinary men, *οἶοι νῦν βροτοὶ εἶσιν*, but their size and strength is not of miraculous proportions. True, Achilles takes on the river Scamander, but the case is unique in the *Iliad*, and it is up to us how seriously we taken the personification. Tragedy is even more careful in the way it keeps mythical fantasy within bounds. Tragic heroes are larger than life, certainly, but not so much bigger and stronger than the norm as the Seven-league-booter Heracles would have to be to lean upon his Pillars (and it does not matter whether or not the Athenians knew how wide the Straits of Gibraltar are¹⁴ – they could distinguish between a man and a feature of the landscape). But was Heracles the one exception? After all he fought with monsters, and captured Cerberus, ‘scarcely an animal one would expect to find at Crufts’;¹⁵ still, there is nothing here beyond heroic strength. He fought with giants, too, but as I have said,¹⁶ Greeks were content to depict the Giants as large hoplites; the exception I did not note is Alcioneus, a truly gigantic figure (*ὄψεϊ ἴσος*) matched with Heracles at P. I. 6.31–3 (cf. N. 4.27) – but Pindar is not a tragic poet, and this too is unique. Just one of Heracles’ labours requires miraculous strength: his taking over Atlas’ burden in the labour of the Hesperides. This was certainly attributed to a human stage-figure in the *Prometheus Luomenos*;¹⁷ not surprisingly, given the cosmic scale of the action and his predicted apotheosis. It also figures in the first stasimon of Euripides’ *Heracles*, where he is a human figure with domestic as well as heroic virtues.¹⁸ But, as I have explained,¹⁹ this is a set-piece account of the labours, from which the traditional Atlas incident could not well be omitted. It can in fact be accommodated to a figure of human proportions, as the metope shows: our attention is concentrated on the man’s efforts, not on the miraculous size of his burden. The point is, however, that in the *Trachiniae* it is omitted, even where one would most expect to find it: after Heracles’ apostrophe of his own arms and shoulders (1089–90). It is omitted because it is important for the drama that Heracles should be a vulnerable human being (not even, as I think, a future god, though that is another story).²⁰ True, he fights and defeats Achelous; but he fights an opponent not in the form of a river, as Achilles does, but in the form of a bull – a task beyond ordinary men, but not wholly outside the bounds of realistic description (there is just such a contest in Sinkiewicz’s *Quo vadis?*).²¹ In the parodos, his human stature and its limitations are particularly important; trouble is his daily bread, and only the gods can keep him afloat (112–21). This theme does indeed begin with the consolation in the second stanza, the first being an introduction on the grand scale. But though the grand scale requires a hero not a toddler as the object of the sun’s enquiries, an allusion to seven-league-boot proportions would be a gratuitous breach of unity in the ode, and out of key with the figure of Heracles in the play (cf. Easterling on 100–1).

¹³ Cf. *Euripides and the Judgement of Paris*, *JHS* Suppl. 11 (1965), 4–5; J. Griffin, *JHS* 97 (1977), 40–3, *Homer on Life and Death* (1981), 165–7.

¹⁴ Cf. op. cit. (n. 6), p. 92.

¹⁵ I quote from a letter of Professor Lloyd-Jones.

¹⁶ Op. cit. (n. 2) 128 n. 35.

¹⁷ Cf. *Fr. Gr. Hist.* 3 Pherekydes fr. 17.

¹⁸ Cf. esp. *HF* 73–9, with Bond’s note: ib. 624–36.

¹⁹ Op. cit. (n. 2) n. 11.

²⁰ See *Studies in Honour of D. J. Conacher* (1985); cf. *BICS* 33 (1985).

²¹ Even Samson’s destruction of the temple, though a superhuman feat achieved by miraculous aid, conforms to his heroic but still human stature.

There is a further point, made succinctly by West: if this was the picture Sophocles had in mind, he could not have alluded to it simply with the words *δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθείς*, 'leaning on two continents'; unless, of course, the story of Heracles leaning on his pillars was as well known as, say, the Atlas incident in the labour of the Hesperides. Now the Pillars of Heracles were sufficiently well established to be mentioned by Pindar (more than once) and Herodotus, and the building of them is recounted by Diodorus in his section on Heracles, much of which may well be old.²² But the striking picture of Heracles resting on his two pillars, one in Spain, the other in Africa, would so far as we know (and the argument from silence cannot of course be conclusive) be unique to Sophocles, and so presumably his invention. Now there is no limit to the poetic imagination, or to paradigmatic expression, as such. But effective paradigmatic expression, if it is not in a private language, depends on being understood. This condition was observed by all Greek poets, but especially, for obvious reasons, by the dramatists. Certainly Sophocles, as a poet, was capable of the invention Lloyd-Jones attributes to him; supposing, that is, that he chose in this one place to ignore the human scale of the action his drama requires. But he could not have expressed it by the words *δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθείς*.

We may let another poet have the last word. Ezra Pound's translation runs:

Land way, sea ways,
in these some slit hath he
found to escape thy scrutiny?

Pound, being a poet, has seen the sense that is needed, but it cannot be got from the Greek as it stands. It is, however, pretty nearly the sense given by my suggestion.

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²² P. O. 3.44, N. 3.21, I. 4.14; Hdt. 2.33.3; Diodorus 4.18.