

TWO SCENES OF COMBAT IN EURIPIDES

(a) THE WEAPONS OF *Andromache* 1132-4

ΑΓ. πυκνῆ δὲ νιφάδι πάντοθεν σποδούμενος
 προὔτεινε τεύχη κάφυλάσσει' ἐμβολὰς
 ἐκέϊσε κάκεισ' ἀσπίδ' ἐκτείνων χερί.
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἦγεν· ἀλλὰ πόλλ' ὁμοῦ βέλη,
 οἴστοί, μεσάγκυλ' ἔκλυτοι τ' ἀμφώβολοι
 σφαγῆς ἐχώρουν βουπόροι ποδῶν πάρος.

Euripides, *Andromache* 1129-34.

THE lines come from the messenger's speech describing the attack of the Delphians on Neoptolemus, a passage which I have discussed elsewhere in connexion with the tradition of Neoptolemus as inventor of the armed Pyrrhic dance.¹ *LSJ* seem to be in several minds about the meaning and connexion of some of the words describing the missiles used by the Delphians. S.v. 'σφαγεύς', they give 'sacrificial knife, spit' uniquely of a word elsewhere meaning 'slayer, murderer', etc.² (elsewhere³ Euripides uses *σφαγ-ίς, -ίδος* in this sense). S.v. 'βουπόρος', they cite *ἀμφωβόλοι σφαγῆς . . . βουπόροι* 'spits fit to pierce an ox's throat'—i.e. taking *σφαγῆς* as gen. sing., rather oddly dependent on *βουπόροι*. S.v. 'ἔκλυτος', they quote this passage, again uniquely, in the sense 'easy to let go, light, buoyant, of missiles'.⁴ This last seems even less likely than Wecklein's *ohne Riemen* or the Budé's *doubles dards sans poignée*, which presumably invoke a rather frigid contrast of the true javelins fitted with thongs (*μεσάγκυλα*) and the spits, sharp at both ends, which were pressed into service of a similar sort, but of course had to be thrown without this attachment: but these implements could hardly be described as *ἔκλυτοι* of thongs which they never had at all in the first place!⁵

With Murray's punctuation (a comma after *ἀμφώβολοι*), since a combination of *a, b, c τε, d* is scarcely credible, *σφαγῆς βουπόροι* is presumably not to be taken as the description of a separate type of weapon, but as an explanatory appositional phrase with *ἀμφώβολοι*. This interpretation is found in the schol. *ὀβελίσκοι σφάττειν δυνάμενοι* and followed by Hermann and Paley ('These same spits might be called exegetically "beef-piercing cutters"'). But it would appear to imply that these spits, normally used either for barbecuing the whole animal or, more likely, roasting pieces cut from the carcase, had actually been used in the first place to inflict the death blow on the victims. Wecklein and the Budé therefore adopt *σφαγῆς τ'* of some later MSS., in which case (with *σφαγῆς* nom. pl.) the 'ox-cutting sacrificial knives' are separated from the previous words. But against this is the fact that *βουπόρος* is elsewhere clearly a word used of roasting-spits, not of knives or axes used in killing: Euripides himself so uses it (*Cycl.* 302-3 *βουπόροισι . . . ὀβελιοῖσι*), as does Herodotus ii 135 and Xenophon, *An.* vii 8.14.⁶ Because of this difficulty, A. Tovar (*Gymnasium* lxxvi [1956] 79-80), takes both *σφαγῆς* and *βουπόροι* as adjectival, referring for the former expedient to schol. *ἀντὶ τοῦ διὰ σφαγῆς, ὥστε ἐμποιῆσαι σφαγῆν*. (He does not say what meaning he assigns to the other adjective *ἔκλυτοι*.)

¹ *JHS* lxxxvii (1967) 18-23; cf. *Hermes* xcvi (1968) 63 ff.

² In Soph. *Aj.* 815, *σφαγεύς* is of course the sword with which Ajax commits suicide, but this can hardly be taken as evidence for the existence of the word as a technical term for a sacrificial weapon—it is simply a poetical personalisation, as though the sword were the active instrument of death.

³ *El.* 811, 1142. Cf. *Poll.* i 33, x 97.

⁴ So Garzya in his edition translates 'leggeri'.

⁵ I do not take seriously a scholiastic statement that *ἔκλυτοι* are *εἶδη ἀκοντίων τριαννοειδῶν*.

⁶ Cf. the marginal note on Callim. *fr.* 110.45 *βουπόρος ὁ ὀβελίσκος*.

But while I agree that *βουπόροι* must qualify *ἀμφώβολοι*, I am not satisfied that *σφαγῆς* is plural; but if it is gen. sing. of *σφαγή* what is the sense and the construction? Professor F. H. Sandbach has suggested to me that it should be taken as depending on *ἔκλυτοι*, the other problematic word, in the meaning ‘ox-piercing spits *removed from the slaughtered animals*’.⁷ But where *σφαγή* is used in this sense it seems always to be in the plural, and, accepting his proposal of *ἔκλυτος* c. gen., I should prefer ‘ox-piercing spits *pulled out of their throats*’. This is closely paralleled—even to the singular *σφαγή* used of a number of animals—in Plut. *Mor.* 996f–997a (*de esu carnium*) ἀναιρήσομεν ζῶον, ἀλλ’ οἰκτείροντες καὶ ἀλοοῦντες, οὐχ ὑβρίζοντες οὐδὲ βασανίζοντες· οἶα νῦν πολλὰ δρώσιν οἱ μὲν εἰς σφαγὴν ὑῶν ὠθοῦντες δβελούς διαπύρους, ἵνα τῇ βαφῇ τοῦ σιδήρου περισβεννύμενον τὸ αἷμα καὶ διαχεόμενον τὴν σάρκα θρύψῃ καὶ μαλάξῃ. Euripides himself, with equal indifference, uses the plural for singular of *σφαγή* = throat in *Or.* 291 μὴ τῆς τεκούσης ἐς σφαγὰς ὄσαι ξίφος. The expression vividly describes how the Delphians, having exhausted the conventional weapons available—the arrows and thonged javelins—then resorted to the spits already in use for the roasting of the victims, which they quickly pulled out of the flesh. It will be remembered that it was at the moment of apportioning the sacrificial meat that traditionally Neoptolemus received the fatal blow (Pind. *N.* 7.42 κρεῶν νιν ὑπὲρ μάχας ἔλασεν ἀντιτυχόντ’ ἀνὴρ μαχαίρα), and in any case a large number of spits would be readily available at Delphi—witness the large heap of those sent by Rhodopis which Herodotus (*loc. cit.*) reports could still be seen in a heap by the altar of the Chians.

I can find no other example of *ἔκλυτος* c. gen. (it is of course common with the verb *ἐκλύω*), but it is a much more natural construction than the gen. with *βουπόρος* which *LSJ* envisages. Among some near equivalents are, Soph. *Aj.* 730 κολεῶν ἐρυστὰ ξίφη (*ἐρύομαι* is used also of withdrawing flesh from spits in Hom. *Il.* i 466), Eur. *Hec.* 544 ἐξέλκειν κολεοῦ, *Hipp.* 781 ἄμμα λύσομεν δέρης (*cf.* Aesch. *Ag.* 875–6), Soph. *Aj.* 1024 πῶς σ’ ἀποσπάσω . . . κνώδοντος;

There is one further problem in the general sense of this passage—ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἦνεν in 1132. The previous lines have described Neoptolemus’ (so far) successful defensive battle with his shield manipulation. The following lines describe the total failure of the shower of missiles as he continues his ‘Pyrrhic Dance’ defence; and it is not until 1136 ff. that, surrounded, he makes his last charge—with the celebrated ‘Trojan Leap’—and even here he is more than holding his own, since many Delphians are wounded or trampled on in their panic-stricken flight, until the divine voice sounds his death-knell in 1147 ff. How then could it be reasonably said in 1132 that ‘he was achieving *nothing*’? Professor Sandbach suggests that the force of the verb might be ‘he did not achieve anything *permanent*’, but this seems curious writing, and I should prefer to emend to ἦνον—it was the Delphians, surely, who at this point were achieving nothing, as the failure of their barrage of authentic and improvised weapons, falling ποδῶν πάρος, described in the lines discussed, shows. The anaphoric ἀλλά . . . ἀλλά almost makes the second group of words explanatory of the first—‘but they achieved nothing, but (for) all their weapons fell short’.⁸ The words happen also to be very similar to ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἦνυτον in the messenger speech of *Bacch.* 1100, where the temporary frustration of the maenads’ attack on Pentheus is described, although in this instance the reason is given with a γάρ clause before τέλος δὲ describes the sequel.

Picturesque description of success or failure in battle, especially where the individual is pitted against the crowd, is characteristic of Euripides’ messenger speeches—one thinks too

⁷ Hermann long ago glossed *e carnibus extracti*, but did not associate *ἔκλυτοι* with *σφαγῆς* as genitive. I am much indebted to Professor Sandbach for his criticisms of this article.

⁸ *Cf.* Hom. *Il.* ii 859–60 ἀλλ’ οὐκ οἰωνοῖσιν ἐρύσσατο κῆρα μέλαιναν, ἀλλ’ ἐδάμη ὑπὸ χερσὶ ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο,

Soph. *Trach.* 1151 ἀλλ’ οὔτε μήτηρ ἐνθάδ’, ἀλλ’ ἐπακτία/ Τίρυνθι συμβέβηκεν ὥστ’ ἔχειν ἔδραν. Mr J. G. Howie points out to me that in all the examples of repeated ἀλλά in Denniston, *Greek Particles, intro.* lxii, the first introduces a negative statement, while the second expresses the positive aspect of the earlier negation.

of Orestes and Pylades surrounded and pelted by rocks, ἀλλ' ἦν ἄπιστον· μυρίων γὰρ ἐκ χερῶν/ οὐδείς τὰ τῆς θεοῦ θύματ' εὐτύχει βαλών (*IT* 328–9). And a line from the long fragment of the *Melanippe Desmotis* (*fr.* 495.27) ἡμῶν δ' ἐχώρει κωφὰ πρὸς γαίαν βέλη,⁹ which describes the failure of the ambush on the brothers Boeotus and Aeolus, has a marked similarity to the description of the weapons of the Delphians which ἐχώρουν ποδῶν πάρος of Neoptolemus.

(b) ETEOCLES' THESSALIAN TRICK

ΑΓ. καί πως νοήσας Ἐτεοκλῆς τὸ Θεσσαλὸν
 ἐσήγαγεν σόφισμ' ὀμιλία χθονός.
 ἐξαλλαγεῖς γὰρ τοῦ παρεστῶτος πόνου,
 λαῖον μὲν ἐς τοῦπισθεν ἀναφέρει πόδα,
 πρόσω τὰ κοῖλα γαστρὸς εὐλαβούμενος·
 προβάς δὲ κῶλον δεξιὸν δι' ὀμφαλοῦ
 καθήκεν ἔγχος σφονδύλοισ τ' ἐνήρμοσεν.

Euripides, *Phoenissae* 1407–13.

Hsch. s.v. Θετταλὸν σόφισμα· παροιμία ἐπὶ τῶν σοφιζομένων λεγομένη καὶ μὴ εὐθυμαχοῦντων.
 Hsch. s.v. ὀμιλία χθονός· ἀντὶ τοῦ φίλια, ἔρωτι τῆς πατρίδος (*cf.* schol. *Phoen.* 1408). καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ πάλη. περὶ γὰρ τὴν πάλην ἐσπούδασαν οἱ Θεβαῖοι.

In the second volume of his edition of Hesychius, Kurt Latte says of the latter entry under the expression from *Phoen.* 1408 ὀμιλία χθονός (καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ πάλη, κτλ.) '*altera explicatio futtilis*'. But he may be too hard on the learned lexicographer, whose motive at least in recording this apparently eccentric explanation can be traced; indeed the explanation may even prove to be entirely relevant to the adoption by Euripides of an apparently familiar expression, τὸ Θεσσαλὸν σόφισμα, and to be much more to the point than the generalities about Thessalian untrustworthiness, and anecdotes about individual crafty Thessalians, which the Euripides' scholia, and the lexicographers and paroemiographers, record in connection with these lines, but which are not worth repeating here. The reference to πάλη would have been more intelligible perhaps if they had been attached to lines 1407–8 in general, not simply to the words ὀμιλία χθονός.

First, an important clue is provided by the application of the expression Θεσσαλὸν σόφισμα which was obviously familiar to Athenaeus. One of his Learned Doctors was the Thessalian Myrtilus, of whom it is said (111b) ταῦτ' εἶπε τὸ Θετταλὸν σόφισμα ἦτοι ὁ ἐκ Θεσσαλίας σοφιστής· παίζει δ' ἕως πρὸς τὴν παροιμίαν ὁ Ἀθηναῖος. Later Myrtilus is challenged by Ulpian, one of his fellow diners, as follows (308b): σὺ δέ μοι εἶπε, ὦ Θετταλὸν πάλαισμα Μυρτίλε, διὰ τι οἱ ἰχθύες ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν ἔλλοπες καλοῦνται; A comparison of these allusions shows that in the proverbial phrase, the σόφισμα was considered by Athenaeus to be a πάλαισμα,¹⁰ and from

⁹ This use of χωρεῖν of weapons occurs also in line 12 of the same fragment. Otherwise I find it only in Xen. *An.* iv 2.28.

¹⁰ When Eustathius (331.39) refers to Θετταλὸν πάλαισμα in Athenaeus (which he glosses ὦ Θετταλὲ ἐλεγκτικέ) he quotes also Θετταλὸν πήδημα καὶ σόφισμα καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων as proverbial expressions. It seems that by Thessalian leap (to which he refers also in his

commentary on Dionysius Periegeta p. 179.10 Bernhardt) he is thinking of the parallel phrase τὸ Τρωικὸν πήδημα of Eur. *Andr.* 1139, which he loosely connects with the tradition of Achilles' powers as a leaper, witnessed also in Lyc. *Alex.* 245 where schol. glosses Πελασγὸν ἄλμα τὸ Θετταλικὸν πήδημα· Πελασγὸς γὰρ καὶ Θετταλὸς ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς; but see my article in *JHS* referred to above, p. 15 n. 1.

such a coincidence with the Hesychian gloss referred to, I proceed on the assumption that Eteocles uses in the armed close combat described by Euripides, a device which was basically a feint adopted in wrestling, and notably associated with some Thessalian wrestler, or wrestlers. A transference of a technique, and the description of it, from wrestling to hoplite fighting is scarcely surprising when one remembers how firmly the Greeks believed that the former was an important and essential training for the latter,¹¹ so that one might become βριθὺς ὀπλιτοπάλας, δάϊος ἀντιπάλοισι (Aesch. *fr.* 700M.). And the referring of a novel feature of a sporting activity to a locality or nation believed to have introduced it is a commonplace in the ancient and modern world alike. In Greek wrestling the Argives were celebrated for their use of the 'cross-buttock' (ἔδραν στρέφειν¹²), just as today we distinguish Cumberland wrestling from other varieties, and wrestling has its Boston crabs, cricket its Yorkers and Surrey cuts, Rugby its Garryowens, golf its Texas wedge, swimming its American crawl, and so on.

If the statement in the *Vita* is correct, that in early life Euripides himself practised at παγκράτιον ἢ πυγμῆν because of the misunderstanding of an oracle relating to his future success at στεφανηφόροι ἀγῶνες,¹³ it is not surprising that in his closely detailed description of the duel of Eteocles and Polynices he should describe with allusion to contemporary athletic terminology¹⁴ a manoeuvre by which one combatant could seize an advantage over another. The manoeuvre in question is one by which—whether in armed combat, boxing or wrestling—the reversal by one combatant of the normal stance, either regularly or suddenly, may be confusing to an opponent expecting a more conventional and familiar one—as in boxing, the fighter we refer to nowadays as a 'Southpaw'¹⁵ (i.e. one who leads off, or takes up a defensive position, with *right* arm and leg in advance while preparing for a subsequent attacking punch with his *left* fist) is often disconcerting to one adopting the opposite, more traditional stance.¹⁶ So in combat with sword and shield, the normal attitude for the right-hander is to advance the left leg and shielded left arm defensively, while the right arm and leg will thrust forward with additional force when the time is opportune to strike an attacking blow. Although wrestling, which involves both arms moving (more or less) together, does not entail so marked a distinction, one observes that vase paintings which depict wrestlers preparing to engage, or in the act of the initial clinch, normally show their left feet in advance of their right, and Pollux (v 23) compares the position adopted by armed warriors awaiting the onset of a wild boar to that of a wrestler, προβάς τὸν πόδα τὸν ἀριστερὸν καὶ τὸν δεξιὸν ὑποβάς, ὡς εἶναι τὸ μέτρον τῆς διαβάσεως οἶον ἐν πάλη.

The schol. on *Phoen.* 1408 describes Eteocles' action as follows: ὑποχωρήσας γὰρ ἐκ τῆς συμπλοκῆς, τὸν μὲν ἀριστερὸν πόδα λάθρα εἰς τοῦπίσω ἀνάγει τὸ πρόσω τῆς γαστρὸς φυλάττων, τὸν δὲ δεξιὸν προβάς καὶ ἐπικλίνας ἑαυτὸν οὕτως ἔτρωσε διαμπάξ. Here συμπλοκή is itself particularly a technical term of a wrestling clinch,¹⁷ although used of close combat in general.¹⁸

¹¹ As is implicit in all Plato's strictures on athletic training (*cf.* especially *Leg.* 830 ff., *Lach.* 182). *Cf.* also Plut. *Mor.* 639e, Athen. 629b-c, Luc. *Anach.* 24, 28; and the assertion of Phil. *Gym.* 11 (p. 140.12 J.) πάλη δὲ καὶ παγκράτιον ὡς ἐς τὸ πρόσφορον τῷ πολέμῳ εὗρηται, πρῶτον μὲν δηλοῖ τὸ Μαραθῶνι ἔργον διαπολεμηθὲν οὕτως Ἀθηναίοις, ὡς ἀγχοῦ πάλης φαίνεσθαι, δεύτερον δὲ τὸ ἐν Θερμοπύλαις, ὅτε Λακεδαιμόνιοι κλασθέντων αὐτοῖς ξιφῶν τε καὶ δοράτων πολλὰ ταῖς χερσὶ γυμναίς ἔπραξαν.

¹² Theoph. *Char.* 27.14: *cf.* Theoc. xxiv.111 (quoted below, p. 20).

¹³ *Cf.* Aul. Gel. xv 20.2, Eus. *PE* 5.227c.

¹⁴ One might note how common πόνος (*cf.* τοῦ παρεστῶτος πόνου) is of athletics—Pindar (*passim*), B. xii 57, Plat. *Rep.* 410b, *Leg.* 646c, Arist. *Pol.*

1338b41, *AP* ix 588.6 (Alcaeus)—the last actually of 'bouts' in the arena.

¹⁵ Originally, it appears, a term of American baseball.

¹⁶ For which, in Greek boxing also, see Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* 419 ff., and the attacking punch aimed by Amycus in Theoc. xxii 121.

¹⁷ *Cf.* Philostr. *Gym.* 38 (p. 166.6), *Im.* ii 6.3, Luc. *Anach.* 2; συμπλέκω Hdt. iii 78, Ar. *Ach.* 704, Soph. *fr.* 618.2, Eur. *Ba.* 800, Plut. *Per.* 11, Luc. *Asin.* 9, Poll. iii 149; πλέκω P. Oxy. iii 466 (see below); περιπλέκω Luc. *Anach.* 31; διαπλέκω Philostr. *Gym.* 41 (p. 166.25); ἀντιδιαπλέκω Aeschin. iii 28; ἀμφίπλεκτοι κλίμακες Soph. *Tr.* 519.

¹⁸ Plat. *Leg.* 833a.

as Eteocles breaks, his feint consists in stepping back with his left foot, drawing in his shield to protect his body,¹⁹ and as Polynices presses forward thinking that he is forced to give ground, or perhaps stumbles in following his change of direction, he swivels as though to let him pass, then with a quick forward step with right foot, drives home his sword as Polynices' impetus leaves a gap between his shield and body, where the thrust may pierce him, the violence of his own onrush increasing the penetration.²⁰

In *wrestling*, the side-stepping of a forward rush would enable the combatant feinting with the Thessalian *sophisma* to grasp and throw his opponent—perhaps in the way pictured on an r.f. kylix (Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, 185 pl. 151), showing Theseus wrestling with Cercyon, where Theseus, with left leg back, steps sideways with the right—in contrast to *ibid.* pl. 155 which shows two wrestlers at the start of a bout each with left leg thrust forward in conventional fashion.

In a passage from *Leg.* 794d ff. in which Plato asserts that the equal capacity of right and left hand should be maintained by using both for all normal purposes, he makes a special point that in the pancratium, boxing and wrestling one is trained both with the right and left hands so as not to be disconcerted if an opponent by a change of feet (*μεταβιβάζων*²¹) compels one to a corresponding change of position: and he stresses that such training is necessary also for armed combat. I quote from 795b: *καθάπερ γὰρ ὁ τελῶς παγκράτιον ἡσκηκῶς ἢ πυγμαῖν ἢ πάλην οὐκ ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν ἀριστερῶν ἀδύνατός ἐστι μάχεσθαι, χωλαίνει δὲ καὶ ἐφέλκεται πλημμελῶν ὁπόταν αὐτόν τις μεταβιβάζων ἐπὶ θάτερα ἀναγκάζῃ διαπονεῖν, ταῦτόν δὲ τοῦτ' οἶμαι, καὶ ἐν ὄπλοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι χρῆ προσδοκᾶν ὀρθόν, ὅτι τὸν διττὰ δεῖ κεκτημένον, οἷς ἀμύνειτό τ' ἂν καὶ ἐπιτιθεῖτο ἄλλοις, μηδὲν ἄργον τούτων μηδὲ ἀνεπιστήμον ἔαν εἶναι κατὰ δύναμιν.* Such changes of direction or of the position of the feet are referred to also in the interesting, if obscure, fragment of a wrestling manual in P. Oxy. iii 466, in which instructions are given to a pair of wrestlers, presumably each being successively designed to counter the previous movement: (6) *μ[ε]ταβαλοῦ· σὺ πλέξ[ε]ον*, (25) *σὺ αὐτὸν μεταβάς/ πλέξον· σὺ μεταβαλοῦ.*

The gloss in Photius' lexicon on *Θετταλὸν σόφισμα* states *καὶ ἐπὶ μάχης καὶ ἐπὶ σχήματος καὶ ἐπὶ παρακρούσεως καὶ ἄλλων μυρίων τάσσοσιν.* While *ἐπὶ μάχης* obviously refers to the occurrence of the expression in the *Phoenissae*, it should be noted that the other two are both wrestling terms: *σχῆμα* is of course the standard term²² for the stance or style adopted, e.g. Isoc. xv 183 *τὰ σχήματα τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀγωνίαν εὐρημένα*, Philostr. *Gym.* 35 *προσφύεστερα τῷ τῆς πάλης σχήματι γυρῶ τε ὄντι καὶ προνεύοντι*, and *παρακρούσεις* is used of the 'throwing off balance' of an opponent by a wrestler using a feint, even without actual physical contact—cf. *Et.M.* 652.48 *παρακρούεται· ἀπατᾶ· ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν παλαιστῶν οὐ καταβαλλόντων ἀλλ' ἐν ὄρα παρακρούοντων ἢ ποδὶ ἢ χειρὶ, καὶ οὐ ρίπτοῦντων.*²³ The term is attested for the classical period by a metaphor in Plat. *Theaet.* 168a *τὰ σφάλματα ἃ αὐτὸς ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν προτέρων συνουσιῶν παρεκέρουστο*, where the specialised meaning of the verb is clearly indicated by the juxtaposition to *σφάλματα*.²⁴

¹⁹ This is undoubtedly what line 1411 means, not 'watching his mark in his foe's belly', as it is translated in Grene and Lattimore, *Complete Greek Tragedies*, and elsewhere.

²⁰ Not dissimilar is the sequence of wrestling terms in Lucius' *ἀνακλινοπάλη* with Palaestra (Luc. *loc. cit.*) *πρώσας νύσσε . . . ἐξεγκύσας . . . διὰ βουβῶνος δῆξον.*

²¹ Cf. *μετάβασις* of shifting from one leg to the other (Hp. *Mochl.* 20). (Incidentally there is an inferior reading *μεταφέρει πόδα* in *Phoen.* 1410.)

²² Also Athen. 629b, 631b, Poll. iii 155, *Anec. Bekk.* 327.10, Eust. 1327.13, schol. Hom. *Il.* xxiii 730, schol. Soph. *Tr.* 520.

²³ *Καταβάλλω* is the commonest word of throwing

an opponent in wrestling, but *ρίπτω* occurs in the Oxyrhynchus fragment referred to (*σὺ ρεῖψον*). These verbs are contrasted here with the discomfiture achieved by a *παρακρούσεις* involving either a change of feet or a feint with the hands. Doubtless of similar meaning is *πλαγιάζειν* (Poll. iii 155) 'side-step'—cf. *πλαγίαν καταβάλλειν* Ar. *Pax* 897, and *πλάγιος εὐρεθείς* and *ὡς εἶναι πλάγιον* in schol. *Phoen.* 1410 in explanation of Eteocles' tactics. For the *ἀπάτη* of wrestling in general, see Xen. *Cyr.* i 6.32, Plut. *Mor.* 638d, and the pompous phrase of Nonn. *Dion.* 37.576 *παλαμοσύνης ἑτερότροπα μάγγανα τέχνης.*

²⁴ For *σφάλλω* cf. *Il.* xxiii 719, Ar. *Ran.* 689, Theoc.

Sophisma is itself used elsewhere of a military stratagem, as early (perhaps) as Ar. *Ran.* 1104 εἰσβολαὶ γὰρ εἰσι πολλαὶ χᾶτραι σοφισμάτων (where it is embedded in a passage describing the poetic contest rich in military vocabulary) and as late as Arist. *Quint.* p. 62.16 W.-I. Plutarch (*Sert.* 10) describes the military skill of Sertorius both as σοφιστής, where tactical manoeuvres were involved, and in εὐθυμαχία, just as the Hesychian gloss first quoted distinguishes σοφίζομένων and εὐθυμαχούντων; and if Ahrens' probable conjecture σοφίσματα for παλαίσματα in Theoc. xxiv 114 is correct,²⁵ we have there an exact equivalent for the sense I propose for the Thessalian *sophisma*, and, with παλαίσμασιν in 112, the same relationship which was observed in Athenaeus' descriptions of Myrtilus (p. 17 above):

ὄσσα δ' ἀπὸ σκελέων ἔδροστρόφοι Ἀργόθεν ἄνδρες
ἀλλάλους σφάλλοντι παλαίσμασιν, ὄσσα τε πύκται
δεινοὶ ἐν ἰμάντεσσιν ἄ τ' ἐς γαῖαν προπεσόντες
(114) πάμμαχοι ἐξεύροντο σοφίσματα σύμφορα τέχνα.

What is the *true* meaning, then, of ὄμιλία χθονός in *Phoen.* 1408? If any explanation is 'futilis' it is the *first* Hesychius gloss ἀντὶ τοῦ φιλία, ἔρωτι τῆς πατρίδος which is lamely taken further in schol. 1408 ἦρα γὰρ πλεόν τῆς πατρίδος διὰ τὸ εἶθισθαι ἄρχειν (!) Another dismal scholium says οὐχ ὡς τραφέντος δὲ τοῦ Ἐτεοκλέους ἐν Θετταλία, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ συντυχίας αὐτοῦ πεποιηκότος σχῆμα Θετταλικόν. Less absurd, but requiring some special pleading and irrelevant background information about Eteocles' familiarity with Thessaly, is Pearson's note that this 'implies that Eteocles had visited Thessaly.'²⁶

It seems to me however that χθονός here must mean not *country* in the national sense at all, but the *terrain* on which the combatants were fighting, a sense proposed in some late scholia such as κλίσει, πλησιασμῶ πρὸς τὴν γῆν, οἱ τουτέστι πρὸς γῆν κάμψας τὸ γόνυ, as well as being hinted at in ἐπικλίνας ἑαυτὸν in the schol. quoted above (p. 18). This interpretation seems to be based on the type of *sophisma* described in ἐς γαῖαν προπεσόντες in the Theocritus lines just quoted, and in the συμπλοκῶν ἐν αἰς περιγίνεσθαι χρή οἶον πίπτοντα ('struggles that one can only win by pretending to fall') of Philostratus *Im.* ii 6.3. This suggests a picture of Eteocles ducking not only sideways, but downwards, for which ὄμιλία χθονός might be a sophisticated and picturesque expression were it to refer, say, to Antaeus whose dependency on contact with earth led him to be regarded later as the inventor of the τρόπος χαμαί of the pancratium.²⁷ For a blow, however, struck with a sword from such a position, καθήκεν ἔγχος would appear to be an improbable description: properly καθίημι ought to indicate a *vertical* blow, as in *H.F.* 993 καθήκε ξύλον παιδὸς ἐς κάρα, where the blow is compared to a smith's hammering on an anvil. But this is inappropriate to describe what appears to be a thrusting, piercing blow²⁸ (one might expect διήκεν as in 1092, 1398), and so the compound may describe not vertical direction so much as depth of penetration, an ambiguity which exists also in Eng. 'plunge' a sword, etc.; and compounds with κατα—such as κατακετεῖν, καταπείρειν, κατατρυπᾶν—seem to fall into such a category. But although such accuracy of detail should not be pressed too far—in *Or.* 1133 Euripides loosely uses μεθίημι (properly of discharging a weapon from the hand) with ξίφος as object—the verb used tells against the scholiast's idea of Eteocles striking from a crouching position, and I should have thought

xxiv 112, etc. Perhaps the same metaphor is intended by Plato in *Lys.* 215c, *Crit.* 47a.

²⁵ There is much to be said for the reverse emendation in Valckenaer's ἀλλ' ἐν ἀσπίδι| δεινός παλαιστής, πολλά τ' ἐξευρεῖν σοφός (MSS. σοφιστής . . . σοφά) in Eur. *Suppl.* 902–3: cf. δεινός παλαιστής in 704, δεινὸν πάλαισμα Xen. *Mem.* ii 1.14; also *Med.* 1214, *Cycl.* 678.

²⁶ A note on this passage, which goes back to Musgrave, referring to Pausanias, that Eteocles had been helped by *auxilia e Thessalia* appears to be a fiction.

²⁷ For refs. see Helm's Eusebius vii, *Die Chronik des Hieronymus* p. 307: cf. also P. *Isth.* 4-55.

²⁸ Cf. καταπήγνυμι and καταφέρω (*LSJ* s.v. 'καταφορά' of a downward cutting as opp. thrusting).

that the simplest explanation of *ὁμιλία χθονός* is 'through his familiarity with the terrain'. Eteocles was, so to speak, on his home ground and had the advantage of being alert²⁹ as to when best to draw Polynices into the error of a rash movement by his change of feet. The influence of the actual ground on the course of the battle was introduced as a motif earlier (1309) when Eteocles himself stumbles on a stone.

There is one final point which may help to vindicate the laconic *ἀντὶ τοῦ πάλης* of Hesychius in his comment on the combat of the brothers. Aristophanes wrote a *Phoenissae* which almost certainly contained elements of burlesque of the recently staged play of Euripides (cf. *fr.* 561 with *Phoen.* 236 ff.). Now in *fr.* 558 when the single combat scene is described in high tragic style,³⁰ Aristophanes calls it *wrestling*³¹—a reminiscence perhaps of the original description with its account of Eteocles' Thessalian trick:

ἔς Οἰδίπου δὲ παῖδε, διπτύχῳ κόρῳ,
 "Ἄρης κατέσκηψ", ἔς τε μονομάχου πάλης
 ἀγῶνα νῦν ἐστᾶσιν.

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²⁹ Cf. *πως νοήσας*, where I cannot agree with Pearson's interpretation 'contriving, as a present expedient'.

³⁰ Note Aristophanes' characteristic delight in caricaturing a stilted tragic phrase—this use of *δίπτυχον* is an Euripidean mannerism, which occurs in *Phoen.* 1354 *διπτύχων παίδων φόνος*, *IT* 242 *δίπτυχοι νεανίαί*, etc.

³¹ *Fr.* 558 is based chiefly on *Phoen.* 1361–3 *ἔστησαν ἐλθόντ' ἔς μέσον μεταίχμιον . . . ὡς εἰς ἀγῶνα μονομάχου τ' ἄλκην δορός*. For the wrestling metaphor of single combat (in which incidentally both parties die, as in the *Phoenissae*), cf. also *Soph. fr.* 210.50 (also *ibid.* 12) *πάλαισμα κοινὸν ἡγωνισμένοι*, referring to the bodies of Eurypylus and his opponent.