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Notes on *Eumenides* 41–2

H. L. Lorimer

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αἱ χαριστέραι in reading λυγρὸν δλεθρον for μυγρὼ δλέθρῳ at γ 87, ο 268; Hermann, too, was clearly wrong in defending ἀποδώσει ἐέδνα against ἀποδώσιν at θ 318. Some other instances are ε 140, οὐ πη ἔγωγε, 417, πού ἐφεύρω, θ 324, οἴκοι ἐκάστη, 491, ἄλλου ἀκούσας, κ 303, αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε, μ 390, αὐτῇ ἀκούσαι, ρ 103, ἐξ οὗ Ὀδυσσεύς, τ 572, καταθήσω θεθλον. The general principle is again quite plain, but it is strange that Class C should here be even better represented than Class B.

For the first foot, on the contrary, we have in α all these: α 2, πλάγχθη ἐπέλ, 12, οἴκοι ἔσαν, 50, νήσῳ ἐν, 57, θέλγει δπως, 62, Τροίη ἐν, 86, νύμφη εὐπλοκάμῃ—but I need not go further.

IV.

About the origin of the hexameter I know as much as other people and care less, but it seems impossible to deny that, as used by the Greek poets, it consists of two phrases of three bars each. According to the usual practice of such combinations of phrases into a line, it is the second phrase in which lightness and neatness is especially sought.¹ ἀψ δ' εἰς Διγύπτοις is all very well for the first half of a line, but would be intolerable for the second. Hence the rules for the second phrase are far more precise and exigent than for the first. But there is a principle of rhythm which applies to both, because it applies to all three bar rhythms. The strongest metrical accent falls upon the first, a subordinate accent upon the third, the weakest or none at all upon the second. This is seen also in a bar of three notes; it is an acknowledged rule in music that in such a bar, unless the time be very

quick, there is a subordinate beat upon the third note. Anyone with a feeling for rhythm who will observe how he reads such a line as:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε Μοῦσα πολύτροπον δὲ μάλα πολλὰ, will find, I believe, that he lays rather more stress upon the first syllables of Μοῦσα and πολλὰ than upon those of ἔννεπε and δὲ μάλα, and the more heed he pays to the proper quantities of the syllables the more will this be so, because the time taken will be longer. Certainly such is my own experience. So it is, too, with such a line as: 'For the flesh of my body is molten, the limbs thereof molten as lead,' where the first *molten* has a stronger accent than the second.

I have sometimes wondered whether this rule in music and poetry is due in its turn to the pulsation of the blood in the arteries, for the sphygmograph traces a line in which there is a strong upward beat first, then a downward curve, then a sort of kick-up or secondary beat towards the close of the cycle.

Hence it follows that the fifth foot is a weak or light foot in comparison with its neighbours. Hence the facts set out above, and also that very acute and remarkable observation of Mr. Drewitt's (*C.Q.* II. 101) that over-lengthening is avoided by Homer in the first syllable of the fifth foot. He does not give any statistics: I have examined the second book of the *Odyssey*, and find 22 such over-lengthenings in the second foot, 26 in the third, 21 in the fourth, and only 10 in the fifth. It is a surprising fact, however, that shortening of a vowel before a mute and liquid is commoner after the second syllable of the fifth foot than in that position in any other foot; in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth books of the *Odyssey* I note the following cases: first foot 2, second 2, third 18, fourth 1, fifth 23. This is due, I think, to the nature of such words as προσηύδα, which are so much more conveniently placed at the end of a line.

ARTHUR PLATT.

NOTE ON EUMENIDES 41-2.

... αἵματι
στάζοντα χεῖρας καὶ νεοσπαδῆς¹ ἔλφος
ἔχοντ' ...

THE chief difficulty of this passage has been cleared up when it is realised, with Verrall and Blass, that the blood with which Orestes drips is not that of Clytaemnestra, but of the victim slain for his purification. The epithet νεοσπαδῆς still awaits explanation; νεωστὶ ἑσπασμένον, the interpretation of the Scholiast, is certainly correct, but how could a sword be seen to be new-drawn? The passage in Apollonius Rhodius, which describes the purification of Jason and Medea (*Arg.* IV. 688-715), suggests a solution. As the pair, who evidently follow strictly the prescribed ritual, seat themselves silently on the hearth, Jason plants in the earth the sword with which he has slain the son of

Aietes. The sword must be brought, for it too must be purified; it is always prominent in the vase paintings which represent the scene at Delphi, and is held unsheathed in the hand over which blood was poured. But the homicide, stealing armed and unexpected into the house of the purifier and debarred from explaining his position in words, would do well to give a prompt demonstration of pacific intentions. The planting of the guilty weapon in the earth was doubtless part of the regular procedure; it would be removed at the moment when the homicide was about to receive the blood. Hence, if the priestess sees the hands of the stranger dripping with blood, she can reasonably conclude that the sword has just been plucked from the earth.

I am unable to produce any other Greek example of the purification of blood-guilty objects; but their trial for homicide at Athens is familiar, and belongs to the same order of ideas.

H. L. LORIMER.

¹ νεοσπαδῆς M., νεοσπαθῆς Fl. Fa. V.