TWO NOTES ON SOPHOCLES.

I.—THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE ABDUCTION INCIDENT IN SOPH. *Oed. Col.*

I HAVE lately spent some time in the locality in endeavouring to ascertain the true meaning of the passages concerned, which are as follows :

- L. 897. οὐκουν τις ὡς τάχιστα προσπόλων μολῶν
πρὸς τούσδε βωμούς πάντ' ἀναγκάσει λεῶν
σπεύδειν ἀπὸ ῥυτῆρος, ἔνθα δίστομοι
μάλιστα συμβάλλουσιν ἐμπόρων ὁδοί,
ὡς μὴ παρέλθωσ' αἱ κόραι.
- L. 1019. ὁδοῦ κατάρχειν τῆς ἐκεῖ, πομπὸν δέ μοι
χωρεῖν, ἴν', εἰ μὲν ἐν τόποισι τοῖσδ' ἔχεις
τὰς παῖδας ἡμῖν, αὐτὸς ἐνδείξῃς ἐμοί·
εἰ δ' ἐγκρατεῖς φεύγουσιν, οὐδὲν δεῖ πονεῖν.
ἄλλοι γὰρ οἱ σπεύδοντες, οὓς οὐ μήποτε
χώρας φυγόντες τῆσδ' ἐπεύξωνται θεοῖς.
- L. 1044. στ. εἶην ὅθι δαῖτων κ.τ.λ.
. . . . ἧ πρὸς Πυθίαις
ἧ λαμπάσιν ἀκταῖς
ἐνθ' οἶμαι κ.τ.λ.
. . . . τούσδ' ἀνὰ χώρους·
- ἀντ. ἧ που τὸν ἐφέσπερον
πέτρας νιφάδος πελώσ'
Οἰάτιδος ἐκ νομοῦ·
ἀλώσεται.

Three commentators, a Scholiast, Col. Leake, and Sir R. C. Jebb, have devoted some attention to this matter, the two latter following the first, in part or altogether, in conclusions, with which I find myself at variance. The wrong view was blindly followed by myself in my translation.

I doubt if sufficient attention has been paid to the dramatic conditions of the problem to be solved. What had Sophocles in view, in planning this incident, and in writing these passages? He was proposing (1) to add interest to the action of the play by the conduct, behind the scenes, of a flight and capture along roads well known to his audience; and (2) to utilise this

incident so as to bring out in Theseus the characteristic of thorough practical efficiency as a putter down of violence. Interpretations which make Theseus appear incompetent, or which militate against obvious facts of topography, should not be lightly hazarded; neither must we conclude, however we may be unable to explain the allusions, that they were not clear to an Athenian audience, or that Sophocles and his audience did not care that they should be clear.

There were in the time of Sophocles, and still are, two roads from Athens to Thebes; one leading by the Sacred Way, through the Pass of Daphní, between Corydallus and Aigaleos, to Eleusis, and thence over the mountain chain by Dryoscephalae between Cithaeron and Megalo Vounó; the other leading past the north eastern end of Aigaleos, along the low neck joining it with the mountain range, and traversing this last by the Pass of Phyle, between Megalo Vounó and Parnes. When we find poetic use made of the circumstance that there was more than one road, we must not forget that to an Athenian mind these roads, first, would necessarily suggest themselves; and any interpretation which involves a different route, and still more if it ignores these, or either of them, will require justification.

In the first passage quoted we have an order given on the spur of the moment by Theseus, to make haste and occupy the places "wherever packmen's roads converge," so the girls do not pass by them. This I interpret, not of some particular fork, but of *all* the spots in the suburbs of Athens, close at hand, where roads converge that are used by packmen *arriving from the country*; the use of the words *μάλιστα* and *ἐμπόρων* I think points to convergences in the direction of Athens, not a single particular convergence in the direction of Thebes: such convergences as the poet had in mind l. 1592, when he says Oedipus

ἔσται κελεύθων ἐν πολυσχίστων μῦ.

I fail to find in the text any indication of an actual convergence of two roads, each starting from Athens, in the direction of Thebes, such as has generally been taken for granted. The object of looking for such a convergence has been to fix upon a place where the guards might lie in wait, and catch the fugitives, by whichever of the supposed two roads they were going. Such a spot has been suggested near Eleusis, just where the railway now descends from the Neck, and approaches the Sacred Way, or again, further off, half way from Eleusis to Oenoe. Here the girls are supposed to be recaptured. Theseus's first plan is on this hypothesis successful; it is to give the abductors scope, to 'make haste' and wait for them ten or fifteen miles off, in the security that whatever road they may take, they must turn up at this particular spot.

To this I object: (1) The plan is imbecile; it is not the sort of way to catch anybody anywhere. (2) There is no point that blocks both the roads, that by Oenoe and that by Phyle. (3) A flight towards Thebes starting from Colonos round the N.E. of Aigaleos, and then making for Eleusis, is an impossible one. The railway to Eleusis goes that way for the sake of the

low gradient: but as a horse or carriage road it is as inconceivable as the way by Decelea. (4) From the second passage quoted we find that the precaution taken by Theseus in the first was not successful. This I venture to maintain, on the principle that in Greek literature the last suggested alternative is always that intended to be selected. This upsets the motive of the hypothesis criticised. (5) For the same reason I do not believe it was near Eleusis, or anywhere *ἐν τόποισι τοῖσδ'*, *i.e.* in Attica, that the abductors are supposed to be arrested, but *χώρας φεγγόντες τῆσδ'*, *i.e.* as they cross the frontier. This however, upon any route passing by Eleusis, they could not do till they reached the Pass of Dryosephalae, which is unreasonably far (30 miles) from Athens. (6) On the same principle we must consider the second route described in the Chorus, that of the antistrophe 1055, to be the actual scene of the recapture; and this again takes us, whatever we may make of it, quite away from Eleusis, which lies on the alternative route previously described in the strophe.

Before attempting to construe these last lines, let us suppose ourselves for a minute standing with Sophocles on Colonus Hippios. All roads coming from the country, we know, meet at last behind us, at the Altar of the Twelve Gods, by the other Colonus; but here we have, to the left, the Sacred Way, and to the right the line of the railway and modern *ὁδὸς Πατίσιος*, both leading to Thebes. Looking along the first, we cannot indeed see, but we can hardly forget, the temple of Apollo on Poecilum, and the Torch-lit Shore of Eleusis; looking along the second, we see snow on Parnes; and a marked depression to the west of it, which is Phyle:—‘Or haply will they be drawing near to the region westward of the snow-clad Rock, passing out of the common field of the tribe of Oea?...He shall be caught (there)!’ I really do not see how the route by Phyle could be more graphically indicated.

In holding that *χώρον* may be understood l. 1055 from *χώρους* l. 1054, I lay stress upon an antithesis parallel to that noticed above in the second passage commented on, between *τούσδ' ἀνὰ χώρους*, places in Attica, and *τὸν ἐφέσπερον πέτρας νιφάδος [χώρον]*, which is not within Attica, but on the frontier. I also call attention to the point, which I think plausible on the principles of Greek literary construction, that the place where on this theory the girls would be recaptured is the very furthest, between Athens and Thebes, which is in any degree visible from Colonus. Also that snow would lie on the south-west slope of Parnes in March, but not on the south-east slope of Aigaleos. Also that snow, if any, on the further side of Aigaleos is poetically unimportant, being out of sight from Athens.

I now come to the Scholiast, whom nobody has as yet translated, though he has been a good deal discussed.

‘Or haply the westward—he is speaking of Aigaleos; for this mountain is on the outskirts of the deme named: and they are enumerating the places at which they think it most likely that the encounter will take place between the followers of Creon and of Theseus. In *of the snowclad rock* he may possibly be speaking of the so-called Smooth Rock, or of the crest of Aigaleos; which are reported to be in that neighbourhood. Even as Istros

in the first book of his *Miscellanies* narrates thus: *From the Sea-coast (or from the torrent, Leake) [we went up] to the Smooth Rock. And a little way on: Thence as far as Colonos past the place entitled the Brazen Place, whence to the Cephissus as far as the Sacred Way that leads to Eleusis; and from this point the parts which lie to the left hand of those proceeding to Eleusis, as far as the easternmost summit of Aigaleos.* In one word, he is speaking either of the so-called Smooth Rock, or of Aigaleos: and the meaning is *Will they be approaching the western region of the Smooth Rock?*

Now in all this the point aimed at, the identification of the Smooth Rock with the Snowy Rock of Sophocles, is stated as a mere conjecture, suggested by the first quotation from Istros, and is not made out. Of the second quotation from Istros nothing can be made, for we are not told what Istros was driving at; if he is describing the limits of the deme of Oea, it is clear from the mention of Colonos, Cephissus, and the Brazen Place, that Oea lay on the hither or south-eastern side of Aigaleos, and not, as Col. Leake would have us place it, on the further side, in the Thriasian Plain. In any case, on the hither side it must be, on the authority of the Scholiast himself: for he says Aigaleos is 'on its outskirts,' which to one regarding it from Athens can have no other meaning. As to the Scholiast's own views of Oea, they are not clear, and he does not seem to speak from knowledge of the spot; they are moreover contradicted by Hesychius, who asserts roundly, 'Oea was not there.' But it is possible we were not intended to place Oea west of Aigaleos, but only the region entered by the fliers as they left Oea. Properly speaking there is no region 'west' of Aigaleos; the Thriasian Plain is rather N.N.W. of it than W. Did any one in his senses ever speak in a passage intended to be graphic, of 'approaching a region west' of a range, when what he meant to describe was 'starting on the South of it, passing round its N.E. end, all along the back of it, till you approach, on leaving it, the region N.W. of it'?

Rejecting his topography, I am entitled to quote the Scholiast against Sir R. C. Jebb as an authority for understanding *χώρον* in l. 1055, for taking *πελώσι* as equivalent to *προσπελάσωσι*, and generally for retaining the MSS. text unaltered. If with Sir R. C. Jebb we abandon the convergence outward of the routes, I cannot see any pretext for the distortion of the second route. Lastly, the very worst of all conjectures is that which distorts the first route behind Aigaleos, in order to obtain a convergence near Phyle. It unites all the impossibilities, and solves none of the difficulties.

II.—THE TRIODOS IN *Oed. Tyr.*

O. T. 715. καὶ τὸν μὲν, ὥσπερ ἡ φάτις, ξένοι ποτὲ
λησται φονεύουσ' ἐν τριπλαῖς ἀμαξιτοῖς.

„ 733. Φωκὶς μὲν ἡ γῆ κλήζεται· σχιστὴ δ' ὁδὸς
ἐς ταῦτὸ Δελφῶν ἀπὸ Δαυλίας ἄγει.

O. T. 800

τριπλῆς

ὄτ' ἢ κελεύθου τῆσδ' ὁδοιπορῶν πέλας,
 ἐνταῦθά μοι κῆρύξ τε καπὶ πωλικῆς
 ἀνὴρ ἀπήνης ἐμβεβώς, οἶον σὺ φής,
 ξυνηντίαζον.

The accounts given by travellers of the locality and of the incident appear in some respects unsatisfactory. In the absence of any good map, a capital T followed by a full stop will serve me as a diagram (T.). The stem and right limb of the T represent the course of the Platania, flowing first north, then east. The left limb is the gorge of Zymeno. Parnassus fills all the ground north of the cross line; Mount Kirphis all the angle between the left limb and the stem. In the other angle is a low hill, and east of it a meadow. Roads exist, and must long have existed, along each of the three water-courses; but we cannot be certain that they have always and at all places been on the same side as at present of the streams. At the present day the main road from Delphi to Daulia lies north of the cross line, and a branch road, described in the older books as that from Ambryssus, west of the stem. Thus Wordsworth's *Greece*, p. 231 :

'The road from Daulia to the S.W. leads along a rugged valley to Delphi; and falls in with another from Ambryssus on the South at a point half-way between the two. This place was called the Schisté Hodos or Triodos. . . . The tomb of Laius and his attendant was seen by Pausanias on the spot where they fell, which is now called Zymenó.'

Upon this I observe that Zymeno itself is a well and khan much further to the west than this junction of the roads. But this is not all. To suppose that the three roads led (1) to Delphi (2) to Daulia and (3) to Ambryssus destroys, to my mind, the whole point of the story. Oedipus is hastening from Delphi with the one object of travelling as far as possible from Corinth. He is not therefore going southwards to Ambryssus. Suppose him going to Daulia. Whence, then, is Laius coming? Not, certainly, from Ambryssus: in so far as the commentators have realised the scene, they have supposed him coming from Daulia, and so meeting Oedipus directly, in the way he was going. Now I do not say this is impossible; I do not deny that the word *ξυνηντίαζον*, which no doubt suggested it, may be urged in its favour; but I am convinced it is a mistake. If Oedipus and Laius met each other at a casual fork, while travelling the same road, there is no point in the often repeated assertion that they met at a triodos; the turning to Ambryssus is merely one of half-a-dozen that might be selected; there is nothing in the circumstance specially tragic, nothing Sophoclean, nothing Greek.

It is true that modern travellers from Thebes generally proceed after leaving Livadia round by Chaeronea and Daulia to Delphi. They do so, as Pausanias did, to see the cities on the way; and also to take advantage of a good road as far as Chaeronea. Meantime they hardly notice, in their guide books, the mention of a direct road, leading due west from Livadia

through the lonely valley in which lie ruins ascribed to the Phocian Trachis. Along this road I found everywhere traces of a paved way, which the local guide ascribed to the Turks, but which must at least have been as old as the Frankish occupation, and was probably an ancient route. At the ancient well of Korakolitho, represented in the diagram by the full stop, it descends abruptly into the meadow. Thence at the present day its course, very ill defined, proceeds westwards, south of the low hill, and then turns northwards, joining the Ambryssus road as it crosses the river bed. This would be the road for Laius to follow, going on business straight to Delphi. At whatever point it in ancient days joined the main road, he meets a wayfarer proceeding along that road. It may have been, as generally believed, at the present junction; it may have been further east, on the right bank of the Platania, in the meadow. Oedipus was bound for Daulia, perhaps for Thessaly; in another moment he would have passed on, the danger would have passed with him; but fate forbids: Laius has already reached the fork; the paved way is too narrow for an armed man to pass the driver and the chariot together; the driver jostles him, he strikes back, the old king intervenes and is struck down. There is no suggestion of a narrow gorge or steep descent; the collision was due to the narrowness of the pavement (804):

*ἐξ ὁδοῦ μ' ὃ θ' ἡγεμὼν
αὐτός θ' ὁ πρέσβυς πρὸς βίαν ἤλαυνέτην.*

That the present junction is the place where a modern conflict took place between Greek soldiers and brigands is nothing to the purpose. No trace has yet been found there of the monument Pausanias saw. I think search might be made for it with advantage, among the many large stones in the meadow further east.

It may be objected, however, that Oedipus did not go to Thessaly; that he came to Thebes: and that if he went thither round by Daulia, Laius may have gone to Delphi that way. It may be so; but Oedipus was wandering, Laius travelling on business. The circumstances of the coming of Oedipus to Thebes are not known to us, except that he there encountered the Sphinx. If this implies that he came over Mount Sphingion, he may well have come from the north, by Akraephnia. In any case I submit that the way in which the locality is indicated by Jocasta, in the second passage quoted, as she stands with Oedipus on the Kadmeion, looking out over the region, is decisive in favour of Thebes as the direction of the branch road. She says, 'A forked road leads to the same place from Delphi and from Daulia;' there is no mention of Ambryssus, or of any other destination for the road after the junction. Its destination, therefore, is Thebes, the place where the speaker stands; this appears the sufficient and only possible reason why she does not specify it. With this I am glad to see Mr. J. G. Frazer (Pausanias, vol. v. p. 231) concurs. But why does he add (p. 232) 'When Oedipus and Laius met, Oedipus was on his way from

Delphi to Thebes, and Laius was on his way from Thebes to Delphi'? This makes the road to Daulia as superfluous, dramatically, as is that from Ambryssus on the older hypothesis. That Oedipus went straight to Thebes, after slaying Laius, seems to me even more improbable than that Laius went round by Daulia to Delphi.

GEORGE YOUNG.