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The Ignorance of Antilochus

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removed for the non-imperative use of *δεῦτε*, *δαῦτε*, or *δηῦτε* to mean 'hither'; and so both here and in Theocr. 11. 22. I would now take it as equivalent to *δή*, the effect here being to recall the reader to the first request of the Ode,—'when return he does, as I am praying he may.' In l. 18, for the elision of the *ι* of *λέχουσι*, cf. Bergk, *P.L.G. Frag. Aësch.* 51 *ἀρμάτεσσ' ὀχήμενος*, where the dialect points to Alcaeus or Sappho; cf. also *ὄττ' ἔμφ* Sa. 1. 17. For *γάαι* = *γαίαι* in l. 19, cf. Sa. 44. *Φωκάας*,

91 *Τμήναον et al.* In the same line *κακάνθη* is accusative of *κακάνθης*, like *χρυσανθής*, *πολυανθής*, *πορφυρανθής*, cf. Nicander *Alex.* 420 *κακάνθηεις*. The *πιδάγη* of l. 20 is imperative of *πιδάγρῳ* or *πιδάγημι*; cf. Hesych. *πιδάγρετον* · *μεταδίδωκτον*, Theocr. 29. 28 *παλινάγρετον*, and the Lesbian use of *ἀγρέω* for *αἰρέω*.

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THE IGNORANCE OF ANTILOCHUS.

A STUDY IN INTERPOLATION.

WE should be grateful indeed if some beneficent fairy could unroll for us a mental cinematograph-film, showing us the different interpolators of Homer at work, and disclosing their thoughts and motives in the process. We to-day have studied the art of analysis to a nicety, and it often causes us to misunderstand the art of interpolation. Accustomed to dissection, we are apt to expect that the interpolator, before inserting his piece, went through the same rigid process as we do. This is not always the case. A particular gem must have sometimes demanded its way into the whole by popular applause, and it would have been listened to uncritically for its intrinsic beauty. A good instance of our change in habit of mind appears in the present stage-rendering of famous Shakesperean passages and that of a generation ago. An elderly acquaintance of mine has told me that in his youth a speech like 'All the world's a stage' would be spoken by the star, detached from the action of the play, and simply reciting to the audience. On the other hand, when I saw Mr. Oscar Asche in the character of Jaques, he took elaborate measures to assimilate this speech to the action and atmosphere of the woodland scene. He spoke it sitting at a rustic table and eating an apple. At the reference to the 'lean and slippered pantaloons' he pointed meaningly to a Guy-Fawkes-like character, obviously dressed to make this piece of business, who self-con-

sciously started at the gibe. Result, explosions from the audience.

Of the two I confess I prefer the old-fashioned style; for the piece is a little poem of itself, and I prefer to sacrifice realism to poetry rather than poetry to realism. I believe that a Greek would have listened in this spirit of detachment to such a piece as the weeping of Achilles' horses. It might delay the action of the battle; it might be a piece of sentiment out of place. But it was moving in itself and subdued criticism. If a rhapsode had omitted it, popular clamour would probably have demanded its restoration.

There are, however, other interpolations which considerably affect the action, which must have demanded some acute analysis before insertion, and which evidence remarkable skill in smoothing, if they fail to obliterate, inconsistencies. The presence of a contradiction by no means infers lack of dexterity. Let any modern try to insert the story of Cain and Abel into *Paradise Lost*. If he could deceive an acute man hunting for difficulties after his tenth reading of the poem he would be clever indeed. For we must remember that it is the acute man hunting for difficulties, and not the ordinary reader, who finds them.

The Patrokleia, or more properly speaking, the original fight and death of Patroclus, is a centre-point in the great contest, and was bound to receive additions. If we are content to expect

certain inconsistencies arising from their insertion, we shall be struck with admiration at the skill in the interweaving. We shall be convinced that the authors of the main expansions had an adequate view of the general framework and were able to justify their work by the choice of sufficient motives.

One growing idea was behind the main drift of certain interpolations—the belittlement of Hector. In the ages nearer to the Trojan war the Achaean chiefs could give the dues of chivalry to a greatly fallen foe. In the original *Menis* Hector alone slays Patroclus, stripping him of his arms. As the war receded into the dimness of time, the Greek bards increased the glory of their national chieftains at the expense of the Trojans. Thus it is that Hector becomes merely a third-hand slayer of Patroclus.

It was this idea which introduced the Euphorbus episode and the donning of Achilles' armour by Patroclus.

If one reads the story with the excitement and hurry of battle in his mind, the traces of these insertions will not be glaringly apparent. There is an amazing verve and continuity in the narrative such as would carry a rhapsode clear through with an audience. Yet the traces are there. For instance, even in the Sarpedon-episode, which has very little to do with the belittling of Hector, somebody has made a slip. Zeus, as he gazes down at the fight over the fallen Lycian, considers whether he will allow Hector there and then to slay Patroclus *and strip him of his armour* (XVI. 650). Here is a vestige of the original story, but it has been forgotten that Apollo is to do this for Hector.

Moreover, though we are told that Apollo did so in XVI. 804, yet at XVII. 125 we find that Hector did it.

So, too, the introduction of Euphorbus leads to a confusion between his armour and that of Patroclus. When Hector hears that Euphorbus is killed by Menelaus, he sees the victor, as he searches the lines, stripping *Euphorbus* of his armour (XVII. 84-85). When he hurries up to engage Menelaus, the latter draws back, regretting that he must leave *Patroclus* and his armour (91).

Originally there was one dead man—Patroclus; and Euphorbus, though very useful to the self-esteem of the Greeks when alive, simply becomes a nuisance when dead, and is obliterated in summary fashion.

Little cracks and fissures thus appear, but the wonder is that there are so few. More have been found in abundance, I know, but many are existent only in hypercritical brains. Let any modern poet, I say again, determine to insert a lengthy Biblical episode into *Paradise Lost*; let him do it under the spell of inspiration, and he will find the rivetting work amazingly troublesome.

For the bards of these particular episodes certainly were under the spell of inspiration. They had worked themselves into the situations and were faithful to the characteristics of the heroes.

This is evident enough in the main, but I take occasion here to defend a passage in which this is questioned—where Hector dons the armour of Achilles (XVII. 140 ff.). 'It is somewhat startling to find Hector, after his great promises, and his appeal to Glaucus to stand by his side and watch, suddenly leaving the field of battle.' Such is the verdict of Leaf.

But consider the circumstances, and it is not startling. Glaucus is a thorough grumbler; he does not seem to have his heart in the fight, or, in fact, in the war. He is concerned to keep Hector alive to the kindness of the Lycians in coming to Troy at all. So, in XVI. 538, he chides Hector for neglecting his allies, and seems to regard him as responsible for Sarpedon's death. Now, too, the old grudge is fresh, and he even threatens to withdraw his men. Hector is readily responsive to an appeal to his chivalry, and his reply shows how deeply his sense of honour is stung. It consists of the defence that Zeus is against him, and ends with a curt command to Glaucus to stand at his side and see what he will do.

It is a good phrase, *ἰδε ἔργον*; it means that Hector is too moved and too proud to say more. A sudden idea has seized him. Zeus may be against him, but he will thwart the Thunderer by

donning the magic armour. Glaucus will not have long to wait; he will soon be back in double vigour.

As he rallies back to the fight, he shows what point in Glaucus' speech stung him. Rushing to his allies he says, in effect, 'Into the fray with you! Troy doesn't keep and feed her allies for the pleasure of it!' The reply is not made to Glaucus in person; it is simply hurled at the allies in general; but it is not a natural retort to the taunt still burning within him that he does not do his duty by his allies? The idea of remissness in knightly duty is above all things abhorrent to Hector. The retort he makes is neither chivalrous nor just; but the chivalrous, when undeservedly touched on a point of honour, often are unjust.

Now the writer of this part had to provide a motive for Hector's donning of Achilles' armour. He might have made Hector do it through sheer cowardice, or through vain-glory, the motive cynically given him by Shakespeare when he chases, in *Troilus and Cressida*, that phantom pomp of armour to his bane. Or again, the bard might have had a different taunt hurled at Hector. Some warrior might have told him that he could not work the havoc Patroclus caused because he was not man enough to wear Achilles' armour. He does none of these weaker things. Instead, he produces a natural and convincing effect by studying his characters.

To the interpolators who were really poets we owe our gratitude and reverence. They were, in fact, not interpolators but co-builders. For an interpolator is properly an intruder, a botcher tricking out a noble fabric with tasteless ornament, or cementing fissures in the honest stone. The tedious simile in the second of the so-called false starts (XVII. 384-399) is an instance of the first process: the first false start, (XVII. 366-383) is an instance of the cement-work.

With this cement-work I shall deal. Its author, the Cementeer, must have been a dull fellow, given to logic rather than poetry: and it was with a logical eye that he read the great passage where Ajax, weary with fighting over Patro-

clus' body, despatches Menelaus to advise Antilochus of Patroclus' death, with the request that he convey the news to Achilles, in the hope of rousing him to revenge (XVII. 652 ff.). This seems to have aroused in our Cementeer nothing beyond the academic question—'Why was Antilochus ignorant of Patroclus' death?'

To be sure, one might reasonably conclude that so significant an event must have become quickly known throughout all the army. Antilochus was clearly ignorant of it, as is seen from the effect the news has on him (694 ff.).

Our bard set about explaining the matter. His respect for the traditional Homer led him to conclude that if Homer said Antilochus was ignorant, then he was, strange though it appeared. There must be a reason, and that reason he found in the miraculous cloud round Patroclus' body.

It was a stupendous piece of machinery to invent for the solution of this trivial point. He viewed it as a logician, but he tried to answer it as a poet. Alas, poetry born of logic has made Ossa like a wart!

However, he was not so bold as to plume himself on actually correcting Homer. He persuaded himself that the miracle was there ready to hand. His task was merely to make explicit what Homer had implied.

Had not Zeus shaken his aegis over the field, causing darkness? (XVII. 593). Does not Ajax plead to the Thunderer to raise it? (645)¹ If the darkness was sent by Zeus of set purpose to confound the Achaeans, must it not have been miraculous?

But it is not said that the darkness was confined to the fight round Patroclus; and the bard now proceeds to read it into the text.

He notices that indistinctness of vision is mentioned by Menelaus and Ajax alone, *i.e.*, *only by warriors fighting round Patroclus*. He fails to remark, or wishes to ignore, the fact that Menelaus does not allege the same cause for it as

¹ It is impossible to agree with Leaf that the *ἀπ* complained of by Ajax is merely a cloud of dust.

Ajax does. Menelaus, urging on his comrades, addresses them indiscriminately, because 'hard is it for me to distinguish each chief amid the press—such blaze, is there of the strife of war' (XVII. 252). This the Cemente^r attributes to the dimness caused by the cloud, since he misreads the closely preceding remark of Ajax to Menelaus that he fears for the lives of them both because 'a cloud of war covers everything' (243)¹. Homer, of course, meant nothing more than a cloud of warriors, but the unimaginative one takes the expression literally.

He argues, therefore, that complaint of 'low visibility' arises only from the space round Patroclus, because the cloud was there and nowhere else.

This, then, was the cause of Antilochus' ignorance. Being in another part of the field, he could not see what was going on round the fiercest point.

Fortified with these conclusions, he launches at 366 into his account of the confined darkness.

How poor a poetic motive this was is seen from the work of still another bard. This second man supplied at 268 a richer motive. Accepting the miracle, he adds that Zeus thus concealed Patroclus in the cloud because he wished to protect him from Trojan desecration. But in the Cemente^r's work it is plain that nothing but the low visibility was in his mind, because nothing but the ignorance of Antilochus concerned him.

Let us now look at the interpolation. 'Then strove they as it had been fire, nor wouldst thou have thought that there was still sun or moon, for over all the battle where the chiefs stood around the slain son of Menoitios they were shrouded in darkness, while the other Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans fought at ease in the clear air, and piercing sunlight was spread over them, and on all the earth and hills there was no cloud seen.'

The supernatural character of this cloud is not exaggerated through any

crude, if genuine, feeling of awe. It is merely to explain the sad case of Antilochus because, as he proceeds, he adds new reasons for his ignorance. 'And they ceased fighting now and again, avoiding each other's dolorous darts and standing far apart. *But they who were in the midst endured affliction because of the darkness and the battle, and all the best men of them were wearied by the pitiless weight of their bronze arms.* Yet two men, Thrasymedes and Antilochus, knew not yet that noble Patroclus was dead, but deemed that he was yet alive and fighting against the Trojans in the forefront of the press. So they twain in watch against the death or flight of their comrades were doing battle apart from the rest, since thus had Nestor charged when he roused them forth to the battle from the black ships.'

Thus not only did the cloud intervene, but Antilochus was on the outer edge of a scattered and desultory combat—in fact, as far as possible from the scene round Patroclus.

It is very bad. The underlined words are mere padding, unless they are meant to contrast the closeness of the central fight with the scattered nature of the rest of the field. Even thus, this go-as-you-please engagement is mere bathos.

His too curious logical faculty is truly unfortunate for him, since it preserves him neither from vagueness nor carelessness. Antilochus' companion was not Thrasymedes but Laodocus (699), while Thrasymedes came up to take Antilochus' place after he had left (705). Moreover, for all his anxiety to repair Homer's omissions, he has not told us where Antilochus was. As for Nestor's injunction, it is a mere ineptitude.

And the irony of the matter is that the poetry born of logic is wrong, while the logic born of poetry is right. There was no fissure at all; the cement was not needed. Homer had in his eye a perfectly consistent picture of the darkness, the circumstances, and the battlefield.

Cutting out the foreign body, Homer's version runs thus:

'There has fallen over the whole

¹ The line following—'Hector, and sheer doom stareth in our face'—is, as Leaf remarks, simply a gloss to explain the expression, 'cloud of war.'

battlefield a dark cloud, such as often rises in that sultry latitude. It is supernatural only as coming from Zeus to accomplish a special design. It naturally obscures distant objects, and Ajax' prayer for light infers nothing more. He cannot afford a messenger to Achilles from the press around him, since things go hard with the Greeks. He wishes he could descry Antilochus, but the murk forbids it. He asks Menelaus to find him, and Menelaus, leaving the contest, searches acutely (the sharpness of his spying is emphasised) until he finds Antilochus.

Where was he? On the left of the whole fight, quite distant enough to offer difficulties to one who scanned the stormy gloom. Why was he there? We are not directly told, but as Ajax had come from there to assist Menelaus (XVII. 116 ff.), and as Thrasymedes was sent to succeed Antilochus, it is legitimate to infer that Antilochus supplied the place of Ajax.

For the left of the battle was a key position. It was north of Troy, holding the ford and securing the Achaean retreat. The Cementeer may have meant to indicate that Thrasymedes and Antilochus were at this spot when he says that they were 'in watch against the death or flight of their comrades' (i.e. were ready to secure the retreat). But he is not half so clear as Homer, for the 'left of the whole battle' is at once intelligible. Coming from this point himself, Ajax might have guessed where Antilochus was. At any rate, he

was very handy for a message to Achilles, for besides being a swift runner, he was at the point of the battlefield nearest the ships.

Under the circumstances pictured by Homer, there is nothing remarkable in the ignorance of Antilochus. He has no talk of lazy fighting straggling out to the fringes of the field. Menelaus finds Antilochus in the thick of it, urging on his men. Like a good leader he is fully occupied in holding his own, and as he gives a hurried glance down the field, and dimly sees under the cloudy sky the bending line of the Greeks, he hurls himself the more fiercely into holding the ford. Homer sees quite well that Antilochus would have noticed that something was wrong, for Menelaus speaks to him in exactly that strain—'Antilochus, you must have seen of yourself, as you cast your eye along, that God rolls waves of woe upon the Greeks,' he says, before he tells him how dire a calamity has befallen.

The whole picture is true and consistent just because Homer was conversant with every part of it. He has not laboured every point because his silences have such obvious replies. But our logical friend, just because he did not see the picture clearly, has forced Homer's silence into the monstrous.

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THE DEUS EX MACHINA IN EURIPIDES.

It has long ago been pointed out that the use of the *deus ex machina* by Euripides has been the cause of a good deal of misunderstanding,¹ but in spite of the more enlightened critics, the misunderstanding is still glibly repeated, as by Laurand as recently as 1914 in

¹ E.g. by Haigh: 'The use of this contrivance in Euripides has been much misrepresented by the critics. It has generally been described as the last resort of an unskilful dramatist, when he is unable to find any other solution for the complexities of the plot.'—*Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 245.

his *Manuel des Études Grecques et Latines* (II. 224), 'Après des péripéties souvent fortuites le dénouement se fait par un *deus ex machina*.' In face of this it may be well to attempt to clear up the whole question, for there can be no doubt that some ancient dramatists did misuse the contrivance, and it figures more frequently in the extant plays of Euripides than anywhere else.

That it was commonly misused is sufficiently attested by (1) Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* I. xx. 53, 'Quod quia quem ad modum natura efficere sine