

THREE NOTES ON SOPHOCLES'
OEDIPUS IN COLONUS (100, 1501-1502, 1747)

1. OC 100: 96 ἔγνωκα μὲν νυν ὥς με τήνδε τὴν ὁδὸν
οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐ πιστὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν πτερόν
ἐξήγαγ' εἰς τόδ' ἄλλος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ποτε
πρώταισιν ὑμῖν ἀντέκυρσ' ὁδοιπορῶν,
100 νήφων ἀοίνοις, κάπι σεμνὸν ἐζόμην
βάθρον τόδ' ἀσκέπαρον.

Many of the traditional misunderstandings' surrounding the striking phrase νήφων ἀοίνοις were cleared up in an important article by Albert Henrichs¹; nonetheless, a few more observations may be added towards its more complete elucidation.

Oedipus recognizes a sign of divine guidance in his having arrived νήφων ἀοίνοις at the sacred grove of the Eumenides: why? Henrichs had little difficulty refuting some older views according to which it was permanent or at least long-term features of Oedipus' character or way of life – abstemiousness, temperance, depression, poverty – which made him an appropriate visitor to the sanctuary². But Henrich's own focus, in itself no doubt entirely legitimate, upon the background of religious cult practice rather than upon the foreground of Sophocles' play led him to emphasize only one aspect of what is mistaken in these views: namely, that what must be involved belongs not to the category of Oedipus' psychology but to that of ritual practice, «that the “kinship” between Oedipus and the Semnai that Sophocles envisaged was based in cult rather than spiritual and that the comparison was not so much “in point of austerity” as in point of ritual»³.

* I am pleased to dedicate this article to Professor K. Tsantsanoglou, expert on Greek religion, for whom Sophocles' *Oedipus in Colonus* has always been a central text. I am grateful to William Furley (Heidelberg) and Alan Griffiths (London) for their generous, helpful, and occasionally acerbic comments on an earlier version of this article and to my colleagues and students at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa and at the Università degli Studi di Pisa, who discussed these passages with me in various seminars between November 2001 and February 2002; none of them should be held responsible for its conclusions. I cite the text of Sophocles from H. Lloyd-Jones & N. G. Wilson (eds.), *Sophocles Fabulae*, Oxford 1990 (= Lloyd-Jones), and I have adopted their symbols to designate the manuscripts and families, but I have enriched from other sources their *apparatus criticus* for the relevant lines.

1. A. Henrichs, «The “Sobriety” of Oedipus: Sophocles OC 100 Misunderstood», *HSClPh* 87 (1983) 87-100.

2. A. Henrichs, op.cit., 89-90.

3. A. Henrichs, op.cit., 100, quoting from R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: An Interpretation*, Cambridge 1980, p. 267, n. 53.

But there is another aspect of this appropriateness which Henrichs neglected, though it is at least as important, and perhaps even more so, in terms of the dramatic action of the play⁴. This is that what is involved is not a long-term or permanent feature of Oedipus' life, but instead one determined completely by the most immediate present circumstances. For what proves to Oedipus that it has been divine guidance leading him on (ἐξ ὑμῶν πτερὸν 97) is that he has come upon the Eumenides first of all (πρώταισιν 99) during his wandering and has sat down upon this holy seat which no human adze has shaped (καπὶ σεμνὸν ἐζόμην | βάθρον τόδ' ἀσκέπαρνον 100-1). Under normal circumstances, the blind man would have had to ask his way of human informants in order to find out how to reach the sacred grove he is seeking. But here he has come upon his goal without any human guidance – just as, at the end of the play, it will be he who will lead the other humans into that grove, without any assistance or guidance from them (1542-48). It is the momentary circumstance of his arrival here unguided by any local human informant which proves to him that it has really been the Eumenides themselves who have been guiding him.

But if so, then the phrase νήφων ἀοίνοις, which is placed squarely in the middle between these other two proofs, must necessarily share their own character of immediate circumstantiality. That is, those traditional views which emphasized Oedipus' permanent psychological disposition in explaining this phrase were mistaken not only because they saw his situation in terms of his character, but also because they looked to the long term rather than to the short term. If, instead, we ask what it is in Oedipus' immediate circumstances that might suggest what he has in mind when he describes himself as νήφων, then the answer is supplied by the very beginning of the play, when Oedipus asks his daughter, τίς τὸν πλανήτην Οἰδίπουν καθ' ἡμέραν | τὴν νῦν σπανιστοῖς δέξεται δωρήμασιν...; (3-4). Oedipus' question can only mean that it is still early in the morning and that he has not yet received the provisions which he as a beggar must hope that someone he will run into will grant him during the course of the day. In other words, Oedipus has not yet had breakfast or lunch; and, in the absence of cappuccino, this means that he has not yet had any wine, a staple of life in ancient as in modern Greece⁵. Attic tragedies, which, as Aristotle noted, conventionally often contrive to

4. A. Henrichs, op. cit., merely hints at it in the words «at the very moment» (89) and in the textual references at 90, n. 12.

5. Cf. Hom. *Od* 16.2, 13-14, 52. Whether or not all real breakfasts in ancient Greece were quite as hearty as the one prepared by Eumaeus, this passage suffices to demonstrate that wine was thought by later Greeks to have been a self-evident component of even a swineherd's breakfast in the heroic age.

concentrate their whole action into the course of a single day, tend to propose themselves as starting in the early morning⁶. So too here: the earliness of the hour has ensured that Oedipus has come upon the wineless Eumenides before he himself has had any wine during this fateful morning; the point is precisely not that he is habitually abstemious. («der an kärgliche Nahrung Gewöhnte»⁷) but that at this very moment he happens not yet to have drunk the wine (good, bad, or indifferent, much or little) that he can look forward to, with a reasonable degree of hope, as his daily portion.

This much was obvious to T. Mitchell already over 140 years before the publication of Henrichs' article (which does not mention him)⁸. But it may be that we can go one step further in understanding the phrase νήφων αἰόνοις, and interpret Oedipus' words with reference not only to the immediate dramatic situation but also to their ultimate religious symbolism. As Henrichs showed, the epithet νήφων is being transferred here from the wineless libations which were normally offered to the Eumenides, to the worshipper who offers them and who is normally not required to be wineless himself⁹. Henrichs then goes on to consider whether the adjective might suggest proleptically a further similarity between the Eumenides and Oedipus, namely that he too will soon enjoy cult status as a hero who receives wineless libations himself; though the evidence is inconclusive, Henrichs does make

6. Arist. *Poet.* 5.1449b12-13; cf. J. P. Schwindt, *Das Motiv der «Tagesspanne»: Ein Beitrag zur Ästhetik der Zeitgestaltung im griechisch-römischen Drama*, Paderborn 1994. At least one scholar has suspected that in the OC the earliness of the imagined dramatic time may be hinted at as late as lines 305-7, where the Chorus leader states that Theseus would awaken from sleep if he heard that Oedipus had arrived (πολὺ γάρ, ὦ γέρον, τὸ σὸν | ὄνομα διήκει πάντα, ὥστε κεί βραδύς | εὔδει, κλύων σοῦ δεῦρ' ἀφίξεται ταχύς): T. Mitchell (ed.), *Oedipus Coloneus of Sophocles, with notes critical and explanatory, adapted to the use of schools and universities*, Oxford - London - Cambridge 1841, pp. 39-40 ad vv. 306-307. But these lines do not in fact require that we understand them to mean that Theseus might actually still be asleep at this hour: they assert that, even if he were asleep, he would come quickly. Yet the rather odd expression may nonetheless seem somewhat more natural if spoken in the early morning than late in the day. R. C. Jebb (ed.), *Sophocles. The Plays and Fragments. Part II. The Oedipus Coloneus*, Cambridge 1907, p. 57 ad v. 306f., suggested a rare figurative use of εὔδω for humans; others emend the text (ἔρπει Brunck, σπεύδει van Eldik).

7. A. Nauck, in F. W. Schneidewin (ed.), *Sophokles. 3. Oidipus auf Kolonos*, ed. A. Nauck, Berlin ⁸1884, p. 46 ad v. 100; so too E. Tournier, *Les Tragédies de Sophocle*, Paris 1867, p. 344 ad v. 100.

8. T. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 19 ad v. 100: «That Oedipus had not broken his fast, when he arrived at Colonus, is clear from the language held by him (sup. 3-4), and from the early hour at which he reaches the place (infr. 306)». Mitchell's commentary, an intriguing mixture of bizarre and perspicacious comments, is unjustly neglected by modern scholars.

9. A. Henrichs, op. cit., 90-93.

interesting suggestions in this direction¹⁰. But might not the primary appropriateness of these words to the libations themselves suggest another way the phrase can be taken, namely to hint by implication that *νήφω* Oedipus is not only an appropriate worshipper for the Eumenides (and not only perhaps one day an appropriate recipient of wineless libations together with them), but is also in some sense an appropriate, because wineless, offering to them himself? For a long time now, Oedipus has known that he is fated to die in the grove of the Eumenides, where, in a sense, he will become an offering to them – soon, he will call himself, astonishingly, *ἱερός εὐσεβῆς τε* (287), designating himself with words which, however incongruous they may seem as a way of describing someone who has done what he has done during his life, are fitting here because they are applied terminologically in the language of Greek religion to sacrificial offerings¹¹. Throughout the play, Oedipus will resist attempts to reintegrate him into the family and politics of Thebes that he has left behind – left behind not only in order to be integrated into the religion and politics of Athens, but also because he will soon belong not to any merely human society at all but to the cult of the Eumenides. And at the conclusion of the play, Oedipus will go to die willingly in the grove of the Eumenides – willingly, as all sacrificial victims must display themselves to be if the sacrifice is to be acceptable¹².

This is not to claim that in the *Oedipus at Colonus* Sophocles shows us Oedipus as a conscious and explicit human sacrifice to the gods, of the sort found not infrequently in Greek tragedy (however rare the practice may have been in the reality of Greek religion)¹³. But it is to say that he brings himself as a destined offering to the Eumenides with whose cult he will soon be associated; and that, since such an offering, to be acceptable to the Eumenides, must be wineless, he can fittingly see the hand of divine guidance in the fact that he is still, on this day of all days, wineless himself.

10. A. Henrichs, *op. cit.*, 95-100.

11. *LSJ* s.v. *ἱερός* II.2 (and n.b. III.1), *εὐσεβῆς* II; and cf. J. Rudhardt, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique*, Paris ²1992, esp. pp. 12-17, 22-30. To be sure, *ἱερός* is further motivated by the fact that it can be applied to suppliants (e.g. Eur. *Ion* 1285), but this is not true of *εὐσεβῆς*.

12. Cf. W. Burkert, *Homo Necans. Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* [RGVV, 32], Berlin - New York 1972, p. 11.

13. Among older studies, cf. F. Schwenn, *Die Menschenopfer bei den Griechen und Römern* [RGVV, 15.3], Giessen 1915, and J. Schmitt, *Freiwilliger Opfertod bei Euripides* [RGVV, 17.2], Giessen 1921; more recently, see especially A. Henrichs, «Human Sacrifice in Greek Religion: Three Case Studies», in *Le Sacrifice dans l'Antiquité* [Fondation Hardt Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, 27], Genève 1981, pp. 195-242.

2. OC 1500-1: 1500 Θη. τίς αὖ παρ' ὑμῶν κοινὸς ἤχειται κτύπος
 1501 σαφῆς μὲν αὐτῶν, ἐμφανῆς δὲ τοῦ ξένου;

αὖ om. z: ἀν K ὑμῶν Zo κοινὸς] κοινὸς F. W. Schmidt ἤχειται] ἠγείται zt: οἰκεῖται R 1501
 del. F. W. Schmidt αὐτῶν] ἀστῶν Reiske

Ever since the heavens thundered at line 1456, the terrified Chorus have been repeatedly screaming for help, and Oedipus himself, though he has retained his composure and only addressed his daughters (for he alone has understood the divine sign), has nonetheless been anxious lest Theseus arrive too late to find him still alive and conscious. When Theseus finally does arrive, he asks what the commotion is all about – and then, if the manuscripts are to be trusted, goes on to say that the noise of the Chorus is clear and that of Oedipus is manifest. But the transmitted text can certainly not be defended:

(a) For Theseus to distinguish so carefully in this way between the clamor of the Chorus and that of Oedipus would be pedantic and artificial; at this highly dramatic moment of the action, it would destroy the tension which Sophocles has been building so carefully since line 1456. Otherwise in this play, Theseus is always quick and to the point (cf. 569-70, 887-90, 1148-49, 1208-10): why, at this critical juncture towards which the whole play has been aiming, should he bother to waste time saying that the Chorus has been shouting on the one hand and Oedipus on the other?

(b) In fact, it is only the Chorus who have been shouting for help, not Oedipus. Oedipus has been speaking trimeters to his daughters since line 1456, while the Chorus has been singing mostly agitated iambics and dochmiacs; although the passage is formally a kommos, Oedipus does not in fact participate in a dialogue with the singing Chorus, but rather converses on the stage with his daughters, while the Chorus sing intermittently in the orchestra on their own. This is not a trivial point but a carefully conceived and striking dramatic effect: the contrast with the Chorus' all too human terror is designed to emphasize Oedipus' almost superhuman self-control. So in fact, if this is what Theseus is saying, he is mistaken: why should Sophocles have gone out of his way to have him make such a pointless and uncorrected error?

(c) What exactly is the κτύπος to which Theseus refers? In the preceding lines, the word has been used twice to refer not to any noise made by humans, but instead specifically to the divine thunder of Zeus (ἔκτυπεν 1456, κτύπος 1464), and it will be used once again with the same meaning a little later (κτύπησε 1606, and cf. ὄτοβος 1479). And the two alternative hypotheses that Theseus goes on to consider immediately after this question –

μή τις Διὸς κεραυνός, ἢ τις ὄμβροια | χάλαζ' ἐπιρράξασα; (1502-3) – both involve various kinds of meteorological din, not human noise. Indeed, in the language of tragedy and comedy, κτύπος and related terms are used invariably for non-verbal sounds¹⁴. From the context, therefore, we would expect the words τις αὖ παρ' ὑμῶν ἠχεῖται κτύπος to mean, «What (non-verbal) din is now being resounded from you?» But this is impossible with κοινός and is contradicted by line 1502.

(d) The correlation of σαφής and ἐμφανής is flat and inane. It suggests an opposition between the kind of clamor made by the Chorus and that (not in fact) made by Oedipus which is vitiated by the thorough synonymy of the two adjectives¹⁵. Jebb provides parallels for Sophocles' correlation of close synonyms¹⁶, but none of the passages he mentions seems really comparable, for in all those cases a significant opposition is created by other words in the sentence in question: but what would be the point of such an opposition between the Chorus and Oedipus here?

(e) The word αὐτῶν, coming as it does immediately after ὑμῶν and κοινός, is very strange indeed. If ὑμῶν denotes both the Chorus and Oedipus, as it must, then αὐτῶν one line later cannot refer emphatically to the Chorus alone, as we would expect it to; but if αὐτῶν is understood together with ὑμῶν to refer to the Chorus and Oedipus together, then the contrast between αὐτῶν and τοῦ ξένου in line 1501 is destroyed. Hence Reiske's emendation of ἀστῶν for αὐτῶν, accepted by Jebb and signalled in the *apparatus criticus* of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson's and Dawe's editions.

But if the true difficulty lies elsewhere, more drastic measures may be required and Reiske's emendation (which does nothing at all to help with the first four problems indicated above) may not be necessary. The key to understanding what has gone wrong with this passage lies in the word κοινός, for what exactly does that adjective mean here? It can scarcely refer to the Chorus as a whole¹⁷, for how else could the Chorus possibly sing except all together, and what would be the point of Theseus' mentioning that fact here? The only alternative is to understand it as the scholia took it, to mean the

14. The few apparent exceptions are not genuine ones: Eur. *HF* 1048, *Or* 137 and 1353 distinguish the stamping of feet from verbal cries; Eur. *Hec* 1113 refers to echoes rather than to shouts; Aristoph. *Ach* 1072 refers to knocking at the door. My thanks to L. Prauscello for her advice on this point.

15. L. Campbell (ed.), *Sophocles*, vol. 1, Oxford ²1879, p. 417 ad v. 1501, suggests, implausibly, that ἐμφανής is being used analytically and is equivalent to ἐν δὲ φαινομένη (he translates, «Distinguishable among the other voices»).

16. R. C. Jebb, *op.cit.*, p. 231 ad v. 1500f.

17. So A. Nauck, *op.cit.*, p. 163 ad v. 1500: «κοινός κτύπος, sofern der gesamte Chor einen Hilferuf hat erschallen lassen».

combination of the Chorus and Oedipus¹⁸; in this view they seem to have been followed by most modern scholars. But, as we have seen before, such a meaning is false (b) and the distinction made thereby is pointless (a). Hence *κοινός* must be corrupt; and the obvious remedy is F. W. Schmidt's *καινός*, mentioned in the *apparatus criticus* of both Lloyd-Jones and Wilson's and Dawe's editions¹⁹. It is precisely the right word to describe some new, sudden, and startling event, like the *κτύπος* Theseus has just heard; for example, earlier in this same play, when Antigone had reacted to the sight of the menacing arrival of Creon and his soldiers by ominously telling the Athenians that now was the time to prove in action the truth of their fine words of self-praise (720-21), Oedipus had asked her, τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ, καινόν; (722)²⁰ But if *καινός* had been corrupted into *κοινός*, the question would naturally have arisen, to whom *κοινός* referred – unless that question was answered by verse 1501. For the scholia, that question was one which had to be answered by a gloss because it was not made clear in Sophocles' text. This fact provides crucial evidence concerning the development of that text, for it can only mean that, in the text presupposed by the scholia, line 1501 was missing – otherwise no one could have misunderstood the meaning of *κοινός* and the gloss would not have been necessary. Hence verse 1501 must be deleted, as proposed by F. W. Schmidt, followed by Nauck²¹; the emendation is mentioned neither in Lloyd-Jones and Wilson's edition nor in Dawe's.

Hence we may distinguish the following stages in the evolution of this passage:

(1) Originally, Sophocles most probably wrote τίς αὖ παρ' ὑμῶν καινός ἤχεῖται κτύπος; What Theseus meant was, «What strange din is now being resounded from you» and what he was referring to was the thunder which he had heard where he was sacrificing and which came from the location of Oedipus, his daughters, and the Chorus. The pronoun was directed by Theseus at everyone he found upon his entrance, and not just at the Chorus; hence it is entirely appropriate that it is Oedipus, and not the Chorus, who answers him.

(2) Then *καινός* was corrupted into *κοινός*.

(3) At this point readers started wondering to whom *κοινός* referred; the

18. Schol. ad 1500 (p. 59.8 De Marco): *κοινός*] ὑμῶν τε καὶ Οἰδίποδος.

19. F. W. Schmidt, *Analecta Sophoclea et Euripidea*, Strelitz 1864, p. 46. For other examples of the confusion postulated here, cf. Eur. *HF* 831 *κοινόν* Wakefield, *καινόν* L; *Ion* 1178 *κοινόν* Musgrave, *καινόν* L; and *Tro* 55 *καινόν* V, *κοινόν* PQ.

20. Cf. also OC 1507 (*νέορτον*), Eur. *Or* 790.

21. F. W. Schmidt, *loc.cit.*; A. Nauck, *op.cit.*, p. 163 ad v. 1501.

scholia provided an answer, ὕμων τε καὶ Οἰδίποδος. But this answer required that κτύπος be misunderstood now as referring not to the noise made by the thunder but to that made by the Chorus and Oedipus.

(4) This marginal gloss was transformed by some reader whose pedantry exceeded his poetic inspiration into an iambic trimeter which at some point entered into the text. If Reiske's emendation is correct, then the author of this line may, in composing his own verse, have recalled a phrase from the beginning of this play, ξένοι πρὸς ἀστῶν (13). On the other hand, we may harbor sufficient doubts concerning this author's poetic capacities to be disinclined to deprive him of αὐτῶν.

3. OC 1747:	1746	Χο.	μέγ' ἄρα πέλαγος ἐλάχετόν τι.
	1747	Αν.	ναὶ ναί. Χο. ξύμφημι καυτός.
		Αν.	φεῦ φεῦ, ποῖ μόλωμεν, ὦ Ζεῦ; ἐλπιδῶν γὰρ ἐς τί(ν' ἔτι) με δαίμων τανῦν γ' ἐλαύνει;
	1750		

1747 del. Dindorf 1748 μόλωμεν rat: μέλωμεν LV: μέλλομεν z: μένωμεν Schneidewin 1749 ἐς τί(ν' ἔτι) Hermann: ἐς τί codd.

It is regrettable that the last pages of the most recent Oxford edition of Sophocles are disfigured by bearing in their text verse 1747, surely the very worst single line in all of extant Greek tragedy. But at least Lloyd-Jones and Wilson indicate in their *apparatus criticus* that Dindorf deleted verse 1747; Dawe's silence on this score suggests he is not troubled by it²². Jebb accepted Dindorf's deletion of the words «which, besides being so feeble, destroy all metre»²³; but Kamerbeek simply asserts that the words in question «should not be regarded as an interpolation [...] Here, as often elsewhere, omission is much more probable than interpolation [...]»²⁴ – as though the vague general principle of the greater likelihood of omission can take precedence over overriding considerations of sense in the immediate passage. As it happens, verse 1747 attracts suspicion already because there is nothing corresponding to it in the strophe after line 1733. But even if a metrically corresponding verse had happened to be transmitted there, the content of verse 1747 is so unacceptable that it would have been a good candidate for athetesis anyway, together with its counterpart in the strophe. The problem is not so much the

22. R. D. Dawe (ed.), *Sophocles. Tragoediae*, vol. 2, Leipzig ²1985, p. 208 ad loc.

23. R. C. Jebb, op.cit., p. 267 ad v. 1747f.

24. J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles. Part VII. The Oedipus Coloneus*, Leiden 1984, p. 231 ad v. 1731-1733. Kamerbeek points out correctly that the line is metrically sound, despite the objections that have been made against its meter by Dindorf and others.

repeated *ναὶ ναί*, which seems colloquial but is also found at moments of extreme grief or solemnity in tragedy²⁵, nor even that the verse is «feeble» or «stultus [...] et indignus Sophoclis arte»²⁶, but rather that it so radically violates the fundamental logical structure of any human linguistic interchange such as this one that it must be rejected as simply impossible. That is, it is not merely aesthetically weak, but linguistically prohibited.

Consider, for purposes of illustration: A and B meet on the street on a hot afternoon in the middle of August. A mops his brow and says, «It sure is hot today.» B, nodding, says, «Yeah, yeah.» A then says, «I myself completely agree with you too.» B looks at him strangely, then walks sadly away, convinced that A has suffered some particularly debilitating form of sunstroke. For one can reasonably express agreement with one's interlocutor if that person has just voiced on his own an opinion with which one concurs (or has asked a question with the propositional content of which one concurs), but one cannot reasonably do so if the interlocutor has just expressed agreement with the view one has expressed oneself just a moment before. This is how *ξύμφημι* is used in Sophocles²⁷, and it is how verbs expressing agreement are used in the languages with which I am familiar. Another way to put this is that the two phrases *ναὶ ναί* and *ξύμφημι καὐτός* have exactly the same meaning: if A says «x,» then B can say *either ναὶ ναί or ξύμφημι καὐτός*, or *else*, if he is feeling particularly prolix or emphatic, *ναὶ ναί, ξύμφημι καὐτός*, and then A can go on to say something else, «y»; but if A says «x», and B says *ναὶ ναί*, A cannot then say to him *ξύμφημι καὐτός* without provoking the suspicion that for whatever reason he has at least temporarily lost his linguistic competence, for with these words, in agreeing with B (who has just agreed with A), A could only mean that he agreed with himself. No wonder B would be perplexed: in technical terms, A would be violating Grice's first maxim of quantity²⁸.

Hermann thought he could answer Dindorf's objections by simply putting a comma at the end of line 1746 after *ἐλάχετόν τι*, so that Antigone's *ναὶ ναί* would merely interrupt the Chorus' sentence, which would run as a whole *μέγ' ἄρα πέλαγος ἐλάχετόν τι, ξύμφημι καὐτός*²⁹; but such a sentence does

25. Aesch. *Pers* 1071, and perhaps TrGF Adesp. *59 (= Aristoph. *Nub* 1468); cf. also Callim. Frg. 228.56 Pf., *H* 6.63, and *Ev. Matth.* 5.37.

26. W. Dindorf, *Sophoclis Tragoediae Superstites et Perditarum Fragmenta. II. Oedipus Coloneus*, Oxford³1860, p. 140 ad v. 1748.

27. Soph. *Aj* 278, *El* 1257, *OT* 553, 642, *Ph* 1310.

28. H. P. Grice, «Logic and Conversation», in P. Cole & J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics. 3: Speech Acts*, San Francisco - New York 1975, pp. 41-58: «Make your conversation as informative as is required (for the current purposes of exchange)».

29. G. Hermann (ed.), *Sophoclis Oedipus Coloneus*, Leipzig²1841, p. 281 ad v. 1747.

violence to the meaning and usage of ξύμφημι and it is difficult to imagine anyone not taking that verb here, coming as it does immediately after Antigone's ναί ναί, as a direct, and meaningless, response to her words. The only other way that I can imagine to save verse 1747 would be to attribute both utterances to Antigone, who would respond to the Chorus' μέγ' ἄρα πέλαγος ἐλάχeton τι by saying ναί ναί, ξύμφημι καὐτός, and then going on with Φεῦ φεῦ, ποῖ μόλωμεν, ὦ Ζεῦ; But καὐτός is masculine singular, and while tragic usage does permit women to refer to themselves in the masculine, they generally seem to be allowed to do so only in the plural, not in the singular³⁰; and what is more, the resulting utterance, ναί ναί, ξύμφημι καὐτός, ponderous and pedantic as it is, would fit very poorly with the intense emotionality of the preceding and following lines.

So it seems best, as Dindorf saw, to delete verse 1747 after all. If we do, then verse 1748 will follow smoothly immediately after verse 1746: to the Chorus' assertion that the two girls have received as their lot an ocean of troubles, Antigone responds appropriately, Φεῦ φεῦ, ποῖ μόλωμεν, ὦ Ζεῦ; So too, there is no lacuna after verse 1733 (where indeed the sense does not require one).

How did this strange interpolation come about? My half-serious guess is that some ancient reader felt such keen agreement with the Chorus' assessment of the situation of Antigone and Ismene in verse 1746 that he expressed his assent by writing ναί ναί in the margin next to that verse. At some later time, some other reader expressed his own agreement with the first reader's judgment (and hence, indirectly, with the words of the Chorus) by appending ξύμφημι καὐτός or words to that effect next to the first reader's marginal comment. For it is only as a tertiary reaction, expressed by yet another speaker (or reader) to a second speaker's (or reader's) comment upon the Chorus' judgment, that the words ξύμφημι καὐτός make any sense at all. Later still, the two comments, misunderstood as accidentally omitted and fortuitously restored parts of Sophocles' text, were suitably modified and added to a text to which they had never belonged and which would have been much better off without them.

30. Cf. Kühner - Gerth II.83.2, Schwyzer II.31 n. 9, 46; and see especially Barrett pp. 366-69 ad Eur. *Hipp* 1102-50. A. C. Moorhouse, *The Syntax of Sophocles* [Mnemosyne, suppl. 75], London 1982, pp. 12-13, discusses the use of masculine singular for a woman «especially in proverbial or general statements. The reference is to any whom the description fits [...]»; but here this usage is ruled out by the specificity of καὐτός