

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

EURIPIDES (?) *RHESUS* 56–58 AND HOMER *ILIAD* 8.498–501: ANOTHER POSSIBLE CLUE TO ZENODOTUS' RELIABILITY

The speech of Hector that follows the parodos in the *Rhesus* (ascribed by the MSS to Euripides) comprises the preface to the nocturnal events narrated in this tragedy (and already in Homer, *Il.* 10). This retrospective summary plays, at least up until line 62 and again at lines 70–73, a virtuoso intertextual game with *Iliad* 8, which had described the day and dusk preceding the night of *Iliad* 10 (and of the *Rhesus*). The speech's primary focus is Hector's fear that the Greeks are secretly escaping, taking advantage of the darkness of night (*Rh.* 53–62):

ἄνδρες γὰρ ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε νυκτέρωι πλάτῃ
λαθόντες ὄμμα τοῦμόν αἵρεσθαι φυγῇν
μέλλουσι· σαίνει μ' ἔννυχος φρυκτωρία.
ὦ δαῖμον, ὅστις μ' εὐτυχοῦντ' ἐνόσφισας
θοίνης λείοντα, πρὶν τὸν Ἀργείων στρατὸν
σύρδην ἅπαντα τῶιδ' ἀναλῶσαι δορί.
εἰ γὰρ φαεννοὶ μὴ †ξυνέσχον† ἡλίου
λαμπτήρες, οὗτ' ἄν ἔσχον εὐτυχοῦν δόρυ,
πρὶν ναῦς πυρῶσαι καὶ διὰ σκηνῶν μολεῖν
κτείνων Ἀχαιοὺς τῇδε πολυφόνωι χερσί.

These men are about to give my watchful eye the slip
and escape from this land by night voyage;
the import of their night fires comes home to me.
O fate, you have robbed me of the feast,
like a lion of his kill, before I could destroy
in one swoop the whole Argive army with this spear of mine!
If the bright lamp of day had not immobilized (?) me,
I would not have checked my victorious spear
until I fired their ships and passed through their tents
slaying Achaeans with this murderous right hand!¹

Hector assumes that the Greeks are already trying to flee² and is unhappy that this is the case, since he would have liked to continue exploiting the “impulse” of the god who had provided him with εὐτυχία (63–64):

1. Translations of the *Rhesus* are from D. Kovacs, *Euripides: “Bacchae,” “Iphigenia at Aulis,” “Rhesus”* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), with modifications.

2. At *Rh.* 54 the future infinitive ἀρεῖσθαι, proposed by Nauck and shortly after by Wecklein, is usually printed in twentieth-century editions of the text. I think that the present infinitive αἵρεσθαι, the reading of almost all the MSS, should be retained. μέλλειν is combined with a future infinitive to express an action that is going to take place in the (more or less) near future, whereas μέλλειν + present infinitive almost always expresses the “probability of the present” (LSJ), and is used to describe an action that is to take place in a

κἀγὼ μὲν ἤ πρόθυμος ἰέναι δόρυ
ἐν νυκτὶ χρῆσθαι τ' εὐτυχεῖ ρύμη θεοῦ.

I myself was keen to hurl the spear in the night
and to make use of the lucky momentum the god had sent.

His seers, however, had prevented him from advancing an attack early in the night. At this point, given that the vast number of fires lit in the Greek camp was evidence enough for him that the Greeks were running away,³ he conceives of at least attempting a late raid in order to kill some of the remaining Greeks still in the process of embarking onto the ships (70–73):

ἀλλ' ὥς τάχιστα χρὴ παραγγέλλειν στρατῶι
τεύχη πρόχειρα λαμβάνειν λήξαι θ' ὕπνου,
ὥς ἄν τις αὐτῶν καὶ νεῶς θρώισκων ἔπι
νῶτον χαραχθεῖς κλίμακας ράνηι φόνωι.

So we must quickly order the army
to wake up and put on its ready armor:
that way even if someone is leaping onto his ship
he will be speared in the back and drench the ladder with his blood.

Hector's idea that the Greeks would attempt to board the ships and escape during the night, and thus that he should have burned their ships earlier, is reminiscent of the Greeks' desperate wish to flee as enunciated by Agamemnon in *Iliad* 8.242–44 and 9.9–28. It also reiterates the real danger that Hector might actually come to the Greek ships and burn them, as is expressed twice in the first part of *Iliad* 8: once by the narrator (8.217) and once by Hector himself, at 8.182–83: ὥς πυρὶ νῆας ἐνιπρήσω, κτείνω δὲ καὶ αὐτοὺς / Ἀργείους (“so that I can set their ships on fire, and cut down the very Argives”). Indeed, nightfall was the only thing that could have prevented Hector from doing so: see 8.487–88 (Τρῶσιν μὲν ῥ' ἀέκουσιν ἔδω φάος, αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοῖς / ἀσπασίη τρίλιστος ἐπήλυθε νύξ ἐρεβεννή, “the daylight sank against their will, but for the Achaeans sweet and thrice-supplanted was the coming of the dark night”). In the *Iliad* Hector does not conceive of an actual night attack as he does in the *Rhesus*, but Agamemnon at least fears that the Trojans may try it at *Iliad* 10.100–101: οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν / μή πως καὶ διὰ νύκτα μενοιθήσῃσι μάχεσθαι (“nor do we know that they might not be pondering an attack on us in the darkness”). What is more, during his final speech in *Iliad* 8, Hector had confessed that he would have liked to start the final attack on that very day, and warns the Trojans to remain vigilant so that they might still harm the Greeks as much as possible during their embarkation, should they actually decide to run away (498–503 and 507–15):

more immediate continuation of the present (cf. most recently L. Basset, *Les emplois périphrastiques du verbe grec MEΛΛΕΙΝ* [Lyon, 1979], 135). The latter temporal perspective fits the sense of our passage better. Hector is disappointed to *be missing* the opportunity to massacre as many Greeks as possible while they embark (ἐνόσφισας, 56), and this embarkation is feared to be an event *occurring* that very night: only an immediate assault (ὥς τάχιστα, 70) might surprise *some* Greeks still leaping onto their ships and lead to their destruction (70–75). Moreover, the chorus too will respond to Hector's statement (ἄνδρες . . . μέλλουσι, 54) not with a future, but with a present indicative: ἄνδρες γὰρ εἰ φεύγουσιν οὐκ ἴσμεν (77); cf. also κἄν μὲν αἴρωνται φυγὴν (126).

3. Most likely because lighting fires in camp before abandoning it was a common strategem for an army trying to flee in secret; this was a way of counterfeiting their continued presence there while they escaped: cf. Hdt. 4.135, Thuc. 7.80.1 and 3, Joseph. *AJ* 13.178; R. Goossens, *Euripide et Athènes* (Brussels, 1962), p. 299, n. 71.

νῦν ἐφάμην νῆας τ' ὀλέσας καὶ πάντας Ἀχαιοὺς
 ἄψ' ἀπονοστήσειν προτὶ Ἴλιον ἠνεμόεσσαν·
 ἀλλὰ πρὶν κνέφας ἦλθε, τὸ νῦν ἐσάωσε μάλιστα
 Ἀργεῖους καὶ νῆας ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης.
 ἀλλ' ἦτοι νῦν μὲν πειθώμεθα νυκτὶ μελαίνῃ
 δόρπα τ' ἐφοπλισόμεσθα·

.....

... ἐπὶ δὲ ξύλα πολλὰ λέγεσθε,
 ὥς κεν παννύχιοι μέσφ' ἡοῦς ἠριγενεΐης
 καίωμεν πυρὰ πολλά, σέλας δ' εἰς οὐρανὸν ἵκηι,
 μή πως καὶ διὰ νύκτα κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ
 φεύγειν ὀρμήσονται ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης,
 μὴ μὰν ἀσπουδί γε νεῶν ἐπιβαῖεν ἔκκηλοι,
 ἀλλ' ὥς τις τούτων γε βέλος καὶ οἴκοθι πέσσει
 βλήμενος ἢ ἰῶι ἢ ἔγχεϊ ὀξυόεντι
 νηὸς ἐπιθρόϊσκων. . . .

Now I had thought that, destroying the ships and all the Achaeans,
 we might take our way back once more to windy Ilion,
 but the darkness came too soon, and this beyond all else rescued
 the Argives and their vessels along the beach where the sea breaks.
 But now let us give way to black night's persuasion; let us
 make ready our evening meal;

.....

. . . and heap many piles of firewood,
 so that all night long and until the young dawn appears
 we may burn many fires, and the glare go up into heaven;
 so that not in the night time the flowing-haired Achaeans
 may set out to run for home over the sea's wide ridges.
 No: not thus in their own good time must they take to their vessels,
 but in such a way that a man of them at home will still nurse
 his wound, the place where he has been hit with an arrow or sharp spear
 springing to his ship. . . .⁴

In conclusion, lines 52–62 and 70–73 of Hector's speech in the *Rhesus* fully reflect the speech of Hector at the end of *Iliad* 8. Only the motif of the blame placed on the seers (*Rh.* 63–68) is apparently foreign to *Iliad* 8, but this theme as well has a precise Homeric model, since it originates from a reproach given by Hector to the quasi-θεοπρόπος Polydamas at 12.211–50. There are thus only a couple of points in the *Rhesus* that seem to be “innovative”: (1) *Rhesus*' Hector is persuaded that the interruption of his εὐτυχία comes from a δαίμων⁵ (ὦ δαῖμον, ὅστις μ' εὐτυχοῦντ' ἐνόσφισας, 56), and (2) that this εὐτυχία had been due to the favor of a θεός (χρησθαί τ' εὐτυχεῖ ῥύμηι θεοῦ, 64).⁶

4. Translations of the *Iliad* are from R. Lattimore, *The “Iliad” of Homer* (Chicago, 1951).

5. Here δαίμων is hardly more than the personification of the idea of “destiny,” as often in the literature of the fifth century; cf. V. Giannopoulou, “Divine Agency and *Tyche* in Euripides' *Ion*: Ambiguity and Shifting Perspectives,” *ICS* 24–25 (1999–2000): 267–71; cf also Eur. *TGF* 901.2: εἴτε τύχα <τις> εἴτε δαίμων τὰ βρότεια κραίνει.

6. In my opinion, δαίμων and θεός are nearly synonymous, as it is usual in Euripides for these two words to be, especially when they are expressing the divine agent exerting control over human affairs (i.e., the god/fate who had provided the support to Hector would have been the same one to suspend it): on the near-synonymy of δαίμων and θεός; cf., e.g., Eur. *TGF* 1073; W. S. Barrett, ed., *Euripides: “Hippolytus”* (Ox-

The second “innovation” is not entirely new. Nowhere in *Iliad* 8 or even before *Iliad* 11 does the Homeric Hector appear to be fully aware that his victories come about because of Zeus’ support (at *Il.* 8.526 he only hopes to have the favor of “Zeus and all the other gods” for the next day), but the readers know perfectly well that this is the case (cf., at least, 8.469–83) and, from Iris’ message at 11.195–209, Hector himself will learn of Zeus’ special favor for him. The author of the *Rhesus* appears to acknowledge the divine support that the text of *Iliad* 8 clearly emphasizes as lying behind Hector’s successes, but at the same time the Hector of the *Rhesus* “rationalizes” the jumble of initiatives conducted by the Homeric Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, and Athena in favor of either himself or the Greeks, attributing the εὐτυχία to the agency of an unnamed θεός.

More evidently innovative—in a context of strict dramatization of the Homeric intertext—seems to be Hector’s other idea that the interruption of his success is due to a δαίμων (*Rh.* 56–58); lines 59–62, which strongly connect (see γάρ) the action of the δαίμων who ἐνόσφισε Hector of his εὐτυχία with the disappearance of the sunlight, may also be meant to “explain” this disappearance as the effect of the interruption of divine favor. In contrast, the Homeric Hector simply acknowledged that the nightfall had forced the interruption of his victorious fighting and “saved” the Greeks (cf. *Il.* 8.500–501, quoted above). Nobody could rule out the possibility that Hector’s idea in the *Rhesus* derives from an interpretation or adaptation of the constant overlapping of divine interventions and the alternate successes of Trojans and Greeks in the κόλος μάχη of *Iliad* 8: nowhere else in the *Iliad* do gods influence the results of the fight in favor of either army as frequently and variably as they do in this book. But another, and more concrete, possibility is that this apparent innovation in the *Rhesus* originates from a text of Homer in which that darkness of night that saved the Greeks from utter destruction is itself ascribed to one of Zeus’ “changes of mind.” According to the Σ A to *Iliad* 8.501,

ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης: ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος γράφει “ἐπεὶ Διὸς ἐτράπετο φρήν.” ἔξ ἄλλου δὲ στίχου τὸ ἡμιστίχιόν ἐστι νῦν ἀναρμόστως προστεθειμένον· οὐ γὰρ κατὰ Διὸς προαίρεσιν νύξ ἐγένετο.

“along the beach where the sea breaks”: Zenodotus writes: “because the mind of Zeus had changed.” The hemistich has been incongruously added here from another line [sc. *Il.* 10.45]: it was not according to Zeus’ will that the night had fallen.

Σ A *Il.* 10.45 confirms:

ὅτι τὸ ἡμιστίχιον ὁ Ζηνόδοτος μετήνεγκεν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἑκτορος λόγον κατὰ τὴν κόλον μάχην.

Zenodotus moved the hemistich to the speech of Hector in the eighth book.

Indeed, in the text of the vulgata and of our manuscripts,

ἀλλὰ πρὶν κνέφας ἦλθε, τὸ νῦν ἐσάωσε μάλιστα
Ἀργείους καὶ νῆας ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης,

ford, 1964), ad 1111–14; G. François, *Le polythéisme et l'emploi au singulier des mots* θεός, δαίμων *dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Platon* (Paris, 1957), 113–51; J. Carrière, “«Démon» tragique,” *Pallas* 13 (1965): 15–19; R. Schlesier, “Daimon und Daimones bei Euripides,” *Saeculum* 34 (1983): 267–79. It is, however, not impossible that δαίμων means a more impersonal “fate,” whereas θεός implicitly points to Zeus; cf. *Rh.* 319–20: τοῦμὸν εὐτυχεῖ δόρυ / καὶ Ζεὺς πρὸς ἡμῶν ἐστίν.

the fall of night is not ascribed to the will of a divine agent—but it certainly is in the variant text favored by Zenodotus:

ἀλλὰ πρὶν κνέφας ἦλθε, τὸ νῦν ἐσάωσε μάλιστα
Ἀργείους καὶ νῆας, ἐπεὶ Διὸς ἐτράπετο φρήν.

In conclusion, *Rhesus* 53–73 and *Iliad* 8.498–516 (plus *Il.* 12.211–50) are speeches whose intertextual connection is more than sure for all motifs but one, namely, the connection between dusk and divine agency. However, this very motif of the *Rhesus* would also find its close parallel in *Iliad* 8.501, if we read the text of Homer as suggested by Zenodotus.

E. Fraenkel's reaction⁷ to the last, as well as the brightest and most learned attempt at defending Euripidean authorship of the *Rhesus*, by W. Ritchie,⁸ has helped to establish a kind of suspension of judgement on the problem of the authenticity, which had absorbed nearly all of the scholarly attention devoted to this tragedy over the last two centuries.⁹ However, there is general scholarly agreement that if this tragedy is not by Euripides, then it has to be dated to the fourth century. I suggest that the author of the *Rhesus* may have read the same text of *Iliad* 8.501 that Zenodotus was later to prefer.

An agreement between the *Rhesus* and Zenodotus on a non-Aristarchean text of Homer would not be surprising. Another probable case is, in my opinion, *Rhesus* 175:

οὐ μὴν τὸν Ἰλέως παῖδά μ' ἐξαίτεϊς λαβεῖν;

Surely you are not asking me to receive the son of Ileus [sc. Ajax the Lesser]?

Here Ἰλέως is transmitted by V, cf. also Ἰλεόν O, both of the family Δ; οἰλέως L, its *apographon* P, and Q, all of the family Λ. Our post-Aristarchean text of the *Iliad* always gives the name of Ajax the Lesser's father as Ὀϊλεύς, and so do all the authors after Lycophron, but up until at least the Hellenistic age the *Ilii excidium* (according to Proclus' summary: Bernabé, *PEG*, p. 89),¹⁰ Hesiod (frag. 235.1 M–W), Stesichorus (*PMGF* 226), Pindar (*Ol.* 9.112), and Lycophron (*Al.* 1150) called the father of Ajax the Lesser Ἰλεύς, a form that Zenodotus unsuccessfully defended in Homer, and Aristarchus opposed: cf. Σ *Iliad* 1.264; 2.527; 12.365; 13.203, 694, 712; 14.442; 15.336; 23.759.¹¹ Both names result from an original ῥιλεύς, with Ὀϊλεύς prefixed with an ο-, which is also attested elsewhere as a trace of ῥ.¹² In the *Rhesus*, where Ilion is frequently attested, a mechanical banalization of an original Ὀϊλέως to Ἰλέως is of course possible,¹³ but in the light of the canonical status of Aristarchus' textual options, and of the postclassical standardization of the form Ὀϊλεύς for the name of

7. *Gnomon* 37 (1965): 228–41.

8. W. Ritchie, *The Authenticity of the "Rhesus" of Euripides* (Cambridge, 1964).

9. Following Pohlenz, Fraenkel (*Gnomon* 37:240) had hoped that, instead of the interminable battle of opinions about the authenticity question, a more adequate evaluation of the literary and historical aspects of the *Rhesus* as a text in its own right might come from a more thorough exegesis of the play. I hope that my forthcoming commentary will contribute to filling this gap.

10. This form of the name is also attested in a scene describing the sacrifice of Polyxena—included in the *Ilii excidium*—on a sixth-century amphora; cf. H. B. Walters, "On Some Black-Figured Vases," *JHS* 18 (1898): 284–86 and pl. XV.

11. Cf. K. Nickau, *Untersuchungen zur textkritischen Methode des Zenodotos von Ephesos* (Berlin and New York, 1977), 36–42.

12. Cf. W. A. Oldfather, *RE* 17.2 (1937): 2175–83 (s.v. "Oileus"); H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen: Sprachwissenschaftliche und historische Klassifikation* (Göttingen, 1982), 295–98.

13. This possibility had been pointed out to me by J. Diggle.

Ajax' father, Ἰλέως appears to be the *lectio difficilior*, and should be preferred for the strong external evidence supporting it.¹⁴ The two manuscripts of Euripides' *Iphigeneia Aulidensis* (**L** and its *apographon* **P**) are relatively coherent about the form Οἰλέως at 93 and 263 of this tragedy,¹⁵ but even in case we accept Euripides' authorship of the *Rhesus*, to standardize for the *Rhesus* the form attested in the *Iphigeneia Aulidensis* is inadvisable, because **L** is precisely one of the manuscripts that read Οἰλέως at *Rhesus* 175. On the contrary, the paradosis of *Iphigeneia Aulidensis* does not provide evidence for the family Δ of **V**, which preserves Ἰλέως in *Rhesus* 175, and in principle this form may very well have been kept by the family Δ for the *Iphigeneia Aulidensis* as well, though no evidence to this point survives. At any rate, there is no certainty about the *Rhesus*' paternity; therefore, confronted with the variant of **V** we ought to suppose that the author of the *Rhesus* may have chosen to subscribe to the form of the name adopted by the post-Homeric authors quoted above—and/or that he, as well as these same authors, and later Zenodotus,¹⁶ may also have read Ἰλεύς in (some of) the Homeric texts.

Zenodotus' editorial method, and above all the crucial issue of whether his readings more or less frequently reflected manuscript variants or were only/mainly based on his own conjectures, has been the subject of heated debate in recent years.¹⁷ Leaving aside the problem of whether Zenodotus' choices are preferable to the text of Aristarchus or the vulgata, or not,¹⁸ I suggest that my hypothesis on the intertextual derivation of *Rhesus* 56–58 proves that in this case, as well as in the many that have surfaced thus far,¹⁹ Zenodotus may have supported his textual variant for *Iliad* 8.501 *ope codicum*, and not just *ope ingenii*.²⁰

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14. Ἰλέως was favored from A. Nauck's first edition (1854) onwards (R. Prinz and N. Wecklein [1902], G. Murray [1913²], W. H. Porter [1929²], Zanetto [1993]), while Οἰλέως had been standard up to F. A. Paley's edition of 1857. I am sorry to be in disagreement on this single point with the excellent edition by J. Diggle (1994), who opts for Οἰλέως; see also D. Kovacs' Loeb edition (n. 1 above).

15. In both passages the MSS give the initial vowels in diaeresis, whereas the word has to be measured as spondaic at 193, and as cretic at 263. E. B. England, *The "Iphigenia at Aulis" of Euripides* (London and New York, 1891), 23, and U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin, 1921), 283, suggested emending Οἰλέως to Ἰλέως in both passages, and the suggestion has been repropounded with cautious approval by W. Stockert, *Euripides: "Iphigenie in Aulis"* (Vienna, 1992), 2:264.

16. Cf. Nickau, *Untersuchungen* (n. 11 above), 41–42.

17. Cf. A. Rengakos, *Der Homertext und die hellenistischen Dichter* (Stuttgart, 1993); F. Montanari, "Zenodotus, Aristarchus and the *Ekdosis* of Homer," in *Editing Texts / Texte edieren*, ed. G. W. Most (Göttingen, 1998), 1–21, and "Alexandrian Homeric Philology: The Form of the *Ekdosis* and the *Variae Lectiones*," in *Epea Pteroenta: Festschrift für Wolfgang Kullmann zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. M. Reichel and A. Rengakos (Stuttgart, 2002), 119–40; M. Noussia, "Olympus, the Sky, and the History of the Text of Homer," in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale «Omero tremila anni dopo»*, Genova, 6–8 Luglio 2000, ed. F. Montanari (Rome, 2002), 489–503; M. L. West, *Studies in the Text and Transmission of the "Iliad"* (Munich and Leipzig, 2001), 33–45, with the review of West's book by A. Rengakos in *BMCR* 2002.11.15, and West's reply (*BMCR* 2004.04.17) to this review and to the review by G. Nagy (*Gnomon* 75 [2003]: 481–501).

18. A crucial problem, of course, as stressed by R. Janko in his important intervention at the *seduta di chiusura* of the conference "Omero tremila anni dopo" (pp. 659–62 of the Proceedings quoted in n. 17)—but a problem that I do not intend to address now, as it is fully independent of the question of whether Zenodotus' readings are (mainly) conjectural or not.

19. The richest collection is still Nickau, *Untersuchungen*.

20. This paper profited from the advice of J. Diggle and R. Hunter, whom I thank. I am also most grateful to J. Hanink for her help with the English form.