

SHORTER NOTES

THE ROBE EPISODE OF THE *CHOEPHORI*

ἦτις δ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τοῦτ' ἐμήσατο στύγος	991
ἔξ οὗ τέκνων ἦνεγκ' ὑπὸ ζώνην βάρος,	
φίλον τέως νῦν δ' ἐχθρόν, ὥς φαίνει, κακόν,	
τί σοι δοκεῖ; μύραινά γ' εἴτ' ἔχιδν' ἔφνυ,	
σῆπεω θιγοῦσ' ἄν ἄλλον οὐ δεδηγμένον	995
τόλμης ἔκατι κακδίκου φρονήματος;	
τί νῦν προσείπω, κἄν τύχῳ μάλ' εὐστομῶν;	
ἄγρευμα θηρός, ἢ νεκροῦ ποδένδυτον	
δροίτης κατασκήνωμα; δάκτυλον μὲν οὖν	
ἄρκυν τ' ἄν εἴποις καὶ ποδιστῆρας πέπλους.	1000
τοιούτον ἄν κτήσαιο φιλήτης ἀνὴρ	
ξένων ἀπαιδίαμα κάργυροστερῇ	
βίον νομίζων, τῶιδέ τ' ἄν δολώματι	
πολλοὺς ἀναιρῶν πολλά θερμαῖνοι φρένα.	
τοιᾶδ' ἐμοὶ ξύννοκος ἐν δόμοισι μὴ	1005
γένοιτ'· ὀλοήμην πρόσθεν ἐκ θεῶν ἅπαις.	

The awkwardness of the word *νῦν* in 997 has called forth various transpositions and excisions, but none so far suggested seems to put the passage right. Thus Fraenkel excised 991–6 and 1005 f.¹ Professor H. Lloyd-Jones very rightly defends the passage against this, advocating the placing of 991–6 between 1005 and 1006.² But although the verses do indeed fit here, *νῦν* is still slightly odd, since a few lines come between Orestes' first talking of the robe (980 ff.) and his next mention of it (997), and in these lines both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are mentioned. To the *reader* there is still ambiguity, and the transposition would seem to have passed the test no more than the text found in the manuscript. The question is: is the test the right one? I accept, with Lloyd-Jones, Fraenkel's view that Wilamowitz's idea of the robe being shown around is based on a misunderstanding of the text. But the key to the problem seems to lie in further contemplation of the staging of the passage: Orestes tells the servants who bring the garment, to unfold it and show it to the sun (i.e. to let the audience see it). If we accept the arrangement of the lines found in the manuscript, the interval between 983, where Orestes begins to ask to have the robe unfolded, and 997 (τί νῦν κ.τ.λ.), which clearly marks the end of the unfolding, is fourteen verses, which would have been spoken in the course of a very few moments. If we cut the length of the passage by more than one-third by accepting the transposition advocated by Lloyd-Jones, the resulting nine verses give very little, perhaps too little, time for the ceremonious unfolding of an item which both according to this passage and according to the *Agamemnon* (1393) was large and unwieldy. I visualize that, having set the unfolding in motion, Orestes by a natural thought connection moves on to an outburst against

¹ Appendix C to Fraenkel's *Agamemnon* (iii.809–15).

² *CQ* N.S. 11 (1961), 181–4.

the villainous couple who made use of the garment. At 996 he reaches a peak beyond which he cannot at that moment go without an anticlimax. He pauses, draws breath, forcibly calms himself, sees that the unfolding is at that moment accomplished, and turns with outward calm towards the robe, or possibly even walks to it and puts his hand on it, attempting to speak as if the outburst had not occurred; in his enforced calm he does not even say: 'What name shall I give *that* (τόδε)?' He starts his quiet but bitter sarcasm with a mere: 'What shall I call it?' The weak *νῦν*, which offends and confuses the *reader*, is thus unambiguous to the *spectator*. Aeschylus chose the word because it conveys what τόδε could not have conveyed: an overstated calm concealing great agitation of mind.³

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³ My thanks are due to Dr. O. Taplin for reading this note and causing me to make certain alterations.

POMPEIUS STRABO'S SECOND CONSULSHIP

For E. Badian¹ the story of Pompeius Strabo's desire for a second consulship in 88, though implausible, was too well documented to require citation of sources. In fact it is not well documented and seems to depend solely on one disputed passage: Vell. Pat. 2.21.2. Others, far less cautious than Badian, have not scrupled, however, to accept it as uncontested fact and on it to build unlikely hypotheses,² despite the long scholarly controversy as to whether it refers to 88 or 86.³ It is my belief that it can be shown that the passage almost unquestionably refers to the ambitions Pompeius Strabo entertained in 87 with regard to the consulship of 86.

In the first place we must recognize that in saying 'frustratus spe continuandi consulatus' Velleius is speaking loosely. Pompeius Strabo had held a consulship in 89, a proconsulship in 88 which had extended into 87, and he hoped for another consulship in 86. Thus he had been an imperium-holder since 89 and obviously wished to continue as such. Velleius, aware of this 'spes imperii continuandi', and also aware of how it was to be brought about, i.e. by a second consulship, has run these two concepts together to produce a kind of shorthand phrase 'continuandi consulatus'. Nor is he without some justification, since, in a sense, Pompeius Strabo is still a consul. His imperium has been prorogued and he still holds the *imperium militiae*.⁴ We should not rule out the possibility that some such notion was in Velleius' mind when he wrote this passage. When we turn to compare the narrative of Velleius with that of our other sources we find even more evidence to support our conclusions as to this passage.

The word 'frustratus' marks a break in the narrative of Vell. Pat. 2.21. Hitherto he has been recounting Pompeius' deeds at Asculum; now he turns to give a strictly chronological account, with some minor omissions, of the last months of his life. Disappointed in hope of office, he intrigues, he fights Cinna,

¹ *Foreign Clientelae* (Oxford, 1958), p.230.

² Cf. e.g. T. F. Mitchell, 'The Volte Face of C. Sulpicius Rufus in 88 B.C.', *CP* 70 (1975), 202; B. R. Katz, 'The Siege of Rome

in 87 B.C.', *CP* 71 (1976), 329, n.6.

³ Bibliography in Katz, *op. cit.*

⁴ Cf. P. Willems, *Le Droit public romain* (Louvain, 1883), p.256.