

# CREON AND HERODOTUS

ANTHONY J. PODLECKI

*Pennsylvania State University*

## I. ΚΡΕΩΝ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ

That Creon in the *Antigone* is in some sense a tyrant is now generally recognized.<sup>1</sup> What has not been equally clearly seen, however, is that the poet captures his character in the very act of *becoming* a tyrant. To trace this process in detail may throw some light on Sophocles' method of characterization and may also help to redress the critical balance which has fallen rather heavily against Creon.

The opening exchanges between Antigone and Ismene fill in relevant details: Antigone seems obsessed with the edict which she says the "general has just enacted;"<sup>2</sup> Ismene is one step behind—she knows only of their brothers' deaths and the lifting of the Argive threat. Antigone then relates the edict (ἐκκεκηρῦχθαι 27; κηρύξαντ' 32) with considerable emotional embroidery of her own.<sup>3</sup> Creon is on his way here to proclaim the edict clearly himself (σαφῇ προκηρύξοντα 34); the penalty for disobedience is public execution by stoning (φόνον . . . δημόλευστον 36). When Antigone offers her sister the chance to join her in burying Polyneices, Ismene reacts instinctively: the act is "forbidden to the city" (44); but when she specifies this as acting in defiance of Creon (47), she seems to veer to the personal aspect, emphasizing that it is *Creon's* edict which they would be disobeying. Antigone's retort is an emphatic rejection of his authority

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. H. Whitman, *Sophocles* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951) 90; C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford 1944) 72–78.

<sup>2</sup> Line 8, κήρυγμα θεῖναι. I doubt that the distinction which Jebb discerns between this and the middle ("τίθηναι νόμον . . . is fitting when the lawgiver is supreme or absolute . . . τίθεμαι νόμον further implies the legislator's personal concern in the law") is of any importance here.

<sup>3</sup> Esp. 29–30: ἐὰν δ' ἄκλαυτον, ἄταφον, οἰωνοῖς γλυκύν / θησαυρὸν εἰσρωῶσι πρὸς χάριν βορᾶς.

in issuing such a proclamation which infringes her private rights (48). There follows a long speech in which Ismene explains her reasoning in refusing Antigone's request: personal and official reasons seem inextricably interwoven. The royal house has annihilated itself and now we are to perish for our disobedience (59); we are mere women, and cannot fight against men, who could issue still harsher commands (61-64). At the same time Ismene never leaves us in any doubt that she is obeying what she believes to be duly constituted authority: νόμου βία (59),<sup>4</sup> τοῖς ἐν τέλει βεβῶσι (67), and, most telling of all, βία πολιτῶν δρᾶν ἔφυν ἀμήχανος (79).

The chorus sing of the unsuccessful Argive attack upon and inglorious flight from Thebes (we are told in the ode, ominously, that "Zeus hates exceedingly the boasts of a proud tongue," 127) and Creon emerges from the palace to deliver the proclamation which we have long been expecting. He has summoned the elders specially, he says, because he knows of their loyalty to the successive incumbents of the royal throne, Laius, then Oedipus, his sons; now full authority has devolved upon him as the next of kin (173-74). Then, suddenly and quite without warning, he launches into a long excursus.

It is impossible to learn a man's true mind and intent until he stands revealed by the wear and tear of public life. *For*, as far as I am concerned, whoever directs the whole state without good counsels *but* keeps his lips sealed through fear is the worst sort of man. *And* I take no account of the man who puts friend above country. *For* I would not be silent if I saw the state headed for disaster, *nor* could I ever make an enemy of the country a friend of mine, because I know that the state is our preserver, and if our voyage on her be prosperous we can make friends. With such principles I make the city flourish.<sup>5</sup>

As a new ruler's political program the lines are perhaps not out of place; Knox calls them Creon's "inaugural speech."<sup>6</sup> Two things, however, are noteworthy: the extraordinary length of the generalizations, and the frequent obscurity, even confusion, of his train of

<sup>4</sup> B. M. Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley 1964) 63 analyzes lines 59-60 and argues that ψῆφον, "with its democratic associations, hints that Creon speaks for the whole body of the citizens"; but it may simply be a loose usage.

<sup>5</sup> Lines 175-91, slightly abridged; italics are the Greek connectives, literally translated.

<sup>6</sup> Knox (above, note 4) 106.

thought. He starts with a familiar sentiment, Bias' "power revealeth the man,"<sup>7</sup> and we might have expected him to put forward his own program immediately. Instead he slips into a way of speaking more appropriate to a subject: "For me (or, as far as I am concerned), whoever directs the whole city (ἐμοὶ γὰρ ὅστις πᾶσαν εὐθύνων πόλιν) . . ." (178). Creon seems for the moment to have forgotten that *he* now "directs" the state. The force of γάρ, too, is anything but clear, and Jebb's comment, "the compression of thought slightly obscures the connection," understates the case. And what exactly is the *fear* which makes the ruler keep his lips sealed? Is it simply, as Jebb interprets, "fear of unpopularity"? Or is it, as the following lines suggest, to be connected with the *philos*, the friend or dear one, whose placement before country Creon is decrying? If that is correct, and Creon means "fear for the safety of a friend" which might lead a ruler to place that friend above the best interests of the state, he has wrapped his connection of thought in obscurity. Besides, Creon runs no risk of succumbing to this kind of fear for dear ones. Indeed, he will be shown to be without personal feelings, for the nephew to whom he refuses burial, the niece whom he will bury so unnaturally, or the son whose most intimate affections he cruelly tramples down. Only the guard will feel any sympathy, and will comment, "it is painful to lead friends into danger" (438-39). One final feature of this generalizing section of Creon's speech deserves comment: it begins and ends with a key-word in the play: a man is revealed (as, of course, we know that Creon will be) ἀρχαῖς τε καὶ νόμοισιν ἐντρίβής (177), and "I make this city grow τοιοῖσδ' . . . νόμοισι" (191). Not content to let his generalizations go at that, after announcing his proclamation concerning the brothers, he returns once more to the level of the abstract. "Never will the evil exceed the just in honor at my hands. Whoever intends well to the city will be honored by me in death just as in life."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει, quoted by Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 5.1 1130A1. According to Harpocration, s.v. ἀρχή, while Theophrastus and Aristotle said the proverb was Bias', Sophocles ascribed it to Solon "in the elegies." This may be simply a mistake, or the relevant verses of Sophocles lost, but it has been maintained that the reference is really to these very lines of Creon's, *Ant.* 175-77 (H. Zurborg, "Sophokles und die Elegie," *Hermes* 11 [1876] 211, ascribes the theory to Ascherson).

<sup>8</sup> 207-10; the generalizing οὐποτ' and ὅστις should be noted.

As the play unfolds before us, it becomes increasingly clear that the tendency to generalize and digress is a consistent feature of the portrayal of Creon.<sup>9</sup> His glittering generalities come tumbling out in profusion and may dazzle us. "He has conceived a programme of government," as Ehrenberg remarks, "full of excellent principles."<sup>10</sup> Only these principles often fail to make sense; his lines amble on in an almost random sequence. This very confusion which runs in an undercurrent beneath the surface forcefulness of the figure Creon cuts is, I suggest, intentional. He is a weak man, used to taking second place in Thebes. His new power rests uneasily upon him. He must cover up his insecurity with well-sounding, if somewhat muddled, political platitudes.<sup>11</sup>

Herodotus quotes Pindar as having said νόμον πάντων βασιλέα εἶναι; Philo was later to invert it and call a king ἔμφυχον νόμον.<sup>12</sup> It is of some interest to examine the relationship between Creon and *nomos*. There is never any question in the play but that his edict has the force of law, a law for which historical parallels can be found.<sup>13</sup> When Antigone is brought in, the chorus express disbelief that she dared to disobey the king's laws (381-82), and when Creon ascertains that she knew of his proclamation he says: "And yet you dared to transgress these laws?" (449). Later in the scene he accuses her of having "transgressed promulgated laws" (481). That the ruler has supreme authority to make law and that the law reflects his own will

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Creon's angry denunciation to the guard (280-314, where note the generalizing second person optative in 314; cf. 476 and 646), his long retort to Antigone at 473-96, his disquisition to Haemon on filial piety (639-80, often both irrelevant and incoherent). Creon's "gnomological" tendency is discussed at length by Eugen Wolf, *Sentenz und Reflexion bei Sophokles* (Leipzig 1910) 48-53, 126-31 (I owe the reference to an anonymous critic).

<sup>10</sup> V. Ehrenberg, *Sophocles and Pericles* (Oxford 1954) 58; Wolf (above, note 9) 48.

<sup>11</sup> As Wolf puts it, "his new position has gone to his head" ([above, note 9] 53). Wolf aptly cites Demetrius *De eloc.* 9 to the effect that the truly apophthegmatic must be brief, pithy, and to the point, εἰ δ' ἐκτείνοντό τις τὴν γνώμην ἐν μακροῖς διδασκαλία γίνεται τις καὶ ῥητορεία ἀντὶ γνώμης. Creon's insecurity comes out also in other ways, e.g. by his excessive insistence upon his maleness *vis à vis* female defiance, a theme which has often been pointed out and is indeed too obvious to miss.

<sup>12</sup> Hdt. 3.38.4, quoted *in extenso* by Plato, *Gorg.* 484B (= fr. 152 Bo.; the latest discussion is by M. Ostwald in *HSCP* 69 [1965] 109-38); Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.4 (cf. the shadowy Diotogenes *ap. Stob.* 4.7.61).

<sup>13</sup> A. C. Pearson in *CQ* 16 (1922) 133-34. Further refs. in Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*<sup>2</sup> (Göttingen 1964) 114, note 2.

is admitted by the chorus (albeit with some hesitation) at 213-14. But the presumption is always that his will reflects the united will of the city. This is implied by Ismene's statement in the opening scene that she cannot aid Antigone because she is "naturally incapable of acting in defiance of the citizens" (79).<sup>14</sup> It is clear that Creon believes himself to be acting for the city's welfare and so with the implied consent of the citizens. From his opening line in which he mentions the "city's affairs," the mention of the city comes often to his lips, and there can be no doubt that his concern is sincere. When Creon speaks of the city as *ἡ σωζουσα*, "the preserver," and says that the Ship of State must come first—friends must take second place (189-90)—he is, after all, only anticipating Pericles.<sup>15</sup> In view, then, of his publicly stated principles, his *nomoi* as he calls them at 191, how will Creon react when he is charged with defying the will of the city? Antigone is the first to make the charge: "The citizens are on my side, but fear has closed their lips."<sup>16</sup> Creon flatly denies it. When Haemon confirms that the whole city *is* on her side (693 ff.) and reiterates it firmly—"the united people of Thebes deny" that she did wrong (733)—Creon reacts in a way that completely contradicts his constitutional stance: "Will the city tell me what commands to give? Should someone else rule the land?" (734, 736).

Haemon, all diplomacy and tact at the beginning, cannot let this go unchallenged. "There is no city which is the private preserve of one man," to which Creon blusters, "Is not the city considered to belong to its ruler?"<sup>17</sup> We should have expected this. His earlier comment about the necessity of obeying the ruler in "small matters and just and the opposite" (667) was not merely, as we might have thought then, an extravagant way of saying "in all things." He had extolled *peitharchia* (676), but the term for him meant absolute and unquestioning obedience.

<sup>14</sup> In this context, Ismene's comment at line 44, that the burial is *ἀπόρρητον πόλει*, might mean "forbidden by the city" (Jebb cites Eur. *Phoen.* 1657 as a parallel) although Jebb rejects that meaning in favor of "to" or "for the city."

<sup>15</sup> Thuc. 2.60.2-3; cf. Ehrenberg (above, note 10) 147.

<sup>16</sup> 504-5, 509; we remember that Creon had said that fear would never seal *his* lips (180).

<sup>17</sup> 738; the word is *νομίζεται* and it is a cruel pun. As Knox (above, note 4) 108, well remarks, "Creon no longer speaks and acts for the *polis* as a whole; he speaks for no one but himself." See also Bowra (above, note 1) 75.

"You would make a fine ruler," Haemon now retorts, "... of a desert" (739). "Do I do wrong in honoring my *archai*?" Creon asks lamely (744), but this attempt to return to a constitutional posture is unsuccessful. The mask is off: he is revealed as the tyrant that he is, a man insensitive to his own *philoî*, heedless of the people's will, and, for all his protestations, a man without principle save that of the supremacy of his own whim. His earlier talk of men "who did not keep their necks under the yoke" (291-92), and his remark to Antigone that "one who is a slave of his neighbors cannot have big thoughts" (478-79), should have struck us as ominous. Antigone had sized him up perfectly when she said "Tyranny is fortunate in many other ways, but especially in being able to do and say what it likes" (506-7).

Creon is thus revealed as a *tyrannos*, not only in the neutral, descriptive sense,<sup>18</sup> but also in the pejorative. "The tyrant's race is fond of base gain," Teiresias will say later (1056), in echo of Creon's earlier charge that *kerdos* was responsible for his edict's being disobeyed. This revelation of him as a man whose fine-sounding but often incoherent principles give way under pressure to an insecurity which cannot brook opposition from any quarter, much less from a woman, may not make him any more sympathetic, but it does entitle him to a greater claim on our attention. He is a character on whose development the poet has expended some care, much more than merely a foil for Antigone. We are prepared for his downfall—even if he is not—by such touches as the chorus' reference to the *nomos* that "nothing powerful in human life goes without *até*" (613-14). Too late Creon learns his lesson that "it is best to end one's life preserving the *established* laws."<sup>19</sup> By all rights he should have been the most fortunate of men, with flourishing descendants, as the messenger points out, the supreme ruler in possession of *pantelê monarchian* (1163). But when we see him at the end, faced with the corpses of his wife and son, all his princely pomp, his *tyrannon schêma* (1169), counts for nothing. He is a ruined man, his world has gone awry in his hands (1345).

<sup>18</sup> Ismene uses it in the plural at line 60 (a slight incongruity with *ψῆφον*, but see above, note 4, and cf. 632, *τελείαν ψῆφον*).

<sup>19</sup> 1113-14, *τοὺς καθεστῶτας νόμους*. Even Peisistratus *ἐπὶ τε τοῖσι κατεστειῶσι ἔνεμε τὴν πόλιν*, according to Hdt. 1.59. What disturbed the Spartans about Pausanias' behavior in Colonae was that he *ἐξεδεδιήτητο τῶν καθεστῶτων νομίμων* (Thuc. 1.132.2).

## 2. ΛΟΓΟΙ ΑΠΙΣΤΟΙ

What are the origins of Sophocles' picture of Creon Tyrannos? It bears certain resemblances to a famous section in Herodotus, the so-called "Debate on Constitutions," Book 3, Chapters 80–82.<sup>20</sup> In the first speech Otanes attacks monarchy and asks, "How can it be a well-adjusted institution when it can do what it likes without giving account?" (3.80.3); we remember Antigone's charge that tyranny is fortunate in being able to do and say what it likes (506–7). "Even the best man," Otanes continues, "when he assumes this office (ἀρχήν) would depart from his customary good sense" (ἐωθότων νοημάτων); Creon had said that a man's φρόνημα and γνώμη are revealed ἀρχαῖς τε καὶ νόμοισιν (177), and we can say that his absolute power has absolutely corrupted his basic good sense; his lack of *euboulia* is emphasized repeatedly in the last part of the play. "A tyrant ought to be without envy," Otanes says, "since he has πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ"; some of Creon's lost ἀγαθὰ are enumerated by the messenger at 1161 ff. Otanes then proceeds to his main indictment of the tyrant: "He disturbs ancestral laws, and does violence to women, and puts to death without trial." *Nomaia patria* is the phrase he uses, and it is a familiar one; Antigone had referred her action to ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῇ θεῶν / νόμιμα.<sup>21</sup> These, she says, "have lived for all time, and no one knows whence they sprang." Her meaning is very close to what an Athenian would have understood by *patria*, "ancestral."

The Persian debate continues. Megabyzus begins by seconding all that Otanes had said against tyranny, but rejects his claims in behalf of rule by the *dēmos*. The people, he says, given their way, simply out-tyrant the tyrant: "It is intolerable for men to escape the tyrant's hybris only to fall into the hybris of the undisciplined *dēmos*. . . . It rushes headlong into things without intelligence, like a river in winter spate, χεimάρρῳ ποταμῷ ἔκελος." The language is of course Homeric,<sup>22</sup> but the image occurs also in the *Antigone*. Haemon is urging his father to listen to good advice: "You see how the trees

<sup>20</sup> Chapters 80–82 of the third book of Herodotus have been studied in great detail by H. Apffel, *Die Verfassungsdebatte bei Herodot* (diss. Erlangen 1957). See also the somewhat inconclusive discussion by P. T. Brannan, S.J., in *Traditio* 19 (1963) 427–38.

<sup>21</sup> 454–55; the neuter plurals *nomaia* and *nomima* should be noticed.

<sup>22</sup> *Iliad* 4.452, 5.88, 11.493, 13.138.

which bend by the banks of streams in winter spate save their branches, while those which counter-strain are ruined root and branch" (712-14); the phrase *παρὰ ρείθροισι χειμάρροις* is a clear echo of Megabyzus' words.<sup>23</sup>

Darius speaks last, accepting Megabyzus' arguments against democracy, but rejecting his support of oligarchy. Both these forms, he maintains, invariably evolve into monarchy. Oligarchy leads to personal rivalries and bloodshed, democracy encourages strong personal friendships, *φιλίαι ἰσχυραί* (82.4), in which men conspire together against the common good. Now Creon had made a special point of attacking, on several occasions in the play, the man who put his *philoî* above his country's interest. Darius concludes by noting that eventually one man sets himself up as champion of the people and puts an end to the associations based on *philia*; he is then admired by everybody and, as a result of this admiration, becomes a monarch. Although the process is not the same, the messenger describes Creon as a man who had been the object of admiration, *ζηλωτός* (1161).

The verbal parallels between the "Debate on Constitutions" and the *Antigone* are too close for Herodotus and Sophocles to be writing entirely independently of each other, and although other similarities between the two authors have been noticed,<sup>24</sup> these, so far as I am aware, have not been discussed in any detail before.<sup>25</sup> Both works may date from roughly the same period, the middle '40's, although the date for neither can be called anything like secure. The *Antigone*

<sup>23</sup> The similarity was noted in passing by E. Maass in *Hermes* 22 (1887) 587, note 1, and Apffel (above, note 20) 33, note 1. The passage from the *Antigone* is given an extended parody in Eupolis' *Prospaltians* (fr. 244A Edmonds) and is echoed more faintly in Aristophanes' *Knights* 526 ff. (Haemon's appeal to the natural world echoes Creon's examples at 473-78. With the tenor of *Ant.* 477-78 compare Pheidipides' argument from *ἀλεκτρούνας καὶ τέλλα τὰ βοτὰ* [Arist. *Clouds* 1427] and Callicles' appeal to the animal world in Plato, *Gorg.* 483D.)

<sup>24</sup> How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus* 1.7, note 3; at greater length in Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* 1.2 (1934) 318, note 3. For Hdt. and Soph., Jacoby, *RE* Suppl. 2 (1913) 233-37, s.v. "Herodotos."

<sup>25</sup> J. S. Morrison, "The Place of Protagoras in Athenian Public Life," *CQ* 35 (1941) 1 ff., argued that "Herodotus derived the material of Darius's speech from Protagoras" and that "there is much in the [*Antigone*] to suggest that the dramatist knew and used the theories of Protagoras" (13), but his comparison of the Debate and the *Antigone* goes no further. Bowra noted that "like Herodotus' typical tyrant, [Creon] 'breaks the laws of the land' in forbidding burial to Polyneices and 'puts to death without trial' in his summary condemnation of Ismene" ([above, note 1] 77).



is generally placed early in Sophocles' career.<sup>26</sup> For those seeking a more specific date the Great Dionysia of 441 has often been suggested,<sup>27</sup> on the basis of the Aristophanic Hypothesis which says that Sophocles was elected to the generalship of the Samian War because of the esteem he gained with the *Antigone*. Sophocles' generalship in the war is guaranteed,<sup>28</sup> but its connection with the *Antigone* is disputable. For one thing, if the generals were elected at the same time in the fifth century as they were in the fourth, *viz.* any time after the sixth prytany in which the omens were favorable, chances are that Sophocles had already been elected general by the time of the Dionysia of 441.<sup>29</sup> In any case, the implication of the Hypothesis' account is clearly that the *Antigone* won first prize, but at the Dionysia of 441 Euripides won his first victory, as we know from the Parian Marble.<sup>30</sup> To move Sophocles' victory back to 442 (or earlier) obviously weakens the link between it and his election to the generalship. But, for all that, the story may be true. As for Herodotus' Debate, that, too, along with the rest of his "Persian history," has been dated in the '40's.<sup>31</sup> Although in strict logic priority can be proven for neither Herodotus nor Sophocles, it has usually been assumed in the other parallel passages that the dramatist is echoing the historian. The possibility must be left open that both are borrowing from a third source.

<sup>26</sup> That is, early relative to his other extant plays; his first victory came apparently in 468 (Plut. *Cim.* 8). See Jebb's commentary, xlvii.

<sup>27</sup> Jebb, xlii; J. E. Powell, *History of Herodotus* (Cambridge 1939) 34; Morrison (above, note 25) 13.

<sup>28</sup> Thuc. I.115.2-117 for the war, and Gomme's *Commentary*, *ad loc.*, for further refs.; Gomme 352 for Sophocles on the board of generals and ancient anecdotes linking his name with Pericles', apparently on this occasion.

<sup>29</sup> Date for elections is fourth century in *Ath. Pol.* 44.4. The seventh prytany "would begin three days before the end of Gamelion . . . and would mainly correspond to the month Anthesterion (middle of February to middle of March)," notes Sandys, *ad loc.*, whereas the Great Dionysia was held from 10th to 15th Elaphebolion, i.e. late in March. Two possible solutions, that the elections were inordinately delayed that year, or that the elections were not normally held until late spring (on the basis of IG II<sup>2</sup> 892), do not recommend themselves. See Sandys' discussion at *Ath. Pol.* 44.4; Gilbert, *Greek Constitutional Antiquities* (Eng. trans. 1895) 216, note 2; and Busolt, *Griech. Staatskunde* (1926) 990, with note 2.

<sup>30</sup> *FGrH* 239, Ep. 60 (archonship of Diphilus).

<sup>31</sup> Powell (above, note 27) 38: "composed, and probably published, at Athens between 448 and 442 B.C."

## 3. ΝΟΜΟΣ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ

Can such a common ancestor for the Debate and the *Antigone* be divined? It has been usual to seek the source of Herodotus' Persian Debate in some sophistic writer; Protagoras has been a favorite candidate.<sup>32</sup> The difficulty is that we have almost no evidence to connect Protagoras' teachings with the content of any of the three speeches.<sup>33</sup> Diogenes Laertius, in a list of Protagoras' works, mentions a *Περὶ πολιτείας*,<sup>34</sup> but no fragment is certainly ascribed to this work. Even the form of the Herodotean Debate is only tenuously connected with Protagoras. At the end of Diogenes' list we find *Ἀντιλογιῶν* α̅β̅, and in another place he quotes both Aristoxenus and Favorinus as having said that "almost all" of Plato's *Politeia* could be found *ἐν τοῖς Ἀντιλογικοῖς* of Protagoras.<sup>35</sup> These *antilogiai* have generally been assumed to be "rhetorical demonstrations on set themes, showing that two contradictory positions can be defended."<sup>36</sup> If that is correct, the Persian Debate shows little resemblance to such contradictory *pairs* of speeches. For there we have three speeches woven together with an elaborately formal "round" technique: Otanes attacks monarchy and defends isonomy (democracy); Megabyzus opens his speech by accepting Otanes' remarks against monarchy (tyranny), but rejects his claims for rule by the people;<sup>37</sup> Darius accepts Megabyzus' attack on isonomy, but rejects his defense of oligarchy.<sup>38</sup> At the end

<sup>32</sup> Full bibliography in Schmid-Stählin, 573, note 2, also 575, note 3; more recent works cited by Apffel (above, note 20) 11, note 5. Protagoras championed by T. A. Sinclair, *History of Greek Political Thought* (London 1951) 38, note 2; R. H. Stroheker, "Zu den Anfängen der monarchischen Theorie in der Sophistik," *Historia* 2 (1954) 381 ff., with recent bibliography at 383, note 4; dissenting voices raised by Jacoby, *RE*, Suppl. 2 (1913) 501, s.v. "Herodotos," and H. Erbse in *Glotta* 39 (1960-61) 224 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Morrison (above, note 25) reconstructed Protagoras' theories on the education of rulers and the importance of *εὐβουλία* from Plato, *Prot.* 321C ff. and *Theaet.* 166DE, and argued that they were the basis of Darius' speech; an unproved assumption, weakened by a tendency to work from the speech to a reconstruction of Protagoras' views.

<sup>34</sup> 9.55 (= *VS* 80A1).

<sup>35</sup> 3.37 (= *VS* 80B5).

<sup>36</sup> K. Freeman, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1949) 351. Cf. Diog. Laert. 9.51.

<sup>37</sup> τὰ μὲν Ὅτάνης εἶπε τυραννίδα παύων, λελέχθω καὶ μοι ταῦτα, τὰ δ' ἐς τὸ πλῆθος ἄγωγε φέρειν τὸ κράτος, γνώμης τῆς ἀρίστης ἡμάρτηκε (3.81.1).

<sup>38</sup> ἐμοὶ δὲ τὰ μὲν εἶπε Μεγαβύζος ἐς τὸ πλῆθος ἔχοντα δοκεῖ ὀρθῶς λέξαι, τὰ δὲ ἐς ὀλιγαρχίην οὐκ ὀρθῶς (82.1).

of his speech we are back with Otanes' (and the Persians') starting-point, monarchy/tyranny: a kind of *Ringkomposition*. Only a superficial interpretation would call these ἀντιλογίαι.

To return to possible content of the Protagorean work entitled *Antilogiai*, we may perhaps allow it to have had political overtones on the shaky basis of the similarities which one or more later authors found between it and Plato's *Republic*, but it is no more than the flimsiest conjecture that the περὶ πολιτείας formed part of the *Antilogiai*.<sup>39</sup> When, from these dubious beginnings, attempts are made to fill out the *Politeia* and/or *Antilogiai* on the basis of Herodotus' Persian Debate,<sup>40</sup> a protest must be lodged against the circularity of the argument.

Morrison went considerably beyond the evidence in arguing that "the moral of the *Antigone* appears to be that rulers should take lessons of Protagoras."<sup>41</sup> In fact, where Protagoras' views of the nature of statecraft can be reconstructed at all, they seem to be implicitly contradicted by the play. Sophocles seems to be rejecting Protagoras' contention that the state's function is to "prescribe laws which are the discoveries of old and venerable lawgivers and force men to rule and to be ruled by them," as Plato makes him say in the *Protagoras* (326D). *Antigone* claims explicitly that her principles "live forever, and no one knows from where they sprang" (456-57); Creon forces Thebes to be ruled by his *nomoi*—to his, and everyone else's, cost. And the verbal similarity between the passage in Plato and a line of the *Antigone* may be intentional.<sup>42</sup> Even the great "Hymn to Man" at lines 331 ff. has been taken as an *ironical* commentary on Protagoras' doctrine of "Man and Measure."<sup>43</sup> The lack of true parallels in Protagoras should encourage us to look elsewhere. Hippias

<sup>39</sup> M. Untersteiner, *The Sophists* (Eng. trans., Oxford 1954) 10, 12, following Gomperz (17, note 23).

<sup>40</sup> Untersteiner 12; the theory of a Protagorean source for the Debate was apparently first put forward by E. Maass, in *Hermes* 22 (1887) 593-94 (so Untersteiner 17, note 20; Stroheker [above, note 32] 382, note 4).

<sup>41</sup> Morrison (above, note 25) 14. I hope to refute elsewhere Morrison's further contention (p. 13) that Protagoras' theories (and Sophocles' alleged echoes of them) "must have been used to justify the ascendancy of Pericles."

<sup>42</sup> καὶ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι (*Prot.* 326D); καλῶς μὲν ἄρχειν, εὖ δ' ἂν ἄρχεσθαι θέλειν (*Ant.* 669).

<sup>43</sup> G. Perrotta, *Sofocle* (Milan 1935) 68, note 1, cited but rejected by Whitman (above, note 1) 98, note 50.

of Elis is known to have interested himself in the word (and so presumably the concept) "tyrant." "He pointed out that whereas later poets call 'tyrants' the kings before the Trojan Wars, Homer does not know this word, using 'king' even for the impious Echetus: 'tyrant' came into use at about the time of Archilochus."<sup>44</sup> In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (4.4.19 ff.) Hippias is shown maintaining a doctrine of "unwritten laws held in every part of the world and in the same way . . . which, as having within themselves the penalty of their transgression, seem to stem from a higher than merely human lawgiver." The words read like a prose version of Antigone's great *credo* at 450 ff. Even more significantly, Plato makes Hippias say, "I consider you all to be kinsmen and relatives and fellow citizens in nature, not in law; for like is kin to like by nature, whereas law, *which is a tyrant over men*, compels them to do many things against nature."<sup>45</sup> This is strikingly like Creon's identification of himself with the *nomos* he has promulgated, and reminds us of Antigone's contention that in refusing to allow her to bury Polyneices he is compelling her to act against nature.<sup>46</sup> Without pressing into service works only dubiously ascribed to Hippias,<sup>47</sup> these parallels suffice to show how close the Sophist was to the tragedian, and if we *must* postulate a philosophical source for the portrayal of Creon (perhaps then, too, for certain details in Herodotus' Debate), Hippias seems a far better candidate than Protagoras. That Hippias was putting forward these ideas as early as the 440's may come as a surprise; he has usually been dated later in the century.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Freeman (above, note 36) 385, on the basis of Hypothesis II to Soph. *O.T.*, *VS* 86B9.

<sup>45</sup> *Prot.* 337D, accepted as genuine by Zeller, acc. to D. Tarrant, *The Hippias Major* (Cambridge 1928) xxii. With Hippias' *dictum* compare Pindar's lines cited above, note 12, and Demaratus' remark to Xerxes that for the Spartans *ἐπεστί . . . δεσπότης νόμος* (Hdt. 7.104.4).

<sup>46</sup> Especially *οὔτοι συνέχθην, ἀλλὰ συμφιλέω ἔφην* (523).

<sup>47</sup> If the work known as "Anonymus Iamblichus" (*VS* 89) were really the work of Hippias, as Untersteiner (above, note 39) 274 believes, that treatise's references to law and justice as "kings among men" which "can in no way be overthrown" as principles constituting "a powerful order determined by nature" (*Anon. Iamb.* 6.1) might be significant. Even more so the statement that the tyrant has no right to overpower the people by destroying "the rule of the just . . . and the universally valid law" (7.15, trans. by Freeman from Untersteiner, [above, note 39] 282).

<sup>48</sup> ". . . active in the second half of the fifth century B.C. . . . Beyond this nothing is known of his date" (Freeman [above, note 36] 381). "It may be assumed that Hippias was about the same age as Socrates, and flourished about 430 B.C." (D. Tarrant, *The*

But he is already an established figure in the *Protagoras*, whose dramatic date is ca. 432.<sup>49</sup> Beyond that his dates are completely unknown.<sup>50</sup>

Whether or not this hypothesis be accepted, that it was Hippias' theories which provided a stimulus for both the poet and the historian,<sup>51</sup> Creon is a character whom Herodotus would certainly have recognized, and perhaps even helped to create.<sup>52</sup>

*Hippias Major*, xix). Untersteiner rather perversely dates his birth "in about 443" [above, note 39] 272, with note 3).

<sup>49</sup> *Platonis Protagoras*, ed. Adam (Cambridge 1893) xxxvi.

<sup>50</sup> Pseudo-Plut. *Vit. X. Orat.* 838A (*VS* 86A3) gives a confused account according to which his widowed daughter—or wife!—married Isocrates, which throws no light on Hippias' dates, as Isocrates was born in 436; the Aphareus who was adopted by Isocrates and went on to become famous for his tragedies in the mid-fourth century will then have been Hippias' grandson or son. It is unclear what value we are to place on Hippias' reference to himself as "much younger than Protagoras" in the *Hippias Maior* 282E.

<sup>51</sup> According to Stroheker (above, note 32) 383, note 4, Walter Nestle originally (in 1908) put forward the theory that Herodotus' Debate was either eclectic or went back to Hippias, but Nestle later recanted and maintained that Hdt.'s source was "with the greatest probability" Protagoras' *Antilogiai* (*Vom Mythos zum Logos*,<sup>2</sup> 1942, 510, quoted by Stroheker). For other possible echoes of Hippias in Hdt., Schmid-Stählin 573, note 2, cite Hdt. 7.107, 2.160, and 4.30.

<sup>52</sup> After my paper was read (December 1965) and accepted for publication, a full-length study of Creon the Tyrant appeared, *ΚΡΕΩΝ ΑΙΤΙΟΛΙΣ*, by Hermann Funke (*Antike und Abendland* 12 [1966] 29–50). Funke reaches some of the same conclusions as I do and notes in passing that Otaues' picture of the tyrant at Hdt. 3.80 "fast alle Züge des Kreon der Antigone trägt" (38, note 46); but he does not trace the deterioration from constitutional monarch to tyrant and makes no suggestion as to a common source for Herodotus and Sophocles.