

Notes on Sophocles' *Epigoni*

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THERE IS NO recent papyrus discovery to help the reconstruction of Sophocles' *Epigoni*; but a reëxamination of the material which has been previously collected will allow us to draw a clearer picture of the play. The main testimonia of the myth are the following: Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.6.1, 7.2ff; Diodorus Siculus 4.66; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 73; and Asclepiades, *FGrHist* 12 F 29 (=Schol. V. *Od.* 11.326), which I translate:

Amphiaraus son of Iocles, who married Eriphyle daughter of Talaus, after quarrelling over some matter with Adrastus and then becoming reconciled, joined with Adrastus to swear an oath that in any matters on which they might disagree they would entrust the decision to Eriphyle and obey her. Afterwards, when the expedition against Thebes took place, Amphiaraus tried to dissuade the Argives from it and prophesied the disaster which was to come. Meanwhile Eriphyle, who had received the necklace of Harmonia from Polyneices, declared to those who had been forced to assemble around Adrastus that Amphiaraus would join their expedition. When Amphiaraus found out about Eriphyle's receipt of the gift(s), he made violent accusations against her, and when he himself set out on the expedition, ordered Alcmaeon not to go to Thebes with the *Epigoni* ('After-born') until he had killed his mother. It is said that Alcmaeon did all this, and that he became mad because of the matricide; but that the gods released him from this sickness because in destroying his mother he was piously helping his father.

The following fragments are attributed to this play by ancient sources, or may be so attributed.¹

ATTRIBUTED TO SOPHOCLES' *Epigoni*

FR.188. *When men are attacked by envy, disgrace is wont to prevail, if their deeds are evil and not good.*²

FR.189. *Oh, you wicked woman, wicked beyond measure, indeed there is and will be nothing worse than a woman, among the disasters which befall mortals.*

FR.190. *The man who will no longer live in Argive valleys.*

¹ A. C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Sophocles I* (Cambridge 1917) 129–39 [henceforth, PEARSON I].

² Translation of Pearson I 134.

ATTRIBUTED TO SOPHOCLES' *Eriphyle*

- FR.191. *Eloquence receives fame among hollow people, where words are stronger than deeds.*
- FR.192. *Where it is not permitted to say useful things freely, in that city wickedness prevails, and mistakes ruin safety.*
- FR.193. *Keep a serene mind, as is seemly for old age.*
- FR.194. *Only the possession of virtue is a lasting thing.*
- FR.195. *For the courage of distinguished men does not slacken.*
- FR.196. *How am I, being mortal, to struggle against heaven-sent destiny? Where there is a danger, hope gives no help.*
- FR.197. *Depart! You shall disturb Sleep, physician of disease.*

ATTRIBUTED TO AN *Epigoni* WITHOUT AUTHOR'S NAME

- FR.185. *Accursed of children, what word have you uttered?*³
- FR.186. *Do you hear this, Amphiaraus, hidden under the earth?*⁴
- FR.187. *Alc. You are akin to a husband-murdering wife.*⁵
Adr. But you are slayer of the mother who bore you.

ATTRIBUTED TO SOPHOCLES WITHOUT TITLE

- FR.198. *For I see the Argives (Eriphyle to Alcmaeon).*⁶

On the grounds stated in the following discussion I have also included the fragments of Accius' *Epigoni*⁷ as available for the reconstruction of

³ For the attribution of fr.185P to Sophocles' *Epigoni*, F. G. Welcker, *Die griechische Tragödien mit Rücksicht auf den epischen Cyclus geordnet* I (Bonn 1839) 276 [henceforth, WELCKER]; O. Ribbeck, *Die römische Tragödie im Zeitalter der Republik* (Leipzig 1875) 494 [henceforth, RIBBECK]; L. Campbell, *Sophocles, Plays and Fragments* II (Oxford 1881) 502 [henceforth, CAMPBELL]; Pearson I 129; C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage* III.1 (Berlin 1921) 958 [henceforth, ROBERT].

⁴ For the attribution of fr.186P to Sophocles' *Epigoni*, Welcker 273, Ribbeck 492, Robert 958. A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*³ (newly edited by B. Snell, Berlin 1964) 173 [henceforth, NAUCK], putting it and fr.185P among the Adespota, remarked, "fortasse huius (Sophoclis) fabulae . . ." Pearson I (129) argues partly from Athen. 584b that the line quoted can be safely regarded as being from Soph. *Epigoni* since it was one of his most famous plays and still popular in the fourth century B.C.

⁵ For the attribution of fr.187P, in connection with Antiphanes fr.191 II 90K, to Sophocles' *Epigoni*, Welcker 278, Ribbeck 495, Pearson I 69, 131, 133, Robert 959.

⁶ For the attribution of fr.198P to Sophocles' *Epigoni*, Welcker 276, Ribbeck 494, Pearson I 138, Robert 958.

⁷ E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* II (LCL, London 1936) 420–29 [henceforth, WARMINGTON]. The text and English translation here given of Accius are all his, except for my revision of fr.272–73 (taking *illorum* as antecedent to *quos*) and of fr.291–93, which I have translated according to the text as restored by Bergk and Ribbeck (*infra* n.9).

Sophocles' play, accepting the views of Welcker, Ribbeck, Robert and Mette.⁸

FRR.272–73. *How shall the eyes of any one of us | Be able to look those men
in the face | Whom now at last their years keep back from warfare?*

FR.274. *Intelligence is ours through the mind; | Enjoyment, in our breath;
when mind is absent | Breath is a thing enfeebled.*

FR.275. *And see you not the Argives roaring 'war'! | The rabble too all
raving for riot?*

FR.276. *Thus bursts he out, a blunderer in stupidity, | A master of no
counsel.*

FRR.277–79. *But now I see Amphilochous coming hither; | And so is given
us a welcome pause | In parley, and time to return to camp.*

FR.280. *This too is the reason for my coming hither— | That no man's ears
should steal our words.*

FR.281. *Who grants no ending to my sad misfortunes | Unless I avenge my
father.*

FRR.282–83. *I do confess it; but why should I slacken | The advancement
of this plan, or hesitate | To spare this person's life?*

FRR.284–85. *Pray why then, Demonassa, only daughter, | Is this that in an
urgent cry to me | You call me thus affrighted from the house?*

FR.286. *Speak you out quickly and unbosom me | Of this my dread.*

FR.287. *I'll not | Delay to approach her. See! She is at hand. | How heavy
with the neck-band is her throat!*

FR.288. *See you! How that disloyalty spurs you on, | And fear restrains
you not!*

FR.289. *Don't! Don't! Get you away! Let go! | Best not touch the robe!*

FR.290. *Now will I proceed | To load the altars of the heavenly gods, |
Appeasing them with worship.*

FRR.291–93. *You will be near Glisas. Good luck, out of the land | Of Pelops
in banishment.*⁹

FR.294. *Near by the plenteous-flowing olden stream | And waters swift
of Inachus.*

There are two important questions to be discussed before a reconstruction can be attempted. First, is Accius Sophoclean? Second, is the *Eriphyle* of Sophocles to be identified with his *Epigoni*, as many critics have proposed?¹⁰

⁸ Welcker 269, Ribbeck 489, Robert 958 and H. J. Mette, *Lustrum* 9 (1964) 116 [henceforth, METTE], regarded Accius' *Epigoni* as a translation of Sophocles' *Epigoni*. Pearson I (129) regarded it as being probably an adaptation, but did not feel certain about this.

⁹ Th. Bergk, *RhM* n.s. 3 (1835) 84: *maneas adhuc an te exilio macte pelopis externis codd.: ad Glisantem Bergk, exilio macte ex terris Pelopiis* Ribbeck³.

¹⁰ For the identification, Welcker 269ff, Ribbeck 489ff, Pearson I 132, Robert 958; Bethe,

To begin with, let us look for some solid basis on which we may develop our discussion. We can extract two facts from the fragments of Accius' play: first, that there were two parties with opposed viewpoints concerning the expedition of the Epigoni, the warlike and the hesitant, who debated the issue on stage (frr.275W, 272–73W, 277–79W, 276W); second, that a son appeared who felt oppressed by an obligation to his father (fr.281W; note the word *miseriis*).

It would be natural for a son of Amphiaraus¹¹ to have felt great hesitation in supporting the warlike party if he had been conscious of his father's command to kill his mother before the expedition could begin. Frr.277–79W, however, seem to show that Amphilocheus, one of the two known sons of Amphiaraus, was wholeheartedly in favour of the war since he is welcomed by those who have been arguing with someone on the opposite side. If Amphilocheus was regarded as a reliable member of the warlike party, he could hardly have been represented as being oppressed by being unable to carry out his obligation towards his father. Who, then, could have spoken fr.281W?

Tradition unanimously says that Alcmaeon slew his mother in obedience to his father's behest. But Apollodorus suggests that he was at first reluctant to do so (see below the quotation from Apollodorus). In Diodorus (see below) Alcmaeon questions the oracle a second time, although the first oracle, obtained by other sons of the Seven (Epigoni), had already recommended the expedition and nominated Alcmaeon as the supreme commander. The second oracle sanctions both expedition and matricide. Mythographical descriptions can often be assumed to reflect the action of tragedy, and we may conjecture that Alcmaeon showed great reluctance towards the expedition because he was distressed at the idea of committing matricide before it, and that it was therefore Alcmaeon who spoke fr.281W.¹² It follows that the interlocutor of frr.275W and 272–73W is Alcmaeon. The tragic design of the play thus becomes clear: that the two brothers were opposed in

RE 1 (1894) 1552 *s.v.* Alkmaion, 6 (1909) 462 *s.v.* Eriphyle [henceforth, BETHE]; T. B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Sophocles*² (London 1969) 174. Against identification: Nauck and Campbell printed separately; W. N. Bates, *Sophocles, Poet and Dramatist*² (New York 1969) 197. Not separation but not identification: W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* I.2 (München 1934) 437 [henceforth, SCHMID].

¹¹ As sons of Amphiaraus only Alcmaeon and Amphilocheus are recorded by mythographers; *cf.* Od. 15.248. As daughters Eurydice and Alcmena are mentioned once by Pausanias (5.17.7) and Demonassa three times (3.15.8, 5.17.7, 9.5.5).

¹² So Welcker 273, Ribbeck 491, Robert 958, Mette 117.

their policy regarding the Theban expedition, Amphilocheus actively promoting the idea of an attack and Alcmaeon holding back; and that Alcmaeon's reason for hesitation consisted in the emotional conflict between filial affection and the assigned duty of matricide.

Cicero (*Tusc.* 2.25.60) gives a line from a Greek tragedy, *Epigoni* (fr.186P): *Audisne haec, Amphiarae, sub terram abdite?*¹³ There can be little doubt that the play he meant was Sophocles' *Epigoni* (see n.4). Cicero cites the line as spoken by Cleanthes, a disciple of Zeno who lived in the third century B.C. when Aeschylus' tragedies were out of fashion. Cleanthes shouted the words at Dionysius of Heraclea, another disciple of Zeno, who had deviated from the doctrine of their deceased master by saying that pain was an evil. The meaning of the sentence is explained by the situation in the play: one of the two sons of Amphiaras is infuriated at the words of the other who has deviated from the will of their father. We find here a confrontation exactly parallel to that in Accius' *Epigoni*: that the sons were opposed to each other and one of them agreed with the injunction while the other was unwilling to execute it. The injunction was matricide, inseparably connected with the expedition. If each of them did not change his own attitude, the opposition would inevitably have developed into such a violent break as fr.186P shows.¹⁴

Cicero writes elsewhere (*De opt.gen.orat.* 18): *Idem Andriam et Synephebos nec minus Terentium et Caecilium quam Menandrum legunt, nec Andromacham aut Antiopam aut Epigonos Latinos reiciunt: immo Ennius et Pacuvium et Accium potius quam Euripidem et Sophoclem legunt.* It is obvious that Cicero was wrong if he meant to say that Ennius' *Andromacha* is an adaptation of Euripides' extant play of the same title,¹⁵ even though he is probably right in regarding Pacuvius' *Antiopa* as a translation of the play of the same title by Euripides.¹⁶

¹³ Probably Cicero's own translation, as he often gives when he cites passages from Greek tragedy.

¹⁴ Ribbeck (492) saw fraternal confrontation in fr.186P, but he found in Amphilocheus a son eager to save his mother. Welcker (273) interpreted it as spoken by Alcmaeon on his discovery of Eriphyle's second bribery. Robert (958) assigned it to Alcmaeon.

¹⁵ Not only Cicero here but also Varro (*Ling.* 7.82) seems to take that view. But the fragments of Ennius' *Andromacha* show that the action falls sooner after the capture of Troy. For detailed discussion, see Mette 76 and H. D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge 1967) 236 [henceforth, JOCELYN].

¹⁶ That Pacuvius' *Antiopa* was modelled after Euripides' *Antiope* may be inferred from Hygin. *Fab.* 8 and Cic. *Fin.* 1.2.4, who implies that the Roman poet followed the original fairly closely.

Is Accius' *Epigoni* a translation of Sophocles? The discussion above leads us to conclude that Accius at least modelled it after Sophocles in bringing about the confrontation of the brothers concerning the paternal injunction. Accius, as a whole, is said to have imitated his Greek models more faithfully than Pacuvius, and Pacuvius more than Ennius.¹⁷ If fraternal confrontation was borrowed from Sophocles, just as it was with Ismene and Antigone in *Antigona*,¹⁸ the consequent development of the action could not have been far different from that in the original. If the reluctant hero is to succeed in performing his filial duty,¹⁹ there cannot be many ways of reaching a dramatic solution. In all probability, therefore, Accius would have followed Sophocles in the development of the action.

The second question is whether the *Eriphyle* of Sophocles should be identified with his *Epigoni*. In fr.281W the paternal behest is explicitly stated as somebody else's as well. That divine will is meant may be inferred from mythographical descriptions (Diodorus' second oracle mentioned below, Apollodorus as quoted below and Asclepiades testify to the divine will). In fr.196P of Sophocles the speaker reveals his resignation to divine will, although he finds it unkind.²⁰ An interlocutor should be expected to be uttering his opposition to divine will. Immisch²¹ was therefore certainly right to combine Accius' fr.281W with Sophocles' fr.196P and state that the direction of the oracle was in accordance with the father's behest. But Ribbeck (491) was mistaken in thinking that Alcmaeon thus (fr.196P) surrendered himself to the divine will. While fr.281W preserves the words of Alcmaeon's protest, fr.196P cannot be spoken by anybody else but Amphilocheus to explain his own attitude to the matricide. This is exactly the situation we now have detected, through Accius, in Sophocles' *Epigoni*.

Fr.196P comes from the *Eriphyle* of Sophocles. The most plausible argument for its identification with the *Epigoni* is that of Welcker, who argued that the tragic death of Eriphyle must be depicted in the tragedy which bears her name, while it is indisputable that the sub-

¹⁷ Jocelyn (30) gives as one of the data the percentage of trimeters in Latin measurable verses compared with that of Greek tragedy.

¹⁸ Warmington fr.87, 88–89, 93–94. So Ribbeck 483; F. Leo, *De tragoedia romana* (Göttingen 1910) 10; Mette 113.

¹⁹ As to whether Eriphyle was killed within the dramatic time in both plays, see *infra* the discussion on Eriphyle and Alcmaeon.

²⁰ For the interpretation of this fragment, see *infra* n.47.

²¹ (N)*Jbb* Suppl. 17 (1890) 180ff (cited by Pearson I 137).

ject of Sophocles' *Epigoni* was her murder by Alcmaeon.²² As far as I can see from the mythographers, there is no other occasion when fr.196P could be more suitably spoken than as interpreted here. Fr.196P fits exactly into the scene of the argument of the brothers with which the action of *Epigoni* developed, inevitably to end in the explosion of fr.186P. Fr.196P thus supports Welcker's view.²³

If the persuasion by the Epigoni (frr.272–73W, 275W) and the attack by Amphilochochus (frr.277–79W, 186P) supported by divine ordinance (fr.196P) did not break down the resolve of Alcmaeon, what could have swayed him into committing matricide? I shall proceed by treating the *dramatis personae* in order to clarify how a dramatic solution was offered to the problem of the hero's evasion of filial duty on the assumption that the fragments of Sophocles' *Eriphyle* and Accius' *Epigoni* are available for the elucidation of the dramaturgy of Sophocles' *Epigoni*.

Dramatis Personae

ERIPHYLE and ALCMAEON. *Paroemiographi Graeci*, App. Prov. 3.35 (Leutsch/Schneidewin I 423) says: "Eriphyle was made by Sophocles to say to Alcmaeon *καὶ γὰρ Ἀργείου ὄρω* (fr.198P). It is said of those who are gazing at something intently and who are thought to be looking at something horrible." Although the title of the play is not stated, the exposition makes it probable that it refers to Sophocles' *Epigoni*, indicating the critical moment when Alcmaeon was to kill Eriphyle. Frr.284–85W show Eriphyle speaking. For further evidence for Alcmaeon's appearance see below the discussion on Adrastus.

As to the time of Eriphyle's death, some critics have doubted that the matricide occurred before the expedition²⁴ because Apollodorus

²² Welcker 270ff.

²³ Jacobs' supposition (*Nachtr. zu Sulzer* IV 123, cited by Welcker 269 and Pearson I 132) that *Eriphyle* dealt with the earlier expedition of the Seven might stand in favour of those against identification. But divine intervention cannot by any means be inserted into that play. It would damage the story. The strongest argument for non-identification is that Accius' *Epigoni* as well as *Eriphyla* (only once) are cited. Ribbeck (493) regarded them as the same play. Pearson left the matter as an enigma (I 132 n.1).

²⁴ 'Matricide before expedition' is supported by Welcker (270), Ribbeck (489) and Robert (958). Schmid (438) and Pearson (I 130–31) have left it unsettled, since they are not happy with the slow attack of the Furies after the expedition. Bethe (*Thebanische Heldenlieder* [Leipzig 1891] 129ff; *RE* 1.1552) thought that there were previously two versions, *Thebais* (=matricide after expedition) and *Alcmaeonis* (=matricide before expedition) but did not say which version Sophocles' *Epigoni* followed. The ending of the play, as here conjectured, would settle the problem.

writes (3.7.2ff): "Alcmaeon joined the expedition, though he was loath to lead the army till he had punished his mother; for Eriphyle had received the robe from Thersander, son of Polynices, and had persuaded her sons also to go to the war . . . After the capture of Thebes, when Alcmaeon learned that his mother Eriphyle had been bribed to his undoing also, he was more incensed than ever and in accordance with an oracle given to him by Apollo he killed his mother. Some say that he killed her in conjunction with his brother Amphiloachus, others that he did it alone."²⁵

The absurdity in Apollodorus is evident:²⁶ that Eriphyle should work such great power of persuasion over the sons who were determined to kill her, or that Alcmaeon should postpone carrying out his father's command until he came back safe from the Theban expedition. The matricide here would no longer be a retribution for his wronged father but a tit-for-tat for his own self. Have we not seen that one point of the tragic design lies in the conflicting emotions of Alcmaeon, to whom matricide before the expedition has been assigned as a filial duty? How could he have started for the expedition without reaching a decision about the problem? Eriphyle has to be murdered before the expedition. And if the discussion below on Adrastus is approvable, fr.187P assures that the matricide was performed within the dramatic time.

AMPHILOCHUS. Frs.277-79W not only prove the appearance of Amphiloachus but also reveal his rôle in the play. The discussion above on frs.281W, 196P and 186P reveals that his eagerness for battle was assumed not in ignorance of the assigned duty of matricide but in full awareness of its being the will of his father and of the gods.

THERSANDER. There is no evidence for his presence in the action. But the Epigoni were the bereaved sons of the Seven who attacked Thebes to help Polynices, who had been banished from his fatherland by Eteocles his brother. Thersander is the son of Polynices. He is most naturally expected to be the most eager for the cause of the Theban expedition of the Epigoni and cannot be absent from the drama entitled *Epigoni*.

DEMONASSA. It is unlikely that Demonassa, daughter of Eriphyle, addressed in frs.284-85W, failed to appear on the stage.²⁷ According

²⁵ The text and translation by J. G. Frazer, *Apollodorus I*⁴ (London 1961) 379ff.

²⁶ So Welcker 272, Pearson I 130, Robert 957.

²⁷ So Ribbeck 493, Pearson I 131 n.1, Robert 958.

to Pausanias (9.5.15) she is the wife of Thersander. There is no evidence, but it is quite probable that she was so represented in this play.²⁸ For if she was, she would be the only person who could divulge the second bribery of Eriphyle to Alcmaeon her brother, which Apollodorus and Diodorus give as the direct cause of Alcmaeon's murder of Eriphyle. Regrettably there is no stronger suggestion of the second bribery (Thersander presenting Eriphyle with the robe of Harmonia) having occurred in this play than fr.289W.²⁹ But if Alcmaeon showed such persistent reluctance as to cause the Epigoni to give up persuasion (fr.277–79W) and as to provoke Amphilocheus to argument (fr.196P) and rage (fr.186P), can anything else than the disclosure of the second bribery cause him to commit matricide? Ribbeck (494) thought that the second bribery did not occur in the play, but admitting that Alcmaeon at first showed serious hesitation, he assumed (491) on the ground of fr.186P that the ghost of Amphiaraus appeared to direct Alcmaeon to matricide. Fr.186P, however, does not say anything about the appearance of the ghost.³⁰

Welcker (272) accepts the second bribery as the direct cause driving Alcmaeon to matricide. His view is grounded on Diodorus. But does Diodorus follow the actual sequence of the drama? In fact, he writes: “. . . But their sons, who were known as Epigoni, being intent upon avenging the death of their fathers, decided to make common cause in a campaign against Thebes, having received an oracle from Apollo that they should make war upon this city, and with Alcmaeon the son of Amphiaraus as their supreme commander. Alcmaeon, after they had chosen him to be their commander, inquired of the god concerning the campaign against Thebes and also concerning the punishment of his mother Eriphyle. And Apollo replied that he should perform both these deeds, not only because Eriphyle had accepted the golden necklace in return for bringing about the destruction of his father, but also because she had received a robe as a reward for securing the death of her son.”³¹ Diodorus does not proceed to tell whether Alcmaeon murdered Eriphyle in accordance with the oracle (he may have thought it evident from 4.65.7) but enters into a detailed descrip-

²⁸ So Ribbeck 493.

²⁹ Warmington (427) recognizes Harmonia's robes in fr.289W. The earliest reference to Harmonia's robe is Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 98.

³⁰ Ribbeck (492) assigned to his ghost fr. *Inc. Inc. Trag.* (Accius?) 25–26, 27–28.

³¹ Text and translation, C. H. Oldfather, *Diodorus Siculus III*³ (London 1961) 27ff.

tion of the Epigoni's expedition. Was Welcker right in finding a Sophoclean sequence here and in assuming that the second bribery was revealed to Alcmaeon by the second oracle and that this drove Alcmaeon to matricide?

It is indeed very likely that the second oracle was consulted on the expedition and matricide by Alcmaeon in the play (fr.280W?, 286W?; but for other possibilities see n.45). What did it tell and how did Alcmaeon react? The oracle sanctioned the murder of Eriphyle, but Alcmaeon still shows himself hesitant, whereas Amphilocheus declared submission (fr.196P): "How am I, being mortal, to struggle against heaven-sent destiny, when hope gives no help in danger?" Alcmaeon as the interlocutor is explicitly shown as refusing the paternal injunction, even now when he has learned it to be divine will. Fr.281W must also be uttered after the inquiry of the second oracle. There matricide is regarded only as the cruel will of the gods. If the second bribery had been disclosed, even Alcmaeon would have had to admit the justice of the divine will, but in fact he speaks of divine will only as demanding cruelty: "Who grants no ending to my sad misfortunes, unless I avenge my father."

We must conclude that the oracle, if it was consulted in the play, indeed sanctioned matricide but did not give any information about the second bribery. The information was certainly given in some other way; for there is no dramatic solution possible for the procrastination of the hero other than this information. The appearance of Demonassa, as wife of Thersander and sister of Alcmaeon, is essential.

ADRASTUS. Plutarch cites (*De aud.poe.* 35E) a part of the dialogue in the *Epigoni* between Adrastus and Alcmaeon (fr.187P). Antiphanes (fr.191 II 90K = Athen. 6.223) attests Adrastus' appearance in the *Epigoni*. In neither case is the author's name given. But Sophocles' *Epigoni* is the only play likely to be referred to in these remarks. The contents of Aeschylus' *Epigoni* are not clear, but his play is less likely to be mentioned by a popular comic poet of the fourth century B.C.³² There were other *Epigoni* plays,³³ but none of them is likely to be referred to in this way. Moreover it seems certain that the references of Plutarch and Antiphanes refer to the same feature of the play. Both speak of the emotional perturbation of Adrastus; pre-

³² *supra* n.5.

³³ Astydamas (*Arist. Poet.* 14), Agathon, Euaretos, Nicomachus as given by Bethe I 1552.

sumably there was a famous scene between uncle and nephew after the matricide.³⁴

MESSENGER. Eriphyle's murder may have been reported, as is the custom in Greek tragedy, by a messenger, unless Adrastus performed this rôle.

CHORUS. The title suggests a chorus of the Epigoni.³⁵ Frr.277–79W consist of anapaests. In Sophocles' *Antigone* there are remarkable anapaestic systems sung by the Chorus to introduce new characters or themes.³⁶ If frr.277–79W are the words of the Chorus, they are exactly of the same type as these examples. The appearance of the Epigoni as the Chorus with some of their soldiers to fill the number would show the urgent demand of the Argives for an expedition.

The discussion of *dramatis personae* enables us to establish the probable course of action of the play. Alcmaeon was asked to become the commander of the Epigoni on their expedition against Thebes. He refused because he had to murder Eriphyle before the expedition in accordance with paternal injunction. Neither the demand of the Epigoni nor the direction of heaven nor the attack of Amphilocheus turned him from his resolve. Disclosure of Eriphyle's second bribery was the only probable motive to lead to his breakdown. Demonassa was the only person who as wife of Thersander could discover it and who as sister of Alcmaeon felt constrained to disclose it. The disclosure converted the hero from obstinate refusal to a decision to commit matricide and the murder took place. If this course of action is to be represented according to the normal structure of prologue, four *epeisodia* and *exodus*, divided by choral odes, dramatic economy would require it to be constructed as follows.

Tentative Reconstruction of the Action

DRAMATIC TIME: directly before the expedition³⁷ (fr.275W and the discussion above on Eriphyle).

DRAMATIC PLACE: Argos, before the palace of Thersander (frr.284–85W). The palace of Thersander is more likely than that of Amphiaras, for the presence of Demonassa at another palace would be difficult.³⁸

³⁴ *infra* nn.62 and 64.

³⁵ So Welcker 270, Mette 117.

³⁶ *Ant.* 155–62, 376–83, 526–30, 626–30, 801–05.

³⁷ So Ribbeck 489, Robert 948, Mette 116.

³⁸ I owe this suggestion to the referee of my paper.

PROLOGUE. There is no evidence to support hypotheses on how the play opened, but it would be greatly detrimental not only to the characterization of Alcmaeon but also to the progress of the action to begin with the argument between the warlike party and Alcmaeon, who cannot disclose his real reason for avoiding the expedition. Sophocles must have composed the prologue in such a way that the predicament of Alcmaeon might be realized fully by the audience through his conversation with Amphilochus. A dialogue would be typical.³⁹ The audience must have been told about the treachery of Eriphyle, the subsequent death of Amphiaraus, his instructions of matricide and the Theban expedition, Thersander's appeal to the authority of the oracle. Alcmaeon may have despatched Amphilochus to consult the oracle (the second oracle of Diodorus). It is Alcmaeon who goes to consult the oracle in Diodorus, where Amphilochus is never mentioned. In Sophocles' play Amphilochus is the more likely of the two brothers to go to consult the oracle, considering the probable sequence of events. *Trachiniae* provides a parallel to the prologue with dialogue exposition and the dismissal of one of the characters.⁴⁰

FIRST EPISODE. Thersander must come out himself with the other Epigoni and attempt to persuade the reluctant Alcmaeon. Alcmaeon must stubbornly have refused to yield, arguing in general terms but not telling the real reason for hesitation. If this did not happen, Thersander would not have a sufficient motive for conceiving the plan of bribery. Three fragments of Accius seem to be spoken by Thersander.

FRR.272–73W. . . . *Quibus oculis quisquam nostrum poterit illorum optui vultus, quos iam ab armis anni porcent?*

FR.275W. *Et nonne Argivos fremere bellum et velle vim vulgum vides?*

FR.274W. *Sapimus animo, fruimur anima; sine animo anima est debilis.*⁴¹

Alcmaeon cannot tell the real reason for his refusal. Fr.192P, Alcmaeon?⁴²

ὄπου δὲ μὴ τὰ χρήστ' ἐλευθέρως λέγειν
ἔξεστι, νικᾷ δ' ἐν πόλει τὰ χείρονα,
ἀμαρτίαι σφάλλουσι τὴν σωτηρίαν.

³⁹ Schmid-Stählin I 2 116 n.3.

⁴⁰ On the prologue of Inachus, see W. M. Calder III, "The Dramaturgy of Sophocles' *Inachus*," *GR(B)S* 1 (1958) 143.

⁴¹ So Thersander as the speaker of fr.272–73W, Welcker 274. Of fr.272–73W, 275W and 274W, Ribbeck 489, Warmington 421.

⁴² So Ribbeck 490.

Fr.191P, Thersander?

γλῶσς' ἐν κενοῖσιν ἀνδράσιν τιμὴν ἔχει
ᾧπου λόγοι χθένουσι τῶν ἔργων πλέον.

In frr.277–79W the arrival of Amphilochus is announced most probably by the Epigoni, who welcome his timely appearance and leave persuasion to him.⁴³

*Sed iam Amphilochum huc vadere cerno et
nobis datur bona pausa loquendi tempusque in castra reverti.*

If Amphilochus was welcomed in his first appearance before the Epigoni as being on their side, he may have appeared in the Prologue, as the deputy of Thersander and the Epigoni, to demand Alcmaeon's prompt acceptance of the command.

Frr.277–79W indicate the disappearance of the Epigoni, which enables the two brothers to hold a secret conversation on the answer of the oracle. Alcmaeon's brief reference to Thersander in his absence may be found in fr.276W:⁴⁴

ita inperitus stupiditate erumpit se, impos consili.

But their conversation instantly turns to the oracle. Fr.280W, Amphilochus?

eaque ivi hoc causa ut nequis nostra verba cleperet auribus.

Alcmaeon, fr.286W?⁴⁵

Eloquere propere ac pavorem hunc meum expectora.

Alcmaeon must have been shocked to learn that his father's command of matricide has been sanctioned by divine will.

SECOND EPISODE. In *Antigone* assaults on Creon's resolve from different characters are divided roughly into separate *episodia*. Analogy and the fragments (mainly fr.186P) would allow us to conjecture that the Second Episode was devoted to an *agon* of the brothers.

⁴³ So Ribbeck 490. If frr.277–79W indicate the disappearance of the Epigoni, they must re-enter before the *agon* of the brothers (Second Episode as conjectured here) to sing the First Stasimon. For examples of the temporary exit of the Chorus, see Eur. *Hel.* 386–514, *Alc.* 747–860, *Rhes.* 565–673.

⁴⁴ So Ribbeck 490.

⁴⁵ Ribbeck (493) and Mette (117) severed fr.286W from fr.280W and assigned the former to Eriphyle ordering Demonassa to reveal the danger mentioned in frr.284–85W, while Welcker (273) assigned it to Alcmaeon and notices a sequence in frr.277–79W—280W—286W, but not on the oracle, as I propose.

Amphilochus, who seems to have been in favour of the expedition from the first, becomes all the more impetuous, if the matricide has been approved by the divine will. He must have demanded that Alcmaeon accept the command without delay. Fr.281W may preserve the words of Alcmaeon expressing his dismay that Apollo has sanctioned matricide:⁴⁶

qui nisi genitorem ullo, nullum meis dat finem miseriis.

Alcmaeon may be hoping that by his help Eriphyle's degraded character would somehow be reformed and that she would possibly be spared divine punishment. He may have revealed his plan (*haec* of frr.282–83W) of saving Eriphyle's life. Amphilochus objects and confesses his submission to the doom.⁴⁷

FR.196P. *πῶς οὖν μάχωμαι θνητὸς ὦν θεία τύχη;
ὅπου τὸ δεινόν, ἔλπις οὐδὲν ὠφέλει.*

Alcmaeon persists, frr.282–83W (*huius*=*Eriphylae*):⁴⁸

*Fateor; sed cur proferre haec pigrem aut huius dubitem parcere
capiti?*

The *agon* perhaps concluded, as the Haemon-Creon scene of *Antigone* (630–780) did, with Alcmaeon shaken but still determined to have his own way. In fr.186P Amphilochus, enraged, calls to his father under the earth,

Audisne haec, Amphiarae, sub terram abdite?

Amphilochus cannot remain inactive after the rupture. He may have decided even to kill Eriphyle himself if he is convinced that the gods will not grant them a successful expedition against Thebes unless Eriphyle dies.

THIRD EPISODE. Fr.194P and a dubious fragment suggest that Alcmaeon earnestly admonished Eriphyle. If Eriphyle recovers herself from degradation, the paternal and divine injunctions may lose much

⁴⁶ *supra* n.12.

⁴⁷ Welcker (273) and Ribbeck (491) did not hesitate to assign fr.196P to the same speaker as fr.281W, and did not see the tone of fr.196P as expounded in this paper. I follow the punctuation of Nauck, interpreting: "How am I, being mortal, to struggle against the heaven-sent destiny, as hope of Eriphyle's recovering from degradation does not help the matter at all, when her death is destined."

⁴⁸ Ribbeck (491) and Warmington (425) regard the words as being uttered by her son eager to save Eriphyle but assume Amphilochus as the speaker.

of their validity. Alcmaeon must also be harassed by the fear that Amphilocheus may anticipate him and attack his mother if he exasperated Amphilocheus at the end of the Second Episode (fr.186P). His admonition, which might take place most fittingly after the appearance of Eriphyle at the beginning of the Third Episode,⁴⁹ must have borne a desperate tone. Fr.194P must be a reference to the hollowness of possessing personal decoration, as Welcker (275) points out.⁵⁰

ἀρετῆς βέβαιαι δ' εἰσὶν αἱ κτήσεις μόνης.

Another fragment may also be from his admonition:⁵¹ fr.188P,

φιλεῖ γὰρ ἡ δύσκλεια τοῖς φθονουμένοις
νικᾶν ἐπ' αἰσχροῖς ἢ 'πὶ τοῖς καλοῖς πλέον.

Eriphyle's appearance could not have been by accident.⁵² Her intention can only be to work Thersander's will upon Alcmaeon. If persuasion was given up in the First Episode, Thersander may have bribed Eriphyle during the Second Episode, and Eriphyle could have presented herself before Alcmaeon if she had known him to be an affectionate son and been convinced that she could prevail upon him to accept the command. The implication of Eriphyle's appearance before Alcmaeon would instantly be realized by the audience if she wore the fabulous robe as well as the necklace. Sophocles, who displayed so much skill in using stage properties, could hardly neglect an opportunity to bring the robe onto the stage and in his favourite ironic situation:⁵³ Eriphyle, decorated with the dazzling ominous ornaments, appears with the hidden intention of sending her own son

⁴⁹ Sophocles often introduces a new character at the beginning of the Third Episode: the messenger from Teucer in *Ajax*, Haemon in *Antigone*, the Corinthian messenger in *Oedipus Rex*.

⁵⁰ So Ribbeck 494. Welcker with much reason combines it with fr.942P.

⁵¹ So Welcker 275.

⁵² Eriphyle's appearance with the intention of allaying the gods' rage is suggested on the strength of Acc. fr.290W and on the analogy of Jocasta in *OT* 911ff and Clytaemnestra in *Elec.* 630ff by Robert 958 and Mette 117. But see n.65 on fr.290W, and if she is in the least repentant of her first treachery, she cannot easily be bribed, nor would she try a second persuasion on her son.

⁵³ Skillful use of stage properties and deft visualization of ironic situation is characteristic of Sophoclean tragedy, as pointed out by H. D. F. Kitto on Orestes' urn (*Sophocles, Dramatist and Philosopher* [London 1958] 161ff); on Philoctetes' bow by P. W. Harsh, "The Role of the Bow in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles," *AJP* 81 (1960) 408ff; and by G. M. Kirkwood on Ajax's corpse (*A Study of Sophoclean Drama* [New York 1958] 95).

to destruction, and the son, quite ignorant of the new treachery, desperately tries to admonish her.

Amphilochus cannot be slow in pursuing his plot, if he broke off with his brother at the end of the Second Episode. He must have been searching for Eriphyle, with his murderous intention obvious to all. The imminent danger is announced by the shout of Demonassa, who could appear with appropriate reason if the dramatic place was before the palace of Thersander. For what else could have been meant by her shout implied in fr.284–85W, spoken by Eriphyle,

*Quid istuc, gnata unica, est, Demonassa, obsecro,
quod me . . . expetens timidam e tecto excies?*

The appearance of Demonassa must lead to the disclosure of Eriphyle's second bribery to Alcmaeon. The filial son must at first be reluctant to believe her words, but if he has already seen the robe on Eriphyle, all denial is precluded. At last Alcmaeon, now converted, professes his decision to kill Eriphyle, fr.189P.

*ὦ πᾶν cὺ τολμήσασα καὶ πέρα γυνή,
κάκιον ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδ' ἔσται ποτὲ
γυναικός εἴ τι πῆμα γίγνεται βροτοῖς.⁵⁴*

FOURTH EPISODE. Eriphyle is now aware that unless she promptly sends her sons off on the expedition the threat to her own life will become imminent. She must appear again to influence or even entreat Alcmaeon and dramatically to be murdered by him.⁵⁵ But Alcmaeon is now determined to kill his mother. Fr.287W, Alcmaeon unseen by Eriphyle?

*. . . Quid cesso ire ad eam? Em praesto est; camo collum gravem!⁵⁶
(FR.326W. Pallas bicorpor anguinium spiras trahit.)⁵⁷*

⁵⁴ So Ribbeck 494. Fr.189P, if these were the words of Alcmaeon cursing Eriphyle, must have been uttered after the temporary exit of Eriphyle urged by Demonassa to escape the danger. For Eriphyle must be absent from the scene where Demonassa reveals the second bribery to Alcmaeon.

⁵⁵ For the catastrophe placed in the Fourth Episode in early plays of Sophocles, see Klaus Aichele *apud* Walter Jens, *Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie* (München 1971) 71.

⁵⁶ So Ribbeck 493. Neither can fr.287W be spoken by Amphilochus, nor can fr.288W or fr.185P or fr.289W be addressed to Amphilochus, if the assumption on Amphilochus' attitude to matricide proposed in this paper is right.

⁵⁷ So Ribbeck 488 n.1. This is from Accius, *Eriphyla*.

Eriphyle takes notice of Alcmaeon's murderous intention. She switches to defence. She must remind Alcmaeon of filial feeling, fr.288W,

FR.288W. *Viden ut te impietas stimulat nec moderat metus?*⁵⁸

FR.185P. *ὀλόμενε παίδων, ποῖον εἴρηκας λόγον;*⁵⁹

Alcmaeon is about to catch and kill her. Eriphyle's words, fr.289W,⁶⁰

Age age amolire! Amitte! Cave vestem attigas!

It is recorded that Eriphyle, when driven into the corner, suddenly gazed at a point in the air and shouted, fr.198P,

καὶ γὰρ Ἀργείους ὄρω.

If Eriphyle is being terrified by the illusionary sight of the Argives, they cannot be perceived as hurrying to save her from Alcmaeon's murderous sword, as Ribbeck thought, refuted by Pearson.⁶¹ The Argives must rather be coming to join Alcmaeon in his attack. If the horror-stricken words of Eriphyle make Alcmaeon flinch for a moment, Eriphyle can rush off and Alcmaeon may run after her. The murder must take place off-stage.

EXODUS. If Adrastus really appeared in Sophocles' *Epigoni*,⁶² a short but violent dispute between him and Alcmaeon must have occurred after the announcement by the messenger of Eriphyle's death, fr.187P:

ALC. *ἀνδροκτόνου γυναικὸς ὁμογενῆς ἔφυς.*

ADR. *ὦ δ' αὐτόχειρ γε μητρὸς ἧς ἐγείνατο.*

Not only is the great indignation of Adrastus remarkably recorded here (see above on Adrastus), but Alcmaeon, too, must have been a passionate speaker throughout the play. Cicero (*Off.* 1.31, 114) says that the rôle was taken up eagerly by an actor with a loud voice. A fragment may be from the harsh exchange of words between uncle and nephew, fr.193P:

*γῆρα προσῆκον κῶζε τὴν εὐθυμίαν.*⁶³

⁵⁸ So Ribbeck 494.

⁵⁹ So Welcker 276, Ribbeck 494, Robert 958 and *supra* n.3.

⁶⁰ So Ribbeck 494 and *supra* n.29.

⁶¹ Ribbeck 494. Also Welcker (276) and Robert (958) failed to see the horrified Eriphyle in fr.198P which Pearson (I 139) noticed.

⁶² Pearson (I 131) regards it as highly probable. Robert (959) gives, as a similar example of a relative appearing to take vengeance, Eur. *Or.* 356ff.

⁶³ For elucidation of this fragment, see Ribbeck 495, Pearson I 136: *προσῆκον* Gaisford: *προσηκόντως* A, *προσόντως* M, *προσόντος* vulgo. *εὐθυμίαν* Dindorf: *εὐφημίαν* codd.

Immisch⁶⁴ supposed, with great probability, that the famous melody which had the reconciliatory effect mentioned by Philodemus (*De musica* 1.30 Kemk.) was sung during the dispute between uncle and nephew. Adrastus left the stage quickly (Athen. 6.223).

Fr.290W seems to be best placed here as words of Alcmaeon eager to allay the gods' rage:

*Nunc pergam ut supplicii placans caelitem aras expleam.*⁶⁵

Alcmaeon's insanity after the matricide is recorded unanimously by tradition. The succession of violent argument and action are enough to unhinge his sensitive mind. Insanity can be represented in Greek tragedy as a short fit to be cured by sleep,⁶⁶ and fr.197P suggests such a sequence:

*ἄπελθε· κινεῖς ὕπνον ἰατρὸν νόσου.*⁶⁷

The speaker can be Amphilochus, telling madness to go away.

Robert (959) concluded from Asclepiades that Alcmaeon did not require purification by the hand of a human being because his deed had been filial and sanctioned by Apollo. This settles the doubt of Pearson and others as to how a mad general could have led the army on an expedition to Thebes.⁶⁸ If the gods quickly released Alcmaeon from insanity, he could have commanded the army successfully. This way of treating Alcmaeon's insanity is dramatically preferable to the traditional purification by Phegeus in Psophis.

Robert supposed Apollo *ex machina* to declare the release from madness and the future victory in the expedition, on the grounds of Athenaeus 6.222b, but that passage does not seem to relate to this particular play. If Amphilochus, however, was represented as inheriting Amphiaraus' art of prophecy,⁶⁹ he could more suitably foretell these things. In fr.291-93W Bergk's brilliant conjecture has restored the name of Glisas, the scene of the decisive battle fought between the Epigoni and the Thebans:⁷⁰

Maneas ad Glisantem, exilio macte ex terris Pelopiis!

⁶⁴ *Philologus* 48 (1889) 554ff.

⁶⁵ So Ribbeck 495, Pearson I 131.

⁶⁶ Eur. *Or.* 1ff, HF 1005ff.

⁶⁷ ἄπελθ' ἐκείνης *codd.*: *corr.* Nauck. ἰητρὸν *codd.*

⁶⁸ *supra* n.24.

⁶⁹ Cic. *Div.* 1.40.80 and Paus. 1.34.3.

⁷⁰ Paus. 9.8.6, 9.9.4; *supra* n.9.

Fr.294W and fr.190P and 195P may also come from this scene, but this cannot be decided with certainty.

FR.294W. *apud abundantem antiquam amnem et rapidas undas Inachi.*

FR.190P. τὸ κοῖλον "Ἄργος οὐ κατοικήσοντ' ἔτι"⁷¹

FR.195P. ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐσθλῶν στέρνον οὐ μαλάσσεται.

Conclusion

Epigoni is a tempting but difficult play to reconstruct. The main problem throughout is the lack of testimonia for the action. The reconstruction here attempted is only a hypothesis based on assumption often of unprovable relevance.

If Accius' anapaests in fr.277–79W reflect Sophoclean ones, their similarity to *Antigone* passages⁷² would suggest early composition. It is indeed very dangerous to discuss chronology on the basis of Roman testimonia. It may be suspected that the Roman poet was much more independent of the Greek model in his treatment of the Chorus than he was in his treatment of the actors' parts.⁷³ But if the argument for a Sophoclean source of Accius followed by our tentative reconstruction of the action confirmed his fidelity to the Greek model throughout the play, his choice for a different chorus would have been strictly limited.

Professor Calder saw in *Antigone* (443 B.C.) a tragedy of Creon, a king who after many assaults on his resolve changed his mind but too late.⁷⁴ He found the same theme, but in less successful form, in *Polyxena* (dated by him *ca* 450 B.C.).⁷⁵ The tragic dilemma posed for Alcmaeon would be more complex than in either play, but if *Epigoni* was another dramatization of similar subject, it could have been near *Antigone*.

The theme of fraternal confrontation on the problem of family duty, which forms one important factor of the dramatic success of

⁷¹ κατοικήσοντ' Blaydes: κατοικήσαντ' L.

⁷² Anapaestic systems employed in *Antigone* must be regarded as an echo of the ancient manner. Among extant Greek tragedies an anapaestic parodus is found only in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vinculus*, *Persae*, *Supplices*, *Agamemnon*; Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Inachus*; and Euripides' *Alcestis*.

⁷³ It seems that Accius in *Antigona* (Mette 113) and Ennius in *Iphigenia Aulidensis* (F. Skutsch, *RhM* 96 [1953] 193–201), for example, used choruses different from those of their models. On how the Roman poets treated choruses, see Jocelyn 30ff.

⁷⁴ W. M. Calder III, "Sophocles' Political Tragedy, *Antigone*," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 389ff.

⁷⁵ W. M. Calder III, "A Reconstruction of Sophocles' *Polyxena*," *GRBS* 7 (1966) 56.

Antigone, was utilized in *Electra*. Certainly the device was one of the favourite techniques of Sophocles throughout his dramatic career.

No indication for dating can be assumed from the mention of the Epigoni story in *Electra* (845). But apart from the unprovable chronological relation of the two plays, *Epigoni*, if it was such a play as outlined here, would explain the doubt of the reader of *Electra* of modern times: "How could Orestes be like that in matricide? He is nothing but an automaton. Nor does Electra suffer with the moral problem of matricide!" In its first production the play would have offered occasion for animated discussion of parricide among the Athenian citizens.

TACHIBANA JOSHI DAIGAKU, KYOTO

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