

The New Fragments of Euripides' *Oedipus*

John Vaio

EURIPIDES' LOST PLAY, *Oedipus*, has long been the subject of zealous attempts at detailed reconstruction.¹ But the fragments of the play preserved in ancient authors have afforded little solid ground for such speculation.² Nor have the supposed representations of the play in ancient art provided any certain evidence.³ The five fragments published by E. G. Turner in Volume 27 of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* are of considerable interest but cannot be said to have settled any of the outstanding problems regarding the reconstruction of the play.⁴ These fragments were again edited and discussed by H. Lloyd-Jones in an important review of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri Part, 27*,⁵ and most recently Bruno Snell has identified the remains of the first line of Euripides' *Oedipus* (*POxy* 2455 frg. 4 col. iv 41f) with frg. trag. adesp. 378N².⁶ The purpose of this paper is not to attempt another reconstruction. The first part of the paper consists of a new text of *POxy* 2459 frgg. 1 and 2 with critical and exegetical remarks;⁷ the second

¹ See, for example, the literature cited at C. Robert, *Oidipus II* (Berlin 1915) 107 n.3 (henceforth cited: Robert).

² Fragments whose attribution to Eur. *Oed.* is certain are collected at A. Nauck, *TGF*² (Leipzig 1889) Eur. frgg. 540–557 (henceforth cited: Nauck). To these must now be added frg. trag. adesp. 541 (see p. 46 *infra*) and perhaps frg. trag. adesp. 378 (see n.14 *infra*).

³ For one of these see n. 60 *infra*.

⁴ E. G. Turner, J. Rea, L. Koenen, J. M. F. Pomar, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part 27* (London 1962) No. 2459 frgg. 1–5 with pls. v, vi, x (henceforth cited: Turner).

⁵ H. Lloyd-Jones, *Gnomon* 35 (1963) 446–7 (henceforth cited: Lloyd-Jones).

⁶ Bruno Snell, "Der Anfang von Euripides' *Oedipus*," *Hermès* 91 (1963) 120 (henceforth cited: Snell). See n.14 *infra*.

⁷ The text is based on those of Turner and Lloyd-Jones with some changes as indicated below (pp. 44–47) and on an examination of the photographs in Turner: pls. vi (frg. 2) and x (frg.1). No attempt is made to reproduce the accents, breathing marks, or punctuation marks of the papyrus; the texts are printed in modern form with accents and punctuation. The use of iota subscript and adscript, square brackets, and dots follows that of Turner (see Turner, p. xii). The remarks made below (pp. 44–47) are also based on an examination of the photographs and are accordingly tentative. How much I owe to Turner's excellent study and Lloyd-Jones' careful review will be evident from what follows. No attempt is made to deal with *POxy* 2459 frgg. 4–5, which contain only a few letters. For frg. 3, see pp. 48–49 with n.20 *infra*.

part deals with the relevance of the new fragments to the reconstruction of the whole.

I

TEXT

- POXY 2459 FRG. 1]ριδῆ τε βοστρύχ[ων] φόβην
οὐράν δ' ὑπί]λασ' ὑπὸ λεοντόπουν βάσιν
καθίζετο . . .]δ' ἀποφέρουσ' ὠκύπτερον
]ν ἐπιπα . . ριζ[.]ν χρόνῳ·
5]ν διήλεσε . . φ . . λων φόβην
]προσβάλη τ' ἀνγαῖς πτερόν·
εἰ μὲν πρὸς ἴπ]πους ἡλίου χρυσωπὸν ἦ[ν
νώτισμα θηρ]ός· εἰ δὲ [πρ]ὸς γέφος βᾶ[λοι
κυανωπὸν ὦ]ς τις ἱρι[ς ἀν]τηγύγει σ[έλας·
10]κρῶν . [
]γοῦσῦπ[
]αφρόνω[
]ουσαγ[
 ]ροχ[
15 ]ιτ[
- FRG. 2] . . . α . . . ρ[
]μον ἐλίπομεν[
]πων ἴσταντ' α[
 σ]υρίζασαῖγα[.] . [
5]αἴνιγμ' ἢ μαιφ[όνος
 ἐ]πειποῦσ' ἐξ . [.] . τ[
]εν ξύνεσιν δ' ἔχο[ν
]πουν τι τρίπο[υν
]γῆ τρισὶ δ' . [
10]ίν δ' ἄρσεν κα[
] . ξύεις ἢ πάλιν β[
]ὸν ὕμνον οπ[
]ὕμεῖς λέξ[
]πουν[

COMMENTARY

FRG. 1

Line 1. "Accent and metre combine to rule out everything except an adjective of form -ρειδῆς (-οειδῆς) . . ." (Turner *ad loc.*). Lloyd-Jones (*ad loc.*) misquotes Turner: for -οειδῆς read -ρειδῆς (-οειδῆς).

Lines 2–3. These lines coincide with Euripides frg. 540N², which can be certainly assigned to Euripides' *Oedipus* (see Nauck *ad loc.*), and so assures the attribution of POxy 2459 to that play. At 2 an examination of the photograph shows Turner's readings to be correct; in Lloyd-Jones' text for]λασ' read]λασ', and for βασιν read βάσιν. The form ὑπίλασ' (adopted by Nauck and Lloyd-Jones) is to be preferred to Turner's ὑπίλ]λασ'.⁸ "Only Aelian continues into the next line with καθέζετο . . ." (Turner *ad loc.*). But the text of Aelian (NA 12.7, followed by Nauck) reads καθίζετο. The papyrus offers no help. The reading καθίζετο is not impossible in the sense required (see LSJ s.v. καθίζω III.1), although καθέζομαι is the commoner word in this sense in Euripides (see Allen and Italie, *A Concordance to Euripides* [Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1954] s.v. καθέζομαι). At 3 Turner suggests ἐμβά]δα or ὀλκά]δα. Lloyd-Jones (*ad loc.*) rightly rejects these. In addition to his remarks we might note the following. It is far more probable that the Sphinx's wings, not her feet, are referred to at 3. A mention of footgear (ἐμβάδ') here would repeat βάσιν (2). And how could the Sphinx carry back (ἀποφέρουσ', 2) her feet while sitting? Apollodorus (Bibl. 3.5.8.2) describes the Sphinx as follows: εἶχε δὲ πρόσωπον μὲν γυναικός, στήθος δὲ καὶ βάσιν καὶ οὐρὰν λέοντος καὶ πτέρυγας ὄρνιθος.

Line 4. An examination of the photograph supports Lloyd-Jones' reading, which has been adopted in the text above. Turner reads]νεπιπα. αἰριζ[.]γχρονωι.

Line 5. διήλασ' ἐπιφράσων Turner. An examination of the photograph supports Lloyd-Jones' λ before ων against Turner's σ.⁹ Moreover, the active of ἐπιφράζω is not found in the sense of "to mark, observe" Lloyd-Jones (*ad loc.*) suggests ε[πι]φ[ύλ]λων or ε[ρι]φ[ύλ]λων. The vertical stroke after φ might possibly be the stem of an *upsilon*, but the slightly rising horizontal in mid line that follows can hardly be a *lambda*. The restoration remains uncertain. Turner conjectures διήλασ' for διήλεσ', and holds that the line refers to the action of a spectator thrusting his way through a crowd (not "some undergrowth," as Lloyd-Jones reports). But in view of the uncertainties of this line and the previous one, can we be sure that διήλεσε is corrupt (see Lloyd-Jones *ad loc.*)? Furthermore, according to Turner, the subject must shift at 5 from the Sphinx (1–4) to some spectator. The uncertain nature of the line makes it difficult to accept such an hypothesis.

Line 6. Lloyd-Jones (p. 446) errs when he states that "fr. 1, 6–9 coincides with fr. trag. adesp. 541 . . ." The latter fragment coincides with frg. 1, 7–9. Thus Turner's restoration at 6 (ὅταν μεθῆ τε], printed by Lloyd-Jones in his text without comment) is unsupported by external evidence. Let us consider this restoration. The stop printed by Turner in his version of the preserved text at the end of 4 is certain; a trace of the stop he prints at the end of 6 can be seen in the photograph. Lines 5 and 6 then form a single sentence unit. The fragment is part of a narrative, and the obvious way to interpret the aorist tense at 5 (διήλεσε) is as a simple past tense. This makes it exceedingly difficult

⁸ See Lloyd-Jones *ad loc.* The emendation was made by Valckenaer at *Diatribes in Euripidis perditorum dramatum reliquias* (Leiden 1767) 193 (henceforth cited: Valckenaer).

⁹ Lloyd-Jones *ad 5* prints λ before ων, but in his text prints λ. The letter should be dotted.

to explain Turner's restoration at 6 ($\delta\tau\alpha\nu$ with the subjunctive). This construction is found with the gnomic aorist or aorists with a sense approaching that of the gnomic aorist (GMT² p. 205f). The subjunctive with $\delta\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\nu$ is found with the aorist at Sophocles, *Electra* 89ff. But as Jebb (*ad El.* 91, also Kühner-Gerth, II. 449) explains, "The subjunctive can follow $\eta\sigma\theta\omicron\nu$, since the thought is 'hast heard' (and still hearest)". So far as we can tell, neither of these explanations applies here. Furthermore, Turner takes $\phi\acute{\omicron}\beta\eta\nu$ (5) to mean "plumage" here but "tresses" at line 1. Can $\phi\acute{\omicron}\beta\eta$ be used of wing-feathers, and especially in a context where it has already been used to mean "tresses" (its regular meaning)? Nor do we know whether $\phi\acute{\omicron}\beta\eta\nu$ (5) is to be understood as the object of the verb presumably missing at the beginning of line 6 or exclusively with the verb of line 5. If line 5 describes some action of the Sphinx, then line 6 might be a purpose clause introduced by $\delta\pi\omega\varsigma$, for example. As has been noted above a conditional relative clause with the subjunctive is unsuitable here, especially in the light of $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ with the optative in line 8 below. In Lloyd-Jones' text, for $\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ read $\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\acute{\iota}\varsigma$.

Line 7. Lines 7–9 coincide with frg. trag. adesp. 541N², and confirm Valckenaer's attribution of that fragment to Euripides' *Oedipus*.¹⁰ Turner's version of the preserved text reads]πουσηλίουχρυσωπονη[. But the photograph shows an acute accent over the last *omicron*, and the short oblique stroke over the final *eta* may be one leg of a circumflex accent (for a similar circumflex see that over the *upsilon* at line 11 of this fragment, pl. x). In Lloyd-Jones' text, for $\chi\rho\upsilon\sigma\omega\pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \eta\eta\nu$ read $\chi\rho\upsilon\sigma\omega\pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \eta\eta\nu$.

Line 8. Turner in his translation (p. 85) renders $\nu\acute{\omega}\tau\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ as "back." LSJ's translation s.v. is to be preferred: "that which covers the back, e.g. wings." In Turner's restored text, for $\theta\eta] read $\theta\eta\rho]. Turner's $\beta\acute{\alpha}$ [is right as against Lloyd-Jones' $\beta\acute{\alpha}$ [.$$

Line 9. Of interest is Anaxagoras on rainbows (frg. 19 D) and the entire text of Schol. Hom. BT *ad P.* 547, from which the Anaxagoras fragment comes.¹¹

Line 10. Turner restores $\nu\epsilon].$

Line 11. Turner's γ is right as against Lloyd-Jones' γ .

Line 12. Turner's] $\alpha\phi\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu\omega$ [is right as against Lloyd-Jones'] $\alpha\phi\rho\omicron\nu\omega$ [.

FRG. 2

Line 2. The acute accent over the *iota*, which appears in the photograph and is printed by Turner, is omitted by Lloyd-Jones.

Line 4. The acute accent over the final *iota*, which appears in the photograph and is printed by Turner, is omitted by Lloyd-Jones.

Line 5. The papyrus reads] $\alpha\iota\nu\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$. $\mu\iota\alpha\iota\phi$ [$\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ $\kappa\acute{\omicron}\rho\eta$ B. Snell *ap.* Turner.

Line 6. Turner incorporates A. M. Dale's suggestion ($\eta\delta\epsilon\nu$ $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta$ *ap.* Turner) and restores as follows: $\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\delta'$ $\acute{\epsilon}]$ $\pi\epsilon\iota\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma'$ $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\alpha}[\mu]$ $\xi\tau[\rho'$ $\eta\delta\epsilon\nu$ $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta$. Lloyd-Jones (*ad loc.*) reports Turner incorrectly: for $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\alpha}[\mu]$ $\xi\tau[\rho'$ read $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\alpha}[\mu]$ $\xi\tau[\rho'$. And in his text for] $\pi\epsilon\iota\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma'$ $\epsilon\xi$ read] $\pi\epsilon\iota\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma'$ $\epsilon\xi$. Turner's reading $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\alpha}[\mu]$ $\xi\tau[\rho'$ is possible but is not an easy one (see Lloyd-Jones *ad loc.*).

¹⁰ Valckenaer, 194.

¹¹ Cited by Valckenaer, 194f.

Line 7. Lines 7–10 (not 6–10 as Lloyd-Jones states) contain the riddle of the Sphinx and appear to be hexameters.¹² Lloyd-Jones in his text omits the acute accent over the final *epsilon*, which can be seen in the photograph and is printed by Turner.

Line 8. Turner's]πουυ is right as against Lloyd-Jones']πουυ.

Line 9. Turner's]νῆ is right as against Lloyd-Jones']νῆ.

Line 10. Turner's κᾰ[is right as against Lloyd-Jones' κᾰ[.

Line 11. The photograph shows an acute accent over the *upsilon*. Turner's εὔεις is right as against Lloyd-Jones' ερεις.

Line 13. The photograph shows a broken oblique stroke, which appears to be an acute accent, over the final *epsilon*. The accent is not printed by Turner (in his preserved text) nor by Lloyd-Jones. Turner's ὕ is right as against Lloyd-Jones' ὕ.

Line 14. Both Turner and Lloyd-Jones read]πουυ[. Yet of the π only a part of the horizontal stroke at the top of the line can be seen in the photograph. The letter should be printed with a dot.

II

The relation of *POxy 2459* (including Euripides frg. 540N² and frg. trag. adesp. 541N²) to the structure of the plot of Euripides' *Oedipus* is not certain. Do the fragments come from the prologue or from some narrative occurring later in the drama? That they are part of a single speech is highly probable; the two best preserved papyrus fragments may well come from the same column.¹³ That the fragments are part of the prologue cannot be proved impossible, although the wealth of detail used in narrating what is probably a single event makes more attractive the hypothesis that the fragments come from a narrative occurring later in the play.¹⁴ The usual Euripidean prologue that fills in the background of the play is a simple narrative generally utilizing a minimum of detail. Of interest are the prologues of the *Ion* and the

¹² On the hexameters see Turner (*ad 6*) and Lloyd-Jones (*ad 6*); on the riddle, Turner (*loc.cit.*) and Lloyd-Jones (*ad 6–10 [sic]*).

¹³ See Turner's introduction to his commentary on frg. 2 (p. 86).

¹⁴ See Turner, 82. Snell identifies the remains of the first line of Eur. *Oed.* with frg. trag. adesp. 378N² (see n.6 *supra*) and conjectures τέκνον for Cicero's τέκνα. The coincidence is striking, but Turner (*ap. Snell*) objects that οὐκ (frg. trag. adesp. 378N²) does not fit the traces of the papyrus (*POxy 2455* frg. 4 col. iv 41f). Unfortunately no photograph of the fragment appears in *POxy 27*, and I have been unable to check the readings. It should be noted that even if frg. trag. adesp. 378N², with Snell's emendation, is the first line of the prologue of Eur. *Oed.*, *POxy 2459* may still be part of the prologue. The speaker, beginning with a history of the house of Laius, could have told of the arrival of the Sphinx and its consequences.

Phoenissae. There we see nothing like the detailed narrative of a single event contained in the *Oedipus* fragments. Of course the *Oedipus* might be a play where the usual procedure was modified. Euripides, possibly telling of Oedipus' encounter with the Sphinx, could have described it at unusual length in the prologue.¹⁵ To assume, however, that the fragments are part of a narrative later in the play raises other questions. Does the narrative relate a contemporary event, *i.e.* some event that takes place during the period covered by the action of the play; or does it relate an event that took place before the action of the play began?¹⁶

Euripides frg. 543N² has been taken to imply that when the play takes place Oedipus is already married to Jocasta and has children.¹⁷ If so, it follows that the event related in the fragments under discussion precedes the action of the play by a number of years. Yet it cannot be proven impossible that frg. 543N² is a general maxim without special reference to Oedipus.¹⁸ Furthermore, just what was the event related in *POxy* 2459? The Sphinx's arrival at Thebes?¹⁹ Oedipus' solving of the riddle? Or even some other happening? *POxy* 2459 frg. 3.3 perhaps contains the word ἀνταγωνιστής.²⁰ A reference to Oedipus is attractive here. But the word could refer to the Sphinx herself or another contestant. In short, certainty is impossible. Still it must be noted that Oedipus' victory over the Sphinx is more germane to the

¹⁵ See pp. 49–50 *infra*.

¹⁶ Turner (p. 83) holds that *POxy* 2459 and Eur. frg. 541N² are part of the same speech occurring later in the play and relating events that took place prior to the action of the play. For criticism of this view, see p. 50 *infra*.

¹⁷ So Robert, I.311ff, and Turner, 82. A number of fragments (see pp. 50–52 *infra*) deal with the relationship between husband and wife. As Schmid (p. 590) notes, it is probable that they refer to the marriage between Oedipus and Jocasta. Even so they do not entail that the marriage is at any specific stage. For example, the marriage might take place during the action of the play, might just have occurred when the play opens, or might be of long standing. It might be merely planned and Eur. frg. 543N² said by Oedipus in anticipation of a fortunate marriage. Nor can it be proved impossible that the fragments are general maxims without specific reference to the marriage between Oedipus and Jocasta (but see pp. 50–52 *infra*).

¹⁸ C. F. Hermann, for example, held that Eur. frg. 545N² refers to Jocasta's relationship with Laius (*ap.* W. Braun, "Der Oedipus des Seneca," *RM N.F.* 22 [1867] 269 n.19). And Eur. frg. 543N² might have been said by Creon offering Oedipus to Jocasta. One simply cannot be dogmatic.

¹⁹ Robert, I.329f. If one restores νε]κρῶν with Turner at *POxy* 2459 frg. 1.10 and supposes that the word refers to the corpses of men already slain by the Sphinx, it would follow that the Sphinx is described sometime after her arrival.

²⁰ The papyrus reads]ταγωνιστή[. See Turner *ad loc.*

action of the plot, given that Oedipus is the central character;²¹ and so the hypothesis that the speech relates the conquest of the Sphinx deserves serious consideration.²²

Euripides frg. 540N² has for the most part been held to come from the prologue, but there has been little agreement regarding the identification of the speaker. Varied candidates have been proposed: Hermes,²³ Oedipus,²⁴ Jocasta,²⁵ and Creon.²⁶ As noted above,²⁷ the new fragments do not prove or disprove the general hypothesis that *POxy* 2459 (including frg. 540N²) belongs to the prologue, but they do cast doubt on the identifications mentioned above of the speaker of Euripides frg. 540N². Whatever the precise nature of the action referred to at *POxy* 2459 frg. 2.2 (*ἐλίπομεν*), it is clear that the speaker was an eyewitness of the event described and that he speaks of himself as part of a group.²⁸ On both these grounds the hypothesis that *POxy* 2459 was spoken by Hermes is far less likely than that it was spoken by a Theban (a servant of the king's house, Creon, Jocasta) or even Oedipus.²⁹ Until there is further evidence to the contrary, the hypothesis that *POxy* 2459, if part of the prologue, was spoken by a god remains the least plausible. That a leading figure in the play spoke of

²¹ Of interest is the well known statement of John Malalas, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn 1831) 53. 11–13: ὁ γὰρ σοφώτατος Εὐριπίδης ποιητικῶς ἐξέθετο δράμα περὶ τοῦ Οἰδίποδος καὶ τῆς Ἰοκάστης καὶ τῆς Σφιγγός. Robert (II.117 n.59) holds that Malalas had not read Eur. *Oed.* and thus was “forced to use” the mythographer Palaiphatos as his source, and that he refers to the prologue of the *Phoen.* Such speculation, asserted rather than proved, is unacceptable. And since we now know that the *Oed.* was being copied in the fourth century A.D., Robert's view becomes even less plausible. On the date of *POxy* 2459, see Turner, 81. See also n.44 *infra*.

²² The speech could possibly relate both the Sphinx's arrival and Oedipus' victory, for all we can tell.

²³ E. Pottier *ap.* L. Séchan, *Études sur la Tragédie Grecque* (Paris 1926) 434 with n.7.

²⁴ E. Vollbehr, *De Oedipi Euripideae fragmentis* (Progr. Glückstadt 1861) 7; and L. Legras, *Les Légendes Thébaines* (Paris 1905) 157.

²⁵ G. Hermann *ap.* Vollbehr, *op.cit.* (n.24 *supra*) 7 n.20. Hermann's view was rejected by F. G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien* (Bonn 1839) 556 n.17; and by Vollbehr, *loc.cit.* Welcker's grounds for rejection are weak; he argues that Euripides would not have used the same character as prologue both in the *Oedipus* and the *Phoenissae*. Much the same argument is used by Robert (I.330), who does not cite any of the earlier literature. On Jocasta as prologue, see p. 50 *infra*.

²⁶ Robert, *loc.cit.*

²⁷ See pp. 47–48 with n.14 *supra*.

²⁸ So Turner, 82. The first person plural in tragedy might be used for the first person singular (see Kühner-Gerth, I.83f) but since the context provides no evidence to determine this one way or the other, it is easier to assume a plural subject for *ἐλίπομεν*.

²⁹ See also Robert, I.329f.

himself as part of a group is less likely than that the speaker is a servant of the king's house, one of Laius' *θεράποντες*,³⁰ or some other minor figure. Of the three leading characters proposed Oedipus is the least likely. Accounts of Oedipus' victory over the Sphinx stress the fact that he accomplished his feat unaided,³¹ and it is more difficult to postulate that Oedipus rather than some Theban was there in the company of others. Furthermore, if *POxy* 2459 is part of the prologue and if the prologue begins with frg. trag. adesp. 378N² (*Φοίβου ποτ' οὐκ ἐῶντος ἔσπειρεν τέκνον*),³² then Oedipus can hardly be the speaker. The argument from *ἐλίπομεν* is less compelling when used to decide between Creon or Jocasta, on the one hand, and a *θεράπων vel sim.* on the other. Nevertheless, it inclines slightly towards the latter.

Turner suggests that the new fragments and Euripides frg. 541N² are part of the same speech.³³ Lloyd-Jones rightly questions this view.³⁴ It is difficult to see what "resemblance of tone" there can be between a two line fragment and the papyrus fragments that abound with difficulties of detail. As Lloyd-Jones states, what it comes to is that "in both passages the verb is in the first person plural."³⁵ There is too little evidence for Turner's view to be maintained, and the hypothesis is too weak to support a reconstruction of the speech and its relation to the plot.

Let us consider again what relation the event described in *POxy* 2459 has to the action of the play. Three fragments clearly attributed to this play are all we can confidently rely on.³⁶ Two of them (Euripides frgg. 545N² and 546N²) deal with the relation between husband and wife. The third (Euripides frg. 543N²) presents some difficulties of

³⁰ See Eur. frg. 541N². So Turner, 83. This does not imply acceptance of Turner's hypothesis that Eur. frg. 541N² is part of the same speech as *POxy* 2459 (on this see below).

³¹ See, for example, Eur. *Phoen.* 1760, Diod. Sic. 4.64.3, and Schol. *ad Phoen.* 1505 (Schwartz).

³² With Snell's emendation. See n.14 *supra*.

³³ Turner, 83.

³⁴ Lloyd-Jones, 447.

³⁵ Lloyd-Jones, *loc.cit.*

³⁶ C. F. Hermann first suggested that Eur. frg. 909N² belongs to Eur. *Oed.* (*ap.* L. Deubner, "Oedipusprobleme," *AbhBerl* [1942.4] 24). This remains no more than an attractive hypothesis. Though the fragment may be included cautiously in a reconstruction of the play, it cannot be used as a basis for argument to settle points of detail about the reconstruction. For some doubts about the interpretation of this fragment, see Deubner, *op.cit.* 24ff. The attribution of the fragment is called probable by Nauck (p. 654); it is approved by Robert, I.315 and Séchan, *op.cit.* (n.23 *supra*) 437. Turner (82) states that "Wilamowitz (*Gr. Trag.* 160) cited a long fragment in trochaic tetrameters (fr. 909N²) as evidence for the blinding during the course of the action." The reference which is to *Die griechische Tragödie und ihre drei*

interpretation. Robert paraphrases lines 2–5 of the fragment as follows: “ein braves Weib wiegt Kinder, Vaterland und Besitztümer auf . . .”³⁷ The first line, he holds, contradicts the rest of the fragment. “Denn hier [1] heisst es, dass Weib und Kinder einem Manne so viel bedeuten wie das Königtum, während dort [2–5] auch die Kinder zu den Gütern gerechnet werden, die durch ein braves Weib aufgewogen werden.”³⁸ But a different translation of 2–4 is possible which avoids Robert’s difficulty. Let us consider the connectives *τε . . . καὶ . . . καὶ . . . τε* (2–4). *LSJ* (*s.v.* *τε* A.ii.1) state that “sometimes the elements joined by *τε . . . καὶ . . .* are joined in order to be compared or contrasted rather than simply joined.” An example cited by *LSJ* is Aristophanes, *Aves* 24: οὐ ταῦτ’α . . . νῦν τε καὶ τότε. Denniston (*GP*² p. 292) discusses the use of *καὶ* after words expressing likeness, etc.³⁹ A relevant example cited by Denniston is Xenophon, *Anabasis* 7.7.49: ἀνομοίως ἔχοντα . . . νῦν τε καὶ ὄτε . . . The natural way to take 2–3 (without 4) is “for I say that to miss the mark in one’s children is as great a misfortune as (to miss the mark in) one’s fatherland and property.” Does the final *τε* alter this view of 2–3? Kühner-Gerth (II, 251f) state apropos *καὶ . . . τε . . .*, “Wo auf *καί* ein *τέ* folgt, weist das *τέ* nicht auf *καί* zurück, sondern steht für sich und bezeichnet das zweite Glied als eine Zugabe zu dem vorhergehenden Gliede = *praetereaque*.”⁴⁰ An example cited by Kühner-Gerth is Thuc. 1.108.4: *τείχη τε περιελόντες καὶ ναῦς παραδόντες φόρον τε ταξάμενοι ἐς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον*. The passage (2–4) should be translated “for I say that to miss the mark in one’s children is as great a misfortune as (to miss the mark in) one’s fatherland and property, and moreover (to miss the mark in) one’s wife (is as unfortunate).” It is not missing the mark in children, country, and wealth that is compared to missing

Dichter (Berlin 1923) is probably from Deubner, *op.cit.* 25, who cites Wilamowitz for the view that Jocasta remained true to her husband after he was blinded and for the quote “die den Gatten in seinem Elend nicht verlässt.” Wilamowitz (*loc.cit.*) neither cites the fragment nor uses it to prove anything about the blinding.

³⁷ Robert, I.312.

³⁸ *Loc.cit.* So also H. Weil, *REG* 2 (1889) 339f.

³⁹ See also Kühner-Gerth, I.413 anm. 11.

⁴⁰ This account is substantially the same as that given by Kühner in his commentary on Xen. *Mem.* (ed.² ad 2.3.19). *LSJ s.v.* *τε* A.ii.3 a state, “*καὶ . . . τε*, both . . . and . . . , is occasionally found, as *καὶ μητέρα πατέρα τ’* E. *Alc.* 646.” The explanation is not quite so straightforward. Earle (*Eur. Alc.* [London 1894] ad 646ff) states, “The irregularity in the connective in *πατέρα τ’* (for *καὶ πατέρα*) may be explained by the incongruity of sex,—‘yes, and father too.’” See also G. Hermann, *Eur. Alc.* (Leipzig 1824) ad 657ff.

the mark in a wife; but missing the mark in children that is compared to missing the mark in country and wealth with the additional mention of missing the mark in one's wife as a matter of similar importance. The thought of the whole passage (1–5) is then “A man's wife and children are of great importance to him; his children are as important as his country and wealth together, and so is his wife; for a man's wife, if he marries a prudent woman, is alone more important than his wealth for him.” The last clause (*ὡς μόνον . . . λάβη*, 4–5) is added by way of climax and in no way contradicts lines 2–3. If the foregoing is correct, it obviates Robert's separation of line 1 from the rest of the fragment.⁴¹

Returning to the question at hand, we note that the fragment concerns itself with the importance to a man of his wife and children. Are these general maxims, or do they have specific relevance to a character or characters in the play? Of Euripides frg. 545N² Schmid states, “. . . vermutlich stand diese Erörterung im Zusammenhang mit der Heirat der Iokaste und des Oedipus.”⁴² Schmid rightly says “vermutlich” for the assertion cannot be proved. Nevertheless, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary it is easier to assume that frgg. 543N², 545N², 546N² refer to the marriage between Oedipus and Jocasta. Furthermore, if frg. 543N² refers to a marriage that is at least a few years old and to the children born to the couple,⁴³ it follows that the victory over the Sphinx took place a few years before and that POxy 2459 (with Euripides frg. 540N² and frg. trag. adesp. 541N²), whether from the prologue or some later speech, relates an event that occurred before the action of the play begins.⁴⁴

We turn to the only certain piece of evidence for Euripides' handling of the Oedipus saga in his *Oedipus*. The Schol. ad Eur. *Phoen.* 61 states *ἐν δὲ τῷ Οἰδίποδι οἱ Λαῖου θεράποντες ἐτύφλωσαν αὐτόν*.⁴⁵ There follow two verses of iambic trimeters (= Euripides frg. 541N²): *ἡμεῖς δὲ Πολύβου παῖδ' ἐρείσαντες πέδω|ἐξομματοῦμεν καὶ διόλλυμεν κόρας*. Schmid rightly calls the evidence certain,⁴⁶ and it is accepted, though

⁴¹ Robert, I.313. A similar separation was made by Weil, *loc.cit.* (n. 38 *supra*).

⁴² Schmid-Stählin, I.3, p. 590. See p. 48 with n.17 *supra*.

⁴³ So Robert, I.311ff, and Turner, 82.

⁴⁴ Malalas' statement (see n.21 *supra*), though it seems to imply that the Sphinx appeared on the stage, may merely refer to the long and elaborate description from which POxy 2459 presumably comes.

⁴⁵ Text from E. Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem I* (Berlin 1887) 258.

⁴⁶ Schmid-Stählin, *loc.cit.* (n.42 *supra*).

interpreted differently, by most critics.⁴⁷ Before going on to consider how the scholium is to be interpreted, let us consider the objections that have been raised against its authenticity. Schneidewin held that the name of another poet had originally appeared in the scholiast's notice before or after *Oιδίποδι*. "Ich gestehe, dass es mir schwer wird zu glauben, Euripides habe so weit den Sophokleischen Plan verlassen und bei oft wiederholter Betrachtung kommt immer von Neuem der Verdacht, dass bei dem Scholiasten vor *Oιδίποδι* oder nach dem Worte der Name eines anderen Dichters ausgefallen sein möchte. Denn es will viel wahrscheinlicher dünken, dass einer von den spätern Tragikern zu einer so gründlichen Umbildung zu greifen sich bewogen fand, als Euripides,"⁴⁸ Such arguments are entirely subjective.⁴⁹ The only way to prove that the scholiast's text is defective is to discover independent evidence, e.g. the relevant parts of Euripides' *Oedipus*. In default of such evidence the testimony of the scholiast must be accepted.

Deubner accepts Schneidewin's arguments, and adds one of his own.⁵⁰ His argument is based on his analysis of the Schol. *ad Eur. Phoen.* 1760 (= *FGrHist* 16 F 10) who quotes a certain Peisander.⁵¹ Deubner's argument is that the first part of the passage is based on Euripides' *Chrysis* and the second part is based on Euripides' *Oedipus*,⁵² but Schol. *ad Phoen.* 61 cannot be reconciled with the narrative of the second part of the Peisander scholium;⁵³ therefore, the former does not refer to Euripides' *Oedipus*.⁵⁴ It is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate the arguments Deubner uses to maintain his

⁴⁷ For example, Robert, I.306ff, Séchan, *op.cit.* (n.23 *supra*) 434, and Turner, 83.

⁴⁸ F. W. Schneidewin, "Die Saga vom Ödipus." *AbhGöttingen* 5 (1851/2) 203f. It should be noted that nothing can be argued from the absence of the name Euripides in the schol. entry (see Deubner, *op.cit.* [n.36 *supra*] 19 with n.4).

⁴⁹ Vollbehr's criticism (*op.cit.* [n.24 *supra*] 9 n.23) of Schneidewin, *in vana abiisse videtur*, is unjustly censured by Deubner, *op.cit.* (n.36 *supra*) 21f, who in his attempt to defend Schneidewin insists that the self-blinding of Oedipus is "ein fundamentaler Zug alter Sage" (*loc.cit.*) and quotes Pohlenz (*Gr. Trag.*¹ I [Leipzig and Berlin 1930] 81f) for support: "Selbstmord der Sohnesgattin, Selbstblendung des Vatermörders wurden früh zu ebenso festen Punkten der Sage wie der Vatermord selbst." It should be noted that Pohlenz in both editions of his *Gr. Trag.* accepts the evidence of the schol. (ed.¹, I.396; ed.², I.373). The arguments of C. Kirchhoff, quoted by Deubner, *op.cit.* 22, are equally inconclusive.

⁵⁰ Deubner, *op.cit.* (n.36 *supra*) 24.

⁵¹ On Peisander see Deubner, *op.cit.* (n.36 *supra*) 1ff. and Jacoby, *FGrHist*, Ia.493ff, 544ff.

⁵² Deubner, *op.cit.* 9ff.

⁵³ Deubner, *op.cit.* 19.

⁵⁴ Deubner, *op.cit.* 24.

thesis that the Peisander scholium is based on the above-named tragedies of Euripides, nor is it necessary. In the first place, it is methodologically wrong to use what can at best be plausible speculation to deny the clear statement of Schol. *ad Eur. Phoen.* 61. Next, only if it could be certainly demonstrated that not only is Euripides' *Oedipus* the source of the second part of the Peisander scholium, but there is no contamination whatsoever present from another source, could that passage be used to disprove the statement of Schol. *ad Phoen.* 61.⁵⁵ Since no such demonstration is possible, the evidence of the latter must be accepted.

Let us now turn to the interpretation of Schol. *ad Phoen.* 61. The passage provides one certain piece of evidence: Oedipus is called the son of *Polybus* and not of *Laius*. The blinding, therefore, preceded the *anagnorisis* and in this sense was not Sophoclean.⁵⁶ But when does the blinding occur, before or during the play? Most critics have held that it occurs during the course of the action.⁵⁷ But Turner supposes that Oedipus was blinded at the time of *Laius*' murder before the play opens.⁵⁸ This view is not unattractive; the meeting of Oedipus and *Laius* is an obvious occasion for the presence of *θεράποντες Λαίου*.⁵⁹ And it must be admitted that there is no certain evidence which proves this view wrong. In fact, what evidence there is cannot decide the question

⁵⁵ Deubner, *op.cit.* 6f, asserts but does not prove that there is no contamination. For a more cautious statement regarding the nature of the scholium and its sources, see Jacoby *ad FGrHist* 16 F 10.

⁵⁶ This has long been pointed out; see, for example, Welcker, *op.cit.* (n.25 *supra*) 538.

⁵⁷ Including Robert, I.306ff, Séchan, *op.cit.* (n.23 *supra*) 435f, and Vollbehr, *op.cit.* (n.24 *supra*) 8ff. One might compare the blinding of *Thamyris* on stage—but this was so unusual that a special and famous mask existed (see especially A. Lesky "Die Maske des *Thamyris*," *AAWW* 88 [1951] 101ff, and W. M. Calder III, "The Blinding, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1271–4" *AJP* 80 [1959] 301 n.2) and the lack of such a mask for Euripides argues against it. Moreover the wording of Eur. frg. 541N², though it does not completely eliminate the possibility of a blinding on stage, strongly suggests a messenger speech reporting an off-stage incident.

⁵⁸ Turner, 82f. The blinding at the time of *Laius*' murder was noted as a possibility by O. Höfer, Roscher, *Myth.Lex.*, s.v. *Oidipus* (III.731) and stated as a fact by P. Masqueray, *Sophocle I* (Paris 1922) 136; neither specifies the relation of the blinding to the action of the play, nor are they noted by Turner.

⁵⁹ This view raises certain questions. One might well ask why the *θεράποντες* did not kill Oedipus. That ignorance of precise detail gives rise to such doubts does not prove the view wrong. How do we know how the poet might have handled the business? Deubner, *op.cit.* (n.36 *supra*) 20, notes that a similar doubt applies to any interpretation of the blinding by the attendants of *Laius*: "Wie man sich auch immer die Blendung des Oedipus durch die *θεράποντες* des *Laios* vorstellen mag: merkwürdig bleibt auf alle Fälle, dass sie ihn nicht töteten."

either way,⁶⁰ though the wording of Schol. *ad Eur. Phoen.* 61, for what it is worth, implies that the blinding occurs during the course of the action,⁶¹ and Euripides frg. 541N² suggests a messenger speech reporting the incident soon after its occurrence.⁶² No convincing argument has been advanced against this view; Turner's is far from cogent.⁶³ In the present, uncertain state of the evidence, the view that the blinding occurs during the course of the action remains the more plausible.

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⁶⁰ An Etruscan relief (see Robert, I.307f with fig. 48 and II.107 n.4) has long been held to derive from Eur. *Oed.* This hypothesis, though attractive, cannot be considered proved. The relief, even if from Eur. *Oed.*, is probably based on a narrative (see n.57 *supra*) and could as easily be based on a speech that told of events that had occurred before the play opens. Yet it should be noted that if the relief does derive from Eur. *Oed.*, it implies that Oedipus' children are several years old at the time of the blinding and that the blinding did not occur at the time of Laius' murder. In that case it would be more difficult to assume an occasion for the blinding prior to the action of the play. Eur. frg. 909N² (see n.36 *supra*) does not entail that the blinding occurs during the course of the action, even if it belongs to this play and refers to Oedipus' blinding.

⁶¹ Though it might be interpreted, "in the *Oed.* <we are told that> the attendants of Laius blinded him."

⁶² See n.57 *supra*.

⁶³ Masqueray, *loc.cit.* (n.58 *supra*), does not argue for his view. Turner, *loc.cit.* (n. 58 *supra*), states, "It seems inconceivable that Laius' attendants could play the rôle ascribed to them in fr. 541 after Oedipus became king of Thebes; even less conceivable after the passage of years, the raising of children and whatever it was that led to discovery." I cannot guess what Turner means by "inconceivable." No more than ten years need pass between Laius' murder and the action of the play. For one conception of how Laius' attendants might possibly play this rôle, see Robert, I.306ff.