

# The Philoktetes of Sophokles.

## Greek Summer School 2019.

### Brief Notes. P. G. Brown



Figure 1. Philoktetes

### References:

Philoktetes, R. Jebb, 1898 edition.

Sophocles Philoktetes, T.B.L. Webster, 1970.

Sophocles Philoktetes, Campbell and Abbott, 1900.

The Philoktetes of Sophocles, G. Burges, 1833.

Sophocles Philoktetes, R.G. Ussher, 1990.

Sophocles Philoktetes, S. Schein, 2013.

## Sophokles.

Sophokles had a long life (496-406) and wrote about 120 plays of which sadly only 7 complete plays survive, and a reasonable portion of the satyr play *The Ichneutai*. He began competing in plays in 468 and was 90 when he staged his last play. He won more prizes than either Aischylos or Euripides. He came from a wealthy family and held public office (as state treasurer) and fought in the battle to put down the revolt on Samos in the time of Perikles.

As a playwright he was very popular and was said to be the first to add the third actor, thereby reducing the role of the chorus and to employ painted stage scenes. His character development is much more than we see in Aischylos and he makes very bold use of language and metaphor – which can make him hard at times to translate.

Philoktetes was performed in 408 (or 409).

The notes below are taken from the works listed in the references. Choral passages are from Perseus. We will read, in Greek, lines: 1-134, 219-284, 300-391, 461-506, 603-621, 889-935, 963-1003, 1047-1080, 1261-1347, 1409-1471. (Total: 626 lines).

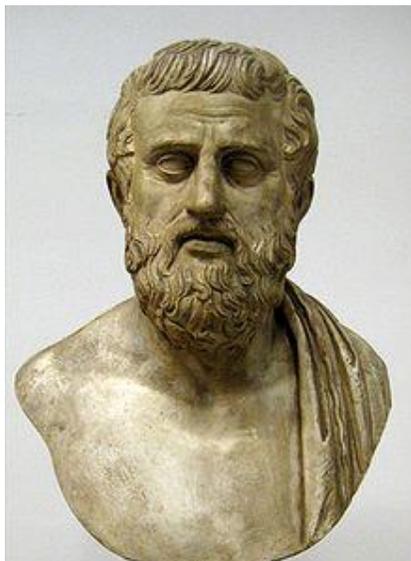


Figure 2. Sophokles.

**NOTES:****Prologos: Lines 1-134:**

9. `when we could not approach in comfort (at our ease) either the libations nor the sacrifices’.

10. κατει̂χε - `prevented’, `kept from (sacrificing)’, tr. `held at bay’. Others take it as `filled’.

δυσφημίαις - `cries of anguish’.

12. ἀκμή -tr. `time’.

13. ἐκχέω - `waste, squander’.

14. ἀτύτικα -tr. `straight off’.

17-18. `where in the winter (lit. cool) there is a two-fold means of sitting in the sun’.

19. ἀμφίτροητος ἀλίου - `the double ended corridor’.

20. βαιὸν δ’ ἔνερθε ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς - `a little to the left below’.

21. σῶν - tr. `not dried up’.

22-23. Lit. `but go there and report to me quietly, whether they (ᾶ) hold this man in the same place or are elsewhere’. Note that ᾶ is the object of προσελθῶν and the subject of ἔχει and κυρεῖ.

25b. `and our proceedings may be in concert’, `and the common action may come from both of us’.

29. τόδ’ ἐξῦπερθε - `here above’.

τύπος - `sign’.

30. καταλισθείς - `he be encamped there’. Note the military term.

32. οἰκοποιός ... τροφή - `homely comforts’.

33. στιπτή - `trodden-down’, `pressed’.

35. ἔκπωμα-`cup`.  
 φλαουρουργοῦ -`a poor craftsman`.
36. πυρεῖα -`fire-sticks`.
38. θάλπεται -`are drying`.
39. `full of foul discharge`.
43. ἐπὶ φορβῆς νόστον -`a journey after food`.
44. νώδυνον -`soothing`.
45. τόν – Neoptolemos has a sailor present as an attendant.
50. ἐφ' οἷς ἐλήλυθας -`(in the matter) for which you have come`.
51. σώματι - `physical presence`.
53. `You must serve those to whom you are subordinate`.
55. ὅπως-`that`.  
 ἐκκλέψεις -tr. `you will win over`.
- 57b. `let there be no deception on this point`.
60. στείλαντες -`having sent for`.
61. Lit. `having none but this as their only means of taking Troy`.
63. κυρίως -`rightfully`.
65. ἔσχατα ἐσχάτων κακά -`the worst among the worst evils`.
70. Lit. `Know that a faithful and secure friendship with him is possible for you but not for me`.
75. ἐγκρατής -`while still in control`.
77. σοφισθῆναι -`to be contrived`.
83. ἐς ἀναιδές -`shamelessly`.
85. κέκλησο - perfect imperative.

86. Lit. 'whatever of the words spoken I have disliked hearing, these I would also hate to carry out'. Tr. 'Some words distress me when I hear them and I am loathe also to carry them out'.

87. πράσσειν – tr. 'to carry out'.

88. ἔφυν γὰρ οὐδέν - 'it is not in my nature'.

ἐκ ... - 'by means of base trickery'.

91. ἐξ ἑνὸς ποδός – we would say 'single-handedly', but emphasis is here placed on his gammy foot.

92. χειρώσεται - 'overpower, subdue'.

97. 'slow tongue and a ready hand'.

98. εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξιῶν – lit. 'going forth to the test'.

99b. 'guiding everything'.

100. τί - 'what'.

104. ἰσχύος θράσος - 'confidence deriving from his strength'.

106. 'so that a man may not dare even to confidently approach him?'

110. 'with what expression would anyone dare to say these things?' The verb is λάσκω whose basic meaning is 'rattle, crash'. Here it is used in the sense of telling a bare-faced lie.

116a. Lit. 'they would be things which must be hunted'.

122. συνήνεσα - 'I have agreed'.

126. τοῦ χρόνου ... τι κατασχολάζειν - 'to tarry somewhat too long'.

128-9. 'having craftily concealed his appearance in the manner of shipowner, so that he will not be recognized (lit. 'to that ignorance may attend him')'.

130-131. 'when he talks with you cleverly, you must pick up from whatever he says anything which helps you'. Take οὐ ... αὐδωμένου as a genitive absolute.

132. παρείς - 'having passed on'.

**Parodos: Lines 135-218:**

The chorus consists of sailors from Neoptolemos' ship.

Strophe a.

Ch: O master, what, O what must I conceal, I a stranger in a strange land? What must I say to this wary man? Tell me! For his skill and discernment surpass all other skills, he by whom the divine sceptre of Zeus is held. All this ancient power has descended on you, dear boy. Therefore, tell me how I can serve you.

Ne: For now keep a bold lookout, for perhaps you wish to see in what part of this far distant land he is lying. But when the strange wayfarer comes out from his abode, stand by me at all times and try to ameliorate the situation.

Antistrophe a.

Ch: What you speak of has been my concern for some time, master, to keep a watchful eye out for your good. But now tell me in what sort of quarters he dwells as his abode and what space he holds. For it is not unreasonable for me to learn this, lest he spring upon me unawares from somewhere. What is this place, what is this location, what footprint does he have? Is he inside or away?

Ne: You see this dwelling, this rocky lair with two entrances.

Ch: Where has the poor wretch gone off to?

Ne: It seems clear to me that he has gone in need of food, trailing a path perhaps nearby. For it is said that has this mode of life, seeking prey with his winged arrows, painful for a man in pain. Nor is there any healer of ills to approach him.

Strophe b.

Ch. I pity him, with none of mortals to care for him, nor seeing any companion, the poor wretch is constantly alone, sick with a savage illness and distressed by each need as it arises. How, how on earth does he endure it? O strange machinations of the gods, O wretched race of men, for whom life is unfair.

Antistrophe b.

Ch. This man perhaps was from second to none of the foremost families. Lacking everything in life he lies separate from everyone in company with the dappled or shaggy beasts. He cries out, pitiful man, in pain in concert with hunger in incurable distress. Everbabbling echo is poured out from far away in concert with his bitter cries.

Ne. Nothing of this surprises me. For if I understand anything, it is that these god-sent sufferings came upon him from savage-minded Chryse (*possibly the goddess whose cave was inhabited by the snake who bit Philoktetes*), and now in regard to the things he suffers apart from people to care for him, they are there by the design of some god, in order that he should not bend the unbeatable divine bow against Troy, until that time might come in which it is said to be prophesied that Troy will fall by them.

Strophe c.

Ch. Hush, young man.

Ne. What is this?

Ch. A cry arose, a companion of a man who is sore pressed. It came from that place perhaps, or this. An unmistakable voice struck me from someone creeping by necessity along the path, nor did the deep sound of a man in pain escape my notice. For he cries distinctly.

Antistrophe c.

Ch. Turn child ...

Ne. What is it?

Ch. ... to some new plan, since he is not far away but near. Not with the music of the pipe like some shepherd who in the wild, but one who cries out a cry heard from a distance as he trips up somewhere from stress, or as he looks at the harbor which is unfriendly to ships. For he cries out terribly.

## First Episode: Lines 219-675:

Lines 219-402: Philoktetes' arrival and Neoptolemos' story.

220. πλάτη -`oar'.

225. ὄκνω – tr. `in fear'.

226. ἐκπλαγῆτ' -`be alarmed'.

228. κακούμενον -`afflicted'.

230. Neoptolemos' initial silence may be due to his reluctance to lie to this poor wretch.

232. οὐνεκα = ὅτι.

235. πρόσφθεγμα -`greeting'.

236. προσέσχε -`put you ashore'.

237. ὄρμη -`impulse'.

243. Lykomedes was Neoptolemos' grandfather on his mother's side.

245. `I am sailing from Ilios if you must know.'

255-6. Lit. `of whom no report at all (που) of my state (of me being thus) has returned home nor to anywhere in the land of Greece'.

259. τέθηλε -`has thrived'.

267. For φοινίω read ἀγρίω. ἀγρίω χαράγματι -`savage bite', (lit. `engraving'.) The first reading is based on a quotation from Eustathius.

269. ποντίας –tr. `sea-girt'.

270. Chryse was a small island near Lemnos.

ναυβάτη στόλω -`on their nautical expedition'.

271. σάλου –tr. `a painful episode' (of his disease). Older commentators say it refers to a rocky sea voyage.

274. βαιά - 'few'.



Figure 3. Philoktetes

275b. 'may the like happen to them!'

276. δοκίς - 'can you imagine'.

278. 'what woes I wept and wailed'.

279. ἐναυστόλουν - 'I used to command'.

281. ἀρκέσειεν - 'who might help'.

282. κάμνοντι - '(me) labouring'.

συλλάβοιτο - 'assist'.

283. ἀνιάσθαι – tr. 'anguish', we need to supply τό to make the infinitive into a gerund.

284. εὐμάρειαν - 'abundance'.

286. βαιᾶ - 'little'.

287. διακονεῖσθαι - 'to look after myself'. (Note the force of the middle.)

290. νευροσπαδῆς ἄτρακτος - 'drawn arrow'. (The latter word also means 'spindle'.)

291. εἰλυόμεν - 'I would crawl'.

293. 'when the frost was spread around as happens in winter'.

297a. 'I brought to light the hidden spark'.

302. ὄρμος - 'anchorage'.

303. '(where) he might trade for gain, or be received as friend'.

304. 'wise men do not make sailing voyages here'. πλόος - 'voyage'.

305a. 'perchance someone unwillingly puts to shore'.

313. ἀδηφάγον - 'eating to excess, devouring, gluttonous'.

320. εἴσι- 'they are' (i.e. the words you have said).

323b. 'so that having suffered you are angry?'

324. 'May it happen one day I can sate my wrath with action'.

327. τίνος - 'at what, for what reason'.

328. ἐκκαλῶν - 'summoning up'.

330. ἄγωγ' = ἃ ἐγώ γε.

ἐξελωβήθην - 'the outrages I have suffered'.

335. τοξευτός - 'struck by an arrow'.

338. ἐλέγχω - 'I should question'.

345b. 'whether it was true or whether in fact it was false'.

349. 'they did not long restrain me from setting forth with speed'.

351b. 'for I had never set eyes on him'.

355. οὐρίῳ πλάτῃ - 'by rowing helped by the wind'. Sigeion was where the tomb of Achilles was located.

370b. `before learning from me (what my wishes were)´.

373. Odysseus had protected both the body and armor of Achilles, when the latter was killed. Allusion to Od. 5.309-10.

374. ἄρασσον –tr. `I began to curse´. Lit. `strike´.

375b. `leaving nothing in short measure´, `not holding back´.

377. `having reached this point´, i.e. being abused by a mere boy.

δύσοργος - `quick to anger´.

383. τητώμενος - `deprived of´.

384. `by that base man Odysseus from base parents´.

386-7. `for a city, and also an army depend wholly upon those who govern it´.

387b-8. `Those among men who violate social order being base by the instruction of their teachers´. (An interesting line in the context of the young behaving badly under the influence of the Sophists.)

391-402: Choric Interlude in place of the usual choral comment at the end of a long speech. This is mirrored in 507ff.

#### Strophe:

O mountain goddess, all nourishing Earth, mother of Zeus himself, you who live near all golden great Paktolos, I cried out to you also then, lady mother, when every insult was brought upon this man at the hands of the Atreidai, when they gave away his ancestral armor, the highest single honour, to the son of Laertes, hear o blessed one who sits upon the bull-slaying lions.

Lines 403-518: Philoktetes´ appeal to be taken to Skyros.

403. σύμβολον - `a common token´.

405. μοι προσάδεθῶ - `touch a note of my own experience´.

γιγνώσκειν - sc. με

407-9. 'for I know that he would attempt (θιγόντα) by his speech each evil plan and act of wickedness, by which he might bring some unjust matter to completion.'

411. ἠνείχετο - 'put up with it'.

417. ὁ ἐμπολητός - 'bought'. Tr. 'the son of Sisyphos bought/fathered by purchase by Laertes'. Antikleia was said to have been pregnant when Laertes married her. The word here may imply that a large bride-price was paid.

419-420. μέγα θάλλοντες - 'prospering very greatly'.

425. ὃς παρῆν γόνος - 'the son that was at his side'.

428. σκοπεῖν = προσδοκᾶν - a rare use.

429. κἀνταῦθα ἵνα - 'in this case also, where'.

432. ἐμποδίζονται - 'thwarted'.

436. ἐκῶν - tr. 'if it can help it'.

438. κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο - 'along the same lines'.

440. δεινοῦ καὶ σοφοῦ - 'shrewd and clever'.

443. i.e. was very verbose.

444. ἐώη opt. from ἐάω.

447. εἶ περιστεύουσιν - 'well protect them'.

448. παλιντριβῆ - 'villainous, knavish'.

449. ἀναστρέφοντες - 'bringing back'.

451a. 'what is one to make of these things?'

457. καὶ ἀποφθίνει τὰ χρηστὰ - 'where honesty is lost'.

467. ἐξ ἀπόπτου - 'from afar'. Tr. 'the season calls us to watch for an opportunity to sail from near the ship rather than from far away'.

473a. Lit. 'regard me as secondary' (to your primary purpose of returning home).

473b-474. 'great is the discomfort of such a burden'.

475. 'to the nobly born, baseness is hateful, while kindness brings renown'.

482. ἀντλίαν - 'the hold'.

487. χωρὶς ἀνθρώπων στίβου - 'apart from the track of men'.

489. 'or to the Euboian dwellings of Chalkodon', i.e. to Chalkis.

493. παλαιὸν ἐξότου παλαιὸς = χρόνος ἄν εἴη ἐξ ὅτου - 'it is long since'.

494. βεβήκη - 'he is dead'.

τοῖς ἰγμένοις - 'by means of those who had come'.

495. ἔστελλον -tr. 'I sent for'.

496. αὐτόστολον - 'in his own ship'.

δόμους -tr. 'home'.

497b. '(disregarding) as messengers do'. The verse seems to start out as 'the service of my messengers (failed me)' to 'my messengers made light of my situation'. Tr. 'they made light of my situation, I think, as one might expect in regard to the behavior of messengers, and continued their expedition homeward'.

502-3. 'How all things are full of danger and apprehension for mortals, so that they may be prosperous or the reverse'.

505. 'to watch lest he be destroyed unawares'.

507-518: Choric Interlude in place of the usual choral comment at the end of a long speech. This balances the interlude above.

#### Antistrophe:

Have pity lord. He has told us of his struggle made up from many troubles, difficult to bear. May none of my friends meet with such things.

But if lord you hate the hateful Atreidai, then transferring their ill to this man's gain, I would convey him to his house where he desires in this swift well-fitted ship, avoiding the nemesis of the gods.

Lines 519-627: The sailor disguised as a merchant ship captain, sent by Odysseus turns up and warns them that Odysseus and Diomedes are on their way from Troy to get Philoktetes.

519. (Addressed to the Chorus). τις εὐχερῆς παρῆς - 'you are an undisturbed bystander', lit. 'you are present as someone who is easy going'.

524. ἐνδεέστερον - 'less willing'.

525. πρὸς τὸ κáριον πονεῖν – epexegetic, 'in respect of toiling for his need', tr. 'to assist him in his need'.

531-2. 'if only there were some deed I could perform to show you how you have made me your firm friend'.

535b. 'how stout-hearted I was'.

536-7. The sense is 'I do not think that any save myself would endure so much as the sight of these miseries.'

541. Note the duals. αὐθις εἴσιτον - 'before the two of you go inside'.

542. ξυνέμπορον - 'fellow-traveller'.

545. ἀντέκυρσα - 'our paths have crossed'.

548. Peperethos is a small island near Thrace.

550. συννεναυστοληκότες -tr. 'members of the same crew'.

552. προστυχόντι τῶν ἴσων - 'as I have had the same lot as you'. (i.e. we are both anchored at Lemnos).

556. ἐξαργούμενα - 'left fallow'.

566. καθ' ὀρμήν - 'eagerly'.

568. πρὸς τάδε - 'for this purpose'.

αὐτάγγελος - 'bring the message himself'.

571. ἔστελλον - 'were setting forth'.

574. i.e. 'keep your voice down.'

579. διεμπολᾶ - 'bargain (about me)'.

583-4. The sense is that he sells many things to the army and gets good return.

590. αἴτιον - 'responsibility'.

ποιού - 'make me (responsible)'.

592. διώμοτοι - 'sworn by oath'.

598-9. 'and by what matter (τίνος ... πράγματος χάριν), after all this long period of time, did the Atreidai turn their attention to this man'.

601. βία - 'compulsion'.

602. ἀμύνουσιν - 'take revenge for'.

607. 'who is called every foul name of dishonour'.

619. ἐφείτο - 'he gave permission'.

621b. 'and anyone else you care about'.

622b. tr. 'the nasty piece of work'.

625. His father is, of course, Sisyphos.

627. συμφέροι- 'may he help'.

Lines 628-675: Philoktetes and Neoptolemos go the cave.

630. ἄν ... δεῖξαι - tr. 'would display'.

νεώσ ἄγοντα - 'leading me from the ship'.

631. 'would I not sooner listen to that most hateful viper ...'.

634. ὁθύνεχα = ὅτου ἔνεκα - 'for this reason'.

636. ὀρίζη - 'separate us from'.

637-8. Gnostic. `Haste in good season, when toil has ceased, brings sleep and rest`.

639. `when the head-wind, (the one beating against the prow), lets up`.

646. Tr. `where there is something you might need or care to take`.

647b. `not from a large store`.

649. φύλλον - `herb`.

652. τι τόξων τῶνδε ἀπημελημένον – lit. `anything neglected connected with this bow`, tr. `stray arrows`.

653. παρερρήκεν - `has slipped out`.

656. ἐγγύθεν θέαν - `a close-up view`.

660b. `I do long for it, but only on the following condition`.

666. ἔνερθεν- `under the feet of`.

668. δόντι δοῦναι - `to return it to the one who gave it`.

ἐξεπέυξασθαι - `to boast over`.

670. The good turn was to light the funeral pyre for Herakles to put him out of his misery.

671ff. The MSS give these lines to Philoktetes, but this has been correctly altered in all modern texts.

672. εὖ δρᾶν εὖ παθῶν - `when he experiences good, to do good`.

675. `for my sick condition desires to take you as a helper`.

### **Stasimon: Lines 676-729:**

#### Strophe:

I have heard in story but never actually seen the one who once approached the bed of Zeus (Ixion), how that almighty son of Kronos bound him on the rolling

rim of wheel. But I know of no other among mortals, either hearing of it nor seeing it, meeting with a more ghastly fate than this man, who wronged none, nor robbed anyone, but was fair to all fair men, but thus has been ruined so unworthily. Indeed, amazement holds me how alone, listening to the beating waves, how he maintained his life, stepped in tears.

Antistrophe:

He was his own neighbour (reading πρόσωπος), unable to walk, nor was there any neighbour of his misery among the inhabitants, to whom he might cry out his lament, awakening response in respect of the devourer who drinks his blood. Nor, when the illness came, was there any to assuage the most hot gushing blood from the ulcers of his untended foot with gentle herbs which he might gather from the sustaining earth. Then he would creep this way and that crawling like a child without its dear nurse, wherever there might be an ease of provision, whenever the torment might come upon him.

Strophe:

Not lifting for his sustenance the sown produce of the sacred earth, nor of those other things that we grain-eating men have, save perchance that, by means of his feathered arrows from his swift-shooting bow he obtains some sustenance for his belly.

O wretched existence! For ten years he has not had pleasure from the wine-cup, but having fixed his gaze on still water, wherever he came to know of any, it was there he used to approach.

Antistrophe:

But now, after all this, he will finally become happy and mighty, having met with the son of a noble race. He, after a period of months, will lead him in his sea-going ship to his paternal court of Malian nymphs and beside the banks of Spercheios, where, above the hills of Oita, the bronze shielded man (Herakles) approaches all the gods resplendent in his sacred fire.

## Second Episode: Lines 730-826:

Philoktetes and Neoptolemos re-enter. Philoktetes has one of his spasms and hands over his bow and arrows before falling into a deep sleep.

731. ἀπόπληκτος - 'crippled, paralysed'.

734. παρεστώσης - 'habitual'.

738. ἡπίους - 'soothing'.

743. παρ' ὑμῖν - 'in your presence'.

745. βρύκομαι - 'I am eaten up'.

752. σαυτοῦ - 'about yourself'.

ποῆ - poetic form of ποιῆ.

755. ἐπίσιγμα - 'hounding on, exasperation'. The MSS reading is ἐπίσαγμα - 'the burden'.

758b-9a. 'when is has been sated with its wanderings'. There are other interpretations. See Webster ad loc.



Figure 4. Philoktetes and Neoptolemos, by William Blake (1757-1822).

761. λάβωμαι - 'take hold of you'.

770. ἐφίεμαι - 'I charge you'.

773. πρόστροπον - 'suppliant'.

774a. `be confident regarding my intentions’.

775b. Lit. `hand it over with good fortune’, tr. `may blessing attend the gift’.

776b. `do reverence to divine jealousy’.

780. εὐσταλής - `favourable’.

781. δικαιοῖ - `deem it right’.

πορσύνεται - `is arranged’.

Lines 782-804:

I fear lest your prayer might be unfulfilled. For this murderous oozing blood drips once again from the depths and I expect worse to come. Ah, Oh. O foot, such evil works you wrought against me. The pain creeps and draws near, woe is me. You grasp what is happening, but please do not run away. Ahhh. O stranger from Kephallene (i.e. Odysseus) would that this pain might come to you piercing through your breast. Ah, and again Ah. O Agamemnon and Menelaus would that instead of me you had nourished this illness and for as long. Ah. O death, death, how is it that I call on you thus each day but you are unable to come. O child, o noble one, come take me, who call upon you, to this Lemnian fire (i.e. the volcano) here and set fire to me. O noble one. I once deemed it right to do the same thing for the son of Zeus in return for these arms which you now keep safe. What do you say child? What do you say? Why are you silent? What are you thinking?

809. ἀντιάζω - `entreat’.

814. Ph. wants Ne. to take him up to the volcano.

815a. παραφρονέω - `to be distraught’.

κύκλον - i.e. the sky.

816. The ποτε expresses a sense of frustration.

818. Lit. `if indeed you are thinking better’, tr. `since you are calmer’.

819. ὅπως ἔχω - `as I am’.

824. παρέρρωγεν - `has burst forth’.

### **Kommos (in place of second stasimon): Lines 827-864:**

#### Strophe:

**Ch.** Sleep which knows nothing of pain, of grief, sleep may you come as fair wind upon us, long abiding, O master. May you hold over his eyes that brightness which now spreads over them. Come, come, god of healing. My son, take thought for where you will stop, where you will go, and what my next thoughts should be. Do you see? He is sleeping. What is the point of us remaining here? In every instance opportunity controls decision and wins a mighty victory, there and then.

**Ne.** Come, this man hears nothing, but I see that sailing without this man, we have this prize, the bow, in vain. For the crown of victory is his, and the god said we should bring him. It is a terrible reproach to boast of an unfinished work achieved by falsehood.

#### Antistrophe:

**Ch.** Come child, the god will see to this. When you make a reply of words, o child, do so in a whisper, since the sleepless sleep of those in sickness is perceptive. But as far as you are able, consider how you will accomplish this in secret. For, you know of whom I speak, if you maintain this intention in regard to this man, one may soon see even for the wise inextricable problems.

#### Epode:

The wind is favourable, the man is sightless with no helper, stretched out in darkness. Sleep in the sun is good. He has no control of hand or foot or anything else, but like one reclining in Hades. See whether what you speak is in season. As far as my poor intelligence can grasp, boy, the toil that frightens not is best.

### **Third Episode: Lines 865-1080:**

Philoktetes awakes to find Neoptolemos still there and gushes gratitude. Embarrassed, Neoptolemos relates that they are really planning to go to Troy

and Philoktetes responds savagely. Odysseus arrives and threatens to remove Philoktetes by force.

865. μηδ' ἀφεισάναι φρενῶν - 'keep your wits about you', lit. 'do not part from wisdom'.

867-8. ἐλπίδων ἄπιστον οἰούρημα - 'the watching by these strangers, beyond my expectation'.

872ff. Note all the words with εὐ- in this and the following lines.

875. ἐν εὐχερεῖ ἔθου - 'you have made little of all this', 'you have taken this in your stride'.

876. γέμων - tr. 'loaded with', the metaphor being possibly relating to ship's cargo, but note also Oed. Tyr. lines 4 and 5.

878. ἀνάπαυλα - 'remission'.

880. κόπος - 'fatigue'.

884-5. 'judged by your present sufferings, your symptoms appeared like to that of a man no longer alive'.

893. ἀντέχου - 'take hold of me'.

894. 'The old familiar habit will enable me to rise'.

895. τούνθενδε - 'from this point on'.

896. ἐξέβης - lit. 'have you gone off course'.

897. ἄπορον - 'powerless, faltering'.

899. 'this is exactly the place in this mental state that I am in fact in'. i.e. 'I am in a state of powerlessness'. In the previous line, Ph. asks if N. is perplexed, and he replies here, 'I am here (in the middle) of perplexity'. Sc. ὦν.

900. δυσχέρεια - 'unpleasantness, discomfort'.

904. ἕξω -tr. 'alien to'.

905. ἐπωφελῶν - 'helping'.

906. 'I have been in distress at this for some time'.

907. 'Certainly not in your actions, but I am nervous (lit. hesitant) at what you have said'.



Figure 5. Philoktetes.

912. λυπηρῶς... πέμπω σε - 'I convey you on a bitter voyage'.

919a. 'firstly to save you from this misery' (your illness).

925-6. 'for justice and expedience make me listen to those in power'.

927. δειμα - 'horror'.

930. προστρόπαιον - 'suppliant'.

935. 'thus he looks back as if he is not going to give it up'.

936. προβλήτες - 'headlands'.

ξυνουσίαι - 'comrades'.

939. παρούσι τοῖς εἰωθόσιν - 'to you who are accustomed to be present'.

944. φήνασθαι - 'to display them as his own'.

946a. 'he does not realise that he is slaying a corpse'.

947. ἄλλως - tr. 'a mere (ghost)'.

948. sc. εἶλεν.

ὥδε ἔχοντα - 'being thus', i.e. 'even in my present state'.

- 952a. `rock formed with double doorway’.
953. ψιλίος - `unarmed’.
954. ἀνανούμαι - `I will wither away’.
959. ῥύσιον - `in requital’.
960. πρόσ - `at the hands of’.
962. γνώμην μετοίσεις - `you will change your intention’.
- 963-4. `it rests with you whether we sail or you concede to this man’s words’.
966. cf. line 806.
- 972-3. ἄλλοισι δούς οἰθεϊκός - `but leave (evil works) to others, to whom they belong’.
975. `will you not leave this bow and come away’, εἶ < εἶμι.
978. πέπραμαι < πιπράσκω.
- 987b. `are these things to be borne?’
988. ἐκ τῶν σῶν - `from your realm’.
- 991b. Tr. `what a story you manage to invent!’.
992. προτείνων - `you hold up as an excuse’ or `you shield yourself behind’.
- 1000b. `this steep land-base’. Tr. `while I have this island’s steep crag beneath me’.
1002. πέτρας ἄνωθεν - `from the rock above’. Take πέτρα with πεσών.
1003. ἐπὶ τῷδε - `on such terms’. Tr. `let this not be in his power’.
1007. οἶ’ αὖ μ’ ὑπήλθες - `how you have tricked me again’, lit. `come upon me secretly’.
1008. πρόβλημα - `screen’.
1009. `too good for you, but worthy to be my friend’.

1010. πλήν - 'except'.

1011. ἀλγεινῶς φέρων - 'feeling badly'.

1013. διὰ μυχῶν βλέπουσα – meaning unclear. Either 'peering from some hidden place' (since Od. has been hiding nearby) or 'looking through in the innermost recesses of Neoptolemos' mind'. Probably the former. Ussher has 'but your low mind which ever peeps from corners'.

1014. ἀφυῆ - 'inept'.

1015. ἐν κακοῖς - 'in mischief'.

1022. τοῦτο αὐτό - 'at this very thing'.

1025. The story in the *Kypria* was that Odysseus pretended to be insane in order to avoid going to Troy. He began ploughing the sand but had to stop when Palamedes put Telemachos in the path of the plough.

1029b. 'you say they did it, they say you'.

1033. 'make sacrifices to the gods and pour libations'.

1036a. i.e. 'me'.

1039. κέντρον – tr. 'urge'.

1040. ἐπόψιοι - 'watchful'.

1041. τῷ χρόνῳ ποτέ - 'at least after some time'. Sophokles' *Elektra* 1013 has the same expression.

1048a. 'if he would let me'.

1049. Lit. 'where such things are needed such am I', i.e. 'I adapt myself to the situation'.

1050. κρίσις - 'competition'.

1051. 'you would not find a man more pious than me'.

1059. ἐπιθύνειν - 'to direct (them)'. Tr. 'I would not be inferior to you either in wielding the bow nor in directing it with my hand'.

1061. γέρας - 'prized possession'.



Figure 6. They take the bow and make to leave.

1065. ἀντιφώνει - 'reply'.

1067. προσφθεγκτός - 'addressed'.

1074. ἀκούσομαι ... πρὸς τοῦδε - 'I will be told by this man'.

1079. λῶω - 'better'.

1080. ὑμεῖς refers to the Chorus.

### Second Kommos (in place of third stasimon): Lines 1081-1217:

#### Strophe:

**Ph.** O hollow cavern of rock, both hot and icy cold, so, alas I was not about to leave you, but you will be witness to my death. Alas, alas. O wretched dwelling, most full of my grief, what will be my daily ration? Where and whence will I, poor wretch, meet with the hope of sustenance, if the birds that previously cowered above shall come through the shrill breeze to destroy me and I have no strength left.

**Ch.** It is you, it is you ill-fated man who would have it so. This fate is not from elsewhere or from stronger hand, for when you had the opportunity to make a decision, you chose to be content with the worse fate rather than the better.

Antistrophe:

**Ph.** Ah wretched me, broken with misery. I alas will dwell here from now on with no man as companion. I will die, ah, ah. No longer bringing food, nor getting any from my winged weapons holding them in my strong hands. The words of his crafty mind possessed me unawares, unexpected and hidden. Would that I might see him, who has contrived these things, meet with the same grief and for as a long a time.

**Ch.** This that caught you is fate send by the gods not any deceitfulness on my part. Direct your ill-fated curse at others. I am worried that you push away my friendship.

Strophe:

**Ph.** Woe is me. He is perhaps sitting on the shore of the grey sea, brandishing in his hand the source of my wretched nourishment, which no other mortal has ever carried. O dear bow, having been ripped from my dear hands. Surely if you have some sense you would see with pity that I will no longer thus hereafter use the prize of Herakles (reading Ἡρακλείῳ ἀεθλίῳ), but you are wielded in the new service of a man of many wiles. You see the wicked deceit, and looking on this hateful wicked man causing countless ills to spring up as many as this man has devised against me.

**Ch.** It is truly a man's part to assert what is right, but when he has spoken, he should not thrust forth malignant venom from his tongue. Odysseus was but one of many who under orders achieved the common good for his friends.

Antistrophe:

**Ph.** O winged prey and race of bright-eyed beasts, whom this land holds as wild mountain dwellers, no longer will you depart in flight from my haunts, for I no longer have in hand that former defense from my bow. O wretched am I now. But this land is guarded carelessly and no longer a source of fear for you. Come, now satiate your mouth with my discoloured flesh to your heart's

content. Soon I will leave this life. For whence is there any sustenance? Who can feed thus from the surrounding breezes if he no longer has control of that which the life-giving earth sends forth?

**Ch.** By the gods, if you can show any regard, draw near to your friend, who approaches you will all goodwill. But know this well that it is within your power to avoid this fate. It is a piteous fate to sustain and incapable of teaching him with whom it dwells to endure its countless burdens.

**Ph.** Again, again you bring to mind the ancient pain, you who are the best of those who have come previously. Why have you afflicted me? What have you done to me?

**Ch.** Why do you say this?

**Ph.** If you hope to bring me to Troy which is hateful to me.

**Ch.** For I think this is best.

**Ph.** Leave me then, go now.

**Ch.** Happily do I hear your command, and I willingly comply. Let us go, let us go, so that the ship may be got ready.

**Ph.** By Zeus who hears men's curses, do not depart.

**Ch.** Be calm.

**Ph.** O strangers, by the gods, wait.

**Ch.** Why do you call out?

**Ph.** Alas, alas, of god, I am destroyed. O foot, O foot, what shall I do with you in my life in the days ahead? O strangers, come back, return again.

**Ch.** Why would we do that? Do you appear to have changed your mind in some strange way from your previous intention?

**Ph.** It is not a cause of anger if one sinking under stormy grief speaks crazily.

**Ch.** Come then, unhappy man, as we bid you.

**Ph.** Never, never, know this for certain! Not even if the fire-bearing lord of lightning comes setting me on fire with thunder-blaze. Ilium can go to hell and all those beneath it, all who dared to reject me and my poor foot. But come, strangers, grant me this boon.

**Ch.** What is this word you speak?

**Ph.** A sword perchance, or an axe or any weapon – send it to me.

**Ch.** To execute what plan?

**Ph.** That by my own hand I might cut off these limbs. My mind is now set on death.

**Ch.** What?

**Ph.** I seek my father.

**Ch.** In which land?

**Ph.** In Hades' house, for he is no longer alive. O city, my paternal city. How, wretched man that I am, I look to you. I who left your sacred streams and went forth to help the wicked sons of Atreus. Now I am nothing.

**Ch.** I should have left you ages ago and gone near my ship, save that I see Odysseus and the scion of Achilles coming here in our direction.

### **Exodos: Lines 1218-1471:**

Neoptolemos and Odysseus argue about the bow and the latter eventually leaves the stage. Neoptolemos offers to restore the bow and Herakles appears *deus ex machina* and prophecies what will happen, thereby convincing Philoktetes to accompany Neoptolemos to Troy.

1219. σοι - ethic dative.

1222. `will you not say why (ἦντινα) you are returning on the same path quickly and in haste?'

1238. ἀναπολεῖν - `to repeat'.

1239. ἀρχήν - `in the first place'.

1246. `but if just they are better than wise’.

1249. ἀναλαβεῖν - `to make up for’.

1251. See Webster ad loc. Tr. `with justice on my side, I do not fear the terrors you speak of’.

1252. τὸ δρᾶν - `to do your bidding’. Lit. `but not even your hand do I obey so as to act’.

1272. ἀτηρός - `ruinous’.

1274. καρτερεῖν - `to hold firm’.

1277b. `Yes, even more than I can say’.

1279. `I have ceased, since if I do not speak in season.’

1289. ὑψιστον σέβας – tr. `highest majesty’.

1293. `as the gods be my witnesses’.

1299a. Common formula: Tr. `you will suffer if you do it’.

ὀρθωθῆ - `goes straight’.

1303. ἀφείλου μὴ κτανεῖν - `(why) have you robbed me of killing ...’.

1305a. `Well, know this much, ...’.

1307. πρὸς ἀίχμῆν - `when it comes to fighting’.

1308b. `there is no reason why’.

1313. ἦκου’ ἄριστα -tr. `was called a hero’.

1314. ἦσθην - `you gave me pleasure’.

1315. ἐφίεμαι - `I desire’.

1318. `but those who cling to self-inflicted miseries’.

1321. Note the triad of ideas.

1327. ἀκαλυφῆ σηκόν - 'roofless sanctuary'. Chrysa is sometimes identified with Athena, whose temple is also guarded by a serpent.

1328. κρύφιος οἰκουρῶν - 'keeping hidden guard'.

1329. παύλαν - 'respite'.

1333. παρ' ἡμῖν - 'in our company'. These were Machaon and Podalirios.

1336. τῆδε ἔχοντα - 'that this is so'.

1344. ἐπίκτησις - 'gain'.

1345. κριθέντα - 'having been chosen'.

παιωνίας ἐς χεῖρας - 'to healing hands'.

1346. πολύστονον - tr. 'of many tears'.

1352. εἰκάθω - 'shall I yield?'

1354. προσήγορος - 'addressed'.

1354. κύκλοι - refers to his eyes.

1356. ξυνόντα - 'keeping company'.

1358. παρελθόντων - 'of past events'.

1359. πρὸς τούτων - 'at their hands'.

1360. προλεύσσειν - 'to foresee'.

1360b -1362. 'Those whose mind is the mother of crime, the mind trains to be criminals in everything, and in you also I am amazed at this'.

1365-1367a. Possible interpolation. 'who, in the matter of your father's arms, judge wretched Aias to be inferior to Odysseus.'

1370. χάριν - 'gratitude'.

1378. ἔμπυον βάσιν - 'suppurating, ulcerated foot'. (Abstract for concrete).

1379. ἀποσώσοντας - 'who will deliver'.

1385. `For you in fact. I am your friend and my words are such`.

1387. θρασύνεσθαι - `to be defiant`.

1391b. `consider if they will again restore you`.

1392. `I will never consider that I willingly see Troy`.

1398. ἤνεσας - `you promised`.

1401. Either `I have had enough of groans and lamentations` or `that place (Troy) has been sounded enough in my lamentations`.

1403a. `join your steps to mine`.

1407. στειῖχε προσκύσας χθόνα - `come when you have shown respect to the land`.

1409-1417 are in anapaests, marking Herakles' entrance (on the roof of the *skene*).

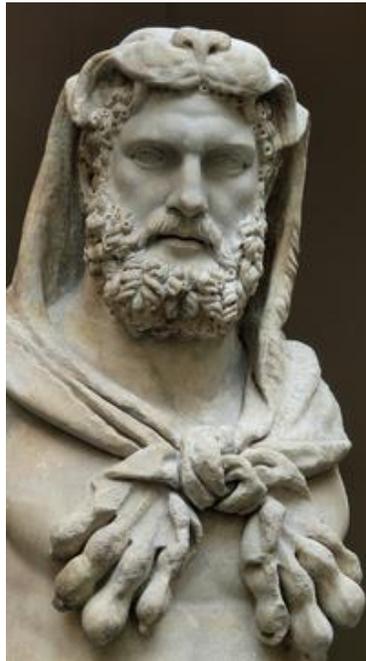


Figure 7. Herakles.

1411. φάσκειν - infinitive for imperative.

1412. ἄκοη - `in your ear`.

1416. κατερητύσων - `intending to detain you', `putting a stop to'.
- 1421b. `this is your destiny to suffer' (lit. `there is obligation (for you) to suffer this').
1427. νοσφιείς βίου - `you will remove from life', i.e. `you will kill'.
1429. ἀριστεία - `prize for valour'.
1432. μνημεῖα - `memory offering', `memorial'.
1439. Herakles sacked Laomedon's Troy. See Iliad 5.638-642.
1440. ἐννοεῖτε - `keep in mind'.
1442. `for father Zeus regards all other things as secondary'.
- 1443-4. `For piety does not die with men, whether they live or die, it does not perish'.
1448. Lit. `I have come to this decision in the same way'. Note that τίθεμαι (τὴν ψηφόν) can mean `vote'. Tr. `I am in complete agreement'.
1450. πλοῦς - lit. `sailing', but by extension `good wind for sailing'.
1453. ξύμφουρον - `that shared my watch'.
- 1455ff. `deep voice of the sea-lashed cape, where often my head was wetted in the recesses of the cave by the blasts of the south wind and where often the mountain of Hermaia sent forth an echo to my mournful cries for me buffeted by the storm'. ἄρσην means masculine, so has a deep voice. κρᾶτα is a rare nominative form.
1461. ποτόν - `fount'.
1463. ἐμβάντες - `entered'. Lit. `Never having entered such expectation'. Tr. `I would never have ventured to expect this'.
1465. ἀμέμπτως - `so that I have no cause to complain'.
- 1467a. `my friends' advice'.