CREON AND THE "ODE TO MAN" IN SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE*

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THOUGH other Sophoclean odes (such as the second *stasimon* of the *Oedipus Rex*) have attracted more controversy, none has been more admired than the first *stasimon* of the *Antigone*.[1] Its catalogue of man's achievements, deceptively modern in tone, has appealed to

[1] The following works will be cited by author's name and (where necessary) date: Max Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie* (Berlin 1930); Paul Friedländer, "Πολλὰ τὰ δεινά," *Hermes* 69 (1934) 56–64; J. S. Morrison, "The Place of Protagoras in Athenian Public Life," *CQ* 35 (1941) 1–16; K. Reinhardt, "*Aias* Vers 131," *Hermes* 78 (1943) 111–112; C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Oxford 1944); V. Ehrenberg, "The Foundation of Thurii," *AJP* 69 (1948) 149–170; Robert F. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone* (Princeton 1951); Cedric H. Whitman, *Sophocles: A Study of Heroic Humanism* (Cambridge, Mass. 1951); J. C. Opstelten, *Sophocles and Greek Pessimism* (Amsterdam 1952); Egon Braun, "Νόμοι Ἀκίνητοι," *JOAI* 40 (1953) 144–150; V. Ehrenberg, *Sophocles and Pericles* (Oxford 1954); B. M. W. Knox, "The *Ajax* of Sophocles," *HSCP* 65 (1961) 1–37; I. M. Linforth, "Antigone and Creon," *UCPCP* 15.5 (1961) 183–259; B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy* (Berkeley 1964); A. J. Podlecki, "Creon and Herodotus," *TAPA* 97 (1966) 359–366; Gilberte Ronnet, "Sur le premier stasimon d'*Antigone*," *REG* 80 (1967) 100–105; Gerhard Müller, ed., *Antigone* (Heidelberg 1967); Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Cornell 1969); Giacomo Bona, "ΥΨΙΠΟΛΙΣ e ΑΠΟΛΙΣ nel primo stasimo dell' Antigone," *RFC* 99 (1971) 129–149; G. H. Gellie, *Sophocles: A Reading* (Melbourne 1972); Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford 1973); R. W. B. Burton, *The Chorus in Sophocles' Tragedies* (Oxford 1980); R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (Cambridge 1980); Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Johns Hopkins 1981); Charles Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981); J. V. Muir, "Protagoras and Education at Thurii," *G&R* 29 (1982) 17–24; V. J. Rosivach, "On Creon, Antigone and Not Burying the Dead," *RhM* 126 (1983) 193–211; Ruth Scodel, *Sophocles* (Boston 1984); Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge 1986). The commentaries of Jebb and Kamerbeek are also cited by commentator's name only.

many, and anyone collecting an anthology of choral odes would probably turn to this poem.

Ironically, however, most critics probably feel that the first *stasimon* would occupy a more secure place in an anthology of Greek lyric poetry than it does in the *Antigone* itself. Though much admired in isolation, the ode has attracted considerably less attention among those who study the play as a whole. Most interpretation has focused on its problematic conclusion (365–375) and neglected the opening three strophes. This paper focuses upon these three strophes, discussing how they fit into the intellectual climate of Athens in the 440s and into the larger context of the play. The first stasimon has, it will be argued, more to do with Creon than most interpreters have felt, and makes an important contribution to characterizing him early in the play.

THE PROBLEM

The stasimon opens with a calculatedly ambiguous statement (332–333): πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κοὐδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει. Thngs that are δεινός are "fearful" or "terrible."[2] To suffer or do things that are δεινά is a serious affair. But δεινός when applied to people is generally a positive term: in Homer, gods or heroes are δεινός when they inspire fear,[3] and the phrase δεινός τ' αἰδοῖός τε signifies respectability.[4] In the fifth century the adjective δεινός still designates a person to be reckoned with,[5] but it also connotes a person who is especially clever.[6] By comparing man to *things* which are δεινά

[2] For general discussions of δεινός in this passage see Friedländer and Segal 441 n. 4.

[3] Angry gods and heroes or man-eating monsters are δεινός: Ares (*Il.* 17.212); Scylla (*Od.* 12.119); Apollo is δεινός when he grows exasperated with the Trojans (*Il.* 4.498) or when he stalks Patroclus (*Il.* 16.790); Odysseus warns his men that Helios is a δεινὸς θεός (*Od.* 12.323); Patroclus reminds Nestor that Achilles is δεινός, a formidable man; after the battle with the suitors Odysseus is δεινὸς δ' εἰς ὦπα ἰδέσθαι (*Od.* 22.405).

[4] At *Od.* 8.22 the phrase describes Odysseus, whose appearance has been transformed by Athena; at *Il.* 3.172 Helen applies it to Priam; the disguised Odysseus, lying about his prosperous days in Crete, says that he was δεινός τ' αἰδοῖός τε μετὰ Κρήτεσσι (*Od.* 14.234).

[5] Elsewhere in Sophocles Ajax at his best is δεινός (*Ajax* 205–206 ὁ δεινὸς μέγας ὠμοκρατὴς / Αἴας), as is Ares / war (*OC* 1065). See also Aesch. *Pers.* 28, 40; Eur. *Bacch.* 861 (Dionysus applies the term to himself).

[6] Consider Sophoclean usage: a face may be δεινός / fearful (*fr.* 865 Radt δεινὸν τὸ τᾶς Πειθοῦς πρόσωπον), someone may be δεινός / fearful *to behold* (*OC* 141: δεινὸς μὲν ὁρᾶν, δεινὸς δὲ κλύειν), but δεινός, when applied directly to people, normally means

Sophocles appeals to two generally distinct sides of the word, each of which makes its own contribution to the overall meaning.[7]

Sophocles may well be following Aeschylus *Choeph.* 585 ff., which begins πολλὰ μὲν γᾶ τρέφει δεινὰ δειμάτων ἄχη. Verbally, the connection is not especially strong,[8] but both odes move from a general discussion of many things which are δεινά to a discussion of man.

In the *Choephori* the Chorus reminds us (in obscure Greek) that earth, sea, and air breed δεινὰ δειμάτων ἄχη, "terrible fearful woes,"[9] but, bad as these may be, "who could describe the reckless pride of men or the ruthless passions of women who will stop at nothing?"[10] The formal priamel points at its climax to the dreadful things which mortals do. The Chorus mentions the crimes of both men and women because Clytaemestra, her adultery with Aegisthus and her part in the murder of Agamemnon, is foremost in their minds. Here the message is clear: the evil deeds of mortals know no bounds or restraint.

Whether the Aeschylean chorus is a source or only a parallel, it has exerted considerable influence on those reading the first stasimon of the *Antigone.* Most critics of the play assume that when the Chorus cites the δεινότης of man it is thinking of whoever buried Polynices. As a result they read the first stasimon of the *Antigone* as if it, like *Choeph.* 585 ff., emphatically described man's infinite cunning and capacity for crime.[11]

"formidable" in the sense of "clever." Six times it describes the cleverness of a speaker: *Ant.* 1046; *OT* 545; *Phil.* 147 (where Neoptolemus ironically recalls Odysseus' warnings at 130–131); *Phil.* 440; *OC* 806, 1065. Once it describes a skillful Athenian charioteer: *El.* 731.

[7] Compare Dionysus, who taunts Pentheus by playing upon the double meaning of δεινός at Euripides *Bacch.* 971: δεινὸς σὺ δεινὸς κἀπὶ δεῖν' ἔρχῃ πάθῃ.

[8] The phrase πολλὰ καὶ δεινά is a regular expression in Greek prose, describing the terrible things that someone has done or suffered, e.g., Plato *Crat.* 395D, *Symp.* 197B, *Alc2* 138C; Isaeus 7.4; Demosth. *De Corona* 271, *Or.* 19.3, 9, 91, 189, 240, 257; *Or.* 21.20, 36 etc. (21 times in all); Xenophon *Anabasis* 2.3.13, *Cyr.* 7.1.40.

[9] δειμάτων is defining genitive with ἄχη, on which see Garvie *ad loc.*

[10] 595–597 ὑπέρτολμον ἀνδρὸς φρόνημα τίς λέγοι | καὶ γυναικῶν φρεσὶν τλημόνων | παντόλμους ἔρωτας.

[11] Soo Jebb: "The chorus had not thought it possible that any one should brave death to bury the corpse (220). But the deed has been done, and without leaving a trace (252). And Creon has silenced the suggestion that the gods have done it (278). The train of thought is continued in this ode. Its theme is man's daring, his inventiveness, and the result to his happiness." Likewise Bowra 84–86; Scodel 55.

Burton discusses the first stasimon at some length (95–104), and assumes that the

Certainly in the fourth stanza (368–375) the Chorus has in mind the person who defied Creon and buried Polynices. They turn to the dangers of unlawful behavior: anyone who does not support the νόμοι χθονός or the θεῶν ἔνορκος δίκη, or who, because of τόλμη, pursues τὸ μὴ καλόν, will be without a city (ἄπολις).[12] The Chorus rejects this person in no uncertain terms. Their words are of course especially ironic: the Chorus does not realize that Antigone has buried Polynices; further, Creon, if he is in their minds at all, must, at this stage in the play, be identified with the man who is ὑψίπολις, but he will ultimately embody the antisocial behavior that the Chorus condemns. We the readers realize that the statement, though true, means something very different from what the speaker has in mind.[13]

But the first three stanzas of the ode have a different tone. They do not emphasize the enormity of man or of his crimes; they celebrate his achievements. Man dares to sail the raging seas (334–337). Man works the fields (337–341). Birds, game, and fish are his prey (342–347). By his wiles he overcomes wild beasts, domesticates horse and bull (347–352). Man has developed language and learned to build cities (353–360). He can cure every ailment except death itself (360–364).

The positive, anthropocentric character of this ode, striking as it has been to many modern readers, is even more striking when set against the standard view of man as it is expressed not only in archaic Greek poetry but in Sophocles as well.[14] The next ode in the *Antigone* begins εὐδαίμονες οἷσι κακῶν ἄγευστος αἰών (583), and then dwells in more conventional terms upon human weakness: there is no escape for a family when θεῶν τις attacks it (594–597); no man can overcome the power of Zeus (604 ff.); we know nothing ahead of time (617–620);

Chorus has in mind the δεινότης of whoever buried Polynices (95). For him, the first three stanzas of the ode are simply a series of examples (97). He ultimately asserts that according to his interpretation the first stasimon "has a very close relevance" to the rest of the play, but in summarizing this relevance he focuses entirely upon the fourth stanza (98).

[12] On the ambiguities of ὑψίπολις and ἄπολις see for example (besides the commentators) Bona and the discussion in *Sophocle, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* 29 (Geneva 1982) 31–32.

[13] On the irony here see Gellie 37.

[14] See for example Opstelten *passim*. Contrast Müller 87, who argues that the first stasimon reflects the standard view of archaic Greek poetry.

once a god leads us to ἄτη we mistake bad for good and soon meet disaster (620–625). Later in the play (1155–1172) the first Messenger moralizes on the disasters that he is about to describe: Creon's fate has demonstrated the fragility of human fortune; a life with high rank but without common pleasures is no life at all. His moralizing closely resembles the programmatic view put forward by Solon in the first book of Herodotus.[15]

In the first stasimon the Chorus does admit that man has found no escape from death (361–362 Αἴδα . . . φεῦξιν) and thus, like Solon (*fr.* 13.57–60 West) and Pindar (*Pythian* 3.55–62), sets limits to medicine in particular and the power of mortals in general. But similarity only emphasises the overarching difference. The prevailing spirit of Solon *fr.* 13 is gloom. Doctors can sometimes heal mortals (61–62), but their power is at best limited (58 τοῖς οὐδὲν ἔπεστι τέλος), they often fail (59–60), and nothing can save us from the δῶρα θεῶν, be these good or bad (63–64). *Pythian* 3 warns the reader throughout not to hope for too much: do not long for that which is not at hand (19 ff., 59 ff.). Suffering dominates life: the wise man makes the best of it, while the fool cannot bear his troubles with dignity (80–83).

But Sophocles is not preaching mortal transience. Man is παντοπόρος· ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδέν ἔρχεται | τὸ μέλλον (360–361). If *only* (μόνον 362) an escape from death itself is beyond him, the emphasis is on the "only." Inevitable mortality serves as a foil not for what man cannot, but for all the other things that man can do. The tone is overwhelmingly positive and optimistic. When the fourth stanza does introduce darker issues a brief, but clearly transitional passage (365–367) marks the change in tone and separates the warnings of 367 ff. from the rest of the ode. Still, when the first three stanzas build up a grand vision of what man can do, they show us what we stand to lose if we yield to our baser instincts. The brighter the light of 332–364, the darker the shadows of 365–375.

The optimism of the first stasimon poses a problem. We can, of course, throw up our hands and simply deny that the Chorus has anything in mind at all.[16] If, however, the Chorus is thinking throughout of

[15] Compare Solon's choices of the happiest mortals and his advice to Croesus not to count any man happy until his death at Herod. 1.30 ff.

[16] E.g., Pohlenz 202; Linforth 198: "in the account of man's achievements we can safely say that there is no overt reference to anyone in particular. No one in the play has

the person who buried Polynices, then the grand praise of the first three stanzas is at best extraneous. The Chorus does not admire the person who buried Polynices. The Chorus in the *Antigone* should, like the Chorus at Aeschylus *Choeph.* 585 ff., stress man's arrogance, and they don't. One scholar suggested that the opening stanzas of the ode are "in effect, a long concessive clause" that lead up to the caveats of the final stanza.[17] But while Greek lyric poetry regularly undercuts triumph by recollections of mortality, it does not praise its villains. Greek Choruses simply do not celebrate those whom they unequivocally condemn.[18]

We can, of course, stress the ambiguity of δεινός, and reinterpret the whole stasimon in a gloomy light.[19] Or we can cut 332–364 adrift from the rest of the play, labelling it a piece on man's cunning and not looking too closely at its contents.[20] But both expedients are problematic, for we either minimize the obviously positive elements within the ode[21] or ignore 332–364 as a whole.[22] In either case the first stasimon would be more effective as a fragment than as part of the play.

INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

If the first stasimon's relationship to the rest of the play is problematic, its relationship to intellectual currents of contemporary Athens is more straightforward. Clearly Protagoras, or at least Protagorean

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shown any inventiveness or ingenuity such as are here described"; see also Kamerbeek 13.

[17] Linforth 199, echoed by Segal 441 n. 3.

[18] Whitman 91 argues that the whole stasimon is really about Antigone. This allows the opening stanzas to have their proper positive force, as Antigone is, in the context of the play as a whole, worthy of praise. The Chorus does not, however, support Antigone late in the play, and in any event has no idea who the criminal is. The ode, interpreted in this way, is ironic, for the Chorus thus praises something very different from what they think they are praising. This leaves unanswered, however, the question of what the Chorus actually thinks it is saying at the time.

[19] E.g., Ronnet; Nussbaum 73 ff.

[20] See n. 11 above.

[21] Nussbaum 73 forthrightly observes that "the surface text of the lyric" is positive, but argues that as we consider the play as a whole "we undercut this happy story."

[22] Thus Reinhardt, Knox, and Winnington-Ingram make little or no attempt to relate the first stasimon to the play as a whole. See however Whitman, who does try to reconcile the first three stanzas with the fourth; above, n. 18.

thinking, lies behind this "Ode to Man." The emphasis on man and lack of emphasis on the gods, the sense of human progress, and the stress on political skill all point to Protagoras.[23]

Furthermore, Protagoras and ideas of government were particularly germane in the late 440s. *Antigone* was probably performed in 442,[24] and the Athenian colony at Thurii was probably founded in 443. While the precise date is uncertain, the colony was certainly established in the 440s.[25]

But Thurii was not merely a recent event. It was something different, and stood out. Unlike Athenian colonies in the Chersonnese or the Aegean, Thurii was not an Athenian cleruchy aimed at ridding the city of excess pouplation and extending Athenian authority.[26] Thurii was a panhellenic enterprise.[27] Athenian citizens represented only a minority of settlers, comprising perhaps a tenth of the population and dominating one of ten *phylai* in the new city.[28] Its foundation was a prominent cultural event, and attracted not only the impecunious. Herodotus the historian and the famous city planner Hippodamus of Miletus took part.[29] Diodorus tells us (12.11) that the Athenians chose Charondas as νομοθέτης, but Heraclides of Pontus stated that Protagoras drew up the νόμοι for Thurii.[30] At the same time Hippodamus of

[23] See Morrison 13–14; Burton 100–101.

[24] On the date see Kamerbeek 36; Ehrenberg (1954) 135–136. The main foundation for this particular date is the story, recorded at the end of Hypothesis 1, that Sophocles was elected general in 440 because of the *Antigone*. Generals were elected before the Great Dionysia (thus 440 is excluded), and Euripides won first prize in 441. A causal connection between the performance of the *Antigone* and a Sophoclean στρατηγία may be doubted, but a temporal connection, suggesting the causal connection, is more likely, and the story does provide reasonable evidence that the *Antigone* was performed shortly before 440. On this anecdote note the skeptical discussion of Lefkowitz 81–83.

[25] On Thurii see Kagan 154–169 with n. 19 for further references.

[26] On these see for example Meiggs 260–262.

[27] Ehrenberg (1948) argued that the panhellenism only disguised an imperialistic action (on which see Kagan 162–163), but the panhellenic aspects of the colony are clear enough.

[28] On the ten tribes of Thurii see Diodorus 12.11.3; Kagan 163.

[29] So Hesychius *s.v.* Ἱπποδάμου νέμησις (= 39 A 3 DK): οὗτος δὲ ἦν καὶ ὁ μετοικήσας εἰς Θουριακοὺς Μιλήσιος ὤν. Cf. also the epithet Θούριος, applied to him by the scholiast on Aristoph. *Equites* 327 (= 39 A 4 DK).

[30] See Protagoras 80 A 1 DK (= Diog. Laert. 9.50; Heraclides Ponticus *fr.* 150 Wehrli): Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Ποντικὸς . . . καὶ Θουρίοις νόμους γράψαι φησὶν αὐτόν (i.e., Protagoras).

Miletus, though best known for his city planning,[31] also had ideas about civic organization. In particular, he felt that laws should constantly be improved, and proposed that citizens be rewarded for civic innovation. A radical idea, conflicting with conservative belief in stability, it later drew sharp criticism from Aristotle.[32]

The details, though obscure and even contradictory, combine to form a single consistent picture. Faced with the problem of organizing a new kind of colony, one that would not simply mimic the standard cleruchies, constitutional theory had a practical importance in the late 440s. Once the constitution of Thurii became a matter of public policy, Athenian citizens must have debated the issue among themselves. The constitution of Thurii, with colonists from throughout the Greek world, must have been a prominent topic, and not simply in Athens. Traditions may differ as to who was responsible for what, but all imply that the constitution of Thurii intrigued the leading intellects of the time[33] and had caught the public eye.

The *Antigone* was performed when Thurii was no more than a few years old. The Athenians who awarded it the first prize had themselves voted to establish the colony and had no doubt discussed, if only privately, the form that it would take. The constitutional debate in Herodotus 3, which probably dates from the 440s,[34] may likewise reflect not only a popular interest in political theory but a sudden upsurge in such interest.[35]

Certainly the first stasimon, with its emphasis on man, on his abilities and on his political skills, evoked ideas that were in the air and to which an Athenian audience of the time may well have been especially sensitive. But the Chorus did not first raise the question of how one should and should not run a city, nor does politics play a major role in

[31] On which see Ferdinando Castagnoli, *Orthogonal Town Planning in Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971) 65–72.

[32] Aristotle *Politics* 1268b; on νόμοι ἀκίνητοι see Braun (1953).

[33] See for example Muir.

[34] So J. E. Powell, *The History of Herodotus* (Cambridge 1939) 36; J. A. S. Evans, "Notes on the Debate of the Persian Grandees in Herodotus," *QUCC* 36 (1981) 84. Certainly if *Antigone* 905–920 is genuine, Sophocles is echoing the story of Intaphernes' wife (Herodotus 3.119), which follows closely on the constitutional debate (3.80–82). This would suggest that this section of Herodotus was well-known at the time when the *Antigone* was performed.

[35] Morrison stresses the possible connection between the constitutional debate in Herodotus and Protagoras.

the first three stanzas (the ἀστυνόμοι ὀργαί at 354–355 are the only reference to politics). The Chorus describes an overview of man's achievements, and in this scheme politics is only a single part. In the previous scene Creon has outlined in general terms the principles that he plans to put into effect (175–191). Thurii and Protagoras had, however, temporarily at least, associated politics and "progress," and this association helps link these stanzas with the action of the play. Creon asserts that he will pursue the best interests of the state fearlessly (178–181) and that he will place no personal feelings or attachments before his responsibilities as ruler (182–191)—this view, in which the state takes absolute precedence, carries the idea of the πόλις to its logical conclusion. When the Chorus celebrates, in Protagorean terms, the achievements of man, Creon's ostentatiously selfless pose may not be the "subject" of the opening three stanzas, but it has provided the chorus with its point of departure.[36]

Nevertheless, if Creon's idealized principles suit political theorizing or rhapsodies on man, they do not suit Creon's work as a practicing ruler. His position proves untenable, brings out his own weaknesses, and provides a backdrop for the sad shift from reformer to tyrannical despot.

CREON

As the play proceeds Creon becomes progressively less flexible and more authoritarian, and ends as an unabashed tyrant, autocratic and deaf to good advice.[37] Already at 175 ff., thirteen lines into his first

[36] For others who have seen a possible connection between Creon and the Ode see for example Morrison 13–14; Goheen 53–56 does emphasize that the ode supports, though in a qualified way, Creon's position, but follows the standard view and connects the beginning of the ode with the burial (54). A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*[3] (Göttingen 1972) 196–197, suggests that the Ode has more to do with Creon than with the person who buried Polynices, but does not go into details. He probably means that the fourth stanza applies more accurately to Creon, but he does not distinguish between what the Chorus thinks and what is in fact true (that Creon *will* turn out to be the villain of the fourth stanza). Segal 152 observes that the ode "seems . . . to support the position of Creon, who begins as the embodiment of the secular rationalism of the Sophistic Enlightenment," but goes on to conclude that "nothing could be further from the truth," pointing out that "the subsequent action negates nearly all the achievements which the ode celebrates."

[37] See Podlecki (1966). Creon does have his defenders: e.g., William M. Calder III,

speech, Creon reveals an attitude well suited to the tyrant: not the welfare of the state but his own fitness to rule is the primary issue. Already he is perhaps just a bit too self-assertive.[38]

But Creon makes a good showing in this speech. A century later Demosthenes, attacking Aeschines as venal and corrupt, would contrast the absolute unselfishness that Creon proclaims at 175–190.[39] Influential readers of Sophocles have accepted a rather idealized picture of the fifth-century *polis*, but the justice of Aristides or the incorruptibility of Pericles were perceived as exceptional at the time, and were a major source of their authority.[40] The *gnome* at 175–177 restates a saying of Bias of Priene, one of the Seven Sages: ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει.[41] At Thucydides 2.60 Pericles expresses the same general idea as Creon does at 178–190: the state is the foundation for all benefits to its citizens, and is therefore far more important than any one individual.[42] Even refusing to bury Polynices is not, at this point, obviously improper.[43] In setting public good above personal relations Creon follows the best principles of the time. He adopts an enlightened

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"Sophokles' Political Tragedy, *Antigone*," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 389–407; James C. Hogan, "The Protagonists of the *Antigone*," *Arethusa* 5 (1972) 93–100.

[38] Winnington-Ingram 124–125.

[39] Demosthenes *De falsa legatione* 247. Some have attacked Creon's speech: A. J. Podlecki, "Sophoclean Athens," in *Panathenaia* (Kansas 1979) 59, calls it a "pompous and rather long-winded statement" that is intended to show us from the start what kind of man Creon is. But Demosthenes' use of the speech should warn us against laying too much stress on any negative elements in it. Demosthenes provides strong testimony that the sentiments expressed here would have seemed admirable to Athenians at large. On this see Knox (1964) 181 n. 52 and his essay "Sophocles and the Polis" in *Sophocle, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* 29 (Geneva 1982) 15 with n. 14.

[40] See Knox (1964) 84–86, who argues that no one would openly put personal relationships above the public interest. An aristocrat (such as Cimon), however, had more in common with members of his class in other Greek states than with most of his fellow Athenians. That is what gives point to the story of Cimon's aid at the battle of Tanagra (Plut. *Cimon* 17). To such a person the *polis*-centered nationalism of Creon would have appeared harsh and vulgar. At the other end of the scale, servants of the state clearly looked to their own interests. Note the contrast between Themistocles and Aristides in Plut. *Aristides* 2.5–6; see also Oedipus at *OT* 249–251. The exceptional probity of Pericles (Thuc. 2.65) says as much about his colleagues as about Pericles. For the less than idealized reality of fifth-century Athenian politics see W. Robert Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens* (Princeton 1971).

[41] Quoted by Aristotle *Eth. N.* 5.3 (= 1130a1).

[42] Compare Democritus 68 B 252 DK.

[43] On this see Rosivach.

position and this, not the cunning of whoever buried Polynices, inspires the opening of the following stasimon.

The constitutional debate in the third book of Herodotus offers a measure against which Creon's development may be gauged. Otanes sums up his case against monarchy with the following words (3.80.5): τὰ δὲ δὴ μέγιστα ἔρχομαι ἐρέων· νόμαιά τε κινέει πάτρια καὶ βιᾶται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους. Creon has not, by the time he relaxes his inflexible stand and tries to rescue Antigone, violated any women, but he has condemned at least one person (Antigone) to death ἄκριτος, without a formal trial, and he has altered τοὺς καθεστῶτας νόμους (1113–1114, also 191). He thus fulfills, generally speaking, the role that Otanes gloomily assigns to the tyrant.[44]

But Creon the tyrant becomes prominent only later in the play. In the first *epeisodion* Creon illustrates a very different side of ὁ μόναρχος. Darius, who argues on behalf of monarchy (Herod. 3.82), speaks third and wins the debate, convincing a majority of the seven conspirators (though not Herodotus or Herodotus' audience).[45] According to Darius, both oligarchy and democracy evolve into a monarchy.

Creon illustrates both paths to monarchy. Oligarchy degenerates into murderous *stasis*, and *stasis* between two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, has just brought a hostile army to the very gates of Thebes, leaving Creon as master of the city. Democracy, on the other hand, does not lead to *stasis*, but to κακότης, corruption, and to φιλίαι ἰσχυραί, "strong friendships," i.e., the kind of relationships which allow individuals to circumvent the law for their own advantage. When early in the play Creon ostentatiously sets state above family and friends he reacts against this, choosing Aristides (or at least the public image of Aristides) rather than Themistocles as his model.[46] Creon, in this high-minded and idealistic pose, could have illustrated the idealized monarch that Darius portrays. The resemblance is perhaps not fortui-

[44] Note Pentheus in the *Bacchae*, who threatens the mysterious stranger with instant death (239–241). He does not rape anyone, but his prurient inclination to spy on the maenads ultimately brings about his destruction. Most strikingly, though Dionysus has just arrived in Thebes, Teiresias defends Dionysiac religion as a πάτριος παραδοχή (201). Later the Chorus speaks as if Pentheus, who is resisting a new religion, were attacking established custom (890–896, with Dodds's note).

[45] On Herodotus' view of *tyrannis* see M. Stahl, "Tyrannis und das Problem der Macht," *Hermes* 111 (1983) 202–220.

[46] See n. 40 above.

tous, and Sophocles may well have had the Herodotean passage in mind.[47]

The classic tyrant bends the νόμοι to suit his own pleasure.[48] But Creon does not evolve into a tyrant by crudely pursuing his physical appetites. His standards are too austere, too unbending. More of a νομοθέτης than a νομοφύλαξ,[49] he declares the state supreme, more important than fear or any personal affection (178–190). These, he declares, are the kind of νόμοι by which he will make the city prosper (191 τοιοῖσδ' ἐγὼ νόμοισι τήνδ' αὔξω πόλιν). When Creon decrees that Polynices be left unburied he is following the principles enunciated at 178 ff.(see ἀδελφὰ τῶνδε at 192). Self-consciously interpreting and altering the νόμοι of the state,[50] he is a different kind of tyrant: the man who trusts too much in his own wits.[51]

Protagoras was certainly a major force behind, and had perhaps made himself synonymous with, political theory at this period. From the start Creon declares that he will as ruler aggressively embrace the ἄριστα βουλεύματα (179). The problem of running a *polis* remains a major theme throughout the play. In a long harangue directed at Haemon Creon declares that a ruler should be obeyed whether he is right or wrong (666–667). While πειθαρχία preserves a city (676–677), nothing is worse than ἀναρχία (672 ff.). When Haemon replies (683 ff.), he argues that his father would govern more effectively if he were more flexible. The nouns εὐβουλία and δυσβουλία, for example, appear four times in the *Antigone* and nowhere else in Sophocles.[52] The

[47] *Antigone* 905–920 effectively prove this, if we accept them as genuine. At least one other small but suggestive piece of evidence might imply that Sophocles had the Persian debate in mind: the simple phrase ἄριστα βουλεύματα turns out to occur at Herod. 3.81.3, Soph. *Antig.* 179, and nowhere else in classical literature. Podlecki 365–367 argues for other verbal parallels betwen the Persian debate and the *Antigone*.

[48] This is presumably what Otanes has in mind at Herod. 3.80.5. Euripides is more explicit in the *Supplices*, where the tyrant does not maintain νόμοι | κοινοί (430–431), but kills the energetic young men (442–446) and forces free-born women to serve his pleasure (452–455). On the tyrant abusing young women see also Eur. *Suppl.* 945–948.

[49] So Jebb on 177.

[50] See in particular 1113–1114.

[51] See for example Theseus' stinging rebuke of Adrastus at Eur. *Suppl.* 216–219. Note also the problematic references in the *Bacchae* (266–271, and esp. 424–432) that seem to assimilate Pentheus to a kind of sophistic tyrant, when in fact he shows very little intellectual self-consciousness at all.

[52] δυσβουλίαν, 95, 1269; εὐβουλία, 1050, 1098. The only other compound of εὐβουλ- or δυσβουλ- is εὔβουλον, *OC* 947.

choice of terms is suggestive, for, if Plato is to be believed, Protagoras summarized his subject matter as εὐβουλία, and the sophist may have become particularly associated with this general term.[53]

The Chorus supports Creon for some time: in the second stasimon (582 ff.) they at once condemn and lament Antigone. In their eyes (781 ff.) *eros* compels Haemon to support Antigone. Creon treats the watchman roughly, and certainly gives us a taste of his later harshness, but his behavior should not be overemphasized. The Athenian audience, full of veterans, knew that punishment is swift, sure and necessary when guards fall short in their job. Certainly Creon's behavior towards the Watchman at 223 ff. is harsh, and he quickly assumes the basest of motives in others,[54] but these actions mainly prepare the way for Creon the tyrant. When the Chorus sings the first *stasimon* and echoes Protagorean ideas about government they associate Creon, the innovative and high-minded ruler, with the progressive ideas current at the time.

But of course the play does not end after the first stasimon. Disaster awaits Creon. The optimism of this ode intensifies the final reversal. But if 332 ff. point to Creon there is no reason to interpret the positive tone away, or to downplay any part of the ode: the brighter the initial outlook, the harder the ultimate fall.[55]

The first *stasimon* moves in at least two directions at once. First, the ode picks up and develops the theme of politics, recapitulating the overall development of the preceding scene. If Creon attacks in general terms the specific problem of governing a city, the Chorus sets politics against the general intellectual background of the time, associating the (at least ostensibly) high-minded ruler with such progressive thinkers as Protagoras. After three positive stanzas cataloging man's successes the final stanza, with its darker tone, recalls the human failings that can attack political success. The shift from triumph to danger parallels the shift from Creon's initial idealistic speech to the revelation

[53] So in Plato *Protagoras* 318E: τὸ δὲ μάθημά ἐστιν εὐβουλία περὶ τῶν οἰκείων, ὅπως ἂν ἄριστα τὴν αὑτοῦ οἰκίαν διοικοῖ, (319A) καὶ περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως, ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν.

[54] See for example Goheen 14–19; Winnington-Ingram 126.

[55] The reader of a Greek tragedy must bear all the components of a tragedy in his or her mind at once; it is all too easy to homogenize characters, to flatten out development within the play, and undercut the drama. A unified and consistent play can present the same objects to its audience from widely varying points of view.

that someone has defied Creon's decree. At the same time, however, the conclusion of the ode foreshadows Creon's ultimate status as a pariah within the city. The shift from the idealistic to the dark points to Creon's own development within the play.

According to this interpretation the entire first *stasimon* contributes to the play as a whole. But if this interpretation integrates the first *stasimon* into the play it also raises questions about Sophocles and intellectual currents of his time.

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