

Τε καί AND κοπίς IN SOPHOCLES'  
ANTIGONE 602

The conjecture of κοπίς for κόνις in line 602 of the *Antigone* has caused as much stir and confusion as any textual critic may rightfully expect from his labors. Recently, Lloyd-Jones, in an article commendable for the solutions it offers for many problems in the ode, supported the conjecture with what he finds a stronger argument:

Such an argument arises from a consideration of the last line of the stanza ... ΑΒ τε καί C. But I know of no such instance in which A is the name of a material object (or even the name of a material object used figuratively, as κόνις or κοπίς is used here) and B and C are names of feminine abstracts readily personified, like λόγον ἄνοια, or names of feminine daemonic beings used in a quasi abstract sense, like φρενῶν Ἐρινός ... The two latter expressions are not, then, linked to κόνις or κοπίς by means of τε καί but stand in apposition to it; the τε and καί serve to link them together.<sup>1)</sup>

He would argue that, since the divinities of the underworld are more often associated with instruments of blood, it is likely that the two feminines are in apposition to κοπίς and not to κόνις. Poetic tastes change. Over fifty years ago Platt pontificated: "If these words be an explanation of either κόνις or κοπίς Sophocles is so bad a poet that it were waste of time to linger over him;"<sup>2)</sup> but Gerhard Müller in his extensive and valuable treatment of the play agrees with Lloyd-Jones and gives his argument "volle Zustimmung."<sup>3)</sup>

I, at least, have not been able to find, even with the help of Ellendt's *Lexicon Sophocleum* and the list of abstracts in A. A. Long's *Language and Thought in Sophocles*, any other juxtaposition of material object and feminine abstract and feminine demonic

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1) "Notes on Sophocles' Antigone," *CQ* 51 (1957) 17-19.

2) "Sophoclea," *CQ* 4 (1910) 249-51. Platt was, it should be remarked, a defender of the conjecture and it was in this article that he secured a place for κοπίς in the tragic vocabulary by pointing out its occurrence in a fragment of Euripides.

3) *Sophokles: Antigone* (Heidelberg 1967) 143.

being. Neither do I believe that a successful end to that search is essential to the salvation of the manuscript reading, or at any rate, the refutation of the new argument for the conjecture. It seems to me that in setting the requirements of the above passage Lloyd-Jones may have come dangerously close to defining the object he seeks out of existence, if not semantically then practically. It is perhaps too much to ask that the parallel be precisely a material object and the beings with which it is in apposition – if indeed they are in apposition with the word which precedes – be either “names of feminine abstracts readily personified” or “names of feminine daemonic beings used in a quasi abstract sense.” One might also think of relaxing the requirements placed on the first element (A), specifically, whether it must be an inanimate object or just an object of a different order than the demonic being and the abstract.

If these relaxations are allowed, the search becomes easier. There are in fact instances in which feminine entities of the same sort as *λόγου ἄνοια* and *φρενῶν Ἔρινός* are linked together with a third element in the form AB *τε καί* C, but in which B and C cannot be taken in apposition to A, as *Ajax* 1388–90:

τοιγάρ σφ' Ὀλύμπου τοῦδ' ὁ πρεσβέων πατήρ  
 μνήμων τ' Ἔρινός καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη  
 κακὸς κακῶς φθείρειαν ...

Surely *πατήρ* (A) is not to be construed as in apposition to *Ἔρινός* and *Δίκη* (B *τε καί* C). Just as the point of the passage in the *Ajax* is that three different divinities will carry out the revenge, so the point of the passage in the *Antigone* is that three agents, again each with a different share in the causality, will accomplish the same destruction. The mortal, inanimate agent in the *Antigone* can still be either the bloody knife of the underworld or the dust on the body of Polynices.