# ANTILABE IN SOPHOCLEAN KOMMOI[1])

It is generally recognised that in passages of lyric dialogue in Sophocles which involve strophic responsion, the responsion extends to *ἀντιλαβή* as well as to the metre. That is to say, where there is a change of speaker in the strophe, there will be a change of speaker at the corresponding point in the antistrophe also[2]).

For example, in the Kommatic Parodos of *Electra* (121–250), the first strophic pair (121–136 = 137–152) shows a strophe divided into two equal periods[3]) sung in turn by the Chorus and Electra, while the antistrophe shows precisely the same division. The second and third strophic pairs of this Parodos are similar, in that there is in the strophe a single division of the stanza between the Chorus and Electra which is exactly matched by the *ἀντιλαβή* in the antistrophe[4]). The same principle holds true also, where the division of parts is more complex. In the third Kommos of *Ajax* (879–960; strophe 879–914 = antistrophe 925–960)[5]), the first long period of the strophe (879–890, mainly dochmiac), is sung by the Chorus; in the second period (891–899) Tecmessa's interjections are answered by iambic trimeters from the Chorus; Tecmessa herself then speaks a trimeter (896) followed by a bacchiac from the Chorus which Tecmessa answers with two further trimeters. The whole of the third period (900–903) is sung by the Chorus; in the fourth, Tecmessa and the Chorus share four iambic trimeters, and the fifth (908–914, mainly dochmiac, with dactylic hemiepes and Reizianum clausula) is again sung by the Chorus. This complex pattern of *ἀντιλαβή* is seen to be exactly matched in the antistrophe, where the Chorus and Electra both sing precisely the same parts as they had sung in the strophe.

1) For the purposes of this article I include under the term 'Kommos', both the *ἀμοιβαῖον* and the *μέλος ἀπὸ σκηνῆς*.

2) See e.g. Pohlsander (Metrical Studies in the Lyrics of Sophocles, (Leiden, 1964) p. 184–5: "Change of speakers, always strictly governed by strophic responsion ...".

3) Pohlsander, op.cit. p. 46–7.

4) The division of parts in these second and third pairs is not equal, as it was in the first pair; nevertheless each antistrophe is divided at the same point as its corresponding strophe.

5) Tecmessa has ten iambic trimeters 915–924, and thirteen 961–973; these are of course not part of the pattern of strophic responsion.

It would be tedious to analyse in detail all the passages of lyric dialogue in Sophocles to accumulate further evidence; a glance at the text will show that the situation outlined above is the prevailing pattern. Indeed, the principle of correspondence of *ἀντιλαβή* is evidently, for the extant works of Sophocles, an inviolable rule.

Occasionally, however, the parts are reversed between strophe and antistrophe. Those parts of the strophe sung by voice A are in the antistrophe sung by voice B, and vice-versa. Thus, for example, in *Oedipus Coloneus* 510–548, the first strophe is divided between the Chorus and Oedipus, while in the antistrophe Oedipus sings the Chorus' parts of the strophe and the Chorus those of Oedipus. It must be emphasized here, that not only does the principle of responsion of *ἀντιλαβή* hold good in these cases, but, more importantly, there is absolute consistency in the division of parts. If voice B begins in the antistrophe by singing the strophic part of voice A, then he or she will continue to do so throughout the antistrophe, singing *all* the parts, and *only* those parts, which in the strophe were sung by voice A.

Of course, in passages involving only two voices, and given the fact of responsion of *ἀντιλαβή*, this is inevitable. If B sings A's parts, then A must sing B's. What does not seem to have been noticed, however, is that these principles of antilabic correspondence and consistency in the division of parts, extend also to those passages involving three voices (the maximum ever employed by Sophocles in lyric dialogue)[6]. To state the rule schematically: in duets, if we have in the strophe voices ABAB, we will have in the antistrophe *either* ABAB *or* BABA, but *not* e.g. ABBA; in three-voice Kommoi, if we have e.g. ABCABC in the strophe, the antistrophe will have *either* ABCABC *or* e.g. BACBAC or ACBACB or CABCAB or the like, but *not* e.g. BACACB. (There are also many less complex examples, such as ABAB=ACAC. For example, in the third strophic pair of the Kommos in *Ajax* at 348–429, (viz. strophe 393b–411 = antistrophe 412–429) the bulk of both stanzas is sung by Ajax, but in the antistrophe the Chorus sings the part sung by Tecmessa in the strophe). In a more complex example, the second strophic

6) Except in *Electra* 1398ff., where Clytemnestra contributes to the strophe from offstage, and Orestes enters at the beginning of the antistrophe to sing his mother's part – necessarily, for he has just killed her. But the division of parts in this Kommos remains problematical; see further, below.

pair of the Parodos of *Oedipus Coloneus* (176–187 = 192–206), the antistrophe opens with two ionic verses from the Chorus, followed by two choriambic-enoplians shared between Oedipus and the Chorus, the latter then continuing with a telesillean. Then Antigone sings two glyconics (197–198, corresponding to 182–183 in the strophe) and after Oedipus' interjection *ἰώ μοί μοι* two more glyconic cola are given to Antigone. Oedipus answers with a pherecratean, and the stanza is closed by the Chorus, who sings the last four cola. This pattern is exactly paralleled by the strophe. It is true that a lacuna must be assumed between 183 and 184 in the strophe, but there is no difficulty in this. Strophic responsion is certain, and consistency in the division of parts between the three voices in both strophe and antistrophe is also clearly established from the extant text. Oedipus, Antigone and the Chorus all sing in the antistrophe the same parts that they sang in the strophe[7]).

Likewise, in the final Kommos of the same play (1670–1750) the first strophe and antistrophe are divided between Antigone, the Chorus and Ismene (1670–1696 = 1697–1723). Once again, a lacuna must be assumed, this time of two verses of Ismene's part in the antistrophe, but this minor disturbance of the text does not affect the question of the division of parts, which corresponds exactly in both stanzas. Certainly, the indication of Ismene as speaker at 1715 is not in the MSS, but the words: *ὦ τάλαινα, τίς ἄρα με πότμος – ἔτ' ἀμμένει σέ τ', ὦ φίλα, [τὰς] πατρὸς ὧδ' ἐρήμας*; could be spoken by no-one else, and no modern editor to my knowledge has disputed the attribution.

The next strophic pair, and the last of the play (1724–1736 = 1737–1750) has a strophe divided between Antigone and Ismene[8]). The antistrophe corresponds in point of *ἀντιλαβή*, but here the parts are sung by the Chorus and Antigone. The

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7) If Hermann's transposition of 198 *ἰώ μοί μοι* is not accepted, strophic responsion can still be maintained simply by rearranging the lacuna, as e.g. Dain, who inserts *ἰώ μοί μοι* after *ἀμαυρῷ* (182) and marks a further lacuna of 3 verses after *κώλῳ, πάτερ, ᾧ σ' ἄγω*; or Jebb, who marks a lacuna of three verses after 181 and a further single verse after 183, giving *ἕπεο μὰν* etc. in responsion to *γεραὸν ἐς χέρα* etc. (200–201) rather than to 197–8. Whatever arrangement is adopted, however, it does not affect the division of parts. Even the fact that the antistrophic *ἰώ μοί μοι* is given by the MSS to Antigone is not material, since, wherever one puts it, the corresponding part of the strophe is *in lacuna*.

8) Antigone and the Chorus, according to the certainly erroneous attribution in LA.

Chorus throughout the antistrophe sings Antigone's parts of the strophe, while Antigone takes Ismene's part. There is one minor problem here. At 1725:

*AN.* ἵμερος ἔχει με *IΣ.* τίς;

is given by the MSS to correspond to 1738.

*XO.* καὶ πάρος ἀπεφεύγετον

This is metrically impossible, so that it is certain, quite apart from the failure of antilabic responsion, that something has gone wrong. The simplest solution is either:

1725 *AN.* ἵμερος ἔχει μέ τις[9])
1738 *XO.* καὶ πάρος ἀπεφύγετον (Wilamowitz)
or
1725 *AN.* ἵμερος ἔχει με *IΣ.* τίς;
1738 *XO.* καὶ πάρος ἀπέφυγε *AN.* τί; (Jebb & Dain)[10])

Having identified these principles of antilabic responsion and consistency in the division of parts, we may now look at some other kommatic passages where these rules appear not to operate and consider the nature of the problems which arise there. In the Kommos at *Ajax* 348–429, the second strophic pair (364–378 = 379–393 a) is divided between Ajax, Tecmessa and the Chorus in the strophe, corresponding, it would seem, to Ajax, the Chorus and Tecmessa in the antistrophe. Ajax sings the same parts in both, while Tecmessa and the Chorus exchange parts. 368 (Tec.) = 383 (Chor). and 377–8 (Chor.) = 392–93 a (Tec.) However, 371 is given by the majority of MSS to the Chorus, and most modern editors have followed this attribution[11]), while the corresponding verse, 386, is also given, unanimously, to the Chorus. Consistency of part-division is thus disturbed, and in order to restore it, either 371 or 386 must be given to Tecmessa. There is no authority for tampering with 386, but on the strophic verse we read (in Pearson's *appar. crit.*): 371 *Tecmessae tribuunt rec.* We should therefore

9) We might suppose that an accidental dittography of τις gave rise to the corruption; μέ τις τις could easily lead to με *IΣ.* τίς.

10) Cf. Pohlsander, op. cit., p. 90: "Strophe and antistrophe throughout follow the same pattern of ἀντιλαβή. Yet Pohlsander appears to countenance Pearson's

1725 *AN.* ἵμερος ἔχει με *IΣ.* τίς; ⟨φράσον⟩
1738 *XO.* καὶ πάρος ἀπεφύγετον *AN.* ⟨τὸ τί;⟩

as an adequate answer to this demand, whereas it is clearly wrong.

11) Blaydes and Dain are exceptions. Kamerbeek hesitates, but appears to come down in the end in favour of the Chorus.

follow this lead, and confidently assign the verse to Tecmessa[12]).

The Kommos at *Oedipus Tyrannus* 649–696 begins with a strophe (649–667)[13]), shared between the Chorus and Oedipus, corresponding to an antistrophe (678–696) divided, apparently, between the Chorus, Jocasta and Oedipus. There is no problem with the first part of the stanzas; the Chorus sings the same part in both strophe and antistrophe and Jocasta in the antistrophe takes over Oedipus' part of the strophe (680–651, and parts of 683 = 655). This pattern is maintained as far as the choral dochmiacs (656/7 = 685/6), but is then disturbed by the fact that the two following iambic trimeters (658/9 = 687/8) are given to Oedipus in both stanzas, whereas Jocasta should have the antistrophic lines, if consistency is to be maintained. This problem can be answered by a different strophic division of the whole. Pearson and Jebb, have already divided the text into two strophic pairs, viz.: str. α 649–659; str. β 660–667; = ant. α 678–688; ant. β 690–696, but this is only part of the answer, since it still leaves the iambics of Oedipus within the first strophic pair. The solution is of course simply to exclude these two pairs of trimeters from strophic responsion; that is, strophe α runs from 649 to 657, ending with the dochmiacs sung by the Chorus; then we have the two non-strophic iambic trimeters (658–9) by Oedipus, followed by strophe β (660–667, sung wholly by the Chorus). This corresponds to antistrophe α (678–686) followed by the two trimeters from Oedipus (687–8) and antistrophe β by the Chorus (690–696). It is true, as Pohlsander observes[14]), that "a pair of iambic trimeters seems to be a favourite as concluding period", but there are occasions when trimeters are "mesodic"[15]), and a strophe often ends in dochmiacs without clausula[16]).

12) Those who have given the verse to the Chorus have generally done so for an inadequate, subjective reason. Cf. Jebb *ad loc*: "Just after so violent a rebuke, the timid Tecmessa would scarcely venture on praying her 'master' to be 'sane';". There is no weight whatever in this argument. The words, in my opinion, suit the despairing Tecmessa at least as well as, in Jebb's opinion, they suit the Chorus, and the principle of consistency of partdivision, supported as it is by some MS authority, must certainly take precedence over such subjectivity.

13) According to Pohlsander's analysis, op. cit., p. 99–100.

14) Op. cit., p. 187.

15) E.g. *Antigone* 1326–7; cf. also *O.C.* 1457–61 = 1472–1476.

16) E.g. *O.C.* 1485 = 1499; *Antigone* 1311 = 1332; ibid. 1325 = 1346; *Philoctetes* 402 = 518.

At *Oedipus Coloneus* 833–843, a strophe divided between Oedipus, the Chorus and Creon, corresponds to the antistrophe at 876–886 which shows exactly the same division of parts[17]). In the antistrophe however, 882, which should be an iambic trimeter (= 839) shows sings of textual disturbance. L has *ταῦτ' ἂν in rasura*, perhaps for *τ' ἂν* or *γ' ἂν* (so Enger), and part of the verse is missing altogether. The consensus of the MSS (apart from the evidence of variation in L) gives:

⟨*v – v –*⟩ *KP. Ζεὺς ταῦτ' ἂν εἰδείη, σὺ δ' οὔ.*

Here again[18]) a textual corruption has brought in its train disturbance of antilabic responsion. Amid the various speculative attempts to fill the lacuna, one thing remains clear; Creon's part in the antistrophe must be of equal length with his part in the strophe. We must therefore divide the text either:

*v – v – Ζεὺς· KP. ταῦτ' ἂν εἰδείη, σὺ δ' οὔ*

(so Hermann), or:

*v – v – v KP. Ζεύς γ' ἂν εἰδείη, σὺ δ' οὔ*

(Enger, Campbell, Jebb, Dain; *Ζεὺς ἂν κ.τ.λ.* Hartung, Dindorf). Only thus can correspondence with the strophe, where Creon's part reads: *μὴ 'πίτασσ' ἃ μὴ κρατεῖς* and which is certainly sound, be maintained.

It remains only to consider that corrupt and confused Kommos at *Electra* 1398–1441[19]). First, the lacunae. Half a trimeter is certainly missing either in 1431 or 1432, where LA give:

*τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν; ΗΛ. οὗτος ἐκ προαστίου*
*χωρεῖ γεγηθώς – – –*[20]).

But if this order of words is to be retained, we must divide (with Kamerbeek and Dain):

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17) There is some minor confusion in the MSS on the attribution of parts in the strophe, but this is of no consequence. The sense demands that Reisig's correction be adopted, and the parts are certainly to be assigned as they are in e.g. Dain and Jebb.

18) See above on *O.C.* 1725/1738.

19) I have not considered the disputed strophic division of *Trachiniae* 971–1042, as it is not germane to the issue under discussion. Whatever strophic arrangement may be adopted there, all the alleged responding stanzas are spoken exclusively by Heracles.

20) This is retained by Blaydes; Campbell, and Jebb, who is not persuaded of strophic responsion in this Kommos, read: *τὸν ἄνδρα; ΗΛ. ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὗτος κτλ.* See also Jebb's appendix, p. 221–2.

*τὸν ἄνδρ'; ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὗτος; ΗΛ. ἐκ προαστίου*
*χωρεῖ γεγηθώς – υ – υ – υ –.*

Alternatively, we may rearrange the words, for which there is also some degree of MS support, and read (as Pearson does):

*τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν – υ; ΗΛ. – υ – υ –*
*χωρεῖ γεγηθὼς οὗτος ἐκ προαστίου.*

Whichever arrangement is adopted (I prefer the former as involving a more appropriate sense of urgency), the parts given to Electra and Orestes must correspond in length to their parts in the strophe (1411–12). Further, a lacuna of three verses must be assumed after 1427 to correspond to 1404–5 (Clytemnestra) and 1406 (Electra), and another, of a single trimeter, after 1429 to correspond to 1409. Even if one does not insist on strophic responsion throughout, the Kommos would be uniquely unbalanced without these lacunae, and they should be regarded as certain[21]).

There is again some confusion in the MSS as to the assignation of parts in the antistrophe. The first two trimeters (1422–3) are given to Electra, and Electra's question in 1426 *τέθνηκεν ἢ τάλαινα*; is given to Orestes, (as a statement of course). These issues can hardly be decided other than subjectively, but the text of 1423–4: *οὐδ' ἔχω λέγειν, 'Ορέστα, πῶς κυρεῖτε*, involving a prosaic indirect question, would be dull and weak in the extreme, and probably meaningless after the preceding words. How could Electra, after saying, "the hand drips blood from sacrifice to Ares", then continue with, "and I cannot tell how you have fared"? Erfurdt's *ψέγειν* does not wholly avoid this problem, indeed it may be thought to aggravate it. If Electra says "I cannot fault the deed", would she then continue with, "Orestes, how have you fared?" Perhaps; it is not impossible, but is certainly weak. Contrariwise, if we give 1422–3 to the Chorus, and the first part of 1426 (*τέθνηκεν ἢ τάλαινα*;) to Electra, the problems disappear. In that case the Chorus discharges its usual function of indicating an actor's arrival (*καὶ μὴν πάρεισιν οἶδε*) and expresses itself satisfied with the evidently successful completion of the deed (*οὐδ' ἔχω ψέγειν*). But that is not enough for Electra. The abrupt insistent questions (1424, 1426) are exactly what we should expect from that

21) See Pohlsander, op. cit., p. 64, who refers also to the defence of the lacuna by Kraus.

eagerly vengeful woman, who wants to have the grisly deed spelled out for her, not least after Orestes' rather less than straightforward words of 1424–5, full of latent misgivings (*τἀν δόμοισι μὲν καλῶς, Ἀπόλλων εἰ καλῶς ἐθέσπισεν*).

The MSS attribution of *ἦ νοεῖς* in 1435 to Orestes is clearly wrong. The reasons for giving these words to Electra are briefly but adequately stated by Jebb, who is followed, rightly, by most modern scholars[22]). Finally, at 1437 (*δι' ὠτὸς ἂν κτλ.*) the indication of speaker is absent from the MSS, and *XO.* should be restored (with Triclinius).

We have thus reconstructed the Kommos as it is printed by e.g. Pearson (except for the arrangement of 1431–2, which is not important here). It falls into two equal parts in which there is exact correspondence in metre (including the lacunae, of course) and complete agreement in point of *ἀντιλαβή*. However, if these two sections form a single strophe and antistrophe, there should also be, according to the principle outlined above, complete consistency in the division of parts. That is, if the Chorus begins in the antistrophe by taking Electra's part of the strophe (as we have decided it does), it should continue through to take her part (and only that part). If Clytemnestra's part in the strophe is taken by Orestes in the antistrophe, he should there sing only that part[23]). But a glance at the text will show that this is simply not the case. Electra's parts of the strophe are sung in the antistrophe variously by the Chorus, Orestes, and by Electra herself, while the Chorus' part is taken by both Electra and the Chorus. Clearly then, these two halves of the Kommos do not form a single pair of corresponding stanzas. Yet there is a good deal more consistency in the division of parts than might at first sight be apparent. Leaving aside for the moment the first six trimeters, Clytemnestra's first agonised cry (1404–5) and Electra's sardonic reply to it (*βοᾷ τις ἔνδον κτλ.*, 1406), and beginning our consideration from 1407 = 1428, we find that from there to the end (1421 = 1441) there is absolute consistency. The Chorus sings the same parts in both sections, Electra likewise, and

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22) By given the words to Electra, antilabic responsion with the strophe (1415) is restored; however Jebb's arguments are quite strong enough even without appeal to this principle, in which he evidently does not believe.

23) Blaydes on 1422 remarks that Clytemnestra's part is taken in the antistrophe by Orestes; yet he gives the first antistrophic lacuna (after 1427, = Clytemnestra 1404–5) to Electra!

Orestes takes the parts sung by Clytemnestra. These sections conform to our rule exactly, and we should therefore have no hesitation in marking 1407–1421 = 1428–1441 as strophe and antistrophe[24]). The earlier part of the Kommos is, however, more intractable. The strophe could, conceivably, be extended backwards to include the immediately preceding verses 1404–6, and this is attractive, as it would divide the Kommos neatly into only two pairs of responding sections: six trimeters 1398–1403 = 1422–1427 followed by the strophe 1404–21 = antistrophe 1427a–1441, but this can only be done if the attribution of parts in the antistrophic lacuna, as indicated in modern editions, is reversed, that is, if the first two verses after 1427 (corresponding to Clytemnestra's 1404–5) are given to Orestes, and the third (= Electra's 1406) to Electra, for, as we have seen, Clytemnestra's part is otherwise consistently taken by Orestes, and Electra sings again her own part throughout the antistrophe. It is my belief that this should be done; we should regard 1404–1421 as a strophe corresponding to 1427a–1441, the antistrophe. This means, of course, that Orestes has three verses in a row (1427 plus 2), but there is no reason why this should not be the case[25]). If this arrangement is not adopted, there is no way in which 1404–6 can be accommodated to any strophic system, unless the lines are regarded as a whole strophe by themselves, which seems improbable.

There remain only the first six trimeters, in which there is a different distribution of parts, but one which is almost completely consistent within itself. Apart from the first two verses of the "antistrophe" (for want of a better word for the moment) the remainder (1424–27) agrees exactly with its "strophe" (1400–03), of which the Choral part is taken in the "antistrophe" by Electra and Electra's part by Orestes. This pattern is disturbed only by 1422–3 (= 1398–9), where the Chorus takes Electra's part. If Sophocles intended antistrophic responsion here in the strictest sense, these two lines 1422–3 should have been spoken by Orestes, which is impossible. We could of course simply ex-

24) As is done, in fact, by Dain. At least this much is certainly strophic, but see further, below.

25) Kamerbeek (p. 181) remarks that some reply to Orestes by Electra seems desirable after 1427, and the point is well taken, but conceivably Orestes goes straight on without waiting for a reply, perhaps expanding on the sense of unease which he is evidently feeling. It would be Electra's function, then, in her missing verse, to reassure him.

clude these two lines from the strophic system[26]), but correspondence is otherwise so exact that it seems better not to do so. It should be remembered that the circumstances at this point in the play are without parallel in Sophocles. Only here does a character involved in a Kommos die between strophe and antistrophe, so that a fourth voice must be used, and that fourth voice must be brought back from off-stage to engage in the remainder of the Kommos. I should therefore prefer to divide the Kommos thus: strophe $\alpha$ 1398–1403; strophe $\beta$ 1404–1421; antistrophe $\alpha$ 1422–1427; antistrophe $\beta$ 1427a–1441, and to note on 1422 that we have there, in the absence of consistency in the distribution of the antistrophic parts, a unique licence justified by the unique circumstances of the play at that moment. Everywhere else in Sophoclean lyric dialogue, as we have seen, consistency in the distribution of antistrophic parts is complete; in every case where the rule appears not to operate, there is either confusion in the MSS as to the attribution, evidence of false attribution, textual corruption or a lacuna, and we have been able to restore consistency without the slightest violation of text or tradition.

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26) Cf. above, on *O. T.* 658–9 = 687–8.