THE TWO AJAXES AND THE TWO KRȘNÁS

In 1957 Sir Denys Page revived Jakob Wackernagel’s hypothesis that the dual form Aةwine (used twenty-two times in the Iliad) signifies, not ‘Telamonian Ajax and Oilean Ajax’, but rather ‘Telamonian Ajax and his brother’ Teucer’.

To this argument two different sorts of objections can be raised. First, one could object that it is inherently implausible that two individuals A and B, not sharing the same name, should (even if closely related) be referred to as ‘the two A’s’. Second, one might waive the question of inherent plausibility but argue that the particular details of the passages in question run counter to this interpretation.

Page addresses himself to the second of these two categories of objection with his usual skill. Yet, since the data are admittedly difficult, one is unlikely to be convinced unless first persuaded that the first objection has been satisfactorily laid to rest.

Parallel passages would provide satisfactory evidence, but the Homeric poems offer only Iliad 11.709 and 750, Μολίων, which probably means ‘Molion and his brother’.

One must look farther afield, to Indian epic.

A reason why Wackernagel’s suggestion has met with less than full acceptance is that the parallels which have been adduced in its support are not the strongest ones available.

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2) Or possibly half-brother: Page 272 n. 49. But see Iliad 12.371.

3) E.g. Iliad 13.313, Αλιντες τε δύο Τεύκρος ἐ (though here we are dealing with plural rather than dual); 12.335, Αλιντε δύο . . . Τεύκρον τε. See Page 272 f. n. 52.

4) Noted by Page 236. C. J. Ruijgh, Sur le nom de Poseidon et sur les noms en -α- Fov. -ι- Fov, Revue des Études Grecques 80 (1967) 15, considers that neither of the Molion was named Molion, because we are told (Iliad 11. 750) that the Molions were sons of Akto, and we are also told (Iliad 2.621) that Kteatos and Eurytos are sons of Akto. But Ruijgh’s argument requires us to presume that Akto cannot have had more than two sons; for this presumption there is no evidence.

5) Peter Von der Mühl, for example, is very cautious in his comments on the suggestion in his essay Der Große Aias (delivered 1930), reprinted in his Ausgewählte Kleine Schriften, Basel 1976, 435–472, esp. 460 f.

6) Wackernagel’s principal example in his original paper (above, n. 1), 308, was ruháva Vårúnaṣ ca (RV VII 88.3a), ‘we and Varuṇa [i.e., Varuṇa and I] got on
Indian epic provides a clearer parallel. In the *Mahābhārata* the deity Kṛṣṇa and his mortal companion Arjuna are referred to frequently (eighty-five times, according to Sorensen¹) and unmistakably as ‘the two Kṛṣṇas’ (= Kṛṣṇau, dual²).

*There follow* a few illustrations of this practice, transliterated into Roman characters and literally translated into English³.

1.214.32:

upāṣṭaṁ tu tāṁ kṛṣṇau bhrājamānaṁ dvijottamam/

äruṇo vāsudevaśca tūṛṇaṁ utpatya tasthaṅaḥ//

The two Kṛṣṇas, Arjuna and the son of Vasudeva, quickly rose to greet that shining best of brahmans [as he] approached, and stood there⁴).

1.218.19–20:

kṛṣṇābhyaṁ rāśītaṁ dṛṣṭvā tāṁ ca dāvam ahamkṛtāḥ/

samūpetaṁ athākāśaṁ suparṇādyāḥ patatrināḥ//

garuḍā vajrasadṛśaiḥ pakṣatunḍanakhaṁ sthāḥ/

prahartukāmaṁ sampetur ākāsāt kṛṣṇapāṇḍavau//

And seeing that forest fire protected by the two Kṛṣṇas, the proud Garuḍas, best of well-winged birds, then flew up together to the sky; and eager to attack with their thunderbolt-like wings, beaks and claws, they swooped from the sky at Kṛṣṇa and the son of Paṇḍu.

1.219.3:

tāṁ dāvam samudikṣantaṁ kṛṣṇau cābhhyudatāyudhau/

utpātanādāśabdena samitrāśita ivābhavan//

Carefully watching that forest fire and the two Kṛṣṇas with their weapons raised, the [forest-dwellers] were set all a-trembling, so to speak, by the sound of the prodigious noise.

1.225.5:

bhagavān api tigmāṁsuḥ samiddhaṁ khāṇḍavaṁ vanam/

dāḍaṁ saha kṛṣṇābhyaṁ janayaṁ jagato 'bhayam//

And the hot-rayed Lord together with the two Kṛṣṇas burnt the kindled Khāṇḍava Forest, bringing about the peace of the world.

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¹) S. Sörensen, An Index to the Names in the *Mahābhārata*, Delhi *et alibi* 1963 (reprint of 1904 edn.), pp. 425, 804. In three instances Sörensen indicates that the dual is found in only one of the major editions used by him; in nine other instances a stigma indicates critical misgivings.

²) This is a clear instance of the sort of divine or heroic *Helferpaare* discussed by Von der Mühll (above, n. 5) 454 ff.

³) The edition used is that by V. A. Sukthankar, Poona: Bhandarkar Research Institute 1933–66, 19 vols. in 20.

⁴) Cf. 1. 214.27

board.’ In his Altindische Grammatik II 1, Göttingen 1905, 150 f. Wackernagel cited dyāvā [i.e., heaven and earth] in this connection. These are not close parallels. E. Schwzyzer, *Griechische Grammatik II* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft), Munich '1966, 50 f., mentions Mitrā for the pair Mitra and Varuṇa; but Wackernagel (above, n. 1) 309 had dismissed this as „nichts ... als verkürzungen eines Mitrā Varuṇā“.

⁷) Cf. 1. 214.27
This evidence dispels the *a priori* objection that it is unreasonable to suppose an epic poet would employ the dual in such a way as Wackernagel suggested. The *a posteriori* objections are another matter. We do not believe we can improve on Page's attempts to meet them.¹)

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DE CAUSA CORRUPTAE LECTIONIS
CUIUSDAM QUAM IN TACITI AGRICOLA
INESSE SUSPICOR EMENDANDAE

Corrigenti quaedam errata typographica ut vocantur novae editionis Tacitei libelli qui vulgo *Agricola* inscribitur¹ mihi repente perspicuum fuit in eo opere unam lectionem librarii manu corruptam adhuc inesse, quae quidem, cum omnibus codicibus unanimiter tradita esset, neque ab editoribus umquam neque a commen-
tatioribus opusculi umquam quantum sci suspeeta sit, quamvis sit difficilis intellec-
tu. Locus de quo agitur a recentioribus textus moderatioribus sic fere restitui solet²): *pauci et, ut i(ta) dixerim, non modo aliorum sed etiam nostri superstites sumus, exemptis e media vita tot annis, quibus iuvenses ad senectutem, senes prope ad ipsos exactae aetatis terminos per silentium venimus* (Agr. 3,2).

Ut supra non inclinatis ut aiunt litteris indicavi, suspicio lectionem manu scrip-
torum q. e. *senes* falsa nobis traditam esse. Quare, id quod infra argumentis ut opinor sanis adhibitis probare aggressurus sum, nomen q. e. *senes* in *seges* verten-
dum esse censeo. Nunc ad rem demonstrandam.

Tacitus in secundo capitulo (i. e. Agr. 2,3) de Domitianis temporibus atque
tum amissa libertate dicens se suoque aequales grande patientiae documentum
dedisse affirmaverat. Tum brevi spatii interiecto narraverat aetatem suam quasi iam
renasci, praesertim cum Nerva et Traianus principatum inissent (3,1).

Non est autem cur dubitemus quin Tacitus eam imaginem adhibuerit volens,
quoniam pergit eandem fere sententiam evolvere, cum plane dicit se ipsum quoque
quasi e mortuorum numero iam revocari (3,1)²): *Nunc demum reedit animus; et
quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu* etc. His dictis incipit statum
et corporis et animi sui accuratius describere se movens de corpore ipso ad
statum mentis feliciter usus imagine aegri hominis, quae figura sermonis hominibus

¹) This paper has benefited from the helpful criticisms of Thomas Gelzer,
who is in no way responsible for its conclusions.

²) P. Cornelii Taciti De vita Iulii Agricolae librum edidit, commentariolo
instructum et illustravit Allanus A. Lund, Othoniae 1881.

²) Textum damus hic secundum editionem Rudolfi Till, Tacitus. Das Lebens
des Iulius Agricola, Berlin 1975.