

AN EMENDATION IN NYMPHODORUS*

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Nymphodorus Müller, FHG II p. 380, F 21 (= sch. Oed. Col. 337, p. 23.23–24.4 ed. De Marco, p. 418.6–14 ed. Papageorgiou)¹

... ὁ γὰρ Σέσωστρις ἐκθηλῶσαι τοὺς ἄνδρας βουλόμενος, ἅτε μεγίστης χώρας γεγενημένους καὶ πολλοὺς ὄντας,² ὅπως μὴ συστραφέντες ἐπ' ἰσομοίριαν ὀρμήσωσι, τὰ μὲν ἐκείνων ἔργα ταῖς γυναίξι, τὰ δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐκείνοις προσέταξεν, ἵνα μὴ μόνον τῶν ὀπλων στερηθέντες [ἀσμένως] ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἀνεθέντες, ἀσμένως ἐπὶ τοῖς ὑπάρχουσι καταμένωσιν ...

According to the above section of Nymphodorus' F 21 (itself an extract from Book 13 of his *Νόμιμα Βαρβαρικά*), Sesostris decided to effeminise the men of his country for fear that they might conspire against him to achieve an equal share in political power. Why did such a danger emerge as a real possibility? 'Because the men had been born of a very large country and were numerous.'³ The first part of the answer is problematical: the men's ability to form a threatening conspiracy against Sesostris does not logically follow from the fact that they had been born of a very large country. I suggest that the text should be corrected to ἅτε μεγίστης (τῆς) χώρας γεγενημένης [καὶ] πολλοὺς ὄντας, 'Because they were numerous, as the country had grown very large'. The sense is now unobjectionable, and consistent with the Greek portrayal of Sesostris: in the Greek tradition Sesostris was represented as

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1) This Nymphodorus is evidently not the Nymphodorus in Jacoby (FGrHist 572). The emendation proposed in this article has been included in my edition: *Scholia vetera in Sophoclis Oedipum Coloneum*, Berlin / Boston 2018.

2) ἅτε μεγίστης χώρας γεγενημένους καὶ πολλοὺς ὄντας is the sentence as given by all three important manuscripts, that is, LMR (see De Marco's edition); I also checked the Triclinian manuscript Parisinus gr. 2711 and found it to reproduce L's readings in this sentence (For the Byzantine scholar's correction of some of L's mistakes see V. De Marco, *Gli scolii all'Edipo a Colono di Sofocle e la loro tradizione manoscritta*, *Rendiconti della Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti Napoli*, n. s. 26, 1951, 26 and *Scholia in Sophoclis Oedipum Coloneum*, Rome 1952, ix).

3) Müller's translation (FHG II p. 380, F 21) "Nimirum Sesostris quum viro- rum animos effeminare vellet, ne per terram maximam dispersa ingens eorum multitudo coiret et juris aequalitatem obtinere contenderet ..." is inaccurate.

a great Egyptian king celebrated for subduing numerous nations and thus creating a huge empire.⁴

The mechanism of corruption is easy to understand. The corruption occurred in two independent stages: (i) τῆς after μεγίστης was lost by haplography. (ii) γεγενημένης was assimilated to the ending of πολλούς, and καί then added to join the two participles.

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4) E.g. Herodotus 2.102 ff., Diodorus 1.53.1 ff., Strabo 16.4.4 C 769; A. B. Lloyd, Herodotus Book II, Commentary 99–192, Leiden / New York / Köln 1993, 16 ff.