

ACADEMIA LITTERARUM BULGARICA

---

PRIMUS CONGRESSUS STUDIORUM THRACICORUM

# THRACIA


II

TE

*Serdicae - 1974*

СЕРДИКА

IN AEDIBUS ACADEMIAE LITTERARUM BULGARICAE



Ad  
JF  
241  
74  
117  
174

DE EDITIONE CURANTIBUS

A. N. FOL, V. I. GEORGIEV, V. TĀPKOVA-ZAIMOVA, V. VELKOV

WILLIAM M. CALDER III (USA)

SOPHOCLES, TEREUS: A THRACIAN TRAGEDY

Native Attic mythology was sparse and uninteresting. The tragedians were often constrained to invent and transpose. Foreigners were brought to Athens: Orestes and Oedipus; or an Athenian was sent abroad: Theseus often or Aegeus in *Medea*. As Wilamowitz long ago surmised,<sup>1</sup> cleruchs enriched the *Heimatsage*. The Polymestor-story derives from the Chersonese. Lemnos provided Priloctetes and Hypsipyle; Skyros the new tale of Achilles and Deidameia. Euripides, *Syleus*<sup>2</sup> requires Athenian occupation of Amphipolis. Sophocles owed Phineus and Tereus to the northern settlements.

Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* (6. 424 sq.) has made the Tereus-legend famous. As often his source is a tragedy. We shall not postulate a lost epyllion. A. C. Pearson remarked:<sup>3</sup> "No detailed account is in existence which can be traced to an earlier date than the era of Sophocles". Let us try to reconstruct this lost tragedy, perhaps the most famous Thracian tale to enter Attic literature and art. Our material is testimonia for the action, preserved fragments (some 57 verses are extant), accounts, especially Ovid, presumably deriving from Sophocles, and for dramatic technique and structure parallels from other plays. I shall try to establish dramatic time and place, *dramatis personae*, and to reconstruct the action.

The action takes place before the palace of Tereus, which presumably is in Thrace rather than Thracian-occupied Daulis. The dramatic time is five years after Pandion, King of Athens, had married his elder daughter, Prokne, to Tereus and so confirmed an alliance after the latter's decisive military aid in a border dispute with Thebes: Ov. M. 6. 424—438; cf. Ap. *Bibl.* 3.14.8. Next the characters. Prokne is attested at frag. 585P. She requires a confidante for the expository prologue. Hence the Nutrix that Sophocles used in *Trachniae* and to whom the autobiographical speech

<sup>1</sup> See Ulrich von Wilamowitz Moellendorf, *Euripides Herakles I<sup>3</sup>: Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie*, Darmstadt, 1969, 38.

<sup>2</sup> See Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, 38 n. 72, and Peter Guggisberg, *Das Satyrspiel* (Zürich, 1947), 128.

<sup>3</sup> See A. C. Pearson, *The Fragment of Sophocles*, vol. II, Cambridge, 1917, 221.

(frag. 583P) is delivered. Tereus is assured by the title. A female servant of the mutilated Philomela delivers the cloth to Prokne. Ovid (M. 6. 578—580) attests her existence. Philomela and Itys (cf. Eurysakes in *Ajax*) would be mutes. The role of Philomela would have been among the most memorable and demanding available to a parachoregema in classical drama. I wonder whether she was played by Sophocles, whose *μυσογονία* deprived him of speaking parts (*VitSoph* 4). The triple metamorphosis could not take place on stage (Horace, *Ars* 187). A messenger is required to describe the miracle — as Theseus in *Oedipus Coloneus*. But a messenger could only report and not explain what had occurred. Since F. G. Welcker<sup>4</sup> a god has been postulated. He suggested Herms. Others have agreed. Zeus normally avoided the theater. Aeschylus' *Psychostasia* was the noble exception. Hermes, as in *Prometheus* and *Inachus*, might easily convey his will. Frag. 581. 2P proves that the god who caused the metamorphosis did not report it (a third person singular verb). What god would be appropriate to appear on the roof of a Thracian palace? Surely the father of the belligerent, reigning monarch, the Thracian Ares.<sup>5</sup> The chorus were Thracian men rather than Athenian or Thracian women. Not merely do the philosophical sentiments of the preserved choral utterances (frags. 590P, 591P, 592P, 593P) suggest this. Prokne, Ovid carefully tells us (M. 6. 581—586), with remarkable control did not reveal her reaction to Philomela's massage. She remained silent. The reason must be that she could not trust a hostile chorus (cf. Accius, frag. 647—648 Ribbeck), male retainers of her husband. That in Accius (647 Ribbeck) the chorus address her *muller* confirms the view. To sum up, the characters in order of appearance would have been:

Dramatis Personae

Prokne  
 Nutrix  
 Chorus senum Thraciorum  
 Tereus  
 Famula  
 Philomela (persona muta)  
 Itys (persona muta)  
 Nuntius  
 Ares (?)

The roles may be conveniently divided: Protagonist, Prokne; deuteragonist, Tereus and Ares; tritagonist, Nutrix, Famula, Nuntius. Within the normal structure of prologue, four epeisodia, and exodos, divided by choral odes, the action would unfold as follows.

I. Prologue: Prokne enters from the central door of the *scaenae frons* followed by Nutrix, to whom, in an expository monologue, she narrates the past, her own unhappiness, and homesickness. The situation recalls Trachi-

<sup>4</sup> See F. G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien mit Rücksicht auf den epischen Cyclus*, vol. I, Bonn, 1839, 383—384.

<sup>5</sup> For Tereus' paternity see Apoll. Bibl. 3. 14, 8 and for the Thracian character of the god see KIP 1 (1964) 527. 41 ff.

female servant  
 vid (M. 6. 578—  
 s in *Ajax*) would  
 the most memo-  
 classical drama. I  
*εγορωία* deprived  
 s could not take  
 d to describe the  
 nger could only  
 elcker<sup>4</sup> a god has  
 l. Zeus normally  
 exception. Her-  
 s will. Frag. 581.  
 id not report it  
 ppropriate to appear  
 belligerent, reign-  
 acian men rather  
 philosophical senti-  
 01P, 592P, 593P)  
 46), with remark-  
 sage. She remain-  
 a hostile chorus  
 husband. That in  
 ms the view. To  
 been:

Procne: deuterat-  
 tius. Within the  
 divided by cho-  
 e *scaenae frons*  
 she narrates the  
 recalls Trachi-

auf den epischen  
 rian character of

niae.<sup>6</sup> The autobiographical fragment (583P) and the apostrophe to her absent sister (584P)<sup>7</sup> belong here. The women, like the two sisters that open Antigone, can speak without fear. They are alone. The chorus have not yet entered. Before the action began, Tereus had been sent to fetch Philomela. This makes his return imminent and accords with the temporal economy of Sophoclean tragedy. Compare the prologue of Oedipus Tyrannus, where Kreon returns from an earlier errand.

II. Parodos: the chorus enter from the right parodos probably to announce their king's return.

III. First Epeisodion: Tereus enters from abroad up the left parodos and falsely reports the death of Philomela (Ov. M. 6. 563—566). Because he brings nobody, the excuse probably was that she was lost at sea.<sup>8</sup> Ovid is not specific. Prokne mourns the death, erects a cenotaph, and provides funeral offerings for a sister not dead, like Electra for a brother not dead (Ov. M. 6. 566—570).

IV. First Stasimon: during the recitation of this ode, one year of dramatic time passes (Ov. M. 6. 571).

V. Second Epeisodion: this contained the famous recognition scene which Aristotle criticized as „contrived by the poet“ (Poetics 16. 1454b30 sq.). Philomela had been imprisoned in a mountain hut, with a stone wall, a guard, and a female attendant (Ov. M. 6. 572 sq.) or *φολακῆ* (Liban. 8. 45. 14F.). She decides to weave a purple inscription (Ov. M. 6. 577) into a white peplos (AchTat 5. 5. 5), intended for her sister. She does not weave pictures of her misfortune, as Pearson erroneously believed.<sup>9</sup> Ovid distinctly specifies *notas* (Ov. M. 6. 577) and *carmen* (Ov. M. 6. 582); Apollodoros (Bibl. 3. 14. 8) and Libanius (8. 45. 17—18F.) *γράφματα*. This is what Aristotle meant (Poetics 16. 1454b36—frag. 595P) by the „voice of the shuttle“ (*κερκίος φωνή*). Normally, Greek inscriptions were read aloud. Prokne receives the gift as part of a traditional Dionysiac festival (Liban. 8. 45. 14 ff. F.), unrolls and reads the text silently. A famous moment in the action (Ov. M. 6. 581—586) was her ability to disguise her grief and rage. For the scene to be effective the audience must somehow divine the truth, probably from the naive tale of the illiterate famula or could they have read a large inscription? In any case Prokne cannot alert the chorus. The famula would have revealed the location of Philomela;<sup>10</sup> and Prokne exits, dressed as a Bacchant, down the left parodos to discover her sister.

VI. Second Stasimon: a Dionysiac theme would be appropriate.

VII. Third Epeisodion: Prokne returns with her sister disguised as a Maenad (Ov. M. 6. 601 sq.). Either Prokne herself or a messenger who anticipated her relates (Accius, frag. 636—639 Ribbeck) the discovery of Philomela to the chorus. Philomela can only communicate by gesture: „pro voce manus fuit“ (Ov. M. 6. 609). Revenge is anticipated. Either the enormity of Te-

<sup>6</sup> Thus Welcker, op. cit., 377.

<sup>7</sup> Thus Welcker, op. cit., 377, followed by Otto Ribbeck, *Die römische Tragödie im Zeitalter der Republik*<sup>2</sup>, Hildesheim, 1968, 579.

<sup>8</sup> Thus E. H. Warmington, *Remains of old Latin*, vol. II, Cambridge London, 1936, 542.

<sup>9</sup> See Pearson, op. cit., 221: „Philomela then wove an embroidered picture of the outrage“.

<sup>10</sup> Thus Ribbeck, op. cit., 581.

reus' crime turns the chorus to Prokne's side, a ruse is used, or details of the revenge are not discussed. Tereus must not be forewarned. Itys (with Nutrix?), "a child of some five years, appeared in the theater (Ov. M. 6. 619—620). a! quam es similis patri." The women exeunt with him (Ov. M. 6. 636 ff.) into the *scaenae frons*.

VIII. Third Stasimon: subject unknown.

IX. Fourth Epeisodion: here early Sophocles placed the catastrophe.<sup>11</sup> Tereus enters. Prokne seduces him into the palace with the pretext that she has prepared a sacred ancestral meal which he must consume alone (Ov. M. 6. 647 sq). One recalls the carpet scene in Aeschylus, Agamemnon. The scene would conclude with the exit of Tereus and Prokne into the central door of the *scaenae frons*. The chorus seek to dissuade Prokne (Accius, frag. 647—648 Ribbeck) but an ominous reply silences them (Accius, frag. 646 Ribbeck).

X. Fourth Stasimon: subject unknown.

XI. Exodos: a messenger enters from a side door of the *scaenae frons*. The chorus urge him to tell the truth (frag. 588P). He relates the murder of Itys, the preparation of the stew, the meal of Tereus, his recognition, rage, and pursuit armed (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 563) of the two Athenians (Ov. M. 6. 638—669). The speech would end with the miraculous triple transformation. Thus far a mortal eye-witness. The explanation of the metamorphosis in frag. 581P (cf. Ov. M. 6. 669—674) which, with most scholars, I consider, Sophoclean, could only be spoken by a god. He also would appropriately declare the final judgement on the whole (frag. 589P). He who fixes on a remedy greater than the disease is a naive physician. The god's identity is not known. Ares, father of Tereus and a peculiarly Thracian divinity, would be involved enough in the action to justify an epiphany. One may compare Herakles, who ends *Philoctetes*. The god withdraws and the chorus exit down the left parodos.

The speech of the *deus* may in the Aeschylean manner (cf. Oedipus Coloneus) have sought to connect the mythical past with the present through the institution of cult. Ovid reports (M. 6. 437) that the day of Itys' birth was made a festival. Tereus became a hoopoe (*επιων*). The cultic calendar from the deme Erchia (early IV B. C.) records<sup>12</sup> that on the fifth day of Boedromion a piglet was sacrificed to Epops. The subsequent worship of the title-character is thereby attested in Attica.

Chronological data are unsatisfactory. One bit of undisputed evidence provides a *terminus ante quem*. There is a parody at Aristophanes, *Aves* 99 ff., a play produced in March, 414 B. C. (hypothesis). May anything else be adduced? Thracian historical arguments are inconclusive. The simple fact of dramatising a Thracian myth at a national festival might be presumed to indicate friendship. The brutal character of the king, his acts of rape and mutilation, and the brutalizing effect of the monarch on two Athenian princesses might as easily criticize the barbarity of despised or feared Northern neighbors.

<sup>11</sup> See Klaus Aichele and Walter Jens, *Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie*, Munich, 1971, 71.

<sup>12</sup> See F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des Cités grecques*. Paris, 1969 No. 18 E 12, 41.

sed, or details of  
arned. Itys (with  
eater (Ov. M. 6.  
with him (Ov. M.

the catastrophe.<sup>11</sup>  
the pretext that  
t consume alone  
Aeschylus, Aga-  
reus and Prokne  
seek to dissuade  
as reply silences

he *scaenae frons*.  
elates the murder  
recognition, rage,  
ians (Ov. M. 6.  
le transformation.  
metamorphosis in  
holars, I consider,  
appropriately dec-  
fixes on a remedy  
s identity is not  
ivinity, would be  
ne may compare  
the chorus exit

ner (cf. Oedipus  
e present through  
lay of Itys' birth  
le cultic calendar  
the fifth day of  
uent worship of

disputed evidence  
istophanes, *Aves*  
ay anything else  
ive. The simple  
might be presum-  
his acts of rape  
on two Athenian  
pised or feared

n der griechischen  
is, 1969 No. 18 E

The play certainly has what one may casually call "Euripidean quali-  
ties." There is the nurse (cf. e. g., *Hypolitus*) and a child used as *cap-  
tatio misericordiae* (cf. *Alcestis*, *Troades*). The introduction of a mutilated  
character recalls Hippolytus and Polymestor in Hecuba (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus).  
The delineation of female psychology would be familiar to Euripidean  
audiences. Most important is the nature of the final catastrophe. Prokne  
slays her child to wreak vengeance on a faithless hisband. Just so Medea  
kills her children to spite the faithless Jason. Ovid already drew the paral-  
lel at Amores 2. 14. 29 sq. Medea's infanticides were an Euripidean inno-  
vation. Before him she merely absconded with the children. The Tereus  
story contrarily was an aetiological legend to explain the nightingale's pla-  
intive cry *Ityn, Ityn*. The infanticide was central and indispensable. I should  
not hesitate to place *Tereus* before *Medea*, dated by its hypothesis to 431  
B. C. The plot motivation, the destructive effects of excessive sibling af-  
fection, recalls *Antigone* of March 443 B. C. I should be prepared to ac-  
cept a date in the early 30's<sup>13</sup> roughly contemporary with Trachiniai.

<sup>13</sup> The Cannibalism suggests the Thyestes legend. Seneca's Atreus (*Thys.*, 275—277) in-  
vokes the Attic sisters to inspire his soul. Sophokles' plays on this theme cannot be pre-  
cisely dated.

Y/MW

ILL pe

Record 12 of 63

CAN YOU SUPPLY ? YES NO COND FUTUREDATE

:ILL: 1236921 :Borrower: VZS :ReqDate: 20000803 :NeedBefore: 20000902  
:Status: IN PROCESS 20000804 :RecDate: :RenewalReq:  
:OCLC: 5110559 :Source: OCLCILL :DueDate: :NewDueDate:

:Lender: FBR, \*VA@, VA@, NOC, NOC  
:CALLNO: DF261, T6 T47  
:TITLE: Thracia.

:IMPRINT: Serdicae, In aedibus Academiae Litterarum Bulgaricae, 1972-

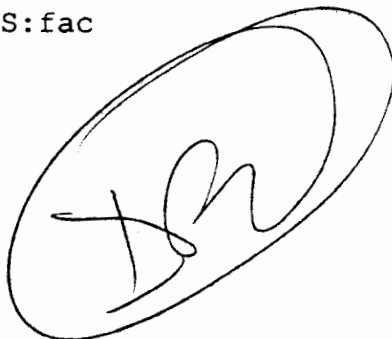
:ARTICLE: Calder, William; Sophocles' Tereus: A thracian tragedy

:VOL: 2 :NO: :DATE: 1974 :PAGES: 87-91

:VERIFIED: OCLC

:PATRON: Curley, D DEPT: classics STATUS:fac

:SHIP TO: ILL  
Skidmore College Library  
815 No. Broadway  
Saratoga Springs  
NY  
12866



:BILL TO: Same

:SHIP VIA: Fastest at no chg. :MAXCOST: \$10 IFM :COPYRT COMPLIANCE: CCL

:FAX: (518)580-5540 ARIEL 141.222.135.98

:E-MAIL: ILLDESK@skidmore.edu

:BORROWING NOTES: SUNY/OCLC Deposit Account# w/ UMI:D#800108 Oberlin Grp.

Mem/CANNOT PAY INVOICE WITHOUT COPY OF REQUEST We do not charge for ILL

services. Please reciprocate.

:LENDING CHARGES: :SHIPPED: :SHIP INSURANCE:

:LENDING RESTRICTIONS:

:LENDING NOTES:

:RETURN TO:

:RETURN VIA: