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SOME REMARKS ON THE NEW EDITION OF THE “TATTOO POEM”
(= P. BRUX. INV. E.8934 + P. SORB. INV. 2254)

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SOME REMARKS ON THE NEW EDITION1 OF THE "TATTOO POEM"
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This paper serves the sole purpose of suggesting new supplements for two lacunae in the first column of P.Brux. inv. E.8934. More specifically our suggestions concern the passage which evokes in Homeric phrasing the fight between Heracles and the Centaur Eurytion. For the sake of clarity the relevant distichs (col. I, 14-24) are reproduced below as they have been printed in the editio princeps.

14. ]...ε [τ]ρίποδα μιέγαν .......
15. ]...φο...[ς κρατός άπε[ρ] λασ[ου]
17. - εεε - εεεε - [ν άνέρος φόδεμου
18. - εεε - εεεεειθηκε βέλος Τριτωμ[ο]ς τ' Αθηνή
19. - εεε - εεεειτου φειδομένη μεγάλως
20. - εεε - ετέρησης μέν [ν' άσφάραγον λάβε χειρί,
21. τη δ' ετέρηση β' οικου σκληρόν δ' εθισχόμενος
22. - εεε - εεεεκρότοφον σύν [τ' δ'] στέα πώντα χραξεν
23. - εεε - εεεειων έκπεσεν [εγ]εφαλος
24. - εεε - εε[πληνήν] ψυχή [δ'] άλνη ήέρα ήνε

In line 17 Parsons’ suggestion is less than probable, for two reasons. In the first place: his supplement (17 letters) is much too long2 in view of the very probable supplements suggested for lines 7 (10 letters) and 21 (11 letters).3 In the second place: in this poem, as far as we can read it, the poet is occupying himself with the vengeful tattooing of an enemy; and he addresses his enemy at least three times (col. II 4,12,14)4 by means of the second person singular in an aggressive way. Now it would be awkward if in col. I, 17 the poet

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2 This was already observed in Huys, op.cit. p.50.
3 For a discussion of these supplements see Huys, op.cit. p.42.
4 Probably also in col. I,5 πρωτά σ' ετει ν' αδότον στιξο.
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would aim the second person singular at another addressee, a kind of ideal, detached reader who is turned temporarily into an eyewitness.\footnote{From I.J.F. de Jong, Narrators and focalizers, the presentation of the story in the Iliad, Amsterdam 1987, pp.54-60, it appears that this technique (the use of the addressee as an imaginary spectator) is frequently used by the poet of the Iliad. What we want to point out is that in this particular elegy, with its highly individual (imagined) situation, this technique would be less appropriate.}

Therefore we would prefer ἔλπίζων ἀλκῆν ἄνερος οὐδεμίαν. The length of this supplement (11 letters) fits the lacuna perfectly, and the prosaic ἔλπίζων is in itself not incompatible with the diction of our poet.\footnote{For the occasional use of a prosaic expression in this poem see Huys, op.cit. pp.88-89.}

Besides, there are other examples of forms of the prosaic active\footnote{We have considered ἐλπίζων, in view of Πλοεία in col. II, 12. This verb occurs regularly in epic poetry from Homer onwards, and would occupy here its traditional sedes (see Σ 260, Hesiod Scutum 66 etc.); but it seems bad method to introduce an uncommon metrical license, viz. the lengthening of a short syllable in princeps position: one finds this very rarely in the pentameter, and then at the diaeresis. See Gow & Page, Hellenistic epigrams, Cambridge 1965, vol.II, p.49 ad Antip.Sid. 19,4 (to the examples taken from Theognis add 1136). If the emendation in col. I, 7 ἰσίζων is accepted, the same metrical license would occur; but in this case there are three ‘attenuating circumstances’: (a) the phenomenon looks less odd in a hexameter, as it is not uncommon in Homer (see West, Greek Metre, Oxford 1982, p.38; and cp. also Theognis 329 and 461), (b) sense and context enforce this emendation, and (c) a syllable ending on η seems more fit for lengthening.}

 seçenek occupying the first metron of the hexameter or pentameter in elegiac distichs: A.P. 5.101,3 and 7.638,4 (Crinagoras), 11.216,5 (Lucillius), 11.350,5 (Agathias). The sense of ἔλπίζων suits the context: the Centaur is convinced that by means of the tripod he can keep Heracles at a safe distance; he "does not expect/fear any help of a man".\footnote{For this sense of ἔλπίζω see LSJ s.v., 2. Cp. Hdt. 1.77 and 8.53: in both passages the verb is used for persons who, wrongly, do not fear any immediate danger from the enemy.}

Then, instead of human defence, the goddess Athena intervenes. The combination of ἀλκῆ with ἄνερος as a genitive of the subject is found also in A.P. 7.426,5-6 (Antip.Sid.), Oppian Halieut. 3.541, Q.Sm. 2.152 and 11.445.

For line 22 we would suggest πληξέν τε] κρόσταν σὺν [τ’ ὁ]στεά πάντα ἄροξεν. The supplement is certainly not too long (8 letters). Our suggestion is based on the comparison with Homeric fighting scenes. Many of them follow a typical four-stages pattern:

1. The enemy hits his opponent with a weapon (βάλε, ἢλασε, πληξε ... ξίφει, δουρί, χερμαδίω).
2. The effect of the wounding is described realistically.
3. The victim falls (πέσεν, κάππεσεν, ἐκπεσεν, πεσόν; less frequently ἠρπε; in some cases it is a part of the body which falls to the ground (in E 82 the hand, in Π 741 the eyes).
4. The victim expires (θυμον ἀποπνεύον, λύθη ψυχή, λίπε δ’ ὡστεα θυμός).

The Iliad contains a wealth of such passages, all variations on the same pattern, e.g. Δ 519-526, Ε 65-68, 80-83, 290-296, 305-310, Π 308-311, 322-325, 411-414 = 577-580, 737-743 etc. The Odyssey contains one relevant passage, viz. μ 412-414: not a combat scene but evidently modelled on the same type.
With our supplement the four phases are represented:

1. Heracles hits the Centaur's temple with his club (21, 22a).
2. He smashes all the bones of his skull (22b).
3. The Centaur's brain falls (through his nose?) to the ground (23).
4. The victim's soul vanishes into the air (24).

The coordination of (1) and (2) by means of the words "te...te" finds a perfect parallel in Ψ 673: ἀντικρῶ χρῶ τε ῥῆξο σύν τ’ ὀστε’ ἀράξω. For πληξεν in combination with κρόταφος we refer to Theocr. 22.124: πληξεν ὑπὸ σκαιὸν κρόταφον καὶ ἐπέμπεσεν ὀμφ, and to Q.Sm. 6.563: πληξε κατὰ κροτάφου... For col. I, 22 as a whole the closest parallel is μ 412-413: πληξε κυβερνήτεω κεφαλήν, σύν δ’ ὀστε’ ἀροξε / πάντε ἁμυδίες κεφαλής.

The imitation of this Homeric type of scene may also explain the specific use of ἐκπέσεν in line 23. This expression had been the object of some amazement in the editio princeps as it is not attested elsewhere to indicate the pouring out of the brain, a recurrent feature in Homeric scenes.9 But given the fact that the use of (ἐκ)πέσεν is very common in the third stage of the killing scene as analysed above, the verb can be expected here. As in so many other instances this poet - whether he is to be identified with Hermesianax or not - shows his skill and originality in using the verbal form, traditional in this context, in an unexpected and new way.10

10 Cp. Huys op.cit. pp.84-86.