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A FRAGMENT OF *PROMETHEUS LYOMENOS*?

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Hesych. (Cyr.) π 2439 πλάκα ἡλιακῆν· τὴν ἀνατολικὴν γῆν. ἢ τὴν ἡλιακὴν περιφέρειαν]. πλάκα καὶ τὴν ὅλην χώραν καὶ τὴν κοινὴν,<sup>1</sup> ἢ τὴν γῆν.

The lemma is clearly a poetic fragment. Schmidt in his source-register notes ‘Tragici passim’, meaning presumably that the use of πλάξ for a tract of land is characteristic of tragic language. So indeed it is; cf. Phryn. *TrGF* 3 F 5.3 παράκτιον πλάκα, Aesch. *Pers.* 718 ἡπείρου πλάκα, *Eum.* 292 Φλεγραΐαν πλάκα, Soph. *OT* 1103, *Phil.* 1430, *OC* 1563, 1577, Eur. *Hec.* 8, *HF* 958, *Ion* 1267, *Ba.* 14 Περσῶν ἡλιοβλήτους πλάκας, 718, *Stheneb.* fr. 661.3, Adesp. 202, 327d.<sup>2</sup> I have searched for later examples with little success. There are several instances in Lycophron, but that only confirms the impression that it is at home in tragic diction. One might have thought that a geographical poet such as Dionysius Periegetes might make use of it, but he does not. I can adduce one plausible example from hexameter poetry, but it is quite isolated: Dionysius, *Bassarica* fr. 19<sup>r</sup> 9 ]πλάκα Κηθαίο[ι].

Is πλάκα ἡλιακὴν then a fragment of fifth-century tragedy? There is one serious, though by no means fatal, objection to the idea: the word ἡλιακός is not attested before Hellenistic times. The same is true of many words formed with the suffix -ακός. But such formations, from nouns and place-names in -ιος, -ία, or -ιον, start to appear from the time of Herodotus, or even somewhat earlier, if fr. 1 of the *Cypria* with its πολέμοιο . . . Ἰλιακοῖο is not to be down-dated so far.<sup>3</sup> It would seem quite possible, therefore, that a fifth-century poet could have coined ἡλιακός for the nonce, even if it did not come into general use till much later. When it did come into general use, it was with the meaning ‘solar’, but our poet is using it to mean ‘eastern’, in accordance with the Homeric expression πρὸς ἡῶ τ’ ἡέλιόν τε.

The gloss τὴν ἀνατολικὴν γῆν suggests that πλάκα ἡλιακὴν referred not to some small district, as it might be the eastern end of the Plain of Argos, but to the East in a much larger sense, the eastern part of the earth. Taking this large geographical outlook together with the semblance of anapaestic rhythm, which the insertion of a particle will perfect, πλάκα <θ’> ἡλιακὴν, we are easily led to think of the anapaestic prologue of the *Prometheus Lyomenos*, in which the chorus of Titans related how they had come from their abode in the Isles of the Blest and traversed Africa and Asia to visit Prometheus in his eastern fastness:

ἐπῆμεν  
 . . . δίδυμον χθονὸς Εὐρώπης  
 μέγαν ἢδ’ Ἀσίας τέρμονα Φᾶσιν . . .  
 φοινικόπεδόν τ’ Ἐρυθρᾶς ἱερὸν χεῦμα θαλάσσης  
 χαλκοκέραυνόν τε παρ’ Ὠκεανῶι  
 λίμναν παντοτρόφον Αἰθιοπῶν,  
 ἔν’ ὁ παντόπτας Ἥλιος αἰεὶ  
 χρῶτ’ ἀθάνατον κάματόν θ’ ἵππων  
 θερμαῖς ὕδατος μαλακοῦ προχοαῖς ἀναπαύει.<sup>4</sup>

The phrase πλάκα <θ’> ἡλιακὴν would fit sweetly in this context.

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<sup>1</sup> κοιλίαν? M. Schmidt, cf. π 2457 πλάξ: . . . ἢ πλάκας τῆς κοιλίας, καὶ ἡ γαστήρ. The letters enclosed in half brackets are restored from ms. A of Cyril. I am indebted for this information to Dr. P. A. Hansen, who is bravely working on the completion of Latte’s edition of Hesychius.

<sup>2</sup> Kannicht–Snell’s text of 327d is to be revised in the light of W. Luppe, *Philologus* 129, 1985, 188–190.

<sup>3</sup> J. Wackernagel, *Sprachl. Untersuchungen zu Homer*, 182; A. Debrunner, *Griech. Wortbildungslehre*, § 394; Buck–Petersen, 637. The usual suffix -ικός was modified to -ακός for the sake of euphony following the -ι- of the noun root.

<sup>4</sup> Fr. 191–192 R.; cf. M. L. West, *JHS* 99, 1979 140f.