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THE BEGINNING OF CALLIMACHUS' HECALE

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The opening line of the Hecale (fr. 1 Hollis = 230 Pfeiffer) is preserved for us by the papyrus which contains Diegeses of Callimachus, i.e. summaries of his poems together with the first line of each. P. Med. 18, Dieg. x,19 reveals that the epyllion started as follows:

Ἄκταίη τις ἔναιεν Ἐρεχθέος ἔν ποτε γουνῶι

Fr. 2 H. = 231 Pf. looks as though it might belong to the same opening sentence:

τίον δέ ἐ πάντες ὀδίται
ἦρα φιλοξενίης· ἔχε γὰρ τέγος ἀκλήιστον.

In that case ἐ (fr. 2,1) would pick up Ἄκταίη τις (fr. 1); the gap could be no larger than a line and a half, or even as small as half a line.

The last person to possess a complete copy of the poem was almost certainly Michael Choniates (Acominatos), Orthodox Archbishop of Athens for some twenty or thirty years up to the Frankish conquest of A.D. 1205.¹ He loved to allude to the Hecale in his prose as well as his verse. One such passage is vol. I p. 157,5ff. ed. Lambros:² τὸν Θησέα . . . καταλύσαι φασι καὶ ἐπιξενωθῆναι παρά τινι γυναικί (Ἐκάλῃ τῇ γυναικί τὸ ὄνομα ἦν) γὰρ μὲν πεμπέλωι καὶ πενιχράι, ξενοδόχοι δ' ἄλλως ἀγαθῇ καὶ τοῖς παροδεύουσιν ἄκλειστον ἀεὶ προβαλλομένη τὸ οἶκημα . . . The underlined words are clearly meant to paraphrase Hecale fr. 2 H. (above). I suspect that the paraphrase of Callimachus' text here may be more extensive, including the whole characterization of his heroine from γὰρ μὲν . . .³

Accordingly it is worth considering whether δέ in Hecale fr. 2,1 (τίον δέ ἐ) might fulfill the same function as in Michael's ξενοδόχοι δ' . . . ἀγαθῇ, i.e. to point the contrast 'old and poor, but hospitable'. If that were so, Michael could offer some guidance to bridging the gap between fr. 1 and fr. 2. As far as I am aware, no special attention has been paid to the epithet πεμπέλωι, 'very old', which Michael here applies to Hecale. In ancient Greek this is an extremely rare word. It occurs twice in the Alexandra of Lycophron (682, 826), in Galen (where it has a scholarly air)⁴ and in the grammarian Choeroboscus.⁵ Remarkably, πέμπελος or πέμπερος = ἐσχατόγηρος survived into modern Greek on Cyprus – apparently nowhere else.⁶ But it seems improbable that Michael here is using πέμπελος as an ordinary

¹ See my Oxford, 1990 edition of the Hecale, pp. 38–40. Michael also knew the Aetia; witness e.g. Mich. Chon. ed. Lambros, Athens 1879–1880, vol. II p. 382, line 199 πάντα δ' ἀνατρέπελα, verbatim from Call., Aetia, fr. 7,30 Pf.

² = Test. 15a in my Hecale, pp. 58–59, and Test. 36 in Pfeiffer, vol. II pp. c–ci.

³ One might wonder whether τινι γυναικί corresponds to the opening words of the poem, Ἄκταίη τις. But (as Martin West says) παρά τινι γυναικί is the natural way to tell the story, and Michael is anticipating the main theme of hospitality. Mich. Chon. I, 159,9–10 τῆς Ἐκάλῃς τῆς Ἀττικῆς may faintly allude to Ἄκταίη, even though Michael uses the commonplace form.

⁴ De sanitate tuenda V 12,29 (CMG V 4,2 p. 167,27) ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν κατὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν ταύτην πέμπελον, ὡς οἱ ταῖς ἐτυμολογίαις χαίροντές φασι, παρά τὸ ἐκπέμπεσθαι τὴν εἰς αἴδου πομπήν (cf. schol. Lyc. 682 παρά τὸ ἦδη πέμπεσθαι πρὸς Ἄδην). See also n. 14 below.

⁵ 1,357,33 Hilgard . . . πέμπελος (σημαίνει δὲ τὸν πολλῶν ἐνιαυτῶν ὄντα). Also Hesychius has an entry (π 1381 Schmidt) πέμπελον· στωμύλον, λάλον. οἱ δὲ λίαν γηραλέον. The accusative case fits both Lycophron 682 and 826. Although I can not think of any linguistic evidence (however far-fetched) which might be adduced in favour of Hesychius' first explanation, 'talkative' would indeed well characterize the πέμπελον γράων of Lycophron 826, who reveals the hiding place of Aphrodite, and would not be inappropriate to Tiresias in Lyc. 682 (he will speak about Odysseus' future). So the Hesychius entry (including the incorrect first meaning) probably comes from Lycophron; I do not share Schmidt's belief that there are no entries from the Alexandra in Hesychius. Compare n. 14 below.

⁶ See G. P. Shipp, *Modern Greek Evidence for the Ancient Greek Vocabulary*, Sydney, 1979, p. 446.

word of his own day; much more likely that he has taken it from the actual text of Callimachus. Lycophron too may have borrowed πέμπελος from the Hecale.⁷

So let us try a three-line⁸ reconstruction, linking frs. 1 and 2:

Ἄκταίη τις ἔναιεν Ἐρεχθέος ἔν ποτε γουνῶι
πέμπελος <—υ—υ> τίον δέ ἐ πάντες ὀδίται
ἦρα φιλοξενίης· ἔχε γὰρ τέγος ἀκλήιστον.

We still need <‘and poor’>, corresponding to Michael’s καὶ πενιχρῶι. <ἀκλήρος τε> might fit rather well.⁹ Hecale has a small house,¹⁰ but – to judge from the repeated stress on her poverty –¹¹ no piece of land (κλήρος) to go with it. Prosperity required both,¹² and the livelihood of an ἀκλήρος was always precarious (Od. 11,490 ἀνδρὶ παρ’ ἀκλήρωι, ὦι μὴ βίσιος πολὺς εἴη). The word ἀκλήρος is Callimachean (fr. 193,17 Pf.) as well as Homeric.

Very tentatively, therefore, I suggest that the epyllion might have started

Ἄκταίη τις ἔναιεν Ἐρεχθέος ἔν ποτε γουνῶι
πέμπελος <ἀκλήρος τε>, τίον δέ ἐ πάντες ὀδίται
ἦρα φιλοξενίης· ἔχε γὰρ τέγος ἀκλήιστον.¹³

Of course this reconstruction (linking frs. 1 and 2) is a long shot, particularly hazardous in a poet who nearly always defeats expectations. Whatever may be thought of it, there seem good grounds for believing that Callimachus applied to his heroine the very rare epithet πέμπελος, and I put that forward with fair confidence as a new fragment of the Hecale.¹⁴

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⁷ For linguistic connexions between the Hecale and Lycophron’s Alexandra, see my Hecale, p. 27.

⁸ A four-line pattern may be no less likely. Martin West writes ‘I have always felt that Ἄκταίη τις ought to be followed up by a noun in the next line. Then the name Ἐκάλη could be easily accommodated in the second half of the line, followed in line 3 by πέμπελος <—υ—υ>.’ Mention of Hecale’s name in the first sentence is indeed plausible, but perhaps not essential. Michael may have inserted his parenthesis Ἐκάλη τῆι γυναικὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἦν for the benefit of contemporaries, few of whom would have heard of the heroine, let alone of the poem which Callimachus wrote about her. Homer does not actually name his ἄνδρα before line 21 of Od. 1, nor Virgil his ‘virum’ before Aen. 1,92.

⁹ Dr. West suggests ἀκτῆμων or ἀχρήμων as other possibilities. Callimachus links two epithets with a single τε at this point in the hexameter at least in hymn 6,16 αὐσταλέα ἄποτός τε.

¹⁰ Fr. 26 H. (= 525 Pf.) ἐλαχὺν δόμον, cf. Diegesis Hecalae (p. 65 H.) 29 οἰκίδιον.

¹¹ Life was not always thus with Hecale: οὐ γάρ μοι πενή πατρώιος, οὐδ’ ἀπὸ πάππων | εἰμὶ λιπερνῆτις· βάλε μοι, βάλε τὸ τρίτον εἴη (fr. 41 H. = 254 Pf.). In fr. 42,1 H. (= 255 Pf.) she seems to speak with emphatic pride of ‘her own’ threshing floor (δινομένην ὑπὸ βουσὶν ἐμῆν ἐφύλασσον ἄλωα), which she possessed before her series of disasters.

¹² Il. 15,498, Od. 14,64, cf. M. L. West on Hesiod, Works and Days 340–341.

¹³ I have sometimes wondered whether fr. 132 H. (= 331 Pf.) ἐπήλυσιν ὄφρ’ ἀλέοιτο | φώριον might belong in this area: because of her poverty, Hecale did not need to lock her door ‘in order to avoid the attack of thieves’. Compare the poor fishermen in [Theocritus] 21,15–16 οὐ κλειῖδ’, οὐχὶ θύραν ἔχον, οὐ κύνα· πάντα περισσά | ταῦτ’ ἔδοκει τήνοις· ἅ γὰρ πενία σφας ἐτήρει.

¹⁴ The Suda has an entry (π 958 Adler) πέμπελος· γέρον καὶ γραῦς, παρὰ τὸ πέμπεσθαι εἰς τὸν ἄιδην (cf. notes 4 and 5 above). But I would not wish to claim that this comes from Salustius’ commentary on the Hecale (see my edition, pp. 40–44 and 358). The source is probably a scholion on Lycophron, who is actually named in Et. Mag. p. 660,6 πέμπελος· Λυκόφρων, ἢ γραῦς κτλ. (clearly from Lyc. 826).

I am most grateful to Dr. Martin West for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Postscript: I have discovered that Mich. Chon. uses πέμπελος once elsewhere (II, 235, 5–6 πεμπέλου ὃ ἐστὶν ἐσχατογέροντος); the added explanation suggests that his correspondent might not know the word.