

LUIGI BATTEZZATO

THE VIENNA EPIGRAMS PAPYRUS: ANOTHER FOOTNOTE

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 204 (2017) 22–23

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

THE VIENNA EPIGRAMS PAPYRUS: ANOTHER FOOTNOTE

Ὡς ὠραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων ἀγαθά.
Romans 10:15

Francesca Maltomini, in her edition of P. Vindob. G. 40611 fr. (a) verso line 14, suggested the reading

πρὸς τὸν ἐμὸν με[.]οντα φίλοι πόδες εἴ μ' ἀνάγοιτε
 'Dear feet, if you should take me to my (beloved) . . .'

In alternative, she suggested μάλλ' ἄγοιτε, 'with the object in the next verse', a solution she judged to be 'not impossible, but less likely'. Maltomini admitted that she could not find 'any similar apostrophe to one's own feet' but observed that 'apostrophes to other parts of the body are common (see e.g. Eur. *Tr.* 1178, Soph. *Phil.* 1004 and Ar. *Th.* 776 for the hands) and the sense seems satisfactory'.¹

Patrick Finglass recently pointed out that 'tragedy preserves three apostrophes from a speaker to his own foot (if not feet), all by Philoctetes, at Aesch. fr. 254 *TrGF* and Soph. *Phil.* 785, 1188–9, but these are from such a different context that they hardly count as parallels'.²

In fact we do have a series of other parallels from tragedy where characters directly address their feet. As in the epigram from the Vienna papyrus, these characters ask their feet to carry them to the place they want to go. Hecuba (in Eur. *Hec.* 170–2) orders her old foot to take her to the tent where Polyxena is lodged:

ὦ τλάμων ἄγησαί μοι πούς,
 ἄγησαι τῶι γηραιῶι
 πρὸς τάνδ' ἀλύαν.

Hecuba again, in Eur. *Tro.* 1275–6, asks her feet to take her for the last time to Troy so that she can bid farewell to her city:

ἀλλ', ὦ γεραιὲ πούς, ἐπίσπευσον μόλις,
 ὡς ἀσπάζωμαι τὴν ταλαίπωρον πόλιν.

At the very end of the play (Eur. *Tro.* 1328–9) she asks again her trembling limbs (in fact a synonym for feet and legs) to guide her march:

ἰὼ (ἰώ), τρομερὰ τρομερὰ
 μέλεα, φέρετ' ἐμὸν ἵχνος·

Finally, the old servant exhorts himself to action at Eur. *Ion* 1041–2, again addressing his foot:

ἄγ', ὦ γεραιὲ πούς, νεανίας γενοῦ
 ἔργοισι, κεῖ μὴ τῶι χρόνῳ πάρεστί σοι.

McClure 1995: 52–5 discusses these and other examples of 'ὦ with parts of the body' and correctly notes that such addresses are used more frequently by female characters, or by characters of lower social status, stressing vulnerability.³

¹ See Maltomini in Maehler, Parsons and Maltomini 2015: 126.

² He observed that a 'better comparison for the sentiment expressed in Maltomini's reconstruction may be found in the words of Sophocles' Electra to the Paedagogus ὦ φίλταται μὲν χεῖρες, ἥδιστον δ' ἔχων ἰ ποδῶν ὑπηρέτημα (*El.* 1357–8). In her delight Electra first apostrophises the hands into which she consigned the infant Orestes years ago (cf. 1348 οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτῳ μ' ἔδωκας ἐς χεῖράς ποτε;), before invoking the feet which did Orestes such service by conveying him to Phocis, and then accompanying him back home again.' See Finglass 2016.

³ McClure 1995: 54: 'This type of address represents the body, whether that of a woman or a child, as a source of affect and site of vulnerability; it is not surprising, therefore, that we find few of these examples applied to men.' See also Dickey

Homeric characters and animals are ‘carried’ by their feet (*Iliad* 5.885 ἀλλά μ’ ὑπήνεικαν ταχέες πόδες, 6.514 ταχέες δὲ πόδες φέρον, 15.405 τὸν μὲν ἄρ’ ὡς εἰπόντα πόδες φέρον, 17.700 τὸν μὲν δάκρυ χέοντα πόδες φέρον ἐκ πολέμοιο, *Od.* 15.555 τὸν δ’ ὄκα προβιβῶντα πόδες φέρον),⁴ and Homer himself, according to Pseudo-Herodotus’ account *On Homer’s Origins, Date, and Life*, wished that his feet took him to a city inhabited by civilised human beings (Ps.-Hdt. *Vit.Hom.* 11):⁵

αἶψα πόδες με φέροιεν ἐς αἰδοίων πόλιν ἀνδρῶν·
τῶν γὰρ καὶ θυμὸς πρόφρων καὶ μήτις ἀρίστη.

The epigrammatist combined traditional literary features from epic and tragedy, two genres that had a huge impact on post-classical Greek literature.⁶ These parallels strengthen the case for Maltomini’s reconstruction, and suggest a possible link between female voice and self-address.⁷

Bibliography

- Battezzato, L. (forthcoming) *Euripides: Hecuba*, Cambridge.
 Dickey, E. (1996) *Greek Forms of Address: from Herodotus to Lucian*, Oxford.
 Finglass, P. J. (2016) The Vienna Epigrams Papyrus: a Footnote, *ZPE* 199: 28.
 Graziosi, B. and Haubold, J. (2010) *Homer: Iliad 6*, Cambridge.
 Heath, M. (1987) ‘Jure principem locum tenet’: Euripides’ *Hecuba*, *BICS* 34: 40–68.
 Maehler, H., Parsons, P. and Maltomini, F. (2015) *The Vienna Epigrams Papyrus (G 40611)*, Berlin.
 McClure, L. (1995) Female Speech and Characterization in Euripides, in F. De Martino and A. H. Sommerstein (eds), *Lo spettacolo delle voci*, Bari, 35–60.
 Medda, E. (2002) Il monologo di Cresfonte e una parodia aristofanea recuperata (Eur. fr. 448a, 83–109 K., *Alc.* 840, *Ar. Ach.* 480–488), *Eikasmos* 13: 67–84.
 Parker, L. P. E. (2007) *Euripides: Alcestis*, Oxford.
 West, M. L. (2003) *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer*, Cambridge, MA.

Luigi Battezzato, Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Piazza S. Eusebio 5, 13100 Vercelli, Italy
 luigi.battezzato@uniupo.it

1996: 186. For other examples of such self-addresses delivered by male and female characters see Medda 2002; Parker 2007 on Eur. *Alc.* 837, with references.

⁴ See e.g. Graziosi and Haubold 2010 on *Il.* 6.511 and 514.

⁵ See West 2003: 303–4 on this and other poetic texts from the *Life*, and 364–5 for text and translation.

⁶ The importance of Homer in Hellenistic literature needs no illustration. On the ancient reception of *Hecuba* see in particular Heath 1987; Battezzato forthcoming (introduction, sections 7–8).

⁷ I am happy to thank Patrick Finglass for discussing this topic with me. The responsibility for any remaining errors is mine. This research is original and received financial support from the Università del Piemonte Orientale.