

THREE HOMERIC PASSAGES

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Las dificultades que parecen contener tres pasajes de Homero (*Il.* 5.709, 15.741 y 16.68) pueden explicarse a la luz de un uso metafórico del verbo κλίνω.

The difficulties which three Homeric passages (*Il.* 5.709, 15.741, 16.68) seem to offer can be explained in the light of a metaphorical meaning of the verb κλίνω.

In a very learned article P. Janni¹ has shown that «il perfetto passivo di κλίνω», followed by the dative, means «trovarsi, essere situato» (pp. 12 and 17) and is as such most suitably used of geographical subjects, such as e. g. islands. The clearest example is *Od.* 4.607 ff. (οὐ γὰρ τις νήσων ἱππήλατος οὐδ' εὐλείμων / αἶθ' ἄλλ' κεκλίεται, «islands, which are located in the sea»), which is n° 13 in Janni's list of the passages examined by him.

G. Giangrande² has demonstrated that Janni's explanation of *S. Tr.* 103 δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθείς, where the subject is Heracles and not a geographical item, is correct, insofar as Heracles is envisaged by the poet, metaphorically, as

¹ *QUCC* 3 (1967) 7 ff.

² *CL* 3 (1987) 61 ff.

part of the landscape: the metaphor, that is underlines Heracles' reluctance to abandon the place where he is.

In the light of Janni's and Giangrande's demonstrations we can perhaps throw light upon three passages which Janni was not able to elucidate entirely. The first is *Il.* 5. 708 ff. (n° 3 in Janni's list):

ὄς ῥ' ἐν Ὑλῆι ναίεσκε μέγα πλούτοιο μεμηλῶς,
λίμνη κεκλιμένος Κηφισίδι πὰρ δὲ οἱ ἄλλοι
ναῖον Βοιωτοί, μάλα πίονα δῆμον ἔχοντες.

Janni (p. 15) confesses himself unable to account for this passage within the framework of his comprehensive study of the terminology under discussion. In reality, the passage is capable of a full explanation: we are faced here with the same metaphorical usage indicated by Giangrande in the case of Heracles at *Tr.* 103. The lake Cephissis, as lake Copais was called in more ancient times³, was proverbially rich in fish, cane, etc. The marshes of the Copais were frequently covered with water fowl, and large quantities of fish were caught in the lake⁴. There is no need to think that Oresbios occupied one of the «lake-habitations» such as Herodotus mentions, i. e. a home resting upon poles in the lake, as Paley thinks in his commentary *ad loc.* The sense is that Oresbios was so πλούτοιο μεμηλῶς, so interested in exploiting the riches of the lake by fishing, that he was, metaphorically, «located in the lake» (λίμνη κεκλιμένος) as though he were one of the geographical fixtures, one of the islands in the marsh. The metaphor is accompanied by the explanatory words μέγα πλούτοιο μεμηλῶς⁵.

The second passage is *Il.* 15.740 (n° 7 in Janni's list):

ἀλλ' ἐν γὰρ Τρώων πεδίῳ πύκα θωρηκτῶν,
πόντῳ κεκλιμένοι ἐκὰς ἤμεθα πατρίδος αἴης.

Whereas at *Od.* 4.607 (...νήσων...αἱ θ' ἀλλ' κεκλιαται) the sense is clear, in the light of Janni's explanation («islands which are located in the sea»), how can the phrase πόντῳ κεκλιμένοι be used of the Greeks? The Greeks are not islands. Syntactically there is no problem: the perfect κεκλιμένοι denotes here, emphatically, a state which has not been reached yet and which the speaker is envisaging, for effect, as already reached⁶. The Greeks are running the risk of being pushed into the sea, and therefore Ajax, in order to exhort them to fight and push back the enemy, says «we are already in the sea» (πόντῳ κεκλιμένοι). From the semantic point of view there is no problem either, because we are faced, once again, with the metaphorical use whereby humans are envisaged as part of the landscape:

³ Cf. W. Smith, *Diction. of Gr. & Rom. Geogr.*, s. v. *Boeotia*, 411.

⁴ Cf. Smith, *op. cit.* 414.

⁵ For this procedure cf. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* 124 f.

⁶ Cf. Kühner-Gerth I, 150.

Ajax is at pains to emphasise, as Paley in his commentary on line 727 underlines, that unless the Greeks fight back and prevent the destruction of their ships they will consequently be permanently, for ever, «stuck in the sea» (πόντῳ κεκλιμένοι) like metaphorical islands or rocks, unable to return to their homeland. In sum: unless the Greeks prevent the Trojans from reaching the ships, the Greeks will be pushed into the sea by the Trojans, who will destroy the ships lying on the shore, whilst the Greeks, pushed into the sea and deprived of their sole means of return, will be permanently «stuck in the sea» as though they were part of the sea-landscape, unable to leave the sea and return to their homeland, just as Heracles, in Sophocles' lines, explained by Giangrande, is envisaged as part of the landscape because of his reluctance to leave that landscape and return to his homeland. Once again, the metaphor is accompanied by explanatory words, as we have seen to be the case with the words μέγα πλούτοιο μεμηλώς which accompany the metaphor λίμνη κεκλιμένος. The explanatory words are in this case ἐκὰς πατρίδος γαίης.

Exactly the same type of metaphor occurs at *Il.* 16.68 (n° 8 in Janni' s list):

οἱ δὲ ῥηγγίῳι θαλάσσης
κεκλίεται, χώρης ὀλίγην ἔτι μοῖραν ἔχοντες
Ἄργεῖοι.

Here the Argives are envisaged as being «stuck in the shore» as if they were part of the landscape because the speaker is at pains to underline that they «cannot move from it», as Paley aptly says *ad loc.* Once again the metaphorical usage (ῥηγγίῳι θαλάσσης κεκλίεται = «they were stuck in the shore, as they were a part of the landscape») is followed by a few explanatory words, in this case ὀλίγην ἔτι μοῖραν ἔχοντες.

Conclusion: The three passages which Janni⁷ cannot fully account for, in the light of his explanation of the construction κεκλιμένος, κέκλιμαι+dative = «be situated in...» (i. e. *Il.* 5.709, 15.740 and 16.68) are capable of an explanation, in the light of Giangrande's clarification to the effect that the construction in question could be applied, metaphorically, to humans who were envisaged as part of the landscape, because they were, as the respective contexts emphasize, unable, or unwilling, to leave⁸.

⁷ *Art. cit.* 15.

⁸ Ναιετᾶω / ναίω, which means «habito» (*Theo. s. v.* ναιετᾶω 1347 D), applicable to people, has been used by both Homer and Sophocles of geographical subjects: e. g. *Il.* 2.648 πόλεις εὐναεταώσας, 2.626 νήσων αἰ ναίουσι πέραν ἄλός, *S. Aj.* 597 ὦ κλεινὰ Σαλαμίς, σὺ μὲν που ναίεις ἀλίπλαγκτος εὐδαίμων.