

Lemnos

- Parallels to Odyssey
 - Odysseus on Calypso's island
 - Polyphemus ('uncivilized')
 - Philoctetes' Desire for Nostos (p.205)
- Parallels to Illiad
 - Philoctetes' hatred and refusal to participate/ Achilles' rage in the Illiad
 - Story of Hephaestus' obligation to Thetis

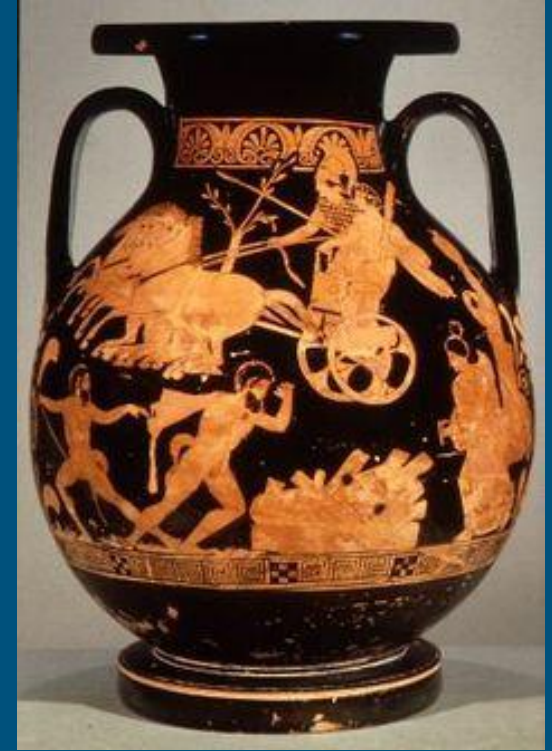


HobbyTech Ααυραβός

Let's GoPro Lemnos

Bow of Hercules

- Helenus has prophesied (through torture) that the bow and Philoctetes are necessary for the sack of Troy p.208



Odysseus

“I well know, my son, that by nature you are not apt to utter or contrive such guile, yet seeing that victory is a sweet prize to gain bend your will to it; our honesty shall be shown forth another time. But now lend yourself to me for one little knavish day, and then, through all your days to come, be called the most righteous of mankind.”

- Odysseus to Neoptolemus p.195 lines 79-85



“Neoptolemus: You think it no shame then to speak falsehood?”

Odysseus: No, if the falsehood brings deliverance.”

-p. 196 lines 108-109

Parallels to 5th century Athens

“...it is equally necessary that the man arguing for the most terrible proposals win over the people by deceit and the man with the better advice make himself trusted by lying.”

- Thucydides 3.43.2 (Diodotos in the Mytilenean debate)
- Victory at all costs
- Rhetoric as tool to further personal political ambitions (necessary whether your goals are noble or not)



“The simplicity that is especially found in noble natures disappeared because it became ridiculous”
-Thucydides, 3.83.1 on moral and civil change during the Peloponnesian War

Neoptolemus

- Rare example of character development and change of mind
- Was not part of Aeschylus and Euripides' *Philoctetes*
- He was usually associated with inhuman cruelty because in the epic cycle he brutally butchers Priam on the altar of Zeus (Hercules alludes to this in his warning to remain pious during the sack of Troy)
- He successfully lies to Philoctetes and obtains the bow while he is in a paroxysm (p.211-12)
- He then feels guilty when he witnesses Philoctetes' agonies and confesses his treachery



Philoctetes' pain

“O Death, Death, when I am thus ever calling you, day by day why can you never come? O my son, generous youth, come, seize me, burn me up, true-hearted friend, in yonder fire famed as Lemnian; I too once deemed it lawful to do the same to the son of Zeus, for the meed of these same arms which are now in your keeping.”

-Philoctetes begs Neoptolemus to kill him as he did for Hercules p. 212-213



Philoctetes

- In Aeschylus & Euripides, Odysseus/Diomedes steal the bow (while he is incapacitated by a paroxysm) and compel Philoctetes to go to Troy
- Sophocles' version heightens the ethical complexity with Neoptolemos' crisis of conscience because of Philoctetes' paroxysm
- Philoctetes is not compelled to go to Troy by human persuasion/plot; instead he obeys the deified Hercules
- In this way the main action is not Odysseus' cleverness, but Philoctetes' own choice to embrace his destiny

