

MEI NUCESQUE

A newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

SOPHOCLES STAGED FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

*This is the shore of jagged Lemnos,
a land bound by waves, untrodden, lonely.
Here I abandoned Poias's son,
Philoctetes of Melos, years ago.*

...
*I had to cast him away here:
our masters, the princes, commanded me to,
for disease had conquered him.*
(Lines 1-17, Translation by Gregory McNamee, from
Project Gutenberg)

So Odysseus says at the beginning of Sophocles' play *Philoctetes*. In this passage Odysseus tells Achilles' son Neoptolemus about Philoctetes, a master archer whom the Greeks had marooned at the island of Lemnos on their way to Troy after he had been bitten by a snake in the foot. Odysseus explains why the Greeks left him in Lemnos: "his foot was eaten away by festering sores. / We had no recourse. At our holy feasts, / we could not reach for meat and wine. / He would not let us sleep; / he howled all night, wilder than a wolf. / He blanketed our camp with evil cries, / moaning, screaming."

The Greeks come back to Lemnos after fighting at Troy for ten years. They have captured Helenus, the son of Priam, who tells them that they need to get Hercules' bow from Philoctetes. Odysseus sends Achilles' son Neoptolemus to steal the bow from Philoctetes. During the course of the play, Neoptolemus learns compassion for this lonely downcast man.

Sophocles received first prize at the Festival of Dionysius in Athens in 409 B.C. for this play. 2400 years later Bryan Doerries, a writer, director, and translator,

staged a reading of *Philoctetes* in a vastly different venue. Dr. Lyuba Konopasek, a pediatrician who directs a first-year course called "Medicine, Patients, and Society" at Weill Medical College of Cornell University asked Mr. Doerries to bring the problems of patient care to light with Sophocles' play. "Dr. Edith Langer, an internist, said, 'Philoctetes' horror was the horror of abandonment.' And yet, she continued, as Sophocles accurately pointed out, it can take so little from doctors to turn that around: a daily visit, a few minutes of friendly conversation, or sometimes just a new young ear to hear the story all over again."

"We have created a subclass of patients like Philoctetes with modern medicine," Mr. Doerries said. "They are abandoned on their islands to live long, but have we risen to the challenge of taking emotional care of them?"



Philoctète sur Lemnos. Liebig 1914. Photo ©Maicar Förlag-GML

Abigail Zuger of the *New York Times* recounts the strong impression the play made on the students: "After the actors finished, students and faculty members talked for a long time about how students often feel helpless in the hospital,

torn between befriending patients with incurable illness and sticking to a professional script. Sophocles somehow got that tenuous position just right, just as he knew that sick people, isolated and transformed by chronic disease, dread being alone and forgotten more than they dread pain or even death."

Quotes from *The New York Times*. "The Difficult Patient, a Problem Old as History (or Older)" by Abigail Zuger. Tuesday March 6, 2007. D5.

Other Sources:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philoctetes>;

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philoctetes_%28Sophocles%29;www.gutenberg.org.

Picture:

<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/000Free/003Illustrations/source/6.html>

Dear Reader,

Would you like to see something different in this newsletter? Send your own submissions to mpawlow@udallas.edu, drop them off at the Classics department desk, or put them in UD Box 610, Attn: MN. Spero tu valeas.

Marv Pawlowski, Editor

Help for Classics and Classical Philology Majors!

Are you wondering about the requirements for your Classics or Classical Philology major? Do you know what Classics in Translation and Related Fields courses are? Are you ambitiously thinking of ideas for your Junior paper or Senior thesis? Do you know when you will take the Senior comprehensive exams? All of these questions, and more, are answered in the "Packet for Majors". You will find a link to it on the menu on the Classics homepage, or go directly to www.udallas.edu/classics/resources/packetformajors.pdf.

DR. CYNTHIA W. SHELMERDINE
Martha Sharp Joukowsky Lecture

“The Workings of a Mycenaean State”

Wednesday April 25, 2007
7:00p.m
Room K-216
North Lake College

Using both archaeological and textual evidence, Dr. Shelmerdine will discuss the Mycenaean economy and society in the Bronze Age. Dr. Shelmerdine's lecture will summarize the current research on how Mycenaean states functioned including relations between states. She will also address her current archaeological work at the Iklaina Archaeological Project in Pylos, Greece. This project seeks to uncover information about the Greek kings at the time of the Trojan War, especially the legendary king Nestor.

Remember, our lectures are free and open to the public. We especially welcome students from all of the colleges and universities in the Dallas – Ft. Worth Metroplex.

Best regards,
Larry Lehman
President, Dallas – Ft. Worth AIA Society

GUESS WHO... The quote and picture from February's edition referred to C. Julius Caesar. For this week: *Philoctetes* was a Greek play written by Sophocles in 409B.C., but he is also mentioned somewhere in the *Iliad*. Do you remember where?

Common Latin Words and Abbreviations Used in Scholarly Papers

Even people who know Latin might not know the technical uses for the following terms sometimes used in scholarly papers. Fortunately the list isn't endless.

c., ca.	circa	about
cf	confer	compare (with this external source)
e.g.	exempli gratia	for example
et al.	et alii (or alia)	and others
et seq.	et sequens	and the following
etc.	et cetera	and the rest, and so forth
ibid.	ibidem	in the same place
id.	idem	the same as before
i.e.	id est	that is
infra	infra	below
loc. cit.	loco citato	the place cited
non seq.	non sequitur	it does not follow
N.B.	nota bene	note well; take notice
op. cit.	opere citato	in the (previous author's) work cited
passim	passim	here and there
q.v.	quod vide	which see (within the same text)
sc., scil.	scilicet	doubtless
sic	sic	thus
supra	supra	above
vide, v.	vide	see
viz	videlicet	namely

(From: "Are There Too Many E.G.'s in the Basket?" B.L. Trippett. *American Speech*, Vol. 36, No. 2. (May, 1961), pp. 141-144, with minor additions.)

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¶462. Exclamatory Infinitive: The infinitive can be used in exclamations (the subject goes in the accusative): "*Mene incepto desistere victam*"--"What! I, beaten, desist from my purpose?" (*Aen.* i. 37). The interrogative particle *-ne* is often attached to the emphatic word, as above. The present and perfect infinitive show present and past time as usual.

-From Allen and Greenough's *New Latin Grammar*

LATINAM? by ELIZABETH MALONE

Bit from Smyth's Greek Grammar

from Scott Laverick

Middle and passive deponents ¶¶810, 811.

Deponent verbs whose *aorists* have an active or middle meaning with middle forms are called middle deponents. The aorist passive for these verbs retains a *passive* force. Thus αἰτάομαι (I accuse), ητiasάμην (I accused), ητιάθην (I was accused).

Deponent verbs whose aorists have the *passive* form but an active or middle meaning are called passive deponents, as βούλομαι (I wish), ἐβουλήθην. The future of these verbs is usually middle. Most passive deponents express mental action of some sort.