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THE ALLEGED AVARICE OF SOPHOCLES.

The passage in Aristophanes, *Pax*, 695-9:

EP. πρῶτον δ' ὅ τι πράττει Σοφοκλέης ἀνήρετο.

TP. εὐδαιμονεῖ· πάσχει δὲ θαναμαστόν.

EP. τὸ τί;

TP. ἐκ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους γίγνεται Σιμωνίδης.

EP. Σιμωνίδης; πῶς;

TP. ὅτι γέρον ὦν καὶ σαπρὸς  
κέρδους ἕκατι κἂν ἐπὶ ρίπὸς πλέοι,

with the implied charge of avarice, has been a puzzle ever since the days of the scholiasts. These clearly had no authentic tradition but talk vaguely about taking pay for poetry,<sup>1</sup> or about graft during the poet's command at Samos (441-39 B. C.), an event, however, which was too remote in time, for Eirene is asking about news since her disappearance in disgust after the outbreak of the war, more particularly after the negotiations for peace after Pylos failed in 425 B. C. (ll. 665 ff.), and this play dates from 422. The modern biographers, commentators, and translators (at least the two dozen or more whom I stopped to look up, from Küster to Coulon) have nothing more plausible to offer,<sup>2</sup> and yet the reason is not, I think, far to seek.

There is no little bitterness in this play against the war-

<sup>1</sup> Adequately dealt with by Van Leeuwen, *Mnem.* 20 (1892), 218 f., although accepted by Lessing, and occasionally re-echoed since.

<sup>2</sup> The well-known difficulties of his extreme old age (*Vita* 13, with notes 55-62 in the edition of Jahn-Michaelis—but this was seventeen years before his death) about which Küster and others after him have hinted, were not yet upon him, although these, since they clearly have to do with property, support directly the inference from the present passage about the poet's very considerable wealth. On the details of the trial with Iophon see O. Hense, *Studien zu Sophokles* (Leipzig 1880), 289-310. Besides *εὐδαιμονεῖ* (696) is quite incompatible with family troubles, but *εὐδαίμων* and its derivatives are among the commonest designations for 'wealthy,' etc. H. Müller-Strübing, *Neue Jahrb.* 141 (1890), 529, thought bribery was charged, but I see nothing to suggest that.—Van Leeuwen's rather bold hypotheses (*Mnem.* 20 (1892), 217-23) have been recanted by their author himself (on *Pax* 697-9, p. 112, n. 2).

profiteers, especially the makers of munitions, whose wealth, derived from big profits in a thriving business, had made them the object of the poet's scorn. Thus at 545 a crest-maker tears his hair at the prospect of peace, and at 546-7 a dealer in pitchforks insults a sword-cutler. A 1199 ff. a sickle-maker, who previously couldn't sell his wares for a collybus is now charging 50 drachmas apiece (profiteering with a vengeance, but the shoe is on the other foot!), while the cask-maker is selling casks for 3 drachmas each. At 1210 a ruined crest-maker appears, whose "trade and living" have been "destroyed," and with him is a spear-burnisher. At 1224 a breast-plate-seller is insulted for his laments over the loss of his market, at 1240 a trumpeter, at 1250 a helmet-seller, and at 1262 the spear-burnisher again. This raillery at the munition-makers is, therefore, one of the conspicuous features of the play.

Now Sophillus, the father of Sophocles, was by class a *τέκτων* or *χαλκεύς* (Aristoxenus), specifically a *μαχαιροποιός* (Istrus), or manufacturer of knives and swords.<sup>3</sup> Such a trade was no doubt lucrative at all times during the fifth century at Athens, and especially so, we can be certain, since the outbreak of the war nine years before the presentation of the *Peace*, when Sophocles himself, who was then either sixty-four or sixty-six years of age, must surely be thought of as having succeeded to the general administration of the business. At a moment, therefore, of general bitterness at the war profiteers, Sophocles the prosperous sword-manufacturer (*εὐδαιμονεῖ*), comes in together with the rest of the munition-makers for a curt fllip.<sup>4</sup> He must have been opposed to the demand for peace<sup>5</sup> and in favor of what Aristophanes regarded as a reckless, that is 'bitter-end' war policy.

<sup>3</sup> *Vita* 1. A. Schöll, *Sophokles, Sein Leben und Wirken* (Frankfurt a. M. 1842), 20-21, suggests not unplausibly that the trade of iron-worker or bronze-founder was practised from of old in the ancestral deme of Colonus.

<sup>4</sup> The dictum that Aristophanes never criticised Sophocles requires a little qualification. See W. J. Hickie's translation, I, p. 195, n. 6.

<sup>5</sup> So Müller-Strübing, *l. c.*, and Van Leeuwen, *ad loc.* Whether with the phrase *ἐπὶ βίβος*, a pun on *βυφοκίνδυνος* (a word not preserved, however, from any comic poet), may have been intended, as Van Leeuwen would seem to suggest, need not be decided.

It is noteworthy, perhaps, that of the three immortal poets at Athens who lived through the Peloponnesian war, the two who felt the utmost moral aversion to war, Aristophanes and Euripides, although they agreed on scarcely any other point, were landowners, and must have been almost ruined by the devastation of the country. The other, Sophocles, who seems never to have had a twinge of moral compunction about war, and was in fact so 'cheerful' in this world that he was thought even to have carried the mood with him into the next (*Frogs*, 82), shared the inner councils of the government and the war party, and was a prominent munition-maker. It is relatively easy for the average man to identify right and wrong with his own interests; but if such minds and characters as these may be thus swayed, how can one envisage the masses of mankind as being moved in large political decisions by anything but material considerations?

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