

LET VIENNA STINK

Philokteter aller Länder, vereinigt Euch!

One of the most important problems concerning the myth about Philoctetes, according to me, is not the sentimental part of it (that he himself is an invalid excommunicated and left on Lemnos island without any compassion on behalf of his military allies) but the sensual part of it (that his leg stinks repulsively, i.e. provokes purely physiological reaction of disgust). From this point of view the guilt of Ulysses who is personally responsible for leaving Philoctetes on the desert island is quite understandable and it is not so easy to blame him for what he did to Philoctetes. In fact Ulysses left him in order not to let the Greek army to be contaminated by his rot. This is the point of the real tragedy - that Ulysses, facing provocation to Vienna when transforming it into Lemnos would be to make the city really stink. Transferring the action from the ethical to purely psychological level, i.e. making Vienna (this perfumed, clean and nice city) to stink repulsively would become real political & esthetic problem (all in one!) which may awake the community and open its noses and eyes for a while.

It's still somewhat easy to try the ability of the people to be compassionate when there are no real sensual hurdles in front of them to jump over. When such hurdles are present though, then, I'm afraid, we'll witness that being compassionate is much more complex question than it appears. Then we could feel on our skin that it's not so easy to blame the presumably bad characters for being bad as it will be directly proven that each of us tends to become bad when our sensual comfort is directly affected. Let Vienna stink unbearably! This is the way to import Lemnos into it. Undoubtedly.

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