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Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica

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The Rock of Ajax: Posidippus 19.9 A-B

μὴ] λόγισαι με<γ>άλ<η>ν τ[αύτη]ν πόσα κύμα[τα λᾶαν
    τη]λοῦ μαινομένης ἐξ[εφόρησ]εν ἁλός·
τή]νδε Ποσειδάων βρια[ρῶς ἐδ]όνει καὶ ἀπ[οκλάς
    ῥίμφ’]{α}ἐφ’ ἑνὸς σκληροῦ κ[ύματο]ς ἐξέβαλεν
ἡμι]πλεθραίην ὅσας προ[τὶ τ]ἄ[σ]τεα πέτρην,
    τοῦ Πολυφημείου σκαιοτέρ<η>ν θυρεοῦ·
οὐκ ἄ<ν> μιν Πολύφημος ἐβάστασε, σὺν Γαλατείαι
    πυκνὰ κολυμβήσας αἰπολικὸς δύσερως·
οὐδ’ Ἀνταί<ου>¹ ὁ γυρὸς ὀλοίτρ<ο>χος,² ἀλλὰ τριαίνης
    τοῦτο Καφηρείης τε<ι>ρα<τ>οεργὸν ἁλός·
ἴσχε, Ποσειδᾶον, μεγάλην χέρα καὶ βαρὺ κῦμα
    ἐκ πόντου ψιλὴν μὴ φέρ’ ἐπ’ ἠϊόνα·
τετρακαιεικοσίπηχυν ὅτ’ ἐ<κ> βυθοῦ ἤραο λᾶαν,
    ῥεῖα καταμήσεις εἰν ἁλὶ νῆσον ὅλην.

                                                    [19 A-B]

Do not calculate how many waves carried [this rock] far from the raging sea. Poseidon shook it fiercely and [having broken it off] swiftly/lightly with one powerful [wave] cast out this rock, half-a-plethron in size, shoving it towards the cities, this rock more wild than the door-stone of Polyphemus. Polyphemus could not have lifted it, the love-sick goatherd who often dived with Galatea; nor does this round boulder belong to Antaeus, but this marvel of the sea of Caphareus is the work of the trident. Poseidon, stay your great hand and do not bring a mighty wave from the sea against the defense-less coast; having raised a rock of twenty-four cubits from the deep, easily would you lay waste in the sea a whole island.³

Line 9 poses a serious problem. What is the relation between the giant Antaeus, son of Poseidon, and the huge rock referred to in the text? In light of this interpretive conundrum, it is worthwhile to re-examine the text and the various suggestions proposed so far.

1. The editors print οὐδ’ Ἀνταί<ου> ὁ γυρὸς ὀλοίτρ<ο>χος, ἀλλὰ τριαίνης and argue that «questa è parsa la soluzione più semplice per l’incomprensibile sequenza ουδανταιογυροςολοδτριχοςαλλατριαινῃς del papiro.»⁴ Apart from emphasizing that Antaeus (like Polyphemus) is the son of Poseidon, they maintain that their suggestion is supported by the fact that this giant was notorious for his force (like Polyphemus) and by his being presented as living on a rocky shore (Luc. *Phars.* 4.589-590)⁵. This line of thought goes the wrong way, despite the fact that Antaeus

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¹ The text is that of Bastianini – Gallazzi 2001. For an up-to-date critical apparatus with multiple new proposals, see the twelfth version of the New Posidippus as a 'text in progress' that is available from the Center for Hellenic Studies at Washington DC (editors: Angiò *et Al.*).
² I do not punctuate after ὀλοίτρ<ο>χος, following Petrain 2003, 359 (see also 360 f.).
³ The translation is by Hunter 2004, 100 with some modifications.
⁴ See Bastianini – Gallazzi 2001, 132.
⁵ *inde petit tumulos exesasque undique rupes, / Antaei quas regna uocat non uana uetustas.*

was, like Polyphemus, very strong and a son of Poseidon. Ἀνταί<ου> hardly makes any sense, for the point Posidippus is making in line 9 must be aligned (οὐδ') with the mythological allusion to the huge rock Polyphemus placed at the entrance of his cave, in order to shut in Odysseus and his companions. 'Nor does this round boulder belong to Antaeus' is meaningless, since Antaeus is *never* associated in myth with any stone,[6] as required by the Posidippan context. Readers who search for anything pertaining to Antaeus will be disappointed, since no matter how much they look into the mythological tradition they will not be able to come up with anything of significance.[7]

Special credit must be given to Petrain, whose study of the entire epigram is full of brilliant insights. Unfortunately, Petrain takes the 'problematic' Ἀνταῖος as a given and tries to explain it by offering a new intepretation of ὀλοίτροχος, despite the fact that he admits that «the Gyrai and Ajax's death at the hands of Poseidon remain nevertheless as a disturbing subtext.»[8] Petrain ingeniously used Theocr. *Id*. 22.48-50,[9] in which the muscles below the shoulders of the boxer Amycus are compared to πέτροι ὀλοίτροχοι, in order to argue that the missing verb we need to understand in line 9 of Posidippus' epigram is ἐβάστασε from line 7 (see οὐκ ... οὐδ') and that we should translate as 'nor could the rounded shoulders of Antaeus [carry the stone]'. The connection to a new Theocritean subtext is tempting, but this line of thought leaves unanswered some basic interpretive desiderata: (a) why would Antaeus be expected to carry or lift a stone? He is, very much unlike Polyphemus, not known for carrying or lifting any stone; (b) what is the function of the sole geographical reference in the whole epigram, i.e. the sea of Caphareus (10) *in connection to Antaeus* (made necessary by the use of ἀλλά in line 9)? (c) It does not make any sense to say 'nor could the rounded shoulders of Antaeus carry the stone, but rather the trident (of his father!) is the cause of this miracle of the sea of Caphareus'; (d) γυρός, a rare word, remains unexplained. Petrain's attempt to take it as an allusion to an Odyssean passage where it is used for Eurybates' shoulders (19.246) introduces yet another intertextual reference that complicates things further, since we need to assume that γυρὸς ὀλοίτροχος represents a juxtaposition of a Homeric gloss of a Theocritean *hapax* (!)[10] (e) The reading Ἀνταί<ου> ὁ γυρὸς creates a hiatus which Posidippus in general avoids.[11]

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[6] As Petrain (2003, 366 f.) rightly observes, the *tumuli* and *rupes* of the Lucan passage the editors are citing «are neither rounded nor mobile, so that ὀλοίτροχος does not fit and γυρός only underscores the difficulty.»

[7] See Hunter 2004, 101 n. 34, who has rightly expressed his skepticism about the editors' choice but admits that this is the best solution he knows.

[8] 2003, 372.

[9] On a detailed commentary on these verses with many parallels, see Sens 1997, 116-8.

[10] There is no ancient evidence whatsoever that ὀλοίτροχος was interpreted as shoulder by the ancient commentators, which would be required if we were to argue that Posidippus is reflecting the scholiastic tradition. On the contrary, such a tradition is amply manifest in ancient Homeric criticism with respect to γυρός ('round') and ὀλοίτροχος ('boulder running destructively' or 'boulder entirely round'). See below.

[11] See Laudenbach 2002-03, 97.

2. Another suggestion has been put forward by D. Obbink:[12] οὐδ' Αἰτναῖος ὁ γυρὸς ὀλοίτροχος ('nor is the huge boulder that of Aetna'). Though attractive, since it tries to solve the 'problem' of the stone, this suggestion is not satisfying, for it fails to explain (a) what triggered the use of the rare word γυρός, and more importantly (b) the function of the sole geographical reference in the whole epigram, that of the sea of Caphareus[13] in the next line.

3. Livrea[14] has suggested ἀνταῖος ('nor was the round boulder menacing') or ἀνταῖον[15] avoiding any mythological references. This is odd, because οὐδ' shows that Posidippus is still operating within a mythological framework. The strongest point against Livrea's suggestion is that his emendation makes no sense in light of the 'abrupt' reference to the sea of Caphareus.

4. Lapini has suggested that we read ἀκταῖος ('nor does the huge boulder belong to the coast') arguing that «con queste parole, Posidippo metterebbe in guardia dal credere che una tale pietra possa essere caduta giù dalla scogliera per cause naturali (ad esempio una frana).»[16] In this case too, as with Livrea's proposal, I maintain that οὐδ' points to the continuation of mythological allusions, and – more importantly – the geographical reference to the sea of Caphareus in the next line remains unexplained.

My own suggestion is to read <Αἴ>αντ{αι}<ος>[17] ('nor is the huge boulder that of Ajax'). According to *Od.* 4.499-511, Locrian Ajax was first saved by Poseidon who drove him on the great cliffs of Gyrae (*Od.* 4.500-501: Γυρῇσίν μιν πρῶτα Ποσειδάων ἐπέλασσεν / πέτρῃσιν μεγάλῃσι καὶ ἐξεσάωσε θαλάσσης), but was then killed by the same god upon Ajax's arrogant boasting that he escaped from the sea on his own powers. Poseidon's vengeance is worth quoting in full (*Od.* 4.502-11):[18]

καί νύ κεν ἔκφυγε κῆρα, καὶ ἐχθόμενός περ Ἀθήνῃ,
εἰ μὴ ὑπερφίαλον ἔπος ἔκβαλε καὶ μέγ' ἀάσθη·
φῆ ῥ' ἀέκητι θεῶν φυγέειν μέγα λαῖτμα θαλάσσης.
τοῦ δὲ Ποσειδάων μεγάλ' ἔκλυεν αὐδήσαντος·

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[12] Though not in print. I owe this information to Hunter (2004, 101 n. 34), who says that this suggestion was made to him by D. Obbink in the Washington Conference on the New Posidippus.

[13] This is the first time Caphereus as an adjective modifies the word 'sea'; see Bernsdorff 2002, 12.

[14] Livrea 2002, 62.

[15] See Livrea (2002, 62), who uses evidence supporting the reading σκαιότερον (offered by the papyrus in line 6) instead of σκαιοτέ<ρ>ην (Bastianini-Gallazzi 2001), as well as τε<ι>ρα<τ>οεργὸν in line 10 (Bastianini – Gallazzi 2001).

[16] Lapini 2003, 44. See also Lapini 2007, 19 f. who insists in reading ἀκταῖος, despite the objections of Schröder 2004, 45 n. 68 and Garulli 2004, 338.

[17] For the combination of braces and angle brackets to indicate transposition, see M. West 1973, 80 f.

[18] Attention on this passage has been drawn by Gärtner 2006, 75-8. But his analysis differs from mine, since he reads οὐδ' Ἀνταίου γυρὸς ὀλοίτροχος, ἀλλὰ τριαίνης / τοῦτο Καφηρείης τειρατοεργὸν ἄγος. Apart from the fact that he offers no parallels for the juncture τριαίνης ... Καφηρείης, the oddity of Antaeus been involved in this double Odyssean reference, according to his interpretation, is very strong. See also n. 23 below.

αὐτίκ᾽ ἔπειτα τρίαιναν ἑλὼν χερσὶ στιβαρῇσιν
ἤλασε Γυραίην πέτρην, ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἔσχισεν αὐτήν·
καὶ τὸ μὲν αὐτόθι μεῖνε, τὸ δὲ τρύφος ἔμπεσε πόντῳ,
τῷ ῥ᾽ Αἴας τὸ πρῶτον ἐφεζόμενος μέγ᾽ ἀάσθη·
τὸν δ᾽ ἐφόρει κατὰ πόντον ἀπείρονα κυμαίνοντα.
ὣς ὁ μὲν ἔνθ᾽ ἀπόλωλεν, ἐπεὶ πίεν ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ.

In fact, he would have evaded his doom, in spite of Athene's enmity, if in his blind folly he had not talked so arrogantly, boasting that he had escaped from the hungry jaws of the sea in defiance of the gods. His loud-voiced blasphemy came to the ears of Poseidon, who seized his trident in his powerful hands, struck the Gyraean rock and split it into two. One half stood firm, but the fragment he had severed, where Ajax had been resting when the blind impulse took him, crashed into the sea and carried him with it into the vast and rolling depths, where he drank the salt water and drowned.[19]

Posidippus is making again an intertextual reference to the *Odyssey*, but as it was the case with the superimposition of the Theocritean Polyphemus on his Homeric predecessor,[20] so here Ajax's Odyssean fate is slightly modeled on later versions that placed his death not in the Gyraean rocks (often situated between Tenos and Myconos)[21] but in the sea of Caphareus, off the south-east corner of Euboea.[22] His ancient readers also knew well a version according to which Locrian Ajax had been killed by Athena at whose temple he had raped Cassandra during the sack of Troy. Athena had then punished Ajax by lifting him up in a whirlwind, after his ship was wrecked in a storm, impaling him with a flash of light in his chest, and finally throwing his body upon a sharp rock,[23] named after him.[24] In this light, it is clear that Posidippus is deliberately blurring two versions of the death of Locrian Ajax: the one referring to the expression 'rock of Ajax' that was widely known and was

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[19] The translation is by Rieu 2003.

[20] See ll. 7 s.; Hunter 2004, 100-4.

[21] Prof. K. Tsantsanoglou reports to me (*per litteras electronicas*) the following story, which is instructive for the process of fusion of local traditions: there is in Tenos a mountain called Tsiknias (718 m.) of quite round shape which may have been at some point called Γυράς (see Hesychius γ 1022), as well as a local tribe under the name Γυραιεῖς (as inferred from 3rd c. BC inscriptions [*IG* XII/5 872, 873, 875] in which various inhabitants of Tenos were called Γυραιεῖς). In modern day Tenos, in the Tsiknias area, people perform a dance (also performed in Andros and many other Cycladic islands) that is called καβοντορίτικος ('of the Cavo d'oro, the Italian name being used for cape Caphareus in Modern Greek). This is an instructive example of how a tradition about the death of Locrian Ajax that was initially linked to cape Caphareus, from where the Homeric hero tried to pass in his attempt to return home after the Trojan War, was later associated with several Cycladic islands. Like the modern dance, rocks and heroes can travel too.

[22] See S. West 1988, 223 f.

[23] See *Nostoi* § 107 Kullmann; Eur. *Tro.* 88-97; Ps.-Apollod. *Epit.* 6.6-7. See also the following version, which are later than Posidippus: Virg. *Aen.* 1.39-45, 11.259 f.; Hyg. *fab.* 116; Sen. *Ag.* 532-56; Dictys Cretensis, *Bellum Trojanum* 6.1 Q.S. *Posthomerica* 14.530-89; Tzetzes, schol. on Lycophron 365, 387, 389, 402. See especially the comments by Holzinger 1973, 229 f. on 387-407; Hurst 2008, 157 on 387-400.

[24] See Hyg. *fab.* 116: *in qua tempestate Aiax Locrus fulmine est a Minerva ictus, quem fluctus ad saxa illiserunt, unde Aiacis petrae sunt dictae.*

associated with his violent death by Athena (and Poseidon) off cape Caphareus,[25] and the other one narrated in the *Odyssey*, where he is killed in the Gyraean rocks by Poseidon as a result of his defiance towards the god of the sea. In this last version, the rock visible on the surface of the sea was only half of the initial rock on which Poseidon placed Ajax to save him from a terrible storm. The other half, after Poseidon broke the entire cliff into two pieces, on which Ajax was resting when he expressed his arrogant boasting against the gods, carried him with it into the bottom of the sea. Seen from this vantage point, Posidippus is superimposing on the Odyssean version of Locrian Ajax's death by Poseidon in the Gyraean rocks a later version, according to which Locrian Ajax was killed by Athena (and Poseidon) off cape Caphareus,[26] only to subvert them: the rock of the sea of Caphareus is not the one created by the death of Ajax, but a physical marvel, the work of Poseidon.[27] This great rock is not a sign of destruction, but of creation. The mighty god must restrain himself (19.11: ἴσχε, Ποσειδᾶον, μεγάλην χέρα). Nobody doubts, implies the epigrammatist, that the sea-god's power is great. He can use it though not to bring down the cities of men, but to place the rock on the surface of the sea and thus create a new island (11-4).

Seen from this vantage point, we can now fully explore the interpretive thrust of Posidippus' mythological references that are built by means of a symmetrical presentation allowing readers to engage in a demanding intertextual game.

The phrase 'more wild than the door-stone of Polyphemus' (19.6 AB) keys the audience on an Odyssean note by recalling the huge boulder the Cyclops Polyphemus placed at the door of his cave, a stone he alone could lift (*Od.* 9.240-3, 340). But this is only the beginning of the sophisticated intertextual game Posidippus weaves into the texture of his epigram. The next phrase 'Polyphemus could not have lifted it, the lovesick goatherd who often dived with Galatea' (19.7-8 AB) evokes two more texts, the one pertaining to a subsequent phase of the Cyclops' Odyssean episode featuring Polyphemus breaking off (*Od.* 9.481) a mountain peak and hurling it into the sea as he tries to destroy Odysseus' fleet (*Od.* 9.482-6), and the other referring to the lovesick Theocritean Polyphemus who dives frequently with the Nereid Galatea [to lift the rock in vain].[28] But even this transformation is not the last one, since in contrast to the Theocritean goatherd who could not swim,

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[25] On Caphareus, see *Etymologicum Magnum* s.v. Καφηρεύς (Gaisford 1848): Ἔχει μὲν καὶ Εὔβοια πρὸς τῇ ἑξῆς θαλάσσῃ Καφηρέα. Καφηρεὺς δὲ λέγεται τόπος θαλάσσης πρὸς τοῖς αἰγιαλοῖς τραχὺς καὶ τεναγώδης, σκοπέλοις διειλημμένος καὶ ἕρμασι καὶ χοιράσι, καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀπόβασιν ἀπορώτατος, ἅτε κρημνοῖς περιστοιχιζόμενος, καὶ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις κακοῖς ἔτι καὶ διηνεκέσι τοῖς ἀνέμοις καταπνεόμενος, ὡς ὁ παρ' Ὁμήρῳ προβλὴς σκόπελος, τὸν οὔποτε κύματα λείπει παντοίων ἀνέμων. On the adjective Καφήρειος, see Crinag. *AP* 9.429.3 (Καφήρειος πέτρη).

[26] In Q.S. (*Posthomerica* 14.568-72) the Gyraean rocks and cape Caphareus are presented as being situated in close distance: δὴ γάρ οἱ νεμέσησεν ὑπέρβιος Ἐννοσίγαιος, / εὖτέ μιν εἰσενόησεν ἐφαπτόμενον χερὶ πέτρης / Γυραίης, καί οἱ μέγ' ἐχώσατο. σὺν δ' ἐτίναξε / πόντον ὁμῶς καὶ γαῖαν ἀπείριτον· ἀμφὶ δὲ πάντη / κρημνοὶ ὑπεκλονέοντο Καφηρέος.

[27] On this 'destabilizing' tendency, see Petrain 2003, 360.

[28] See Richard Thomas' suggestion (apud Hunter 2004, 103) «that we should understand κολυμβήσας conditionally, 'the lovesick Cyclops could not have lifted it from the sea-floor, *even if* he dived frequently with Galatea».

his Posidippan namesake dives frequently with Galatea (19.8 AB: πυκνά κολυμβήσας),[29] perhaps to the sea-floor to lift the stone. It should not escape one's attention that Posidippus' first nexus of intertextual associations contains both *explicit* and *implicit* references: the former (explicit intertextuality) pertain to the Cyclops' door stone and the goatherd's lovesickness for Galatea, while the latter (implicit intertextuality) echo the Cyclops' hurling the first stone against Odysseus' fleet (*Od.* 9.482-6) and then praying to his father Poseidon (*Od.* 9.528-35) and lifting a far larger stone (9.537), which are innately contingent to both Poseidon's breaking off the stone (19.3 AB: καὶ ἀπ[οκλάς) and to lifting from the sea floor an even bigger one (19.13 AB: τετρακαιεικοσίπηχυν ὅτ' ἐ<κ> βυθοῦ ἤραο λᾶαν). The point in this first nexus of intertextual references is the subversion of expectations: the double reference to Odyssean Polyphemus with respect to two phases of the same episode (the door stone and the hurling of the rock) is cut short by the inability of his Theocritean namesake to perform such deeds, a namesake who is further subverted into a diver looking for the stone.

The same intertextual strategy is mutatis mutandis observed in the following couplet that begins with a reference to the first phase of another Odyssean episode: the phrase 'nor is this the round boulder of Ajax' refers to the Odyssean episode of Ajax's initial salvation and placement by Poseidon on the Gyraean rocks (*Od.* 4.499-501), that were later known as *Aiacis petrae* (Hyg. *fab.* 116). As it was the case with the previous couplet (σὺν Γαλατείαι), in the fifth and sixth feet of the hexameter (ἀλλὰ τριαίνης)[30] Posidippus subverts Poseidon's role as savior of Ajax by making an allusion through implicit intertextuality to the next phase of the same episode, in which Poseidon punishes Ajax for his arrogance and breaks into two the Gyraean rock, one part staying on the surface of the sea and the other with Ajax on it sinking to the sea floor (*Od.* 4.502-11). Abiding by the intertextual strategy he introduced in the previous couplet, Posidippus further subverts his pair of Odyssean associations pertaining to two subsequent phases of the same episode. This time he does not resort to a Theocritean context but to another epic text, the Cyclic *Nostoi*, according to which Ajax was killed by Poseidon in the sea of Caphareus (§ 107 Kullmann: εἶθ' ὁ περὶ τὰς Καφηρίδας πέτρας δηλοῦται χειμὼν καὶ ἡ Αἴαντος φθορὰ τοῦ Λοκροῦ). In a remarkable display of symmetrical development,

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[29] See Hunter 2004, 103.

[30] The force of the ἀλλά clause is to introduce an antithesis between the two Odyssean references inherent in the first four feet of 19.9 AB and pertaining to the two phases of the Ajax episode (his salvation and subsequent drowning *in the Gyraean rocks* and the placement of the episode *in the sea of Caphareus*). Those scholars who support the view that we should read Ἀνταίου and that the verb βαστάζειν must be understood fail to explain that *Antaeus is not linked to the lifting of any stone.* Schröder's suggestion (which is not very different from Petrain's understanding in 19.9 AB of some form of the verb βαστάζειν on the basis of ἐβάστασε from 19.7 AB) that the phrase οὐδ' Ἀνταί<ου> ὁ γυρὸς ὀλοίτρ<ο>χος means something like οὐδ' Ἀνταίου ἂν ἦν βαστάσαι τὸν γυρὸν ὀλοίτροχον (2004, 45 v. 68) is based on the forced assumption that in both mythological references we are dealing with the theme of stone lifting. Here lies the crucial difference with my own interpretation: the associative mechanism is the *stone, not its lifting*. Polyphemus and Ajax are the vehicles showing the range of the power of Poseidon against an Odyssean backdrop, either indirectly (Polyphemus being Poseidon's son) or directly (Ajax being saved and then killed by Poseidon).

Posidippus undermines, as he did in the previous couplet, even the context of the *Nostoi*, since in contrast to that epic he transforms the rock of the sea of Caphareus into a marvel of Poseidon's force.

In sum, Posidippus organizes his intertextual game according to the following blue-print:

A1. Two Odyssean references to two distinct phases of the Polyphemus episode, an explicit (door stone) and an implicit one (hurling of the stone).
A2. A Theocritean reference undermining the previous explicit Odyssean reference (inability to lift the stone)
A3. A Posidippan coloring of the last reference (Polyphemus as diver)

B1. Two Odyssean references to two distinct phases of the episode of Locrian Ajax's death, an explicit (his salvation on the Gyraean rock), and an implicit one (his drowning together with that part of the rock on which he was lying)
B2. A Cyclic reference undermining the explicit Odyssean allusion (the episode is linked to the sea of Caphareus and not to the Gyraean rock)
B3. A Posidippan coloring of the last reference (the rock is seen as a marvel, not as a means of death)

In this way, Posidippus' intertextual game involves multiple rocks: the door stone and the rock(s) thrown against Odysseus in the Polyphemus episode, the rock Ajax was placed on by Poseidon who initially saved him and the rocks created by Poseidon's anger, one on the sea surface and one with Ajax upon it on the sea floor.

Having discussed the various interpretive ramifications of the suggested reading Αἴαντος, it is time to evaluate it from the point of view of textual criticism. Seen as a whole, the reading Αἴαντος:
(a) is easily explained by a transposition of αι AIANTO > ANTAIO;
(b) has the advantage that it does not create a hiatus, line Ἀνταί<ου> ὁ γυρὸς proposed by the editors, which Posidippus in general avoids;[31]
(c) makes perfectly comprehensible the mythological allusion to Ajax, i.e. someone whose fate must be associated with the rock Posidippus is referring to as being shaken and broken off by Poseidon: τή]γδε Ποσειδάων βρια[ρῶς ἐδ]όνει καὶ ἀπ[οκλάς (19.3) – ἤλασε Γυραίην πέτρην, ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἔσχισεν αὐτήν· (*Od*. 4.507);
(d) is in accordance to the technique known as *window of allusion*,[32] i.e. the super-imposition of one intertextual reference on another,[33] which Posidippus employs in this epigram;

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[31] See Laudenbach 2002-03, 97.
[32] On the term *window of allusion*, see McKeown 1987, 37-45.
[33] Prof. K. Tsantsanoglou suggests to me (*per litteras electronicas*) that one does not need to talk about 'superimposition' of one intertext upon another in the case of Caphareus, since this is not expected to be done with toponyms, only with mythical episodes. This is certainly true, but the fact that the *Odyssey* does not refer to Caphareus at all in the episode of the drowning of Locrian

(e) is tuned to the same Odyssean note with other Posidippan expressions:
με<γ>άλην ... λᾶαν (19.1) – πέτρῃσιν μεγάλῃσι (*Od*. 4.501), τριαίνης (19.9) – τρίαιναν (*Od*. 4.506), πέτρην (19.5) – πέτρην (*Od*. 4.507), μεγάλην χέρα (19.11) – χερσὶ στιβαρῇσιν (*Od*. 4.506);[34]

(f) explains the use of the rare word γυρός,[35] instead of λᾶας and πέτρη, which were employed in lines 1 and 5 of the same epigram respectively, as a deliberate play with the toponym Γυραῖαι πέτραι that are associated with the death of Locrian Ajax in the *Odyssey*.[36] The juxtaposition of γυρός and ὀλοίτροχος[37] reflects Posidippus' poetic strategy of «putting a *glossa* and its near-synonym side by side».[38] γυρός meaning 'rounded, curved' glosses ὀλοίτροχος that is often explained by ancient authorities as 'round rock'. Posidippus may well be playing with the etymological ambiguity of the word ὀλοίτροχος (a contracted form of ὀλοοίτροχος) that was interpreted either as denoting someone or something 'destructively running' (from ὀλοός + τρέχειν) or as 'completely rounded' (from ὅλος + τροχός).[39] The rock upon which Ajax was resting, thinking that he had escaped

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Ajax, whereas most of the other later versions explicitly mention it leaves the 'superimposition' scenario open.

[34] Other intertextual resonances stemming from the same Odyssean passage, which are weakly lexicalized, can be seen in: ἐξ[εφόρησ]εν ἁλός (19.2) - ἐξεσάωσε θαλάσσης (*Od*. 4.501), ἐφ' ἑνὸς σκληροῦ κ[ύματο]ς ἐξέβαλεν (19.4) – τῷ ... ἐφεζόμενος ... / τὸν δ' ἐφόρει (*Od*. 4.509 f.). I also draw attention to the acoustics of ΙΣΧΕΠΟΣΕΙΔΑΟΝ (19.11), which seems to be a playful reversal of the acoustics of ΑΠΟΔΕΣΧΙΣΕΝ (*Od*. 4.507), especially since the former refers to Posidippus' prayer to Poseidon to restrain his power, while the latter described the exact opposite, i.e. his splitting in two pieces the rock upon which Locrian Ajax was sitting.

[35] On γυρός, see Pontani 2010 on *Od*. 500a1 Γυρῇσιν: πέτραις πλησίον Μυκόνου τῆς νήσου οὕτω καλουμέναις, ἐπεί εἰσι περιφερεῖς. MᵃVγ (p. 321.45 f. P.); 500a2 Γυρῇσιν] Γυραὶ πέτραι εἰσὶ περὶ τὴν Μύκονον, πλησίον Μυκόνου καὶ Νάξου τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων. HNP¹ (p. 321.47-8 P.); 500b1 γυρῇσιν] στρογγύλαις πέτραις, ἐξ οὗ καὶ «γυρὸς» ὁ κυρτός, διὰ τὸ δοκεῖν κυκλοῦσθαι Β (p. 322.51 f. P.); 500c Γυρῇσιν: Γυραὶ πέτραι εἰσίν, ἤγουν αἱ μεγάλαι πέτραι αἱ ἐξέχουσαι τῆς θαλάσσης, αἱ λεγόμεναι χοιράδες. T (p. 322.52 f. P.). In some poets (Homer, Archilochus [fr. 105 W.], Lycophron) and prose authors (Philostratus, *Imagines* 2.13) any geographical reference to the location of the Gyraean rocks is missing, while in other poets the Gyraean rocks are explicitly placed off cape Caphereus in south Euboea (*Nostoi* § 107 Kullmann: εἶθ' ὁ περὶ τὰς Καφηρίδας πέτρας δηλοῦται χειμὼν καὶ ἡ Αἴαντος φθορὰ τοῦ Λοκροῦ; Quintus Smyraneus 6.524: Καφηρίσιν ἀμφὶ πέτρῃσιν). On the other hand, prose authors and ancient commentators and lexicographers place them in various locations in the Cyclades: between Tenos and Andros (Philostratus, *Heroicus* 707.10), around Myconos (Hom. Scholia on *Od*. 4.500a1, 500a2, 500b1, 500c [Pontani] and Eustathius ad *Od*. 4.500), in Tenos (Hesychius γ 1022), between Myconos and Tenos (Tzetzes in Lycophron's *Alexandra* 365, 387, 389, 402).

[36] See *Od*. 4.500 (Γυρῇσιν), 507 (Γυραίην πέτρην). Führer (in Bernsdorff 2002, 11 n. 1) omits the article ὁ. In my view the article should stay, since the rock is specifically that of Locrian Ajax (*Aiacis petra*). See also Laudenbach 2002-03, 96.

[37] On ὀλοοίτροχος, see *Il*. 13.136-8: Τρῶες δὲ προύτυψαν ἀολλέες, ἦρχε δ' ἄρ' Ἕκτωρ / ἀντικρὺ μεμαώς, ὀλοοίτροχος ὣς ἀπὸ πέτρης, / ὅν τε κατὰ στεφάνης ποταμὸς χειμάρροος ὤσῃ; Theocritus 22.48-50: ἐν δὲ μύες στερεοῖσι βραχίοσιν ἄκρον ὑπ' ὦμον / ἔστασαν ἠΰτε πέτροι ὀλοίτροχοι οὕστε κυλίνδων / χειμάρρους ποταμὸς μεγάλαις περιέξεσε δίναις.

[38] Sistakou 2007, 403.

[39] See *e.g.* Σ ex. on *Il*. 13.137c, Σ D on *Il*. 13.137.

death, 'run to destruction' by being plunged by Poseidon into the bottom of the sea together with the arrogant Greek hero.[40]

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[40] If this interpretation is on the right track, then Posidippus is changing the function of ὀλοίτροχος from active ('running destructively') into passive ('running to its own destruction').

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Abstract: The author argues that in Pos. 19.9 (A-B) we should read <Αἴ>αντ{αι}<ος> instead of Ἀνταί<ου>, that is printed in the standard edition of the Milan papyrus.

Keywords: *Ajax*, rock, Posidippus, intertextuality, window of allusion.