

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND NICANDER

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In the preface to my monograph *Studies in The Poetry of Nicander I* indicated that I have established a new text of his poems: I am most gratified to see that the latest editor of the poet, Dr Oikonomakos, has adopted my *Textgestaltung* (cf. *G.I.F.* 2004, page 279, for details). G. Spatafora, in *G.I.F.* 2005, page 231 ff., indulges in a psychologistic interpretation of Nicander's work, and goes in search of "potenzialità psicotrope" (page 254), but does not discuss any textual problems, except for two cases, which he has not fully understood. In *Ther.* 460 the words *ἐκάς Ῥησικυνθίδος Ἥρης* had perplexed the critics. As Spatafora notes (page 253), Klauser took *ἐκάς* to mean *contra*, so that the meaning would be that Lemnos and Samothrace "giacciono dinanzi a Era Rescindide". This is nonsensical, because the two islands do not lie "dinanzi", i.e. "in front of" Thrace. Gow-Scholfield put a comma after "*ἐκάς*", "intendendo 'giacciono lontano, nel golfo Thracio' " (so Spatafora), which is equally nonsensical: "lontano" from what? The only possible meaning of Nicander's words, as I argued, is that the poet means that "Lemno e Samotraccia sono distanti da Era Rescindide" (so Spatafora, *loc. cit.*): Spatafora cannot but accept my explanation of the poet's words, and accordingly translates them "giacciono nel golfo Tracio, lontano da Era Rescindide". Yet in the same breath he asserts that one cannot "escludere categoricamente" the interpretations suggested by Klauser and Gow-Scholfield, which assertion shows that his judgement, in matters of *Textkritik*, is at fault.

Spatafora (page 255) is wrong in accepting Jacques' suggestion at *Alexipharmaca* 7. The text has Ἄρκτον: therefore this word cannot possibly be confused with the genitive plural Ἄρκτων ὄρος, as Gow-Scholfield (*ad loc.*)¹ maintain, or with Ἄρκτων νῆσος (Steph. Byz.), as

1. Spatafora's words "intendono per Arcton (*sic*) la montagna ..." are misleading.

Jacques suggests. Ἄρκτος, in astronomical-geographical terms, as the scholiast correctly underlines, denotes the *Ursa Maior*. The scholiast offers “very far fetched explanations of the adjective” ὀμφαλόεσσαν (so Gow-Scholfield). I have shown that ὀμφαλόεσσαν means, as is normal in Greek, “at the centre of the northern hemisphere.” The preposition ὑπὸ + accus. is used in its astronomical-geographical sense. Ἄρκτον ὑπ’ ὀμφαλόεσσαν means “*sub Arcto*”: cf. τὰ ὑπὸ τὴν Ἄρκτον Herod. 5,10, Arist. *Mete.* 362 a 17, ὑπὸ τὸν πόλον Gem. 5, 38 and 16, 21, quoted in *LSJ*, s.v. ὑπὸ C, 2. Of all this, Spatafora has, alas, understood nothing.