

right:—Does the credit rest with the inventor of the phrase or with its true interpreter?

It is likewise admitted that where a fresh *interpretation* is so recent as to leave room for doubt as to priority of authorship, it should not be adopted without acknowledgment.

But more than this in a subject so long worn as Sophocles can hardly be demanded. Originality cannot be claimed without priority, and the proof of priority may be left to the critical reader. Beyond this point the method to be followed becomes a question of discretion. Prudence of a certain kind may suggest that contemporary opinions should have a prominence out of proportion to their merit, while the ingenuities of former generations are allowed to sleep. But a higher prudence demands that the interest of the student should be steadily kept in view. And this being so, it cannot be expected that an editor besides stating his own interpretation should distinguish it from others that are similar but not the same¹. Neither ought it to be required of him that in stating a known interpretation he should always count authorities in its favour. And if not only previous editions but the chief reviews of them, and by parity of reasoning, articles in the *Rheinische Museum*, *Philologus* and the *Neue Jahrbücher*, together with observations made by the historians of literature and the writers on metre, are to be laid under contribution, the central work will soon be buried under the *πάρεργα*. It is at least surely permissible to edit Sophocles without doing this, and one who happens to be more versed in the text than in the literature of his author may be allowed to give in his contribution without being made to stand and deliver what he knows about other men's opinions.

An edition of Sophocles is no doubt conceivable in which the plan of Elmsley's *Oedipus Coloneus* should be consistently carried out. It would be a work of great labour, but, in the present day, one of doubtful utility. The list of

¹ For examples of the difficulty to which this would lead, see *Ant.* 31; *O. C.* 308.