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Verrall's *Agamemnon* (Ed. 2) *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*. With an Introduction, Commentary, and Translatation, by A. W. Verrall, Litt.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Hon. Litt.D. in the University of Dublin. London: Macmillan & Co., 1904. Second Edition. Pp. Ixii. + 252. 12s.

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the gloss *maximas* appears in RG³ (*honestissimas maximas civ. hon.*): while the rival family (7776) has *honestissimum civitatis honestissimae*. That the reading of Par. 7775 is correct may be seen also from the analogy of p. 292, 7: cp. 471, 29 and 473, 25.

P. 463, 6 *Non enim, sicut erat antea semper consuetudo*, etc. Here the first hand in the Regius (R) gives *anper.* which Halm and succeeding editors have made into *antea semper*. The passage may be made an epitome of the whole criticism of Books iv–v. R¹ is the only MS. which gives *anper.* The second hand in R, with which 7775 is generally (but not always) in agreement, gives *nuper*, and this is the reading of all the MSS. of this family, except R¹ (i.e. Par. 7775, 7823 G³, λ, Harl. 4105, 4852). On this evidence, *nuper* would seem just as probable as Halm's emendation. But Thomas points out that words are sometimes abridged in R, i.e. *excogit*, *adulentes*, and that in Pro Sestio § 107 editors now read *ut semper* for *et per* of the MSS. And *antea* is made probable by the reading of the rival family *sicut antea consuetudo erat* Par. 7776, 4588, and the dett. On the other hand the transposition of *erat* is suspicious, and suggests that a corrector has been at work.

P. 465, 18. *O spectaculum miserum . . . ludibrio esse urbis gloriam, populi Romani nomen, hominum conventum atque multitudinem piratice myoparoni!* Here Müller proposes *tantum hominum conventum*, and Eberhard (comparing § 107) would read *hominum honestissimorum conventum*. Perhaps *omnium hominum conventum*.

P. 470, 18. *illud . . . quod . . . non falso ille de vobis iam in morte ipsa praedicavit, non posse Verrem testes interficiendo *ius extinguere; graviores apud sapientes iudices se fore ab inferis testem quam si vivus in*

iudicium produceretur. For *ius* the R family has *nos*: while the rival tradition (Par. 7776 and dett.) gives *crimina sua*. This divergence is enough to indicate that an omission in the text had been detected, and had been supplied in different ways. Among the numerous other conjectures are *scelus* (Halm, Nohl), *facinus* (Kornitzer), *eos* (Lutembacher), *noxiam* (Heraeus), *voces*, *homines*, *conscios*, etc., etc. My emendation shall be simpler than any of the above: it is based on the supposition that the word which has been dropped was like in form to *testes* (cp. *honestissimae civitatis honestissimum* p. 436, 3; *cives crucem civis* 373, 34). Such a word we have in *testimonium*: in a contracted form this may have appeared as *test'*, and the scribe who had already written *testes* may easily have passed it over. When it fell out of the text its place was supplied by *nos*, and *crimina sua*, as stated above. Read therefore *non posse Verrem testes interficiendo testimonium extinguere*.

P. 471, 7. *Nam si cum aliorum improbitate certet, longe omnes multumque superabit; secum ipse certat, id agit ut semper superius suum facinus novo scelere vincat*. Here the two best MSS., Reg. 7774, and 7775 agree in *sed cum ipse*: the rival tradition is *sed secum ipse*, while the Vatican palimpsest gives *secum ipse*. Surely here again the true reading is to be obtained by a combination: I propose *sed secum cum ipse certat, id agit ut*, etc.—Since this suggestion occurred to me, I have noted in Jordan's app. cr. the citation, given doubtfully as from a codex of Ursinius: '*sed cum secum ipse certet* cod. Urs. (?)'

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REVIEWS.

VERRALL'S *AGAMEMNON* (ED. 2).

The Agamemnon of Aeschylus. With an Introduction, Commentary, and Translation, by A. W. VERRALL, Litt.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Hon. Litt.D. in the University of Dublin. London: Macmillan & Co., 1904. Second Edition. Pp. lxxii. + 252. 12s.

THE first edition of this Commentary was

published fifteen years ago, and the great attention which has been given to the *Agamemnon* during this period by English scholars has been largely due to it.

The second edition differs but little from the first, which was marked by a freshness of view, and attracted attention from the new and ingenious reading of the plot. This view, now well known, is in outline as

follows: Aegisthus, who is lurking in Mount Arachnaeus, and scheming for revenge, has arranged to signal to Clytemnestra when Agamemnon reaches Argos, and the plot is carried out with the aid of their accomplices in the palace and the state. The chorus is composed partly of loyal friends of Agamemnon, and partly of conspirators; and the novelty is, that here and there in the play, lines are given to this second party. Only one beacon really was lit; the others are a lie invented by Clytemnestra on the spur of the moment in reply to awkward questions. This bold view is worked out by a close and rigorous argument, to which justice cannot be done by a bare summary.

The difficulties which the editor finds in the current interpretation of the play, are: that the sudden arrival of Agamemnon is an impossible illusion; that the remarkable action of the first part has no particular bearing upon the second; that the remarks of the Chorus in places of the dialogue are difficult to understand, if they are assigned to the same company of loyal elders; that the storm and wreck and arrival are inconsistent with the episode of the beacons, amongst other reasons, because the Athenians of the day knew too much about the Aegean to tolerate such an illusion; and that the important question is, how Clytemnestra got her chance.

The editor has rendered a real service in pointing out the glaring improbabilities which this example of an early dramatist's work displays; but in the face of so plausible an argument, a few general considerations are necessary.

I.—The genius of Aeschylus, as Mr. Tucker has said, shows itself, not in his plots, but in spite of them. Even in the *Prometheus Vinculus*, one of his later plays brought out not long before the Trilogy, the episode of Io, although it has its place in the economy of the play, is out of proportion to its importance. Close-knit plots are not Aeschylus' strong point. Further, to regard the plot of the Agamemnon as primary, is both to alter the balance of the play and to obscure the fact that the Agamemnon is but one play in a Trilogy.

The importance of the plot is secondary. The murder of Agamemnon is not the consummation of the tragic story; it is only one link in the chain of moral events, of which the beginning and the end are alike unseen; as the Chorus say at the end of the *Choephoroi*:—

ποῖ δῆτα κρανεῖ, ποῖ καταλήξει;

'nothing stands alone:

the chain holds on, and where it ends unknown.'

Cardinal Newman in his penetrating way has exactly touched the secret of the *Agamemnon* (*Essays*, vol. i.) 'The expression of their (i.e. the Chorus') anxiety forms the stream in which the plot flows.' The story advances by means of the Chorus; the plot no doubt must have incidents, but it is through the Chorus that the moral bearing of the incidents appears; there appear the principles of the eternal powers and the working of the eternal laws. This is primary; the incidents are secondary, and the story is hewn in the rough, with bold strong strokes. Aeschylus is a Hebrew prophet first, a playwright afterwards. It is the Choral Odes, not the incidents, that are the ψυχή τῆς τραγωδίας.

Contrast this with the *Oedipus Rex*. There the plot is paramount and absorbing to the reader because the play leads up to a crisis, the blinding of Oedipus; and the play is complete in itself.

Now, what Dr. Verrall does, is to change the balance of the play. By forcing the plot into prominence, and by keeping the minds of the spectators upon the stretch in following its intricacy, he disturbs the march of the moral teaching. Instead of making Clytemnestra and her deed the pivot on which the play works, he makes Aegisthus and his intrigue; to him the process is more important than the result, the episodes than the general effect. For his view requires us to believe that the action of the play from the opening speech of the Watchman, Aegisthus' tool, is leading up to the appearance of Aegisthus in the last scene as its climax; in short, the title of the play should be, not 'Agamemnon' but, 'Aegisthus, or the Revolution at Argos.' But really this last act is episodic, like the appearance of Io, and winds the play off. Technically, Dr. Verrall reverts to the Homeric position of Aegisthus, where he plays the important part; whereas by Pindar's time, Clytemnestra had become the principal figure; ethically, his plot appeals to the head of the audience, while Aeschylus' drama appeals to their conscience; the play becomes more sensational than moral; the drama has become a novel; it is the hand of Euripides, not Aeschylus.

II.—To quote Newman again: Aristotle prefers 'skilful intricacy and ingenious workmanship, and a gratification of the

reasoning faculty, to imaginative power.' That is just the charge we bring against Dr. Verrall.

He satisfies our logical faculty, but leaves no room for the imagination; he is a critic, as Matthew Arnold would say, 'of much vigour and rigour'; he allows nothing to illusion, and lets his logical faculty run away with him. Thus (*Pref.* xxix.) the democratic Athenian would think 'what would become of Agamemnon's government upon the flight of the imperial Regent? How would a state and the people be affected and behave?' This is fine-drawn, and we do not bring our politics in this way into the theatre. Again: 'What are we to say to the useless and impossible mystery with which the beacons are surrounded? The Athenians were to suppose that there had been maintained on a hill close to Argos, night after night, a beacon forming part of a system of communication with the absent army, and that all this while, so strictly had the secret been kept, the elders of the city had not the least notion of it.' Exactly. That is just what a tragedian requires of us. And so with the appearance of Agamemnon. There is a remarkable parallel to this in the plot of the *Persae*, worked out by Mr. Prickard in the *Oxford Magazine* of March 2, 1904; the queen-regent of great force of character, the feeble elders, the army and king away on a distant expedition, 'a growing estrangement between those at home and those on service, a message passed between Europe and Asia, and, closely following upon the arrival of the message, the return of the king.' The principle of Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 52) is sound. *εἰ μὲν ἐδύναντο πάσας διαφεύγειν τὰς ἀλογίας ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις, ἵσως ἂν εἶχε λόγον μηδὲ τοῦτο παραπέμψαι· νῦν δὲ πολλάκις ἐν μᾶ ἡμέρᾳ παραγιγνομένους ποιοῦσι τοὺς κήρυκας πλείωνων ἡμερῶν δδόν.* Or, as Mr. Butcher puts it, (*Poetics*, 277) 'It is part of the poet's art to make us forget all time, and we can hardly place any limit on the demands to which the imagination will respond, if only those demands are made by one who knows how.'

If Aeschylus elsewhere showed power in creating plots, we might accept such a masterpiece of plot as Dr. Verrall gives us here; but it is in this respect that Aeschylus' taste is unsophisticated and his power imperfect. Had he lived in a later age, when tragedians had won greater experience, 'there is little doubt,' to quote Mr. Tucker (*Choeph.* *Pref.* lxiv), 'that his genius would have revealed itself in mere constructiveness with the same power as it

displays in other dramatic qualities more difficult of attainment.' And we may be sure it would have been quoted as a typical example of a well-constructed play in the way that Aristotle finds his ideal in the *Oedipus Rex*.

It has been said that the two most ingenious plots in literature are the *Oedipus Rex* and the *Moonstone*. If Dr. Verrall writes a play, he will run these two classics hard; but Aeschylus had better not be entered for the race. *Οἷον ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγωδίας*, says Aristotle; yet even the *Oedipus Rex*, which he admired for this reason, has its weakness, in that the past silence of Oedipus concerning his past life, 'exceeds the limit of verisimilitude' so that 'the true defence of the improbability consists in frankly recognising it' (Jebb, *O.T.* *pref.* xxv).

The editor makes much of the difficulty in one passage l. 1645-6 (*pref.* xxxii), and argues that *σὺν γυνὴ ἔκτεινε* could not reasonably be addressed to one (i.e. Aegisthus), who had merely lain by, while the wife directed and performed the whole. What is the meaning of *σὺν*? he asks. It need, however, mean no more than 'was the murderer in complicity with you.' It appears to be a reminiscence of the earliest form of the Homeric story; *Od.* 3. 194 *Αἰγισθος ἐμήσατο*, 4. 529 *Αἰγισθος δολίην ἐφράσσατο τέχνην*, 11. 410 *Αἰγισθος τεύξας θανάτῳ τε μόρον τε | ἔκτα σὺν οὐλομένη ἀλόχῳ*. And *μηχανὴν δυσβουλίας* may quite well mean 'the sinister plot,' not the 'hard plot' as the editor translates it, and would suit Aegisthus' temper of triumph in wickedness.

That different bodies of the Chorus take part in the dialogue may well be the case, just as they do in the last scene; but they need not be regarded as 'chorus of Loyalists,' and 'chorus of Conspirators.' The passage of Pollux which he quotes may refer to the closing scene, which exhibits traces of mutilation; but the text has been suspected. Pollux' authority is sometimes questioned. Thus in iii. 152 he quotes Xenophon for Thucydides (iv. 121 *ἐρασίῳ*); in i. 26 he says: *Θουκυδίδης δ' αὐτὰ εἰρκεν ἀγὰ θύματα*, which some editors, as Hude and Stuart Jones, have admitted into the text of Thucyd. i. 126; but Mr. Forbes thinks that Plato, *Laws* 782c *ἀγὰ θύματα* may be referred to, and that Pollux has put Thucydides by a mistake for Plato. [Forbes on Thuc. i. 126]

To turn to special passages. From an edition which bristles with controversial matter, new renderings, new forms, (as

κλάβας 'eye-sores,' προσέβατο, πένθεια 'kins-woman,' ἐπίανεν 'gladdened,' from ἐπιαίνω, ἡμερόφατος,) one can only select passages where excellence or defect seems clear.—3. 'lulled in the embrace of the roof' would require στεγῶν ἄγκαθεν; there is no objection to στεγαῖς in a locative sense.—50. ὕπατοι λεχέων 'highest-nested.' But ὕπατος apparently has not a superlative force, but is an adjectival -τος formation, the adjective of ὑπέρ; it is not possible to get a superlative meaning out of 89, θεῶν ὑπέρτων χθονίων, nor is it required in 55 ὕπατος δ' αἰῶν ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων, nor in 509. ὕπατος χώρας.—192. βιαίως ἡμένον 'who came by struggle to his seat' would require an aorist.—422. πάρεστι σιγᾶς. The whole view of the passage is perverted. To keep ἀδιστος ἀφεμένων of M, he assumes that the whole passage is one of ironical and malicious mockery, and thus destroys the most affecting passage in the play. This reading of the passage makes ἀνστενον of 417, unmeaning; 'mocked' is what this interpretation would require. Nor can ὦ be translated 'aha'; and 435 ἄχη repeats the note of pathos which marks the whole passage.—478. μή....μήτε is almost certainly a solecism, and should not be kept.—484. ἢ τοι θεῶν ἐσσι, μή ψύθος 'it is indeed miraculous, if not false' sounds harsh Greek.—516. ἢλθ' ἀνάρους, By keeping this, the editor gives the awkward construction of a third person inserted between two second persons.—525. ἢ που πάλαι. 'And oh! how long ye have looked,' seems an impossible translation of ἢ που. These particles could only mean 'you have looked a long time, I think.' 'I reckon they are very antique' is what an American would say at the first sight of Stonehenge.—854. The remedy κληδόνas is simpler than the far-fetched argument by which ἡδονάς is supported; the same is true of νηπίους, as against ἡπίους in 1631.—1009. The editor throws the MSS. over with the improbable suggestion that Ζεὺς αὐτὸ ἔπανσε is an explanatory note.—1039. θυραία 'gadding' is one of his new words; he supports it by the equations τροπαία=τροπή; εὐναία=εὐνή. Then θυραία=θύρα.—1215. He keeps the objectionable ἢ κάρτ' ἄρ' ἂν παρεσκόπεις.—1565. κεκόλληται γένος προσάψαι. 'It is a sort that sticketh fast.' This feeble προσάψαι is retained; πρὸς ἄτq, a brilliant correction, is dismissed.

It is curious how brilliant emendations

become temporarily eclipsed; Conington's λέοντος Ἴνυ has indeed reasserted itself; but Porson's διοσδότῳ γάνει is still not without its critics: so, 1327 σκίᾳ τις ἂν πρέψειεν is under a cloud; 266 σύνορθρον αἰγαῖς is dropped, and, in a cold fit, the editor does not print his convincing πεσόντα δ' ὃδ' ἀμείβομαι 1266. And sometimes where simple correction would cure, his nerve seems to desert him.—298. ὑπερτελής τε. The construction is harsh and crabbed, and βίον κτείνοντες 1361 is harsh.—861. If 'mantle' means 'the earth laid upon him when dead,' then Clytemnestra has not disarmed the reference to burial at all. So in 239, if αἰὼν generally has the meaning of 'life-breath,' where 'life' shows that 'breath' is an important thing, how can 'mere life-breath' be a consistent translation?—1171. The desperate θερμόνους passage is treated with a desperate remedy.—1227. He has not solved the riddle of μοσητή κύων.

Better suggestions are the following: 309. Ὠρώπον given by Turnebus, for Ἀσωποῦ.—386. ἐγγονοῖσα 'pregnant pride,' which helps the interpretation of the passage forward, just as παιδικὰ πάχη does in 1512.—867. He rightly accepts the conjecture λελιμμένης.—937. ἀλουργίσιν (in the note) for ἀλουγέσιν.—973. ψαμμί' ἀκτᾶς is the best conjecture so far.—997. σφενδόνας ἀπ' εὐμέτρον 'from the duly-weighted loading-scale' is justified by an inscription lately discovered.—1040. τὰ μὲν γάρ 'as to the central hearth' is an improvement; and 1077 παιδιορραντήριον and 1098 χεῖρ' ἐκ χειρὸς ὀρεγομένα.—1146. γλυκύν τ' ἀγῶνα, M 'a sweet passage' i.e. death, and 1192 τηρῶ, MSS. he may be right in keeping; and his conjecture 1254, δυσπυθῆ, is good.

These are hardly a tithe of the valuable suggestions made in this edition, which, whether its main thesis and its interpretations be right or not, must always remain a landmark in the history of Aeschylaeian criticism.

There are the following misprints: p. xxxix. (note) C.R. ii. should be C.R. iv: p. lvi. (middle) C.R. vi. should be vii.—l. 1273. note: C. R. ii. should be iv.—p. 178 note: should be θηγάναισιν.—l. 623. σεσφωμένος should not be kept, in spite of Kühner.

J. U. POWELL.

Oxford.