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On Euripides *Alcestis* 16

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The Classical Review / Volume 19 / Issue 01 / February 2005, pp 13 - 14

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00991169, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00991169

How to cite this article:

Charles N. Smiley (1905). On Euripides *Alcestis* 16. The Classical Review, 19, pp 13-14
doi:10.1017/S0009840X00991169

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The recent discovery and publication (*Oxyr. Pap.* iii. p. 103) of a papyrus fragment of the third century containing vv. 710–15 carries back our manuscript tradition for the lines some nine centuries and gives us new reason for objecting to the text of Prinz-Wecklein. And indeed it is hard to see how the verses can be omitted without weakening the entire passage, for as it stands we have an effective climax—‘if thou grantest me asylum, then I pray that thy desire for offspring may be fulfilled, and that thou mayest live in happiness until thy

end. Aye, more than this, I will end thy childlessness. The means I know.’ Omit the prayer in 714 f. and the words *εὖρημα δ’ οὐκ κ.τ.λ.* follow too abruptly on Medea’s appeal and her speech loses much of its force.

It is also interesting to note that the papyrus reads in v. 713 *δόμοις ἐφέστιον* with the manuscripts against Prinz-Wecklein’s *δόμων ἐφέστιον*.

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ON EURIPIDES *ALCESTIS* 16.

ἦνεσαν δέ μοι θεαί
 Ἀδμητον ᾗδην τὸν παραντίκ’ ἐκφυγεῖν,
 ἄλλον διαλλάξαντα τοῖς κάτω νεκρόν.
 16 πάντας δ’ ἐλέγξας καὶ διεξελθὼν φίλους
 πατέρα γεραίαν θ’ ἢ σφ’ ἔτικτε μητέρα,
 οὐχ ἦνρε, πλὴν γυναικός, ὅστις ἤθελε
 θανὼν πρὸ κείνου μηκέτ’ εἰσορᾶν φάος.

W. Dindorf was the first to remove verse 16 from the text on the ground that *πάντας φίλους* of verse 15 cannot be restricted to three (or two) persons. Most modern editors have looked upon the line with suspicion. Earle rejects it altogether, and Nauck, Weil, Hayley, and Prinz-Wecklein bracket it. Yet the verse appears in all the manuscripts and was read by the scholiast as well; furthermore there is nothing in the diction or metre to arouse suspicion. But its only defender since Dindorf’s day is Dr. Verrall who, in his *Euripides the Rationalist*, pp. 27 ff., claims that according to the bargain none was admissible except the family of Admetus. As Dr. Verrall does not present the necessary proofs in support of his contention, it may not be amiss to examine the question anew.

At the outset it must be granted that the phrase *πάντας φίλους διεξελθὼν* seems an unusual expression to apply to a group of only three persons; but if it appear that in the play itself there is no suggestion that any other than father, mother, or wife could take Admetus’ place, we shall then have a strong reason for retaining the verse in question. There are four passages which bear on this point:

290–293 (Alcestis speaks)

καίτοι σ’ ὁ φύσας χῆ τεκούσα προὔδοσαν,
 καλῶς μὲν αὐτοῖς κατθανεῖν ἦκον βίον,
 καλῶς δὲ σῶσαι παῖδα κεύκλεως θανεῖν.

338 f. (Admetus speaks)

στυγῶν μὲν ἢ μ’ ἔτικτεν, ἐχθαίρων δ’ ἐμὸν
 πατέρα· λόγῳ γὰρ ἦσαν οὐκ ἔργῳ φίλοι.

466–470 (Chorus)

ματέρος οὐ θελούσας
 πρὸ παιδὸς χθονὶ κρύψαι
 δέμας οὐδὲ πατρὸς γεραιοῦ,
 ὃν ἔτεκον δ’, οὐκ ἔτλαν ῥύεσθαι,
 σχετλίῳ, πολλὰν ἔχοντε χαίταν.

Again in the long wrangle between Admetus and his father (629–740) Admetus reproaches his father and mother for letting Alcestis die when they might have saved her. While it is hardly necessary to illustrate the use of *φίλοι* = ‘dear ones,’ ‘one’s own family,’ such passages as 339 above and 701 f., where Pheres replies to his son’s abuse, shows conclusively that the word is there employed in the restricted sense:

κᾶτ’ ὀνειδίξεις φίλοις
 τοῖς μὴ θέλουσι δρᾶν τὰδ’, αὐτὸς ὦν κακός;

and other places may be added to show that in this play *φίλοι* is usually limited to the three immediate relatives of Admetus, and that only one of them could take his place. This idea, reiterated in the tragedy itself, naturally found its way into the first hypothesis: καὶ δὴ Ἀλκιστὶς ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ Ἀδμήτου ἐπέδωκεν ἑαυτήν, οὐδετέρου τῶν γονέων ἐβλήσαντος ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς ἀποθανεῖν. The

conception of Euripides therefore appears to have been that only one of these three¹ could take Admetus' place. This limitation, furthermore, seems not to have been an innovation by Euripides. In the *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodorus the same restriction is found (1, 106 Wagner) ἡγήσατο παρὰ μοιρῶν ἵνα, ὅταν Ἀδμητος μέλλῃ τελευτᾶν, ἀπολυθῇ τοῦ θανάτου, ἂν ἐκουσίως τις ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ θνήσκειν ἔλθῃ [πατὴρ ἢ μήτηρ ἢ γυνή] ὥς δὲ ἦλθεν ἢ τοῦ θνήσκειν ἡμέρα, μήτε τοῦ πατρὸς μήτε τῆς μητρὸς ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ θνήσκειν θελόντων, Ἀλκίονος ὑπεραπέθανε. This is repeated again in Hyginus (*Fab.* 51): et illud ab Apolline accepit, ut pro se alius voluntarie moreretur. *Pro quo*

¹ The children of Admetus were left out of account obviously from their youth.

*cum neque pater neque mater mori voluisset, uxor se Alcestis obtulit et pro eo vicaria morte interit.*²

The received form of the myth, the antecedent conditions of the play, and the manuscript tradition then all make for the retention of v. 16. If we feel it to be bathetic, as Hayley claims it is, we are not therefore warranted in rejecting it, but must rather recognise frankly Euripides' artistic fault.

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² Hayley quotes in part both passages, but in each instance he stops short of the essential words: μήτε τοῦ πατρὸς μήτε τῆς μητρὸς ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ θνήσκειν θελόντων, and 'pro quo cum neque pater neque mater mori voluisset.'

SUGGESTIONS ON THE NICOMACHEAN ETHICS.

1. 1139 a 3 πρότερον μὲν οὖν ἐλέχθη δὴ εἶναι μέρη τῆς ψυχῆς, τό τε λόγον ἔχον καὶ τὸ ἄλογον· νῦν δὲ περὶ τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον διαιρετόν. Nothing is here said of the way in which the higher part of the ἄλογον can claim to be λόγον ἔχον. This is a strong but hitherto unnoticed argument in favour of this book's belonging to the Nicomachean treatise. For while the Nicomachean 1st book speaks of τὸ ὁρεκτικόν as ἄλογον in the first place (1102 b 13), and only afterwards allows it, and then with some reservation (οὐ κυρίως), some title to be called part of the λόγον ἔχον, the Eudemean 2nd book on the other hand refers to it from the first as λόγον ἔχον, with only a slight reservation in favour of the Nicomachean view (1219 b 28). The reference here made, πρότερον ἐλέχθη κτλ, is therefore much clearer to the Nicomachean passage: for here there is no suggestion that the ὁρεκτικόν could possibly be considered as anything but ἄλογον, which goes a little beyond even the Nicomachean passage, but is entirely inconsistent with the Eudemean. Observe that the reference here is in a form that shows it is not an interpolation as many references may be.

2. 1139 a 15 ληπτέον ἂρ' ἐκατέρου τούτων τίς ἢ βελτίστη ἔστι· αὕτη γὰρ ἀρετὴ ἐκατέρου, ἢ δ' ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὸ ἔργον τὸ οἰκεῖον. This punctuation seems to hide the sense. I should place a full stop after ἀρετὴ ἐκατέρου. For ἢ δ' ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὸ ἔργον τὸ οἰκεῖον has

nothing to do with what precedes, and a great deal to do with the whole of the following chapter, which is devoted to discovering the ἔργον of each of the two intellectual faculties with a view to discovering the ἀρετὴ of each thereby. This is quite clearly brought out by the conclusion 1139 b 12 ἀμφοτέρων δὴ τῶν νοητικῶν μορίων ἀλήθεια τὸ ἔργον. καθ' ἃς οὖν μάλιστα ἔξεις ἀληθεύσει ἐκάτερον, αὐταὶ ἀρεταὶ ἀμφοῖν.

3. The following re-arrangement of the text of 1139 a 21-b 5 (the only important passage in the 6th book which at all seems to require re-arrangement) is I think new and has some advantages over others—(i.) (as at present) a 17 Τρία δὲ ἔστιν . . . a 20 πράξεως δὲ μὴ κοινωνεῖν: (ii.) a 31 πράξεως μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ προαίρεσις . . . a 35 ἄνευ διανοίας καὶ ἡθους οὐκ ἔστιν: (iii.) b 4 διὸ ἡ ὁρεκτικὸς νοῦς . . . b 5 καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη ἀρχὴ ἀνθρώπος: here would appropriately follow the foot-note b 6 οὐκ ἔστι δὲ προαιρετὸν οὐδὲν γεγονὸς . . . b 11 ἀγένητα ποιεῖν ἄσ' ἂν ἡ πεπραγμένα: (iv.) a 21 ἔστι δ' ὅπερ ἐν διανοίᾳ κατάφασις καὶ ἀπόφασις . . . a 31 τῇ ὁρέξει τῇ ὀρθῇ: (v.) a 35 διάνοια δ' αὕτη οὐθὲν κινεῖ . . . b 4 ἢ δ' ὁρεῖς τούτου: (vi.) the last two lines, b 12-13, of course keep their place. The advantages of this arrangement are as follows: 1. All the passages dealing with προαίρεσις are brought together and arranged in their natural order. 2. The discussion of θεωρητικὴ διάνοια is properly separated from that of πρακτικὴ, which is