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THE DEFENCE OF ORESTES.

IN the course of an interesting argument *Class. Rev.* xxi. 163) to show that the proper sanctuary and proper place of trial for Orestes was the court known in historical times as τὸ ἐπὶ Παλλαδίῳ, Prof. Ridgeway assumed that the killing of Clytemnestra, as represented and referred to by Aeschylus, might be called a case of ἀκούσιος φόνος. The court in question, we know, dealt with this kind of killing, and for this reason, as well as for others, Prof. Ridgeway makes the place where it lay, not the Acropolis, the scene of the larger part of the *Eumenides*. The description of the murder as ἀκούσιος has been accepted by Dr. Verrall in his edition of the play. There are, however, two or three things that may make us hesitate about it.

First, have we really proof that in reference to this court ἀκούσιος φόμος ever meant anything but accidental, unintentional killing? Undoubtedly this is the natural and ordinary sense of the expression. But the death of Clytemnestra was certainly not the result of accident.

Prof. Ridgeway means by ἀκούσιος that Apollo compelled Orestes to kill his mother. This, he says, is the plea by which Orestes defends himself, while Apollo defends him further by the plea of justifiable homicide, because his mother deserved it. It is true that some of the responsibility is put upon Apollo by Orestes, by the Furies, and by Apollo himself; but is it true that the man is represented as acting under real *compulsion* from the god? Certainly the leader of the Furies declares in line 199 that Apollo is not merely μεταίτιος but παναίτιος. Orestes calls him 465 κοινῇ ἐπαίτιος, and Apollo owns 579 αἰτίαν ἔχω. Certainly he bade Orestes kill his mother: 203 (Apollo) ἔχρησα ποινὰς τοῦ πατρὸς πράξαι, 595 (Orestes) ἐξηγείτό μοι μητροκτονεῖν: and denounced pains and penalties on Orestes, if he did not kill her, 466 ἀλγῇ προφωνῶν ἀντίκεντρα καρδίᾳ (alluded to by Athena, who knows a little too much in 426 ἀλλης ἀνάγκης οὕτινος (or ἀλλαις ἀνάγκαις ἢ τίνος) τρέων κότον; where ἀνάγκαις must in fairness be

noticed) and the passage of some length *Cho.* 270 foll.; cf. 1032 there. But does all this amount to compulsion? We do not need, perhaps we ought not, to take Aristotle's point, that things done under stress of threats or fear of various evils to follow are not ἀκούσια, because after all the agent does them of his own free will under the circumstances. Waiving that point, can it fairly be said, and is it ever said in Aeschylus, that Orestes was compelled to act as he did, that he had no alternative? It is not so put in any words that I recall. Neither he nor any one for him pleads explicitly that he could not help himself. ἄκων, ἀκούσιος are not used, though on Dr. Ridgeway's theory Aeschylus would surely have made a point of using the word at least once to connect his story with the Palladian court. ἀνάγκη and similar words are not used, for ἀνάγκαις above mentioned in 426 is hardly applied plainly and with full knowledge of the circumstances: it is in fact interrogative. No expression at all, I think, is used strong enough to convey the idea of compulsion. Apollo does, on the contrary, use the much weaker, though vague, word πείθειν in 84 κτανεῖν σ' ἔπεισα μητρῶν δέμας, and so the leader of the Furies 593, πρὸς τοῦ δ' ἐπέσθης καὶ τίνος βουλεύμασι; and, while I cannot find Orestes pleading that he acted under compulsion, he does distinctly in 600-613 (cf. *Cho.* 988, 1027) plead justification, σὺν δίκῃ κατέκτανον, οὐκ ἄνευ δίκης, πατέρ' ἐμὸν κατέκτανεν, and so on.

Finally, if we admitted compulsion, is even that enough to make the killing ἀκούσιος? Not unless Orestes was of himself quite unwilling to do it. What a man is obliged to do is not therefore ἀκούσιον, unless he decidedly objects to doing it, and would not do it except for the pressure or compulsion brought to bear on him. Where is the evidence that this could be said of Orestes? Reluctance of a kind he may have felt. Some scruples, heart-searchings, compunction, we may ascribe to him, though there is little enough of them in the *Choëphoroe*, and not a syllable in the *Eumenides*. Πυλάδη,

τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἰδεσθῶ κτανεῖν; is his only and momentary word of hesitation. But we should quite misread him if we fancied that a strong repugnance to the act was only overcome by the terror of Apollo's threats. Bidden or unbidden, the son would have avenged his father's death.

If these arguments are sound, they go to show that the defence of Orestes took the line associated in later times with the Delphinium, where justification was pleaded, not with the Palladium.

H. RICHARDS.

PLATO, *PHAEDO* 66 B.

PROBABLY no passage in Plato has been explained in so many ways. The last clause (τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ἀληθές) carries us back to 65 E. The sentence beginning with ἐκ πάντων τούτων is merely a re-statement of the arguments deduced and conclusions reached in 65 B–66 A inclusive, and must be taken closely with these to be understood. Wohlrab, Archer-Hind, Jowett, Bonitz, Ast, Heindorf, Stalbaum, Schmidt, Schneider, and others have, apparently, failed to do this; and inasmuch as the clauses following κινδυνεύει happen to contain so many words (ἀτραπός, ἐκφέρειν, λόγον, σκέψει), as well as constructions (ὅτι . . . ὅτι, μετὰ τοῦ λόγου, σκέψει ὅτι) which admit of various explanations, these scholars have mistaken Plato's meaning.

Commentators on Sophocles quote our passage to illustrate the use of ἐκφέρει in *Ajax* 7. Platonic scholars likewise cite the Sophoclean verse. But the verb is used in different senses by the poet and by the philosopher, and unless this fact is recognized, the reader, ἀμαρτὼν τῆς ὁδοῦ, is liable to be led into a maze of difficulties, to extricate himself from which he will be apt to wrangle in tickle points of niceness and entangle himself still more in over-wiseness. If the Greek can be understood in so many ways, it does not deserve to be understood in any—if there is not something in the context to indicate to us what is the definite thought which Plato desired to express, something which will brush aside at once all these devious explanations, we may as well give up the passage as hopelessly corrupt.

'We assert,' declares Socrates in 66 B, 'that this (οὐ ἐπιθυμοῦμεν) is τὸ ἀληθές (an echo of ἀλήθειαν in 65 B), which we shall never get possession of (cf. κτήσιν, 65 A)

so long as the soul is not free to make the search unimpeded, so long as it is mixed with such an evil as the body.' But the question propounded in 65 A is: πότερον ἐμπόδιον τὸ σῶμα ἢ οὐ, εἰάν τις αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ ζητήσει κοινωνὸν συμπαραλαμβάνῃ; The answer is found in 66 B. The body is an obstacle (if we take it with us in our quest of truth¹), for it leads us astray ὥσπερ ἀτραπός, so that we go the longer way, τὴν κατ'ἐπερθε ὁδὸν πολλῶν μακροτέρην ἐκτραπόμενοι (Hdt. 1. 104), or the wrong way, until finally, recognizing our mistake, we exclaim: 'Nous avons fait fausse route.' The ἀτραπός leads off (ἐκφέρει) the main road, not on towards the goal; ἡ ἀτραπὸς ἀπέσχισται ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ, as Herodotus says; or the road, like a river, σχίζεται τριφασίας ὁδοῦς (2. 17), καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἡῶ τράπεται, ἡ δὲ πρὸς ἐσπέρην ἔχει, while ἡ ἰθὺς τῶν ὁδῶν would lead us to the truth. Borne out of our course, as Io was (ἔξω φέρομαι *Prom.* 883), we grope in the dark; we are unable to see the οἶμος. We cannot follow the road, because our reason is beclouded (εἰάν τὸ σῶμα ἔχωμεν)—εἵκομεν τῆς ὁδοῦ καὶ ἐκτραπόμεθα (Hdt. 2. 80).² The verb ἐκφέρειν may mean *ad exitum* (ψ 376 ff.) as well as *a recta via ducere*; but the context shows that the preposition is used in the

¹ Note the parallel words and phrases in question and answer: ἐμπόδιον <ἐκφέρειν, τὸ σῶμα> ἀτραπός, τις <ἡμᾶς, αὐτὸ κοινωνὸν συμπαραλαμβάνῃ> τὸ σῶμα ἔχωμεν, ἐν τῇ ζητήσει <ἐν τῇ σκέψει.

² The ἀτραπός is not θάνατος, as Wohlrab maintains. The soul cannot grasp truth μετὰ τοῦ σώματος (65 B and D), for the latter drags it off on a by-path (μετὰ τοῦ λόγου ἐν τῇ σκέψει), whereas it should be left by itself, to continue its march toward pure being. Socrates is not thinking of death (in 66 B), but of the philosopher's 'death in life' (ὁ ἐγγύς τι τείνειν τοῦ τεθνάναι ἐπιχειρῶν). This is proved by his frequent use of ὅτι μάλιστα in both sections.