

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Previously Published Works

Title

Review of David Kovacs' Euripidea (Euripidean testimonia and textual criticism)

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1z9624fw>

Journal

Bryn Mawr Classical Review, 5(4)

Author

Mastronarde, Donald J.

Publication Date

1994

Peer reviewed

[326] David Kovacs, *Euripidea Mnemosyne Supplement 132*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994. Pp. x + 181. \$51.50. ISBN 90-04-09926-3.

Reviewed by Donald J. Mastronarde, University of California, Berkeley

The bulk of this volume (pp. 1-141) presents the major testimonia (and pseudo-testimonia, such as the egregious work of Satyros and the “Letters of Euripides”) to the life and craft of Euripides, with Greek texts and facing English translations by K. The Greek texts are from various standard editions, but K. has usually paid close attention to the text and makes about a dozen conjectures in them. K. had hoped that this work would be printed in the first volume of his new Loeb Euripides. But that proved impossible, and so now we have a companion volume to the forthcoming Loeb, filled out with some textual discussions. It is the sort of work that a century ago would have appeared in the *Abhandlungen* or *Mitteilungen* of a European academy, and now fits fairly comfortably (if expensively) in the ranks of the *Mnemosyne* Supplements.

The printing of the Greek texts would have been of questionable value if Kannicht’s long-awaited edition of the fragments of Euripides (TrGF 5) had appeared or were known to be imminent. Since we still await that tome, the only qualm here may be about the padding of the volume with such extensive quotation and translation of Aristophanes. Radt set the example by producing an edition of almost the entire second half of *Frogs* as Testimonium 120 to Aeschylus. K. devotes 45 pages to Euripides in Aristophanes, with 87 lines of *Acharnians*, 140 of *Thesmophoriazusae*, and 248 of *Frogs*. Apart from the Aristophanes, however, the English translations are of permanent value, as they give clear and in general very accurate guidance to the student and to any Greekless scholar who cares to venture into this unprepossessing material. Of notable utility are the versions of the Lives (one from the older mss of Euripides, one from the *Suda*, one from Thomas Magister) and the rendering of the main fragments of Satyros’ dialogue (from P. Oxy. 9.1176). Snatches from various scholia and from the *Marmor Parium* are also welcome since English translations cannot otherwise be found. The “Letters” have never been translated into English before: it is nice to have them as examples of rhetorical exercises from postclassical times, although they tell us nothing about Euripides and not very much about his reputation in later ages.

There are very few corrections to be made of the translations. P. 13, 2nd to last line: read “were on display” (as correctly on p. 3) for “are on display.” P. 15, line 8: “to Macedonia” omitted. P. 19, lines 15-16: better “suggesting to them images of Spartan onslaughts” than the ambiguous “urging Spartan charges upon them.” P. 23, line 15: either “so long did they get the upper hand over their adversaries” or (with *τέως* used like *ἕως*: LSJ s.v. I.2; cf. Arrighetti’s [327] *finché*)¹ “until they got the upper hand over their adversaries.” P. 27, line 8: “all alone” omitted after “Euripides.” P. 27, line 14: *ἀνάπαλιν* here is “conversely,” not “again.” P. 57, line 15: K. strangely translates the Aristotelian chestnut (*Poetics* 1460b32-5) as “Sophocles said that he himself made his characters as he had to make them” (the usual translations are “as they ought to be” or “as one ought to make them”). P. 61, *Frogs* 1407-9: replace the second-person forms with third-person. P. 83, *Thesm.* 339: read “help to bring the tyrant back” (the phrase is a survival from the political situation of 510-490). P. 87, *Thesm.* 449: read “to keep myself alive.” P. 89, *Frogs* 62: “suddenly” omitted. P. 95, *Frogs* 785: “right now” omitted. P. 95, *Frogs* 790: K. accepts and translates Coulon’s *κᾶνειακος*; but *ἄνειακος* is not a properly formed classical Greek adjective and probably never existed (postclassical *ἀνειακία* for *ἀνικία* reflects later confusion of *νικ-* and *νειακ-*). P. 101, *Frogs* 943: *ἀπηθῶν* is from the medical/botanical verb *ἀπηθέω*, “strain, press,” not from (unattested) adjective *ἀπήθης*. P. 107, *Frogs* 1029: “clapped its hands,” not “stuck up it hands.”

The need to translate forces a recognition of textual difficulties that might otherwise be glossed over, and K. is keenly interested in textual criticism and has a sharp eye. I here review some of his suggestions. In the *Life* from the *Suda* (p. 10) K. attractively posits that an adverb has been lost, thus eliminating the odd emphasis given by *καὶ* before *περὶ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἔρωτας* and the harsh use of intransitive *σχεῖν*. On the other hand, when K.’s posits a lacuna in Thomas Magister’s *Life* (p. 12), he seems to forget that we are dealing with a text written ca. 1300, the earliest textual source for which (Triclinius’ ms T; these pages were written by Triclinius himself) is dated within a decade or two of its composition (and the other early witnesses, ZZm, fall within 30-50 years); not only are the sources close in time to the original composition, but the

¹G. Arrighetti, *Satiro. Vita di Euripide* [Studi Classici e Orientali, 13] (Pisa 1964) 89.

preservation of the work at all is due to the *pietas* of Thomas' students. So, if Triclinius could stomach the precious use of the articular infinitive as a complement to θαυμαστός, with the laudatory adjective placed climactically at the end of the clause, we should accept it too.² In the minor crux at *Acharn.* 461 (p. 72) K. prints οἶσ' ("endure") for οἶσθ'; but οἶσε elsewhere in Attic comedy (the form is not found in tragedy or Attic prose) always means "bring [something]"; if emendation is necessary here, I would prefer ἴσθ' as a mocking rejoinder to Euripides' ἴσθ' in the previous line. At *Frogs* 956 (p. 100) K. cleverly conjectures λεπτῶν τε κανόνας εἰσβολῶν, "[taught them] to measure out the line of subtle attack," [328] giving a sharper point to λεπτῶν. But transmitted λεπτῶν τε κανόνων εἰσβολὰς, "insertions of subtle (carpenter's) rules," is adequate and forms a better pair with γωνιασμούς (two verbal nouns, two metaphors from handicraft). At *Poetics* 1461b20 (p. 114) K. has attended to the anomalous μηθὲν following μὴ ἀνάγκης οὔσης and slightly improves Gomperz's <πρὸς> μηθὲν to <εἰς> μηθὲν (the problem is ignored in recent editions). At *Plut. Mor.* 841F (p. 116), the famous "Lycurgan decree" on the texts of the tragedians, K. depends on the Loeb rather than the 1971 Teubner of J. Mau and conjectures οὐδ' to produce οὐδ' ἐξεῖναι παρ' αὐτὰς ὑποκρίνεσθαι for οὐκ ἐξεῖναι γὰρ <παρ'> [Bernardakis] αὐτὰς ὑποκρίνεσθαι; but this makes ἐξεῖναι a

²K. is relying on Dindorf's edition of the Thoman *Life*, poorly based on the late 15th-century Triclinian replacement pages supplying the lost opening pages of ms B and on the 16th-century replacement pages supplying the lost opening pages of Mn. But one can in fact ascertain that T and Z have the same reading as Dindorf's late mss in this passage, since a facsimile of the *Life* in T (with collation of Z) was published by Bjarne Schartau in *Odense University Classical Studies*, vol. 3 (1973). In sentence 15 of the Thoman *Life* (p. 14), K. emends τῷ τότε εἰσαγαγεῖν πρὸς τὸν ἀγῶνα to τῷ τότε εἰσαγαγεῖν προαγῶνι to produce agreement with the older *Life*: we know that Thomas generally copied and conflated material he read in the old mss and the old scholia; but Thomas may not have understood what a προαγῶν was and may have written what we find transmitted in T and Z and printed by Dindorf.

continuation of the indirect command construction, so that μηδ' would be needed, not οὐδ'. In Lucian, *quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 1 (p. 124), K.'s alteration of ἐρρωμένως to ἐρρωμένω seems to me misguided. The phrase πυρέττειν ... ἅπαντας ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης εὐθὺς ἐρρωμένως καὶ λιπαρεῖ τῷ πυρετῷ makes two points: (1) the fever was very strong from the first day (it did not start mild and grow more severe) and (2) it continued without variation in intensity (it did not come and go or rise and fall repeatedly). The idiomatic combination ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης εὐθὺς properly goes with ἐρρωμένως alone and does not consort well with λιπαρεῖ τῷ πυρετῷ. Finally, in the first "Letter" (p. 128) K.'s correction of δοκίμων to δόκιμον is excellent.

The remainder of the book (pp. 145-72; pp. 173-81 have bibliography and five brief indexes) contains textual discussions of 33 passages in *Cyclops*, *Alcestis*, and *Medea* (plus a dozen brief references to recent articles for other passages). These could easily enough have been presented in another article, but there is perhaps some economy in appending them to this book, and it is certainly useful to have the cross-references to the other discussions, which a journal might not have printed. I am a more conservative critic than K., but there is good value in many of these discussions, even for one who disagrees with the conclusion. For my taste, K. often starts from an inflexible premiss that conditions his conclusion, and his repeated statements that "reason" tells us something with certainty run the risk of begging some vital questions (did Euripides always compose perfectly? did Euripides always want his characters' statements, arguments, and motivations to be utterly clear and "reasonable"?). I offer here a selection of my reactions.

First, I believe K. (probably) makes the right choice at *Alc.* 811, *Med.* 240, 752. He persuades me that εἶ τῆγγων is not the right solution at *Cycl.* 326 and that there may be no reference to erection or masturbation (despite the learned parallels given by Seaford), though I would prefer πέδον to πλέων in 327. The emendation of φίλων to θεῶν in *Med.* 847 is attractive. The oddities of *Alc.* 673-4 are well diagnosed, but the solution proposed is doubtful. In other cases of parenthetical γάρ-clauses interrupting a sentence, the word before the interruption is usually stronger and clearer in function than the genitive noun here (one expects the imperative).

On the other hand, the discussion of *Cycl.* 60-2 starts from a premiss I question: a narrow definition of εἶσω as “physically inside of.” Occasionally εἶσω is used in a looser sense, as “in between” or “encircled by” (in Eur. compare *Hipp.* 4 and perhaps *IT* 113, though the latter is an unsolved crux). “Grassy pastures [329] amidst the crags of Aetna” seems quite possible in lyric. At *Cycl.* 164 κἄν is not convincing because it ought to be in front of μίαν, the word to be emphasized in this context. At *Cycl.* 170 παρεσκευασμένον seems to me too roundabout in a context of quick enumeration of fantasy joys: either use daggers or accept transmitted genitive (“well-tended”). At *Cycl.* 287 ψέγομεν for λέγομεν would be too tactless on Odysseus’ part; better to view ἰκετεύομέν τε καὶ λέγομεν ἐλευθέρως as hendiadys. At *Cycl.* 340-4, why should there not be a large cauldron on stage (for ghoulish display) to which τόνδε in 343 refers? The rewriting of *Cycl.* 439-40 is unattractive: I do not see a legitimate force for τόνδε, and the sequence with καὶ (rather than an adversative) and the repetition of ἐκφυγ- are dubious.

At *Alc.* 64 I would side with Diggle. “You *will* do as I ask!” is easier, even with βίᾳ following at a distance, than πάυση as explicated by K. or than the emendation proposed. At *Alc.* 103 we need a word for household slaves, not for kin, since Alcestis has no kin in the vicinity (nor does Admetus, except for his parents). At *Alc.* 121-6, the emendation proposed to allow the retention of μόνος seems unlikely to me because of the lack of expressed “her” as the object of ἦνευ. K. rightly points to the uniqueness of Hermann’s μόνον (which I commended in *CP* 83 (1988) 155); but I do not share his qualm about the word-position in μόνον δ’ ἄν, εἰ κτλ., and the unique usage could be a deliberate variation on prosaic μόνως εἰ. The discussion of *Alc.* 290-2 is a good example of the sharpness of K.’s critical eye, but also of his inflexible treatment of language. First, I would not, as K. does, deem the repetition κατθανεῖν / θανεῖν problematic: the emphatic word in the second phrase is εὐκλεῶς (“and thus die with good fame”). Second, βίου need not be straitjacketed into the fixed meaning “length of years”: in 291 is connotes “time of life,” “advanced age,” but in 292 it may be understood to connote “condition of life,” as explained in the following clause (they have only one son and no hope of begetting another). *Alc.* 314 should not be emended. Take the dative πατρί as adnominal with συζύγου (not of interest with τυχοῦσα), and understand τυχοῦσα with gen. noun and predicative adjective under the heading LSJ B.II.1 (note esp. Xen. *Anab.*

5.5.15): “what kind of a woman will you find your father’s new spouse to be?” (“meeting with what kind of person in the one mated to your father?”).

At *Med.* 234 I still prefer Diggle’s (Brunck’s) text. The transformation presupposed by Diggle is not “equally hard to explain,”³ and I take the sense to be “and this [getting a master] is an evil still more painful than an evil [buying a husband at great expense].” The deletion of *Med.* 304-5 (instead of just 304, as usually done) seems to me to spoil the rhetoric of the passage. K.’s shorter text eliminates the fine transition with δ’ οὖν (“however others may feel about me, the important point is that *you* fear me: but why?”). In my view, εἰμὶ δ’ οὐκ ἄγαν σοφή makes a good contribution to the argument (“not only am I unfairly judged, but I am not really that σοφή”), and this softening of the claim to cleverness gives an opening for the next argument (“what have you got to be afraid of [330] from me?”). At *Med.* 365, K. insists that τὰύτη must refer back to κακῶς in the previous line unless one assumes a lacuna that makes the futurity of ταῦτα τὰύτη explicit. The futurity is implied, however, by the contrastive force of ἀλλ’ οὔτι, by the interjection μὴ δοκεῖτέ πω, and by the use of τὰύτη, “by this way,” which suggests “going on a path” (a present/future motion). I believe the text already says what K. wants it to say, but in a brief and forceful style. At *Med.* 496-7 I agree that gen. complement γονάτων with φεῦ after the exclamatory nom. χεῖρ in the previous line is unusual; but K.’s expedient of repunctuating to attach γονάτων to ἐλαμβάνου upsets the rhetorical balance of the phrasing and leaves both hand and knees to be understood as the parts “touched in vain,” whereas Page’s parallels show that χρώζειν is *mot juste* with γόνατα alone. Finally, if *Med.* 945 is assigned to Medea, K. is right to add Herwerden’s <γ>; but I would again side with Diggle in the assignment of the line to Jason. This is not the place for Medea to flatter Jason with the backhanded compliment that all women find him irresistible (cf. the view of one scholiast [not “two scholiasts” as K. says] that γυναικῶν here implies τῶν φιλόανδρων). The reason “if indeed she is an ordinary woman” (implicit is the conventional belief that women are more susceptible to pity) is of little effect if

³τοῦτ’ became τοῦδ’ by assimilation to the preceding κακοῦ; τοῦτ’ ἔτ’ became τοῦτ’ by saut du même au même (or because little words easily drop out); τοῦτό γε is a correction of the meter subsequent to that omission.

spoken by Medea, but in Jason's mouth it tells why he has made the abrupt shift from the diffidence of 941 ("I might not be able to persuade Creon") to the confidence of 944.

The Greek is very accurately printed. Correct p. 40, Test. 25, line 2, where the numeral should end with IIII, not III (the translation is correct); p. 68, *Acharn.* 401 (ὕποκρίνεται); p. 108, *Frogs* 1053 (last three characters of the line are cut off); p. 134, line 19 (ἐπιτηδείων). In English, correct to "points" on p. 146, line 11, and insert "is" on p. 163, line 15. Other minor slips: p. 66, n. 1: read "ortus"; p. 67 n.1: transpose the parenthetic words and read "the second is incorrect on the stone (144 is the correct figure)."