

SOME PASSAGES OF EURIPIDES'
HECUBA IN THE LIGHT OF
NEW TEXTUAL RESEARCH

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FOR THE PROFANE who think that in classical studies nearly everything has already been achieved, and that we can quietly rest on the sure results won by our predecessors during many centuries, it must be a surprise to learn that the science of manuscripts or codicology is a new one¹ and that the attempt to trace the textual history of an ancient author is scarcely older than the present century. The oldest *stemma codicum* ever drawn is still not a hundred years old.

In fact there is still much to do to establish a readable text of the most important ancient authors. By readable we mean a text which is founded not only on a complete recension of manuscripts, but also on the knowledge of textual history throughout the centuries. No branch of tradition must remain unclassified behind a text based on an incomplete exploration. This is, at present, a duty imposed upon philologists by the mere existence of modern methods.

I shall attempt to show here how a fundamental study devoted to Euripides' manuscripts² can affect the text of a tragedy, and do so even though the standard edition, that of Gilbert Murray, is unanimously acknowledged to be an excellent work.

The fact that the tragedy we choose for our analysis, the *Hecuba*, belongs to the so-called Byzantine triad, that is, to the most repeated group in all extant manuscripts, makes our task easier. The tragedies of the triad are those to which Professor Turyn has devoted most careful attention in his book.

Let us examine some characteristic passages of this work in which the value of the famous manuscripts L and P, considered as the best from the first edition in the Renaissance until that of Kirchoff (1855), with a later reaction in favor of them initiated by Wilamowitz and sustained by the authority of G. Murray,³ decays still more when we can, thanks to the research of Turyn, know the manuscript tradition better.

L and P are under the influence of late Byzantine scholar-

¹ See for instance H. Hunger, *Gnomon*, 30 (1958), 285.

² A. Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides* (Urbana, 1957).

³ Euripidis fabulae, ed. Murray, (Oxonii, 1902). See I, ivf.

ship, especially, as we can check, in the triad (*Hec.*, *Orest.*, *Phoen.*), and even when they both agree, they do not prove anything, because as Turyn says,⁴ “the evidence of L and P for the text of the triad is deprived of value, except for scattered peculiarities which throw subsidiary light on the diffusion of some rare readings of the old tradition.”

Turyn is inclined to think⁵ that the source from which L and P were copied was related to a manuscript of the “complete” Euripides (as we possess him) owned in the twelfth century by the Homeric commentator Eustathius. We can add as proof some coincidences between quotations of this author from *Hecuba* and P and/or L readings: 260 ἀνθρωποκτονεῖν P (errore ex Σ, as Murray points out) and also Eustathius; 421 ἄμμοροι LPMS Eustathius; 786 λέγεις LP and Eustathius; 996 τοῦ πλησίον P and Eustathius. The “Eustathius manuscript” is undoubtedly of the same type as the “complete” manuscripts L and P, and probably was either the original from which these were copied or a brother of it.⁶

In this case, and against the present day slogan *recentiores non deteriores*, the fact of the posteriority of LP as compared with M or B, is still a proof of their inferiority.

Be that as it may, the old reputation and authority of the manuscripts L and P have lasted into the Murray edition, as will be shown by the few passages which we shall now reexamine.

Line 88 Κασάνδρας read all the manuscripts except P; notwithstanding, most of the editors (Nauck, Kirchhoff, Paley, Murray but not Méridier) accept the reading of P, Κασάνδραν. The reason for the correction in P is clearly given by a Byzantine scholium: εἶπε δὲ ψυχὴν Ἐλένου ἐπειδὴ τεθνηκῶς ἦν, Κασάνδραν δέ, καὶ οὐ Κασάνδρας, ἐπειδὴ ζῶσα ἦν. It is evidently the pedantic spirit of a late Byzantine scholiast who here speaks, most probably the same grammarian who has influenced P.

135 οὐνεκ' M BAV: εἵνεκ' LP. Murray says in his preface:⁷ “οὐνεκα non mutauit in εἵνεκα nisi unius saltem libri auctoritate.” But it is just in cases like the present one that the authority of

⁴ *op.cit.* p. 303.

⁵ *ibid.* p. 305.

⁶ *ibid.* 305f.

⁷ Eurip. fab. I, p. x.

L and P is to be disputed: could they in this case represent the genuine tradition? Not necessarily so, since inscriptions show the use of οὐνεκα instead of the preposition ἔνεκα.⁸ Kirchoff and Méridier wisely read οὐνεκα in this line.

256 φροντίζετε LP: γινώσκετε MA. The replacement of γινώσκετε is due to the wish to avoid the repetition of the verb after the γιγνώσκουσθε of the previous line, but it emphasizes much better the hate that Mécuba feels for demagogues:

μηδὲ γιγνώσκουσθέ μοι,
οἱ τοὺς φίλους βλάπτουτες οὐ γινώσκετε!

As I have shown in two other instances,⁹ it is important not to be misled by pleasure in variation. Although B is presented in this passage by Méridier as a support of φροντίζετε, we know that this codex has been supplemented in this part with a Moschopulean text.¹⁰ It is therefore certain that the reading φροντίζετε is an interpolation by Byzantine scholars.

820 τί MB: πῶς ALPb. Here again we decide against LP, although they are accompanied by A. But even the presence of this manuscript¹¹ in the group LP can be proof of the corrective character of πῶς instead of τί in order to avoid the sequence τί . . . τις at the distance of three small words in the same line.

853 χάριν MBA γρ. l: δίκην LPΣ *et marg.* A². Here again the coincidence of LP is what makes the reading δίκην suspect, although this is accepted by all recent editors: Kirchoff, Nauck, Paley, Murray, Méridier. While it is true that the expression δοῦναι δίκην at least once (*Aeschylus Suppl.* 703 δίκας ἄτερ πημάτων διδοῖεν) it means "to grant arbitration," it is generally used to signify "to suffer punishment, make

⁸ K. Meisterhans and Ed. Schwyzer, *Grammatik der attischen Inschriften*⁸ (Berlin, 1900), 215–17.

⁹ On *Bacch.* 1152 in *Homenaje a Rodolfo Oroz*, *Bol. de Filol. de la Universidad de Chile*, 8 (1954/5), 461f., and on *Androm.* 1171f. in *Gymnasium*, 63 (Heidelberg, 1956), 80f.

¹⁰ Turyn *op.cit.* p. 88.

¹¹ Turyn *op.cit.* p. 89 has established the position of this manuscript: the codex A "occasionally follows in the triad some Moschopulean elements," although "in its basic stock MS. A carries an old tradition. . ."

awards," which is quite unsuitable here. For *δοῦναι χάριν* we can compare Aeschyl. *Prom.* 821 *ἡμῖν αὖ χάριν δὸς ἤνπερ ἠτούμεσθα* and Soph. *Oed. Col.* 1489f. *ἀνθ' ὧν ἔπασχον εὖ, τελέσφορον χάριν δοῦναι σφιν, ἤνπερ τυγχάνων ἐπεσχόμεν.* The favor that Agamemnon would wish to grant to Hecuba, provided that he can avoid arousing suspicion that he is doing so for Cassandra's sake, is that of permitting her to have her will against the Thracian host:

*καὶ βούλομαι θεῶν θ' οὔνεκ' ἀνόσιον ξένον
καὶ τοῦ δικαίου τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν.*

Here *δοῦναι* governs two accusatives: *ἀνόσιον ξένον* and *τήνδε χάριν*. The fact that two lines below the verse finishes again with the word *χάριν* invited Byzantine scholars to seek a *uariatio* in style, and at the same time an easier reading. But *τήνδε χάριν* here is the *χάρις* alluded to in line 830.

943 *Διοσκόροιν* MBA: *Διοσκούροιν* LP. The corrector of this late branch of tradition could not be prevented from changing this word by metrics in a seemingly indifferent point, but it must be recalled that *Διόσκοροι* is the Attic form, assured by the iambic metre in other passages of our poet (*Hel.* 1644, *El.* 1239). This case shows clearly how the reading of LP can be, against the other evidence, the result of correction.

990 *σέθεν λέγεις* MBAP: *λέγεις σέθεν* L. The preference given by all the editors (except Kirchhoff and Paley) to the reading *λέγεις σέθεν* is only a consequence of the old recognized authority of L or P. The order *εὖ καξίως σέθεν* seems preferable, and as we have reason to doubt the value of L, nothing justifies maintaining L's reading against that of all the rest of the codices.

In all the passages so far examined it cannot be said that only a prejudice against L and P has led us to prefer the readings of the other branch of the tradition. Linguistic and literary arguments confirm the interpolated character of L and P and lead us again to the position of Kirchhoff: in nearly every passage I find myself agreeing with him. This does not mean that in philology scholars do Penelope's work. If Kirchhoff acted in reaction against an opinion accepted for many cen-

turies, we can boast of a more complete knowledge of the Euripidean manuscripts and their relations. For the first time A. Turyn has followed the labyrinthine history of the whole of these manuscripts. We have only given a proof of the possibilities he has offered for making the text of the third Greek tragedian more accurately readable.¹²

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¹² I express my thanks to my colleague Professor D. Larkin of Univ. Nac. de Tucumán for his revision of the English text.