

The Riddle of Wilamowitz's *Phaidrabil*

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IN 1867 at the age of eighteen, Wilamowitz already held views on *Hippolytus*.¹ The play even then was a favorite. It reveals “was der Dichter, wenn er sich zusammennahm, leisten konnte, in der That ein treffliches Werk!”² The youth sees *Hippolytus* as the best example for Longinus’ praise of Euripides’ depiction of love (*Subl.* 15.3), the sensual love of the southern woman, passion mixed of sorrow and joy (*Hipp.* 348). *Odi et amo*, but not the adolescent sentimentality of *Romeo and Juliet*.³ The great expository scene between the Nurse and Phaedra (*Hipp.* 176–524) far excels its counterpart in *Medea*.⁴ The brilliant thought and natural exposition of the scene are compared with the dialogue of Hippolytus and the aged servant (*Hipp.* 88ff) that so well points the grounds for Aphrodite’s wrath. He refuses to condemn Hippolytus’ attack on women (*Hipp.* 616ff): “seine lange Diatribe gegen die Weiber, wohl das tollste, was selbst Euripides gegen sie losgelassen hat.”⁵ Hippolytus is a misogynist to begin with and has just encountered their worst possible side. And what follows is so dreadful. That Phaedra is provoked reasonably motivates her revenge. Theseus’ exasperation is perfectly natural. The scene between father and son has an extraordinary effect upon the audience, who know the innocence of Hippolytus but admit that from his point of view Theseus is right.

That Poseidon is caught in his own promise Wilamowitz sees as a

¹ See Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *In wie weit befriedigen die Schlüsse der erhaltenen griechischen Trauerspiele?: Ein ästhetischer Versuch*, ed. William M. Calder III (Leiden 1974) 112–14 (hereafter, *Trauerspiele*).

² *Trauerspiele* 112.

³ At *Trauerspiele* 112 n.232, Wilamowitz cites *Romeo and Juliet* I.1.182–87 in English with two errors.

⁴ The interpretation of *Hippolytus* by contrast with *Medea* would be deepened in later years. Here is the slightest beginning of what has become, largely because of Wilamowitz, a staple of modern Euripidean criticism.

⁵ *Trauerspiele* 113. The idiomatic style is typical of this earliest work.

folkmotif⁶ present in German saga. He astutely compares Herodes and John the Baptist. Artemis is not at all a *deus ex machina* but is closely integrated into the action. She must appear as the beloved of Hippolytus to effect the reconciliation of her favorite with his father. Euripides needed to motivate Hippolytus' reserve (*Sprödigkeit*),⁷ and instead of the incest and matchmaking that may have been part of the first *Hippolytus*, here he sought to bring a philosopher on stage. Artemis, the goddess of virginity, is "the personified idea that fills his mind," "not an operatic figure without a soul like Liberty in *Egmont*."⁸ Then we have a passage remarkable for its autobiographical intensity:⁹ "Hippolytos ist noch ein Jüngling, erfüllt von idealem Streben nach dem Unausführbaren, ein Phantast, ein bei weitem mehr deutscher Character, das führt denn dahin, dass er zu weit geht und fällt." Euripides kept serious a play that could easily have become comic. The thoroughly rational, impious poet, far more speculative than sensitive in his temperament (all his portrayals of passion appeal to our understanding rather than to our feeling), did not quite avoid exposure of the moral world-order. He cites *Hippolytus* 1400 to argue that Euripides presents the gods themselves in discord¹⁰ and over us something worse than ourselves. That Kypris punishes Phaedra more than Hippolytus is surely the worst fault of the play. Their inexorable but unjust fate spoils any general reconciliation in the last act. Only here on earth has the poet procured us moral satisfaction. But by banishing the origin of sin to a higher world, how does our perception of it change? In short, Euripides' portrayal of the gods offends the youth's moral sense. He sees Phaedra as their victim but admires most of all the idealism of Hippolytus, in whom he sees himself before such catastrophe.

⁶ The kernel of what became fundamental to Wilamowitz's treatment of the Hippolytus story in Euripides: see *Hermes* 15 (1880) 483= *KS* I 19 and *Euripides Hippolytos: Griechisch und Deutsch* (Berlin 1891) 44 n.2 (hereafter, *Hippolytos*). See further J. T. Kakridis, *Απαί* (Athens 1929) 26ff.

⁷ At *Hippolytos* 33, Wilamowitz applies the word to the Amazons, who provided Hippolytus with his mother.

⁸ *Trauerspiele* 114. The reference is to Goethe, *Egmont ad fin.*= *Goethes Werke* IV⁶ (Hamburg 1965) *Dramatische Dichtungen* II.452–53. There is obvious similarity between Egmont and Hippolytus, both martyred youths loyal to their ideals. Wilamowitz had recently played the title rôle in a school production of the play: see *Trauerspiele* 23 nn. 40 and 44.

⁹ *Trauerspiele* 114.

¹⁰ *Trauerspiele* 114 ("... die Götter selbst sind in Zwist..."); cf. *Hippolytos* 55: "Euripides hat diese disharmonie nicht verhüllt, im gegenteil, er hat sie gefliessentlich hervorgezogen. das ist seine art oder unart."

In 1891 Wilamowitz wrote:¹¹ "It is now some twenty-three years ago that I first translated the *Hippolytus*; and of that boyish attempt only several scattered dialogue verses remain here." The boyish version is remembered for a special reason. During vacation at Markowitz, his family estate in Posen, between semesters at Bonn, in 1868 he visited his paternal aunt, Emma von Schwanefeld (*ob.* 1876), at Schloß Kobelnik several miles away, and read her aloud his translation of *Hippolytus*. Wilamowitz never forgot this meeting. Sixty years later he wrote of it in his *Erinnerungen*.¹² Twice in scholarly publications he had earlier recalled it. I cite from the later of these:¹³

It is now thirty years ago that I tried out the power of this scene on an old lady.¹⁴ For her, Greek, and indeed really lofty poetry, had never become a living power. The classical poetry which she had come to respect as such from childhood on was the French. Life had never once brought close to her German Romanticism and 'das junge Deutschland' in its best representatives. Ida Hahn-Hahn¹⁵ had been close to her. Frivolity and affected piety were, therefore, not foreign to her. But a keen intellect and a vivacious sense for the genuine always helped her through. Now I read aloud to her my translation of the *Hippolytus*. She brought with her of course the prejudice that Racine had long ago surpassed that dead old rubbish, the feeling that for her heart Racine too did not suffice, and the correct appraisal that my translation had to be as unripe as I. Therefore, I was very disappointed; for the hoped-for success was wanting. But I read further because I believed in my ideals.¹⁶ Then came the song to Aphrodite, that follows the messenger-speech, and the epiphany of Artemis. Then there burned in the sparkling eyes of the elderly lady the true fire of inspiration; and, when I was

¹¹ *Hippolytos* 1.

¹² Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Erinnerungen 1848-1914*² (Leipzig 1929) 55 n.1. The note numbers have been reversed; in n.1 for "S. 59" read "S. 54 A. 1." This passage identifies Tante Emma as the elderly lady cited in the passage below.

¹³ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechische Tragödien I*⁴ (Berlin 1904) 121 n.1, and earlier *Hippolytos* 54 n.1.

¹⁴ Emma von Schwanefeld: see *Erinnerungen*² 53-56. Her memoirs survive, which I intend to edit. They are cited in Fanny Gräfin von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Erinnerungen und Begegnungen* (Berlin 1936) 62ff.

¹⁵ See *Erinnerungen*² 54, 55 n.2.

¹⁶ "Aber ich las weiter, denn ich glaubte an meine Ideale." The resemblance to Wilamowitz's description of Hippolytus (*supra* p.220) is noteworthy. On December 4, 1869 *Hippolytus* remains his favorite Euripidean play: *GRBS* 11 (1970) 147.

done, she sprang to her feeble feet, clapped her hands, and cried:
 'That is more than Racine; has a pagan really composed it?'

Two years later we have another glimpse of Wilamowitz's familiarity with *Hippolytus*.¹⁷ In October 1870 he was quartered with his orderly at the home of Monsieur Bardi in Beauvais, a retired headmaster. There over a delicious though sparse meal of ragout of rabbit with turnips, the elderly gentleman recited "with youthful warmth" the messenger speech from Racine, *Phèdre*, beginning "à peine nous quittâmes les portes de Trézène," "because I had impudently disparaged his Racine in comparison with my Euripides." They regaled each other with French and Greek verses. Monsieur Bardi succeeded where Emma von Schwanefeld had failed. The young officer began to admire Racine. By October 1870 Wilamowitz had committed *Hippolytus* to memory.

At Berlin in summer semester 1875 Wilamowitz, the young Dozent, taught *Hippolytus*.¹⁸ At Greifswald summer semester 1881 he offered a seminar on the play. He had a good deal to say. The seminar continued through winter semester 1881/2. At Göttingen winter semester 1886/7, he again lectured on *Hippolytus*. He tells us of these classes.¹⁹ He would return home, his soul filled with the poetry, and, in spite of himself, seek again to say in his own language what he felt. He never taught *Hippolytus* again. The reason is evident. In 1891 he published his edition²⁰ of the Greek text with German translation, with the famous foreword, "What is Translation?," admired by Gildersleeve²¹ and often reprinted in *Reden und Vorträge*,²² and with an introduction, "The Hippolytus Story and its Handling by Euripides." A philological appendix with selective notes, critical and exegetical, concludes the famous volume.

The essay on the Hippolytus story includes Wilamowitz's most

¹⁷ The source for what follows is *Hippolytos* 232 n.1, another example of Wilamowitz's habit of inserting autobiographical reminiscence into scholarly work. He alludes later to this passage at *Reden aus der Kriegszeit* (Berlin 1915) 51–52 and *Erinnerungen*² 111–12.

¹⁸ Details of Wilamowitz's teaching career are gathered at F. Frhr. Hiller v. Gaertringen and G. Klaffenbach, *Wilamowitz-Bibliographie 1868 bis 1929* (Berlin 1929) 75–83.

¹⁹ *Hippolytos* 2.

²⁰ See *supra* n.6.

²¹ *Selections from the Brief Mention of Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve*, ed. C. W. E. Miller (Baltimore 1930) 15–17, 50–51, 61, 68, 352.

²² See lately Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Reden und Vorträge I*⁵ (Dublin/Zürich 1967) 1–36. There are numerous changes from the first publication of 1891.

extended discussion of the tragedy and rewards scrutiny. Beginning from the remark at *Hippolytus* 1423ff that virgins of Troezen²³ will offer their hair to Hippolytus, Wilamowitz investigates the cultic background of the legend (23ff) with an ironic dismissal of the solar mythologists²⁴ and comparatists who have found Hippolytus among the Eskimo.²⁵ There is a typical digression on the importance of marriage for the Greek girl and the paradox that girls sing of a boy who died for chastity. The explanation for ancient cult practice assumes uniformity of response (29), the approach criticized so vehemently by Thomas Mann and Kerényi.²⁶ The call for excavations at Troezen with the assumption that what would be uncovered could elucidate *Hippolytus*²⁷ typifies Wilamowitz's *Totalitätsideal*, the antithesis of so much ahistorical modern criticism, that assumes a text may be understood cut away from the society that produced it.²⁸ After a brief parallel drawn between Hippolytus and Phaethon (34), the introduction of the stepmother-motif leads to arguing the thesis (38) that the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus is a novella involving heroic characters grafted onto a cult song. The mode of Hippolytus' death is due the etymology of his name (39). Poseidon enters the story as god of the earthquake, not of the sea. The monstrous bull recalls Minos and was the favorite offering for Poseidon. A seventh-century origin of the Troezen tale of Hippolytus is suggested (41); and we are told that Hippolytus was brought to Athens with Theseus (42).²⁹

²³ Against Wilamowitz, Barrett and others, I have argued for the retention of the diphthong: see *CP* 60 (1965) 279–80.

²⁴ He would recently have read Sauer, *apud* Roscher, *LexMyth* I.2 (Leipzig 1886–1890) 2683.46ff.

²⁵ For Wilamowitz's sceptical view of comparative studies see Robert Ackerman and William M. Calder III, *PCPS* n.s. 24 (1978) 31ff.

²⁶ See *Mythology and Humanism: The Correspondence of Thomas Mann and Karl Kerényi*, transl. Alexander Gellay (Ithaca/London 1975) 111–12. For Mann's unfair view of Wilamowitz see my note at *HSCP* 81 (1977) 281 n.32.

²⁷ See *Hippolytos* 31 and *GrTr* I⁴ 100.

²⁸ This polarity is particularly evident in criticism of *Pindaros*: see David C. Young, *apud* William Musgrave Calder III and Jacob Stern, *Pindaros und Bakchylides* (Wege der Forschung 134, Darmstadt 1970) 52ff. Contrarily G. L. Huxley, "Simonides and his World," *Proceedings of the Irish Academy* 78 C no.9 (1978) 231–47, is through and through Wilamowitzian.

²⁹ I do not mean to rule here on the accuracy of Wilamowitz's conclusions. Those interested may consult W. S. Barrett, *Euripides Hippolytos* (Oxford 1964) 1ff, with my review at *CP* 60 (1965) 277–82.

Now the great scholar turns to Euripides and argues a connected trilogy, *Aegeus*, *Theseus* and *Hippolytus I*. He had considered the possibility in 1875.³⁰ A suggestion of his Bonn friend, Carl Robert, furnished the clue that convinced him.³¹ The *Märchenmotiv* of the three wishes provided the trilogy's unity.³² In *Hippolytus I* and *II* we find the last. If it were the second, the third would have been used to revoke it. That the second, the return from Hades, occurred in *Hippolytus I* had long been deduced from Seneca, *Phaedra*.³³ In *Theseus* the first wish freed him from the labyrinth.³⁴ In *Aegeus* Theseus discovered his mortal father, whose legacy was a curse; in *Theseus* his heavenly father, Poseidon, whose mercy in the last play turned to ruin. In *Hippolytus I* Theseus plays a minor rôle. The deaths of Hippolytus and Phaedra work out the curse of Aegeus. But the gods intervene. Perhaps through Asclepius Hippolytus is granted immortality to be worshipped in an Attic shrine. The portrait of Medea in *Medea* caused *Aegeus*, in spite of the great messenger speech where, by presenting the sword, Theseus at the last moment is stopped from drinking Medea's poisoned potion,³⁵ to be forgotten (45). The scandal of *Hippolytus I* is well known, although Ovid³⁶ and Seneca drew from it. The revised version along with *Medea*, whose protagonist is a revision after Medea in *Aegeus*, is a Euripidean masterpiece, both "wiser second thoughts" (*Hipp.* 436).³⁷ Wilamowitz seeks to detect traces of *Hippolytus I* in *Hippolytus II* and isolates

³⁰ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Analecta Euripidea* (Berlin 1875) 171–72, 175.

³¹ Recorded at *Hermes* 15 (1880) 483 = *KS* I 19.

³² What follows seeks to summarize *Hippolytos* 44–45 and the more expanded argument at *KS* I 19.

³³ *KS* I 19, that could only be a reference to Seneca, *Phaedra* 949, where Seneca merely says that the wish for Hippolytus' destruction was the last. Indeed at Seneca, *Phaedra* 835–49 one finds reference only to Theseus' struggle to return, without a word of divine aid. On the whole matter of the three wishes see Clemens Zintzen, "Analytisches Hypomnema zu Senecas Phaedra," *Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* 1 (Meisenheim/Glan 1960) 111–12.

³⁴ Scholiast on Eur. *Hipp.* 887 = II 103.19–21 Schwartz. T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967) 106, objects that Eur. fr.1001 N.² refers to the ball of thread and, though unassigned, most easily fits the action of *Theseus*.

³⁵ See *KS* V.2 114 n.1 after F. G. Welcker, "Die griechischen Tragödien mit Rücksicht auf den epischen Cyclus," *RhM* Suppl. II.1 (Bonn 1839) 729 with n.1. L. Malten's reference *apud* Wilamowitz, *loc.cit.*, to Welcker, 1598, must be corrected.

³⁶ *Hippolytos* 46 n.1, with the important remarks of Howard Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton 1974) 145 n.9.

³⁷ Wilamowitz's hypothesis of a connected Theseus trilogy has been discarded by modern scholarship: see Schmid-Stählin, I.3 377–78, and Webster, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.34) 105–06.

the changes. He points beautifully the proto-Christian character of *Hippolytus* (47): “Hippolytus dies innocent, certainly, but he would not die if he were not so inhumanly virtuous.” That Racine by introducing a subplot, Hippolytus’ love for *la charmante Aricie*, ignores that Hippolytus presents the tragedy of chastity, provides a further indication of how much closer Euripides stands to Christianity than the triumphant Counterreformation.³⁸

Wilamowitz then writes his famous characterization of Phaedra:³⁹

Euripides’ Phaedra is no ordinary woman. She is not even of vivacious sensuality. Rather a keen intellect prevails. She approves virtue. At least she talks a lot about it; and in Phaedra madness does not bring to the surface visions of the sort that dominate Ophelia’s imagination. Through and through she is a woman of the aristocratic world. She knows and fulfils her duties. She has husband and children, relatives and social position and knows to maintain well the considerations that she owes everyone. Her reputation is impeccable. But she lacks a profound attachment to children and husband, not to speak of anything else. Her life lacks the blessing of work, and she is too intelligent to find satisfaction in idleness and empty sociability.⁴⁰ She has sleepless nights when she yields to deeply pessimistic thoughts.⁴¹ She is therefore ripe for passion. Suddenly in her stepson she meets a being who attracts her just because she does not understand him. For he is different from all the others, strong and sure of himself, despising the opinions of the world as weakness, and he hates women. He combines the robust, youthful zest of the male with the austerity of the virgin. From him Phaedra creates the ideal of her dreams. She dreams of a life free from the bonds of convention, a life of freedom and of feeling, of a sort she does not know, for herself at his side. To gather flowers with him on the bank of a brook, to ride and hunt at his side, that would give meaning to her existence. So her feeling. Her intellect does not object, and she is used to following it. She knows that she ought never to take the false step, nor will she, and that she must hide

³⁸ *GrTr* I⁴ 98 n.2.

³⁹ I translate the version at *Hippolytos* 48–49, reprinted with slightest changes at *GrTr* I⁴ 111–12. Bits have recently been translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *apud* Karl Reinhardt, *Sophocles*, transl. Hazel and David Harvey (Oxford 1979) xviii–xix. I am grateful to Ms Luzie Mason for improvements.

⁴⁰ That is *geselligkeit*. Lloyd-Jones (xviii) translates ‘society’, which would be *Gesellschaft*.

⁴¹ That is the best I can do. Only Germans have “weltschmerzlichen gedanken.”

her feeling in her deepest soul. But she cannot free herself from it. It will consume her. It doesn't matter, she thinks. She toys with thoughts of death, which certainly at the moment are serious, but which no one can take seriously. 'One doesn't make long speeches, when one says goodbye'.⁴² What she fears is not the sin. Remember: she thinks it is not her fault that she is in love. What she fears is humiliation. Appearance was her life. She was the irreproachable consort, because it was proper. Because it is proper, she will also die. Quite impossible that she, daughter of Minos, Queen of Athens, should cause a scandal.

Wilamowitz proceeded to present his characterizations of the Nurse (50–51) and of Hippolytus (51). To the latter I shall return below. Then a discussion of the two goddesses. "His gods are not human beings and yet are only too human." They lack the best of men, the love which lives for others. Euripides honestly stresses the disharmony. He believes in an impersonal god governing nature and morality; but he is angry with his people because they believe in personal gods. Wilamowitz ends with allusion to the minor characters; of which he believes Theseus one, the division of rôles (Phaedra is protagonist), *Nachleben* in art, and a word on Sophocles, *Phaidra*.

In 1899 Wilamowitz reprinted his translation of *Hippolytus* with a shortened less technical version of his introduction of 1891 and brief notes on the Greek text at the end.⁴³ He stresses what the educated laity would want, its place in literary history and the proto-Christian aspect.⁴⁴ But the characterization of the principal characters remains the same with only the slightest stylistic changes. The version of 1899 was often reprinted. The translations in the series were often staged. Aside from an occasional citation in another context, this was his last published pronouncement on the play. Because changes from the large edition of 1891 were minimal, I shall regularly cite it below.

Swift, sharp criticism struck from an unexpected source. Wilamowitz, as was his habit,⁴⁵ had sent a copy of the new edition from

⁴² I cannot identify the source of the iambic trimeter "man macht nicht viele worte, wenn man den abschied gibt." It is a variation of *Sirach* 7.15 (cf. *Matthew* 6.7): "Wenn du betest, so mache nicht viele Worte."

⁴³ *GrTr* I⁴ 95–192.

⁴⁴ See especially *GrTr* I⁴ 118 with the citation of St Martin of Tours *apud* Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 2.10.

⁴⁵ So in November 1881 he had sent *Antigonos von Karystos* (Berlin 1881) to Mommsen: see *Mommsen und Wilamowitz: Briefwechsel 1872–1903*, edd. Friedrich and Dorothea Hiller von Gaertringen (Berlin 1935) 125 (no.107).

Göttingen to his father-in-law in Charlottenburg, Theodor Mommsen. He had expected a polite, disinterested acknowledgement—nothing more. In a letter of 17 September 1891 Mommsen wrote that when unable to work he had read *Hippolytos* “with great satisfaction but also in large part with disagreement.” He adds: “You will not be surprised that the old man is just as stubborn as the young one was.”⁴⁶ Mommsen encloses an essay of several pages (“ein paar Blätter”).

“Love is the curse of human kind,” began Mommsen, aged 73, who attributes the view “to all serious men of antiquity.”⁴⁷ *Hippolytus* is the most unfeeling and powerful sermon on this theme. He sees Artemis much more as the foil to “the devil Venus” (“Venus die Teufelinne”). Hippolytus is “the primal pattern of the chaste youth, of the ephebe who does not desire the love of women.” Then disagreement: “With great art the poet emphasizes not the stepmother but the woman, and so profoundly alters the whole novelle. Incest does not horrify Hippolytus; love’s pleasure does, in his fresh youth, his delight in the chase and in manly games.” One vainly attributes guilt to Hippolytus; or squeezes the obligatory thoughts of sin into this quite otherwise intended play. His contempt toward the nurse and Phaedra, his respect for his father are beyond reproach. Unlike his son-in-law “von Hoffart und Tugendstoltz sehe ich kein Atom.” With brilliant malice the two women contrast with this man. The contrast is black and white. For perfect worthlessness the women leave nothing to be desired. To be sure the worthlessness of the duchess differs from that of her maid; with the one is necessarily joined the respectability of the aristocratic world;⁴⁸ with the other the servant’s loyalty, both skilfully exploited by the poet. Mommsen then seeks to demolish Wilamowitz’s portrait of Phaedra: “There one meets again the main schematic feature of the whole work: the

⁴⁶ *Mommsen-Wilamowitz* 425 (no.343). Mommsen’s essay is published *ibid.* 426–29. His youthful stubbornness refers to the critique of Euripides in *Römische Geschichte* I of 1854=*Römische Geschichte* II (Munich 1976) 436–40. Wilamowitz’s dedication of *Analecta Euripidea* to Mommsen was an intended provocation.

⁴⁷ The *locus classicus* is Sophocles at *Pl. Resp.* 329B, often cited in antiquity: see Sophocles τ 80a Radt.

⁴⁸ Mommsen’s “die Respektabilität der vornehmen Welt” (428) reflects “eine frau der vornehmen welt” (*Hippolytos* 48). One detects the pastor’s son’s resentment of the nobility: see *Lit.Zentralblatt* 1 (1852) 275: “Styl und Zitate zeigen, dass der Verfasser auf der Bildungsstufe des Adels steht,” cited by A. Heuss, *Theodor Mommsen und das 19. Jahrhundert* (Kiel 1956) 280.

love of Phaedra for Hippolytus is in no way ethically softened; it is developed in her more or less as when an oversexed broad sees a husky stableboy."⁴⁹ She has no scruple of conscience. In her soul there is no trace of the married woman's chastity. Then a cruel sneer at Ulrich: "Die 'weltschmerzlichen Gedanken' zu finden bin ich nicht hellsehend genug."⁵⁰ The fake indictment stems not from the "relatively noble motivation of scorned love and revenge but from the vulgar calculation that she can meet the expected indictment only as a fake Lucretia." A last sarcastic grumble: "I was astounded to learn from you that the elegant Phaedra is a second improved edition of the former crude one." He liked the translation especially of the choral passages but disagrees with the rendering of 659f.

The next day Wilamowitz replied.⁵¹ He is grateful for the criticism and believes that it ought to be published. He likes the unity of Mommsen's analysis and that the drama thus grows out of the inner being of Hippolytus. He approves a variety of interpretations. His objection is revealing. "But then I should have to consider the characters more as types. I believe the poet has intentionally emphasized the exposition of their characters. The great speech of Phaedra, I think, makes it impossible to probe her too deeply." The "weltschmerzliche Gedanken" are Phaedra's insight (*Hipp.* 372ff) that the weakness of the flesh sickens life. The unexpected echo of *Matthew* 26.41 implies again a proto-Christian Euripides. On 1 October 1891 Wilamowitz thanks Mommsen for "das neue Hippolyteum." This has not survived; but Mommsen revised his view and grew closer to Wilamowitz, who admits that he ought to have modified his expressions.⁵²

If Mommsen were right, Wilamowitz had fundamentally misunderstood the character of the protagonist and therefore missed the point of a play that had engaged his scholarly attention for some twenty-five years. His whitewashing of Phaedra reveals the moral blindness of the aristocrat. The corollary that excessive virtue in part justifies Hippolytus' punishment compounds the error. All this Wilamowitz countered by arguing that Mommsen was wrong. Cato cannot judge Euripides. But the old man had revealed himself.

⁴⁹ "wie wenn ein geiles Weib einen kräftigen Stallknecht sieht." What Wilamowitz has done is whitewash the woman.

⁵⁰ *Cf. supra* n.41.

⁵¹ *Mommsen-Wilamowitz* 432-33 (no.344).

⁵² *Mommsen-Wilamowitz* 435 (no.346); *cf.* 561.

Mommsen's view of love as a curse and his profound detestation of women were new to Wilamowitz. This is the reason why "This evening I shall read aloud your criticism to Marie."⁵³ He wrote to Eduard Schwartz of the shattering impression that Mommsen's intensely personal reaction had had on him.⁵⁴

Mommsen's critique was not published until 1935. Wilamowitz's edition of 1891 exerted incalculable influence on European interpretation of *Hippolytus* for the next fifty years. Wilhelm Schmid's study⁵⁵ of 1940, the best example of intelligent orthodoxy, cites Wilamowitz throughout, disagrees only in details, and in documentation reveals how much work after 1891 simply extended Wilamowitz's insights. For Schmid *Hippolytus* is "die Tragoedie des anaphrodisischen Jünglings," precisely Wilamowitz's formulation.⁵⁶ His characterization of the main characters differs little from Wilamowitz's.

The octogenarian survived those capable of public reproof. Rarely did younger men dare provoke a foe whose retort could annihilate a career. They waited, as they would with Housman, until he could not reply. In 1953 a student of Eduard Fraenkel, himself Wilamowitz's most devoted student, and a late follower of Wilamowitz in the Göttingen chair, first in print dared what Mommsen in a letter had done,⁵⁷ query Wilamowitz's whole conception of Phaedra. Wolf Hartmut Friedrich⁵⁸ objected on historical rather than moral grounds. He printed bits of Wilamowitz's sketch of Phaedra.⁵⁹ He then observes:

⁵³ *Mommsen-Wilamowitz* 433 (no.344). Marie was Wilamowitz's wife and Mommsen's daughter. He would never have consulted her on a scholarly problem; they discussed that evening what Mommsen had revealed of himself.

⁵⁴ See Eduard Schwartz, *Gesammelte Schriften I, Vergangene Gegenwärtigkeiten* (Berlin 1938) 371: "Ich erinnere mich eines Briefes, in dem mir W. von dem erschütternden Eindruck schrieb, den Mommsens innere, aus dem ganzen Menschen herausquellende Teilnahme an der Ausgabe und Übersetzung von Euripides' Hippolytos auf ihn gemacht hatte." To my knowledge the letter has not been preserved.

⁵⁵ Schmid-Stählin, I.3 379–90.

⁵⁶ Schmid-Stählin, I.3 379 after Wilamowitz, *Hippolytos* 51.

⁵⁷ Hans von Arnim (1859–1931), one of Wilamowitz's oldest doctoral students (Greifswald 1882), had also written a letter along Mommsen's lines: *Mommsen-Wilamowitz* 433: "Übrigens hat mir Arnim über Hippolytos ganz ähnlich geschrieben."

⁵⁸ Wolf H. Friedrich, *Euripides und Diphilos: zur Dramaturgie der Spätformen* (*Zetemata* 5, Munich 1953) 140–41.

⁵⁹ An unfortunate misprint has made it difficult for readers of Friedrich to trace the Wilamowitzian citation. At p.140 for "S. 484 f." read "S. 48 f."

If one did not know that these sentences were published in 1891, one could pretty well date them; so clearly does the world of Hedda Gabler and Effi Briest rise up before us. The empty sociability, appearance, the 'weltschmerzlichen Gedanken' are fabricated from this milieu as is the preservation of honor ridiculed⁶⁰ as fear of a scandal. The need of things to do and the lack of a deep interest in husband and children are further fabrication. It means nothing when Phaedra declares (315) she loves her children and dies for them (717), when she shudders to add a sorrow to Theseus (321) . . . and she 'toys with thoughts of death' if she, because it is proper, really dies . . .

Friedrich means that the psychological criticism (so we should call it today) that Wilamowitz used is anachronistic, more suitable to Ibsen than to Euripides. We have no right, as historians of literature, to read behind the lines. Friedrich reminds us of Mommsen's assumption that the characters are types. Wilamowitz would have replied to Friedrich as he had to Mommsen by citing Euripides. A. J. A. Waldock's strictures on the documentary fallacy, well known to American critics of tragedy, are not dissimilar.⁶¹ Friedrich *en passant* hid his objection in small print. He could never have imagined the effect it would have.

A brilliant, complex, erratic man, Karl Reinhardt, had been a shy, adoring student of Wilamowitz, who called him "der stille Knabe."⁶² In the thirties Reinhardt fell under the spell of the George Circle,⁶³ people who for wrong reasons detested Wilamowitz. In old age he developed an ambivalent attitude toward his old teacher.⁶⁴ Reinhardt read Friedrich. In 1957, four years after Friedrich's book, he published an often reprinted study, "Die Sinneskrise bei Euripides." He wrote of interpreters of the nineteenth century who proudly rediscovered "what they called the 'psychological'." Then without a

⁶⁰ Friedrich's "ridikülisiert" is too strong but symptomatic of the view that Wilamowitz sought to denigrate Phaedra. The correspondence with Mommsen proves the opposite true.

⁶¹ A. J. A. Waldock, *Sophocles the Dramatist* (Cambridge 1951) 11–24; cf. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Gnomon* 25 (1953) 350.

⁶² See *HSCP* 82 (1978) 316 n.78.

⁶³ At Frankfurt: see Volker Losemann, "Nationalsozialismus und Antike: Studien zur Entwicklung des Faches Alte Geschichte 1933–1945," *Historische Perspektiven* 7 (Hamburg 1977) 235 n.50.

⁶⁴ See Karl Reinhardt, *Vermächtnis der Antike: Gesammelte Essays zur Philosophie und Geschichtsschreibung*², ed. Carl Becker (Göttingen 1966) 346ff, 361ff.

word for Friedrich⁶⁵ he began:⁶⁶ “Wilamowitz wanted in 1891, one year after Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler*, to characterize Euripides’ Phaedra.” He then reprints bits of Wilamowitz’s now familiar portrait of Phaedra, inserting bracketed additions with exclamation points of the sort “siehe Ibsens Nora!” He prints three lines of dialogue from *Hedda Gabler* about scandal, a gloss on Wilamowitz’s remark that Phaedra wished to avoid one. He concludes: “The agreement was too overwhelming but that one would have noticed the intrusive anachronisms: ‘aristocratic world’, ‘social position’, ‘profound relationship’, ‘blessing of work(!)’, ‘empty sociability’, ‘bonds of convention’, ‘meaning of existence’ . . .” Reinhardt has repeated Friedrich’s comparison of Wilamowitz’s Phaedra with *Hedda Gabler*, remade the point that a psychological interpretation of Phaedra is anachronistic, embroidered the whole with rhetoric and irony, and underlined the cause and effect of Ibsen on Wilamowitz. He omits Friedrich’s complaint that Wilamowitz often prefers deduction of what is implied to what the text states. And nowhere Friedrich’s name.

Hugh Lloyd-Jones in 1962 reviewed Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist*. He observed:⁶⁷ “. . . one must relish the gentle irony with which Reinhardt deals with Wilamowitz’s characterization of the Euripidean Phaedra, a year after the appearance of *Hedda Gabler*, in almost Ibsenian terms. ‘Kein gemeines Weib’, Wilamowitz called the lady . . . To this kind of treatment of Greek tragedy, Reinhardt’s writings are an excellent corrective; English readers may ask themselves whether Gilbert Murray’s understanding of Euripides was helped or hindered by his admiration for the work of Shaw.” There

⁶⁵ Therefore, even so accurate a scholar as Albin Lesky writes *apud* “Euripide,” *Entretiens sur l’Antiquité Classique* 6 (Vandoeuvres-Genève 1958) 125: “Er [Reinhardt] stellt diese Phaidra, wie Wilamowitz sie zeichnete, neben die Hedda Gabler Ibsens und die Berührungen sind frappant. Man erinnert sich daran, dass man aus Euripides zu Zeiten einen antiken Ibsen machen wollte” = Ernst-Richard Schwinge, ed. *Euripides* (Wege der Forschung 89, Darmstadt 1968) 79. Not a word on Friedrich and the implication that Wilamowitz wanted to make an Ibsen of Euripides.

⁶⁶ Karl Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist: Gesammelte Essays zur Dichtung*, ed. Carl Becker (Göttingen 1960) 236. The paper was first published in *Die Neue Rundschau* 68 (1957) 615–46; later at *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 26 (1958) 279–313 and *apud* Schwinge, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.65) 507–42. The most superficial comparison of Reinhardt with Friedrich proves his indebtedness to the earlier book.

⁶⁷ *CR* 76 (1962) 244–45. I have omitted only the citations from Wilamowitz. Lloyd-Jones never cites Friedrich.

are the citations from *Hippolytos* 48, now over seventy years old, and the suggested parallel of Murray and Shaw. In his Sather Lectures of 1969, delivered at a center of war-protest, Lloyd-Jones combatted the chimaera of Euripides, “a ‘committed’ poet, an enemy of traditional religion, a pioneer of female emancipation and a protester against the brutalities of his own country’s imperialism.”⁶⁸ The unexpected villain was a Prussian Junker:⁶⁹ “The portrait was made popular in English-speaking countries by Gilbert Murray, but its creator was Wilamowitz; Karl Reinhardt has amusingly pointed out the resemblance of Phaedra, as sketched by Wilamowitz in the year after the première of *Hedda Gabler*, to an Ibsenian heroine. Murray’s Shavian Euripides derives from the Ibsenian Euripides of Wilamowitz.” Predictably Reinhardt is cited.⁷⁰ But for the first time we learn that “Much earlier, P. Friedländer . . . had drawn attention to Ibsen’s influence on Wilamowitz’s conception of Euripides.”⁷¹ If one pursues the reference, he discovers that Friedländer generalizes that German and English criticism has sought to understand Euripides through Ibsen. Conceivably Wilamowitz may be implied. Friedländer nowhere states that his teacher was influenced by Ibsen. In 1971 Lloyd-Jones writes⁷² of “that early Wilamowitz who saw Euripides as a proto-Ibsen, thus encouraging Gilbert Murray to see him as a proto-Shaw.” In 1972, while approving Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s lack of emphasis on characterization in Sophocles, he cites Reinhardt, who “gives a particularly amusing instance of this tendency in Wilamowitz.”⁷³ In 1979 Lloyd-Jones published his fifth and most extended discussion of Reinhardt on Wilamowitz’s *Phaidrabil*.⁷⁴ “Reinhardt in his essay on Euripides quotes a particularly revealing instance from the great man’s edition of the *Hippolytus* which Wilamowitz published in the year of the première of *Hedda Gabler*.⁷⁵ ‘She is no ordinary woman’, Wilamowitz

⁶⁸ Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Sather Classical Lectures 41, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1971) 145.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 145–46.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 206 n.71.

⁷¹ The reference to Friedländer is inaccurate. For “156” read “154”.

⁷² *CR* 85 (1971) 343.

⁷³ *CQ* n.s. 22 (1972) 216 n.2 (cf. 215).

⁷⁴ Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *apud op.cit.* (*supra* n.39) xviii–xix.

⁷⁵ Reinhardt had correctly written one year *after* the première. Lloyd-Jones earlier had had it right.

writes of Phaedra . . . This Ibsenite Euripides has little to do with the reality,⁷⁶ like the Shavian Euripides of Gilbert Murray that was so popular in England.”

Any theory that an Ibsenite Wilamowitz is to blame for a Shavian Murray may instantly be discarded. Not only is an Ibsenite Wilamowitz unproven but Murray’s long and intimate friendship with Shaw⁷⁷ would be reason enough for any such distortion. But have Friedrich, Reinhardt, Lesky and Lloyd-Jones proven that *Hedda Gabler* influenced Wilamowitz’s *Phaidrabil*? Wilamowitz dates his preface to *Hippolytos* 3 March 1891. Pages 48–49 would have been written months before. The German première of *Hedda Gabler* was at the Hoftheater, Munich on 31 January 1891.⁷⁸ Wilamowitz remained in Göttingen February 1891. Later, as his Scandinavian friendships grew, he read and saw Ibsen in Norwegian.⁷⁹ In Germany he rarely visited the theater except to see productions of his own translations. There is not a shred of evidence that Wilamowitz had read or seen *Hedda Gabler* before March 3, 1891. Furthermore, in a passage which none of Wilamowitz’s critics cites, he rejects vehemently any attempt to read Ibsen into Euripides. “First in the last generation has scholarship in Germany, France and England tried with success to approach the thinker and artist, not without serious mistakes. To find in Euripides an ancient Ibsen is more than that, it is simply silly.”⁸⁰ Friedrich has defended the practice of limiting criticism to what people write. Nor has any of these scholars made the obvious suggestion that resemblances between Phaedra and Hedda Gabler are not because Wilamowitz read Hedda into

⁷⁶ I assume “the real Phaedra” must be Euripides’ conception of a traditional figure of mythology at the moment of reworking *Hippolytus I*. I should assume that only one with a precise knowledge of that ‘reality’ might call down Wilamowitz or Murray for deviating from it.

⁷⁷ See E. R. Dodds, *apud Gilbert Murray: an Unfinished Autobiography*, edd. Jean Smith and Arnold Toynbee (London 1960) 14.

⁷⁸ Wilhelm Frieze, *Ibsen auf der deutschen Bühne: Texte zur Rezeption* (Tübingen 1976) 141. The standard life is Halvdan Koht, *Life of Ibsen*, transl. Einar Haugen and A. E. Santaniello (New York 1971).

⁷⁹ See *Erinnerungen*² 202. Ibsen’s correspondence with Holger Drachmann, A. B. Drachmann’s half-brother, would have increased Wilamowitz’s interest.

⁸⁰ See *GrTr* IV 368: “In Euripides einen antiken Ibsen zu finden, ist mehr als das, ist einfach albern.” I drew attention to this passage at *Trauerspiele* 14 n.58 but in vain. In a letter of 18 December 1906 to Edward Fitch (*HSCP* 83 [1979] no.2) Wilamowitz draws a careful distinction between Ibsen and ancient literature.

Phaedra. They are because Euripides had influenced Ibsen.⁸¹ The equation Hedda-Phaedra has long been known.⁸²

That intelligent Europeans in the late nineteenth century, whether Ibsen, Wilamowitz or Freud, sought to understand character in new ways is quite another thing. The *Zeitgeist*,⁸³ not Ibsen, colored Wilamowitz's judgement, if colored it was. A precise parallel is the remarkable parallel between Ibsen's Peer Gynt and Heinrich Schliemann, to which I drew attention in 1972.⁸⁴ Imitation either way is impossible. Wolfgang Schindler has shown how both characters, the fictional and the historical, are typical products of the period.⁸⁵

But the decisive argument that Hedda Gabler did not influence Wilamowitz's *Phaidrabil*d is that we know the lady who did. Every biographer of a modern writer understands that repeatedly characters and scenes in works of fiction recall the author's friends or experiences.⁸⁶ Similarly an interpreter, philologist or historian, reads into a work that he is interpreting his past experience, into a character himself or a person he has known. Since 1868 Wilamowitz had associated his aunt, Emma von Schwanefeld, with *Hippolytus*. He tells us so in both versions of his introduction to the play and in his memoirs.⁸⁷ The first sentence of his sketch of Phaedra confirms the equation: "sie ist nicht einmal von lebhafter sinnlichkeit, vielmehr wiegt ein scharfer verstand vor." Compare several pages later of Tante Emma: "aber ein scharfer verstand und ein lebhafter sinn für das echte half ihr immer durch."⁸⁸ That we are to read the portrait

⁸¹ For the influence of Euripides on Ibsen see Hugo Steiger, "Euripides: seine Dichtung und seine Persönlichkeit," *Das Erbe der Alten* 5 (Leipzig 1912) 6ff, and Schmid-Stählin, I.3 837.

⁸² Steiger, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.81) 10–11.

⁸³ A Tacitean rather than Hegelian discovery: see O. J. Brendel, *Prolegomena to the Study of Roman Art* (New Haven/London 1979) 56 n.72.

⁸⁴ *GRBS* 13 (1972) 352–53; *cf.* *Meander* 30 (1975) 137–38.

⁸⁵ See Wolfgang Schindler, "Heinrich Schliemann: Leben und Werk im Spiegel der neueren biographischen Forschungen," *Philologus* 120 (1976) 281–82, and his detailed study in *Festschrift Irmscher*, forthcoming.

⁸⁶ A good recent example is my colleague, Jeffrey Meyers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Biography* (London 1978); see further his "The Quest for Katherine Mansfield," *Biography* 1 (1978) 51–64.

⁸⁷ *Hippolytos* 54 n.1; *GrTr* I⁴ 121 n.1; *Erinnerungen*² 55 n.1.

⁸⁸ *Hippolytos* 48, 54 n.1.

of Tante Emma in the *Erinnerungen*⁸⁹ as a variation of that of Phaedra in *Hippolytos* is clear from a second parallel. The sketch of Phaedra begins: "Die Phaidra des Euripides ist kein gemeines Weib." Compare of Tante Emma: "Sie war keine gewöhnliche Frau."⁹⁰

Following up these two verbal clues, notice how many other things fit. As elder sister Tante Emma filled the place of mother for Arnold, Ulrich's father.⁹¹ An ironic description of her marriage proves she had no profound attachment to her ineffectual husband "whose estate she inherited as she had always ruled him." She loved virtue; at least she talked a lot about it. When nieces visited, she covered a nude statue of Psyche with a grey gauze veil but wintered in Nice or Rome with Ida Countess Hahn-Hahn and Wolf Goethe. Appearance was life. She adored being hostess, the sun about whom everyone else revolved. Unlike the foil to both his aunt and Phaedra, Ulrich's mother,⁹² Emma blatantly lacked "the blessing of work." This meant the emptiness in her life. Her sleepless nights and "welt-schmerzlichen gedanken" appear as "die Unrast ihres inneren Wesens." This in turn led to her irrationality, the parallel to Phaedra's madness.⁹³

Who was the youth who attracted her because she could not understand him? He must be different from all the others, strong and sure of himself, despising the opinions of the world as weakness, detesting women, combining the young male's zest for life with a virgin's austerity, able to give meaning to her empty existence. There is no better description of Ulrich, aged nineteen, Hippolytus' age. Phaedra yearned to hunt and ride with her stepson. Tante Emma offered to take her nephew to Italy. That afternoon in summer 1868 at Kobelnik, when the youth, true to his ideals, read through the translation to Phaedra, he became Hippolytus. The profound autobiographical commitment in the *Phaidrabilid* allowed Mommsen's critique, as Ulrich wrote to Schwartz, to shatter him. His adoration

⁸⁹ *Erinnerungen*² 53–56=Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *My Recollections 1848–1914*, transl. G. C. Richards (London 1930) 55–59.

⁹⁰ *Hippolytos* 48; *Erinnerungen*² 54.

⁹¹ *Erinnerungen*² 53.

⁹² For the many duties of Ulrich's mother see *Erinnerungen*² 45ff.

⁹³ I refer to *Erinnerungen*² 54: "Die ungläubliche Lebhaftigkeit der gebrechlichen alten Frau, die Unrast auch ihres inneren Wesens, ward wohl zur Launenhaftigkeit und führte sie in ihren Entschlüssen, Zuneigungen und Abneigungen zu unberechenbaren Quersprüngen."

of Tante Emma had caused the whitewashing of Phaedra. But she was only an oversexed broad; and he a husky stableboy. In any case Hedda Gabler had nothing to do with the matter.

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