Hyperboreus 23:1 (2017) 19–27

AND WHAT WERE *YOU* LIKE IN HADES? EUR. *HF* 1410–1417

Θη. οὕτω πόνων σῶν οὐκέτι μνήμην ἔχεις;
Ηρ. ἅπαντ' ἐλάσσω κεῖνα τῶνδ' ἔτλην κακά.
Θη. εἴ σ' ὄψεταί τις θῆλυν ὄντ' οὐκ αἰνέσει.
Ηρ. ζῶ σοι ταπεινός; ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὐ δοκῶ.
Θη. ἄγαν γ'· ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν.
Ηρ. σὺ ποῖος ἦσθα νέρθεν ἐν κακοῖσιν ὤν;
Θη. ὡς ἐς τὸ λῆμα παντὸς ἦν ἥσσων ἀνήρ.
Ηρ. πῶς οὖν †ἔτ' εἴπησ† ὅτι συνέσταλμαι κακοῖς;
Θη. πρόβαινε.[1]

1410–1417 suspectos habet Diggle (1404–1428 iam Wecklein), post 1253 trai. Bond.

Theseus: Have you forgotten your valorous labours so completely? *Heracles*: All I suffered is less than this. *Thes*.: If anybody sees you now being womanish, he won't approve. *Her*.: You think I live humbly? But I am sure it wasn't so before (you surely didn't think so just before). *Thes*.: Yes, indeed. Now that you are sick you are no longer Heracles the hero. *Her*.: And what were you like down there, when in trouble? *Thes*.: If you mean courage, I was a coward no one could match. *Her*.: How then can you say I waste myself in sorrows? *Thes*.: Now, let's go.[2]

Turning to these much-discussed lines again, I hope to prove they do make sense exactly where the tradition has them – or else, at least to agrue against the attempted transposition and excision.

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[1] In the course of the discussion, I cite Diggle's text every time, if not otherwise mentioned. The apparatus I give here is essentially Diggle's, but made more concise. The three recent editions of *Heracles* – of Diggle (OCT), Lee (Teubner) and Kovacs (Loeb) – virtually unanimously voice doubt.

[2] This translation differs from D. Kovacs' variant in Loeb on two points – the quality the lack of which Theseus displayed in Hades (was it 'pride' [Kovacs] or, rather, 'courage'?) and his words in 1418. It is Heracles who has the last word, and Theseus rather acknowledges this with "Now, let's go", than commands "March on" (Kovacs).

Theseus arrives with his men to give a helping hand only to find Heracles' family miserably dead and Heracles himself awake from his mental wanderings and mad killings to his real ruinous condition revealed to him by Amphitryon. Rigid with grief, he is resolved to kill himself in a way (he considers three ways) the heroic ἀρετή code demands it.[3] On seeing Theseus, whose approach is an obstacle to his immediate will to take his life, he covers his head with his cloak. Theseus, who is quick to grasp the situation, at once sets to talk Heracles out of suicide by first expressing his gratitude for Heracles' recent benefaction in Hades (1221–1222: ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἀνοιστέον / ὅτ᾽ ἐξέσωσάς μ᾽ ἐς φάος νεκρῶν πάρα ("It goes back to the time when you saved me and brought me back to the light from the dead") and expanding on true friendship. Heracles pulls (or lets Theseus do it) the cloak off his head, but conventionally (still very much as an epic hero) insists that Theseus keep away from pollution, to which Theseus promptly responds, "friends are not there to avenge".[4] Heracles, like one gravely ill and no longer responsive to such trifles, waves him off with polite reserve (1235: ἐπήνεσ᾽· εὖ δράσας δέ σ᾽ οὐκ ἀναίνομαι).[5] Theseus goes on working within distinctively unheroic scope of emotions, expressing pity for the (now has been) hero, for whom pity is a novel feeling: "am I pitiable, having killed my children?", Heracles asks.[6] At this point he does not believe it. Death is the only match for such a deed, but Theseus (at some point afraid that Heracles might be planning another ruinous deed)[7] does not think so. He touches Heracles to the quick saying that a suicide is a way of an ἐπιτυχόντος ἀνθρώπου, stupidity, devoid of any heroism (these two friends have very different notions of what is

[3] Sophocles' Ajax – with all probability an earlier play – is believed to have been on Euripides' mind throughout. Cf. his motive for suicide: ἀλλ᾽ ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι / τὸν εὐγενῆ χρή (479–480). Ajax lives and 'dies up' to this demanding standard. Euripides' Heracles does not.

[4] What Theseus means is that he will not be a vehicle for vengeance, it will not come on Heracles through him.

[5] What does Heracles mean to say? Wilamowitz took these words to mean "ich kann deine ansicht nicht teilen, aber ich danke dir dafür, und wenn du mich gemahnt hast das geschehene ohne murren zu tragen, so lasse ich das wenigstens von deiner rettung gelten" (Wilamowitz ²1895, 251). Bond's "psychological truth" that "a man loves the person he benefits, and gets less love in return" (see Bond 1981, 377) seems to be wide of the mark, needlessly making Heracles even more miserable, a frustrated friend giving himself to friends who just will not appreciate it. These words may simply mean: "Well done, I won't deny that I helped you, [but, seeing what *I* have done, you cannot hope to help me in your turn]".

[6] Through M. L. West (see West 1973, 148). It is equally good as an ironic affirmative.

[7] "Er [Heracles] spricht mit finsterem stoltze", observes Wilamowitz *ad loc*.

heroic), while Heracles is the protector and glory of Hellas (1252, 1254). Heracles retorts that "it is easy to judge when you are not afflicted" (1249), but he is far from unimpressed. He grows to feel pity for himself and going through details of his biography reviews his whole life,[8] while trying to argumentatively[9] prove to Theseus that to live has always been hard for him and he is not dying ἀμαθής: ἀβίωτον ἡμῖν νῦν τε καὶ πάροιθεν ὄν ("To live for me was and is unlivable",1257). Childishly[10] (rather that rhetorically) exaggerating the number of labours and subdued beasts (1271–1273), Heracles breaks into a long monologue, drawing with bitter irony the sad story of his πολύπονος life to its culmination, the "last and worst labour" – the killing of his wife and children (1279–1280). Along with this, he vividly imagines how, should he live on, people in the street would recognise him and exercise their sharp tongues (1289–1290), and Hera, of whose jealousy he has been an innocent victim, will dance with joy seeing the ἄνδρ' Ἑλλάδος τὸν πρῶτον (him) and τοὺς εὐεργέτας Ἑλλάδος (again him) perish (1303–1310). At this point, Theseus reminds Heracles that he is a common mortal, and seeing that gods also breed and suffer injustice and crime, it is not for a mortal to defy their lot, but to accept it. Pious (and idealistic) Heracles at the same time refuses to believe that gods are what Theseus says them to be: ἀοιδῶν οἵδε δύστηνοι λόγοι ("These are the wretched tales of poets", 1346),[11] but he has taken his mind off suicide, not because he is afraid to be called boorish (the "gods do" argument of enlightened Theseus is an irritating πάρεργον), but for fear of being condemned as a coward: μὴ δειλίαν ὄφλω τιν' ἐκλιπὼν φάος ("so that, having killed myself, I would not bring upon myself the charge of cowardice", 1348).

Having thus decided to live on and endure the hardships, Heracles breaks into tears and says he is crying for the first time in his whole life (1355–1356). Theseus almost leads him away, when Heracles suddenly wishes to see the bodies of his children once again and embrace his father. This must have brought new tears, for we see Theseus resort to the

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[8] Wilamowitz [2]1895, 252: "Es ist das erste was Thes. erreicht, daß Her. überhaupt von sich spricht".

[9] Theseus, who throughout this scene must have been afraid, at this point can feel relief, for he, together with Wilamowitz, seems to be quite aware that "Wer mit gründen ficht, wird nicht mehr nach dem impulse der leidenschaft handeln", see Wilamowitz [2]1895, 256.

[10] "See how you'd have managed without me – nohow!"

[11] D. Mastronarde offers an attractive explanation of this outburst: "[these words] express a willful (and wishful) rejection, what I would interpret as the psychological reflex of a good man defiantly insisting on imposing an ideal order and morality on experience". See Mastronarde 1986, 209.

once-so-effective way to brace Heracles up by reminding him of his past valorous deeds. Heracles answers that his former sufferings are nothing compared to this last one. But Theseus is strangely persistent, drawing on *opinio communis* and saying that Heracles is no longer the hero he used to be. It might seem that Heracles would remain indifferent to such words, since he has experienced the vanity of earthly glory to the full. Far from it, he hits back pointedly: σὺ ποῖος ἦσθα νέρθεν ἐν κακοῖσιν ὤν; (1415). Theseus readily admits he behaved cowardly,[12] which is not left unanswered just as well: "why then blame me?"

Such an undignified finale of the tragedy of Heracles (the farewell scene with Amphitryon is very brief: the outcome is clear, there remain only a few arrangements to be made for the burial) leaves the editors at a loss. Wilamowitz (not at a loss)[13] sees Theseus' intrusion (1410 ff.) as yet another manifestation of friendship: Theseus cannot suffer to see a prolonged painful leave-taking;[14] the *tu quoque*, in its turn, shows the moral superiority of Heracles who, unlike Theseus, "selbst seinen endgültigen entschluß gefasst hat". G. Bond finds the scene "petty" and "not edifying": Heracles is smartly acrimonious, and Theseus displays inhumanity.[15] Since such an exchange coming after the conclusive generous praise of Theseus as friend (and a useful Athenian connection) is uncomely, Bond suggests transposing these verses to the end of suicide stichomythia 1229–1254, arguing that what Theseus says in 1410, 1412 and 1414 is incongruous: "1410–17 *in situ* are primarily an argument about delay <…> He [Theseus] complains not about delay but about the effeminacy of Heracles' embracing his father and seeing the children once again. <…> This dialogue is barely tolerable if it refers to an excess of (hypothetical) lamentation. It would make good sense if it refers to Heracles' decision to kill himself", where after 1253 it "fits well with Theseus' reproach that Heracles speaks like an ἐπιτυχών and maintains the slightly acrimonious tone of that passage".[16] Bond never really explains how the transposed lines would fit in the context:

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[12] Wilamowitz [2]1895, 255: "das leben nimmt sich der erste beste, aber nicht der σοφός, es ist eine dummheit <…> eine gesellschaft, die das individuum so hoch schätzt, opfert eher die ehre als das leben. das sind die verbreiteten keineswegs edlen motive: Herakles zeigt uns freilich unten tiefere und wahrhaft sittliche".

[13] Wilamowitz [2]1895, 279: "Thes. wendet den streit so, daß der kranke freund zum schein recht behält, aber an den aufbruch mit erfolg gemahnt wird". Theseus may not be so omniscient, and Heracles may well be right, though.

[14] Wilamowitz [2]1895, 279: "er will dem freunde den peinlichen abschied kürzen". Bond, *ad loc*., argues against this "psychological" explanation.

[15] Bond 1981, 417.

[16] Bond 1981, 418.

Θη. εἴρηκας ἐπιτυχόντος ἀνθρώπου λόγους.
Ηρ. σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ὧν γε συμφορᾶς με νουθετεῖς.
Θη. ὁ πολλὰ δὴ τλὰς Ἡρακλῆς λέγει τάδε; 1250
Ηρ. οὔκουν τοσαῦτά γ'· ἐν μέτρῳ μοχθητέον.
Θη. εὐεργέτης βροτοῖσι καὶ μέγας φίλος;
Ηρ. οἱ δ' οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦσί μ', ἀλλ' Ἥρα κρατεῖ.
< Θη. οὕτω πόνων σῶν οὐκέτι μνήμην ἔχεις; 1410
Ηρ. ἅπαντ' ἐλάσσω κεῖνα τῶνδ' ἔτλην κακά.
Θη. εἴ σ' ὄψεταί τις θῆλυν ὄντ' οὐκ αἰνέσει.
Ηρ. ζῷ σοι ταπεινός; ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὐ δοκῶ.
Θη. ἄγαν γ'· ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν.
Ηρ. σὺ ποῖος ἦσθα νέρθεν ἐν κακοῖσιν ὤν;
Θη. ὡς ἐς τὸ λῆμα παντὸς ἦν ἥσσων ἀνήρ.
Ηρ. πῶς οὖν †ἔτ' εἶπησ† ὅτι συνέσταλμαι κακοῖς; >
Θη. οὐκ ἄν <σ'> ἀνάσχοιθ' Ἕλλὰς ἀμαθίᾳ θανεῖν. 1254

Theseus, seeing that the argument 'this is stupid' (he himself thinks it to be a gross stupidity) leaves Heracles cold, decides to remind him that he is the much-enduring hero and friend of man (1250, 1252). Heracles does not deny it, but says, "there should be a limit to suffering", adding bitterly that those for whom he performed his labours are of little benefit now. How could Theseus after such words still insist that Heracles is forgetful of his labours? He is in fact very much aware of them and will shortly be enumerating them, saying that they have been in vain, not simply repeating that his former sufferings are nothing compared to this last one. Moreover, 1412 sits ill in this context: why should Heracles wishing death be womanish (soft)?[17] If he is already weeping, there should be something to that effect in the text, but there is nothing until 1353–1356, when Heracles, having just decided ἐγκαρτερήσω βίοτον (1351),[18] complains: ἀτὰρ πόνων δὴ μυρίων ἐγευσάμην· / ὧν οὔτ' ἀπεῖπον οὐδέν' οὔτ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων /

[17] Certainly not because with Euripides suicide is often the way of a woman. However, with the exception of Phaedra, who hangs herself in misery, and Medea, who, though in pain and indecision, ends superhuman and triumphant, Euripidean females (Euadne, Macaria, Iphigenia, Polyxena, Cassandra, even Alcestis) face death heroically and manfully.

[18] βίοτον Wecklein, Palmer, Wilamowitz : θάνατον L : πότμον Heimsoeth, Wecklein thus adding yet another instance to the repository of 'polar' errors. Is the reading of L so easily expendable? After Wilamowitz (who did not, however, think it to be 'polar', but rather based on the vulgar notion that to die is the worst thing ever) and his powerful assertion "man vermißt in der ganzen rede die praecise äußerung des entschlusses zu leben. somit war θάνατον in βίοτον zu ändern. das ist keine schreibfehler: da hat vielmehr die gemeine menschenansicht geändert, die es zwar für schwer hält zu sterben, aber nicht begreift, daß zu leben unendlich viel schwerer ist"

ἔσταξα πηγάς, οὐδ' ἂν ᾠόμην ποτὲ / ἐς τοῦθ' ἱκέσθαι, δάκρυ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων βαλεῖν ("Although I experienced numerous labours, I never wearied, nor did tears ever gush forth from my eyes, and I never thought I would be reduced to shedding tears", 1353–1356). At 1253, before his great speech on labours (1255–1310) and final succumbing to Theseus (1351), his eyes seem to have been dry. When in 1204 Amphitryon asks Heracles to uncover his head and talk to Theseus, he goes down on his knees and, making his supplication more poignant, says that he is crying: βάρος ἀντίπαλον δακρύοις συναμιλλᾶται· / ἱκετεύομεν… πολιὸν / δάκρυον ἐκβαλών· ἰὼ παῖ, κατά-/σχεθε λέοντος ἀγρίου θυμόν ("The weight [of my grief] wrestling against [your grief] is helped by tears; I beg you, an old man as I am shedding tears, please, child, subdue your savage spirit of a lion [and cry together with me]").[19] Would Amphitryon,

(see Wilamowitz [2]1895, 273) βίοτον is accepted straight into the text by all the recent editors. Following in the steps of Nauck, who read [ὑποστῆναι βέλος] ἐγκαρτερήσων θάνατον, and Bremer, who simply, and reasonably, believes ἐγκαρτερήσω θάνατον to mean "ich werde der Versuchung des Todes nicht erliegen" (see Bremer 1977, 199), J. Gibert defends the ms. reading on the grounds that "the change requires attributing to the word [ἐγκαρτερεῖν] a meaning that it did not have in the fifth century", but taking θάνατον one step further to mean "an opponent": "Herakles pictures a face-to-face combat in which he must prove his courage; his adversary, as in some of his mythical exploits, is Death itself, and Heracles must "endure", that is, withstand him. <…> the commonplace "endure life" is unendurably banal compared to Euripides' expression". See Gibert 1995, 140, expanded in Gibert 1997. But is not this 'braving Death again' a trifle too much for a man who has recently killed his wife and children in a fit of mad bravery? Despite this, the ms. reading θάνατον is indeed defensible and yields the satisfactory "I will be strong against death".

[19] The turn of phrase is wrought, but the idea is clear: "See, your aged father is down on his knees and in tears, begging you!" Wilamowitz believes that Heracles is crying too, explaining in the commentary: "Amph. sagt also: καὶ ἐνθάδε βάρος ἐστὶν ἰσόρροπον τοῖς σοῖς δακρύοις· ἐγὼ γὰρ καὶ ἱκέτης εἰμὶ καὶ δακρύω καὶ αὐτός", and translating: "Schämst du der Thränen dich? schaue mein Flehen, wiegt es nicht mehr als die Scham?" (see Wilamowitz [2]1895, I, 255; II, 246–247). Murray prints in his OCT βάρος ἀντίπαλον, δακρύοις συναμιλλαταί, which is unintelligible, though in his *app. crit*. he lists Hermann's δακρύοισι ἁμιλλᾶται "quod si verum, hiat oratio, supplendaque ex. gr. σοῖσι τάδ' ἁμέτερα", intending the meaning to be the same as Wilamowitz' "my tears against your tears". J. Jackson suggested to alter the order and put the 'teary' lines together: δάκρυον ἐκβάλλων / βάρος ἀντίπαλον δακρύοις ἵν' ἁμιλλᾶται (see Jackson 1941, 182 n. 2), thus achieving the desired clarity (Heracles is crying): "the counterpoise to the tears of Hercules is the tear of Amphitryon and no omission [Murray] need be postulated". Bond, following M. L. West's "His [Amphitryon's] physical weight and his tears combine to press home his appeal" (see West 1973, 147), explains neatly: "he [Amph.] is using them [tears] as an aid in his contest against Heracles". He pays little attention to whether Heracles is crying at this point too, or not.

who is evidently very much afraid of his son, be speaking of "the savage spirit",[20] seeing Heracles already reduced to tears? Heracles most certainly begins to cry only when he has overcome his suicidal despair in 1351.[21] Before that, the tears would have been out of keeping with his mood.

The exchange of 1413–1414 "You think I live humbly?[22] But I am sure it wasn't so before. – Yes, indeed. Now that you are sick you are no longer Heracles the hero" is hardly tolerable in its new context. At that time Heracles spurns life, it has been ἀβίωτον (1257) for him, while the words "But I am sure it wasn't so before" ring with hurt pride of a person far from uninterested in life and its attractions. What is more, Theseus, now so willingly acknowledging Heracles' "lapse from heroism", was busy proving the opposite in 1250, 1252, and will go on promising a carefree life in Athens and posthumous honours (1332–1333). As for the *tu quoque* repartee, Bond tentatively suggests it being caused by a "rebuke (?) by Theseus that Heracles is 'reduced' by his woes <…> [with Heracles] stung perhaps by the repeated argument and the sanctimonious tone",[23] as well as by his general "slightly acrimonious" mood of σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ὤν γε συμφορᾶς με νουθετεῖς. But the weight these words carry is unequal: "it's easy to judge when the sorrow is not your own" is a natural (and neutral) reaction of a person whose overwhelming grief is measured by somebody else, be it even a close friend. At that point (1249) Heracles might not even remember that Theseus acted cowardly at some time in the past. He remembers that he saved him in Hades, as well as he remembers the whole multitude of his own (useless) labours. "And what were you like in Hades?" is, on the contrary, a calculated vigorous blow[24] dealt by one who is no longer absorbed in attempting suicide. Equally so, Theseus may venture (he is evidently relieved) his ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν only when Heracles has grown more stable and resolved to live (the emphatic proud ἐσκεψάμην of 1347, the point of no return, is turned

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[20] Kovacs' remark ad v. 1213 "Heracles keeps an obdurate silence" is good and reflects the hero's mute with grief state (Kovacs 1998, 431).

[21] Bond *ad loc*.: "Tears at 1354 are introduced as abruptly as the labours were at 1353. Kroeker is surely right in explaining them as a Sophoclean reminiscence". But why should such a powerful scene be written off as a reminiscence?

[22] Bond takes ζῶ to be deliberative subjunctive meaning "Am I to live on in humility" which suits (at a stretch) the suicide context of 1250 ff. more than the indicative.

[23] Bond 1981, 418.

[24] Both dramatically and psychologically pointed. The plot offers ample material for tragic irony in which Euripides, often not without *Schadenfreude*, indulges. τίνων δ' ἀμοιβὰς ὧν ὑπῆρξεν Ἡρακλῆς / σώσας με νέρθεν, ἦλθον (1169–1170), says Theseus on arrival.

as an expression of his own free will, but Theseus has done his bit too) and his condition can no longer be aggravated by this homely truth. Any transposition of the kind suggested by Bond would thus ruin the carefully crafted and psychologically truthful representation of the emotional lability[25] of the newly regained assertive readiness to fight against odds (1349–1352, then at 1382–1385 firmly stepping back into life again, keeping his weapons and asking Theseus to help with Cerberus), but repeatedly slipping back into despair (1367–1382, again at 1406–1417[26]) and finally regaining resolution (1418 ff.).

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[25] Reviewing Bond, D. Mastronarde suggests that "the dramatic point of the passage is to display the common humanity of Theseus and Heracles and to show that judging and learning can work both ways – there can be no facile judgement of the proper amount of tears of grief nor of how 'low' a hero may feel and act. Theseus has 'cured' Heracles by reminding him of his bravery, but in this scene Heracles reasserts that he cannot just return to the status quo ante in his feelings of self-sufficiency. The fact that the argument used to 'cure' Heracles at 1250 recurs in a failing effort at 1410 is not a problem, but a deliberate effect … which underscores the lability of man's understanding of his place in the world" (Mastronarde 1983, 111–112). Cf. a rather indiscriminating retelling of this scene in Garrison 1995, 75–76.

[26] Diggle most probably suspects these lines to be an (actors') interpolation, hence *suspectos habet* of his apparatus. D. L. Page, however (in *Heracles* heavily relying on the opinion of Wilamowitz), does not even discuss this scene among the interpolations in the play.

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The much-maligned lines Eur. *HF* 1410–1417 are treated in this article as a psychologically veritable conclusion – should we not wish to follow N. Wecklein and bluntly round off at 1404 – of the Amphitryon–Heracles–Theseus scene in which they are most at home where the tradition has them, at the very end, and not, as G. Bond would attempt to prove, immediately after 1253. Along the way to 1417 certain minor critical comments are offered.

В статье предпринята попытка опровергнуть предложенную Г. Бондом транспозицию ст. Eur. *HF* 1410–1417. Стремясь спасти стихи, которые издатели считают неподлинными, Бонд предлагает перенести их из конца трагедии, где они создают "диссонанс", в конец стихомифии 1229–1253, что, на наш взгляд, нарушает психологически достоверное развитие этой важной для трагедии сцены.

CONSPECTUS

SYMBOLAE *CHRISTIANO HABICHT NONAGENARIO*
OBLATAE, QUAE *HYPERBOREI* VOLUMINIS XXII FASCICULO II
IN EIUS HONOREM EDITO ADICIUNTUR

Статьи сопровождаются резюме на русском и английском языке
Summary in Russian and English