



EURIPIDES, HIPPOLYTUS 136

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EURIPIDES, HIPPOLYTUS 136*

The manuscripts at Hipp. 135–8, where the chorus of Troezenian women are singing of Phaedra’s mysterious sickness, read:

τριτάταν δὲ νιν κλύω τάνδε κατ’ ἀμβροσίου στόματος
ἀμέραν Δάματρος ἀκτᾶς δέμας ἀγνὸν ἴσχειν.

The difficulties inherent in τάνδε κατ’ ἀμβροσίου στόματος (it “gives neither metre nor sense”, wrote Barrett¹) have long been recognized. A century and a half ago Hartung conjectured τάνδ’ ἀβρωσῖαι, and he has been followed, among recent editors, by Barrett, Diggle, and Stockert.² The text then reads (with Diggle’s colometry):

τριτάταν δὲ νιν κλύω
τάνδ’ ἀβρωσῖαι
στόματος ἀμέραν
Δάματρος ἀκτᾶς δέμας ἀγνὸν ἴσχειν.

A literal translation might render this as:

For three days now I hear that, in the non-eating of her mouth, she has kept her body pure from Demeter’s grain.³

*) For assistance of various kinds (scholarly and practical) I am grateful to James Diggle, Pat Easterling, Monica Gale, Bruce Gibson, Ben Henry, Eoghan Moloney, Robert Parker, Catherine Steel, and especially Armand D’Angour and the late Sir Charles Willink. Observations made by the editor and the anonymous referees have also helped to improve this paper; to them, too, my thanks.

1) W. S. Barrett, *Euripides: Hippolytus* (Oxford 1964) 187, with explanatory comment. Of the standard editions now available, only the Budé of L. Méridier (*Euripide II* [Paris 1927]) prints this phrase.

2) J. A. Hartung, *Euripides’ Werke III* (Leipzig 1848) 14, with explanatory note at 137–8; Barrett (n. 1); J. Diggle, *Euripidis Fabulae I* (Oxford 1984 [OCT]); W. Stockert, *Euripides: Hippolytus* (Stuttgart 1994 [Teubner]).

3) All translations from Greek texts are my own. According to Barrett (n. 1) 187, in this passage “the construction seems to be rather ‘she keeps (withholds) her pure body from D.’s grain’ than ‘she keeps (maintains) her body pure from D.’s grain’”. But it should be noted that when the phrase δέμας ἀγνὸν recurs (with the order reversed) at 1003, the accompanying genitive of separation is certainly dependent on the adjective; on this line, and on the question of Phaedra’s ‘purity’, see below, 230–231.

In support of this emendation Hartung drew attention to a scholion on 135, to which Stockert also refers:

οἶον· λοιπὸν τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἔχω ἀκούουσα περὶ αὐτῆς ὅτι ἀσθενεῖ καὶ οὐ μεταλαμβάνει βρώσεως ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῆς.⁴

In 1968 Willink⁵ argued instead for τάνδ' ἑκάς ἀβρώτου, combining conjectures by Reiske (τάνδ' ἑκάς ἀμβροσίου) and Verrall (τάνδε κατ' ἀβρώτου);⁶ he is followed by Kovacs in the recent Loeb edition,⁷ thus:

τριτάταν δὲ νιν κλύω
τάνδ' ἑκάς ἀβρώτου στόματος ἀμέραν
Δάματρος ἀκτᾶς δέμας ἀγνὸν ἴσχειν.

The passage might then be rendered literally in this way:

For three days now I hear that she has kept the holy⁸ substance of Demeter's grain far from her non-eating mouth.

My main purpose in this note is to adduce independent evidence which offers strong support for Willink's reading while at the same time making clear that Hartung's conjecture was already along the right lines;⁹ but it will be useful first to evaluate summarily the merits of the two readings in their own terms. It should be noted

4) Text in: E. Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem* (Berlin 1887–91) II 22.

5) C. W. Willink, *Some Problems of Text and Interpretation in the Hippolytus*, CQ 18 (1968) 11–43, at 37 (= C. W. Willink, *Collected Papers on Greek Tragedy* [= CP], ed. W. B. Henry [Leiden / Boston 2010] 3–49, at 40–1, with the case re-asserted in the addenda at 802).

6) J. J. Reiske, *Ad Euripidem et Aristophanem animadversiones* (Leipzig 1754) 22; A. W. Verrall, *The 'Medea' of Euripides* (London 1881) 86 (in note on Eur. Med. 982). Both the Reiske and the Verrall conjecture face in part the same objections as the manuscript reading; I consider Verrall's further below, n. 37. For other conjectures see the appendix to the edition of N. Wecklein (*Euripidis Hippolytus*; Leipzig 1900) 70 and n. 9 below.

7) D. Kovacs, *Euripides II* (Cambridge, Mass. / London 1995).

8) For ἀγνός here see further below, 229 f.

9) Both are rejected by M. Giusta, *Il testo dell'Ippolito di Euripide: congettura e croci* (Florence 1998) 45–7, who points to some of the difficulties which I consider below; but his own proposal, τάνδε κατ' ἀκρασίαν στόματος, which gives (at best) poor sense and entails a further emendation in the matching strophe to achieve responsion, is patently inferior to either even without my supporting evidence.

at the outset that although Hartung's proposal has won considerable editorial favour, editors have not always seemed confident in accepting it. "Hartung is probably right with τάνδ' ἄβρωσίαι" is the observation of Barrett,¹⁰ drawing attention to the fact that ἄβρωσία is otherwise attested only in the *Onomasticon* of Pollux (6.39);¹¹ he nowhere mentions Verrall's ἄβρώτου. More recently, Halleran (who prints Diggle's text) has expressed the same uncertainty.¹² Willink's suggestion has attracted little comment.

1. In favour of τάνδ' ἑκάς ἄβρώτου is, first and foremost – Willink's chief argument – the fact that the run of the letters offers an evidently superior explanation for the corruption to τάνδε κατ' ἀμβροσίου.

2. A weakness in the case for τάνδ' ἄβρωσίαι is that the genitive στόματος which follows is unnecessary to the sense, whereas it forms an integral part of the phrase with ἑκάς ἄβρώτου.

3. As regards metre, the verse scans differently in each case, but in both cases scansion and strophic responsion are unproblematic. Thus

(a) τάνδ' ἄβρωσίαι στόματος ἀμέραν

– ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ –

corresponds to (126–7)

πορφύρεα φάρεα ποταμίαι δρόσῳι,

the -ea in both πορφύρεα and φάρεα being scanned long by synizesis¹³ to give a hypodochmius, followed by a dochmius with the common resolution in the second position.¹⁴ By contrast,

(b) τάνδ' ἑκάς ἄβρώτου στόματος ἀμέραν

– ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ –

corresponds to

πορφύρεα φάρεα ποταμίαι δρόσῳι

10) Barrett (n. 1) 188.

11) And in a single manuscript, according to Giusta (n. 9) 46.

12) M. R. Halleran, Euripides: Hippolytus (Warminster 1995) 162; Verrall's conjecture is again unmentioned.

13) Instead of φάρεα one might, alternatively, read φάρη with Hartung (so Willink, CP [n. 5] 802). On this issue see Barrett (n. 1) 186; C. W. Willink, *Critical Studies in the cantica of Sophocles: II. Ajax, Trachiniae, Oedipus Tyrannus*, CQ 52 (2002) 50–80, at 76 n. 88 (with unfortunate typographical errors in the Greek, corrected in Willink, CP [n. 5] 382–423, at 418 n. 88).

14) Cf. Willink, CP (n. 5) 802.

as a syncopated iambic trimeter (iambic metron followed by two cretics), with two resolved longs; in this instance the -εα in πορφύρεα has its natural disyllabic value.¹⁵ In short, while further arguments could be adduced on both sides, there is little to choose between the options on metrical grounds.

4. Among the objections which Barrett¹⁶ brings against Reiske's τάνδ' ἐκὰς ἀμβροσίου are two that could be made equally against τάνδ' ἐκὰς ἀβρώτου: namely, that the word-order in the sentence is "impossibly interlaced", and that the periphrasis in Δάματρος ἀκτῶς δέμας ('the substance of Demeter's grain' [that is, bread]; the words must be taken in this way if ἐκὰς is read) is unlikely here. As regards the first of these, the difficulty which Barrett perceives would seem to lie in the separation of the phrase ἐκὰς ἀβρώτου στόματος from Δάματρος ἀκτῶς δέμας ἄγνόν by ἀμέραν when the two phrases are syntactically linked as ἀβρωσία στόματος and Δάματρος ἀκτῶς δέμας ἄγνόν are not ('has kept the holy substance of Demeter's grain far from her non-eating mouth', against 'in the non-eating of her mouth, has kept her body pure from Demeter's grain'). But the words split by ἀμέραν can hardly be deemed unsplittable, and in my judgement the most that can be said is that the hyperbaton (in itself extremely common in Euripidean lyric, and present in an intricate form here whichever reading is followed¹⁷) is somewhat more marked with ἐκὰς ἀβρώτου στόματος than with ἀβρωσία στόματος.

5. Barrett's second objection is also lacking in force. His assertion that Δάματρος ἀκτῶς δέμας is an "unlikely periphrasis" here is unsupported except for the (defensive) citation of two passages¹⁸ where, he maintains, "δέμας dwells on the physical aspect [my

15) It will also be noted that in this case the first syllable of φάρεα scans long, while for the line to correspond with (a) it must be scanned short. Euripides admits both possibilities elsewhere; see e.g. (long) El. 191, IT 1150; (short) Andr. 831, Or. 840.

16) Barrett (n. 1) 187–8.

17) For separations of noun and attributive adjective in Euripidean lyric see W. Breitenbach, Untersuchungen zur Sprache der euripideischen Lyrik (Stuttgart 1934) (Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 20), who (242–9) cites more than 200 instances where the relevant words are separated, as here, by more than one word, and (261) 11 further instances, including the present, where three agreeing words (noun and two adjectives) are all separated from each other, often with more than one intervening word.

18) Soph. fr. 255.4 Radt (TrGF 4.242); Critias (?), fr. 19.33 Snell (TrGF 1.181) (where the reading δέμας is uncertain anyway).

emphasis] of the thing described” rather than its physicality as such. Certainly both of these passages possess a strong visual quality, but that does not derive from the word δέμας; and in the present context, where Phaedra is refusing to eat, the intrinsic physicality of the word seems entirely appropriate. On the other hand, δέμας in itself might well refer to Phaedra’s body, and indeed it is so used just a few lines previously (132) and on several occasions later in the play.¹⁹

6. Evaluation of these two possible interpretations of δέμας requires that we consider too its attributive adjective ἄγνόν.²⁰ Parker argues that, when applied to deities, the term ἄγνός (which I have above translated ‘holy’) means, quite specifically, ‘demanding respect’, ‘reverend’, like σεμνός, and that a particular appropriateness to context is regularly apparent;²¹ this might be held to pose a difficulty for the understanding of δέμας ἄγνόν as the bread of Demeter, in that no special reason is evident here for the bread to be so described.²² At the same time, it would appear quite straightforward to take (Δάματρος) ἄκτᾶς as a genitive of separation after ἄγνόν, especially in view of the analogous construction at 1003, where Hippolytus says to Theseus, λέχους γὰρ ἐς τόδ’ ἡμέρας ἄγνόν δέμας (‘To this very moment my body is pure from sex’). These points favour Hartung. Yet Euripides’ description of Phaedra’s body as ἄγνόν also possesses implications which may not be thought entirely satisfactory. Barrett explains the use of the term by reference to the religious practice of ritual fasting;²³ this is fully in accord with

19) Vv. 175, 198, 204, 274.

20) It is an indication of the difficulty of interpretation that when v. 138 is cited by LSJ s.v. ἄγνός, δέμας is understood to refer to Phaedra’s body, and when it is cited s.v. δέμας, it is understood to refer to bread.

21) R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford 1983) 147–8.

22) On this interpretation, the adjective could not adequately be explained as (an otherwise attractive view) emphasizing the extreme nature of Phaedra’s refusal to take food (cf. Willink [n. 5] 37 [= CP 40–1]: “the point is that Phaedra must be gravely stricken if she is rejecting something *god-given*”).

23) Barrett (n. 1) 187; cf. C. Segal, *Shame and Purity in Euripides’ Hippolytus*, *Hermes* 98 (1970) 278–99, at 279–80; Halleran (n. 12) 162. Segal additionally identifies in ἄγνόν a second level of meaning, in which the term refers also to the moral and sexual ‘purity’ which Phaedra is trying to preserve, citing in support of this view the apparent echo of the phrase δέμας ἄγνόν at 1003. Given the importance of this theme in the play, such an overtone may certainly be heard; but it cannot be considered to bear significantly on the present discussion, where the primary meaning is critical.

Parker's understanding of the meaning of ἄγνός as applied to humans,²⁴ and in itself unproblematic. Willink, however, objected that the chorus cannot be supposed to believe that Phaedra is engaged in a ritual fast when they have been informed that she wishes to die (139–40);²⁵ and though Willink apparently failed to see that Barrett was not in fact suggesting that, in the chorus's understanding, Phaedra was actually undertaking a ritual fast, even a metaphorical allusion to the ritual practice²⁶ (itself rare in Greek religion, as Barrett, followed by Halleran, explicitly acknowledges) might be considered curiously out of place where the aim is suicide by starvation (it can hardly be claimed that the chorus is speaking ironically).

It will be evident that the arguments presented above do not point unambiguously in one direction. Further support in favour of Willink's τάνδ' ἐκός ἀβρότου, however, emerges from another quarter; and this may be thought decisive. In a recent article²⁷ I argue that the *Hippolytus* represents a significant intertext for the novelist Chariton in his *Chaereas and Callirhoe*. In particular, two scenes in the novel can claim to be modelled on scenes in Euripides' play.²⁸ In the second of these, the king of Persia, who has fallen in love with the beautiful Callirhoe, asks the eunuch Artaxates to find a remedy (φάρμακον) for his love (C&C 6.3.7). What follows can be seen to rework the scene in the *Hippolytus* (433–524) where Phaedra's nurse, to save the queen from death, urges her to surrender to her passion for her stepson. The eunuch, who takes the role of the nurse, first encourages the king (= Phaedra) in the same direction, and then, when the king rejects absolutely the idea of seducing another man's wife, reverses his position, pressing his master to fight against himself, distracting his mind with pleasure. Situational parallels, the relationship between the characters, and linguistic and conceptual echoes work together in the novel to sur-

24) See Parker (n. 21) 148–9: ἄγνός = essentially 'uncontaminated', free from (a) pollution, i. e. fit to worship.

25) Willink (n. 5) 37 (= CP 41).

26) Segal (n. 23) 280 refers to "the metaphorical, quasi-ritual 'purity' of the fast".

27) J. H. D. Scourfield, *Chaereas, Hippolytus, Theseus: Tragic Echoes, Tragic Potential in Chariton*, *Phoenix* 64 (2010) 291–313.

28) The first is the scene of Chaereas' assault on Callirhoe at C&C 1.4.10–12, which recalls the scene in the *Hippolytus* where Theseus curses his son (882–90).

face the Euripidean intertext.²⁹ At the end of the scene, the eunuch makes the specific suggestion that the king go hunting (a detail which itself evokes the *Hippolytus*, and particularly, given the context, Phaedra's wild fantasy at 215–22):

μάλιστα δὲ κυνηγεσίοις ἐξαιρέτως χαίρεις· οἶδα γάρ σε ὕφ' ἡδονῆς
διημερεύοντα ἄβρωτον, ἄποτον ἐν θήρᾳ. (θήρᾳ) δὲ ἐνδιατρίβειν (βέλ-
τιον) ἢ τοῖς βασιλείοις καὶ ἐγγὺς εἶναι τοῦ πυρός.³⁰

You take very great pleasure in hunting in particular; indeed, I know that you spend the entire day without food or drink when you go hunting, you enjoy it so much. It is better to spend your time hunting than in the palace and close to the fire. (Chariton, C&C 6.3.9)

The phrase διημερεύοντα ἄβρωτον, ἄποτον echoes in the first instance Xenophon, Cyr. 7.5.53:³¹

ἐπεὶ γε μέντοι ἐδεξιόσω με καὶ παρὰ σοὶ ἐκέλευσας μένειν, ἤδη περί-
βλεπτος ἦν, ὅτι μετὰ σοῦ ἄσιτος καὶ ἄποτος διημέρευον.

However, when you took me by the hand and bade me stay at your side, I was envied all around because I was spending a whole day with you – without anything to eat or drink.

We should note, however, that Chariton writes not ἄσιτος, following Xenophon, but ἄβρωτον, which in fact does not occur in Xenophon at all; nor does it occur anywhere else in Chariton. But what is especially significant is the appearance of ἄβρωτος in an active sense. A search of the Thesaurus linguae Graecae online³² generated (as raw data) 113 instances of ἄβρωτος in Greek up to and including the second century A.D., of which only two evidently bear an active sense ('not eating', rather than 'inedible' or 'not eaten'): Sophocles, fr. 967 Radt (TrGF 4.599), which depends on very sketchy evidence in the same passage of Pollux as affords the only attestation of the word ἄβρωσία;³³ and the present Chariton

29) For full details, see Scourfield (n. 27) 302–4.

30) Text: B. P. Reardon, Chariton Aphrodisiensis: De Callirhoe narrationes amatoriae (Munich / Leipzig 2004).

31) Echoes of the *Cyropaedia* in *Chaereas and Callirhoe* are frequent; see A. D. Papanikolaou, Chariton-Studien: Untersuchungen zur Sprache und Chronologie der griechischen Romane (Göttingen 1973) (Hypomnemata 57) 19–20, who observes the present borrowing. The context in Cyr. 7.5.53 is not significant, but cf. also 4.2.46, 8.1.43, where the context is hunting.

32) Undertaken on 17 July 2007.

33) See above, 227. The passage in Pollux reads in full: ἄβρωτος δ' ὁ νῆστις παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ, καὶ ἄβρωσία ἡ ἄσιτία (but see also n. 34 below).

passage.³⁴ It is natural to conclude that Chariton's switch from Xenophon's ἄσιτος (a more common word in any case³⁵) to ἄβρωτος was prompted by the presence of ἄβρωτος, also with an active sense, in his text of Hipp. 136.³⁶ Hartung's ἄβρωσία, inspired by

34) For the *Hippolytus* the TLG presents Diggle's text; i.e., at 136, τάνδ' ἄβρωσία. It may be noted that C. G. Cobet, *Annotationes criticae ad Charitonem*, *Mnemosyne* 8 (1859) 229–303, at 244, recognizing the unusual usage of ἄβρωτος in the Chariton passage, and not trusting the text of Pollux, argued that Chariton's ἄβρωτον was a scribal error (which he leaves unexplained) for the author's ἄσιτον, which he had taken directly from Xenophon. Cobet further proposed that, in the Sophoclean fragment preserved by Pollux, the tragedian in fact wrote ἄβρώς, on the analogy of ὠμοβρώς, found at Soph. fr. 799.5 Radt (TrGF 4.542) and elsewhere (see also Cobet, *De nonnullis fragmentis tragicorum*, *Mnemosyne* N.S. 5 [1877] 225–48, at 248). This emendation in turn prompted T. Barthold, *Kritisch-exegetische Bemerkungen zum Hippolytus* des Euripides, *RhM* 31 (1876) 313–40, at 316, to propose the genitive ἄβρώτος at Hipp. 136. But Cobet's case against ἄβρωτος in the Chariton and Sophocles / Pollux passages is, in the first place, extremely weak; and, in the second place, a further TLG search (29 July 2010) disclosed only two certain attestations of ἄβρώς, both from the sixth century A.D. (Anth. Pal. 9.764.5 [Paulus Silentiarius]; Agathias, *Hist.* 2.31.8) and both passive in sense.

35) My parallel TLG search (same date as above [n. 32]) generated 154 instances, covering a wider range of texts.

36) Note also ἀμέραν at 137 in relation to Chariton's διημερεύοντα; it is possible that the presence of this word helped to trigger Chariton's recollection of the Xenophontic phrase.

37) Strictly, my argument concerning Chariton supports only Verrall's conjecture (ἄβρώτου), not the whole package proposed by Willink (τάνδ' ἐκὰς ἄβρώτου), and any lingering concerns regarding ἀγνόν could be dispelled if it were possible to take δέμας ἀγνόν of Phaedra's body while retaining ἄβρώτου. Verrall himself ([n. 6] 86) managed this, but only by construing the words τριτάτων ... τάνδε κατ' ἄβρώτου στόματος ἀμέραν wholly implausibly, with κατὰ taken to govern τριτάτων ... τάνδε ... ἀμέραν and ἄβρώτου στόματος read as a genitive absolute. No less implausible is the notion, implicit in a scholion (for which see Schwartz [n. 4] II 22) and seemingly taken seriously by as distinguished a scholar as L. C. Valckenaer, *Euripidis tragoedia Hippolytus* (Leiden 1822 [original edition 1768]) 181, that κατ' ... ἴσχειν represents an instance of tmesis, Valckenaer proceeding from there explicitly to construe δέμας with ἀμβροσίου στόματος ('kept the body of her divine mouth pure from Demeter's grain'); the insurmountable problems remain with ἄβρώτου. With κατὰ taken in the most natural sense of 'down into', the sentence contains the strong anacoluthon described by Barrett (n. 1) 187. Armand D'Angour suggests to me that it might perhaps be taken, alternatively, to mean 'in regard to', 'in respect of'; but the instances of this usage cited in LSJ (s.v., A II 7) seem to mark it as prosaic and limited in application, and in the context of this sentence the expression strikes me as improbably awkward (as Hartung's ἄβρωσία στόματος, which it might be thought to resemble, in itself does not). As things stand, Willink's reading cannot be bettered.

the βρώσεως of the scholion on 135, was a brilliant conjecture; but the scholion's paraphrase might equally have been generated by ἀβρώτου, and the evidence of Chariton, added to the argument concerning the textual corruption (and the sheer rarity of the word ἀβρωσία), vindicates Willink. The only substantive counter-argument lies in the propriety of the term ἄγνόν to describe the bread of Demeter at 138, and it seems to me much easier to suppose that Euripides here used the word in a somewhat weakened sense than that Chariton, echoing a phrase familiar to him from the *Cyropaedia* and in a context bearing clear traces of the *Hippolytus*, substituted for a straightforward adjective an alternative almost unattested in the required sense elsewhere, without the stimulus of its presence in that play.³⁷

Maynooth

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