

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

EURIPIDES *HIPPOLYTUS* 100 AND THE MEANING OF THE PROLOGUE

Θε. πῶς οὖν σὺ σεμνήν δαίμον' οὐ προσενέπεις ;
Ιπ. τίν' ; εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μή τι σου σφαλῆ στόμα.
Θε. τήνδ' ἢ πύλαισι σαῖς ἐφέστηκεν Κύπρις.
Ιπ. πρόσωθεν αὐτὴν ἀγνὸς ὦν ἀσπάζομαι.
Θε. σεμνή γε μέντοι κάπσιμος ἐν βροτοῖς.
Ιπ. ἄλλοισιν ἄλλος θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μέλει.

[Eur. *Hipp.* 99–104]

Interpreters of Euripides' *Hippolytus* cannot be said to have reached consensus on very many points. But on one point there seems to be only sporadic disagreement, that the hero brings his own ruin upon himself, that—whatever disproportion there may be between his offense and his punishment—Hippolytus, by his haughty and overbearing behavior, his assumption of superhuman virtue, and his denial of his sexual nature, deserves punishment.¹ That punishment is seen, despite its disproportion, as somehow fitting. It arises out of the wrath of the woman he so self-righteously scorned, and he dies as a result of horses he is unable to control, a fitting symbol, one might suppose, of his repressed passion.

This view of the play is persuasive, but I believe it to be mistaken. In a subsequent and longer essay I intend to discuss the difficulties it entails in the play as a whole and to propose another interpretation. In the present essay I will discuss, at greater length than would be possible in a more general essay, one particular line and the scene in which it occurs. The usual interpretation of the play has, in my view, caused this line to be interpreted in an unnatural way. And the prologue as a whole is usually regarded as unambiguous evidence of Hippolytus' guilt, in spite of several contrary indications in the text. The importance of this scene for interpretation will, I hope, justify the length of this note.

Line 100 has been interpreted in three ways thus far. (1) Musgrave suggested that Hippolytus suspects that the old man is going to mention the Erinyes, the *σεμναὶ θεαὶ* whose name could not be spoken.² This suggestion has been followed by a number of English editors including Paley and Mahaffy–Bury.³ (2) Barrett regards such a reference as both absurdly irrelevant and impossible (“did Musgrave fancy that one could worship *one* of this indivisible plurality?”). Instead, Hippolytus “suspects that the old man means Aphrodite, and warns him not to

1. G. E. Dimock, Jr., “Euripides' *Hippolytus*, or Virtue Rewarded,” *YCS* 25 (1977): 239–58. is the most recent dissenting voice. But see Pohlenz's sympathetic treatment of Hippolytus in *Die griechische Tragödie*², vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1954), pp. 269–70.

2. *Euripidis quae exstant omnia* (Oxford, 1778), ad loc.

3. F. A. Paley (ed.), *The “Hippolytus” of Euripides* (London, 1872); J. P. Mahaffy and J. B. Bury (eds.), “*Hippolytus*” (London, 1889), ad loc.

Permission to reprint a note in this section may be obtained only from the author.

mention her."⁴ This I take to be the majority view today. (3) Most recently, Dimock has suggested that this line expresses shocked piety on Hippolytus' part.⁵ Σεμνός has just occurred in 93 and 94 in the unfavorable sense. Should not the servant beware of using this word of a goddess?

There are difficulties with all three interpretations. Musgrave's suggestion derives whatever plausibility it has from the fact that σεμνήν in the previous line is a word often used of the Erinyes. Furthermore, σφαλῆναι στόμα is a likely expression for religious offences of the tongue. But, as Barrett points out, the reference to the Erinyes has no relevance to the play.

On Barrett's view, however, the line ought to imply that Hippolytus will be angry at his servant for mentioning Aphrodite. The warning "Careful you don't slip" makes sense only when a slip will have consequences. If the consequences are not in the divine realm, then they must be in the human. But nothing in the previous lines suggests the possibility of wrath (Hippolytus has given the servant permission to say what he likes), and after the mention of Aphrodite there are still no signs of anger at him. If 100 is a warning not to offend Hippolytus, it is an idle one.

Dimock's view retains the advantages of Musgrave's interpretation, the religious reference in σφαλῆ and the close connection with σεμνήν, but avoids its absurdities. This is an attractive suggestion, and it may be right. Two objections could be raised, however, neither fatal but enough to make one hesitate. First, in order to understand 100 as Dimock does, the audience must regard σεμνήν δαίμονα in 99 as an expression likely to give offense to the divinity in question. They must do so instantly and without any help from Hippolytus, since he does not specify the grounds for his apprehension. Yet expressions like σεμνή δαίμων or σεμνή θεός are so much a part of ordinary religious language (cf. 61) that I am not sure whether, even after 93 and 94, an audience hearing 99 could be counted on to sense the danger of impiety. Second, by putting the interrogative pronoun before his warning, Hippolytus seems to imply that some goddesses might be offended at being called haughty or aloof while others might not. If the servant picks the right one, he can avoid offense. On Dimock's view he ought merely to have said, for example, σεμνός γάρ ἐστι θεῶν τις; εὐφήμει, γέρον.

I suggest that Musgrave was right after all, that the reference is to the possibility of offending some divinity by a slip of the tongue. Musgrave went too far only in specifying the Erinyes. They are irrelevant, but a pious warning of general reference is not. The servant asks Hippolytus why he does not address an awesome, august divinity. Hippolytus replies by asking him which divinity he means, but warns him to proceed with caution. Where σεμναὶ θεαὶ are concerned, speech is often perilous.

There are grammatical grounds, not absolutely decisive but not inconsiderable, for interpreting σφαλῆ with reference to the gods. The passive of this verb means either to slip, more or less literally, or to be overthrown, fall, meet with disaster. The tongue may slip, say something unintentional, but only its owner may meet with disaster. Line 100 therefore means "Be careful lest your tongue slip," rather

4. *Euripides: "Hippolytos"* (Oxford, 1964), ad loc.

5. "Virtue Rewarded," p. 246.

than "Be careful lest your tongue meet with disaster." (It clearly does not mean "Be careful lest your tongue get you into trouble" for which the Greek might be *μή τι σε σφάλῃ στόμα*, though this would convey Barrett's meaning more naturally than the text does.⁶) If this is so, we must ask how a reference to a slip of the tongue is likely to be understood in our context. Now it is just possible to take *σφαλῆ στόμα* as Barrett does, of an ill-considered but intentional remark, the advice to Hippolytus to worship Aphrodite. But the words are more likely to suggest some accidental utterance of ill-omened nature, words which tumble out before they were quite considered but which are nevertheless magically efficacious for good or ill.⁷ The three preceding lines all mention the gods and no reference is made to Hippolytus' possible anger. All of Euripides' audience acted daily on the belief that accidental utterance can be harmful.⁸ Unless 100 were uttered in a pointedly dark and menacing fashion, it is hard to see how they could be expected to understand it in Barrett's sense. Under these circumstances it is most naturally interpreted as a warning to avoid offense not against Hippolytus but against a goddess.

This interpretation might well be thought to detract from the dramatic purpose of the scene, as that purpose is usually conceived, to show clearly the choice that lies before Hippolytus, of worshiping or refusing to worship Aphrodite, and his culpability in refusing. On the majority view, 100 is the expression of Hippolytus' barely concealed haughtiness to the servant and serves to underscore his pride toward Aphrodite. On my view, it does no such thing. In fact, by giving additional evidence of his piety, it tends to do the opposite. This might be a weighty objection if we were quite sure of the purpose of the scene. Yet the usual view of this scene is not as obviously right as is often supposed. It deserves more careful scrutiny than it has hitherto received.

There are several things in the scene which ought to give pause. If we are meant to see the irony of the scene working against Hippolytus, to see that he is guilty and his servant wiser than he, the servant ought to be given arguments that are convincing in order that Hippolytus' rejection of them may appear culpable. But the servant is made to argue in a most curious and unconvincing way. Instead of emphasizing the difference between men and gods, that they are above us and we must worship them, he goes out of his way, it seems, to point up the similarity. In 91-98 he makes an extended analogy between the attitudes of gods and those of men. This tends to minimize the difference between them. Next he censures in humans a quality (*σεμνότης*) which will then be his reason (99, 103) for urging that honors be given to Aphrodite without the slightest awareness that, if men and gods alike hate what is *σεμνόν* and Aphrodite is *σεμνή*, it follows that she is properly an object of detestation. In fact, the servant is made to combine two quite distinct arguments: (1) men and gods alike hate pride: do you not be proud toward Aphrodite; (2) the gods demand the worship of mortals: do you not neglect to worship Aphrodite. Yet he combines them in such a way as to nullify them both.

6. D. J. Conacher's "Watch out lest your tongue be your ruin" (*Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme, and Structure* [Toronto, 1967], p. 32) is a mistranslation.

7. Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 27. 5 where *σφάλμα* is used of an accidental but ominous utterance.

8. Cf. the passages cited in LSJ, s.vv. *εὐφημέω* and *εὐφημία*. On this whole subject, see J. J. Peradotto, "Cledonomanicy in the *Oresteia*," *AJP* 90 (1969): 1-21, and the literature cited by him.

The use of *σεμνός* now in the bad and now in the good sense has generally been put down to mere carelessness.⁹ Barrett alone sees the irony of it as an all too accurate description of Aphrodite; but, since this point would detract from his view of the scene as a whole, he has no incentive to draw further conclusions. We should consider whether the irony of the scene does not work throughout entirely against the servant rather than against Hippolytus. The servant's objections to Hippolytus' behavior might be designed to throw into relief the rightness of Hippolytus' choice. This view will strike most readers as pure paradox. Yet I hope to show that it accounts for far more of the prologue than does its competitor.

On first glance, the "rhetoric" of the prologue looks obvious. Hippolytus is to be shown as a sinner against Aphrodite by his exaggerated chastity. And so we first see the goddess herself and learn that she is a power to be reckoned with. Then follows a scene in which Hippolytus' opposition to the goddess is dramatized. First comes the hymn to Artemis and Hippolytus' prayer. In these the beauty of his life is evident, but the emphasis is meant to fall on his folly, as seen in the dialogue with the servant. There he explicitly and blasphemously rejects his duty to worship Aphrodite. The servant's concluding prayer is meant to contrast his humility and wisdom with the pride and folly of his master. Though the servant tries to win pardon for Hippolytus, the audience knows that his doom is sealed.

All of this looks obvious. But its plausibility diminishes on closer inspection. All parts of the prologue—monologue, hymn and prayer, dialogue, servant's prayer—have elements which make them unsuitable for the purpose which, on the usual view, they were meant to serve. It is clear that Hippolytus is doomed. But it is a different question whether we are intended by the dramatist to regard his death as deserved. Hippolytus can be made culpable if he is shown refusing to reverence something that he ought to reverence, something above himself, as the gods are thought to be. Yet the whole of the prologue blurs the contrast between humanity and divinity by the statements that are made about the gods and men. And the distance between gods and men is diminished from both sides by the actions of the characters: Aphrodite is made to appear all too human, while Hippolytus approaches the divine.

In her first two lines Aphrodite declares that her power and renown are great among mortals as among the gods. The parallelism between these two realms is made explicit in 7–8 where she explains that in honoring those who honor her and tripping up those who are proud to her she is acting on a motive (the desire for *τιμή*) that the gods share with humans. Such an assertion tends to reduce the distance between gods and mortals. It has other effects as well. Self-justification, even where the plea is a valid one, tends to have an effect opposite to its intention: *qui s'excuse, s'accuse*. But in this case the excuse is not very good. The pardonable desire for *τιμή* will scarcely serve to justify her murderous course of action. Shortly thereafter we also learn that she will use an innocent woman to accomplish her end. Phaedra is no slughter of Aphrodite: indeed she even builds the goddess a

9. Attempts have been made to remove it by emendation. See Barrett, "*Hippolytos*," ad loc., who argues decisively against Murray's conjecture, printed in the OCT. Mahaffy and Bury, "*Hippolytus*," ad loc., change the order of the lines in an attempt to lessen the contrast between the two senses of the word by having as many lines as possible fall between them. They also posit a lacuna. *Alii alia*.

temple.¹⁰ (Contrast what Aphrodite says in 5.) The goddess' attempt at self-exculpation in 48–50 is even more incriminating than her earlier one. To worship such a creature might be an act of prudence. It could never be a moral duty.

The next section of the prologue, the hymn and prayer, transports us into an entirely different moral climate, whose beauty is admitted by all. Hippolytus' selfless devotion makes the most complete contrast to the unattractive figure who preceded him on the stage. He bids his men sing a hymn to the heavenly child of Zeus, in whose care they are. These last words point at once to the mutual tie that binds worshiper and deity. This tie is the basis for the hymn that follows, a hymn full of the superlatives and honorific epithets that the language of love shares with that of religion.¹¹ This hymn restores to the idea of divinity the beauty that Aphrodite has taken away. The adoration it expresses is exquisitely intense and goes far to convince us of the worthiness of its object.

Hippolytus' prayer intensifies this mood even more. His simple act of devotion, garlanding the goddess' statue, combines in itself images of growth, wildness, springtime, and water, together with the moral and religious notions of *aidos* and undefiled sanctity. Here the poet is clearly using all his verbal magic to weave a spell. It is hard to believe that he does not mean us to surrender to it and that he intended his first audience to maintain an attitude of ironic reserve toward his hero.¹²

To find irony where there is none is a task requiring only determination, and the determined have found it in this scene too. Barrett, while admitting the beauty of Hippolytus' existence, speaks of its "divorce from the common life."¹³ Grube speaks of his "isolation from the rest of humanity."¹⁴ It is hard to know how to reply to objections like these. The critic sees and condemns the very quality which the poet intends him to see and admire. Hippolytus' life is not common, not ordinary or widely shared, but extraordinary. To the goddess Artemis he stands in a unique relation, not only in his own opinion (which might be a personal delusion) but in Aphrodite's as well.¹⁵ He has the singular privilege

10. It is possible that Euripides has deliberately suppressed grounds Aphrodite might have had for persecuting Phaedra. Cf. the scholiast on *Hipp.* 47, who explains Aphrodite's grudge against the Heliads, of whom Phaedra is one. If Euripides knew this story, he probably omitted it in order to make the persecution of Phaedra even more of an injustice.

11. A. J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964), pp. 10–18, gives a sympathetic portrait of the religious sentiments presented in the hymn and the prayer.

12. Barrett "*Hippolytos*," p. 172, speaks of "the first hint . . . of a remoteness and intolerance that make that life inadequate." He goes on to talk about the dangers of a puritanism "that belongs to every age." But in the course of that discussion he makes it clear that in fifth-century Greek society the "puritan" qualities Hippolytus exhibits are rare in isolation and unexampled in combination. How then are the audience to take the hint Barrett detects? They have scarcely ever seen anyone who could be called a puritan. Still less have they had their lives warped or circumscribed by a puritan set of values. To say that they would not be as alive as we are to the dangers of puritanism is to understate the matter drastically. Under these circumstances the poet's hints will have to be somewhat broader.

13. "*Hippolytos*," p. 173.

14. *The Drama of Euripides*² (New York, 1961), p. 178.

15. I emphasize this point because the tendency in the modern literature is to speak as if Hippolytus' opinion of his preeminence were mere conceit, as if he were an ordinary worshiper of the goddess who had an exaggerated notion of his own importance to her. Barrett, for example, compares his requirement of innate purity with the requirements contemporary religion placed on its adherents ("*Hippolytos*," pp. 172–73). This is implicitly to equate Hippolytus with the ordinary

(84, 17; cf. 12) of constant association with Artemis, an association that is greater than mortal (19). Aphrodite had used a single pronoun (20 *τοῦτοις*) to refer to them both as a pair. Hippolytus is no ordinary worshiper but the favored companion of Artemis. The similarity of his nature to hers, his preeminent chastity, fits him to be, in all but the carnal sense, her consort.¹⁶ And if he makes unusual claims for himself, that is no cause for wonder. A man would be mad to claim Zeus as his father—unless his name were Heracles.¹⁷

Hippolytus is blessed above ordinary mortals, and to this blessing he responds with extraordinary devotion, self-forgetful benevolence, and thankfulness. He requests nothing for himself except the continuance of Artemis' presence: 87 is a prayer not for long life (which would be ironic in view of Aphrodite's prediction) but that he may end his life in the company of Artemis, a wish which is granted. While Aphrodite sinks to the level of a mortal and below, Hippolytus, though mortal, rises to the level of the divine. Even his death, the one irreducible fact of his humanity, joins him to Artemis. The prologue thus shows that the ties of loyalty between goddess and mortal are real and mutual. For Hippolytus, they are the meaning of his existence. It is hard to see what could (or should) induce him to abandon them.

When we come to the dialogue with the servant, we are in a better position to explain the oddities we have noticed. The servant wants Hippolytus to worship Aphrodite, at least in some token fashion. Hippolytus refuses. This seems a clear-cut case of impiety, but another interpretation is possible. For the very arguments the servant uses to urge submission tend, though he does not realize it, to support Hippolytus' refusal. The analogy between men and gods is intended by the servant as an argument for submission. (We have seen that it does not work very well as such.) Yet his words emphasize ironically what we have already seen. Men and gods have analogous loves and hatreds. Aphrodite deals with her enemies in all too human fashion, while Artemis and Hippolytus share a common life of hunting in the wild, a friendship which places them on nearly the same level. Men and gods are not always separated by such a vast gulf that every man must worship every god, for (the argument about *τὸ σεμνόν*) in both men and gods moral qualities make a difference. Those who have earned hatred by their overbearing behavior ought to be hated, whether mortal or god. Those who deserve our loyalty by their

worshiper of Euripides' own day. But the protagonist of this play is not Strepsiades or Dicaeopolis but Hippolytus, a quasi-hero at whose tomb regular offerings are made. That his position is not that of an ordinary mortal is made clear at the beginning of the play. Even his enemy recognizes it. Artemis' appearance at the end only confirms it. On assimilation to divinity in Greek literature, see D. Roloff, *Gottähnlichkeit, Vergöttlichung und Erhöhung zu seligem Leben* (Berlin, 1970), esp. ch. 2.

16. Aphrodite hints (17) that they have a degree of intimacy usually found only between lovers. For her, *παρθένω ἑνῶν αἰεί* makes, one might suppose, a disagreeable oxymoron.

17. We must begin to take into account the profound differences between ourselves and the Greeks of the classical period where speaking of oneself is concerned. To speak of one's own attainments directly and without apology is, in our culture, usually an offense against good manners and not infrequently regarded as evidence of more serious moral failings. But things were otherwise in pagan antiquity, not only in Homer (where a certain naive *praeconium sui* may be thought to be in order) but also as late as Aristotle, who shocks modern readers by his characteristically Greek notions of the virtue of *megaloψυχία*, and Virgil, whose hero introduces himself complacently as *pious Aeneas*. For Hippolytus to dwell in prayer on the uniqueness of his nature and his favored position called forth no disapproval or ironic smiling in a fifth-century audience. This is not arrogance but merely a recognition of the facts. Our own attitude in this regard is profoundly influenced by such New Testament texts as Luke 18:9-14.

friendliness ought to have it. And by a slip of the servant's tongue Aphrodite is placed where she has already been shown to be, in the first of these two groups. The peculiarities of the servant's arguments now have their sufficient explanation.

The analogy between men and gods has other implications. Loyalty to companions is necessarily exclusive, whether these are human or divine: one cannot be the loyal friend of everyone. And so in 104 the servant's objections are fittingly answered out of his own mouth: ἀλλοισιν ἄλλος θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μέλει. The analogy holds. Just as one cannot be an object of care to every man, so one cannot be to every god. Special ties exist, and we cannot pretend indifference to them.¹⁸

The prologue as a whole thus serves to show that Hippolytus' opposition to Aphrodite is real and considered and that (for him at least) it is justified. Worship of Aphrodite would be the betrayal of his allegiance to Artemis and her favor to him, all that gives meaning to his existence. Given the character of Aphrodite as it was shown in the monologue, submission to her might be a prudential act, but such prudence befits only a slave, as the servant himself unwittingly makes clear.¹⁹ The servant's last line reminds us with forcible irony of the contrast we have seen between the goddess of love and her mortal opponent; "the gods ought to be wiser than mortals." Even he will not say that they are.

Those who agree that Hippolytus, though mortal, occupies a different level of existence from his servant will welcome M. L. West's demonstration that 88 means "Lord—(I call you thus) for one ought to call one's masters gods." West's arguments, made on grammatical grounds, are, it seems to me, unanswerable.²⁰ It is now possible to see why what must be true on grammatical grounds makes sense in dramatic terms. The servant's purpose in speaking this way is to try by

18. Note that μέλει makes the same point as μελόμεσθα in 60. Barrett's "Each has his likes, in men and gods alike" ignores the force of the verb.

19. See 115. (The words ὡς πρέπει δούλους λέγειν surely modify what follows rather than what precedes.) The Christian virtue of humility and use of δοῦλος should not be allowed to infect our reading of this line. If a Greek of the fifth century says that a mode of speech befits a slave, that will scarcely serve to commend its use by free men.

It should be noted that the Nurse, who has a similar status, gives similar advice to Phaedra (submit to Aphrodite) on similar grounds of prudence and at the cost of an analogous disloyalty. Both Phaedra and Hippolytus reject prudential advice and choose principle. Neither values long life per se (cf. 87, noted above, with 401–2 and 426–27). Contrast the Nurse at 191–97.

20. See "Euripides, *Hippolytus* 88," *CR* 15 (1965): 156, the reply by J. Glucker, "Euripides, *Hippolytus* 88," *CR* 16 (1966): 17, and West's rejoinder, "Euripides, *Hippolytus* 88, Again," *CR* 16 (1966): 274–75. West makes two points. On Barrett's interpretation ("*Hippolytus*," p. 176), the servant "pointedly refrains from addressing him with the customary *δεσποσα*, so that he can insist that this humblest of addresses is the privilege of the gods," for "with *δεσποσα* the worshiper proclaims his humility as that of slave towards master." West points out the contradiction here: "If *δεσπότης* is applied to the gods in order to suggest the master-slave relationship, it cannot at the same time be inappropriate to the master-slave relationship on the ground that it is only fit for the gods."

His second point is that whenever a parenthesis with γάρ explains a vocative, it makes clear the appropriateness of the form of address used, not the inappropriateness of some other form of address. He cites Eur. *Hel.* 560 and Soph. *El.* 1361. We may add Eur. *Med.* 465–66, *Andr.* 64 (cf. also 56), *Hec.* 736, 1114, *HF* 1113, *IT* 827, *Hel.* 857, 1193, *Bacch.* 1316–17 (cf. also *Hclld.* 181 and Wilamowitz' conjecture); Soph. *OT* 334, 1071, *OC* 891; Pl. *Ap.* 40A. These all confirm, as West says ("*Hippolytus* 88, Again," p. 275), that "in a line beginning ἀναξ—θεοῦς γάρ . . . θεοῦς should explain ἀναξ." The attempt by J. Diggle, "Euripides, *Hippolytus* 88–89," *CR* 17 (1967): 133–34, to make the γάρ anticipatory, explaining what follows (as in Eur. *Alc.* 163–64, 280–81) does not convince me. He translates, "Lord, since it is essential to call the gods our masters, will you listen to a good piece of advice from me [on this topic of the relation between gods and ourselves]?" The supplement is not obvious; even if it were, it is hard to see how 88 can furnish a reason for 89.

his abjectness to win a favorable hearing for his proposal. But he unintentionally suggests Hippolytus' closeness to divinity and the vast gulf that separates him from the servant. Hippolytus is fittingly addressed as divine since that is the sphere to which he belongs.²¹

DAVID KOVACS
University of Virginia

21. Before leaving this scene, I would like to argue for a transposition of lines in 101–9. This transposition does not affect the preceding argument about the meaning of the scene; it merely makes the dialogue tidier. As Barrett ("*Hippolytos*," p. 180) points out, 105 is intended to end the conversation but does not, while 107 is not intended to but does. Gomperz, cited by Barrett, proposed to have the couplets 104–5 and 106–7 change places. This is simple and easily accounted for, especially in stichomythy where every other line begins with the same symbol. And it restores excellent sense to the argument as a whole, as a paraphrase makes clear: *Ser.* (101): You do not address Aphrodite. *Hipp.* (102): I greet her from afar for I am pure. *Ser.* (103): But she is a great goddess. *Hipp.* (106): I don't like gods who are worshiped at night. *Ser.* (107): That makes no difference. You've got to worship (all) the gods. *Hipp.* (104): Not so; as with mortal companions, I must make a choice. *Ser.* (105): Good luck to you—and more sense. *Hipp.* (108): Servants, proceed, etc.

Barrett's objections are flimsy: "104 is the answer to 103." But 106 is just as good an answer to 103, and 104 is a far better answer to 107. "The more out-spoken 106 must come later than 104." Only if you imagine Hippolytus getting progressively angrier. But there is nothing in the text to suggest this. Gomperz' order deserves to be printed as the text.

WORDPLAY AT *AMPHITRUO* 327–30

ME. illic homo a me sibi malam rem arcessit iumento suo.
so. non equidem ullum habeo iumentum. ME. onerandus est pugnis probe.
so. lassus sum hercle e naui, ut uectus huc sum: etiam nunc nauseo;
uix incedo inanis, ne ire posse cum onere existumes.

[Plaut. *Amph.* 327–30]

These lines are spoken in the midst of a series of wordplays in which Sosia interprets the metaphorical expressions of Mercury literally.¹ The wordplays on *iumento–iumentum* (327, 328) and *onerandus–onere* (328, 330) have been noted previously, but it has gone unnoticed that the frame of reference has changed from an animal of burden in line 328 to a ship of burden in line 330. Mercury's metaphorical use of *iumento suo* (327) is picked up by Sosia's literal disclaimer that he has no beast of burden (328). When Mercury attempts to continue the *iumentum* metaphor on the basis of Sosia's reply, the literal-minded Sosia switches Mercury's use of *onerandus* (328) to refer to the loading of ships. Overhearing the word, *onerandus*, Sosia is suddenly reminded of how tired he is after his voyage and how seasick he still feels. Sosia is thus "empty" because he has vomited his food, and this sense of *inanis* is combined with the antithesis of *inanis* and *cum onere* to suggest the loaded and unloaded cargo ship.² *Inanis*, then, in line 330 has

1. See P. Siewert, *Plautus in "Amphitruone" fabula quomodo exemplar Graecum transtulerit* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 15–18, esp. p. 15: "Nec vero minus affabre artificioseque nec minus libere Plautus ipse plerisque eorum locorum orationem conformavit, quibus uni vocabulo duplex vis tribuitur aut quolibet modo in nominibus propriis vel vocabulis aliis luditur." Cf. also W. B. Sedgwick, *Plautus: "Amphitruo"* (Manchester, 1960), p. 85.

2. I would like to thank the anonymous referee for drawing my attention to the connection between *etiam nunc nauseo* and *inanis*.