EURIPIDES *HIPPOLYTUS* 1120–1150

THE difficulty in the apostrophe of the τάλαινα μᾶτερ with ἔτεκες ἀνόνατα (1144–5) has been noticed by commentators. So Barrett (*ad loc.*): '. . . this cannot mean that the Amazon οὐδὲν ὀνήσεται from Hipp. now that he is exiled: in all the forms of her legend . . . she meets a violent death at a time which cannot be long after Hipp.'s birth, and it is inconceivable that Eur. should mean his audience to think of her as still alive in Trozen or Athens.'

What seems to have passed unnoticed is that there are, in this choral ode (the triad 1120–50), two other passages which also suffer from at least prima facie incongruities with details of the story well known to the audience:

1. 1135–6: μοῦσα δ' ἄυπνος ὑπ' ἄντυγι χορδᾶν λήξει πατρῷον ἀνὰ δόμον· Two difficulties:

(*a*) Phaedra's recent death has already, at least for the period of mourning, put an end to every kind of music in Theseus' halls (e.g.: ἐν δόμοις βοή 790).

(*b*) The μοῦσα ἄυπνος which is to cease because of Hippolytus' exile[1] must have been produced by him or in connection with him[2] as long as he was in his father's halls—a description hardly consistent with that of the austere young hunter depicted in the play (e.g. as concluding a day of hunting by exercising his horses, 109–12).

2. 1140–1: νυμφιδία δ' ἀπόλωλε φυγᾷ σᾷ λέκτρων ἄμιλλα κούραις. Bridal rivalry for the bed of Hippolytus was hardly to be expected considering that his rejection of sex was the mainspring of the action (14) and that, in the course of the play, he repeatedly avowed both his puritanism (106, 1003–6) and his contempt for women (616 ff., 664 ff.).

Three such passages in one choral song seem to indicate a plan, and although the discrepancy in every single one can be—differently—explained away,[3] the question to be asked may be rather why the poet introduced them, i.e. what purpose of his may have been served by the contradictory information included in them. Observation of the contradictions themselves may help toward a possible solution.

[1] φυγᾷ σᾷ (1140), mentioned only with the last of the series of activities to cease, is to be understood as the cause for the cessation of all of them, just as οὐκέτι (1131), which opens the first, serves as the motto for the whole series.

[2] It is the second in the series of the four activities. The first, chariot-riding (1131–3), is explicitly ascribed to Hippolytus (ἐπιβάσῃ, 1131); the third, garlanding (1137–8), implicitly (cf. e.g. 73 ff.); of the fourth, bridal rivalry (1140–1), he is the object.

[3] For 1144–5 see e.g. the solution Barrett offers; he also quotes that of Maas. For 1135–6 it can be argued (a) that the poet passed over Phaedra's death and its consequences because this choral ode deals with the fate of Hippolytus exclusively; or that it is not a temporary pause in the music that is referred to but a permanent change; and (b) that it may be somehow possible to refer the μοῦσα ἄυπνος to Hippolytus' hymns to Artemis; or to maintain that what is not mentioned need not therefore be non-existent: Hippolytus may have found time for music when relaxing at night from his hunting and chariot-riding. To 1140–1 it can be retorted that girls are notorious for pining away in romantic dreams just for the men who reject them.

Still, while every single passage can be explained away, for all of them together an extraordinary amount of explanation would be needed.

What these three passages have in common is that they describe what would normally be expected to happen when a brilliant young prince leaves his paternal home under sad circumstances: in the palace the music of merriment will cease, the would-be brides will be bereft of the object of their rivalry, and pitiable will be his mother—being young he will have a mother—who will have no further enjoyment of her child.

'What would normally be expected to happen' in a given situation is what is typical of that situation; and what is typical is automatically assumed to apply also to the particular case unless denied or contradicted.

Careful examination of this ode seems to show that Euripides intentionally evaded every possible contradiction, both by (*a*) the selection of his details and (*b*) their arrangement.

(*a*) Choosing from the various data of the plot he included in this song only such as could, while describing Hippolytus, also refer to any brilliant youth belonging to a society for whose ἄριστοι the ideal pastimes were hunting and chariot-riding (1126–34). The connection of such a young man with the divine patroness of these sports (1130, 1138–9) would be assumed as natural. His devotion to her would be viewed as admirable. What was peculiar to Hippolytus' devotion was its exclusiveness. But this is not even hinted at.

Omission may be as significant as inclusion. Therefore it seems important to point out also that neither the persons nor the places referred to in this song are called by their names or described in a way which would tie them down to the Here and Now of the plot as staged. The song is about 'the most conspicuous—or the brightest—star Ἑλλανίας . . . Ἀθάνας[1] (1121–2); his father (1124) and mother (1144–5) are referred to only as such, not by name. The place which the hero is leaving is his fatherland or paternal country[2] (ἐκ πατρίας γᾶς 1148); he is on his way to an undefined other land (ἄλλαν ἐπ' αἶαν 1125). The only two items which seem to be particular and therefore lend an air of reality to the whole description, namely the breed of the horses exercised by the youth (1131: πώλων Ἐνετᾶν) and the location of their training (1132: τὸν ἀμφὶ Λίμνας τρόχον) are in fact generic: Enetic (= Venetian) was as good as synonym for 'excellent' when applied to horses;[3] and 'race-track by the mere' would suit many of the race-tracks of mountainous Greece.

That such vagueness was not necessitated by conventions of style can be inferred from comparison with the choral ode about Phaedra in this very play (752–75). There the heroine is defined by the chorus as their[4] queen (755) who came on board a Cretan boat (752–3) from Crete (757) to Athens (759), succumbed to an unholy passion (765) and is expected to commit suicide (770)—none of which would fit anybody but the Phaedra of this play. The comparison is all the more instructive as the two songs occupy similar positions in the development of the plot: both follow upon the final exit of Phaedra and Hippolytus to the doom envisaged for them by the chorus.

[1] Whatever that means. See Barrett *ad loc.* See also H. Lloyd-Jones in *J.H.S.* lxxxv (1965), 171, and C. W. Willink, *C.Q.* N.S. xviii (1968), 42 (where the reference to *I.A.* 194 is based on error).

[2] Trozen, or Athens, or both? See Barrett pp. 32–4.

[3] See R. C. Beaumont, *J.H.S.* lvi (1936), 191.

[4] In 1120–50 the chorus do not explain in what relationship they stand to the hero, or why they are so involved in his fate. Such an explanation would have led to exclusive identification of the hero of the song with Hippolytus.

(*b*) The three passages 1135–6, 1140–1, and 1144–5, which seem to be incongruous with details of the plot well known to the audience (see above) are worked into this song in such a way that they perform at one and the same time different functions in various artistic patterns:

The music and the bridal rivalry (1135–6 and 1140–1) make up the second and the fourth (and last) of the periods of the antistr. (1131–41), all of which describe activities doomed to cease because of the hero's departure; they are framed by *οὐκέτι*[1] (1131) with the first which serves as motto, and *φυγᾷ σᾷ*[2] (1140) with the last which serves as reason, for all. The first and the third deal with chariot-riding[3] (1131–4) and devotion to Artemis[4] (1137–9), both of which are occupations characteristic of the hero of this tragedy: for chariot-riding cf. 110–12, for *στέφανοι* to Artemis see 73. Moreover, the use of specific names with the first activity (the chariot-riding: names of breed of horses, and of location of race-track, 1131–2) adds to the verisimilitude of the whole series.

From one point of view, the second, third, and fourth period form one group as against the first: the hero of the song is the grammatical subject of the first only (1131: *ἐπιβάσῃ*); the subsequent three have different subjects (1135: *μοῦσα*; 1138: *ἀνάπαυλαι*; 1141: *ἅμιλλα*).

From another point of view, the first occupation is linked to the fourth, the second to the third: In the first and the fourth the hero of the song is addressed (1131: *ἐπιβάσῃ*; 1140: *φυγᾷ σᾷ*), in the second and the third he is not mentioned: the music will stop; Artemis' *ἀνάπαυλαι* be without garlands. Since it is common knowledge that the unmentioned agent of the third activity was Hippolytus—it is he who used to supply the garlands—it is automatically inferred that he was responsible also for the music in his father's halls.

Viewed again from a different point, one steady, ever-increasing movement seems to flow through the four descriptions, from the prospective future of the first (1131: *οὐκέτι . . . ἐπιβάσῃ*) and the second (1136: *λήξει*) through the verbless and therefore time- and tenseless third (1137: *ἀστέφανοι . . . ἀνάπαυλαι*) to the inevitable finality of the perfect in the fourth (1140: *ἀπόλωλε*).

The third passage, the apostrophe of the mother (1144–5), makes up the second of the four periods of the extremely excited epode.[5] It follows upon a personal statement of the chorus's own emotional reaction to the misfortune of the hero[6] (1142–4) and precedes another such pairing of a personal

[1] *οὐκέτι* opening the antistr. repeats *οὐκέτι* opening the str., 1120.

[2] *φυγᾷ σᾷ* in the last period of the antistr. (1140) is echoed by *σᾷ δυστυχίᾳ* (1142) in the first period of the epode.

[3] Chariot-riding in the first period of the antistr. follows upon hunting which makes up the last period of the str., 1126–30, repeating the order mentioned by Hippolytus in 109–112.

[4] This period too is connected to the last period of the str., Artemis being referred to in both (1138–9: *κόρας . . . Λατοῦς*; 1130: *Δίκτυννα*).

[5] There is asyndeton throughout, but for the *δέ* in the very beginning (1142) which connects the epode with the antistr. (on another connection see above, n. 2).

[6] This repeats the pattern of the first str., where the apostrophe of nature (the haunts where Hippolytus used to hunt in the train of Artemis, 1126 ff.) follows upon the chorus's declaration of their personal reaction to the situation (1120: *οὐκέτι . . . καθαρὰν φρέν' ἔχω κτλ.*). The obvious difference between str. and epode is that while the reason for the chorus's agitation is condensed to *σᾷ δυστυχίᾳ* in the epode (1142), it is elaborated in a long causal clause (1121–5) in the str. (on some functions of which see p. 234 n. 3). In both str. and epode the apostrophe is consequent on the reason stated for the chorus's feelings: in the str. the haunts where the hero used to hunt are envisaged in a state of deprivation due to his departure (1125), in the epode pity for the mother is called up by the *δυστυχία* of the son.

statement of the chorus followed by an apostrophe (1146, 1148). The first apostrophe, that of the τάλαινα μâτερ (1144–5) is evoked by the δυστυχία of the son mentioned in the period before (1142); the second, that of the Graces[1] (1148), is evoked by the reproach of the gods (1146) upon which it follows.

Thus viewed, the third passage is worked into the epode as one of the two apostrophes[2] (= the second and the fourth periods of the epode).

It is also, by implication, linked to the period which precedes it: it is because of the δυστυχία of the son that the mother is said to have given birth ἀνόνατα.

The mother and the son are linked again, explicitly, by the use of the same adjective to designate both of them: 1144 τάλαινα, 1148 τὸν τάλαν'. This serves as another tie between the second period and the fourth; here the connection is with the question posed to the apostrophized Graces, which constitutes the finale of the triad[3] and the stasimon.

Viewed again from another aspect, a steady increase in pathos from period to period, marked by the exclamations interspersed between the different periods, unites all of them: from ὦ (1144) between the first and the second, through φεῦ (1145) between the second and the third, to twice-repeated ἰώ (1147) which introduces the fourth and last.

Thus viewed, the structure of this song is most artistically close-knit. The details which apply to the particular hero and the dramatic situation—selected and represented in a way which allows for general interpretation—and the incongruous details which convey a picture of an idealized prince are inextricably interwoven. Euripides seems to have aimed at making his audience temporarily suspend awareness of these contradictions so as to enable them to accept all the details stated. His purpose may have been to add the ideal as a different dimension, coexistent as it were with that of the specific plot. The theme of this choral ode would thus be simultaneously the tragic

[1] The Graces are implicated either as natural guardians of youth (in Athens apparently especially of male youth; their names appear in the list of Ἵστορες θεοί of the Oath of the Athenian Ephebi. Tod, in *Gr. Hist. Inscr.* ii. 306, remarks that although the inscription dates from the fourth century, both the vocabulary of the oath formula and the names of the witnesses attest its high antiquity. For other connections of the Graces with Ephebi see *P.W.*, s.v. Charites) since all that is radiant and growing belongs to their domain; and they are therefore blamed for not having prevented the hero's departure; or, since they are closely connected with Aphrodite (in graphic art they appear as her subordinate companions, see *P.W.*, ibid.), they vaguely represent her and are therefore by implication accused of having brought about his expulsion (τί . . . πέμπετε . . . ; 1148–50) from home and country in spite of his innocence (οὐδὲν ἄτας αἴτιον, 1149).

[2] Unlike the second apostrophe (1148), this is introduced by ὦ, which it has in common with 1126 and 1127, the apostrophes of nature in the first str.; on which see p. 233 n. 6).

[3] In this fourth and final period the hero is again spoken of (and not addressed as he is in the antistr. and the beginning of the epode), thus returning to the way he was introduced in the first strophe. When this is noticed, his designation by τὸν τάλαν' becomes all the more poignant, as it comes as contrast to his first appearance as 'brightest star' (1123). The two passages (str.: 1121–5, and epode: 1148–50) complement each other: in both the hero is envisaged as on his way, but the goal is mentioned only in the str. (1125 ἄλλαν ἐπ' αἶαν), the starting-point only in the epode (ἐκ πατρίας γᾶς, 1148 τῶνδ' ἀπ' οἴκων, 1150). Of the two descriptions given to the starting-point, the one, ἐκ πατρίας γᾶς, recalls the cause for the hero's departure stated in the str., ἐκ πατρὸς ὀργᾶς (1124), whereas the other, τῶνδ' ἀπ' οἴκων, the very last words of the whole song, links the stasimon back to the Here and Now of stage and action, and is taken up by τόνδ' and πρὸς δόμους in 1151–2.

hero of the play and Splendid Youth personified; not as a representation of the one by the other, but as diverse aspects of the same.

Moreover, by the cumulative effect of all the details almost threnodic quality is attained. It may be worth while to pay attention to the location of the choral song between Hippolytus' exit to exile (1101) and the arrival of the messenger with the announcement 'Hippolytus is (as good as) no more' (1162). This announcement does not come as a surprise: The condemnation to exile (897 ff.) follows upon (and indeed was introduced as an alternative for) the prayer to Poseidon to kill Hippolytus before the day is over (887–90). Although from 897 on, exile only is envisaged,[1] the curse was there all the time, lurking in the background.[2] The chorus fits in with this, carrying on a double mood: While ostensibly describing exile,[3] this song about 'no more' at the same time conveys the impression of eternal farewell. Except for the framing allusions to exile[4] and the middle statement thereof (1125, 1148–50; 1140), the song could be a threnos. The three passages which started our inquiry, namely the cessation of music in the paternal halls, the end of the maidens' rivalry, and the apostrophe of the pitiable mother, would ideally suit a dirge for a youth who died still unwed.

Viewed in this way, these three passages seem to have an additional function: Not only does the hero of the play become in them also an ideal incarnation of male youth, but the choral song too is now a farewell song, now a lament.[5] The ode evokes different but never mutually exclusive emotional responses in each and all of its aspects, and immensely intensifies the pathos of the situation through the interplay of its various coexistent meanings. This achievement is most likely to have been Euripides' ultimate aim when he introduced these prima facie incongruous details and worked them so subtly into the structure of this choral song.

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[1] See 973 ff.; 1043; 1048 f.; 1052; 1056; 1087 ff.; 1093–4. Death as punishment is proposed and rejected in 1043–7 ff.

[2] The curse is indeed understood to have caused Hippolytus' death: 1167 ff.

[3] It is referred to three times: in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the triad; of these, only 1140 uses plain language, *φυγᾷ σᾷ*; 1125 and 1148–50 paraphrase.

[4] *ἄλλαν ἐπ' αἶαν* which is stated as goal (1125) could be taken also as euphemism for Hades' realm. Cf. Pl. *Ap.* 40c: ". . . *τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον*".

[5] It is sung at the very moment at which the curse is being fulfilled.