

envy, disappointment, etc.²² And so, at *Thes.* 148, Agathon asserts that he is not dressed as he is as a result of any moral or intellectual laxity. Rather it is a deliberately contrived feature of his craft. *χρὴ γὰρ ποιητὴν ἄνδρα κτλ.*

But there is a difficulty with the idiom *ἀπὸ γνώμης* that arises out of the ambiguity of the preposition and which may have been responsible for the corruption. Just as *ἀπ' ὀμμάτων* can mean both 'by sight' and '(away) from the eyes',²³ so *ἀπὸ γνώμης* can mean both 'on the basis of considered judgement' and 'away from good judgement'. This last is Jebb's rendering of the phrase at *Soph. Trach.* 389, where we read *καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης λέγεις*. Now, it is true that an attempt has recently been made to alter the text to *καὶ γὰρ οὖν ἀπὸ γνώμης λέγεις*.²⁴ But there is an exact parallel at Pausanias 7.1.4, where *οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης* means 'not contrary to the wishes (of Ion)', and we must acknowledge that the expression *ἀπὸ γνώμης* can legitimately mean either 'on the basis of' or 'contrary to' *γνώμη*. It is likely, then, that *ἅμα γνώμη* at *Thes.* 148 has its origin in some marginal or interlinear note introduced by someone who thought he was being helpful.

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²² I find the expression *ἀπὸ γνώμης* also at Philo, *De migr. Abr.* 225 and Hesychius, s.v. *ἀχρεῖον ἰδόν*. In addition, we frequently find the phrase expanded by the addition of some attribute to *γνώμη*: Eur. *Ion* 1313; Thuc. 3.92.1, 4.68.3 (see P. Huart, *ΓΝΩΜΗ chez Thucydide et ses contemporains* [Paris, 1973], p. 148); Dem. 18.161; D.S. frag. Bk. 27 (6.366.9–12 Fischer) and frag. Bk. 29 (6.382.8 Fischer); Cassius Dio Bk. 1 frag. 5.11, Bk. 3 frag. 12.10, 38.18.2, 38.42.4, 42.53.5, 46.52.3, 48.45.1, 60.31.2.

²³ Aesch. *Ag.* 988; *Soph. OC* 15; Eur. *Hec.* 240. Compare also *ἀπ' ὅψεως*, 'on the basis of external appearance' (Lysias 16.19), with *ἀπ' ὀφθαλμών*, 'out of sight' (Hom. *Il.* 23.53).

²⁴ By Emmanuel Viketos, *Hermes* 113 (1985), 494–5.

WHOSE LAUGHTER DOES PENTHEUS FEAR? (EUR. *BA.* 842)

ΠΕ. πᾶν κρείσσον ὥστε μὴ ᾿γγελᾶν βάκχας ἐμοί.

842

᾿γγελᾶν Pierson, Reiske: *γγελᾶν* P

The Aldine editor, no doubt put off in part by the expression *πᾶν κρείσσον ὥστε*, had the text printed as given by P (the sole witness for this part of the play), but punctuated with commas after *κρείσσον* and *βάκχας*, so that *ἐμοί* could go with *πᾶν κρείσσον*. According to Elmsley,¹ it was Musgrave who removed the comma after *βάκχας*, adducing *I.T.* 276 to show *γελᾶω* taking a dative. But, continues Elmsley, the simple *γελᾶω* in this and other examples is taking a dative of the thing, never of the person. Accordingly he prints Pierson's easy emendation *᾿γγελᾶν*, proposed independently by Reiske and printed almost simultaneously with Elmsley by Matthiae. The resulting reading has sufficiently satisfied all editors from then until the present day; there is not one, as far as I am aware, who does not print it. In our century the line has not been the object of any controversy.

As early as 1790, however, it was observed by Jacobs² that it is not the Bacchae

¹ P. Elmsley, *Euripidis Bacchae* (Leipzig, 1822), *ad loc.*; I was not able to see the earlier edition (Oxford, 1821), but the second is the *editio auctior* anyway.

² F. Jacobs, *Animadversiones in Euripidis tragoedias* (Gotha, 1790), according to the citation in C. Kopff's new Teubner edition (Leipzig, 1982); Elmsley, however, quotes the conjecture as coming from Jacobs' *Exercitationes criticae in scriptores veteres* (Leipzig, 1796). I have seen neither.

whose mockery Pentheus should fear, but the Theban citizenry; accordingly he proposed tentatively *Θήβας* for *βάκχας*. A century later Wecklein was toying with the same possibility, as well as suggesting *ἄστούς*.³ As explanations of our text these guesses did not convince even their proposers; nevertheless the reasoning that prompted them is right.⁴

Pentheus is about to arm and march against the Bacchae in the mountains, when Dionysos suddenly proposes to him the opportunity of seeing them instead. Pentheus is instantly eager, and his eventual agreement is a foregone conclusion; but he has still to be wooed. The movement of the scene is this: on Pentheus' side, objections to the plan and inquiries about its details; on Dionysos', immediate satisfaction of each objection or inquiry in turn. The exchange is stichomythic and tightly constructed; it is drawn out only long enough to make clear Dionysos' power over Pentheus, and for Pentheus (and the audience) to hear the plan in full detail.

Pentheus' hesitation is based on the central feature of the plan – he must dress as a woman. At first he is outraged (822); then he yields immediately to Dionysos' justification, that the Bacchae will kill him if they see him as a man (823–4). A moment later, he hesitates again, pleading *αἰδώς* (828); again he capitulates: before all else, he agrees, he must spy on the Bacchae (838). A third time qualms about donning female dress overcome him: 'How will I go through the city *Καδμείους λαθών*?' (840) 'We'll take deserted streets, and I will guide you,' replies Dionysos. Once again Dionysos has answered an objection of Pentheus', and once again a line is required in which Pentheus lets us know that he is satisfied with Dionysos' reply.

In this context 842 as we have it is a jarring *non sequitur*. It was fear of the *citizens'* laughter, not the Bacchae's, that prompted Pentheus' objection at 840, and it is *this* fear which he should now say Dionysos has allayed. Moreover, what our text has Pentheus say is not a meaningful response to what precedes: the route taken through the city will have no bearing on whether the Bacchae laugh at Pentheus when he reaches the mountains. Indeed, it makes nonsense for Pentheus to express any fear whatever of the Bacchae's laughter. Assuming that they see him at all – and Dionysos and he have expressly agreed that he is going *ἐμφανώς*, not *λάθρα* (817–18) – either they will see him as a woman, in which case there would be no reason for them to laugh at him, or they will see him as a man, in which case they will kill him (823). Thus Pentheus' fear of the Bacchae's laughter has no logical place.

Here are Dionysos' words after Pentheus goes inside to make his decision: *χρήζω δέ νιν γέλωτα Θηβαίοις ὀφλεῖν | γυναικόμορφον ἀγόμενον δι' ἄστεως* (854–5). These bear upon 840–2 by a relationship of inversion. Dionysos has told the opposite of the truth throughout: Pentheus will not see the Bacchae so much as be seen by them (1075), contradicting 811; they will hunt him in spite of his precautions, contradicting 817–18; the result will be bloodshed, not spying, contradicting 837–8; and Pentheus will be exposed to the laughter of the citizens, contradicting 840–1. All this is in keeping with the many reversals which take place during this scene and the next.⁵ Pentheus has publicly mocked Dionysos' effeminacy and had him hunted down,⁶ and now the

³ N. Wecklein, *Ausgewählte Tragödien des Euripides* (Leipzig, 1879); also R. Prinz and N. Wecklein, *Euripidis Fabulae* (Leipzig, 1898).

⁴ The author had suspected the line some years before learning of Wecklein's and Jacobs' earlier suspicions.

⁵ For a good list of these, see now C. Segal, 'The *Bacchae* as Metatragedy', in P. Burian, ed., *Directions in Euripidean Criticism* (Durham, 1985), 156–73; also B. Seidensticker, 'Comic Elements in Euripides' *Bacchae*', *AJPh* 99 (1978), 303–20.

⁶ Note especially 352–3, *ἐξιχνεύσατε τὸν θηλύμορφον*, which Dionysos is echoing here; also 235 and 453ff.

tables will be turned. Thus Pentheus' fear of the Bacchae's laughter has no thematic or structural place.⁷

There is also a more speculative, almost Frazerian argument. Pentheus' fate, from his change of clothing to his death on the mountain and transportation back to the city, may be thought of as somehow reflecting ritual, whether contemporary or embedded in the mythic sources; and mockery of Pentheus, but only while on his way out of the city, would be an appropriate part of that ritual.⁸ Jeering, mockery, and buffoonery are a common feature of Greek rituals, often during processions, and in particular during Dionysiac processions.⁹ Mockery is also a part of the expulsion from the city of a *pharmakos*, of which in a sense Pentheus is one (he dies for the sake of the city's failure to propitiate Dionysos voluntarily).¹⁰ But the sacrificer does not mock his victim. Thus it makes, as it were, cultural sense to speak of the Thebans mocking Pentheus, but not to speak of the Bacchae doing so. The point is confirmed indirectly by Nonnus, who devotes several lines (46.128ff.) to a description of the citizens turning out to view Pentheus as he passes through the city. It is true that viewing is not mocking; but this only shows that Nonnus is not merely elaborating Euripides. The passage may indicate a common mythic source of which Euripides is taking account; in any case the fact that Nonnus feels compelled to underline this moment suggests that Euripides might be at pains to do the same. 842 as it stands would subvert this aim.

The main purpose of this note – to call attention to the fact that a corrupt 842 is being heedlessly printed in our editions – is now accomplished; my intention is to urge emendation, not to pretend to be able to solve the difficulty. Still, as *Θήβας* and *ἀστούς* do seem unlikely sources of the MS *βάκχας*, one is led to wonder: granted that it is the Thebans' laughter which Pentheus fears, is there any way in which Pentheus might yet have spoken of Bacchae here, so as to give rise to the MS reading? There is one *βάκχη* highly germane to the context – Pentheus himself. This suggests that the trouble might be not with the verb *γελᾶν*, after all, but with its object; perhaps we ought to read something like, *πᾶν κρείσσον ὥστε μὴ γελᾶν βάκχην ἐμέ*, 'Anything but that [someone] should laugh at me for being a Bacchant'.

This reading is neat on several counts. It could explain our text; a well-meaning scholarly copyist, not expecting an accusative object, and seeing in *βάκχην* a corruption of the subject of the infinitive, altered the number of *βάκχην* and the case of *ἐμέ* accordingly.¹¹ The line itself is highly charged, in a not un-Euripidean manner.

⁷ Cf. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysos* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 118: 'It was the purpose of Dionysos to make Pentheus ridiculous and he achieves it.' But for this to work, Pentheus must fear such ridicule (else the punishment is no punishment), and from those to whom he will in fact appear ridiculous – the Thebans, as Dionysos says.

⁸ The classic argument for this, using the principles of comparative anthropology of the day, is A. G. Bather, 'The Problem of the *Bacchae*', *JHS* 14 (1894), 244–63; also C. Gallini, 'Il travestimento rituale di Penteo', *SMSR* 34 (1963), 211–28, and W. R. Halliday, 'A Note on Herodotus VI.83, and the *Hybristika*', *ABSA* 16 (1909–10), 212–19. Bather lists the second item of the ritual (after the transvestism) as, 'He is led through the middle of the town to be the laughing-stock of all Thebes', and calls such ritual mockery too familiar to need further discussion; there is no laughter in the later parts of his reconstructed ritual.

⁹ W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), pp. 104f. and 287: 'During the procession to Eleusis grotesquely masked figures sat at a critical narrow pass near the bridge... and insulted the passers-by. At Dionysian festivals wagons drove through the streets carrying masked figures who shouted abuse at everyone they passed in a proverbially coarse manner.'

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 82ff.

¹¹ For a parallel alteration compare 503, where an accusative *με καὶ Θήβας* after *καταφρονέω*, guaranteed by *Σ* *Frogs* 103 (and possibly P. Ant. 24), has been replaced with *μου καὶ Θήβης*.

The omission of a subject for the infinitive, which confused the copyist and renders the line slightly obscure, is well justified by its significant irony: Pentheus intends the Thebans as subject, but what he says is the equivalent of, 'Anything but that I should *be laughed at* as a Bacchant' – which accurately foreshadows what will happen, since the audience, rather than Thebans on the stage, will laugh at him in the next scene.¹² And just when sexual transformation is at issue, Pentheus refers to himself as a *female* bacchant (something else that might have helped to confuse the copyist).

The problem is to persuade oneself that Euripides could have given γελάω an accusative object. Of course one might weaken and settle for βάκχη γ' ἐμοί; but then we have resorted to the flimsy expedient of an inserted γε, and if Elmsley is right we must again emend the verb to γ' γελάω, so that the line contains two separate errors.¹³ But perhaps there is no need for this. *LSJ* give examples of γελάω + acc. from Xenophon and Aristophanes. It is true that in these examples the accusative objects are neuter pronouns; but they are true direct objects, a step beyond the internal accusative which 'can provide the first step towards transitivity'.¹⁴ Already during Euripides' lifetime the language was on its way towards admitting transitive use of verbs of emotion generally.¹⁵ Euripides himself shows this tendency at *Hipp.* 1339–40, τοὺς εὐσεβεῖς θνήσκοντας οὐ χαίρουσι – this involves a supplementary participle, but one might think of the proposed reading for 842 as involving a suppressed ὄντα. The closest Euripidean parallel is rather a good one: the very surprising καταγελάω + acc. at line 286 of our play. The compound is not the simple; but the example does suggest that Euripides may have been sporadically disposed, late in life, to feel the verb as transitive.¹⁶

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Note that this 'correction' took place early enough in the transmission to be shared by both L and P. This may point to the time of the 'correction' of 842 as well. That the scribe of P saw βάκχας ἐμοί in his exemplar is virtually certain, for he copies slavishly, and his errors are all due to rapidity and ignorance of meaning. See G. Zuntz, *An Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 115.

¹² Cf. Seidensticker, op. cit. (n. 5), p. 317: '[Detailed analysis would] show the gruesome and witty finesse with which Dionysos exposes Pentheus to the laughter of the audience.' This is why Euripides does not bother to portray the laughter of the Thebans directly: he has Dionysos make Pentheus ridiculous before the *audience*, who are made to function as a stand-in for the Thebans. This accords nicely with Segal's theory of the scene as meta-theatrical (above, n. 5).

¹³ In favour of the dative, perhaps, is that it might have given rise to our text early, and accidentally, rather than by perverse interference: *BAKXHIT* (or possibly, even better, *BAKXHΓ*) → *BAKXAΣ*. It also avoids the ambiguity of an accusative βάκχην ἐμέ which might have been heard as the subject, not the object, of the infinitive (though on the other hand the very ambiguity of the posited accusative helps, as I have said, to explain its corruption). And the γε is not inappropriate, for it points up Pentheus' horror at the impending reversal – is he, he wonders, to be mocked as the very thing he has himself mocked all along?

¹⁴ A. C. Moorhouse, *The Syntax of Sophocles* (Leiden, 1982), p. 36.

¹⁵ Moorhouse, loc. cit., gives a number of examples from Sophocles, including κλαίω, στένω, etc. By New Testament times virtually any verb of emotion could be used transitively; see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, tr. and rev. R. W. Funk (Chicago, 1961), §148, where examples include εὐδοκεῖν 'be pleased at'.

¹⁶ The succeeding line, 843, is a notorious problem, but not germane to the matter at hand – unless one takes it as evidence for wholesale dislocation of lines in this region of the text, since in this case arguments from logical context and dramatic structure become inapplicable. I assume that the state of 843 is sufficiently well explained by the loss of at most a line, or more likely two half-lines as suggested by Jackson (cited by Dodds *ad loc.*).