

truth, applying to all (ἀνθρώποις). But these differences are unsurprising considering the circumstances and genres involved. Mimnermus was composing an elegy, where a personal voice was commonplace. The messenger was a character in a drama; and although personal statements were permitted by even such minor characters,<sup>8</sup> at the end of this speech, which is intended to demonstrate to Pentheus his mistaken judgment about the bacchants, the gnomic, universal statement is more effective.

The reason for the echo of Mimnermus is clear. The messenger is trying to persuade Pentheus to abandon his plans of routing the Maenads but rather to honour this new god, and Euripides is using him as a foil for the intransigent and doomed Pentheus. Mimnermus' dictum was well known: love makes life and pleasure possible. The messenger's conclusion builds on that with a type of *a fortiori* argument: without wine, i.e. Dionysus, love and any other pleasure are impossible. By echoing the verse from Mimnermus and having it as the background, the force of the concluding gnome is enhanced. Thus both its position at the end of the speech and its echo of Mimnermus highlight the gnome's import and underscore Pentheus' mistaken and ruinous opposition to the god.

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<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., the end of the second messenger's speech in this very play (1150–2).

## TWO NOTES ON EURIPIDES

### (a) The Avenging Spirit at *Medea* 1260

ἀλλά νιν, ὦ φάος διογενές, κάτειρ-  
γε κατάπαυσον ἔξελ' οἴκων τάλαι-  
ναν φονίαν τ' Ἐρινὺν ἥ' ὑπ' ἀλαστόρων†.

1260

This is the OCT text of J. Diggle (reprinted with corrections 1987). Medea, having finally resolved to murder her children, has left the stage to do so. The chorus implores her grandsire, the Sun, to stop her. What will happen next? Infanticide? Escape? Divine intervention? The fraught suspense experienced by the original audience is disagreeably prolonged for the modern reader by the textual problems to which he must find at least a provisional solution if he is to make any sense of what is being said. The difficulty here at least can be resolved by the simplest of remedies, deletion – of two obeli, an apostrophe and a smooth breathing.

Despite the explicit and contrary view of the scholia (of B and V), Erinys must here mean the vengeful Medea herself, because it is she alone who threatens the lives of the children. They, poor innocents, have done nothing to attract the attentions of an authentic demon. At 1333 Jason says to Medea that the gods have directed her ἀλάστωρ against him. So D. L. Page, *Euripides Medea* (Oxford, 1952), p. 169 recommends us to 'read Ἐρινὺν ὑπαλάστορον "subject to [the power of] an ἀλάστωρ"; for this force of ὑπό in compound adjectives cf. ὑπόσπονδος ὑποτελής ὑπόνοσος ὑποινος.' Now Medea the human being (cf. 1257) can intelligibly be said to be at the mercy of an avenging spirit, that of Absyrtus for example. Medea as Erinys is a different matter, especially as Euripides apparently equates avenging spirits with Erinyes at 1059, where Medea swears μὰ τοὺς παρ' Αἰδηι νεττέρους ἀλάστορας. So if, at 1258–60, Medea is the Erinys within, it is she who has put *the house* at the mercy of an avenging spirit – herself. Read ἔξελ' οἴκων ... Ἐρινὺν ὑπαλαστόρων.

(b) Ganymede's Horsemanship at *Orestes* 1392

ὄττοτοί  
 ἰαλέμων ἰαλέμων·  
 Δαρδανία τλάμων,  
 Γανυμήδεος ἵπποσύνα, Διὸς εὐνέτα.

1392

Students of the *Orestes* are fortunate to have two excellent commentaries at their disposal, by C. W. Willink (Oxford, 1986) and M. L. West (Warminster, 1987). Neither will help them to understand this line, which is 'the only allusion to Ganymede's horsemanship' (Willink *ad loc.*), because 'no story of riding by Ganymede is known' (West *ad loc.*). But we are repeatedly reminded that the scene with the Phrygian (1369ff.) has far fewer affinities with tragedy than with comedy, and *ἐὺριπιδαριστοφανίζεται*. Comedy provides the clue, specifically at Ar. *Vesp.* 501f. and *Lys.* 676ff. The reference is to the variety of equestrianism for which Ganymede is far from unknown (he was too young to have established an association with any other kind). For *ἵπποσύνη* here describes a *σχῆμα ἐρωτικόν*, and the line means *Ganymedes concubinus, Iovis supini inguini insidens et equitans, sc. inter causas fuit malorum propter Iunonis invidiam Troianis immissorum*.

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## TURNING THE TABLES: VARIUS, VIRGIL AND LUCAN.

Of the four surviving fragments of Varius' *De Morte*<sup>1</sup> perhaps the most widely discussed has been the first:

Vendidit hic Latium populis agrosque Quiritum  
 eripuit, fixit leges pretio atque refixit (Fr. 1 Morel)

This is imitated by Virgil, whose Sibyl says of a soul in Tartarus:

Vendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem  
 imposuit; fixit leges pretio atque refixit (Aen. 6.621f.)

Most commentators, quoting Cic. *Phil.* 12.5.12, connect both passages exclusively with Antony,<sup>2</sup> and rightly point to Servius' words on v. 622, 'possumus Antonium accipere'. What should be stressed, however, is that Servius also thinks the words 'vendidit hic auro patriam' have a general reference, but are at the same time designed to recall historical individuals, of whom he names two:

etiam haec licet generaliter dicantur, habent tamen specialitatem: nam Lasthenes Olynthum Philippo vendidit, Curio Caesari XXVII. S. Romam: de quo Lucanus (4.820) Gallorum captus poliois et Caesaris auro.

Hollis is not convinced and remarks 'I doubt this; it seems to me that Virgil, in describing a whole category of the damned, has widened and generalized his model, leaving untouched "fixit leges pretio atque refixit" to confirm the imitation and recall Varius' reference to Antony.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All quoted by Macrobius as models imitated by Virgil: for references see Morel's edition. Macrobius, however, apparently did not notice that fr. 4, the simile of the hunting dog chasing a stag which lies behind *Ecl.* 8.88, is also imitated in the *Aeneid*: to fr. 4.3 'saevit in absentem' cf. *Aen.* 9.63 (Turnus as a wolf) 'saevit in absentis', and see W. Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (California, 1987), p. 162 n. 18.

<sup>2</sup> A. Rostagni, 'Il *De Morte* di L. Vario Rufo', *RFIC* 37 (1959), 380-1; A. S. Hollis, 'L. Varius Rufus *De Morte* (Frr. 1-4 Morel)', *CQ* 27 (1977), 188-9. <sup>3</sup> Art. cit. 188.