EURIPIDES, *MEDEA* 1–17[1]

The text and apparatus below are Diggle's. At the end of the article I give, for the sake of the curious, an expanded version, for 11ff., of Wecklein's 'Appendix coniecturas minus probabiles continens', with references where they are known to me.

> Εἴθ' ὤφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος
> Κόλχων ἐς αἶαν κυανέας Συμπληγάδας,
> μηδ' ἐν νάπαισι Πηλίου πεσεῖν ποτε
> τμηθεῖσα πεύκη, μηδ' ἐρετμῶσαι χέρας
> ἀνδρῶν ἀριστέων οἳ τὸ πάγχρυσον δέρας   5
> Πελίαι μετῆλθον. οὐ γὰρ ἂν δέσποιν' ἐμὴ
> Μήδεια πύργους γῆς ἔπλευσ' Ἰωλκίας
> ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγεῖσ' Ἰάσονος·
> οὐδ' ἂν κτανεῖν πείσασα Πελιάδας κόρας
> πατέρα κατώικει τήνδε γῆν Κορινθίαν,   10
> ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοισιν, ἁνδάνουσα μὲν
> †φυγῆι πολιτῶν† ὧν ἀφίκετο χθόνα,
> αὐτῶι τε πάντα ξυμφέρουσ' Ἰάσονι·
> ἥπερ μεγίστη γίγνεται σωτηρία,
> ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατῆι.   15
> νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ πάντα, καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα.
> προδοὺς γὰρ αὐτοῦ τέκνα δεσπότιν τ' ἐμὴν κτλ.

12 πολιτῶν codd. et Σ^bv: πολίταις (B^gl)V³, sicut coni. Barnes   13 αὐτῶι Sakorraphos: αὐτή codd. et gE et Stob. 4.23.30   δὲ Stob.

The serious problems with this text, as scores of earlier readers have seen, are in 11–15, but it seemed best to quote the whole of 1–17 for the sake of the larger context. There have been numerous suggestions for dealing with the daggered words in 12.[2] But quite a few scholars in the last four centuries have been bothered by the logic of the passage as a whole.[3] The most recent attack, that of Ulrich Hübner, states the objections with great cogency, though his solution, reviving Wheeler's excision of 11–15, is neither satisfying nor plausible, as I will show below. This paper will summarize the reasons given so far for suspecting that the transmitted text is wrong, adding some new considerations along the way, and then will propose a new solution, a lacuna before line 11.

(1) Consider the expectations raised by the contrary-to-fact wishes (1–2, 3–4a, 4b–6a) and the contrary-to-fact conditions that follow and explain them (6b–8, 9–13). Here is a paraphrase of the transmitted text: 'Would that the Argo had never sailed, would she had never been built. For then my mistress would not have been smitten

[2] See especially J. Diggle, *CQ* n.s. 34 (1984), 50–1, who argues for Sakorraphos' αὐτῶι and also for the reading πολίταις, without, however, being satisfied that the problems of φυγῆι are solved; and S. J. Harrison, *CQ* n.s. 36 (1986), 260, who solves the latter by reviving Pierson's φυγὰς.
[3] See Appendix below. Our century has not been inclined to see deep corruption here and has convinced itself that all is basically sound. Lenting's attitude, by contrast, though conservative in its result, was more gloomily realistic: 'Hanc omnium et MSS. et edd. lectionem vitio laborare, nemo dubitat.' Then, after citing evidence that the text was basically the same in late antiquity, he says 'Corruptam igitur lectionem retinere malui, quam incertam alicuius coniecturam in textum recipere' before going on to put forward a tentative suggestion.

with love for Jason and sailed to Iolcus, nor have been banished thence for murder
nor now be living in Corinth *with husband and children, loved (to be sure) by the
citizens and cooperating with her husband.*' The last item ought, like the others, to
signify something unhappy, part of the pickle Medea is now in precisely because the
Argo *did* sail. At best it could be something neutral, such as living in Corinth rather
than Colchis. But it makes little sense for the situation the Nurse is wishfully
deprecating to be described in the favourable terms used in 11–15. The μέν, it is said,[4]
is concessive and qualificatory and indicates that the Nurse realizes that coming to
Corinth was not all bad. But the particle raises as many suspicions as it quiets, for in
the first place impassioned wishes and wishful ruminatings on what might have been
are only weaker for having qualifiers tacked on to them. In the second place, the μέν
comes too late to operate on ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοισι, which surely belong on the
positive side of the ledger. Third, the qualification goes on for five lines, including a
two-line *gnome*, and it gives the impression that the Nurse has completely lost sight,
in the course of her sentence, of its main point. In sum, the fact that Medea now lives
with husband and children, enjoys the favour of the Corinthians and cooperates in all
things with Jason – enjoying the supreme felicity of marital cooperation – cannot be
part of the reason for wishing the Argo had never sailed, and if these facts have been
added as qualifiers, the job has been ineptly done.

(2) Before we come to line 16, we must surely think that what the Nurse says *would
not now* be happening if the Argo had never sailed is the present actuality. Yet the
situation here implied does not wholly agree with the facts. Medea, to be sure, is now
living in Corinth (as implied by the tense of κατῴκει and the general context) and
presumably is still loved by the Corinthians (if that is what the text means), but it
cannot be truly said that she is now living in Corinth 'with *husband* and
children...cooperating in all things with Jason'. Though the lack of cooperation is
not Medea's fault, she cannot be said *now* to be either living with him or cooperating
with him for he is now living with his new bride.[5] Some elements of this situation
belong to the past and not to the present, and clarity is not served if this is obscured.

Dr Diggle, with whom I had the pleasure of discussing this problem on two
occasions, offers a defence of the transmitted text. He takes the two participles in 11
and 13 as 'imperfect' participles, and he cites *Hec.* 821 as an instance where a present
participle, without any temporal adverb, is used of anterior action. Equally, one could
regard κατῴκει ἄν as past contrary-to-fact, which would achieve the same effect of
assigning the action of this sentence to the past. This is in fact preferable since it
avoids the implication that Medea now lives 'with husband and children'. I am happy
to concede that against objection (2) considered by itself this is a grammatically
satisfactory defence. But although we cannot convict the passage of grammatical
impossibility – if we could, it would have been more sharply challenged long ago –
some weight attaches to the feeling, which others share,[6] that if we were not forced to

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[4] E.g. by Wilamowitz, p. 821.
[5] This point was made by Ritschl, pp. 148–9 (rpt., pp. 749–50): 'da doch das οὐκ ἄν κατῴκει
den Zeitbegriff κατοικεῖ gibt, wie kann von der Gegenwart πάντα cυμφέρουc᾽ Ἰάσονι ausgesagt
werden, wovon ja gerade das Gegentheil wahr ist?' and by Hübner, p. 21: 'Das Motiv
κατῴκει... | ξὺν ἀνδρί – anders 32f. ἀφίκετο | μετ᾽ ἀνδρόc – führt vorübergehend sogar in die
Irre.' See also the similar argumentation of Schröer: 'Dem οὐδ᾽ ἄν κατῴκει können also die
Participia praesentis...*nicht* zu- und untergeordnet sein da beide abgeschlossen hinter Medea
liegen: ausserdem kann ἀνδάνουcα (– günstiges für Medea –) gedanklich nicht dem οὐδ᾽ ἄν
κατῴκει (– Verwünschung –) zugeordnet werden'. The impossibility of the conjectures which
follow these sensible remarks in no way reduces their accuracy.
[6] See the scholars cited in nn. 5 and 10.

do otherwise by our knowledge of the situation, we would more naturally take
κατώικει ἄν as present contrary-to-fact and the participles as ordinary coincident
present participles. Objection (1) is untouched by this defence.

(3) Furthermore, the νῦν δ' in 16 pulls us in two different directions and does not
wholly lend itself to being translated either as 'but in reality' or as 'but now'. Coming
right after the two contrary-to-fact constructions, it would seem to imply a contrast
with the hypothetical situation, 'but in reality'. Yet its immediate context (the next
three lines, joined to 16 by a γάρ, describe the rupture of Medea's marriage) pulls νῦν
δ' towards 'but now (in contrast to then)'. Indeed, if we took it to mean 'but in
reality', the contrast would be an odd one indeed: 'Would that the Argo had never
sailed. Medea would never have left Colchis for Iolcus and Corinth. But as it is Jason
is unfaithful to her.' The oddity is that if the Argo had never sailed Medea's world
would not contain a Jason at all, either as faithful or unfaithful husband. If, on the
other hand, we opt for 'but now', we face the embarrassing fact that the description
up to this point has contained not a single word to warn the audience that the Nurse
is describing a past and not a present reality. There is as yet no 'then' with which to
contrast the 'now', so that unless we adopt Steup's πρὶν for μέν, Ritschl τέως δέ for
αὐτή τε, or Stadtmueller πρὶν πᾶν for πάντα, 'but now' loses much of its plausibility.
We must be prepared to hear, of course, about ambiguity and polyvalence in
Euripidean dialogue, though what Euripides' play would have gained by being
ambiguous here is more than I can see.[7]

(4) It is also worthwhile saying a word or two against a tradition of wishful
thinking about the function of the particles μέν, τε, and δέ in the Gedankengang. (This
is a side-issue, to be sure, since the soundness of the passage does not stand or fall with
the question of how these particles are construed, yet it is worthwhile establishing the
impossibility of one line of defence associated with the great names of Wilamowitz
and Page.) Page, following Wilamowitz, says 'ἁνδάνουςα μέν and αὐτή τε are
opposed to the understood sentiment μιςουμένη δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρός'. I find nothing
in the lines that remotely suggest this,[8] and 14–15 suggest the opposite. 'νῦν δέ in v.
16 is opposed to vv. 14–15.' But 16 is the description of particular fact, while 14–15
are a generality true for all time. Line 16 cannot stand as reality to unreal supposition
since 14–15 are not an unreal condition, nor as an update to them since they are not
particular fact but timeless generality.

Another and more plausible interpretation, suggested by both Willink and Diggle
per litteras, makes δ' in 16 answer μέν in 11. In this way 11ff. are shown to be
preliminary and concessive, the first half of a contrast whose second element is the
more important. This derives its plausibility from the fact that one finds in some
authors the syntactic pattern 'main verb, subordinate participle with μέν, new finite
sentence with δέ': see Denniston, GP 369n., whose tragic examples are S. Tr. 836
(and, if Jebb is right, 265) and O.C. 522. Still, there is a difficulty: I have examined
all occurrences of μέν in the plays and fragments of Euripides, and while I have found
analogous sequences (e.g. main verb, prepositional phrase with μέν, main verb with
δέ), there is no instance of this precise sequence.[9]

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[7] Willink's 'νῦν δέ in 16 does double duty' puts the matter altogether too kindly.

[8] Cf. Willink, n. 21: 'we cannot be expected to "understand" anything adverse about Jason
before we have heard 16ff.'.

[9] The following are the only prima facie examples I could find of things other than main
clauses paired with main clauses: Alc. 353 ('accusative in apposition with the sentence' with
main clause), 591 (prepositional phrase: text corrupt), Med. 500 (parenthetic, with elliptical
ὅμως δ'), Hcld. 997 (probably μέν solitarium rather than paired with δ' in 1000), Su. 873

The upshot of all of this is not, unfortunately, as clear and decisive as one would wish. It is possible to defend the paradosis, or all of it but the first two words of 12, by adopting the following measures: (*a*) take κατῴκει as a past contrary-to-fact, allowing it to refer to an earlier period of Medea's residence in Corinth, before Jason abandoned her; (*b*) take μέν as marking a contrast with Jason's later behaviour and assume that the absence from Euripides of this particular sequence of main verb, participial phrase with μέν, and new finite sentence with δέ is due to chance; (*c*) if one has to translate, begin a new sentence at ἁνδάνουca μέν. (Every single translation of the play known to me does this.) This still leaves objection (1) untouched, but we could (*d*) tell ourselves that our notions of rhetoric and those of Euripides may be quite different. This defence is not obviously and clearly impossible. And given the unattractiveness of the remedies thus far proposed, scholars have reasonably preferred to quiet their misgivings rather than to print alterations of the text that are either clearly wrong or not much of an improvement.

Of the solutions thus far proposed, most attempt to address only one of the difficulties noted above. Thus when Steup proposes πρὶν for μέν, Ritschl τέωc δέ for αὐτή τε, and Stadtmueller πρὶν πᾶν for πάντα, they create a 'then' to set against the 'now' of 16 but leave the other problems mostly untouched.[10] The transposition proposed by Schneidewin and Usener creates problems without really solving any.[11] Recently Hübner revived the proposal of Wheeler to delete 11–15. But even this radical and desperate measure (desperate because nothing in the lines suggests the work of an interpolator) founders when one reads together οὐδ' ἂν κτανεῖν πείcαca Πελιάδαc κόραc | πατέρα κατῴκει τήνδε γῆν Κορινθίαν. | νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ πάντα, καὶ νοcεῖ τὰ φίλτατα. In this sequence 'now all is enmity' seems to suggest – laughably – that the murder of Pelias just mentioned exemplifies friendliness, and we can find the antithesis to 'now all is enmity' in what precedes only if we concentrate with all our might on ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγεῖc' Ἰάcονοc in 8, ignoring what comes after, and persuading ourselves that this passion of Medea for Jason *suggests* mutual good-will and thus provides the antithesis to the enmity of 16.

A reasonable and economical solution must begin by facing the fact that up to 10 the Nurse is describing unfavourable aspects of Medea's situation, while in 11, beginning with ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοιcιν, she describes facts that are both favourable and (with the possible exception of ἁνδάνουca κτλ.) true only of a period ending some days before the present. If we mark a lacuna before 11, we can allow the Nurse to

(adjective phrase), *El.* 35 (but μέν *solitarium* in Diggle's punctuation), *Hel.* 261 (prepositional phrase), *Ph.* 1421 (adverb), *Ba.* 224 (πρόφαcιν μέν set against main clause), *I.A.* 569 (prepositional phrase). (*Med.* 1316 rightly diagnosed as unsound.) This allows us to say that the pairing of a phrase with a clause is not impossible (as we knew in any case from Denniston's Sophoclean examples) but that there are no other examples in Euripides of the sequence 'main clause, participial phrase with μέν, main clause with δέ'. See, e.g. *Sup.* 34 and 204 and *Alc.* 338 for examples of the expected and logical use.

[10] The same is true of the acute suggestion of Stephen Harrison, *per litteras*, to attack κατῴκει, replacing it with a verb in the aorist meaning 'come to', thus allowing the participles to refer exclusively to past time. This line of attack has never been proposed before to my knowledge, and I pass it on in case some future critic can make use of, e.g. 'κατῴκει] μετέcτη post Harrison Kovacs cl. *Med.* 551' as part of a larger solution. Until such larger solution is put forward, however, its attractions are limited.

[11] Schneidewin suggested transposing 11 to follow 12 and writing καὐτὴ δέ in 13, but with 12 following on 10 ἀφίκετο must refer to her arrival in Iolcus, ineptly introduced into a discussion of her departure; while ἁνδάνουca μέν καὐτὴ δὲ πάντα ξυμφέρουc' Ἰάcονι, referring to Jason's love for Medea and her cooperation with him, seems oddly restricted to their arrival in Iolcus. Usener likewise transposed 11 and 12 but wanted to mark a lacuna of two or three lines after 10, a highly uneconomical procedure.

outline clearly and intelligibly Medea's multi-layered situation. Medea's fatal passion for Jason is the principal and original source of her present unhappiness, for she has left one country voluntarily and been driven into exile from a second. (The theme of Medea's separation from her native land and kinsmen is an important one in the play: cf. 35, 328, 431–6, 645–53, etc.) But 11–15 look like a description of Medea making the best of her situation in Corinth, finding some kind of happiness even in exile, and it is this *pis aller* to which Jason's desertion delivers the finishing blow, marking a second and more desperate degree of misery.[12] As far as I can see, the passage – with Pierson's φυγάς and the (possibly conjectural) πολίταις of V³ in 12 – all makes sense if we assume some such original as the following:[13]

> οὐδ' ἂν κτανεῖν πείσασα Πελιάδας κόρας
> πατέρα κατώικει τήνδε γῆν Κορινθίαν,
> ⟨φίλων τε τῶν πρὶν ἀμπλακοῦσα καὶ πάτρας.
> καὶ πρὶν μὲν εἶχε κἀνθάδ' οὐ μεμπτὸν βίον⟩
> ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοισιν, ἁνδάνουσα μὲν
> φυγὰς πολίταις ὧν ἀφίκετο χθόνα,
> αὐτῶι τε πάντα ξυμφέρους' Ἰάσονι·
> ἥπερ μεγίστη γίγνεται σωτηρία,
> ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατῆι.
> νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ πάντα, καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα.

W. S. Barrett, as is well known, legislated against 'assum[ing] mechanical lacunae in the dialogue of the select plays' (ad *Hip.* 663), but such legislation is arbitrary when most editors diagnose lacunae at *Alc.* 204 (mistakenly removed, I feel, by Diggle), 410, 468, *Andr.* 364, *Tro.* 434, 961, and *Pho.* 1606. Two of these are lyric, but though lyric is more liable than dialogue to corruption, there is no good reason to think it is more liable to omission of whole lines. The rest, in any case, are dialogue.[14] In our passage if the first of the missing lines contained a feminine participle in its second half, as in my supplement, a scribe's eye could easily have leapt from it to the feminine participle in 11, causing omission of the intervening lines. For a μέν/δέ (τε) opposition nested within another μέν/δέ, see *Su.* 465–8 and S. *Aj.* 815–20.[15]

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[15] I mention last a way of construing transmitted φυγῆι πολιτῶν that has been put forward at least since Lenting and has recently been championed by Roux, 'by her avoidance of the citizens'. Roux argues that what the Nurse must have said was that Medea pleased Jason by living a retiring and unsociable life. For Medea herself, when she is trying to win the Chorus over to her side, remarks that some people win a reputation for slackness from their quiet manner of life, and she seems to be asking them not to hold her retiring ways against her. Yet, attractive as it is to retain a MS. reading seemingly confirmed by the rest of the play, it runs afoul of its context: if we supply Ἰάσονι with ἁνδάνουσα, then αὐτῶι makes no sense, while transmitted αὐτή is just as difficult as before. If we understood ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοισιν with ἁνδάνουσα, then αὐτῶι would make a certain amount of sense, separating the more important Jason off from the children. But it makes little sense to say that Medea's quiet life pleased *husband and children*, for though one could see why a Greek husband might be happy that his wife remained indoors, why would the children be pleased? If there is really a reference here to Medea's retiring way of life, we must be more courageous and adopt Nauck's λανθάνουσα. But at present, I favour Pierson's reading.

APPENDIX CONIECTURARUM ALIARUMVE TRACTATIONUM

11 τέκνοιcι, νοῦν ἐνδοῦca Burges, τέκνοιcι, μὴ ἁνδάνουca Lenting, ad loc. (Zutphaniae, 1819), τέκνοιciν, ἀμπλακοῦca Camper, τέκνοιciν, ἀλλάccουca Fuldner, *Adnotationes in Euripidis Medeae prologum* (Marburg, 1855), p. 12, et Hoffmann, *Jahrb. f. cl. Phil.* 133 (1886), 308, τέκνοιcι, λανθάνουca Nauck, *Euripideische Studien*, Erster Theil, Mémoires de l'académie impériale des Sciences de St Pétersbourg, VIIᵉ série, Tome I, No.12 (1859), 107–8, τέκνοιcι, λαγχάνουca Hartmann, *Mnemos.* 51 (1923), 338, τέκνοιciν, ἁνδάνουcι Kvičala, *Denkschr. der kais. Akad. d. Wiss.*, Philos.-hist. Cl. 29 (Wien, 1879), 237–8, τέκνοιcι· χἁνδάνουca Vitelli, *Philologus* 39 (1880), 164–5 (ὧν 'suorum' reddens), τέκνοιcι, φυγγάνουca (et 12 ὀργὴν pro φυγῆι) J. Lunak, *Philologus* 51 (1892), 544–5 | μὲν] πρὶν Steup | versum post 12 transposuit Schneidewin, *GGA* (1853, 2), 726–7, et, post 10 unum vel duos versus excidisse ratus, Usener, *RhM* 23 (1868), 156 (= *Kleine Schriften* [Osnabrück, 1865], i.141–2)

11–15 delet Wheeler, *De Alcestidis et Hippolyti Euripidearum interpolationibus*, diss. Bonn, 1879, p. 11 et Hübner, *Philologus* 128 (1984), 21–5

11sq. ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοιcιν· ἁνδάνουca μὲν ⟨ὧιπερ μεγίcτων ἐκ πόνων cώτειρ' ἔφυ⟩ φυγῆι πολιτῶν τῶνδ' ἀφίκετο χθόνα Barthold, ad loc. (Lipsiae et Pragae, 1888), tum. u. v., 'Kritisch-exegetische Untersuchungen zu des Euripides Medea und Hippolytus', *Oster-programm des Wilhelm-Gymnasiums in Hamburg* (1887), τέκνοιcι ⟨δ'⟩ ἁνδάνουca μὲν φυγῆι πολιτῶν τῶνδ' Schröer, *Philol. Wochenschrift* 53 (1933), 877–9, ἁνδάνουc' ἀεὶ φυγῆc πολίταιc Sitzler, *Gymnasium* (Paderborn) 24 (1906), 203

12 φυγῆι] φυλῆι (debebat, ut monet Elmsley, φύλωι) vel ψυχῆι Canter, *Novarum Lectionum Libri Octo* (Antwerpiae, 1571), ii.21, p. 136, φυῆι vel φύτληι Reiske, *Ad Euripidem et Aristophanem Animadversiones* (Lipsiae, 1754), p. 15, ὀργῆι Musgrave, φύcει Wyttenbach, *Bibliotheca Critica* (Amstelodami, 1779–1808), ii.1, p. 40, φθογγῆι Burges, φίλη C. Hartung, *Quaestiones Moscheae* (Bonn, 1865), p. 51, cιγῆι M. Seyffert, ἀρχῶι Herwerden, *RPh* 18 (1894), 72 | φυγὰc πολίταιc Pierson, *Verisimilium Libri Duo* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1752), pp. 57–8, φυγῆι πολίταιc Brunck, φύcει πολίταιc Jacobs, *Animadversiones in Euripidem* (Gothae, 1790), p. 21, φυγὴ πολίταιc Elmsley, φίλοιc πολιτῶν olim Barthold, 'Kritische Bemerkungen zu den Prologscenen und der Parodos der Medea, V. 1–212', *Gymn.-Progr. von Altona* (1885), pp. 1–3 | χθονί Bergk | versum post 13 collocat Pflugk, del. Kvičala, post 30 collocat Ussher, *Eranos* 59 (1961), 1–2

13 πάντηι τε Nauck, τέωc δὲ Ritschl, *RhM* 21 (1866), 148–9 (= *Opuscula Philologica I* [Lipsiae, 1866], pp. 749–50, αὐτῶι τε Sakorraphos ad loc. (Athenis, 1891), ex Bursiani *Jahresbericht* 71 (1892), 256 tantum mihi notum, quod idem postea coniecit Earle, *Classical Studies in Honour of Henry Drisler* (New York, 1894) et *CR* 9 (1895), 361 necnon Herwerden *RPh* 18 (1894), 72, probante Verrall *CR* 19 (1905), 361 | αὐτή τε πρὶν πᾶν Stadtmueller | paradosin vel immutatam vel v. 12 tantum leviter mutato defendunt inter alios Wilamowitz, *Hermes* 15 (1880), 520–2, Marx, *RhM* 74 (1925), 193, Roux, *REG* 85 (1972), 40, Willink, *CQ* 33 (1988), 317.