

the middle of 2.14–17, of the material on Thesean Athens might have given the language in 2.16.2 a pre-classical colouring. (If such a thing were to be seriously argued, it would call for better evidence than this.) There is a middle ground, and I note that the most reliable translation of Book II in current use—that of Rhodes, for Aris and Phillips—duly occupies it: ‘each man was virtually abandoning his own city’.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Thucydides, History II*, ed. with trans. and comment. by P. J. Rhodes (Warminster, 1988), 61. Cf. e.g. T. K. Arnold, *The Second Book of Thucydides, with English Notes and Grammatical References* (London, 1854), 75, citing Dale: ‘construe, “and in fact as good as leaving their several cities,” or “and each of them doing what was equivalent to leaving his native city”’. J. S. Rusten, *Thucydides Book II* (Cambridge, 1989) passes over the issue.

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### A NOTE ON THE EURIPUS IN EURIPIDES' *IPHIGENIA AT AULIS*

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle levels against Euripides the charge of inconsistency (τοῦ ἀνωμάλου) in *I.A.* on the grounds that ‘the girl who beseeches is in no way like her later self’ (*Poetics* 1454a).

The play is set by the Euripus, the strait which separates the island of Euboea from Boeotia in mainland Greece. We are first informed of this location at 11<sup>1</sup> and the name Euripus recurs four times (166, 804, 813, 1323). The chorus have come across this strait from Chalcis on Euboea.<sup>2</sup> The Greek navy is becalmed there and it is from there that it will set out after the play is over.

Strabo (1.3.12) tells us that in the Euripus the currents changed seven times a day; and they were notorious for their unpredictability.<sup>3</sup> And LSJ inform us that the name was used proverbially of an unstable man.<sup>4</sup> Among other citations,<sup>5</sup> they give Pollux, *Onomasticon* 6.121, a passage which sets the word in a clear semantic context:

Κοῦφος, ῥάδιος, εὐμετάβολος, εὐτρεπτος, εὐτράπελος ὀξύρροπος, μεταπίπτων μεταρρέων μετατρεπόμενος, οὐκ ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς δόξης μένων, ὄρνις, ἄνεμος, εἰκαῖος, συρφετός, αὔρα, πνεῦμα, ἀκατάστατος, ῥάων τῶν κωμάτων τὴν τροπὴν, πορθμός, εὐριπος, ἀπαγής, ἀβέβαιος, ἀνερμάτιστος, σαλεύων, τοῦ φέροντος αἰὲ πνεύματος, ὀξύτερος πτεροῦ τὴν ῥοπήν.

It is against this background, both geographical and semantic, that we must surely

<sup>1</sup> *I.A.*, of course, has two prologues and thus there is a question mark over the authenticity of these lines. There can be no argument, however, about the setting of the play.

<sup>2</sup> Although not across the new bridge built in 411 (Diodorus Siculus 13.47). The dramatist places his tragedy securely in the heroic age.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. P. G. Walsh, Cicero: *The Nature of the Gods* (Oxford, 1997), 196, n. on 3.24.

<sup>4</sup> To ‘unstable’, LSJ add the word ‘weak-minded’. Readers can base their judgement about how far this meaning applies in the citations. In my view the emphasis is very decidedly on the lack of stability.

<sup>5</sup> Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 90: of Callias of Chalcis: καταλιπὼν δὲ κἀκείνους, καὶ πλείους τραπόμενος τροπὰς τοῦ Εὐρίπου, παρ’ ὃν ᾧκει . . .; Aristotle, *E.N.* 1167b7: τῶν τοιούτων (i.e. good men) γὰρ μένει τὰ βουλήματα καὶ οὐ μεταρρεῖ ὥσπερ εὐριπος . . .; Hipparchus (quoted in Stobaeus 4.44.81): πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα (the chances and changes of life), ἀστατά τε καὶ ἀβέβαια Εὐρίπου τρόπον . . . καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῶν μένον οὐδὲ ἀκίνητον οὐδὲ ἀναφαίρετον.; and Libanius, *Letter* 907: μετὰ ταῦτ’ Εὐριποὶ γινόμενοι . . . (i.e. changing their views of things).

set the metamorphosis of Iphigenia of which Aristotle complains. And of course she is not the only one of the play's characters to change radically by the Euripus.<sup>6</sup> At 332 Menelaus accuses Agamemnon of constantly shifting:

πλάγια γὰρ φρονεῖς, τὰ μὲν νῦν, τὰ δὲ πάλαι, τὰ δ' αὐτίκα.

At 471 Menelaus himself totally reverses his own position. Then at 511 Agamemnon reverses his. Euripides has prepared the ground—and set the scene—for Iphigenia's famous reversal at 1368.

My suggestion is that Euripides draws our attention to the location of the play by the Euripus with its famously shifting currents<sup>7</sup>—because he wishes it to be an external symbol—an 'objective correlative', to use T. S. Eliot's expression—for the extreme shifts the play's characters undergo. Thus he can ensure that such shifts can become an integral part of the drama. The shifting currents of human motivation are surely an essential feature of the play's geography.

A fine irony is lent to Aristotle's criticism of Iphigenia's radical change by Procopius, who tells us (*History of the Wars* 8.6.20) that Aristotle quite literally worried himself to death because he could not solve the problem of the shifting currents of these very waters.

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<sup>6</sup> As J. Griffin remarks, the play 'is of all Greek tragedies the one with the largest number of changes of mind' (*Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, ed. C. Pelling [Oxford, 1990], 143). Griffin sees changeability as a key feature of the world of this play (140–9).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *I.T.* 6–7.

#### A NOTE ON THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

Gill<sup>1</sup> suggested that since the symptoms which Plato describes for Socrates' death (*Phaedo*, 117a ff.) do not correspond with pure hemlock poisoning, the account is highly selective, both to show Socrates' self-control and the endurance of the psyche despite its departure, signified by οἴχεσθαι,<sup>2</sup> from the body.

Poetic licence certainly cannot be ruled out, but Gill, basing his interpretation wholly on Nicander's *Alexipharmaca*, seems to have ignored the fact that within the family Apiaceae (Umbelliferae), there are two distinct strains of native European hemlock which produce markedly dissimilar symptoms. The first strain includes *Cicuta maculata/virosa/douglasii*—water hemlock, also known as 'cowbane', which has the active ingredient cicutoxin, an unsaturated alcohol; and *Oenanthe crocata*—water dropwort, whose active ingredient is oenantheotoxin. Both of these plants produce Nicander's pronounced symptoms of vomiting, convulsions, agitation, and violent spasms, as well as frothing at the mouth.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the scholiast to Nicander's *Alexipharmaca*<sup>4</sup> suggests that some call the plant to which his source is referring *krokeanon*, which may also allow a further identification with *Oenanthe crocata*.

<sup>1</sup> C. Gill, *CQ* 23 (1973), 25–8.

<sup>2</sup> *Pl. Phd.* 115d3–4, 118a3–4.

<sup>3</sup> D. Frone and H. J. Pfänder, *A Colour Atlas of Poisonous Plants* (London, 1983), 37–44; J. M. Kingsbury, *Deadly Harvest* (London, 1967), 67; K. F. Lampe and M. A. McCann, *AMA Handbook of Poisonous and Injurious Plants* (Chicago), 56–7, 124–5.

<sup>4</sup> A. S. F. Gow and A. F. Scholfield (edd.), *Nicander: The Poems and Poetical Fragments* (Cambridge, 1953), 186–94.