

FOUR PASSAGES FROM EURIPIDES' *ION*

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47–51

οἷκτω δ' ἀφῆκεν ὠμότητα—καὶ θεὸς
συνεργὸς ἦν τῷ παιδί μὴ ἔκπεσεῖν δόμων—
τρέφει δέ νιν λαβοῦσα. τὸν σπείραντα δὲ
50 οὐκ οἶδε Φοῖβον οὐδὲ μητέρ' ἧς ἔφνυ,
ὁ παῖς τε τοὺς τεκόντας οὐκ ἐπίσταται.

In 51, ἐπίσταται is used in a sense for which it is difficult to find a parallel.¹ The entire line also seems rather flat and colorless, especially by contrast with its surroundings. Could it be an interpolation?

We can easily do without it. Strike 51, and 49–50 then mean “and she took him and is raising him. And he does not know the father who begat him, Phoebus, nor the mother from whom he sprang,” rather than “*she* does not know.” The change of subject between τρέφει and οἶδα is slightly difficult but not impossible. Since Ion is mentioned as the object of τρέφει (which refers to the process of his growing up), he can easily be supplied as the subject of οἶδα. The passage makes good sense without 51.

We may go further. It is possible both to show a motive for interpolation and to demonstrate the superiority of the passage without it. Either with or without 51, there must be a reference to Ion's ignorance, not merely to that

¹Owen remarks on its peculiarity. LSJ s.v. II 3 apparently regard it as unusual. Arist. *Eq.* 1278 seems to be the only other example from the classical period where it is used of knowing people instead of facts or subjects, though the other passages cited show an extension of meaning in later Greek.

Throughout this paper, the *lemmata* are quoted from Murray's Oxford text. Reference is made to the following works by author's name alone: M. A. Bayfield, *The Ion of Euripides* (London 1889); Ettore de Marchi, *Euripide: Ione* (Torino 1914); J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford 1954²); H. Grégoire, *Euripide* III (Paris 1923); G. Italie, *Euripides' Ion* (Leiden 1968); A. S. Owen, *Euripides: Ion* (Oxford 1939); Rudolf Prinz and Nicolaus Wecklein, *Euripidis Fabulae*, Vol. I, Pars V (Leipzig 1898); Umberto Scatena, *Euripide: Ione* (Florence 1938); A. W. Verrall, *The Ion of Euripides* (Cambridge 1890); Leon Volpis, *Euripide: Ione* (Milan 1934); N. Wecklein, *Euripides' Ion für den Schulgebrauch erklärt* (Leipzig 1912); Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Euripides: Ion* (Berlin 1926).

of the Pythia. The interpolator could see that this was the sense required, but he may have felt that 49–50 were not sufficiently unambiguous in this sense because of the change of subject. He knew enough meter to produce an uninspired and colorless trimeter, but fitting the right *verbum cognoscendi* into place proved a task too great for his powers.

It is not only his word-choice that betrays him. If we read 51, the emphasis of the passage is all wrong. The priestess' ignorance of Ion's parentage gets the fuller treatment, each parent mentioned separately and with ampler and more emotive expressions for each (τὸν σπεύραντα, μητέρ' ἧς ἔφν). Ion's ignorance appears as an afterthought, much more weakly expressed. Yet it is Ion's ignorance (and his sense of bereavement) which is important in the play. Only if Ion is the subject of οἶδε is the emphatic diction explicable. It goes without saying that neither the Pythia nor Ion knows who Ion's parents are. But it makes sense to say of Ion, as it does not to say of the Pythia, that he does not know "the father who begat him nor the mother from whom he sprang." These phrases give us not obvious *facts*, but the emotional quality of Ion's foundling existence, a quality we shall see demonstrated in Ion's own words from his first entrance (136) until he is rejoined with his mother. 51 destroys the sense and must go.²

²I record here as further corroboration the experience which gave rise to this conjecture. I have read the *Ion* several times in the last few years, but always at intervals great enough that I came to its phraseology fresh. Each time I read 49–50, I remember understanding these lines to refer to Ion. Each time, 51 came as a shock, forcing me to revise my understanding of the verb in 50. From this I conclude that it is more natural, despite the shift involved, to make Ion its subject. Indeed οἶδε τὸν σπεύραντα is Greek for "He knows his (own) father" in much the same way that ἔλαβε τὸ ἱμάτιον is Greek for "He took his (own) cloak." This can be confirmed from Euripides' usage, though no doubt from that of others as well. Wherever ὁ τεκών, ὁ φύσας, or ὁ σπεύρας (or the corresponding feminines) occurs in Euripides as a substantive, without the direct object of the participle expressed, and in the oblique cases, the subject of the clause, if personal, is a son or daughter of the father or mother in question. See, e.g., *IA* 474 and 1551. Exceptions to this rule are *Alc.* 1098 and fr. 980, where both parents and children stand in the oblique cases, the somewhat cryptic fr. 82, and *Supp.* 819. I find no clear parallel for "She does not know *his* father" expressed by means of a bare attributive participle as object of the verb.

I note also that I am not alone in feeling that Ion as subject is more natural. Barnes, quoted in the Glasgow edition of 1821, tries hard to convince himself that his instinct is wrong: "Haec verba de nutrice prophetissa sunt sumenda, quod nempe illa nesciebat, Phoebum huius adolescentis olim expositi patrem, neque matrem, quae fuerit, ubiubi fuerit; sed nec et ipse parentes suos novit. Et hunc sensum nisi loco affigamus, importuna erit Ταῦτολογία nostro poeta indigna." So do Scatena, Volpis, and Italie. Wecklein, in his school edition, regards the line as superfluous. Other earlier scholars have suggested deletion, though with few arguments or none: F. Commer, *De Prologorum Euripideorum Causa ac Ratione* (Diss., Bonn 1864) 55; J. Klinkenberg, *De Prologorum Euripideorum Arte et Interpolatione* (Diss., Bonn 1881) 45;

369–380

- οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις σοι προφητεύσει τάδε.
 370 ἐν τοῖς γὰρ αὐτοῦ δώμασιν κακὸς φανεῖς
 Φοῖβος δικαίως τὸν θεμιστεύοντά σοι
 δράσειεν ἄν τι πῆμα. ἀπαλλάσσου, γύναι.
 τῷ γὰρ θεῷ τάναντί' οὐ μαντευτέον.
 ἐς γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἀμαθίας ἔλθοιμεν ἄν,
 375 εἰ τοὺς θεοὺς ἄκοντας ἐκπονήσομεν
 φράζειν ἃ μὴ θέλουσιν, ἢ προβωμίῳ
 σφαγαῖσι μῆλων ἢ δι' οἰωνῶν πτεροῖς.
 ἄν γὰρ βίᾳ σπεύδωμεν ἀκόντων θεῶν,
 ἄκοντα κεκτῆμεσθα τὰ γάθ', ὦ γύναι.
 380 ἃ δ' ἄν διδῶσ' ἐκόντες, ὠφελούμεθα.

374–377 secludit Bayfield

375 ἄκοντας Brodaeus: ἐκόντας

LP: ἐκόντες Wakefield

In his 1889 edition, Bayfield brackets 374–77. (According to the Prinz-Wecklein appendix, deletion was first proposed by D. Holthoef, *Animadversiones in Euripidis Herculem et Alcestem* [Diss., Bonn 1881] 39.) Of the four reasons he gives (summarized by Owen *ad loc.*) only the second is really cogent: “ἐς τοσοῦτον refers to nothing.” It does look at first glance as if these lines were written by someone who thoughtlessly wrote ἐς γὰρ τοσοῦτον instead of, e.g., ἐς γὰρ μέγιστον, not reflecting that ἐς τοσοῦτον ἐλθεῖν would take some kind of complement, usually a ὥστε clause.³ (Cf. *Med.* 371, 569; *Tro.* 972.) If this is in fact the case, their author is almost certainly not Euripides. It is here, however, that both attackers and defenders of these lines misunderstand them.

Owen tried to defend the lines by arguing that τοσοῦτον refers back to the previous line, “consulting the god in what is opposed to his will.” This will not do, however, for it gives a sense that is, rhetorically speaking, backwards. An orator might say, “We must not allow ourselves to be enslaved. For that is the pitch of folly to which we shall come if we let this provocation pass without response.” The first sentence gives to a course of action a highly emotive and unfavorable name, while the second explains in more factual terms why such a designation is appropriate. (Cf. *Hipp.* 473–75.) In our passage, however, the direction is reversed. Instead of

idem, *Euripidea I: Ion Tractatur* (Progr., Aachen 1884) 22–23 (changing his mind); J. von Arnim, *De Prologorum Euripideorum Arte et Interpolatione* (Diss., Greifswald 1882) 64.

³Volpis regards a result clause as “sottaciuta.” Wilamowitz says “so weit in die Verkehrtheit und Dummheit . . . dass wir uns den Zorn des Gottes und seine Strafe zuziehen.” Several editors prefer to change the text to, e.g., Badham’s ἐς τοῦσχατον γάρ.

explaining a more forceful expression by a milder one, the author explains the milder one (consulting the god contrary to his will) by a more forceful one (constraining the gods to speak against their will). It is as if our orator had said, “We must not let this provocation pass without response. For that is the pitch of folly we shall come to if we allow ourselves to be enslaved.”⁴

The phrase *ἐς γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἀμαθίας* is therefore not explanatory in the way Owen takes it. But neither is it otiose, as Bayfield thinks. The meaning of these lines has been obscured because of a misunderstanding of the words *ἢ προβωμίῳ σφαγαῖσι μῆλων ἢ δι’ οἰωνῶν περοῖς*. Owen remarks that the two datives are not parallel, for “*σφαγαῖσι* is the method by which men try to make the gods reveal secrets, [while] *περοῖς* is the method of revelation.” I think it more likely that the two expressions are parallel (note correlative *ἢ*) and refer to two different means of divination, by inspection of entrails (or other divination connected directly with sacrifice) and by observing the flight of birds.⁵ If this is so, the passage means “We ought not to put to an oracle questions that are clearly contrary to the god’s will. It would be as foolish to try to induce the gods to speak against their will by examining entrails or observing birds (which is manifestly impossible).” The point of the passage, then, is an analogy between one method of inquiring of the gods and two others. Just as the gods will thwart unwelcome inquiry by means of entrails or birds (presumably by giving false signals or none at all), so they will here through the reluctance of their ministers. The fact that one can question the god directly at Delphi provides no grounds for expecting greater success in circumventing his will. For even though in Delphi we seem able to take the initiative, the real initiative still lies with the gods, and if we attempt to gain things against their will, we will not like what we receive.⁶

If we have indeed recovered the argument here, we can also throw light on another difficulty. In 375, where the manuscripts read *ἐκόντας*, Brodeau conjectured *ἄκοντας*, which all editors but one print. Yet *ἄκοντας* duplicates the sense of *ἀ μὴ θέλουσιν* in the next line. We might consider whether Wakefield’s *ἐκόντες* isn’t right after all. Under normal

⁴Even if, as someone might argue, the two expressions in our text are equally forceful, that will not serve either. The second ought logically to be less emotive and more factual.

⁵An example of divination connected with sacrifice might be observing the way the offering burns. The question might be asked whether a reference to the slaughter of animals would by itself suggest a form of divination. I think it would. The two practices would have been closely connected, as the term *θυτική* (*τέχνη*) suggests. And the mention of sacrifice is joined by paired correlatives to another unmistakable reference to divination. Cf. Soph. *Ant.* 999 ff. where the two methods are complementary.

⁶Several editors (Volpis, Scatena, Italie, Verrall) see a reference here to divination by entrails. But none of them shows what relevance extispicy or augury has to Delphic inquiry.

circumstances, we have no way of knowing whether our attempts at extispicy or augury are contrary to the divine will. In order to produce a closer analogy with Creusa's present situation, Ion assumes into his hypothesis that his putative *auspex* knows in advance that the gods are unwilling to tell him what he wants to know but that he still persists. This would be a folly comparable to Creusa's. (It should be noted that *ἐκόντες* could easily be corrupted to *ἐκόντας* after *θεούς*.) The whole passage then may be translated as follows: "There is no one who will act as *prophêêtês* for you in this matter. For Phoebus would be within his rights to inflict pain on the one who serves you if he were shown up as base in his own temple. Desist, woman. For one ought not to put to an oracle questions that are contrary to the god's will. It would be an equivalent pitch of folly to which we should come if we were to expend effort wittingly to make the gods say what they do not wish either by the slaughtering of animals or by divination through birds.⁷ For if we strive for something by force against the gods' will, the objects of our striving turn out to be unwelcome, woman. But whatever the gods give of their own free will confers blessing on us."

506–509

οὔτ' ἐπὶ κερκίσιν οὔτε λόγους
φάτιν ἄιον εὐτυχίας μετέχειν
θεόθεν τέκνα θνατοῖς.

Wilamowitz, Owen, and Italie find these lines slightly puzzling. For while Achilles, Heracles, and Theseus might be named as examples of children of gods who met with misery, the sons of gods generally fare well in legend. Why should the chorus regard such offspring as universally wretched?

In fact they don't. All throughout the epode, they have been singing of the Long Rocks, scene of the unhappiness of Creusa's fictitious friend. There, in a place otherwise graced with music and dancing, she had to expose her child. It is her misery that they have in view, as *ὦ μελέα* and *πικρῶν γάμων ἔβριν* clearly show, and the unhappy fate of the child is here mentioned chiefly as a cause of misery to the mother rather than in its own right. (This woman's childless fate contrasts with the prayer for children in the strophe, and is a particular instance of the antistrophe's

⁷ ἢ δι' οἰωνῶν πτεροῖς is, as Bayfield says, rather odd. Previous attempts to emend (see the Prinz-Wecklein appendix) are unconvincing. Hudson-Williams, *CR* n.s. 2 (1952) 145–46, suggests plausibly that δι' οἰωνῶν is an explanatory note that has crept into the text. What is needed in its place is something corresponding to *προβωμίους*. He suggests δι' αἰθέρος, but without an article this is too bold. A simple adjective would be better. I suggest μεταποῖους.

assertion that children bring happiness and childlessness brings woe.) Then come the lines quoted above, which in this context can only mean that to be the chosen object of divine lust is never a blessing: “Children from the gods possess no share of happiness for mortals.” Luckless paramours of the gods are far easier to name than luckless sons: Danae, Io, Semele, Callisto, Coronis, and Cassandra come readily to mind. The chorus’ generalization is therefore quite plausible.

Grammatically this way of reading the lines is easier in two respects, more difficult in one. There is no need to supply a somewhat awkward “sc. *γενόμενα*” after *θνατοῖς* as Owen does. And the dative of advantage or disadvantage of a noun for mortals is quite common in Euripides as the last word of a generality about the human lot: cf. *Med.* 127, 128, 203, 965, 1080; *Supp.* 199, 488; *Tro.* 989. On the other hand, it is hard to find a precise parallel to this use of *μετέχω*. I cannot find any other example where it is used of a thing or circumstance possessing a share in some other thing or circumstance *for* someone else. Yet that is the only meaning which will make sense in the context. Fortunately a partial parallel exists in this very stasimon: in 472 ff. abundance of children “possesses” (*ἔχει*) happiness *for* those mortals whose houses are thus blessed.⁸

It is entirely natural that *θεόθεν τέκνα* practically means being the paramour of the god, for the embraces of a god are never in vain (λ 249), and therefore invariable effect may be put for cause.⁹ But the same euphemistic substitution occurs even in mortal contexts: at *Med.* 565, σοί τε γὰρ παίδων τί δεῖ; is Jason’s way of asking why Medea should object if he transfers his marital attentions to the bed of his new bride.

585–647¹⁰

At the end of Xuthus’ description of the happiness that awaits Ion in Athens, Ion is silent (582 ff.) and shows by his demeanor that he is having disquieting thoughts. When he finally speaks, he tells what they are. Things do not look the same from close up as they did from afar, he says. He is glad to have found Xuthus as his father, but now the prospect of going to Athens fills him with misgivings. For the Athenians are a pure-blooded race, and in Athens he will have two counts against him, foreign blood and illegitimate birth.

Up until this point, problems with the text are few and minor.¹¹ Hereafter, we meet with numerous difficulties of grammar, meter, logic,

⁸For this use of *ἔχω*, cf. also fr. 642 and Thuc. 2.41.3.

⁹At Aesch. *Ag.* 1207, *τέκνων ἐς ἔργον* means intercourse, though there, of course, *ἔργον* makes this much more explicit.

¹⁰The length of this *lemma* precludes transcription. See Murray’s Oxford text.

¹¹See Owen on 588 and 589.

and style. Not all of these are equally grave, and a few of them are perhaps slight when considered alone. Taken together, however, they raise the suspicion that we are dealing with an interpolator. Here follows a preliminary examination of all the grammatical and metrical difficulties in 593 ff. The first of these has, as will be seen, no direct bearing on the authenticity of the whole.

(1) 594 is metrically defective. Owen follows Murray in regarding it as an interpolation designed to fill an imagined gap. Yet in both cases the explanation of how a line came to be wanted here seems unconvincing. Murray, following Verrall, imagines an aposiopesis, but this is highly unlikely. Owen, who thinks Euripides wrote *ἀσθενῆς μενῶ*, argues that “when *μέν* [first syllable of *μενῶ*] was supposed to answer *δέ* (595), *ὦν* would naturally be written, and some line then inserted to justify the participle.” This does not inspire confidence, as there are two weak links in the chain of causality. Furthermore, the hypothesis requires us to believe that this same couplet was subjected to two separate and unrelated corruptions: the first (in two stages) motivated the interpolation, and the second, at a later date, rendered it unmetrical. (Unless, of course, we are prepared to believe that what our manuscripts give us was this man’s idea of a trimeter.) It is unchivalrous to pick on a line that is three syllables shorter than normal, and bad critical practice as well: one never knows what originally stood there. It is a good guess that 593 and 594 were written by the same man.¹²

(2) In 598, the position of *τε* causes difficulty. Are these men good and capable of being wise, or capable of being good and wise? If the former, we might expect *χρηστοί* to have an *ὄντες*. If the latter, the position of *τε* is hard to parallel. (See Denniston 520, note 1, who denies it even to comedy.) In neither case is it clear why *Ion* should speak of *potential* goodness or wisdom.¹³ (Herwerden conjectured *δυνάμενοι τ’, ὄντες σοφοί*, but *δυνάμενοι* is precisely what these men decline to be.)

¹²Conjectures on this line are numerous. Good sense is given by Bruhn’s *ἀρ’ οὐ τὸ μηδὲν κοῦδένων κεκλήσονται*; and by Seidler’s *καὺτὸς τὸ μηδὲν*. Either gives a parallel, with the terms in reverse order, to 592.

Owen’s objection that *Ion* could not refer to his father as a nobody is not persuasive. He is predicting what the pure-blooded Athenians will say, not endorsing their views. And the *οὐδένες* include not only his father but also his maternal ancestry, which being unknown counts as nullity.

¹³Wilamowitz writes “‘Die trefflichen Leute, die zugleich imstande sind, das Kluge, das sie kennen, auch durchzuführen’—nicht jeder vermag dem zu folgen, was er als richtig kennt.” This seems desperate, and puts far too much weight on *εἶναι*. Others (Scatena, de Marchi) see a contrast between *δυνάμενοι* and *ἀδύνατοι* (596). But there is too much difference between *ἀδύνατοι* *ἰοῦν* *court* and *δυνάμενοι εἶναι σοφοί* for this to be true. The one concerns political power and the other intellectual ability.

(3) In 600, the normal verb to go with both γέλωτα and μωρίαν in this connection is ὀφλισκάνειν. (Cf. *Alc.* 1093, *Med.* 404, *Hclid.* 985, *Hec.* 327, *Supp.* 846, *HF* 1348, *Ion* 443, *IT* 488, *Pho.* 763, *Ba.* 854, fr. 862.)¹⁴ As far as I can determine, λαμβάνειν is unexampled in this sense. It would have been easy, too, for the author to write μωρίαν τ' ὀφλήσομεν as Nauck thought he had. But if he did, the corruption is unexplained.

(4) 602 is faulty in sense and scansion when judged by fifth-century tragic standards. The first metron has an anapaest in its second half. And in fifth-century Greek, λόγιοι are chroniclers, local historians, who are definitely out of place here. Several conjectures have been put forward, but the ones that are Greek are only tenuously related to the manuscript tradition. I would suggest, however, that the line cannot be emended because it was written precisely as we have it. Understood as a piece not of classical but of imperial Greek it makes perfect sense. Here is what the Atticist Phrynichus says about λόγιος:

ὥς οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ δεινοῦ εἰπεῖν καὶ ὑψηλοῦ, οὐ τιθέασιν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοῦ τὰ ἐν ἐκάστῳ ἔθνεϊ ἐπιχώρια ἐξηγουμένου.¹⁵

From this protest, we learn that λόγιος has come to mean “eloquent” by the second century A.D. That is precisely the meaning that is needed in our passage. For eloquence is the quality required for political prominence in almost any age. As for the meter, a late histrionic interpolator need not always have been too strict about the difference between tragic and comic scansion.¹⁶

(5) It should be further noted that χρώμαι τῇ πόλει is a rather prosaic expression with no parallel in tragedy. (Cf. *Xen. Hel.* 2.3.13; *Hyper. Eux.* 28; *Plut. Per.* 15, *Comp. Nic. et Crass.* 3.)

(6) 602–603 are difficult to construe. Sense may be obtained by taking the genitive in 602 as a genitive of comparison dependent on the adverb πλέον which modifies ἐς ἀξίωμα βάς: “having attained a greater status than the eloquent speakers who are active in politics I shall be guarded against by (their) votes.” This is preferable to taking πλέον, as Owen does, with φρουρήσομαι, for this leaves the genitive with nothing to depend on and πλέον with no point.¹⁷ But while this is possible, it is rather clumsily

¹⁴κτάομαι is used twice in Euripides with similar meaning (*Med.* 210 and *IT* 676) but with different objects. Cf. also *Soph. Ant.* 924.

¹⁵Phrynichus 176 (Fischer). See LSJ s.v. and also at λογιότης.

¹⁶Anapaests, of course, are common in the trimeters of comedy both old and new. They also appear elsewhere in tragic interpolations, e.g., *IA* 1580, 1584, 1589, 1596.

¹⁷The genitive cannot depend on ἀξίωμα, for it is doubtful whether in Greek I can enter upon or invade the ἀξίωμα of a particular individual any more than in English I can enter upon or invade his good name. An ἀξίωμα is something one possesses oneself, the standing or

expressed, since *πλέον* by its position doesn't seem to belong to the participial clause but rather to what follows, as Owen takes it. And taking it with what precedes leaves only two words for the main clause of the sentence, a somewhat lame windup to the sentence's elaborate beginning. We are also bound to ask what it means to say that Ion will be "guarded against by (their) votes." This expression might mean ostracism, or being voted out at the next election, or simply a coalition of politicians trying to reduce Ion's effectiveness in office by combining against him. (Cf. 605–606, which are compatible with all of the above.) Just what it is that should deter Ion from a political career is left exceedingly vague. This objection will not perhaps seem weighty to all temperaments, but I do not think it is captious. Something is expressed clumsily and lamely and turns out when examined not to mean anything in particular. Perhaps Euripides, a poet known in antiquity for his *σαφήνεια*, wrote this on one of his bad days. But perhaps he did not.

(7) The Greek for "That is the way things usually happen" is *οὕτω γίγνεσθαι φιλεῖ*. The infinitive is not optional in main clauses, though in Plato and subsequent authors it is sometimes omitted in subordinate clauses. Its omission in 604 is noticeable and awkward.

Thus far we have seen a high concentration of fairly serious difficulties in 602–604, four or five in all, and it is therefore no great surprise when we read in the Prinz-Wecklein appendix that their excision has already been proposed. But these three lines do not detach easily from their context since 605–606 plainly adhere to 602–604, while 595–601 would clearly be incomplete without a continuation. It should be remembered too that 595–601 are not free of serious difficulty either, as we have seen in (2) and (3) above. Suspicion thus rests on a passage that extends from 595 to 606. (I see no reason to doubt 593–94: they are the logical continuation of what precedes.¹⁸)

status of which one is deemed worthy. (Cf. *Hec.* 293, *El.* 658.) Elsewhere, at any rate, to possess or gain the *ἀξίωμα* of someone or something is an entirely different idea, to be deemed worthy of receiving that person or thing: cf. 62, *Tro.* 485, *Or.* 9. To construe the genitive with *ψήφοισι* is unnatural.

¹⁸One of this journal's anonymous referees suggested that *ἀσθενὴς μὲν ὢν* in 593 is in antithesis with *ἦν δ' ἐς τὸ πρῶτον κτλ.* of 595 ff. and that the speaker is methodically covering all the possibilities. Therefore, he says, 593 f. will have to be deleted if the rest goes. I do not think that this is the unavoidable conclusion. For to take *ὢν* as conditional is far from obvious: the participle just before it is causal. The most natural logic of the passage is as follows. The pure-blooded Athenian people are proud of their autochthony and have no use for men of illegitimate and non-Athenian birth. Since Ion is both illegitimate and non-Athenian and therefore can enjoy no power, he will be called a nullity, son of nullities. If *ὢν* is conditional, a different and weaker argument results. The Athenians are proud of their autochthony and therefore if I do not prove myself by succeeding in politics, they will despise me.

The logic of these suspected lines is no better than their grammar and meter. The passage just before them contains considerations of particular relevance to Ion and suggests why he will have an unhappy life in Athens. Likewise 607–20 refer to the particular details of the difficult domestic situation which his arrival will give rise to. Not only will the city not receive him, but his own home will be hostile.¹⁹ In between these two complementary passages stand lines with no particular relevance to Ion but discussing in quite general terms the difficulties and dangers of political life. These lines stand in contradiction to their context both in premises and conclusion. The entire passage is therefore rendered weak at best, nonsensical at worst.

The easiest way to see this is to compare the argument we have with two valid arguments we might have had. Ion might have said, “Father, I do not wish to go to Athens, for I want to make a name for myself in public life, and the political situation in Athens is such that I could never succeed. The Athenian masses are hostile to men of ability, the intellectuals despise anyone who aspires to power, and I understand that the ruling clique keeps things pretty much in their own hands.” This is a practical argument based on unpropitious circumstances in a particular place, Athens. Political eminence is good in principle, but as a practical matter unattainable in Athens. But that is not what 595–606 mean. There is nothing specifically Athenian about the situation they describe. The terms are universal, as is clear from 597 (*λυπρὰ γὰρ τὰ κρείσσονα*) and 605–606. And therefore the conclusion is not specific but universal, and based not on practicalities but on general principle. The desire for success in political life is everywhere misguided. For wherever a man lives, some will be powerless, some powerful, and some will consider the game not worth the candle.

The second argument would run as follows: “Father, it is my opinion that happiness is not to be had in the political arena. Conditions are such there that one can never succeed. The masses will hate you for your ability, the wise will despise you for trying, and your competitors will thwart you. *If I go to Athens, I am sure to be caught up in political life against my better judgment*, and so I do not propose to go.” This too is a valid argument. Quietism is right in principle but impossible to carry out in Athens. But again that is not what the Greek says. The italicized words above are essential to the argument but are nowhere represented in the text.²⁰ And the fact that there are in Athens a number of able men who do not go into

¹⁹I prefer to follow Dindorf and Wilamowitz in deleting 616–17. We do not want a reference to Creusa as cunning murderess just before Ion’s words of pity for her. And if murderous propensities were going to be mentioned, they ought logically to have been those of stepmothers for stepsons rather than those of women generally for men.

²⁰595 begins neutrally “If I go into politics,” not “I am bound to get involved in politics.”

politics tells against this idea: why could he not join them? Furthermore, if Ion were of the opinion that political power is worthless, he would have no objection to being *ἀσθενής*. But to judge from 591–94, Ion's foreign blood and illegitimate birth will be galling to him in Athens at least in part because they will make him weak and a nonentity. These lines make neither the one argument nor the other.

The whole can thus be summarized: "I do not want to go to Athens. For people who go into politics are foolish." Since this is not an argument, the conclusion is therefore hard to resist that 595–606 are an essay on quietism inorganically stuck into a deliberation to which they do not contribute. Some will no doubt argue that this does not preclude their being by Euripides, that it is quite in his manner to inject his *obiter dicta* without regard to dramatic propriety. In the present case, however, it will be sufficient to point out the improbability that Euripides was illogical, ungrammatical, unmetrical, and faulty in his word-choice all at the same time.

If we remove these lines, we pass from 594 to 607 without any perceptible break. And we are also spared the unwelcome interruption between the discussion of Ion's position in the city and that of his life in the palace. After 620, however, we again find ourselves in the realm of the vague and the general. And again difficulties of style and sense, together with logical absurdities, begin to appear.

(1) In 622–23, τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον ἡδύ, τὰν δόμοισι δὲ λυπηρά is a remarkable antithesis: the face is pleasant, but the domestic circumstances or aspects are painful.²¹

(2) In 627 f. the author has hold of a *topos*, but his hold is not very secure. τοὺς πονηροὺς ἡδονὴ φίλους ἔχειν misstates the case. It is one thing to say that the tyrant mistrusts excellence and rejoices in the κακοί (Hdt. 3.80) or that tyranny is πονηρόφιλον (Arist. *Pol.* 1314A1). It is quite another to say that it is a positive pleasure for the tyrant to have the base as his friends.²² If it is a pleasure for him, why should he object? (Ion himself says later, 646–47, that the actual character of the object of pleasure is a matter of indifference if one is really pleased with it.) Wilamowitz saw this objection, but the remedy he proposed—δῶ for ᾧ τοὺς—does not help.

²¹If πρόσωπον is an architectural metaphor (façade), as suggested to me by one of this journal's referees, there is a plausible contrast, that between the outside of the palace and its life inside. But the primary, non-metaphorical, meaning of πρόσωπον, unlike that of "façade," is not architectural, and a context where buildings are mentioned seems necessary in order for the metaphorical meaning to come to mind: cf. *Ion* 188 and Pind. *Pyth.* 6.14. And τῆς τυραννίδος τὸ πρόσωπον provides no help in that direction.

²²Scatena writes on 627 "ἡδονή. Non 'piacere' ma 'convenienza.'" But it was Humpty-Dumpty, rather than Euripides, who said that a word meant whatever he wanted it to.

(3) The verb ἐκνικᾶν (629) occurs nowhere else in tragedy nor indeed, as far as I can tell, in poetry. It does not occur with an object until the imperial period.²³ The whole line surely rates among the flattest in all tragedy, a *prolepsis* of which the dullest beginning student of verse composition would be capable.

(4) Lines 630–31 are the reply to this *prolepsis*: “I do not enjoy hearing noises while preserving wealth in my hands, nor do I enjoy enduring toils.” What noises? What toils? Murray suggests that the former are the noises one starts at when one is afraid. This is probably what the author meant. And the toils? Large estates require much work to tend them, of course. What should be noted here is the elliptical quality of this argument. The author appears to be writing a kind of short-hand for an audience long familiar with tyrants “hearing noises” and “having toils.” He need do no more than allude to these clichés, without providing any details or argument, because they are part of the well-worn coinage of his day. Contrast the explicit way the second theme is handled in *Pho.* 552 f. It should also be noted that ἐν χερσὶ σῶζων ὀλβον is less than felicitous. Why ἐν χερσὶ ? Why σῶζων ?

(5) Finally, whoever wrote this improving essay did not stop to reflect that the situation it presupposes is incompatible with Ion’s later remarks about being jostled in the street: this is not the normal fate of tyrants. It is also incompatible, for similar reasons, with the lines about entering the political fray. This latter fact need not surprise even if both come from the same interpolator. A man who is merely gratifying a taste for sententiousness in his audience need not worry about logic or dramatic situation. It is not inconceivable, however, that two such men have been at work here, one inspired by the other. It should also be noticed that Xuthus has offered Ion what he himself possesses, kingship. The author of these lines makes Ion call both gift and owner worthless.

At 633 we leave behind arid generalities and rhetorical posturing²⁴ and begin to hear once more the accents of a speaking voice talking about a concrete human situation. Because he cannot hope for success at Athens, Ion prefers to remain in Delphi where he will not have to endure the jostlings of his inferiors and where he enjoys a life of leisure, smiling faces, novel companions, and untroubled justice. These are small things, he admits, but his pleasure in them is real (646–47). We will not be wrong if we hear in these lines, and particularly the last, a measure of wistful self-consolation, an attempt to placate his sense of greatness foregone. These

²³Aelian *VH* 10.1; Synesius *Ep.* 67; Callistratus *Stat.* 9.

²⁴The flat *prolepsis* of 629 is one example. Note also the bombastic τίς μακάριος, τίς εὐτυχής.

lines are far from being a disparagement of high political destiny. They are merely Ion's way of trying to convince himself that he can do without it.

Further confirmation that the disputed lines are not original comes from Xuthus' speech in reply. Xuthus, to be sure, is no towering intellect, and he may not be the man to appreciate to the full an argument to the effect that being king is not all jam. But if he has just heard a speech in which both practical and principled objections are raised, one might expect him to say something in reply to the latter. He says nothing. Even more striking is Ion's next speech. As soon as Xuthus has explained that Ion's impediments of birth are not fatal to his success and that he will install him on the throne, *Ion is satisfied* (668).²⁵ Now only one thing is lacking from complete good fortune, he says. I must find my mother. May she be an Athenian so that I will have no impediment whatever to *παρρησία*. These are not the words of a man averse in principle to holding power. Ion, as we saw earlier, does not mean to be *ἀσθενής*.

Ion's speech gains immensely with the loss of these two versified essays on the theme *λάθε βιώσας*. Neither is in character. Ion is no proto-Epicurean but the son of Apollo and the father both of the Ionian race and of the Athenians, whom no one ever praised for their retiring ways. Even as a temple-slave he has had inklings of that high calling. (Cf. 153.) Below is his speech as restored:

- 585 οὐ ταῦτ' ὄνειδος φαίνεται τῶν πραγμάτων
 πρόσσθεν ὄντων ἐγγύθεν θ' ὀρωμένων.
 ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν μὲν συμφορὰν ἀσπάζομαι,
 πατέρα σ' ἀνευρών· ὦν δὲ γινώσκω, πάτερ,
 ἄκουσον. εἰναί φασι τὰς αὐτόχθονας
 590 κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας οὐκ ἐπίσακτον γένος,
 ἔν' ἐσπεσοῦμαι δύο νόσω κεκτημένος,
 πατρός τ' ἐπακτοῦ καὐτὸς ὦν νοθαγενής.
 καὶ τοῦτ' ἔχων τοῦνειδος, ἀσθενής μὲν ὦν
 (ἄρ' οὐ τὸ) μηδὲν κοῦδένων κεκλήσομαι;
 607 ἔλθων δ' ἐς οἶκον ἀλλότριον ἔπηλυσ ὦν
 γυναικικά θ' ὥς ἄτεκνον, ἥ κοινουμένη
 τὰς συμφοράς σοι πρόσθεν, ἀπολαχοῦσα νῦν
 610 αὐτῇ καθ' αὐτὴν τὴν τύχην οἴσει πικρῶς,
 πῶς οὐχ ὑπ' αὐτῆς εἰκότως μισήσομαι,
 ὅταν παραστῶ σοὶ μὲν ἐγγύθεν ποδός,

²⁵Xuthus directs not a word against the principled objections to kingship or political life found in our manuscripts. If we retain those lines, we must assume that Ion is merely talking for the sake of talk, propounding arguments that he abandons without having encountered a single objection to them.

- ἥ δ' οὖσ' ἄτεκνος τὰ σὰ φίλ' εἰσορᾷ πικρῶς,
 κᾶτ' ἢ προδοὺς σύ μ' ἐς δάμαρτα σὴν βλέπῃς
 615 ἢ τὰ μὰ τιμῶν δῶμα συγχέας ἔχῃς;
 618 ἄλλως τε τὴν σὴν ἄλοχον οἰκτίρω, πάτερ,
 ἅ παιδα γηράσκουσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἄξια
 620 πατέρων ἅπ' ἐσθλῶν οὖσ' ἀπαιδίᾳ νοσεῖν.
 633 ἅ δ' ἐνθάδ' εἶχον ἀγάθ' ἄκουσόν μου, πάτερ·
 τὴν φιλτάτην μὲν πρῶτον ἀνθρώποις σχολὴν
 635 ὄχλον τε μέτριον, οὐδέ μ' ἐξέπληξ' ὁδοῦ
 πονηρὸς οὐδεὶς· κείνο δ' οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
 εἵκειν ὁδοῦ χαλῶντα τοῖς κακίοσιν.
 θεῶν δ' ἐν εὐχαῖς ἢ λόγοισιν ἢ βροτῶν,
 ὑπηρετῶν χαίρουσιν, οὐ γοωμένοις.
 640 καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐξέπεμπον, οἳ δ' ἦκον ξένοι,
 ὥσθ' ἡδὺς αἰεὶ καινὸς ἐν καινοῖσιν ἦ.
 ὃ δ' εὐκτὸν ἀνθρώποισι, κἄν ἄκουσιν ἦ,
 δίκαιον εἶναί μ' ὁ νόμος ἢ φύσις θ' ἅμα
 παρεῖχε τῷ θεῷ. ταῦτα συννοούμενος
 645 κρείσσω νομίζω τὰνθάδ' ἢ τὰ κεῖ, πάτερ.
 ἔα δ' ἔμ' αὐτοῦ ζῆν· ἴση γὰρ ἡ χάρις,
 μεγάλοισι χαίρειν σμικρά θ' ἡδέως ἔχειν.