

Vsevolod Zeltchenko

EUR. *IT* 819: A PARALLEL

In the famous recognition scene from *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Orestes tells his sister about certain details and events from her past that no stranger could be aware of. Among other things, he mentions that, when sending Iphigenia to Aulis for her supposed wedding to Achilles, Clytaemestra gave her water for the prenuptial bath (818). My focus will be on Iphigenia's response to these words (819):

OP. καὶ λούτρ' ἐς Αὐλιν μητρὸς ἀνεδέξω πάρα;
IΦ. οἶδ'· οὐ γὰρ ὁ γάμος ἐσθλὸς ὧν μ' ἀφείλετο.

At a time when Euripides' work was evaluated according to the rigorous principles of common sense and classical aesthetics, this line was seldom left as it is. The only relatively popular defense of the *paradosis* came from August Matthiä, who attributed to Iphigenia a kind of status pride inappropriate in the grim circumstances of her failed marriage: “Nuptiae enim bonae, cum nobili viro ineundae, non effecerunt, ut lavacris a matre ministrandis carerem”.¹ For the most part, the text was subjected to emendations,² some of which were quite radical (οὐ γὰρ ὁ γάμος ἐσθλὸς ὧν μ' ἐπωφέλει Kirchhoff, οὐ γὰρ ὁ χρόνος μακρὸς ὧν μ' ἀφείλετο Nauck, οἴκου γὰρ ὁ γάμος ἐξολῶν μ' ἀφείκετο F. G. Schmidt etc.).

This state of affairs changed when Reinhold Klotz and Henri Weil, both relying on a scholion in **L** that was later established to belong to Demetrius Triclinius (<ἀφείλετο>· τοῦτο τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι), argued that the text is sound and the object of ἀφείλετο is the infinitive obtained from οἶδα. Iphigenia implies that a happy marriage could have erased the memory of the mother's gift, but it is now forever

¹ Matthiae 1823, 465.

² They are listed in Wecklein 1898, 76.

etched in her mind.³ When Euripidean scholarship had become accustomed to subtle and intricate psychological interpretations, this idea enjoyed universal success from N. Wecklein (1876, *dubitanter*) to M. Cropp (2000); to avoid unnecessary suspense, I will say that I judge it to be correct. In his instructive note to *Hel.* 577, Richard Kannicht collected examples of similar ellipses of the object after *verba privandi*, including *Andr.* 913: *κᾶκτεινας, ἥ τις συμφορά σ' ἀφείλετο* (sc. τὸ κτείνειν);⁴

Nevertheless, this *communis opinio* has been called into question by Poulheria Kyriakou, L. P. E. Parker, and Emily Kearns in their recent commentaries on the tragedy:

The problem with this explanation is that a happy marriage does not necessarily erase the memories of its ritual preliminaries. One would expect a bitter comment along the lines of “I know, but the unhappy marriage did not allow me to use that water”. Perhaps *λουτρά* is the implied object of the verb. Iphigeneia may suggest that the marriage, though dismal in every other respect, did not at least deprive her of this kind of maternal care.⁵

Most editors understand οὐ with both *ἐσθλὸς* and *ἀφείλετο*, and understand: ‘For the marriage, not being *ἐσθλός*, did not take away the knowledge’. Kovacs takes *ἐσθλός* as ironic. But either way, the underlying assumption is that if the marriage had been fortunate, she might have forgotten the pre-nuptial bath. Schöne – Köchly’s *εἰ γάρ <...>* might satisfy someone who is prepared to believe that a happy marriage might make one forget the wedding ceremony. The rest of us will remain puzzled.⁶

³ Klotz 1860, 114–115 (“Scio. Neque enim nuptiae probae [Iphigeniae nuptiae improbae potius dicendae erant] mihi abstulerunt eius rei memoriam”); Weil 1868, 508 (“Le sens de ces mots doit être: «Je me le rappelle: ce n’est pas le bonheur de mon mariage qui m’en a ôté le souvenir». Iphigénie aurait pu oublier ce détail, s’il avait été suivi d’un heureux mariage; mais, se trouvant lié aux souvenirs ineffaçables du jour le plus funeste de sa vie, il est resté gravé dans sa mémoire”).

⁴ Kannicht 1969, 163–164.

⁵ Kyriakou 2006, 273.

⁶ Parker 2016, 225.

...In that case it is difficult to make sense of ἐσθλὸς ὄν: why should a good marriage erase memories of the ritual preliminaries? The line is very likely corrupt.⁷

This criticism is symptomatic. Indeed, the interpretation of Klotz and Weil, for all its depth and elegance, needs not only grammatical but above all substantive parallels. Without them, the idea that a happy marriage could make someone forget the circumstances of the prenuptial ceremony could easily appear like a typical example of anachronistic over-psychologizing, an ‘Ibsenism’. I will attempt to propose such a parallel.

In 1928, Girolamo Vitelli and Medea Norsa published a papyrus fragment of Erinna’s *Distaff* (*PSI IX 1090* = 401 SH = Erinna. F 4 Neri), the renowned hexametric ποιημάτων most likely dating from the 4th c. BC. In this poem, written in the first person, Erinna mourns her friend Baucis, who left home to get married and died shortly after the wedding. In the lines preserved on the papyrus, Erinna, interrupting her memories with exclamations of grief, evokes scenes from the common infancy of two girls, with their games, scary fairy tales, and carefree activities. In his monumental edition of Erinna’s *testimonia et fragmenta*, Camillo Neri argued that these flashbacks do not refer to different periods of time, as was previously thought, but to a single night on which “un rito di nubile” took place.⁸ This hypothesis cannot be discussed here; suffice it to say that if Neri is right (I am not entirely convinced that he is),⁹ this would add weight to my argument, since the parallel with Euripides turns out to be closer. After the set of recollections, Erinna continues as follows (28–30):

άνικα δ’ ἐς [λ]έχος [άνδρὸς ἔβας, τ]όκα πάντ’ ἐλέλασο,
 ἄσσο’ ἔτι νηπιάσσασα τε[ἄς παρὰ] ματρὸς ἄκουσας,
 Βαυκί φίλα· λάθας ..ε.[]. Αφροδίτα.

⁷ Kearns 2023, 213.

⁸ Neri 2003, 90 *et alibi*.

⁹ One of the reviewers expressed enthusiastic support for Neri’s thesis: “It is hard to resist this interpretation. The old perception that the poem describes with childish naivety scenes of everyday life must be laid to rest once and for all” (Spanoudakis 2007, 208).

V. 28 *suppl.* P. Maas:¹⁰ this ingenious reconstruction, which fits with the traces of letters and the context, has been widely accepted and does not require further justification. V. 29 as printed above was also completed by Maas, and this conjecture also became deservedly popular; but here we need a digression. In 1977, M. L. West suggested that the lacuna contained a possessive pronoun of the first person rather than of the second, referring to *Erinna's* mother: ἄσσ' ἔτι νήπια εἶτα τ' ἐ[μᾶς ἐν(ι)] μάτρος ἄκουσας.¹¹ C. Neri made a strong case for νηπιάσασα ("l'unica forma compatibile con le tracce"),¹² but retained τ' [ἐμᾶς παρὰ (vel ποκα)]. His reasons are as follows: (1) a trace after τ "sembra riconducibile a un apostrofo piuttosto che a una lettera";¹³ (2) above in v. 23 (one of the flashbacks), a μάτηρ, mentioned without any clarification, can only be Erinna's (cf. *AP* 9. 190. 5–6). In my opinion, νηπιάσασα τ' is impossible because of the particle's position and meaning (Neri vaguely characterizes it as τε *épieque* "con una sfumatura temporale", without discussing the eccentric word order).¹⁴ Since τοι is equally unimaginable here, the assumption of an apostrophe must be rejected.¹⁵ As for argument (2), it does not seem necessary to consider two mothers as the same person. Erinna still remembers her mother's tale about Mormo (vv. 23–27); in contrast, Baucis forgot all *her* mother's words.¹⁶ For v. 30, cf. West's conclusion: "Scholars have sought

¹⁰ Maas 1929a; Maas 1929b; Maas 1934.

¹¹ West 1977, 108 ("If we read εἶτα, τεᾶς is no longer possible, because the τ must represent τ': 'in your infancy and then...'. Elided τ', or there is no caesura").

¹² Neri 2003, 356; cf. 355 (objections against νηπία εἶτα, both palaeographic and metrical).

¹³ *Ibid.* 355; cf. 71; 327. The text of *PSI* IX 1090 is provided with apostrophes, although not systematically.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 358. Neri's references to "*LSJ* 1765 s. v. C 5" (dealing with Homeric ὅτε τε) and "Denniston *GP* 524" (a section devoted to such combinations as ἐξ οὗτε, ἴνα τε or ἐπεῖτε) are misleading.

¹⁵ I am unable to examine the papyrus directly, but both West and the editors of *Supplementum Hellenisticum* assumed that the trace after τ could well be part of ε (West 1977, 99; Lloyd-Jones, Parsons 1983, 191).

¹⁶ We must also dismiss the two peculiar interpretations of μάτηρ in v. 29. D. L. Page believed that vv. 23–29 referred to the girls playing house: Erinna took on the role of the mother and Baucis that of the daughter. "When she says 'You forgot all you heard from Mother when you were a child', she plainly means 'all you heard from me': she can have no interest in whether Baucis forgets things said to her by her real mother in the past" (Page 1981, 344;

the sense ‘Aphrodite made you forget’. A more general proposition such as ‘Aphrodite makes people forget many things’ would, I think, be more effective, but I cannot restore the Greek”.¹⁷

When Baucis came to the marital bed, she forgot everything her mother had told her while she was a maiden; Iphigenia, who had never experienced the joys of marriage, forgot nothing. This parallel, it seems, helps us to understand Euripides’ aphoristic line better and to dispel the doubts expressed by Kyriakou and Kearns (“Why should a good marriage erase memories of the ritual preliminaries?”). If Iphigenia had been blessed with an ἑσθλὸς γάμος, she would have forgotten not her prenuptial bath itself, but rather the touching detail that Clytaemestra provided the water for it. The notion that marriage separates a daughter from her mother, destroying their close personal bond, appears as early as in Sappho’s epithalamia (fr. 104a Voigt; Theocr. 18. 12–15; cf. Hes. *OD* 520–521). There is no need to emphasize that this exchange between Iphigenia and Orestes is imbued with tragic irony, highlighting the stark contrast of their idyllic past and their dire present: the mother Orestes speaks of was killed by him, and the ritual ablution was performed on Iphigenia not as a bride, but as a victim.

Vsevolod Zeltchenko

*Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran),
Yerevan*

vsevolodzelcenko@gmail.com

cf. Page 1941, 487, n. b). However, it remains unclear what important and memorable words Erinna could have said to Baucis during their one-time game, as there is simply no room for this *message* on the papyrus (see Bowra 1953, 157 n. 1 for other objections). Zdeněk K. Vysoký assumed that ‘mother’ in all three cases (vv. 23, 29 and *AP* 9. 190. 5–6 [an anonymous epigram on Erinna]) refers to the leader of a ‘Sapphic’ *thiasos* to which Erinna and Baucis belonged (Vysoký 1942, 97–98). Without getting into a discussion about *thiasoi*, I would like to note that Vysoký fails to provide examples of μήτηρ being used in this way: παῖς, adopted by Sappho to designate the young members of her circle, does not necessarily mean ‘daughter’, and Kleis from Sapph. fr. 98; 132 Voigt was the real daughter of the poetess (Hallett 1982).

¹⁷ West 1977, 108. For various attempts for reconstruction, see Neri 2003, 360–364; the general sense is clear.

Bibliography

- C. M. Bowra, *Problems in Greek Poetry* (Oxford 1953).
- J. Hallett, “Beloved Cleis”, *QUCC* 19 (1982) 21–31.
- R. Kannicht (ed., comm.), *Euripides. Helena* II (Heidelberg 1969).
- E. Kearns (ed., comm.), *Euripides. Iphigenia in Tauris* (Cambridge 2023).
- R. Klotz (ed., comm.), *Euripidis Tragoediae* III: 2 (Gotha–Erfurt 1860).
- P. Kyriakou, *A Commentary on Euripides’ Iphigenia in Tauris* (Berlin – New York 2006).
- H. Lloyd-Jones, P. Parsons (eds.), *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Indices in hoc Supplementum necnon in Powellii Collectanea Alexandrina confecit H.-G. Nesselrath (Berlin – New York 1983).
- P. Maas, rev.: [G. Vitelli, “Frammenti della Conocchia di Erinna”, *BSAA* 24 (1928) 9–16], *DLZ* n. s. 6 (1929a) 116–117.
- P. Maas, “Addenda et corrigenda”, in: *Papiri greci e latini* IX (Florence 1929b) XI–XIV.
- P. Maas, “Erinnae in Baucidem nenia”, *Hermes* 69 (1934) 206–209.
- A. Matthiae (ed., comm.), *Euripidis Tragoediae et fragmenta* VII (Lipsiae 1823).
- C. Neri, *Erinna. Testimonianze e frammenti* (Bologna 2003).
- D. L. Page (ed., transl.), *Greek Literary Papyri* I (London – Cambridge, Mass. 1941 [31950]).
- D. L. Page (ed., comm.), *Further Greek Epigrams: Epigrams before A.D. 50 from the Greek Anthology and other sources, not included in “Hellenistic Epigrams” or “The Garland of Philip”*. Rev. and prep. for publication by R. D. Dawe and J. Diggle (Cambridge 1981).
- L. P. E. Parker (ed., comm.), *Euripides. Iphigenia in Tauris* (Oxford 2016).
- K. Spanoudakis, rev.: Neri 2003, *Gnomon* 79 (2007) 204–209.
- Z. K. Vysoký, “Erinna”, *Listy filologické* 69 (1942) 85–113.
- N. Wecklein (ed.), *Euripidis Fabulae*. Ed. R. Prinz, N. Wecklein II: 1 (Leipzig 1898).
- H. Weil (ed., comm.), *Sept tragédies d’Euripide* (Paris 1868 [21879]).
- M. L. West, “Erinna”, *ZPE* 25 (1977) 95–119.

During a tense exchange with Orestes, Euripides’ Iphigenia appears to suggest that a happy marriage should erase a young woman’s memory of the events preceding it. This unusual idea has puzzled three recent commentators on the tragedy, P. Kyriakou, L. P. E. Parker, and E. Kearns, who suggest that v. 819 is corrupt. The article draws attention to the fact that the same notion is implied in a papyrus fragment of Erinna (F 4, 28–30 Neri). This parallel enables Iphigenia’s response to be interpreted more accurately: if she had been destined for a happy marriage, she would have forgotten not her prenuptial bath, but the fact that the water for it was given to her by her mother.

В напряженный момент диалога с Орестом еврипидовская Ифигения как будто дает понять, что счастливый брак должен отнимать у девушки память о том, что ему предшествовало. Эта необычная мысль вызвала недоумение трех недавних комментаторов трагедии, которые, совпав в этом с длинным рядом старых издателей, предлагают считать ст. 819 испорченным. В статье обращается внимание на то, что аналогичное представление выражено в папирусном фрагменте Эринны (F 4, 28–30 Neri). Более того, эта параллель позволяет точнее истолковать ответ Ифигении: будь ей сужден счастливый брак, она могла бы забыть не о самом предсвадебном омовении, но о том, что вода для него была передана матерью.

CONSPECTUS

NICHOLAS LANE	
Two Conjectures on Pindar	5
VSEVOLOD ZELTCHENKO	
Eur. <i>IT</i> 819: A Parallel	10
CAROLUS M. LUCARINI	
In <i>Pindari Scholia</i> adversaria	17
ELIA SCHNAIBLE	
Varia epigraphica	35
ELENI AVDOULOU	
Sardanapal(l)us in Cicero and Philodemus' <i>On Rhetoric</i> Book 3	48
MARIA N. KAZANSKAYA	
The Expression <i>longus Hellespontus</i> in Ovid	56
HEIKO ULLRICH	
Eine vergessene Konjektur J. G. Frazers zu Ov. <i>Fast.</i> 5, 74	77
DENIS KEYER	
“Waxing the Knees of the Gods” in Juvenal (10. 55) and Prudentius (<i>Apoth.</i> 457)	102
GRIGORY BELIKOV	
Maximos von Tyros und Apologie des Sokrates	131
GIOVANNI ZAGO	
Per il testo e l'esegesi di Aviano, <i>Fab.</i> 40. 1–4	155
S. DOUGLAS OLSON	
Philological Notes on the Letter <i>lambda</i> in a New Greek-English Dictionary. IV. λογοςκόπος – λωφάω	161
Keywords	188
Guidelines for contributors	190

Статьи сопровождаются резюме на русском и английском языке
Summary in Russian and English