An Emendation in *Hippolytus* 1014*

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Oxford 1008-1015 reads

δεί δὴ σε δείξαι τῷ τρόπῳ διεφθάρην.
póterα τὸ τίθεν σιῶμ᾽ ἐκαλλιστεύετο

1010 ποισῶν γυναικῶν: ἦ σὸν οἰκήσειν δόμον
ἐγκλήρον εὐνήν προσαλοβῶν ἐπηλπίσα; 
μάταιος ὁρ’ ἦν, οὐδαμοῦ μὲν οὐν φρέναν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὁς τυραννεῖν ἤδυ τοῖς σωφροσύν;
’ ἠκείστα γ’, εἰ μή τὸς φρένας διεφθορεῖν

1015 θνητῶν ὅσοισιν ἀνδάνει μοναρχία.

Hippolytus is defending himself against hypothetical motives for raping Phaedra: that she is beautiful; that he would attempt, through her, “to live in [Theseus’] house” and attain the rulership of the land. For the sense in this as a motive for rape see Barrett 351.

Lines 1013–1015 do not make sense as given above; accordingly, few scholars have attempted to interpret them without emending the text. One of them was Wilamowitz, who saw εἰ μή as an ellipsis for δείξαν γώρ ἄν ἦν, εἰ 

μή, meaning “as if not”. It would not then be the protasis to ἠκείστα γ’, but an independent clause: “als ob nicht die herrschaft den schon verblendet hat, dem sie gefällt.”

Lagercrantz offers a similar solution: ἀλλάς τυραννεῖν ἤδυ τοῖς σωφροσύν; ἠκείστα γ’, εἰ μὴ τὸς φρένας διεφθορεῖν...“hat übrigens die Herrschaft einen Reiz für die Verständigen? Keineswegs. Fürwahr hat die Herrschaft den Verstand der schon verdorben, die sie reizt”.

Barrett regards lines 1012–1015 “with the gravest suspicion” but suggests for line 1014 ἠκείστ’, ἐπεὶ τοῖς φρένας διεφθορεῖν...

(For more examples of emendation see Prinz and Wecklein.)

I my view the rhetoric of Hippolytus here presupposes an unreal condition. διεφθορεῖν in perfect tense seems awkward no matter how the passage is

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emended: in the text preferred by Wilamowitz and Lagercrantz we would expect an unreal or a gnomic aorist. I believe that Euripides wrote:

\[ \text{διεφθορή \ θνητῶν \ ὁσίουν \ ἀνδάνει \ μοναρχία.} \]

This offers an unreal conditional in past time. From line 1008 on Hippolytus defends himself in past tense: “You must show in what way I was destroyed. That her body was the most beautiful of all women’s? … that I hoped to live in your house? I would have been an utter fool, out of my mind!” In what follows Hippolytus does not introduce any new arguments but rather elaborates the last one, offering a sub-argument to the “I would have been a fool” conceit in 1012: “I would have been an utter fool! But you say it is wonderful for the wise to rule? Most wonderful indeed, had it not been that everyone whom monarchy attracts gets his mind destroyed.”

For ἡδίστα cf. Supp. 1098, Or. 1054, IT 447 and also LSJ, s.v. ἱδός III.1. This would be an ellipsis for ἡδίστα γ’ ἢν ἢν (ταῦτα) or ἡδίστα γε λέγεις; or, Hippolytus being in affect, it may be a confusion of the two expressions. Moreover, in 986 Hippolytus stresses that he is not an accomplished orator, a fact which he demonstrates in his less than successful attempt at apology.

As for the corruption of the text one might expect the philosophically (but not rhetorically) trained reader to interpret ἡδίστα as ἡδίστα, knowing that kingship is vanity, and miss the rest of the argument. The scholion is an illustration of this: οὐδεμιῶς ὑπέθυμε θαυμάζειν, εἰ μὴ ἐκστάσει τῶν φρενῶν. The scholiast who wrote this has in some way lost, or not considered, or not correctly understood line 1015. If this line is disregarded however the scholium offers a fair enough paraphrase of the passage, based on a reading of διεφθορή.

For διεφθορήν, the MSS M and O have διεφθορέν, whereas B has διεφθορέ; L offers the ‘correction’ διεφθορέν (not, I think, an existing Greek form, but perhaps it should be read διεφθορ’ ἢν). After πῶς had inevitably become τῶς (probably at an early stage, before ἡδίστα was changed) διεφθορή may have appeared strange to those who gave heed to line 1015: the verb would seem to want μοναρχία for a subject or, as in the case of διεφθορέν (if taken as a short form of διεφθορέσαν, or a mistaken form of aorist 1) an antecedent to ὁσίους in the plural. Accordingly it was subject to emendation, as is suggested by the great number of variant readings.

As for πῶς (which goes well with θνητῶν; cf. LSJ πῶς A. III.1) we may note that Euripides almost always places this word (in the masculine nominative singular) in the third longum of his iambic trimeter, both as a substantive (as here) and as an attribute to ὁνίπ (cf. HF 78, Ion 924, IA 1561, Med. 788, Fr. 162.3, 760, 781.36 (Nauck, the last w. σώφρον), Heracl. 339, El. 430, Hipp. 1185, IT 309). The only exception seems to be Ba. 482 where πῶς comes first in the line. This does not always apply in other instances of πῶς,
such as "πᾶς τυς, πᾶς λέως" etc., presumably because they do not call for such an emphatic position, not being equally pregnant.

References
These works are referred to in the text by the names of their authors only:


