

## An Emendation in *Hippolytus* 1014\*

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Oxford 1008-1015 reads

- δεῖ δὴ σε δεῖξαι τῷ τρόπῳ διεφθάρην.  
πότερα τὸ τήσδε σώμ' ἐκαλλιστεύετο  
1010 πασῶν γυναικῶν; ἢ σὸν οἰκήσειν δόμον  
ἔγκληρον εὐνήν προσλαβῶν ἐπήλιπτα;  
μάταιος ἄρ' ἦν, οὐδαμοῦ μὲν οὖν φρενῶν.  
ἀλλ' ὡς τυραννεῖν ἠδὺ τοῖσι σώφροσιν;  
† ἤκιστα γ', εἰ μὴ † τὰς φρένας διέφθορεν  
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 μὴ as an ellipsis for δεινὸν γὰρ ἂν ἦν, εἰ μὴ, meaning “as if not”. It would not then be the protasis to ἤκιστα γ', but an independent clause: “als ob nicht die herrschaft den schon verblendet hat, dem sie gefällt.”

Lagercrantz offers a similar solution: ἄλλως τυραννεῖν ἠδὺ τοῖσι σώφροσιν; ἤκιστα γ' ἢ μὴν τὰς φρένας διέφθορεν... “hat übrigens die Herrschaft einen Reiz für die Verständigen? Keineswegs. Fürwahr hat die Herrschaft den Verstand derer schon verdorben, die sie reizt”.

Barrett regards lines 1012–1015 “with the gravest suspicion” but suggests for line 1014 ἤκιστ', ἐπεὶ τοι τὰς φρένας διέφθορεν...

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

In my view the rhetoric of Hippolytus here presupposes an unreal condition. διέφθορεν 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:

ἤδιστα γ', εἰ μὴ πᾶς φρένας διεφθάρη  
θνητῶν ὅσοισιν 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 ἤδιστα cf. *Supp.* 1098, *Or.* 1054, *IT* 447 and also LSJ, s.v. ἡδύς III.1. This would be an ellipsis for ἤδιστα γ' ἂν ἦν (ταῦτα) or ἤδιστα 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 ἤδιστα as ἥκιστα, knowing that kingship is vanity, and miss the rest of the argument. The scholium is an illustration of this: οὐδαμῶς <ὁ> σῶφρων ἐπιθυμεῖ βασιλεύειν, εἰ μὴ ἐκσταίη 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 διεφθάρη.

For διέφθορεν, the MSS M and O have διέφθειρεν, whereas B has διέφθορε; L offers the 'correction' διέφθοραν (not, I think, an existing Greek form, but perhaps it should be read διέφθορ' ἄν). After πᾶς had inevitably become τᾶς (probably at an early stage, before ἤδιστα was changed) διεφθάρη 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 διέφθοραν (if taken as a short form of διεφθόρασιν, or a mistaken form of aorist 1) an antecedent to ὅσοισιν in the plural. Accordingly it was subject to emendation, as is suggested by the great number of variant readings.

As for πᾶς (which goes well with θνητῶν; cf. LSJ πᾶς 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 ἀνὴρ (cf. *HF* 78, *Ion* 924, *IA* 1561, *Med.* 788, *Fr.* 162.3, 760, 781.36 (Nauck, the last w. σῶφρων), *Heracl.* 339, *El.* 430, *Hipp.* 1185, *IT* 309). The only exception seems to be *Ba.* 482 where πᾶς comes first in the line. This does not always apply in other instances of πᾶς,

such as  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$   $\tau\iota\varsigma$ ,  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$   $\lambda\epsilon\acute{\omega}\varsigma$  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:

- Barrett Euripides, *Hippolytos*. Ed. with Introduction and Commentary by W. S. Barrett, Oxford 1964.
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