Thirty years ago Euripides’ IT was almost entirely ignored and was very poorly served by scholars. The available texts (Grégoire, Murray) were edited in the days before the fundamental work of Turyn and Zuntz enabled a full understanding of the nature of the manuscript evidence and the available commentaries (Platnauer, Strohm) were of limited value to students and scholars alike. The past generation, however, has witnessed an outbreak of interest in both the text and interpretation of the play. There have been new editions of the text in the Teubner (1981), OCT (1981) and Loeb (1999) series and a text, translation and commentary by Martin Cropp (2000) in the Aris & Phillips series, as well as a number of important studies of literary, dramatic and ritual aspects of the play, including now Matthew Wright, Euripides’ Escape-Tragedies: A Study of Helen, Andromeda, and Iphigenia among the Taurians (2005). K.’s splendid new commentary takes all of these works fully into consideration (except Wright’s, which appeared too late: 6 n. 3).

The beautifully produced volume consists of a 40-page introduction, a full and detailed commentary, metrical analysis of the lyric passages, up-to-date bibliography and somewhat helpful indexes. No text is included. K. has based her commentary very closely on Diggle’s Oxford text (vii: ‘I agree with the vast majority of the editor’s [i.e. Diggle’s] choices ... and nowhere would I certainly make a different editorial choice’). Since Diggle’s text is readily available, this does not inconvenience the reader unduly, but there are times when one might have hoped for a greater degree of independence.

For example, on line 6, K. refers to Diggle’s discussion in Studies on the Text of Euripides (1981) for ‘ὅντισιν with acc. denoting proximity’, so she presumably follows Diggle in adopting Monk’s ὅντισιν in preference to the manuscript’s ὅντισιν, but then she goes on to say (correctly, in my view), ‘ὅντισιν with acc. is not always different from ὅντισιν with dat.’ Again, on line 536, K. seems to register some faint doubts about Diggle’s adoption of Markland’s ὅντισιν. Those doubts ought to have been stronger; the manuscript’s ὅντισιν is the standard pronoun used as the ‘antecedent’ following a relative clause (Powell’s Lexicon to Herodotus, s.v. B.IV.1 lists 108 instances in that author alone).

On the whole K.’s discussions of textual and dramaturgical matters are very sound and sensible. She has an impressive ability to identify and to convey succinctly the decisive consideration that invalidates this or that argument put forth by earlier scholars. Commendably, she pays particular attention to details of staging and production. So, for example, her treatment of the presence on stage of non-speaking attendants (on lines 468b–71, 638 and 725–26) reviews all the evidence in a fair and comprehensive fashion. Not everyone, however, will be persuaded by her solution to the very real problems that the text presents, namely that at 725 Iph. comes out of the temple accompanied by attendants, whom she orders, immediately upon her entrance, to return to the temple, orders which she could perfectly well have given them while she and they were inside. Why would Euripides not instead have had Iph. come onstage and say, ‘I have given orders to those in charge of the sacrifice to make the necessary preparations inside’? In the introduction and throughout the commentary K. presents
numerous sensitive insights on literary matters, particularly regarding the «nobility of character» on the part of Iph. and Orestes, which «is not found again in the plays of the same period» (10), regarding the characterization of Iph., which «seems to have been pursued, to some extent at least, for its own sake and may be counted among the play’s innovations» (31), and regarding the way in which the play glosses over the uglier aspects of the Atreid family past (11–12 et passim).

There are only a small number of places where I would disagree with or would wish to supplement K.’s fine commentary, and these are mostly concerned with relatively minor matters of text and interpretation.

Line 3: K. approves the retention of παῖς but does not address the objection that none of the cited ‘parallels’ consists of a singular noun as predicate to more than one subject (for ἀξον at line-end in genealogies, see Or. 18, El. 35, Hel. 391, Med. 406, HF 826, Ion 292, Fr. 73a.1, 228a.18 Kannicht). 33: For the skeptical force of εἰ δὴν, see G. Wakker, Conditions and Conditions, Amsterdam 1994, 351–57. The sequence εἰ τι δὴν is almost exclusively tragic. 208: «It would be pointless to specify» that Clytaemnestra «was wooed by Greeks because Greek is the obvious nationality for the suitors of any Greek woman». True, but compare Or. 20–21 ὃς Ἰετεινόμενος λέγω [sc. γεμίζω] ἐπίσημον τις Ἐλληνας ἀγωνίζοντος ἀνένε, where ‘Ἐλληνας seems similarly self-evident. 249: That ἐπικλήσθη is not ‘employed here as a simple copula’ is shown both by the expression of agent (παῖς θετείνυον) and by the tense, which refers to Orestes’ repeated addresses to Pylades by name (285, 321). 265: ‘L’s reading υπερεξειόσει is less likely because of the rarity of the verb.’ On the contrary; emending to κανενέσθην had been a banalization. The ‘rare’ verb occurs at Αρ. Ach. 456, where it may be paratragic (= Eur. Fr. 99142 Austin; cf. C. Preiser, Euripides. Telephon, Spudasmata 78, Hildesheim 2000, 580). Here, the force of the preverb relates to the fact that the Taurian cowboy comes ‘away’ from the cave (262–63, 277, 281) in which he saved Orestes and Pylades sitting, 411–12: K. describes φανάριστον ὁμολέγησαν ὑπερεξειόσειν as «a remarkable phrase» but does not explain it or offer parallels for the use of the verb. Suppl. 233 ποιημένοις τ’οὐκετινόσειν comes closest, but perhaps we should rather read ὑπερεξειόσειν. 470–49: Whether ἴδει τὸν ἄγγελον δεξιμοίρων, ... εἰ τις ἐστι is «contrary to fact» is not at issue. See Wakker, Conditions 286–94, on «τι-conditional with subject or object function». 483: K. suggests that, «in Orestes’ mouth the address [γέναι] may be somewhat dismissive»; but cf. E. Dickey, Greek Forms of Address from Herodoto to Lucian, Oxford 1996, 86, who says that, «when used to women who are not married to the speaker, γέναι ... seems to be a neutral term». Similarly, K.’s comments on ὅ ἐστι at 597 would have benefited from reference to Dickey’s extensive discussion of the expression (146–49).

569: The readings of (the manuscripts of) Plutarch and Clement (and Psellus, poem. 21.210) are not relevant to determining Euripides’ spelling of ῥητήρ. 606: K. seems to suggest that κεκαταβλεθάνει ἡματικός represents either a wrestling metaphor or a metaphor from sacrificial practice, but neither seems particularly appropriate here (or at Antiph. Soph. 58 D–K, where the subject of the verb is ‘expectations’). The verb is used literally of tearing down a built structure (e.g. Hdt. 1.17.2–3, 8.109.3, 9.13.2, Thuc. 3.89.4, 7.24.1), and there is no reason not to see that as the metaphorical meaning here, as it manifestly is at HF 1261 κεκαταβλεθή γένοις. 610–31: For ὅι μὴν ἀλλάδι, in verse, see Archestratus Fr. 15 Olson-Sens (= 139.5 SH). 842: ἀπότομος occurs only here and at Ion 690 in fifth-century poetry; rather, in serious fifth-century poetry, since it occurs in Empolos and Pherecrates and half a dozen times in Aristophanes. 1041: «Madvig’s νίψων is simpler than the transmitted νίψα» only if we insist that it depends upon ἐρῶ. There is no need to refuse to take it as dependent upon βουληθόμα (1359), parallel to ἄγνοια, with ὡς ἐρῶ appended as qualification of ποιμήν ἤγοντος, as ὡς ἄγνοια ἤπι συ is appended at Alc. 302 as qualification of ἐκοντα. 1046: In defending Brodacus’ πόνον in place of L’s ἐρῶν, K. says, «the matricide was mentioned last at 1233». This is true, but everything that has been
said since that line has been concerned with the matter of removing the pollution (so γαρολυγομενον μητομενιν in 1047) arising from that matricide. 1155: It is not clear from her translation («glowing like fire») how K. takes the dative in λαμπουμονοι πους, 1174: Thoas’ claim that not even among barbarians would someone go so far as to kill his mother ought to have prompted comparison with Herodotus’ assertion (1.137.2) that the Persians deny that anyone has ever killed a parent. 1264: It is not accurate to refer to πολεμικον as «L’s reading» (or to πολεμικον as the reading of Triclinius). In fact, L (now) reads πολεμικον, with one accent original and one added by Triclinius. The reading of the apograph P (πολεμικον) shows that what appeared originally in L was a form of the word πολέμος and that Triclinius sought to introduce a ‘Homeric’ form of the word πολέμος (for which there is no precedent in the text of Euripides or Sophocles; see Maia 31 [1979] 242–43), 1272: In connection with θυονοιν ὑψελεν μήν τις θεος a reference to P. Pyth. 4.158–59 ὑψελεν μήν θυονοιν would have been appropriate. 1312–13: The participle in τῇ δὲν ποιον παρόντι’ seems superfluous, and I wonder if it hasn’t replaced the rare παρόντι’ (for which, see Headlam and Thomson on A. Αγ. 7377), making a pointed contrast with μόνος.

Naturally, any commentary, particularly one on a work whose text and interpretation are so energetically contested, will provoke disagreement and discussion. Indeed, the only commentaries that fail to do so are those that are ignored. K.’s important contribution to the study of IT should not, and will not, be ignored.

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