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EURÍPIDES' VERSIFICATION AND TEXTUAL CRITICISM

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As a modest, but I hope didactically useful, appendix to White's paper entitled "Two Philological Notes" I should like to underline a methodological criterion which is, alas, not taken into account by many would-be textual critics.

That Euripides' versification is characterized by great freedom has been often repeated, from Haigh (as quoted by H. White) to Gentili-Lomiento¹. Such freedom manifests itself, in particular, in the employment of resolutions placed in unusual, i.e. "anomalous" positions: this point, already discussed by Rossbach-Westphal, has been recently insisted upon, with good results, by Prato (cf. Gentili-Lomiento, *op. cit.* p. 254-255, notes 56 and 40). It follows that, if a resolution attested in an unusual position makes contextually perfect sense, it is unwarranted to eliminate it conjecturally, "merely for metrical reasons", as H. White has emphasized, quoting J.W. White: the "*emendatio metri causa*" is, in sum, not justified when dealing with Euripides.

It was therefore intrinsically wrong of Diggle to alter the contextually impeccable dactyl in the second position at Eur. fr. 784, 2 Nauck: the illicitness of Diggle's alteration is confirmed, as H. White has demonstrated, by the fact that a dactyl in the second position also occurs in Eur. fr. 1110, 2 Nauck².

I shall now draw the attention of scholars to a few clear-cut cases which I think are instructive. Since the tribrach is attested in the first four positions, in the tragic trimeter, there is no reason why it should not be attested also in the fifth, but many metricians have decreed that it cannot be employed there³: yet it is attested in the fifth position at Eur. *Iph. Aul.* 844 and 632. Dobree and Porson eliminated it by conjecture (cf. Calderon's apparatus *ad loc*⁴, but of course Calderón retains it, rightly concluding that the two attestations (844 and 632) support each other.

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¹ B. Gentili - L. Lomiento, *Metrica e ritmica*, Città di Castello 2003, p. 253 ff., 266.

² The two dactylic resolutions in fragm. 1110, 2 Nauck are typical of Euripides' style: cf. Gentili-Lomiento, *op. cit.* p. 255 ("addirittura quattro le soluzioni nel fr. 641, 3 Nauck").

³ Cf. D.S. Raven, *Greek Metre*, London 1962, p. 28: the tribrach as a resolution is "practically excluded from the last metron of the line", in the tragic trimeter.

⁴ *Eurípides. Heracles. Ifigenia en Áulide*, Madrid, 2002.

If Euripides used the dactyl in the first two odd positions (i.e. first and third: cf. Raven's table *op.cit.*, p.30), why should he not use it also in the remaining odd position, i.e. in the fifth? In fact, a dactyl is attested in the fifth position⁵ at Eur. *Iph. Aul.* 1623, and accepted without qualms by Calderón as well as by Paley and Murray (Porson, as was his wont in such cases, eliminated it by conjecture, cf. Murray's apparatus *ad loc.*).

Euripides used a spondee; in the fourth (i.e. an even position at fr. 852,3 and 1132,31 Nauck as H.White has indicated: it is therefore not unexpected that he should use it also in another even position, i.e. the second, at *Iph. Aul.* 449, as Bodraeus and Calderón have brilliantly shown. In exactly the same way, Euripides employs an anapaest in the second position at fr. 813,3 Nauck and fr. 984 Nauck: in both cases, as H. White has underlined, dogmatic critics wanted to abolish and destroy these anapaests (which of course confirm each other): it must be remembered that critics of the same dogmatic persuasion have in vain tried to "abolire l' anapesto in quarta sede" at Eur. *El.* 23 (Gentili-Lomiento, *op. cit.*, p. 255)⁶.

I venture to express the hope that future editors of Euripides will follow in Calderón, Prato's and H. White's footsteps and avoid making the metrical errors which these three scholars have had to correct.

⁵ "Comicorum more", to quote H. White, *art. cit.* For another "eccezione autentica in Euripide, ormai prossimo alla tecnica comica", cf. Gentili-Lomiento, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

⁶ On the "anapesto in sede pari" and on the "anapesto in seconda o quarta sede" in Euripides cf. Gentili-Lomiento, *op. cit.*, p. 754, note 36 and p. 255, note 40.