

in which he has always believed and whose truth has been proved anew by his and his grandson's contrasting fates.

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WHOSE LAUGHTER DOES PENTHEUS FEAR? (EUR. BA. 842)

ΠΕ. πᾶν κρείσσον ὥστε μὴ ἔγγελᾶν βάκχας ἐμοί

ἔγγελᾶν Pierson: γελᾶν P

Matt Neuburg, in *CQ* 37 (1987), 227–30, rightly objects that it does not make sense that Pentheus should be afraid of being laughed at by the Bacchantes when he is disguised as a woman,¹ and proposes a new emendation. Apart from possible objections to this, I do not believe that any change is necessary if the line is properly interpreted. The main point is that *ἐγγελᾶν* does not refer to laughter at Pentheus' appearance by the Bacchantes or by anybody else. There is also something to be said about the implication of *πᾶν κρείσσον*.

To take the second point first, when in dialogue somebody says 'anything would be better than *x*', he is normally referring to some distasteful proposal and indicating that anything, even that, would be better than *x*, i.e. something that must be prevented at all costs. It is hard to see why Dionysus' proposal in 841 *ὁδοὺς ἐρήμους ἵμεν* should be particularly repugnant, and it is more likely that Pentheus is not referring to the previous line, or at any rate not only to that line, but to the idea of being dressed as a woman and a Bacchant, the contemplation of which has occupied his mind since line 822. He has twice declared his opposition (828, 834), but in 838 *μολεῖν χρὴ πρῶτον εἰς κατασκοπὴν* he sees, or pretends to see, the proposed expedition as a military reconnaissance. This, as *πρῶτον* indicates, he now represents to himself as a preliminary to further action; later (846), with characteristic inconsistency, he speaks of military action and Dionysus' proposal as alternatives.

What is it that Pentheus thinks must be prevented at all costs? We have already heard (785–6) what enraged him and provoked his call to arms:

*οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ὑπερβάλλει τάδε
εἰ πρὸς γυναικῶν πεισόμεσθ' ἃ πάσχομεν,*

and in answer to a proposal which he seems to suspect will amount to surrender, he exclaims sarcastically (803)

τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἐμαῖς;

What is not to be endured, then, is that the Bacchantes should be allowed to triumph over him by continuing their wild orgies, and his description of these as *ὑβρισμα* in 779 anticipates the sense of *ἐγγελᾶν*.² For *ἐγγελᾶν* with a dative in the sense 'triumph over' see E. *Med.* 1354–5

*σὺ δ' οὐκ ἐμέλλες τᾶμ' ἀτιμάσας λέχῃ
τερπνὸν διάξειν βίοντον ἐγγελῶν ἐμοί,*

¹ Much the same point was made by Hans Oranje, *Euripides' Bacchae: the Play and its Audience* (Leiden, 1984), pp. 85–8: 'P. is after all apprehensive of the ridicule of the men in the city, not that of the women on the mountain'. Here, too, *ἐγγελᾶν* is taken to denote laughter at Pentheus' appearance.

² This last point was suggested by the anonymous referee.

and again, without a dative, in 1362.³ That ἐγγελάν does not denote laughter at Pentheus' appearance has indeed been suggested by at least two scholars, but somewhat doubtfully. Jeanne Roux, in her edition of *Bacchae* with translation and commentary (Paris, 1972), translates 842 'Tout plutôt que d'être ridiculisé par les Bacchantes', but in her commentary she rightly observes 'Penthée ne redoute pas que les bacchantes se moquent de son costume, mais qu'elles bravent impunément son autorité'. See also E.-R. Schwinge, *Die Verwendung der Stichomythie in den Dramen des Euripides* (Heidelberg, 1965), p. 395. Neither scholar cites the passages from *Medea* which confirm this sense for ἐγγελάν.

In this scene, from 810 onwards, Dionysus begins to dominate the mind of Pentheus, perhaps, as Dodds and others have suggested, by appealing to the Dionysiac urge within him, and when he refers to the expedition to spy on the Bacchants as a reconnaissance he may be, as Dodds puts it, 'rationalising his unacknowledged lust to pry into the women's doings'. All through this part of the stichomythia he wavers between curiosity, bluster and acquiescence. There is, however, a contrast between this scene and the next (912–70), where he is completely controlled by Dionysus and no longer has a mind or will of his own. In this scene the domination is not yet complete, as is shown by 851–3. Pentheus is still attempting to assert his independence, and I take it that at 842 his line of thought is ostensibly something like this: I still find repugnant the idea of dressing as a woman, but anything would be better than allowing the Bacchants to triumph over me, and a reconnaissance in disguise could be the first move against them. On this view no emendation is needed, apart from the trifling change required by Pierson's ἐγγελάν.

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³ In *S. El.* 807 ἀλλ' ἐγγελάωσα φρουδος Jebb translates 'She left us with a laugh'. Clytemnestra's pretence of grief at the report of Orestes' death is no doubt hypocritical, but I feel some doubt about whether she would be described as literally 'laughing'. Perhaps the sense is rather 'triumphant', 'exulting'. Cf. in the same play 277 ἐγγελάωσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις, which Kells, in his note *ad loc.*, translates 'exulting in her deeds'.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PROBLEM OF THE ATHENIAN PLAGUE

I. Two New Candidates

The first of these is not a single disease but a group of three: 'all the clinical and epidemiological evidence described by Thucydides' (henceforward T) 'can be attributed to infection with influenza virus complicated by a toxin-producing strain of noninvasive staphylococcus' (A. D. Langmuir, T. D. Worthen, J. Solomon, C. G. Ray and E. Petersen, *New England Journal of Medicine* [henceforward *NEJM*] 313 [1985], 1027–30). This initial analysis is in fact supplemented (1028) by bullous impetigo in an attempt to explain the marked skin symptoms which are not ascribable to the other two diseases: streptococci produce flushes of the skin that end in desquamation – something which Langmuir *et al.* admit T would have described if present.

The authors (henceforward L) themselves admit (1029) that certain features do not square with T: (a) influenza epidemics produce a high proportion of pneumonia cases but T does not record such symptoms and L admits that T's careful observation would not have missed them. (b) The high mortality of about 33% (based on T's