

μελάγκουρος seems to me to mean 'with dark, malignant eyes'; cf. LSJ s.v. μέλας III.4.

Another interpretation, however, seems possible as well: Fraenkel¹⁴ remarks *ad* A. Ag. 391 that κακός χαλκός loses the fine lustre of its surface; instead there appears an unsightly blackness which cannot be removed: κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ τρόπον . . . μελαμπαγής. If we assume for beautiful Truth the possession of ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα, her opposite Untruth has 'dark, dull, false eyes'.

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¹⁴ E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950).

Euripides, *Bakchai* 877–81 = 897–901

τί τὸ σοφόν, ἢ τί τὸ κάλλιον	877
παρὰ θεῶν γέρας ἐν βροτοῖς;	878
ἢ χεῖρ' ὑπὲρ κορυφᾶς	879
τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρείσσω κατέχειν;	880
ὃ τι καλὸν φίλον ἀεί.	881

877 σοφόν editores vetustiores, Grégoire:¹ σοφόν; editores recentiores: σοφόν, Ammendola² σοφόν; ἢ τι Willink³ τὸ deleunt Dodds,⁴ Willink 878–9 βροτοῖς ἢ editores plerique: βροτοῖς; ἢ Blake,⁵ Roux⁶

The correct interpretation of these lines significantly affects our understanding of the attitude of Dionysiac worshippers towards violence. If the chorus is here saying that power over one's enemies is the best possible gift from the gods and furthermore that this statement constitutes wisdom, violence and vindictiveness are essential ingredients of Dionysiac religion. If, on the other hand, they are renouncing power over their enemies, Dionysiac religion is essentially peaceful and non-aggressive. The first interpretation, that triumph over one's enemies is the greatest gift and that knowing this constitutes wisdom, is the popular view at the present time. It is the interpretation which is found in all current English translations of the play, including those of Arrowsmith⁷ and Kirk.⁸ It is also the view of several scholars who have undertaken a detailed study of the passage. These include Dodds,⁹ Winnington-Ingram,¹⁰ and Arthur.¹¹ Others who have studied the passage have reached the opposite conclusion, that the greatest

gift consists of caution and respect, which in turn lead to restraint and avoidance of violence. These include Blake,¹² Festugière,¹³ and Roux.¹⁴ The aim of this paper is to reach a greater degree of certainty concerning the meaning of the passage by a close examination of the grammatical constructions.

To begin with, τὸ σοφόν in 877 cannot be taken by itself to mean 'wisdom'. There are two reasons for this. The first is the use of the expression τὸ σοφόν elsewhere in the play. It has long since been noted that Euripides in *Bakchai* is drawing a sharp distinction between true wisdom and false wisdom or mere cleverness. The word used for 'wisdom' is σοφία and the words used for 'cleverness' are τὸ σοφόν, σοφίσματα, and σοφίζεται. The contrast between the two is stated explicitly at 395: τὸ σοφόν δ' οὐ σοφία, 'cleverness is not wisdom'. The negative connotations of σοφίσματα (30, 489) and σοφίζεται (200) are readily evident from the context. The expression τὸ σοφόν in its other two occurrences besides 395 and 877 = 897 is a negative entity. It is clearly so at 202–3: οὐδείς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος, οὐδ' εἰ δι' ἄκρων τὸ σοφόν ὑρῆται φρενῶν, 'no argument will cast them [the ancestral traditions] down, not even if cleverness has been found by acute minds'. At 1005, although the text is corrupt, τὸ σοφόν is contrasted with βροτείως ἔχειν in 1004 and hence must also be a negative entity. Thus on the basis of the usage of these words in the play alone the interpretation of τὸ σοφόν in 877 as 'wisdom' is extremely unlikely. Arthur's theory that τὸ σοφόν is the positive entity and σοφία the negative entity is not adequately supported by the evidence.¹⁵ The use of σοφός apart from the expression τὸ σοφόν is ambiguous in the play and the meaning depends on the speaker. In the usage of Kadmos (179 bis, 186) σοφός clearly means 'wise'. Similarly the word means 'wise' in the usage of Dionysos (480, 641, 656, 839), the chorus (427), Teiresias (266), and the Messenger (1151). Pentheus (655 ter, 824) and Agaue (1190), on the other hand, use the word with the meaning 'clever'.

The second reason why τὸ σοφόν in 877 cannot be taken by itself to mean 'wisdom' is the alternative question construction in which the expression occurs. Alternative questions of the form τί . . . ἢ τί are a favorite device of the Attic orators. The useful observation is that in this construction both questions expect the same answer. Thus at Aischines iii 155: τί ποτ' ἀνερεῖ, ἢ τί φθέγγεται; 'What will he claim, what will he say?' the expected answer is οὐδέν. A similar answer is expected at Demosthenes ix 16: τί δὲ ταῦτ' ἐστίν, ἢ τί τούτων μέλει τῇ πόλει; 'What are these things, of what concern are they to the city?' At Andokides i 129: τίς ἂν εἶη οὖτος; Οἰδίπους ἢ Αἰγισθος; ἢ τί χρὴ αὐτὸν ὀνομάσαι; 'What could he be? An Oidipous or an Aigisthos? What should one call him?' the expected answer to the second question is likewise Οἰδίπου ἢ Αἰγισθον; There are numerous other examples in the orators. The question words in alternative questions of this type can also occur in two repeated constituents with the rest of the sentence shared by both constituents. A good example of this is found at Dem. ix 43: τίς ἦν

¹ *Les Bacchantes* in *Euripide*, ed. H. Grégoire, 6 vols (Paris 1959–64).

² Euripide, *Le Baccanti*², ed. G. Ammendola (Torino 1950).

³ C. W. Willink, 'Some problems of text and interpretation in the *Bacchae*', CQ xvi (1966) 229.

⁴ Euripides, *Bacchae*², ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford 1960).

⁵ W. E. Blake, 'Euripidis Baccharum interpretatio secundum versus 877–881', *Mnemos.* lx (1933) 361–8.

⁶ Euripide, *Les Bacchantes*, ed. J. Roux, 2 vols (Paris 1970–2).

⁷ *The Bacchae*, tr. W. Arrowsmith, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, ed. D. Grene and R. Lattimore, 9 vols (Chicago 1953–9).

⁸ *The Bacchae* of Euripides, tr. G. S. Kirk (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1970).

⁹ Dodds (n. 4) 186.

¹⁰ R. P. Winnington-Ingram, 'Euripides, *Bacchae* 877–881 = 897–901', *BICS* xiii (1966) 34–7.

¹¹ M. Arthur, 'The Choral Odes of the *Bacchae* of Euripides', *YCS* xxii (1972) 159–65, 176–9.

¹² Blake (n. 5) 365–6.

¹³ A. J. Festugière, 'Euripide dans les *Bacchantes*', *Erano*s lv (1957) 135–7.

¹⁴ Roux (n. 6) 516–17.

¹⁵ Arthur (n. 11) 176–9.

ποθ' ἢ διάνοια τῶν Ἀθηναίων τῶν τότε ταῦτα ποιοῦντων, ἢ τί τὸ ἀξίωμα; 'What was the intention of those Athenians when they did this, what was the purpose?' In view of this the most natural way to understand *Ba.* 877–8 is to take *τί τὸ σοφόν* and *ἢ τί τὸ κάλλιον* as repeated constituents with *παρὰ θεῶν γέρας ἐν βροτοῖς* shared by both. The lines then mean: 'What is the wise, what is the better gift of the gods among men?' When *σοφόν* is taken as an adjective with *γέρας*, its normal meaning in the play, 'wise' when used by the chorus, is preserved. Furthermore, *τὸ σοφόν* without a noun then everywhere in the play has the meaning 'cleverness'.

In line 879 a different problem arises. As has been repeatedly observed, the clause *ἢ χεῖρ' ὑπὲρ κορυφᾶς τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρείσσω κατέχειν* cannot be construed with *τὸ κάλλιον... γέρας*. The sequence article, comparative adjective, noun does not occur in Greek with a comparative construction, either a genitive or an ἢ clause. By far the best remedy here is to read ἢ with Blake and Roux. This makes 879–80 an independent question: 'Is it to hold a stronger hand over the heads of enemies?' The correction is minimal. Substitution of ἢ for ἦ is common in the manuscripts and the correction of ἦ to ἢ is routinely accepted elsewhere in Euripides.¹⁶ Dodds' metrical argument in favor of deleting the second τὸ¹⁷ has been convincingly refuted by Winnington-Ingram.¹⁸ The deletion is furthermore unacceptable because it destroys the parallelism of the alternative questions.

Line 881 implicitly answers the question of 879–80 in the negative. Power over one's enemies is not *τὸ καλόν*. To find out what is meant by *τὸ κάλλιον γέρας* and *τὸ καλόν* we must look elsewhere in the play. An explanation is given in two places. The first statement is made at 1007–10. The chorus has just rejected *τὸ σοφόν* in 1005 and claims to be striving for *τὰ καλά* in 1007. The *καλά* are explained in 1007–10: *βίον ἡμαρὲς νόκτα τ' εὐαγοῦντ' εὐσεβεῖν, τὰ τ' ἔξω νόμιμα δίκας ἐκβαλόντα τιμᾶν θεούς*, 'Leading a pure life night and day show respect and rejecting practices outside of justice honour the gods'. An even more explicit statement, which verbally echoes both the *σοφόν* and *κάλλιον* of 877, is made at 1150–2: *τὸ σωφρονεῖν δὲ καὶ σέβειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν κάλλιστον· οἶμαι δ' αὐτὸ καὶ σοφώτατον θνητοῖσιν εἶναι χρῆμα τοῖσι χρωμένοις*, 'Restraint and respect for the affairs of the gods is best. This, I believe, is the wisest thing for those who use it.' These sentiments are both quite traditional and quite non-aggressive. An accurate rendition of lines 877–81 = 897–901 then is: 'What is the wise, what is the better gift of the gods among men? Is it to hold a stronger hand over the heads of enemies? What is good is always dear.'

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¹⁶ J. T. Allen and G. Italic, *A Concordance to Euripides* (Groningen 1970) 271–2.

¹⁷ Dodds (n. 4) 188.

¹⁸ Winnington-Ingram (n. 10) 34–5.

Further notes on Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*

- P. 5: *Ἀμύντου* is the normal genitive of persons we normally call Amyntas.
- Vv. 9–10: the date and family placing of Hipponikos discussed, on a premise rightly denied by Page, J. K. Davies, *Ath. Prop. Fam.* 256.
- Pp. 20 ff.: P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* i 778–80; I confess to some doubt about Egyptian Chersonesos.
- P. 87: we might consider the *gentilicium* Satrius, though the reading habits of Satrius Secundus (*Tac. Ann.* iv 24) are hardly relevant.
- Vv. 476–9: if Peek 46 (now P. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca* [Berlin 1983] ['CEG'] no. 12) is in point, so is CEG 11, very close in date to Aeschylus' death; I have gone through life thinking that the genitive *Γέλας* belonged with Kühner–Gerth § 419, 2 (a); for trees at Marathon, cf. *Nep. Mil.* 5.3.
- Vv. 494–7: if the inscription is relevant, and it surely is, Wilamowitz' interpretation is possible, but Page's alternative is not; no amount of landholding in Euonymon will turn an Athenian of another deme into an *Εὐωνυμεύς*.
- Vv. 508–9: now CEG 313.
- Vv. 522–5: CEG 312; long ago I saw another stone in the Acropolis Museum with the beginnings of 522–3, and it is surely not to be excluded that Leocrates scattered his herms round Attica, as Wilamowitz thought; the case for the authenticity of 524–5 is not much strengthened.
- Vv. 526–7: I find it mildly interesting that Telemachos, more firmly associated than Sophocles with the beginnings of the Asklepios cult, laid some emphasis, in similar language, on his priority in setting up altars and cults (*IG* ii² 4355, 4961); Sophocles' descendants going into competition?
- Vv. 566–9: there is a case (J. Pouilloux and F. Roux, *Énigmes à Delphes* [Paris 1963] 55–60; *ML* 95) for supposing that Ion of Samos belongs to the second half of the fourth century and made his epideictic additions to the Aegospotami monument then, so that an attribution to him would not be out of character, but his two surviving poems include his own name.
- V. 675: an unpublished fourth-century text from Mytilene has *Σαωνυμείω* as a patronymic adjective in the genitive.
- Vv. 684–7: CEG 430.
- Vv. 691–5: CEG 179; the point that *ἀχνυόνετι* is one letter too long for the fifth-century copy is concealed here, as is the modern tendency to backdate it a decade.
- P. 201: there can be no doubt about Adeimantos' son Aristeus, so prominent in *Thuc.* i.
- Vv. 720–4: CEG 131.
- P. 219 n. 1: the last sentence belongs to n. 2.
- Vv. 764–71: CEG 2; I only note that Page's restoration of 768, claimed as filling the space better, is in fact as long as the restoration it replaces: Page has forgotten the aspirate of *ὑπέρβιον*.
- Vv. 772–3: *Plut. Arist.* 5.6 is relevant to Persian gold at Marathon, but I have no confidence that the source is early; I am less happy than Page about the use of *Ἀθηναῖοι*.
- Vv. 790–1: CEG 305; the altar has now been splendidly reconstructed by W. B. Dinsmoor Jr.