

## Euripides, Heracles 1228

By Archibald Allen, Pennsylvania State University

ὅστις εὐγενῆς βροτῶν

1228 φέρει τὰ τῶν θεῶν γε πτώματ' οὐδ' ἀναίνεται

So, in L, Theseus' words of encouragement and exhortation to the despondent and suicidal Heracles. I quote them from J. Diggle's Oxford text, Euripidis Fabulae vol. II (1981), which G. W. Bond used for his Oxford commentary on the play (1981).

In CR 19 (1901) 105, W. Headlam observed that τὰ τῶν θεῶν πτώματα "could only mean, I think, 'the falls which the gods themselves experience,' not those which they cause", and he proposed the reading φέρει τὰ γ' ἐκ θεῶν πτώματ', comparing Phoen. 1764, τὰς γὰρ ἐκ θεῶν ἀνάγκας ὕνητόν ὄντα δεῖ φέρειν, Hom. Il. 24, 617, θεῶν ἐκ κήδεα πέσσει, Pind. Pyth. 10, 20, μὴ φύονεραῖς ἐκ θεῶν μετατροπίας ἐπικύρσαιεν, Mosch. 4, 68, τοιῆσδ' ἐκυρήσαμεν ἐκ θεοῦ αἴσης. Bond favoured that reading, added to Headlam's parallels Soph. Phil. 1316, τὰς μὲν ἐκ θεῶν / τύχας δοθείσας ἔστ' ἀναγκαῖον φέρειν, and, for the "general sense", cited Phoen. 382, δεῖ φέρειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν, and Thuc. 2, 64, 2, φέρειν δὲ χρὴ τὰ τε δαιμόνια ἀναγκαίως.

Yet even if the general sense of the line is fairly clear, πτώματ' is still quite opaque. It can hardly refer to 'falls' or 'calamities' which come from the gods, as Headlam thought<sup>1</sup>, and it is difficult to discern any hint of a dicing metaphor in the word, as Wilamowitz supposed<sup>2</sup>. Elsewhere, Euripides uses πτώμα, literally and metaphorically, of people falling, in wrestling (e.g. El. 686, εἰ παλαισθεῖς πτώμα θανάσιμον πεσεῖ), in accidents (e.g. El. 575, ὀρῶ μὲν πτώματος τεκμήριον), and in death (e.g. Phoen. 1482, πτώματα νεκρῶν τρισσῶν). Nowhere does a πτώμα come to anybody from anybody else, mortal or divine, and nowhere is πτώματα the equivalent of τὰ ... πεπτωκότα (cf. Hipp. 718 and I.A. 1343, πρὸς τὰ νῦν πεπτωκότα)<sup>3</sup>, which probably referred originally to the falls of the dice thrown by the gods (for which see Wilamowitz and Bond in their notes on the present line).

1 Cf. LSJ, s.v. πτώμα (2): "metaph., *misfortune, calamity*, τὰ γ' ἐκ θεῶν πτώματα *calamities* sent by the gods".

2 See his comments ad loc. in his Berlin 1889 edition. In his text, he printed τὰ θεῶν γε πτώματ' (Stiblinus); for the undesirable synzesis of θεῶν at the end of the first metron, see Bond, with reference to J. Diggle, PCPhS n.s. 20 (1974) 32, n. 7. In that same foot-note, incidentally, Diggle registered his opinion that Headlam's τὰ γ' ἐκ θεῶν or Vitelli's τὰ θεῖα (Riv. Fil. 8, 1880, 458) is "likely to be right".

3 Cf. H.F. 597, ἔγνω πόνον τιν' ἐς δόμους πεπτωκότα.

I would suggest that the time has come to reject πτώματ' as corrupt; Euripides wrote:

φέρει τὰ τῶν θεῶν πνεύματ' οὐδ' ἀναίνεται.

The metaphor is now that of fortune's winds; compare especially H.F. 216, ὅταν θεοῦ σοι πνεῦμα μεταβαλὸν τύχηι, and also El. 1147–48, ἀμοιβαὶ κακῶν· μετὰτροποι πνέου-/σιν αὔραι δόμων, Ion 1506, μεδίσταται δὲ πνεύματα, I.T. 1317, πνεῦμα συμφορᾶς<sup>4</sup>. Since the image of shifting winds is closely associated with that of seafaring, it is worth noting that, just a few lines earlier, Theseus has said that he hates a fair-weather friend, a man who is unwilling συμπλεῖν ... τοῖς φίλοισι δυστυχουσιν (1225)<sup>5</sup>.

4 While πνεύματ' is palaeographically close to πτώματ', L's γε πτώματ' may owe something to a gloss, πεπτωκότα, which might have been written above πνεύματ'. Encouraged by the confusion of κ and μ in minuscule script, the latter then could have been copied as πεπτώματ', which would have been corrected subsequently to the received γε πτώματ'.

5 Prof. Gelzer kindly reminds me that I am not the first to have had doubts about πτώματ(α), citing N. Wecklein's note ad loc. in the *Appendix coniecturas minus probabiles continens* (p. 69) to his *Euripidis Hercules* (Leipzig 1899): "τὰ τῶν θεῶν σφάλματ' olim Wilamowitz".