

## EURIPIDES, ANDROMACHE 236ff.

The first epeisodion of Euripides' *Andromache*, the principal subject of which is the contrasts and parallelisms between the characters of Hermione and Andromache<sup>1</sup>), is brought appropriately to a close with a scene in stichomythia which represents in concentrated form the theme of the preceding *ζήσεις*. It seems to me, however, that what is otherwise a carefully constructed debate is disturbed in the traditional text at two points.

In the first place, Hermione's remark in 237 does not connect with the preceding verse. To give it meaning we are forced to make *νοῦς* refer to Andromache's closing word in 231<sup>2</sup>); this deprives the reply of any immediacy and so weakens its force. Secondly, 251-52 are not satisfactory where they stand. This short closing debate progresses from mere verbal bickering to the question of action, and after Andromache's declaration in 250 that she will be silent, the reintroduction of discussion in 251 diverts the debate from its course. Again, Andromache's reply in 252 is without point and Stevens' explanation is only a Not-behalf.

I suggest that all these difficulties can be removed by a single measure: the transposition of 251-52 to after 236. The text of 236ff. would then run as follows:

*Av.* οὐκ οὖν ἐφ' οἷς γε νῦν καθέστηκας λόγους.

*Ερ.* ἐκεῖνο λέξον, οὐπερ εἶνεκ' ἐστάλην.

*Av.* λέγω σ' ἐγὼ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχειν ὅσον σε δεῖ.

*Ερ.* ὁ νοῦς ὁ σός μοι μὴ ξυνοικίη, γύναι.

This produces a closely knit sequence of verses which are full of the pointed use of language typical of Euripidean stichomythia. It can be seen that each verse contains an emphatic word which is taken up by the next speaker, who, of course, adjusts its use to her own advantage.

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1) Instructive on the function of the first epeisodion is K. M. Aldrich, *The Andromache of Euripides*, University of Nebraska Studies, n. s. 25, 1961, pp. 28 ff.

2) So P. T. Stevens in his recent commentary (Oxford, 1971).

In reply to Andromache's point that her words convict her of lack of *σωφροσύνη*, Hermione remarks: 'Well then you do the talking – on the subject which brought me here.' Andromache takes up this challenge very deliberately, as is shown by the repetition of the verb – emphatically positioned – and the use of the pronoun. 'What *I* have to say' she replies, 'is that you do not have the *νοῦς* you ought to have'<sup>3</sup>). This returns to the point made in 231 and is tantamount to saying 'you are your mother's daughter'. But this round in the debate is won by Hermione, whose retort brings from Andromache not an answer, but a taunt. She takes up Andromache's *νοῦς* and uses the word against her – a typically Euripidean device. The use of words in *Hipp.* 498 ff.

Φα. ὦ δεινὰ λέξασ', οὐχὶ συγκλήσεις στόμα  
καὶ μὴ μεθήσεις ἀνθις αἰσχίστους λόγους;

Τρ. αἴσχρ', ἀλλ', ἀμείνω τῶν καλῶν τάδ' ἐστὶ σοι.  
and *El.* 568 f.

Ηλ. πάλαι δέδορκα, μὴ σὺ γ' οὐκέτ' εἶ φρονης.

Πρ. οὐκ εἶ φρονωῶ γὰρ σὸν κασίγνητον βλέπων;  
is closely parallel, and *HF* 556 f. and *Bac.* 655 f. are similar.

A consideration of 250 ff. shows, I believe, that the removal of 251–52 allows the stichomythia to flow properly after 250. When Andromache announces her intention to be silent, Hermione moves, as we should expect, to the central question and asks: 'Are you going to leave the sanctuary of the goddess?' Andromache's refusal to do so eventually motivates Hermione's departure<sup>4</sup>), which brings the epeisodion to a close.

In regard to the *ratio corruptelae* I suggest that 251–52 are similar enough to 236–37 to have been mistakenly omitted and later replaced in the wrong place. The examples discussed by Jackson<sup>5</sup>) provide evidence for the frequency of such a source of error.

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<sup>3</sup>) Barrett has shown in his note on *Hipp.* 105 that there is no need for Nauck's seductive *οἶον*.

<sup>4</sup>) Garzya's idea that Hermione is present during the stasimon and the following epeisodion (*Dioniso* xv [1952], 136) has not met with acceptance. See Stevens' note on 268 and A. Pippin Burnett, *Catastrophe Survived*, (Oxford, 1971) p. 139 n.

<sup>5</sup>) *Marginalia Scaenica* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 1 ff.