

COMMENTARII BREVIORES

EURIPIDEA MINORA

I. WHY IS APHRODITE LIKE A BEE? EURIPIDES, *HIPP.* 563–564

μέλισσα δ' οἷα τις πεπόταται (sc. Ἀφροδίτη)

She is like the bee, according to Barrett *ad loc.* “because she moves unpredictably from one victim to another like a bee that flits from flower to flower; so Pi. P. 10. 53 f.... There is no more to the comparison than this; those who scent an allusion to the bee’s sting (schol. BV), or to honey and sting together, are crediting Eur. with a meaning which he has simply not expressed”.¹ But what a poet does not express openly he may strongly imply by other

¹ Aphrodite is likened to a bee, according to the scholia, (i) τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν σομάτων μαραίνουσα, and (ii) κεντούσα. Among those modern scholars scenting, without much argument, an allusion to the sting are: A. H. Sommerstein, “Notes on Euripides’ *Hippolytus*”, *BICS* 35 (1988) 30 (who notes in particular Sappho 130 LP/V “Ἔρος δηῦτε μ’ ὁ λυσυμέλης δόνει | γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον and its reminiscence at Theogn. 1353 “Ἔρος γλυκύπικρος; for Sappho, see below); R. Garner, *From Homer to Tragedy: The Art of Allusion in Greek Poetry* (London 1990) 129 f. (who sees here an allusion to Il. 2. 87–93, where the Argives are likened in a simile to a swarm of bees; cf. *Hipp.* 527 (“Ἔρος ἐπιστρατεύση); M. Halleran, “*Gamos* and destruction in Euripides’ *Hippolytus*” *TAPA* 109–121, esp. 114 f. (who does not quite commit himself: “If both aspects of the bee are called to mind, it echoes the image of Eros the bittersweet”); R. Padel, *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the Tragic Self* (Princeton 1992) 122 (who, pp. 117–125, places this image in the context of other passages, in *Hipp.* and elsewhere, where love is a stinger, biter, goader, etc.). In agreement with Barrett is A. P. Burnett, “Hunt and hearth in *Hippolytus*,” in M. Cropp et al. (edd.), *Greek Tragedy and its Legacy: Essays Presented to D. J. Conacher* (Calgary 1986) 167–185, esp. 171, “All is sweetness in this outer circle of song [sc. str. A and ant. B] but just *inside it* [sc. ant. A and str. B] are the dart, the lightning bolt, and the smoking ruin of cities desolated by a desire that came with violence” (emphasis mine). (Nonetheless, despite my disagreement on this one point, Burnett’s article remains the best treatment of the way in which the theme of marriage in *Hipp.* is developed from ode to ode.) Most recently, H. M. Roisman, *Nothing is as it seems: The tragedy of the implicit in Euripides’ Hippolytus* (Lanham 1999) 28–32 and 96 f. interprets this passage largely in terms of the association of the bee with chastity, but recognizes the interesting implication that “here the bee, associated with Hippolytus’ chastity, is used to describe Cypris, as if to suggest that Hippolytus will be destroyed by something within himself: his chastity, which is no more than suppressed sexual desire” (97).

means. In this case, the comparison of Aphrodite to a bee (which stings) in the last clause of a lyric stasimon might well be thought to recapitulate the ode's beginning where the chorus deprecates the sweet desire brought on by the weapon which, although hurled by Eros, is said to belong to Aphrodite (βέλος οἶον τὸ τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας, 531 f.).

There may be another way in which Euripides prepared his audience to understand that the bee does more than flit from one flower girl to the next.² As the chorus sings of the tyranny of Eros in general they call him τὸν τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας φιλιτάτων θαλάμων κληδοῦχον (539 f.), a phrase that evokes the marriage chamber (so Barrett and Halleran); they turn in strophe/antistrophe B to love's role in marriage in particular. First Iole is said to have been given in marriage to Heracles by Aphrodite in bloody nuptials (φονίοισι νυμφείοις, 552), the strophe ending ᾧ τλάμων ὑμεναίων. Then in the antistrophe Aphrodite, once again the matchmaker, marries Semele off in bloody fate to Zeus νυμφευσάμενα πότμω φοινίῳ κατηύνασεν, 561–2). With such a record, μέλισσα οἷα could well be taken as an answer to this stanza's opening question to Thebes and Dirke: συνείποιτ' ἄν ἅ Κύπρις οἶον ἔρπει, 557–8).³

The bittersweetness of love and marriage we know to be a commonplace of the hymenaion, which mingles joyful expectation of the pleasures of sex with the sadness to be experienced on both sides with the separation of the girl from her female friends.⁴ Reading the ode with marriage in mind we can see that it is Sappho in particular, the primary literary witness for the hymenaion, who provides the background music which allows Euripides' audience immediately to comprehend the meaning of the bee.⁵

² Cf. Sappho 22.11–13 LP/V σε δηῦτε πόθος τ[υ] | ἀμφιπόταται || τὰν κάλαν.

³ Barrett quite rightly takes οἶον as an adv. ("in what manner"), but "Aphrodite comes as *what manner of thing*" may lie latent, to which "like a bee" would provide an exact answer.

⁴ This is well brought out by R. Seaford, "The tragic wedding," *JHS* 107 (1987) 106–130. From Sappho, note fr. 114:

παρθενία, παρθενία, ποῖ με λίποις' ἀποίχη;
†οὐκέτι ἤξω πρὸς σε, οὐκέτι ἤξω†,

which probably occurred in a song which also said something like χαῖρε νόμφα (fr. 116) or χαίροις ἃ νόμφα (fr. 117). See further I. Jenkyns, "Is there life after marriage? A study of the abduction motif in vase paintings of the Athenian wedding ceremony," *BICS* 30 (1983) 137–145; H. P. Foley, *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (New York 1985) 60–105.

⁵ Echoes of Sappho in Euripides are not hard to find; cf. R. Hampe, "Paris oder Helena? Zu Sappho fr. 27 a (Diehl) [= 16 Voigt]," *MH* 8 (1951) 144–146; A. Pertusi, "Euripide e Saffo," *PP* 8 (1953) 376–380; E. Cavallini, "Motivi saffici nella tragedia," *MCr* 18 (1983) 43–60; ead. *Presenza di Saffo e Alceo nella poesia greca fino ad Aristofane* (Ferrara 1986); S. Radt, "Sapphica," *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970) 338; M. Di Marco, "Una parodia di Saffo in Euripide (*Cycl.* 182–186)," *QUCC* 5 (1980) 39–45. Some other Euripidean passages can be found in Voigt's register of similia.

As Barrett notes (p. 237), the third line of strophe/antistrophe B is a minor variation of the Sapphic hendecasyllable. It is possible that the final reference to the bee would very likely recall Sappho 146 LP/V μήτε μοι μέλι μήτε μέλισσα, which was well enough known in later times to stand by itself as a paroimion applied ἐπὶ τῶν παραιτουμένων ἀγαθόν τι παθεῖν διὰ τὸν κίνδυνον τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ.⁶ Here clearly the “danger” represented by the bee can only be its sting. Our sources give no hint as to the context or genre of this line, but its (generally uncommon) meter, *pher^d*, is paralleled elsewhere in Sappho only in a hymenaion, fr. 110.⁷ If fr. 146 comes from this same hymenaion (or from another), Euripides’ meaning at the end of the first stasimon would be instantly clear to his audience: Aphrodite is like a bee because, for all the sweet joy she brings in marriage, she also stings.

II. NOTES ON EURIPIDES, *HERACLES*

(Amphitryon to Lykos):

183 ἐροῦ τιν’ ἄνδρ’ ἄριστον ἐγκρίνειαν ἄν;
ἐκκρ. Dobree ἄν κρίνειαν Elmsley

The verb compounded of ἐν + κρίνειν, which with ἐν or εἰς regularly means “admit in(to) or among”. But Amphitryon, a boastful father, is far from asking whether the Centaurs would reckon his son Heracles *among* the best men. For the meaning which must be imposed on this passage “reckon as”, *LSJ* can offer only this passage. If we remember, however, that in fifth-century Attic Greek phonology ἐκ + κ- was pronounced as though it were ἐγκ- and that this pronunciation would occasionally be spelled accordingly (cf. L. Threatte, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions* 1 [Berlin 1980] 579 f.; Barrett, *Eur. Hipp.*, p. 241), the verb more usually spelled ἐκκρίνειν, “single out,” immediately recommends itself; cf. Soph. *Phil.* 1425 ἀρετῇ τε πρῶτος ἐκκριθείς στρατεύματος. What Dobree, *Adversaria* 4 (Cambridge 1833; Berlin 1874), printed, therefore, is in the first instance simply a more correct spelling (equivalent to printing τὴν πόλιν for an inscription’s τῆμ π.; cf.

⁶ Greg. Cyr. 3. 4; sim. Diogenian. 6. 58 ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ βουλομένων παθεῖν τι ἀγαθὸν μετὰ ἀπευκτοῦ. See Voigt’s apparatus for further citations.

⁷ θυρώρῳ πόδες ἐπτορόγυιοι,
τὰ δὲ σάμβαλα πεμπεβόεια,
πίσσυγγοὶ δὲ δέκ’ ἐξεπόνησαν.

It is acknowledged that the shortness of fr. 110 allows for the possibility (noted by Voigt) that a longer extract would suggest a different metrical analysis.

Barrett), but a conjecture as well, since it must now be read as a different Greek word.

460 ἦ πολὺ με δόξης ἐξέπαισαν ἐλπίδες
ἦν πατρὸς ὑμῶν ἐκ λόγων ποτ' ἤλπισα

460 ἦ π. γε δ. ἐξέπεσον εὐέλπιδος Hirzel, approb. Kannicht Diggle ἦ π. με πράξεις
ἐξέπαισαν ἐλπίδος Musgrave ἦ π. με δαίμων ἐξέπαισαν ἐλπίδος Hartung 461
ᾶς Haupt

Is 460, spoken by the distraught Megara, so hopeless that complete obelization (Lee) or change is necessary? Bond, whose note *ad loc.* lays out the argument fully and clearly, sees no problem with με δόξης ἐξέπαισαν, offering as parallel passages Plat. *Phdr.* 228 e, Soph. *OT* 1432, Eur. *Med.* 1010, *Hipp.* 1414, to which can be added Eur. fr. 420.5 N² οἷς γὰρ ἦν ποτε [sc. ὁ πλοῦτος], ἐξ ἐλπίδων πίπτοντας ὑπτίους ὀρώ; Although this is cited by Bond later in support of ἐξέπεσον, I would rather see ἐξ... πίπτοντας as the passive of καταβάλλειν, in accord with what seems to be the wrestling imagery here. See also A. *Suppl.* 96 f. (Zeus) ἰάπτει δ' ἐλπίδων ἄφ' ὑψιπύργων πανώλεις βροτούς. Nor is Bond bothered by δόξης... ἦν... ἤλπισα, where ἦν in the first instance has as antecedent δόξης, which then merges semantically with ἐλπίδα (Bond cites Vahlen, *Opuscula Academica* (Leipzig 1908) 2. 255 ff.; cf. *HF* 91 f. δοκημάτων δ' ἐκτὸς ἦλθεν ἐλπίς, 771); nor by the idea of hope(s) striking or dislodging someone; cf. Antiphon B 58 DK.

What Bond (and others) find “most awkward” is the combination of ἐλπίδες as the “object, i. e., achievement of hope” (*LSJ* 2, newly redefined by *LSJ* Suppl. as “basis of one’s hope or expectation”) and δόξης ἦν ἤλπισα referring to the formation of hope (*LSJ* 1). Apart from the questionable notion that Euripides was incapable of writing an awkward line whose sense is none the less clear (many of Medea’s tortured thoughts are echoed in her syntax), in this particular case the contrast of the two senses of ἐλπίς should be seen as less awkward than intentionally pointed, as in Romans 4.18, where again two senses of this word are played against each other: παρ’ ἐλπίδα ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν. For the sense of ἐλπίδες in 460, cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 776 Ὁρέστης ἐλπίς οἴχεται δόμων (Orestes in whom we placed our hope is lost to us), Thuc. 3. 57. 4 ὑμεῖς, ᾧ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, ἡ μόνη ἐλπίς, δέδιμεν μὴ οὐ βέβαιοι ἦτε, *IG* III 1311. Even without the apposition which makes the objective sense clear, the meaning of 460 f. can easily be understood as “Indeed, the things [as detailed in the lines following] in which I place my hopes knocked me [in the event] from the hopes I had.”

474 τρεῖς δ' ὄντας <-ῶ> τριπύχοις τυραννίσι
πατὴρ ἐπύργου

<ὕμᾶς> Canter <οὔτω> Paley τριπτόχους L^s -οὐ L

Since ὄντας must scan as a trochee the two missing syllables cannot go later in the line, although a trochee would fit between δ' and ὄντας (there being no need to assume any deeper corruption). Now since this line sums up the three “hopes” Heracles and Megara had for their three sons (see above), Canter’s ὕμᾶς is certainly possible, but – coming after 462 σοί, 467 σὺ, 472 σοί – it has the appearance of a space filler, especially when compared with Paley’s οὔτω, which logically links the three sons with their three hoped-for kingdoms. I would improve upon Paley somewhat by suggesting οὔτως, which not only makes it slightly easier for a scribe to omit by haplography after ὄντας but which also completes the s/t alliteration of this line:

τρεῖς δ' ὄντας οὔτως τριπτόχους τυραννίσι.

For οὔτως before consonants, cf. *HF* 861

εἴμι γ' οὔτε πόντος οὔτως κύμασι στένων λάβρος,

where Diggle follows **Tr**² in reading οὔτω, but where all of Lyssa’s spluttering sigmas should be saved. As Johansen-Whittle on Aesch. *Suppl.* 338 spell out in detail there are too many passages in the dramatists (ten times in all; two other places in Euripides: *HF* 1410, *Hyps.* fr. 60.45) where οὔτως is followed by a consonant in all the mss. for us to deny this phenomenon and so rule it out of the text, as Diggle does at *HF* 1410 and as West now does in the Teubner Aeschylus (cf. p. xlix).

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Сравнение Афродиты с пчелой (Eur. *Hipp.* 563–564) основано на том, что любовь не только сладка, как мед, но и жалит. В тексте “Геракла” предлагается принять: ἐκκρίνειαν (183); рукописное чтение (460–461); οὔτως на месте лакуны (474).