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POSSIBLE ONE-VERSE ADDITIONS BEFORE EUR. *SUPPLICES* 263

ROLF WESTMAN

The entreaty of Adrastus on behalf of the Argive mothers (vv. 163-192) has been flatly refused by King Theseus (195-249). Adrastus gives up and tells the mothers to withdraw from the Eleusinian altar of Demeter (258-262). From the Argive point of view, all seems lost.

At this critical moment, the Chorus take action for a last passionate plea. First the Coryphaeus appeals to Theseus, invoking the blood relationship between the mothers and Theseus himself. Then the chorus members continue in lyrics, forming two hemichoria. Their moving appeal awakens compassion in Theseus' mother Aethra, whose words (297-331) bring about a change of heart in the King, allowing the play to continue.

Already Melanchthon and Xylander, in their Latin translation published in Basle 1558, saw that something had been lost before 263. W.Canter in 1571 was more explicit¹: as Gilbert Murray states in his critical apparatus *ad loc.* (Eur. *Fabulae* II, third ed., Oxford 1913), Canter expressed the missing thought by the words "O Rex, tu filius filiae es Pitthei". This appears to supply the necessary information. As far as I know, J.Barnes in his Cambridge edition of Euripides (1694) was the first to suggest a Greek verse here. Barnes's note, as quoted by F.A.Paley (Vol.I of his three-volume edition of Euripides, London 1857, p.389), runs: "Tale quid addendum credo, ἡ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ Πιτθέως ἔφυσ τέκνον &c."² Paley goes on: "But he (sc. Barnes) thought it was part of the ῥῆσις of Adrastus." Again, according to Paley (*l.c.*), G.Hermann in his edition of the *Supplices* (Leipzig 1811) was the first to assign the missing verse to

¹ Whether in his Euripides edition or in his *Novarum lectionum libri octo*, I am not in a position to tell.

² Reiterated with sympathy in Euripide, *Supplici*. Introduzione, testo e commento di G.Ammendola. A cura di Vittorio D'Agostino. Torino 1964 (seconda edizione), *ad loc.* (p.33).

the Chorus, not to Adrastus. Paley states at the beginning of his note "There is here a lacuna of several verses" and, having mentioned the well-known genealogy (cf. Eur. *Heracl.* 207-209) running from Pelops down to Theseus, is then bold enough to suggest the Greek of these "several verses", when he writes "The missing lines probably ran after this fashion:-

ἄναξ, τὸ θεῖον καὶ τὸ συγγενὲς σέβου,
 ἡμῖν δ' ὀφείλεις μητρόθεν τιμωρίαν·
 ἢ Πιτθέως γάρ ἐστιν ἢ σ' ἐγείνατο,
 ὃς Πέλοπος ἦν παῖς κτλ."

A.Nauck in his Teubner Euripides (vol.I, third ed. 1871) does not give any Greek suggestion, but prints two lines of asterisks above verse 263.³ After him, it seems to be usual to indicate only one missing line: see Murray 1913, Grégoire 1924, Collard (with comm.) 1975, Diggle 1981 and Collard in his Teubner edition 1984.⁴

In fact, I firmly believe, *pace* Paley and, in a way, Collard 1975 (v. *infra*) that only one line has been lost. My argument is the economy of the play. Things are on the razor's edge: Theseus is already on the point of leaving and the Chorus must voice a quick, forceful appeal to catch his attention. Thus, the situation calls for a strong apostrophe, like "O Rex" in Canter; however, βασιλεῦ seems unlikely, Θεσεῦ is more probable. As Collard thinks (II 178): "The line or lines missing before 263 contained Th.s name (voc.) and a statement of his descent through his mother from her father Pittheus ... , whose name provided the antecedent to ὃς Πέλοπος ἦν παῖς" (again, cf. Canter, *supra*).

This is all true, but it is not an exhaustive account of what is needed for the verse we are looking for. Three further requirements must be met:

1. The verse 262a (as I call it for convenience) must be a principal clause, for 263 contains a subordinate clause (ὃς ... παῖς) and the rest of 263 forms with 264 an independent principal clause which continues 262a.
2. In the required principal clause, 262a, there must be a finite verb (or

³ In his *Adnotatio critica*, p. LXXXIV, Nauck makes no mention of our passage.

⁴ I have not seen G.Fucarino's edition, Palermo 1985, nor that by D.Ebener, Berlin 1990, see *L'Année philologique* D E for 1985 n.1594 and for 1990 n.1426, respectively.

possibly there could have been an ellipsis).

3. It would be natural if 262a contained the particle μέν, corresponding to δέ in the following principal clause, 263-264. This requirement, however, is not an absolute one.

It must now be shown how Collard's requirements and my three additional ones can be met in the compass of a single verse. To concretize: in addition to Θησεῦ, we need the name of his maternal grandfather. Then it would be natural to expect "you are", and probably the emphatic σὺ. Here we have already quite a number of syllables, and therefore we must look for a succinct way to express Th.s relationship to Pittheus. I suggest μητρόθεν "from mother's side" combined with the genitive of the maternal grandfather's name, Πιτθέως⁵.

Let us assume that we now have all the elements needed to construct the missing verse. The "easiest" way would be to write simply

* Θησεῦ, σὺ μητρόθεν μέν ἔσσι Πιτθέως,

which (though presenting a mid-caesura) certainly has the merit of placing the required antecedent of the following ὅς as near to it as is possible (as Canter has already done). But the suggestion fails on the grounds that the form ἔσσί is not found in extant tragedy.⁶

Therefore we have to put in εἶ, the normal Attic form. One could think of

Θησεῦ, σὺ Πιτθέως μέν εἶ τὰ μητρόθεν

or, with ellipsis,

⁵ Paley (v. *supra*) had μητρόθεν in his supplied verses, but I had thought of it before I saw his edition. I suggest it together with Πιτθέως as a kind of extended "Genitiv der Abstammung" (Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* II, München 1950, 124, γ).

⁶ If ἔσσί were admissible, one could even think of Θησεῦ, σὺ μέν παῖς παιδός ἔσσι Πιτθέως.

Θησεῦ, σὺ μὲν τοῦ Πιτθέως τὰ μητρόθεν

or perhaps in both cases τὸ μητρόθεν.

There is also the possibility

Θησεῦ, σέ γ' ἴσμεν Πιτθέως τὸ μητρόθεν

explicitly involving the Chorus as informed (and pleading) persons.

In all three cases (the first, again, has medial caesura), the name of Theseus' maternal grandfather, though not at the end of the verse, seems to carry enough weight to be readily felt as the antecedent of the immediately following relative clause.

Some readers may feel that there is little point in putting forward textual guesses that can never be proved. But, in my opinion, it is not without interest to imagine what words Euripides could have used at a critical moment of his play.

Let me conclude - remembering that Aethra is present and remembering *Med.* 683 - with the suggestion

Θησεῦ, πατὴρ σῆς μητρὸς ἦν Πιτθεὺς ἄναξ,

a powerful possibility.

Turku