

8.

**A Case of Aposiopesis.
Note on Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 827-836.**

Mattia De Poli

A “new” reading ...

After a long series of critical interventions and corrections on the text of Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 827-836, a “new” reading is possible. This is my suggestion:

<i>Ιφ.</i> ὦ φίλτατ’, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, φίλτατος γὰρ εἶ,		<i>3ia</i>
ἔχω σ’, Ὀρέστα, τηλύγετον.		<i>pent^{ia} cho</i>
χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν, ὦ φίλος, ... 830		<i>pent^{ia} dochm</i>
<i>Ορ.</i> κἀγὼ σε, τὴν θανοῦσαν ὡς δοξάζεται.		<i>3ia</i>
κατὰ δὲ δάκρυ, κατὰ δὲ γόος ἅμα χαρᾶι		<i>3cr</i>
τὸ σὸν νοτίζει βλέφαρον, ὡσαύτως δ’ ἐμόν.		<i>3ia</i>
<i>Ιφ.</i> ... τότε ἔτι βρέφος		<i>cr</i>
ἔλιπον ἀγκάλασι νεαρὸν τροφοῦ, 835		<i>2dochm</i>
νεαρὸν ἐν δόμοις. [...]		<i>dochm</i>

Iph. O dearest – nothing else: you are dearest! –, I hold you, Orestes, petted child. Away from our country, Argos, my dear, ...

Or. And I hold you, the dead woman, as it is thought. Tears and sobs, mingled with joy, bedew both your face and mine.

Iph. ... at that time, when you were still a babe, I left you, a newborn, in the arms of a nurse, a newborn in the palace.

Now the adjective τηλύγετος (828) maintains the usual Homeric meaning,¹ that is «born late» and so especially «cherished»² or «only child», and in

¹ A different meaning (“distant from”) is supported by RENEHAN 1976: 35-36, and STINTON 1990: 15.

² KIRK 1985: 290, referring to Homer, *Iliad* 3.175; HAINSWORTH 1993: 76, referring to Homer, *Iliad* 9.143. See also CHANTRAINE 1999: 1114.

general «darling son», «petted child».³ In the Euripidean text it refers to σ', that is Orestes, like in *Iliad* 9.143 (= 9.285): Iphigenia is underlining that her brother is the only male child in the royal family at Argos, so he was petted when he was a babe, because he was the only heir of the kingdom.⁴ Agamemnon's point of view as a father was nearly the same as Iphigenia's, since «the male children are the pillars of the house» (57), that is they are very important for all the family, both parents and sisters.

As a consequence, the words χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος Ἀργόθεν (829-830) can't depend on τηλύγετος, but they could refer to the Orestes and Iphigenia's present situation among the Taurians and their embrace far from their homeland Argos.⁵ Anyway, I prefer to mark a full stop after τηλύγετος and «away from our country, Argos» is just Iphigenia «at that time», when Orestes was still a babe and she left him. We can compare these words to lines 218-228, as well as lines 834-836 have a clear parallel at lines 231-235,⁶ although this amoibaion is less formal than Iphigenia's monody as for the language: I mean that τηλύγετον (828) is more familiar and tender than σκηπτοῦχον (235), and χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν is as brachylogical as pleonastic in a way that is coherent with the present emotional state of this female character, while the rhetorical structure at lines 231-235 uses various tools in order to emphasise the mournful tone of her song.⁷

Orestes' claim κἀγὼ σε (831) is right the answer to Iphigenia's words ἔχω σ', Ὀρέστα (828), while τὴν θανοῦσαν ὡς δοξάζεται (831)⁸ refer to the general opinion among the Greeks about the eldest Agamemnon's daughter after her sacrifice at Aulis and balance both τηλύγετον (828) – regard for Orestes vs. regard for Iphigenia – and χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν (829-830) – false opinion about Iphigenia's fate vs. true Iphigenia's fate.

At 834 Diggle suggests to emendate the corrupted words τὸ δέ τι βρέφος and write ὄν ἔτι βρέφος «ἔλιπον», restoring a full dochmiac and introducing a

³ LIDDEL, SCOTT, JONES 1968, s.v. τηλύγετος. Maybe, other Homeric influences on these lines are: 1) τηλύγετος + λείπω (cf. Homer, *Iliad* 3.174-175 θάλαμον γνωτούς τε λιπούσα / παῖδά τε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὀμηλικὴν ἔρατεινήν), although in the Euripides' text they are not in the same sentence; 2) ἀπό + -θεν (pleonastic: cf. Homer, *Iliad* 8.365 ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν, 24.492 ἀπὸ Τροίηθεν), although Ἀργόθεν is a mere apposition of χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος.

⁴ Cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 235 Ἀργεὶ σκηπτοῦχον Ὀρέσταν (Iphigenia speaking of her young brother).

⁵ See ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΥ 2006: 279.

⁶ In these two texts some words recur literally (231 = 835 ἔλιπον, 232 = 834 ἔτι βρέφος) or with some little changes (232 νέον ... θάλας ~ 835-836 νεαρὸν ... νεαρὸν, 233-234 ἐν χερσὶν ματρὸς πρὸς στέρνοις τ' ~ 835 ἀγκάλαισι ... τροφοῦ, 235 Ἀργεὶ ~ 836 ἐν δόμοις).

⁷ Etymological figure (218 ἀξείνου ... ξείνα, 225-226 αἰμορράντων ... αἰμάσσουσ'), alliteration with asyndeton (220 ἄγαμος ἄτεκνος ἄπολις ἄφιλος), anaphor (221-220 οὐ ... οὐδ', 227-228 οἰκράν τ' ... οἰκρόν τ', 232 ἔτι ... ἔτι ... ἔτι ...).

⁸ About the comma before τὴν θανοῦσαν, see WILLINK 1989: 46 note 7.

relative clause that strictly reconnect 834 (ὄν) to 830 (ὃ φίλος).⁹ Actually, single cretics often recur among the dochmiac series in the following Iphigenia's monody (869-899), and 881-882 τόδε τόδε σόν, ὃ μελέα ψυχά, χρέος ἀνευρίσκειν (*cr dochm dochm*) with the fully resolved cretic (five short syllables) are very similar to 834-836 (*cr 2dochm dochm*).¹⁰ Matthiae's τότε ἔτι introduce a temporal adverb, which has – like other temporal adverbs (νῦν or ποτέ) – an important function in the narrative structure of the Euripidean “dithyrambic monodies”.¹¹ Anyway, I believe that 829-830 are the beginning of a syntactical period ending at 834-836. Asyndeton between 827-828 and 829-830 has a parallel in a previous Iphigenia's monody, between 203-207 and 208-217.¹² Again, we can consider χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος, Ἀργόθεν (830) just like ἀ μναστευθεῖς ἔξ Ἑλλάνων (208) or τὴν θανοῦσαν ὡς δοξάζεται (831), that is one only syntagm, or – better – 829-830 is the equivalent of a subordinate clause, whose verb – a participle, such as πεμφθεῖσα, βληθεῖσα, ἀρπασθεῖσα or σπασθεῖσα – is understood:¹³ maybe it is too difficult for Iphigenia to find the right word that can explain what happened at Aulis after the Artemis' intervention (Iphigenia may wonder whether it was a salvation – πεμφθεῖσα – or a violence and a misfortune for her – βληθεῖσα, ἀρπασθεῖσα or σπασθεῖσα) and probably Orestes just fills Iphigenia's hesitation at this emotional peak with his words (831-833). Anyway, the ἀπό-complement at the very beginning of the period underlines Iphigenia's “exile” in the remote region where the Taurians lived.¹⁴

So 829-830 are an example of aposiopesis with a missing participle in a split sentence. Syntactical peculiarities like this are not unusual in the Euripidean plays.¹⁵ In particular, we can compare *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 827-836 (lyric) with *Ion* 525-527 (trochaic catalectic tetrameters) as for the dialogical structure:¹⁶

Ἐο. ὡς τί δὴ φεύγεις με; σαυτοῦ γνωρίσας τὰ φίλτατα ... 525
 Ἴων οὐ φιλῶ φρενοῦν ἀμούσους καὶ μεμνηνότας ξένους.
 Ἐο. κτεῖνε καὶ πῖμπρη· πατρὸς γάρ, ἦν κτάνης, ἔση φονεύς.

⁹ DIGGLE 1981: 277, in the *apparatus criticus*.

¹⁰ See DE POLI 2011: 167-173.

¹¹ Cf. Euripides, *Orestes* 1483 (Phrygian Slave's monody). See DE POLI 2012: 148 and 156. In this amoibaion, we can consider 830 and 834-836 like a “dithyrambic section” (see DE POLI 2012: 149).

¹² See DE POLI 2011: 165-166.

¹³ In the prologue Iphigenia says that Artemis stole her away and carried her (30 πέμψασά μ') to the land of the Taurians. Cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 878 ἀπὸ πόλεως, ἀπὸ φόνου πέμψω, *Helen* 694-697 ἐμὲ δὲ πατρίδος ἀποπρὸς ... ἔβαλε ... ἀπὸ πόλεος ἀπὸ τε σέθεν, *Hecuba* 91 ἀπ' ἐμῶν γονάτων σπασθεῖσαν, 512 μητρὸς ἀρπασθεῖσ' ἄπο.

¹⁴ For a similar emphatic ἀπό-complement, cf. Euripides, *Bacchae* 64 Ἀσίας ἀπὸ γαίας.

¹⁵ For further cases in the Euripidean plays, see DE POLI 2008. For other similar expressions (interrupted speech or *sermo fractus*) in this tragedy, see MASTRONARDE 1979, 66-69.

¹⁶ These lines are part of a “false” recognition scene, that between Xouthos and Ion: at that moment of the play the former is sure to be Ion's father. For their interpretation, see HARTWIG 2007, defending Page (and Grégoire)'s text.

While a character is speaking or singing, a subordinate clause is separated from the principal one by the intervention of another speaker. While Ion seems to answer Xuthos' question (525), it is evident he doesn't understand his words and Ion's claim (526) causes Xuthos' hyperbolic reaction (527) with an unexpected change of mind. On the other hand, Orestes probably tries to support his sister, focusing on their present feelings, but he doesn't understand her statement about their past sufferings, as τότε' finally shows (834): there is no actual change of mind in Iphigenia's speech, so Orestes' intervention is quite ineffective. Euripides' *Phoenician Women* 1735 offers another parallel:

φυγάδα πατρίδος ἄπο γενόμενον,
ὦ πάτερ, θανεῖν που

since the vocative is inserted between the two clauses, the second level subordinate (with a participle) and the first level one, just like ὦ φίλος (830).

... and the manuscript reading.

This reading mostly corresponds to the text of the *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, as it is written in the most important medieval manuscript (*Laurentianus plut.* 32.2, charta 140 recto):¹⁷ it only needs the emendation of τὸ δέ τι (834) into τότε' ἔτι (Matthiae).

A full stop is clearly marked after τηλύγετον and a large blank space divided this adjective from the following words χθονὸς ἀπὸ πατρίδος. The text is similarly laid out at 844-845 (charta 140 verso),¹⁸ where a full stop is marked after ἀμπτόμενος φύγηι (844) and another large blank space divided this word from the following words.¹⁹

832 is attributed to Orestes, even it is a melic line (3cr), but modern editors usually change the manuscript attribution of 832 as well as 861-871,²⁰ so Orestes is a non-lyric character in this tragedy. Single melic lines are anyway attributed to another male character in the recognition scene of Euripides' *Helen*, Menelaus, who certainly sings 642-643 (2ba 3ba), 654-655 (2dochm dochm), 659 (2dochm)

¹⁷<http://teca.bmlonline.it/ImageViewer/servlet/ImageViewer?idr=TECA0000369877&keywords=euripides#page/293/mode/1up>.

¹⁸<http://teca.bmlonline.it/ImageViewer/servlet/ImageViewer?idr=TECA0000369877&keywords=euripides#page/294/mode/1up>.

¹⁹ Cf. 846, after Μυκῆνα φίλα. It doesn't mean that the punctuation in the medieval manuscript is always correct: Page's reading of *Ion* 825-827 needs a change of it (see HARTWIG 2007). Probably the blank space has a metrical function, showing the cola division, like the *dicolon* (:) after the iambic trimeter at 827 and between two dochmiacs at 836-837 or word division ἀγκάλαι | σι at 835-836.

²⁰ See KYRIAKOU 2006: 286-287.

and maybe 637 (*ia ba ba?*):²¹ in particular, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 831-833 (*3ia 3cr 3ia*) are very similar to *Helen* 658-660 (*3ia 2dochm 3ia*).

Finally, 833 is attributed to Orestes and undivided,²² just like *Ion* 1462 **τοῦμόν** λέγουσα καὶ **τὸ σὸν** κοινῶς λέγεις.

²¹ See BELARDINELLI 2003: 164-165; WILLINK 1989: 47, 52-61.

²² Division of 833 between Orestes and Iphigenia is supported by CROPP 1997: 33-34.