

## TWO DIFFICULT LINES IN TRAGEDY

1. **Aeschylus Agamemnon 1371** τρανώς Ἄτρείδην εἰδέναι κυροῦν ὅπως.

I am not at all sure that this is wrong as it stands and as it is usually interpreted<sup>1</sup>, although Denniston and Page call it „an incoherence of language without parallel or proper explanation“: but a mere change in orthography would give clearer, if less forcible grammar: τρανώς Ἄτρείδην εἰδέναι κυροῦν (from κυρώω) ὅπως<sup>2</sup> „clearly to know and establish“ (a pleonastic composite expression for „to establish a basis of clear knowledge“) *plane Atriden* (in hyperbaton) *nouisse et confirmare*<sup>3</sup> *quomodo (se habeat)*. It might even be possible to keep κυροῦνθ<sup>4</sup> as accusative participle of the same verb, with indefinite subject, „that one should know by establishing“, *nouisse confirmando* (lit. *confirmantem*).

2. **Euripides Bacchae 263** τῆς εὐσεβείας. ὦ ξέν', κτλ.

To take εὐσεβείας as ironical is hardly to be considered; Reiske's δυσσεβείας<sup>5</sup> gives the required sense, but the exclamatory genitive seems to me awkwardly abrupt. I would again invoke a change of orthography: τῆς εὐσεβείας ὦ ξέν' (for ξένα). *O res alienas a pietate!* (It is a small point that ξένα is not perhaps the happiest form of address to the king since the chorus has already, in line 212, been told who he is by Cadmus).

If I were a Greek poet, I should not be particularly proud if either of my proposed lines, but at least they should be exempt from the charge of palaeographical audacity.

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<sup>1</sup> „How he is“ (lit. „being how?“). Fraenkel evidently accepts this, though he would welcome a parallel (the Aramaic use of a participle for the indicative will obviously not serve!). He rejects Murray's suggestion of a lacuna.

<sup>2</sup> Understand εἴπει. The effect is not much more laconic than in 1369 (δίχρη) or 1669 (ἐπεὶ παρά).

<sup>3</sup> I give *confirmare* as a rough equivalent. I think the verb κυρώω is appropriate here, even though I have no exact parallel for the sense I want.

<sup>4</sup> In recitation εἰδέναι and κυροῦνθ<sup>7</sup> could be run together so as to leave no suspicion that the participle agreed with Ἄτρείδην.

<sup>5</sup> The author of the *Christus Pativus* apparently did not know the reading δυσσεβείας: his ἀσεβείας seems to be an unmetrical correction of εὐσεβείας.