

Lines 10-11 of the *Bacchae* provide a helpful illustration of some of the variation which is possible within the pattern of the iambic trimeter.

— — — — | — — — — | — — — —
 αἰνῶ δὲ Κάδμου, ἄβατον ὅς πέδον τόδε
 — — — — | — — — — | — — — —
 τῆθρα, θυγατρὸς σηκῶν· ἀμρέλου δέ νιν

In the first of these lines, Euripides substitutes a long for a short syllable only once, at the very beginning, while at the same time "resolving" the long syllable at the end of the first foot of the second metron into two short syllables (ἄβα-), producing the pattern — — — — where we expect — — or — —. In the following line, he has used an identical resolution as a substitute for a simple iamb at the end of the first metron, producing the pattern — — — — (-σι, θυγα-) where we expect — —. Note that scansion of this line reveals that the second syllable of θυγατρὸς must be short, an example of the "mute-liquid rule" at work.
 The meters of the choruses, which are more various and complex than iambic trimeter, are thoroughly analyzed by Dodds in his commentary.

Commentary

Abbreviations:

- D E. R. Dodds, *Euripides Bacchae*, (Oxford 1960)
- GP J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*² (Oxford 1954)
- S H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. by G. M. Messing (Cambridge, Mass. 1956)

Prologue

- 1 τήνδε ... χθόνα: "to this land", terminal acc. In poetry, the goal of a verb of motion is often in acc. without a preposition (S 1588).
- 3 λοχευεῖτα(α) < λοχεύω, "to bring to birth."
- 4 αἰετῖνας ἐκ: "having taken x (acc.) in exchange for y (gen.)."
- 7 τόδ(ε): "this one here," indicating, as often, someone or something present on stage.
- 9 μητέρ(α) εἰς ἐμὴν: "against my mother." In poetry an object can precede its preposition.
- 11 ἀθάνατον ... ἕβριν: in apposition to φλόγα.
- 11 τῆθρα: "establish x (acc.) as y (acc. adj.)."
- 11 σηκῶν: "shrine."
- 11 νιν: third person, sing. or pl., masc. or fem. accusative pronoun used frequently in poetry (S 325e). Here, masc. acc. sing.
- 11f ἀμρέλου ... βοτρυνῶδει χλόη: "with the clustered greenery of the grape-vine."
- 13 γῶας < γόνος, ου, ὅ, "field, land."
- 14 φρυγῶν τε, Πεσσῶν θ': The first τε connects Ἀυδῶν in 13 and φρυγῶν. θ' connects the phrase governed by ἐρελθῶν in line 16 to the phrase governed by ἁπῶν in line 13. The comma shows the point after which the acc.'s are objects of ἐρελθῶν rather than ἁπῶν. The remaining connectives link the objects of ἐρελθῶν.
- 14 πλάκας < πλάξ, πλακός, ἡ, "plain, plateau."
- 17 ἄλα < ἄλας, ἄλός, ἡ, "sea," as in Homer.
- 18 μυγάσιν < μυγάς, ἄδος, "mixed, mingled."
- 19 πῆλεις < πῆλησις, ες, "filled (with)."
- 20 καλλιτροργῶτους: "with beautiful towers."
- 21 D believes that this line should follow line 22, but if it remains in this position, he suggests substituting χθόνα for πῶλιν to avoid repetition after πῶλεις in 19.
- 21 τᾱκεῖ = τᾱ ἐκεῖ, "the regions there." D prefers (in combination with his shift of line 20) κάκεῖ = καὶ ἐκεῖ, which is the reading of the manuscripts.
- 22 τελετάς: "rites," especially of initiation.
- 24 ἀνωδάλλουξα < ἀνωδαλόξω, here causal "excite with cries."
- 24 νεβρίδ(α) < νεβρίς, ἴδος, ἡ, "fawnskin."
- 24 ἐξάγνας < ἐξάγρω, "to fasten x (acc.) to y (gen.)."
- 24 χροός < χρώς, χροός, ὁ, "skin, flesh, body."

- 26 ἄς ἤριστα χρῆν: "for whom it was least necessary." χρῆν = unaugmented imperfect of χρῆν.
- 27 οὐκ ἔφασκον: "denied."
- 28 νυμφευθείσαν < νυμφεύω, literally, "give in marriage." ἐκ: a common poetic alternative to ὑπὸ + gen. as an expression of personal agent (S 1688c).
- 29 ἀναφέρειν: "attribute"; continues indirect statement introduced by οὐκ ἔφασκον in 27 but without the negative.
- 30 Κάδμου σοφίσματα(τα): "a wily stratagem belonging to Kadmos." In Greek poetry, the plural is often used where English uses an indefinite singular (S 1000b). As D points out, the phrase is in apposition to Semele's claim that Zeus is the father of her baby (Σημέλην ... ἀναφέρειν), which her sisters dismiss as a face-saving expedient devised by their father Kadmos.
- 31 ἐξεκαυχῶν(το) < ἐκκαυχάομαι, "gloatingly announce." This is an ἄραξ λεγόμενον, the only occurrence of this compound verb.
- 32 γάμους: here, her affair with Zeus.
- 33 φῆσιν(α) < οἰστρώω, "goad."
- 35f φρενῶν: For the gen. of separation, see S 1392; here, dependent on παράκοροι, "struck aside from."
- 36 πᾶν ... ἦσαν: As punctuated in the text, these lines seem to say the same thing twice, perhaps to stress the exclusion of males from maenadic ritual. For an alternative punctuation which removes the tautology and produces a more normal iambic line, see D.
- 37 ἐξέμηνα < ἐκμαίω, "drive mad."
- 38 ἀναμειγμέναι < ἀναμίγνυμι/ἀναμίγγω, "mix up, mix together."
- 39 ἀνορόφοις ... πέτραις: literally, "on roofless rocks." In poetry, the dat. of place is often expressed without a preposition (S 1531).
- 40 ἦνται < ἦμαι, "sit"; for the conjugation, see S 789.
- 41 ἀτέλειστον οὐσαν: participle in indirect statement with ἐκμαθεῖν in 39.
- 42 Βακχευμάτων: with ἀτέλειστον, "uninitiated"; see on 33.
- 43 Σημέλης ... ἦπερ: The accent on a disyllabic preposition shifts to the first syllable (anastrophe) when its object precedes it (S 175).
- 44 τίκτηι: Subject is Semele.
- 45 τὰ κατ' ἐμέ: literally, "the (actions) involving me"; internal acc. (S 1554a) with θεωροῦσθαι.
- 47 ἄπο: For accent, see on 41.
- 50 αὐτῶ ... γερῶς ἐνδείξομαι (< ἐνδείκνυμαι): "show, give proof of being x (participle) to y (dat.)."
- 52 ἦν = ἐάν.
- 53 μαινάσαι < μαινάς, ἄθος, ἦ, "madwoman, Bacchantes." ἀλλάξας (< ἀλλάσσω) ἔχω: "I have taken in exchange." ἔχω + aor. part. = periphrastic perfect (S 599b).

- 55 ἐρυμὰ < ἐρύμα, ατος, τό, "defence, bulwark."
- 58 ῥάριχ' ὤρι(α) = τὰ ἐριχ' ὤρια, "native."
- 59 ἐμά: The possessive adj. is often substituted for a parallel possessive pronoun, here ἐμοῦ.
- 61 κτυρεῖται: causal, "make (them, i.e., the τύκρανα) resound."
- 63 ἴν(α): "where," as usual when followed by the indicative.
- 64 Παροδος
- 64 γὰς = γῆς. In tragic choruses Doric α is often substituted for Attic η.
- 67 κάρματόν τ' εὐκάματον: literally, "toil easily toiled."
- 68 εὐαζομένηα = εὐαζομένη; see on 64.
- 69 τίς: D's commentary is based on Gilbert Murray's edition of the text, with which he frequently disagrees. Here, objecting to Murray's monosyllabic question, he prefers the reading τίς μελόθροισι ("Who (is) in the house?"). For dat. of place, see on 38.
- 72 εὐφημον: "uttering words of good omen" here, as often, implies, in order to avoid bad omens, uttering no words at all, i.e., to observe religious silence.
- 74 ὕμνησάω: "sing, praise, celebrate," takes double acc. of the thing praised and the thing wherein or with which it is praised.
- 75 βιοτᾶν ἀγιστεύει: literally, "keeps pure with respect to his life."
- 76 θιασεύεται: literally, "bring into the θιάσος/Bacchic company."
- 78 ἕρπαι < ὄρος, ὄρους, τό, "hill," Homeric dat.
- 79 ὄρηται: "worship, rites, sacrifices," especially those practiced secretly by the initiated.
- 80 θεμιτεύων: "practicing according to the rite fixed by θέμις (religious law)."
- 81 ἀνά ... τινάσσων: As D points out, imesis of ἀνατινάσσων, "shake up and down, brandish." For tmesis, see S 1650-1651.
- 87 ἀγυιάς < ἀγυιά, ᾄς, ἦ, "street, highway."
- 88 ὠδίνων < ὠδῖς, ἴνος, ἦ, "travail, labor pain."
- 89 λοχίαται: "of childbirth, natal."
- 90 πταμένους < πέτομαι, "fly," aor. mid. part.; gen. absolute, as D explains.
- 97 νηδύος < νηδύς, ύος, ἦ, "stomach, womb"; gen. of separation with ἐκβόλον, "cast from, aborted."
- 99 συνεπεῖδαι < συνεπεῖδω, "set firmly together, bind closely."
- 100 ἀντίκα = ἦντίκα, "when."
- 100f ταυρόκερῶν: masc. acc. sing., "bull-horned." For the accent, see S 163a.
- 101f τέλεισταν ... στεφάνοσεν: For the omission of the syllabic past indicative augment in Attic tragedy, see S 438a.
- 102 ἐνθεν: "from which cause"(D).
- 104 θηροτρόφον: literally, "beast-fed" i.e., "bestial, wild."
- 106 πλοκάμους: "locks, braids of hair."
- κισσῶ: "ivy."