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978-0-521-06896-3 - The Tragedies of Ennius: The Fragments

Edited by H. D. Jocelyn

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INTRODUCTION

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I. ATHENIAN DRAMA AND THE ROMAN FESTIVALS

The twenty-two dramatic treatments of Greek heroic legend whose remains are discussed in this volume were adapted from Athenian tragedies between the years 203 B.C. and 169 for performance at *ludi scaenici*. These *ludi scaenici* formed an important element both of the regular yearly festivals managed by the civil magistrates in honour of Iuppiter, Apollo, Ceres, Magna Mater and Flora and of those held for some special purpose, such as to thank a deity for a magistrate's military success or to honour the spirit of a deceased member of the ruling class.¹ They were believed to have been introduced to Rome from Etruria in 364 as a means of placating the divine senders of a plague.² The old agricultural festivals of the so-called Calendar of Numa, which continued to be managed by the priests, had no place for them.³ The earliest adaptation of an Athenian play which scholars of the first century B.C. could find recorded was performed at *ludi scaenici* in 240, the year following the first capitulation of Carthage to Roman arms.⁴

¹ See Habel, *RE Suppl.* v (1931), s.v. *ludi publici*, 608 ff., L. R. Taylor, *TAPhA* LXVIII (1937), 284 ff. For the continuing religious associations of the *ludi scaenici* see J. A. Hanson, *Roman Theater-Temples* (Princeton, 1959), pp. 3 ff.

² Cf. Festus, p. 436.23 ff., Livy 7.2, Valerius Maximus 2.4.4.

³ Naevius (*Com.* 113) identified the old *Liberalia* with the Attic Διονύσια. Plautus however (*Cist.* 89, 156, *Curc.* 644, *Pseud.* 59) seems to have thought the differences too great to justify the identification. Tertullian's statement (*De spect.* 10.19) that scenic games were properly called *Liberalia* is based on second-hand theorising rather than firm knowledge.

⁴ H. Mattingly Jr., *CQ N.S.* vii (1957), 159–63, produces no good reason for doubting the veracity of the *antiqui commentarii* consulted by Varro (Gellius 17.21.42), Atticus and Cicero (*Brut.* 72, *Tusc.* 1.3, *Cato* 50). Accius, whose *Didascalica* set the first production of a play by Livius Andronicus in 197,

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Scholars and literary amateurs of the first century B.C. regarded those plays of the previous two centuries whose scenes were set in Greece as being the work of the men who wrote the Latin acting scripts and yet were conscious that particular Greek tragedies and comedies underlay them all.¹ The Greek philosophical dialogues which Cicero adapted were full of quotations from Attic drama. Cicero sometimes replaced these with quotations from the scripts of Latin stage adaptations and sometimes with his own translations of the verses quoted. In the first case he either left the quotation anonymous or named the Latin adapter while in the second he always named the Greek

may have been quite well aware that Naevius and Plautus had produced plays before this date (see W. Hupperth, *Horaz über die scaenicae origines der Römer* [Diss. Köln, 1961], pp. 5 ff., 10 ff., H. Dahlmann, 'Studien zu Varro, "De poetis"', *Abh. Ak. d. Wiss. u. d. Lit. Mainz, Geistes- u. Sozialw. Kl.* 1962, Nr. 10, 29 ff., C. O. Brink, 'Horace and Varro', *Entretiens Hardt* ix [1963], 192). E. Fraenkel seems to have based his view that Livius produced only one play, and that a tragedy, in 240 (*RE* Suppl. v [1931], s.v. *Liuius*, 598 f.) on Cicero, *Brut.* 72, *Tusc.* 1.3, *Cato* 5. These passages should not be pressed nor, it must be admitted, should Gellius' words *Liuius poeta fabulas docere... coepit*. However according to Cassiodorus (*Chronica*) Livius produced both a tragedy and a comedy in 239. This date is a clear error for 240 but the rest of Cassiodorus' statement may be reliable. For Livius as the founder of both comedy and tragedy cf. Donatus, *De com.* 5.4, *Gloss. Lat.* 1 128, s.v. *comoedia*, 1 568, s.v. *tragoedia*.

¹ There is nothing in ancient discussions of republican tragedy and comedy to support the statement frequently made in modern times that the Latin poets occasionally wrote quite independently of particular Greek models (cf. J. J. Scaliger, *Coniectanea in M. Terentium Varronem de lingua Latina* [Paris, 1565], p. 6, H. Columna, *Q. Ennii Poetae Vetustissimi quae supersunt Fragmenta* [Naples, 1590], p. 408, F. Nieberding, *Ilias Homeri ab L. Attio Poeta in Dramata Conuersa* [Conitz, 1838], p. 3, T. Ladewig, *Analecta Scenica* [Neustrelitz, 1848], pp. 8, 29, 38, G. Boissier, *Le poète Attius* [Paris, Nîmes, 1857], p. 60, W. S. Teuffel, *Caecilius Statius, Pacuvius, Attius, Afranius* [Tübingen, 1858], pp. 23, 29, U. von W., in T. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die dramatische Technik des Sophokles* [Berlin, 1917], p. 315 n. 1, J. Vahlen, *Ennianae Poesis Reliquiae*² [Leipzig, 1903], p. ccvii [very tentatively], E. M. Steuart, *AJPh* xlvii [1926], 276, J. Heurgon, *Ennius* ii [Paris, 1958], p. 143). Cicero, *Fin.* 1.7 refers to the relations between Ennius' *Annales* and Homer's epics; *Gloss. Lat.* 1 568, s.v. *tragoedia* (*tragoedias autem Ennius FERE omnes ex Graecis transtulit*), to plays on Roman historical themes such as the *Sabinae* (cf. Horace, *Ars* 285–8).

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dramatist.¹ Scholars normally at this time gave the name of the Latin poet and his Latin title when quoting from an acting script but very occasionally gave the title of the Greek original; on one occasion a play is quoted with the name of the author of the original as well as that of the adapter.² The writers of the third and second century acting scripts were by now thought of with varying degrees of admiration as the fathers of an indigenous Roman literature and it is clear that performances of these scripts were advertised with their names to the fore.

When the early adaptations were being made a different attitude to them probably prevailed among the managers of the *ludi scaenici* and the citizens who attended the theatre. The literary and artistic culture that had spread out from Athens over the whole Greek-speaking world was then making the same appeal to certain of the Roman governing class as it had to the rulers of Etruria and other barbarians in earlier centuries. The works that had been produced for performance at the festivals of Dionysus were among the brightest jewels of that culture. They could have been produced in the original Greek at the Roman *ludi*, as in later times they perhaps sometimes were,³ but one of the purposes of the *ludi* was to impress the peers of the presiding magistrate and their clients. To many of these Greek culture in its less adulterated forms was an alien and suspect thing. The pride of the majority in Roman race, language and tradition was satisfied by the form in which the Greek works were presented; the enthusiasm of the minority

¹ Cf. G. Przychocki, *Eos* xxxii (1929), 215 ff., Fraenkel, *Gnomon* vi (1930), 663. Seneca followed Cicero's practice; contrast *Epist.* 115. 14–15 with 95. 53 and 102. 16.

² See below, p. 59.

³ The evidence collected by F. G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien mit Rücksicht auf den epischen Cyclus* (*RhM* Suppl. II, Bonn, 1839–41), pp. 1323 ff., is of an ambiguous kind. Polybius 30. 22, Tacitus, *Ann.* 14. 21, Plutarch, *Brut.* 21 do not necessarily refer to drama at all. Suetonius (*Iul.* 39, *Aug.* 43) talks of performances by 'omnium linguarum histriones'.

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for classical Greek culture by their advertisement as the works of the classical Athenian tragedians and comedians. Slaves and foreign immigrants did the work of adaptation and it is unlikely that their names carried much weight while they lived. The uncertainty among Roman scholars about the authorship of certain comic scripts popularly ascribed to Plautus¹ may have been partly due to failure by the magistrates of earlier times always to record the Latin poet's name in their *commentarii*. A Sophocles might be made a magistrate at Athens but at Rome a magistrate could be pilloried for having an Ennius in his retinue.²

The opening speech of the *Rudens* describes a storm as follows (83–8): *pro di immortales, tempestatem quouismodi | Neptunus nobis nocte hac misit proxuma. | detexit uentus uillam — quid uerbis opust? | non uentus fuit uerum Alcumena Euripidi, | ita omnis de tecto deturbauit tegulas; | inlustriores fecit fenestrasque indidit*. It is unclear whether the speaker has in mind a stormy reaction by the heroine of Euripides' play to her husband's accusations³ or a real storm within the action of that play;⁴ likewise whether the identification stood in the Diphilian original⁵ or was added by Plautus himself.⁶ In any case one cannot imagine such a state-

¹ Cf. Terence, *Eun.* 25 (?), Varro, *Ling.* 6. 89, Gellius 3. 3.

² For the traditional Roman suspicion of the maker of verses cf. Cato, *Mor.* 2 *poeticae artis honos non erat; si quis in ea re studebat aut sese ad conuiuia adplicabat grassator uocabatur*.

³ Cf. Plautus, *Amph.* 812 ff.

⁴ So R. Engelmann, *Ann. Ist. Corrisp. Arch.* XLIV (1872), 16, *Beiträge zu Euripides I: Alkmene* (Berlin, 1882), p. 11, *Archäologische Studien zu den Tragikern* (Berlin, 1900), pp. 59–60.

⁵ So S. Vissering, *Quaestiones Plautinae* I (Amsterdam, 1842), p. 42, T. Bergk, *Ind. lectt. Marburg* 1844, XI (= *Kl. phil. Schr.* 1225), Ladewig, *Anal. scen.* p. 5.

⁶ So Fraenkel, *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Berlin, 1922), p. 68 (= *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* [Florence, 1960], p. 64); cf. the *Addenda* to the Italian translation, p. 403. The addition of the Greek poet's name suggests Plautine authorship; for the late fourth century method of referring to famous tragedies cf. Menander, *Epit.* 767 τραγικήν ἔρω σοι ῥήσιν ἐξ Αὔγησ ὄλην (contrast Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 134 ff.).

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ment being made on the Roman stage unless a play about Alcmena had already appeared there and been advertised as being in some sense Euripides' Ἀλκμήνη. Admittedly there is no undisputed evidence elsewhere for the existence of an adaptation of this play,¹ but considering the fragmentary record of third and second century dramatic production² we should not be surprised to find such a reference in the *Rudens*. The prologues of the *Poenulus* (v. 1) and the *Eunuchus* (vv. 9, 19–20) refer to Latin versions of Greek plays in this way although it was theatrically possible for the speakers to use the first century's customary mode of reference if it had then been in general use.

The only Greek plays which are said by knowledgeable ancient authorities to have been adapted for performance at Roman *ludi* in the late third and early second centuries were originally composed for the festivals of Dionysus at Athens in the fifth, fourth and early third centuries.³ The only dramatists among the famous Greeks mentioned in Plautus' comedies are the Athenians, Euripides,⁴ Diphilus and Philemon.⁵ The forms of comedy written by Epicharmus and others at Syracuse in the fifth century and by Rhinthon at Tarentum in the third and the imitations of Athenian drama made by Machon and the

¹ O. Ribbeck (see *Corollarium in Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta*² [Leipzig, 1871], p. LXIII) took Marius Victorinus, *Gramm.* vi 8.6 ff. to refer to tragic personages rather than to titles; hence *Alcmena* does not appear in his 'index fabularum'. Plautus, *Amph.* 91 ff. can be plausibly interpreted as referring to the play postulated. See also below, p. 63.

² Of the 130 comic titles once attributed to Plautus we now know only 53. Several tragic titles occur only once or twice in our sources, sometimes even without the Latin adapter's name (*Laomedon* at Schol. Veron. *Verg. Aen.* 2. 81; *Penthesilea* at Festus, p. 206. 3).

³ Bergk, *Commentationum de Reliquiis Comoediae Atticae Antiquae Libri II* (Leipzig, 1838), p. 148, explained the fragment of Varro's *De poetis* quoted by Priscian, *Gramm.* II 469. 9—*deinde ad Siculos se adplicauit*—as referring to Plautus (cf. Horace, *Epist.* 2. 1. 58) but thought that Varro was speaking generally of the reputed πρώτος εὐρητής of the comic genre.

⁴ *Rud.* 86.

⁵ *Most.* 1149. Philemon was not, of course, an Athenian by birth.

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tragedians of the 'Pleiad' for the festival of Dionysus established at Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247)¹ obtained for themselves a certain literary notoriety and it is not utterly impossible that plays from Alexandria² and Magna Graecia³ were adapted for the Roman stage. Ennius adapted non-dramatic works by Epicharmus, Arcestratus, Sotades and Euhemerus for the private delectation of his aristocratic patrons and perhaps imitated Callimachus' Αἴτια in the proem of his epic *Annales*⁴ but the public presentation of dramatic works outside the classical Athenian repertoire would have been quite another matter. As late as 45, when a large number of poetical works from Alexandria and other Hellenistic centres had achieved a sort of second-grade classical status and were being enthusiastically studied and imitated by poets writing in Latin, Cicero chose adaptations of the non-dramatic poems of Euphorion to set against what he believed to be a version by Ennius of a Euripidean tragedy.⁵ New plays continued to be presented at the Dionysiac competitions of Athens until well into the first century A.D.⁶ but no playwright productive

¹ Cf. Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung* I (Berlin, 1924), pp. 166 ff.

² So A. Rostagni, *RFIC* XLIV (1916), 379–97 (= *Scritti Min.* II ii 3–22); cf. M. Lenchantin De Gubernatis, *MAT* LXIII (1913), 389 ff., *Ennio* (Torino, 1915), pp. 62 ff. For detailed criticism of Rostagni's argument see N. Terzaghi, *AAT* LX (1925), 660 ff. (= *Stud. Graec. et Lat.* [Torino, 1963], 686 ff.).

³ So T. B. L. Webster, 'Alexandrian Epigrams and the Theatre', in *Miscellanea di studi Alessandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni* (Torino, 1963), 531–43, *Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (London, 1964), pp. 269 ff., 282 ff., 290 f.

⁴ So K. Dilthey, *De Callimachi Cydippa* (Leipzig, 1863), pp. 15 f., F. Skutsch, *Aus Vergils Frühzeit* (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 34 ff., S. Mariotti, *Lezioni su Ennio* (Pesaro, 1951), p. 60, O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (London, 1953), p. 10; *contra* E. Reitzenstein, in *Festschrift R. Reitzenstein* (Leipzig, 1931), 63 ff., R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus* I (Oxford, 1949), p. 11, G. Marconi, *RCCM* III (1961), 224 ff.

⁵ *Tusc.* 3.45. For Cicero's belief (apparently false) that Ennius' *Andromacha* was an adaptation of a tragedy by Euripides see *Opt. gen.* 18.

⁶ Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 19. The competition for new plays was over by the late second century (Lucian, *Enc. Dem.* 27). Οἱ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνῖται often included tragic and comic poets as well as actors (see below, p. 16).

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between 240 B.C. and the fall of the Roman senatorial regime seems to have gained more than an ephemeral repute. Ziegler's view¹ that the Latin playwrights adapted contemporary Greek work thus lacks all probability.

Besides the six classical Athenian dramatic poets Roman audiences are reported to have seen in Latin linguistic dress Aristarchus, a contemporary of Euripides whose name figured in accounts of the development of tragedy and from whose hand seventy titles were known to ancient scholars,² Alexis, Posidippus, Apollodorus and Demophilus.³ Only the last mentioned is absent from the Greek record but that may be an accident and there is no good reason to suppose that the original of the *Asinaria* was composed either outside Athens or by a contemporary of Plautus. Of the comedians Menander was plainly the one most often performed and of the tragedians Euripides.

The classical six had certainly acquired most of their later pre-eminence in Greece by 240 B.C. A competition for actors held at Athens in 254 employed three old satyr plays, three old tragedies and three old comedies, one each by Diphilus, Menander and Philemon.⁴ Aristophanes' comedy Βάρτραχοι shows Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides standing out in public esteem as early as the end of the fifth century. From

¹ *RE* 2 vi ii (1937), s.v. *Tragoedia*, 1984.

² *Souda* A 3893 Adler. A third century B.C. papyrus (*Flinders Petrie Papyri Part II*, ed. J. P. Mahaffy [Dublin, 1893], pp. 158–9 [= nr. 1594 Pack²]) contains scraps of what looks like a collection of epigrams addressed to famous poets; in them and their titles are legible the names Aristarchus, Astydamas and Cratinus. See R. Reitzenstein, *BPhW* xiv (1894), 155–9.

³ At *Epist.* 2.1.163 ff. Horace is talking generally. He names Thespis because of his fame as the πρώτος εὐρητής of tragedy; cf. above, p. 7 n. 3, on the reference to Epicharmus at *v.* 58.

⁴ See B. D. Meritt, *Hesperia* vii (1938), 116 ff., A. Körte, *Hermes* lxxiii (1938), 123 ff., A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 123 f.

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the record of theatrical revivals in Athens and elsewhere¹ and the character of allusions to tragedy in fourth and third century comedy² it is clear that Euripides' popularity far surpassed that of the other two quite early and continued to do so.

Menander gained a similar position among comedians, although exactly when is hard to say.³ Nevertheless for some time other tragedians and comedians continued to have their works revived. There are recorded performances of tragedies by the fourth-century poet Chaeremon and the otherwise unknown Arcestratus⁴ and performances of comedies by Anaxandrides, Posidippus and Philippides.⁵ The scholars of the Alexandrian Museum thought Ion and Achaeus worthy to stand beside Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides,⁶ doubtless in obedience to a common opinion. The Ptolemaic rubbish tips of Oxyrhynchus and other Greek settlements of the Egyptian countryside provide evidence of a taste in tragic poetry more extensive

¹ For the literary and inscriptional evidence see Welcker, *Die griech. Trag.* pp. 1275 ff., A. Müller, *Lehrbuch der griechischen Bühnenaltertümer* (Freiburg, 1886), pp. 390 f., *NJbb* xxiii (1909), 36 ff., Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals*, pp. 100 ff., M. Kokolakis, Πλάτων xii (1960), 67 ff. The evidence from figurative monuments collected by Webster (*CQ* xliii [1948], 15 f., *Hermes* lxxxii [1954], 295 ff., *Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play* [*BICS* Suppl. xiv (1962)]) is ambiguous; it has to be interpreted with the aid of knowledge provided by literature and lapidary inscriptions; it does not provide new knowledge.

² See A. Pertusi, *Dioniso* xvi (1953), 27 ff., xix (1956), 111 ff., 195 ff.

³ On Menander's posthumous fame see A. Dain, *Maia* xv (1963), 278 ff. The material concerning comedy in late antiquity collected by Webster (*AJA* lxxvi [1962], 333 ff.) refers almost exclusively to Menander.

⁴ *I.G.* v 2.118 (saec. II a. Chr. = *S.I.G.*³ 1080). Given the context, Webster's view (*Hellenistic Poetry and Art*, p. 16) that Arcestratus was a contemporary poet seems most unlikely. L. Moretti's doubts (*Athenaeum* xxxviii [1960], 272) as to whether *I.G.* xii 1.125 (saec. I a. Chr.) refers to the classical Sophocles are likewise unjustified.

⁵ *I.G.* ii² 2323 a (Anaxandrides 311), 2323 col. iii (Posidippus 181), col. v (Philippides 155).

⁶ *Anecd. Graec. Par.* iv 196.20, Tzetzes, *Proleg. Lyc.* p. 3.8 Schcer.

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and catholic than that possessed by the schoolmasters of the urban centres of later antiquity.¹

Where playwrights were concerned the tragic and comic repertory of the third and second century Roman theatre probably reflected that of contemporary Greek theatres. But in actual plays the Romans seem to have had their own taste. Many scholars have noted the extraordinary preponderance among surviving tragic titles of those connected with the Trojan cycle of heroic legends.² These legends had long been of particular interest to the ruling families of Greek states of recent origin; in these there was a keen desire to find the same links with the heroic past as Argos, Thebes and Athens possessed.³ The wanderings of the Greek and Trojan heroes after the destruction of Troy were easily embroidered to suit any state in the Mediterranean area. The families of the cities of Etruria and Latium, as of other non-Greek speaking communities, early took an interest in the legends that fascinated their Greek neighbours. Long before the earliest adaptation of an Attic tragedy speakers of Latin imitated as best they could the sounds of the Greek heroes' names⁴ and were accustomed to see representations of incidents from the legends on works of art.⁵ There is

¹ On the comparatively large number of Euripidean plays absent from the selection of the later schools which are represented in Ptolemaic papyri see C. H. Roberts, *MusHx* (1953), 270. The proportion of tragic papyri which cannot be attributed to the classical trio seems to be much greater among the Ptolemaic than among the Roman; cf. nos. 169 ff. and 1707 ff. in the second edition of R. A. Pack's catalogue (Ann Arbor, 1965).

² E.g. Welcker, *Die griech. Trag.* pp. 1344, 1350, Ribbeck, *Die römische Tragödie im Zeitalter der Republik* (Leipzig, 1875), p. 632.

³ Cf. T. J. Dunbabin, *PBSR* xvi (1948), 11 ff., for the claims of South Italian cities to be founded by Greek heroes after the fall of Troy.

⁴ On the inscriptions on the Praeneste mirrors and caskets (*C.I.L.* 1² 547-70) see R. S. Conway, *The Italic Dialects* (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 315 ff. On the forms of names used by the early poets see J. Wackernagel, *Philologus* lxxxvi (1931), 143 (= *Kl. Schr.* 1755).

⁵ See I. S. Ryberg, *An Archaeological Record of Rome from the Seventh to the Second Century B.C.* (London, 1940 [Studies and Documents xiii]), *passim*.