

## ALCESTIS BARCINONENSIS

A miscellaneous Greek and Latin papyrus codex (P. Monts. Roca inv. 158-161, s. IV/2, p. 65-71, 02298.100 MP<sup>3</sup>), written by the same scribe, contains an anonymous 122-hexameter poem conventionally referred to as *Alcestis Barcinonensis*. The *editio princeps* dates back to 1980 (R. Roca-Puig), the last one was published 2014 (G. Nocchi Macedo) : Cedopal registers five editions published after the former and before the latter (Roca-Puig 1982 and 2000, Marcovich 1988, Nosarti 1992, Liberman 1998). The occasionally extremely corrupt text aroused strong critical interest in the years following the publication, as is testified by the Cedopal bibliography. Marcovich 1988 and Liberman 1998 tried to edit a readable text and extensively resorted to conjectures, whereas Nosarti 1992 is much more conservative, though not as much as Roca-Puig and Nocchi Macedo. Then the critical and also, but to a lesser extent, literary interest for *Alcestis Barcinonensis* abated. The text edited by Nocchi Macedo is, like that of Roca-Puig in his three editions, but a slightly doctored version of a diplomatic transcription. It is not I believe unfair to say that it is barely readable and very incorrect, sometimes unmetrical (see l. 49, *deripia<n>t uterum<que> cōgis, uis, ultimus ignis*, also ungrammatical ; the beginning of l. 74, *Admetē uentura*, where I now reject lengthening of an open syllable at *caesura ternaria*<sup>1</sup> ; 102, *disce mori, disce ex m<e> exemplā pietatis*). This would be no criticism of the editor if the author of what Cedopal hesitatingly suggests may be an « exercice scolaire » were an incompetent writer and poet by classical standards. But well transmitted passages, including those which only call for extremely light emendation, prove the contrary : the gifted and witty author wrote good Latin and poetry ; when the text is un-Latin and absurd, it is the scribe's (or scribes') fault, not the author's. The mistakes in our papyrus codex suggests that the scribe was not quite conversant with Latin and that he may have had little understanding of what he wrote. Remarkably enough most lines he writes do not coincide with the poem's hexameters, though the text he copied seems to have been written κατὰ στίχον ἐξάμετρον<sup>2</sup>. Without the passages which, in the transmitted and uncorrected text, offer good or excellent Latin and poetry, one might rightly object that emending the text and then claiming that its author is competent involves circular reasoning. But this is not the case and any editor who accepts an absurd and/or incorrect text must account for the fact that elsewhere the author is competent or even very competent. If the qualification « exercice scolaire » aims at claiming presumably wrong or suspect readings as failures of the author, then it must be firmly rejected. A reader of classical Latin poetry may query dactylic *edoce* (6) and

<sup>1</sup> The lengthening of the last syllable of *uenit* at 100-101, *tum non mea dulcis imago | paulum no<c>te ueni<f>, et tu pro coniuge cara*, would not by itself be shocking (see F. Vollmer, « Zur Geschichte des lateinischen Hexameters. Kurze Endsilben in arsi », *SBAW, Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse*, 1917, « 3. Abhandlung », 1-59). But we need a future and *paulum* is, as happens in the transmission of Latin poetry, a mere stop-gap : all flaws vanish if one reads *nocte <ad te> ueniet. Tu pro coniuge cara*. See Eur., *Alc.*, 354-356, ἐν δ' ὀνειρασιν | φοιτῶσά μ' εὐφραίνεις ἄν· ἦδὺ γὰρ φίλους | κὰν νυκτὶ λεῦσσειν, ὄντιν' ἄν παρήϊ τρόπον (χρόνον mss., corr. Prinz). *Imago* (φάσμα) corroborates τρόπον, an unfortunately no longer fashionable emendation. One faces the same issue at 85-86, *carior ista tegat. Et tu me nomine tantum | ne cole meque puta tecum sub nocte iacere* (Nocchi Macedo's text). One might accept the lengthening of the last syllable of *tegat* (read *legat*), but *et... ne cole* with four intervening words is implausibly awkward and it is difficult to guess why the author did not write something like *nec tu me nomine tantum | <per>cole meque puta* etc. H. Pinkster, *The Oxford Latin Syntax*, II, Oxford, 2021, 647 claims that *nec... -que* « is attested from Cicero onwards, but it is very rare » : a careful reader of Latin knows and *TLL IX.1.586.66-587.13* (a. 2022) shows that it is not true.

<sup>2</sup> « Entre autres indices, le blanc laissé à la dernière ligne de la page trois après posent (64), fin d'hexamètre, suggère que le modèle n'était pas écrit comme de la prose » (Liberman 1998, 219 n. 2).

iambic *para* (26)<sup>3</sup>, but this does not amount to much<sup>4</sup>. Pyrrhic *para* reminds one of the old « Iambenkürzung »<sup>5</sup>; it is by no means certain that the true reading is not <math>m>e\ doce</math> (contrast *latē* 56). At 88-89, *nec timida tractare manu, †sudare† fa<u>i<l>las | unguento*, the nearest correction *udare* entails hiatus, not exemplified in the body of « correct » Latin poetry<sup>6</sup> and in the supposedly correctly transmitted text of *Alcestis*: *iactat membra toro et fletibus atria complet* (22)<sup>7</sup>; *Si sine lumine ero, aliquid tamen esse uidebor* (35). The transmitted text offers another case of hiatus at 68, *fleuit Ityn Progne et colligit illa cruentum*, but the tense and meaning of *colligit* do not fit (Procne did not collect the limbs of Itys whom she had dismembered) and the line certainly harbours corruption: I suggest *fleuit Ityn Procne quem coxerat ipsa cruenta*<sup>9</sup>. If this poem really is an « exercise », it is in my view a very successful one, one of a competent poet and writer. Revisiting the carefully composed piece and indulging in a now unfashionable « Westphalian »<sup>10</sup> study of literary « economy », I realised that the hexameter poem (unsurprisingly in the case of a poem dealing with the story of *Alcestis*<sup>11</sup>) imitates the division of a drama into five acts: I) 11 + 9 lines, Admetus asks Apollo what is in store for him and Apollo answers that Admetus may escape his incoming death if he finds somebody to die in his place; II) 11 + 11 lines (actually 10 lines and a half), his father asks Admetus why he is crying, Admetus answers and asks his father if he is ready to die instead of him; the father says no and accounts shrewdly and calmly for his answer; III) 28 lines (actually 28 and a half), Admetus asks his mother and she also says no but states her case angrily and offensively; IV) 34 lines (three groups, 12 + 10 + 12), Admetus' wife says yes unhesitatingly; V) 20 lines, the poet narrates *Alcestis*' death.

<sup>3</sup> Provided that Lebek's ingenious conjecture *prope* is not right. It does not only improve prosody, for *funera prope nato* is better in point of sense than *funera para nato*.

<sup>4</sup> On the contrary L. Zurli, « *Alcestis Barcinonensis* ed *Aegritudo Perdicae*. Considerazioni stravagante », *Paideia*, 73, 2018, 699-707 believes that the prosody of *Alcestis* « shows noticeable abnormalities in respect of the classical poetry practice » and that « they attract *Alcestis* near to the Vandal African poems, collected in the Salmasiana anthology ». How is it that those abnormalities are absent from whole passages which make sense? How is it that they tend to concentrate in passages which do not make sense or suffer from other than metrical flaws?

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. F. Vollmer, « Über die sog. Iambenkürzung bei den skenischen Dichtern der Römer », *SBAW, Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse*, 1924, 4. Abhandlung, 1-19. Iambic *caue* is famously classical; so is iambic *puta* meaning « e.g. » (see L. Müller, *De re poetica poetarum Latinorum praeter Plautum et Terentium*, Petersburg / Leipzig, 1894, 418-420). Contrast *putā* « imagine » 86 (arsis, main caesura).

<sup>6</sup> Müller 1894, 368-379.

<sup>7</sup> The poet could easily avoid hiatus writing *beatis... toris*. Perhaps he did.

<sup>8</sup> See *Ov. met.*, 6.645; *Pers.*, 5.8-9, *si quibus aut Procnes aut si quibus olla Thyestae | feruebit saepe insulso cenando Glyconi*.

<sup>9</sup> See *Verg., georg.*, 4.15, *et manibus Procne pectus signata cruentis*.

<sup>10</sup> I mean R. Westphal: see his ground-breaking *Prolegomena zu Aeschylus Tragödien*, Leipzig, 1869 but also his *Catull's Gedichte in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhange übersetzt und erläutert*, Breslau, 1867<sup>1</sup>, 1870<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Euripides' *Alcestis* was not, to judge from the very small number of extant papyrological fragments, very popular in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, though it is part of the ten tragedies by Euripides selected for educational purpose early in the Christian era: see L. Parker, *Euripides. Alcestis*, Oxford, 2007, lix-lx. She does not mention *Alcestis Barcinonensis* and even writes (xxiv) « from Roman poetry, no version of the story of *Alcestis* survives ». Parts II-IV of *Alc. Barc.* are but a development of four lines said by Apollo at the beginning of the play (15-18). *Alc. Barc.* is not interested in the rescue of the dead *Alcestis* by Herakles which qualifies the drama as a satyric one (see Liberman, « Petits riens sophocléens », *Hyperbo-reus*, 28, 2022, 29-52, esp. 38 n. 40).

One could also identify an introduction and a conclusion (20 lines each) and a three-part main body, 82 lines, 20 1/2 + 28 1/2 + 34, an illustration of Behaghel's « Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder » (extended to larger components) in which the mother's selfishness and the wife's devotion are efficaciously contrasted with each other. All this may well be too much for a schoolboy in later Roman Egypt, even if one remembers the very young Arthur Rimbaud's admirable Latin poems. Note the apparently unnoticed hellenizing use of *cerno* at l. 47, *tu, scelerate, potes materna cernere morte*, « you wicked, can you see the light of day if you buy it with the death of your mother ? ». Nocchi Macedo accepts the correction *maternam cernere mortem*, but this « Verschlimmbesserung » makes poor sense : the author, presumably living in partly Greek-speaking Egypt, possibly imitated the well-known brachylogy βλέπω meaning φάος βλέπω, viz. *uiuō*<sup>12</sup>. Nisbet's ingenious suggestion *materna uiuere morte* may be unnecessary. Instead of an « exercice scolaire » I would rather suppose a successful attempt, no αὐτοσχεδίασμα, by a professional poet who used his skill and learning (he e.g. knows Propertius' *regina elegiarum*<sup>13</sup>) to commend the boundless commitment of a wife to her husband. It is true that parts III, IV and V may seem to contain unnecessary lines and display increasing rhetorical self-complacency, whereas parts I and II seem to show a pithy and elegant *brevitas*. The interesting use of transitive *inproperans* (46) — a word already in Petronius, 38.11 — meaning *inprobans* is one of the few items which point to later Latin, so that one has to admit that heavy corruption took place in an unknown but comparatively short lapse of time. The text of *Alcestis* had already suffered before being copied by the scribe of our papyrus codex. Such rapid corruption is by no means unique and illustrates the fact, well-known to Plato scholars<sup>14</sup>, that good medieval manuscripts may offer a much better text than an ancient papyrus, even when the date of the writing of the papyrus is near the date of the composition of the text. How near ? I think it is impossible to tell. Sure if this were a faulty « exercice scolaire », it could well antedate the papyrus by only a few years. But this is no « exercice scolaire ». One of the very different texts copied by the same and one scribe in the same papyrus codex (p. 5-47 : 02921.100 *MP*<sup>3</sup>) is Cicero, *In Catilinam*, 1.6-9, 13-33 and book 2, so that one cannot base on the contents of the papyrus book the idea that *Alcestis* is a fourth-century poem, which it may be, but I think one cannot rule an earlier date out.

The level of corruption of parts of the poem is such that no restitution of the entire piece may hope to reach certainty and meet with general approval. Nevertheless a tentative restitution of the whole poem is I believe worth proposing for it gives an idea of what the poet wrote or may have written. Now this cannot be achieved by a nearly diplomatic text or even by one which stands mid-way between nearly diplomatic transcription and tentative restitution. I offer below a new attempt for anyone interested to ponder over. It is I believe an improvement on my 1998 text, which was meant to provide the French public with a provisory and readable text of *Alcestis Barcinonensis*. A quarter of a century has elapsed and I think that, in spite of recent Covid affecting my intellectual capacity, I am now aware of textual issues which I had missed and of my sometimes resorting to rewriting when textual corruption could have been emended away less violently. Nevertheless the level of corruption of the text is sometimes so high that only bold remedies are at hand, if one wants to offer more than palaeographical stop-gaps, I mean emendations which follow the *ductus litterarum* at the cost of diction and sense. I readily grant that some emendations I accept are not definitive : let

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Eur., *Alc.*, 142, καὶ πῶς ἂν αὐτὸς κατθανοί τε καὶ βλέποι;

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. 93, *Ante omnes commendo tibi pia pignora natos* / Prop., 4.11.73, *Nunc tibi commendo communia pignora natos* (*natos* mss. : *Paulle* Butrica ; the author of *Alc.* may have already read a corrupt text).

<sup>14</sup> I discuss a Pindaric case in « *Olympica Pyndarica* (I) », *ExClass*, 27, 2023, 9-55, esp. 34.

others find better<sup>15</sup>. My point is that the difficulty of recovering the truth should not be used as a pretext for keeping or defending nonsensical or ungrammatical readings. Sure, the author of a very thorough and competent critical commentary (none exists as far as the *Alcestis* is concerned) may usefully print a conservative text and explain why it cannot be what the author wrote and discuss more or less plausible emendations, but then the ordinary reader cannot form an idea of what the original as a whole looked or may have looked like. I would less hesitatingly claim that many emendations I adopt are so obvious and necessary improvements that whoever checks them against the transmitted corrupt readings will find them justified or at least will understand why I adopt them and what they are meant to put right, but now less than ever in the history of classical scholarship can one expect the obvious to be obvious, Latin (or Greek) prosody or metre to be known or cared for<sup>16</sup>, basic grammar and ordinary diction to be mastered, to say nothing of the unwritten laws of logic. All this is becoming a very serious hindrance and threat to the pursuit and acknowledgement of truth in the field of textual criticism and more generally « *Altertumswissenschaft* ». I nevertheless proceed with the examination of selected passages, some involving less obvious issues and solutions, beginning with part I, which perhaps includes the most difficult *crucis* in the whole poem. I start from Nocchi Macedo's text and French translation. The reader is kindly asked to check the text and apparatus criticus which follows this discussion.

## PART I

1-11

He accepts *laurusque tuo de nomine tectas* (2) and translates « ainsi que les lauriers protégés par ton nom », which does not in my view make sense : Apollo's laurels are famously prophetic<sup>17</sup> and I am fairly confident that the author wrote or may have written *laurusque tuo de numine doctas*, « and the laurels which owe their knowledge to your divine power ». This use of *de* is notoriously characteristic of later Latin<sup>18</sup>. Further Nocchi Macedo prints *cui (qui pap.) me post fata relinquam* (5), « (fais-moi connaître) à qui, après l'accomplissement de mon destin, je m'abandonnerai », which I consider as meaningless. According to him, *sidereas animus quando ibit in auras* depends on *edoce*, « enseigne-moi quand mon âme ira dans les airs étoilés ». I am afraid that this is a misunderstanding of the grammatical construction : *quando ibit* is not on the same footing as *quando rumpant* (3-4) and it is no indirect interrogation but means « at the time when my spirit goes ». In fact *edoce* is to be referred to what precedes, not to what follows. Rightly understood, the text

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<sup>15</sup> L. Zurli, *Il limen (sottile) tra congettura e restituzione. Sulla validità delle congetture ritenute palmari*, Hildesheim, 2020<sup>2</sup> devotes a light chapter (91-94) to *Alcestis*. I no longer think that his *sal* (which I had adopted in 1998) is better than *mare* at 69, *Nam quaecumque gerunt tellus, mare uel uagus aer* (this emends *nam quaecumque †legit illius† uel uagus aer*). True, the omission of *sal* between ILLIUS and UEL seems easier than that of *mare*, but the rarer *sal* jars with the simple *tellus* and *aer*. Furthermore 83, *ne post mea fata*, is the only line in this poem with a long monosyllable at the fourth weak position and another one at the following fifth strong position. Now the components of *post mea fata* belong together. *Tellus, sal uel uagus aer* strikes me as an ugly hemistich. Such may be the limits of « palaeographical » conjectures.

<sup>16</sup> My supplement at *CLE* 2481.1, *moenia quisque [facit, fama et]ernae studet ille*, is replaced by *famae et [gloriae studet ille]* by the latest editor, P. Cugusi, *CLE* IV,1 (Teubner, 2023) : « *computandum (!) est 'glorjae'* ». There is no ground for thinking that the author of the four lines was that bad at Latin prosody.

<sup>17</sup> See Eur., *Andr.*, 296 παρά θεσπεσίῳ δάφναι ; Callim., in *Apoll. hymn.*, 1-2 and in *Delum hymn.*, 94 ; Claudian, *rapt. Pros.*, 2.109, *uenturi praescia laurus* ; cons. *Stil. lib. tertius*, 59, *litora fatidicas attollunt Delia laurus*. Claudian was born in Alexandria at a time which is more or less that ascribed to our papyrus codex.

<sup>18</sup> See K. Rossberg, *Materialien zu einem Commentar ueber die Orestis Tragoedia des Dracontius*, I, Hildesheim 1888, 50 ; G. Sheridan Burgess, *The Preposition DE. A Study in Late Latin and Old French Syntax* (thesis), Mac Master University, Hamilton (Ontario), 1966, 55-72 (with bibliography).

seems to imply some such a contrast<sup>19</sup> : « tell me what will happen after my death to my memory on earth, at the time when my spirit goes to the sky (*sidereas oras*, seemingly more plausible than the transmitted *side-rea*<*s*> *auras*) ». This could be expressed by *quid mea post fata relinquam* or (more elegantly) *mea quid post fata relinquam* (cf. 83 *post mea fata*). Note that Alcestis also cares for her memory after death : *Quod morior, laus magna mihi post funera restat. | Non ero, sed factum totis narrabitur aëuis | et coniunx pia semper ero* (76-78, our text). The following lines (7-11), as transmitted and barely improved by Nocchi Macedo, are extremely difficult : *Quamuis scire homini, sit prospera uita futuri, | tormentum sit, <an> atra dies et pallida uita, | ede tamen, si te colui famulumque pauentem | succepi pecudumque ducem post crimina diuum | accepi iussi<que> idem dare iubila siluis*. I wonder how *quamuis scire homini, sit prospera uita futuri, | tormentum sit* (7-8) can mean « quoiq̄ue, pour un homme, savoir si sa vie future sera heurieuse soit un tourment » : this would require *future*, not *futuri*. Mark that repeated *sit* is extremely awkward. The addition of *an* (8) enables Nocchi Macedo to consider *sit prospera uita futuri* as the first part of the indirect interrogation, but « it is hard for a man to know if his future life will be happy or if the day will be dark and the life pale » is irrelevant because Admetus is not asking Apollo whether his life will be happy or not but whether he is to die or not. Consequently Admetus must say that he wants to know whether he is about to die even if it is torture for a man whose life is happy to know the future (because he would love his happy earthly life to last for ever and knows that death will put an end to it). I have no doubt that this is what the author meant, though it may seem difficult to fit this meaning into the Latin. The original meaning and construction of *atra dies et pallida uita* are not obvious. I guess Admetus means that when you have a happy life, to know what anyway lays in store for you, viz. death, saddens your life. *Atra dies* very neatly means « a sad life », but *pallida uita* hardly fits. I suggest *pallida* may be a not unknown slip for *squal(ly)ida*<sup>20</sup>. My attempt is *quamuis scire homini, si prospera uita, futurum, | tormentum sit et atra dies et squalida uita, | ede tamen* etc., « though for a man, if his life is prosperous, to know the future is a torture and his day is (then) dark and his life worthless, nevertheless tell me the truth ». If I am right, the author of this poem may interestingly have believed that a dead man's soul goes back to the sky but that a man who enjoys a happy life on earth could not expect to find any sort of similar personal happiness after death. Alcestis later (76-78) acknowledges that the only thing she can expect after death is the earthly fame of her sacrifice<sup>21</sup>.

12-20

Admetus may escape death if he finds somebody *lumina pro te | qui claudat fatoque tuo tumuloque cremetur*. *Cremetur* hardly fits *fato tuo* and does not fit *tumulo* (*tuo*) at all : *prematum* (Nisbet), which is very near, is palmary. *Cremetur* may be due both to *cl(audat)* and to the death of Alcestis as described below, 114,

<sup>19</sup> I follow an oral suggestion of J. Cornillon.

<sup>20</sup> *TLL* X.1.129,29 (Cornelia Zäch, 1982) seems to admit this confusion at Verg. *aen.* 8.197, *foribusque adfixa superbis | ora uirum tristi pendebant pallida tabo*, but at 130,20 it quotes the passage with *pallida* and voices no doubt. I wonder if J. Delz, who had been busy with *TLL* as a proofreader since 1971, had planned to adopt *squalida* in the edition of Vergil's main poems which he was preparing for Teubner when he died (2005). G. B. Conte (Teubner edition, 2009) prints *pallida* without reporting *squalida*, which is, as *squallida*, Bentley's conjecture, formerly wrongly said to be the *prima manus* reading of *Mediceus* (fol. 150<sup>r</sup>). It is discussed but rejected in the latest commentary on book 8 (Frantantuono-Smith 2018 ; Eden 1975 had done the same). It is in my view misguided to advocate Ov. *met.*, 15.627, *pallidaque exsangui squalebant corpora tabo*, for in this description of pest *squalebant* is better support for *squalida* than *pallida* (Ov.) is for *pallida* (Verg.). For *squalida uita*, see e.g. *Vita S. Raymundi confessoris* (XIth c.) 3B (*Acta sanctorum... collecta... a C. Ianningo, J. Sollerio et J. Pinio, editio novissima curante J. Carnandet, Julii tomus primus*, Paris / Rome, 1867, 601), *dulces etiam musas nostras, sine quibus inficeta et squalida uita est nihilque habet iocunditatis aut solatii, in exilium quasi amandaverat*.

<sup>21</sup> Compare Eur., *Alc.*, 623-634, *πάσαις δ' ἔθηκεν εὐκλεέστερον βίον | γυναίξιν, ἔργον τλάσα γενναῖον τόδε ; 1002-1005, Αὔτα ποτὲ προὔθισαν' ἀνδρός, | νῦν δ' ἔστι μάκαιρα δαίμων· | χαῖρ', ὦ πότνι', εὐδὲ δόις. | τοῖται νιν προσερούσι φάμαι*. Willink 2010, 801 wants a dative instead of τοῖται φάμαι but I fail to see that as an improvement.

*arsurosque omnes secum subponit odores*. The mistake *quae* for *qui* (20) is also an anticipation of Alcestis' sacrifice. *Prematur* pointedly picks *claudat* (« close one's eyes », viz. « die ») up.

## PART II

Admetus' very old father would be ready to sacrifice for his son's sake his eyes or one of his hands but not whatever length of life he still can enjoy : *Si lumina poscas, | concedam gratamque manum de corpore nostro, | nate, uelis, tribuam : uiuet manus altera mecum* (32-34). *Altera* points to the old father having mentioned the left or the right hand, more probably the latter, because he insists on his being ready for some sort of serious sacrifice, though not for the one he is asked. Now *gratam* would be an implausibly indirect and obscure way of meaning the right hand and I suspect *gratam* is a « Perseverationsfehler » due to 14, *gratamque relinquere lucem*. Why should the father give his remaining life to his son ? *Quapropter ? Quia regna dedi tibi, castra reliqui, | con<ten>tantum uitae qua[m] dulcior ulla[m] | nil mihi* (38-40). I hold that the at least superfluous *quia* expelled the word with which *tibi* was in sharp and very welcome contrast, that is *mea*<sup>22</sup>. I am ready to accept the later Latin construction of *contentus* with genitive but I am unable to concile with the Latin text N. M.'s translation « uniquement content de la vie, rien ne m'étant plus doux ». *Dulcius* is an obvious and necessary emendation. But what are we to do with *ulla* ? It can neither, as nominative (*ulla* sc. *uita*), coexist with *nil* nor, as an ablative with *qua*, mean *quantacumque*, « than which, no matter how long it may be, nothing is sweeter to me », or *quantulacumque*, « however limited ». *Qua dulcius nil una* (Hutchinson), which I formerly accepted without translating it, is worse than a mere verse-filler : it is virtually impossible. That is why I suggest *uitae... offla / ofla* : « only content with a crumb of life than which nothing is sweeter to me »<sup>23</sup>. *Offla* (three times in Petronius<sup>24</sup>, once in the insulting phrase *crucis offla*, 58.2, « chip of the cross », « gallows-bird ») is a contracted form of *offula* (TLL IX.2.530.46-80), a diminutive of *offa* meaning a small round piece of meat, bread etc. Figurative use of *offa* itself seems extremely rare, but Persius is not shy to say *quantas robusti carminis offas | ingeris, ut par sit centeno gutture niti ?* (5.5-6), which Sidonius, a reader of Persius, may have remembered when he wrote *cumque frusta diuersa* (sc. *carminis*) *quasi per iocum effunderent* (*epist.* 1.11.3).

## PART III

The mistake which I postulate at 45, *nec pietate nocens nec uincitur, inproba, fletu*, for *nec pietate parens nec uincitur inproba fletu* is difficult to account for but *nocens* is much worse than otiose : perhaps somebody who did not understand that one has to construe *inproba parens* looked for a participle synonymous with and symmetrical to *inproba*. Admetus' mother asks him « *Oblitus mente parentum | tu, scelerate, potes materna cernere morte ?* » (46-47), « forgetting mentally your parents, you wicked, can you see the light of day if you buy it with the death of your mother ? ». *Oblitus mente parentum* for *oblita mente parentum* seems implausibly awkward, but is « forgetting your parents » fully satisfactory ? What one expects is « forgetting that you owe your life to those begot you ». *Parentum* seems too weak to carry this meaning : did the gloss

<sup>22</sup> See Eur., *Alc.*, 685-689. Angry Admetus tells his father εἰ δ' ἀπειτεῖν χρῆν με κηρύκων ὕπο | τὴν σὴν πατρίαν ἐστίαν, ἀπειπόν ἄν (737-738), « If I (...) renounce your paternal hearth by means of heralds, I would have renounced it ». Like everybody, Parker 2007, 198 renders χρῆν « (if) it were appropriate for me to... », but this is strained. One needs a verb meaning « (if) it were / had been possible for me to... », that is ἦν with acc. and inf.

<sup>23</sup> See Eur., *Alc.*, 649-650, βραχὺς δὲ σοὶ | πάντως ὁ λοιπὸς ἦν βιώσιμος χρόνος ; 692-693, ἧ μὴν πολὺν γε τὸν κάτω λογίζομαι | χρόνον, τὸ δὲ ζῆν (« life » generally) σμικρὸν ἀλλ' ὅμως γλυκὺ. « Dieser Phères hätte die Herrschaft gewiss nicht abgegeben, wenn er nicht ganz dekrepit wäre » (Wilamowitz, *Griechische Tragoedien*, III, Berlin, 1906<sup>2</sup>, 95).

<sup>24</sup> See W. Heraeus, *Die Sprache des Petronius und die Glossen*, Leipzig 1899, 46 = *Kleine Schriften*, Heidelberg 1937, 144. A Greek « calque » of *offula* is ὀφλάριον, a word not known to TLG but (not aptly) registered s. v. *ofella* by E. Dickey, *Latin Loanwords in Ancient Greek*, Cambridge, 2023, 722.

*parentum expel creantur* ?<sup>25</sup> At 50-51 I postulate a remarkable mistake, *hostis †meae† lucis*, | *hostis, nate, patris*, for *hostis genetricis, nate, tuae*. I consider *hostis mihi lucis* (Marcovich) as nothing more than a way of mending the wrong quantity. This poet does not seem to end the line with three disyllables<sup>26</sup> and *hostis mihi lucis* is very poor diction, especially when *hostis patris* follows. *Meae lucis* may be an unmetrical rewriting of a misunderstood original reading, *genetricis*, which I believe calls for *tuae* instead of *patris*. One might object that *parentum* supports *patris* but here Admetus' mother considers her son's disrespect of *uterum quod te peperit* (49-50) and I think there is no point for the father to be mentioned. Admetus' mother is supposed to ask her son *cur metui <s> mortem, cui nascimur*<sup>27</sup> ? (53), but what she blames him for is not fearing death but trying to escape it, that is *refugis*<sup>28</sup>, which I adopt and is pointedly picked up by *effuge* in the same line : death will find Admetus wherever he flees to escape it. I would not compare 119, *coniugis in gremium refugit fugientis imago*, for there *fugientis* sc. *Alcestis* is totally otiose : this « Perseverationsfehler » expelled a participle construed with *coniugis* sc. *Admeti*, perhaps *lacrimantis* (« no more than a shadow<sup>29</sup>, she took shelter in the bosom of her crying husband »<sup>30</sup>), but there are of course other possible verbs. There is a kind of *non sequitur* between *cur metuis mortem* and « you may flee wherever you like : death will find you there », which calls for *refugis*.

The mention of the phoenix, *ubi barbarus ales | nascitur adque †nobis iteratum cingitur urbis†* (55-56), is unfortunately corrupt. I formerly (1998) resorted to extensive rewriting, *eque toris renouatus surgitur ustis*, but I now prefer to follow the *apices litterarum* more closely, even if I am not sure that I can thus recover the original reading : *atque nouis iteratum*<sup>31</sup> *cingitur armis*, « and is again equipped with new weaponry », that is new wings. For this use of *arma*, see Ov., *ars*, 2.50, *haec umeris arma parata suis* (Ica-

<sup>25</sup> There are still many undetected glosses in our classical texts. See Eur., *Alc.*, 965-972, κρεῖσσον οὐδὲν Ἀνάγκας | ἥϊρον οὐδέ τι φάρμακον | Θρήισσας ἐν σανίσιν, τὰς | Ὀρφεῖα κατέγραψεν | γῆρυς, οὐδ' ὅσα Φοῖβος Ἀσκληπιάδας ἔδωκε | φάρμακα πολυπόνοις | ἀντιτεμῶν βροτοῖσιν. The repetitive φάρμακα must be the gloss of such a word as χρίματα (cf. Pindar, *Pyth.*, 4,221-222, σὺν δ' ἐλαίῳ φαρμακώσαστο' ἀντίτομα στερεῶν ὀδυνῶν | δόκε χρίσθαι).

<sup>26</sup> One finds two final disyllables preceded by a monosyllable (prepositive or not) at 69 *uel uagus aer*, 83 *post mea fata*, 84 *ne mea coniux*. I read *Pelia sata flentis* (see Ov., *met.*, 7.322, *satae Pelia* ; Eur., *Alc.*, 37, Πελίου παῖς) at 71, but this is not unobjectionable. I for one would not inflict on this poet either of the unattested forms *Pelieida* (Tandoi) or *Pelieia* (Hutchinson), though they are nearer *PELEIDE* and avoid the objectionable hexameter end.

<sup>27</sup> A very striking amplification of Horace's *debemur morti nos nostraque* (*ars*, 63). One is reminded of Martin Heidegger's « Sein zum Tode ». Alcestis dying instead of Admetus breaches the law « Tod ist je nur eigener » (*Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen, 1967<sup>11</sup>, 265).

<sup>28</sup> Compare Eur., *Alc.*, 12-14, ἦνεσαν δέ μοι θεαί | Ἄδμητον Ἄιδην τὸν παραντικ' ἐκφυγεῖν, | ἄλλον διαλλάξαντα τοῖς κάτω νεκρὸν ; 197-198, καὶ καθανόν τῶν ὄχετ', ἐκφυγὼν δ' ἔχει | τοσοῦτον ἄλγος, οὐποθ' οὐ λελήσεται ; 956-957, ἀλλ' ἦν ἔγμην ἀντιδοῦς ἀψηχία | πέφρυγεν Ἄιδην.

<sup>29</sup> Compare Eur., *Alc.*, 204-205, παρεμμένη δέ, χειρὸς ἄθλιον βάρος | <...> | ὅμως δὲ καίπερ σμικρὸν ἐμπέουσ' ἔτι. In spite of Parker 2007, 92-93, the omission of a line (Elmsley) must be postulated. In the transmitted text χειρὸς ἄθλιον βάρος is implausibly obscure ; the missing line made it clear that Alcestis is but a burden in her husband's hands.

<sup>30</sup> Compare Eur., *Alc.*, 201, κλαίει γ' ἄκοιτιν ἐν χεροῖν φίλην ἔχον.

<sup>31</sup> Perhaps *nouis iterum succingitur armis*. *CLE* 1549,5 (held to belong to the second century AD), *adiecit Chloto iteratum rumpere filum*, is adduced by Nosarti 1992 and Zurlì 2018 as support for *iteratum* here but, even if F. Bücheler himself (*CLE*) takes it as meaning *iterum*, it seems better to construe it with *filum* : « Clotho added another thread to cut » (the father lost his wife and his son). *TLL* VII.2.551.35-8 registers another very dubious example (Oribasius) of *iteratum* = *iterum*.

rus')<sup>32</sup>. *Reposcunt* is an obvious emendation for the unmetrical *deposcunt* at 64, *Cur ego de nato doleam quem fata deposcunt*?, but is Admetus' mother so hateful as to wonder why she should lament her son's death? There is an obvious *non sequitur* between *cur ego de nato non doleam*... and the following line *Cur ego non plangam, sicut planxere priores*? I think Admetus' mother asks why on earth she should die instead of her son and not rather lament his death as other legendary women did their son. *De nato doleam* must have replaced *pro nato peream* through a kind of « Antizipationsfehler » due to 92, *nec doleam de me quod uitam desero pro te*.

## PART IV

The repetition of *uinco* at 75, *si uinco matrem, uinco pietate parentis*, and the absurdity of *parentis* point to another reading of the line: *sic uinco matrem, uinco pietate parentem*. It is very plausible for Alcestis to say proudly « thus I surpass a mother, I surpass a father as far as *pietas* is concerned » after stating that she wants to give her life to her husband. *Si* at 76, *Si mo<r>ior; laus magna mei* or rather *mihi*, is less offensive than *si* at 75, but Alcestis has already decided to sacrifice herself and *si* wrongly suggests that she is still weighing the pros and cons. That is why I read *quod morior*: « because I die great glory awaits me ». I construe *post funera nostra* with *laus magna mihi*, not with what follows, because I consider the statement *post funera nostra non ero* as unworthy of this poet. But *nostra* is weak and one misses a verb; *restat* (Nisbet) mends both defects: *quod morior, laus magna mihi post funera restat*. Many print *non tristior atros aspiciam uultus* (78-79). Whose face is it? That of Admetus or of other relatives? Does *atros* mean « pale because of death » or « sad »? Where in Latin literature are *uultus* said to be *atri*? In fact *atros* points to mourning clothing, *cultus* (Nisbet). But it would be almost ridiculous for Alcestis to say that her sacrifice prevents her from seeing her own bereavement dresses or those of her relatives; she must say that she will be prevented from wearing such dresses, *non accipiam* (Goodyear).

## PART V

Not a few corruptions mar the last lines. That in 107, *Plangere saepe iubet sese natosque uirumque*, is the ugliest because it misrepresents Alcestis' *ethos*: the woman who said to her husband *de te*<sup>33</sup> *sic nullas habeat mors ista querellas*: | *non pereo nec enim morior; me, crede, reseruo*, | *quae tibi tam similes natos moritura relinquo* (95-97) cannot repeatedly ask her loved ones to keep lamenting her death. A « polar error » changed *uetat* into *iubet*. The last line, *infernusque deus claudet \*\*\* membra sopore*, is also corrupt. It is not enough to emend *claudet* (wrong word, wrong tense) into *condit* and to supply the missing three-letter word between *condit* and *membra*. *Sopore* must mean death but for that it needs an epithet, *aeterno*, which may have been first corrupted to *aeternus* and then to *infernus*. Compare *CLE* 2099,1 (between 401 and 499 AD, France, Aquitania, Lugdunum Conuenarum), *Nymfius aeterno deuinctus membra sopore*. The ablative *aeterno* also improves the structure of the imbalanced line, which is as bad as 31, *digneris natoque tuo concedere lucem*, where *tuam* is an obviously right emendation of the otiose *tuo*. We are no longer left with the unexpected *infernus deus* but *deus* is still odd. I suspect that the preceding *mors ultima*<sup>34</sup> is the subject of *condit* and that *deus* replaced e.g. *semel* « once for all ». Alcestis mentions *Porthmeus*: *Me trade sepulcris, | me portet nigro melius uelamine Porthmeus* (81-82) = Eur., *Alc.*, 253-255, νεκρῶν δὲ πορθμεὺς | ἔχων χερ' ἐπὶ κοντῶι

<sup>32</sup> *TLL* II.590.73 adds Ennod., *carm.*, 2.18.1-2 (*In missorio quod habet loricaum iuuenem super equum tenentem Victoriam in manu*), *Ecce tenet uictrix pennatum dextera numen*: | *uenit et ad reditum non habet arma uiae*.

<sup>33</sup> *De te = a te*, « originating from you » (see Meridan Burgess 1966, 36-40).

<sup>34</sup> *Ultima* is very idiomatic: see my note on Valerius Flaccus, 5,226 (II, Paris, 2002, 171).



Χάρων | μ' ἤδη καλεῖ<sup>35</sup>. Who is the *infernus deus* I suppress ? It cannot be *Mors*, who would be *dea*<sup>36</sup>. Is he Hades ? One might adduce Eur., *Alc.*, 259-262, ἄγει μ' ἄγει τις, ἄγει μέ τις (οὐχ | ὄραϊς;) νεκῶν ἐς αὐλάν, | ὑπ' ὄφρῦσι κυανανγῆς βλέπων | <~ → πτερωτὸς Ἄϊδας. But Death, not Hades is winged and it is not easy to concile the repeated τις with Ἄϊδας. It follows that Ἄϊδας is suspect ; it seems, as Carl Robert<sup>37</sup>, Wilamowitz and Henri Weil<sup>38</sup> thought, to have replaced another reading<sup>39</sup>. This is corroborated by what Apollo declares in the prologue, ἤδη δὲ τόνδε Θάνατον εἰσορῶ πέλας, | ἱερέα θανόντων, ὅς νιν εἰς Ἄϊδου δόμους | μέλλει κατὰξιν (24-26), and what Admetus states later, τοῖον ὄμηρόν μ' ἀποσυλήσας | Ἄϊδη Θάνατος παρέδωκεν (870-871), « such is the life pledge<sup>40</sup> (Alcestis) I was robbed of when Death consigned her to Hades ». I suggest that *infernus deus* is not more genuine in our poem than Ἄϊδας in Euripides' line. The scribe or reader who I surmise introduced the *infernus deus* may have taken him to be Orcus<sup>41</sup>.

#### NOCCHI MACEDO'S TEXT AND OURS

##### I) 20 v. (11 + 9)

11v. <Admetus Apollinem adloquitur>

« Praescie lauripotens, Latonie, Deli<e>, Paeon,  
inuoco te laurusque tuo de nomine tectas :  
†Apollo† da scire diem, da noscere quando  
rumpant Admeti fatalia fila Sorores,

« Praescie lauripotens, Latonie, Delie, Paeon,  
inuoco te laurusque tuo de numine doctas :  
<uaticinans> da scire diem, da noscere quando  
rumpant Admeti fatalia fila Sorores ;

<sup>35</sup> Parker 2007, 108 notes J. Racine's translation.

<sup>36</sup> See Wilamowitz 1906<sup>2</sup>, 78-79.

<sup>37</sup> *Thanatos*, Berlin, 1879, 34-36. He mentions Wilamowitz' Ἄϊδαν, a very dubious emendation, to which its author stuck : see Wilamowitz 1906<sup>2</sup>, 155 ; A. Biel, W. M. Calder III, R. Fowler, *The Prussian and the Poet : the Letters of U. v. W.-M. to Gilbert Murray*, Hildesheim, 1991, 40. Murray himself proposed the strange ἄ δᾶ (cf. [Aesch.], *Prom.*, 567). Wilamowitz kept the transmitted κυανανγῆσι (κυανανγῆς Monk) and understood Ἄϊδαν βλέπων (« Tod blickend »), but H. Weil, *Euripide, Alceste*, Paris, 1891, 31 rightly criticizes Ἄϊδαν (« mot qu'on n'attend plus après πτερωτὸς »). Furthermore κυανανγῆσι entails a metrical issue which is solved by Monk's κυανανγῆς (« lançant des regards d'un sombre éclat », Weil) : see C. W. Willink, *Collected Papers on Greek Tragedy*, Leiden / Boston, 2010, 793. Willink keeps Ἄϊδας and suggests ὑπ' ὄφρῦ κυανανγῆ but fails to see that then βλέπων is left without a complement. The translation of Parker 2007, 109, « looking from under dark-gleaming brows », is inaccurate.

<sup>38</sup> Weil 1891, 31, adopting a dubious conjecture of his based on a variant reading. The way Parker 2007, 109 tries to explain τις... τις... Ἄϊδας away and to neutralize the fact that Hades is not winged seems to me to strain credulity. G. A. Seeck, *Euripides, Alkestis*, Berlin/New York, 2008, 93 resorts to desperate special pleading : « „Hades“ ist hier nicht die mythologische Figur (Bruder des Zeus, Herrscher im Totenreich), sondern eine Personifikation des Todes wie der „Tod“ im Prolog (...). Daher kann er „geflügelt“ genannt werden, während in bildlichen Darstellungen Hades keine Flügel trägt ».

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps simply ἤδη : see 216-217, καὶ μέλανα στολμὸν πέπλων | ἀμφιβάλωμεθ' ἤδη ; 266 μέθετε μέθετέ μ' ἤδη ; *Medea*, 977, οὐκέτι· στείχουσι γὰρ ἐς φόνον ἤδη (a few other passages from Euripides could be adduced). Neither a substantive nor an adjective can be ruled out, e.g. ἄπραξ or ἀδμάς (*indomitus*), which would recall the name of Admetus, who, according to K. O. Müller and Wilamowitz (see e.g. *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, II, Berlin, 1932, 38) was originally reigning over the dead.

<sup>40</sup> There is no warrant for A. M. Dale's suggestion, favourably viewed by Parker 2007, 228, that « 'hostage' is being used very loosely to mean no more than 'substitute' ».

<sup>41</sup> See Wilamowitz 1906<sup>2</sup>, 79 n. 1.

quae finis uitae, cui me post fata relinquam, 5 quae finis uitae, mea quid post fata relinquam,  
 edoce, siderea<s> animus quando ibit in auras. edoce, sidereas animus quando ibit in oras.  
 Quamuis scire homini, sit prospera uita futuri, Quamuis scire homini, si prospera uita, futurum  
 tormentum sit, <an> atra dies et pallida uita, tormentum sit et atra dies et squalida uita,  
 ede tamen, si te colui famulumque pauentem ede tamen, si te colui famulumque pauentem  
 succepi pecudumque ducem post crimina diuum 10 succepi pecudumque ducem post crimina diuum  
 accepi iussi<que> idem dare iubila siluis ». accepi iussique idem dare iubila siluis ».

*Selecta tantum abiectis quisquiliis enotantur. Emendationum ab omnibus aut ab ipso Nocchi Macedo receptorum auctores perraro nominantur. Nominatur autem unus tantum e pluribus qui in idem commentum simul paene inciderunt. 1 Delie Paean : DOLIPIANT | 2 QUEM TUUS | numine Parsons : NOMINE | doctas Lib. 1998 : TECTAS || 3 uaticinans Lib. || 5 mea (Lebek) quid (Roca-Puig) post fata Lib. : QUI ME POST FATA | RELINQUA{NT}M || 6 AEDOCE : me doce Lebek | ANIMUM | ibit Führer : LUIT || 7 HOMINIS | si Lib. : SIT | futurum Lib. 1998 : FUTURI || 8 sit et atra Lib. : SIT ATRA || squalida Lib. : PALLIDA || 9 SI NON TE COLUI || 10 CRIMINE || 11 IUSSI, ut dominus famulum. Vide Eur., Alc., 572-573, ἔτλα δὲ σοῖσι μηλοβότας (μηλονόμας codd., correxi) | ἐν νομοῖς (ᾄδομοῖς codd., corr. Pierson) γενέσθαι, et K. O. Müller, Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie, Göttingen, 1825, 306-307.*

9 v. <Apollo Admetum adloquitur>

Praescius <h>eu Paean : « Doleo, sed uera fatebo<r> : Praescius hic Paean : « Doleo, sed uera fatebor :  
 mors uicina premit maestumque Acheronis adire, mors uicina premit maestique Acherontis adire  
 iam prope regna tibi gratamque relinquere lucem. iam prope regna tibi gratamque relinquere lucem.  
 Sed ueniat pro te qui mortis damna subire 15 Sed, ueniat pro te qui mortis damna subire  
 possit et instantis in se conuertere casus possit et instantis in se conuertere casus,  
 tu poteris posthac alieno uiuere fato. tu poteris posthac alieno uiuere fato.  
 Iam tibi cum genitor, genetrix cum car<a> supersit Iam tibi cum genitor, genetrix cum cara supersit  
 et coniux natiue rudes, pete lumina pro te et coniux natiue rudes, pete lumina pro te  
 qui claudat fatoque tuo tumuloque cremetur ». 20 qui claudat fatoque tuo tumuloque crematur ».

12 hic Parsons : EU || PIAN | sed : SEO || 13 MORS INQUID UICINAM | maestique Hutchinson : MAESTUMQUE |  
 ACHERONIS || 15 SUBIRET || 16 CASUM || 18 CUM GENITUM || 20 qui : QUAE | crematur Nisbet : CREMETUR.

## II) 21 1/2 v.

11 v. <Pater pro Admeto nato suo mori non uult>

Ille larem post dicta petit maestumque beato Ille larem post dicta petit maestusque beato  
 iactat membra toro et fletibus atria complet. iactat membra toro et fletibus atria complet.  
 Ad natum genitor triste concurrat et alto Ad natum genitor tristem concurrat et alto  
 pectore suspirans lacrimarum causa<m> requirit. pectore suspirans, lacrimis quae causa, requirit.  
 Edocet ille patrem fatorum damna Sororum : 25 Edocet ille patrem fatorum damna suorum :  
 « Me rapit ecce d<i>es genitor, para funera nato. « Me rapit ecce dies, genitor, para funera nato.  
 Hoc Parcae docuere nefas, hoc noster Apollo Hoc Parcae neuere nefas, hoc noster Apollo  
 inuitus, pater, edocuit. Se<d> reddere uitam inuitus, pater, edocuit. Sed reddere uitam  
 tu, genitor, tu, san<c>te, potes, si tempora dones, tu, genitor, tu, sancte, potes, si tempora donas,  
 si pro me mortem subitam tumulosque subire. 30 si pro me mortem subitam tumulosque subire  
 dignes<ri>s natoque tuo concedere lucem ». dignaris natoque tuam concedere lucem ».

21 maestus Parsons : MESTUM || 21-22 a beatis... toris hiatus uitandi causa emendando caui, nescio an non recte || 24  
 lacrimis quae causa Parsons : LACRIMARUM CAUSA | REQUERET || 25 suorum Lebek : SORORUM || 26 ECCE UIDES  
 | PARA : probe Lebek || 27 HOC... NEFAS : has... nece Lib. Iniuriam, non nefas queritur Admetus Euripideus 246-247 |  
 neuere Shackleton Bailey : DOCUERE || 29 GENITUR | SANETE | donas Lib. : DONES || 30 SUBITAM, an propter SU-

BIRE ? : monitum *Lib. 1998* ('mortem cuius Apollo me monuit') uel potius properam idem nunc. *Caue ne subitam tuearis coll. Eur., Alc., 12-14*, ἤνεσαν δέ μοι θεαί | Ἀδμήτων Ἄϊδην τὸν παραρτίκ' ἐκφυγεῖν, | ἄλλον διαλλάξαντα τοῖς κάτω νεκρόν | TUMULIS || 31 dignaris *Lib.* : DIGNEOS | tuam *Lebek* : TUO.

10<sup>1/2</sup> v. <Admetus patrem suum adit>

Hic genitor, non ut genitor : « Si lumina poscas, concedam, gratamque manum de corpore nostro, nate, uelis, tribuam : uiuet manus altera mecum. Si sine lumine <e>ro, aliquid tamen esse uidebor. 35 Nil ero, si qu<o>d sum donauero. Quanta senectae uita meae superest, minimam uis tollere uitam ? Quapropter ? Quia regna dedi tibi, castra reliqui, con<ten>tus tantum uitae qua dulcior ulla nil mihi. Post mortem quam tu si reddere uelles, 40 nate, tibi concessissem tumulosque <h>abitasse<m> uisurus post fata diem ».

Hic genitor, non ut genitor : « Si lumina poscas, concedam, dextramque manum de corpore nostro, nate, uelis, tribuam : uiuet manus altera mecum. Si sine lumine ero, aliquid tamen esse uidebor. Nil ero, si quod sum donauero. Quanta senectae extremae superest, minimam uis tollere uitam ? Quapropter ? Mea regna dedi tibi, castra reliqui, contentus tantum uitae qua dulcius ofla nil mihi. Quam tu si post mortem reddere posses, nate, tibi concessissem tumulosque habitassem uisurus post fata diem ».

32 GENITOR GENS SI || 33 dextram *Lib.* : GRATAM || 34 UELLIS || 36 NIHIL | SI CUT SUM || 37 extremae *Nisbet* (cf. *Eur., Alc., 649-650*) : UITAE MEAE | uitam : USTAM || 38 QUEMPROPTER | mea *Hutchinson* : QUEA | REGNAM | dedi : DEDS | RELINQUI || 39 contentus tantum *Shackleton Bailey* : CONTUS TANTUM | QUAM | dulcius *Hutchinson* : DULCIOR | ofla *Lib.* : ULLAM || 40 quam tu si post mortem *Lib. 1998* : P. M. Q. T. S. | posses *Hutchinson* : UELLIS || 41 tibi : TUO | CONCESSISSESEM ED TUMULUSQUE | habitassem *Lebek* : ABITASSE : fort. subissem *coll. 30* tumulosque subire.

III) 28<sup>1/2</sup> v. <Admetus matrem suam adit>

Pulsus geneticis  
uoluitur ante pedes, uestigia blandus adorat  
inque sinus fundit lacrimam. Fugit illa rogantem  
nec pietate nocens nec uincitur, inproba, fletu, 45  
haec super inproperans : « Oblitus mente parentum  
tu, scelerate, potes materna<m> cernere morte<m> ?  
Tu tumulis gaudere meis ? Haec ubera flammae  
deripia<n>t uterum<que> cogis, uis, ultimus ignis  
consumat, quod te peperit<▷>, hostis †meae† lucis. 50  
hostis, nate, patris. Vitam concedere uellem  
si semper posses aeternam sede<m> morari.  
Cur metui<s> mortem, cui nascimur ? Effuge longe,  
quo Part<h>us, quo Medus, Arabs ubi barbarus ales  
nascitur adque nobis iteratum †cingitur† urbis : 55  
illic, nate, late <...> te tua fata sequentur.  
Perpetuum nihil est, nihil est sine morte creatum :  
lux rapitur et nox oritur, moriuntur et anni.  
Non est terra locos quos egenerauerat ante ?  
Ipse pater mundi fertur tumulatus abisse. 60  
et fratris Stygii regnum multatus obisse.  
Bacc<h>um fama refert <T>itanide <de> arte perisse  
per uadam <...> Lethi Cererem Veneremque subisse.  
Cur ego de nato doleam quem fata †deposcunt† ?  
Cur ego non plangam, sicut planxere priores ? 65  
Amisit natum Diomedem, carpsit Agaue,

Pulsus geneticis  
uoluitur ante pedes, uestigia blandus adorat  
inque sinus fundit lacrimas. Fugat illa rogantem  
nec pietate parens nec uincitur inproba fletu,  
haec super inproperans : « Oblita mente creatum  
tu, scelerate, potes materna cernere morte,  
tu tumulis gaudere meis ? Haec ubera flammae  
diripiant uterumque rogi uis ultimus ignis  
consumat, quod te peperit, geneticis  
hostis, nate, tuae. Vitam concedere uellem  
si semper posses terrena in sede morari.  
Cur refugis mortem, cui nascimur ? Effuge longe,  
quo Parthus, quo Medus, Arabs, ubi barbarus ales  
nascitur atque nouis iteratum cingitur armis ;  
illic, nate, late : tete tua fata sequentur.  
Perpetuum nihil est, nihil est sine morte creatum :  
lux rapitur et nox moritur, moriuntur et anni.  
Nonne est terra locos quos egenerauerat ante ?  
Ipse pater mundi fertur tumulatus abisse  
et fratris Stygium regnum mutatus obisse.  
Bacchum fama refert Titanum de arte perisse  
perque uadum Lethes Cererem Veneremque subisse.  
Cur ego pro nato peream quem fata reposcunt ?  
Cur ego non plangam, sicut planxere priores ?  
Amisit natum Diomedem, carpsit Agaue,



Si redeunt umbrae, ueniam tecum †sub nocte iacebo†. 90 Si redeunt umbrae, ueniam tecumque iacebo.  
Qualiscumque tamen coniux ne desera<r> a te nec doleam de me quod uitam desero pro te. Qualiscumque tamen coniux ne deserat a te nec doleam de me quod uitam desero pro te.

85 ipsa *Watt* : ISTA | legat *Lebek* : TEGAT | nec *Lib.* ('et tu me non nomine tantum percole meque puta tecum sub nocte iacere') : ET || 86 percole *Lib.* : ME COLE || 87 NEUEDIGNARETINERE || 88 udare *Lib.* 1998 : SUDARE || 89 UNGUENTUM || 90 tecumque iacebo *Hutchinson* : TECUM SUB NOCTE IACEBO || 91 *intellege* 'qualiscumque coniux fui, tamen ne a te deserat' : qualiscumque (*pereleganter dictum*) = οἰαδήποτε οὔσα || 92 DEGERO.

12 v.

<p>Ante omnes commendo tibi pia pignora natos, pignora quae solo de te fecunda creauī, de te : sic nullas habe&lt;a&gt;t mors ista querellas, 95 non pereō nec enim morior : me, crede, reseruo quae tibi tam similes natos moritura relinquo, quos rogo ne paruos †man&lt;u&gt;s indigna nouercae† proderet et flentes matris pia uindictē umbra. Si tibi dissimiles hoc, non mea dulcis imago 100 paulum no&lt;c&gt;te ueni&lt;t&gt;, et tu pro coniuge cara disce mori, disce ex m&lt;e&gt; exempla (!) pietatis.</p>	<p>Ante omnes commendo tibi pia pignora natos, pignora quae solo de te fecunda creauī. De te sic nullas habeat mors ista querellas : non pereō nec enim morior ; me, crede, reseruo, quae tibi tam similes natos moritura relinquo. Quos rogo ne paruos manus unquam indigna nouercae uerberet et flentes matris pia uindictē umbra. Hoc si dissimules, tum non mea dulcis imago nocte ad te ueniet. Tu pro coniuge cara disce mori, disce hoc ex exemplo pietatis.</p>
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93 OMNEM || 95 *sensus uerae structurae* : 'propterea ne a te eam propter mortem quam pro te subeo querelae ullae moueantur, quia re uera non morior' | QUERELLAM || 96 PEREOR NEC ENIM MOREOR || 98 unquam *add. Tandoi* || 99 uerberet *Nisbet (cf. Eur., Alc., 306-307)* : PRODERENT || 100 hoc si dissimules (*dissimules Marcovich olim*), tum *Lib.* (*sensus* : 'si hoc officium negligas, tum') : SI TIBI DISSIMILES HOC || 101 nocte (*nocte iam Roca-Puig*) ad te ueniet *Lib.*, *expulsa uocula paulum farciendi causa, ut saepius fit, inserta* : PAULUM NOTE UENI || 102 hoc ex exemplo *Lib.* : EXM EXEMPLA.

#### V) 20 v. <Poeta Alcestis mortem narrat>

<p>Iam uaga sideribus nox pingebatur et alis rore soporifero compleuerat omnia somnus. Ad mortem properans in coniuge fixa iacebat. 105 Alcestis lacrimasq&lt;ue&gt; peritura uidebat. Plangere saepe iubet sese natosque uirumque, disponit famulos, componit in ordine funus, l&lt;a&gt;eta sibi pictosque toros uariosque paonas, barbaricas frondes †odoresque† tura crocumque, 110 Pallida sudanti destringit balsama uirga, ereptum nido pr&lt;a&gt;ecidit puluer amomi, arida purpureis destringit cinnama ramis arsurosque omnes secum disponit odores. &lt;H&gt;ora propinquabat lucem ra&lt;p&gt;tura puellae. 115 tractabatque manus rigor, omnia corripiebat. Caeruleos unguis oculis moritura notabat algentisque pedes. Fatali frigore pressa coniugis in gremio refugit fugientis imago. Ut uidit sensus : « Coniux, dulcissime coniux, » 120 exclamat, « rapior. Venit, mors ultima uenit, infernusque deus claudet *** membra sopore.</p>	<p>Iam uaga sideribus nox pingebatur et ales rore soporifero compleuerat omnia somnus. Ad mortem properans in coniuge fixa iacebat Alcestis lacrimasque peritura uidebat. Plangere saepe uetat sese natosque uirumque, disponit famulos, componit in ordine funus, strata parat pictosque toros uariosque tapetas, barbaricas frondes et nardum tura crocumque. Pallida sudanti destillat balsama uirga, ereptum nido contundit puluer amomum, arida purpureis destringit cinnama ramis, arsurosque omnes secum deponit odores. Hora propinquabat lucem raptura puellae torpebantque manus, rigor omnia corripiebat. Caeruleos unguis oculis moribunda notabat algentisque pedes. Fatali frigore pressa coniugis in gremium refugit lacrimantis imago. Ut uidit sensus labi, « dulcissime coniux, exclamat, rapior ; uenit, mors ultima uenit aeternoque †deus† condit mea membra sopore.</p>
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103 ales *Parsons* : ALIS || 104 COPLEBANT | SOMNUM || 105 IACABAT || 107 uetat *F. Jones* : IUBET || 108 *sensus* : 'famulos quid cuique faciendum sit docet' | FAMOLOS : tumulos *dub. Lib. 1998* || 109 strata *Lib.* : LAETA : lecta *Roca-Puig* : morituram iam in lecto iacere (105) memento | parat *Lib.* : SIBI. Parat, destillat etc. = parari, destillari etc. iubet | PICTUS | tapetas *Parsons* : PAONAS || 110 et nardum *Lib.* : ODURESQUE propter odores u. 114 : et odores *Parsons* || 111 PALLADA | destillat *Nisbet* : DISTRINGIT || 112 contundit *Lib.*, uocem propriam restituens : PRECIDIT, uox parum apta | amomum *Marcovich* : AMOMI. *Sensus* : 'amomum sic contundit ut pulvis fiat' || 114 ARSURUSQUE | deponit *Roca-Puig* : DESPONIT (cf. disponit 108) || 115 PUELLAE : iacenti *Lib. Parum adpositum uidetur glossema, etsi σὸ δ' ἐν ἡβῆαι* | νέα νέου προθανούσα φωτός ὄρχη *Euripideus chorus canit 470-471* || 116 torpebantque *Tandoi* : TRACTABATQUAE (cf. tractare 88) || 117 moribunda *Nisbet* : MORITURA propter 83 et 97 || 118 prensa *Lib. 1998* : PRESSUM || 119 gremium *Hutchinson* : GREMIO | lacrimantis e.g. *Lib.* : FUGIENTIS || 120 *sensus labi dulcissime Hutchinson* : SENSUS CONIUX EX DULCISIME || 121 MORIS || 122 aeterno *Lib.* : INFERNUS | DEUS : semel *Lib.* | condit *Hutchinson* : CLAUDET | mea *Lib.* : lacuna trium fere litterarum | SEMBRA.



