NOTES ON THE PROLOGUE OF EURIPIDES’
BACCHAE*)

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1: ἐκώ. Not ‘je parais’ (R.), but ‘I have come’. For the perfective use of the present cf. 5 πάρειμι, 11 τίθησι, and K.G., I, 135-7. See also below, on 42 τίκτει, 44 διδωσιν.


1: τίνδε. ‘Here’: cf. 7 τάδε, 20 τίνδε, 23 τήσδε, 60 τάδε, 212 ὃδε, Barrett on Hipp. 12, K.G., I, 628-9, Schw., II, 210-1.

2: τίκτει. The historic present is used with or, as in this case, without expressive force (praesens annalisticum): cf. Schw., II, 272. R. and L. fail to distinguish this use from the perfective present at 42 τίκτει.

3: ἀστραπηρόρω. The translation ‘carrying lightning’ is suggested by fr. 312 ἀστραπηροῖς, but ‘carried by lightning’ (R., L.) seems to be more probable on account of S. O.R. 199-200 πυρφόρων ἀστραπάν.

*) The following observations expand and correct my notes on the Bacchae in Mnem. IV 15 (1962), 337-8. They form the beginning of a commentary on this play which I am preparing and which is intended to be a supplement to the editions by Grégoire, Dodds, Roux, Lacroix, and to the notes added by Kirk to his translation. Abbreviations are explained at the end of the article.
4: ἄμετίψας. Properly ‘having acquired by exchange’ (LSJ A I 1), hence ‘having exchanged my divine figure for a human one’. There is no need to raise the question how this is to be reconciled with the anthropomorphism of the gods, as is done by R.

8: ... Most editors read Διόν without τε, but there is no evident parallel for φλόγα as an internal object of τυφόμενα: smoke and flame are different things. Willink (221) defends ἄδροφος given by Plutarch, but the fire is smouldering rather than abundant (L. ‘έπαισ’). The MSS. reading Διόν τε has been rightly defended by C. Prato, Maia 9 (1957), 1-19, who discusses 19 passages, most of them from the later plays, where anapaests occur elsewhere than in the first foot. Similar deviations from the rule are to be found in Aeschylus (e.g. Prom. 680) and Sophocles (e.g. Phil. 491). For more examples cf. C. Prato, SIFC 33 (1961), 101-13. Willink objects that “the antithesis Διόν/Ἡρας is awkward rather than desirable here”, but it may be an allusion to the story that Semele was persuaded by Hera in disguise to ask Zeus to visit her in his true shape (Hyg. Fab. 167, 179). The corruption underlying Plutarch’s testimony is similar to that at Suppl. 860 τὸ Διόν (given by Polybius), where the MSS. have τὸν ἄδρον.


8: ζώσαν. Fire was considered to be a living force: cf. Hom. E 4 etc. ἀκάματον πῦρ, and my article Heraclitus’ Conception of Fire, in: Kephalaion: Studies offered to C. J. de Vogel (Assen 1975), I ff., espec. 7 n. 31.

9: ἄθανατον. Winnington-Ingram (18 n. 5) rightly observes: