

CHAPTER 3

THE NEED OF OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

The *Christus patiens* seems to have more in common with the *Rhesus* than the two hundred and fifty-odd lines of verse which have been identified as being borrowed, in part or in their totality, from that play. In the *introduction* to his edition of the text of the *Rhesus*, W. H. Porter (1916) wrote:

The *Rhesus* has perhaps excited a greater difference of opinion among those who have discussed its literary value and significance than any other extant Greek play. This has happened mainly because critics have not approached it with an open mind. Their real interest has lain in the question whether the *Rhesus* is to be regarded as a genuine work of Euripides. This question, first raised by certain ancient critics, has been debated, not infrequently with some asperity, by every generation of scholars from the days of Scaliger. It is significant that those who deny the authenticity of the play generally proceed to denounce it as a feeble and mediocre production, while almost every upholder of its Euripidean title has adjudged it a meritorious work not unworthy of its author.

Almost word by word, this description of the scholarly debate surrounding the *Rhesus* is applicable also to the *Christus patiens* and the question whether it is to be regarded as a work of Gregory of Nazianzus. However, it seems that the *Rhesus* has been treated better than the *Christus patiens*, for Porter could add: "Of late the protagonists on either side have approached the problem with more diffidence ... Hence it has become less difficult for the student, in dealing with the interpretation and literary significance of the play, to keep his judgment unbiased by the problem of authorship, and to reserve the latter for independent examination." Three quarters of a century have elapsed since these words were written, but the position has remained basically unaltered as far as the *Christus patiens* is concerned.

The most momentous event to be recorded during this period, was the publication of a critical edition of the text, with introduction, French translation, notes, and indexes, by André Tuilier (1969). The greatest value of Tuilier's edition lies in the access which it provides to the text itself, as it is printed in a clear and readable font, and complemented by auxiliary material facilitating research of the relations between the play and its thematic as well as poetic sources. The French translation, though inviting criticism at various points, is a welcome addition in an age when the knowledge of Latin is not as common among students as it used to be.

Note: The Latin prose translation accompanying the Greek text as printed in Migne's *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, vol. 38, is quite uninspiring; and to the verse translation of Roillet the words of Caillau (concerning the metrical translation of Gregory's *carmina* by Billius) equally apply: "... opus istud plus ipsi difficultatis quam lectoribus utilitatis attulit."

In his *introduction*, Tuilier presents an eloquent defence of the authenticity of the *Christus patiens*. The distinction between internal and external evidence regarding the question of authorship is perhaps his main claim to scientific status. He explicitly indicates (p. 27) that he regards the arguments of **internal criticism** as **subordinate** to the evidence which he classifies as pertaining to **external criticism**, viz. (1) the direct testimony of the manuscripts; (2) indirect evidence, such as (a) correspondence of the text to variant readings in the textual tradition of Euripides, (b) evidence gained from parallels between the play and diverse byzantine authors, and (c) biographical testimony.

That scholars reviewing his edition paid little attention to this basic distinction, is not Tuilier's fault; but it has resulted in mounting confusion rather than clarity about the issue of the play's authenticity. In roughly one third of the reviews of his edition, the authorship of Gregory is rejected categorically; the same number of scholars accept it without much hesitation; and the rest prefer to remain neutral. (Cf. the previous chapter, section 2.7.) Notably, none of these scholars explicitly accept, or reject, Tuilier's distinction between internal and external evidence. Yet those who reject

his defence of the play's authenticity, almost exclusively call upon arguments of internal criticism to support their position.

Furthermore, if the distinction between internal and external evidence were respected, the issue would still not have been solved immediately; for the arguments pertaining to external criticism as defined by Tuilier, rest upon the interpretation of evidence which is not self-explanatory. Indeed the reviews contain some examples of evidence interpreted in a way which contradicts the interpretation by Tuilier. Consequently, it is not surprising that the latter, for all his eloquence, did not convince everybody that the play belong to Gregory.

One major pitfall which Tuilier has not successfully avoided, though, is the confusion of the play's (in)authenticity with its literary significance. In his defence of the attribution of the play to Gregory of Nazianzus, he repeatedly likens it to classical tragedy - cf. such expressions as "la tragédie chrétienne par excellence", "l'auteur utilise les thèmes et la mise en scène du théâtre grec", "la pièce reproduit tous les aspects scéniques du drame antique" (p.19), "le drame est une trilogie ... trois épisodes successifs ... maintiennent l'unité de la tragédie chrétienne dans la tradition biblique et dans la tradition classique" (p.20). Indeed, the play does exhibit many parallels to the classical theatre; but Tuilier surely invites criticism and dissent when asserting (p.70):

(L')auteur montre à cet égard une singulière connaissance du théâtre antique pour le fond et pour la forme. C'est pourquoi cet auteur est certainement Grégoire de Nazianze qui lisait les poètes antiques, et qui cite à maintes reprises Euripide dans ses oeuvres les plus authentiques.

With this remark, Tuilier seems to ignore his own distinction between internal and external criticism, and his premise that the arguments of internal criticism are subordinate to - and accordingly can only lend support to - the evidence belonging to external criticism; but worse still, he confuses his own literary appreciation of the *Christus patiens* with the issue

of the play's authenticity or inauthenticity. The quotation concerning the *Rhesus* at the beginning of the chapter, seems to apply equally well, at this point, to Tuilier's discussion of the *Christus patiens*.

The following example may indicate how widespread and firmly established this confusion is in the tradition of scholarly debate concerning this play: In 1769, J. Iriarte defended the *Christus patiens* against the (derogatory ?) designation *Tragicomoedia*:

Quid enim, si Christianum spectatorem consulas, aut rebus, aut personis, aut verbis admixtum habet humile, quid sordidum, quid ridiculum? Imo quid eius argumento grandius, augustius, coelestius, divinius? Quot et quanta *Christus patiens* in hominum animis concitet παθήματα? Quid denique ad veram Tragoediam pertinens, praecipitur, quod in eo desideres? (pp. 368-9)

F. Trisoglio (1974) regards this as an obvious indication that Iriarte was one of the defenders of the authenticity of the play - "come tale si inserisce ovviamente tra i fautori della paternità gregoriana". If this equation of authenticity with literary merits (measured by the standards of classical tragedy) is valid, then the arguments of those who deny both the authenticity and the literary significance of the play, on the assumption that the one necessarily implies the other, are also valid. Then the whole issue remains subject to the dictates of personal preference, and the dispute may continue interminably.

To penetrate to the roots of the problem, however, we should consider whether the play had to conform to all the standards applying to classical tragedy, as if that were its only claim to literary significance. Does the fact that it imitates the dramatic poetry of Euripides, imply that it must necessarily reflect every aspect of that poetry? Does the fact that it contains no choral lyrics, or transgresses the Aristotelian requirements regarding time and locality, or lacks dramatic tension, mean that it cannot be regarded as good poetry? Is this not to deny its centonic (i.e. eclectic) character?

Consider the following example of an evaluation of the play, based entirely on subjective opinion:

Wir empfinden die Ausstattung der heiligen Personen mit den übel zugerichteten Lappen der attischen Bühne als eine wüste Profanierung. Das mumienhaft erstarrte Gewand der alten Tragödie passt den auf einem ganz anderen Boden erwachsenen Gestalten nicht; ihre Bewegungen erscheinen darin ungereimt, und wir haben beim Anblick der so bunt aufgeputzten Figuren mehr mit der Heiterkeit als mit den Thränen zu kämpfen. ... Mit dem bekannten Εἶθ' ὤφελ' tritt die Gottesmutter als Maria Medea auf die Bühne; in schnellster Folge wechselt sie ihr Kostüm, sie wird zur Hekabe, Cassandra, Klytämestra, Andromache, sogar zum Hermes; dieselbe Chamäleonnatur haben alle andere Personen.

In this description by Krumbacher - pp. 746-747 - it seems that the play is denounced for being what its author intended it to be - a cento of Euripidean verse. But opinions may have changed since 1897; consider, thus, a more recent evaluation, by Trypanis (1981, p.490):

Its author ... uses numerous lines, half-lines and formulae from Classical and Hellenistic plays. Most of this material is Euripidean ... All this should not be judged in the light of a modern view of plagiarism. It is typical, 'praiseworthy' Byzantine imitation of the classics, which dominates much highbrow Byzantine writing.

Certainly, 'praiseworthy' (*sic*) does not mean praiseworthy!

What connection is there between this remark and the question of the play's (in)authenticity? Nothing - except that it is preceded by a paragraph telling the reader that the *Christus patiens* "has been traditionally but wrongly attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus. In actual fact, it is an uninspiring cento of the eleventh or twelfth century by an unknown author". The reader would readily believe this, especially in the light of an earlier paragraph (p.411): "It is natural

(and not unusual) that to great names of the past lesser works should be attributed; such is the case with the *Christus patiens*, the drama on the Passion of Christ which was believed to be a work by Gregory but has been proved to be a second-rate Euripidean cento of the eleventh or twelfth century."

"Second-rate", "uninspiring", "wrongly attributed to Gregory" - it seems that remarkably little has changed during the last century.

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The question may arise whether, at this stage, anything new can still be said about the *Christus patiens* and the question of its authenticity. In the following chapters, some aspects of the play are discussed which have received very little, if any, attention from critics. The conclusions given at the end of each chapter, it is trusted, are the logical result of the evidence examined, and duly verified. But before proceeding to the discussion of these aspects, the **suppositions** of the present author regarding these issues have to be explicitly defined:

1) The literary significance of the *Christus patiens* and the question regarding the identity of its author, are separate and distinct issues, interrelated but not interdependent.

In the first part of this chapter, an illustration has been presented of the confusion and dispute arising from failing to observe the distinction between these two issues. Though some aspects of the authenticity issue - e.g. the historical era in which a work was composed - may influence to a certain extent the appreciation of its literary, historical, or theological significance, inauthenticity does not necessarily imply mediocrity; neither can artistic or poetic brilliance provide the decisive proof that a specific work is authentic.

2) In order to obtain some measure of objectivity, a literary evaluation of the *Christus patiens* must acknowledge its centonic character.

This, in simple terms, means that a cento of tragic verses is not necessarily a tragedy (as a literary form of art); nor does it have to be "tragic" in the broader sense of the word. Cf. the significance of the phrase κατ' Εὐριπίδην, as it is discussed in the introductory chapter of this study. Aspects of the style, metre, diction, even the theological vocabulary of the play, may be influenced by its centonic character. In chapters 4, 5, and 6, some of these aspects will be discussed in more detail.

3) In the enquiry into the (in)authenticity of the play, the evidence of external criticism take precedence over arguments pertaining to internal criticism.

This is essentially Tuilier's premise, implying that explicit references to a work and its author, demonstrable parallels, and allusions, are more trustworthy indications regarding the authenticity or inauthenticity of a work than arguments based on its style, literary merits, or its technical and artistic deficiencies.

Of course, explicit references may be wrong, or deliberately misleading; whereas parallels and allusions must be carefully interpreted. This is part of the reason why Tuilier's defence of the play's authenticity was not generally accepted. This issue seems to call for further, independent examination - to which chapters 7 and 8 of this study are devoted.

It would suffice to record, at this point, an instance of the application of this supposition:

Euripidean influence on the style, metre, diction, and even the structure of the play - especially when considered within the framework of a three-legged parallel - is more conclusive evidence than, for instance, comparison of this cento to some supposedly genuine works of Gregory of Nazianzus.

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CHAPTER 4

ASPECTS OF THE MACROSTRUCTURE OF THE CHRISTUS PATIENS

It has been said in chapter 1 (*introduction*) that the action of the *Christus patiens* comprises the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Christ. This involuntarily leads to a comparison with the dramatization of the events of Holy Week which is traditional in the West, and of which there is evidence also in the Cyprian Passion Cycle, a Passion play reconstructed by A. C. Mahr (1947) from a scenario contained in *Codex Palatinus Graecus* 367, as edited by A. Vogt (1931). The scenes of this Cycle include the awakening of Lazarus, the pageant of the palms, the supper, the feet washing, the betrayal, Peter's denial, the questioning, the mockery of Herod, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the touching of the wounds of Jesus. In fact, the value of a comparison of the *Christus patiens* to this and other Passion plays, is that it underlines the vastly different approach to the subject matter found in the *Christus patiens*. The general pattern comprises a number of scenes corresponding to the sequence of events commemorated during Holy Week, which could - though they need not specifically - be incorporated in the liturgy.

Note: Roughly the same pattern occurs in the Passion Play of Oberammergau, with its large profusion of individual scenes, comprising the events from the entry into Jerusalem to the resurrection, and grouped into the following acts:

- 1 the Entry into Jerusalem
- 2 the Parting at Bethany
- 3 the Last Journey to Jerusalem
- 4 the Last Supper
- 5 the Betrayer
- 6 Jesus on the Mount of Olives
- 7 Jesus before Annas
- 8 Jesus is condemned to death by the High Council
(including the penitence of Judas)
- 9 the Despair of Judas
- 10 Jesus before Pilate
- 11 Jesus is sentenced to death on the cross by Pilate
- 12 the Way to Golgotha
- 13 Jesus on Golgotha
- 14 the Resurrection

(This represents the text written in 1810/11 by Father Othmar Weiss, O.S.B., of the Benedictine Monastery of Ettal, revised by J. A. Daisenberger, Parish Priest of Oberammergau, which was used also for the 1984 production of the Oberammergau Passion Play.)

The *Christus patiens*, on the other hand, concentrates much more sharply on a smaller selection of scenes, whereas the remainder of the events are introduced by means of messenger speeches, or merely alluded to in the course of the dialogue. Moreover, the successive scenes in this play exhibit such continuity as lends to the whole an almost indivisible unity. Each transition from one scene to the next is marked simply by the introduction of a new character, while the locality remains basically unchanged.

In the *Christus patiens* the different character roles seem to be very sparsely distributed, when compared to other Passion plays. The characters involved in the dialogue at any given moment are limited with an almost Aeschylean severity. In the first part (lines 1-1133), for instance, there never occurs a moment when more than one character (excluding the χορός) is conversing with the θεοτόκος. In the second part (1134-1905) the dialogue is more lively, involving at times the θεοτόκος, the θεολόγος, Joseph of Arimathea, and (a mute) Nicodemus; but then the χορός of Galilean women have receded into the background (cf. the phrase ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι - Mt 27.55 and Mk 15.40). The single line (viz. 1433) which the χορός speaks in the course of this triangular dialogue, represents the type of interjection which can easily be understood as a remark by some interested bystanders overhearing a report not primarily addressed to them.

A third feature of the *Christus patiens* which is underlined by comparison to the Cyprus Passion Cycle, is its consistent use of poetic phraseology. In this respect, the assertion of C. A. Trypanis (1981, p. 490), viz. that the "author draws on Scripture and the Apocryphal Gospels for both his subject and his diction", seems somewhat misleading. Indeed, the author draws on Scripture for his subject - a point to which we will presently return - but very seldom does his diction reproduce the exact wording of his scriptural sources. A few examples may serve to illustrate this statement:

Christus patiens 161-163 & 172 (Jn 17.1-2 & 26):

Consider, for instance, Jesus' prayer shortly before the betrayal. According to Jn 17.1-2, He said: Πάτερ, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα· δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα ὁ υἱὸς δοξάσῃ σέ, καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. This request is repeated in 17.5: καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί. In the *Christus patiens* (lines 161-163) the prayer commences as follows:

Πάτερ, μέγιστον νῦν πάρασχέ μοι κλέος·
τὸ παρὰ σοὶ γὰρ μὴ λιπὼν ποτε κλέος,
εἰς μεῖζον ἤξω, δυσμενῆ κτανῶν βροτῶν.

The concluding words of the prayer - according to Jn 17.26 - are: καὶ ἐγνώρισα αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου καὶ γνωρίσω, ἵνα ... In the *Christus patiens* (172) these words of Jesus become:

Καὶ πρὶν κλείσας, νῦν κλείσω σε πλέον.

Note: Tuilier (1969, p.143 n.1) sees line 172 as an allusion to Jn 12.28-29. Although there are some apparent parallels between that passage and the line in question - viz. the repetition of the verb, first in the aorist and then in the future tense, as well as references to the sound of thunder (Jn 12.29 ἔλεγον βροντῆν γαγονέναι / line 170 ὡς βροντῶν) - the scriptural source of 172 is without doubt Jn 17.26. This is confirmed by the exact parallelism in context: In both passages Jesus is the speaker, the end of his prayer is indicated (Jn 18.1 ταῦτα εἰπὼν / line 173 ἐπεὶ ταῦτ' ἐνηχῆθη) and his departure to the garden is mentioned. Accordingly, it is clear that *Christus patiens* 161-172, as a whole, is based on the prayer recorded in Jn 17.

It seems that the content of the prayer is quite faithfully represented, while the phraseology is notably different. The more usual terms, like δοξάζω and γνωρίζω (τὸ ὄνομα), are replaced by poetic phrases like κλέος παρέχω and κλείζω. The meaning of δίδωμι ζωὴν αἰώνιον is paraphrased as ἔκτανον δυσμενῆ βροτῶν. These changes are not due merely to the requirements of metre; nor do they simply represent *verbatim* borrowings from Euripides. Even though lines 161 and 162-163 partly reproduce lines 1233 and 1236-1237, respectively, of the *Bacchae*, the words and phrases discussed above do not occur in those lines of the Euripidean play. Thus it seems that the author's use of poetic phraseology is a function of his own choice and preference.

Christus patiens 727-729 (Jn 19.26-27):

Another example of the difference in phraseology between the play and its scriptural sources, is the first address of the crucified Jesus to his mother. In the fourth Gospel (19.26) we read: Ἰησοῦς οὖν . . . λέγει τῇ μητρὶ· γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου. Then Jesus said to the disciple: ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. In the *Christus patiens*, the words spoken by Christ are:

Ἴδ', ὧ γυναικῶν ἐξ ἀπασῶν βελτίων,

ὁ παρθένος πάρεστιν υἱός σοι νέος.

Ἴδου δὲ καὶ σοί, μύστα, μήτηρ παρθένος. (727-729)

The phrase γύναι, ἴδε is transformed into a trimeter line, and so is ὁ υἱός σου. Note the occurrence of alliteration and *homoioteleuton* in 727-8. The figure of alliteration is even more conspicuous in line 729, the poetic transformation of the prosaic ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου.

When these three lines from the play are considered jointly, it seems that the simple parallelism of the Gospel narrative (ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου - ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου) is transformed into an intricate poetic pattern. A reciprocal *a-b-c-c-b-a* pattern -

παρθένος

υἱός

σοι

σοι

μήτηρ

παρθένος

- is interspersed with ἴδε/ἰδοῦ and vocatives, in such a way as to mitigate its strictness, and to produce the striking juxtaposition μύστα - μήτηρ in line 729.

Christus patiens 2060-2068 (Mt 28.5-7/Mk 16.6-7):

The words spoken by the angel announcing the resurrection, according to Mt 28.5-7, are: Μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς, οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε· οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν· δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο. καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοῦ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε· ἰδοῦ εἶπον ὑμῖν.

Almost the same words occur in Mk 16.6-7. Apart from a few phrases added by Matthew, e.g. οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι and καθὼς εἶπεν, the only differences in phraseology are μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε for μὴ φοβεῖσθε, ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν for ὅπου ἔκειτο, and ὑπάγετε εἶπατε for πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε. The corresponding passage in the *Christus patiens* (2060-8) reads as follows:

Ἔμμες δὲ μὴ θροεῖσθε, μηδ' ἔστω φόβος· 2060
ζητούμενος γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἐστὶν ἐν τάφῳ.
Ἄναξ Ἰησοῦς τῆτες ἐσταυρωμένος·
ὅδ' οὐκέτ' ἐστὶν ἐν τάφῳ νεκρὸς μένων.
ἀλλ' ἐξεγερθεὶς εἰς Γαλιλαίαν τρέχει·
ὡς εἶπε, μύσταις ὀπτάνεσθαι νῦν θέλει. 2065
κενὸν δ' ἰοῦσαι τὸν τόπον κατίδετε.
Ἄπιτε γοῦν, ἄπιτε καὶ ταῦτα σφίσιν
εἶπατε τρανῶς· πάντα γὰρ ἔγωγ' ἔφην.

When compared to the Gospel sources, this passage seems to resemble its scriptural precedents quite closely. All the elements occurring in the corresponding Gospel passages are reflected in these lines, whereas the play contains only a small number of additions. These seem to be the result of the specific intentions of the author:

1) Line 2063 (ὅδ' οὐκέτ' ἐστὶν ἐν τάφῳ νεκρὸς μένων) contains the additional elements (οὐκ)έτι and μένων, and the more specific ἐν τάφῳ (for ὡς), presumably to place emphasis on the contrast dead-and-buried / alive-and-out-of-the-tomb. This is supported by another additional element in the play, viz. τῆτες in 2062, and by the repetition of οὐκέτ' ἐστὶν ἐν τάφῳ in 2061 and 2063.

2) The appositional Ἄναξ in line 2062, and ὀπτάνεσθαι θέλει for ὄψεσθε, are probably intended to stress the sovereignty of the crucified and resurrected Jesus.

3) The adverb τρανῶς and the adjective πάντα, in line 2068, are elements not occurring in the corresponding passages in the Gospels. Both seem intended to emphasize that the full content of the angel's message must be told.

Three points of difference in phraseology between the Gospel passages in question have been mentioned above. When the corresponding phrases in the *Christus patiens* are compared to these, a marked harmonizing tendency of the play is revealed:

1) Line 2060 - "Ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ θροεῖσθε, μηδ' ἔστω φόβος - consists of two semantically parallel expressions. This could merely be due to stylistic considerations; though on closer examination the phrases μὴ θροεῖσθε and μηδ' ἔστω φόβος seem to reflect both the μὴ φοβεῖσθε of Mt 28.5, and its Markan equivalent μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε (Mk 16.6).

2) The similar - though not identical - phrases πορευθεῖσθαι (εἶπατε) and ὑπάγετε (εἶπατε) are represented in the play by the repetition of a synonymous expression: Ἄπιτε γοῦν, ἄπιτε (καὶ ... εἶπατε). Repetitions like these occur quite frequently in the play; yet it seems significant that this particular instance - like the parallel expressions in 2060 - coincides with a difference in phraseology between the Gospel sources on which the passage is modelled.

3) No choice is made between the variants ὅπου ἔκειτο and ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν, both being represented in the play by the paraphrase κενὸν ... τὸν τόπον.

The inference to be drawn from these examples, is that the author of the *Christus patiens* paid considerable attention to the details of his scriptural sources, with regard to content as well as phraseology. In his implementation of the material from these sources, he was careful to represent the contents quite closely, while mostly diverging from the characteristic phraseology of the Gospels. The nature of these deviations reveal a preference for poetic vocabulary and diction, which implies more than mere versifying of the Gospel texts. In terms of vocabulary, this preference is manifested in words like βροτός (for ἄνθρωπος), κλέος (for δόξα), μύστης (without exception, for μαθητής), and τάφος (instead of μνημεῖον).

Isolated passages do occur, however, where the play preserves the exact phraseology of the corresponding Gospel passages,

e.g. *Christus patiens* 180 & 183 (Mt 26.49-50):

‘Ραββὶ προσειπὼν χαῖρ’, ἐφίλει δυστρόπως.

Οὐκ εἶπεν οὐδέν, πλὴν ‘Ἐταῖρ’, ἐφ’ ᾧ πάρει;

These verses belong to the speech of a messenger, who reports to the θεοτόκος the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. The same words are recorded in Mt 26.49-50: εἶπεν· χαῖρε, ῥαββί, καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἑταῖρε, ἐφ’ ὃ πάρει;

Note: Rather than constituting a deviation from the source, the slight change from ἐφ’ ὃ to ἐφ’ ᾧ seems to be due to necessity. Without this lengthening of the syllable, the phrase ἑταῖρ(ε), ἐφ’ ὃ πάρει; could not be incorporated into the iambic trimeter.

On two occasions the metrical pattern of the play has been suspended, in order to retain the exact phraseology of the source. These are:

- 1) *Christus patiens* 2097 (Mt 28.9): Χαίρετε.
- 2) Line 2504 (Jn 20.19): Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν.

Note, however, that these are rare exceptions to the rule: only two lines out of 2602. The author’s normal treatment of material drawn from Scripture is to reformulate it according to the demands of the iambic metre, implementing to a certain extent verses taken from Euripides, but impressing on the final product the stamp of his own preference regarding both diction and vocabulary. In this process of transformation, he remains remarkably true to the content of his biblical sources.

This last point, *viz.* that the author of the *Christus patiens* represents quite faithfully the contents of his scriptural sources, has some definite implications for the literary evaluation of the play. These will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

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The relation of the *Christus patiens* to the Gospel narrative is analogous in many respects to the relation between ancient tragedy and the corpus of Greek mythology. Mythology, to the ancient Greeks, was not a mere storehouse of stories - to use a phrase of D. W. Lucas (1959, p. 37) - but a vehicle for thought and emotion. It represented that body of collective experience on which poetry, and drama especially, depended to become meaningful communication between author and audience. With few exceptions, the 5th century tragedians turned to mythology for their plots. Convention seems to have dictated that they restrict their choice of themes mainly to three major "cycles" of mythology: the Trojan cycle, the Oedipus myth, and the Heracles saga. However, this is not to say that they were restricted to any "canonical" version of the myths. They could choose with considerable liberty between divergent and sometimes conflicting versions of a story, and in their plot construction each was free to express his own tragic view of life, and develop his own dramatic technique.

The author of the *Christus patiens* also selected his theme from such a body of collective knowledge, viz. the "myth" of God's concern with the salvation of mankind, personified in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. The play can communicate true meaning only to those for whom this "myth" has become a basic life experience providing the common ground necessary for meaningful communication. The theme which the author has selected from this "cycle", concerns the central events of the crucifixion and resurrection. Up to this point, he had an open choice; but once he had made this choice, he was confronted with not one, but four canonical versions of the "myth". This fact compelled him, as it were, to harmonize rather than select, and to condense rather than amplify, as far as the actions included in the plot are concerned. When the plot had been constructed on these principles, the author could elaborate on specific points, implementing and adapting material from classical tragedy and from apocryphal sources.

Note: The only instance of the conflation of parallel scenes occurring in the play, is the "second visit" to the tomb (lines 2116-2173); but this is also an attempt at harmonizing material from divergent Gospel sources.

When viewed in this light, the verdict of C. A. Trypanis (1981, p.490), viz. that the play has "hardly any plot and no dramatic tension", seems unjustified. The plot of more than one ancient tragedy consists of little more than the eventual offstage killing of a major foe. What more dramatic action could be envisaged than the destroying of death, the ultimate enemy of all humanity?

In fact, it is an open question whether Trypanis based this assertion on first-hand knowledge of the play. His references to Lycophron's *Alexandra* - instead of *Cassandra* - and to the *Rhoesus* (*sic*) of Euripides, may be due to errors of proof reading, but a different picture emerges when the following two quotations are compared:

Krumbacher (1897, p.747) -

Die Hauptrolle trägt nicht Christus, sondern Maria. Damit hängt der Mangel einer Handlung und einer dramatischen Steigerung zusammen; der grösste Teil des Stückes besteht aus langen Botenerzählungen und ebenso ausgedehnten Klagereden; Christus selbst steht im Hintergrunde, und wir hören von ihm meist nur durch Berichte anderer Personen.

Trypanis (1981, p.490) -

The central figure of the piece is Mary, not Christ, who is kept in the background and about whom we only hear from others. There is hardly any plot and no dramatic tension, the largest part of the play consisting of messengers' speeches and lamentations.

From this comparison it seems that Trypanis has simply missed the word "meist" while copying this passage from Krumbacher's "Geschichte".

* * *

Much criticism has been voiced against the *Christus patiens* on the assumption that it was intended for stage performance. That this was probably not the case, is illustrated by the following:

1) There is no historical evidence of the play ever being performed in Byzantine or mediaeval times. In fact, there is

no evidence of the existence of drama in its classical sense in Byzantium. Cf. in this respect Krumbacher (1897, pp. 644; 747) and Mitsakis (1986, pp. 330 ff.).

2) In the ὑπόθεσις or argument preceding the dialogue, the play is introduced as primarily a poetic rather than dramatic work. Cf. the discussion of the relevant passage from the ὑπόθεσις in chapter 1 (introduction).

3) The metre and diction of the play (cf. the first section of this chapter) lend to it a totally different character from what would have been popular entertainment, even in the 4th century.

Yet different scholars have pronounced extremely negative judgements of the play, measuring it by all the standards of classical (5th century BC) tragedy. Krumbacher (1897, p.747) is no exception:

Dass die aristotelische Einheit von Ort und Zeit überschritten wird, darf nicht auffallen; das Drama leidet aber auch an starken Verstössen gegen die elementarsten Regeln der Technik. Trotzdem hat man versucht, durch verschiedene Kunstgriffe das Werk mit den Anforderungen der Dramatik in Einklang zu bringen – gewiss mit Unrecht. In der Zeit, als dieses Scheindrama entstand, fehlte die wichtigste Voraussetzung dieser Litteraturgattung (*sic*), die Aufführung; und auch das Studium der alten Stücke wurde nicht derart betrieben, dass aus demselben eine Einsicht in die Technik hätte erwachsen können. Es wäre ein wahres Wunder, wenn unter solchen Verhältnissen ein Dichter die inneren und äusseren Gesetze der Dramatik erfasst und in einem wirklichen Kunstwerke zum Ausdrucke gebracht hätte.

The implication seems to be that the *Christus patiens* cannot be a true work of art, since it was composed at a time when dramatic performance did not exist as a literary form of art. Although Krumbacher regarded the play as a product of the 11th or 12th century, the same argument would apply to the 4th century.

Even when the question of the play's authenticity is entirely disregarded, though, it still retains an ambivalent aspect. This is to say, it tends to evoke conflicting literary and aesthetic judgements, not only from different critics, but even within the minds - and within single paragraphs - of individual scholars. The following quotation from J. Mossay (1971, p.298) may serve to illustrate this statement:

Les emprunts verbaux faits au texte d'Euripide sont assez libres pour ne pas paraître choquants ou artificiels; mais la structure générale du drame est évidemment conventionnelle et relève d'une esthétique antique, déjà absolument dépassée à l'époque de Grégoire de Nazianze et *a fortiori* à une époque plus récente. L'oeuvre garde néanmoins son charme littéraire ...

The main problem confronting Mossay seems to be how to react, psychologically, to a literary production belonging to an era in which tastes differed greatly from those of the late 20th century, though reviving - if only by way of imitating - the literary practices and conventions pertaining to an era much earlier than the time of its actual composition.

* * *

In the final analysis, every reader will have to form his own opinion about the literary value of the play. Since this can only be done by first-hand acquaintance with the work itself, the following two chapters are devoted to detailed discussion of extensive passages from the play: lines 1-90, and 267-357. These two passages, it may be noted, have not been selected at random. The first is the prologue of the play - chosen because the beginning is in a very real sense the logical place to start. The second is one of the longer monologues of the play - chosen for two reasons: firstly, because the play is often criticized as consisting largely of monologues (laments and messenger speeches); and secondly, since in this and the previous chapters, shorter sections of the dialogue have already been discussed from different perspectives.

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CHAPTER 5

EXPOSITION OF THE PROLOGUE

The prologue to be discussed in this chapter is not the introduction to the play, which contains an indication of its centonic nature and a short summary of the opening scene, but the proper dramatic prologue – a monologue, spoken in this case by the protagonist, explaining the essence of the tragic situation, indicating the identity of the speaking character, as well as the precise moment within the course of the "mythical" events at which the dramatic action commences, and ending with an indication of some external event which sets the action in motion.

The syntactical structure of the very first sentence (lines 1–31) recalls the opening lines of the Euripidean *Medea*: Εἴθ' ὄφελ' ... μηδ' ... οὐ γὰρ ἔν It refers to a "mythical" event which the speaker identifies as the first cause of the present unfavourable situation. Simultaneously, it serves to indicate the emotional attitude of the speaker to this situation, expressing an unfulfilled wish that this had never occurred.

Within these lines there are many details worth noticing. Firstly, the protasis consists of two parallel expressions referring to the same event: the serpent intruding in the garden (cf. Gen 3). The attribute ἀγκυλομήτης (line 3) is emphatically placed at the end of the second of these phrases. Lexically and poetically, it is a perfect choice: it gives an almost visual description of the serpent, while stressing its lethal wiliness/cunning (cf. Gen 3.1).

The results of this initial event are described in the apodosis of the conditional sentence (lines 3b–31). It is a lengthy exposition, but is neatly structured by syntactic articulation which supports its semantic continuity. The main units are introduced by οὐ γὰρ ἔν (line 3), οὐδ' ἔν (line 8), οὐδ' ἔν (line 19), and οὐδ' ἔν (line 23). Semantically, these units concern the following aspects:

- 1) the first sin committed by Eve, mother of the human race;
- 2) the immediate consequences: she is banned from paradise, condemned to the woes of childbearing, and suffers hardship on this earth together with her husband and children;
- 3) the further consequences: the entire human race is in a state of decay, which can only be rectified by intervention of God – assuming human nature and suffering;
- 4) the present result: the virgin mother suffers as she hears of her son being dragged before a court of judgement, and she fears to see him being maltreated.

Concerning the first of these units (lines 3-7) the following may be noted:

- The act itself (eating of the forbidden fruit) is not defined, but is referred to in terms expressing abhorrence of its audacious nature: τόλμημα τολμᾶν παντότολμον ἀνέτιλη (line 5). This attitude towards the first sin is emphasized by the almost obtrusive alliteration produced by repetition of the same stem (τολμα-) in four consecutive words.
- The rest of the syntactic unit is structured concentrically around this line, adding further emphasis to the central statement. The lines immediately preceding and following it contain indications of the mental state that led to such an audacious act, expressed by the participles ἠπατημένη (4) and ἐκπεπληγμένη (6) – note the end rhyme – while the outer circle of this concentric pattern is formed by an identification of the subject (3b) and of her reason for desiring the forbidden fruit (7).

The first phrase identifying Eve – πλευρᾶς φύμα (3) – recalls Gen 2.21-2. Tuilier (p. 129 n. 1) calls it a "métaphore intraduisible", excusing thereby his rendering "la femme". At first glance it also seems to be a vague allusion, requiring a *tour de force* to be interpreted. However, when considered within the context of the concentric pattern of which it forms a part, the poet's intent is revealed. Eve, being part of God's creation (πλευρᾶς φύμα – line 3), is beguiled (4) into desiring (6) not so much the fruit itself as the divine attributes which she is persuaded that it will confer upon her (line 7 – cf. Gen 3.4-5). This underlines once more the

ἁβρίς involved in the first act of sin.

The second syntactic unit within the apodosis (lines 8-18) describes the immediate consequences which the first sin has for Eve. It is subdivided into three aspects, viz. -

- 1) she is banned from paradise,
- 2) she is condemned to the woes of childbearing, and
- 3) she suffers hardship together with her husband and children.

These subdivisions are indicated syntactically by the conjunction τε - and the recurring of ἄν - with the indicative verbs ἐξώκιστο (10), ἤκουσεν (12), and ᾤκει (14). (It seems to me line 14 should read ἰδρῶ τε) ἄν ᾤκει ... - implementing the Epic form - in stead of ἰδρῶ(ι) ἄν ᾤκει.)

The subdivisions may now be considered separately. Note, firstly, some poetic features of line 8:

- Like line 7, it contains a participle of πείθω with an infinitive dependent on this; but the words are arranged in inverse order, so as to create a chiasmatic pattern:

πεισθεῖσα	τυχεῖν
φαγεῖν	πείσασα

- The semantic content of πείσασα (8) differs from that of πεισθεῖσα (7), in as far as persuading a person to do something differs from believing something. This type of verbal repetition, involving different meanings of the same word, is a stylistic device frequently occurring in classical tragedy.

- The grammatical forms of the word πείθω (passive in line 7 but active in line 8) support the shift of emphasis which occurs on the semantic level: after being beguiled into desiring the forbidden fruit, Eve now becomes actively involved in sin, even to the point of enticing another to do the same.

The banishing from the garden (line 10) is emphasized by contrastive technique: the reference to the garden (λειμῶνος ... τοῦ πανολβίου) is surrounded by an indication of the negative value of the fruit (μηδὲ συμφέροντος ... σφίσι - an understatement) and of the conditions prevailing outside of

the garden (λύμην ... καὶ λυγρὸν μέρος). Note, also, the balancing of syntactic elements: the indicative ἐξώκιστο is surrounded by two participle phrases, viz. πείσασα ... (8) and κατακριθεῖσα ... (11) - an instance of τὸ στρογγύλον, perhaps?

The second aspect of the consequences of sin for Eve - being condemned to the woes of childbearing - is described in lines 12-3 (cf. Gen 3.16). Note the heavy emphasis produced by the three phrases ἐκ δυσκοιτίας (12), μογαστοκοῦσα (13), and ὠδῖσί τ' ἐμπαρειμένη (13) all expressing similar content, as well as by the predominance of long syllables in line 12.

The third aspect of these consequences - suffering hardship - is expounded in lines 14-8. Lines 14 and 15 are parallel in structure. The first phrase in 15 supplements the first in 14, and the second in 15 (ἄρα ὑστάτης) explains the second in 14 (τήνδε γῆν ὀλεθρίαν). Incidentally, the adjective ὀλεθρίαν is to be understood in its passive sense - "lost" or "undone" - because of the last curse; the last of three, that is. (Cf. Gen 3.14-7: the first affects the serpent, the second one affects the woman, and the last, addressed to the man, declares the earth to be accursed because of man's sin.)

Note: If this parallelism is not taken into account, one may end up like Tuilier, rendering "... sur cette terre de mort, avec son mari et les enfants de malédiction", and having to ignore the adjective ὑστάτης, which does not fit the context then.

The elaboration in lines 16-8 serves to keep attention focused upon the destiny of the woman - to bear children λύπαις καὶ στόνοις, to produce an offspring, and thereby to obtain reconciliation.

(This seems to be the poet's interpretation of I Tim 2.15: σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας.)

The third syntactic unit of the apodosis (lines 19-22) concerns the further consequences of the initial event to which the protasis referred: now all of humanity is in a state of ruin, from which only divine intervention can bring salvation. In these lines the scope of thought is enlarged

to a cosmic scale. It concerns man and God, ruin and restoration. Note the syntactic articulation: γένος τ(ε) ... καὶ τὸν Δυνατόν ... The infinitive ἀλθανεῖν (20) is dependent upon Δυνατόν: "the One who can restore". The other three infinitives are dependent upon ἔπεισε, as is indicated by the conjunctions: καπιέναι ... βρωτωθῆναί τε καὶ τλῆσαι ... (Tuilier interprets the passage differently, rendering τὸν Δυνατόν by "le Tout-Puissant", and treating all four infinitives as co-ordinate statements.)

In lines 23-31 (the fourth syntactic unit within the apodosis of the conditional sentence) the present result of the first sin is described: the virgin mother suffers as she hears of her son being dragged before a court of judgement and fears to see him being maltreated. (It should be kept in mind that this is part of a conditional sentence expressing an unfulfilled condition: every repetition of "I would not ..." is sounding the refrain "I am ...")

Note, incidentally, the explicit ἐγώ in line 23. It adds emphasis to the first indication, within the text, of who the speaking character is. This indication is given at the appropriate moment, when the context focuses attention upon the speaker. In this respect also, the poet follows the example of his classical models.

Two perspectives are delicately interwoven in lines 23-7:

- Regarding the virgin mother, these lines form a crescendo, with line 23 simply stating her identity, line 24 mentioning what she hears about her son, line 26 expressing her reaction of shock to see him being maltreated, and line 27 stating by way of metaphor the effect of all this upon her.
- Regarding her son, these same lines form a concentric circular pattern by which the terms defining his origin and nature are emphasized: while lines 23 and 27 refer to the mother only, 24 and 26 explicitly name the son as object of her concern (υἰόν in 24, and τόνδε in 26), adding emphasis by the rhyming effect of ἔκλυον υἰόν ... and ... ἔφριπτον τόνδε καθυβρισμένον surrounding οὐράνιον, γήϊνον (25).

The attributes οὐράνιον and γήϊνον - here effectively juxtaposed without any conjunction - are the first hint at what is to become a very important theme of the play, viz. the double nature of Christ.

Cf. Trisoglio (1979, p. 339): "L'originalità e la vitalità poetica della Vergine risiedono proprio nell'essere ella madre del διφυῆς (v. 1795): nel suo cuore di creatura si scontrano due grandezze misteriose in sé ed incommensurabili tra di loro: ha la missione di fare da cerniera a due mondi che si regolano con norme diverse. ... Alle due nature di Gesù era logico che, psicologicamente, corrispondessero nella Madre le due reazioni dello strazio e della fede."

If this is true, and if it is revealed to be the basic concept upon which the characterization of the protagonist is founded, it constitutes another (internal) argument against the hypothesis of Cataudella (1969). It would imply that the revision supposed by Cataudella was so radical that it affected the very essence of the character of the protagonist. I find it difficult to be convinced that a remodelling of that extent could have occurred, without causing the dramatic framework of the whole play to collapse.

(Moreover, this aspect of the play may provide a sensible answer to those objections against a fourth century Cappadocian origin which are based upon the characterization of the Virgin, but which consider this characterization from a narrow theological perspective. An investigation of this aspect may reveal that the characterization of the Virgin does not passively reflect a fully developed Mariology, but rather that it is inspired by a firmly orthodox Christology, and as such explores new facets of Mariology. If this is true, it points at an earlier date rather than a later one.)

The metaphor of line 27 - φέρουσα ... δεινὴν φλόγα - is elaborated in lines 28-31. The relative construction allows a transition to positive statements in the present indicative, by which the effect of the present events upon the virgin mother is vividly described: μαιμάσσει με ... δονεῖ κέαρ ... καρδίαν δίσσειν. This is supported by the concurrent transition from ἐγώ ... φέρουσα ... to the accusative με (28), also made possible by the relative construction.

Lines 30-1 refer to the prophecy of Simeon (καὶ σοῦ δὲ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία - Lk 2.35), probably suggesting that the virgin mother is only now beginning to understand the full meaning of those words.

* * *

After line 31 there occurs an abrupt change of tone. By means of a gnomic utterance, the poet momentarily eases the intensity produced by the metaphor of lines 27-9. The focus of attention is removed from the virgin mother, and a point is provided from which the basic theme of the prologue can be expounded anew.

Lines 32-6 provide a contrast to the terse statement of the present situation in lines 37-8. Although gnomic in character, those lines are still to the point, in as far as they express the attitude which Eve should have had, but did not have. Note the stylistic structuring. The subject of γίνεται (32), that is, the definition of what constitutes μέγιστη σωτηρία, is formulated in a parallel pattern:

ὅταν ... μὴ διχοστατῆ — συμφέρουσα
μηδέ ... κλύη — ... συμφρονοῦσα

This is supported by the rhyming effect of the key words, while the semantic opposition between ideal and reality is also highlighted by end rhyme: σωτηρία - καίρια.

Ideal versus reality: the perfect state which has been brought to an end because of sin, in contrast to the imperfect, unfavourable reality which resulted - but the precise relation of this reality to that initial sin has not yet been defined. Perhaps it cannot be defined; at least, not in logical terms. Therefore the poet implements three parallel expressions of gnomic character (lines 39-42): ancient *hybris* tends to produce *hybris* anew; from tears ever flow more tears; evil vies with evil. Within this parallel pattern, the central statement is emphasized by its position as well as by the relative phrase defining δάκρυα.

This theme of remorse without measure is expounded in the

next sentence (lines 43-50). It is not stated in general terms, as in the previous lines; the subject is specified: *πότνια φύσις* (43). Whether this phrase refers to Eve – the mother of the human race – or to the whole of humanity, is left unanswered for the moment. The syntactic core of the sentence (*στένει ... , ἐπεὶ ... ἥσθετο(ο) ...*) provides two points of reference, from which the elaboration of thoughts commences:

– *Το στένει* (44) are added two participles: *κλάουσα* and *συντήκουσα* (*sc. δακρύοις*). The first of these introduces the reasons for lamenting, the second serves to indicate the perpetuation thereof. Note the effect produced by the word order in line 46: *τὸν πάντα ... χρόνον* is extended to the total length of the line by inserting *συντήκουσα δακρύοις* between the adjective and the noun.

– The content of *ἥσθετο* (47), *viz. ἠδικημένη*, is specified by *πρὸς ἐχθροῦ ... καὶ ... βλάβη*, the latter being defined by *μητρὸς αὐτῆς ... πατρός (τις)*. Both genitives *μητρός* and *πατρός* are further defined in lines 48 and 49 respectively, and the loose ends are neatly tied together in the relative phrase of line 50.

All of the details mentioned above may be considered external or objective aspects of the theme of remorse. The internal, subjective (perhaps "psychological") aspect thereof is expressed by the participles *ἠτιμωμένη* and *ἠδικημένη*. (Incidentally, their rhyming sound pattern supports the syntactic balance of the sentence, the first being associated with *στένει* and the second with *ἥσθετο*.) The dishonour and injury to which these terms refer, are manifestations of the humiliation which human nature suffered because of the first sin. The adjective *πότνια* (43) serves to emphasize by way of contrast the participle *ἠτιμωμένη*; note the effective positioning of these two words in line 43, directly before and after *φύσις*.

But who is this *πότνια φύσις ἠτιμωμένη*? Is it the mother of the human race, the one whose origin was indicated by the metaphor *πλευρᾶς φύμα* (line 3)? – her venerable nature was indeed humiliated by that first *βλάβη*. Or does the phrase

refer to the whole of humanity, her descendants and heirs to her miserable condition? Or did the poet intend both, perhaps, and deliberately left the ambiguity unresolved? An answer may be found in αὐτῆς (line 48). If it is to be understood as the personal pronoun defining μητρός, then the descendants of that mother are intended. If, however, it is to be understood as defining βλάβη, then the mother herself is intended, being defined by the appositional μητρός ... πρωτοπήμονος. In prose, word order and the presence of the definite article would have decided the matter; but this is poetry, and the ambiguity remains.

It was stated above that line 50 neatly ties together the loose ends of this sentence. What was meant, is this:

- The relative ὧν jointly refers to μητρός and πατρός, the progenitors of the human race (ἔκγονοι).
- The phrase πάντες ... οἱ κατὰ χθόν(α) suggests (without stating explicitly) that the whole of humanity is included in the destiny of the first sinners.
- The verb ἔσμεν (first person plural) includes the Virgin also, thus suggesting once again that the results of the first sin continues into the present. One may even see in this a direct reminder to the reader - audience? - of also being included among the ἔκγονοι of Adam and Eve.
- Syntactically, this line reveals perfect symmetry. Thus style, syntax, and content all add to the poetic aptness of this concluding phrase.

The following lines (51-5) open another perspective upon the reactions of Eve - or of mankind? - to the consequences of sin. Lines 51-2 recall the reaction of Eve, when confronted with what she had done: she blamed it all upon the serpent (cf. Gen 3.4 & 13). Line 55 depicts another typically human reaction: detesting that which reminds one of one's sin. In this case it is the natural environment (κόσμον), so totally different from paradise.

Note the stylistic pattern of these lines: a series of short, co-ordinately arranged phrases is interrupted by a two-line explanation. This in itself is an example of the *varietas*

which some critics are unable to detect in the poetic fibre of the play; but it may become even clearer when the style of these lines is compared to the periodic style of the previous sentence (43-50).

Incidentally, these lines contain a notable concentration of "transgressions" of the "laws" which some hold to apply to iambic trimeters. Among the five lines, three do not have a paroxytone ending; and the second α in ἀνακαλεῖ (line 51) has to be arbitrarily lengthened to avoid a foot consisting of only two short syllables. However, those critics who object to the attribution of the play to Gregory on the basis of the metrical deficiencies which it is held to exhibit, should note that all these lines are taken from the *Medea* of Euripides, without any alterations which affect the metre. This does not mean that Euripides is to be blamed for every single deviation from the norm in terms of metre. There are many instances in the play, where the author's adaptation of a Euripidean line has caused the metrical deviation. It is very unlikely, though, that the author - whoever he be - would not allow himself the same liberties as those characterizing the verse from which he draws as his main poetic source.

From line 56 onward, the attention is once more focused upon the virgin mother and on her present situation. This is indicated by the use of a first person singular form of the verb in 56, and the pronoun $\mu(\epsilon)$ in 57. The conjunction γάρ in 56 is not to be understood in the strict sense of indicating the cause of the foregoing, since the sentence as a whole has the conventional function of explaining the presence of the speaking character on stage. Once this has been done, the virgin can proceed with an exposition of her own involvement in the events of the play (lines 59 ff.).

Though consisting of a number of independent syntactic units, lines 59-70 are semantically linked up and structured around a central theme. From a stylistic viewpoint, it may be noted that this passage is an example of the λόγος ἀφελῆς or the loose rhetorical style, where phrases are strung together

without much use of subordination and often with the omission of connectives. In the process of interpreting these lines, however, close attention should be paid to the semantic structuring of the passage as a whole.

The central theme of these lines is the miraculous birth of Christ and the virginity of the mother Mary; but this is set within the frame of her present suffering, the nature of which it serves to explain. Consider, firstly, the frame:

- In lines 59-60 she states that "the poor woman" has not ceased from wailing; the one, that is, who gave birth and yet did not give birth, or rather, who escaped the pangs of childbirth. This paradox is to be explained in the following lines, by yet another paradox.

- The rhetorical question and exclamation of line 68 refer to the second paradox: that the virgin had a child, is reason for astonishment. But how is she now to bear seeing him being insulted? This second rhetorical question (69) focuses attention on her present suffering, which is psychological, not physical. The contrast is confirmed in line 70, in an exclamation consisting of two phrases, the first recalling line 68, the second, line 69.

Note: It seems the phrase $\pi\omega\varsigma$ $\acute{o}\delta\upsilon\nu\omega\mu\alpha\iota$ $\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\rho$ (line 70) is to be taken as an exclamation, not as a question. Otherwise it would indicate the present suffering of the virgin as being paradoxical, which obviously does not suit the context. Furthermore, the repetition of $\pi\omega\varsigma$ in four consecutive lines (68, 69, 70, and 71) should in itself be an indication that a difference in usage is to be expected. Thus, after the questions $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\alpha$ $\pi\omega\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\iota\kappa\tau\omicron\nu$; - suggesting a paradox - and ... $\pi\omega\varsigma$ $\omicron\iota\omega$ $\beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota\nu$; - suggesting precisely that to see her son being insulted is unbearable - the phrase in 70 serves to emphasize her mental agony.

The central theme of lines 59-70, as stated above, concerns the birth of Christ and the virginity of Mary. The first of these two aspects has been referred to in line 60; the paradoxical nature thereof is explained in lines 61-3. This "explanation", however, is nothing more than a series of re-formulations of the same thought, interrupted by phrases which indicate the impossibility of explaining this miracle in terms of logic. Thus the oxymoron of line 60 is echoed in line 62, followed by the phrase $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho$ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\nu$. The next line

contains another oxymoron (τόκον ... ἄτοκον), followed by a rhetorical question (τί γὰρ φράσω;) which creates the expectation of yet another re-formulation. This is given in line 64, but the phrase πόνους φυγοῦσα comes very close to repeating the last phrase of line 60 (φεύγουσ' αὖ τόκους). The only way out of this circle is by adding a second object to φυγοῦσα, viz. φθοράν (loss of virginity). Lines 65-7 serve to explain this aspect of the theme, culminating in the explicit statement οὐ γὰρ κορείης ἄμμα διέφθειρέ τις. (Note the association φθορά-διαφθείρω.) This statement leads quite naturally to the rhetorical question of line 68.

The semantic pattern of the passage in question is reinforced also by the recurrence of the same thought in the phrases φεύγουσ' αὖ τόκους (60) and πόνους φυγοῦσα (64 and 70). In line 60 the term τόκος is appropriate, by reason of its contribution to the sound pattern of that line as well as its specific reference to childbirth. The term πόνος, on the other hand, fits better into the sound pattern of both lines 64 and 70, where it occurs in contexts which prevent it from being misunderstood. Moreover, it serves to suggest a contrast between Mary and Eve: the latter suffered physical πόνοι (cf. line 45), while Mary, albeit πόνους φυγοῦσα, suffers mentally.

In sum then, the semantic structure of this passage consists of a central theme, the two aspects of which are jointly stated in line 64, and expounded in lines 61-3 and 65-7, respectively; this theme is set in the frame of the present suffering of the virgin mother - mentioned only in line 59, but forcefully emphasized in lines 68-70.

After line 70, the poet introduces a diversion comparable to that which occurs after line 31 - comparable in function, though not in type. After line 31, the emotional intensity is abated by means of a gnomic utterance which removes the focus of attention from the virgin mother; whereas here, after 70, the same effect is produced, but this time by contrasting her present suffering to her joy at the annunciation. From a stylistic viewpoint, this contrast is enhanced both by the

figures of asyndeton and of chiasmus:

πῶς ὀδυνῶμαι κέαρ
ἀνηλάλαξα πῶς ...

The stylistic structure of lines 71-4 is also worth noticing: the neat chiasmus occurring in lines 73-4 (φράζων ἄλυξιν - χάρμα ... φέρων) supports the larger chiastic pattern of the sentence, with its play upon content and reaction:

χαρᾶς ὑπο τόκον
ἄλυξιν χάρμα

(Note, however, that the term ἄλυξιν is not defined by δυσμενῶν βροτῶν. If that were the case, the unmarked lexical meaning of both ἄλυξις and δυσμενής would produce the sense "(announcing) escape from enemies"; whereas in these lines, the context requires the sense "(announcing) salvation (to the race) of wretched mortals".)

In lines 75-8, reference is made to Mary's first reaction to the annunciation, namely that of disbelief (*cf.* Lk 1.34). The formulation in these lines almost sounds like a reproach of the archangel, for not revealing that her son was to be a sacrifice; but the intention is rather to emphasize that upon accepting the angel's message, she had reason for great joy. So, though finding the announcement hard to believe, she gave expression to her joy (*cf.* Lk 1.46 ff.) and conducted herself in a way which is considered proper for faithful servants of the Lord (lines 79-86; *cf.* Lk 1.38, 48). This is expounded at length, in a passage rather loosely structured, in which the figure of asyndeton is conspicuous. The poetic purpose of these lines is to provide a background against which line 87 is effectively contrasted.

The emotional content of the entire prologue is concentrated in line 87. In this line, rhetorical style and the choice of words collaborate to produce the intended effect:

- The rhetorical question, or rather exclamation, introduced by (καὶ) πῶς, recalls the occurrence of the same figure in lines 70 and 71. Thus it is contrasted to the sense of joy evoked by lines 71 ff. while reflecting the grief of line 70.

- The adverb νῦν is balanced against πάλαι (line 71), to support the contrast between this line and the foregoing.
- The metaphor στροβεῖ ... σπλάγχνα ... δριμύ βέλος recalls that of lines 28-9 (... δονεῖ κέαρ καὶ καρδίαν δῖεσιν ὡς ῥόπτρον μέγα), which marked the first moment when attention was sharply focused upon the suffering of Mary.

In this way line 87 completes the main pattern of the prologue, viz. successive expositions of different themes, each of which culminates in a sharp focus on the suffering of the virgin mother. This pattern suggests that her involvement in the Passion is to provide the principal perspective from which the further events of the play will be regarded.

Lines 88-90, though spoken by the same character as the previous lines, do not form part of the rhetorical structure of the prologue. Their function is to provide a transition from the contemplative to the dramatic; that is, from a discussion of events to a representation thereof.

Note: Even in a play meant to be read rather than performed, there exists a marked difference between these two aspects; for in a play which is meant to be read, the printed form is a code calling upon the reader to imagine himself "watching a performance". In other words, the printed code instructs the reader to pretend that the text he is reading, is a play in actual performance. The difference between a play being performed and a play being read, then, is only that the code of pretence which applies to the former situation, is in the latter case supplemented by an additional layer of pretence.

Thus in these lines the time of day - just before dawn - is indicated, and the entry of a second character is announced, marking the point where the dialogue commences. (The chorus in this play has a function much more closely resembling that of a third actor, than that of the χοροί of classical tragedy. Although in classical tragedy the chorus - or an individual acting as their mouthpiece - frequently entered into the dialogue in the same manner as the other actors, here the function of the chorus is strictly limited to that type of participation in the action. Accordingly, they are presented as a corporative personality, whose speech is not distinguished from that of the individual characters by any

metrical or dialectal means.)

* * * * *

At the beginning of this chapter, the passage to be discussed was called the "proper dramatic prologue" of the play. This definition may still need some explanation.

Note: Tuilier (1969, p.20) describes this passage as a "long monologue qui sert d'introduction dramatique à la pièce", while he uses the term "prologue" in referring to the passage of 30 lines preceding this one.

Firstly, by virtue of its being spoken by one of the characters - in this case the protagonist - this passage is not a preface or introduction, but an integral part of the play. On the other hand, it does not form part of the dialogue, since it is a monologue in the stricter sense of that term, being addressed directly to the reader (or to the audience), while no other characters are present - or, at least, none of the characters is referred to as if being addressed. Bearing these facts in mind, lines 1-87 of the play may be compared to the opening lines of classical tragedies. In that context, the term "prologue" is used when referring to the part of a play - whether monologue or dialogue - preceding the "parodos" or introductory lines of the chorus. In this play, which lacks any part comparable to the lyrical "parodos" of ancient tragedy, the term "prologue" is applicable to the opening lines in as far as the dramatic function of these lines resemble that of the "prologos" of classical tragedy.

An examination of the dramatic function of the prologue in some Euripidean plays may also be of value for the proper interpretation of lines 1-90 of the *Christus patiens*. Therefore, the following series of questions will now be asked, and answers be attempted, with reference to some of the plays which the author used as his poetic sources:

- What form does the prologue take, and why?
- What information is given on the mythological background to the events of the play?

- What information is given on the point where the action commences?
- Who speaks the prologue, and why?
- What emotional appeal is made to the audience?
- What is the basic theme of the prologue, and does this define the essence of the tragic situation?

Firstly then, the form of the prologue: Euripides seems to have preferred a monologue, but showed great diversity in his implementation of this form. In the *Bacchae*, the opening monologue is followed directly by the parodos; or, in other words, the prologue consists of one uninterrupted monologue. The prologue of *Hecabe* consists of two monologues; first the one spoken by the ghost of Polydorus, who leaves the stage when Hecabe enters, and then Hecabe's speech, which is also a monologue in the strict sense of the term, although the implicit stage direction in the text requires the presence of two mute characters on stage. In the *Troades*, Poseidon's monologue is followed by a dialogue between him and the goddess Athene, after which follow the lyrical lines of Hecabe, eventually developing into dialogue between her and the chorus. A similar pattern is found in *Hippolytus*, where the monologue of Aphrodite is followed by a dialogue between Hippolytus and his servant, including a hymn to Artemis by the huntsmen who accompany Hippolytus. In *Medea* the opening monologue of Medea's attendant is followed by a dialogue between her and the tutor. This is interrupted by Medea's first cry of anguish from behind the scene, after which follows another short monologue by the attendant.

Thus, in terms of form, the author of *Christus patiens* had a large variety of examples to choose from. His reasons for preferring a long, uninterrupted monologue will be revealed when some further aspects of the prologue are examined.

Concerning the second question, about the mythological setting of the plays: the prologues of the Trojan plays contain little reference to the legendary cause of the Trojan war, probably because this was the most well-known of all the Greek myths. Instead, in each case an episode is recounted

which has more immediate relevance to the events of the play. In *Hecabe* it is the story of how Priam's youngest son Polydorus was treacherously murdered by his father's guest-friend Polymestor; while in the *Troades* it is the episode of the wooden horse, relevant both because of Athene's part in the victory of the Greeks and because the sacking of Troy immediately precedes the situation at the beginning of that play. In the prologues of both the *Bacchae* and *Medea*, the very beginnings of the underlying myths are recalled, though for different reasons. The negation by Semele's sisters of the supernatural birth of Dionysus provides the main reason for that god's conduct as dramatized in the *Bacchae*; whereas in *Medea* the reference to the Argonauts' expedition as the first source of Medea's troubles, serves to elicit pity for the protagonist on the part of the audience.

In *Christus patiens* the myths are replaced by the history of mankind as it is portrayed in Scripture. Accordingly, from a dramaturgical viewpoint, scriptural events are to the author of the *Christus patiens* what the corpus of Greek myths was to Euripides.

When the prologue of the *Christus patiens* is regarded from this perspective, it reveals how closely the poet followed the example of Euripides' *Medea*; but it also reveals in what respects he went beyond that example, to produce an original work of art. The opening lines recall the very beginning of the underlying "myth", viz. the events in the garden of Eden. Those events are then portrayed as initiating an endless series of troubles, which culminates in the present suffering of the protagonist. Thus the reader (or audience) is led to feel pity for the protagonist, and to be interested in the events of the play, primarily considering the effect these have upon her. Up to this point, the method and result of the author of *Χριστὸς πάσχων* closely resemble those of Euripides in his *Medea*; but the prologues of both these plays go beyond this point, and that is where they differ most conspicuously.

In the *Medea* the second emotion which the prologue is meant

to inspire – next to pity – is that of fear. Thus Medea is portrayed as a frightening person; the audience is led to expect that her reaction to the wrongs she suffers will be terrible. That is partly the reason why Medea herself does not speak the prologue, and why it does not consist of an uninterrupted monologue; Euripides could achieve greater effect by having another character first hint at Medea's awesome nature, before confirming this by her own backstage cries, and eventually by her actions. The protagonist of the *Christus patiens* is to be awe-inspiring in a different way. She is the one who can interpret events which her companions do not understand; who can bring herself to accept the inevitable, even if it is the death of her divine Son; who can overcome her own grief and intercede on behalf of others. But all this is to be revealed as the play proceeds; so the prologue can focus upon inspiring pity – and what better way is there to inspire pity than by presenting to an audience the living embodiment of maternal grief?

Towards the end of the prologue, a more recent event within the "myth" is recalled, viz. the annunciation. This serves the purpose, mainly, of contrasting the great joy which that message provoked to the present grief of the protagonist. Thus it contributes to the heavy emphasis which the entire prologue places upon the suffering of the virgin mother.

These considerations seem to explain the reason for the poet's choice of a monologue by the protagonist. He aimed at focusing attention solely upon her person, in order to elicit – right from the beginning of the play – the highest possible degree of compassion and involvement from the audience.

Note: Even after deciding upon this form of prologue, the author did not make any use of the monologue which forms the prologue of the *Bacchae* of Euripides. The self-assured, challenging spirit which prevails in that monologue simply did not suit his intent. Thus he drew inspiration mainly from the prologue of *Medea*. He would find occasion to draw from the prologue of the *Bacchae* later, at lines 1530 ff. of the *Christus patiens*, where the tone changes from lament to praise as the virgin mother expounds the consequences of Christ's victory over death.

The classical dramatic convention of a prologue referring to the mythological background of the play - either recalling the very beginning of the underlying myth, or recounting a particular episode, or both - resulted in another convention, viz. that of explicitly indicating the precise moment in the course of events at which the dramatic action commences. This necessary item of the prologue is not always introduced with the same measure of success. From a dramaturgical viewpoint, it can be regarded as most acceptable when least conspicuous; that is to say, when the audience is almost unaware of being given this necessary bit of information. Thus in *Hippolytus* the audience learns from the goddess Aphrodite that it is the day of the hero's impending death, at the very moment when his entry is announced. In similar fashion, Dionysus in the *Bacchae* introduces the chorus of Oriental women, inviting them, as it were, to invade the city of Thebes with their music, directly after sketching the probable reaction of Pentheus to the bacchantes. In *Medea* it is revealed early in the prologue that the scene is set in Corinth, where Medea has learned of her husband Jason's treason, without any more specific indication being given; for the audience is to become well acquainted with Medea's character before the moment when she is struck by the final blow, the order of banishment pronounced by Creon.

Note: In both the Trojan plays from which the author of the *Christus patiens* also drew some poetic inspiration - though much less than from the plays discussed above, if this can be measured by counting lines - the description of the sacked city which is given early in the prologue is soon amplified by a more specific indication of time and circumstance. In the *Troades* the audience is told that Hecabe does not yet know of her daughter Polyxena's death. In *Hecabe* the ghost of Polydorus explains his mother's distress as resulting from the vision of him she has seen in a dream, after revealing to the audience that his body is soon to be found and brought to her for burial.)

In the prologue of *Christus patiens* the first indication of specific time and circumstance occurs in line 24, immediately after the identity of the speaking character is made known. Some more indications, though less specific, occur in lines 56-8, 69, and 87. Then, in lines 88-90, the precise time of day is indicated. Note how every one of these indications

coincide with a focusing of attention upon the suffering of the virgin mother, in such a way that their being consciously inserted by the poet goes unnoticed.

Another aspect of these indications, which is important for the characterization of the protagonist, is this: never once in the prologue does she mention that death is part of what her son is to suffer. The content of line 24 is amplified by the parallel *ἰδεῖν τ' ἔφριπτον τόνδε καθυβρισμένον* in 26. The same thought is expressed in line 69: *ὑβρισμένον δὲ τανῶν πῶς οἴσω βλέπειν*; - note the verbal repetition. In line 89 - *ἰδεῖν τε Παιδὸς ἦν κακωσύνην πάθοι* - different words are used, but the meaning is essentially the same.

Note: Tuilier translates this line "pour voir la Passion de mon Fils" - showing more piety than accuracy. It should not be forgotten that the supposed time is the morning of the day on which Christ is to be crucified, or rather, of the day on which his mother is to witness his death by crucifixion. Thus the term "Passion" (*sic*) is anachronistic, apart from being much more comprehensive in meaning than what the immediate context requires.

This prepares the way for her rebuke of the chorus in lines 111-9, while together with that passage it serves to explain her reaction to the news that her son is sentenced to death - a reaction which is at first equally perplexing to the chorus and to the reader or audience. The important point to note, however, is that part of the virgin's suffering, and also part of her tragic interest, is her struggle towards a full understanding of the events which she is to witness, and with which she is so deeply involved.

The next question by which a comparison between the plays of Euripides and the *Christus patiens* can be approached, is: who speaks the prologue, and why? This question has already partially been answered regarding the latter play, with reference to the central position of interest which the protagonist is to occupy. However, if the comparison with Euripides is further pursued, it may reveal some more aspects of the poet's method and intent.

In the plays of Euripides, the prologues may be spoken by

Olympians, royals, domestic slaves, or even by apparitions from the world of the deceased. The Olympians normally have foreknowledge of the outcome of events, which they impart to the audience. Thus in the *Bacchae* and in *Hippolytus* we learn from the opening monologue that Pentheus and Hippolytus are to pay for their scornful attitude towards the divine forces involved. There is a marked difference, however, in the poet's presentation of the gods in these two plays: whereas in the *Bacchae* Dionysus becomes the character who dominates the action, in *Hippolytus* the goddess Aphrodite does little more than providing the background to a tragic interplay of human ideals and emotions. Accordingly, the monologue of Dionysus occupies the entire prologue of the *Bacchae*, while in *Hippolytus* the monologue of Aphrodite is followed by the entry of Hippolytus, who reveals himself as a truly fanatical devotee of Artemis, but also provides a transition from the divine to the human world by his disdain of Aphrodite, which implies the same attitude towards all humans who yield to, or even acknowledge, the power of love. Regardless of the particular way in which Euripides in each play represents the gods, though, the prologues spoken by gods do not tend to elicit much pity for the protagonist.

Supernatural foreknowledge is combined with genuine human compassion in the ghost of Polydorus, who speaks the first monologue in *Hecabe*. This monologue is immediately followed by that of the captured queen Hecabe - a monologue which elicits pity for the protagonist if ever Euripides achieved that effect. The fact that in the second half of the play this compassion will be obliterated by the repulsive cruelty of Hecabe's revenge upon Polymestor, does not diminish the effect of the prologue; on the contrary, it reveals a recurring pattern which seems relevant to the comparison between the prologue of the *Christus patiens* and the methods which Euripides applied in the prologues of his plays. In the Euripidean plays where the prologue serves primarily to elicit pity for the protagonist, this is normally replaced by some other emotion in the course of the action. Thus both *Hecabe* and *Medea* contain an act of revenge which cancels pity for the protagonist because it is more wicked than the crime

by which it was provoked. The author of the *Christus patiens* created a similar pattern, also eliciting pity at the beginning of the play and then causing it to be replaced; though the reaction by which pity is replaced differs sharply from that produced in the Euripidean plays. In the *Christus patiens* the protagonist is also the victim of treason; but she prays for divine retribution, not personal revenge. She earns admiration by her concern for others - for the descendants of the Jews, and for Peter, on behalf of whom she begs for pardon - even in the midst of her own grief.

* * *

In sum, then, the point of this section is to demonstrate that a better comprehension and evaluation of the prologue - and, by implication, of the whole - of the *Christus patiens* can be attained by a comparison with the works of Euripides. When regarded from this perspective, the prologue of the *Christus patiens* reveals the extent of the poet's knowledge of Euripides - knowledge not only of his poetical and lexical means of expression, but also of his dramatic method; of the ways in which he combined theme and structure, content and form, into a dramatic work of art. It also reveals with what remarkable measure of success the author copied these methods of the famous tragic poet.

* * * * *

EXPOSITION OF LINES 267-357

In these lines the θεοτόκος reacts to the news of Judas' treason. The speech has much in common with the structure of ἀγῶνες (formal judicial debates) in classical Greek tragedy. In fact, it is an imaginary address of the traitor, who is absent (and indeed never appears on stage in this play). That Judas does not enter the scene to speak in his own defence, is due probably to the intention of the author thereby to suggest that his guilt is beyond questioning. It must be admitted that in this way the author missed the opportunity to create a thrilling dramatic clash of opposing forces; but rather than lamenting this loss, one may study the structure and the poetic technique of this speech, in order to discern its own effect and function within the play.

The speech is framed by two short passages (lines 267-8 and 352-7) which serve as reference to the immediate dramatic context in which it is set. The first of these expresses the horror which the mother of Jesus feels upon hearing the news of Judas' treason. The second terminates her address of the traitor, and expresses the hope she has of seeing her son still alive. The use of vocatives, exclamations, and the repetition of verbs (imperatives and optatives) occurring elsewhere in the speech, provides cohesion between this frame and the content of the speech.

The phrase ὦ γαῖα μήτερον ... (267) is the first in a series of vocatives which lends unity to the speech, but which also demarcates the different themes constituting its structure. The others occur at lines 269, 272, 274, 278, 283, 291, 302, 316, 330, 333, 340, 344, 347, and finally, 353. Of these, all but two refer to the traitor; the exceptions are Παῖ (269), and ὦ Παῖ (347). Both of these occur in passages referring to Christ's foreknowledge of the treason, which is contrasted to the ignorance of the other disciples (in the first passage), and of mankind generally (lamented in the second passage). Thus these passages form an inner frame around the charges against the traitor.

The body of the speech, consisting of accusations against Judas, has a twofold structure: the first part (272-300) is emotionally more vehement, while the second part (301-346) commences in a calmer, more reasoned tone.

This structure is comparable to that of Medea's speech (lines 465-519) in the ἀγών scene of the Euripidean *Medea*. There a traitor - Jason - is also being accused by the woman who is most deeply affected by his treason. Like Medea, the θεοτόκος opens her address to the traitor with the words

ὦ παγκάκιστε, τοῦτο γάρ σ' εἰπεῖν ἔχω (272).

The calmer second part of her speech is introduced also, like that of Medea, by the formula

ἐκ τῶνδε πρώτων πρώτον ἄρξομαι λέγειν (301; cf. *Medea* 475).

This is followed, in both works, by a full account of the benefits which the traitor has received from the person whom he has betrayed (Medea herself in the Euripidean play; Jesus in the *Christus patiens*). This account serves to emphasize the audacious nature of the act of treason - the theme being re-introduced in the *Christus patiens* by the formula

καὶ ταῦθ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, παγκάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, παθῶν,
προὔδικας αὐτόν (316-7)

which is also taken from the *Medea* of Euripides:

καὶ ταῦθ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ὦ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, παθῶν
προὔδικας ἡμᾶς (488-9).

* * *

Before entering into a more detailed discussion of the structure of this speech, attention should be focused on some poetic features which serve to enhance its emotive effect. Firstly, the horror which the virgin mother feels at the news of Judas' treason - expressed in the adjective ἄρρητος - is confirmed by her reluctance to define the crime. Thus she refers to it vaguely at first, using words like δρᾶμα (269), τῶνδε κακῶν (271), and ταῦτ' ἔδρασας (273a), before defining it in the phrase σὸν προδοῦς εὐεργέτην (273b).

On the semantic level, lines 269-71 form a chiasmic pattern: The crime (δρᾶμα) was committed by the disciple whom Jesus had indicated (ὄν ... ἔδειξας); for He was not unaware (οὐ γὰρ σ' ἔλαθε) of the identity of the criminal (αἴτιος κακῶν).

By means of its *a-b-b-a* arrangement, this passage concerning the foreknowledge of Jesus naturally introduces the address to Judas: *παγκάκιστε* (272) reflects *κακῶν* (271) – a type of *epanastrophe* – while *ἔδρασας* (273), as well as *ἔδρασεν* (275) and *ὁ δράσας* (276), is prefigured by *δρᾶμα* (269).

Note the reiteration of *σύ ... σόν ... σά ...* in lines 273-4. It is reinforced by the initial position which each of these words occupy within their respective phrases, and by the omission of conjunctions. The resulting combination of the figures of *anaphora* and *asyndeton* serve to focus attention on the person of the accused. This is also the function of the rhetorical question in lines 274-5.

The alliteration of *ς* sounds which is present in this passage from line 273 onwards, reaches a crescendo in line 277:

αἰσχρός τε μύστης ἀξίαν τίσει δίκην.

In addition to the six occurrences of *ς* sounds in this line, the *τ* sound occurs three times. This sound pattern is typically associated with the expression of disdain.

The syntactic elements of line 276 are arranged in a chiasmic pattern (verb-noun-noun-verb), while containing a striking *antithesis*: the death-wish (*ὄλοιτο*) implies the opposite of *ἐπίσταται*, as the offender (*ὁ δράσας*) is opposed to the principle of justice (*ἡ δίκη*). The contrast between *δράσας* and *δίκη* is further emphasized by alliteration.

In line 277 the parallel arrangement of syntactic elements (adjective-noun-adjective-noun) also supports the *antithesis* between the offender and the retribution. This results in a parallel arrangement of elements in these two lines, *viz.* offender-justice-offender-punishment. Note, however, that the same person is referred to by two different phrases (*ὁ δράσας* and *αἰσχρός μύστης*), while the term *δίκη* refers first to the general principle of justice, then (in 277) to the particular punishment awaiting the traitor.

In line 278 the phrase *συνήδη σὺ δόλω* is given emphasis by the parallel arrangement of alliterating sounds (*σ-δ-σ-δ*).

The rhetorical questions of lines 278-80, arranged in order of increasing length, also have implications of increasing importance. While ποῦ συνήδη σῶ δόλω; (278) merely implies distaste of treacherous actions, line 279 implies that one guilty of such actions should rather die, and line 280 is even more direct and more specific, implying that Judas should hide himself in the dark abyss.

This implication is stated explicitly in lines 281-2, where both the alternatives which are apparently offered to Judas ironically have exactly the same consequence, *viz.* death - emphatically stated in the final word, θανεῖν.

The metonymic (ῶ) μῖσος of line 283 contrasts with ὡς φίλος in 285. This antithesis may have been inconspicuous, were it not supported by *paromolosis* (parallelism of sound in two clauses equal in size).

The exaggerated formalism of line 284 is purely ironical, since its content refers to the basest of actions imaginable. The effect of this line is enhanced by its sound pattern: the word endings in -ην -ην -αν -αν, the repetition of τ, δ, σ, and π, and the juxtaposition of Δεσπότην and προδοῦσαν, which is emphasized by the chiasmic sound pattern δ-π-π-δ.

The figure of *asyndeton* is noticeable in the passage 283-9. Combined with *epanaphora* (ῶ ... ῶ ... in 283; ἦλθες ... ἦλθες in 286) and *anadiplosis* (πῶς πῶς ... πῶς in 288), it adds to the staccato effect of the whole. The passage contains some other stylistic devices too, e.g. the *chiasmus* in lines 285-6 (προσελθεῖν - ἦλθες πρόσ), and the parallelism in 288-9:

πῶς πῶς — προσεῖπας;

γλώσση — προσηύδας.

The obvious and apparently redundant answer to πῶς προσεῖπας; *viz.* γλώσση, gains its specific meaning from the *antithesis* γλώσση - καρδίᾳ (289).

Note also the frequency of alliteration in this passage - especially in line 288, where five out of six words begin in π, resulting in seven occurrences of this sound, while ε occurs eight times in the very same twelve-syllable line.

The next passage contains an interesting *chiasmus*:

προσβλέπειν — τολμᾶς (290-1)
τολμᾶν — προσβλέπειν (293)

Once again – as in the case of *δίκη* in lines 276-7 – the repetition of a word coincides with a difference in meaning or reference. Thus *προσβλέπειν* in 290 is used figuratively, while the same word in 293 is used in its literal sense. This is verified by the respective objects of *προσβλέπειν*, *viz.* ἥλιόν τε ... καὶ γαῖαν in 290-1; εὐεργέτην in 293.

The first usage of *προσβλέπειν* echoes an earlier passage, lines 278-82, as is evident from the repetition of phrases:

εἰσέτι ζῆς ταῦτ' εἰργασμένος (279)
ταῦτα δράσας (προσβλέπειν) τολμᾶς εἰσέτι (290-1)

Moreover, in the phrase ἥλιόν τε ... καὶ γαῖαν (290-1) may be heard an echo of γῆς ... κάτω (281) and πυρός ... αἰθέρος (282).

The second occurrence of *προσβλέπειν* (293) is in a passage dealing with shame and audacity, and which echoes the theme of lines 283-9. In this context, *προσβλέπειν* functions on the same level as (ἔτλης) προσελθεῖν (285), προσεῖπας (288), and προσηύδας (289).

The θεοτόκος ends the first part of this speech by motivating her address of the traitor. The *antithesis* of lines 298-9 is expressed in two phrases which are parallel in terms of their syntactic arrangement (an example of *parison*):

ἐγώ τε — λέξασα — κουφισθήσομαι
σύ τε — κού κλύων — μάθης.

Line 300 gives an explanation of this last word – μάθης – and focuses attention on it by the figure of *epanastrophe*: μάθης· μάθης γάρ ...

The content of εὐρών (line 300) is emphasized by the sound pattern of the line (the word endings -ων -ην -αν -ιν) and by its repetition – almost *verbatim* – of the thought expressed already in line 277: αἰσχρός τε μύστης ἀξίαν τίσει δίκην.

* * *

The θεοτόκος begins the second part of her speech by listing the benefits which Judas has received from Jesus. This list consists of seven items – or rather, seven syntactical units, strung together without the use of conjunctions. *Asyndeton* may become tiresome when used so extensively; but this danger is avoided by varying the length of the different units:

εἴλκυσεν ἐκ σκότους σε τῆς ἀγνωσίας,
ἔσωσέ σ’,

ὑπέδειξε φῶς σωτηρίας·

δέδωκέ σοι χάρισμα πολλῶν θαυμάτων·

μύσταίς ἔφησε καὶ σὲ συνεδριάσαι κρίναί τε φυλάς Ἰσραὴλ ...

ἔθηκεν ἀργύρια πάντα χερσὶ σου,

ἔκοπέ σου πρόφασιν ἀναργυρίας. (303-309)

Thus the first, fourth, sixth and seventh unit each fills one trimeter line; the second and third taken together fill one line; and the fifth is extended to the length of two lines. On the semantic level, the third syntactic unit expresses the same thought as the second, while the semantic content of the last unit is a logical corollary of the preceding statement. The *antithesis* between lines 303 and 304 is underlined by syntactic parallelism:

ἐκ σκότους — τῆς ἀγνωσίας

φῶς — — σωτηρίας

This is further supported by parallelism in sound: by *paronomiosis* (ἀγνωσίας - σωτηρίας) as well as the alliteration of *ς* sounds in these two lines.

The figure of *kuklos* occurs in line 304, where ἔσωσε in the initial position of the first clause is synonymous with σωτηρίας in the final position of the second clause.

Note how all the syntactic units but one in this passage have their verb in the initial position. This adds to the surprise effect of line 310, which also commences in a verb, without any conjunction – thus creating the impression that it is a continuation of the list – but the statement refers to what Judas has always been doing, not to what Jesus has done.

After this interruption, the θεοτόκος continues her account of the benefits which Judas has received, though in a different style. From line 311 onwards, the statements are

extended by adverbial or participial clauses, or both, and conjunctions are employed between the syntactic units.

The account culminates in the statement in line 315, which is emphasized by its sound pattern (τ occurs six times in this line) and also by the *antithesis* between the attributes *δυσμενεστάτους* and *μυστικωτάτου*. This in itself gains effect from the chiastic arrangement (adjective-noun-noun-adjective) and from the similar sound pattern of these two adjectives.

Note the use of the adjective *δυσμενεστάτους* in line 314. It is syntactically dependent upon *πόδας*, though expressing an attribute of Judas himself, not of his feet. (Cf lines 274-5: *τίς γὰρ ἂν ἄλλος ποτὲ ἔδρασεν ἢ βούλευσε δυσμενῆς ἀνὴρ;*) This is an instance of the figure known as *hypallage*.

The contrast between what Judas has received and what he has done, is highlighted in lines 316-8, by the following means:

- the juxtaposition of *παθῶν* (316) and *προὔδωκας* (317);
- the alliteration of key words commencing in π (*παγκάκιστε, παθῶν, προὔδωκας, πολλῶν, and προσόντων*);
- the chiastic arrangement of the antithetical statements *προὔδωκας αὐτόν* and *δῶρα δ' ἐκτίσω* (317).

By means of the participial clause *πολλῶν προσόντων* (318) a new theme is introduced: Judas had no reason for betraying Jesus. Had he been penniless, he would have had a reason to yearn for money (*λαβὴν ἂν εἶχας ...*); but now he has none (*οὐκ ἔχεις πρόφασιν*). Note the chiastic arrangement of the syntactic elements (noun-verb-verb-noun) by which this antithesis is given more emphasis.

Note: The term *λαβὴ* (319) is used in a figurative sense; but this usage is quite rare. That the author himself regarded it as a novel expression, may be deduced from his insertion of a defining genitive - *δράματος* - in line 146, where *λαβὴ* first occurs in this sense. The impact of this figurative usage is due to its being unconventional - that is, to the tension a reader notices between the usual and the unusual.

Through the association of ideas, the theme of Judas having no reason for betraying his master is developed into the closely related theme of the innocence of Jesus. This line

of development may be traced through the nouns λαβή (319), πρόφασις (320), λόγος (320), and αἰτία (321), all of which occur in the same syntactic function. In terms of poetic technique, they are bound together by the following means:

- by *chiasmus*: λαβήν-εἶχες-ἔχεις-πρόφασιν,
- by *epanaphora*: οὐκ ἔχεις πρόφασιν, οὐκ ἔχεις λόγον, and
- by syntactic parallelism: ἔχεις λόγον - κατειπεῖν αἰτίαν.

In terms of the meaning of these nouns, they are linked to one another on the basis of synonymity, or shared semantic features: λαβή here signifies a reason or motive; whereas πρόφασις is an excuse or alleged reason; the communicative component in the meaning of πρόφασις is obviously present too in the meaning of λόγος; and finally, both λόγος and αἰτία can mean "reason", while both can also mean "accusation". It seems that the author intended this ambiguity, since at first glance the meaning "reason" perfectly fits the context, while the following passage (lines 322-6) makes sense only if τοσοῦτον in 322 refers to κατειπεῖν αἰτίαν meaning "formulate a (just) accusation".

Line 324 - καὶ γῆν ἅπασαν ῥημάτων πλήσῃ κακῶν - recalls by contrast the content of line 213 - πλήσει τε πᾶσαν γαῖαν εὐδόξων λόγων - suggesting that the triumph of Christ over evil is unimpaired. Not even a combined effort of the forces of darkness, encompassing the whole earth, could produce any just accusation against Jesus; for all of creation is aware of his excellence (line 325).

The parallel statements of lines 325-6 are arranged in a chiasmatic pattern:

ἐπίσταται	κτίσις
πάντες	ἐγνώρισαν

The primary function of this type of semantic parallelism, where both statements express similar content, is to give emphasis. However, in a text restricted by the bounds of the iambic metre, this figure enables the author to fuse elements of two syntactic units into one semantic unit. Thus in this passage the object of ἐπίσταται, viz. μὴν ἐσθλὸν ὄντ(α), is obviously to be understood as the object of ἐγνώρισαν also. The phrase ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων (326) probably also belongs to both statements.

The frequently recurring contrast between words and deeds – between λόγος and ἔργον – is once again effectively employed in this passage. Here the contrast is expressed by the terms ῥῆμα and πρᾶγμα. The fact that both occur in their genitive plural form – ῥημάτων (324) and πραγμάτων (326) – results in a parallel sound pattern which serves to highlight this contrast: the words of the demons can not disprove the deeds which reveal the greatness of Christ.

In lines 327-8 the real reason for Judas' treason is defined as φιλαργυρία, "which is the root of all evil". Note the emphatic alliteration of κ and π sounds in 328. The thought itself is not original; cf. I Tim 6.10, and Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, 4.1: ἀρχὴ δὲ πάντων χαλεπῶν φιλαργυρία.

The metaphoric ἤρξεν ἀρχόνῃ σε (line 327) may be an allusion to the death of Judas as described in Mt 27.5: καὶ ῥίψας τὰ ἀργύρια εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἀνεχώρησεν, καὶ ἀπελθὼν ἀπήρξατο. If this is a deliberate allusion, it seems to imply a direct link between Judas' vice and his ruin.

Alliteration is prominent again in line 330, which recalls a theme expounded already in 290-1: after what Judas has done, it is nothing but audacity even to live any longer. In the next two lines, the rhetorical questions suggest the nature of this audacity: Judas either thinks that God does not rule any more, or he thinks that justice has lost all effect. Both these alternatives imply essentially the same, viz. that he expects to escape with impunity. The rhetorical technique is worth noting: by feigning a choice between two possibilities, which are in reality almost identical, the point is made that both are equally true. The same technique was used in lines 281-2, where, incidentally, the conjunctions ἢ ... ἢ ... were also employed to introduce the alternatives.

In the next passage (lines 333-9) the θεοτόκος declares Judas to be an inhuman monster, born neither of man nor of God. (Cf. Jn 1.13.) The first of these statements contains metaphoric language drawn from the biological world (ἔρνος, ῥίζα, and ἐκπεφυκέναι) which explains the phrase ὅσα τε γῆ τρέφει κακά in 336. It does not seem to reflect a gnostic cosmology.

The second statement is syntactically parallel to the first:

οὐ γὰρ ἐρῶ ποτ' ἐκ θεοῦ φῦναί σ' ἐγώ (337)

οὔποτ' εἶ ... πικρῶν δὲ ῥιζῶν φημί σ' ἐκπεφυκέναι (333-4)

However, different types of extensions are added to these two complementary statements:

The first is followed simply by a list of the πικραὶ ῥίζαι from which Judas is said to have sprung. Note the emphasis given to the items in this list, firstly, by the chiasmic arrangement of line 335 (ἀλάστορος - πρῶτον - εἶτα - φθόνου) and, secondly, by the assonance in φθόνου, φόνου, πότμου. (For a similar list, in the same style, cf. Rom 1.29.)

The second statement is followed by a logical explanation: though everything is within the plan of God, He does not save any person against his will.

In lines 340-1 Judas is once more confronted with the horror of his crime. The repetition of vocatives in 340, extending to the full trimeter line, marks the end of the calmer tone which has prevailed since line 302. Incidentally, the name of the traitor occurs only once in this entire speech: Ἰούδα in 302, which marks the moment when the θεοτόκος deliberately changes her tone from heated argument to reasoned discussion. This seems to reflect the intention of the author, to suggest that only at that moment could the θεοτόκος bring herself to utter the name of the person whom she elsewhere addresses in terms ranging from ἀργυραμοιβέ to παγκράκιστε καὶ μαιφόνε.

The pun involving the verbs πράσσω and πιπράσκω in line 341 is made more striking through the use of the perfect forms πέπραχας and πεπρακώς, resulting in *paronomiasis*, as well as by the juxtaposition of these forms at the *caesura*.

Note: Regarding the metre of this line, we may note that ε before a *muta cum liquida* is used as short in πέπραχας, while long in πεπρακώς, and that the long α occurring in the stem of both these verbs is treated as if it were short in the case of πεπρακώς. To some scholars the immediate proximity of these inconsistencies may indicate an insensitivity to prosody on the part of the author. However, it may also be regarded as indicating, simply, that the author was more concerned with implementing effective rhetorical techniques than with writing trimeter lines which scan correctly. In other words, it does not necessarily mean that the author was ignorant regarding the finer details of metrical practice.

As in lines 272-7, the explicit definition of Judas' crime in 341 (πεπρακῶς εὐεργέτην) is immediately followed by a wish that he may be punished: Αὐτός σ(ε) ... πρόρριζον ἐκτρίψειεν ... (342-3). This seems to be a key feature in the structure of the speech. The parallelism (both syntactic and semantic) between lines 273 and 341 is notable:

σὺ ταῦτ' ἔδρασας, σὸν προδοῦς εὐεργέτην· (273)

οἶον πέπραχας, πεπρακῶς εὐεργέτην; (341)

In fact, these lines would have been fully interchangeable, were it not for the following considerations:

- 1) The sound pattern of 273, with the alliteration of σ and δ sounds, fits better into the context of 272-7.
- 2) The demonstrative ταῦτ(α) suits the context where the first definition of the crime is given, while οἶον includes a reference to the implications of the crime.
- 3) While προδοῦς εὐεργέτην gives a precise definition of the immoral nature of the crime, the monetary connotation in πεπρακῶς εὐεργέτην is more in place after the references to ἀργύρια (308), ἀναργυρία (309), and φιλαργυρία (327).

In contrast to the motivation of her address of the traitor in lines 295b-300, the θεοτόκος now terminates this address in words expressing her absolute disgust:

Ἔρρ', αἰσχροποιέ, φιλίας διαφθορεῦ·

ἀπέπτυσ' οὐδ' ἀπόντι σοι δεῖ συλλαλεῖν·

τὸν γὰρ δόλιον καὶ θεὸς βδελύσσεται. (344-6)

Lines 347-50 is a direct quotation from Euripides' *Medea* (516-9), in which only the vocative ὦ Ζεῦ (516) is replaced by ὦ Παῦ. To this passage is added the words

ἀλλ' αὐτὸς εἰδῶς, ἀγνοεῖν πάντα θέλεις (351)

If this is to be read as a question, it is a rather dull and pointless repetition of the preceding rhetorical question. If, however, it is read as a statement, it marks a change of tone which suits the context: from an almost rebellious inquiry, prompted by the reference to τὸν δόλιον (346), the tone of the θεοτόκος changes to acceptance and resignation.

Note: The change from σώματι (*Medea* 519) to σώματος seems to be of minor importance, only involving the construction of σῶμα with χαρακτήρ rather than with ἐμπέφυκε.

The concluding lines (352-7) lead the attention of the reader - or audience - back to the dramatic situation which has occasioned the speech. After a short series of exclamations which sum up the feelings of the θεοτόκος regarding the traitor, there follows a passage in which she expresses the hope nevertheless to see her son still alive. Note the effective use of figures like *anadiplosis* (ὄλοιτ' ὄλοιτο and ἔρρ' ἔρρε) and *asyndeton*. The main trends of the entire speech are echoed in these lines, by the choice of words:

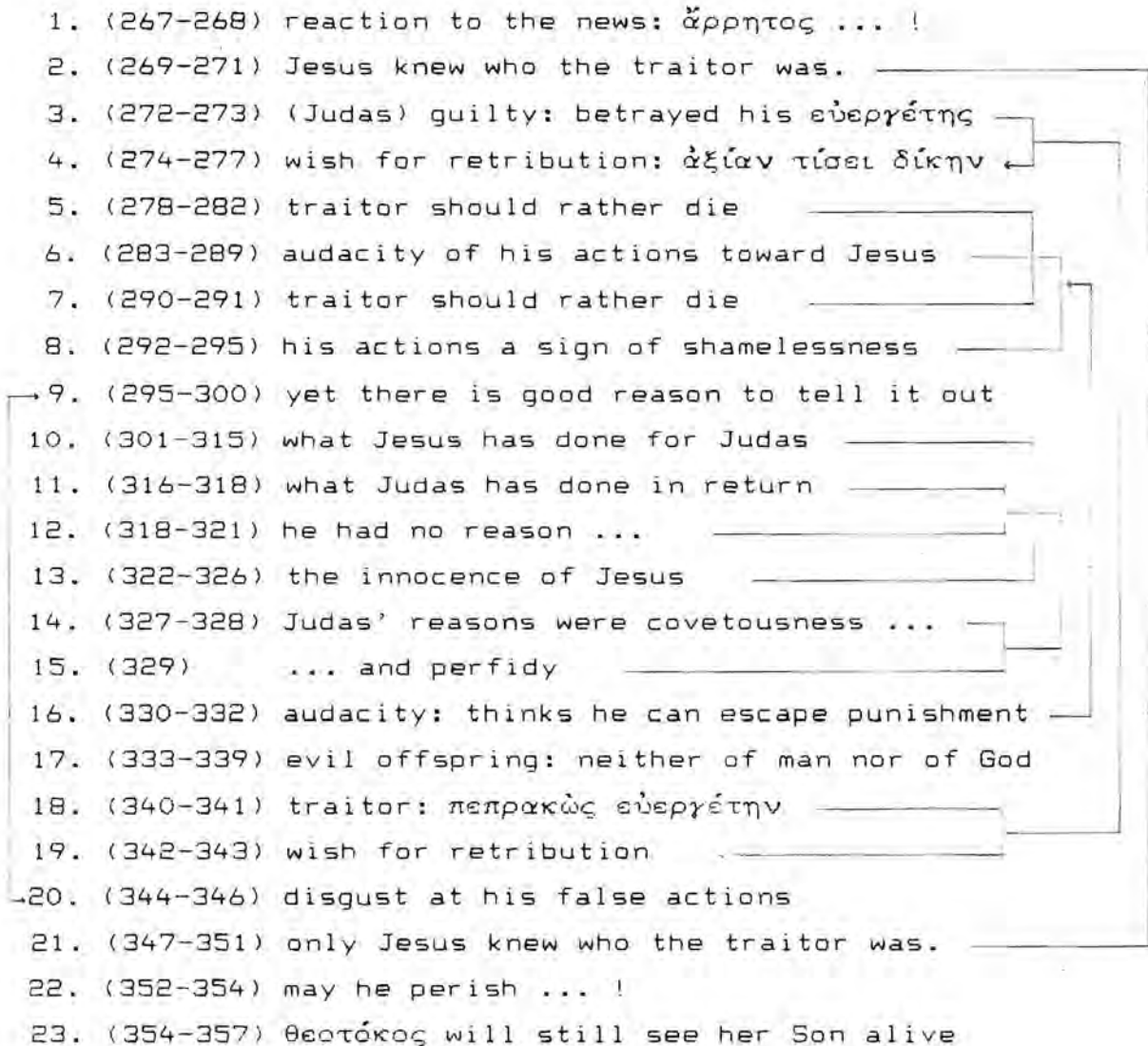
- ὄλοιτο (352) recalls ὄλοιθ' ὁ δράσας (276);
- ἔρρε (353) repeats the same word in 344;
- πανδίκως suggests a just retribution, as did the phrases ἀξίαν τίσει δίκην (277) and εὐρών τὴν κατ' ἀξίαν τίσιν (300);
- κακουργάτης recalls αἴτιος κακῶν (271) as well as (possibly) ταῦτ' εἰργασμένος (279);
- παγκάκιστε καὶ μαιφόνε (353) reflects the vocatives of lines 272, 291, 316, and 340.

The transition from this death wish to the hope of life is marked by *hiatus* (354), which rarely occurs in the play.

* * *

At the beginning of this chapter, reference was made to a twofold structure, as well as passages forming an inner and outer frame around the speech. These terms, obviously, are not to be regarded as implying that the "structure" of the speech is a tangible or visible entity. On the contrary, it should be remembered that the reader or audience experiences a dramatic monologue as a communicative event progressing irreversibly (in temporal terms) from beginning to end. Yet the attentive reader, or the involved spectator, is bound to discern the succession and repetition of related (similar or contrastive) sounds, phrases and themes. These are entrusted to memory, not as an exact replica of the experience, but as an interpreted version which influences his reception of the speech (or the entire play) as it continues. A description of the "structure" of a speech (or play), therefore, is nothing but a documented record of this interpretive process. Whether it is presented in discursive or diagrammatic form, or both, is simply a matter of preference.

The thematic structure of this speech of the θεοτόκος can be represented by the following diagram:



Regarding the mutual relations between the structural units shown in this diagram, the following may be noted:

The passages concerning the foreknowledge of Jesus (2 and 21) are related not only through their common theme, but also by means of the vocatives Παῦ (line 269) and ὦ Παῦ (347). Though the latter passage (lines 347-51) consists almost entirely of lines borrowed from the *Medea* of Euripides, its function in the structure of this speech was deliberately planned by the author, as may reasonably be concluded from the introduction of this theme at lines 269-71 already.

Since the main body of the speech is modelled partly on the speech of Medea (465-519) in the Euripidean play, the first series of accusations (units 3-8) is concluded by a passage motivating the address of the traitor (unit 9). This passage facilitates the transition to a calmer, more reasoned account of the full implications of the crime. But since Judas is not present to answer these charges, the second part of the speech (units 10-19) is terminated by a passage expressing disgust and total rejection of the criminal (unit 20).

Note: When the θεοτόκος addresses Judas again after this, it is only in the strongest terms of absolute rejection:
ἔρρ' ἔρρε, παγκάκιστε καὶ μαιφόνε, ὄλοι(ο) (lines 353-4)

Immediately after the definition of Judas' crime (3), the θεοτόκος expresses a wish for retribution (4). An identical sequence occurs near the end of the speech (18 and 19). The repetition of εὐσεργέτην as the object of a verb denoting the treason, serves to underline the relation between these two passages. Note, however, that the wish for divine retribution is expressed in much stronger terms in the second passage:

αὐτό(ς) σ(ε) ... πρόρριζον ἐκτρίψειεν οὐτάσας πυρί (342-3)

The themes expounded in units 5-8 are interrelated by their parallel arrangement. These may be summarized as follows: One who has shown the audacity and shamelessness of Judas, should rather not live. This theme recurs at lines 330-2 (unit 16). The attentive reader cannot miss the hint that Judas should anticipate the divine retribution which is inevitable. This seems to be an allusion to his suicide, as it is announced in lines 231-5, and reported in 1427-32.

Units 10-15 are also arranged in a parallel pattern. After all the good deeds Jesus has done (10), Judas rewarded him with treason, though he could not even claim ἀναργυρία as an excuse (11-12); everyone knows that Jesus is innocent (13); so Judas betrayed him only because of his own φιλαργυρία and faithlessness (14-15).

* * *

In conclusion, a few words may be said about the dramatic function of this speech. It has been said already that the speech contains the reaction of the θεοτόκος to the news of Judas' treason. This occurs at a point in the play when she has not yet come to grips with the fact that her divine son has to die to fulfil his mission. Thus the news comes as a shock to her, not primarily because Judas' treason will lead to her son's death, but because of the unimaginable ὕβρις involved in betraying the divine εὐεργέτης.

When this is kept in mind, it is possible to appreciate fully the importance of this speech for the dramatic portrayal both of the θεοτόκος and of Jesus. Firstly, the θεοτόκος: she is characterized as simply human, lacking the divine insight which she acknowledges in Jesus, and prone to react in a way which is typical of any human mother whose son is betrayed by a trusted person. Jesus, on the other hand, is seen as the divine Son:

- the one who knew beforehand who the traitor was (269-71);
- the Δεσπότης (284) and Διδάσκαλος (285);
- the Saviour (304) and miracle worker (305);
- the supreme Judge (306-7);
- πανάγαθος (311) and ἐσθλός (325), as all of creation knows.

Consequently, it is understandable that his mother finds it very difficult to accept that he has to die. She has said so before this speech, in 111-9; and she will say so again, in lines 423-7.

In the light of all this, it becomes clear that the author has deliberately framed the entire speech by the two passages concerning the foreknowledge of Jesus. He planned to mirror Judas' treason against the background of the divine nature of Christ, in order to underline in this way too the mystery of salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ.

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