

μηδὲν νέον? The Paradox of Old Religion/New God in Euripides' Bacchae

1. [Eur. *Ba.* 195-203]

Κά: μόνοι δὲ πόλεως Βακχίῳ χορεύσομεν;
Τε: μόνοι γὰρ εὖ φρονοῦμεν, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι κακῶς.
Κά: μακρὸν τὸ μέλλειν: ἀλλ' ἐμῆς ἔχου χερὸς.
Τε: ἰδοῦ, ζύναπτε καὶ ζυνωρίζου χέρα.
Κά: οὐ καταφρονῶ γὰρ τῶν θεῶν θνητὸς γεγώς.
Τε: οὐδὲν σοφίζομεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσιν.
πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ' ὀμήλικας χρόνῳ
κεκτήμεθ', οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος,
οὐδ' εἰ δι' ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν ἠῦρηται φρενῶν.

2. [*Ba.* 266-285]

Τε: ὅταν λάβῃ τις τῶν λόγων ἀνὴρ σοφὸς
καλὰς ἀφορμάς, οὐ μέγ' ἔργον εὖ λέγειν·
σὺ δ' εὐτροχὸν μὲν γλῶσσαν ὡς φρονῶν ἔχεις,
ἐν τοῖς λόγοισι δ' οὐκ ἔνειςί σοι φρένες.
θράσει δὲ δυνατὸς καὶ λέγειν οἷός τ' ἀνὴρ
κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται **νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων.**
οὗτος δ' ὁ δαίμων ὁ νέος, ὃν σὺ διαγελαῖς,
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μέγεθος ἐξειπεῖν **ὅσος**
καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ἔσται. δύο γάρ, ὧν νεανία,
τὰ πρῶτ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισι· Δημήτηρ θεὰ –
Γῆ δ' ἔστιν, ὄνομα δ' ὀπότερον βούληι κάλει·
αὕτη μὲν ἐν **ξηροῖσιν** ἐκτρέφει βροτούς·
ὃς δ' ἦλθ' ἔπειτ', **ἀντίπαλον** ὁ Σεμέλης γόνος
βότρυος **ὕγρον πῶμ' ἠῦρε** κάσηνέγκατο
θητηοῖς, ὃ παύει τοὺς ταλαιπώρους βροτούς
λύπης, ὅταν πλησθῶσιν ἀμπέλου ροῆς,
ὑπνον τε λήθην τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν κακῶν
δίδωσιν, οὐδ' ἔστ' ἄλλο φάρμακον πόνων.
οὗτος θεοῖσι σπένδεται θεὸς γεγώς,
ὥστε διὰ τοῦτον τάγάθ' ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν.

3. [*Ba.* 326-7]

Τε: **μαίνῃ γὰρ ὡς ἀλγίστα,** κοῦτε φαρμάκοις
ἄκη λάβοις ἂν οὔτ' ἄνευ τούτων νοσεῖς.

4. [Prodicus quoted in Sext. *Emp. adv. math.*

9.18 = D-K B5]

πάντα τὰ ὠφελοῦντα τὸν βίον ἡμῶν οἱ παλαιοὶ
θεοὺς ἐνόμισαν διὰ τὴν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὠφέλειαν...
καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸν μὲν ἄρτον Δημήτηρα νομισθῆναι,
τὸν δὲ οἶνον Διόνυσον... .

Cadmus: Are we alone dancing for Bacchus?

Teiresias: Yes, for we alone **think rightly**, the others **badly**.

Ca: Long is the delay; take my hand.

Te: See, join hands with me and make a pair.

Ca: I, myself, do not **disdain** the gods, since I am mortal.

Te: Nor do we **use cleverness on the gods** [Dodds]. Hereditary customs, and those which we procure as old as time, no argument will refute them, not even if cleverness is found through the highest thought.

Te: When some intelligent man chooses a good basis for his speech, it is no matter to speak well. And you have a fluent tongue as if you have understanding, while **in your words there is no sense**. A man powerful in his boldness and capable of speaking is a bad citizen because he is **without sense**. This new god, that you ridicule, I cannot explain **how great he will be throughout Greece**. For there are, young man, **two first things** among humans: the goddess Demeter—she is Earth, call her by whatever name you want; she nourishes mortals with **dry food**; and he who came next, the son of Semele, who **discovered as an equal match the liquid drink** of the grape cluster, and introduced it to mortals, that which stops wretched humans from suffering when they are filled with the flow of the grape, and gives sleep as forgetfulness of the ills of the day, nor is there any other remedy for sufferings. **He, being a god, is poured out for the gods, so that because of him humans have good things.**

For, **you are mad as painfully as possible**, and you will neither have a cure by drugs, nor are you sick without these things.

“the ancients held all things aiding our life to be gods because of their help...on account of this bread was held to be Demeter and wine was held to be Dionysus... .”

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