

In the prologue of Euripides' *Heraclidae*, Iolaus explains why he has brought the eponymous suppliants to Marathon: they are related to the sons of Theseus, Demophon and Acamas, who rule that land. Interrupting the flow of this speech, however, is a curious explanation of how they came to power: κλήρω λαχόντας ἐκ γένους Πανδίωνος (36). On the most natural reading, this appears to be a reference to the Athenian practice of sortition by which magistrates were selected; tragedy was hardly a stranger to such democratic anachronism. But this case is egregious, and moreover borders on nonsensical: the heirs apparent ascended to the throne by virtue not of heredity but happenstance, their father both vital and somehow irrelevant. Indeed, the verse has long troubled commentators; the specific meaning is less than clear, and interpretations are far from unanimous (Paley 1857, Wilkins 1993, Allan 2001). Wilamowitz (1882) came closest to the point in transposing it, but the logic of both the passage and the play is best maintained by simple deletion of the verse. I argue this not only from internal evidence, but also within the context of fourth-century political interpolations identified by David Kovacs (1982) in the plays of Euripides.

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