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GREEK VERSE

1914

BY

FRANK NEWTON TRIBE

SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE



TRAGIC IAMBICS

TRANSLATION FROM

BROWNING'S STRAFFORD

13

ACT V, SCENE II, LINES 268 TO END

BY

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SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE



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Recited in the Sheldonian Theatre

June 24, 1914

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BROWNING: STRAFFORD

ACT V, SCENE 2, LINES 268 TO END

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BROWNING: STRAFFORD

ACT V, SCENE 2, LINES 268 TO END

Pym. Have I done well? Speak, England! Whose
sole sake

I still have laboured for, with disregard
To my own heart,—for whom my youth was made
Barren, my manhood waste, to offer up
Her sacrifice—this friend, this Wentworth here— 5
Who walked in youth with me, loved me, it may be,
And whom, for his forsaking England's cause,
I hunted by all means (trusting that she
Would sanctify all means) even to the block
Which waits for him. And, saying this, I feel 10
No bitterer pang than first I felt, the hour
I swore that Wentworth might leave us, but I
Would never leave him: I do leave him now.
I render up my charge (be witness, God!)
To England who imposed it. I have done 15
Her bidding—poorly, wrongly,—it may be,
With ill effects—for I am weak, a man:

Π. Ἄρ' εὖ τάδ' ἐξέπραξα; φράζε μοι, πόλι'
 πάλαι γὰρ ἤδη σὴν χάριν μόνης πόνους
 ἤθλησα πάντας, τοῦμὸν ὦν ἦρα κέαρ
 πάντ' ἐν παρέργῳ θέμενος. οὐ τὴν σὴν χάριν
 ἤβην τε γυμνὴν χαρμονῶν κάκμην βίου 5
 ἤγαγον ἔρημον, θυμ' ὅπως πόλεως ὑπερ
 τοῦτον προθύσαιμ'; ὄνπερ ὄντα μὲν νέον
 ξύνηβον εἶχον (κάφίλησ' ἴσως ἐμέ),
 ἀλλ'—ὔστερον γὰρ τὴν πόλιν προδοὺς ἔχει—
 ἅπαντα κινῶ πέτρον εἰς τὸν νῦν καλῶς 10
 ὑπερκρεμασθέντ' ἐκκυνηγετῶν μόρον·
 δίκαια γὰρ πάνθ' ἂν πόλις τάξῃ ποεῖν.
 κού μείζον ἄλλος τάδε λέγοντα νῦν μ' ἔχει
 ἢ μ' εἶχ' ἐπεὶ τὰ πρῶτα θεοὺς ἐπάμοσα,
 κὰν οὗτος ἡμᾶς ἀπολίπη ποτ', ἀλλ' ὅμως 15
 οὐ μὴ αὐτὸς οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀπολείψειν ποτέ·
 νῦν δ' ἀπέλιπόν νιν, χῶδε παραδίδωμί σοι
 ὡς, Ζεὺς ξυνίστω, μοὶ πέταξας, ὦ πόλι.
 πῶς οὐ τὰ σὰ ἔεπραξά γ' ἐντεταλμένα,
 φλαύρως μὲν ἐκδίκως τε δυσπότμως δ' ἐμοί 20
 (μόνον γὰρ ἀνθρώπειόν ἐστί μοι σθένος);

Still, I have done my best, my human best,
 Not faltering for a moment. It is done.
 And this said, if I say . . . yes, I will say 20
 I never loved but one man—David not
 More Jonathan! Even thus I love him now :
 And look for my chief portion in that world
 Where great hearts led astray are turned again,—
 (Soon it may be, and, certes, will be soon : 25
 My mission over, I shall not live long,)—
 Ay, here I know I talk—I dare and must,
 Of England, and her great reward, as all
 I look for there : but in my inmost heart,
 Believe, I think of stealing quite away 30
 To walk once more with Wentworth—my youth's
 friend

Purged from all error, gloriously renewed,
 And Eliot shall not blame us. Then indeed . . .
 This is no meeting, Wentworth! Tears increase
 Too hot. A thin mist—is it blood?—enwraps 35
 The face I loved once. Then, the meeting be!

Straf. I have loved England too ; we'll meet then,
 Pym.

As well die now. Youth is the only time
 To think and to decide on a great course :

ὅσον δ' οἷός τ' ἦν πάντ' ἄριστ', ἄνθρωπος ὦν,
ἔπραξ' ἀόκνως ἐντρεπόμενος οὐποτε.

καὶ νῦν πέπρακται τοιγαροῦν ἃ δεῖ λέγειν
λέγοιμ' ἄν· οὐ γὰρ πώποτ' ἠράσθην τινὸς 25

ἄλλου, μένω δὲ τοῦδ' ἐρῶν ἔτ' ἐμπέδως,
ὡς οὐδ' Ἀχιλλεὺς τοῦ Πατροκλέους πλέον.

ζῆλον δ' ἐκείθην προσδοκῶ προφέρετατον,
οὐ πρὸς τὸ σῶφρον, εἴ τις εὐγενῆς γεγῶς
ἤμαρτεν, αὐθις σὺν θεοῖς ὑποστρέφει· 30

ἃ δὴ τάχ' ἔσται γ'· οὐδὲ νῦν ἄπεσθ' ἐκάς,
τοῦργον γὰρ ἀνύσας οὐ μακρὰν βιώσομαι.

καὶ νῦν μέν, οἶδα, τήνδ' ἐμὴν δοκῶ πόλιν
ἀνδρῶν τ' ἔπαινον ἀξιῶν—καὶ γάρ με δεῖ—
ὡς ὄντα πάνθ' ὦν βούλομαι κάκει τυχεῖν· 35

εὐ δ' ἴσθ' ἀληθῶς ἐλπίς ἐστὶ μοι λάθρα
στείχειν ἀφέρποντ' αὐθις αὐ τοῦτου μέτα
τοῦ πρόσθ' ἑταίρου, τότε καθαρθέντος καλῶς

κακῶν ἀπάντων χῶσπερ εὐρόντος φύσιν
κλεινὴν νεώρη τ'· οὐδὲ νῶ ψέξει Μένων. 40

κάκει μέν, ὦ φίλ', ὄλβος ἂν γένοιτο νῶν,
ὀμιλία δ' οὐχ ἦδε, δακρύων ἐπεὶ

θερμαὶ ῥοαὶ στάζουσι· καὶ λεπτὸν νέφος
—ἄρ' αἵματηρόν;—τὴν ἐμοὶ φίλην ποτὲ
ὄψιν στεγάζει. τότε δ' ὀμιλήσαιμί σοι. 45

Σ. κάγῳ 'φίλησα τὴν πόλιν' κάσται τότε,

τότ', ὦ φίλ', ἡμῖν εὐμενῆς ὀμιλία.

νῦν δ' οὐκ ἄριστον θάνατος; ὡς νέος μὲν ὦν
μόνον τις οἷός τ' ἐστὶ φροντίζων μέγα

Manhood with action follows ; but 't is dreary, 40
 To have to alter our whole life in age—
 The time past, the strength gone! As well die now.
 When we meet, Pym, I'd be set right—not now!
 Best die. Then if there's any fault, fault too
 Dies, smothered up. Poor grey old little Laud 45
 May dream his dream out, of a perfect Church,
 In some blind corner. And there's no one left.
 I trust the King now wholly to you, Pym!
 And yet, I know not: I shall not be there:
 Friends fail—if he have any. And he's weak, 50
 And loves the Queen, and . . . Oh, my fate is nothing—
 Nothing! But not that awful head—not that!

Pym. If England shall declare such will to me . . .

Straf. Pym, you help England! I, that am to die,
 What I must see! 't is here—all here! My God, 55
 Let me but gasp out, in one word of fire,
 How thou wilt plague him, satiating hell!
 What? England that you help, become through you
 A green and putrefying charnel, left
 Our children . . . some of us have children, Pym— 60

- πλέκειν τι βούλευμ'· εἶτα δ' ὦν ἀνὴρ τελεῖ. 50
 ἀλλ' ἔστι λυγρὸν ὄντι γηραιῶ ζῶην
 μεταστραφῆναι πᾶσαν, ἢ τ' ἰσχυρὸς ὅτε
 χῶ καιρὸς ἀνδρὶ φρουῶδος· ὥστε νῦν δοκεῖ
 τὸ θανεῖν ἄριστον· ἐμὲ δὲ παιδεύοις τότ' ἄν,
 ὅταν ξυναντησώμεθ', ἀλλ' οὔπω, φίλε. 55
 ἀποφθίνειν δ' ἄριστον· εἰ γὰρ ἔστι τι
 ἀμάρτιον, καὶ τοῦτ' ἀποφθίνει πνιγέν.
 νῦν οὖν Σοφιστὴν πολλὸν ὄντ' ἑάσομεν
 πόλεως ὀνείροις, εἰ γένοιτό τις ποτε
 πασῶν ἀρίστη, μόνον ἐν μυχῶ τινι 60
 τυφλῶ ξυνεῖναι. λείπεται δ' οὐδ' εἰς φύλαξ.
 σοὶ δ' οὖν πέποιθα τόν γε βασιλέα, φίλε,
 παντῇ φυλάσσειν· ἀλλ' ὅμως οὐκ οἶδ' ἐγώ,
 οὐ γὰρ παρέσομαι· καὶ φίλοι λείπουσί νιν,
 εἰ δὴ φίλους ἄρ' εἶχε· κάστι θηλύνους, 65
 ἐρᾶ τε τῆς γυναικός, ἀλλὰ τ' ἀσθενεῖ.
 ἀλλ' οὐδέν ἐστιν ἢδ' ἐμῆ δυσπραξία·
 κείνου δὲ σεμνὸν μὴ τί μοι πάσχη κάρα.
- Π. ἦν μοι πόλις καὶ τοῦτο προστάξῃ ποεῖν—
 Σ. πόλιν μὲν οὖν σύ· τὸν θανούμενον δ' ἐμὲ 70
 χρῆ δυσθέατα προσβλέπειν· ὡς ἐνθάδε
 τὰ πάντα δείματ'. εἴθε γὰρ ρίπτοιμ' ἔπος
 ἐν ἄγριόν τι—τόνδ' ὅπως λωβώμενοι
 σκλήρ' ὄμματ' ἐκπλήσουσι Πλούτωνος θεοί.
 ἀλλ' εἰ γὰρ ἀυανθεῖσα πρόρριζος πόλις, 75
 ἦπερ προσαρκεῖς δῆθεν, ἀρκέσεως χάριν
 τῆς σῆς σαπέιη—πάτριον δῶρον τέκνοισ'.

Some who, without that, still must ever wear
 A darkened brow, an over-serious look,
 And never properly be young! No word?
 What if I curse you? Send a strong curse forth
 Clothed from my heart, lapped round with horror
 till 65

She's fit with her white face to walk the world
 Scaring kind natures from your cause and you—
 Then to sit down with you at the board-head,
 The gathering for prayer . . . O speak, but speak!
 . . . Creep up, and quietly follow each one home, 70
 You, you, you, be a nestling care for each
 To sleep with,—hardly moaning in his dreams,
 She gnaws so quietly,—till, lo he starts,
 Gets off with half a heart eaten away!
 Oh, shall you 'scape with less if she's my child? 75
 You will not say a word—to me—to Him?

Pym. If England shall declare such will to me . . .

Straf. No, not for England now, not for Heaven
 now,—

See, Pym, for my sake, mine who kneel to you!
 There, I will thank you for the death, my friend! 80
 This is the meeting: let me love you well!

Pym. England,—I am thine own! Dost thou exact
 That service? I obey thee to the end.

Straf. O God, I shall die first! I shall die first!

- τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν ἔστι τέκνα, καὶ τινὰς
 τέκνων γ' ἀμοίρους δεῖ ξυνοφρυωμένους
 οὕτως αἰεὶ πρόσωπον ἀγέλαστον φορεῖν, 80
 καὶ μήποθ' ἠβᾶν.—οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ' ἔτι;—
 πῶς ἦν ἀράς σοι δείμασιν τ' ἠσθημένας
 ἀφείδ' ἀρῶμαι καρτεράς τ' ἐξ ἥπατος,
 ὥστ' ὄμμασιν λευκοῖσι περιπλανωμένας
 φοβεῖν δύνασθαι, σοῦ τε καὶ τῶν σῶν φίλους 85
 ἀποτρέπειν; κἀνταῦθ' ὀμιλήσουσί σοι
 ξυνδαίτορές τε κἀπὶ ταῖς εὐχαῖς ὁμοῦ—
 φθέγξαι τι δεῦρ' ἄθρησον.—ἔρπουσαί θ' ἅμα
 ξένοισι πᾶσιν οἴκαδ' ἔψονται λάθρα
 καὶ ξυγκαθευδήσουσιν—εὐνήται πικροί. 90
 κἀν φάσμασιν μὲν (ᾧδε μαλθακῶς ἀραὶ
 δάψουσιν) οὐδ' ἂν ἠσύχως μύξειέ τις,
 ἀλλ' ἐξαναστάς, εἴτ' ἐρινύσιν λάθρα
 τὰ σπλάγχχν' ἐφευρῶν ἡμίβρωτ' οἰχήσεται.
 ἦ τῶνδ' ἐρινὺς ἡ' ἔξ ἐμοῦ γεννωμένη 95
 δράσει σ' ἐλάσσω; πῶς γάρ;—ἀλλὰ μήτ' ἐμὲ
 λόγον προσειπεῖν μήτε τοὺς θεοὺς θέλεις;
 Π. ἀλλ' ἦν περαίνειν ταῦτ' ἐπισκῆψῃ πόλις—
 Σ. μὴ νῦν σὺ πόλεως μηδὲ τῶν θεῶν χάριν,
 ἐμὴν δὲ μᾶλλον, ὅς σε γόνασι προσπίτνω. 100
 ἀλλ' εἴσομαί σοι τοῦδε τοῦ θανεῖν χάριν.
 νῦν μὴν ὀμιλεῖν, νῦν δέ σού μ' ἐρᾶν ἔα.
 Π. πόλις, σός εἰμι· κἀν ἀπαιτήσης σύ γε,
 καὶ τοῦτο δράσω διὰ τέλους ὑπηρετῶν.
 Σ. ᾧ θεοί, θάνοιμι πρὶν τελεσθῆναι τάδε. 105

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