The manuscripts at Hipp. 135–8, where the chorus of Troezenian women are singing of Phaedra’s mysterious sickness, read:

τριτάταν δὲ νιν κλύω τάνδε κατ’ ἀμβροσίου στόματος ἄμεραν Δάματρος ἀκτάς δέμας ἁγνὸν ἴσχειν.

The difficulties inherent in τάνδε κατ’ ἀμβροσίου στόματος (it “gives neither metre nor sense”, wrote Barrett1) have long been recognized. A century and a half ago Hartung conjectured τάνδ’ ἀβρωσίαι, and he has been followed, among recent editors, by Barrett, Diggle, and Stockert.2 The text then reads (with Diggle’s colometry):

τριτάταν δὲ νιν κλύω
τάνδ’ ἀβρωσίαι
στόματος ἄμεραν
Δάματρος ἀκτάς δέμας ἁγνὸν ἴσχειν.

A literal translation might render this as:

For three days now I hear that, in the non-eating of her mouth, she has kept her body pure from Demeter’s grain.3

1) W. S. Barrett, Euripides: Hippolytos (Oxford 1964) 187, with explanatory comment. Of the standard editions now available, only the Budé of L. Méridier (Euripide II [Paris 1927]) prints this phrase.

2) J. A. Hartung, Euripides’ Werke III (Leipzig 1848) 14, with explanatory note at 137–8; Barrett (n. 1); J. Diggle, Euripidis Fabulae I (Oxford 1984 [OCT]); W. Stockert, Euripides: Hippolytus (Stuttgart 1994 [Teubner]).

3) All translations from Greek texts are my own. According to Barrett (n. 1) 187, in this passage “the construction seems to be rather ‘she keeps (withholds) her pure body from D.’s grain’ than ‘she keeps (maintains) her body pure from D.’s grain’”. But it should be noted that when the phrase δέμας ἁγνὸν recurs (with the order reversed) at 1003, the accompanying genitive of separation is certainly dependent on the adjective; on this line, and on the question of Phaedra’s ‘purity’, see below, 230–231.
In support of this emendation Hartung drew attention to a scholi-on on 135, to which Stockert also refers:

οίον· λοιπὸν τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἔχω ἀκούωναν περὶ αὐτῆς ὑπὶ ἀσθενεὶ καὶ οὐ μεταλμαβάνει βρώσεως εν τῷ στόματι αὐτῆς.⁴

In 1968 Willink⁵ argued instead for τάνδ’ ἑκὰς ἀβρώτου, combining conjectures by Reiske (τάνδ’ ἑκὰς ἀμβροσίου) and Verrall (τάνδε κατ’ ἀβρώτου);⁶ he is followed by Kovacs in the recent Loeb edition,⁷ thus:

τριτάταν δὲ νιν κλώω
τάνδ’ ἑκὰς ἀβρώτου στόματος ἁμέραν
Δάματος ἀκτὰς δέμας ἁγνὸν ἴσχειν.

The passage might then be rendered literally in this way:

For three days now I hear that she has kept the holy⁸ substance of Demeter’s grain far from her non-eating mouth.

My main purpose in this note is to adduce independent evidence which offers strong support for Willink’s reading while at the same time making clear that Hartung’s conjecture was already along the right lines;⁹ but it will be useful first to evaluate summarily the merits of the two readings in their own terms. It should be noted

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⁶) J. J. Reiske, Ad Euripidem et Aristophanem animadversiones (Leipzig 1754) 22; A. W. Verrall, The ‘Medea’ of Euripides (London 1881) 86 (in note on Eur. Med. 982). Both the Reiske and the Verrall conjecture face in part the same objections as the manuscript reading; I consider Verrall’s further below, n. 37. For other conjectures see the appendix to the edition of N. Wecklein (Euripidis Hippolytus; Leipzig 1900) 70 and n. 9 below.
⁸) For ἁγνὸς here see further below, 229f.
⁹) Both are rejected by M. Giusta, Il testo dell’Ippolito di Euripide: congettura e croci (Florence 1998) 45–7, who points to some of the difficulties which I consider below; but his own proposal, τάνδε κατ’ ἀκρασίαν στόματος, which gives (at best) poor sense and entails a further emendation in the matching strophe to achieve responsion, is patently inferior to either even without my supporting evidence.
at the outset that although Hartung’s proposal has won considerable editorial favour, editors have not always seemed confident in accepting it. “Hartung is probably right with τάνδ’ ἀβρωσίαι” is the observation of Barrett,10 drawing attention to the fact that ἀβρωσία is otherwise attested only in the Onomasticon of Pollux (6.39);11 he nowhere mentions Verrall’s ἀβρώτος. More recently, Halleran (who prints Diggle’s text) has expressed the same uncertainty.12 Willink’s suggestion has attracted little comment.

1. In favour of τάνδ’ ἑκὰς ἀβρώτου is, first and foremost – Willink’s chief argument – the fact that the run of the letters offers an evidently superior explanation for the corruption to τάνδε κατ’ ἀμβροσίου.

2. A weakness in the case for τάνδ’ ἀβρωσίαι is that the genitive στόματος which follows is unnecessary to the sense, whereas it forms an integral part of the phrase with ἑκὰς ἀβρώτου.

3. As regards metre, the verse scans differently in each case, but in both cases scansion and strophic response are unproblematic. Thus

(a) τάνδ’ ἀβρωσίαι στόματος ἁμέραν

 corresponds to (126–7)

 πορφύρεα φάρεα ποταμίαι δρόσωι,

the -εα in both πορφύρεα and φάρεα being scanned long by synizesis13 to give a hypodochmius, followed by a dochmius with the common resolution in the second position.14 By contrast,

(b) τάνδ’ ἑκὰς ἀβρώτου στόματος ἁμέραν

 corresponds to

 πορφύρεα φάρεα ποταμίαι δρόσωι

10) Barrett (n. 1) 188.
11) And in a single manuscript, according to Giusta (n. 9) 46.
12) M. R. Halleran, Euripides: Hippolytus (Warminster 1995) 162; Verrall’s conjecture is again unmentioned.
14) Cf. Willink, CP (n. 5) 802.
as a syncopated iambic trimeter (iambic metron followed by two crotics), with two resolved longs; in this instance the -εα in πορφύ-
ρεα has its natural disyllabic value. In short, while further argu-
ments could be adduced on both sides, there is little to choose
between the options on metrical grounds.

4. Among the objections which Barrett brings against
Reiske’s τάνδ’ ἐκάς ἀβρόσιτο στόματος from Δάματρος ἀκτας δέμας ἁγνόν
when the two phrases are syntactically linked as ἀβρωσίαι στό-
ματος and Δάματρος ἀκτας δέμας ἁγνόν are not (‘has kept the holy
substance of Demeter’s grain far from her non-eating mouth’,
against ‘in the non-eating of her mouth, has kept her body pure
from Demeter’s grain’). But the words split by ἀμέροι can hardly
be deemed unsplittable, and in my judgement the most that can be
said is that the hyperbaton (in itself extremely common in Euripi-
dean lyric, and present in an intricate form here whichever reading
is followed) is somewhat more marked with ἐκάς ἀβρότου στό-
ματος than with ἀβρωσίαι στόματος.

5. Barrett’s second objection is also lacking in force. His as-
sertion that Δάματρος ἀκτας δέμας is an “unlikely periphrasis” here
is unsupported except for the (defensive) citation of two passages
where, he maintains, “δέμας dwells on the physical as p e c t [my

15) It will also be noted that in this case the first syllable of φάρεα scans long,
while for the line to correspond with (a) it must be scanned short. Euripides admits
both possibilities elsewhere; see e.g. (long) El. 191, IT 1150; (short) Andr. 831, Or. 840.
16) Barrett (n. 1) 187–8.
17) For separations of noun and attributive adjective in Euripidean lyric see
W. Breitenbach, Untersuchungen zur Sprache der euripideischen Lyrik (Stuttgart
1934) (Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 20), who (242–9) cites more
than 200 instances where the relevant words are separated, as here, by more than
one word, and (261) 11 further instances, including the present, where three agree-
ing words (noun and two adjectives) are all separated from each other, often with
more than one intervening word.
18) Soph. fr. 255.4 Radt (TrGF 4.242); Critias (?), fr. 19.33 Snell (TrGF 1.181)
(where the reading δέμας is uncertain anyway).
emphasis] of the thing described” rather than its physicality as such. Certainly both of these passages possess a strong visual quality, but that does not derive from the word δέμας; and in the present context, where Phaedra is refusing to eat, the intrinsic physicality of the word seems entirely appropriate. On the other hand, δέμας in itself might well refer to Phaedra’s body, and indeed it is so used just a few lines previously (132) and on several occasions later in the play.19

6. Evaluation of these two possible interpretations of δέμας requires that we consider too its attributive adjective ἁγνόν.20 Parker argues that, when applied to deities, the term ἁγνός (which I have above translated ‘holy’) means, quite specifically, ‘demanding respect’, ‘reverend’, like σεμνός, and that a particular appropriateness to context is regularly apparent;21 this might be held to pose a difficulty for the understanding of δέμας ἁγνόν as the bread of Deme-
ter, in that no special reason is evident here for the bread to be so described.22 At the same time, it would appear quite straightforward to take (Δάματρος ἁκτ/αλφαγραμματις) ἁγνόν as a genitive of separation after ἁγνόν, especially in view of the analogous construction at 1003, where Hippolytus says to Theseus, λέχους γὰρ ἐς τόδ’ ἡμέρας ἁγνὸν δέμας (‘To this very moment my body is pure from sex’). These points favour Hartung. Yet Euripides’ description of Phaedra’s body as ἁγνόν also possesses implications which may not be thought entirely satisfactory. Barrett explains the use of the term by reference to the religious practice of ritual fasting;23 this is fully in accord with

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19) Vv. 175, 198, 204, 274.
20) It is an indication of the difficulty of interpretation that when v. 138 is cited by LSJ s.v. ἁγνός, δέμας is understood to refer to Phaedra’s body, and when it is cited s.v. δέμας, it is understood to refer to bread.
22) On this interpretation, the adjective could not adequately be explained as (an otherwise attractive view) emphasizing the extreme nature of Phaedra’s refusal to take food (cf. Willink [n. 5] 37 [= CP 40–1]: “the point is that Phaedra must be gravely stricken if she is rejecting something god-given”).
23) Barrett (n. 1) 187; cf. Č. Segal, Shame and Purity in Euripides’ Hippolytus, Hermes 98 (1970) 278–99, at 279–80; Halleran (n. 12) 162. Segal additionally identifies in ἁγνόν a second level of meaning, in which the term refers also to the moral and sexual ‘purity’ which Phaedra is trying to preserve, citing in support of this view the apparent echo of the phrase δέμας ἁγνόν at 1003. Given the importance of this theme in the play, such an overtone may certainly be heard; but it cannot be considered to bear significantly on the present discussion, where the primary meaning is critical.
Parker's understanding of the meaning of ἁγνός as applied to humans, and in itself unproblematic. Willink, however, objected that the chorus cannot be supposed to believe that Phaedra is engaged in a ritual fast when they have been informed that she wishes to die (139–40); and though Willink apparently failed to see that Barrett was not in fact suggesting that, in the chorus’s understanding, Phaedra was actually undertaking a ritual fast, even a metaphorical allusion to the ritual practice (itself rare in Greek religion, as Barrett, followed by Halleran, explicitly acknowledges) might be considered curiously out of place where the aim is suicide by starvation (it can hardly be claimed that the chorus is speaking ironically).

It will be evident that the arguments presented above do not point unambiguously in one direction. Further support in favour of Willink’s τάνδ’ ἑκὰς ἀβρώτου, however, emerges from another quarter; and this may be thought decisive. In a recent article I argue that the Hippolytus represents a significant intertext for the novelist Chariton in his Chaereas and Callirhoe. In particular, two scenes in the novel can claim to be modelled on scenes in Euripides’ play. In the second of these, the king of Persia, who has fallen in love with the beautiful Callirhoe, asks the eunuch Artaxates to find a remedy (φάρμακον) for his love (C&C 6.3.7). What follows can be seen to rework the scene in the Hippolytus (433–524) where Phaedra’s nurse, to save the queen from death, urges her to surrender to her passion for her stepson. The eunuch, who takes the role of the nurse, first encourages the king (= Phaedra) in the same direction, and then, when the king rejects absolutely the idea of seducing another man’s wife, reverses his position, pressing his master to fight against himself, distracting his mind with pleasure. Situational parallels, the relationship between the characters, and linguistic and conceptual echoes work together in the novel to sur-

24) See Parker (n. 21) 148–9: ἁγνός = essentially ‘uncontaminated’, free from (a) pollution, i.e. fit to worship.
25) Willink (n. 5) 37 (= CP 41),
26) Segal (n. 23) 280 refers to “the metaphorical, quasi-ritual ’purity’ of the fast”.
28) The first is the scene of Chaereas’ assault on Callirhoe at C&C 1.4.10–12, which recalls the scene in the Hippolytus where Theseus curses his son (882–90).
face the Euripidean intertext. At the end of the scene, the eunuch makes the specific suggestion that the king go hunting (a detail which itself evokes the Hippolytus, and particularly, given the context, Phaedra’s wild fantasy at 215–22):

μάλιστα δὲ κυνηγεσίοις ἐξαιρέτως χαίρεις· ὅτι γὰρ σε ὑπὲρ ἡδονῆς διημερεύοντα ἀβρωτον, ἀποτον ἐν ἡθαιρ. ὁ ἡθαιρ. δὲ ενδιατρίβειν (βέλτιον) ἦ τοῖς βασιλείοις καὶ ἕγγυς εἶναι τοῦ πυρός.

You take very great pleasure in hunting in particular; indeed, I know that you spend the entire day without food or drink when you go hunting, you enjoy it so much. It is better to spend your time hunting than in the palace and close to the fire. (Chariton, C&C 6.3.9)

The phrase διημερεύοντα ἀβρωτον, ἀποτον echoes in the first instance Xenophon, Cyr. 7.5.53:

ἔπει γε μέντοι ἐδεξιώσω με καὶ παρὰ σοι ἐκέλευσας μένειν, ἢ ὅτι περίβλεπτος ἦν, ὅτι μετά σοὐ ἀσίτος καὶ ἀποτος διημέρευον.

However, when you took me by the hand and bade me stay at your side, I was envied all around because I was spending a whole day with you – without anything to eat or drink.

We should note, however, that Chariton writes not ἀσίτον, following Xenophon, but ἀβρωτον, which in fact does not occur in Xenophon at all; nor does it occur anywhere else in Chariton. But what is especially significant is the appearance of ἀβρωτος in an active sense. A search of the Thesaurus linguae Graecae online generated (as raw data) 113 instances of ἀβρωτος in Greek up to and including the second century A.D., of which only two evidently bear an active sense (‘not eating’, rather than ‘inedible’ or ‘not eaten’): Sophocles, fr. 967 Radt (TrGF 4.599), which depends on very sketchy evidence in the same passage of Pollux as affords the only attestation of the word ἀβρωσία, and the present Chariton

29) For full details, see Scourfield (n. 27) 302–4.
30) Text: B.P. Reardon, Chariton Aphrodisiensis: De Callirhoe narrationes amatoriae (Munich / Leipzig 2004).
31) Echoes of the Cyropaedia in Chaereas and Callirhoe are frequent; see A.D. Papanikolaou, Chariton-Studien: Untersuchungen zur Sprache und Chronologie der griechischen Romane (Göttingen 1973) (Hypomnemata 57) 19–20, who observes the present borrowing. The context in Cyr. 7.5.53 is not significant, but cf. also 4.2.46, 8.1.43, where the context is hunting.
33) See above, 227. The passage in Pollux reads in full: ἀβρωτος δ’ ὁ νήστης παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ, καὶ ἀβρωσία ἢ ἀσίτια (but see also n. 34 below).
It is natural to conclude that Chariton’s switch from Xenophon’s ἄσιτος (a more common word in any case) to ἄβρωτος was prompted by the presence of ἄβρωτος, also with an active sense, in his text of Hipp. 136. Hartung’s ἄβρωσία, inspired by...
the βρώσεως of the scholion on 135, was a brilliant conjecture; but the scholion’s paraphrase might equally have been generated by ἅβρωτου, and the evidence of Chariton, added to the argument concerning the textual corruption (and the sheer rarity of the word ἅβρωσία), vindicates Willink. The only substantive counter-argument lies in the propriety of the term ἁγνόν to describe the bread of Demeter at 138, and it seems to me much easier to suppose that Euripides here used the word in a somewhat weakened sense than that Chariton, echoing a phrase familiar to him from the Cyropædia and in a context bearing clear traces of the Hippolytus, substituted for a straightforward adjective an alternative almost untested in the required sense elsewhere, without the stimulus of its presence in that play.37

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