

ὄρα δὲ γ' εἴσω τριγλύφων ὅποι κενὸν
δέμας καθεῖναι.

“As the text stands it is almost untranslatable.” – M. Platnauer, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, repr. Oxford 1967, p. 70,

And yet the individual words seem secure enough! *ὄρα* is an echo of *ὄρα* / *ὄρω* in vv. 67-68; *δέ γ'* is a rejoinder to Orestes' questions and suggestions about getting into the temple at 94 ff. (Denniston, *Greek Particles*, Oxford 1970² p. 155 (i) rather than (ii)). *εἴσω* . . . *ὅποι* both reveal the speaker's eagerness to climb *inside* the temple, rather than “between” (Platnauer), and so are psychologically exact. *κενὸν* is convincing as the means by which such penetration is to be effected.

Suppose we introduce light punctuation after *τριγλύφων*:

ὄρα δὲ γ' εἴσω τριγλύφων, ὅποι κενὸν
δέμας καθεῖναι

“Look within the triglyphs, to where there is a gap for us to let ourselves down.”

For the loosely added infinitive of consequence *καθεῖναι* see, for example, A. C. Pearson's note on Eur. *Phoenissae* 380 (Cambridge 1909, p. 105). If the poet had written *πάρα* (= *δυνατόν ἐστιν*) the sentence would have caused no difficulty.

D. Sansone's two attractive conjectures (*Mnemosyne*. vol. XXIX, p. 79) raise nevertheless the problem of the syntax of his proposed *καθεῖμεν* following the present imperative *ὄρα*. Eur. *Heracles* 302 introduces its optative by the aorist *εἰσῆλθε*, and Thuc. I. 58. 1 *πείσειαν* is also governed by an aorist. For further examples see W. W. Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (repr. London 1929), para. 489. It seems impossible to take the optative as potential with omitted *ἄν*: see W. S. Barrett on *Hippolytus* 1186 (Oxford, repr. 1969, pp. 379-80).

It is just possible that Platnauer is right in suggesting that a line may have fallen out (and certainly this is a phenomenon in the transmission of Greek tragic texts which deserves a separate study). If we were to read, *exempli gratia*

ὄρα δὲ γ' εἴσω τριγλύφων, ὅποι κενὸν
<εὐρόντε χάσμα σὺν θεῶν δυναίμεθ' ἄν>
δέμας καθεῖναι

all would flow very easily. *δυναίμεθ' ἄν* would pick up v. 62, and *χάσμα* look ironically ahead to v. 626.