

TEXTUAL NOTES ON AESCHYLUS,  
*CHOEPHORI*

165, 124-6 κῆρουξ μέγιστε τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω,  
Ἐρωῆ χθόνιε κηρύξας ἐμοὶ  
τοὺς γῆς ἔνεοθε δαίμονας κλύειν ἐμὰς  
εὐχάς, πατρῶων δωμάτων ἐπισκόπους.

126 δωμάτων Pearson: δ' ὀμμάτων M

The commencement of Electra's prayer at the tomb of Agamemnon.

The first of these lines stands in the manuscript between 164 and 166. Since it is evidently out of place there and would make a suitable beginning to Electra's prayer, Hermann's proposal to insert it between 123 and 124 has been accepted by modern editors. At some stage in the tradition it appears to have been written in the right-hand margin and subsequently incorporated into the next column (Tucker). This theory would postulate a column length on a papyrus roll of about 42 lines, which is plausible.

When this adjustment is made, we are left with a textual problem to solve in 124. This line is deficient both in metre and in sense; we need an iambus and a half, and also a main verb, either imperative or optative, upon which κηρύξας can depend. The deficiencies may be easily supplied: before Ἐρωῆ we may insert ἄρηξον (Klausen), κλύοις ἄν (Thomson) or ἄκουσον (Hermann), or after χθόνιε we may insert γένοιο (Housman). These remedies are obviously not of equal value; Housman's γένοιο, for instance, does not derive much support from his parallel passage at *Sept.* 145-6, while Klausen's ἄρηξον seems to have a slight edge over the rest on the score of suitability to the context. But whatever supplement we adopt in 124, we leave two or three irritating questions unanswered. There is not simply the question why 165 became misplaced or why a part of 124 was lost in the tradition; there is also the problem of the construction of κηρύξας... εὐχάς. We must construe "having proclaimed for me the gods beneath the earth to hear

my prayers". This use of *κηρύσσειν* with the accusative and infinitive of command seems to be unparalleled in Aeschylus or any other author; although even *λέγειν* can be used in this way<sup>1</sup>), *κηρύσσειν* is not. Amongst the commentators Paley is one of the few to face the issue, and the only parallel passages he adduces are *ἐγὼν δὲ καρνεῶ Δικαιοπόλιν ὄπα*, Ar. *Ach.* 748, and *κηρύσσει θεοὺς τοὺς τ' οὐρανίδας τοὺς θ' ὑπὸ γαῖαν*, Eur. *Hec.* 146–7. These passages, however, merely illustrate the regular use of *κηρύσσειν* with the accusative of the person for broadcasting a message *about* persons whether present or absent (men of distinction, gods, criminals, runaway slaves); they cannot disguise the fact that where the message is *directed to* persons and couched in the infinitive of command, the dative is regular. The relevant parallel is in Orestes' speech at *Cho.* 4–5, *τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθῳ τῶδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ | κλύειν, ἀκοῦσαι*. Moreover, in the present passage the accusative object is particularly awkward alongside the ethic dative. "Having proclaimed to me that the gods beneath the earth are listening to my prayers" is a perfectly possible sense, and even the natural sense. Must we accept this as one more instance of Aeschylean obscurity?

These objections are not by themselves conclusive. The construction after *κηρύξας* may conceivably be defended by appeal to the Homeric authority of *κηρύσσειν ἀγορήνδε Ἄχαιοῦς*, *Il.* 2. 51 and *Od.* 2. 7. But when problems of text coincide with difficulties of syntax, we must be on our guard against interpolation. And if we bracket the defective line as an intruder, we shall solve all the problems with a single stroke. Aeschylus wrote *κῆρυξ μέγιστε τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω, | τοὺς γῆς ἐνερθε δαίμονας κλύειν ἐμὰς | εὐχάς*, leaving the god whom Electra was addressing unidentified by name and casting the prayer in the accusative-and-infinitive construction<sup>2</sup>). In both respects Electra's approach contrasts with that of Orestes (*Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε ... σωτήρ γενοῦ μοι*), and it may be that Aeschylus deliberately chose to represent the daughter of the house as less direct and less confident than the son in dealings with the supernatural powers.

Being cast in this form, the prayer attracted the attention of the early commentators. It was necessary to identify *κῆρυξ μέγιστε*, and to explain why Electra needed Hermes as *κῆρυξ*,

1) E.g. *τοῖς δ' ἐναντίοις | λέγω φανῆναι σοῦ, πάτερ, τιμῶρον*, 142–3.

2) Cf. 306–7, *ἀλλ' ὦ μεγάλα Μοῖραι, Διόθεν | τῆδε τελευτῶν*.

in contrast with Orestes, who had addressed him as *χθόνιος*. Hence emerged a gloss, written in the left-hand margin at 165, in language partly borrowed from Aeschylus himself, *Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, κηρύξας ἔμοι*, which means in effect: "The *κηρύξ* is the *Ἐρμῆς χθόνιος* already addressed by Orestes; he is here 'herald' by virtue of having proclaimed for Electra". In another passage of the *Choephoroi*, 560-2,

*ξένω γὰρ εἰκώς, παντελῆ σαγὴν ἔχων,  
ἦξω σὺν ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἐφ' ἐρκείους πύλας  
[Πυλάδῃ, ξένος τε καὶ δορυξένος δόμων]*

we can see the same motivation and the same procedures being applied. The 'urge to identify' has generated *Πυλάδῃ* as a gloss on *ἀνδρὶ τῷδε* (it occurs at this point in the line in *Cho.* 20), and the gloss has expanded into an iambic trimeter, with the importation of *δορυξένος* from *Ag.* 880-1, *εὐμενῆς δορυξένος | Στροφίος ὁ Φωκεύς*, and *Cho.* 914, *εἰς δόμους δορυξένους*<sup>3</sup>). In neither case was there any intention to interpolate, for otherwise 124 would not be metrically defective and 562 would not be ungrammatical. If *ἔμοι* in 124 looks suspiciously like an attempt at forgery, we must bear in mind that early scholars often found it convenient for reasons of brevity to adopt the dramatic impersonation in their comments. For instance, on *Cho.* 42, *τοιάνδε χάριν ἀχάριτον*, the scholiast writes *τοῖς ὀργιζομένοις νεκροῖς ἄχαριν ἦ, ἔμοι ἀηδῶς ὑπηρετούσῃ αὐτῇ*, where *ἔμοι* means the chorus. Having once been written in the left-hand margin, *Ἐρμῆ... ἔμοι* attached itself to the beginning of the line it glossed<sup>4</sup>), thrusting it out into the right-hand margin and eventually into the adjacent column. Tucker's diagnosis of the misplacement of 165 is thus corroborated.

When the text has been emended in this way, there remain one or two minor features which call for comment. Electra has addressed Hermes simply as *κηρύξ*, without identifying him by name, and this contrasts with the normal practice of invocations,

3) The line was bracketed by Schmidt. Arguments in his favour are (1) *ξένος*, 562, in the sense 'guest-friend' after *ξένω*, 560, in the sense 'foreigner', (2) *δορυξένος* after both, (3) the grammar in 562, (4) *πύλας/Πυλάδῃ* - an impromptu and inappropriate exercise in etymology. For other examples of 'piracy' see *Ag.* 871/875 and, perhaps, 1044/1058.

4) For an instance of this see *Men. Dysc.* 944, where an identifying gloss, *τὸν Διόνυσον*, has attached itself to the end of the line, after being written in the margin at 946.

in Aeschylus or any other author. The explanation must be that the god to whom she was praying was present, visible and recognizable to the audience, *i.e.* there was a statue of Hermes Chthonios at the tomb of Agamemnon. This suggestion is not new – it is attributed to Conington by Paley on *Cho.* 1 – but as a clue to the interpretation of Orestes' prayer to Hermes, 'Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη, | σωτήρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχος τ' αἰτουμένω, it has been generally underestimated. It is commonly maintained that πατρῶα cannot mean 'thy father's', because that would entail taking ἐποπτεύων κράτη in the sense 'exercising powers as steward', and ἐποπτεύειν cannot bear this sense<sup>5</sup>). But, evidently, if we allow for the presence of a statue of Hermes at the tomb, as an integral part of the stage-set for which the play was written, ἐποπτεύων may be interpreted quite appropriately of a literal survey: "O Hermes of the Underworld, inasmuch as thou art surveying the sovereignty of thy father (*i.e.* the upper world), do thou (*sc.* like him) become Saviour and Ally to me, in answer to my prayer". Thus the words πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη look both backward to 'Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε and forward to σωτήρ ... σύμμαχος τε; they serve to bridge the theological gap between the Hermes Chthonios whom Orestes could see and the Zeus Soter whose help he wished to enlist. And once the god who presided over the tomb had been identified by Orestes in the prologue, further identification by Electra in her prayer was unnecessary.

129–31 κἀγὼ χέουσα τίσδε χέριβας φθιτοῖς  
λέγω καλοῦσα πάτερ ἐποίκιτόν τ' ἐμέ,  
φίλον τ' Ὀρέστην πῶς ἀνάξομεν δόμοις.

129 βροτοῖς M νεκροῖς γρ. m φθιτοῖς Hermann 130 ἐποίκιτόν M  
cf. 502 131 ἀντὶ τοῦ ὅπως. – βασιλεύσομεν Σ (πῶς· ἵνα Σ ad 122) ὡς ἀνάξομεν  
Blass φῶς ἀναψον ἐν post Schneidewinum Wilamowitz

With the exception of Hermann's φθιτοῖς and the orthographic correction ἐποίκιτον, I give here the text as it is preserved in M.

Wilamowitz's correction φῶς ἀναψον ἐν δόμοις, with the accusative πατέρῳ in 130, is now generally accepted. It has a good deal to recommend it: it accounts for the presence of τε after ἐποίκιτον, it presents the prospective return of Orestes in terms of a metaphor which is found elsewhere in the *Choephoroi* (863, 934, 962 and 972) and it presumes a scribal confusion

<sup>5</sup>) This argument has most recently been sustained by I.G.Kidd, *C. R.* 8 n.s. (1958) 103–5, referring to Fraenkel on *Ag.* 1270.

between *ἀνάπτειν* and *ἀνάσσειν* which is paralleled at Eur. *Or.* 609 and *Med.* 107. Nevertheless there are solid grounds for dissatisfaction with the text as reconstituted in this way. *καλεῖν* is, of course, common in invocation contexts, and in all other Aeschylean instances it stands as an integral element of the invocation formula and is not relegated to a subordinate rôle<sup>6</sup>). Once this factor is entertained as relevant, another possible solution of the textual problem begins to take shape. M's vocative *πάτερ*, strangely ignored by the Oxford editors and excluded from the *apparatus criticus*, may well be right. If so, a chain reaction follows. *καλοῦσα* must be converted to *καλῶ σε* (Heraldus), the imperative *ἐποίκιτρον* must be converted to an infinitive, with *τε* suppressed, and the correction *φῶς ἀναφρον ἐν* must yield gracefully to Blass's proposal, which is much closer to the tradition:

*λέγω· Καλῶ σε, πάτερ, ἐποίκιτρον ἐμὲ  
φίλον τ' Ὀρέστην, ὡς ἀνάξωμεν δόμοις.*

To this reading there seems to be only one substantial objection, that raised by Thomson: "In no circumstances could Electra regard herself as the *ἀναξ* of the house". I believe that this objection, which would ordinarily be valid for a daughter of the royal house, is invalidated by the extraordinary language used by Electra in the lines which follow immediately on *ὡς ἀνάξωμεν δόμοις*:

*πεπραμένοι γὰρ νῦν γέ πως ἀλώμεθα  
πρὸς τῆς τεκνύσης, ἄνδρα δ' ἀντηλλάξατο  
Αἴγισθον, ὅσπερ σοῦ φόνου μεταίτιος.  
κἀγὼ μὲν ἀντίδουλος· ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων  
φεύγων Ὀρέστης ἐστίν ...*

The terms in which she describes her plight here cannot be justified by reference to any specific passages of the *Choephoroi*. While Sophocles, for his part, has a substantial list of miseries to which Electra has been subjected after the murder of her father (*El.* 359–65, 520–22, 589–90, 814–16, 1181 ff.), Aeschylus represents her as merely deprived of the normal right of marriage (481 ff.). His Electra has simply identified her own plight with that of Orestes, in order to reinforce the prayer to her dead

<sup>6</sup> See *Ag.* 146, *Cho.* 201, *Eum.* 116, 287, *Suppl.* 213. *καλοῦσα* at *Eum.* 28 is not really an exception; the priestess is more concerned to nominate the deities prescribed by tradition than to supplicate them with a specific request.

father; it was Orestes, not Electra, who had been 'sold into slavery' and was living the life of 'a wanderer' (cf. 915, αἰκῶς ἐπρόσθην, ὦν ἐλευθέρον πατρός, and *Ag.* 1282, φυγάς δ' ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος). The same device is employed again by Electra at 336–7, τάφος δ' ἰκέτας δέδεκται φυγάδας θ' ὁμοίως, and by Orestes at 254, ἄμφω φυγῆν ἔχοντε τὴν αὐτὴν δόμον. What objection can there be, then, if Electra prays to her father that she and Orestes may be masters in their own home? The terms which she uses to describe her condition provide overwhelming support for ὡς ἀνάξωμεν, and no support whatsoever for φῶς ἀναφον.

There is additional support from the epic. Homer in *Od.* 3. 195–209 draws a comparison, though imperfect, between the situation of Telemachus and that of Orestes, and there are echoes of this at several points in the *Choephoroi*, both in substance and in language. It is therefore reasonable to parallel ὡς ἀνάξωμεν δόμοις, and perhaps also ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων ... ἐστίν, with the words used by Eurymachus to Telemachus in *Od.* 1. 402, κτήματα δ' αὐτὸς ἔχοις καὶ δώμασι σοῖσιν ἀνάσσοις.

What factors were responsible for the corruption in these three lines? First, καλοῦσα may have been written for καλῶ σε because the copyist's eye strayed from 130 to 129; the similarity between κἀγὼ χέουσα and λέγω καλῶ σε may have caused the mischief. This type of error is found in M at *Cho.* 772–3, and in MVH at *Sept.* 393–4. Second, the basic corruption in 130 may have been ἐποίκτειρον for ἐποικτεῖρην, the τε being added later *metri gratia*. The confusion of ει with ο or ω may have a useful parallel in *Ag.* 10–11<sup>7</sup>). Third, ὡς ἀνάξωμεν was corrupted to ὡς ἀνάξομεν, yielding a phenomenon which has no parallel in the surviving plays of Aeschylus, ὡς with the future indicative for purpose. In the second stage of the corruption ὡς was converted to πῶς, in an effort to construe the clause as a direct or indirect question. Finally πῶς has been equated by the surviving scholia with ὅπως and the clause interpreted as purpose. If this diagnosis is accurate, ancient scholarship

7) ὦδε γὰρ κρατεῖ | γυναικὸς ἀνδροβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ (ἐλπίζον F Tr: ἐλπίζων *supra scr.* ο MV); read ἐλπίζειν with Headlam, construe ὦδε with ἐλπίζειν and for the construction see *Ag.* 1364 and *Cho.* 683. But it is only right to add that the manuscript evidence indicates that at some stage between the autograph and the archetype ἐλπίζων *tout net* may have been transmitted. And that, *pace* Fraenkel, is not the same thing as ἐλπίζον; for long periods in the transmission copyists could and did differentiate between ο and ω.

emerges with scant credit; but that, unfortunately, needs no parallels.

172-4 *Ηλ. οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πλὴν ἐμοῦ † κείρετό νειν †.*  
*Χο. ἐχθροὶ γὰρ οἷς προσῆκε πενθῆσαι τριχί.*  
*Ηλ. καὶ μὴν ὄδ' ἔστι κάρτ' ἰδεῖν ὁμόπτερος -*

172 *κείρετό νειν* M, *νν superscriptis* m: *κείραιτο νν* Turnebus

Here the correction made by Turnebus has long held the field, but there are grave objections to it: -

1. At 172 Electra is commencing her exposition of the inferences which she draws from the lock of hair which she has found at the tomb. The conclusion of the stichomythic passage will be that it came, probably, from Orestes and that he must have sent it. The kind of exposition we look for in stichomythia is gradual, sometimes painfully gradual; here we expect a modest initial premiss, couched in general terms. But Turnebus' correction carries us, at a leap, half-way to the *wrong* conclusion, viz that this lock came from Electra's head.

2. The editors adduce the usual parallels for the optative without *ἄν* after *ὅπως* in primary sequence; there are two from Aeschylus, *Ag.* 620 and *P.V.* 291, and two more at *Soph. Ant.* 605 and *Eur. Alc.* 112. There is no doubt that the construction existed; but there is also no doubt that it applied exclusively to actions which were future or potential, and not to actions complete. *κείραιτο* looks to a potential cutting, while *νν* designates the lock which has been cut; it is therefore impossible for both *νν* and *κείραιτο* to be right.

3. If the *βόστρυχος* (*νν*) was an integral part of the proposition in 172, we should surely not expect Electra to reintroduce it in the next proposition with the strongly adversative *καὶ μὴν ὄδε*.

To accept m's correction *νν* is simply to connive at the process of corruption. We must start with the original reading in M. I can see only one solution which will at the same time account for the corruption and satisfy the logic of Electra's argument: *κείρει κόμην*. In Byzantine minuscules the confusion of *μ* with *ν*, *η* with *ει* and *κ* with *τ* is easy enough; here the confusions are combined with another common error, wrong division between words. *κείρειν*, of cutting the hair, is used only once elsewhere by Aeschylus, at 189, *ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὴν νν ἠ̄ κτανούσ' ἐκείρατο*, and there stands, as we should expect, in the middle voice. But the active had Homeric authority at *Il.* 23. 146, *σοί τε κόμην κερῆεν*,

and that would have sufficed for Aeschylus. *κείρει κόμην* carries an implication identical with that postulated for *κείραιτό νιν*, i.e. “but I didn’t cut this lock”, and therefore leads into the succeeding stages of Electra’s argument equally well, but the succeeding stages have certain disquieting features which I intend to discuss at a later date. It is sufficient to note here that this passage, like others in the recognition scene, has been contaminated by fifth- or fourth-century interpolation.

215 *Ορ. εἰς ὄψιν ἦκεις ὄνπερ ἐξηύχον πάλαι.*

*ἐξηύχον* M *ἐξηύχον* Robertellus

Orestes steps forward towards the tomb to reveal his identity to his sister.

The text of Aeschylus has been subjected to such a barrage of conjectural emendations, many of which do violence to Aeschylean usage or palaeographic probability or common sense, that one hesitates to level any criticism at a word which has hitherto escaped unscathed. But it must be done. The target is *ὄνπερ*. Electra had prayed for the return of one man, Orestes (138–9). It is true that subsequently, if the manuscript tradition were to be trusted, she has found two sets of footprints at the tomb (205–11), but it is Orestes only by whom she is confronted in the recognition scene. Line 220 is addressed *ὦ ξέρε*, not *ὦ ξένοι*; everybody is oblivious of Pylades down to the end of the episode; there are no introductions. *ὄνπερ*, therefore, is an unexpected plural for singular, where the singular would have been metrical and would have made all things plain. And why do we have to tolerate it? It was, says *LSJ*<sup>9</sup>, *εἰς ὄψιν ἦκειν τινός* or *τινί*. But the nearest approach to a parallel for M’s reading is one passage in Euripides, *πῶς ἂν εἰς ὄψιν τῶν ἀμετέραν | ἔλθοι* (*Med.* 173–4), whereas for *εἰς ὄψιν τινί* we have Hdt. 1. 136, *οὐκ ἀπικνέεται εἰς ὄψιν τῶ πατρί*, Aesch. *Pers.* 181–3, *ἔδοξάτην μοι δύο γυναῖκ’ εὐείμονε ... εἰς ὄψιν μολεῖν*, where *μοι* seems to be operating *ἀπό κοινοῦ* with *ἔδοξάτην* and *μολεῖν*, and the regular use of *ἦκειν* with the plain dative of the person (Aesch. *P.V.* 103, Soph. *O.C.* 1177 etc). This is a familiar problem: are we to defend an abnormality in Aeschylus by appealing to an isolated passage in later tragedy? Should we not venture to read *ὄπερ* instead? The confusion of *ι* adscript with *ν* is not unusual; at 880 the Medicean manuscript has *διαπεπραγμένων*, duly corrected by Turnebus to *διαπεπραγμένω*.

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