NOTES ON THE TEXT
OF SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

ABSTRACT: This paper offers a detailed textual discussion of six problematic passages in Aeschylus’ Seven against Thebes (203-7, 211-13, 219-22, 223-25, 271-80, 282-84), draws attention to undeservedly neglected variant readings, and proposes new emendations.

THE TEXT, line-numbering and apparatus criticus are based (with occasional changes) on those of M. L. West, Aeschylus: Tragoediae (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1990, corr. edn. 1998).

I. 203–7

ΧΩ. ὃ φίλον Οἰδίπον τέκος, ἔδεισ’ ἀκούσα τὸν ἁρματόκτυπον ὄτοβον ὄτοβον, ὅτε τε σύριγγες ἐκλαγξαν ἑλίτροχοι, ἵππικῶν τ’ ἄπυον πηδαλίων διὰ στόμα πυριγενέται χαλινοὶ.

205 ὅτε τε Hermann: ὅτι τε fere codd. 206 ἄπυον Lachmann: ἄχπνων Σ.Ω 207 διὰ στόμα Lachmann: διὰ στόμα Ω πυριγενεταὶ χαλινῶν Heimsoeth: πυριγενετᾶν χαλινῶν Ω

In 206–7 (ἵππικῶν ... χαλινοῖ), construe πυριγενέται χαλινοὶ ἄπυον διὰ στόμα ἵππικῶν πηδαλίων, ‘the fire-born bridles sounded through the equestrian rudders’ bits’. ἄπυον is Lachmann’s emendation of the unmetrical and pointless ἄχπνων. Lachmann (n. 1) is also responsible for διὰ στόμα, which

NOTES ON THE TEXT OF SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

restores responsion with πόλεος in 215. Heimsoeth’s πυριγενέται χαλινοί provides a subject for ἄφωνον. It seems that χαλινοί here = ‘bridle and bit’ (cf. Herodotus 3.118.2, 4.64.2; IG i3 476.174–5), hence the distinction from the στόμια (for which see also Herodotus 1.215.2, 4.72.4). The reference is to the clinking noise produced by the metal bridles (πυριγενέται, lit. ‘born in fire’, means ‘forged by fire’, cf. Euripides, HIPPOLYTUS 1223 στόμια πυριγενή) as they strike against the metal bridle-bits; the noise is thus transmitted ‘through’ (διά) the bits.

It might be possible to keep the transmitted πυριγενετῶν χαλινῶν by emending ἄφωνον into αὐονά, ‘cry’ (αὔω): ‘and the cry of equestrian rudders (sounded, ἔκλαγξεν) through the bits of the fire-born bridles’. AΥΟΝ- will have been corrupted into ΑΥΠΙΝ-, and the ending changed under the influence of ἵππικων . . . πηδαλίων. With this arrangement, στόμια . . . χαλινῶν would be an accurate description of the bit being part of a bridle. Admittedly, however, αὐονή in this sense occurs only in Semonides, fr. 7.20 West (of a dog’s yapping).

II. 211–13

ΧΩ. ἄλλ’ ἐπὶ δαμύον πρόδρομος ἦλθον ἄρχαι βρέτη, θεοῖσι πίσυνος, λιθάδος ὅτ’ ὀλοᾶς νεφομένας βρόμος ἐν πύλαις.

212 θεοίσι πίσυνος Blomfield, Seidler : πίσυνος θεοῖς Ω  λιθάδος Naber (cf. 159) : νιφάδος Ω

In 213, the paradosis (ὅτ’ . . . βρόμος ἐν πύλαις) involves a harsh ellipsis of the imperfect tense of the copula in a subordinate clause, for which I can find no adequate parallels. It is impossible to supply the copula without major rearrangement of the word order, e.g. Schmidt’s ὅτ’ ὀλοάς | νιφομέ-

---

2. F. Heimsoeth, Die Wiederherstellung der Dramen des Aeschylus, Bonn 1861, 259.
3. X. Eq. 6.7–8, 10.6–10; J. K. Anderson, Ancient Greek Horsemanship, Berkeley 1961, 50–2.
4. Cf. R. Kühner and B. Gerth, Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache, ii: Satzlehre, vol. 1, Hannover and Leipzig 1898, 41. Note also Italie’s remark: ‘De weglating van ἦν is zeer ongewoon’ (G. Italie, Aeschylus’ Zeven tegen Theben, Leiden 1950, ad 212). For the (rare) omission of ἦν in principal clauses cf. E. Ba. 436 ὅ ὄρο δόδ’ ἤμιν σφάος; Pl. R. 503b δακός γάρ, ἔφη, ὦ φίλε, ἐγώ εἰπεῖν τὰ νῦν ἀποτετολμήματα (with M. Schanz, Novaes commentationes Platonicae, Würzburg 1871, 33). The one example known to me where ἦν needs to be understood in a subordinate clause is A. Ag. 445–6 εὐ λέγοντες ἄν | ὅρα τὸν μὲν ὡς µάχας ἱδρείς.
As a tentative solution I suggest ἤν πύλαις, with πύλαις as locative dative.⁷

III. 219–22

Although τυφόμενον has scant MSS support, it seems to be the correct reading (with Meineke’s στρατόν for στράτευμ’ in 221):⁸ the ‘population’ (στρατόν, cf. 184, 302) of a city set on fire by its captors is ‘smoked out’ of it, as wasps or bees might be smoked out of their nests;⁹ hence the image of frenzied flight evoked by ἄστυδρομομέναν. The paradosis καὶ στράτευμ’ ἄπτομεν entails the grotesque notion of setting the entire population on fire, rather than e.g. killing them or taking them as slaves. No further tampering with the paradosis is advisable. Prien’s καὶ στρατοῦ ἄπτομεν (sc. πόλιν) πυρὶ δαίων is awkward,¹⁰ even though ἄπτομεν is idiomatic,¹¹ and στρατοῦ . . . δαίων is paralleled in 147: the separation of δαίων from στρατοῦ, further aggravated by the intervening ἄπτομεν looking back to πόλιν, makes for impossibly tortuous phraseology; and the bare genitive στρατοῦ is inelegant. Hutchinson’s καὶ στρατοῦ ἄπτομεν πυρὶ δαίων does remove the inelegance, but parallels suggest that in similar contexts ‘fire’ is the subject of ἄπτειν (cf. n. 11).¹²

---

6. The conjecture is attributed to Voss by N. Wecklein (Aeschyl Fabulae, vol. 2, Berlin 1885, 63), but not to be found in H. Voss, Curarum Aeschylearum specimen I, Heidelberg 1812.
7. Cf. e.g. S. OT 20 ἄγοραῖς θακεῖ, El. 313 ἄγοραῖσι τυγχάνει (Kühner and Gerth [n. 4], 441–2).
11. Cf. ΙΙ. 23.183 πυρὶ δαπτεῖν; Α. PV 368 ποταμοὶ πυρὸς δάπτοντες.
IV. 223–5

ΕΤ. μὴ μοι θεοὺς καλοῦσα βουλεύου κακῶς·
Πειθαρχία γάρ ἐστὶ τῆς Εὐπραξίας
μῆτηρ, † γυνή † σωτῆρος· ὧδ’ ἔχει λόγον.

225 γώναι GFκ Tr

In 225, σωτῆρος is commonly taken to refer to Ζεὺς Σωτήρ, and Sommerstein adduces a 4th-century inscription (IG ii2 4627) mentioning another personified abstraction (Good Fortune) as Zeus’ wife. But Hutchinson offers two decisive objections to the communis opinio: (i) ‘(ὁ) Σωτήρ does not seem to be used alone of Zeus save in the proverb τὸ τρίτον τῶι Σωτήρι and expressions derived from it’; (ii) for Eteocles to bring in the supreme god here would spoil the chorus’ counter-argument θεοῦ δ’ in 226, as well as (we may add) vitiating the overall antithesis between the polis-centred Eteocles and the prayerful chorus.

It seems best to take σωτῆρος as a qualification of Εὐπραξία (cf. Σ 224c τῆς σωτῆρος εὐπραξίας, 225g τῆς σωστικῆς). As a result, γυνή can no longer stand, nor can the vocative γώναι at this position, esp. in view of the fact that Eteocles never uses the vocative to address the chorus, except disparagingly (cf. 182). Hermann’s γονῆς σωτῆρος (‘offspring of a deliverer’) clumsily introduces two genitives in succession. Read perhaps χυνῆς σωτῆρος, ‘(Welfare,) assurer of common safety’: *ΥΝΗΣΣΟΤΗΡΟΣ with the first letter erased would be almost inevitably supplemented as <Γ>ΥΝΗΣΣΟΤΗΡΟΣ, hence γυνή σωτῆρος. For κοινός σωτήρ cf. Strabo 17.2.3 (C822) κοινὸς ἀπάντων σωτῆρας, and the catchphrase κοινὴ σωτηρία in inscriptions and the orators.

14. Hutchinson (n. 12), ad 225.
15. For σωτήρ in the feminine cf. A. Ag. 664 Τύχη δὲ σωτήρ, S. OT 80–1 τύχη . . . | σωτήρ; E. El. 993 τιμάς σωτήρας. For nomina agentis qualifying feminine nouns without change of grammatical gender, esp. in tragedy, see Ernst Fraenkel, Geschichte der griechischen Nomina agentis –τήρ, –τωρ, –της (–τ–), vol. 2, Strassburg 1912, 49.
17. e.g. IG ii2 680.13, 682.32–3; Isoc. 4.85, 8.39, Lycurg. 46, 88, 139; Din. 1.2.
V. 271–80

ἐγὼ δὲ χώρας τοῖς πολισσούχοις θεοῖς, πεδινούμοις τε κάγορας ἔπισκόποις, 
Δίρκης τε πηγαῖς ὑδατί Θἰσμηνοῦ λέγω, 
εὐδ ξυντυχόντων καὶ πόλεως σεσωμένης 
μήλοισιν αἵμασσον ἑστίας θεῶν 275 
{ταυροκτονοῦντας θεοῖσιν ὃδ’ ἐπεύχομαι} 
θήσειν τροφαία {πολεμίων δ’ ἐσθήματα} 
λάφυρα δάιων δουρύπληχθ’ ἁγνοῖς δόμοις. 278 
{ταυροκτονοῦντας θεοῖσιν ὃδ’ ἐπεύχομαι} 
εὐδ’ ἐν ματαίοις κάρφίσις πουφύμασιν 280


Lines 276–278a are heavily corrupt; I have indicated above the parts that seem to me most likely to be interpolated.18

Line 276 is almost certainly suppositious,19 and seems to have ousted a genuine line. Following hard upon μήλοισιν αἵμασσοντας (275), ταυροκτονοῦντας seems idle, and is at any rate unacceptable without a connective (e.g. ταυροκτονοῦντάς τε; cf. the clumsy attempt in I to supply one): it was probably suggested by ταυρογαγοῦντες . . . ταυρείου φόνου (43–4). Likewise, θεοῖσιν so shortly after θεῶν is offensive, while the pointless ὃδ’ is probably a filler to make up the metre. Finally, ἐπεύχομαι, which can only mean ‘I boast that’,20 is inapposite in this context, and appears to have been concocted from 279 (ἐπεύχομαι) with the purpose of supplying a verb to govern θήσειν (277). That such a verb was contained in the genuine line ousted by 276 is highly likely; I suggest, exempli gratia:

18. For a detailed account of earlier attempts to emend see S. Novelli, Studi sul testo dei Sette contro Tebe, Amsterdam 2005, 177–84.
καλὸν τ’ ἐπευφημοῦντας ὕμνον ἔλπομαι
θήσειν τροπαία

‘and intoning, in addition (ἐπ-), a beautiful hymn, I expect us to set up trophies

For καλὸς ὕμνος cf. Aeschylus, fr. **204b.9 Radar καλ[φ]’ ὕμνον . . . μολ-/πάσειν [ἐ]ο[λ’ ἐγ’]ὦ (suppl. Lobel); for ἐπευφημεῖν denoting the singing of hymns to accompany ritual offerings cf. Persae 619–20 χοαῖσι ταῖσδε νεφτέφων / ὕμνοις ἐπευφημεῖτε.

In 277, πολεμίων δ’ ἐσθήματα (or the minority readings ἔσθήμασι | ἔσθημάτων) will not do: even if it could mean ‘enemy armour’ (thus Σ 277j, 277o, p), it would be otiose before λάφυρα δάιων (278). Its repetition in 278a (in a few MSS) bespeaks the interpolator’s hand in one of the two passages, or even in both. The only parallel I could find for this peculiar use of ἔσθηματα (which elsewhere means only ‘garments’) is in the 4th-century orator Demades, a notorious practitioner of linguistic affectation (‘a word-hunting sophist’, Athenaeus 99e), who is credited, inter alia, with the recherché metaphor ἔσθής τῆς πόλεως, ‘raiment of the city’, meaning ‘the city walls’ (Athenaeus 99d). It is conceivable, then, that πολεμίων δ’ ἐσθήματα started life as an overeager, ‘word-hunting’ interpolator’s expansion of λάφυρα δάιων.

Line 278a is, again, almost certainly interpolated; it is found only in three MSS, and its first half-line alone in two more. Hutchinson (n. 12, ad 275–8a) plausibly argues that στέψω πρὸ ναῶν was misguidedly devised to supply 278 with a verb, and that πολεμίων δ’ ἐσθήματα was then pilfered from 277 to make up the line. In particular, πρὸ ναῶν looks like a scholiastic banalization of ἄγνοις δόμους (278), and the rough-and-ready στέψω, prompted no doubt by the lack of a verb to govern λάφυρα in 278, was devised apparently on the basis of μνημεῖα . . . | . . . ἐστεφον (49–50); cf. Sophocles, Ajax 93 στέψω λα-φύροις; Euripides, Troades 574–6 σκύλοι τε Φρυγῶν δοριθηράτοις | . . . | στέ-ψει ναούς. A standard term for dedicating spoils to temples is πασσαλεύω,21 and the text may be emended accordingly as follows:

θήσειν τροπαία καὶ λάφυρα δάιων 277
<προσπασσαλεύσειν> δοντίζετεξῆ άγνοις δόμοις 278

21. Cf. Α. Αγ. 579 θεοῖς λάφυρα ... | δόμοις ἐπασσάλευσαν; [Ε.] Rh. 180 θεοῖσιν αὐτὰ πασσάλευε πρὸς δόμοις.
‘(I hope) to set up trophies and peg up spoils won from the enemy with the spear’s stroke (as dedications) to the holy temples’ (of the gods, cf. 275 θεῶν).

For προσπασσαλεύω + dative cf. Prometheus Bound 20 προσπασσαλεύσω (sc. se) τῶιδ’ ἀπανθρώπωι πάγωι; Herodotus 9.120.4 σανίδι (Scaliger: σανίδας codd.) προσπασσαλεύσαντες (cf. 1.144.3).

VI. 282–4

ἐγὼ δέ γ’ ἄνδρας ἓξ ἐμοὶ ξὺν ἑβδόμωι ἀντηρέτας ἐχθροῖσι τὸν μέγαν τρόπον †

τὸν μέγαν τρόπον †

eἰς ἐπτατείχεις ἐξόδους τάξοι μολὼν

In 283, τὸν μέγαν τρόπον, ‘in the grand manner’, makes no sense in this context, and the article is particularly offensive. Hutchinson (n. 12, ad loc.) posits a lacuna after 283, which would have contained a dative plural particle qualifying ἐχθροῖς, with τὸν μέγαν τρόπον meaning ‘in that proud manner of theirs’. However, μέγας tout court is not ‘proud’, nor have we witnessed, as yet, examples of the attackers’ insolence. A more promising line of argument would be to take τὸν μέγαν τρόπον as a corruption of, e.g., οὐ σμικρῶι τρόπωι (cf. 465 ἐσχημάτισται ὁ σμικρῶι τρόπῳ) or οὐ φαύλῳ τρόπωι (cf. [Euripides] Rhesus 599 μολόντα Ῥῆσον οὐ φαύλῳ τρόπῳ).22 The modal datives would then attach to ἀντηρέτας: ‘opponents in no negligible fashion’.

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
vayos.liapis@ouc.ac.cy