TEXTUAL NOTES ON AESCHYLUS,
CHOEPHORI

165, 124–6 κήρος μέγιστε τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω,
Ἔμηθ χόνει κηροῦς ἐμοί
tοὺς γῆς ἐνερθείς δαίμονας κλύειν ἐμὰς
ἐὐχάς, πατρόφων δωμάτων ἐπισκόπους.

126 δωμάτων Pearson: δ' ὅμματον 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 κηροῦς can depend. The deficiencies may be easily supplied: before Ἔμηθ we may insert ἄγηξον (Klausen), κλύειν ἄν (Thomson) or ἄκονσον (Hermann), or after χόνει 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 ἄγηξον 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 κηροῦς ἐμὰς . . . ἐὐχάς. 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 way1), κηρύσσειν is not. Amongst the commentators Paley is one of the few to face the issue, and the only parallel passages he adduces are ἄγων δὲ καρυξίω Δικαίωτοι ὀπιὰ, Ar. Acb. 748, and κηρύσσει θεοῦ τοὺς τ’οὐρανίδας τοὺς θ’όπο γαίαν, 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 Chb. 4–5, τίμιον δ’ ἐπ’ ὄμω τῷ δε κηρύσσεσσι πατρὶ κλεῖν, ἄκοεσαι. 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 κηρύσσειν may conceivably be defended by appeal to the Homeric authority of κηρύσσειν ἂγον ἂν Αχαίοις, 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 κηροὺς μέγιστε τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω, | τοὺς γῆς ἐνερθέ δαίμονας κλεῖν εἰς | εὐγάς, leaving the god whom Electra was addressing unidentified by name and casting the prayer in the accusative-and-infinitive construction2). In both respects Electra’s approach contrasts with that of Orestes (“Εὔμη ἱέροντε … σωτῆρ 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 κηροὺς, μέγιστε, and to explain why Electra needed Hermes as κηρον, 1) E.g. τοῖς δ’ ἐκατόν | λέγω φανήσαι σοι, πάτερ, τιμόροιο, 142–3. 2) Cf. 306–7, ἀλλ’ ὁ μεγάλει Μόιραι, Διόνυ | τῇ δε τελευτῶν.
in contrast with Orestes, who had addressed him as χήρως. Hence emerged a gloss, written in the left-hand margin at 165, in language partly borrowed from Αeschylus himself, "Εψήφις χήρως, κηρύξας ἔμοι, which means in effect: "The κηρύξ is the "Εψήφις χήρως already addressed by Orestes; he is here 'herald' by virtue of having proclaimed for Electra". In another passage of the Choephoroi, 560–2,

ζένω γὰρ εἰκόνες, παντελῆ σαγήν ἔχων,
ἡξὼ σὺν ἄνδοι τῶδε ἐρ' ἐξείλειος πύλας
[Πυλάδη, ζένος τε καὶ δορυφένος δόμων]

we can see the same motivation and the same procedures being applied. The ‘urge to identify’ has generated Πυλάδη as a gloss on ἄνδοι τῶδε (it occurs at this point in the line in Cho. 20), and the gloss has expanded into an iambic trimeter, with the importation of δορυφένος from Αγ. 880–1, εὔμενης δορυφένος | Στροφίος ὁ Φωκεύς, and Cho. 914, εἰς δόμως δορυφένος3). 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, τοίλαις χάριν ἄχαριστων, the scholiast writes τοῖς δόρυξιμένοις νεκροίς ἄχαριστοι ἔμοι ἄνδοις ὑπηρετούσης αὐτῆς, where ἔμοι means the chorus. Having once been written in the left-hand margin, "Εψήφις ... ἔμοι attached itself to the beginning of the line it glossed4), 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 χήρως, 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) δορυφένος after both, (3) the grammar in 562, (4) πύλας/Πυλάδη – an impromptu and inappropriate exercise in etymology. For other examples of ‘piracy’ see Αγ. 871/875 and, perhaps, 1044/1058.

4) For an instance of this see Men. Dysc. 944, where an identifying gloss, τῶν Διόνυσον, has attached itself to the end of the line, after being written in the margin at 946.
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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, 'Ευμή γέριν, πατρῳ ἐποπτεύων κράτη, | σωτήρ γενόν μοι σύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένο, it has been generally underestimated. It is commonly maintained that πατρῷ cannot mean ‘thy father’s’, because that would entail taking ἐποπτεύων κράτη in the sense ‘exercising powers as steward’, and ἐποπτεύων cannot bear this sense 5). 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 πατρῳ ἐποπτεύων κράτη look both backward to 'Ευμή γέριν 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 κἀγώ χέονσα τάσδε χέρνυμας φθιτοὶς
λέγω καλούσα πάτερ ἐποίκτηρον τ’ ἐμέ,
φιλόν τ’ ὶρέστηρ πιὸς ἀνάξωμεν δῶμοις.

129 βροτοὶς Μ νεκροὶς γρ. m φθιτοῖς Hermann 130 ἐποίκτηρον Μ ef. 502 131 ἀντὶ τοῦ ὅπος, — βασιλέσαμεν Σ (πῶς; οὐ Σ ad 122) ὡς ἀνάξωμεν Blass ὡς ἀναγμ. ἐν post Schneidewinum Wilamowitz

With the exception of Hermann's φθιτοῖς and the orthographic correction ἐποίκτηρον, I give here the text as it is preserved in M. Wilamowitz's correction φῶς ἀναγμ. ἐν δῶμοις, with the accusative πατερ in 130, is now generally accepted. It has a good deal to recommend it: it accounts for the presence of τε after ἐποίκτηρον, 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

5) 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 ἀνάσπτειν 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. 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 καλὸς se (Heraldus), the imperative ἐποίησον must be converted to an infinitive, with τε suppressed, and the correction φῶς ἀναγινέν ἐν must yield gracefully to Blass's proposal, which is much closer to the tradition:

λέγον· Καλὸ se, πάτερ, ἐποίησον ἐμε
φῖλον τε Ὄρεστην, 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 ἀνάξ 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:

πεποραμένοι γάρ νῦν γέ πως ἀλόμεθα
πρὸς τῆς τεχνόσεις, ἄνδρα δ' ἀντῆλλάξατο
Ἀἴγυπτον, δάστεο σοῦ φόνον μεταίηιος.

καὶ μὲν ἄντιδονλος· ἔκ δὲ χρημάτων
φρέγων Ὄρεστης ἔστιν ...

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

6) 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 ἐποδήθην, ὥν ἐπεθήκεν πατρός, and Ag. 1282, φυγάς δ’ ἄλλητης τῆςδὲ γῆς ἀπόδειξον). The same device is employed again by Electra at 336–7, τάφος δ’ ἱκέτας δέδεκται φυγάδας δ’ ὅμοιος, and by Orestes at 254, ἄμφω φυγήν ἔχοντε τὴν αὐτὴν δόμων. 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 ὦς ἀνάξωμεν, and no support whatsoever for φῶς ἀναψον.

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 ὦς 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 δῶμασι σοίσιν ἀνάσσοις.

What factors were responsible for the corruption in these three lines? First, καλουσα may have been written for καλοῦσε because the copyist’s eye strayed from 130 to 129; the similarity between καγὼ χένοσα 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 ἐποίηκεν for ἐποιητέειν, the τέ being added later metri gratia. The confusion of et with o or ω may have a useful parallel in Ag. 10–11”). Third, ὦς ἀνάξωμεν was corrupted to ὦς ἀνάξωμεν, yielding a phenomenon which has no parallel in the surviving plays of Aeschylus, ὦς with the future indicative for purpose. In the second stage of the corruption ὦς 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 ὀπῶς and the clause interpreted as purpose. If this diagnosis is accurate, ancient scholarship

7) ὃδε γάρ κατετὶ γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαι (ἐλπίζον F Tr: ἐλπίζον supra str. o MV); read ἐλπίζειν with Headlam, construe ὃδε 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 ἐλπίζον 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 o and ω.
emerges with scant credit; but that, unfortunately, needs no parallels.

172-4 Ἡλ. οὖν ἐστὶν ὅστις πλὴν ἐμοῦ Ἰ ἱέρετο νειν Ἰ.
Χο. ἐχθροὶ γὰρ οἷς προσήκηκε πενθῆσαι τριγή.

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 ἰν after ὅσος in primary sequence; there are two from Aeschylus, Ἀγ. 620 and Π. V. 291, and two more at Soph. Ἀντ. 605 and Εὐρ. Ἁλκ. 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. κείρατο looks to a potential cutting, while νην designates the lock which has been cut; it is therefore impossible for both νην and κείρατο to be right.

3. If the βόστρυχος (νην) 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 ὅδε.

To accept m’s correction νην 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: κείρατο 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. κείρατον, of cutting the hair, is used only once elsewhere by Aeschylus, at 189, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μὴν νην ἢ κτανόντο εκείρατο, and there stands, as we should expect, in the middle voice. But the active had Homeric authority at Ἰλ. 23. 146, σοὶ τε κόμην κεφεῖν,
and that would have sufficed for Aeschylus. *κείομεν κόμην* carries an implication identical with that postulated for *κείομεν τόν*, *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 O€. εἰς ὅψιν ἣκεις ὅπερ ἐξηφύσαν πάλαι.

ἐξηφύσαν Ἄρ Εὔπορος

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 ὅπερ. 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 ὁ ἕνε, not ὁ ἕνοι; everybody is oblivious of Pylades down to the end of the episode; there are no introductions. ὅπερ, 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*, εἰς ὅψιν ἣκεις τινός or τινί. But the nearest approach to a parallel for M’s reading is one passage in Euripides, πῶς ἄν ἐξ ὅψιν τῶν ἀμετέραν | έξήθοι (†*Med. 173–4*), whereas for εἰς ὅψιν τίνι we have *Hdt.* 1.136, ὅπερ ἀπεικόνεται ἐξ ὅψιν τῷ πατρὶ, *Aesch. Pers.* 1.81–3, ἐδοξάσαν μοι δύο γυναῖκες εὐείμονε ... εἰς ὅψιν μολείν, where μοι seems to be operating ἀπό κοινοῦ with ἐδοξάσαν and μολείν, and the regular use of ἣκειν 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 ἅπειρο instead? The confusion of ἅ adscript with ν is not unusual; at 880 the Medicean manuscript has διαπεραγμένον, duly corrected by Turnebus to διαπεραγμένον.