

SOPHOCLES, *ANTIGONE* 572–581

This passage, which appears as follows in Jebb's edition:

- \*AN. ὦ φίλταθ' Αἴμον, ὡς σ' ἀτιμάζει πατήρ.  
 KP. ἄγαν γε λυπεῖς καὶ σὺ καὶ τὸ σὸν λέχος.  
 \*XO. ἧ γὰρ στερήσεις τήσδε τὸν σαυτοῦ γόνον;  
 KP. Ἄιδης ὁ παύσων τοῦσδε τοὺς γάμους ἐμοί. 575  
 XO. δεδομέν', ὡς ἔοικε, τήνδε κατθανεῖν.  
 KP. καὶ σοί γε κἄμοί. μὴ τριβάς ἔτ', ἀλλὰ νιν  
 κομίζετ' εἴσω, δμῶες· ἐκ δὲ τοῦδε χορῆ  
 γυναικάς εἶναι τάσδε μῆδ' ἀνειμένας.  
 φεύγουσι γάρ τοι χοί θρασεῖς, ὅταν πέλας 580  
 ἦδη τὸν Ἄιδην εἰσορῶσι τοῦ βίου.<sup>1)</sup>

contains at least two problems to which Jebb's solutions have been as influential as they have been unsatisfactory.

1) The first of these concerns Creon's first words in 577. Following the scholiast in relating the dative pronouns to *δεδογμέν'* in 576, Jebb was faced with the choice of arguing for an instrumental or an ethic dative. He finally rejected the former possibility on the grounds of sense, thus declaring for the only slightly happier sense of the ethic dative, 'Determined, yes, for thee and for me.' If we understand *δεδογμέν'* in 577, then clearly *σοί* would be more cogently interpreted as ethic, *κἄμοί* as instrumental, and no convincing method of explaining the two datives in conjunction can be discerned. We might, to provide better sense, attempt to relate the datives of 577 to *ἔοικε* in 576, arguing that this verification of the chorus' timidly voiced suspicion is appropriately sarcastic in Creon's mouth, but there is some difficulty in having the datives connected with a parenthetic clause in the previous line. Again, it would be possible to see a reference in *καὶ σοί γε κἄμοί* back to the ethic dative *ἐμοί* in 575: 'As far as I am concerned, death will stop this marriage' (575) . . . 'and as far as you are concerned too' (577) in bitter confirmation of the chorus' tentative statement at 576. Neither of these suggestions, however, seems really convincing.

1) Sir Richard Jebb, *Sophocles, The Antigone*, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1900, p. 110.

A great deal of difficulty is resolved if we make one textual emendation and re-attribute some of the lines in this passage. The proposed emendation is that *τῆδε* be substituted for *τῆνδε* in 576. The copyist of L, whose accents and breathings are often, admittedly, deciphered only with some uncertainty, would appear to have written, instead of an acute, a mark much more like the circumflex of *κατθανεῖν* in the same line over the first syllable of *τηνδε*. Moreover, the copyist of L tends to write *-ην-* as if it were *-ηιν-*; *τῆν μὲν* in 561, *τῆν δ'* in 562, both look as if they had an intrusive iota in *τῆν*, although the accent in these examples is fairly unequivocally grave. Could it not be that the copyist, having written *τηι*, went on carelessly to produce his usual *ν*?

If a case can be made for *τῆδε* in 576, while the appropriateness of the datives in 577 seems much more assured, the speakers are unlikely to be right, since Creon can hardly talk of the chorus and himself having decided to die. These lines being part of a wider problem, the attribution of the lines from 572 onwards should be re-considered.

Line 572 has been given to Antigone by Jebb because *τὸ σὸν λέχος* in 573 has otherwise to be taken in the less natural sense 'the marriage of which you talk' but largely on the grounds that otherwise we have no reference to her love for Haemon. Yet, Antigone has never shown emotional involvement with him up till now, and does not do so when she is led away. She has chosen to die (555), makes no plea or compromise, and appears to wish that none be made on her behalf, although Ismene and Haemon attempt to sway Creon. As she is deaf to Ismene's need for her continuing presence (548–49), so presumably is she to any like claim on behalf of Haemon. Furthermore, it would be odd to have Creon reacting with such impatience to Antigone who has not addressed a single word to Creon from 531 to 572 and who has studiously avoided making any plea or complaint. Without *τὸ σὸν λέχος* in 572, it would have to be taken that the MSS were right in attributing 572 to Ismene. It is surely more acceptable for the editors to take that phrase in its less usual sense than to wring 'a solitary reference to her love' from Antigone here. It is equally easy to suggest that the MSS are right in giving 574 to Ismene. The constant reiteration of the same question by Ismene actually strengthens the case for the original attribution, since Ismene has already displayed dogged tenacity in the face of Antigone's dismissal of her claims to share her penalty<sup>2</sup>.

2) See esp. 537, 540–41, 544–45, and then her question at 554.

The first re-attribution that does seem to be required is at 575. The ethic dative which ends the line seems very odd in Creon's mouth. What sort of answer is, 'I look to the Death-God to break off this match' (Jebb), when quite clearly the Death-God will never do so unless Creon himself orders it? If, on the other hand, Antigone at last breaks her silence, to reiterate her resolution to die, both the final dative of 575 and the chorus' remark at 576 make better sense. 'Errors as to the persons occur not seldom in L.' (Jebb) The present error would be unusually easy to make in a passage of stichomythia involving only Ismene and Creon from 565. If the attribution were wrongly made to Creon in 575, it is all the easier to see why *τήνδε* might have been erroneously read in 576, and why all of 577 has been given to Creon in the MSS. The one remaining re-attribution is in this latter line. In L, there is a gap between *κἀμοί* and *μὴ τριβάς*. A change of speaker would be highly apposite, the line beginning with Ismene's brief reminder to Antigone that she too has decided to die, and Creon continuing with the brusque *μὴ τριβάς*. His remarks from that point clearly concern both women, and would be a particularly appropriate, violent response to the renewed determination of Ismene to die with her sister. The reference of *σοί* (577), not to the immediately previous speaker, but to Antigone, is not so very different from the situation of 740–41. Up till 740, Creon and Haemon have addressed each other directly, but at that point Creon in suddenly addressing the chorus uses the third person in respect of Haemon, who makes direct answer in the second person. At 536, Ismene has talked to Creon of Antigone in the third person. The latter then interrupts (538–39) and Ismene forgets Creon in her dialogue with her sister, until he interrupts at 561. It seems fitting that she should return to addressing her sister directly at the end of the episode, reacting to the chorus' remark but using the second person in speaking to Antigone, not the chorus.

2) The more serious problem, which may be somewhat alleviated by the suggested re-attribution (above), centres on the 578 reading *ἐκ δὲ τοῦδε*, which Jebb defends against another version (*εὖ δετὰς* or *ἐκδέτας*) that initially attracted him. In 1924, Pearson had sufficient confidence in Bruhn's *ἐκδέτους*<sup>3</sup>) to print it in the OCT Sophocles, but the overwhelming popularity of Jebb's ver-

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3) It has been pointed out to me that, although Pearson credits Bruhn with the reading *ἐκδέτους*, it was proposed by Karl Frey in *Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie* for 1878, p. 464.

sion continues to be attested by those works which make direct reference to these lines and by practically every English translation of the play<sup>4</sup>).

Reading ἐκ δὲ τοῦδε at 578, Jebb has to place considerable stress on γυναικας in 579 since it is the only possible remaining contrast with ἀνειμένας ('Henceforth they must be women'), and to justify this sense on the grounds of 'Attic notions of feminine propriety'. While there is no doubt that Creon is repelled by the thought of a woman's victory over him<sup>5</sup>), or that Ismene is conscious of unfeminine boldness in Antigone's defiance of a man's edict<sup>6</sup>), here the transgression against Attic notions of feminine propriety must be taken to be nothing more than the sisters' freedom of movement. Since Gomme's valuable exposition<sup>7</sup>) of the uncertainty of the conclusions which we may legitimately draw from the wealth of material regarding women's freedom of movement in the fifth and fourth centuries and his criticism of facile generalisations about women's social position on the basis of decontextualised utterances from Greek drama, for example, it is no longer enough to cite, as Jebb does, certain remarks which apparently relate to women's freedom of movement from a tragic, gnomic and comic poet without further examination of the remarks in context. Passages from Sophocles' *Electra* have been

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4) See, for example, R. F. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone: A Study of Poetic Language and Structure*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1951, pp. 29–30; I. M. Linforth, 'Antigone and Creon', *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* XV, 5, pp. 183 ff.

R. E. Braun (*Sophocles: Antigone*, London, O.U.P., 1974, p. 44) translates the disputed lines as follows: 'Hurry,/take them both inside./Now they'll have to be-women and know their place.' In so doing, he is following in a tradition that includes H. MacNaghten (tr.), *The Antigone of Sophocles*, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1926, p. 18; Gilbert Murray (tr.), *Sophocles. The Antigone*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1941, p. 45; E. F. Watling (tr.), *Sophocles. The Theban Plays*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1947, p. 142; Elizabeth Wyckoff (tr.), 'Antigone' in D. Grene and R. Lattimore (edd.), *Sophocles*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1954, p. 179; P. Roche (tr.), *The Oedipus Plays of Sophocles*, New York, Mentor, 1958, p. 184; H. D. F. Kitto (tr.), *Sophocles, Three Tragedies*, London, O.U.P., 1962, p. 21.

Two translations which accept Pearson's view of 578 are R.C. Trevelyan (tr.), *The Antigone of Sophocles*, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1939 and F. Kinchin Smith (tr.), *The Antigone of Sophocles*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1950.

5) *Ant.* 484, 525, 678 ff., cited by Jebb, op. cit., p. 111.

6) See esp. *Ant.* 61–62.

7) A. W. Gomme, 'The Position of Women in Athens in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.' in A. W. Gomme, *Essays in Greek History and Literature*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1937.

frequently used to support the notion that women were expected to stay indoors. Jebb cites *El.* 516, in the belief that there Clytemnestra goes on to identify Electra's disgracing of her relations with her presence out of doors<sup>8</sup>). However, a different view of these lines might be suggested by *El.* 328–31, where Chrysothemis also makes mention of the location, the outer gate, which Electra chooses for the utterance of her complaint, but appends the reason for the implied reproach against Electra's conduct. She ought to have learned by now not to indulge in vain her idle wrath. According to Chrysothemis the more sensible approach which she has adopted to the same problem is to keep quiet and not to utter threats incapable of execution. Electra is not admonished therefore for being unwomanlike in making complaints at the outer gate. She is blamed for being foolhardy enough to utter complaints, when her position is too weak to allow her to accomplish her threats, and when her public utterance of complaints can only embroil her in trouble. Is this not basically what upsets Clytemnestra? Only by being outside the palace can Electra disgrace her kinfolk, because only there can she publicly revile them and cause them shame<sup>9</sup>).

Furthermore, if it were improper conduct for a woman to appear out of doors in whatever circumstances, why is it that, when in the *Antigone's* prologos the thoroughly conventional Ismene disputes Antigone's behaviour, she never questions the propriety of their being outside the palace but limits her observations to the un wisdom of women taking up the fight against men?

If Pearson has inspired so little confidence, Jebb so much, presumably Jebb's attack on the reading has been widely credited:

8) 'Electra should be restrained, μή τοι θυραίαν γούσαν αίσχύνειν φίλους', Jebb, op. cit., p. 111.

9) Another passage from Sophocles that is sometimes cited to prove that women were expected to stay indoors is O.C. 343, where Oedipus says that his sons stay home like maidens. When the context is explored more carefully, however, it appears that Oedipus compares the behaviour of his children, who have acted in ways quite contrary to the general habits of the sexes, to that of the Egyptians, whose men weave indoors while the women procure food outside the house. It is therefore considered the province of Greek women in Sophocles to work indoors while men go abroad to toil. Oedipus' remark should be limited to that thought, and not taken as a general utterance about women's confinement to the house. *οἰκουρέω* is used elsewhere in Sophocles only at *Phil.* 1328, where it appears to be used in the sense 'Guard, look after, the house'. This is the sense that should be understood here. He does not imply that maidens are normally kept indoors, but that their normal work does not involve going abroad.

‘Seyffert: εὖ δετὰς δὲ χορῆ / γυναῖκας εἶναι τάσδε μηδ’ ἀνειμένε-  
νας. Engelmann substituted ἐκδετὰς [sic] for εὖ δετὰς. This is  
one of those conjectures which are taking at first sight, but which  
reflection condemns. δετὸς occurs only in the subst. δετή, a fag-  
got. Nor were the royal maidens to be put in bonds; they were  
merely to be detained in the house’<sup>10</sup>).

The linguistic objection is not unanswerable. While it is true  
that adjectival δετὸς does not occur elsewhere in extant classical  
Greek literature, it does appear in Oppian<sup>11</sup>), where οὐχὶ δετὰς is  
used to qualify παλάμας in the sense, ‘that ought not to be  
bound’. Again, ἐκδετον is used to qualify Ἐκτορα in the *Palatine  
Anthology*<sup>12</sup>). Of the readings εὖ δετὰς and ἐκδέτας Engelmann’s  
is probably preferable in that the use of the word in the simple  
passive sense of ‘bound’ is attested, δετὰς being a gerundive  
would make χορῆ otiose, and ἐκ is closer to the MSS than εὖ. ἐξ  
ἵππων follows ἐκδετον in the *P.A.* poem, but ἐκδήσαντες is used  
absolutely in Euripides<sup>13</sup>). Clearly, however, there is little to  
choose between these readings. Bruhn’s ἐκδέτους is probably best  
of all<sup>14</sup>). The oddity of Sophocles’ use of any of these forms here,  
when they are not known to be used till much later, is not much  
more worrying than that of, for instance, the appearance of και-  
νοποιηθῆν<sup>15</sup>), a word not in common use until Polybius’ day.

10) Jebb, op. cit., p. 252.

11) *Cynegetica* IV, 289.

12) IX, 97.

13) *Andr.* 556.

14) See Note 3.

I am indebted to Mrs. Easterling of Newnham College, Cambridge, for  
pointing out to me, in a helpful letter concerned with the present article, that ‘the  
reading ἐκ δὲ τάσδε is confined to L<sup>ac</sup> and the lemma of the scholion in L.’ She  
goes on to state: ‘This strongly suggests that the paradosis was ἐκ δὲ τούδε, as in  
all the other MSS (and as implied in the text of the scholion: λέγει γὰρ ὅτι χορῆ  
λοιπὸν μὴ ἀνειμένενας εἶναι, ἡγουν αὐτεξουσίους, ταύτας τὰς γυναῖκας, ἀλλὰ  
φρουρεῖσθαι). Presumably the scribe of L made an error in the process of copying  
(under the influence of τάσδε in 579?); if the reading had any more ancient origin  
we should probably have some evidence for this somewhere: as a variant in other  
MSS or in the scholia, for example.’

Mrs. Easterling stresses the force of λοιπὸν in the scholion quoted above,  
but this scholion actually increases my suspicion of the most popular interpretation  
of the passage. ταύτας τὰς γυναῖκας in the scholion seems a highly curious  
rendering of the separate functions of γυναῖκας and τάσδε in the sentence, the  
former being predicative in Jebb’s translation. λοιπὸν might simply be an indica-  
tion that χορῆ has a future application here.

15) *Trach.* 873.

Two further objections might be raised against reading *ἐκδέτους*, Jebb's point that the women were 'merely to be detained in the house', not bound, and the apparent ineptitude that results from having Creon thus twice repeat a simple notion – take them within (*νῦν / κομίζετ' εἰσω*); they must be restrained or kept within (*ἐκδέτους . . . χρῆ . . . εἶναι*); they must not be unrestrained or free to roam about (*μηδ' ἀνειμένας*). These points are interconnected. If we accept the implications of Jebb's remark that *ἐκδέτους* indicates more than mere conveying within the palace, we then have a new, more sinister idea introduced, and not only does the single repetition of the binding notion lend emphasis to Creon's threat against both girls<sup>16</sup>) but *ἐκδέτους* provides a far more satisfactory contrast with *ἀνειμένας* than *γυναῖκας* could have represented.

The credibility of the present suggestion, that both Ismene and Antigone are to be seized by the attendants and could be taken at this stage *both* to be threatened with the same punishment, and possibly, therefore, ultimately with death, requires something more positive than the mere undermining of Jebb's argument.

The immediate context provides some support, however, since, even if we ignore my earlier suggestion that Ismene speaks the first four words of 577, the reason here appended (that even the bold seek flight when death approaches) would surely imply that Ismene too is involved in the threat usually taken to be made against Antigone alone, for that this is a generic plural intended to apply to only one of the sisters seems highly unlikely.

The opening speech of the play would lead the audience to expect Antigone and Ismene to go on sharing the common fate that they have borne together up till this time. When Antigone first informs Ismene of Creon's edict, she considers it a threat to both of them (31–32), but later in disgust at her timidity she decides to dissociate herself from her sister and to undertake the burial alone (69–70). On the other hand, Creon, while recognising that the doer of the deed is Antigone alone, associates both sisters in punishment at 488–90, because of Ismene's assumed share in the plotting. At 565, he accuses Ismene directly of sharing in her sister's evil. Just as nothing is said by Creon of Ismene's guilt or

16) It is even possible that *ἐκδέτους* might be taken as evidence that Creon demands specially firm binding (or imprisonment); see Professor Stevens' note on Eur. *Andr.* 556: 'In combination with other verbs . . . *ἐκ* can denote completeness or thoroughness and this possibility cannot be ruled out for *ἐκδέω*.' (P.T. Stevens, *Euripides, Andromache*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971)

punishment between lines 494 and 565, so she is ignored during the argument between Creon and Haemon – naturally so, since he might be expected to intercede on behalf of his betrothed before all others and since no threat against Ismene has been clearly understood by the other characters to have been made by Creon, although Creon has at no point absolved Ismene from guilt and punishment. Even when Creon stresses the solitary nature of Antigone's rebellion, at 655–6, he no more pronounces on Ismene's innocence than he did at 488–90, where he linked them in the plotting, but not the execution, of the deed. Finally, his apparent intention to kill both girls is so abruptly and unexpectedly announced after Haemon's departure that the chorus asks whether he can really mean to kill both (769–70)<sup>17</sup>). Only at this late stage does he make it unequivocally evident that he has decided to kill only the doer of the deed.

Moreover, such evidence as Salustius' Hypothesis offers about the treatment of the Ismene-Antigone story in *Ion of Chios*, for example, would lead one to believe that there was a tradition that they met their end together<sup>18</sup>).

The objection might be raised that, if Ismene is threatened at 578–9, it is curious that no mention is clearly made of her fate until the chorus is startled into asking about it at 770. On the other hand, the precipitate removal of the women prevents any outcry on the part of Antigone, who up till 577 believes that only she is to die (see esp. 555–60).

Haemon's thoughts, as has already been suggested, may reasonably be centred only on Antigone. The chorus, the one witness to Creon's double threat to whom the opportunity is given to speak between the utterance of the threat at 578–9 and the isola-

17) Creon's intention to kill them is called 'apparent' because *μόρου* (769) need not be taken as equivalent to 'death', but to 'doom' in a wider sense. The same may be said of his threats at 488–89. It is a reasonable expectation on the chorus' part that he is talking of death, rather than punishment, for both sisters, especially in view of the fact that Antigone has been promised death by Creon at 497–8. However, the obscurity of Creon's intention towards Ismene permits the audience (and eventually the chorus) to entertain the fear that Ismene and Antigone are linked not only in imprisonment, awaiting decision on their punishment, but also in subjection to the death penalty. The fact that the death penalty is eventually equated with imprisonment compounds the obscurity. More is said of obscurity of intention as a means of heightening suspense later in this article.

18) *ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἴων ἐν τοῖς διθυράμβοις καταπροσθῆναι φησὶν ἀμφοτέρων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τῆς Ἥρας ὑπὸ Λαοδάμαντος τοῦ Ἐτεοκλέους* (see Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 5)

tion of Antigone in punishment at 771, could be taken to allude to a threat against both daughters at 599–600, for the *ἐσχάτη ῥίζα* of Oedipus' house is not only Antigone but also Ismene. However, if the chorus has clearly understood that Ismene is to die, it is odd that it questions Creon on the point only at 769. Then, too, Antigone at 941, like the chorus at 599–600, thinks of herself as the last of the Labdacids although it is clear to her by then that Ismene is to survive.

We are forced to conclude that only obscure threats are made against Ismene at 578–9, and at all other points in the play where her fate is alluded to, until she is dissociated from Antigone's penalty at 770. *ἐκδέτους* is a term of double significance in this play, referring as it does in its superficial sense to restraint and at a deeper level, in this play's context, to imprisonment and therefore, finally, death. The connection of the word here with death seems to be underlined by the chorus' words immediately after Antigone is led away to her possible death<sup>19</sup>) in the rock prison. The central theme of the choral ode at 944 ff. is the imprisonment of three others, Danae, Lycurgus and Cleopatra. It is noteworthy that the expression *ἐν χαλκοδέτοις ἀνλαῖς* is used (945–6), and *ἐν δεσμῶ* (957). Most significant of all, Creon uses only the word *ἔδησα* (1112)<sup>20</sup>) when he thinks of the fatal judgment he has made against Antigone. It may well be that Creon has already decided on the manner of Antigone's punishment by 578–9. He does not mention it clearly until 773, but he is directly questioned on this point only at 772. This obscurity of intention on Creon's part is well paralleled in the same play by Haemon's vague threat at 751:

*ἢδ' οὖν θανεῖται θανούσ' καὶ ὀλεῖ τινά.*

Creon takes himself to be threatened but receives no confirmation or denial of his supposition, and the threat would appear to be forgotten by him until he encounters Haemon in the rock prison. The fact that Haemon does first draw his sword on his

19) Creon's intentions concerning Antigone's doom are not completely clearcut either. At 887–8, he appears to accept the possibility that Antigone may survive in her prison.

20) The recurrent images of tying/loosing, restraint/freedom in the *Antigone* would tend to argue for the retention of the albeit obscure expression *λύουσ' ἂν ἢ φάππουσα* at 40 and thus against such suggested emendations as that of R.M. Newton, 'Sophocles, *Antigone* 40', *AJPh*, XCVI, 1975, pp. 128–30.

The notion entertained by Nauck that *ἔδησα* should be taken figuratively here is surely absurd, at least if one thinks at the primary level of sense, in a passage where such concrete items as axes have just been called for.

father (1231–4) before committing suicide (1234 ff.) makes Haemon's veiled threat at 751 as uncertain in reference at the end of the play as it was at the time of utterance.

If current opinion about the Antigone story is right and Sophocles was dealing with a peculiarly little-known legend, he was presented with a unique opportunity for the creation of suspense in his audience, particularly in relation to Ismene and Haemon. The former character represents an element in his play which is obviously useful to him in dramatic terms. Ismene's submissive, traditionalist nature is fully exploited by the playwright to heighten the audience's sense of the heroine's dedication and audacity. Even if Antigone's fate were taken to have been known to the audience in advance, it is unlikely that the same would be true of Haemon's or Ismene's. Therefore, the repeated but always obscure threats<sup>21</sup>) against Ismene serve to maintain the audience's unease and curiosity about her eventual fate, while the characters of the play themselves devote their attention almost wholly to the high-lighted sister. When the time for suspense is over and the dramatic usefulness of the character is at an end with the certainty that Antigone will die and Ismene live, she disappears for good. Not only is all mention of her abandoned henceforth, but Antigone talks about herself as though she had never had a sister<sup>22</sup>).

In the passage, 572–81, whatever Antigone's desires in the matter, the sisters have not finally been dissociated in guilt and punishment, and the mention of imprisonment for both and thus the clear hint of possible death for both would have caused a frisson of alarm in the first audience for this play<sup>23</sup>).

Polytechnic of North London

J. K. MacKinnon

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21) For example, an ambiguous exchange between Creon and Antigone at 497–8 could be taken at one level to indicate a fear on her part that worse than death – possibly torture before death – is to befall her. This would seem to be how Creon takes her words. However, for Antigone to ask her question so shortly after Ismene has been summoned and denounced, in her absence, by Creon could at another level be taken to indicate a fear that her sister too will be killed.

22) *Ant.* 941.

23) I should like to thank my former colleague, Mr. Ian Moxon, for his useful criticisms of this article in draft form and for his helpful suggestions throughout the various stages of its preparation.