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978-1-107-66116-5 - ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΥ ΧΟΗΦΟΡΟΙ: The Choephoroi of Aeschylus

With Critical Notes, Commentary, Translation and a Recension of the Scholia by T. G. Tucker

Excerpt

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T. A.

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THE short *ὑπόθεσις* which would be prefixed to the *Choephoroi* by m is missing along with the beginning of the play. Six leaves are lost in the Medicean at this point. These contained the lines of the *Agamemnon* from 1159 to 1673, the *ὑπόθεσις* to our play, the list of *dramatis personae* and the opening passage of the prologue, of which nine lines have been recovered (seven wholly and two in part). The maximum number of lines to the page for Aeschylus being 48 and the average for the other eight leaves lost between *vv.* 323 and 1051 of the *Agamemnon* being 46, it is evident that the prefatory notice to the *Choephoroi* must have been brief, and also that no great number of verses in the prologue are still to seek¹.

The *ὑπόθεσις* would come (though not necessarily verbatim) from Aristophanes of Byzantium, who derived his information, when not contained in the play itself, either from the *διδασκαλία* of Aristotle and his school, or from a work of the grammarian Callimachus, who himself went directly to the Aristotelian sources. The argument to the *Eumenides* is expressly stated to be by Aristophanes *γραμματικός*.

The date of the production of the *Choephoroi* is B.C. 458. In the *ὑπόθεσις* to the *Agamemnon* the *διδασκαλία* says *ἐδιδάχθη τὸ δράμα ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Φιλοκλέους Ὀλυμπιάδι κῆ (ὀγδοηκοστῇ Meursius) ἔτει β. πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος Ἀγαμέμνονι, Χοηφόροις, Εὐμένισι, Πρωτῆ σατυρικῶ. ἐχορήγει Ξενοκλῆς Ἀφιδνεύς*. In 1886 there was discovered at Athens an inscription (published in the *Ἐφημερίς Ἀρχαιολογική* part 4 p. 269) vouching for the accuracy of the *διδασκαλία*. It records the victories at the City

¹ It must, however, be remarked that the *ὑπόθεσις* is sometimes not written between the plays, but at the top, bottom or sides of the page, as seemed most convenient.

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ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΥ

Dionysia [ἐπὶ Φίλο]κλέους, and among them τραγωδῶν Ξενοκλήης Ἀφιδνα(ῖος) ἐχορή(γει), Αἰσχύλος ἐδίδαξεν. The scholiast on Ar. *Ran.* 1124 gives the names of the same four plays in the tetralogy called the Ὀρέστεια, on the warrant of ‘the Didascaliae.’

ΤΑ ΤΟΤ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ.

ΠΥΛΑΔΗΣ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΩΝ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ Α (ΘΥΡΩΡΟΣ).

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ Β (ΘΕΡΑΠΙΩΝ ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΥ).

This is the list (not including attendants) as it may be gathered from the play. The names are here arranged, as in the list prefixed by *m* to the *Eumenides*, in the order of appearance. Instead of the οἰκέται α' and β' Hermann, Wecklein and Paley give οἰκέτης, Weil θεράπων. It is not likely, however, that the servant who answers the door is also the servant in attendance upon Aegisthus, although the same actor may perform both parts.

The Chorus consists of (probably) twelve handmaids, who are elderly women (παλαιὰ 170, with which compare their manner of addressing Orestes and Electra as παῖδες, τέκνα 263 sq.). Their tone throughout is that of experience and discretion. That they are Trojans is nowhere stated or implied. It is contrary to the probabilities, since captives newly brought from Troy by a master who was slain on the day of his arrival at home would hardly identify themselves so keenly with him and with the past and present fortunes of the house. They were taken from ‘their fathers’ homes’ (75) and, if this be understood in its more natural sense, it would imply that they were young and unmarried at the

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fall of Troy. But Troy was taken only seven or eight years before. Moreover Trojan captives would never have set eyes on Orestes (since he was with Strophios before Agamemnon's return), and yet the Chorus always speaks of him (*e.g.* 180 sq.) in terms which would be inconceivable unless we regard the women as having once been under the happier *régime* of the house, at a time when Agamemnon and his children were dwelling in it. The erroneous notion seems to have arisen from vv. 74 sqq., where they are made to speak of themselves as born free but carried into captivity at the fall of their country. But this is merely to introduce them to us as *αἰχμαλωτῖδες*, not slaves of the market or born slaves. They thus obtain that air of being ladies (*cf.* *δμῳαὶ γυναικες* 83) which fits them for 'ideal spectators' and advisers.

Κλυταιμήστρα is the spelling of the name in Aeschylus. It is used by M in the text (*Ag.* 84, 270; *Cho.* 881) and also by m, who prefixes *Κλυταιμήστρας* *εἶδωλον* to *Eum.* 94 and always so writes the word in the scholia (*Cho.* *passim*; *Eum.* 94, 104; *Ag.* 31 &c.). It is true that *Κλυταιμνήστρα* is written by M in *Eum.* 116 through a slip due to his habituation to a later form. The tendency was of course to substitute the more common spelling with *ν*, and in the list of personae to the *Eumenides* the later m¹ 'corrects' m and writes *-μνήστρα*. In *Ag.* 590, where M fails us, the MSS which have to serve its place give *Κλυταιμνήστρα*. See the note on *Cho.* 648 (*κλυτὰ βυσσόφρων*, which I believe to be a play upon *Κλυταιμνήστρα*)¹.

If we are to assume the traditional view to be correct, *viz.* that there were literally only three actors employed in all (apart from supernumeraries), and not rather to suppose simply that three actors only could appear on the stage together (*ne quarta loqui persona laboret*), we may distribute the *rôles* in more than one way. Most natural, however, in view of the relative importance of the parts usually allotted to the three grades of actor, and of the practical possibilities of the stage, would be the arrangement

Protagonist: Orestes.

Deuteragonist: Electra, Clytaemnestra, Aegisthus.

Tritagonist: Doorkeeper, Servant of Aegisthus, Pylades.

There would be no difficulty in the way of the tritagonist, since the Pylades of the first part of the play is a *κωφὸν πρόσωπον*, and, when he

¹ Where our MSS of Aristotle *Poet.* xiv. 1453^b 23 give *Κλυταιμνήστραν* the Arabic version shews an original in *-μήστραν*.

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approaches the door with Orestes, he is disguised. So far the *rôle* might be taken by any supernumerary. The Pylades who speaks the three lines 899—901 is a different person, the third actor. Those who think that insufficient time is allowed for a change from the servant to Pylades between *vv.* 888 and 898 perhaps forget that the play is acted and not read. There was probably a highly dramatic scene somewhat prolonged at this point.

κωφὰ πρόσωπα are the attendants of Orestes and Pylades (709, 981) and of Clytaemnestra (708).

[In the present work an asterisk before the name of the speaker denotes that the MS does not mark the change of speaker even with the *παράγραφος*.]

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TECHNICAL DIVISIONS OF THE PLAY.

1—21	<i>πρόλογος.</i>
22—82	<i>πάροδος.</i>
83—582	<i>ἐπεισόδιον α΄</i> including a <i>κομμός</i> (305—476).
583—648	<i>στάσιμον α΄.</i>
649—714	<i>ἐπεισόδιον β΄.</i>
715—725	<i>στάσιμον β΄.</i>
726—778	<i>ἐπεισόδιον γ΄.</i>
779—836	<i>στάσιμον γ΄.</i>
837—853	<i>ἐπεισόδιον δ΄.</i>
854—867	<i>στάσιμον δ΄.</i>
868—933	<i>ἐπεισόδιον ε΄.</i>
934—970	<i>στάσιμον ε΄.</i>
971—1074	<i>ἔξοδος.</i>

There seems to be no reason for varying the terminology and calling *στάσιμον β΄* ‘a short anapaestic ode’ with no technical place in the piece, and then numbering the remaining *στάσιμα β΄ γ΄ δ΄* respectively. There is no principle of distinction by which we can declare vv. 854—867 to be a *στάσιμον* while lines 715—725 are not. The brevity of the passage is no argument.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ.

ἜΡΜΗ χθόνιε, πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη
 σωτήρ γενού μοι ξύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένω·
 ἦκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι.

M=the first hand of the Medicean MS. m=the διορθωτής. m'=later hands, quoted without further distinction. G=cod. Guelferbytanus, a copy of M, and of little consequence. †=see Commentary below.

1—9 The opening lines are missing with the leaves lost from the MS (see p. 3 and *Intro.* p. lxxx). m' has written *Χοηφόροι* at the top of the page. 1—5 Restored by Canter from *Ar. Ran.* 1126 sqq., 1172 sq. See Appendix. There is no very strong evidence that v. 4 followed immediately upon v. 3. †.—In v. 4 some

Scene: *At the grave of Agamemnon in Argos. Upon or beside the χῶμα is seen a conventional symbol of Hermes. Orestes, in the travelling dress of an ἐφηβος, stands upon the mound (v. 4), Pylades being near at hand.*

For a determination of the details of the scene, and for the objections to the older notion that it lay before the palace (the Hermes in that case being προπύλαιος as in v. 808, *Ag.* 519, *Ar. Nub.* 1478 &c.), see *Intro.* pp. xxxii sqq.

The time of day is uncertain. The remark in *Etym. Mag.* p. 468 ἀπὸ δὲ μεσημβρίας ἔθνον τοῖς καταχθονίοις does not appear to be final for χοαὶ to the dead; but, if it is correct that such offerings were usually not made till afternoon (cf. *Plut. Quaest. Rom.* 34, *Apoll. Rh.* i. 587 and schol. there), we may accept that indication. This would well suit the nightfall of v. 656, although, according to the conventions of the Greek stage, agreement of time is of little importance. 1—21 Prologue. (*Intro.* pp. xxxii sqq.)

1—5 Ἔρμη χθόνιε...ἀκούσαι. For the treatment of this passage by Aristophanes and a discussion of the correct interpretation see Appendix.

1 Ἔρμη χθόνιε κ.τ.λ. In any case religious custom prescribed that the deities represented in visible emblem before a house or demesne should be saluted by one entering, and especially by a returning traveller. Examples of such a πρόσρησις are frequent, e.g. *Ag.* 514, 801, *Soph. El.* 1374, *Eur. Hipp.* 99

&c. Here, however, there is an accumulation of reasons for invoking Hermes in especial. (1) As κήρυξ τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω (123 sqq.) he will carry the appeal of Orestes (v. 4) to the dead Agamemnon and the nether gods. (2) As πομπαῖος, ψυχοπομπός (cf. v. 620) he will bring back the spirit of the father to aid the children (vv. 454, 487). (3) As ἐναγώνιος he will favourably direct the impending combat (581 sq., 723 sqq.). (4) As δόλιος, λόγιος, he will second the δόλος enjoined by the oracle (724, 808 sqq.). χθόνιε has reference to the first two of these services, the other two are implied in the next line. χθόνιος Ἔρμης occurs also in *Soph. Aj.* 832, *El.* 1111, *Eur. Alc.* 743. For other titles (and, in a sense, avatars) see *Ar. Plut.* 1153 sqq.—χθόνιε. For the tribrach formed by a single and complete word in 2nd foot cf. *Ag.* 1590 (ξένια), *Soph. Ant.* 29 (ἀταφον L), *Phil.* 1235, 1314. In the 3rd foot it is found (in tragedy) only in *Soph. El.* 1361 (πατέρα); in the 5th it is not very rare (*Soph. Aj.* 459, *O. T.* 719, 1496, &c.). Aeschylus has the same rhythm once in the 4th foot (*Pers.* 335 λιγέα) but never in the 3rd or 5th.

πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη. See Appendix.—ἐποπτεύων may be taken (1) as vocative: 'thou who dost steward.' Cf. v. 381 Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, κάτωθεν ἀμπέμπων, *Hom. Il.* 3. 276 Ζεῦ πάτερ, Ἴδηθεν μεδέων, or (2), with more compactness and point, as part of the predicate with σωτήρ γενού: 'in stewarding the will of thy sire, Ζεὺς Σωτήρ, become thou σωτήρ to me.' The

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ORESTES.

ΤΗΟΥ nether Hermes, in stewardship of powers that are thy sire's be my preserver, and make my cause thine own, at my prayer. For here am I, coming again to this home-land; and

inferior MSS of Aristoph. have the impossible *τάδε* or the stopgap *τάδε γε* for *τῶδε*, and there are the usual orthographical variations of *ἐς* and *ξύμμαχος*. **1** Verrall (after H. V. Macnaghten) punctuates Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῷ, ἐποπτεύων κράτη, See Appendix. I have removed the comma from the end of the line. **2** Quoted by Thom. Mag. (in voc. αἰτουμαι). **3** Quoted by the same (under ἦκω and κατέρ-

failure to perceive this connection has been the chief cause of difficulty. Hermes can only be *σωτήρ* as the agent of Zeus. —*πατρῷα* bears some emphasis, and indirectly the appeal is to Zeus himself, as in v. 18: 'let it be the will of Zeus to be my Soter, and may you carry out that bidding.' Once again *ab Iove principium*. Cf. *Suppl.* 1 (n.).—The precise sense of *ἐποπτεύω* is determined by its context, and here it is 'direct the performance of,' *administrare* (as overseer). Cf. vv. 487, 581 (n.), *Eum.* 244 (*δικας*). The same rendering is best in *Ag.* 1578 *φαίην ἄν... | θεοῦ ἀνωθεν γῆς ἐποπτεύων ἄχη*.—*κράτη* properly = 'exertions of *κράτος*,' i.e. of power and authority, and may be rendered 'will.' The translation 'victories' is incorrect. In *Suppl.* 962 *εἴη δὲ νίκη καὶ κράτη τοῖς ἄρσεσιν* the plural = 'powers and authority.' So *ibid.* 397 *μή τι ποτ' ὄν γενοίμαν ὑποχέλριος κράτεσιν ἄρσένων*, *Soph. Ant.* 166 *σέβοντας...θρόνων δει κράτη*, 173, &c. The word may, of course, often be rendered 'commands,' e.g. *Soph. Ant.* 60 *εἰ... | ψῆφον τυράννων καὶ κράτη παρέξιμεν*, *Eur. Rhés.* 132 and in the present place. But it can hardly = 'domain' (*imperium*, of the place ruled), and the interpretation 'overlooking my father's realm (viz. Argos)' is untenable.

2 *ξύμμαχος τ'* asks for positive help in addition to protection.—*αἰτουμένω* might appear a rather weak addition, but v. 478 and *S. c. T.* 246 tend to shew that the word was part of the formula in earnest appeals and = the paratactic *oro*, 'I beseech you.'

3 *ἦκω...καὶ κατέρχομαι*. The captious objection of tautology urged by 'Euripides' in Aristophanes is not to be

taken seriously, but is merely intended to afford the comedian an opportunity for a political hit. See Appendix. *κατέρχομαι* of course implies return from exile or dispossession (cf. *κατάγειν*, *καταδέχσθαι* and *Eum.* 465 *κἀγὼ κατελθὼν τὸν πρὸ τοῦ φεύγων χρόνον*), while *ἦκω* states the bare fact of arrival: 'here I am at last (where the oracle bade me come), and am on the way to regain my rights.' Dr Verrall has already drawn attention to the difference between the completed and uncompleted actions implied in the verbs. Orestes cannot yet say *κατελήλυθα*.—The true Euripides would find no tautology here or in v. 5. Cf. his own *ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν* (*I. T.* 490, *Hērē.* 380, where the verbs have their special meanings).—*τῆνδε* adds a touch of affectionate claim: 'in coming to this land I am coming back to my own.'

It is, however, impossible to say whether the sense was actually concluded at *κατέρχομαι*. Aristophanes quotes only enough for his purpose. Since the line, taken by itself, appears somewhat lacking in force and relevance, we may hazard the guess that it was connected in sense with the preceding appeal by some such completion as *<χρησμῷ κελυσθεῖς Λοξίου με-γασθενεῖ, | ὅσπερ προφήτης ἐστὶν ὑψίστου Διός>*, the implication being that, as he was sent by the supreme command, he should rely upon supreme aid. Otherwise we must place a comma only at *κατέρχομαι* and connect with what follows: 'here I am (as bidden)...and now I proceed to call to my father'; with which turn of expression we might compare *P. V.* 1—3 (where, however, *μὲν* makes a difference).

τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθῳ τῶδε κηρύσσω πατρί
κλύειν, ἀκούσαι * * * 5

* * * πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θρεπτήριον,
τὸν δεύτερον δὲ τόνδε πενθητήριον

οὐ γὰρ παρὼν ᾧμῶσα σόν, πάτερ, μόρον
οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἐκφυρὰν νεκροῦ.

τί χρῆμα λεύσσω; τίς ποθ' ἦδ' ὀμῆγυρις 10
στείχει γυναικῶν φάρεσιν μελαγχίμοις
πρέπουσα; ποία ξυμφορᾷ προσεικάσω;

χομαι). **6, 7** Recovered by Stanley from schol. Pind. *P.* 4. 145 (82). Though the schol. does not name the *Choeph.*, his *παρ' Αἰσχύλου* and *Ὁρέστης φησὶ τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονι* leave no room for doubt. The verses were known to Eustathius (Comment.

4 τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθῳ. A κήρυξ regularly made proclamations from a βῆμα or rising ground. Cf. Eur. *El.* 708 *πετρῖνους δ' ἐπίστας κάρυξ ἰάχει βάθροισι*, Plut. *Sol.* 8 *ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ κήρυκος λίθον*, Verg. *Aen.* 5. 44 *tumulique ex aggere fatur*. The point must not be ignored here. Orestes stands *υρον*, not simply *at*, the mound, and *τύμβου*, τῶδε and *πατρί* are all delivered with some stress. It is not 'upon this hillock of the tomb,' but 'upon this for my hillock, the hillock of a tomb,' and the proclamation is addressed to one hearer, the father beneath.—*κηρύσσω*: as one formally announcing his claims and intentions (which were probably set forth briefly in words now lost). Cf. *S. c. T.* 621 (of the claimant Polyneices) *πύργους ἐπεμβὰς κἀπικρυχθεὶς χθονί*.

5 κλύειν, ἀκούσαι. After *κηρύσσω* these words suggest the familiar *ἀκούετε λεῷ*. Even if they were synonymous the effect would be that of added solemnity, not of tautology. But we must note (1) the significant difference of tense, (2) the fact that *κλύειν* and *ἀκούειν* seem to be actually distinguished in *e.g.* *P. V.* 464 *κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον*, Eur. *Phoen.* 919 *οὐκ ἔκλυον, οὐκ ἤκουσα*. The one verb refers to the ear, the other to the mind, although the discrimination exists only when the words are thus juxtaposed. By a further step *ἀκούσαι* suggests the notion, familiar in *ὑπακούειν* and not rare in *ἐπακούειν*, of responding. Cf. v. 457.

So ἀκούειν = 'obey' *Ag.* 947, *S. c. T.* 178.

6 πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θρεπτήριον. The Inachus is the *ἐπιχώριος ποταμὸς* of Argos, and Orestes, who has just come of age (Hom. *Od.* 1. 41 *ὀππὸτ' ἀνηβήθη τε καὶ ἦς ἰμείρεται αἴης*), takes the first opportunity of carrying out, or at least symbolising, a prescribed rite. Eustathius (comm. on *Il.* 2, p. 165) says that the ancient Greeks for the most part wore their hair long, *ἐν δὲ πένθους καιρῷ κείρεσθαι· ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐν καιρῷ ἀκμῆς ἦται τελεῖας ἡλικίας*. On the latter occasion they cut their hair short *Ἀπόλλωνι κουροτρόφῳ καὶ ποταμοῖς· καὶ ἦν οὗτος μὲν ὁ πλόκαμος θρεπτήριος κατὰ τὸν Αἰσχύλον, πενθητήριος δὲ ὁ ἕτερος*. On *Il.* 23. 141 *ξανθὴν ἀπεκείρατο* (Achilles) *χαίτην, | τὴν ῥα Σπερχειῷ ποταμῷ τρέφε τηλεθῶσαν* he makes much the same remark, adding *ἐποῖον δὲ οὕτω τιμώντες τὸ καλὸν ὕδωρ*. Cf. Paus. 1. 37 *ἀνάθημα κειρομένου οἱ τὴν κόμην τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπὶ Κηφισῷ*, schol. Pind. *P.* 4. 82 *τὰς πρώτας κόμας τοῖς ποταμοῖς ἀπεκείροντο.—θρεπτήριον*. The rivers and springs of a country are *κουροτρόφοι*. Cf. Hes. *Theog.* 346 (the water-nymphs) *αἰ κατὰ γαῖαν | ἀνδρας κουρίζουσι σὺν Ἀπόλλωνι ἄνακτι | καὶ ποταμοῖς*, *Synbrl.* 287 *καὶ Νείλος ἀν θρέψει τοιοῦτον φυτόν*, *ib.* 867, *fr.* 155, *Ag.* 1157 *ὠὲ Σκαμάνδρου πατρὶον ποτόν | τότε μὲν ἀμφὶ σὰς αἰώνας τάλαν' | ἀνυτόμαν τροφαῖς*.—The word is adj. and could scarcely = plur. *θρεπτήρια* (cf. *τροφεῖα*,