

INTERPOLATIONS IN THE *PHOENISSAE*: PAPYRUS EVIDENCE

The *Phoenissae* of Euripides was throughout antiquity an exceptionally popular play, and is generally thought to be exceptionally heavily interpolated. In the *Phoenissae*, as in other annotated plays, a significant feature of variance between the medieval text and the text in antiquity is revealed by the scholia: verses present in the medieval manuscripts (to attempt a non-controversial formulation) were occasionally absent from ancient manuscripts. 'Some (many, most) manuscripts are without this verse (these verses)'. Such scholia are well known: the ancient tradition, if one may speak of such a thing, was evidently in a more fluid state than the medieval. As to the authenticity of verses so signalled, opinions may vary. A verse (or verses) may have been completely unknown to the scholiast, that is to say, absent from *all* the copies consulted. No other inference is possible when we encounter something like this:

Phoen. 1223 ff. Ἑτεοκλῆς δ' ὑπῆρξ' ἀπ' ὀρθίου σταθεῖς
 πύργου, κελεύσας σῖγα κηρῦξαι στρατῶ,
 1225 ἔλεξε δ' ὦ γῆς Ἑλλάδος στρατηλάται
 Δαναῶν ἀριστῆς, οἵπερ ἦλθ' ἐνθάδε, κτλ.

Scholium: ἀπὸ τοῦ διηγηματικοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ μμητικὸν μετέβη¹ λέγει οὖν τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ταῦτα λέγων, 'there is a transition from narrative to direct speech; so one must supply "speaking as follows" '.

As Dindorf states, 'haec qui scripsit non legit versum 1225'.² In such cases spuriousness is generally presumed.³

Now the scholia may be complemented by a class of evidence which has been less adequately exploited but which is obviously germane, namely the evidence of the ancient manuscripts themselves, the papyri. In this paper I collect the verses, eleven in number,⁴ which are variously 'omitted' by papyrus manuscripts of the *Phoenissae*. I do not include here the third-century B.C. collection of lyrics which 'omits' *Phoen.* 1737-end.⁵ With this exclusion, the manuscripts concerned are of distinctly post-Alexandrian date; in fact none of them is earlier than the first century A.D. It will be my contention that every one of the 'omitted' verses, or 'minus-verses' as they might be called, is spurious.⁶ Three of them have been previously suspected, the rest, to my knowledge, have not.

¹ For τὸ διηγηματικὸν and τὸ μμητικὸν (sc. εἶδος), see *BICS* 19 (1972), 20 f.

² An evidently subsequent scholium, on 1225, attests that the line was absent from the majority of manuscripts.

³ Not by J. Baumert, *ENIOI AΘETOTΕΙΝ* (Tübingen 1968), who allows that *Phoen.* 1225 is possibly spurious (p. 49) but believes *Or.* 1024 to be genuine (p. 50, n. 1). Baumert misrepresents and seriously undervalues the evidence of the papyri, a fundamental defect which M.D. Reeve, in his otherwise admirable critique (*GRBS* 13, 1972, 248-65), does nothing to remedy. (See for instance on *Andr.* 7, 'omitted' by P. Oxy. iii. 449: Baumert 84, Reeve 261.)

⁴ More exactly, ten and a half.

⁵ See *Pt. Pap.* 3 (1936), 75, *Gnomon* 36 (1964), 642, n. 3 (not *Philol.* 110 (1966), 30, n. 2).

⁶ It will be understood that 'omitted' is an anachronistic term, or at least a potentially anachronistic one, in so far as it takes the medieval text as the norm. The same is true of 'minus-verses', of course, but 'minus-verses' is less prejudicial and suggests that the phenomenon has a connection with the so-called 'plus-verses', known best in Homer but also found in Euripides (e.g. *Bac.* 1104a in P. Oxy. xix. 2223, on which see R. Merkelbach, *RbMus* 97 (1954), 374 f.).

The papyri in question are four. The numeration is simply *ad hoc*.

Π¹ P.Oxy.inv.50 4B.30/E(1), to be published in a forthcoming volume of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.⁷ Codex, 2nd or 3rd cent., professionally executed. Portions represented: init.—40, 51—63.

Π² P.Oxy.inv.21 3B.26/E(7—8)a, edited by D. Hughes in a London Ph.D. thesis of 1972 and to appear in a forthcoming volume of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. 1st or 2nd cent., written amateurishly and across the fibres. Portions represented: init.—14, 46—61.

Π³ P.Berol.21169, edited by H. Maehler in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 4 (1969) 101—7 (with Taf. VI). 3rd cent., written in a fluent hand across the fibres. Portions represented: 280—98, 337—51, 364—77, 379—92.

Π⁴ P.Mert.2.54. 2nd cent., the script an amateurish attempt at a good book-hand. Portion represented: 768—806.

Nothing distinguishes these four papyri as a group from the other *Phoenissae* papyri beyond the fact that each of them in their respective surviving sections is without at least one verse which is present in the medieval manuscripts. The places concerned happen not to survive in other ancient manuscripts.

The 'omitted' verses are the following.

- 1—2 1 Ὡ τὴν ἐν ἄστροις οὐρανοῦ τέμνων ὁδὸν
 2 καὶ χρυσοκολλήτοις ἐμβεβώς δίφοις
 "Ἥλιε θααῖς ἵπποις εἰλίσσων φλόγα,
 ὥς δυστυχῇ Θήβαισι τῇ τότ' ἡμέρᾳ
 ἄκτιν' ἐφῆκας, κτλ.

1—2 *non habent* Π¹ Π², *nec novisse videntur Theodectes Accius alii*; v.3 *initium dramatis praebebat Dicaearchus*(?), P.Oxy.xxvii 2455, fr. 17.290 + fr. 19.2.

Certainly spurious. See *Proc.XIV Int.Congr.Pap.*, 161—6, and *GRBS* 16 (1975), 149—74.

- 11 ἐγὼ δὲ παῖς μὲν κλήζομαι Μενικέως,
 11 Κρέων τ' ἀδελφὸς μητρὸς ἐκ μιᾶς ἔφθ.
 καλοῦσι δ' Ἰοκάστην με· κτλ.

11 μιᾶς ἐκ μητρὸς L

post κρεωνδα[δε]λφος vacat Π¹ (δ : *non* τ), *totum versum habebat* Π² (]v· *ad finem exstat*)

Condemned by some (most?) but not by all. For the arguments against see E. Fraenkel, *Zu den Phoenissen*, 5 f.

An omitted half-verse is an odder phenomenon than an omitted whole verse: I trust its inclusion in this list will not be objected to. Apparently an interpolation half-way there. (For other possible instances of filled-out trimeters see Fraenkel and Denniston-Page on Aesch. Ag.1226.) 47 too begins Κρέων δ' ἀδελφός (δ' *sic*: Turyn, *Byzantine Manuscript Tradition* 82, 113; so also apparently Π² after correction).

⁷ I am grateful to the Egypt Exploration Society for allowing me to mention this papyrus, and both to the Society and to

Dr. Hughes for allowing me to mention the next.

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τυγχάνει δέ πως
 μούσας ἐμὸς παῖς Οἰδίπους Σφιγγὸς μαθὼν,
 ὅθεν τύραννος τῇσδε γῆς καθίσταται
 52 καὶ σκῆπτρ' ἔπαθλα τῇσδε λαμβάνει χθονός.

52 *non habet* Π², *habuisse videtur* Π¹.

Spuriousness of either 51 or 52 generally accepted; Fraenkel argued against 52.

The variance between the papyri here and at 11 shows the non-fixity of the ancient tradition. Permeation took time.

291–2

Polynices, in answer to chorus:

πατὴρ μὲν ἡμῖν Οἰδίπους ὁ Λαῖου,
 ἔτικτε δ' Ἰοκάστη με, παῖς Μενουκίως.
 καλεῖ δὲ Πολυνείκη με Θηβαῖος λεώς.
 291 Χο. ὦ συγγένεια τῶν Ἀγήνορος τέκνων,
 292 ἐμῶν τυράννων, ὧν ἀπεστάλην ὕπο,
 γονυπετεῖς ἔδρας προσπίτνω σ', ἄναξ,
 τὸν οἶκοθεν νόμον σέβουσ',
 ἔβας ὦ χρόνῳ γὰν πατρώαν. κτλ.

291–2 *non habet* Π³.

Not suspected. The 'omission' by the papyrus attributed, like that of 387, to 'Nachlässigkeit', 'Versehen'.

The chorus's relationship to Polynices is not in point. The women break straight into song at the revelation of his identity: their ecstasy is immediate; his formal, momentous self-identification meets with a lyrical response.

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Χο. γονυπετεῖς ἔδρας προσπίτνω σ', ἄναξ,
 τὸν οἶκοθεν νόμον σέβουσ',
 ἔβας ὦ χρόνῳ γὰν πατρώαν.
 297 ἰὼ ἰὼ· πότνια, μὲν πρόδρομος,
 ἀμπέτασον πύλας.
 κλύεις, ὦ τεκοῦσα τόνδε μᾶτερ;
 τί μέλλεις ὑπώροφα μέλαθρα περᾶν
 θιγεῖν τ' ὠλέναις τέκνου;

293 προσπιπτω Π³: προσπιτνω *codd.* 294 σέβουσα Π³ *codd.*
 295 ἔβας BL et M¹P: ἔβας ἔβας *rell. et* B⁷P ὦ] ὦ πολυνείκη L:
 om. A γὰν] γαῖαν L 296 ἰὼ *semel* ABL πρόδρομος M¹P: πρόδρομος
rell. 297 ἀμπέτασον V: ἀναπέτασον *rell.* 298 τόνδε] τῶνδε V

aut ἀμπέτασον πύλας *aut* κλύεις ὦ τεκοῦσα τόνδε *non habebat* Π³.

The papyrus is lacunose. What it actually has is (I reproduce the alignment as accurately as possible, from the plate in ed.pr.):—

]ρασπροσιπτωσ' αναξ	293
]νσεβουσα	294
]τρωαν	295
]λεπρόδρομος	296
]ματερ	29(7–)8

It then breaks off. Lacunae in the papyrus, variants in the manuscripts: things may be tricky. But it is clear that the last line in the papyrus cannot have accommodated both 297 and 298. The editor suggested that the last two papyrus lines should be restored to read:

ιω ιω ποτνια μο]λε προδρομος
αναπετασον πυλας] ματερ

As will be seen by anyone who writes out the restored text for himself (preferably in a script like the original), *both* of these lines are definitely too short for the space available. We have a choice of alternatives. *Either* these last two papyrus lines were indented in relation to the preceding three (this is the only way of saving the editor's supplements), *or* the last papyrus line read κλύεις, ὦ τεκοῦσα τόνδε] *māter* (298), and 296 was longer than the longest version offered by the medieval manuscripts. Now the whole lyric section is already indented in relation to the preceding trimeters, and while a double degree of indentation (*ἐπέισθεις*) is by no means unknown, there is no reason for it here. The second alternative may be thought the more plausible. The papyrus alignment is perfectly suited to the last line's being 298 (293 has twenty-nine letters, 294 twenty-two, 295 twenty, 298 twenty-four); and as for 296, either a longer exclamation (exclamations are notoriously unreliably transmitted) or a doubling of *πότνια* is an easy emendation of the manuscripts. The chorus then do not have to address Jocasta simply as *māter*, and the whole of this passage is in lyric iambs.

It seems likely then, that the papyrus was without *ἀναπέτασον πύλας*, which we could well dispense with. An intrusive gloss on *μόλε πρόδρομος*, or more deliberate?

- 387 Πο. ἀλλ' ἐξερῶτα, μηδὲν ἐνδεές λίπης·
 ἀ γάρ σὺ βούλῃ, ταῦτ' ἐμοί, μήτερ, φίλα.
387 Ιοκ. καὶ δὴ σ' ἐρωτῶ πρῶτον ὧν χρήξω τυχεῖν·
 τί τὸ στέρεσθαι πατρίδος; ἢ κακὸν μέγα;
 τυχεῖν] μαθεῖν F: κλύειν Polle

387 *non habet* Π³.

Not suspected.

We would be well rid of 387. Reassured, Jocasta blurts out her question. 388 begins the stichomythia.

778, 781. End of Eteocles' last speech.

- 778 σοὶ μὲν τάδ' εἶπον· προσπόλοισ δ' ἐμοῖς λέγω·
 ἐκφέρετε τεύχη πάνοπλά τ' ἀμφιβλήματα
 ὥς εἰς ἀγῶνα τὸν προκείμενον δορός
781 ὀρμώμεθ' ἤδη ξὺν δίκη νικηφόρῳ.
 τῇ δ' Εὐλαβεία, χρησιμωτάτῃ θεῶν,
 προσευχόμεσθα τήνδε διασῶσαι πόλιν.

nec 778 *nec* 781 *habet* Π⁴.

778 suspected but not universally condemned; 781 not suspected.

About 778 there is no need to say anything (except perhaps that its absence from the papyrus has been held to be of no evidential value). 781 is one of the best-

known and best-attested types of interpolation, the filling-out of a construction considered incomplete. For *ὥς εἰς ἀγῶνα* cf. line 1363 of this play (cf. too *Heracl.* 672, and see Jebb at *Soph. Phil.* 58). Eteocles never claimed to have Justice on his side. In the agon between Polynices and him (469–525), the *δίκαιος λόγος* is Polynices', as is not only asserted by Polynices but acknowledged by Eteocles himself. Eteocles openly sets his desire for *Τυραννίς* above the obligations of *Δίκη*. His closing words are (524 f.) *εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χροή, τυραννίδος πέρι | κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τᾶλλα δ' εὐσεβεῖν χρεών*. Cf. 527 f., 608 f., 452. Tyranny is the greatest of the gods,⁸ and Caution (for one who is concerned to preserve the status quo) the most useful: with Justice he has nothing to do.⁹

800 End of strophe.

800 ἡ δὲ τὰς Ἐρις θεός, ἃ τὰδε
μήσατο πῆματα γὰς βασιλεῦσιν,
Λαβδακίδαις πολυμόχθοις.

800 *non habet* Π⁴.

Not suspected.¹⁰

An 'identification' addition, untypical only in so far as it is lyric. But will not 800 be protected by the corresponding line in the antistrophe? There is no corresponding line in the antistrophe, not in any manuscript; editors have postulated a lacuna.¹¹

The above verses have been discussed, so far as they can be or need be, on their individual merits, not *en bloc* or in *a priori* terms. But we do not have to depend on such judgements (which have often an inherent fallibility, since they may proceed from unfounded or poorly founded criteria), for it is possible to set up an argument from general probability. The 'omissions' in the papyri, just like those reported by the scholia, are all of dispensable verses—dispensable in the sense that syntax and meaning do not suffer from the omission. Taken individually, each apparent omission might with greater or less degree of probability be put down to mere inadvertence on the part of the scribe (though it may be noted that not in a single case could a mechanical cause for the omission be adduced). It will be agreed that this can hardly be maintained now that they are viewed in aggregate. It is easy to assume that such verses are interpolations, spurious verses which at some stage invaded the text; and the internal evidence of the individual cases goes some considerable way towards validating that assumption. But it would be

⁸ 506. There is special irony in Eteocles' calling Tyranny *ἡ θεῶν μεγίστη*, for *Τυραννίς* was proverbially subordinate to one other—Death: Eur.fr.250N² (*Archelaus*), *Τυραννίς*, *ἡ θεῶν δευτέρα νομίζεται* | *τὸ μὴ θανεῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἔχει, τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔχει*.

⁹ Unlike Theseus in the *Supplices*: 328 (*Aethra* to *Theseus*) *ὥς οὔτε ταρβῶ σὺν δίκῃ σ' ὀρμώμενον*.

¹⁰ Even since the accession of the papyrus. The omission has been called 'curious' and 'intéressante'.

¹¹ I am being slightly, but only very

slightly, unfair. The text in the antistrophe is a little corrupt. (In the papyrus it does not survive.) Wecklein would have known the truth: he comments in his apparatus at 817, 'post 817 aliquid excidit (= 800), nisi strophæ interpolatione laborat'.

There is an analogous case in the second stasimon of the *Bacchæ*. The first line of the antistrophe (537), *οἶαν οἶαν ὀργάν*, corresponds to nothing in the strophe, and should not be left in the text. Similarly *Andr.* 1206, *Hec.* 175 f., and perhaps *Alc.* 458.

wrong to accept it before considering the alternative (what would be called the conservative) assumption: that all the verses—or as many as possible, if all cannot be saved—are authentic but that they had been excised, histrionically, editorially, scribally, or however. But the very statement of such an assumption should be enough to show its implausibility. The objections to it are overwhelming. It is not only that some of the verses available are unarguably spurious and all of them arguably so. When interpolation but not excision is an attested phenomenon, when there is no evidence that the verses were even in existence prior to their supposed excision, when the practice of collation would have served at once to protect the authentic and disseminate the intrusive, when no motive is forthcoming for the arbitrary jettisoning of Euripidean material—when, in short, the assumption runs counter to everything we know and have reason to believe about the history of the tradition, it may safely be discarded. In fact, although the tally of ‘omitted’ verses from such a small sample and at a date when the text has been thought to have been stabilized may surprise, it would have been only reasonable to expect papyri occasionally to expose, by ‘omission’, a bogus verse which had not yet succeeded in infiltrating the whole tradition, and it could be said that the evidence presented above merely bears out, in a remarkably strong way, that expectation. At all events, the presumption will now be that ‘omissions’, ‘minus-verses’, will be spurious. There may be the occasional inadvertent omission, of course, but any ‘missing’ verse will have the presumption of truth against it.

It is strange that principles have been applied to the evidence of the papyri which are the opposite of those that should be applied. Let it be stated that the *presence* of a given verse in an ancient manuscript is *not* evidence of the authenticity of that verse, or that it is at best very poor evidence; far less does it *confirm* authenticity: conversely, the *absence* of a given verse (save always when there is mechanical cause for its omission) is *prima facie* evidence of spuriousness. Verses present will be known to be ancient (but not known to be original), verses absent will not be known to be ancient. (This is not to say that minus-verses will necessarily be of subsequent origin: they may have entered but not yet permeated the tradition.) To oversimplify a little: absence signifies, presence doesn’t.

The papyri complement the scholia in two ways. First, they directly augment the scholiastic information on the absence of verses from ancient manuscripts, showing that several verses on which the scholia are silent—or which they annotate—were nevertheless not present in all the manuscripts even by the second or third century. The ancient tradition was in an even more fluid state than could be inferred from the scholia, and whatever stabilizing influence Alexandrian editorial activity exerted on the text, it did not seriously inhibit subsequent accretion. Secondly, presumption of spuriousness is to be extended to those verses which the scholia testify were not common to the whole tradition; the onus of proof lies firmly on the shoulders of those who would defend any given instance.

If the spuriousness of the verses catalogued above is accepted, it is clear that our text of the *Phoenissae* (I do not here explore the relationship between the *Phoenissae* and other plays) contains a disconcertingly large amount of foreign matter, larger perhaps than has been thought. It would be absurdly unrealistic to hope that we have here more than a small proportion of it. The papyri cover only a fraction of the text. What is more, few of them are at all close in date to

Euripides. There is no reason to think that the text was kept free of interpolation until the second or third century A.D.; and unless we do think that, we must reckon with interpolations that had entrenched themselves by that time, which the papyri will not show up.

Clearly, as a mechanical detection device the papyri are defective. There will be many interpolations they do not expose. And equally clearly, not all interpolations, however blatantly in retrospect they may be seen to have deprived the text, are easy to spot without some such external aid. Of those listed above, even the worst, that is to say those that most seriously affect our critical appreciation, had evaded detection. The papyrus evidence is welcome not only because it leads directly to the expulsion of the particular verses concerned, but also because of its implications: as well as vindicating approaches to the *Phoenissae* (such as Fraenkel's) which see it uncompromisingly as an accretion-accumulating text, it may help scholars to identify and clear away the dead wood.

As would be expected, most of the exposed accretions are iambics.¹² Nothing much more exciting than 800 can be expected of post-Alexandrian creativity in the area of lyric. It is the iambics that demand attention. 387 and 778 are both banal additions; each provides some internal ground for suspicion, but only one had in fact been suspected. Verses designed to complete constructions thought deficient may similarly pass themselves off as original, for instance 781; and would 1225 have been pitched out were it not for the scholium?¹³ This verse involves an apostrophe, and apostrophes were evidently liable to prefatory expansion. Startling examples are 1–2 and 291–2. Neither of these had been suspected before the accession of the papyrus evidence (or even then), though hindsight may see grounds enough. But if they are a shock, they are a salutary one. They highlight the problem of our critical criteria. So long as it could be held that pointlessly extended addresses were characteristic of Euripides (or something of that sort), a proposed expulsion of 1–2 or of 291–2 would not have commanded assent.¹⁴ The papyri require us to revise our expectations of the dramatist. The verses treated here may not be very numerous; but can we not already see a cleaner, sharper Euripides, a Euripides of greater dramatic logic and incisiveness, emerging from a haze of fulsomeness and insipidity?

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¹² Most of them too smell more of the study than of the stage. This may not be true of interpolations generally, but only of those revealed by the papyri: actors' interpolations may for the most part have already established themselves.

¹³ According to Reeve, *GRBS* 13 (1972),

254, n. 23, deletion would have been unjustified. Perhaps he is right, but it is a deplorable state of affairs if a proposed deletion of a verse which is in fact spurious is to be rejected on principle.

¹⁴ No compunction need now be felt about expunging *Bac.* 1025–6, say.