

ON THE TEXT OF SOPHOCLES *OEDIPUS TYRANNUS* 1524–30

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ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσει, Οἰδίπους ὅδε
 δς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἦδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,
 ὅστις οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν καὶ τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,
 εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
 ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντ' ἐκείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
 ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
 τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεινὸν παθῶν.

Soph. OT 1524–30

ὦ πάτρας κλεινῆς πολῖται, λεύσσει, Οἰδίπους ὅδε
 δς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἔγνω καὶ μέγιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,
 ὃς μόνος Σφιγγὸς κατέσχον τῆς μαιφόνου κράτη,
 νῦν ἄτιμος αὐτὸς οἰκτρὸς ἐξελεύνομαι χθονός.
 ἀλλὰ γὰρ τί ταῦτα θρηνῶ καὶ μάτην ὀδύρομαι;
 τὰς γὰρ ἐκ θεῶν ἀνάγκας θνητὸν ὄντα δεῖ φέρειν.

Eur. *Phoen.* 1758–63

COMMENTATORS BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN have joined in declaring Sophocles OT 1524–30 a literary embarrassment.¹ This attack has been pursued most recently and with the greatest vigor by R. D. Dawe, who

¹The scholiast ad 1523 asserts αὐτάρκως ἔχει τὸ δρᾶμα. τὰ γὰρ ἐξῆς ἀνοικεῖα, γνωμο-
 λογούντος Οἰδίποδος. The lines are rejected by, e.g., Franz Ritter, "Zu Sophokles tragö-
 dien," *Philologus* 17 (1861) 422–436, at 424–428, and *Sophokles' König Oidipus* (Leipzig
 1870); Henricus van Herwerden, ed., *Sophoclis Oedipus Rex* (Traiecti ad Rhenum 1866);
 W. Teuffel, "Über den Schluss des sophokleischen Koenig Oedipus," *RhM* 29 (1874)
 505–509; Franz Mayerhöfer, *Über die Schlüsse der erhaltenen griechischen Tragödien*
 (Erlangen 1908) 16–21; A. C. Pearson, ed., *Sophoclis Fabulae* (Oxford 1924) (who in
 his *apparatus criticus* cites the similar judgment of Bruhn); Oddone Longo, *Sofocle:
 Edipo Re* (Florence 1972). The lines are defended by: P. W. L. Graffunder, "Über den
 ausgang des 'König Oedipus' von Sophokles," *NJbb* 132 (1885) 405; William M. Calder
 III, "Oedipus Tyrannus 1515–30," *CP* 57 (1962) 219–229, at 225 f.; Walter Pötscher,
 "Sophokles, Oidipus Tyrannos 1524–30," *Emerita* 38 (1970) 149–161, at 161; D. A. Hes-
 ter, "Very Much the Safest Plan or, Last Words in Sophocles," *Antichthon* 7 (1973)
 8–13, at 11 f.; Brian Arkins, "The Final Lines of Sophocles, *King Oedipus* (1524–30),"
CQ NS 38 (1988) 555–558.

The original ending of the play might conceivably have been at 1523, although
 the absence of closing words by the Chorus makes that seem unlikely. (Cf., however,
 Soph. *Trach.* 1264–73, which are unfortunately dogged by a controversy over attribu-
 tion.) On the conclusions of tragedies, see esp. Deborah H. Roberts, "Parting Words:
 Final Lines in Sophocles and Euripides," *CQ NS* 37 (1987) 51–64, and "Sophoclean End-
 ings: Another Story," *Arethusa* 21 (1988) 177–196. On the problem of interpolation,
 see esp. Denys L. Page, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1934), and
 the response of Richard Hamilton, "Objective Evidence for Actors' Interpolations in

follows Ritter in expelling the lines from the text, and in tracing their origin to the received text of Euripides *Phoenissae*.² Not only is the original conclusion of Sophocles' greatest tragedy missing, therefore, but if Dawe is right, Oedipus' final speech is wholly derivative and almost certainly post-classical.

Mueller-Goldingen has already made a case for the priority of OT 1524–30 over the closing verses of *Phoenissae* on grammatical and poetic grounds.³ I will argue that the literary history of the verses posited by Dawe is untenable for other, more obvious reasons. OT 1526–30 may well be a late, non-Sophoclean addition to a damaged manuscript. OT 1524 f., on the other hand, are probably part of the original conclusion of the play.

Dawe constructs an elaborate four-stage literary genealogy for the final seven verses of *Oedipus Tyrannus*.⁴ The analysis begins with (1) Sophocles OT 438: TE. ἥδ' ἡμέρα φύσει σε καὶ διαφθερεῖ. Following Mueller and Robert, Dawe (270 f.) maintains that this (undisputably Sophoclean) passage is alluded to by the author of (2) Eur. *Phoen*. 1688 f.:

AN. ὁ δ' Οἰδίπους ποῦ καὶ τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματα;
OI. ὄλωλ'· ἐν ἡμάρ μ' ὤλβισ', ἐν δ' ἀπώλεσεν.

Greek Tragedy," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 387–402. Page (95) takes no strong stand on this passage.

²R. D. Dawe, *Studies in the Text of Sophocles*. 1: *The Manuscripts and the Text* (Leiden 1973) 266–273. Dawe brackets the lines in his Teubner text and his Cambridge edition of the play: R. D. Dawe, ed., *Sophoclis Tragoediae* (Cambridge 1982). Ritter, "Zu Sophokles," merely argues for the dependence of Soph. OT 1524–30 on Eur. *Phoen*. 1757 f., a case which Dawe develops and expands. Dawe's judgment has been followed by most recent students of the play, including: M. Davies, "The End of Sophocles' O.T.," *Hermes* 110 (1982) 268–277, at 269, n. 4; Oliver Taplin, "Sophocles in his Theatre," *Sophocle* (Vandoeuvres-Genève 1983, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 29, Fondation Hardt) 155–174, at 173, n. 40; D. A. Hester, "The Banishment of Oedipus," *Antichthon* 18 (1984) 13–23, at 22.

³Christian Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen zu den Phönissen des Euripides* (Stuttgart 1985, Palingenesia 22) 263–266.

⁴The manuscripts assign the lines to the Chorus, the scholiast ad 1523 (above, n. 1) to Oedipus. Dawe gives the verses to the Chorus in his Teubner and Cambridge texts, despite some uncertainty reflected in his discussion of the passage at *Studies* 267 f. (As Dawe himself notes, "the chorus can hardly address other people as the Θήβης ἔνοικοι when they are Θήβης ἔνοικοι themselves, and no other people we know of are present.") J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles. Part 4: The Oedipus Tyrannus* (Leiden 1967) ad loc., assigns the lines to the Coryphaeus "with some misgivings," and cites a variety of earlier opinions. Cf. also Pötscher (above, n. 1) 157–161; R. W. B. Burton, *The Chorus in Sophocles' Tragedies* (Oxford 1980) 182–184. Despite the grammatical problems involved, however, as F. W. Schneidewin and August Nauck, eds., *Sophokles* (Berlin 1888) ad loc., saw long ago, the most compelling argument for assigning Soph. OT 1524–30 to Oedipus is the parallel in Eur. *Phoen*. 1758–63. Since one of the passages is clearly a close imitation of the other, and since Oedipus definitely speaks in *Phoenissae*, it is to be assumed that he speaks in *Oedipus Tyrannus* as well. Cf. the comments of Calder (above, n. 1) 226. This also avoids what would otherwise be the only example of direct address of the audience in Sophocles (cf. Dawe, *Studies* 272).

Dawe (270) has reservations about the authenticity of this passage as well,⁵ but the lines can in any case be no earlier than the original performance of *Phoenissae*, sometime between 411 and 409 B.C.⁶

The next step in the argument turns on the meaning of κλεινά in *Phoen.* 1688. "The point we must insist on is this: κλεινός denotes that which brings κλέος on a person or thing" (Dawe 271). τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματα, therefore, means "the riddles which brought fame to (you, i.e., Oedipus)." Eur. *Phoen.* 1759 (ὅς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἔγνω καὶ μέγιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ) and Soph. *OT* 1525 (ὅς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ) both appropriate this crucial phrase, but neither, Dawe insists, uses it correctly. "There is nothing in either place to make it clear that τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματα means not 'the famous riddles' but 'the riddles whose solution brought fame on Oedipus' In other words, the authors of *OT* 1525 and *Phoen.* 1759 are borrowing a phrase used in a sense they did not fully comprehend" (Dawe 271). Both passages are thus interpolations, dependent on *Phoen.* 1688 f., and date at the very earliest to the last decade of the fifth century B.C.⁷

Of these two apparently interpolated passages, (3) *Phoen.* 1758-63 is grammatically easier, and Dawe concludes that it must therefore be earlier as well. "The linguistic argument for priority rests mainly on the common-sense assumption that competent writers are less likely to imitate incompetent writers than *vice versa*" (Dawe 272). The deuterio-Sophoclean author of (4) *OT* 1524-30 has found his source in these spurious Euripidean verses, probably at some relatively late date, and certainly no earlier than the very last years of the 400s B.C.

Dawe's sequence of texts is thus:

1. Soph. *OT* 438 (ca 429 B.C.)
2. Eur. *Phoen.* 1688 f. (411-409 B.C. at the earliest; later if an interpolation)
3. [Eur.] *Phoen.* 1758-63 (after 411-409 B.C.)
4. [Soph.] *OT* 1524-30.

⁵Since this is stichomythy, 1688 f. must be treated as a single entity. Mueller-Goldingen (above, n. 3) 253 f., n. 64, provides extensive bibliography and defends the verses.

⁶On the date of *Phoen.*, cf. the scholiast ad Ar. *Ran.* 53. Wolfgang Luppe, "Zur Datierung der *Phoenissai* des Euripides," *RhM* 130 (1987) 29-34, would date the play to 408 B.C.

⁷Twentieth-century scholars have regularly attacked the final scenes of *Phoenissae* as non-Euripidean. Cf. Mueller-Goldingen (above, n. 3) 262: "Dass auch die Trochäen 1758-63 zu athetieren sind, dürfte sicher sein." D. J. Conacher, "Themes in the *Exodus* of Euripides' *Phoenissae*," *Phoenix* 21 (1967) 92-101, explores the poetic unity of the conclusion of the play. Further bibliography on the passage is supplied by Mueller-Goldingen 262 f., n. 84; and Conacher 92, n. 3. On the dangers of a heavy-handed approach to the problem of interpolation in the play, cf., e.g., Donald J. Mastronarde, "Are Euripides' *Phoinissai* 1104-40 Interpolated?," *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 105-128; Dana L. Burgess, "The Authenticity of the Teichoskopia of Euripides' *Phoenissae*," *CJ* 83 (1988) 103-113.

As may already be obvious, Dawe's theory is plagued by serious difficulties. First of all, there are no literary connections whatsoever between (1) *OT* 438 and (2) *Phoen.* 1689. There is not a single verbal reminiscence. Nor is the sense of the two lines the same. The Sophoclean Teiresias' point is that a single, crucial day will both give Oedipus his identity and bring about his destruction.⁸ In *Phoenissae*, on the other hand, Oedipus declares that there have been two crucial days in his life, one of which made him great, while the other destroyed him (ἐν ἡμᾶρ . . . ἐν).⁹ Dawe's texts (1) and (2) thus say completely different things in completely different words, and a connection between the two can be established only by misreading *Phoen.* 1689 so as to collapse the Euripidean Oedipus' two days into one. There is nothing here to lend credibility to the first stage of Dawe's proposed literary genealogy for *OT* 1524–30.¹⁰

The supposed priority of (2) *Phoen.* 1688 f. over (3) *Phoen.* 1759 and (4) *OT* 1525 depends on the assertion that κλεινός properly means "bestowing fame" rather than "famous." This is simply untrue, as the text of *Oedipus Tyrannus* itself makes clear.¹¹ There is accordingly no reason to believe that the authors of *Phoen.* 1759 and *OT* 1525 have used (and tellingly misunderstood) *Phoen.* 1688. Stages two through four in Dawe's hypothetical history of the Sophoclean text must also be rejected.

Dawe's elaborate literary history of *OT* 1524–30 is thus completely untenable. All we are left with is Dawe's texts (2), (3), and (4), which stand in an obscure, although obviously close literary relationship to one another.

⁸On tragedy's single day, cf. Arist. *Poet.* 5.8.

⁹*Contra* Mueller-Goldingen (above, n. 3) 254, n. 64, who insists that "Gemeint sein kann hier nur . . . ein einziger Tag." (Sosiphanes 92 F 3.2–3 TrGF, ἐξουσίας / ὅς ἐν τ' ἔδωκε φέγγος ἐν τ' ἀφείλετο, does not support this interpretation at all, but militates decisively against it. The point is not that the same day brings wealth and takes it away, but that fortune changes from one day to the next. On the dangers of interpreting τόποι of this sort out of context, cf. the discussion of Robert Renehan, *Greek Textual Criticism: A Reader* [Cambridge, Mass. 1969] 42 f., and his remark: "where the sense does not serve as a touchstone, parallels must be used with especial discretion" [42].) Euripides' Oedipus is referring to the day on which he solved the riddle of the Sphinx and became king of Thebes, on the one hand, and to the day on which his identity was revealed and he lost his kingdom and his sight, on the other.

¹⁰This also means, of course, that there is no reason to delete the Euripidean verses from the text as "an ill-timed reproduction" of a Sophoclean exemplar (Dawe, *Studies* 270).

¹¹ὅς πᾶσι κλεινός Οἰδίπους (8). Presumably even Dawe would not want to read the line "Oedipus who has brought fame to everyone." Cf. also Soph. *Phil.* 575, 654; *El.* 300 (ironic); as well as the entry in LSJ. Dawe's other example (Eur. *Hel.* 453) has no force. Menelaus calls his armies κλεινά not because they brought him fame, but because he expected that they would be known throughout the world. On the word and its implications, cf. the remarks of R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripide* (Vandoeuvres-Genève 1960, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 6, Fondation Hardt) 34 f.; Kevin H. Lee, "Helen's Famous Husband and Euripides *Helen* 1399," *CP* 81 (1986) 309–313, at 311 f.

Certainty is impossible to obtain in matters of this sort, but the weight of the evidence actually seems to suggest that the Sophoclean passage is earliest of the three.

Dawe (272) gives chronological priority to (3) *Phoen.* 1758 f. over (4) *OT* 1524 f. primarily on the basis of the smoother style of *Phoen.* 1758-63. As he himself admits, this judgment is "logically insecure." Worse than that, it ignores the peculiar literary character of *Phoenissae*. *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a largely self-contained piece of theater.¹² Euripides' Theban saga, on the other hand, is constructed as an extended series of self-conscious allusions to the long literary and mythological tradition centering on the house of Laius.¹³ It would thus be entirely in the character of that play to end with an evocative quote from or allusion to the well-known Sophoclean tragedy of *Oedipus*. Nor do the lines make sense where they stand in *Phoenissae*. *Oedipus* in *Oedipus Tyrannus* can reasonably address the Chorus as *πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι* (*OT* 1524). By the end of the *Phoenissae*, however, the only Theban citizen onstage is Antigone, since the Chorus is made up of captive slave women from Asia. Metrical considerations as well, finally, support the conclusion that the lines originally belong to the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. *OT* 1524-30 fall at the end of a substantial section of trochaic tetrameters (*OT* 1515-30). The lines are thus not formally exceptional in their context.¹⁴ The trochaic tetrameters at *Phoen.* 1758-63, on the other hand, appear abruptly at the end of an elaborate lyric kommos (1710-57), and are followed immediately by choral anapests (1764-66). *Oedipus'* lines are thus a metrical anomaly in Euripides' play. They have all the air of an isolated poetic scrap, snatched out of context elsewhere, and inserted here in order to evoke the atmosphere of a well-known earlier play.

¹²On the play's dramatic independence, cf. most recently the remarks of T. C. W. Stinton, "Allusion in Greek Tragedy," *Greek Tragedy and Its Legacy: Essays Presented to D. J. Conacher* (Calgary 1986) 72-74.

¹³Cf. esp. Marilyn B. Arthur, "The Curse of Civilization: The Choral Odes of the *Phoenissae*," *HSCP* 81 (1977) 163-185. As Anthony J. Podlecki, "Some Themes in Euripides' *Phoenissae*," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 355-373, at 356, notes, "It is all here, from the foundation of Thebes by Cadmus to its last glories in the great days of *Oedipus*." For a survey of the literary sources and the various dramatic adaptations, cf. H. C. Baldry, "The Dramatization of the Theban Legend," *G&R NS* 3 (1956) 24-37.

¹⁴There are no other trochaic tetrameters in extant Athenian tragedy from Aesch. *Oresteia* (458 B.C.) to Eur. *HF* (ca 417 B.C.?) and *Tr.* (415 B.C.), with the exception of the dubiously dated [Eur.] *Rhes.* 679, 683-691, 730 f. (ca 455-440 B.C.?). As far as I know, no-one except Teuffel (above, n. 1, 507-509) (and one anonymous referee for this journal) has proposed excising 1515-30 as a whole from the text on that basis. On the meter and its dramatic significance, cf. esp. Thomas Drew-Bear, "The Trochaic Tetrameter in Greek Tragedy," *AJP* 89 (1968) 385-405. Trochaic tetrameters are used in *Phoenissae* for excited entrances (1308 f., 1335-39) and for extended emotional speeches (588-637), as typically in late Euripides, but 1758-63 represents neither.

The closing verses of *Phoenissae* are thus more likely to be dependent on the final speech in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* than the other way around. As *Phoen.* 1758–63 are frequently taken to be non-Euripidean (and therefore potentially quite late),¹⁵ however, the apparent priority of the Sophoclean passage tells us little that is certain about its absolute date. For the solution to this problem, we must turn to our third text, *Phoen.* 1688. As Dawe recognized, the recurrence of the phrase τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματα here clearly marks a literary relationship among all three passages. This is in no way simple cut-and-paste borrowing. Instead, Antigone's question is allusive, with all the air of a careful literary reference designed to evoke the entire tradition of the Oedipus saga: "Where is 'Oedipus and the famous riddles'?"¹⁶ It is far more likely, therefore, that Οἰδίπους . . . καὶ τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματα at *Phoen.* 1688 is a calculated allusion to Οἰδίπους . . . ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει at *OT* 1524 f. (followed by *Phoen.* 1758 f.) than that *Phoen.* 1688 provided the model for the other two versions of the verse. Already by 411–409 B.C., it seems fair to conclude, the beginning of Oedipus' final speech was among the most famous lines in Sophoclean tragedy. There is accordingly no reason to believe that these verses are not part of the original, Sophoclean conclusion to the play, even if all that follows them is spurious.

OT 1526–30, largely ignored by the author of *Phoen.* 1758–63, seem to derive in large part from Euripides *Andr.* 100–102,¹⁷ and are marred by basic grammatical problems. They may well be a late, sub-literary patchwork, appended to the play when the original conclusion was lost.¹⁸ Any amount of text, including a section of choral anapests, might have

¹⁵Cf. the references cited above, n. 7.

¹⁶*Contra* Dawe, that is to say, but quite in the spirit of *Phoenissae*, the riddles are κλεινά precisely because they are one of the most well-known features of this famous story.

¹⁷Ritter, "Zu Sophokles," 426 f., followed by Dawe, *Studies* 270.

¹⁸*OT* 1526 in particular is either corrupt or nonsensical. Cf. Dawe, *Studies* 267–270, who does his best to magnify the problems in the text, and Pötscher (above, n. 1, 149–157), who attempts to resolve them. Mueller-Goldingen (above, n. 3, 264, n. 91) gives extensive bibliography on the grammatical problems here. Editors who do not excise the verses have generally been forced to emend. Cf., e.g., A. Nauck, ed., *Sophoclis Oedipus Tyrannus* (Berlin 1867); Lewis Campbell, ed., *Sophocles* (Oxford 1879); Schneidewin and Nauck, *Sophokles*; Richard C. Jebb, ed., *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments. Part 1: The Oedipus Tyrannus* (Cambridge 1902); F. Stoer, ed., *Sophocles 1* (Loeb Classical Library, London 1918); J. M. Fraenkel and P. Groenenboom, *Sophocles' Oedipus Rex* (Groningen 1979); Calder (above, n. 1) 225; Kamerbeek, *The Plays*. Cf. also the comments of Herwerden (above, n. 1) ad 1526. Arkins (above, n. 1, 557 f.) ignores the problems of sense in *OT* 1528–30 (for which see Dawe, *Studies* 268 f.), and greatly underestimates the connections of the passage with Eur. *Andr.* 100–102 by insisting that these are just "coincidences of expression" which "are bound to occur," given "the general similarity of theme."

been lost after 1525. *OT* 1524 f., however, seems to be part of the original conclusion to the play. At least portions of the extant ending of Sophocles' greatest tragedy are thus far earlier, and far more valuable, than Dawe was willing to concede.¹⁹

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¹⁹Thanks are due Gregory W. Dickerson, Deborah H. Roberts, and several anonymous referees for their comments on and criticisms of earlier drafts of this paper.