

## AESCHYLUS: WHEN TO EMEND AND WHEN NOT TO EMEND

I have recently been reading with great interest the volume of the Proceedings of a Conference held in this University and at Rovereto in 1999 to mark the centenary of the birth of M. Untersteiner<sup>1</sup>. Some of the papers delivered at that Conference dealt sympathetically with Untersteiner's conservatism as a textual critic of Aeschylus, and I have a great deal of sympathy for that myself, as I have always considered myself to be at least moderately conservative when it comes to textual criticism. R. Dawe has estimated<sup>2</sup> that between Wecklein's 1865 edition with Appendix and the publication of his own book in 1965 some 20,000 conjectures had been published, of which only 0.1% might be thought «to have hit the truth». Since 1965 emendation has continued unabated, and there is no good reason to suppose that the proportion of successful, or at least generally accepted, conjectures has grown any higher. We can all name critics who emended a text simply because they were clever enough to think of what seemed to them to be an improvement. In a very few cases these improvements may really be improvements, and Aeschylus, if he has access to modern editions of his plays in the Isles of the Blest, may well be regretting that he did not think of them himself. I agree entirely with A. Casanova and V. Citti<sup>3</sup>, that the difficulties experienced by scholars often derive from their failure to recognise that modern sensibility may be alien to that of a fifth-century B.C. poet, that the logic of poetry, and especially of Aeschylus, may be different from that of rational prose discourse, and that the richness of Aeschylus' imagery and the density of his language are not to be smoothed out by attempts at simplification and normalisation. So, for example, G. Ierand<sup>4</sup> is quite right to defend κτύπον δέδορκα at *Sept.* 103 against κτύπον δέδοικα, which Askew conjectured, and Murray printed, on the grounds that you can be afraid of a noise but you cannot see one. The transmitted reading is to be accepted as a perhaps extreme example of the kind of synaesthetic imagery which is so effective at *Pers.* 395, where the Greek trumpet «inflamed» the whole area of Salamis with its blare. The noise seemed to take visible form. And at the same time, since πάντ' ἐκείν(α) is ambiguous, the trumpet metaphorically excited the whole Greek fleet. There should be no doubt that Aeschylus is a difficult writer, and it is clear from Ar. *Ranae* that he was already seen to be so at least by the end of the fifth century. We do him no service by trying to eliminate all of the difficulties in his text.

<sup>1</sup> *Dalla lirica al teatro: nel ricordo di Mario Untersteiner (1899-1999)*, edd. L. Belloni - V. Citti - L. de Finis, Trento 1999.

<sup>2</sup> R. D. Dawe, *Repertory of Conjectures on Aeschylus*, Leiden 1965, 3.

<sup>3</sup> A. Casanova, *Mario Untersteiner editore e interprete dei 'Persiani' di Eschilo*, in *Dalla lirica*, 69-95; V. Citti, *Le 'Coefore' di Mario Untersteiner*, *ibid.*, 95-106.

<sup>4</sup> G. Ierand, *La musica del caos: il lessico dei suoni nei 'Sette contro Tebe' di Eschilo*, in *Dalla lirica*, 336 n. 33.

It is therefore tempting to rely upon our manuscripts when there is consensus among them, although, of course, when they disagree, choices have to be made. It is here, however, that my worries arise. Anyone who considers the numerous occasions in the Byzantine triad on which the Mediceus gives an inferior reading to other manuscripts will feel that in *Supplices* and *Choephoroi*, where it is the only manuscript, it is unlikely to be a reliable guide. But in the other plays too, where there is manuscript disagreement, there is no logical reason why any of them must have preserved the truth. They may *all* represent attempts to make sense of a deep-seated corruption. And even a consensus among the manuscripts does not necessarily mean that they preserve the truth. The whole tradition may still be corrupt. Of course our starting-point must be the manuscript tradition, but we sometimes, I think, forget that our primary duty as textual critics is not to make sense of the tradition at all costs, but to determine what Aeschylus in fact wrote. Often it will be impossible to do this with any certainty, but that does not set us free from the obligation to attempt it. I see no point, then, in denying that, while it is true that Aeschylus is a difficult writer, at the same time his text is highly corrupt. To some extent the latter is a consequence of the former. It is often the difficulties that have led to the corruption. In his interesting Commentary on the parodos of *Choephoroi*, first published in the 1999 Centenary volume<sup>5</sup>, Untersteiner himself remarks (p. 421) of the very difficult epode (75-83) that in his opinion one *must* (my italics) follow substantially the manuscript text with only one or two minor modifications. In my own Commentary on 78-81<sup>6</sup> I remarked that «some sort of sense can be extracted» from M's text, but went on to argue that that sense was unsatisfactory and the language excessively strained. Many of us, and I include myself, have found ourselves writing something like «emendation here is unnecessary». We should ask ourselves what we mean by this. If we are saying not only that the transmitted text makes sense, but also that it makes the best sense in its context and that of the play as a whole, that it is in accordance with everything that we know about Aeschylus' style, and so is probably what Aeschylus wrote, then we are justified in saying it. If, however, we mean that because it is the transmitted text it is *ipso facto* preferable to a conjecture that makes better sense, we are on much shakier ground. The question that we should be asking is not «how can we save the manuscript reading, but how hard should we try?» Nor is it safe to assume that corruption is always clearly betrayed by a text that makes no, or inadequate, sense, or is simply written in bad Greek. Many, perhaps not all, copyists were perfectly capable of writing respectable Greek and could scan at least iambic trimeters. They wrote what, in most cases, seemed to them to make sense, but that does not necessarily mean that it was the sense which Aeschylus intended. For all we know, there may be lines in our texts which have never been suspected, but which are nevertheless corrupt.

<sup>5</sup> See n. 1, 379-435.

<sup>6</sup> A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus Choephoroi, with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford 1986.

There is nothing much that we can do about this sort of problem. The real difficulty arises when in any particular case we are required to determine what *is* the best possible sense, and what, therefore, Aeschylus is likely to have written. How do we find the right balance between those on the one hand who assert that Aeschylus is a difficult writer, whose style does not obey the logic of prose, so that emendation is to be practised as rarely as possible, and on the other hand those who assert that his style seems difficult only because his text is corrupt? There are degrees of unintelligibility, but at what point do we decide that this passage is so unintelligible that Aeschylus cannot have written it? I have read many helpful studies of Aeschylus' style, but I still cannot share the optimism of F.R. Earp, who wrote<sup>7</sup> that after such study «Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides are as distinct to the mind as their bodily presence would be. They become three old friends whose little ways we know». I suspect that it is those scholars who pride themselves most on their knowledge of Aeschylus that are sometimes most likely to set out to «improve» his text.

With these considerations in mind I turn to a few passages in *Persae*, the first of which may seem to raise a very minor problem.

(1) *Persae* 8-11

ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ  
καὶ πολυχρύσου στρατιάς ἤδη  
κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται  
θυμὸς ἔσωθεν

The Chorus, in the opening anapaests, is anxious about the return of Xerxes and his army, and according to the MSS tradition that army is described as «rich in gold». The authenticity of the epithet has occasionally been questioned. Weil proposed<sup>8</sup> to replace it with πολυχιρρός (for which cf. 83), while H. Stadtmüller emended it to πολυφύλου, a conjecture which was independently repeated by O. Skütsch in 1968<sup>9</sup>. Wecklein in his *apparatus criticus* remarked «fort. πολυάνδρου», and now M. West in his Teubner edition<sup>10</sup> actually prints that conjecture in his text. We might reject this alteration straightaway on the grounds that it is «unnecessary», and that the text makes perfectly good sense in its transmitted form. But that would be too hasty. On palaeographical grounds it is quite possible, as West says<sup>11</sup>, that the corruption arose from «an accidental repetition» of πολυχρύσων in line 3. Our duty is to consider which of the two epithets, πολυχρύσου or πολυάνδρου Aeschylus is

<sup>7</sup> F. R. Earp, *The Style of Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1948, 5.

<sup>8</sup> H. Weil, *Aeschyli tragoediae*, Leipzig 1891, xxiv.

<sup>9</sup> O. Skütsch, *Aeschylus, 'Persae'*, CR 8, 1968, 146-47.

<sup>10</sup> M. L. West, *Aeschylus tragoediae, cum incerti poetae Prometheus*, Stuttgart & Leipzig 1990 (1998<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>11</sup> M. L. West, *Studies in Aeschylus*, Stuttgart 1990, 75.

more likely to have employed. On strictly logical grounds it is quite true that the former «appears purely ornamental and without point» (West), and that one might expect the emphasis to be on the size rather than the wealth of the army. Moreover, πολυάνδρος is used three times later in the play, at 73 (at the beginning of the lyric part of the parodos), 533, and 899. If the MSS had presented us with πολυάνδρου here, I doubt if anyone would have questioned it. The surprising and tragic loss of this huge army is undoubtedly one of the major themes of the play. So, however, is the loss of Persian wealth. According to Herodotus (7.41, 9.80) Xerxes' expedition was equipped with great quantities of gold. Atossa, on her first entrance at 159-72 (a passage which I shall discuss below), is worried about both Persian wealth and manpower. The Messenger, on his appearance at 249, first greets the land of Persia, the great harbour of wealth (πλοῦτος), then reports that at one stroke the great prosperity (ὄλβος) of Persia has been struck down, and that the flower of Persian manhood has fallen (with wealth and men again going together). The ghost of Darius at 751-52 is afraid of what is going to happen to the wealth which he himself had so laboriously acquired. The logic for which West is looking is not necessarily the logic of poetry. It is a well-known fact that at the beginning of his plays Aeschylus likes to introduce themes and motifs which are going to be important later in the drama. Only at line 12 will he begin to develop the theme of the *size* of the Persian forces. He begins with the theme of Persian wealth, and rounds this off by repeating πολυχρυσος, in a kind of ring-composition, at 9. And, in a more elaborate ring-composition, he repeats the epithet again towards the end of the anapaestic section, at 45 and 53. As for the «purely ornamental» nature of the epithet, one could say the same of almost all the many epithets in the section. Earp, indeed, opined<sup>12</sup> that *Persae* is particularly rich in «ornamental» compound epithets, and some have been tempted to attribute this to Aeschylus' supposed immaturity in 472 B.C. We should remind ourselves that he was probably over 50 years of age when he wrote the play. Any of the epithets, seen in isolation, may be regarded as «ornamental». But it is the cumulative effect that matters. Together they contribute to the effect of a mighty army going to war, backed by all the resources of a wealthy empire. I conclude that πολυχρυσος fits perfectly into all that we know of Aeschylus' poetic technique, and that it should therefore not be changed. Belloni is right<sup>13</sup> to defend the transmitted reading.

(2) *Persae* 43

Μιτραγάθης West μιτραγαθής Q<sup>sscrpsscr</sup> μιτρογαθής QLh μητραγαθής vel μητρογαθής plerique

As with most of the Persian names in this play the MSS provide a great variety of spellings, and it is difficult to place trust in any of them. It is well known that even with

<sup>12</sup> See n. 7, 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> L. Belloni, *Eschilo, 'I Persiani'*, Milano 1994<sup>2</sup>.

Greek proper names copyists in general tend to make what may seem to us to be elementary mistakes. In the case of Persian names in *Persae*, some of which are no doubt genuine, but transliterated by Aeschylus into Hellenized forms, while others were probably invented by Aeschylus himself, it is often a hopeless task to recover what he originally wrote, and one has to make a more or less arbitrary choice among the readings which have been transmitted. Here Sidgwick and Broadhead<sup>14</sup> favour Μιτρογαθής, but most editors print Μητρογαθής, and it may seem to be hardly worth the trouble of questioning it. West, however, has done so, and in this case I am inclined to agree with Belloni and Hall<sup>15</sup> that he is right. Alone among all the names in the Catalogue Μητρογαθής would sound Greek rather than Persian, and some editors indeed have related its first element to the Greek word for the Asiatic mother goddess, Cybele. But then the second element, as West says<sup>16</sup>, is «inexplicable as Greek». It looks very like the corruption of a scribe who thought that he recognised some form of the word for «mother», and perhaps supposed that the second element had something to do with the familiar ἀγαθός or perhaps γαθέω. Some of the earlier editors had already accented Μιτρογάθης or (Mazon<sup>17</sup>) Μητρογάθης. So, by a simple change of accent in the superscript reading of Q and P West restores a more plausible-sounding Persian name, «he by whom Mithra is hymned» (Old Persian \*Mithragatha, with a long *a* in the penultimate syllable). It is only from the time of Xenophon that names derived from Mithras are commonly spelt Μιθρ-. In Herodotus the predominant form is Μιτρ-.

### (3) *Persae* 159-69

ταῦτα δὴ λιπούσ' ἰκάνω χρυσεοστόλους δόμους  
καὶ τὸ Δαρείου τε κάμιν κοινὸν εὐνατήριον·  
καὶ με καρδίαν ἀμύσσει φροντίς· εἰς δ' ὕμᾱς ἔρω  
μῦθον οὐδαμῶς ἔμαυτῆς οὐσ' ἀδείμαντος, φίλοι,  
μὴ μέγας πλοῦτος κονίσας οὐδας ἀντρέψη ποδι  
ὄλβον, ὃν Δαρεῖος ἤρην οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινος.  
ταῦτά μοι διπλῆ μέριμν' ἄφραστός ἐστιν ἐν φρεσίν, 165  
μήτε χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων πλήθος ἐν τιμῇ σέβειν  
μήτ' ἀχρημάτοισι λάμπειν φῶς, ὅσον σθένος πάρα·  
ἔστι γὰρ πλοῦτός γ' ἀμεμφής, ἀμφὶ δ' ὀφθαλμῶ φόβος·  
ὄμμα γὰρ δόμων νομίζω δεσπότης παρουσίαν.

162 ἔμαυτῆς, οὐδ' (οὐδὲ Q<sup>sscr</sup>) ἀδείμαντος West ἄμαντις οὐσα δείματος Lawson (ἀδείματος Lc) 168 ὀφθαλμῶ Heimsoeth μὸς Q-μοῖς rel.

<sup>14</sup> A. Sidgwick, *Aeschylus 'Persae', with Introduction and Notes*, Oxford 1903; H. D. Broadhead, *The 'Persae' of Aeschylus*, ed. with introd., critical notes and commentary, Cambridge 1960.

<sup>15</sup> E. Hall, *Aeschylus 'Persians'*, ed. with an Introd., Transl. and Comm., Warminster 1996.

<sup>16</sup> *Studies*, 76.

<sup>17</sup> P. Mazon, *Eschyle I*, Paris 1953<sup>6</sup>.

My main concern is with lines 166-68, and I shall comment only briefly on the problems in the earlier part of this passage. They have all been fully discussed by Broadhead and Belloni. The Queen Mother Atossa has just arrived on stage, and this is the first speech that we hear her utter. Her first word ταῦτα, «for this reason», apparently picks up the previous line in which the chorus-leader has voiced the fear that the ancient fortune of the Persian army may now have changed for the worse. Atossa too is worried, and she will shortly go on to explain the cause of her anxiety, the bad dream which she has had in the previous night, and the omen of the eagle and the falcon which followed the dream. I am inclined to agree with those who think that ἐμουτῆς at 162 is corrupt. In this play which presents the double tragedy of Persia and its king, while the chorus represents Persia as a whole, Atossa's role throughout is to represent her son, so that her fear should be, not for herself, but for Xerxes. She might, I suppose, mean that, while the chorus's anxiety concerns the fate of Persia and the army, hers is a more private one that concerns herself, i.e. her family, but it would be an odd way of saying this. West, followed by Hall, takes ἐμουτῆς with μῦθον, and changes οὐσ' to οὐδ', comparing the παλαίφατος λόγος of Ag. 750, and the τριγέρων μῦθος of Cho. 314, but I do not understand why Atossa should want to emphasise so strongly that her μῦθος is not her own. I should prefer Lawson's ἄμαντις οὔσα δειμάτος, which Page adopts<sup>18</sup>, but, while what Atossa is about to say may be prophetic of evil, and so may arouse fear, «not unprophetic of fear» is a slightly strange expression. Fear should be the result, not the object, of prophecy.

Lines 163-64 have caused particular difficulty for commentators, and have been variously explained and emended. πλοῦτος (or Πλούτος) has been altered, for example, to δαίμων (Heimsoeth), πότμος (Skutsch and Lawson), στόλος (Weil), πῶλος with μέγαν (A. Y. Campbell), πλίνθον with ὄλβος (Cataudella). In what sense can wealth be said to overturn the virtually synonymous ὄλβος? I agree with Belloni that there is nothing wrong with the text here, and that the association of ὄλβος and πλοῦτος should not be eliminated. Atossa picks up the vital theme of Persian wealth and prosperity, which, as we saw, was introduced by the chorus in the opening anapaests. I argued in my paper at the 1998 Cagliari Conference<sup>19</sup> that the whole of the first part of the play is dominated by the amoral idea that wealth and success are dangerous, that they attract the resentment, the φθόνος of the gods, and that it is not until the Darius-scene that the fall of Persia and Xerxes is seen in moral terms of punishment for *hybris*. These lines seem to me to be entirely consistent with that view. What worries Atossa is not, despite Broadhead, that the Persians may have wrongly used their wealth, and that the expedition has been «conceived in ὕβρις» (p. 262). There is no criticism here of Xerxes at all. It is not Atossa's role to criticise, but

<sup>18</sup> D. L. Page, *Aeschylus septem quae supersunt tragoedias edidit*, Oxford 1972.

<sup>19</sup> A. F. Garvie, *Text and Dramatic Interpretation in 'Persae'*, subsequently published in *Lexis* 17, 1999, 21-34.

to represent and to support, her son. What worries her, as it worried the chorus, is quite simply that Persia may have become too rich and prosperous. All the emphasis is on μέγας at the beginning of the clause. We should translate, not «great wealth», but «wealth when it has grown <too> great». In other words, when you have grown too rich, your prosperity is liable to desert you. Perhaps, as Belloni argues (119-20), the two nouns are not in fact synonymous: πλοῦτος may describe something less permanent than ὄλβος, and therefore suggest the transient wealth enjoyed by Xerxes, whereas the prosperity of Persia under Darius was god-given and therefore more permanent. I am not so sure about this. At 751 Darius uses πλοῦτος, not ὄλβος, of the wealth which he himself had so laboriously acquired, and at 755-56 the two words seem to be synonymous. In any case, thanks to Salamis, his prosperity has turned out not to be so permanent after all. At 709-12, when Atossa greets the ghost of her dead husband, she praises him because he surpassed all men in prosperity and was envied while he was alive. Now she envies him only because he died before he saw the disaster of Salamis. That, however, does not stop her from spoiling his happiness down below by ensuring that he knows all the details of that disaster. The metaphor has been variously explained as drawn from the collapse of a building, or a column, or the overturning of a table as a symbol of bankruptcy, or from wrestling in the palaestra. Broadhead wanted to emend κονίσσας οὐδας to κενώσας Σουσίδ' and ποδί to πέδοι. I prefer the usual view that the metaphor is derived from a horse which, like the Greek horse in Atossa's shortly to be related dream, upsets the chariot and rushes off it with across the plain in a cloud of dust (cf. Soph. Ant. 1275). As my old teacher A. H. Coxon pointed out<sup>20</sup>, κονίσσουσιν πεδίον at Hom. Ξ 145 (cf. N 820) implies rapid and ignominious flight.

So far, despite the problems of detail, the thought is more or less straightforward. Atossa's fear concerns Persian wealth and prosperity. But 165 introduces a development, when she explains that her inexpressible anxiety is in fact twofold. The lack of diaeresis in the middle of the trochaic tetrameter in 165 is worrying. It is paralleled elsewhere in tragedy only at Soph. Phil. 1402. I am not convinced by the argument that such oddities are only to be expected in an early play (why, then, in the late Phil.?). Once more we should remind ourselves that *Persae* was produced only fourteen years before the *Oresteia*. Porson, followed by many more recent editors, may have been right to transpose διπλῆ to the end of the line, while C.G. Haupt, followed by Sidgwick, proposed μέριμνα φραστός («is pondered»). φραστός, however, does not seem to occur in extant literature.

The sense of 165, however, is not in doubt, and it is certain that in the two apparently parallel μήτε clauses of 166-67 Atossa explains the nature of her double anxiety. She seems to be saying that on the one hand a large quantity of wealth without

<sup>20</sup> A. H. Coxon, *Persica*, CQ 8, 1958, 47.

men should win no honour or respect, while on the other hand men without wealth are not likely to be as successful as their strength might lead one to expect. Both wealth and manpower are required. For the thought Groeneboom<sup>21</sup> compares Call. *Hy.* 1.94-96. But can the Greek really mean what editors want it to mean? As Sidgwick pointed out long ago, the two μήτε clauses may be parallel in form, but the function of the two infinitives is apparently different. The first seems to indicate Atossa's anxious *resolve* not to honour wealth, while the second appears to be a *statement* of her belief, with which the negative would be normally οὐ rather than μή. Hall, like Mazon and Podlecki<sup>22</sup>, takes both infinitives as expressing indirect statement, with πλήθος as subject of σέβειν («I believe that the masses will not hold in respect wealth in the absence of men»), but I do not understand how χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων, which ought then to be the object of σέβειν, can be «best construed as a genitive absolute». As for 167, I have little confidence in the rendering, «(I am anxious) also that light [i.e. presumably the light of success] does not shine for men without money in proportion to their strength» [literally «in accordance with how much strength is available to them»]. Men without money normally *have* no strength. Podlecki emends πάρα to κάτω, and renders «the light of popular favour does not shine in proportion to their (intrinsic, former) power». But his vital bracketed supplement is not in the Greek. It is possible that σθένος refers not to strength in general but more specifically to the size of an army, to its manpower, so that the meaning is that even a large army may be defeated if it is not backed by financial resources. For this sense of σθένος cf. perhaps Hom. Σ 274 and Soph. *Ai.* 438, and the English «force», as in «an armed force». By the end of the play the σθένος, which under Darius had remained indefatigable (901), will have been cut off by Xerxes (1035). But the Greek does not say «even a large army». If this is the required sense, it would be better, with Blaydes, to change ὄσον to ὄσοις: «and that light does not shine for those who have an army, but are without money». ὄσοις could easily have been corrupted to ὄσον before the following σθένος. But the relevance of all this to Xerxes' army, which *was* backed by splendid financial resources, is highly dubious. Denys Page once suggested that the reference is not to the Persians but to the Greeks, and that λάμπειν is the indirect form of a direct optative wish: «may light not shine for the moneyless Greeks in proportion to their strength»; i.e. the Greeks may turn out to be stronger than their lack of resources would lead one to expect. But this indirect wish is far from convincing, and in any case it is clear from the dialogue between the Queen and the chorus-leader at 231-45 that Atossa is not supposed to know anything about the strength of the Greek forces.

Even if we tolerate the difficulties in the Greek, we have still to attempt to analyse

<sup>21</sup> P. Groeneboom, *Aeschylus' Persae, met inleiding, critische noten en commentaar*, Groningen 1930, on 165-67.

<sup>22</sup> A. J. Podlecki, *Three Passages in 'Persae'*, *Antichthon* 9, 1975, 1-2.



the development of Atossa's thought in the speech and in the context of the play as a whole. The combination of anxiety concerning wealth with anxiety concerning manpower need cause us no surprise. We have already noted it<sup>23</sup> at other points in the play. And it is undoubtedly effective that, while ἀνάνδρων at 166 evidently suggests the absence of the Persian army, and thus picks up the chorus's fears that the men may never return, by 168-69 it has become clear that only one man is really in Atossa's mind, namely her son. Similarly at 296-98 she enquires of the Messenger as to who is not dead, and for which of the commanders she is to mourn. The Messenger understands her psychology, and replies quite simply that «Xerxes himself is alive and sees the light». At 300 Atossa picks up the metaphor of light from 167, but it is now the light that has come to the house. She forgets her own warning here at 167 that light does not shine for those who have no money, and the Messenger has already reported (251-52) that the wealth of Persia has been destroyed. Her son will return, but he will have lost both his army (cf. the theme of κενανδρία at 118, 730; also 549, 716, 718, 761) and his wealth, and there will be no light for anyone at the end of the play.

In terms, then, of the later development of the plot lines 166-67 make good sense. It is only when we examine the immediate context that problems arise. I remarked at the beginning that the logic of poetry may well be different from the logic of prose discourse, but that does not mean that Aeschylus gave to his characters speeches which were totally illogical. Atossa begins by saying that she is worried about the possible loss of Persian wealth and prosperity. It then occurs to her, not unnaturally, that her anxiety is in fact twofold: to have men without money is as bad as to have money without men. It is her conclusion that is astonishing: «for I have no fault to find with our wealth; it is for my darling son that I am afraid». If Atossa had said, «I am even more worried about the loss of men (or the man) than I am about the loss of wealth», we might understand her. But how can she, in the space of only a few lines, have moved from expressing her worries about wealth to this categorical statement that she is not worried about wealth at all? And what is the logic of γάρ, which, I think, it is illegitimate to take in any other sense than causal? It cannot have adversative force: «I am not actually worried about wealth». But after 167, in which Atossa is still expressing her fear about the loss of wealth, «for» makes no sense at all. Wilamowitz<sup>24</sup> thought that it followed on rather from 166, with 167 providing a mere polar antithesis for the main idea of money without men. One might compare 598 ff., where a similar polar antithesis is followed by a γάρ clause which picks up only the first part of that antithesis, and the second part is largely irrelevant. But here the emphasis on Atossa's double anxiety surely indicates that the two μήτε clauses should have equal weight. There is therefore, I believe, no convincing alternative to

<sup>23</sup> See p. 3 above.

<sup>24</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aischylos Interpretationen*, Berlin 1914, 52.

accepting A. Ludwig's transposition of 166 and 167, which at least restores some intelligible logic. Atossa's anxiety about the loss of wealth leads naturally to 167. Then she reveals her second worry which concerns the loss of men. And in the γάρ clause at 168 she explains that it is this second anxiety which is uppermost in her mind. There may then be tragic irony in her conclusion that there is no need at all to worry about the loss of wealth; only her son is in danger. Ludwig's transposition is, then, on the right lines, but I suspect that, despite the consensus of the manuscripts, the corruption goes deeper. Atossa's change of mind is really too abrupt to be convincing. There have been many emendations, particularly of σέβειν, but I know of none that solves all the problems of this difficult passage. So I have some sympathy for Jo. Staurides' desperate deletion of 165-67 - the easy, but often, I think, wrong, way of eliminating difficulties. I am not even sure that my translation of ἔστι γὰρ πλοῦτός γ' ἀμεμφής, «for I have no fault to find with our wealth», is correct. It might mean, «for our wealth at any rate is not such as to attract the criticism of others [or "of the gods"]». So, in effect, it is taken by Mazon and Belloni who translate the word by «intact» (Belloni explaining that it is intact because it is exempt from blame), and by Hall who renders «we have sufficient wealth», and explains «irreproachable [sc. as to amount]». Rather we should compare *Ag.* 491, where the chorus expresses a preference for ἄφθονος ὄλβος, wealth that does not attract the φθόνος of other people or of the gods, in other words wealth only in moderation. In earlier poetry (e.g. *Hes. Op.* 118, *Hom. hAp.* 536, *Sol.* 38.5 W) such expressions with ἄφθονος mean something quite different. They describe prosperity given unstintingly or ungrudgingly by the gods. Homeric man wants as much prosperity and success as he can get, but by the fifth century excessive prosperity is often seen as something that is undesirable because it may attract divine resentment. So here, if Atossa is claiming that Persian wealth is not so great as to attract the notice of the gods, she is clearly deluding herself. But, after all that we have heard in the parodos about the boundless wealth and prosperity of Persia, it would be a surprising claim for her to make.

(4) *Persae* 579-83

πενθεῖ δ' ἄνδρα δόμος στερη-  
 θείς, τοκέες δ' ἄπαιδες  
 δαιμόνι' ἄχη,  
 ὀά,  
 δυρόμενοι γέροντες τὸ πᾶν δὴ κλύουσιν ἄλγος

580 τοκέες Tr τοκῆες rell post ἄπαιδες habent ἔρρανται vel ἔρραται vel ἔρα vel ἄρα codd.:  
 ad 571 rettulit Hermann

583 δυρόμενοι MQ ὀδυρόμενοι rell τε πᾶν Page κλύοντες P<sup>98</sup> ἰκχέουσιν Broadhead

This is a case where the generally accepted text, incorporating Hermann's deletion here of the superfluous verb at 580, *can* be made to render possible sense: «and every house mourns, deprived of its man, while childless parents, lamenting, alas, their

heaven-sent woes, in their old age hear of all their pain». For the emotional state of the parents cf. 63. The oxymoron of «childless parents» is reminiscent of the wife who is μονόζυξ, «yoked all alone» at 139, while the detail that these parents are old reminds us that all the young men have been lost at Salamis. It is not clear to me that anything is gained by Page's change of τὸ πᾶν to τε πᾶν. Presumably he meant it to connect γέροντες with ἄπαιδες. Nor am I convinced by West's explanation in his apparatus that τὸ πᾶν δὴ goes, not with ἄλγος, but with γέροντες («senes facti iam omnino», «who have now become completely old»). This is to lay too much stress upon the old age of the parents. The transmitted text, then, makes sense, but is it satisfactory sense, and is it what Aeschylus wrote? The problem lies in κλύουσιν ἄλγος, which a scholion explains by κλύουσι καὶ μανθάνουσιν ἄχος, «they hear and learn of their woe». ἄλγος, however, means not «woe» but «pain», and, to judge from *LSJ*, it is only in late Greek that it can describe the *cause* of pain. To hear of *troubles* is natural (as at 331), but to hear of pain is much less so. The rendering, «as they lament they come to understand the extent of their pain («the full measure of their anguish», Tucker<sup>25</sup>; cf. Sidgwick and Mazon), is, I think, to strain the Greek beyond what it can bear. I agree with Broadhead that «in a context that is concerned with lamentations...and especially in the concluding line of the stanza, one expects some more forcible verb than κλύουσιν». One might accept (with H. J. Rose<sup>26</sup>) that we have here a not uncommon case of a sentence in which the principal idea is expressed, not in the main verb, but in a participle that is placed emphatically at the beginning of the clause: «it is with lamentation that they hear of their pain». Hall translates, «...bewail...as they learn the full measure of their affliction». But the problem of hearing pain remains. There have been many emendations, and Broadhead himself proposed ἔκχουσιν, «give full vent to their pain». He compared *Ag.* 1029, where that verb governs γλῶσσαν, and *Ar. Thesm.* 554 ἐξέχεας ἅπαντα. The sense is attractive, but the corruption difficult to explain. It surprises me that nobody seems to have taken much notice of Bothe's ἔκλύουσιν, with prodelision: «in lamentation they unloose their pain». So, at *Soph. Ai.* 1225 it is clear to Teucer that Menelaus is about to «unloose his στόμα» (ἐκλύσω στόμα). Alternatively, and more subtly, the expression might imply that in lamentation the old men find some relief from their pain. Cf. *Eur. Pho.* 695 μόχθον ἐκλύει, where Mastronarde comments<sup>27</sup>, «ἐκλύει "undoes (by relaxing the tension/intensity of)", so "puts an end to"». I

<sup>25</sup> T. G. Tucker, *The 'Persians' of Aeschylus*, transl. by T. G. T., Melbourne 1935, 25.

<sup>26</sup> H. J. Rose, *A Commentary on the Surviving Plays of Aeschylus I*, Amsterdam 1957, on 582-83.

<sup>27</sup> D. J. Mastronarde, *Euripides: Phoenissae*, ed. with introd. and comm., Cambridge 1994. Cf. also *Eur. fr.* 573 N, ἀλλ' ἔστι γὰρ δὴ κἂν κακοῖσιν ἡδονὴ | θνητοῖς ὄδυροιο δακρύων τ' ἐπιρροαί· | ἀλγηδόνας δὲ ταῦτα κουφίζει φρενῶν | καὶ καρδίας ἔλυσε τοὺς ἄγαν πόνους. For the idea in general see M. Kokolakis, 'Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρίδα τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν 32, 1998-2000, 292-95.

wonder whether an actor in his delivery would be able to distinguish sufficiently between 'κλύουσιν and κλύουσιν.

(5) *Persae* 732

Βα. Βακτρίων δ' ἔρρει πανώλης δῆμος οὐδέ τις γέρων

Finally I turn to a line of stichomythia in which the last two words, which are the reading of all the MSS, have, despite Sidgwick's remark that «there is no need for emendation», nevertheless been widely suspected by commentators. I do not believe that they have ever been satisfactorily explained. Blomfield's<sup>28</sup> «*ne unus quidem senex superest*», «not even an old man survives» is impossible without the vital verb «survives», and in any case it is clear from the whole play that only the young men have been killed in the battle; the old men, like the chorus itself, survive to mourn the young, as we have seen in the passage which I have just been discussing. Better, therefore, is Sidgwick's «nor is any old man [among them]», which gains some support from the scholion in M, ὅ ἐστι πάντες νέοι, and from schol. Byz. A, τουτέστι πάντες οἱ νέοι ἐφθάρησαν. With this we have to supply ἔρρει from the first half of the line. In the next line, ᾧ (or ᾧ) μέλεος, οἶαν ἄρ' ἦβην ξυμμάχων ἀπώλεσεν, Darius duly laments the loss of the allies' youth, and Belloni rightly points out that this contrast between youth and old age is a recurring theme in the play. The role of the young men in this tragedy is to be cut down prematurely, because of the folly of the young Xerxes, while that of the old men, like Darius himself, is, as we have seen, to mourn their loss. I am not, however, convinced that this justifies the transmitted reading. At 729 Darius has asked whether the whole Persian people (λαὸς πᾶς) has been destroyed, and Atossa in effect answers «yes»: the whole city of Susa mourns its emptiness of men. So here the people of the Bactrians has been utterly destroyed, and, although Casanova<sup>29</sup> finds in the litotes an effective bitterness, it seems to me that Atossa would only, and disastrously, weaken her point by adding, «but not of course the old men». That there were no old men in the battle should be obvious enough. The contrast between old and young is sufficiently implied in Darius' response, and it does not depend upon the presence of the word γέρων in 732. I am not even sure that the scholion in M presupposes that reading. It could be the comment of someone who felt uncomfortable with the obvious, though, I think, natural, exaggeration in ἔρρει πανώλης δῆμος (Broadhead, indeed, suspected that δῆμος was corrupt), and, in the light of the next line, explained that Atossa must be referring only to the youth.

Here too there have been many emendations<sup>30</sup>, of which I shall consider only three.

<sup>28</sup> C. J. Blomfield, *Aeschyli Persae*, London 1840<sup>s</sup> (on his 738).

<sup>29</sup> See n. 3, 89.

<sup>30</sup> The most recent known to me is ὥστε τις γέρων, M. Vñchez, *Esquilo, Tragedias I, Los Persas*, Madrid 1997.

Gomperz<sup>31</sup> περί for γέρων is in many ways attractive: «the people of the Bactrians has perished in total destruction, and no one survives». The polarisation of expression, in which the same thing is stated first positively and then negatively, is too common to need illustration. But, although πάρα regularly stands for πάρεστι, there is no evidence (apart from Hesych. s.v. περί· περισσόν, περίεστι) that περί was ever used in the sense of περίεστι. περίεστι itself does not seem to occur in tragedy. More promising perhaps is the approach of Wilamowitz<sup>32</sup>, who, after Zakas, restored a second ethnic name by changing οὐδέ τις γέρων to ἡδ' Αἰγυπτίων. Why the Bactrians are singled out for special mention here is not entirely clear. Elsewhere in the play they, or rather individual Bactrians, appear only at 306 and 317. But Hall may be right to suppose (on 730-32) that Susa (730) and Bactria represent the western and eastern parts of the empire. So here, as Wilamowitz argued in his apparatus criticus, Egypt might represent the west. The corruption into τις γέρων is, however, highly improbable. I should prefer ἡδέ Κισσίων, largely because I thought of it myself before I discovered from Dawe's *Repertory of conjectures* that it had already been proposed by Boutens. The outlying Bactrians would then be paired with the heartland of the empire. As we have seen, the proper names in this play have caused great trouble to copyists. Once κισ had been corrupted to the familiar τις, a scribe, faced with the meaningless σίων, might have invoked the antithesis between old and young to make sense of his text. I would, however, not go so far as to claim any certainty that this is what Aeschylus wrote. I am sure only that, despite the consensus of the manuscripts, he did not write οὐδέ τις γέρων. The correct procedure here is, with most modern editors, to obelize. I sometimes think that it is a procedure which editors should adopt more often. On that note of ἀμνηγανία or ἀπορία I end.

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<sup>31</sup> Th. Gomperz, *Beiträge zur Kritik und Erklärung griechischer Schriftsteller*, SB Wien, 1890, Abh. IV, 1.

<sup>32</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aeschyli tragoediae*, Berlin 1914.