

**SEMINARIO DI STUDI SU RICHARD PORSON.
UNIVERSITÀ DI SALERNO, 5-6 DICEMBRE**

PORSON'S LAW RECONSIDERED

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be invited to open this Conference on the subject of my fellow-countryman, Richard Porson, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, the next-door neighbour of Gonville and Caius College, in which I spent three happy years from 1957-60. In 1792 Porson was appointed to the Chair of Greek at Cambridge. It is particularly gratifying that you should have decided to recognise, through this Conference, the work of one who did so much to establish the text of Greek tragedy, at a time when it was still possible to produce a host of emendations which were incontrovertibly correct, and accepted ever since, often on matters of detail that we now take for granted, such as the restoration of the Doric α in lyric passages. My concern today is with his ground-breaking work on Greek metre, and in particular with Porson's discovery of the law that now bears his name, the law which states that there cannot be word-division between the two longs of a spondee in the so-called fifth foot of an iambic trimeter, or at the end of a trochaic tetrameter. In 1797 he published his edition of Euripides' *Hecuba*, and it was in the Preface to the 2nd (1802) edition of that work that he first fully promulgated his famous Law. When I was a student, it was still customary in British universities for one to be taught how to translate Shakespeare and other English poets into Greek iambic trimeter verses. It was then that, long before I knew anything else about Porson, his name became familiar to me, as that of the law-giver, whose ordinances I too often broke. When I became a lecturer it was my turn to *teach* Greek verse-composition, and to introduce a new generation to the dreaded figure of Porson and his Law.

As time went on I learnt that Porson's Law was related to another phenomenon, Havet's Law, which was in fact already known to Porson, according to which in a trochaic tetrameter there cannot be word-division after an anceps in fourth position. Paul Maas demonstrated further that in various other metres too word-division after long anceps is permissible only at the caesura in the middle of the line¹. In the iambic trimeter that means at the penthemimeral caesura, in the trochaic tetrameter at the medial diaeresis. My concern today will be mainly with the end of the tragic iambic trimeter. The text-books on metre are often content to state the *facts* as they

¹ P. Maas, *Greek Metre* (tr. H. Lloyd-Jones), Oxford 1962, 34.

concern the practice of the early iambographers and the three tragedians, and to note that in comedy, and to a slightly lesser extent in satyr-drama, no such rule applies. They also present useful lists of breaches, or apparent breaches, of the Law. But they do not always attempt to explain *why* the tragedians avoided word-division in this position². I am still unsure of the answer to that question. I seem to remember being taught as a student that to the Greek ear a word with cretic form after a long anceps would produce a trochaic rather than an iambic effect. But this can hardly be true, given the ease with which the same lyric rhythms (for example the *lekythion*) can so easily be interpreted as either iambic or trochaic, depending on the context in which they appear. Various explanations of the Law have of course been given. Jean Irigoin, for example, argued that because of the disparity between a true long which implies the equivalence of two shorts and a long anceps which implies the equivalence of one short the poets aimed to avoid the lengthening effect of the pause which comes after the end of a word³. As Laetitia Parker says, in an important article, «this, however, is not enough to account for the varying degrees of strictness with which the rule is observed by different poets and in different metres»⁴. Parker's own suggestion is that the bacchiac rhythm κ| | is a characteristic *clausula*, and would thus give an impression of dislocation if it were found in this position before the end of a line. Why, then, is word-division after a bacchiac at the beginning of a lyric colon not subject to the same objection, as for example before an ithyphallic (or cretic bacchiac) at *Ag.* 368 πᾶρεστίν τοῦτό γ' ἔξιχνεῦσαι? At *Ag.* 182-83 West similarly prints a bacchiac at the beginning of a colon, whereas Page placed it at the end of the previous colon⁵. At *Ag.* 224-25 it is the other way round. In the bacchiac both longs are of course true longs, and there is no anceps, but that should not affect the point at issue. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides had never heard of Porson and his Law, and I wonder how they would themselves explain their adherence to it. Would they say that it simply *felt* right to them and no doubt to their audiences? But why, then, do we find more breaches of the Law in some plays than in others, and why did the comic poets not expect the same audiences to be equally sensitive to their own refusal to observe the Law? What was there about the Law that made it in the fifth century appropriate only to serious poetry? Is it enough to say, with Koster⁶,

² The same complaint cannot be made against A.M. Devine and L.D. Stephens, *Language and Metre: Resolution, Porson's Bridge, and Their Prosodic Basis*, Chico, California 1984, whose highly sophisticated study can be best appreciated by readers who are at home with modern linguistic theory and statistical methods and with mathematical formulations.

³ J. Irigoin, *Lois et règles dans le trimètre iambique et le tetramètre trochaique*, REG 72, 1959, 67-80.

⁴ L.P.E. Parker, *Porson's Law Extended*, CQ 16, 1966, 1-26. The quotation is taken from p. 2.

⁵ M.L. West, *Aeschyli Tragoediae cum incerti Poetae Prometheus*, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1990 (corr. 1998); D.L. Page, *Aeschyli Septem quae Supersunt Tragoedias ed.*, Oxford 1972.

⁶ W.J.W. Koster, *Traité de métrique grecque suivi d'un précis de métrique latine*, Leiden 1966, 106 n. 2.

that the iambics of comedy are closer to the spoken language? And earlier, why do Archilochus' iambics in general conform with the Law, whereas Hipponax breaches it in several places in his surviving choliambi? One may suspect that once established, for whatever reason, as appropriate to tragedy, the tragedians instinctively, and perhaps even unconsciously, maintained it. The question then arises as to how far, and for what reasons, they were prepared to breach the Law. And the answer to that question has important implications for the art of textual criticism. Should all breaches be emended away, or only major breaches, and are even some major breaches acceptable, and what are the criteria for distinguishing between major and minor breaches?

To emend away *all* breaches of Porson's Law would seem to be a very extreme procedure, and I am certainly not about to advocate it. And yet Porson himself, in the same Preface to his edition of *Hecuba*, still found it necessary to argue that an anapaest or dactyl was impossible in the so-called fifth foot of the trimeter, with the only permissible exceptions involving intractable proper names. I do not think that any modern scholar would seriously question that, or that anyone would find acceptable, for example, a spondee in the second foot. Out of the total number of iambic trimeters in the surviving tragedies the cases in which the manuscripts present exceptions are so few that there can be no doubt that emendation is required. With Porson's Law, however, that is not the case. There are too many instances of what scholars describe as minor breaches for us to condemn them all. The most obvious, and least problematical, cases involve proclitic monosyllables like the definite article followed by the noun, where the close semantic connection between the two words is apparently sufficient to nullify the sense of pause. I have noticed a particularly large number in Euripides' *Cyclops*, but I have not carried out a systematic analysis of all the plays. It is interesting to note that prosody by itself is not the sole consideration, but that the sense of the Greek can override it in this way. What, then, are we to make of Eur. *Phoen.* 886-87 [TEXT 1] ... τῶν Οἰδίπου | μηδένα πολίτην μηδ' ἄνακτ' εἶναι χθονός, 'that none of the sons of Oedipus should be a citizen or ruler of the land'? Here the article and the following noun are *not* formally in agreement. Probably the elliptical Οἰδίπου is to be understood as equivalent to a genitive in agreement. Or should we suppose that the definite article in this position in the line was so common that it could be used even when, unusually, it was not followed by a noun in agreement with it? The lines are in a passage deleted by Diggle (after Fraenkel). If they are right, this instance cannot be used as evidence for the practice of Euripides. Mastronarde, however, defends their authenticity⁷.

⁷ J. Diggle, *Euripidis Fabulae* III, Oxford 1994; D.J. Mastronarde, *Euripides 'Phoenissae'*, Cambridge 1994.

Other monosyllabic words which are used in the first half of a spondee are prepositions, and particles etc. which cohere closely in sense with what follows: *καί* (e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 1104 [TEXT 2(a)] *καὶ τῷδε σέ*, Eur. *IA* 669 [TEXT 2(b)] *καὶ μητέρος*), *οὐ* etc. At Eur. *Andr.* 346 [TEXT 2(c)] *ἀλλ' οὐ πείσεται* is Pflugk's generally accepted emendation of the MSS' more serious breach, *ἀλλὰ ψεύσεται*. More difficult is the relative pronoun at the end of Eur. *El.* 572 [TEXT 2(d)], *ὃ πείσομαι*, where the pronoun refers not forwards but back to the antecedent earlier in the line. Only a few lines earlier, at 567 we find the more normal *τὸν φίλτατον*. Monosyllabic enclitics or other postpositives are quite common (especially in Sophocles and Euripides) in the second half of the spondee: e.g. *παραινῆς μοι καλῶς* at Aesch. *Cho.* 903 [TEXT 3(a)], Eur. *IA* 1146 [TEXT 3(b)] *ἀνακαλύψω γὰρ λόγους*; Kirchhoff emended to *ἀνακαλύψομεν*. Six or seven instances of *ἄν* in that position, always following an elided verb in the optative, are listed by Porson, and by Jebb on Soph. *El.* 413 [TEXT 3(c)] *εἴποιμι' ἄν τότε*⁸. This kind of recurring word-pattern at a given position in the line has been recently well documented by Stefano Novelli⁹. So far I have been discussing the kind of monosyllabic words that can easily be explained as causing trivial or minor breaches of Porson's Law. But there are also signs of a possible extension of the range of exceptions. Dodds in his note on *Ba.* 246-47 remarks that 'the use of a long monosyllable, or elided trochaic word, at the beginning of the fifth foot, is characteristic of Eur., and especially of his latest style'¹⁰. One should perhaps distinguish between these two categories, the long syllable and the elided trochaic word. It is in his use of long monosyllables in this position that Euripides seems especially to go beyond earlier practice, and this may support my suggestion that at least *his* earlier observance of the usual restriction was based more on tradition and habit than on conscious understanding of the reason for it. Similarly, as is well known, he, like Sophocles, moves from restraint to greater freedom in the matter of metrical resolutions. On the other hand he never breaks the rigid rule that an anapaest or a dactyl is not permitted in the fifth foot. In several places we find a monosyllabic noun in the first half of the fifth-foot spondee. At Eur. *Ba.* 252 [TEXT 4a)] Pentheus, in his diatribe against Cadmus and Tiresias, speaks the line *τὸ γῆρας ὑμῶν εἰσορῶν νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον*, 'seeing that your old age possesses no sense'. Euripides clearly liked the sound of this; for at 271 [TEXT 4(b)] he makes Tiresias retaliate in similar terms, *κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων*, '[someone like Pentheus] proves to be a bad citizen because he lacks good sense'. In this play which

⁸ R.C. Jebb, *Sophocles, the Plays and Fragments VI, the Electra*, Cambridge 1894.

⁹ S. Novelli, *Studi sul testo dei Sette contro Tebe*, Amsterdam 2005.

¹⁰ E.R. Dodds, *Euripides Bacchae*², Oxford 1960.

is so much concerned with the antithesis between rationality and the irrational Dionysiac religion, the echo is certainly intentional, and it is made all the more emphatic by the isolation of the key word *voũv* with word-division both before and, in its unusual position, after it. I cannot see that there is the same justification for Eur. *Supp.* 1098 [TEXT 4(c)] ἡδίστα πρίν γε δῆθ' ὄτ' ἦν παῖς ἦδε μοι, 'sweetest once when this my daughter was still alive', or for the adjective at *IA* 49 [TEXT 4(d)] τρεῖς παρθένοι, or for the verb at *IT* 501 [TEXT 4(e)] δὸς τῇ τύχῃ. Sophocles uses *voũς* in similar fashion as early as *Ant.* 68 [TEXT 4(f)] περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει *voũv* οὐδένα. But this does seem to be more characteristic of Euripides in his later plays.

Cases involving an elided trochaic word seem to me to be a little more complicated. Dodds' note on *Ba.* 246-47 [TEXT 5(a)] is on the line ταῦτ' οὐχὶ δεινῆς (δεινὰ Mau, followed by Diggle) ἀγχόνης ἔστ' ἄξια; One can understand why Elmsley emended to ἐπάξια. But the word-shape recurs at *Or.* at 615 [TEXT 5(b)] θανεῖν ἔστ' ἄξια (where Elmsley also emended it), and at fr. 299 [TEXT 5(c)] ἔστ' ἀσθενῆ. In all of these one may feel that the elision eliminates the sense of word-division. On the other hand, if ἔστι is an enclitic, as I was taught at school, it coheres in sense with what precedes, rather than with what follows. So Eur. *Hel.* 281 [5(d)] ends with τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἐμόν, with the verb closely connected with the preceding word. It is true that unemphatic ἔστι can begin a sentence or a line, and that when it does so it correctly bears an accent on the first syllable. But is it correct in the kind of case that we are discussing? The uncertainty of Dodds himself is betrayed by his printing of the verb in his citation of the *Orestes* passage without, but in the fragment with, the accent. Willink uses Murray's text of *Orestes*, in which there is no accent, but in the lemma to his note he tacitly inserts it¹¹, while Diggle inconsistently prints an accent in the *Bacchae*, but not in the *Orestes* passage. In two other places involving ἄξιος the elision certainly involves an enclitic, at *IA* 507 [TEXT 5(e)] σοῦ τ' ἀξίως, and in the same play 975 [TEXT 5(f)] σοῦ τ' ἄξια. In his note on the first of these Stockert, citing Dodds, states categorically that the long monosyllable is not a breach of Porson's Law¹². It would be more accurate to say that it *is* a breach, but to consider *why* Euripides permitted it on these occasions. Was there something special about the word ἄξιος, or about the word *voũς*, which we considered a moment ago, that lent itself to this minor breach of Porson's Law. For an elided particle following a monosyllabic verb cf. also *Or.* 1035 [TEXT 5(g)] δεῖ δ' ἢ βρόχους, which Platnauer in his note on *IT* 580 says is unique¹³, but *IA*

¹¹ C.W. Willink, *Euripides Orestes*, Oxford 1986.

¹² W. Stockert, *Euripides Iphigenie in Aulis* II, Vienna 1992, 344, «In σοῦ τ' ἀξίως stellt das lange Monosyllabon keinen Bruch des "Porson'schen Gesetzes" dar».

¹³ M. Platnauer, *Euripides Iphigenia in Tauris*, Oxford 1938.

1026, $\chi\rho\acute{\eta}\ \mu'\ \acute{\alpha}\theta\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ is not significantly different. My final example in this category comes not from Euripides but from Aeschylus. At *Pers.* 762 [TEXT 5(i)] we find $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \tau\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\nu\ \text{Ζεὺς}\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\acute{\xi}\ \tau\acute{\eta}\nu\delta'\ \acute{\omega}\pi\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$, 'ever since lord Zeus bestowed this honour'. The elision seems to eliminate, or at least to weaken, the word-division, but $\tau\acute{\eta}\nu\delta\epsilon$ looks not forward but back to $\tau\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\nu$. Here the rhythmical structure evidently outweighs purely semantic considerations. But why, as E. Harrison once asked, did Aeschylus not write $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \tau\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\nu\ \tau\acute{\eta}\nu\delta'\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\acute{\xi}\ \text{Ζεὺς}\ \acute{\omega}\pi\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$ ¹⁴?

Most of the examples which we have considered so far have concerned monosyllables of one kind or another in the first half of the fifth foot spondee. It is when the first syllable of the spondee is the last syllable of a *longer* word that more serious difficulties arise, and that we cannot avoid the question of possible textual corruption. Porson indeed framed his Law in terms of what he called hypermonosyllables, and some modern scholars follow him in this. The Law then states that there cannot be word-division between the two longs of a spondee in the fifth foot unless the first long consists of a monosyllable. So Parker, when she declares, [see n. 3] 13 n.3, that there are seven breaches of the law in *Cyclops*, ignores 10 instances of the definite article + six other minor breaches, and indeed misses one or two more serious ones. Can we really decide that any kind of monosyllable is acceptable in this position? Why then are there so comparatively few? Why do we find the same monosyllabic words occurring several times? And why should there be this difference between monosyllabic words and hypermonosyllables? I have never come across any attempt to explain this. Is it that the longer the word the greater is the sense of the pause when it comes to an end, or that, for some reason, word-division after a monosyllabic word is felt less when there is word-division also before it? I begin with more serious occurrences involving elision, or supposed elision. The very first line of Eur. *Ion* [TEXT 6(a)] presents a notorious problem: $\text{Ἄτλας}\ \acute{\omicron}\ \chi\alpha\lambda\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\iota\sigma\iota\ \nu\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu\ | \ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \pi\alpha\lambda\alpha\iota\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\acute{\rho}\acute{\iota}\beta\omicron\nu$, 'Atlas, who with his brazen back rubs away the ancient home of the gods'. One imagines that playwrights pay special attention to the opening line of a play, and it is hard to believe that Euripides was so careless with the beginning of this one. Owen, in his commentary on the line, observes that 'it has been suggested that the weight of the line indicates the heavy burden of Atlas'¹⁵. He does not tell us whether he accepts this explanation. It is of course true that the absence of a regular caesura can sometimes produce an apparently deliberate laborious effect, but I know of no other instance in which a breach of Porson's Law can be said to have the same effect, and it would have little point here. In his school

¹⁴ E. Harrison, CR 46, 1932, 256.

¹⁵ A.S. Owen, *Euripides Ion*, Oxford 1939, 67.

edition C.S. Jerram cites Jebb's comment on the equally troublesome σήμαιν' εἴτ' ἔχει at the end of Soph. *Phil.* 22 [TEXT 6(b)]¹⁶. Jebb explains that 'the natural stress on the first syllable of the imperative σήμαιν', coinciding with the rhythmical ictus, has the effect of making the next syllable (αιν) seem relatively short to the ear'. One would like to know the evidence from which Jebb has concocted this idea, and I can see no reason to apply it, with Jerram here, to νώτοις οὐρανόν. In any case other explanations have been put forward for the Sophocles passage, one of them relating to the elision. So for T.B.L. Webster 'probably elision was felt to tie the words together so that the end of the line was heard as a pentasyllabic word which firmly bound the third metron into the second'¹⁷. Dawe emended σήμαιν' to μάνθαν', while Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (rightly, I think) obelize the word¹⁸. Some have tried to solve the *Ion* problem by supposing that νώτοις could be felt as νώτοις', that is to say the elided form of νώτοισι, but that any audience would understand this seems highly improbable. There have been many conjectures and rearrangement of the words. As good as any is the text printed by Diggle, on the basis of a fragmentary quotation in Philodemus: ὁ χαλκείοισιν οὐρανὸν νώτοις Ἄτλας¹⁹. It is hard to see why Euripides should have rejected this simple formulation in favour of a major and pointless breach of Porson's Law.

Another major breach which certainly involves elision is to be found at Soph. *Aj.* 1101 [TEXT 7(a)] ποῦ δὲ σοὶ λεῶν | ἔξεστ' ἀνάσσειν ὦν ὄδ' ἠγεῖτ' οἴκοθεν; '(how do you have the authority to command the host which he led from home?'). Here too I do not believe (with Koster [n. 5] 105) that the elision is sufficient to mitigate the abnormality. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (after an anonymous scholar) emend ἠγεῖτ' to ἠγετ'. I prefer Porson's own conjecture ἦγεν in the active voice, which picks up Menelaus' οἴκοθεν ἄγειν at 1052-53; cf. also *Il.* 2.557 in the Catalogue of Ships, Αἴας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν δυοκαίδεκα νῆας. Whatever we may make of all these passages, it seems clear to me that it is highly dangerous to introduce this kind of major breach of Porson's Law by emendation. At Aesch. *Pers.* 761 [TEXT 7(b)] the MSS have οἶον οὐδέπω | τόδ' ἄστν Σούσων ἐξεκείνωσεν πεσόν, 'such as has never before fallen upon and emptied this city of Susa'. I am sure that Pauw was wrong to emend to ἐξεκείνωσ' ἐμπεσόν, a major breach of Porson's Law which Aeschylus is very unlikely to have committed immediately before the less serious breach at 762 which we have already considered. There is

¹⁶ C.S. Jerram, *Euripides Ion*, Oxford 1896; R.C. Jebb, *Sophocles; the Plays and Fragments IV, the Philoctetes*², Cambridge 1898, 9

¹⁷ T.B.L. Webster, *Sophocles Philoctetes*, Cambridge 1970, 69.

¹⁸ R.D. Dawe, *Studies on the Text of Sophocles III*, Leiden 1978, 121-22, *Sophocles Philoctetes*³, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1996, 3; H. Lloyd-Jones and N.G. Wilson, *Sophocles Fabulae*, Oxford 1990.

¹⁹ J. Diggle, *Euripides Fabulae II*, Oxford 1981.

nothing wrong with the transmitted text, and no doubt, if Pauw's text had been transmitted, editors, offended by the breach of Porson's Law, would have quickly emended it to what has in fact been transmitted. It is true that ἐμπίπτω is commoner than the simple πίπτω in this sense, but cf. Soph. *Aj.* 300, 375, and 1061. ἐν + a dative would have been more normal, but it is easy enough to understand 'on it'. Page prints Broadhead's πέδον²⁰, which necessitates the insertion of τ' after Σούσων, and awkwardly separates Σούσων from ἄστν. In this category I mention Eur. *Held.* 529 [TEXT 7(c)], which ends with the words καὶ κατάρχεσθ' εἰ δοκεῖ, 'and begin the ritual if you are so resolved'. For Paley there was no problem as he deleted the whole passage in which it occurs²¹. Elmsley suggested emending to the active κατάρχετ', but the active in this sense is apparently not found elsewhere until late Greek. It may be that we have to choose between the metrical anomaly and the unusual use of the active voice. Diggle cautiously obelizes the words²². At Eur. *Alc.* 671 [TEXT 7(d)] we find at line-end οὐδείς βούλεται, and οὐδείς or οὐδέν in the same position also at *OC* 1022, *Cycl.* 120 and 672, *Phoen.* 747, and, in a line deleted by Nauck and Diggle, at *HF* 1338; also at Eur. fr. 494.1. Porson said, and more modern metricians repeat, that this is acceptable, because in such cases we can always print οὐδ' εἶς or οὐδ' ἔν, thus, if I understand them correctly, restoring a monosyllable in the first half of the spondee. I do not see that this makes any significant difference. Metricians seem happy to argue that elision *obliterates* word-division when it suits their purpose, but that it *creates* word-division when that is what they want. I can suggest myself only that once Euripides has used οὐδείς for the first time in this position, it joins various other words (νοῦς etc.) in his mind as a word in which the licence is acceptable.

I turn now to serious, or fairly serious, breaches of Porson's Law that do not involve elision. At *IT* 1006 [TEXT 8(a)] P's reading τὰ δὲ γυναικὸς ἀσθενῆ is obviously preferable to L's γυναικῶν. At *HF* 933 [TEXT 8(b)] Porson's αἱματώπας is an easy correction of αἱματοπούς. At *IT* 580 [TEXT 8(c)] οὕτω γίγνεται should probably be emended to ᾧδε (Porson) or to γίγνεται τόδε (Diggle). At *IA* 1455 [TEXT 8(d)] κείνον δεῖ δραμεῖν is easily corrected to δεῖ κείνον δραμεῖν. I am not sure why Stockert [n. 11] thinks that it may be excused by the long monosyllabic δεῖ. At *OC* 664 [TEXT 8(e)] κάνευ τῆς ἐμῆς I suppose that we might just agree with Jebb that 'the prep. coheres closely with its case'²³. *PV* 821 [TEXT 8(f)] produces ἡμῖν αὖ χάριν, where it is easy enough, with Griffith, to print

²⁰ H.D. Broadhead, *The Persae of Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1960.

²¹ F.A. Paley, *Euripides I*², London 1872.

²² J. Diggle, *Euripidis Fabulae I*, Oxford 1984.

²³ R.C. Jebb, *The Plays of Sophocles II*³, Cambridge 1900, 112.

ἤμιν with short iota²⁴. Sophocles uses that form quite often but it does not occur in Euripides or in Aeschylus, unless Kirchhoff's emendation is correct at *Supp.* 959, and unless we retain the transmitted reading at *Eum.* 349 (in lyric dactyls). Since I do not believe that Aeschylus is the author of *PV* this does not greatly trouble me.

I am, however, greatly troubled by *Pers.* 321 [TEXT 10], the final passage which I wish to discuss: ... ὅ τ' ἐσθλὸς Ἀριόμαρδος, Σάρδεσιν | πένθος παρασχών. This is the most serious breach of Porson's Law in Aeschylus, and it is not to be explained by the early date of the play. *Persae* is not all that early, and, if dating has any relevance at all, it may have some bearing on why *Persae* has by far the fewest instances in Aeschylus of minor breaches of the Law. But that makes it all the more surprising that it contains this serious one. Editors declare that it can be justified by the proper name, but I know of no other instance where a proper name is involved in this kind of breach of Porson's Law. Moreover, it is not the only peculiarity in the line. Ariomardos made his first appearance at 38 where, as again at 967, his first syllable was long, whereas here it is short, producing a normal 'third-foot tribrach'. Furthermore, at 38 he was commander of Egyptian Thebes, whereas here he seems to come from Sardis. We need not worry too much about this. Many of the Persian names in the play may be Aeschylus' own invention, and even when he uses a name known to us also from, say, Herodotus, he may have known little or nothing about the real owner of the name. So Ariomardos here cannot have been the man who at *Hdt.* 7.67 commanded the Caspians, or (7.78) the son of Darius who commanded troops from the Caucasus. It is pointless to speculate as to whether our Ariomardos came from Sardis but commanded Egyptians. Inconsistency on Aeschylus' part is much more likely. He liked the name, and it did not matter to him whether the first syllable of his creation was long or short. Similarly Artembares has a long penultimate syllable at 29 and 972, but a short one at 302. We can, I think, reject the suggestion that *ιο* is to be scanned as a single syllable, or that the first syllable is indeed long, and that the proper name excuses the resulting 'fourth-foot anapaest'. Such a licence is very rare in tragedy, even in proper names, and the only parallel in Aeschylus' surviving plays would be the 'fifth-foot anapaest' at *Sept.* 569 Ἀμφιάρεω βίαν. The breach of Porson's Law is another matter. Naturally one thinks of emendation, but it has not proved successful. Porson himself emended to ἄρδεων for Σάρδεσιν, followed by a one-line lacuna which began with the words βολαῖσι πιστός, 'trusting in the shooting of his arrows'. Bothe, and later Broadhead²⁵, who makes no mention of Porson, without a lacuna made the palaeographically easier change of Σάρδεσιν to ἄρδεσι: 'producing grief (i.e. for his enemies) by his

²⁴ M. Griffith, *Aeschylus Prometheus Bound*, Cambridge 1983.

²⁵ H.D. Broadhead, *CR* 60, 1946, 4-5.

arrows'. But ἄρδις, strictly an 'arrow-head', is a very rare word, found in Classical Greek only at *PV* 880 (metaphorically), and twice in Herodotus. It would be surprising if in this play which makes so much of Persian fighting with the bow Aeschylus found only this opportunity to use the word. And, against Bothe and Broadhead, all the emphasis in this speech is on the πένθος suffered not by the Greeks but by the Persians, who were brave but ineffective. The point would be ruined by an untimely reminder that the Greeks too suffered losses. The only other conjecture worth mentioning is D.S. Robertson's Ἀσίδι²⁶, but the corruption is improbable. In this paper, in which I have tried to honour Porson, I am sorry to end by disagreeing with him, but I think that on this occasion at least we should indulge Aeschylus, by letting him break the rule for once.

University of Glasgow

A.F. Garvie

Texts

1. ... τῶν Οἰδίου | μηδένα πολίτην μηδ' ἄνακτ' εἶναι χθονός
Eur. *Phoen.* 886-87
2. (a) ... ἢ καὶ τῶδε σέ
Soph. *Aj.* 1104
- (b) ... ἀπὸ πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος
Eur. *IA* 669
- (c) ... ἀλλὰ ψεύσεται
Eur. *Andr.* 346
- ἀλλ' οὐ πείσεται Pflugk
- (d) ... ᾧ πείσομαι
Eur. *El.* 572
3. (a) ... παραινέεις μοι καλῶς
Aesch. *Cho.* 903
- (b) ... ἀνακαλύψω γὰρ λόγους
Eur. *IA* 1146
- (c) ... εἴπομ' ἂν τότε
Soph. *El.* 413
4. (a) τὸ γῆρας ὑμῶν εἰσορῶν νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον
Eur. *Ba.* 252
- (b) κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων
Eur. *Ba.* 271

²⁶ D.S. Robertson, CR 58, 1944, 34.

- (c) ἥδιστα πρίν γε δῆθ' ὅτ' ἦν παῖς ἦδε μοι
Eur. *Supp.* 1098
- (d) τρεῖς πάρθενοι
Eur. *IA* 49
- (e) ... δὸς τῇ τύχῃ
Eur. *IT* 501
- (f) περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα
Soph. *Ant.* 68
5. (a) ταῦτ' οὐχὶ δεινῆς (δεινὰ Maas) ἀγχόνης ἐστ' ἄξια
Eur. *Ba.* 246
ἐπάξια Elmsley
- (b) ... θανεῖν ἐστ' ἄξια
Eur. *Or.* 615
ἐπάξια Elmsley
- (c) ... ἐστ' ἀσθενῆ
Eur. *fr.* 299
- (d) ... τοῦτ' ἐστ' ἐμόν
Eur. *Hel.* 281
- (e) ... σοῦ τ' ἀξίως
Eur. *IA* 507
- (f) ... σοῦ τ' ἄξια
Eur. *IA* 975
- (g) ... δεῖ δ' ἢ βρόχους
Eur. *Or.* 1035
- (h) ... χρή μ' ἀθλίαν
Eur. *IA* 1026
- (i) ἔξ οὔτε τιμὴν Ζεὺς ἄναξ τήνδ' ὥπασεν
Aesch. *Pers.* 762
6. (a) Ἄτλας ὁ χαλκίοισι νώτοις οὐρανόν | θεῶν παλαιὸν οἶκον ἐκτρίβων ...
Eur. *Ion* 1
- (b) ... σήμαιν' εἴτ' ἔχει
Soph. *Phil.* 22
μάνθαν' Dawe
7. (a) ... ποῦ δὲ σοὶ λεῶν | ἔξεστ' ἀνάσσειν ὦν ὅδ' ἠγεῖτ' οἴκοθεν
Soph. *Aj.* 1101
ἦγεν Porson, ἦγετ' anon.
- (b) ... οἶον οὐδέπω | τόδ' ἄστυ Σούσων ἐξεκείνωσεν πεσόν

Aesch. *Pers.* 761

ἔξεκείνωσ' ἔμπεσόν Ραυω: Σούσιων τ' ... πέδον Broadhead

- (c) ... καὶ κατάρχεσθ' εἰ δοκεῖ
Eur. *Hclid.* 529
κατάρχετ' Elmsley
- (d) ... οὐδεὶς βούλεται
Eur. *Alc.* 671 (cf. *Cycl.* 120 and 672, *HF* 1338, *Phoen.* 747, fr.
494.1, *Soph. OC* 1022)
8. (a) ... τὰ δὲ γυναικὸς ἀσθενῆ Ρ: γυναικῶν L
Eur. *IT* 1006
- (b) ... αἱματωποὺς ἐκβαλῶν
Eur. *HF* 933
αἱματώπας Porson
- (c) ... οὕτω γίγνεται
Eur. *IT* 580
- ᾧδε Porson: γίγνεται τόδε Diggle
- (d) ... κείνον δεῖ δραμεῖν
Eur. *IA* 1455
- δεῖ κείνον δραμεῖν Porson
- (e) ... κάνευ τῆς ἐμῆς
Soph. *OC* 664
- (f) ... ἡμῖν αὖ χάριν
[Aesch.] *PV* 821
10. ὁ τ' ἔσθλος Ἀριόμαρδος, Σάρδεσιν | πένθος παρασχῶν
Aesch. *Pers.* 321
- ἄρδεσι Bothe: ἄρδεων Porson, followed by a one-line lacuna, beginning with βολαῖσι πιστός:
Ἄσιδι D.S. Robertson

Abstract. After a brief consideration of the reason why Porson's Law is generally observed in Greek tragedy, this paper goes on to ask how far, and for what reasons, the tragedians were prepared to breach the Law. The answer to this question has important implications for the art of textual criticism. But the distinction between minor and major breaches is not always easy to determine.

Tragedia, Metro, Critica testuale