

# Ancient Evidence for the Colometry of Aeschylus' *Septem*

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IN THIS ESSAY I hope to demonstrate three points: (1) that the colometry of Byzantine manuscripts of Aeschylus is supported and corrected by an ancient papyrus fragment of *Septem*; (2) that this colometry is defensible on metrical grounds; (3) that adoption of this colometry obliges us to reexamine two textual problems.

The earliest witness to the text of *Septem* 563–67~626–30 is to be found in a papyrus of the second century, *P.Oxy.* XXII 2333 (1956). One of the two scraps which comprise this papyrus contains the ends of lines 626, 627, 629 and 630. In a photograph (PLATE 1) the visible letters are displayed as follows:

ΟΥΛΙΤΑϸ  
ΛΙϸΕΥ ΗΙ  
ΕΚΤΟΘΕΝ  
ΝΩ

When the papyrus was first published, it was restored to read:<sup>1</sup>

626 [κλυοντες θεοι δικαι]ους λιτας  
[ημετερας τελειθ ως πο]λις ευ[τυχ]ηι  
[δοριπονα κακ εκτρεποντες <ες> γας]  
[επιμολους βαλων πυργων δ] εκτοθεν  
630 [Ζευς ϸφε κανοι κεραι]γω

The editor (C. H. Roberts) comments on his alteration of the traditional word order in 629: “The position of the surviving letters in relation to the preceding and following lines makes it certain that 27–29 letters have been lost before *εκτοθεν*, while the margin to the right precludes us from reading *βαλων* after it *as do all other MSS*” (italics mine).

<sup>1</sup> The editor did not include the missing 628 in his reconstruction. For the sake of clarity I have printed 628 as it appears in Murray’s first edition (OCT, Oxford 1937), against which the papyrus was collated originally.

It is not entirely clear by what process of calculation the figure "27–29 letters" was reached. So far as one can tell from a photograph, the first letter of EKTOΘEN would appear to have been, roughly, under the 24th letter of 627.<sup>2</sup> Since, in the part of the papyrus containing 644–55, the lines do not seem to vary by more than two (at most three) in number of letters when they have been aligned with the 24th letter of 646, we might, therefore, suppose that about 22–24 letters have been lost before E in 629. This accords far better with the 21 letters of the editor's restoration than his own figure of 27–29 letters.

Is it necessary, however, to accept this altered word order? An altered colometry might provide a less drastic solution to the problem. If βαλών began 630 (as the papyrus suggests), this would leave us only 16 letters in 629. Addition of γᾶς from the end of 628 would produce a line of only 19 letters, but if we should take -τες from the end of ἐκτρέποντες (the smallest possible addition), the sum would be raised to 22 letters, a total within the range of possibility which the disposition of the letters suggests. This colometry of 628–29: . . . ἐκτρε-  
 ἔπον| . . . ἔκτοθεν | would have an additional advantage. The last letter, ω, of 630 appears directly under the T in 629. In the editor's reconstruction, T is the 24th letter of 629 and ω the 19th of 630, a difference of five letters. In the colometry which I propose, T is the 25th letter of 629 and ω the 24th letter of 630, a difference of only one letter.

One more argument might be adduced in favor of this new colometry. Although no trace of 628 has been preserved on the papyrus, there is just enough room beneath EY in 627 and enough at the right of 628 to have left some trace of the final γᾶς. No trace, however, of 628 would have survived in a colometry where 628 was divided . . . ἐκτρέπον|–.

The most important piece of evidence supporting the editor's reconstruction is implied in his phrase, "as do all other mss." Since there is a good deal of support for the view that the colometry of Byzantine mss of the tragedians represents the tradition of ancient

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to determine the exact relation of the letters in the two lines, since that part of the scrap which contains 629–30 appears slightly askew in the photograph, with the result that the first letter of EKTOΘEN appears beneath the 25th (missing) letter of 627; that is, 629–30 are misplaced, by the space of one letter, to the right. This adjustment, however, is not vital to the argument.

editions,<sup>3</sup> it would be dangerous to reconstruct the papyrus in such a way as to do violence to the traditional division of the lines. Collation for colometry of a selection of older, 'Thoman', and Triclinian mss does not support the editor's assertion. The most reliable mss **M I V**, as well as **Q K Pd Ra Lc G**, display the same colometry: in the strophe, . . . *στηθέων* | . . . *μεγαληγόρων* | . . . *εἰ θεοὶ* (*εἰ γὰρ* | **Q K Lc G**) | . . . *γᾶ* |; and in the antistrophe, . . . *λιτᾶς* | . . . *εὐτυχῆ* | . . . *ἐκτρέποντες* | . . . *ἔκτοθεν* | . . . *κεραυνῶ* |. The only error of responson in this colometry lies in the failure to split *ἐκτρέποντες* in 628.<sup>4</sup>

A few mss, e.g. **O Fc L**, have almost the same colometry as **M** but misdivide 566 . . . *ἀνδρων* |. The only significant variation in the tradition is to be found in the Triclinian mss **F T**. **F** in *Septem* contains two systems of colometry. The line-divisions are generally in agreement with *Phi* and 'Thoman' manuscripts but are often simply haphazard. Colometric corrections, not necessarily in responson, are indicated by a colon (:). **F** divides 565–67 as: . . . *μέγαρα* | . . . *ἀνο: κρίων* . . . *ἀνδρῶν* | . . . *εἰ θεοὶ θεοὶ: . . . γᾶ* | and 628–30 as . . . *ἐκτρέ: ποντες* | . . . *ἐπι: μόλους* . . . *ἔκτοθεν* | *βαλῶν: . . . κεραυνῶ* |. It will be noticed that although in **F** 566–67~629–30 were originally divided like **O Fc L**, colometric corrections have rendered them the same as Roberts'. Triclinius in **T** carries the process of correction to completion in his line divisions. For 565–67 he has: . . . *κλύων* | . . . *εἰ θεοὶ θεοὶ* | . . . *γᾶ* |; and for 628–30: . . . *γᾶς* | . . . *βαλῶν* | . . . *κεραυνῶ* |. Triclinius' metrical scholia reveal the aim of his efforts; he has made 565~628 into an antispastic colon like the rest of the lyric with the exception of the clausula.<sup>5</sup>

We are forced to conclude that the editor of *P.Oxy.* 2333 was in error in his reconstruction of the text of this passage, since his interpretation was based on the altered colometry of Triclinius; that the colometry of the Byzantine mss is confirmed by this papyrus; and that the colometric error of the paradosis at 628 (failure to divide the final word of the colon) was probably not committed in the papyrus.

Similar confirmation of the Byzantine colometry of Aeschylus is

<sup>3</sup> See Wilamowitz's original arguments at *Heracles I*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin 1895, repr. Darmstadt 1959) 129ff.

<sup>4</sup> The combination of two cola into one and the failure to split a word at the end of a colon are the two most common types of scribal error in the colometry of Aeschylean mss.

<sup>5</sup> Triclinius analyzes 563–67 as: antispastic trimeter brachycatalectic, antispastic trimeter catalectic, antispastic dimeter hypercatalectic, antispastic dimeter catalectic, choriambic hepthemimer.

provided by *P.Oxy.* 2179, which supports the correct colometry of *Parisinus gr.* 2884 (Q) at *Septem* 163,<sup>6</sup> where the other mss fail to divide μάχαι|σί.

It has become increasingly apparent that the colometry of Byzantine mss of the tragedians represents the tradition of ancient editions. In the case of Euripides, Barrett has stated: "The Mediaeval mss. of Euripides show a notable consistency in their colometry, and there can be no doubt that they are reproducing, in general with commendable accuracy, the same original arrangement. This was evidently the work of a competent metricalian, who established it in accordance with intelligent principles."<sup>7</sup> Zuntz, after surveying the evidence of Euripidean papyri, concludes: "... that basically the layout in the mediaeval manuscripts is the Alexandrian one—which was bound to be corrupted, to some extent, in the course of the tradition just as was the text."<sup>8</sup> Examination of the only two papyri of lyrics from extant Aeschylean tragedies leads to the same conclusion.

Before we decide on the use to which we may put the colometry of the older mss of Aeschylus, we must first discover if the meter of this colometry is defensible. The text of the *paradosis* (corrected for *responsion* in 628) may thus be analyzed.

- 563 ἰκνεῖται λόγος διὰ στηθέων  
 τριχὸς δ' ὀρθίας πλόκαμος ἴσταται  
 μέγала μεγαληγόρων  
 κλύων ἀνοσίων ἀνδρῶν, εἰ θεοὶ
- 567 θεοὶ τοῦδ' ὀλέσειαν ἐν γᾶ.
- ~ 626 κλύοντες θεοὶ δικαίους λιτὰς  
 ἡμετέρας τελεῖθ', ὡς πόλις εὐτυχῆ,  
 δορίπονα κακ' ἐκτρέπον-  
 τες γᾶς ἐπιμόλους πύργων δ' ἔκτοθεν
- 630 βαλῶν Ζεὺς σφε κάνοι κεραυνῶ.

<sup>6</sup> R. D. Dawe, *The Collation and Investigation of Manuscripts of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1964) 152.

<sup>7</sup> *Euripides Hippolytus*, ed. W. S. Barrett (Oxford 1964) 84.

<sup>8</sup> G. Zuntz, *An Enquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge 1965) 32. See also D. C. C. Young, "The Text of the Recognition Duet in Euripides' *Helena*," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 39–46.

563~ 626	υ--υ- υ--υ-	<i>dochmiac dimeter</i>
564~ 627	̄ῡ <sup>υ</sup> ̄-υ- ̄ῡυ-υ-	<i>dochmiac dimeter</i>
565~ 628	υυυυυ -υ-	<i>2 cretics</i>
566~ 629	̄ῡ-υυυ- ---υ-	<i>dochmiac dimeter</i>
567~ 630	υ--υυ-υ--	<i>hipponactean</i>

Apart from 565~ 628 and 567~ 630, the lyric consists of dochmiac dimeters. Two cretics appear as a colon six times in Aeschylean dochmii.<sup>9</sup> Korzeniewski defends the completely resolved cretic both in *Septem* 565~ 628 and in *Agamemnon* 1142.<sup>10</sup> The hipponactean is found twice in Aeschylean dochmii, and its use as an 'alien' clausula is so common as to require no comment. The colometry of the paradosis is consistent both with Aeschylus' metrical practice as it is presented in the Byzantine tradition and with modern metrical theory.

The colometric history of this passage has important implications for two major difficulties in interpreting the text. Before these specific problems are examined, two points must be made clear: (1) the Byzantine colometry in all probability represents the ancient tradition, and (2) the "competent metrician" who divided the text of an ancient dramatist into cola was not likely to violate such metrical principles as he understood. Snell's praise of the colometry of Bacchylides is worth remembering: "Quae divisio versuum non modo magna cum diligentia sed etiam consilio et ratione a grammaticis antiquis confecta . . ." <sup>11</sup>

In 566 κλύων, the reading of most mss, is accepted by Verrall as "another bold figure, the hair itself being said 'to hear'," <sup>12</sup> an interpretation which Rose termed "merely grotesque." Many editors, including Page in his recent Oxford text, have adopted Hermann's κλυούσα with "respectable manuscript support" <sup>13</sup> from κλύουσα I<sup>pc</sup>,

<sup>9</sup> All figures for metrical phenomena are given on the basis of the colometry of the paradosis. It is, therefore, necessary to cite the line numbers of the only edition of Aeschylus that preserves and reports this colometry, Wecklein's edition of 1885. For 2 cretics: *Sept.* 552~615; *PV* 600~622, 606~628, 613~635; *Ag.* 1106~1120, 1113~1127. For the hipponactean: *Sept.* 113?, 554~617; *Supp.* 646~659.

<sup>10</sup> D. Korzeniewski, *Griechische Metrik* (Darmstadt 1968) 111.

<sup>11</sup> *Bacchylidis Carmina cum fragmentis*, ed. B. Snell (Leipzig 1949) preface.

<sup>12</sup> A. W. Verrall, ed. *The Seven Against Thebes of Aeschylus* (London 1887) ad 553.

<sup>13</sup> Dawe, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 168. He further observes (p.110): "I<sup>pc</sup>'s reading could be emendation to correct the gender of the participle, but B<sup>γρ</sup> . . . gives unconscious support to Hermann: its great merit being that it does not make any sense, and therefore cannot be invention." The reading of B<sup>γρ</sup> actually does no more than support κλύουσα, which need be no more than the full form of κλύουσα'.

κλύους' X C Nc, and ἀλύουσα B<sup>ρ</sup>. If, as appears likely, ancient editions of Aeschylus did not end a colon at this point, Hermann's conjecture ought to be rendered inadmissible by reason of the hiatus within the colon. Elision of a long vowel is, of course, out of the question, but prodelision, that is, κλυούσα ἠνοσίων, cannot be entirely ruled out. Platnauer notes that although  $\bar{a}$  and  $\bar{\alpha}$  are, for obvious reasons, rarely the cause of elision in tragedy, there are five examples in Sophocles but none in Aeschylus. *Epsilon* is the vowel which most frequently suffers elision, but Platnauer cites μὴ ἠπολακτίσης PV 651 and the surprising (and suspected) ἀστιβῆ ἠπόλλωνι Sept. 858, but in most examples of prodelision of *alpha*, it is an *alpha*-privative. Platnauer cites *Eum.* 85, 691, 749 τὸ μὴ ἠδικεῖν and *Eum.* 86 τὸ μὴ ἠμελεῖν, and notes that such prodelisions are almost never indicated in mss or printed editions.<sup>14</sup> This orthographic convention could have prevented the recognition of an unusual prodelision and favored a nominative form which could be easily understood as a normal elision.

Wilamowitz originally defended κλύων as a legitimate alternate form for the feminine,<sup>15</sup> but he later proposed κλύοντες to be understood as in agreement with θεοί.<sup>16</sup> Wilamowitz's explanation of the process of corruption looks suspiciously like *petitio principii*: "Die Korruptel erklärt sich ohne weiteres dadurch, dass die Wunschpartikel hinter dem Partizipialsatz steht." In fact, it is difficult to find parallels in Aeschylus for an extended participial phrase preceding the clause of wishing with whose subject the participle is in agreement.<sup>17</sup> It is also true that Wilamowitz's conjecture is defensible only in the Triclinian colometry, which he adopts. If we attempt to import it into the older colometry, we supplant a normal and expected dochmiac dimeter with an anomalous iambic trimeter in which "resolution . . . precedes syncopation."<sup>18</sup> I can find no similar violation of Miss Dale's dictum in the lyrics of Aeschylus. Another metrical

<sup>14</sup> M. Platnauer, "Prodelision in Greek Drama," CQ 10 (1960) 140–44.

<sup>15</sup> See *Griechische Tragödie* I (Berlin 1889) 190–191. Most examples of this formation are doubted by Ed. Fraenkel on Ag. 562 and attacked by Barrett on *Hippolytus* 1105, cf. J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer* (Göttingen 1916) 59 n.2.

<sup>16</sup> *Aischylos-Interpretationen* (Berlin 1914) 113.

<sup>17</sup> A possible example can be found at Sept. 260: αἰτουμένω μοι κούφον εἰ δόιης τέλος, which, however, can as easily be interpreted as the protasis of a conditional sentence which, after interruption, is completed by 262.

<sup>18</sup> A. M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama* (Cambridge 1968) 73.

FLEMING PLATE 1



*P.Oxy. 2333 fr. A (SECOND CENTURY): AESCHYLUS, Septem 621-38  
(Reproduced by permission of the Egypt Exploration Society)*

problem lies in the ending  $\cup-- --\cup-$ , for which there is only one Aeschylean parallel, at *Agamemnon* 247~258, where the initial *anceps* of the iamb is short ( $\cup-- \cup\cup-$ ) and the sequence of four *longa* avoided.<sup>19</sup> If we accept the colometry of the paradosis as representing ancient editions, only *κλύων* (which we may interpret with Verrall) or *κλύουε'* (which we might construe, albeit awkwardly, as a *nominativus pendens*, "as I hear"), and *κλυούεα* (whose metrical difficulty is almost justified by the improvement in sense) appear to deserve an editor's attention.

The same metrical arguments apply to Hermann's supplement *ἐε* γὰρ in the responding 628. Support has been drawn from the mss: *εἰς* is superscript in **M I** over *ἐπιμόλους*, and *πρὸς* is written after γὰρ in nine of Dawe's mss.<sup>20</sup> In his edition Hermann recognized *πρὸς* as an intrusion, and it is worthy of note that the phrase *πρὸς τοὺς ἐπιμόλους* occurs among the scholia. Although Verrall and (it would seem) Wilamowitz<sup>21</sup> believed *εἰς* to be similarly intruded, Hermann's supplement has won approval because the loss of *ἐε* can be explained as haplography and because of the frequency of the combination *ἐκτρέπειν εἰς*, which occurs in Aeschylus (*Ag.* 1464), Euripides, Thucydides, Antiphon, Aristotle and Herodotus, who uses it twice to refer to the diversion of water.

The same verb, however, is found with a variety of constructions: with *πρὸς* in Sophocles (*Aj.* 53), with a direct object in Sophocles (*El.* 350) and (middle voice) in Demosthenes (19.225), and with various prepositions. Although we are able to understand the reason for the intrusion of *εἰς* by scribes, we cannot assume that this unmetrical scribal conjecture has hit the mark.

If we reject Hermann's supplement on the grounds of colometry and meter, is the Greek possible to interpret? The answer seems to lie in the construction found in Sophocles and Demosthenes, that is, to take *ἐπιμόλους* as direct object. We might translate "You gods, hearing our just prayers, bring to fulfillment—that the city be victorious—spear-labored woes, by turning aside the invaders of our land."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Such a sequence seems almost unparalleled in the lyric iambs of Aeschylus. In the few (dubious) examples, there is metron-diaeresis.

<sup>20</sup> Dawe, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 275.

<sup>21</sup> *op.cit.* (*supra* n.16) 112.

<sup>22</sup> This interpretation was first suggested to me by the late Professor Douglas Young.



Two difficulties arise from this interpretation. In the first place, it may be objected that the intrusion of a purpose clause between verb and object is too violent a disruption of the sense, but see *Septem* 337 and Euripides' *Cyclops* 121, which is cited by Schwyzer,<sup>23</sup> and an even closer Euripidean parallel at *Supplices* 1145. In *Septem* 628 the parenthetical purpose clause seems to take the form of an interjected hope, like similar interjected clauses in Aeschylus as, for example, *Septem* 5. Such a parenthetical purpose clause would have easily been misunderstood by scribes who were able to make sense of this troublesome passage only by interpolating *εἰς* or *πρὸς*.

In the second place, *κλύω* is commonly described as requiring the genitive case when it means 'listen to', as it seems to do in 626.<sup>24</sup> Aeschylus, however, provides at least three examples of this verb followed by an accusative case where the gods are asked to listen to a prayer (*Sept.* 171, *Cho.* 125–26) or a plea (*Ag.* 814). It might be added that the papyrus gives evidence against any attempt to reinterpret *λιτὰς* as a Doric genitive, since it appears to support *δικαίους* **M<sup>2</sup> I** and most mss with the exception of **Q O Δ N<sup>pc</sup>**, which have *δικαίας*. *δίκαιος* is treated as an adjective of two terminations twice in Euripides (*Heracl.* 901, *IT* 1202). Kühner-Blass I 537 list other adjectives in *-αιος* which suffer the same variation and cite *ἄτης λαθραίου* from Aeschylus (*Ag.* 1230), as well as nine examples of adjectives of various formations that are otherwise found with three terminations but which Aeschylus employs with only two. Page appears to be convinced by the evidence and prints the masculine form. In sum, there appears to be nothing against interpreting *κλύω* with an accusative in the sense 'to listen to'.

Although it is still quite possible that the solution to some of these problems eludes us, it is unlikely that any remedies which depend on Triclinian colometry can be correct. The starting point of any discussion of the text of this passage must be the text and colometry of our earliest witness.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ed. Schwyzer, "Die Parenthese," *AbhBerlin* 1939 no.6, p.17.

<sup>24</sup> See for example LSJ s.v. II and Kühner-Gerth I p.358.

<sup>25</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to Professors P. A. Stadter and E. C. Kopff for their suggestions and criticisms, to Dr R. A. Coles and Professor E. G. Turner for providing a photograph of the papyrus, and to the Egypt Exploration Society for their permission to reproduce the photograph.