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The importance of the context

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Druk: Casparie Heerhugowaard bv

The title of my lecture is of course a truism. We all of us know from daily experience how important context in its broadest sense can be. E.g. we behave and talk quite differently according to the varying *social* context in which we find ourselves. And the cry 'Fire!' has very different meanings depending on the *situational* context in which it is uttered: it may be a cry for help, but it may also be a command, or it may just be the answer shouted by an excited student in a class asked by the teacher to name the four elements that were assumed by the Greek philosophers – it all depends on the situation. It is also a well-known fact that this decisive role of the situational context may be exploited for comic effects by transferring an utterance from one context to another quite different from it, e.g. when the hetaera Gnathainion in the poem by Machon uses the highly tragic formula τὸ κοῖλον Ἄργος to denote her private parts¹; or when in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes Strepsiades – who, in order to get an idea of the amount of his debts, is looking into his book of accounts –, after having ascertained that he owes 12 minae to a certain Pasion, asks himself (*Nub.* 30) ἀτὰρ τί χρέος ἔβῃ με μετὰ τὸν Πασίαν; – using a highly poetic phrase, which in its proper context must have meant 'which need has come to me...?' but by this transfer into the context of money-lending comes to mean 'which debt came to me...?'; or when – the other way round – in a famous passage of the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, every time Euripides has recited the solemn first lines of one of his tragedies, Aeschylus completes his last trimeter with the prosaic everyday words ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν – an effect comparable to Stodart-Walker's parody of Wordsworth 'My heart leaps up when I behold A mince pie on the table'². A medieval rhetorician, John of Sicily, has even defined parody in general in these terms: 'we speak of parody' he says 'when someone transfers somebody else's utterance into his own context in such a way that it will not escape notice'³.

But my real subject will not be the situational context. I shall confine myself to the context in its original sense, that is: the words surrounding a certain passage or a certain word within a spoken or written utterance.

That in this narrower sense, too, the context plays an important part is something we can, again, observe in everyday life. Thus we are familiar, all of us, with the phenomenon that the context of a word may cause a *speech error*. In English e.g. one may hear phonetic assimilations like 'still waters do run steep'⁴ instead of 'deep' under the influence of the preceding word 'still', or 'Spanish speaking people'⁵ or 'available for exploitation'⁶; in France we

¹ Machon 384-6 Gow ἡ δ' εἶπε 'μήτηρ, πῶς ἔφη 'μέλλω φιλεῖν
τὸν μηδὲν ὠφέλημα, τὸν ὑπὸ τὰς στέγας
τὸ κοῖλον Ἄργος δωρεὰν θέλοντ' ἔχειν;'

² Archibald Stodart-Walker, *The Moxford Book of English Verse*, 1340-1913, London 1913, 62.

³ Ioann. Sicel. in Hermog. *Id.* ed. Walz, *Rhet. Gr.* 6, 400, 16-8 παρωδία γὰρ ἐστὶν ὅταν τὸ ἄλλοτριον εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν σύνταξιν μεταποιήσῃ τις οὕτως ὥς μὴ λανθάνειν.

⁴ Victoria A. Fromkin (ed.), *Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence* (Janua Linguarum. Ser. Maior 77), The Hague-Paris 1973, 248 (44).

⁵ *ibid.* 218.

⁶ *ibid.* 219.

may come across people saying ‘trous les tois’⁷ instead of ‘tous les trois’ (by the way: in this French example the influence of the context has resulted not in the change of one sound but in the interchange of two sounds – it is a specimen of the famous class of speech errors called spoonerisms); in German the numeral for eleven may be pronounced ‘ölf’⁸ instead of ‘elf’ because of the following numeral ‘zwölf’ (‘twelve’), or someone inviting a company at the dinner-table to drink to the health of their principal may say ‘Ich fordere Sie auf auf das Wohl unseres Chefs aufzustossen’ (‘to belch’)⁹ instead of ‘anzustossen’ – a most embarrassing slip caused by the two preceding ‘auf’s; and so on and so forth.

By the way, a very attractive explanation has recently been given on these lines of the famous speech error committed by the actor Hegelochos, who, when reciting line 279 of Euripides’ *Orestes* ἐκ κυμάτων γὰρ αὐθις αὐ γαλήν’ ὀρῶ, pronounced the word γαλήν’ ‘calm’ as γαλῆν’ ‘weasel’: a few years ago Stephen Daitz¹⁰ has very plausibly suggested that Hegelochos’ faulty accentuation was caused by the three circumflected syllables surrounding the word γαλήν’.

Occasionally such mistakes have even become regular elements of the language, as, e.g., in the French expression ‘la robe était toute neuve’ and the like, where the feminine gender of the adverbial ‘toute’ is due to the surrounding feminines¹¹; or in the Latin numeral for ‘nine’ ‘novem’, whose last letter etymologically should be an *n* but has become an *m* under the influence of the following numeral ‘decem’¹²; or in the Latin expression ‘mihi Gaius nomen est’, where the case of ‘Gaius’ is assimilated to the preceding dative¹³; and so on and so forth.

But in general the phenomenon is restricted to individual cases. In ancient Greek literature a well-known instance is Ar. *Pax* 291 ὥς ἡδομαι καὶ χαίρομαι κευφραίνομαι, where the middle χαίρομαι instead of the normal χαίρω is an ‘Augenblicksbildung’ due to the middle voices on both sides of this word; similar cases are Ar. *Eq.* 115 πέρδεται καὶ ῥέγκεται and 1057 χέσαιτο γάρ, εἰ μαχέσαιτο, where the unusual middles ῥέγκεται and χέσαιτο are due to the same wish on the part of Aristophanes to make these verbs ‘rhyme’ with the middles in the immediate neighbourhood; in Theocr. 17,66 ὄλβιε, κοῦρε, γένοιο the predicate ὄλβιος is assimilated to the following vocative – a phenomenon which is found several times in Greek and Latin literature, but only in poetry (see Gow’s commentary on this passage); and in the well-known saying ἔρδοι τις ἦν ἑκαστος εἰδεῖν τέχνην¹⁴ the illogical optative εἰδεῖν in the

⁷ *ibid.* 181.

⁸ F. Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, s.v. elf (181960, 163).

⁹ Fromkin 46.

¹⁰ *CQ* 77 (N.S.33), 1983, 294 f.

¹¹ W. Havers, *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax*, Heidelberg 1931, 75.

¹² M. Leumann, *Lat. Laut- und Formenlehre*, München 1977, 487.

¹³ E. Löfstedt, *Syntactica* 2, Lund 1956, 108.

¹⁴ Ar. *Vesp.* 1431.

defining relative clause is due to the influence of the optative *ἔρδοι* in the main clause.

A large quantity of *scribal errors* in the manuscripts of our texts are to be explained in the same way: they have been caused by the influence of the context on the copyist.

Thus the substitution of a middle form of a verb for an active one, of which we have just seen occasional uses made by Aristophanes, is a mistake found rather frequently in the manuscripts of Greek lexicographers. E.g. in Hsch. δ 782 the manuscript has *δηΐουν: ἐμάχοντο. ἐπορθοῦντο*: Bühler¹⁵ has seen that the second part of the explanation should be *ἐπόρθουν*, which became *ἐπορθοῦντο* through assimilation to the preceding middle *ἐμάχοντο*; similar cases are Hsch. ο 860 *ὄνεται: ἀτιμάζεται. μέμφεται*, where Latte has rightly restored *ἀτιμάζει* for *ἀτιμάζεται*, and Hsch. κ 3856 *κουριζόμενος: ὕμεναιούμενος*, where, I am sure, *ὕμεναιῶν* should be read instead of the unparalleled middle *ὕμεναιούμενος*.¹⁶

Substitutions like these are only one kind of the very numerous class of assimilations or, as Hermann Fränkel has called them, ‘Echoschreibungen’¹⁷, that are to be found in our manuscripts. For example at S. *Trach.* 1212 two manuscripts have *φορᾶς γέ τοι φθόνησις οὐ φθονήσεται* instead of *γενήσεται*; in Menander’s *Aspis* line 4 the papyrus has *εὐδο[ξο]ῦντα καὶ σωθοῦντα* instead of *σωθέντα*; in most manuscripts of Aristophanes the first line of the *Antigone* of Euripides, quoted in the *Frogs* (1182) by Euripides himself, runs *ἦν Οἰδίπους τὸ πρῶτον εὐτυχῆς ἀνὴρ*, but two manuscripts have *εὐδαίμων* instead of *εὐτυχῆς* – a mistake apparently caused by the next line in *Frogs*, in which Aeschylus protests *μὰ τὸν Δῖ, οὐ δῆτ’, ἀλλὰ κακοδαίμων φύσει*; etc. etc. Every classical scholar, I think, knows from his own experience how frequent mistakes of this class are: instances can be found in the apparatus of almost every page of a classical text, and I shall, therefore, not multiply examples. I should like to add just one interesting case, where, I think, the phenomenon has escaped the notice of scholars.

In the last chapter of his treatise *On the Arrangement of Words* Dionysius of Halicarnassus deals with ‘melodious and metrical arrangement that bears a close affinity to prose’¹⁸. He illustrates this kind of arrangement with passages from Homer for epic, from Euripides for iambic, and from Simonides for melic poetry. The quotation from Simonides – the famous Danae-fragment (PMG 543) – he introduces with the following words¹⁹: *γέγραπται δὲ κατὰ*

¹⁵ *RhM* 107, 1964, 96.

¹⁶ The same mistake is made e.g. by Victor Magnien in his monograph *Le futur grec* 2, Paris 1912, 150, where he quotes Photius *Lex.* 406,6 Porson as *πείσονται: πάθωνται* (instead of *πάθωσιν*).

¹⁷ *Einleitung zur kritischen Ausgabe der Argonautika des Apollonios* (Abhandl. Ak. d. Wiss. Göttingen, Philol.-hist. Kl. III 55), Göttingen 1964, 38 ff.

¹⁸ 2,135,20f. U.-R. *περὶ .. τῆς ἐμμελοῦς τε καὶ ἐμμέτρου συνθέσεως τῆς ἐχούσης πολλὴν ὁμοιότητα πρὸς τὴν πεζὴν λέξιν*.

¹⁹ 2,140,18ff. U.-R.

διαστολὰς οὐχ ὧν Ἀριστοφάνης ἢ ἄλλος τις κατεσκεύασε κώλων, ἀλλ' ὧν ὁ πεζὸς λόγος ἀπαιτεῖ. πρόσεχε δὴ τῷ μέλει καὶ ἀναγίνωσκε κατὰ διαστολὰς, καὶ εὖ ἴσθ' ὅτι λήσεται σε ὁ ῥυθμὸς τῆς ᾠδῆς 'The lines are written divided not into the cola constituted by Aristophanes or somebody else, but into those which are required by prose. Now give heed to the melody and read according to the divisions, and < so our manuscripts read > be sure that the rhythm of the ode will escape you'. Now the expression 'be sure' strikes me as rather odd in this context, where, after the instructions given to his addressee, we rather expect an expression of Dionysius' *own* certainty of what will happen if his instructions are followed up: that is to say, we should expect not 'be sure', εὖ ἴσθ', but 'I am sure', εὖ ἰδθ' – and for my part I have little doubt that that is the true reading and that the reading of our manuscripts is due to the influence of the two preceding imperatives.

By the way: the phenomenon occurred as early as in Mycenaean times, as appears from a Linear B tablet from Pylos²⁰ *di-pa me-zo-e ge-to-ro-we 1 di-pa-e me-zo-e ti-ri-o-we-e 2*, where the first *me-zo-e* is a mistake for *me-zo*, apparently caused by *me-zo-e* in the next item. And that the mechanism which lies at the root of this phenomenon has never ceased working we can see every day in printed texts. To give just a few examples: in Wagner's edition of the Greek tragic fragments²¹ a fragment of Sophocles (F 201c) is printed as γῆρα προσ-ῆκον σῶξε τὴν σωτηρίαν instead of εὐφημίαν; in a Dutch school edition²² of Menander's *Dyskolos* line 797 runs περὶ χρημάτων λαλεῖς, ἀβεβαίου χρήματος instead of πράγματος; and recently the Aeschylus edition of Wecklein-Zomaridis was twice cited as 'Aischylou Dramata Sozomata' instead of 'Sozomena'²³. In the same way one may come across in English a strange word like 'requized' for 'required', caused by the word 'criticized' in the line above it²⁴, and in German the expression 'in Winklichkeit' instead of 'in Wirklichkeit' under the influence of the word 'Winkelmass' a little further on²⁵.

Apart from assimilations the context may also be the cause of omissions of syllables or words – the well-known phenomenon of haplography, a good instance of which is Aeschylus' magnificent wording of the *lex talionis* at Ag. 1430, where Casaubonus has restored Aeschylus' words τύμμα τύμματι τεῖσαι, whereas our manuscripts offer τύμμα τύμμα τίσαι – the last syllable of τύμματι having been overlooked because of the following τι of τίσαι. A partic-

²⁰ PY Ta 641,2.

²¹ *Aeschyli et Sophoclis perditarum fabularum fragmenta*, Vratislaviae 1852,255.

²² *Menander: Dyskolos*. Met inleiding en commentaar uitgegeven door B.A.v. Groningen, Leiden 1960, 48.

²³ T. Gantz, *CJ* 74, 1979, 298⁵². *CQ* 75, 1981, 21²².

²⁴ *CR* 7, 1893, 346a.

²⁵ 'In Winklichkeit ist dies eine alte Form des Winkelmasses' (K. v. Fritz in: O. Becker [ed.], *Zur Gesch. der griech. Mathematik* [WdF 33], Darmstadt 1965, 286 = *Grundprobleme der Gesch. der antiken Wissenschaft*, Bln.-N.Y. 1971,557). – Other nice examples are 'Hac forma de ipso Apollodoro, qui Artemitam patriam habuitur utitur Strabo' (Meineke ad Steph. Byz. 128,12); 'H. Freudentheul: Euklid' (*Gnomon* 44, 1972, Bibliogr. Beilage p. 23).

ularly glaring case is Apoll. Dysc. *Synt.* 1,3²⁶, where as an example of the repetition of a word the grammarian quotes from Sophocles the words *βαρὺς βαρὺς σύνοικος*, and nevertheless in most manuscripts the word *βαρὺς* is written only once – a nice example of purely mechanical copying without regard to the contents of the text (which for us, of course, makes things much easier than an intelligent copyist consciously changing the text!).

The omission may even affect a much greater part of the text. In that case we have the notorious *saut du même au même*, the result of the copyist's eye wandering from the next word to be written or from the last word he has just written down to the same word or a much similar one further on. This has caused e.g. the loss of 15 words in our best manuscript of Aristotle's *Poetics*²⁷; a nice example is also a passage in the second *hypothesis* of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* *χαριέντως δὲ Τύραννον ἅπαντες αὐτὸν ἐπιγράφουσιν ὡς ἐξέχοντα πάσης τῆς Σοφοκλέους ποιήσεως, καίπερ ἡττηθέντα ὑπὸ Φιλοκλέους, ὥς φησι Δικαίαρχος* (S.T 39), where the scribe of the manuscript G has skipped the words *ποιήσεως* up to and including *Φιλοκλέους*, because his eye strayed from the first *-κλέους* to the next.²⁸

Still another way in which the context may be responsible for accidents in the transmission of texts is the substitution for the end of a verse of a verse-end in the neighbourhood: I refer you to the list of instances given by Eduard Fraenkel in his commentary on *Agamemnon* line 1216.

All these mistakes are the result of too much, and misplaced, attention to the surrounding context by copyists; usually they are easily detected and do not harm the interpretation of the passage in question. This is quite different when, on the contrary, too little attention is given to the context by readers: the consequence of this may often be that a passage is wrongly interpreted.

E.g. Erotian in his *Hippocratic Glossary*, commenting upon the word *κοχώνην* in Hippocrates' *Epidemics*²⁹, says (fr.17 Nachmanson [p. 103, 13ff.]): *οἱ μὲν τὸ ἱερὸν ὁστούν. οἱ δὲ τὰς κοτύλας τῶν ἰσχύων ἐξ ὧν ἐστὶν Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ γραμματικὸς. Γλαυκίας δὲ καὶ Ἰσχόμαχος καὶ Ἰππῶναξ τὰ ἰσχία* 'Some take it to mean the sacrum, others – among whom Aristophanes the grammarian – the sockets of the hip-joints, and Glaukias, Ischomachos and Hipponax the haunches'. On the strength of this passage the word *κοχώνη* figures among the fragments of the iambic poet Hipponax in two of our modern editions (fr. 151 b Masson, West) – but the Hipponax cited by Erotian as an interpreter of Hippocrates along with the grammarians Glau-

²⁶ p. 3,4ff. Uhlig *δις τὸ αὐτὸ στοιχεῖον παραλαμβάνεται, ἔλλαβεν, ἔννεπε · ἀλλὰ καὶ συλλαβή, Λέλεξ, πάμπαν · ἀλλὰ καὶ λέξις, 'Μῶσ' ἄγε, Μῶσα λίγεια* ' (Alcman PMG 14a), 'βαρὺς βαρὺς (alterum *βαρὺς* om. LCB) *σύνοικος* (S.F 753).

²⁷ See Kassel's preface p. VII.

²⁸ By the way, it is not only copyists who fall prey to the *saut du même au même*: witness the stewardess who said to her passengers 'extinguish your seat belts' instead of 'extinguish your cigarettes and fasten your seat belts' (Fromkin [n.4] 256).

²⁹ *Epidem.* 5,7 (5,208,2f. Littré).

kias and Ischomachos and opposed to Aristophanes of Byzantium cannot possibly be the poet: he must be a grammarian too. The context of Erotian, taken by itself, therefore, would already be evidence enough for the existence of a grammarian Hipponax; and this evidence is confirmed, moreover, by Athenaeus, who once mentions an Hipponax as the author of a work on synonyms³⁰; in all probability this was the same man. All this is nothing new: it was observed long ago by Theodor Bergk, and I don't see how he can be refuted.

I also draw your attention to an important article by Dover³¹, in which Sir Kenneth demonstrates that Adkins in his studies on Greek moral values has more than once been led to wrong conclusions because he has neglected the context of passages in Homer and tragedy.

I shall give you another example at the end of my lecture. But first I should like to turn to a special but common case which I have constantly met in the course of my work on the *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*: I mean the context of *fragments*, that is of quotations from lost literary works, especially from tragedies.

Here we may distinguish two kinds of context: first the context within the lost work, and second the context of the quoting author.

On the first kind, the context within the lost work, I shall be brief. Much ingenuity has been spent – especially since Welcker published his books on the Aeschylean trilogy in 1824 and 1826 – on the reconstruction of the context of fragments of Greek drama and, on the basis of such reconstructed contexts, of the whole of the plot of lost plays and trilogies. But such reconstructions, however plausible they may be, always remain hypothetical and speculative, and I do myself not feel greatly attracted to this kind of thing – on the contrary: these speculations at first deterred me when years ago Bruno Snell asked me to join him and Richard Kannicht in the project of bringing up to date Nauck's edition of the fragments of the Greek tragedians. Nauck, by the way, had a similar dislike of reconstructions of lost plays (a dislike which tended to make him a little unfair towards Welcker), and he gave a superb illustration of the dangers that beset such speculations. It is to be found not in his *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, but in the preface to the third volume of his edition of Euripides³². Let us assume for a moment, he says there, that the *Electra*, the *Heraclidae* and the *Heracles* of Euripides were lost, and let us see what, in that case, we would know of these three

³⁰ Athen. 11,480F (3,58,7f. Kaibel) 'Ἰππῶναξ δ' ἐν Συνωνύμοις οὕτως γράφει. 'Hipponactis grammatici mentionem nemo, ut videtur, fecit. An legendum 'Ερμῶναξ <sic>?' Dobree (*Adversaria*. Ed. J. Scholfield 2, Cantabrigiae 1833, 333), who could not know yet the fragment of Erotian, which was only published in 1853 by Daremberg; following Dobree's suggestion Meineke and Kaibel substituted 'Ερμῶναξ for 'Ἰππῶναξ – Dobree himself, I am sure, would have withdrawn his suggestion if he had known the fragment of Erotian.

³¹ *JHS* 103,1983,35–48 = *Greek and the Greeks* 1, Oxford 1987, 77–96.

³² Lipsiae 1869, VIII–XV.

plays from the indirect tradition. By just putting together all the quotations from these plays we come across in our texts (most of them in Stobaeus) Nauck makes it as clear as daylight that nobody could ever have guessed the plot and action of the three plays from these fragments; and the same would appear, I am sure, if one were to apply this procedure to any other surviving Greek drama.

Another salutary example is the Berlin papyrus which Wilamowitz ascribed to the *Ἀχαιῶν σύλλογος* of Sophocles (and which, therefore, made its appearance in Pearson's collection of the Sophoclean fragments)³³, but which in reality – as Handley and Rea demonstrated in 1957³⁴ – belongs to the *Telēphos* of Euripides; or the *Diktyulkoī* of Aeschylus, which had been considered a tragedy from Gottfried Hermann's time³⁵, until the papyri showed that it had been a satyr-play.

In this field one cannot be cautious enough, and to my mind it is regrettable, for example, that scholars often talk nowadays quite carelessly of 'the Achilles-trilogy of Aeschylus', as if this were a certain datum: actually this trilogy – however plausible it may be – is a mere conjecture, put forward by Welcker.

On the second kind of context – the context of the quoting author –, fortunately, we need not speculate: here we are on firm ground; and it is rather surprising to see that, while there is no end of speculations on the first kind of context, the firm ground of the second is not always exploited. For the context in which a fragment is quoted may be of great importance for its interpretation, and a good edition of fragments should therefore give the whole of this context as far as it may be relevant. More than half a century ago Hermann Fränkel³⁶ summed up all the information an editor of fragments ought to provide, and it is much to be regretted that editions still frequently appear which do not satisfy these requirements. Such editions not only compel the reader to go and look up the texts of the quoting authors: a much more serious thing is that many readers will omit to do so and, as a consequence, will remain without the information that may be essential for the understanding of a fragment. How essential this information can be I should like to illustrate with a few examples from my work on the *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*.

In his systematic encyclopaedia Pollux³⁷ starts the enumeration of terms from the building trade with the statement that in Homer the *οἰκοδόμοι* are designated by the word *τέκτονες* and that from this word the terms *ἀρχιτέκτων* and *ἀρχιτεκτονεῖν* are derived. Now, after having mentioned the noun *ἀρχιτέκτων* and before mentioning the accompanying verb *ἀρχιτεκτο-*

³³ B.K.T. V 2,64f. = S.fr. 142 P.

³⁴ *BICS* Suppl. 5.

³⁵ *Opusc.* 8,177 (followed also by Wilamowitz, *Aischylos. Interpretationen*, Berlin 1914, 154²).

³⁶ *GGA* 190, 1928, 259ff.

³⁷ 7,117 (2,84,18ff. Bēthe).

νεῖν, he adds a parenthesis, in which he calls attention to the fact that the reverse order of the component parts of this noun also occurs, namely in the expression τεκτόναρχος μοῦσα used by Sophocles in his *Daedalus* (an expression which Pollux condemns as ‘strained’, βιαία): ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τοὺς οἰκοδόμους τέκτονας Ὀμηρος καλεῖ, καὶ ἀρχιτέκτων εἴρηται παρὰ Πλάτωνι (Polit. 259 e 8): βιαία γὰρ ἡ ἐν τῷ Σοφοκλέους Δαιδάλω (F 159) ‘τεκτόναρχος μοῦσα’· τὸ δὲ ἀρχιτεκτονεῖν Ἀριστοφάνης εἴρηκεν ἐν Δαιδάλω (fr. 201 K.-A.). Nauck proposed to replace the word τεκτόναρχος in this Sophoclean fragment by τεκτονουργός (a word attested by Hesychius³⁸ and glossed by him with ἀρχιτέκτων) – but this is not only ‘unnecessary’, as Pearson says, but simply precluded by Pollux’ context.

Another example. A very learned scholium on Homer, *Iliad* 7,76, preserved on papyrus³⁹, gives a list of nouns and adjectives that have passed from the third declension into the second. One of these is the word ἄρπαγος, for which the learned grammarian quotes from Aeschylus the words ἄρπαγοι χεροῖν and from Sophocles the expression χερσὶν ἀρπάγοις. In the quotation from Aeschylus Wilamowitz proposed to add a ν to ἄρπαγοι, so as to make this word a dual ἀρπάγοιν, congruent with χεροῖν; and this change of the transmitted text has been generally accepted. The quoting grammarian, however, says that Aeschylus used ἄρπαγος in the plural (ἐπλήθυνεν) – if the dual ἀρπάγοιν were the right reading, he should have said not ἐπλήθυνεν but ἐδύαζεν⁴⁰. But the decisive argument is that a dual ἀρπάγοιν would not be testimony to a nominative ἄρπαγος, since it might just as well be derived from ἄρπαξ! So the context of the quotation gives the lie to Wilamowitz’ conjecture.

A third example. Our only manuscript of Hesychius at ν 739 Schmidt quotes from Aeschylus (F 339) something unintelligible, evidently corrupt, which is written ὑποσκεπόνχερα. This Hesychius explains as follows: ὥσπερ οἱ ἀποσκοποῦντες, οὕτω κελεύει σχηματίσαι τὴν χεῖρα, καθάπερ τοὺς Πᾶνας ποιοῦσι ‘Like those who are peering into a distance, so he commands to hold the hand, in the same way as Pan’s are represented’. From this comment we learn in the first place that the corrupt expression quoted from Aeschylus was describing the well-known gesture called ἀποσκοπεῖν: the holding of the flat hand above the eyes to protect them against the sun, typical of people looking into a distance and characteristic of representations of the god Pan in art⁴¹.

³⁸ τ 388 Schmidt τεκτονουργός (τεκτόναρχος Salmasius coll. Poll. 7,117, fort. recte): ἀρχιτέκτων.

³⁹ Σ Hom. *H* 76 P. Oxy. 1087 I 22ff. (2,223,22ff. Erbse) τὸ δὲ μάρτυρος παρώνυμον [τῇ γ]ενικῇ [τ]οῦ πρωτοτύπου συμ[π]έπτωκεν, ὥς τὸ Τροίζηνος, ἐνθεν [‘Τρ]οιζήνοιο’ (Hom. *B* 847)... τὸ ἄρπαγος, ἐνθεν ἐπ[λ]ήθυνεν Αἰσχ[ύ]λος ἐν Φινεῖ (F 259a) ‘ἄρπαγοι χερ[ρ]οῖν’ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἐν Φινεῖ α’ (F 706) ‘χερσὶν ἀρπ[ά]γοις’.

⁴⁰ Cf. Eust. *Il.* 47,27ff. ἔθος Ὀμήρω ἀδιαφορεῖν ἐν τοῖς θυκοῖς καὶ τοῖς πληθυντικοῖς, καὶ ποτε μὲν πληθύνειν τὰ θυικά, ποτε δὲ θυάζειν τὸ πληθος.

⁴¹ Cf. I. Jucker, *Der Gestus des Aposkopie...*, Zürich 1956. Borthwick, *CQ* 62,1968,49f.

This would already be enough to make the conjecture of Musurus *ὑπόσκοπον χέρα*, accepted by all subsequent editors, utterly improbable: that *ὑπόσκοπος* could have meant ‘from underneath of which one is looking’ seems to me no more than a piece of wishful thinking. All other compounds ending in *-σκοπος* and beginning with a preposition⁴² are used as epithets of the person who is looking – on the analogy of these *ὑπόσκοπος* should mean ‘looking under’.

But the context provides us with still another objection to Musurus’ conjecture. For from the words *οὕτω κελεύει σχηματίζειν τὴν χεῖρα* it appears that in Aeschylus there was a *command* to make the gesture of *ἀποσκοπεῖν*. That is an important clue which shows that the unintelligible letters *ὑποσκεπόν* before *χέρα* are a corruption not of an *epithet* to *χέρα* but of an *imperative* governing *χέρα*. I suspect it was the imperative of a verb beginning with *ὑπερ-*, perhaps *ὑπερσχεθοῦ*.

I shall conclude not with a fragment, but with a testimony on Aeschylus and Sophocles, in the interpretation of which, I think, the context has been unduly neglected.

In his *Life of Kimon* Plutarch tells us⁴³ that when the young Sophocles produced his first set of plays at the Dionysia of 468 B.C., one of the other competitors being Aeschylus, there was such rivalry and partisanship (*φιλονικία καὶ παρατάξεις*) among the audience that the presiding archon Apsephion departed from the regular procedure of drawing lots in order to appoint the jury, and instead swore in Kimon and his nine fellow-strategoi, who had just come into the theatre and performed the customary libations. After a contest fought out with more than usual keenness because of the dignity of the jury, the judges gave the first prize to Sophocles.

Now there is a contradiction in this story, which – as I discovered afterwards – had already been pointed out in 1860 by Rudolf Dahms in his Berlin thesis *De Aeschyli vita*⁴⁴, but, as far as I know, neglected by everybody else. The rivalry and partisanship of the audience, which induced Apsephion to proceed in this unparalleled manner, apparently did not result from the tragic performances at this very festival, but already existed before these performances started. How, then, could the audience already have been so passionately divided between people favouring Aeschylus and others favouring Sophocles?

⁴² ἀπό-, ἐπί-, κατά-, πρό-.

⁴³ Plut. *Cim.* 8,8f. (I 1³, 342, 27ff. Ziegler) = A.T 57 πρώτῃν γὰρ διδασκαλίαν τοῦ Σοφοκλέους ἔτι νέου καθέντος Ἀψεφίων ὁ ἄρχων, φιλονικίας οὐσης καὶ παρατάξεως τῶν θεατῶν, κριτὰς μὲν οὐκ ἐκλήρωσε τοῦ ἀγῶνος, ὥς δὲ Κίμων μετὰ τῶν συστρατῆγων παρελθὼν εἰς τὸ θέατρον ἐποίησεν τῷ θεῷ τὰς νενομισμένας σπονδὰς, οὐκ ἐφήκεν αὐτοὺς ἀπελθεῖν, ἀλλ’ ὀρκώσας ἠνάγκασεν καθίσαι καὶ κρίναι δέκα ὄντας, ἀπὸ φυλῆς μᾶς ἕκαστον. ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀγὼν καὶ διὰ τὸ τῶν κριτῶν ἀξίωμα τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ὑπερέβαλε. νικήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους λέγεται τὸν Αἰσχύλον, περιπαθῆ γενόμενον καὶ βαρέως ἐνεγκόντα, χρόνον οὐ πολὺν Ἀθήνησι διαγαγεῖν, εἴτ’ οἴχεσθαι δι’ ὁργὴν εἰς Σικελίαν, ὅπου καὶ τελευτήσας περὶ Γέλαν τέθαιπται.

⁴⁴ p.15.

Pickard-Cambridge⁴⁵ supposed that the audience 'had probably seen the Proagon and formed their prejudice in favour of particular competitors' – but that hypothesis will not do: for as far as we know the ceremony of the Proagon – which, by the way, as Blume has observed⁴⁶, may even not yet have existed at that date! – did not contain anything which could rouse the emotions of the audience in the way implied by Plutarch's story. It was no more than a presentation to the Athenian public of the poets with their choruses and actors – all of them adorned with garlands but without masks and costumes – and an announcement of the subjects of their plays: I for my part cannot see how Sophocles could have managed to win the favour of a great part of the public by this purely formal ceremony. Nor, to my mind, can this favour have been due, as Wilamowitz thought, to the fact that Sophocles belonged to a well-to-do family and was famous for his beauty and amiability ('das publicum ist in aufregung, weil neben dem grossen bewährten meister ein neuling auftreten soll, ein jüngling aus begütertem bürgerhause von berufener schönheit und liebenswürdigkeit'⁴⁷). The only plausible reason for the favour of the public I can think of (and which Dahms had already suggested in 1860) is that the Athenians had seen plays by Sophocles performed on the stage before: only in that case could there have been such a strong pro-Sophoclean faction – all the more so since on that former occasion (or occasions) Sophocles must have been defeated (for that he won his first *victory* in the year of Apsephion is confirmed by the *Marmor Parium*⁴⁸); and probably he had been defeated by the same Aeschylus with whom he was now competing again.

But then Plutarch's statement that in the year of Apsephion Sophocles produced his *first* set of plays cannot be correct. Now this statement has already been doubted occasionally, because it is at variance with the date given for Sophocles' first production in the *Chronicle* of Eusebius: both Hieronymus and the Armenian translation record this under the year 471/470 (with the variant reading 470/469 in one ms. of Hieronymus). On account of this contradiction Yorke e.g. cast doubt in 1954⁴⁹ on Plutarch's statement, whereas Luppe in 1970⁵⁰ flatly denied its correctness and declared the year given by Eusebius to be the real one.

You will see, I think, how strongly the case for Eusebius' dating of Sophocles' first production is corroborated by the argument from Plutarch's own context, which implies that the Athenians had witnessed the performance of at least one Sophoclean tetralogy before 468 B.C. Apparently Plutarch in this passage (or, maybe, his source) has dealt with the facts rather carelessly

⁴⁵ *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, Oxford 1953, 96f. = ²1968, 96.

⁴⁶ H.-D. Blume, *Einführung in das antike Theaterwesen*, Darmstadt 1978, 19.

⁴⁷ *Aristoteles und Athen* 1, Berlin 1893, 146⁴¹.

⁴⁸ A 56 = S.T 33.

⁴⁹ *CR* 68, 1954, 10f.; cf. already W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Literatur...*⁴, München 1905, 235².

⁵⁰ *Philologus* 114, 1970, 7f.

– a carelessness which, by the way, is also apparent at the end of Plutarch's story: there, after having told us that Aeschylus left Athens out of anger at his defeat and went to Sicily, Plutarch adds that he also died there – implying that he never came back to Athens before his death, which plainly contradicts the facts. Here, too, two different things have been telescoped into one – so the conflation of Sophocles' first *victory* with his first *production*, which we find in this same story, need not surprise us too much.

The rejection of Plutarch's dating of Sophocles' first production also rids us, by the way, of the strange phenomenon of a quite inexperienced beginner defeating the great master at his first attempt⁵¹.

If then, as it seems, Sophocles produced his first tetralogy before 468, this has important consequences for the famous problem of the dating of the *Supplikes* of Aeschylus. Every Greek scholar knows what some of the older ones still remember, how the didascalía of the Danaid tetralogy of Aeschylus (A.T 70), preserved on papyrus and published in 1952, has overthrown the traditional chronology of the plays of Aeschylus. Before 1952 the *communis opinio* was that the *Supplikes* must have been the oldest of the extant plays of Aeschylus – then we learnt from the didascalía that the Danaid tetralogy (to which the *Supplikes* in all probability belonged) won the first prize in a contest in which one of the other competitors was Sophocles (who came off second). Unfortunately the name of the archon at the beginning of the didascalía is lost: the only thing preserved after the preposition *ἐπί* 'during the office of...' is the letter *A*, followed by a tiny trace, which Lobel interpreted as part of a *P*, but which, as one can see on inspection of the papyrus, might as well be part of a *B*, whilst there are quite a few other possibilities that cannot be excluded – even a vertical seems possible. So if what came after *ἐπί* was the name of the archon – and not simply the word *ἄρχωντος* –, there are many possibilities, provided the name begins with an *A*.

Now, in trying to find a date for this didascalía, everybody has, on the authority of Plutarch, taken it for granted that Sophocles first produced in 468 B.C., and so everybody – even people who were reluctant to accept a late date for the *Supplikes* – has been looking for a date after 467 (the years 468 and 467 being excluded, because in 468 Aeschylus was defeated and in the next year he produced the Theban tetralogy); and this has led to a new *communis opinio*, which dates the *Supplikes*, if not in the year 463 (supplying *ἐπί* 'Ἀρχεδημίδου'), in any case somewhere between 467 and 458 B.C. (the year of the *Oresteia*).

Since we have seen, however, that the first production by Sophocles must,

⁵¹ Cf. W.G. Forrest, *CQ* 54, 1960, 238: 'Between 484 and 458 Aeschylus won thirteen dramatic victories. Since he probably did not compete more than about fifteen times in these years, there is a good chance that in 468 he had behind him an unbroken line of eight or nine successes. All the more surprising that at the Dionysia of that year he should have come second to the inexperienced Sophocles' ('but less surprising', F. continues, 'when we remember the political context, and, above all, the name of the judge').

on Plutarch's (or his source's) own premisses, have been earlier than 468, we are free to look for a date *before* that year and thus to fulfil a wish implied in Oliver Taplin's statement: 'Were it not for the papyrus *didaskalia* a sober man might well put the play in the 470s rather than the 490s, but he could not in all fairness be expected to plump for the 460s'⁵².

Now, to be sure, as long as we trust Eusebius (or rather the translations of his *Chronicle*), we cannot go farther back than 470, which, I am afraid, is still not quite what Taplin (and I myself) had hoped for, although, of course, it is a good way in the right direction. Only if we could discard the testimony of Hieronymus and the Armenian translation would we arrive at a date before the *Persians* of 472 B.C., which to my mind would best fit the archaic structure and technique of the *Supplices*. But personally I should hesitate to reject the date of Eusebius – since, after all, it is the only testimony we possess⁵³ – and content myself with a dating of the *Supplices* in 469 (supplying in the *didaskalia* ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Δημοτίωνος) or 470 (supplying ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Πραξιέργου).*

⁵² *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus...*, Oxford 1977, 195.

⁵³ Cf. E.J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, London 1968, 88: 'The datings of Eusebius, often transmitted incorrectly in manuscripts, are of little use to us today, except in a few cases where no better information is available'.

* I thank Christopher Collard and Andrew Palmer for correcting my English.