

‘WHAT HARBOUR WILL THERE NOT BE FOR YOUR CRIES?’ (420) AND OTHER TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN SOPHOCLES’ *OEDIPVS TYRANNVS**

ABSTRACT

These four textual notes attempt (1) to demonstrate that OT 420 as transmitted is unlikely to impossible, and to show the desirability of Blaydes’s conjecture ποῖος οὐκ ἔσται ἰλικῶν, that is, Ἐλικῶν; (2) to argue for the necessity of reading ὄν for εἰ at line 121 and of making the line a complete sentence; (3) to argue for a lacuna before line 530; and (4) to propose τίς ἄταις μᾶλλον ἢ τίς ἀγρίαι ξύνοικος ἀλλαγῆναι βίου; in lines 1205–6.

Keywords: Sophocles; *Oedipus Tyrannus*; Frederick Blaydes; Mt Helicon; Mt Cithaeron; prodelision; lacuna; textual criticism

The lemmata and any apparatus criticus are transcribed from P.J. Finglass, *Sophocles: Oedipus the King* (Cambridge, 2018).¹

I. OT 420–3 (BLAYDES’S ‘WHAT HELICON?’ DEFENDED)

βοῆς δὲ τῆς εἰς ποῖος οὐκ ἔσται λιμῆν, 420
ποῖος Κιθαρων οὐχὶ εὐμῶνος τάχα,
ὅταν καταίθῃ τὸν ὑμέναιον, ὄν δόμοις
ἄνομον εἰσέπλευσας, εὐπλοῖας τυχῶν;

Translators seem to have no difficulty rendering lines 420–1. This would be more reassuring if the translations both accurately rendered the Greek and made sense but, while some do the first and others do the second, none that I know of manages both. I also miss any recognition from the commentators that the usual stylistic verve that characterizes the speech of all the major characters in this play has here completely deserted Teiresias, who is reduced to barely coherent stammering. Here are the

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¹ I cite the following editions by author name only: R.C. Jebb, *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments, Part I: The Oedipus Tyrannus* (Cambridge, 1893, reprinted 2004); H. Lloyd-Jones and N.G. Wilson, *Sophocles fabulae* (revised impression, Oxford, 1992); R.D. Dawe, *Sophocles: Oedipus Rex* (revised edition, Cambridge, 2006); P.J. Finglass, *Sophocles: Oedipus the King* (Cambridge, 2018); and similarly the following translations: U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Griechische Tragödien I* (Berlin, 1899); D. Grene, *Sophocles I* (Chicago, 1942); P. Mazon, *Sophocles: Tome II* (Paris, 1968); H. Lloyd-Jones, *Sophocles: Ajax, Electra, Oedipus Tyrannus* (Cambridge, MA, 1994); R. Blondell, *Sophocles’ King Oedipus* (Newburyport, MA, 2002); O. Taplin, *Sophocles: Oedipus the King and Other Tragedies* (Oxford, 2015); D. Kovacs, *Sophocles: Oedipus the King* (Oxford, 2020).

difficulties I find in these lines. (I have restated some items on the list given by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson² and added others.)

(1) For line 420 Finglass gives ‘What harbour will there not be for your cries?’. This is accurate but not quite intelligible. Since ‘What X will not?’ is a way of saying ‘Every X will’, it could only be paraphrased as ‘There will be every harbour for your cries’, which just misses being sense. Sense without any clear grammatical justification is given by those translators (Jebb, Grene, Blondell) who smuggle the word ‘place’ into the translation as the noun modified by ποῖος: ‘And what place shall not be harbour to thy shriek?’ says Jebb, though his note translates similarly to Finglass. Even so, all is not well: Teiresias cannot mean that *everywhere* will be a harbour to Oedipus’ cries.

(2) ‘Harbour’ as a metaphor is hard to understand. Dawe ad loc. glosses it with ‘any place that will receive his cries as a harbour receives a ship’. But harbours do not merely receive but also offer refuge or protection, a notion that has no application to cries. To be sure, the idea of ‘harbour’ does occur a couple of lines later (422–3) to describe the house that received Oedipus after his arrival at Thebes (to his cost, as it was ἄνορμος, ‘not a harbour’, that is, not protective). But in Oedipus’ view at the time the palace *was* a place of refuge. P.E. Easterling (in *JHS* 114 [1994], 186–8, at 187) thinks that the metaphor in lines 422–3 helps elucidate the one in line 420. However, as Lloyd-Jones and Wilson make clear, the later harbour does not help with the earlier.³ ‘Harbour for cries’ has no inherent plausibility.

(3) Finglass translates line 421 ‘what Cithaeron will not soon resound in accompaniment to them?’. It is hard to know what to make of ‘what Cithaeron?’. Is this by metonymy for ‘what mountain’?⁴ That seems difficult to parallel, and Dawe ad loc. finds this ‘as odd an expression as “what sort of Mt Everest?”’.

(4) If this interpretation is nevertheless correct, it is surprising that, after implying that *every place in the world* will be the receiver of Oedipus’ cries, Teiresias now restricts this to mountains. The term ‘bathos’ is a good descriptor for such a sharp and unmotivated descent.

(5) When a speaker, whether in tragedy or elsewhere, uses an anaphora such as ποῖος ... ποῖος, the expectation is raised that there will be a parallelism of thought. This expectation is defeated here: ‘what harbour’ is not parallel to ‘what Cithaeron’ since ‘harbour’ is a metaphor but Cithaeron is an actual place to be filled with Oedipus’ cries. We also expect parallelism of construction, but that is absent as well: the ἔσται expressed in line 420 is the substantive verb ‘there will be’, whereas the one implied in line 421 is the copula connecting the predicate adjective εὐφώνος with the subject ‘Cithaeron’. Teiresias elsewhere (320–1, 372–3, 413–14, 417–19, 454–60) uses the resources of rhetoric, including parallelism, effectively. Here we have failed parallelism and inept rhetoric.

How do we deal with these difficulties? In my view one alteration sets them all to rights, that of Blaydes.⁵ Blaydes proposes writing, for transmitted ἔσται λιμῆν, ἔσται ἑλικῶν, that is, ἔσται ἑλικῶν:

² H. Lloyd-Jones and N.G. Wilson, *Sophoclea* (Oxford, 1990), 89–90.

³ H. Lloyd-Jones and N.G. Wilson, *Sophocles: Second Thoughts* (Göttingen, 1997), 51.

⁴ Jebb says it means ‘what part of Cithaeron?’ and Wilamowitz writes ‘dann hallet jede Bucht, hallt jede *Klippe* | Kithairons wieder deine Weheruf’, while Taplin has ‘no *hollow* of Cithaeron’s mountainside’ (my emphasis in both cases), but this is without parallel and should be rejected. Mazon, by contrast, writes simple ‘Cithéron’, but adds a note that the name has to mean simply ‘mountain’, which it could not mean ‘si la Cithéron ne tenait dans la vie de l’Édipe, qui, aveugle, y passera longtemps, une place particulière’, a statement I find impenetrable.

⁵ See F.H.M. Blaydes, *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (London and Edinburgh, 1871), viii.

βοῆς δὲ τῆς κῆς ποῖος οὐκ ἔσται Ἑλικῶν,
 ποῖος Κιθαίων οὐχὶ εὐμῶνος τάχα,
 ὅταν κτλ.

The resulting text can be translated as follows: ‘What Helicon, what Cithaeron will not soon join in with your cries, when, etc.’. What advantages in sense and style does this reading enjoy?

(1) It eliminates the absurd implication that *every place* will receive Oedipus’ cries. Helicon and Cithaeron are two *mountains*, and two mountains of *Boeotia*, so the universe of discourse is narrowed from ‘there will be every harbour for your cries’ to ‘the mountains of Boeotia’ will resound with them.

(2) It gets rid of the ‘harbour’ metaphor that cannot be plausibly explained.

(3) Gone likewise is the bathos of ‘There will be every harbour for your cries. Well, at any rate, every mountain will resound.’

(4) It makes ἔσται in line 420 into a copula to match the copula understood in line 421, thereby restoring the parallelism of construction forecast by the anaphora. And ‘what Helicon, what Cithaeron’ restores parallelism of thought.

An additional advantage is that, when the parallelism of lines 420 and 421 has been restored, there is the possibility of the kind of brachylogy by which words necessary but unexpressed in one line may be supplied from a neighbour.⁶ It is common ground between those who accept the paradosis and those who do not that ἔσται must be supplied in lines 421. It also seems to be implicit in the interpretation of conservatives that βοῆς τῆς κῆς in line 420 is to be understood with εὐμῶνος in line 421. Now that ἔσται is copula in both lines, εὐμῶνος goes naturally with the expressed ἔσται and βοῆς τῆς κῆς with the unexpressed,⁷ a state of affairs Jebb ad loc. recognizes as possible and then rejects on inadequate grounds.⁸ Now Teiresias’ lines have had restored to them the concision and force that his other utterances lead us to expect.

As for the cause of corruption, the confusion of *kappa* and *mu* is a frequent phenomenon,⁹ and once λικῶν had been corrupted to λιμῶν, the change to a familiar word could have followed easily.

At the end of his note on lines 420–3 Finglass tries to show that Blaydes’s conjecture should be rejected. He gives three grounds.

(1) Citing the metaphors of the palace of Thebes as harbour for Oedipus and of the ‘fair sailing’ that brought him there, Finglass complains that Blaydes’s conjecture ‘eliminates a key part of this maritime imagery’. But this fails to distinguish ‘imagery’ (a set of more or less consistent pictorial words, such as ‘harbour’ for the place of refuge the Theban palace seemed to be and ‘fair winds’ for the circumstances that brought Oedipus there) from the single and not easily explicable picture at line 420, where a

⁶ The phenomenon is discussed by L. Döderlein, *Commentatio de brachylogia sermonis Graeci et Latini* (Erlangen, 1831) and G.H.R. Wichert, *Über die Ergänzung elliptischer Satztheile aus korrespondirenden im Lateinischen* (Euben, 1862).

⁷ One might expect that εὐμῶνος would here govern a dative, the complement it receives in all but one of the examples in LSJ. But ξύνοικος is construed with a genitive complement at Soph. *Ant.* 451, as is κύχχορτος at Eur. *Andr.* 16–17.

⁸ Jebb takes the trouble to spell out this possibility thus: ‘what haven of the sea or what mountain ... shall not resound [*sc.* with thy cries]’. He rejects this because it is incompatible with the metaphorical sense of λιμῆν that he feels is certainly right. But with Blaydes’s conjecture the brachylogy encounters no objection.

⁹ See M.L. West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique* (Stuttgart, 1973), 25.

harbour does not perform the protecting or sheltering we would expect.¹⁰ Finglass's 'key part' cannot be maintained since the other maritime images cohere but this does not.

(2) Finglass says, citing Platnauer,¹¹ that the suggestion introduces 'a prodelision unparalleled in tragedy'. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson concede this point,¹² but they need not have done so since there are two further highly plausible cases in tragedy where -αι causes prodelision of ε-. Platnauer himself cites as a reading that 'may or may not be right' Reiske's γενήκομαι ἔγω at Eur. *IA* 1396.¹³ If this conjecture is not the truth, it is hard to see what could be: the corruption to L's γενήκομ' ἔγω is trivial and easily undone. Diggle also prints Porson's αἰρήκομαι ἔγω at Eur. *Hel.* 953, a reading argued for by Kannicht, who rejects Platnauer's strictures. These two emendations, as far as I can see, are certain. So this precise kind of prodelision is attested twice in tragedy.

There is a reason for Sophocles to turn here to this rare prodelision. If Ἐλικῶν, which scans as an anapaestic foot, is to be introduced in unabridged form, the only place where it could be admitted is as the first two elements of the line, where all three tragic poets freely admit anapaests.¹⁴ But this would mean that the anaphora ποῖος ... ποῖος would be difficult to achieve. We should not be surprised at Sophocles' choice here.

(3) The conjecture produces 'an unwelcome reference to a mountain irrelevant to Oedipus'. And even if the association of the two mountains could be established by something better than the singing contest between Helicon and Cithaeron mentioned in Corinna,¹⁵ it would be 'poetically ruinous to mention both mountains as if they were equally significant'. Actually one might ask what significance *Cithaeron* has in this prophecy. Cithaeron was meant to be the place of Oedipus' exposure, and it was where his life was in fact saved. After the revelation of who he is and what he has done, he asks to be sent there (1451–4). But nothing in the play indicates that he actually returns there. And a search of the standard reference works (Roscher, *RE*, *DNP*) reveals nothing in poetry, prose, or cult showing Oedipus on Cithaeron subsequent to the discovery of the patricide and incest. So neither Cithaeron nor Helicon will figure in Oedipus' future, so far as we know. Furthermore, at this point in the play Cithaeron has not yet been mentioned as the place of exposure and rescue. The audience would therefore not experience 'What Helicon, what Cithaeron' as the joining of relevant with irrelevant.

There are two ways for them both to be relevant to Oedipus, and they involve treating the two mountains as a synecdoche for Boeotia as a whole. Teiresias might mean that all of Boeotia will soon be filled with Oedipus' cries. Alternatively, Boeotia may be

¹⁰ A common trope of conservative textual argument is to counter objections to lapses of sense or grammar by claiming that the transmitted reading coheres imagistically with the rest of the text. But lapses of sense or grammar are often demonstrable, whereas in the nature of things the rightness of an image cannot be so decisively demonstrated and is inherently subjective. We should not take such arguments at face value.

¹¹ M. Platnauer, 'Prodelision in Greek drama', *CQ* 10 (1960), 140–4, at 141.

¹² Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (n. 2), 89–90.

¹³ In *IA*, which is heavily interpolated, the chances that a given passage is a later addition is particularly high, but this line is part of the passage where Iphigenia changes her mind and hence indispensable. Diggle's siglum recognizes this fact, and I am unaware of anyone who challenges the Euripidean authorship of line 1396.

¹⁴ It is, to be sure, a proper name, but a word of this shape, even a proper name, is not admitted elsewhere than in the first foot of a trimeter: see D. Kovacs, *Euripides: Troades* (Oxford, 2018), commentary on line 1126.

¹⁵ Finglass cites the claim of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (n. 2), 89 that a passage in Corinna (fr. 654 *PMG*) shows the connection between the two mountains.

κύμαρον with Oedipus’ shout because even its sparsely inhabited regions will cry out in horror and pity in answer to the cry with which Oedipus greets the discovery of his fate. Both of these are hyperbole, of course, but they are hyperbole of a kind seen elsewhere in the play: see lines 1295–6, where the Exangelos says that even those who hate Oedipus will utter words of pity for him. Note also the hyperbole at lines 1227–31, where the Exangelos says that neither the Ister nor the Phasis could cleanse the Theban palace of all its stain. Of course, a different plausible explanation of the relevance of Cithaeron to Oedipus’ future might one day be thought up, but until then it would appear that it is only conjectural ‘Helicon’ that provides relevance to transmitted ‘Cithaeron’.¹⁶

In my view none of Finglass’s three points disproves a conjecture that has a great deal to recommend it.

II. OT 118–23

- Kp. θνήσκουσι γάρ, πλὴν εἶς τις, ὃς φόβωι φυγῶν
ὦν εἶδε πλὴν ἔν ουδέν εἶχ’ εἰδὼς φράσαι.
Oι. τὸ ποιον; ἔν γάρ πόλλ’ ἄν ἐξεύροι μαθεῖν, 120
ἀρχὴν βραχεῖαν εἰ λάβοιμεν ἐλπίδος.
Kp. ληιστὰς ἔφασκε συντυχόντας οὐ μιᾷ
ῥώμηι κτανεῖν νιν, ἀλλὰ σὺν πλήθει χερῶν.

The first hand of MS K omits line 121. It was added in the margin, perhaps by the original scribe. It is missing entirely¹⁷ from *P.Oxy.* 2180: see below, n. 19, where I discuss the possibility of bracketing the line as interpolated.

Finglass ad loc. translates lines 120–1 ‘What is that? One thing might lead to the discovery of many things for us to learn, if we could grasp some brief beginning of hope.’ This is an accurate translation of what is transmitted. Unfortunately it makes imperfect sense. In line 120 Oedipus says that one thing they already possess (the survivor’s one assertion) might lead to further knowledge. The second line says ‘if we were to get some brief (or slight) beginning of hope’, but there is no ‘if’ about it on the theory Oedipus is entertaining: Oedipus supposes that they already have a brief beginning of hope, one piece of knowledge that *might* lead to more. No further supposition is required.¹⁸ The ‘if’ is irrational and the line redundant.¹⁹

¹⁶ A view not dissimilar to this is found in the scholia, where Thomas Magister paraphrases Teiresias by saying that κύμαρον means συνάιδων τῶι ἡμετέρωι λόγωι ‘chiming in with our [sc. the Thebans’] words’, and Demetrius Triclinius paraphrases βοῆς τῆς κῆς as τὴν περὶ σὲ φήμην ‘the report about you’: O. Longo (ed.), *Scholia Byzantina in Sophoclis Oedipum Tyrannum* (Padua, 1971), 202. (I owe this reference to Nicholas Lane.) Though the βοῆ in line 420 cannot be that of the Thebans with κῆς used ‘objectively’ (ὅταν κατοίεθθι explains why *Oedipus* is crying out), it is nevertheless possible for the people of Boeotia to be the ones ‘chiming in’ with Oedipus’ cry.

¹⁷ I do not find plausible the attempt by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (n. 2), 82–3 to rewrite line 121 on the basis of υμ in the papyrus, letters more easily explained as belonging to οὐ μιᾷ in line 122. The attempt forces them to alter line 120 as well, which makes against their hypothesis.

¹⁸ Some other translations (Jebb, Taplin) show the same redundancy. Grene and Wilamowitz eliminate it by omission. (Lloyd-Jones translates the conjectural text discussed in the previous note.)

¹⁹ Since the line is missing in the papyrus and from the main text of K, why not delete? (1) There is unbroken distichomythia from line 106 to line 131. (2) It is hard to see anything that would have motivated an interpolator: on this point, see J. Jackson, *Marginalia Scaenica* (Oxford, 1955),

Sense that is not redundant would be obtained if we put a raised point at the end of line 120 and wrote ἀρχὴν βραχεῖαν ἄν λάβοιμεν ἐλπίδος. My translation of this text (see n. 1 above) reads ‘What’s that? One thing might be the clue to many: we might have grounds for hope, however slender.’ The explanation for the corruption is simple: the ἄν was lost by haplography, and someone who saw that a syllable was missing supplied an εἰ that seemed plausible before the optative verb.

Possible objections to the position of the modal particle can be answered. To be sure, the ἄν that goes with potential optatives and counterfactual indicatives often stands either second or third in its word group or just behind the verb. But position later than the third and right before the optative or the past indicative is common enough (cf. *OT* 77, 282). There is also no reason to object to ἄν immediately after the penthemimeral caesura (cf. *OT* 282, 561, 599, 970).

III. *OT* 528–31

- Kp. ἐξ ὀμμάτων δ' ὀρθῶν τε κάξ ὀρθῆς φρενός
κατηργορεῖτο τοῦπικλημα τοῦτό μου;
Xo. οὐκ οἶδ' ἄ γάρ δρῶς' οἱ κρατοῦντες οὐχ ὀρῶ. 530
[αὐτὸς δ' ὄδ' ἦδη δομάτων ἔξω περῶ.]

531 om. Π¹: habent Ω

There is a problem in line 530.²⁰ The Chorus Leader has been asked about something he has seen with his own eyes, whether Oedipus' manner when he made his accusation exhibited the steady gaze of sanity or showed signs of madness, such as eyes constantly in motion. Why does he say he does not know? He was there. Why does he give the general reason that he does not see what his rulers are doing? Many things a king does are hidden from his gaze, but not this particular thing.

Dawe²¹ admits that the Chorus ‘do know and did see’. But he explains that they are ‘the soul of discretion where their betters are concerned’. For this to work as an explanation, however, the Chorus Leader must believe that Oedipus *did* show signs of madness. He must suspect that Oedipus is about to enter and hence hesitates to say what he thinks for fear of offending him. But there is no indication in the text that Oedipus rolled his eyes or otherwise acted like a madman or that the Chorus Leader thinks he did. If he held the view that Oedipus was *not* mad and declared it, the only person it might offend would be Creon. But Creon is unlikely to take offence since he has thrown out this explanation only as a somewhat desperate hypothesis.

There is another possibility worth considering, namely that two or three lines have perished before line 530 (three if the pattern of lines 525–8 is continued), in which the Chorus Leader answered that Oedipus seemed in his right mind, not crazed, and Creon asked something about Oedipus that the Chorus Leader could not answer.

2. Neither actors nor others later in the tradition were bothered by slight departures from formal patterns (they did not intervene, for example, after lines 102 and 105). (3) The vocabulary and word order seem unimpeachably Sophoclean.

²⁰ I am by no means certain that line 531 is interpolated. Yes, it is absent from a fourth-century papyrus. But that same papyrus omits line 121 as well: see n. 19 for an argument in favour of retaining the latter.

²¹ Dawe ad loc.

What could this be? One thing the Chorus Leader does not know is the movements of the king and their expected schedule. What if Creon’s question were whether Oedipus would soon emerge from the palace? The Chorus Leader could easily plead ignorance for precisely the reason he gives, namely that he does not know what his sovereign is doing. When it left Sophocles’ hand, the passage might have looked something like this.

Κρ. ἐξ ὀμμάτων δ’ ὀρθῶν τε κάξ ὀρθῆς φρενός
κατηγορεῖτο τοῦπίκλημα τοῦτό μου;
<Χο. οὐκ ἔστρεφ’ ὄμματ’ οὐδ’ ἐφαίνεται’ ἐμμανήε.
Κρ. ἀλλ’ εἶσιν ἔνθαδ’ ὥστε καὶ κλυεῖν ἐμοῦ;
ἐλεύθερος γάρ αἰτιῶν εἶναι θέλω.>
Χο. οὐκ οἶδ’ ἂ γάρ δράωσ’ οἱ κρατοῦντες οὐχ ὀρῶ. 530

If the Chorus Leader’s reply began with a form of οὐ (as suggested above), the wandering of a scribe’s eye from the first negative to the second could have caused the omission.

IV. OT 1204–6

τανῦν δ’ ἀκούειν τίς ἀθλιώτερος,	str. 2
τίς †ἐν πόνοις τίς ἄταις ἀγρίαίς†	1205
ξύνοικος ἀλλαγῆ βίου;	

1205 τίς ἄταις ἀγρίαίς, τίς ἐν πόνοις Hermann

As transmitted line 1205 does not give the required metre, which is *ba cr ia*, and accordingly editors dagger it. A further problem, as most have seen, is that the comparative idea (or its functional equivalent) is needed in the second and third lines as well as in the first. Hermann’s conjecture fails to supply the comparative. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson’s apparatus criticus suggests ‘fort. τίς ἄταις ἀγρίαίς τόσαις πονῶν (τόσαις Heimsoeth, πονῶν Dawe), vel τίς ἄταις, τίς ἀγριωτέροις πόνοις’. The first of these conjectures gives the meaning ‘Who lives closely with alteration of his life, labouring with so many cruel ruinations?’ The question seems awkward, and the parallelism with line 1204 is weak since τόσαις, which might take the place of a comparative, is in the participial phrase. Furthermore the repetition of τίς in line 1205 is too good to give up. The second gives (with the comparative adjective taken ἀπό κοινοῦ) ‘Who dwells with crueller ruinations, who with crueller toils in the alteration of his life?’ Now the datives in line 1205 go with ξύνοικος, but the final ἀλλαγῆ βίου seems a falling off, and the dative (of circumstance?) is confusing after the two datives in line 1205. Finglass in his commentary suggests τίς ἄταις ἀγριωτέροις ἀνήρ. This, though supplying a comparative, likewise gives up the repetition and is furthermore so straightforward that it does not invite corruption. Additionally here also we have trailing ἀλλαγῆ βίου.

I propose τίς ἄταις μάλλον ἢ τίς ἀγρίαί | ξύνοικος ἀλλαγῆ βίου; ‘Who dwells on closer terms with ruinations or who with cruel alteration of life?’ Now there are only two dative nouns, both complements to ξύνοικος, not three, two of which are complements and the third is not. Now the final phrase does not trail but is integral. There is a pleasing separation between ἀγρίαί and ἀλλαγῆ (possibly causing part of the corruption) as well as between μάλλον and ξύνοικος. The adjective ‘cruel, harsh’ is arguably otiose with

'ruinations' (in the transmitted text), but with 'alteration of life' (as in my conjecture) it is welcome: there is more than one kind of life change. Both sense and style are thus improved. For a comparative adjective (ὀθλιώτερος) followed by a positive adjective plus μᾶλλον, see lines 815–16.

Admittedly the alteration from my suggestion to the wording of our manuscripts is difficult to map out with certainty, but the adjustment of adjectives to agree with neighbouring nouns they originally did not modify is a common form of corruption, and it could have played a role here.²² Let us suppose that ἀγρίαίαι had already been corrupted to ἀγρίαίαι and that ἐν πόνοισι is a gloss on ἄταις. Perhaps the gloss somehow obliterated not ἄταις but the μᾶλλον ἢ of my proposal. The resulting τίς ἄταις ἐν πόνοισι τίς ἀγρίαίαι may have then been deliberately or unconsciously reshuffled to put the noun and adjective together. However difficult the postulated corruption may be, against this difficulty must be set the gains in sense and style described in the last paragraph, a combination of gains offered by none of the competing conjectures known to me.

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²² See West (n. 9), 23–4; Jackson (n. 19), 186–7; and J. Diggle, *Euripidea: Collected Essays* (Oxford, 1994), 288, 428 and 469–70.