GRAECIA ANTIQUA

PHILOLOGIA CLASSICA VOL. 19. FASC. 2. 2024

UDC 80

Antigone: The Curse Transformed

Zoia A. Barzakh

Hebrew University of Jerusalem,
Givat Ram, Jerusalem, 9190401, Israel; https://orcid.org/0000–0001–9669–8447, zoia_barzakh@mail.ru

For citation: Barzakh Z. A. *Antigone:* The Curse Transformed. *Philologia Classica* 2024, 19 (2), 192–214. https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu20.2024.201

This paper is dedicated to the analysis of the intertextual relationship between Sophocles' *Antigone* and the plays of Aeschylus, especially the Theban trilogy. It is shown that Sophocles in this play creates the situation that is radically different from that of Aeschylus' tragedies. The main differences are the attitude towards "peace in death" and towards the ancestral curse. In Sophoclean play, by contrast with Aeschylus, death is not the end of the strife — at least not until those in power acknowledge that it is; blood ties are not enough for belonging to the cursed family, and this belonging is not necessarily envisaged in negative terms. To illustrate the utter inadequacy of the Aeschylean approach to the world and the events of his tragedy, Sophocles embodies such approach in his Chorus and provokes, during the course of the play, the growing disappointment of the spectator by it. The Chorus is irresponsive when directly addressed, annoyingly counterproductive during the commos with Antigone and prone to change their opinion and perspective too quickly and radically. At the fifth stasimon Sophocles, by the reference to another Aeschylus' tragedy, this time the *Eleusinians*, gives the spectator the short-living hope for the rescue of Antigone. This trap is also intended to disappoint the spectators and show them the inadequacy of the Chorus' Aeschylean perspective.

Keywords: Antigone, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Chorus, *Eleusinians,* Labdacids, ancestral curse, free choice.

1. The Scythian's Job Undone

This article is originally a chapter of my PhD dissertation, written during my being a postgraduate student at the University of Bar-Ilan (Ramat Gan, Israel, 2019–2022).[1] In this paper, I am going to analyze the relationship between Sophocles' *Antigone* and

---

[1] The full text of the dissertation is published in public domain: "Sophocles' Theban Trilogy: Continuity and Inner Development", Department of Classical Studies, PhD Thesis submitted to the Senate of Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, April 2022, https://www.academia.edu/108347549/Sophocles_Theban_Trilogy_Continuity_and_Inner_Development.

© St. Petersburg State University, 2024

Aeschylus' extant *Septem contra Thebes* and lost *Eleusinians*. My working hypothesis is that Sophocles uses references and hints to his predecessor's works in order to create expectations of the spectators which afterwards prove false. Moreover, while the situation of *Antigone* is radically different from that of the *Septem*, the latter tragedy — or rather, the whole Aeschylean Theban tetralogy of which we have only this one and several fragments of other three dramas — with its worldview is given a voice in the Sophocles' tragedy, and it is the voice of the Chorus.

Sophocles starts where Aeschylus finished; actually, he annuls what was achieved and proclaimed in the most solemn way at the end of the *Septem*. The city was saved and the doomed house, which presented the danger to the city by its very existence, was extinguished. The brothers killed each other. The final lament of the Chorus proclaims, in effect, the posthumous reconciliation of the brothers. Now, their blood mixed in the dust of the battlefield, they are literally ὅμαιμοι; their strife has come to the reconciliation promised by Eteocles' dream, but this is reconciliation in death, the Scythian arbiter being the deadly metal (vv. 936–945, cf. 728–733). No more strife between brothers; death brings peace, however bitter. The brothers will be buried side by side, next to their wretched father (vv. 1002–1004[2]). However, Creon of the Sophoclean tragedy, as we learn from the very first lines (vv. 7–10, 21–30), is unwilling to accept peace achieved in such a way: by his decree, the strife in the family is prolonged even after the death of the brothers.

Therefore, the spectator can assume from the first lines that Sophocles has taken — or rather built — the version of the story radically different from that of Aeschylus, even contradicting it. However, as I will show in what follows, the Sophoclean Chorus will make an attempt to apply the old, Aeschylean approach to the new story. This attempt of an old approach to a radically new situation will turn out to be misleading.

On the lexical level, Sophocles uses wording and imagery, borrowed from Aeschylus, in order to underline the contrast. The words chosen to describe Creon's decree for the first time are suggestive of two central motives of Aeschylean trilogy: Oedipus' curse (v. 2: τῶν ἀπ᾽ Οἰδίπου κακῶν) and an outrageously unnatural inimical attitude between φίλοι, "dear ones", relatives (v. 10: πρὸς τοὺς φίλους στείχοντα τῶν ἐχθρῶν κακά).[3]

---

[2] I agree with the majority of scholars that the final scene as we have it (vv. 1005–1078) is a later interpolation, influenced by Sophocles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Phoenissae*, the terminus post quem of its composition thus being 409 BCE.

[3] There are two possible ways to understand of this phrase: "evils, that should belong to, i. e., be inflicted upon enemies, are advancing against our friends", τῶν ἐχθρῶν understood as *genetivus objectivus*; so Wunder 1855, 5; Wecklein 1878, 8; White 1883, 141; Jebb 1891, 10; Kells 1963, 47–52, or "evils are coming from our enemies against our friends", τῶν ἐχθρῶν understood as *genetivus subjectivus*; Blaydes 1859, 449; Schneidewin 1869, 35; Μιστριώτης 1874, 68; Campbell 1879, 460. The first interpretation, however, seems more plausible. I am convinced, most of all, by the following argument of Kells: if we take τῶν ἐχθρῶν as *genetivus subjectivus,* we will make Antigone, from the first lines, to put unduly heavy stress on the enemies and the enmity. This is not in character of the girl who is thinking at the moment only about her brother and who will say, later in the play, οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν (v. 523). Moreover, the antithesis φίλοι vs ἐχθροί will be much stronger, if we understand τῶν ἐχθρῶν as *genetivus objectivus*. If, on the other hand, we take it as *genetivus subjectivus*, there will be no antithesis and no paradox at all, since it is only natural that someone's enemies harm their friends. However, it is probably significant that the syntactic ambiguity was upon the first hearing no clearer for the original audience than it is for us. At first, the audience can only understand that there are still friends and enemies, and enemies, probably, are harming or planning to harm friends, which is only natural. However, later, from the context, the spectator picks up the true meaning of the line: friends are treated as enemies.

The tragic paradox of φίλοι ("friends" or "relatives") being enemies was at the heart of both Aeschylean trilogies on the cursed families, the *Oresteia* and the Theban trilogy.[4] At the beginning of the *Choephori* (v. 234) Orestes says bitterly that he knows that the nearest and dearest (in the context — the mother, plural being *pluralis poeticus*) are inimically disposed towards him and his sister (τοὺς φιλτάτους γὰρ οἶδα νῷν ὄντας πικρούς, here πικροί, as it is usually, being a synonym for ἐχθροί). Later he expands on the nature of the antithesis, or rather, the unnaturalness of the situation. While being pregnant, he supposes, his mother naturally must have felt about her still unborn children as about "dear burthen", but later, as evidenced by facts, she regarded them as her enemies (vv. 992–993: ἐξ οὗ τέκνων ἤνεγχ᾽ ὑπὸ ζώνην βάρος, / φίλον τέως, νῦν δ᾽ ἐχθρόν, ὡς φαίνει, κακόν). The ghost of the mother, however, has every right to return this reproach to the son in the next tragedy: in *Eum.* 100 Clytemnestra complains bitterly that she "suffered such terrible things from the nearest and dearest" (παθοῦσα δ᾽ οὕτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων).

In the *Septem* the tragic paradox of φίλοι being ἐχθροί is exploited to its fullest in the lines where we see the impersonated Curse of Oedipus in its full grim grandeur. In v. 695–697 Eteocles answers the desperate plea of Chorus not to fight his brother:

φίλου γὰρ ἐχθρά μοι πατρὸς †τελει † ἀρὰ
ξηροῖς ἀκλαύτοις ὄμμασιν προσιζάνει,
λέγουσα κέρδος πρότερον ὑστέρου μόρου.

> True, hateful, ruinous curse of my father, who should have loved me, hovers before my dry, unweeping eyes, and informs me of benefit preceding subsequent death.

The imagery of these lines is designed to remind of the blind mask of Oedipus from the previous tragedy. I think that Hutchinson, who tends to stress or even exaggerate Eteocles' nobility wherever possible, did not account for the whole context, when he gives to φίλου here the strong sense of "dear, beloved", and comments: "Eteocles does not detest the father who has cursed him."[5] The resentment that resonates in Sommerstein's translation — "Curse of the father who should have loved me"[6] — seems to me closer to the meaning of Aeschylus here.[7] Anyway, the juxtaposition of φίλου and ἐχθρά stresses the unnaturalness of the situation, where the father hated his sons and where his curse engendered the mutual hatred of the brothers. The similar effect has been reached earlier, where Eteocles has claimed to be the most fitting person to combat Polyneices: ἄρχοντί τ᾽ ἄρχων καὶ κασιγνήτῳ κάσις, ἐχθρὸς σὺν ἐχθρῷ (vv. 674–675). It is, indeed, only natural that an enemy fights an enemy and a ruler fights a ruler; however, κασιγνήτῳ κάσις strikes a very different note, hinting on the most unnatural — fratricide and pollution. As Hutchinson puts it in his commentary on the lines, "Of the three pairs, the first and third are natural enough… The middle term is unnatural and appalling. The form displays the perversion of Eteocles' mind here."[8] Later in the play, in the solemn lament for the brothers — if indeed we can attribute these lines to Aeschylus[9] — this unnaturalness will be once more stressed by the repeated φίλον in the context of mutual fratricide (v. 971): — πρὸς φίλου γʼ ἔφθισο. — καὶ φίλον ἔκτανες.

---

[4] On the use of φίλοι vs ἐχθροί antithesis in Aeschylus and Sophocles see Schein 2011.

[5] Hutchinson 1985, 156.

[6] Sommerstein 2009b, 223.

[7] However, with Greek allowing both possibilities, different members of the audience may, depending of their attitude to the protagonist and their understanding of the story in general, interpret "φίλος πατήρ" "my dear father" either straightforwardly, like Hutchinson, or sarcastically, like Sommerstein.

[8] Hutchinson 1985, 152, on 674–676.

However, by the end this enmity had been finished forever — v. 937: πέπαυται δʼ ἔχθος — once the Scythian peacemaker made his job. In the world of Sophocles' *Antigone*, however, death is not an indisputable end of enmity: it is up to those who survived to prolong enmity or to stop it. Creon's edict has in effect undone what was achieved by the end of the *Septem,* the peace in death. It does this on three levels: that of ideology, phraseology and imagery.

It has long since become a commonplace among Sophoclean scholars that the incompatible interpretations of the concept φιλία lie at the heart of the dramatic conflict of *Antigone*. As L. Slatkin puts it, "Antigone and Creon disagree not merely on which individual is a friend: rather… they disagree on what the word 'friend' means".[10] Antigone uses the word in its sense attested earlier in the *Septem*: "dear ones, relatives", while for Creon "friend" means, first and foremost, a political ally. Therefore, the problem solved at the end of the *Septem* simply does not exist for Creon: Polyneices has never been φίλος of Eteocles and the rest of the family and the city — at least from the time he led the invader's army against Thebes — and will never be.

The lexical expression of Creon's denial and destruction of the peace in death, assumed by Aeschylus, is most prominent in v. 520, where he states his ideology in the most general terms: "the good" and "the bad" are not to receive equal shares after death, as well as while living: ἀλλʼ οὐχ ὁ χρηστὸς τῷ κακῷ λαχεῖν ἴσος. Words λαχεῖν and ἴσος played an important role in the *Septem*: the central image of its final scene were equal shares of paternal soil, attributed to each brother by the Scythian peacemaker — the tiny area necessary for burial (*Sept*. 906–910: "ἐμοιράσαντο δʼ ὀξυκάρδιοι / κτήμαθʼ, ὥστʼ **ἴσον λαχεῖν"**). Paternal property shares attributed to the sons of Oedipus were also mentioned in the father's curse (vv. 788–790): Oedipus wished them "σιδαρονόμῳ διὰ χερί ποτε **λαχεῖν** κτήματα". The shares they obtained (λαχεῖν, λαχόντες) this way are equal — and indeed much smaller than they had hoped for (vv. 906–910 above; cf. vv. 945–949: "ἔχουσι μοῖραν **λαχόντες** οἱ μέλεοι / διοδότων ἀχθέων: / ὑπὸ δὲ σώματι γᾶς / πλοῦτος ἄβυσσος ἔσται"). The possibility of this "equality of portion" is explicitly denied by Creon, in a wording strikingly similar to that of the Aeschylean Chorus.

If we recollect the function of the lot imagery in the Aeschylus' tragedy (and possibly in the whole trilogy), we can see that the deed of Creon appears in even more sinister and sacrilegious light. As has long since been noted, the drawing of lots is a recurrent image in the *Septem*, symbolizing the power of fate, or gods, and the vanity of human attempts to circumvent it. Already in Stesichorus' *Thebais* the lottery was used for the initial distribution of the father's possessions between brothers in order to avoid the implementation of Teiresias' prophesy by channeling the power of Moirai into the process of distribution.[11]

---

[9] Hutchinson 1985, 202–203, despite marking the final scene as spurious, believes this dialogue to be genuine, with speakers not Antigone and Ismene, but semi-choruses. Similarly, Brown 1976, 207–208, who stresses the close parallel of the stichomythic lament with the end of the *Persae* and refuses to ascribe it to the later interpolator, since "the rigidly formalized ritual lament of which 961–1004 consist is the last thing that would be composed by the kind of late-fifth-century or fourth-century interpolator who was responsible for the sisters" (208), scil. for the insertion of Antigone and Ismene into the end of the *Septem.*

[10] Slatkin 2016, 97–98 with n. 15. Cf. Nussbaum 1986, 57–58, 63–64.

[11] On lottery in Lille's Stesichorus and *Septem*, see: Swift 2015.

One can assume, keeping in mind the repetitions of the lottery image in the *Septem,* that the lots were used by brothers also in Aeschylus (it must have been described in the lost *Oedipus*, the second play of the tetralogy). If so, the lottery there was a vain attempt to prevent the implementation of Oedipus' curse, which also mentioned lottery. Anyway, the extant tragedy of the trilogy frequently mentions or even describes lottery and shares. Apart from above-mentioned "distribution by lot" in the curse of Oedipus (vv. 711, 788–790) and its implementation (vv. 906–907, 914, 944–945), it is by lottery that the Seven choose the positions at the gates (vv. 55–56). If we apply the understanding of "lot" as "the gods' decision", relevant to these contexts, to the situation of *Antigone,* we have to assume that Creon's denial of possibility of equal shares for "the good" and "the bad" even in death amounts to creating an earthly system of shares distribution as opposed to the divine one, or rather to denying the divine system of "irrational" share distribution and creating the earthly, rational one instead.

To sum up: Sophocles stressed on several levels the radical difference between the situation at the end of *Septem* and that at the beginning of *Antigone.* He deliberately breaks the expectations of the spectators to see the sequel of the Aeschylean myth. Common sense tells us that radically different situations demand radically new reaction. This we will shortly see in the behavior and worldview of Antigone.

2. The Family of Choice

Before we start, let us reassume the main features of the ancestral curse in both Aeschylean tetralogies about the cursed families, the Oresteia and the Theban trilogy.[12] These main features are: 1) once the curse is provoked by the misdeeds of one of the ancestors, it can be only inherited: if you belong to the cursed family, you cannot exit it safe and sound, escaping the devastating consequences of the curse; if you do not belong to it by the right of birth, you are safe: no misdeed can provoke this particular curse to fall upon you; 2) the belonging to the cursed family is always envisaged in strongly negative terms, and 3) the curse of the Labdacids specifically amounts to the inherited folly or madness (*Sept.* 654–655, 686, 725, 750, 756–757, 781 and 802).

The dominant scholarly attitude to Antigone's dismissal of Ismene can be summarized by the judgement of D. Carter: "It seems odd that someone so concerned to look after her own *philoi* should reject her only surviving blood relative so fiercely during the scene after the first stasimon, when one girl is already arrested and the other is craving to share her fate."[13] There are various explanations of this inconsistency: some scholars[14] see it as a symptom of Antigone's almost perverse "love to death", others — as a proof of the idiosyncratic and irrational nature of Antigone's concept of *philia*[15] or a sign of the crucial importance of active "sharing in deed" for her.[16]

---

[12] See in more details: Доватур, А. И. Наследственная вина в представлении Солона, Феогнида, Эсхила. В: Ю. В. Откупщиков (ред.). *Philologia Classica. Язык и литература античного мира.* Ленинград, 1977, 36–45.

[13] Carter 2012, 125. Cf. Flaig 2013, 85. Similarly Sommerstein (2018, 26): "She may say later that she was not born to join in hatred but in love (523), but her treatment of Ismene seems to give the lie to this." Cf., e. g., Brown 1987, 166–167; Nussbaum 1986, 83–84; Cairns 2016, 95.

[14] Carter 2012, 126–129.

[15] Bundell 1989, 112–115.

[16] Winnington-Ingram 1980, 134.

The most intriguing question here is not why Antigone dismisses the sister, but why Sophocles bothers to introduce Ismene into the story at all. Note that here he contradicts the established mythological tradition. By the time of production of *Antigone* Ismene already had a story of her own, popular with lyric poets and vase-painters. In this version, she was eventually killed by Tydeus, one of the Seven, during the siege of Thebes.[17] This popular version being incompatible with Ismene participating in the conflict after the siege, Sophocles preferred to ignore it.

But why? What was the purpose of introducing Ismene, completely unsuccessful as she is in everything she attempts to do on stage — first in dissuading the sister from her deed and then in attempts to share her fate? The standard explanation is summarized by A. Brown: "he needed her as a foil to Antigone".[18] However, this contrast, although it certainly exists, does not explain Ismene's eagerness to share the sister's fate. Hereunder I am going to substantiate the following explanation: Sophocles introduces Ismene to challenge the Aeschylean concept of the ancestral curse.

One of the features of the grim reconciliation reached at the end of *Septem* were two dead brothers united in common dual forms, their mutual slaughter being described as a single act of self-destruction (e. g. v. 816: "δισσὼ στρατηγώ", v. 820: "βασιλέοιν δ᾽ ὁμοσπόροιν"). In *Antigone,* as noted already by B. Knox,[19] the brothers are consistently referred to in the dual form throughout the Prologue by both sisters (vv. 13–14, 21–22, 55–56). Creon, in consistency with his political agenda, stresses the difference between the brothers not only by breaking this dual, but also by using their names in a syntactic construction most fitting for the contrast — μὲν… δὲ… (in reported speech, Antigone retelling the edict in vv. 22–30, and in Creon's own speech in vv. 194–206).

There is one more pair of siblings in the play referred to at first by dual form and later by μὲν… δὲ… construction — Antigone and Ismene. In the prologue, the sisters speak of themselves in dual (vv. 3, 21, 49–50, 57, 61–62). However, towards the end of the prologue, as soon as it becomes clear that Ismene is not going to share in her labor, Antigone stops to use this dual form and persistently uses μὲν… δὲ… construction (vv. 71–72, 81–82). She continues to use it during the sisters' last encounter (vv. 555, 557, 559), even though Ismene makes an attempt to reestablish the lost connection, using a dual form once more (v. 558).[20]

The sisters start on the same ground: they are encompassed by the same dual form (vv. 2–3), symbolizing their union in common and inevitable fate, "the evils that stem from Oedipus". The catalogue of family horrors, with which Ismene starts her answer to the sister's challenge (vv. 49–57), shows that she views her belonging to the family in strongly negative terms. Her refusal to participate in Polyneices' burial and her warnings to the sister are explicitly motivated by fear that they can share the horrible fate of the other family members (vv. 58–60).

Hereafter, as has been noticed by Hahnemann,[21] Antigone insistently uses adversative μὲν… δὲ… construction speaking about herself and her sister towards the end of the prologue. What is even more telling, she repeatedly employs the language of opinion, choice and decision speaking of the sister's position (v. 71: "ἴσθ᾽ ὁποῖά σοι δοκεῖ", v. 76: "εἰ δοκεῖ", v. 555: "εἵλου", v. 557: "φρονεῖν"), while Ismene herself explicitly denies that she has made any decision. The word she chooses to express her refusal to participate in the brother's burial is "I will obey" ("πείσομαι" — v. 67). Later, she refers to public opinion and her own nature as reasons and excuses for her refusal to act (vv. 78–79). For Antigone, however, she made a choice: she has chosen to survive at the cost of her εὐγένεια, which in the context means the belonging to the cursed γένος.[22]

---

[17] Mimnermus, fr. 21 West; for the vase-painting, see Krauskopf 1964.

[18] Brown 1987, 4. Cf. Lloyd 2018, 345.

[19] Knox 1964, 79–80.

[20] The use of dual and μὲν… δὲ… construction for two pairs of siblings in *Antigone* has been analyzed by Hahnemann 2019, 1–16.

[21] Hahnemann 2019, 1–16.

That is how Antigone represents this choice, using the wording that sounds striking in the context (vv. 37–38):

οὕτως ἔχει σοι ταῦτα, καὶ δείξεις τάχα
εἴτ᾽ εὐγενὴς πέφυκας εἴτ᾽ ἐσθλῶν κακή.

> That is how you have it, and soon you will show, whether you were born noble or a bad child of good parents.

The traditional concept of aristocratic excellence, passed from parents to children, is hardly compatible with the idea of the ancestral curse.[23]

When in v. 549 Antigone taunts the sister of being a κηδεμών of Creon, it is not just sarcasm: hereby Antigone acknowledges that from now on her sister belongs to another family, that of her maternal uncle. These words, however, contain a paradox, since in the given situation it would be more natural to call Creon the κηδεμών of Ismene: in tragedy (Aesch. *Suppl.* 76, Soph. *Phil.* 195) this word designates individuals that exercise protection on others, "a caregiver". By this role-inversion Antigone stresses once again the active role of Ismene as a decision-maker, the role Ismene herself denies: for Antigone, she "takes care" of Creon, not merely obeys his orders (cf. vv. 78–79).

Knox notices that, after they parted, Antigone speaks "as if Ismene ceased to exist": indeed, she says she has no φίλος, relative, to mourn her death (v. 875), she calls herself the last remaining member of the family, the only daughter of the royal house (vv. 895, 940).[24] It would be probably more accurate to put it differently: she speaks as if Ismene does not belong to the family any more. The Chorus, in fact, shares her view: for them, too, Antigone is "the last root" of the house of Oedipus (vv. 599–600). However, having lost her identity as a daughter of Oedipus, Ismene is, hereafter and hereby, of no interest for the tragedy. The casual manner of her dismissal is revealing. In v. 769 Creon speaks of the sisters in dual, stating that Haemon would not be able to free "these two maidens" from their punishment. This sounds strange, since in the preceding scene Ismene was nowhere mentioned; moreover, Creon was insistently speaking of personal relationship of his son with Antigone as a cause for his intervention on her behalf. The Chorus react to this with dismay (v. 770): “ἄμφω γὰρ αὐτὼ καὶ κατακτεῖναι νοεῖς”; Creon immediately changes his mind (v. 771): “οὐ τήν γε μὴ θιγοῦσαν: **εὖ γὰρ οὖν λέγεις**”. “No, not the one who didn’t touch: what you say is right.” But the Chorus did not say anything of this kind: they only repeated, in a somewhat disappointed tone, the sentence pronounced by Creon a line earlier. However, by the moment Ismene is so obviously excluded from the family and from the tragedy that this mere repetition was enough to show Creon, enraged as he is at the moment (few lines earlier he was about to execute Antigone here and now, on stage, in front of her groom), the absurdity of his decision. The manner of her last naming is also highly significant: she is called neither by name nor by a kinship term (e. g. “the second sister”), nor even “a maiden” or by some derogatory expression Creon is so fond of (cf. vv. 531, 652, 750): she is “one who did not touch”, she is characterized only negatively, by the deed she did not participate in[25] (cf. the elaborate address of Antigone to the sister in v. 1). By the middle of the tragedy, Ismene is worse than dead: through her decision not to belong to the house of Oedipus, she pales into complete inexistence.

---

[22] Cf. v. 45, where Antigone interprets Ismene's refusal to participate in the burial as her unwillingness to be Polyneices' sister.

[23] Cf. the wording in which Oedipus, in his agony, describes his belonging to the cursed family (*OT* 1397): νῦν γὰρ κακός τ᾽ ὢν κἀκ κακῶν εὑρίσκομαι. It is telling that, as shown by Foster 2017, as early as several years after the production of Aeschylus' Theban tetralogy, Pindar, in his *Pythian* 8, challenges Aeschylean understanding of the myth from the point of view of the aristocratic ideology of εὐγένεια. However, for the epinician poet, this ideology was the inevitable part of genre poetics, incompatible with tragic vision of destructive familial inheritance, while Sophocles encompasses these two visions in one genre and one play.

[24] Knox 1964, 82.

Antigone, by contrast, envisages her belonging to the family as something supporting: even after her emotional breakdown in the first kommos (vv. 806–890), she manages to find comfort in the image of posthumous family reunion (vv. 891–903), which has already appeared early in the play (vv. 73–76).

Even the Chorus, who, in general, sides with Creon and, as we shall see, clings to the Aeschylean view about the family curse, does not view her family inheritance in exclusively negative terms. In vv. 471–472, after the famous monologue on the divine Nomoi, the Chorus comments on Antigone’s words as follows:

Δηλοῖ τὸ γέννημ᾽ ὠμὸν ἐξ ὠμοῦ πατρὸς
τῆς παιδός· εἴκειν δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπίσταται κακοῖς.

> She makes it clear, that the daughter has fierce inborn temper from her fierce father: she is unable to surrender to evils.

The best rendering of ὠμός here is provided in Kamerbeek’s commentary: “not, of course, ‘cruel’, but ‘fierce’, ‘intractable’”.[26] The Chorus explains the meaning of Antigone’s hereditary ὠμότης in the second half of v. 472: she “is unable to surrender to evils” (“εἰκεῖν δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπίσταται κακοῖς”). This is said with palpable admiration. Sophocles’ Antigone has inherited inability to surrender from Aeschylus’ Oedipus, the protagonist of the eponymous tragedy.[27] The capstone of this tragedy — and, in a sense, of the whole trilogy — was Oedipus cursing his sons who refused to provide him proper maintenance when, after the revelation and self-blinding, he found himself helpless in their care. One would expect that Oedipus, after all he suffered, would be broken to such an extent that he would not ask gods to punish the crime committed against himself. However, this was not the case. And it is this inability to surrender to suffering, this refusal to be broken and a passive victim of subsequent assaults that Sophocles’ Antigone inherited from Aeschylus’ Oedipus. Here we have reference to the tragedy of Aeschylus, but in totally un-Aeschylean spirit:

---

[25] For the dramatic importance of such periphrastic naming in Sophocles, cf. *OT* 1447.

[26] Kamerbeek 1978 ad loc.

[27] On this reference to Aeschylus’ Oedipus, see in more detail: Barzakh 2017.

for Aeschylus, it is absurd to search for anything positive or admirable in non-material inheritance passed across the generations of the cursed family.

It is Creon, not Antigone, who, despite having no blood ties with the Labdacids, follows the pattern drawn by Aeschylus for the cursed family.[28] He is evidently infected by familial folly, or even insanity, of Labdacids (vv. 755, 765, 1050–1052; cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 725, 756, 781 et passim), his actions, like that of Eteocles, incur pollution upon the city (vv. 1010–1022; cf. *Sept.* 680–682, 734–737), and he repeatedly refuses to listen to the good advice of the friends until it is too late (the scenes with Haemon and Teiresias; cf. *Sept.* 677–719 and 876). The outcome is so disastrous for him that the spectator cannot but recognize the familiar devastating work of the curse.

This and the previous paragraphs show how different the worldview presented in the *Antigone* is from that of the *Septem.* Death is not the end of the strife — at least not until those in power acknowledge that it is. Blood ties are not enough for belonging to the family: at least, one can choose not to belong and to quit the tragedy, safe and sound, before the end. Finally, even belonging to the cursed family is not necessarily envisaged in negative terms. This world is radically un-Aeschylean. It would be absurd to approach it with Aeschylean ideology. To show this absurdity in the most graphical way, Sophocles embodies this ideology in his Chorus.

3. The Chorus: The Voice of the Aeschylean Tragedy

By now it has been shown that Sophocles envisages the family curse, or rather the familial non-material inheritance, of the Labdacids in an extremely un-Aeschylean way. One, who, through blood-ties, belongs to the cursed family, can escape the curse. The curse can fall upon a person who is not bound by blood-ties to the cursed family. It can be escaped willingly, accepted willingly or can fall upon the person due to his misdeeds. Those who willingly accept it not necessarily conceptualize it as something exclusively negative. In other words, what matters is choice and action, not an inheritance passively accepted.

But Sophocles does more than that: upon this un-Aeschylean background he presents the interpretative voice which is consistently Aeschylean from the beginning to the last words of the tragedy. I mean the voice of the Chorus.

The songs and iambic utterances of the Chorus are punctuated by Aeschylean references more than any other part of the tragedy. Already the Parodos abounds in Aeschylean imagery and ideology, as has been shown by Dunn.[29] The Aeschylean motives in the Second Stasimon, most significantly, the motive of ancestral curse, were abundantly celebrated by scholars.[30] In the Kommos, the Chorus' position is formed mainly by the concept of ancestral curse in the Aeschylean sense of the word. The Fifth Stasimon, as I am going to show at the end of this article, probably contains the intertextual reference to the lost Aeschylean *Eleusinians.* However, the Chorus is not just the most prominent mouthpiece of the Aeschylean concept of the ancestral curse — their worldview is directly opposed to the idea of choice and actions defining the outcome of the events and the individual fates.

---

[28] For the fullest analysis, see Liapis 2012.

[29] Dunn 2012, 268–270.

[30] See Kitzinger 2008, 32, with bibliography.

Hereunder I will analyze the Chorus' "Aeschylean" utterances in their dramatic context. My goal here is not to interpret them in full — this task by far exceeds the scope of this article — but to attempt to imagine the spectators' reaction on them.

Parodos, which, as shown by Dunn,[31] is Aeschylean in both form and content, contains the recapitulation of Aeschylus' *Septem*. It begins where Aeschylus ends — with the death of the brothers, who, as in the final Kommos of *Septem*, are spoken of in the dual form and presented as equally impious and insane, no matter that one of them was the protector, and the other — the intruder of the city (see, e. g., *Sept.* 891). In Parodos the Chorus of *Antigone* seems to share this view (vv. 144–147): "πλὴν τοῖν στυγεροῖν, ὣ πατρὸς ἑνὸς / μητρός τε μιᾶς φύντε καθ᾽ αὑτοῖν / δικρατεῖς λόγχας στήσαντ᾽ ἔχετον / κοινοῦ θανάτου μέρος ἄμφω". As well as the Chorus of *Septem*, this Chorus is sure that with the death of the brothers all misfortunes have ended (cf., e. g., *Sept.* 938: "πέπαυται δ᾽ ἔχθος"). The Chorus hopes for the forgetting — v. 151 "λησμοσύνα" — of the recent past. However, the spectator has already seen and heard enough to suppose that nothing has ended.[32] Nevertheless, at this stage the spectator is not supposed to label the point of view of the Chorus as inadequate: it is just another perspective, that of the citizens, who are not obliged to share the concerns of the royal family until they touch their well-being.

However, the contrast between the Chorus' song and the preceding and the following scenes is much more profound. As we remember, it was in the Prologus that the concept of "the family of choice" appears first: Antigone considers Ismene's refusal to participate in the burial as a refusal to belong to the family and stresses the nature of contrasting positions of her and her sister as two possible free choices (in contrast with Ismene, who repeatedly takes refuge in the necessity). Meanwhile, the Parodos, as has masterly been shown by R. Kitzinger,[33] tends, in its interpretation of the battle with Argives, to erase human choice and action from the picture, replacing it by images of the divine and natural order. In the world drawn by the Chorus there is no place for choice.

At this point, the spectator is not supposed to question the possibility of such interpretation. However, he cannot but notice that the conclusion of the Chorus — everything has come to its natural end, now it is time to forget the war, its human causes and consequences — contradicts what we have just seen and what we are about to see in the first *epeisodion,* immediately after the Parodos. The same pattern — a confident statement which immediately proves to be wrong — is reenacted in the following scene. The Chorus expresses the confidence that no one would defy the decree: no one is silly enough to long for dying (v. 220). Immediately after these words, however, the Guard enters to tell that someone did exactly this. The Chorus' immediate suggestion after the story of the Guard is that of the divine intervention (vv. 278–279). This suggestion bears in itself the tragic irony, which characterizes many other utterances of the Chorus. By asking whether the deed had a divine generation, the Chorus does not approve it but merely states that it was extremely difficult to perform it and it demanded capacity beyond human. However, the divinity was indeed involved, since Antigone acted out of the pious motives.[34] The irony of this kind is intended to show misunderstanding of the situation by the speaker (cf. numerous tragic ironies in *OT*). Accordingly, the Chorus is noteworthy unaware of possible meanings of their words in the context — due to their misunderstanding of the events.

---

[31] Dunn 2012, 268–270.

[32] Cf. Müller 1961, 398–399; Coleman 1972, 6; Kamerbeek 1978, 10.

[33] Kitzinger 2008, 13–20.

[34] Müller 1961, 400–401.

The first stasimon, which follows this scene, is a masterpiece of Sophoclean tragic irony.[35] On its face value, the Chorus, shocked by the cunning daring of the unknown who buried Polyneices, contemplates the skills of the man and their dangers.[36] The irony, however, consists in the fact that the correlation between the ode and the events of the tragedy is much more complex — but the Chorus is completely unaware of it.

The sinister sounding of the ambiguous δεινός (vv. 332–333) has been repeatedly discussed.[37] It is even more ambiguous in its context, when we consider the parallel with Aesch. *Cho*. 585–586, also repeatedly mentioned by scholars.[38] Among the parallel features of the two odes, the most prominent are "πολλὰ δεινά" at the beginning (*Cho*. 385–386, *Ant*. 332), followed by priamel that encompasses earth, sky and water, comparing their inhabitants, directly or indirectly, to the human *(Cho*. 588–592, *Ant*. 334–345) and stressing the dark side of the human φρόνημα (*Cho*. 594–595, *Ant*. 365–366).[39]

The Chorus of Aeschylus' tragedy, starting with the statement on the abundancy of δεινά, continues with the catalog of human misdeeds. The humanity surpasses the animal world only in its boldness, not in its skills. It is implied in the strophe (vv. 589–592) that the animals are still dangerous to the man. In Sophoclean ode, however, the man masters over the animals, who are not dangerous to him anymore , and the catalogue of human misdeeds is replaced with the list of achievements. The implication of this reference to Aeschylus is clear. In Aeschylus' world, the evaluation of the Antigone's deed could be only negative, given that she acted under the influence of ancestral curse and her endeavor leads to her destruction. However, in our tragedy this is not the case, given the positive aspects of human δεινότης, as they appear in the ode. The Chorus, meanwhile, is unaware of these ambiguities.

They are also unaware of the complications created by themselves in their catalogue of the humanity's achievements. When they, for instance, describe the progress of agriculture, their wording unwittingly stresses the assaulting violence against the Earth, the superior goddess (vv. 338–339: "θεῶν τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν / ἄφθιτον, ἀκαμάταν, ἀποτρύεται", the last word being a strongly negative term).[40] The proclamation of Creon can be seen as "the violence against the Earth", since it contradicts the basic norms established by the gods below, those who dwell in the abyss of the Earth.

Note also that the first two achievements of humanity listed in this song are at the same time favorite sources of metaphors that Creon uses speaking of his power:[41] he envisages himself as a captain of a ship (vv. 162–163; cf. vv. 334–337 in the ode) or a plougher who has to deal with disobedient and wild animals (vv. 291–292, 477–478; cf. vv. 333–341, 350–352 of the ode). Creon never mentions hunting or setting snares for birds; however, both images are present in the following scene in the monologue of the Guard, who compares Antigone to a bird (vv. 424–425) and his task — to hunting (v. 433; cf. vv. 342–352).

---

[35] On the tragic irony in the first stasimon, see: Müller 1961, 406.

[36] Goheen 1951, 54.

[37] Most recently, by Biilings 2021, 73.

[38] Goheen 1951, 53; Kamerbeek 1978, 13; Cairns 2014, 7–9.

[39] Cairns 2014c, 8.

[40] Billings 2021, 74–75; Bernadete 1999, 41, also speaks of "difficulty, of which Chorus is scarcely aware, that the unwearied earth, which man tries to wear out, is a goddess, the highest of the gods besides!"

[41] Nussbaum 1986, 59.

Therefore, while speaking of awesome/dangerous man, represented by a perpetrator of Creon's edict, the Chorus unconsciously hints at Creon.

Later in the ode, the Chorus unwittingly hints at Creon once again. As I will discuss in detail later, the Chorus believes in the Aeschylean concept of the hereditary curse, which presupposes the inborn nature of the traits that lead the cursed person to their destruction. However, in vv. 353–354, strikingly enough, the same Chorus states that the man has "taught himself" ("ἐδιδάξατο" — medium form) "ἀστυνόμους ὀργάς". As Billings notes, the idea of a man having taught himself the social skills and political life, as well as the idea of self-taught skill of articulated speech (v. 353), is alien to most of other Greek versions of the history of civilization: these skills are usually taught by a god or a hero.[42] However, here Chorus speaks of political life not in general terms, but specifically, of "anger (or passion) that governs the city". Political strifes that determine the fate of the community are, according to the Chorus, based on the ὀργή, anger, passion. The term ὀργή and its synonyms are highly relevant for both Creon and Antigone: both are prone to anger and follow their political agenda with genuine passion. As for the αὐτόγνωτος ὀργά (v. 875) of Antigone, however, the Chorus, contradicting their own idea of "self-taught political passion", believes it to be innate rather than acquired: it is a part of her ancestral curse, the inheritance of her father Oedipus (vv. 379–383, 853–856). Creon, on the contrary, has not inherited his "political passion", but "taught himself" (ἐδιδάξατο) this way. Thus, the Chorus unconsciously hints at Creon once again.

The second antistrophe also has, in the context of the drama, the second meaning of which the Chorus is unaware. It states that, to be "high in the city" (ὑψίπολις), one should "honor the laws of the city and the laws of the gods" (vv. 368–369: "νόμους… χθονὸς θεῶν τ᾽ ἔνορκον δίκαν"). This juxtaposition of two codes of law, civil and divine, betrays their faith in their universal compatibility. However, the spectator is aware that in the context of this drama these codes are incompatible. Thus, he experiences the perspective of the Chorus not just as different from that of the characters of the drama, but as an inadequate one.

Immediately after the ode Antigone is led in by the Guard (vv. 376–383). It is difficult to imagine better illustration of incompatibility of these two codes of law. The paradigm is the same as with the Parodos and with v. 220: the belief of the Chorus is falsified a moment after it is expressed. The first reaction of the Chorus to this sight is a shock: they see this as "the portent from the god" (v. 376, transl. A. Brown). Soon, however, they find a clue to the situation in Antigone's parentage. She is "the wretched child of the wretched father, Oedipus" (vv. 379–380), the child of the cursed family, and so her decision to break Creon's edict can be, in accordance with Aeschylus' picture of the curse of the Labdacids, labelled as one more manifestation of the inherited ἀφροσύνη (v. 383), "folly". Now that they see the pattern, they are prepared to see foolishness or insanity in the deed that they once have ascribed to the divine intervention (vv. 278–279).

For a moment, the spectator as well might think that this is the clue. In fact, the "evils that stem from Oedipus" were mentioned as early as in v. 2, the events of Aeschylus' trilogy were recapitulated in vv. 49–57, and now Antigone, despite the warnings of Ismene in the Prologue, is clearly following in the steps of her dead relatives, led, as Eteocles in *Septem*, by her own will and decision. Should a self-destructive decision of a child of a cursed house be labeled as ἀφροσύνη in any case, no matter the motives and the context?

---

[42] Billings 2021, 76–77. He even singles this passage out as "the most strongly anthropic of cultural origins we have encountered" in Greek drama.

In the world of Aeschylus — yes, it should. The Chorus holds on this worldview until as late as v. 1110 — in fact, until it is too late — to the presumably growing disappointment of the spectator.

In the following two scenes, the Chorus is repeatedly addressed. Antigone, in vv. 504–505, states that the elders of the Chorus would praise her deed, but they don't do so out of the fear of the king. Later (vv. 693–700), Haemon claims to have heard the same praise from Theban citizens, whom the elders of the Chorus are supposed to represent. The Chorus, however, keep silent, neither admitting nor denying their sympathy for Antigone's deed. Verses 504–505 is the only passage in the extant tragedy where the Chorus is directly addressed, but does not react.[43] This silence has probably disappointed the spectators, the more so since the fear of a tyrant would be especially blameworthy in the eyes of the citizens of democratic Athens.[44]

The interpretation of the situation, given by the Chorus in the Second Stasimon, is utterly Aeschylean in both ideas and imagery[45] and highly disappointing. The image of a sea-storm, attacking the doomed house (vv. 584–592), resembles the similar picture drawn by Aeschylus in *Sept*. 758–762. The "bloody dust of the nether gods" (v. 602),[46] which is about to destroy the last child of the cursed family, originates in the same choral ode, dedicated to the fate of the royal house (*Sept*. 735–737). The next line — v. 603: "λόγου τ᾽ ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν ἐρινύς" — makes the interpretation complete and irrevocably damnatory for Antigone. Erinys of the Labdacid house, as she has done three times in a row in the Aeschylean trilogy, has found her way to the girl's mind, infecting it with familial ἄνοια, folly, or even frenzy, and leading her victim to inevitable destruction.

Aeschylean as it is, this interpretation also sounds strikingly inadequate — and this time the spectators are supposed to experience this as an inadequacy, not as the different point of view. The second verbal reference to Aeschylean ode ironically hints at this inadequacy. "The bloody dust" of the Aeschylean Chorus was the agent of inexorable pollution by fratricide, while in the Sophoclean context the dust, by which Antigone has covered the body of her brother, was intended to remove the pollution (v. 256: "λεπτὴ δ᾽, **ἄγος φεύγοντος ὥς**, ἐπῆν **κόνις**").[47] Moreover, the last stanza (vv. 616–628) is evidently irrelevant for the case of Antigone, since she was by no means deluded by any hope ("πολύπλαγκτος ἐλπίς"): from the beginning, she was aware that she is going to die for her daring (cf. vv. 71–78). It is Creon who entertains the false hope that his politics will lead the city to the prosperity (v. 191) and his enemies will be broken (vv. 304–314, 473–479). Therefore, the last part of the ode fits Creon much better than Antigone,[48] and the visual innuendo to it may be his presence onstage during the ode.[49] However, given the explicit mention of Antigone in the first antistrophe, we should assume that the reference of the ode to Antigone is to be taken as intended by the Chorus, while the second meaning, the reference to Creon, is an ironic one perceived only by the audience. Here, as well as in the previous ode, the tragic irony is intended to show the speaker's misunderstanding of the dramatic situation.

---

[43] Cf., e. g., *OT* 648, *OC* 822–825, where the Chorus answers immediately to the appeal of a character.

[44] The spectator might first agree with Antigone's interpretation of the Chorus' silence. However, later in the tragedy, especially in vv. 853–856 and vv. 872–875, the Chorus demonstrates that their unwillingness to side with Antigone was genuine.

[45] For numerous parallels between this stasimon and Aeschylus' ode on the fate of the Labdacids, see Cairns 2014c, 17–18.

[46] See Cairns 2014a on why we should preserve the text of MSS. The verbal parallelism with Aeschylus is not the least argument for such decision.

[47] Bernadette (1999, 32–33, 55) notes that the layer of dust, according to the Greek beliefs, was, in cases like one presented in the tragedy, an essential and sufficient means to avoid pollution. When it was impossible to cremate or bury a dead body or when it was considered to be too time-consuming (e. g., in the case when the pious duty was performed by a passerby), it was enough to hide it from the sight of humans and heavens by covering it with a layer of earth or dust.

[48] On the applicability of the last part of the ode to Creon, see Goheen 1951, 64.

The Chorus' interpretation of the events given in the following ode (vv. 781–800) is even more obviously misleading. While Haemon indirectly calls the Chorus to account, referring to the opinion of the citizens, the Chorus keeps silent (vv. 693–700). Instead, they side with Creon, who disregards the sincerity of Haemon's speech and insists that his son's only motive is his love for Antigone, taunting him with "being a woman's slave" (v. 756). In the same vein, in the Third Stasimon the Chorus assumes that the driving force of the strife they have just seen is the erotic passion (vv. 793–794). The one-sidedness of this understanding is evident to the spectator,[50] already disappointed by the Chorus' ignoring Haemon's implicit call. However, this ode, as well as the previous one, contains the tragic irony — the condemnation of Creon which cannot be in the minds of the singers. When they speak of Eros as an invincible and ubiquitous divine force, they implicitly criticize his mockery of the feelings and the words of his son (not just in the scene of their controversy, but already in the previous scene, vv. 568–575).[51]

The Chorus plays an active part in the following scene, but, due to their misunderstanding of the situation, their intervention is annoyingly counterproductive. They are directly called to witness by Antigone in v. 806 ("ὁρᾶτ᾽ ἔμ᾽, ὦ γᾶς πατρίας πολῖται") and are expected to measure up to their role as witnesses and interpreters of the situation or at least to provide a consolation and a sign of empathy to the girl going to her death. However, staying true to their Aeschylean concept of the events, they appear conspicuously ineffective in both roles. Their attempts of consolation sound for Antigone as mockery rather than comfort (v. 839). Their interpretation of the events, given in the second strophic pair, is, in the light of what has been said, rather predictable and totally Aeschylean. Antigone, according to the Chorus, is paying a debt of her father (v. 856), but her death is also a consequence of her own wrong decisions. Her personal flaw, the manifestation of familial folly, is the impudence (v. 853 "θράσος") with which she went up against the authorities (vv. 873–875).

Before this point, no consistent narrative was opposed to the Chorus' version of the events. It is here, just before going to her death, that Antigone presents her view of her family history and her own role in it. Although, by mentioning her father, the Chorus managed to touch Antigone's pressure point (v. 858: "ἔψαυσας ἀλγεινοτάτας ἐμοὶ μερίμνας"), the daughter of Oedipus, judging by vv. 858–871, sees the story of her family as a succession of sufferings, not of crimes or folly. Unlike Eteocles (cf. *Sept.* 653), when she realizes that she is about to share the sufferings of her ancestors, she recognizes her belonging not with a feeling of god-forsakenness and despair, but as a strange comfort and, in a sense, uniting with gods. She does not see above herself "the sublime throne of Dike" (v. 854 "ὑψηλὸν Δίκας βάθρον"), demanding for the destruction of her cursed family: on the contrary, Dike still resides in the world below (vv. 450–460) with those she loves

---

[49] See, e. g., Müller 1961; Cairns 2014a; Cairns 2016, 72–73.

[50] So, Müller 1961, 410–412; Erbste 1991, 260–261.

[51] Winnington-Ingram 1980, 86–96.

(vv. 893–894: “οἷ πορεύομαι / πρὸς τοὺς ἐμαυτῆς”). Indeed, while the moralizing comments of the Chorus only convince her that she is going to her death alone, unwept and without friends (v. 877: “ἄκλαυτος, ἄφιλος”), it is in the image of posthumous reunion with her family (vv. 891–903) that she finds comfort.

Upon the final exit of Antigone, the spectator is left with two narratives, coherent in themselves, but completely incompatible. One is supported by the authority of the myth and the tradition, best expressed in the Aeschylean trilogy, the other — by the spectator's own growing feeling of discontent with the Chorus and sympathy towards Antigone. This contradiction cannot be solved by human measures; indeed, Antigone explicitly left the decision with the gods (v. 925). In this tragedy, they have a representative authorized to pronounce their sentence.

The revelations of Teiresias decide the matter — and change the perspective of the Chorus dramatically. It turns out that the dismissive “σέβειν μὲν εὐσέβειά τις” (v. 872) — the Chorus' utterance on the kommos — was not enough to encompass all the reasonable doubts Creon's position raises. More than that, Teiresias, the revered prophet and the most authoritative figure of the play, proclaims Creon to be the prey for “῞Αιδου καὶ θεῶν᾽Ερινύες” (v. 1085). The Chorus, however, finds the way to preserve their Aeschylean stance. Now they turn to the newly proclaimed victim of Erinyes with good advice, which, in accordance with the Aeschylean pattern (cf. *Sept*. 686–719, 876), is doomed to be ineffective.

Here, it is worth noticing the Chorus' inconsistency about the crucial problem of the tragedy. First, the Chorus, for all their repeatedly stressed reverence to the gods, managed somehow to ignore the issue of μίασμα until relatively late, i. e. until this issue was raised by Teiresias. Given that in Greek religion a dead human body was considered one of the main sources of ritual pollution,[52] ignoring the issue of μίασμα by the pious Chorus in the tragedy with the dead human body, stinking and devoured by wild animals, at the center of the story, would be unbearable for the spectators. Speaking of the piety, the Chorus manages to generate, in the crucial moment of the tragedy and in its end, two statements about it, which, while being banal to the point of tautology, contradict one another in the context. First of these phrases is v. 872: “σέβειν μὲν εὐσέβειά τις”.[53] The most important words in this line, otherwise utterly tautological, are μέν and τις. Μέν takes a special significance, since the following δέ-clause tells that no one should under any condition oppose those in power, and Antigone is destroyed by her self-will (vv. 873–875). So, the Chorus can magnanimously concede that there is some piety (εὐσέβειά τις) in doing pious acts (σέβειν), but loyalty to those in power is obviously more important for them.

At the end, however, they produce another banality about the piety: “χρὴ δὲ τά γ᾽ εἰς θεοὺς μηδὲν ἀσεπτεῖν” (vv. 1347–1348). This line, in turn, contains the condemnation of Creon and explains his downfall. Now the loyalty to their king is much less important for them than the piety. Therefore, it is obvious that the Chorus fails to present a consistent reaction to the events of the tragedy. They are consistent only in being banal, cruelly moralizing — and Aeschylean. All this must undermine the spectators' trust in the Chorus as an interpreter of the events.

In fact, Creon, unlike Eteocles, follows the Chorus' advice — but with an important reservation. While for Teiresias the case of Polyneices is obviously more important than that of Antigone, who is mentioned only in passing (vv. 1068–1069), the Chorus, on the contrary, starts their advice with the rescue of Antigone (vv. 1100–1101), being probably aware of the fact that the dead can wait but it can be too late for the living one. Nevertheless, Creon, with attention to the formal piety combined with insensitivity which is much in character (cf. vv. 775–776), attended first to the burial of Polyneices. After the event, the spectator can speculate that this decision was fatal. But he may also wonder, why the Chorus reserved their good advice until so late.

---

[52] On the ancient Greek attitude to the issues of burial, see Garvie 1998, 12–14.

[53] In Brown's translation: “Piety is piety, perhaps”.

When Creon returns to the stage with the dead body of his son in his hands, to learn about the death of his wife, the Chorus is no less cruel to the broken old man than it was to the maiden going to her death. Again, their moralizing comments have distinctly Aeschylean coloring (see esp. vv. 1337–1338, 1350–1351). However, when they tell Creon that he "has seen the justice too late" (v. 1270), the spectator cannot but notice that this is no less true with regard to themselves.

Let us sum this section up. The situation of *Antigone* being radically different from that of the Aeschylus' tetralogy, the Aeschylean approach to it can be expected to be inadequate. To show this inadequacy, Sophocles embodies this approach in his Chorus and makes spectators to be, in the course of the play, more and more in disagreement with it and disappointed by it.

There is probably only one ode during which the spectator can full-heartedly identify with the Chorus — the Fifth Stasimon, the *hyporcheme*. However, the short-living hope for the rescue of Antigone, which Sophocles grants the spectator and the Chorus, is also colored in the Aeschylean overtones.

4. The Eleusinian Hope Failed

As Creon leaves to bury Polyneices and free Antigone, the Chorus sings the *hyporcheme* full of hope for the happy outcome of their mission. This song, the Fifth Stasimon (vv. 1109–1152), is the prayer to Dionysus, which strongly resembled to the original audience the Eleusinian mysteries. The Mysteries are explicitly mentioned in vv. 1119–1121.[54] The last stanza of the ode sounds especially Eleusinian. The epithet "the leader of fire–breathing stars" (vv. 1146–1147: ἰὼ πῦρ πνειόντων χοράγ᾽ ἄστρων) and the name Iacchus, applied to Dionysus (v. 1152), refer, as noted by scholars,[55] to the opening event of the Mysteries — the procession, which took place at night 19th–20th of Boedromion and led from Athens to Eleusis.[56] The participants of the procession were carrying torches — "fire-breathing stars" — and invoking Dionysus as Iacchus. Moreover, the very invocation of the god as "the leader of fire-breathing stars" refers, as attested by the ancient scholium, to a certain "doctrine of the mysteries" ("μυστικὸς λόγος"), which calls Dionysus the chorus-leader of the stars.[57]

---

[54] On the Eleusinian imagery and terminology of this ode, see: Kamerbeek 1972, 189–190; Seaford 1990, 76–90, esp. 87–88; Griffith 1999, 313–314, 318–319; Csapo 2008, 262–290; Jiménes San Cristóbal 2013, 278–279.

[55] Csapo 2008, 267–270; Macedo 2011, 407; Seaford 2018, 170.

[56] On the connection of the name Iacchus to the opening procession of the Mysteries, see: Smith 1873, s. v. Iacchus; Burkert 1963, 279; Jiménes San Cristóbal 2012, 125–136; Bremmer 2014, 6–7.

[57] Scholia vetera in Sophoclis Antigone 1146 (Papageorgios 1888, 271). See also: Csapo 2008, 269; Jimenes San Cristabel 2013, 281–282. This mystic concept, together with the Eleusinian rite, is also hinted

All these Eleusinian motives may be intended to remind the spectators of another tragedy set in Eleusis and dealing with the denied burial of the Theban dead — this time, however, not that of Polyneices, or at least not only of Polyneices, but of all Argive champions. I mean Aeschylus' *Eleusinians*. Our main source for its plot is Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* (FGrHist 328 F 112 = Plut. *Thes*. 29.4–5):

> συνέπραξε δὲ καὶ Ἀδράστῳ τὴν ἀναίρεσιν τῶν ὑπὸ τῇ Καδμείᾳ πεσόντων, οὐχ ὡς Εὐριπίδης ἐποίησεν ἐν τραγῳδίᾳ, μάχῃ τῶν Θηβαίων κρατήσας, ἀλλὰ πείσας καὶ σπεισάμενος· οὕτω γὰρ οἱ πλεῖστοι λέγουσι· Φιλόχορος δὲ καὶ σπονδὰς περὶ νεκρῶν ἀναιρέσεως γενέσθαι πρώτας ἐκείνας. ταφαὶ δὲ τῶν μὲν πολλῶν ἐν ᾿Ελευθεραῖς δείκνυνται, τῶν δ᾿ ἡγεμόνων περὶ ᾿Ελευσῖνα, καὶ τοῦτο Θησέως ᾿Αδράστῳ χαρισαμένου. καταμαρτυροῦσι δὲ τῶν Εὐριπίδου ῾Ικετίδων οἱ Αἰσχύλου ᾿Ελευσίνιοι, ἐν οἷς καὶ ταῦτα λέγων ὁ Θησεὺς πεποίηται.
>
> He also aided Adrastus in recovering for burial the bodies of those who had fallen before the walls of the Cadmeia, not by mastering the Thebans in battle, as Euripides has it in his tragedy, but by persuading them to a truce; for so most writers say, and Philochorus adds that this was the first truce ever made for recovering the bodies of those slain in battle, although in the accounts of Heracles it is written that Heracles was the first to give back their dead to his enemies. And the graves of the greater part of those who fell before Thebes are shown at Eleutherae, and those of the commanders near Eleusis, and this last burial was a favor which Theseus showed to Adrastus. The account of Euripides in his *Suppliants* is disproved by that of Aeschylus in his *Eleusinians*, where Theseus is made to relate the matter as above (transl. B. Perrin).

Aeschylus' treatment of the myth immediately became canonical for the Athenians[58] and ignited controversy among their political opponents.[59] At the wake of Plataea, where Thebans acted as Persian collaborators, Thebes became the prime target of the Athenian propaganda, and the Athenian intervention for the fallen Argives served its purposes as a mythical illustration of Athenian piety, justice and loyalty to Panhellenic values versus Theban *hybris* and cruelty.[60] By at least 460s,[61] this heroic achievement became an integral part of Athenian patriotic narrative, regularly enunciated in public funeral orations.[62] One can assume that Aeschylus' treatment of the myth about the Theban dead was part of background information for every Athenian who came to watch the tragedy of Sophocles.

The only extant fragment of the *Eleusinians* suggests its probable influence upon Sophocles' *Antigone*. Here we read: "ὤργα τὸ πρᾶγμα· διεμύδαιν᾿ ἤδη νέκυς".[63] Similarly, Sophocles stresses that the body of Polyneices started to stink and be devoured by wild animals within the short time after his death (vv. 410–412, cf. v. 1202: "ὃ δὴ λέλειπτο

---

at in Aristoph., *Ranae,* 324–336, where the Chorus of Eleusinian initiates call Dionysus by the name Iacchus (on this passage and its connection to the Mysteries, see: Bowie 1993, 230).

[58] Steinbock 2016, 155–210.

[59] I mean the exploration of the same myth by Pindar (Pind. *Nem*. 9.21–27 and *Ol.* 6.12–17), who stated that the Thebans didn't fail to give their enemies a proper burial and even supported his version by the new interpretation of the Seven Pyres, the monument known in Thebes long ago, but previously connected with a different story. See Jacoby *FGrH* 3b (Suppl.) 2, 353, n. 30; Hubbard 1992, 95–99.

[60] Hubbard 1992, 97–98; Rosenbloom 2013.

[61] On the dating for the foundation of the institution of funeral oration, see: Walters 1981, 204–205, n. 2, with literature.

[62] Collard 1975, 4–5; Blake Tyroll, Bennett 1998, 1; Hanink, 2013; Proietti 2015, 523; Steinbock 2016, 156–158.

[63] *TrGF* F 53a Radt.

συγκατῄθομεν”, “we put together what little was left”). These disgusting details, aimed to create the sense of indecent outrage,[64] were probably echoing a similar description in Aeschylus’ *Eleusinians*, and the purpose of the earlier poet was probably the same — to stress the abhorrent nature of the Thebans’ decision, as a contrast with civilized humanity of the Athenians, incorporated in their mythical leader Theseus.[65]

It is natural to suppose that Aeschylus included into the tragedy called *Eleusinians* and set in Eleusis some details of Eleusinian ritual and cult well known to almost all Athenians.[66] The author of *Eleusinians* was an Eleusinian himself (T8 a–d Radt). Moreover, his particular connection with the Mysteries is attested as early as by Aristophanes (*Ran.* 886–887 = T 120 Radt). One testimony explicitly compares the outfit of a tragic actor adopted by Aeschylus with the garment of Eleusinian hierophants and torchbearers (Athen. I. 21 D = T 120 Radt). It has been suggested that Aeschylus’ wide use of stunning visual effects also stems from the Mysteries.[67] The ancient tradition, attested already by Aristotle (*EN* 1111 a 8–10 = T 93 a Radt), that Aeschylus was accused of the divulgation of the Mysteries, may also, though indirectly, testify to the special connection of his creative production with the Mysteries.[68]

Therefore, it is quite possible to assume that, hearing the Eleusinian hymn of the Chorus in the context of the burial of the Theban dead, the spectators could think of Aeschylean *Eleusinians* with its prosperous outcome assured by Theseus. This allusion is aimed to reinforce the hope that this tragedy, too, is going to have a prosperous ending.

The Fifth Stasimon is hardly the only reference to the Eleusinian myth and rites in the play. One of the central motives of the tragedy also resounds with Eleusinian echoes. The execution of Antigone is envisaged, both by others and, eventually, by herself, as a marriage to death or even marriage to Hades. As R. Goheen stresses, “the imagery of marriage, especially as it is used in close connection with death, is a fairly prominent element in the overall structure of the play and brings to it insights of both emotional and religious import”.[69] This marriage-death connection appears first in the words of Creon to Haemon, full of crude sarcasm (v. 644–645):

ἀλλὰ πτύσας ὡσεί τε δυσμενῆ μέθες
τὴν παῖδ᾽ **ἐν Αΐδου** τήνδε **νυμφεύειν τινί**.

No, spit this girl out as if she were an enemy, let her go find a husband in Hades.

There is nothing especially mysterious in the words “let this girl marry someone in Hades”[70] in themselves; however, the idea of Antigone’s death as her wedding becomes prominent on Kommos (vv. 801–882).[71] When Antigone sings in her lament “ἀλλά μ’ ὁ παγκοίτας Ἅιδας ζῶσαν ἄγει / τὰν Ἀχέροντος / ἀκτάν, οὔθ’ ὑμεναίων ἔγκληρον, οὔτ’ ἐπινύμφειός / πώ μέ τις ὕμνος ὕμνησεν, ἀλλ’ Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω”, “No, Hades who lays all to rest leads me living to Acheron’s shore, though I have not had my due portion of the chant that brings the bride, nor has any hymn been mine for the crowning of marriage. Instead, the lord of Acheron will be my groom” (vv. 810–815, transl. R. Jebb), ἄγει, juxtaposed by ἐπινύμφειος (v. 814) and νυμφεύσω (v. 815), can only be interpreted in a marital sense: ἄγειν γυναῖκα is a common expression for a groom taking a wife.[72] This makes Antigone “the bride of Hades”, as the Eleusinian Persephone once was (or “the bride of Acheron”). The words of the Messenger in the next scene “πρός λιθόστρωτον **κόρης** / **νυμφεῖον ῞Αιδου** κοῖλον εἰσεβαίνομεν” (vv. 1204–1205) point in the same direction.[73]

---

[64] So, Kitto 1956, 148–149.

[65] Mills 1997, 229–230: “The putrefaction of the human bodies is perhaps a reproach to the Thebans for their inhumanity in continuing to refuse burial.” Note that the description of the fall of Capaneus in *Ant.* 127–137 may also be echoing Aeschylus’ Argive trilogy, this time his *Argives* (*TrGF* F17 Radt).

[66] On the connection of Aeschylus with Eleusinian mysteries, see: Sommerstein 2013, 8–9.

[67] Gould 1991, 117–128.

[68] Sommerstein 2013, 9. On the Eleusinian motives in Aeschylean tragedies, see: Seaford 2018, 133–134.

[69] Goheen 1951, 37.

[70] Rehm (1994, 61) goes too far in stating that “the image of a frigid embrace… leads Creon to command that Antigone “do marry someone in Hades”. However, it may be telling that he doles out the punishment of Antigone, in contradiction with his own previous decree that the penalty for disobeying the edict would be stoning by the whole city (vv. 35–36), just after the scene with Haemon (vv. 773–776). While Brown is probably right that the audience “may suppose that, after what Haemon has said, Creon is afraid

Moreover, the details of Antigone’s execution also remind the fate of Persephone as represented in the Eleusinian ritual. Antigone was entombed alive in a cave (v. 774: “κρύψω πετρώδει ζῶσαν ἐν κατώρυχι”).[74] The role of the cave in festivals of Demeter and Persephone is well attested by both written sources and archeological evidence.[75] According to Dietrich, during these festivals “the Underworld… was identified with the cave or megaron in the actual celebrations”.[76] The Eleusinian Telesterion itself had no subterranean crypt, but it is reasonable to suppose that the Ploutonion,[77] a cave near Telesterion, which served as a temple of Hades, indicated the entrance to the Underworld. For all probability, this cave was believed to be the very “cave of Eleusinian deme, which is the gate to Hades” (“ἄντρον δήμου Ελευσίνος, τόθι περ πύλαι εἰσ’ ᾿Αίδαο”, *Hymn. Orph.* XVIII, 14–15), through which Persephone, according to the Orphic hymn, was abducted by Pluto.[78] As shown by G. Mylonas, the archeologist of the site, the structure of this cave makes it especially fitting for the staging of the annual return of Kore from the Underworld.[79] Therefore, it is safe to assume that in the Mysteries Persephone was imagined (or even presented by a priestess, who impersonated the goddess) being forcibly abducted into the cave and then emerging from it.

This gives us the full picture of what the Athenian spectators must have seen and imagined not long before the catastrophic ending of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. After v. 1108 the procession, accompanied by the invocation of Iacchus the Star-Leader, is leaving in order

---

that the people would refuse to carry out the sentence”, it is also true that the artistic logic leads naturally from the refused marriage with Haemon to the “bridal chamber of Hades”, where Antigone would be entombed alive.

[71] For the discussion of marriage-death motive in this scene, see: Brown 1987, 188–197; Rehm 1994, 63–64. For the same motive in Attic funerary epigrams and statues, see: González González 2019, 40–45.

[72] See LSJ s. v. ἄγω B II.

[73] Seaford (1990, 89) notes: “λιθόστρωτον means ‘paved’, which is surprising of Antigone’s cave but true of the cave from which Kore may have emerged to create joy at Eleusis”. On the paved floor of Eleusinian Ploutonion see: Mylonas 1961, 149, although Mylonas dates the fragments of pavement that can be seen nowadays to IV BC.

[74] Cornford (1913, 160) lists Antigone’s cave among caves and chambers connected with the Eleusinian myth and ritual, proving his point by the statement that “the suggestion throughout the *Antigone* is that the heroine becomes the bride of Pluton”.

[75] Dietrich 1982, 451–452. As noted already by Cornford (1913, 157), “the legend persistently describes the maiden as carried off into the chasm in the earth, or a cave”.

[76] Dietrich 1982, 452.

[77] Frazer 1898, 507; Kerényi 1967, 80; Ustinova 2009, 233–234; Martin 2018, 340.

[78] Quandt 2005, 18.

[79] Mylonas 1961, 147.

to free "the bride of Hades" from her bridal chamber[80] and to perform the duty of burying the dead, one that was accomplished by Theseus in Aeschylus' *Eleusinians*. Surely, the Eleusinian deities, who have once helped Theseus to perform burial duties for the dead Argives, are now going to save the one who performed the similar duty — she will rise, like the Eleusinian Kore, from her death chamber…

However, as the spectator learns immediately after the ode (vv. 1155 sqq.), the hope reinforced by these references was one of the kinds mentioned in vv. 615–617 — "ἀπάτα κουφονόων ἐρώτων". The pattern is the same as before: the hints given by the references to the earlier tragedy prove to be misleading, since the initial situation is too different. There, the setting was the sacred precinct of civilized Athens, not tragic Thebes; more importantly, as Plutarch stressed, the means of changing the Thebans' mind were persuasion and negotiations ("πείσας καὶ σπεισάμενος"), not intimidation of the tyrant by the insulted prophet[81].

To sum up, the intertextual strategy Sophocles uses in *Antigone* with reference to Aeschylus' tragedies looks as follows. Sophocles presents the spectator with the situation, which stands in explicit and striking contrast with that of the earlier tragedy. Death is not the end of the war, at least not for those in power; one can refuse belonging to the cursed family; one can be proud of such belonging and find comfort in it. In any case, there is no Theseus to save the situation and no one who would listen to Theseus if he appears. On this background, Sophocles gives a voice to the earlier tragedy. The Chorus sounds allegedly confidently and consistently, the last child of the doomed house is going to her fate, led by her own self-destructive choice, but Iacchus the Star-Leader from another Aeschylean trilogy is already rushing to rescue… However, the spectator, who at the beginning may have thought that the perspective of the Chorus was just one more possible vision, by the end is completely disappointed in the probability of their narrative, given the Chorus' ultimate ineffectiveness when it is addressed, too quick change of opinion and the false hope it granted at the end.

References

Barzakh Z. Soph. *Ant.* 471 and Aeschylus' *Oedipus*. *Philologia Classica* 2017, 12 (1), 4–11.

Bernardete S. *Sacred Transgressions: A Reading of Sophocles' "Antigone"*. South Bend, St Augustine's Press, 1999.

Billings J. *The Philosophical Stage: Drama and Dialectics in Classical Athens*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012.

Blake Tyroll W, Bennett L. J. *Recapturing Sophocles' Antigone*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998.

Blaydes F. H. M. (ed.). *Sophocles, with English Notes*, vol. 1. London, Whittaker, 1859.

Blundell M. W. *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Bowie A. W. *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Bremmer J. N. *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*. Boston, De Gruyter, 2014.

Brown A. (ed., notes). *Sophocles, Antigone*. Warminster, Aris and Philips, 1987.

---

[80] So rightly Macedo (2011, 407), on the Eleusinian motives in this ode: "Sophocles… is using myth… to create literary effect of boosting the audience's expectation, which would be all the more encouraged to believe in her prompt release by associating her with Persephone."

[81] Note that the attempts of persuading Creon and negotiating with him were made: first by Haemon (vv. 683–765), then by Teiresias (vv. 998–1032). Given the timing of the events, the outcome would be different, were Creon more negotiable and persuasible.

Burkert W. *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Rituals and Myth*. Translated by P. Bing. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1963.

Cairns D. 'The bloody dust of the nether gods': Sophocles, "Antigone" 599–603. In: E. K. Emilsson, A. Maravela, M. Skoie (eds). *Paradeigmata. Studies in Honour of Øivind Andersen.* Athens, The Norwegian Institute at Athens Press, 2014a, 39–51.

Cairns D. From Solon to Sophocles: Intertextuality and Interpretation in Sophocles' "Antigone". *Japan Studies in Classical Antiquity* 2, 2014b, 3–30.

Cairns D. *Sophocles: Antigone*. London — New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Campbell L. (ed., notes). *Sophocles*. Vol. 1. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1879.

Carter D. *Antigone*. In: A. Markantonatos (ed.). *Brill's Companion to Sophocles*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, 111–128.

Coleman R. The Role of the Chorus in Sophocles' "Antigone". *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 1972, 18, 4–27.

Collard Chr. (ed., comm.). *Euripides, Supplices*. Groningen, Bouma, 1975.

Cornford F. The Ἀπαρχαί and the Eleusinian Mysteries. In: Quiggin E. C. (ed.). *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1913, 153–166.

Csapo E. Star Choruses: Eleusis, Orphism, and New Musical Imagery and Dance. In: M. Revermann, P. Wilson (eds). *Performance, Iconography, Reception: Studies in Honour of Oliver Taplin*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, 262–290.

Dietrich B. The Religious Prehistory of Demeter's Eleusinian Mysteries. In: M. J. Vermaseren, U. Bianchi (eds). *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano*. Leiden, Brill, 1982, 445–471.

Dovatur A. I. Ancestral Guilt in Solon, Theognis and Aeschylus. In: Iu. V. Otkupshchikov (ed.). *Philologia Classica. Language and Literature of the Ancient World*. Leningrad, 1977, 36–45 (in Russian).

Dunn F. Dynamic allusion in Sophocles. In: A. Markantonatos (ed.). *Brill's Companion to Sophocles*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, 263–279.

Erbste H. Haimons Liebe zu Antigone. *RhM* 1991, 134, 253–264.

Flaig E. To Act with Good Advice: Greek Tragedy and the Democratic Public Sphere. In: J. P. Arnason, K. A. Raaflaub, P. Wagner (eds). *The Greek Polis and the Invention of Democracy: A Politico-Cultural Transformation and Its Interpretations*. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, 71–98.

Foster M. Fathers and Sons in War. Seven against Thebes, Pythian 7 and the Polemics of Genres. In: E. Torrance (ed.). *Aeschylus and War. Comparative Perspectives on Seven against Thebes*. New York, Routledge, 2017, 150–172.

Frazer J. G. (ed., comm.). *Pausanias' Description of Greece, Volume 2: Commentary on Book 1.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1898.

Garvie A. F. (ed., comm.). *Sophocles. Aiax*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Goheen R. *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1951.

González González M. *Funerary Epigrams of Ancient Greece*. London, Bloomsbury, 2019.

Griffith M. (ed., comm.). *Sophocles. Antigone*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hahnemann C. Broken Sisterhood: The Relationship between Antigone and Ismene in Sophocles' "Antigone". *Scripta Classica Israelica* 2019, 38, 1–16.

Hanink J. Epitaphioi Mythoi and a Tragedy as an Encomium to Athens. *Trends in Classics* 5, 2013, 259–317.

Hubbard T. K. Cult Tradition in Pindar's Ninth Nemean. *HSCPh* 1992, 94, 77–112.

Hutchinson G. O. (ed.). *Aeschylus. Septem contra Thebes*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985.

Jebb R. C. (ed., comm.). *Sophocles. Plays and Fragments*. Vols I–VII. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1883–1900.

Jiménes San Cristóbal A. Iacchus in Plutarch. In: L. R. Lanzillotta, I. Muñoz (eds). *Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity*. Leiden, Brill, 2012, 123–135.

Kamerbeek J. C. *The Plays of Sophocles. Commentaries*. Vols I–VII. Leiden, Brill, 1969–1984.

Kells J. H. Problems of interpretation in the "Antigone". *BICS* 1963, 10, 47–64.

Kerényi K. *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967.

Kitto H. D. F. *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study*. London, Methuen & Co., 1973.

Kitzinger R. *The Choruses of Sophocles' "Antigone" and "Philoctetes"*. Leiden, Brill, 2008.

Knox B. *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1964.

Krauskopf I. Ismene. In: *LIMC,* V, 1. Zürich — München, 1964, 796–799.

Liapis V. (2012). Creon the Labdacid: Political Confrontation and the Doomed Oikos in Sophocles' "Antigone". In: D. L. Cairns (ed.). *Tragedy and Archaic Greek Thought*. Swansea, The Classical Press of Wale, 2012, 81–118.

Macedo J. M. In Between Poetry and Ritual: The Hymn to Dionysus in Sophocles' "Antigone". *CQ* 2011, 61, 402–411.

Martin L. H. Initiation. In: R. Uro, J. Day, R. E. DeMaris, R. Roitto (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, 334–352.

Mills S. *Theseus, Tragedy and Athenian Empire*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Μιστριώτης Γ. (εκδ.). ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ *ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ*. Αθῆναι, Εκ του τυπογραφείου των καταστημάτων Μιχαήλ Ι. Σαλιβέρου, 1874.

Müller G. Űberlegungen zum Chor in "Antigone". *Hermes*, 89, 1961, 398–422.

Mylonas G. *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961.

Nussbaum M. *The Fragility of Goodness*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Papageorgios P. (ed.). *Scholia in Sophoclis tragoedias vetera*. Lipsiae, In aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1888.

Proietti G. Beyond the "Invention of Athens". The 5th century Athenian "Tatenkatalog" as an Example of "Intentional History". *Klio* 2015, 97 (2), 516–538.

Quandt G. (ed., comm.) *Orphei Hymni*. Hildesheim, Olms-Weidmann, 2005.

Rehm R. *Marriage to Death*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Rosenbloom D. "Thebes". In: H. Roizman (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy*. Malden, MA, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, 1390–1392.

Schein S. The Language of Hatred in Aeschylus and Sophocles. *Metis* 9, 2011, 69–80.

Schneidewin F. W. (hrsgb., erklr.). *Sophokles*. 4. bd. *Antigone*. Berlin, Weidmann, 1869.

Seaford R. The Imprisonment of Women in Greek Tragedy. *JHS* 101, 1990, 76–90.

Seaford R. *Tragedy, Ritual and Money in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Slatkin L. Sophocles' "Antigone" and the Paradoxes of Language. *Adalya* 2016, 19, 95–102.

Smith W. A. *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. London, Spottiswoode and Co., 1873.

Sommerstein A. (ed., transl.). Aeschylus. *Persians. Seven against Thebes. Suppliants. Prometheus Bound*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2009.

Sommerstein A. *Aeschylean Tragedy*. New York, Bloomsbury, 2013.

Sommerstein A. Antigone as Others See Her. In: Stuttart D. (ed.). *Looking at Antigone*. London — New York, 2018, 25–36.

Steinbock B. *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse: Uses and Meanings of the Past*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2016.

Swift L. Stesichorus on Stage. In: P. J. Finglass, A. D. Kelly (eds). *Stesichorus in Context*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 125–144.

Ustinova Y. *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Walters K. R. "We Fought Alone at Marathon". *RhM* 1981, 124, 206–211.

Wecklein N. (ed., comm.). *Sophocles. Antigone*. Lipsiae, In aedibus Teubneri, 1878.

White J. H. *Studies and Addresses*. Boston, Boston University Press, 1883.

Winnington-Ingram R. P. *Sophocles: An Interpretation*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Wunder E. (ed., notes). *Sophocles*. Vol. I. London, Williams and Norgate, 1855.

«Антигона»: иное проклятие

Зоя Анатольевна Барзах

Еврейский университет Иерусалима,
Израиль, 9190401, Иерусалим, Гиват-Рам; https://orcid.org/0000–0001–9669–8447, zoia_barzakh@mail.ru

Для цитирования: Barzakh Z. A. *Antigone:* The Curse Transformed. *Philologia Classica* 2024, 19 (2), 192–214. https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu20.2024.201

Настоящая статья посвящена анализу интертекстуальных взаимоотношений между «Антигоной» Софокла и трагедиями Эсхила, прежде всего фиванской трилогией.

В статье показано, что в своей трагедии Софокл создает мир, радикально отличающийся от мира эсхиловских трагедий. Основные различия — отношение к «примирению в смерти» и к наследственному проклятию. В трагедии Софокла, в отличие от драм Эсхила, смерть не является концом вражды — по крайней мере, не прежде, чем власть имущие готовы будут это признать; кровной связи недостаточно для принадлежности к проклятому роду, и эта принадлежность не всегда рассматривается как нечто сугубо негативное. Чтобы проиллюстрировать абсолютную неадекватность эсхиловского подхода к миру этой трагедии и ее действию, Софокл воплощает такой подход в своем Хоре и делает так, что на протяжении трагедии зритель все больше разочаровывается в этом Хоре и его интерпретациях. Хор не реагирует, когда к нему обращаются напрямую, ведет себя чрезвычайно бестактно и контрпродуктивно в своем коммосе с Антигоной и слишком быстро и радикально меняет свое мнение и свою точку зрения на ситуацию. В пятом стасиме Софокл, посредством отсылки к другой трагедии Эсхила, «Элевсинянам», дает зрителю краткую надежду на то, что Антигона будет спасена. Этот прием также направлен на то, чтобы зритель почувствовал разочарование и понял неадекватность точки зрения Хора, то есть мировоззрения Эсхила, применительно к этой трагедии.

Ключевые слова: Антигона, Софокл, Эсхил, Хор, «Элевсиняне», Лабдакиды, наследственное проклятие, свобода воли.

Received: 17.07.2024
Accepted: 19.10.2024