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Forthcoming in B. Kayachev (ed.), *Poems without Poets. Approaches to Anonymous Ancient Poetry* (Cambridge Classical Journal suppl. 43; Cambridge 2021).

### Editing anonymous ancient Greek tragedy<sup>1</sup>

What would an edition of anonymous Greek tragedy look like? For the big three tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, the contents of an edition are fairly straightforward – the plays by these authors that have survived in full, plus fragments of the other, lost plays, preserved as quotations in other authors’ works that did outlast antiquity, or on fragments of ancient manuscripts discovered in the modern period. So too, in the case of the ‘minor tragedians’ – that is, everyone else apart from those three, including some playwrights, like Astydamas and Carcinus in the fourth century, who collectively produced many more plays than the three classical tragedians did and who were hugely popular in their day – it is straightforward to conceptualise what an edition of their works would contain. No plays by them have survived in full, so it is a matter of gathering the fragments together along with the testimonia (references to the authors and their plays which nevertheless do not contain actual words of the lost dramas).<sup>2</sup> Anonymous tragedy is everything else: all those texts which cannot be assigned to a definite author. The sole modern collection of those unassigned fragments is in the second volume of the monumental work *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, edited by Richard Kannicht and Bruno Snell in 1981; subsequent discoveries were published as an appendix to the fifth and final volume of *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (Euripides), which was edited by Richard Kannicht and appeared in 2004. Anonymous tragic texts published after 2004 have not yet found a place in any edition.

A truly complete edition of anonymous tragedy, however, needs to go beyond the limits set by *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, which contains only papyri and quotations. For quite substantial amounts of anonymous tragedy can be found in the plays which have survived complete; since during the course of their transmission, many plays received interpolations, or lines added by a stranger’s hand, for whatever reason, to the original author’s work. As an example we may take the suicide speech delivered by Sophocles’ Ajax, which appears as following in my edition (Finglass 2011):

ὁ μὲν σφαγεὺς ἔστηκεν ἧ τομώτατος	815
γένοιτ’ ἄν, εἴ τῳ καὶ λογίζεσθαι σχολή,	
δῶρον μὲν ἀνδρὸς Ἴκτορος ξένων ἐμοὶ	
μάλιστα μισηθέντος, ἐχθίστου θ’ ὄρᾶν.	
πέπηγε δ’ ἐν γῆ πολεμία τῇ Τρωάδι,	
σιδηροβρῶτι θηγάνη νεηκονῆς·	820
ἔπηξα δ’ αὐτὸν εὖ περιστείλας ἐγώ,	
εὐνοῦστατον τῷδ’ ἀνδρὶ διὰ τάχους θανεῖν.	
οὔτω μὲν εὐσκευοῦμεν· ἐκ δὲ τῶνδέ μοι	

<sup>1</sup> For this topic see also Finglass 2020, another piece on anonymous Greek tragedy that takes a different perspective.

<sup>2</sup> For such an edition see Cropp 2019, as well as the relevant volume of *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, Snell 1971/1986.

σὺ πρῶτος, ᾧ Ζεῦ, καὶ γὰρ εἰκός, ἄρκεσον.  
 αἰτήσομαι δέ σ' οὐ μακρὸν γέρας λαβεῖν. 825  
 πέμψον τιν' ἡμῖν ἄγγελον, κακὴν φάτιν  
 Τεύκρω φέροντα, πρῶτος ὧς με βαστάση  
 πεπτῶτα τῷδε περὶ νεορράντῳ ξίφει,  
 καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἐχθρῶν του κατοπτευθεῖς πάρος  
 ῥιφθῶ κυσὶν πρόβλητος οἰωνοῖς θ' ἔλωρ. 830  
 τοσαῦτά σ', ᾧ Ζεῦ, προστρέπω· καλῶ δ' ἅμα  
 πομπαῖον Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον εὖ με κοιμίσαι,  
 ζὺν ἀσφαδάστῳ καὶ ταχεῖ πηδήματι  
 πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τῷδε φασγάνῳ.  
 καλῶ δ' ἄρωγούς τὰς αἰεὶ τε παρθένους 835  
 αἰεὶ θ' ὀρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη,  
 σεμνάς Ἑρινῦς τανύποδας, μαθεῖν ἐμὲ  
 πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὡς διόλλυμαι τάλας.  
 [καὶ σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους  
 ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμὲ 840  
 αὐτοσφαγῆ πίπτοντα· τὼς αὐτοσφαγεῖς  
 πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων ὀλοίατο.]  
 ἴτ', ᾧ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἑρινύες,  
 γεύεσθε, μὴ φεῖδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.  
 σὺ δ', ᾧ τὸν αἰπὺν οὐρανὸν διφρηλατῶν 845  
 Ἥλιε, πατρώαν τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα  
 ἴδης, ἐπισχῶν χρυσόνωτον ἠνίαν  
 ἄγγελον ἄτας τὰς ἐμὰς μόρον τ' ἐμὸν  
 γέροντι πατρὶ τῆ τε δυστήνῳ τροφῷ.  
 ἧ που τάλαινα, τήνδ' ὅταν κλύη φάτιν, 850  
 ἧσει μέγαν κωκυτὸν ἐν πάσῃ πόλῃ.  
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔργον ταῦτα θρηνεῖσθαι μάτην·  
 ἀλλ' ἄρκτέον τὸ πρᾶγμα σὺν τάχει τινί.  
 [ᾧ θάνατε θάνατε, νῦν μ' ἐπίσκεψαι μολῶν·  
 καίτοι σὲ μὲν κάκεῖ προσαιδήσω ξυνῶν. 855  
 σὲ δ' ᾧ φαεννῆς ἡμέρας τὸ νῦν σέλας,  
 καὶ τὸν διφρευτὴν Ἥλιον προσεννέπω,  
 πανύστατον δὴ κοῦποτ' αὔθις ὕστερον.]  
 ᾧ φέγγος, ᾧ γῆς ἱερὸν οἰκείας πέδον  
 Σαλαμῖνος, ᾧ πατρῶον ἐστίας βάθρον, 860  
 κλειναί τ' Ἀθῆναι, καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος,  
 κρήναί τε ποταμοὶ θ' οἶδε, καὶ τὰ Τρωικὰ  
 πεδία προσαιδῶ, χαίρετ', ᾧ τροφῆς ἐμοί·  
 τοῦθ' ὕμιν Αἴας τοῦπος ὕστατον θροεῖ,  
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐν Ἄϊδου τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι. 865

The slaughterman stands where it will be sharpest – if a man has leisure to make calculations – the gift of Hector, the man most hateful of foreigners to me, and most detestable to see. It stands fixed in the hostile land of the Troad, newly sharpened on

an iron-gnawing whetstone. I planted it, securing it well all round, so that it should prove most kind to this man in providing a speedy death. Thus I am well prepared. After this you, o Zeus, as is fitting, be the first to help me. I shall ask to obtain no great favour from you. Send a messenger for me, bearing the grim tidings to Teucer, so that he may be the first to raise me as I lie fallen on this freshly-dripping sword, and I shall not be noticed beforehand by some enemy and thrown out as prey to dogs and birds. Such is my supplication of you, o Zeus. At the same time I call on Hermes of the earth below, escort of souls, to lull me fast to sleep, as with a swift and spasmless leap I break through my ribs with this sword. And I call as my helpers the perpetual virgins, the perpetual overseers of all the sufferings of men, the dread, far-striding Erinyes, to learn how I am destroyed by the Atridae in my wretchedness. [And may they seize the wretched men most wretchedly and utterly destroy them, just as they see me fall through self-slaughter. Just so, slaughtered by their kin, by their dearest offspring, may they perish.] Come, o swift and punishing Erinyes: taste the entire army, do not spare them. And you, who drive your chariot through the lofty heaven, the Sun, when you catch sight of my ancestral land, check your golden rein and announce my ruin and my death to my aged father and the wretched woman who nursed me. Wretched woman, I suppose that when she hears this message, she will raise a great lamentation in the whole city. But there is no point in vainly lamenting thus: no, the deed must be begun with speed. [O Death, Death, come now and visit me! And yet I shall meet you and speak with you there too. And I call upon you, o present blaze of the bright day, and the Sun, the charioteer, for the very last time, and never again later.] O light, o holy ground of my native land of Salamis, o ancestral foundation of my hearth, and famous Athens, and your race kindred to mine, and springs and rivers here, and the Trojan plains I address: farewell, you who have nourished me. This is the last word that Ajax pronounces to you; the rest I shall speak to those below in Hades.

The brackets denote interpolations: passages which appear in the manuscripts, but which, in an editor's judgment, on the basis of language and structure, were written not by Sophocles but by someone else.<sup>3</sup> This massive speech was a favourite of actors from at least the fourth century; one actor, Timotheus of Zacynthus, became so associated with it that he was nicknamed 'the slaughterman' after its opening phrase, which indicates that it was a highlight of his repertoire.<sup>4</sup> Actors thus had a clear motivation to extend the speech by interpolating lines to make it even more of a showpiece, allowing them further opportunity to demonstrate their excellence.<sup>5</sup> If the deletions above are correct, fully nine lines of the speech are not by Sophocles; and since their true author's name is unknown, they properly belong in an edition of anonymous tragedy that is worthy of the name.

<sup>3</sup> For the case in favour of the deletions, see Finglass 2006: 261–3, 2011: 384 and 387 ad locc.

<sup>4</sup> Σ 864a δεῖ δὲ ὑπονοῆσαι ὅτι περιπίπτει τῷ ξίφει. καὶ δεῖ καρτερόν τινα εἶναι τὸν ὑποκριτὴν, ὡς ἄξαι τοὺς θεατὰς εἰς τὴν τοῦ Αἴαντος φαντασίαν· ὅποια περὶ τοῦ Ζακυνθίου Τιμοθέου φασὶν ὅτι ἤγε τοὺς θεατὰς καὶ ἐψυχαγῶγει τῇ ὑποκρίσει, ὡς σφαγέα αὐτὸν κληθῆναι, 'It must be conjectured that he falls on his sword, and the actor must be strongly built so as to bring the audience to the point of visualising Ajax, as is said of Timotheos of Zakynthos, whose acting carried along and enthralled the spectators so much that he acquired the "tag" Sphageus [The Slayer]' (text from Christodoulou 1977: 195; tr. by Lada-Richards 2002: 398).

<sup>5</sup> For Sophoclean reperformances and the impact which those reperformances had on the transmission of tragic texts, see Finglass 2015a, 2015b.

The number of lines that editors delete from the thirty-two preserved tragedies is not negligible. To give an idea of the extent of these deletions, I provide below a text of all the deletions from my edition of Sophocles' *Ajax* (40 lines deleted from 1420, or 2.8% of the play as transmitted).<sup>6</sup>

[κάνηρετ' ἐν τῷ πράγματος κυροῖ ποτε.] And he asked in what situation he was.	314
[τοιαῦτα γάρ πως καὶ λέγει κώδύρεται.] For such things, I suppose, he both speaks and laments.	327
[καὶ τρίς· τοιούτοις γὰρ κακοῖς ἐντυγχάνω·] and thrice – for such are the sorrows that I am encountering –	433
[τὸ μὴ φρονεῖν γὰρ κάρτ' ἀνώδυνον κακόν,] for lack of understanding is a most painless suffering,	554b
[μέχρις οὗ μυχὸς κίχῳσι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ] until they reach the recesses of the god below	571
[σῶζειν θέλοντες ἄνδρα γ' ὃς σπεύδῃ θανεῖν]. as we desire to save a man who hastens to his death.	812
[καὶ σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμὲ αὐτοσφαγῆ πίπτοντα· τὼς αὐτοσφαγεῖς πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων ὀλοίατο.] And may they seize the wretched men most wretchedly and utterly destroy them, just as they see me fall through self-slaughter. Just so, slaughtered by their kin, by their dearest offspring, may they perish.	840
[ὦ θάνατε θάνατε, νῦν μ' ἐπίσκεψαι μολῶν· καίτοι σὲ μὲν κάκεῖ προσαιδήσω ξυνών. σὲ δ' ὦ φαεννῆς ἡμέρας τὸ νῦν σέλας, καὶ τὸν διφρευτὴν Ἥλιον προσεννέπω, πανύστατον δὴ κοῦποτ' αὔθις ὕστερον.] O Death, Death, come now and visit me! And yet I shall meet you and speak with you there too. And I call upon you, o present blaze of the bright day, and the Sun, the charioteer, for the very last time, and never again later.	855
[φυσῶντ' ἄνω πρὸς ῥῖνας ἔκ τε φοινίας πληγῆς μελανθὲν αἷμ' ἀπ' οἰκείας σφαγῆς]. as he spurts blackened blood towards the nostrils and out of the bloody wound as a consequence of his self-inflicted slaughter.	918

<sup>6</sup> Deletions in each case justified in my commentary ad loc.: Finglass 2011.

[ἐμοὶ πικρὸς τέθνηκεν ἢ κείνοις γλυκὺς,  
αὐτῷ δὲ τερπνός· ὦν γὰρ ἠράσθη τυχεῖν  
ἐκτήσαθ' αὐτῷ, θάνατον ὄνπερ ἠθέλεν.  
τί δῆτα τοῦδ' ἐπεγγελοῦεν ἂν κάτα;  
θεοῖς τέθνηκεν οὗτος, οὐ κείνοισιν, οὔ.]

970

His death is bitter to me than sweet to them, but was a delight to him. For he obtained for himself what he desired to gain, the death which he wanted. Why, then, should they laugh at him? It is the gods that killed him, not they, no!

[σκέψασθε, πρὸς θεῶν, τὴν τύχην δυοῖν βροτοῖν.

Ἔκτωρ μὲν, ᾧ δὴ τοῦδ' ἐδωρήθη πάρα

ζωστήρι πρισθεὶς ἵππικῶν ἐξ ἀντύγων

1030

ἐκνάπτει· αἰέν, ἔστ' ἀπέψυξεν βίον·

οὗτος δ' ἐκείνου τήνδε δωρεὰν ἔχων

πρὸς τοῦδ' ὄλωλε θανασίμῳ πεσήματι.

ἄρ' οὐκ Ἐρινὺς τοῦτ' ἐχάλκευσε ξίφος

1035

κάκεινον Ἄιδης, δημιουργὸς ἄγριος;

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τὰ πάντ' ἀεὶ

φάσκοιμ' ἂν ἀνθρώποισι μηχανᾶν θεοῦς·

ὄτῳ δὲ μὴ τάδ' ἐστὶν ἐν γνώμῃ φίλα,

κεῖνός τ' ἐκεῖνα στεργέτω κάγῳ τάδε.]

Consider, by the gods, the fortune of the two men. Hector, his body gripped from the chariot rails by the belt which he had received from this man, was mangled right up to the moment that he gasped out his life. But this man, who received this gift from him, perished by means of it through his fatal fall. Was it not an Erinys that forged this sword, and Hades who made that belt, a fierce craftsman? Now, I would say that the gods contrive for mortals these things, and all things, always. But as for the man in whose mind these things are not acceptable, let him cherish those thoughts, as I shall these.

[τὴν τοῦδ' ὕβριν πρὸς μῆλα καὶ ποίμνας πεσεῖν]

1061

so that this man's violence fell on the sheep and flocks

[ὑπαρχος ἄλλων δεῦρ' ἐπλευσας, οὐχ ὅλων

1105

στρατηγός, ὥστ' Αἴαντος ἠγεῖσθαί ποτε.]

You sailed here as the lieutenant of others, not as general of the whole, so as to have authority over Ajax.

[λωβητὸν αὐτὸν ἐκβαλεῖν ταφῆς ἄτερ]

1388

to cast him out, disfigured, without burial

[κοῦδενί πω λῶνι θνητῶν

1416

Αἴαντος, ὅτ' ἦν, τότε φωνῶ.]

and never yet for a better man among mortals than Ajax – when he was alive, it is of then that I speak.

It is strange to see a collection of such lines in isolation. Since the earliest days of editing Greek drama, at the Library of Alexandria in the third and second centuries BC, lines suspected of being interpolations have not been removed from the text but signalled as inauthentic by means of a marginal sign, while remaining in place (Pfeiffer 1968: 115, 178). W. S. Barrett (1964: vii) diverged from this practice in his edition of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, writing in the introduction:

My text presents what I think the poet wrote; I have thought it wrong to encumber it with the errors of his manuscript tradition [...] I have relegated interpolated lines to a position below the text: an editor's function is to guide his reader through the text as the poet wrote it, and he will perform that function the better if he not merely signposts but removes the obstacles erected by actors and pedants in later centuries.

Barrett's approach, however logical (other textual changes made by editors, after all, are normally signalled as such only in the apparatus, not additionally by a sign in the main text), was condemned by Eduard Fraenkel, and has not been followed by subsequent editors;<sup>7</sup> and so deleted lines remain ensconced within the texts where, in the view of their editors, they do not belong, rather than being moved to the apparatus at the foot of the page, or to an appendix at the end. As a consequence, we are not used to looking *en masse* at the lines deleted even by a single editor from a single play, let alone an entire collection from across the genre of tragedy as a whole.

Putting such a collection together would not be easy. No-one alive has edited the whole of tragedy, and it is scarcely possible that someone should ever do so, at least in any serious fashion. So collecting together deleted lines would mean relying to a great extent on the work of others; and while tragedy has historically been fortunate in attracting many editors of high calibre, even they will differ in their approach to the question of interpolation and in the degrees of scepticism and tolerance which they apply. So any collection of interpolations would run the risk of inconsistency of method, greatly reducing its value. Putting together a team of scholars working in concert would not solve the problem, for the same reason: even like-minded scholars will not always agree over whether a particular line has been interpolated or not. Even a single scholar who, in the course of what would have to be a dedicated and rather austere lifetime, did somehow manage to edit the thirty-two tragedies that have been preserved complete, might find that their approach changed over time and that they would become either more sceptical or more tolerant from one play to the next.

Moreover, the starkly binary choice offered by the traditional approach to deletion – a line is either genuine or it is not – creates particular problems for someone gathering deleted lines together. If an editor decided to delete any line which they regarded as having a 50% chance or more of being interpolated, say, a collection of deleted lines would thus contain a line that the editor thought had a 60% chance of not being original; whereas a line which was only 40% likely to be an interpolation would not appear in the collection. At least with a regular edition of a play an editor can signal doubt in the apparatus, allowing readers to make up their own minds; whereas an edition constructed through selecting all the lines deleted

<sup>7</sup> Fraenkel 2007: 49 (from a seminar held in April 1966): 'È male far scomparire i versi sospetti; io non sono d'accordo col mio amico Barrett che mette in apparato i versi che ritiene spuri [...] Meglio facevano gli Alessandrini che copiavano i versi sospetti e vi aggiungevano gli ὀβελοί.'

from a play would miss entirely those lines where a reasonable doubt exists but where that doubt does not lead the editor actually to delete.

A more nuanced approach that would deal with some of these problems is suggested by James Diggle's edition of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*. This play is particularly difficult to edit since it was left unfinished at Euripides' death and thus saw additions from a non-Euripidean hand (or hands) at a very early stage, as well as later interpolations. Rather than presenting his text in the traditional binary system, with lines either genuine or spurious, Diggle's edition offers four different classifications for: 'fortasse Euripidei', 'fortasse non Euripidei', 'uix Euripidei', 'non Euripidei' ('perhaps by Euripides', 'perhaps not by Euripides', 'scarcely by Euripides', 'not by Euripides').<sup>8</sup> An edition of possibly interpolated lines which, say, identified passages as interpolated beyond reasonable doubt, probably interpolated and possibly interpolated would avoid the binary classification problem identified above, while also doing much to meet the objection that no two scholars will agree on which lines in our texts of tragedy are interpolated. By having the categories 'probably' and 'possibly' interpolated, an editor of anonymous tragedy could include lines which editors have doubted without having to commit to saying definitively that the lines were in fact spurious. For example, I do not myself believe that the final scene of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* has suffered serious interpolation, and delete only the closing lines 1524–30 which just about everyone recognises as a later addition. But serious doubts by leading scholars have been expressed about the authenticity of the ending (from line 1424 onward, although some scholars who doubt the ending have deleted less than this), and in constructing an edition of anonymous tragedy I might feel obliged to include it as 'possibly interpolated' despite having argued against that possibility in print.<sup>9</sup> Or to take another case, Vayos Liapis has claimed that many of the fragments attributed (by the ancient authors who cite them) to Euripides' *Oedipus* belong not to that play but to a later (second–first century BC) rhetorical exercise that was confused with Euripides' play in antiquity.<sup>10</sup> I have argued that he is wrong (Finglass 2017), but others may take a different view – and if Liapis's hypothesis does win support, then the fragments in question would need to find their way into an edition of anonymous tragedy, since the rhetorical exercise that Liapis posits has no named author.

Because there is no certainty in the detection of interpolations, editors of such collections would be advised to include passages that they personally did not believe were interpolated but where serious doubts had been expressed by a plurality of scholars. The risk resulting from this approach is that too much material would end up being printed: but that seems a price worth paying, especially since the editor would not be committing to the proposition that every text printed in the edition was interpolated, but rather putting them before readers, setting out the evidence and letting them decide for themselves. Further opportunities are opened up by the possibility of a digital edition, where the reader could opt to see only those texts which the editor believed to be interpolated beyond reasonable doubt or probably interpolated, for example.

The presentation of these texts would need some thought. Collecting together these fragments allows us to see at a glance what interpolations may have been added to a particular

<sup>8</sup> Diggle 1994: 358; see also his justification on p. vi ('Euripidem a posteris purgare non licet: nam genuina subdituius per nexus confunduntur non explicabiles').

<sup>9</sup> Finglass 2009, 2018: 612–13 and 615–17; see Finglass 2019: 104–5 for further relevant bibliography.

<sup>10</sup> Liapis 2014. For Liapis's interest in anonymous tragedy and attribution, see also Liapis 2016: 77–84, on Tr. Adesp. fr. 649 *TrGF*.



play; but the alleged interpolations, shorn of their surrounding lines, are missing vital information regarding their sense and context. This would need to be remedied by including some of the surrounding text. To take the first of these ‘fragments’, a text of the line in an edition could look something like this:

καὶ τὸν μὲν ἦστο πλεῖστον ἄφθογγος χρόνον·  
ἔπειτ' ἐμοὶ τὰ δεῖν' ἐπηπείλησ' ἔπη,  
εἰ μὴ φανοίην πᾶν τὸ συντυχὸν πάθος.

**κάνήρετ' ἐν τῷ πράγματος κυροῖ ποτε.**

κάγώ, φίλοι, δείσασα τοῦξειργασμένον  
ἔλεξα πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἐξηπιστάμην.

315

And he sat there for a long time, without speaking. Then he threatened me with those dreadful words, if I didn't reveal the whole story of the disaster. **And he asked in what situation he was.** And I, my friends, in my fear, told him everything that had been done, as far as I knew it.

In other words, the surrounding text of Sophocles becomes the ‘context’ for the anonymous ‘fragment’; the traditional presentation is turned inside-out, as it were, with the interpolated line highlighted through boldening, font size and indentation, and the text of Sophocles visually relegated, providing context but not the main focus of attention. This is the same way that traditional fragments are printed; and as with traditional fragments, exactly how much context to print will always be a matter for debate. There is a difference, though, in that the context of a regular fragment originally had nothing to do with the text of fragment itself – it is mere chance that some line of a lost play of (e.g.) Euripides is preserved in the context of (e.g.) a treatise written by Plutarch. With interpolated lines, on the other hand, the ‘fragment’ was created precisely for the context in which it now finds itself – indeed, was intended to fit seamlessly into that context in such a way as to be undiscoverable.<sup>11</sup>

The apparatus to each fragment would then indicate not just why the line was thought not to be by Sophocles, but also its most likely provenance. This too marks a change from the presentation of deleted lines in a regular edition where, unless the edition is equipped with a commentary, there is usually no discussion of why a line or passage requires ejection. The editor of the tragedy might be ascribing it to a fourth-century source, such as an actor, or to a period centuries later in the transmission – an Imperial or even Byzantine origin, for example. From the editor's point of view, however, the key thing is that the line is not original to the tragedy and thus needs to be marked as spurious. In an edition of anonymous tragedy, on the other hand, the likely origin of an interpolated line becomes a central rather than peripheral consideration: something that would always be addressed in an apparatus, and a commentary too if the edition was furnished with one.

Fragments of this type are not, as we have already noted, found in the only modern collection of anonymous Greek tragedy, the relevant volume of *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*. And there are important differences between them and other anonymous fragments. Those other fragments come from larger works which the editor would like, as far as possible, to reconstruct; anonymous interpolations, on the other hand, are already found in

<sup>11</sup> Compare the Helen episode in Virgil's *Aeneid*, discussed in this volume by Mikhail Shumilin.

the full context which their authors intended for them. Moreover, the authors of ‘traditional’ anonymous fragments were known, even famous, individuals in their own time, whose authorship of these works was a matter of public record, and it is mere chance that we do not know their names today; whereas interpolations were often added by individuals who will have been altogether unknown, or by individuals who, while famous in their own right (such as actors), will not necessarily have advertised their interference in the texts to which they contributed new material.<sup>12</sup> Yet this latter point only strengthens their claim to belong in such an edition, in that their anonymity is not merely a contingent feature of their transmission but something fundamental to their original creation. Many of the fragments located in volume 2 of *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta* are likely to be by named authors, especially Euripides, by far the most popular Greek tragic playwright from the fourth century onwards; an interpolated line or passage, on the other hand, is almost always genuinely anonymous.<sup>13</sup> As for the former point, these texts are indeed different from traditional fragments in that way; we might even deny them the designation ‘fragments’ on that basis. But anonymous they certainly are; and we are discussing a prospective edition of anonymous tragedy as a whole, not just of fragments. Such an edition, it follows, would also include two dramas that have survived complete, namely *Prometheus Bound* and *Rhesus*. The scholarly consensus is that these two plays are not by Aeschylus and Euripides, to whom they are respectively attributed in the manuscripts.<sup>14</sup> They too would be found in any complete collection of anonymous tragedy, alongside the papyri, quotations, and interpolations whose author is uncertain or unknown.

So far we have been considering the practical and methodological issues in constructing an edition of anonymous tragedy. But what purpose would an edition constructed along these principles serve? It is reasonable enough to gather together the fragments of a given author – but since ‘anonymous’ covers all kinds of writers from across the centuries, is there any reason to put these texts together at all? Moreover, since, as we have seen, the category of anonymous texts covers a number of discrete groupings, is there any particular reason to gather them together in this way – particularly the alleged interpolations, which were not included in the most recent such edition in *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*?

Such an edition would have the practical virtue of highlighting literature which otherwise might easily be neglected. Anonymous fragments present a mass of material that has been woefully understudied, most of which was published centuries or decades ago, but which today remain unknown. Texts that do not have an author’s name attached to them run the risk of being ignored in favour of works whose creator can be identified; and the risk is even greater in the case of fragments, which can seem less attractive than complete texts to potential readers. In the case of interpolations, we do not necessarily think of them as texts at all; they are certainly not artistic wholes. Since our focus is generally on the works of a named tragedian such as Sophocles, anything that is not by that named tragedian is a distraction, to be set aside and ignored. Putting these texts into an edition together with other anonymous

<sup>12</sup> For example, for the possibility that the famous actor Neoptolemus was behind some of the interpolations in Euripides’ *Orestes*, see Kovacs 2007.

<sup>13</sup> The most obvious exception to this involves lines written in the margin of a manuscript by scribes, as a parallel passage designed to shed light on or explicate the text in the manuscript, which a subsequent copyist actually places within the text. If the parallel passages is from a named author, then the line is interpolated, but might not be anonymous depending on whether its source was known.

<sup>14</sup> The key works that brought about this state of affairs are Fraenkel 1965 (*Rhesus*) and Griffith 1977 (*Prometheus Bound*).

tragic texts would be a first step towards taking them seriously; assigning them to an entirely separate book, on the other hand, would be to exile them even from texts which themselves, thanks to their anonymity, endure a kind of exile. And while it might be objected that such an edition would impose an unwarranted certainty on a matter which is still largely a matter of personal judgment and preference, the methodology for selection outlined above would ensure that, even if the edition was the product of a single scholar, a variety of viewpoints would be canvassed and readers would be in a position to make decisions for themselves.

Such an edition would encourage the question: granted that this line is not by Sophocles (or Aeschylus, or Euripides), what does it contribute to the play in question? It might sound sacrilegious even to make the inquiry.<sup>15</sup> The issue of quality is already bound up with the search for interpolations; lines which seem to offend against the overall economy of a drama are typically labelled interpolated, and so it could seem perverse to consider what they might actually add to a play, not least because our concept of what is appropriate in ancient tragedy has been shaped primarily by the ‘big three’ tragedians some of whose plays have survived in full.<sup>16</sup> In some cases – say when lines have been mistakenly added by scribes, as discussed earlier (p. YYY n. 13) – the answer to the question above might be ‘nothing’. But when dealing with lines deliberately added for inclusion in a performance, say to make a given actor’s role more prominent (p. YYY above), we should at least be prepared to consider the aesthetic principles that lay behind a given interpolation, to ask how its inclusion in the drama changes the presentation of a character, or the mood of a scene.<sup>17</sup> These questions are relevant to a traditional edition only insofar as they help to illustrate the spuriousness of an interpolation. An edition of anonymous tragedy, on the other hand, encourages the question to be put from a different perspective and with different, more positive, goals. We cannot even rule out that we could find ourselves arguing that a passage, while clearly an interpolation, nevertheless improves the overall drama: that the actor (or whoever) has made a great play greater.

We saw above (pp. YYY) how Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis* stimulated James Diggle to devise a more nuanced set of descriptors for dealing with the question of interpolation. The same play prompted David Kovacs (2003) to attempt to identify those parts of the transmitted play that were not written by Euripides, but were part of the first performance, in Athens probably in 405, after the poet’s death. ‘We could guess’, Kovacs (2003: 78) argues, ‘that at least some of the lines in the play as we have it that look un-Euripidean were written by E[uripides] M[inor] [the poet’s son] or someone he employed to prepare the play for its first production’; further changes and additions were then made by an anonymous figure whom Kovacs calls the ‘Reviser’. Whether or not we agree with Kovacs’s classification of any individual passage, his analysis at least takes seriously the contribution of post-Euripidean writers to the text of the play, attempting to distinguish the different layers of authorship. The lines that Euripides himself wrote were never intended to be (and probably never have been) performed in isolation; the contribution of anonymous hands to the play which was (and

<sup>15</sup> As Matthew Hosty notes elsewhere in this volume, ‘When a text is known, or at least widely believed, to be the work of a great author – a Sophocles or a Sappho – it tends to be treated with a certain reverence, which extends to preserving as far as possible its accuracy and coherency.’ The idea that an interpolation might improve on a canonical text of this kind is virtually heretical.

<sup>16</sup> See Tarrant 2016: 85–104 on the metaphorical language, often associated with disease, used with reference to interpolations.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Schumilin’s comment in his chapter ‘the presumption that an interpolator can only be an incompetent poet is groundless’ (p. YYY, with bibliography).

continued to be) performed is essential. Taking such additions seriously throughout the corpus would be a major goal of such an edition. Interpolations are generally seen as a problem, which from the perspective of someone attempting to recover the exact words of (e.g.) Sophocles they certainly are. But they are also testimony to the vibrancy of the genre, in that there was so much reworking of the works of others. Anonymity here is a mark of creativity.

The question of whether we can recognise literary qualities in an anonymous tragedy has been at the heart of modern scholarship on the two surviving plays which are generally thought to be of unknown authorship: another reason for taking all anonymous tragedy as a whole, despite the discrete nature of the subcategories covered by this heading, since all these texts have suffered to some extent in terms of their literary appreciation because of their anonymous status. Martin West attacked the quality of *Prometheus Bound* in striking terms when making the argument that it was not by Aeschylus; yet the scholar who made the decisive modern intervention in the authenticity debate, Mark Griffith, produced a commentary that contains a sympathetic treatment of the play as a work of literature.<sup>18</sup> More recently the literary quality of *Rhesus* has received criticism in the commentary on that play by Vayos Liapis (2012), which provoked lively disagreement among reviewers of that book. Liapis was accused by one reviewer of ‘intellectually lazy scholarship. Too many times, L[iapis] attributes flaws of plot and characterisation to the author’s lack of skill rather than making any attempt to understand them as artistic choices.’<sup>19</sup> Another reviewer, by contrast, refers to ‘Liapis’ first-rate commentary on this embarrassingly second-rate text’, asking with regard to the drama’s few good points: ‘given the derivative nature of so much of the play’s phraseology and dramaturgy, which Liapis documents in exhaustive detail, how can we know that those occasional strokes and flashes are not reproduced from one of the innumerable tragedies, some of which are by the likes of Euripides, to which we no longer have access?’<sup>20</sup> Praise for the commentator is here mingled with criticism of the text on which he is commenting; even when that text gets something right, it must (rather unfairly) be ascribed to the influence of some lost work rather than to any merit of the anonymous author.

A more positive view of the play is taken by Almut Fries, whose edition opens with an epigraph by A. C. Pearson: ‘The curious thing about the *Rhesus* is that, when all this has been said, the play is not nearly so bad as it ought to be.’<sup>21</sup> Fries concludes an article preliminary to her edition with the words: ‘I hope to have provided some deeper insights into the poetic technique of a man who I firmly believe was not Euripides, and who demands minute attention from critics of his style’; and this is her general approach throughout the commentary.<sup>22</sup> This more positive approach seems the better course. Analysis of both plays has been vitiated by a frequent assumption that anything by Aeschylus/Euripides must be

<sup>18</sup> West 1990: 51–72, especially 59–61 (condemned by Lloyd-Jones 1993: 10–11 = 2005: 178–80, Davies 1994: 262–3); Griffith 1983.

<sup>19</sup> Zuckerberg 2013: 31. This review was even noted in the press, though in my view the basic criticism made of the book under review (that it too readily attributes alleged flaws to the author’s supposed lack of skill) was justified: Anonymous 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Sansone 2013. Perris 2013 is also a positive review.

<sup>21</sup> Pearson 1921: 59 (cited by Fries 2014: vii).

<sup>22</sup> Fries 2010: 351; see further Fries 2014, 2019, and cf. Kovacs 2016 on the commentary: ‘Fries is not at all dismissive of the play she has chosen. *Rhesus* is no one’s favorite play, and Fries shows herself clearly aware of the features of it that annoy. She nevertheless tries to appreciate what the *Rhesus* poet is attempting to do and succeeds in showing that in spite of his shortcomings he is worth thinking about as a dramatist.’ A further commentary, Fantuzzi 2020, was published after the final version of my chapter was submitted to the publisher.

good, and anything by a nameless tragedian must be bad; therefore (according to this reasoning), these plays must be of lower quality if (as scholars generally agree today) they are not in fact by Aeschylus or Euripides.

An edition of anonymous tragedy would therefore gather together texts of different types: fragments from works whose playwrights cannot today be ascertained; fragments deliberately inserted into the works of others with the intention that their real author's identity should remain unknown; complete plays passed off for centuries as the works of another. What they all have in common, as we have seen, beyond the mere fact of anonymity is that the lack of an author's name has had an impact on their literary appreciation.<sup>23</sup> Fragments unassigned to any author tend to languish unappreciated even when substantial enough to merit closer attention; interpolations are simply condemned for getting in the way of the original play; and even complete plays are thought by some to be inferior if they are shown not to be by a named and acknowledged master. Given that there is always a temptation to be influenced by the name of an author in assessing the literary quality of a piece, we might rather say that anonymous tragedy offers us the unique opportunity to engage with ancient drama free from such prejudices, ready to focus on the issue of quality alone. Simply gathering this material together – if 'simply' is the right word in the context of a process which would require the most careful analytical skills – and furnishing it all with a commentary could help readers to discern the positive contribution that these texts make to our understanding of this genre, thereby leading to all kinds of insights into what we value in an ancient tragedy today.

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<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of this point in relation to *Rhesus*, see Valtadorou 2016.

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