SHORTER NOTES

A FILLY'S MANGLED MANE REFLECTED: SOPHOCLES, *TYRO* FR. 659 RADT

ABSTRACT

Fragment 659 Radt of Sophocles' Tyro *contains a number of textual problems, and editors have tended to accept four conjectures made by scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This note argues that the text of the manuscripts should be retained and that it can make perfect sense.*

Keywords: textual criticism; Greek tragedy; Sophocles; *Tyro*; anthropomorphism; emotions; textual conservatism

κόμης δὲ πένθος λαγχάνω πώλου δίκην,
ἥτις συναρπασθεῖσα βουκόλων ὕπο
μάνδραις ἐν ἱππείαισιν ἀγρίᾳ χερὶ
θέρος θερισθῇ ξανθὸν αὐχένων ἄπο,
πλαθεῖσα δ' ἐν λειμῶνι ποταμίων ποτῶν
ἴδῃ σκιᾶς εἴδωλον αὐγασθεῖσά που
κουραῖς ἀτίμως διατετιλμένης φόβην.
φεῦ, κἂν ἀνοικτίρμων τις οἰκτίρειέ νιν
πτήσσουσαν αἰσχύνῃσιν οἷα μαίνεται
πενθοῦσα καὶ κλαίουσα τὴν πάρος χλιδήν

And it is my lot to mourn my hair, like a foal,
whom herdsmen have seized
in the horses' stables with rough grip,
and who has had the yellow mane reaped from her neck;
and when she comes to the meadow to drink the water of the river,
reflected in the water she sees her image,
with her hair shamefully hacked off.
Ah, even a pitiless person might pity her,
cowering beneath the outrage, as she madly
laments and bewails the luxuriant hair she had before!

Thus appear the ten verses of fr. 659 Radt from Sophocles' *Tyro* in Lloyd-Jones's Loeb edition and translation.[1] The fragment comes from Aelian's *On the Nature of Animals* and has recently been studied closely in an Italian doctoral dissertation and a related article by Cardinali.[2] The first four verses are relatively unproblematic from a textual point of view, but the following verses contain a number of issues, reflected in the fact that Lloyd-Jones's edition contains four conjectures: 5 πλαθεῖσα Reiske for σπασθεῖσα codd.; 6 αὐγασθεῖσά που Meineke for αὐγασθεῖσ' ὑπὸ codd.; 7 φόβην Wakefield for

[1] H. Lloyd-Jones (transl.), *Sophocles. Fragments* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2003[2]), 317.

[2] Ael. *NA* 11.18; S. Cardinali, 'Tre note a Sofocle, fr. 659 R.[2] (Tiro)', *Frammenti sulla Scena* 2 (2021), 12–30 (https://doi.org/10.13135/2612-3908/6728); and S. Cardinali, 'Sofocle. *Tiro*. Introduzione, testimonianze, testo critico, traduzione e commento' (Diss., Università di Urbino Carlo Bo, 2022) (https://hdl.handle.net/11576/2700109).

© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Classical Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 22:19:34, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838826101815

φόβης codd.; 10 χλιδήν Brunck for φόβην codd. Lloyd-Jones adopted all these conjectures, and largely followed Radt in doing so. Radt, however, retained the reading of the manuscripts in line 6 (αὐγασθεῖσ' ὑπό) and by placing the Greek words between daggers indicated that he regarded the text as corrupt beyond conjecture. Neither Radt nor Lloyd-Jones offer arguments for their choices.

Cardinali argued for restoring the text of the manuscripts in all these four cases; and she offers the following interpretation for the resulting text (5–10):

> … [una puledra, che] strappata,[3] in un prato di acque fluviali
> veda, rilucendo, l'immagine d'ombra
> dopo che le è stata indegnamente strappata via la chioma a ciocche.
> Ah, anche un essere privo di compassione avrebbe pietà di lei
> che si fa piccola per la vergogna per quanto impazzisce
> lamentando e piangendo la chioma di un tempo.[4]

> … [a filly which] torn away in a meadow of river water
> sees the shining image of a shadow
> after her mane is shamefully torn off in [batches of] locks.
> Oh, even a creature devoid of compassion would pity her,
> as she makes herself small with shame, so intense is her madness,
> wailing and crying over the mane she once had.

We propose to reexamine these six lines and offer another explanation for the text of the manuscripts, that, we believe, must be retained. To do so, we shall discuss these textual problems, which Cardinali has already scrutinized extensively, and offer fresh solutions.[5]

In 5, the two main issues are, first, the fact that the verb σπάω in the sense of 'to drag (away)' allegedly implies motion rather than position, so that we either would have to alter the verb or change the preposition ἐν to ἐς plus accusative; and, second, the genitive at the end of the line which is difficult to interpret. σπάω obviously refers in its most literal sense to dragging, but it can also be used metaphorically for being stressed, as in Plato's *Laws* (644e) where he states that ταῦτα τὰ πάθη ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεῦρα ἢ σμήρινθοί τινες ἐνοῦσαι σπῶσίν τε ἡμᾶς … ('these affections that reside in us put stress on us like sinews or cords … '). In a medical context, in the passive voice, σπάομαι means 'being affected by spasms'. It makes no dramatic sense to take σπασθεῖσα literally here in the sense that the filly is dragged onto the meadow to drink water. The herdsmen committed their abuse against her in the stables (μάνδραις ἐν ἱππείαισιν) and would hardly then 'drag her' to the meadow, her natural habitat. In his *Dialogue on Love*, Plutarch talks of 'those who shear their mares, and then lead them to a river' (τοῖς ἀποκείρουσι τὰς ἵππους εἶτα πρὸς ποταμὸν … ἄγουσι).[6] If Plutarch had the *Tyro* passage in mind, this would suggest that his source read σπασθεῖσα rather than πλαθεῖσα. Be that as it may, the participle σπασθεῖσα must have a physio-motoric meaning, and express the intense emotion with an embodied image: after the violence suffered at the hands of the herdsmen, the traumatized filly finds herself in the meadow, jumping skittishly around, leaping jerkily and nervously, dragged hither and thither by frustration and painful emotions; from the perspective of an observer, she appears to be convulsing. This abrupt quality of equine movement when under the effect of intense emotion (fear, joy, rage are

[3] For 'stappata', Cardinali (n. 2 [2021]), 25 also offers the other interpretations 'in preda a spasmi/lacerata'.
[4] Cardinali (n. 2 [2021]), 10; ead. (n. 2 [2022]), 93.
[5] Cardinali (n. 2 [2021]), *passim*; ead. (n. 2 [2022]), 164–73.
[6] Plut. *Amat.* 754A.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 22:19:34, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838826101815

the typical anthropomorphizing verbalizations) is a stock feature of Greek poetic imagery—for example, in Euripides' *Bacchae*; a specific term for such animal movements is σκίρτημα.[7]

Cardinali offers two interpretations for ποταμίων ποτῶν: first, as the destination where the filly is dragged; and second, as a genitive going with λειμῶνι, which would represent an easy solution to the problem.[8] The genitive can sometimes denote purpose, and therefore, one solution would be to understand ποταμίων ποτῶν with Hugh Lloyd-Jones as 'to drink the water of the river'.[9]

The next issue concerns αὐγασθεῖσ' ὑπό; Diggle and Radt (as already mentioned) put this between daggers, thus indicating that the place is hopelessly corrupt.[10] As αὐγάζω literally means 'to see clearly', it could be deemed redundant after ἴδῃ. The word ὑπό appears to offer even greater difficulty. Ellendt and Genthe proposed to read it in enjambment with κουραῖς, but Cardinali notes that 'κουραῖς is always attested simply in the dative and not with a preposition; moreover, the expression "under the locks (already) cut off" could not possibly have any understandable meaning'.[11] The first of Cardinali's points is without merit, as there are only two additional occurrences of κουραῖς in extant classical Greek literature.[12] And we disagree with Cardinali (and others before her) who claim that the expression αὐγασθεῖσ' ὑπὸ | κουραῖς ἀτίμως διατετιλμένης φόβης cannot make sense. Picture the distressed filly walking up to the water and lowering her head: now she sees the projected image (σκιᾶς εἴδωλον), as she looks at herself, 'under the strands of her mane so disgracefully torn'. The reflected image is appraised from underneath the mangled mane and thus appears on the surface of the water.

In 10, previous editors appear to have been repulsed by the repetition of φόβην ('mane') and therefore replaced the reading of all the manuscripts with χλιδήν ('graces', 'decoration'). Yet Greek poetic and especially tragic language admits of repetition.[13] In this case, the repetition is justified by the poetic intensification commanded by the context; once the genitive at line 7 is restored, moreover, the less acceptable perfect homophony and rhyme are avoided.[14]

Therefore, we should be textually conservative and restore the original reading of the manuscripts, translating 5–10 as follows:

> σπασθεῖσα δ' ἐν λειμῶνι ποταμίων ποτῶν
> ἴδῃ σκιᾶς εἴδωλον αὐγασθεῖσ' ὑπὸ

[7] Cf. Eur. *Bacch*. 162–6, with a filly image, here communicating elation and positive excitement; also ibid. 149–50 for the animalistic behaviour shared by the dancing maenads and the animal when spurred.

[8] Cardinali (n. 2 [2021]), 10; ead. (n. 2 [2022]), 93.

[9] R. Kühner, B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*. *Teil 2, Satzlehre*, 2 vols. (Hannover and Leipzig, 1898[3]), 2.40–1 (§478.4.c).

[10] J. Diggle, *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta selecta* (Oxford, 1998), 75; S.L. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta IV* (Göttingen, 1999[2]), 469.

[11] F. Ellendt, *Lexicon Sophocleum*. Editio altera emendata H. Genthe (Hildesheim, 1965[2]), 879 s.v. ὑπό; Cardinali, 'Frammenti' (n. 2 [2022]), 169 (our translation). On such 'strong' enjambements in tragedy see L. Battezzato, *Linguistica e retorica della tragedia greca* (Rome, 2008), ch. 5.

[12] Diog. Laert. 8.17 and Philo, *Belopoeica* 57.22, as a *TLG* search reveals. The other occurrences are either related to our passage or much later, from Byzantine times.

[13] P.E. Pickering, 'Verbal repetition in Greek tragedy' (Diss., University of London, 1999); P.E. Pickering, 'Verbal repetition in *Prometheus* and Greek tragedy generally', *BICS* 44 (2000), 81–101; P.E. Pickering, 'Repetitions and their removal by the copyists of Greek tragedy', *GRBS* 41 (2000), 123–39; and P.E. Pickering, 'Did the Greek ear detect "careless" verbal repetitions?', *CQ* 53 (2003), 490–9.

[14] Cardinali, (n. 2 [2022]), 175–6.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 22:19:34, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838826101815

κουραῖς ἀτίμως διατετιλμένης φόβης.
φεῦ, κἂν ἀνοικτίρμων τις οἰκτίρειέ νιν
πτήσσουσαν αἰσχύνῃσιν οἷα μαίνεται
πενθοῦσα καὶ κλαίουσα τὴν πάρος φόβην. 10

carried to and fro on the meadow in search of river water to drink, 5
she sees the image of her shadow as she looks at herself beneath
the strands of her viciously torn mane.
Ah, even a pitiless person would pity her,
cowering beneath the outrage, as she madly
laments and bewails the mane she had before. 10

The University of Manchester PETER E. PORMANN
peter.pormann@manchester.ac.uk

Humboldt University of Berlin CHIARA THUMIGER
chiara.thumiger@cms.hu-berlin.de
doi:10.1017/S0009838826101815

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 22:19:34, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838826101815