AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by

Edith Hall

AESCHYLUS
PERSIANS

To Ricky, Frances, Lecky, and GBH, with love.

Ἀφανισθήκαμεν ἐκεῖ στὴν Σαλαμῖνα
Ὀά, ὀά, ὀά, ὀά, ὀά, νὰ λέμε.
Δικά μας εἶναι τὰ Ἐκβάτανα, τὰ Σοῦσα,
καὶ ἡ Περσέπολις - οἱ πιὸ ὡραῖοι τόποι...

(Κ. ΚΑΒΑΦΗΣ, Η ΝΑΥΜΑΧΙΑ)

General Editor: Professor M.M. Willcock

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ADDENDA

p. 163

787-9 *at end:* They are not bored: they are desperate.

808 *after: ... and the Greeks.*

See Fisher 1992, 257–8.

809–10 *after: ... at Persepolis.* Aulus Gellius claims that Xerxes also stole the entire contents of the Athenian public library (7.17.1).

p. 164

813 they suffer tribulations: The punishment of the Persians is formulated according to the popular ethical principle that the doer shall suffer (δράσαντι παθεῖν), which was fundamentally to condition the theodicy of the *Oresteia* (e.g. *Ag.* 533, 1430, 1527–9, *Choeph.* 306–14). This ancient precept was attributed by Aristotle to none other than Rhadamanthys, the judge of the dead (*EN* 5.1132b 25).

821–2 The aorist in ἐκάρπωσεν ('produces') is gnomic.

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E.H. 1997

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Introduction

(Throughout this book line references are to the Greek text, rather than the translation, whose numeration is occasionally slightly different: a line reference followed by an asterisk (e.g. 8) refers to the commentary on that line of the Greek text).*

1. Remember Athens

One of the many themes to have been neglected by critics in Aeschylus' *Persians* is memory. The messenger groans as he 'remembers Athens' (285); the catastrophe Xerxes has inflicted on his people is 'never to be forgotten' (760); the ghost of Dareios solemnly warns the chorus to 'remember Athens and Greece' (824). Two and a half millennia later Europe remains obedient to the Great King: we have not forgotten the Greek victory at Salamis.

For nineteenth-century Greeks Salamis was a charter myth for the independence movement against Turkey;[1] for Britons it had always seemed analogous with the defeat of the Spanish Armada, but when they became involved in the Opium Wars against China it symbolised the destruction of a decadent eastern empire;[2] for Nietzsche it heralded the disintegration of Athenian greatness;[3] but for Yeats it was an emblem of the spirit of Irish republican rebellion.[4] The perennial significance of the Salamis story lies precisely in its politicised expression of the archetypal David-and-Goliath theme: a smaller nation scores a victory over a larger, imperialist aggressor. And the text which made the most important contribution to the aesthetic and ethical shaping of the story, thus ensuring that it was passed down to resonate throughout posterity, was undoubtedly Aeschylus' tragic *Persians*.[5]

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1 See e.g. Andreas Kalvos' famous ode 'To Fame' (*Eis Doxan*), which equates the struggle against the Turks with various events in the Persian wars, and is suffused with linguistic reminiscences of *Persians*, including the words from the Greek battle-cry, 'sons of the Greeks' (*Pers.* 402). There are several engravings taken from paintings depicting Salamis in a similar philhellene and triumphalist spirit reproduced in Rados 1915.

2 See especially Thomes Rymer's detailed plan for an adaptation of *Persians* translated to the court of Spain as it heard of the loss of the fleet sent against England (Rymer 1693, 11-17). An early Victorian burlesque of *Persians* entitled *The Chinaid* makes Xerxes into Chingyang, an opium-addicted Emperor, and the chorus into obsequious mandarins (Anon. 1843).

3 Quoted in Strong 1975, 169.

4 Easter 1916 becomes a victory of civilisation over barbarism as the Irish rebels win a spiritual victory over the English. It was men, 'not the banks of oars/that swam upon the many-headed foam at Salamis' who 'put down/All Asiatic vague immensities' (*The Statues*, see Macintosh 1994, 14–15).

5 This is not to underestimate either the influence on Aeschylus of Phrynichus (see hypothesis with commentary), or the contribution made by other ancient versions of the story, especially by Herodotus' *Histories*. But the close resemblances in diction and thought in Aeschylus and Herodotus (Lattimore 1943, 92-3 and n. 29) show that Aeschylus'

Aristophanes saw that the play's power lay in its ability to make its audience 'yearn always for victory over their enemies' (*Frogs* 1026–7), and revivals have tended to be associated with periods of strong patriotic sentiment or heightened political consciousness. After its première in the Athenian theatre of Dionysus in the spring of 472, the play may have been performed during Aeschylus' lifetime in Syracuse; the Sicilian tyrant Hieron liked to equate his defeat of the Carthaginians and Etruscans with the mainland Greeks' victory over Persia (Pind. *Pyth.* 1.71–6).[6] Aeschylean dramas were revived during the decades after his death (Σ Ar. *Frogs* 10); his son Euphorion was reputed to have been responsible for some of these revivals. (12 *TgrF* T 1). The familiarity of the comic poets Eupolis and Aristophanes with *Persians*[7] therefore strongly implies that the tragedy enjoyed a second fifth-century performance, perhaps in 425 when we happen to know Aeschylean plays were revived (Ar. *Ach.* 10).

Appropriately enough for the earliest surviving European drama, it may have been the first ever ancient Greek tragedy realised in something approximating to a performance in a modern European language. As early as 1571 (fourteen years before the famous *Oedipus* in Vicenza, which is widely held to have inaugurated the modern revival of Greek tragedy), *Persians* was recited in Greek or Italian on the Greek island of Zakynthos to celebrate victories against the Ottomans.[8]

In our own century performances have sometimes appeared at moments of patriotic fervour. Gilbert Murray was well aware that the play, in the right context, was political dynamite, for in a letter to Yeats in 1905 he suggested a production in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 'with a seditious innuendo'.[9] The rise of Nazism offered an extreme example of imperialism and anti-democratic militarism: it is therefore probably no coincidence that Murray's translation was broadcast on the Home Service to the people of Britain in 1939.[10] The capacity of Greek tragedy to be appropriated by either side in any conflict could not be better demonstrated than by the subsequent production of *Persians* in Göttingen; it was one in a wartime stream of Greek tragedies performed in Germany because of their emphases on heroism, fighting, struggle, and the grief of women left waiting at home; the date of *Persians* was February 1942, when the German army on the eastern front was beginning to encounter terrible hardship.[11]

Yet in the post-war years the play has usually been used to protest *against* war. It was often performed in the former East Germany. Matthias Braun's production, revived four times between 1961 and 1969, was explicitly anti-fascist and anti-imperialist. While making no bones about equating Xerxes with Hitler, it was inspired by US involvement in Korea and subsequently turned (like a short-lived production off Broadway during the same period) into a protest against the Vietnam war:[12] the last revival, in Dresden, presented the audience with soldiers doing drill during the

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formulation was already influencing historiography in the fifth century (Michelini 1982, 75).

6 So a scholion on Ar. *Frogs* 1028. See Gauthier 1966, 8-14, Podlecki 1970, 117–20.

7 See 65*, 346*, 623-680*, 1071–2*.

8 Knös 1962, 654.

9 Clark and McGuire 1989, 9.

10 F. West 1984, 216.

11 Flashar 1991, 169 and 360 n. 16.

12 Trilse 1975, 150–5. Braun's *Perser* is included in Braun 1969.

messenger scene. A performance of Andreas Spätauf's bravely slang-laden translation by the Berliner Ensemble in 1983 portrayed the Persian court as the epitome of western militarist decadence; Atossa in a cocktail dress, Dareios in a flashy suit, and Xerxes in the khaki uniform of a Junta commander.[13]

In Greece the play is, understandably, a popular part of the performance repertoire. The most famous Greek production was certainly that directed by Karolos Koun (see fig. 4), first performed in 1965, with costumes and scenery by the famous Yannis Tsarouhis. It was a great hit in London, which hosted it as a part of a season of World Theatre, and where it helped to foster the philhellene sentiment which was to become so important to rousing international condemnation of the Greek dictatorship of 1967–74. More recently the political significance of the Salamis story has been interestingly inverted: the controversial director Peter Sellars used it to question the bombing in 1993 of Saddam Hussein's Iraq by the UN. His production was performed in the United States and several European cities in 1993. He saw it as a medium through which the suffering of modern Iraq could speak, in the voice of ancient Persia, to the west: 'what can't be shown on television can be said on the stage. In America the war in Iraq was shown with no Iraqis at all – dead or alive... We're saying come and meet a few'.[14]

2. Aeschylus

Giving the Persians a sympathetic hearing was probably not Aeschylus' priority: his own brother had died a particularly bloody death at Marathon (Hdt. 6.114). Few Athenians of his generation had any cause to regret the outcome of the military engagements with Persia. Yet little else can confidently be surmised about the poet. The biographical evidence is lamentably scanty; the late *Life of Aeschylus*, which alleges that he died when an eagle dropped a tortoise on his head, is obviously to be read with scepticism.[15] But greater reliability can be expected of some other sources such as (i) the Parian Marble, (ii) a fragmentary fourth-century inscription which records Athenian drama competitions (*IG* II^2 2318), and (iii) the hypotheses to the plays.[16] It can be assumed that Aeschylus was born into a Eupatrid family at Eleusis in about 525 BC. He won his first victory in 484, and was victorious again in 472 with the group including *Persians*, for which a youthful Pericles acted as *chorēgos*. In about 470 he visited Sicily. He won at Athens with the trilogies including *Seven against Thebes* (467 BC) and *Supplices* (about 463 BC), and with the *Oresteia* (458 BC). He returned to Sicily and died there in 456 BC, at about sixty-nine years of age.

From the perspective of interpreting *Persians* the most important aspect of this biographical information is simply Aeschylus' age. He must have been about fifty years old when he conceived the play; he had lived through one of the most exciting periods in Athenian history. He spent his early childhood in the Athenian tyranny of the

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13 Kuckhoff 1987, 19–20. Linzer 1983.

14 Quoted in Pappenheim 1993; for a fuller (and very critical) account of the production see Lahr 1993. The adaptation was by Robert Auletta (Auletta 1993).

15 The *Life of Aeschylus* is well discussed and translated by Lefkowitz 1981, 67–74, 157–60. See also Podlecki 1966, 1–7.

16 See G. Murray 1955, 52, 373; Ireland 1986 3-7; Rosenmeyer 1982, 369–76.

Peisistratid brothers Hippias and Hipparchus. When he was about nine years old the scandalous assassination of Hipparchus resulted in a harsher and more oppressive regime under Hippias. Aeschylus was already in his teens when in 510 BC the Alcmaeonid family, assisted by Sparta, deposed Hippias after violent encounters and many casualties: over the next two years Athenian politics were blighted by the power struggle between aristocratic factions, at the end of which Aeschylus had witnessed Cleisthenes' radical democratic reforms and all the social upheavals they entailed.

Yet from the turn of the century onwards the Persian threat must have loomed as large in any young Athenian's consciousness as the reorganisation of local Athenian demes. Aeschylus' fellow citizens had been involved in military operations against the Persians from at least as early as 498 BC, when they had sent ships to Ionia (Hdt. 5.97) to aid in the revolt which ended so catastrophically in the Persians' subjugation of Miletos in 494, an event which must have shocked and terrified them. The poet was in his physical prime – about thirty-five – when Dareios finally invaded mainland Greece, bringing the deposed Athenian tyrant Hippias with him: Aeschylus probably fought alongside his brother in the battle of Marathon in 490 BC (Ar. *Frogs* 1296–7). The decade between the Persian invasions, marked by turbulent internal politics at Athens, was however dominated by the permanent threat of a fresh offensive from the east. When it finally came in 480 Aeschylus was witness to the crumbling of the Greek defence in Boeotia, the terrifying march of Xerxes on Athens, the people's evacuation of the city, its subsequent sacking, and the eventual Greek victories at Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale. Aeschylus had then lived amongst the ruins of his terribly devastated city.[17]

But the struggle with the Persians was by no means over, and fear of subjugation by them did not evanesce: unfavourable references to 'the Mede' were never actually deleted from the Assembly's prayers (Ar. *Thesm.* 337, 365, Isocr. 4.157). The Athenians remained at war with Persia throughout the 470s, after founding the Delian league, the confederacy of Ionian, Aegean and Hellespontine city-states which aimed to push the enemy ever further eastwards (see 852–907*). There were constant campaigns, especially against the *huparchoi* whom Xerxes had established throughout Thrace and the Hellespont, campaigns remembered by the ageing chorus of *Wasps*, who say that they took many cities from the Medes (1098–100). The hero of the hour was Cimon, whose illustrious campaigns at Byzantium, Eion on the Strymon, and Scyros, must have gratifyingly fed Athenian patriotic pride.

So by the time of the production of Aeschylus' *Persians* the poet and his audience had for a quarter of a century been in fear of or actively engaged in war with the eastern empire. Since 480 they had annually celebrated the repulse of Xerxes at the Eleutheria festival,[18] and there may even have been for a time a regular semi-official celebration through drama of the Persian wars at the City Dionysia, of which *Persians* is the only extant example.[19] It is difficult for readers in the late twentieth century western world to imagine either the strength of the emotions which thinking about Persia could stir up,

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17 On the archaeological evidence for the extent of the destruction see H.A. Thompson 1981.

18 The evidence is collected by Raubitschek 1960, 180.

19 Suggested by G. Murray, 1940, 115.

or the depth of the conceptual chasm which was felt to yawn between West and East.[20] Just as importantly, the defeat of Persia approximately coincided with the inauguration of the Cleisthenic democracy; the Athenians' drive to push back Persia was conceptually inseparable from their desire to protect their political system. For decades public figures suspected of oligarchic aspirations were to continue to be suspected of sympathy towards 'the Mede'.[21]

3. *Persians* and Historical 'Reality'

Since Aeschylus' *Persians* is the only extended text to survive written by an author with first-hand experience of the Persian wars, and within a decade of Salamis itself, it has always been tempting to assess its usefulness as a mine of evidence for historical 'facts'. There exist in print plentiful discussions, with explanatory maps, elucidating the messenger's account of the naval operations at the battle of Salamis;[22] they reconstruct it by studying the physical site,[23] or compare it with the version in Herodotus,[24] and with the much later narratives in Diodorus and Plutarch.[25] Lattimore, for example, systematically compares the proper names of the Persian commanders in Herodotus and Aeschylus, concluding that Herodotus is infinitely more reliable.[26] Indeed, the 'veracity' of the play has in general not tended to be well rated in comparison with the much longer and more detailed version of events offered by Herodotus' *Histories*, even though Herodotus was born after the wars and recorded them several decades later. But if the goal is the appreciation and understanding of the play, the important point is surely not its historical veracity in terms of detail, but its interest as a document of the Athenian collective *imagination*: it is beyond all doubt an absolutely truthful record of the ways in which the Athenians liked to think about their great enemy, and a monument to Aeschylus' poetic inventiveness, however 'racist' it may now seem, in his evocation of Persia.[27]

The play also used to be seen as a repository of information about Achaemenid Persia: the German title of Keiper's long and impressive dissertation of 1877, which is still often cited, translates as *Aeschylus' Persians Treated as Source for the Study of Old Persian Antiquity*. But this was in the days when there was no theoretical understanding of the ideological factors at work in the social construction of one culture by another. The truth value of the picture which Greek sources painted of Persia is impaired by the effect of ethnic stereotypes; these powerfully distort the cognitive precision of the process by which one ethnic group is identified and observed by another.[28] Scholars like Keiper did not understand the function of the production of

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20 Hall 1989, 56–62. The polarisation was profoundly to influence all of Aeschylus' plays (Delcourt 1934).

21 See further Hall 1989, 58–9.

22 Recently see e.g. Lazenby 1988 and 1993, 151–97.

23 Hammond 1956.

24 E.g. Broadhead 1960, 322-339, Podlecki 1966, 131–41, Kaukhcisvili 1981, Morrison and Coates 1986, ch. 3.

25 Puech 1932, Roux 1974.

26 Lattimore 1943, 84–7.

27 Hall 1989, 72–100. On the problematic notion of 'reality' see Péron 1982.

28 Hall 1989, 102–3.

images of the ethnically 'other' in the ethnic *self*-definition of the group producing the images.[29] That is, the Athenians looked in other cultures for the most important dimensions of their own self-image (as democratic, non-hierarchical, as guided by the ideals of moderation, self-restraint, and manliness); unsurprisingly they found the hated Persians lacking in them. The *focuses* of the portrait of the Persians in the tragedy (for example, on their tyranny and effeminacy) tell us therefore some important truths, yet they are truths pertaining less to the Persians than to the Athenians' own sense of identity.

The dangerous myth of the Orient as decadent, effeminate, luxurious and materialistic, which remains to this day a corner-stone of western ideology, was actually born at the time of the Persian wars: indeed, the very first example quoted in Edward Said's important *Orientalism* comes from Aeschylus' *Persians*.[30] Although Herodotus, Ctesias, and the eighth book of Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia*[31] were to elaborate the theme, it was historical tragedy which first gave birth to the idea of the decadence of the Achaemenid Persian empire (a decadence usually historically traced, as in Aeschylus, to Xerxes' accession); this is the orientalising fantasy of excessive luxury and wealth leading to the eventual collapse of a once proud and well organised regime. It is only fairly recently that scholars have begun to see that this image was created by the Greek imagination, and needs to be carefully corrected and supplemented by excavating as much of the Persians' own self-image as possible.[32]

Yet a balance must be struck between the misguided use of the play as a truthful empirical source for Persia and denial that it contains any features which derive from observation of the dictinctive protocols and practices of the Persian court. If nothing at all survived of the Achaemenids, then we would have to read the play as a source exclusively for the Greek imagination, but the Persians' own buildings, relief sculptures and inscriptions can in fact help to illuminate some aspects of the play. Although we know infinitely less about fifth-century Persia than about fifth-century Greece, crucial correctives to Hellenocentric versions of Persian history[33] are offered by Persepolis and other sites, especially Pasargadae and Sousa, and by important relief sculptures and inscriptions such as those at Behistun.[34] Prostration before the great King, for example, which is such a distinctive aspect of Aeschylus' vision of the Persian court (see 152*), is probably portrayed in Persian art; the use of the bow as a prominent image of Persian monarchy is confirmed by Dareios' own self-publicity (555–7*), and some of the regal and military language Aeschylus gives his Persians is clearly informed by Old Iranian forms of expression attested in royal inscriptions (see 24*, 50*).[35] It is therefore inadequate to categorise all such phenomena in the play as 'oriental colour' or 'ethnographic touches'.[36] One of the challenges this drama presents is the requirement

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29 Hall 1989, 97–100.

30 E. Said 1978, 56.

31 Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987a and 1987b.

32 Tourraix 1984; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987, xi-xiv; Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt 1987.

33 For a detailed account of the Achaemenid empire see Cook 1985.

34 Translated in Kent 1953. For a brilliant discussion of the Persian Kings' self-image as conveyed by their relief sculptures and inscriptions see Root 1979.

35 See especially Schmitt 1988.

36 E.g. Hegyi 1981.

to draw careful distinctions between those aspects of Aeschylus' portrait of the Persian court which are fascinating hints at the cultural translation of authentic Persian practices, and those which are fantastic productions of his Athenian perspective. A clear example of the latter is the Queen's statement that she is more upset by Xerxes' torn clothes than by the prospect of the wholesale slaughter of Persian forces at Plataea (845–8): this clearly reveals no truth whatsoever except that the Athenians *thought that* Persian queens were psychopathically heartless, status-conscious and obsessed with sartorial display.

4. Historical Tragedy

Although *Persians* is the only extant example, there were several other Greek tragedies on historical themes. The first author to portray recent historical events in dramatic form may well have been Phrynichus, whose *Sack of Miletus* met with disfavour at Athens, allegedly because the audience wept at the sight of the terrible suffering of the devastated city after the Ionian uprising (Hdt. 6.21.2 = 3 *TgrF* F 2). The play may or may not have been performed during Themistocles' archonship in 493/2.[37] We know slightly more about Phrynichus' *Phoenician Women*, on which Aeschylus' *Persians* is at least partially dependent (see the hypothesis and the commentary upon it): it opened with a eunuch preparing the seats for a meeting of Xerxes' counsellors and announcing the King's defeat (= 3 *TgrF* F 8).[38] The chorus consisted of women of Phoenicia, possibly slaves in the Persian court, but more likely widows of the Phoenicians in the Persian navy; they sang things like 'leaving the city of Sidon and dewy Arados' (3 *TgrF* F 9).

Ever since Richard Bentley made the connection in the late seventeenth century, it has been generally accepted that Phrynichus' *Phoenician Women* was one of the group of plays with which Phrynichus won the drama competition in 476, and for which Themistocles acted as *chorēgos* (Plut. *Vit. Them.* 5.4).[39] Matters are however complicated by the notice in the *Suda* that Phrynichus wrote a play known variously as *Persians*, *The Just Ones*, or *Men Sitting Together* (*Sud.* φ 762 = 3 *TgrF* T 1): this play could have been in the same trilogy as *Phoenician Women*.[40] But since the notice does not mention *Phoenician Women*, the lexicon's entry may be hopelessly confused,[41] or these titles may all be alternatives for the famous play's more familiar name.[42]

In the second quarter of the fifth century there was almost certainly a tragedy treating the famous story (also told in Bacchylides 3) of the immolation of Croesus, the last king of Lydia in the sixth century; some fragments of a hydria by the Leningrad

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37 See Roisman 1988, 15–16.

38 The counter-intuitive attempt of Stössl (1945) to argue that the defeat of Xerxes related in *Phoenissae* was Mycale rather than Salamis can be disregarded.

39 Bentley 1699, 305–6.

40 Lloyd-Jones 1966.

41 The conclusion reached by Roisman 1988, 20–3.

42 See Grooneboom 1960, 8 n. 7.

painter show him on a pyre, attended by barbarians and an aulos-player.[43] There is also evidence for at least three comedies treating Persian war themes by dramatists active during the first half of the fifth century: the Sicilian Epicharmus' *Persians*, and *Persians* (or *Assyrians*) and *Lydians* by the Athenian poets Chionides and Magnes respectively.

A few more 'historical' plays turn up later. A papyrus fragment, probably of a tragedy (tr. fr. adesp. 685), includes the words 'O race of the Persians...of a wretched father...king...I will lament'. This looks like a dirge for Dareios or another king of Persia. It is possible that this fragment should be associated with the famous Apulian krater known as the 'Dareios vase' (Naples 3523, see fig. 1). The messenger on this vase stands on a rostrum actually inscribed with the word *Persai*, and it is widely accepted that the scene was inspired by a scene from an extraordinary tragedy,[44] almost certainly treating the battle of Marathon. For in the centre of the painting Dareios, complete with tiara and sceptre (see 661*, 764), sits on a gorgeous throne; before him is the messenger, and on either side alarmed counsellors. On the level below are a treasurer and other barbarians bringing tribute or grovelling. The top level explains the divine dimension: on the right Apatē ('Deception') tries to entice 'Asia' from her seat; in the centre Athena leads 'Hellas' up to Zeus, while Apollo and Artemis (on whose festival day the battle of Marathon was commemorated) flank them on the left. Attempts have been made to use this wonderful scene as proof of a fourth-century revival of a play by Phrynichus,[45] but it is much more likely to be evidence for a splendid but unknown fourth-century play about the first Persian invasion.

The fourth-century Theodectas composed a *Mausolus* (72 *TgrF* T 6–7). A papyrus fragment of another fourth-century or Hellenistic tragedy set in Sardis shows that it portrayed Gyges' accession to the Lydian throne after being 'forced' to look at Kandaules' wife with no clothes on (Hdt. 1.8–12); the play included orientalising features such as prostration (tr. fr. adesp. 664.9).[46] The sole fragment of Moschion's third-century *Themistocles* is a colourful description of a battle (97 *TgrF* F 1), echoing Aeschylus' *Persians* (302). Two 'historical' Hellenistic tragedies survive only in title: Lycophron's *Kasandreis* and Philicus' *Themistocles*.[47] The Jewish tragedian Ezekiel, who probably lived in Alexandria in the second century BC, composed an *Exagoge*, a fascinating and unfairly neglected tragedy in classical Greek on the Jewish exodus from Egypt (128 *TgrF*). The substantial fragments include a speech by an Egyptian messenger reporting the parting of the Red Sea by Moses; his description of the

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43 Corinth T 1133 = *ARV*^{2} p. 571, no. 74: see Beazley 1955. Despite attempts to interpret the vase as portraying the necromancy in *Persians*, Beazley's view is far more likely (see Hall 1989, 65 and n. 36, with bibliography).

44 See the discussion in Trendall and Webster 1971, no. III.5.6

45 Anti 1952.

46 All attempts to date this play to the fifth century are frustrated by metrical arguments (see Latte 1950). For further bibliography and discussion see Holzberg 1973, Hall 1989, 65 and n. 37.

47 See further Bazzell 1932, 13–24.

Pharaoh's army is almost certainly dependent on military passages in Aeschylus' *Persians*.[48]

5. History and Myth

The distinction between 'historical' and 'mythical' tragedy assumed in the foregoing section is not a popular one. Scholars often claim that it is an anachronism, saying that the Greeks saw their own mythical past as history:[49] they cite Thucydides' belief in the existence long ago of a Greek general called Agamemnon, and in the historicity of the Trojan wars (1.9). Yet it is misleading to subsume the subject-matter of *Persians* under the same heading as that, for example, of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. There is evidence indicating that the Greeks did have a yardstick with which to distinguish the mythical past and the immediate past of contemporary history: before the Persian wars their visual arts and their heroic epics had almost exclusively confined themselves to the deeds of gods and heroes. An aesthetic norm had existed which determined that certain artistic genres were not suitable for the representation of contemporary events. On the other hand archaic poems in lyrics and elegiacs (Archilochus, Alcaeus, Callinus, Mimnermus) had indeed sometimes been regarded as appropriate vehicles for the commemoration of recent political and military endeavours.

The point is not that Aeschylus' audience could not tell the difference between the battle of Salamis and the mythical siege of Thebes by the Seven, but (i) that the Persian wars were not just any piece of history (as Conacher puts it, they belonged to the order of events 'which seem to imply causes or meanings...belonging to a higher order of reality than the particular events themselves'),[50] and (ii) that fifth-century tragedy was a flexible and originally experimental genre able to assimilate both kinds of subject-matter.[51] *Persians* belongs to a whole species of artefacts celebrating the Persian wars, many of which draw implicit or explicit connections with the world of heroic myth. Simonides of Ceos, a poet much involved in the production of poetry celebrating the Persian wars, wrote an elegy on Plataea (of which fragments have been only recently published): this seems to have drawn parallels between the Trojan and the Persian wars, and perhaps even between Achilles and the Spartan general Pausanias.[52] The connection elsewhere may be less a parallel than an *aition*: Aeschylus' *Oreithyia*, for example, explained the Athenians' friendship with Boreas, the god of the north wind, who had married their mythical princess Oreithyia. The Athenians actually established a shrine for Boreas to thank him for the storm which helped them to defeat the Persians at Artemisium (Hdt. 7.189), and the subject-matter of Aeschylus' play may well have been chosen because of the new interest in Boreas as a divine ally of Athens.[53] This

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48 Lines 193–242 in the edition (with useful translation) of Jacobson 1983, who collects the echoes of *Persians* at pp. 136–41. I am grateful to Tessa Rajak for discussing this play with me. There was a satyric *Persians* in the 2nd century (Cšapo and Slater 1995, 47).

49 See e.g. Snell 1928, 66.

50 Conacher 1974, 142.

51 On the catholicity of earlier tragedy see Herington 1985, 125–50. Castellani 1986 tries to explain why 'myth' rather than 'history' dominated tragedy.

52 See Parsons 1992, 32–3.

53 Simon 1967, 107–21.

was certainly the case in the treatment of the Boreas/Oreithyia story in Simonides' *Naumachia* ('Sea-battle', see frr. 532–5 *PMG*).

The fifth-century visual arts begin similarly to portray the battles against the Persians alongside the mythical struggles of Greeks against Amazons,[54] Trojans,[55] giants,[56] and centaurs, and to model them along similar lines. These legendary battles were felt to have been their forerunners, and the process of fusing and equating myth and history elevated the Persian wars in the popular imagination, providing authorisation for their outcome via parallel victories in myth. Vase-paintings depicting battles against the Persians were added to the repertoire of famous mythological scenes:[57] Polygnotus painted a mural in the Stoa Poikile on which the battle at Marathon was to be seen alongside Greek heroes like Theseus and Heracles conquering the mythical foreign Trojans and Amazons (Paus. 1.15.3).

6. The Tetralogy

The hypothesis to Aeschylus' *Persians* tells us that it was produced in a group containing plays on 'mythical' themes: the group comprised *Phineus, Persians, Glaukos Potnieus* and a satyric *Prometheus* (probably the *Prometheus Purkaeus*, 'Fire-Kindler': attested by Pollux 9.156), apparently in that order. The fragments of *Phineus* show that it treated the seer's harassment by the harpies; those of *Glaukos Potnieus* that it dealt with the Boeotian hero's destruction by the horses which drew his chariot at Pelias' funeral games; those of *Prometheus Purkaeus* suggest that it portrayed a satyr bemused by the invention of fire. Scholars have predictably attempted to identify some thematic links between the four plays, but the evidence for all except *Persians* is so slight that speculation is best kept to a minimum.

Given that the climax of *Persians* consists of Dareios' revelations of oracles and his prophetic account of the battle of Plataea, it is intriguing that the play which preceded it concerned one of Greek myth's most famous prophets.[58] Although the traditions surrounding Phineus are so confused that it is impossible to be sure which versions Aeschylus adopted, it is likely that Phineus had been punished by Zeus or Apollo for misdemeanours connected with his powers of prophecy, and that he was rescued from the harpies by the Argonauts in return for disclosing information to them.[59] Perhaps Phineus delivered predictions which were subsequently fulfilled in *Persians*.

Another possible point of contact is the figure of Phrixus, Athamas' son, who escaped on the golden ram with his sister Helle; it was on their quest for the golden fleece that the Argonauts visited Phineus in Thracian Salmydessus. Since *Persians* explicitly names Athamas, and mentions the aetiology which derived the name of the Hellespont from Helle (69–70*), an interest in the Hellespont linking the first two plays

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54 Bovon 1963, 597–8, Hall 1993, 114–15.
55 Hall 1989, 68 and n. 49.
56 Oliver 1960, 121–4.
57 See Bovon 1963, Raeck 1981.
58 Prophecy was regarded as the primary theme linking the plays by Deichgräber 1974, 58–9.
59 For a detailed account of the variants of the Phineus myth, see A.C. Pearson 1917, vol. ii, 311–15.

cannot be excluded. More speculatively, the antithesis between Europe and Asia so prominent in *Persians* could have been prefigured in *Phineus*: the seer was the brother of Europa. According to Herodotus 1.2 a (Persian) version of Europa's story regarded her abduction from Phoenicia by some Greeks as an important contributory factor in the enmity between the two continents.

The links between *Persians* and *Glaukos Potnieus* are far less amenable to speculation.[60] Glaukos, the son of Sisyphus, kept his man-eating mares in the Boeotian city of Potniai. He died when his horses ate him, or went mad and tore him to pieces, at the funeral games of Pelias. The only possible connections with *Persians* seem to be (i) Boeotia (where Plataea is located), (ii) the gulf of Pagasae (the setting of the games for Pelias *and* a place where the Persians had anchored before Artemisium), and (iii) the horses-and-chariots theme: Xerxes in the Queen's dream falls from his chariot when the horse representing 'Hellas' breaks the yoke (194–7). No links between *Persians* and *Prometheus Purkaeus* immediately spring to mind.

7. Political Perspective

Persians is the most overtly political of all extant Athenian tragedies, and much of the secondary literature is devoted to analysing its political overtones and purpose.[61] The first question is the extent of its Athenocentrism, a problem exacerbated by the lack of information about the constitution of the original audience. It would make a great deal of difference to our understanding of the play's political trajectory if we knew whether large numbers of non-Athenian Greeks were present at the City Dionysia as early as 472 BC; many certainly attended it later in the century, when the festival became an occasion as much for authorising Athenian imperialism as for affirming Athenian civic identity.[62]

Aeschylus' version of the Persian wars clearly elevates the battle of Salamis to a position of preeminence, and Lattimore argues that Aeschylus' Athenian vision is so biased as to distort altogether the collaborative nature of the panhellenic defence of Greece.[63] It is quite true that although five lines are spent on Dareios' prophetic vision of the victory of the 'Doric spear' at the battle of Plataea (816–20), they pale into insignificance beside the messenger's three detailed speeches about Salamis between 302 and 432, and even beside his account of the (in reality) insignificant slaughter on land at Psyttaleia (447–70). The play stresses that the loss of the *fleet* at Salamis in effect destroyed the *whole* force (278–9, cf. 234), and the battles of Thermopylae,

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60 It should be added that some scholars have thought that the third play of the trilogy was not about Glaukos of Potniai, but Aeschylus' *Glaukos Pontios*, which certainly dealt with the remarkably aquatic mortal who became a sea-god after eating a special kind of grass. A play about a Greek sea-god would be easier to link with *Persians* than a play about man-killing horses; the sea is sometimes thought to have been the connecting theme (Melchinger 1979, 35 and n. 44). But the well-informed hypothesis of *Persians* (in those manuscripts which do specify which *Glaukos* title was in the group) is unequivocal on this matter.

61 See e.g. Salanitro 1965, a prodigious exercise in finding specific references to contemporary Athenian politicians.

62 See Goldhill 1990.

63 Lattimore 1943, 90–3.

Artemisium and Mycale are completely omitted. There is no sign of the convenient dualism with which Pindar (who was neither Athenian nor Spartan) in 470 BC divided the credit between Athens and Sparta (*Pyth.* 1.75–8). On the other hand the text refers to 'Hellas' as often as to 'Athens' (790, 824, 1025 etc.), there is an almost complete absence of references to Athena, and in the central Salamis narrative the Greek agents are always 'Hellenes' rather than 'Athenians' (353–432). Rather than denying the validity of either viewpoint, it is therefore best to see the play as a nascent expression of the very tension between Panhellenic ideals and Athenian imperial ideology which was to inform historiography, tragedy, and comedy throughout the fifth century.[64]

Another effect of the focus on Salamis is to downplay the extent of the threat which had been posed to Greece by Dareios' invasion a decade previously. Although Marathon receives a few mentions (see 474–5), the play clearly seeks to elevate the importance of the victory of 480 relative to that of 490. It is important to bear in mind that one reason for this is to create a distinctive (if wholly inaccurate) contrast between the careers of wise old Dareios and rash young Xerxes.[65] But it is difficult to exclude the possibility that the lack of balance in the play reflects the rivalry which had arisen by 472 between Themistocles, the mastermind of Salamis, and Cimon, the son of Miltiades who had been the hero of Marathon.[66] Indeed Themistocles was in deep trouble by the time of the production of *Persians*, which may have coincided with his ostracism; the play was also partially dependent on Phrynichus' *Phoenician Women*, for which Themistocles had acted as *chorēgos*, and which may therefore have reflected his desire for self-advertisement. Yet the pro-Themistoclean interpretation should not be overplayed: Pericles, who may at this time have supported Cimon's policies,[67] was the *chorēgos* for *Persians*, campaigns under leaders other than Themistocles are implicitly celebrated in the stasimon after the Dareios scene (852–907*), and the text scrupulously avoids naming Themistocles, or indeed any single Greek commander.

For the focus on Salamis was primarily a compliment to those really responsible for the victory, as they were for the subsequent successes in the 470s:[68] the ordinary Athenian citizens who manned the ships and had most to gain from defending their democracy. The real hero of Aeschylus' version is the average Athenian citizen-rower. Although the play is careful to avoid neglecting hoplites in the audience by recounting their successful engagement near Salamis (447–72), there is no implication that any particular Athenians or Greeks were superior to their fellow combatants by birth, class, or rank. In addition to posing a stark contrast with the exaggerated hierarchicalism of the Persians, this represents a remarkable exercise in the erasure of the social distinctions which were still so important within the citizenry at Athens. It was widely acknowledged that the claim of the poorer Athenians to power in the democracy partly rested on their contribution to her standing as a sea-power: even opponents of the democracy saw it as just that the poor and ordinary men should have more power than

64 Hall 1989, 160-5, 181–200, Baslez 1986, Perlman 1976.
65 S. Said 1981, 31–8.
66 Podlecki 1966, 12–13, Hahn 1981.
67 G. Thomson 1973, 279. Salanitro 1965 argues that the play is in fact *critical* of Themistocles.
68 Melchinger 1979, 36.

the highborn and wealthy, since 'it is the ordinary people who man the fleet and bring the city her power' ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.2).[69]

This interpretation – that the play is as concerned with celebrating the Athenian democratic system, with its hard core of citizen-rowers, as with taking a position on the contemporary manoeuvrings of élite politicians – is supported by the manner in which it constructs the Persians and their empire as deficient in precisely those qualities which the Athenians like to think characterised their Athenian democratic system: freedom of speech, lack of hierarchical protocol, accountability of magistrates, and protection of the individual under the laws. The chorus lament that the Persian imperial rule is now in danger (584–94): the King's subjects will no longer pay him tribute, perform prostration, or keep their opinions to themselves. And yet, as the Queen reminds the chorus, whatever his failings Xerxes remains King and 'unaccountable' to the people (213*). Moreover, under Xerxes' regime even high naval commanders could be summarily executed without trial (369–71*).[70]

Just as important to the Athenian democratic self-image were the ideals of self-discipline and *andreia* ('courage' or, more literally, 'manliness'): it is implied in various passages that the Persians are cowardly, ill-disciplined, emotional and chaotic,[71] and they are powerfully effeminised by language, attitudes, and imagery. The patriarchal ancient Athenians used gender differentials and gender hierarchies to help them explain their relations with many groups other than women: male supremacy over the female was regarded as natural, and by drawing parallels between the asymmetry of power between men and women and the relationship of Greek to Persian, the ascendancy of victor over defeated in the play is 'naturalised' and thus lent powerful legitimacy.

The effeminisation of Persia is achieved by various means. The court is portrayed as lacking a strong adult male in control: Xerxes is too young, the chorus are old, and the character on stage for longest is the Queen. Repeatedly the marriage beds, cities, and the whole continent of Asia are described as 'manless' or 'unmanned' (117–19, 289, 579–80, 730), whereas 'men remain' to Athens (349). The costume and voices of Xerxes and the other Persian men are actually described in language normally confined to the delineation of females (see 468*); the closing *thrēnos* shows them performing funereal actions normally identified as examples of female behaviour (908–1078*). The play offers serial images of Asia as Woman: the mourning maternal earth of the Asiatic continent (61–2*), and the sexually deprived young widows, languishing on their soft-sheeted bridal beds (133–9*). In the register of imagery and metaphor the Asia of *Persians* is thus constructed as a paradigm of feminity, profoundly affecting its political and psychological impact on the Greek male audience.[72]

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69 See Euben 1986, 368.

70 For a more detailed analysis of the Athenians' implicit construction of the ideal democrat through the negative image of the Persian despot see Hall 1989, ch. 2.

71 Hall 1989, 79–84.

72 This interpretation is worked out in detail in Hall 1993.

8. Aeschylus' Sources

Persians was of course not the first tragedy to offer to the Athenian audience evocations of the Persian empire; Phrynichus' *Sack of Miletus* may well have had Dareios and/or his commanders as characters, and certainly cannot have avoided much discussion of the Persians. His *Phoenician Women* provided material – discussion of the defeat at Salamis, preparations for a meeting of royal counsellors, threnodic choral odes sung by barbarians – on which Aeschylus was to an unknown degree actually dependent (see hypothesis and the commentary upon it). By 472 BC encounters with the Persians had inspired a corpus of lyrics, elegiacs, and epigrams, which had developed a poetic language in which to represent the eastern empire: Ibycus had long before referred to Cyrus, the general of the Medes (fr. 320 *PMG*), Simonides produced elegiacs on Plataea, and treated the dead at Thermopylae and the sea battle at Artemisium in lyrics (frr. 522–25, 536 *PMG*). Pindar refers to the Persian wars, and an anonymous lyric dealt with Marathon (fr. 932 *PMG*).

But Aeschylus was almost certainly a war veteran who had actually laid eyes on the barbarian army, and therefore much of the material in *Persians* must be the result of what the early historians called 'autopsy' – firsthand eyewitness evidence. The remains of the Persian forces must have been a favourite topic of discussion, and the possibility that Aeschylus had very specific information concerning the identity of Xerxes' commanders at Salamis must not be discounted (21*). The poet had also been present in Athens in the aftermath of the Persian invasion, when the fabulous spoils were displayed in the city centre as visual proof of Greek supremacy over barbarism (see Dem. 22.13); they included Mardonius' golden scimitar, and a huge silver-footed throne (Dem. 24.129), allegedly the very one on which Xerxes had sat to witness the battle of Salamis (Harpocration s.v. *arguropous diphros*).[73] The Greeks dedicated Phoenician triremes to Ajax at Salamis, at Sounion, and one at the Isthmus which was still to be seen in Herodotus' day (Hdt. 8.121); timbers from the enemy fleet may even have been used in the restoration of the theatre itself in the 470s.[74]

The Athenians of 472 had been preoccupied with the Persian threat for at least a quarter of a century: rumours and traditions about the eastern empire must have been in circulation, especially emanating from the Greek cities in Ionia; there was much more extensive contact between Greeks and Persians than scholars used to believe,[75] and numerous translators and interpreters of barbarian languages were available in Greek cities.[76] Persian prisoners of war and Greek deserters would have had much to tell the Athenians;[77] the anecdotes of the numerous Greek workers (including women) who helped to build Persepolis and Sousa would have made enthralling listening.[78]

It is sometimes alleged that Aeschylus had one very specific source of information on Persia – the geographical treatise called the *Periegesis* by the early Ionian

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73 See D.B. Thompson 1956. On spoils taken from the Persians generally see also M. Miller 1985, 74–88.

74 See O'Neill 1942.

75 Lewis 1977 and 1985.

76 See Mosley 1976.

77 Kranz 1933, 92.

78 See Cameron 1948, 110 no. 15.6, Hallock 1969, no. 1224, Nylander 1970, 14–15, 69–149.

logographer Hecataeus of Miletus, which included catalogues of descriptions of places in Asia, and was probably composed before the Ionian revolt.[79] There are several examples elsewhere in Aeschylus of Hecataean influence;[80] moreover, there is a portrait of Hecataeus drawn by Herodotus, who describes him in a meeting at Miletus before the Ionian revolt, 'enumerating all the tribes under Dareios and showing how great that King's power was' (5.36); this is strongly suggestive of the catalogues of Persian forces and Persian territories which are such a distinctive feature of *Persians*. But the fragments of Hecataeus' prose treatise are unfortunately so exiguous that it cannot incontrovertibly be shown to have reappeared, transformed into poetry, in the play.[81]

9. Religion

The claim that Aeschylus' *Persians* made a concerted attempt to paint a picture of the authentic Zoroastrian religion of the Achaemenid dynasty has often been made;[82] this was a dualistic and non-anthropomorphic belief system which had synthesised the ancient Ahuric beliefs of the Median tribesmen with radical dualistic doctrines attributed to the prophet Zarathustra.[83] The features which have been used to support this interpretation of the religious aspect of the play are its supposed emphasis on the sanctity of the elements (see 495–7*), the ghost-raising scene (598–680*), alleged ruler-worship (156–7*), and the multiple references made by all the characters and the chorus to a nameless *daimōn* with malevolent intent towards the Persians;[84] these have been seen as signifying the army of evil spirits led by Ahriman, the principle of evil in Zoroastrianism (158*). But the commentary argues that none of these features is particularly unusual in the context of a Greek tragedy:[85] the Greeks had little problem with inserting the proper names of their own gods into their descriptions and evocations of barbarian cultures,[86] and there are parallels in tragedy in Greek contexts to all three types of ritual performed in the play: propitiatory libation, necromancy, and formal *thrēnos*, with the possible addition of epicedian procession (see 1036*, 1078*).

This is not to say that the numerous references to the opposition of heaven do not cumulatively imply that the Greek victory over Persia was divinely sanctioned: indeed, this is the overarching theological argument of the play. The Persian catastrophe is multiply over-determined, for numerous contributory factors are adduced besides the ubiquitous *daimōn*: the Persians' desire to add seafaring, without divine blessing, to their divinely authorised mission of military operations on land (107–14), Xerxes' lack of understanding (361–2, 552), his youth (744, 782), his rash bridging of the Hellespont which offended Poseidon (745–50), manipulative advisers who taunted him for failing to augment the empire (753–8), the goddess Atē (99, 1007), Zeus himself (532–6, 915),

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79 See L. Pearson 1939, 26–7.
80 Jacoby 1912, coll. 2680–1.
81 For a fuller discussion see Hall 1989, 75–6.
82 See e.g. Olmstead 1948, 199 n. 12, 232.
83 Boyce 1982, 14–48.
84 E.g. 345, 354, 472, 515, 724, 725, 845, 911, 921.
85 See further Hall 1989, 86–93, 181–4.
86 Linforth 1926, Burkert 1985a.

oracles connected with Zeus (739–40, 800–2),[87] the Persians' hubristic and sacrilegious defilement and looting of Greek holy places (807–15), and Xerxes' hubris in forgetting his mortal status and in lusting after wealth beyond his divinely ordained portion (821–8). The gods thus became hostile for a complex series of interconnected misdemeanours, and not least beause they were the protectors of the city of Athens (347).[88]

Although it is strange that the lengthy parodos hardly names any gods at all,[89] a striking feature of the theology of the play is the divinities associated with Greeks and Persians respectively. It is implied that a whole series of Greek male gods and heroes besides Zeus were implicated in the defeat of Persia: the local heroes of Salamis, Ajax and Cychreus (368, 596, 570), the local divinity of Salamis, Pan (449), and other manly Olympians such as Apollo (206), Poseidon (750), and Ares (952). There is a remarkable lack of emphasis on Athena, named only once, as Pallas, in a metonymy for her city (347): the reason may be the poet's consistent effeminisation of Persia and masculinisation of the Greeks (see above). For the Persians are associated, in contrast, primarily with Earth, the dark chthonic goddess to whom the Queen pours her libations and who is repeatedly conceived as the 'mother' of the youths of the Persian land (611–18*); in the necromancy the chorus beg Earth, Hermes and Hades to allow the ghost of Dareios forth from the subterranean gloom (629*).

10. *Persians* as Tragedy

This issue of the degree to which *Persians* deserves to be designated a 'tragedy' has long hampered appreciation of its unique qualities. In a sense the question is futile, since the fifth-century Athenians would have been astonished to hear that *Persians*' tragic status had ever been called into question. As a play produced at the City Dionysia in the tragic competition it could not be anything else. Moreover, it shares with the rest of the extant tragedies its form, metres, and conventions, its representation of a serious action, its theological frame of reference, and its avoidance of obscenity and direct audience address.[90] Discussions of its ontological status as a tragedy proceed from wholly anachronistic definitions of 'the tragic' which cannot be identified before Aristotle's *Poetics* at least a century later: even so, *Persians* includes a recognisably proto-Aristotelian 'reversal' of fortune, from prosperity to adversity (see 158*, 903–7), and a (sadly corrupt) passage even attributes this to a *hamartia* of some kind (675–7) – a movement reflected in the polarity the play constructs between old and new. The chorus, the empire, the citadel, the building, the Queen, Dareios, the chorus and even the trees of Persia are 'ancient',[91] in contrast with 'young' Xerxes (12, 744, 782), who has brought about a new, unprecedented, and unexpected calamity.[92]

Those who find it difficult to accept the play's tragic status have usually complained that patriotic eulogy, composed from an unashamedly Greek perspective, is too morally

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87 On Zeus' role see the definitive study by Winnington-Ingram (1973).
88 On divine *phthonos* in the play see Lenz 1986, 148–51.
89 Else 1977, 81.
90 The best study of form and dramatic convention is Michelini 1982.
91 E.g. 17, 94, 141, 615, 682, 704.
92 E.g. 256, 265, 901, 1006. On the significance of his youth see Paduano 1978, 95-6.

'low' a purpose for the exalted genre of tragedy. Such critics have concentrated on the distinction the play draws between Greek and Persian psychology and customs,[93] and argue that the Persians are presented as vain, degraded, and even ridiculous.[94] When taken to an extreme this view can find 'brutality' in the Queen, and nothing but servility, sycophancy, and materialistic impulses displayed by the chorus.[95] Such interpretations also point to the historical specificity of the subject-matter, which, as Aristotle would say, is less philosophical, less general and universally significant, than poetry on mythical themes dealing with what *might* happen (*Poet.* 9.1451b 3–7).

Defenders of the play, conversely, argue that it is the very 'universality' of the Persians' experience of defeat which makes it a suitably elevated piece of tragic action. The drama is concerned with all humankind's relation with the gods. It teaches a 'universal' lesson by formulating history in terms of the traditional Greek ethical cycle of *hubris* and *atē*, whereby arrogance and excess lead to downfall and ruin. The action is about 'the character of human destiny in general', because it could happen in any *Greek* city.[96] The Persians are treated with remarkable 'sympathy' and the ethnic colour is nothing more than fleeting ornament and is transcended by Aeschylus' sense of human unity:[97] indeed, it can be seen as 'discouraging provincialism', and would have 'prompted the reflection that all men are subject to the same human laws'.[98] When pushed to its limits this view regards the play as a conscious warning to the Athenians against imperial expansion.[99] The 'sympathetic' interpretation can even identify and pity a true 'tragic hero': some say that it is the chorus, the representatives in the play of the whole wretched Persian nation;[100] others claim that the status of tragic hero is divided between Dareios and Xerxes.[101]

More sophisticated treatments try to see the play's dynamism as a product of the tension it creates between Greek and Persian viewpoints.[102] While conceding that tragedy 'was not quite the suitable vehicle for such a record of joy and thanksgiving',[103] Gilbert Murray was convinced that the striking dignity of the Persian characters ensured that in all of world literature this play constitutes the only celebration of a *victory* in war which reaches the ranks of the highest poetry.[104]

Allegations that *Persians* is fundamentally and structurally flawed were commonplace once two highly influential German philologists early in this century had

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93 This view was commonly held in the 19th century: see the commentaries of Blomfield 1818, Prickard 1879, xxviii–xxix, Sidgwick 1903. More recently see Clifton 1963.

94 Blomfield 1818, xii.

95 Clifton 1963, 113. The Queen's role is differently discussed in Kierdorf 1966, 62–6.

96 Meier 1993, 71.

97 Vogt 1972, 132, de Romilly 1974, 16, Perrotta 1931, 54.

98 Thalmann 1980, 2812.

99 Melchinger 1979, 36.

100 Perrotta 1931, 55.

101 Meier 1993, 71.

102 E.g. Gagarin 1976, 29–56. For a nuanced discussion see now Pelling 1997.

103 G. Murray 1939, 8.

104 G. Murray 1940, 123. See also Ridgeway 1910, 114, whose verdict was that *Persians* 'is no true drama; it is rather a glorious epinician poem infinitely superior to those ... [of] Pindar'.

determined that it was 'a tragedy without any unity of action'[105] and that the 'unstructured' action presented did not do justice to the significance of the actual events.[106] But more recently 'structural' studies have made some headway. Some see the play's structure as dependent on its theological shape:[107] hubris is the unifying theme, indeed '*Persians* is the one play in the entire extant literature – not just in Aeschylus – which is genuinely and fully founded upon *hubris*'.[108] Adams finds the operation of three movements analogous to those of a musical symphony: realisation of foreboding, realisation of divine wisdom, and realisation of hubris.[109] Others focus on the surprising complexity of the play's serially interlocking ring compositions; these appear internally to individual sections (for example in the anapaestic opening of the parodos),[110] link separate individual passages, and unite the whole.[111] There is a circular process whereby the distinctive feature of the inventory of barbarian proper names is enumerated with pride in the parodos, but converted into roll-calls of the dead in the messenger scene and final dirge.[112]

Others point to the figure of Xerxes as unifying element,[113] for the play is essentially a 'homecoming' drama, like tragedies derived from the cyclic *Nostoi*, and is spent either anticipating or reacting to the King's arrival (see 8*). Salamis also offers some unity; although the 'dramatic irony' whereby the audience is in exclusive possession of knowledge only lasts until the messenger scene, discussion of the battle in various different registers and serially by all the characters unites the remainder of the play.[114] It is marked by an unusually high degree of 'double explication', in both speech and song, of the same events and images: the picture of Xerxes tearing his clothes, for example, is described in speech consecutively by the Queen, the messenger, and Dareios, and then finally reenacted by the chorus in the lyrics of the closing dirge.

Aeschylus' compression of time in the play also merits attention: although beginning 'more or less at the end' of the story of the battle's supposed impact on Persia, it unloads in passing its antecedents and consequences from the foundation of the empire through to Plataea and the future 'three generations hence' (818).[115] The action of the play underlines the Persians' defeat by its consistent frustration of its characters' intentions: until Xerxes' arrival every time a character decides on a course of action another one moves the action around to a different end.[116] The chorus intend to hold a debate but are interrupted by the Queen; the Queen intends to sacrifice but is interrupted by the messenger; Dareios' help is sought so that in the future the situation may be better, but when he appears he says that it will get worse; the Queen finally departs to ensure that

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105 von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1914a, 48.
106 Snell 1928, 48.
107 Winnington-Ingram 1973, Lenz 1986.
108 Jones 1962, 72. See also Fisher 1992, 256–63.
109 Adams 1952.
110 Winnington-Ingram 1973a.
111 Holtsmark 1959 and 1970.
112 Rosenmeyer 1982, 114–16.
113 Ireland 1973, 165–8.
114 Diagrammatic analyses of the episodes are offered by Seeck 1984, 11–21.
115 Rosenmeyer 1982, 323.
116 Korzeniewski 1966, Georges 1994, 92-4.

Xerxes is not seen in rags, but the play ends with the Queen losing her 'race against time' as he instead meets the chorus and displays his rags in public.[117] Another unifying feature is the city of Sousa itself, described in both the parodos and probably the closing dirge as ringing with the cries of lamentation (119, 1071): the civic location stresses the public nature of the catastrophe.[118]

The play also offers an *emotional* progression, from fear and foreboding, to shock and panic at the reception of the news, through to the Queen's resigned pragmatism in the Dareios scene, and the exhaustive 'catharsis' of grief in the final, extended dirge orchestrated by Xerxes himself. The Persians use many emotive words describing their feelings, which are dominated by longing (*pothos*) for their men,[119] hatred, notably of Athens,[120] and overwhelming terror, especially expressed by the Queen.[121] This emotional register is a clue to the complex experience which the play offered its victorious audience; during it they relived the arrival of Xerxes at Athens, the battle of Salamis, the uncertain period after it leading up to Plataea (during which they themselves must have acutely felt the loss of their own dead), vicious hatred of the enemy, and absolute terror. Despite their own construction in the play as fearless and invincible killing machines, the unique psychological process offered by the theatre allows them, through watching fellow citizens 'playing the other',[122] vicariously to work through the difficult emotions which they had themselves experienced. Yet the displacement of those emotions onto the enemy (a process psychoanalysts call 'projection') simultaneously permits them to retain the comfortable identity of unemotional Greeks so scrupulously maintained by the text. They could simultaneously enjoy profound patriotic pride, a sense of ethnic superiority, confirmation of their own masculine self-image, the thrill of victory, *and* the covert exorcism of their own psychological pain. The Athenians tended to prefer to represent powerful emotions through theatrical representations of their 'others' – barbarians, non-Athenians, and women – a phenomenon which may originally have been connected with the literal 'masking' of the identity of the performers of ritual sacrifice.[123] *Persians*, however, is the only extant tragedy whose cast is exclusively barbarian.

11. Visual and Aural Dimensions

Plutarch said that watching a tragedy was 'an amazing aural and visual experience' (θαυμαστὸν ἀκρόαμα καὶ θέαμα, *de glor. Athen.* 348c); *Persians* has proven particularly susceptible to the school of criticism which emphasises that tragedy was designed to be appreciated in performance. Theatrical texts need to be read in a different way from texts designed for reading, such as novels; a consistent effort to

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117 Dworacki 1979, 106–7.

118 Meier 1993, 71. The setting and scenery are discussed at 140–1*. Ridgeway 1910, 113-19 argued that it was the grave of Dareios which united the play by providing a visual 'pivot for the dramatic movement'.

119 133, 136, 512, 542, 992.

120 284, 286, 976, 980 etc.

121 116, 162, 168, 206, 210, 391, 600, 603, 685, 696.

122 I borrow this phrase from an important article by Zeitlin (1990). See also Pelling 1997, 16–19.

123 Burkert 1966, 115.

imagine the visual and aural dimensions of the experience of spectating *Persians* enhances the experience of reading it and the degree to which its 'meaning' is understood. Important new ground was broken by Taplin's discussion of the play in *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus*, which shows how the study of exits, entrances, and other theatrical conventions radically affects our appreciation and understanding of this and other tragic texts.[124] Particularly illuminating is the notion of the 'mirror scene', whereby the Queen's two entrances from the identical direction are carefully distinguished in ways which underline the play's ethical and emotional shape.[125]

The play used to be accused of being static and repetitive, a view which the evidence of the text alone completely refutes. The following was the minimum exotic visual stimulation offered to the audience (there may have been much more): a mass prostration by the chorus, the arrival of the Queen on a gorgeous chariot and in gorgeous clothes,[126] a distraught messenger who charges onto the stage, moving his limbs in a manner distinctively 'Persian', the pouring of an elaborate libation, prayers, a necromantic sequence involving the beating and scratching of the ground, the appearance and disappearance of a deified ghost from Hades, complete with Persian royal regalia, the arrival of a ragged bowless Xerxes on a second Persian vehicle, a dirge of extreme emotional intensity involving a young man waving his quiver and rags at twelve old grey-haired men who beat their breasts, pluck their beards, and tear at their clothes and hair, and finally a quasi-funeral procession in which the Persians walk in a strange 'soft' way indicating their ethnicity. Not only is this not bad for an hour's entertainment: the visual dimension affected the meaning of the text. Thalmann has shown how Xerxes' rags symbolise the complete ruin of the Persians' supremacy, the destruction of their empire.[127]

One aspect of the performative dimension which can never be recovered is the dance movements of the chorus, which must have been (along with the style of singing) the chief carrier of meaning in the choral sections, especially the extended final dirge.[128] In just one fascinating passage we hear that the chorus' gestures included a movement replicating the rowing of ships (1046*). Unfortunately the aural dimension, at least of the accompanying music, is also lost to us forever. But we can be sure that the music the audience could hear enhanced the orientalising effect of the verbal and visual elements. There are just a few clues: the references to Asiatic styles of lamentation (937, 1054), a term in the necromancy which implies that the pitch of music was highly variable (635–6*), the large amount of choral rhyme and repetition, the effect of which was almost certainly strengthened by repetition in the music (532–97*), and the recurring use of the Ionic *a minore* metre, often associated with eastern contexts in tragedy (65–139*).[129]

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124 Taplin 1977, 61–128; the visual dimension and scenery are also discussed by Melchinger 1979, vol. i, 9–39, Sider 1983, Ferrari 1986, pp. 133–40.

125 Taplin 1977, 70–103.

126 On the costumes of fifth-century stage barbarians see Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 182–3, 186–7, 199, with figures 36, 48, 49.

127 Thalmann 1980, 270; see also Conacher 1974, 165 n. 36, S. Said 1988, 335–51.

128 Rosenmeyer 1982, 86.

129 On the metrical and musical design of the play see Scott's discussion (1984), especially 155–8, and the Metrical Appendix at the end of this Commentary.

12. Imagery

The imagery of the hunt and the natural world so familiar from the *Oresteia* is prefigured in *Persians*: metaphors dialectically construct both Xerxes and *Atē*, the goddess who ruins him, as implacable hunters (95, 233). The army is like a swarm of bees (128); in the Queen's dream Persia is symbolised by an eagle (205–6); Persian sailors are eaten by fish (577–8), but they are also 'spliced' by the Greeks, as fish are gutted by fisherman (424–6*); Persian infantry are analogously dismembered like joints of meat on a butcher's block (463).

But the most of the imagery in *Persians* is more specific to the play and is closely related both to its ideological and political significances and the visual experience it offers. Aeschylus produces a range of images, symbols, and metaphorical expressions with which the Athenians could encode the defeat of their enemy in their historical imagination, and it is striking how often the verbal image is eventually substantiated visually on stage. For example, the play uses floral metaphors to decribe both hubris, which 'flowers' and puts forth a crop of ruin (821–2), and the beloved Persian dead, 'the flower of the land' (50, 252, 925), sacrificed at Salamis. These metaphorical flowers find their visual counterpart in the flowers which form part of the Queen's offering at the tomb of Dareios. The play also consistently uses metaphors drawn from the semantic field associated with the sea, sailing, and rowing; the Persian army is as invincible as a sea-wave (90), its shout like the roaring of the sea when dashed by oars (406–7), the troubles which have afflicted Persia are a great ocean or a wave (433, 599–600). But at the climax of the great concluding dirge, Xerxes orders the chorus to 'row' with their arms (1046*), a threnodic dance movement bizarrely mimicking the movements of the sailors in the doomed ships at Salamis. Another theme is the idea of circle (e.g. 504, 871–3), reminiscent of the circular tactics described at Salamis and on Psyttaleia (418, 458): it is of course highly likely that the circularity motif was reduplicated in the chorus' dance formations.

The bow is the privileged signifier of Xerxes and by extension Persia: 'the bow' and 'the spear' unequivocally stand for Persia and Hellas respectively (147–8). A title the chorus lend to Dareios is 'lord of the bow' (555–7*). But at the end of the play Xerxes shows the chorus his quiver, all that is left of his regalia: he has lost his bow, the very symbol of Persian military might (1019–20). Here the *absence* of the concrete visual manifestation of the previous verbal image has a marked significance. The language in which Xerxes describes his quiver may also imply that it is empty, and filling and emptying have been prominent in the play's metaphorical register throughout. Tears fill marriage beds with tears (134), the sea fills with wreckage (421), headlands with corpses (924), and Xerxes has 'crammed' Hades with Persians (924). But he has also 'emptied out' all Asia of all her men (119, 718, 730, 761) and is fed on 'empty' hopes (804).

The yoke is used as an image of the political domination Xerxes and his army sought to cast on the Persian imperial dominions (50*): the yoke with which he sought to harness Asia and Europe together in the Queen's dream (191), the yoke with which he sought to bridge the Hellespont (71, 722, 736), and the 'yoke of slavery' (50), which banned free speech (595).[130] The yoke is of course a part of another important emblem

[130] On the image of the yoke see Petrounias 1976, 7–15, Dumortier 1935, 12–26.

of Persian imperial rule: the chariot. In the parodos the audience is asked to imagine the ranks of Lydians' chariots, 'some with two poles, and some with three' (46–7), and Xerxes himself leads his invincible army from a magnificent chariot of Assyrian design (84). This will have given added resonance to the Queen's actual arrival on a splendid chariot, presumably drawn by horses (prominent animals in the poetry): chariot entrances seem to have been particularly suited to the presentation of ostentatious and oriental royalty on the Athenian stage.[131] In the Queen's dream Xerxes *falls* from his chariot, and when he finally appears it is not on his Assyrian war-chariot but on the rather pathetic and bathetic alternative of the Persian king's curtained car (1000–1*).

Finally, the term 'blow' (*plēgē* and its cognates) unites the different registers within which the play operates. It is used in 'straight' narrative for the literal violent blows which the Greeks struck the Persians with weapons (304), and designates the lethal ramming by Greek ships (906). It also stands as a metaphor for the 'blows' of bad luck and of catastrophic fortune (251–2, 1008–9). But in the closing dirge the literal and metaphorical blow which the Greeks have struck Persia is verbally repeated and visually enacted by the chorus in the ritual 'blows' of self-mutilation which they distractedly inflict upon themselves (1053).

13. Style and Language

The vocabulary of Persians is at times extremely difficult, and the reader will often feel sympathy with the fifth-century spectator, who, Euripides alleges in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, was 'bludgeoned into unconsciousness' by Aeschylean diction (*Frogs* 962). In the same comedy Euripides characterises Aeschylus' language as rugged, elevated, unbridled, unsubtle, 'not-to-be-out-talked', 'worded-with-bundles-of-pomp', and as distinguished by compound terms and polysyllabic adjectives (837–9, 963). His characters' phrases used 'bull-words' with shaggy eyebrows and crests (924–5), which nobody in the audience could understand (ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις, 926).

This is a fair description of much of *Persians*, where there are indeed baffling phrases and numerous polysyllabic compounds, many of them probably coined by Aeschylus himself.[132] Strange compounds of *habro-* ('soft') abound (41*), as do epithets ending in *-genēs* ('son of') and in *-batēs* ('treading, stepping').[133] The play contains a conspicuously greater number of ornamental epithets than any other Aeschylean tragedy,[134] which implies that they are designed to suggest the formal and high-flown diction believed by the Greeks to characterise the discourse of the Persian court: the chorus and the Queen's language in particular is studded with expressions such as 'the sumptuous and much-golded palace' (3), 'the luxuriously-living Lydians' (41), and a 'beautifully-flowing-watered spring' (201–2). The characters all address each other with an unusual degree of solemnity and with honorific titles; another distinctive feature which may signify an Aeschylean attempt to reproduce in poetry an

131 Taplin 1977, 76–8, Hall 1989, 95–6.
132 Listed and discussed in Earp 1948, 15–23.
133 Kelley 1978–9.
134 Earp 1948, 54–63.

authentic feature of Persian court language is the elaborate periphrastic diction used to describe light and the sun, and the metaphors drawn from this whole semantic field.[135]

Any discussion of Aeschylean style must be subjectively selective,[136] but the most memorable features are those which not only provide elevation but probably have an ethnic significance as well: catalogues of barbarian proper names (21*), heavy anaphora,[137] and strong repetition, especially in threnodic passages (930, 980, 985, 991). There is a high preponderance of '*a*' and '*ai*' sounds in some of the choral sections (e.g. the chorus' first response to the messenger, 256–9); these are indeed a characteristic of Old Persian, and also occur in Aristophanes' pseudo-Persian in *Acharnians* (100).[138] Many such '*a*' sounds occur because the characters in the play are particularly partial to the privative alpha, which is used significantly to point up the differences between Dareios and Xerxes: Dareios was an 'un-damaging un-conquerable' ruler (855), whereas Xerxes has turned his ships into 'un-ships un-ships' (ἄναες ἄναες, 680). It is therefore intriguing to find Euripides, parodying Aeschylus in *Frogs*, piling up three such adjectives: Aeschylus had an 'unbridled uncontrolled unchecked mouth' (838, ἀχάλινον ἀκρατὲς ἀπύλωτον στόμα). This parody may also point to the accumulations of adjectives qualifying a particular noun: in the necromancy the chorus use no fewer than five adjectives asyndetically to describe precisely the 'barbarous' and 'ceaseless' noise they are making at the time – a perfect fusion of form and content (635–6).

The feature which will first most strike the reader is the huge variety of 'meaningless' cries expressing despair or agitation. These are scattered throughout the text, but especially proliferate in threnodic passages: *ototoi*, *aiai*, *oi*, *oioioi*, *popoi*, *totoi*, *pheu*, *oa*, *iō*, *iōa*, *papai papai*, *iē*, and several others. These have been retained and transliterated in the English, rather than conventionally translated by 'alas' and 'alack', in order to preserve something of the effect of estrangement they were intended to create.[139]

Numerous other techniques help to suggest within Greek diction the Persians' barbarian language. There are a few actual exotic words (e.g. *ballēn*, see 657–9*) and spellings (e.g. the '*a*' sounds retained in *Agbatana* and *Darian*, 16*, 651*). There are not infrequent Ionicisms,[140] for example *rheëthron* (497, the only instance of this open form in tragic trimeters), the omission of augment, the lengthening of the syllable before *phr* (782), and Ionic epithets (765). These helped to lend an eastern atmosphere, by attributing to the Persians the Greek dialect which was spoken geographically nearest to them.[141]

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135 151, 167–8, 299–300, 364–5, 377, 386–7, 428, 504–5, 710.

136 The study of Aeschylean style by Stanford (1942) still has much to recommend it.

137 550–2, 560–2, 694–6, 700–1, 950–1, 956–7, 1002–3, 1008–10.

138 Morenilla-Talens 1989, 160, 162.

139 Scott 1984, 156–8, Hall 1989, 83. There is an extremely sensitive discussion of the history of Aeschylean translation, and the special problems it presents, in Green 1960, 185-215.

140 First noted and listed by Headlam (1898, 198–93).

141 Rose 1957, 13.

Aeschylus' debt to specifically Homeric diction cannot be overestimated, for this play (like all Aeschylus' works), 'shines with the brightness of epic word chains'.[142] Scholars have gone some way towards tabulating the many allusions to the two great epics.[143] Sometimes the Homeric terminology contributes to the effect of ethnic estrangement, by equating barbarian arrogance with epic boasting, obsolete diction from the distant past with alien diction from distant Asia.[144] But much work remains to be done on Aeschylus' appropriation through *transformation* of epic language in *Persians*: the point is usually not what he has borrowed, but the way in which he has adapted or altered it. Thus the Homeric *ptoliporthos*, 'city-sacking' becomes *perseptolis*, identical in meaning but providing a word-play on the proper name *Persians* (65*); Xerxes is called *thourios*, 'raging', a variant of an epithet only used in Homer of the mindlessly bloodthirsty war-god Ares (73*); a curious description of Xerxes' fierce glance implicitly equates him with Hector *on the brink of his defeat* by Achilles (81–2*). The omen the Queen has seen is reminiscent of a favourable omen in the *Odyssey*, but instead of predicting victory it forebodes defeat (207–8*). Another excellent example is Xerxes' shame when he contemplates the advanced age of his chorus: the language is reminiscent of Priam's hope that Achilles will be shamed by his own old age into handing back Hector's corpse. But Xerxes, in contrast, has no bodies to hand back (913–14*).

Aeschylus uses numerous techniques by which to build up an impression of the enormous size of the Persian forces, and the consequent enormity of the Persian disaster. For example, the basic word πᾶς ('all', 'every') is of course frequent in any Greek text, but the accumulated phrases like 'all the might born of Asia' (12), 'all of Asia' (e.g. 56–61, 249, 547, 763), 'the entire army' (255, 278 etc.), 'all the suffering' (254), 'the entire barbarian race' (434), 'all our young men' (670), 'all Sousa' (730), and many others, gradually and almost subliminally build up an impression of the totality of the catastrophe Aeschylus' audience liked to think the Persians had suffered. In some parts of the messenger's narratives a word from the root πᾶς occurs in nearly every line (see e.g. 378–400).

The same applies to *polus* and its compounds: from the parodos where the palace and the army both have 'much gold' (*poluchrusos*, 3, 9), the army is 'great' (*pollēs*, 25), the Lydians have 'many chariots' (46), to the later stages of the play where the 'evils' the Persian are suffering are so 'many' (e.g. 843, 845), this stem consistently implies the size of the lost army and the extent of the present suffering: several times the stem occurs more than once in a single line (e.g. 780).

Even more distinctive is the recurrence of the term *plēthos* (a significant word reappearing in Herodotus 7.49): it is used to describe the sheer size of individual contingents in the army (40), of the entire army (803), of the fleet of ships (337, 342, 352, 413); it signifies the vast numbers of the Persian dead (432, cf. 420), the bereaved women of Persia (122), and the 'plethora' of afflictions facing the Persians (429,

142 Rosenmeyer 1982, 77.
143 Sideras 1971, 198–200, 212–15, Belloni 1988.
144 Michelini 1982, 77–8, 105.

477).[145] An analogous term is *ochlos*, 'crowd', used of, for example, the Lydian contingent (42), the Babylonians' army (53), and Xerxes' high commanders (936).

The root term κακός ('bad', 'evil', 'miserable' etc.) is so predominant as to require no documentation: suffice it to say that it presents a challenge to the translator. Yet Aeschylus does vary the expressions in which he includes the notion of 'the bad things' (τὰ κακά) which have happened: metaphorical language construes them, for example, in terms of 'the heights' (331, 807) or 'the depths' (712), perhaps inspired by the memorable picture of Xerxes sitting on his high cliff near Salamis, looking down on the carnage below (465–7).

To close on a neglected peculiarity: the impression of the size of the army and therefore of the casualties is further reinforced by the thematic and metaphorical emphasis on counting. Towards the end of the play the chorus asks Xerxes where his 'enumerator' is (980): the word he uses is *pempastēs*, from *pempazō*, 'count on the five fingers of the hand'. The Greeks liked to imagine the Persians engaged in the counting of all the contingents in the army (see Hdt. 7.60). The play 'enumerates' the forces and commanders of the Persian army, but the catalogues are macabrely converted into roll-calls of the dead. And the idea of counting resurfaces throughout the play: the Egyptian rowers were 'incalculable' in number (*anarithmoi*, 40); 'three' men fell from 'a single' ship (312–13), the precise numbers of ships on each side are carefully detailed by the messenger (338–43), who also calculates that it would take him more than 'ten days' to specify all the casualties (429–30), and that 'such a great number' of men had never before died in a 'single' day (431–2); Dareios himself laboriously counts the past rulers of the empire through from number one to seven (765–78). A related feature is the use of titles and descriptions for the Persian commanders drawing attention to the division of the Persian army into units of multiples of ten: Artembares 'the commander of ten thousand horsemen' (302), Dadakes the 'chiliarch' (304), Matallos the 'commander of ten thousand' (314), and Tharybis the commander of 'five times fifty' ships (323, see also 318, 927, 994).

14. The Text

The text of *Persians* has survived because it was one of the so-called 'school' selection, probably made in the third century AD, of the seven plays attributed to Aeschylus to have come down to us in manuscript form.[146] *Persians* was also chosen to be one of the three plays comprising the early Byzantine Aeschylean 'triad', along with *Prometheus Bound* and *Seven against Thebes*. Aeschylus was always much less popular amongst the Byzantines than either Euripides or Sophocles, probably because of his linguistic difficulty and lack of set-piece rhetorical debates. But interest in him seems to have been reawakened in the tenth century, from which the earliest manuscript dates (see below); thereafter it is possible to find the Byzantine author Michael Psellos (11th century) commending Aeschylus' 'obscure profundity', and Theodore Prodromos

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145 On the *plēthos* theme and its reappearance in Herodotus see Michelini 1982, 86-98.

146 Wartelle 1971, 337–60 discusses the reasons behind the choice of these particular seven plays.

(12th century) borrowing Aeschylean lines with some regularity.[147] In the 14th century both Thomas Magister and Demetrius Triclinius[148] produced annotated editions of the triad, including *Persians*.

Yet the survival of *Persians* was not guaranteed until the arrival in Italy, in around 1423, of our earliest and best Aeschylean manuscript.[149] This is the Codex Laurentianus (Laur. 32.9), known as 'M' for 'Medicean', after the Medici family to whose collection it belonged. 'M' dates from the middle to the end of the tenth century A.D. and is immeasurably superior to the other manuscripts:[150] it often preserves authentic ancient spellings, on numerous occasions has the correct reading where the other, later manuscripts do not, and contains rich scholia recording data and comments on the play, some of which are very ancient indeed.[151]

It would make life much easier for the textual critic of Aeschylus if 'M' were the source of all the other manuscripts, but it cannot, unfortunately, be regarded in any way as an archetype: indeed, the stemma of Aeschylean manuscripts constructed by Turyn,[152] which assigned a place to nearly all of them, was shown in a path-breaking study by Dawe to be fundamentally flawed.[153] The recension remains entirely open. Certain similarities make it possible, however, to assign some of the manuscripts to family groups in something analogous to stemmatic relationships: for these specialists must consult the extensive apparatus criticus in the recent Teubner text of Martin West. He collated more manuscripts than any previous editor, and adopted symbols elucidating the probable connections between the manuscripts in each group.[154]

Aeschylus first appeared in print in the so-called 'Aldine' edition of 1518, a decade and a half later than Sophocles and Euripides. The Aldine editions took their name from Aldus Manutius, an entrepreneurial individual who established a press in Venice primarily for the publication of Greek texts; he died, however, before the edition of Aeschylus was printed. It was not of a high standard, since it had been prepared by Franciscus Asulanus, a man to whom the Greek of tragedy was 'a total mystery'.[155] But in 1552 Aeschylean textual criticism was finally put on a firm footing by the first two important printed editions, which appeared virtually simultaneously but quite independently: those of Francesco Robertelli in Venice and Adrianus Turnebus in Paris. Turnebus, a fine scholar, made nearly two hundred essential corrections: see, for example, the apparatus criticus on *Persians* line 326.

The edition which then became the standard text for over a century was prepared by Petrus Victorius and Henricus Stephanus in 1557: its authoritative complete text was

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147 For these writers' use of Aeschylus see Hero 1991.

148 Triclinius is indicated in this edition's apparatus criticus as 'Tr'.

149 For a commendably intelligible and interesting account of the transmission of Aeschylus' plays see Rosenmeyer 1982, 1–28.

150 See M.L. West 1990a, 321–2. 'M' is available in published facsimile (Aeschylus 1896).

151 The scholia can be consulted in Dähnhardt 1894. Triclinius' scholia have been edited by Positano (1963).

152 Turyn 1943.

153 Dawe 1964.

154 For an account of his collation see M.L. West 1990a, 323.

155 M.L. West 1990a, 357.

supplemented by scholia and a commentary.[156] It was in turn eventually superseded by Thomas Stanley's impressive London folio edition of 1663, which had the merit of offering the reader something approximating to modern notions of literary criticism.[157] But amongst the numerous subsequent editions of Aeschylus most is owed by the text of *Persians*, at least, to three German scholars of the late 18th and 19th centuries: C.G. Schütz, W. Dindorf, and especially Gottfried Hermann, whose seminal work, published posthumously in 1852, particularly deserves to be singled out because it was the first to put onto a comprehensively scientific footing the metrical structures of the lyric sections.[158]

The text printed in this volume is my own, although it contains no new emendations,[159] and is heavily dependent both on the Oxford Classical Text of Denys Page (1972) and, to a greater extent, on the recent Teubner edition prepared by Martin West (1990). I adopt several of West's suggestions.[160] The aim throughout has been to keep the apparatus criticus to a minimum. Like most of Aeschylus' plays, the text of *Persians* had already suffered considerable corruption by the time of the earliest surviving manuscript; this is especially apparent in the spelling of the numerous barbarian proper names and in the lyric sections. The manuscripts contain dozens of minor variants, most of them relatively unimportant; the gap between the paradosis and the printed texts has, moreover, been gradually widening ever since the renaissance as scholars have grown to understand ancient spelling, dialectal forms, accentuation, grammar, syntax, metre, and especially strophic responsion in lyrics. This textual and editorial history is of compelling interest to Hellenists in its own right, as well as holding up a mirror to the historically determined preoccupations which successive generations of scholars have brought to bear on the plays of Aeschylus in general and on *Persians* in particular. Only the most ample apparatus (currently West's) could aspire to offer anything like a comprehensive record of the manuscript variants and the history of editorial correction.

Yet fortunately even the noble and substantial tradition of Aeschylean textual criticism cannot obscure the rarity of occasions in *Persians*, at any rate, when the fundamental meaning of a passage is actually seriously in doubt. Most of the textual controversies reflect not choices between entirely different readings, and therefore different meanings, but alternatives in spelling, grammatical detail, or perceived metrical system. A few instances do remain, however, where the interpreter emphatically needs to know that the text is uncertain enough to raise significant doubts about its factual, aesthetic, or ideological import: it is the sole purpose of my apparatus to focus attention on these.

The material selected for inclusion in the apparatus therefore reflects the three main reasons why this kind of important uncertainty occurs. (i) The text as transmitted is hopelessly corrupt, sometimes to the point of unintelligibility: on such occasions

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156 For a discussion see Mund-Dopchie 1984, 124–9.

157 Elucidated by Arnold 1984.

158 On the question of metre see further the Metrical Appendix at the end of the Commentary.

159 On one occasion my translation assumes that the unnamed subject of a verb is the Greeks rather than, as most editors have believed, Xerxes' high commanders (374–83*).

160 See 99, 256, 981–2, 1008, 1076–7.

adds important words, deletes them, or changes the order in which they occur (see especially 1077, 146, and 288–9). It should also be added that material of other kinds has very occasionally been included where it is pertinent to the discussion in the commentary.

Our understanding of *Persians* has been pushed forward by interpretation in earlier commentaries as much as by textual criticism: I have drawn fairly heavily on the 1960 German translation of Grooneboom's sensible pre-war Dutch edition, Broadhead's wonderfully detailed commentary, published in the same year (1960), which includes useful appendices on military and metrical matters, and the exhaustive and exhausting bibliographical expertise shown by Belloni in his Italian edition of 1988. Although Belloni's stated intention was to read the play in the light of Achaemenid history, the main virtue of his book is actually the large number of literary parallels it draws from Greek poetry to illuminate Aeschylus' diction – more than any previous edition.

Yet the central purpose of my own commentary is rather different from that of previous editions: military history is emphatically not a concern, and discussion of purely text-historical, philological, and metrical controversies is largely excluded. Instead the focus is on the visual and performative dimensions of the play, its emotional impact, its metaphors, symbols, imagery, and psychological registers; central concerns are the poetic vocabulary used to delineate the ethnically other, and especially the tension between the tragedy's 'translation' of authentic Persian practices and blatant misrepresentations emanating from its ethnocentric Athenian perspective.

Xerxes and Salamis continued to excite audiences throughout antiquity. Timotheus' *Persians*, which echoes Aeschylus, was sung at the Nemean games in the late third century BC (Plutarch, *Vit. Philopoemen* 1.11).[161] Augustus, the victor in an equally famous sea-battle at Actium, had the battle of Salamis reenacted at a Roman festival of Mars in 2 BC (Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.171–2; Cassius Dio 55.10.7). This extraordinary aquatic spectacle was conducted in a custom-built basin called the *naumachia*.[162] In Nero's day a notorious Greek performer named Sostratus was still declaiming a poem on Xerxes' exploits, much to Juvenal's disgust (*Sat.* 10.173–87).[163] But the text which gave the story to posterity was actually first performed before an audience containing numerous men who had fought in the battle itself. It is hoped that in a small way this edition will better enable us not just to 'remember' Salamis, as Aeschylus' Dareios advises, but to understand a little more clearly something of what it meant to its victors.

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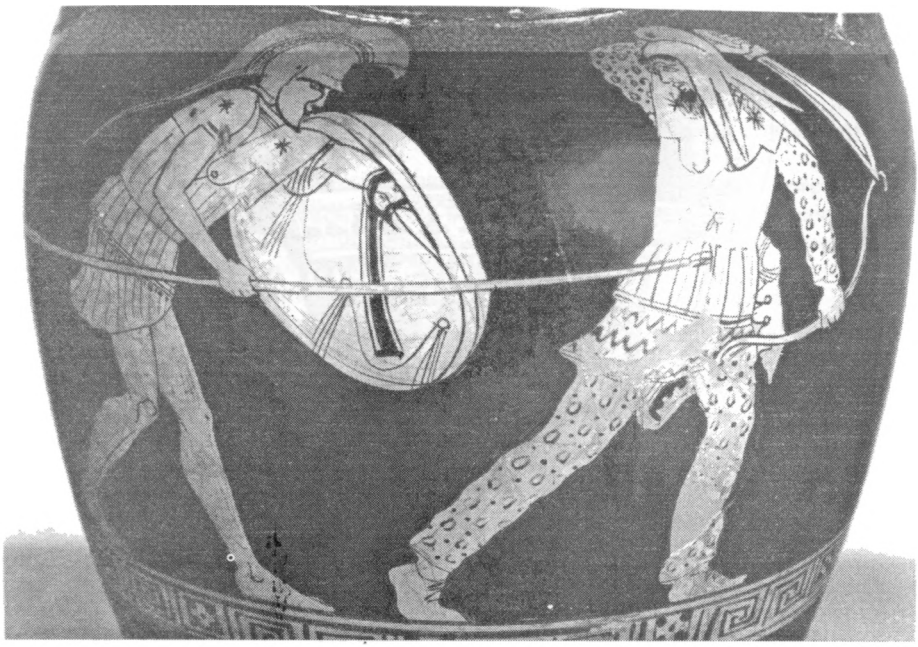
161 See Hall 1994, 58–9.
162 See Coleman 1993, 53–5.
163 See Thomson 1951.

Fig. 1: The Persians as fourth-century Greeks saw them
The so-called 'Dareios vase' in Naples (Naples 3253), an Apulian volute-krater, c. 340–330 BC. See the discussion on p. 8 of the Introduction. Photo, courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologia della Provincia di Napoli e Caserta-Napoli. For an enlarged detail showing Dareios and the figure on the podium beside him see p. 34.



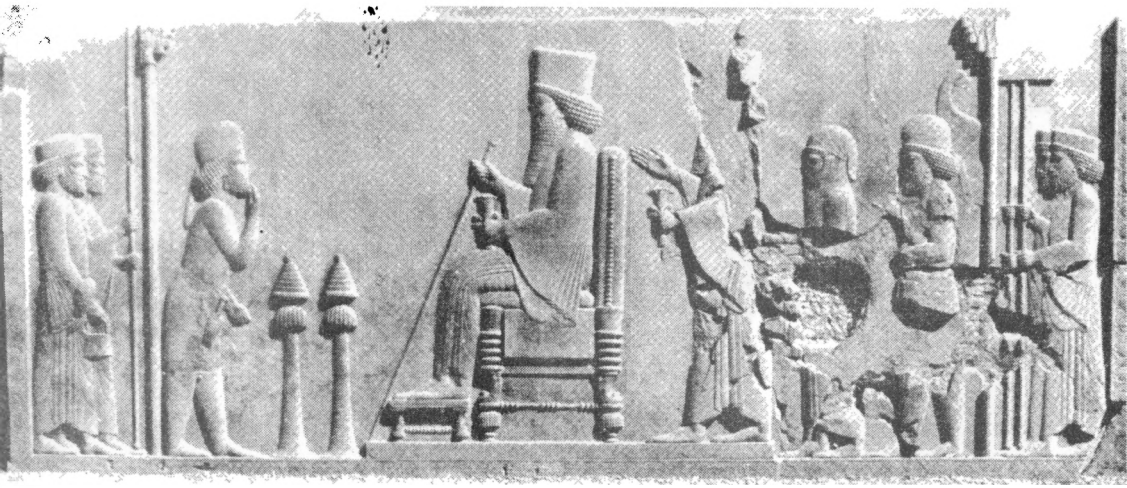


Fig. 2 (top): The Persians as fifth-century Greek saw them
A Persian under Greek hoplite attack. An amphora in New York (New York 061021 117, c. 480 BC). See the discussion of line 463 in the Commentary.

Fig. 3 (bottom): The Achaemenid Persians as they saw themselves
Relief sculpture in the treasury of Persepolis, from the façade of the Apadana. From H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A Kuhrt (eds), Achaemenid History *vol II (Leiden 1987). Photo: B. Grunewald. See the discussion of lines 152 and 1056 in the Commentary.*

Fig. 4: The Persians as Greeks saw them in 1965
The chorus of Persians in Karolos Koun's Theatro Technis ('Arts Theatre') production (costumes by Yannis Tsarouhis), originally created for the World Theatre Period in London. See p. 3 of the Introduction.

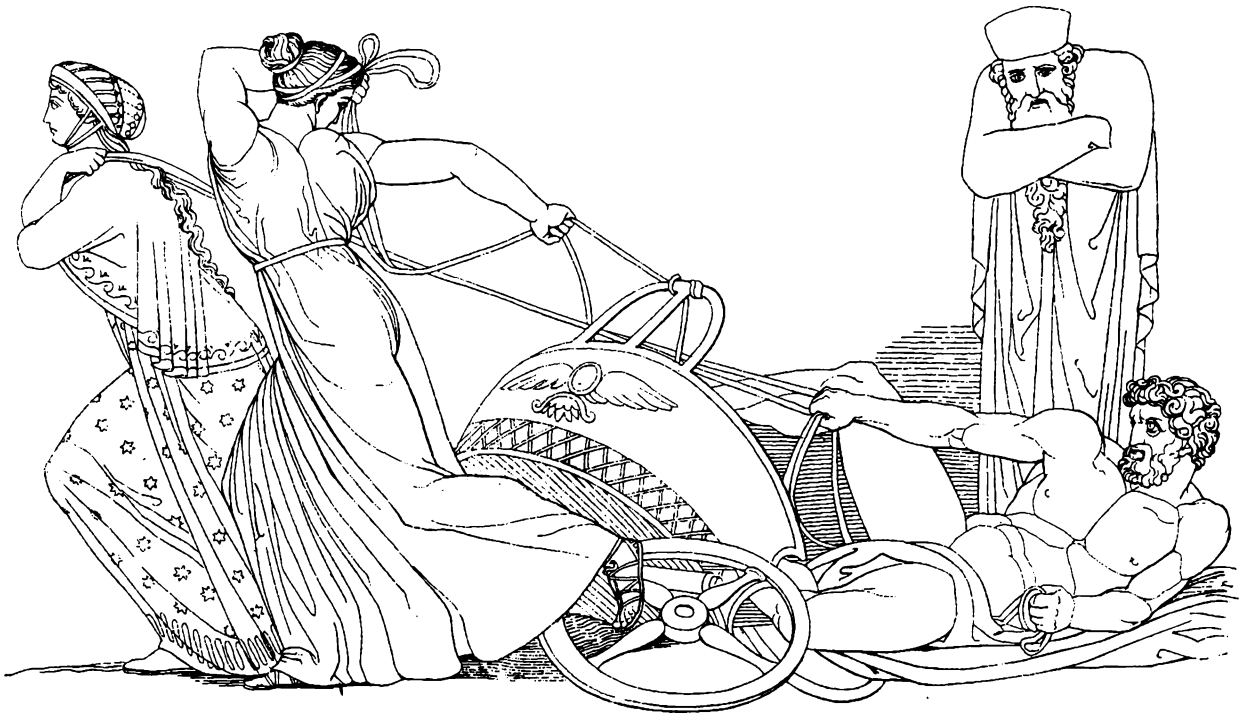


Fig. 5: The Persians as an 18th-century Englishman saw them
The Queen's dream by John Flaxman, in Compositions from the Tragedies of Aeschylus *(London 1795). See the discussion of lines 176–214 in the Commentary*

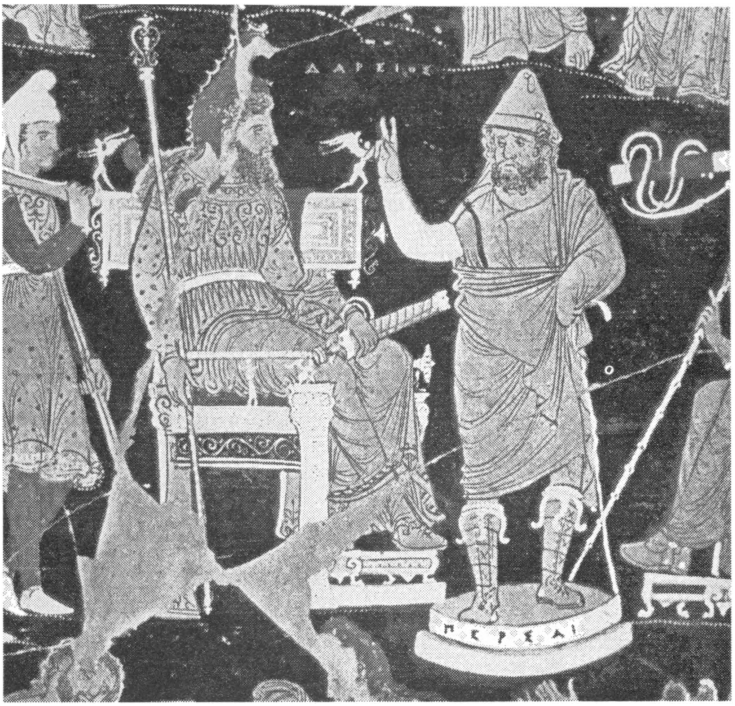
Symbols in the Apparatus

Manuscripts

A	Milan, Ambros. gr. C 222 inf. (late 13th century)
B	Laur. 31.3 + 86.3 (14th century)
D	Milan, Ambros. gr. G 56 (early 14th century)
F	Laur. 31.8 (early 14th century)
G	Venice, gr. 616 (663) (ca. 1320–1)
H	Heidelberg, Palat. gr. 18 (ca. 1270)
I	Athos, Ἰβήρων 209 (olim 161) (late 13th or early 14th century)
K	Laur. conv. suppr. 11 (early 14th century)
Lb	Rom. Vallicell. B 70 (ca. 1320)
Lc	Cambridge, Bibl. Univ. Nn III 17 A (ca. 1320)
M	Laur. 32.9 (10th century)
N	Madrid, 4677 (14th century)
O	Leiden, Voss. gr. Q 4 (late 13th century)
Q	Paris, gr. 2884 (1301)
Tr	Naples, II F 31 (ca. 1325)
V	Venice, gr. 468 (653) (late 13th century)
W	Vat. gr. 1332 (ca. 1290)
Xc	Laur. conv. suppr. 98 (1372)
Y	Leiden, Voss. gr. Q 6 (early 14th century)

Other Symbols

Σ	a scholion
M^a	M before correction
M^1	M as corrected by the first hand
M^2	M as corrected by another hand
M^s	M as corrected by the hand that wrote the scholia
M^{gl}	written in M as a gloss
$M^{\gamma\rho}$	a variant in M introduced by γράφεται
M^{ss}	written above the line in M
M^t	written on the line or margin in M



Detail of the central panel of the so-called 'Dareios' vase (fig. 1). A Persian king, labelled 'DAREIOS', sits on a throne, wearing a 'tiara' and holding a sceptre; a male figure to the right stands on a podium labelled 'PERSIANS'. See the Commentary on lines 662 and 762–4.

AESCHYLUS
PERSIANS

ΠΕΡΣΑΙ

ὑπόθεσις Περσῶν Αἰσχύλου· Γλαῦκος ἐν τοῖς περὶ Αἰσχύλου μύθων ἐκ τῶν Φοινισσῶν Φρυνίχου φησὶ τοὺς Πέρσας παραπεποιῆσθαι. ὃς ἐκτίθησι καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ δράματος ταύτην, τάδ' ἐστὶ Περσῶν τῶν πάλαι βεβηκότων. πλὴν ἐκεῖ εὐνοῦχός ἐστιν ἀγγέλλων ἐν ἀρχῇ τὴν Ξέρξου ἦτταν, στορνύς τε θρόνους τινὰς τοῖς τῆς ἀρχῆς παρέδροις· ἐνταῦθα δὲ προλογίζει χορὸς πρεσβυτῶν. καὶ ἔστιν ἡ μὲν σκηνὴ τοῦ δράματος παρὰ τῷ τάφῳ Δαρείου· ἡ δὲ ὑπόθεσις· Ξέρξης στρατευσάμενος κατὰ Ἑλλάδος καὶ πεζῇ μὲν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς νικηθείς, ναυτικῇ δὲ ἐν Σαλαμῖνι, διὰ Θεσσαλίας φεύγων διεπεραιώθη εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν.

ἐπὶ Μένωνος τραγῳδῶν Αἰσχύλος ἐνίκα Φινεῖ, Πέρσαις, Γλαύκῳ Ποτνιεῖ, Προμηθεῖ. πρώτη ἔφοδος Περσῶν ἐπὶ Δαρείου ἐδυστύχησε περὶ Μαραθῶνα, δευτέρα Ξέρξου περὶ Σαλαμῖνα καὶ Πλαταιάς.

τὰ τοῦ δράματος πρόσωπα·

χορὸς γερόντων

Ἄτοσσα

ἄγγελος

εἴδωλον Δαρείου

Ξέρξης

μύθων M: μύθοις cett. post πρεσβυτῶν leguntur haec in M: τῶν δὲ χορῶν τὰ μέν ἐστι παροδικά, ὅτε λέγει δι' ἣν αἰτίαν πάρεστιν, ὡς τὸ Τύριον οἶδμα λιποῦσα (Eur. Phoen. 202), τὰ δὲ στάσιμα, ὅτε ἵσταται καὶ ἄρχεται τῆς συμφορᾶς τοῦ δράματος, τὰ δὲ κομματικά, ὅτε λοιπὸν ἐν θρήνῳ γίνεται, secl. Blomfield post Ἑλλάδος habent nonnulli (non M) μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς, ἵππον μὲν ἄμετρον ἐπαγόμενος, ναῦς δὲ χιλίας διακοσίας ἑπτά, ἢ δεκατέσσερας. Ποτνιεῖ om. MQK

PERSIANS

This is the hypothesis to Aeschylus' *Persians.* In his treatise on Aeschylus' plots Glaucus says that the *Persians* was modelled on the *Phoenician Women* of Phrynichus. He quotes the following as the opening line of Phrynichus' drama: "These belong to the Persians who have long ago departed". But in that play it was a eunuch who reported the defeat of Xerxes at the beginning, while he prepared some thrones for the magistrates of the empire, whereas in *Persians* the prologue is delivered by a chorus of elders. The drama is set beside the tomb of Dareios, and its argument is this: Xerxes conducted a campaign against Greece; his infantry was defeated at Plataea, and his navy at Salamis, and he fled through Thessaly and crossed over to Asia.

Aeschylus was victorious in the tragic competition when Menon was archon with *Phineus*, *Persians*, *Glaukos Potnieus* and *Prometheus.* The first Persian offensive in the time of Dareios came to grief at Marathon, and the second offensive, that of Xerxes, failed at Salamis and Plataea.

Characters in the Drama:

Chorus of old men

Atossa

Messènger

Ghost of Dareios

Xerxes

38

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων
Ἑλλάδ' ἐς αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται,
καὶ τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων
ἑδράνων φύλακες, κατὰ πρεσβείαν
οὓς αὐτὸς ἄναξ Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς
Δαρειογενὴς
εἵλετο χώρας ἐφορεύειν.
ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ
καὶ πολυχρύσου στρατιᾶς ἤδη
κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται
θυμὸς ἔσωθεν.
πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχὺς Ἀσιατογενὴς
οἴχωκε, νέον δ' ἄνδρα βαΰζει,
κοὔτε τις ἄγγελος οὔτε τις ἱππεὺς
ἄστυ τὸ Περσῶν ἀφικνεῖται·
οἵτε τὸ Σούσων ἠδ' Ἀγβατάνων
καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσσιον ἔρκος
προλιπόντες ἔβαν, τοὶ μὲν ἐφ' ἵππων,
τοὶ δ' ἐπὶ ναῶν, πεζοί τε βάδην
πολέμου στῖφος παρέχοντες·
οἷος Ἀμίστρης ἠδ' Ἀρταφρένης
καὶ Μεγαβάτης ἠδ' Ἀστάσπης,
ταγοὶ Περσῶν,
βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὕποχοι μεγάλου,
σοῦνται, στρατιᾶς πολλῆς ἔφοροι,
τοξοδάμαντές τ' ἠδ' ἱπποβάται,
φοβεροὶ μὲν ἰδεῖν, δεινοὶ δὲ μάχην
ψυχῆς εὐτλήμονι δόξῃ·
Ἀρτεμβάρης θ' ἱππιοχάρμης
καὶ Μασίστρης ὅ τε τοξοδάμας

---

9 πολυάνδρου Wecklein

16 Ἀγβατ- Brunck (cf. 535): Ἐκβατ- codd.

[*The scene is somewhere in the Persian city of Sousa. The audience can see an ancient building containing seats, and the tomb of Dareios. The dramatic time is the late autumn of 480 BC. Enter the chorus of elderly Persian counsellors.*]

CHORUS

We are called "The Faithful" of the Persians
who have gone to the land of Greece,
and we are guardians
of the sumptuous palace, rich in gold.
Lord Xerxes the King himself,
son of Dareios,
chose us by virtue of our seniority to oversee his domain.
But already the heart within me
is troubled excessively, prophetic of disaster,
anxious about the homecoming of the King
and his gold-bedecked army;
for all of the might born of Asia
has departed, and clamours at the young man,
and no messenger either on foot or on horseback
has come to the Persians' city.
Forsaking Sousa and Agbatana
and the ancient ramparts of Kissia
they went, some on horseback,
some in ships, and some on foot, moving steadily
in the close columns of war.
Men sprang forth like Amistres and Artaphrenes,
Megabates and Astaspes,
commanders of the Persians,
kings subject to the great King,
guardians of the enormous army,
invincible archers and horsemen,
terrifying to look upon and formidable in battle,
in the steadfast resolve of their spirit.
And Artembares the charioteer,
and Masistres, and the noble Imaios,

ἐσθλὸς Ἰμαῖος Φαρανδάκης θ'
ἵππων τ' ἐλατὴρ Σοσθάνης.
ἄλλους δ' ὁ μέγας καὶ πολυθρέμμων
Νεῖλος ἔπεμψεν· Σουσισκάνης,
Πηγασταγὼν Αἰγυπτογενής,
ὅ τε τῆς ἱερᾶς Μέμφιδος ἄρχων
μέγας Ἀρσάμης, τάς τ' ὠγυγίους
Θήβας ἐφέπων Ἀριόμαρδος,
καὶ ἐλειοβάται ναῶν ἐρέται
δεινοὶ πλῆθός τ' ἀνάριθμοι.
ἁβροδιαίτων δ' ἕπεται Λυδῶν
ὄχλος, οἵτ' ἐπίπαν ἠπειρογενὲς
κατέχουσιν ἔθνος, τοὺς Μιτραγάθης
Ἀρκτεύς τ' ἀγαθός, βασιλῆς δίοποι,
χαὶ πολύχρυσοι Σάρδεις ἐπόχους
πολλοῖς ἅρμασιν ἐξορμῶσιν,
δίρρυμά τε καὶ τρίρρυμα τέλη,
φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι.
στεῦνται δ' ἱεροῦ Τμώλου πελάται
ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλεῖν δούλιον Ἑλλάδι,
Μάρδων, Θάρυβις, λόγχης ἄκμονες,
καὶ ἀκοντισταὶ Μυσοί· Βαβυλὼν δ'
ἡ πολύχρυσος πάμμεικτον ὄχλον
πέμπει σύρδην, ναῶν τ' ἐπόχους
καὶ τοξουλκῷ λήματι πιστούς·
τὸ μαχαιροφόρον τ' ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης
Ἀσίας ἕπεται
δειναῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ πομπαῖς.
τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἴας
οἴχεται ἀνδρῶν,
οὓς πέρι πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιῆτις
θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῷ,
τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγδὸν
τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται.

invincible with the bow, and Pharandakes,
and Sosthanes, driving his horses.
The great and fertile
Nile sent forth others: Sousiskanes,
Egyptian-born Pegastagon,
and the ruler of sacred Memphis,
great Arsames, and Ariomardos,
governor of ancient Thebes,
and skilled oarsmen from the marshes,
an incalculable horde.
A crowd of Lydians followed, who live
in luxury and control the entire
continental-born race; they are set going by Mitragathes
and noble Arkteus, kingly rulers,
and by the manifold gold of Sardis; they are mounted
on numerous chariots,
columns of them, some with two poles and some with three,
a terrifying sight to behold.
The inhabitants of sacred Tmolos are set on
casting the yoke of slavery onto Greece;
Mardon, Tharybis, anvils of the lance,
along with the Mysians of the light spear. And Babylon,
rich in gold, sends forth her long trailing column
of hordes of every kind; sailors borne in ships,
and those who trust in their skill and courage with the bow.
From all of Asia there follow tribes
wielding the sabre,
at the dread summons of the King.
Such is the flower of manhood, such the flower of the
Persian land which has gone.
The entire land of Asia
which nurtured them grieves with violent yearning,
and parents and wives, counting the days,
shudder as time lengthens.

πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις ἤδη στρ. α.
βασίλειος στρατὸς εἰς ἀντίπορον γείτονα χώραν,
λινοδέσμῳ σχεδίᾳ πορθμὸν ἀμείψας
Ἀθαμαντίδος Ἕλλας,
πολύγομφον ὅδισμα ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλὼν αὐχένι πόντου.

πολυάνδρου δ' Ἀσίας θούριος ἄρχων ἀντ. α.
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει
διχόθεν, πεζονόμοις ἔκ τε θαλάσσας,
ὀχυροῖσι πεποιθὼς
στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις, χρυσογόνου γενεᾶς ἰσόθεος φώς.

κυάνεον δ' ὄμμασι λεύσσων στρ. β.
φονίου δέργμα δράκοντος,
πολύχειρ καὶ πολυναύτας,
Σύριόν θ' ἅρμα διώκων,
ἐπάγει δουρικλύτοις ἀνδράσι τοξόδαμνον Ἄρη.

δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστὰς ἀντ. β.
μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν
ὀχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἴργειν·
ἄμαχον κῦμα θαλάσσας·
ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός.

δολόμητιν δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ ἐπῳδός.
τίς ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει;
τίς ὁ κραιπνῷ ποδὶ πηδήματος εὐπετέος ἀνάσσων;
φιλόφρων γὰρ ποτισαίνουσα τὸ πρῶτον παράγει
βροτὸν εἰς ἀρκύστατ' Ἄτα·
τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲρ θνατὸν ἀλύξαντα φυγεῖν.

---

80 χρυσογόνου $\Sigma^{\gamma p}B^{\gamma p}W^{\gamma p}Q^{2\gamma p}$: χρυσονόμου codd.
93–100 post 101–14 locavit O. Müller
96 ἀνάσσων Turnebus
97 <ποτι>σαίνουσα Hermann: σαίνουσα codd.
99 ἀρκύστ<ατ>' Ἄτα West: ἄρκυας Ἄτα Hermann: ἀρκύστατα codd.

The King's army, which annihilates cities, *str. 1*
has already passed over to our neighbours' land opposite,
crossing the strait named after Helle,
Athamas' daughter, on a floating bridge bound with flaxen ropes,
yoking the neck of the sea with a roadway bolted together.

The raging leader of populous Asia *ant. 1*
drives his godlike flock against every land
in two movements: an equal of the gods, born of the golden race,
he trusts in his stalwart
and stubborn commanders both on land and on the sea.

He casts from his eyes the dark *str. 2*
glance of a lethal snake;
with numerous soldiers and numerous sailors
he speeds on in his Syrian chariot,
leading an Ares armed with the bow against famous spearsmen.

No-one is so renowned for valour *ant. 2*
that they can withstand such a huge flood of men,
and ward them off with sturdy defences.
A sea-wave is invincible.
The Persians' army is irresistible and its people are brave of heart.
But what mortal man can avoid *epode*
being cunningly deceived by god?
Who is so swift-footed that he has the power to leap easily aside?
With apparent friendliness at first Calamity fawns on a man
and induces him into her nets.
It is impossible for a mortal to escape from them and flee.

θεόθεν γὰρ κατὰ Μοῖρ' ἐκράτησεν στρ. γ.
τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπέσκηψε δὲ Πέρσαις
πολέμους πυργοδαΐκτους
διέπειν ἱππιοχάρμας τε κλόνους πόλεών τ' ἀναστάσεις. 105

ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροιο θαλάσσας ἀντ. γ.
πολιαινομένας πνεύματι λάβρῳ 110
ἐσορᾶν πόντιον ἄλσος,
πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πείσμασι λαοπόροις τε μαχαναῖς. 114

ταῦτά μοι μελαγχίτων ἇρὴν ἀμύσσεται φόβῳ, στρ. δ.
"ὀᾶ Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος", τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πύθη- 117
ται, κένανδρον μέγ' ἄστυ Σουσίδος·

καὶ τὸ Κισσίων πόλισμ' ἀντίδουπον ἄσεται, ἀντ. δ.
"ὀᾶ", τοῦτ' ἔπος γυναικοπλήθὴς ὅμιλος ἀπύων, 122
βυσσίνοις δ' ἐν πέπλοις πέσῃ λακίς. 125

πᾶς γὰρ ἱππηλάτας καὶ πεδοστιβὴς λεὼς στρ. ε.
σμῆνος ὡς ἐκλέλοιπεν μελισσᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμῳ στρατοῦ,
τὸν ἀμφίζευκτον ἐξαμείψας ἀμφοτέρας ἅλιον 130
πρῶνα κοινὸν αἴας.

λέκτρα δ' ἀνδρῶν πόθῳ πίμπλαται δακρύμασιν· ἀντ. ε.
Περσίδες δ' ἀβροπενθεῖς ἑκάστα πόθῳ φιλάνορι 135
τὸν αἰχμάεντα θοῦρον εὐνατῆρ' ἀποπεμψαμένα
λείπεται μονόζυξ.

ἀλλ' ἄγε Πέρσαι, τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι 140
στέγος ἀρχαῖον,
φροντίδα κεδνὴν καὶ βαθύβουλον
θώμεθα· χρεία δὲ προσήκει·
πῶς ἄρα πράσσει Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς

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121 ᾄσεται Burney: ἔσεται vel ἔσσεται codd.
135 ἀβροπενθεῖς ΣΥ: ἀκρο- cett.

For Fate, ordained by the gods, long ago *str. 3*
gained the upper hand, and commanded the Persians
to engage in wars which destroy walls,
in the tumult of cavalry charges and in the overthrowing of cities.

But they learned to cast their sights *ant. 3*
on the precinct of the ocean,
the wide-pathed sea whitening under the violent wind,
confident in the slender cables designed to provide a passage for their men.

This is why the black robes of my heart are rent *str. 4*
with terror -
"*oa*! – the Persian army!" - lest the city, the great citadel
of Sousa, become emptied of men and hear this cry.

And the Kissian city will sing in response, *ant. 4*
"*oa*!" – this is what the massive horde of women will call out,
tearing their linen gowns.

For all the cavalry and all the infantry, *str. 5*
like a swarm of bees, have left with the leader of the army;
they have crossed to the other continent after yoking the sea
between the two headlands.

Marriage-beds are overflowing with the tears of *ant. 5*
yearning for husbands;
every softly-grieving Persian woman who has sent forth
her raging warrior husband is left alone under the marriage yoke,
aching with desire for her man.

But come, Persians, let us sit down
on this ancient building
and engage in deep and careful
thought; the need is urgent.
How are matters proceeding for Xerxes the King,

Δαρειογενής;
πότερον τόξου ῥῦμα τὸ νικῶν,
ἢ δορυκράνου
λόγχης ἰσχὺς κεκράτηκεν;
ἀλλ' ἥδε θεῶν ἴσον ὀφθαλμοῖς
φάος ὁρμᾶται μήτηρ βασιλέως,
βασίλεια δ' ἐμή· προσπίτνω·
καὶ προσφθόγγοις δὲ χρεὼν αὐτὴν
πάντας μύθοισι προσαυδᾶν.

ὦ βαθυζώνων ἄνασσα Περσίδων ὑπερτάτη,
μῆτερ ἡ Ξέρξου γεραιά; χαῖρε, Δαρείου γύναι·
θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ ἔφυς,
εἴ τι μὴ δαίμων παλαιὸς νῦν μεθέστηκε στρατῷ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ταῦτα δὴ λιποῦσ' ἱκάνω χρυσεοστόλμους δόμους
καὶ τὸ Δαρείου τε κἀμὸν κοινὸν εὐνατήριον.
καί με καρδίαν ἀμύσσει φροντίς· ἐς δ' ὑμᾶς ἐρῶ
μῦθον οὐδαμῶς ἐμαυτῆς, οὐδ' ἀδείμαντος, φίλοι,
μὴ μέγας Πλοῦτος κονίσας οὖδας ἀντρέψῃ ποδὶ
ὄλβον, ὃν Δαρεῖος ἦρεν οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινος.
ταῦτά μοι διπλῆ μέριμν' ἄφραστός ἐστιν ἐν φρεσὶν,
μήτε χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων πλῆθος ἐν τιμῇ σέβειν
μήτ' ἀχρημάτοισι λάμπειν φῶς, ὅσον σθένος πάρα.
ἔστι γὰρ πλοῦτός γ' ἀμεμφής, ἀμφὶ δ' ὀφθαλμῷ φόβος·
ὄμμα γὰρ δόμων νομίζω δεσπότου παρουσίαν.
πρὸς τάδ', ὡς οὕτως ἐχόντων τῶνδε, σύμβουλοι λόγου
τοῦδέ μοι γένεσθε, Πέρσαι, γηραλέα πιστώματα·
πάντα γὰρ τὰ κέδν' ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστί μοι βουλεύματα.

145-6 Δαρειογενὴς τὸ πατρωνύμιον γένος ἀμέτερον codd.: τὸ πατρωνύμιον γένος ἀμέτερον del. Schütz: Δανάης τε γόνου τὸ παρωνύμιον (cf. 80) West
152 προσπίτνω προσκυνῶ MI
159 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ Koechly: Ἄτοσσα codd.
162 οὐδ' West: οὐδὲ Q^{ss}: οὖσ' codd. ἀδείματος Lc: ἄμαντις οὖσα δείματος Lawson
167 ἴσον O^{c}: ὅσοις Blaydes
168 ὀφθαλμῷ Heimsoeth: ὀφθαλμὸς Q: ὀφθαλμοῖς cett.

son of Dareios?
Has the drawn bow won,
or has the mighty pointed
spear been victorious?
But here comes the mother of the King,
my Queen, like light from the eyes
of gods. We prostrate ourselves,
and must all address her
with words of salutation.

[*The chorus prostrate themselves and speak formally to the Queen as she enters in great pomp on a chariot from the direction of the palace.*]

O highest Queen of the deep-girdled women of Persia,
aged mother of Xerxes and Dareios' wife, greetings.
You are the spouse of the Persians' god, and a god's mother,
unless an ancient deity has now somehow turned against the army.

QUEEN

That is the reason why I have come here, leaving the palace with its golden ornaments and the bed-chamber I shared with Dareios. Anxiety is tearing my heart also: I did not invent the proverb I am about to tell you, friends; I am afraid that "great Wealth may kick up a cloud of dust from the ground and overturn the prosperity" which Dareios won by divine favour. The trouble in my heart, of which I can hardly speak, is twofold: I believe that the masses would not hold in respect wealth in the absence of men, and light would not shine as radiantly on indigent people as on the powerful. We have sufficient wealth, but I am afraid for the "light" of our household. For I consider a household's "light" to be the presence of its master. Faithful elders, Persians, since these are the circumstances, counsel me on this matter. For you are the source of all the wise advice I receive.

Χο. εὖ τόδ' ἴσθι, γῆς ἄνασσα τῆσδε, μή σε δὶς φράσαι
μήτ' ἔπος μήτ' ἔργον, ὧν ἂν δύναμις ἡγεῖσθαι θέλῃ·
εὐμενεῖς γὰρ ὄντας ἡμᾶς τῶνδε συμβούλους καλεῖς.
Βα. πολλοῖς μὲν αἰεὶ νυκτέροις ὀνείρασι
ξύνειμ', ἀφ' οὗπερ παῖς ἐμὸς στείλας στρατὸν
Ἰαόνων γῆν οἴχεται πέρσαι θέλων·
ἀλλ' οὔτι πω τοιόνδ' ἐναργὲς εἰδόμην
ὡς τῆς πάροιθεν εὐφρόνης· λέξω δέ σοι.
ἐδοξάτην μοι δύο γυναῖκ' εὐείμονε,
ἡ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἠσκημένη,
ἡ δ' αὖτε Δωρικοῖσιν, εἰς ὄψιν μολεῖν,
μεγέθει τε τῶν νῦν ἐκπρεπεστάτα πολύ,
κάλλει τ' ἀμώμω, καὶ κασιγνήτα γένους
ταὐτοῦ· πάτραν δ' ἔναιον ἡ μὲν Ἑλλάδα
κλήρῳ λαχοῦσα γαῖαν, ἡ δὲ βάρβαρον.
τούτω στάσιν τιν', ὡς ἐγὼ 'δόκουν ὁρᾶν,
τεύχειν ἐν ἀλλήλῃσι· παῖς δ' ἐμὸς μαθὼν
κατεῖχε κἀπράϋνεν, ἅρμασιν δ' ὕπο
ζεύγνυσιν αὐτὼ καὶ λέπαδν' ὑπ' αὐχένων
τίθησι. χἡ μὲν τῇδ' ἐπυργοῦτο στολῇ
ἐν ἡνίαισί τ' εἶχεν εὔαρκτον στόμα,
ἡ δ' ἐσφάδαζε, καὶ χεροῖν ἔντη δίφρου
διασπαράσσει, καὶ ξυναρπάζει βίᾳ
ἄνευ χαλινῶν, καὶ ζυγὸν θραύει μέσον,
πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς. καὶ πατὴρ παρίσταται
Δαρεῖος οἰκτίρων σφε· τὸν δ' ὅπως ὁρᾷ
Ξέρξης, πέπλους ῥήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σώματι.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νυκτὸς εἰσιδεῖν λέγω.
ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνέστην καὶ χεροῖν καλλιρρόου
ἔψαυσα πηγῆς, σὺν θυηπόλῳ χερὶ
βωμὸν προσέστην, ἀποτρόποισι δαίμοσιν
θέλουσα θῦσαι πέλανον, ὧν τέλη τάδε.
ὁρῶ δὲ φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἑσχάραν
Φοίβου· φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἑστάθην, φίλοι·
μεθύστερον δὲ κίρκον εἰσορῶ δρόμῳ
πτεροῖς ἐφορμαίνοντα καὶ χηλαῖς κάρα
τίλλονθ'· ὁ δ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο γ' ἢ πτήξας δέμας
παρεῖχε. ταῦτ' ἔμοιγε δείματ' ἔστ' ἰδεῖν,
ὑμῖν δ' ἀκούειν. εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, παῖς ἐμὸς

Chorus Be sure of this, Queen of the realm: you do not have to repeat requests for us to help you by any word or action which lies within our power. For it is with goodwill towards you that we advise you, at your invitation.

Queen I have been incessantly visited at night by numerous dreams, ever since my son raised his army and departed intending to destroy the land of the Ionians. But last night's dream was the most vivid I have yet beheld. I will tell you about it. Two beautifully dressed women seemed to appear to me, one decked out in Persian robes, the other in Doric clothing. In stature they were conspicuously larger than people are today, and they were faultlessly lovely; they were sisters of one race. One of them lived in her fatherland, Greece, which she had obtained by lot, the other in the land of the barbarians. A conflict between these two arose, as it seemed to me. When my son found out about it he tried to restrain and mollify them; he harnessed them both beneath his chariot and put a yoke-strap beneath their necks. One of them towered proudly in this gear, taking the reins submissively in her mouth, but the other struggled, tore the harness from the chariot with her hands, dragged it violently along without the bridle, and smashed the yoke in the middle. My son fell out. His father Dareios stood close by, pitying him. When Xerxes saw him he tore the robes around his body.

These were the apparitions I saw during the night. But when I had risen and dipped my hands in the fair-flowing water of a spring, I stood at the altar with materials for a sacrifice in my hand. I wanted to make libation to the gods who avert disaster, to whom such rites are due. But I saw an eagle seeking refuge at the hearth of Phoebus: my friends, I stood there speechless with terror. Next I saw a hawk rushing on beating wings towards the eagle, and tearing its head with its talons. The eagle could do nothing but submit its body, cowering. These things are terrifying to me as witness, and to you as audience. For you are well aware that

πράξας μὲν εὖ θαυμαστὸς ἂν γένοιτ' ἀνήρ,
κακῶς δὲ πράξας - οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει,
σωθεὶς δ' ὁμοίως τῆσδε κοιρανεῖ χθονός.
Χο. οὔ σε βουλόμεσθα, μῆτερ, οὔτ' ἄγαν φοβεῖν λόγοις
οὔτε θαρσύνειν. θεοὺς δὲ προστροπαῖς ἱκνουμένη,
εἴ τι φλαῦρον εἶδες, αἰτοῦ τῶνδ' ἀποτροπὴν τελεῖν,
τὰ δ' ἀγάθ' ἐκτελῆ γενέσθαι σοί τε καὶ τέκνοις σέθεν
καὶ πόλει φίλοις τε πᾶσι. δεύτερον δὲ χρὴ χοὰς
Γῆ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς χέασθαι· πρευμενῶς δ' αἰτοῦ τάδε,
σὸν πόσιν Δαρεῖον, ὅνπερ φῆς ἰδεῖν κατ' εὐφρόνην,
ἐσθλά σοι πέμπειν τέκνῳ τε γῆς ἔνερθεν ἐς φάος,
τἄμπαλιν δὲ τῶνδε γαίᾳ κάτοχα μαυροῦσθαι σκότῳ.
ταῦτα θυμόμαντις ὢν σοι πρευμενῶς παρῄνεσα·
εὖ δὲ πανταχῇ τελεῖν σοι τῶνδε κρίνομεν πέρι.
Βα. ἀλλὰ μὴν εὔνους γ' ὁ πρῶτος τῶνδ' ἐνυπνίων κριτὴς
παιδὶ καὶ δόμοις ἐμοῖσι τήνδ' ἐκύρωσας φάτιν.
ἐκτελοῖτο δὴ τὰ χρηστά· ταῦτα δ' ὡς ἐφίεσαι
πάντα θήσομεν θεοῖσι τοῖς τ' ἔνερθε γῆς φίλοις,
εὖτ' ἂν εἰς οἴκους μόλωμεν. κεῖνα δ' ἐκμαθεῖν θέλω,
ὦ φίλοι· ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἱδρῦσθαι χθονός;
Χο. τῆλε πρὸς δυσμαῖς ἄνακτος Ἡλίου φθινασμάτων.
Βα. ἀλλὰ μὴν ἵμειρ' ἐμὸς παῖς τήνδε θηρᾶσαι πόλιν;
Χο. πᾶσα γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν Ἑλλὰς βασιλέως ὑπήκοος.
Βα. ὧδέ τις πάρεστιν αὐτοῖς ἀνδροπλήθεια στρατοῦ;
Χο. καὶ στρατὸς τοιοῦτος, ἔρξας πολλὰ δὴ Μήδους κακά.
Βα. καὶ τί πρὸς τούτοισιν ἄλλο; πλοῦτος ἐξαρκὴς δόμοις;
Χο. ἀργύρου πηγή τις αὐτοῖς ἐστι, θησαυρὸς χθονός.
Βα. πότερα γὰρ τοξουλκὸς αἰχμὴ διὰ χερῶν αὐτοῖς πρέπει;
Χο. οὐδαμῶς· ἔγχη σταδαῖα καὶ φεράσπιδες σαγαί.
Βα. τίς δὲ ποιμάνωρ ἔπεστι κἀπιδεσπόζει στρατῷ;

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218 τέκνω IW: τέκνῳ Heimsoeth
227 παισὶ $O^2YQ^{ss}Lb$

if my son were to succeed he would be a man to excite great admiration, but that if he fails - he is not accountable to the community. Provided that he has survived he is still sovereign of this land.

Chorus We do not want, mother, to say anything either to frighten you too much or to make you over-confident. If you saw something boding evil, supplicate the gods with prayers, and ask them to avert the disaster and to grant blessings on yourself and your children and all your friends. Secondly, you must pour out libations to Earth and the dead. Ask in propitiatory manner that your husband Dareios, whom you say you saw during the night, send good fortune for you and your son up into the daylight from beneath the earth, and that contrary fortune be kept down by the earth in obscure darkness. This is the kindly advice I give you from my prophetic heart. In our judgement these matters will work out well for you in every way.

Queen As the first interpreters of these dreams you have pronounced them favourable to my son and my household. May everything work out for the best. We will do everything for the gods and our friends beneath the earth, as you instruct, when we return to the palace. But there is something I want to find out, my friends. In what part of the world do they say that Athens is situated?

Chorus Far away towards the west, where the Lord Sun sets.

Queen Was this the city my son was so eager to make his prey?

Chorus Yes, for thus all Hellas would become subject to the King.

Queen Do they have such a large supply of men for their army?

Chorus Their army is large enough; it did the Medes great harm.

Queen Besides their men what else do they have? Is there plenty of wealth in their palace?

Chorus They have a spring of silver, a treasury in the earth.

Queen Do they wield bows and arrows in their hands?

Chorus Not at all. They have spears for close combat and are equipped with shields.

Queen Who leads them and is sole commander of the army?

Χο. οὔτινος δοῦλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπήκοοι.
Βα. πῶς ἂν οὖν μένοιεν ἄνδρας πολεμίους ἐπήλυδας;
Χο. ὥστε Δαρείου πολύν τε καὶ καλὸν φθεῖραι στρατόν.
Βα. δεινά τοι λέγεις κιόντων τοῖς τεκοῦσι φροντίσαι.
Χο. ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν τάχ' εἴσῃ πάντα νημερτῆ λόγον.
τοῦδε γὰρ δράμημα φωτὸς Περσικὸν πρέπει μαθεῖν,
καὶ φέρει σαφές τι πρᾶγος ἐσθλὸν ἢ κακὸν κλύειν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὦ γῆς ἁπάσης Ἀσιάδος πολίσματα,
ὦ Περσὶς αἶα καὶ πολὺς πλούτου λιμήν,
ὡς ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ κατέφθαρται πολὺς
ὄλβος, τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν.
ὤμοι, κακὸν μὲν πρῶτον ἀγγέλλειν κακά·
ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πάθος,
Πέρσαι· στρατὸς γὰρ πᾶς ὄλωλε βαρβάρων.

Χο. ἄνια ἄνια, νεόκοτα καὶ στρ. α.
δάϊ'· αἰαῖ, διαίνεσθε Πέρ-
σαι τόδ' ἄχος κλύοντες.

Αγ. ὡς πάντα γ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖνα διαπεπραγμένα·
καὐτὸς δ' ἀέλπτως νόστιμον βλέπω φάος.

Χο. ἦ μακροβίοτος ὅδε γέ τις αἰ- ἀντ. α.
ὼν ἐφάνθη γεραιοῖς, ἀκού-
ειν τόδε πῆμ' ἄελπτον.

245 κιόντων Wecklein: ἰόντων codd.
256 ἄνια ἄνια κακά OYAVNLb: ἄνι' ἄνια κακά (καὶ HXc) cett.: κακά del. Prien

Chorus They are called neither the slaves nor subjects of any single man.

Queen So how then can they withstand hostile invaders?

Chorus Well enough to have destroyed Dareios' large and excellent army.

Queen What you say is terrible for the parents of our men to contemplate.

[*A man dressed in Persian clothes runs into the theatre from the opposite direction to the entrance of the Queen.*]

Chorus I think that you will soon be in possession of a full and truthful report; for this man is clearly Persian, to judge from the way he is running, and he is bringing news of some event, whether it will make good or bad listening.

MESSENGER

O citadels of all Asia, O land of Persia, storehouse of huge wealth! Your great prosperity has been destroyed at a single blow; the flower of the Persians has fallen and gone. *Oimoi*, it is hard to be the first to report disastrous news. Yet I must relate the catastrophic story in its entirety, Persians. For the whole barbarian force has perished.

Chorus Agonising, agonising, without precedent and dire! *Aiai*, Persians, weep as you hear about this disaster. *str. 1*

Mess. Indeed, for the entire force is lost; I did not expect to return home alive myself.

Chorus We are old; our lives have been proven too long if we must live to hear about this unexpected calamity. *ant. 1*

Αγ. καὶ μὴν παρών γε κοὐ λόγους ἄλλων κλύων,
Πέρσαι, φράσαιμ' ἂν οἷ' ἐπορσύνθη κακά.

Χο. ὀτοτοτοῖ, μάταν στρ. β.
τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῆ
γᾶς ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἦλθ' ἐπ' αἶαν 270
Δίαν, Ἑλλάδα χώραν.

Αγ. πλήθουσι νεκρῶν δυσπότμως ἐφθαρμένων
Σαλαμῖνος ἀκταὶ πᾶς τε πρόσχωρος τόπος.

Χο. ὀτοτοτοῖ, φίλων ἀντ. β.
ἁλίδονα †σώματα πολυβαφῆ† 275
κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι
πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν.

Αγ. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἤρκει τόξα, πᾶς δ' ἀπώλλυτο
στρατὸς δαμασθεὶς ναΐοισιν ἐμβολαῖς.

Χο. ἴυζ' ἄποτμον δαΐοις στρ. γ.
δυσαιανῆ βοάν, 281
ὡς πάντα Πέρσαις παγκάκως
θεοὶ θέσαν· αἰαῖ στρατοῦ φθαρέντος.

Αγ. ὦ πλεῖστον ἔχθος ὄνομα Σαλαμῖνος κλύειν·
φεῦ, τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ὡς στένω μεμνημένος. 285

Χο. στυγναί γ' Ἀθᾶναι δαΐοις· ἀντ. γ.
μεμνῆσθαί τοι πάρα
ὡς Περσίδων πολλὰς μάταν
εὔνιδας ἔκτισσαν ἠδ' ἀνάνδρους.

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275 πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἁλιβαφῆ Prien
280–3 ἴυζ' ἄποτμον βοὰν δυσαιανῆ Πέρσαις δαΐοις ὡς πάντα παγκάκως ἔθεσαν αἰαῖ codd.: sed ἔθεσαν θεοὶ αἰαῖ Y, οἱ θεοί H B^{gl}: βοὰν et δαΐοις traiecit Hermann, Πέρσαις traiecit Page, θεοὶ suppl. Hermann
288 Περσίδων πολλὰς Weil: πολλὰς Περσίδων codd.
289 εὔνιδας ἔκτισσαν Boeckh: ἔκτισαν εὔνιδας codd.

Mess. I myself witnessed the damage suffered, Persians, and can give you an account of it. I did not hear about it from other people.

Chorus *Ototoi*! In vain *str. 2*
did our weapons, innumerable and various,
go from Asia to Zeus'
country, the land of Greece.

Mess. The shores of Salamis and all the neighbouring regions are filled up with the corpses of those who met unhappy deaths.

Chorus *Ototoi*! You are saying *ant. 2*
that the dead bodies of our friends are tossed, drenched,
and carried along by the sea,
their cloaks wandering around them.

Mess. Our bows and arrows were useless, and the entire force was defeated by the ramming of ships.

Chorus Yell out a melancholy shout of ill omen *str. 3*
against our enemies;
the gods have ordained utter catastrophe for the Persians.
Aiai, the army is destroyed.

Mess. O Salamis, most hateful name to hear. Alas, how I groan as I remember Athens.

Chorus Athens is indeed abhorrent to her enemies. *ant 3*
We have reason to remember
that she ruined the marriages of many Persian wives,
leaving them without husbands.

Βα. σιγῶ πάλαι δύστηνος ἐκπεπληγμένη
κακοῖς· ὑπερβάλλει γὰρ ἥδε συμφορά,
τὸ μήτε λέξαι μήτ' ἐρωτῆσαι πάθη.
ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πημονὰς βροτοῖς φέρειν
θεῶν διδόντων· πᾶν δ' ἀναπτύξας πάθος
λέξον καταστάς, κεἰ στένεις κακοῖς ὅμως·
τίς οὐ τέθνηκε, τίνα δὲ καὶ πενθήσομεν
τῶν ἀρχελείων, ὅστ' ἐπὶ σκηπτουχίᾳ
ταχθεὶς ἄνανδρον τάξιν ἠρήμου θανών;
Αγ. Ξέρξης μὲν αὐτὸς ζῇ τε καὶ φάος βλέπει.
Βα. ἐμοῖς μὲν εἶπας δώμασιν φάος μέγα
καὶ λευκὸν ἦμαρ νυκτὸς ἐκ μελαγχίμου.
Αγ. Ἀρτεμβάρης δὲ μυρίας ἵππου βραβεὺς
στύφλους παρ' ἀκτὰς θείνεται Σιληνιῶν.
χὠ χιλίαρχος Δαδάκης πληγῇ δορὸς
πήδημα κοῦφον ἐκ νεὼς ἀφήλατο·
Τενάγων τ' ἄριστος Βακτρίων ἰθαιγενὴς
θαλασσόπληκτον νῆσον Αἴαντος πολεῖ.
Λίλαιος Ἀρσάμης τε κἈργήστης τρίτος,
οἵδ' ἀμφὶ νῆσον τὴν πελειοθρέμμονα
νικώμενοι κύρισσον ἰσχυρὰν χθόνα·
πηγαῖς τε Νείλου γειτονῶν Αἰγυπτίου
Φαρνοῦχος, οἵ τε ναὸς ἐκ μιᾶς πέσον [313] 312
Ἀρκτεύς, Ἀδεύης, καὶ Φερεσσεύης τρίτος. [312] 313
Χρυσεὺς Μάταλλος μυριόνταρχος θανών
πυρσὴν ζαπληθῆ δάσκιον γενειάδα [318] 315
ἔτεγγ', ἀμείβων χρῶτα πορφυρᾷ βαφῇ.
καὶ Μᾶγος Ἄραβος, Ἀρτάβης τε Βάκτριος,
ἵππου μελαίνης ἡγεμὼν τρισμυρίας, [315] 318
σκληρᾶς μέτοικος γῆς ἐκεῖ κατέφθιτο.
Ἄμιστρις Ἀμφιστρεύς τε πολύπονον δόρυ
νωμῶν, ὅ τ' ἐσθλὸς Ἀριόμαρδος, Σάρδεσι
πένθος παρασχών, Σεισάμης θ' ὁ Μύσιος,
Θάρυβίς τε πεντήκοντα πεντάκις νεῶν
ταγός, γένος Λυρναῖος, εὐειδὴς ἀνήρ,

299 βλέπει φάος Σ Ar. *Ran.* 1028
312–313 hoc ordine Merkel
318 post 314 codd.: traiecit Weil

Queen I have long been silent in my misery, stunned at the terrible news; for this disaster is so overwhelming that it is hard to speak or ask questions about what we have suffered. Nevertheless it is necessary for humankind to endure the tribulations the gods send. Compose yourself and speak, unfolding the whole disaster, even if you are groaning at our miseries. Who survived? Which of the leaders placed in high command must we mourn; who died and left their positions over their troops vacant and unmanned?

Mess. Xerxes himself lives and looks upon the light.

Queen What you have said brings a great radiance to my household, anyway, and a brilliant day out of dark night.

Mess. Artembares, the commander of ten thousand horsemen, is being smashed along the rough shores of Sileniai. And Dadakes the chiliarch, at a blow of a spear, leapt lightly from his ship. High-born Tenagon of the Bactrians' most ancient lineage haunts the wave-beaten island of Ajax. Lilaios and Arsames, and thirdly Argestes, rammed in defeat the tough ground of the dove-breeding island. Pharnouchos died, neighbour of the streams of Egyptian Nile; and those who fell from a single ship, Arkteus, Adeues and thirdly Pheresseues. Matallos from Chrysa died, the commander of ten thousand, and his thick, bushy, tawny beard changed colour as he dipped it into the dye of the purple sea. And Magos the Arabian and Artabes the Bactrian, leader of thirty thousand dark horseman; he moved to a cruel land, there to be killed. Amistris and Amphistreus, who wielded a spear laden with pain, and excellent Ariomardos, thus bringing grief to Sardis, and Seisames the Mysian, and Tharybis the commander of five times fifty ships, a handsome man of Lyrnaean family; the poor man lies there dead, after meeting

κεῖται θανὼν δείλαιος οὐ μάλ' εὐτυχῶς·
Συέννεσίς τε πρῶτος εἰς εὐψυχίαν,
Κιλίκων ἄπαρχος, εἷς ἀνὴρ πλεῖστον πόνον
ἐχθροῖς παρασχών, εὐκλεῶς ἀπώλετο.
τοσόνδε γ' ἀρχόντων ὑπεμνήσθην πέρι,
πολλῶν παρόντων δ' ὀλίγ' ἀπαγγέλλω κακά.
Βα. αἰαῖ, κακῶν ὕψιστα δὴ κλύω τάδε,
αἴσχη τε Πέρσαις καὶ λιγέα κωκύματα.
ἀτὰρ φράσον μοι τοῦτ' ἀναστρέψας πάλιν·
πόσον νεῶν δὴ πλῆθος ἦν Ἑλληνίδων,
ὥστ' ἀξιῶσαι Περσικῷ στρατεύματι
μάχην ξυνάψαι ναΐοισιν ἐμβολαῖς;
Αγ. πλήθους μὲν ἂν σάφ' ἴσθ' ἕκατι βάρβαρων
ναῦς ἂν κρατῆσαι. καὶ γὰρ Ἕλλησιν μὲν ἦν
ὁ πᾶς ἀριθμὸς εἰς τριακάδας δέκα
ναῶν, δεκὰς δ' ἦν τῶνδε χωρὶς ἔκκριτος·
Ξέρξῃ δέ, καὶ γὰρ οἶδα, χιλιὰς μὲν ἦν
ὧν ἦγε πλῆθος, αἱ δ' ὑπέρκοποι τάχει
ἑκατὸν δὶς ἦσαν ἑπτά θ'· ὧδ' ἔχει λόγος.
μή σοι δοκοῦμεν τῇδε λειφθῆναι μάχης;
ἀλλ' ὧδε δαίμων τις κατέφθειρε στρατόν,
τάλαντα βρίσας οὐκ ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ.
θεοὶ πόλιν σῴζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς.
Βα. ἔτ' ἆρ' Ἀθηνῶν ἔστ' ἀπόρθητος πόλις;
Αγ. ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἔρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές.
Βα. ἀρχὴ δὲ ναυσὶ συμβολῆς τίς ἦν φράσον·
τίνες κατῆρξαν, πότερον Ἕλληνες, μάχης,
ἢ παῖς ἐμός, πλήθει καταυχήσας νεῶν;
Αγ. ἦρξεν μέν, ὦ δέσποινα, τοῦ παντὸς κακοῦ
φανεὶς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν.
ἀνὴρ γὰρ Ἕλλην ἐξ Ἀθηναίων στρατοῦ

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326 σύννεσις vel σύνεσις codd.: corr. Turnebus ex Hdt. 7.98
328 εὐτυχῶς YD: νηλεῶς $P^{\gamma\rho}$
329 τοσόνδε Heimsoeth: τοιῶνδ(ε) codd. γ' add. GFTr ἀρχόντων νῦν codd. praeter $MOQ^{a}GFTr$
334 πόσον νεῶν δὴ πλῆθος ἦν Musgrave: πόσον δὴ (vel δὲ) πλῆθος ἦν νεῶν codd.
338 ναῦς ἂν Heimsoeth: ναυσὶ codd.
344 ληφθῆναι $MHBN^{2}$ μάχης Todt: μάχῃ codd.
347 nuntio continuavit Wellauer: paragr. in M, 'Atossae' (cf. ad 159) trib. fere codd.

an unfortunate end. And Syennesis, the most courageous, the leader of the Cilicians, the man who individually caused most trouble to the enemy, died a glorious death. This is the extent of the leaders I have called to mind; but my report encompasses but a small part of the terrible situation.

Queen *Aiai*! What I am hearing is the height of calamity, a cause of disgrace to the Persians and of shrill screams. But go back to your report and tell me this: how great was the fleet of Hellenic ships that they thought they could meet the Persians in a naval encounter, with ramming of ships?

Mess. As far as the size of the fleet was concerned you can be sure that the barbarians would have won. The total number of Greek ships came to three hundred, but ten of these were selected out separately from them. The size of Xerxes' fleet I know for certain was a thousand, and two hundred and seven of the ships were exceptionally fast. So much for the numbers. You are not under the impression that we were numerically outdone in the battle? No, it was some god who destroyed us by loading the scales with an unequal weight of fate. The gods protect the city of the goddess Pallas.

Queen So is the city of Athens still not sacked?

Mess. While men remain to a city its defences are secure.

Queen Then tell me how the naval encounter began. Who commenced hostilities? Was it the Greeks? Or my son, with pride in his superior number of ships?

Mess. The whole disaster began, mistress, when some vengeful spirit or malignant deity appeared from somewhere. For a Greek man came from the Athenian force and told your son

ἐλθὼν ἔλεξε παιδὶ σῷ Ξέρξῃ τάδε,
ὡς εἰ μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἵξεται κνέφας,
Ἕλληνες οὐ μενοῖεν, ἀλλὰ σέλμασιν
ναῶν ἐπανθορόντες ἄλλος ἄλλοσε
δρασμῷ κρυφαίῳ βίοτον ἐκσωσοίατο.
ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ὡς ἤκουσεν, οὐ ξυνεὶς δόλον
Ἕλληνος ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ τὸν θεῶν φθόνον,
πᾶσιν προφωνεῖ τόνδε ναυάρχοις λόγον,
εὖτ' ἂν φλέγων ἀκτῖσιν ἥλιος χθόνα
λήξῃ, κνέφας δὲ τέμενος αἰθέρος λάβῃ,
τάξαι νεῶν στῖφος μὲν ἐν στοίχοις τρισίν
ἔκπλους φυλάσσειν καὶ πόρους ἁλιρρόθους,
ἄλλας δὲ κύκλῳ νῆσον Αἴαντος πέριξ.
ὡς εἰ μόρον φευξοίαθ' Ἕλληνες κακόν,
ναυσὶν κρυφαίως δρασμὸν εὑρόντες τινά,
πᾶσι στέρεσθαι κρατὸς ἦν προκείμενον.
τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε κάρθ' ὑπ' εὐθύμου φρενός·
οὐ γὰρ τὸ μέλλον ἐκ θεῶν ἠπίστατο.
οἱ δ' οὐκ ἀκόσμως, ἀλλὰ πειθάρχῳ φρενὶ
δεῖπνόν τ' ἐπορσύνοντο, ναυβάτης τ' ἀνὴρ
τροποῦτο κώπην σκαλμὸν ἀμφ' εὐήρετμον.
ἐπεὶ δὲ φέγγος ἡλίου κατέφθιτο
καὶ νὺξ ἐπῆλθε, πᾶς ἀνὴρ κώπης ἄναξ
ἐς ναῦν ἐχώρει πᾶς θ' ὅπλων ἐπιστάτης·
τάξις δὲ τάξιν παρεκάλει νεὼς μακρᾶς,
πλέουσι δ' ὡς ἕκαστος ἦν τεταγμένος.
καὶ πάννυχοι δὴ διάπλοον καθίστασαν
ναῶν ἄνακτες πάντα ναυτικὸν λεών.
καὶ νὺξ ἐχώρει, κοὐ μάλ' Ἑλλήνων στρατὸς
κρυφαῖον ἔκπλουν οὐδαμῇ καθίστατο·
ἐπεί γε μέντοι λευκόπωλος ἡμέρα
πᾶσαν κατέσχε γαῖαν εὐφεγγὴς ἰδεῖν,
πρῶτον μὲν ἠχῇ κέλαδος Ἑλλήνων πάρα
μολπηδὸν ηὐφήμησεν, ὄρθιον δ' ἅμα
ἀντηλάλαξε νησιώτιδος πέτρας
ἠχώ· φόβος δὲ πᾶσι βαρβάροις παρῆν
γνώμης ἀποσφαλεῖσιν· οὐ γὰρ ὡς φυγῇ

372 ὑπ' εὐθύμου MIOA: ὑπερθύμου fere cett.

Xerxes this: when the darkness of black night fell, the Greeks would not stay there, but would leap up onto the benches and try to save their lives by making a furtive escape, each one of them going in a different direction. Because Xerxes did not understand that this Greek was tricking him, nor that the gods were against him, on hearing this he immediately gave a pre-battle speech to his admirals as follows. As soon the sun should cease burning the earth with its rays and darkness should take over the regions of the sky, they were to arrange the column of ships in three rows to guard the passageways leading out to the sounding sea, and other ships were to surround and encircle Ajax's island. If the Greeks avoided a horrid fate, and found some way of escaping secretly with their ships, the prescribed punishment for all his men would be beheading. This is what he said, and with a very optimistic heart, for he did not comprehend what the gods had in store.

And yet the Greeks prepared their dinner, in no disorderly manner but with hearts obedient to authority, and each sailor fastened his oar-handle to the peg, ready for rowing. When the sunlight failed and night came on, each sailor embarked, the king of his own oar, as did each man who was master of his weapons. The banks of rowers called out in encouragement to each other down the length of the ships, and they made sail, each according to his instructions. And all night long the ships' captains kept the entire naval force moving to and fro.

Night was departing, and the Greek force had not attempted any furtive escape whatever. As soon as the brilliant sight of daybreak and her white horses covered the earth, first a sung cry of good omen rang out loudly from the Greek side, and simultaneously a high-pitched echo sounded back in response from the island rocks. Terror fell on all the barbarians, mistaken in their expectation. For it was not in

παιᾶν' ἐφύμνουν σεμνὸν Ἕλληνες τότε,
ἀλλ' ἐς μάχην ὁρμῶντες εὐψύχῳ θράσει·
σάλπιγξ δ' ἀϋτῇ πάντ' ἐκεῖν' ἐπέφλεγεν.
εὐθὺς δὲ κώπης ῥοθιάδος ξυνεμβολῇ
ἔπαισαν ἅλμην βρύχιον ἐκ κελεύματος,
θοῶς δὲ πάντες ἦσαν ἐκφανεῖς ἰδεῖν.
τὸ δεξιὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐτάκτως κέρας
ἡγεῖτο κόσμῳ, δεύτερον δ' ὁ πᾶς στόλος
ἐπεξεχώρει. καὶ παρῆν ὁμοῦ κλύειν
πολλὴν βοήν· "Ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε,
ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
παῖδας γυναῖκας θεῶν τε πατρῴων ἕδη
θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών."
καὶ μὴν παρ' ἡμῶν Περσίδος γλώσσης ῥόθος
ὑπηντίαζε, κοὐκέτ' ἦν μέλλειν ἀκμή.
εὐθὺς δὲ ναῦς ἐν νηῒ χαλκήρη στόλον
ἔπαισεν· ἦρξε δ' ἐμβολῆς Ἑλληνικὴ
ναῦς, κἀποθραύει πάντα Φοινίσσης νεὼς
κόρυμβ'· ἐπ' ἄλλην δ' ἄλλος ηὔθυνεν δόρυ.
τὰ πρῶτα μέν νυν ῥεῦμα Περσικοῦ στρατοῦ
ἀντεῖχεν· ὡς δὲ πλῆθος ἐν στενῷ νεῶν
ἤθροιστ', ἀρωγὴ δ' οὔτις ἀλλήλοις παρῆν,
αὐτοὶ δ' ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐμβόλαις χαλκοστόμοις
παίοντ', ἔθραυον πάντα κωπήρη στόλον,
Ἑλληνικαί τε νῆες οὐκ ἀφρασμόνως
κύκλῳ πέριξ ἔθεινον· ὑπτιοῦτο δὲ
σκάφη νεῶν, θάλασσα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν ἰδεῖν,
ναυαγίων πλήθουσα καὶ φόνου βροτῶν·
ἀκταὶ δὲ νεκρῶν χοιράδες τ' ἐπλήθυον.
φυγῇ δ' ἀκόσμως πᾶσα ναῦς ἠρέσσετο,
ὅσαιπερ ἦσαν βαρβάρου στρατεύματος.
τοὶ δ' ὥστε θύννους ἤ τιν' ἰχθύων βόλον
ἀγαῖσι κωπῶν θραύμασίν τ' ἐρειπίων
ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον· οἰμωγὴ δ' ὁμοῦ
κωκύμασιν κατεῖχε πελαγίαν ἅλα,
ἕως κελαινὸν νυκτὸς ὄμμ' ἀφείλετο.
κακῶν δὲ πλῆθος, οὐδ' ἂν εἰ δέκ' ἤματα
στοιχηγοροίην, οὐκ ἂν ἐκπλήσαιμί σοι.
εὖ γὰρ τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδάμ' ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ

flight that the Greeks were then singing the sacred paean,
395 but rushing into battle with courage and confidence. A
trumpet fired their whole fleet on with its sound.
Immediately, on the command, they all pulled together
simultaneously, striking the deep salty sea, dashing it with
their oars. At great speed the whole fleet came clearly into
view. First, in the lead, came the right wing, in disciplined
400 and orderly fashion, and secondly the whole fleet came out
against us; at the same time we could hear a great shout: "O
sons of the Greeks, come on, liberate your fatherland,
liberate your children, your wives, the shrines of your
405 ancestral gods and the graves of your forefathers. Our
struggle now is on behalf of them all!" This was met from
our side by a clamour in the Persian tongue; it was no longer
time for delaying.

Straightaway a ship struck its bronze beak against a
410 ship. A Greek vessel began the ramming, and smashed off
the entire stern of a Phoenician ship; each captain steered his
ship against another. At first the flood of the Persian force
put up a resistance; but when the mass of their ships was
crowded together in a narrow strait, and they could not bring
415 any assistance to one another, they struck each other with
their bronze-mouthed beaks, and shattered all the rowing
equipment; the Greek ships judiciously encircled them and
made their strike, and ships' hulls were turned upside down,
and it was no longer possible to glimpse the sea, which was
420 brimming with wrecked ships and dead men. The shores and
reefs were brimming with corpses. Every ship was being
rowed in disorderly flight - every ship, that is, in the
barbarian fleet. But they kept on striking and splicing us
with broken oars and fragments of the wreckage as if we
425 were tunny or a catch of fish. At the same time groaning and
shrieking filled the sea, until black-eyed night brought it to
an end. I could not give you a full narrative about the
430 plethora of disasters even if I took ten days to go through it
line by line. For you can be certain that never in a single

πλῆθος τοσουτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν.
Βα. αἰαῖ, κακῶν δὴ πέλαγος ἔρρωγεν μέγα
Πέρσαις τε καὶ πρόπαντι βαρβάρων γένει.
Αγ. εὖ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδέπω μεσοῦν κακόν·
τοιάδ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἦλθε συμφορὰ πάθους,
ὡς τοῖσδε καὶ δὶς ἀντισηκῶσαι ῥοπῇ.
Βα. καὶ τίς γένοιτ' ἂν τῆσδ' ἔτ' ἐχθίων τύχη;
λέξον τίν' αὖ φῂς τήνδε συμφορὰν στρατῷ
ἐλθεῖν, κακῶν ῥέπουσαν ἐς τὰ μάσσονα.
Αγ. Περσῶν ὅσοιπερ ἦσαν ἀκμαῖοι φύσιν,
ψυχήν τ' ἄριστοι κεὐγένειαν ἐκπρεπεῖς,
αὐτῷ τ' ἄνακτι πίστιν ἐν πρώτοις ἀεί,
τεθνᾶσιν αἰσχρῶς δυσκλεεστάτῳ μόρῳ.
Βα. οἳ 'γὼ τάλαινα συμφορᾶς κακῆς, φίλοι.
ποίῳ μόρῳ δὲ τούσδε φῂς ὀλωλέναι;
Αγ. νῆσός τις ἐστὶ πρόσθε Σαλαμῖνος τόπων,
βαιά, δύσορμος ναυσίν, ἣν ὁ φιλόχορος
Πὰν ἐμβατεύει ποντίας ἀκτῆς ἔπι.
ἐνταῦθα πέμπει τούσδ', ὅπως, ὅτ' ἐκ νεῶν
φθαρέντες ἐχθροὶ νῆσον ἐκσῳζοίατο,
κτείνοιεν εὐχείρωτον Ἑλλήνων στρατόν,
φίλους δ' ὑπεκσῴζοιεν ἐναλίων πόρων,
κακῶς τὸ μέλλον ἱστορῶν. ὡς γὰρ θεὸς
ναῶν ἔδωκε κῦδος Ἕλλησιν μάχης,
αὐθημερὸν φάρξαντες εὐχάλκοις δέμας
ὅπλοισι ναῶν ἐξέθρῳσκον· ἀμφὶ δὲ
κυκλοῦντο πᾶσαν νῆσον, ὥστ' ἀμηχανεῖν
ὅποι τράποιντο. πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ χερῶν
πέτροισιν ἠράσσοντο, τοξικῆς τ' ἄπο
θώμιγγος ἰοὶ προσπίτνοντες ὤλλυσαν·
τέλος δ' ἐφορμηθέντες ἐξ ἑνὸς ῥόθου
παίουσι, κρεοκοποῦσι δυστήνων μέλη,
ἕως ἁπάντων ἐξαπέφθειραν βίον.
Ξέρξης δ' ἀνώμωξεν κακῶν ὁρῶν βάθος·
ἕδραν γὰρ εἶχε παντὸς εὐαγῆ στρατοῦ,

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444 οἰκτρῶς IOY δυστυχεστάτῳ Q[I]K[I]
450 ὅτ' ἐκ Elmsley: ὅτ' ἂν vel ὅταν codd.

day has such a large number of men died.

Queen *Aiai*! A vast ocean of catastrophes has burst out upon the Persians and the entire barbarian people.

Mess. You can be sure that they are not yet half narrated. Such was the suffering which happened after them that it outweighed them in the balance by at least twice.

Queen And what misfortune could be even more hateful than this? Tell me, what is this other disaster you say happened to our force to swing the balance even further down?

Mess. The Persians who were in their physical prime, most noble in spirit and distinguished in lineage, the ones always foremost in fidelity to the King himself - they died shamefully by the most inglorious of fates.

Queen *Oi*, how wretched I am at this terrible misfortune, friends. How do you say these men died?

Mess. There is an island in front of Salamis, small and difficult for ships to anchor in, where dance-loving Pan treads the seashores. Xerxes had sent these men there so that they could both make an easy killing of the enemy Greek force when they were shipwrecked and tried to make to the island for safety, and save their own comrades from the sea straits. So poorly did he understand what was to happen. For on the same day that god gave victory in the naval battle to the Greeks, they armoured their bodies with fine bronze weaponry, leapt out of their ships and encircled the whole island, so that our men had no idea where to turn. They were struck repeatedly by stones thrown from Greek hands, and arrows shot from the bow-string fell on them and destroyed them. In the end the Greeks, rushing at a single cry against them, struck them, butchered the poor men's limbs until they had all been deprived of life.

Xerxes wailed aloud as he saw the depth of the disaster. For he had a seat with a clear view of the whole

ὑψηλὸν ὄχθον ἄγχι πελαγίας ἁλός·
ῥήξας δὲ πέπλους κἀνακωκύσας λιγύ,
πεζῷ παραγγείλας ἄφαρ στρατεύματι,
ἵησ' ἀκόσμῳ ξὺν φυγῇ. τοιάνδε σοι
πρὸς τῇ πάροιθε συμφορὰν πάρα στένειν.
Βα. ὦ στυγνὲ δαῖμον, ὡς ἄρ' ἔψευσας φρενῶν
Πέρσας· πικρὰν δὲ παῖς ἐμὸς τιμωρίαν
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν ηὗρε, κοὐκ ἀπήρκεσαν
οὓς πρόσθε Μαραθὼν βαρβάρων ἀπώλεσεν·
ὧν ἀντίποινα παῖς ἐμὸς πράξειν δοκῶν
τοσόνδε πλῆθος πημάτων ἐπέσπασεν.
σὺ δ' εἰπέ, ναῶν αἳ πεφεύγασιν μόρον,
ποῦ τάσδ' ἔλειπες; οἶσθα σημῆναι τορῶς;
Αγ. ναῶν δὲ ταγοὶ τῶν λελειμμένων σύδην
κατ' οὖρον οὐκ εὔκοσμον αἴρονται φυγήν·
στρατὸς δ' ὁ λοιπὸς ἔν τε Βοιωτῶν χθονὶ
διώλλυθ', οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ κρηναῖον γάνος
δίψῃ πονοῦντες, οἱ δὲ < - - -
- - - οἱ δ'> ὑπ' ἄσθματος κενοὶ
διεκπερῶμεν εἴς τε Φωκέων χθόνα
καὶ Δωρίδ' αἶαν Μηλιᾶ τε κόλπον, οὗ
Σπερχειὸς ἄρδει πεδίον εὐμενεῖ ποτῷ·
κἀντεῦθεν ἡμᾶς γῆς Ἀχαϊΐδος πέδον
καὶ Θεσσαλῶν πόλεις ὑπεσπανισμένους
βορᾶς ἐδέξαντ'· ἔνθα δὴ πλεῖστοι θάνον
δίψῃ τε λιμῷ τ'· ἀμφότερα γὰρ ἦν τάδε.
Μαγνητικὴν δὲ γαῖαν ἔς τε Μακεδόνων
χώραν ἀφικόμεσθ', ἐπ' Ἀξιοῦ πόρον,
Βόλβης θ' ἕλειον δόνακα, Πάγγαιόν τ' ὄρος,
Ἠδωνίδ' αἶαν· νυκτὶ δ' ἐν ταύτῃ θεὸς
χειμῶν' ἄωρον ὧρσε, πήγνυσιν δὲ πᾶν
ῥέεθρον ἁγνοῦ Στρυμόνος. θεοὺς δέ τις
τὸ πρὶν νομίζων οὐδαμοῦ τότ' ηὔχετο
λιταῖσι, Γαῖαν Οὐρανόν τε προσκυνῶν.

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470 ἵησ' GF: ἵησ' MIOY: ᾗϊσ' A: ᾗξ' fere rell.
481 αἴρονται Elmsley: αἰροῦνται fere codd.
484 post οἱ δὲ lac. stat. Roussel
489 πόλεις Schiller: πόλις MBOY: πόλισμ' cett.

militia, a high bank close to the sea. He tore his robes and shrilly screamed, and straightaway gave an order to his infantry, rushing away in disorderly flight. You have to lament this disaster in addition to the former one.

Queen O loathsome deity, how you have deceived the minds of the Persians! The vengeance my son planned to exact from famous Athens turned bitter on him, and the barbarians whom Marathon destroyed were not enough for him. My son, expecting to exact requital for them, has brought on a multitude of afflictions. But you, tell me, which of the ships evaded destruction? Where did you leave them? Do you have knowledge so that you can give me a clear indication?

Mess. The commanders of the remaining ships hurriedly took to flight in disorder with a following wind. The rest of the force began dying off in the Boeotian land, some afflicted with thirst for shining spring-water, others [.....and others of us,] gasping for breath, made our way through to the country of the Phocians and the land of Doris and the Melian gulf, where Spercheios irrigates the plain with his benevolent waters. From there, starving, we arrived at the plain of the Achaean land and the cities of Thessaly; the majority died there from thirst and hunger, for both were rife. We came to Magnesia and the land of Macedonia, to the ford of Axios and Bolbe's reedy marsh and Mount Pangaion, Edonian territory. That night god induced wintry weather out of season, and the entire sacred flowing Strymon froze. Those who previously had not taken the gods at all seriously then called on them with prayers, prostrating themselves before Earth and Sky. When the army finished its numerous

ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλὰ θεοκλυτῶν ἐπαύσατο
στρατός, περᾷ κρυσταλλοπῆγα διὰ πόρον·
χῶστις μὲν ἡμῶν πρὶν σκεδασθῆναι θεοῦ
ἀκτῖνας ὡρμήθη, σεσωμένος κυρεῖ.
φλέγων γὰρ αὐγαῖς λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος
μέσον πόρον διῆκε, θερμαίνων φλογί·
πῖπτον δ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν· εὐτυχὴς δέ τοι
ὅστις τάχιστα πνεῦμ' ἀπέρρηξεν βίου.
ὅσοι δὲ λοιποὶ κἄτυχον σωτηρίας,
Θρῄκην περάσαντες μόγις πολλῷ πόνῳ
ἥκουσιν ἐκφυγόντες, οὐ πολλοί τινες,
ἐφ' ἑστιοῦχον γαῖαν· ὡς στένειν πόλιν
Περσῶν, ποθοῦσαν φιλτάτην ἥβην χθονός.
ταῦτ' ἔστ' ἀληθῆ· πολλὰ δ' ἐκλείπω λέγων
κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός.

Χο. ὦ δυσπόνητε δαῖμον, ὡς ἄγαν βαρὺς
ποδοῖν ἐνήλου παντὶ Περσικῷ γένει.

Βα. οἲ 'γὼ τάλαινα διαπεπραγμένου στρατοῦ·
ὦ νυκτὸς ὄψις ἐμφανὴς ἐνυπνίων,
ὡς κάρτα μοι σαφῶς ἐδήλωσας κακά.
ὑμεῖς δὲ φαύλως αὖτ' ἄγαν ἐκρίνατε.
ὅμως δ', ἐπειδὴ τῇδ' ἐκύρωσεν φάτις
ὑμῶν, θεοῖς μὲν πρῶτον εὔξασθαι θέλω·
ἔπειτα, Γῇ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς δωρήματα,
ἥξω λαβοῦσα πέλανον ἐξ οἴκων ἐμῶν -
ἐπίσταμαι μὲν ὡς ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις,
ἀλλ' ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν εἴ τι δὴ λῷον πέλοι.
ὑμᾶς δὲ χρὴ 'πὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς πεπραγμένοις
πιστοῖσι πιστὰ ξυμφέρειν βουλεύματα·
καὶ παῖδ', ἐάν περ δεῦρ' ἐμοῦ πρόσθεν μόλῃ,
παρηγορεῖτε, καὶ προπέμπετ' ἐς δόμους,
μὴ καί τι πρὸς κακοῖσι προσθῆται κακόν.

invocations of the gods it began making its way over the packed ice. And those of us who crossed quickly, before the sun-god's beams spread around, have survived. For the bright orb of the sun, blazing with its rays, heated the path with flame and drove through the middle of it. The men fell on one another, and lucky were they whose breath of life broke from them the fastest. The remnant who happened to survive - there are not many - are coming in flight to the hearths of their homeland, after just managing to pass through Thrace with much suffering. Such is the cause of grief for the city of the Persians, yearning for the country's beloved young men. These things are true. But my words omit many of the afflictions with which god blasted the Persians.

[*Exit the messenger*]

Chorus O grievous deity, you have leapt and stamped on the entire Persian race too heavily!

Queen *Oi*, what misery the destruction of the army brings me! O nocturnal vision, appearing to me in dreams, how very truly you revealed to me our tribulations! But you, friends, judged them to be of too little account. However, since your words ordained it, I want nevertheless first to make prayers to the gods. Then I shall come, after fetching gifts for Earth and the dead, a libation from my palace. I know that doing this cannot change what has happened, but it is for the future, in case things may improve. You should contribute trustworthy counsels about what has happened to us who trust you. And if my son arrives here before me, console him, and escort him to the palace, so that he does not pile any further afflictions on afflictions.

[*Exit the Queen in the direction of the palace.*]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, νῦν ‹ — › Περσῶν
τῶν μεγαλαύχων καὶ πολυάνδρων
στρατιὰν ὀλέσας
ἄστυ τὸ Σούσων ἠδ' Ἀγβατάνων
πένθει δνοφερῷ κατέκρυψας·
πολλαὶ δ' ἁπαλαῖς χερσὶ καλύπτρας
κατερεικόμεναι
διαμυδαλέους δάκρυσι κόλπους
τέγγουσ', ἄλγους μετέχουσαι.
αἱ δ' ἀβρόγοοι Περσίδες ἀνδρῶν
ποθέουσαι ἰδεῖν ἀρτιζυγίαν,
λέκτρων εὐνὰς ἁβροχίτωνας,
χλιδανῆς ἥβης τέρψιν, ἀφεῖσαι,
πενθοῦσι γόοις ἀκορεστοτάτοις.
κἀγὼ δὲ μόρον τῶν οἰχομένων
αἴρω δοκίμως πολυπενθῆ.

νῦν γὰρ δὴ πρόπασα μὲν στένει στρ. α.
γαῖ' Ἀσὶς ἐκκενουμένα.
Ξέρξης μὲν ἄγαγεν, ποποῖ,
Ξέρξης δ' ἀπώλεσεν, τοτοῖ,
Ξέρξης δὲ πάντ' ἐπέσπε δυσφρόνως
βαρίδεσσι ποντίαις.
τίπτε Δαρεῖος μὲν οὕτω τότ' ἀβλαβὴς ἐπῆν
τόξαρχος πολιήταις,
Σουσίδος φίλος ἄκτωρ;

πεζοὺς †τε γάρ† καὶ θαλασσίους ἀντ α.
†αἱ δ' ὁμόπτεροι† κυανώπιδες
ναῦες μὲν ἄγαγον, ποποῖ,
ναῦες δ' ἀπώλεσαν, τοτοῖ,
ναῦες πανωλέθροισιν ἐμβολαῖς,
διὰ δ' Ἰαόνων χέρας.

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532 νῦν τῶν OYQ[a]: νῦν <αἳ> Elmsley: <δὴ> Scholefield
535 Ἀγβατάνων M: Ἐκβατάνων cett.
536 στυγερῷ VNK[γρ]
553 βαρίδες τε ποντίαι MQ[t]
558 τε γὰρ fere codd: γὰρ τε Tr: γάρ σφε Maas
559 αἱ δ' del. Brunck

Chorus O Zeus my king, now you have destroyed
the army of the Persians
who could boast so many men,
and you have shrouded the citadel of Sousa and Agbatana
over with grief and gloom.
There are many women tearing their veils
with their soft hands,
soaking, drenching their breasts
with tears, taking their share of pain.
The softly wailing women of Persia
who long to see their recent bridegrooms,
the soft sheets of their nuptial beds,
the pleasures of luxuriant youth, abandon themselves
to grieving in insatiable laments.
And I myself genuinely sustain deep grief
for the fate of the departed.

For now the entire land of Asia mourns *str. 1*
emptied out of its men.
Xerxes led them away, *popoi,*
Xerxes destroyed them, *totoi,*
Xerxes wrong-headedly drove everything on in seafaring ships.
Why was Dareios, lord of the bow,
beloved leader of Sousa,
so benign in the past to his citizens?

Soldiers and sailors! *ant. 1*
Dark-eyed and sail-winged
ships led them away, *popoi,*
ships destroyed them, *totoi,*
ships manned by Ionians destroyed them
by lethal ramming.

τυτθὰ δ' ἐκφυγεῖν ἄνακτ' αὐτὸν, ὡς ἀκούομεν,
Θρῄκης ἂμ πεδιήρεις
δυσχίμους τε κελεύθους.

τοὶ δ' ἄρα πρωτομόροιο, φεῦ, στρ. β.
ληφθέντες πρὸς ἀνάγκας, ἠέ,
ἀκτὰς ἀμφὶ Κυχρείας, ὀᾶ,
‹ἔρρανται.› στένε καὶ δακνά-
ζου, βαρὺ δ' ἀμβόασον
οὐράνι' ἄχη, ὀᾶ·
τεῖνε δὲ δυσβάυκτον
βοᾶτιν τάλαιναν αὐδάν.

κναπτόμενοι δ' ἁλὶ δεινά, φεῦ, ἀντ. β.
σκύλλονται πρὸς ἀναύδων, ἠέ,
παίδων τᾶς ἀμιάντου, ὀᾶ.
πενθεῖ δ' ἄνδρα δόμος στερη-
θείς, τοκέες δ' ἄπαιδες
δαιμόνι' ἄχη, ὀᾶ,
δυρόμενοι γέροντες
τὸ πᾶν δὴ κλύουσιν ἄλγος.

τοὶ δ' ἀνὰ γᾶν 'Ασίαν δὴν στρ. γ.
οὐκέτι περσονομοῦνται,
οὐδ' ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσιν
δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις,
οὐδ' εἰς γᾶν προπίτνοντες
ἄρξονται· βασιλεία γὰρ διόλωλεν ἰσχύς.

οὐδ' ἔτι γλῶσσα βροτοῖσιν ἀντ. γ.
ἐν φυλακαῖς· λέλυται γὰρ
λαὸς ἐλεύθερα βάζειν,
ὡς ἐλύθη ζυγὸν ἀλκᾶς.
αἱμαχθεῖσα δ' ἄρουραν
Αἴαντος περικλύστα νᾶσος ἔχει τὰ Περσᾶν.

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567 δυσχίμους D'Arnaud: δυσχειμέρους fere codd.
568–9 πρωτομόροιο...ἀνάγκας Blomfield: πρωτόμοροι...ἀνάγκαν fere codd.
ληφθέντες IHBO^{ss}D^{ss}VNQ: λειφθέντες M cett.
571 <ἔρρανται> suppl. Hermann, cf. ad. 580
580 ἔρρανται, quod post ἄπαιδες habent codd., ad 571 transtulit Hermann

We hear that the King himself only just escaped
to the plains
and bleak pathways of Thrace.

str. 2

The first to meet their fate, *pheu,*
overtaken by necessity, *ēë,*
are shipwrecked against the shores of Cychreia, *oa.*
Groan and mourn; with a deep voice bewail aloud
your heaven-sent distress, *oa,*
and stretch out your miserable voice
in an agonising howl.

ant. 2

Lacerated terribly by the brine, *pheu,*
they are mangled by the voiceless children, *eë,*
of the undefiled sea, *oa.*
And each house deprived of a man grieves, and parents left childless
bewail in their old age, *oa,*
their heaven-sent distress,
as they learn the full measure of their affliction.

Not for long now will the inhabitants of Asia *str. 3*
abide under Persian rule,
nor pay further tribute
under compulsion to the King,
nor shall they be his subjects,
prostrating themselves on the ground; for the kingly power is destroyed.

Men will no longer curb their tongues; *ant. 3*
for people are released to talk freely
when a strong yoke
has been removed.
And the soil of Ajax's sea-washed island,
stained with gore, holds the remains of the Persians.

Βα. φίλοι, κακῶν μὲν ὅστις ἔμπειρος κυρεῖ,
ἐπίσταται βροτοῖσιν ὡς ὅταν κλύδων
κακῶν ἐπέλθῃ, πάντα δειμαίνειν φιλεῖ,
ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ, πεποιθέναι
τὸν αὐτὸν αἰὲν ἄνεμον οὐριεῖν τύχης.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἤδη πάντα μὲν φόβου πλέα·
ἐν ὄμμασίν τ' ἀνταῖα φαίνεται θεῶν,
βοᾷ δ' ἐν ὠσὶ κέλαδος οὐ παιώνιος·
τοία κακῶν ἔκπληξις ἐκφοβεῖ φρένας.
τοιγὰρ κέλευθον τήνδ' ἄνευ τ' ὀχημάτων
χλιδῆς τε τῆς πάροιθεν ἐκ δόμων πάλιν
ἔστειλα, παιδὸς πατρὶ πρευμενεῖς χοὰς
φέρουσ', ἅπερ νεκροῖσι μειλικτήρια,
βοός τ' ἀφ' ἁγνῆς λευκὸν εὔποτον γάλα,
τῆς τ' ἀνθεμουργοῦ στάγμα, παμφαὲς μέλι,
λιβάσιν ὑδρηλαῖς παρθένου πηγῆς μέτα,
ἀκήρατόν τε μητρὸς ἀγρίας ἄπο
ποτόν, παλαιᾶς ἀμπέλου γάνος τόδε·
τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐν φύλλοισι θαλλούσης βίον
ξανθῆς ἐλαίας καρπὸς εὐώδης πάρα,
ἄνθη τε πλεκτά, παμφόρου Γαίας τέκνα.
ἀλλ', ὦ φίλοι, χοαῖσι ταῖσδε νερτέρων
ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε, τόν τε δαίμονα
Δαρεῖον ἀνακαλεῖσθε· γαπότους δ' ἐγὼ
τιμὰς προπέμψω τάσδε νερτέροις θεοῖς.

Χο. βασίλεια γύναι, πρέσβος Πέρσαις,
σύ τε πέμπε χοὰς θαλάμους ὑπὸ γῆς,
ἡμεῖς θ' ὕμνοις αἰτησόμεθα
φθιμένων πομποὺς
εὔφρονας εἶναι κατὰ γαίας.
ἀλλά χθόνιοι δαίμονες ἀγνοί,
Γῆ τε καὶ Ἑρμῆ βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων,
πέμψατ' ἔνερθεν ψυχὴν ἐς φῶς·
εἰ γάρ τι κακῶν ἄκος οἶδε πλέον,
μόνος ἂν θνητῶν πέρας εἴποι.

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598 ἔμπειρος HBOY: ἔμπορος M cett.
602 αἰὲν ἄνεμον Weil: αἰεὶ δαίμον' fere codd.
632 πέρσας HB: πέρσαις $\Sigma^{\gamma p}V^{1}QK^{1}$

[*Enter the Queen, on foot, from the direction of the palace.*]

Queen Friends, whoever has experience of adversity knows that when a wave of disasters rears against people they tend to be utterly terrified. But when heaven blows gently, they believe that it will always grant the same wind of good fortune. I am already full of every kind of fear; hostile images from the gods appear before my eyes, and a din - no victory-song - rings in my ears. Such is the terror caused by the disaster which is driving me out of my mind. I have therefore made my way back from the palace without the chariot and finery I had before, carrying materials for a libation to propitiate my son's father, of the sort that appease the dead: delicious white milk from a pure heifer, glistening honey distilled from flowers, lustral water from a virgin spring, and pure liquid taken from its wild mother, this delightful product of an ancient vine. Here also are the fragrant fruit of a pale olive-tree, which flourishes in leaf perpetually, and garlands of flowers, the children of fruitful Earth. But you, friends, sing hymns to accompany these libations to the dead, and summon up the spirit of Dareios. I will send forth for the earth to drink these gifts in honour of the gods below.

Chorus My lady Queen, revered by the Persians,
you send the libations to the subterranean chambers,
and we with hymns will ask
the escorts of the dead
to be benevolent beneath the earth.
You, pure gods of the underworld,
Earth and Hermes and king of those below,
send up the soul from below into the light.
For if he knows any further cure for our problems,
he alone of men could tell how to bring it to pass.

ἦ ῥ' ἀΐει μου μακαρίτας ἰσοδαίμων βασιλεὺς στρ. α.
βάρβαρα σαφηνῆ
ἰέντος τὰ παναίολ' αἰανῆ δύσθροα βάγματα;
παντάλαν' ἄχη
διαβοάσω;
νέρθεν ἆρα κλύει μου;

ἀλλὰ σύ μοι, Γᾶ τε καὶ ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες, ἀντ. α.
δαίμονα μεγαυχῆ
ἰόντ' αἰνέσατ' ἐκ δόμων, Περσᾶν Σουσιγενῆ θεόν·
πέμπετε δ' ἄνω,
οἷον οὔπω
Περσὶς αἶ' ἐκάλυψεν.

ἦ φίλος ἀνήρ, φίλος ὄχθος· στρ. β.
φίλα γὰρ κέκευθεν ἤθη.
'Αϊδωνεὺς δ' ἀναπομπὸς ἀνείης, 'Αϊδωνεύς,
θεῖον ἀνάκτορα Δαριᾶνα· ἠέ.

οὔτε γὰρ ἄνδρας ποτ' ἀπώλλυ ἀντ. β.
πολεμοφθόροισιν ἄταις,
θεομήστωρ δ' ἐκικλήσκετο Πέρσαις, θεομήστωρ
δ' ἔσκεν, ἐπεὶ στρατὸν εὖ ποδούχει. ἠέ.

βαλλήν, ἀρχαῖος βαλλήν, ἴθι, ἰκοῦ, στρ. γ.
ἔλθ' ἐπ' ἄκρον κόρυμβον ὄχθου
κροκόβαπτον ποδὸς εὔμαριν ἀείρων,
βασιλείου τιήρας φάλαρον πιφαύσκων.
βάσκε πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν· οἴ.

ὅπως καινά τε κλύῃς νέα τ' ἄχη, ἀντ. γ.
δέσποτα δεσποτᾶν φάνηθι.
Στυγία γάρ τις ἐπ' ἀχλὺς πεπόταται·
νεολαία γὰρ ἤδη κατὰ πᾶσ' ὄλωλεν.

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650 ἀνείης Brunck: ἀνίησ' O: ἂν εἴη M^s: ἀνίη vel ἀνίει rell.
651 θεῖον Schütz: Δαρεῖον οἷον (vel οἷον) codd. ἀνάκτορα Δαριᾶνα Dindorf: ἄνακτα Δαρειὰν fere codd.
656 εὖ ποδούχει Dindorf: ὑπεδώκει M^a: ἐπεδώκει OY: ἐποδώκει M^1
666 δεσποτᾶν Dindorf: δεσπότου codd.

Does my blessed King, equal to a god, hear me *str. 1*
as I let forth in my barbarian language clear,
varied, ceaseless and harsh-sounding utterances?
Will my cries of misery and pain
get through?
Is he listening to me from below?

But you, Earth, and the other leaders of those below, *ant. 1*
permit the proud spirit
to come from your halls, the Sousa-born god of the Persians.
Send him up;
the soil of Persia
has never covered his like before.

Beloved was the man, beloved his funeral mound, *str. 2*
beloved the disposition of the person it has covered.
Aïdoneus, be his escort, Aïdoneus, send up
the divine ruler Darian! *ēë.*

For he never killed our men *ant. 2*
through the ruinous waste of war.
He was called godlike in counsel for the Persians, and
godlike in counsel
he was, since he steered the army well. *ēë.*

Shah, ancient Shah, come, draw near, *str. 3*
arrive at the very top of your funeral mound,
raising the yellow-dyed slippers on your feet,
and revealing the tip of your kingly tiara.
Come, benign father Darian! *oi.*

Come that you may hear about the strange new *ant. 3*
suffering;
master of masters, appear!
Some Stygian mist is floating overhead,
for all our young men have recently perished.

βάσκε πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν. οἴ.

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ· ἐπῳδός.
ὦ πολύκλαυτε φίλοισι θανών,
†τί τάδε δυνάτα δυνάτα
περὶ τᾷ σᾷ δίδυμα διαγόεν ἁμαρτία;†
πᾶσαι γᾷ τᾷδ' ἐξέφθινται τρίσκαλμοι
νᾶες ἄναες ἄναες.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ
ὦ πιστὰ πιστῶν ἡλικές θ' ἥβης ἐμῆς
Πέρσαι γεραιοί, τίνα πόλις πονεῖ πόνον;
στένει, κέκοπται, καὶ χαράσσεται πέδον.
λεύσσων δ' ἄκοιτιν τὴν ἐμὴν τάφου πέλας
ταρβῶ, χοὰς δὲ πρευμενὴς ἐδεξάμην.
ὑμεῖς δὲ θρηνεῖτ' ἐγγὺς ἑστῶτες τάφου,
καὶ ψυχαγωγοῖς ὀρθιάζοντες γόοις
οἰκτρῶς καλεῖσθέ μ'· ἐστὶ δ' οὐκ εὐέξοδον
ἄλλως τε πάντως, χοὶ κατὰ χθονὸς θεοὶ
λαβεῖν ἀμείνους εἰσὶν ἢ μεθιέναι.
ὅμως δ' ἐκείνοις ἐνδυναστεύσας ἐγὼ
ἧκω· τάχυνε δ', ὡς ἄμεμπτος ὦ χρόνου.
τί ἐστὶ Πέρσαις νεοχμὸν ἐμβριθὲς κακόν;

Χο. σέβομαι μὲν προσιδέσθαι, στρ.
σέβομαι δ' ἀντία λέξαι
σέθεν ἀρχαίῳ περὶ τάρβει.

Δα. ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ κάτωθεν ἦλθον σοῖς γόοις πεπεισμένος,
μή τι μακιστῆρα μῦθον ἀλλὰ σύντομον λέγων
εἰπὲ καὶ πέραινε πάντα, τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδῶ μεθείς.

Χο. δίομαι μὲν χαρίσασθαι, ἀντ.
δίομαι δ' ἀντία φάσθαι,
λέξας δύσλεκτα φίλοισιν.

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671 Δαρειὰν codd.
676–7 τᾷ σᾷ vel τὰ σὰ codd. διαγόεν M^a: διαγόεν δ' M^s: διὰ γόεν θ' $I^{\gamma\rho}$: διάγοιεν δ' vel διάγοιεν fere rell.
685 πρευμενὴς MQK: πρευμενεῖς cett.

Come, benign father Darian! *oi.*

Aiai, aiai! *epode*
O you whose death was much lamented by your friends,
master, master, what is the reason
for this double error(?)
For all the triple-banked ships of this land have been destroyed
and are ships no more, ships no more.

[*The ghost of Dareios appears over his funeral mound.*]

Dareios O faithful of the faithful, contemporaries of my youth, aged Persians, what is the sorrow the city is suffering? The ground groans, has been beaten, is being gashed. The sight of my wife close to the tomb fills me with fear; I received the libations graciously. But you are performing a dirge, standing near the tomb, and pitifully summon me, raising your voices in necromantic wails. Leaving Hades is especially difficult, and the gods of the underworld are better at taking than releasing. Nevertheless, since I have authority amongst them, I have come. But hurry, so that I cannot be reproached about the time I have spent. What is this new and onerous evil crushing the Persians?

Chorus Awesome to me is the sight of you, *str.*
awesome it is to me to speak face to face with you,
on account of my old fear of you.

Dareios Since I came here from below in obedience to your laments, do not make a long oration, but speak to me in concise words and get the whole matter over, casting aside the awe in which you hold me.

Chorus I am afraid to oblige *ant.*
I am afraid to answer,
in words hard for friends to utter.

Δα. ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δέος παλαιὸν σοὶ φρενῶν ἀνθίσταται,
τῶν ἐμῶν λέκτρων γεραιὰ ξύννομ', εὐγενὲς γύναι,
κλαυμάτων λήξασα τῶνδε καὶ γόων σαφές τί μοι
λέξον. ἀνθρώπεια δ' ἄν τοι πήματ' ἂν τύχοι βροτοῖς·
πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ θαλάσσης, πολλὰ δ' ἐκ χέρσου κακὰ
γίγνεται θνητοῖς, ὁ μάσσων βίοτος ἢν ταθῇ πρόσω.
Βα. ὦ βροτῶν πάντων ὑπερσχὼν ὄλβον εὐτυχεῖ πότμῳ,
ὡς ἕως τ' ἔλευσσες αὐγὰς ἡλίου ζηλωτὸς ὢν
βίοτον εὐαίωνα Πέρσαις ὡς θεὸς διήγαγες,
νῦν τέ σε ζηλῶ θανόντα, πρὶν κακῶν ἰδεῖν βάθος.
πάντα γάρ, Δαρεῖ', ἀκούσῃ μῦθον ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ·
διαπεπόρθηται τὰ Περσῶν πράγματθ', ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔπος.
Δα. τίνι τρόπῳ; λοιμοῦ τις ἦλθε σκηπτός ἢ στάσις πόλει;
Βα. οὐδαμῶς· ἀλλ' ἀμφ' Ἀθήνας πᾶς κατέφθαρται στρατός.
Δα. τίς δ' ἐμῶν ἐκεῖσε παίδων ἐστρατηλάτει; φράσον.
Βα. θούριος Ξέρξης, κενώσας πᾶσαν ἠπείρου πλάκα.
Δα. πεζὸς ἢ ναύτης δὲ πεῖραν τήνδ' ἐμώρανεν τάλας;
Βα. ἀμφότερα· διπλοῦν μέτωπον ἦν δυοῖν στρατευμάτοιν.
Δα. πῶς δὲ καὶ στρατὸς τοσόσδε πεζὸς ἤνυσεν περᾶν;
Βα. μηχαναῖς ἔζευξεν Ἕλλης πορθμόν, ὥστ' ἔχειν πόρον.
Δα. καὶ τόδ' ἐξέπραξεν, ὥστε Βόσπορον κλῆσαι μέγαν;
Βα. ὧδ' ἔχει· γνώμης δέ πού τις δαιμόνων ξυνήψατο.
Δα. φεῦ, μέγας τις ἦλθε δαίμων, ὥστε μὴ φρονεῖν καλῶς.
Βα. ὡς ἰδεῖν τέλος πάρεστιν οἷον ἤνυσεν κακόν.
Δα. καὶ τί δὴ πράξασιν αὐτοῖς ὧδ' ἐπιστενάζετε;
Βα. ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακωθεὶς πεζὸν ὤλεσε στρατόν.
Δα. ὧδε παμπήδην δὲ λαὸς πᾶς κατέφθαρται δορί;
Βα. πρὸς τάδ' ὡς Σούσων μὲν ἄστυ πᾶν κενανδρίαν στένει -

Dareios Since you men are inhibited by the old fear in your minds,
you, high-born lady, aged partner of my marriage bed, stop these tears and lamentations and tell me something clear. It is the human condition that calamities happen to men. For mortals face numerous hazards, coming both from the sea and the land, and the longer life is extended the more there are.

Queen O you who in your fortunate destiny outdid all men in prosperity, while you looked upon the sun's rays you were enviable, living your life happily among the Persians, like a god; and now I envy you, because you died before witnessing the depths of our disasters. You will hear, Dareios, the entire story in a brief statement: the Persians, "the destroyers of cities", have been utterly destroyed.

Dareios How? Were they blasted by some plague, or was there civic strife?

Queen Not at all. But the entire armed forces have been destroyed at Athens.

Dareios Which of my sons led a campaign there? Tell me.

Queen Raging Xerxes, after emptying the whole continent.

Dareios How did the poor wretch attempt this foolish enterprise - with the army or the navy?

Queen Both. The front was a double one, incorporating both forces.

Dareios How did such a great land army manage to get over there?

Queen He yoked the strait of Helle with contraptions to make a road over it.

Dareios He actually managed to close up the great Bosporos?

Queen Yes. But perhaps one of the gods facilitated his project.

Dareios Alas, it was a mighty god that came upon him, to make him lose his judgement.

Queen Indeed, for one can see the disastrous result of his achievement.

Dareios What happened to them to make you lament like this?

Queen The defeat of the navy determined the destruction of the land army.

Dareios Has the whole force then been completely wiped out by the spear?

Queen Yes: not only does all Sousa lament its emptiness of men...

Δα. ὦ πόποι κεδνῆς ἀρωγῆς κἀπικουρίας στρατοῦ.
Βα. Βακτρίων δ' ἔρρει πανώλης δῆμος †οὐδέ τις γέρων†.
Δα. ὦ μέλεος, οἵαν ἄρ' ἤβην ξυμμάχων ἀπώλεσεν.
Βα. μονάδα δὲ Ξέρξην ἔρημόν φασιν οὐ πολλῶν μέτα -
Δα. πῶς τε δὴ καὶ ποῖ τελευτᾶν; ἔστι τις σωτηρία;
Βα. ἄσμενον μολεῖν γέφυραν γαῖν δυοῖν ζευκτηρίαν.
Δα. καὶ πρὸς ἤπειρον σεσῶσθαι τήνδε, τοῦτ' ἐτήτυμον;
Βα. ναί· λόγος κρατεῖ σαφηνὴς τοῦτό γ'· οὐκ ἔνι στάσις.
Δα. φεῦ· ταχεῖά γ' ἦλθε χρησμῶν πρᾶξις, ἐς δὲ παῖδ' ἐμὸν
Ζεὺς ἀπέσκηψεν τελευτὴν θεσφάτων· ἐγὼ δέ που
διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου τάδ' ηὔχουν ἐκτελευτήσειν θεούς·
ἀλλ' ὅταν σπεύδῃ τις αὐτός, χὠ θεὸς συνάπτεται.
νῦν κακῶν ἔοικε πηγὴ πᾶσιν ηὑρῆσθαι φίλοις.
παῖς δ' ἐμὸς τάδ' οὐ κατειδὼς ἤνυσεν νέῳ θράσει,
ὅστις Ἑλλήσποντον ἱρὸν δοῦλον ὡς δεσμώμασιν
ἤλπισε σχήσειν ῥέοντα, Βόσπορον ῥόον θεοῦ,
καὶ πόρον μετερρύθμιζε, καὶ πέδαις σφυρηλάτοις
περιβαλὼν πολλὴν κέλευθον ἤνυσεν πολλῷ στρατῷ.
θνητὸς ὢν θεῶν τε πάντων ᾤετ', οὐκ εὐβουλίᾳ,
καὶ Ποσειδῶνος κρατήσειν· πῶς τάδ' οὐ νόσος φρενῶν
εἶχε παῖδ' ἐμόν; δέδοικα μὴ πολὺς πλούτου πόνος
οὑμὸς ἀνθρώποις γένηται τοῦ φθάσαντος ἁρπαγή.
Βα. ταῦτά τοι κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκεται
θούριος Ξέρξης· λέγουσι δ' ὡς σὺ μὲν μέγαν τέκνοις
πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω σὺν αἰχμῇ, τὸν δ' ἀνανδρίας ὕπο
ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῷον δ' ὄλβον οὐδὲν αὐξάνειν.
τοιάδ' ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ὀνείδη πολλάκις κλύων κακῶν
τήνδ' ἐβούλευσεν κέλευθον καὶ στράτευμ' ἐφ' Ἑλλάδα.
Δα. τοιγάρ σφιν ἔργον ἐστὶν ἐξειργασμένον
μέγιστον, ἀείμνηστον, οἷον οὐδέπω
τόδ' ἄστυ Σούσων ἐξεκείνωσεν πεσόν,

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732 οὐδέ τις πέρι Gomperz
753 τοι Dindorf: τοῖς codd.
761 Σούσων τ' ἐξεκείνωσεν πέδον Broadhead

Dareios Alas for the trusty protection and assistance the army gave!
Queen ...but all the Bactrian people have disappeared to a man.
Dareios O miserable wretch, the allies he lost were in their youthful prime.
Queen They say that only Xerxes, with hardly any men...
Dareios How and where did he end up? Is there any chance of his survival?
Queen ...gladly reached the bridge which yoked the two continents.
Dareios And so he has reached this continent safely; is this true?
Queen Yes. This account of events is clearly correct; there is no disagreement.
Dareios Alas! How swiftly oracles have been accomplished! Zeus has hurled down on my son the consummation of prophecies. I trusted, I suppose, that the gods would bring them to fulfilment in some far distant time. But when someone is himself hasty, god lends assistance, too. Now it seems that a fountain-spring of misery has been discovered for all those dear to me. And this was achieved by my son, uncomprehending in his youthful audacity, the man who thought he could constrain with fetters, like a slave, the sacred flowing Hellespont, the divine stream of the Bosporos. He altered the very nature of the strait, and by casting around it hammered shackles furnished a great road for his great army; although only a mortal, he foolishly thought that he could overcome all the gods, including Poseidon. Surely this must have been some disease affecting my son's mind? I am afraid that the great wealth I amassed by my labours may be plundered by the first comer.
Queen Raging Xerxes learned the idea from talking with wicked men. They said that while you had acquired great wealth for your children by your valour, his lack of manly courage made him play the warrior at home, and he did not increase the prosperity left by his father at all. It was because he heard reproaches of this kind expressed frequently by wicked men that he decided to implement the road over the Hellespont and the campaign against Greece.
Dareios And so he has brought about something so momentous, so unforgettable, that it has never before befallen: the complete emptying out of the city of Sousa. This has never happened

ἐξ οὗτε τιμὴν Ζεὺς ἄναξ τήνδ' ὤπασεν,
ἔν' ἄνδρ' ἁπάσης Ἀσίδος μηλοτρόφου
ταγεῖν ἔχοντα σκῆπτρον εὐθυντήριον.
Μῆδος γὰρ ἦν ὁ πρῶτος ἡγεμὼν στρατοῦ·
ἄλλος δ' ἐκείνου παῖς τόδ' ἔργον ἤνυσεν·
φρένες γὰρ αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ὠκοστρόφουν.
τρίτος δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Κῦρος, εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ,
ἄρξας ἔθηκε πᾶσιν εἰρήνην φίλοις·
Λυδῶν δὲ λαὸν καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐκτήσατο,
Ἰωνίαν τε πᾶσαν ἤλασεν βίᾳ.
θεὸς γὰρ οὐκ ἤχθηρεν, ὡς εὔφρων ἔφυ.
Κύρου δὲ παῖς τέταρτος ηὔθυνε στρατόν.
πέμπτος δὲ Μάρδος ἦρξεν, αἰσχύνη πάτρᾳ
θρόνοισί τ' ἀρχαίοισι· τὸν δὲ σὺν δόλῳ
Ἀρταφρένης ἔκτεινεν ἐσθλὸς ἐν δόμοις
ξὺν ἀνδράσιν φίλοισιν, οἷς τόδ' ἦν χρέος.
ἕκτος δὲ Μάραφις· ἕβδομος δ' Ἀρταφρένης
κἀγὼ· πάλου δ' ἔκυρσα τοῦπερ ἤθελον.
κἀπεστράτευσα πολλὰ σὺν πολλῷ στρατῷ,
ἀλλ' οὐ κακὸν τοσόνδε προσέβαλον πόλει.
Ξέρξης δ' ἐμὸς παῖς νέος ἐὼν νέα φρονεῖ,
κοὐ μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς.
εὖ γὰρ σαφῶς τόδ' ἴστ', ἐμοὶ ξυνήλικες·
ἅπαντες ἡμεῖς, οἳ κράτη τάδ' ἔσχομεν,
οὐκ ἂν φανεῖμεν πήματ' ἔρξαντες τόσα.
Χο. τί οὖν, ἄναξ Δαρεῖε; ποῖ καταστρέφεις
λόγων τελευτήν; πῶς ἂν ἐκ τούτων ἔτι
πράσσοιμεν ὡς ἄριστα Περσικὸς λεώς;
Δα. εἰ μὴ στρατεύοισθ' ἐς τὸν Ἑλλήνων τόπον,
μηδ' εἰ στράτευμα πλεῖον ἢ τὸ Μηδικόν.
αὐτὴ γὰρ ἡ γῆ ξύμμαχος κείνοις πέλει.
Χο. πῶς τοῦτ' ἔλεξας; τίνι τρόπῳ δὲ συμμαχεῖ;
Δα. κτείνουσα λιμῷ τοὺς ὑπερπόλλους ἄγαν.
Χο. ἀλλ' εὐσταλῆ τοι λεκτὸν ἀροῦμεν στόλον.
Δα. ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὁ μείνας νῦν ἐν Ἑλλάδος τόποις
στρατὸς κυρήσει νοστίμου σωτηρίας.

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778 seclusit Schütz
794 ὑπερπόλλους M^a: ὑπερπώλους M^sIAWDV: ὑπερκόμπους fere rell.

since lord Zeus bestowed this honour on us, that a single man should have command over all of sheep-rearing Asia, and wield the sceptre of authority. For Medos was the first leader of the people, and his son was the next to accomplish this task, for good sense steered his heart. Third in line came Kyros, a most fortunate man, whose rule brought peace to all his friends, and who acquired the peoples of Lydia and Phrygia and controlled all Ionia by force. For god held no grudge against him, since he was of kindly disposition. Kyros' son was the fourth to direct the host, and the fifth ruler was Mardos, a disgrace to his fatherland and the ancient throne. He was killed in the palace by noble Artaphrenes, along with some friends whose obligation it was. Sixth came Maraphis, seventh Artaphrenes, and then myself. The lot I desired fell to me. And I went on many military campaigns with a large army, but I never brought such a great catastrophe upon the city. My son Xerxes is a young man who thinks young thoughts and does not remember my injunctions. For know this well, contemporaries of mine: none of us who have wielded the royal power would ever have been responsible for so much suffering.

Chorus What then, lord Dareïos? What conclusion are your words pointing to? In the circumstances how can the Persian people do best?

Dareios Only if you take no expedition into Greek territory, not even if the Persian army is larger. For the very soil of Greece is their ally.

Chorus What do you mean? How is it an ally?

Dareios It starves to death any excess population.

Chorus But the force we will muster will be a fine one, carefully selected.

Dareios No. Even the forces now in Greek territory will fail to return home safely.

Χο. πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων
περᾷ τὸν Ἕλλης πορθμὸν Εὐρώπης ἄπο;
Δα. παῦροί γε πολλῶν, εἴ τι πιστεῦσαι θεῶν
χρὴ θεσφάτοισιν, ἐς τὰ νῦν πεπραγμένα
βλέψαντα· συμβαίνει γὰρ οὐ τὰ μέν, τὰ δ' οὔ.
κεἴπερ τάδ' ἐστί, πλῆθος ἔκκριτον στρατοῦ
λείπει κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν πεπεισμένος.
μίμνουσι δ' ἔνθα πεδίον Ἀσωπὸς ῥοαῖς
ἄρδει, φίλον πίασμα Βοιωτῶν χθονί·
οὗ σφιν κακῶν ὕψιστ' ἐπαμμένει παθεῖν,
ὕβρεως ἄποινα κἀθέων φρονημάτων,
οἳ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
ᾐδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·
βωμοὶ δ' ἄϊστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ἱδρύματα
πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανέστραπται βάθρων.
τοιγὰρ κακῶς δράσαντες οὐκ ἐλάσσονα
πάσχουσι, τὰ δὲ μέλλουσι, κοὐδέπω κακῶν
κρηπὶς ὕπεστιν, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἐκπιδύεται.
τόσος γὰρ ἔσται πέλανος αἱματοσφαγὴς
πρὸς γῇ Πλαταιῶν Δωρίδος λόγχης ὕπο·
θῖνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρῳ γονῇ
ἄφωνα σημανοῦσιν ὄμμασιν βροτῶν
ὡς οὐχ ὑπέρφευ θνητὸν ὄντα χρὴ φρονεῖν.
ὕβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦσ' ἐκάρπωσεν στάχυν
ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλαυτον ἐξαμᾷ θέρος.
τοιαῦθ' ὁρῶντες τῶνδε τἀπιτίμια
μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδέ τις
ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα
ἄλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέῃ μέγαν.
Ζεύς τοι κολαστὴς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν
φρονημάτων ἔπεστιν, εὔθυνος βαρύς.
πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐκεῖνον σωφρονεῖν κεχρημένοι
πινύσκετ' εὐλόγοισι νουθετήμασιν
λῆξαι θεοβλαβοῦνθ' ὑπερκόμπῳ θράσει.
σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιὰ μῆτερ ἡ Ξέρξου φίλη,
ἐλθοῦσ' ἐς οἴκους κόσμον ὅστις εὐπρεπὴς
λαβοῦσ' ὑπάντιαζε παιδί. πάντα γὰρ

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815 ἐκπιδύεται Schütz: ἐκπαιδεύεται fere codd.

Chorus What are you saying? Is the barbarian force not crossing the straits of Helle from Europe intact?

Dareios Few enough out of so many, if one who contemplates what has happened should have any trust in the gods' ordinances. They all without exception come to pass. This means that Xerxes, in leaving his selected troops behind, is deluded by empty hopes. They are waiting where the Asopos waters the plains with his streams, to fatten pleasingly the Boeotian land. The pinnacle of misery and suffering awaits them there, in requital for hubris and godless designs. When they went to the land of Greece they were not ashamed to steal images of gods, nor to set fire to temples; altars have vanished from sight, and the shrines of the gods have been uprooted from their foundations and turned upside down in total chaos. And so they suffer tribulations no less than those they have caused themselves, and they will suffer more, nor is there yet any solid base to their troubles: they are still welling up. So great will be the bloody sacrificial slaughter, caused by Doric spears, on the earth of Plataea. Piles of corpses will mutely signify to the eyes of people even three generations hence that mortals must not think thoughts above their station; for hubris flowers and produces a crop of calamity, and from it reaps a harvest of lamentation. Consider what the penalties for this are like, and remember Athens and Greece, so that no-one may scorn the situation god has put him in, lust after what belongs to others, and pour away great prosperity. For Zeus stands over and chastises arrogant minds, and he is a stern assessor. So in the light of this, use sensible words of warning to admonish Xerxes to behave temperately and stop offending the gods with his boasts and excessive confidence.

But you, aged and beloved mother of Xerxes, go home, get suitable clothing for your son, and meet him. For in his

κακῶν ὑπ' ἄλγους λακίδες ἀμφὶ σώματι
στημορραγοῦσι ποικίλων ἐσθημάτων.
ἀλλ' αὐτὸν εὐφρόνως σὺ πράϋνον λόγοις·
μόνης γάρ, οἶδα, σοῦ κλύων ἀνέξεται.
ἐγὼ δ' ἄπειμι γῆς ὑπὸ ζόφον κάτω.
ὑμεῖς δέ πρέσβεις χαίρετ', ἐν κακοῖς ὅμως
ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονὴν καθ' ἡμέραν,
ὡς τοῖς θανοῦσι πλοῦτος οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ.

Χο. ἦ πολλὰ καὶ παρόντα καὶ μέλλοντ' ἔτι
ἤλγησ' ἀκούσας βαρβάροισι πήματα.

Βα. ὦ δαῖμον, ὡς με πόλλ' ἐσέρχεται κακῶν
ἄλγη, μάλιστα δ' ἥδε συμφορὰ δάκνει,
ἀτιμίαν γε παιδὸς ἀμφὶ σώματι
ἐσθημάτων κλύουσαν, ἥ νιν ἀμπέχει.
ἀλλ' εἶμι, καὶ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἐκ δόμων
ὑπαντιάζειν παιδί μου πειράσομαι·
οὐ γὰρ τὰ φίλτατ' ἐν κακοῖς προδώσομεν.

Χο. ὦ πόποι ἦ μεγάλας ἀγαθᾶς τε πο- στρ. α.
λισσονόμου βιοτᾶς ἐπεκύρσαμεν, εὖθ' ὁ γεραιὸς
πανταρκὴς ἀκάκας ἄμαχος βασιλεὺς
ἰσόθεος Δαρεῖος ἄρχε χώρας.

πρῶτα μὲν εὐδοκίμους στρατιὰς ἀπε- ἀντ. α.
φαινόμεθ' ἠδε †νομί(σ)ματα πύργινα πάντ' ἐπεύθυνον†.
νόστοι δ' ἐκ πολέμων ἀπόνους ἀπαθεῖς
‹αὖθις ἐς› εὖ πράσσοντας ἄγον οἴκους.

ὅσσας δ' εἶλε πόλεις πόρον οὐ διαβὰς Ἅλυος στρ. β.
ποταμοῖο
οὐδ' ἀφ' ἑστίας συθείς·
οἷαι Στρυμονίου πελάγους Ἀχελωΐδες εἰσὶ πάροικοι
Θρῃΐκων ἐπαύλεις,

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845 κακῶν Schütz: κακὰ codd.
850 παιδί μου Burges: ἐμῷ παιδὶ MIWV
859 νομίματα MYA[1]: νομίσματα A[a]: νόμιμα τὰ fere cett.: πολίσματα Keiper
861 <αὖθις ἐς> suppl. Headlam ἐς ante οἴκους del. Porson
864 ὅσσας MAK: ὅσας cett.
865–6 ποταμοῖο οὐδ' Burney: ποταμοῦ οὐδ', ποταμ' οὐδ', ποταμοῦ δ', ποταμοῦ γ' οὐδ' codd.
870 ἐπαύλεις Wilamowitz: ἐπαύλων vel ἐπαυλέων fere codd.

anguish at the catastrophe he has completely ripped up the embroidered robes he is wearing into tattered threads. So calm him down with kind words; you, I know, are the only one he will be able to bear listening to.

I am now going back down into the subterranean darkness. Elders, farewell to you. Lend your souls to pleasure a day at a time, despite the difficulties, since wealth is of no use to the dead.

[*Dareios disappears from view.*]

Chorus It was agonising to hear about the barbarians' many tribulations, both now and in the future.

Queen O god, numerous harsh pains are afflicting me, but the misfortune which hurts me most of all to hear about is that my son is disgraced by his clothes on his body. I shall go and get robes from the palace and try to meet him. For I shall not fail those dear to me in a time of trial.

[*Exit the Queen in the direction of the palace.*]

Chorus *O popoi*, what a great and excellent *str. 1*
life of civic order was ours, when the old
all-sufficing undamaging invincible
godlike King Dareios ruled the land!

First we proved ourselves glorious on military campaigns, *ant. 1*
and then a system of laws, steadfast as towers, regulated everything(?)
Our men return to their homes again from wars
successfully, uninjured and unharmed.

How many cities he took without even crossing the river Halys, *str. 2*
without even leaving his hearth:
the Acheloian cities neighbouring the gulf of Strymon,
Thracian garrisons.

λίμνας τ' ἔκτοθεν αἳ κατὰ χέρσον ἐληλαμέναι ἀντ. β.
πέρι πύργον
τοῦδ' ἄνακτος ἄϊον,
Ἕλλας ἀμφὶ πόρον πλατὺν εὐχόμεναι, μυχία τε
Προποντίς,
καὶ στόμωμα Πόντου·

νᾶσοί θ' αἳ κατὰ πρῶν' ἅλιον περίκλυστοι στρ. γ.
τᾷδε γᾷ προσήμεναι,
οἵα Λέσβος ἐλαιόφυτός τε Σάμος,
Χίος ἠδὲ Πάρος, Νάξος, Μύκονος,
Τήνῳ τε συνάπτουσ' Ἄνδρος ἀγχιγείτων.

καὶ τὰς ἀγχιάλους ἐκράτυνε μεσάκτους, ἀντ. γ.
Λῆμνον Ἰκάρου θ' ἕδος
καὶ Ῥόδον ἠδὲ Κνίδον Κυπρίας τε πόλεις
Πάφον ἠδὲ Σόλους Σαλαμῖνά τε, τᾶς
νῦν ματρόπολις τῶνδ' αἰτία στεναγμῶν.

καὶ τὰς εὐκτεάνους κατὰ κλῆρον Ἰαόνιον πολυάνδρους ἐπῳδός.
†Ἑλλάνων ἐκράτυνε σφετέραις φρεσίν.†
ἀκάματον δὲ παρῆν σθένος ἀνδρῶν
τευχηστήρων παμμείκτων τ' ἐπικούρων.
νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀμφιλόγως θεότρεπτα τάδ' αὖ φέρομεν
πολέμοισι,
δμαθέντες μεγάλως πλαγαῖσι ποντίαισιν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἰὼ·
δύστηνος ἐγὼ, στυγερᾶς μοίρας
τῆσδε κυρήσας ἀτεκμαρτοτάτης.
ὡς ὠμοφρόνως δαίμων ἐνέβη
Περσῶν γενεᾷ· τί πάθω τλήμων;
λέλυται γὰρ ἐμῶν γυίων ῥώμη

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876 Ἕλλας τ' QKLb: τ' om. rell.
900 <πόλεις> post ἐκράτυνε suppl. Schütz
904 θεόπρεπτα MI^{a}OV: θεόθρεπτα Q

And the walled cities on dry land outside the lake *ant. 2*
knew him as their King,
proudly situated around the broad stream of Helle;
and the creeks of the Propontis,
and the mouth of the Black Sea.

And the sea-washed islands opposite the *str. 3*
coast of the peninsula, lying near this country,
such as Lesbos and olive-producing Samos,
Chios and Paros, Naxos, Mykonos,
and Andros the close neighbour of Tenos.

ant. 3

And he governed the sea-girt islands between the coasts,
Lemnos and Ikaria,
Rhodes and Cnidos, and the cities of Cyprus,
Paphos, Soloi and Salamis, whose
mother-state is the cause of the lamentations now.

And he governed in his wisdom the cities rich in *epode*
wealth and men in the Ionian land colonised by Greeks.
He had at hand the indefatigable strength of men
under arms and a great variety of allies.
But now there is no doubt that through wars we are enduring
the gods' reversal of our fortunes;
we have suffered a great defeat through blows inflicted at sea.

[*Enter Xerxes, in rags and on a curtained vehicle, from the same direction as the messenger.*]

XERXES

Iō!
Wretched me, I have suffered a loathsome
and totally unexpected fate!
How cruelly god has come down on the Persian race!
Miserable me, what is to become of me?
The vigour has gone from my limbs

τήνδ' ἡλικίαν ἐσιδόντ' ἀστῶν.
εἴθ' ὄφελεν, Ζεῦ, κἀμὲ μετ' ἀνδρῶν
τῶν οἰχομένων
θανάτου κατὰ μοῖρα καλύψαι.

Χο. ὀτοτοῖ, βασιλεῦ, στρατιᾶς ἀγαθῆς
καὶ περσονόμου τιμῆς μεγάλης,
κόσμου τ' ἀνδρῶν,
οὓς νῦν δαίμων ἐπέκειρεν.
γᾶ δ' αἰάζει τὰν ἐγγαίαν
ἥβαν Ξέρξᾳ κταμέναν, Ἄιδου
σάκτορι Περσᾶν· Ἀγβατάνων γὰρ
πολλοὶ φῶτες, χώρας ἄνθος,
τοξοδάμαντες, πάνυ ταρφύς τις
μυριὰς ἀνδρῶν, ἐξέφθινται.
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ κεδνᾶς ἀλκᾶς·
Ἀσία δὲ χθών, βασιλεῦ γαίας,
αἰνῶς αἰνῶς ἐπὶ γόνυ κέκλιται.

Ξε. ὅδ' ἐγών, οἰοῖ, αἰακτός· στρ. α.
μέλεος γέννᾳ γᾷ τε πατρῴᾳ
κακὸν ἄρ' ἐγενόμαν.

Χο. πρόσφθογγόν σοι νόστου ταύταν
κακοφάτιδα βοάν, κακομέλετον ἰὰν
Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος
πέμψω πολύδακρυν ἰαχάν.

Ξε. ἵετ' αἰανῆ πάνδυρτον ἀντ. α.
δύσθροον αὐδάν. δαίμων γὰρ ὅδ' αὖ
μετάτροπος ἐπ' ἐμοί.

Χο. ἧσω τοι καὶ <τὰν> πάνδυρτον,
†λαοπαθῆ τε σεβιζων ἁλίτυπά τε βάρη†
πόλεως γέννας πενθητῆρος.
κλάγξω δ' αὖ γόον ἀρίδακρυν.

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924 Ἀγβατάνων Brunck: ἀγδαβάται codd.: ἀδοβάται Hermann
926 ταρφύς τις Franz: γὰρ φύστις codd.
935 ταύταν Page: τὰν codd.
941 αἰανῆ καὶ codd.: καὶ del. Passow
944 καὶ <τὰν> anon.: κἀγὼ Paley: καὶ codd.
945 λαοπαθέα σέβων Prien

as I contemplate the advanced age of these citizens.
O Zeus, I wish that fate had shrouded me
with death as well,
along with the men who died.

Chorus *Ototoi*, my King! Alas for your noble army
and for the great prestige of imperial Persia,
and for the glorious men
whom god has now cut down!
Earth laments the youth of the young
men she bore, killed by Xerxes, who has crammed
Hades with Persians. Many men
from Agbatana - the flower of the land,
archers, a great thicket of men,
tens of thousands of them - are destroyed.
Aiai aiai - their cherished might!
The land of Asia, O King of the country,
has terribly, terribly been brought to her knees.

Xerxes Behold me - *oioi* - I am lamentable! *str. 1*
I have become a miserable blight
upon my family and my fatherland.

Chorus To salute your return I shall let forth this
cry of ill omen, the ill-auguring sound
of a Mariandynian mourner,
a wail full of tears.

Xerxes Let out your ceaseless, dismal, *ant. 1*
harsh-voiced noise, for god has now
changed course against me.

Chorus I shall indeed let out my dismal noise,
honouring the people's suffering, and the city of my birth,
which mourns the disasters incurred at sea.
I shall shriek a tearful lament.

Ξε. Ἰάων γὰρ ἀπηύρα, στρ. β.
Ἰάων ναύφαρκτος
Ἄρης ἑτεραλκὴς
νυχίαν πλάκα κερσάμενος
δυσδαίμονά τ' ἀκτάν.
Χο. οἰοιοῖ βόα καὶ πάντ' ἐκπεύθου.
ποῦ δὲ φίλων ἄλλος ὄχλος;
ποῦ δέ σοι παραστάται,
οἷος ἦν Φαρανδάκης,
Σούσας, Πελάγων καὶ Δατάμας
ἠδὲ Ψάμμις Σουσισκάνης τ'
Ἀγβάτανα λιπών;

Ξε. ὀλοοὺς ἀπέλειπον ἀντ. β.
Τυρίας ἐκ ναὸς
ἔρροντας ἐπ' ἀκταῖς
Σαλαμινιάσι, στυφελοῦ
θείνοντας ἐπ' ἀκτᾶς.
Χο. οἰοιοῖ <βόα>, ποῦ σοι Φαρνοῦχος
Ἀριόμαρδός τ' ἀγαθός;
ποῦ δὲ Σευάλκης ἄναξ
ἢ Λίλαιος εὐπάτωρ,
Μέμφις Θάρυβις καὶ Μασίστρας
Ἀρτεμβάρης τ' ἠδ' Ὑσταίχμας;
τάδε σ' ἐπανερόμαν.

Ξε. ἰὼ ἰώ μοι· στρ. γ.
τὰς ὠγυγίους κατιδόντες
στυγνὰς Ἀθάνας πάντες ἐνὶ πιτύλῳ,
ἐέ, ἐέ, τλάμονες ἀσπαίρουσι χέρσῳ.
Χο. ἦ καὶ Περσᾶν τὸν ἄωτον,
τὸν σὸν πιστὸν πάντ' ὀφθαλμὸν

960 ἠδὲ ἀγαβάτας codd.: ἀγαβάτας del. Passow
967 <βόα>, ποῦ σοι Hermann: ποῦ δὲ (vel δὴ) σοι codd.
977 ἔ ἔ ἔ fere codd.
978 Περσᾶν τὸν ἄωτον Page: τὸν (vel τῶν) Περσῶν αὐτοῦ codd.

Xerxes Robbed by the Ionian *str. 2*
– the Ionian – Ares, with his fences of ships,
favouring the other side,
ravaging the night-dark surface of the sea
and the ill-starred shore.
Chorus *Oioioi* - cry it out, and find everything out.
Where is the rest of your crowd of friends?
Where are your comrades,
such as Pharandakes,
Sousas, Pelagon and Datamas?
Psammis and Sousiskanes,
who left from Agbatana?

Xerxes I left them behind, destroyed, *ant. 2*
disappearing from Phoenician ships
onto the strands
of Salamis, striking
against the harsh coast.
Chorus *Oioioi* - cry it out; where are your Pharnouchos
and noble Ariomardos?
Where lord Seualkes
or Lilaios of noble birth?
Memphis, Tharybis and Masistras,
Artembares and Hystaichmas?
I put the question to you again.

Xerxes *Iō iō*, ah me! *str. 3*
When they saw Athens, ancient
and abhorrent, all at one oar-stroke –
ehe ehe - they lay gasping, poor wretches, on the shore.
Chorus And what of the best of the Persians,
your most faithful, all-seeing Eye?

μυρία μυρία πεμπαστὰν
< - - - - >, Βατανώχου
παῖδ' ἄλπιστον
τοῦ Σησάμα τοῦ Μεγαβάτα,
Πάρθον τε μέγαν τ' Οἰβάρην
ἔλιπες ἔλιπες; ὢ ὢ δαΐων.
Πέρσαις ἀγαυοῖς κακὰ πρόκακα λέγεις.

Ξε. ὔυγγά μοι δῆτ' ἀντ. γ.
ἀγαθῶν ἑτάρων ἀνακινεῖς,
‹ἄλαστ'› ἄλαστα στυγνὰ πρόκακα λέγων.
βοᾷ βοᾷ ‹μοι› μελέων ἔνδοθεν ἦτορ.
Χο. καὶ μὴν ἄλλους γε ποθοῦμεν,
Μάρδων ἀνδρῶν μυριοταγὸν
Ξάνθην Ἀρίον τ' Ἀγχάρην,
Δίαιξίν τ' ἠδ' Ἀρσάκην
ἱππιάνακτας,
†κὴγδαδάταν† καὶ Λυθίμναν
Τόλμον τ' αἰχμᾶς ἀκόρεστον.
ἔταφον ἔταφον οὐκ ἀμφὶ σκηναῖς
τροχηλάτοισιν ὄπιθεν ἑπομένους.

Ξε. βεβᾶσι γὰρ τοίπερ ἀγρέται στρατοῦ. στρ. δ.
Χο. βεβᾶσιν, οἴ, νώνυμοι.
Ξε. ἰὴ ἰή, ἰὼ ἰώ.
Χο. ἰὼ ἰώ δαίμονες,
<ὡς> ἔθετ' ἄελπτον κακὸν
διαπρέπον· οἷον δέδορκεν Ἄτα.

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981 lac. hic stat. West, post Ἄλπιστον Hermann
982 ἄλπιστον West: ἄλπνιστον Wecklein: Ἄλπιστον codd.
989 ἀνακινεῖς Headlam: ὑπομιμνήσκεις codd.
990 <ἄλαστ'> suppl. Hermann
991 <μοι> suppl. Dindorf
992 ἄλλους Prien: ἄλλο codd.
993 μυριοταγὸν Dindorf: μυριόταρχον $M^{a}H$: μυριόνταρχον M^{1}
997 καὶ Δαδάκαν Wilamowitz
1006 <ὡς> suppl. Johansen

The one who counted the tens of thousands
[——], the fairest son
of Batanochos,
son of Sesames, son of Megabates?
And Parthos and great Oibares -
did you leave them behind, leave them behind? *Ō ō*, for their misery!
You tell of evils beyond evils for high-born Persians.

Xerxes You stir up in me longing *ant. 3*
for my noble comrades,
telling of unforgettable - unforgettable - and loathsome evils beyond evils.
My heart cries out - cries out - from within my limbs.

Chorus There are yet others we long for -
Xanthes, commander of ten thousand
Mardians, and Anchares the Arian,
and Diaixis and Arsakes,
lords of the cavalry,
[——] and Lythimnas
and Tolmos, insatiable in war.
I am astounded - astounded - that they do not follow
behind the wheels of your curtained car.

Xerxes They have gone, those commanders of the army. *str. 4*

Chorus They have gone - *oi* - into obscurity.

Xerxes *Iē iē, iō iō*!

Chorus *Iō iō*, O gods,
you caused an unexpected and outstanding
disaster! How terribly Calamity looks at us!

Ξε. πεπλήγμεθ', οἵ, τᾶς δι' αἰῶνος τύχας - ἀντ. δ.
Χο. πεπλήγμεθ'· εὔδηλα γάρ -
Ξε. νέᾳ νέᾳ δύᾳ δύᾳ.
Χο. Ἰαόνων ναυβατᾶν
κύρσαντες οὐκ εὐτυχῶς.
δυσπόλεμον δὴ γένος τὸ Περσᾶν.

Ξε. πῶς δ' οὔ; στρατὸν μὲν τοσοῦ- στρ. ε.
τον τάλας πέπληγμαι.
Χο. τί δ' οὐκ ὄλωλεν, μεγάλατε, Περσᾶν;
Ξε. ὁρᾷς τὸ λοιπὸν τόδε τᾶς ἐμᾶς στολᾶς;
Χο. ὁρῶ ὁρῶ.
Ξε. τόνδε τ' ὀϊστοδέγμονα -
Χο. τί τόδε λέγεις σεσωμένον;
Ξε. θησαυρὸν βελέεσσιν;
Χο. βαιά γ' ὡς ἀπὸ πολλῶν.
Ξε. ἐσπανίσμεθ' ἀρωγῶν.
Χο. Ἰάνων λαὸς οὐ φυγαίχμας.

Ξε. ἄγαν ἄρειος· κατεῖ- ἀντ. ε.
δον δὲ πῆμ' ἄελπτον.
Χο. τραπέντα ναύφαρκτον ἐρεῖς ὅμιλον;
Ξε. πέπλον δ' ἐπέρρηξ' ἐπὶ συμφορᾷ κακοῦ.
Χο. παπαῖ παπαῖ.
Ξε. καὶ πλέον ἢ παπαῖ μὲν οὖν.
Χο. δίδυμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ τριπλᾶ -
Ξε. λυπρά· χάρματα δ' ἐχθροῖς.
Χο. καὶ σθένος γ' ἐκολούθη.
Ξε. γυμνός εἰμι προπομπῶν.
Χο. φίλων ἄταισι ποντίαισιν.

Ξε. δίαινε διαΐνε πῆμα· πρὸς δόμους δ' ἴθι. στρ. ζ.
Χο. αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δύα δύα.
Ξε. βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

1008 οἵ, τᾶς...τύχας West: οἵαι (vel οἵᾳ)...τύχαι fere codd.
1026 ἄγαν ἄρειος Wellauer: ἀγανόρειος vel -όριος codd.

Xerxes We have been struck down - *oi* - from our lifelong good fortune... *ant. 4*

Chorus We have been struck down; for it is clear....

Xerxes ... by new anguish, by new anguish!

Chorus ... that we encountered the Ionian sailors to our misfortune.
The Persian race is unlucky in war.

Xerxes How could it be otherwise? It is a miserable blow for me to have lost so great an army. *str. 5*

Chorus Is anything left of the Persians, O man of great calamity?

Xerxes Do you see what remains of my outfit?

Chorus I see, I see.

Xerxes And this quiver...

Chorus What is this that you say has survived?

Xerxes ...the storehouse of arrows?

Chorus Little enough out of so much.

Xerxes We have been deprived of those who defended us.

Chorus The Ionian people do not run away from battle.

Xerxes They are too warlike; I watched an unexpected disaster. *ant. 5*

Chorus Do you mean the rout of our naval force?

Xerxes I ripped my gown because of the disaster which happened.

Chorus *Papai, papai*!

Xerxes And even more than *papai*.

Chorus Twofold, threefold are...

Xerxes ...our afflictions. But they delight our adversaries.

Chorus Yes, and our strength was shorn off.

Xerxes I am stripped bare of escorts.

Chorus By the disasters incurred by our friends at sea.

Xerxes Weep, weep at the disaster; proceed towards the palace. *str. 6*

Chorus *Aiai, aiai*, agony, agony.

Xerxes Cry out in response to me.

Χο. δόσιν κακὰν κακῶν κακοῖς.
Ξε. ἴυζε μέλος ὁμοῦ τιθείς.
Χο. ὀτοτοτοτοῖ·
βαρεῖά γ' ἅδε συμφορά·
οἴ, μάλα καὶ τόδ' ἀλγῶ. 1045

Ξε. ἔρεσσ' ἔρεσσε καὶ στέναζ' ἐμὴν χάριν. ἀντ. ζ.
Χο. διαίνομαι γοεδνὸς ὤν.
Ξε. βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.
Χο. μέλειν πάρεστι, δέσποτα.
Ξε. ἐπορθίαζέ νυν γόοις. 1050
Χο. ὀτοτοτοτοῖ·
μέλαινα δ' ἀμμεμείξεται,
οἴ, στονόεσσα πλαγά.

Ξε. καὶ στέρν' ἄρασσε κἀπιβόα τὸ Μύσιον. στρ. η.
Χο. ἄνια, ἄνια. 1055
Ξε. καί μοι γενείου πέρθε λευκήρη τρίχα.
Χο. ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα, μάλα γοεδνά.
Ξε. ἀΰτει δ' ὀξύ.
Χο. καὶ τάδ' ἔρξω.

Ξε. πέπλον δ' ἔρεικε κολπίαν ἀκμῇ χερῶν. ἀντ. η.
Χο. ἄνια, ἄνια. 1061
Ξε. καὶ ψάλλ' ἔθειραν καὶ κατοίκτισαι στρατόν.
Χο. ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα, μάλα γοεδνά.
Ξε. διαίνου δ' ὅσσε.
Χο. τέγγομαί τοι. 1065

Ξε. βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι. ἐπῳδός.
Χο. οἰοῖ οἰοῖ.
Ξε. αἰακτὸς ἐς δόμους κίε.
Χο. ἰὼ ἰώ· Περσὶς αἶα δύσβατος. 1070
Ξε. ἰωὰ δὴ κατ' ἄστυ.
Χο. ἰωὰ δῆτα, ναὶ ναί.

1052 ἀμμεμείξεται Dindorf: αὖ μεμίξεται codd.
1053 οἴ Lachmann: μοι codd.
1054 κἀπιβῶ Dindorf: καὶ βόα Hermann ex Eust., Αἰσχύλος φησί· βόα τὸ Μύσιον.

Chorus A wretched response of wretched cries to wretched cries.
Xerxes Shout your song along with me.
Chorus *Ototototoi*!
This misfortune is hard to bear:
oi, this pains me exceedingly too.

Xerxes Row with your arms like oars, row them, and groan for my sake. *ant. 6*
Chorus I weep in my distress.
Xerxes Cry out in response to me.
Chorus This is my concern, master.
Xerxes Raise high your voice in wailing.
Chorus *Ototototoi*!
Groans will mingle,
oi, with blackening blows.

Xerxes Beat your breast and cry out the Mysian lament. *str. 7*
Chorus Agonising, agonising!
Xerxes And ravage for me the white hair of your beard.
Chorus I do so with tightly clutching hands and terrible despair.
Xerxes Scream sharply.
Chorus This too I will do.

Xerxes Tear the robe on your breast with your finger-nails. *ant. 7*
Chorus Agonising, agonising!
Xerxes Pluck your hair and pity the army.
Chorus I do so with tightly clutching hands and terrible despair.
Xerxes Let tears fall from your eyes.
Chorus My eyes are wet.

Xerxes Cry out in response to me. *epode*
Chorus *Oioi*, *oioi*.
Xerxes Wail as you proceed towards the palace.
Chorus *Iō*, *iō*; the Persian earth is hard to tread.
Xerxes Cry *iōa* throughout the city.
Chorus *Iōa* indeed; yes, yes.

Ξε. γοᾶσθ' ἁβροβάται.
Χο. ἰὼ ἰώ· Περσὶς αἶα δύσβατος.
Ξε. ἠὴ ἠή, τρισκάλμοισιν, 1075
<Χο.> ἠὴ ἠή, βάρισιν ὀλόμενοι.
<Ξε. πρόπεμπέ νύν μ' ἐς οἴκους.>
Χο. πέμψω τοί σε δυσθρόοις γόοις.

1076 choro redd. West
1077 exempli gratia suppl. West

Xerxes Wail, you who tread softly.
Chorus *Iō, iō*; the Persian earth is hard to tread.
Xerxes *Ē-ē, ē-ē*, triple-banked....
Chorus ....*ē-ē, ē-ē*, were the ships in which they died.
<Xerxes Escort me home now.>
Chorus I will indeed escort you with harsh-voiced wails.

[*Xerxes and the chorus exeunt in the direction of the palace.*]

Commentary

(Throughout this book line references are to the Greek text, rather than to the translation, of which the numeration is occasionally slightly different: a line reference followed by an asterisk (e.g. 8) refers to the commentary on that line in the Greek text).*

Hypothesis

This ancient preface to the play is probably a late compilation of observations dating back to the Hellenistic scholars of Alexandria. It is included in the manuscripts with a certain degree of variation, especially in connection with its account of the Persian wars.

Glaucus: It would be comforting to be able firmly to identify this unknown ancient scholar with Glaucus of Rhegium (in southern Italy), a late fifth-century critic writing within decades of both Phrynichus and Aeschylus.
modelled: On the interpretation of the Greek term παραπεποιῆσθαι rests our view of the extent to which Aeschylus' play was dependent on his predecessor. The verb παραποιεῖν can have a pejorative connotation: Thucydides uses it of making a false copy of a seal (1.132), and it can mean 'to parody' (Dio Chrys. 32.81). But it usually means 'to alter slightly' (Paus. 5.10.1), or 'to copy with alterations' (Athen. *Deipn.* 12.513a). However much Aeschylus adapted from Phrynichus' play, we can be certain that he did make some significant alterations (discussed below).
"These...": If the first lines of the two plays are representative, Aeschylus did not simply reproduce any of the work of Phrynichus. Although similar, the opening words differed in metre, in terms of the verb in the participle (βεβηκότων / οἰχομένων), and in Aeschylus' omission of the word πάλαι ('long ago').
Phrynichus: On this tragedian and his work see Introduction, pp. 7 and 14.
eunuch: The eunuchs of the Persian court fascinated the Greeks, who found them emblematic of the effeminacy and the cruelty which they attributed to their historic enemy. Eunuchs appeared in Sophocles' *Troilus* and Euripides' *Orestes* (see Hall 1989, 157-8).
defeat: Phrynichus' play was constructed completely differently if the audience was aware from the prologue onwards that Xerxes had been vanquished.
prepared: The Greek στορέννυμι means 'to strew' or 'put coverings on' something, often to 'make up' a bed (e.g. *Il.* 9.621). By having his eunuch put out cushions or rugs, Phrynichus was playing on the Greeks' obsession with the luxurious textiles of the Persian court (see 543-5*).
thrones: Although θρόνος can simply mean 'chair', it probably here implies regal thrones of state (see e.g. Hdt. 1.14).
magistrates: In Herodotus (7.147, 8.138) the word πάρεδροι is used specifically of the special counsellors who 'sat beside' Xerxes, although it can often have the technical sense 'state magistrate'.
elders: It was a big change to substitute senior male Persians for Phrynichus' female Phoenicians, and may suggest that Aeschylus changed the focus of the play from private bereavement to public grief at a catastrophe afflicting the empire as a whole.

Greece: Some manuscripts add here details of the size of the cavalry and navy.
Menon: A fourth-century inscription allows us to date Menon's archonship to 473/2, and therefore Aeschylus' production to the spring of 472 (*IG* ii^2 2318 = *TgrF* I DID A 1); the inscription adds that Pericles was the *chorēgos.*
***Phineus...*:** On these plays see Introduction, pp. 10–11.
Atossa: See 155*.

1-154: Parodos

The chorus of elderly Persian royal advisers, greying and bearded (1056), dressed in long ceremonial robes (πέπλοι, 1060), file into the theatre via the *parodoi*, the passages to the sides of the central dancing area (*orchēstra).* Their entrance song is designed to inform the audience of the precise chronological point at which actors and audience are collectively entering, through the medium of dramatic illusion, the Persian city of Sousa: the Persian army left for Greece some time ago, and has long since crossed the Hellespont, but no news has yet arrived as to the outcome of the expedition.

The *parodos* falls into three distinct parts. (i) A 'programmatic' section (1-64), whose temporal focus is the past. After explaining their own identity, status, and topographical location, the chorus give an account of recent events, including an overview of the contingents and commanders who have followed Xerxes to Greece but of whom they have as yet had no news. The metre is the so-called 'marching anapaest', a metre from archaic times associated with a synchronised military pace (see further Raven 1968, 56-61, West 1987, 29, 48-9): it was probably chanted, since anapaests followed a musical line dissimilar from the natural pitch of the tonal Greek language (Pötscher 1959); strophic lyrics in *Persae* are usually preceded by anapaests (532-47, 623-32, 908-31), and may have been used to occupy the time while the chorus arranged themselves for the stasima (Ruijgh 1989). M.L. West calculates that since an anapaestic metron (∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –) corresponded to a double pace, the chorus probably took 119 double paces during this section (1990a, 8). (ii) A more emotional, imaginative, and pessimistic section (65-139), which moves from the past into the future. The metre changes to lyrics, with the 'Ionic *a minore*' prominent (65-139*). The chorus express their acute anxiety about the fate of the Persian forces, offer images of Xerxes crossing the Hellespont and leading his great army from his royal chariot, and anticipate the terrible distress and scenes of mourning which a Persian defeat would inflict on their people. (iii) A brief, pragmatic section (140-54), which returns abruptly to the present situation, marked by the return to anapaests. The chorus recall their current purpose - to reflect on the situation - but are interrupted by the arrival of the Queen.

1-2 "The Faithful"...Greece: The Persian counsellors refer to themselves in the neuter plural (τάδε), a construction which tends to lend an impersonal or formal effect: in this play it suggests the self-conscious formality of the Persia court: cf. 171 (γηραλέα πιστώματα), 681 (πιστὰ πιστῶν), and 851 (τὰ φίλτατ'). Here it lends a solemn tone to the opening line. The Greeks believed that the Persian kings named their close advisors by an Iranian term meaning 'The Faithful' (Hdt. 1.108, Xen. *Anab.* 1.5.15); the stem *pist-* recurs in reference to the chorus and other important figures in Xerxes' regime (171, 443, 681, 979). By choosing it

Aeschylus makes the first of many attempts at lending authentic ethnographic colour to his evocation of Persia. The fundamental opposition of the whole play, Persia/Greece, is set up immediately. **who have gone:** The verb οἴχομαι (go) could be translated throughout by 'depart', providing the same ambiguity and overtone of death as the Greek term (*LSJ* s.v. οἴχομαι II.1). Aeschylus gradually unfolds the implications of the verb in this anapaestic section (see 13, 60, Winnington-Ingram 1973a).

3 **the sumptuous palace:** The luxury and wealth of Persia and its court is to be a recurring issue until Dareios' climactic statement at 842 that wealth is of no use to the dead. The chorus do not use a deictic to say '*this*' sumptuous palace, because the play is set at a sufficient distance from the royal household for the Queen's chariot entrance (at 155) to be plausible. **rich in gold:** The gold of Asia, contrasted with the silver from the Attic mines at Laureion (238*), is one of the standard poetic signifiers of the barbarians in this play, mentioned several more times in the parodos alone (45, 53, 80).

4-6 **lord Xerxes...son of Dareios:** One of the means by which Aeschylus suggests the hierarchy and extravagant protocol of the Persian court is by the serial accumulation of titles bestowed on members of the royal family (see e.g. 155-7, 633-4, 854-6). **seniority:** The chorus members are elderly, contemporaries of the dead Dareios (681), but the term πρεσβεία also implies seniority in status.

8 **the homecoming:** This play is the first of many by all three tragedians with a plot structured around the return home (*nostos*) of the male head of the household (e.g. Aesch. *Ag.*, Soph. *Trach.*, Eur. *HF*). The archetypes of the nostos-plot were the cyclic epic 'Returns' (*Nostoi*), which told of the returns of heroes such as Agamemnon from Troy, and, of course, the *Odyssey*. The theme is picked up by the chorus of this play at 935, shortly after the long-awaited arrival of Xerxes (see also 261).

9 **gold-bedecked:** The army, like the palace (3), is rich in gold. Although Wecklein's popular emendation πολυάνδρου ('of many men') makes arguably better sense in the light of line 12 (and cf. 73 and 533), πολυχρύσου is an appropriate enough epithet for the army: Herodotus (9.80) remarks on the golden spoils the Greeks took from the Persians after Plataea; a possibly Simonidean epigram quoted by a fourth-century orator calls the Medes at Marathon 'gold-bearing' (χρυσοφόρων): Simonides *EG* 21.2).

10 **prophetic of disaster:** At Aesch. *Sept.* 722 the Erinys that Oedipus called down upon his sons is likewise κακόμαντις. Aeschylus typically slightly adapts a familiar Homeric expression: in the first book of the *Iliad* Agamemnon calls Calchas 'prophet of evil' (μάντι κακῶν, 106). On Aeschylus' physiology of the emotions see 745-50*. **is troubled:** A strange word, explained by Hesychius as ταράσσεται ('is disturbed'): see the discussion in Pernée 1985. The verb ὀρσολοπέω is identical in meaning to ὀρσολοπεύω: in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* the divine infant asks Apollo 'why are you angrily harassing me?' (χολούμενος ὀρσολοπεύεις, 308). Cf. Anacreon's epithet of Ares, ὀρσόλοπος, 'troublesome' (fr. 393 *PMG*).

13 **clamours at the young man:** βαΰζει is an unexpected word to find in the context, since this metaphor from the barking of dogs often implies the murmured

expression of secret, hostile, or disaffected sentiments (*Ag.* 449-50), although here it may imply the foreignness of the language, for at *Pers.* 574-5 the chorus describes its own voice as making a sadly 'barked' (δυσβάυκτον) noise in lamentation. The text could be translated 'snarls that the man is too young', or 'murmurs at having a youthful (or new) king', or even 'snarls "the man is young!"'. There may be textual corruption. The youth and inexperience of Xerxes later in the play certainly become part of its explanation for his disastrous career (744, 782, see Paduano 1978, 95-6), although in reality Xerxes, at around forty years of age, was no spring chicken at the time of Salamis.

14 **no messenger:** Although it is unlikely in the extreme that in reality no news of the army had come to the palace by this stage, the lack of awareness here expressed by the chorus is necessary if the extended 'messenger scene' (249-514) is to achieve its full emotional impact. **on foot or on horseback:** The normal tragic messenger arrives on foot. It is possible that Aeschylus is suggesting the *angarēion* (a Persian loan-word), the Persians' fast and efficient courier-system described by Herodotus, in which one horseback courier handed over daily to another at stage-posts along the route (8.98). The word *angaros* occurs in reference to the beacon fires in *Agamemnon* (282). In Timotheus' *Persians* one of the barbarians dying at Salamis is described as coming 'from the land of couriers who run across it in a day' (fr. 791.40-2 *PMG*).

16-18 **Forsaking Sousa:** This implies that all the commanders and contingents to be enumerated between 21 and 32 had mustered at Sousa before the expedition. **Agbatana:** The capital of the old Median empire, crushed and assimilated by the Persians under Kyros in 550/49; the Greeks used the names 'Medes' and 'Persians' interchangeably. Aeschylus in this play uses a Hellenised form of the name closer to the authentic Persian *Ha^{m}gmatana* ('place of assembly') than the usual Hellenisation *Ekbatana*, which suggests an authentically Persian form of pronunciation (Kranz 1933, 86). Cf. 535, 961. **Kissia:** According to Herodotus Kissia was the district within which the city of Sousa was situated (5.49), although this play may imply that it was a separate community (120). Aeschylus may have derived the name from the Ionian Hecataeus' proto-historical *Periegesis* (I *FgrH* F 284): see 21-58*. **they went:** The postponement of the verb (see also 25) helps to suggest the sheer size of the forces.

21-58 The chorus embark on a catalogue of the commanders of the Persians' army and navy, and the contingents they led, similar to the poeticised cartography to be found elsewhere in Aeschylus (see 480-514*). It is conspicuous that it does not include any of the Greek peoples and leaders who fought for Xerxes (see 771, 852-907*). The military catalogue had of course an ancient archetype in the tradition of oral epic: see especially the catalogues of Achaean and Trojan forces in the *Iliad* (2.494-759, 816-77) and the catalogue of Trojan allies which concluded the lost cyclic *Cypria* (Proclus, *Chrest.* 80 = *PEG*, p. 43). Catalogues of foreign-sounding peoples and places were familiar from the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, especially books 2-3: see Merkelbach 1968, 136-9, M.L. West 1985, 76-91, 144-54, Hall 1989, 35-7. But many scholars assume that Aeschylus' source for the catalogues was Hecataeus' *Periegesis*; Hecataeus is described by Herodotos in a meeting at Miletus, 'enumerating all the tribes under

Dareios and showing how great the king's power was' (5.36). Although Aeschylus may have derived some place-names from Hecataeus (see 16-18*, 317*, 935-40*), and possibly some information on barbarian clothes (see 660*), there is however no way of proving the extent of his debt to the early historian (see Introduction, pp. 14–15).

21-32 The catalogue commences with Persian commanders.

21 **Amistres:** The first proper name in the first of six such catalogues of barbarian military commanders, also marking the messenger's first long speech (302-27), and Xerxes' *kommos* (958-61, 967-72, 981-5, 993-9). In striking contrast, not a single Greek individual is ever named (see 355*). These passages create within Greek diction the impression of barbarian speech, especially where they are listed consecutively with no Greek words to dilute the cacophonous effect (e.g. 958-9). They imply the strangeness of the Persians' language and their superiority in numerical terms. They largely do not conform with those of Herodotus' Persian commanders; their historical authenticity is impossible to establish, and it is not even clear whether Aeschylus had access to a source which had been lost (see Introduction pp. 14–15), was drawing on the Athenians' collective memories of the war, or whether he invented some or all of them. Even their etymological possibility in the Iranian language is controversial. Keiper (1877, 53-114) thought that about 75% were recognisably Iranian. Kranz saw an authentic historical figure lying behind most of the names, but thought that most of them had been disguised in form or considerably Hellenised (1933, 90-3). Lattimore (1943, 86-7), while believing that the names of Xerxes' personnel were largely fictitious, thought that most of the 'invented' warriors bore genuine Iranian proper names. Schmitt (1978, 70-1) concludes that the poet had only a small repertoire of Iranian names to draw on, and that the names in the parodos are much more plausible than those in the *kommos* at the end of the play. There is no doubt that some of the elements in the names of the leaders indicate (if they are invented) a sensitivity to the sound of the Iranian language (see 22*, 967-73*). **Artaphrenes:** The *Art-* element in this and several other of the proper names in the play is a Hellenisation of an Iranian root meaning 'the right' (Benveniste 1966, 83-5, 97, 101-2, 117), which is common in Persian inscriptions (Burn 1970, 52).

22 **Astaspes:** The element *-aspes* is derived from the Iranian for 'horse'.

23 **commanders:** ταγός (see also 324) is an elevated term found only in solemn contexts or parodies of them (e.g. Ar. *Knights* 159)

24 **kings...the great King:** This is a grammatical inversion of the expression 'King of kings', probably attested first here in Greek literature, and known to be a Greek translation of the Persian title *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām* (Schmitt 1978, 19). Dareios used it on the Behistun inscription: 'I am Dareios, the great King, the King of kings, the King of Persia' (Kent 1953, 140 par. 8h); see also Burn 1970, 27, Missiou 1993. It had Assyrian and Median antecedents (Frye 1964, 34-46); a similar grammatical form is attested in Egyptian literature (Gwyn Griffiths 1953, 151), and it is recurrent in the Bible (see *Revel.* 17.14, 19.16, 'King of kings and lord of lords'). The Egyptian chorus of Aeschylus' *Supplices* (524) call Zeus 'king of kings' (ἄναξ ἀνάκτων). For the technically minded the plural term in such phrases is an example of the 'paronomastic genitive of intensity'. See also 664-6*,

681*. **subject:** The term *hupochoi* probably refers to the satraps, the provincial governors of the Persian provinces; Herodotus and Thucydides call them *hupochoi*, and the term is here used of Persian (rather than e.g. Egyptian) commanders. The term *satrapēs*, the Hellenisation of the Iranian *xšaçapāvā*, is not attested until the early fourth century.

26 **invincible archers and horsemen:** Herodotus says that Persian youths were trained 'to ride and in archery and to tell the truth' (1.136). See also 555-6*.

27 **terrifying to look upon:** Aeschylus frequently prompts the visual imagination of his audience by such expressions (48, 179, 210, 398).

29-32 **Artembares...horses:** The catalogue-effect is heightened by the absence of a verb. These lines further develop the theme of Persian horsemanship and archery (26*), and insinuate the image of the chariot, which, along with the bow and the yoke, is to become one of the play's symbols of the Persian empire (84*). **the charioteer:** The Greek word ἱππιοχάρμης in the *Iliad* means 'one who fights from a chariot' (24.257). It is one of several epic terms used by Aeschylus to convey the strangeness of the Persians' language, substituting diction which would have sounded archaic to the fifth-century audience for the ethnically alien (see Michelini 1982, 77-8, 105); on Homericisms in *Persians* generally see Sideras 1971, 198-200, 212-15.

33-40 The chorus turn to Egypt, annexed by Kambyses in 525 BC (Hdt. 3.1-15).

33-4 **the great and fertile Nile:** The Greeks, ever envious of the Egyptians' abundant arable land, were fascinated by this river. A fragment of Aeschylus (300 *TgrF*) reflects contemporary theories about its source of emanation; the Danaids in his *Suppliants* sing in the Nile's praise (561, 854-7), emphasising its fecundity and life-giving properties, in a manner which suggests that Aeschylus may have been familiar with Egyptian hymns to Hapy, the personified Nile (Hall 1989, 144). Euripides opened his *Helen*, set in Egypt, with the *topos* of the fertile Nile (1-3), in lines hilariously parodied by Aristophanes (*Thesm.* 855-7). 'The Nile' often stands in poetry metonymically for 'Egypt'; see Aesch. *Suppl.* 281, 880, 922.

36 **sacred Memphis:** Often regarded as the centre of lower Egypt, Memphis was supposedly the site for the celebration of Egyptian mysteries, and had numerous famous temples (Hdt. 2.153, 176).

37-8 **governor:** The verb ἐφέπειν, only here in tragedy, may imply that Ariomardos' leadership style was autocratic; in the *Iliad* it is used of 'driving' or 'whipping on' horses (16.732, 24.326 - with μάστιγι). **ancient Thebes:** In the *Iliad* Achilles turns down Agamemnon's offered gifts, saying that he would not even accept 'all the wealth that goes...to Egyptian Thebes, where the houses hold vast numbers of possessions - Thebes, the city of a hundred gates, and two hundred warriors with horses and chariots pass through each' (9.381-4). For Greek authors on Egyptian Thebes see Burkert 1976.

39 **skilled oarsmen:** Egyptian rowing seems to have fascinated Aeschylus; in his *Suppliants* Danaos vividly describes the leading ship of the fleet of the sons of Aigyptos, her sail furled, being rowed in to shore (719-23). According to Herodotus the Egyptians' main contribution to Xerxes' force was naval (7.97). **from the marshes:** Thucydides calls the marshmen of the Nile 'the most warlike' of the Egyptians (1.110).

40 **incalculable horde:** On the theme of numbers and the leitmotif of astonishing or excessive size (πλῆθος), see Introduction, pp. 24–25.

41-52 From Egypt the chorus turn to the Persian provinces in mainland Asia.

41 **Lydians:** Kyros conquered Lydia in 547/6 BC, and it became the chief Persian satrapy in western Asia. **live in luxury:** Literally, 'having a soft lifestyle'. This is the first of a remarkable series of compound adjectives with *habro-* in the play (133-9*, 541-2*, 543-5*, 1073*). They helped to canonise the notion of ἁβροσύνη (like χλιδή, 544, 608) in the semantic register of orientalism (see Antiphanes fr. 91 *PCG*). The earliest appearances of ἁβρός are in references to the delicacy of young women (Hesiod fr. 339 *MW*), goddesses, and young eastern gods (Sappho frr. 44.7, 128, 140.1 *PLF*); in reference to men and cities ἁβρός is usually pejorative, implying an excessive luxury and consequently effeminacy (Hall 1993, 120-1). The Lydians' ἁβροσύνη became a traditional *topos*: Herodotus tells how they fell from warlike manliness into ἁβροσύνη when Kyros ordered them to exchange their weapons for musical instruments and shopkeeping (1.155-7).

42-3 **the entire continental-born race:** Under Xerxes the Lydian satrapy, based at Sardis, was in charge also of Mysia (52*) and of the Ionian Greek settlements in Asia minor: the 'continent' (ἠπειρο-) here seems to mean the western coast of Asia minor. It is conspicuous that Aeschylus at this point omits to specify these Greeks, subsuming them under a vague collective term (although see 771*, 852-907*). The sheer length of the current sentence, with its relative clauses of increasing extension (οἵτ'... τοὺς...), mirrors the content.

43 **Mitragathes:** In Old Persian this would mean 'by whom Mithra [the supreme Zoroastrian divine principle] is hymned'.

44 **rulers:** The term δίοπος may sound exotic: its only other occurrence in tragedy is in the mouth of a Thracian addressing other barbarians at Eur. *Rhes.* 741.

45 **manifold gold of Sardis:** On the term πολύχρυσος, already applied to the proverbially wealthy Lydian king Gyges by Archilochus (19.1 *IEG*), see 3*, 9*. Herodotus says that gold dust was actually washed by a river through the market in the centre of Sardis (5.101.2). In Euripides' *IA* the chorus imagine 'gold-decked Lydian women' (πολύχρυσοι Λυδαί) as part of the mythical *Trojan* empire (786-7). Sardis, the capital of the kingdom and then the satrapy of Lydia, had long been famous for its metallurgy and wealth (the faction of the archaic Lesbian poet Alcaeus received financial support from Lydia, fr. 69 *PLF*), and was thought to have been the first place to mint coins.

46 **set going:** The verb ὁρμᾶν or ἐξορμᾶν is elsewhere used of setting an army in motion (Hdt. 8.106, Eur. *IT* 1437, *Or.* 352). **chariots:** See 84*. The extended emphasis on the Lydians' chariots is an expression of the powerful impact these military vehicles seem to have made on the Greeks: the archaic poet Sappho speaks of the outstanding visual beauty of 'the Lydians' chariots and armed infantry' (*PLF* fr. 16.19-20, see Page 1955, 54-5). This section of the parodos dwells on barbarian military hardware.

47 **poles:** At Xen. *Cyr.* 6.1.51 a 'four-poled' chariot has eight horses, which may corroborate the view of a scholiast here, that Aeschylus visualised four-horse and six-horse chariots respectively.

48 **a terrifying sight:** See 27*.

49 **sacred Tmolos:** A famous mountain in Lydia, mentioned in an earlier military catalogue, for the Trojans' Maeonian allies in the *Iliad* were born 'beneath Tmolos' (2.866). Tmolos is likewise 'sacred' at Eur. *Bacch.* 65. **are set on**: In Homer this verb is always singular and with a future infinitive implies a threat or promise (e.g. Hector 'threatens' or 'vows' (στεῦται) to cut the top of the poops off the Achaean ships, *Il.* 9.241). But it once occurs, as here, with the aorist infinitive (*Od.* 17.525).

50 **yoke of slavery:** The connection of Tmolos and the metaphorical yoke of political subordination may have been suggested to Aeschylus by Theognis 1023-4 *IEG*, 'I will never put my neck under the galling yoke of my enemies, not even if Mount Tmolos is on my head'. The yoke is to become one of the most prominent images in the play, associated throughout with the excessive and despotic exercise of power. Xerxes is arrogant enough to 'yoke' the two continents (68-72, 722, 736), in the Queen's dream Xerxes tries to yoke Greece and Asia to the same chariot (191), but Greece smashes the yoke (196), and the imperial regime, which proscribed free speech, was 'a strong yoke' (594). One of Aeschylus' most effective techniques is the use of imagery which eventually becomes visually concrete, and two 'yokes' actually appears in due course, when the Queen and subsequently Xerxes enter the stage on vehicles (see 607-8*, 1000-1*). Archaic poetry metaphorically associates the yoke with necessity (*Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 216-17, Pind. *Pyth.* 2.93), or political domination (Theognis 1023 *IEG*); the 'yoke of slavery' became a common metaphor in the fifth century (see Schreckenberg 1964, 24-7). Herodotus makes his Xerxes memorably declare that he will not rest until he has made the Greeks submit to the yoke of slavery (7.8.3). Cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 75, 471, 793, Soph. fr. 591.5. The conception of political subjection to the Persian kings as 'slavery' may have been suggested by their own practice of calling even their lieutenants 'slaves', for δοῦλος in epigraphy is attested as a translation of the *ba"daka* occurring on the Behistun inscription (Cook 1985, 224 n. 1).

51 **anvils of the lance:** A scholiast plausibly explains this as meaning that Mardon and Tharybis were as immovable under the onslaughts of spears as anvils under the hammer. Much later Callimachus was to call Heracles 'The anvil of Tiryns' (*Hymn. Dian.* 146).

52 **Mysians...light spear:** The Mysians also appeared in the Homeric catalogue of Trojan allies (2.858). Under the Persians they were governed by the Lydian satrapy. They were renowned for their light spears, which Herodotus says were made of wood hardened in fire (7.74.1). Aeschylus put Mysians on the stage as the chorus of his tragic *Mysians*, probably dealing with the story of the Greek hero Telephus' sojourn in Mysia.

52-5 **Babylon...with the bow:** The whole of the eastern empire, which in actuality extended all the way to the Indus, is dismissed in these few lines, which may indicate that Aeschylus knew very little about it beyond the name 'Babylon' itself. **rich in gold:** See 3*.

59 **such the flower:** This has been repeated in English to avoid clumsiness. The chorus here introduce one of the more important images in the play: the young men of Persia are said to be its 'flower' (see 252, 925). ἄνθος is already used in

the metaphorical sense of the 'bloom' of youth (ἥβης ἄνθος) in Homer (*Il.* 13.484), and Solon (fr. 25.1 *IEG*): for a discussion of its connotations elsewhere see Borthwick 1976. In *Persians* the metaphor is consistently used in proximity to the idea of the Persian earth as the young men's 'mother' (see 61-2*), and thus springs into vivid life. Flowers have other, related connotations at 611-18* and 821-2*.

61-2 land of Asia...nurtured them: The introduction of the recurring image of the land of Asia as a fertile mother figure, or mother in mourning (see 548-9*, 922*, Hall 1993, 122-6): the play stresses the fecundity of Asia. **violent yearning:** Cf. the 'softly weeping' Persian wives at 135-6. The Persians' longing (πόθος) for their men (see especially 992) is an important component of the emotional dimension of the play (see Introduction, p. 19).

63 parents and wives: Such 'photographic' glimpses into the private lives of the Persians in the city and empire beyond the scene of the action pervade the play: see especially 537-45.

65-139 After the conclusion of their 'marching' anapaests, the chorus commence a strophic lyric system, based on Ionics *a minore* until 115, where trochaic and iambic lyrics take over. The Ionic *a minore* metre (∪ ∪ – –) recurs in the evocation of Dareios (633-71), in the chorus' responses to him (694-5 = 700-1), and in Xerxes' *kommos* (950-6 = 962-8, 977 = 991). It is found elsewhere in association with the 'eastern' god Dionysos (Eur. *Bacch.* 113-14 = 128-9, 144-53, Ar. *Frogs* 324-36 = 340-53), and Headlam (1900, 108) suggested that its predominance in *Persians* helped to create its eastern atmosphere, a view now generally accepted (Dale 1968, 120-6, Korzeniewski 1968, 116-18, Hall 1989, 82-3).

65 which annihilates cities: Soon the chorus will explain that fate ordained the Persian task of sacking cities (102-7); περσέπτολις is identical in meaning and stems to the Homeric πτολίπορθος, epithet of warlike individuals such as Achilles, Ares (*Il.* 15.77, 20.152, Hes. *Theog.* 936) and Odysseus (*Od.* 8.3). The term περσέπτολις almost certainly involves a word play; the *pers-* element is connected with πέρσαι, the aorist 1 infinitive of the verb πέρθειν, 'to sack, destroy', which sounds identical to the proper name Πέρσαι, 'Persians'. Aristotle recommends exactly this verbal pun in his *Rhetoric* (3.1412b 2): see also 348, 585*, 714*, 1056, Couch 1931, Winnington-Ingram 1973a. The term may also be suggestive of the place-name Persepolis, where Persian kings were (in reality) buried. This line was famous enough to be parodied by the comic poet Eupolis (*Marikas* fr. 207 *PCG*).

66-7 neighbours' land opposite: I.e. Europe. Euripides spells it out clearly in a similar passage in his *Ion*: the Ionian Greeks 'shall colonise the plains on either side of the strait (ἀντίπορθμα...πεδία) that divides the two continents of Europe and Asia' (1585-7).

68-72 crossing....together: This is the earliest example of one of the most famous *topoi* in Greek and subsequent literature inspired by the Persian wars: the bridging of the Hellespont (cf. Herodotus 7.34-6, 54-6; Timotheus fr. 791.72-4 *PMG*): the theme is developed by Dareios and the Queen at 721-5, 745-50. **Helle, Athamas'**

daughter: The Greeks liked to think that the Hellespont, for which this whole phrase is a periphrasis (see others at 799, 876-8), derived its name from the Theban princess Helle. Her wicked stepmother contrived to make Helle's father Athamas decide to sacrifice her and her brother Phrixus: the children were rescued by the golden ram, sent by their real mother Nephele, on which they flew off across the sea. Phrixus survived, but Helle fell off into the famous strait, which was thenceforward named after her. This mythical complex must have been treated in archaic poetry, for it was popular in the fifth century: Aeschylus and Sophocles both wrote plays entitled *Athamas*; *Phrixus* tragedies are attributed to Sophocles and Euripides. **floating bridge:** σχεδία can mean a raft or float (*Od.* 5.33, Xen. *An.* 2.4.28), or (as here) a bridge of boats (Hdt. 4.88, 97). **bound with flaxen ropes:** For a detailed description of how the mechanics of the bridge may have operated, see Herodotus 7.36: Odysseus's raft (σχεδίη) is 'bound with many ropes' (πολύδεσμος, *Od.* 5.33). The Persians' cables were taken to Athens (Hdt. 9.121) to be dedicated as offerings in the temples; epigraphic evidence proves that some of them were dedicated at the Athenian Stoa at Delphi (Amandry 1953, 39, 104-15). **yoking:** See 50*. **bolted together:** Hesiod calls ships πολύγομφοι (*Op.* 660).

73 **raging:** θούριος combines the senses of violent aggression and precipitate hastiness (see 137-8, 718). It is probably important that in the *Iliad* only Ares is θοῦρος (e.g. 15.127): he is the god so keen on bloodshed, and so indiscriminate about *whose* blood is shed, that Zeus calls him ἀλλοπρόσαλλος (one who fights on either side), adding 'you are the most hateful to me of all gods on Olympus, for strife and wars and battles are always dear to you' (5.889-1). **populous:** See 9*.

75 **godlike flock:** In Homeric epic kings, especially Agamemnon, are called 'shepherd of the people' (ποιμένα λαῶν), and 'godlike' (θεῖος). The chorus, in accordance with their generally extravagant depiction of the army and appropriation of the epic style (see 29-32*), make Xerxes' flock, rather than himself, slightly superhuman. Kranz (1933, 87) was wrong in thinking this to mean that Xerxes is seen as a god (see 156-7*).

76-80 **equal of the gods:** Dareios is also called ἰσόθεος (856), an innocent enough word in epic, but with overtones of excessive self-aggrandisement in tragedy (Conacher 1974, 151). **golden race:** According to Herodotus 7.61 and 7.150, the Persians claimed to be descended from the eponymous hero Perseus, who was conceived by Danaë when Zeus visited her in the form of a shower of gold. See 185-6*. The genealogy interacts with the emphasis on the actual abundance of Persian gold (3*). **both on land and on the sea:** An antithesis which is to prove fundamental to the play (see 102-14*, 707*).

81-2 **He casts...snake:** Later in the play the chorus are unable to meet Dareios' gaze (694). This striking description of Xerxes assimilates several Homeric expressions in a new combination: κυάνεος means 'blue-black' (like the hair of Poseidon and Boreas in archaic poetry, and of Hector at *Il.* 22.401-2). Agamemnon has 'blue-black' snakes portrayed on his breastplate (*Il.* 11.26), and when Hector awaits his last combat with Achilles he is likened to a snake with a terrifying gaze (σμερδαλέον...δέδορκεν, *Il.* 22.93-5).

84 **his Syrian chariot:** According to Herodotus 7.140 the Athenians had received an oracle from Delphi including the warning that 'fire and a harsh Ares' would bring them low, 'speeding in a Syrian chariot'. The verbal similarities between the oracle Herodotus quotes and this passage have been used to prove the authenticity of the oracle (see Pritchett 1971-85, vol. i, 311 and n. 47). The chariot was probably conceived as Assyrian in design: Herodotus says that the Greeks called the Assyrians 'Syrians' (7.63). The play in performance must have drawn a contrast between this chariot and the shabby curtained vehicle on which Xerxes actually arrives (1000-1*).

85 **Ares:** If printed without a capital 'A' the term ἄρη could simply mean a warlike 'force' or 'spirit'. But the presence of Ares in the oracle (see 84*) and the chorus' desire in Aesch. *Choeph.* 161-2 to be liberated by an 'Ares...brandishing a back-bending Scythian bow' protect the actual conceptualisation of the war-god here. Ares, notoriously fickle in warfare (73*), is associated with both sides in Aeschylus' presentation of the Greco-Persian conflict: see 950-4. **spearsmen:** Here the play sets up the bow/spear antithesis, which is to provide a symbolic alternative to the Persia/Greece polarity throughout. See 147-9*.

86 **for valour:** This has to be supplied in English.

87 **flood:** Cf. 412, where the Persian 'flood' is having to do the withstanding. For the Homeric predecessors of the imagery here see van Nes 1963, 30.

90 **sea-wave:** The metaphors in *Persians* often draw on the appropriate semantic register of the sea and sailing (see 406*, 433*, 599-600*, 767*, 1046*).

92 **being cunningly deceived:** A fragment of Aeschylus says 'god does not stand aloof from righteous deception' (ἀπάτης δικαίας, fr. 301 *TgrF*).

94-5 **has the power to leap easily aside:** More literally, 'who with a swift foot is king of an easy leap' - a very bold use of ἀνάσσω. Later a rower is described as being 'king of' (i.e. in charge of) his oar (κώπης ἄναξ, 378), and comparable metaphorical meanings of ἀνάσσω are attested elsewhere in tragedy (of an oar, Eur. *Telephus* fr. 111.1 Austin, of a generalship, Eur. *IT* 17), but none is as bold as this.

96-8 **apparent:** This has to be supplied to make sense in English. **Calamity:** The goddess *Atē* herself is personified here, the eldest daughter of Zeus (at Hes. *Theog.* 230 her mother is Strife), who wrecks men's judgement, blinds them, corrupts them and brings them down indiscriminately (*Il.* 19.91-4). See 821-2*, 1006-7*. **fawns on:** With ποτισαίνω (= προσσαίνω) cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1665. **nets:** ἀρκύστατα (cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1375) are nets set up to make a tunnelled enclosure with high enough sides to prevent the hunted animal, once driven into them, from escaping (Xen. *Cyneg.* 6.6-7). Thus the emphasis on leaping (94-5).

102-14 The text does *not* adopt Müller's almost universally accepted transposition of these lines with 92-101, because it is unnecessary (there is exhaustive discussion and bibliography, although a different conclusion, in Belloni 1988, 93-8). After the confident tone of the first two strophic pairs (65-91), in which the chorus described the inexorable movements and conquests of Xerxes' army on land, they then introduced a note of anxiety: the gods deceive mankind and Calamity can appear friendly at first before luring men into her nets (92-101). This pattern is then illustrated with a possible example. The gods ordained that the Persians sack

cities (102-7), but following successes in that sphere the Persians may have been led by Atē into 'learning' to cast their eyes on the sea (108-14). This fear is the cause of the chorus' acute anxiety (115-25). The distinction is between divinely approved fighting on land and *learned* behaviour, without divine sanction; this thought sequence is similar to Pindar's antitheses between what is natural and approved by god, and what humans acquire without god (see *Ol.* 2.86-8, *Ol.* 9.100-4, *Nem.* 3.40-2, A. Miller 1983, Wilson 1986).

102-7 The imperial expansion of Persia through military campaigns *on land* was divinely sanctioned. **Fate, ordained by the gods:** 'ordained' has to be supplied out of θεόθεν. Cf. the words of the chorus of *Agamemnon*, 'a fate ordained by the gods' (τεταγμένα μοῖρα...ἐκ θεῶν, 1025-6). **which destroy walls:** Walls and towers are recurrent images, perhaps prompted by the Greeks' astonishment at the Persians' monumental architecture. See 192, 874. **overthrowing of cities:** See 65*.

108-14: There is no mention of divine sanction when it comes to the Persians' first steps in maritime activities. **cast their sights on:** The meaning 'eye eagerly' for εἰσοράω is supported by Soph. *Ant.* 30, but the implication could be 'endure the sight of' (Eur. *Med.* 264). **precinct:** The meaning of the antistrophe depends on the interpretation of ἄλσος. It usually designates a sacred grove; if it here implies a sense of enclosure, then the reference might well be specifically to the bridging of the Hellespont (as the following lines certainly imply), rather than naval affairs in general. **wide-pathed sea:** An echo of the Homeric θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο (e.g. *Il.* 15.381). **confident...men:** A poetic reiteration of the more exact description of the bridge over the Hellespont at 67-72*.

115 black robes of my heart: The notion of desperate tearing of clothes (at *Choeph.* 24-5 the cognate ἀμυγμός is used of gashed cheeks), a crucial theme in the play (123-5, 199*), is here metaphorically transferred to the chorus' 'heart', or φρήν (internal seat of emotion, see 745-50*). It is possible that the chorus were themselves wearing black, but Homer often calls the φρένες 'black' (e.g. *Il.* 17.499), and Aeschylus' (admittedly black) Danaids speak of their 'black-skinned heart' (785). **terror:** Along with hatred and longing, one of the Persians' dominant emotions (Introduction, p. 19).

116-17 "*Oa* - the Persian army!": Here and at 121-2 the chorus imagine and preemptively utter the kind of cry of lament which a defeat would precipitate at Sousa, and which, from the moment they hear the bad news at 274, they continuously utter themselves; a remarkable feature of the play is its repetition and variety of cries of misery approximately equivalent in significance to the poetic English 'alas!' (see Introduction, p. 23). But ὀᾶ, like many of the noises in the play (especially ἠή and οἴ without μοι or ἐγώ), seems to have been less than familiar to the Greek ear, for a scholiast here needed to explain it as 'a Persian lament'. This instance of imagined collective direct speech contrasts with the remembered direct speech of the Greek battle exhortation (402-5).

118-19 emptied of men: κένανδρον here is the first appearance of the recurrent picture of an Asia completely emptied of men, or deprived of men (ἀνάνδρους, 289), by the war. Wild Xerxes is said to have 'emptied' the whole continent (κενώσας 718), a metaphor probably made visually concrete by his empty quiver

at 1020-2. The land of Persia, in defeat, is conceptualised as manless and female. See also 166, 298, 579, 730, M. Anderson 1972, 169, Bacon 1961, 3, Hall 1993, 117-18.

120 in response: The chorus imagine Kissia (17*) singing antiphonally in response to Sousa; on the Asiatic antiphonal lament see 1040*. The idea of a city as a mourner recurs (682, 944-8*); ἀντίδουπον (rather than ἀντίφωνον) also implies the self-inflicted blows of mourning (δοῦποι is used of breast-beating at Soph. *Aj.* 634).

121-2 horde of women: This description of the mourning of the women of Persia, a recurrent picture (see 133-9*, 537-45), contributes to the overall impression of Asia as a 'feminine' continent, in contrast with the masculine strength of Greece (Hall 1993). Phrynichus' Salamis play, *Phoenician Women*, had a female chorus, either widows of the Phoenician navy or slaves in the Persian court, who sang lyrical and exotic songs recalling their homeland (3 *TgrF* frr. 9-11), which Aeschylus may have had in mind in such passages as these. On the *-plēth-* element see Introduction, pp. 24–25.

123-5 tearing their linen gowns: This violent picture further establishes the theme of threnodic clothes-rending (115*), in which Aeschylean barbarian choruses specialise (cf. *Choeph.* 28-31), and which is to be of profound importance (199*). Herodotus (7.181) agrees that the Persians used βύσσος, a fine linen, which Pollux says came all the way from India (7.75). A fragment of linen imported from Asia has been found preserved in a bronze urn at Koropi, near Athens: see Beckwith 1954.

128-9 like a swarm of bees: An expression powerfully reminiscent of the simile in the *Iliad* marking the mustering of the entire Achaean army to assembly, 'just as the tribes of thronging bees go forth from some hollow rock, always coming on afresh...' (2.87-90). **leader:** ὄρχαμος is a Homeric term not found elsewhere in tragedy. Here Aeschylus implies that what we call queen bees were male.

130-2 Literally, '[the company], having crossed over the projecting sea-arm, now yoked over, which is common to both continents'. A circumlocution for the Hellespont bridge. **yoking:** see 50*.

133-9 Marriage-beds...man: This antistrophe develops further the picture of the lonely women of Persia already mentioned at 63 and 121-2*, and which will recur again at 288-9 and 537-45. These images dwell on the themes of female desire (φιλάνορι), yearning (πόθος, see 61-2*), and softness (ἁβροπενθεῖς, see 41*). An evocative image of Persia is the marriage bed occupied by only one spouse, the wife: when the Queen arrives she says she has left the bedroom which she used to share with Dareios (160); Dareios' ghost returns to the theme of the marriage bed they once shared (704). **raging:** See 73*. **the marriage yoke:** The repertoire of uses to which the image of the yoke is put in this play (see 50*) is supplemented by the picture of the Persian wife, supporting the yoke of marriage on her own.

140-54 The chorus now turn from the past and the feared future to the present, a change marked by the return to anapaests. They intend to turn their thoughts to practical measures, but are interrupted by the arrival of the Queen.

140-1 But come, Persians: Anapaestic passages frequently open with an apostrophe introduced by 'but', (ἀλλά), marking a change in the train of thought (Pötscher 1959, 91); ἀλλά is also sometimes found introducing a command or exhortation (Denniston 1954, 13-15). **let us sit down on this ancient building:** A vast amount of speculative ink has been spilt over these lines, even by Aeschylean scholars' standards. On the interpretation of the word 'building' (στέγος), and the view taken of what little is said about Dareios' tomb (τάφου, 684) and funeral mound (ὄχθος, 647, 659), rests our view of the original scenery. The problem is exacerbated by the dearth of available information external to the play about the theatre at Athens in the fifth century, especially as early as 472 BC (for discussions see Taplin 1977, 434-59, Hammond 1972 and 1988, Gould 1985, Podlecki 1989, 9-11). The only certainty seems to be that the spectators' benches (*ikria*) were made of wood. At this date dramatic performances may still have taken place in the agora, or they may already have been transferred to the southern slope of the acropolis. The dancing floor (*orchēstra*) may have been either round or rectangular. The action may or may not have made great use of a rock (*pagos*), which could in the case of *Persians* have served as Dareios' funeral mound. There may or may not have been background scenery. There may or may not have been a raised stage (*skēnē*) for the actors behind the *orchēstra*.

In the light of the inconclusive external testimony, the only sensible policy is to eschew unprovable hypotheses and use only the evidence of the text. I discount the remote possibilities either that there was no scenery at all, or that the scene was supposed to be imagined as *changing* during the course of the play (for example from a council chamber to a road outside the city, as has sometimes been alleged) without the transference being made verbally explicit .

The following, therefore, is all that can with likelihood be inferred from the text. (i) The action is set at sufficient distance from the palace for the Queen to say she has 'left' it (159) and to arrive in a chariot: the line 'Cry *iōa* throughout the city' (1071-2*), uttered by Xerxes as he and the chorus prepare themselves to travel from the setting of the play to the palace, might imply that the city centre lay between them. (ii) A tomb and a funeral mound are required for the Dareios scene. (iii) The chorus here say τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι στέγος ἀρχαῖον: there must therefore have been somewhere or something on which the audience might plausibly imagine the chorus members were going to sit: it *may* be relevant that Phrynichus' *Phoenician Women* certainly opened with a eunuch preparing seats (θρόνοι) for the magistrates of the realm - see commentary on the hypothesis. (iv) Whatever the audience could see, it looked plausibly 'old' (ἀρχαῖον).

Beyond these conclusions there is only controversy. στέγος could refer to an edifice either consisting of or including Dareios' grave, since in Sophocles' *Electra* it is used of a funeral urn (1165), and in Lycophron (*Alex.* 1098) it refers unequivocally to a grave. But although στέγος almost always implies a roof or cover, it can mean 'building' or 'residence' in a fairly vague sense. The participle ἐνεζόμενοι does not help, since it could plausibly mean either 'sitting in' (a building? an alcove?) or 'sitting on' (a funeral mound? steps up to a council chamber?): see Aristotle, *Probl.* 5.11 = 881b 37.

The textual evidence in *Persians* is therefore most easily construed as implying that the tomb of Dareios and the meeting place of the chorus, advisers to the Queen, are either identical or located in the immediate proximity of each other, across the city from the palace. Such an arrangement would have seemed far less macabre to an ancient Greek audience than it does to us. There is considerable archaeological and literary evidence for assemblies of one kind and another at tombs (Kolb 1981, 7, Seaford 1994, 111-13). In the *Iliad* the Trojans meet in council by the tomb of their ancestor Ilus (10.415), and assemble their army at the tomb of Myrine (2.814). Moreover, anecdotes tell how the Megarians built a council chamber to incorporate the tomb of their hero Timalcus (Paus. 1.43.3): indeed, at Sicyon the citizens celebrated the sufferings of their hero Adrastus with 'tragic choruses' at his hero-shrine in their agora (Hdt. 5.67). By the fifth century there was a dichotomy between extramural burial and intramural hero-cult at ancient tombs, e.g. in the Athenian agora (Seaford 1994, 117): Dareios, as deified dead King, is comparable with a Greek hero.

145-6 son of Dareios: The patronymic echoes that in the opening sentence of the play (6). The manuscripts' reading, 'our race of your father's [i.e. Dareios'] name' does not make sense. The Persians are not called the 'Dareians'. It is simplest to assume that line 146 arose from an intrusive gloss, and delete it altogether, as in the text printed here.

147-9 bow...spear: These weapons are here made to symbolise the Persians and the Greeks respectively (see 239-40); the metal heads of Persians arrows, brand new in 480 BC, have turned up in the Athenian agora (H.A. Thompson 1981, 345).

150-1 like light...gods: This may imply that the chorus, who are about to perform prostration, are unable or not allowed to meet the Queen's gaze (see 81-2*, 694). Both Xerxes and Dareios are called ἰσόθεος, 'equal to the gods' (76-80*). This extravagant compliment to the Queen, suggestive of elaborate court protocol, would seem dangerously excessive in a Greek context: cf. Clytemnestra's speeches equating Agamemnon on his arrival with numerous blessings (*Ag.* 896-901, 968-72), including 'the fairest of dawns to look upon after a storm' (901). Those comparisons are almost certainly imitating a barbarian (Egyptian) praise-song to a king (see Hall 1989, 206). The Persians in this play are extraordinarily partial to ornamental diction related to light and the sun, perhaps reflecting a Greek poetic appropriation of authentic Persian court language.

152 prostrate: A powerful piece of stage action implying more forcefully than words ever could the hierarchical nature of the Persian court. Although the Greeks genuflected before the images of *gods*, and when praying (Soph. *Phil.* 776), they were deeply shocked by the Persian act of obeisance towards mortal superiors, which they regarded as totally degrading. In Herodotus two Spartan emissaries at Xerxes' court refuse to prostrate themselves before the King (7.136). See Hall 1989, 96-7, 156, 206-7. The chorus may also prostrate themselves before the ghost of Dareios (694-702*), but not before the 'failed' king Xerxes. Other barbarians in tragedy perform prostration (see Eur. *Phoen.* 293-4, *Or.* 1507, fr. adesp. 664.9 - Lydian slave women); it is conspicuous that the only Greek who does so is Clytemnestra before Agamemnon, in a context where she wants to make him be perceived as similar to a barbarian autocrat (Aesch. *Ag.* 918-22). The

more usual term for prostration is προσκυνῶ (a word actually found after προσπίτνω in some MSS): προσπίτνω may suggest kneeling. The Persians seem to have performed a variety of gestures ranging from the full prostration to kissing of the hand (Frye 1972); Plato regards the most extreme as the προσκύλισις, the rolling out of the body in the direction of the recipient (*Legg.* 10.887e 3, see also Plut. *de Sup.* 166a). See the Persian dignitary in the act of the hand-before-mouth gesture, while bowing slightly, depicted in the Persepolis treasury relief (see fig. 3) and also the tribute procession relief at Apadana (fig 17 in Root 1979), although some scholars deny that this is a representation of prostration (Bickerman 1963). For a full discussion see Root 1979, 238.

153-4 must all address: This announcement of an obligation to make a formal speech of salutation is most unusual, and perhaps implies to Aeschylus' audience that it was a regular Persian court practice. **of salutation:** Clytemnestra describes her formal and hyperbolic panegyric of Agamemnon (see above 150-1*) by the cognate term προσφθέγματα (*Ag.* 903); see also what the Persian chorus later say when they 'salute' Xerxes' return at 935.

155-248: The Queen

While the chorus are performing prostration and delivering their formal salutation, the aged Queen of Persian enters on a chariot in great finery (see 607-8*). Her dialogue with the chorus falls into three sections. (i) A short formal interchange in which the Queen is greeted, she explains the reason for her appearance, and secures the promise of assistance from her 'Faithful elders' (155-175): the metre is the trochaic tetrameter. This metre is a striking feature of *Persians*, characterising several sections of the exchanges between the chorus, the Queen, and Dareios (697-9, 215-48, 703-58): in other Aeschylean tragedies it occurs only at *Ag.* 1649-73, the animated ending of the play (Rosenmeyer 1982, 32). Trochaic lines are longer than iambic trimeters, but were felt to be livelier and closer to the rhythm of rapid colloquial speech: they are frequent in comedy and occur in a fragment of an Aeschylean satyr drama, *Theōroi* (or *Isthmiastae*, fr. 78a.18-22 *TgrF*). Aristotle says that trochaics were a feature of early tragedy, which was similar to satyr drama, and that they gave way to iambics as tragedy gained its proper solemnity (*Poet.* 1449a 21): the preponderance of trochaics in the play may therefore be a sign of its early stage in the development of tragedy. But it is easy to overplay such evolutionary models: Aeschylus may just as well have selected the metre at will for exclusively aesthetic reasons. Here it may imply a sense of great excitement at the arrival of the Queen (see Drew-Bear 1968, 388). (ii) The second section comprises the Queen's report of the dream and omen which have presented themselves to her, and the chorus' interpretation of the signs and advice to perform rituals (176-230): the metre changes to the iambic trimeter for the Queen's long narrative (176-214, which underlines the change in register from interchange to sustained monologue), and back to trochaics when the chorus respond. (iii) A trochaic dialogue (stichomythic after the first two lines) between the Queen and the chorus in which she asks them questions about Athens (230-48). The importance of this whole sequence lies in its establishment of the formalised relationship between members of the Persian royal family and even their most high-status courtiers. The Queen is the first character to appear, and the one involved in the greatest part of the action. Aeschylus chooses to make her the primary

representative of the Persian empire, thus allowing ancient Persia, defeated by the men of the new Athenian democracy, to speak in an ageing female voice. She is a powerful, grave, and stately character, deeply concerned with affairs of state, and portrayed as wielding influence over her son Xerxes (838). It is possible that Aeschylus was aware that royal Persian females enjoyed a relatively influential role in the life of the court (Hall 1989, 95), although later Greek authors tended to exaggerate it wildly (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983). On the 'real' Atossa see Brosius 1996, 16–17, 108–9.

155 **O highest Queen:** She is not named in the play; 'Atossa' in the list of characters was probably imported by ancient scholars from Herodotus or the scholia. This does not mean that Aeschylus did not know her name; Xerxes is not addressed by name in the vocative in his presence either, and the poet may be implying that, unlike Greek royal characters in tragedy, who are sometimes addressed by name even by underlings, Persian royalty did not permit such easy familiarity. **deep-girdled:** Given the play's thematic emphasis on clothes, it is striking that the first of the string of solemn honorifics offered to the Queen (see 4-6*) refers to the clothing of Persian women. Following a scholion on *Od.* 3.154, the term βαθύζωνος has been taken to be particularly suitable for barbarians (Gow 1928, 137 n. 15); it may be more significant, given the honorific context, that it often refers in Homeric epic and hymns, Hesiod and Pindar, to goddesses (but see *Choeph.* 169). The word probably implies that Persian women's gowns were voluminous, using an extravagant amount of fabric to create a deep indentation inwards towards the belted waist.

156-7 The chiastic word order of these two lines (mother/wife/wife/mother) adds to their formality. **aged:** In reality Atossa, as a daughter of Kyros I, could not have been much younger than seventy at the time of Salamis. **the Persians' god...god's mother:** On no other occasion in tragedy is a king, living or dead, called unequivocally a 'god' (θεός). The play assumes that the dead Dareios has been deified: at 643 he is called 'the Sousa-born god of the Persians' (see Gow 1928, 136). Some Iranologists believe that the Persian kings did indeed receive formal posthumous cults which Aeschylus may have known about (e.g. Calmeyer 1975). There were rumours in Greece, probably incorrect, that the Persian kings also encouraged ruler-cult (see e.g. Gorgias 82 B 5a *DK*), but it is now generally accepted that the Persian kings did not expect to be thought divine while alive (Duchesne-Guillemin 1979, Calmeyer 1981). Aeschylus here leaves the charismatic status of the Persian kings during their lifetimes slightly ambiguous: it is implied that Xerxes has the *potential* to become a god, but with the clear qualification that he successfully fulfils his imperial destiny (75*, 711).

158 **an ancient deity:** The Persians in this play speak with remarkable frequency of an indefinite and unnamed *daimōn* with malevolent intent towards them (see Introduction, p. 15). It has been thought that Aeschylus was attempting to represent the army of evil spirits led by Ahriman, the principle of evil in Zoroastrianism, described in the *Vendidad* (*SBE* vol. iv, see Sole 1946, 23-49). But the belief in malevolent *daimones* was common in Greek thought (Mikalson 1983, 19, 59-60), and seems to be interchangeable with the frequent Greek formulations θεός τις ('some god'), or troubles which come 'from the gods' or are 'god-given' (see e.g. *Pers.* 294). **turned against:** μεθέστηκε here is somewhat problematic, but it must literally mean something like 'altered for the army in some respect [τι]' or 'changed its stance in some respect with reference to the army'. It is quite clear, however, that the chorus are

afraid of a *change* in fortune, a change recognised later both by the chorus ('the gods' reversal of our fortunes', θεότρεπτα, 903-4), and by Xerxes ('god has changed course against me', 942-3).

159-72 The Queen's first speech is astonishingly obscure in both meaning and expression, even by the cryptic standards of Aeschylean females. The poet may be trying to lend an impression of the formality and strangeness of Persian court discourse.

159 **That is the reason:** The Queen's ταῦτα picks up the fear the chorus have just expressed at the end of their address to her. **golden ornaments:** It is fitting that her very first words allude to gold (3* 76-80*).

160 **bed-chamber:** The royal bedroom is also emphasised by Dareios (704).

161-4 **Anxiety is tearing my heart:** A close echo of the chorus' words at 115*, 'the black robes of my φρήν are torn (ἀμύσσεται) with terror'. It is conspicuous that the Queen's anxiety is not for the welfare of the Persian state or army, but for her family's private wealth. **the proverb...I am afraid that:** More literally, 'I shall tell you a proverb not at all of my own, nor am I without fear lest..'. The word μῦθος can mean a proverb or saying (Aesch. *Choeph.* 314). **"great Wealth...prosperity":** This apparently proverbial saying is obscure in meaning and not otherwise attested. Its context is usually thought to be the battlefield or the race-course, although the image may be that of overturning the table as a symbol of bankruptcy. See Sansone (1979), who however argues that it is a wrestling metaphor: the image is 'of great wealth tripping up prosperity and throwing it to the floor of the palaestra amid a cloud of dust'. The following lines suggest that the Queen's distinction is not so much between 'wealth' and 'prosperity', but between well husbanded and unsupervised wealth. Unhusbanded wealth may 'kick up dust' and spoil things. The play elsewhere does however seem to distinguish πλοῦτος and ὄλβος (Gagarin 1976, 44-5 with n. 35).

166 **I know that the masses...respect:** A verb like 'know' or 'believe' has to be supplied in English. The negative of the infinitive in indirect discourse is usually οὐ, but μή (or μήτε as in this and the next line) is not uncommon in expressions conveying either lack of hope or disbelief: see Soph. *OT* 1455-6 and Goodwin 1889, 269-70. χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων is best construed as a genitive absolute. The Queen seems to be afraid of revolution in the absence of Xerxes and his army, as Dareios later fears both *stasis* and that the wealth he laboured to accumulate may be plundered by the first comer (715, 751-2).

167 **light...powerful:** It is almost impossible to make sense out of this line, which may be corrupt. As it stands it could equally well mean, 'Men who lose their wealth have not the radiant strength that once they had' (Podlecki 1970, 39). Here φῶς (contraction of φάος) probably has a metaphorical meaning, approximating to 'happiness' or 'glory'. On the high-flown 'light' language in this and the following lines see 150-1*.

168 **sufficient:** Literally, 'irreproachable [sc. as to amount']. **"light":** ὀφθαλμός can mean the dearest or most precious attribute of something, as Pindar calls Theron's forefathers collectively 'the eye (ὀφθαλμός) of Sicily' (*Ol.* 2.9-10), and Amphiaraus the 'eye' of Polynices' army (*Ol.* 6.16). But in a Persian context the reference may be more specific (see 979*).

169 **"light":** For variety Aeschylus uses ὄμμα, another word literally meaning 'eye', which, like ὀφθαλμός, could metaphorically mean something particularly precious (Aesch. *Eum.* 1025, the Athenian women picked to escort the Erinyes to their new home are 'the ὄμμα of the whole land of Theseus'). **presence:** The chorus later curiously praise Dareios for expanding his empire while staying at his own hearth (862-6*).

171 **Faithful elders:** For the neuter plural and the *pist-* stem see τάδε...πιστά (1*).

174 **which lies within our power:** The translation assumes that the ambiguous Greek phrase is here equivalent to the Homeric 'as far as I am able' (ὅση δύναμίς γε πάρεστι, *Il.* 8.294), rather than, as often supposed, a reference to a *formal* vested authority.

176-214 In this speech the Queen describes to the chorus two events which have caused her to be anxious about the welfare of her son. The first was a dream and the second an omen. Her narrative provides the first firm indication in the play that disaster has struck the Persian forces. This will soon be corroborated by the eye-witness evidence to be delivered by the messenger, by Dareios, and subsequently by Xerxes himself. The change in register from dialogue to narrative is underlined by the change from trochaics to iambic trimeters, the first time the latter are used in the play. At the conclusion of the dream Xerxes tears his clothes while Dareios pities him - a picture which encapsulates the action of the whole play. Aelion 1981, 136-7, therefore argues that the dream represents a brilliant early instance of the literary device of the 'mise en abyme', a term borrowed from heraldry to denote the inclusion of an internal miniature duplication of the frame motif - e.g. a shield within an indentical shield. The Queen's dream was memorably illustrated by John Flaxman (more famous for his designs created for Josiah Wedgwood's pottery) in his *Compositions from the Tragedies of Aeschylus*, which he created in Rome but had published in London in 1795 (fig. 5).

176 **dreams:** Dreams were regarded as one of the means, along with omens and sacrifices, by which gods give signs to men (Xen. *Eq. Mag.* 9.7-9). In Hesiod's *Theogony* they are the fatherless children of Night, who also gave birth to Fate, Death, Sleep, Blame, and Misery (211-14). In tragedy they are unsolicited, almost invariably afflict women, are usually a device predictive of crisis, and are always true (Mikalson 1991, 101-4, 107-10); cf. Clytemnestra's dream (*Choeph.* 32-46, 523-50), prefiguring her murder, and Io's dreams at *PV* 640-72, ordering her to submit to Zeus.

178 **departed:** See 1-2*. **to destroy:** Probably a pun on *persai* (to destroy) and *Persai* (Persians). See 65*. **Ionians:** The Persians in this play frequently call the Greeks collectively 'Ionians' (see e.g. 563, 1011, 1025). There is no implication whatsoever that it means Ionians as opposed to Dorians. Aeschylus suggests the strange language of the Persians without directly representing it. A scholion on Ar. *Ach.* 104 claims that barbarians referred to all Greeks as 'Ionians' (see also Hdt. 7.9.1): this has been confirmed by the appearance in the Persepolis tablets of Greeks working in Persia denoted by the ethnic *Yaunā* (See Hall 1989, 74 n. 76, 78 and n. 100, Hallock 1969, nos. 1800.21-3, 1810.18-19).

180 **last night's dream:** The word for 'night', as often in Greek poetry, is the euphemistic εὐφρόνη, 'the kindly time' (see e.g. Soph. *El.* 19). This dream is given

a detailed but anachronistically psychoanalytical reading by Devereux (1976, 1-23).

181 beautifully dressed: The description of the clothing of the two women is characteristic of the play's emphasis on the significance of dress (see Introduction, pp. 7 and 20). The two women are visualised as wearing identifiably Persian and Greek robes respectively, underlining their roles as personifications of the two countries. The polarity is further emphasised by the use of the dual number throughout this line. Female figures representing Asia and Hellas are portrayed on the Dareios vase (for which see p. 8 and fig. 1). The Queen's dream seems to have been familiar to the Hellenistic poet Moschus at least three hundred years later; his Europa dreams that two women, one looking foreign and one like the women of her own country, struggled over possession of Europa (2.8-15).

182-3 Persian robes...Doric clothing: The term 'Doric' does not imply that the woman represents Sparta rather than all of Greece. The short and austere Doric *chitōn* was thought to have been the dress worn by *all* Greek women in earlier times (Hdt. 5.88).

184 conspicuously larger: Heroes from the past (Soph. *El.* 758, Hdt. 1.68), goddesses in human form (*Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 275-6, *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 84-5), and messengers in dreams (Hdt. 5.56, 7.12) were all conceptualised by the Greeks as extremely tall. So were Asiatic people generally (Hippocr, *de Aër.* 12.36, μεγέθει μεγίστους). The stature and beauty of the women adds solemnity to the Queen's report.

185-6 sisters of one race: Even ancient scholars found this confusing: an improbable scholion cites an obscure tradition which made Europe and Asia both daughters of Ocean by different wives. Some modern scholars have interpreted the expression as meaning that the woman in Persian dress represents the Asiatic *Greeks* under Persian rule, but this is confusing and unnecessary. The Greeks tended to view all the peoples of the world as stemming ultimately from Greek heroes (Bickerman 1952), a theory given systematic expression in books 2 and 3 of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (M.L. West 1985, 76-91, 144-54). A genealogy in Herodotus (see 80*) makes the Persians descendants of the eponymous Greek hero Perseus. Georges 1994, 67, argues that the dream is a genuine reflection 'of Persian diplomatic propaganda that represented the Persians to the Greeks...as a kindred people'.

187 land of the barbarians: Persia and all her dominions (434*). In calling her own people and their subjects 'barbarians' the Queen sounds unusually Greek.

188 conflict: The Greek word στάσις is particularly associated with political strife (see 715*). Here the pre-existing antagonism is suggestive both of the Ionian revolt (see Introduction, p. 4) and Dareios' 490 invasion of Greece, mentioned at 236, 244, 475.

190-1 harnessed them...chariot: At 84* Xerxes' chariot was a symbol of his military power: here it represents his imperial rule. The bit from a Persian bridle, lost by a Persian on the acropolis or dedicated there by an Athenian, has been found near the Parthenon (M. Miller 1985, 100 and plate 3a). **yoke-strap:** See 50*. The picture of the two women yoked like horses is striking: although poets called young women 'fillies' (e.g. Anacreon fr. 417.1 *PMG*), on monuments

chariots are usually drawn by stallions (Devereux 1976, 8-10). But female figures often served as eponyms of countries.

192 **towered proudly:** On architectural imagery see 102-7*

196 **smashed the yoke in the middle:** The Greek woman's destruction of the yoke, which symbolises the destruction of Persian imperial power, may also have called to mind popular rumours about Xerxes' original flaxen 'yoke' over the Hellespont (see 68-72*, 130-2*). According to Herodotus 7.34 'a storm of great violence smashed it up'.

199 **he tore the robes:** The word for robes, πέπλοι, in Greek suggests female clothing, and funereal robe-tearing was conceived as a female practice (see 123-5*, 908-1078*). This detail contributes to Aeschylus' systematic feminisation of the Persians (see Introduction, p. 13). Xerxes arrives in rags at 908, and the messenger, Dareios, the Queen, and he himself all repeat that in reality grief drove him to tear his πέπλοι (468*, 834-6*, 847-8 1028-30*).

201-2 **dipped...spring:** Aeschylus makes little attempt to differentiate Persian from Greek religious practices (see Introduction, pp. 15–16): it was Greek custom to cleanse oneself in fresh water after an unpropitious dream (Ar. *Frogs* 1340).

203-4 **a libation....disaster:** Elsewhere in tragedy libations are offered after disturbing dreams (*Choeph.* 22-99, Soph. *El.* 406-27, Eur. *IT* 42-64). Judging from the proximity of Apollo's hearth (205-6), he is intended to be one of the recipients. **avert:** Apollo was often invoked in 'apotropaic' contexts (Ar. *Knights* 1307, *Birds* 61).

205-6 **an eagle:** This bird, always associated with sovereignty (it is Zeus's favourite bird at *Il.* 24.310-11, 'because it is the strongest'), was believed by the Greeks to be the Persians' own chosen emblem of royalty (Xen. *An.* 1.10.12, *Cyr.* 7.1.4), and indeed has been discerned by Nylander 1983, 23 on the Persian standard in the famous Alexander mosaic. It here represents Xerxes and by extension the might of the entire Persian force. It may well be relevant that Delphi was the only temple complex not burnt by the Persians, which gave rise to oral traditions alleging that Apollo himself intervened to drive them away (O. Murray 1987, 105), just as the eagle here is prevented from reaching Apollo's hearth. But another interpretation would argue that although the eagle tries to find sanctuary at Apollo's hearth, the god denies him protection because of such sacrileges as Xerxes *did* commit at Delphi (Hdt. 8.35-9). On the eagle in augury see D'A.W. Thompson 1936, 7-8. **hearth of Phoebus:** The alternative name of the god Apollo may have been used because it contributes to the conspicuous alliteration of 'ph' sounds, suggestive of the Queen's stupefaction (Φοίβου· φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος...φίλοι). Apollo is in the classical period the quintessentially 'Hellenic' god of reason and order, who watches over the triumph of the Lapiths over the barbarous centaurs on one of the pediments at Olympia, and opposes the Persians on the 'Dareios vase' (see Introduction, p. 8, fig. 1, and 181*). He is one of the seven *male* gods and heroes (see 347*, Hall 1993, 127-30) depicted in *Persians* as authorising, overseeing, or collaborating in the Greek victory: Ajax (307*), Pan (448-9*), Cychreus (570*), Zeus (739-40*), Poseidon (749-50*), Ares (950-4*). Apollo's divine sanction for the Persian defeat will have had a particular significance for the Athenians, since one of the most important buildings destroyed in their agora by the Persians in 480-79 was the temple of Apollo Patroös (see 809-10*, Travlos 1971, 3, 96, H.A. Thompson 1981, 344).

207-8 hawk...eagle: The notion of the weaker bird defeating the stronger not only underlines the play's concentration on the numerical superiority of the barbarian force. It also brings with it the authority of the *Odyssey*, by imitating the important omen in which a hawk, 'the messenger of Apollo', tears apart a dove (15.525-8), interpreted as meaning that Telemachus will not be subordinated to the suitors. But of course in *Persians* the omen spells *defeat* to its recipient. It is a fairly typical tragic omen, in that it portends disaster and uses the medium of birds (Mikalson 1991, 104-5).

210-11 witness...audience: For this popular formulaic contrast of those who see something with those who hear about it, see e.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 1.26–7.

212 to excite great admiration: The Persians were thought to honour men who had distinguished themselves in battle more than any other people (Hdt. 7.238).

213 not accountable: The choice of word - Xerxes is not ὑπεύθυνος - draws a political contrast between the unanswerability of Persian monarchs and the accountability of Athenian magistrates under the democracy, who had to submit themselves to annual *euthunai*, examinations of their conduct in office (Hdt. 3.80). The tyrannical Zeus of *Prometheus Bound* is said to be 'a harsh monarch who rules without being ὑπεύθυνος' (324). See 828*.

215-16 mother: Since the chorus are at least the same age as the Queen, this is a reverential mode of address implying their utter subordination to her. Dareios is addressed as 'father' (663*). **either...or:** The chorus' response to the dream and omen could not here be more equivocal, although they offer an optimistic interpretation a few lines later (225).

218 children: It is possible that 'child' should be read here, but the plural throws into relief the Queen's obsessive interest in her son Xerxes alone (see 227).

220 libations to Earth and the dead: The nightmarish dreams of tragedy are usually thought to have been sent from the dead (Soph. *El.* 459-60), or the underworld gods, especially Earth, 'mother of dark-winged dreams' (Eur. *Hec.* 70-1, see also *IT* 1259-82). Mikalson (1991, 103) points out that in the 'real life' of classical Athens dreams were more often associated with Zeus, Athena, and the healing gods. **propitiatory manner:** πρευμενῶς usually means 'graciously' (as below at 224), but in this play it often seems to signify the formal reciprocity of goodwill to be desired in potentially dangerous interchanges between the living and the dead (609-10*, 684-5*).

223 be kept down..obscure darkness: With μαυροῦσθαι cf. *Ag.* 296, where the flame of the beacon-relay burns brightly and is 'not dimmed' (οὐδέ πω μαυρουμένη).

224 prophetic heart: θυμόμαντις, as Broadhead (1960, 86) remarks, implies that the chorus prophesy intuitively, rather than from signs or in a state of possession. They have previously called their θυμός 'prophetic of evil' (κακόμαντις, 10*).

225 will work out well: The optimistic view of the chorus represents one of the most mistaken pieces of divination in Greek literature. According to Hesiod a happy life is guaranteed to those who *can* understand divination from birds (*Op.* 826-8). The chorus are like Xerxes in their total inability to divine the future (see 373), unless the implication is that they dare not express their true fears to the Queen.

227 my son: See 218*. Atossa actually had four sons by Dareios (717*).

231-45 In this first stichomythic dialogue of the play the chorus answers a series of questions put by the Queen about the Athenians, covering their political system, their military capacity, and their economy. It must have given Aeschylus' audience considerable pleasure to hear themselves discussed in this manner in their theatre. The way in which the Queen's questions are formulated cleverly draws a picture of the Persian political psyche, for her concerns are limited to the size of the Athenians' army, their wealth, whether they are good archers, and the identity of the sole political and military leader she assumes rules over them.

231 **Athens:** The Queen's puzzling ignorance of the whereabouts of the very city her son's expedition set out to conquer has long excited disapproval from commentators, but it might be intended to heighten the impact of the news of the Persian defeat - they were beaten by a people they had previously regarded as insignificant. From this point onwards the proper name 'Athens' is recurrent: see 474, 716, 824, 976.

232 **the Lord Sun:** This circumlocutory way of saying 'they live far to the west of us' allows the introduction of the association of the Athenians with light (and therefore the Persians with darkness), which is to inform the messengers' speeches in particular. See 386–7*.

233 **his prey:** The verb θηρεύειν insinuates an image of Xerxes as a hunter. Herodotus, when relating that the Persians 'hunted down' the populations of conquered islands by combing them with chains of men holding hands, uses the metaphor of the fisherman's dragnet (ἐσαγήνευον...ἐκθηρεύοντες, 6.31). *Atē* was earlier seen as a huntress (96-8*).

234 **all Hellas:** There is no clearer evidence of the play's Athenocentric bias (see Introduction, pp. 11–13) than this statement. **subject:** The Athenians were to use the term ὑπήκοοι of their own subject allies (Thuc. 7.57.5), but passionately rejected the status of 'subjects' themselves (see 242*).

235 **a large supply of men:** On the obsession with large numbers and the *-plētheia* element see the Introduction, pp. 24–25. The Queen's question implies that the Persians assumed that size was the only important factor in an army's success: and yet the whole play suggests that Athenian cunning intelligence, discipline, naval skill, manliness and valour were, in contrast, the determining factors.

236 **large enough...great harm:** This is one of the only two occasions in classical Greek on which Denniston (1954, 325) thinks that an opening καί may have an affirmative sense comparable with 'yes'. The other is Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 302e. But the chorus' answer, in accordance with the play's strategy of implying the vast numerical superiority of the Persian forces, is actually non-committal as to the size of the Athenian army. They respond instead in terms of its efficacy. The reference is to the battle of Marathon, at which, according to Herodotus (6.117), there were 6,400 Persian and only 192 Athenian casualties. **Medes:** Media, in central Asia, had been crushed by Kyros' Persians in 550/49 BC, and the two cultures fused.

237 **wealth:** The Queen is obsessed with wealth (see 161-4*). **palace:** When the Queen has used the term δόμοι previously (159, 169), it has been in reference to royal households. Having no conception whatsoever of democracy (see 241), she is assuming that there must be a palace in Athens.

238 **a spring of silver:** In contrast with the Persians' much-emphasised gold (3*). The reference is to the silver mines at Laureion in Attica (see Thuc. 6.91); Themistocles (to whom this line probably makes veiled allusion, see Introduction p. 12) had persuaded the Athenians to use the revenue from these mines on building a fleet for a war against Aegina. Herodotus says that the outbreak of that war 'saved Greece by forcing Athens to become a naval power' (7.144). A report on p. 3 of *The Independent* of 23/9/94 (coincidentally the anniversary of the battle of Salamis) says that geologists have found lead in ice cores in Greenland dating from the early 5th century BC, some of which they think entered the atmosphere from the extraction of silver from lead ore (cupellation) at Laureion.

239 **bows and arrows:** More literally, 'Is the arrow-point (αἰχμή), drawn by the bow, to be seen in their hands?' She assumes that an army's effectiveness is based on its archers.

240 **spears...shields:** A poetic way of describing hoplites, for the spear was of course the hoplite weapon *par excellence* (see Lazenby 1991, 96). Despite its focus on the naval encounter at Salamis, the play does give a degree of emphasis to the achievements of the hoplites and marines in the encounter at Psyttaleia (447-71*). In classical times the Athenians despised archery, regarding it as a cowardly mode of fighting from a distance, suitable only for Scythians and Cretans. See Lycus' disparagement of Heracles' archery in Eur. *HF* 157-64. Great pride was attached to close combat, designated in Homer as σταδίη ὑσμίνη.

241 **Who leads them:** Literally, 'who is their shepherd' (see 75*). **is sole commander:** The verb ἐπιδεσπόζειν probably implies the tyrannical autocrat.

242 **slaves:** On the Persians' conceptualisation of the king-subject relationship as a form of slavery see 50*. **subjects:** see 234*.

244 **Dareios' large...army:** Another allusion to Marathon (see 236*).

245 **parents:** See 63*. The Queen is of course herself a parent of someone on the expedition. **of our men:** Literally, 'of men who go (or "who have gone") [to war]'. The notion may well be a gnomic generalisation: the news is of the kind that would universally cause distress to parents of soldiers. If the verb is aorist in tense, then a gnomic tone is even more likely.

247 **clearly Persian...running:** Gait was construed both ethnically and ethically by the Greeks (see 1073*). One can speculate as to the means by which the actor playing the messenger indicated his ethnicity through his movements. It is possible that a jibe is intended at the speed with which the Persians turned tail and fled from Greece (see 470): in Euripides' *Orestes* the Phrygian messenger sings of his 'barbarian flight' (βαρβάροισι δρασμοῖς, 1374) on his 'runaway legs' (δραπέτην...πόδα, 1499) from the Greek Pylades' sword.

249-531: The Messenger

The dramatic entrance of the running Persian opens the longest messenger scene in extant Athenian tragedy. It falls into two sections. (i) The first includes music (249-89): the immediate impact of the bad news which the messenger has summed up in his first lines is expressed by the chorus in lyrics, alternating with the messenger's spoken

iambics. Inarticulate cries of grief begin to proliferate for the first time: the effect is of a wild, disjointed dialogue, of shock, panic, and extremes of grief, mingled with curiosity, settling in neither one register nor the other. Very few 'facts' about the defeat emerge, except that it was in a naval encounter at Salamis, and that the Athenians were involved. (ii) In the second section the messenger, in response to questions by the Queen, delivers five speeches of between 11 and 79 lines recounting the full story of Salamis and its aftermath: a roll-call of the dead in the naval encounter (302-30), an account of the size of the fleets (337-47), the central, longest speech describing the preparations before and the events of the naval engagement (353-432), a report of the land battle on Psyttaleia (447-71), and a narrative dealing with the flight of the survivors through Greece and Thrace (480-514).

The messenger's role is extremely challenging: he has to sustain the tension and interest in his narratives for considerably longer than any other tragic messenger, but Aeschylus has assisted him by using some spectacularly colourful images and vocabulary, and varying the tempi and styles of diction within the narratives. Note the careful use of prompts to the audience's visual imagination (e.g. 387, 398), visual details like the colour of a captain's beard changing as it became wet (315-16), reports of speeches made by individuals on both sides (357-60, 364-71), sensory stimulation in the form of descriptions of the noise of the trumpet, the battle-cry, the screams of the dying (395, 402-5, 426-7), and particularly brutal verbs to describe the violence (e.g. 426, 463). Although there can be no certainty, there are various hints in the text as to the movements and gestures a performer of this role could use to keep up the audience's visual interest: his own distinctively Persian gait (247), and his apparent difficulty in standing still and refraining from desperate groaning (295). Moreover, his narratives contain suggestive descriptions of certain actions such as the 'leaping' of the dying from their ships (305), the 'head-butting' of the shores by corpses (310), Xerxes' threat to behead his captains (371), the striking of oars against the surf (396-7), and the prostration in prayer of the Persian escapees at the frozen river Strymon (499). How far did he replicate these actions by gesture and posture?

249-289: The initial shock in response to the messenger's news is expressed not by the Queen but by the chorus, in three pairs of strophes and antistrophes, interspersed with short spoken iambic utterances by the messenger. This structure is known as 'epirrhematic' and often serves to mark an emotional peak (M.L. West 1990a, 14). Although in tragedy generally characters of non-aristocratic social status do not sing (Maas 1962, 53-4), Aeschylus could have made this Persian messenger sing antiphonally with the chorus. The two low-status singers in extant tragedy are both overwrought male barbarians: the Egyptian herald in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, and the Phrygian slave in Euripides' *Orestes* (Hall 1989, 119). But the impact of the lyrics of Xerxes is made far greater by reserving the individual singing voice for him alone.

249-50 The messenger uses elaborate titles to address Sousa, as the chorus use elaborate titles when talking to or about their rulers (4-6*). **citadels:** The messenger might be addressing all the cities under Persian rule, but he might equally be addressing Sousa as the capital 'of all Asia'. **storehouse of huge wealth:** The Greek actually says 'huge harbour of wealth'. The word λιμήν is

used metaphorically elsewhere by Aeschylus (e.g. *Suppl.* 471), but may be particularly appropriate in a play with a naval theme (see 90*). Euripides borrowed the notion of 'a great harbour of wealth' at *Or.* 1077.

251-2 prosperity: On the juxtaposition of 'wealth' (πλοῦτος) and 'prosperity' (ὄλβος) see 161-4*. **at a single blow:** The term πληγή (and its cognates) has four interrelated meanings in the play: as here, the metaphorical 'blow' of bad fortune (1008-9), the violent blows inflicted by the Greek weapons (304), the ramming of the ships (906-7), and the ritual blows of self-mutilation the mourning Persians inflict on themselves (1053). **flower of the Persians:** On this metaphor see 59*.

254: relate: Literally, 'unfold': see also 294. The verb ἀναπτύσσειν means to unfold the rolls on which documents were written (Hdt. 1.125).

255 Persians: The fact that the messenger apostrophises the chorus rather than the Queen has sometimes been taken to signify the sinister and excessive influence of 'advisers' at the Persian court, but the news to be related is of concern to the whole Persian empire of which the chorus is the representative.

256 Agonising, agonising: The text reproduces the manuscripts' *ánia ánia* (short 'i'), which gives a word otherwise unknown outside this play, meaning something like ἀνιαρός ('painful', 'distressing'); it recurs at 1055 and 1061. **without precedent:** νεόκοτος seems to mean 'strange' or 'unheard of' (cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 803). The notion of the novel and exceptional nature of the disaster emerges repeatedly in the play (e.g. 664-6, 693). The first expression of grief by the chorus is remarkable for its 'a' and 'ai' sounds, which may be the result of an attempt to make them sound distinctively Persian (Introduction, p. 23).

257 weep: διαίνειν is a verb of unknown origin meaning 'to moisten' (*Il.* 22.495, a cup 'wetted the lips but not the palate'). In this play both the active διαίνειν (1038) and the middle form διαίνεσθαι (here and 1064) signify weeping.

261 to return home alive: A clear adaptation of the Homeric expression 'to see the day of homecoming' (νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι, *Od.* 5.220). See 8*.

262-4 We are old...too long: The Greek is impossible to translate literally. The chorus say that as old men (γεραιοῖς) their own life (αἰὼν) has manifestly been (ἐφάνθη) lived too long (μακροβίοτος), since they have to hear about the unforeseen disaster. The messenger, presumably a young man, did not expect to escape alive: the chorus imply in response that they should not even *be* alive, if this is what old age had in store for them.

266 I myself witnessed: The attachment of importance to eye-witness evidence is one of the many features tragic messenger scenes share with the Athenian lawcourts, where throughout the fifth century witness testimony, presented orally in person, was the most common medium for the corroboration of evidence (see Eden 1986, 14-16). Similar assurances of 'autopsy' are offered by the messenger in Aeschylus' *Septem* (40-1), and the herald in his *Suppliants* (930-2).

268 *Otototoi!*: Repeated in the corresponding position in the antistrophe (274), this is a favoured exclamation, of varying extension, in tragic lament contexts, especially in the mouths of distraught barbarians (Aesch. *Ag.* 1072, 1076, Eur. *Tro.* 1294). It recurs in the closing dirge (1043, 1051).

269 our weapons: Aeschylus often makes weapons or blows the subjects of verbs, which sounds somewhat unnatural in English.

270-1 Zeus' country: Giving *Dian* a capital letter produces an allusion to the genealogy of Hellen, the offspring of Zeus (Hes. fr. 4 *MW*), and eponymous mythical ancestor of the Hellenes (see Oliver 1960, 124-5), comparable to the derivation of the Persians from Perseus (see 80*, 185-6*). This is probably better than *dian*, a here somewhat inappropriate reference to 'the noble land' of Greece.

272 are filled up with: The vocabulary of emptying and filling permeates the play (see 118-19*, Introduction p. 21). **the corpses:** Recurrent imagery pictures barbarians, defeated by Greeks, struggling in the water or knocking, as corpses, against the shores (274-7, 303, 307, 419-21, 576-8, 964-6). Many of the original audience will have been able to remember such scenes in reality. Herodotus says that a reason for the Persians' heavy casualties at Salamis was that, unlike the Greeks, they could not swim (8.89), and Timotheus' poem about the battle, his *Persians*, includes an extended description of a drowning barbarian (fr. 791.40-85 *PMG*): in classical Athens the proverbially ignorant man was said to be unable either to read or to swim (Plato, *Legg.* 3.689d 3), and exegetes of the proverb explained that all the classical Athenians taught their sons to swim 'on account of sea-battles' (Hall 1994).

273 Salamis: The first of the frequent mentions of the island which occur until 965.

275 bodies...drenched: The overall sense of this apparently unmetrical line is not in doubt.

277 their cloaks wandering around them: The *diplax* in Homer is a garment or covering with double folds (*Il.* 3.126). Seaford points out that three of its four occurrences in the *Iliad* have funerary overtones (*Il.* 22.440-4, 23.243, 253), and suggests that in this passage the Persians' robes 'have become (enfolding) funeral robes, and their only funeral procession is to be carried (φέρεσθαι) by the sea' (1994, 339 n. 31). The pathetic detail (see also the article on this passage by Flintoff 1974) fits with the Persians' alleged general obsession with their magnificent clothing; comments on the Persians' clothes seem to have been a standard feature of Athenian popular Persian war narratives. See Ar. *Wasps* 1087, 'we harpooned them in their baggy trousers'.

278 bows and arrows: Both included in τόξα.

279 defeated: δαμάζειν (see also 906-7) is often used of 'taming' animals and raping women as well as defeating other men in war (Vermeule 1979, 101), and its use may add to the way in which the Persians are effeminised in the play (see 468*, Introduction, p. 13, Hall 1993, 118). **ramming:** The ramming of the Persian ships in the battle receives considerable emphasis (336, 408-9, 561-3, 906-7).

280-3 Yell...Persians: The printed text is the result of extensive surgery on the corrupt manuscript readings, although the general gloom of the sentiment is not in doubt. **the gods have ordained:** The insertion of θεοί (scanned as one syllable) provides metrical correspondence with 289, and much better sense.

284 hateful: Hatred is one of the dominant emotions in the play (see e.g. below 286, and the Introduction, p. 19).

285 as I remember Athens: On the memory theme see 287 and 824*.

286 abhorrent: στυγνός and its cognates are prominent words (e.g. 909, 976).

288-9 The chorus concludes its sung responses to the messenger with a reminiscence of previous 'unmanned' wives of Persia - presumably those who lost their

husbands at Marathon (236, 244). On the 'manlessness' of Persia see Introduction, p. 13. **she ruined...husbands:** More literally, 'made many of the Persian women bed-partners in vain, and manless'.

290 **I have long been silent:** The Queen speaks for the first time since the entry of the messenger. She says that her silence was caused by shock. Aeschylus was notorious for exploiting silence in the delineation of principal characters, on which see Taplin 1972; it is one of his techniques derided by Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (919-20). But in the other known examples the characters' silences preceded any speech from them at all (e.g. Niobe in his *Niobe* remained silent for a third of the play, Cassandra remains silent from her entrance at 810 of the *Agamemnon* all the way until 1072).

293-5 Dareios later expresses a very similar comforting generalisation (γνώμη) when trying to calm the Queen into telling him the news (706-8). **the gods send:** For a similar formulation see Aesch. *Sept.* 719, 'when the gods send troubles (θεῶν διδόντων) you cannot evade them'. **compose yourself:** In *Frogs* a calm wind is described as καθεστηκός (1003). The messenger may have been evincing signs of uncontrollable distress, and the Queen extends her 'wind' analogy to him. **unfolding:** See 254*.

296-8 **Who survived...placed in high command:** By asking first who did *not* die, and focusing on the superior officers, the Queen is clearly fishing for news of Xerxes. The expression ἐπὶ σκηπτουχίᾳ recalls the Homeric expression σκηπτοῦχοι βασιλῆες, 'sceptred kings' (*Il.* 2.86 etc.). In contexts depicting Persia σκηπτοῦχοι designates important officers in the royal court, often assumed by Greek authors to be eunuchs (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.38, 8.3.15, *Anab.* 1.6.11). But there is no need to imagine that eunuchs are suggested here (although they did feature in tragedy: see commentary on the hypothesis). **unmanned:** See 288-9*.

299 **lives and looks upon the light:** Only a slight adaptation of the Homeric expression ζώειν καὶ ὁρᾶν φάος ἠελίοιο, 'to live and see the light of the sun' (*Il.* 18.61, *Od.* 4.540). The messenger and the Queen in the next two lines engage in *Persians*' distinctively elaborate 'light' vocabulary (see 150-1*).

300 **a great radiance:** Here the metaphorical 'light' is similar to the Homeric metaphor of the 'light' of joy at deliverance, e.g. Ajax, by breaking a Trojan phalanx, 'brought deliverance to his comrades' (φόως δ' ἑτάροισιν ἔθηκεν, *Il.* 6.6).

301 **a brilliant day out of dark night:** One of Clytemnestra's phrases in her 'salutations' of Agamemnon (which may be based on a barbarian encomium of a king, see 150-1*), hails him as 'the fairest of days to look upon after a storm' (*Ag.* 901).

302-30: The messenger's first extended speech is a roll-call of the dead commanders, ornamented with a few picturesque details. On the accumulation of barbarian-sounding proper names see 21*.

302 **Artembares:** This cavalry officer had been the fifth leader named by the chorus in the parodos (29). **commander:** βραβεύς strictly means 'umpire', but here and at Aesch. *Ag.* 230 it refers simply to a man in command. **of ten thousand:** See 304*.

303 Sileniai: A scholiast says that this was the name of the coast of Salamis adjacent to the site of the Greek victory.

304 chiliarch: A commander of a thousand men. The Persian army was divided into units in multiples of ten (Hdt. 7.81), and Greek words (unheard of elsewhere in tragedy) and periphrases (e.g. 302) suggest this. The term χιλίαρχος is a Greek translation of the attested Iranian *hazārapatiš* (Schmitt 1978, 20). There is controversy about the extent of the chiliarchs' responsibilities (Lewis 1977, 17-18). **blow**: See 251-2*.

305 leapt lightly: The image of a diver may be possibly be implied here: in the *Iliad* the dying Cebriones falls from his chariot, and Patroclus taunts him with being a 'light' (ἐλαφρός) man, plunging to the ground like diver into the sea (16.745-50). The irony is that the speaker here is a friend rather than a foe.

306 Bactrians: Bactria (known to the Iranians as something like 'Zariaspa', part of modern Afghanistan), was an important eastern satrapy, in the parodos subsumed under 'the tribes wielding the sabre' from every corner of Asia (56). See also 317, 730-2*.

307 haunts: πολέω is equivalent to the Homeric πολεύω ('haunt, range around, go about', *Od.* 22.223). **island of Ajax:** Salamis. Ajax's name receives some prominence in the play (368, 596). This important local hero of Salamis (Pind. *Nem.* 2.13-14), celebrated in Attic drinking songs as the best warrior after Achilles who went to Troy (frr. 898, 899 *PMG*), had a significant cult in Attica (Kearns 1989, 82, 141), for which Sophocles' *Ajax*, with its Salaminian chorus, provides a mythical charter (Burian 1972). According to Herodotus he received special prayers, along with his father Telamon, from the Greeks before the battle of Salamis (8.64): the victory was celebrated at the Aianteia, Ajax's festival, on Munychion 16 (see G. Murray 1940, 115).

308 Arsames: Named as an important figure in the parodos (37). **and...Argestes:** The crasis in κ'Αργήστης is most unusual. The ' is not a sign of elision of καὶ, but the breathing in the capital alpha now internalised. •

309-10 rammed: A graphic image, for the usual meaning of κυρίσσω refers to butting with horns (Plato, *Resp.* 9.586b 1). **dove-breeding island:** Nobody can decide whether this is another way of saying 'Salamis' or a reference to one of the smaller islands nearby.

312 Pharnouchos died: There is no verb in the Greek.

314 Chrysa: Perhaps the same place as the Iliadic Chryse in the Troad (1.37). **commander of ten thousand:** See 304*. The Iranian term would have been **baivarpatiš*.

315-16 More literally, 'he was dipping his tawny, thick, bushy beard, changing its colour by dyeing it purple'. A vivid visual picture adds colourful detail to the catalogue of the dead. Aeschylus piles up adjectives without connecting particles, as often in the play (see e.g. 635-6*). **bushy:** δάσκιος is used of the river-god Acheloös' dripping beard at Sophocles' *Trach.* 13. **tawny:** πυρσός (more commonly πυρρός) is an adjective often found applied to hair and to red-haired or red-skinned barbarians such as the Scythians (Hdt. 4.108, Hippocr. *de Aër.* 20.20-4). **dye of the purple sea:** Aeschylus combines a Homeric epithet describing the colour of the sea with a metaphor inspired by textile technology.

317 Magos the Arabian: For information about 'Arabians' Aeschylus may be dependent on Hecataeus (1 *FgrH* F 198). But although Magos is probably the proper name (Schmitt 1978, 38-9), it is possible that this should be translated 'Arabos the Magian'; the Magoi were a Medo-Persian ethnic group (Hdt. 1.101) who formed a priestly caste.

318 thirty thousand: See 304*.

319 he moved: A metic (μέτοικος) at Athens was a resident non-citizen who enjoyed few civic rights. The *met-* element implies a change of residence, rather than living 'with' (Whitehead 1977, 6-7). The tragedians often used the idea metaphorically, especially in pathetic reference to men buried away from home (see Garvie 1986, 231-2).

321 Ariomardos: This name, here given to a Lydian commander, apparently from Sardis, was applied to an Egyptian leader at 38, and recurs at 968.

322 Mysian: See 52*.

323 Tharybis: A name repeated from 51. **five times fifty:** See 304*. At 341-3 the messenger says that there was a total of 1,000 Persian ships, which would put Tharybis in charge of a quarter of the entire vast barbarian fleet. Commander C.F.T. Poynder kindly advises me that this is highly improbable, especially in the days before radio.

324 handsome: The Hippocratic treatise *On Airs Waters Places* comments on the good looks of Asiatics (τὰ εἴδεα καλλίστους, 12.36).

326-8 Syennesis: A name regularly borne by the Cilician kings. The trouble he is said to have caused to the Greeks may well mean that this is an individual with whom Aeschylus' audience, to their cost, were perfectly familiar.

331 *Aiai!*: Three of the Queen's subsequent responses to the messenger's narratives similarly open with a cry of despair (433, 445, 517). **height of calamity:** An expression also used by Dareios at 807. The Persians talk about their calamitous situation in terms of both heights and depths (see Introduction, p. 25).

332 shrill screams: On the significance of the *kōku-* stem see 468*.

334-6 The Queen assumes that only a comparably large fleet could have dared to take on the Persians: see 235*, 236*. **with ramming of ships:** See 279*.

337-47 The messenger's second narrative is an ostensibly precise account of the size of the respective fleets, with a theological tailpiece. On counting see the Introduction, pp. 24–25.

337 size: On the term *plēthos* see the Introduction, p. 24

338-43 The precision of the numbers of the ships on each side, their consistency with other sources on Salamis, and what is meant by the ships of special speed, have all been much debated by historians. For general discussions see Lazenby 1993, 172-3, Morrison and Coates 1986, 55-6, 152-7.

339-40 came to: The preposition εἰς can have this meaning in numerical contexts (*LSJ* s.v. εἰς III.2). **three hundred...separately:** The ten ships forming this select squadron may be those which were to constitute the leading right wing in the actual battle (399-400), or those from which the Greek hoplites disembarked to

attack Xerxes' elite infantry on the island of Psyttaleia (456-7). Presumably Aeschylus' original audience knew the answer.

341-3 thousand...fast: According to Aeschylus' figures the Persian fleet outnumbered the Greek by more than three ships to one. The account of the naval engagement itself makes no further mention of these 207 outstandingly swift barbarian triremes.

345 some god: On the malevolent *daimōn*, mentioned by every character in the play, see the Introduction, p. 15, and 158*.

346 by loading....fate: This image may imply that the *daimōn* was Zeus, for it goes back to his golden scales in the Iliad, in which he weighed the fortunes of men and which determined the issue of battles (e.g. 8.69, 16.658, 19.223 and most famously 22.209-13, where the fates of Achilles and Hector are weighed against one another). Aeschylus wrote a play entitled *Psychostasia*, dramatising another famous weighing of souls at Troy: those of Achilles and Memnon (frr. 279-80 *TgrF*). Aristophanes may have remembered this when he made Aeschylus suggest using a set of scales to weigh poetry in *Frogs* (1365). The messenger in *Persians* is partial to the image of scales (437*).

347 the goddess Pallas: This reference to Athena, in a metonymic expression for her topographical sphere of influence, is the only one in the play. This is remarkable given the general tendency to exaggerate the Athenians' contribution to the Persian wars (Introduction, pp. 11–13). It is all the more surprising in view of the thanks offered to Athena Nike (Athena of Victory) in the immediate aftermath of the wars (Boersma 1970, 42, 132). Moreover, a mural in the Stoa Poikile, painted at approximately the same time as the first production of *Persians*, portrayed Athena assisting the Athenians at Marathon (Paus. 1.15.4), and tradition held that the good omen of Athena's owl was seen before both Marathon (Ar. *Wasps* 1086) and Salamis (Plut. *Vit. Them.* 12.1). The play's suppression of Athena may therefore be evidence for some attempt to make the Salamis victory panhellenic rather than Athenian, but it could also be a result of the masculinisation of the Athenians, otherwise represented on the divine level exclusively by virile Olympians and heroes (see 205-6*).

349 while men...secure: The city of Athens had of course been sacked. The messenger's answer expresses an apparently traditional sentiment; the Lesbian poet Alcaeus had said that a city's defences consisted not in walls but men (Ael. Arist. *Or.* 46.207 = Alcaeus fr. 426 *PLF*; cf. Thuc. 7.77). The statement also draws an implicit contrast with the frequent stress on the now 'unmanned' and 'manless' Persian empire.

353-432 The messenger's third speech is by far his longest, and deals with the twenty-four hours of the actual naval engagement itself, from the events of the evening preceding it, through the Greeks' surprise attack at dawn, until the following evening, which fell as the sea still resounded to the screams of dying barbarians (428).

354 vengeful spirit or malignant deity: See 158*.

355 a Greek man: No Greek individual is ever named in *Persians*, just as in the funeral speeches in praise of the war dead (*epitaphioi logoi*), delivered at the Athenians' annual military funerals, instead of the dead being catalogued by name (as the Persian commanders are so conspicuously in the play), Athenian history

and values were rehearsed and defined (Loraux 1986, Goldhill 1988). Aeschylus' inclusion of this episode shows that the ruse of the false message was a well-established element of the popular Salamis narrative within a decade of the battle. This is probably the most transparent reference to Themistocles in the play (see Introduction, p. 12), for according to Herodotus it was Themistocles who sent his own slave Sicinnus to deliver the message (8.75).

357 when the darkness...fell: The Greek uses a conditional clause in place of the temporal construction required to make sense in English.

361-2 understand...tricking him: This incident implies the superiority of the Greeks over the barbarians in cunning intelligence. The archetypal story of the defeat of greater physical power by greater (Greek) cleverness is of course Odysseus' tricking of the Cyclops, the 'barbarian' of the *Odyssey*, in book 9. The word for 'trick' here (δόλος) calls to mind Odysseus' epithet δολόμητις, used in the parodos of *Persians* of divine trickery (92). The four cardinal Greek virtues were already in a process of canonisation in Aeschylus' time (*Sept.* 610); they are normally defined as intelligence (σοφία or ξύνεσις), courage or manliness (ἀνδρεία), discipline or restraint (σωφροσύνη), and political justice (δικαιοσύνη, Plato, *Resp.* 4.427e 10-11). Aeschylus' Persians are portrayed as deficient in all four; this episode defines their inferior intelligence (see also 369-71*, 374* 468*). **gods were against him**: More literally, 'bore a grudge'. On the 'popular' theology suggested by divine φθόνος see Lenz 1986, 148-51.

363 a pre-battle speech: This is the first occasion on which the audience begins to hear about Xerxes' style of leadership. His battle exhortation (364-71), at least according to Aeschylus, consisted merely of bald orders and a death threat. The effect of the indirect speech is both to keep the audience at an emotional distance from the Persian King, and to throw the Greeks' very different pre-battle exhortation into sharp relief (402-5*).

364-5 As soon as....sky: The elaborate style of description of day and night, light and dark, is typical of this play (see 150-1*). **regions:** The word τέμενος is properly used of a sacred enclosure.

366-8 For a worthy attempt to make sense of the naval tactics in the battle as described by the messenger see Morrison and Coates 1986, 58-60. According to Aeschylus' account it is at least clear that the central strategy of the Greek fleet was to maximise the effectiveness of ramming by first tricking the Persians into occupying narrow straits, and then attacking them simultaneously from both sides (398-401). **Ajax's island:** See 307*.

369-71 If the Greeks...beheading: Xerxes' reported speech of instruction concludes with a tyrannical threat which underlines both his despotic relationship with his men (he has the power of life and death even over his senior officers) and his cruelty. Herodotus relates that Xerxes did have some Phoenicians beheaded during the battle (8.90). Unpleasant physical punishments are hallmarks of the barbarian tyrant in Greek thought: see Hartog 1988, 198, Hall 1989, 158-9, 205. The detail suggests Xerxes' lack of 'justice' (361-2*).

373 he did not comprehend: Xerxes' inability to divine the future or the purpose of the gods is mentioned later by Dareios (see 744). The chorus had of course been unable to interpret correctly the Queen's dream and omen (225*).

374-83 And yet the Greeks...to and fro: The words 'and yet' constitute a rather strong translation of the text's δ'. The Athenian citizen audience who had rowed at Salamis would have recognised themselves in this portrait: the physical demands which the rowing at Salamis made on the Athenian sailors was a proverbial cause of a sore bottom (Ar. *Knights* 785). Most commentators and translators assume, however, that the lack of an explicit change of subject must mean that the whole passage refers to the overnight activities of the Persians rather than the Greeks (an exception is Craig 1924, 100). But the arguments for making the Greeks the subject here are persuasive: the delineation of the sailors in terms of orderly conduct, in conventional democratic language defining *willing* obedience to authority (see 374*), is far more appropriate to the play's overall picture of the Greeks. Moreover, the οἱ δ' picks up explicitly on the disorderly flight, with every man for himself, falsely predicted by the Greek (359-60), and contrasts it with the actual orderliness and mutual cooperation which ensued. There is elsewhere some confusion in the messenger's narratives as to the identity of the subjects of verbs, especially in the Psyttaleia speech (450, 452, 458), which is possibly meant to suggest his state of psychological disturbance. Of course in performance verbal stress, intonation, and gesture would make the meaning quite clear: I wonder, however, whether some text has not dropped out here.

374 in no disorderly manner: The Greeks' discipline is continuously contrasted with the Persians' disorder (see 399-401*). **hearts obedient to authority:** The πείθαρχος φρήν of the Greeks was a concept intimately connected with Athenian democratic and imperial ideals. An Athenian citizen at Ar. *Eccl.* 762-4 says that he must obey (πειθαρχεῖν) the laws passed in the assembly; Isocrates, in his patriotic *Panathenaicus*, cites πειθαρχία as one of the virtues which enabled the Athenian democracy to maintain its imperial hegemony (115).

376 ready for rowing: The adjective εὐήρετμον is best taken proleptically. For a detailed account, with illustrations, of the construction of the oar-ports, thole-pins and other rowing equipment in the classical trireme see Morrison and Coates 1986, 148-51.

378-9 king of his own oar...master of his weapons: Elaborate periphrases for the rowers and marines respectively. The Persians' socio-political hierarchies ('king', 'master') are metaphorically transformed by the Athenian democratic imagination into descriptions of each citizen's relationship with the tools with which he will defend his own liberty.

380 banks of rowers: This unusual meaning of the term τάξις, which would more normally signify a squadron of ships, is highly probable in the context. Cf. Σ Ar. *Frogs* 1074, 'three banks (τάξεις) of rowers', i.e. in a trireme.

386-7 the brilliant sight: In narrative Aeschylus frequently uses such phrases to prompt his audience's visual imagination (see 27*, and below 398). **her white horses:** Eos, the goddess of the dawn, is drawn by horses in the *Odyssey* (23.244-6). The messenger's speeches use the imagery of light and dark to point up Greek victory and barbarian defeat respectively (Kakridis 1975; Pelling 1997, 2–6). According to Pritchett (1971-85, vol. ii, 161), this is one of seventeen examples of 'surprise' dawn attacks in Greek texts.

388-9 cry of good omen: The paean, specified below (393*).

392 their expectation: I.e., that the Greeks would attempt an overnight escape.

393 sacred paean: The paean was a triumphal song, performed after a battle in thanksgiving for victory (*Il.* 22.391, after Salamis in Timotheus *Pers.* fr. 791.196-201 *PMG*), but it often also refers to the song of soldiers *before* battle (Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.6). Although properly associated with the worship of Apollo, the paean as battle-cry may have been addressed to Ares (see Σ Thuc. 1.50). On the contrast between the paean and the θρῆνος, representative of the Greeks and Persians respectively, see Haldane 1965, 35-6.

395 a trumpet: This instrument, made of bronze and around 100 cm in length, produced a noise so loud that it was said to be audible over fifty stades (Poll. 4.88, = ten kilometres). It was only used for signalling purposes (coordinating battle tactics, summons to assembly, starting races), rather than music-making; the attested competitions in trumpet-playing were probably judged according to the criterion of volume alone. Because of its importance in military operations (see Krentz 1991) it was closely associated with warfare in classical Greece: texts even suggest that it would become, like weapons, redundant in peacetime (Aesch. fr. 451n.8-9 *TgrF*, Ar. *Peace* 1240, M.L. West 1992, 118-21).

396-7 on the command: The shouted instruction to the rowers, presumably by the κελευστής (Morrison and Coates 1986, 130). **they all pulled together:** In Homer ἐμβαλέειν κώπης means 'bend to the oars' (*Od.* 10.129). The ξυν- element in ξυνεμβολῇ here stresses the cooperative nature of the enterprise: cf. Ar. *Lys.* 246, where Lysistrata says that all the women should go into the acropolis and help the others in applying the crowbars together (ξυνεμβάλωμεν...τοὺς μοχλούς).

398 came clearly into view: See 386-7*.

399-401 On the battle formation see 366-8*. **in disciplined...fashion:** Throughout the messenger's speeches a pointed contrast is drawn between Greek discipline (374, 462) and Persian disorder (422, 470).

402-5 a great shout: Aeschylus carefully avoids specifying who shouted the great battle-cry of the Greeks. The ambiguity allows the possibility that the words are actually those of Themistocles (so Podlecki 1970, 62, who thinks 'there is a good chance that they are an iambic rendering of Themistocles' words on this occasion, or something very like them'). On the other hand the shout could be imagined as uttered by all the Greeks together: so Broadhead (1960, 124), who thinks it is a traditional kind of battle-song of the kind known as a 'war nome' (Thuc. 5.69, with Σ *ad loc.*). **O sons of the Greeks...forefathers:** These memorable and stirring words, the culmination of various noises made by the Greeks (their paean (388-91), their trumpet (395), the order of the rowing master and the splashing of their oars (396-7)) are the only direct speech by any Greeks to be heard in the entire play. Greek audiences to this day often applaud loudly at this point in a performance. **liberate...liberate:** Although the general formula of the exhortation is traditional (cf. e.g. Callinus fr. 1.6-8 *IEG*, 'It is an honourable and glorious thing for a man for fight his enemy for his land and children and wedded wife'), the repeated term ἐλευθεροῦτε had powerful resonances in democratic Athens (see also 592-3* and especially Hdt. 5.62). In Timotheus' *Persians* the Greek battle exhortation before Salamis, praised by Plutarch (*de aud. Poet.* 11), included (and probably opened the poem with) the line 'Fashioning for Hellas the great and

glorious ornament of freedom' (ἐλευθερίας...κόσμον, fr. 788 *PMG*). See Hall 1994. **fatherland:** Asia, in contrast, is continuously imagined as a grieving *mother* (see 61-2*). **wives:** This is the sole mention in the entire play of the real women of Greece, in contrast with the several glimpses of the wives of the Persian army (63*, 121-2*, 133-9*). **struggle:** In Aeschylus ἀγών, originally an athletic contest, often means a military conflict.

406 clamour in the Persian tongue: ῥόθος (τὸ ῥόθιον is a loud shout of approval at Ar. *Knights* 546) contributes to the semantic register in the play suggestive of the sea (90*). The word and its cognates are particularly associated with the violent movement and/or sound of dashing waves (396* above, *Od.* 5.412, Aesch. *PV* 1048, Soph. *Phil.* 688). See 462*. Aeschylus conspicuously omits to give the Persians any trumpet, music, or stirring words comparable to the Greek battle exhortation (Scott 1984, 156). Later texts assert that the Persians had a traditional practice of raising a great shout at the onset of battle (Diod. Sic. 17.58.1, Curtius 3.10, *inconditum et trucem sustulere clamorem*). Paley (1879, *ad loc.*) was concerned that Aeschylus neglected to mention that 'a great part of the fleet would shout in Phoenician, Greek or Coptic, not in Persian at all'.

408-10 struck: This verb marks the beginning of the violence. There is to be a variety of verbs for hitting and different images used to evoke the blows inflicted on the Persians by the Greeks both at sea and on land. **bronze beak:** Although the ramming fixtures were made of iron, 'bronze' remained the traditional epithet in poetry of armaments of all kinds, and Pindar even characterises bronze as 'grey', like iron (*Pyth.* 3.48, 11.20)! Aeschylus may be equating the battle of Salamis here and at 456 with the heroic struggles of the *Iliad* by describing it as though it were fought with bronze (Thomson 1944, 36). **a Greek vessel began:** An unreliable tradition identifies the Ameinias of Pallene who commanded the first ship to ram (Hdt. 8.84) with a brother of Aeschylus of the same name (but different deme). Ramming, the most important tactical function of the trireme in the fifth century, was deemed analogous with aggressive sexual penetration (Ar. *Birds* 1256).

412 flood: See 87*.

418-19 made their strike: See 408-10*. **turned upside down:** Just as the Persians had turned upside down the shrines of the Greek gods (811-12). **glimpse:** See 386-7*.

420 brimming: On the recurrence of this picture see 272*, and on the *plēth-* stem (repeated in the next line) 429*.

421 reefs: Many Greek expressions for 'rocks' charmingly associate them with pigs (e.g. Archilochus fr. 231 *IEG*, Aesch. *Eum.* 9, Δηλίαν...χοιράδα, 'rocky Delos'). Here (as at Pind. *Pyth.* 10.52, χοιράδος...πέτρας) the idea seems to be that the rocks protrude in low flat curves from the water, like the backs of semi-submerged pigs.

422 was being rowed: See 1046*. **in disorderly flight:** In contrast with the consistent emphasis on the Greeks' orderly conduct (399-401*).

424-6 But they: This is the only occurrence of the epic τοὶ δ' in tragic trimeters. The use of epic forms is one means by which Aeschylus estranges the language of his Persians (see Introduction, p. 23), but the form is also particularly appropriate

here, where it introduces a simile in the epic style. **striking and splicing...tunny:** Note the accumulation of different verbs denoting violence, here enhanced by the asyndeton. In the *Iliad* Patroclus, spearing Thestor, is likened to an angler dragging a fish from the sea (16.406-8). θύννοι were large Mediterranean fish related to mackerel. The simile is particularly apposite because the fish were killed by being struck on the head in their nets with clubs while still at sea, as the Greeks struck the encircled Persians: compare the image equating Cleon's associates with tunny fisherman in Aristophanes' *Knights* 313, and see Oppian, *Hal.* 3.637-41. In a fragment of Aeschylus (307 *TgrF*) a man is said to endure repeated blows in silence, 'like a tunny fish'. The fish were then taken to shore and filleted: ῥαχίζειν is a particularly graphic verb, meaning 'to slice through the spine' (of e.g. a sacrificial animal). See especially Soph. *Ajax* 299. The fourth-century Sicilian name-vase of the 'Tunny-seller painter' (Campania no. 54 in Trendall 1967, 207-8, and the frontispiece of D'A.W. Thompson 1947) vividly depicts the extent of the physical force a fishmonger needed to fillet this fish. On the imagery of food processing see also 463*.

427 **shrieking:** The dying Persians are effeminised by the use of the term κωκύματα, which belongs to the semantic register usually preserved for women (see 468*).

429 **the plethora of disasters:** Words with the stem *plēth-*, extremely common throughout the play (see Introduction p. 24), are piled up on one another at the end of this speech like the Persian corpses themselves (413, 420, 421, 432). **ten days:** The significance of the number is not clear. It may be related to the repeated emphasis on the division of the Persian army into units in multiples of ten (see 304*). On the other hand it may just signify a large number of days, as δεκάπαλαι, 'a tenfold long time ago' (Ar. *Eq.* 1154), only means 'a very long time ago'. See also *Il.* 2.489.

430 **go through it line by line:** The verb Aeschylus coins is particularly appropriate because the στοιχ- element is associated with the orderly sequence of soldiers filing past in rows (e.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 6.3.34 and see *LSJ* s.v. στοιχέω).

432 **such a large number:** On arithmetic see the Introduction, p. 25.

433 **A vast ocean:** The metaphorical notion of 'a sea of troubles' is idiomatic (see. *Sept.* 758, *Suppl.* 470, Eur. *Hipp.* 822, *HF* 1088, Bond 1988, 340-1). But in the context of a naval disaster (cf. πελαγίαν ἅλα, 427), it springs into vivid and effective life (90*).

434 **the entire barbarian people:** I.e. all the barbarian ethnic groups in the Persian empire (see 187). This line attests, for the first time in extant Greek literature, to the absolute polarisation of 'Hellene' and 'barbarian', which here means 'not-Greek' rather than just 'Persian'. The conceptual antithesis of 'Hellenes' and 'barbarians' sometimes presupposes that a generic bond exists not only between all Greeks, but between all non-Greeks as well: cf. Soph. fr. 587 (πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον γένος), Eur. *Hec.* 1200, *Andr.* 173, *Rhes.* 404-5, 833-4, Hall 1989, 160-2.

437 **outweighed them in the balance:** The messenger uses the image of the scales again (see 346*). Here it is not the fate of the Greeks which is being weighed against that of the Persians, but the gravity of two separate incidents at Salamis. It is significant that the deaths of a few hundred of Xerxes' most trusted Persian noblemen (400 according to Paus. 1.36.2) is said to be 'at least twice' as tragic as

the deaths the messenger has already reported of thousands of less prominent barbarians in the battle itself.

438-40 And what misfortune: Denniston observes that καὶ before an interrogative can imply surprise and contempt, especially at the opening of a speech in a dialogue (1954, 309-10). **to swing the balance:** The Queen picks up the messenger's weighing metaphor (436-7).

441-3 physical prime...lineage: The messenger introduces his account of the massacre of Persians on the island at Psyttaleia with details emphasising the quality, rather than the quantity, of lives lost. This is in accordance with the status-conscious barbarian psyche as construed throughout the play. **in fidelity:** See 1*.

447-71 The messenger now describes the hoplite assault on the Persian elite, an episode to which the play thus lends remarkable prominence in comparison with e.g. Plataea. Although the Athenian navy is the most illustrious hero of the play, Aeschylus is certainly anxious not to overlook the contribution made by the infantry (see 240*, S. Said 1992/3).

447 an island: Ancient historians call this island Psyttaleia. Modern historians have exercised great ingenuity in trying to identify it with the modern Lipsokoutali, or with Ayios Yeoryios: see Hammond 1956, 37, Broadhead 1960, 332-5.

448-9 dance-loving Pan: Pan, a close associate of Dionysus, is also linked with dancing by Pindar (fr. 99 *SM*), and in Attic drinking songs (*PMG* 887.1-2, 936.1-3, Πᾶνα...χρυσέων χορῶν ἄγαλμα). In Sophocles' *Ajax*, the chorus of Salaminian sailors call on Pan, 'the gods' lordly dance-leader' (θεῶν χοροποί' ἄναξ, 698), to inspire their dancing. This detail in *Persians* is extremely sinister in conjunction with the account of the slaughter which follows it. Pan is one of the series of male gods and heroes Aeschylus connects with the Greek victory in the play (see 205-6*). In reality he was granted a place in the special pantheon associated by the Athenians with assistance in the Persian wars. Herodotus (6.105) says that the Athenian herald Pheidippides encountered Pan in Tegea on his journey to ask the Spartans for assistance before Marathon; the god told him to rebuke the Athenians for their neglect of him, and they therefore consecrated a shrine to him amongst the caves of the acropolis, and instituted an annual ceremony in his honour (see Ar. *Lys.* 911, Eur. *Ion* 938, Travlos 1971, 417, Borgeaud 1979, 195-7). **treads:** A term often used of divinities (Soph. *OC* 679, of Dionysus), indeed of Pan himself (Cratinus fr. 359.2 *PCG*, Πάν...ἐμβατεύων; Eur. fr. 696.2-3 N^2).

450 Xerxes: The proper name has had to be supplied for clarity in the translation (see 374-83*). Xerxes has not been the subject of any verb for nearly 80 lines (373); perhaps Aeschylus is implying that to the Persians 'he', when in doubt, meant the King.

452 make an easy killing: The alteration in the subject of the verbs in this sentence (Xerxes/the Greeks/the Persians) may suggest the messenger's disjointed thought processes (374-83*), but in performance his emphases would prevent any confusion.

454 what was to happen: Amongst Xerxes' numerous failings is a complete inability to divine the gods' will or the future, as Dareios remarks at 744.

455 victory: By using the Homeric term κῦδος (not employed by the other tragedians), the battle of Salamis is equated with the glorious military achievements of the warriors of the *Iliad* (1.279, 8.216, Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκε, etc.)

456 they armoured: From φράσσειν, a term meaning literally 'to fence' or 'fortify'. It is usually used of fencing battlements (*Il.* 12.263), fortifying defensive walls (Aesch. *Sept.* 63), or fencing in ships (*Il.* 15.566-7, see below 951, 1029). Here the idea of fencing with armour is vividly transferred to the Greek warrior's own bodies, in a poetic evocation of hoplite equipment.

458 our men: Supplied in the translation to clarify the confusion caused by yet another abrupt change in subject (see 374-83*, 452*). **had no idea:** Unlike Homer's archetypal clever Greek, πολυμήχανος Odysseus, they were without resource (μηχανή). The barbarians' lack of cunning intelligence has been suggested previously (361-2*).

461 arrows...fell on them: It would be much more natural in English to say that the Greeks shot arrows at them, rather than making the arrows the subject of the verb, but Aeschylus is gradually transferring the viewpoint from the Persian victims, via the Greeks (462), to Xerxes, sitting at a distance from the scene and, like the audience, contemplating it (465). There were of course archers on the Greek side; Plutarch records that there were four on each ship (*Vit. Them.* 14.1, see Pritchett 1971-85, vol. iv, 150).

462 at a single cry: Or, 'in a single sweep' (see 406*). Either interpretation emphasises the unity of the Greek assault.

463 struck them, butchered...limbs: See 48-110*. The asyndeton suggests the uncontrolled violence of repeated blows. After stones and arrows, the Greeks finally get to close quarters with their victims, hacking their limbs to pieces, presumably with swords, the hoplite's secondary weapon (see J.K. Anderson's evocation of the bloody experience of hoplite fighting (1991), the illustration on the front of this book, and fig. 2). Georges 1994, 84, sees this line as Aeschylus' own 'poetic justice for his brother...killed at Marathon by a Persian who hacked off his arm with an ax' (see Introduction pp. 3–4). The term κρεοκοπεῖν, 'to cut meat', is shockingly bald: at Eur. *Cyc.* 359 the chorus says that the cannibalistic giant is about to 'slice up (κρεοκοπεῖν) the limbs of strangers', to similarly graphic effect. Cf. Aeschylus' image of the butcher's block where Cassandra imagines she will be slaughtered (κοπείσης) Aesch. *Ag.* 1277-8). In the messenger's last long speech the Persians were conceptualised as fish being caught and spliced, with similar asyndeton (424-6*).

465 wailed aloud: Cf. 426, οἰμωγή, and Ajax's cry of despair in Sophocles (317). Xerxes did not react like this to the loss of his ships; he is more upset by the loss of his crack regiment of πιστοί (441-4). The cries of despair we hear in the play itself were thus prefigured by those of Xerxes and his forces at Salamis.

466 he had a seat: According to Herodotus Xerxes watched the battle from Mount Aigaleos (8.90.4). This famous scene was further elaborated in later writers: in Timotheus' *Persians* Xerxes delivers his lament surrounded by an entire wailing entourage (fr. 791.171-2 *PMG*); in Plutarch he sits on a golden throne (*Vit. Them.*

13.1). A silver-footed Persian throne on which Xerxes was alleged to have sat during the battle was one of the most famous spoils from the wars on the acropolis (see Introduction, p. 14). Those who wish to experience Xerxes' views of the battle can consult the photographs in Hammond 1956.

468 **he tore his robes:** Robe-tearing is typical especially of female and barbarian lamentation in Greek literature: see 123-5*, 199*. The term for Xerxes' clothes, πέπλοι, which the chorus also wear (1060), is used in Homer only for women's raiment; in Greek literature it is rarely used for male clothing, which usually consists of the ἱμάτιον or χλαῖνα. Plutarch describes the ritual reversal of gender roles at the Hybristika at Argos: 'they clothe the women in men's tunics (χιτῶσι) and the men in women's robes (πέπλοις) and veils' (*de Virt. mul.* 4 = *Mor.* 245e-f). With the exception of the gown in which Agamemnon dies, defeated by a woman, the πέπλος or πέπλωμα in Aeschylus is only worn by women and/or barbarians (*Choeph.* 30, *Suppl.* 432). Elsewhere, when men are given the πέπλος, it is usually a narrative strategy by which they are 'effeminised' (e.g. Pentheus and Dionysus in Eur. *Bacch.*, see Loraux 1990, 33-40). The term, however, *is* used 'especially of long Persian dresses' (*LSJ* s.v. πέπλος II.3, e.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 3.1.13). **shrilly screamed:** These words also belong to the semantic register normally reserved for women: men hardly ever κωκύειν in serious Greek literature. The word, implying a high-pitched scream of despair, is properly used of women's lamentations over the dead (*Od.* 24.295, Aesch. *Ag.* 1313). In the *Iliad* Briseis, like Xerxes here, λίγ' ἐκώκυε over Patroclus' corpse (19.284), and Thetis' laments (ὀξὺ...κωκύσασα, 18.71) are juxtaposed to Achilles' manly deep groaning (βαρὺ στενάχοντι, 18.70). See Soph. *Ajax* 317–20, where Tecmessa says that Ajax, who groaned in a deep voice, regarded high-pitched wailing as 'unmanly'. Elsewhere in Aeschylus the only utterances described by the term λιγύς are delivered by women (*Suppl.* 114) or the nightingale, whose song was explained by the mythical *aition* of the female Procne's unceasing laments for her dead son Itys (*Ag.* 1146). Male barbarians are said to κωκύειν or utter κωκύματα elsewhere in *Persians* (e.g. 427).

469 **infantry:** This implies that Xerxes had retained some foot-soldiers for his own special protection.

470 **rushing:** This probably refers to Xerxes' own flight. In Homer ἴησι (from ἴημι) is used intransitively to denote the rushing movement of rivers or springs (*Il.* 21.158, *Od.* 7.130). On the other hand it could here be transitive (as at *Il.* 21.158), in which case it could be translated 'sending them away'. **disorderly:** See 399-401*.

472 **O loathsome deity:** Once again the situation is blamed on a malevolent but unspecified *daimōn* (158*).

473-4 **The vengeance...turned bitter on him:** Literally, 'The vengeance my son exacted from famous Athens was bitter'. **famous Athens:** Aeschylus may have allowed a partisan Greek viewpoint (focalisation) to intrude here (Broadhead 1960, 134), but it is more likely that the Queen speaks with bitter irony.

475 **Marathon:** Another reminiscence of the battle of Marathon (see 236, 244), here virtually personified as the vanquisher of Persia.

477 **multitude:** The πλῆθος theme again (see Introduction, pp. 24–25).

480-514: The messenger's last speech is an example of Aeschylean poeticised cartography, similar to the travelogues and catalogues detailing numerous peoples and

places in other plays attributed to Aeschylus (the 'map' of Pelasgia in *Supplices*, the beacon-relay in *Agamemnon*, the travelogues of the *Prometheus* plays): see Bacon 1961, 45-59, Griffith 1983, 213-32, 287-91, 297-9, Bernand 1985, Hall 1989, 75-6: see also 21-58*. The audience accompanies in imagination the fast diminishing barbarian force along the whole hard route from Athens to Sousa, through well-known landmarks in mainland Greece via the river Strymon in Thrace. There is conspicuously little detail about the Asiatic section of the journey. The central theme is the Persians' inability to endure extreme hunger, thirst, and sudden changes in temperature: this idea coincides with the argument of the 5th-century Hippocratic treatise *On Airs, Waters, Places*, which explains that Asiatics lack spirit and independence because of their temperate climate and plentiful harvests, whereas Europeans, who suffer changeable climates, grow up vigorous and passionate and know how to deal with harsh physical conditions (*de Aër.* 12.7-38, 16.3-33, see Jouanna 1981, Hall 1993, 123-6). See also 792-4. The culminating catastrophe which occurred when the Persians tried to cross the river Strymon may have been raised to prominence in this play because it seemed fitting divine recompense for Xerxes' arrogant bridging of the waters of the Hellespont. Disaster while crossing a river is thus 'an appropriate form of punishment for the crossing of the straits' (Horsfall 1974, 505).

481 in disorder: See 399-401*.

482-3 began dying off: The imperfect tense suggests continuous acts of dying. Boeotia is of course to be the site of many more Persian deaths in the battle of Plataea, shortly to be prophesied by Dareios at 800-42.

484 others: Two consecutive half lines have almost certainly dropped out of the text, describing a middle group who suffered from a cause other than thirst or breathlessness, perhaps disease.

486 the land of Doris: Commentators have objected to the indirect route the remnant of the force are said to have taken from Phocis to the Melian gulf, but according to Herodotus Xerxes did pass through Doris, at least on his outward journey (8.31).

488 Achaean land: Phthiotic Achaea (Achilles' homeland) in Thessaly.

494-5 Bolbe's reedy marsh: Lake Bolbe is literally called 'a marshy reed'. **Mount Pangaion, Edonian territory:** A famous mountain in Thrace, associated with Dionysiac myths. The first play of Aeschylus' tetralogic *Lycurgeia* was called *Edonians*. These names were important to Aeschylus' audience: in the period immediately after the wars the Athenians were keen to build up their colonies in this area; only seven years after the production of *Persians* they were to suffer catastrophic losses in Edonia (Thuc. 1.100). In *JHS* 1898, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii, there is a summary of an intrepid professor's account of the Thracian section of his expedition to retrace Xerxes' journey.

495-7 god: One of the many indications that the Persians' catastrophic experiences were divinely ordained. **out of season:** The flight of the Persians took place in the autumn. On the Asiatics' alleged inability to withstand changeable climates see 480-514*. **sacred...Strymon:** This expression has been taken to imply the Persians' Zoroastrian reverence for water (especially river water), represented by the 'Apas', who were the 'yazatas' or divine beings of the element (e.g. Kranz 1933, 86). But the epithet ἁγνός occurs in reference to rivers in entirely Greek

contexts in Pindar (*Isthm.* 6.74) and elswhere in tragedy (Aesch. *Suppl.* 254-5, in the Greek Pelasgos' mouth, also in reference to the Strymon). See also 497-9*, 577-8*.

497-9 Those who...prayers: Presumably the irreligious were praying in thanks for what initially seemed like a benevolent divine intervention. **prostrating themselves:** As the Greeks did for gods (see 152*); in Aristophanes' *Knights* it is implied that 'prostration before the earth and the gods' was associated with offering thanks for any great blessing conferred (156); in a fragment of Sophocles 'everyone prostrates themselves before the turning circle of the sun' (738.2 *TgrF*). **Earth and Sky:** Earth was a rather vaguely conceptualised goddess, in the *Iliad* one of the elemental deities invoked in solemn oaths, along with Zeus, Sun, Rivers, and the Erinyes (3.276-9, 19.258-60). In mythology Gaia first gives birth to and then lies with Sky (Ouranos, Hes. *Theog.* 126-36). It has often been thought that the worship of Earth and Sky here reflects the Greek belief voiced by e.g. Plato's Socrates (*Crat.* 397c-d), that barbarians (and Greeks in former times) worshipped elemental deities such as 'sun, moon, earth (γῆ), stars, and sky (οὐρανός)'; Herodotus says that the Persians eschewed anthropomorphic gods and worshipped elements instead (1.131). But both Gaia and Ouranos were Greek divinities, addressed elswhere in tragedy (Eur. *Med.* 57, 148), and it is unnecessary to assume a conscious attempt to evoke Zoroastrian ritual here. See 495-7*.

500 numerous invocations: The implication may be that the Persians stupidly wasted valuable time on praying; if they had crossed the ice more quickly, they might all have escaped before the thaw.

502-5 the sun-god's beams...flame: On the play's recurrent elaborate language describing light and the sun, see 150-1*. **drove through:** A forceful verb, from διΐημι ('thrust through'), used e.g. of an arrow from Odysseus' bow driving through the iron axes at *Od.* 21.328.

506 fell on one another: An aesthetically appropriate fate, echoing the collision of the Persians' ships with each other earlier, in the waters of Salamis (415-16).

507 breath of life: These barbarians either died from being crushed in the water, or drowned, or both (see 272*). This scene is reminiscent of the Trojans driven into the river Xanthus by Achilles, whose corpses choked its waters (*Il.* 21.7-26).

512 yearning: On the πόθος theme see Introduction, p. 19.

514 blasted: ἐγκατασκήπτειν implies that the god has struck the Persians as with thunder or lightning (cf. Soph. *Trach.* 1087, ἐγκατάσκηψον βέλος...κεραυνοῦ). This theme is later picked up by Dareios (715*, 739-40*).

515-16 Grievous deity: Yet another reference to the malevolent *daimōn* (see 158*). **leapt and stamped:** In *Eumenides* the Erinyes say that they 'leap' with a heavy foot onto malefactors (372-4); cf. Soph. *Ant.* 1345-6, *OT* 263. But the image may have sounded distinctly oriental to Aeschylus' audience: a hymn to the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal calls him 'the mighty hero, who has trampled on the neck of his foes, who has trodden down all his enemies' (Luckenbill 1926, vol. i, 169). On the Behistun relief Dareios himself stands with his left foot triumphantly planted on the prostrate figure of the rebel Gaumata (Root 1979, 185). See also the anaphoric Egyptian hymn in honour of Thutmose III, 'I came to let you tread on

Djahi's chiefs, I spread them under your feet...I came to let you tread on those in Asia' (Lichtheim 1973-80, vol. ii, 36-7).

518 nocturnal vision: A reference, of course, to the dream described at 176-200. It is unusual to find the prosaic and comic term ἐνύπνιον in tragedy, which generally prefers ὄναρ, ὄνειρος, and ὄνειρον (Kessels 1973, 132-4).

520 you...judged them: The chorus had delivered this judgement at 225.

521-4 However...palace: The chorus had suggested prayers and libations at 216-23.

525 doing this cannot change: These words have had to be supplied in English.

528 to us who trust you: On the significance of the recurrence of the *pist-* stem see 1*. Here, πιστοῖσι might just possibly refer to the chorus rather than to the Queen ('You must take faithful counsel amongst your faithful selves').

530 escort him to the palace: An instruction the chorus do not forget, and which may, like other instances of προπέμπειν, have funereal overtones (see 1036*). The suggestion that Xerxes could arrive at any minute keeps up the tension of anticipation in this *nostos*-play (see 8*).

532-97: Anapaests and Stasimon

The chorus have been restraining their emotional response to the messenger's cumulatively and increasingly more terrible news since their initial explosive reaction at 256-89. In this great dirge, at the heart of the play, they range widely and in emotional (rather than chronologically linear) order over the past causes and the present and future private and public ramifications of the messenger's catastrophic report. They consecutively attribute the destruction to Zeus (532-6), Xerxes (550-3), and 'ships' both Persian and Greek (558-63), using the same root verb for all three (ὀλέσας, ἀπώλεσεν, ἀπώλεσαν). They reflect on the grief of bereaved Persian women (537-47), on the contrast between Xerxes' and Dareios' leadership (550-7), on the battle itself (558-63), on the escape of Xerxes (565-7), on their own lamentation (571-5), on fishes eating the Persian dead (576-8), on the grief of the bereaved parents (579-83), on the potential fall of the Persian empire (584-90), and conclude with a last glimpse of the Persian dead at Salamis (595-7). The language and imagery of the final third strophe and antistrophe (584-97) construct a picture of life under Persian despotism clearly formulated from an Athenian, democratic perspective.

The stasimon proper, which begins at 548, is introduced by a sequence of anapaests, just as the parodos, the necromancy, and the Xerxes' *kommos* with the chorus are (1-154*). The predominant metres of the stasimon itself are the lyric iambic in the first strophic pair, and subsequently lyric dactyls. The ritual effect of the dirge is powerfully enhanced by the strong twofold and threefold repetition both within and across the strophic system (see especially 550-2/560-2, 568/584), and by a variety of repeated inarticulate cries and exclamations (see Introduction, p. 23).

532 O Zeus, my king: Greece *may* previously have been called 'Zeus's country' (see 270-1*), but the supreme Olympian has not otherwise so far been named in the

play, which increases the impact of this strong statement of the role of the god in the destruction of the Persian expedition. In Dareios' homilies Zeus' role in the past and present history of Persia is to be fully established and clarified (739-40*, 762-4*, 827), and Xerxes invokes Zeus in his first utterance (915): see Winnington-Ingram 1973.

533-5 you have destroyed: In English the word νῦν ('now') means that the perfect tense is here required to translate the Greek aorist of κατακρύπτω. **who could boast so many men:** Literally, 'greatly boasting and having many men'; with the impact of μεγαλαύχων cf. Pindar's use of it to describe the 'braggart' Porphyrion, the king of the giants, who dared to fight against the gods but were utterly defeated (*Pyth.* 8.15), just as here the Persians arrogantly thought they could conquer the Greeks.

535 Agbatana: See 16-18*.

536 gloom: Cf. *Choeph.* 52, 'gloom (δνόφοι) covers the house'.

537-8 many women: The chorus return to one of their favourite themes - the lamentation of Persian *women* (see 121-2*, 123-5*). **tearing their veils:** In the *Iliad* Hecuba tears her veil *off* when mourning Hector (22.405-7). But the Persian women are actually ripping the fabric of their veils, for the middle of κατερείκειν is transitively used for tearing one's own garments, as in Sappho fr. 140(a) 2 (young women instructed to beat their breasts and tear their clothes in rites for the dying Adonis), and Hdt. 3.66 (high-born Persians weeping around the distressed king Kambyses). See also 1060*.

539-40 soaking, drenching: Literally 'soaking with tears their drenching breasts', or 'soaking with tears their breasts so that they are drenched'. In the *Iliad* Althaea's breast is similarly drenched with tears (δεύοντο δὲ δάκρυσι κόλποι, 9.570) through grief for her dead brother, and Hector's brothers 'drench their clothes with tears' as they mourn him (24.162).

541-2 softly wailing: The first of two *habro-* compounds in quick succession (543), on the significance of which see 41*. **their recent bridegrooms:** For the motif of the newly wedded bride, bereft of her husband, see Protesilaus' young widow, 'her cheeks torn in wailing, left behind in Phylace, his house but half established' (*Il.* 2.700-1); this Achaean was slain by a Trojan warrior as he leapt forth from his ship on arrival in Asia.

543-5 soft sheets: Another *habro-* compound. See 541 and 41*. The luxurious textiles of the Persians became a standard feature of Greek orientalising discourse (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.16, Hall 1989, 207). **nuptial beds...pleasures:** A sensual image: Dareios later enjoins the chorus to lend themselves to daily 'pleasure' (841*). **abandon...laments:** Insatiability and abandoned emotionalism are two of the hallmarks of the barbarian psyche as constructed in this play. See 908-1078*.

546 And I myself: The chorus add their voices of lament to those they have been describing, implying that they are but one group amongst many currently raising the dirge throughout the land of Persia. This sentiment serves as an introduction to the performance of the impending dirge proper: the change is marked by the shift into strophic lyric iambics, which are the predominant metre of lamentation in this play.

548-9 the entire land of Asia: The lyrics begin with the continent of Asia virtually personified as a woman in mourning (see 61-2*). **emptied out:** See 118-19*.

550-2 Xerxes...Xerxes...Xerxes: The threefold anaphoric rhythmical repetition and the inarticulate cries lend a simple but powerful ritual effect.

553 ships: Here and at 1076 the chorus uses an unusual term, βᾶρις, which in Greek literature seems to signify an exotic non-Greek vessel; cf. Aesch. *Suppl.* 874, Hdt. 2.96 (Egyptian boats), Eur. *IA* 297 (Trojan ships).

555-6 Lord of the bow: This title underlines the image of the Persian bow which is so important in the play (26*, Introduction p. 21). Here Aeschylus may be drawing on something of Dareios' own self-publicity. In a Persian sculpture at Behistun (Root 1979, plate 6) he is portrayed as an archer, and inscribed upon his tomb were the words, 'trained am I both with hands and with feet... As a bowman I am a good bowman both afoot and on horseback' (Kent 1953, 140, par. 8h). On royal coins Dareios had himself depicted as 'the first bowman of his people' (Root 1979, 309). Aeschylus may well have seen one of the golden darics, coins introduced by and named after the King, on which his figure is distinguished by a conspicuous bow; these did filter to Athens, where they have been found in large quantities (M. Miller 1985, 99, 104 and appendix 1), since they were used in the western empire amongst the Greek communities (Cook 1985, 221-2 and plate 12.3). **benign:** The strange formulation by which Dareios is described as 'not causing harm' rather than positively beneficial recurs at 663* (ἄκακε), 855 (ἀκάκας), and 860 (the men used to come home from wars unharmed (ἀπόνους ἀπαθεῖς). This is in contrast with Xerxes, who turned the fleet into 'not-ships' (ἄναες, 680): see Introduction, p. 23. **citizens:** A somewhat jarring word given the effort Aeschylus has made to suggest the lack of rights enjoyed by the Persian King's subjects, but Herodotus uses it often in barbarian contexts, signifying little more than 'fellow countrymen' (e.g. 1.37).

558-9 Soldiers...sail-winged: There are textual problems here. Both lines as they appear in the manuscripts fail to respond metrically with 548-9, and the meaning of ὁμόπτεροι is not clear: it probably means something like λινόπτεροι, 'winged with sails', at *PV* 468. **Dark-eyed:** Cf. the Homeric epithet for ships, κυανόπρῳροι, 'dark-prowed'. Eyes were actually painted on the bows of ships (see Aesch. *Suppl.* 716), but the expression could just mean 'of dark aspect'.

560-2 ships...ships...ships: The lines use the same verbs and cries as those in the strophe, with the same strong threefold anaphoric repetition (550-2*). The first ships are Persian, the third Greek; the second either or both. **manned by Ionians:** Literally, 'by Ionian hands'. **by lethal ramming:** Described by the messenger, 278-9.

570-1 Cychreia: The name 'Cychreia' (identified with Salamis, Strabo 9.1.9 = 393) was derived from that of Cychreus, a mythical king of Salamis. He was succeeded by Ajax's father Telamon (Apollod. 3.12.7). Pausanias says that he appeared to the Athenians at the battle of Salamis in the form of a dragon (1.36.1). He had a sanctuary at Salamis, and was honoured in cult at Athens and Eleusis (Plut. *Vit. Thes.* 10.1, *Vit. Sol.* 9.1). The 'Cychreian rock' was named in Sophocles' play about another Salaminian, his *Teucer* (fr. 579 *TgrF*).

576 Lacerated: A strong word. The sea tears the flesh of the dead into ribbons. A metaphor from wool-combing, the word κνάπτειν denotes the effect on human flesh of torture by whips (Cratinus fr. 303 *PCG*) or thorned shrubs (Plato, *Resp.* 10.616a 3), or the mangling of Hector's body as it trails behind Achilles' chariot (Soph. *Aj.* 1031).

577-8 voiceless children...undefiled sea: I.e. fishes. In an earlier simile the Persians themselves had been envisaged as fishes, trapped by fisherman (424-6*). In the *Iliad* Achilles, after throwing Lycaon into the river to be washed downstream to the sea, predicts that fishes will feast on his body (21.126-7, see also 203-4). In a Sophoclean fragment a tunny fish is called 'voiceless' (ἄναυδος, 762 *TgrF*, cf. 424*). The description of the sea as 'undefiled' has been thought to suggest the Persians' reverence for water. But Zoroastrians actually regarded sea-water as water whose purity had been tainted by Ahriman (see 495-7*, 497-9*), their malevolent deity (Boyce 1982, 166). The epithet, rather, reflects the *Greek* belief that sea-water could wash away pollution (see *IT* 1193, and Parker 1983, 226-7).

584 the inhabitants of Asia: τοί is an Ionic form (see Introduction, p. 23), with which the second strophe also began (568).

585 abide under Persian rule: περσονομοῦνται may involve a word play (65*): the *pers-* element suggests to the ear the aorist of the verb πέρθειν, 'to sack' (of cities), and implies that the Persian empire had been won by military violence against its vassal states. In English a future tense is required to make sense of the Greek's present tense plus δήν.

586-7 pay further tribute...to the King: On the tense of the verb see the previous note. The word δασμός is particularly associated in Greek sources with the taking of tribute by Persia (Xen. *Anab.* 1.1.8). Under the democracy at Athens taxes were payable to the state, not to any individual. The diction implicitly contrasts the Athenian system with the Persian kings' exaction of tribute paid to themselves, in elaborate ceremonies depicted on reliefs in Persian architecture: see for example the great stone portrait of Dareios and Xerxes at Persepolis, which probably portrays tribute-bringers from all over the empire from Arabia to the Caucasus (Burn 1970, 314, but consult also the cautious remarks of Root 1979, 230). These scenes fascinated the Greeks; see the lowest row of figures on the 'Dareios vase' (fig. 1).

588 prostrating themselves: Another reference to the prostration (προσκύνησις) performed before Persian royalty (see 152*), here envisaged as being performed by the entire subject population. But the chorus fear that Salamis may have put a stop to it.

592-3 people...talk freely: Aeschylus' chorus are afraid that freedom of speech will now be impossible to prevent. This implies to the audience that hitherto subjects of the King did not enjoy the right to express their views (in Greek ἰσηγορία and παρρησία) so valued by Athenian democrats. The expression ἐλεύθερα βάζειν seems to be equivalent to the verbs ἐλευθεροστομεῖν (*PV* 180), and ἐλευθεριάζειν, which in political theory means 'to speak or act like a free man' (Plato, *Legg.* 3.701e 5, Aristot. *Pol.* 5.1314a 8); 'freely' (ἐλεύθερα) brings to mind the term for the Athenian political ideal of freedom, ἐλευθερία (see 402-5*).

594 a strong yoke: The image of the yoke - the bridge which 'yoked' the Hellespont, the yoke with which in the Queen's dream Xerxes tried to control both Persia and Greece, the yoke of slavery the barbarians wanted to cast upon Hellas - recurs insistently as a symbol of Persian despotism (see 50*).

596-7 Ajax's...island: Salamis. See 307*. **remains of the Persians:** This ambiguous phrase both implies that the Persian empire and Persian hopes died at Salamis, and also suggests the familiar gruesome image of the Persians' corpses (see 272*).

598-622: The Queen Returns

The Queen returns to the stage on foot (607-8*), and plainly dressed; she carries materials for the libation, perhaps in a basket or on a tray. This is a 'mirror' entrance, imitating her previous arrival at 155, but drawing a direct contrast with it (see Introduction, p. 20). The figure whose pomp represented the pride of the empire now represents its downfall. There is apparently no prostration by the chorus.

599-600 a wave of disasters: The Queen adopts marine imagery, traditional in Greek poetry for expressing notions about the vicissitudes of human fortunes, especially affairs of state, but particularly appropriate to a play about a disaster at sea (90*, 433*).

601 heaven blows gently: In the English 'heaven' is a paraphrase of *daimōn*, the divine agent who sends a fair wind. See 158*.

604-5 hostile images...rings in my ears: An acute description of the sensory disturbances caused by extreme anxiety. **no victory-song:** οὐ παιώνιος could alternatively be translated 'no song to bring about healing', but by emphasising that the din ringing in the Queen's ears has nothing to do with victory Aeschylus would remind his audience of the terror with which the barbarians heard the confident Greek pre-battle παιάν (393*), also called a κέλαδος (388).

606 terror: Fear is one of the most dominant emotions in the play: see Introduction, p. 19. **driving me out of my mind:** The Greek conveys the Queen's utter emotional distraction by a strong alliteration of 'k' and 'p' sounds (κακῶν ἔκπληξις ἐκφοβεῖ φρένας). On the connotations of φρένες see 745-50*.

607-8 without the chariot and finery: Incontrovertible evidence that the Queen's previous entrance was on a chariot and accompanied by much pomp; on chariot entrances in tragedy see Introduction, p. 22. The word for finery, χλιδή or its cognates, is often found in tragic contexts evoking specifically barbarian luxury (544 above, Aesch. *Suppl.* 235-6, Eur. *IA* 74 (βαρβάρῳ χλιδήματι), *Rhes.* 960). The Queen's second and simpler dress may have been black (Taplin 1977, 99). Her former χλιδή may have included attendants: perhaps the contrast between her two entrances is increased by making her return alone.

609-10 materials...libation: Before the messenger's arrival the Queen had been advised, and had resolved, to offer a liquid sacrifice (219-20, 229, 523-4). **to propitiate:** The Greek adjective πρευμενής consistently underlines the importance of securing the goodwill of the dead (see also 220, 685), and may, like the term 'benign' (ἄκακος, see 663*), be associated with apotropaic ritual.

611-18 The ingredients of the libation (milk, honey, water, wine, and oil, accompanied by flowers) are typical of Greek libations to the dead and the gods of the underworld, at least as represented in tragedy: Soph. *El.* 894-6 (milk, flowers), Eur. *IT* 159-66

(milk, wine, honey), Eur. *Or.* 114-15 (honey, milk, wine); see Burkert 1985, 194. The description of the ingredients, with its elaborate periphrases, is notable for its evocation of their purity and the femininity of the natural world which has produced them. While suitably solemn for the occasion, the expressions are also highly appropriate in the mouth of this anxious mother-figure, and by interacting with all the other female imagery in the play, inscribe the femininity and fecundity of Asia in the text (Hall 1993, 125-6). The picture, suggestive of a lactating cow, hard working bees, mature vines, abundant water, olives and flowers, is in accordance with the Greeks' stereotypical view of Asia, regarded in the Hippocratic *On Airs, Waters, Places* as blessed with a temperate climate, plentiful harvests, and fertile livestock (see 480-514*), in contrast with the ungenerous soil of Greece (792-4). **a virgin spring:** Springs appear in metaphors in the play: see 743*. **garlands of flowers:** As so often in Aeschylus a pervasive verbal image is made visually concrete. This part of the Queen's offering, visible to the audience, is a physical substantiation of the recurrent floral images preceding this scene: she is sacrificing real flowers, but the 'manly flower of the Persian land' (59*) has been sacrificed at Salamis.

620-1 summon up: Although the Queen has previously been advised to pray for assistance to her dead husband (222-3), the decision, here announced, actually to call up his ghost may have come as a surprise to the original audience. The verb used for 'to summon up', ἀνακαλεῖσθαι (middle of ἀνακαλεῖν), makes it apparent that the Queen requires the chorus to sing an 'anacletic' hymn (Rose 1950, 263-4). This *could* simply mean a hymn calling for aid, but the chorus' appeal at 630, 'send up the soul from below into the light', suggests that they have understood her as asking them to perform a necromancy.

623-80: Necromancy

The necromancy is the most exciting section in the play, visually and aurally bizarre and distinctive. Dareios is the earliest example in surviving tragedy of a ghost character; Aeschylus used another ghost, that of Clytemnestra, fourteen years later in his *Eumenides*, and Euripides' *Hecuba* is opened by the ghost of the murdered and unburied Polydorus, wandering the coast of Thrace. But both of these ghosts roam abroad, whereas Dareios' ghost 'is in no wise detached from the grave where the remains of its carnal tabernacle are entombed' (Ridgeway 1910, 151). Seneca was enthusiastically to adopt the Greek tragic ghost; his *Thyestes*, for example, is opened by the spectre of Tantalus. Much of the evidence for ghosts on the ancient stage is gathered in Hickman 1938. It was partly Seneca's influence which made the theatrical ghost a staple of the renaissance and Shakespearean stage.

Yet the raising of Dareios' ghost, a scene in which an afflicted, war-torn community seeks advice from a respected dead leader, has its closest parallels in Athenian *comedy*: Dionysus in *Frogs* seeks advice on how to save the city from the dead Euripides and Aeschylus in the underworld (and his awareness of his debt to *Persians* is suggested by his references to the tragedy, see 1071-2* and Introduction, p. 2). An even closer parallel occurred in Eupolis' famous comedy, *The Demes*, in which the desperate Athenians brought back up from Hades several of their greatest leaders, including Pericles (Ael. Arist. *Or.* 3.365, Eupolis frr. 99-146 *PCG*).

For ghost-raising was by no means an unfamiliar procedure to the Greek audience. Some scholars (e.g. Headlam 1902) have argued that it would have had a distinctly 'oriental' significance. But in *Choephori* there is a vigorous (although unsuccessful) attempt to raise Agamemnon's ghost (see especially 477, 489–90). The Greeks honoured their dead ancestors with rituals (Hdt. 4.26); the Athenians had a festival of the dead, the Genesia, at which they believed their ancestors returned from the underworld to haunt the city (see Jacoby 1944).

Seeking advice from the shades of the dead had a fundamental archetype in the *Odyssey*. Following Circe's instructions (10.516-37), Odysseus goes to the entrance of Hades at the very edge of Ocean; there, by rituals including animal sacrifice and libation (see below, 667-8*), he raises the ghost of Teiresias (and of many others including his mother), from whom he seeks counsel (11.9-151). Aeschylus dramatised Odysseus' raising of Teiresias' ghost in his lost *Psuchagōgoi*, 'Soul-raisers' (frr. 273-8 *TgrF*), which included a speech by the 'raised' Teiresias prophesying the hero's death (as in *Od.* 11.100-37). This other Aeschylean necromantic play was also alluded to in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (fr. 273 *TgrF*, *Frogs* 1266). Eitrem (1928, 9) speculates that knowledge of ghost-raising was also prominent in Aeschylus' *Penelope*, *Ostologoi*, and satyric *Circe*. Aeschylus may therefore have been particularly associated with stage ghosts: he appeared as one himself both in Pherecrates' comedy *Crapataloi* (fr. 100 *PCG*), and in a lost play by Aristophanes (see fr. 696 *PCG*). But Euripides in *Hecuba* and Sophocles in his *Polyxena* (Achilles' ghost) also used the device. See Green 1994, 18–19.

A story was current in the fifth century that Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, had something of an ongoing dialogue with his dead wife Melissa at the oracle of the dead at Ephyra in Thesprotia (Hdt. 5.92.6-7); although he had killed her and slept with her corpse, she eventually helped him to recover lost property. There is archaeological evidence at this nekyomanteion dating from the third century BC, but built on the same site as the much older cult of the dead: the evidence suggests that necromantic rituals similar to those performed by Odysseus were practised in reality (see Dakaris 1963, 51-4).

The chorus' necromantic hymn opens with an anapaestic introduction (623-32, see 1-154*), during which the chorus arrange themselves around the tomb of Dareios, perhaps in a kneeling position reminiscent of their prostration before the Queen on her first entrance. Dareios' first speech indicates the violent physical actions which had been performed by the chorus during their ghost-raising song: pounding and scratching the earth (see 683*). They may also have clapped their hands (1071-2*). The stasimon proper commences with the chorus asking whether Dareios can hear them (633-6); it then alternates addresses to the underworld gods (640-6, 649-50) with eulogy of Dareios in the third person (647-8, 652-6); finally the chorus seem to pluck up the courage to apostrophise his ghost directly in the second person for a sustained sequence of three stanzas (657-77). The fundamental metre of the stasimon is the distinctive Ionic *a minore*, familiar from the parodos (65-139*), although the closing epode is predominantly dactylic.

This liturgical structure and content (on which see Citti 1962, 41-3, and especially Moritz 1979) may correspond closely with real prayers to the dead and with the rituals performed at oracles of the dead. The use of refrain (see 671*) and the repetition of the

sound *an-* are particularly striking. The language of the entire hymn is characterised by extensive repetition, inarticulate cries, and accumulations of adjectives; they make it unequivocally, as the chorus themselves say, an utterance 'in my barbarian language, clear, varied, ceaseless and harsh-sounding' (635-6*). It is not clear at what exact point Dareios first becomes visible, although it is plausible to take the account of his clothing at 660-1 as a description of what the audience are beginning to glimpse.

623 My lady...Persians: See 4-6*.

626 the escorts of the dead: These are to be named at 629 and 650.

628 You, pure gods: The chorus mark their change of interlocutor with the word ἀλλά, which here has little if any adversative force. It is sometimes used, as here, to initiate an *apostrophe*, which is technically the 'turning away' from one addressee to another.

629 Earth: See 497-9*. **Hermes:** One of this god's cult titles was ψυχοπομπός, 'escort of souls', the only Olympian who could pass in and out of the chthonic sphere (cf. *Choeph.* 124 (= 165 transposed), 'greatest herald of those above and below': Hermes leads the souls of the suitors down to the underworld in the second *nekuia* of the *Odyssey* (24.1-14), and his special responsibility for the dead is shown by the inscription of his name on graves (Burkert 1985, 157-8). **king of those below:** Subsequently named as Aïdoneus (649-50*).

633-4 Does...hear me: ἀΐει (from ἀΐω, 'perceive') must mean 'hear' (as often), and provides variety with κλύει in the next question (639). Cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 362–3. Haldane 1972, 43 collects evidence (e.g. *Choeph.* 315-19) that it was thought necessary to shout very loud indeed in order to be heard by those in the underworld. More honorific epithets: see 4-6*.

635-6 my barbarian language...utterances: The Greek audience could apparently tolerate stage foreigners, who by convention spoke Greek, describing their own language as 'barbarian'. Headlam wanted to read βάρβαρ' ἀσαφηνῆ, i.e. '*un*clear barbarian noises', like Iphigenia's 'barbaric incantations' in her ritual at *IT* 137-8, the 'foreign-sounding meaningless polysyllabic words' uttered by the necromancer Mithrobarzanes in Lucian's *Menippus* 9, and in spells now familiar from the magical papyri (1902, 55). The reading is not implausible, but Headlam's theory that there were spells in unintelligible jargon (not preserved in the text) uttered between 632 and 633 was based on no solid evidence (see Lawson 1934). The chorus' asyndetic piling up of five adjectives to describe their own language creates a strange enough effect in itself. **varied:** Since αἰόλος in musical contexts means 'of changing pitch' (e.g. Soph. *Inachus* fr. 269c.32 *TgrF*), this adjective may give a clue to the nature of the music here (see Haldane 1972, 46).

640-1 Earth: See 497-9*.

643 Sousa-born god of the Persians: The dead Dareios is unquestionably believed to be divine (see 156-7*).

647-8 beloved...beloved...beloved: According to Strabo the inscription on Dareios' tomb read, 'he was loved by those who loved him', (φίλος ἦν τοῖς φίλοις, 15.730.8). The threefold anaphora (evidenced several times in this play, e.g. 550-2, 560-2), around the stem *phil-*, lends a liturgical and incantatory effect. Aeschylean barbarians elswhere use extended repetition and anaphora when addressing important figures (*Suppl.* 370-4, see Hall 1989, 193, 206). **mound:**

Besides Dareios' mention of his 'tomb' (τάφου, 684) this word gives us the only clue as to the appearance of the grave scenery (see also 657-9* and especially 140-1*).

649-50 Aïdoneus: Hades; cf. Soph. *OC* 1559. The name seems to be a poetical extension of the Homeric Ἀΐδης, a name probably meaning 'Unseeing' or 'Unseen', from ἀ- plus ἰδεῖν (Farnell 1907, 282), although the meaning has been disputed. Hades was the son of Kronos and Rhea and brother of Zeus and Poseidon; his apportioned lot of the universe was the 'murky gloom' of the underworld (*Il.* 15.187-91).

651 Darian: The chorus here and below (671) use a form of the dead King's name designed to lend an authentic foreign flavour. The usual Hellenisation of his name (as elsewhere in this play) was *Dareios*; *Darian* approximates much more closely to the Persian *Dārayava^{h}us* (see 16-18*).

652 he never killed: In contradistinction to Xerxes, earlier said to have 'destroyed' (ἀπώλεσεν) his men (551).

654-6 godlike in counsel: In the military context θεομήστωρ may call to mind Ares, of whom an epithet was παμμήστωρ ('all-counselling', tr. fr. adesp. 129.9). **he steered the army well:** Dindorf's conjectured alternative to the various unconvincing manuscript readings has a naval connotation, 'he guided the ship by its sheet well': this is entirely appropriate in the context of this naval play (90*, 767*).

657-9 Shah: This word has been selected to translate the Greek βαλλήν in order to imitate its orientalising effect; βαλλήν would have sounded strange and eastern to Aeschylus' audience. It was either a Phrygian word meaning 'king' (Hesych. s.v. βαλήν, [Plut.] *de Fluv.* 12.4), or derived from the Phoenician honorary title 'Ba'al'. Sophocles' orientalised Trojans in his *Poimenes* used the same title, perhaps of Priam (fr. 515 *TgrF*; see Hall 1989, 120-1). **come, draw near, arrive:** The asyndeton and the three nearly identical imperatives sound powerfully hieratic. **the very top:** The somewhat unexpected κόρυμβον (instead of e.g. κορυφή, the word for the top of Achilles' tomb at Eur. *Hec.* 93) may have a naval connotation (90*): in the *Iliad* its only meaning is the top of a ship's stern (9.241), and this is what κόρυμβα meant earlier in the play (411).

660-1 yellow-dyed slippers: The Phrygian eunuch in Euripides' *Orestes* also wears 'barbarian' εὐμάριδες (1370), on which in general see M. Miller 1985, 269-72. Later authors say that they had very thick soles (βαθύπελμος, *AP* 7.413.3-4, Lyc. *Alex.* 855), which may be connected with the later comments on the 'soft' Persian gait (1073). See also 247* (and 814-15*, which just possibly conceals a reference to Persian military boots). The closed shoe (as opposed to the sandal), not attested in Greek art or literature until the beginning of the fifth century, was an idea copied from the east (Erbacher 1914, 71). The Greeks' fascination with Persian clothing is evinced already in fragments of the early historian Hecataeus (1 *FgrH* F 284, 287), on whom Aeschylus may here and in the following line be dependent. Yet Persian royal relief sculptures do suggest that the kings wore special shoes to distinguish themselves from their subjects (Root 1979, 112-13, 185). It is curious that Dareios' rising feet are described before his head.

662 tip...tiara: The King's peaked head-dress excited great interest amongst the Greeks (numerous references in Belloni 1988, 193). It was also called the κυρβασία, and according to Hesychius (τ 836) only the Kings of Persia could wear its peak upright, while their generals wore it bent down. In Aristophanes' *Birds* Euelpides says that the cock is the only bird to wear his κυρβασία upright (i.e. to have a crest), like the Great King of Persia (486-7), so 'revealing the tip' here may refer to the regally erect position of the peak of Dareios' hat.

663 come: The Greek imperative βάσκε has a specific religious resonance, since in Homer it is used exclusively to exhort an immortal or supernatural being to undertake a terrestrial mission (Iris, Hermes, or Agamemnon's false dream, *Il.* 24.144, 24.336, 2.8). See Moritz 1979, 194. **benign:** Raising the dead is a terrifying task: addressing Dareios as 'benign' may be intended to placate him, and thus serve an apotropaic ritual function. See also 555-6*, 609-10*. **father:** Although Sophocles' Oedipus paternalistically calls his subjects his children (*OT* 1), it is not usual for kings in tragedy, even dead ones, to be addressed as 'father' by coevals; it implies a distinctly inegalitarian relationship (see 'mother', 215-16*). The Greeks may have believed that Persian kings required this form of address, for in Timotheus' *Persians*, when a barbarian supplicates a *Greek* who has mastered him, he calls him 'father' (fr. 791.154 *PMG*).

664-6 Come: The verb has to be supplied in the translation of the antistrophe. **master of masters:** The manuscripts have the meaningless 'master of master', and Dindorf's emendation, in the light of such attested Persian phrases as 'king of kings' (see 24*), is almost certain: cf. the skolion attributed to Hybrias the Cretan (fr. 909.8-10 *PMG*), where a likely supplement makes a first-person serf-master's voice say that people prostrate themselves before him, addressing him as 'master of masters and Great King'. Free Greeks used the term δεσπότης of gods and expected their slaves to use it of them: the title in *Persians* suggests both the servility of the chorus and the divinity of Dareios.

667-8 Stygian mist: Is this evidence for an ancient special effect? The meaning of ἀχλύς is not as clearly metaphorical as *LSJ* (s.v. ἀχλύς 2) and most commentators assume. The parallel text they cite is *Eum.* 379-80, where the chorus (at Athens) say that 'a murky ἀχλύς' is settling on Orestes' household. But in *Persians* the presence of ἀχλύς is explained by the next line: 'for all our young men have recently perished'. The only time when ἀχλύς hovers around generally in Homer is in the crucial omen at the end of book 20 of the *Odyssey*. Theoclymenus says that the palace entrance is thronged with ghosts speeding down to Erebos, the sun has been eclipsed, 'and a foul ἀχλύς hovers over all' (20.355-7). There the ἀχλύς marks the precise point at which the living are conceptualised joining the dead. But Aeschylus at this point in *Persians* unequivocally calls the mist 'Stygian': Odysseus does his necromantic rituals at the exact point where 'a branch of the Styx' meets two other rivers (10.513-15, 11.21-2). The chorus' entirely concrete reference to 'Stygian mist' therefore occurs at the point where *both* a ghost is being raised from the underworld *and* young men are going down to it. I am very grateful to my graduate student Ruth Bardel for pointing out to me that a column of smoke is clearly depicted beneath the only figure in Greek vase-painting which can with absolute certainty be identified as a

tragic ghost. This is the labelled 'ghost (*eidōlon*) of Aietes' in the illustration of an unknown *Medea* tragedy on a fourth-century vase by the Underworld Painter (no. III.5.4 in Trendall and Webster 1971). Aietes was also a barbarian monarch. **floating overhead:** ἐπιποτάομαι (see also *Eum.* 378) is a lengthened poetic form of ἐπιπέτομαι, 'fly over, towards'.

670 all our young men: The Doric noun νεολαία means something like 'the youth of the nation (λαός)' (cf. Aesch. *Suppl.* 687).

671 Repeated verbatim from the last line of the corresponding strophe (663). Refrain as a typical feature of necromantic ritual may be implicit in Circe's instructions to Odysseus to invoke the spirits of the dead *many* times (πολλὰ δὲ γουνοῦσθαι, *Od.* 10.521).

675-7 master: δυνάτης, according to a scholion, is a variant of the more familiar δυνάστης. **what...mistake:** This sentence of the epode is hopelessly corrupt, although the apparent reference to a 'second mistake' could be linking Marathon and Salamis.

678-9 triple-banked: The notion of ships 'with three *skalmoi*' (thole-pins to which the oar was fastened, see 375-6) comes to mean 'with three banks of oars', i.e. triremes. The term recurs right at the end of the play (1075). **have been destroyed:** The same form of this verb (ἐκφθίνω) recurs in the final dirge (927). The totality of the destruction is underlined by the heavy, doleful effect of the unrelieved long syllables in the epode's spondaic penultimate line, especially in contrast with the serial short syllables of line 675.

680 ships no more: The term 'not-ships' (ἄναες) is a striking use of the prevalent privative alpha, contrasting Xerxes' and Dareios' leadership (555-6*, Introduction, p. 23).

681-851: Dareios

The ghost of Dareios, after emerging from the tomb arrayed in tiara, yellow slippers, and presumably other kingly regalia, remains visible for some 160 lines, before descending again to the underworld. He opens by speaking in iambics, and then has an unsuccessful discussion with the chorus, in which they sing that they cannot bring themselves to speak to him (681-702), and Dareios' response changes to trochaic tetrameters. This remains the metre of the more fruitful spoken interchange with the Queen (703-38), in which she paraphrases the news which the messenger had related to her.

But the heart of the scene lies in Dareios' three great speeches, in which he takes his audience through the theological reasons for the catastrophe and through the history of the Persian empire into the future 'three generations hence' (818). The speeches are in the iambic trimeter, to mark the change from dialogue to narrative. They are of increasing length, and all refer the course of history and its divine authorisation explicitly to Zeus. (i) The past: the revelation of unfavourable oracles which had emanated from Zeus, with which Dareios was familiar, and whose fulfilment Xerxes had precipitated by building the bridge over the Hellespont (739-52). (ii) The past: from the empire's foundation (authorised by Zeus) until the accession of Xerxes (759-

786). (iii) The climax of the play is Dareios' account of the present and future: the slaughter at the battle of Plataea awaiting the Persian contingents left behind in Greece, a chastisement for hubris to be meted out, again, by Zeus (800-842). This last speech is distinguished by its two references to *hubris* (808, 821, the only occasions on which the word occurs in the play), and by its compounds of *huper-* in words describing Xerxes' arrogance and excess (820 ὑπέρφευ, 825 ὑπερφρονήσας, 827 ὑπερκόμπων, 831 ὑπερκόμπῳ). Dareios the divine king-prophet has access to an understanding of the divine order of the universe denied to all the other Persians. For discussions see Alexanderson 1967, S. Said 1981, Belloni 1982, Fisher 1992, 258–61.

681 faithful of the faithful: See 1*, 24* (on the *pist-* stem and the intensifying paronomastic genitive plural). **contemporaries:** Since Dareios took power in 521 BC, the chorus cannot be imagined as any less than 65 years of age at the time of Salamis.

682 sorrow...suffering: The translation attempts to reproduce by sigmatism the alliteration (of 'p' sounds) in the Greek, which may have been meant to suggest the noise of the repeated striking of the earth. **the city:** Early in the play the chorus had predicted that the city would resound to the cries of mourning women (115-25), and the city is described as a woman in mourning at 944-9*.

683 the ground groans: As often, the Asian earth is personified (61-2*). **is being beaten:** Literally, 'has been beaten'. Dareios' eye-witness view of the necromancy describes two ritual actions - the pounding and scratching (χαράσσεται) of the earth - which the chorus' hymn had not detailed. The accumulation of the three verbs replicates the repeated violent gestures, which imply that the chorus is now on the ground, either kneeling, crouching, or lying fully stretched out: in the *Iliad* Althaea pounded the earth with her hands 'as she called upon Hades and dread Persephone, while she knelt and made her breast wet with tears' (9.568-70); in the dirge at Eur. *Tro.* 1305-9 Hecuba says, 'I let my aged limbs sink to the ground (ἐς πέδον) and I beat (κτυποῦσα) the earth with my hands'. The chorus respond, 'I in turn kneel on the earth (γόνυ τίθημι γαίᾳ) and call upon my wretched husband in the world below'.

684-5 fear: See 694-6*. **graciously:** The term πρευμενής here implies more than (as at 224) simply polite protocol: it seems to have had a special significance in the context of dialogue between the living and the dead (see 609-10*).

688 Leaving Hades is especially difficult: 'Hades' has to be supplied. The sentiment is similar to Anacreon's famous formulation, 'for the recess of Hades is grim, and the road down to it (κάτοδος) is grievous, and it is certain that he who goes down does not come up again' (*PMG* 395.9-12).

691 since I have authority: Dead royalty were often conceived as retaining their earthly status in the underworld, a conception probably connected with hero-cult. Odysseus says to Achilles in the underworld that 'we honoured you like a god before, when you were alive, and now that you have come here, you have great power (μέγα κρατέεις) amongst the dead' (*Od.* 11.484-5); cf. Aesch. *Choeph.* 354-8; Soph. *El.* 841.

694-702 The chorus is so overwhelmed by the appearance of Dareios that they find it difficult to look at him (which may well imply that they perform prostration

(152*), or are still on the ground after the necromancy), or even to respond to him: they express their confused emotions in a lyric strophe and antistrophe (in the 'orientalising' Ionic *a minore* metre: see 65-139*), between which Dareios addresses them in speech. He has changed his own metre to trochaic tetrameters, perhaps implying greater speed of delivery and emotional agitation (see 155-248*). The chorus do not regain their composure sufficiently to speak again until line 787.

694-6 Awesome...of you: The repetition and rhyme create a semi-liturgical effect, implying the quasi-religious awe in which Dareios, now a god (see 156-7), had always been held. The chorus can almost certainly not be looking at Dareios. **old fear:** Aeschylus carefully indicates (see also 703) that the chorus had been afraid of Dareios, as supreme autocrat, even during his lifetime. The central emotion of this scene is fear: Dareios had used the same word at 685. The play implies both that the Persians feared the Greeks, and that relationships between the Persians were characterised by fear.

699 casting aside the awe: Dareios gives the chorus 'permission' to forget the usual reverential attitude his presence demanded and speak to the point.

700-2: The antistrophe replicates the syntax, repetition, and rhyme of the strophe.

703 old fear: See 694-6*.

704 high-born lady..marriage bed: Dareios uses nearly as solemn titles to address his widow as the chorus had used towards her on her first appearance (155-8). The chorus and the Queen had also made reference to the royal marriage bed (157, 160).

706 the human condition: Note the Queen's extremely similar gnomic generalisation at 293-4. Just as she had calmed the messenger in order to extract news from him, so Dareios is calming her for the same reason.

707 both from the sea and the land: A fine example of Aeschylus' ability to bring a traditional poetic *topos* alive by making it peculiarly relevant to his current aesthetic purpose. Such polar expressions involving sea and land (see also *Choeph.* 585-8) go back to Hesiod (*Theog.* 582) and the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* (5-6): the goddess subdues all the creatures 'that the dry land nurtures, and all reared by the sea' (more examples in Barrett 1964, 394). But the formula is particularly appropriate in a context where military operations by land and sea have been consistently paired (see 76-80, 102-14*).

709 O you...prosperity: A hyperbolic apostrophe even by theatrical Persians' standards, but the word ὄλβος may be chosen carefully (161-4*). It is best to take 'all men' to be dependent on ὑπερσχών and ὄλβον as accusative of respect.

710 while you looked: For the elaborate diction on the theme of light see 150-1*.

711 living your life...Persians: This is the obvious way to interpret the Greek, although it is just possible that it means 'making life pass happily for the Persians', since the chorus begin their next chorus with an assertion of that nature (852-6). **like a god:** See 156-7*.

712 depths: On the imagery of 'heights' and 'depths' see the Introduction, p. 25.

714 Persians: The translation omits the word πράγμαθ', the 'affairs' of the Persians. **"the destroyers of cities":** This has been supplied in the translation because a pun on Πέρσαι and διαπορθεῖν (= διαπέρθειν) is almost certainly intended (see

65*). On the other hand a traditional expression about the fall of Persia, with a variable verb, may be implied: see Hdt. 7.10.γ.2, διέργαστο ἂν τὰ Περσέων πρήγματα). The play offers several pithy and memorable sayings about the Persian wars (824*). The Queen's rider ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔπος (not translated here), modifies the categorical force of *dia-* in the verb: '*utterly* destroyed, as it were'. The same phrase modifies a similarly sweeping statement at Eur. *Hcld.* 167.

715 blasted: A σκῆπτος is a thunderbolt; the strong metaphor, 'thunderbolt of plague', is comparable with Eur. *Andr.* 1046 (of war), and especially *OT* 27-8, 'the fiery god of plague has blasted (σκήψας) the city'. But in *Persians* the notion of the thunderbolt, Zeus's prerogative, anticipates Dareios' revelation of Zeus's prophecies at 739-40*. See also 514*. **civic strife:** It is revealing that Dareios immediately assumes the crisis has been caused not by external military campaigns but by internal sedition.

717 Which of my sons: The Athenians may have been aware of rumours similar to Herodotus' later narrative of the bitter quarrel between Dareios' seven sons (three by his first wife, four by Atossa) over the succession (7.2-3). Dareios had at least twelve children by six known wives (Cook 1985, 228).

718 raging: See 73*. **emptying:** See 118-19*.

720 the front: μέτωπον, properly 'forehead', could mean a 'line' in a military sense (Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.2).

722 yoked: See 50*. **strait of Helle:** Yet another circumlocution for 'the Hellespont' (see 67-72*). **contraptions:** Cf. λαοπόροις τε μαχαναῖς (112-14).

723 actually managed: Literally, 'he accomplished this thing, so as to close...'. **Bosporos:** Another way of saying 'the Hellespont'. The name 'Bosporos' usually referred to the Thracian or Tauric (Crimean) straits, deeper into the Black Sea, but Sophocles also uses it to designate the Hellespont (*Aj.* 884).

724-5 one of the gods...a mighty god: On the ubiquitous *daimōn* see 158*.

729 whole...completely: On the play's pervasive use of the term πᾶς ('all', 'every') and its cognates, which cumulatively build up an impression of the *totality* of the annihilation of Persia, see the Introduction, p. 24 **by the spear:** i.e. 'by the Greeks'.

730-2 Sousa...all the Bactrian people: On the Bactrians see 306*. The antithesis by μέν and δέ of Sousa and Bactria may mean that the Queen is thinking of Sousa and Bactria as representative of the western and eastern parts of the empire respectively. **emptiness of men:** See 118-19*. **to a man:** The manuscript reading 'not even an old man [sc. 'survives]' makes little sense, unless it is a uniquely elliptical way of saying that none of the Bactrians will reach old age. There has been continuous emphasis on the *youth* of Xerxes' forces (as in the next line), and old men usually appear in such contexts as bereft parents (see e.g. 63*).

733 he lost: Or, 'he destroyed'.

734 only Xerxes: I.e. Xerxes is the sole man *of high status* to have escaped.

736 which yoked: See 50*.

738 disagreement: For this sense of στάσις cf. Plato, *Euthyphr.* 8d, where στασιάζειν means 'to disagree'.

739-40 oracles...prophecies: Dareios introduces for the first time in the play the notion of oracles, received from Zeus apparently in his lifetime, foretelling the

Persian catastrophe: Dareios thus confirms the play's thesis that the defeat of Persia was divinely ordained. This kind of language was so intimately associated with the tragic register in the Athenian imagination that Aristophanes makes a character, in a parody of tragedy, say οἴμοι πέπρακται τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ θέσφατον (Ar. *Knights* 1248), 'alas, the oracle of the god has been fulfilled'. Aeschylus does not make Dareios specify what the oracles consisted of, where he received them, or when: in Herodotus various oracles had predicted Persian defeat (8.96, 9.42-3), but not to Dareios. **Zeus:** See 532*. **hurled down:** The verb is ἀποσκήπτειν, 'cast down from above', probably suggestive of Zeus's thunderbolt (see 715*).

742 hasty...assistance: The sentiment encapsulates the argument of the play, that the Persian defeat was ordained by the gods, but that its implementation was accelerated by Xerxes' impetuosity. The idea became typical in gnomic utterances in tragedy: see Eur. *IT* 910-11, fr. 432.2 N^2, and especially Aeschylus fr. 395 *TgrF*, 'god loves to help the one who is struggling [sc. to achieve something for himself]'.

743 fountain-spring: The problems facing the Persians have previously been metaphorically conceptualised as an 'ocean' (433*). The Athenians, in contrast with this spring of calamity, have a 'spring' (πηγή) of silver which won them the battle (238*).

744 youthful audacity: Xerxes' lack of understanding of the divine order of the universe (τάδ' - see also 373*), and his impetuous boldness, are both here associated with his allegedly tender years (see 13*).

745-50 constrain...Poseidon: The chorus and the Queen have both described the bridging of the Hellespont (112-14, 130-2, 722); now it is Dareios' turn, and he sets Xerxes' actions in their theological context. This passage probably has nothing to do with the famous tradition in which Xerxes had the waters of the Hellespont flogged (Hdt. 7.35), a tradition which was either not yet current, or was unfamiliar to Aeschylus, or which he chose not to exploit. **fetters, like a slave:** Since Xerxes regarded the waters of the Hellespont, like all his other subordinates (see 50*), as a slave, the cables and other components of the bridge by metaphorical extension become its fetters. **divine stream:** Literally, 'stream of a god', presumably Poseidon (see 750). **altered the very nature:** μεταρρυθμίζειν seems to mean 'to change the shape or form' of something: in Hdt. 5.58 it is used of changing the design of the Phoenician letters of the alphabet to their Hellenised form. **mortal:** Despite the attempts to extract king-worship from *Persians* (see 156-7*), Xerxes' human status could not be made more explicit. **including Poseidon:** The καί marks a climax, suggesting '*even* Poseidon' or '*and most of all* Poseidon' (Denniston 1954, 291-2). Poseidon, important in Attic cult, is one of the series of male Olympians or heroes arrayed on the Greek side in the play: see 205-6*. **disease...mind:** On the vulnerability of the 'mind' (φρένες, actually innards locatable somewhere in the midriff) to disturbance and disease in tragedy, see Padel 1992, 20-4. Thalmann 1986 discusses the terminology Aeschylus uses for the sentient innards.

751-2 I am afraid...labours: The effect of this change of topic is heightened by the asyndeton and the alliteration of 'p' sounds - the latter not infrequent in this tragedy (e.g. 205-6*, 682*). Cf. *Choeph.* 137, where Clytemnestra and Aegisthus

wastefully luxuriate in the wealth which Agamemnon had *laboured* to accumulate (ἐν τοῖσι σοῖς πόνοισι χλίουσιν μέγα). **the first comer:** The word ἀνθρώποις, 'for [or 'among'] mankind', is virtually redundant in English.

753-4 **Raging Xerxes:** See 73*. **by talking with wicked men:** this line introduces the notion that Xerxes had been influenced by advisors (see Michelini 1982, 149-50). It is very likely that the reference would have had a particular significance for Aeschylus' audience: in Herodotus the men who encouraged Xerxes included not only his cousin Mardonios and the leading royal family in Thessaly (Aleuadae), but also the old Athenian tyrant family, the Peisistratids (7.6), on whom see Introduction, pp. 3–4.

755 **lack of manly courage:** The Greek word ἀνανδρία, 'lack of bravery', literally means 'lack of manliness'. Xerxes in the play has of course been constructed as deficient in ἀνδρεία in both senses of the word, especially in his reaction to Psyttaleia (468*) and in his headlong flight from the scene of battle (469-70).

757 **wicked men:** See 753-4*.

760 **unforgettable:** On the theme of memory see the Introduction, p. 1, and 824*.

761 **the complete emptying out:** See 118-19*

762-4 **lord Zeus...sceptre of authority:** Dareios says that the Persian monarchy, symbolised by the sceptre, was ordained by Zeus. Aeschylus is using Homeric precedent in order to imagine how a king talked about his right to rule. In the *Iliad* the supreme king Agamemnon's sceptre was derived ultimately from Zeus, and bestowed on his grandfather Pelops by Hermes (*Il.* 2.101-8); Odysseus says to the Achaeans, 'Let there be one commander, one king, endowed by the son of crooked-minded Kronos [i.e. Zeus] with sceptre and royal rights of custom' (2.204-5). Dareios' sceptre is conspicuous in fig. 1, which suggests that in the fourth-century play which the vase illustrates the actor who played Dareios held a sceptre; it would have been dramatically effective in *Persians* if his ghost brought one from the underworld. **a single man:** The language recalls the Queen's question about who ruled the Athenians, and the chorus' response (241-2). **sheep-rearing Asia:** Archilochus had called Asia μηλοτρόφος (fr. 227 *IEG*); in *Persians* the fecundity of Asia is contrasted with the barrenness of Greece (480-514*).

765 **Medos:** It is possible that this merely means 'a Mede', rather than an eponymous individual called Medos. Either way Aeschylus' version shows that he was at least aware that the Persians had taken over what was already a substantial Median empire in 550/49. Greek genealogists had been playing derivation games with the ethnic names 'Persian' (see 76-80*) and 'Mede' at least as early as the sixth century (see Drews 1973, 9): in Hesiod's *Theogony* Medea gives birth to a son called *Medeios* (1001), and in the *Odyssey* her grandmother's name is *Persē* (10.138-9). **the first**: The play's interest in counting (see Introduction, p. 25), here manifests itself in the form of Dareios' catalogue of the Kings.

766 **the next:** It is strange that the second king is not named; Bentley thought that ἄλλος was the corruption of a proper name. If Medos in 765 meant 'a Mede', ἄλλος here would mean 'another Mede' rather than 'the next'.

767 **good sense:** This translates φρένες. This King was thus the opposite of Xerxes, whose φρένες, according to Dareios, were diseased (750). **steered:** Literally,

'turned the rudder of his heart'. Aeschylus elsewhere used rudder metaphors (cf. *Ag.* 802, πραπίδων οἴακα νέμων), which were particularly suitable in contexts to do with government (*Septem* 3); in *Persians* it also contributes to the semantic register inspired by the sea-battle theme (see 90* and Petrounias 1976, 33-5).

768 Kyros: The leader of Persia (or 'Persis'), one of the Medes' own dependencies, Kyros the Great acceded to their throne in 550/49 BC. **fortunate:** Kyros' εὐδαιμονία became traditional in Greek accounts of eastern history (see e.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.6-7).

770 Lydia and Phrygia: On the Lydians see 41*. The Phrygians (in the fifth century often identified with the mythical Trojans: see Hall 1988), not otherwise named in this play, had been conquered by the Lydians before the establishment of the Persian empire and were thus assimilated into it.

771 Ionia: In making Kyros 'control' the Ionians 'by force', Aeschylus here implies that the eastern Greeks had put up a strong resistance. The play effectively passes over the numerous enthusiastic supporters of Persia who had been and continued for many decades to be produced by the Ionian Greek cities (Lewis 1977, 115).

773 Kyros' son: Kambyses, who by the time of Herodotus had acquired a reputation for having failed in all the virtues his idealised father had exemplified.

774 Mardos: Dareios was involved in a conspiracy which resulted in the death of the ruling Persian king. Both Dareios himself on the Behistun inscription, and Herodotus (3.61), claimed that the true heir to the throne, a brother of Kambyses named *Gaumāta* by Dareios and 'Smerdis' by Herodotus, had died, and that an impostor had taken his place (see Bickerman and Tadmor 1973). Aeschylus, who calls the assassinated king 'Mardos', is unique in making no suggestion that he was an impostor. This may be important evidence that the 'impostor' theory was invented by Dareios in order to legitimize his coup (Dandamaev 1976, part ii, 108-63). On the other hand Aeschylus may have had only the foggiest of notions as to what had in reality taken place.

778 Sixth came Maraphis: This entire line has been suspected and is often deleted, since neither the Behistun inscription nor Herodotus speaks of any kings between Mardos/Smerdis (see 774*) and Dareios. But incompatibility with other sources is not a sufficient reason for excising material. The events surrounding the conspiracy and Dareios' accession were by their nature open to multiple variations and interpretations. There is no reason to suppose that the brother of Kambyses (called by one scholiast 'Marphios') did not reign for a short time, nor that Artaphrenes, who in Aeschylus' version was primarily responsible for the assassination of Mardos (776), did not briefly succeed him. The important point is not the veracity of Aeschylus' account, but its psychological impact: the suggestion that there had been an extremely brisk succession of kings since Kambyses implies an unstable and bloody barbarian court, susceptible to vicious intrigues and serial coups.

782 young man...young thoughts: On Xerxes' youth see 13*. A Sophoclean fragment says that hubris 'flowers' particularly in the young (786 *TgrF*).

784 contemporaries: See 681*

787-9 The chorus has finally recovered sufficient composure to speak to Dareios (see 695, 701). Broadhead (1960, 198) may be projecting his own reaction in thinking

that they 'speak as if they were somewhat bored by the King's excursion into Persian history'.

790 Only...Greek territory: It must be remembered that the audience still regarded themselves as at war with Persia in 472 BC: see Introduction pp. 3–5.

791 Persian: The Greek actually says 'Median' (see 236*).

794 It starves to death: See 480-514*.

795 the force: The play here implies for the first time that the Persians had every intention of repeating their attempts to subjugate Greece.

796-7 the forces now in Greek territory: This line would immediately have made Aeschylus' audience think of the battle of Plataea. According to Herodotus (8.113), Mardonios' army consisted of 300,000 selected men. **to return home:** See 8*.

799 the straits of Helle: Yet another poetic variation on the name (68-72*).

800-842 Dareios' last speech turns from the present to the future.

800 Few...many: A poignant expression; the chorus later use a very similar formulation in response to Xerxes when he shows them his quiver at 1023.

802 They all without exception come to pass: More literally, 'it is not the case that some come to pass and some do not'.

804 empty hopes: The man who has 'emptied' all Asia (119-19*) even has 'empty' aspirations.

806 to fatten pleasingly: πίασμα (from πιαίνω, make fat) would naturally seem to be in apposition to the river Asopus. But this may be a case of rich Aeschylean ambiguity, for a more sinister interpretation puts it in apposition to the subject of μίμνουσι, and sees the bodies of the Persians as waiting to enrich, as corpses, the soil of Plataea: in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* Amphiaraus predicts that he will die and fatten (πιανῶ) the Theban earth (587).

807 pinnacle of misery: The same expression was used by the Queen in response to the roll-call of the dead (331*). It is significant that Dareios delays specifying exactly what will happen to the army in Boeotia until *after* his statement of Persian culpability.

808 hubris: A crucial allegation, often regarded, along with the other mention of hubris at 821-2, as the key to the play (e.g. Adams 1952). Hubris defines a deliberate assault on the honour of someone else, whether mortal or divine, often involving violence, and particularly often imputed to the young, rich, male, and well-born. Xerxes' particular hubris was the desecration of Greek holy places, which assaulted the honour of both the gods and the Greeks. On Aeschylus' assimilation of the traditional ethics of Hesiod and Solon see Solmsen 1949, 84-90, 114-17, 200-4. Perdrizet 1921 discusses this account of the desecration of Athens.

809-10 to steal images: Among the statues said to have been stolen was Antenor's famous Athenian tyrannicide group, an action which seemed to symbolize Xerxes' intention to deprive Athens of her liberty (Taylor 1981, 45). The Persians really did take away Greek cult images: a statue of Demeter turned up at Persepolis. **set fire to temples:** The fourth-century orator Lycurgus (*In Leocr.* 81) and Diodorus (11.29.3) say that the Greeks swore an oath before the battle of Plataea not to rebuild the monuments the Persians burned down, but to leave them in their

ruined state as a reminder of the barbarians' impiety; Pollitt (1972, 65-6) connects this oath with the scanty evidence for building activity in Athens between 479 and the eventual peace with Persia in 450 BC. Excavations in the Athenian agora have revealed just how thorough the Persians had been in their destructive activities, at least at Athens: the acropolis was indeed looted and burned, as was the lower city; fortification walls, sanctuaries and houses were all demolished (H.A. Thompson 1981, 344-6).

811 shrines of the gods: At *Ag.* 339 Clytemnestra says that she fears the Argives will desecrate the θεῶν...ἱδρύματα at Troy. Perdrizet's interpretation of the δαιμόνων ἱδρύματα here as 'cemeteries of the dead' (1921, 74-9) is thus improbable.

814-15 solid base...welling up: The translation assumes that the image is from building: foundations cannot be laid in (undrained or muddy) ground because water keeps welling up. Analogously, the problems facing the Persians cannot be brought under control. This interpretation is by no means certain, since ἐκπιδύεται is an emendation, but it does provide the meaning suggested by a scholiast in 'M', 'their troubles (κακά) will increase'. While many emendations and interpretations dependent upon them have been suggested, introducing images from temple plinths to the bottom of cisterns and to fountain-springs, one possibility which has not been explored is that corruption masks another meaning of κρῆπις, which elsewhere often signifies a man's equestrian military boot (Xen. *Eq.* 12.10, Pollux 7.85, Theocr. 15.6 with the references and discussion in Gow 1952, ii, 268), associated with effeminate Asiatic-style luxury (Athen. *Deipn.* 12.522a, 12.539c, Plut.*Vit. Ant.* 54). The word κρῆπις also occurs in the context of Plataea in a fragmentary Simonidean elegy (*IEG* fr. 14.9), where Parsons wonders whether it means 'boot' or 'foundation' (1992, 42).

816 bloody sacrificial slaughter: Although πέλανος can mean simply clotted liquid of any kind, it probably has a resonance of sacrifice here (see 203-4).

817 Doric: Here the meaning is quite specifically 'Spartan' (see 182-3*), since the Plataean victory was regarded as predominantly a Spartan one (Hdt. 9.61-5).

818 Piles of corpses: The same word is used in the *Odyssey* of the macabre pile (θίς) of bones of dead men in the Sirens' meadow (12.45). Herodotus says that only 3,000 of the 300,000 soldiers in the Persian army at Plataea survived (9.70). **three generations hence:** At least forty years after *Persians* sensationalist anecdotes about the Persians' skeletons at Plataea, discovered 'long after' the battle, were in circulation (Hdt. 9.83). There was also an impressive number of funeral mounds to be seen there in Herodotus' time, although he says that some of them were empty, erected by Greek states who wanted to pretend that they had participated in the fighting (9.85).

821-2 hubris...lamentation: On hubris see 808*. The construction of the ὕβρις - ἄτη cycle in terms of plant imagery, indeed specifically arable farming imagery, seems to have been traditional in Athenian poetry (Solon 4.34-5 *IEG*: Eunomia ('good rule') 'puts a stop to excess, confuses hubris, and withers the springing flowers of ruin'). See also Soph. fr. 786, Aesch. *Sept.* 601, *Suppl.* 104-6, Bacchylides 15.57-9. Dareios' theological views could not sound more Greek if he tried. On ἄτη see also 96-8*. This lends another meaning in the play to

metaphorical flowers (59*); the flowers decorating the Queen's libation (611-18*) are probably still visible on stage.

824 remember Athens and Greece: The messenger had earlier 'remembered Athens' and groaned (see 285). The theme of memory is extremely important to the play, which itself constitutes a memorial of the wars, replete with memorable pithy phrases (see e.g. 1013, 1025). The catastrophe Xerxes caused is to be remembered for all time (760) and is totally unforgettable (990). Athens is rather out of place immediately after a prediction of the 'Doric' victory at Plataea: hence the perfunctory addition of 'Greece'.

826 lust after: Clytemnestra uses the cognate term ἔρως of the Argive army's desire for plunder (*Ag.* 341); in Herodotus the transgressive desire denoted by ἔρως is attributed only to tyrants and kings (Bernadete 1969, 137-9 and n. 9, Hall 1989, 208).

826 pour away great prosperity: See the Queen's fear at 163-4.

827 chastises: The primary meaning of κολάζειν is 'to prune', but in tragedy κολαστής is used of individuals and things characterised as 'punishers' or 'correctors' (Eur. *Hcld.* 388 (Zeus), Soph. *OT* 1148). Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1.10.17 = 1369b) distinguishes the gaining of satisfaction from a criminal from the actual act of correction (κολάζειν).

828 assessor: At 213* Xerxes was said to be in no way 'accountable' (ὑπεύθυνος) to the community. But he is, of course, accountable to the divine εὔθυνος.

830 exhort: πινύσκειν is a Homeric term meaning 'admonish' (*Il.* 14.249).

834-6 More literally, 'For because of anguish at the catastrophes tearings of the embroidered clothes around his body utterly rip them into threads'. Dareios recapitulates the theme of Xerxes' clothes-ripping, seen by the Queen in her dream, reported by the messenger, and soon to be given visual proof by Xerxes himself (468*, 1028-30*). **embroidered robes:** According to Herodotus fabulous Persian clothing had fallen into Greek hands, including an 'embroidered gown' (ἐσθὴς ποικίλη) at Plataea (9.80). Hecataeus had said that the inhabitants of Kissia wore gowns designated by this term (1 *FgrH* F 284). Both ἔσθημα and ἔσθης may have feminine overtones: in Sophocles fr. 769 *TgrF* a male character looked 'conspicuous in woman-mimicking (γυναικομίμοις) ἐσθήμασιν'.

839 darkness: ζόφος is a Homeric term for the gloom of Hades (649-50*).

841 pleasure: While the general sentiment is common enough in tragedy (e.g. Eur. *HF* 503-5), in the Persian context Dareios' parting injunction implies an 'oriental' preoccupation with sensual self-gratification (see also 543-5*). In the temperate climate of Asia, according to the Hippocratic *On Airs, Waters, Places* (12.40-4), 'courage, endurance, industry and high spirit could not arise, but pleasure (ἡδονή) must be supreme'. Later Greek writers record oriental tomb-inscriptions expressing the same notion, e.g. Sardanapalus' epitaph, 'eat, drink, play, since the other things in this life are not worth the snap of a finger' (Athen. *Deipn.* 12.530b-c, cf. Strabo 14.5.9 = 672).

846-8 hurts: Literally, 'bites'. The Queen has just heard that the army in Greece is about to be slaughtered wholesale, and yet the primary cause of her anguish is her son's scruffiness. Nothing more powerfully conveys the audience's view of the obsessiveness of Persian sartorial display.

849-50 I shall go: The Queen is removed from the stage so that Xerxes' scene is confined to interaction with the chorus. Either the actor who played the Queen or the one who played the messenger/Dareios could have doubled as Xerxes. Aeschylus' decision not to include the Queen in the closing scene ensures that the focus is on Xerxes' failure as a civic and military leader, rather than as her beloved son; it also means that sung dirges are only delivered in this play by males, which contributes to the overall effeminisation of Persia (908-1078*).

851 those dear to me: For the 'impersonal' neuter plural see 1*.

852-907: Stasimon

With the departure of both the ghost of Dareios and the Queen, the chorus are left alone for the first time since 597, to sing a stasimon until one of the two actors returns dressed in the new mask and ragged costume of Xerxes. The Dareios scene had concluded with their expression of anxiety about the present and future (843); here they reminisce nostalgically about the prosperous days of the Persian empire under the wise leadership of Dareios. From 867-900 this takes the form of enumerating states over which he used to rule, allowing Aeschylus another opportunity for poeticised cartography (480-514*). The conspicuously dactylic metre is well suited to the catalogue form of this geographical survey, reminiscent of similar catalogues in the second book of the *Iliad*; the dactyls provide a 'remarkable...instance of reflection of sense in metre in this muster-roll' (Dale 1971, 4).

A striking aspect of this cartographic procedure is that Aeschylus has decided to address the thorny issue of the Greek communities under the Persian empire, an issue which has until this point for the most part been tactfully avoided (see 42-3*, 771*). But the original audience must have felt particular pleasure at hearing the place-names, for by the time of the play's production in 472 BC most of these states were now liberated from Persia. Moreover, the majority of them were in the Delian league, the alliance of Ionian, Hellespontine, and island states under Athenian leadership formed in 478/7 to wage war against the Persians. The league's aims were to push the Persians ever further eastward and to extract compensation for the losses which had been incurred (Thuc. 1.96). The survey covers Thrace (864-70), north-western Asia Minor and the Hellespont region (871-9), Aegean islands and Cyprus (880-95), and the Greek cities in Asia (896-900). The play's ostensible lament for the Persians' lost domains functions for the audience as a celebration of the regained autonomy of numerous Greek city-states.

852-4 life of civic order: πολισσονόμος must mean something like 'managing a city' (πόλις + νέμειν); this is the implication of the expression ἀρχὰς τε πολισσονόμους at *Choeph.* 864 ('the authority to run a city', although unfortunately this occurs in a corrupt passage: see Garvie 1986, 282-3). Unfortunately the messy state of the antistrophe in *Persians* makes it difficult to ascertain whether the chorus' focus is primarily on the internal management of civic affairs or on the external imperial management of other cities. If the latter, then 'life governing an empire of many cities' might here be the meaning.

civic affairs or on the external imperial management of other cities. If the latter, then 'life governing an empire of many cities' might here be the meaning.

854-6: old...Dareios: On the honorific accumulation of epithets see 4-6*. **all-sufficing:** παντα ρκής cannot mean simply 'all-powerful', as it is usually rendered, since ἀρκεῖν always implies being sufficient or adequate. Hesychius π 395 glosses it as ὁ πᾶσιν αὐταρκῶν. **undamaging:** On the use of these negativised adjectives in reference to Dareios see 555-6*. He has earlier been called by a variant of the same word (ἄκακος, 663). **invincible:** Dareios, the chorus falsely claim, could not be beaten in battle, just as the army was like an 'invincible wave' (ἄμαχον κῦμα, 90). **godlike:** See 76-80*, 156-7*.

857-9 proved...campaigns: ἀποφαίνομαι can mean 'produce evidence' or 'prove'. **a system of laws...everything:** There is certain corruption here: the metre does not respond with that of the strophe. The sudden introduction of the idea of the Persians' laws is also strange in the pervasively military context, and there is no satisfactory parallel for this meaning of πύργινος, although metaphorical towers have appeared earlier in the play (192). But νομί[σ]ματα πύργινα might just refer to the laws which Persian kings are thought by some to have had conspicuously inscribed at their palace doors and city gates (see Rogers 1903). Dareios was certainly concerned to get regulations codified and written down, especially in the Greek cities of the empire (Cook 1985, 221).

860-1 returned to their homes: For the 'homecoming' (*nostos*) theme see 8*. **uninjured and unharmed:** On the pervasive use of adjectives with privative *alpha* used to describe Dareios' regime see 555-6*.

862-6 without even crossing...hearth: The Greeks seem to have thought that the river Halys marked the western boundary between Persia itself and Lydia. It is not clear precisely why the chorus should regard it as so impressive that Dareios delegated the subjugation of the Thracian cities to others and stayed at home himself, but a differentiation between Persian and Greek ideals of leadership is almost certainly intended. Exactly this kind of behaviour is criticised in the hearth-tending Aegisthus of *Agamemnon* by the Greek chorus; they call him a woman who 'stays at home awaiting the return of the men from war' (1625-6). See also 169*.

867-70 Acheloian: Greek sources mention several rivers called the Acheloios, but none is known of near the Strymon. Since Ἀχελῷος came to signify any stream, or simply 'water' (Eur. *Bacch.* 625), it may be that Ἀχελωΐδες here means 'riverside [cities]'. It is much more likely, however, that it means 'coastal': a drinking-song calls sea-water 'dews of Acheloios' (fr. 917c.5 *PMG*). **Thracian:** Before the war there were Persian military governors throughout Thrace, but by 472 BC most of them had been expelled by the Greeks (see Meiggs 1972, 52-3).

871-3 lake: It has been claimed that this is Lake Maeotis, the Sea of Azov, the part of the Black Sea to the north-east of the Crimean peninsula. But the remainder of the strophe seems to be further describing these 'cities outside the lake', which means that the 'lake' is the virtually enclosed waters of the whole Hellespontine and Propontine area. Most editions read 'and' (τ') after Ἕλλας, thus distinguishing the 'cities...outside the lake' from those on the Hellespont etc. But the structural pattern of the following three stanzas is to use, as here, a poetic circumlocution in the first

line(s), followed by a specification of the proper names of the same places. **encircled:** περιελαύνω (here split by tmesis) also means 'build round' in Homer (*Il.* 18.564): πύργον is best taken as an accusative of respect. Towers have appeared before in this ode (857-9*); circles have recurred throughout the play (Introduction, p. 21).

876-8 proudly situated: εὔχομαι, 'aver with pride', sometimes occurs without an infinitive 'to be' (εἶναι); see e.g. *Od.* 14.199, 'I am proud [sc. to be of] Cretan descent', ἐκ...Κρητάων γένος εὔχομαι [sc. εἶναι]. **Helle:** See 67-72*. Some, although by no means all, of the coastal Hellespontine cities seem to have been original members of the Delian league (see 852-907*, Meiggs 1972, 53).

880 coast of the peninsula: The πρῶν' ἄλιον is probably the Ionian peninsula.

883-7 Lesbos....Samos, Chios: These islands are of course 'near' Asia. More importantly, they were prominent founding members of the Delian league (Hdt. 9.106, Meiggs 1972, 42-3). **Paros...Tenos:** These five islands of the Cyclades formed the geographical and emotional heart of the Delian League: its treasury was on Delos, curiously not named.

890-6 Lemnos: An important island which had been settled by Athenians but which had fought for Xerxes and was by 472 required to pay tribute to the Delian League. **Ikaria...Cnidos:** The islands between the Cyclades and south-west Asia Minor. **the cities of Cyprus:** The Cypriots, especially the leaders of Soloi and Salamis, had played an important and energetic role in the Ionian revolt against Persia, but had ultimately failed. Cyprus was not free of Persia at the time of the foundation of the Delian League, and was probably still contested territory in 472 BC (see Podlecki 1966, 159 n. 28). **mother-state:** For the term see Thuc. 1.24. This word suggests that the Attic Salamis felt that it had the special claims to its namesake in Cyprus of a mother-city to her colony. The mythical founder of Cypriot Salamis was Teucer, who migrated from the Attic Salamis (Pind. *Nem.* 4.46–8; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.21–32). In Euripides' *Helen* he comes to Egypt in the course of his journey (see 144–50).

897-900 There is certainly textual corruption in line 899-900. The translation needs to supply the noun 'cities'. **Ionian land colonised by Greeks:** The Greek cities of western Asia Minor, such as Miletus. Most of the Ionian Greek cities were in the Delian League by the time of the production of *Persians*.

903-7 the gods' reversal of our fortunes: At 158* the chorus had feared that an ancient *daimōn* would change things for the worse for the Persian army: see Introduction, pp. 15–16. **defeat:** On the connotations of δμαθέντες see 279*. **blows:** See 251-2*.

908-1078: Xerxes

The young King of Persia, so long awaited, finally enters in rags (1016-18*, 1030), with a quiver but no bow (1020*), on his (now dilapidated?) curtained car (1000-1*). He may remain upon it for the duration of the scene: Persian kings were apparently prevented by taboo from touching the ground directly with their feet, which helps to explain the 'carpet' scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (Hall 1989, 207 n. 25). Xerxes may, on the other hand, descend from it to partake in the more extreme physical movements as the lamentation grows wilder. The entire scene is intoned or sung. The chorus' attitude to their King is not particularly accusatory, but they show him markedly less respect than

either the Queen or Dareios, refraining from strings of honorary titles and from prostration (see 4-6* and 152*).

Xerxes' role demanded an expert singer; he is the only significant character in Greek tragedy who never uses iambic trimeters, the medium of speech (see Hall 1998). This *thrēnos*, a sung dialogue between Xerxes and the chorus (*kommos*), is the longest and wildest in extant Greek tragedy. Like most of the lyrics in the play (see 1-154*), it opens with an anapaestic section (908-30). At 931 Xerxes opens the kommos proper, which consists of seven strophic pairs and a final epode. It falls into two distinct parts: there is a shift in form, content, metre, and mood at the beginning of the fourth strophe (see 1002-78*).

This tragic dirge is unusual in being performed by men rather than women, who were usually responsible for the performance of funereal song and lamentation in Greek life and literature generally. The idea that displays of grief were unmanly is already present in the archaic poetry of Archilochus (fr. 13.9-10 *IEG*, 'Quickly, endure, and put away womanish grief', γυναικεῖον πένθος). The phenomenon of lamentation in the highly public arena of the theatre is quite remarkable, not least because Athenian legislation attributed to Solon had severely curtailed the extent and the nature of public lamentation at funerals (the evidence in collected in Ruschenbusch 1966, 95-7). Solon was supposed to have 'taken away the harsh and barbaric practices...in which [women] had usually indulged up to that time', including laceration of the flesh (Plut. *Vit. Sol.* 12.8): note (i) that the legislation referred directly to women (it being assumed that no man would have indulged in such self-mutilation) and (ii) the self-mutilation performed by the male barbarians in *Persians*, who blacken their flesh with blows, beat their breasts, and tear their beards, clothes and hair (1052-3, 1054, 1056, 1060, 1062). The legislation also proscribed the performance of set laments at funerals, limited the number of (female) mourners, discouraged funeral processions, and forbade 'everything disorderly and excessive'. The great dirge in *Persians*, which is not even performed on the occasion of an actual funeral, not only includes many of the features of lamentation outlawed at Athens, but is performed by men, thus gaining much of its orientalising force. The male barbarians are portrayed as expressing their emotions through actions in which not even women were permitted to indulge at Athens in the fifth century: even lamentation in other tragedies (on which see Alexiou 1974, 14-23, Foley 1993), usually performed by women, is set in the distant mythical past.

908-30 The introductory anapaests may offer an opportunity for the chorus to arrange themselves around Xerxes, and conceivably for him to descend from his car (although we might have expected this to be made explicit in the text). The closing line is marked by the striking resolution of the anapaest into short syllables, producing the agitated 'proceleusmatic' ∪∪ ∪∪ (on which see Raven 1968, 56).

908 *iō* : An exclamation of despair which Xerxes will repeat at 974, 1005, and which the chorus pick up in the closing epode at 1070 and 1074.

909-10 loathsome: στυγερός in Homer is sometimes an epithet of Hades (*Il.* 8.368), or of avenging Erinyes (*Od.* 2.135); the Queen called the malevolent *daimōn* 'loathsome' (στυγνέ) at 472, and Xerxes will also call Athens 'loathsome' (στυγνάς) at 976. **unexpected:** The literal meaning of ἀτέκμαρτος is 'unpredicted [or unpredictable] by signs'; Pindar says that things a year in the future are

ἀτέκμαρτον to foresee (*Pyth.* 10.63), and Herodotus uses it of an obscure oracle (5.92.γ). Xerxes' lack of foresight has earlier been a criticism (454, 744).

911 god: The malevolent *daimōn* again (see 158*). At 515-16 the chorus remarked that the *daimōn* had leapt and stamped on the Persian race.

913-14 vigour...limbs: Xerxes uses the stylised language of Homer (e.g. *Il.* 7.6, γυῖα λέλυνται). **contemplate...advanced age:** A sentiment reminiscent of Priam's hope that Achilles will be shamed by Priam's great age (ἡλικίην...γῆρας) into handing back Hector's body (*Il.* 22.419-20). But Xerxes has no corpses to hand back.

915-17 Zeus: Xerxes seems to be aware of Zeus' role in the disaster (739-40*). **shrouded me with death:** Another expression influenced by Homeric stylisation of death. See *Il.* 16.502, Sarpedon's death, μιν...τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψεν. The chorus have earlier said that Zeus had shrouded (κατέκρυψας) Sousa and Agbatana with gloom (536). **died:** The mortuary overtones of οἰχομένων (see 1*) are here unambiguous.

918 *ototoi*: The chorus respond to Xerxes' arrival much as they had to the arrival of the messenger (*ototoi*, 268, 274).

919 imperial Persia: Περσονόμου picks up earlier fears that the subjects of the Persian empire will not tolerate it (οὐκέτι περσονομοῦνται) any more (585*).

921 god: The ubiquitous *daimōn* (158*). **cut down:** At *Iliad* 16.394 Patroclus 'cut down' (ἐπέκερσε) the enemy phalanxes. The word 'now' (νῦν) means that the past perfect tense is required to make sense in English.

922 The earth laments: This picture recalls the early image of the land of Asia as the mother of the Persians, lamenting as she yearns for her sons to return (61-2*), except that now she laments because they will *not* return.

924 who has crammed: σάκτωρ (from σάττειν) is a striking word. It has military overtones (Hdt. 7.62), but also suggests that Xerxes has stuffed the jaws or stomach of a ravening Hades with his men (*LSJ* s.v. σάττειν II b). The metaphor picks up the recurrent themes of emptying and filling (118-19*). **Agbatana:** This is Brunck's emendation (see 16-18*) of the puzzling manuscript reading *agdabatai*: nobody knows what it means. A scholion explains it as 'a Persian people', but the Agdabatai are otherwise unattested.

925 flower of the land: See 59*.

926-7 archers: See 26, 30, 85 (τοξόδαμνον Ἄρη). **a great thicket...tens of thousands:** Literally, 'a very (πάνυ) dense myriad of men'. The manuscripts say γὰρ φύστις, and φύστις is an unknown word. The suggested ταρφύς is an adjective meaning 'thick' (of densely falling arrows, *Il.* 11.387; of hair, Aesch. *Sept.* 535). See the previous and subsequent stress on the grouping of the Persian forces into multiples of ten (μυρίας, 302*, μυρία μυρία, 980*, 993).

929-30 The land of Asia...knees: see 61-2*, 922*: Asia is virtually personified as a woman, physically demonstrating her humiliation by kneeling.

931-1001 In the first three strophic pairs of the lyric kommos proper the chorus take over from Xerxes mid-way through each stanza. The first pair, in lyric anapaests often resolved into serial short syllables ('proceleusmatics', see 908-30*), programmatically announces the intention to sing a dirge, conveyed by the use of future tenses in 940, 944, and 947. The distinctive feature of the second strophic pair is the chorus'

catalogues of the proper names of Xerxes' commanders, taking the syntactical form of direct questions: the metre shifts into the 'eastern' Ionic *a minore* first heard in the parodos (65-139*). In the third strophe and antistrophe (974-1001) the interrogative roll-call of barbarian names continues, but the metre reverts to lyric anapaests, again characterised by several startling proceleusmatics.

931 Behold me: The lyrics open with Xerxes, like many characters in tragedy, inviting the chorus (and by extension the audience) to focus their gaze upon him: this is the force of the deictic ὅδε.

935-40 To salute: On the force of πρόσφθογγον, probably ironic here, see 153-4*. **your return:** This picks up the homecoming theme, established in the parodos (8*). **a Mariandynian mourner:** A scholiast says that the Mariandynians' pipe (αὐλός) was especially suited to dirges. The Mariandynians were a people of north-western Asia, named in Herodotus' catalogue of the Persians' forces (7.72): Aeschylus may here be dependent on the early Ionian historian Hecataeus (1 *FgrH* F 198). They were famous for their wild ritual laments, attested as late as first century BC (Alexiou 1974, 11-12). Athenaeus relates the dirges to mourning for a young man named Bormos or Mariandynos (*Deipn.* 14.619f - 621a): See 1054*.

941-3 Let out...noise: The diction, with its accumulated adjectives, recalls the chorus' description of their own utterance in the necromancy (636). **now:** This is the force of ὅδ'. **changed course:** A metaphor drawn from changing winds; see the Queen's comparison of changing wind and changing fortune at 601-2. This picks up the chorus' fear about the fickle *daimōn* at 158*.

944-9 I shall indeed...noise: αὐδάν has to be supplied in English: the chorus are obeying the instruction of Xerxes at 941-2. **honouring...at sea:** Line 945 is hopelessly corrupt; 'the disasters incurred at sea' are more literally 'sea-smitten burdens'. **which mourns:** The term *penthētēros* (cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 1062) is in meaning, metre, and termination identical to *thrēnētēros* in the same position in the strophe (937), creating a rhyming effect characteristic of the choruses in this play (see e.g. 551-2 with 561-2); its apposition to 'city of my birth' in effect genders the mourner as female.

950-4 Given the shocking power of the images here, it is a shame that it is such a difficult sentence to construe: more literally, 'The Ionian Ares...robbed [sc. us]'. **Robbed:** ἀπηύρα is the third person singular of the imperfect (with aorist sense) of the verb (never found in the present tense) ἀπαυράω. **the Ionian:** See 178*. **Ares:** See 73*, 85*, 205-6*. **with his fences of ships:** See 456*, 1029, and Eur. *IA* 1259. **favouring the other side:** At *Il.* 16.362 ἑτεραλκέα νίκην means 'victory won by the other side'. Ares had of course been regarded as leading the *Persians* into battle in the parodos (85*). **ravaging:** With κερσάμενος compare the daimon who 'cut down' the Persians (ἐπέκειρεν, 921), and Aesch. *Suppl.* 665-6, Ἄρης κέρσειεν ἄωτον. **night-dark...ill-starred shore:** Cf. Eur. *Med.* 211, ἅλα νύχιον, 'night-dark brine'. Gow (1928, 155) thought that there was a reference here to Ahriman, the principle of evil in Zoroastrianism, sometimes associated with darkness (Plut. *de Is. et Os.* 369e). But there is no reason to suppose that there is any familiarity with the Persians' religion in the play (see

158*), and darkness is repeatedly associated in it with the Persian defeat (see 386-7*).

958-61 The chorus embark on another session of cataloguing barbarian proper names (see 21*), which lasts until 999. Pharandakes and Sousiskanes were prominent Persian commanders in the parodos (31, 34), but the other four names are new additions. The unmetrical ἀγαβάτας is almost certainly intrusive, suggested by Ἀγβάτανα in the next line, although it just might have something to do with the obscure ἀγδαβάται at 924*.

963 Phoenician ships: According to Herodotus 8.85 it was the Phoenician squadron of ships which the Athenians had faced at Salamis. Phoenician sailors were already famous enough to make appearances in the *Odyssey*. The Persians were heavily dependent on the Phoenician navy, which is probably the reason why Phrynichus chose Phoenician women as the chorus for his play on the Salamis theme.

967-73 ***oioioi*...where...where:** The diction and structure of the antistrophe nearly replicate those of the strophe (955-7). Five of these commanders have been named before: Ariomardos (38), Lilaios (308) Tharybis (51), Masistras (30), and Artembares, who led the messenger's roll-call of the dead (302, see also 29). **Hystaichmas:** A convincing Persian name, a transliteration of *viçtakhma*, 'the resister' (Keiper 1877, 108).

975-7 Athens: The last time this name is uttered. **abhorrent:** See 909-10*. **at one oar-stroke:** Given that the play celebrates Athenian oarsmanship, this is a finely judged metaphor for something like 'at one go': see also 90*, 406*. **gasping:** The verb ἀσπαίρειν, used of expiring sacrificial lambs (*Il.* 3.293), or freshly caught fish (Hdt. 9.120), perhaps here re-evokes the image of the Persians as a catch of fish (see 424-6*); the strange cry ἐἔ ἐἔ may have allowed Xerxes and the chorus to re-enact the gasps of the dying.

978-83 And what...Megabates: This entire passage is almost certainly describing a single individual, of great importance to Xerxes and the army, but whose actual name, or some other word(s) describing him, may have dropped out, probably at 981.

978 the best of the Persians: ἄωτον is a metaphor provided by textiles; in the *Iliad* it signifies the soft surface of fine wool (13.599) or of the best linen (9.661).

979 faithful: See 1*. **Eye:** It is possible that ὀφθαλμόν just means something like 'light' or 'blessing' (see 168*). But the Greeks believed that the Persian kings' most trusted confidants and spies were called either their 'Eyes' or their 'Ears' (see Hdt. 1.114, Ar. *Ach.* 92, Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.10-12, Hall 1989, 94 and n. 178). This may have been a misconception arising from the Persians' own concept of Mithra, the god of 'ten thousand ears...ten thousand eyes...with full knowledge, sleepless' (*SBE* xxiii, 121, see Hirsch 1985, 101-39). There is some evidence for a Persian word (**gaušaka*) meaning 'the King's Ear' (Eilers 1940, 22-3), but the Eye has alas not turned up (Lewis 1977, 19-20).

980 The one...thousands: This important official was apparently responsible for reviewing the troops in their multiples of ten, a task Xerxes oversees at Hdt. 7.60. On the theme of counting, see Introduction, p. 25.

982 the fairest: Or 'the favourite'. ἄλπνιστος (which Wackernagel argued should be spelt ἄλπιστος), is an adjective found qualifying ἄωτον (see 978*) at Pind. *Isthm.* 5.12, 'the sweetest bloom' [of life]. See further M.L. West's discussion of this Aeschylean passage (1990a, 92-3). The possibility cannot however be discounted that the proper name of Xerxes' official is somehow concealed in this word.

983 son of Sesames...Megabates: It befits an official of such high status as the King's Eye that he is the only individual other than Xerxes to be given such a long genealogy. It is sad that we do not know *his* name.

984 Parthos...Oibares: Neither has been previously named.

986-7 beyond evils: Or 'on top of evils'. **high-born:** Or 'proud'. This epithet is used collectively of the Trojans, but never of the Achaeans, in the *Iliad*.

988 longing: The word is *iunx*, a bird apparently called in English 'wry-neck'. It was used in spells to attract lovers (e.g. by the love-lorn sorceress Simaetha in Theocritus' *Idylls* 2.17), and Aeschylus, like Pindar (*Nem.* 4.35, with scholia) uses the bird's name metaphorically to stand for powerful emotional longing, the same as that for the lost men which has been stressed elsewhere (61-2*, 992). See Gow 1952, vol. ii, 41.

990-1 unforgettable: ἄλαστος in Homer is often used of grief and suffering, but the play has consistently emphasised the theme of memory (at 760 Dareios called the catastrophe ἀείμνηστον, 'to be remembered for all time'). The repetition of the word, and the addition of μοι, are emendations designed to make the lines correspond metrically with the strophe. **loathsome:** see 909-10*. It is remarkable that Xerxes here imitates the chorus' diction as he responds to them, whereas in the rest of the dirge he takes the lead in introducing new language and ideas. The attribution of the lines may not be authentic.

992 long for: On the 'yearning' for the dead men see 61-2*, 988*.

993-4 Xanthes: Neither Xanthes nor Anchares has been named before. **ten thousand:** see 304*. Herodotus says the Mardians were nomads (1.125). **Arian:** see *Choeph.* 423-4, 'Arian strains of Kissia'.

995-8 Diaixis...insatiable in war: None of these names has been heard before. The daggers enclose corrupt letters which probably conceal another proper name, perhaps Dadakes (the chiliarch named at 304).

999-1001 I am astounded: ἔταφον is the 'instantaneous' aorist of τέθηπα. **curtained car:** More literally, 'wheeled tent'. These words almost certainly imply that Xerxes has arrived alone and not on foot, although they could just possibly be construed as meaning that the chorus can see *neither* the attendant warriors *nor* the car (so Taplin 1977, 123). Xerxes' 'tent on wheels' is called a ἁρμάμαξα by Herodotus, and described as an alternative to his military chariot (7.41); the play may have presented it as a bathetic contrast to Xerxes' Assyrian war-chariot (84*). The curtained vehicle became a stock element in caricatures of effeminate Persians: the Athenian envoy in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, who, it is implied, had 'gone native' at the Persian court, was escorted there in the same kind of vehicle, and is comically made to complain about the hardship involved in this (to a Greek) outrageously luxurious form of transport (69-70).

1002-78 The fourth strophe marks a change of metre, form, content, and emotional pitch. The dominant metre becomes the lyric iambic, as in the dirge after the messenger scene. The antiphony quickly dissolves into single lines, sometimes interrupting the interlocutor's sentence or line (lyric 'antilabē'), sustained all the way until the end of the play (except for 1005-7 / 1011-13 and 1043-5 / 1051-3). In most cases Xerxes sings some kind of instruction or introduces a lexical item, to which the chorus respond, or which they repeat, in the following line or lines. This is probably a reflection of a very ancient and primitive form of liturgical antiphony. The content shifts from the imparting of information about the casualties to more sustained threnodic language, complete with its multiple inarticulate cries and violent gestures. The dirge reaches a fever-pitch of emotion, culminating in the catalogue of self-mutilation in the seventh and last strophe and antistrophe, and the density of cries in the closing epode.

1006-7 unexpected: See 909-10*. **How terribly:** This needs to be extracted from the exclamatory οἷον. **Calamity:** On the goddess *Atē* see 96-8*. **looks at us:** With the absolute and intransitive use of δέδορκεν cf. Pind. *Nem.* 3.84, δέδορκεν φάος, 'light has looked forth'.

1008-9 struck down: See 251-2*. **from our lifelong good fortune:** West's emendation of the problematic manuscript readings; the chorus have earlier feared that a *daimōn* might appear to wreck Xerxes' chances of success (158*). At *Choeph.* 26 δι' αἰῶνος...βόσκεται means 'is fed always' (or 'ever').

1011 Ionian: See 178*. **sailors:** The great dirge consistently reminds its audience that they won the victory as sailors, in a sea-battle (Introduction, pp. 11–13).

1013 The Persian race...war: One of the several repeatable gnomic sayings about the Persians and Greeks designed to stick in the audience's imagination (or which were already in popular circulation). See also e.g. 402-5, 824*, 1025.

1015 blow: See 251-2*.

1016-18 man of great calamity: μεγάλατος is a formulation entirely in keeping with the recent emphasis on Ἄτη (1006-7*). At *Eum.* 791 and 821 the chorus of Erinyes, who fear that they have just lost their war with the younger gods, call themselves μεγάλατοι. **Do you see:** A question which would direct the audience's gaze as much as that of the chorus. In forensic terms, Xerxes' display of his torn gowns and empty quiver provides the final, and the most reliable, of all the pieces of evidence (especially the messenger's eye-witness testimony, see 266*) so far adduced of the Persian defeat (Eden 1986, 16). **my outfit:** Xerxes' στολή is almost certainly his clothes: he is about to explain why they are in tatters (1030). In Timotheus' *Persians* the vanquished barbarians rip their 'well-woven Persian clothing (στολήν) around their breasts' (fr. 791.167-8 *PMG*).

1020 this quiver: All that Xerxes retains of his arms is his quiver; it is of profound symbolic importance that he seems not to have retained his bow (see 555-6*). It has been suggested that Xerxes' quiver is empty, and that this 'makes it part of a complex of symbols of outpouring, squandering, draining', which make a moral and emotional statement about Xerxes (Bacon 1961, 3).

1023 Little...much: See Dareios' similar formulation at 800.

1025 Ionian: See 178*. For the semi-proverbial impact of this line, see 1013*.

1026 warlike: The epic epithet ἄρειος would put a Homeric gloss on the Greeks' valour, and may recall 'the Ionian Ares' of whom Xerxes sang at 950-4.

1027 unexpected: See 909-10*.

1028-30 Do you mean...naval force: ἐρεῖς is an idiomatic 'allusive' future (cf. Soph. *OC* 596). The expression ναύφαρκτον ὅμιλον literally means 'our ship-fenced company' (see also 456*, 951). **I ripped my gown:** Xerxes finally recapitulates in lyrics the crucial detail which the Queen dreamt about, the messenger first reported, Dareios described, and the Queen repeated (199, 468, 834-6, 847-8, see Introduction, p. 18).

1031-2 *papai papai...papai*: This exclamation indicates either extreme psychological disturbance (Aesch. *Ag.* 1114, Cassandra) or physical agony. In a comic parody of tragedy a physically injured general says *papai* (Ar. *Ach.* 1214). Philoctetes, tortured by his wounded leg, extends it to '*pappapappapai*' (Soph. *Phil.* 754). It seems rather excessive in response to the news of a torn gown, and so it may have struck the original audience. Xerxes, however, regards it as insufficient to the calamity.

1033 Twofold, threefold: Amongst the many echoes of the parodos, this expression seems to pick up the two-poled and three-poled Lydian chariots (47*). Sophocles' Ajax says he has grounds 'to make twofold and threefold lament' (καὶ δὶς αἰάζειν ἐμοι / καὶ τρίς, 432-3).

1034 delight: A very epic phrase. Iliadic warriors fear that they will be a cause of pleasure (χάρμα) to their enemies (3.51, 10.193).

1036 escorts: προπομπῶν implies both protection (Xen. *Cyr.* 3.1.2) and formal procession (Aesch. *Eum.* 1006, Xen. *Cyr.* 4.5.17). It may also have funereal overtones. προπέμπειν occurs in the dirge of *Septem* (1059); at Plato *Menex.* 236d it is used of the processions at public funerals, and at *Legg.* 7.800e2-3 of hired epicedian mourners. In conjunction with threnodic cries and gestures (as at *Choeph.* 23, where the chorus describe themselves as the προπομπός of libations to the dead, accompanied by 'sharp blows of the hands'), the funeral overtones become marked (see Seaford 1994, 358-9). The irony is that Xerxes' missing (funeral) escorts are themselves the absent dead. No Persian bodies will receive the honour of a funeral since Xerxes has 'left them behind' at Salamis. The chorus are however about to become his substitute processional escort.

1038 Weep, weep: See 257*. **proceed towards the palace:** This probably suggests that the chorus begin to arrange themselves around or behind Xerxes (and his vehicle?), in a column or other formation, for the procession out of the theatre in the direction that the Queen had twice departed (531, 851). From this point onwards Xerxes' lines (except 1075) are almost exclusively orders, delivered in the imperative, as he directs like a chorus-master the conduct of the last, frantic, lamentation.

1040 in response: On ἀντίδουπά μοι see 120*. The antiphonal dirge seems to have been eastern in origin: a fragment from Assurbanipal's library portrays a royal funeral, and the words upon it read 'the wives wail; the friends answer' (Jeremias 1900, 9-10). Cf. the formulae used of the laments for Hector by Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen (*Il.* 24.746, 760, 776): 'Thus she lamented, and the women

groaned in response'; 'Thus she lamented, and unceasing wailing arose'; 'Thus she lamented, and the countless people of the city wailed in response'.

1041 wretched....cries: However clumsy this sounds in English, the triple polyptoton of κακός must have sounded distinctive to the ancient audience.

1042 along with me: ὁμοῦ τιθείς very strongly implies that the following wail, *ototototoi* (and therefore perhaps also the *ototototoi* in the same position in the antistrophe, 1051), is delivered by Xerxes and the chorus simultaneously.

1046 Row with your arms: ἐρέσσειν primarily means simply 'to row' (e.g. *Il.* 9.361). In the dirge of *Seven Against Thebes* the chorus sings, 'wave your hands (ἐρέσσετ') about your heads (or 'beat your heads with your hands') with the rhythmic oar-stroke which accompanies the passage across Acheron...' (855-6, see Hutchinson 1985, 188-9). This image could not be more appropriate in a play about a sea-battle: at 422 every barbarian ship 'was rowed' (ἠρέσσετο) in disorderly flight. There is no reason to suppose that the chorus did not obey Xerxes and employ arm movements powerfully suggestive of rowing. In Aeschylus' lost *Phrygians* the barbarian chorus certainly performed memorable movements around Hector's corpse, 'making many gestures in one direction, and another, and another' (Ar. fr. 696b. 3 *KA*); see Hall 1989, 132-3.

1049 master: On δέσποτα see 664-6*.

1051 *ototototoi*: Probably uttered by both Xerxes and the chorus (1042*).

1053 blows: See 251-2*.

1054-65 The chorus' responses to Xerxes are identical in both the strophe and antistrophe (1055 = 1061, 1057 = 1064), which pick up on the 'blackening blows' of 1053, and accelerate the threnodic self-mutilation.

1054-5 the Mysian lament: A scholion comments that the Mysians and Phrygians were the people most given to dirges: on the Mysians see 52*. **Agonising, agonising:** The chorus repeat here, so near the end of the play, the very same unusual word with which they first responded to the messenger's news at 256*. Whether their response has anything to do with specifically Mysian lamenting is not clear. Aeschylus likes to give Asiatic proper names to styles of lamentation (cf. 993–4*, *Choeph.* 423-4, 'Arian strains of Kissia').

1056 ravage...beard: Beard-plucking (unlike breast-beating etc.) is not a gesture usually found in Greek dirges, probably because they are nearly monopolised by females. But when in the *Iliad* Priam in despair 'plucks the grey locks from his head with his hands' (22.77-8) the context (see 22.74-5) suggests that it is intended to include the hairs of his grey beard. The Behistun and Persepolis reliefs (see fig. 3) show just how imposing and elaborate Persian beards must have seemed to the Greeks (cf. Root 1979, plates 6-7).

1057 I do so: A verb has to be supplied to make sense in English. **with tightly clutching hands:** ἄπριγδα is equivalent to the adverb ἀπρίξ, which means 'with tight grip' (from πρίειν with intensive alpha). Ajax, when he comes to his senses, clutches at his hair with his finger-nails ἀπρίξ (Soph. *Aj.* 310). See also Aesch. *Choeph.* 425, ἀπρικτόπληκτα, 'striking and tightly clutching', with Garvie 1986, 159.

1060 Tear the robe on your breast: Cf. 538, κατερεικόμεναι. The chorus-members, like Xerxes (468*), wear a πέπλος, presumably a long, flowing robe which

looked somewhat effeminate to the audience: a Persian servant depicted on a relief sculpture from Persepolis in Boston (31.372) wears a remarkably luxurious, flowing garment of the kind Aeschylus may have had in mind. **finger-nails:** The expression 'with the extremity (ἀκμῇ) of your hands' almost certainly involves an idea of the sharpness of the finger-nails; in Euripides' *Bacchae* Agaue says that the maenads' hunting *weapons* were χειρῶν ἀκμαί, 'blades of our hands' (1207), by which she means fingers and finger-nails.

1061 Agonising, agonising: See 256*. This repeats the same words as the line in the same position in the strophe (1055).

1062 Pluck your hair: See 1056*. The verb ψάλλειν suggests the twanging of a stringed musical instrument.

1063 Repeated from 1057.

1066 Repeated from 1048.

1068 as you proceed towards the palace: See 1038*.

1070 the Persian earth is hard to tread: The audience's attention is turned towards the chorus' gait (see 1073*), but some reiteration of the theme of the lamenting Persian earth (61-2*) may also be intended.

1071-2 ***iōa...Iōa.*** In Aristophanes' *Frogs* Dionysos says that it gave him much pleasure when watching *Persians* to hear the chorus saying '*iauoi*' and clapping their hands (1029). In the transmitted text of *Persians* this noise, *iōa*, most nearly approximates to *iauoi*. Aristophanes may well have distorted the noise even further for humorous effect. It is not clear at what point in *Persians* the hand-clapping belongs. **throughout the city:** This might imply that the chorus needed to cross the city in the course of their journey to the palace from the grave of Dareios and their place of assembly (see 140-1*).

1073 you who tread softly: On the significance of the compound with ἁβρο- see 41*. The chorus is presumably moving in a special 'foreign' way, like the messenger's recognisably Persian running (247*), thus affirming Xerxes' description; the alleged softness of their steps may have had something to do with Greek interest in their thick-soled slippers (see 660-1*). Elsewhere in tragedy a soft tread is usually (although not always, see Eur. *Med.* 830) imputed to female or effeminate male barbarians: the disguised epicene Dionysos of Aeschylus' lost *Edoni* was a 'soft-stepping (ἁβροβάτης) prophet' (fr. 60 *TgrF*), Hecuba's foot walked 'delicately' in Troy, Ganymede treads 'delicately' on Olympus (Eur. *Tro.* 506, 819-22). On the significance of gait in Greek culture generally see Bremmer 1991.

1074 hard to tread: Repeated from 1070.

1075-6 triple-banked...ships: On the non-Greek connotations of βᾶρις see 553*. The Persian ships were also called 'triple-banked' right at the end of the necromantic hymn (678–9*). It is probable that there is something slightly awry in the manuscripts here. They lose the previously consistent line-by-line alternation of Xerxes and the chorus, and the last line, 'I will escort you with harsh-voiced wails', looks as though it is responding to a command from Xerxes. It is likely, therefore, that the chorus should be given line 1076, and that a subsequent line in which Xerxes ordered them to escort him home has dropped out. The text prints as line 1077 West's persuasive supplement, 'Escort me home now', for the sake of example.

1078 escort: The chorus finally manage to obey the Queen's instruction at 530. πέμψω is possibly intended to pick up the notion of a quasi-funeral procession from line 1036*.

Metrical Appendix

The purpose of the following metrical analysis is to scan the sung sections of *Persians* as printed in this edition, and to name the predominant metres in each song, strophic pair, and epode. A brief survey reveals that the three main lyric metres are the 'orientalising' Ionic *a minore*, lyric dactyls (which seem to be particularly associated with the happy former reign of Dareios), and the lyric iambics which dominate the overtly threnodic sections. Further discussion of the aesthetic effects of the different metres can be found in the Commentary.

No attempt has here been made to label the metrical units in each individual line. There has been controversy amongst metrical experts about how to define and label some of the elements within the lyrical metrical systems of *Persians*, especially in the closing dirge (those interested can consult the invaluable appendix in Broadhead 1960, Dale 1969, 25–33, and especially West 1990, 460–6), but this edition is not the appropriate place for further discussion of technical metrical minutiae.

The symbols have been kept to an absolute minimum. Where two symbols signifiying short syllables are printed closely adjacent to one another (⏑⏑) it means that the long syllable to be expected in that metrical position has been resolved into two shorts. Where one symbol appears above another in the analysis of a strophic pair (⏒), the upper symbol represents the syllable in the strophe, and the lower symbol the syllable in the antistrophe. It has been assumed that several of the inarticulate cries in some of the lyric sections are not, technically speaking, to be counted as part of the metrical system.

PARODOS: 65–139

This consists of two strophic pairs, an epode, and a third strophic pair in the 'Ionic *a minore*' metre (see 65–139*), followed by a strophic pair almost entirely consisting of lecythia (– ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –), and a closing fifth strophe and antistrophe in lyric iambics.

Strophe and Antistrophe 1: 65–72 = 73–80

⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – –

⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – –

⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – –

⏑⏑ – ⏑⏑ – –

⏑⏑ – ⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – ⏑⏑ – – ⏑⏑ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 2: 81–5 = 86–92

⏑⏑–––⏑⏑––– (scan κυάν- as one syllable)

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑–⏑–⏑––

Epode: 93–101

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––– (scan θεοῦ as one syllable)

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑–⏑⏑⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑–

⏑⏑–––⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑–

Strophe and Antistrophe 3: 102–7 = 108–14

⏑⏑––⏑⏑–⏑⏑––

⏑⏑–⏑⏑––⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––

⏑⏑––⏑⏑––⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑–⏑–

Strophe and Antistrophe 4: 115–19 = 120–5

–⏑–⏑–⏑––⏑–⏑–⏑–

ὸᾶ –⏑–⏑–⏑––⏑–⏑–⏑–

–⏑––⏑–⏑–⏑–

Strophe and Antistrophe 5: 126–39

–⏑––⏑––⏑–⏑–⏑–

– ∪ – – ∪ – – ∪ – – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

∪ – – – ∪ – ∪ – – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –

– ∪ – ∪ – –

EPIRRHEMA: 256–89

The dominant metre of the chorus' three sung strophic pairs, which alternate with the messengers's spoken iambic trimeters (249–89*), is the lyric iambic.

Strophe and Antistrophe 1: 256–9 = 262–5

⏑ ∪∪ ∪∪∪ ∪∪∪ ∪ –

– ∪ – – ∪ – – ∪ –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 2: 268–71 = 274–7

∪ ∪∪ – ∪ –

∪ ⏑⏑ ∪ ⏑⏑ ∪ – ∪ –

– ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –

– – – ∪ ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 3: 280–3 = 286–9

⏑ – ∪ – – – ∪ –

⏑ – – – ∪ ⏒

– – ∪ – – – ∪ –

– ∪ ∪ – – ∪ – ∪ – – (scan θεοὶ as one syllable)

STASIMON: 548–97

This choral ode consists of three strophic pairs. The first pair is iambic; the dominant metre of the second two pairs is dactylic.

Strophe and Antistrophe 1: 548–57 = 558–67

– – – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

– – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – (scan κυαν- as one syllable)

– – ∪ – ∪ – ποποῖ

– – ∪ – ∪ – τοτοῖ

– – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

⏑̄ ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

– ∪ – ⏑̄ – ∪ – – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

– – – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 2: 568–75 = 576–83

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ⏑ φϵῦ

– – – ∪ ∪ – – ἠέ

– – – ∪ ∪ – – ὀᾶ

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –

– ∪ ∪ ∪ – ὀᾶ

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –

∪ – – ∪ – ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 3: 584–97

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ⏑̄

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪

– – – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

STASIMON: 633–80

The necromantic chorus appeals to Dareios' ghost in three predominantly Ionic *a minore* strophic pairs, and a concluding epode featuring both dactyls and iambics.

Strophe and Antistrophe 1: 633–9 = 640–6

– ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ –

– ∪ ∪ ∪ – –

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – – – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪

– ∪ ∪ ∪ –

∪∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 2: 647–51 = 652–6

– ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – –

∪ ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – –

∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – – ἠέ

Strophe and Antistrophe 3: 657–63 = 664–71

∪̄ – – ∪̄ – ∪̄ – ∪∪ ∪ –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – –

∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – –

∪ ∪ – – ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –

– ∪ ∪∪ ∪ ∪∪ – ∪ – οἵ

Epode: 672–80

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –

† ?

? †

– – – – – – – – – – –

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

STROPHE AND ANTISTROPHE: 694–702

The metre in which the chorus responds to the ghost of Dareios is, once again, the Ionic *a minore*: he replies to them in the spoken trochaic tetrameter. See further 694–702*.

694–6 = 700–2

∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – –

∪ ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – –

⏑⏑ – – – ∪ ∪ – –

STASIMON: 852–907

Lyric dactyls dominate this entire choral ode.

Strophe andAntistrophe 1: 852–6 = 857–61

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –

– ∪ ∪ – – – ∪ – ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 2: 862–70 = 871–9

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ⏑

– ∪ – ∪ – ∪ ⏒

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ – ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 3: 880–7 = 888–96

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

– ⏑̄ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –

∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ⏑⏑̄ – ∪ ∪ –

– – ∪ ∪ – – – ∪ – ∪ – –

Epode: 897–907

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

† ? †

– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– – – – – – – ∪ ∪ – –

– – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

– – – ∪ ∪ – – – ∪ – ∪ – –

KOMMOS: 931–1078

There are seven strophic pairs in this lyric dialogue, and a closing epode. The first three pairs consist of lyric anapaests, the Ionic *a minore*, and lyric anapaests respectively: thereafter the metre changes into lyric iambics, which continue until the end. For further discussion see 931–1001* and 1002–78*.

Strophe and Antistrophe 1: 931–40 = 941–9

Xe. ∪ ∪ – – – – – –

⏑⏑ ⏑̄ – – – ⏑⏑ ⏑̄ –

∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ –

Cho. – – – – – – – –

∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ –

∪ ∪ – – – – – – –

– – ⏑⏑ ⏑̄ ∪ ∪ ∪ –

Strophe and Antistrophe 2: 950–61 = 962–73

Xe. ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –

⏑ ⏑ – – – ⏑

– – ⏑ ⏑ – –

⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ –

– – ⏑ ⏑ – –

Cho. – – – ⏑ – – – – – –

– ⏑ ⏑ – – ⏑ ⏑ –

– ⏑ – ⏒ – ⏑ –

– ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

– – ⏑ ⏑ – – – – –

– – – – – – – –

⏒ ⏒ ⏑ ⏑ –

Strophe and Antistrophe 3: 974–87 = 988–1001

Xe. ⏑ – ⏑ – –

⏒ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –

⏒ – ⏑ – – – ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ –

⏑ – ⏑ – – ⏑ ⏑ – – ⏒ ⏑ – –

Cho. – – – – ⏑ ⏑ – –

– – – – – ⏒ – –

– ⏑⏑ ⏒ ⏑⏑ – – –

– – – – ⏑⏑ – –

– ⏒ – –

– – – – – ⏑⏑ – –

– – ⏑⏑ – ⏒ – –

⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ – – – ⏑ –

⏒ – ⏑ – ⏒ ⏑ ⏒ ⏒ ⏑ –

Strophe and Antistrophe 4: 1002–7 = 1008–13

Xe. ∪ – ∪ – – ∪ – ∪̲ – ∪ –

Cho. ∪ – ∪ – – ∪ –

Xe. ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

Cho. ∪ – ∪ – – ∪ –

– ∪∪̲ ∪ – – ∪ –

– ∪ ∪ – – ∪ – ∪ – – (scan δια- as one syllable)

Strophe and Antistrophe 5: 1014–25 = 1026–37

Xe. ⏑ – ∪ – – ∪ –

– ∪ – ∪ – –

Cho. ∪ – ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –

Xe. ∪ – ∪ – – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

Cho. ∪ – ∪ –

Xe. – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

Cho. ∪ ∪∪ ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

Xe. – ⏑ – ∪ ∪ – –

Cho. – ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

Xe. – ∪ – ∪ ∪ – –

Cho. ∪ – – – ∪ – ∪ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 6: 1038–45 = 1046–53

Xe. ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ ∪̲ (scan second διαῖν- as one syllable)

Cho. ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

Xe. ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

Cho. ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ ⏑

Xe. ∪ – ∪ ∪∪̲ ∪ – ∪ –

Cho. ∪ ∪∪ ∪ –

⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ – –

Strophe and Antistrophe 7: 1054–9 = 1060–5

Xe. – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – (scan -βοα as one syllable)

Cho. ⏑ ⏑⏑ ⏑⏑⏑

Xe. – – ⏑ – – – ⏑ – ⏒ – ⏑ ⏑

Cho. ⏑ – – – ⏑ ⏑⏑ ⏑ – ⏑

Xe. ⏑ – – – ⏑

Cho. – ⏑ – –

Epode: 1066–78

Xe. ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

Cho. ⏑ – ⏑ –

Xe. – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑

Cho. ⏑ – ⏑ – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

Xe. ⏑ – – – ⏑ – ⏑

Cho. ⏑ – – – ⏑ – –

Xe. ⏑ – ⏑⏑ ⏑ –

Cho. ⏑ – ⏑ – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

Xe. – – – – – – – –

Cho. – – – – – ⏑⏑⏑ ⏑ –

Xe. ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – –

Cho. – – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

Abbreviations

The abbreviations of the names of ancient authors and works normally follow those of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*[2] (Oxford 1970). Other abbreviations are as follows:

Austin	C. Austin (ed.), *Nova Fragmenta Euripidea in Papyris Reperta* (Berlin 1968).
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Dublin/ Zurich 1951-2[6]).
EG	D.L. Page (ed.), *Epigrammata Graeca*. (Oxford 1975).
FgrH	F. Jacoby (ed.), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin/Leiden 1923-58).
IEG	M.L. West (ed.), *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* (Oxford 1989[2]).
MW	R. Merkelbach and M.L. West (eds.), *Fragmenta Hesiodea* (Oxford 1967).
N^2	A. Nauck (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, second edition, with supplement by B. Snell (Hildesheim 1964[2]).
PCG	R. Kassel and C. Austin (eds.), *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin/New York 1983-1989).
PEG	A. Barnabé (ed.), *Poetarum Epicorum Graecorum* vol. i (Leipzig 1987).
PLF	E. Lobel and D. Page (eds.), *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*. Oxford.
PMG	D. Page (ed.), *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962).
RE	A. Paul, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll (eds.), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart 1894-1980).
SBE	F. M. Müller (ed.), *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford 1879-1910).
SM	B. Snell and H. Maehler (eds.), *Pindarus*, vol. ii (Leipzig 1975).
TgrF	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, and S. Radt (eds.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Göttingen 1977–).

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