



Project  
**MUSE**®

*Scholarly journals online*

## THE HERMENEUTICS AND POETICS OF MEMORY IN AESCHYLUS'S *PERSAE*<sup>1</sup>

JONAS GRETHLEIN

**T**hough evidently different from modern ideas of history, the ways that the ancient Greeks constructed their past are far from being clear-cut.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, we can say that stories which we see as mythical were considered by the Greeks to refer to the past. Even Thucydides, often invoked as the father of critical historiography, did not cast any doubt on the historicity of the Trojan War. On the other hand, there is evidence that “myth” and “history” could be seen as separate by ancient Greeks: as distant and recent past, distinguished less by their ontological status than by their sources. For example, at the beginning of his *Histories*, Herodotus first mentions Persian traditions relating earlier conflicts, but then starts his own account featuring Croesus as the “first of the barbarians of whom we know.”<sup>3</sup>

Generalizing claims about the ancient Greek idea of history are easy to disprove, and it is therefore advisable to review the pragmatics of every

---

1 The Greek text follows West 1998; the translations are based on Hall 1996. I wish to thank audiences in Freiburg, Heidelberg, Santa Barbara, and Thessaloniki for their comments. I am also very grateful to an anonymous reader and Marianne Hopman for their important suggestions.

2 This paper is part of a larger project in which I juxtapose the rise of Greek historiography with non-historiographical media of memory and compare both with modern views of history. For a reading of Mimnermus frag. 14 W2 from this angle, see Grethlein 2007a; on Herodotus and Thucydides, see Grethlein 2005, 2006b. In Grethlein 2006a, I examine the idea of history in the *Iliad* and compare it to modern ways of viewing the past (cf. 97–105).

3 There are plenty of works examining whether or not the ancient Greeks distinguished between myth and history. For a recent analysis, see Gotteland 2001.89–102.

single position. One genre in which this complexity of the view of history comes to the fore is tragedy. As is well known, the topics of tragedy, which were considered to be past events, most of the time belonged to the mythic past (cf. Knox 1979.15, Neumann 1995.9–15, with further literature at 9 n. 1). Yet at least in the first half of the fifth century, there were tragedies dealing with events that were more recent for the audience. While we have only very few testimonies and fragments of Phrynichos's *Halosis Miletou* and *Phoinissae*, with Aeschylus's *Persae*, at least one "historical" tragedy has been fully preserved.<sup>4</sup>

However, there are two levels at which the *Persae* distances the recent past from the present. First, the action takes place in Persia and no Greek individuals are named.<sup>5</sup> The lack of temporal distance is therefore partially compensated for by spatial distance (Vernant 1988.244f.). Second, the *Persae* conceives the battle of Salamis, which had taken place only eight years earlier, with "heroic vagueness."<sup>6</sup> Besides the epic colouring of the language,<sup>7</sup> which is common in tragedy, the long lists of Persians remind us of epic catalogues, particularly the Catalogue of the Ships.<sup>8</sup> Strong similarities between the messenger in the *Persae* and epic bards have also been

4 There are no fragments of the *Halosis Miletou*, about which we are informed merely through the famous account of its failed performance in Hdt. 6.21.2. Cf. Rosenbloom 1993, Mülke 2000 with further literature in 234 n. 1. On historical tragedies, see Castellani 1986, Hall 1996.7–9. For the *Phoenissae*, see TrGrF 3 Phrynichos frags. 8–12. As noted in the Hypothesis, the first lines of the *Persae* allude to the first line of Phrynichos's play. On the comparison of both plays, see Kitto 1961.33–35. Stoessl 1945 offers a very bold reconstruction of the *Phoinissae* on the basis of Aeschylus's *Persae*.

5 Similarly, the funeral speeches and epigrams on the Persian wars only rarely name individuals. This seems to serve two functions: firstly, the polis comes to the fore as acting subject; secondly, the recent past is made more distant, since references to individuals who were still living would have tied the events to the present.

6 For this term, see Easterling 1997. On the *Persae*'s position between history and myth, see Péron 1982.

7 On epic language in the *Persae*, see Stanford 1942.26, Sideras 1971.98–200, 212–15, Saïd 1988.326f., and Garner 1990.22–24. Hall 1989.79 and 1996.24 argue that the epic language helps to present the Persians as aliens. Moreover, she makes the important observation that epic language is not simply copied, but transformed in tragedy (1996.24).

8 In 21–58, the Chorus gives a catalogue of Persians and their allies; in 302–30, the messenger lists fallen Persians, and in the *exodus*, the Chorus and Xerxes name dead warriors. On the connection between the three catalogues, see Saïd 1988.332f.; on their epic background, see Albin 1967.256, Paduano 1978.51–70, Holtsmark 1970.20, Michelini 1982.15, 77, Saïd 1988.329. The differences from epic catalogues are stressed by Belloni 1982.195f. Hall 1989.76 further mentions the similarities with "the cataloguing technique of Ionian logography." The Persian names are fabricated, cf. Lattimore 1943.82–87, Bacon 1961.23f.

pointed out (Barrett 1995, 2002.40–46). While in other media and genres the Persian Wars are juxtaposed with heroic endeavours,<sup>9</sup> they are themselves stylized as a heroic event in tragedy. It seems that the way the past was represented depended not so much on the actual temporal distance as on the application of a certain register of memory—an event as grand as the Persian Wars could be portrayed in the same way as the Trojan War.

The *Persae* is not only interesting for remembering both the recent past in the spatial “other” and the distance of the heroic world, it also contains quite a few reflections on memory, which have not received due attention. Just a brief glance at the language reveals that the stem *μνη*-occurs frequently, showing that the characters ponder the act of remembering from various angles.<sup>10</sup> Seen in combination, these reflections add up to a hermeneutics of memory, which will be outlined in part I of this paper. This interpretation is then carried further by the argument that, since the *Persae* itself is a memorial for Salamis, the hermeneutics of memory can be taken to a metapoetic level. By moving from the intradiegetic to the extradiegetic level in part II, I will venture to apply the characters’ reflections on remembering the past to the *Persae* itself as an act of memory. Seen from this angle, the *Persae* foregrounds the otherwise only implicit dynamics of the past in tragedy.<sup>11</sup> In addition, in part III, both the hermeneutics and poetics of memory will be complemented by a fresh look at Darius, who can be interpreted as a temporal *mise en abyme* because, with his entry, a past within the past is enacted. I will argue that the embedded past of Darius acts as a mirror image of the past staged in tragedy.

## I. THE HERMENEUTICS OF MEMORY

What do I mean by the hermeneutics of memory? The object of hermeneutics is the understanding of texts. Since the past remains visible in

---

9 An example from literature is Simonides’ Plataia elegy (frag. 11W<sup>2</sup>). For an epigraphic testimony, see the inscriptions on the Eion-herms (Simon. 40 FGE). The Stoa Poikile can be adduced as archaeological evidence; see also Francis 1990, Castriota 1992, Hölscher 1998.163–69.

10 285; 287; 824: *μμνήσκομαι*; 760: *αἰείμνηστος*; 783: *μνημονεύω*. *ὑπομμνήσκες* in 989 is corrupt for metrical reasons.

11 Hall 1996.1 introduces her commentary on the *Persae* with the following observation: “One of the many themes to have been neglected by critics in Aeschylus’ *Persians* is memory.” However, she uses this only as a springboard to elaborate on the later memory of the Persian Wars.

signs and traces that can be read or deciphered like a text, it makes sense to claim that hermeneutics underlies the (re)construction of the past.<sup>12</sup> But what are we to expect from such a hermeneutics of memory? In his philosophical hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer uses the model of the dialogue to describe the process of understanding (1986.368–84). On the one hand, the text conveys a message to the receiver; on the other, it is only the questions asked by the receiver that make the text speak.

Hence a hermeneutical process is a reciprocal act. We ought to ask not only in what way the subject's stance shapes her understanding, but also what impact this understanding has on her. A third point to consider is the fact that memory is a special type of understanding in which the object is no longer present. Thus the relation between the past object and its representation must be examined.

These three aspects will guide my analysis of the characters' reflections. I will first view reflections on the representation of the past in memory (a); then, I will analyze the different stances of remembering subjects (b); and finally, I will address the impact of memory on the remembering subjects (c). Let me add one point here about memory: my main interest does not lie in the simple act of recalling something in the past, but rather in the expression of that memory.

a) The words *history/histoire/Geschichte/storia* conceal the gap between past events and their representation because they can signify both: "history" can refer to the past itself as well as to the narrative account thereof.<sup>13</sup> The messenger's report in the *Persae*, which is explicitly marked as an act of memory,<sup>14</sup> is a most vivid account of the battle at Salamis. The messenger makes use of many narrative tools: changes between past tense and present tense (e.g., 450: πέμπει; 455: ἔδωκε), a simile (424–26), authorial prolepses (e.g., 372f.), deviant focalization (392–94), indirect (357–60, 364–71) and direct speeches (402–26), just to name a few devices. In 266f., the messenger claims that his account is not based on other reports:

---

12 On the role of traces for memory, see de Certeau 1988.35–44, Liebsch 1996.353–64, Ricoeur 2004.146–81. For the philosophical background, see Levinas 1972.62–70; Röttgers 1982.24–88 and 1988.51–106 offer an elaborate model of history as text.

13 History was given this double significance in the wake of Historicism, cf. Koselleck 1975.647–58.

14 285: φεῦ, τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὡς στένω μεμνημένος, 329: τοσόνδε (γ') ἀρχόντων ὑπεμνήσθη πέρι.

καὶ μὴν παρών γε κοῦ λόγους ἄλλων κλύων,  
Πέρσαι, φράσαιμ' ἄν οἱ' ἐπορσύνθη κακά.

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

As James Barrett shows, the messenger combines a claim to eyewitness status with the lack of a clearly defined point of view in his account, and thus evokes the impression that the story tells itself.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, however, the messenger emphasizes that he is not capable of giving a presentation that does justice to the event.<sup>16</sup> He closes his first longer rhesis in line 330 with the words: πολλῶν παρόντων δ' ὀλίγ' ἀπαγγέλλω κακά, "But my report encompasses but a small part of the terrible situation."

At the end of his last rhesis, he says in 513f.:

... πολλὰ δ' ἐκλείπω λέγων  
κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηπεν θεός.

But my words omit many of the afflictions with which  
god blasted the Persians.

His words reveal that as much as memory can try to revive the past, its accounts fall short of the events. The discrepancy between the messenger's claim of giving an appropriate presentation and his insight into the restrictions of memory comes to the fore in 429–32, when the messenger says:

κακῶν δ' πλήθος, οὐδ' ἄν εἰ δέκ' ἥματα  
στοιχηγοροίην, οὐκ ἄν ἐκπλήσαιμί σοι·  
εὖ γὰρ τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδ' αὖτ' ἡμέραι μιᾷ  
πλήθος τοσουτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν.

15 Barrett 1995:546–50. On the claim to autopsy in the Greek historians, see, e.g., Schepens 1975.

16 However, see the expectation of the Chorus in 246: ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν τάχ' εἴσηι πάντα ναμερτῇ λόγον.

I could not give you a full narrative about the 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 day has such a large number of men died.<sup>17</sup>

And yet the event and the corresponding account are closely linked to each other. The *κακῶν πλῆθος* which is to be told is taken up by the *πλῆθος τοσούτῳριθμον ἀνθρώπων*.<sup>18</sup> The word signifying the process of representation, *στοιχηγορεῖν*, contains *στοῖχος*, an element that is also attributed to the object being described: in 366, the messenger says: *τάξαι νεῶν στῖφος μὲν ἐν στοίχοις τρισίν*, and *στοῖχος* is also used to signify files or rows of soldiers (cf. Hall 1996 ad 430; further examples: Thuc. 4.47, Xen. 6.3.34). It is as if the messenger attempts to describe the events by telling what happened to each row of soldiers and rowers, aiming for an exact correspondence between his account and the spatial layout of the battle. When the words that describe a battle “fit into a kind of order,” such as the ranks of ships or soldiers, the form and the content of the presentation converge.

Moreover, both the event and its account are measured in time. However, the messenger claims that not even ten days of reporting would suffice to repeat the event that happened on a single day. This juxtaposition not only underscores the extent of the defeat, it also forcefully expresses the point that representations will always fall short of events. The implicit, mimetic claim in the messenger’s words is therefore counterbalanced by this explicit reflection. There is an unbridgable gap between events as they occur and events as they are reconstructed by memory and then unfolded in narrative.

b) Let us turn to the subject that is remembering. In lines 285–89, the messenger and the Chorus are wailing. They say about Athens:

ΑΓ· φεῦ, τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ὡς στένω μεμνημένος.  
ΧΟ· στυγναί γε δὴ δαίσις·

17 The messenger’s words reverberate with the words of the Homeric narrator in *Il.* 2.487f.: *πληθὺν δ’ οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ’ ὀνομήνω, / οὐδ’ εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ’ εἶεν*. Cf. Barrett 1995.550–54, who elaborates on how the messenger combines claims of the Homeric narrator and Muse.

18 The reflection on *πλῆθος* gains an additional twist because the same word is used within the account of the battle to compare the two armies: the Persians are defeated, although their army is larger than the Greeks’ (337–44).

μεμνήσθαι τοι πάρα,  
 ὥς πολλοὺς σπερμάτων  
 εὐνιδας ἔκτισσαν ἢ δ' ἀνάνδρους.

Messenger: Alas, how I groan as I remember Athens.

Chorus: She is indeed abhorrent to her enemies. We  
 have reason to remember  
 that she ruined the marriage of many Persian wives,  
 leaving them without husbands.

To this the queen replies in 290–95:

σιγῶ πάλαι δύστηνος ἐκπεπληγμένη  
 κακοῖς· ὑπερβάλλει γὰρ ἦδε συμφορά,  
 τὸ μήτε λέξαι μήτ' ἐρωτῆσαι πάθη.  
 ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πημονὰς βροτοῖς φέρειν  
 θεῶν διδόντων· πᾶν δ' ἀναπτύξας πάθος  
 λέξον καταστάς, κεῖ στένεις κακοῖς ὅμως.

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.

As line 295 shows, the messenger is having trouble giving an account of the battle—of course, he recalls what has happened, but the articulation of this memory is impaired by the force of *στένειν*. Before Atossa appeals to the messenger to start his report, she explains her own silence and points out that the events weigh too heavily to be remembered properly.<sup>19</sup> Memory and its articulation, it seems, depend on the remembering subject and her relation to the remembered object.

---

19 On Atossa's marked silence, see Taplin 1972.80, who draws attention to the contrast between her and the Chorus' reaction to the news. See also Taplin 1977.87 with n. 1; on silences in tragedy in general, Aélion 1983/84.



A similar restriction of memory can be noted with regard to the recipient of an account. When Darius asks the Chorus to tell him the reason for their mourning, the Chorus shies away from informing the old king of his son's devastating defeat (694–702). They are filled with fear and are not capable of ἀντία φάσθαι, / λέξας δύσλεκτα φίλοισιν (“answering, / in words hard for friends to utter,” 701f.). Again, the articulation of memory is affected, this time by its meaning for the receiver.

c) The messenger's hesitation, the queen's reflections, and the Chorus' refusal demonstrate that memory is embedded in the process of communication: it is passed on by one person to another. The stances of both shape memory and its expression; they can even, as the examples show, bring it to silence. On the other hand, memory has an impact on the remembering subject.<sup>20</sup> In 598–602, the queen says:

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.

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.

The nature of the remembered experiences shapes the outlook on the future. Expectations are made on the basis of experience. Atossa's general link between experience and expectation gains a new twist and a pragmatic dimension with Darius. He says in his last speech (818–26):

θῖνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρῳ γονῇ  
ἄφωνα σηματοῦσιν ὅμμασιν βροτῶν

---

20 The social function of memory has been the object of different approaches in the humanities. It may suffice to name the “lieux de mémoire” (Nora 1984–92) and the “kulturelles Gedächtnis” (Assmann 1992, 2000).

ὥς οὐχ ὑπέρφευ θνητὸν ὄντα χρὴ φρονεῖν·  
 ὕβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦσ' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν  
 ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλαυτον ἐξαμᾶι θέρος.  
 τοιαῦθ' ὁρῶντες τῶνδε τὰπιτιμία  
 μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδὲ τις  
 ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα  
 ἄλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέηι μέγαν.

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 flowered and produced a crop of calamity, and from it reaped 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.

Here, Atossa's observation that experiences can mould our expectations is taken from the descriptive to the normative level. Memory not only has an impact, but it can serve a function: the past has a lesson to teach to the present. Darius even projects this view onto the past when he describes Xerxes' disaster as a consequence of his neglecting to remember in 782f.:

Ξέρξης δ' ἐμὸς παῖς νέος ἐὼν νέα φρονεῖ,  
 κοῦ μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς.

My son Xerxes is a young man who thinks young thoughts  
 and does not remember my injunctions.

Of course, Darius's injunctions are different from the rather general experiences noted above. Yet by using the word *μνημονεύειν*, the text itself sets Xerxes' ignorance against the backdrop of the hermeneutics of memory.

However, the use of the past is far from unambiguous. Asked by Darius how Xerxes came to commit such an act of hubris, the queen says in 753–58:

ταῦτά τοι κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκεται  
 θούριος Ξέρξης· λέγουσι δ' ὥς σὺ μὲν μέγαν τέκνοις

πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω ξὺν αἰχμῇι, τὸν δ' ἀνανδρίας ὑπο  
 ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῶιον δ' ὄλβον οὐδὲν ἀυξάνειν·  
 τοιάδ' ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ὀνειδίη πολλάκις κλύων κακῶν  
 τήνδ' ἐβούλευσεν κέλευθον καὶ στρατεύμ' ἐφ'  
 Ἑλλάδα.

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.

According to Atossa, the exemplum of the past was used to push Xerxes into his irresponsible adventure (Lenz 1986.158f.). There is no direct contradiction in Darius's claim that his son paid no attention to his ἐπιστολαί, but in one case it is memory, in the other the neglect of memory that leads to disaster. Evidently, the past is far from sending a clear-cut message, but is rather open to different uses—and abuses.

To summarize: the reflections of the characters combine to create a hermeneutics: memory appears to be limited in its ability to represent the past. As a communicative act, memory is shaped by the remembering subject and the listening receiver, who are themselves influenced by memory in their outlook on the future. Much of this may sound rather like common sense, and yet it is remarkable that the reflections of Aeschylus's characters incorporate all of the essential aspects of a hermeneutics of memory. This shows what an important issue memory is in the *Persae*. Moreover, the hermeneutics of memory serves as the basis for the next step in which my interpretation will proceed from the level of the action to the level of performance and reception.

## II. THE POETICS OF MEMORY

Since these reflections are to be found in a play that is itself a commemorative act, the question arises as to whether they can be read at a self-reflexive level. Does the hermeneutics of memory involve a poetics of memory? In my argument, I will first present passages from the *Per-*

*sae* that encourage such a metapoetic reading (a). Then I will venture to transform the observations on the hermeneutics of memory into a poetics of memory (b).

a) A metapoetic reading of the *Persae* is supported by the fact that the object about which the protagonists reflect coincides with the event on which the *Persae* focuses, the battle of Salamis. This makes it easy to transfer the characters' reflections on memory to the *Persae* as an act of memory. Here the Chorus plays an important role. I certainly do not wish to rely on the old thesis that the ancient Greek audience would have always identified with the Chorus and that hence their reception would have been guided by the Chorus' reactions.<sup>21</sup> Yet there is a close interaction between Chorus and audience in many plays. The *Persae* is a rather special case. The Chorus can be seen as an inner audience; its reactions, however, are opposed to those of the audience in the theatre. Particularly in the beginning of the play, the spectators find themselves in a situation that parallels that of the Chorus. Both wait, first, for the messenger to come and then figure as audiences, one within the play and one outside, that listen to his account in the first *epeisodion*. References to the act of perceiving therefore highlight this doubling of the audience. For example, in 210f., Atossa evaluates her dream: ταῦτ' ἐμοί τε δειμιατ' ἔστ' ἰδεῖν, ὑμῖν τ' ἀκούειν, "These things are terrifying for me to see and for you to hear." Just like the Chorus, the audience has not seen the dream, it has only heard Atossa's account.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the parallel situations of the Chorus and the audience underscore their opposite perspectives on the battle at Salamis. In one passage, we can even spot a hint at diverging attitudes toward the news, 248: καὶ φέρει σαφές τι πρῶτος ἐσθλὸν ἢ κακὸν κλύειν, "And he is bringing news of some event, whether it will make good or bad listening."

Of course, the bipolar division of the news is due in part to the

21 See, for example, Gould 1996, who argues against Vernant that the Chorus as a group does not automatically reflect the perspective of the audience.

22 See also 331f.: αἰαῖ, κακῶν ὕψιστα δὴ κλύω τάδε / αἴσχη τε Πέρσαις καὶ λιγέα κακώματα, "Aiai! What I am hearing is the height of calamity, a cause of disgrace to the Persians and of shrill screams"; 565: τυτθὰ δ' ἐκφυγεῖν ἄνακτ' αὐτόν, ὡς ἀκούομεν, "We hear that the King himself only just escaped"; 582f.: δορόμενοι γέροντες / το πᾶν δὴ κλύουσιν ἄλγος, "the old ones bewailing their heaven-sent distress" (I deviate from Hall's translation here); 843f.: ἦ πολλὰ καὶ παρόντα καὶ μέλλοντα ἔτι / ἤλγησ' ἀκούσας βαρβαροῖσι πῆματα, "It was agonizing to hear about the barbarians' many tribulations, both now and in the future."

Greek inclination to polarize expressions. At the same time, however, it can be read as a marker of the double audiences, describing their diverging receptions: while the news shocks the Persians on the stage, it must have delighted the Greeks in the audience. The presence of an inner audience that follows the account of the past as the spectators do, albeit from an opposite perspective, suggests reading the reflections on memory at the level of the action as being metapoetic.

Furthermore, there are two passages which show that the *Persae* is a commemorative act and thus invite a metapoetic reading. In 759–61, Darius comments on his son's defeat:

τοιγάρ σφιν ἔργον ἐστὶν ἐξεργασμένον  
μέγιστον, αἰείμνηστον, οἶον οὐδέπω  
τόδ' ἄστυ Σούσων ἐξεκείνωσεν πεσόν.

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 Susa.

What initially looks like praise for an outstanding achievement, turns into a harsh judgment on failure (Kellog 1978/79.215). In an ironic way, the positive phrasing of this statement contrasts with the rather critical content. Moreover, the adjective αἰείμνηστον evokes the idea of epic κλέος ἄφθιτον and comes with a metapoetic ring: when the event that the *Persae* re-enacts is called “eternally remembered” in the play itself, it goes without saying that this statement bears a self-reflexive meaning. The *Persae* inserts itself into the long series of works, starting with the *Iliad*, that claim to create eternal fame (Schmitt 1967.61–102, Nagy 1974.231–35). This interpretation is supported by the positive description of Salamis. What is irony in Darius's mouth complies with a Greek perspective, suggesting a self-reflexive reading.

Moreover, the already quoted verses 818–26 have a special significance. Three points allow us to apply the warning that the corpses are for the Persians also to the Greeks and thus make it possible to read Darius's words as an explicit articulation of the *Persae*'s commemorative function.<sup>23</sup>

---

23 For conventional interpretations of this passage, see Lenz 1986.144, who sees a reference to Xerxes, and Fisher 1992.258–63, who makes Darius's speech the cornerstone of his reading of the *Persae* as an untragic play.

First, their warning not to detest present fate and thus to lose happiness is not just a general *gnome*, but applies much better to the Athenian audience than to the Persian protagonists. While things cannot become much worse for the Persians after their defeat in Greece, Athens was in the process of laying the ground for its role as superpower. Some critics even regard the *Persae* as an early warning against Athenian imperialism.<sup>24</sup>

Second, my interpretation is reinforced by the second-person plural imperatives. In a theatre performance, second-person plural imperatives can, if their message is general, easily slide from the intra- to the extradiegetic level.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the dramatic illusion is not broken, but a general message can blur the borderline between stage and extradramatic reality. In this case, the audience can feel as if it is directly addressed.

Third, the corpses are said to “mutely signify to the eyes.” With some boldness, one could claim that the medium of the theatrical performance has inscribed itself in the negative form ἄφωνα—theatre not only shows (σημαίνειν ὄμμασιν), but also employs voices. This means that by negatively referring to the dramatic mode of memory, the description of the corpses draws attention to the *Persae* as an act of remembering. I concede that this is a rather subtle reading; yet if it works, it reinforces the metapoetic meaning of the passage.

b) What, then, is the poetic relevance of the hermeneutics of memory that emerges in the *Persae*? I would like to argue that all reflections on the past by the protagonists in the play shed light on the *Persae* and other tragedies as representations of the past.

The first point I mentioned in my argument was that representations of the past fall short of the events they describe. This can be viewed from the perspective of narratology, which focuses on the historiographical representation of the past, but the insights of which can be applied to other genres as well. Most prominently, Hayden White questions the claim of historians of providing objective representations of the past and emphasizes the rhetorical component of historiography (White 1973, 1978, 1987, 1999). Even though White is still caught in the positivist presuppositions he tries

---

24 Rehm 2002.247 reads Xerxes' fate as a warning to the Athenian audience. See also Holtsmark 1970.22f., Rosenbloom 1995.93, Nicolai 1998.23, who argue that Aeschylus is criticizing the first signs of Athenian imperialism.

25 Cf. for a parallel in the *Eumenides*, Grethlein 2003a.223f.

to question,<sup>26</sup> and even though his tropology offers a rather shaky foundation for systematizing the narrative encoding of the past,<sup>27</sup> he has forcefully called to our attention the gap between events and their representations.

This limitation also applies to the representation of the past in tragedy, even though the medium of drama combines showing and narrating. I suggest reading the messenger's reflections on the limits of his account as an expression of the general gap between events and narratives. What is more, the claim that not even ten days would suffice to tell the events of a single day can be read as a play with the discrepancy between narrative time and narrated time.<sup>28</sup> Nearly all narrative works condense time, i.e., the events told take much longer than the time needed to tell them. However, even in the opposite case, if time is stretched in the narration, it is impossible to grasp all that has happened.

Perhaps we can take this interpretation a bit further and read the messenger's words in a more specific way: οὐδ' ἄν εἰ δέκ' ἡμέματα / στοιχηγοροίην imply a specific temporal restriction. If we take into account the strong epic echoes in the passage, we can spot an implicit juxtaposition of tragedy and the epic. Both are incapable of giving a full account of the past. Yet tragedy is even more limited, because a single tragedy could not extend over a period of ten days, while this is much closer to the time it would take to perform a poem such as the *Iliad*.

The second point of my analysis is that the stance of the remembering subject has a particular relevance for tragedy. Overwhelmed by the disaster, the messenger hesitates to give his report, Atossa feels the need to fall silent, and the Chorus refuses to break the bad news to Darius. These characters are so affected by the events that they are unwilling to recall them. This ties in well with ancient and modern views on tragedy. According to Aristotle, the audience must feel pity and fear in order to undergo a catharsis (*Poet.* 1449b24–28, cf. 1452b30–33, 1453b11–13). Pity only

26 White's assumption that there are "objective" data or events is positivist. Cf. Carroll 1990.147–52 and Lorenz 1998. A more radical approach is taken by Carr 1986, who argues from a phenomenological angle that there are no objective data, but that reality is only a construction of experiences which already have a narrative form.

27 The status of the tropes in White shifts from "ideal-typical structure" to "deep structure of the historical imagination" in his first book (1973.5). In White 1978, he draws on concepts by Piaget and Freud to elucidate the tropes. For fuller criticism, see Grethlein 2006a.183–86.

28 This distinction was introduced by Müller 1968.247–68. See also Sternberg 1990.902, 1992.519.

emerges if the closeness and similarity between the audience and the tragic hero are balanced by distance; otherwise, fear for oneself can outweigh the pity one might feel for the "other."<sup>29</sup> This observation can be linked to modern approaches which stress that the contingencies, monstrosities, and transgressions of tragedy are projected onto the "other" on the levels of time, space, ethnicity, culture, social group, age, and gender.<sup>30</sup>

This model works very well for the tragedies dealing with the Persian Wars.<sup>31</sup> According to Herodotus, neglecting this distancing effect was the reason for the failure of Phrynichos's play *Halosis Miletou*. The performance led to a riot because it re-enacted the οἰκεῖα κακὰ of the Athenian audience (cf. the literature in n. 3). On the other hand, in the prize-winning *Persae*,<sup>32</sup> the disaster is not only distanced by "heroic vagueness," but it also takes place in the enemy's camp. To return to a point made earlier—that the Chorus serves as an internal audience—we could say that according to Aristotle's theory, the *Persae* is a successful tragedy containing a failed one: while the Chorus is so much affected by the news that no catharsis can occur, the Greek audience is protected by distance and can indulge in the performance.<sup>33</sup>

The third point of my argument is that the relevance of the past for the future mirrors an important function of tragedy in Athenian society. As many ancient testimonies, most clearly Aristophanes' *Frogs*, show,

29 Aristot. *Rhet.* 1386a17–24. See also 1375a7f., 1379b22–24, 1385b32f. On this aspect of pity in Aristotle, see, e.g., Halliwell 1986.178, Belfiore 1992.232f., Konstan 2001.49–74. For the Aristotelian concept of catharsis, see the literature in Halliwell 2002.206 n. 70. That it is fear which threatens tragic memory is indicated by Atossa's words in 206: . . . φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην, φίλοι, "My friends, I stood there speechless with terror." Due to her fear, Atossa loses her speech, which is essential for the expression of memory.

30 Cf., e.g., Zeitlin 1990; Croally 1994.40–43, with important qualifications about the relation between the self and other; Rehm 2002.236–38, with a rather critical view. Parker 1997 points out that Athens itself is untragic in tragedy.

31 Cf. Grethlein 2007b: the balance between closeness and distance as pointed out by Aristotle explains not only the success of the *Persae* in 472 BC, but also underlies its popularity in the twentieth century. Modern adaptations and productions tend to compensate for the distance of the Persian Wars by reading them as a *chiffre* for contemporary wars.

32 McCall 1986 considers explanations for the first prize that Aeschylus was awarded for the *Persae*.

33 However, the antiphonic mourning of Xerxes and the Chorus establishes a closure. Cf. Rehm 2002.250, who points out that Xerxes is reintegrated into the community. See also Avery 1964.182f. Anderson 1972.174 notes that Xerxes is gaining in self-confidence at the end. Yet his claim that Xerxes is putting on new clothes lacks textual evidence, cf. Thalmann 1980.



tragedy was perceived to be not only a kind of entertaining show, but also a medium of instruction.<sup>34</sup> Of course, tragedy ought not to be reduced to just this aspect. Moreover, recent scholarship has managed to elucidate rather subversive tendencies in tragedies.<sup>35</sup> Yet not only do ancient testimonies clearly show that tragedy was considered a didactic medium, but the context of the performances bears the imprint of the polis (Goldhill 1990). That the relevance of memory, as reflected in the embedded past in the *Persae*, mirrors tragedy's didactic function is most clear in Darius's appeal to remember Athens and Greece in order to avoid hubris. As I have already pointed out, this exhortation is addressed to the Chorus on stage, but it makes even more sense for the audience—the lesson taught by the past blurs the boundaries between the intradiegetic and the extradiegetic levels of the play.

The didactic use of the past in tragedy can be made clear by a comparison with other genres. In funeral speeches, for example, Athenian history appears as an uninterrupted series of successes and victories.<sup>36</sup> Individual loss is compensated for by collective bliss. In tragedy, on the other hand, man's fragility comes to the fore. Thus far from encouraging hubristic deeds, tragedy reminds its audience of their limits.

In summary, I suggest that the hermeneutics that emerges from the protagonists' reflections on memory has a metapoetic component because it grasps important features of the past in tragedy: there is a gap between the past and its representation; compared to epic poetry, tragedy is further limited by its shortness. Moreover, tragedy requires a particular relation of the audience to the tragic hero in which closeness and distance are carefully balanced. Finally, the past has a didactic function in tragedy.

---

34 The didactic function of tragedy has been the object of fierce debate. It has been contested or at least been downplayed by Heath 1987, Griffin 1998, 1999. Holzhausen 2000 even tries to argue that neither Aristophanes nor Aristotle testify to a didactic function of tragedy. On the other hand, see Gregory 1991, who shows aspects of instruction in Euripides, and Croally 1994.17–47 for a balanced discussion of the testimonies (with further literature on 17 n. 1).

35 For example, Griffin 1998, 1999 warns against limiting tragedy to its political aspect. The subversive aspect of tragedy is emphasized by, e.g., Goldhill 1984, 1990, 2000.

36 On the past in the funeral speeches, see Walters 1980, Loraux 1986, Prinz 1997. For a comparison of tragedy and funeral speeches, see Parker 1997, Grethlein 2003a.

### III. DARIUS AS *MISE EN ABYME*

In order to further illuminate the dynamics of memory, I will now turn to the character of Darius.<sup>37</sup> I have already looked at his reflections on the didactic function of memory and noticed that his words have a strong metapoetic ring. Furthermore, Darius's words conjure up the past, present, and future: he is not only the former king, but also invokes a long tradition of Persian kings (762–86). Although he has to be informed about his son's debacle, he knows about the future decline of the Persian empire from oracles and predicts the defeat at Plataia (739–42, 800–17). He reaches out into the future which is already the past for the audience. By saying that the piles of corpses will serve as a warning to the third generation (818–20), he goes even further to a time which is beyond the audience's present.

I suggest that the Darius scene can be read as a *mise en abyme* for which the following definition is given: "est mise en abyme toute enclave entraînant une rétention de similitude avec l'oeuvre qui la contient."<sup>38</sup> This concept was developed mostly for novels, in particular the *nouveau roman*. However, the notion of a part mirroring the whole is restricted neither to a genre nor to an epoch and has, without always being named *mise en abyme*, found wide application. In the study of drama, the analysis of metatheatres has thoroughly examined the "play-in-play."<sup>39</sup> As interesting and impressive as this phenomenon may be, its synecdochical auto-referentiality grasps only the level of the theatrical performance and does not exhaust the possibilities of the *mise en abyme*.<sup>40</sup>

37 On Darius in the *Persae*, see Alexanderson 1967.1–11, Saïd 1981, Griffith 1998.57–65.

38 Dällenbach 1977.18. See also the definition in Prince 2003 s. v.: "A miniature replica of a text embedded within that text; a textual part reduplicating, reflecting, or mirroring (one or more than one aspect of) the textual whole." The concept of the *mise en abyme* goes back to a note in Gide's journal dating from 1893 (Gide 1948.41). The fundamental analysis of *mise en abyme* is still Dällenbach 1977, who starts with an extended critical discussion of Gide's note, develops a differentiated concept, and, on this basis, offers a reading of novels belonging to the *nouveau roman*. Bal 1978 is a critical discussion of Dällenbach which tries to ground the *mise en abyme* in semiotics by understanding it as an icon. Ron 1987 turns the focus to the "iconic relation in the narrative text and the relative position and importance of its sign . . . within it" (422) and discusses a variety of its aspects.

39 The groundbreaking work on metatheatres is Abel 1963. Much work has been done on metatheatres in Shakespeare, see, e.g., Egan 1975, Homan 1981, Hubbard 1991. On metatheatres in Greek tragedy, see, e.g., Zeitlin 1980, Batchelder 1995, Ringer 1998, and Dobrov 2001, who uses the term *mise en abyme*.

40 Cf., for example, Dobrov 2001.15, who defines *mise en abyme* as a "metarepresentational strategy whereby a miniature *theatrical* situation is embedded within a larger, similarly

The mirroring can be directed to different levels. Drawing on Roman Jakobsen's model of communication, Lucien Dällenbach distinguishes between the mirroring of the *énoncée*, the *énonciation*, and the code (1977.59–148). Moreover, a *mise en abyme* need not be linked to a diegetic downshift and is not necessarily a single section of a text, but can be distributed among different passages (Ron 1987.427–29, 431). Another point worth noting is that a *mise en abyme*, while it is based on similarity, can also provide a contrast to the text. This is due to the fact that, as a part of the whole, the *mise en abyme* cannot mirror the whole in all aspects (Ron 1987.422–25).

In what way, then, is Darius in the *Persae* a *mise en abyme*?<sup>41</sup> There are some aspects which may invite the eager interpreter to argue for a “play-in-play.” As a ritual, the necromancy has a metatheatrical dimension.<sup>42</sup> The Chorus describes Darius's robe (660f.)<sup>43</sup> and, in what reads like a stage direction, appeals to Darius to turn up (658f., 662). Yet there is another, more significant similarity through which Darius mirrors an aspect of the whole play. Through him, the past enters the present of the play in the same way that tragedies are the staging of past events—the temporal relation between the internal (stage) and external communication systems (stage-receiver) is mirrored within the internal communication system. To take an analogy from verbal tenses: the pluperfect of Darius is to the preterite tense of the tragic action, as the preterite of the tragic action is to the present tense of the performance. In doubling its own relation to the present of the performance, the *Persae* becomes self-reflexive, revealing

---

structured dramatic framework” (the italics are mine). An exception to the tendency to focus on the “play-in-play” in classics is Aélion 1984, who interprets prophecies and dreams in Aeschylus as *misses en abymes*. This analysis is directed towards the *énoncée*, while the “play-in-play” approaches deal with the *énonciation*.

41 In her paper on the *mise en abyme* in Aeschylus, Aélion 1984.136f. also looks at the *Persae*. However, she only looks at mirrors of the *énoncée*, and restricts herself to Atossa's dream.

42 Hornby 1986.21 points out that any ritual performed on stage is metatheatrical; cf. Ringer 1998.8. On the necromancy in the *Persae*, see Eitrem 1928.1–16, Rose 1950, Citti 1962, Jouan 1981. On ancient necromancy in general, see Ogden 2001. Hall 1989.89–91 and Bardel 2005.87 state that the necromancy in the *Persae* is not particularly non-Greek. On the other hand, Sourvinou-Inwood 2003.224 argues that “the ritual is made of Greek ritual elements, but it would have been perceived by the audience as non-Greek.” Ogden 2001.128–48 stresses the alien character of necromancy. For a ritualist reading of the *Persae* that focuses on lament, see Gödde 2000.

43 On the metatheatrical dimension of references to costume, see, e.g., Slater 2002.15–18.

the otherwise only implicit shape and function of its own presentation of the past.<sup>44</sup>

This mirroring is difficult to categorize in Dällenbach's system, since it combines at least two levels, the *énoncée* (the past) and the *énonciation* (the past to the recipients), and thus is proof of Mieke Bal's point that Dällenbach's categories cannot be clearly distinguished (1978.120f.). In the first part of my analysis below, two aspects of the tragic past will be illuminated by this reading of Darius (a); in a second step, I will demonstrate how the *mise en abyme* can serve as a tool to elaborate on the hermeneutics and poetics of memory (b).

a) As a ghost, Darius must have been a spectacular apparition on the stage.<sup>45</sup> He is treated with great awe and reverence by the Chorus. Already before he arrives, the Chorus states that "the soil of Persia / has never covered his like before" (645f.). When he comes, the elders are filled with so much fear that they do not even dare to break the bad news to him. Atossa addresses him with the following words in 709–11:

ὦ βροτῶν πάντων ὑπερσχὼν ὄλβον εὐτυχεῖ πότμωι,  
ὥς ἔως τ' ἔλευσσεσ ἀνγὰς ἡλίου ζηλωτὸς ὦν  
βίοντον εὐαίωνα Πέρσαις ὥς θεὸς διήγαγε.

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.

This is not the only place where Darius is compared to a god; in line 856, the Chorus calls him ἰσόθεος. Embodied by the godlike apparition of Darius as a ghost, the past appears larger than the present, just as the past in tragedy transcends the dimensions of the audience's present.<sup>46</sup> Most tragedies

---

44 My interpretation ties in well with a comment made by Bardel 2005.83 in a comparison of fragments and ghosts in drama: "Ghosts are also vestiges of a past, 'spectral traces,' reappearing in the present, often intriguing and sometimes inscrutable."

45 For ghosts on the stage of Attic tragedy, see Bardel 2005.

46 This relation between past and present can already be found in the *Iliad*, where the example of Nestor shows that the heroes of the past are greater than those of the present (1.259–74; see also the description of Nestor's cup at 11.636f.). Moreover, the heroic past is compared to the present of the performance when heroes lift stones that "men as they are today"

are set in the heroic past. The heroes are stronger than present-day men and are still in direct touch with the timeless gods. The metre and dignity of their speech set them apart from everyday life. That the tragic heroes were considered different comes to the fore in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where Aeschylus accuses Euripides of making his protagonists appear as ordinary men and scoundrels (1013–17). The distancing of the tragic action is particularly striking in a play that, like the *Persae*, deals with the very recent past. The larger-than-life frame gives tragedy authority over relevant questions of the present because it allows viewers to draw conclusions *a maiore ad minus*.<sup>47</sup>

Darius not only transcends the present by appearing like a god, he also stands in stark contrast to the present.<sup>48</sup> He is strongly juxtaposed with his son, the current ruler, through their parallel entrances: while Darius enters the stage probably in full regal attire (660f.), Xerxes comes in rags. The contrast is underscored by the divergent receptions they receive from the Chorus (Taplin 1977.121–27, Saïd 1988.337f., Goldhill 1988.192). While Darius is praised as ἀκάκας (855), Xerxes reproaches himself for having become a κακόν for his fatherland (932f.). In the third stasimon, the Chorus praises the old king's reign and compares it to the present disaster (852–906). The numerous negations highlight the fact that the past is envisaged as a foil to the present.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, Darius not only juxtaposes himself, but also his ancestors, with Xerxes (759–86).

This contrastive relation between past and present mirrors the temporal dynamics of the *Persae*. There is, however, one difference. The play does not present a glorious past contrasting with a desolate present, but the reverse: a miserable past juxtaposed to a rather glorious present. By taking the Persians' perspective, the presentation of the recent past becomes a contrast to the present.

---

could not lift (5.302–04, 12.381–83, 12.445–49, 20.285–87). There are, however, a few passages in which the heroes' present appears to be greater than the past, cf. Grethlein 2006a.53–55.

47 Vernant 1988.242 is right to point out that the heroes of tragedy are not positive models. However, he underestimates the complexity of the epics and lyrical poetry when he claims that, other than tragedy, they offer positive models.

48 Cf. Alexanderson 1967.2, 9. Michellini 1982.73f. points out that Darius is "Xerxes bettered"; Mitsis 1988.112, Föllinger 2003.254–67, with literature at 255 n. 106.

49 855: ἀκάκας ἄμαχος, "undamaging invincible"; 861: ἀπόνους; ἀπαθείς, "uninjured and unharmed"; 865f.: οὐ διαβὰς Ἴλυνος ποταμοῖο οὐδ' ἄφ' ἐστίας συθείς, "without even crossing the river Halys, without even leaving his hearth"; 901: ἀκάματον, "indefatigable." See also the phrase νῦν δέ ("but now," 904), which is used already in the *Iliad* to mark a contrast between the past and the present. Cf. Grethlein 2006a.122f.

It is difficult to argue that all tragedies serve as a contrast to the present of the performance. Some of the Euripidean tragedies staged during the Peloponnesian War rather look like a mirror (Croally 1994). Yet many tragedies become effective through their contrast to reality. Some of them, e.g., *Oedipus Tyrannus* or *Medea*, present transgressions of the conventions on which life in fifth-century Athens was based. In other plays, Thebes appears as an Anti-Athens (Vidal-Naquet 1988b, Zeitlin 1990). Sometimes, the ideal Athens within the tragedy reveals the faults of the real Athens. Thus one could say that, in many tragedies, the present of the performance is illuminated by a past that contrasts with it at different levels.

b) At this point, after Darius has helped us to elucidate the character of the tragic past, I would like to hark back to the hermeneutics and poetics of memory and argue that it is confirmed and complemented by the *mise en abyme* of Darius. First, the relation of memory and the remembering subject can be broadened into a more general point of temporal perspective. Second, the gap between an event and its presentation will gain a more critical dimension. Third, the link between past, present, and future in the Darius scene will highlight the didactic function of tragedy.

Let us start with an aspect of the past's relation to the present that raises the question of how far we can push our interpretation of the Darius scene as a *mise en abyme*. While Darius, the embodiment of the past, interacts with Atossa and the Chorus, the communicative structure of the tragedy is rather one-dimensional: the drama is performed for an audience which may strongly react to it—yet it is far from being a reciprocal exchange. Is this already the limit of the interpretation of the Darius scene as *mise en abyme*?

I would like to suggest that, on the contrary, the dialogue between Atossa, the Chorus, and Darius illuminates an important aspect of tragic performances as re-enactments of the past. I have already noted that memory depends on the remembering subject and her relation to the remembered past. Every representation of the past, even scientific historiography, is a (re)construction of the past which is given from a certain point of view.<sup>50</sup> By focusing on the temporal aspect of history's perspectivity, we can say

---

50 The perspectivity of historical judgements was already grasped by Chladenius 1742.189, who coined the term "Sehepunkt." Cf. Koselleck 1975.696–98. The temporal perspectivity of history has become a cornerstone of historical thinking in Historicism.

that accounts of the past always bear the imprint of the present in which they are given.

This point is particularly obvious for tragedy. Because it draws on only a limited corpus of myths, tragedy repeatedly deals with the same subjects. Yet every tragedy is a new application of its myth. The well-known story is presented in a new light that makes it interesting and relevant to the audience (e.g., Neumann 1995, Burian 1997). Since this is a fairly established view, it may suffice to mention the example of Aeschylus's *Supplikes*.<sup>51</sup> The democratic features of Argos have struck critics as being anachronistic and reminiscent of contemporary Athenian practice (e.g., Sardiello 1969–71, Petre 1986, Podlecki 1993:75–79). They are a “zooming-device” which projects a present concern into the past action and thus gives it significance for the audience (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1989 on “zooming-devices” in tragedy). In this way, the present inscribes itself into the (re)construction of the heroic past.

Seen from this angle, the conversation between Darius, who is an embodiment of the past, with Atossa and the Chorus resembles the dialogue between the present and the mythic past—the fruit of which tragedy is. Tragedy negotiates contemporary issues and tensions against the backdrop of the heroic past in the same way that the present is inscribed in the representation of the past through Darius. In accordance with our observation that memory depends on the remembering subject, Darius reveals that it is the present which makes the past speak.

This leads to another facet of Darius as a *mise en abyme*. There is a huge gap between the historical persona and its presentation in the *Persae*. Darius's expedition to Greece is only touched upon, and his defeats are glossed over. Most strikingly, Darius blames Xerxes for disregarding his ἐπιστολαί when he invaded Greece (783f.). However, as Herodotus has it (modern historians following suit), the later expedition had already been prepared by Darius. According to Herodotus, Xerxes was even most reluctant to lead a new attack against Greece (Saïd 1981.20f.).

The majority of scholars emphasize this downplaying of Darius's defeat and are inclined to attribute this distortion to its dramatic function:<sup>52</sup>

---

51 For a more detailed examination of the *Supplikes* as a rereading of a myth in the light of contemporary tensions and issues, see Grethlein 2003a.45–107.

52 Cf. Lattimore 1943.91, Saïd 1981.37f., and Harrison 2000.85, who also points out that the neglect of Marathon enhances the focus on naval warfare.

since he is introduced as a critical foil for Xerxes, there can be no reference to his own expedition and plans. Yet it has been noted that it is unlikely that the Athenian audience had forgotten the immense threat which Darius's army had posed to Greece.<sup>53</sup> After all, when the *Persae* was performed only eighteen years had passed since Marathon. It is difficult to imagine that the Athenian spectators could have forgotten Darius's own crossing of the Bosphorus when he criticizes his son's crossing of the same strait (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003.225f.).

Moreover, Darius's defeat by the Greeks is explicitly mentioned (Podlecki 1993.61f.). Edith Hall argues that the Chorus already alludes to Marathon in 236 (1996 ad 236): καὶ στρατὸς τοιοῦτος, ἔρξας πολλὰ δὴ Μήδους κακά, "Their army is large enough; it did the Medes great harm."

While this reference is ambiguous, the queen's reply to the Chorus' question of how the Greeks could withstand the hostile army is clearer, 244: ὥστε Δαρείου πολὺν τε καὶ καλὸν φθεῖραι στρατὸν, "Well enough to have destroyed Darius's large and excellent army."

Later, Atossa even names Marathon in 473–75:

... πικρὰν δὲ παῖς ἐμὸς τιμωρίαν  
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἦϋρε, κούκ ἀπῆρκεσαν  
οὕς πρόσθε Μαραθῶν βαρβάρων ἀπώλεσεν.

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.

These words do not tie in with the tendency to emphasize the rupture between Xerxes and Darius, instead they construct a continuity. Seen against this background, it is uncertain whether Darius's words in 780f. are only an assertion of the difference between father and son or if they also evoke the Persian defeat under Darius for the audience:<sup>54</sup>

53 Cf. Lloyd-Jones 1971.89, Gagarin 1976.52, and Griffith 1998.62, who argues that the audience is supposed to be half aware of the discrepancy between the real and fictive Darius and elaborates on this tension in his interpretation of the conflict between fathers and sons.

54 Cf. Broadhead 1960 ad 781: "We know from Hdt. that Darius' expeditions were by no means always successful, and this is implicit in the present line."



κάπεστράτευσα πολλὰ σὺν πολλῶι στρατῶι,  
 ἀλλ' οὐ κακὸν τοσόνδε προσέβαλον πόλῃ.

And I went on many military campaigns with a large  
 army, but I never brought such a great catastrophe upon  
 the city.

Neither the memory of the audience nor the references to Darius's defeat ought to be neglected. They undermine those interpretations that see Darius as the authoritative voice of the poet (e.g., Winnington-Ingram 1983.8–15, Georges 1994.82, Court 1994.54) and lead to a more complex reading of the play's rich texture. I argue that the audience's memory of Marathon and the hints at Darius's failures in the text cast a shadow over, if they do not subvert, his otherwise straightforward positive presentation.

Such an interpretation allows us to elaborate on the poetics of memory. In part I of this article, I established that representations are not capable of giving a full account of past events. This observation gains a new twist if we read the discrepancy between the representation and historical figure of Darius as a mirror of how the past is treated in the *Persae*. As with Darius, the firm embedding of the past in the audience's view of the present can lead to distortions of the past. This is fairly evident in the *Persae*, which is, as historians have come to agree, a rather problematic source for the reconstruction of the battle at Salamis as well as Persian history (e.g., Lattimore 1943, Kierdorf 1966.60–62, Lazenby 1988). Just to give one example: the extensive portrayal of Psyttalia in the messenger's speech is a far cry from its real importance.<sup>55</sup> Read in this way, the immanent mirror of an embedded past that is distorted undermines the *Persae*'s claim to present a truthful account.

So far, I have discussed the links of the past to the present. However, in the Darius scene, the future is also embedded through the integration of the past into the present. As I have already mentioned, Darius predicts in precise terms the Persian defeat at Plataia.<sup>56</sup> The embodiment of the past provides an insight into the future. Scholars have wondered how Darius, who does not know about the current catastrophe, can look into the

---

55 On the meaning and function of Psyttalia in the *Persae*, see Saïd 1992/93.

56 On the integration of the future into the *Persae* through Darius's prediction, see Dawe 1963.31, Court 1994.64.

future (e.g., Court 1994.51). Asked if the whole Persian army is crossing the Hellespont on the way back, he replies in 800–802:

παῦροί γε πολλῶν, εἴ τι πιστεῦσαι θεῶν  
 χρὴ θεσφάτοισιν, εἰς τὰ νῦν πεπραγμένα  
 βλέψαντα· συμβαίνει γὰρ οὐ τὰ μέν, τὰ δ' οὔ.

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.

The dead Darius has not gained prophetic power; his prediction is based on the conclusion he draws from signs.<sup>57</sup> He only gains authority from the fact that some of the signs have already proven true, which makes him expect the rest to happen. And from the audience's point of view, Darius's claim is justified.

It is important to link Darius's insight into the future to the comments he makes on the relevance of the past. I have already interpreted these comments as an expression of tragedy's didactic function, and Darius's prediction can be read along the same lines. The insight into the future presented from the stance of the past mirrors the didactic function of tragedy. The past which is presented may not provide predictions of the future; yet the insights into human life that are given in tragedy make it easier to plan the future. Tragedy cannot teach the future, it teaches for the future.

Another passage illuminates in what way tragedy prepares its audience for the future. Atossa's words in 598–602 reveal that the prosperous are prone to projecting their bliss onto the future. Yet the confrontation with extreme misfortune in tragedy, albeit at a safe distance, alerts them to their own fragility.

After spelling out all the features that make Darius a *mise en abyme*, it is time to mention at least one aspect which marks a clear distinction between Darius's pluperfect and the past in the *Persae*. It is the point where the mirror of the *mise en abyme* becomes dull: Darius belongs to the Persians' own past—he is the father of Xerxes for whom he serves as a foil. The *Persae*, however, focuses on the past of the "other." The audience

---

57 Cf. Alexanderson 1967.3. Ogden 2001.238–41 elaborates on the indirect nature of predictions in necromancies.

encounters their own past only as a refraction of the Persian experience. Or, to put it more bluntly, only through the distance to Susa can the *Persae* become a tragedy for the Greek audience, in accordance with Aristotle. This applies to many tragedies in which the tragic action is set in the realm of the “other.”

Yet this is not the whole story. There are tragedies with Athenian protagonists (e.g., Sophocles *Oedipus Coloneus*, Euripides *Supplices*, *Heraclidae*), but they are neither victims of the gods’ envy nor liable to tragic fault. As I have already mentioned, in these tragedies, “Athens” is presented as a foil to the real Athens. Seen from this angle, the poetological significance of Darius does not apply to the *Persae* alone but to other tragedies: the Darius scene may not mirror the focus on the past of the other in the *Persae*, but it corresponds to the tragedies in which contemporary reality is evaluated by the measure of Athens’s own past.

#### IV. CONCLUSION: THE TRAGIC PAST

The *Persae* is not the most popular tragedy among classicists. The play has even been belittled as rather deficient. Edith Hall, on the other hand, demonstrates that the *Persae* is well worth engaging with. In her reading of the play as a source for the “invention of the barbarian,” she points out that the “other” of the Persians helps to establish a Greek identity. I have tried to elucidate another aspect of the play’s rich texture by turning from its spatial to its temporal axis. The *Persae* is not only a construction of the “other,” it is also a multi-faceted reflection on memory. I have attempted to demonstrate that the characters’ reflections add up to a hermeneutics of memory that can be read on a metapoetic level. Moreover, by staging the past within the past, the Darius scene mirrors the enactment of the past in tragedy.

The past as it has emerged from this reading is not only strongly linked to, it is even constituted by, the present. The past functions as a contrast that highlights the present. Thus ethnic and temporal “others” resemble one another and are employed to the same end: to create an identity in the here and now. The eminent role of tragedy in fifth-century Athens testifies that the Greeks were “in the grip of the past,” as B. A. van Groningen put it (1953). To this we can add that, in tragedy, the past is in the firm grip of the present.

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abel, L. 1963. *Metatheatre: A New Vision of Dramatic Form*. New York.
- Aélion, R. 1983/84. "Silences et personnages silencieux chez les tragiques," *Euphrosyne* 12.31–52.
- . 1984. "Songes et prophéties d'Eschyle: Une forme de mise en abyme," *LALIES* 3.133–46.
- Albini, U. 1967. "Lettura dei Persiani di Eschilo," *PP* 22.252–63.
- Alexanderson, B. 1967. "Darius in the *Persians*," *Eranos* 65.1–11.
- Anderson, M. 1972. "The Imagery of the *Persians*," *G&R* 19.166–74.
- Assmann, J. 1991. "Die Katastrophe des Vergessens: Das Deuteronomium als Paradigma kultureller Mnemotechnik," in A. Assmann and D. Harth, eds., *Mnemosyne: Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*. Frankfurt. 337–55.
- . 1992. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung, und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. Munich.
- . 2000. *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis*. Munich.
- Avery, H. C. 1964. "Dramatic Devices in Aeschylus's *Persians*," *AJP* 85.173–84.
- Bacon, H. H. 1961. *Barbarians in Greek Tragedy*. New Haven.
- Bal, M. 1978. "Mise en abyme et iconité," *Littérature* 29.116–28.
- Bardel, R. 2005. "Spectral Traces: Ghosts in Tragic Fragments," in F. McHardy et al., eds., *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens: Greek Tragic Fragments*. Exeter. 21–48.
- Barrett, J. 1995. "Narrative and the Messenger in Aeschylus's *Persians*," *AJP* 116.539–57.
- . 2002. *Staged Narrative: Poetics and the Messenger in Greek Tragedy*. Berkeley.
- Batchelder, A. G. 1995. *The Seal of Orestes: Self-Reference and Authority in Sophocles' Electra*. Lanham.
- Belfiore, E. 1992. *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion*. Princeton.
- Belloni, L. 1982. "L'ombra di Dario nei *Persiani* di Eschilo: La regalità degli Achemenidi e il pubblico di Atene," *Orpheus* 3.185–99.
- . 1988. *Eschilo: I Persiani*. Milan.
- Broadhead, H. D. 1960. *The Persae of Aeschylus*. Cambridge.
- Burian, P. 1997. "Myth into Muthos: The Shaping of Tragic Plot," in P. Easterling, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge. 178–208.

- Carr, D. 1986. *Time, Narrative, and History: Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy*. Bloomington.
- Carroll, N. 1990. "Interpretation, History and Narrative," *The Monist* 73.134–66.
- Castellani, V. 1986. "Clio vs. Melpomene; Or, Why so Little Historical Drama from Classical Athens," *Themes in Drama* 8.1–16.
- Castriota, D. 1992. *Myth, Ethos, and Actuality: Official Art in Fifth-Century B.C. Athens*. Madison.
- de Certeau, M. 1988. *The Writing of History*. New York.
- Chladenius, J. M. 1742. *Einleitung zur richtigen Auslegung vernünftiger Reden und Schriften*. Leipzig (reprint Düsseldorf 1969).
- Citti, V. 1962. *Il linguaggio religioso e liturgico nelle tragedie di Eschilo*. Bologna.
- Court, B. 1994. *Die dramatische Technik des Aischylos*. Stuttgart.
- Croally, N. T. 1994. *Euripidean Polemics: The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy*. Cambridge.
- Dällenbach, L. 1977. *Le récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme*. Paris.
- Dawe, R. D. 1963. "Inconsistency of Plot and Character in Aeschylus," *PCPS* 189.21–62.
- Dobrov, G. M. 2001. *Figures of Play: Greek Drama and Metafictional Poetics*. Oxford.
- Easterling, P. 1997. "Constructing the Heroic," in C. Pelling, ed., *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*. Oxford. 21–37.
- Egan, R. G. 1975. *Drama Within Drama: Shakespeare's Sense of his Art in King Lear, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest*. New York.
- Eitrem, S. 1928. "The Necromancy in the *Persae* of Aeschylus," *SO* 6.1–16.
- Fisher, N. R. E. 1992. *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece*. Warminster.
- Föllinger, S. 2003. *Genosdependenzen: Studien zur Arbeit am Mythos bei Aischylos*. Göttingen.
- Francis, E. D. 1990. *Image and Idea in Fifth-Century Greece: Art and Literature after the Persian Wars*. London.
- Gadamer, H.-G. 1986. *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen.
- Gagarin, M. 1976. *Aeschylean Drama*. Berkeley.
- Garner, R. 1990. *From Homer to Tragedy: The Art of Allusion in Greek Poetry*. London.

- Georges, P. 1994. *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience: From the Archaic Period to the Age of Xenophon*. Baltimore.
- Gide, A. 1948. *Journal 1889–1939*. Paris.
- Gödde, S. 2000. "Zu einer Poetik des Rituals in Aischylos' Persern," in S. Gödde and T. Heinze, eds., *Skenika: Beiträge zum antiken Theater und seiner Rezeption: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von H.-D. Blume*. Darmstadt. 31–47.
- Goldhill, S. 1984. *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: The Oresteia*. Cambridge.
- . 1988. "Battle Narrative and Politics in Aeschylus's *Persae*," *JHS* 108.189–93.
- . 1990. "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," in J. J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin, eds., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*. Princeton. 97–129.
- . 2000. "Civic Ideology and the Problem of Difference: The Politics of Aeschylean Tragedy, Once Again," *JHS* 120.34–56.
- Gotteland, S. 2001. *Mythe et rhétorique: Les exemples mythiques dans le discours politique de l'Athènes classique*. Paris.
- Gould, J. 1996. "Tragedy and Collective Experience," in M. S. Silk, ed., *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*. Oxford. 217–43.
- Gregory, J. 1991. *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians*. Ann Arbor.
- Grethlein, J. 2003a. *Asyl und Athen: Die Konstruktion kollektiver Identität in der griechischen Tragödie*. Stuttgart.
- . 2003b. "Die poetologische Bedeutung des Aristotelischen Mitleidbegriffs: Überlegungen zu Nähe und Distanz in der griechischen Tragödie," *Poetica* 35.41–67.
- . 2005. "Gefahren des Logos: Thucydides' Historien and die Grabrede des Perikles," *Klio* 87.41–71.
- . 2006a. *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias: Eine Untersuchung aus phänomenologischer und narratologischer Perspektive*. Göttingen.
- . 2006b. "The Manifold Uses of the Epic Past: The Embassy Scene in Hdt. 7.153–163," *AJP* 127.4.485–509.
- . 2007a. "Diomedes Redivivus: A New Reading of Mimnermus fr. 14 W2," *Mnemosyne* 60.102–11.
- . 2007b. "Variationem des 'nächsten Fremden': Die Perser des Aischylos im 20. Jahrhundert," *Antike und Abendland* 53 (forthcoming).
- Griffin, J. 1998. "The Social Function of Attic Tragedy," *CQ* 48.39–61.
- . 1999. "Sophocles and the Democratic City," in J. Griffin, ed.,

- Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones*. Oxford. 73–94.
- Griffith, M. 1998. "The King and the Eye: The Rule of the Father in Greek Tragedy," *PCPS* 44.20–84.
- van Groningen, B. A. 1953. *In the Grip of the Past: Essay on an Aspect of Greek Thought*. Leiden.
- Hall, E. 1989. *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*. Oxford.
- . 1996. *Aeschylus: Persians*. Warminster.
- Halliwell, S. 1986. *Aristotle's Poetics*. London.
- . 2002. *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton.
- Harrison, T. 2000. *The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus's Persians and the History of the Fifth Century*. London.
- Heath, M. 1987. *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy*. Stanford.
- Hölscher, T. 1998. "Images and Political Identity: The Case of Athens," in D. Boedeker and K. Raafaub, eds., *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*. Cambridge, Mass. 153–83.
- Holtsmark, E. B. 1970. "Ring Composition and the *Persae* of Aeschylus," *SO* 45.5–23.
- Holzhausen, J. 2000. *Paideía oder Paidíá: Aristoteles und Aristophanes zur Wirkung der griechischen Tragödie*. Stuttgart.
- Homan, S. 1981. *When the Theatre Turns to Itself: The Aesthetic Metaphor in Shakespeare*. Lewisburg.
- Hornby, R. 1986. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. Lewisburg.
- Hubbard, J. D. 1991. *Metatheater: The Example of Shakespeare*. Lincoln.
- Jouan, F. 1981. "L'évocation des morts dans la tragédie grecque," *RHR* 198.403–21.
- Kellog, K. A. 1978/79. "Variable Repetition: Word Patterns in the *Persae*," *CJ* 74.213–19.
- Kierdorf, W. 1966. *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege*. Göttingen.
- Kitto, H. D. F. 1961<sup>3</sup>. *Greek Tragedy*. London.
- Knox, B. M. W. 1979. "Myth and Attic Tragedy," in *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theatre*. Baltimore. 3–24.
- Konstan, D. 2001. *Pity Transformed*. London.
- Koselleck, R. 1975. "Geschichte, Historie V: Die Herausbildung des modernen Geschichtsbegriffs," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* II.647–91. Stuttgart.

- Kranz, W. 1933. *Untersuchungen zu Form und Gestalt der griechischen Tragödie*. Berlin.
- Lattimore, R. 1943. "Aeschylus on the Defeated of Xerxes," in *Classical Studies in Honor of W. A. Oldfather*. Urbana. 82–93.
- Lazenby, J. F. 1988. "Aischylos und Salamis," *Hermes* 116.168–85.
- Lenz, L. 1986. "Zur Dramaturgie und Tragik in den Persern," *Gymnasium* 93.141–63.
- Levinas, E. 1972. *Humanisme de l'autre homme*. Paris.
- Liebsch, B. 1996. *Geschichte im Zeichen des Abschieds*. Munich.
- Lloyd-Jones, H. 1971. *The Justice of Zeus*. Berkeley.
- Loraux, N. 1986. *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*. Cambridge.
- Lorenz, C. 1998. "Can Histories be True? Narrativism, Positivism, and the 'Metaphorical Turn,'" *H&T* 37.309–29.
- Magny, C. E. 1950. *Histoire du roman français depuis 1918*. Paris.
- McCall, M. F. 1986. "Aeschylus in the Persae: A Bold Strategy Succeeds," in M. Cropp et al., eds., *Greek Tragedy and its Legacy*. Calgary. 43–49.
- Michelini, A. 1982. *Tradition and Dramatic Form in the Persians of Aeschylus*. Leiden.
- Mitsis, P. 1988. "Xerxes' Entrance: Irony, Myth, and History in the Persians," in P. Pucci, ed., *Language and the Tragic Hero: Essays in Honor of G. M. Kirkwood*. Atlanta. 103–19.
- Mülke, M. 2000. "Phrynichos und Athen: Der Beschluß über die Mileto Halosis (Herodot 6, 21, 2)," in S. Gödde and T. Heinze, eds., *Skenika: Beiträge zum antiken Theater und seiner Rezeption: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von H.-D. Blume*. Darmstadt. 233–46.
- Müller, G. 1968. *Morphologische Poetik: Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Tübingen.
- Nagy, G. 1974. *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Neumann, U. 1995. *Gegenwart und mythische Vergangenheit bei Euripides*. Stuttgart.
- Nicolai, W. 1998. "Aischylos' Perser," in W. Düsing, ed., *Aspekte des Geschichtsdramas: Von Aischylos bis Volker Braun*. Tübingen. 12–30.
- Nora, P. 1984–92. *Les lieux de mémoire*, I–III. Paris.
- Ogden, D. 2001. *Greek and Roman Necromancy*. Oxford.



- Paduano, G. 1978. *Sui Persiani di Eschilo: Problemi di focalizzazione drammatica*. Rome.
- Parker, R. 1997. "Gods Cruel and Kind: Tragic and Civic Ideology," in C. Pelling, ed., *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*. Oxford. 143–60.
- Pelling, C. 1997. "Aeschylus's *Persae* and History," in C. Pelling, ed., *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*. Oxford. 1–19.
- Péron, J. 1982. "Réalité et au-delà dans les Perses d'Eschyle," *BAGB* 3–40.
- Petre, Z. 1986. "Les décret des Suppliantes d'Eschyle," *StudClas* 24.76–100.
- Podlecki, A. J. 1993. "Κατ' ἀρχῆς γὰρ φιλαίτιος λέως: The Concept of Leadership in Aeschylus," in A. H. Sommerstein et al., eds., *Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis*. Bari. 55–79.
- Prince, G. 2003<sup>2</sup>. *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln.
- Prinz, K. 1997. *Epitaphios logos*. Frankfurt.
- Rehm, R. 2002. *The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy*. Princeton.
- Ricoeur, P. 2004. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago.
- Ringer, M. 1998. *Electra and the Empty Urn: Metatheater and Role Playing in Sophocles*. Chapel Hill.
- Ron, M. 1987. "The Restricted Abyss: Nine Problems in the Theory of *Mise en Abyme*," *Poetics Today* 8.417–38.
- Rose, H. J. 1950. "Ghost Ritual in Aeschylus," *HTR* 43.257–80.
- Rosenbloom, D. 1993. "Shouting 'Fire' in a Crowded Theater: Phrynichos's *Capture of Miletos* and the Politics of Fear in Early Greek Tragedy," *Philologus* 137.159–96.
- . 1995. "Myth, History, and Language in Aeschylus," in B. Goff, ed., *History, Tragedy, Theory*. Austin. 91–130.
- Röttgers, K. 1982. *Der kommunikative Text und die Zeitstruktur von Geschichte*. Freiburg.
- . 1988. *Die Lineatur der Geschichte*. Amsterdam.
- Säid, S. 1981. "Darius et Xerxès dans les Perses d'Eschyle," *Ktema* 6.17–38.
- . 1988. "Tragédie et renversement: L'exemple des Perses," *Metis* 3.321–44.
- . 1992/93. "Pourquoi Psyttalie ou Comment transformer un combat naval en défaite terrestre," in P. Ghiron-Bistagne et al., eds., *Les Perses d'Eschyle*. Montpellier. 53–69.

- Sardiello, R. E. 1969–71. Il problema della datazione e il significato politico delle Supplici di Eschilo,” *AFL* 5.5–36.
- Schepens, G. 1975. “L’idéal de l’information complète chez les historiens grecs,” *REG* 88.81–93.
- Schmitt, R. 1967. *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit*. Wiesbaden.
- Sideras, A. 1971. *Aeschylus Homericus*. Göttingen.
- Slater, N. W. 2002. *Spectator Politics: Metatheatrical and Performance in Aristophanes*. Philadelphia.
- Sourvinou-Inwood, C. 1989. “Assumptions and the Creation of Meaning: Reading Sophocles’ *Antigone*,” *JHS* 109.134–48.
- . 2003. *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*. Lanham.
- Stanford, W. B. 1942. *Aeschylus in his Style*. Dublin.
- Sternberg, M. 1990. “Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Time,” *Poetics Today* 11.901–48.
- . 1992. “Telling in Time (II): Chronology, Teleology, Narrativity,” *Poetics Today* 13.463–541.
- Stoessl, F. 1945. “Die Phoinissen des Phrynichos und die Perser des Aeschylus,” *MH* 2.148–65.
- Taplin, O. 1972. “Aeschylean Silences and Silences in Aeschylus,” *HSCP* 76.57–97.
- . 1977. *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy*. Oxford.
- Thalmann, W. G. 1980. “Xerxes’ Rags: Some Problems in Aeschylus’s *Persians*,” *AJP* 101.260–82.
- Theissen, G. 1988. “Tradition und Entscheidung: Der Beitrag des biblischen Glaubens zum kulturellen Gedächtnis,” in J. Assmann and T. Hölscher, eds., *Kultur und Gedächtnis*. Frankfurt. 170–96.
- Vernant, J.-P. 1988. “The Tragic Subject,” in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988.237–47.
- Vernant, J.-P., and P. Vidal-Naquet (eds.) 1988. *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*. New York.
- Vidal-Naquet, P. 1988a. “Aeschylus, the Past and the Present,” in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988.249–72.
- . 1988b. “Oedipus Between Two Cities: An Essay on *Oedipus at Colonus*,” in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988.329–59.
- Walters, K. R. 1980. “Rhetoric as Ritual: The Semiotics of the Attic Funeral Oration,” *Florilegium* 2.1–27.

- West, M. L. 1998<sup>2</sup>. *Aeschyli tragodiae cum incerti poetae Prometheo*. Stuttgart.
- White, H. 1973. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore.
- . 1978. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore.
- . 1987. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore.
- . 1999. *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*. Baltimore.
- Winnington-Ingram, R. P. 1983. *Studies in Aeschylus*. Cambridge.
- Zeitlin, F. I. 1980. "The Closet of Masks: Role-Playing and Myth-Making in the *Orestes* of Euripides," *Ramus* 9.51–57.
- . 1990. "Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama," in J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin, eds., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*. Princeton. 130–67.