

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

PERSAE 374–83: PERSIANS, GREEKS, AND ΠΕΙΘΑΡΧΩΙ ΦΡΕΝΙ

οἱ δ' οὐκ ἀκόσμως ἀλλὰ πειθάρχω φρενὶ
 δεῖπνόν (τ') ἐπορσύνοντο, ναυβάτης τ' ἀνὴρ 375
 τροποῦτο κώπην σκαλμὸν ἄμφ' εὐήρετμον.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ φέγγος ἡλίου κατέφθιτο
 καὶ νύξ ἐπῆρει, πᾶς ἀνὴρ κώπης ἄναξ
 εἰς ναῦν ἐχώρει πᾶς θ' ὅπλων ἐπιστάτης,
 τάξις δὲ τάξιν παρεκάλει νεὼς μακρᾶς, 380
 πλέουσι δ' ὥς ἕκαστος ἦν τεταγμένος·
 καὶ πάννηχοι δὴ διάπλοον καθίστασαν
 ναῶν ἄνακτες πάντα ναυτικὸν λεών.

And not in a disorderly fashion, but with an obedient mind they were preparing their meal, and [each] seaman was fastening his oarshaft around the close-fitting pin. And after the light of the sun was lost and night was approaching, each man, king of an oar, and each master of weapons went on board, and oarbank was calling to oarbank of the long ship, and they sail as each had been assigned, and all night long the kings of the ships were keeping the whole naval force actively sailing.¹

These lines of the *Persae* occur in the messenger's speech as he reports the preparations prior to the battle of Salamis. He recounts how a Greek delivered a false report and deceived Xerxes, and how the Great King consequently ordered his naval officers, upon pain of death, to prevent the ostensible nighttime retreat of their foes. The passage in question picks up here, and has traditionally been understood as describing the actions of the Persians.² Recently E. Hall has argued that these lines are better understood with the Greeks as subject, commencing with οἱ δ' (l. 374).³ Yet her arguments are not convincing. Both the particulars of the passage and relevant information from Herodotus provide better support for the traditional view; ll. 374–83 should continue to be understood as describing the actions of the Persian contingent.⁴

Hall has two main arguments for making the Greeks the subject of these lines. The first has to do with the orderliness of the actions described. She claims that “through-

I thank the Editor and anonymous referees of this journal for their comments and criticisms. This note is the better for their careful attentions.

1. All textual references to the *Persae* are based on M. L. West, *Aeschyli Tragoediae* (Stuttgart, 1990). All translations are my own.

2. E.g., H. D. Broadhead, *The “Persae” of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1960), 120.

3. E. Hall, *Aeschylus. “Persians”* (Warminster, 1996), 137.

4. A further issue is whether the subject should be understood as the Persian officers (thus Broadhead, *Persae*, 120) or the Persian force more generally. Although officers are specifically mentioned at l. 383 (ναῶν ἄνακτες), the force of πᾶς ἀνὴρ (l. 378), πᾶς . . . ἐπιστάτης (l. 379), and πάντα ναυτικὸν λεών (l. 383) suggests that the passage also includes the actions of the entire Persian fleet.

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out the messenger's speeches a pointed contrast is drawn between Greek discipline and Persian disorder."⁵ The sailors here are said to act οὐκ ἀκόσμως (l. 374); by contrast, the Persian fleet and Xerxes flee in a disorderly fashion both during and after the battle.⁶ Moreover, Hall places special emphasis on the phrase *πειθάρχω φρενί* (l. 374), which she paraphrases as "willing obedience to authority"; the sailors in question obey because they choose to, while in general Persians obey because they must.⁷ To support her claim she cites passages in Aristophanes and Isocrates in which *πειθαρχία/πειθαρχέω* appears as a virtue possessed by Athenians.⁸ But *πειθαρχία* does not in and of itself contain any notion of willing obedience. The definitions given by LSJ of verb, noun, and adjective are all neutral in tone. *Πειθαρχέω* means "to obey one in authority"; *πειθαρχία* means "obedience to command"; and *πειθαρχος* means simply "obedient."⁹ Thus *πειθαρχία* is not an unqualified good thing: it can also be put to more ambiguous uses.¹⁰

Moreover, there is an aspect of *πειθάρχω φρενί* in the *Persae* that Hall neglects. Although she examines the adjective and notes the antithesis the phrase forms with οὐκ ἀκόσμως, she does not comment on the noun and its relation to the lines directly preceding. At l. 372 the messenger sums up Xerxes' commands to his admirals: *τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε κάρθ' ὑπ' εὐθύμου φρενός* ("... so much he spoke with a very cheerful heart"). The *πειθάρχω φρενί* of l. 374 clearly picks up on the *εὐθύμου φρενός* of l. 372. The phrases occur in the same emphatic line-end position, are adjective-noun pairings based upon the same word (*φρήν*), and are separated by just one line. Thus the *πειθάρχω φρενί* of the sailors should be seen against the backdrop of the *εὐθύμου φρενός* of Xerxes. What Xerxes has just done with blithe heart is issue orders and threaten his men with execution. Here Persian sailors appear more appropriate than Greek ones. Although their king has threatened them with death, they do not react in a disorderly panic, but calmly obey and go about the business at hand; regal commands and harsh, arbitrary punishment form a familiar part of their daily lives.

Aeschylus' use of the phrase *πειθάρχω φρενί* at l. 374 is thus related to the *εὐθύμου φρενός* at l. 372. This latter phrase may in turn be connected with an earlier moment in the play. At ll. 212–13, Atossa states that if Xerxes' expedition against Greece succeeds he will be admired, but even if it fails, it does not matter, for he is not accountable to the community, οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει (l. 213). This phrase has a political import; Xerxes is not like magistrates in Athens who had to submit to formal scrutiny when their terms of office expired.¹¹ Moreover, the phrase bears a strong phonological resemblance to the second half of l. 372. Only one letter differentiates the stem of ὑπεύθυνος (l. 213) from that of ὑπ' εὐθύμου (l. 372). Given the earlier reference at l. 213 and the aural similarity between *μ* and *ν*, it seems plausible that the

5. Hall, *Persians*, 138.

6. The fleet: *φυγῇ δ' ἀκόσμως πᾶσα ναὺς ἡρέσσετο* (each ship was being rowed in a disorderly retreat, l. 422). Xerxes: *ἴησ' ἀκόσμως ξὺν φυγῇ* (the flees in a disorderly retreat, l. 470). See also ll. 480–81.

7. Hall, *Persians*, 137.

8. Ar. *Eccl.* 762–64; Isoc. *Panathenaecus* 115.

9. LSJ s.v. *πειθαρχέω*, *πειθαρχία*, *πειθαρχος*.

10. As at *Antigone* 676, where Creon employs the term in urging Haemon to accept his decision to kill Antigone. Here the ruler cites the dangers of *ἀναρχία* (anarchy) and praises its opposite, *πειθαρχία*. By using the word in this context, Creon implies that all political authority demands obedience.

11. S. Goldhill, "Battle Narrative and Politics in Aeschylus' *Persae*," *JHS* 108 (1988): 189–93, at 191. For a detailed discussion of the *εὐθυνα* and the *εὐθυνοί* who conducted it see M. Piérart, "Les ΕΥΘΥΝΟΙ athéniens," *L'Antiquité Classique* 40 (1971): 526–73.

audience listening to l. 372 might have thought it heard something like this: τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε κάρθ' ὑπειθύνου φρενός ("... so much he spoke out of/from an extremely accountable heart"). On the surface, such a statement would have been puzzling. It was a commonplace among the Greeks that Persian kings did as they liked, and were accountable to no one.¹² At one level, then, Xerxes has a φρήν that is the very opposite of ὑπειθύνος. He has just threatened his captains with death, and done so with impunity.¹³ On the other hand, however, one of the central themes of the *Persae* is that in the end even Xerxes is in some senses accountable.¹⁴ The description of Xerxes' φρήν as εὐθυμος at l. 372 may thus contain an ironic yet meaningful allusion to his earlier description as οὐχ ὑπειθύνος at l. 213. In the long view of things presented by the play, Xerxes does what he does with a heart that is momentarily cheerful (εὐθυμος) and yet, from the Persian point of view, ultimately all too accountable (ὑπειθύνος).¹⁵

Hall's second argument for treating the Greeks as subjects of ll. 374–83 comes from the elaborate periphrases used to describe the sailors. At ll. 378–79 each rower is referred to as κόπης ἄναξ, "king of an oar," while each marine is referred to as ὅπλων ἐπιστάτης, "master of weapons." According to Hall, "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."¹⁶ However, it is not clear that these circumlocutions derive from any programmatic intent on the part of Aeschylus. The phrase κόπης ἄναξ also appears in Euripides' *Cyclops* (in the plural, κόπης τ' ἄνακτας, l. 86), and a like construction with the participle (κόπης ἀνάσσων) appears in the fragments of the *Telephus* (frag. 705). Moreover, the phrases πέλτης ἄναξ (*Alc.* 498), ὅπλων ἄνακτες (*IA* 1260), ὄχων ἀνάσσουσ' (*Hel.* 1240), ἑρετῶν ἐπιστάτης (*Hel.* 1267), and ἀρμάτων ἐπιστάται (*Soph. El.* 702) occur elsewhere in tragedy. The prevalence of such "ἄναξ of *x*" and "ἐπιστάτης of *y*" expressions in other dramas suggests that these locutions may be employed primarily for their dignity of style, as befits tragic diction.¹⁷ Thus Hall may be reading too much into these phrases. And even if Aeschylus is using hierarchies to describe the relationships between sailors and marines and their respective tools, he might be making a point about Persians instead of Greeks. The implication would then be that Persia is

12. In the Persian debate about constitutions, Herodotus has Otanes describe μοναρχίη (monarchy) as τῇ ἔξεστι ἀνευθύνω ποιεῖν τὰ βούλεται ("that to which it is permitted to do what it wants without accountability," 3.80.3).

13. Herodotus also has Otanes explain that one of the hallmarks of a monarch is putting men to death without a trial (κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους, 3.80.5).

14. His dead father Darius scrutinizes his conduct minutely and finds it wanting (ll. 715–53). And the gods in turn punish Xerxes for his actions. At l. 354 the messenger alludes to the possible role of an ἀλάστορ; at ll. 827–28 Darius describes Zeus as an εὐθνος βαρὺς. See further Broadhead, *Persae*, 118, and R. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1983), 1–15.

15. Taking l. 372 as containing a complex allusion of this sort lends additional support to the claim that the πειθάρχω φρενί referred to at l. 374 belongs to the Persian sailors. Aeschylus' intent would then be to characterize further the Persian political system as a whole; even though Persian monarchs act irresponsibly, their subjects do not hold them to account, but on the contrary readily obey.

16. Hall, *Persians*, 137.

17. Thus Broadhead, *Persae*, 121, and A. Sidgwick, *Aeschylus*. "Persae" (1903; reprint Bristol, 1982), 24. See also F. A. Paley, *Aeschyli Tragoediae* (London, 1879), 207–8. R. Seaford, *Euripides*. "Cyclops" (Oxford, 1988), 119–20 further notes that the ἄναξ metaphor "may derive in part from an ancient sense of ἀνάσσειν as 'control' (e.g. in χειρῶναξ)."

wedded to hierarchy through and through: just as Xerxes is king over all, even the lowliest subjects have their individual fiefdoms.

In addition to the preceding objections to Hall's claim, there are two positive arguments for taking the Persians as the subjects of ll. 374–83. The first lies in the temporal sequence of ll. 377–81. Day fades, night comes on, the crews man their ships and sail according to their instructions. This is the same sequence contained in Xerxes' commands to his troops previously reported by the messenger (ll. 364–69):

προφωνεῖ τόνδε ναύαρχους λόγον,
εὖτ' ἂν φλέγων ἀκτῖσιν ἥλιος χθόνα
λήξῃ, κνέφας δὲ τέμενος αἰθέρος λάβῃ,
τάξαι νεῶν στίφος μὲν ἐν στοίχοις τρισίν
ἔκπλους φυλάσσειν καὶ πόρους ἀλιρρόθους,
ἄλλας δὲ κύκλῳ νῆσον Αἴαντος πέριξ.

He makes this announcement to the ship-captains: whenever the sun ceases burning the earth with its rays, and gloom takes hold of the sanctuary of heaven, [for them] to station a body of ships in three squadrons, to guard against sailings out and [to watch] the echoing straits, and for others to guard around the island of Ajax in a circle.

Although the diction in these lines is more elaborate, the broad outline of events is the same: sunset, nightfall, and subsequent naval activity. The naval activity demanded by Xerxes at ll. 367–69 is obviously Persian; the temporal framework of the two passages suggests that the sailing described later at ll. 380–81 is also Persian. Moreover, at l. 381 the sailors are said to sail as each had been assigned: πλέουσι δ' ὥς ἕκαστος ἦν τεταγμένος. Here the use of the perfect passive participle τεταγμένος recalls the infinitive τάξαι (l. 366) of Xerxes' orders to his admirals. Thus correspondences between ll. 364–69 and ll. 374–83 suggest that the Persians are the sailors in both passages.¹⁸ In the former, the messenger describes the instructions issued by Xerxes; in the latter, he details their faithful execution.

A final argument for considering the Persians the subjects of our passage comes from comparison with a detail in Herodotus. At ll. 382–83 of the *Persae* the naval captains of the force under discussion have their sailors conduct nightlong maneuvers: καὶ πάννυχτοι δὴ διάπλοον καθίστασαν/ ναῶν ἄνακτες πάντα ναυτικὸν λεῶν. Here the adjectives πάννυχτοι, "all night," which is used of the captains, and διάπλοον, "sailing continuously,"¹⁹ used of the fleet in general, suggest that the officers and crews did not sleep that particular night. This corresponds to what the historian tells us at 8.76.3 of Persian behavior on the night before the battle: οἱ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα τῆς

18. We find a similar description of Persian activities that night in Herodotus 8.76.1. Night falls and Persian naval operations commence: ἐπειδὴ ἐγίνοντο μέσαι νύκτες, ἀνήγον μὲν τὸ ἀπ' ἐσπέρης κέρας κυκλοῦμενοι πρὸς τὴν Σαλαμῖνα, ἀνήγον δὲ οἱ ἀμφὶ τὴν Κέον τε καὶ τὴν Κυνόσουραν τεταγμένοι, κατεῖχον τε μέχρι Μουνιχίης πάντα τὸν πορθμὸν τῆς νηυσί. ("After it was midnight, they were leading up the wing from the west, circling towards Salamis, and those who had been stationed around Ceos and Cynosura also came up, and they held with their ships all the strait as far as Munichia"). See N. G. L. Hammond, "The Battle of Salamis," *JHS* 76 (1956): 32–54, at 43–44.

19. LSJ gives the primary definition of διάπλοος as "sailing across or sailing continuously." Aeschylus may also intend here a contrast between the διάπλοος of the Persian ships and the ἐκπλους or "sailing out" purportedly planned by the Greeks (l. 385). Note further the verbal similarities between ll. 382–83 and 384–85: the Persians διάπλοον καθίστασαν . . . ναυτικὸν λεῶν (ll. 382–83), while the Ἑλλήνων στρατός . . . ἐκπλούν οὐδαμῇ καθίστατο.

νυκτὸς οὐδὲν ἀποκοιμηθέντες παραρτέοντο (“And in fact they were making these preparations and got no sleep during the night”).²⁰

In conclusion, Hall’s arguments for making the Greeks the subjects of *Persae* 374–83 are not persuasive. Lexical detail and structural features from the passage in question weigh against her claim, as does a brief comparison with Herodotus 8.76.3. The phrase *πειθάρχῳ φρενί* (l. 374) on which she relies describes not a “willing obedience to authority” on the part of the Greeks, but rather the subservient attitude of Persian subjects towards their sovereign who is accountable to no man. The traditional interpretation of the passage should stand: the lines describe the activities of Persian sailors.

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20. See Hammond, “Salamis,” 44. However, given that Herodotus’ account of Salamis was written decades later than the *Persae* and may in fact have been influenced by it, this correspondence is not in and of itself conclusive.

KΥΑΘΟΣ AT ARISTOPHANES *PAX* 538–42, *LYSISTRATA* 443–44, AND
[ARISTOTLE] *PROBLEMS* 890B7–38

In two passages of Aristophanes the term κύαθος is associated with the treatment of black eyes resulting from a blow. In *Pax*, Hermes remarks on the blissful situation of the reconciled Greek cities now that Eirene has been recovered:¹

Ἴθι νυν, ἄθρει
οἶον πρὸς ἀλλήλας λαλοῦσιν αἱ πόλεις
διαλλαγεῖσαι καὶ γελῶσιν ἄσμεναι—

At this point Trygaeus interrupts with the observation:

καὶ ταῦτα δαιμονίως ὑπωπιασμέναι
ἀπαξάπασαι καὶ κύαθους προσκείμεναι

And in *Lysistrata*, when the Proboulos orders a Scythian archer to arrest one of the old women defending Lysistrata, a second old woman threateningly informs the archer:

Εἰ τᾶρα νῆ τὴν Φωσφόρον τὴν χειρ’ ἄκραν
ταύτηη προσοίσεις, κύαθον αἰτήσεις τάχα.²

Early authorities such as LSJ and E. Pottier in *Dar.-Sag.* (s.v. *cyathus*) took the term κύαθος in these lines in its usual sense of “ladle,” which is the meaning of the

We are grateful to Michael Halleran and to our two anonymous referees for their useful comments and criticisms.

1. In this and the following passage we follow the assignment of lines by Platnauer and Henderson respectively. In fact it makes no difference to our argument who speaks them.

2. To these passages we may add Apollonophanes, *Iphigeron* frag. 3 (Kassel/Austin) πόθεν ἂν κύαθον λάβοιμι τοῖς ὑπωπίοις and Euripides frag. 374 (Nauck, *TGF*) ἢ κύαθον ἢ χαλκήλατον ἥμῶν προσίσχων τοῖσδε τοῖς ὑπωπίοις.