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I.—The Case of the Third Actor

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The ancient evidence is divided on the question who introduced the third tragic actor. There are also discrepancies in the case of the first actor. Finally, there is still no agreement on how the word *ὑποκριτής* came to mean "actor." This essay suggests a solution. The poet, who according to our notion was the first actor, was always called *τραγῳδός*. The second person on the stage, and the third, were dubbed *ὑποκριταί*. Both were introduced by Aeschylus. After the poet, in the person of Sophocles, quit the stage the term *ὑποκριτής* was generalized; but the old terminology was revived in the fourth century for the production of old plays.

Aristotle says in the *Poetics*¹ that Aeschylus first increased the number of actors, *ὑποκριταί*, from one to two, and Sophocles to three.² The statement that Sophocles introduced the third actor is also made by the anonymous *Life of Sophocles*,³ and by Diogenes Laertius and Suidas.⁴ On the other hand the *Life of Aeschylus* claims the honor for him, but adds that Dicaearchus awarded it

¹ 4.1449a16.

² In *TAPhA* 70 (1939) 139–157, I argued against the authenticity of the passage from *τρεῖς δὲ τὸ ἀπασευμνύθη* (1449a21), which includes the remark on Sophocles, and showed that in any case it has to be taken as a parenthesis. But in itself there is nothing un-Aristotelian in the ascription of the third *ὑποκριτής* to Sophocles.

³ (4) Παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ δὲ τὴν τραγῳδίαν ἔμαθε, καὶ πολλὰ ἐκαινούργησεν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι. πρῶτον μὲν, καταλύσας τὴν ὑπόκρισιν τοῦ ποιητοῦ διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν μικροφωνίαν (πάλαι γὰρ καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς ὑπεκρίνετο αὐτός), τοὺς δὲ χορευτὰς ποιήσας ἀντὶ ἑβ' ἑ', καὶ τὸν τρίτον ὑποκριτὴν ἐξεύρεν. (5) Φασὶ δὲ οὕτω καί, κτλ. (Punctuation mine; see note 30). The *Life* is most easily accessible in Pearson's *OCT* edition of the plays (Oxford, 1924).

⁴ Diog. Laert. 3.56: Τὸ παλαιὸν ἐν τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ πρότερον μὲν μόνος ὁ χορὸς διεδραμάτιζεν, ὕστερον δὲ Θέσπις ἓνα ὑποκριτὴν ἐξεύρεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ διαναπαύεσθαι τὸν χορὸν, καὶ δεύτερον Αἰσχύλος, τὸν δὲ τρίτον Σοφοκλῆς, καὶ συνεπλήρωσε τὴν τραγῳδίαν. Suidas s.v. Σοφοκλῆς: οὗτος πρῶτος τρισὶν ἐχρήσατο ὑποκριταῖς καὶ τῷ καλουμένῳ τριταγωνιστῇ.

to Sophocles.⁵ Finally, Themistius says that according to Aristotle "Aeschylus invented actors"⁶ — a statement which if strictly interpreted might be argued to mean that he introduced all the actors, especially as Themistius' next words (τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων) seem to imply that Sophocles' contributions were in a different field.

There remains a heavy preponderance of authority for Sophocles, namely Aristotle in the *Poetics*, Dicaearchus, the *Life of Sophocles*, Diogenes Laertius, and Suidas. Our tangible first-class sources are two, Aristotle and Dicaearchus.⁷ It would be foolish to ask for better. But the contradiction between Aristotle in the *Poetics* and Aristotle *apud Themistium* remains; or at least it cannot be said that the two passages confirm each other. Modern scholars have on the whole ignored the passage from Themistius, or emended it, and accepted the majority testimony.⁸ They then have to assume that Sophocles introduced the third actor very early in his dramatic career, when by his own account⁹ he was deeply under the influence of Aeschylus, and that Aeschylus copied the innovation from his young rival¹⁰ — a pattern of events which is by no

⁵ (15) Ἐχρήσατο δὲ ὑποκριτῇ πρώτῳ μὲν Κλεάνδρῳ, ἔπειτα καὶ τὸν δεύτερον αὐτῷ προσῆψε Μυνηίσκον τὸν Χαλκιδεά. τὸν δὲ τρίτον ὑποκριτὴν αὐτὸς ἐξεῖρεν, ὡς δὲ Δικαίλαρχος ὁ Μεσσήνιος, Σοφοκλῆς. Cf. Cramer's Anonymus (*Anecdota Graeca* . . . [Oxford, 1839] 1.19).

⁶ *Orat.* 26.316d: Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ σεμνὴ τραγωδία μετὰ πάσης ὁμοῦ τῆς σκευῆς καὶ τοῦ χοροῦ καὶ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν παρελήλυθεν εἰς τὸ θέατρον; καὶ οὐ προσέχομεν Ἀριστοτέλει ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ χορὸς εἰσὶν ἦδεν εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς, Θέσπις δὲ πρόλογόν τε καὶ ῥῆσιν ἐξεῖρεν, Αἰσχίλος δὲ τρίτον ὑποκριτὰς καὶ ὀκρίβαντας, τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων Σοφοκλέους ἀπελευσάμεν καὶ Εὐριπίδου; The reference is probably to the *Περὶ Ποιητῶν*. Τρίτον is adverbial, and ὑποκριτὰς should not be tampered with; see Else, *op. cit.* (see note 2) 141, n. 8. Neither should there be any question about the authenticity of the citation. Themistius was a serious and competent Aristotelian, and he quotes from a number of other lost works.

⁷ The didascalical evidence given by the *Life of Sophocles* points to either Aristotle or Dicaearchus as the ultimate source, perhaps *via* Ister or Satyrus (who are the authorities most frequently quoted elsewhere in the *Life*). Of course Aristotle's researches were the ultimate source of all the serious didascalical tradition for the early theatre; but Dicaearchus' work *Περὶ Διονυσιακῶν Ἀγῶνων* may have been more accessible to the compilers.

⁸ Thus Usener inserts β' before ὑποκριτὰς; Pickard-Cambridge (*Dithyramb. Tragedy and Comedy* [Oxford, 1927] 100) changes ὑποκριτὰς to ὑποκριτὴν; and Gudeman reads δεύτερον for τρίτον. Anything can be arrived at by such methods. In any case the ascription of the third actor to Sophocles is accepted by all the standard modern treatises, e.g. Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama*⁴ (Chicago, 1936) 167; Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.* 1.2 (Munich, 1934) 58, n. 5.

⁹ Plut. *De Prof. in Virt.* 7: ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἔλεγε, τὸν Αἰσχίλου διαπεπαιχὼς (?) ὄγκον, εἶτα τὸ πικρὸν κτλ.; and see Bowra in *AJPh* 61 (1940) 385–401, esp. 392–3.

¹⁰ Since three actors are required in the *Oresteia* (458).

means impossible, but which psychologically is not quite in character for either man.¹¹

These small difficulties are not very serious in themselves. But if we look at the testimony concerning the first actor we find further inconsistencies cropping up. Few things in the early history of tragedy are still taken as indisputable fact, but one of them is that Thespis was the first actor. Diogenes Laertius in effect says he was, and Plutarch presents Solon watching him act.¹² Aristotle himself remarks in the *Rhetoric*¹³ that the early poets acted in their own plays; in the *Poetics* he seems to imply that Aeschylus inherited one actor — surely from Thespis —; and, as quoted by Themistius, he credits Thespis with inventing a prologue and a speech — surely to be recited by the poet himself. Yet Aristotle also says that Aeschylus invented actors; and whatever may be thought of the applicability of the remark to the third actor, it certainly applies to the first, and just as certainly excludes Thespis. Finally, the *Life of Aeschylus* has very interesting things to say about a first actor, but a first actor introduced by Aeschylus.¹⁴

It might help if we could determine precisely why and in what sense the word *ὑποκριτής* was first applied to an actor. We begin with an initial presumption that Thespis was that actor. But again we meet *ἀπορία*. *ὑποκρίνομαι* is an Ionic form corresponding to the Attic *ἀποκρίνομαι*; it means (a) "to interpret" or "be spokesman for," and (b) "to answer." The latter is the commoner meaning, and it has generally been taken for granted, in ancient as well as modern times, that the *ὑποκριτής* was so named because he was an answerer. But whom did he answer? The chorus, say the scholars, quoting

¹¹ In spite of the assertion of the *Life* (see note 3), *πολλὰ ἐκαινούργησεν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι*, Sophocles was not an innovator by nature. The other dramatic changes ascribed to him there, that is, outside the third actor and the increase in the size of the chorus, are unimportant or in the nature of adaptations. (The introduction of scene-painting, ascribed to him in the *Poetics* [see note 2], is claimed for Aeschylus by Vitruvius.) Sophocles' characteristic contributions to the tragic art are internal: he moves within the external bounds marked out by Aeschylus, but within them he refines and perfects. Aeschylus, on the other hand, was above all things a pathfinder and creator. Again it is more plausible, at least under Greek conditions, that the older poet, after years of practical experience, should feel the need of another actor than that the younger man should feel it at the outset.

¹² Plut. *Solon* 29: *ἑθέασατο τὸν Θέσπιν αὐτὸν ὑποκρινόμενον, ὥσπερ ἕθος ἦν τοῖς παλαιοῖς*. It should be noticed for what it is worth that Diogenes Laertius (see note 4) does not actually say that Thespis was the first actor, but that he introduced the first actor.

¹³ 3.1.1403b23.

¹⁴ See below, p. 5.

Pollux and Photius.¹⁵ But Pollux says that *before* Thespis somebody used to get up on a table and reply to the chorus; so that by his account, whoever was or introduced the first *ὑποκριτής*, it was not Thespis. And Photius does not mention Thespis at all. Again, according to Diogenes Laertius, Thespis invented the actor in order to give the chorus a rest. The remark, whatever it means, hardly seems to point in the direction of a dialogue between actor and chorus.¹⁶ Once more, Aristotle makes Thespis introduce a prologue and a speech, of which the speech may have been, but the prologue certainly was not, a reply to the chorus. (Actually we have no other evidence of a tragic prologue before the *Phoenician Women* of Phrynichus, in 476.) But quite apart from all this, some recent scholars are so convinced that tragedy cannot have grown out of a conversation between actor and chorus that they throw out the whole etymology and take the *ὑποκριτής* to be the spokesman or interpreter of the poet (which immediately rules out Thespis), or else leave the question hanging.¹⁷

All these *ἀπορίαι*, taken together, are annoying and confusing. I believe that most if not all of them can be resolved, and some new light shed on the early history of tragedy, if we accept the usual etymology of *ὑποκριτής* = "answerer" but give it a different application. The trouble is, I think, that we have been deluded by the English word "actor." Why must we assume that Thespis was ever called *ὑποκριτής*? Grant that he invented and delivered a

¹⁵ Pollux 4.123: 'Ελεὸς δ' ἦν τράπεζα ἀρχαία, ἐφ' ἣν πρὸ Θέσπιδος εἰς τις ἀναβὰς τοῖς χορευταῖς ἀπεκρίνατο. Photius *s.v.* ὑποκρίνεσθαι· τὸ ἀποκρίνεσθαι οἱ παλαιοὶ καὶ ὁ ὑποκριτὴς ἐντεῖθεν, ὃ ἀποκρινόμενος τῷ χορῷ. For discussion see J. B. O'Connor, *Chapters in the History of Actors and Acting in Ancient Greece* (Chicago, 1908) 3-5; W. Kranz, *Stasimon* (Berlin, 1933) 14.

¹⁶ Actually, of course, it is impossible to say what Diogenes meant, or whether he meant anything in particular. It seems to me, however, that he (or his source) must have been thinking of the actor as somebody who came on *between* choral songs (*δι-ἀναπαύεσθαι*); or he may have thought of conversations between actor and coryphaeus, in the manner of fifth-century tragedy, while the chorus stood by resting. In any case the passage can hardly be used to support the modern theory of "lyric dialogue." To describe a lyric exchange between actor and full chorus as a rest for the chorus is surely too strong.

¹⁷ See references to the "spokesman" theory in Pickard-Cambridge, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 110. He points out that this brings the introduction of the word *ὑποκριτής* down to the time when the poet (Sophocles) quit the stage and leaves it undetermined what the actor was called until then. But surely such a *lacuna* is unthinkable. Actors must have been called something, at least by Aeschylus' time, and we know of no term except *ὑποκριτής*. Pickard-Cambridge himself suspends judgment; so does Schmid, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 58, n. 3.

prologue and a set speech and thereby became, according to our lights, the first actor. But why should it have occurred to anybody in his day to give him a new and special title for that reason? We know that the competing poets at the Dionysia were called *τραγωδοί* in the fifth century, and there is good reason to believe that they were so called from the beginning of the contests.¹⁸ There is no need to postulate any other title for Thespis the "actor."¹⁹ When he spoke, it was the *τραγωδός* speaking; if he replied to anybody (though it is not proven that he did), it was the *τραγωδός* replying.

On the other hand there is excellent sense in the use of a new term, and particularly *ὑποκριτής*, when the *second* person — the second actor, as we should call him — appeared on the stage. This was the moment when tragedy was really born, because debate, action, conflict between two characters could now be represented in the flesh instead of being merely reported.²⁰ And the second man, unlike the *τραγωδός*, is a wholly new person, having no genetic or functional connection with the chorus. He has one clearly defined function, namely to converse, debate, or conflict with the *τραγωδός* — in short, to be an "answerer." I suggest that this is the person who was first called *ὑποκριτής*. And the suggestion can be documented. We know the poet who brought the second man on the stage; we can make a rough approximation of the date; and, as it happens, we can name the actor. The poet was Aeschylus; the deed was done before the *Suppliants*, that is, possibly before Marathon and almost certainly before Salamis;²¹ and the actor's name was Cleander. The information comes from the *Life of Aeschylus*:²² *ἐχρήσατο δὲ ὑποκριτῇ πρώτῳ μὲν Κλεάνδρῳ*. Note that the *Life* uses the specific words *ὑποκριτῇ πρώτῳ*. Whether the compiler

¹⁸ O'Connor, *op. cit.* (see note 15) 16–17.

¹⁹ In the beginning the poet was author, composer, choreographer, director, *χοροδιδάσκαλος*, *χορηγός*, and "actor." Of all his activities, acting was the least. Officially, for the archon, the poet did not exist as actor, but only as *χοροδιδάσκαλος*.

²⁰ Cf. *TAPhA* 70 (1939) 153.

²¹ It has always been recognized that Aeschylus brought the second person on the stage; and it has been taken for granted, without discussion, that this second person was also the second *ὑποκριτής*. On the date of the *Suppliants*, see Schmid, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 194, n. 2. The earlier the date, the more plausible is the use of an Ionic word. Ionism was at its peak at Athens in the nineties and waned sharply after 480.

²² § 15. The younger Cleander (O'Connor, *op. cit.* [see note 15], *Prosopographia Historica* no. 293, p. 111), who flourished in the last quarter of the fifth century, was probably his grandson, rather than his son as O'Connor suggests.

knew what they meant is a different question; but there is no reason to doubt his testimony.

The addition of a second ὑποκριτής — the *third* person on the stage — was as decisive in its way as the introduction of the first. With him the tragic company reached its canonical size,²³ and the road to free dramatic development, so far as the Greeks ever knew it, was open. This, I believe, is the achievement which Aristotle describes in the words τὸ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν πλήθος ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς δύο ἡγαγε; ²⁴ he considered that it, together with the rise of the dialogue to pre-eminence over the choral odes, marked the culmination of tragedy. This interpretation is the only one that will square with the words of Themistius,²⁵ Αἰσχύλος δὲ τρίτον ὑποκριτὰς . . . (sc. ἐξέῤῥε), τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων Σοφοκλέους ἀπελαύσαμεν καὶ Εὐριπίδου; and it is confirmed by the *Life of Aeschylus*, which again gives us the name of the actor. He was Mynniscus of Chalcis, one of the famous lights of

²³ In spite of Rees, *The So-called Rule of Three Actors in the Classical Greek Drama* (Chicago, 1908), it is still generally agreed that except in a few instances the tragedians stuck to the "rule." See Flickinger, *loc. cit.* (see note 8). My remarks in 1939 (*op. cit.* [see note 2] 153 and n. 51) about the unimportance of the third actor, as compared with the second, need some revision.

²⁴ It should not be necessary to argue that Aristotle, with his didascalic researches, was capable of using ὑποκριτής in its special old sense, if such existed, when referring to the early drama. The fact that he does not do so elsewhere (that is, outside the *Poetics* passage and Themistius) is not a counter-argument. In ordinary contexts he had no occasion to use anything but the ordinary sense of the word.

It has always been tacitly assumed that the phrase ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς δύο, taken together with πρῶτος, meant that Aeschylus inherited one "actor" (from Thespis) and added a second. But in fact ἐξ ἑνὸς does not necessarily mean any such thing; it can perfectly well designate a person introduced by Aeschylus himself. See also next note.

²⁵ To summarize, it is evident that according to Themistius, Aeschylus introduced at least the first ὑποκριτής. It is evident that according to the *Poetics* he introduced a second; and that is also the natural implication of the plural ὑποκριτὰς in Themistius. If ὑποκριτής is used in the same sense in both passages — as surely we must assume — it follows that according to Aristotle he introduced both the first *and* the second ὑποκριτής. The apparent contradiction, or rather obliquity, between the *Poetics* and Themistius springs from the fact that they are focussed differently. In the latter, Aristotle (or Themistius paraphrasing Aristotle) gives a rapid summary of the whole development of tragedy from beginning to end, by stages (τὸ μὲν πρῶτον . . . , Θέσπης δὲ . . . , Αἰσχύλος δὲ τρίτον . . . , τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων), and therefore takes in the whole span of Aeschylus' work, though only certain aspects are mentioned. In the *Poetics*, on the other hand, he leaps directly from the early dithyramb to the final culmination, with no more than a wave of the hand at the intervening stages: καὶ πολλὰς μεταβολὰς μεταβαλοῦσα ἡ τραγῳδία ἐπαύσατο. This involves passing over Aeschylus' early period (Thespis is not even mentioned). Of all the actors, Aristotle is interested here in that one who brings the tragic company to completion, full strength. He is thinking of Aeschylus' last period, represented for us by the *Oresteia*. The treatment in the *Poetics* is more selective than that in Themistius, but it does not contradict it.

the Greek stage, who later won the actors' contest (in 445, possibly in 427, and again in 422) and had the honor to be ridiculed by Plato the comic poet.²⁶ He did not replace Cleander: the *Life* says explicitly that he was "added" to him, and added as the second ὑποκριτής: ἔπειτα καὶ τὸν δεύτερον αὐτῷ προσῆψε Μυννίσκον τὸν Χαλκιδέα.

From the evidence of the *Life* it appears that Aeschylus had a standing company which produced his plays from year to year; and indeed, when the poet himself still trod the boards and there was no actors' contest, there was no need to shuffle the actors every year and assign them to the poets by lot in order to equalize their chances of winning.²⁷ Aeschylus' acting company, then, consisted originally of himself; then of himself and Cleander; and finally of himself, Cleander, and Mynniscus. These are the three who played the *Oresteia*. It is interesting to speculate which of them played Clytemnestra, or Cassandra; and whether it was the young Mynniscus who created the role of Orestes. He must have been young then, to have been still flourishing in 422. As for the date of his admission to the company, it must have been between the *Seven Against Thebes* and the *Oresteia*, that is, between 467 and 458.²⁸

It can be taken for granted that Sophocles and the other poets quickly followed Aeschylus' lead and used a second ὑποκριτής, as their predecessors had presumably used the first. And no more changes were made in the tragic company — except that when Sophocles quit the stage the loss had to be made good by the addition of a third ὑποκριτής.²⁹ We do not happen to know his name, but the sequence of events is still discernible in the words

²⁶ O'Connor, *op. cit.* (see note 15) 117, no. 351. Mynniscus is also mentioned in the *Poetics*, 26.1461b34.

²⁷ Even under the system of assigning actors by lot, only the protagonists were assigned, and they brought their troupes with them. See Haigh, *The Attic Theatre* ³ (Oxford, 1907) 58.

²⁸ The fact that Mynniscus was still hale and flourishing as late as 422 may indicate the later rather than the earlier part of the period. The hesitancy with which Aeschylus seems to handle his three actors in the *Oresteia* might seem to point in the same direction, were it not that the other poets still betray the same awkwardness; see Flickinger, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 170.

²⁹ This solution of the problem of the third actor was suggested by Friedrich Schoell, *De locis nonnullis ad Aeschyli vitam et ad historiam tragoediae Graecae pertinentibus epistula* (Jena, 1876) 48-9: namely, that Aeschylus had only two professional actors and the third was added by Sophocles after he quit the stage. But Schoell's remark seems to have been ignored, and in any case he did not relate it either to the use of the word ὑποκριτής or to the historical context generally.

of the *Life of Sophocles*.³⁰ Again we cannot give a precise date, but we can surmise that it was not too long before the institution of the actors' contest in 450/49; for once the *ὑποκριταί* had the stage to themselves the demand that they too have a contest cannot have been long in coming.

Under this interpretation the introduction of the third *ὑποκριτής* was a mere substitution: so far as the form of tragedy was concerned the crucial deed had been done by Aeschylus. Yet the institution of all-professional casts had a great effect. In particular, it established a new, generalized sense of *ὑποκριτής*, in which for the first time it was equivalent to the English word "actor." From this point on through the fifth century there prevails the classical situation with which we are all familiar — so familiar, in fact, that we have unconsciously assumed it always prevailed. (Later antiquity fell into the same error.)³¹ The poet, still called *τραγῳδός*, produced

³⁰ See note 3. Retirement from the stage, increase of the chorus from 12 to 15, and introduction of the third *ὑποκριτής*: these three innovations are presented in order, and the grammatical structure makes the last appear as a consequence or sequel of the others. The usual punctuation of the passage, with a comma after *ἀγῶσι*, and making *καταλύσας* depend on *ἐκαινούργησεν*, totally obscures the structure. The statement that "Sophocles made many innovations in the contests" is followed by a bill of particulars. The first of these is introduced by *πρῶτον μὲν* and goes through *ἐξέειπεν*; the second begins in § 5, *Φασὶ δέ*; and others follow in § 6. It is impossible to say whether the compiler knew the original meaning of *ὑποκριτής* and therefore saw the implications of what he was copying. But the value of the testimony does not rest on whether he understood it. The words themselves are clear enough. The case of the *Life of Aeschylus* is a little different. After speaking of Cleander and Mynniscus it goes on (see note 5) to assert that Aeschylus also invented the third actor, adding that Dicaearchus ascribed the invention to Sophocles. There are two ways of interpreting the words *τὸν δὲ τρίτον αὐτὸς ἐξέειπεν*. They may be of a piece with the foregoing (as at first sight they seem to be) and mean that Aeschylus introduced a third *ὑποκριτής* in the same sense in which Cleander was the first and Mynniscus was the second. The *Life* would then be claiming for Aeschylus precisely what we have claimed for Sophocles. But Aeschylus also was an actor, and a third *ὑποκριτής* can only have replaced him; otherwise we should have a fourth actor, not a third. The *Life* shows no awareness of this and does not even mention Aeschylus' acting, much less any retirement from the stage. Furthermore, if the information were from the same good source as that about Cleander and Mynniscus we should expect the actor's name; but none is given. It is much more likely that the compiler or some intermediate source, finding only two actors mentioned in the original source, knowing that Aeschylus used three, and not knowing or forgetting that he himself was one of them, simply staked out a general claim. If this interpretation is correct, the author intended to assert no more than what I have maintained here, that Aeschylus introduced the third member of the tragic company; he did not realize that the third man was already there in the person of Mynniscus.

³¹ The learning of the well-known *scholium* on Demosthenes, *De Pace* 6 (emended and explained by E. Capps, *AJPh* 29 [1908] 206 ff.; cf. O'Connor, *op. cit.* [see note 15] 7) reached just this far back and no farther.

his plays with a company consisting of a chorus and three ὑποκριταί. It was during this period that ὑποκριτής became generalized to mean "actor," any actor.

But this generalized usage was not, or did not remain, the only usage. Beginning in 387/6 an old tragedy was performed regularly every year at the Dionysia.³² For these performances, and in general for fourth- and third-century performances of old tragedies, the producer, manager, and leading actor was officially called τραγῳδός and he was assisted by two ὑποκριταί.³³ This terminology is usually regarded as an innovation. I would argue that it is a reversion to the terminology of Aeschylus' day. These fourth-century τραγῳδοί did everything Aeschylus himself had done except to write the bare text of the play. Like him they trained the other actors and the chorus, supplied the choreography and probably the music, and acted the leading role. And for that matter, they, if anybody, were responsible for the text; at least there is evidence enough to indicate that they sometimes rewrote it.³⁴

We have to remember that, although the written text of the play is perforce the all-important aspect of the poet's work for us, it was not by any means so for the Athenian audience or the judges, and in fact was not the part of which the state took direct cognizance in the contests. The poet "received a chorus" as διδάσκαλος, not as poet; and in this respect the fourth-century τραγῳδός was on exactly the same footing, though he did not compete for a prize. Furthermore, it was no uncommon thing even in the fifth century for one man's plays to be produced by another, acting as διδάσκαλος.³⁵ In particular, it is recorded that after Aeschylus' death the Athen-

³² IG² 2.2.2318, line 201. The same was done for comedy in 340/39: *ibid.*, line 316.

³³ For the evidence see O'Connor, *op. cit.* 5, 10-15.

³⁴ This was undoubtedly one of the chief reasons for Lycurgus' state edition. See Schmid, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 60, n. 3. D. L. Page, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford, 1934), finds histrionic interpolations in *Seven Against Thebes* and *Eumenides* (line 405) — in both cases following Wilamowitz —, very few in Sophocles, and a great many in Euripides. The latter conclusion is natural enough, considering how often Euripides was acted in the fourth century.

³⁵ The case of Aristophanes' early plays is well known. In tragedy it was especially common for posthumous plays to be produced by sons or grandsons: so Euphoriion for Aeschylus (with four victories), Suidas *s.v.* Εὐφορίων; Sophocles *minor* for his grandfather, *Arg. Oed. Col.*; and the younger Euripides for the older, *Schol. Ar. Ran.* 67. But the custom was old. In 467 Pratinas' son Aristias won second prize with two tragedies of his own and his father's satyr-play Παιλαισται: *Arg. Aesch. Sept.*

Whether any of these gentlemen acted in their productions is not recorded (presumably Aristias did). If they did, the parallel with the fourth century would be complete.

ians voted to give a chorus to anybody who wanted to produce his plays.³⁶ Several of these posthumous performances even won the prize.³⁷ The formula for such a competitor, if he won, was still *ὁ δέινα* (sc. *ἐνίκᾳ*) *διδάσκων*,³⁸ and in his producer's — or reproducer's — role he can hardly have been called anything but *τραγωδός*. Thus there was a real continuity of practice between the fifth century and the fourth. In fact, the official introduction of an old tragedy into the Dionysia in 387/6 can hardly have been anything but a regularization of a long-standing and increasingly popular custom.³⁹

This strange and ambiguous history of the word *ὑποκριτής* — granted that it did have such a history — was of course overlaid and forgotten in the course of time. Later antiquity could see back only as far as the palmy days of the Periclean age, and we have inherited their view of the matter. Only two men who are tangible to us were in a position to know the story: Aristotle and Dicaearchus. Their report is decisive for us; and the development as I have reconstructed it is the only one which tallies with all their recorded statements. If the *Περὶ Ποιητῶν* were preserved, no doubt the whole matter would be clear and explicit. As it is, we have the *Poetics*, Themistius, and the precious didascalic evidence embedded in the *Lives of Aeschylus and Sophocles*, evidence which itself must go back to Aristotle and Dicaearchus. It all hangs together, if we divest ourselves of the terminological prejudice that Thespis was the first *ὑποκριτής* and are content to apportion the remaining honors: to Sophocles the third *ὑποκριτής*, to Aeschylus the third actor.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

ca. 534	Thespis as <i>τραγωδός</i> ; first prologue (?) and speech
499–6	Aeschylus as <i>τραγωδός</i>
ca. 490	Cleander, first <i>ὑποκριτής</i> ; dialogue begins
ca. 460	Mynniscus, second <i>ὑποκριτής</i> ; tragic company complete
455–0	Sophocles gives up acting; third <i>ὑποκριτής</i> substituted
450/49	Actors' contest established
387/6	Regular production of old tragedies established; <i>τραγωδός</i> assisted by two <i>ὑποκριταί</i>

³⁶ *Vita Aesch.* 12. Other references in Schmid, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 192, n. 4; and cf. note 35 above.

³⁷ According to the *Life*, Aeschylus won 13 victories; Suidas gives both 13 and 28. The discrepancy may be accounted for, at least in part, by posthumous victories.

³⁸ Haigh, *op. cit.* (see note 27) 73; Flickinger, *op. cit.* (see note 8) 326–30. It should also be remembered that the Athenians had long been familiar with second performances and revivals of old plays at the Country Dionysia and other local festivals.

³⁹ For the whole subject see Haigh, *op. cit.* (see note 27) 71–77.