

TEXT AND DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION IN *PERSAE*

In attempting to restore dramatic texts textual critics are usually careful to pay attention to the immediate context in which any given passage occurs. They are, however, sometimes less good at considering the relationship between a passage and the wider context of the whole play, so that they may end up with a text which is perfectly satisfactory if seen only in its immediate context, but which is nevertheless out of step with the correct interpretation of the play taken as a whole. Or, if they do consider the wider context, their dramatic interpretation may itself be flawed, and this can lead them to the adoption of the wrong text. I start from the premise that textual criticism and dramatic interpretation are interrelated, and my aim is to study a few passages of *Persae* from this point of view. I am well aware of the danger that one may alter a sound text simply in order to make it fit one's own preconceived interpretation of the meaning of a play, but, if only one passage seems to contradict or to be out of step with everything else in a play, even if in its own context it seems to be unexceptionable, we are, I believe, entitled to suspect that something is wrong.

My main concern will be with the so-called mesode at lines 93-100 of the parodos. I shall not deal with the textual problems within the mesode, or with unconvincing attempts to turn it into a corresponding pair of strophe and antistrophe. I shall discuss only its position within the parodos. In all the codices it appears as follows after the first two strophic pairs:

90	ant. β	δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστάς μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν ὄχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἴργειν ἄμαχον κύμα θαλάσσης. ἀπρόσοιστος γάρ ὁ Περσᾶν στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός.
93		δολόμητιν δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ τίς ἀνήρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει;
95		τίς ὁ κρατηνῶ ποδὶ πηδή- ματος εὐπετέος ἀνάσσων; φιλόφρων γάρ <ποτι>σαίνουσα τὸ πρῶτον παράγει βροτὸν εἰς ἀρκύστ<ατ> ¹ Ἄτα ¹
100		τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲρ θνατὸν ἀλύξαντα φυγεῖν.
102	str. γ	θεόθεν γάρ κατὰ Μοῖρ' ἐκράτησεν τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπέσκηψε δὲ Πέρσαις πολέμους πυργοδαίκτους διέπειν ἵπποχάρμας τε κλόνους πόλεων τε μαχαναῖς.
105		
	ant. γ	ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροιο θαλάσσης

¹ The conjecture of West for the transmitted ἀρκύστατα.

110		πολαινομένας πνεύματι λάβρω ἔσορᾶν πόντιος ἄλσος, πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πείσ- μασι λαοπόροις τε μαχαναῖς.
114	str. δ	ταῦτά μοι μελαγχίτων φρῆν ἄμύσσειται φόβῳ, κτλ.

However, in 1837 O. Müller⁵ proposed to move it to a position after the third strophic pair². Either way, it comes between an antistrophe and the following strophe, and I do not understand why most modern scholars (M.L. West in his Teubner edn. is an exception) insist on describing it as a mesode, when that term, according to Hephaestion³, should describe a non-responding stanza which comes between a strophe and its antistrophe. For convenience, however, I shall, like everybody else, continue to use the term 'mesode'. Wilamowitz followed Müller, and among modern editors the transposition has been accepted by H. Weir Smyth, G. Murray, H.J. Rose, Broadhead, Roussel, and West, while the Mss. order has been retained by Sidgwick, Mazon, Groeneboom, Page, de Romilly, Belloni, and Hall. Irigoien, who is in favour of restoring a pair of strophe and corresponding antistrophe, has defended the Mss. order on the basis of a complicated analysis of the metrical structure and of the pattern of repetition of phonetic sounds⁴. Page's inclusion on this side of the argument has always seemed to me to be surprising, as it was he who, in a Cambridge lecture, first persuaded me that Müller's transposition was correct. He must have changed his mind. I see no advantage in putting the mesode (with Korzeniewski⁵) after 105, *between* the third strophe and antistrophe, and I am unconvinced by the attempt to refer it to the Greeks and their confidence that they can oppose the Persians⁶. With the stanzas in their transmitted order the connection of thought seems to be as follows: Xerxes has transported to Greece a mighty army and fleet (strophe and antistrophe α), which are irresistible (strophe and antistrophe β). But what mortal can escape the delusion sent by the gods (mesode)? For the divinely appointed destiny of the Persians from of old has been to win wars on land (strophe γ); but now they have learnt to cross the sea (antistrophe γ). This is why I am worried (strophe δ).

In itself this sequence of thought seems to be impeccable. The Chorus is worried that Xerxes' crossing of the sea to Greece may turn out to have been a big mistake. He has transgressed against the divinely-appointed Persian destiny, and so when he falls

² RhM 5, 1837, 369 n. 11.

³ *Poëm.* 7.2 (p. 62 Consrbruch).

⁴ *Studi in onore di Aristide Colonna*, Perugia 1982, 173-81, and in *Les Perses d'Eschyle*, edd. P. Ghiron-Bistagne, A. Moreau, J.-C. Turpin, Montpellier 1993, 6-13.

⁵ D. Korzeniewski, *Helikon* 6, 1966, 571-76, and *Griechische Metrik*, Darmstadt 1968, 177-82.

⁶ W.C. Scott, *GRBS* 9, 1968, 259-66.

we shall know that he deserves his punishment. Many scholars think that this is a very simple play with a simple moral - those who commit ὕβρις are punished by the gods. And, if they are troubled by the fact that later in the play Aeschylus never clarifies the precise nature of Xerxes' ὕβρις (I shall return to this later), they are glad to find the explanation in this passage: Xerxes' ὕβρις was that he crossed the sea. If some scholars have rejected this transmitted sequence of thought it is because they have rightly found it difficult to extract from the Greek. They have been worried by the logic of the γὰρ at 101, but more especially by the contrast which the interpretation requires between strophe and antistrophe γ, «the Persians used to confine their warfare to land, *but now* they have learnt to cross the sea». Δέ by itself is not a sufficiently strong adversative conjunction to bear the weight of this antithesis - we should expect at least νῦν δέ, and probably a perfect rather than an aorist tense. Some⁷ have tried to find a Pindaric contrast between divinely appointed destiny and what the Persians have misguidedly *taught* themselves, but I do not find this any more convincing than the view that Hector must be an inferior kind of hero because (Z 444) he has had to *learn* to be ἐσθλός. More troubling, however, is the fact that the antithesis is between the thought of the strophe and that of the antistrophe. In every other strophic pair in this ode the two stanzas are parallel, not contrasted, in their thought. And this is generally true of the composition of the choral odes in this play. The choral odes of *Persae*, more, I think, than of any other play of Aeschylus, are composed in pairs of stanzas in which it is not only the metres that respond, but also words, syllables, and vowel-sounds, and the ideas that they express. The unity of the whole ode seems often to be subordinate. Some have thought that this technique may have been characteristic of the pre-literary θρηνησις⁸, and one might be tempted to explain its preponderance in *Persae* in terms of the early date of the play. But that temptation should probably be resisted. It is not really an early play, and it was similar considerations that led so many to their mistaken dating of *Supplices*. Whatever the reason, however, the fact remains, and it therefore seems *prima facie* unlikely that in the middle of this ode Aeschylus should have done something quite different with his chorus.

None of these considerations in itself is perhaps weighty enough to compel us to accept Müller's transposition, though cumulatively they add up to a strong case. It is by considering the relationship between all this and the correct interpretation of the play that I believe that we can settle the matter. With the transmitted order of the stanzas the Chorus already fears that Xerxes has committed an act of ὕβρις for which he will be punished. But this is entirely out of step with the development of thought in the play taken as a whole. Aeschylus presents two quite different reasons for the fall of

⁷ For example A. Miller, *ClAnt* 3, 1983, 77-81; J.R. Wilson, in *Greek Tragedy and Its Influence*, in *Essays D.J. Conacher*, edd. M. Cropp, E. Fantham, S.E. Scully, Calgary 1986, 53; cf. *Pind. Ol.* 2.86 f., 9.100-04, *Nem.* 3.40 ff.

⁸ See A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus, 'Supplices', Play and Trilogy*, Cambridge 1969, 40-43.

Xerxes and Persia, the first that human success can become excessive and attract the resentment (φθόνος) of the gods, the second that the gods punish those who do something wrong. The first idea is amoral, the second clearly moral. The amoral concept, far from being ancient, as most scholars believe, seems to me to belong firmly to the fifth century, and I suspect that it developed in the late sixth century, at the time when tragedy was beginning to develop. The first explicit reference to the φθόνος θεῶν that I have been able to find is at line 20 of Pindar's 10th *Pythian*, an ode usually dated to 498 BC. In Homer, while a god naturally punishes any infringement of his honour by a mortal, there is no general conception that the gods resent excessive human prosperity. Every Homeric hero wants as much of that as he can get. It is the moral view, that the gods, and in particular Zeus, punish wrongdoing, that is old and traditional. The amoral and the moral concepts should be distinguished as far as possible, despite the attempts of Fraenkel and others to confuse them. In his note on *Ag. 762* Fraenkel argued that the amoral idea, which he thought to be crude and primitive, has been purified by Aeschylus, and that what the gods resent is the craving for the *livan*, for excess, which, he says, «is ὕβρις in the true sense of the word». I believe that he was wrong. Excessive prosperity may often lead to wrong behaviour, but the two are not the same. It is not immoral in itself to have too much money in the bank, but only if one has acquired it unjustly or uses it badly. I agree for the most part with N.R.E. Fisher, who, in his recent book on ὕβρις⁹, argues that that term denotes not an attitude or disposition of mind, but a specific action that dishonours, or is thought by the victim to dishonour, someone else, usually a fellow human being. Though the victim naturally hopes that the gods will be on his side and punish the perpetrator, ὕβρις is not a religious crime.

In the second part of *Persae* the ghost of Darius will twice use the word ὕβρις, and will condemn Xerxes for his foolish behaviour. But in the first part, that is before the announcement of the disaster of Salamis, there is, as Winnington-Ingram noted¹⁰, no suggestion at all that Xerxes has done anything wrong. I shall return later to the question of why there should be this division between the two parts of the play. For the moment I am concerned with it merely as a fact. So striking is it that Broadhead, in remarking that the play could have ended at 597, after the first stasimon, contrives to give us the impression that Aeschylus prolonged it only because he suddenly realised that he had somehow omitted so far to explain the moral reason for Xerxes' fall, which, for Broadhead, was «the grand moral lesson of the play»¹¹. I do not believe that this is how great tragedies are written, and I am sure that Aeschylus knew very well what he was doing. The whole of the first part is entirely dominated by the

⁹ N.R.E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece*, Warminster 1992.

¹⁰ R.P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1983, 4, 7 f.

¹¹ H.D. Broadhead, *The Persae of Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1960, XXXVI.

concept that it is dangerous to be too successful, and that Persian prosperity cannot last. No one suggests that Xerxes or the Persians have committed any crime. So in the opening anapaests the Chorus's confident and proud statement of the might of the Persian forces and the wealth and splendour and antiquity of their empire, is framed by their anxiety that it is all too good to last. At 49-50 we hear of the Persian attempt to cast a yoke of slavery on Greece, but, while that would doubtless excite outrage in a patriotic Greek audience, there is no suggestion that this was a crime for which the gods might be expected to punish the Persians. In the lyric section of the parodos the bridge of boats over the Hellespont is described in terms of admiration (65-71, 114), not fear, and, though here too the yoke image is used, the Chorus seems to have no idea that, as Darius will later explain, to throw a yoke over the neck of the sea is foolish or an offence against the god Poseidon. There is no reason why it should. To build a bridge over a stretch of water is regularly described, even in the most prosaic of authors¹² in terms of yoking, and there is no hint of ὕβρις in such passages. When Atossa enters the Chorus greets her (157) as both the wife and mother of a god. Things will be different later, but at this stage of the play Xerxes and Darius enjoy the same godlike status. Atossa says that she is worried, and what worries her (163 f.) is that Xerxes may lose the prosperity which Darius had bestowed on Persia. I take it that, whatever the sense of the metaphor, πλοῦτος and ὄλβος are used more or less synonymously, and all the emphasis is on μέγας. This is the usual amoral view, that when prosperity grows too great it cannot last, a view which is confirmed by the Messenger immediately after his arrival at 250-52. In his account of the sea-battle the Messenger has no hesitation in attributing the disaster to the deceit of the Greek man (i.e. Themistocles) and the θεῶν φθόνος (362). This is indeed the only place in the play in which that phrase is used, but it is entirely in keeping with everything that we have heard so far, as are all the references to gods in the messenger-scene as a whole. The gods are seen as having deceived the Persians and led them on to their destruction, but no attempt is made to explain why they should have done so. Certainly there is not the slightest suggestion that they have punished Xerxes and the Persians for their bad behaviour. Even in the latter part of the play Darius himself, before he begins to moralise, begins (751 f.) by expressing fears for the wealth which he has so laboriously acquired, and he ends the scene pathetically (842) by remarking that it is of no use to him now that he is dead.

With Müller's transposition the parodos fits very well into this interpretation of the play. The sequence of thought is now as follows: «The Persian forces are irresistible; for it is our divinely-appointed destiny to win wars by land *and* by sea. But what mortal can escape the treacherous deceit of god? *Ate* leads him seductively into a net from which there is no escape. That is why I am worried». There is no suggestion at

¹² For example Xen. *an.* 1.2.5, Pol. 3.46, Diod. Sic. 13.14.1, Strabo 10.2.8.

all that the Persians have done anything wrong and are thus afraid of punishment. The mesode, as Müller saw, is rather an epode which brings to a close the ionic section of the parodos, and leads on to the trochaic section, which, as elsewhere in Aeschylus (e.g. the so-called hymn to Zeus in the parodos of *Agamemnon*) seems to convey a sense of deep foreboding to the audience. For this transitional function of an epode Belloni compares *Ag.* 140-59. Fraenkel says that «it seems most unlikely that at any time he [Aeschylus] should have doubted this fundamental truth: the gods (or Zeus) see to it that sooner or later the impious man is punished while the righteous will be spared». Far from being a «fundamental truth» this is not true at all. The problem of undeserved suffering and unmerited prosperity was as much a problem for fifth-century Greeks as it is for us. Nor is it particularly tragic. Aristotle remarked (*Po.* 1453a. 1-7) that the fall of a very wicked man from happiness to unhappiness would not arouse pity and fear. It is the suffering of the innocent, or at least partly innocent, man that is the proper business of tragedy. So here, it is the destiny of the Persians, appointed by the gods themselves, to win wars by land and sea. But their very success in fulfilling that destiny makes them worried, in case it should arouse the resentment of the gods. Their very destiny is tragic. Throughout the play the double nature of the expedition is emphasised. Earlier in the parodos, at 73-80, 83-85, Xerxes leads both his sea- and his land-forces. When the Messenger appears, the *Psyttaieia* episode, which seems so exaggerated in its importance if we compare the account of Herodotus, is there to make it clear that the Persians have been defeated by land as well as by sea. At 707 f. the ghost of Darius remarks that men who live for a long time are likely to experience many troubles from both sea and land. Cf. also 558, 719 f., and 728. So it cannot be merely a naval expedition that was doomed to disaster. The Persian destiny to win wars by both land and sea has led to utter disaster in both these spheres. I have no easy answer to the question as to why the mesode should have been misplaced in the codices. But Broadhead reminds us that 552-61 «were omitted by M, but added in the margin, and might easily have been reinserted in the wrong place». It is also possible that some early editor, like his modern colleagues, misunderstood the connection of thought and deliberately transposed the stanza.

I have been arguing that in the first part of the play there is no suggestion that Xerxes has done anything wrong, and that neither the Chorus nor Atossa criticises him for leading the expedition to Greece. There is, however, another passage to be considered, that which contains line 13 in the opening anapaests. It has been discussed most recently by D. Schenker¹³. There is no agreement among editors about either the text or the interpretation. Most of the codices have νέον δ' ἄνδρα βαῦζει, but there is a, clearly ancient, variant, ἐὼν δ' ἄνδρα βαῦζει. Most scholars have been troubled by the difficulty of identifying the subject of βαῦζει, some taking it to be the army

¹³ D. Schenker, *RhM* 140, 1997, 8-16.

which is mentioned in 12, others the θυμός of the Chorus, which has been worrying at 10 f., in which case πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχὺς Ἀσιατογενῆς ᾤχωνεν (or οἶχ-) is to be seen as a parenthesis. For others again the subject is Ἀσία, understood, most improbably, I think, from the adjective Ἀσιατογενῆς. There is further uncertainty as to whether the νέον δ' ἄνδρα is a collective description of the whole Persian army or Xerxes himself. Groeneboom follows Kōnnecke¹⁴ in putting νέον δ' ἄνδρα in quotation-marks, «... mutters "the man is too young"». Eccentric is the view of Mazon¹⁵ that the meaning is «the unknown man», or «a new arrival», or «a bearer of news». Dawe¹⁶ and Page favour ἔδον, with a lacuna after 13, in which the subject is identified as the women left at home who are yearning for their husbands. This gives good sense, but ἔδος is a form not certainly attested anywhere else in tragedy, though τεός occurs once or twice, as Dawe reminds us. Emendation has not proved successful, and Fritzsche's νυός, which means a bride at Theocr. 18.15, is particularly unconvincing. If θυμός is the subject, and the young man is Xerxes, not the army, we should not, like Groeneboom, see criticism in the description, but it *would* help to prepare us for the later contrast between the young, foolish, and rash Xerxes (744, 782) and the old, wise Darius, together with all his kingly predecessors. The description is less likely to be of the army, not because the Chorus has had no report from the expedition (14-16) - as Schenker says, poetic fiction is not the same as prosaic reality - but because the attitude of the army to the expedition is nowhere an issue.

The real problem in all this concerns the meaning of βαῦζει, a word which means to say «bow wow», that is to bark like a dog. In most of its other occurrences (e.g. Heraclitus fr. 97 D-K, Aesch. *Ag.* 449, *Ar. Thesm.* 173 and 895, Theocr. 6.10 f.) the word expresses some kind of hostility. The same is true of ὑλακτέω, with which it is glossed by Hesychius and the *Suda*. In the Heraclitus fragment it is used perhaps (but the text is uncertain) with the accusative of dogs who bark at someone whom they do not know. It has, however, been rightly objected that nowhere else in the parodos is there any suggestion that the army, or the Chorus's heart, or the people of Asia, depending on how we take the subject of the verb, is criticising Xerxes for leading the expedition to Greece. In the light of my earlier discussion, I would add that such criticism is in place only in the second part of the play. Schenker (15) says that «Aeschylus is well-known for his thematic foreshadowing; he introduces his themes, in other words, obliquely or allusively, and subsequently develops them more explicitly», and he compares the dissonance between reverence and criticism at *Ag.* 60-62 and 799-804. This may well be true as far as *Agamemnon* is concerned, but the

¹⁴ O. Kōnnecke, *BPhW* 35, 1915, 1637-638.

¹⁵ P. Mazon, *REG*, 63, 1950, 11-13, and in the translation of his Budé edition.

¹⁶ R.D. Dawe, *The Collation and Investigation of Manuscripts of Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1964, 170-71.

structure of *Persae* seems to me quite different, and I find it difficult to believe that the single word βαῦζει here can, or should, provide this kind of foreshadowing. Rather, Aeschylus has quite deliberately reserved all the criticism of Xerxes for the second part of the play. That the opening anapaests veer between confidence and anxiety is quite a different matter. The word does not look like a scribal corruption or a gloss, and certainly no one has as yet emended it convincingly. There seems then to be no reasonable alternative to accepting that Aeschylus uses it here in an unusual sense. Murray explains «sc. *circumlatrat*, ut canes venatorem», and the picture of the army, like hunting-dogs, barking round Xerxes is appropriate enough, But *circum* can hardly be extracted from the Greek. Dawe rightly insists that we require an expression of anxiety or lamentation, and perhaps we can find it, with Hall, at 575 where δυσβάυκτον αὐδάν, like δύσθορα βάγματα at 636, describes the lamentation of the Chorus, and in the context there is no trace of criticism. So here «barks» describes the harsh-sounding utterance of whoever is the subject of the verb. Although I sometimes feel that the assumption of a lacuna provides too easy an escape from a difficulty, here it does seem to me that the best sense is given by the acceptance of a lacuna, in which the subject appears as a woman mourning for her husband. But I prefer νέον to ἑόν. For Persian women mourning for their new or *recently-married* husbands cf. 541 f.

I have been arguing that it is not until after the sequence of messenger-speeches that we find the first criticism of Xerxes. The Messenger himself comments on Xerxes' lack of understanding (361, 373, 454), but he attributes the disaster almost entirely to the intervention of the gods (345, 347, 354, 454, 495 ff., 514), and both Atossa and the Chorus-leader agree (472, 515). It is only in the first stasimon (544-97) that Xerxes' responsibility begins to be acknowledged. No longer is he the godlike man, the ἰσόθεος φῶς of line 80, and no longer is Atossa the mother as well as the wife of a god. Darius' status remains unimpaired, but Xerxes has fallen from grace. From now on Xerxes will be contrasted, not paired, with his successful father. This brings me to what has seemed to some editors to be a problem at 555-57, where, after describing Xerxes' responsibility for the disaster, the Chorus (according to the usually printed text) ask the rhetorical question, τίπτε Δαρεῖος μὲν οὕτω τότε ἀβλαβῆς ἔπην | τόξαρχος πολίταις | Σουσίδος φίλος ἄκτωρ: «why ever was Darius then [i.e. presumably at the time when he was alive] set over the citizens as a commander of archers who did no harm, the dear leader of Susa?». It is not so much the μὲν-*solitarium* that troubles some editors (for the antithetical δέ-clause, «but Xerxes has done harm», can be easily understood); what seems surprising rather is the fact that the Chorus expresses its judgement, not in a statement (as at 652 f.), but in a question, and indeed one in which it is the suppressed antithesis which seems to contain the main point. What the Chorus ought to say is, «why, when Darius was so successful, has Xerxes turned out to be such a failure?», with the μὲν-clause, as often,

subordinate in sense to the δέ-clause. As it stands, however, all the emphasis is on the success of Darius. This, no doubt, is why Page emends οὐτω to οὐ καί, to produce the sense, «why was Darius not then too [i.e. at the time of the Battle of Salamis, as well as in his own lifetime] set over the citizens etc.?»: in other words, «it is a great pity that it was Xerxes, and not Darius, who led the expedition». This does something to correct the apparently wrong emphasis, but the reference to Xerxes' failure is still only implied. I shall argue that the text is fundamentally sound, and that the question which the Chorus asks, which puts all the emphasis on the success of Darius, is exactly the question which Aeschylus wants the audience to consider in the latter part of the play.

Of course we are concerned also with the reason for Xerxes' fall. From the beginning of the play until the Darius-scene we have been encouraged to think exclusively of the dangers of excessive prosperity and success. It seems clear that Xerxes fell because he went too far, that he crossed the line that should separate men from gods, and so, as the Messenger puts it, he has incurred the resentment of the gods. It is hard to derive any moral from this. Most people, like Homeric heroes, want as much prosperity as they can get, and, although they may be theoretically aware of the danger of excessive prosperity, it is impossible for them in advance to distinguish the point at which it becomes dangerous. How much money am I allowed to have in the bank before the gods notice it and cut me down to size? The successful Darius evidently did not cross the danger-line but the question is why not? - the very question that the Chorus poses for us in the lines that we are considering. Much stress is laid in the play on the way in which he expanded the Persian empire and increased its wealth and prosperity. When Atossa addresses his ghost at 709-12, she says that he surpassed all men in prosperity with happy fortune (ὁ βροτῶν πάντων ὑπεροχῶν ὄλβον εὐτυχεῖ πότμῳ), and we may note the ὑπερ-compound, which seems to so many critics to be significant for our understanding of Xerxes' tragedy in Darius' speech at 820 ff. If the gods resented Xerxes' attempt to increase the wealth and prosperity of the Persian empire, why did they not take notice of, and cut down, the man who surpassed all other mortals in his prosperity? The unfairness of it all should become clear at 753-58, but these lines are strangely passed over by many critics who think that *Persae* is an easy play to interpret. Atossa explains to Darius that evil men had taunted Xerxes with being a lesser man than his father. While Darius had acquired great wealth for his sons with his spear, Xerxes played the warrior only at home and did nothing to increase his father's wealth. It was as the result of such reproaches that Xerxes led the expedition to Greece, seeking to emulate Darius' behaviour and success. In terms of the amoral concept of divine resentment we can perhaps understand why Xerxes failed. What is difficult to understand is why Darius, who surpassed Xerxes and all men in his achievements, did not incur divine resentment but maintained his godlike status until his death. The Chorus's question at 555-57, with

the transmitted text, is, therefore the right one to ask, and we may note that the Chorus itself makes no attempt to answer it. The only, easy, change that we might consider is to read ποτέ instead of the more definite τότε: «why was Darius *once* etc.». The Chorus looks back to a vague and idealised period in the past.

Given that the Chorus is unable to answer its own question, it is easy to see why most modern critics (Gagarin¹⁷ is a rare exception), in trying to supply the answer, greet with relief the attempts of the ghost to explain Xerxes' fall in moral terms. The reason, they say, must be that in trying to expand the empire, Xerxes, unlike Darius, did something wrong: he committed ὕβρις, which, as of course we know, is always punished by the gods. The play, therefore, presents a simple moral to the audience: if we behave like Darius, and not like Xerxes, we can ensure a happy and prosperous life. For Kitto the play is «the tragedy of Xerxes' sin»¹⁸, while A. Moreau says: «L'*hubris*, la démesure, est toujours châtiée. Telle est la leçon des Perses»¹⁹. Critics rarely stop to consider why Aeschylus has left it till so late in the play before he begins to hint that this is the moral of the play, or why he uses the word ὕβρις only twice, both times in the same speech of Darius (808 and 821).

And there are further problems. Earlier, as we have seen, the Messenger attributes the disaster to the resentment of the gods, whereas Darius blames it on Xerxes' bad behaviour. We may suppose, with most critics, that Darius, the great king who is still a powerful king among the dead, is the more authoritative figure, but Aeschylus never makes it explicit that the amoral view is wrong, and the moral one to be preferred. Does he really expect us now to look back over the whole earlier part of the play and revise the opinion which he led us there to form? And, if Darius does indeed present the moral of the play, why in the final stasimon (852-907) does the Chorus appear to have learnt nothing from it? The speculations of the Chorus on ὕβρις in the second stasimon of *Agamemnon* would have seemed to be entirely appropriate here. And why does the Chorus not reproach Xerxes with his ὕβρις in the closing *kommos*? Winnington-Ingram, who is one of the few to notice this problem, remarks merely (14-15) that «everything has been transformed by the Darius scene. But not, it would appear, for the Chorus. Aeschylus must have hoped that his audience would be more perceptive». I can see no point in Aeschylus' refusal to provide the proper guidance. Xerxes too, like the Chorus, has something to say (911, 921) about the daimon which has destroyed him, but nothing at all about his own ὕβρις. In fact the end of the play is totally unconcerned with the supposed moral, and presents us instead with a simple contrast, between the wretched Xerxes in his rags, the symbol of his utter ruin, and the mighty king who at the beginning of the play led his splendid and confident expedition to Greece.

¹⁷ M. Gagarin, *Aeschylean Drama*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1976, 46-50.

¹⁸ H.D.F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study*, III, London 1961, 43.

¹⁹ A. Moreau, in Ghiron-Bistagne et al. (see n. 4) 49.

The most serious problem concerns the precise nature of Xerxes' ὕβρις. It would be so much easier if only Aeschylus had told us what Herodotus tells us at 7.34-35.2 (cf. 8.109.3), that, when Xerxes' bridge was destroyed by a storm, he had the Hellespont whipped, fettered, branded, and insulted as a punishment. Herodotus does not use the word ὕβρις, but clearly it is in his mind. Why does Aeschylus omit this incident? There are three possible explanations: (1) The story is true, but unknown to Aeschylus. (2) The story is not true but invented by Herodotus or one of his sources, who perhaps created it out of the metaphorical 'fettters' (πέδαις) of *Pers.* 747. Herodotus talks of a πεδέων ζεῦγος, a literal yoke of fetters, an idea which would have fitted so well into the dominant imagery of our play, if Aeschylus had known of it. (3) The story is true, and known to Aeschylus, but deliberately omitted by him. If this last is correct, the likeliest reason is that he did not want to provide too simple and obvious an explanation of Xerxes' ὕβρις. It is significant that, while almost all scholars agree that he fell because he has committed ὕβρις, they do not agree as to what it is that he has done wrong. Some fall back on Herodotus, who tells us (8.109.3), through the words of Themistocles, that the gods grudged that one impious and presumptuous man should be lord of both Asia and Europe, but (unless at 762-64) it is nowhere put in these terms in the play. For Snell «the *hybris* of Xerxes was that he wanted to enslave the Greeks»²⁰. But most, relying on what I have argued is an impossible interpretation of the parodos, tell us that it was wrong for him to cross the sea, or, more specifically, to bridge the Hellespont. So (Fraenkel on *Ag.* 762) «the king endeavoured to upset the rule by which the gods have arranged the limits of land and sea», while for Winnington-Ingram (10) he was seeking to abolish a natural boundary between East and West. Di Benedetto sees the bridging as a violation of an ethical-religious norm²¹. To the other arguments in favour of Müller's transposition in the parodos I would add what I have written elsewhere²² about the final stasimon (852-907), which, far from dwelling upon the ὕβρις of Xerxes, takes us back to the great days of the past, and thus prepares us for the appearance of the unhappy Xerxes and reinforces the contrast between the beginning and the end. The Chorus describes how in those happier days the Persian forces under Darius won wars by land and also conquered a long list of Aegean islands, not only those adjacent to the coast of Asia Minor, but islands in the heart of the Cyclades. Sommerstein and Conacher in their recent books²³ see that there is a problem, but most scholars do not. You cannot conquer an island without crossing the sea. If it was ὕβρις for Xerxes to do so, why

²⁰ B. Snell, *Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama*, Leipzig 1928, 69.

²¹ V. Di Benedetto, *L'ideologia del potere e la tragedia greca: ricerche su Eschilo*, Torino 1978, 8.

²² *Dionysiaca: Nine Studies in Greek Poetry Presented to Sir Denys Page*, edd. R.D. Dawe, J. Diggle, P.E. Easterling, Cambridge 1978, 70 with n. 23.

²³ A.H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean Tragedy*, Bari 1996, 93-94; D.J. Conacher, *Aeschylus: The Earlier Plays and Related Studies*, Toronto 1996, 29-30.

was it not so for Darius? It cannot, therefore, be his crossing of the sea that distinguishes Xerxes from his father. It is true that Darius achieved all this without personally crossing the river Halys or stirring from home (865-66), but I take that to mean that he was such a great king that, like Zeus on Olympus, he could direct affairs from a distance (cf. *Supp.* 101-03). The moral can hardly be that Xerxes' mistake was to take personal command of the expedition.

It is time to look at the actual way in which Darius presents the supposed moral. He certainly holds Xerxes responsible for the disaster, but it is some time before he uses the term ὕβρις. His first comment on the crossing of the Hellespont (723) sounds more like one of admiration than of criticism. But when Atossa says that some daimon must have helped Xerxes in his purpose (or touched him in his mind), Darius agrees that he was not thinking properly (725). The same Aeschylean combination of human and divine responsibility appears more strongly at 742, «when someone is himself in a hurry, god too lends a hand»²⁴. It is at this point that Darius interprets the bridge of boats as an attempt to enslave the sacred stream of a god and to master Poseidon himself. Clearly such behaviour when described in these terms is foolish and calculated to arouse the god's anger. Xerxes was afflicted by a mental sickness (νόσος φρενῶν 750). But the word ὕβρις is not used, and that is in keeping with the fact that ὕβρις is not normally a religious offence. Still, since Xerxes has certainly, in the view of Darius, set out to dishonour Poseidon by his outrageous behaviour, the *idea* of ὕβρις is not too far from our minds. But can this really be the reason for Xerxes' fall? If he had ferried his forces across the Aegean in a more conventional way would his success have been assured? The yoking of the Hellespont can be no more than a symbol of his ὕβρις, like Agamemnon's trampling on the crimson fabrics in the later play. But it is the very conception of the expedition that we need to see as an act of folly, and Darius has as yet given no explanation of that.

It is in his final speech (800-42) that Darius introduces the concept of ὕβρις, and uses the word twice. The first occurrence (808) does not help. The Persian forces committed ὕβρις by sacking the images of the gods and burning their temples. This is clearly bad behaviour, but the punishment for that will be Plataea, and this does nothing to explain the defeat at Salamis. The second occurrence (821) follows on from Darius' prediction of Plataea, but now Darius talks in more general terms of the dangers of excess, using many ὑπερ-compounds. The man who despises his present fortune and conceives a desire for more is liable to lose his prosperity, and Zeus punishes tempers that are excessively proud. This at least we can relate to Xerxes and the conception of the expedition as a whole. And here, quite exceptionally I think, Darius does come close to Fraenkel in confusing the amoral concept of divine resentment with the moral idea that Zeus punishes those who misbehave. Even here, however, where it is clear that the desire for more is associated with, and may lead to

²⁴ On 724 and 742 see J. Jouanna, in Ghiron-Bistagne et al. (see n. 4) 81-97.

ὑβρις²⁵, it is not actually stated that it is ὑβρις. In any case, the moral is fatally undercut by the fact that, as we have seen, Darius himself had despised his present fortune and sought to acquire still greater wealth and prosperity. Remember that he surpassed (ὑπερσχών 709) all men in his prosperity. He is in no position to preach sermons to his son, nor to criticise him (782-83) for failing to take his advice to refrain from acting in the way that he himself has acted. We began this discussion with the Chorus's question, «why was Darius so successful?» The answer has still not been given. Winnington-Ingram remarks (15) that «the victims are all guilty». But Darius too seems to be guilty: why, then, is he not a victim?

If there is no difference between Darius and Xerxes in their behaviour, it remains true that the two are strongly contrasted throughout the second part of the play. What then is the difference between them? The only difference, but it is a crucial one, is that Darius succeeded, while Xerxes failed. It is only with his failure that he ceases to be godlike. And this, I think, gives us a clue to the problem which I raised earlier. Why does Aeschylus wait so long before introducing the idea of ὑβρις at all? The answer is that it is only in retrospect that it seems possible to talk in these terms at all. It is rather like the concept of μοῖρα, 'destiny', whose unpredictability is recognised by Xerxes himself at 909. In real life we know that one day we are fated to die, but we have no means of telling when that day will be. It is only after our death that others, with a fatalistic bent, may say, «He died yesterday, so he must have been fated to die yesterday». I suggested earlier that, if we follow the amoral line of thought, and believe that excessive prosperity is dangerous and bound to lead one day to a fall, we still cannot predict the point at which desirable prosperity will turn into excessive prosperity. So in the first part of the play the Chorus was anxious in case Xerxes and the Persians might have reached that point, and so be heading for a fall. But it is only *after* a man has crossed the line that he knows that he has crossed it. Those who, like the ghost of Darius, prefer moral explanations, and who believe, like Fraenkel, that suffering must be the result of sin, will reply that Xerxes must have done something wrong; for otherwise he would not have fallen. This judgement too can be made only in retrospect. That is why before the announcement of the disaster the Chorus was anxious, but saw no reason to believe that Xerxes had committed an offence for which he was liable to be punished by the gods. Why indeed *should* they have supposed that it was wrong for the Persians to try to fulfil their divinely-appointed destiny of winning wars by land and sea, or to build a bridge? It is only the fact that he failed that shows that Xerxes was wrong. If he had succeeded, Xerxes, like his father, would still be the godlike man and Atossa the mother of a god.

²⁵ Cf. Theogn. 153 f. W, Sol. 6.3 f. W.

We are left, therefore, in the end with two different explanations of Xerxes' fall. Either he went too far or he behaved immorally. Aeschylus leaves us to decide for ourselves. But, whichever way we look at it, the play provides no comfortable moral for the audience. We do not leave the theatre knowing how to live our lives so as to avoid disaster. We want to be prosperous, but we still do not know how far we shall be allowed to go. We do know that ὕβρις is a bad thing, and likely to lead to punishment. But there is no need to write a play to preach this sermon. It is the common belief of all Greeks, the background of thought against which the tragedians wrote their plays, and often questioned it. It is one thing to know in theory that one should not commit ὕβρις, quite another to determine in advance that any particular act *will* be considered as an act of ὕβρις. Even if we can satisfy ourselves that we understand why Xerxes was wrong to seek to extend the Persian empire, we are still left with the unanswered question of the Chorus, «Why was Darius so successful?». For those who like simple morals this must be a disappointing conclusion. But after all *Persae* is a tragedy, not a simple morality play.

Glasgow

A.F. Garvie

Osservazioni:

Il problema che pongo a Dawe può valere in parte anche per Garvie, che accetta per conto suo la trasposizione di Müller, ma ho altre due curiosità. Anche di questo intervento si può dire tutto il bene possibile, sia per la prudenza metodica che manifesta, sia per l'importanza dei problemi che solleva, e che mettono in discussione alcune opinioni apparentemente consolidate. Io ero convinto l'idea dello φθόνος τῶν θεῶν appartenesse a una fase oscura, primitiva del pensiero religioso e che il principio eschileo che vuole Dike parea di Zeus rappresentasse una evoluzione significativa verso una concezione eticamente più qualificata (non vorrei dire superiore: questi termini hegeliani mi imbarazzano un po') del divino. Garvie mi ha obbligato a ripensare a questo punto di vista che generazioni di studiosi si sono tramandati un po' come una vulgata: questo è sempre salutare, per chi desidera γηράσκειν πολλά (se ci si riesce) διδασκόμενος. Pure in un dettaglio i conti non mi tornano: mi è sempre sembrato che Aesch. *Ag.* 750ss. (dove si legge una nota di Fraenkel che Garvie contesta) si riferisse proprio allo φθόνος definendo questa idea come un παλαίφατος... γέρων λόγος. L'intensificazione della variatio sinonimica è un modulo dello stile eschileo, ma non possiamo pensare che egli l'abbia usata invano. Anche in mancanza di un preciso supporto testuale che ci autorizzi a pensare all'antichità dello φθόνος τῶν θεῶν (e qui mi pare che Garvie colga nel segno), mi resta il sospetto che Eschilo lo considerasse antico, e su questo punto egli potrebbe essere ben informato.

Connessa con questo problema è l'osservazione dello stesso Garvie, che non vede nella prima parte della tragedia alcuna allusione ad una *hybris* di Serse che avrebbe suscitato contro di lui la *nemesis* divina; questo sarebbe il punto di vista di Dario, quando egli viene evocato, ma nulla farebbe pensare che questo punto di vista sia presente nella prima parte della tragedia. Garvie ricorda a questo proposito l'argomento di Schenker (che per la verità anche altri hanno sostenuto), che cioè Eschilo adombri allusivamente il suo pensiero all'inizio dell'azione tragica e lo sviluppi in seguito, come in *Ag.* 60-62, ripreso in 799-804, ma trova che questo parallelo non si possa applicare ai *Persiani*. A proposito di *Pers.* 13 $\nu\epsilon\omicron\nu\delta\alpha\ \delta\prime\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha\ \beta\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\iota$, dove qualcuno ha visto un accenno ad una possibile colpa di Serse, Garvie preferisce pensare ad una lacuna che preceda il verso, («in which the subject appears as a woman mourning for her husband»), come ai vv. 541 s. si ricordano le giovani donne persiane che, lasciate sole in casa, lamentano la lontananza dei loro uomini. Ma forse a questa ipotesi, abbastanza costosa, si potrebbe opporre l'argomento di chi ha voluto vedere nel $\nu\epsilon\omicron\nu\delta\alpha$... $\acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha$ proprio Serse, trascinato nella rovinosa avventura dalla sua giovinezza inesperta sedotta dai cattivi consiglieri, in coerenza con il punto di vista di Dario esposto ai vv. 744 ss.: $\beta\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\iota$ avrebbe allora come soggetto $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\ \dots\ \iota\sigma\chi\upsilon\varsigma\ \prime\text{Α}\sigma\iota\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$, come leggiamo nel testo tramandato. Il sogno stesso di Atossa, con le due donne che Serse vorrebbe aggiungere a forza al suo carro, sembra confermare l'idea di una trasgressione da parte del re, e quindi l'affermazione che, rispetto al procedimento di scoperta del punto di vista dell'autore nell'*Agamennone*, «the structure of *Persae* seems me quite different», parrebbe bisognosa di una dimostrazione più analitica a sostegno.

Vittorio Citti

The case for $\beta\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\iota$ expressing anxiety rather than hostility may be stronger than you allow. At *Agam.* 449 $\beta\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\iota$ follows $\sigma\acute{\tau}\epsilon\nu\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota$ and precedes $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, and must take some colouring from its context. A comparison can also be drawn with latin: the new Oxford dictionary s.v. *latro* 4b tells us that at Lucretius 2.17 the meaning is to cry out *for* (not *at*). I also think $\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu$ must be genuine. The choice of the word may have been influenced by Hom.τ 209 $\kappa\lambda\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha$. To quote your own words «it does not look like a scribal corruption or a gloss».

When you comment later in your paper «What is difficult to understand is why Darius, who surpassed all men in his achievements, did not incur divine resentment but maintained his godlike status until his death», you might have said «until after his death». But historically Darius had incurred divine resentment: at any rate he lost the battle of Marathon. Aeschylus is re-writing history.

What you say about this not being a simple *hybris* play is illuminating. But perhaps you can have size being itself a danger, even without *hybris*: cf. *Soph. Ant.* 613f. Or

the moral could be even simpler, the one the queen expresses at 598ff.: nothing is for ever, neither good luck nor (for reasons of polar expression?) bad goes on all the time.

Roger D. Dawe

Sur 22 s., *neon d'andra bauzei*.

Si l'on se limite aux possibilités offertes par le texte transmis, et donc si l'on écarte l'hypothèse d'une lacune, on a, je crois, un bon argument pour faire de *thumos* et non de *iskhus Asiatogenès* le sujet du verbe. La phrase avec *bauzei* est fortement reliée à la suivante (par *kai*), *koute tis aggelos oute tis hippeus... aphikneitai*; or cette seconde phrase concerne par son contenu directement l'angoisse du chœur (que l'arrivée d'un messenger ou d'un cavalier devrait rassurer).

Quant au sens de *bauzei*, le vers 575 paraît être un exemple pertinent pour le sens de 'se lamenter'. Quant à la syntaxe, on a intérêt à faire de *neon andra* un complément d'objet, non pas externe, mais interne: ces mots développent le contenu du cri (cf. *Zéna... klazôn*, *Ag.* 173 s.). Le chœur hurle comme un chien plaintif le nom (Xerxès) d'un homme qui est jeune. Il n'y a là aucune critique contre le roi (Garvie a bien démontré que ce serait tout à fait déplacé), mais la raison d'une angoisse: une force de tradition séculaire, «née de l'Asie», est entre les mains d'un homme qui a l'impétuosité et l'inexpérience inquiétantes de la jeunesse (selon le sens habituel de *neos* dans la tragédie).

Sur la 'mésode' (v. 93-100):

A.F. Garvie lie une décision sur le sens de ces vers (et de la *parodos* en général) à une décision critique portant sur la pertinence de l'ordre transmis par les manuscrits. Si l'on peut le suivre dans son effort, justifié, pour délivrer l'interprétation de cette partie de l'œuvre de tout recours à la notion d'*hybris*, on ne peut pas, je pense, tirer de cela la conclusion qu'il est nécessaire de changer l'ordre des vers. La signification (mauvaise) que Garvie prête au texte transmis pour écarter ce texte n'est en fait pas celle qui s'impose.

Quelle que soit sa place dans le texte, l'épode énonce la règle générale dont le chœur redoute l'application; il n'y est, de fait, pas question d'*hybris*, mais du danger lié à un succès: la ruse des dieux, qui conduit les hommes à leur perte, se montre d'abord sous un jour favorable, à savoir à travers des succès, puis impose la ruine. Il est clair que ce premier moment (favorable et provisoire) de la ruse des dieux ne peut coïncider avec la *Moira* divine (v. 101) qui régit depuis la plus haute antiquité (*to palaion*, v. 103) le sort des Perses. Pour que le chœur évoque la possibilité qu'une telle ruse ait commencé à opérer, il faut que quelque chose de nouveau, qu'un succès imprévu ait eu lieu; or ce succès semble bien être la traversée réussie de l'Hellespont. C'est, de fait, l'unique information dont dispose le chœur (cf. le premier vers de la *parodos* lyrique), celle qu'il retient dans la première strophe comme l'élément majeur

de l'expédition contre la Grèce (quitte à ne pas mentionner l'exploit symétrique qu'était le percement de l'Athos pour fournir un passage à la flotte), et, probablement, celle qu'il évoque avec *leptodomois peismasi laoporois te mékhanais* («les câbles d'architecture légère et les machines pour faire passer les peuples», v. 103 s.). En apprenant à traverser la mer, les Perses n'ont pas été hybristiques (Garvie a raison sur cela): ils ont seulement trouvé un moyen totalement neuf de réaliser leur ancienne destinée, qui est de prendre des villes (il est clair que dans l'antistrophe γ, il n'est nullement question de batailles navales): ils ont, avec succès, fait de la mer un moyen de passage pour une armée terrestre. Or, selon la théologie exposée dans l'épode, cette réussite-même est un danger.

Le chœur ne condamne donc pas l'expédition navale (cf. Garvie, p. 22: «So it cannot be merely a naval expedition that was doomed to disaster»); mais dans l'antistrophe γ il n'est pas question de l'expédition en tant que telle, mais de la traversée de la mer au moyen de machines légères et extraordinaires.

Plusieurs traits laissent apparaître une méfiance du chœur vis-à-vis de la traversée de l'Hellespont: le fait que la mer soit appelée «bois sacré» (*alsos*); en la pénétrant du regard, les Perses se mettent en danger; le fait qu'ils aient mis leur confiance (*pisunoi*) dans des «édifices légers» (avec l'adjectif, formé pour le passage, *leptodomois*); le 'jeu de mot' que permet le rapprochement de *pisunoi* et de *peismasi* renforce encore l'impression que le chœur insiste ici sur le caractère périlleux de l'entreprise. La prouesse presque miraculeuse de l'armée, qui malgré les risques est bien parvenue à franchir la mer, incite à croire à un désastre prochain.

Les mots *emathon d'*, «ils ont appris» (v. 108), ne marquent donc pas une rupture radicale (le *d'* serait effectivement insuffisant), mais un événement nouveau dans le cours de la destinée ancienne: avec 'l'apprentissage' des Perses quelque chose de différent s'est mis en place. Je ne crois donc pas que l'on puisse vraiment paraphraser le passage par: «for it is our divinely-appointed destiny to win wars by land *and* by sea» (p. 21), car c'est alors le changement marqué par *d'* qui est effacé; et si on n'isole pas, comme nouveauté, la réussite qu'a été le franchissement de l'Hellespont, on n'explique pas bien la logique de la ruse divine, qui fait d'abord remporter des succès (étant bien entendu que l'ensemble des succès anciens des Perses, cf. *to palaion*, n'entrent pas dans ce schéma de la ruse des dieux: avec le temps, ces succès sont bien confirmés comme faisant partie du destin des Perses; il n'y a, éventuellement, de ruse que pour l'entreprise actuelle).

L'examen du couple strophique γ, sans préjuger de la place de l'épode, invite donc à rejeter avec Garvie toute thématique de l'*hybris*, mais invite aussi à ne pas minimiser la rupture marquée par *emathon d'*. Quant à la place de l'épode, elle ne peut se laisser déterminer par le contenu sémantique à donner au couple strophique γ. Si on la laisse

à sa place, elle éclaire par avance le sens des vers 101-14. Cette fonction d'anticipation correspond bien à l'usage des maximes dans la lyrique chorale.

Pierre Judet de la Combe

I am very largely in agreement with this paper, and make only one observation. The author writes, «I have no easy answer to the question as to why the mesode [*Pers.* 93–100] should have been misplaced in the codices». He refers to the case of *Pers.* 552–61, omitted in M and restored in the margin; but that omission is an obvious instance of *saut du même au même*. He also judges it possible «that some early editor, like his modern colleagues, misunderstood the connection of thought and deliberately transposed the stanza».

The latter hypothesis is quite out of the question. Ancient scholars did not behave like that. The misplacement must be accidental; and there is a simple reason why a whole strophe might be displaced, even in the absence of verbal homoearchon or *homoeoteleuton*. In ancient manuscripts strophe were marked off with *paragraphoi*. If a scribe's eye slipped from one *paragraphos* to the next, he might easily omit a whole strophe. Once omitted, it could only be restored in a margin, and the next copyist might well make a mistake as to where it should stand in the sequence.

Martin L. West

Replica:

A P. Judet de la Combe

It is gratifying that we agree that there is no suggestion of *hybris* in the first part of the play. At 13 it may indeed be possible to take νεὸν ἄνδρα as a kind of internal accusative, but I am concerned that Judet de La Combe's interpretation, namely that Xerxes' youth represents a danger for the army, still implies, even if it does not explicitly express, a criticism that seems to me to be out of place. And, with θυμός as the subject of βαῦζε, the difficulty of the parenthesis (πᾶσα... ὄχλωκεν) remains.

I should be happy to retain the transmitted order of stanzas at 94 ff. if it could indeed be made to yield the sense that seems to me to be required. Judet de La Combe argues that antistrophe γ introduces a *new* element, which justifies the fear of excess that the Chorus has already expressed in the epode: divine ἄτη has led the Persians to cross the Hellespont trusting to a flimsy bridge of boats, and this is a worrying sign of excessive success. My objection is that, even if we do not call this *hybris*, it still

introduces the idea that the Persians have done something that they should not have done, and again it seems to me that this already implies criticism of Xerxes. My own feeling is that in this stanza the Chorus is expressing not anxiety but admiration for a great achievement. Darius also sent expeditions across the sea (see the stasimon at 852 ff.). Why in his case was this not considered to be a mark of excessive success? Our disagreement is not fundamental. But I think that the general interpretation which we both favour is best served by the transposition.

A Martin L. West

I am happy to accept West's suggestion that the misplacement of the mesode probably resulted from the scribe's eye slipping from one paragraphos to the next.

A Roger D. Dawe

It is true that βαύζει at *Ag.* 449 occurs in a context of grief, and I do not really disagree with Dawe. But a note of hostility too is apparent in φθονερόν, and it is this that is developed at 456-57. I certainly do not believe that ἔόν arises from a gloss. It would be a simple matter of wrong word-division.

Yes, size by itself can be a danger, as it may incur the φθόνος of the gods. My point is that this concept is to be distinguished from the idea of an act of *hybris* which is rightly punished by the gods.

A V. Citti

I agree that *Ag.* 750 ff is puzzling. But, even if Aeschylus believed that the φθόνος-idea was ancient, we still have to explain how he can make his Chorus say that it is alone in believing that suffering is the result of ὕβρις, given that that idea goes all the way back to the *Odyssey* and Hesiod. Denniston-Page see that there is a problem («the opinion which the Chorus here advances as an exceptional and personal one [δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων εἰμί] was not in fact at all novel»), but make no attempt at solving it. I can surmise only that the φθόνος-idea had come to predominate since perhaps the beginning of the century, and that Aeschylus here makes his Chorus revert to the less fashionable, but in fact older, idea.

As for the structure of *Persae* and *Agamemnon*, both plays begin with anxiety and foreboding. But as early as the parodos of *Agamemnon* it becomes clear that *Agamemnon* has committed quite specific offences. The Chorus disapproves of his sacrifice of Iphigeneia, he is responsible for the deaths of too many men, all for the sake of a promiscuous woman (62 etc.), and we shall soon hear about his sacking of the temples of the gods at Troy. All of this is known to the audience before the tragic

event, the πάθος occurs. In *Persae* there is nothing remotely comparable until *after* the announcement of the tragic event. If line 13 is to be taken as criticism of Xerxes, it is completely out of keeping with the development of the Chorus's thinking. Atossa's dream certainly portends the failure of Xerxes' European expedition, but I do not find here any suggestion of transgression on Xerxes' part. At 197 Darius pities him, but does not criticise him.