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MARIA BROGGIATO

Eratosthenes and the Persian War Tetralogy of Aeschylus

This paper aims to understand a problematic piece of information, dating to the Hellenistic age, that concerns the staging of Aeschylus' *Persians* by the poet himself in Syracuse upon request of the tyrant Hieron. In my opinion, the incomplete and perplexing evidence we possess about this performance can be better understood in the light of the modern discussion centering on the tetralogy to which the tragedy belonged. To this purpose, in the first part of this paper I offer an outline of Alan Sommerstein's recent arguments in favour of the unity of this tetralogy around the theme of the Persian Wars; in the second part, I try to explain the terms of the Hellenistic discussion on the Syracusan performance of the play, which is centered on the testimony of Eratosthenes of Cyrene, the head of the library at Alexandria in the second half of the third century BC.

1. *The Persians tetralogy*

Aeschylus' *Persians* has always had a special place in the history of classical studies, as it is the earliest complete Greek play that has come down to us and the only one among those we possess that deals with a historical subject. The ancient hypothesis to the play, found in medieval manuscripts¹, has preserved the date when Aeschylus presented the tragedy, 472, and the titles of the plays of the tetralogy to which *Persians* belonged: *Phineus*, *Persians*, *Glaucus of Potniae* and the satyr drama *Prometheus*. In the last two centuries there have been a number of attempts to find connections between the subject-matter of the four plays: scholars mainly tried to detect in the lost tragedies allusions to an underlying motif, the conflict between Europe and Asia, or between the Greeks and the barbarians of the East. This concept could have linked the historical play, *Persians*, with the others that were based on mythical themes². The prevalent opinion, however, is that the tragedies dealt with unrelated subjects and were not linked in the manner characteristic of several other Aeschylean productions, most famously the *Oresteia*³. H. D. Broadhead

¹ See *TrGF* III, Test. Gc 55a, p. 48 Radt.

² Detailed critical surveys of the earlier discussion on the subject are in Broadhead 1960, pp. iv-lx; Garvie 2009, pp. xliii-xlvi; also Sommerstein 2012, p. 98 f.

³ On Aeschylus' connected tetralogies see Gantz 1979 and 1980; Sommerstein 2010a, pp. 32-42.

lucidly summed up the accepted viewpoint when he wrote, “any connection between an ‘historical’ play and two based on mythical themes would appear *a priori* very improbable” (1960, p. lv).

Recently, however, Alan Sommerstein has offered new and interesting arguments in favour of the unity of the *Persians* tetralogy, underlining the presence in all four plays of references to and prophecies of the Persian wars, and arguing that the mythological matter of the lost plays offered subtle links to the historical conflict⁴. In the first tragedy, the prophet Phineus, tormented by the Harpies, is saved by Zetes and Calais. They were the sons of Boreas, the North Wind, and Oreithyia, daughter of the Athenian king Erechtheus; during the second Persian expedition, according to Herodotus, Boreas and Oreithyia, answering the prayers of the Athenians, sent the storm which destroyed the Persian fleet near Cape Sepias (7. 189. 3). It is possible that in the play Phineus foretold how Boreas, in the distant future, would help the Athenians against the invaders (Sommerstein 2012, pp. 101 f.). In the extant play, *Persians*, we find the description of the battle of Salamis and the prophecy of the victory at Plataea, announced by the ghost of Darius (*Pers.* 805-820). The third play, *Glaucus of Potniae*, was set in Boeotia and Thessaly⁵, and centered on the story of Glaucus, who, during the chariot race at the funeral games for Pelias, had been devoured by his mares. We know that the village of Potniae was situated not far from Thebes, on the road to Plataea, where the Greeks had won a decisive land battle against the Persians in 479; modern scholars have often suggested that the play could easily have contained hints at the victorious battle fought at Plataea⁶. Sommerstein took an important step towards the reconstruction of the plot of this play when he suggested that a fragment quoted in the Pindar scholia as belonging to a play by Aeschylus entitled *Glaucus*, unspecified, could in fact belong to the *Glaucus of Potniae*⁷: the text is not well preserved,

⁴ See Sommerstein 2008, pp. 7-9 and Sommerstein 2012. On the theme of the Persian Wars as the link that connected the four plays see also for example Murray 1940, pp. 113 f.

⁵ The title of the play appears as *Glaucus* in the oldest manuscript, M, and as *Glaucus of Potniae* in most other mss. We know that Aeschylus had written at least another play with the title *Glaucus*, *Glaucus Pontios* (*Glaucus the Sea-god*), which in all likelihood was a satyr drama, not a tragedy: see Sommerstein 2012, p. 96 f., who discusses and rejects earlier attempts to identify the *Glaucus Pontios* with the third play of our tetralogy.

⁶ So already Ahrens 1846, pp. 195 f. See also for example Campbell 1891, pp. 158 f.; Spring 1917, p. 159; Murray 1940, p. 114; Moreau 1993, p. 130; Harrison 2000, p. 117 n. 1; Sommerstein 2012, pp. 98 and 100.

⁷ Aesch. fr. 25a Radt = schol. Pi. P. 1. 153. Radt assigns it to one of the plays entitled *Glaucus*, leaving the question open; on the contrary Nauck, following Hermann, had printed it among the fragments of the other Glaucus play by Aeschylus, *Glaucus the Sea-god* (*Glaucus Pontios*, fr. 32 N.²). The fragment in Radt's edition runs as follows: καλοῖσι λουτροῖς τέκλέλουμαιτ (έκλελουμένος Heyne) δέμας / εἰς ὑψίκομημον Ἰμέραν δ' ἀφικόμην (?) ('Having thoroughly washed myself in its [the river Himeras'] fair streams, I came to Himeras on its high cliffs', transl. Sommerstein 2012, p. 99 n. 29).

but the character who is speaking, most probably the god Poseidon, states that he has come from the city of Himera or the river Himeras⁸. At Himera, in northern Sicily, Gelon of Syracuse had obtained a great victory against the Carthaginians in the same year of the battle of Salamis: so Poseidon, at Potniae, possibly prophesied the future victory of the Sicilian Greeks against the barbarians of the west, and the tragedy could have contained references not only to the victories against the Persians, but also to those against the Carthaginians in the western Mediterranean (Sommerstein 2012, pp. 99 f.)⁹. The fourth play, the satyr drama *Prometheus Pyrphoros*, narrated how Prometheus brought fire to the satyrs, who did not know how to handle the gift. We do not have much information on the contents of the play; a link with the events of the Persian wars, however, could be provided by the Athenian festival in honour of Prometheus, where racers carrying torches brought the fire into the city (Sommerstein 2012, pp. 97 f. and 102 f.).

In conclusion, our tetralogy would have presented an artful combination of mythical and historical themes; in it, as Sommerstein aptly puts it, “past and present are linked to Athens’ glory as surely as they were a few years later on the walls of the Stoa Poikile, where Marathon kept company with the Amazon and Trojan wars (Paus. 1. 15. 1-3)” (2012, p. 105).

2. Eratosthenes and the Syracusan production of Persians

Sommerstein’s reconstruction of the contents of the *Persians* tetralogy could help us explain a controversial piece of information about a second production of *Persians* by Aeschylus himself during one of his visits to Sicily. Hellenistic scholars apparently believed that on this occasion the poet had staged a different and revised version of *Persians*, subsequently lost: this tragedy comprised the description of the Athenian victory at Plataea in 479, a year after the battle of Salamis, which is described in the extant *Persians*.

This information is found in the much-discussed scholia on line 1028 f. of Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, where the character Dionysus refers to a performance of Aeschylus’ *Persians* in terms that apparently do not match the contents of the extant tragedy; he seems to mention the announcement of the death of the Persian king Darius, which had occurred several years before the events described in *Persians*, and describes a performance where the chorus clap their hands and cry “iauoι”, an exclamation that does not occur in *Persians* as we

⁸ In a similar way, Sommerstein notes, Athena in *Eumenides* (ll. 397-404) declares that she has arrived to Athens from the river Scamander in the Troad.

⁹ As Sommerstein himself notes, the connection with the battle of Himera was already suggested by Welcker, who thought however that the play in question, the third in the trilogy, was *Glaucus the Sea-god* (1837, pp. 236 ff.). On the links with the battle of Himera see also Sommerstein 2008, pp. 7-9. Another reference to the western Greeks in *Glaucus of Potniae* could be fr. 40a Radt (33 N.²), which possibly mentions a harbour in or near the strait of Messina (see Sommerstein 2008, p. 8 n. 20).

read it¹⁰. The scholia on these lines contain a long Hellenistic doxography on this ancient *zetema*, with quotations from a number of grammarians active in Alexandria and Pergamum from the third to the first century BC¹¹. I omit to analyze the whole doxography, which offers a number of different solutions to the problem, all ultimately derived from Didymus' commentary on *Frogs*¹². What follows is the relevant part of these scholia; even if our section is corrupt at some points, the general sense is clear¹³:

I. [...] Ἡρόδικος (p. 126 Düring = fr. 10 Broggiato) δέ φησι διττὰς γεγονέναι <καθέσεις> <***> τοῦ θανάτου, καὶ τὴν τραγωδίαν ταύτην περιέχειν τὴν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς μάχην. δοκοῦσι δὲ οὗτοι οἱ Πέρσαι ὑπὸ τοῦ Αἰσχύλου δεδιδάχθαι ἐν Συρακούσαις, σπουδάσαντος Ἰέρωνος, ὡς φησιν Ἐρατοσθένης ἐν γ' περὶ κωμωδιῶν (fr. 109 Strecker = 6 Bagordo). VEΘBarb(Ald)

διττὰς Dobree: διττοῦ VEΘBarb (διττὴν G) <καθέσεις> suppl. Dobree <***> τοῦ θανάτου: lac. coniecit Dindorf ("Fortasse plura verba exciderunt, in quibus mentio esse facta potuit τοῦ θανάτου Δαρείου"), <πρὸ> τοῦ θανάτου propos. Montana (i.e. Aeschilo vivente) καὶ ... περιέχειν VEΘBarb, ἤτις περιέχει G

I. [...] Herodotus says that there were two productions <***> of the death, and that this tragedy included the battle of Plataea. This *Persians* appears to have been performed by Aeschylus in Syracuse, on Hieron's request, as Eratosthenes says in the third book of his treatise *On Comedy*.

¹⁰ In addition to this, the text of line 1028 is corrupt. Wilson 2007 prints lines 1028-29 as follows: ἐχάρην γοῦν ἠνίκ' ἤκουσα περὶ Δαρείου τεθνεώτος, / ὁ χορὸς δ' εὐθύς τῷ χειρῷ ὦδι συγκρούσας εἶπεν· "ἰαυοῖ." See the discussion on this passage in Dover 1993 and in Sommerstein 1996; on the scholia see Piero Totaro's fundamental contribution (Totaro 2006, with a detailed overview of earlier bibliography), Broggiato 2014a (on Herodotus F 10, pp. 83-88), Broggiato 2014b and Montana 2017, pp. 215-221.

¹¹ They are Eratosthenes of Cyrene, Herodotus of Babylon (both discussed below), Chaeris, who belonged to the school of Aristarchus in Alexandria, and Didymus. Some material is quoted anonymously (schol. ad 1028 *d* and *g* in Chantry's edition).

¹² See my discussion of this material in Broggiato 2014b. – In the manuscripts' layout we find two distinct compilations of excerpta, derived from two different commentaries both depending on Didymus' work, the first more rich and detailed than the second one (on this see F. Montana 2017, pp. 216 f.).

¹³ I follow the layout proposed by F. Montana in his edition of this scholium (Montana 2017, p. 216 f.). Montana restores the format found in all the medieval manuscripts; on the contrary, the most recent editor of the *Frogs* scholia, M. Chantry, separates the excerpta derived from different sources. As Montana rightly points out, Chantry's analytical method of edition runs the risk of misrepresenting the ancient evidence, more so in the case of scholia which contain Hellenistic doxographies, as in the case of our scholium (Montana 2017, pp. 195-200 and 215-221). The manuscripts' readings are taken from Chantry's edition; see also the apparatus in *TrGF* III, T 56 a, p. 49 Radt. For Dobree's emendations see Dobree 1833, p. 173; Dindorf's observations are found in the apparatus to his edition of the Aristophanes scholia (Dindorf 1838, p. 121).

V = Venetus Marcianus gr. 474, s. XI; E = Estensis α.U.5.10, s. XIV ex.; Θ = Laurentianus conv. soppr. 140, s. XIV; Barb. = Vaticanus Barberinianus gr. 126, s. XIV in.; Ald = editio Aldina, Venetiis 1498 a M. Musuro composita; G = Venetus Marcianus gr. 475, s. XV, codicis V apographum.

Another parallel scholium on the same line omits the reference to Eratosthenes and summarizes Herodicus' opinion thus:

II. [...] δι' ὃ τινες διττὰς καθέσεις, τουτέστι διδασκαλίας, τῶν Περσῶν φασί, καὶ τὴν μίαν μὴ φέρεσθαι. [...]VEΘBarb(Ald)

καθέσεις Casaubon (cf. schol. Ar. Vesp. 1326, Lys. 1094): καταθέσεις V (G) per comp., ΘBarb, θέσεις E (Ald)

II. [...] therefore some say there were two productions, that is stagings, of *Persians* and that one of them has not come down to us. [...]

The earliest authority mentioned is the prominent scientist, poet and philologist Eratosthenes of Cyrene, who was the head of the library in Alexandria in the second half of the third century BC; according to our scholia, Eratosthenes in his influential work *On Old Comedy* stated that Aeschylus had staged *Persians* in Syracuse, at the request of Hieron. The ancient *Life of Aeschylus* provides similar information, in all probability derived from Eratosthenes' work: φασὶν ὑπὸ Ἱέρωνος ἀξιωθέντα ἀναδιδάξαι τοὺς Πέρσας ἐν Συκελίᾳ καὶ Λίαν εὐδοκιμεῖν (Aesch. T 1, 68 sq., p. 37 Radt). In modern times this note has given rise to much speculation concerning the text of the Sicilian production of the tragedy: did Aeschylus make any alterations to the play? could a second version be used to explain real or presumed difficulties in the text of the extant *Persians*? The issue is further complicated by the perplexing statement immediately preceding the quotation from Eratosthenes: another grammarian, Herodicus, said that there had been two stagings of the tragedy, and that the version that was not extant included a section on the battle of Plataea. This second grammarian, who was probably active in Pergamum about a century after Eratosthenes, is a more dubious figure. Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophists* has preserved excerpts from a polemical work by Herodicus aimed at Plato and his school, where Herodicus' attacks against his adversaries are based on the systematic misrepresentation of Plato's writings. Our fragment should belong to another of his works, a treatise on characters made fun of in comedy (*Komodoumenoi*)¹⁴. His proposition is in all likelihood based on Eratosthenes' report on the second staging in Syracuse: in other words, Herodicus used this piece of information to support his theory on the two different versions of the tragedy¹⁵. Eratosthenes' account of the Syracusan staging of *Persians* is gener-

¹⁴ In general on Herodicus see Düring 1941 and Broggiato 2014a: our fragment is F 10 Broggiato (discussed at pp. 83-88) = p. 126 Düring.

¹⁵ So already Wilamowitz 1897, p. 394 n. 3: "... die durch Herodikos zu thörichten Schlüssen missbrauchte eratosthenische Notiz ..."; Montana 2017, p. 219. Less convincingly, the expression δοκοῦσι δὲ οὗτοι οἱ Πέρσαι found in the longer version of the excerpt has been explained in the past as opposing Herodicus' theory: the compiler would be arguing that Aristophanes in *Frogs*

ally considered reliable, in view of the close links Aeschylus had with Sicily and with the tyrant Hieron, for whom during one of his visits to Sicily he produced a play, the *Women of Aetna*¹⁶; on the contrary, Herodicus' isolated annotation about a hypothetical lost version of the tragedy is quite problematic: it is not supported by other ancient evidence and it is not clear how a reference to Plataea could solve the problem of the mismatch between the statement in *Frogs* and the extant *Persians*¹⁷. A. Garvie, who discusses the problem in his recent edition of *Persians*, reaches the conclusion that Hellenistic scholars, knowing of the reproduction at Syracuse, must have guessed that it must have been different from the original and explained accordingly the inconsistency with *Frogs*; Herodicus' reference to Plataea should be a mistake arising from the prophecy of Darius' ghost in the extant *Persians* (ll. 805-20), who foretells the disastrous outcome of the battle (see Garvie 2009, p. lvi).

I do not wish to go into the merits of the numerous theories that have been devised to explain the statements in our scholium and the related possibility that different texts of the tragedy circulated in antiquity: Broadhead's and more recently Garvie's editions of *Persians* give a fair and detailed account of the modern debate¹⁸. I would rather try to explain Herodicus' puzzling statement about the battle of Plataea taking as a starting point the possibility that Herodicus misinterpreted a reference to the *Persians* production in his source, Eratosthenes: let us suppose that Eratosthenes was discussing the whole tetralogy comprising *Persians* and that this tetralogy did contain a reference to Plataea – not in *Persians*, however, but in the third play, *Glaucus of Potniae*. In other words, Herodicus understood that *Persians* contained a reference to the battle, while his source, Eratosthenes, was actually speaking of *Glaucus*; Herodicus, as a consequence, devised the theory that Aeschylus in Syracuse had staged a different version of the tragedy *Persians*, which described the battle of Plataea. As for Eratosthenes, the wording of the scholium does not allow us to understand whether he thought that Aeschylus had staged in Syracuse a revised version. There is no reason to doubt that he mentioned the Syracusan production in his work *On Old Comedy*, but the wider context of the

would not mention the Syracusan version of *Persians* in front of an Athenian audience, who could not be aware of it (see van Leeuwen 1890, p. 70; Roemer 1908, p. 394 f.).

¹⁶ See *TrGF* III T A1, p. 34, ll. 33 f. Radt. We should also consider that Eratosthenes too had close links with Syracuse, in that he was a friend of Archimedes, who dedicated to him his *Method of Mechanical Theorems*. The introduction to this treatise makes it clear that Archimedes treated him as an equal and discussed his work with him; it is not impossible to think that Eratosthenes discussed with Archimedes philosophical or literary topics as well as mathematical ones.

¹⁷ Note that the *Life of Aeschylus*, quoted above, uses the verb ἀναδιδάσκω when speaking of this production: this verb was used to refer to second stagings of the same play, while in the cases when the text had been revised, διασκευάζω was normally used (see below).

¹⁸ Broadhead 1960, pp. xlvi-iv; Garvie 2009, pp. liii-lvii (with E. Medda's 2010 review, esp. pp. 274 f.). See now also Constantinidis 2012, pp. 5-15; on the Syracusan production, Boshier 2012, pp. 97-111.

discussion is lost to us. Even if the starting point of his argument was actually the *Frogs* passage, we cannot be sure that Eratosthenes used the argument of the existence of a revised version to solve the inconsistency. In fact, other fragments of his work on comedy have survived, where he discusses cases of plays that had been restaged; he always displays a prudent and conservative attitude toward the idea that the text had been revised for the second performance, refraining from making unsubstantiated hypotheses¹⁹. To sum up my argument so far, Herodicus' position is incomprehensible, because his theory of a lost version of the tragedy that included Plataea does not answer the main problem addressed in the scholia, the conflict between Dionysus' statement in *Frogs* about *Persians* and the text of the extant tragedy. The notion that he misunderstood the information he found in Eratosthenes could offer an explanation for his theory, that is not supported by any other ancient testimony.

The possibility that Eratosthenes was discussing the whole tetralogy, not only *Persians*, in the context of the staging at Syracuse is altogether interesting, if we consider that *Glaucus*, as Sommerstein suggested (see § 1), probably contained references to the Syracusan victory over the Carthaginians at Himera. Hieron, who had invited Aeschylus to Syracuse, was the brother of Gelon, the ruler of Syracuse at the time of the battle of Himera. It is evident that the whole production of 472 as Sommerstein reconstructs it would have been extremely well suited to the Sicilian stage: alongside the narration of the victory of the Athenians at Salamis in *Persians*, it contained allusions to the other contemporary victory of the western Greeks over the Carthaginians at Himera, in the *Glaucus of Potniae*. If we consider the contents of the whole tetralogy, it is difficult to think of a performance more appropriate to the occasion: the plays magnified both the glory of the recent Greek successes against the Persians and the achievements of the Syracusan rulers against the Carthaginians²⁰.

Salamis and Himera were always closely associated in the minds of the Greeks: according to Herodotus (7. 166), they had even taken place on the same day, and Aristotle in his *Poetics* mentions them as an example of events

¹⁹ See Eratosth. fr. 38 Strecker = fr. 10 Bagordo (= argum. Ar. *pac.* A 2 Holwerda) and fr. 97 Strecker = 14 Bagordo (= schol. in Ar. *nub.* 553 Holwerda), respectively on *Peace* and on *Clouds* (see the discussion in Broggiato 2014b, p. 9). Moreover, in the passage of the *Life of Aeschylus* which mentions the Syracusan production (Aesch. T 1, 68 sq., p. 37 Radt, see above, in all probability derived from Eratosthenes' work) we find the verb ἀναδιδάσκω with reference to this production. As Blomfield established two centuries ago, this verb was used when speaking of the second staging of the same play, while διασκευάζω indicates a substantially revised version: see Blomfield 1818², p. xxvi f., Broadhead 1960, p. xlix and Garvie 2009, p. lvi (for exceptions to this rule see however Medda 2010, p. 275 f. n. 21). – E. R. Lange conjectured that the same verb might have been used in our scholium: ... ὑπὸ τοῦ Αἰσχύλου <ἀνα>δεδιδάχθαι ἐν Συρακούσῃσι ... (Lange 1832, p. 7 n. 15; I owe this observation to an anonymous colleague).

²⁰ Some modern readers of Aeschylus have defended the theory that the production had been written for the Sicilian stage and that only later it had been performed in Athens: this idea has been recently given a new lease of life by Kathryn Boshier (2012, with earlier bibliography).

that occurred in the same period of time (23, 1459 a 26)²¹. Significantly, the two Greek successes of 480 are mentioned together, as extraordinary examples of the Greek courage in the struggle against the barbarians, in Pindar's first *Pythian* ode (ll. 75 ff.). In particular, the fourth triad of this ode celebrates Hieron's foundation of the city of Aetna (for which Aeschylus wrote a play, the *Women of Aetna*) and his victory over the Etruscans at Cuma and the Carthaginians at Himera, together with the mainland Greeks' successes at Salamis and Plataea: the Syracusan triumphs over the Etruscans and the Carthaginians are celebrated alongside the victories over the Persians, in a clear attempt to put the Sicilian tyrants at the centre of the Greek world and on the same level of Athens and Sparta in mainland Greece.²²

The first *Pythian* was written for Hieron's victory at Delphi in 470. The date is remarkable, because the second staging of *Persians* (or of the entire tetralogy) in Syracuse cannot have been very distant in time from the performance of Pindar's victory ode for Hieron²³. Assuming that *Glaucus* did allude to Himera, it would have been incomprehensible for Aeschylus to stage in front of the tyrant of Syracuse only the tragedy *Persians*, without the other plays; we can reasonably hypothesize, therefore, that when Eratosthenes wrote that *Persians* had been restaged in Syracuse, he might well have been discussing a restaging of the whole production of 472.

3. *Persians*: a collective title?

To conclude, I would like to discuss the possibility that the misunderstanding at the root of Herodicus' theory about the lost version of *Persians* could have arisen from the way ancient writers referred to tragic productions. It has been suggested that in some instances, alongside the familiar titles ending in -εἰα, such as *Oresteia*, the title of a single play could be used to refer to the whole tetralogy: in our case, Eratosthenes might have used the title *Persians* to indicate the whole tetralogy including this play, and mentioned Plataea (which appeared in *Glaucus*) in his discussion. Herodicus might have thought that he was speaking of the single tragedy *Persians*, and consequently hypothesized that Aeschylus had staged a different version of this play, which included a description of the battle.

Collective titles ending in -εἰα for theatrical productions are well attested from the end of the fifth century BC. Aristophanes uses such titles to refer to sections or passages in tragic productions: in *Frogs* he famously mentions the title *Oresteia* (ran. 1124); another title, *Lykourgeia*, derived from the myth of Lycurgus, king of the Edonians in Thrace, appears in *Thesmophoriazusae* (l. 135)²⁴.

²¹ See also the list of passages from later historians in Cingano 1995, p. 17 n. 2.

²² See Cingano 1995, p. 17 f.

²³ See Morgan 2015, pp. 96 ff.

²⁴ *TrGF* T 67, p. 54 Radt. On this production see West 1990, pp. 26-50.

Other collective titles for fifth century productions are attested in a number of ancient sources: Polyphrasmon, Phrynichus' son, also wrote a *Lykourgeia* (*TrGF* I, Test. 3, p. 84 Snell, from the *Didaskaliai*); Meletus, possibly the father of Socrates' accuser, composed an *Oidipodeia* (schol. Pl. *apol.* 18 b = *TrGF* I, F 1, p. 186 f. Snell); Philocles, the nephew of Aeschylus, was the author of a *Pandionis* (schol. Ar. *av.* 281 = *TrGF* I, Test. 6c, p. 140 Snell); a title *Telepheia* is attested for Sophocles (*TrGF* I, DID B 5. 8, p. 39 Snell, *TrGF* IV, p. 434 Radt)²⁵. Wilamowitz in 1914 advanced the suggestion that Aeschylus himself gave titles to the productions, and that the single plays had been named only later by grammarians; in his opinion, this usage was not yet widespread in the second century BC, at the time of Apollodorus of Athens (Wilamowitz 1914, 379). Along the same lines, Sommerstein has now argued in detail that in Aeschylus' time connected tetralogies were officially recorded under a single title, and only with time individual plays acquired their own names, thanks to the book trade or to later productions of single pieces; these titles were later added to the published version of the *Didaskaliai*²⁶.

All the undisputably attested titles for productions are formations on the main character's name, with the suffixes -εια or -ις. Modern scholars however have repeatedly argued that one of the plays' titles could also be used to indicate the whole tetralogy; a most compelling case in this direction was recently made by C. Meliadò, who thinks that the alternative title *Lycurgus* could have been used to refer to the whole Aeschylean tetralogy *Lykourgeia*, which comprised the *Edonians*, the *Bassarides*, the *Neaniskoi* and the satyr drama *Lycurgus*²⁷. In fact, a marginal annotation in an Oxyrhynchus papyrus, illustrating the rare ethnonym "Edonians", quotes as an example the title *Lycurgus*, and not, as we would expect, the title of the first play of the tetralogy, *Edonians*, that obviously had a very strong association with the people. Meliadò rightly suggests that this could be explained if the title *Lycurgus* in this case indicated the whole *Lycurgus* production²⁸. The hypothesis that *Lycurgus* could be used as a collective title had already been advanced by Welcker almost two centuries ago in his discussion of another Theocritus scholium, that mentions a commentary by the Alexandrian scholar Aristarchus on Aeschylus' *Lycurgus*: again, this title could indicate the whole production, not only the

²⁵ See e.g. Griffith 1977, p. 16; Garvie 2009, p. xli f.

²⁶ Sommerstein 2010b, p. 15 f. See also the discussion in Sommerstein 1989a, p. 12; 1989b, p. 435 f.; on the contrary, Brown 1984, p. 268, thought that Aristophanes used titles such as *Oresteia* or *Lykourgeia* to indicate single plays, not whole productions.

²⁷ The plays of the tetralogy are listed in the schol. on Ar. *Thesm.* 135 = Aesch. T 68, p. 54 Radt.

²⁸ Marginal schol. on POxy. 2064 + 3548 (fr. 20c), ed. Meliadò 2009, p. 213: Ἡδ[ων]οί, ἔθνος Θράκης, ὧν μ[έ]μνηται(αι) | [Αἰσχύλος] ὁ ποι[η]τ(ης) ἐν Λυκούργωι [(*"The Edonians, a people of Thrace, who are mentioned by the poet Aeschylus in the Lycurgus"*). The note explains Theocr. 7. 111; see Meliadò 2009, pp. 213-215.

satyr drama²⁹. Scholars have hypothesized the existence of such titles for other Aeschylean productions as well: for example the production comprising *Supplices*, *Egyptians* and *Danaids* might have been collectively named *Danaids*³⁰; likewise, another title assigned to Aeschylus, *Pentheus*, could hide a reference to an entire tetralogy dealing with the story of the Theban king³¹. In any case, a certain amount of flexibility or approximation should be taken into account in the use of titles for productions: for instance Aeschylus in *Frogs*, when asked to deliver the prologue of *Oresteia*, recites the beginning of the second tragedy, *Choephoroi* (*ran.* 1124 ff.)³².

In the case of the tetralogy including *Persians*, where a title ending in *-εια* would have been difficult to formulate³³, it is possible that *Persians* could be used to refer to the whole production. This idea was first proposed in the nineteenth century, in connection with early attempts at finding links between the plays of the tetralogy; the same hypothesis has also been used to explain the well-known problem concerning two quotations, assigned to *Persians* by ancient sources, which actually do not appear in the text of the tragedy as we read it today³⁴.

In conclusion, I would argue that our scholia could in fact hide a reference to the restaging in Syracuse of the whole *Persians* tetralogy. It is possible that Eratosthenes, who wrote about a restaging of *Persians* in Sicily, was thinking of the whole production, not only of the play with the same name; Herodotus later misunderstood the title and the reference to the tetralogy in Eratosthenes' work, and accordingly conjectured that Aeschylus had staged a revised version of the tragedy which comprised the victory at Plataea³⁵.

²⁹ Schol. ad Theocr. 10. 18 e Wendel: Ἀρίσταρχος ἐν ὑπομνήσει Λυκούργου Αἰσχύλου ...; see Welcker 1824, p. 325 and Welcker 1826, p. 103. On the hypothesis that the commentary dealt with the whole tetralogy see Radt's edition of Aeschylus' fragments, p. 234 f. – Very little is left of the work of the Hellenistic philologists on Aeschylus: see in general Montanari 2009, who discusses the schol. on Theocritus 10. 18 at pp. 416 f.; see also my analysis of some particular cases in Broggiato 2018, pp. 175-183.

³⁰ See Wilamowitz 1914, p. 379, and Garvie 1969, pp. 14 and 186. The discussion is centered on a statement found in Strabo (5. 2. 4): Αἰσχύλος δ' ἐκ τοῦ περὶ Μυκίνας Ἄργους φησὶν ἐν Τεκτίσι ἢ Δαναΐσι τὸ γένος αὐτῶν (= Aesch. F *46 Radt). According to Wilamowitz, Strabo's source, Apollodorus of Athens, referred to *Supplices* using both its title (*Supplices*) and the title of the trilogy (*Danaids*) to avoid confusion. See TrGF III, p. 111 n. 4.

³¹ See Welcker 1824, p. 325, followed by Zieliński 1925, p. 69; the title is mentioned in the hypothesis to Euripides' *Bacchae*. Welcker (1824, p. 325) suggested that other Aeschylean titles could refer to trilogies as well, such as *Prometheus*, *Niobe* and possibly also *Athamas* and *Iphigenia*.

³² See C. Pace in Meliadò 2009, p. 214 n. 22.

³³ In fact, *Perseia* would seem to be about Perseus rather than the Persians (I owe this observation to an anonymous colleague).

³⁴ See Lange-Pinzger 1825, pp. 41 f.; Schneider 1837, pp. xvii f.; Ahrens 1846, p. 194. The fragments in question are fr. 285 Radt (inc. fab.): insulae νηιτοτρόφοι (?) (= Athen. 3. 86b); fr. 286 Radt (inc. fab.): ὑπόξυλος (= schol. Hermog. ed. Walz, Rhet. Gr. 7. 973. 14 + 5. 486. 11). For the extensive bibliography on the problem see Radt's apparatus on these fragments; different explanations for the quotations are reviewed in Broadhead 1960, pp. xlix f.

³⁵ I would like to thank Fausto Montana for sending me a pre-publication draft of his important article (*Zetemata alessandrini negli scoli alle Rane di Aristofane. Riflessioni ecdotiche*, 2017).

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ABSTRACT: The starting point of this article is Alan Sommerstein's proposal to consider Aeschylus' 472 production as a linked tetralogy, based on the theme of the war against the Persians. The tetralogy comprised the tragedies *Phineus*, *Persians*, *Glaucus of Potniae* and the satyr drama *Prometheus Pyrphoros*. My paper discusses, in the light of Sommerstein's reconstruction, the puzzling statements about the Sicilian production of *Persians* found in the scholia on Ar. *Frogs* 1028, which quote Eratosthenes of Cyrene and Herodicus of Babylon. In particular, when Eratosthenes stated that *Persians* was restaged by Aeschylus in Syracuse, he might have actually been discussing a restaging of the whole production and not of the single tragedy; the information we read in Herodicus about a version of *Persians* that included the battle of Plataea could derive from a misunderstanding of Eratosthenes' statement.