

CHAPTER 4

THE NAMES IN *THE PERSIANS*

4.1 Introduction

In his discussion on Aeschylus' selection and treatment of plot, Haigh (1938:76) concludes:

Aeschylus exhibits, in the selection and treatment of his subjects, a preference for everything which is strange, and mysterious, and remote. He loves to penetrate into the dim twilight of the primitive mythology ... He lays the scenes of his tragedies in Heaven and even in Hell. He is fond of discoursing about those far distant regions which lie on the borderland between fable and reality. Hence the clusters of strange names and places in the *Persae*....

For the Greek audience there was a relation between myth and the mysterious; what is known and every day life. The names were actual, and though strange and foreign, at the same time phonetically, communicate a different significance. The names thus become descriptors. The names also function within the play's dramatic structure.

Broadhead (1960: 318) asks two important questions: "How many [names] are authentic Persian?" and, "How many of the commanders are historical persons?" In the short essay, Broadhead considers various answers experts had given to the questions. He asserts (1960: 318) that "the bulk of the names are Iranian,⁷⁴ though in many cases we cannot trust the spelling". Kranz, according to Broadhead (1960: 318) maintains that none of the names were invented by Aeschylus, "who would get them from prisoners of war or from Greek deserters or from historiographical sources".

However, what Broadhead ascribes to possible "errors in transcribing unknown or little-known names" could be considered to be deliberate alterations, and thus Broadhead's "allowance for the influence of popular etymology and the tendency to assimilate the unknown to the known", is seen rather as a manipulation of some historical names, which, along with some fabricated names – for which there are no other witness –

⁷⁴ Broadhead (1960: 318) states that a few of the names are found in Persian sources, and all but eighteen occur in other Greek writers.

indicates that the poet was not intending to give a precise recount of the events. Broadhead (1960: 319) also comes to the conclusion: “We can only conclude that the poet’s aim was very different from that of the historian, so that quite different pictures are given”.

Murray (1939: 10-11) probably gives the best indication of the manipulation of names by Aeschylus. He considers the use of names as a means to create an atmosphere of “far away and long ago”. He mentions that the Persians are mentioned abundantly and with deliberate effect, relating the names Artaphrenes, Artembares and Hystaichmas to their characterisation (my interpretation) regarding them as “remote and awful beings with the fascination of distance about them”. Contrary to Murray, though, the names in *The Persians* are not considered as only “grand and barbaric” (1939:10), but also contain something familiar, domestic, apart from the grandiose and foreignness.

Podlecki (1970: 122) briefly refers to what he calls a “sensitive article” by Jacqueline Duchemin, “Réflexions sur la tragédie des Perses”. In this article she comments on the “sonorities of the exotic names”. Apart from identifying only three groupings of names (16ff, 302ff, 955ff), which she groups in catalogues, she investigates the richness of the names in their musical context. Furthermore, she illustrates how they contribute to the play’s pathos (sic), by encouraging the audience “to feel for the conquered enemy the sympathy of one human being for another in the face of the precariousness of their common existence”. This study has identified five groupings, which are categorised under character clusters. Furthermore, this study concentrates on word-lexical and structural analysis and not on metre as Duchemin does.

4.2 The name of the play

Herodotus used “Persians” in a geographic sense. Immerwahr (1966:32n51) distinguishes between three geographic meanings: the homeland of the Persian tribes listed in Herodotus 1.125.3-4 (Also: 1.108.2; 120.6; 123.3-4; 1.209.2 & 3.70.3); the heartland of the Persian empire, including Susa, as in *The Persians* (Herodotus 3.1.1); and the Persian empire as a whole (Herodotus 7.8c1;53.2).

Aeschylus uses the name *The Persians* (Περσαί nominative plural, Περσῶν genitive plural) in three senses: One, as a geographic historic enemy of Greece (1-7); two, in its

phonetically associated, etymologically orientated meaning “destructor” (πέρσαις 95)⁷⁵ (Greece, the current universal aggravator - trade and travel - must beware not to follow suit, to stray from their calling according to the oracle at Delphi - Persians were originally called to care for goats, not to make war);⁷⁶ and thirdly, as a hint on the name Perseus (Περσεύς), son of Jove (Jupiter) and Danaë.⁷⁷

4.3 Structures of personal and place names

4.3.1 Micro structure of persons and places

4.3.1.1 Micro structure of persons

The following table is used to present an analysis of the micro structure of the character clusters in the play:

Chr
Act
M
P
S

⁷⁵ Note the alliteration of the π sound and the assonance of the αι, οι and ει diphthong combinations in 94-99, as well as the reference to Μοῖρα (Moirā), the goddess of fate, in 93: See also 178: Ἰαόνων γῆν οἴχεται πέρσαι θέλων (wishing to destroy the land of the Ionians – Greece). Πέρσαι is the Aorist infinitive of πέρθω); in 252: τὸ Περσῶν δ’ ἄθος οἴχεται πεσόν (Persia’s flower, that had fallen, has been destroyed); the description of the destruction in 459-471; also 517: διαπεπραγμένου στρατοῦ (the army totally destroyed); and 532-534: Ζεῦ ... νῦν ... Περσῶν τῶν μεγαλούχων καὶ πολυάνδρων στρατιὰν ὀλέσας (Zeus, the Persian army’s proud appearance and great numbers you have now destroyed); and 561: “... as well as the navy” (νᾶες δ’ ἀπώλεσαν).

⁷⁶ An ironic reference, since the Persian empire was “destroyed” by their attempted attack on Greece.

⁷⁷ Perseus (flighted), according to Greek mythology, killed Medusa, the Gorgon. According to a contemporary theory (Bulfinch 1979: 133) the Gorgons and associated Graeae were personifications of the terrors of the sea - an interesting association in the context of the Persians’ failed attack by sea.

Table 3: Micro structure of persons

Character cluster 1 (21-58): The terrifying escort under the king (58)		
Blossom of men from the Persian land (59)		
Name	Text elaboration	Comments
Character cluster 1a (21-23)		
Amistris (Ἀμίστρης) 21	Called Persian marshals (23), lords, subjects of the great king.	The oxymoron lords, subjects (24) along with their action, being hastened, indicates that the procession was not well prepared. It is not sure whether the great king refers to Xerxes or Darius. In 13 Xerxes is called a young man, compared to 5, where he is referred to as king (though also son of Darius). Darius is elevated in the play, and the reference to the great army (25) could be a reminder of the defeat at both Marathon and Salamis.
Artaphrenes (Ἀρταφρένης) 21		
Megabates (Μεγαβάτης) 22		
Astaspes (Ἀστάσπης) 22		
Character cluster 1b (29-32)		
	... supervisors of the great army archers and horsemen causing fear when seen, deadly in battle, reputed by their steadfast courage (25).	
Artembares (Ἀρτεμβάρης) 29	The one who relishes fighting from the chariot (29).	The first syllable 'Art', occurs frequently in the name clusters.
Masistres (Μασίστρης) 30	The archer brave (30).	
Imaeus (Ἴμαῖος) 31		
Pharandakes (Φαρανδάκης) 31		
Sosthanes (Σοσθάνης) 32	The driver of horses (32).	

Character cluster 1c (33-40)		Those from Egypt (33)	
Name	Text elaboration	Comments	
Sousiskanes (Σουσισκάνης) 34		Those from Egypt are mentioned in the same breath as the marsh-dwellers that row ships, skilled and uncountable in number (39-40). The differentiation into nationalities is interesting, since it was part of the Persian policy to assimilate their defeated subjects and not to distinguish between their previous national origins. The vast size of the Persian fleet was a factor that assisted the Greeks to defeat them.	
Pegastagon (Πηγασταγών) 35	Egyptian born (35).		
Arsames (Ἀρσάμης) 37	Great (37), the lord of holy Memphis (36).		
Ariomardos (Ἀριόμαρδος) 38	The regent of wealthy Thebes (37-38).		
Character cluster 1d (41-48)			
	The crowd of delicately living Lydians (41 –42) who control the whole Mainland nation (44), aspiring lords (44).	The idea is conveyed that these people are definitely not soldiers, and even less accustomed to the sea. Thus, the fearfulness (48) was not in the eyes of the enemy, but in the eyes of the Persian guardians (the chorus).	
Mitrogathes (Μητρογαθής) 43			
Arkteus (Ἄρκευς) 44	Brave (44).		
Sardis (Σάρδεις) 44	Wealthy (45).		
	...excited with countless chariots arranged two and three abreast, a most fearful sight to behold (44-48).		
Character cluster 1e (49-57)			
	The neighbours of holy Tmolos (49) who threaten to throw the yoke of slavery over Greece (49-50).	Apart from the names of persons being related to different names of places, the continued threat of the Persians (perceived by Aeschylus) is also considered, thus making the play a matter of actuality. (The animosity between the Greeks and “the neighbours of holy Tmolos” date back to the days of Paris and Troy. Thus a classic allusion).	

Name	Text elaboration	Comments
Mardon (Μάρδων) 51		
Tharybis (Θάρυβις) 51	Anvils of the spear (51) Mysian javeliners (52).	
	Babylon (52) the rich in gold, powerful multitude in a long row (53-54) - contrast to commanders of ships (54). All have faith in the tight temper of the bow (55) - contrast to spear-bearing nation from all over Asia (56-57).	The contrast and mixed legions indicate that the army was far too diverse, a strategic tactical error by Xerxes, weakening his command by not concentrating on either the land or sea attack, and in choice of weapons, bows and spears. Traditionally Persians were javeliners, thus to use bows and arrows would, and was a fatal error.

Character cluster 2 (299-330) A few disasters selected from many (330)

Character cluster 2a (299)	Survivor	
Xerxes (Ξέρξης) 299		In the play the only survivor mentioned is Xerxes. This is most certainly not historically correct. The tactic in the play is to compare the dead to Xerxes (299), thereby accentuating the severity of the Persian loss, as well as the political irony - the one responsible for the deaths survived. See also character cluster 5.

Character cluster 2b (302-307)	Dead	
Artembares (Ἄρτεμβάρης) 303	Leader of ten thousand horsemen (302) slammed against cruel coasts of Sileniae (303).	In this cluster the personal names are given in relation to place names with further elaboration on their ranks with vivid descriptions of their fate.
Dadakes (Δαδάκης) 304	Leader of one thousand, due to a spear attack jumped from his ship with too light a leap (304-305).	
Tenagon (Τενάγων) 306	Honourably born of the Baktrians (306) fares around sea struck island of Ajax (307).	(compare to 318).

Character cluster 2c (308-313)		Dead
Name	Text elaboration	Comments
Lilaios (Λίλαιος) 308	The dwellers alongside the fountains of Egypt's Nile (311).	Two sets of three names (308-310 & 311-313). The first three's fate is given in 310, and the second three's fate in 313.
Arsames (Ἀρσάμης) 308		
Argestos (Ἀργήστος) 308		
Arkteus (Ἀρκτεύς) 312		
Adeues (Ἀδεύης) 312		
Pharnouchos (Φαρνούχος) 313		
Character cluster 2d (314-319)		Dead
Chryseus (Χρυσεύς) 314	Commander of thirty thousand dark horses (315), he has bushy reddish dark full beard (316) which was drenched, while his colour changed in the purple dye.	Rank and description is given in each case.
Matallos (Μάταλλος) 314	Commander over ten thousand.	- with ...
Magos (Μᾶγος) 318		- also ...
Arabos (Ἄραβος) 318		
Artabes (Ἀρτάβης) 318	From Baktria (318) a Stranger from a savage land (319).	(see Cluster 2b).
Character cluster 2e (320-328)		Dead
Amistris (Ἀμιστρίς) 320		In relation to place names and rank, skill and description of their fate.
Amphistreus (Ἀμφιστρεύς) 320	Skilful manipulator of the spear (320-321).	
Ariomardos (Ἀριόμαρδος) 321	He that brings forth suffering (321).	
Seisames (Σεισάμης) 322	Noble (321) to Sardis (322)	
Tharubis (Θάρυβις) 323	Mysian (322) lord over five times fifty ships (323), a Lurnaeon by birth (324) a handsome man (324).	
Suennesis (Συέννεσις) 326	Foremost among the brave (326), high commander of the Cilicians (327) one man who offered the most resistance against the enemy, died like a hero (328).	

Character cluster 3 Persian Kings in Darius' message (765-792)		
Name	Text elaboration	Comments
Medos (Μῆδος) 765	... and his son (766)	Not all the Persian leaders were renowned, nor does Darius spare criticism, granting him authority to comment on Xerxes.
Cyrus (Κῦρος) 768	A blessed man Lydia (770), Phrygia, Ionia (770-771) places suppressed with force.	
Nameless	The son of Cyrus (773).	Nameless. The nameless characters in the play should be afforded a more particular study.
Mardos (Μάρδος) 774	An embarrassment. Assassinated by Artaphrenes (Ἄρταφρένης) (775-776).	
Artaphrenes (Ἄρταφρένης) 778		
Maraphis (Μάραφης) 778		
Self reference 789	I (Darius - implied) (789).	
Xerxes (Ξέρξης) 782	Youth.	The youthfulness and rashness of Xerxes is emphasised, he being the last to be mentioned, almost as a curse.
Character cluster 4 The other multitude of friends lost (956-1001)		
Character cluster 4a	From Agabattania (961)	
Pharandakes (Φαρανδάκης) 958		Their fate (962-966) Turian warship (964), beaches of Salamis (965).
Sousas (Σούσας) 959		
Pelagon (Πελάγων) 959		
Dotamas (Δοτάμας) 959		
Psammis (Ψάμμις) 959		
Sousiskanes (Σουσισκάνης) 960		
Agabatas (Ἄγαβάτας) 960		
Character cluster 4b (967-970):	Those lost (973) who saw Athens (976)	
Pharnouchos (Φαρνούχος) 967	Lord (969).	The tempo of names intensifies, and the absence of further elaboration, either on origin and rank (descriptive) heightens the intensity at this point in the play. It is very climactic.
Ariomardos (Ἀριόμαρδος) 968		
Sevalkes (Σευάλκης) 969		
Lilaios (Λίλαιος) 970	Honourable (970).	
Memphis (Μέμφις) 971		
Tharybis (Θάρυβις) 971		
Masistras (Μασίστρας) 971		
Artembares (Ἀρτεμβάρης) 972		
Hustaichmas (Ἵσταίχμας) 972		

Character cluster 4c (978-985): The Flower of the Persians (978) left behind (985)		
Name	Text elaboration	Comments
Almistos (Ἄλμιστος) 981	Son of Batanochos (Βατανώχος) (981).	Corrupted text in 982.
Batanochos (Βατανώχος) 981		
Nameless	Son of Sesames (Σεσάμης) (983).	
Sesames (Σεσάμης) 983		
Nameless	Son of Megabates (Μεγαβάτης) (983).	
Megabates (Μεγαβάτης) 983		
Parthos (Πάρθος) 984		
Oibares (Οἰβάρης) 984 big 984		
Character cluster 4d (992-1001): Others that are missed (992)		
Mardon (Μάρδων)	Captain over ten thousand (993).	Note the chiasm between the names and their adjectival phrases.
Xanthes (Ξάνθης) 994		
Anchares (Ἀγχάρης) 994	From Arion (994).	
Diaixis (Δίαξις) 995	Cavalry leader (996).	
Arsakes (Ἀρσάκης) 995	Cavalry leader (996).	
Agdadates (Ἀγδαδάτης) 997		
Luthimnas (Λυθίμνας) 997		
Tolmos (Τόλμος) 999	War hero (999).	
Character cluster 5 Those who have remained from Xerxes' troops (1017)		
A single arrow holder (1020)	Ionian folk (1025) do not flee from battle (1025) very warlike.	A very weak apology is given by Xerxes, which is acknowledged, but not accepted by the chorus.
A storehouse for keen arrow heads (1022)	So little from so much (1023).	Personification of the weapons, implying that nobody had survived.

4.3.1.2 *Micro structure of places*

Distinction is made between individual places and clusters in which place names are mentioned.

4.3.1.2.1 *Individual places*

Several places are mentioned specifically:

- Susa (16, 119, 535, 557, 643, 730, 761).
- Agbatana (16, 535).
- Cissia (17, 120).
- Greece, (4, 40, 186, 234, 271, 402, 745, 757, 790, 797, 799, 809, 824, 875).
- Europe (799).
- Athens (231, 285, 286, 348, 474, 716, 824, 976).
- Salamis (273, 284, 447, 893, 966).
- Marathon (474), esp. in relation to Athens.
- Strait of Helle (472).
- Great Bosporos (723, 746, 875).
- Hades (924) (in context).
- Land of Asia (929).
- Fatherland (932).

These places are noteworthy for anchoring the play geographically. Some of these names have military significance, such as Marathon and Salamis, whereas others have political significance, like Athens, Susa and Agbatana. The imagery of the yoke in the Queen's dream (176-214) places the Grecian and Persian places in relation to each other.

The numerous origins of the soldiers in the opening sequence is also significant, indicating the variety of soldiers, and the disunity in the formations. Historically, the Persians assimilated their conquered territories into their ranks. These distinctions are thus ironic.

4.3.1.2.2 Place clusters

Place Cluster 1: The Persian escape routes (480-511)

1a: The land soldiers' route (480-511)

Boeotian land (483).
Phocian land (485).
Dorian country (486).
Gulf of Malia (486).
Spercheios (487) - water.

These places are compared to:

The land and soil of Achaea (488) - land.
Towns of Thessalia (489) - thirst and hunger (490).
Magnesian land (492).
Land of the Macedonians (492-493).
Stream of Axias (493).
Reedy marsh of Bolbe (494).

These places are contrasted to:

Pengaeas' mountains (494) the home of the Edonites (495).
Holy Strymon (496-507).
Thrace (509).
Sanctuary and land (511).

Place cluster 2: The advance by land and sea (736-748)

The bridge that joins two lands (736) - yoke.
The flowing open sea of Greece (745) - a slave in chains (746).
Bosporos (746) - the stream of the gods and forced to root against its nature (747).

Place cluster 3: Holy places, streams of nourishment and climax of disasters (805 - 812)

Asopus (805) through streams (805-806) the bringer of wealth.
Boeotian land (806) where climax of disasters awaits army (807).
Land of Greece (809).
Temples of the gods (810).
Altars (811).
Spirits' shrines (812).

Place cluster 4: Places Conquered and governed with wisdom (865-900)

4a: Mainland (866-879)

Halys river (866) the border (866).
Acheloin towns (869).
Strymon land (869).
Phrygian land (870).
The lake on the mainland surrounded by towers (871).
Greece's broad river (875).
Propontis (876).
Pantos (879).

4b: Islands near the mainland (882-886)

Lesbos (882).
 Samos, where olives grow (883).
 Chios (884).
 Paros (884).
 Naxos (885).
 Mukanos (885).
 Andros (885).
 Tanus (886).

4c: Islands deep in the sea and further (890-898)

Lemnos (890).
 Ikaros (890).
 Rhodes (891).
 Knidos (891).
 Towns of Cyprus (891).
 Paphos (893).
 Soli (893).
 Salamis (893) whose mother city is the cause of the complaints (895-896).
 Ionia (898) wealthy Greek inhabited cities.

The tempo of the names becomes more intense as the play progresses, helping to control pace and intensity in the play. The manner the names have been interwoven into the narration gives the play a Homeric feel, reminding of Odysseus' travels.

4.3.2 Meso structures

The meso structures are presented to indicate the relation between the name groupings and the play's progress. A formal arrangement is detectable, with related content orientation. The shift moves from a procession of many to the return of few.

4.3.2.1 Meso structure of persons' names

Character cluster 1 (21-58): The terrifying escort under the king (58)

Blossom of men from the Persian land (59).

Character cluster 1a (21-22)

Called Persian marshals (23), lords, subjects of the great king.

Character cluster 1b (25-32)

Supervisors of the great army (25).

Character cluster 1c (33-40)

Those from Egypt (33).

Character cluster 1d (41-48)

The crowd of delicately living Lydians (41-42).

Character cluster 1e (49-57)

Related to different Place names.

Character cluster 2 (299-330): A few disasters selected from many (330)

Character cluster 2a: Survivor

Xerxes (299).

Character cluster 2b: Dead

Personal names in relation to place names with ranks (302-307).

Character cluster 2c: Dead

2 pairs of 3.

The Persians (familiar to the audience) (308-310).

The dwellers alongside the fountains of Egypt's Nile (311-313).

Character cluster 2d: Dead

Rank and description (314-319).

Character cluster 2e: Dead

In relation to place names and rank, skill and description (320-328).

Character cluster 3: Persian Kings in Darius' message

The one man (763-764).

The family (765-789).

Character cluster 4: The other multitude of friends lost (956-1001)

Character cluster 4a

From Agabatania (958-966).

Character cluster 4b

Emphasis of those lost (973) who saw Athens (976) (967-970).

Character cluster 4c (978-985)

The Flower of the Persians (978) left behind (985) (978-985).

Character cluster 4d (992-1001)

Others that are missed (992-1001).

Character cluster 5: Those who have remained from Xerxes' troops (1017)

So little from so much (1020 1023).

4.3.2.2 Meso structure of place names

The presentation of the place clusters show how expressive they are of the play's main themes and images.

4.3.2.2.1 Place clusters

Place cluster 1: The Persian escape routes (480-511).

1a The land soldiers (480-511).

Place cluster 2: The advance by land and sea (736-748).

Place cluster 3: Holy places, streams of nourishment and climax of disasters (805 -812).

Place cluster 4: Places conquered and governed with wisdom (865-900).

4a Mainland (866-879).

4b Islands near the mainland (882-886).

4c Islands deep in the sea and further (890-898).

4.3.3 Macro structures

The macro structures present a broad overview of the names used in the play.

4.3.3.1 Macro structure of persons' names and place names

Character cluster 1	(21-58):	The terrifying escort under the king (58).
Character cluster 2	(299-330):	A few disasters selected from many (330).
Place cluster 1	(480-511):	The Persian escape Route.
Place cluster 2	(736-748):	The Advance by Land and Sea.
Character cluster 3	(765-792):	Persian Kings in Darius' message.
Place cluster 3	(805 -812):	Holy places, streams of nourishment and climax of disasters.
Place cluster 4	(865-900):	Places Conquered and governed with wisdom.
Character cluster 4	(956-1001):	The other multitude of friends lost.
Character cluster 5	(1017):	Those who have remained from Xerxes' troops.

The balance of names is very evident, and the headings, expressive of the contents, in short tell the story of *The Persians*.

4.3.3.2 Macro structure of names of gods

Moira (Goddess of fate) (93).

Ata (Ruin) (113, 1006).

The ancient fortune bringer, the δαίμων of old (158).

Ploutos (Death), King of the dead (163).

Protecting gods (203).

Phoebos' (Apollo's) altar (205-206).

Helios (232).

Pallas (Athena) (347).

Pan (448).

Zeus (532, 739, 762, 827).

Earth (as deity) (629, 641).

Hermes (629).

King of the Dead (629).

Blessed King 633 – Darius equal to a god (643, 856-857 (157, 620-621).

Aidoneus (649-650).

Poseidon (750).

Ares (951).

Apollo (the statue of Apollo was placed central stage, in front of the Palace).

The gods have not been structured in any formations, or families, since the text also contains many passive allusions to the gods. The presence of the gods could call for a third stage behind, over and above the off-stage action being reported on by the messengers. The central messenger, Darius, would then be the messenger of this third stage. *The Persians* would then have a tripartite setting.

4.3.3.3 Structure of persons and places taking gods into consideration

The following structure indicates the harmonised balance of the play. It could be suggested that the play has a formal ring composition around Fate and Ata (Ruin), with its pivot falling on the speech of Darius.

Character cluster 1 (21-58): The terrifying escort under the king (58)

Moira (Goddess of fate) (93).

Ata (Ruin) (113).

Darius (157).

Xerxes (157) - indirectly.

The ancient fortune bringer, the δαίμων of old (158).

Ploutos (Death), King of the dead (163).

Protecting gods (203).

Phobos' (Apollo's) altar (205-206).

Helios (232).

Character cluster 2 (299-330): A few disasters selected from many (330)

Pallas (Athena) (347).

Pan (448).

Place cluster 1 (480-511): The Persian escape route

Zeus (532).

Darius (620-621).

Earth (as deity) (629, 641).

Hermes (629).

King of the Dead (629).

Darius (633, 643).

Aidoneus (649-650).

Place cluster 2 (736-748): The advance by land and sea

Poseidon (750).

Zeus (739, 762).

Character cluster 3 (765-792): Persian kings in Darius' message

Place cluster 3 (805 -812): Holy places: streams of nourishment and climax of disasters

Zeus (827).

Darius (856-857).

Place cluster 4 (865-900): Places conquered and governed with wisdom

Ares (951).

Darius (856-857).

Character cluster 4 (956-1001): The other multitude of friends lost

Ata (1006)

Character cluster 5 (1017): Those who have remained from Xerxes' troops

4.4 Characterisation

This study agrees with Owen (1952:32), where he states:

The poem is designated not to reveal personalities, not to show character in action, but to express and develop a great emotion.

Emotion, or rather pathos, is important to the play. This emotion is controlled, and not as Owen would have it an inversion of Greek patriotism projected onto the Persian defeat. The play is far more complex in its organisation. It is proposed that character plays a central role in the play. This is not only character as portrayed by the actors, but also the characters mentioned in the play, which contribute to characterising the Persian nation.

In this section caution will be exercised not to present character development, where the character, through the course of the play, would exhibit growth of sorts, or decline. This notion is based on the comprehension that *The Persians*, in line with Greek thought, does not have character development within it.⁷⁸ Characters that are mentioned in the play, but are not portrayed on-stage, are representative of the Persian nation. The characters portrayed on-stage are static in terms of character development, but are versatile in their responses to the main action. It is not the action that is important, but the reaction thereto. This reaction is manipulated by Aeschylus through his use of language, and other technical devices, such as music, song and dance.

The study of the names used in *The Persians* will therefore be conducted under the auspices of “characterisation”, as glimpses into the off-stage personae are communicated through the names, which contain within themselves adjectival qualities.

As the main action of the drama does not take place on-stage, but is reported, so the characters participating in this action are not presented on-stage, apart from through the reports given. The characters thus have no way of establishing themselves. The audience must deduce a mental picture of the action and character through the reports given on-stage. Due to time limitations (stage time), in order to maintain the tempo (poetic and musical) and tension (performance), the names of the off-stage characters

⁷⁸ Rather than referring to character development within Greek thought, it would be more appropriate to consider character within Greek drama as character portrayal. Character stereotypes are more evident than character development.

have a dual purpose. The first function is that of identification, and the second is descriptive. It is particularly in this second function that this study is interested. There is a strong relation between character portrayal and character name in *The Persians*. The principal character establishment is enhanced through the adjectival potency of the names.

4.4.1 Characterisation theory

4.4.1.1 Contrast of characters

Contrast of characters is often contained within the same name. The audience's reaction to a name, and connotations attached to its mentioning, would depend on the name's position in the play, whether early (often pathetic), in the height of the action (alarm, uneasiness, insight), or late (generating pathos). Further considerations are: the name's relation to the other names mentioned within the same cluster; the name sounding at once foreign and familiar; the different meaning combinations and associations; the toned grandeur of the names, and emotion evoking reference to places, their initial humorous undertones; and the absence of any names of Greek leaders, generals or soldiers. The Persian army is thus not compared to the Greek army directly, but their presence, especially in the battle scenes, is always immediate.

Where Murray (1939:10) sees the absence of Greek names in the play as one of the methods by which Aeschylus contrives "to remove his theme from the atmosphere of the poor prosaic here-and-now into that of the heroic 'far away and long ago'..." I see the non reference to Greeks by name as a characterisation devise.

4.4.1.2 The Hellenised names

From the Queen's dream, 176-199, the two sisters are designated, one as being Greek (186) and the other a Barbarian (187). Apart from the reference to Barbarian, which emphasises the fact that that the play is Greek, the reference to the two enemies as sisters emphasises the gravity of the ancient feud. She also sends her barbarian cries (635) in her attempts to prompt Darius into action.

Krantz (cf Broadhead 1960:318) identifies ten names as Iranian: Arimardos, Arsakes, Arsames, Artames, Artaphrenes, Artembares, Megabates, Mitrogathes, Oibares, Pharnakes. He further maintains that none of the names in the tragedy were invented by

Aeschylus, who would have had access to them from prisoners of war or from Greek deserters or from other historiographical sources. Broadhead (1960:318) asserts that the bulk of the names in *The Persians* are Iranian. To his own admission, the spelling of the names causes problems, being ascribed to errors in transcription, the influence of popular etymology, the tendency to assimilate the unknown to the known, or to mistakes made by copyists. It is important for Broadhead to maintain the integrity of names in *The Persians* to uphold his hypothesis that the tragedy is “realistic” historic reflection.

I agree with Murray (1939:77), who considers that Aeschylus makes great play with the “grand Persian names”. Murray mentions that the names have been superficially Hellenised and that a few seem neither Persian nor Greek.

In terms of historicity, only eleven names of the leaders mentioned by Aeschylus are also recorded by Herodotus (vii, 61-97). A further forty names used by Aeschylus are not reflected in Herodotus. Regardless, Murray (1939:11) has set about “dehellenising” *The Persians* to attain a more exotic feel in the play, by using the Biblical Javan to transliterate Iâôn, the name by which the Persians called the Greeks, and further, he “knocked off from the proper names the final syllable with which they were Hellenised and which to our ears makes them all sound Greek”. The Hellenisation of the names appears to be deliberate, and to ‘dehellenise’ them for exotic purposes, or to pursue their historical correctness thus seems to be doing the play an injustice.

4.4.1.3 Linguistic considerations

Similar to English borrowing words from foreign languages (Greek, Latin and French being sources for many English words) to communicate new meanings or sophisticated expressions for which it has no equivalent or to be fashionable, Greek also borrowed many words from languages akin to it. Thus, many Egyptian and Persian words crept into the Greek language. The search for the establishment of the true – “original” meaning, through an etymological study, of a word by tracing its source could become problematic as the use of words develop through adoption, adaptation, and through changing reference systems. The theory that a word and its meaning are not necessarily related could also be substantiated by the phonetic closeness of some similar sounding words, where these words - though sounding similar - are associated with diverse senses. For example: ἀδικία, ἡ (an offence) and δική, ἡ (right), or “there” (adverb of

direction) and “their” (possessive pronoun). In English ἀδικία sounds like “adikeya”, which could be confused with “adequate”, and δική, sounding like “decae”, could be confused with either a type of coffee, or allusion could also be made to the name “Dick” and its diminutive “Dicky”. It is thus not possible to establish roots via sounds, though associations and confusion exists.

This theory is contrary to Moore & Moore (1996:iv), who state:

Many of the words in English are based on Latin and Greek roots ... These roots are dependable and unchanging and serve as the key to understanding the vocabulary of English and many of the modern European languages. An understanding of the core meaning of each root will provide a tool for unlocking the meaning of the thousands of Latin and Greek based words in many languages. Mastering the knowledge of these roots will open doors to new knowledge and provide the reader with a more powerful and useful vocabulary.

It would be important to point out that the “roots” of the parent language are determined principally through the derivatives, through the receiving language. Greek and Latin roots are thus interpreted through an understanding of the English language, for different reasons. There is thus a reversal of sensibility. In addition, the former argument - that Greek itself borrowed words from other languages - makes the establishment of original meanings very difficult. Even so, slightly modified, a dramatist could manipulate such borrowings to good effect.

If foreign words (for example, especially multiple syllabic ones) were to be transliterated into a different language, the listeners would use their own language systems to interpret the foreign words. Thus, they would not hear the foreign words as pronounced in their language of origin, but within the phonemic structures of the recipient language. The sentence, or utterance structures (syntax) of the recipient language would further accentuate hearing the foreign words in semantic structures of the receptor language. Thus a dramatist could use foreign words, and names, to heighten dramatic effect.

There is no documented proof that this is what Aeschylus did, but through a lexicographical analysis of the Persian names used in *The Persians*, it may be shown to be very probable, whether by design or co-incidence, that the dramatic effect of the Greek phonetic derivatives of the Persian names, would have made the play far more

colourful. The dramatic effect would be further heightened if the audience did not have a working knowledge of the language of origin. The dramatic irony is emphasised, as in *The Persians*, if actual Persian names were to be used, which, as has been established, is the case. In his *A Lexicon to Aeschylus*, Linwood (1847) indicates the names as proper names without subjecting them to any etymological or morphological analysis. The proper names used in *The Persians* could thus be considered by Linwood to be unproblematic, and as a reference to real people.

Lyotard is interesting for his considerations on proper names. He uses them as “vehicles for reference” (Williams 1998:71) in his goal to distance phrases from the things they refer to. Lyotard argues that proper names in a phrase do not refer to an outside reality that can be inspected through ‘a process of verification’, but rather, that reality is constituted by the conjunction of the various senses that the phrase can have and the thing to which the name refers. So the name does not have a sense of its own that can be fixed by referring to a real thing in the world. Williams (1998:71) determines that, instead, there is a series of different versions of reality, brought forth when a name brings a thing that is referred to together with a network of senses, that is, the different senses of the phrase that includes the name.

4.4.2 Dramatic intention, effect, meaning

The same names used in different parts of the play have a different bearing on the play, and when they are mentioned, they have different effects on the audience. At times, and especially in the opening sequence one is prone to smile, though with reserve, and later the names become expressive, descriptive of the Persian defeat. The characterisation contained within their compounds helps to guard against *The Persians* becoming a song of Greek triumph.

The tone of the performance, as well as the actor’s stage attitude, would have to be taken into consideration. Their interpretation of the significance of the names would have influenced their voice dramatisation. The names could have been of foreign origin, but through Greek stress, they would be altered in significance and implication. On the one hand a foreign and exotic atmosphere would be created, and on the other a Greek slur would have given a sense of familiarity. The tension between the known (the list of islands and references to the deity) and the unknown (list of Persians and associates) strengthens this notion.

In the next section the names of the persons mentioned in the play are analysed, distinguishing between the stage characters - the chorus and the messengers - and the off-stage characters - represented in on-stage reports and descriptions.

4.5 Characters in *The Persians*

There are two principal groups of characters, stage characters and off-stage characters. Xerxes is the only human character to be involved in the action of both these stages. The gods are presented on-stage by reference to their names and their deeds. Due to the fact that the gods are affecting both the on-stage and the off-stage action, they are treated separately.

4.5.1 Analysis of the gods

The presence of Greek gods in the Persian camp is not a point of inaccurate archaeology, as Haigh (1938:106) suggests. The presence of the different Greek gods is more akin to the deeper plot of the play. On-stage, the main action is reported, and the main action is governed by divine providence. The appearance of Darius, and his testimony, is the primary messenger of the divine plot, and the subordinate human characters. The principal characters, thus, could be said to be the Greek deity. The mention and placing of their names would communicate significantly to the Greek audience.

It is of paramount significance that only Greek gods are mentioned. Darius and Xerxes - to a lesser extent - are deified, and the Queen is associated with the gods. However, this deification only occurs in their off-stage representation, and the elevation of Darius to godly status helps to validate his on-stage representation of the underworld.

Apollo is also present throughout the performance, through his statue being placed before the Palace. Where he is static and silent, Dionysus is represented through the choral dances, chants, song and lamentations.

4.5.2 Analysis of the stage characters

4.5.2.1 *The chorus*

The chorus introduces itself as representing the aged trustees, who had been called to stand guard over Persia, while the youth had gone into battle (1-7). The guardians announce their primary concern (8-11), which is then also the topic of the play. The chorus is thus functional in announcing the play to the audience. They also serve as first messengers, to the audience, to inform the spectators of the character of the procession that left Persia.

Different roles can be distinguished (Rehm 1992:59). The chorus acts as play host; represents the audience on-stage, being direct audience to the reported off-stage action; acts the role of the Queen's councillor; serves as the link between the battle of Marathon and the current events; thus also contrast to the youth gone into battle, as the aged comrades of Darius; its response, both in the formal dance and song and in the narration, carries the development of pathos in the play. The chorus is therefore central and instrumental in the play.

4.5.2.2 *The messengers*

4.5.2.2.1 *The Queen (of concern/represents women of Agbatana)*

In *The Persians*, the Queen is not mentioned or referred to as Atossa, the historical name of the wife of Darius and mother of Xerxes. She has a difficult role, a weak persona to portray. Apart from functioning as messenger she also represents the women of Agbatana. Thus the rapport between the chorus (veterans of Marathon and guardians of the land) and the Queen in their concern for the expedition becomes a rapport between people previously at war and people at home against war.

The interaction between the messengers (the Queen and the messenger; the Queen and Darius; the Queen and Xerxes) prompts considering the Queen a stage persona more akin to later productions. The interaction between the messengers requires the use of a second actor.

The Queen appears, and consolidates the chorus' fears by reporting on her dream, a metaphor of the situation, implicating Greece and Persia, and indicating the inharmonious actions of Xerxes. In this she is also a messenger, reminding the chorus and the audience that Xerxes has a mother (though naive) who cares for him. Thus another dimension of war, the people at home, is given consideration.

4.5.2.2.2 *The messenger (of war/of the off-stage action)*

The messenger acts in the same way as a story teller on the radio. The report is given to the chorus and the Queen, but the audience is also given the opportunity to visualise the off-stage action.

4.5.2.2.3 *Darius (of the gods/underworld/conscience)*

Immerwahr (1966: 169) asserts that fifth century Greek tradition considers Darius the embodiment of Persian character at its highest. The difference in portrayal of Darius (Herodotus sees him in a less than favourable light, while Aeschylus elevates his position) has to do at once with Herodotus' structure of the rise and fall of a leader, and with Aeschylus' emphasis on the wise king (now that he is dead). The Persian peril is thus emphasised. Plato also gives an idealised picture of Darius (*Laws* 3.696c).

Darius the worthy, defeated previous enemy is elevated to a position of respect. As with Xerxes, distinction must be made between the reported characterisation, as a great king and warlord, and his on-stage characterisation as having greater wisdom.

Darius, the beloved leader of Susa (554), is also the god's councillor (652-656), and is thus contrasted to Xerxes, the young inexperienced leader. The appearance of Darius as a ghost gives authenticity to his message and interpretation of the events.

4.5.2.2.4 *Xerxes (of the situation)*

Xerxes does not have a strong character. He is called Δαρειογενής (born of Darius) (5, 145). The references made to Xerxes are repeatedly in close proximity to Darius. Xerxes is thus portrayed as being in Darius' shadow. The fact that he only appears on-stage after Darius, supports this consideration. The rashness of Xerxes' youth and inexperience is contrasted to the maturity and wisdom of Darius. Thus how great a leader was defeated in Xerxes, so much the greater the defeat of Marathon, and how great was the onset of Greek democracy, so must it beware not to lose itself in its youthfulness (to extend the unexpressed simile quite far).

4.5.3 Analysis of the implied characters (off-stage)

4.5.3.1 *The group names in The Persians*

The group names in the play can also be distinguished. The wealth of the Persians, which could not assure them of a military victory, could be compared to the Ionians' wealth (889-899), which when governed with wisdom brought about prosperity. The specified nationalities in the Persian ranks are also ironic, as has been indicated above.

4.5.3.2 *Analysis of the personal names in The Persians*

One of the problems related to analysing the personal names used in *The Persians*, is that many of the phonetic nuances have been lost, and are thus difficult to reconstruct. The foreign names are also not analysed according to their original morphologies, as they functioned in their languages of origin, but rather, according to Greek lexical morphology, and compounded Greek adjectives, derived from phonetic associations. The reconstructed phonetic representations of the foreign names in *The Persians* is based on the Erasmian form of pronunciation. This is an academic reconstruction and is not necessarily the correct pronunciation. This study is restricted to a spelling determined, phonetic reconstruction of the pronunciation of the foreign names in *The Persians*.

A further consideration is that many of the names are used not in speech, but in song, thus further complicating the phonetic reconstruction of the word/name combinations the Greek audience would have heard. The “grandiose nature” of the tragedy is related to this complication, and would have been used by the dramatist to enhance the effect of “foreignness” and mythological/Homeric historical character and ambience, and simultaneously an uncomplicated familiarity of knowing the story, and making word/name associations with the foreign names.

The shortcoming that the current study is restricted to the written play, and not the performed play, is all the more evident, especially as the manner the names were pronounced would have guided one in the manner the audience reacted. Knowledge of the pitch, tones, and stresses, being necessarily Greek and not Persian, would have been of tremendous help in assessing the impact and the significance the use of foreign personal names in *The Persians* had on the audience.

In each case, not all the possibilities are explored. Rather, sufficient evidence in the morphological analysis of the foreign names used in *The Persians* is presented to indicate that this dimension of the tragedy requires further scrutiny, and closer analysis. The greater effect on, and understanding of the tragedy's language would also require further and greater attention, since it relates strongly to, and enhances the already well documented Aeschylean language usage.

Special attention should also be given to the names that are repeated, and how they function differently in the different contexts. There are also several syllables that are similar, or related, for example the Greek ending ης is very popular, as is the affix 'A-, as contained in the syllable 'Αρτ- (Art-).

Interesting associations could be possible if the names were vocalised, and if they were to be heard in English and not Greek. This would, however, force the play to be heard differently in its word play. For example: Amistres (21,320) - A mistress; and Masistres (30, 971) - Mrs Stress.

This does not constitute an exhaustive study of the names, but rather an indication of the possibilities. Where some of the names have easy associations, others are forced. The principle, however, that is postulated, is that more attention should be given to the underlying relations of the names, and the relation of the names to the broader context and language of the play.

In the opening sequence (1-7), the chorus, a group of older men are anticipating the arrival of news from the battle front and the return of the Persian army (8-15 & 59-64).

Important descriptives are: royalty's return (10), the gold paid army (11), a whole Asian generation, and wailing about a young man. The grandiose is subject to the whims of immaturity (stressed by the emphasis on their own age and maturity [1-7], in the context of Darius the young man's famed father). The group that left Susa, Agbatana and the ancient walled city of Cissia, indicating unity, are immediately described in their military formations. The vastness of their numbers, accompanied by the divergence of attack, prompted the confusion which contributed to their defeat.