

**The name clusters and use of names in *The Persians*: their contribution to
appreciating the play's historical and dramatological aspects**

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Handwritten notes at the bottom right of the page, including the date "10-2-01" and the name "SWART".

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“No wonder the Greeks decided to record tragedies for the benefit of later generations”

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Pretoria 2001

SUMMARY

For a brother
who never ceased to motivate, as in his own style,
and who, for a rather prolonged period of time,
could turn any conversation on any topic
to bear on the completion of this study.

Thank you Steven

I would also like to thank the following people who contributed in various ways towards the completion of this task:

1. Professor Gerhard Swart, who introduced me to Greek Tragedy, who patiently listened to all my ideas, groomed my thoughts, corrected my irregular language (Greek and English), and stimulated me to greater inquiries, while reminding to keep to the topic on hand.
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SUMMARIES

English summary

The Persians by Aeschylus is traditionally considered a history play. A close study, based on phonetics, morphological and structural analyses, indicates that the names in the play have an intentionally descriptive function. The historic validity of the names referring to actual people is not disputed. The names reveal the character of the Persians and are instrumental in developing the play's pathos. The names relate to the imagery and themes developed in the play. The history reflected in the play is constructed history according to contemporary understanding, but functions within the 5th century BC Homeric world view.

An analysis of the function of character, place and deity names is done. No names of Greeks are mentioned. The names of characters are contained in 5 clusters. The mentioned places illustrate the Persians' disunity and the Greeks' unity. The play is a tribute to the battle at Salamis, but is not a song of triumph. The theme "the battle lost and won" is used by this study to illustrate the Greek balance in the play.

The three traditionally distinguished characters, the Queen, Darius and Xerxes are considered messengers and not principal cast. The play does not have a tragic hero. The play has three stages. The chorus and the Queen represent the on-stage performance. The messenger and Xerxes relay the off-stage action. The ghost of Darius represents the third stage (universal).

The use of interpretations of Aristotle's *Poetics* to develop a theory on tragedy is thus questioned in light of *The Persians*. This study indicates that the *Poetics* is also a construct that has its own concerns. Modern Aesthetics is considered as well as other ancient theories. It is illustrated that Renaissance drama contemplation, which influenced all later drama theories, was most strongly influenced by readings of Aristotle. The *Poetics* must be read against the background of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Ethics*.

The principal problem in approaching *The Persians* is that the study of drama is restricted to the text. This reading indicates that the audience response can also be determined in part by the nature of the names.

Key terms

Aeschylus

Aristotle

Characterisation

Drama theory

Dramatology

Greek history

Names

Persians

Salamis

Tragedy

Afrikaanse opsomming

Aeschylus se *Die Persae* word tradisioneel as 'n historiese verhoogstuk beskou. 'n Nadere studie van die teks, morfologies, foneties, en struktuuranalities, dui aan dat die name 'n doelbewuste beskrywende funksie het. Die historiese grondslag van die name word nie ontken nie. Die name stel die karakter van die Persiese nasie bloot waar dié taamlik divers voorkom. Die name is instrumenteel in die ontwikkeling van die tragedie se *pathos*. Die name staan ook in verband met die beeldspraak en temas in die verhoogstuk. Die geskiedenis in die tragedie is gekonstrueer in terme van huidige denke, maar funksioneer wel binne die 5de eeu voor-Christelike Homeriese wêreldbeeld.

'n Analise van die funksies van karakter, plek en goddelike name word gemaak. Geen name van Grieke word genoem nie. Die karakters se name kom voor in 5 groeperings. Die plekke wat genoem word dui op die Perse se diversiteit teenoor die Grieke se eenheid. Die verhoogstuk is 'n huldiging van die veldslag by Salamis, maar is nie 'n triomflied nie. Die tema "oorlog gewen en verloor" word gebruik om die Grieke se balans in die tragedie aan te dui.

Die drie tradisioneel onderskeie karakters, die Koningin, Darius en Xerxes, word as boodskappers beskou en nie as hoof karakters met eie persoonlikhede wat karakterontwikkeling ondergaan nie. Die verhoogstuk het geen tragiese held nie. Die verhoogstuk het drie verhoë. Die koor en die Koningin verteenwoordig die sigbare verhoogaksie, terwyl die boodskapper en Xerxes die agterverhoog aksie vertel. Darius se spook verteenwoordig die derde verhoog (universeel), wat beide die voorverhoog en agterverhoog aksie betrek.

Die gebruikmaking van interpretasies van Aristoteles se *Poetica* om 'n teorie van tragedie te ontwikkel word dus bevraagteken in die lig van *Die Persae*. Hierdie studie dui aan dat die *Poetica* self 'n konstruksie is met eie oogmerke. Moderne estetika word oorweeg sowel as ander antieke teorieë. Dit word aangedui dat die Renaissance drama denke, wat latere drama teorie beïnvloed het, ten sterkste deur Aristotles beïnvloed was. Die *Poetica* moet gelees word teen die agtergrond van Aristoteles se *Metafisika* en *Etiiek*.

Die prinsipiële probleem in die toenadering tot *Die Persae* is dat dramastudies beperk word tot die teks. Hierdie studie dui aan dat die gehoor se reaksie ook ten dele afgelei kan word deur die aard van die name. In dié lig is *Die Persae* nie 'n triomflied van die Grieke se oorwinning by Salamis nie. Eerder is dit 'n herinnering om getrou te bly aan die goddelik bepaalde lewensplasing.

Kern terminologie

Aeschylus

Aristoteles

Dramateorie

Dramatologie

Griekse geskiedenis

Karakterisering

Name

Perse

Salamis

Tragedie

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**But what mortal man can escape
the crafty-minded deception of God?**

**Whose foot is so light
that he can leap aside easily?**

(The Persians: 107-110)

“What is best and most desirable for humans?”

**“Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and toil, why do you
force me to tell you what would be best for you not to hear? The very
best of all things is completely beyond your reach: not to be born, not to
be, to be nothing. But the second best for you is – to meet an early
death.”**

(the wisdom of Silenus in: The birth of Tragedy: 3)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation

Maybe the problem with interpreting and understanding *The Persians* is to be found in the fact that the tragedy of Aeschylus was preserved in written form (Maritz: unpublished).

The presupposition of this statement, which ignores the fact that the tragedy would not have been known to us, but had it been recorded in written form, is that a play is far greater than is implied by its written form.¹ In this sense, the written form of a play, whether modern or ancient, is considered to be a tool that assists in the construction or reconstruction of the performance for which it is intended. Few plays are written with the sole purpose of being read.²

In the same line of thought, Butcher (1904:177) provokingly states:

The people of all others who have done most for the intellectual progress of the race, whose literature more than once has roused the Western world by the shock of new ideas from lethargy to mental activity, knew but little of books, and looked with some suspicion on writing as of doubtful value for awakening thought.

This quotation is understood in terms of its emphasising the mental and scholarly distance between appreciating, viewing, reading or analysing a play in either its written, “pre-produced” form and its performed, “produced” form. The written version is not the “real thing” yet, the words have not been uttered, and the written version is incomplete,

¹ Reference to the written text also prepares for a distinction between the text of the dramatist, the text of the reader, and the text in its physical form. Eagleton (1988:77) refers to the process of reading for reception theory as always being dynamic. He considers Roman Ingarden, who calls a literary work “a set of schemata, which the reader must actualise”. A script or a play on paper is therefore only actualised once it is performed.

² See Swart (1990:6) on Greek drama that was possibly written to be read. This is also the place of drama as literature, how drama - especially tragedy - came to be studied and appreciated in the classroom and the study. See also Taplin (1978): a play is in essence the visual and oral experience on-stage (theatre). Only with the later recording of drama on paper did the literary study of drama commence. The theatre performance should thus always have primacy over the written drama, apart from plays that were intended to be studied in their written format. As Taplin notes (1978:2), Aristophanes and Plato took the audience directed nature of drama for granted. Taplin (1978) also confirms the fact that Aristotle is one of the first critics of read plays.

lacking enactment. Where it does not contain stage directions, it merely indicates dialogue. From this, the play must be constructed. Dialogue is only one aspect of a performance. The director's "vision" is of great importance too, as is the interpreter's knowledge and orientation to the play. The text of the production is enriched by more than the mere written text, or by deductions made from it. Furthermore, a correct understanding of a play would require cues where the audience laughed, cried, fell silent or became angry. The same text could have the different emotional responses, which the dramatist intends to manipulate. To deduce these emotional responses is a hypothetical art. At best different possibilities could be indicated, depending on an understanding of the play's intention.

It would be an exhaustive enterprise to differentiate between modern aesthetic appreciation and critical analysis on the one hand, and modern and ancient understanding of the tragedy on the other. The tracing of the development of drama critique would complicate a scientifically accounted-for reflection on the difference between the ancient and the modern approaches. Focus is placed on how the one led into the other, and how the plays being produced contemporary to the drama analysts influenced their appreciation of Greek Tragedy. The transition between ancient and contemporary is made with caution, not neglecting the history of the theory of drama, but rather emphasising and directing towards the ancient interpretations, with references to the contemporary as orientation.

It could be argued that it is prejudicial to refer to the period when Aeschylus first produced *The Persians* as "Ancient", other than in a temporal context for purposes of identification. In his own sense Aeschylus revolutionised an already established and refined approach to stage art. He was contemporary in his world. References to "Antiquity", "Ancient" and "Early Greek" are thus used cautiously, since orientation to what is said could then only be through a contemporary perspective, thereby indicating a critical distance in terms of the present reading of *The Persians*, and the performance the first audience experienced.

To come to a better understanding of the play, a key is needed. Unfortunately, all that is currently available is the text of the play, a reconstruction of the socio-political and religious setting, and fragmentary evidence of how tragedies were appreciated at the festivals. There must have been criteria according to which tragedies were evaluated, in

order for one competitor to be announced the winner. Text structure, grammar, language, poetic and circumstantial studies have their restrictions, but all make unique contributions to developing a holistic view of what happened before, during and after a drama production in antiquity. Though the judges' guidelines were not documented as such, through reconstruction from (for example) Aristophanes, a good idea of what was considered worthy can be deduced.

The theory of tragedy did not originate with Aristotle, nor with Plato. Each dramatist, member of the audience and judge had a theory of tragedy, a concept of what made a tragedy good and successful, or not good and unsuccessful. Each had an idea of what was required to produce a stage production, in terms of the purpose of the production: whether it was to be entertainment, didactic, for prestige and recognition, or to bring reverence to the gods. Though Aristotle is taken as the general orientation to Greek Tragedy, he is by no means the only reference nor the most exhaustive. He had his own concerns and understanding of a phenomenon that was at once far greater than what his writings gives testimony to (tradition and dynamism), and at the same time also a phenomenon that has fallen victim to poor production quality and reduced audience value, due to the poor efforts of imitators and dramatists who had little creative genius.

It is also important to look at different interpretation perspectives in terms of "what is happening in the tragedy?" in terms of political, religious, aesthetic and entertainment value considerations, from a biographic (diachronic), a textual (synchronic) and receptive point of view. Though one of these three fields tend to be emphasised in preference to the others, depending on the analyst, it is nevertheless important to pay attention to all three. Where this study takes its orientation in the textual aspects, the play is read in terms of how it was received, and from there to what was intended. The textual is used as basis for reconstructing the drama production - not the historical production itself, or testimony to the production, as would be required for an accurate reception critique,³ or production development notes, which would have helped in assessing production intention.

³ Reception critique has its orientation in hermeneutics, and is also known as "reception aesthetics" (Eagleton 1988:74). Where reception theory is normally applied to the reader of literature, it is considered in a broader sense in this study to also include the audience of a stage production. Thus, a reader of a written play could also be considered as "audience".

Any study that wishes to be specific in its aims of necessity cannot be complete in an exhaustive sense. It is more important for a study such as this to open up more concerns and indicate issues that could be pursued in different, though related, studies. The restriction to a specific set of questions also ensures that an emphasis is maintained on the field of study, as specified, and not on stumbled upon problems. On the other hand, a fuller investigation of such problems could contribute to a more justified reading. Thus, where arguments are developed in deviation, it is to substantiate the main line of thought, and not to attempt an exhaustive treatment of the read tragedy.

1.2 Problem areas

What key could be used to understand the tragedy? No single character predominates in *The Persians* (Will, 1976:27). It seems as if this were also the case in another tragedy of Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*. Another key to unlocking the tragedy is thus required. The problem is that contemporary understanding of tragedy gives character central significance, especially in terms of the tragic hero, following a reading of Aristotle.

This approach to tragedy can be seen in the work of Gaither (1953:1), who formulates the second assumption underlying her study as follows:

The character chosen to represent the tragic action is a key to the understanding of the concept of tragedy itself, regardless of the dramatist's emphasis, whether it be on the character or plot.

This assumption is drenched in Aristotelian theory. It would be necessary to unravel the Aristotelian theory, the problems lying within the theory, as related to *The Persians*, regarding the definition of tragedy, and Aristotle's understanding of tragedy. The relation between Aristotle and Plato is thus also in contention, as are other non-Aristotelian understandings within ancient approaches to tragedy.

In the words of Will (1976:27) on *The Persians*: "The play bathes in a single mood of doom." As will be indicated, the destruction of the Persians is very apparent even in the attempted grandeur of the opening sequence. The tragedy is not concerned with an elevated subject matter, with either a mythological hero, or a god as such. Its subjects are the defeated enemy. Many members of the audience, present at the historical performance, fought in those battles. However, the play implies an elevated subject in its deeper structure, viz. that of Divine Providence. The play does not present a historically accurate account. This is reflected in the obvious deviations in comparisons

with other historians, but uses the historic situation as structure. For example, the appearance of Darius, Xerxes' dead father, also defeated by the Greeks at Marathon, could not be taken as factual; nor the numbers of the enemies, often exaggerated to ridiculous proportions. Why, and to what effect? A primary clue is to be found in the name clusters. Although the lists contain actual names of people who were involved in the war, these are not historic figures, but constructions within the dramatic structure of the play.

How are these lists of enemy names to be compared to those of the heroes, when no Greek is mentioned by name, nor has a direct speaking part? The silence of the Greeks could be seen as an attempt to objectivity on the part of Aeschylus. His heroes (actual), the Greek generals, need not speak. The chaotic enemy elevates them sufficiently. Only the reported deviance of a Greek "collaborator" is recalled, and the Greek call to enter battle. Further it is the cries and woes of the Persians that dominate the performance.

The Persian gods are not mentioned,⁴ nor do they have place in the play. Rather, the gods of the Greek audience are the gods the Persians revere. The majority of the place names are Greek islands. How do these place clusters contrast to the clusters of enemy names? These names have been Hellenised, retaining original morphological structures, but being pronounced in Greek thus raising the question as to their function, change in meanings, especially because the Greek phonetic equivalents are often humorously contradictory to the Persian grandeur.

A further problem related to the play is a tendency within tragedy research: *The Persians* is often considered a historical play in terms of contemporary criteria of history (as also ancient history, e.g. Homer, Herodotus and Thucydides), and not in terms of its dramaturgic intention. An alternative reading of the play would include an interpretation of the Greek experience of the Persian wars, and of how Aeschylus crafted his play to present the recently defeated enemy as the subject matter, on the surface, referring to the Persians primarily and to Xerxes on a secondary level. Xerxes is at no point presented as a worthy leader, thus causing particular problems in attempting

⁴ See 157. The Queen is considered θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ ἔφυσ - "spouse of the Persian god and also mother of their god". Darius was no god, nor, as Murray (1939:79-80) points out, was there any consideration of a Persian leader being revered as a god. While Murray considers this "apparently one of Aeschylus' mistakes", it substantiates the religious construct being imposed upon the Persians, which was predominantly Greek in character.

to analyse his character and function within the play in terms of a “tragic hero”. The only “elevated character” could be Darius, who stands in service, as a messenger, of divine justice and providence. The religious aspects of the play should receive far more attention in order to better appreciate the play.

1.3 Problem formulation

The tragedy, *The Persians* by Aeschylus, cannot be understood in terms of later interpretations of Aristotelian drama theory. The play does not conform to the requirements for tragic hero, character, plot, or structure. The question is whether a comparison between more ancient witnesses could help reconstruct a plausible drama theory applicable to Aeschylus, which would also be sufficiently universal in nature to encompass Aristotelian theory. In essence: What is a tragedy?

A second problem relates to the nature of the tragedy: whether it is historical by intention, design or instrument. There are inconsistencies in historic facts, as compared to Herodotus, and textual, as in implied dreams and the appearance of Darius. Also, the formidable enemy of less than ten years before is now portrayed in sympathetic colour before an emotional audience. In essence: How real is tragedy?

The third problem this study will be investigating is how to appreciate the emphasis on the names of the enemy, where not one name of a Greek is mentioned - only names of islands. The names of the gods are Greek; the names of the enemy seem to be compounded Greek adjectives, contributing to the tragedy’s impact, sounding at once foreign and noting a cord of differing significance. What was the dramatic intention of including and emphasising the Persian names, and Greek islands? What dramatic effect do these names have on the play, and on its understanding? In essence: How does tragedy effect?

The historicity of the names is not disputed. It is contended that they take on a further significance in terms of their etymological potential, as expressed in their dramatic adaptation as compounded Greek adjectives. It is thus important to ask why Aeschylus selected the names he did, and what effect he wished to achieve through their placement within the various name clusters.

1.4 Hypothesis

The play is a tribute to the victory at Salamis, emphasised from the perspective of the enemy's defeat, but with a vital moral undertone. It thus employs a mythologisation of contemporary history with a didactic substructure, being instrumental in patriotic upliftment and emphasising the mortality of man at once. "Do not misinterpret the gods or anger them, or be rash, or be other than one's nature". The name clusters promote this understanding.

According to our hypothesis, understanding the name clusters and mention of Greek gods help to a better dramaturgic appreciation of the play – intention, presentation, reception, and reaction. Furthermore, the play falls outside the scope of Aristotelian theory of drama, as it is understood in terms of later interpretations. However, analysis of other ancient drama theories does not exclude Aristotelian theory in essence.

1.5 Methodology

This study of the tragedy is a textual analysis, thus being more a study in literature than drama (performance) appraisal. It is thus primarily concerned with the tragedy in its capacity to be a potential stage production. Stage performance and audience reception must be inferred from textual evidence from the text of *The Persians*. The study of the names, though based on a textual analysis, relates to an understanding of Greek drama as it was performed, using contemporary categories of pre-production, production and reception. These terms, in a literary context, refer to the development of the play, the performance, and the reception. The names are understood as an integral part of the text, structurally and in terms of historic significance, but also as dramatic device used to enhance performance, and generate response. An integrated approach is thus required covering three integrated, but often distinguished areas of specialisation: historic, literary (linguistic), and dramaturgic.

Criticism on the play can be divided into four groups, signifying four periods of response to *The Persians*: the first group would be the judges and first audience, who saw the original production; the second group would be the ancient literary and drama critics, commentators and observers (Aristotle, Aristophanes, Plato, Horace, and Longinus); the third group would be the scholars who "rediscovered" Aristotle and classic tragedy during the Renaissance; the fourth group would be modern structuralists

(either emphasising history, language, art of tragedy, whether sociologists, feminists, dramaticians, linguists, modernists or post modernists, philosophers or phenomenologists). Representatives of each group will be used to illustrate their approaches to the main concerns of this study. Attention will also be given to perspectives falling outside these categories, but which also serve to emphasise the need for a broader, more comprehensive approach to the reading of classic drama.

The study programme is reflected in the division of chapters of this manuscript. Each of the phases overlapped and was influenced by the insights reflected in the others: The introduction looks into the problems of reading and thereby understanding Greek Drama. The play was first read critically in the Greek, translated, and then the complexities of understanding it according to contemporary interpretations of Aristotle were investigated. The second phase concerns the historic context of the play, in its being categorised as a historic play, and in terms of its history of interpretation. The third phase pertains to the stagecraft, and draws attention to the importance of diction as communicator of more than mere story. The fourth phase, the actual subject of the study, uncovers the dramatic contribution of the names and name clusters to the appraised reception of the tragedy. The names and interpretation of the names need to be understood in a historic context, in their linguistic functions and how they are integrated into the structure and mood of the play, and how they function similar to set dressing, being descriptive, but also emotive in their intention and reception.

1.6 Conclusion

This study will indicate that the traditional views on approaching *The Persians* need to be reviewed. The close reading of the personal names in their phoneme and morpheme potentialities, and against the broader structures of names – of gods and places in *The Persians*, will show that the play is not as simplex as may be assumed with an initial reading. It is crucial to the play to understand it against the social background of its first performance, as well as the historic battle being alluded to. Furthermore, not only is a comprehensive understanding of Tragedy as a phenomenon paramount to appreciating *The Persians*, but an understanding of *The Persians* - being unique in its action (communicated via the messengers) and in its use of characters (communicated via the names) - contributes significantly to understanding the phenomenon of Tragedy more comprehensively.

Therefore, this study will close with a reading of selected passages from *The Persians*. However, before this is attempted, the play must be scrutinised in its historicity and social context. This serves as background to understanding the play, theoretically, ancient, intermediate and modern, as art form, production and performance, where this study gives particular attention to the audience's reception of the play, which is the intention of the dramatist – to evoke reaction.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORIC CONTEXT OF *THE PERSIANS*

In this chapter a preliminary overview of the historic context of *The Persians* will be given. The overview will serve as background for the discussion on drama theory in Chapter 3 and for the analysis of the names and name clusters found in this tragedy. An understanding of the names in *The Persians* is central to determining a historic orientation to the play.

This chapter indicates the relations, in historic context, between the history proper, history as reflected in tragedy (*The Persians*), theories on history, and the related history of drama theories.

2.1 Introduction

What is a defeat to some, is a victory to others. As a theme this idea is conveyed well in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where the witches mention "the battle lost and won" (I:I,4). This medieval tragedy comments on the phenomenon of the writing of the history of war, which normally contains a reflection on the loss of the opposition and an emphasis of the victory from own perspective, in cases where the historian sides with the victors. In the opposite case, where the historian is sympathetic with the losers, the historian's task is different, and thus emphasis is placed on aspects other than on the war itself, to lessen the impact of the loss, and to prepare for revenge. Cultural awareness, economic growth, and the establishment of international relations are emphasised. The Persians as a nation, under the leadership of Xerxes (who wished to avenge his father's loss at Marathon), serves as an example of a defeated people, whose fate was recorded and remembered by the victors, the Greeks - and especially so by the Athenians, who played a leading role in the victory at Salamis, under the leadership of Themistocles.⁵

⁵ Cartledge (1997:25) discusses the fate of Themistocles, the champion of the battle at Salamis and of early Athenian democracy at the time of the first performance of *The Persians*. At the time of the performance he was embroiled in a political battle, which eventually saw him leaving the polis.

The fate of Xerxes and Themistocles,⁶ the war generals, whether they were commemorated or not, depended on the outcome of the war. It was important for the dramatists to present their respective fates in perspective of the other, in line with Greek considerations for impartiality, which was made more difficult in *The Persians*, because a large part of the audience was involved in the battle.⁷ The formal presentation of impartiality in *The Persians* is expounded, in the words of Broadhead (1960:xxxii): “by the dramatist’s marked restraint in describing the Greek victory....”

A further distinction could be made on the theme of “battle lost and won”. In general terms, the outcome of a war would also affect the post war lives of the soldiers and civilians. For the victorious camp the initial benefits would be: economic growth; developments in education, trade and industry; a boost in national pride; and the general betterment of living conditions. Eventually the state of “well-being” would give way, as was experienced by Themistocles at the time when *The Persians* was first performed. A state of decadence would threaten the state of “well-being”, in terms of religious, moral and traditional values. There would be a rise in levels of corruption amongst army and political leaders, and the hunger for more power.⁸ Thus, the subject matter of *The Persians* is at once very daring, relevant and carefully presented.

More specifically, it appears as if Aeschylus were combining the two perspectives on war - that of a battle lost and won (victory to Greece),⁹ and that of a battle won and lost (after the victory the onset of decadence) - to reaffirm the notion that everything (far in the past, recent past and present) is influenced by the will of the gods, and that homage should be paid to these gods. Furthermore, a reminder is made not to contradict the nature the gods bestowed upon one.¹⁰ For the Persians this nature implied that they were

⁶ “... ‘It is not we who have done this,’ exclaimed Themistocles, the chief engineer of the victory, after his crowning success. ‘It was the gods and heroes striking down the pride and impiety of man’” (Herodotus VIII 109 in Murray 1939:7).

⁷ Themistocles is not mentioned in the play, nor is his presence implied by the text. However, indirect comparisons can be traced between himself and Xerxes as heroes or “failures”, especially regarding the political constitutions and the adoration of the followers: for Xerxes this would imply his mother and the chorus (see 852-906); for Themistocles this would imply the immediate audience.

⁸ Thucydides (Book 9) contrasts the inability and ability of different powers to gain greatness, esp. regarding the obstacles which the national growth encountered in various localities. He relates that “wherever there were tyrants, their habit of providing simply for themselves, ... made safety the great aim of their policy, and prevented anything great proceeding from them” (This apart from Sicily, which gained great power).

⁹ In the words of Xerxes, the tragedy (1027) is at once a disaster (1030) and a prize for our enemy (1034), which is Greece.

¹⁰ See Darius’ speeches (681-842).

destined to be the keepers of sheep, an honour bestowed by Zeus himself.¹¹ A further implication of Aeschylus' reminder is for leaders not to be influenced by poor advice, like Xerxes was.¹² The theme of nature, and going against one's natural "designation" is expounded further in Xerxes attacking Greece by both sea¹³ and land,¹⁴ when the ways of the sea he knew not (81-84 & 100-106).

Simultaneously, the post war boom, experienced by Athens after the victory at Salamis, also benefited the arts. In this period of political stability, tragedy, for example, was able to establish itself to a far greater extent than was ever possible before. *The Persians* could thus also be seen as a tribute to a war. The positive outcome of the war made experimentation in drama possible.

The historic perspective Aeschylus worked with would have been Homeric,¹⁵ being cyclic and not linear¹⁶ - making it more difficult for contemporary historians, schooled in views of linear history, to appreciate the cyclic views on time. Therefore, this chapter

¹¹ Cf. Speech of Darius (759-786). The ἔν' ἄνδρα πάσης Ἀσίδος (763) is emphasised in this speech, but directly after mentioning the original "pastoral" bestowal over the Ἀσίδος μηλοτρόφου ταγεῖν (763-4), Darius mentions the different Persian warlords, each time emphasising their virtues and vices in relation to the gods, except in the cases of Maraphis and Artaphrenes (778). According to the theory expounded in chapter 4, the Greek phonetic morphology of these names (Μάρα φῖς - φῆς and Ἄρτ[ι]αφρένης) could be translated as "he was dead" and "he who was foolish", which would emphasise the Persians' dependence on the wise conduct of their leader, contrary to the foolishness exhibited by Xerxes (782-786). See also the strophe and antistrophe 65 and 73-4, where the royal army, the city destroyers, and the impetuous lord, who drives his godly herd, is contrasted. See also contrasting allotment by Moira, who allotted the Persians the power to destroy towers in battles (93-99).

¹² Apart from the trickery by the Greek messenger Xerxes accepted rashly (355-363), he was easily manipulated by evil men (753-758). Compare this to the old queen who asks cautiously for advice from the wise, elder men (170-175) and to Darius who requests the aged city guardians to give good advice to Xerxes, who lacks good reason (829-838).

¹³ This results in him contradicting the allotment of land to the Persians (749-753).

¹⁴ The theme of the two sided attack is well explored by Aeschylus (65-70).

¹⁵ It is important to indicate that Homer does not present theories for either history (historic events) or for the writing of history. Homer's approaches to history and history writing are deduced from his writings. However, it may be inferred that his approaches were in line with the Greek world view contemporary to his times. The reference to Homer is made to indicate that the older Homeric history, rather than that of Herodotus and Thucydides, who wrote their histories later than *The Persians*, would have moulded Aeschylus' thought. Even for Herodotus and Thucydides, Homer was still the authority on the early history of Greece.

¹⁶ Christian scholars, who based their linear time view on the Jewish time view, introduced distinctions between linear and cyclic time views. For example, St Augustine is contrary to the classic Greek view, as is evident in the numerous fragments of Heraclitus. The study of Greek Drama by the Renaissance scholars would have been influenced through their understanding of Greek history in terms of a linear model, being superimposed over the cyclically structured Greek history (Homeric). During the second half of the ninth century, studying literature of antiquity become a focus once more. Scholars and churchmen in the circle of the patriarch Photius were involved in this revival (Cf. Zimmermann 1991:5). See also Hobson (1998:12-13) on linear analysis and history. Compare also to *Phaedo*, in which Plato sets out to prove that the soul is immortal, that life proceeds from death as death from life. See also De Romilly (1968) on *Time in Greek tragedy*. See also Jones (1962:80) on Judeo-Christian considerations.

will indicate that *The Persians* should be considered more akin to plays that are based on and interpret epic (Homeric) history, since their views on history would have been more similar. Caution is thus practised not to place *The Persians* historically without carefully studying Aeschylus' treatment of the recent historical events in light of Homeric history.

The history theories of the drama theorists are considered to have an influence on their appraisal of a tragedy, in terms of the individual play's historic placements, and of tragedy as an art form. A further factor, which complicates the assessment of the perspectives of drama theorists, is that drama theorists tend to incorporate and interpret their predecessors' theories to suit their own views and aspirations. An indirect result is that most of the contemporary theories on tragedy are based on the work of the Renaissance tragedy critics such as Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558) and Lodovico Castelvetro (1505-1571) (Wilson 1980:314).

2.2 Views on history

Scholars' thoughts on the origin of tragedy have been found to be central to their treatment of history considerations on Greek tragedy.

Historically speaking, tragedies could be divided into two basic kinds (Wilson 1980:307): traditional and modern tragedy. Where modern tragedy would refer to plays of the past century, traditional tragedy would include works from several periods of the past. Wilson (1980:308) indicates the three noteworthy periods of history for the study of tragedy as: "Greece in the fifth century BC; England in the late sixteenth century; and France in the seventeenth century." This is a very general division, since, when the developments and different accentuations within the period of Greek tragedy is considered, and direct comparisons are made to alter-context tragedies of later periods, only very general observations could be made in determining common and universal characteristics.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Campbell (1904), who conducts a comparative study between Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare. Though he does do justice to the Greek tragedians, his orientation to them is made biased through his predilection to "promote" Shakespeare. Similarly, Cook (1967) sees the classic line continuing through from Homer, through Dante to Milton.

The distinguished forms of later tragedies were based upon models derived from tragedies of previous eras, while making use of contemporary tragedy theories. These critic-specific peculiarities are shrouded by claims to universality in drama. “Universal observations” are often made after the plays have been performed. As *The Persians* illustrates, there are sufficient inconsistencies between the universal rules as set out and observations made from the play, to require a reconsideration of the characteristics of Greek tragedy, which are normally used to help define traditional tragedy in its entirety.¹⁸ The basis for a reconsideration of these characteristics can be found in: historic reflection; theory and techniques of drama; and detailed play analysis.

2.2.1 The origins of tragedy

In contrast to other theorists of tragedy,¹⁹ Else (1965:2) considers tragedy, not in terms of “development”, as advocated by Aristotle (*Poetics* 4.1449a14), but as “the product of two successive *creative acts* by two men of genius”. These “two men of genius” would be Thespis and Aeschylus, and their “creative acts” would be the creation of *tragôidia* by the former and the creation of tragic drama by the latter (Else 1965:2). For the correct appraisal of tragedy, Else (1965:8) advocates the need to understand the circumstances and ideas which prompted its creation, rather than concentrating on the assumed and unfounded theories on the “development” of tragedy.

The different theories²⁰ on the origins of tragedy could be considered as mostly emphasising an origin in religion and then, more specifically, in religious cult:

Thus although the cults chosen for the purpose differ widely and the theories built on them more widely still, it is a fact that almost all the countless views put forward on the subject fix on some religious ritual – Dionysiac, Eleusinian, other agrarian, hero-cult, etc. – as the root of tragedy (Else 1965:11).

¹⁸ Wilson (1980:308) distinguishes between 4 characteristics: “... In traditional tragedy, the universe seems determined to trap the hero or heroine in a fateful web”; “The figures of tragedy ... face a tragic fate and must go forward to meet it”; “The hero or heroine shows a willingness and an immense capacity to suffer”; and “The language of traditional tragedy is verse”.

¹⁹ Modern theorists include Herder, Lessing, Kant, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bertold Brecht (Reedy 2000:1).

²⁰ Else (1965:12) classifies the theories on the origins of tragedy using three groups according to the presumed sources of tragedy: 1. The dithyramb – the cult of Dionysus, and mostly but not always the satyrikon (Aristotle & Wilamowitz); 2. Other orgiastic or mystery rituals (Gilbert Murray); 3. the cult of the dead (hero-cult) (Martin P Nilsson).

The root of tragedy does not help us to understand its temporal impact on audiences, or its performance in the competition. Even the development from the “goat song”, τράγος ᾠδή, to τραγωδία is not convincing. The argument rests upon an illegitimate etymological deduction of word origins, meaning development and language suppositions.²¹ Even so, an understanding of the distinction between dithyramb and satyr-play, being different genres, helps in the analysis and understanding of tragedy, because tragedy employs various genres to achieve its own specific goals. The presence of elements of both dithyramb and satyr in tragedy would therefore not be negated, only the adopted forms would now have to be considered within the context of the tragedy. It would also not be justifiable for the satyr and dithyramb to be evaluated against the background of the tragedy, since they belong to different categories.²²

Thus, the contributing and formative forces (as derived from the play intrinsically and from the immediate context) should be emphasised rather than an origin-historic construct. The emphasis on the historical limits an understanding of “the dramatic”.²³ The setting to one side of deliberations on the “origins of tragedy” opens the way to focussing on what Else (1965:33) calls the things of first importance: “things such as the mode of self-presentation and the sense of tragedy, without which the tragic drama never could have – never has – come into being”. The present analysis considers tragedy in terms of its presentation on-stage and representation of a motif as contributing towards its sense.

However, it is important to note that the views of history of the theorists of tragedy influenced their contemplation on the nature of the plays. It is thus important to review

²¹ Else (1965:15) proposes three reasons why “satyrikon” cannot be considered as an origin of “tragōidia”: 1. The connection was only made because the term “satyrikon” was mentioned in the *Poetics*; the connection of song of goats with tragedy via etymological deductions, and reductions; 3. the nature of the satyrs were of a non-serious tone, implicating a development from “gay to grave”. Where the second reason is exemplified in the main argument, all three postulations deserve more deliberation. The difference in tone between the satyr and tragedy indicates different forms. Historic differentiation does not imply historic development. Satyrs were later also included in the drama competitions in liaison to the tragedies. A closer reading of what Aristotle meant when mentioning Satyrs is also required, as is a reading of his references to dithyrambs.

²² Compare to a contemporary dance production, where elements of e.g. rumba (slow) and samba (fast) are combined within a single chorus.

²³ Else (1965:5) considers the different senses of “dramatic” and drama, both contemporary and ancient. It is possible to conclude that the acts these terms describe were presented and received differently, whether accompanied with action, implying it, or void of it; whether the action was in the person or in that being spoken or sung in the plot/story or in a movement on-stage, or being static.

the theorists' approaches to the origins of drama, in the context of their history views, to arrive at an appreciation of their contributions to understanding the genre "tragedy".

2.2.2 Views on history of drama theorists

The importance of considering the history views of the theorists of drama is to be found in the fact that these invariably, either influence their theorising on the historicity of the tragedies, or help to understand the theorists' concerns when contemplating tragedy. This consideration is appropriated to the fact that the revival of the study of ancient tragedy²⁴ was conducted primarily by scholars with a Christian theological training²⁵ and world view,²⁶ or were strongly influenced by it. On the other hand, being primarily Western European, such scholars were concerned with an attempted indication of the continuation between ancient Greece and modern Europe, regarding culture, philosophy, language, politics and art.²⁷

One of the important avenues to emphasising this continuation is the reading of Aristotle. For latter tragedy theorists, therefore, the *Poetics* is often read a-historically, to accentuate the universality of Aristotle's considerations, to thus confirm the continuation between Ancient Greece and modern Europe. One of the profoundest examples of such a tragedy theorist is Friedrich Nietzsche, who imposed his structure of history over the span of civilisation and cultural heritage, while basing much of his reasoning on Aristotle.

²⁴ The study of Tragedy in the West was stimulated by Aristotle's *Poetics*, which was "found" by the Italian Renaissance. The first critical edition with a commentary of *The Poetics* was Francisco Robertello's (1548) (Edwards 1967:157).

²⁵ This presumption is based on the grounds that late medieval universities, in their humanity faculties, specialised in theology, law and philosophy.

²⁶ For an interesting perspective on the relationship between language and worldview see Hobson 1998:214 & 215. The perspectives deal with the debate between Derrida and Benveniste. Benveniste argued that Aristotle's categories are an unconscious extrapolation from Greek grammar, an ontologizing of grammatical categories specific to Greek. Derrida reacted, pointing out that the fact that Benveniste ignores the historical localization of his own argument, is historically restricting the scope of Aristotle's. Whorf's is a further perspective treated by Hobson (ibid). The Whorfian position would state that a worldview is imposed on its speakers by a language and its determination of conceptions through grammar and lexis.

²⁷ Hobson (1998:1) indicates: "The putting together of arguments, even in a scientific tradition, is affected by the particular scientific tradition and the particular language, national and cultural context it is occurring in." The three primary academic "analysts" of tragedy (aesthetics; philology; drama), thus, would each have their own language systems which are at once determined by time, culture and language, and influenced by factors outside their field of expertise.

2.2.2.1 Aristotle

Without regarding the immediate historic context of Aristotle, or his views on history,²⁸ apart from his insistence on tragedy stemming from dithyrambs in contrast to comedy having its origin in phallic songs (*Poetics* 1449a9-11), it must be realised that Aristotle had his own designs for considering the development of tragedy:

τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐπισκοπεῖν εἰ ἄρα ἔχει ἤδη ἡ τραγωδία τοῖς εἶδεσιν ἰκανῶς ἢ οὐ, αὐτό τε καθ' οὐτὸ κρίναι καὶ πρὸς τὰ θέατρα, ἄλλος λόγος. γενομένη δ' οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτοσχεδιαστικῆς καὶ αὐτὴ καὶ ἡ κωμωδία, καὶ ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξαρχόντων τὸν διθύραμβον, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν τὰ φαλλικά ἃ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν πόλεων διαμένει νομιζόμενα, κατὰ μικρὸν ἠϋξήθη προαγόντων ὅσον ἐγένετο φανερὸν αὐτῆς· καὶ πολλὰς μεταβολὰς μεταβαλοῦσα ἡ τραγωδία ἐπαύσατο, ἐπεὶ ἔσχε τὴν αὐτῆς φύσιν.

To consider whether or not tragedy is even now developed in its types – judging it intrinsically and in relation to audiences – is a separate matter. Anyhow, when it came into being from an improvisatory origin (that is, both tragedy and comedy: the former from the leaders of dithyramb, the other from the leaders of the phallic songs, which remain even now a custom in many cities), it was gradually enhanced as poets developed the potential they saw in it. And after going through many changes, tragedy ceased to evolve, since it had achieved its own nature.

From this brief quotation it is evident that Aristotle is concerned with working with specific genres (τοῖς εἶδεσιν ἰκανῶς) as they make themselves manifest in current times in terms of their own specific characteristics (αὐτῆς φύσιν). It would appear that Aristotle is not as interested in the historic development of tragedy as he is in the format in which it was performed during his age. Although he does cover the history briefly, he takes selected aspects into consideration. These considerations were in turn developed, often representing the sum total of historic contemplation on the refinements and developments within the genre of tragedy. The developments chosen by Aristotle represent the formal considerations he requires to emphasise the coming to be of tragedy into its own form, thus implying that the early tragedies need not be considered as “real” tragedies in their “true” nature (*Poetics* 1449a15-30).

²⁸ Finely (1942:325) has pointed out that Aristotle called tragedy more philosophic than history, on the ground that tragedy was capable of revealing the inner relationships of human life, whereas history was not (cf. *Poetics* 1551b6). Finely assumes that Aristotle did not consider Thucydides!

Aristotle's design for *Poetics* is set out in his opening paragraph (1447a12), in which he states:

... ἀρχάμενοι κατὰ φύσιν πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων.

... beginning, as is natural, from first principles.

This methodology, of systematic and analytic discourse, which sorts everything into categories and sources these to causes,²⁹ is characteristic of all his philosophical thought. It also provides a key to understanding the *Poetics* against the background of his *Metaphysics* and *Ethics*, as well as to his construction imposed on the history of tragedy. The question is how this search for the basic principles was affected by his view on history, and how this differed from other Greek thinkers. The assertion of this relation between methodology and world view is important, as is the reminder that *Poetics* is a construction and not an attempt to portray a linear chronology of tragedy's history. It is thus rather problematic to use Aristotle as a source for the chronological "development" of tragedy, without the reserve that he is working with categories, and not necessarily with facts.³⁰

2.2.2.2 Nietzsche

Where Else (1965:9) indicates that for Nietzsche tragedy stems from Dionysus and satyrs, Smith (2000:xiv) gives a clearer elaboration by considering Nietzsche's pursuit for origins within the context of Nietzsche's observation of the decadence of modern life.

Nietzsche had a primary concern for German culture where he wished to establish a continuation and link between Germany and Greece. Nietzsche thus used a model of history incorporating origin and consequence, where an emphasis on the origin could help fashion the present. Smith goes further than Else in indicating that Nietzsche sought a hidden or unknown origin behind the avowed or accepted one (Smith 2000:xxviii). For Nietzsche, tragedy originates in music, not in the chorus, and serenity

²⁹ Ἐοίκασι δὲ γεννηῆσαι μὲν ὅλως τὴν ποιητικὴν αἰτίαι δύο τινές καὶ αὐταὶ φυσικαί (*Poetics* 1448b)
 "It can thus be seen that poetry broadly came to be by two causes, which are both natural."

³⁰ This assertion also holds true for the duo ἔλεος καὶ φόβος (pity and fear), when considered as antonyms constituting two poles of emotion within the framework of Aristotle's *Ethics*.

is not the origin but simply a product of Greek culture (Smith 2000:xxviii). Tragedy is thus born from the spirit of music (understood in Wagnerian sense).³¹

Nietzsche's view on history³² is based on the antitheses of different typologies:³³ the Judaeo-Christian versus the Hellenic, the Semitic versus the Aryan, and the Romanic versus the Germanic. Smith (2000:xiv) indicates that these typologies "are translated by Nietzsche into the terms of the new typological opposition at the centre of the argument of *The birth of Tragedy* – that between the Apollonian and the Dionysian". Each of these typologies is a critique of the decadence of modern life, and is related also to the decline of tragedy, where Socrates played an important role (Smith 2000:xix), as did rationalism in current German culture (Smith 2000:xviii). A continuum can thus be identified in Nietzsche's history view, a development from the primitive to the sophisticated, where the primitive "was somehow more real, potent, *urwüchsig*" (Else 1965:11).

It is thus possible to discern why Nietzsche read tragedy in terms of the dichotomy of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, as derived at once from his historical frame and from his endeavour to create a basis for the upliftment of Germanic culture.

One philologist who reacted severely against Nietzsche's reconstruction of the history of Greek tragedy is Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, whom Reedy (2000:4) indicates, became the most famous classical philologist of his generation and one of the most famous of all time. Reedy (2000:4) notes that, "Scholars have noted the 'almost pathological tone of detestation, sometimes marked by personal abuse' of the attack". The creative reconstruction of the history of tragedy has received greater appreciation by Silk & Stern (1981:137). They consider *The birth of Tragedy* in four areas: music; customs and religion; literary and intellectual history; and the origin of history. Furthermore, Reedy (2000:4) proposes the consideration that *The birth of Tragedy* should be read like a myth, revealing Nietzsche's attempts to indicate the strong relations between Greek and German music. Silk & Stern (1981:137) find this idea

³¹ Wagner considered his own operas to be a "rebirth of Greek, especially Aeschylean tragedy" (Else 1965:110n2).

³² According to Smith (2000:160 n109) Nietzsche is applying the methods of historical research, which sought to provide an objective documented reconstruction of the past "as it really was".

³³ This antithesis is also considered in opposition to the maintained Greek harmony, Greek Beauty, Greek serenity (*The birth of Tragedy*: ch.20 – Nietzsche 2000:108).

preposterous. Thus German music (Wagnerian) could be considered (following Nietzschean thought) the cultural heritage of Greek tragedy.

2.2.2.3 Derrida and Lyotard

Jacques Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard are selected to represent twentieth century thinkers who have influenced the way Greek Tragedy is approached. They are also chosen as representatives of post modern approaches to history. Their inclusion in this study is an indication that the study of Greek Tragedy is relevant to twenty-first century literature and drama analysis.

Williams (1998:1) indicates that Lyotard's work is indispensable to any reflection on the most difficult problems of late twentieth century society and culture. According to his philosophy, testimony to difference and to fragmentation (the post modern condition) is made in art and in literature. Thus, Lyotard is as important for his theories on art as he is for his political and social theory. Lyotard uses Aristotle's study of time to show how the present is a moment that is always lost once it is represented³⁴ as a moment in time, that is, as the moment thought of in relation to the past and the future (Williams 1998:76). Williams (1998:77) quotes Lyotard to indicate how the latter uses Aristotle to indicate that we cannot capture the present moment – the “now” – in time:

Aristotle ... distinguishes time which, in universes presented by phrases, situates the instances constituting these universes in relation to each other (the before/after, the now), from the presentation-event (or occurrence) which as such is absolute (now). As soon as one phrases the latter, it is placed among the relations of phrase universes.

The present is distinguished from the past through the process of fragmentation, as opposed to the search for continuance, and discontinuance in history results. The recession from the event, though, “I believe”, helps in understanding the various spheres and relations between belief systems, events, myths, the interpretations of these and the language used to achieve this.

Derrida is known for his programme of “deconstruction” (Hobson 1998:189). Though being a philosophical programme, deconstruction also has applications for - and has had an influence on - language studies, linguistics and history.

³⁴ Lyotard also calls occurrences that go beyond our powers of representation, “events” (Williams 1998: 22).

Though the language is philosophical, the debate on history Derrida is involved in still concerns an understanding of 'time' - linear, and non-linear. Hobson is discussing the 'two infinities' in historical thought, that is: "moving towards an absolute, exceeding the world, seeing it as a totality by transcending it, unifying it momentarily into a totality and thus causing determinateness (and hence rigour) to appear" (1998:42); and secondly, the first movement is in "rhythmed interchange with a falling back into determinateness, into historical localization" (1998:42). Derrida rejects the alternatives: finite totality and positive infinity (finite structure and hyperbole). Rather, he uses these as two poles to determine an approach to historicity. Within this approach he is biased against the written recording of history, like Plato in *Phaedrus*, for its secondary and determinate attributes, wishing to represent a totality in finite language.

The problem of placing *The Persians* within the locus of 'history' can be elaborated upon using the distinctions between finite totality and positive infinity. The actuality of the play cannot be denied, but that it represents actual events can be questioned, because the representation cannot encapsulate the events. On the other hand, the play does represent the actual events, interpreting them within the finite understanding (world) of the audience (being non-linear view to history). In short, *The Persians* cannot be used as a reference to reconstruct the historic events of the battle at Salamis. It is a play that uses 'history' in that it relates to its audience the relations between the worlds of the gods and man (constitution), the status of the opposing sides (harmony), and the continuance between perfect past and continued past (destiny). Thus, *The Persians* is a history construct and not history as such.

2.2.2.4 History of drama: science or art?

Since the foundation of the Royal Society in 1660 (Gomme 1937:3), the philosophical, historical and philological sciences were neglected, and the "Physico-Mathematical Experimental Learning"³⁵ promoted. This one-sided emphasis led to the distinction between "science" and "arts", where the "arts" were considered of lesser worth, and mathematics, physics and chemistry of greater significance. The study of history, within the subject History, therefore, was evolved as much in a justification of its identity as it

³⁵ Quoted by Gomme (1937:3) from Royal Society Memorandum, November 28, 1660.

was with its field of inquiry, being history. A controversy came to be, which to Gomme (1937:7) always seemed barren, whether “history is a science or an art: a controversy that is surely only possible among a people which misuses the word science as we do”.³⁶ These are important considerations for the presentation of the “historical”, especially early Greek productions. This is because the presentations are conducted in competition with the natural sciences. A relevant consideration is the natural sciences’ quest for “objective exact truth”, and the “air of lesser worth”, experienced by the arts, where the Greek genius is relativised in pursuit of the justification of the own. The pursuit for “historic correctness”, or “truth” is conducted using own criteria, in principle.

A further consideration would be related to the Marxist theory of history (Scruton 1983:7), which in dividing the base from the superstructure (in society), thereby hopes to achieve a scientific view of both. Such a theory confines art to the superstructure, explaining its character in terms of the economic conditions under which it was conceived.

Within one of the early historians, Immerwahr (1966:5) sees the combination of educator, scientist, and writer as the chief characteristics of Herodotus, who would have been the first to discover history as a method of understanding the world as a whole.³⁷ Though certain technical chronological disputes could be raised on the issue of primacy between philosophy and poetry, Immerwahr (1966:5) indicates that Herodotus made history the equal of poetry and philosophy. However, the principal argument would appear to evolve around methodology, whether history of drama could be considered a science or art.

It is therefore important to consider the relation between “myth” and “history” and “truth” within both the constructs of the current “historical-scientific enquiry”, and the ancient “historic expression”. This will mean that Aeschylus’ creative genius in the historic organisation of *The Persians* is appreciated to value.

³⁶ Gomme (1937:7) uses the Platonic terms “art” and “skill” to qualify for scientific enquiry.

³⁷ Bury (1909:68) asks whether the plays of Phrynichus and Aeschylus had influenced the “solemnity of Herodotus’ documentation” of the Persian wars. Though Bury ascribes it to their glorification of the subject, I would like to suggest that it would have been due to Aeschylus’ “pathosic” (sic) treatment.

2.2.3 History and myth

To a large extent, these are more recent considerations, and the current distinctions between “myth” and “history” would not have been much of an issue to Aeschylus. He was working within a different history/historic context. The immediate question pertains to how Aeschylus managed to present a ‘recent to him historic event’, the defeat of the Persians (victory of the Greeks), within a mythological context (current to twenty first century thought). Akin to this question how should *The Persians* be read, being considered at once a history drama in twenty first century thought and a history drama within a Homeric construct. A principal argument is that the early tragedians were all interpreters of history, their history being considered myths today.

In a study that is concerned more with a religious understanding of history and myth than political, sociological or literary, Davies (1994:1) states:

Myth and history both involve ideas about time expressed through significant events and possessing an important bearing upon life. Myth and history reflect a characteristic search for meaning which is typically human, and which, in life at large, takes many forms from science to poetry.

This definition is representative of the broader understanding of these two terms in relation to each other. Myth is related to the ritual way of life (thus primitive and normally oral), providing an account of how things came to be and why certain values are important (Davies 1994:2). In contrast, history is considered in terms of written documentation.³⁸

Smith (2000:xv) shows that Nietzsche rejects the rational and factual approach to history, as was represented by his contemporaries such as Leopold, Ranke and Ernest Renan. It was important for Nietzsche to make what happened long ago relevant to his times, and thus, as Smith indicates (2000:xv): “Nietzsche suggests that the past should be remembered and celebrated through myths rather than history, since myths create a sense of spiritual community which analytic history only works to dispel.”

³⁸ David Diriger (quoted in Graham 1987:14) contemplates on the historian’s basic need for written sources. His one section is also entitled “Real history is based on written documents”!

According to Else (1965:38), Aeschylus, as an Attic poet, followed the example set by Solon in the writing of poetry. A feature of Solon's poetry, according to Else, is the total absence of mythology. Though no direct influence between Solon and Aeschylus can be established, this observation forms the basis of the argument where Else purports (1965:38):

This quasi-vacuum or low density of mythological tradition in Attica was perhaps in the long run her greatest asset for the development of a tragic drama based on myth; for it meant that her poets were free to choose those myths that best suited the tragic idea, without regard to their status in local tradition, that is, their pre-established appeal to Attic pride or piety. Thus Athens was uniquely fitted to become ... residual legatee and reinterpreter of the pan-Hellenic stock of myth for the whole Greek nation.³⁹

Reedy (2000:8) points out that there is no agreed definition of myth. He proposes a description, which he adapted from William Doty (1986:11):

Myths are culturally important stories conveying by means of metaphoric and symbolic diction, graphic imagery and emotional conviction and participation, the foundational accounts of the world and humankind's roles and status within it. Myths convey the values of a culture and often involve the intervention of suprahuman entities.

There is a definite mythical dimension in *The Persians*. Apart from the appearance of Darius' ghost, and the prevalence of the many gods (religious proportions), the style and language of *The Persians* is mythical. Aeschylus' tragedy, therefore, must be assessed differently from the history of Thucydides, of whom Bury (1909:81) says, has nothing mythical in his stories.

2.2.3.1 *Tragedy and history*

The distinctions between "history" and "tragedy" would appear to be more academic in nature than indicating intrinsic differences. This point is made clear by Plato's reference to Homer as the first tragedian (*Republic* 595C), as well as to Finley (1942:322) who finds Thucydides more in line with the tragedians than with Herodotus, when he sets about describing the great actions of the wars. An interesting point is made by Campbell (1906:38), who believes that Aeschylus' account (referred to as a poet by Campbell) is to be preferred to that of Herodotus, because Aeschylus was at Salamis, and his brother, Ameinias, "certainly took a prominent part in the engagement". The two accounts are

³⁹ Else (1965:63) points out that the standard tragic myths are not Athenian. It could be postulated that Aeschylus' choice of a "non-traditional" Homeric myth was in his endeavour to use an Athenian myth for reasons of appraisal.

difficult to reconcile on all points, but more importantly, the natures and intentions of Aeschylus' play and Herodotus' histories are different.

Before further elaboration on tragedy as an expression of history is made, a pause on the distinctions between chronicle and chronicle play, history and history play, would give further credence to the argument proposed, that tragedy, as an expression of history, is performed in a particular mode to enhance a multitude of reactions. When tragedy is considered from a history/myth point of view, it views myth/history in similar fashion to the way chronicles and historiography look at history, though their formulations, styles, and accentuations, intentions, differ tremendously.

A "chronicle" could be described as "a register of events in order of time, often composed contemporaneously with the events it records" (Cuddon 1998:135). A "chronicle play" is "also known as a History Play, and therefore based on recorded history rather than on myth or legend" (Cuddon 1998:135).

The Persians could be considered a "history play", being based on "recorded" historic events. But, as Webster (1942:5) illustrates, one reason why *The Persians* must be cast in mythological dimensions, is because poetry comes from the Muses, firstly; and secondly, "the knowledge of other times and other lands must come to the poet from outside, and the gods must be responsible". Though this is a rather romantic formulation, to a large extent denying the dramatist's poetic and artistic genius, it does indicate the close relation between a dramatist and the subject he is dealing with. There would need to be a close affinity if the resultant product were expected to "move" people. Such an understanding would be close to Plato, although he sees art differently.

For example (*Republic* 568C):

Τοιγάρτοι ... ἄτε σοφοὶ ὄντες οἱ τῆς τραγωδίας ποιηταὶ ξυγγιγνώσκουσιν ἡμῖν τε καὶ ἐκείνοις, ὅσοι ἡμῶν ἐγγύς πολιτεύονται, ὅτι αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν πολιτείαν οὐ παραδεχόμεθα ἄτε τυραννίδος ὑμνήτας.

Wherefore ... being wise as they are, the poets of tragedy will pardon us and those whose politics resemble ours, for not admitting them into our polity, since they sing the praises of tyranny.

It is evident that Plato cannot consider the arts in isolation from politics, and that his appreciation of tragedy would be affected by its potential influence on audiences. Plato also considers tragedy in relation to the divine (*Republic* 597A-598A), when he comes

to the conclusion that tragedy is three removes from reality, and that it is phantoms, not realities that they produce (*Republic* 599A).⁴⁰ This is said in preparation for his criticism of Homer. Plato says Homer was not able to teach (*Republic* 600C). This is in contrast to his assertion that Homer was the first teacher of tragedy, as well as being “the beginner of all these beauties” - ἡγεμῶν γενέσθαι (595C).

Aeschylus has no such concerns. From the nature of the text it would seem that he has no problem in departing from reality, and modifying history to achieve particular dramatic effects. Aeschylus should be seen where he cast his play in an air of “myth-history” to ensure his audience’s favourable response.⁴¹ Campbell (1906:xv) states that Aeschylus’ treatment of legendary history is free, as is his treatment of mythology. He concludes:

Such instances afford strong illustration both of the unfixed condition of Greek heroic legend, and of the boldness of Aeschylus in his employment of it.

Gaster (1950:3), who is concerned primarily with the origin of drama, attempts to indicate the relation between history, myth and rituals:⁴²

Drama evolves from seasonal rituals. Seasonal rituals are functional in character. Their purpose is periodically to revive the *topocosm*, that is the entire complex of any given locality conceived as a living organism. But this *topocosm* possesses both a punctual and a durative aspect, representing, not only the actual and present community, but also that ideal and continuous entity of which it is but the current manifestation. Accordingly, seasonal rituals are accompanied by myths which are designed to interpret their purely functional acts in terms of ideal and durative situations. The interpretation of the myth and ritual creates drama.

Else (1965:63) reacts vehemently against the relating of myth and ritual, where he states that they “have got tangled up together in well-nigh hopeless confusion”. Else (1965:63) ascribes this state of affairs “in part to the ancient theories of an origin out of dithyramb and/or satyr-play, in part to modern developments in anthropology, psychology, etc”. In

⁴⁰ Graham (1987:34) indicates that education in Greece during the 5th century BC “revolved not around reading and writing but around ‘music, poetry and recitation’, and that literacy did not become widespread in Athens until at least the last third of the century”. Interesting, Aristotle is often taken to represent the moment of transition from primarily oral to primarily literate book culture (*ibid*).

⁴¹ Compare to Aristotle *Poetics* (1449a) on the emphasis on audiences: Aristotle says ... καὶ πρὸς τὰ θεάτρα, ἄλλος λόγος, and in relation to audiences, ‘[it is] a separate issue’, illustrating his emphasis rather on the intrinsics of a production than on its effect, which is a primary consideration of Plato.

⁴² See Heraclitus’ fragments on history and seasonal changes. For example: Fragments 15, 57: ὅστις ἡμέρην καὶ εὐφρόνην οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν. ἔστι γὰρ εἷν (day and night are one; 62: ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δ’ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες (Immortals are mortals; mortals are immortal, the dead [amongst] these are living and the life of these is ending [dying]); Also Fragments 51 & 67.

similar fashion to the model placing the origins of tragedy within the construct of development not being successful (Else 1965), Gaster (1950:5) considers the function of myth in drama. He considers myth within a contemporary understanding of the term; an understanding which would probably have been very foreign to the tragedians, who manipulated the myths within their own constructs. Gaster (1950:5) argues:

The connecting link between these two aspects, the factor which transmutes Ritual into Drama, is Myth. The function of Myth ... is to translate the real into terms of the ideal, the punctual into terms of the durative and the transcendental.

It would be best to consider myths, as employed within tragedy, from the perspective of the first audiences. They did not have a scientific understanding of the relations between myth, history and truth. In the world of Aeschylus, myth was history, and thus truth. This truth was not scientific in terms of exact correctness, but rather in terms of symbolic indication.

Even if he had adopted an approach such as Heraclitus did, the Homeric would still have been the rule.⁴³ Many Heraclitian elements can be traced in *The Persians* (Maritz 1997:7-8). Though this does not establish definite influences, certain tendencies can be indicated, which help to understand Aeschylus' understanding of history through his use and manipulation of historic data, and his careful construction of the various themes and harmonics.

2.3 The historians' histories

2.3.1 Herodotus and Thucydides

As ideas of history, its methods and meaning change (Immerwahr 1966:2), so also the appreciation of the historians.

Herodotus wrote his patriotic history in prose, and is often considered to be the victim of the traditions he worked with, where "his work appeared (to especially nineteenth century historians) a confused and rather untrustworthy collection of tales" (Immerwahr

⁴³ It is interesting, as Gomme (1962:16) indicates, that Homer's "*Iliad* is, as Aristotle saw, tragic: a μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, a representation of noble action, of the action and suffering of noble men, the story logical and inevitable, the disaster caused by the noblest of them all, through a fault which is not a fault of vice or depravity...." See also Bury (1909:238), who substantiates the fact that Homer was the authority for Greek authors.

1966:2), compared to Thucydides, who is considered to be more objective in his consideration of history (following his own claims in his Introduction).

Where Herodotus expands significantly on the Persian camp, he continuously makes such references in light of Greece's supremacy. *The Persians* could be seen in the same light in its historic report on the supremacy of the Persian fleet which was defeated by an inferior Greek fleet. Persia is thus presented as a worthy enemy, though with its inherent flaws – as is made explicit in the Chorus' opening lines. Where Herodotus attempts to be accurate in his information, this is not a primal concern for Aeschylus, as can be seen in his report on the astronomical numbers.

Thucydides refers to the Persian wars in the context of the Peloponnesian War (I:118):⁴⁴

Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἤδη γίνονται οὐ πολλοῖς ἔτεσιν ὕστερον τὰ προειρη-
 μένα τὰ τε Κερκυραϊκὰ καὶ τὰ Ποτειδαετικὰ καὶ ὅσα πρόφασις τοῦδε
 τοῦ πολέμου κατέστη. ταῦτα δὲ ξύμπαντα ὅσα ἔπραξαν οἱ Ἕλληνες
 πρὸς τε ἀλλήλους καὶ τὸν βάρβαρον ἐγένετο ἐν ἔτεσι πεντήκοντα
 μάλιστα μεταξύ τῆς τε Ξέρξου ἀναχωρήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦδε τοῦ
 πολέμου· ἐν οἷς οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι τὴν τε ἀρχὴν ἐγκρατεστέραν κατε-
 στήσαντο καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐπὶ μέγα ἐχώρησαν δυνάμειος....

After this, though not many years later, we at length come to what has been already related, the affairs of Corcyra and Potidaea, and the events that served as pretext for the present war. All these actions of the Greeks against each other and the barbarian occurred in the fifty years' interval between the retreat of Xerxes and the beginning of the present war. During this interval the Athenians succeeded in placing their empire on a firmer basis, and advanced their own home power to a very great height....

Thucydides accounts for the Persian wars (Marathon and Salamis) in abbreviated terms, and then only in the discussion on the strength of Hellenic ships, in light of the political models (tyranny and monarchy – Athens [naval] and Lacedaemon [military] - *The Peloponnesian war* I:17-19). Thucydides places the Peloponnesian war in the context of the whole history of Greece, from the state of Greece from the earliest times to his current situation. However, he only emphasises the conflicts. Further, his history is void of the Homeric heroes.

⁴⁴ According to Thucydides (I:18), this battle was fought primarily by the Athenians.

An important perspective on Herodotus' approach to and use of history, relating also to Aeschylus' treatment, is given in his account of the Persians' pre-war discussions by Artabanus, uncle of Xerxes (*Historiae* VII: 10:5-10):

ὦ βασιλεῦ, μὴ λεχθισέων μὲν γνωμέων ἀντιέων ἀλλήλησι οὐκ ἔστι τὴν ἀμείνω αἰρεόμενον ἐλέσθαι, ἀλλὰ δεῖ τῇ εἰρημένῃ χρᾶσθαι, λεχθισέων δὲ ἔστι, ὥσπερ τὸν χρυσὸν τὸν ἀκήρατον αὐτὸν μὲν ἐπ' ἐωυτοῦ οὐ διαγινώσκομεν, ἐπεῖν δὲ παρατρίψωμεν ἄλλῳ χρυσῷ, διαγινώσκομεν τὸν ἀμείνω....

Oh king, it is impossible, if no more than one opinion is uttered, to make choice of the best: a man is forced then to follow whatever advice may have been given him; but if opposite speeches are delivered, then choice can be exercised. In like manner pure gold is not recognised by itself; but when we test it along with baser ore, we perceive which is the better....

Artabanus, in his short recount of the war history between Persia and Greece, continues to encourage Xerxes not to attack Greece, because Greece is far superior. This is in miniature what Herodotus is doing with the Persians: he is presenting them as detailed as he can, to indicate the superiority of Greece, in terms of especially government, military skill and power. Herodotus allows the Persians to exalt Greece, as the Greeks cannot glorify themselves, with the emphasis placed on his wisdom in his warning that it is not good (VII:10,37-38):

...ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ γε ἐνὶ πάντα τὰ βασιλέος πρήγματα γεγενῆσθαι.

... that the king's fortunes depended wholly on one man.

Bury (1909:69) identifies three maxims of historical criticism in Herodotus: (1) suspect superhuman and miraculous occurrences which contradict ordinary experiences (Bury indicates that Herodotus' application leaves room for portent, and does not cover oracles and dreams); (2) when confronted by conflicting evidence or differing versions of the same event, an open mind is kept ("*audi alteram partem*" 1909:70); (3) autopsy and first hand oral information are superior to stories of second hand, whether written or oral.

In contrast, Thucydides was unprejudiced by authority and tradition, and applied logic to everything (Bury 1909: 75). It is important to remember that Thucydides was active during the rise of sophism, and the refinement of rhetoric, and thus his writing would display more of an argumentative nature than descriptive, though as has been indicated,

Finley (1942:322) finds Thucydides more in line with the tragedians than with Herodotus, possibly reflecting on either information or style source.

Immerwahr (1966:44) reports that both the *Histories* of Herodotus and *The Persians* have an oriental structure, by which the unity of viewpoint is manifest in the description of the effect of the Persian Wars upon the Persians themselves, rather than the effect of the wars upon the Greeks.

Herodotus continuously emphasises the brutality of the Persians. He tells a series of symbolic stories about Xerxes' retreat, stressing the change of fortune caused by the battle at Salamis, while Aeschylus tells of a similar retreat by Xerxes to emphasise the loss of purpose and direction (which he ironically never had, considering how he gazed at the grey haze of the [unknown] sea) and to emphasise self destruction. (Herodotus 8.115-20; *The Persians* 482ff).

2.3.2 The historic events

Athens had entered a new period of democracy, Solon (c.a. 630-560 B.C.), having introduced a new constitution. The reforms especially affected the legal proceedings. The political distance from monarchy was to be increased with the democratic reforms introduced under the rule of Pericles (c.a. 495-429 B.C.). *The Persians* could be seen to be comparing the two political models indirectly, indicating the weaknesses of the monarchy, while superficially exaggerating its strength. During the battle chaos, which halted the Persians and their allies, the strength of the Greek army and its political system of democracy could be implied. However, the play is approached, thematically, solely from a Persian perspective, thus from the point of view of the defeated enemy, and from a Greek religious perspective. The religious is interwoven into the historic. The constructs of the Queen's dream and Darius' appearance (besides the appointment of the aged guardians) make a reconstruct of actual historic events via the play rather fragile.

2.4 The story according to *The Persians* (synopsis)

The story of *The Persians* runs along rather conventional lines. There are two actions – on-stage and off-stage. The messengers relate and tell the story of the off-stage action (much like radio drama), while the chorus is always present to receive and respond to

the messengers' tales and reports, sometimes on behalf of and sometimes in opposition to the audience, depending on the point of view.

The play starts with the Persian elders, anxious for news about the Persian Army. They suggest, through doubts and misgivings, a vague pre-sentiment of impending calamity. The outcome of the war has been decided, and they are awaiting news about its outcome, and are expecting the worst.

The Queen (Atossa) appears on the scene. She relates the story of her ominous dream, and heightens the feeling of foreboding and apprehension for an outcome already determined. Then at length, a messenger from Xerxes' expedition appears, and the Persians are enlightened as to the outcome of the war. The audience (Greek) already knows the outcome, thus taking in a particular omniscient role as witness. The messenger describes the losses of the Persians, the defeat at Salamis, the massacre of Psyttaleia and the disastrous retreat.

The ghost of Darius then appears. After solemnly rebuking his countrymen for their pride and insolence, he foretells the crushing defeat the Persians would experience at Plataea. Xerxes, himself, and his attendants now appear on-stage. They are distraught and shred of all glory. Xerxes and his attendants join with the elders in an outburst of lamentation, and the play closes with this final and crowning picture of disaster (Haigh 1938:73).

The Persians has a particular point of view on the historic events of the battles which are neither predominantly Persian nor Greek military, but rather Greek religious. The next paragraph investigates the play as historic reflection in the light of Aeschylus' intentions with the play, as can be determined.

2.5 The play as historic reflection

The play does not merely want to retell the tale of the battle, nor evoke national pride at the expense of the Persians, regardless of how Aeschylus might feel towards them personally. Thus, this study proposes that more attention should be given to the dramatic intention and reflection of history in the play, rather than merely looking at the history. Apart from the contents, the genre should also be considered.

The Persians should also be interpreted in its historic-artistic context. In this sense it is a tragedy, which is a development of sacred choral entertainment. In this genre the choral song and music were occasionally relieved by the recitative of a single actor, or by dialogue between this actor and the leader of the chorus. Though character⁴⁵ stands separate from “actor”, the introduction of a second actor must have influenced, and enhanced characterisation of characters portrayed on-stage, because this addition would greatly have increased the scope and versatility the dramatist could apply to his production. This would enhance both the artistic aspects relating to the tragedy, and the entertainment value, and evoke response from the audience.

On the one hand, it could be considered that *The Persians* is “a magnificent dramatic song of triumph for the victory of Greece over the invading host of Persia” (Jebb, 1878:80), or as Bury (1909:66) thinks, the play could be seen to be a poetical form of the “self-flattering version of the war [which] had become a tradition at Athens”. However, this is not a complete rendition of the play’s magnitude, since it approaches the battle, victory to the Greeks and loss to the Persians, from a Persian perspective. Thus, it must be established that the historic situation of the play cannot govern reflection on the play. A further result of such an appraisal is that the play is considered in isolation of the drama contest and tragedy tradition (which would have placed scorn upon a “song of triumph” – though it is admitted that Aeschylus does play with his audience’s sentiment), without also regarding a closer reading of the text.

The following aspects, based on immediate observations, help to determine the play’s perspective: the lack of Greek names, but the Hellenisation of foreign names; the prominence of the Greek gods, and the absence of Persian deity; the elaborate and extensive hyperbole in the descriptions; the pronounced mention of places, mostly Greek, and mostly having emotional bearings for the Greek audience, or particular associations in both enemy and national place names.

Thus, rather than being considered a “historic play” as such, *The Persians* must be seen as an elevated political-religious play (tragedy), with recent history, in mythological dimensions, as its subject matter.

⁴⁵ See Gomme (1962:194-213) for a discussion on “Aristotle and the Tragic Character”, in which the basis for the character in tragedy is treated in universal proportions (Sophocles, Aristophanes and Shakespeare).

2.5.1 The audience

The audience of *The Persians* is taken to be Athenian, though as Sifakis (1967:1) rightly indicates, drama was known to other Greeks. Sifakis (ibid) indicates that, though the Hellenistic rulers failed to achieve political unity in the Greek world, a cultural unity was brought about as a result of the great expansion that took place. Here, Sifakis is referring to the third and later centuries BC, but this process was advanced by playwrights, such as Aeschylus, who travelled abroad with his plays. Travellers from elsewhere in Greece would also have been exposed to the theatre on their visits to Athens. Thus, Aeschylus would have been cautious not to offend other parties about the primacy of Athens in the battle of Salamis.

The principal audience of tragedy was male orientated (Hall 1997:103-104), tragedy being profoundly concerned with civic life.⁴⁶ Goldhill (1997a:54) makes an important point when he suggests that the Athenian audience also attended the law courts and the Assembly (the major political institutions of democracy). The theatre audience would therefore have been well versed in public performances by speakers.⁴⁷ Goldhill (1997a:54) concludes correctly that a discussion of the audience of Greek tragedy “must take as its frame not modern theatrical experience but both the pervasiveness of the values in Greek culture and in particular the special context of democracy and its institutions, where to be in an audience is above all to play the role of democratic citizen”.

Though the audience was made up primarily of Athenian citizens, other dignitaries and people were also present (Hall 1997:93-126). The first Athenian audience of *The Persians* saw the play prior to the Peloponnesian war. According to Herodotus (VII) the Greeks were divided as to their Persian testimonies. Thus, Aeschylus would have had to present the play in such manner as not to bring offence to any member of the audience. This point has greater pertinence in light of the presence of many veterans of the battle of Salamis in his audience. This would not have excluded veterans from the land battles also being present in the audience.

⁴⁶ Hall (1997:103-104) considers “the marginal space immediately outside the door of the private home” as the locality of tragedy, and not in the arenas of civic discourse – the council, assembly or lawcourts. Compare to Goldhill (1997a:54): “To be in an audience was not just a thread in the city’s social fabric, it was a fundamental political act.”

⁴⁷ Though Aeschylus is pre-sophistic and thus pre-rhetorical, the oratory excellence in *The Persians* and other contemporary tragedies must reflect on the quality of oration in the law courts and Assembly.

2.5.2 The dramatist

2.5.2.1 Aeschylus (the person)

Aeschylus (525-456 BC), the servant of Dionysus and votary of Demeter, was at once dramatist and prophet (Campbell 1904:135). He also had military experience, having fought at Marathon when he was a little more than thirty years old, and ten years later, was involved in the battle at Salamis (de Romilly 1968:59). Campbell (1906:xi) considers Aeschylus in more lustrous dimensions, referring to:

... the pride which Aeschylus took in the renown of Athens was associated with a profound religious feeling. The secret of her triumph was, as he regarded it, that principle of Right, which is the corner-stone of civilisation and alone makes national life worth living.

Furthermore, Campbell (1906:xi) indicates that Aeschylus was “first a soldier, and then a poet, although he is not for that reason less a poet”. This assertion is based on his epitaph (in Campbell 1906:xi):

This monument in Gela's fruitful plain
 Doth Aeschylus, Euphorion's son, contain.
 Of Athens he; - whose might the Mede will own,
 That met him on the field of Marathon.

2.5.2.2 The other plays of Aeschylus

It is difficult to relate to his other plays, and to draw conclusions from comparisons between *The Persians* and his other tragedies, because of the different treatments of tragedy, without falling into the trap of “dramatic action development”, as Else (1965) himself does, when proposing that “a creative achievement of the first magnitude was reserved for Aeschylus” (1967:78), where “Thespis and Aeschylus represent not so much two stages in a process of development as two successive acts of creation, the one of *tragôdia*, the other of tragic drama” (1967:78). In the next stage of his argument, Else unwittingly proposes development within the activity of Aeschylus' drama, thus restricting the creative genius of each individual tragedy, where he comments (1967:83-84):

He [Aeschylus] was above all a bold, imaginative experimenter, and tragic drama was the outcome, not the point of departure, of his restless experimentation.

The reader will have noticed that at this point I speak of ‘development,’ not merely of ‘creation.’ A modification of what was said previously about Aeschylus’ creative act is not intended. No great creative step in literature is limited to a single act at a single moment ... In any case fate has willed it that we now have, in spite of the tiny selection of Aeschylus’ work that is available to us, a datable sequence of plays leading to a climax.

A contradiction in argument is detectable, where Else mentioned earlier in his reasoning (1967:82-83):

Much though Aeschylus has been admired as the ‘creator of tragedy’,⁴⁸ the magnitude of his achievement as a dramatist has not been properly recognized. In part this springs from neglect, failure to study his plays carefully as plays; in part it springs from false premises, especially the *idée fixe* that tragedy was already dramatic before him and therefore all that remained for him to do was to enhance or refocus its dramatic qualities. On the contrary ..., it is more than simple justice to say that Aeschylus created tragedy as we understand it: that is, as tragic drama.

It is my opinion that Aeschylus’ tragedy, *The Persians*, from a drama history perspective, should be considered an experimental play, fully embedded in the traditional forms, as practised in the annual competitions during the Dionysian festivals. Playwrights who followed Aeschylus, such as Sophocles and Euripides - as well as Aeschylus himself, further refined these experimental drama techniques - in form and material, thus adding new status to Tragedy as an art form.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter consideration was given to various perspectives on history, concerning the context of the play, the understanding of history - as it has bearing on the interpretation of *The Persians* as a “history play”, and the relation between history and myth - distinguished today, but not in antiquity. Consideration was also given to orientations on the history of the drama theorists, as this influenced their interpretations of the historic orientation of *The Persians*.

⁴⁸ See Gilbert Murray, *Aeschylus, The Creator of Tragedy* (Else 1967:82).

This chapter, dealing with the historic context of *The Persians*, will serve as fundamental orientation to the next chapter, Drama analysis (stagecraft, production and cult setting), which will argue for the best approach to analysing *The Persians*, within a framework of the history of drama analysis.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF DRAMA (STAGECRAFT, PRODUCTION AND CULT SETTING)

McCormick (1990:1) commences his chapter on interpretation and history with an expression on the relation between interpretation and history, theory and practice in the arts:

One virtue among the several vices in recent philosophy of art, whether in Anglo-American or Continental terms, however various, is careful work on the interactions between interpretation and history, theory and practice. Thus, philosophers as diverse as Arthur Danto, Nelson Goodman, Francis Sparshott, and Richard Wollheim on the one hand and Hans-Georg Gadamer, Gilles Deleuze, François Lyotard, and Paul Ricoeur on the other continue to elaborate their sustained reflections on art in the context of repeated and closely detailed case studies within such individual arts as literature, painting, dance and cinema.

In this chapter an overview of ancient and modern drama theory will be given, in order to ascertain the best approach to appreciating *The Persians*, a tragedy, as a stage production.

3.1 Introduction

Drama analysis, especially regarding the study of Greek tragedy, is invariably restricted to the text of the script, and does not necessarily take the broader extent of the production into consideration.⁴⁹ Under the broader extent of the production is understood: the performance itself; the character portrayal and interpretation; the dance and choreography; the music and sound; lighting (special effects); the cast-audience interaction, the theatre itself; the setting of the competition and the role of the judges; and the relation of the specific production (in terms also of the tetralogy)⁵⁰ to the cult festival.

⁴⁹ E.g. Campbell (1904). 19th century philologists were often more concerned with establishing a correct text than with interpreting the text within its immediate context. Thus also the heavy attack against Nietzsche by Wilamowitz-Möllendorf (See Reedy 2000).

⁵⁰ Murray (1939:73) considers *The Persians* as the second play in a tetralogy: *Pineus*, *Persae*, *Glaucus Potnieus* and *Prometheus the fire-kindler*. These are named by Campbell (1906: xxi): The three tragedies *Phineus*, *Persae*, and *Glaucus of Potniae*, and the satyric drama *Prometheus with the fire*.

These aspects are difficult to research, especially in terms of a historic and theoretic construct, since not much information is available. A further complicating factor is that drama fashions and trends change and develop (as Greek tragedy itself is a development). It is thus that theories of drama also change and develop in conjunction to the development of the arts, and as such, it is not always desirable to formulate a universal theory of tragedy, or to regard a specific theory (esp. that of Aristotle) as being universally applicable.

The different schools of thought are presented in this study to emphasise the importance of consulting contemporary-to-production orientated drama theory. In the same breath, the presentation of theories is beneficial to the appreciation of the development of criticism of the art form.

The problem of understanding a play the way it was intended and understood by the writer, the director, the cast, and the audience - both initially and from later periods - is integral to drama theory and analysis. This refers to the history of interpretation. Later readings of a play are often influenced by a reconstruction of the play's interpretations through time. The interpretations are often the result of various approaches to reading the text. At certain stages, certain readings, as a result of specific strong interpretations, become dominant. This is dangerous, because traditions of interpretation evolve that become rigid and dogmatic in their nature. Readings then result that are orientated more towards the tradition of interpretation than in the text or production of the play.

3.2 Drama theories

In his pursuit to answer the question: "What is Art", McCormick (1990:4) mentions: "Danto thinks of a theory in art as an 'interpretation'..." Tilghman (McCormick 1990:4) points out: "all Danto's examples of theories as interpretations are 'examples of what we would ordinarily call artistically relevant descriptions and not theories at all'...." For the purposes of this study it is important not to fall into the trap of merely describing tragedy as a specific art form. Rather, its nature and the ways in which it was and is interpreted are discussed, to serve as a theoretical framework to how Aeschylus' *Persians* is read.

There is necessarily a difference between drama theory for the producers of plays (including directors, cast, performers and artists) and the audience (including critics,

judges, media, analysts and students). The first is directed towards the second, and the latter receives from the former. The following distinguished questions serve as illustration: the producer asks: “How will this dialogue/action affect my audience?”; “Does the emotion I am looking for in this character communicate the character’s mood?”; whereas a member of the audience would ask: “Why/How did that dialogue/action affect me/not affect me?”; “Why did that character portray that specific emotion?” This study, being of the second category, will attempt to enhance its argument by referring to aspects of drama production.

3.2.1 Aesthetics and drama theories

Though the term ‘aesthetics’ is based on a Greek word (αἰσθάνομαι), and though Aesthetics derives much from Greek philosophical contemplation, it is rather a modern (including post-modern) branch of Philosophy. Lee (1938:6) gives a workable “definition of aesthetics”:

... aesthetics is a branch of philosophy, as it is the attempt to understand one particular portion of experience and the nature of the value apprehended in that experience. The artist, the critic, and the psychologist can contribute valuable data concerning certain aspects of this experience and the processes to be understood. But the philosophical task lies in electing the general principles inherent in all the particular data and in systematically organising them into a coherent theory.

Gadamer (McCormick 1990:16) considers three periods of Aesthetic reflection, being represented by Plato, Kant and Hegel. It is important to remember that Gadamer orientates himself to earlier “aesthetics” through his own situation: McCormick (1990:16) notes that Gadamer focuses on the nature of the apparent revolt of the modernist artists against the tradition. McCormick (1990:17) comments that Gadamer “urges especially that we rethink such traditional concepts as imitation, expression, beauty, play, festival, gesture, sign and symbol”.

Further distinctions in aesthetics could be established between the different schools, whether it be analytic aesthetics, of which Arthur Danto is an exponent, or hermeneutic aesthetics, in which Gadamer found himself involved (McCormick 1990:2).

3.2.1.1 Medieval Aesthetics

A particular characteristic of medieval aesthetics’ attitude to ancient texts, which particularly influenced the way Greek plays were treated (as a literary genre more than

as stage genre), was the emphasis placed on grammatical structures. Eco (1986:102) indicates that “Poetics had long been confused with Grammar and Metrics”. The study of Tragedy fell under the study of Poetry, where, like poetry, the tragedies were rather read and interpreted for linguistic eloquence than as a stage production and a performance. Eco (1986:102) indicates:

The idea of an art of poetry reappeared in Domenico Gundisalvi’s *De Divisione Philosophiae*, but on the whole the place of Poetics was taken by the rules of oratory (*artes dictamini*), to which prose and poetry alike were subject. As Curtis⁵¹ notes, there were no words for the writing of poetry; the concepts of metrical composition, verse, or writing in metre, were expressed by Adhelm of Malmesbury and Odo Cluny as ‘metrical eloquence’ (*metrica facundia*) or ‘written texts designed for poetic dicta’ (*textus per dicta poetica scriptus*), and other expressions of the same type.

Eco (1986:4) indicates that most of the aesthetic issues that were discussed during the Middle Ages were inherited from Classical Antiquity. He reasons that medieval thinking might be said “to involve no more than the manipulation of an inherited terminology, one sanctified by tradition and by a love of system but devoid of any real significance”.⁵² Eco emphasises the tradition when he says (1986:4):

... where aesthetics and artistic production are concerned, the classical world turned its gaze on nature, but the medievals turned their gaze on the classical world; that medieval culture was based, not on a phenomenology of reality, but on a phenomenology of a cultural tradition.

The use of names in *The Persians* is a continuation of a Homeric tradition (*The Odyssey*). The deeper meanings associated with names also had cultural significance. The names used in *The Persians* can be understood on various levels, signifying a person, containing an adjectival quality of the character indicated,⁵³ implicating grandeur while sounding at once foreign and distant, familiar and ordinary. The philosophic approach to the meanings of words distinguished between various levels of understanding (Plato: *Timaeus*). This philosophic tradition in which word meanings were analysed was also practised by medieval scholars, like Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae* (Eco 1986:58-64). Eco quotes Aquinas (Eco 1986:58-64):

... Words can signify something properly and something figuratively; the literal sense is not the figure of speech itself, but the object which is figured.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cf Curtis, ER. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, ch. 8, in Eco (1986:102 n.40).

⁵² Hobson (1998:1) indicates: “The putting together of arguments, even in a scientific tradition, is affected by the particular language, national and cultural it is occurring in.”

⁵³ The Persian nation is being implied by the various names in the play.

⁵⁴ Quoted from Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae* I 1,10 ad 3.

In the thought of Aquinas, then, distinction is made between a first level of meaning, which is the historical literal; and a second level, which is used to communicate pathos and humour (Eco 1986:64). The names in the play, though approached from different traditions, whether cultural, linguistic, philosophic or dramaturgic, can be indicated as being of paramount significance for a comprehensive understanding of the play. The medieval scholars neglected the stage and performance dimensions of drama analysis, but their approaches to the language of the plays, while being narrow (grammatically orientated), still have value for a critical understanding of the performance on-stage, because the tones implied by the associated meanings of the names, in the cultural context of the audience, and in the tradition of tragedy, while simultaneously identifying a person, had a particular effect on the play's audience.

3.2.1.2 *Modern Aesthetics*

In similar fashion to Aristotelian drama theory having its limits (Scruton 1983:3), modern aesthetics also has its limits, in that it considers the subject and object of art from a particular historic orientation, both regarding the subject matter itself, and its varied assessments (critical – appreciative/descriptive) through time. Scruton (1983:3) elaborates on the restrictions of modern aesthetics:

[Aesthetics'] rise and fall (as we presently perceive them) have been contemporaneous with the rise and fall of Romanticism. Now that art looks back to the upheavals which created the 'modern' consciousness, philosophy stands on its shoulder, discoursing on their common loss of faith. To understand the state of contemporary aesthetics, we must therefore reflect on its romantic origin.

Lee (1938:174-175) uses Aristotle to arrive at a theory of tragedy.⁵⁵ He expounds the apparent problem Aristotle had with a theory of tragedy, in relating beauty and ugliness.⁵⁶ In his short exposition, Lee reduces Aristotle, and thus his theory of tragedy, to the assumption "that it is necessary to explain how the contemplation of tragic drama can yield pleasure" (Lee 1938:175). Lee elaborates on this problem:

The whole statement of the problem, as well as its treatment, is bound up with Aristotle's representative theory of art. For him, art is the representation either of actual or universalized situations. Aesthetic pleasure

⁵⁵ See also Listowel (1933:254-259), who considers the various categories of Aesthetics, for a survey of early 20th century thinkers on tragedy, who, all in one way or another, relate to Aristotle from a point of own concern.

⁵⁶ Lee (1938:174) makes specific references to *Poetics* chapter 4.

is the pleasure of recognizing a representation, or perhaps of recognizing the universal elements in what is represented. If the actual situation is unpleasant, why is not its representation unpleasant? This, for Aristotle, was the major theory of tragedy.

Two directions in modern aesthetics could be indicated by distinguishing the analytic and hermeneutic aesthetic schools. The respective representatives of these schools could be summarised as follows, according to McCormick (1990). McCormick's summary of the later views of Danto on interpretation and history are relevant to this study:

1. What marks the difference between mere things and works of art is interpretation; interpretations define works of art.
2. Interpretations are neither classificatory nor explanatory but are constitutive in that, as functions, interpretations 'transform material objects into works of art.'
3. Specifically, interpretations are artistic identifications that 'determine which parts and properties of the object in question belong to the work of art into which interpretation transfigures it.'
4. The successful results of a surface interpretation's determination of identity become the *interpretanda* of deep interpretations.
5. Interpretations change and therefore are essentially historical in character.

McCormick (1990:32) summarises the elements of interpretation and truth in the latter works of Gadamer as follows:

1. The essential historical character of interpretative understanding lies in a dialectic of innovation with tradition in a fusion of horizons.
2. Interpretation involves rethinking both the cardinal notion of tradition and the traditional character of such central notions as expression, representation, and the cognitive.
3. Such a rethinking needs to award a central place to the distinction between language as an utterance and language as dialogue.
4. Deploying the dialogue aspect of language in interpretative understanding helps us take account of the further distinction between the truths of language – truth as what we mean – and – 'the truths of things' – what things make manifest.
5. Interpretative understanding addresses pre-eminently the truth of things in the sense of trying to respond to the peculiar way things come to abide as a hold on what is near through the suspension that works of art effect in the natural and ineluctable transience of things.

These summaries indicate that modern aesthetic thinking is an important apparatus to understanding the problems of interpreting tragedy and understanding it correctly, but in its abstraction and insistence on emphasising the cognitive, it removes itself from the theatre event and considers the aesthetic value in the study or library. Like philology, aesthetics has its limitations in fully apprehending a tragedy in its varied dimensions.

Further elaboration on modern aesthetics would be incomplete without mention of the contributions made by Kant and Hegel.⁵⁷ This would however entail a drawn out discourse, which would be a deviation from the main line of argument. It suffices to mention that Kant gave form and status to aesthetics, and Hegel endowed it with content (Scruton 1983:3), indicating the historical “gap” in using it as a theoretical base to approach Greek Tragedy.

The lines of argument set in the previous chapter will be picked up, where consideration is given to the producers of Greek Tragedy, who applied particular “theories” and rules to maximise on the effectiveness of their works of art, whether their intentions were to win the prize, enhance the cult festivals, venerate the divine, or to be involved in didactic activities (religious, political, or moral).

3.2.2 Pre-Aeschylean drama

Without disregarding the actual historic development of tragedy as an art form, the dramatists preceding and contemporary to Aeschylus (his models and competitors) are investigated to follow the theoretic development of the art form, in order to better understand his craft as expressed in *The Persians*. Thus, the fashions of drama prior to Aeschylus will be related to him.

3.2.2.1 *Thespis*

Thespis was trained in the art of composing rustic dithyrambs by the masters of Sicyon, whom he also later influenced (Croiset & Croiset 1904:167).⁵⁸ Thespis modified the traditional forms of tragic chants and created something new and original. This must at once also be seen as a development, because the old traditional forms could no longer be appreciated to the extent that they were previously esteemed, if new developments were used as the measure. However, this should not detract from the earlier forms being evaluated and appreciated in accordance to the older criteria.

⁵⁷ Further elaboration would, for example, consider Kant’s threefold division of rationality: in which aesthetic judgement is distinguished from morality (practical reason) and from science (understanding), to be united with them only through a theory of agency. Scruton (1983:3) indicates that Kant was not too clear on the matter of the agency, to which Hegel gave clarity, where the latter would have stated that “it is not possible to discuss aesthetics without advancing a theory of art” (Scruton 1983:3).

⁵⁸ See also Aristotle *Poetics* 1448b on the history of Tragedy.

Thespis introduced an actor, a development of the chorus leader (ἑξαρχος), thus signifying a stronger development in the distinction of roles within the chorus. Until then the leader of the chorus narrated in easy rhyme (Croiset & Croiset 1904:167), and was answered by the greater chorus in composed passages. Thespis is also credited with developing costumes and applying makeup to enhance the dramatic illusion, aspects which Aeschylus developed to a far greater extent (Croiset & Croiset 1904:168). It is also indicated that Thespis could have been the first person to win a drama contest between 536-534BC (Croiset & Croiset 1904:168), thus indicating a development also in the cult setting.

3.2.2.2 *Choerilus*

Little is known of Choerilus, apart from the fact that he was active during the time between Thespis and Aeschylus, competing against the latter, and being responsible for costume and mask developments. It is important to remember that stagecraft developments were as important to the development of Greek Tragedy, as were matters pertaining to the text of the script (dialogue, plot, structure, motifs and themes).

3.2.2.3 *Phrynichus*

Phrynichus is known to have won the 67th Olympiad (Croiset & Croiset 1904:170), thus between the years 512-509BC. Apart from introducing feminine characters (acted by boys/men), he developed a variety of sentiments, emotions as well as introducing material equipment.

Phrynichus tried twice to deal with contemporary issues, indicating a continual search amongst the dramatists for new and innovative material. According to Else (1965:88), the reason for the presence of only three 'historical' tragedies was "because the single thing absolutely essential to a tragedy was a pathos⁵⁹ of heroic quality and scope, and fifth-century history in Greek lands provided just two such: the fall of Ionia and the defeat of Persia". Croiset & Croiset (1904:170) indicate that Thespis enlarged the drama

⁵⁹ According to Else (1965:88), pathos has two related senses, which result in dramatic action which affects all the persons of the play, as well as the audience: "For the chorus it remains a generalized fear and anxiety about what may happen; for the hero it takes more and more pointed form, as a moral and emotional crisis attending a *decision to act*. From having one focal point, the pathos itself, the drama begins to have two, the hero's act of choice and pathos; the play is then a sequence of action leading through the one to the other." He also indicates (1967:99): "The old undramatic pathos and the static forms of lamentation that accompanied it have been caught up in the service of a larger unity, an ongoing movement. Pathos has become part of the drama and ultimately gives way to *mathos*, learning."

source from a Dionysus orientated corpus to include the broader Homeric corpus, or the broader history of Greece (in mythological terms).⁶⁰ In similar vein, in 495 BC, Phrynichus represented a recent historical incident, the *Capture of Miletus*. The play is said to have made the Athenians weep, though it excited their anger against the poet. In 476(?) BC he produced *Phoenician Women*. The play was concerned with the defeat of Xerxes at Salamis. This play was not too successful, leaving it to Aeschylus to attain victory, using *Phoenician Women* as basis, a few years later.⁶¹

3.2.2.4 Pratinas

Pratinas is associated with the satyr-drama. He competed against Aeschylus on numerous occasions.

Two schools of drama could be distinguished during the late 6th century BC. The differentiation between Pratinas and Aeschylus serves as a good opportunity to exemplify the development of theory of drama in antiquity. The Attic tragedy, of which Aeschylus was an exponent, was centred strongly around the chorus, which was predominant in the production. In contrast, the Peloponnesian tragedy was structured around the satyrs. Satyr plays were a special form of tragedy. The main difference between the Peloponnesian and Attic forms was that the Attic was more serious in nature, where the Peloponnesian possessed a merrier humour (Croiset & Croiset 1904:170).⁶² The two schools were strongly associated by the audiences and later the association was prescribed by law for competition purposes. Thus the development of the tetralogy, consisting of three Attic orientated tragedies, and Satyr drama came to be part of Greek drama legacy.

A central figure in drama's heritage is Aristotle. Drama had a long history before him, and developed significantly after his time. His observations on tragedy and comedy (though comedy is not developed in *Poetics*) have influenced especially Renaissance

⁶⁰ The mythological is mentioned here while accepting of a continuation between the ancient and the recent, the present and the future, the ancient and the future.

⁶¹ On plot and structure, it is possible to gain insight into how Aeschylus developed his ideas through the testimony of Glaucus of Rhegium, a 4th century writer, who wrote in his *On the plot of Aeschylus*: "the poet had made over", or, "the poet had composed on the model of" *parapepoieisthai* the play of Phrynichus (*The Phoenician Women*). He opened his play with a description of the defeat of Xerxes, given by the eunuch while placing the chairs for the elders. According to Haigh (1938:72) the rest of the drama could only have been monotonous and deficient in interest, and was to be associated strongly with the old choral drama. See also Else (1965:87-88).

⁶² Demetrius of Phaleron is reported to have said "it is a gay tragedy" – παίζουσα τραγωδία.

and thus modern and contemporary drama contemplation and theory. It would, therefore, be important for this study to unravel the Aristotelian thinking to determine an Aeschylean theory, since the two are divergent on many points and the Aristotelian is often used as theory model to represent all ancient drama.

3.2.3 Aristotelian theory

Chaucer gives a representative medieval view on tragedy in his prologue to *The Monk's tale* (Cuddon 1998):

Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of hym that stood in great prosperitee
And is yfallen out of height degree
Into myserie, and endeth wrechedly.

This medieval view was influenced by reading Aristotle, as well as by an own design, where Chaucer gives a basic summary of his story.

As a man of the theatre, Aeschylus was not only a playwright, but was concerned with the totality of the production. His tragedies were intended to be performed before an audience (Taplin 1978:1).

Taplin is practical in his approach to drama in the sense that he seeks the real as being reflected in what we see (1978:1). Where he lays emphasis on the dramatists' visual technique, the devices used to translate intended meaning into theatrical terms (1978:3-4), Taplin is advocating a study of drama, oriented to the stage, and not its written form, as is the case with Aristotle. This is not to demean Aristotle, but to indicate the difference between critical orientation and drama.

Lee (1938:174-175) considers Aristotle's predicament with the theory of tragedy in terms of "difficult beauty", where the subject matter of tragic art may be "strikingly different in kind from that of idyllic or lyric art".

Aristotle's primary intention with the *Poetics* was not for general publication, it generally being included in his esoteric works, as opposed to his esoteric books (1454b, Maritz 1997:2). Its theoretical base is to be found in the *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. The *Poetics'* readers could be identified as philosophy students rather than either playwrights, drama critics or drama students. Aristotle says at the

start: κατὰ φύσιν πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων (as is natural, from first principles) (*Poetics* 1447a), and says: ... ὅτι μαυθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἥδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βραχὺ κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτοῦ (“... that understanding gives great pleasure not only to philosophers but likewise to others too, though the latter have a smaller share in it” - *Poetics* 1448b).

Aristotle compares the natures of history and tragedy in theoretic dimensions while discussing narration (*Poetics* 1459a):

Περὶ δὲ τῆς διηγηματικῆς καὶ ἐν μέτρῳ μιμητικῆς, ὅτι δεῖ τοὺς μύθους καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις συνιστάναι δραματικούς καὶ περὶ μίαν πράξιν ὅλην καὶ τελείαν ἔχουσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσα καὶ τέλος, ἵν' ὥσπερ ζῶον ἐν ὅλῳ ποιῆ τὴν οἰκείαν ἡδονήν, δῆλον, καὶ μὴ ὁμοίως ἱστορίαις τὰς συνθέσεις εἶναι, ἐν αἷς ἀνάγκη οὐχὶ μιᾶς πράξεως ποιεῖσθαι δῆλωσιν ἀλλ' ἐνὸς χρόνου, ὅσα ἐν τούτῳ συνέβη περὶ ἓνα ἢ πλείους, ὧν ἕκαστον ὡς ἔτυχεν ἔχει πρὸς ἄλληλα. ὥσπερ γὰρ κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρόνους ἢ τ' ἐν Σαλαμίῳ ἐγένετο ναυμαχία καὶ ἢ ἐν Σικελίᾳ Καρχηδονίων μάχη οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ συντείνουσαι τέλος, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐφεξῆς χρόνοις ἐνίοτε γίνεται θάτερον μετὰ θάτερον, ἐξ ὧν ἐν οὐδὲν γίνεται τέλος.

As regards narrative mimesis in verse, it is clear that plots, as in tragedy, should be constructed dramatically, that is, around a single, whole and complete action, with beginning, middle, and end, so that epic, like a single and whole animal, may produce the pleasure proper to it. Its structures should not be like histories, which require an exposition not of a single action but of a single period, with all the events (in their contingent relationships) that happened to one person or more during it. For just as there was chronological coincidence between the sea battle at Salamis and the battle against the Carthaginians in Sicily, though they in no way converged on the same goal, so in a continuous stretch of time event sometimes follows event without yielding a single goal.

In this extract it is evident that Aristotle is comparing action to period in comparing the essential criteria for tragedy as compared to history. Where history is unrelated in its events, tragedy needs a strong sense of cohesion. This is communicated through plot.

Tragic action, which is superior to character (1450) is displayed in the construction of plots (1452-3), and is based on the consideration that (1452b):

... τὴν σύνθεσιν εἶναι τῆς καλλίστης τραγωδίας μὴ ἀπλὴν ἀλλὰ πεπλεγμένην καὶ ταύτην φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν εἶναι μιμητικὴν...

... the structure of the finest tragedy should be complex not simple, as well as representing fearful and pitiable events....

Furthermore (1450b):

ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἶον ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγωδίας, δεύτερον δὲ τὰ ἦθη ... τρίτον δὲ ἡ διάνοια ... τέταρτον δὲ τῶν μὲν λόγων ἢ λέξεις ... τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν ἢ μελοποιία μέγιστον τῶν ἡδυσμάτων, ἢ δὲ ὄψεις ψυχολογικὸν μὲν ἀτεχνότατον δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα οἰκείον τῆς ποιητικῆς· ἢ γὰρ τῆς τραγωδίας δύναμις καὶ ἄνευ ἀγῶνος καὶ ὑποκριτῶν ἔστιν, ἔτι δε κυριωτέρα περὶ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν τῶν ὄψεων ἢ τοῦ σκευοποιοῦ τέχνη τῆς τῶν ποιητῶν ἔστιν.

Plot, then, is the first principle and, as it were, soul of tragedy, while character is secondary ... Third in importance is thought ... Fourth is the diction of the spoken sections ... Of the remainder, lyric poetry is the greatest embellishment, while spectacle is emotionally potent but falls quite outside the art and is not integral to poetry: tragedy's capacity is independent of performance and actors, and besides, the mask-maker's art has more scope than the poet's for rendering effects of spectacle.

Aristotle distinguishes between the forms of media, performed and written, and shows greater affiliation with the written art form. Though the elements are indicated to be present in Aristotle's thought, being spectacle and effect, these are not primary. It is thus wrong to ascribe these considerations to Aristotle's pen, though later drama theorists might have placed greater value on these aspects.

In contemporary drama theory, Aristotle is the one name that is mentioned repeatedly in discussing tragedy. This is well illustrated by Wilson in *The Theater Experience* (1980:383):

One of the most fundamental dramatic forms in the Western tradition, tragedy involves a serious action of universal significance and has important moral and philosophical implications. Following Aristotle, most critics agree that the tragic hero or heroine should be an essentially admirable person whose downfall elicits our sympathy while leaving us with a feeling that there has in some way been a triumph of the moral and cosmic order which transcends the fate of any individual. The disastrous outcome of a tragedy should be seen as the inevitable result of the character and his or her situation, including forces beyond the character's control. Traditionally tragedy was about the lives and fortunes of kings and nobles, and there has been a great deal of debate whether it is possible to have a modern tragedy....

It is especially in this last debate that a person like Nietzsche (2000) would have found himself, where he saw the revival of Greek tragedy, its continuance, in German culture, in the music of Wagner. There are several cues in this quotation from which whole debates could be started. These are: (i) whether Greek drama should be seen, or not be

seen, in a Western, European light;⁶³ (ii) the adaptation of Aristotelian drama observations as theory, without considering all the consequences; (iii) and more specifically for this study, whether the nature and material used, characters and stories, are primary determinants in qualifying a drama as a tragedy, or whether a time specific genre is being dealt with.

As has been indicated, character is not of primary concern for Aristotle, though he does not disregard its importance. As it is problematic to base theories of modern drama on the thoughts of Aristotle, emphasising differing aspects, so it is problematic to interpret pre-Aristotelian drama using the thoughts of Aristotle as guideline. None the less, it must also be said that Aristotelian thoughts would have much in common with his predecessors and other ancient theories. A point in fact would be the contemplation on character.

A treatment of the tragic hero is not found in the *Poetics*. This treatment is contradictory to his considerations on character where (1452b – 53a):

...πρῶτον μὲν δῆλον ὅτι οὔτε τοὺς ἐπικεικίς ἄνδρας δεῖ μεταβάλλοντας φαίνεσθαι ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν, οὐ γὰρ φοβερόν οὐδὲ ἐλεεινὸν τοῦτο ἀλλὰ μιαιόν ἐστιν· οὔτε τοὺς μοχθηροὺς ἐξ ἀτυχίας εἰς εὐτυχίαν, ἀτραγωδότατον γὰρ τοῦτ' ἐστὶ πάντων, οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔχει ὦν δεῖ, οὔτε γὰρ φιλόανθρωπον οὔτε ἐλεεινὸν οὔτε φοβερόν ἐστιν· ... ὁ μεταξὺ ἄρα τούτων λοιπός. ἔστι δὲ τοιοῦτος ὁ μήτε ἀρετῇ διαφέρων καὶ δικαιοσύνη μήτε διὰ κακίαν καὶ μοχθηρίαν μεταβάλλων εἰς τὴν δυστυχίαν ἀλλὰ δι' ἁμαρτίαν τινα....

... it is to begin with clear that neither should decent men be shown changing from prosperity to adversity, as this is not pitiable but repugnant, nor the deprived changing from adversity to prosperity, because this is the least tragic of all, possessing none of the necessary qualities, since it rouses neither compassion nor pity nor fear ... This leaves, then, the person in-between these cases. Such a person is someone not pre-eminent in virtue and justice, and one who falls into adversity not through evil and depravity, but through some kind of error....

These considerations are akin to general Greek thought, which does not consider character development as an aspect of characterisation, but character manifestation, thinking rather of character stereo types. It is also based on Aristotle's own ethic

⁶³ The question is whether the Greek genius is Western European or whether it is more Egyptian and Eastern influenced. The Greek genius has been inherited by Western Europe (especially via the Renaissance), and is thus considered, reversibly, in light of the direct continuation of old Greek and modern Western civilisation.

framework of the golden mean, in which the best temperament is neither the one nor the other, either overly bad or overly good.

Gomme (1962: 194-214) discusses problems of interpreting Aristotle and his *Poetics*, “and with the meaning of what he says, not with the problem whether he is right or wrong” (1962:194). Gomme identifies three principal passages in the *Poetics* in which Aristotle expresses an opinion about tragic character: chapters 2; 13; and 15. He continues to elaborate on three “characters in tragedy” which are not covered by Aristotle (1962:196). Unfortunately, Gomme does not consider the characters used by Aeschylus, and rather considers the characters in the plays of Aristophanes, Shakespeare, and Euripides in light of Aristotelian drama theory without considering the essence of Aristotle’s concerns.

The most important consideration in the *Poetics*, given to the central unifying function of a hero, is given in Aristotle’s discussion of plot where he states (1451a):

Μῦθος δ’ ἐστὶν εἰς οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται ἐὰν περὶ ἓνα ᾗ.

A plot is not unified, as some think, if built round an individual.

Thus, on this reading of Aristotle, the central function of a tragic hero is not possible. Nor can characterisation contribute to the play’s structural unity.

The tragic hero is also foreign to Aeschylus’ portrayal of character, and to the context of the play at large – Xerxes’ character is worse than it should be in Aristotelian thinking - and as Greeks in the audience saw him. From the onset, Xerxes is presented as a slight figure, always in his father’s shadow. His defeat is imminent from the start of the play, where the anxious chorus expects the worst. The time frame of the play also precedes the appearance of the chorus, and the defeat has already taken place. Xerxes was the audience’s enemy, and he is presented as enemy of the Persian people too, contrary to Darius, also a defeated enemy, who is portrayed in an honourable light.

It is also determined that character plays a unifying role in *The Persians*, not that of Xerxes, Darius or the Queen on their own, but that of the failed expedition in contrast to the chorus. This characterisation is conveyed through the changing pathos associated with the changing tempo/intensity, name associations, adjectival elaboration and events through the course of the play. The functions of Xerxes, Darius and the Queen in the

play on-stage are akin to that of the messenger, themselves being messengers. The men in the procession we laugh at in the beginning we feel empathy for at the end. It is thus important to determine more accurately the sense communicated by the names mentioned in the play. Distinction is also made between the on-stage action and the off-stage action.

Else (1965:76) considers *The Persians* as “not yet quite a drama, but Aeschylus has given it considerable dramatic life”. The criteria determining “drama” for Else is orientated from later considerations on the theme (Aristotle), and even though he rejects the idea of “tragedy development” he seems to be falling prey to his own verdicts, where he indicates “development” within the dramas of Aeschylus. Else analyses *The Persians* under “action”. It is interesting that he does not force the tragedy structure into an Aristotelian model, but reflects on it in terms of 4 phases (1965:76):

In the *Persians* the disaster has already taken place before the play begins; all that remains is to bring its effect and meaning home to us. The action, so far as we can speak of an action, goes through four stages, each having a definite relation to the disaster (the battle of Salamis). These stages are: (1) apprehension (the chorus and the Queen), (2) verification (the Messenger’s report of the battle), (3) explanation (by the Ghost of Darius), (4) emotional realization (the frantic lamentations of Xerxes and the chorus).

Else would need to keep in mind that the tragedy was performed by a Greek cast before a Greek audience. Thus, the battle at Salamis would not be considered a disaster but a triumph. Even so, Else indicates the complexity of drama structure, where the main action took place off-stage before the production begins. To a certain extent this is an economic consideration. The economic considerations are also illustrated by: time, for the battle to be displayed and enacted on-stage; cast, extra choreography that must be plotted and choruses and music that must be learnt; and, the story line, which supports the primary focus of the tragedy (do not fight against your nature).

The plot of *The Persians* is not complicated, and the story line is straight forward. However, this can neither be called primitive nor a flaw. Jones (1962) is an example of drama analysts who insist on using the Aristotelian “rules” as model for all tragedies,⁶⁴

⁶⁴ An interesting inversion between Aristotle and Aeschylus is very apparent, a critical slip, where Jones (1962:115) states: “Aeschylus breaks the Aristotelian rule in order to throw a premonitory light upon the abnormal individual.” I have not been able to trace references to Aristotle or his rules in either Aeschylus or in Aeschylus’ contemporaries!

imposing structures on tragedies where they are not necessarily relevant. For example, Jones (1962:72) states:

The *Persians* is the one play in the entire extant literature – not just in Aeschylus – which is genuinely and fully founded upon *hybris*, and the story of the failure of the Persian expedition against Greece is at one with the work of art's morality....

Jones sees “art's morality” in a religious context, and the *hybris* he indicates as irreverence towards the native Greek gods (1962:80).

Aristotle was reacting to other theories on tragedy, as is evident in his remark: ὡσπερ τινὲς οἴονται (“as some think” - 1421a). This makes it necessary, also in the light of Aristotle's inadequacies, to consider alternative or other ancient theories of drama.

3.2.4 Other ancient theories of drama

3.2.4.1 Homer

Webster (1942:6) relates Homer's composition craft to the cosmos: “In manner due and orderly you sing”. Composition is then “the careful balancing of phrase by phrase and scene by scene so that the whole has a definite shape”. Webster (1942:6) wishes to see Homer's compositions constructed in terms of cosmic order (Greek), and thus balance is emphasised. Since the sixth and fifth centuries, dramatists inherited this craft, and I would like to suggest that *The Persians* should be analysed in terms of cosmic harmony and balance. This is well reflected in the philosophy of Aeschylus' contemporary, Heraclitus.

3.2.4.2 Plato

Plato's thoughts on tragedy, like his thoughts on art, are predetermined by his theory of Forms, and should thus be understood in relation to his ethics and politics. Education plays a central role. A condensed indication of Plato's thoughts on tragedy is expressed in the famous Book X of his *Republic*: Plato's concern is that art, tragedy, distorts “truth” (*Republic* 598-599):

... μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπισκεπτέον τὴν τε τραγωδίαν καὶ τὸν ἡγεμόνα αὐτῆς Ὅμηρον, ἐπειδὴ τινῶν ἀκούομεν, ὅτι οὗτοι πάσας μὲν τέχνας ἐπίστανται, πάντα δὲ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια τὰ πρὸς ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν, καὶ τὰ γε θεῖα· ἀνάγκη γὰρ τὸν ἀγαθὸν ποιητὴν, εἰ μέλλει περὶ ὧν ἂν ποιῆ καλῶς ποιήσῃ, εἰδότα ἄρα ποιεῖν, ἢ μὴ οἶόν τε εἶναι ποιεῖν. δεῖ δὴ ἐπισκέψασθαι, πότερον μιμηταῖς τούτοις οὗτοι ἐντυχόντες ἐξηπάτηνται καὶ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ὀρώντες οὐκ αἰσθάνονται τριττὰ ἀπέχοντα τοῦ

ὄντος καὶ ῥάδια ποιεῖν μὴ εἰδότε τὴν ἀλήθειαν· φαντάσματα γάρ, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ὄντα ποιοῦσιν....

We must now consider tragedy and its leader, Homer, in the light of this, for we hear it said by some that tragedians know all arts, all human affairs where vice and virtue are involved, and all things divine too: for they say, the good poet must compose with knowledge if he is to compose well on any subject. We must therefore consider whether these people have fallen in with a set of imitators who have deceived them and have failed to realise that their works, which they see, are three removes from the reality and are easy to make even if you don’t know the truth. They are images, not realities....

Therefore, Plato’s thoughts on tragedy are not considered feasible criteria for understanding the dramatological aspects of *The Persians*, though he does indicate that there are “people” who consider the composition of tragedies as a form of art.

3.2.4.3 Horace

Horace prescribes rules for tragedy in his *Art of Poetry* (24-20 BC). Wilson (1980:314) indicates that the *Art of Poetry* is the only complete piece of dramatic theory from the Roman period. Accordingly, the Roman critic stressed consistency in character and the exclusion of comic relief. He also dictates a five act structure, indicating a development in formal play structure into various acts.

3.2.4.4 Longinus

Longinus criticised Aeschylus for his extravagance of thought and language, indicating one of his primary concerns in his *On the Sublime* 3:1 (Περὶ ὕψους). He is rather direct in his criticism, quoting from *Oreithyia*(?) Fragment 281- Nauck (Apfel 1935):

... καὶ καμίνου σχῶσι μάκιστον σέλας.
 εἰ γάρ τιν’ ἐστιοῦχον ὄψομαι μόνον,
 μίαν παρείρας πλεκτάνην χειμάρροον,
 στέγην πυρώσω καὶ κατανθρακώσομαι·
 νῦν δ’ οὐ κέκραγά πω τὸ γειναῖον μέλος.

... restrain the oven’s mighty glow.
 For if I see but one beside his hearth,
 I’ll thrust in just one tentacle of storm,
 and fire his roof and turn it all to cinders.
 I’ve not yet started my proper song.

On this quotation Longinus expands (3:1):

οὐ τραγικὰ ἔτι ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ παρατράγωδα, αἱ πλεκτάναι, καὶ τὸ πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἐξεμεῖν, καὶ τὸ τὸν βορέαν ἀύλητὴν ποιεῖν, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἐξῆς· τεθόλωται γὰρ τῇ φράσει καὶ τεθορύβηται ταῖς φαντασίαις μᾶλλον ἢ

δεδείνωται, κὰν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν πρὸς αὐγὰς ἀνασκόπηῃς, ἐκ τοῦ φορεβοῦ κατ' ὀλίγον ὑμονοστυεῖ πρὸς τὸ εὐκαταφρόνητον. ὅπου δ' ἐν τραγωδίᾳ, πράγματι ὀγκηρῶ φύσει καὶ ἐπιδεχομένῳ στόμφῳ, ὅμως τὸ παρὰ μελὸς οἶδῃν ἀσύγγνωστον, σχολῇ γ' ἂν οἶμαι λόγοις ἀληθινοῖς ἀρμόσειεν. ταύτη καὶ τὰ τοῦ Λεοντίνου Γοργίου γελάται γράφοντος “Ξέρξης ὁ τῶν Περσῶν Ζεὺς,” καὶ “γῦπες ἔμψυχοι τάφοι,” καὶ τινὰ τῶν Καλλισθένους ὄντα οὐχ ὑψηλά, ἀλλὰ μετέωρα, καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον τὰ Κλειτάρχου φλοιώδης γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ φυσῶν κατὰ τὸν Σοφοκλέα μικροῖς μὲν αὐλίσκοισι, φορβειᾶς δ' ἄτερ.

This is not tragedy; it is a parody of the tragic manner – tentacles, vomiting to heaven, making Boreas a flute player, and so on. The result is not impressiveness but turbid diction and confused imagery. If you examine the details closely, they gradually sink from the terrifying to the contemptible. Now if untimely turgidity is unpardonable in tragedy, a genre which is naturally magniloquent and tolerant of bombast, it will scarcely be appropriate in writing which has to do with real life. Hence the ridicule attaching to Gorgias of Leontini’s “Xerxes the Persians’ Zeus” and “their living tombs the vultures”, or to various things in Callisthenes, where he has not so much risen to heights as been carried off his feet. Clitarchus is an even more striking example; he is an inflated writer, and, as Sophocles has it, blows at his tiny flute, the mouth-band off.

3.2.4.5 Aristophanes

Aristophanes makes special reference to Aeschylus in *The Frogs*. In this comedy a competition is staged between Euripides and Aeschylus, to reveal Euripides as a poor dramatist. Moral content of the play as well as the person of the dramatist is taken into consideration. They must both be exemplary. The office of the dramatist is a lofty and responsible one. His duty is to make the citizens braver, nobler, more generous and more virtuous than he found them; “to inspire them with valiant thoughts and exalted aspirations” (Haigh 1938:66).

3.2.5 The Renaissance

Wilson (1980:314) indicates that the Italian Renaissance critics devised rigid criteria for tragedy that were debated for centuries. Among these critics were Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558) and Ludovico Castelvetro (1505-1571). Wilson (1980:314-315) summarises their theory of tragedy as dealing with individuals of high birth. Further, “mixture of genres was forbidden. The unities of time (twenty-four hours), place and action were inviolable”. Wilson (1980:315) also indicates that the tragic playwright, according to the Renaissance critics, should strive for an “illusion of reality (*verisimilitude*)”.

3.2.6 Modern theories

The modern authors are grouped together, though their influences and schools of thought are often divergent. The groupings are more for convenience's sake than to distinguish finer nuances. The treatment attempts to accommodate a fuller understanding of the authors' concerns in context, while also safeguarding against indiscriminate eclectic "patchwork" references to authors, who themselves were dependent on other sources.

According to Wilson (1980:315):

During the eighteenth century, there was a movement away from strict adherence to the Italian ideals. Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Preface to Shakespeare* (1765) is a defence of Shakespeare's tragic style. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in *Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1767-69), suggested that the neoclassical critics had misinterpreted Aristotle. He also called for critical acceptance of domestic tragedy, which dealt with the lower social classes. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the German Romantics, among whom were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, began writing tragedies that emulated Shakespeare rather than the Greeks.

Wilson closes his discussion of the theories of tragedy from the eighteenth and nineteenth century with a short mention of Friedrich Nietzsche. According to Wilson (1980:315) *The birth of Tragedy* "was probably the most important theoretical essay of the century". Wilson summarises Nietzsche's theory: "...tragedy was born out of the fusion of the Dionysiac and the Apollonian, the primitive and the rational."

3.2.6.1 Russian Formalists

The Russian Formalists are used as illustration of modern theories. The Formalists are important for seeing literary devices as interrelated elements or functions within a total textual system. They⁶⁵ have a particular bearing for this thesis on the names in *The Persians*, like medieval Aesthetics, because, though the Formalists concentrated on particular aspects of texts, consideration of their insights helps to assess the relation between the names and the greater play.

⁶⁵ Russian formalists emerged before the 1917 Bolshevick revolution, and were active during the 1920s. They included: Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Ospin Brik, Yury Tynyanov, Boris Eichenbaum; and Boris Tomashevsky (Cf. Eagleton 1988:2-6).

The formalists emphasised the literary form over the literary content, being essentially concerned with the structures of language rather than with what is said. Partially in reaction to Formalist Theory, and partially basing arguments on insights derived from the Formalist School, the close relation can be indicated between linguistics, structure, meaning and significance (the effect of how something is said on what is said and how it affects an understanding of the language structure). Where the Formalists saw art as having no relation to the social reality, this thesis illustrates that there is a definite relation. *The Persians* indicates the close relation between the art (the performance), the playwright, the audience (including judges) and historic and social setting. The judges as first “formal critics” also signify the relation between the art and its formal critical valuation and judgement, at once in context, as illustration of later critics’ relations to their own social contexts and to that of the world of Aeschylus. Eagleton (1988:3) uses the examples of *Don Quixote* and *Animal Farm* to indicate the relation between socio-political context, names and the significance of names within the various socio-political contexts, form and meaning:

Don Quixote is not ‘about’ the character of that name: the character is just a device for holding together different kinds of narrative technique. *Animal Farm* for the Formalists would not be an allegory of Stalinism; on the contrary, Stalinism would simply provide a useful opportunity for the construction of an allegory.

In this extract, indicating at once Eagleton’s pre-concern for ideological stance and treatment of the different literary schools, Eagleton illustrates the Formalists’ priority of form over content. This priority cannot be seen as a total exclusion of meaning. In contrast, *The Persians* contains names that indicate characters and convey characterisation, that are as important to the play’s structure as they are to its content (historic and literary) in relation to context (historic and literary)⁶⁶ and to its effect (reception).

⁶⁶ Content and Context are here distinguished by literary and historic considerations which do not preclude each other. The historic is conveyed through the literary, and the literary has a historic orientation.

3.2.6.2 Reception theories

Reception theories are based in part on Hermeneutics, such as on the thoughts of Gadamer, Ricoeur and Schillebeeckx (Vos 1996), as well as on communication dynamics as considered by de Saussure (1959). Reception theories place emphasis on the audience, and the audience's participation in the theatre event. The question the dramatist would ask is: How would my audience receive this? And in relation to this: If I wished to evoke a particular reaction, how would I have to orchestrate my presentation? It is with this consideration that the limits of only using textual versions of the play are most evident; we do not know what the audience's reactions were. This must be assumed.

Even though the emphasis on audiences and how they receive and experience the performance is a relatively new science, its essence is by no means new. Aeschylus presented his plays before judges at a competition, and the audience's reaction was one criterion that determined its success. He was therefore very aware of its reception, and surely also composed and performed it in such manner as to invoke the audience's favourable response.

3.2.7 Understanding drama

The performed play should be approached as a production which incorporates back stage, stage, and audience. The play in its written form should be approached as the script,⁶⁷ which dictates back stage activities, is interpreted on-stage, and assumes reaction from the audience. To reach a correct understanding of a play, it would be necessary to know the different cues where the audience laughed, cried, fell silent or became angry. Unfortunately, such cues are not explicit and must be induced from a close reading of the text.

3.3 The script – intention

Taplin (1978:2) indicates that:

All students of the theatre ... must be aware that the written quotation of any spoken sentence is a very incomplete transcript of what was conveyed by the utterance itself. On the one level we miss the tone of voice, nuance,

⁶⁷ See also Easterling (1997:157) for a discussion on considering the extant text a script. Although, it must also be mentioned that the extant text was only prepared after the first performance and not prior to it.

pace, stress; and we miss facial expression, gesture and the physical posture and positioning of the speaker and addressee. Even more profoundly the transcript does not convey the roles and social or personal relationships of the real people involved ... It lacks context ... For the medium of the playwright is the bodies and the voices of his actors, and by these means he has, in a very limited space of time, to build up a complex of relationships and communications of sufficient depth and interest to capture his audience. So the meaning of the play, what it is about, is heard and seen ... When we read a play, what we are doing - or what we should be doing - is hearing and seeing the play in the theatre of the mind....

Through the text a reader can only partially appreciate the tragedy. It needs to be reconstructed. The reader thus becomes an internal drama constructor, based on knowledge and feeling.

The dramatic action (on-stage and off-stage) is contained within the language. The language of Tragedy is therefore dramatic language. The acting, walking and facial expressions are therefore not as important as the speech, and the tone, volume, pitch is more important than the stage décor. Aeschylus' creativity and ingenuity is detectable in 1026-1027 - "without foresight I looked at a tragedy". Xerxes is made a spectator of the off-stage action, and is thus made part of the audience. The audience experiences the off-stage action through Xerxes. This same scene also has implications for the competition, where his view is firstly described in 1028 as the route of the fleet of warships, and secondly the tragedy is confirmed in 1030 as a disaster but also as a prize for our enemy (1034). The theme of battle won and lost is also contained herein.

3.3.1 The language of the script

I would like to suggest that the pathos of *The Persians* is established in the play's language, and not in the character of the hero.⁶⁸ Aristotle himself considers character secondary to plot.

Goldhill (1997b:127) asks how the language of tragedy is to be characterised. He indicates that "tragedy is - and was perceived to be - made up of a particular register of language: there is a style and vocabulary proper to the genre". Even though Goldhill tries to cover the corpus of 5th century tragedy, he does this through criteria elaborated upon during the later quarter of the 5th century and course of the 4th century BC. This

⁶⁸ Contrary e.g. Else (1967:87).

pertains specifically to the association between the tragedians and the school of sophists in their approaches to language and rhetoric (Goldhill 1997b:127-150). Still, the criteria were prevalent, though applied differently by Aeschylus, during the earlier part of the 5th century BC. Even so, this treatment of the language of Greek tragedy is more detailed than that of Wilson (1980:309), who indicates: “The language of traditional tragedy is verse.”

Using Goldhill’s criteria, the following characteristics of the language of Greek Tragedy could be indicated:

3.3.1.1 *Application and alternation of different genres*

Goldhill (1997b:127) indicates: “One basic articulation of tragedy is the difference between scenes and choral odes.” Different genres are also incorporated within the scenes and the choral odes, where the scenes are subdivided into *rhēseis* and *stichomythia*. The speeches and alternating speech in the play mostly make use of an Attic dialect. The Doric dialect is applied in much of the choral odes, which are subdivided into a *πάροδος*, a *μεσώδη*, an *ἐπωδός*, and *προωδός*, and where the standard *stasima* could be divided into *στροφή* and *ἀντιστροφή*. The principle, as has been determined in *The Persians*, is that each type of verse has its own specific mood and pitch, which would have been amplified by the accompanying dance and sound. They fulfil various functions within the play, apart from regulating the pace and allowing for breathing space and accentuating the spectacle. They lead the audience in its participation in the play, since the chorus could also be described as the participating audience on-stage.

The integration of at once foreign sounding foreign names into the already loaded diction of the choral verses would heighten the effect of at once distance and time, but also of familiarity, since the audience, identifying with the chorus, would make certain associations with the foreign names. The differentiated language contained within the alternating genres in the tragedy help to accentuate its dramatic effect.

3.3.1.2 *Colloquial language*

Not all the language in tragedy is ‘elevated’, and requires effort to grasp. If this were the case the dramatist would lose three quarters of his audience. A fine balance would be

required, with an overall effect of being of an elevated nature, even though much use is made of colloquial language, or as Goldhill (1997b:128) formulates: “the language of tragedy also incorporates many elements of the language of the city.”

An example in Afrikaans Anglicisation serves to illustrate the use of “language of the city” in a lofty sense, while also indicating the phonetic morphological possibilities foreignness and grandiosity could give rise to. The English “Breakfast” when transcribed to Afrikaans could be rendered as “Brekvis” (Breck - fish). An Afrikaans mother asks her daughter what she wishes to eat. They are in a grand hotel. “Vis” (Fish), the daughter replies. “Brekvis”. The daughter is trying to speak in ‘elevated’ language, and in the confused phonetics/meanings/words, the resultant communication is rather amusing. The dramatist who can manipulate these inter-language devices has command over a very useful dramatic tool.

The Persians has definite lighter moments. The humour is carried for example in the wordiness of the Queen, as well as in her impromptu, audience amusing, essential questions, such as when she suddenly queries where Athens is (230-231):

... κείνα δ' ἐκμαθεῖν θέλω,
 ὦ φίλοι, ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός·

But first I wish to know this, friends,
 where in the world do the people say Athens is situated?

These expressions by the Queen give the chorus opportunity to expound on the political and military strength of Greece, as well as to relieve the more intense moments in the play. The Queen’s language could be described as common in an air of pomp.

3.3.1.3 Elevated language

The feeling of grandiosity is carried by both diction and inverted syntax. Aeschylus makes much use of compound adjectives.⁶⁹ One of the principal problems Aeschylus faces is elevating recent history to the status of Homeric history. If successful, Homeric history would, in a sense, become more real. Goldhill (1997b:129) says: “the archaic grandeur of Homeric language resounds throughout Greek tragedy.”

⁶⁹ See Kelly (1975:1-30) for a detailed analysis of the compound adjectives in *The Persians*.

This study isolates pronunciation of diction and use of names, at once exotic and familiar to attain a sense of grandiosity.

3.3.1.3.1 *Pronunciation*

The correct pronunciation of the Persian names would be established through a study of the Persian language. One of the problems in *The Persians* is that not all the names are Persian, but also represent the “nations” that went into battle with them. Questions that could be asked on the pronunciation of the names by the Greek actors, would query differences between Persian and Greek pronunciation, the difference in stressed and unstressed syllables, tone and pitch. It will be established that the names were intended to be Hellenised, and thus an analysis into the Persian language and pronunciation, though interesting, will not be necessary for this study.

A further consideration, in accordance to Rutherford (1968:3) is that the language of tragedy is the Attic of the time when tragedy “sprang into life”. Rutherford (ibid) considers the irregularities in Greek dialects when considering the use of Attic dialect in tragedies:

It is strange that Tragedy which, rightly considered, sheds more light than aught else on the history of the Attic dialect, should have been the occasion of concealing its purity. Among other causes which have prevented Attic from being thoroughly understood, none can equal the mistake of regarding the Tragic diction as only an elevated modification of ordinary Attic. This conviction is of the same kind as that arising from the concomitant study of several Hellenic dialects, namely that Greek as a whole is markedly irregular. As a matter of fact nothing is further from the truth.

In agreement with Rutherford (1968), I consider Greek, within its different dialects, to have become regulated by the time that Aeschylus produced *The Persians*. The different dialects were used in the tragedies for dramatic effect, as much as convention also contributed to and was used to create a particular environment. No general rule can be established regarding the Attic dialect, or diction in the various tragedies, since each dramatist considered and used these differently in the presentation of their plays.

3.3.1.3.2 *Letters and sounds*

A comparison between the phonetics of ancient Greek and modern Greek alphabet serves as an illustration to emphasise the complexity of using the written letters as guide to establish the pronunciation of letters from foreign words. Smyth indicates in his *Greek Grammar for Colleges* (1920:12) that “the pronunciation of Ancient Greek varied

much according to time and place, and differed in many important respects from that of the modern language". For the purposes of *The Persians* it will be necessary to focus on Attic Received Pronunciation, since this was the dialect spoken by the majority of the Athenian audience. To this extent, even the Doric used in the play should, from a reception point of view, be considered from an Attic perspective.

Smyth (1920:12) further expounds the problem of reconstructing correct pronunciation of Ancient Greek when he states:

While in general Greek of the classical period was a phonetic language, i.e. its letters represented the sounds, and no heard sound was unexpressed in writing ..., in course of time many words were retained in their old form though their pronunciation had changed. The tendency of the language was thus to become more and more unphonetic. Our current pronunciation of Ancient Greek is only in part even approximately correct for the period from the death of Pericles (429 BC) to that of Demosthenes (322 BC); and in the case of several sounds, e.g. ζ, φ, χ, θ, it is certainly erroneous for that period. But ignorance of the exact pronunciation, as well as long-established usage, must render any reform pedantical, if not impossible.

The matter would be further complicated when the foreign words used in Ancient Greek are considered: to what extent was the pronunciation of the "original" language retained? A further consideration is that the predominant current pronunciation of all ancient texts, from Homer to Simonides to the texts of the New Testament and late Byzantium, is relatively similar.

Distinction between pronunciation of words in songs, narratives, speeches and poetry is also not taken into consideration, emphasising the difference between written and spoken word; nor how the varied sound interpretations, pending familiarity, would have influenced meanings associated with the sounds heard and deciphered in the codes of the reception language. Further, the elaboration on the complexities involved in syllable renditions and unravelling diphthongs would only be justified in a treatise on its own, and thus will only be mentioned here, though their complexities will be taken into consideration in the phonetic and morphological name analysis.

The sound equivalents of the ancient and modern Greek alphabets are given as example to illustrate the problem of "changed pronunciation" and symbolic representation of

sounds. It must be remembered that an English (South African) phonetic/sound system is being used for both alphabets:⁷⁰

Table 1 Greek and English alphabets

Letters			
Greek		English (Classic)	
A	α	A	A
B	β	B	B
Γ	γ	G	G
Δ	δ	D	D
E	ε	E	E
Z	ζ	Z	Z
H	η	Ē	Ē
Θ	θ	TH	Th
I	ι	I	I
K	κ	K	c, k
Λ	λ	L	L
M	μ	M	M

Letters			
Greek		English (Classic)	
N	ν	N	N
Ξ	ξ	X	X
O	ο	O	O
Π	π	P	P
P	ρ	R	R
Z	σ,ς	S	S
T	τ	T	T
Υ	υ	U	u, y
Φ	φ	PH	Ph
X	χ	X	X
Ψ	ψ	PS	Ps
Ω	ω	Ō	Ō

⁷⁰ Further elaboration would then distinguish between American English, Queen's English (Received Pronunciation), Scottish and Irish dialects, South African (Cape/ Boland, Gauteng, Natal, Bloemfontein) dialects, as to how certain sounds are pronounced, e.g. the "r" sound is soft, hard, rolled, or absent.

Table 2: ancient and modern Greek letter sounds

Sounds: ancient Greek (Smyth 1920:7)			Sounds: modern Greek (Ελληνικά Τώρα 1992:14)		
Greek	English	English	Greek	English	English ⁷¹
ἄλφα	alpha	a: aha; ā: father	άλφα	Alpha	Art
βῆτα	bēta	Beg	βήτα	Vita	Voice
γάμμα	gamma	Go	γάμα	Yama	Yes, woman
δέλτα	delta	Dig	δέλτα	Velta	That
εἶ, ἔ (ἔ ψιλόν)	epsilon	Met	έψιλον	Epsilon	Egg
ζῆτα	zēta	Daze	ζήτα	Zita	Zoo
ἦτα	ēta	Fr. Fête	ήτα	Ita	Think
θῆτα	thēta	Thin	θήτα	Thita	Think
ιώτα	iōta	e: meteor; ī: police	γιώτα	Yiota	Think
κάππα	kappa	kin, [could]	κάπα	Kapa	Key
λάμβδα	lambda	Let	λάμδα	Lamva	Lamp
μῦ	mu	Met	μι	Mi	Man
νῦ	nu	Net	νι	Ni	No
ξεῖ (ξι)	xi	Lax	ξι	Xi	Taxi
οῦ, ὄ (ὄ μῦκρόν)	omīcron	Obey	όμικρον	Omikron	Port
πεῖ (πί)	pi	Pet	πι	Pi	Port
ῥῶ	rho	Run	ρω	Ro	Room
σίγμα	sigma	Such	σίγμα	Sigma	Sea
ταῦ	tau	Tar	ταυ	Tau	Tea
ῦ (ῦ ψιλόν)	ŭpsilon	u: Fr. tu; ū: Fr. Sûr	ύψιλον	Ipsilon	Think
φεί (φί)	phi	Graphic	φι	Fi	Fun
χεῖ (χί)	chi	Germ. Machen	χι	Hi	He
ψεῖ (ψί)	psi	Gypsum	ψι	Psi	Maps
ῶ (ῶ μέγα)	ōmēga	Note	ωμέγα	Omega	Port

⁷¹ Further illustration: the complication of English pronunciation – received, South African, Australian, English, Irish, American, all different, also take note of the great vowel shift.

The reference in the introduction to the problem of dealing with a written and read play, and not a spoken (sung) and heard play is thus accentuated. A further complicating factor would be the influence of tunes, melodies, music and pitch. These are aspects of performance, and reconstruction of these could probably support the thesis on the names here explored, but would require, under the circumstances, more speculation than would be permissible. Any proposal would then have to be considered without its plausibility being subject to critical applause or denunciation.

Examples of different types of language are: religious and ritual language, seen in the Queen's dreams, the references to the deity (names) and hero worship (Darius - various functions), and the rituals and libations; the political and legal language, where democracy is compared to monarchy (232-244).

3.4 Other aspects of Greek Tragedy

3.4.1 The world (context)

The festival of Dionysus was the immediate context of Greek tragedy. Goldhill (1997a:55-56) mentions that the boundary between the audience and the participants must have become increasingly less distinct during the processions leading up to the performances. The audience participation would then also have been strengthened by the ceremonies and the audience's involvement in these ceremonies.

The larger context was the *polis*. The nature of Greek tragedy reflected the nature of the *polis*. This can be described in terms of the competition, the prevalence of the judges – elected to represent the various tribes, the oratory nature of the speeches – already compared to the orations in the Assembly and law courts, and the educational dimension of Greek tragedy. Cartledge (1997:15) considers the role of tragedians as civic teachers, where they “were expected to contribute to popular understanding of the ways in which the gods sought to impose or foster justice among men”.

3.4.2 The stage – presentation

Formal and performance orientated stagecraft is distinguishable. Formal considerations concern aspects of stagecraft such as exits and entrances (Taplin 1978:61-128), whereas performance orientated aspects deal with décor, dance and music.

The role and presence of the chorus is most important for this study, more so than stage dress – of which we have little knowledge, and stage construction – which was standard. In *The Persians* the chorus introduces itself,⁷² thus establishing an immediate rapport with the audience concerning the various aspects of the play. One of the important functions of the chorus was to help, prompt, the audience to become involved in the process of responding to the play (Easterling 1997:164). Easterling (1997:163) notes on the role of the chorus that “as choruses express their hope or fear, joy or sorrow for the characters, they offer possible models for the onlookers’ emotional responses”. However, this cannot be considered as a general rule as she mentions that the emotional range the chorus covers is immense, and that the guidance offered by a chorus may be quite elusive. In *The Persians*, though, the role of the chorus is instrumental in guiding the audience from the ridicule of the Persian situation (πάροδος) to empathy with the losers (ἔξοδος).

3.4.3 The audience – reception – effect

Where Will (1976:27) sees the single mood of the tragedy indicating a single preoccupation, being the fate of the Persian forces, the mood of the audience must also be taken into consideration. This is especially the case in the enactment of their victory over the Persian enemy. The audience’s mood would then be elevated, being lofty with national pride. The sombre mood of the enacted tragedy would thus be in direct tension with the mood of the audience. This tension is carried by the contrasts between the inwardly portrayed characters on-stage and the response provoked from the audience. The genius of this tension is that the human is seen in relation to the heavenly, to the will of the gods. The historic figures on-stage are given mythological proportions, and thus the audience, too, stand in mythological relation to the world of the gods. The cult setting of the tragedy would further enhance this aspect. Thus, regardless of being champion or enemy, hero or anti-hero, the characters become examples of “meddlers of fate”, and “disrupters of harmony”.

⁷² Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων Ἑλλάδ’ ἐς αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται.... (1ff).

3.4.4 The competition

In line 738 Aeschylus refers to the strength of his play in terms of the competition, when he lets the Queen say:

... λόγος κρατεῖ σαφηνῆς τοὔτό γ' οὐκ ἔνι στάσις.

... this tale wins the day, without any competition.

The competition is immediate and it is obvious that Aeschylus is very aware of it. Furthermore, the drama competition is reflective of 5th century BC Athenian life. The essence of the legal and political systems is made imminent in the debates and jurisdiction by way of votes.

3.5 Understanding Aeschylus

Haigh (1938:65) states:

The most obvious characteristic of the poetry of Aeschylus ... is its grandeur, and loftiness, and massive strength. His dramas are colossal creations, planned and executed with a largeness of design and a depth of purpose to which it would be difficult to find any parallel ... There is no point in which this elevation of treatment manifests itself more conspicuously than in the profound and intense earnestness of the moral tone⁷³ ... The justice of Providence, the unrelenting power of fate, and the dire effects of crime and wickedness, are the ideas which form the key-note of every scene ... The purpose of Aeschylus is not, like that of other dramatists, to analyse the complex machinery of the human mind, but to reveal the relation in which men stand to the universal order of things, and to teach them how to read the mysterious decrees of destiny, and to adjust their actions to the will of Providence.

More attention should be given to Aeschylus' stagecraft. The text of the tragedy is part of this stagecraft, being the script of what was said. It appears from a reading of the text, expressed in the next chapter, that the stage arrangements of Aeschylus are far more complex than a central stage and a central action. The various mechanics of past and present, divine and profane, dramatic intent and audience reaction become evident when a performance is envisaged.

⁷³ Note especially the speech by Darius (800-842).

3.6 Conclusion

In defeat, the men and women of tragedy triumph. They lose, but in losing they win. This paradox gives traditional tragedy much of its resonance and meaning, and explains why we are both devastated and exhilarated by it (Wilson 1980:309).

The dramatic techniques Aeschylus employed that can be discerned from the text are contained primarily in the language. In this chapter the different approaches to tragedy were considered, as an art form and as a stage production. It was determined that *The Persians* should be interpreted uniquely from the various theories, which pose a danger of distorting its dramatological sense. The central action on-stage is contained within the dialogue. Manipulation of the language in the dialogue is therefore the most important dramatic technique employed by Aeschylus.

In the next chapter a close analysis of the names used in *The Persians* will be made as outflow of the theoretical considerations made in this chapter to illustrate how Aeschylus used the known (history, actual and constructed names) to achieve his dramatic intentions.

¹⁴ Frothingham (1950: 10) states that a few of the names were found in the same place as the drama itself.

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:

Char

Act

Line

Pha

Scen

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’ ἄνθος 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 (Ἀρτεμβάρης) 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 (Ἀρκεύς) 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 Agabatania (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).

Phoebos' (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.

4.5.4 Possible morphological-phonetic word associations

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

Character cluster 1a (21-22) (Those disdained)

Ἀμίστρης (Amistres) (21, also 320: Ἀμίστρις)

ἀμῖς, ἴδος and τρεῖς, τρία.

ἀμῖς, ἴδος: a chamber pot.

τρεῖς, τρία: the number three.

Modern Greek does not distinguish between the vocalisation of the η and the ι. Both are sounded i, as in “little”. In the classic texts, distinction is made between the long η, ê sound and the short ι, “i” sound. The two variant spellings could be attributed to both rhyme and meter manipulation, or to an error in the scribing process of the play. In this exercise, they are considered referring to the same person.

When the adverb of τρεῖς, τρίς, is used in combinations it often loses its stress. There is no explicit verb that is being modified, and thus the verb “to be” is implied: to be three times - ... In this construction it seems that a chamber pot (toilet) is implied, and idiomatically could have a contemporary equivalent of “smelly”. Thus: “Thrice Smelly”.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Thrice Smelly*.

Ἄρταφρένης (Artaphrenes) (21, 776, 778)

ἄρτι and ἄρτιος and ἄφρων, ον.

ἄρτι: present/exactly.

ἄρτιος: perfect(ly).

ἄφρων, ον: foolish.

In the compound of the two words, the ι would be lost in the assimilation of the newly created ια diphthong, and under influence of the stressed syllable φρέν that follows. Also, then, possibly antonym to ἀρτίφρων, ον (sound of mind, sensible), giving the sense of Idiot. The oxymoron qualification of perfectly foolish is strengthened by the adverbial particle ἄρτι, giving the sense of totality in the indicated sense.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Perfectly Foolish*.

Μεγαβάτης (Megabates) (22, 982)

μέγας, μέγα and βατίς, ἴδος, or βάτος, or βαίνω (βάτης).

μέγα: big.

βατίς, ἴδος: the prickly roach.

βάτος: bramble bush.

βαίνω: step, mount, cover: βάτης: control.

Although it is tempting to restrict the possible associations to the first association’, “Huge Spikey Fish (Roach)”, the allure of βάτης is very strong. It

has the sense possibility of “he that was mounted”,⁷⁹ or idiomatically “the abused one”, or poofter. If this could be considered a possibility, the combination with the adjective μέγα would convey the idea “the greatly abused one”, or “big poofter”. This being a military parade, the juxtaposition and ill-fitting characters within its ranks would most certainly give the elders reason to be concerned (8-10).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Big Poofter*.

Ἄσταςπης (Astaspes) (22)

ἀστός, ἦ or ἄστυ and ἀσπίς, ἶδος, ἦ.

ἀστός, ἦ: a citizen.

ἄστυ: city.

ἀσπίς, ἶδος: a round shield, or a kind of snake. Referring also to a body of men at arms.

Both the possibilities of ἀστός, a male citizen and ἄστυ: city could work in combination with ἀσπίς, ἶδος. Within the context of the πόλις (Greek city-state), the mention of Agbatana, Susa, and Cissia (16-17), makes the association with ἄστυ (city) stronger than ἀστή (citizen). Thus, ἄστυ is considered an adjective, qualifying ἀσπίς (snake or shield). Both the possibilities, snake and shield, could work in the context of a military procession, and should be considered; possibly intended simultaneously. The snake was a venomous pest to the Greeks, whereas it was a sign of life to especially the Egyptians. In this sense, the dual irony of “city snake” (not disregarding associations with evil), would have inter-played between the ideas of life and death. The “city shield” was leaving the city to do battle in a far off country. A choice is difficult to make, but because of its military association, “City Shield”, is considered. The resulting association promotes a sense of vulnerability.

Possible association and reconstruction: *City Shield*.

Character cluster 1b (29-32) (Land and sea)

Ἄρτεμβάρης (Artembares) (29, 302, 972)

ἀρτεμής, ἔς, ἀρτάω, ἀρτέμων, ὠνος, ἀρέτημα, ἄροτρον and τέμενος, εὖς and βάρος.

ἀρτεμής, ἔς or ἀρτεμία: safe, sound or safety and soundness.

ἀρτάω: fasten, fit, prepare.

ἀρτέμων, ὠνος: foresail, topsail.

ἀρέτημα: a hanging ornament.

ἄροτρον: plough.

τέμενος, εὖς: a piece of land.

βάρος: weight, burden, pressure: hence grief, misery: also a quantity, excess.

In considering ἄροτρον, the “ο” sound would be dropped in the compounded word. The stress moves to the second last syllable, leaving the previously stressed “α” unstressed, and encouraging the “ο” sound between the rolling “r” and dental “t” sounds to be dropped. τέμενος is associated especially with sacred ground.

⁷⁹ There is also an explicit sexual connotation, where ἵπποι βαινόμενοι (Hdt 1.192) indicates the mounting of mares, and οἶα βατεύονται (Theocritus 1.87) indicates intercourse with a she-goat.

τέμενος also strengthens ἄροτρον, since the derived verb τέμνω (Dor. Ep. τάμνω) has the senses of cut and hew in battle, to slaughter, sacrifice, as well as to plough. This possibility was considered, but in view of the powerful oxymoron “foresail” and “weight”, further associations with land and safety merely acts to strengthen the misappropriation of this character travelling by sea. He is from the land, through and through, and yet, the overlaying Ἄρτέμ[ων], top sail is an intrinsic contradiction, implying “airiness” against the heavy βάρος, or the sought for theme of sea. Ironically, in 302, he is slammed against the cruel coasts of Sileniae, and in 972, he is remembered as one of those left behind.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Wind Ton*.

Μασίστρης (Masistres) (30, 971) (Note different declension in 971)

μασί or μασι and τιτρώ.
μασι: intensifying prefix: much, greatly.
μασί: Dor. for μησί, dat. pl. of μήν: month.
τρήσω: τρη- stem of τιτρώ: bore, pierce.

There is no motivation to considering μασί (month). It would appear that the fate of this character is predicted in his name (971).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Greatly pierced*.

Ἴμαίος (Imaeus) 31

ἱμ or ἱμάς, ἄντος (ἱμαῖος, α, ου) and ἠίων.
ἱμ: variant for ἐμ = ἐν: in, on.
ἱμάς, ἄντος: strap, girdle, latch (ἱμαῖος, α, ου: rope for drawing water).
ἠίων (Attic - ἠών, Doric - αἰών, ὄνος - Dative = ἀόσι): beach, shore.

ἱμάς, ἄντος (strap, girdle, latch) is a feasible consideration, even though the breathing ‘(h) is not used but ’ (soundless). Rather, the prefix ἱμ is considered in combination with the exotic sounding αἰών, familiarised to αἶος Beach.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Beach Top*.

Φαρανδάκης (Pharandakes) (31, 958)

φαράω or φάραγξ, αγγος and δάκος, εος or δάκνω.
φαράω: infinitive φαρᾶν: to plough.
φάραγξ, αγγος: cleft, chasm, metaphor of the anus.
δάκος, εος: a dangerous animal.
δάκνω: bite.

Later, in 958, the name has a sad ring to it; here however, it releases a wry smile. The picture is rather vivid. Though homosexuality was well esteemed, to play the role of the female was not. This character was therefore quite despicable.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Anus Bitten*.

Σοσθάνης (Sosthanes) (32)

σῶς or σόω and θνήσκω or θάνατος.

σῶς: safe.

σόω: Ep. for σώζω: escape, save, keep alive.

θάνον, Ep. aor. 2 of θνήσκω: kill, die.

θάνατος: death.

Another oxymoron is detectable. The greater preference is given to the combination which implicates the combination of σώζω and θάνατος. Thus, the only person in this sub-cluster, it would seem, whose name is not related to any of the features of land or sea is Σοσθάνης (Sosthanes), whose name recalls another bilateral theme in the play: life and death. The oxymoron contained in the name exhibits this theme in a profound manner. The inclusion of Sosthanes (Living Dead) in the land and sea sub-cluster indicates the affinity of the bilateral themes: life and death; light and darkness; day and night; land and sea; Greece and Persia; the battle lost and won.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Living Dead*.

Character cluster 1c (34-38): Dignity amongst the doomed
Σουσισκάνης (Sousiskanes) (34)

σούσιος or σοῦσον and ἴσκω or σκανά.

σούσιος: person from Susa, as in σουσιγενής (644): person born in Susa.

σοῦσον: lily (flower).

ἴσκω: to think like, to make like.

σκανά. Dor. for σκηνή: a tent, a stage, a banquet.

The flower imagery in the play has not yet been developed. The construction in the form of a name would be the type of device that would draw the audience's attention to this imagery. Here though, a flower, a lily at that, has little place in a "magnificent" display of military power.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Lily Like*.

Πηγασταγών (Pegastagon) (35)

πηγάς or πηγή and τᾶγέω or σταγών, ωνος.

πηγάς: anything congealed or hardened.

πηγή: spring, fountain, source.

ταγός:⁸⁰ commander.

σταγών, ωνος: drop.

Depending on the word break, either side of the "σ", different combinations are possible, with ironic implications. If πηγή is considered in combination with σταγών, ωνος, the idea is created of Spring Drop, which would be the source of the stream that would eventually gush into the sea. This in itself is a nourishing imagery. If πηγάς were considered in combination with ταγός, a contrasting picture is created. This commander is tough. The first association that jumps to

⁸⁰ This term is used of Θάρυβις, commander of 5 X 50 ships (323).

mind is Spring Drop, though the possibility of the alternative is not excluded, indicating the richness of the character imagery/portrayal.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Spring Drop*.

Ἄρσάμης (Arsames) (37, 308)

ἄρῳ (αἶρω) or ἀραρίσκω and ἄμης, ἠτος or σῆμα, ατος.

ἄρῳ (αἶρω): lift.

ἀραρίσκω: ἄρσαι, ἄρσον, ἀρσάντες, ἀρσάμενος: all aorist 1 active and middle of ἀραρίσκω: to be joined closely together; to be fitted closely, to fit well; to be fixed, to be fitting, meet or suitable.

ἄμης, ἠτος: a kind of milk cake.

σῆμα, ατος: Dor. = σᾶμα: battle sign/seal.

Depending, once more, on where the break is made, Ἄραρίσκω seems to be indicated in the first syllable (ἄρσ-) of the compound. Then, in combination with the most likely possibility (ἄμης) with the remainder of the compound (-άμης), it is difficult to determine what sense would be implied with the compound: well baked, or to be compact. Within the immediate context, Ἄρσάμης could be accentuating the juxtaposition of the “domestic” orientated “flower like” (Σουσισκάνης) (34) in the army, in that a “Dense Milkart” is also present - and then in the company of a “Spring Drop” (Πηγασταγών) (35).

However, it seems more plausible to consider the first syllable as ἄρ and the second as σάμης. Thus considered, the idea is portrayed of dignity, where the person has a proud bearing.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Battle Emblem*.

Ἄριόμαρδος (Ariomardos) (38, 321, 968)

Ἄρης or ἄρι or ἄριος and μάρτυς (note the alliteration of the “α” and “ο” sounds in conjunction to the liquid “ρ”, the nasal “μ”, dental “δ” and sibilant “ς”).

Ἄρης: Genitive = Ἄρεος: Ares, the god of war (also Ἄριος-).

ἄρι prefix like ἐρι - strengthens the notion conveyed by its compound.

ἄριος: old word for Μηδικός, Median.

μάρτυς: witness.

Rather than opting for “Median Witness”, preference is given to the allusion to Ares, the god of war. This would also be befitting the context. “T” (t) and “δ” (d) are both dental sounds, and with the stress being placed on the inserted “ο” sound after Ἄρι, the name sounds both foreign and familiar. Though Ἄριος is an old allusion to Media, the Ares association is stronger. However, the previous possible reference to a place, Susa (34), in this sub-cluster could be motivation for Media. It seems that “Ares’ Witness”, who plays an important role in the off-stage action of the play - called noble (brave - ἐσθλός) in 321, and was witness to Xerxes deserting his men in 968 - takes in the sobering position in this sub-cluster with “Spring Drop” (35) and “Battle Emblem” (37).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Ares’ Witness*.

Character cluster 1d (43-44): This and That
Μητρογαθής (Metrogathes) (43)

μήτηρ (μητρο-) and ἀγαθός, ἤ, ὄν or γαθέω.

μήτηρ: mother. (μητρο in compounds).

ἀγαθός, ἤ, ὄν: good.

γαθέω, Dor. for γηθέω: rejoice, to be delighted.

Between the two options, “Good mother” and “Mother’s delight”, “Mother’s delight” is considered most feasible. It could have the sense that a mother would be proud of her distinguished son, or that the boy was a wimp. Possibly, both senses are considered.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Mother’s Delight*.

Ἄρκτης (Arkteus) (44, 312)

ἄρκτος.

ἄρκτος: bear.

Ἄρκτος, Bear, has a reference to strength, size and valour. Thus, not all of Persia is pathetic - but these people are ill-placed, Arkteus especially, since he was aboard a ship, and neither his strength nor his size was of any advantage to either himself or the boat (312).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Bear*.

Character cluster 1e (51): Odd couple
Μάρδων (Mardon) (51, 993)

cf.: Ἄριό-μαρδος (38, 321, 968).

μάρτυς (note closeness of dental sound “τ” and “δ” following the liquid “ρ” and nasal “μ”).

μάρτυς: witness.

This person was a witness not a fighter!

Possible association and reconstruction: *Witness*.

Θάρυβις (Tharybis) (51, 323, 971)

Θάρρος and ὕβος.

Θάρρος (Attic for θάρσος): courage.

ὕβος: hump-backed.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Brave Hump-back*.

In the first cluster it is apparent that the elders had reason to be concerned. Even though there is disorganisation, they are still described as Persia's military procession. A gentle reminder, in some of the honourable names, is also left that the outcome of the battle could have been different. There is little tension between the audience and the events on-stage, or the military procession of the enemy that was described.

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

The second character cluster (299-330) is significant for its dramatic tension between the narration and the audience, between victory and loss. The name cluster falls within the midst of the off-stage action (which, chronologically - dramatically - took place before the on-stage action). The intensifying sequences (though not yet as intense as in the fourth character cluster 961-1003), with their inherent characterisation, further helps to accentuate the horror of the reported battle at Salamis. Some of the audience would have relived some of that horror during the performance of *The Persians*. In this cluster the names are chosen and placed selectively and strategically to give a personal touch to the national disaster. There is a strong sense of misplacement, which was hinted at during the opening sequence (1-64). The names help communicate the misplacement of manpower and national loss, symbolised in the powerful imagery of the Flower of Persia, signifying the innocent youth that had perished on the ill-timed battle field. The dramatic, situational irony is not to be disregarded: it is the audience's enemy loss (Persian) that is being emphasised, but not over-played; the delicate mockery has a sting and balances out the potential over-sympathising with the enemy (Persian) losses.

Character cluster 2a (survivor)

Ξέρξης (Xerxes) (299)

As a historic person, no deeper significance is sought in the singular name structure. The name appears constantly throughout the play, like Darius, but here it has a strategic function, in relation to the "constructed names", since it emphasises the Persian anguish in signifying the Persian survivors (see also character cluster 5) over against the torment of the recalled dead.

Character cluster 2b (dead)

Ἄρτεμβάρης (Artembares) (302, 29, 972)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Wind Ton*.

Δαδάκης (Dadakes) (304)

δᾶ for γᾶ and δάκος, εος or δάκνω or δάϊος, α, ον or δάω or δάκνω.

δᾶ: Earth.

δακνῶ: δάκε: Ep for ἔδακε, aorist 3 sing: Bite.

δάκος, εος: a dangerous animal.

δάϊος, α, ον: hostile, destructive - also unhappy, wretched.

δάω: to learn, to teach.

δάκνω: bite.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Dust Bitten*.

Τενάγων (Tenagon) (306)

τέναγος, εος or τένων, οντος and ἀγών.

τέναγος, εος: shallow, a shoal.

τένων, οντος: a sinew, tendon.

ἀγών: battle, fight, contest.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Shoal Battle*.

Character cluster 2c (dead)

Λιλαίος (Lilaios) (308, 970)

λιλαίομαι or λαός or λαιός, ά, όν.

λιλαίομαι: to long.

λαός: people.

λαιός, ά, όν: left! (not right).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Yearner*.

Ἄρσάμης (Arsames) (308, 37)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Battle Emblem*.

Ἄργηστης (Argestes) (308)

ἀργής, ἦτος and γή and ἴστημι.

ἀργής, ἦτος: white, bright, vivid.

γή: land.

ἴστημι: στή - Ionic for ἔστη, aorist 3 sing of ἴστημι: stand, place, fix, raise.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Bright Land*.

The high frequency, in different combinations, of the affix Ἄρ- must surely carry more significance than that it was a common affix in Persian names. Within the context of the play, and especially the battle report sequence, the allusion to Ἄρά (Ara), (a prayer/curse; ruin, mischief, evil; and the name of the goddess of ruin!) is rather appealing. References and allusions to Ἄρτέμις (Artemis - the goddess of death) and

Ἄρης (Ares - god of war) are also a probability, considering especially the emphasis - stress - on the first syllable of Ares and Artemis.

Ἄρκτηύς **Arkteus** (312, 44)

The great bear meets his fate, too cumbersome perhaps for the vessel.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Bear*.

Ἄδεύης **Adeues** (312)

ἄδεής and υἱός or ὕς.

ἄδεής: fearless, shameless, secure, confident.

υἱός: son.

ὕς: ὕός genitive of ὕς: boar hog.

Some may hear son, others could hear hog.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Fearless Son*.

Φαρνοῦχος (**Pharnouchos**) (313, 967)

φάρος, ὄ, or φάρος, εὐς or φάρω or φαράω and νύξ, νυκτός.

φάρος, ὄ: a lighthouse (light).

φάρος, εὐς: cloth, sail.

φάρω: separate.

φαράω: plough.

νύξ, νυκτός: night.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Night Light*.

Character cluster 2d (dead)

Χρυσεύς (**Chryseus**) (314)

Χρύσεος.

Χρύσεος: gold.

Similar to Ἄρκτηύς (Arkteus) - Bear.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Gold*.

Μάταλλος (**Matallos**) (314)

μάτη or μετά or μέταλλα or μέταλλάω and ἄλλος.

μάτη: folly, fault, vain, idle, senseless, false.

μετά: Preposition - not with nominative: with.

μέταλλα: gold mine.

μεταλλάω: explore.

ἄλλος: another, other.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Gold Miner*.

Μάγος (Magos) (318)

μάγος.

μάγος: a magician (Persian).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Magician*.

Ἄραβος (Arabos) (318)

ἄραβος and βοή or βοῆ also ἄβιος, ον.

ἄραβος: gnashing of teeth, grinding.

βοή: cry.

βοῆ: shield.

ἄβιος, ον: not survived!

Possible association and reconstruction: *Gnashing Teeth*.

Ἄρτάβης (Artabes) (318)

ἄρτάω or ἄρτάβη and βαίνω or ἄβιος, ον.

ἄρτάω: fasten, hang.

Ἄρτάβη: Persian measure equal to 1 medimnus (μέδιμνος) - about 12 gallons, and 2 choenices (χοῖνιξ, ικος) - dry measure, about a quart.

βαίνω: βῆ poetic for ἔβη aorist 3 sing of βαίνω: walk, step, go.

ἄβιος, ον: not survived!

Possible association and reconstruction: *Fill Tank*.

Ἄμιστρος (Amistris) (320, 21)

Compared to the humorous and awkward mention of this name in the opening sequence (21), in which a possible association was identified as “Thrice Smelly” - “Very Smelly”, probably due to lack of personal hygiene, its placement here calls for a more startling rendition. Here, the idea of a chamber pot reminds of a coffin, being mentioned in the context of death and decay. This is an example of the context dictating the meaning associations made. The idiomatic association of the name “Very Smelly” now communicates as “Very dead”, emphasised by the adverbial enforcement “thrice”, indicating the totality of the state.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Thrice Smelly*.

Ἄμφιστρεύς (Amphistreus) (320)

ἀμφίς and τρέω (τρέος).

ἀμφίς: round.

τρέω: tremble, quake, flee, be afraid (τρέσας: coward).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Total Fear*.

Ἀριόμαρδος (Ariomardos) (321, 38, 968)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Ares' Witness*.

Σεισάμης (Seisames) (322) (compare Σησάμης 982)

Σείω and ἄμης, ἠτος.

Σείω: shake, pass to be shaken, shake, to harass.

ἄμης, ἠτος: milk cake! See also 37 and 308.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Shaken Milk-tart*.

Θάρυβις (Tharybis) (323, 51, 971)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Brave Hump-back*.

Συέννεσις (Suennesis) (326)

σύν or σύειος, α, ον and ἐν and νέω or νεοσίς or ἐννεσία or ἐνίημι.

συν: in compositions: with, along with, together, at the same time.

σύειος, α, ον: of swine.

ἐν: in compositions: in, with, by.

νέω: swim.

νεοσίς: chicken.

ἐννεσία: suggestion, counsel.

ἐνίημι: to throw in, send, inspire, implant, incite.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Among Chickens*.

Character cluster 3: Persian Kings in Darius' message

This third name cluster, incorporated into Darius' speech, is the most historically inclined. The authority with which the names are recalled - or omitted - by Darius is indisputable. It is therefore those missed or dead. The appearance of the name in the Persian kings cluster therefore calls for a closer scrutiny of possible, though admittedly more subtle, associations.

The climax builds up to the reference Darius makes to himself, a historically indisputable persona, though constructed character (as a messenger and as a ghost of the dead king), without mentioning his own name. In the last breath of the long wake, Xerxes is also mentioned - almost as a curse - as in a death procession. This is dramatic in itself, since Xerxes, though totally defeated, is still alive.

A further interesting feature is the absence of particular names: the sons of kings are referred to but are not given names (766, 773). Divergent reasons could be given for this, including: names not fitting into the immediate metre and rhythm; the persons being of little or no consequence; the contrast between the named soldiers under Xerxes' doomed expedition to the leaders (some great names) gone before - accentuating the severity of Xerxes' actions; and the names containing no possible,

wanted or strong Greek association possibilities. The last argument is possibly the weakest.

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

If ever there were an intensity of compounded loss, then this would be contained in the fourth name sequence in *The Persians*. The poet is relentless in the tides of names washing over his Greek audience. Nevertheless, the Greek audience would not have had the feeling that they were responsible for the calamities. Thus the audience would not have experienced the tides of names and the descriptions as either a victory celebration or as an admonishment. Rather, the names communicate what could be best described as pathos. It is neither pity, awe nor sympathy; neither joy nor humour. Instead the audience would experience irony and tension; innocence and guilt (Persian); the humour of the gods; and the deference (to act according to one's nature) that should be afforded to the gods.

Character cluster 4a: From Agabatana (961)

Φαρανδάκης (Pharandakes) (958, 31)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Anus Bitten*.

Σούσας (Sousas) (959)

σοῦσον.

σοῦσον: lily (Persian word).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Lily*.

Πελάγων (Pelagon) (959)

πελάγος.

πελάγος: sea.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Sea*.

Δοτάμας (Dotamas) (959)

δίδωμι.

δίδωμι: to be given.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Offering*.

Ψάμμης (Psammis) (959)

ψάμμη.

ψάμμη: sand.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Sand*.

Σουσιस्कάνης (Sousiskanes) (960)

σοῦσις, ἰδος and κάνη, ἦ (κάννα).
σοῦσις, ἰδος: a woman of Susa.
κάνη: reed.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Reed of Susa*.

Ἄγαβάτας (Agabatas) (960)

See also: Μεγαβάτης (Megabates) (22, 982).
ἄγω and βατίς, ἰδος, or βάτος, or βαίνω (βάτης).
ἄγω: to lead.
βατίς, ἰδος: the prickly roach.
βάτος: bramble bush.
βαίνω: step, mount, cover: βάτης: control.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Inside Poofter*.

Character cluster 4b (967-970): Emphasis of those lost (973) who saw Athens (976)

Φαρνοῦχος (Pharnouchos) (967, 313)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Night Lighthouse*.

Ἄριόμαρδος (Ariomardos) (968, 38, 321)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Ares' Witness*.

Σευάλκης (Sevalkes) (969)

σεύω and ἀλκή.
σεύω: put into quick motion, drive, hunt, chase.
ἀλκή: bodily strength, force, prowess, courage, defence, battle.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Chasing Defence*.

Λίλαιος (Lilaios) (970, 308)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Yearner*.

Μέμφις (Memphis) (971)

μέμφις, εως or also μέμφομαι.
μέμφις, εως: a complaint.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Complainer*.

Θάρυβις (Tharybis) (971, 51, 323)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Brave Hump-back*.

Μασίστρας (Masistras) (971, 30: note alternative declension)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Greatly Pierced*.

Ἄρτεμβάρης (**Artembares**) (972, 29)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Wind Ton*.

Ἵσταίχμας (**Hustaichmas**) (972)

ἴς and [τ] αἰχμή.

ἴς: a tame pig.

αἰχμή: point of a spear, a spear, a staff, war, battle, warlike spirit.

Possible association and reconstruction: *War Boar*.

Character cluster 4c (978-985): The Flower of the Persians (978) left behind (985)

Ἄλπιστος (**Alpistos**) (981)

ἀλύπητος.

ἀλύπητος: not pained or grieving.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Without Grief*.

Βατανώχος (**Batanochos**) (981)

βατία and νύχιος.

βατία: a thorn bush.

νύχιος: doing a thing by night, as if asleep, dark as night, murky.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Night Thornbush*.

Σησάμης (**Sesames**) (982) (compare Σεισάμης 322)

σησάμη.

σησάμη: a sesamé tree.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Sesamé Tree*.

Μεγαβάτης (**Megabates**) (982, 22)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Big Poofster*.

Πάρθος (**Parthos**) (984)

παραθέω.

παραθέω: to run to one side of, to run beside, to run beyond.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Alternative Path*.

Οιβάρης (**Oibares**) (984)

See also Ἄρτεμβάρης (*Artembares*) (29, 302, 972).

οἶος and βαρύς or βάρος.

οἶος: alone, by oneself, alone.

βαρύς, εἶα: grievous, oppressive, troublesome, impressive.

βάρος: weight, burden, pressure: hence grief, misery: also a quantity, excess.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Lonely Grief*.

Character cluster 4d (992-1001): Others that are missed (992)

Note must be taken that numerous names in this cluster are in the accusative case (ην, ον, αν, ιν), and not in the nominative case (ης, ος, εα). This cluster can be singled out as the cluster with the most names being in the accusative case, drawing particular attention to the names. The grammatical shift accompanies the dramatic shift in mood.

Μάρδων (Mardon) (993, 51)

Possible association and reconstruction: *Witness*.

Ξάνθη (Xanthes) (994)

ξανθός.

ξανθός: yellow of various shades, golden or pale yellow, a horse of Achilles.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Goldman*.

Ἄγχάρην (Anchares) (994)

ἄγχω ανδ ἀρά.

ἄγχω: to press tight, to strangle, hang.

ἀρά: a prayer, cursed (goddess Ἄρα: goddess of destruction).

Possible association and reconstruction: *Strangled Curse*.

Δίαξιον (Diaixis) (995)

δία and ἰκνέομαι (ἴκω).

δία: godlike one.

ἰκνέομαι: to come, arrive, reach, becoming, proper, befitting.

Possible association and reconstruction: *God Befitting*.

Ἄρσάκη (Arsakes) (995)

ἄροσις, εως (ἄρω) and ἀκή.

ἄροσις, εως: arable, ploughing, tillage (fruitful).

ἀκή: a point, edge, silence, healing.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Silent Soil*.

Ἄγδαδάτης (Agdadates) (997)

ἄγδην and ἀδάητος.

ἄγδην: adverb (ἄγω) by carrying.

ἀδάητος: unknown.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Unknown Company*.

Λυθίμναν (Luthimnas) (997)

λύω and Θεός and μνα.

λύω: loosen, unyoke, unharness, set free.

θεός: god.

μνα: 100 drachmae.

Instead of only considering θεός, the optative passive of λύω could also be taken into account. Here, λυθείην would give the sense of a desire to be loosened, set free. Other uses of the optative mood could also be involved, such as, the optative after verbs of fear and caution. The sentence is built around the verb ποθοῦμεν (...whom we miss). There is thus a definite presence of fear under the chorus in the list of names they mention. Under the influence of the monetary value, feelings of ransom are procured. This association works well in South African currency, where Rand-som generates the idea also of monetary involvement.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Deo Ransom*.

Τόλμος (Tolmos) (999)

τόλμα.

τόλμα: brave, courage to venture on a thing, boldness, daring.

The adjectival elaboration, αἰχμας ἀκόρεστον (the war hero), strengthens the idea that this person was a worthy soldier. He is also the last person to be named, and thus the full impact of the name lists concludes in his attributes.

Possible association and reconstruction: *Braveheart*.

“These soldiers have all gone without names” (1003), reminding of the importance of the names. In the fourth cluster the names leave a lump in the throat. There are different reasons for this, ranging from content - what happened to them - to organisational considerations, such as meter, pace and rhyme and density of names.

The audience is thus not only influenced by the names on their own, but also by the formal organisation of the play.

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

In contrast to all the names mentioned of the soldiers who had gone into battle, by land and by sea, an inversion occurs in the 5th cluster. To emphasise the gravity of Xerxes' disposition, feared during the opening sequence, items of his weaponry are personified. This has the effect of qualifying the name analysis of the various names mentioned in this play:

οἰστοδέγμονα: *A single arrow holder* (1020).

θησαυρὸν βελέεσσιν: *A storehouse for keen arrow heads* (1022).

Of all the Persians gone into battle this is all that remains. As surely as this is no attempt to being historically correct, it is a dramatic technique used to consolidate the Persian loss in tangible items, which are symbolic of nature, visible to the audience, and not too heavy as to require extra energy at the end of a long and intense performance.

4.5.4.1 *New literal translation possibilities of relevant passages*

In this section, translated passages have been selected to illustrate the names of the Persian soldiers in context. Attention is drawn to the various functions of the names: the names sound at once exotic and familiar. In the first extract, some of the names sound cumbersome and out of place in a military procession. The first extract gives more descriptions of the characters, mentioning their origins, ranks, and military specialities. The general impression is that the old men have reason to worry.

4.5.4.1.1 *Lines 1-64*

1. We here are the trustees, called to
stand guard over both the riches and gold-laden
estates of the Persians who have left
for the Grecian land; because of our age
5. lord Xerxes, king,
son of Darius
chose us to oversee the land.

- Our hearts - prophets of doom - are already
extremely worried here deep inside
10. about the royalty's return
and concerning the gold-paid army:
because a whole Asian generation
was led away, and is wailing about a young man,
yet neither a messenger nor any rider
 15. has returned to the city of the Persians;
these men that left Susa, Agbatana
and the ancient walled city of Cissia
set out, some on horseback,
others per ship, and marching on foot,
 20. surging forward as a solid column of war;
men like *Thrice Smelly, Perfectly Foolish,*
Big Poofter and *City Shield* -
Persian marshals,
lords, subjects of the great king,
 25. hastened, supervisors of the great army,
archers and horsemen,
causing fear when seen, deadly in battle,
reputed for their steadfast courage:
Wind Ton, the one who relishes fighting from the chariot;
 30. *Greatly Pierced*; the archer brave

Beach Top; Anus Bitten;
and the driver of horses *Living Dead*.

The big and prolific Nile also
sent some: *Lily Like;*
35. *Spring Drop*, Egyptian born;
the lord of holy Memphis,
great *Battle Emblem*; the regent of
wealthy Thebes, *Ares' Witness*;
and marsh-dwellers that row ships,
40. skilled and uncountable in number.

They were followed by a crowd
of delicately living Lydians, who control
the whole Mainland nation, those leaders that *Mother's Delight*
and brave *Bear*, aspiring lords,
45. and wealthy Sardis,
excited with countless chariots,
arranged in squadrons two and three abreast,
a most fearful sight to observe!

The neighbours of holy Tmolos threaten
50. to throw the yoke of slavery over Greece:
Witness; Brave Hump-back, those anvils of the spear;
Mysian javeliners; Babylon - the
rich in gold - is sending a powerful multitude,
in a long row, and the commanders of ships;
55. they all have faith in the tight temper of the bow;
and the spear-bearing nation from all over
Asia follows
in the terrifying escort under the king.

Such is the blossom of men from the Persian land
60. who have gone,
all of the Asian soil that fed them
mourns for them with a glowing yearning;
parents and wives tremble as they count
the stretched out time day by day.

4.5.4.1.2 Lines 290-330

The description of the battle scene is graphic. The events of the battle are structured around the fate of the Persians. Principle attention is given to the leaders, though the chorus mourns for the youth, the flower of Persia. Xerxes, mentioned first, contrasts to the whole of the fleet and army. He is alive, and others have died. The messenger also chooses a few incidents. He need not be exhaustive, and opportunity is given for the chorus to react, and ask Xerxes about particular characters later in the play. This change in voice also contributes to the developing pathos. The graphic nature of the associated

meanings of the names helps to paint a grim picture. The grim picture contrast to the Queen's self conceit, and wordiness.

BASILEIA

290. I was quiet for so long, poor me, I was shattered
by the misfortune; because this state is the best:
that suffering should neither be mentioned nor questions asked about it.

Even so, necessity dictates that people must bare all ills
when the gods send it; unfold the whole woeful
295. tale, take your stand, even if you cry because of the agony;
who did not die, and over which of the leaders
should we mourn, which officer's position
has been left manless, empty because he had died?

MESSENGER

Xerxes himself lives and looks at the light.

BASILEIA

300. You refer to a great light for my house
and a bright morning after the black night.

MESSENGER

Wind Ton the leader of ten thousand horsemen
was slammed against the cruel coasts of *Sileniae*.

The leader of one thousand, *Dust Bitten*, due to a spear attack
305. jumped from his ship with a too light leap;
and *Shoal Battle* most honourably born of the Baktrians
fares about around the sea struck island of *Ajax*.

Yearner, *Battle Emblem* and thirdly *Bright Land*
were defeated close to the island
310. and were shed against the tough, deadly land where doves find nurture;
and from the dwellers alongside the fountains of Egypt's Nile
Bear, *Fearless Son* as well as the heavily weaponed
Night Light thirdly, fell from a single ship.

Gold with *Gold Miner*, he that is commander over ten thousand, died,
315. himself commander of thirty thousand dark horses,
his bushy, reddish, dark, full beard
was drenched, while his colour changed in the purple dye.

Also *Magician*, *Gnashing Teeth*, *Fill Tank* the Baktrian,
a stranger from a savage land, was slain there.

320. *Thrice Smelly* and *Total Fear*, the skilful manipulator
of the spear, and he that brings forth suffering, noble *Ares' Witness*
from *Sardis*, and *Shaken Milkart* the Mysian,
and *Brave Hump-back*, lord over five times fifty ships,
a Lurnaeon by birth, a handsome man,

325. lies dead, victim of a not too fortunate fate;
and *Between Chickens* foremost amongst the brave,
high commander of the Cilicians, one man who offered
the most resistance against the enemy, died like a hero.

Such then was my report concerning those things.

330. I have told a few disasters from many incidents.

4.5.4.1.3 Lines 956-1001

The uttering of the names intensifies as the chorus requests further information from Xerxes. Various character traits of the men gone to battle are discernible. The majority of men were not suited for war. The small kernel of natural soldiers was restricted in its duties by the multitude of characters who should have stayed at home. The names are also uttered rhythmically, almost becoming chant like. The pace of the play is thus intensified. The descriptions of the soldiers are less frequent, and many names are repeated. Thus the chorus requests of Xerxes:

Where are the other multitudes of friends?

Where are they that stood by you,
men like *Anus Bitten*,
Lily, Sea, Offering, Sand,

960. *Reed of Susa* and *Inside Poofter*
who left Agabatania?

ANTISTROFE B

XERXES

I left them behind
where they went to their death
from a Turian warship

965. on the beaches of Salamis,
when they struck the rock hard coast.

CHORUS

Ah please no, where did you leave
Night Light and also good *Ares' Witness*?

970. And where is lord *Chasing Defence*,
or the honourable *Yearner*,
Complainer, Brave Hump-back and *Greatly Pierced*,
Wind Ton and *War Boar*?

I ask you again.

STROFE C

XERXES

Poor poor me.
975. after they all saw old
and hateful Athens with one stroke,
ah ah, they pitifully breathed out their last breathe on a beach.

CHORUS

And the Flower of the Persians
your totally trustworthy eye
980. who counted the tens of thousands
Without Grief son of *Night Thornbush*

son of *Sesamé Tree*, son of *Big Poofter*,
and *Alternative Path* also big *Lonely Grief*
985. you have left behind? Oh poor people.

Evil upon evil you tell to the honourable Persians.

ANTISTROFE C

XERXES

To be sure you keep me drinking
the howling earth of the beloved and those longed for,
990. when you speak of hateful cruelty on cruelty.

My heart screams and screams within my limbs.

CHORUS

And the others whom we miss,
captain over ten thousand *Witness*,
Goldman, *Strangled Curse* from Arion,
995. *God Befitting* and also *Silent Soil*
the calvary leaders,
and *Unknown Company*, *Deo Ransom*
and *Braveheart* the war hero.

1000. I am amazed, amazed, they are not
in your train, they are not following your wheeled and curtained carriage.

Xerxes returned in luxury. The army and navy did not. This is far from the historical retreat of the Persian fleet. More so, this is happening on a stage, and on the stage Xerxes would stand alone, a arrow holder in one hand, and a storehouse for keen arrowheads in the other. These weapons personify the Persian loss and contrast to the names the chorus has just inquired about.

4.6 Function of place names and character clusters in the play

Broadhead (1960:321) concludes his discussion on the Persian names with the observation:

The poet has made effective use of Persian names to attain his dramatic purpose: what historical truth may underlie the Persian roll of honour is for the historian and the antiquarian to determine.

The interest in the use of the names to determine the historical correctness of the play cannot be considered. The use of the names to achieve the poet's dramatic purpose is of more importance.

When one hears the names of the soldiers in the opening sequence, one almost wants to smile, but on hearing the last name, Tolmos (Braveheart), one has a lump in the throat. It would be difficult to determine the psychological effect the mentioning of the names would have had on the play's first audience. It cannot be denied that the names, in whatever sense they are understood in - dramatically or historically, had a profound effect on the Greek audience.

The on-stage action takes place all in one day: the day Xerxes returns. The on-stage scene does change. The play's movement and parts are controlled by the chorus and messengers. The chorus does not leave the stage, and thus particular emphasis is placed on the messengers, the Queen, the messenger, Darius and Xerxes, and their link to the off-stage action.

The off-stage action covers several generations, in Darius' speech, and covers a large geographical area, with many ports of call. Even the battle scene is best described as a montage sequence of amalgamated scenes.

The names mentioned in the procession that went into battle characterise the Persian army and fleet. This characterisation is contained to a large extent in the disorganisation, cumbersome size, misappropriated personas, lack of leadership, but also in the balanced reference to worthy men. The play's imagery and several of the themes are contained within these names. The names themselves do not develop the imagery or themes, but their placement, like music notes, contributes towards their development.

The imagery the names allude to include: the contrasted land and sea; the symbolism of flowers and youth - as compared to the aged guardians; the strong and the weak; the despicable and the honourable. These characteristics are inherent in the names through the dramatised Hellenised pronunciation thereof, and are not a historic reflection on the actual name carriers.

The travels and journey back to Persia are Homeric in structure and syntax. These are not travels of the hero Odysseus, but the escape routes used by the enemy. The majority of places mentioned are Greek orientated, contrasting Greek unity to the Persian disunity. The Persian disunity is communicated by the references made to the soldiers' origins in the opening sequence. Greece was united under Athens, which is prominent in the play. The non-mention of any Greeks by name should also be considered in this context. No opportunity is given for party formation under the audience, who are thus also united. This political unity has a religious bearing, emphasised by the Homeric stylistic allusions.

Allusion to the Dionysian myth could also be made due to the mention of the places. Thus the Dionysian allusions in the off-stage action could be contrasted to the allusion to Apollo on-stage through the presence of his bust.

4.7 Reading the play

In this section a reading is made of selected sections of the play. These sections have been chosen to represent interpretations of various aspects pertaining to the play. The readings are not comprehensive and are intended to highlight considerations brought to the fore by this study. The readings are based on a dramatological analysis of the text and thus imply that various interpretative exercises have been conducted.

4.7.1 The opening sequence (1-64)

The opening sequence forms the first of three parts of the *πάροδος*. The sequence opens with the entrance of the chorus, who introduce themselves as the elders of the Persian empire, too old to go into battle, but still entrusted to guard the home land. Broadhead (1960:37) indicates that the chorus was singing in anapaestic measure, reflecting on the prevalent anxiety for the safety of Xerxes and his army. The audience knows that the Persian army has been defeated, and thus there is no tension in an anticipated victorious return for Xerxes, but the audience can have empathy for the position the Persian elders find themselves in. The chorus would thus be credible in the eyes of the audience, even though they represent the defeated enemy.

Murray (1939:77) interprets line 14 as: “Royal Post:] An organized postal service throughout the Persian Empire had been established by Darius (*Herodotus* VIII. 98). It is one of the features which illustrate the great superiority of the Persians to the Greeks in material civilisation.” This reading would not be true, even in the context of the ample references to the Persian riches. This wealth is a false wealth (800-842). The presentation of the Persian empire to the audience is in contradiction to the plight the elders find themselves in. Therefore, contradictory to Broadhead (1960:37), who believes that an impressive list of the different commanders and their contingents is provided, I consider the clusters to reflect on the elders’ anxiety, where the futility of their attempted war against Greece is evident. The futility is expressed in the descriptive names provided, and their positioning in the ‘appraisal’. The inherent futility could also be considered a false confidence in the Persian military power. The false confidence is elaborated upon further by the chorus’ gloomy foreboding in the second sequence of the *πάροδος* (65-139). Though the elders are far more positive in the third, short, sequence of the *πάροδος* (140-154), they are still very “anxious” (143-144).

Certain images are introduced in the opening sequence, which are used at first to accentuate the false confidence. Where a state of anxiety is established in the opening sequence, this state undergoes a change during the course of the performance, and the Greek audience leaving the theatre at the close of the play would have a different foreboding about its own position in the eyes of the deity. The chorus is instrumental in leading the audience in its changed perception through the course of the play. The chorus manipulates the change in pathos. Apart from the names, the following images in

the first sequence accentuate a frightful situation in the Persian camp, which is best described as “clumsy”.

φύλακες (4). The old and the wise men of Persia would not have given offence to the Greek audience. Aeschylus would therefore have been able to use their prominence to communicate vital and orientating information. They would have been reliable and would have been able also to articulate mood and control the play’s pace. Ironically, they would have been too old to be effective guards over both the riches and the gold laden estates of the Persian Empire, and to oversee the land (1-7).

θύμος (11). The hearts of the trustees, personified to imply the elders. The prophets of doom who are worried about the campaign’s return set the pitch for the play. There is no hope, it would seem, for their victorious return. There is thus a dramatic tension, because the audience knows that the campaign will not be returning. Thus, the audience is also participating in the drama, in the off-stage action. The clause (8-11) also serves as a heading for the πάροδος.

νέον ἄνδρα (13) in contrast to ἀναξ Ξέρξης βασιλεύς (5), and in contrast to πρεσβείαν (4), and Δαρειογενής (6). The portrayal of Xerxes as a young leader is emphasised, and his inability to maintain an own status is established by the continuous close proximity of references to Xerxes to those of Darius’ status. The ‘supernatural’ status of Darius indicates that his persona in the play is a creation (not to be taken seriously), and thus also the persona of Xerxes is portrayed as weaker than the historic person. The archetypes of the created persona are significant, not the historic persons. This character image should also be related to the images of youth and flowers (59).

A final image to be mentioned: ἄνθος Περσίδος (59) contrasted to the πρεσβείαν (4). The youth of Persia, depicted as the blossom of the Persian land makes the youthfulness of Xerxes sour. The contrast between the youth and the elders is also carried through the references: τοιούδ’ (59) and τᾶδε (1). The former refers to the action off-stage, and the second implies the events on-stage. There is a relation between the two “stages”, which will be bridged by the messengers.

Murray (1939:77) makes an important observation: “Like Herodotus, he (Aeschylus) is impressed by the great variety of nations under Xerxes’ rule, from the highly armed

Persians and Medes to Ethiopians with painted bodies and stone-headed arrows and Libyans with spears headless but hardened in the fire” (Herodotus VIII,61-80). On reading the opening sequence an inherent defeat is detectable in the construction of the army, which Murray (1939:77) applauds. The solid column of war (20) was not so solid, as is indicated by the flaws communicated by the names and by the variety in the groupings.

The poor military strategy is made explicit through the mention of the multiple angle attack: horseback (18); per ship (19); and others on foot (20). The divided attack by land and sea was one of the primary factors that led to their defeat, where their leadership resources were divided. In the messenger’s description of Xerxes’ involvement, the idea is created that he is neither here, nor there (465-471). To suggest such military strategy in a procession of “triumph” is contradictory. Xerxes was fighting on two fronts.

Furthermore, the divided nature can be seen in the ambivalent description of the Egyptians, who are described as merchants (37-38) and as labourers (40) – though, sarcastically it may be implied that labourers and not sailors are an asset to any navy. The uncountable in number (40) reads at once as of significant proportions, and as chaos. Within the context the second reading is preferred. This reading is substantiated by the reference to the crowd of delicately living Lydians (41-42). The concept “crowd” gives the idea that the non-military Lydians were rather disorganised. The divisions are given further accentuation in the description of the various weapons, and in their inappropriate trust (49-58). Such a military expedition was doomed to fail. Their trust should have been with the gods, not with riches (53) with bows (55) while being spear fighters (51; 56) or with land fighters – implied (55) while being a naval battle. Historically, on a military technical point: Greece fought with spears and Persia with bows and arrows. Greek unity is thus implied by the reference to Persian diversification.

An idea is also created that the whole column was not unified in focus. Lines (41-43) 44-48 illustrates one of the reasons why the column that left for Greece made the old war veterans concerned:

[ἀβροδιαίτων δ’ ἔπεται Λυδῶν
 ὄχλος, οἷτ’ ἐπίπαν ἠπειρογῆς
 κατέχουσιν ἔθνος, τοὺς Μητρογαθῆς]
 βασιλῆς δίοποι,

χαί πολύχρυσοι Σάρδεις ἐπόχους
 πολλοῖς ἄρμασιν ἐξορμῶσιν,
 δίρρυμά τε καὶ τρίρρυμα τέλη,
 φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι.

[They were followed by a crowd
 of delicately living Lydians, who control
 the whole Mainland nation, those leaders that Mitrogothes
 and brave Arkteus,] aspiring lords,
 and wealthy Sardis,
 excited with countless chariots,
 arranged in squadrons two and three abreast,
 a most fearful sight to observe!

The adjectives to note are: δίοποιοι (those who are aspiring), describing βασιλῆς (lords - gentry in no way warriors!); and πολύχρυσοι (those who are wealthy) and thus used to luxury, fine cloths and good food and not rations, marching and hardship; The verb ἐξορμάω indicates that the discipline was not controlled. Ἐξορμάω is similar to ἐξορμίζω, which corresponds to a further sense of ἐξορμάω: to bring out of harbour. In this wordplay the dual front of the Persians is suggested: chariots - land; and ships - sea. This column was not fearful to the enemy, but to the old men:

This section of the column, starting with the delicately living Lydians (42) was more like a festival procession. Here, Aeschylus could be reflecting on the drama festival processions which precede the actual performances. It could be that he is describing these, but evidence to support this hypothesis is lacking. However, the idea of “entertainment” features strongly, where the courage of non-militants to enter battle comes from external stimulus and not from military ability or training. The description of Xerxes’ column is thus impressive to behold, but holds little threat. In light of the chorus’ concern, expressed at the onset, this last observation surely refers to the elders concern for the expedition’s well being.

And a last point: the elders concern is only for the blossom of men from Persia and not for the whole column (59-64). On the one hand this would have provoked the Greek audience’s sense of discretion, and on the other a reminder that it was not only Athens that went into battle, to defend the offensive against Greece.

4.7.2 The Queen's enquiries about Athens (230-245)

Broadhead (1960:88) asks whether "Aeschylus [has] been guilty of introducing the dialogue merely in order to gratify national pride".

The Queen has related her dreams (176-214) and the chorus has responded (215-225). In 228-230 the Queen thanks the chorus, but then asks the unexpected question:

ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός

Where in the world do the people say Athens is situated?

Though an initial response, like that of Broadhead (1960:88) could be justified, this question provides Aeschylus with an opportunity to conduct certain necessary exercises in drama: 1. Break the immediate tension, with a humorous, naïve question (who does not know where Athens is? everybody does!); 2. Bring Athens (physical) and the play (physical and super-physical) into the sphere of the deity (Helios) (super-physical). 3. Provide an opportunity to bring hail to Athena and the *chorēgos*⁸¹ (benefactor) of the play (232-244); 4. Compare the Athenian and Persian military and political situations;⁸² 5. Relate the battle of Salamis to the battle of Marathon (244).

Mention of the battle of Marathon (indirect through the reference to Darius) is followed by the introduction of the second actor: the first messenger. The stachismata between the chorus and the Queen prepares the scene for the entrance of the messenger and his relation of the events off-stage.

It is important that the audience be drawn into comparing Persia with Greece. This would be in order to accentuate the universality of the events, within the pathetic question by the Queen and the mention of Athenian strengths, a relation to history, and an unwritten warning that things could change. But first a question: Who of the Athenians knew where Agbatania, Susa was? The news delivered by the messenger would be good and bad; good for Greece, bad for Persia. The first words of the messenger let the chorus know that Persia's luck has changed (249-252).

⁸¹ According to Cartledge (1997:25) Pericles, who was barely adult, served as the play's *chorēgos*.

⁸² "They have no master" relates to the difference in government between Persia (autocracy) and Athens (democracy). However, Greece had the law as their master, but Aeschylus does not explore this dimension. It is though, explored by Herodotus (VIII, 104): "They are free, but not free in everything. There is a Master over them called Law, whom they fear more than thy slaves fear thee": answer of Demarātus, the exiled Spartan king to Xerxes.

This passage illustrates how Aeschylus controls his audience's reactions to the play, and thus also to his themes. It is also instrumental in the pathos development through the course of the play, hinging on the ignorance of the Queen (let the audience not be ignorant). The chorus tells the Queen, the audience, the facts the way Aeschylus wants them to think about and understand them. This is one of the obstacles facing historians: Aeschylus is working in a frame of reference that is drama orientated and not a frame of reference that is historically true. Thus, rather than questioning validity and actuality, functionality should be queried. Aeschylus appears to be exploring extremes of the boundaries of information: For example, Darius the defeated enemy is presented as a god in the play, a messenger from the underworld.

4.7.3 The prophecy of Darius (800-842)

Darius appears in the play as the second messenger. He looks back into the past and forward into the future. Within the tradition of Greek "fairness" he does not seek the outcome of the battle within the ranks of the Persians (inherent as expressed in the πάροδος) nor in the superiority of the Greeks (as implied by the outcome of the battle), but in the transgression of divine law, a theology which is wholly Greek, with no Persian traces.

The sacrilegious actions, such as the wrecking of the altars, are paradoxical. Historically, the Persians did not believe in anthropomorphic gods as the Greeks did (Herodotus I,131). However, in the religious construct of the play these acts of the Persians create the illusion that they were exercising sacrilege, where they were plundering their own shrines. Thus the theme of impiety is emphasised: Greek impiety.

It could therefore be determined that it is not Darius (historical person) speaking, but a Greek messenger God. The extent of this message's significance is made evident in that a former enemy relates it to a Greek enemy. The validity of the message is thus accentuated.

The reference made to the Spartan victory in the Battle of Plataea (800) helps to neutralise the notion that the play is an Athenian song of triumph. Apart from such references there are a few themes, many referred to in the opening sequence, that receive particular emphasis in Darius' prophecy.

4.7.4 The Queen's concern for Xerxes' robes (845-851)

The Queen's concern for Xerxes' robes is confusing. Everything she has heard about the Persians losses seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The losses seem to have been relativised in relation to the immediate predicament. The Queen is worried about her son's lack of appropriate clothing, where his clothes are shredded – not befitting a monarch – and to dress him in new clothes would help him to regain his lost dignity. An aspect of the importance of clothes is made clear in 914 and in 1036, where his vulnerability in the face of total defeat is expressed.

In 849-850 play directions are given by Aeschylus. The audience is prepared for Xerxes' appearance.

Line 851 gives a key to the play: we will not betray our beloved ones in these trying times. Not only her son is implicated, the appeal is universal – Greeks too, therefore Greek empathy is generated. This is followed by political commentary by the chorus (852-857). This is important for the Athenians because the democratic concepts civil law and order are being ascribed to a monarch. Also, the ambivalence between democratic and religious society. Religion is autocratic, civil society is democratic.

4.7.5 The final sequence (907-1076)

The final sequence involves the third messenger, Xerxes, who now appears to validate the first and second messengers.

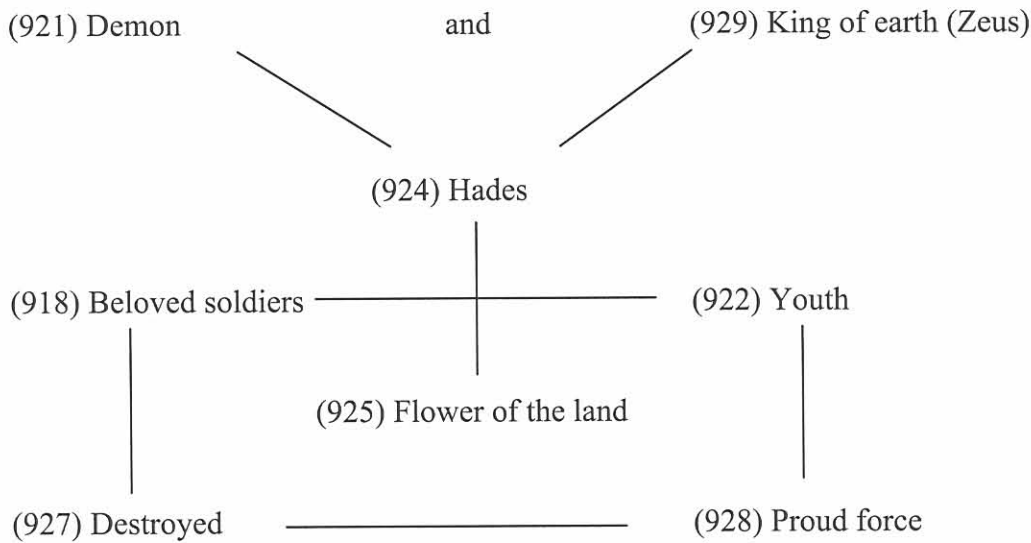
In 914 the clothes metaphor is made clearer. The robes become metaphor for ruin, as implied by the single sheath carrier, probably indicating an assistant of sorts, like a weapon carrier. The war is thus reduced in importance, fighting for a worthy cause, futility of war.

Line 939 contains a lamentation. Murray (1939:91) considers this “an exotic performance in the style of some Asiatic people” also present in 1054 as “a Mysian song”. Correctly he states (1939:92):

This lamentation is not only written with great technical skill, but seems to combine an expression of utter defeat and desolation with a certain nobleness and dignity. The conquered oppressor is not mocked.

A construction can be drawn which communicates this balance between honour and destitution:

Figure 1: The balance between honour and destitution



It is important to note that the chorus is not crying for Xerxes but for those who died (944-946). This lament for those have died is accentuated in line 1003: “They have gone, oh without names!” The importance of the use of names in *The Persians* for dramatological purposes is thus beyond dispute.

4.8 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presents numerous dramatological and historic insights on *The Persians*, based on the analysis of the names. The names of the people are considered in light of a characterisation technique which characterises the Persian nation more than it does individuals. In this light, no characters in *The Persians* could be considered as central. They are all functional. The consideration of the Queen, Darius and Xerxes as messengers, alongside the messenger of war also has an impact on the way the play is interpreted. These messengers present the audience different perspectives on the relation between gain and loss in the context of Fate.

The mentioning of the place names are more akin to the nature of tragedy as an art form, regarding play structure and classic allusion, than giving historic reflection on the Persian retreat. It must therefore be concluded, that the whole of *The Persians* is a dramatic construction, utilising recent events (the battle of Salamis) in an imposed situation (the return of Xerxes), reminding the Greek audience of the ever present power of Fate.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The term “fabrication of history” is a bit strong to describe *The Persians*, but the use of names contained in the character clusters in the play, along with the appearance of Darius’ ghost, indicate that the tragedy cannot be considered a “history play” in the traditional sense of the word.

The tragedy is carried in the pathos of the language used in the play. An analysis of the names exemplifies the fact that “the tragic” is associated with the human, and has to do with the response evoked from the audience.

5.1 Chapter overview

The introduction looked into the problems of reading and understanding Greek drama. The main reason for this is to be found, ironically, in the means used to preserve it. The shift has moved from a spectacle and listening experience to a reading exercise. Further reasons include the vast drama theoretical differences and the existence of various approaches to drama and stage productions. The theoretical framework Aeschylus produced *The Persians* in was different to the theoretical criteria Aristotle used to describe forms of tragedy. *The Persians* was an experimental play before the genre became more standardised.

The second chapter therefore considered **the historic context of the drama**. Traditionally *The Persians* is categorised as a history play. This assumption is questioned, and is found to be wanting. To open the way to understanding the nature of the Persians, the concepts “history” and “myth” are investigated. Distinction is made between the drama analysts’ approaches to these concepts. Reference is made to their relations to Greek tragedy and to the period Aeschylus lived in.

The third chapter pertains to **stagecraft production and drama theory**. Attention is drawn to the importance of diction as communicator of more than mere story. The text (script) is concentrated on, as this is, ironically, the only means we have to appreciating

the play. Aristotelian theory is considered as a possible means to approaching *The Persians*, but is found to be insufficient in many respects. Modern theories have been found to be too dependent on Aristotelian theory, and do not consider the play on its own right. Thus, a close study of the play is requested to see what its dramaturgical mechanics are. This is done in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 uncovers the dramatic contribution of **the names** and name clusters to the appraised reception of the tragedy. The names and interpretation of the names need to be understood in a historic context and in their linguistic functions. It is seen how they are integrated into the structure and mood of the play, and how they function similar to set dressing, being descriptive, and at the same time also emotive in their intention and reception.

5.2 Testing the hypothesis

The hypothesis proposed in the introduction has been found to be useful to understand *The Persians*. The hypothesis stated that the play is a tribute to the victory at Salamis, emphasised from the perspective of the enemy's defeat, but with a vital moral undertone. Furthermore, the play has been found to be very balanced in its attitude towards the battle, and thus it is not a human tribute, but a reminder that Fate was on the side of the Greeks. The Persians did not deserve to win. The play thus employs a mythologisation of contemporary history with a didactic substructure, being instrumental in patriotic upliftment and emphasising the mortality of man at once: "Do not misinterpret the gods or anger them, or be rash, or be other than one's nature". The structuring of the name clusters, with their inherent characterisation of the Persian nation and classic allusions (especially the place clusters), promotes this understanding.

Understanding the name clusters and the references to Greek deity help to appreciate the play better in its intention, presentation, reception, and the assumed reaction it received - based on its winning the prize. Furthermore, it is found that the play falls outside the scope of Aristotelian drama theory as it is understood in terms of later interpretations. This does not render Aristotelian theory as obsolete. Rather, a close reading of the *Poetics* is proposed, to understand it within its own right, and not under influence of later theories of drama. It has been found, through the analysis of other ancient drama theories, that the essence of Aristotelian theory is true to ancient drama analysis.

5.3 Answering the problems

Therefore, where the tragedy, *The Persians* by Aeschylus, cannot be understood in terms of later interpretations of Aristotelian drama theory, the criteria mentioned in the *Poetics* is still a most useful tool. Where the play does not conform to the requirements for the tragic hero, character, plot nor structure a comparison between more ancient witnesses helps reconstruct a plausible drama theory applicable to Aeschylus, which is sufficiently universal in nature to encompass Aristotelian theory. Tragedy is found to be a tradition that has many facets to it.

The second identified problem relates to the nature of the tragedy. It is concluded that the play uses history as an instrument, and has modified it for its own purposes. To the first audience *The Persians* was real, not because of its historic correctness, which it is not, but because of the way it was presented, addressing issues of the day.

The third problem this study investigates, is how to appreciate the emphasis on the names of the enemy. Not one name of a Greek is mentioned - but references to Greek islands abound. The play is orientated towards Greek religious experience. The names of the enemy soldiers are Hellenised in their pronunciation and form compounded Greek adjectives. They contribute to the tragedy's impact, sounding at once foreign and noting a cord of differing significance. The names help in building the tragedy's pathos in conjunction with the reference to the Greek islands. The reaction to the names determines the mood.

Lastly, the historicity of the names is not disputed. It is contended that they take on a further significance in terms of their etymological potential, as expressed in their dramatic adaptation as compounded Greek adjectives. Aeschylus thus chose the names carefully and places them strategically to generate what is known as Greek balance. The reaction evoked from the audience is thus controlled. They applauded, and it was suggested that *The Persians* be preserved, in written format, for later generations also to appreciate.

5.4 The way forward

In conclusion several areas for further research sprouting from this study can be identified: a comparison in the Homeric and Aristotelian Legal systems to better

understand divine justice and justice in general in Greek tragedy; a differentiation between oratory and rhetoric skills in Greek tragedy; a close study of the various lamenting “sounds” in *The Persians*; a contextualisation of the various Heraclitian fragments traced in the tragedies of Aeschylus; a more in-depth study of the various themes in *The Persians*; rereading Aristotle’s *Poetics* in relation to his metaphysics, ethics and politics and to Plato, especially considering the term “elevated”; differentiating between semantic-linguistic, philosophical-esthetical and practical art appreciation of a tragedy; time in *The Persians*; a study of the messengers in the play; a study of the different stages: on-stage, off-stage and meta-stage.

Where the name clusters and use of names in *The Persians* are found to contribute significantly to appreciating the play’s historical and dramatological aspects, this study has served to open the way to further study in Greek tragedy.

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ADDENDUM

Translation

CHORUS

1. We here are the trustees, called to
stand guard over both the riches and gold-laden
estates of the Persians who have left
for the Grecian land; because of our age
5. lord Xerxes, king,
son of Darius
chose us to oversee the land.

- Our hearts - prophets of doom - are already
extremely worried here deep inside
10. about the royalty's return
and concerning the gold-paid army:
because a whole Asian generation
was led away, and is wailing about a young man,
yet neither a messenger nor any rider
15. has returned to the city of the Persians;
these men that left Susa, Agbatana
and the ancient walled city of Cissia
set out, some on horseback,
others per ship, and marching on foot,
20. surging forward as a solid column of war;
men like Amistres, Artaphrenes,
Megabates and Astaspes -
Persian marshals,
lords, subjects of the great king,
25. hastened, supervisors of the great army,
archers and horsemen,
causing fear when seen, deadly in battle,
reputed for their steadfast courage:
Artembares, the one who relishes fighting from the chariot;
30. Masistres; the archer brave
Himaeus; Pharandakes;
and the driver of horses Sosthenes.

- The big and prolific Nile also
sent some: Sousiskanes;
35. Pegastagon, Egyptian born;
the lord of holy Memphis,
great Arsames; the regent of
wealthy Thebes, Ariomardos;
and marsh-dwellers that row ships,
40. skilled and uncountable in number.

They were followed by a crowd

of delicately living Lydians, who control
the whole Mainland nation, those leaders that Mitrogathes
and brave Arkteus, aspiring lords,
45. and wealthy Sardis,
excited with countless chariots,
arranged in squadrons two and three abreast,
a most fearful sight to observe!

The neighbours of holy Tmolos threaten
50. to throw the yoke of slavery over Greece:
Mardon; Tharybis, those anvils of the spear;
Mysian javeliners; Babylon - the
rich in gold - is sending a powerful multitude,
in a long row, and the commanders of ships;
55. they all have faith in the tight temper of the bow;
and the spear-bearing nation from all over
Asia follows
in the terrifying escort under the king.

Such is the blossom of men from the Persian land
60. who have gone,
all of the Asian soil that fed them
mourns for them with a glowing yearning;
parents and wives tremble as they count
the stretched out time day by day.

STROFE A

65. The royal army, the city destroyers
have gone to a neighbouring land
across the sea,
they crossed the Strait of Helle, Athama's daughter,
70. on a light boat fastened with ropes
while the way was strengthened
by fastening a yoke on the neck of the sea.

ANTISTROFE A

The impetuous lord of populous Asia,
drives his godly herd over every land
75. from both sides;
attacking by foot and from the sea
he trusts his marshals,
dependable and mighty,
80. an offspring of golden descent, a godlike man.

STROFE B

While he stares with the dark glare
of a murderous viper in his eyes
over his many men and plentiful ships,
while driving his Syrian chariot,
85. he an Ares sends the archer
in against men famed for their spears.

ANTISTROFE B

- Nobody, however renowned
can stand one's ground against such a great flood,
cast up strong walls
90. against the relentless wave from the sea;
because the Persian army cannot be withstood,
and the nation is battle-minded.

STROFE C

- Because when Moira (Goddess of fate) was in power
as of old, as the gods had sanctioned,
95. she allotted for the Persians
tower destructing battles,
chariot charges
as well as the
upheaval of citizens.

ANTISTROFE C

100. They mastered the broad pathway
of the grey growing ocean,
with the howling wind,
and they saw a green landscape,
while trusting on slightly-built
105. bridges
engineered with flimsy ropes.

MESODE

- But what mortal-man can escape
the crafty-minded deception of God?

Whose foot is so light
110. that he can leap aside easily?

Because while slanting friendly smiles,
Até (Ruin) first leads man into a net,
from where there is no escape
by fleeing for any mortal.

STROFE D

115. Concerning these things, my black-robed
heart is struck with fear -
oh, the Persian armoury -
may the city not hear this cry,
the big city Susa which is empty of men.

ANTISTROFE D

120. Also the Cissian city will
let an echo be resounded,
oh, a thronging crowd of women
will take up these lamentations,
125. and a tear appear on full-robcs made of fine linen.

STROFE E

- Because all the horse riders
and hordes of foot soldiers
have left like a swarm of bees
streaming after the soldiers' leader,
130. after they had crossed over the bridge
that yokes both lands' necks
together onto one another.

ANTISTROFE E

- And wedding beds are filled with tears
due to the yearning for men;
135. and while each Persian woman mourns separately
softly with a yearning for her marriage partner:
the brave soldier
whom she sent away into battle
has left her in her room alone.
140. But come, Persians, who sit here
at this ancient abode,
let us think the thoughts over, anxious and deep,
because the crisis demands it,
how the situation has developed for Xerxes the king
145. born of Darius,
.....
whether the victory belongs to the flight of the bow,
or whether the strength
of the sharpened spears has seized the victory.
150. But here comes the king's mother
whose eyes glow with the light of gods -
my queen - I fall down before her;
let us all now give honour to her
with welcoming words of praise.
155. Oh Lady, first-most amongst Persian women, wearers of flowing
dresses, honoured mother of Xerxes, greetings, wife of Darius;
spouse of the Persian god, and also mother of their god,
if their ancient Fortune Bringer were not to abandon the soldiers.

THE QUEEN

160. This is the reason I came from the palace's golden halls
and out from the room Darius and I too shared.

Serious anxieties also tear my heart; I shall thus tell my account
to you which leaves me in no way untroubled, friends, that Great
Patmos (Death) doesn't disturb the harmony of the earth's dust
with his foot, that which Darius had established, not without one of the gods.

165. Concerning these things, there is an inexpressible double anxiety in my heart:

neither do the people revere the widows' wealth with respect;
nor does the light shine as bright as it could for the poor.

Because there is indeed over enough wealth, but my fear is for the eye;
because I maintain that the master's presence is the eye of the house.

170. Therefore, seeing that matters stand as such, be advisors
to me in this matter, Persians, trustworthy because of your age;
because you are appreciated advisors of all matters to me.

CHORUS

Be assured of this, Queen of this land, you shouldn't need to
request twice from us either a word or a deed in which we are able to guide you;
175. because we are so kindly disposed, you call us to give advice in these matters.

THE QUEEN

For many nights I have had constant dreams as
companions, since my son raised a force and went off to
the land of Ionians wishing to destroy it;
but never has the dream been so clear
180. as it was in the night that has just passed, I shall set it out for you:
I dreamed two well-clothed women appeared before me,
the one was attired in a Persian shawl,
and the other was in Doric dress,
they were far more distinguished in greatness than before,
185. and faultless in beauty, and they looked like sisters from the same
family; Greece was allotted to the one and she
resided in the land, the other was a Barbarian.

Then as I dreamed, an argument arose
between the two; and when my son found out about it
190. he tried to stop and calm them. He then tied them up
in front of his chariot and placed a yoke over their
heads. The one remained quiet in the grip due to her
towering pride and kept her mouth obediently to the reins,
but the other one fought, and with her hands she tore the
195. harness straps, and now she drags it on with force unchecked
by the bridle pieces and she broke the cross-bar into two between them.

My son falls, his father Darius stands close by
taking pity on him; but when Xerxes sees

him, he tears the clothes off his body.

200. And these then are the nightly dreams I tell.

After I had risen and washed my hands
at a fountain of clean water, I stood at the altar
with an offer in my hands, while I wished to make
an offering to the protecting gods, to whom these actions belong.

205. But there I saw an eagle that was flying to the altar of
Phoebos (Apollo); and in fear I stood speechless, friends;
and a moment later I saw a hawk circle about;
then with flapping feathers it attacked and tore at the eagle's head
with its claws; the eagle did nothing else except cower
210. and yield. It was a terrible sight for me to see,
and for you to hear. Because as you should well know, if my son
were to do well he would be a man admired by all,
but if he fares badly - he does not owe the city an explanation,
and if he is safe he will be ruler of the land as he was before.

CHORUS

215. We wish not to make you, mother, either fearful with our answer
nor to encourage you; but we wish you to go to the gods with petitions,
if what you saw were terrible, ask them to avert the evil,
and to provide you with every perfect gift as well as for your sons,
the city and all your people. Secondly it is necessary
220. to our offerings for the earth and the dead; you must request with gracious heart
that your husband, Darius, whom you say you saw in last night's dream,
send blessings up into the light to you and to your son,
from beneath the earth and to keep constrained the opposite of this in the darkness
under the ground.

Such advice I give you with compassion and a gracious heart;
225. and concerning these things we calculate that matters everywhere will go well for
you in all respects.

THE QUEEN

But surely, you, the first interpreter of these dreams
have kindly confirmed this report on my son and house.

May the outcome be very positive; and all these things, as you have
recommended,
we shall entrust to the gods and to our friends under the ground,
230. as soon as we return home. But first I wish to know this,
friends, where in the world do the people say Athens is situated?

CHORUS

Far in the region where Lord Helios declines and sets.

THE QUEEN

Does my son yearn to hunt down this city?

CHORUS

Yes indeed, then all of Greece will become subject to the king.

THE QUEEN

235. So, do they have an army consisting of many men at their disposal?

CHORUS

Yes, such an army that they provide the Medes with many problems.

THE QUEEN

What besides men do they possess? Are there ample riches in their homes?

CHORUS

A silver fountain they own, a treasure from the ground.

THE QUEEN

Do their powers in archer warfare show in their use of hand bows?

CHORUS

240. Definitely not, an erect spear and shields are their weapons.

THE QUEEN

And who has been appointed as shepherd and commands the army?

CHORUS

No-one's slaves they are called, nor are they subject to any man.

THE QUEEN

How then will the men possibly keep an enemy attack at bay?

CHORUS

So well that they could destroy Darius' large and excellent army.

THE QUEEN

245. You are telling terrible things to parents of children to think over.

CHORUS

But it seems to me you will soon receive a full and accurate report.

Because the style of this man coming seems suited to a Persian,
and he brings us a clear message to listen to, whether good or bad.

THE MESSENGER

250. Oh cities of all the Asian land,
oh Persian land and great harbour of wealth,
how only a single stroke brought great prosperity
to an end, and Persia's flower, that had fallen, has been destroyed

255. Oh, oh to be the first messenger of bad news is unfortunate;
but necessity demands that all suffering be made known,
Persians: because the whole Barbarian army has been wrecked.

STROFE A

CHORUS

Distress, anguish
unheard of and
disaster. Alas, mourn, Persians
when you hear of this woe.

MEESENGER

260. Indeed, everything there has gone to ruin for us;
and I myself unexpectedly see the light of my return.

ANTISTROFE A

CHORUS

Life has proven to be
too long for us,
old men, to hear
265. of such affliction unexpectedly.

THE MESSENGER

And since I was there, and not having heard my report from others,
Persians, I can thus tell what disasters have befallen us.

STROFE B

CHORUS

Oh no, oh no, to no avail
the great variety of weapons
270. left the Asian land for - alas -
the wretched land of Greece.

THE MESSENGER

Filled with corpses most miserably destroyed
are the beaches of Salamis and the whole surrounding coast.

ANTISTROFE B

CHORUS

Oh no, oh no, corpses
275. of our beloved ones, shaken
and sea dipped, you say, floating
turbulent in their clothes.

THE MESSENGER

Because their bows were of no use, and the whole army
was destroyed, overcome by the battering of the ships.

STROFE C

CHORUS

280. Scream for the unhappy wretched

a most horrible unhappy wail,
as (the gods) ran everything everywhere
for the worse; oh, our destroyed army!

THE MESSENGER

Oh Salamis, most hateful name that could be heard;
285. groan, how I mourn when I remember Athens.

ANTISTROFE C

CHORUS

Athens hateful towards the wretched;
we too have reason to remember;
since they made so many Persian wives
into widows - so without their men.

THE QUEEN

290. I was quiet for so long, poor me, I was shattered
by the misfortune; because this sate is the best:
that suffering should neither be mentioned nor questions asked about it.

Even so, necessity dictates that people must bare all ills
when the gods send it; unfold the whole woeful
295. tale, take your stand, even if you cry because of the agony;
who did not die, and over which of the leaders
should we mourn, which officer's position
has been left manless, empty because he had died?

THE MESSENGER

Xerxes himself lives and looks at the light.

THE QUEEN

300. You refer to a great light for my house
and a bright morning after the black night.

THE MESSENGER

Artembares the leader of ten thousand horsemen
was slammed against the cruel coasts of Sileniae.

The leader of one thousand, Dadakes, due to a spear attack
305. jumped from his ship with a too light leap;
and Tenagon most honourably born of the Baktrians
fares about around the sea struck island of Ajax.

Lilaios, Arsames and thirdly Argestes
were defeated close to the island
310. and were shed against the tough, deadly land where doves find nurture;
and from the dwellers alongside the fountains of Egypt's Nile
Arkteus, Adeues as well as the heavily weaponed
Pharnouchos thirdly, fell from a single ship.

Chryseus with Matallos, he that is commander over ten thousand, died,

315. himself commander of thirty thousand dark horses,
his bushy, reddish, dark, full beard
was drenched, while his colour changed in the purple dye.

Also the Magus, Arabos, Artabes the Baktrian,
a stranger from a savage land, was slain there.

320. Amistris and Amphistreus, the skilful manipulator
of the spear, and he that brings forth suffering, noble Ariomardos
from Sardis, and Seisames the Mysian,
and Tharubis, lord over five times fifty ships,
a Lurnaeon by birth, a handsome man,
325. lies dead, victim of a not too fortunate fate;
and Suennesis foremost amongst the brave,
high commander of the Cilicians, one man who offered
the most resistance against the enemy, died like a hero.

Such then was my report concerning those things.

330. I have told a few disasters from many incidents.

THE QUEEN

Oh, oh, I have just heard the culmination of evils,
an embarrassment to Persians, and shrill lamentations.

- But tell me this, return back again;
the numerous ships the Greeks had, were they so many,
335. that they deemed it worthwhile to engage in battle
against the Persian regiment with their battering-ramming vessels?

THE MESSENGER

- On account of the numbers, be assured of this,
the Barbarian ships should have won. Because to be sure,
the Greeks ships were totalled at three hundred,
340. and of these, ten were placed one side specially;
but of Xerxes' fleet, as you well know, the number
was not less than one thousand, and those exceeding in speed
were two hundred and seven; and that's the issue.

Surely you do not think that we were overwhelmed here-in during battle?

345. No, a certain demon destroyed the fleet;
the weight of the scale was not equally distributed.

The gods protect goddess Pallas's city.

THE QUEEN

What, is the city of Athens not invaded yet?

THE MESSENGER

No, because as long as there are men there is a strong defence.

THE QUEEN

350. How did the battle between the ships start, tell;
which side attacked - the Greeks or my son,
while he depended on the number of his ships?

THE MESSENGER

The one, lady, who started all the evil
was one or other curse or an evil spirit
that appeared from somewhere.

355. Because a man, a Greek, came along out from the Athenian camp
and he said the following to your son Xerxes,
that as darkness and the black of night were to come along,
the Greeks would not remain, but would jump
onto the rowing chairs of their boats, each one for himself
360. and save their lives by fleeing in secret.

And immediately when he heard it, while he did not grasp the falsehood
of the man from the Greek camp nor the gods' jealousy,
he proclaimed to all his captains the decree:

365. that when the sun's brightness has stopped scorching the earth,
and darkness has covered the sky's vault,
they must divide the main corps of ships into three columns,
(368) and while others surround the island of Ajax,
(367) to guard the exits and the straits to the open sea;
so that, if the Greeks wished to escape an evil death,
370. by finding some hidden escape route for their ships,
it was put to them: "Off with their heads".

That was the totality of his words, and from an optimistic heart;
because he did not know the future as the gods had planned it.

- And everyone, not in chaotic manner, but with loyal hearts,
375. prepared their supper, and every man in the navy
placed his oar onto its well fitted pin.

When the sun's radiance had disappeared
and night had come along, every man in charge of an
oar went on board his ship, and each one that handled the heavy weapons:

380. the one regiment called out to the other regiment;
and everyone kept to his instructions as he had been ordered,
right through the night the ships' captains sailed to and fro
according to the whole strategy of the navy.

And the night disappeared, the Greek fleet
385. had not attempted to sail out in secret at all;
but when the white horse chariot of a morning appeared
and filled the whole earth, beautiful to behold,
first, a noise; a call from the Greeks -
a joyful song, and in answer to this

390. piercing echoes resounded from the cliffs;
there was fear amongst the barbarians,

they were cheated in their hope; because not as in flight
did the Greeks sing a solemn song,
but boldly, they were busy rushing into battle with good courage;
395. and a trumpet let her sound reverberate over all else.

At once dashing oars together in harmony
beat the sea from out deep after a summon,
and suddenly they were all visible to sight.

400. From the right first, a well arranged wing
showed the way in orderly fashion, and secondly the whole army
advanced forward, and jointly they brought forth
an enormous voice that could be heard: "Oh sons of Greece, go,
bring freedom to your fatherland, and bring freedom
to your children, wives, and to all the thrones of your forefathers' gods,
405. and to the graves of your predecessors; now the battle is for all of them".

Also on our side a multitude of Persian tongues
called out: "There is no more time for delay".

And immediately a ship rammed its bronze beak against
a ship; the ramming was started by a Greek
410. ship, it broke away a whole side of a Phoenician
ship, the one directed a spear to the other.

At first the flowing Persian force withstood;
but as their crowded ships thronged in the
passages, no longer giving assistance to one another,
415. they struck each other amongst themselves with bronzed
rams, they broke their whole stock of oars,
and the Greek ships hardly without plan,
came around them and struck, ships' hulls were overturned
and the sea was no longer visible,
420. being filled with wreckages and the slaughter of mortals,
the beaches and reefs around were filled with corpses.

Without order all the ships were hasting to the flight,
as many ships as there were in the Barbarian army.

425. Like Tuna or a certain catch of fish
they chased us, broke our oars
and smashed our wrecks; they hacked us to pieces;
the screaming kept control over the sea during the moaning,
until the eye of the dark night removed it.

430. And the pains are so great, that not even if I were to take ten days
to give an account, then I could not even tell it to you in full.

Because realise this well, never before in one day
has such a large sum of men gone to their death.

THE QUEEN

Ah ah, a great sea of evil has broken out
and has overwhelmed the Persian and Barbarian nations.

THE MESSENGER

435. Now realise it well, you have not heard half the evil yet;
because such a great number of suffering has come our way,
that they were out balanced twice in the scales.

THE QUEEN

What fortune could be more confronting than this?

440. Tell us what suffering befell the soldiers would you say
and tilted the balance of evil over.

THE MESSENGER

As great as they were in the prime of their Persian strength,
noblest courage and most outstanding family trees,
the first on whom the king could always rely,
disgracefully they were slain with the most inglorious death.

THE QUEEN

445. Oh poor me! How harsh my fate is, friends.

What kind of death do you say they died?

THE MESSENGER

There is a certain island just before Salamis,
a small one, without ship's anchorage, where Pan who
loves dancing wanders all along the sea's coast.

450. He sent these men there, so that, when the enemy
were to seek shelter from their abandoned ships on the island,
the easy to overcome Greek army would surely fall prey,
and he would rescue our beloved ones from the salty straits,
but he had judged the outcome of events poorly. Because when God
455. gave the honour of the naval battle to the Greeks,
on that very day, after setting up a tight defence with heavy shields
wrought from fine brass, the body leapt forth from their ships; and from around
the whole island they circled in, that the Persians were planless
of where they could turn. Because at first
460. hordes were struck by hand thrown rocks, and
arrows shot from bows showered down, destroying them;
finally, after storming forward in a single stream,
they struck, they butchered the limbs of the wretched,
until the life of everyone had been totally destroyed.

465. When Xerxes saw the magnitude of the destruction he screamed,
because he had a seat in full view of the entire army,
on top of a forested hill alongside the sea;
he tore his clothes and let out a sharp shrill;

- immediately after giving orders to the troops,
470. he fled in confused flight. To the previous events
these too are attached for you to mourn over.

THE QUEEN

- Oh hateful spirit, how you deceived the Persians'
minds; how bitter the vengeance was that my son
475. sought from famous Athens, had Marathon formerly
not destroyed enough of them - the Barbarians departed;
while my son thought he was avenging them
he drew in such a big catch of woes.

But you must tell, the ships that escaped destruction,
where did you leave them, would you know at all to be
able to tell it clearly?

THE MESSENGER

480. The captains of the remaining ships hastily
started a down-wind escape without any good order;
the remaining soldiers were marginalised
in the Boeotian land; some were suffering with thirst
for a nourishing fountain, but we passed out
485. through to the Phoenician land, exhausted from lack of breath,
and on to the Dorian country, the Gulf of Malia, whose
plain Spercheios waters with its friendly stream;
from there the land and soil of Achaea and the
towns of Thessalia received us, empty handed without food
490. as we were; most died there as a result of
thirst and hunger, because both these enemies were very present there.

- We arrived in the Magnesian land and in the land of the
Macedonians, at the stream of Axias,
at the reedy marsh of Bolbe, and at Pangaeus' mountains,
495. the home of the Edonites; during that same night God
evoked an untimely storm, and holy Strumon's
entire course froze. Whoever did not
have faith in the Gods before now prayed and
made promises, while kneeling before earth and sky.

500. When the soldiers completed their many
prayers, they started crossing over the bridge of solid ice;
and whoever of us could cross over before the rays of God's
sun spread out, crossed safely.

- Because the sun's bright disc, flaming with its rays,
505. bore through the middle of the passage, warming it with its flame;
and they fell over each other; and fortunate was
he whoever could breathe out his breath of life quickest.

- Whoever survived and was unfortunate to be saved,
after scarcely crossing through Thrace with much suffering,
510. arrived at refuge, not many of them though

at their sanctuary and land; with the result that the Persian city
is mourning, while yearning for the beloved youthfulness of the land.

That is the truth. Much have I omitted while relating
the woes that God brought down upon the Persians.

CHORUS

515. Oh spirit of suffering, with how heavy a leap
of your feet have you not pounced upon the whole Persian race.

THE QUEEN

Ah! I am miserable, the army totally destroyed;
oh vision of the night so clear in dreams,
how clearly you revealed the terrible disasters to me.

520. But you judged the warnings very thoughtlessly.

Nethertheless, since this is indeed what your words proclaimed,
I wish to pray, first to the gods,
thereafter for the earth and for the dead I shall give offerings
while from my home I shall bring libations;

525. I know for certain that it is for events now fulfilled,
but for that which remains, if something better were to arrive.

You must start with that which happened accurately
and convince your council on whom we trust to think it over;
and my son; if he should come along before I

530. return, set him at ease and lead him to my home,
so that to the previous woes he may not add more troubles.

CHORUS

Oh King Zeus, the Persian army's
proud appearance and great numbers
you have now destroyed -

535. the city of Susa and Agbatana too
you buried in dark grief;
and the veils of many wives, with soft hands
were torn,

540. their breasts drenched with tears
as they share in the pains.

The Persian women with feminine wailing
yearn to see their recently married husbands,
and their marital beds, of soft linen,
the comfortable pleasure of the youth, they have lost,
545. and they mourn with long unquenchable tears.

And I, because of the death of those who are away,
am shedding tears of absolute grief.

STROFE A

Because now all Asia's lands mourn
due to their empty state.

550. Xerxes led, oh oh,
Xerxes destroyed, woe woe,
Xerxes
all his plans failed
in ships in the sea.

555. Why did Darius then
bring no injury to his men
when he led them into battle,
the beloved leader of Susa?

ANTISTROFE A

Because foot soldiers and also sailors
led the dark cheeked

560. ships ahead, oh oh,
ships were destroyed, woe woe,
ships
with murderous thrusting rams,
and through Ionian hands.

565. The leader's escape was close,
as we hear,
through the abounding plains of Thrace,
dangerous and wayward.

STROFE B

They were the first to die, shame,
when they were caught through necessity, ah,
570. on the beaches around Kuchreuas, woe,
they were drowned, moan and snarl,
and in heavy lament
scream to the heavens your sorrows, ah;
stretch your sorrowful voices

575. in a heart-moving scream.

ANTISTROFE B

Terribly they were torn by the sea, shame,
mangled by the voiceless, ah,
the children of the unpolluted depths, woe.

580. Every house mourns for the man
it lost
and the childless parents
bemoan the loss, ah,
sent to them in their age
and they hear all the pain.

STROFE C

- Those people throughout Asia are no longer
585. controlled by Persian law,
no longer do they pay recognition
to the leader's decisions due to necessity,
and also they don't fall on the ground
to express honour, because the royal
590. power has been broken.

ANTISTROFE C

- There is no control over men's tongues,
because the crowds have been left to speak freely
without hindrance
when the power's yoke broke.
595. The fields on Ajax's Island,
drenched in blood
retains Persia's residue.

THE QUEEN

- Friends, who ever has met the experience of troubles,
how it comes up against men, when floods
600. of problems erupt, to become afraid of everything friendly,
but when the spirit flows, that wind
of good fortune is always trusted to blow.

- Because concerning me, for long everything was fear;
God's terrible visions have appeared before my eyes,
605. and a noise sounds in my ears, hardly healthy;
such are the evil's panic causing my thoughts to fear.

- Therefore I have returned once more from my dwelling
masking my way here without a chariot or without
the pomp, to bring pleasant gifts to my son's
610. father, that comfort the dead,
milk so white and sweet from an unyoked cow
and glowing honey, flower working bee's droplets,
mixed with globules from a virgin fountain,
and purified from its mother in the field
615. this drink is the pride of a very old vine;
and from the ever flowering yellow olive
here are the wonderful smelling fruits,
and woven garlands, child of the fertile earth.

- But, oh Friends, sing over these offers to
the dead a song of goodwill, and call on the spirit
of Darius, while I am sending these gifts,
to be drunk by the earth, to the gods beneath the earth.

CHORUS

Lady queen, whom the Persians honour,
you must send offers to the inner chambers beneath the surface
625. while we shall request the escorts
of the dead with songs
to be gracious down below.

But, holy spirits of the underworld,
Earth and Hermes, and King of the Dead,
630. send a soul from beneath the light.
because if he were to know of additional cures for our ailments,
he alone would hopefully share it with mortals.

STROFE A

Upon my honour does the Blessed King hear me
he equal to a god while
635. I send my Barbarian cries
sharply alternating and clear sorrowfully sad shrills?

Will my pitiful nagging
penetrate?

Can he hear me below?

ANTISTROFE A

640. But for me you, Earth and also the others
that lead the dead away, allow
the spirit to proudly
come forth from the home underneath, god born in Susa for the Persians;
send him up
645. he whose type
Persian soil never before covered up.

STROFE B

Beloved was the man, beloved his grave;
because the remains it covers are beloved.

Aidoneus let him free
650. and guide, oh Aidoneus,
our king Darius, ah.

ANTISTROFE B

Because he never killed our men
through the blindness of worthless warfare,
he was called God's councillor
655. by the Persians, and he was a God's councillor,
because he steered the army well, ah.

STROFE C

King, ancient
king, come, appear;
come to the highest point of your grave,

660. while you lift up your saffron coloured slippers,
of your royal garments
exhibit the feathers.
Make haste father unharmed Darius, oh.

ANTISTROFE C

- So that you may hear of hardship
665. new and strange,
appear lord of my lord.
- Because a certain (death) mist from Stugia hangs in the air;
seeing that all the youth
670. have already died.
- Make haste father unharmed Darius, oh.

EPODOS

- Ah ah
oh most mourned of the dead by friends,
675. why, oh lord, lord,
this abnormal double and twice mourned fault?
- All this land's
three oared ships are lost
680. ships no longer ships.

ENTER DARIUS

- Oh trustworthy amongst the faithful, friends of my youth
aged Persians, which pain hurts the city?
- It moans, it has been struck and the ground has been irritated.
- As I look upon my wife standing near the grave
685. I am afraid, the offers I received were wonderful.
- You standing around my grave raising groans
and while you scream shrill crying to call up the dead
you are calling me inconsiderately; it is not an easy way out
all in another, the Gods beneath the ground are
690. more eager to receive than to part.
- Nevertheless I have exercised authority and
I have come; but make haste, so that you receive no blame
for wasting time.
- What is the new evil the Persians are experiencing?

STROFE

CHORUS

695. Respectfully I hesitate to look,
respectfully I decline to speak
because of the ancient fear for you.

DARIUS

But seeing that I have come from down there after hearing your shrilling,
don't make any long story but shorten the tale,
speak and complete all, place my respect one side.

ANTISTROFE

CHORUS

700. Fearfully I am reluctant to obey,
fearfully I decline to speak,
words that are confusing to friends.

DARIUS

Seeing that the age old fear has taken up its stand before your thoughts,
aged partner of my bed, noble lady,
705. take a rest from your mourning and these sighs and speak clearly
to me. The human condition indicates that suffering will come to men.

Since on one hand much from sea, and on the other much evil from land
will fall over men, especially if you stretch you life that longer too far.

THE QUEEN

Oh you that surpasses the happiness of all men in fortunate destiny,
710. In as much as when you still looked upon the sun rays how jealous
didn't you make men as you led your life amongst the Persians like a god,
and now I desire your death, before the deep evil could be seen.

Because everything, Darius, you will hear in shortened version;
The Persian interests have all been brought to an end, as the saying goes.

DARIUS

715. How'd that happen? Did a disease suddenly appear, or a city rebellion?

THE QUEEN

Not so ever, but the whole army was destroyed close to Athens.

DARIUS

Who of all my sons drove the army there in warfare? Talk.

THE QUEEN

Furious Xerxes, who emptied the whole far stretching mainland.

DARIUS

And in what manner did he tackle the doomed expedition, on foot or sea?

THE QUEEN

720. Both, his onslaught was doubled with two faces.

DARIUS

How did such a large army succeed in crossing on foot?

THE QUEEN

With innovation he manipulated the strait of Helle, that it held a road.

DARIUS

And did he contrive this, that he closed the great Bosphoros?

THE QUEEN

In this way he did; but I think a certain spirit stood him by.

DARIUS

725. Ah, a certain big spirit must have come, that he couldn't think straight.

THE QUEEN

So much so that the evil he accomplished at the end can be seen.

DARIUS

And what happened to them that you cry so bad?

THE QUEEN

After the navy was doomed the foot soldiers were destroyed.

DARIUS

So that the whole armoured force was totally destroyed by the spear.

THE QUEEN

730. For this so that the whole city of Susa grows for its lack of men.

DARIUS

Oh the loss of secure support and the defence of soldiers.

THE QUEEN

Bactrians also went to the defence, without any success.

DARIUS

Oh pitiful, how young was the friendship's bond which he destroyed.

THE QUEEN

And only Xerxes alone they say, and not with many along with him.

DARIUS

735. How and where did he meet his end? Was there any escape?

THE QUEEN

He was fortunate to arrive at the bridge that joins two lands.

DARIUS

Did he really succeed in crossing safely to the side?

THE QUEEN

Yes, this tale wins the day, without any competition.

DARIUS

740. Ah, the resolution of the oracle has come swiftly, Zeus has hurled
down against my son the prophecy's fulfilment; but I thought
the gods would fulfil their promise in a long time to come;
but, when someone hastens himself, god speeds him on.

Now it would seem a fountain of disaster has been found for all our friends.

745. This is what my son brought about blindly in his rash youth;
he that hoped to possess the flowing sacred open sea of Greece,
a slave as in chains, Bosphoros, the streams of the gods;
and forced to root against its nature, and after casting across
strengthened chains he succeeded in crossing the great passage with the great
army.

As a mortal that he was he attempted to manipulate the gods, not with good
reason,

750. And to conquer Poseidion, surely my son did not possess
this madness of mind? I am afraid the fruit of my vast
wealth is no longer being set forward for anyone to plunder.

THE QUEEN

Eager Xerxes learned this from instruction through evil
men; they said you accumulated great wealth through warfare
755. and left it to your children, and he fought the inner self through
unmanliness, and the inherited wealth was not honoured.

After continuously hearing reproach as this from evil men
he planned this passage and lead his army to Greece.

DARIUS

760. Therefore an action accomplished by him is
gigantic, unforgettable, emptiness such as has never before
been brought upon this city of Susa,
since Lord Zeus bestowed this honour upon us,
one man would govern all the Asian sheep
grazing; holding the ruling sceptre.

765. Because Medos was the first to lead our army;
and another his son accomplished this task;
because he controlled his heart with his mind.

770. Third after him was Cyrus, a blessed man,
as monarch he established peace for all his friends;
he collected the people from Lydia and Phryggia,
and he suppressed the whole Ionia with force.

Because he was not hated by god, so wise was he.

The son of Cyrus was the fourth to lead the army.

775. Mardos was fifth, an embarrassment to the fatherland
and the ancient throne; he was assassinated in a clever plot
by Artafrenes in the royal halls,
assisted by brave friends, for whom this was essential.

[The sixth was Marafis, and the seventh Artathrenes.]

780. I was inaugurated after I desired the lot,
and led many expeditions with many men;
but I never brought down so much ill fortune on the city.

785. Xerxes my son is young in years and young in intelligence,
and he cannot remember any of my lessons;
because you know this well, my aged friends
none of us, that ever held this power,
would never have caused this much trouble.

CHORUS

Thus wherefore, Lord Darius, whence do you bring to an end
the conclusion of your message? How could we the people of Persia
survive in the situation as it is so that we excel?

DARIUS

790. If you were not to wage war against the place of Greece,
and if there were no more Median expeditions.

Because the land itself becomes their battle ally.

CHORUS

What are you saying here, in what manner does it fight with?

DARIUS

Enemy that is too big, it kills through famine.

CHORUS

795. But we will select a well-chosen force.

DARIUS

No, not even the army that now waits in
Greece will ever reach safety.

CHORUS

What are you saying? That not all the Barbarian forces
will return over the seaway of Greece from Europe?

DARIUS

800. A few of many, if someone trusts in the gods'
prophesies it will be, if everything that has happened till now

is looked upon; because that happens - not on the one hand and then not on the other.

If this were the case, he leaves behind a hand picked army in vain who are yielding to his futureless hope.

805. They are waiting where Asopus waters the fields with its streams, bringing a friendly wealth to the Boeotian land; where the climax of disasters await them to be experienced, a retaliation for their unfaithfulness and impious thoughts; they went to the land of Greece, not hesitating from looting the images of the gods nor from burning down their temples; 810. altars were destroyed, the spirits' shrines were uprooted from their foundations and thrown about in confusion.

- Therefore, because they acted in evil manner they suffer no less in reception, though more, and the boundaries of evil 815. have not yet been established, but still flows forth.

- Because the flow of blood from the wounds will be so great in the land of the Plataeans through Dorian swords; and the piles of corpses, even in generations to come will indicate in silence to the eyes of men 820. that a mortal must not think greater than what needs be,

Because faithlessness blossomed and brought forth a crop of ruin, and a harvest full of tears was collected from it.

- While you look down upon these deeds and ponder on them remember Athens and Greece and let no person 825. despise the presence of the spirits casting eyes onto other and so losing great wealth.

Zeus stands as the punisher of overly arrogant though, a terrible investigator.

- Taking this into consideration, when he that lacks good sense returns, 830. give him good advice and reason, to stop him wounding God with overbearing pride.

- And you, oh beloved aged mother of Xerxes, enter the house and take which ever cloak is most suitable and go greet your son. Because all 835. his clothing around his body are in tatters and his knitted coats are torn through grief.

But you must comfort him with tender words; because to you alone, I know, will he bear to listen.

I return once more beneath the dark earth.

840. To you, eldest, greetings, even in disasters

allow your souls to enjoy daily pleasures,
seeing that wealth has no use for the dead.

CHORUS

The sufferings present and still to come
are multiple as I have heard and over which I shudder.

THE QUEEN

845. Oh spirit, how much suffering from evil
has come, but this situation halts me most,
to hear of my dishonoured son who wears shredded
garments around his body, oh to clothe him.

But I am, and I will bring him a cloak from the house
850. on my way to try meeting my son.

Because we will not betray our beloved ones in these trying times.

STROFE A

CHORUS

Oh how great and good the life was that we had
of civil law and order,
when the aged
855. and totally in control, maliceless, unconquered king
Darius equal to God
ruled the land.

ANTISTROFE A

First the army we displayed
was honoured, and attacked all the villages
860. of the enemy legally.

And back from warfare, healthy and unscafed
they returned once more
successfully to their homes.

STROFE B

865. How many cities did he take in without
crossing the Halys river,
without departing from the homeland,
from the Acheloin towns all along the Strymon
870. and the Thrygian lands,

ANTISTROFE B

and those around the lake on the mainland, which is surrounded
by towers
listened to him as lord,
875. and those near Greece's broad river, and the interior
of Propontis,
also the mouths of Pantos honoured him;

STROFE C

880. islands, washed through the sea near the mainland
located close to this land
such as Lesbos and Samos where olives grow,
Chios and Paros,
885. Nachos, Mukonos, and Andros the
neighbour beyond Tanus.

ANTISTROFE C

- He governed over those on the sea from the mainland,
890. Lemnos, Ikaros,
Rhodes, Knidos and the towns of Cyprus,
Paphos, Soli, and Salamis,
895. whose mother city is the cause
of the complaints.

EPODOS

- He also ruled the wealthy Greek inhabited
cities in Ionia
900. with all his wisdom.
- The unplenishable power of soldiers
and countless allies were near at hand
but now we experience the contrary to this,
where God has turned it without reasonability,
905. we were overwhelmed
and by and large given a thrashing on the sea.

XERXES

- Ah ah,
How unfortunate am I because this terrible fate
910. I experienced did not indicate what was to come,
how cruel the spirit came down
on the Persian race; what will I do with my poor self?
- Because the strength has flowed forth from my limbs.
- When I see this youthfulness of the city
915. oh that he had, Zeus, also buried me with
the men that died
through the result of death.

CHORUS

- Oh please no, king, the beloved soldiers
and the great honour of Persian domination,
920. and the extent of men,
that the demon mowed down.

PRODOS

The land cries out aloud
for the youth of Persia that Xerxes murdered
and cast into Hades; because those carrying prickles

925. were many people, flower of the land,
that died through the bow, a dense thicket that was
a thousand men, all destroyed.

Ah ah, the proud force,
and the land of Asia, oh king of the earth,
930. has sunk down onto her knees.

STROFE A

XERXES

I am here, ah, with fruitless mourning
to be received as evil
by family and fatherland.

CHORUS

935. I greet you sir from your journey
evil sounding scream, an evil natured sound
of a Mariandunian mourner
940. I shall send up send up, a cry full of tears.

ANTISTROFE A

XERXES

Let your voice go filled with
tears and noise. Because this spirit on the other hand
has turned against me.

CHORUS

I will cry many tears for you sir,
945. overflowing misfortunes and highly regarded seamen and a ship,
the city mourns over her sons.

I shall scream and scream a tearful wail.

STROFE B

XERXES

950. Because the Ionians stole,
Aries gave strength
to the Ionian warships
while they cut through the double haunted
sea and shore during the night.

Ah.

CHORUS

955. Ah please no, learn everything.
Where are the other multitudes of friends?
Where are they that stood by you,

- men like Pharandakes,
Sousas, Pelagius, Dotomas, Psammis,
960. Sousiskanes and Agabates
who left Agabataria?

ANTISTROFE B

XERXES

- I left them behind
where they went to their death
from a Turian warship
965. on the beaches of Salamis,
when they struck the rock hard coast.

CHORUS

Ah please no, where did you leave
Pharnochos and also good Ariomandos?

- And where is lord Sevalkes,
970. or the honourable Lilaos,
Memphis, Tharybis and Masistras,
Artembares and Hustaichmas?

I ask you again.

STROFE C

XERXES

- Poor poor me.
975. after they all saw old
and hateful Athens with one stroke,
ah ah, they pitifully breathed out their last breathe on a beach.

CHORUS

- And the Flower of the Persians
your totally trustworthy eye
980. who counted the tens of thousands
Alpistos son of Batanchos

son of Sesame, son of Megabates,
and Parthos also big Oibares
985. you have left behind? Oh poor people.

Evil upon evil you tell to the honourable Persians.

ANTISTROFE C

XERXES

- To be sure you keep me drinking
the howling earth of the beloved and those longed for,
990. when you speak of hateful cruelty on cruelty.

My heart screams and screams within my limbs.

CHORUS

And the others whom we miss,
captain over ten thousand Marondites,
Xanthes, Agcharen from Arion,

995. Diailia and also Arsaken
the calvary leaders,
and Agdatates, Luthimnas
and Tolmos the war hero.

1000. I am amazed, amazed, they are not
in your train, they are not following your wheeled and curtained carriage.

STROFE D

XERXES

But however therefore the pursuing have gone.

CHORUS

They have gone, oh without names.

XERXES

Ah ah, oh oh.

CHORUS

1005. Oh oh, devils;
you have brought an unexpected
evil, how visible Ata is.

ANTISTROFE D

XERXES

We are struck through the misfortune of the time;

CHORUS

we are struck, that is visible;

XERXES

1010. new pains new pains

CHORUS

without good fortune we ran
into Ionian sailors.

The Persian nation is definitely unfortunate in war.

STROFE E

XERXES

1015. Was it not so? I felt the onslaught
against such an overwhelming army.

CHORUS

And who did not die, the Persian greatly struck with ruin?

XERXES

Can you not see who has remained from my troops?

CHORUS

I see, I see.

XERXES

1020. And this arrow holder...

CHORUS

What is it you say has been spared?

XERXES

A store house for keen arrow heads?

CHORUS

So little from so much.

XERXES

We were stripped from our supporters.

CHORUS

1025. Ionian folk don't flee from battle.

ANTISTROFE E

XERXES

Very warlike; without foresight
I looked at a tragedy.

CHORUS

Are you talking about the route of the throng warships?

XERXES

1030. I tore my clothes at the sight of the disaster.

CHORUS

Ah shame ah shame.

XERXES

And even more than a mere ah shame.

CHORUS

Because it is double even triple...

XERXES

A casualty, but a prize for our enemy.

CHORUS

1035. And our strength was cut short...

XERXES

I am naked and bodyguardless.

CHORUS

Our friends died in sea disasters.

STROFE Z

XERXES

Weep wet your cheeks; go onto your homes.

CHORUS

I wet them in mourning.

XERXES

1040. Scream now to echo mine.

CHORUS

A terrible feedback to a terrible situation.

XERXES

Place your shrills alongside mine.

CHORUS

Ah please no.

These circumstances are heavy
1045. they also fill me with pains.

ANTISTROFE Z

XERXES

Row, wow and cry on my behalf.

CHORUS

Ah ah pain pain.

XERXES

Scream to resound mine.

CHORUS

We are still standing beside you, master.

XERXES

1050. Now exalt your sobs.

CHORUS

Ah please no.

The mixture will be black,
ah, that what tears cause.

STROFE H

XERXES

And hit your chests and scream a Mysian lamentation.

CHORUS

1055. Sorrow sorrow.

XERXES

And pull the white hair from your aged beard for me.

CHORUS

Firm, my hold is firm, shrill my complaint.

XERXES

Scream out aloud.

CHORUS

That I will do too.

ANTISTROFE H

XERXES

1060. And tear the clothes from your chests with your fingertips.

CHORUS

Oh horror horror.

XERXES

And pull your hair and pity the soldiers.

CHORUS

Firm, my hold is firm, my complaint is shrill.

XERXES

Let your eyes weep.

CHORUS

1065. I am drenching them.

EPODOS

XERXES

Now resound to resound mine.

CHORUS

Ah ah.

XERXES

Call out and go home.

CHORUS

Ah ah, [the earth is deeply trodden for Persia].

XERXES

1070. Call out through the city.

CHORUS

Yes yes, a call indeed.

XERXES

Mourn with a tender stride.

CHORUS

Ah ah, the earth is deeply trodden for Persia.

XERXES

Ah ah, the ships with three benches,
1075. ah ah, they that destroyed the ships.

CHORUS

I will walk with you with mourns and groans.

fin