**Departing the Polis**

**Travel, Travellers and Panhellenism in the extant plays and fragments of Greek drama**

Conference organisers: Edmund Stewart (Nottingham) and Anna Lamari (Thessaloniki)

Emmanuela Bakola (Warwick) ‘Travelling and mapping the cosmos in Aeschylean tragedy’

This paper is part of a larger project which explores Aeschylus’ creative engagement with cosmological discourses current in the early fifth century BC. The project as a whole uses theoretical approaches to conceptual metaphor (for example, Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors we live by, 1980; Kövecses, Metaphor, 2002) and to performance criticism (Wiles, Tragedy in Athens, 1997; Rehm, Play of Space, 2002), to explore the function of imagery and space in the theatre for the representation of cosmos-related concepts. Some of the conceptual metaphors used in Aeschylus’ cosmological fabric include ‘COSMOS IS AN OIKOS’, ‘COSMOS IS A BODY/ORGANISM’, ‘COSMOS IS AN ARTEFACT’, ‘COSMOS IS EXCHANGE’ AND ‘COSMOS IS A POLITICAL ORGANISATION’. In Aeschylus’ complex imagistic universe, metaphorical nexuses connect with one another not only within individual plays, but also within Aeschylus’ oeuvre, as this develops – as far as our surviving sources allow us to see – from the Persians down to the Oresteia.

One of the images that Aeschylean dramaturgy uses to conjure, depict and reflect on the cosmos, is that of travelling in a cartographical perspective. From their beginnings, cosmological discourses were closely linked with cartography: the natural philosopher Anaximander (6th c. BC) was perceived to have been the first map-maker in the Greek world (A1, A6), and the cartographical imagination of the cosmic shield of Achilles in Iliad 18 has often been noted (Cosgrove, Apollo’s Eye, 2001). Maps can make large expanses of space perceptible holistically and synoptically, thus offering a unique tool for visualising the cosmos; besides, Greek maps were equally connected with the depiction of both terrestrial and celestial spaces (Dilke, Greek and Roman maps, 1983). Furthermore, in the same way that a map could capture a cosmic view, so a journey on the map could capture a cosmological process: as the Homeric Hymns to Apollo and to Demeter show, mapping journeys from a bird’s eye viewpoint could also capture cosmological developments such the creation of a renewed cosmic order and the allocation of prerogatives to divinities who entered the Greek pantheon.

By focusing on cartographic imagery and a bird’s eye view of travelling in Aeschylean tragedy, and by using the case-studies of the crossing of continents in the Persians and the ‘Beacons speech’ in the Oresteia, this paper argues that the repeated return to map- and travelling imagery in several Aeschylean plays is part of a wider nexus of the poet’s reflection on, conceptualisation and representation of the cosmos. Io’s and Heracles’ travels in the Prometheus trilogy also suggest an understanding of this feature as distinctly Aeschylean.

Lyndsay Coo (Bristol) ‘Wandering satyrs: travel in classical satyr drama’

This paper considers the implications of thinking about the chorus of satyr play as the ultimate ‘wandering chorus’. Unlike the heroic characters with whom they share the stage, the satyrs are travellers not because this is a feature of their mythical tradition but as a requirement of their theatrical role. As inorganic figures within the stories depicted, the satyrs’ presence has to be accounted for and so their travel is thematised within individual plays: for example, they may arrive in new and unexpected locations in order to attend a wedding feast or an athletic competition, or as a result of shipwreck. But in a broader sense the fixed choral identity of satyr drama also establishes the satyrs’ travel as an intertextual network created by all examples of the genre. From play to play, the same group of satyrs roams throughout the known world, each time assuming new working identities such as shepherds, craftsmen, construction workers, rowers, reapers, trackers, net-haulers or nannies. This paper analyses the satyrs’ travel along these two axes, asking whether we should view the wandering satyrs not just as a parody of the itinerant heroes of myth, but as a phenomenon reflecting broader concerns about travel in the ancient world.

Eric Csapo (Warwick) and Peter Wilson (Sydney) ‘Ἑλλὰς Ἑλλάδος : the Centripetal Politics of the Athenian Dionysia’

In the fifth and fourth centuries BC Athens actively asserted its primacy as the metropolis of theatre culture, but it also used its theatre to assert its centrality within Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. We will survey the question of how Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BC used the Dionysia to promote itself as a central hub for various international networks (mercantile, military, imperial, and cultural); how these international ambitions find reflection in the surviving texts of drama or dithyramb; and how they impacted on the myths and imagery related to Dionysus (as e.g. wanderer, pilgrim, shipper, conqueror, patron of the arts).

Patrick Finglass (Bristol) ‘Tragic networks in Sophocles’ Tereus’

Tbc

Massimo Giuseppetti (Rome) ‘Euripides’ *Melanippe* Plays and the Politics of Greek Identity’

Euripides wrote two tragedies centered around the rather obscure figure of Melanippe. In the first play, *Melanippe Wise*, she becomes mother by Poseidon of the twins Aeolus and Boeotus, which she hides in a stable soon after their birth. Some herdsmen find them there and bring them to king Aeolus, Melanippe’s father. Unaware of their origin, he is ready to kill them, but Melanippe defends them by arguing that they are human beings and not the monstrous progeny of a cow, as they are thought to be. The second play, *Melanippe Captive* (possibly part of the same tetralogy), is set in Metapontium at a later moment of the story. The boys are now grown up, and they have been adopted by the local king and his wife. The queen resents them and plots to kill them, but her plans only lead to the death of her brothers and possibly her own suicide. Although a large part of these plays is lost, it is clear that Euripides fashions the myth of Melanippe as a story of travel and displacement across the Greek world. If the tragedies were part of the same tetralogy, as many scholars are inclined to believe, this would further strengthen the intrinsic ‘dynamism’ of Melanippe’s story. Her myth is designed to map on the stage the heroic and divine ancestry of the Greek lineage (Hellen is Melanippe’s grandfather, where the eponyms of the Aeolian and Boeotian races are her sons). The paper aims to explore some implications of this theatrical myth by focusing on two interconnected aspects: the contemporary political scenario (in particular Athenian interests in Magna Graecia in the late 5th century) and the plays’ later reception in Magna Graecia.

Edward Harris (Edinburgh and Durham) ‘Suppliants in Greek Tragedy’

A legal procedure can give structure and meaning to action on stage. Another legal procedure used by the tragic poets to shape dramatic action was supplication. This procedure was a common ritual that combined religious and legal elements. Supplication plays an important role in promoting Athens’ reputation for piety and justice. The Athenians prided themselves on helping those who were wronged. On the other hand, supplication was also an important Panhellenic ritual, involving common values shared by all Greeks equally.

Malcolm Heath (Leeds) ‘Travels and travails in Euripides’ Medea’

Like most Greek tragedies, Euripides’ Medea has an immediate focus on a sequence of events occurring in a single location in a short period of time: thus, apparently, relatively static. But, like many other tragedies, these focal events are part of a much larger sequence of events; and, as in some other cases, that larger sequence involves extensive travel. The travels of Medea are unusually varied and wide-ranging. In the course of those travels the two protagonists bring about the complete breakdown of their normal social connections and support networks. The construction of substitute support networks transforms a relationship of mutual dependence into one of radical asymmetry, and then into one of conflict; in the end the asymmetry is reversed as the conflict escalates to the point of homicide and filicide. The recurrent Greek/barbarian contrast may imply that the long-range travel which launches the play’s backstory generated the conflict by bringing incompatible cultural differences into confrontation.

Lucy Jackson (Durham) ‘Choral performers on tour in the fifth and fourth centuries BC’

In discussions of how drama travelled around the ancient Mediterranean from the mid fifth century BC onwards, it is often asserted that a travelling band of actors would be joined by a group of choral performers that had been recruited 'locally' (e.g. Dearden 1999:226-7, Taplin 2012: 240). With a greater sense of the practicalities involved in mounting and rehearsing productions, and a better understanding of the proximity of multiple venues for performances in Attica, Sicily, the Cyclades, and the coast of Asia Minor (see Csapo and Wilson 2015), we must consider the possibility that recruiting choral performers locally was neither practical nor desirable.

In the first part of this paper I consider the likelihood that choral performers 'toured' alongside actors, auletes, and poets in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Gathering what there is in the way of literary and epigraphic evidence dating from before the appearance of the 'Artists of Dionysus' (a group who are known to have travelled with choral performers in their companies), we can begin to fit the choral component of Attic drama into the wider picture of the mobile phenomenon that was the fifth- and fourth-century theatre industry. In the second part, I examine how a non-local identity for choral performers might inform audiences' reception and appreciation of Greek tragedy, taking two plays as test cases -- Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris.* Exploring how the identities of the choral performers in these two dramas might interact, or exist in productive friction, will allow us to test what is at stake when we imagine drama, and its choruses, begin performed outside of Athens.

Andreas Markantonatos (University of the Peloponnese) ‘Oedipus and Polynices: Two Sides of Exile in Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus’

In this chapter I shall argue that in Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus there are two sides to exile that are purposely and painfully juxtaposed in the scene with Oedipus and Polynices. Oedipus has been brutally banished from his native land for distinctly religious reasons, while Polynices has been forcefully driven into exile on purely political grounds. Father and son confront each other at Athenian Colonus, where they are given over to a relentless war of words, during which Polynices entreats his father’s aid for exactly the wrong reason, whereas Oedipus confirms his certainty of knowledge about his terrible prophecies. In their sharp antithesis Oedipus and Polynices together form the crucial conflict between moral innocence and premeditated malice; this emphatic contrast creates an impassable barrier between Oedipus and Polynices, the first ascending from disgrace to honour, while the latter descending from glory to downfall. Athens serves as a perennial sanctuary where the play lets loose chaos in a fearful destruction of kinship ties between father and son, but at the same time its strong moral trajectory asserts the framework which can contain and neutralize that violence and resentment.

Eoghan Moloney (Winchester) ‘Reboot? The royal Macedonians take the stage’

Theatre in the ancient world was to become very much an international art form, enjoyed by audiences from Athens to Ecbatana and back again. This paper seeks to follow that particular journey, reviewing the appropriation of Greek drama by successive Macedonian kings as it considers the cosmopolitan appeal of ancient drama. That broad popularity was certainly not lost on royal sponsors in the fourth century BC, who sought to use productions and performances to emphasise and articulate high cultural ideals. But to what extent did Macedonian patronage – and the new demands it made of Greek theatre – impact on the evolution of ancient theatre culture?

Judith Mossman (Coventry) ‘Mapping Medea: a mobile heroine in Euripides and beyond’

A key feature of the Medea-myth is her geographical mobility: travelling from Colchis to Iolcus to Corinth to Athens and thence eastwards again. This paper argues that, while some treatments make this part of her frightening side, others de-toxify it in various ways. Above all, her constant travelling underlines her semi-divine, unclassifiable nature.

Martin Revermann (University of Toronto) ‘Travel for the cure: disease, mobility, renewal and their dramatic filters’

Travel to sanctuaries was a standard feature of short-, medium- and long-distance travel in antiquity and is featured in tragedy (prominently) as well as comedy, often in the form of ‘travel for the cure’ (both literally and metaphorically speaking). How does this important type of mobility present itself once subjected to the filters of theatre and dramaturgy? What do those filters tell us about the interfaces between theatre, myth and religion? And how recognizable and relatable is such dramatized mobility of injured elite male travellers for 5th- and 4th-century Greek audiences?

Alan Sommerstein (Nottingham) 'Triptolemus and other tragic globetrotters'

Tbc

Edmund Stewart (Nottingham) ‘Theoria: Pilgrims and Sanctuaries in Greek Tragedy’

Pilgrimage (*theoria*) was an important feature of life in the world of ancient Greece. Regular journeys to sanctuaries and festivals helped to connect disparate Greek communities into a single people with a shared culture. The extant texts of tragedy feature many such pilgrims as characters on the stage, from the chorus of Euripides’ *Ion* who excitedly respond to their first sight of Delphi, to Theseus who is returning to Troezen from a similar journey in *Hippolytus*. The texts of tragedy are informed by a detailed knowledge of the sacred topography of Greece and its festivals and this knowledge affects the poets’ choice of myths and the ways in which they are presented.

Oliver Taplin (Oxford) ‘The Seven on the Way to Thebes’

I shall look at Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, set at Nemea, as evidence for tragic interest in the north-eastern Peloponnese, other than the Argolid, an area which happens to sparsely represented in surviving tragedy. I shall particularly look into indications of the route taken by the Seven, which may have contrasted with their retreat. I have a suspicion that Athenian tragedy had something of a fascination with the possible route between the Peloponnese and Thebes which went over the high ridges of Geranos and Kithairon, as opposed to the way via Eleusis.

Anna Uhlig (UC Davis) ‘Io in Egypt’

Io is a paradigmatic wanderer of Greek drama, but - unlike many other similar figures - her mythical migration from Argos to the banks of the Nile is reflected in the historical movement of Greek drama into Egypt, particularly under Ptolemaic rule. In this paper I will explore the story of Io’s wanderings from an Egyptian perspective. Alongside analysis of likely Egyptian productions of Io-themed plays, I will examine how the Egyptian context their “rediscovery” informs the stories that we, as Classicists in the twenty-first century, can tell about these plays.