

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON AESCHYLUS' *AETNAE(AE)*\*

As it is well-known, there are several contributions which deal with the questions raised by the little amount of evidence available on Aeschylus' *Aetnae(ae)*<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, it is not the appearance of any new data that has prompted this article, but rather realizing that some points made by my predecessors need rectifying, whereas other interesting elements (not certainties yet, though) deserve wider appreciation. So my reflections will still be speculative, though perhaps more sensible and more respectful of likelihood.

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1) I shall leave undecided the form of the title, until I have argued in favour of one. I have benefited from the following secondary literature: G. Hermann, *De Aeschyli Aetnaeis*, in: *Opuscula* (Lipsiae 1831) VII 315–31, especially 315–23; Ed. Fraenkel, *Vermutungen zum Aetna-Festspiel des Aeschylus*, *Eranos* 52 (1954) 61–75 (= Id., *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* [Roma 1964] II 249–62); M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie* (Göttingen <sup>2</sup>1954) II 198–200; R. Stark, *Osservazioni su due drammi di Eschilo perduti*, *Maia* 8 (1956) 83–91, especially 83–9; E. Grassi, *Papyrologica*, PP 11 (1956) 208; Id., *Postilla* (*Aesch.* fr. 6 N., 3), PP 12 (1957) 374; Q. Cataudella, *Tragedie di Eschilo nella Siracusa di Gerone*, *Kokalos* 10–1 (1964–5) 371–98; A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen <sup>3</sup>1972) 152–3; V. La Rosa, *Le Etnee di Eschilo e l'identificazione di Xuthia*, *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale* 70 (1974) 151–64; A. Garzya, *Sul problema delle Etnee* di Eschilo, *SicGymn* 30 (1977) 401–12; O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 416–8; E. Culasso Gastaldi, *Eschilo e l'Occidente*, in: L. Burelli/E. Culasso Gastaldi/G. Vanotti, *I tragici greci e l'Occidente* (Bologna 1979) 19–89, especially 61–8; R. Rehm, *Aeschylus in Syracuse: the commerce of tragedy and politics*, in: B. Daix Westcoat (ed.), *Syracuse, The Fairest Greek City* (Roma/Atlanta 1989) 31–4; C. Corbato, *Le Etnee di Eschilo*, in: B. Gentili (ed.), *Catania antica. Atti del Convegno della S.I.S.A.C., Catania, 23–4 maggio 1992* (Pisa/Roma 1996) 61–72; G. Basta Donzelli, *Katane-Aitna tra Pindaro ed Eschilo*, in: Gentili (as before) 73–95; A. Ippolito, *De Aeschyli deperdita fabula quae Aitnaïtai inscribitur*, *Latinitas* 45 (1997) 2–12. On Aeschylus' visits to Sicily see C. J. Herington, *Aeschylus in Sicily*, *JHS* 87 (1967) 74–85.

*I. P. Oxy. 2257 fr. 1*

Before tackling any specific questions, it is worthwhile to dilate on this most important piece of evidence. As it is well-known, this is a fragment of a *hypothesis*, in all probability to our play, as the editor, E. Lobel<sup>2</sup>, suggested, and is unanimously agreed. Since Görschen<sup>3</sup> gave very different diplomatic and articulated transcriptions of the fragment, especially in the first seven lines, so as to imply a lot more than Lobel, it struck me that no one so far had checked whether Görschen's proposals deserved serious attention<sup>4</sup>. So I have inspected myself the fragment and ascertained that Lobel's transcriptions are correct, whereas those of ll.1–7 by Görschen (based on a photograph, by the way) have no more to do with the traces of ink on the papyrus than a flight of fancy.

There are only few points I would disagree about with Lobel, or I would insist on more emphatically. At l.4 I cannot see a high point after tau, but only a small trace above it. At the end of the same line, the traces, seen under the microscope, look compatible with *πραγματα*. At l.6 the traces after *θην* are in fact compatible with *α* (provided these letters were somehow connected), and those after *εκ* are compatible with *δελ*. At l.7 the trace before *αζε* is compatible with *β*; the traces after *τρωι* are compatible with *αν*, whereas anything like *λο* (or similar, amounting to a mention of Sophocles' play *Troilus*) is definitely ruled out; then the final traces (seen under the microscope) can be reconciled with *σοφοκ*<sup>λ</sup>—. At the beginning of l.8 the trace is compatible with *ο*.

2) The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, part XX (London 1952) 66–8.

3) F. C. Görschen, Die Hypothesis zu Aischylos' *Aitnaiai* (P. Oxy. XX, nr. 2257, fr. 1), *Dioniso* 19 (1956) 217–26. See how he translates his text of the *hypothesis* (pp. 225–6): “(Aeschylus poeta tragicus personas fabularum suarum transponit) in Tmolum et Pamphyliorum fines | ex Rhipis montibus auferens et Europa continente ex Phaside fluvio terminali. | ... Teuthrantis oppidum (Aeschylus) invenit laetus / (sexies?) Euripides compilans / Teuthrantis oppidum invenit abripiens | ... denuo (poetam) magis / maxime tragicum se praestitit Euripides |(uterque?) autem apte imitatus est (Sophocles et?) Euripides Aeschylum |(Euripides enim vero) Telephum Athenas Delphis trans- | fert (ferens), Sophocles autem Achillem Troia removens, | ut (demonstrant) Achillis amatores. Eqs.”

4) Even M. Fernández-Galiano, *Les papyrus d'Eschyle*, in: Proceedings of the IX Congress of Papyrology. Oslo, 19–22 August 1958 (Oslo 1961) 81–133, especially 116–7 n. 294 contents himself with mentioning noncommittally Görschen's divergent transcriptions and interpretations.

Therefore, we can still believe that the *hypothesis* to our play, here copied on a margin (presumably of the text of the play itself), after providing a summary of the plot with its frequent change of setting, offered parallels from Aeschylus to that dramatic peculiarity. ll.6–7 may well refer to *Eumenides*, as Lobel suggested, provided the reference to (presumably) a shift of scene to Troy belonged to the next example, perhaps preceded by *ωc*, i. e. Sophocles' *The lovers of Achilles*. I deem that this one was the only parallel drawn from outside Aeschylus, as I cannot read anything compatible with either Euripides (Görschen) or *Troilus* (Lobel). Then a detailed account of scene-shifting in the play under consideration followed.

Finally, I disagree with Lobel on account of the interpretation of ll.12–3. He takes *μετὰ δ' αὐτὸν Συρακοῦσσαι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ [ ] τῆ διαπεραίνεται κτλ.* to mean '(and) after this (place) (the scene is) Syracuse and in particular the remainder of the play takes place in ...'. In other terms *καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ* would not introduce the last change of scene, but would specify where in Syracuse the final act was set. I think that this interpretation, followed by most scholars, puts a strain on the Greek, especially in view of the change of syntactical construction (from toponym in the nominative and ellipsis of ἡ σκηνὴ κεῖται, to τὰ λοιπὰ [sc. τοῦ δράματος] διαπεραίνεται with preposition and toponym in the dative)<sup>5</sup>. How ll.12–3 are interpreted has a bearing on the total number of scenes (either five or six) and of the scene-changes (either four or five).

## II. Dramatization

### 1. Time and place

The play was set in the remote mythical past, as appears from the wording of fr. 6 R., a stichomythia between two characters or, possibly, between chorus-leader and character:

- A. τί δῆτ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ὄνομα θήσονται βροτοί;
- B. σεμνοῦς Παλικούς Ζεὺς ἐφίεται καλεῖν.
- A. ἦ καὶ Παλικῶν εὐλόγως μένει φάτις;
- B. πάλιν γὰρ ἴκουσ' ἐκ σκότου τόδ' εἰς φάος.

5) In *καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ* the *καί* is often a mere conjunction ('and'): e. g. Plat. Cra. 396d–e, Demosth. 9.21.5, 21.106.5, 37.32.3, etc.

Here the reference to the name which mortal men will use in future, as well as to present disposition about it on the part of Zeus, and the present tense for the 'return' of the Palici, do command no other interpretation than this one<sup>6</sup>.

As we learn from the papyrus *hypothesis*, the spatial setting of our play changed five times. Given that scene change is rare in tragedy, and that those few extant instances (*Eum.*, *Soph. Ai.*) exhibit a maximum of two shifts (*Eum.*), some scholars have supposed the play must have been a unique or, rather, an abnormal tragedy. Indeed, they go on to say, far from being a real and 'normal' tragedy, it must have been a mere celebrative play, devoid of dramatic unity and coherence, simply made up of six separate acts<sup>7</sup>. But this is in all likelihood a rash and unwarranted inference. The lack of a complete parallel for the dramatic device (*Eumenides* being only a partial one) does not prove in itself that it affected perversely the play, as though Aeschylus could not master his own resources and skills<sup>8</sup>. I need not mention that neither the structure of the seven pairs of speeches in *Septem*, nor the bold treatment of time in *Agamemnon*, nor the central *kommos* in *Choephoroi* is completely paralleled. A more economical supposition seems to be that Aeschylus produced a proper tragedy by contriving and exploiting an unusual dramatic device. This entails taking the information provided by the *hypothesis* as confirming what we knew from other quarters, i. e. his dramatic freedom, or even boldness, ingenuity, and variety<sup>9</sup>.

Then, we may wonder what led Aeschylus to admit, or resort to, such a peculiarity. If we look at *Eum.* and at *Soph. Ai.*, a reasonable guess is that the plot he had in mind involved moving from place to place on the part of a character (or more) and/or the chorus. (I wish to stress that I am thinking of a continuous and coherent plot.) This sort of thing happens most easily if a character,

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6) Here I agree with Grassi (n. 1 above [1956]) 208 – followed by Cataudela (n. 1 above) 391–2, Garzya (n. 1 above) 404–5, Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 87 – against Fraenkel (n. 1 above), who believes the play was wholly set in shortly-past historical times, and contained only an indirect report on the origin of the Palici.

7) Fraenkel (n. 1 above) 71, followed by most scholars; Taplin (n. 1 above) 416–8. Against: Pohlenz (n. 1 above) II 200, Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 87.

8) Taplin's anxiety ([n. 1 above] 416–7) has more to do with his own theory on the sequence exit-song-entry, than with Aeschylus' actual dramatic technique.

9) A similar inference, i. e. that Aeschylus' use of dramatic space could resemble his free use of dramatic time, is drawn from our *hypothesis* by V. Di Benedetto/E. Medda, *La tragedia sulla scena* (Torino 1997) 311.

on the one hand, has to reach another place in order to bring his/her intentions to pass, or has to flee; and if the chorus, on the other hand, want either to seek or pursue him/her.

Whether the chorus left the scene some or all the times the setting was going to shift, we cannot say. But their *μετάστασις*<sup>10</sup>, though paralleled (*Eum.* first change: 231–5; *Soph. Ai.* only change: 814–5), is by no means necessary, provided some sort of articulation in the overall structure, and verbal indication of the new setting are given (*Eum.* second change: 566)<sup>11</sup>. That the audience could be happy with a change of scene, either with or without exit of the chorus, is proved by *Eumenides*, so that no need arises for the notion of 'refocus' to be dragged in<sup>12</sup>. (It has even been maintained<sup>13</sup> that these frequent changes of scene were made easier and far from disturbing by the innovative equipment available in the new theatre of Syracuse, which included such appliances as some sort of orchestra pitch, and poles for quickly changing backcloths. Of course, this point depends on whether the play was performed in Syracuse: see below.)

As to the settings mentioned in the *hypothesis*, the first, Aetna, must be the mountain, since the dramatized action takes place, as we have seen, in remote times<sup>14</sup>. Also, it may be argued that by

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10) The term *μετάστασις χοροῦ* is drawn from Poll. 4.108 B. καὶ ἡ μὲν εἴσοδος τοῦ χοροῦ πάροδος καλεῖται, ἡ δὲ κατὰ χρεῖαν ἔξοδος ὡς πάλιν εἰσιόντων μετάστασις, ἡ δὲ μετὰ ταύτην εἴσοδος ἐπιπάροδος, ἡ δὲ τελευταία ἔξοδος ἄροδος. Clearly, the *μετάστασις* is considered not as a conventional movement, but as part of the plot.

11) Again, I find Taplin's misgivings ([n. 1 above] 416–7) excessive: surely Aeschylus did not feel obliged to comply with Taplin's "act-dividing song rule".

12) As Taplin ([n. 1 above] 417), though hypothetically, does. That is, however, an unuseful and confusing notion, which mingles different phenomena: (a) change of setting signalled only by words: e.g. *Eum.* 566; (b) attention being drawn on a so far neglected, though present, part of the scene (without any proper change of setting): e.g. *Pers.* 140–1, 648, 659–60, 685, 687, Ch. 561, 571; (c) the alleged magical creation, as it were, only by means of words, of single items in the scene (unparalleled, I think, in tragedy). See its fullest theorization in A.M. Dale, *Seen and unseen on the Greek tragic stage*, *WS* 69 (1956) 96–106. An interesting re-examination of the notion of refocus, with emphasis on the differences between tragic and comic practice, is provided by S. Scullion, *Three Studies in Athenian Dramaturgy* (Stuttgart/Leipzig 1994) 67–8.

13) By Corbato (n. 1 above) 67, who follows C. Anti and L. Polacco about the theatre of Syracuse: see below.

14) Thus also Grassi (n. 1 above [1957]) 208, Cataudella (n. 1 above) 377, La Rosa (n. 1 above) 152, Garzya (n. 1 above) 404–5.

a bare Αἴτνη the grammarian must mean what was more obvious, i. e. the mountain, not the city<sup>15</sup>.

The second, Xuthia, is a region nearby Leontini<sup>16</sup>, according to D. S. 5.8.2: ἐβασίλευσε δὲ καὶ Ξουθίος τῆς περὶ τοὺς Λεοντίνους χώρας, ἥτις ἀπ' ἐκείνου μέχρι τοῦ νῦν χρόνου Ξουθία προσ-αγορεύεται. I follow the suggestion<sup>17</sup> that Xuthia was a χώρα rather than a πόλις, as in Steph. Byz. s. v. Ξουθία, πόλις Σικελίας, Φίλιστος τρίτῳ Σικελικῶν (= FGrHist 556 F 18), and that πόλις may be a mistake on the part of Stephanus or his intermediate source, absent in Philistus, who may have mentioned Xuthia as a region. Given the toponym Xuthia it is very hard to resist connecting it with a hero Xuthus: for, even if it were a local pre-Greek name (which is far from proved), the Greeks could not but perceive the connection as most natural. It remains to be established which Xuthus was believed to have ruled over, or laid a claim on, that region, which I shall try to do later on. Indeed it is possible that in Aeschylus' play the setting Xuthia entailed mentioning or bringing on stage its eponym.

The third setting is again Aetna, i. e. the mountain, not the newly founded city<sup>18</sup>, as the wording of the *hypothesis* (l.10 πάλιν) makes clear beyond any possible doubt. The idea<sup>19</sup> that πάλιν should here mean 'in its turn', i. e. a different location in spite of identity of name with a previous location, is untenable<sup>20</sup>.

Then, the following settings there mentioned are Leontini, the fourth; Syracuse, the fifth; and finally its suburb Temenite, provid-

15) I owe this point to Prof. B. Manuwald.

16) For an attempt at localization see La Rosa (n. 1 above) 157–64, although not every one will be persuaded by his contention that Xuthia was the original pre-Greek seat of the Palici cult, and must be identified with a place where findings from the early bronze-age show considerable Italic influence, like Metapiccola or Molino della Badia. (Yet, Basta Donzelli [n. 1 above] 90 accepts that Xuthia may be a pre-Greek toponym.)

17) By K. Ziegler, Xuthia, RE IX A.2 (1967) 2156. So does Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 92, who, moreover, finds it to have provided a suitable birthplace for the Palici.

18) Here I disagree with the great majority of my predecessors.

19) Garzya (n. 1 above) 406.

20) The nuance of meaning 'in turn', which is brought forward by an opposition implied in the context, sometimes occurs both in poetry (see e.g. Soph. El. 371, 1436, OT 619) and in prose (see the instances in LSJ, s. v., III). But our passage has a repetition of Αἴτνη instead of an opposition; and our *hypothesis* is written in plain common prose language, as usually exegetical literature is.

ed Pfeiffer's restoration (registered by Lobel) hits the mark<sup>21</sup>. Admittedly, the latter places belonged to human contemporary, or relatively shortly past, history, as they were Greek colonies. That is why one may be tempted to see in them historical settings, in time as well<sup>22</sup>. But we saw that fr. 6 R. is set in the heroic time, which is also likely to have been the case for the scene set in Xuthia. If we take scenes 4–6 as set in historical times, we should accept a huge temporal shift within one single tragedy, which is not only unparalleled, but also unlikely to have yielded any good dramatic effect. And, what is even more, it is difficult to imagine how Aeschylus could bring on stage contemporary Leontini and Syracuse without introducing Gelon and Hiero, too, and how this could yield fine dramatic and celebrative results. In other terms, I deem it probable that Aeschylus pursued his celebrative task by means of a drama wholly set in the remote past of gods, nymphs and heroes (or their descendants), but at the same time developing aetiologically every suitable point. On dramatic consideration, therefore, we can confidently rule out that any scene in the play was set in the present of the Dinomenidae. So, what the grammarian meant by 'Leontini' and 'Syracuse' must be the sites of the future cities of those names; this way of referring to places may have been prompted in him by the presence, in each of these scenes, of references to the cities that one day would be founded in those spots. Examples of such a compendious manner of referring to places of would-be-cities are, e. g., D. S. 4.79.1; 5.3.5,4.2, etc.

If Pfeiffer's restoration is correct, the last and fifth scene change to the Temenite hill can be compared to the second and third settings in *Eumenides*, Athena's temple on the Acropolis and the Areopagus hill. Under the same assumption, and of the play being performed in Syracuse, *Aetnae(ae)* and *Eumenides* would both have acts set nearby the very spot of the theatre<sup>23</sup>. It is tempting to suppose that Aeschylus was thus experimenting with a particularly effective way of dealing with aetiology, to which he would turn back in 458. It must have been clear to him that the coincidence (or

21) But Görschen (n. 3 above) 224–5 fills the lacuna differently: ll.13–4 καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ [πάλ(ιν) ἐν Αἴτ]νηι δ(ια)περαίνεται / ὅς (ἐστὶ) τόπ(ος) [ἐπώνυμος].

22) So does almost every scholar.

23) Notoriously, the remains of the Greek theatre in Syracuse – i. e. of Hiero II's theatre, under which the fifth-century theatre is believed to have stood, as perhaps also the older one – lie on the slopes of that hill.

quasi-coincidence) of dramatized space and real space could bridge over the huge temporal distance between the dramatized events and their present counterpart, and hence emphasize the connections between the two spheres, the fact that the one had its roots in the other.

It is remarkable that scenes 1–4 implied two different settings alternating twice, which considerably moderates the spatial variety. Mount Aetna providing a setting twice – superficially, a mere consequence of the dramatized plot – gives us a clue to how Aeschylus was attuned to his patron’s ideological and propagandistic demands. For in Pi. P. 1.29–32 the rationale of naming the city ‘Aetna’ is honouring Zeus of mount Aetna, rather than the mountain alone. The cult of Zeus Aetnaeus had already been an important one (see mentions of him without connection with the city: Pi. O. 4.6–7; 6.96; N. 1.6), when Hiero decided to give it even greater impulse by naming the new city ‘Aetna’, and making it the first cult there<sup>24</sup>. Since Pi. P. 1.29–32 in all probability reflects a corner-stone in the Aetna-related propaganda, according to the explicit wish of Hiero, it is fair to suppose that in *Aetnae(ae)* too the aetiological sequence implied that Zeus of mount Aetna decreed the foundation of a name-sake city in honour of himself and connected incidents (cult-place, love affair with Thalia consummated on the mount).

Next, we still have to consider two more places mentioned outside the papyrus *hypothesis* by witnesses to our play. The first is the river Symaethus – which flows partly around mount Aetna, and partly halfway between the regions of Catane-Aetna and of Leontini – given by Macrobius (in his tale of the Palici functioning as an introduction to the quotation [fr. 6] from *Aetn.*) as the location of Thalia sinking into the earth after being seduced by Zeus<sup>25</sup>. From the following of Macrobius’ narrative it would appear that it was in the same spot that the Palici, once born, were to emerge from under the earth. It is possible that this geographical detail belonged to our play, even if Thalia was abducted and seduced on mount Aetna, if after the event she fled southwards, to the region

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24) See E. Ciacero, *Culti e miti nella storia dell’antica Sicilia* (Catania 1911) 145–6, A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (Cambridge 1925) II.2, 908–9.

25) Macr. Sat. 5.19.18 *In Sicilia Symaethus fluvius est. Iuxta hunc nympha Thalia compressu Iouis grauida metu Iunonis optavit, ut sibi terra dehisceret. Eqs.*



of would-be-Leontini. But in this case its omission in the *hypothesis* must be reckoned with, perhaps by supposing it to have been mentioned only indirectly. Alternatively, the detail of river Symaethus may have come to Macrobius from a source on the Palici other than Aeschylus<sup>26</sup>.

Secondly, in a passage from Ioannes Lydus (de mens. 4.154 = Aeschyl. fr. 11 R.) Aeschylus is said to have mentioned in this play a Κρονία πόλις in Sicily, as founded and ruled over by Cronus, which corresponded to the contemporary Ἱερὰ πόλις<sup>27</sup>. In the same passage other authors (Charax, Isigonus and Polemo) are mentioned for the same reasons, and those are known to have taken an interest in Sicily and/or the Palici cult. The connection between a former city of Cronus and a 'Holy City', possibly sacred to the Palici, is not clear. At any rate, Cronus' actual founding and ruling over that city must have been only a matter of narration in *Aetnae(ae)*, because the main events in the plot took place in the age of his son Zeus. A connection of this Cronia with the would-be area of the Palici, i. e. the area of would-be-Leontini, is also made more plausible by another piece of evidence. P. Oxy. 2637 fr. 1(a)<sup>28</sup> is a commentary on two odes (scolia or encomia by Simonides, it has been suggested<sup>29</sup>), the first of which developed a Sicilian myth, apparently about a *uenator gloriosus*. At ll. 3–4 the poetical phrase, which must have occurred in the ode, αἱ Κρονίου πτυχαί is explained by Κ]ρόνιον ἐν Λεοντίνοισι. Whereas this place named after Cronus, and set in the area of Leontini, has nothing to do with the other Cronium, where Dionysius the Elder was defeated by the Carthaginians in 383 B. C. (D. S. 15.16.3: the place has not been identified yet, but it must be in western Sicily; for after the battle the Carthaginians withdrew to Panormus, D. S. 15.16.4) nor with the Cronium named by Polyæn. 5.10.5 (and identified with Pizzo Cannita): a connection with the city of Cronia, mentioned by Aes-

26) This is certainly true of the remainder of his tale on the Delli (Sat. 5.19.19). Moreover, he may have been made keen on the Symaethus by its occurring in the *Aeneid* passage (9.581–5), which he has set out to comment upon.

27) The emendation Ἱμέρα (Bloch) is rightly rejected by Radt in view of the apposition πόλις.

28) Edited by E. Lobel, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, part XXXII (London 1967) 139.

29) M. Treu, *Sizilische Mythologie bei Simonides* (P. Oxy. 2637), *Kokalos* 14–5 (1968–9) 428–38.

chylus and others, is irresistible<sup>30</sup>. However, the ode seems to speak about a mere open area, perhaps a vale or a hilly place, while the play mentioned a city. Although we know that in Sicily many a hill was named after Cronus (D. S. 3.61.3), it is reasonable to guess that Cronia city was mentioned in connection with the Palici (see the later name of ‘Holy City’), and hence possibly in an act set in the area of would-be-Leontini, either the second or the fourth.

All in all, it is conceivable that most or all of the settings offered a good chance to include some aetiological hints within the self-sufficient and continuous action, and it is likely that such hints were aimed at giving Hiero’s rule and policy a mythological dignity, and, by implication, justification.

## 2. *Myth and plot*

Surely, when Hiero commissioned Aeschylus to compose a play in celebration of Aetna, and presumably made clear to him the propagandistic gist of the event, the question as to what to dramatize occurred to the playwright. No ready-to-use myth was available on the remote and divine antecedents of Hiero’s policy concerning the city of Aetna. It had to be invented more or less *ex novo*.

To be more exact, there had been around some or several stories on Sicily’s remote past, aimed at providing the Greek domination with an antecedent and some sort of justification. This important function of myth-making and developing genealogies was prominent throughout the archaic period, both in the mainland (especially with the saga of the Heraclids), and in colonies, where it lasted longer<sup>31</sup>. See the great number of myths on eponyms of cities (or, less frequently, areas) which in historical times were Greek colonies: e. g. Siris (Timaeus FGrHist 566 F 52, Eur. fr. 496 N.<sup>2</sup> Melan. capt.); Messapus (Str. 9.2.13 [C 405], Steph. Byz. s. v. Μεσσάπιον, Serv. ad Verg. Aen. 8.9); Metapontus or Metabus (Steph. Byz. s. v. Μεταπόντιον); Hipponius (or a similar form:

30) Treu (n. 29 above) 429–30.

31) See e. g. K. Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (London 1992) 169, I. Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean* (Cambridge 1994) *passim* (especially on explicit charter myths); but see also Id., *The Return of Odysseus. Colonization and Ethnicity* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1998) 20–1, with warnings on too blunt views on this function of myth.

Steph. Byz. s. v. Ἰππώνιον); Eryx (Steph. Byz. s. v. Ἐρυξ); Zancus (Steph. Byz. s. v. Ζάγκλη). Other eponyms could be closer in time to the actual Greek foundation of the colonies to which they were attached: Syracuse after either Archias' wife, or his daughters Syra and Cosse (Schol. marg. ad Call. Ait. II fr. 43.28–30 Pf.). Most of these tales are rivalled by alternative explanations, based e. g. on rivers (Siris, according to Archilochus, fr. 22 W.). Or see the tale of Athena, Artemis and Core receiving each a portion of Sicily's territory (D. S. 5.3). Or of Core's abduction by Pluton taking place in Sicily (D. S. 5.4–5). The localization in Sicily of the settings of Od. 9–10, which had been left vague by Homer, took place in the archaic colonial period, and was taken for granted in the classical age (see Th. 3.88.1, 6.2.1, Eur. Cycl. 20–2, cf. later Theocr. 11.47–8). This must have been the starting point of a group of variant, or even conflicting stories all aimed at taking advantage of the Odysseic Aeolus (Od. 10.1–12, particularly 2 Αἰόλος Ἰπποτάδης)<sup>32</sup>.

A story (D. S. 5.7–8, probably from Timaeus [566 F 164: see Jacoby ad l.]<sup>33</sup>) went that the Odysseic Aeolus ruled over his namesake islands, having married Liparus' daughter Cyane. At his death, his six sons became masters of various areas of Sicily and Italy: Pheraemon and Androcles of the northern coast of Sicily; Xuthus of the region of Leontini; Agathyrnus of the region and city which were then called after his name; Astyocheus of Lipara; Iocastus of Rhegium (a tradition recalled by Call. fr. 618 Pf. Ῥήγιον ἄστου λιπῶν Ἰοκάστῳ Αἰολίδῳ, and drawn on Timaeus, too, according to Pfeiffer ad loc.). Note that the native people willingly deferred power to them both because they were in discord, and because their father had gained a reputation for justice and virtue. Their descendants ruled for several generations, until they were overthrown. It is needless to emphasize how useful a charter was provided by such a story for Greek domination<sup>34</sup>. An advantage of this

32) Cf. J. Bérard, *La colonisation grecque de l'Italie méridionale et de la Sicile dans l'antiquité. Histoire et légende* (Paris 1957) 315–6.

33) But this does not necessarily mean that the story is recent, as Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 90 is inclined to think. In fact, the legend is at least as old as the fifth century B. C., when Iocastus is represented on coins from Rhegium, and the name of Pheraemon is on coins from Messana: see G. Vallet, *Rhégiion et Zancle* (Paris 1958) 91–4.

34) On its typical pattern see T. S. Brown, *Timaeus of Tauromenium* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1958) 59.

story is its ethnic vagueness, which depends on the vagueness of Homer himself about the pedigree of this Aeolus and the localization of his islands. As in Homer, Aeolus is the son of Hippotes without further indication (D.S. 5.7.6). But in spite of all this vagueness, one may wonder why one of Aeolus' sons should be called Xuthus, and rule over Leontini of all places. One would suppose that in the first place the Chalcideans in the area of Leontini connected the latter with Xuthus the son of Hellen and father of Ion – not least because Xuthus was especially linked with Euboea (to two sons of his, Cothus and Aeclus, was credited the foundation respectively of Chalcis and Eretria)<sup>35</sup>. The story of the empire of the sons of the Odysseic Aeolus reflects the broader horizon of Greek presence in Sicily and southern Italy quite apart from parochial disputes between Chalcideans and Dorians. It also witnesses the importance of Syracuse in the detail of Cyane.

Another story (D.S. 4.67.2–6) makes of 'Aeolus the king of the Aeolian isles' a person of completely different lineage. The Homeric datum of 'Aeolus son of Hippotes' is retained but pushed a generation back so as to provide the grand-father of our Aeolus, and the intermediate link, through Mimas, with the best known Aeolus the son of Hellen. Aeolus (III) and his brother Boeotus were both sons of Arne (in Diodorus; Melanippe in a variant of this story: e. g. Hyg. Fab. 186, Eur. Mel. capt.) and Poseidon; their conception caused their mother to be sent to Metapontium by her father. After several vicissitudes, Aeolus ended up with being the master of those islands which were then named after him, whereas Boeotus went back to continental Greece. It will not be my task to assess how this story came about, and to which demands it responded. Let it suffice here to note its probably being posterior to the one narrated in D.S. 5.7–8. The link of Magna Graecia and the Aeolian Islands with Aeolia is far from clear, unless it was just meant as a counter-claim against a preceding and very specific one, maybe Dorian or Heraclid, since Aeolus was the son of Hellen and the brother no less of Xuthus (father of Ion) than of Dorus<sup>36</sup>. (It is

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35) See M. L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Oxford 1985) 58.

36) The variant legend of Melanippe and Metapontus, used by Euripides in his *Melanippe captiua*, may have reflected Athenian strategic interest in the area of Metapontium: see L. Burelli, *Euripide e l'Occidente*, in: L. Burelli/E. Culasso Gastaldi/G. Vanotti (n. 1 above) 129–67, especially 160–2. On the problems raised by

in fact well-known that concurrent versions of a myth used to arise alongside conflicting claims over a territory<sup>37</sup>.)

Making a step back to *Aetnae(ae)* scene two, if the eponym of Xuthia was there mentioned or brought on stage, we may wish to answer the question of his identity. (a) That he may have been the son of Hellen<sup>38</sup> sounds dubious, because that would have amounted to re-asserting old Chalcidean claims over the territory of Leontini, which seems to be most unlikely within a drama commissioned by such a patron as Hiero, who not only ruled over Leontini, but also pursued an openly pro-Dorian policy to the disadvantage of the Chalcideans. (b) His being one with the Odysseic Aeolus of the story in D. S. 5.7–8 is not impossible, but one would expect myths more specifically connected with Hiero's policy. (c) A different story, and more to the point with Hiero, was reflected. Unfortunately nothing else is attested, so the answer to the question about Xuthus' identity in scene two must remain hypothetical. Before developing my favourite hypothesis, let me review some facts. Syracuse had been founded by Archias, a Heraclid himself from Corinth, and a member of the Bacchiad γένος (Th. 6.3.2, [Plut.] Mor. 772d–3b). The like must have been true for most or all of the aristocrats joining his enterprise. Corinth was believed to have come to the Heraclids when Aletes, a son of the Heraclid Hippotes, defeated and banned from it Sisyphus, a son of Aeolus. During his exile and wanderings after murdering the soothsayer Carnus in Naupactum (Paus. 3.13.3, [Apollod.] 2.8.3), the Heraclid Hippotes settled in Cnidus (cf. Tz. ad Lyc. 1388)<sup>39</sup>. The Cnidian Pentathlus referred his descent back to the Heraclid Hippotes (D. S. 5.9.2). An interest in the Heraclid Hippotes during the archaic age is witnessed by a fragment from the Hesiodic 'Greater Ehoëae' (fr. 252 M.-W.).

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this Metapontine legend in relation with Thessalo-Boeotian saga see Bérard (n. 32 above) 332–3.

37) See Malkin (n. 31 above [1994]) *passim*.

38) S. Mazzarino, *Il pensiero storico classico* (Bari 1966) I 555, considering Xuthia an Ionian territory par excellence, especially after Hiero's deportations of Chalcideans from Naxos and Catane to Leontini. But, surely, stressing the Ionian claim to this territory would have weakened Hiero's sway on it.

39) A similar pattern is followed in the story about Tlepolemus, the son of Heracles: after killing Lycymnius, he was banned from Argos; so he moved to Rhodes, where he founded Lindus, Ialysus, and Camirus: Pi. O. 7.20–38, [Apollod.] 2.7.6, 8.

Now, it is conceivable that someone, either in Syracuse or among the Cnidians of the Aeolian Isles, identified their ancestor Hippotes the Heraclid with the Hippotes mentioned by Homer as father of Aeolus the master of winds. This identification would have altered the story told in D.S. 5.7–8 so as to provide an antecedent to Dorian domination in Sicily and Magna Graecia. For Syracuse this must be pure speculation. For the Cnidians of the Aeolians the hypothesis is somewhat more solid. First it is striking that Diodorus should narrate in one and the same context of ‘Aeolian archaeology’ both the story about the Odysseic Aeolus the son of Hippotes, and the events of Pentathlus’ attempt at colonization in the area of Lilybaeum, whose failure led the surviving Cnidians to settle in Lipara. His version of the latter event is remarkable for the detail that the few descendants of Aeolus (sc. the Odysseic one) entreated the Cnidians to settle there, while Antiochus (FGrHist 555 F 1) reported that the Cnidians either found the isles desert or expelled the natives. One gets the impression that Timaeus’ source not only represented Cnidian colonization of the Aeolians in a very rosy light, but also made of the colonists descendants of Aeolus, and hence kinsmen of the local inhabitants, by means of the common ancestor Hippotes (sc. the Heraclid). The identification of the Homeric Hippotes with the Heraclid Hippotes will have been rejected by Timaeus, either on grounds of mythical chronology (since Odysseus, who fought at Troy like Tlepolemus, the son of Heracles, comes earlier than any Heraclid of the second and later generations, whereas Hippotes belongs to the third generation; see also the chronology which dated the Trojan War to 1194–84 B. C., and the return of the Heraclids to 1104 B. C.: cf. FGrHist 244 [Apollod.] F 61–2), or of ideological implications (supposing a similar version had been exploited by, say, Hiero). That the Cnidians might have wished to support their territorial claim by a charter myth is made conceivable by the parallel behaviour, positively attested, of Dorieus (Hdt. 5.43, D.S. 4.23.2–3): he based his claim to rule over western Sicily on the tale that Heracles, his ancestor, had overcome in wrestling the Elymians’ king Eryx.

So one may hypothesize that scene two of *Aetnae(ae)* one way or another involved a Xuthus ruler of Xuthia and son of Aeolus, as in D.S. 5.7–8, and that as a grandchild of the Heraclid Hippotes; the scene would have thus asserted Dorian (and particularly Syra-

cusan) claims over the territory of Leontini<sup>40</sup>. Admittedly, nothing more can be alleged in support of this speculation.

Whatever the value of the above hypothesis, what we have seen so far are stories in the interest of the ruling Greeks in general, which do not offer any clues to individuals. Yet, we possess two scraps of evidence which hint to a special interest taken by the Dinomenidae in the exploitation of such myths.

(i) Most commonly the name of Gela was explained as derived from its river, and this called after the Sicel word for 'ice' (cf. Lat. *gelu*)<sup>41</sup>. A rare tradition, reported by Proxenus (FGrHist 703 F 4) and Hellanicus (FGrHist 4 F 199), derived it from a certain Gelon, son of Aetna<sup>42</sup> and Hymarus (the latter name is likely to be corrupt)<sup>43</sup>. Another explanation was based on the 'laughing' (*γελᾶσαντος*) of the would-be founder Antiphemus in Delphi (all three accounts in Steph. Byz. s. v. *Γέλα*, and Schol. ad Th. 6.4.3 H.). The first tradition was the most widespread, and probably the true one. The last one sounds like a later embroidery. The second one is interesting because it points to the tyrant Gelon: for who else could encourage the rise of such a story<sup>44</sup>? The latter, whether simply orally circulated, or, rather, formalized by a poet<sup>45</sup>, is likely to have dealt with a remote Gelon, ruler of his namesake city, Gela, and an-

40) Thus also V. Merante, *Pentatlo e la fondazione di Lipari, Kokalos* 13 (1967) 88–104, especially 99 n. 36, and G. Maddoli, *Il VI e V secolo a. C.*, in: E. Gabbia/G. Vallet (eds.), *La Sicilia antica* (Napoli 1980) II.1, 52–3 (who takes into account the proximity of Telus, place of origin of the Dinomenidae, to Cnidus).

41) Cf. Duris, FGrHist 76 F 59 φησὶ γὰρ Δουρὶς ὅτι αἱ πλεῖστα τῶν Σικελικῶν πόλεων ἐκ τῶν ποταμῶν ὀνομάζονται, Συρακούσας Γέλαν Ἰμέραν Σελινούντα καὶ Φοινικοῦντα καὶ Ἐρύκην καὶ Καμικὸν Ἀλικύας τε καὶ Θέρμιον καὶ Καμαρίναν, ὡς καὶ ἐν Ἰταλίαι, Schol. ad Pi. O. 2.16b καὶ γὰρ ταύτην ὀνόνημον εἶναι Γέλαι τῷ ποταμῷ, Verg. Aen. 3.702 *immanisque Gela fluvii cognomine dicta*.

42) Whether she was presented as a goddess or a nymph, we sadly do not know.

43) Perhaps the corruption conceals another name: perhaps Himeras, to be linked with the city of Himera (Meineke ad Steph. Byz. cit.); or Maros, mount Maroneum personified, cf. Plin. NH 3.8.88 (Ciaceri [n. 24 above] 308).

44) The link is made also by Ciaceri (n. 24 above) 11.

45) If this story came about in a poem commissioned by Gelon, as I tend to believe, Callimachus' adoption of the fluvial etymology of Gela (l. 46), along with those of other Greek colonies of Sicily in Aet. 2 fr. 43 Pf., could be accounted for as conscious departure from his predecessors, and deliberate preference accorded to less immediate, at least for a poet, but much more learned sources, such as historians. It is noteworthy that Thucydides, too, had not even mentioned traditions like the present one (e. g. 6.4.3 τῇ μὲν πόλει ἀπὸ τοῦ Γέλα ποταμοῦ τοῦνομα ἐγένετο).

cestor of the fifth-century Gelon, in order to charter his right to rule over Gela, perhaps shortly after the time of his usurpation of power at the expense of Hippocrates' sons. But there seems to be more than justification of power. Very little is known of the descent of the Dinomenidae<sup>46</sup>. Gelon, Hiero, Thrasybulus and Polyzelus were the sons of Dinomenes (Schol. ad Pi. P. 1.112; Pi. P. 1.79; Bacchyl. 3.7, 4.13, 5.35). One ancestor of theirs, Telines, had gained the hereditary hierophanty for the cult of the Goddesses (and presumably political prestige), as a reward for his mediator's offices during a case of civil discord in Gela, at an unknown date (Hdt. 7.153, Schol. ad Pi. O. 6.158a). A more remote ancestor, who came from the island of Telos, had taken part in the foundation of Gela (Hdt. ib.). At Herodotus' time the particulars of Gelon's pedigree were already forgotten. But this can hardly result solely from the decline of their rule as early as 466: for not even Pindar and Bacchylides magnify, or just mention, the genealogy of the Dinomenidae beyond Dinomenes. In this respect, a comparison with the Emmenidae is most illuminating. Not only do we know that Thero descended from Telemachus, a founder of Acragas and a conspirator against Phalaris, through Emmenidas and Aenesidamus, Thero's father; but also that he drew the whole genealogy back to Thersander the son of Polynices (cf. Pi. O. 2.43–7)<sup>47</sup>. One would think that it was impossible for the Dinomenidae to draw their genealogy back to one of the usual heroes, maybe because they had been a notoriously obscure or even low-status family up to Telines<sup>48</sup>. If that was the case, it would be easier to imagine Gelon sponsoring

46) On this topic I have much profited from J. P. Kesteman, *Les ancêtres de Gélon*, AC 39 (1970) 395–413.

47) See G. Lippold, Theron, RE V A (1934) 2447–51, especially 2447–8.

48) This seems to be implied in Herodotus' narrative (surely resting on a negatively biased source): note the unflattering description of Telines (7.153.4); Suager's spiteful implicit comparison between the pedigree of Spartan military leaders, i. e. kings, and Gelon – which in fact Gelon perceives as *ὄνειδη* and *ὑβρίσματα* – (7.159–160.1). It is usually inferred that the Dinomenidae were Geloan aristocrats from their hierophanty, Gelon's supreme command of the cavalry under Hippocrates, and their later life-style and policy. Yet, the hierophanty was acquired under exceptional circumstances, according to Herodotus. Before commanding the cavalry, Gelon had been a trusted supporter of Hippocrates, one of his *δορυφόροι* (Hdt. 7.154.1), which does not speak in favour of Gelon belonging to an ancient aristocratic family. Nor Chromius (the trusted supporter of Hippocrates, then Gelon, and finally Hiero) was celebrated by Pindar (N. 1 and 9) for his pedigree. Contrast e.g. Pi. O. 6 with its wide celebration of Hagesias as an Iamid.



a Sicilian genealogy for his family. Through a common pattern – the pattern which involves rule over an oversea territory in the remote past, then its end, and finally return of the ruling stock to that territory – Gelon could raise special claims over Sicilian territory.

(ii) We know that somewhere Simonides (PMG 552) dealt with a dispute over Sicily between Hephaestus and Demeter (clearly moulded after the example of Athena and Poseidon contending for Attica); this was decided by Aetna. Again, it is sensible to suppose that the topic was developed in a poem commissioned by one of the Dinomenidae, either Gelon or Hiero<sup>49</sup>. It is a pity that our witness does not give more details on Aetna, whether she was a goddess, or a nymph and/or the daughter of a god. It is clear, however, that the inclusion of this figure in a newly-created myth featuring Olympian gods had political implications. If Aetna herself, a more or less divine figure tightly bound to Sicily, had assigned possession of the island to one of the two contending Greek gods, the message again came across that Greek domination there was not a recent imposition from the outside. (Be that as it may, Aetna's importance in myths with political implications is proved by other genealogies of her, which may be later than the Dinomenidae: daughter of Uranus and Ge according to Alcimus<sup>50</sup>; of Oceanus [and mother to the Palici by Hephaestus] according to Silenus<sup>51</sup>; of Briareus [and sister of Sicanus] according to Demetrius of Callatis<sup>52</sup>.)

The upshot of this discussion is, therefore, that a set of legends on supposedly remote antecedents of Greek rule over Sicily (and southern Italy) did in fact exist when Aeschylus was commissioned with *Aetnae(ae)*. Moreover some myths had been developed by poets, presumably working for the Dinomenidae, to the same purpose and/or to justify their tyranny. So it is not utterly exact to say that Aeschylus had to start working in a vacuum. But it

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49) Simonides is usually thought to have worked only for Hiero, because he appears to have been his guest from 476 onwards. But nothing prevented him from accepting commissions from Gelon, or any other wealthy Siceliot, either by mail, as it were, or directly on such occasions as the games. On the problems raised by Simonides' Siceliot commissions see J. H. Molyneux, *Simonides. A Historical Study* (Wauconda 1992) 220–36.

50) FHG IV 296 fr. 2.

51) FGrHist 175 F 3, ap. Steph. Byz. s. v. Παλική.

52) FHG IV 381 fr. 4.

is still reasonable to suppose that no special myth on Hiero's policy concerning the foundation of Aetna was available – a supposition which is supported by the explicit statements in ancient sources on the one hand that he was the first Greek author who dealt with the Palici, and explained the etymology of their name<sup>53</sup>; and on the other that he gave them a Greek genealogy, making them sons of Thalia and Zeus<sup>54</sup>.

An unbiased reading of Macr. Sat. 5.19.15–9 suggests that the story of Zeus and Thalia, there given as the background to the Palici fragment, belonged to the play as well<sup>55</sup>. Macrobius' introduction to Aeschyl. fr. 6 (Sat. 5.19.24 *Aeschyli tragoedia est, quae inscribitur Aetna. In hac cum de Palicis loqueretur, sic ait:*—) does not prove that the story of the Palici was only reported, rather than directly dramatized: for Macrobius gives the impression that he knows no more of *Aetnae(ae)* than he found in his source and copied down<sup>56</sup>. So, although there is room for difference of opinions in reconstructing this play, no one can reasonably deny that the love-affair, its consequences for Thalia, the 'birth' of the Palici, could provide enough stuff for most of the drama. Compare Aeschylus' lost play *Callisto*, which is likely to have dramatized the love-affair between Zeus and the virgin (either nymph or mortal woman; in any case connected with Artemis) Callisto, and the consequences of it. The changes of setting in *Aetnae(ae)* are no hindrance to this supposition. If the chorus was made up of nymphs of mount Aetna, Thalia's associates (either sisters or friends), they may have moved to other places seeking her, after Zeus had taken her away. Or she could flee in fear of Hera's reprisal. After she had been swallowed by the Earth, the search for her could continue; or the exact site of the 'birth' of the Palici might have been looked for.

53) Macr. Sat. 5.19.17 ... *et di Palici in Sicilia coluntur, quos primus omnium Aeschylus tragicus, vir utique Siculus, in litteras dedit, interpretationem quoque nominis eorum, quam Graeci ἐτυμολογίαν uocant, expressit uersibus suis, eqs.*

54) Steph. Byz. s. v. Παλική... Παλικῶν, οἱ εἰσι δαίμονες τινες, οὗς Αἰσχύλος ἐν Αἰτναίαις (Meineke: Αἴτνας codd.) γενεαλογεῖ Διὸς καὶ Θαλείας τῆς Ἡραίστου.

55) This is also the opinion of K. Ziegler, *Palikoi*, RE XVIII.3 (1949) 100–23, especially 118, and A. Lesky, *Thaleia, Thalia* (4), RE V A (1934) 1207, Grassi (n. 1 above [1956]) 209, Cataudella (n. 1 above) 393, Corbato (n. 1 above) 67, Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 87. On the other hand, Fraenkel (n. 1 above) 63 implies the opposite when he maintains that the birth of the Palici was dealt with only indirectly and in the fourth scene.

56) I disagree with Fraenkel (n. 1 above) 63, 72 (followed by most scholars).

We can be assured that in *Aetnae(ae)* the mother of the Palici was called Thalia<sup>57</sup>, not Aetna<sup>58</sup>, given the occurrence of that former name in direct connection with Aeschylus, and without mention of any alternative, in Macrobius (Sat. 5.19.18 *nympha Thalia compressu Iouis grauida eqs.*) and Stephanus of Byzantium (s. v. Παλική, quoted above), plus the inscription ΘΑΛΙΑ in a vase-painting representing the abduction of the nymph (see below). If Aeschylus was the first to introduce a Thalia as a nymph of mount Aetna and daughter of Hephaestus, he might have been induced to take this step in order to leave Aetna other roles, perhaps those seen above (Aetna mother of Gelon, and arbitrator between Hephaestus and Demeter), which are likely to have been particularly dear to the Dinomenidae.

It is a fair assumption that the plot included some other incidents and/or characters, especially in connection with settings 4–6. Indeed, the setting of Xuthia makes it attractive to imagine Xuthus, and possibly some of his brothers, featuring in the play. Yet, any further guess is pointless. What is important is to realize that the Palici story need not have been confined to the scene set in Leontini just because their pond and sanctuary were actually located near that town (modern Lago Naftia, near Palagonia, halfway between Catania and Caltagirone)<sup>59</sup>. On the contrary, it is probable that at

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57) A sensible name for a nymph, and that mother of two chthonic gods involved with earth fertility: see the anecdote, on the role played by the oracle of the Palici in one instance of famine, narrated by Xenagoras, FGrHist 240 F 21, ap. Macr. Sat. 5.19.30 (thus also Ziegler [n. 55 above] 118, and Lesky [n. 55 above] 1207).

58) Her mention under this name (Serv. ad Verg. Aen. 9.581; Silenus, FGrHist 175 F 3, ap. Steph. Byz. s. v. Παλική; Lact. Plac. ad Stat. Th. 12.156–7) may either rest on a different version, or be due to textual corruption, say of a longer phrase giving for Thalia her Aetnaean connection (see Rufin. Recogn. 10.22.5 [*Iupiter stuprat*] *Thaliam Aetnam nympham* . . . ex qua nascuntur apud Siciliam Palici, where one should like to correct to *Aetnaeam* [given the implausibility of a double name ‘Thalia Aetna’], beside *Palici*). At any rate, there is no need to assume (with F.G. Welcker, Griechische Götterlehre [Göttingen 1863] III 189–95, followed by Ciaceri [n. 24 above] 31) that Thalia is a corrupt form of Aithalia, which, in its turn, should be a variant of Aetna.

59) I strongly disagree with Fraenkel's view ([n. 1 above] 63), and I cannot help wondering why he was so categorical about scene four, since also scene two was located in the area of Leontini. In the midst of the almost unanimous consensus gained by his view, it is remarkable that La Rosa (n. 1 above) 153–4 should favour at least act one and two, and Corbato (n. 1 above) 67 even a series of scenes for the dramatization of the Palici story.

least all the scenes, from one to four, dealt with their broader story, i. e. the story of Thalia and Zeus. It is also conceivable that already within this part of the play some more incidents and/or characters appeared (the Xuthia scene is, as we said, a good candidate), whose dramatization could go on and be fully developed in scenes five and six. In one word, once the conclusion has been reached that in all probability the broader story of the Palici made up the bulk of the dramatized action, there is no real basis for the view that the play was no proper tragedy with a dramatic economy, but a series of aetiological tableaux, all alike and unrelated one another.

Nonetheless, I am not going to deny that aetiology must have dominated the play. Indeed, once selected (or invented) and elaborated a remote story, the playwright must have turned to aetiology again and again, as the most obvious procedure to both dignify the present, and express blessings of prosperity and political concord. An instructive combination of aetiology (of both the Areopagus tribunal and the cult of the Semnai), with blessings for a city (Athens), which verge on political paraenesis proper, is provided by *Eumenides*.

This guess about the (frequent) use of aetiology within a consistent and unitarian action set in the remote past of Sicily, is made plausible by our few data. (a) The play was set in the remote pre-historical past (see above, fr. 6 R.). (b) Somewhere in the play the foundation of the city of Aetna was prospected as a synoecism with blessings for its inhabitants (*Vita* Aesch. [= T 1 R.] 33–4 ... ἐπεδείξατο τὰς Αἴτνας οἰωνιζόμενος βίον ἀγαθὸν τοῖς συνοικίζουσι τὴν πόλιν<sup>60</sup>). (c) The settings of the play are the very places which in the 470s were being affected by Hiero's policies. The events on mount Aetna could provide the background for the future foundation of a city of the same name.

Some support to this admittedly speculative, however likely, attempt at reconstruction, comes from a group of vase-paintings<sup>61</sup>

60) I take this statement in the *Vita* as a faithful précis of the play, and hence as a scrap of evidence on it, although I am aware that a more sceptical approach may reject it altogether.

61) I have drawn the following remarks from A. Kossatz-Deissmann, *Dramen des Aischylos auf westgriechischen Vasen* (Mainz 1978) 33–44, to which I refer the reader for a full catalogue and plates. Almost the same (with up-dated bibliography) can be found in Ead., *Thalia* (2), LIMC VII.1 (1994) 896–8. See also L. Curtius, *Thalia*, in: *Scritti in onore di B. Nogara* (Città del Vaticano 1937) 105–18.

from southern Italy, dated to a period spanning from 390 to 330–310 B. C. (plus three plastic representations, from Taras, dated one to the fourth century, the others to a period between the second half of the fourth and the beginning of the third century B. C.). All of these represent Thalia (with inscription of her name in one specimen, a Paestan amphora, ca. 330–10 B. C.<sup>62</sup>) being abducted by a big bird of prey (whether it be meant to be an eagle or a vulture, it is hard to say). The latter, on the basis of literary evidence dealing with Thalia, is reasonably taken as Zeus under disguise: see (though badly corrupt) [Clem. Rom.] Homil. 5.13.5 (Ζεὺς συνῆλθε) Ἐρσάϊου νόμφηι γενόμενος γύψ, κτλ., to which corresponds Rufin. Recogn. 10.22.5 (*Iuppiter stuprat*) *Thaliam nympham mutatus in uulturem, eqs.*<sup>63</sup> As usual with tragedy, the vase-paintings do not provide any clue to the theatricality of the represented scene; so the link between them and a given play is bound to remain a supposition, however reasonable<sup>64</sup>. In our case, the supposition that the common scene of Thalia's abduction has any bearing to our play, is made more plausible by the fact that one specimen occurs on an Apulian amphora (340–30 B. C., Berlin F 3239) which is decorated with two more scenes apparently inspired by fifth-century drama: Chrysippus' abduction by Laius (Eur. *Chrysippus*), and Actaeon's death (Aeschyl. *Toxotides*)<sup>65</sup>.

Moreover, the above-mentioned Paestan amphora, although preserved only in a drawing by Tischbein, bears a more detailed image of Thalia being abducted by a bird of prey, inasmuch as it represents an altar, a sort of halo around the animal (i. e. its divine

62) A. D. Trendall, *The Red-Figured Vases of Paestum* (The British School at Rome 1987) 262.

63) See also the confusing statement in Serv. ad Verg. Aen. 9.581 [... *Alii dicunt Iouem hunc Palicum propter Iunonis iracundiam in aquilam commutasse*...]: given the singular *Palicus*, it possesses little authority; so it may simply distort a tradition of Zeus transformed into an eagle to abduct Thalia.

64) On the problems posed by iconography possibly dependent on tragedy, see the illuminating discussion by O. Taplin, *Comic Angels* (Oxford 1993) 21–9. See also P. E. Arias, *Gnomon* 52 (1980) 533–9, review of Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 61 above [1978]). It is remarkable that Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 61 above [1978]) 33–44 (but also *passim*) inclines towards theatrical interpretations of the vase-paintings examined, whereas Ead. (n. 61 above [1994]) tends to consider the iconography of Thalia *per se*. This iconographic autonomy may indeed be conceded for the Tarantine sculptures.

65) A. D. Trendall/A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia* (Oxford 1978–82) II 490.

nature), flowers and a satyr (i. e. open nature, without it being necessary to suppose *Aetnae(ae)* to have been a satyr-play), a dropped ball, and a basket<sup>66</sup>. All this implies a full narrative centred around Thalia, which is just natural to identify with part of the plot of *Aetnae(ae)*. The latter can therefore be reconstructed, however hypothetically, as follows. Thalia and her friends (or sisters), nymphs of mount Aetna, were playing ball<sup>67</sup> in the open nature nearby the altar (and sanctuary?) of Zeus Aetnaeus<sup>68</sup>. Suddenly a bird of prey (i. e. Zeus) seized Thalia and lifted her up into the air. The other nymphs may have fled in panic; then they may have started seeking Thalia. At some point in the play, the foundation of the city of Aetna (possibly together with the foundation of the Palici cult) could be prospected by Zeus as a way to make up for Thalia's inconvenience by honouring the memory of the mount where he had loved her. It is a common situation in mythical love-affairs between a major god, especially Zeus, and a nymph or a mortal woman, that their offspring should be granted some kind of honour, and that some place should be named after the mistress (or some other detail of the affair)<sup>69</sup>.

To admit a close link between fourth-century vase-paintings (in particular the Paestan amphora) and our play means to accept the idea that Aeschylus was still well-known, through performance

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66) See the acute analysis by Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 61 above [1978]) 38–9.

67) Compare a similar situation in Od. 6.100ff., which was brought on stage by Sophocles in his *Nausicaa* (Athen. 1.37.19–20 K. = T 28 R.); note that Nausicaa and her maids have their picnic in a basket (Od. 6.76–8). Another similar situation, but for the detail of picking flowers instead of playing ball, is to be found in the myth of Europa abducted by Zeus (see Moschus' *Europa*); but on an Apulian amphora, Napoli H 3218 (see Kossatz-Deissmann [n. 61 above (1978)] 38 n. 206, Trendall/Cambitoglou [n. 65 above] II 497), she is abducted while playing ball with her mates.

68) I prefer to think of a place of cult sacred to Zeus on the slopes of mount Aetna, rather than of the altar of the Palici, as Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 61 above [1978]) 39 does. At any rate, the vase itself, with a bare representation of an altar, does not provide any clues either way.

69) If this outline recovers part of the plot of *Aetn.*, then what was 'tragic' about it? Of course we cannot tell for sure, although there seems to have been plenty of scope for developing a tragic action (i. e. Hera's persecution of Thalia; how to grant her sons survival; her premature sort of death; a struggle for power possibly involving a Xuthus) – at least as much as in other plays on divine seduction of a mortal woman and its consequences (Aeschyl. *Callisto*, *Semele*; Soph. *Danae*, *Tyro I*, *II*; Eur. *Alcmena*, *Alope*, *Antiope*, *Danae*, etc.).

rather than reading, in Sicily and Magna Graecia. This supposition is begged by the whole set of western Greek vases studied by Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 62 [1978]), all of which seem to represent scenes of Aeschylean dramas. However, the idea that fifth-century Athenian theatre should be much performed and appreciated among the western Greeks in the following century, as much as to be reflected on locally produced vases, has been recently discussed – i. e. stated afresh for tragedy, and originally advocated for comedy<sup>70</sup>. The most remarkable point made by that discussion is perhaps that socio-political particularity of Athenian fifth-century drama, especially comedy, need not have been a major obstacle to appreciation and popularity in the wider Greek world<sup>71</sup>. The point is interesting also to those who consider what the 'Nachleben' of our play, which was Syracuse- and Dinomenidae-specific, may have been like.

To our reconstruction of the plot of *Aetn.*, which is mainly based on vase-paintings, one may object that the latter reflect not Aeschylus' tragedy, but either (a) the spurious *Aetnae(ae)* recorded in the Catalogue of Aeschylus' plays (T 78 R.), or (b) a fourth-century play by an unknown and, given the local theme, probably local author<sup>72</sup>. Such objections, though, are not fatal. For, on the one hand, we know almost nothing on the spurious *Aetnae(ae)*, neither where they were performed, nor whether they were ever as popular as to be reflected on vase-paintings<sup>73</sup>. On the other hand,

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70) Taplin (n. 64 above).

71) Taplin (n. 64 above) 94–9.

72) This is what C. W. Dearden, Fourth-century tragedy in Sicily: Athenian or Sicilian?, in: J.-P. Descœudres (ed.), *Greek Colonists and Native Populations* (Canberra/Oxford 1990) 231–42, especially 233–4, infers from the fragment of an early south-Italian bell-crater (Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum, inv. n. 1952.33; K 8 in Kossatz-Deissmann [n. 61 above (1978)] 35).

73) One guess (Pohlenz [n. 1 above] II 200 [but cf. also U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aischylos. Interpretationen* (Berlin 1914) 242 n. 1], Cataudella [n. 1 above] 398) is that, when the Catanians took back possession of their city and territory (461 B. C.), they had a new play composed (and possibly performed) which represented their own version of the events leading to the foundation of the city of Aetna, and which was meant as a reply to the highly propagandistic play commissioned around 470 by Hiero. Another guess (C. Corbato, *Una ripresa eschilea nella Pace di Aristofane*, in: *Studi triestini di antichità in onore di L. A. Stella* [Trieste 1975] 323–35, 330 n. 19) has it that the so-called spurious play was in fact a version of the original one, revised for performance in Athens by the poet himself in order to suppress the most celebrative and specific (or rather ideologically embarrassing) points.

there is no inner necessity in the argument that fourth-century vase paintings of possible theatrical nature must reflect a fourth-century play, and that a theme with local connections such as the story of Zeus and Thalia must have been dramatized by a local playwright – especially as we do positively know that Aeschylus dealt with that story in *Aetnae(ae)*. The most economical stand is to connect those vase-paintings with Aeschylus' play, if one accept their 'theatricality'.

There is a possibility that even after the fall of the Dinomenidae Aeschylus' drama continued to enjoy popularity. If the play was set in the remote past, as I have argued, and conveyed celebration of Hiero's policy through aetiology, the propagandistic element could be tolerated more easily than if the play crudely brought on stage the object of its praise. Again, the propagandistic gist of the play may have been of such a tenor as to please most the Dorian aristocracy of Syracuse (see below) – nor to annoy the population of, say, Acragas or Taras, even in later times. For the emphasis might have lain on their desiderata (aristocratic freedom and equality, monarchy as a military office, supremacy of the laws) rather than on the reality of Hiero's tyranny. The message of Greek domination over the local peoples was destined to keep its appeal also after the fall of tyranny (apart from the short and utilitarianistic entente cordiale with Ducetius on the part of post-tyrannical aristocracy-led Syracuse<sup>74</sup>). If that was the case, the play could not fail to retain its popularity even after the political contingency in which it had been commissioned, not only in Syracuse, but throughout Sicily and Magna Graecia.

One more point. Neither the vase-paintings, nor the capitell-reliefs which represent Thalia's abduction can help decide whether Zeus is disguised as a vulture or as an eagle. Although Pseudo-Clemens and Rufinus talk of a vulture, it is suggestive to suppose that in Aeschylus' play the bird was an eagle, with some (para-)etymological connection between Αἴτνα/Αἴτναῖος and αἰετός in his typical manner, but also with reference to the symbology of Zeus

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74) On that alliance see F. P. Rizzo, *La repubblica di Siracusa nel momento di Ducezio* (Palermo 1970) passim; on 'democracy' in Sicily after the fall of the Emmenidae and Dinomenidae see, e. g., D. Asheri, *Agrigento libera: rivolgimenti interni e problemi costituzionali*, *Athenaeum* 78 (1990) 483–501, S. N. Consolo Langher, *Un imperialismo tra democrazia e tirannide: Siracusa nei secoli V e IV a. C.* (Roma 1997) 42, 51–5.



Aetnaeus which was so dear to Hiero<sup>75</sup>. A tetradrachm from Aetna (earlier than 450 B. C.) bears on the reverse an image which can be identified with Zeus Aetnaeus: a god seated on throne, holding in his right a thunder-bolt, and having at his side a fir (symbol of the mount, rich in wood) with an eagle on top of it; legend on the obverse: ΑΙΤΝΑΙΟΝ<sup>76</sup>.

### 3. Title<sup>77</sup>

By ruling out the possibility that the play dramatized the present time; by taking Thalia, the name of the mother of the Palici given by Macrobius and Stephanus of Byzantium, as the genuinely Aeschylean; and by linking the above-discussed Paestan amphora to the play (with the consequence that Thalia must have been playing ball with someone, i. e. the other nymphs, before the abduction): in so doing, I end up by accepting the form Αἰτναῖαι as the authentic title, referring to the chorus of nymphs of mount Aetna.

By 'authentic title' I mean the form under which the play was known to the Alexandrian scholars<sup>78</sup>, and was registered in the source of our Catalogue of Aeschylus' works. The poet himself may have attached little importance to the compendious name currently used to denote this play, as for any other play<sup>79</sup>. One may

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75) The institution of the cult of Ζεὺς Ἐλευθέριος in Syracuse after Thrasylbulus' defeat and expulsion (D.S. 11.72.2) seems to be a reaction to the cult of Zeus promoted by the Dinomenidae.

76) G. F. Hill, *Coins of Ancient Sicily* (Westminster 1903) 74–5, pl. 4 n. 13.

77) On the occurrences of the various forms (Αἰτναῖαι, Αἴτναι, Αἴτνη, *Aetna*) see Radt ad *Aetn.* (fr. 6–11), who also gives references to the opinion of modern scholars on this issue.

78) Since there is no good reason to believe that the play was performed also in Athens, the title is unlikely to have been included either in Aristotle's *Didascalidae*, or in its source, the official records of Athenian productions. For the same reason it can be supposed that in the Alexandrian edition of *hypotheses* to Aeschylus' plays, *Aetnaeae* was put at the end, and that the roll of its text kept company, in one and the same case, to the rolls of the plays whose titles began with the last letters of the alphabet, maybe from φ- onwards. The like has been supposed for Euripides' *Archelaus* by E. G. Turner, Euripidean *hypotheses* in a new papyrus, in: Proceedings of the IX International Congress of Papyrology (Oslo 1961) 1–17, especially 3.

79) The titles of Aeschylus' individual dramas are clearly not his own in two cases, *Seven against Thebes* and *Eumenides*. For these the poet, his audience, and the contemporary official records must have used the collective name of the tetra-

suppose that at the time of performance and later, the drama was identified either after the chorus, which I am confident was made up of *Aetnaean* nymphs, or by the name of the city it was meant to celebrate, *Aetna*. (I rule out the possibility that the plural *Aetnae* may have given a suitable identification label, because the plurale tantum is poorly attested for the city, if it is attested at all<sup>80</sup>, whereas a plural referring to the repeated setting of mount Aetna, and to the mention of the future name-sake city is a far-fetched idea<sup>81</sup>.) That variable denomination may be the origin of all subsequent shifting in the form of the title. Yet, for the latter, we need not go that far, since corruption of titles of lost plays in quotations is extremely common, and understandably so, as those titles were not well-known<sup>82</sup>.

As I said, I believe the chorus was made up by nymphs of mount Aetna, either friends or sisters of Thalia, a nymph of mount Aetna herself<sup>83</sup>. That they should be women of the city of Aetna<sup>84</sup> is ruled out by the remote time setting of the play. The idea of male citizens of the same city (accepting as title Αἴτναι)<sup>85</sup>, based on the ground that

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logies they belonged to; individual titles will have become common as a consequence of separate performances and/or book-trade. See A. L. Brown, *Eumenides* in Greek tragedy, CQ 34 (1984) 260–81, especially 268–9, A. H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus. Eumenides* (Cambridge 1989) 11–2, Id., Notes on Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, Hermes 117 (1989) 432–45, especially 436, and, also on the new use made of titles in the second half of the fifth century B. C., Id., The titles of Greek dramas, especially p. 4 (an unpublished paper I had the pleasure to listen to at the Classical Association Conference in Lampeter, April 1997; then the author has been so kind as to show me a copy of it).

80) Small coins from Catane-Aetna, similar to those circulating in Catane before 476 B. C., bear the legend ΑΙΤΝΑΙ (Hill [n. 76 above] 74 pl. 5). But this may just be an abbreviation for the usual plural genitive.

81) Or, as Dr. M. L. West suggests, the plural Αἴτναι may refer to the nymphs themselves, just as those of mount Nysa are sometimes called Νῦσαι.

82) Within Aeschylus, see e. g. ἐν σκύφῳι for ἐν Σισύφῳι, ἐν Αἰγύπτῳι for ἐν Αἰγυπτίῳις (see test. fr. 5 R.); ἐν ἀμυμόνι / ἀμυμόνοι / ἀμύμνα / ἀσυμβάνηι for ἐν Ἄμυμόνῃι (see test. fr. 13 R.); Ἄργεῖοι / Ἄργεῖαι (see Radt ad fr. 16–9); κάκχῳι for Βακχῳι (see test. fr. 22 R.); Βασάρῳι / πασσαλῳι for Βασσαρῳι (see test. fr. 23 R.); Δαναῖσι / Δαναήσι / Δαναοῖσι (see test. fr. 43 R.); δαῖσι for Δαναῖσι (see test. fr. 45 R.); etc.

83) Thus also Grassi (n. 1 above [1956]) 209, Cataudella (n. 1 above) 393–4, etc.

84) As most scholars (i. e. those who adopt Fraenkel's [n. 1 above] conjectures) hold.

85) Wilamowitz (n. 73 above) 242 n. 1, followed by Pohlenz (n. 1 above) II 200, Garzya (n. 1 above) 411. I do not think that the adjective γνήσιοι in the Cata-

only these would make up a 'serious' chorus, is in addition undermined by the existence of several tragedies (serious enough, I dare say) where the chorus consists of figures others than male mortal citizens. To our chorus of nymphs it is useful to compare the Oceanids in *Prometheus Vincetus*, the Titans in *Prom. Solutus*, the Nereides in the name-sake play, the sisters of Phaethon in *Heliades*, and especially the nymphs mates of Artemis in *Toxotides*.

#### 4. Should other fragments be ascribed to this play?

Above I have argued that the hypothesis of a bizarre, episodic play is unwarranted and completely unlikely. So I have undermined the supposition on whose basis Fraenkel, then followed by most scholars<sup>86</sup>, has conjecturally assigned the famous 'Dike-fragment' (fr. 281a R. = P. Oxy. 2256 fr. 9[a]) to *Aetnaeae*. But there is more<sup>87</sup>. (a) First, the fragment is likely to belong to a satyr-play, as the colloquial conjunction  $\delta\tau\acute{\iota}\eta$  (l. 9) proves (this was inferred by the first editor, Lobel). Against its occurrences in satyr-play and comedy alone, but never in tragedy, nor serious poetry in general or prose (see LSJ s. v.), the argument that Aeschylus may as well have used it whenever he wished to<sup>88</sup>, is untenable<sup>89</sup>. Nor can one lightly attribute to a tragedy the fragment where such a colloquialism occurs, on the ground that this time the playwright was too concentrated on political issues to heed formal minutiae<sup>90</sup>. (b) The apparent seriousness of the scene is no sufficient ground to rule out

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logue proves that the authentic title should be in the masculin plural; rather it may be due to assimilation to  $\nu\theta\omicron\iota$  and should be emended to  $\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$ .

86) From Pohlenz (n. 1 above) II 198 to Corbato (n. 1 above). Only few have kept being wisely sceptical: Taplin (n. 1 above) 418, Garzya (n. 1 above) 411–2, Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 86.

87) The following objections are meant to meet also Cataudella's ([n. 1 above] 379–91) case for the same attribution.

88) Thus Fraenkel (n. 1 above) 71 and all his followers.

89) Protests to this effect in H. J. Mette, *Literaturbericht über Aischylos für die Jahre 1950 bis 1954*, *Gymnasium* 62 (1955) 393–407, especially 405. The fragment has been ascribed to a satyr-play also by F. C. Görschen, *Zum sogenannten Dike-Fragment des Aischylos*, *Dioniso* 18 (1955) 139–51, D. F. Sutton, *A possible subject for Aeschylus' 'Dike play'*, *ZPE* 51 (1983) 19–24. It is not worth while refuting the proposal to read  $\delta\tau\acute{\iota}\eta$  (Cataudella [n. 1 above] 379).

90) Stark (n. 1 above) 83 n. 2.

a satyric provenance: for seriousness could be suddenly replaced by a burst of mirth. See, e.g., fr. 47a R., where several stretches sound serious in themselves, albeit the overall situation is gently ludicrous; the like in Soph. fr. 314 R., and, though more rarely, in Eur. *Cycl.* (c) The appearance of Dike need not imply a tragic and serious context. In fact, her featuring as a character is unparalleled in tragedy (and in drama outside our fragment)<sup>91</sup>, where she is rather at work behind the events, or is invoked. Generally speaking, tragedy admits of gods on stage, but not of more or less extemporary personifications of less established anthropomorphic nature. These are rather at home in comedy: see, e.g., *Diallage*, *Spondai*, *Wrong and Right*, *Polemos*, *Kydoimos*, *Theoria*, *Opora*, *Penia*, *Plutos*<sup>92</sup>. (d) The whole apologue of the *παῖς μάργος*, whoever he may be<sup>93</sup>, is couched in a fairly plain school-teacher style, which seems to become an exchange between Dike and the ignorant satyrs better than two parties in tragedy. (e) Indeed, it is hard to conceive a tragic situation, however remote, whereby the chorus need to be taught who Dike is and what her tasks are. Satyr-play, with a chorus of rather animal beings, is a more satisfactory supposition.

So the case for a tragic, rather than satyric, attribution of fr. 281a R. has collapsed, even though we are not able to guess to which satyr-play it belonged<sup>94</sup>. Fraenkel was led to assign it to *Aetnaeae* by his preconceived ideas that the play was episodic, and that its propagandistic content had to consist of a mere celebration of justice and peace as marks of a new era inaugurated by Hiero's military victories. This, as we shall see, entails a remarkable reduction of the propagandistic function of the play. That in Pindar's *First Pythian* (67–72) peace, both in domestic and foreign affairs, should be invoked for Aetna, does not surprise. What is more meaningful as

91) See F.W.Hamford, *Griechische Kultpersonifikationen der vorhellenischen Zeit* (Mainz 1964) 51–3.

92) See H.-J.Newiger, *Metapher und Allegorie. Studien zu Aristophanes* (München 1959) 104–22, 135–43, 155–78.

93) Ares (see especially D. S. Robertson, *Dike and Ares*, CR n.s. 3 [1953] 79–80) rather than Sinis (Görschen [n. 89 above]), or Cynus the son of Ares (H. Lloyd-Jones, *Zeus in Aeschylus*, JHS 76 [1956] 55–67, especially 59 n. 26, and again in his *Appendix to the Loeb Aeschylus*, II 577), or Heracles (P. J. Kakridis, *Der παῖς μάργος im Dike-Fragment des Aischylos* [P. Oxy. 2256 fr. 9(a)], *Eranos* 60 [1962] 111–21, followed by Sutton [n. 89 above] 20–4) or Hephaestus (Sutton [n. 89 above] 20, but then she discards the suggestion).

94) Görschen (n. 89 above) thinks of *Theori*, Sutton (n. 89 above) of *Kerykes*.

a clue to Hiero's propagandistic aims, is the praise of the Spartan-like institutions of the new city (P. 1.61–6). Similarly, Pi. P. 1.67–72 offers no ground for a safe attribution of the famous 'Eirene-fragment' (fr. 451n R.) to *Aetnaeae*. (For the latter fragment, a tragic context seems more likely, although we cannot say which exactly<sup>95</sup>.) But at least Fraenkel was aware of the fact that these were only conjectures based more on his impressions than on arguments. His followers, on the contrary, have taken for granted his views, and from that 'basis' have developed other ideas (one example below).

### 5. Did *Aetnaeae* belong to the same trilogy as the 'Prometheuses'?

It has been supposed<sup>96</sup> that *Prom. Vincetus* and *Prom. Solutus*, both regarded as the genuine work of Aeschylus, were followed in one and the same trilogy by a play other than Προμηθεὺς πυρφόρος (considered as an erroneous form for Προμ. πυρκαεὺς), and that this play should be *Aetnaeae*. Vital to Aeschylus' Prometheus-plays, the argument goes, was some sort of agreement being reached and struck between Zeus and the Titan. Prometheus was to deliver the fatal secret; Zeus was to free him and send Dike to mankind: see the Prometheus myth in Plat. Prt. 322c. *Aetnaeae*, with its setting suitable to Hephaestus, and other links with the Prometheus myth (Typhoeus' imprisonment and Aetna's volcanic activity), especially the arrival of Dike among men (accepting Fraenkel's attribution of fr. 281a R.), was the third play in the trilogy.

Several points object against this hypothesis (which, however, has enjoyed little favour<sup>97</sup>). (a) Even if we grant Aeschylus' authorship of *Prom. Vincetus* and *Prom. Solutus*, internal data of the former (in metre, style and rhetoric) point to a late date, even later than the *Oresteia*<sup>98</sup>. (If that were the case it would be inescapable

95) The parallels brought by Corbato (n. 1 above) 71–2, especially Aeschyl. Supp. 630–97, far from proving his case, make clear that a wish for, or a praise of, peace was common enough to occur in many a tragedy.

96) H. Lloyd-Jones, *Il Prometeo incatenato* di Eschilo, *Dioniso* 43 (1969) 211–8.

97) Explicitly rejected by Taplin (n. 1 above) 464–5, M. Griffith, *Aeschylus, Sicily and Prometheus*, in: *Dionysiaca. Nine Studies in Greek Poetry Presented to Sir D. Page* (Cambridge 1978) 105–39, especially 123.

98) C. J. Herington, *Some evidence for a late dating of the Prometheus Bound*, *CR* 14 (1964) 239–40; Id., *The Author of the Prometheus Bound* (Aus-

to place the composition and performance of the *Prometheia* within Aeschylus' last stay in Sicily<sup>99</sup>.) This rules out a première around 470, simultaneously with *Aetnaeae*. (b) It is impossible to dispose so lightly of the title Προμ. τυρρόρος; for one of its only two quotations occurs in the Catalogue, whose descent from good sources no one would deny. (c) The *Vita* seems to speak of only one play, not of a trilogy, in celebration of the city of Aetna. Anyway, it is difficult to imagine how the rest of the hypothesized trilogy could extoll the newly founded city – not to mention that *Prom. Vincitus* would be an unsuitable *laus tyranni* –, nor why only the third drama in it should do it. (d) The thematic link between the story of Prometheus on the one hand, and a mythical story suitable to praise Hiero's policy (such as that of Zeus and Thalia, etc.) is less than tenuous. (e) Nothing compels us to expect that in Prometheus-plays Zeus must have sent Dike to mankind in order to satisfy Prometheus, not to mention the fact that in Plat. *Prt.* 322c it is Hermes who is charged by Zeus to bring to mankind αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην, and that under quite different circumstances. (f) The Dike-fragment is unlikely to belong to *Aetnaeae*. (g) No ancient quotation links together the *Prometheuses* with *Aetnaeae*.

### 6. Where was the play performed?

Unfortunately, no piece of evidence can help us answer this question<sup>100</sup>. In theory, however, a Syracuse performance (maybe

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tin/London 1970) 103–21, 127–9; M. P. Pattoni, L'autenticità del *Prometeo incatenato* di Eschilo (Pisa 1987) passim. It seems to me that R. Bees, *Zur Datierung des Prometheus Desmotes* (Stuttgart 1993) does not achieve any substantial progress in the 'Prometheusfrage' over either M. Griffith's (*The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound* [Cambridge 1977]) or Pattoni's (as before) researches.

99) Thus and only thus can a connection between the trilogy and Sicily be put forward (see e. g. Herington [n. 98 above (1970)] 113–5), whereas *Prom. Vincitus* does not betray in itself any obvious signs of Sicilian influence, as it has been shown by Griffith (n. 97 above) against the common version of the 'Sicilian theory' (e. g. F. Focke, *Aeschylus' Prometheus*, *Hermes* 65 [1930] 259–304).

100) Some scholars have favoured only one place of performance, either Aetna or Syracuse (Mette [n. 89 above] 395, Rehm [n. 1 above] 31); others (U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hieron und Pindaros*, *SBakBerl* [1901] 1273–1318 [= *Id.*, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin 1972) VI 234–85], especially 1284 [247], T. Guardi, *L'attività teatrale nella Siracusa di Gerone I*, *Dioniso* 51 [1980] 25–47, especially 42,

the première?) is very likely, for Hiero had just got the old wooden theatre of that city renewed in stone by the architect Damocopus 'Myrillas'<sup>101</sup>. Also, the celebrations of the newly founded city were surely meant as a means of spreading and asserting the ideological purport of the whole procedure. The propaganda contained in Pi. P. 1 and Aeschylus' *Aetnaeae* was perhaps more needed at home, among the fretful aristocrats, than in Aetna, among colonists who had just been beneficated by Hiero.

On the other hand, it is quite natural to imagine the same celebrations, including Aeschylus' play, going on in Aetna as well, perhaps on the first occurrence of the festival Αἰτναῖα<sup>102</sup>, whether Catane-Aetna had a theatre at that time<sup>103</sup>, or a temporary structure had to be erected for the special occasion.

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G. Vallet, *Pindare et la Sicile*, in: *Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt*, XXXI, Pindare [Vandœuvres/Genève 1984] 285–320, especially 307–8) have admitted the possibility of two, though leaving the question open. A similar question is begged by Pi. P. 1, by many believed to have been performed alongside *Aetnaeae*, within the same celebrations of the newly founded city: e.g. Wilamowitz (as before) 1279 (241), E. Cingano (in: B. Gentili al., *Pindaro. Le Pitiche* [Milano 1995] 9) think of Aetna.

101) The Syracusan architect Damocopus was mentioned by Sophron, together with the occasion which prompted his nick-name (having completed the theatre, he got μύρον distributed to his fellow-citizens): Sophron fr. 128 K. The other views (shared by Guardi [n. 100 above] 28–9, Dearden [n. 72 above], Corbato [n. 1 above], etc.) on the dating (476–72 B. C.), the patron, and the material of the new fifth-century theatre (i. e. the second trapezoidal theatre = 'Syracuse III'), are to be found in C. Anti, *Teatri greci arcaici* (Padova 1947) 85–106; Id., *Guida al teatro antico di Siracusa* (Firenze 1948) 37–54; L. Polacco al., *Il teatro antico di Siracusa*, I (Rimini 1981), II (Padova 1990), especially I 167–78. For the sake of honesty, it must be mentioned that very different views are held by L. Bernabò Brea, *Studi sul teatro greco di Siracusa*, *Palladio* 17 (1967) 97–154: sed hoc archaeologi uiderint.

102) If indeed this festival dedicated to Zeus, sc. Aetnaeus, was celebrated in Catane-Aetna, and not, say, in Inessa-Aetna only at a later date: cf. Schol. ad Pi. O. 6.162a ἐν τῇ Αἰτνῇ Διὸς Αἰτναίου ἄγαλμα ἴδρυται καὶ ἑορτὴ Αἰτναῖα καλεῖται, and see Cook (n. 24 above) II.2, 908, M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung mit Ausschluss der Attischen* (Leipzig 1906) 34.

103) Archaeologists have found some rests of undoubtedly Greek masonry on the spot of the Roman theatre (K. Mitens, *Teatri greci e teatri ispirati all'architettura greca in Sicilia e nell'Italia meridionale c. 350–50 a. C.* [Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Supp. 13, 1988] 100–3). They may belong to a fifth-century theatre, as supposed by Anti (n. 101 above [1947]) 125–8 (was it in the theatre that Alcibiades spoke in front of the Catanian assembly [Th. 6.51.1]?) but then, it is still uncertain whether this dated to the Dinomenid period of the city, or later.

## 7. Staging

Supposing my attempt at reconstruction of the plot is correct, we may wonder how much of it was brought on stage, with special reference to (a) Thalia's abduction by the bird of prey, (b) her sinking into the earth. (As to the 'birth' of the Palici, we can be reasonably confident that nothing like their pond, the craters, and the bubbling water could be brought on stage.)

(a) I, for one, have no qualms about imagining Aeschylus working out the actual staging of the abduction<sup>104</sup>. The spectacular scene with a big eagle (or vulture) gliding down, seizing and lifting Thalia up into the air, could be achieved by means of the so-called γέρανος or μηχανή<sup>105</sup>, a machine which must have been strong enough to carry two actors (see Lyssa and Iris in Eur. *HF*, the Dioscuri in Eur. *El.*, Apollo and Helen in Eur. *Or.*).

Even if the play in question had been composed for Athens, I would admit such a spectacular staging. In fact there is no good reason to deny Aeschylus the use of stage machines<sup>106</sup>, unless one is so biased as to suppose him utterly alien from spectacular devices. In the case of Syracuse, however, I am even more inclined to reconstruct a grand staging. For the theatre was new, and provided with a larger and more advanced range of stage machines than the contemporary theatre in Athens<sup>107</sup>. The existence of such facilities may have induced Aeschylus to make a full use of them. The fact that all of the vase-paintings and sculptural reliefs probably inspired by

104) Let it be enough here to say that I deem Taplin's case ([n. 1 above] 253–4, 432–3, 443–7) against the use of the crane in Aeschylus far from convincing, as resting mainly on a bias against spectacle in this playwright. I find myself very close to the position of Di Benedetto/Medda (n. 9 above) 19–22.

105) Although Pollux treats the two separately (4.128 ἡ μηχανὴ δὲ θεοῦς δείκνυσι καὶ ἥρωας τοὺς ἐν ἀέρι Βελλεροφόντας ἢ Περσέας καὶ κείται κατὰ τὴν ἀριστερὰν πάροδον, ὑπὲρ τὴν σκηνὴν τὸ ὕψος κτλ., 130 B. ἡ δὲ γέρανος μηχανήμα ἐστὶν ἐκ μετεώρου καταφερόμενον ἐφ' ἀρπαγῆι σώματος, οὐ κέχρηται ἕως ἀρπάζουσα τὸ σῶμα τὸ Μένωνος), it is sensible to take them as one and the same machine.

106) Cf. Vita Aesch. (= T 1 R.) 53–5 Πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος ... τὴν ὄψιν τῶν θεωμένων κατέπληξε τῆι λαμπρότητι, γραφαῖς καὶ μηχαναῖς κτλ.

107) This aspect is emphasized by Polacco (n. 101 above) I 177, Dearden (n. 72 above) 231–2. Of course, whereas such structures as Charonian steps can still be detected, it would be vain to seek rests of the γέρανος, a machine which was presumably taken away after the performances in which it was used.



*Aetnaeae* represent the abduction may testify to the deep impact the spectacular scene had on the audience.

(b) As to Thalia sinking into the earth, it is hard to take a stand. The only parallel for such a staging would come from *Prom. Vincitus*, if indeed the protagonist there was swallowed into the earth (with the chorus) at the end of the play. As everybody knows, that is a very controversial issue in itself<sup>108</sup>. I incline to think that if a stage device of this description ever existed, that was in the renewed theatre of Syracuse, where Aeschylus could use it around 470 and again around 457, supposing the *Prometheuses* were actually composed by him, and for Sicily on his second permanence there.

### III. Propaganda

#### 1. A suitable myth

We have seen above that at a time when several myths were circulating about alleged antecedents to Greek domination in Sicily and Magna Graecia, Aeschylus moulded a new story to a similar effect, which at the same time could afford repeated occasion of justifying and extolling Hiero's policy.

#### 2. Hellenized Palici

Aeschylus, who gave the Palici a Greek genealogy, was the first Greek author who dealt with them (Macr. Sat. 5.19.16, Steph. Byz. s. v. Παλική)<sup>109</sup>. That such a novel step was taken without premeditation and consideration of its propagandistic effect, is scarcely credible. So most scholars have seen in this procedure the reflection

108) See a judicious discussion in Taplin (n. 1 above) 273–5.

109) On the cult of the Palici see D. S. 11.89, Macr. Sat. 5.19.15–9, Steph. Byz. s. v. Παλική, Str. 6.275, Ov. Met. 5.405, Serv. ad Verg. Aen. 9.581–5, Lact. Plac. ad Stat. Theb. 12.156–7, [Clem. Rom.] Homil. 5.13.5, Rufin. Recogn. 10.22.5; G. Bloch, Παλικοί, Roscher III (1897–1909) 1281–95; Ciaceri (n. 24 above) 23–37; Ziegler (n. 55 above) 100–23; J. H. Croon, The Palici. An autochthonous cult in ancient Sicily, Mnemosyne ser. IV.5 (1952) 116–29; L. Bello, Ricerche sui Palici, Kokalos 6 (1960) 71–97.

of one item of Hiero's policy, namely of his attitude towards the Sicels. This is quite reasonable, since the Palici were autochthonous deities highly worshipped in the island, very soon also by the Greeks, and who could attract Sicel nationalistic feelings. But this acknowledged fact has been variously interpreted. It has been read (a) as a reflection of Hiero's attempt at assimilating the Sicels to his state, and conciliating their friendship<sup>110</sup>. Or (b) as one aspect of a policy aiming at peaceful coexistence of different ethnic entities (Sicels, Greeks of the three stocks, i. e. Aeolians, Dorians, and Ionians)<sup>111</sup>. Or (c), more exactly, as a reflection of a policy whereby the Sicels were subdued to the Greeks, who, in their turn, were assimilating local elements, especially in the field of religion<sup>112</sup>. I would in fact rule out any willingness on Hiero's part to be friends with the Sicels on a basis of mutual respect, and also the all too modern idea of multi-ethnic society. That the Sicels were treated unscrupulously by Hiero (as by the land-owning aristocrats, and by Gelon before him) is proved, among other incidents, by the fact that in the Aetnaean region he deprived a group of them of their land, so that he might give it to the new colonists of Aetna (cf. D. S. 11.49.1,76.3).

As to the Sicels in Syracuse, we do not know whether they still were all *κυλλύριοι* (Hdt. 7.155.2), or some of them had at least gained freedom, if not political rights. Still, we can doubt that many of them watched *Aetnaeae* sitting in the audience (if the play was performed in that city); and even more that they, not being allowed to watch the performance, could get written copies of the text. So, any propagandistic message directed at the Sicels would have come to nothing. (The like will have been even truer for an Aetna performance, if there was one, because it does not appear that any Sicels were among the colonists.)

I am not envisaging the assimilation necessarily involved in the hellenization of the Palici as a means of unifying different classes and ethnic groups<sup>113</sup>. Yet, it would be rash to deny the Dinome-

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110) Pohlenz (n. 1 above) II 199, Cataudella (n. 1 above) 396–7, Corbato (n. 1 above) 67. Protests against this view, as vague and implausible, in La Rosa (n. 1 above) 156, Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 94.

111) Garzya (n. 1 above) 408–10.

112) Kossatz-Deissmann (n. 61 above [1978]) 44, Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 94.

113) This has been recently shown not to have been the case even for the cult of Demeter and Core (see D. White, *Demeter's Sicilian cult as a political instrument*,

nidae any awareness of the potential usefulness of religious policy. A plausible supposition is that the hellenization of the Palici entailed to assert once more that the Greeks had been well integrated in the traditions of the island since the remotest times, as though they were its natural masters. A similar idea was implied in typically Greek cults which lent themselves to local connections (e.g. Zeus Aetnaeus, Hephaestus, Heracles, etc.).

### 3. *Emphasis on the Dorian element*

It is well-known that the Dinomenidae, Hiero in particular, favoured Dorian cities and settlers against Ionians. Such an ethnic opposition should not be dismissed too light-heartedly<sup>114</sup>, although it is true that the Greeks of different stocks were themselves able to coexist<sup>115</sup>. Indeed under, and by, the Dinomenidae the ethnic issue was often raised, as scholars have persuasively argued<sup>116</sup>, in full awareness of the political consequences of that step. Generally speaking, ethnic opposition could, from time to time, be a real threat to political stability within the highly mixed Greek city-states of Sicily. So, any action taken against the Ionians was in a sense a preventive measure. Secondly, the ethnic opposition provided an honourable pretext to their policy of forced synoecisms and dioecisms, which depended on broader political and strategic considerations<sup>117</sup>.

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GRBS 5 [1964] 261–79; G. Zuntz, *Persephone* [Oxford 1971] 70–5; G. A. Privitera, *Politica religiosa dei Dinomenidi e ideologia dell'optimus rex*, in: *Perennitas. Studi in onore di A. Brelich* [Roma 1980] 393–411), in spite of a tenacious *communis opinio* which made of the Dinomenidae the responsible for the diffusion of that cult to that end (cf. e.g. E. Ciaceri, *Il culto di Demeter e Kora nell'antica Sicilia* [Catania 1895], Id. [n. 24 above] 191).

114) As, e.g., by E. Will, *Doriens et Ioniens* (Paris 1956), *passim*, and 58–61 on Pindar (included P. 1.61–5); contra: J. Alty, *Dorians and Ionians*, *JHS* 102 (1982) 1–14. On Will's historically conditioned approach see Malkin (n. 31 above [1994]) 39 n. 115.

115) See the example of Himera, with its population partly Ionian, and partly Dorian: *Th.* 6.5.1.

116) Maddoli (n. 40 above) II 52, Vallet (n. 100 above) 309–10.

117) The deportation of the Chalcideans of Catane and Naxos to Leontini seems to have been prompted not only by Hiero's wish to found a new city (Aetna), and hence to gain for himself the status of *οἰκιστής* – which may have been achieved also by founding one *ex novo* –, but also by his need to keep the Ionians

In terms of domestic policy, the Dinomenidae had to take into account the demands of both propertied aristocracy and propertiless masses, since they owed their power in Syracuse to discord between the two groups, and their success in bringing them together<sup>118</sup>. However, while the masses could be easily satisfied in a prosperous city, the aristocrats could object to their rule on matter of principle, too. It is not by accident that when the last of the Dinomenidae, Thrasybulus, was opposed and defeated, the aristocracy closed ranks against him. So, it is quite probable that Pi. P. 1.61–6, a passage in praise of the Spartan-like institutions granted by Hiero to Aetna, gives voice to one of the political purposes of that foundation. That is to say, faced with ever growing opposition to the illegal basis of his power, Hiero would have tried to show the aristocrats that he himself was in favour of a monarchy of Spartan type. Thence the stress on freedom (i. e. the aristocratic notion of freedom and equality among peers), on the military nature of the supreme authority, on laws which are warranty of concord between citizens (again i. e. aristocrats) and king. In this view, Hiero was ready to implement these desiderata in Aetna rather than in Syracuse, even though he wished to exploit the full propagandistic potentiality of this act mainly in Syracuse. All this is very likely, given the extent of Pindar's passage and its being filled with specifically political terms<sup>119</sup>. Now, on the basis of the Pindaric passage, it is a fair supposition that *Aetnaeae* too contained some,

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close at hand under his vigilant eye (cf. Vallet [n. 100 above] 308–10, Basta Donzelli [n. 1 above] 74), and to hinder any tight alliance of them with Anaxilas, the tyrant of Rhegion (cf. Vallet [n. 33 above] 367).

118) See G. Bruno Sunseri 'Aristocrazia e democrazia nella politica di Gelone' in: *Φιλίας χάριν*. Miscellanea di studi classici in onore di E. Manni (Roma 1980) I 294–308. On Gelon's ascent see Hdt. 7.155.

119) The best representative of this view (followed by G. Méautis, *Pindare le dorien* [Neuchâtel 1962] 160–1, and considered plausible by e. g. C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* [Oxford 1964] 133) is E. Kirsten, *Ein politisches Programm in Pindars erstem pythischen Gedicht*, *RhM* 90 (1941) 58–71, somewhat anticipated by Wilamowitz (n. 100 above) 1278–9 (240–1), Id., *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 300–1. The other view (Will [n. 114 above] 58–61, Basta Donzelli [n. 1 above] 80–2), which takes the named passage to refer vaguely to a general aristocratic ideal of 'good government', more as an expression of the poet's own feelings, and wishes for freedom in Aetna, and military glory, than of Hiero's propagandistic ends, has the odds against itself.

perhaps indirect or aetiological, praise of the Dorian institutions set up by Hiero in Aetna<sup>120</sup>.

Similarly, an issue both political and ethnic may have been implied by the scene set in Xuthia. Above I have put forward the hypothesis that this scene either brought on stage, or somehow mentioned, the eponym Xuthus, and identified his grand-father Hippotes with the Heraclid Hippotes. In that case the political purport of the scene would have been to provide a mythical antecedent to Dorian (i. e. Syracusan) sovereignty over that area, against any Ionian (i. e. Chalcidean) claim, based on the different (and probably older) story of Xuthus the son of Hellen. This view<sup>121</sup>, however speculative, seems to me more attractive than the other ones, i. e. that the Xuthia scene was either meant (a) as the 'Ionian' scene in a play providing a dramatic interpretation of an alleged new balance between Dorians and Ionians implemented by Hiero<sup>122</sup>; or (b) as the 'Aeolian' scene, and that the play, a series of ethnically differentiated tableaux, conveyed a message of peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups<sup>123</sup>. View (a) identifies the eponym of Xuthia with the more familiar Xuthus, and takes that scene to have had an 'Ionian' meaning (no better specified). Diodorus' context (5.7–9) is ignored, just as the unlikelihood of a poet working for Hiero and, at the same time, asserting a story in support of Ionian claims over Leontini. View (b) rests on a confusion of Aeolus the father of Xuthus (D. S. 5.7–8) with Aeolus the son of Arne (D. S. 4.67), and on the supposition that each act was devoted to a different ethnic group (but one wonders what the Aeolians were at in eastern Sicily), the last celebrating Syracuse's alleged panhellenism.

#### 4. *The playwright*

Hiero commissioned Aeschylus with a play to celebrate the foundation of Aetna and assert the ideological purport of this deed. That in all probability included praising what had been achieved by

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120) It is well-known that Hiero not only commissioned but also managed coherently a lot of propagandistic poetry, so that one theme was often taken over from one poet and developed by another (Privitera [n. 113 above] 410).

121) Which I partly share with Maddoli (n. 40 above) II 53.

122) Mazarino (n. 38 above) I 555.

123) Garzya (n. 1 above) 407–8.

means of forced deportation, as a blessed synoecism, asserting Greek supremacy over the Sicels, and Dorian supremacy over the Ionians, extolling Spartan-like institutions, and, perhaps only indirectly, eulogizing the Dinomenidae as exemplary rulers. This whole episode in Aeschylus' career, however little we positively know of it, is most interesting. It shows a good poet working out artistic devices to meet the demands posed by the patron, quite irrespectively of the ideological purport of the commissioned work. It is striking that in all likelihood one main dramatic device (final aetiology with identity of place to bridge up the temporal distance: see above) should have been used again in *Eumenides*, to celebrate completely different institutions and political set-up. More generally, it shows our playwright in the same attitude of ideological flexibility as we are prepared to find in lyric poets. This episode of Aeschylus' career has hardly ever been fully appreciated<sup>124</sup>, just because it clashes against very tenacious assumptions. Some of these are that, through his plays, Aeschylus educated his audience to the 'good', preached in earnest like a prophet, supported democracy out of deeply-felt conviction, or that tragedy is essentially and inherently a democratic genre. Under these assumptions scholars have either neglected *Aetnaeae*, or have tried to find explanations for the paradox they thought to be faced with – Aeschylus working for a tyrant very much like Simonides, Pindar or Bacchylides. So it has been imagined that our play must have either asserted an ideal of peaceful coexistence in a multi-racial society, or struck some note of serious reflection on the fate of the deported Chalcidians, or divulged a message of concord and co-operation among the different ethnic entities, or left room for the Ionian Leontini alongside the Dorian Syracuse<sup>125</sup>. Now, all these conjectures are not only speculative, but also rest on a biased discomfort about our data. Apart from the fact that there is no need to excuse Aeschylus for having pleased a tyrant, those excuses, all aimed at finding some 'good' intentions after all, are all unconvincing in the case of a drama commissioned by a tyrant, who used to exploit the propagandistic potential of poetry. All in all – omitting to refute here the other above-mentioned assumptions – the conclusions to draw

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124) A partial exception is Griffith (n. 97 above) 106.

125) The first view is by Garzya (n. 1 above) 407–8; the second by Rehm (n. 1 above) 33; the remaining ones by Basta Donzelli (n. 1 above) 93–5.

from *Aetnaeae* about the playwright are the following. First, and in general, Aeschylus was no “prophet of democracy”<sup>126</sup>; for, had he been a constant militant in the democratic party (supposing the existence of such one in Athens before the 460s), and had he resorted to his tragedies as a vehicle for propaganda of his own political creed, not only he would hardly have accepted Hiero’s mercenary proposal, but also Hiero would have had qualms about commissioning him of all poets with that propagandistic piece of work. Secondly, at least in the particular case of *Aetnaeae*, Aeschylus proved to be as ready to work for the mercenary Muse, as Simonides, Pindar, Bacchylides.

Oxford

Letizia Poli-Palladini

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126) I cannot agree with A. H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Bari 1996) 413, 421 on the use of this label.