

SYMBOLAE OSLOENSES
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*avec mes remerciements sincères
et l'expression personnelle de
mon cordial dévouement
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THE NECROMANCY IN THE PERSAI OF AISCHYLOS

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I. Homer.

Though the influence of the dead upon the living does not play any important part in Homer, yet the introduction of the Nekyia into the *Odyssey* is a sufficient proof that the oracles of the dead even in Homeric society had rather a strong hold on the minds of the upper classes to which the rhapsodes addressed themselves. In fact the Nekyia gives us the first description, and a rather detailed one, of the psychomantic ritual used either in the oracular centres or in private circles at that time. No doubt such a theme, the eliciting of the secrets of the dead, had a too thrilling effect on the auditors not to be used in the poetry of more remote times. We may even suppose that it had been utilized in epic poetry before 'Homer' made his *Odysseus* call forth the souls in a region beyond the reach of men, on the very outskirts of the realm of the dead.

To these distant borders of the *Oceanus* *Odysseus* sails in his ship which is driven by a northwind that appears spontaneously (X 507) — later, i. e. XI 7, it is ascribed to the demonic influence of *Circe*. This is a motive conventional in fairy-stories, and here used in the same way as the tale of the fairy ship that brings *Odysseus* home from the island of the *Phaeacians*. That the *Cimmerians* live in the dark of night is a motive borrowed from the fairy-tales, and it is still preserved by Homer, but further rationalized by making *Odysseus* reach the 'outskirts of *Oceanus*' at evening-time, having sailed the whole day, from morning to evening, on the *Oceanus*.

Contrasting with this combination of *Odysseus*' adventures with motives due to story-tellers the sacrifice that *Odysseus* offers

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135776

to the dead is described in a rather detailed and exact way, a description which supplies a precious document of the ritual followed up in the oracles of the dead in those remote times. We are well justified in supposing that the Greeks took over the *ψυχοπομπεία* and the like oracles from the pre-Greek population (on the Minoan Sarcophagus from Hagia Triada the epiphany of the dead hero before his sepulchre is represented — in that case the sacrifices offered to him, viz. a boat [filled with fruits?] and two calves, are supposed to elicit his soul from the grave).

The ritual described in the *Odyssey* is put into the mouth of the sorceress Circe, perhaps just because such a ritual in the times of the poet was mostly known to his public from practices of private necromancy. But no doubt the stately ritual originally is to be referred to oracular centres commonly known and universally acknowledged.

With a bronze sword Odysseus digs out a hole in the ground. A sword may seem very little useful for this purpose, but for apotropaic usages, especially if bronzen, it is very well fitted. Moreover a hero always carries his sword at his side. The hole is exactly one cubit square (*ὄσσον τε πυγούσιον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα*). It is puzzling that the hole is not a round one, but it may be that the hole is to be orientated conformably to the four quarters of the world or that a square hole more resembles the actual grave, and that the libations to the souls in that way better reach their aim. This remains obscure. Now the series of the ritual performances is this:

1) expiation of all dead (*μελίκρητον*, wine, water, finally flour strewn on the whole).

2) promise of a sacrifice to all dead to be offered after the return of Odysseus to his home: a sterile cow and other burnt offerings — to Teiresias extra a black ram (castrated?).

3) *αἱμακουρία* for the dead — the blood is taken from 2 black sheep, a ram and a ewe (X 572), that are skinned and thereupon

4) thrown into the fire. Follows

5) a prayer to Hades and Persephone.

In this imposing ritual we may consider no. 2 — the promise of sacrifices to the dead after the return home — as quite extraordinary and due to the fact that Odysseus is in foreign parts.

As a sailor in danger, or as sailors leaving the foreign port homeward bound (formerly as nowadays), he makes his promise of good gifts after safe return (to the dead, because he now is in the realm of the dead).

First all souls are invited by the libations, the *μελίρρητον*, thereupon the souls are satisfied by the pouring out of blood. Here is a climax: the blood only — not the *μελίρρητον* so conventional in sacrifices to the dead — restores the *φρένες ἔμπεδοι* to the dead who were allured by the *χοαί*. But the fire (no. 4) apparently is introduced only because the two sheep being extremely *tabu* must be annihilated. And this burning quite naturally becomes a burnt-offering which for itself called for a prayer: this prayer again naturally was addressed to the sovereigns of the nether world. But the secondary character, and the inferior importance, of this performance appears from the fact that Odysseus leaves it completely — sacrifice and prayer — to his comrades, he himself being busy about things more important.

Consequently the climax of this passage, as 'Homer' gives it, is this: from all dead to the particular one now called upon, Teiresias; from sprinkling the *χοαί* round the hole to the pouring of blood into the hole — finally from *λιταί*, addressed to the dead, to *εὐχοαί*, addressed to the mighty deities of the nether world, to Hades and Persephone. May be that the very analogy with the ritual followed in sacrifices to the Olympian deities caused the placing of the libations to all dead before the special blood-sacrifice to Teiresias. In 'Olympic' ritual very often a sacrifice to the Olympian gods or one or some of them precedes the application to the special divinity whose help is desired at this special moment¹.

Homer describes this necromantic ritual only throwing out the chief points and leaving all minor details out. This appears from his silence upon the object of the skinning. We know very well from other sources to which end the skins of black rams or oxen — even in the number of two (though in our special case the two chthonic deities may have brought in the two sheep — the

¹ Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination* I 334, is not aware of the stately and circumstantial ritual of necromancy required by Circe for this important occasion.

ram for Hades and the ewe for Persephone) were used by those consulting the oracles of the dead or of chthonic deities. They slept on them while awaiting the appearance of the souls or the divinities¹. The poet is silent upon this important detail, but he lays stress on the burning of the bodies. Why does not Odysseus, for instance, kneel on these black skins (cp. v. 29)? In fact the poet did not know what to do with the skins, these being quite superfluous when the 'incubant' himself was transferred to the very realm of the dead. On the whole he did not sleep, but was kneeling at the βόθρος in order to hear the voices of the dead from the locality appointed for this necromantic ritual by Circe, X 513:

ἔνθα μὲν εἰς Ἐχέροντα Πυριφλεγέθων τε βέουσι
 Κώκυτός θ', ὅς δ' ἠ Στυγὸς ὕδατός ἐστιν ἀπορρώξ,
 πέτρῃ τε ξύνεσις τε δύω ποταμῶν ἐριδούπων.

In other words: as in the upper world the souls swarm at night especially at the crossroads, so the souls in the nether world especially keep to the streams (they had also on leaving this life been taken across a stream) and haunt the crossing, the *bivium* or the *trivium*, of these streams. I do not know of any exact parallel to this detail, taken from the descriptions of *καταβάσεις* into Hades. But no doubt the poet here was inspired from superstitions and practices concerned with the crossways of this upper world.

Now for the βόθρος itself (XI 25): it serves here only so to speak as a drinking cup of the souls, not as the place whence the dead swarm out from Hades and through which they again return sinking below. The souls gather (v. 36 αἱ δ' ἀγέροντο) up from the Erebus (ὑπέξ Ἐρέβους) and move round the pit cut out in the ground with the sword (v. 42 περὶ βόθρον ἐφοίτων). Originally the souls rose from their graves when satisfied with the libations and the sacrifices on their tombs and temporarily revived: then there was no danger that other souls than the special ψυχή called for should appear. But in necromantic oracles — as e. g. in Ephyra in Thesprotis (Herod. V 92) — it was no easy matter to get hold of the right soul. Odysseus of course wants

¹ Deubner, De incubatione 27; v., e. g., Strabo VI 284 on the oracle of Kalchas: ἐναγίζουσι δ' αὐτῷ μέλανα κριὸν οἱ μαντευόμενοι, ἐγκοιμώμενοι ἐν τῷ δέρματι.

to question the μάντις, Teiresias, just because that illustrious sooth-sayer had the mantic faculty latent in himself — and not the crowd of common νέκυες, as was, even at the time of the poet, and later still more commonly, the belief of the crowd. Yea, Teiresias' authority as a μάντις may have increased after his death, because the voice of man sounds still more mighty and impressive when coming from the grave, from the mouth of Hades. Odysseus uses the sharp edge of his good sword to keep the unbidden souls away. The sword (as well as a knife, an axe, a pair of scissors) was according to Greek — and common — superstition eminently possessed of an apotropaic faculty¹.

Hopfner, Offenbarungszauber II § 333, believes that according to Homer the epiphany of the dead is caused by Odysseus visiting an 'entrance to Hades' (such 'entrances being characteristic of all νεκρομαντεῖα, Πλουτώνια, Χαρώνια) and by magic formulas, not mentioned in the poem, but presupposed by the poet. But the first motive may be sufficiently explained as an epic motive, the hero's κατάβασις being mixed up with his visiting the distant fairy land beyond the Oceanus. The result, however, is a rather perplexing vagueness in the description of the epiphany of the souls. For these already beforehand, as we are induced to suppose, dwell on the shores of this dark region. But at the same time the blood sacrificed to them causes them 'to gather ὑπέξ Ἐρέβους' (cp. the end of the song, XI 627 sqq.), a discrepancy already noticed above.

As for the magic *carmina* the poet hardly knows anything of such compulsory formulas. They do not fit well into the εὐχολαί and λιταί mentioned in v. 34, neither do they harmonize well with the kneeling gesture of Odysseus (v. 29 γουνούμην). Of course the poet may have suppressed them as he evidently omitted the preparatory ascetic measures prescribed to visitors of all such oracles. But in the *necromanteia* of higher quality and of more official stamp the *carmina* may early have been dropped, cp. e. g. the oracle of Trophonios in Lebadeia.

¹ Cp. my 'Opferritus' p. 300 and, e. g., Negelein, Der Traumschlüssel, p. 163, where the Old-Indian magician performs his hocus-pocus amidst the graves of the dead, turning his face to the south, clothed in redcoloured garments and holding a sword in his hand.

II. Aischylos.

Aischylos has with a striking theatrical effect made use of the necromancy in the Persai. But he does not tell us so much if we try to extract interesting folkloristic details from his description. Of course he knows necromantic oracles. But his knowledge of necromancy is chiefly based on his reading of Homer, i. e. the *Nekyia*, as he so far probably also did in his trilogy *Ψυχαγωγοί, Πηνελόπη, Ὀστολόγοι, Κίρκη σατυρική* (see Wilamowitz, Interpret. zu Aisch. 246 sq.). At any rate Aischylos reflects Greek, not Persian necromancy. The oriental colouring which he commonly is supposed to have given to the necromantic scene is at the best reduced, as soon will be seen, to rather trifling circumstances¹.

Before the necromantic scene the queen had sacrificed to 'the gods' (v. 522) — this in full harmony with the psychomantic cult e. g. of Trophonios, Paus. IX 39.

The necromantic scene Aischylos naturally divides into two parts: the sacrifice to the dead king and the 'epode'.

The former part corresponds to the libations in Od. XI 27 sqq. Only there is a slight difference: in Homer the libations are spent to all dead, but the blood to Teiresias; in Aischylos this has so to speak been concentrated into one ritual act, the libations being spent to the single dead² whom the queen wants to consult, and the blood-offering, the *αίμακουρία*, being completely dropped. This the poet probably did at his own risk. He needed only to think of the cult of Gaia on Aigina — if indeed he knew this detail from the cult of an island which as yet had not got into the hands of the Athenians — where the priestess drank ox-blood before descending into the cavern to vaticinate (Plin. h. n. XXVIII 41). But

¹ Aischylos' astonishing ignorance — or complete negligence — of Persian affairs is well illustrated by Ove Jørgensen in his study "Aischylos' Perserdrاما som historisk kildekrift" (Copenhagen 1914).

² The poet is rather vague on this point: "the peace-offerings to the father of my child" (v. 609) the queen later corrects, or better generalizes (v. 622), into "honours, drank by the ground, for the gods below". Wilamowitz, Aischylos-Interpretationen p. 45, has given prominence to this as he thinks, discrepancy of the poet; the poet has "sowohl die Absicht des Opfers als auch das Lokal gewechselt"; but Dareios the queen no doubt included in her sacrifice to γῆ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς (v. 523 and compare v.

such a blood-offering apparently did not suit Aischylos' taste, or he did not dare to produce on the orchestra a protracted sacrifice of victims. He contented himself with libations, well-known to him from actual sepulchral cult, the cult of the heroes, and from literature. From the actual cult of the dead he also borrowed the wreaths v. 618 (which Homer did not and could not mention) as well as the plain attire that the queen now wears (v. 608). But Aischylos makes himself guilty of a strange mixing up of libations to all dead (v. 619 *χοαῖσι ταῖσδε νερτέρων*, but v. 609 only *παιδὸς πατρί*, cp. v. 685) and of ὕμνοι that are to evoke the dead king from Hades; Homer kept all dead and the single soul of Teiresias distinctly apart, and — as we have seen — he altogether dropped the formulas and the ὕμνοι ψυχαγωγοί. Dareios on his appearing declares that he, as might be expected, “benevolently, *πρευμενής*, accepted the drink-offering” (v. 685), the *μειλικτήρια* (v. 610), but he evidently does not listen to the addition to the sacrifice, the ‘ghost-compelling anthems’, the *ψυχαγωγοὶ ὕμνοι*, in the same mood. Euripides was more in conformity with the traditional ritual, true ‘realist of the stage’, when he made (in the rhesis of Talthymbios) Neoptolemos evoke the ghost of Achilles in Hekabe (v. 535): *δέξαι χράς μου τάσδε κηλητηρίους / νεκρῶν ἀγαγούς · ἐλθὲ δ’ ὡς πίης μέλαν / κέρης ἀκραιφνὲς αἶμα, πρευμενῆς δ’ ἡμῖν γενοῦ*, etc. The effect, however, of the ‘ghost-compelling’ hymn of Aischylos is in so far limited as it depends on the leave of absence granted to Dareios by the chthonic deities, the *φθιμένων πομποί* (v. 626). This idea the poet no doubt had from actual mantic and necromantic cult where sacrifices to the deities — at least a select body of them — as already noticed above, preceded the application made to the special divinity or hero in question. We may emphasize that Aischylos in this drama on this point handles the

220.). Otherwise the poet is rather vague also in his conception of the king. In the lyric part Dareios is *ἰσοδαίμων* (v. 632), ‘god from Susa’ (v. 644), *θεομήτωρ* on earth (v. 655), but in the dialogue Dareios considers himself no better than other mortals, or better than other *δυνάσται* dead (v. 690). Such a vagueness — quite puzzling as it is — may be excused in this special case where we have to do with the Persian *μέγας βασιλεύς* being evoked, but in actual Greek cult the categories of chthonic deities, heroes, and common men deceased never were mingled together in such a way (cp. my annotations below).

ritual facts nearly as freely as he did the historical facts. The obvious reason to account for this is the plot of the drama transferred to a distant and indefinite Orient, to the capital 'Susa'.

Now for the libations, the *πελανός* (v. 524, cp. v. 204) poured out to the soul of Dareios at his kingly sepulchre by his consort:

- 611 βούς τ' ἀφ' ἀγνῆς λευκὸν εὐποτον γάλα,
 τῆς τ' ἀνθεμουργοῦ στάγμα, παμφαῆς μέλι,
 λιβάσιν ὕδρηλαῖς παρθένου πηγῆς μέτα,
 ἀκήρατόν τε μητρὸς ἀγρίας ἄπο
- 615 ποτὸν παλαιᾶς ἀμπέλου γάνος τόδε·
 τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐν φύλλοισι θαλλούσης βίον
 ἕξανθῆς ἐλάας καρπὸς εὐώδης πάρα.

Here we may find more real Greek ritual than readers mostly are used to discover (cp. the queen's "dipping the hands in the pure fountain" and the sacrifices to the 'evil-averting powers' after her bad dreams, v. 203 sqq. — also a Greek usage, as the commentators generally state). The milk is from an ἀγνή βοῦς (the cow is 'pure', in the same sense as the *μόσχος ἀκήρατος* in Eur. Iph. T. 1082, i. e. untouched by the yoke)¹. The water was taken from a 'virgin spring' — not simply 'pure water' in the ordinary sense, as the scholiast takes it, but either really 'new water' — from a spring that had not yet been used, or, better, from a spring that elsewhere was not used for secular purposes. As to the various and much detailed prescriptions for the ritual character of the water cp. e. g. Pap. Berol. mag. II 37 ὕδωρ καινοῦ φρέατος ὀρυγέτος πρὸ μηνῶν πέντε ἢ ἐντὸς ἐτῶν πέντε ἢ ὃ ἐὰν καταλάβῃς ἀπὸ πρώτης ἡμέρας τῆς ὀρύξεως; even a libation of the conventional sepulchral character, used for magic (in casu mantic, as Apollon is invoked) purposes, may be so to speak refined and subtilized by particular instructions, cp. e. g. Pap. Berol. mag. I 286 σπονδῆν τέλεσον ἀπὸ οἴνου καὶ μέλιτος καὶ γάλακτος καὶ ὀμβρίου ὕδατος (even for the milk to be used we sometimes find special rules: Ov. met. VII 247 *tepidi carchesia lactis*, Stat. Theb. IV 452 *vernum lac!*). As to the wine, the words of Aischylos hardly mean

¹ The scholiasts, however, vary much in their interpretations: ἢ διὰ τὸ τοῖς θεοῖς ἀεὶ τὰς βοῦς θύεσθαι ἢ διὰ τὸ ταύτην εἶναι λευκὴν . . . ἢ διὰ τὸ ἀγελαίαν εἶναι . . . ἢ ἀγνῆς · τῆς ἀσινούς καὶ μηδέ τινα βλάβην ἐχούσης ἢ ποδὸς στερηθείσης ἢ ὀφθαλμοῦ.

“living juice from an ungrafted wine”, as Campbell translated it. This μήτηρ ἀγρία Teuffel-Wecklein ad l. explained as ‘ex agris proveniens’, and the παλαιὰ ἄμπελος as ‘Übertragung der Eigenschaft des Weins auf den Stock’, much to the same sense as Wilamowitz who in his edition annotated ad v. 611 ‘castitas re vera non vaccae, sed lactis’ (the purity of the milk sounds rather trivial) and v. 614 ‘ἀγριότης vini meracis potius quam vitis’. But the ἄμπελος ἀγρία, mentioned by Theophrastus, was at least in later times a definite sort of wineplant, the *labrusca*, see Plin. h. n. XXIII 19 and XIV 98 (*vinum oenanthinum*). The *labrusca* was, according to Pliny, just used for superstitious purposes, *utuntur ea pro amuleto et ad expiationem*. Probably the μήτηρ ἀγρία (μήτηρ sounds very appropriately in the mouth of the queen, herself the desolate mother of Xerxes) is the poetic version of the ἄμπελος ἀγρία. In the same way παλαιὰ may also be taken directly, ‘old wild wine’. We ought not to think of good old wine from the king’s vaults.

Now for the ‘pious hymns’ that the chorus is to sing to make Dareios appear (v. 620) — ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε! It is in itself, as far as I can see, quite exceptional that the person who wants to see and listen to the dead and who himself brings the sacrifice or pours out the libations, leaves it to another to speak or recite the *carmen* which forces the dead to appear. Here of course the technique of the drama has caused Aischylos to follow his own way: the chorus was there to sing its song, and so the queen had to be engaged only in pouring out the libations which better might have been left to a subordinate person. But as soon as the song has fallen silent and Dareios has risen from his ὄχθος causing a complete consternation of his old councillors, the queen has to speak on behalf of the confused chorus, to instruct Dareios on things newly passed, to hear his grave misgivings for the future and to listen to his wise counsels.

The chorus accompanies the queen’s approaching the grave with its anapaests. It goes on accompanying her 3 libations with 3 strophes — as the third libation is finished, the dead appears. Here we only have to notice the natural progress of the thoughts and the climax: first the Earth, Hermes (probably not as a ψυχοπομπός — Dareios appears without being conducted by Hermes — but in conformity with old Greek belief who considered Hermes

really as a mighty ruler of the ghosts¹), Pluto — thereupon Aidoneus alone (str. 2) — finally Dareios, the βαλῆν of the βάρβαροι (str. 3). Consequently with the 3rd libation and the 3rd strophe the sacrifice, and the address to the dead king — I think, also the intensity of the voices — reaches its culminating point. Whereupon the bewilderment, then the complete silence of the chorus is the more striking. It is of course not unimportant that the first address to the three mighty powers of the nether world should have been presented in anapaests (the contrast between the βασιλεύς ἐνέρον and the common 'ghost', ψυχή, one of the *profanum vulgus* below there, a θνητός v. 632, for whose getting leave of absence the chorus prays, v. 630, is also to be noted). In this way the motive for the application to these deities — "Dareios alone of all dead (θνητῶν²) may be able to tell us the remedy of all evils and how to reach their end" — is uttered in a more quiet tone and with great weight before it is intensified in the lyric strain.

In the following lyric part Headlam (Class. Rev. 1902 p. 57) was sure to discover traces of a previous compulsion put upon the deities of Hades and upon the soul of Dareios. From v. 639 νέρθεν ἄρα κλύει μου he concluded that there already might have been some call upon the dead Dareios, and consequently he supposed that the chorus had begun with regular ἐπωδαί — as in customary magic — 'in unintelligible jargon', before it broke out into their hymn: ἦ ῥ' αἶει etc. But v. 639 is sufficiently explained by the song that we are hearing, and παναίολα βάρβαρα (v. 635) which are determined as βάρβαρα etc. cannot prove such a thesis³. In usual

¹ See my study 'Hermes und die Toten' (1909) p. 41 sqq.

² This is the reading of MSS which Gomperz (followed e. g. by Wilamowitz, but not by Mazon in his Budé-edition) corrected into θρήνων — with no plausible reason. The genitive as a necessary supplement to πέρας that Wilamowitz wants may be easily supplied from the previous κελῶν ἄκος.

³ Mazon in his edition translates this quite correctly and exhaustively: "m'entend-il lancer en langue barbare, claire à son oreille, ces appels gémissants, lugubres, où se mêlent tous les accents de la plainte (παναίολα)". Of course the 'barbaric', i. e. Persian language is the proper language to be used by Persians to the Persian king; the Persians call themselves 9 times in this play βάρβαροι; δύσθροα means "difficult to pronounce", sc. because of the affliction of the chorus.

magic — at least of later times — the incantation began with unarticulated sounds or voices (Luk. Men. 9 βόθρον τε ὠρυξάμεθα καὶ τὰ μῆλα κατεσφάξαμεν καὶ τὸ αἷμα περὶ αὐτὸν ἐσπείσαμεν· ὁ δὲ μάγος . . . δ᾿ἄδα κατέχων . . . παμμέγεθες . . . ἀνακραγῶν δαίμονάς τε ὁμοῦ πάντας ἐπεβοᾶτο καὶ Ποινὰς καὶ Ἑρινύας “καὶ νυχίαν Ἐκάτην καὶ ἐπαινὴν Περσεφόνειαν” παραμιγνύς ἅμα καὶ βαρβαρικά τινα καὶ ἄσημα ὀνόματα καὶ πολυσύλλαβα). We know from our magic papyri what sorts of sounds, words and formulas were used for this purpose. This aimed at ‘breaking the soil’ before the opening of Hades and the appearing of the ghosts. It was often accompanied by regular thunder (Ov. met. XIV 406, cp. VII 204, Philostr. Ap. T. IV 16, Luk. Philops. 22). This incantation was uttered in a forced tempo, probably also with quick movements or gesticulations (Luk. I. I. ἐπίτροχόν τι καὶ ἀσαφῆς ἐφθέγγετο, Sen. Oed. 561 *carmen . . . rabido minax decantat ore*). But how is this to be reconciled with the brilliant song of the chorus of Aischylos, composed in a rhythm (choriambs, ithyph., glyc., ionici etc.) that, even if it is brought out in an ever accelerating tempo, does not at all suggest a ‘barbaric’, and even less a magic song? The oriental colour that interpreters usually detect in this song, is reduced to the kingly dress of Dareios (v. 660 sq.), to his title and his name. Further details Aischylos did not know, at least did not care to tell. There may be a trace of incantation in str. 3 (v. 658 sq.) ἔθ’ ἔθ’ ἰοῦ . . . βάσκε πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν οἶ, also concluding v. 671 (the reminiscence from epic poetry adding to the solemn effect), as Headlam l. l. pointed out. But more likely the old Persian counsellors utter this penetrating prayer in despair (cp. the imperatives used in the corresponding scene in Choeph. 331 κλυθε νυν, ὦ πάτερ, v. 480 δός etc.). However, the name Δαριάν or Δαρειάν v. 651 and v. 662, may, as already stated, be due to the rule of magic that the true name of the person invoked, or evoked, must be placed in the proper place of the ritual incantation — Aischylos may have complied to this rule by forming or reproducing the unique forme Δαρειάν. A specifically Persian colour he probably did not even attempt to impart to it, because no other proper name of a Persian has got this ending in his play. The (probably Semitic) title of Dareios, βαλῆν (v. 657), may be explained in the same way, sounding to the auditory like the genuine title of an

Oriental despot. But a regular incantation Aischylos surely did not compose, Aischylos no more than the Homeric poet in the *Nekyia*. The dramatist has so to speak socialized and individualized the nether world and its inhabitants still more than the epic poet did. In Homer the whole crowd of ghosts at once swarm to the blood-drink as soon as it is poured out, but in Aischylos the nether world is ruled by three mighty powers whom all other ghosts obey as their subjects and to whom they have to apply for leave of absence. This leave is not easy to obtain (v. 688). Again the ghosts dare not outstay their term of leave, v. 692: τάχυνε δ' ὡς ἀμεμπτος ὦ χρόνου. These details Aischylos borrowed from common superstition of that time — cp. 'Ghost' in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* I 1 and 5 — and we still sometimes find common people, in Greece as elsewhere, sticking to the same or similar belief well known in fairytales as well as in folksongs. Even the bitter touch of irony that Dareios gives his remark on the greediness and jealous parsimony of the powers below Aischylos derived from the same source, v. 688:

ἔστι δ' οὐκ εὐέξοδον,
 ἄλλως τε πάντως χοί κατὰ χθονὸς θεοί
 λαβεῖν ἀμείνους εἰσιν ἢ μεθιέναι.

This is genuine popular humour, such as even Vergil, *Aen.* VI 392 sqq., with much the same effect did not disdain to introduce in order to characterize Charon as the vulgar sailor. Just at the moment where the tragic pathos has reached its climax, the humour of daily life, of substantial reality, throws a sharp flash of light into the sombre aspect of night. A further touch of what may be called the day life of the world below Aischylos lent to the description of the dead being shocked at every unusual sound heard from above — this to characterize the anguish of the slowly awakening and rising Dareios, v. 683. Those below hear every blow on the earth as a knock on the ceiling of their silent abode. This was the ruling idea in the ritual of the 'greater initiation' of Demeter *Kidaria* in Pheneos (*Paus.* VIII 15 βάρδοις τοὺς ὑποχθονίους παίζει¹), it was also traditional, though of course exceptional, in sepulchral cult for people fervently entreating the help of

¹ We should expect βάρδοις <γῆν παίων> τοὺς ὑποχθονίους <καλεῖ>.

the dead (Aisch. Choeph.), in chthonic cult (cp. the behaviour of Meleager's mother when calling on the Erinyes). And it was already used by Homer to characterize the fear of Hades being afraid that the soil, the roof of his palace, should break above his head at the turmoil raised by the fighting men and gods, II. XX 62:

δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἄλτο καὶ ἴαχε μὴ οἱ ὑπερθεῖν
γαῖαν ἀναρρήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων, etc.

So also the Dareios of Aischylos declares (v. 683) that the earth "groans, is struck and scratched", scil. by the mourning and despairing Persian people entreating the nether deities for help. The chorus itself was 'standing near the tomb', v. 686 — it did not walk round the tomb, as Hopfner, Offenb. § 340 and others suppose, though thus encircling the grave is conventional in sepulchral rite; how could the choreutai walk in this way all the time singing a chorus in such a rhythm? Neither did the chorus strike nor scratch the earth — though it probably at the end of the epode falls on earth in the gestus of προσκύνησις. To the whole scene of libation and singing Aischylos has given the character of decency though other poets might have been induced here to produce a more effectful spectacle. Very characteristic of this decorum, but rather surprising in such a sepulchral-magical scene, is the queen's ordering εὐφημία (v. 620 ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε), as if they were going to sacrifice to ordinary θεοί of this world. From the scope of ideas popular amongst common people Aischylos, as well as Homer, also borrowed the idea that dead men pursue their old occupations from here above, and that they hold the same social position as in life, yea wear the same attire, the same distinctions (v. 660 sqq.). A dead king consequently fills an exceptional position in Hades, based firstly on his former power (so also in Choeph. v. 355 sqq.), secondly on his great services done to men when alive: v. 655 "a better man than Dareios the Persian soil did not conceal", which then is further explained in the 2nd strophe and antistrophe. Moreover the king of the dead ought to have a special sympathy for a late king of the living, so to speak for his royal colleague, himself also a 'god' (v. 641 δαίμονα, v. 644 θεόν, v. 655 θεομήστωρ). All this throws into relief the truly human character that Aischylos has given to the old despot

(v. 666) of Persia — he was neither alive nor dead a μάντις, only his slowly awakening memory of old 'oracles' rendered his words mantic¹ — and to the whole scene of necromancy. The Attic dramatist does not, even in this matter, care much about the historical truth: μέγας βασιλεύς is a 'father' to his people (v. 662 — in quite euphemistic tone v. 671 πάτερ ἄνακτε). The Attic opinion on this point surely is much better illustrated, in harmony with Herodotus, by the artist of the so-called 'vase of Dareios' in Naples. As a 'father' Dareios also, when sinking back into his grave, gives to the old men the good counsel not to exaggerate their sorrow at the great losses of Persia, v. 841: 'cheer your souls with comforts day by day, wealth (πλοῦτος — perhaps with a touch of better irony, as he himself belongs to the realm of Πλούτων) does not help the dead'.

On the whole we may state that the nerve of the whole necromantic scene in the Persai is the belief in the power of the heroes, their faculty to protect and to help the surviving in the highest danger — this belief having grown especially strong in Attica after the Persian wars (cp. Jørgensen l. l.): they really were πατέρες to their πόλις — the danger of Persia is to the dead Dareios, thinking as a true Athenian, the danger of his own πόλις (v. 682).

III.

There are some peculiarities in the plot of the Persai which well deserve the attention of readers. The fate of Xerxes, the characterization of his juvenile haughty spirit (ὑβρις), the failure of his adventurous expedition towards the west, finally his miserable return to his country bear — according to the exposition of Aischylos — striking resemblances to the fate of Phaethon, in fact so striking that it is likely that Phaethon's fate here on many essential points exercised a decided influence on the genius of the Athenian dramatist.

We do not know very much of the plot of Aischylos' Heliades (fr. 68—73 Nauck², cp. G. Hermann, Opuscula III 130 sqq. and Knaack, Quaest. Phaeth. p. 17 sq.). The hazardous drive of Phaethon,

¹ So also Homer in the Nekyia presented only Teiresias, who already on earth was a μάντις, as the single soothsayer of Hades worth hearing.

the son of Helios, who could not manage the fiery horses of the Sun and paid the forfeit of his life, was of course the central point of the drama the chorus of which was made up of his anxious and distressed sisters, 'the daughters of Helios'. Phaethon's death was due to his ὕβρις. Perhaps without the knowledge of his wise and good father, but supported by his compliant mother he had contrived to get the chance of a day's drive over heaven — in a messenger's ῥῆσις his father probably was informed of his downfall and of the disaster caused to the whole world. May be that Phaethon's lamentably damaged body at the winding up of the drama was brought on the orchestra and bewailed by his mother and sisters. There are, as stated above, a number of parallels to Phaethon's fate in the Persai which may here be shortly indicated. Xerxes is the young prince from the East, the regions of the 'golden' Sun¹, the country of wonder, of immense riches, v. 79 χρυσογόνου χεραῖς ἰσόθεος φῶς (cp. v. 2 of the Persian counsellors τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων ἐδράνων φύλακες, further v. 9, 45, 53, 159, 168, 250, 314 Χρυσεύς — in opposition to all this 'gold of the orient' we hear of Attica, situated πρὸς δυσμαῖς ἀνακτος Ἡλίου φθινάσματος, and its 'fountain of silver', v. 238)¹. In Herod. III 134 we hear of his ambitious mother Atossa pushing his son on to go against Hellas, but the wording of Aischylos harmonizes still better with the young Phaethon being irritated by his playfellows who did not believe in the Sun being his father and so instigated him to his daring venture, v. 752:

ταῦτά τοι κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκεται
 θούριος Ξέρξης etc.

Then it is the ὕβρις v. 808, 821 — so Dareios terms the folly of his son — or the νέον θράσος (v. 744), then it is the ἄτη (v. 99, cp. v. 93, 822), the ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων (v. 354, cp. v. 345, 472, 724, 911, 921) or θεῶν φθόνος (v. 362. cp. v. 742, 827) which destroys the Persian king, θεοβλαβοῦντ' ὑπερκόμπω θράσει, v. 831. So the sun also might have designated the foolish hazard of his

¹ Cp. Eur. Phaeth. fr. 781 N.²

κρύψω δέ νιν
 ἔστοῖσι θαλάμοις, ἔνθ' ἔμῃ κεῖται πόσει
 χρυσός· μόνη δὲ κληῖθρ' ἐγὼ σφραγίζομαι.

son driving from the sunny East to the far West in spite of his father and the Gods. Zeus destroys Phaethon with his thunderbolt — on his might as universal god cp. Aisch. Hel. fr. 70—, and according to Dareios Zeus is the 'severe punisher of boastful thoughts' — (εὐθύνος βάρύς (v. 828). The idea of Phaethon driving the carriage of the Sun with its bolting horses may directly have started the wonderful dream of the queen, v. 181 sqq.: the two stately women, Persia and Hellas, being yoked by Xerxes to his car, but quarelling and so wrecking the chariot and precipitating the young prince to the ground: 'my son fell headlong and Dareios stood beside and pitied him' (v. 198). At last we see Xerxes returning in ragged clothes — in so much a living illustration and parallel to the unfortunate son of Helios. The Heliades may have struck the same note of lamentation as the chorus of the Persai of Aischylos. In this way we better understand the poet's characterization of the queen and of the dead king: we can better judge of the remarkable displacement of the historical truth of which Aischylos made himself guilty in order to put the hazardous and sinful adventure of their son into relief. We may now also better understand the central position of Dareios in the play. His words, mantic as they sound from the grave, powerful as the words of a 'god', authoritative as the counsels of a father and full of wisdom as the words of a grand old man admired by all. His words give us the rule from which we may understand the ὑβρις of Xerxes, everting the natural order of things and negligent of old oracles and good counsels.

The fate of Phaethon may perhaps have been shown on the Attic orchestra before Aischylos played his drama, the Heliades (cp. Choirilos fr. 4 N.²), the date of which we do not know. But this supposition is not necessary in order to understand the perhaps purely instinctive influence that the fate of the son of Helios, familiar to his auditory already from epic poetry, exercised on his genius when he wrote his drama of Xerxes returning home after the crushing defeat in the far West.