

## THE DATE OF AESCHYLUS' PERSEUS TETRALOGY

It is usually agreed that Aeschylus wrote a tetralogy on the Perseus theme consisting of *Phorcides*, *Polydectes*, a tragedy of unknown title, and the satyr play *Dictyulci*<sup>1</sup>). Although the *Dictyulci* has been the object of much scholarly attention since two significant fragments of the drama were published in 1933 and 1941, no conclusive hypothesis concerning its date has been made<sup>2</sup>). The earliest dating, before 490, has been proposed by T. P. Howe on the basis of vase paintings she believes were inspired by the tetralogy<sup>3</sup>). E. Simon and others, however, have dated the tetralogy during the 460's, upon the basis of later paintings<sup>4</sup>). Still

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1) F. G. Welcker, *Die Aeschylische Trilogie Prometheus* (Darmstadt 1824) 336–37, 376–78, first suggested the likelihood of such a tetralogy, although he followed the Catalogue (see T 78, 4b Radt) in calling the *Dictyulci* the *Diktyourgoi* and suggested that it was a tragedy. G. Hermann, *Opuscula* 8 (Leipzig 1846) 175–77, correctly surmised the name and subject of the play, although he too considered it a tragedy. Hermann was followed by, e.g., N. Wecklein, *Fragmenta Aeschyli* 2 (Athens 1896) 607–8; U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Aischylos. Interpretationen* (Berlin 1914) 244. Since the discovery of the fragments from the *Dictyulci*, almost all scholars who have taken a position argue the probability of a Perseus tetralogy. See R. Pfeiffer, *Die Netzfischer des Aischylos*, SBMünchen 1938 [2], 20; T. P. Howe, *Illustrations to Aeschylus' Tetralogy on the Perseus Theme*, AJA 57 (1953) 269–75; H. Lloyd-Jones, *Appendix to H. W. Smyth, ed., Aeschylus* 2 (Cambridge, Mass. 1957) 531–35; H. J. Mette, *Der verlorene Aischylos* (Berlin 1963) 155–61; T. Gantz, *The Aeschylean Tetralogy: Attested and Conjectured Groups*, AJP 101 (1980) 149–51. For the fragments of the plays, see S. Radt, ed., *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* 3 (Göttingen 1985). The most thorough discussion of possibilities regarding the plot of the *Dictyulci* is in M. Werre-De Haas, *Aeschylus' Dictyulci*, *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* 10 (Leiden 1961). In subsequent references the studies above will be cited only by the last name of the author. – I am grateful to Prof. Dr. C. W. Müller for several helpful suggestions.

2) For example, D. F. Sutton, *The Greek Satyr Play* (Meisenheim am Glan 1980) 20, notes that “nothing is known of the date or circumstances of production of *Dictyulci*,” although he does consider it likely that the play was part of a Perseus tetralogy.

3) Howe (above, n. 1) 269–75. It should be noted that Howe's early dating of the tetralogy was made prior to the down-dating of the *Supplices*. Before the fragments were found, Wilamowitz (above, n. 1) 244 had suggested that the tetralogy was written early in Aeschylus' career, but he was not specific regarding the date or the reasons behind his conjecture.

4) See E. Simon in: D. Kurtz and B. Sparkes, edd., *The Eye of Greece*:

others have dated the plays within the last decade or so of Aeschylus' career because of dialectical forms found in the fragments. R. Cantarella suggested that the plays were presented very shortly after Aeschylus' supposed trip to Sicily, ca. 470. Both L. Ferrari and S. Radt agreed that Aeschylus' trip to Sicily influenced the language of the plays, although neither went as far as Cantarella in concluding that the tetralogy must have been presented within a few years of Aeschylus' journey<sup>5</sup>). A relatively late date has also been proposed by H. Lloyd-Jones on the grounds that there are apparently three actors, including Silenus, required for the *Dictyulci*<sup>6</sup>). But because of the uncertainty of Silenus' exact status as an actor in satyric drama, Lloyd-Jones' argument for a late date on those grounds has not been universally accepted.

With the exception of Howe, the consensus of recent scholars has been that the plays were produced within the last decade or so of Aeschylus' life. But, although those who have taken a position tend to favor a late date, most do so for one particular reason without considering all of the evidence together. It will be the purpose of this study to reexamine the several theories and to look at other aspects of the play in order to determine if we can come to a firmer conclusion regarding the date of the tetralogy than has been made in the past.

Attempts to date the Perseus tetralogy on the basis of vase paintings have not produced a conclusive result, although they have usually pointed towards a fairly late date. Several vase paintings portraying scenes compatible with the Perseus tetralogy have been attributed, although not unanimously, to it. Three of these vase paintings, dating ca. 470–450, have been associated with the

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Studies in the Art of Athens (Cambridge 1982) 139; Jean-Jacques Maffre, Danae, LIMC 3.1, 336–37; J. H. Oakley, Perseus, the Graiai, and Aeschylus' Phorkides, AJA 92 (1988) 383–91. See also T. B. L. Webster, Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play (London 1967) [= BICS Suppl. 20] 139 and 144.

5) See R. Cantarella, I nuovi frammenti Eschilei di Ossirinco (Naples 1948) [= Collana di Studi Greci 14] 66; Radt (above, n. 1) 362; L. Ferrari, I drammi perduti di Eschilo (Palermo 1968) 39–41, 319–27. In a catalogue of reconstructed tetralogies and their possible dates, Ferrari suggests 465 for the Perseus tetralogy, although he stresses that the arrangement "approssimativamente cronologico non può essere preso in senso rigido" (40). W. B. Stanford, Traces of Sicilian Influence in Aeschylus, PRJA 44, sec. C, no. 8 (1938) 240, and C. J. Herington, Aeschylus in Sicily, JHS 87 (1967) 79, suggest that Aeschylus' trip to Sicily caused him to use Dorisms and Sicelisms in his works, although they do not apply this theory directly to the dating of the Perseus tetralogy.

6) Lloyd-Jones (above, n. 1) 535 n. 1.

*Dictyulci*<sup>7</sup>). The vases depict Danae and Perseus being rescued from their chest by one or more fishermen. We know that this scene occurred in the *Dictyulci*, and so it is tempting to conclude that the paintings were inspired by that play. There are, however, some problems with this theory. In the first place, there are no satyrs or sileni depicted on the vases, and we do suspect strongly that satyrs would have been on hand when Danae and Perseus were rescued in the *Dictyulci*<sup>8</sup>). Moreover, a vase fragment (Agora P 29612 fr., ca. 460) depicting the same scene and dating from about the same time as the other vase paintings seems to portray Polydectes, who probably did not appear in the *Dictyulci*. The presence of Polydectes in this fragment led J. H. Oakley to suspect that it, and possibly the other vase paintings commonly attributed to the *Dictyulci*, might have been inspired by another source<sup>9</sup>). Certainly the absence of the satyrs in the group of vases and the presence of Polydectes in the fragment do not preclude the possibility that one or more of these works stemmed from the *Dictyulci*. Yet on the other hand, there is nothing depicted on any of the vases that links them undeniably to it. While the *Dictyulci* seems the most likely source for the three vases dating around 460, there are too many uncertainties for us to consider them as providing a certain *terminus ante quem* for the play.

It is still more difficult to date the tetralogy on the basis of vase paintings that might represent scenes from the other three plays, since we possess no significant fragments from them. Oak-

7) The vases in question are: r.f. pyxis by the Wedding Painter in the C. Clairmont collection, ARV<sup>2</sup> 924 (ca. 470–60); r.f. frag. by the Karlsruhe Painter, Tübingen E 109, ARV<sup>2</sup> 736 (ca. 470–60); r.f. bell krater, Syracuse 2310, C.V. pl. 13, 4 (ca. 460–50). All three are attributed to the *Dictyulci* by T. B. L. Webster (above, n. 4) 139. Simon (above, n. 4) 139 attributes ARV<sup>2</sup> 924 and ARV<sup>2</sup> 736 to the play. See also J. H. Oakley, Danae and Perseus on Seriphos, *AJA* 86 (1982) 111 and Oakley (above, n. 4) 390; Maffre (above, n. 4) 336–37. Howe (above, n. 1) 271 suggests that the paintings may have been inspired by the *Perseus* of Aristias from 467. Howe seems to confuse the *Seriphoi* of Cratinus with the *Perseus* of Aristias. She says the *Seriphoi* of Aristias when she appears to mean the *Perseus*.

8) The absence of satyrs is noted by Simon (above, n. 4) 139 and C. Clairmont, *Studies in Greek Mythology and Vase Painting*, *AJA* 57 (1953) 94. Clairmont for that reason favored a lyric or dithyrambic source for the vases, although Simon still attributed them to the *Dictyulci*. W. Calder, *The Dramaturgy of Sophocles' Inachus*, *GBS* (now = *GRBS*) 1 (1958) 138 n. 6, suggests that "one can never be certain that a satyr is not present on a vase for artistic reasons rather than historical ones."

9) For a thorough discussion of the pottery fragment, see Oakley (above, n. 7) 111–15. In a subsequent article (above, n. 4) Oakley 390 argues more strongly for the *Dictyulci* as the source for the vases that Webster et al. attributed to the play.

ley has plausibly attributed to the *Phorcydes* a recently found red-figure krater dating ca. 460<sup>10</sup>). T. B. L. Webster has suggested that two vases, ARV<sup>2</sup> 485 and ARV<sup>2</sup> 1069, the former dating ca. 470–460 and the latter ca. 450–430, were inspired by the *Polydeces*<sup>11</sup>). There are also several vase paintings portraying Perseus and Danae being condemned to their chest that have been linked with the play of unknown title in the tetralogy<sup>12</sup>). These fall into two groups, the first beginning ca. 490 and the second beginning ca. 460. Howe argued that the first group was so similar in detail that it demanded a visual prototype, which she suggested was the Aeschylean drama in question. The later paintings likewise portray the same subject. While Howe suggested that these vases might have been inspired by the undated *Acrisius* of Sophocles, there is no firm evidence to support her contention, and they are just as likely, probably more likely, to have depicted scenes from the Aeschylean play.

Judged on the whole, the evidence from vase paintings is inconclusive, although it suggests the probability of a relatively late date for the Perseus tetralogy. Almost all of the vases from the Aeschylean period that depict Danae and/or Perseus are dated ca. 460, and the story seems to have become very popular at that time. We cannot be sure that any individual vase portrays a scene from a play in the tetralogy. But the increased interest in Perseus as a subject and the variety and vividness of the paintings makes a dramatic tetralogy seem the most likely source. Since Aeschylus' Perseus tetralogy is the only such tetralogy that we know of during the period, it is tempting to see it as the source for these vase paintings. While we must be aware that our conclusion is only tentative, we are left with ca. 460 as a likely *terminus ante quem* for the plays.

Another argument in support of a comparatively late dating for the Perseus tetralogy is based on the number of Dorisms and

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10) Oakley (above, n. 4) 383–90. The vase is in the Metaponti Antiquarium (no. 20145) and has been published by D. Adamesteanu, *Popoli anellenici in Basilicata* (Naples 1971) 21 and pl. 3.

11) See Webster (above, n. 4) 139.

12) The first group consists of Triptolemos Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 360; Eucharides Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 228; Eucharides Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 231; Gallatin Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 247. The second group consists of: Deepdene Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 498; Danae Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 1076; Phiale Painter, ARV<sup>2</sup> 1019; Painter of the Athens Dinos, ARV<sup>2</sup> 1181. Other vase scenes possibly inspired by the unknown Perseus play are listed by Oakley (above, n. 7) 113 n. 7. For a discussion, see Oakley, Howe (above, n. 1) 272–74, and Maffre (above, n. 4) 331–32 and 336.

Sicelisms in the fragments. Both Lobel and Stanford noticed what they believed to be an unusually high number of Dorisms in the approximately one hundred extant lines of the *Dictyulci*<sup>13</sup>). Stanford proposed that at least two (θῶσθαι and ζύγαινα), and perhaps more, of these words were specifically Sicilian. Athenaeus (9. 402b), who tells us that Aeschylus made great use of Sicelisms, also provides a fragment from the *Phorcides* (261 Radt) in which he cites ἀσχεδῶρος as an example of such a form.

Although scholars may disagree regarding individual cases of proposed Dorisms and Sicelisms, it seems reasonable to agree with Stanford, Cantarella, and Radt that the Perseus fragments show an unusually strong influence of both of these dialects. In the extant plays Aeschylus appears to have used Dorisms most frequently in the *Supplices* and the *Septem*<sup>14</sup>). In the *Supplices* Stanford also noted at least three probable Sicelisms, more than in any other play. Five likely Sicelisms appear in the *Oresteia*<sup>15</sup>).

We are, of course, on somewhat dangerous ground in comparing the number of Dorisms in the *Dictyulci* and in the extant tragedies. Since we do not have extensive remains of satyric drama, we cannot be sure that the genre did not tend to have more frequent Dorisms than did tragedy, especially considering the genre's possible origin in the Peloponnese<sup>16</sup>). However, the presence of at least three probable Sicelisms in the scanty remains of the Perseus tetralogy is striking and gives further support for dating the tetralogy to roughly the same period as the *Septem*, *Supplices*, and *Oresteia*, since these plays, but not the *Persae*, employ several apparent Sicelisms. Stanford and others have suggested that Aeschylus' use of Sicelisms is traceable to the influence of his trip to Sicily, during which he presented the *Persae* at Syracuse<sup>17</sup>). Upon this theory, as

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13) E. Lobel, ed., *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 18 (1941) 9, cites μικρός, Φίντων, πάπας, θῶσθαι, and δβρίχοισι. W. B. Stanford, *Aeschylus in his Style* (Dublin 1942) 53, agrees with Lobel and adds ζύγαινα as a probable Sicelism. The relatively high proportion of Dorisms and Sicelisms is also confirmed by Cantarella (above, n. 5) 64–66; Herington (above, n. 5) 78; and Radt (above, n. 1) 161.

14) Stanford (above, n. 13) 52.

15) Stanford (above, n. 13) 53. For other examples of Sicelisms in Aeschylus, see Stanford (above, n. 5) 231–35.

16) On the possibility that satyr plays contained more Dorisms than did tragedies, see Sutton (above, n. 2) 20 n. 72, and R. J. Walker, *The Ichneutae of Sophocles* (London 1919) 35–40.

17) See above, n. 5. On the basis of the *Vita Aeschyli*, most scholars have agreed that Aeschylus made a rather long trip to Sicily between 472 and 468. See, e.g., Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Munich 1934) I 2,

we have seen, Cantarella concluded that the *Dictyulci* was probably written just after Aeschylus' trip, and should therefore be considered a relatively late work of the poet, probably from the early 460's<sup>18</sup>). Radt and Ferrari, however, have taken a more cautious approach by simply considering the trip to Sicily as a *terminus post quem* for the plays. Since the determination of dialectical forms is not an exact science, and since we do not have all of the Perseus tetralogy for comparison with the whole, extant plays, the approach of Radt and Ferrari seems the correct one. While there does seem to have been a relatively high number of Sicelisms in the Perseus tetralogy, we certainly cannot say that there were more of them than in say the *Supplices*, and of course even if we could make that assumption, we could not therefore say that the plays were written immediately after a trip to Sicily. It seems safest simply to link the Perseus tetralogy with the later plays (i.e., after the *Septem*) without trying to be more specific solely on the basis of dialectical forms.

Lloyd-Jones' theory of the third actor in the *Dictyulci* provides perhaps the most promising possibility for dating the tetralogy. It is almost certain that Danae, Dictys, and Silenus were required to be on stage at the same time in the *Dictyulci*<sup>19</sup>). As we have already mentioned, this apparent presence of the third actor prompted Lloyd-Jones to suspect a late date for the play, based on Aristotle's claim that Sophocles introduced the third actor (Poet. 1449a18). While the accuracy of Aristotle's statement has often been questioned, we can at least be certain that the third actor was introduced during the decade or so after Sophocles' entry to the Attic stage, which was probably in 470 or 468<sup>20</sup>).

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189–92; J. Ferguson, *A Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Austin 1972); A. Lesky, *Greek Tragic Poetry*, trans. M. Dillon (New Haven 1983) 39–40. Herington (above, n.5) 75 n.10 gives a full bibliography on the subject. In addition to Athenaeus (9. 402b), Macrobius (Sat. 5.19.17) attests to Aeschylus' strong ties with Sicily.

18) Cantarella (above, n.5) 64–66. See also Ferrari (above, n.5) 327; Radt (above, n.1) 161–62, 362. Regarding the fragment of the *Phorcidēs* cited by Athenaeus, Radt states, “[Fabulam] non ante iter Sicelicum scriptam fuisse e F 261 efficere par est” (362).

19) See Lloyd-Jones (above, n.1) 535 n.1; Werre-De Haas 74; and O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 419–20.

20) For the earlier date, based on Eusebius/Hieronymus, Chron. Ol. 77 (= Trag. Graec. Frag. I, DID D 3, Snell-Kannicht), see C. W. Müller, *Zur Datierung des sophokleischen Ödipus* (AbhMainz 1984 [5], Wiesbaden 1984) 60–61. For the later date, based on Plut. Cim. 8 (= Soph. T 36 Radt), see Lesky (above, n.17) 116 and 435 n.5.

If Lloyd-Jones is right concerning the presence of three actors in the play, then we should probably date the *Dictyulci* in the 460's or early 450's. In considering Lloyd-Jones' theory the main question that arises is whether or not Silenus is indeed to be considered an actor in satyric drama. Some scholars have claimed for him the status of coryphaeus or a *tertium quid* role, while others argue that he should be considered a full-fledged actor<sup>21</sup>).

Although our remains of the *Dictyulci* in particular and satyric drama in general are limited, it does seem that Silenus' role in the *Dictyulci* and other satyr plays exceeds what we should expect of the coryphaeus. Silenus can appear without the chorus, as he does in the *Cyclops* and apparently the *Dictyulci* and *Ichneutae*. As A. M. Dale notes, "he acts on stage and can hold an iambic dialogue with the coryphaeus<sup>22</sup>." Furthermore, we know of no instance in the *Ichneutae* or the *Cyclops* in which there are three actors in addition to Silenus. In both of these satyr plays there are only two actors if Silenus is not counted. Thus in the case of these two plays we must either accept Silenus as an actor or assume, without compelling evidence, that the satyr play tended towards only two actors even as late as Euripides<sup>23</sup>). While playwrights in the last half of the fifth century were certainly capable of writing plays with only two actors, as in the case of Euripides' *Medea*, it seems unlikely that both of our significant examples of post-Aeschylean satyric drama should have only two actors.

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21) For the view that Silenus should be considered an actor, see, e.g., E. Buschor, *Satyrtänze und frühes Drama*, SBMünchen 1943 [5]; Lloyd-Jones (above, n.1) 535 n.1; A. M. Dale, ed., *Euripides: Alcestis* (Oxford 1954) xix n.2; G. Koniaris, in his review of R. Seaford, ed., *Euripides: Cyclops*, in *CP* 82 (1987) 63–64. That Silenus should be considered a coryphaeus is argued by, e.g., Schmid-Stählin (above, n.17) I 2, 59 n.2 and D. F. Sutton, *Father Silenus: Actor or Coryphaeus?* *CQ* 68 (1974) 19–23. Several other scholars take a middle ground and consider Silenus a *tertium quid* having a role somewhere between that of actor and coryphaeus: see O. Taplin, (above, n.19) 419–20; Werre-De Haas (above, n.1) 74; R. Seaford, ed., *Euripides: Cyclops* (Oxford 1984) 4. N. E. Collinge, *Some Reflections on Satyr-Plays*, *PCPhS* 5 (1958–1959) 30, suggests that Silenus' official role changed from coryphaeus to actor sometime "between the Aeschylean and Sophoclean heyday."

22) Dale (above, n.21) xix n.2. On Silenus' independence of the chorus in the *Cyclops*, *Ichneutae*, and *Dictyulci*, see Sutton (above, n.2) 140–41; Seaford (above, n.21) 4; Taplin (above, n.19) 418.

23) A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, rev. J. Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford 1968) 136, argues that the cast for satyr plays would have been identical with that of the tragedies. So also J. J. Winkler, *The Ephebes' Song: Tragoidia and Polis*, in: J. J. Winkler and Froma Zeitlin, ed., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* (Princeton 1990) 44.

The conclusion based on the satyric remains that Silenus was indeed a third actor seems to be corroborated by the Pronomos Vase (ARV<sup>2</sup> 1336), a volute crater dating ca. 400. The Pronomos Vase depicts two rows of various divine and human figures associated with drama. In the middle of the top row are four divine figures, Dionysus, his consort (Ariadne?), a tiny winged figure (Himerus?), and a female figure who has been plausibly identified as Paideia. The latter holds a mask that is assumed to be that of a female character, Hesione, or perhaps Omphale, as E. Simon has suggested<sup>24</sup>). The other figures are a man playing an unknown role and holding a mask with a tiara (Laomedon?), a man playing Hercules, a man playing Silenus, the flutist Pronomos, the lyre player Charinus, and eleven other men, all but one of whom are dressed in the furry britches of the satyr chorus. Although some earlier scholars had suggested that the scene depicted a combination of the characters from a tragic trilogy and the chorus of a satyr play, most recent commentators on the vase now consider the painting as some type of representation associated primarily with a satyr play, without specific reference to the cast of the preceding trilogies<sup>25</sup>).

As we see in the *Cyclops* and the *Ichneutae*, on the Pronomos Vase there are two actors portrayed as well as Silenus. Several visual considerations suggest that Silenus ought to be considered as a third actor. An important female part, a fourth role in the play, is indicated on the vase by the female mask that 'Paideia' holds in her hand. If Silenus were the coryphaeus, we would expect the Pronomos painter to depict a third actor wearing the mask, since he has taken pains to show three masks and so three main characters. While there could be a doubling of roles by another actor, it is more likely that the poet would have used all three actors he had available to him. Since no other actor is shown on the vase, it

24) On Paideia as the identity of the divine figure, see M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton 1961); F. Brommer, *Zur Deutung der Pronomosvase*, AA (1964) 110; H. Froning, *Dithyrambos und Vasenmalerei in Athen*, *Beiträge zur Archäologie* 2 (1971) 10; E. Simon, *Die Omphale des Demetrios*, AA (1971) 205. On the vase in general see also Beazley ARV<sup>2</sup> 13361; P. Arias, *A History of Greek Vase Painting*, trans. and rev. B. Shefton (London 1962) 377–80; Pickard-Cambridge (above, n. 23) 186–88; E. Simon, *Die griechischen Vasen* (Munich 1981) 153–54.

25) Bieber (above, n. 24) 10–11; Brommer (above, n. 24) 113–14; Simon, *Die Omphale* ... (above, n. 24) 199; Froning (above, n. 24) 5 argue that the human figures are all from the cast of a satyr play. For the view that the vase portrays actors in roles from the preceding tragedies along with the satyr chorus, see E. Buschor in: Furtwängler and Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei* 3, 132–150; Arias (above, n. 24) 377.

seems best to consider Silenus as that third actor. The physical appearance of Silenus himself corroborates the view that he should be reckoned among the actors. Both F. Brommer and J. J. Winkler have noted that the figure playing Silenus has a beard of his own (i.e., in addition to his mask) and resembles Laomedon and Hercules more than he does the satyrs, who are youthful and beardless<sup>26</sup>). The conclusion seems to be that Silenus is an older, more experienced actor as opposed to the choreutae, who Winkler has recently argued were youths.

To consider Silenus as a *tertium quid* who is essentially an actor but officially considered a special sort of second coryphaeus essentially confuses the question with misleading terminology. The third actor would surely have originated only when there was a sufficient number of trained actors to allow for the addition and when the poets learned how and why to write for three characters in a scene. As B.M.W. Knox suggests, the number of actors in the Aeschylean period must have been largely dependent upon economics and availability. Sophocles' addition of the third actor would not have occurred until there gradually became enough skilled actors to allow for three in each tetralogy of the Dionysia<sup>27</sup>). In the *Dictyulci* the part of Silenus would have required considerable acting skill, equal to that of any character in the play. The part would have to be played by a third person skilled enough to carry off a (probably the) major role – certainly an actor.

The nature of Silenus' part in the *Dictyulci* is also characteristic of the role usually assigned to the third actor in Aeschylean tragedy. The fragments of the *Dictyulci* suggest that there was a great deal of conflict and interaction between Dictys, Danae, and Silenus. It is hard to imagine any reconstruction of the play that would not have at its center an animated argument involving each of these three characters. It is likewise probable that at the end of the play Dictys rescued Danae from Silenus and the lascivious satyrs, another scene that would have included a lively row before Silenus gave up his 'prize'. While there are no places in the fragments where we can be sure of three individual speakers, since

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26) See Brommer (above, n.24) 110; J.J.Winkler (above, n.23) 43–44. Arias-Shefton (above, n.24) 378 also note that Silenus, unlike the choreutae, is bearded. Winkler 45 n.7 considers Silenus a third actor. Most other commentators on the vase also call Silenus an actor.

27) B.M.W.Knox, Aeschylus and the Third Actor, *AJP* 93 (1972) 105–6. See similarly R.Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (Chicago 1936) 168–69.

they are not marked on the papyri, the type of interpersonal conflict that is suggested by the fragments is typical of Aeschylus' mature, three-actor period, rather than the two-actor phase. As has often been noted, the second actor in Aeschylus acts essentially as a messenger or deliverer of information to the protagonist<sup>28</sup>). This use of the second actor is seen in the *Persae*, *Septem*, and *Supplices*, plays from what Kitto has called the Middle Period of tragedy. The more complex interaction between characters that we would expect in the *Dictyulci* was made possible only by the third actor, who introduced the element of conflict – exactly the role of Silenus.

Although Silenus' role in the *Dictyulci* seems to confirm his apparent portrayal on the Pronomos Vase as an actor, one aspect of the vase has raised questions regarding that view. D. F. Sutton contends that the number of chorus members shown on the vase is inexplicable without taking Silenus as the coryphaeus<sup>29</sup>). Sutton suggests that the Pronomos painter portrayed the entire cast of a satyr chorus with eleven chorus members and Silenus as a twelfth. He argues that an eleven-man chorus is unattested, while a twelve-man chorus could be explained as a return to the pre-Sophoclean chorus size. In this case Silenus would have to be the coryphaeus and the twelfth member of the chorus.

Certainly the number of chorus members shown on the Pronomos Vase raises questions, but the vase admits of explanations other than Sutton's. In the first place, if the Pronomos painter intended to portray an entire chorus composed of twelve men – which is far from proven – there is the possibility that the poet Demetrius is the coryphaeus<sup>30</sup>). But it may not be necessary to find a twelfth chorus member, since we can hardly be sure that the painter was trying to portray a twelve-man chorus. As Sutton himself notes, we have no evidence to suggest that the number of choreutae had indeed reverted to the earlier number of twelve, as opposed to fifteen. It seems more likely that the painter chose to illustrate only a part of a full, fifteen-man chorus rather than a chorus of twelve. A close look at the Pronomos Vase suggests that

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28) On the functions of the second and third actors in Aeschylus, see, e.g., H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London 1961) 31–33, 51, 149–56; G. F. Else, *Hypokrites*, *WS* 72 (1959) 102–6 and *The Origin and Form of Early Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass. 1965) 86–95; Knox (above, n. 27) 106–7.

29) See Sutton (above, n. 21) 19–23.

30) So Kühnert in Roscher's *Lexicon* IV, col. 456 and Winkler (above, n. 23) 45 n. 72.

it is very far from being an all-inclusive record of a dramatic cast. Many aspects of the vase preclude our considering it in such a light. First, there are the divine characters, who themselves add a non-historical aspect to the vase. But more importantly there are omissions of details that we would expect to see if the painter intended to give a full account of a specific chorus. We note that there are eleven certain choreutae. Ten have the furry satyr britches, of whom nine are holding or wearing masks and one is without a mask. The eleventh chorus member wears a chiton but holds a mask in his hand. Since the painter has made no attempt to show eleven satyr masks or eleven pairs of britches, we should not necessarily assume that he is trying to show specifically eleven choreutae (or twelve counting Silenus). Even more significant is the fact that the artist goes to the trouble of naming nine choreutae, but inexplicably leaves two unnamed. It seems very clear that the number of chorus members is not of great importance to the painter<sup>31</sup>). The reason for this lack of detail must have been that the vase is not intended to be a fully descriptive representation of any particular stage of the play's production. It is instead "an *ad hoc* selection of figures connected with Dionysus, but with special reference to Pronomos' interest (drama) and a special story (Hesione)," in N. E. Collinge's words<sup>32</sup>). Although the painting was probably commissioned to commemorate a dramatic victory, as the tripods show<sup>33</sup>), the scene presented seems to portray the actors preparing for a practice. The painter is probably depicting not a historical moment from the play's production, but an imaginary glimpse of the cast getting ready to rehearse the satyr play of a soon-to-be successful tetralogy. The scene is carefree and relaxed. One dancer is being coached in the *σκιῶνις* by Pronomos, while others are milling around in various stages of dress. The most likely reason that there are not fifteen choreutae is that they are simply not imagined as being there yet. The scene is the product of the Pronomos painter's mind and should not be pressed too rigidly for information that it is not intended to give.

If we are correct regarding Aeschylus' use of a third actor in the *Dictyulci*, upon that basis we may be able to pinpoint further

31) See Winkler (above, n. 23) 45 n. 72.

32) Collinge (above, n. 21) 30–31. See similarly F. Lissargue, *Why Satyrs are Good to Represent*, in: *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* (above, n. 23) 230.

33) See Lissargue (above, n. 32) 230. Webster (above, n. 4) 29 and Winkler (above, n. 23) 44 also suggest that the painting was commissioned for a dramatic victory.

the date of the Perseus tetralogy. It seems most likely that Aeschylus did not use three actors until the period after the *Supplices*. If Sophocles did indeed introduce the third actor, he probably would not have asked for or been allowed such an innovation until he had competed at least once or twice. Surely he would have had to prove himself<sup>34</sup>). Nor would we expect Aeschylus immediately to follow the lead of a beginning playwright, even if the younger poet had been granted a third actor in his first or second competition. It seems unlikely that Aeschylus would have used the third actor before the mid 460's. The number of actors employed in his extant dateable plays bears out this conclusion. Only two actors are used in the *Persae* of 472, the *Septem* of 467 (assuming we regard the ending of the play as an interpolation), and the *Supplices*, probably produced in 463<sup>35</sup>). In contrast, three are used in each play of the *Oresteia* of 458<sup>36</sup>). All the available evidence suggests that Aeschylus began to use three actors sometime after the *Supplices*. G. Else very plausibly suggested ca. 460 as the date for Aeschylus' introduction of the third actor, both on the evidence mentioned above and on the probable age of Mynniscus, who, according to the *Vita*, was that third actor<sup>37</sup>). Else notes that Mynniscus won an acting contest as late as 422, and so he probably would not have begun acting with Aeschylus very long before the *Oresteia*. We might assume that the playwright presented one or two tetralogies in which he experimented with the third actor before using him so thoroughly in the *Oresteia*. It is very likely that the Perseus tetralogy was one of these initial uses of the third actor and that it was presented no more than a few years before the *Oresteia*.

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34) So G. F. Else, *The Case of the Third Actor*, TAPA 76 (1945) 2–3 and B. M. W. Knox (above, n. 27) 107. Here and elsewhere (see above, n. 28) Else argues that Aeschylus created the third actor. Since the city paid the actors, we would expect it to be slow in changing the number from two to three.

35) Most scholars have regarded the ending of the *Septem* as an interpolation: see most recently Kurt Sier, *Zwei Bemerkungen zu den Sieben gegen Theben*, RhM 134 (1991) 15–22. See also Taplin (above, n. 19) 185–86; Lesky (above, n. 17) 61–62. On the date of the *Supplices*, which is after 467 and is usually accepted as 463, see A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus' Supplices: Play and Trilogy* (Cambridge 1967) 163–233; A. Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (Ann Arbor 1966) 42–43. Of course it is not impossible that other plays in the Danaid tetralogy had three actors. If so, it would very likely have been the first such usage by Aeschylus.

36) Aeschylus also apparently used three actors in the trial scene of the undated *Palamedes*. See fr. 181–182 Radt and C. W. Müller, *Der Palamedesmythos im Philoktet des Euripides*, RhM 133 (1990) 208.

37) Else (above, n. 34) 6–10.

Further evidence for a relatively late dating of the Perseus tetralogy is found in the subject matter of the plays themselves. Despite its humor and charm, the *Dictyulci*, and probably also the *Polydectes*, must have been pervaded throughout by the juxtaposition of Bia and Peitho within the context of sexual relationships. These images compose, as R. P. Winnington-Ingram has noted, one of the most "insistent [themes] in the later Aeschylus<sup>38</sup>." This subject seems to have been especially popular within the context of sexual seduction. Here we can find strong similarities between the Perseus tetralogy, the Danaid tetralogy, and the *Prometheus Bound*. In considering the latter play we will, of course, have to bear in mind throughout our discussion that the play may not have been written by Aeschylus<sup>39</sup>).

In the Perseus tetralogy there can be little doubt that the *Polydectes* would have portrayed the wicked King of Seriphos trying to force Danae to have intercourse with him, since according to the myths he offered violence against her (see, e.g., Apollodorus 2.4.2–3). We also, of course, find the threat of violence within the context of an attempted sexual seduction as the major focus of the *Dictyulci*. While we have lost the portions of the play in which Silenus apparently tried to seduce Danae herself, no doubt with occasional veiled references to the possible use of force to obtain his goal, we do have a speech in which Silenus tries to woo the young mother by charming her son. The passage is a delightful piece of loveable hypocrisy that would have been suitable for John Falstaff. In it Silenus promises to be a good father to the young Perseus and encourages him to come to his "nursemaid hands" (παιδοτρόφους ἐμά[ς, 806). He promises to rear the boy in the woods, introducing him to the life of a satyr, which he describes in terms of purity and simplicity. But Silenus' real desire is shown for what it is after his speech to Perseus. He and the satyrs carry off Danae on the pretext of a wedding (822), while they claim

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38) Winnington-Ingram in: P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox, ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 1: *Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1985) 295. See similarly C. J. Herington, *The Author of the Prometheus Bound* (Austin 1985) 95; D. J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound: A Literary Commentary* (Toronto 1980) 145; R. G. A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1982) 67 and 113.

39) For the view that Aeschylus did not write the *Prometheus Bound*, see Mark Griffith, *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1977). Arguing in favor of Aeschylean authorship is C. J. Herington (above, n. 38). Most recent scholars who accept the play's authenticity consider it a relatively late Aeschylean work. See, e.g., Herington *passim*.

that she “desires to have her fill” of their love (φιλότιτος ἄδην κορέσασθαι, 826). Of course the situation is just the opposite. It is the satyrs and Silenus who seek to satisfy themselves, and their erect phalloi would have made it quite clear to the audience that the charming words of Silenus were only a facade for a rape.

The conflict between *Bia* and *Peitho* within a sexual context is central also to the Danaid tetralogy, which was probably presented in 463. In the *Supplices* the Danaides refuse to marry their cousins, the sons of Aegyptus. Recent studies have suggested that the Danaides’ refusal arises from fear of an oracle that prophesied Danaus’ death at the hands of one of his sons-in-law<sup>40</sup>). They bitterly complain of the *hybris* of their suitors (e.g., 30, 81, 426, 528, 817), whom they and their father compare to animals (223–26, 511, 751, 762, 1000). The King of Argos rightly understands their anxieties and suggests that marriages could only be arranged if the Danaides were “persuaded by holy argument” (εἴπερ εὐσεβῆς πίθει λόγος, 941). The chorus of handmaids similarly praises the beauty of a love that is compelled gently by persuasion (1034–1042).

The themes of love and persuasion also appear in the *Danaides*. In fr. 44 Radt, Aphrodite speaks of the overwhelming compulsion of a cosmic love. Although we cannot be certain of the context, it seems likely that Aphrodite is defending Hypermetra for the latter’s unwillingness to kill her husband<sup>41</sup>). This proper view of love is perhaps parodied in a fragment of the *Amymone*, the satyr play of the tetralogy, in which a speaker, probably Silenus or one of the satyrs, tells Amymone that she should yield to his sexual advances. “You are fated to be my wife and I to be your husband.” σοὶ μὲν γαμείσθαι μόρσιμον, γαμεῖν δ’ ἐμοί (fr. 13 Radt). As in the *Dictyulci*, there is the suggestion of marriage that only thinly veils the speaker’s willingness to use force to obtain his desire.

The threat of violence within the context of seduction is seen in the *Prometheus Bound* as well. In a speech much like that of Silenus to Danae, we are told of Zeus’ seduction of Io, which occurs through the agency of deceptive dreams, speaking with “seductive words” (λείοισι μύθοις, 647) that make little attempt to

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40) See Martin Sicherl, *Die Tragik der Danaiden*, MH 43 (1986) 81–110 and Wolfgang Rösler, *Der Schluß der Hiketiden und die Danaiden-Trilogie des Aischylos*, RhM 136 (1993) 1–22. See also the scholion to verse 37 of the *Supplices*. For a reconstruction of the entire trilogy, see Rösler 15–22.

41) See Rösler (above, n.40) 16–19. Rösler 20–22 also draws interesting parallels between this apparent trial scene and the one in the *Eumenides*.

conceal the threat behind them. While at first there is the promise of a wedding with the most-high Zeus, quickly thereafter Io is warned in a violent and bestial metaphor not to kick against the goad (651)<sup>42</sup>). Although there is an obvious difference in tone between the seduction speeches of Zeus in the *Prometheus Bound* and Silenus in the *Dictyulci*, the two passages are also remarkably similar. Both speeches contain hypocritical and patronizing protestations of honorable love that are only a facade for the violent intent of the speakers. The feigned friendliness of the forms of address ὦ παῖ (Prom. 651) and ὦ φίλος (Dict. 807) adds to the false ring of the avowals of love in both passages. Also in these two plays, as well as in the Danaid tetralogy, there is the repeated blurring of the lines between humanity, divinity, and bestiality within an erotic context<sup>43</sup>). While one might object that the violence and bestiality of the *Amymone* and the *Dictyulci* are due solely to their satyric genre, it should be noted that only these two of the seventeen Aeschylean satyr plays whose titles we possess seem to have had the attempted seduction of an unwilling young woman as their main plot. In the *Amymone* and the *Dictyulci* the focus upon violence within an erotic context seems more a product of Aeschylus' own artistic interests than of the demands of the satyric genre. The two satyr plays contribute to the examination of sexuality, persuasion, and violence that is characteristic of their own tetralogies and of the *Prometheus Bound*.

Even if we discount the evidence based on the *Prometheus Bound*, which we are forced to do in view of the play's uncertain authorship, it seems clear enough that Aeschylus was very interested in the juxtaposition of Peitho and Bia during the latter part of his career. Peitho and Bia are juxtaposed in a non-erotic context in the *Eumenides*<sup>44</sup>) and in a sexual context throughout the Danaid tetralogy. While it is possible that this theme was common in some of Aeschylus' earlier plays that are no longer extant, we do

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42) See N. Wecklein, *Äschylos' Prometheus* (Leipzig 31893) and scholiast M on line 651. Note also the metaphor from horse taming in lines 671–72. Of course the taming of horses is commonly associated with sexual dominance, see, e.g., Anacreon fr. 417 PMG.

43) Especially notable in the *Dictyulci* and the Danaid tetralogy is the use of the word κνώδαλα by women to describe men or satyrs who are trying to ravish them. (See Dict. 775, *Amymone* fr. 15 Radt, and Suppl. 762, 1000.) A link between the bestial violence of the *Prometheus Bound* and the *Supplices* is seen in the latter, when we learn that Zeus apparently raped Io when he was in the form of a bull (Suppl. 301).

44) See Buxton (above, n. 38) 109–113.

not find it figuring prominently in the *Persae* or the *Septem*. Once again we find greater similarities between the Perseus tetralogy and the later plays, especially the Danaid tetralogy, rather than with the *Persae* or the *Septem*. Those who accept Aeschylean authorship of the *Prometheus Bound* will perhaps also see this play in terms of the theme of violence and persuasion that seems to have interested Aeschylus in his later years.

Another pertinent link between the *Supplices* and the Perseus tetralogy is the probable emphasis on Argos in the two tetralogies. The Perseus tetralogy is, of course, based on one of Argos' greatest heroes. While the fragments contain no references to the city, and so do not inform us specifically of Aeschylus' attitude expressed towards it, the very choice of Perseus' life as a subject for the tetralogy suggests a relatively positive attitude towards Argos on the part of the author. In the *Septem*, *Supplices*, and *Oresteia*, Aeschylus typically makes reference to Argos in a way that shows his own political bias at the time. In the *Septem*, dating 467 and probably written a year or so earlier, Aeschylus paints the city in a poor light as the sponsor of Polyneices' ill-conceived insurrection. The violence of the Argives is repeatedly emphasized, and their Doric dialect is rather inappropriately called a barbarous tongue (169–70). As scholars have noted, Argos in the *Septem* must represent Persia, the barbarous nation that had launched its own unwarranted attack on Athens and other Greek states<sup>45</sup>). Aeschylus' apparently hostile attitude towards Argos at this time was probably the result of her refusal to help in the Persian War and perhaps also her refusal to allow Themistocles to continue his sanctuary there after the Spartan delegation asked that he be thrown out<sup>46</sup>). Whatever the reasons for Aeschylus' hostility, they were apparently nonexistent or at least set aside by around 464, when the *Supplices* was likely written. It was, of course, only a few years later that the democrats at Athens forged an Argive alliance, and, as Forrest and Podlecki suggest, the idea was probably being bandied about while Aeschylus was creating the Danaid tetralo-

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45) See T. G. Tucker, *The Seven Against Thebes of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1908) xlvi; J. T. Sheppard, *The Plot of the Septem contra Thebas*, CQ 7 (1913) 77; H. J. Rose, *A Commentary on the Surviving Plays of Aeschylus* 1 (Amsterdam 1957) 176 at lines 169–70; Podlecki (above, n. 35) 30; Ferguson (above, n. 17) 49. See also Sept. 69–75, 463, and 583.

46) W. G. Forrest, *Themistokles and Argos*, CQ n.s. 10 (1960) 221–41, suggests that a democratic Argos gave Themistocles refuge in the late 470's and then after an aristocratic reaction ca. 470/469 forced him to give up that sanctuary.

gy<sup>47</sup>). In the *Supplices* Aeschylus praises Argos to a degree not required by the plot<sup>48</sup>), and, after the Argive alliance ca. winter 462/461, he glorifies the city by choosing it over Mycenae as the setting for *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*. The playwright goes even further in the *Eumenides*, where on three occasions he praises in glowing terms the Argive alliance with Athens (289–91, 669–73, and 762–74)<sup>49</sup>).

While we cannot, of course, be certain that Aeschylus would only have written a tetralogy about Perseus during a period of good relations with Argos, the influence of politics on the settings of Aeschylean plays has been amply demonstrated. The emphasis on Argos in the *Supplices* and the *Eumenides* and its choice as a locale for the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* suggest that a Perseus tetralogy would most likely have been produced during the period of the Athenian-Argive alliance. Aeschylus probably would not have chosen the Argive hero Perseus as the focus of a tetralogy until around 464, when the Athenian democrats likely began to promote the view of Argos as an ally against Sparta, instead of seeing it in Cimonian terms as a Medizing city. By 464 Sparta had felt the effects of an earthquake and the helot revolt, while Argos, now perhaps leaning more towards Athens and democracy<sup>50</sup>), was beginning to assert herself against Sparta. Aeschylus and others would have seen the importance of an alliance. If the *Supplices* was intended to promote friendship between the two cities, it is tempting to believe that Aeschylus wrote the Perseus tetralogy in order to celebrate the eventual alliance, as he does to some extent in the *Oresteia*. If we assume that this is the case, the most likely time for the production of the tetralogy would have been a year or two after the alliance of 462/461, say around 460, a date which we have already seen as a likely one for the plays.

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47) See Forrest (above, n. 46) 240; Podlecki (above, n. 35) 126. For the view that the *Supplices* shows good relations between Argos and the democratic faction at Athens, see also Ferguson (above, n. 17) 64; Garvie (above, n. 35) 144–47; Lesky (above, n. 17) 69.

48) Forrest (above, n. 46) 240 considers the praise of Argos at 605–624 “totally irrelevant in any mythological situation.”

49) See P. Mazon, *Eschyle 2* (Paris 1955) xi; Podlecki (above, n. 35) 82 and Aeschylus: *Eumenides* (Warminster 1989) 19–20; A. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus: Eumenides* (Cambridge 1989) 30–31.

50) So Forrest (above, n. 46) 236; Podlecki (above, n. 35) 45–52.

### *Conclusion*

Although there is no single indisputable piece of evidence to date the Perseus tetralogy, we have seen several good reasons to consider the plays as the product of the last decade or so of Aeschylus' career. The themes, dramaturgy, and language of the plays seem far more similar to the *Supplices* and subsequent dramas than to the *Persae* or the *Septem*. Specifically, the use of the third actor, the interaction between characters, and the presence of a relatively large number of apparent Sicelisms in the tetralogy indicate a date after the *Septem*. Several vase paintings from around 460 corroborate this date. The conclusion, then, is that the tetralogy was produced during the last ten years or so of Aeschylus' life. It may also be reasonable to pinpoint the date further. If Mynniscus was Aeschylus' third actor and if the records concerning his career are correct, 460 seems a good guess for the date of his entry onto the Athenian stage, and so Aeschylus' first use of the third actor. The probable emphasis on Argos in the tetralogy likewise suggests a date after the *Supplices* and probably within a few years of the Argive alliance of 462/461. If we allow for two years between the presentation of individual tetralogies by the same poet, as C. W. Müller has recently suggested, 461 or 460 seems the most likely date for the Perseus tetralogy<sup>51</sup>).

That the *Perseus* tetralogy was a work from Aeschylus' peak period, perhaps the last tetralogy before his masterpiece the *Oresteia*, is no surprise when we consider the artistry revealed in the scanty remains of the *Dictyulci*. Even in its fragmentary state the play shows the skill, humor, and imagination of a mature and masterful poet. It is a confident and adept Aeschylus who places what Fraenkel has called "one of the loveliest pieces of Greek poetry" in the mouth of Silenus and transforms the lustful satyr into a tender nursemaid<sup>52</sup>).

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51) See C. W. Müller (above, n. 20) 60–77.

52) See E. Fraenkel, Aeschylus: New Texts and Old Problems, Proc. Brit. Acad. 28 (1942) 241, regarding lines 786–820, Silenus' speech to the infant Perseus.