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PURE PROPAGANDA OR GREAT ART,  
PATRIOTISM AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?  
HOW AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES USED THEIR PLOTS  
TO SUPPORT ATHENIAN POLITICS TOWARDS THE ALLIES\*

ABSTRACT. Śmiechowicz, Olga, Pure Propaganda or Great Art, Patriotism and Civic Engagement? How Aeschylus and Euripides Used Their Plots to Support Athenian Politics towards the Allies (*Czysta propaganda, czy wielka sztuka, patriotyzm i obywatelskie zaangażowanie – jak Ajschylos oraz Eurypides używali swoich fabuł, by wspomóc Ateńską politykę wobec sojuszników*)

In this article I would like to focus on one research topic: how ancient tragedians manipulated their drama plots (based on Greek mythology) so as to use them for influencing Athenian “international policies.” Those were not any mistakes or airs of nonchalance on the part of the Athenian tragedians; it was just their carefully premeditated strategy of creating persuasive messages to function as pure propaganda. I am chiefly directing my attention to the topic of how the Athenians established their relations with the allies. Meaning the closest neighbours as well as some of those who did not belong in the circle of the Hellenic civilization. I have decided to devote all of my attention to Aeschylus’ and Euripides’ works, as both of them were obvious supporters of the democratic faction. I focused my attention on the texts: Aeschylus: *The Suppliants*, *Oresteia*; Euripides: *Heracleidae*, *Andromache*, *Archelaus*, *Temenos*.

Keywords: ancient theatre; propaganda; allies; tragedy; Aeschylus; Euripides; international politics.

If we are a little more familiar with the political aspect of ancient Greek dramaturgy, most of the contemporary dissertations on the history of the theatre indicate that Old Attic comedy is the genre to have keenly (and often explicitly) responded to important events during the timeline of Ancient Athens. It is generally assumed that sometime after the heyday of *The Capture of Miletus* by Phrynichus and *The Persians* by Aeschylus, the tragedians deviated much from the course of covering topics of the day. They actually focused on the problems of social meta-paideia instead of wasting time on singular events and characters that seemed to be almost invisible against the background of a whole

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\* I would like to express my gratitude to the Lanckoroński Foundation for the award of a scholarship which enabled me to consult some important scholarly works on the subject.

universe of ideas and values. Nevertheless, many of the existing fragments of those tragedies clearly prove that the theory of their apoliticality is rather far from true.<sup>1</sup> If we take a closer look at the chronology and dates of the showings of those particular works, we can quickly realise that they entered into direct dialogue with the most recent events of those years.<sup>2</sup>

Theatre in the ancient times was the primary expression of mass culture. During the Great Dionysia, the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens used to have the largest audiences in the ancient world. Everyone was perfectly aware of the opinion-making power of that medium: archontes officially approving of texts to be used on the stage, choragi financing the theatrical productions, and playwrights. It is hard to determine what kind of literary education an archon could or should have had, but it was solely within the scope of his competence to allow playwrights' texts into the public domain. The most decisive factor was probably the author's popularity as well as his previous victories at the Great Dionysia or the Lenaia. The social and political message of a suggested text also had a lot to do with the process of granting a chorus. The aforementioned thing is clearly hinted at in one excerpt from Plato's *Laws*, in which the philosopher introduces the procedure that any and all playwrights from outside Athens should be subject to:

In truth, both we ourselves and the whole State would be absolutely mad, were it to allow you to do as I have said, before the magistrates had decided whether or not your compositions are deserving of utterance and suited for publication. So now, ye children and offspring of Muses mild, do ye first display your chants side by side with ours before the rulers; and if your utterances seem to be the same as ours or better, then we will grant you a chorus, but if not, my friends, we can never do so.

(Plato, *Laws*, 817d)

Regrettably, we are not in possession of any source material that would help us reconstruct how choragi were selected in order to sponsor individual compositions: by lot or by personal choice? In several cases, we can observe that the message of a play happened to be in perfect accordance with its choragus' political views. The first non-anonymous choragus was Themistocles, who financed the showing of *Phoenician Women* by Phrynichus in 476 BC. Unluckily,

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<sup>1</sup>For a long time, the research was influenced by the opinion of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who admittedly stated: "Es ist auf das schärfste zu sagen, dass keine sophokleische Tragödie eine unmittelbare Beziehung auf ein Factum der Gegenwart enthält" (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1899: 59). This opinion influenced the entire reading of the Greek tragedy. Till 1955 when a book by Günther Zuntz appeared (*The Political Plays of Euripides*), it began to be timidly insinuated that maybe some of Euripides' texts contain some allusions to the present day of the tragedian.

<sup>2</sup>I have done more research into this particular subject in my monograph cf. Śmiechowicz 2018.

this is the only information we have, so far. We know of no single choragus for Euripides' works; and in the case of Sophocles, there are just a few letters of his choragus's name preserved.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, we have hardly any sources that could let us reconstruct the typical relationship between a poet and his choragus. Was his choragus in a position to exercise any influence over the contents of the poet's play and over the form of its showing? It seems that the choragus had no direct tool for exerting any such pressure because the poet received his remuneration from the city funds. He actually received his *misthos* (μισθός – military pay, payment, remuneration), just like every soldier or judge, which simply confirmed his status as a "poet laureate."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to state unequivocally whether all those social and political messages that we can detect in the texts of ancient tragedies were the archon's interference, the choragus's intervention, or just the poet's private viewpoint. (You need to be extremely cautious about that, so as not to repeat the Hellenistic researchers' mistake of ascribing imaginary autobiographical plots to playwrights because of some wrong interpretations of their dramas).<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, if we attentively read through the existing texts, we can immediately draw this conclusion that both Aeschylus and Euripides were ardent advocates of democracy whilst Sophocles supported the aristocratic faction.

The authors of the Old Attic comedy made direct references to the recent events by making use of *parrhesia* (παρρησία – free speech) to extremes in a political sense.<sup>6</sup> Tragedians had to apply some more delicate means of expression. In order to talk about the current events they referred to mythological allegories. Myth, that specific part of Greek history, despite it being always far from reality, was very often used in dramatic texts as a carrier for a very concrete ideology.<sup>7</sup> By introducing a few small changes into the plot, those playwrights skilfully manipulated the society's beliefs about their common mythical past. That is how they deftly planted their fixed notions in the subconscious minds of their audience. Such fixed notions were good enough to shape the spectators' views and opinions about reality. Quite frequently, those changes remain on the border of perception for a reader in the present day, especially if we read the text of an ancient tragedy in isolation from its historical context. In this article, I would like to focus on one research topic: how those tragedians manipulated their plots based on mythology so as to use them for influencing Athenian "international policies." I am chiefly directing my attention to the topic of how the Athenians established their relations with the allies. Meaning the closest neighbours as well as some of those who did not belong in the circle

<sup>3</sup> Pickard-Cambridge 1988: 90.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson 2000: 65.

<sup>5</sup> Rosen 2010: 234.

<sup>6</sup> See. f.e. Cratinus, *Cheirones*, fr. 259.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., among other things, the pro-Delphian overtones of Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus the King*.

of the Hellenic civilisation. We perfectly realise what the Athenians thought of the barbarians. In their eyes, the barbarians were a bunch of morons who only found entertainment in mindless cruelty (the Scythian archer in the comedy *Thesmophoriazusae* by Aristophanes). The image of barbarians, which has existed in literature up to our times, was a perfect antithesis emphasising who and what the citizens of “golden” Athens were not like.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, there happened to be such situations when the Athenians needed help from their *barbarophon* (derived from βαρβαρόφωνος – speaking a foreign tongue) neighbours. And in order to gain allies, we first have to strengthen their belief in how powerful they are. In many tragedies, we can, therefore, come across some previously unconfirmed genealogies that trace the barbarians’ lineage back to the Greek gods and heroes. Those were not any mistakes or airs of nonchalance on the part of the Athenian tragedians; it was just their carefully premeditated strategy of creating persuasive messages to function as pure propaganda. And this is the aspect of Greek tragedy as a practical tool to shape “international politics,” on which I would like to focus in this article. I have decided to devote all of my attention to Aeschylus’ and Euripides’ works, as both of them were obvious supporters of the democratic faction.

Aeschylus, a senile Marathonomach (as he is depicted by Aristophanes in *The Frogs*), if he is read from the perspective of his time, proves to have been a very progressive author. On the grounds of his existing works, it can be observed that he was deeply involved in supporting the democratic changes taking place in Athens. *The Suppliants* – a piece of writing that is particularly often used in the present day to comment on Europe’s immigration policies<sup>9</sup> – was basically received in the ancient times as a play about the subject of the necessity to come to the aid of people, but also about the dangers connected with it. When Danaus and his fifty daughters arrive in Argos, Pelasgus is faced with a choice between exposing his city to Zeus Ikesios’ anger because of disrespecting the suppliants’ right and inviting a potential war with the Aigyptioi. Pelasgus is not a tyrant in Argos, so he cannot make his sole decision about that; therefore, it is necessary to call for the people’s assembly. We become familiar with the course of the assembly by Danaus’ own account:

Action was taken by the Argives, not by any doubtful vote but in such a way as to make my aged heart renew its youth. For the air bristled with right hands held aloft as, in full vote, they ratified this resolution into law: “That we are settlers in this land, and are free, subject to no seizure, and secure from robbery of man; that no one, native or alien, lead us captive; but, if they turn to violence, any landholder who refuses to rescue us, should both forfeit his rights and suffer public banishment.

(Aeschylus, *The Suppliants*, 605–615)

<sup>8</sup> Herodotus, 9.76–80.

<sup>9</sup> Jelinek 2015.

The playwright creates a very explicit dramatic panorama in his work: there is a unanimous forest of the citizens' hands shooting up during the assembly. That is what we call perfect unanimity in democracy.<sup>10</sup> Yet, it seems that Pelasgus (who so nobly invokes the will of his people in the first place), has not presented all the circumstances of the case being decided on by voting, during his speech at the assembly. He has only mentioned the suppliant maids and the danger of Zeus' anger. At the same time, he has concealed the fact that the Egyptian army is just marching toward Argos. Aeschylus shows us the power of democracy on the one hand, and the easiness of manipulating it on the other hand. While the saved maids are singing their song of thanks for the citizens of Argos, Danaus is reminding his daughters that they should always remember the good things they have experienced in this city. That heavily emphasised, pro-Argive message can only be interpreted as friendly relationships between the Athenian democrats and the Argive political elite.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, when the Athenians expelled Themistocles (who, as we know, had Aeschylus' support and friendliness), it was the city of Argos where he found shelter (he arrived there in about 469/8 BC). So it was another reason for the writer to present that city in a positive light. Anyway, granting Themistocles asylum meant nothing risky to Argos (in a diplomatic or military sense). By contrast, the aid given to the suppliant women in Aeschylus' tetralogy ends up in a war (that war was depicted in the lost and no longer existing *Aigyptioi*). Pelasgus dies and then an Egyptian "foreigner", i.e. Danaus, becomes the tyrant of Argos.<sup>12</sup>

The lack of the exact dating of this drama causes many interpreting issues. Alan Sommerstein's concept of ascribing that teatrology to the events of 462 BC seems a really interesting suggestion. As Sparta could not manage to suppress the Helot revolt, it simply called its allies (Athens included) for help. According to Sommerstein's claim, the plot of *The Suppliants* precisely mirrors everything that took place in Athens in 462 BC.<sup>13</sup> The main suppliant was a Spartan citizen named Pericleidas, who – as an emissary – asked for sending support to Peloponnesus. The playwright makes it rather clear in his drama that the utmost caution must be exercised when making a decision about going to the rescue of outlanders. We will be able to help them, yes, but we may also destroy our own country by doing so. It actually turned out that he was right to a certain extent. When the Athenian army had reached Messenia, the Spartans began to fear that Athens would form an alliance with the Messenians and decided to send the Athenians alone back home. It was just then that Athens broke their alliance with Sparta and established a new one with Argos (the recent opponent

<sup>10</sup> Chou 2012: 113–114.

<sup>11</sup> Lesky 2006: 115.

<sup>12</sup> Sommerstein 1997: 76.

<sup>13</sup> Sommerstein 1997: 76.

of Sparta). The policies of Athens took a radically different course, and so there was a major diplomatic shuffle on the map of Hellas. Naturally, it was all partially reflected by the text of the tragedy.

In 458 BC, Aeschylus staged his *Oresteia*. In that play, the very first monologue by Agamemnon can already hold the reader entirely spellbound:

Argos first, as is right and proper,  
I greet, and her local gods who have helped  
me to my safe return.

(Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 810)

These are the very first words that Agamemnon has said shortly after his appearance on the stage. And the reader, who has just become so advanced and involved in his/her gripping read, has to stop suddenly at this fragment. After all, Agamemnon is associated with Atreides, Mycenae, The Lion Gate and The Cyclopean Walls. His life story is a perfect example to show practical use of mythology for political purposes. Homer in his *Iliad* tells us that Agamemnon was the king of Argos and commanded the troops that had come from Mycenae (2.567). On the other hand, the lyrical poet Stesichorus (who held pro-Spartan views) presented Agamemnon as the king of Sparta. In the sixth century, both Sparta and Argos sought a mythological justification reasonable enough to sanction the role of a hegemon for the entire Peloponnesian peninsula. Argos took pride in its Seven Against Thebes conquest. The Spartans had their Agamemnon. In Aeschylus' drama, moving the base of Agamemnon the Great Hero of Troy to Argos was nothing but a political nod to the new ally. (Ten years before the showing of *The Oresteia*, the Argives conquered Mycenae and took control over it – so the fact that the playwright moved the Atreides palace to Argos was even more rationalised).<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus, throughout his entire play, “brainwashes” us with pro-Argive propaganda. This can be easily linked with the fact that the playwright – like all of the democratic faction members – placed his high hopes in the new alliance.<sup>15</sup> Which is very strongly expressed at the end of his trilogy. When Orestes leaves Athens (finally freed from the Erinyes following him), he promises the Athenians that the citizens of Argos will be their allies now and forever:

I will return to my home now, after I swear an oath to this land and to your people for the future and for all time to come, that no captain of my land will ever come here and bring a well-equipped spear against them.

(Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 760–765)

We find the example of Argos to be the only account of alliance relationships, a trace of which has survived in the text of the tragedy written in the period

<sup>14</sup>Hall 2007: 336.

<sup>15</sup>Macleod 2007: 274.

of peace. This example is made even more interesting by another change to happen on the “political” map of Hellas with the passing of time. Almost fifty years separated the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian war. The first years of the war with Sparta (between 430 and 426 BC) are the estimated date of Euripides’ tragedy titled *Heracleidae* (*The Children of Heracles*). It was a really up-to-date work with direct references to the issue of seeking allies. The children of Heracles, being on the run from their persecutor Eurystheus (the king of Argos and Mycenae), had reached as far as Marathon. Remembering the past friendship that connected their fathers, they were looking for help from Theseus’ scions. Taking the side of the suppliants has, of course, brought the danger of war with Argos. And in that way, the drama becomes a textbook example of *enkômion Athenon* (ἐγκώμιον Ἀθηνῶν – praise of great Athens) because Athens is commanded by wise leaders who will always take the side of the weak.

*Heracleidae* is an exceptional specimen of propaganda art. Euripides’ patriotism and civic engagement are certainly most obvious in it. Athens is shown by him in a very idealistic manner as a paragon of democracy, where each of the conflicting sides has to be heard out. Justice, eagerness to help the weak – all of these values are represented by Iolaus, Macaria and Demophon. In contrast, the Spartans/Eurystheus after having come from the Peloponnese try to destroy the aforementioned values. Jerzy Łanowski, who translated this text into Polish, says that Euripides actually wrote “a political morality play, an up-to-date propaganda drama with all the numerous pros and noticeable cons of this genre of writing.”<sup>16</sup> It gives the impression of holding in your hands a sort of book that has been prepared in haste and left imperfect. The main idea of this work is expressed in the scene with Iolaus promising the Athenians his gratitude for their kindness and help:

My children, we have put our friends to the test. And so if you ever return to your country and live in your ancestral home and <get back again> your patrimony, you must consider <the rulers of this land> for all time as your saviors and friends. Remember never to raise a hostile force against this land, but consider it always your greatest friend. The Athenians are worthy of your reverence seeing that in exchange for us they took the enmity of the great land of Argos and its army, even though they saw that we were wandering beggars [they did not give us up or drive us from the land].

(Euripides, *Heracleidae*, 310–320)

*Heracleidae* did not ever forget that, but their offspring did – and that is exactly how they made war on Athens.

Another tragedy by Euripides that we can date to have been written during the first years of that war, between 430 and 425 BC, is *Andromache*. All the chances are that it was a separate work written for the purpose of being shown

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<sup>16</sup>Euripides 2005: 199.

outside the territory of Athens (most probably, at the court of the Molossian dynasty in Epirus) – at least, such is the information we receive from the scholia. As Jerzy Łanowski summarises: it was “a medium quality product for export.”<sup>17</sup>

The problematic plot of the tragedy begins with a conflict between two women. Hermione (the daughter of King Menelaus of Sparta) could not bear a male heir to Neoptolemus whilst Andromache (his captive concubine from Troy) gave birth to his bastard son. Straight from the subject of the two women’s rows, Euripides makes a smooth transition to his “curricular” defamation of the Spartans. The mythical characters are cast on the contemporary scene of “international” relations. And it is easily noticed that Andromache’s insults are thrown at the Spartans of the Peloponnesian War times, not at those of the heroic epoch. Ideologically, the most essential is still the ending of Euripides’ drama. Evidently, it was a drama “written with intention.” We are transported into the first years of the war. Athens is seeking allies. In the last lines, we find out about Thetis’ command:

As for the captive woman, I mean Andromache, she must go to dwell in the land of Molossia and be married to Helenus, and with her must go her son, the last of the line of Aeacus. It is fated that his descendants in unbroken succession will rule over Molossia and live their lives in prosperity. For, old sir, it was not to be that your race and mine should be so laid waste, nor that of Troy, for Troy too is in the gods’ care although it fell by the will of Pallas Athena.

(Euripides, *Andromache*, 1245–1255)

In order to gain allies, you should first make them feel confident in their greatness. The afore-quoted statement – being said by Achilles’ mother herself in an Athenian playwright’s drama – it certainly had to boost the egos of the rulers of Epirus. The Molossians were one of the most powerful tribes inhabiting the north-western region of the Balkan Peninsula. The dynasty of Aiakides, who ruled over them, claimed to be direct descendants of Aeacus King of the Myrmidons, who had become a Judge of the Dead in Hades. His son, Peleus, was Achilles’ father and Neoptolemus’ grandfather. The mythical messages contain the information that the son of Neoptolemus and his captive Trojan woman was named Molossus. Euripides most probably did not want his drama to become a roughly made piece of propaganda writing, so that the name (Molossus) was never mentioned in the text of the drama. This (Harlequin-Romance-like) drama is a typical example of an etiological propaganda tragedy. Or how did the Aiakides get to Epirus, if not because of the Spartans’ treacherous schemes?

Twenty years later, Hellas was still involved in the war between Athens and Sparta. After 407 BC, Euripides is time-stamped to have left for Macedonia. He went to the court of King Archelaus, best known to history as a ruler with high aspirations for arts and culture patronage. By dint of these aspirations, he desired

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<sup>17</sup>Euripides 2006: 10.

to introduce his country into the sphere of Hellenic civilisation. Euripides, most likely wanting to please his host, wrote the tragedies *Archelaus* and *Temenos* (or *Temenides* – it has never been confirmed whether he wrote one or two pieces – the existence of the “Macedonian trilogy” has not been proven true). In those dramas, he made use of one myth that made it possible for him to trace the dynasty of the Macedonian kings back to Heracles himself. Thus, he finally brought the ancestors of the Macedonians into the Hellenic heroic age.

The plot of *Temenos* can only be reconstructed based on the myth. Heracles and Deianira’s sons: Temenos, Cresphontes and the twins Procles and Eurysthenes together conquered the Peloponnese. They divided the land among themselves by lot: Argos was given to Temenos, Sparta was drawn by the twins, and Cresphontes received Messenia. It is quite likely that Euripides’ tragedy referred to the moment when the Heracleidae shared power to control the Peloponnese. Archelaus, Temenos’ offspring (this is probably the space of the second tragedy), was expelled by his brothers, who took over his throne. Then, he went as far as Thrace to reach the court of King Kisseus, who promised to give him a kingdom and his daughter in marriage if he helped him to defeat his opponents. Archelaus, as Heracles’ descendant, beat all of the enemies. Yet, when he came and claimed his prize, Kisseus decided to break his promise and secretly ordered assassination of his would-be son-in-law. One of the slaves revealed the assassination plot to Archelaus. Then Archelaus killed Kisseus and set out on a journey to Macedonia. When he reached his destination, he followed the footprints of a goat – in agreement with Apollo’s oracle – until he got to the place where he founded Aigai – “city of goats” (αἴξ – goat). It became Macedonia’s first historical capital – known as Vergina in the present day.<sup>18</sup>

Euripides knew how to return a favour to his protector and how to show that the protector had earned his fame the hardest way by shedding blood, sweat and tears. He perfectly realised that the *dramatis personae*’s reality was one thing, but another thing was the audience – dignitaries and people closely connected with the court of King Archelaus – who were going to carefully listen to the spoken words of the drama. The king himself must have gone up in his own estimation while hearing the genealogical story of his dynasty, which was as old as the times when Danaus and his fifty daughters had arrived in Argos. Certainly, it meant so much to the Macedonians that their national identity was being rediscovered by an objective outsider. Their Hellenic ambitions were no

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<sup>18</sup>In the Reign of King Archelaus, the capital of Macedonia was moved from Aigai to Pella. That is why we cannot tell where the showing of *Archelaus* took place. The three most likely places are: Aigai, Pella and Dion (cf. Harder 1985: 126–127). In Pella, only stone remnants of its ancient theatre of the fourth century BC have survived, but the wooden structure might have stood in that place at a much earlier date. On the other hand, Aigai might be suggested by the oracle upon the city foundation stone, which is mentioned in the text of the drama (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 41).

unjustified usurpation at all if one of the most famous Athenians in those days supported them.

The Hellenic connection to the Macedonian myth was not only based on the ties of kinship between the ruling dynasty and Heracles. The very fact that Archelaus had been expelled from Argos being under his rule also seemed to get Macedonia and Athens closer to each other. These strong Hellenic roots of the Macedonians were expected to be very useful to the Athenians, who had been desperately looking for allies against Sparta during the last years of the war. The introduction of the half-barbarians into the Hellenic family tree and finding their protoplasts among the home-grown heroes of Hellas was some serious elevation. Archelaus undoubtedly liked it very much. At the same time, the Athenian playwright – while keenly observing his city and the development of the international situation – certainly saw a great potential in that operation to gain a lot of political advantages. History of theatre considers Euripides to be a harmless dandy who always preferred focusing on the psychology of his characters to analysing social and political issues – which is an image as false as Aeschylus' alleged conservatism.

Of course, references to Athens' allies can also be found in comedies. On the basis of the existing works, we can suppose that some of them were dedicated to the current bonds of alliance. The first proven comedy with references to Athens' allies was Hermippus' *Basket Bearers* (dated 424 BC). On the basis of the existing fragments, it is assumed that Eupolis' *Cities* and *Friends* as well as Aristophanes' *Babylonians* and *Islands* were all comedies about the bonds of alliance. (There is a comedy that has not survived until our times, it is titled *The Alliance*, and we cannot even say whether it was written by Kantharus or Plato.) The existing comedy fragments mainly reveal that allies are to be used and then left alone. This principle is completely changed in Aristophanes' comedies titled *Peace* and *Lysistrata*. The author shows in them that the best results are always produced by united collaboration when everyone offers their strength at the same level. Most comedies satirise the allies as slaves submitting themselves to the tyrant-city; in tragedies, a deep nod is given to those people by elevating their origin and position above the actual "historical" facts. In Aeschylus' text, legendary Agamemnon had his headquarters in Argos. Then Euripides proves that there was Heracleian blood in the veins of the rulers of Epirus, and Archelaus the King of Macedonia was a descendant of Heracles. Therefore, bonds of alliance in those tragedy texts are basically depicted as genealogical and geographical shake-ups. Tragedians were never unreflective, so they always made it clear in their dramas that bonds of alliance meant much more than just diplomacy and courtesy, and the commitments resulting from such bonds might even jeopardise national security. It is necessary to remember in what circumstances the bonds with the allies were treated as something most important. Were those tragedy texts ever presented on the theatrical stage during the Great Dionysia, to the

audiences that were not only made of Athenians but also of deputies and envoys of the allied cities? Were the audiences at the Lenaia only reduced to the citizens of Athens and the nearby demes because of the winter storms? (Regrettably, we are not in possession of any existing information to let us know which of the aforementioned festivals was used to stage the works that I deal with in this article.) The theatrical showings that took place outside Athens had a totally different meaning at the courts of Epirus or Macedonia, for instance. The great idea of Panhellenism was also very important for the Athenians, who always – as the first of all the Hellenic people – used it as their principal argument, most frequently in those moments when they sought support. The bonds of alliance were just one of many examples of how those playwrights responded to the latest social and/or political events in their texts. So it would be hard to deny the truth of Peter Rhodes' words: "Clio, muse of history, has moved massively into the territory of her tragic sister Melpomene."<sup>19</sup>

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ЧИСТАЯ ПРОПАГАНДА ИЛИ ВЕЛИКОЕ ИСКУССТВО, ПАТРИОТИЗМ И  
ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ АКТИВНОСТЬ?  
КАК ЕВРИПИД И ЭСХИЛ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАЛИ СЮЖЕТЫ СВОИХ ТРАГЕДИЙ В  
ПОДДЕРЖКЕ АФИННСКОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ С ЦЕЛЬЮ УБЕДИТЬ СОЮЗНИКОВ.

S u m m a r i u m

В этой статье я хотела бы остановиться на одной теме, а именно на том, как древние трагики манипулировали своими драматическими сюжетами (опираясь на греческую мифологию), чтобы использовать их для влияния на афинскую «международную политику». Это не были какие-либо ошибки или признаки неосторожности со стороны афинских трагедов, это была их тщательно продуманная стратегия создания убедительных посланий, которые нужны были действовать как чистая пропаганда. В основном я обращаю свое внимание на то, как афиняне установили свои отношения с союзниками, имея в виду ближайших соседей, а также некоторых из тех, кто не принадлежал к кругу эллинской цивилизации. Я решила сосредоточить свое внимание на работах Эсхила и Еврипида, поскольку оба они были явными сторонниками демократии, опираясь на тексты; Эсхила: *Просительницы, Орестея* и Еврипида: *Герakлиды, Андрoмаха, Архелай, Темен*.