

Persians By Aeschylus

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persians is both aeschylus first extant tragedy and the earliest surviving drama in the western tradition because

aeschylus was there at the struggle between greeks and persians in the straits of salamis in 480 b c the persians is not merely a play but a valuable historical document the description of the battle contained here is in fact the only account of any event in the great persian wars that has been composed by an eyewitness lembke and herington faithfully recreate in modern language aeschylus account of the frightful contrast between the human work of butchery and the serene sunlit natural background of salamis though critics have argued for centuries about the veracity of the historical details aeschylus poetic vision makes the persians a compelling dramatic experience jacket

the persians aeschylus the persians is an athenian tragedy by the ancient greek playwright aeschylus first produced in 472 bc it is the oldest surviving play in the history of theatre it dramatises the persian response to news of their military defeat at the battle of salamis 480 bc which was a decisive episode in the greco persian wars as such the play is also notable for being the only extant greek tragedy that is based on contemporary events

the persians aeschylus translated by robert potter an ancient greek tragedy a superb new edition the persians is an ancient greek tragedy written during the classical period of ancient greece by the greek tragedian aeschylus it is the second and only surviving part of a now otherwise lost trilogy that won the first prize at the dramatic competitions in athens city dionysia festival in 472 bce with pericles serving as choregos the first play in the trilogy was called phineus it presumably dealt with jason and the argonauts rescue of king phineus from the torture that the monstrous harpies inflicted at the behest of zeus the subject of the third play glaucus was either a mythical corinthian king who was devoured by his horses because he angered the goddess aphrodite see glaucus son of sisyphus or else a boeotian farmer who ate a magical herb that transformed him into a sea

deity with the gift of prophecy see glaucus the persians takes place in susa which at the time was one of the capitals of the persian empire and opens with a chorus of old men of susa who are soon joined by the queen mother atossa as they await news of her son king xerxes expedition against the greeks expressing her anxiety and unease atossa narrates what is probably the first dream sequence in european theatre this is an unusual beginning for a tragedy by aeschylus normally the chorus would not appear until slightly later after a speech by a minor character an exhausted messenger arrives who offers a graphic description of the battle of salamis and its gory outcome he tells of the persian defeat the names of the persian generals who have been killed and that xerxes had escaped and is returning the climax of the messenger's speech is his rendition of the battle cry of the greeks as they charged on sons of greece set free your fatherland your children wives homes of your ancestors and temples of your gods save all or all is lost 401 405 at the tomb of her dead husband darius atossa asks the chorus to summon his ghost some remedy he knows perhaps knows ruin's cure they say on learning of the persian defeat darius condemns the hubris behind his son's decision to invade greece he particularly rebukes an impious xerxes decision to build a bridge over the hellespont to expedite the persian army's advance before departing the ghost of darius prophesies another persian defeat at the battle of plataea 479 bce where the plain grows lush and green where asopus stream plumps rich boeotia's soil the mother of disasters awaits them there reward for insolence for scorning god 9 xerxes finally arrives dressed in torn robes grief swarms the queen says just before his arrival but worst of all it stings to hear how my son my prince wears tatters rags 845 849 and reeling from his crushing defeat the rest of the drama 908 1076 consists of the king alone with the chorus engaged in a lyrical *kommós* that laments the enormity of persia's defeat

aeschylus *Persae* first produced in 472 bc is the oldest surviving greek tragedy it is also the only extant greek

tragedy that deals not with a mythological subject but with an event of recent history the greek defeat of the persians at salamis in 480 bc unlike aeschylus other surviving plays it is apparently not part of a connected trilogy in this new edition a f garvie encourages the reader to assess the persae on its own terms as a drama it is not a patriotic celebration or a play with a political manifesto but a genuine tragedy which far from presenting a simple moral of hybris punished by the gods poses questions concerning human suffering to which there are no easy answers in his introduction garvie defends the play s structure against its critics and considers its style the possibility of thematic links between it and the other plays presented by aeschylus on the same occasion its staging and the state of the transmitted text the commentary develops in greater detail some of the conclusions of the introduction

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knows ruin & cure they say on learning of the persian defeat darius condemns the hubris behind his son's decision to invade greece he particularly rebukes an impious xerxes decision to build a bridge over the hellespont to expedite the persian army's advance before departing the ghost of darius prophesies another persian defeat at the battle of plataea 479 bce where the plain grows lush and green where asopus stream plumps rich boeotia's soil the mother of disasters awaits them there reward for insolence for scorning god xerxes finally arrives dressed in torn robes grief swarms the queen says just before his arrival but worst of all it stings to hear how my son my prince wears tatters rags 845 849 and reeling from his crushing defeat the rest of the drama 908 1076 consists of the king alone with the chorus engaged in a lyrical *kommós* that laments the enormity of persia's defeat

this is a literary study of aeschylus persians alongside herodotus histories which offers a comprehensive understanding what actually happened at the battle of salamis and afterwards thomas harrison examines the political and ideological motivating factors underpinning persai in the context of the times aeschylus persians is not only the first surviving greek drama it is also the only tragedy to take for its subject historical rather than mythical events the repulse of the army of xerxes at salamis in 480 b c it has frequently been mined for information on the tactics of salamis or the greeks knowledge of persian names or institutions but it also has a broader value one that has not often been realised what does it tell us about greek representations of persia or of the athenians self image what can we glean from it of the politics of early fifth century athens or of the athenians conception of their empire how if at all can such questions be approached without doing violence to the persians as a drama what are the implications of the play for the nature of tragedy

a new edition with introduction and commentary of aeschylus persae first produced in 472 bc a f garvie argues

that the play is a genuine tragedy which far from presenting a simple moral of hybris punished by the gods poses questions concerning human suffering to which there are no easy answers

the third edition of this volume includes newly revised authoritative and compelling translations of four timeless works by the ancient greek tragedian aeschylus i contains the persians translated by seth benardete the seven against thebes translated by david grene the suppliant maidens translated by seth benardete and prometheus bound translated by david grene for this edition mark griffith and glenn w most have carefully updated these translations to bring them even closer to the ancient greek while retaining the vibrancy for which the renowned university of chicago press series is famous this edition also includes brand new translations of euripides medea the children of heracles andromache and iphigenia among the taurians fragments of lost plays by aeschylus and the surviving portion of sophocles s satyr drama the trackers new introductions for each play offer essential information about its first production plot and reception in antiquity and beyond in addition each volume includes an introduction to the life and work of its tragedian as well as notes addressing textual uncertainties and a glossary of names and places mentioned in the plays the entire series has also been reorganized both within and between volumes to reflect the most up to date scholarship on the order in which the plays were originally written

aeschylus persians is the earliest extant greek tragedy and sole surviving historical tragedy it tells the story of the persian king xerxes disastrous invasion of greece in 480 79 and dramatises his return to persia in rags to face the condemnation of his elders and to lament his defeat the first western depiction of the causes and limits of imperialist conquest the persians is especially relevant today the play is unflinching in its portrayal of the horrors of the persian defeat but it is not merely a paean to western freedom democracy courage and military

supremacy it is a meditation on the tendency of wealth power and success to take on a momentum of their own and to push societies to the brink of ruin this companion to the play provides historical context thematic discussion literary and performance history bibliography and glossary it is entirely accessible to those studying the play in translation as well as the original greek back cover

a new accurate and readable translation of four of aeschylus plays persians seven against thebes suppliants and prometheus bound it is based upon the most authoritative recent edition of the greek text and particular care is taken with the many lyric passages a lengthy introduction sets the plays in their original context and includes short appreciative essays on them the explanatory notes treat dramatic issues structure and form and theatrical aspects as well as details of content and language major difficulties in the texts themselves which affect general interpretation are briefly discussed the volume as a whole should provide an informative reliable and suggestive basis for study and enjoyment

an accurate and readable new translation with introduction extensive explanatory notes and up to date bibliography of four of aeschylus plays including the unique historical tragedy persians and the hugely influential prometheus bound

aaron poochigian s new translations of aeschylus s earliest extant plays provide the clearest rendering yet of their formal structure the distinction between spoken and sung rhythms is as sharp as it is in the source texts and for the first time readers in english can fully grasp the balanced harmonious arrangement of choral odes the importance of these works to the history of drama and tragedy and to the history of classical literature is beyond question and their themes of military hubris and foreign versus native are deeply relevant today

persians offers a surprisingly sympathetic portrayal of the athenians most hated enemy in seven against thebes argive invaders though no less greek than the thebans themselves are portrayed as barbarians and in suppliants the city of argos is called upon to protect egyptian refugees based on textual evidence and the archaeological remains of the theater of dionysus at athens poochigian s introductory overview of stage properties and accompanying stage directions allow readers to experience the plays as they were performed in their own time he is most careful in his translations of the plays choral odes instead of rendering them with little or no form poochigian has preserved the comprehensive structures aeschylus himself employed readers are thus able to recognize aeschylus as a master of poetry as well as of drama poochigian s translations are the most accurate renditions of the poetry and dramaturgy of the original works available intended to be both read as literature and performed as plays these translations are lucid and readable while remaining staunchly faithful to the texts

the ghost summoned with bizarre rituals from the underworld the elaborate protocol of the persian court desperate lamentations self mutilation and an eye witness account of the battle of salamis these are some of the features of aeschylus persians and makes it an example of ancient theatre as one of the earliest surviving european dramas it should be of interest to students of ancient literature as the only extended account of the persian wars by an author who fought in them it is a unique document of the athenian historical imagination the play focuses on the visual and aural effects aeschylus created his use of imagery and its contribution to athenian democratic ideology

aeschylus persians is unique in being the only extant greek tragedy on an historical subject greece s victory in 480 bc over the great persian king xerxes eight years before the play was written and first performed in 472 bc

looking at persians examines how aeschylus responded to such a turning point in athenian history and how his audience may have reacted to his play as well as considering the play s relationship with earlier lost tragedies and discussing its central themes including war nature and the value of human life the volume considers how persians may have been staged in fifth century athens and how it has been performed today the twelve essays presented here are written by prominent international academics and offer insightful analyses of the play from the perspectives of performance history and society intended for readers ranging from school students and undergraduates to teachers and those interested in drama including practitioners this volume also includes an accurate accessible and performance friendly english translation of persians by david stuttard

classical greek dramatic poetry and drama

a boon for classicists and general readers alike for the reader who comes to tragedy for the first time these translations are eminently accessible and consummately american in tone and feeling for the classicist these versions constitute an ambitious reinterpretation of traditional masterpieces after 2 500 years the poetry of euripides and aeschylus has found a new voice in fact ten of them the boston book review

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