



DARTMOUTH COLLEGE CENTER
FOR SOCIAL IMPACT AND
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

AESCHYLUS' *PERSIANS*

A Collaborative Student
Performance

28 May 2021 • 6:00 PM EDT

Performed by students at Dartmouth College
and Woodstock Union High School

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Aeschylus' *Persians* is both our first extant Greek tragedy and the only fully surviving Greek tragedy that takes recent history as its subject matter. Though staged in Athens in 472 BCE, the tragedy is set some seven years earlier, between two major battles of the Greco-Persian Wars. The play depicts the Persian court's reaction to news of defeat at the Battle of Salamis (480 BCE) and prophecy of the destruction that awaits the rest of the Persian army at the Battle of Plataea (479 BCE). The playwright Aeschylus had lost his brother to these wars (at Marathon in 490 BCE) and likely served at the Battle of Salamis. Ruins created by the Persian invasions of Athens in 480 and 479 BCE were still visible on the landscape surrounding the theater in which this play was staged in 472 BCE. And yet, the play portrays the suffering of the Persian people at the hand of the Greeks with great sympathy.

This seeming paradox provides inspiration for our exploration of Aeschylus' *Persians* as a universalizing story of homecoming after defeat in war rather than as a testimony to the absolute polarization between Greeks and Persians in ancient Greek thought (as the play has previously been understood).

Accordingly, we translate the ancient Greek word *barbaros* as "non-Greek" rather than "barbarian," given the negative associations of the latter term in modern English. (The ancient Greek word *barbaros* designated someone speaking a language that to Greek ears sounded like *bar-bar*, i.e. incomprehensible sound.)

With each of its six entrances, Aeschylus' *Persians* prompts us to consider what it means to return to Susa (a capital of the Achaemenid Persian empire and the play's dramatic setting). The chorus, whose entrance begins the play, offer the

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

perspective of the Persian people on their army's long absence. The Persian queen Atossa amplifies the anxiety of the chorus of Persian elders by telling of a dream and omen. The messenger, who presents himself as an eyewitness to the Battle of Salamis, begins to unfold the tragedy of the Persian army. When Atossa re-enters the stage after the messenger's departure, she offers the perspective of a wife and mother hoping for a better future despite the unfolding tragedy. The ghost of Darius (her husband and the former king of Persia) dashes these hopes by predicting immense Persian suffering at the Battle of Plataea. Xerxes (her son and the current king of Persia) finally returns alone and leads the chorus in antiphonal lament for all those lost in Greece.

Tonight's dramatic reading is the endpoint of a collaborative process that began in summer 2020 with wonderful students at Woodstock Union High School in Vermont (audio of choral song with GRK 24 students) and their fabulous teacher Sarah Allen (stage manager and chorus leader), facilitated by Dartmouth's Center for Social Impact.

In fall and winter 2020, our composer Christian Wolff, accompanist Abigail Mans, and sound engineers Max Fuster and Henry Phipps bravely joined the team. This spring, students in CLST 2, GRK 24, and the Dartmouth Department of Classics made this dramatic reading fully possible by generously lending their time as on-stage chorus leaders, actors, and more. We hope you will enjoy the show and consider sticking around afterwards for a brief talkback with its cast and director!

CAST

CHARACTERS

Atossa (Persian queen)

TARA KARIM

Messenger

JACOB PARKER

Ghost of Darius (former Persian king)

HEATHER DAMIA

Xerxes (current Persian king)

GUS GUSZKOWSKI

CHORUS LEADERS

Sarah Allen

Kevin Donohue

Ian Gill

Sarah Mason



CAST

CHORUS

Ella Ballou

Celia Burrington

Danny Drebber

Maeve Haff

Parker Kuhnert

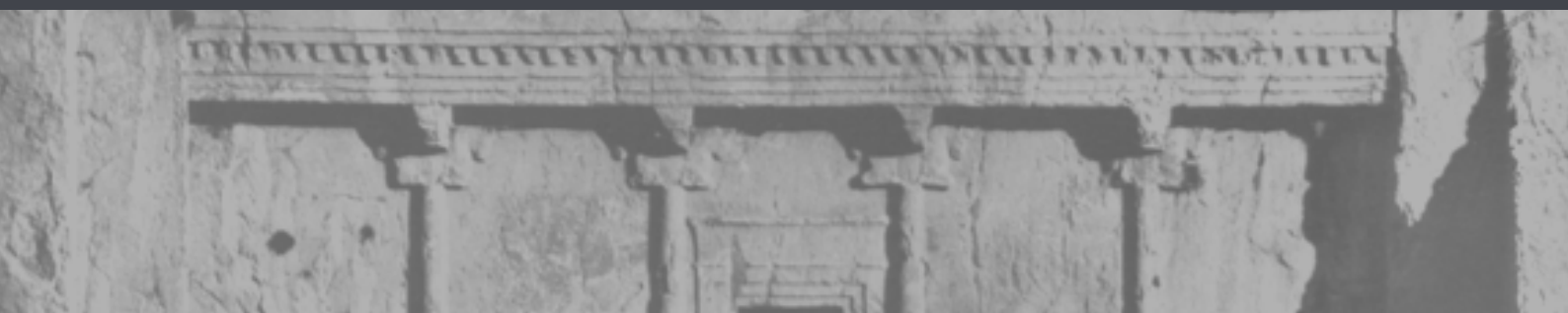
Molly Maxham

Ethan Mello

Joey Ranberg

Molly Shearer

Colby Warren



CREDITS

Composer: Christian Wolff

Accompanist: Abigail Mans

Sound engineers: Max Fuster and Henry Phipps

Poster design: Ian Reinke

Program design: Ashley Xie

Poster and program image (Darius' tomb in Persepolis with humans for scale): Erich Schmidt

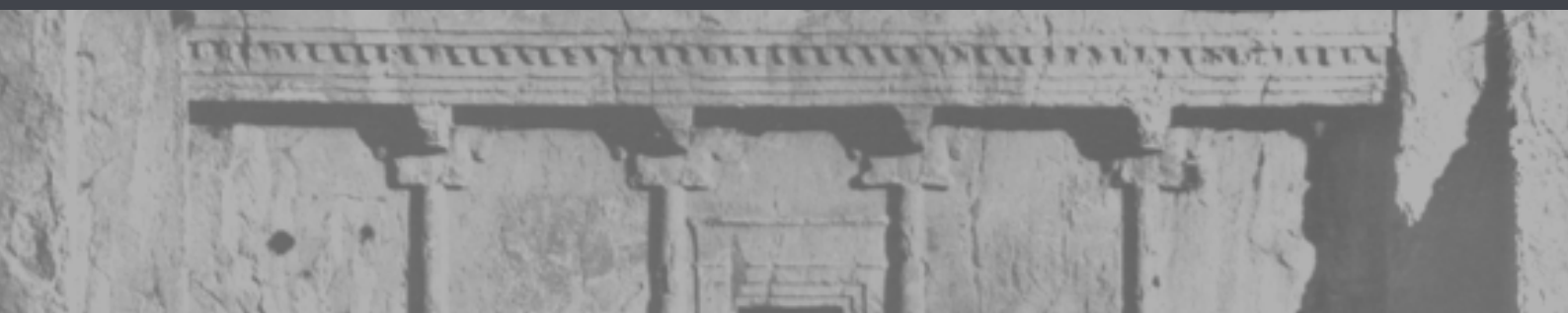
Greek text of play: Aeschylus (as edited by Denys Page)

Translation: Ian Johnston (performed text, with minor adaptations) and Simone Oppen (program text)

Director: Simone Oppen

Stage manager: Sarah Allen

Post-show talkback facilitator: Peyton Bullock



CHORUS LEADER PROFILES



Sarah Allen grew up in Vermont, earned a BA in Classics from Smith College and then a MAT from UMASS Amherst. She has been teaching Latin (and now sometimes Greek!) at Woodstock Union High School and Middle School since 2012. When she's not teaching she enjoys gardening, reading, and exploring the beauty of Vermont.



Kevin Donohue is a senior studying Classical Languages and Literatures and Linguistics at Dartmouth College. It's been a while since he's participated in any sort of dramatic production, tragic or otherwise, but he is looking forward to getting back into it. Outside of the tragic stage he loves hiking, local diners, contra dancing, and doing crosswords.



Ian Gill is a sophomore at Dartmouth double majoring in Classical Languages and Literature and Mathematics with a minor in English. When he's not reading Latin poetry and Greek tragedy, he enjoys playing ultimate for Dartmouth's Men's team, hiking with the Outing Club, running, and reading English literature.



Sarah Mason is a sophomore studying Classical Languages and Literatures at Dartmouth College. She is extremely excited to make her Ancient Drama debut remotely from Southern Mississippi. When not trying to understand the subjunctive mood, she enjoys writing short stories and reading Homer aloud to her cat.

CAST PHOTOS AND BIOS



Peyton Bullock is a '22 from southeast Missouri. He began studying Latin during his first term at Dartmouth, and has since declared a major in Classical Studies, modified with Medieval and Renaissance Studies. His academic interests include - but are very much not limited to, as they're constantly changing - Roman religion, the European alchemical tradition, Arthurian literature, and Rome in the medieval imagination.



Tara Karim is a first-year pre-health student at Dartmouth College, interested in studying Chemistry and Spanish. While she has extensive backstage experience, this is her first time actually appearing in a production. In her spare time, Tara enjoys horseback riding, volunteering near her hometown, and spending time with friends and family.



Jacob Parker is a '23 studying Classical Languages and Literatures. Originally from Winston Salem, NC, he was part of a number of shows in high school, but this is his first production at Dartmouth. While not studying Classical Greek, he enjoys reading and walking.



Gus Guskowski is a junior studying Classical Languages and Literatures at Dartmouth, and they're so excited to be playing Xerxes! Their love of drama (onstage, at least) has led them to participate in Barnard College's production of *Iphigenia* at Aulis as well as acting in several shows with the Dartmouth Rude Mechanicals. Offstage, you can find them attempting to perfect their translation of the *Bacchae* or, more often, procrastinating.



Abigail Mans is a '22 at Dartmouth studying Environmental Studies and Spanish. She grew up in Minnesota and loves to ski, canoe, and generally spend time outside. She's been playing the saxophone for 11 years and has participated in numerous ensembles such as concert bands, pit orchestras, marching bands, and performer showcases. She is currently a member of the Dartmouth College Wind Ensemble and Reed My Lips saxophone quartet.



Heather Damia is a freshman at Dartmouth College who has yet to declare a major. She is thrilled to be performing in her first live reading of a Greek play, and has enjoyed studying classics in her first year. In her free time, she enjoys acting, singing, writing silly poems, and making things.



Woodstock Union High School's Latin IV class of seniors is made up of Ella Ballou, Celia Burrington, Danny Drebber, Maeve Haff, Parker Kuhnert, Molly Maxham, Ethan Mello, Joey Ranberg, Molly Shearer, and Colby Warren. Many came to Latin through an interest in mythology that was sparked by popular fiction. Half of them also started learning about the Romans with Magistra Allen in middle school, and the rest joined in high school. Most also learned some beginning Greek in an introductory ancient Greek course when it was offered for the first time last year. In class they particularly enjoy playing competitive vocabulary games like reverse pictionary and around the world. They love learning about history, and they are great at building their Latin, Greek and English vocabulary by making connections between languages. They began their study of Latin with the Cambridge Latin Course and would like to wish that *Cerberus requiescat in pace*. More than half are planning to continue their study of the ancient world and foreign cultures in college next year. Some of the courses they will be studying include Latin, classics, Italian, and archaeology!

SPECIAL THANKS

Carol Bean-Carmody
Dartmouth College Classics Club
Ashley Doolittle
Margaret Graver
Paul O'Mahony
Thomas Pike
Roberta Stewart

GREEK SONG ONE

πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις
ἤδη [στρ. α] (65)

βασίλειος στρατὸς εἰς
ἀντίπορον γείτονα χώραν,
λινοδέσμῳ σχεδίαι πορθμὸν
ἀμείψας Ἀθαμαντίδος Ἑλλας,
(70)

πολύγομφον ὄδισμα ζυγὸν
ἀμφιβαλὼν αὐχένι πόντου.

πολυάνδρου δ' Ἀσίας θούριος
ἄρχων [ἀντ. α]
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα
ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει
(75)

διχόθεν, πεζονόμοις ἔκ τε
θαλάσσης ἐχυροῖσι πεποιθῶς
στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις,
χρυσονόμου γενεᾷς ἰσόθεος
φῶς. (80)

δολόμετιν δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ τίς
ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει;
[μεσῳιδ.]
τίς ὁ κραιπνῶι ποδὶ
πηδήματος εὐπετέος
ἀνάσσων; (95)

The city-destroying royal army
has crossed to the neighboring
land on the other shore,
having crossed the strait of
Hellas, daughter of Athamas, by
means of a boat bridge,
having tossed a road of many
bolts as a yoke around the neck of
the sea.

And the dashing ruler of
populous Asia
drives his divine flock over the
whole Earth
in two ways, having trusted in his
foot-soldiers and by sea his
fortified,
severe commanders, a man equal
to the gods from a family
dispensed in gold.

What mortal will escape the wily
deceit of a god?
Who, though ruling the well-
falling leap with a nimble foot?

GREEK SONG ONE

φιλόφρων γὰρ ποτισαίνουσα
τὸ πρῶτον παράγει
βροτὸν εἰς ἄρκυας Ἄτα,
τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲρ θνατὸν
ἀλύξαντα φυγεῖν. (100)

πᾶς γὰρ ἱππηλάτας καὶ
πεδοστιβῆς λεῶς [στρ. ε]
σμῆνος ὥς ἐκλέλοιπεν
μελισσᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμωι
στρατοῦ,
τὸν ἀμφίζευκτον ἐξαμείψας
ἀμφοτέρως ἄλιον (131)
πρῶνα κοινὸν αἴας.

λέκτρα δ' ἀνδρῶν πόθωι
πίμπλαται δακρύμασιν, [ἀντ.
ε]
Περσίδες δ' ἀβροπενθεῖς
ἐκάστα πόθωι φιλάνορι (135)
τὸν αἰχμήεντα θοῦρον
εὐνατῆρ' ἀποπεμψαμένα
λείπεται μονόζυξ.

For fawning at first with friendly
intent
Infatuation leads a mortal aside
into nets,
whence it is not possible for a
mortal even having escaped over
them to flee.

For the whole people on
horseback and on foot
like a swarm of bees have left
with the leader of the army,
having crossed over the sea-
promontory yoked on both sides
common to both lands as one.

And beds because of yearning for
men are filled with tears,
and Persian women tenderly
mourning, each one with
yearning for her beloved husband
since she has sent away from
herself her spear-armed, dashing
bedfellow
she is left yoked alone.

GREEK MESSENGER SPEECH

ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε
ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ',
ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
παῖδας γυναῖκας θεῶν τε
πατρώων ἔδη
θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ
πάντων ἀγών.

Ō sons of the Greeks, come on
free your fatherland, free your
children, wives, the abodes of
your ancestral gods,
and the graves of your ancestors;
now is a contest over all things.

GREEK SONG TWO

Ξε. ὅδ' ἐγὼν οἰοῖ αἰακτός,
[στρ. α]
μέλεος γένναι γᾶι τε
πατρώιαι
κακὸν ἄρ' ἐγενόμαν.
Χο. πρόσφθογγόν σοι
νόστου ταύταν (935)
κακοφάτιδα βοάν,
κακομέλετον ἰὰν
Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος
πέμψω πολύδακρυν ἰαχάν.
(940)

Xerxes. Here am I *oioi* lamentable,
wretched to my family and
fatherland
I became, then, a disaster.
Chorus. In salutation for your
homecoming
this ill-sounding cry, the
lamenting voice concerned with
evil
of a Mariandynian mourner
I shall send you a cry filled with
tears.

Ξε. ἴετ' αἰανῇ πάνδυρτον
[άντ. α]
δύσθροον αὐδάν, δαίμων γάρ
ὄδ' αὔ
μετάτροπος ἐπ' ἐμοί.
Χο. ἦσω τοι †καὶ < >†
πάνδυρτον,
λαοπαθέα σέβων ἀλίτυπά τε
βάρη (945)
πόλεως γέννας πενθητηῆρος·
κλάγξω δ' αὔ γόον
ἀρίδακρυν.

Ξε. βεβᾶσι γάρ τοίπερ
ἀγρέται στρατοῦ. [στρ. δ]
Χο. βεβᾶσιν οἱ νώνυμοι.
Ξε. ἰῆ ἰῆ ἰὼ ἰὼ.
Χο. ἰὼ ἰὼ, δαίμονες (1005)
ἔθεντ' ἄελπτον κακὸν
διαπρέπον, οἶον δέδορκεν
Ἄτα.

Ξε. πεπλήγμεθ' τοῖαι δι'
αἰῶνος τύχαι†. [άντ. δ]
Χο. πεπλήγμεθ', εὐδηλα γάρ,
Ξε. νέαι νέαι δύαι δύαι. (1010)
Χο. Ἰαόνων ναυβατᾶν
κύρσαντες οὐκ εὐτυχῶς·
δυσπόλεμον δὴ γένος τὸ
Περσᾶν.

Xerxes. Utter a long-drawn out,
all-plaintive
ill-sounding song, for this
divinity here in turn
changed round against me.
Chorus. I shall utter let me tell
you †even † all-plaintively,
honoring the people's suffering
and the sea-beaten griefs
of city, family, and mourner;
and I shall shout in turn a very
tearful wailing.

Xerxes. For they have gone the
very commanders of the army.
Chorus. They have gone the
nameless ones.

Xerxes. iē iē iō iō

Chorus. *iō iō*, the gods
brought to pass an unexpected
evil
conspicuous, the sort which
Disaster has looked upon.

Xerxes. We have been struck
†such fortunes through age†.
Chorus. We have been struck, for
things are exceptionally clear,
Xerxes. by a new anguish.
Chorus. since we met with Ionian
sailors
not fortunately;
indeed the Persian people are
unlucky in war.