THE POWER OF SPACE:

THE ACROPOLIS, THE THEATRE OF DIONYSOS, AND TRAGEDY IN THE

5TH CENTURY BCE

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the effects of the shared space of the Theatre of Dionysos and the Acropolis during tragic performances in Athens during the 5th century BCE. The theatre's location on the south slope of the Acropolis allowed the Acropolis' depiction of Athenian power, I argue, to speak to audience members as they watched dramatic performances in the theatre space. The theatre's location provides a way of understanding how the mythic plots of the tragedies could speak to the contemporary concerns of the Athenian *polis*. I am concerned with what the spatial relationship between the Theatre of Dionysos and the Acropolis becomes during the performances, how it contributes semiotic meaning to tragedies that call upon it, and how it influences the thematic effect of these performances.

I examine three tragedies historically and ideologically within the context of their first performances: Aeschylus' *Persians*, Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, and Euripides' *Ion*. These case studies reveal the semiotic influence of the Acropolis on tragic performances that refer to its presence within the Theatre of Dionysos. This sampling of plays that span the course of the 5th century disclose the shifting Athenian perception of their *polis.* They effectively demonstrate the changes in the way the Acropolis presents Athenian power, and the various roles it enact in the performances.

Writing about the role of the Acropolis in tragic performances that took place in the Theatre of Dionysos is a project aimed at contributing to the conversation on

the role of spatial semiotics in performance, and in particular, ancient performance. This interdisciplinary project contributes to a variety of fields including theatre and performance studies, classics and archaeology, and anthropology.

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I. Introduction: The Spatial Relationship of the Acropolis and the Theatre of Dionysos

Today in Athens, Greece, the Acropolis still sits above the city, its ruins artistically lit at night to fully display its mystery and magnificence (Plate 1). Anyone walking through the Acropolis complex during the day can feel the strength and power of the ancient society that constructed such glorious monuments. Looking north from the precipice of the Acropolis one has a view of the ancient Roman forum and Greek *agora*, as well as the touristy restaurants, cafes, and souvenir shops that surround the area. Beyond them is the smoggy, noisy city of modern Athens that extends beyond the horizon. The view to the south presents similar contemporary sights, but rather than a view of the ancient markets, one looks over the Dionysos precinct. This area contained many structures during antiquity, but the most recognizable to the untrained eye today is the Theatre of Dionysos that rests on the south slope of the Acropolis (Plate 2).

This structure and its location on the slope of the Acropolis piqued my interest when I visited Athens for the first time in 2006. It was the first ancient Greek theatre of several in which I would set foot that summer, and its location at the center of ancient Athens intrigued me. Here this open-air theatre sat on the slope of the *polis*' nucleus while functioning as part of a religious precinct. Having just read Marvin Carlson's *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture,* I found the theatre's location in the overlap between the Acropolis and the Dionysos precinct

significant to any performance taking place there in antiquity. This sent me on a search to find plays that make reference to this unique location, thus drawing the structures of the Acropolis and their meanings into the performance. Briefly in 2008 and more extensively during the summer of 2010, I was able to return to Athens as an associate visiting member of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens to further examine the physical relationship of the Theatre of Dionysos to the Acropolis. This time I had in-hand the texts of plays that refer to its relationship to the Acropolis. How could this relationship between the Acropolis and the Theatre of Dionysos influence performances in this space? My time spent in the theatre space, the surrounding Acropolis complex, and at the new Acropolis Museum greatly affects this dissertation. This on-site experience guides my analyses of the plays along with relevant critical scholarship in theatre, classical literature, and archaeology.

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An understanding of the Acropolis and the Theatre of Dionysos as they exist today does not provide a steadfast basis for examining the semiotic meanings of these structures in relation to performances during antiquity. The Acropolis today looks little as it did in the 5th century BCE, and the ruins of the Theatre of Dionysos are mostly from its reconstruction during the Roman empire. While the spatial relationship between Acropolis and theatre remains, one must peel back the layers of time to reveal the state of the Acropolis at the time of each performance as well as the appearance of the theatre during the classical period.

The state of the Acropolis varied widely throughout the course of the 5th century BCE, and its thematic focus shifted somewhat with its current condition. Prior to the Persian invasion in 480 BCE, the Acropolis housed the archaic temple to Athena Polias where the sacred, olive-wood cult statue was kept. Also located there was the Old Parthenon, which Robin Francis Rhodes suggests was the most important temple of early Athenian democracy through its commemoration of the battle of Marathon in combination with its roots in archaic religious traditions.[1] Thus, the early 5th century BCE Acropolis reflects the emerging democracy by presenting the close relationship between the Athena and the Athenians. As Jeffrey M. Hurwit notes, the Athenians identified themselves with Athena, claimed her as their own, and took her attributes to be their ideal such as military valor, boldness, love of the beautiful, and the love of reason, moderation, and knowledge. Because the Athenians could easily combine religion and patriotism, Athena and Athens were seen as one.[2]

That the Persians sacked the Acropolis in 480 BCE and destroyed the temples located there was an atrocity like no other for the Athenians. Due to the close association between Athena and Athens, to breach the walls of the Acropolis, as Hurwit explains it, was to violate Athena.[3] After the Athenians took control of the town again in 480/479 BCE, they fortified the city, but did not rebuild the shrines on

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1 Robin Francis Rhodes, Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 32.

2 Jeffrey M. Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 11.

3 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 15.

the Acropolis until after a peace treaty was signed with Persia in 448 BCE. Perhaps the reason for not reconstructing the temples was due to the Oath of Plataea that stated temples destroyed by the Persians would not be rebuilt in order to remind the Athenians of the Persians' impiety.[4] The litter from the Persian invasion was cleared away, but this took years. In the meantime, as Hurwit points out, this rubble would have had a powerful emotional effect on the Athenians, and fueled their anger against the impious barbarians.[5] Rhodes finds a similar play of Athenian grievances in the use of column drums and sculpture of destroyed temples in the hasty reconstruction of the north wall during the fortification of the city.[6] Thus, the Acropolis shifts from a representation of early Athenian democracy to a war memorial that represents Athens' power to overcome her adversaries.

The Acropolis regains and surpasses its former glory in the mid to late 5th century under the Periklean building program, and it is in this form that it expresses the strength and might of the Athenian empire. For example, the Parthenon alone depicts Athens as a cultural and intellectual center as well as the head of an empire. As Rhodes observes, the mixed styles found in the Parthenon present an international architecture that "point to Athens as the first great cosmopolis of the Greek world."[7]

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4 Unfortunately the authenticity of this oath has been questioned since the time of Theopompus. Hurwit logically points out that this oath could simply refer to a local Athenian ban because the archaeological record contains no major violations of it. See Diodorus Siculus, "Diodorus of Sicily," ed. C.H. Oldfather (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), vol. of The Loeb Classical Library, 11.29.3. and Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 141.

5 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 142.

6 Rhodes, Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis 33.

7 Rhodes, Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis 76.

The Acropolis becomes a symbol for the triumph of Athens, and her immense power throughout the Hellenic world.

Despite the various states and shifts in theme throughout the course of the 5th century BCE, the architecture, the sculpture, the association with Athena, and the myths concerning the Acropolis can be read as texts that speak to the power of Athens. The pre-Persian Acropolis presents the fledgling democratic power seen in the Old Parthenon's tribute to the battle of Marathon in which the Athenians defeated the Persians without the aid of Sparta.[8] In the years between the Persian sack of the Acropolis in 480 BCE and the beginning of the Periklean building program, the Acropolis memorialized the Persian occupation of Athens through the ruins or even absence of structures and the reconstructions, like the north wall, that made use of the rubble from the devastation. As such a memorial, the Acropolis reminded the Athenians that they had the strength to recover their city and to drive out the barbarians from their homeland. Without a doubt the Periklean Acropolis continued this display of the supremacy of the Athenians, most notably in the frieze on the Parthenon that depicted the Athenians next to the gods.

The Theatre of Dionysos sits on the south slope of this display of Athenian power. The physical space of the Theatre of Dionysos, like many ancient theatres,

8 The Athenians sent a herald to Sparta to ask for help. The Spartans agreed to send aid to Athens at Marathon, but could not do so until the full moon as was according to their laws. This was probably during the month of Karneios when the Karneia was celebrated to honor Apollo. As a result, only the Plataeans arrived in time to fight with the Athenians at Marathon. Herodotus, The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories, trans. Andrea L. Purvis, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007) 6.105-06.

magnified this focus on the *polis*. The theatre was used not only for dramatic performances, but also for certain civic meetings, *dithyrambic* competitions between the Attic *demes*, and for specific festival ceremonies. The theatre had a prime location for enhancing such civic performances and discussions. Marvin Carlson draws attention to the significance of theatre locations in ancient Greece that certainly applies to the Theatre of Dionysos:

> The Greek theatre, like the agora and the gymnasium, was an essential unit in the urban model, an inevitable, accessible, and highly visible element in any Greek city worthy of the name. . . . A logical location was offered in many cities by the slope of the acropolis, the elevated stronghold that often served as the nucleus for an urban development that strikingly united architectural and natural features. . . . In many cities, including Corinth, Priene, and Ephesus, the spectator in the theatre sees before him not only the performance space, but a magnificent perspective of the lower city, the ramparts, and beyond them, the plain or the sea.[9]

Carlson specifically mentions the Roman theatres at Corinth and Priene and the Hellenistic theatre at Ephesus, but his description equally suits the 5th century BCE Theatre of Dionysos at Athens. The theatre was physically situated in a carefully balanced relationship between the Acropolis and the sanctuary of the Dionysos Eleuthereus (Plate 3). Its *theatron*, the seating area, was located on the slope of the Acropolis, and the *orchestra*, the performance area, on the periphery of the sanctuary of the god. It was the ideal location for the performances of tragedies that were performed as part of the festival held to celebrate both the god and the city.

The theatre's location allowed the Acropolis' depiction of Athenian power to

9 Marvin Carlson, Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989) 62.

speak to audience members as they watched dramatic performances in the theatre space. Previous scholarly research has examined how the location of the theatre encourages the concrete language of surrounding structures and other landmarks to influence performances.[10] Rush Rehm and David Wiles touch on the relationship of the Acropolis to the Theatre of Dionysos, but neither fully explore the Acropolis' influence on performances within the theatre space. Rehm interprets the location of the theatre as an ecological space nested within larger spaces, describing it as existing "in the sanctuary dedicated to the god on the south slope of the Acropolis within the walled portion of Athens on the Attic peninsula, part of the Greek mainland, which is part of the Mediterranean world. . ."[11] Such an analysis of the theatre's location provides a way of understanding how the mythic plots of the tragedies could speak to the contemporary concerns of the Athenian *polis*.

Significantly, the Acropolis is not simply a larger space in which the theatre is nested; it and the Dionysos precinct are the spaces most closely associated with the Theatre of Dionysos. Wiles' structuralist reading of buildings visible from the theatre space reveals the semiotic relevance of these structures to performances within the theatre.[12] He includes the Acropolis as a significant point in his "axes of the

10 Marvin Carlson, Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), Carlson, Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture. Marvin Carlson, The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003). Rush Rehm, The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), David Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

11 Rehm, The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy 15.

12 Wiles states that in the Odeon "[t]he Persian architectural symbolism is interesting because it helps to define the spatial context of performance. On the one side stood the temple of the god, on the other the monument to a Greek triumph. The Odeon can be interpreted as a sign of the exotic

performance space" in addition to the temple of Dionysos, the altar, and the Periklean Odeon. These structures each lend their semiotic meanings to the performances of tragedy. Wiles focuses on a reading of the Odeon, but beyond a sweeping semiotic reading of the sculpture and architecture of the Periklean Parthenon, he leaves the influence of the Acropolis unexamined. This dissertation focuses on the relationship between the Acropolis and the Theatre of Dionysos, to reveal the semiotic influence of the Acropolis on three tragedies that make reference to its presence within the theatre space.

Methodology

To examine the effects of the shared space of the Acropolis and the Theatre of Dionysos during the performances of the tragedies, I necessarily read the plays included in this study both historically and ideologically. I frame the plays within the context of their first performances to understand the semiotics of the Acropolis as an active presence in the performance space. I am concerned with what the spatial relationship between the Theatre of Dionysos and the Acropolis becomes during the performances. How does the Acropolis contribute semiotic meaning to the tragic performances that call upon it? How does this meaning influence the thematic effect of the performances that took place in the Theatre of Dionysos?

To understand how the Acropolis functions in the performance of ancient

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barbarian other, and thus was an appropriate gathering point for citizen dancers intent on assuming an identity alien to their own." Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning 55.

tragedy, it is necessary to examine the role of the art form in Athenian society. Ancient Greek tragedy may not always speak to a particular historical event, but it is political because it is of the Athenian *polis*. These plays were performed at the City Dionysia, a festival that Simon Goldhill, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, and W. Robert Conner observe was a civic festival that reveals to us the ideological constructs that accompanied Athens' rise to power, and so provided a civic context for the tragic performances.[13] During the events of the City Dionysia, the identity of the *polis* was displayed, its power defined, and both were challenged.

The tragedies performed at this festival followed suit, presenting and questioning Athenian ideals and the strength of the Athenian empire. There is much debate on whether the tragedies alluded to specific historical events, but I will not attempt to survey that conversation here since Suzanne Saïd provides a very thorough account of this dialectic in her argument against the political allusion in tragedy.[14] It is enough to say that Rebecca Futo Kennedy is right to acknowledge that the genre of tragedy is not diminished even if these plays did refer to specific events, and that they nevertheless capture the spirit of the times and the way in which Athens viewed itself.[15] This self-image found in the tragedies changes throughout the course of the 5th

13 Simon Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," Nothing to Do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context, eds. John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual," Ritual, Finance, Politics, eds. Robin Osborne and Simon Hornblower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). W. Robert Connor, "City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy," Classica et Mediaevalia 40 (1989).

14 Suzanne Saïd, "Tragedy and Politics," Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens, eds. Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

15 Rebecca Futo Kennedy, "Athena/Athens on Stage: Athena in the Tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles," PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2003, 18-19. Note that Anthony J. Podlecki

century BCE as the political scene changes in Athens with the rise and fall of the empire.

The nature of tragedy and the civic context in which it was viewed allows for the space of the Theatre of Dionysos and the surrounding structures that make up the hub of the city, the physical manifestation of the community, to come into play. The centrality of the theatre space during a performance, as Gay McAuley explains:

> is, of course, not an empty container but an active agent; it shapes what goes on within it, emits signals about it to the community at large, and is itself affected. . . a dynamic and continually evolving social entity.[16]

The *theatron,* the audience and therefore social space, from its position on the slope of the Acropolis served as a bridge between the performance taking place in the orchestra and the Acropolis itself. So the Theatre of Dionysos' location on the slope of the Acropolis furnished the spectators with a way to interpret the performance of the tragedy when the play called its presence into the performance by making a reference to it.

When called into play, the myths, memories, and physical architecture associated with the Acropolis lent their diverse meanings as well as the over-arching theme of Athenian power to the performances that took place at the rock's base. Through the manner in which the texts of the tragedies referred to these associations, the plays shaped the way that the Acropolis functioned semiotically during the

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examines the tragedies for possible allusions to specific political events

16 Gay McAuley, Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999) 41.

performance. The Acropolis could support the theme addressed by the play, present contrasting ideas to it, or function in counterpoint with it. In turn, these links to the Acropolis, as a presence of everyday Athens within the performance, provided a means of bringing the mythological stories of tragedy into the present moment for the Athenian audience. Through the addition of this contemporary element to the performance, the plays can use the tragic myths to praise, warn, and often criticize the Athenian *polis*. Goldhill finds this reflection of the state of the city throughout the events of the City Dionysia.[17] So without setting the play in the present day or in the city of Athens, references to the Acropolis allow the plays to discuss current issues of the *polis* and capture the spirit of the times.

This dissertation examines three plays that make references to the Acropolis: one from each period of the 5th century BCE: early, middle, and late. These case studies reveal the semiotic influence of the Acropolis on tragic performances that refer to its presence within the Theatre of Dionysos. This sampling of plays that span the course of the 5th century disclose the shifting Athenian perception of their *polis* as they watched it rise to glory in the early years, establish a thriving empire in the middle, and face ultimate defeat in the later years of the century. They effectively demonstrate the changes in the way the Acropolis presents Athenian power, and the various roles in can take in the performances.

I have included Aeschylus' *Persians*, Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, and Euripides' *Ion* as case studies with an appendix on the potential role of the Acropolis in comic

17 Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology."

performance through a brief survey of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. These plays do not refer to the Acropolis in the same way, nor do they use it for similar purposes. I explore each case study as a unique theatrical experience, but I use the same underlying analytical technique to uncover reasons for bringing the Acropolis into the performance as a supplement to the text. First, I examine how the text of the play refers to the Acropolis. Then, I look to the state of the Acropolis at the time of the performance. Finally, I explore how the Acropolis - in that condition and referred to in those ways - plays a role in the thematic effect of the tragic performance. Such an analysis reveals how the performance of tragedies within the space of the Theatre of Dionysos carried on a political discussion that suited the civic nature of the City Dionysia, and captured the atmosphere in Athens at the time of the performance.

It is necessary to address the issue of translation in any study involving primary research in an ancient language. For the purposes of this dissertation, the analyses of the plays use the Loeb edition of the Greek texts. For the historical accounts of Herodotus and Thucydides, I use the translations edited by Robert B. Strassler. If not otherwise acknowledged, translations from the Greek are my own. In this study, I focus on the meaning of the plays in the context of their time and the conversation of power that emerges through the analyses of the space, the historical accounts, and the plays themselves.

This chapter, Chapter one, has sought to introduce the reader to the spatial relationship between the Theatre of Dionysos and the Acropolis. Then it laid out the

methodology for this project that seeks to examine the effects of the semiotics of the Acropolis on performances in the Theatre of Dionysos. Chapter two is a review of literature that establishes the appropriateness of taking into account the Acropolis' semiotics in the analysis of plays performed in the Theatre of Dionysos. It focuses on the civic atmosphere of the City Dionysia, during which the plays were performed, and the political context the pre-performance ceremonies gave the tragedies. It asks how the Acropolis' semiotics could come into play, due to its physical location and the festival atmosphere, during the performances of the tragedies.

Chapter three analyzes Aeschylus' retelling of the Athenian-led Greek victory in the waters off Salamis in his *Persians* in light of the Acropolis' spatial presence in the Theatre of Dionysos. It examines the near emptiness of the Acropolis in 472 BCE as a memory machine that calls upon the memory of the Persian occupation of Athens in order to understand how and why the *Persians* refers to the presence of the Acropolis in the performance space. This chapter explores how the Acropolis functioned as a display of Athenian power in the tragic performances even at a time when its architecture still clearly showed the effects of the Persian occupation. The praise and warning for the *polis* present in the *Persians* show that even in the earlier portion of the 5th century BCE, the plays performed at the City Dionysia questioned Athenian ideology. The references to the Acropolis allow the play to juxtapose the memory of the Persian king Xerxes sacking the Acropolis and occupying Athens with its retelling of the Athenian naval victory at Salamis to justify Athens' position as

leader in the Delian League, and to warn of the dangers that come with this position.

Chapter four examines the influence of the Acropolis on Aeschylus' *Eumenides* that is mostly set in Athens. It focuses on the role played by the Acropolis as it functions in two forms: the archaic represented by the ancient temple of Athena Polias suggested on stage during Orestes' scene of supplication and the early classical present through its proximity to the Theatre of Dionysos. The two forms of the Acropolis combine to present the Athenian empire's and its patron goddess' ability to triumph over the barbaric, and yet incorporate the monstrous into the Athenian notion of civilization. This enhances the imperialist message of a play that Athena and the Athenians, who permanently rid Orestes of the Furies and them to take their place in Athenian society, will spread their superior civic form of justice to their allies.

The final case study, Chapter 5, examines how the myths retold in the *Ion* call on the presence of the Acropolis to ground the play's themes of divine order, mortal chaos, and civilization in the everyday world of contemporary Athens. Unlike in the *Eumenides*, the Acropolis does not become the setting for the play, nor does it hold a memory that complements the events of the play as in the *Persians*, but it is the location of the Athenian myths recounted by the characters. This constant reference to the Acropolis reminds the audience that this play is about Athens, her history, and her divine-given superiority and power. The fate of Athens is at stake. Yet, the Athenians had lived beyond the time of Athenian expansion that Athena foretells at the end of the play. In the final years of the 5th century BCE, Athens' empire was declining, and

the Athenians had good reason to feel uncertainty and fear. With these emotions in mind, the play reflects on the uncertainty of Athenian power and the future of its empire.

Following this case study is Chapter six, the conclusion, which reiterates the main arguments and findings of this dissertation.

There are three appendices: Appendix A briefly explores how the play of the Acropolis' semiotics within the performances of tragedy in the Theatre of Dionysos may have influenced the use of the Acropolis in old comedy through a brief analysis of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*; Appendix B includes plates of images and maps relevant to this dissertation; Appendix C is an index of references to the Acropolis in the extant tragedies and comedies.

II. Literature Review: The Acropolis' Semiotics at Play in the Theatre of Dionysos during the City Dionysia

To examine the semiotic effect of the Acropolis on the tragic performances in the Theatre of Dionysos, one must establish that the festival during which these performances took place provided a civic and political frame. Such a frame would allow the semiotics of the Acropolis, as the nucleus of Athens, to enter the performance, and thus make it an element worthy of study in understanding the role of ancient tragedy. This chapter demonstrates the civic atmosphere of the City Dionysia, the festival during which the 5th century BCE tragedies were first performed. It focuses on how the pre-performance ceremonies charged the performances themselves with a political significance. Finally it examines how the semiotic meanings of the Acropolis could so easily become connected to the performances through its shared space with the Theatre of Dionysos, during a festival that celebrated and explored the identity of the *polis*.

The Civic Nature of the City Dionysia

Theatre is always a social event, but in the case of Greek tragedy, the plays were a part of a larger social event, the City Dionysia. This festival provided a particular lens for viewing the performances of the tragedies. Many scholars, including Goldhill, Sourvinou-Inwood, and Connor, have discussed the political themes of the City Dionysia, and the civic context it provided for the presentation of

the tragedies.[18] Studying the events of the City Dionysia reveals the ideological constructs that accompanied Athens' rise to power through the early and middle 5th century BCE that certainly influenced the performances of the tragedies. The ceremonies that took place in the Theatre of Dionysos prior to the tragic performances likewise present the power of Athens. This display of Athenian identity easily links to the semiotics of the Acropolis, the most magnificent display of Athenian identity and power. So any reference to the Acropolis in the tragedies could lead to a discussion of the ideology of the city.

The City Dionysia had a strong connection with Athens' democracy and rising empire from at least the time of its reorganization during the Kleisthenic reforms. There is much debate over the exact dating of the initial festival, but it seems to be as closely connected with Athenian democracy as it is with Dionysos. Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge feels certain that the tyrant Peisistratus brought the festival to importance in the 6th century BCE.[19] However, W. Robert Connor proposes that the festival's inception occurred during the democracy, and was instated at some point between 506 and 501 BCE, which was well after the fall of the Peisistratids in 510 BCE.[20] Sourvinou-Inwood counters this argument, citing the religious centrality of the festival and its agonistic element to support the established notion that the festival

18 Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology.", Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual.", Connor, "City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy."

19 Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 58.

20 Connor, "City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy," 16.

was instated by Peisistratus and reorganized during the Kleisthenic reforms.[21] John Travlos admits the uncertainty of when the cult of Dionysos Eleuthereus was introduced into Athens, but dates the earliest architectural evidence of the structures around the shrine to the second half of the 6th century BCE. This places the introduction of the cult and likely the festival during the rule of Peisistratus or, as Travlos considers more likely, one of his successors.[22] Despite the lack of certainty of the time period and the tyrannical or democratic mindset in which the festival was initially established, one thing is certain: the festival adjusted to the current ideology of the *polis,* and reached its height in the 5th century BCE under the democracy of the Athenian empire.

The festival theme of the *polis* surfaces in the mythology that the festival commemorated. The City Dionysia was established to honor the god Dionysos Eleuthereus by celebrating his mythological coming to Athens. The Athenian *polis*, just like Thebes and other Hellenic cities, did not welcome the god. So the god afflicted the Athenian men with a disease that affected their genitals.[23] They took the advice of an oracle, and healed the affliction by constructing *phalloi* to honor the god.[24] The *polis* features in this rejection myth that is presumed to be the reason for instating the festival, but this myth is not at the center of the festival events.

The event that commemorated this myth took place before the beginning of

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21 Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual," 275-6.
22 John Travlos, Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) 537.
23 Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens 57.
24 Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens 57.

the City Dionysia, leaving the actual events of the festival to celebrate the city. According to Pickard-Cambridge, the *epheboi*, the young men of military age, led the pre-festival procession that brought the image into the city. They took the image of Dionysos from its place in the theatre precinct, and carried it out of the city, probably to a shrine near the Academy.[25] After sacrifices and hymns, the image was returned to the city in a night-time procession. As Sourvinou-Inwood points out, this cleared the festival to focus on the "centre of the city" and that which was within the *polis*.[26] This pre-festival ceremony honored the god, and at the same time brought attention to the young men, who were the next generation of Athenian citizens.

These *epheboi,* who led the pre-festival procession and were a representation of Athens' future, also played a significant role in the festival itself. They had their place, among the ranks of the other citizens, in the *pompe*, or festival procession, that stopped at several sites around the city before finally leading to the sacrifices in the precinct of Dionysos.[27] John Winkler proposes that many of these young men performed in the choruses of the tragedies that were performed on subsequent days of the festival as part of their military training, and all of the *epheboi* had special seating in the theatre.[28] If this is the case, the festival paraded the young men as new citizens in their proper role of serving the *polis* in the military.

25 Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens 59-60. Sourvinou-Inwood argues that the altar was not near the academy but in the agora. See Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual," 282-84.

26 Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual," 273.

27 Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens 61-62.

28 John J. Winkler, "The Ephebes' Song," Nothing to Do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context, eds. John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

A festival that combined a celebration of the arrival of a god into the Athenian *polis* with display of civic duty through the *epheboi,* manifested the identity of the *polis* and defined its power. The City Dionysia presented this ideology to more than the Athenian citizens; it displayed these themes to the large number of foreigners visiting the city for the festival. The City Dionysia took place in the early spring at a time when sea travel was convenient. This made the festival available to the entirety of the Hellenic world, and significantly to those included within Athens' empire. The *polis* took this opportunity to advertise as Pickard-Cambridge notes "the wealth and power and public spirit of Athens, no less than of the artistic and literary leadership of her sons" to those who came to the festival.[29] The City Dionysia gave Athens the opportunity to display its greatness to those who were visiting, and to explore the ideology that brought it to such power.

The four ceremonies that opened the days of the tragic competitions set the stage for the performances of the tragedies, and connected the mythological plots of the plays with the festival's theme of the *polis*. Rebecca Futo Kennedy is right to say that these ceremonies shaped the meaning of the performances in the Theatre of Dionysos, and so are vital to understanding the discussion of Athenian identity in the tragedies.[30] These ceremonies included the orphan parade that displayed the war orphans in their new *hoplite* gear given by the *polis*,[31] the announcement of the city's

29 Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens 58.
30 Kennedy, "Athena/Athens on Stage: Athena in the Tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles," 7.
31 The Athenians monetarily supported orphans of war, and oversaw their education, including their military training. When the orphans came of age, they were presented with *hoplite* gear on behalf of the city.

benefactors, the pouring of libations by the generals, and the display of the tribute from the members of Athens' empire. All four of these ceremonies took place by the mid-5th century BCE, but Goldhill, Sourvinou-Inwood, and Kennedy propose that at least one to two were performed from the earliest years of the tragic performances.[32] So from the beginning, these ceremonies provided a civic gaze with which to understand the tragedies.

Each of these ceremonies served a civic function in their recognition of the power and excellence of the *polis*. As Christian Meier points out, the orphan parade reminded the audience of the sacrifices the Athenian people made on behalf of their city and their allies.[33] The naming of the benefactors honored those prominent citizens who had paid for the festival events. The generals pouring the libations created an obvious civic and political atmosphere in a city in which all citizens served in the military. Displaying the tribute that Athens required of her allies recognized Athenian greatness and her role as leader of an empire. These ceremonies shared the theme of the imperial *polis*, and created a civic context for the performances of the tragedies.[34] They connected the performances to the city, and provided a political frame for the subsequent events that took place in the orchestra of the Theatre of Dionysos.

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32 Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," 106, Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual," 272, Kennedy, "Athena/Athens on Stage: Athena in the Tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles," 7.For a discussion of the conflicting dates for the introduction of the orphan parade, see Kurt A. Raaflaub, "The Transformation of Athens in the Fifth Century," Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens, eds. Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 30.

33 Christian Meier, The Political Art of Greek Tragedy, trans. Andrew Webber (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988) 56-57.

34 Kennedy, "Athena/Athens on Stage: Athena in the Tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles," 13.

Following such ceremonies, the tragedies fit easily into the City Dionysia's focus on the *polis*. As part of the festival, the tragedies validated Athenian ideals, but they also questioned the justice and failure of the moral fiber that made up Athenian society. As Connor, Oliver Taplin, and Charles Segal point out, the tragedies celebrated the civic freedom of the Athenian citizens through their discussion of the city's concerns.[35] In the terms used by Victor Turner, the tragedies played a *liminal* role, providing a time of "social limbo," in the festival that gave them the ability to juxtapose the festival's celebration of the city with myths that thematically questioned its ideology. During such a *liminal* period, the transitional phase of a rite of passage, participants "play" with familiar ideology and other elements of their society, and then defamiliarize them. This allows for new ideas to arise from the rearrangement of familiar elements.[36] Because theatrical performance is a time that suspends and reorders typical societal arrangements through play, the term *liminal* can be applied to it. Thus during the performance of the tragedies within the civic-minded City Dionysia it was possible, for Euripides' *Trojan Women,* written during the Peloponnesian War*,* to question atrocities committed by those who are victorious in battle. Likewise, it was acceptable for Sophocles' *Antigone* to challenge notions of duty to the *polis* and the family through conflict between civic and private interests.

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35 Connor, "City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy," 23, Oliver Taplin, "Spreading the Word through Performance," Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy, eds. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 52-53, Charles Segal, Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) 48.

36 The term liminal comes from the Latin *limen*, threshold. Victor Turner, From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982) 24, 27-28.

Certainly the tragedies have universal themes, like justice and duty, that speak to the foibles of all humanity, but these plays were a particularly Athenian practice in the 5th century BCE. So when understood within the context of the original performances, the tragedies are necessarily laden with local meaning that may not refer to specific historical events, but certainly capture the spirit of the times. Because in theatrical performance the "space," as McAuley informs us, "is activated and itself made meaningful,"[37] the local flair of these tragedies materializes when they are viewed within the context of the festival and an understanding of the spatial semiotics at play within the Theatre of Dionysos.

Tragic Performances in the Theatre of Dionysos

From their beginning, tragic performances at the City Dionysia were held in a place representative of the *polis*. Originally they took place in the *agora,* the heart of the city (Plate 4). Although many of the *agora* structures were part of the building program of the Peisistratids, H. Alan Shapiro considers the *agora* to be the physical setting of democracy for the Athenian *polis*.[38] Travlos agrees, calling the *agora* "the part of Athens where the whole life of the city was concentrated, the focus of political, commercial, social and administrative activity."[39] It speaks volumes to the civic and political role of tragedy at the City Dionysia that very early performances

37 McAuley, Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre 8-11.
38 H. Alan Shapiro, "Autochthony and the Visual Arts in Fifth-Century Athens," Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens, eds. Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 129.
39 Travlos, Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens 1.

took place in this setting. Travlos places the *orchestra*, the performance space, in the middle of the *agora*. He believes it was such a renowned feature in the latter years of the 6th century BCE that the first statues set up in the *agora,* those of the liberators of the city, were placed near it in 510 BCE.[40] The placement of statues commemorating Athens' freedom from tyranny near the *orchestra* ties the civic and political ideology of Athenian democracy to early performances of tragedy.

The date for the move of tragic performances to the south slope of the Acropolis within the Dionysos precinct is uncertain, and so of much concern to scholars. Literary passages by Photius, Hesychius, and Suidas report that the relocation of the performances and the laying out of the *orchestra* and *theatron* for the Theatre of Dionysos seems to have occurred after the wooden *ikria*, the temporary seating erected around a dirt *orchestra* in the *agora*, collapsed.[41] Suidas tells us that this occurred during the 70th Olympiad, 500-497 BCE. He also provides an alternative date of 458 BCE, but William Bell Dinsmoor discredits this date "not only because it is coupled with the myth of the murder of Aeschylus by the eagle, but also because at that time the theater of Dionysus was already in existence."[42]

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40 The statues were of Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Travlos, Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens 3, 8.

41 See the Suda pi 2230 under Pratinas. The passages discussed above were gathered by Frickenhaus and Pickard-Cambridge, and were later discussed by Dinsmoor. Photius tells us that the transfer of the theatre from the *agora* to the south slope of the Acropolis immediately followed the collapse of the *ikria*. Suidas and Hesychius do not clearly state that this collapsed *orchestra* was in the *agora*, but in their descriptions they refer to the single poplar tree that was known to have been in the *agora*. William Bell Dinsmoor, "The Athenian Theater of the Fifth Century," *Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson*, ed. George E. Mylonas (Saint Louis, MO: Washington University, 1951) 314.

42 Dinsmoor, "The Athenian Theater of the Fifth Century," 314.

There is also archaeological evidence that scholars cite to conclude that performances were moved to the Theatre of Dionysos in the early fifth century BCE. Although Suidas' alternative dating of 458 BCE seems to have appealed to the archaeologist Travlos, who associates the collapse of the *ikria* and the subsequent relocation of performances with the building of the Periklean Odeon in the middle of the 5th century BCE,[43] it is more widely accepted that the performances were moved to the Dionysos precinct much earlier. N.G.L. Hammond presents sherds found in the soil that was spread to level the slope above the Theatre of Dionysos as evidence that the move occurred sometime between 500 and 497 BCE, the same time frame recorded by Suidas.[44] Sourvinou-Inwood examines the addition of a pavement and enclosing wall to the altar that was in the *agora,* near the Altar of the Twelve Gods and the *orchestra*. She considers this altar to be the place where the Dionysos statue stood, rather than the altar near the Academy, from which the *epheboi* processed with it to the theatre. Whether this altar was that of the pre-festival events or the place to which the *epheboi* carried the statue of Dionysos after the events, the statue would no longer have had a view of performances in the *orchestra* after the additions to the altar. Given the connection between the god and tragic performance, she sets the date for the move to the Theatre of Dionysos just after the Kleisthenic reforms of 508/7 BCE, a few years earlier than the dates proposed by Hammond.[45] Thus it seems likely

43 Travlos, Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens 537.

44 N.G.L. Hammond, "The Conditions of Dramatic Production to the Death of Aeschylus," Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 13 (1972): 404.

45 For a more detailed account of Sourvinou-Inwood's argument that this altar, also known as the *eschara,* mentioned in the inscriptions was not near the academy but in the *agora*, see Sourvinou-

that the extant tragedies were written for a performance in the Theatre of Dionysos within the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus on the south slope of the Acropolis.

There may have been semiotic as well as structural reasons for shifting the performances away from the *agora*. Shapiro may find the *agora* laden with democratic meanings, but Rehm considers its association with the tyrannical Peisistratids a hard relationship to overlook. Rehm postulates that the plays were indeed moved from the *agora* in the late 6th or early 5th century as the "newly democratic *polis* relocated the City Dionysia as a way of celebrating the city's political transformation." He proposes that there was a need to separate the festival, and the theatrical performances, from references to the Peisistratids found in the structures they built in the *agora*. Even placing the statues of the city's liberators near the *orchestra* would not be enough to overshadow the memory of the tyrants found in the buildings they constructed.[46] As McAuley tells us, what is said and done in a performance is necessarily seen in relation to the place of performance.[47] In the case of tragic performances during the City Dionysia, this meant finding a space that represented the new democracy rather than a location that constantly called forth memories of the previous tyranny. The location of the Theatre of Dionysos met that need. Situated as it was on the south slope below the Acropolis wall and leading down to the temple of Dionysos Eleuthereus, it suited both the civic context and the religious element of the City Dionysia.

Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual," 282-84.

46 Rehm, The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy 44.

47 McAuley, Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre 95.

Because the tragic performances took place during the day, the audience was necessarily aware of their surroundings, their fellow audience members, and the performance within the open-air Theatre of Dionysos. As the audience climbed to their seats in the *theatron* or approached the theatre from above along the *peripatos*, they had a view of the south wall of the Acropolis and until the construction of the Periklean wall around 449 BCE, they likely had a clear view of the Acropolis' summit.[48] During the performances, they sat on the slope of the Acropolis and had a view of the temple of Dionysos Eleuthereus and the outlying city. The pre-performance ceremonies maintained an awareness of the performance's existence within a festival that celebrated the Athenian *polis,* and prepared the audience for viewing the tragedies with a civic-minded gaze.

The Presence of the Acropolis in the Theatre

The location of the Theatre of Dionsysos could only add to the display and questioning of Athenian ideals and power nestled as it was within the Sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus on the slope of the Acropolis (Plate 5). As mentioned in the introduction to this volume, the influence of the Acropolis on performances in the Theatre of Dionysos remains unexplored. Rehm and Wiles include the Acropolis in

48 According to Travlos, the south wall around 500 BCE was just the Mycenaean fortification wall that ran at an elevation of about 140-145 meters above the Theatre of Dionysos. After 490 BCE, when the Athenians began to the build the first Parthenon, they constructed two retaining walls over the Mycenaean wall to extend the terrace south to support the Parthenon's foundations. It seems that the modern south wall of the Acropolis was constructed during the building of the Periklean Parthenon because it backs up to what is thought to be Pheidias's workshop. If this is the case, then it is likely that the theatre-goers had an excellent view of the Acropolis until around 449 BCE.

their works on the theatre space, but neither examine this particular relationship in great detail. Rehm explains the spatial location of the Theatre of Dionysos ecologically, nesting it within larger spaces from the Dionysos precinct and the slope of the Acropolis to its placement within the Hellenic world.[49] Placed in this context, it is easy to see how the mythological plots of the plays gained contemporary meaning during performances in the theatre. Wiles examines specific semiotic meaning of the structures surrounding the Theatre of Dionysos, but only provides a semiotic reading of the Parthenon as justification for including the Acropolis as a point in his "axes of the performance space."[50] These two scholars point to the significance of the Acropolis within the space of the Theatre of Dionysos, and they give the inclination that this structure must have influenced tragic performance there. So how could the Acropolis lend its representation of Athenian power and ideology to the performances within the theatre?

If we consider the Acropolis to be the nucleus of the city, as Carlson does,[51] then the Acropolis stands as a representation of the Athenian *polis.* Throughout the 5th century BCE, the structures on the Acropolis may have changed a great deal, but the rock continuously presented the power and might of Athens as it took leadership of an empire after the Persian invasion of the city, watched the empire grow, and then saw its utter collapse. Even during the performance of Aeschylus' *Persians* when the Acropolis was a bleak eye-sore and empty of the buildings that the Persians had

49 Rehm, The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy 15.
50 Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning 55.
51 Carlson, Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture 62.

destroyed during their occupation of the city, it was a war memorial to Persian impiety as the Oath of Plataea indicates.[52] Certainly the Periklean building program presented the glory and majesty of the Athenian empire, even if the empire was waning by the time it was completed.[53] Such a representation of Athenian ideology resting directly above the Theatre of Dionysos must have shaped performances that took place there during a festival that celebrated the city.

The theatre's location is a transitional space that perfectly suits performances during the City Dionysia. The theatre lies both within the Dionysos precinct and on the slope of the Acropolis. So within the space of the theatre, god met *polis*. In particular, the *theatron*, the audience space, climbs the slope of the Acropolis with the *orchestra*, performance space, at its base. Thus the *theatron* creates a link between the crest of the Acropolis and the world of the performance below. Thus the *theatron* and the audience seated there become the physical bridge between contemporary life in Athens and the mythical plot of the play. This spatial meaning must have enriched the experience of tragedy by maintaining the civic gaze of the City Dionysia via the presence of the Acropolis during the theatrical illusion of the performances. With such a presence in the theatre, it would be possible to use mythology set in other places to speak about contemporary concerns.

Certainly we can never reconstruct the total experience of a Greek tragedy, but we should consider the physical elements, like the Acropolis, that potentially enriched

52 Diodorus Siculus, "Diodorus of Sicily," vol., 11.29.3.

53 Rhodes, Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis, Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 154-245.

the meanings of the performances. Not doing so ignores, as Wiles puts it: "a subtle but powerful instrument for the production of meaning."[54] The playwrights wrote their tragedies specifically for performance in the Theatre of Dionysos. As Peter D. Arnott reminds us, they knew the context of the City Dionysia, the preconceptions and probable responses of their audience, the physical location of the theatre, and the nature of that space.[55] So a reading of those texts for the purposes of understanding the original performance cannot divorce the text from that time, in that place, and in that theatrical space. Certainly all of these factors helped to shape the plays, but because the plays were not guaranteed subsequent performances in other theatres, lines included by the playwrights that suggest a reference to the Acropolis were experienced in relationship to its presence in the space. So the location of the Theatre of Dionysos on the slope of the Acropolis securely connected the textual references to the Acropolis, and allowed its semiotics to play a role in the performances.

Plays that Refer to the Acropolis

The unique context provided by the festival and the location of the Theatre of Dionysos must be considered as much as the universal themes in the analyses of the tragedies. The references to the Acropolis called on its presences in the theatre, which as McAuley points out: "Objects on the stage tend to merge into the background, and they become meaningful only when handled, looked at, or referred to."[56] So, once

54 Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning 219.
55 Peter Arnott, Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre (London: Routledge, 1989) 1.
56 McAuley, Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre 91.

called on by the text, the Acropolis could function as a representation of the Athenian *polis*, thus adding a political element to the civic context established by the City Dionysia and the pre-performance ceremonies. Of course the role of the Acropolis in the dramas changed throughout the course of the 5th century BCE to reflect how the Athenians viewed their city: from a rising star in the Delian League to a collapsing empire. These changes paralleled the physical architecture of the Acropolis as it morphed from its relatively empty state following the Persian invasion in the early 5th century BCE to its architectural height during the Periklean building program later in the century. The plays that refer to the Acropolis actively engaged its contemporary representation of the *polis,* and persuasively used it as a political construct to discuss Athenian issues within the transitional space of the Theatre of Dionysos during a festival dedicated to civic responsibility and the identity of the the city.

Peter Burian appropriately characterized tragic performance when he wrote: "Words are the tools of power in tragedy."[57] The texts of the Greek tragedies certainly shaped meaning in the Theatre of Dionysos, and were in turn shaped by the meanings present in the theatre. When the actors spoke the scripted references to the Acropolis in the Theatre of Dionysos, the references became visual due to the Acropolis' presence there. Its physical presence within the theatre space gave the *polis* a representative in the performances, thus allowing the meaning of the spoken words to

57 Peter Burian, "Myth into Mythos: The Shaping of Tragic Plot," The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 200.

extend far beyond their verbal means. The words themselves became an action, awakening the otherwise benign presence of the Acropolis, and adding a political character to the performance that was specific to that time and that location.

Thus it is sensible that Wiles and Hurwit link the Acropolis to specific dramas performed in the Theatre of Dionysos. Wiles discusses the symbolic meaning of the *polis* Troezen in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.[58] He concludes that we neglect a part of the performance's meaning if we forget that the Acropolis overlooked the Saronic Gulf, across which Troezen was located.[59] Hurwitt also finds the location of the Acropolis and its meanings relevant to performances in the theatre. He emphasizes the role of the Acropolis in the the *Ion, Lysistrata,* and *Hippolytus:*

> [The audience] had, after all, the rock and the monuments and temples on the summit and slopes over their shoulders or in the corners of their eyes, and they had their past and recent experiences of the place in mind.[60]

The Acropolis played an active role in creating meaning in the performances of these plays, and as this dissertation finds, it did in plays throughout the 5th century BCE.

The textual references to the Acropolis vary in sort, but they are all rhetorical devices that position the signifying presence of the Acropolis in the world of that particular play. Often the references directly point to the Acropolis, its shrines, and events that took place there as Hurwit discovers in his exploration of ancient Greek literature that refers to the statues of Athena and other shrines and physical locations

58 Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning 218-19.
59 Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning 219.
60 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 39.

on the Acropolis.[61] In Aeschylus' *Eumenides,* Apollo commands Orestes to go to "Pallas' city" and to "kneel there and clasp the ancient idol in [his] arms" (79-80). Orestes travels to Athens and supplicates himself before the statue (235-244), which we can assume was the wooden image of Athena Polias that was housed on the Acropolis. Direct references to the Acropolis also occur in the *Hippolytos* that mentions the shrine to Aphrodite on the south slope (30-34), as well as in the *Herakleidai* that, as Hurwit points out, alludes to the dancing of the young people on the Acropolis the night before the Panathenaic procession (777-783).[62]

Sometimes references to the Acropolis are connected to a myth or the memory of an event that took place on the Acropolis. Euripides' *Ion* explores the mythology associated with the Athenians' autochthonous origins. Kreusa reveals to her elderly servant that she bore the child she conceived when raped by Apollo in the Cave of Pan, located on the Acropolis' north slope (936-9), and that she placed a wreath made from a branch of Athena's sacred olive tree in the basket with her child (1433-6). Euripides' *Medea* indirectly refers to the Acropolis when the chorus sings about the god-blessed children of Erechtheus (825), calling upon this mythological figure's associations with the Acropolis.[63] Aeschylus' *Persians* calls not on mythology but

61 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 36-39.

62 In the Herakleidai Euripides calls the Acropolis "the windy hill." Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 38.

63 According to mythology, the hero Erechtheus was the 6th king of Athens. Hurwitt calls him a "shadowy figure" because his identity is often confusingly connected to other mythological figures. Erechtheus seems to have had a connection with Poseidon; they shared a priest and an altar. The Erechtheion, named in honor of Erechtheus, housed shrines to Athena and Poseidon. Erechtheus' identity is also often associated and sometimes completely united with Ericthonios, the 4th king of Athens. Erechtheus is known for sacrificing one of his daughters on behalf of Athens. In the Iliad,

collective memory. It indirectly recalls the memory of the Persians occupying Athens and sacking the Acropolis. Aeschylus wrote: “while [Athens'] men still live, the walls are secure” (349). Of course this line refers to the walls of the city, which had been destroyed by the Persians and were either in the process of being reconstructed or had recently been completed at the time of the play. These walls included the north wall of the Acropolis, but probably not the south,[64] and so focused attention on the fact that the Acropolis had been sacked by the Persians.

While this dissertation focuses on the semiotic influence of the Acropolis on the performance of tragedies, several of the comedies also make reference to the Acropolis. In his quest to find references to the Acropolis in Athenian literature, Hurwitt notes quite a few references to the Acropolis in Athenian old comedy. Hurwitt finds references to the chryselephantine statue of Athena that was housed in the Parthenon in Aristophanes’ *Birds* (1168-76), *Knights* (670), and *Lysistrata* (344). Plays referring to specific sites on the Acropolis or its slopes include Aristophanes’ *Wasps* that mentions the Odeon of Perikles and his *Ploutos* that mentions the treasury of Athena, called the Opisthodomos. This play also describes the healing procedure called “incubation” that was performed in the Sanctuary of Asklepios on the south

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Homer tells us that Athena raised Erechtheus and placed him in her temple on the Acropolis where he received sacrifices (2.546-51). For a detailed account of Erechtheus, see Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 32-34.

64 Maria Brouskari discusses the evidence of the reconstruction of the Acropolis walls. Maria Brouskari, The Monuments of the Acropolis (Athens: Ministry of Culture: Archaeological Receipts Fund, 1997) 223. Also see: Plutarch, "The Life of Cimon," trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives by Plutarch (New York: Penguin Books, 1980) Life of Kimon, 13, Pausanias, "Description of Greece," ed. WHS Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), vol. of The Loeb Classical Library, 1.28.3.

slope of the Acropolis.[65]

Most significant of the comedies that refer to the Acropolis, *Lysistrata* was most likely set in front of the Propylaia and mentions many of the Acropolis' structures. This comedy deserves particular attention in a study of plays that refers to the Acropolis, but there are several problems with including it in an exploration of the spatial semiotics at play within the Theatre of Dionysos. *Lysistrata* was performed at the Leneaia, rather than the City Dionysia, and so may not have been performed in the Theatre of Dionysos or even within the city walls.[66] However, the prominence of the Acropolis in this play is worthy of investigation. If the play was performed in the Theatre of Dionysos, then it constantly refers to the Acropolis through its setting. If it was performed in the *agora*, another location within the city, or the Attic countryside, the play brings the presence of the Acropolis into the performance via scenic suggestions. Referencing the Acropolis in a performance that did not occur in the Theatre of Dionysos captures the parodic nature of old comedy. Aristophanes may have been spoofing the role the Acropolis played in some of the tragedies by representing it in the set of the *Lysistrata.* He makes a similar parody of the elements of tragic performance in the *Clouds* when he has Socrates enter from the *mechane* in a basket or net of some sort as a mockery of the gods entering from the *mechane* in

65 One must note that this scene could also refer to another Sanctuary of Asklepios at Zea on the Attic coast. Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 36-39.

66 There are two records from scholia and lexicographers as to where the Lenaia, and thus its performances, took place. It was originally celebrated either ἐν ἀγροῖς, outside the city walls, or ἐν ἄστει, inside the city. There is some discussion that the performances at the Lenaia moved from the *agora* to the Theatre of Dionysos after the stands collapsed. Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens 37.

tragedy. Because I focus on tragedies performed at the City Dionysia and within the Theatre of Dionysos, I have included a discussion of this play in an appendix.

As we have seen, many of the ancient dramas call forth and make use of the presence of the Acropolis within the Theatre of Dionysos, and do so in diverse ways. Thus, I do not assume that the selection of these plays that I examine fit the same analytical mold. But the plays share one element: they each refer to the presence of the Acropolis (and its meaning) in the dramatic text, and this makes the Acropolis a part of the performance. Each of the following case studies will explore the state of the Acropolis at the time in which the play was performed, how the text refers to the Acropolis, and what use this connection serves. Such an analysis reveals how watching these plays in the Theatre of Dionysos, in that place and space, contributed a political discussion to the civic nature of the City Dionysia, and captured the spirit of Athens at the time of the performance.

III: Creating Identity, Constructing Power: The Role of the Acropolis in Aeschylus' *Persians*

ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἔρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές.
while [Athens'] men still live, the walls are secure
(Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 349)

Imagine sitting in the Theatre of Dionysos in 472 BCE during the performance of Aeschylus' *Persians* that tells of Athenian victory over the Persian enemy.[67] Your fellow Athenians sit crowded around you in the *theatron,* and the surrounding city bears witness still to the Persian destruction it saw nearly eight years earlier. During their occupation of Athens, the Persians had left their mark. Themistokles may have rebuilt the city's walls, but he ordered the citizens to do so as quickly as possible, and to use whatever material they could find, including column drums from unfinished or destroyed temples and other materials from the sack of the Acropolis.[68] The Acropolis itself stands mostly empty behind you. Some of the debris from the sack has been

67 The Parian Marble, the Hypothesis to the play, and the Fasti Theatri Atheniensis indicate that the *Persians* was performed in the spring of 472 BCE at the City Dionysia under the archonship of Menon. The Fasti Theatri Atheniensis records that Aeschylus won first prize at the City Dionysia for his tetralogy that included *Phineus, Persians, Glaucus,* and *Prometheus the Firekindler.* See: Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, The Parian Marble, March 7, 2001 2001, Available: http://www.ashmolean.org/ash/faqs/q004/ May 9, 2011. Bruno Snell, ed., Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, vol. I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1985) 49, Marmor Parium 50, 59. Felix Jacoby, Die Fragmente Der Griechischen Historiker (Leiden: Brill, 1957) 239. Gilbert Murray, Aeschyli: Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoediae, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) 52 Hypothesis to Aeschylus' "Persians". Snell, ed., Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta 48, Fasti Theatri Atheniensis (55a).

68 Thucydides, The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War, trans. Richard Crawley, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York: Touchstone, 1996) 1.90-1.93.

buried on the Acropolis, but nothing rebuilt. Mere rubble is all that remains of the *Archaios Naos*, the Temple of Athena Polias. The Athenian *polis* took an oath not to rebuild the temples destroyed by the Persians.[69] So stark ruins lie on the Acropolis summit, a reminder of the barbarian invasion.

The *Persians* weaves together Aeschylus' retelling of the Athenian-led Greek victory in the waters off of Salamis with the surrounding architectural structures that call upon the memory of the Persian occupation of Athens. This chapter examines the near emptiness of the Acropolis in 472 BCE as a memory machine in order to understand how and why the *Persians* refers to the presence of the Acropolis in the performance space. It explores how the play uses the Acropolis as a synecdoche of Athenian power to simultaneously praise and warn the Athenian *polis*. Through three references to the Acropolis, the play juxtaposes the memory of the Persian king Xerxes sacking the Acropolis and occupying Athens with its retelling of the Athenian naval victory at Salamis to justify Athens' position as leader in the Delian League, and to warn of the dangers that come with this position.

The Acropolis Haunts the Performance

Collectively, the audience of Athenians would remember the events that led to the sacking of Athens, and their physical surroundings during the performance of the

69 Diodorus Siculus, "Diodorus of Sicily," vol., 11.29.3. Unfortunately the authenticity of this oath has been questioned since the time of Theopompus. G.L. Cawkwell defends the authenticity of the oath. Hurwit logically points out that this oath could simply refer to a local Athenian ban because the archaeological record contains no major violations of it. See Diodorus Siculus, "Diodorus of Sicily," vol., 11.29.3., G.L. Cawkwell, "The Oath of Plataea " Classical Review 25.2 (1975)., and Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 141.

Persians would call forth these memories.[70] Only eight years prior to the performance, in 480 BCE, the Persians had forced their way into Hellas. As the Persian forces moved towards Attica, the Athenians faced a direct attack on their city. Herodotus records two mystical events that led to the Athenian plan of defense for their city, or lack thereof. The Athenians received some devastating news from an Athenian priestess. She reported that the honeycake offering made each month to the giant snake that guarded the Acropolis was left untouched. The Athenians decided that the uneaten cake was a sign that their patron goddess, Pallas Athena, no longer protected the Acropolis.[71] Without the goddess' protection, the majority of the populace was willing to desert the city. If that was not reason enough to flee, two recent oracles from Delphi predicted the doom of Athens and promised help from "wall[s] of wood".[72] The Athenians interpreted the wooden walls to mean their ships, so as the Persians advanced into Attica, they abandoned "their city, broke up their homes, threw themselves into their ships, and became a naval people."[73]

When Xerxes invaded Athens, he found only the priestesses of the temple and a few indigent people barricaded on the Acropolis. Because the remaining Athenians believed that the walls of the Acropolis were the impregnable wooden walls referred

70 The performance most likely took place in the Theatre of Dionysos, on the south slope of the Acropolis. If the performance had taken place in the *agora*, the Acropolis would still be in view of the audience as they entered or sat in the wooden *ikria.* The references to it in the play would still call upon the memories of the Persian occupation. See Chapter 2 of this work, pages 23-26.

71 Herodotus, 8.41.2-3.

72 When the Athenians received the first oracle that predicted their doom, they asked for a second one, which gave them the promise of survival. Herodotus, 7.141.

73 Thucydides, 1.18.2.

to in the oracle, they refused to surrender.[74] These Athenians initially proved indomitable, but the Persians soon found a way onto the Acropolis by climbing the steepest slope that the Athenians had left unguarded.[75] When the Athenians realized that the Persians could access their stronghold, they took sanctuary in the temple or jumped from the walls. The Persians reached the summit, opened the gates to the Acropolis, killed the suppliants, plundered the temples, and burned everything that they could.[76] Any remaining architectural ruins from the Persian sack, the absence of structures that should be present, and the smattering of the debris still littering the Acropolis in 472 BCE must have reminded the theatre-going Athenians of these painful events.

These architectural signs that recalled the 480 BCE invasion marked the Acropolis as a war memorial, and necessarily haunted the performance of the *Persians*. Exact dating of reconstruction is unclear, but the Acropolis walls were in the process of being built at the time of the performance.[77] Maria Brouskari proposes that the new north fortification wall was constructed under Themistokles' direction at

74 Herodotus, 8.51.2.

75 This would be the east end of the Acropolis, above the cave of Aglauros.

76 Herodotus, 8.52-53.

77 The post-Mycenaean Acropolis walls seem to have been constructed over an extended period of time, perhaps as long as four decades. Antiquity attributes the south long retaining wall above the Mycenaean wall to Kimon. The north wall was likely constructed at the same time as the city walls, but no source from antiquity specifically refers to it. Hurwit argues that it makes little sense to fortify only one wall of the Acropolis, and proposes that Kimon may have built portions of the north when he built the south. However, from a psychological standpoint, it seems that the Athenians would desire to begin replacing the Mycenaean fortifications that had protected the citadel until the Persian invasion. The upper portion of the south wall and part of the western section of the north wall were likely built by Perikles. For further discussion of the reconstruction of the walls, see Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 142, 59. Brouskari, The Monuments of the Acropolis 142, 59, 223.

the same time as the city walls, but the new south wall was constructed later by Kimon after his 467 BCE victory over the Persians in Asia Minor.[78] If this is the case, the north wall, which was partially constructed of reused column drums and sculpture (Plate 6), existed in some form at the time of the performance, but the Acropolis wall that faced the Theatre of Dionysos had yet to be built (Plate 7). Just as the display of column drums and other fragments from the Old Parthenon and the Temple of Athena Polias in the north wall memorialized the Persian occupation,[79] the absent south wall was itself a reminder that the Persians breached the Cyclopean fortifications that had protected the citadel for nearly 700 years.[80] It also gave the audience a glimpse of the Acropolis' summit as they climbed up its south slope to take their seats in the theatre.

By the time of the performance in the spring of 472 BCE, the Acropolis summit had been somewhat cleared of the ruins left from the Persian destruction. Some of the debris was used in reconstructing the north wall, and some had probably already been buried in a pit northwest of the classical Erechtheion.[81] However, it took many years to bury the majority of the wreckage. Some pieces were excavated alongside later classical materials. Pausanias, on his trip to Athens in later antiquity, describes several pre-Persian occupation statues: a bronze lion, an Archaic statue of

78 Brouskari, The Monuments of the Acropolis 223. Also see: Plutarch, "The Life of Cimon," Life of Kimon, 13, Pausanias, "Description of Greece," vol., 1.28.3.

79 Rhodes, Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis 32-33. For a textual reference of the use of debris in the wall, see Thucydides, 1.93.

80 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 142.

81 The sculpture found in this pit may have been buried by 472 BCE, but could have been buried up to a decade later. Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 141.

Athena, and other sculptures blackened by fire during the Persian capture, implying that some of the debris was never interred during antiquity.[82] While the audience for the tragedies may not have been able to see specific pieces of damaged sculptures and broken building materials from their position on the south slope, their bleak view of the summit certainly awakened memories of the dilapidated state of the Acropolis when they returned to their city.

The barren view of the citadel from its south slope was likely dotted with the ruins of the temples ransacked by the Persians (Plate 8).[83] Gloria Ferrari proposes that the Temple of Athena Polias was "left standing and made into a monument to barbarian sacrilege and Athenian righteousness."[84] This argument falls in accordance with the themes presented in Aeschylus' *Persians* and also with the Oath of Plataea that stated the temples destroyed by the Persians would not be rebuilt in order to remind the Athenians of the Persians' invasion and their impiety.[85] Unfortunately, this oath exists in several different versions, and its authenticity was questioned as early as the 4th century.[86] Hurwit logically argues that the oath may have reflected a local Athenian ban because the archaeological record of the post-war Acropolis contains no major violation of it.[87] That the story of the oath survives shows a desire on the

82 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 141. Pausanias, "Description of Greece," vol., 1.23.1-2, 1.26.4, and 1.27.6.

83 These temples include the Old Parthenon, the shrine of Athena Nike, and the Temple of Athena Polias. See Plate 8 for a map of the Acropolis c. 480 BCE prior to the sack that shows the location of these temples.

84 Gloria Ferrari, "The Ancient Temple on the Acropolis at Athens," American Journal of Archaeology 106 (2002): 14.

85 Diodorus Siculus, "Diodorus of Sicily," vol., 11.29.3.

86 Theopompus was the earliest known questioner of the oath's authenticity.

87 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to

part of the Athenians to remember the events of 480 BCE and physically commemorate them. The Acropolis, then, served as a war memorial for the Athenians.

The Athenian audience entering the theatre to watch the *Persians* would certainly recall this previous destruction of their *polis* as they climbed to their seats on the slope of the Acropolis. They would also remember that the Hellenes, led by the Athenians, were victorious at Salamis, even if the Athenians were *apolis*, without their city, at the time. Like the memory of the bombing of Pearl Harbor for Americans, the painful memory of the sacking of the Acropolis recalls the subsequent victory in the waters off the island of Salamis. This victory, at least in Aeschylus' play and probably in Athenian memory, paved the way for Athens' leadership in the Delian League, which ultimately became its empire.

Aeschylus uses the poetry of tragedy to re-imagine the memory of the battle of Salamis in a space surrounded by reminders of the Persian invasion to suit the needs of his primarily Athenian audience. He retells the story from the enemy's perspective, creating myth from a well-known historical event. As Attilio Favorini explores, the resulting pseudo-documentary of such a telling plays to the politics of commemoration.[88] Aeschylus constructs a play that memorializes Athenian victory from a Persian perspective that dramatizes as David Rosenbloom explains "visions of the future derived from history in the sense of the events of the past."[89] By honoring

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the Present 141.

88 Attilio Favorini, Memory in Play: From Aeschylus to Sam Shepard (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 47 and 49.

89 David Rosenbloom, "Myth, History, and Hegemony in Aeschylus," History, Tragedy, Theory: Dialogues on Athenian Drama, ed. Barbara Goff (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995) 51.

the memory of a significant Athenian victory through the eyes of the defeated enemy, Aeschylus is able to legitimize the rising power of Athens in the Delian League whose members needed protection from the Persians. And he depends upon his audience's collective memory of the battle to personally and emotionally connect them to his retelling of these events.

As the play unfolds, it reveals the intense despair of the Persians and the ruinous impact of their defeat at Salamis. But a combination of the Athenian memories, the emotions attached to those memories, and the location of the Theatre of Dionysos frame the performance with Athenian victory. Carlson stresses the importance of the previous experience that is recalled in theatrical performance.

> [T]he relationships between theatre and cultural memory are deep and complex. . . . The retelling of stories already told, the reenactment of events already enacted, the reexperience of emotions already experienced, these are and have always been central concerns of the theatre in all times and places, but closely allied to these concerns are the particular production dynamics of theatre: the stories it chooses to tell, the bodies and other physical materials it utilizes to tell them, and the places in which they are told.[90]

Here Carlson refers specifically to the experience of previous performances haunting those of the present, but memory of real events also necessarily haunts the theatre. It especially does so in a play that commemorates a victory of which many of the Athenians in the audience had a personal and thus emotional memory. As the words spoken during the performance evoked those memories and emotions, the markers of the invasion that surrounded the space of the Theatre of Dionysos certainly enhanced

90 Carlson, The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine 2-3.

the experience. References to the physical area calls the space to play the role of a memory machine continuously reminding the audience of the Persian sacking of the Acropolis and the subsequent Athenian victory. The play uses these living commemorations as cultural monuments to aid in the creation of an Athenian identity that the Persian other in the text of the play solidifies. The constructed Athenian identity legitimizes Athens' leadership in the Delian League. Simultaneously the play uses the physically present memory of the deeds of the once-mighty Persians to warn Athens against inordinate *hubris,* or arrogance, that their new position of power could proffer.

The *Persians* only makes three textual references to the Acropolis, but these references allow the memory of the Persian occupation and the subsequent Athenian restoration to resound throughout the play. The *Persians* first calls attention to the presence of the Acropolis within the theatre space, and thus the memory of its devastation, fairly early in the text, at line 346 out of the entire 1076. After hearing that the Persian army has been defeated by the Athenians, the Queen asks the Messenger how enormous was the Hellenic fleet that it dared to fight the Persians (334-6). The Messenger replies that the Persians were not outnumbered, but θεοὶ πόλιν σῴζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς, "the gods saved the city of the goddess Pallas" (347). Pallas refers to Athena, the patron goddess of Athens whose home was on the Acropolis. Copies of the Palladion statue (a representation of Pallas Athena) were at the time popular dedications on the Acropolis where a temple had housed the ancient

image of Athena Polias before the Persian occupation (Plate 9).[91] This ironically calls forth the memory of the sacking of the Acropolis. The gods did not save the physical city of Athens! Xerxes and his men razed it. This reference also reminds the audience that the Persians had been prideful enough to destroy the temples on the Acropolis, and thus lost the favor of the gods. And so it was that the gods bestowed their favor on the Athenians in their naval battle against the cursed Persians.

The second reference to the Acropolis quickly follows. The Queen subsequently asks if Athens was sacked (348), and the Messenger informs her: ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἕρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές, "while [Athens'] men still live, the walls are secure" (349). The walls of the city and the Acropolis were not secure! Xerxes breached the walls, and thus violated Athena,[92] when he sacked Athens. However, the Acropolis serves here as a physical reminder that Athenians had overcome the outside occupation of their city. The walls of the city and at least the north wall of the Acropolis had been reconstructed at the time of the performance.[93] The Athenians were not destroyed along with their city. When the Persians breached the city walls, the Athenians in their ships became the symbolic walls of Athens. The Athenians themselves are the walls and protectors of their city. Their strength was in their men, and the Acropolis served as a reminder that they had overcome the Persians at

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91 The Palladion, supposedly a part of the spoils from Troy, had been taken by Athens and placed in the law court that was named after her. Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 22.

92 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 15.

93 Brouskari, The Monuments of the Acropolis 223. Plutarch, "The Life of Cimon," Life of Kimon.

Salamis, regained their city, and rebuilt their walls.

The third reference to the Acropolis comes much later in the play in lines 809-812. Darius describes the specific acts committed by Xerxes and his army when they sacked the Acropolis:

> οἳ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
> ἡδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·
> βωμοὶ δ' ἄιστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ἱδρύματα
> πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανίσταται βάθρων.
>
> having come to the land of Hellas, [the Persians] took pleasure at plundering the images of the gods and burning the temples. Altars have been destroyed, the statues of the gods thrown from their bases in utter confusion (809-12).

This reference directly relives the painful memory of the Persian occupation that has haunted the play from the first references to the Acropolis. Certainly such a recount of events that took place adjacent to the theatre space must have greatly affected the emotions of the Athenian audience, and reminded them that their very homeland was at stake during the battle of Salamis.

Establishing Athenian Identity Through a Memory of Victory

The Acropolis guides the construction of Athenian identity in the play through its reminder, as a war memorial, of the Persian occupation of Athens and the following Athenian regaining of their city. The *Persians* establishes fundamental Athenian qualities prior to bringing the Acropolis into the action. The first two Acropolis references contribute to these aspects, further shaping the Athenian identity that continues throughout the play. These references provide a physical reminder that

the Athenians were ultimately victorious against the Persians, and have the power of the gods on their side.

To fully understand how the Acropolis aids the play in constructing Athenian identity, it is necessary to examine the underlying identity that the play establishes prior to the initial reference to the Acropolis. It is important to note, as Thomas Harrison does, that in this description of Athens Aeschylus' use of the Persian perspective allows for Athenian self-definition and self-praise without appearing too self-congratulatory concerning Athens' seemingly superior qualities.[94] Just over a hundred lines before the first mention of the Acropolis, the Queen asks the chorus of elders to tell her about the city of Athens (231). The elders reveal several significant Athenian characteristics: by taking Athens all of Hellas would be slaves to the king (234); Athens has a wealth of silver (238); Athenians are slaves to no man (243), and Athens' army defeated Darius' host at Marathon (244). These attributes point out the strength of the Athenian democracy as opposed to Persian autocracy, a significant theme when one considers that Perikles was the *choregos* for the Persians.[95]

These four Athenian attributes establish Athens as the unquestionable leader of Hellas, and so legitimizes their prominence in the Delian League. According to the first point made by the Persian elders, Greece stands or falls with Athens as the

94 Thomas Harrison, The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus' *Persians* and the History of the Fifth Century (London: Duckworth, 2000) 22. For a detailed discussion of using the barbarian other in tragedy to identify what is Greek and Athenian also see Edith Hall, Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

95 The choregos provided funding for the performance. For a record of Perikles' involvement see: Snell, ed., Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta 48, Fasti Theatri Atheniensis (55b).

Hellenes did at Salamis. The next point considers Athens' silver mines, the root of her power. Mention of the silver mines reminds the audience that the citizen Themistokles convinced the Athenian assembly to agree to use the revenue from the silver mines at Laurium to build triremes, an advanced type of fighting vessel, for the war against Aegina.[96] This fleet was used at Salamis to defeat the Persians, and so established Athens as a powerful naval force. The third point praises the powerful Athenian democracy that ensured freedom for all Athenians and was a source of pride for the citizens. The final point recalls the battle at Marathon, in which the Athenians, without the help of the Spartans, defeated the Persians and prevented them from enslaving the Athenian *polis*.[97] This passage uses the Persian characters to legitimize Athens as the leader of the Hellenes by identifying Athens as wealthy, democratically free, and the most powerful force in Hellas.

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96 Plutarch, "The Life of Cimon," Themistokles 4. Aristotle, "The Athenian Constitution," trans. Sir Frederick G. Kenyon, The Complete Works of Aristotle, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 22. Some scholars postulate that the Persians is pro-Themistoklean. For a discussion on the political propaganda in the play, see H.D Broadhead, The Persae of Aeschylus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). Lois Spatz, Aeschylus (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982). Harrison, The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus' *Persians* and the History of the Fifth Century. Anthony J. Podlecki, The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966). Albin Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry, trans. Matthew Dillon (London: Yale University Press, 1972). I am inclined to say that the play is not likely pro-Themistoklean due to Aeschylus' high-born status and the mention of deeds accomplished by both Themistokles and his rival Aristides. I agree with Hammond; there is not sufficient evidence to consider the play pro-Themistoklean. If it is propagandistic, it is cleverly concealed as all good propaganda should be. However, any pro-Themistoklean qualities found in the text are only indirectly relevant to my argument as far as they contribute to capturing the spirit of the times.

97 In 490 BCE, the Persians marched on Marathon. The Athenians met them there and sent a messenger to ask Sparta for help. The Spartans, according to their laws, had to wait for the full moon to send aid. The Plataeans, who were under Athenian protection, arrived in full force. The Athenians prevailed and drove the Persians to their ships. They sailed to Athens in hopes of finding the city unprotected. However, the Athenians had quickly marched home and confronted the fleet and saved their city. Herodotus, 6.102-6.16.

The Messenger confirms this image of a mighty Athens in his report of the Persian defeat: στρατὸς γὰρ πᾶς ὄλωλε βαρβάρων, "the entire army of the barbarians was lost" (255). πᾶς στρατὸς, the *whole* army, is certainly an overstatement of the outcome of the actual naval battle off Salamis, yet it supports the notion in the play that Athens led the Hellenes to complete victory over Persia. The Messenger's speech illustrates the source of Athenian power by focusing on their prowess in naval battle. He reveals that the Persian forces met their fate at sea, and that the bodies of the fallen fill the shores of Salamis and the nearby coasts at line 273 (Plate 10). He groans to recall the memory of Athens and the elders join his agony, calling Athens "hateful to her foes" (285-6). He then reinforces this image of the all-powerful Athenians and the immensity of the Persian defeat by reading a very lengthy list of the fallen Persian leaders (299-330). The Persian messenger and elders construct a picture of Athens as single-handedly depleting the massive Persian army including her illustrious war leaders.

The initial references to the Acropolis lend depth to the Athenian identity that the Persian characters have so far constructed in the play. The reference at line 346 that "the gods saved the city of the goddess Pallas" provides an explanation of how Athens was able to defeat the larger Persian forces at Salamis as described in the play. The answer is quite simple: the gods protect Athens. And although the Persians were able to take Athens and raze the Acropolis, which they were occupying at the time of the battle of Salamis, the Athenians, with the backing of the gods, were able to

reclaim their city. That the Athenians have the favor of the gods will be even more significant upon hearing Darius' speech, which I will examine in the following section. At the moment it suffices to say that this statement lends divine justification to Athens' presence as a leading Hellenic military power.

The second reference to the Acropolis that "while [Athens'] men still live, the walls are secure" at line 349 bestows some credit on the Athenian citizens. The gods may protect and support Athens, but it is through the strength of the Athenian men that Athens still stands. The Athenians were not so daunted by the fact that the Persians had sacked the Acropolis and were occupying Athens during the battle at Salamis that they could not defeat their foe. The wooden walls of their ships became their temporary homes, and they became a naval people. As a nautical power they were able, at least in the context of the play, to deal a severe blow to the Persian empire, and ultimately, as the state of the Acropolis would confirm, reclaim their city and clean up the wreckage.

Thus far the text along with the presence of the Acropolis has constructed Athens as the prime Hellenic force with which the Persians must contend. So far in the play it seems that the Persians feel they are the only force even worth mentioning. So it may seem surprising that in the Messenger's account of the battle of Salamis he specifically names a deed as being Athenian only once. He gives credit to the Athenians for tricking the Persians into sailing into the strait where the Hellenes could attack them (355-8).[98] The rest of the account speaks generically of the

98 According to Herodotus, the Athenian Themistokles sent a servant to the Persians to tell them that

Hellenes, but refer to events that at least Herodotus attributes to Athenians. However, Aeschylus no longer needs to specify the deeds of the Athenians. Through the Persian characters, he has already informed us that Hellas stands or falls with Athens, and that the Athenians defeated the Persians at Salamis.

The Messenger's account of the battle seems omniscient in its overview of events, but simultaneously it is personal and emotional. And it is likely that this retelling of the battle was an eyewitness account, albeit an embellished one, since the Parian Marble tells us that Aeschylus fought in this battle.[99] And as H.D. Broadhead reminds us, the audience was familiar with the facts and would not need specific details, so Aeschylus is able to bring his memory to life on-stage with the merest allusion to specific events.[100] Without specifically naming Athenians, Aeschylus could expect his audience to recall images of the battle and use them to fill in the gaps in his retelling to grasp the theme of Athenian valor that is present throughout the Messenger's account.

Due to the audience's collective memory of the battle, it is possible for the name of Athens to all but disappear from the text of the battle narrative, and yet the account emphasizes the strength and cunning of the Athenian forces. Richmond Lattimore is correct to say that this narrative is a "glorification of a victory which is,

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the Greeks were planning to escape from Salamis rather than prepare for battle. Herodotus, 8.75.

99 Fragment 48 of the Oxford fragments of the Parian Marble. Jacoby, Die Fragmente Der Griechischen Historiker no. 239. Also see the Scholiast on the Persians and the Life. Murray, Aeschyli: Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoediae 370-72, Αισχυλοι βιος, George Thomson, Aeschylus and Athens: A Study in the Social Origins of Drama (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973) 280.

100 Broadhead, The Persae of Aeschylus 322.

as far as Aeschylus can make it so, *Athenian*."[101] The ever-present Acropolis would constantly remind the audience that this battle led to the reclaiming of their city and their growing power amongst the Hellenic states. So it is possible at this point in the play to use the word Hellene in place of the word Athenian when telling of Athenian contributions to the battle. This substitution of names, as Harrison discusses at length, reinforces the idea that the fate of Greece lies with Athens.[102]

Aeschylus writes a battle cry that may be meant to rouse the entire Hellenic fleet, but would particularly animate the Athenian forces and raise the hairs on the Athenian audience members' necks. The Messenger recalls the battle cry:

> ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων ἴτε,
> ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ' ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
> παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρῴων ἕδη,
> θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών.
>
> Oh children of the Hellenes go!
> Free your fatherland, free your
> children and your wives, both the temples of your fathers' gods,
> and the tombs of your ancestors. Now fight on behalf of all! (402-5).

This call emphasizes freedom, which the Persians elders constructed as part of Athenian identity, but this cry has much more important ramifications. It drives the Athenians to begin the battle, and so begin to recover their home from the Persians: their place of their families' tombs, θήκας, and the location of the temples of their father's gods, θεῶν τε πατρῴων ἕδη, which the presence of the Acropolis recalls lay in

101 Richmond Lattimore, "Aeschylus on the Defeat of Xerxes," Classical Studies in Honor of William Abbott Oldfather (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943) 90.
102 Harrison discusses the significance of the substitution at length. Harrison, The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus' *Persians* and the History of the Fifth Century 61.

ruins.

Aeschylus gives credit to the Athenians for their shrewdness in convincing the Persians to take up a suitable position for a Hellenic attack, he recalls two more events as Hellenic led that Herodotus records, and so the Athenians surely remembered, as Athenian led. Aeschylus writes that the initial charge after the battle call was led by a ship of Hellas (409-11), but Herodotus records that the Athenians gave credit to Ameinias of Pallene, a citizen of an Athenian *deme*, for leading the advance.[103] Aeschylus later recalls the massacre of the elite Persian forces by the Hellenic *hoplites* on an island near Salamis (456-464), but once again Herodotus records that the aristocratic Athenian Aristides landed *hoplites* on Psyttaleia, and killed all of the Persians stationed on the island (Plate 10).[104] Based on their personal memories or at least the collective memory of the battle, the audience easily supplied the the knowledge that these feats were accomplished specifically by Athenians, rather than Greeks at large. Aeschylus uses the collective memory of his audience to identify Athens as the mastermind and leader of the battle by recounting their feats of military prowess and courage.

In case the elders' descriptions of Athens and the Messenger's account of their abilities do not construct an Athenian identity that would satisfy the most fastidious of Athenian citizens, Aeschylus reminds his audience that Salamis is not the first time that Athens defeated Persia in battle. The Queen interrupts the Messenger's narrative

103 Herodotus, 8.84.
104 Herodotus, 8.95.

to lament the vengeance Xerxes meant for "illustrious Athens" brought instead on the Persians as it had been in 490 BCE when Darius led the Persians against Athens at Marathon (474-5). Note here that the Queen connects Xerxes' defeat at Salamis solely to the Athenians rather than the Hellenes as the Messenger just related it to her, and so places the two situations in parallel. Xerxes, like his father Darius at Marathon, meant to wreak havoc on Athens. And in the play neither were even somewhat successful. The Athenians defeated Darius' army at Marathon, and his son's forces at Salamis.

In contrast to this scene in the play, the Acropolis haunts the performance with the memory that Xerxes did successfully sack the city, and the Queen recognizes that Xerxes suffered the vindictive power of the gods through the naval might of the Athenians. She is the first character in the play to understand that the disastrous events at Salamis and the calamity of the Persian retreat serve as punishment for Xerxes' excessive *hubris,* which, without ever mentioning the occupation of Athens, refers to his barbaric treatment of the people and temples when he seized the Acropolis. H.D.F. Kitto argues that the entire play is about this *hubris* and punishment, and that any celebration of victory is "incidental."[105] Certainly Kitto is right that the play is one unending lament for the Persian characters, but I simply must disagree with his argument because for the Athenian audience the Persian defeat is inseparable from Athenian victory. And thus far in the text, Aeschylus has only called forth memories that ultimately celebrate Athens, its victory, and its favor with the gods.

105 H.D.F. Kitto, Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1950) 36.

A Warning to Athens through a Memory of Defeat

In constructing an Athenian identity through Persian characters, the *Persians* necessarily sets these two groups in opposition. However, the play finds similarities between the two beginning with aspects of the Queen's dream. The play eventually sets Athens and Persia in parallel through these similarities, and paves the way for the Acropolis as a reminder of Persian impiety to serve as a warning to the Athenians. It is the realization that Athens has replaced Persia as the power *par excellence*, could one day make the same mistakes, and face Persia's fate that allows the necromancy scene to serve as a warning to Athens. From that point the Athenians could reflect on the divine punishment of Persia as their own possible future, and thus feel pity for the Persians while simultaneously celebrating their defeat.

The Queen's account of her dream provides the initial comparison of Greek to Persian that paves the way for constructing an Athenian identity. At first this identity seems in direct opposition to the Persian other that the characters represent, but ultimately in the dream establishes Athenian and Persian similarities that will later allow the two powers to be set in parallel. The dream depicts two women, whom the Queen immediately identifies as Persian and Greek by their style of clothing (182-183). The account then reveals that the two women are equally beautiful and of the same race , but all similarities aside, they have provoked one another (185-90). The dream Xerxes has sought to reconcile the two by yoking them to his cart (189-192). One woman stands proud and obedient in the harness, but the other, the Greek,

struggles and snaps the yoke (192-196). Xerxes' yoking of course refers to his desire to add all of Hellas, and particularly Athens, to his empire. However, as Ippokratis Kantzios point out, the differing reactions of the two women, sisters in all other regards, show the fundamental difference between the two: their political systems.[106] The kingship that is completely acceptable to the Persian seems misguided and abhorrent to the Greek, and also to the Athenians watching the performance. This major difference in government is certainly significant in constructing Athenians as democratically free, but underneath this difference the fact remains that the two nations are equals and furthermore brethren. According to the Queen's dream, Persians and Athenians were cast from the same mold.

The play sets the two nations in true parallel in the choral ode that follows the Messenger's account of the battle and following retreat. The chorus of elders grieves for the loss of their men and the utter ruin of their empire (532-583), all the while ghosting Athenian democratic ideals and Athenian fears. The ode ends with the following lament:

> For no longer will those in the Asian land
> live under Persian law,
> nor any longer will they pay tribute
> to their master when he compels it,
> nor will they prostrate themselves on the ground
> in awe of him. For the king's power has been destroyed.
> No longer will men guard their tongues.
> They are loosened and the people are free to speak
> now that the strength of the yoke has been broken (584-594).

106 Ippokratis Kantzios, "The Politics of Fear in Aeschylus' "Persians."," The Classical World 98 (2004): 16-17.

This dirge for the Persian empire expresses Greek thoughts and fears rather than Persian. Edith Hall and Anthony Podlecki provide interpretations that show how the ode aligns Persian and Athenian. Edith Hall concludes that these lines express what the Greeks thought Persian rule would entail,[107] but the Messenger has already revealed that this danger has been dispelled by the vengeance of the gods via Athenian victory. The Athenians have set free the lands of the Persian empire. And as the Acropolis examples through the memory of the Persian occupation, Athenian power has overcome and replaced Persian power. Anthony J. Podlecki's explanation of the lament replaces this broken Persian power with Athenian power. He determines that these lines assert not the demands of a Persian rule, but the concerns of a powerful Greek *polis*, particularly Athens, after suffering such loss for the sake of their expansionist policies.[108] If the Persian empire did face the outrage of its citizens following their defeat at Salamis, no extant historical source reveals it, but the play presents a crumbling power that will certainly face the uprisings of its many lands. Aeschylus' Persian characters suffer from the same fears as the Athenian audience would in a similar situation. And because the Acropolis haunts this scene with the memory of Athenian might displacing Persian control, it is easy to see that Athens could suffer the same fate as Persia.

This choral ode marks a significant transition in the play. So far, Aeschylus has defined Athens primarily by its differences from Persia. Further oppositions will

107 Hall, Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy 98.
108 Anthony J. Podlecki, "Polis and Monarch in Early Attic Tragedy," Greek Tragedy and Political Theory, ed. J. Peter Euben (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 81-82.

continue to define Athens, but so will its similarities to Persia. These few lines that publicize the shared qualities of Athens and Persia move the tone of the play from a celebration of Athenian victory to that of pity and fear for the Persians. These parallels allow the Athenians to relate to the plight of the Persians on an emotional level. They are no longer only the enemy. They are a representation of what could happen to Athens if she grows too strong, over expands, and becomes so proud as to offend the gods. Such a transition paves the way for the following necromancy scene that successfully twists a so far celebratory play into a warning. This scene does not praise Athenian success, but through a precise account of the flaws that led to Persia's defeat, it warns Athens of the dangers of excessive *hubris* that accompany immense power. The Persian invasion of Hellas served the desires of an expansionist and imperialist nation, which the Athenians could compare to their own recent acquisition of power in the Delian League. As Rehm concludes:

> If Aeschylus helped to invent the barbarian as a symbol of political tyranny and moral *hubris*, then he did so at a time when his own city was on the verge of emulating those very qualities.[109]

With this in mind, the meaning of the Acropolis also transitions from a war memorial of Athenian victory to a symbol of an empire losing the favor of the gods through their pride and excess.

The ghost of Darius focuses on the reason for Xerxes' failure: his irreverence for the gods. He declares that Xerxes twice committed atrocities that offended the gods during his campaign into Greece. Xerxes' first offense was his attempt to bridge

109 Rehm, The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy 248.

the sacred Hellespont and bind the holy Bosporos River as if it were a slave. Yoking the Hellespont and invading Greece met Persia's imperialist aims, but Darius condemns this behavior, stating that this was an attempt by his son to master all of the gods, even Poseidon (745-50).[110] This declaration of impiety provides the first reason the gods turned their backs on Persia, and it serves as a warning for the recent imperialist behavior of the Athenians.

Xerxes' second offense to the gods directly involves his occupation of the Acropolis. Darius retells the deeds of the Persians that were particularly offensive to the Athenians:

> οἳ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
> ἠδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·
> βωμοὶ δ' ἄιστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ἱδρύματα
> πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανίσταται βάθρων.
>
> having come to the land of Hellas, [the Persians] took pleasure at plundering the images of the gods and burning the temples. Altars have been destroyed, the statues of the gods thrown from their bases in utter confusion (809-12).

This statement is the final textual reference to the Acropolis in the play. Certainly Xerxes razed other cities in Hellas, but these lines describe the specific atrocities committed when the Persians took the Acropolis.[111] Up until that time, the Persian campaign into Hellas had been considerably successful, and Darius attributes the current disaster to Xerxes' transgression of divine law rather than Athenian

110 Kitto considers the bridge to be a symbol of Xerxes' pride and his transgression of heaven's limits. Kitto, Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study 39.

111 Herodotus, 8.53.

superiority.[112] The ghost says to remember Athens and Hellas (824), but he does not lavish the Athenian *polis* with praise as does most of the play. Aeschylus does not allow the Athenian audience to take credit for their success against the Persians. Anthony J. Podlecki sums it up nicely:

> [T]he gods' plan to punish Xerxes depended for its fulfillment, on the human determination of Xerxes' intended victims to resist his attack. . . . What human effort could accomplish with divine approval.[113]

The Athenians were victorious because the gods no longer favored the Persians. The Acropolis stood as a reminder of the Persian occupation, the atrocities committed during the invasion, and the ultimate success of the Athenians with the help of the gods. While the Acropolis as a war memorial reminds viewers that Athens did defeat the Persians and so are legitimate leaders in the Delian League, it also warns against the dangers of excessive pride that come with such a position of power. Through the symbol of the Acropolis, the fall of Persian power equates the rise of Athenian power and so, the two are set in parallel. Beware, Athens, lest your fate become the fate of Persia!

The Acropolis haunts the remainder of the play with echoes of Darius' warning. The choral ode that follows the necromancy scene solidifies the warning to the Athenians through one last comparison of Athens to Persia. The elders remember the good old days by naming the Ionian lands that the Persian empire once controlled

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112 Broadhead, The Persae of Aeschylus xxix.
113 Podlecki, "Polis and Monarch in Early Attic Tragedy," 80.

(864-908). They specifically list the Acheloan cities,[114] the mainland cities, and the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Paros, Naxos, Myconos, Andros, Lemnos, Icarus, Rhodes, Cnidos, and the Cyprian cities of Paphos, Soli, and Salamis. As C.M. Bowra points out, these are the same lands that were members of the Delian League in 472 BCE when the *Persians* was performed (Plate 11).[115] These lands were not simply allies with Athens, they paid an annual tribute to her.[116] Therefore, they were under Athenian protection, but also her subjugation. Athenian imperialism had already taken hold. Once more, the play presents an Athens that has defeated and replaced Persia as the Mediterranean superpower, and as the rising leader of the Delian League, which will become the Athenian empire in all but name. Therefore Athens faces the same dangers of imperialist expansion that led to the downfall of the Persian empire in the play.

Conclusions

Xerxes' lament at the end of the play perfectly concludes the performance by bringing together the simultaneous celebration of Athenian victory and the warning of

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114 According to Herbert Weir Smyth, Aeschylus could be referring to the settlement of Paeonians on Lake Prasias or to the islands off of Thrace, which include Imbros, Thasos, and Samothrace. Aeschylus, "Persians," Aeschylus I, ed. Herbert Weir Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), vol. of The Loeb Classical Library, 185. Sommerstein states that Acheloian refers to the Achelous River that is considered to be the father of all rivers, and is sometimes used in poetry to mean fresh water. He believes Aeschylus describes the lake-villages of the Strymon basin. Aeschylus, "Persians," Aeschylus I, ed. Alan H. Sommerstein (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), vol. of The Loeb Classical Library, 111.

115 C.M. Bowra, "The Tragic Vision," Aeschylus: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Marsh H. McCall (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972) 26.

116 Aristides made the first assessment of the tribute from the Ionian states two years after the battle near Salamis. Aristotle, "The Athenian Constitution," 23.

overextending one's means. At line 909 Xerxes finally arrives on-stage to grieve over his wretched state, and leads the chorus in a lament that continues for 135 lines. Due to the previous connections drawn between Athens and Persia, the audience could initially pity the Persians, but this dirge continues for a very long time with, as Hall puts it, a great deal of "emotional abandonment." She emphasizes that because such excessive mourning practices were considered barbaric in Athens and discouraged, this scene is extremely non-Greek.[117] Thus, the play returns from its comparison of Athens and Persia to once more define Athens by what it is not or at least what it finds inappropriate. In this case, the Athenians could take comfort in the performance of a foreign dirge that constructs their own identity in direct opposition to what is Persian. After Darius' warning against imperialist ambitions, such an excessively emotional lament would recall that the Athenians are culturally different from the Persians and are therefore not necessarily set to suffer the same fate.

Yet Darius' words of warning linger via the presence of the Acropolis amidst the pity for the Persians and the pride for Athenian triumph. In a visually striking scene, Xerxes and the Persian elders perform in a full lament for the ruin of the Persian empire at the base of the Acropolis, which they impiously sacked. The Persians have been punished for their imperialist desires by their defeat at Salamis and in Athens, but Athens is not exempt from such punishment by the gods if she follows in the footsteps of the Persians. So the Acropolis with her partially rebuilt walls and traces of ruins suitably represents the Athens of 472 BCE. It echoes Darius'

117 Hall, Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy 84.

warning to the Athenians, yet it was not destroyed by the Persians. It survived and was rising to power through the will of the gods and the strength of its men.

The *Persians* includes only three references to the Acropolis, but its presence in the theatre haunts the entire performance. From the time when the audience entered the Theatre of Dionysos through the final lament of Xerxes and the Persian elders, the Acropolis stands as a synecdoche of Athenian power. Aeschylus' retelling of the naval battle near Salamis through the eyes of the Persians establishes the differences between Athens and Persia. The references to the Acropolis and its presence in the theatre allow the play to juxtapose the memory of the Persians sacking the Acropolis with its retelling of Persian defeat at Salamis. The oppositions drawn between Persian and Athenian and the memory of such events allow the celebration of Athenian victory over Persia to dominate much of the play, all for the sake of legitimizing Athenian leadership in the Delian League.

The textual references to the Acropolis juxtapose the memory of the Persians sacking the Acropolis with its retelling of Persian defeat at Salamis. These memories ultimately present Athenian strength, and so justify Athens' leadership in the Delian League. Still the play is a tragedy, even to an Athenian audience watching their enemy mourn its losses at the base of the Acropolis they once held. The play constructs an Athenian identity that is often at odds with what is seen as Persian, and then it finds the similarities between the two as the once major powerhouse and the new rising leader. This allows for Darius to warn the Athenians that Athens could

suffer the same fate as Persia if they become too proud, overextend their power, or otherwise offend the gods. This warning is more powerful after witnessing the retelling of events that glorify Athenian battle prowess, praise her democratic society, and justify her growing imperialist power. Thus the play creates a dichotomy of celebration and suffering. The Persian agony witnessed throughout the play foreshadows the warning that such suffering could await the Athenians. The audience would eventually see their *polis* compared to Persia and could reflect on the grievous events in the previous scenes, and only then could they fully connect to the immense suffering found in the *Persians*.

IV: Imperial Justice, Divine Right: Athena, Athens, and the Acropolis in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

Imagine watching the performance of a play on the lawn in front of the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. as part of an Independence Day celebration. Suddenly the scene shifts from a far away location to the nearby Washington Monument, and in that location the actors establish the sanctity of the Supreme Court, where the rest of the play is set. Imagine the feelings of pride and patriotism you would feel as you watched this play along with your fellow Americans. It is likely that the *Eumenides,* the final play in the *Oresteia,* called forth similar emotions from Athenian citizens who saw its premiere in 458 BCE.[118] The conditions surrounding the *Oresteia* were quite similar to this fictional scenario. It was performed at the Theatre of Dionysos that stood on the south slope of the Acropolis, a representation of the *polis*. And it was performed during the City Dionysia, which celebrated Athens as much as it did the god Dionysos.[119] Most significantly, the trilogy's final scenes are set in Athens: first on the Acropolis and then the nearby Areopagos.

The *Eumenides* is unique in that it is our only extant tragedy in which a scene takes place on the Acropolis, or for that matter within the city of Athens.[120] Because a

118 The date for the performance of the Oresteia is fairly secure. It is mentioned in the "Testimonia vitae atque arti" in Snell, ed., Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta 1.5, 65.

119 For further reading on the Dionysia as a celebration of Athenian democracy, values, and imperialism, see Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology.", Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to Do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual." Connor, "City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy."

120 Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus takes place in Attica, but not within the city of Athens. Also set in the polis are Euripides' Suppliants and Heracleidai. From the few plays we have extant, there is no reason to believe that this was the only 5th century BCE tragedy to be set on the Acropolis, but from

scene takes place at the *Archaios Naos*, also known as the temple of Athena Polias, on the Acropolis, the actual Acropolis on the slope of which the audience sat is called to mind. So unlike the role of the Acropolis in the other plays contained in the present work, here it functions in two forms within this play: as the early classical Acropolis with its renovations that memorialized the Persian occupation through the ruins of the *Archaios Naos*,[121] and as the on stage suggestion of the archaic Acropolis that features an unspoilt temple of Athena Polias as the home of the goddess. These two forms combine to present an Athenian mythos that justifies their imperial intentions. The Acropolis bears a message of the Athenian empire's and its patron goddess' ability to triumph over the barbaric, and yet incorporate the monstrous into the Athenian notion of civilization. This justifies Aeschylus' choice to have Athena lead the proceedings of the trial, and to replace a jury of the gods with a democratic Athenian jury that permanently rids Orestes of the Erinyes, the Furies, who will subsequently take a role in Athenian society, and dwell in the *polis*.

The Acropolis on stage: The *Eumenides* Brings the Semiotics of the Acropolis into Play

Unlike the other plays discussed in this study, there is very little textually that would specifically call to mind the Acropolis, or bring its many meanings into the

the few extant plays it seems that foreign locations were preferable.

121 There is much debate over where this image was housed on the Acropolis after the destruction of the *Archaios Naos* by the Persians. The location of the statue is given as the o*pisthodomos*, a room, but given the vagueness of the word, there are several possible locations for the room in which the statue was housed on the Acropolis. See Jeffrey M. Hurwit, "Space and Theme: The Setting of the Parthenon," The Parthenon: From Antiquity to the Present, ed. Jennifer Neils (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 24. and Ferrari, "The Ancient Temple on the Acropolis at Athens."

performance. It is Apollo's command to Orestes: μολὼν δὲ Παλλάδος ποτὶ πτόλιν ἵζου παλαιὸν ἄγκαθεν λαβὼν βρέτας,[122] "When you come to the city of Pallas, sit and take in arm her ancient image" (79-80) that initially acknowledges the presence of the Acropolis within the space of the Theatre of Dionysos. This reference is subsequently supported by the audience witnessing Orestes grasping the statue on stage, which we can infer from the chorus' reaction to this stage business: ὁ δ᾽ αὖτέ γ᾽ [οὖν] ἀλκὰν ἔχων περὶ βρέτει πλεχθεὶς θεᾶς ἀμβρότου ὑπόδικος θέλει γενέσθαι χερῶν, "Here he is! With all his strength having wrapped himself around the statue of the immortal goddess, he desires to be brought to trial for the deeds of his hands" (258-60).

It is generally accepted that despite Aeschylus' vague description this scene takes place before the ancient olive-wood image of Athena housed on the Acropolis, but the two prominent scholars Lesky and A.W. Verrall make the argument for a small and less renowned temple or shrine close to or even on the Areopagos itself.[123] Lesky points out:"[W]e would naturally think here of the Akropolis, but the goddess in her founding speech (685 ff.) specifically describes the Areopagos as the scene of events."[124] Of course, Athena's speech at 685 is over four hundred lines from when

122 Greek text is from Aeschylus, "Eumenides," Aeschylus II, ed. Herbert Weir Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), vol. of The Loeb Classical Library.All translations from the Greek are my own unless otherwise indicated.

123 Oliver Taplin, The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1977), D.J. Conacher, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*: A Literary Commentary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry, A.W. Verrall, The 'Eumenides' of Aeschylus with an Introduction, Commentary, and Translation (London: Macmillan and Co., 1908).

124 Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry 90.

Orestes first kneels before her statue as Apollo commanded (235-243). The lack of description concerning location prior to 685 does not necessarily mean that the first scene set in Athens did not at some point shift to the Areopagos prior to Athena's speech. Verrall also explores this issue in his note on βρέτας. He argues that the sanctuary could very well be the murder court known as e*pi palladioi* rather than the Areopagos, which he concludes would better fit Aeschylus' vague description of locality.[125] It is true that Aeschylus never specifically indicates the *Archaios Naos* on the Acropolis; however, as Taplin points out, the Athenians needed no explanation of the location of Athena's ancient image.[126] The ruins of the *Archaios Naos* was a familiar spot to Athenians, as well as to foreigners who visited the city for the festival. Given that there is no known attempt at realism in the performances of the ancient tragedies, it is completely possible and dare I say highly likely that there would be no need to specifically refer to the Acropolis or the temple of Athena Polias at the beginning of the scene. The audience would merely assume this location unless they were told it was another, lesser known statue in another place.

Although there is no specific reference to Orestes' location, it seems most likely that he supplicates before the ancient olive-wood image of Athena Polias that was housed, until the Persian invasion, in the archaic temple of Athena Polias as Taplin and Conacher suggest.[127] This image of Athena is always mentioned in other

125 Verrall, The 'Eumenides' of Aeschylus with an Introduction, Commentary, and Translation n. to 80.

126 Taplin, The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy 390.

127 Taplin, The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy

sources as being on the Acropolis, even after the Persian sack in 480 BCE.[128] Note that the main identifier in both passages is Athena's βρέτας, which the LSJ defines as "the wooden image of a god," and Apollo's speech describes it as παλαιὸν, ancient. Until the Persian invasion in 480 BCE, the ancient wooden statue of Athena Polias was housed in the *Archaios Naos* on the Acropolis. When the Athenians fled before the Persian advance into Attica, they removed the statue from the *Archaios Naos*, and took it with them onto one of their ships.[129] It is never mentioned that this statue was housed anywhere other than the Acropolis, but the references to it beyond this point say that it was located in the *opisthodomos*. This is a generic term that the LSJ defines as "at the back of the building." More specifically, it refers to the back room of a temple, and there are several temples to which the *opisthodomos* could refer including a reconstruction or undamaged area of the *Archaios Naos*.[130] Because Athena's ancient olive-wood image was well-known to the audience and never known to be housed anywhere other than the Acropolis, the vagueness of Aeschylus' description leads one to believe that Orestes must supplicate before this famed statue, and so must be somewhere on the Acropolis. The Athenians could potentially have watched this

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146. Conacher, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*: A Literary Commentary 245.

128 Alan H. Sommerstein, ed., Aeschylus: Eumenides (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

129 Herington states: "In 480 b.c. it [the image of Athena Polias] escaped with its people across the Saronic gulf." Herington cites Kleidemos apud Plut. Them. 10, section 6 (Jahn-Michaelis, p 8, no 52, fr.. 21, Jacoby). C. J. Herington, Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1955) 22 and fn. 5.

130 Hurwit proposes that the *opisthodomos* could refer to that area of the temple of Athena Polias even after the Persian invasion. He also notes that it could be that area of the Periklean Parthenon , which wasn't completed until 438 BCE, twenty years after the performance of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. Hurwit, "Space and Theme: The Setting of the Parthenon," 24-5.

scene with two locations in mind: the cultural memory of the temple of Athena Polias as the home of Athena's ancient image prior to the Persian invasion, and the mysterious *opisthodomos*, the current and thus known location of the statue. So the city of Athens, represented by the archaic and early classical forms of the Acropolis, becomes the stage on which the trial of Orestes, and more importantly, the Athenization of the Furies will unfold.

The Goddess of Choice: Athena

It is clear from the events of the previous plays in the *Oresteia* trilogy, the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephoroi*, that it is not possible for Apollo himself to rid Orestes of the monstrous Furies. Apollo is tied up in the violent and personal blood-vengeance of the house of Atreus from the moment Agamemnon brings Cassandra home as his concubine. Cassandra reveals that as a young maiden in Troy she spurned Apollo's advances. At line 1212, she tells us that for her obstinate behavior he cursed her with the ability to foretell events, which no one will believe. Before she exits into the palace and to her death, she states: “And now the seer has attained his due from me, the seer, and has lead me to this deadly fate” (1275-1278). Apollo seeks a violent death for a young maiden who dared to oppose him.

It should come as no surprise then that Apollo is the one who commands Orestes to seek vengeance for his father's murder in the *Choephoroi.* In fact, he not only authorizes the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus as retribution, he warns that if Orestes does not complete this task, he will pay with many misfortunes

including the "aggression of Furies, brought about by [his] father's blood" (283-284). Winnington-Ingram calls this vendetta Apollo's flaw that connects the god's idea of justice with blood vengeance, violent feuds, and all the resulting consequences.[131] Due to this flaw, and his previous one against Cassandra, Apollo cannot relieve Orestes from the torment of the pursuing Furies. As Kitto notes, Apollo's idea of justice is just as vengeful, violent, and unending as that of the mortals in this trilogy.[132]

It is just that Athena should be the goddess to serve as the *Archon Basileus* since she, unlike Apollo, has no direct connection to personal revenge-justice in this trilogy. First of all, Athena, unlike Apollo, has no direct connections to the Atreids' violent notion of the personal vendetta that has served as justice long enough in the *Oresteia*. Second, the descriptions of the Furies focus on their monstrous qualities, and the Acropolis sculpture attests to Athena's ability to triumph over the monstrous. Third, Athena shares chthonic qualities with the Furies through the symbol of the snake.

The three depictions of the Furies use slightly different terms to describe them, but the overall picture is the same: they are monstrous, earthy beasts. Orestes first describes the Furies at the end of the *Choephoroi*. In three speeches he visualizes them for the chorus who cannot see them:

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131 R.P. Winnington-Ingram, Studies in Aeschylus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 150.

132 Kitto likens Apollo's violent idea of justice to Clytemnestra's. H.D.F. Kitto, Form and Meaning in Drama: A Study of Six Greek Plays and of *Hamlet* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd., 1969) 70.

> Servant women, see them there, like Gorgons,
> dark-robed and entwined with snakes.
> I can stay no longer (1048-1050).
>
> These are no troubled visions to me. For clearly
> these are the spiteful hounds to avenge my mother (1053-1054).
>
> Lord Apollo! They come in full, and from
> their eyes drips hateful blood (1057-1058).

The Pythia describes the Furies in much the same way in the prologue of the *Eumenides*. Rushing terror-stricken from Apollo's temple at Delphi, she describes them:

> Before this man a wonderful band of women sat asleep on thrones. Not women, but Gorgons, I say! Yet I cannot liken them to the form of Gorgons. Once before I saw a drawing of creatures carrying off the feast of Phineus, but these are without wings, dark, and entirely disgusting, snorting intimidating breaths.[133] From their eyes pour hateful drops. And their clothes are neither fit to bring before the statues of the gods nor into the houses of men. I have not seen the tribe that owns these creatures, nor know the land which claims to have reared this race unharmed and not rue the labor (46-59).

Apollo's statement, after the Furies have appeared on stage, focuses on who the Furies are rather than what they look like:

> They were born for the sake of evil, and hence dwell in the evil darkness of Tartarus beneath the earth. They are hated by both men and the Olympian gods (71-73).

So the Furies appear to be awful female creatures comparable in looks to the Gorgons and the Harpies, connected to bloodshed, and associated with the earth.

The Furies have no direct mythological connection with Athena or the

133 Smyth notes that the creatures carrying off the feast were the Harpies. Aeschylus, "Eumenides," vol., n. 1.

Acropolis, but from these three descriptions, they represent the sort of chthonic creatures that Athena was known for conquering through her participation in the *gigantomachy*, the battle of the gods and the giants, which was represented in the pedimental sculpture on the *Hecatompedon* (Plate 12). Although this temple no longer existed at the time of the performance, it represents the connection of Athena and the Acropolis to the mythological display of the *gigantomachy*. The *Hecatompedon* was replaced by the older Parthenon, which was sacked by the Persians while still under construction, which in turn would much later be replaced by the Periklean Parthenon that also displayed the *gigantomachy* on its metopes.

However, Athena is not in complete opposition to nor completely divorced from the earthy, chthonic realm of the Furies. Orestes' description of the Furies as entwined with snakes is not so different from the statue of Athena from the *gigantomach*y represented on the *Hecatompedon* (Plate 12). This Athena also wears a robe entwined with snakes. This brings to mind another connection of Athena to the chthonic realm found on the Acropolis. Herodotus records that the Athenians say a huge snake guards the Acropolis and lives in the sanctuary. When the priestess revealed that this snake did not eat the ritual offering of a honey cake in 480 BCE as the Persians approached Attica, the people were quick to leave their *polis*, because they believed that Athena had abandoned the Acropolis.[134]

Finally, Athena is essential to the trial because the Furies are creatures associated with uncivilized and savage acts like kin-murder, and so, in their current

134 Herodotus, 8.41.2-3.

duties, have no place in the Athenian legal system under which Orestes is tried. Winnington-Ingram proposes that Orestes had to go to Athens not for himself, but so the Furies could find their place in a civilized community,[135] and it is quite appropriate that Athena finds a civic function for these displaced creatures. Both Orestes and the Pythia initially use the term Γοργόνες, Gorgon to describe the Furies. Representations of Athena, from the Acropolis and other locations, often included the symbol of the Gorgon's head on her aegis or shield (Plate 13). So even before the mention of Athena or Athens, the Furies have been likened to a monstrous creature that Athena wears proudly on her armor to generate fear in her enemies during battle. Just as she placed the head of the Gorgon on her armor to serve her own purposes to generate fear in battle, she finds a place for the Furies in Athenian society: the Furies will receive "burnt offerings before childbirth and the completion of marriage" (835) and in return they will provide a natural order in the land: "for keeping the land fruitful and the livestock of the citizens thriving, and not failing over time; and for the saving of the mortal seed" (907-909) that suits their chthonic existence.

The *Polis* of Choice: Athens

Athena's decision for the jury to consist of Athenian citizens is, according to Sommerstein, probably a significant alteration from previous versions of the myth in which the jury consisted of immortals.[136] Not only does this alteration establish the

135 Winnington-Ingram, Studies in Aeschylus 154.
136 For a detailed account of how Aeschylus altered what was likely the traditional myth to suit Athenian purposes see Sommerstein, ed., Aeschylus: Eumenides 21.

Areopagos court, and make it a symbol of all Athenian courts as Thomson and Kennedy suggest, it also delivers the guilt or innocence of a cursed individual, like Orestes, to the mortal realm through the idea of legal justice, as noted by Samons and Podlecki.[137] The fact that a vote by Athenians, guided by Athena, relieves Orestes of the Furies presents the idea that civic justice, *a la* Athens' court system, is superior to the violent cycle of personal vengeance explored throughout the preceding plays of the *Oresteia*.

Just as the Acropolis supports the text in establishing Athena as the appropriate goddess to deal with the Furies, it also gives validity to such a trial by a jury of Athenians. Lesky describes the moment when Athena appears to Orestes as he clasps her statue:

> Orestes is confined to his asylum at the statue; only the goddess invoked by him earlier can help him now. And she comes as the envoy of a great, order-establishing power, but at the same time as the wonderful embodiment of the Attic spirit that brings light to the darkness and reaches its pinnacle in the harmony of the Parthenon.[138]

The Parthenon was not in existence by the time of the performance in 458 BCE, so it cannot contribute its magnificent display of the Athenians side-by-side with the gods in the frieze nor its sculptural presentation of Greek triumph over the barbaric through various battles, including the battle between the Amazons and the Athenians, on its

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137 Thomson, Aeschylus and Athens: A Study in the Social Origins of Drama 265, Rebecca Futo Kennedy, "Justice, Geography and Empire in Aeschylus' "Eumenides"," Classical Antiquity 25.1 (2006): 53, Loren J. Samons II, "Aeschylus, the Alkmeonids and the Reform of the Areopagos," The Classical Journal 94.3 (1999): 232, Podlecki, The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy 74, Sommerstein, ed., Aeschylus: Eumenides 21.

138 Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry 86.

west metopes.

However, Athena's appearance to Orestes on the Acropolis brings to mind the physical reminders of the Persian invasion present on the early classical Acropolis as a reminder of Athenian triumph over the barbarian Persians. The early classical Acropolis already memorialized the Persian Wars, a theme that the Periklean Acropolis would later aggrandize. Hurwitt points out the psychological effects of the sight of broken sculpture and fallen statues to the Athenian people:

> [It] would nonetheless have had a powerful moral and political effect upon the Athenians in the 470s and after, inciting them against the impious barbarians who had ravaged their sanctuary. The rubble left exposed fed Athenian grievances and was thus its own kind of war memorial.[139]

The north wall of the Acropolis had been rebuilt with column drums and other rubble from the Persian sacking, and this towered over the north part of the *polis*. In compliance with the Oath of Plataea,[140] the *Archaios Naos* was left in its ruined state complete with a fallen entablature and colonnade and fire-blackened cella walls.[141] With whatever else it may have brought to mind, the Acropolis was a stern reminder of barbarian impiety when the Persians breached the Acropolis' defenses.[142] These

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139 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 142.

140 Diodorus Siculus, "Diodorus of Sicily," vol., 11.29.3.However, as previously noted in chapter 3, the Oath of Plataea exists in several forms and so may not be authentic. It's authenticity has been questioned by many beginning with Theompompus (FgrHist 88 F 153). Hurwitt argues that the oath may have reflected a local Athenian ban because the archaeological record of the post-war Acropolis contains no major violation of it. Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 141.

141 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 144.

142 For an account of the Persians taking the Acropolis see Herodotus, 8.53.

architectural memories of the Persian sack also remind the Athenians that ultimately they were victorious and recovered their city from the barbarians, thus qualifying them to serve as jurors for a trial that brings civic order to the personal vendetta.

The Acropolis' presence reinforces the theme of Athenian victory over the barbaric and uncivilized found in Athena's opening speech about where she was when Orestes called for her. Athena announces that she was “near the Scamander where she was taking possession of the land” (398). Previous scholarly research has taken this reference to mean Sigeum, which the Athenians acquired in the late 7th century BCE. By connecting the reference to Sigeum, Macleod and Dover do not attribute any contemporary allusions to this reference, but Kennedy makes the point that Sigeum Medized during the Persian Wars, and remained under Persian control until the Athenians freed it after their victory at Salamis.[143] As Kennedy concludes, it was one of the successes of the Delian League's first offensive against Persia, and “was a sure symbol of the effectiveness of Athens' aggressive anti-Persian policy.”[144] But Kennedy goes a step further to consider that perhaps “near the Scamander” does not mean specifically Sigeum, and reminds us of an Athenian interest in the entire region. In the early stages of the Greek offensive against Persia, the Greeks drove the Persians from the whole area of the Troad (Plate 14).[145] That Athena came from this

143 Kennedy, "Justice, Geography and Empire in Aeschylus' "Eumenides"," 41-42, K.J. Dover, "The Political Aspect of Aeschylus's *Eumenides*," The Journal of Hellenic Studies 77.2 (1957): 237, C.W. MacLeod, "Politics and the *Oresteia*," The Journal of Hellenic Studies 102 (1982).

144 Kennedy, "Justice, Geography and Empire in Aeschylus' "Eumenides"," 42.

145 There may have been trouble in Sigeum that involved the aid of the Delian League in the 450s based on IG 12 32 + AG 11276 and the fact that Sigeum appears on the tribute list for the following year 450/1 BCE. However, there were no battles in the Troad in the late 460s and early 450s. Herodotus, in book 9, describes the affairs of the Greeks after there success against the Persians at

area reinforces that the Athenians are as adept at dealing with the barbaric as she is with the monstrous. So they too are capable of freeing Orestes from his family's uncivilized blood-feud.

After the scene changes to the Areopagos court, the audience is once again reminded of the Acropolis' associations with the triumph of the Athenians over the uncivilized through the references to the battle against the Amazons. During Athena's speech to the jury prior to their vote, Aeschylus alters the mythology of the Areopagos to supply a new aetiology for the name Areopagos, πάγος τ᾽ Ἄρειος, the Hill of Ares. Rather than sticking to the familiar legend that the court first assembled to try Ares for the murder of Poseidon's son,[146] Aeschylus replaces this aetiological myth with the events leading up to the battle between the Athenians and the Amazons.

> This hill of Ares, where the Amazons dwelt in their tents when they came leading their army in ill will against Theseus, and at the time built a new city with high towers and sacrificed to Ares, for which case the rock was named (685-690).

Because the Amazons were the daughters of and so naturally the worshipers of Ares, the change from the trial of Ares to the battle between Theseus' Athens and the Amazons satisfies the demands of the hill's name.[147] The description of the Amazon

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Plataea. The battle of Mycale is most significant, which Kennedy understands as the end of the Persians' presence in the Aegean. After their success at Mycale, the Greeks sailed to the Hellespont, a region they mostly controlled by 477 BCE. Kennedy, "Justice, Geography and Empire in Aeschylus' "Eumenides"," 42.

146 Hugh Lloyd-Jones, The Eumenides by Aeschylus: With a Translation and Commentary (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970) n. to 681-82.

147 The Amazons were the legendary race of warlike women who lived in Asia Minor. They marched against Athens to punish Theseus for helping Herakles take away Hippolyta. Gantz proposes that although there are no illustrations of the Amazon assault on the city of Athens prior to the mid-5th century, except possibly the Athenian treasury at Delphi completed sometime around 490 BCE, the story seems to go back to the 6th century BCE because Plutarch claims that it was part of the epic

encampment with its lofty towers that rivaled those of Theseus is a direct reference to the Acropolis fortifications. The Athenians were victorious over the Amazons, who like the bloodthirsty Furies are a group of warlike women. The bodies of the Amazonian dead were buried along the ridge between the Areopagos and the Hill of the Muses.[148] Both mythology and history prove that the Athenians are capable of dealing with the uncivilized, be it barbaric peoples or creatures like the Furies.

Yet the Athenians have their own connections with the earth that are equivalent to the *Hecatompedon* statue of Athena entwined in snakes. The Acropolis also serves as a reminder that the autochthonous line of Athenian kings have chthonic origins in their earthborn ancestor, Erechthonios.[149] The Erechtheid line, through the Athenian Erechtheus, was honored in the temple of Athena Polias, and later in the Erechtheion, alongside Athena. The Acropolis shows that Athens embraces its earthy origins, and so is the perfect *polis* to accept the Furies into civic life.

The Athenian Way: Civic Justice

The actual trial scene in the *Eumenides* appears to take place at the Areopagos court, so the vague shift of locale from the Acropolis to the Areopagos is necessary to continue the semiotic effects of the Acropolis on the performance in its dual archaic-early classical forms. Many scholars, like Conacher, agree that the scene change must

story Theseis. See Lloyd-Jones, The Eumenides by Aeschylus: With a Translation and Commentary n. to 685. and Timothy Gantz, Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 284-5.

148 Pausanias point out their grave in his *Description of Greece*. Pausanias, "Description of Greece," vol.

149 The Acropolis' representation of the mythology surrounding the Erechtheid line is explored more fully in chapter 5.

have been minimal, but make the mistake of attempting to pinpoint the exact moment of the scene change.[150] I think Taplin is more accurate in stating that establishing the place in the text where the change takes place is impossible, and that one must understand that the shift could have occurred gradually and even more minimally than has been often suggested.[151] Such a gradual shift would allow the meanings associated with the on stage suggestion of the archaic Acropolis along with those of the very real presence of the early classical Acropolis to remain at play for the rest of the performance.

The shift from the Acropolis to the Areopagos would only require minimal changes, so the problem of a vague and gradual shift of location practically disappears. There would have been little need to provide more than the most essential properties to suggest these locations. We must remember that the audience would have been intimately familiar with both the *Archaios Naos* on the Acropolis and with the court of the Areopagos. From what we know of ancient Greek theatre there was little if any attempt at realism. So, the audience would not expect any effort to bring a realistic scenic display of the Acropolis or the Areopagos to the performance space. They would only need some hint, either through word or object, to suggest the location. Certainly this is the case with the Areopagos that Athena refers to in her speech at 685. Her descriptions could easily have been supported by the use of voting urns typical of any Athenian court, which could have been easily brought on when the

150 Conacher, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*: A Literary Commentary 159.
151 Taplin, The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy 391.

jury of Athenians entered the space sometime around the beginning of Athena's speech at line 566.[152]

The only concern in a gradual shift from Acropolis to Areopagos is what happened to Athena's image that Orestes clasped at lines 258-60? There are at least two possible options: that the statue was on the *ekkuklema*, a device that rolled or turned out from the *skene*'s central doors, or that the statue remained on stage for the rest of the performance. If the statue was situated on the *ekkuklema,* it would have been located in a central location, and so received the focus due to such a very important object in the performance. It would also be easy to remove from the performance space at some point before the trial. If the image was not on the *ekkuklema*, it is quite possible that it remained on stage for the rest of the performance, where it would provide a constant reminder of the meanings associated with the Acropolis even after the scene shifted to the Areopagos. In either case, the seamless quality of this shift from the Acropolis to the Areopagos layers the two spaces onto the performance space, projecting a memory of the Acropolis scene onto the Areopagos trial scene, although the temple of Athena Polias and the Areopagos court do not share the same space in real life (Plate 15).

Athena's description of the battle between the Amazons and the Athenians in

152 The text at 734-752 calls for some props for the casting of votes, rather than the raising of hands to support the stage action. The text at 742 calls for some sort of container for holding the votes, which Sommerstein translates as urns. See Aeschylus, "Oresteia," Aeschylus II, ed. Alan H. Sommerstein (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), vol. of The Loeb Classical Library. It is likely that urns were used to hold the voting chips, as was typical in Athenian court proceedings. Athena makes a show at 734-5 of being last to physically cast her vote in favor of Orestes. From Orestes' question at 744, we can infer that the outcome is still in doubt. Apollo at 748-9 calls for a fair count of the votes, which Athena provides.

the transition to the trial scene enhances this spatial layering of Acropolis onto Areopagos. Athena states that the Amazons "fortified this new citadel across from the existing citadel" (687-688), the new citadel being the Areopagos and the existing one the Acropolis. This textual reference maintains the Acropolis' presence throughout the the trial scene as a reminder that Athena and the Athenians are best suited to try Orestes and find a new place for the Furies in Athens' civic notion of justice.

This form of justice is quite different from the personal revenge justice seen in the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephoroi* in which one murder in the name of justice causes another with the result that the Furies haunt the family generation after generation. Recollections of the violent history of justice in the house of Orestes' ancestors begin in the *Agamemnon*. The first choral ode of the *Agamemnon* hints about a feast that could be a reference to the Thyestian feast for which Atreus and his lineage was cursed.[153] Thyestes was tricked by Agamemnons' father, Atreus, into eating his own children. Cassandra recalls that Atreus' horrible mistreatment of Thyestes was motivated by revenge for Thyestes' adulterous affair with Atreus' wife (1191-1193). Aegisthus aids Clytemnestra in her plot to murder Agamemnon to avenge his father. Clytemnestra murders Agamemnon because he killed their daughter

153 Whallon comments that this passage could also refer to Tantalus offering Pelops as a feast for the gods for which he and his entire lineage was cursed. Atreus was a descendent of Tantalus. Whallon argues that the Thyestian feast may have been new to the *Agamemnon*, which would make Aegisthus' speech all the more exciting. If this was the case the audience were either puzzled by the hints of such a feast in the first choral ode, or they associated them with the feast of Tantalus. Whallon cites that in the year before the *Oresteia* was first performed, Pindar speaks of Tantalus' feast as if it were familiar in his *Olympian 1*, so this feast may have been fresh in the minds of the audience members. William Whallon, Problem and Spectacle: Studies in the Oresteia (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980) 31-32.

Iphigenia.[154] Finally Orestes kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus to avenge Agamemnon. As Goldhill notes, each character commits violent acts in the name of justice,[155] And that notion of familial justice has created a never-ending bloodbath of personal vengeance that can be traced back beyond the characters in the play to Tantalus, the family's beginnings.

In the course of the trial Athena and the Athenians, haunted by the Acropolis as a symbol of their ability to triumph over the barbaric, present a better solution for achieving justice than a blood-feud that could curse a house for generations. Orestes' trial as the one that establishes the origin of the court of the Areopagos revolutionizes the idea of justice, moving it from personal revenge to social legality. In this way, Aeschylus makes Orestes' trial a myth of the origin of law that, as Goldhill points out, is so important to the development of the *polis* and to democracy.[156] However, the nature of this trial is not simply to promote the civility found in Athens due to the Areopagos' role to eliminate clan warfare and personal vengeance in the city by trying citizens for murder.[157] Orestes was an Argive, not an Athenian citizen, and therefore his trial before a court that usually tried only Athenian citizens is atypical. As seems to be commonly accepted, the trial of Orestes, along with the fact that Aeschylus

154 Whallon argues that Agamemnon must sacrifice his daughter because of his inherited guilt. For a full discussion of inherited guilt in the Oresteia see Whallon, Problem and Spectacle: Studies in the Oresteia 30.

155 Simon Goldhill, Aeschylus: The Oresteia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 36.

156 Goldhill, Aeschylus: The Oresteia 32.

157 Schap considers the curse on the house of Atreus to be the perfect example of the clan warfare that the Areopagos court sought to eliminate from Athenian life. However, one must remember that the Areopagos only tried Athenians, so the trial of Orestes, as a foreigner from Argos, is a bit unusual. David M. Schaps, "Aeschylus' Politics and the Theme of the *Oresteia*," Nomodeiktes, eds. Ralph M. Rosen and Joseph Farrell (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996) 508.

shifted Orestes' home from Mycenae to Argos, brings to mind the recently established Argive-Athenian alliance. If this is true, then Athena and Athens' exoneration of Orestes creates another origin important for the Athenians: that of a long-standing friendship with Argos. Trying an ally and delivering justice by lifting the curse on his house justifies the current spread of the Athenian empire via its superior system of justice. I must agree with Kennedy that

> Aeschylus may not intend to support the imperial ideology; he nonetheless reflects Athens' promotion of her cultural superiority in the realm of justice, and it is this idea of justice that Athens uses to disguise and justify its growing imperial power.[158]

Intentionally or not, Aeschylus captures the spirit of the times. The trial of Orestes is the story of how justice is removed from the personal to the civic realm, and Athena and Athens are responsible for that shift toward a more civilized society. It justifies Athens' desire to expand its empire, thus expanding its form of civic justice throughout the cities of its allies. The Acropolis' presence throughout the trial supports this display of imperialism by providing the mythos that Athena and Athens are well-suited to conquer the monstrous and barbaric.

However much the trial may focus on Orestes, the outcome of his trial cannot be the sole concern of the play or the ultimate outcome of the trilogy. The *Eumenides* continues for over 200 lines beyond Orestes' final oath of alliance and subsequent exit. The rest of the play involves transforming the Furies into beings that can coexist with Athens' civic form of justice. Initially this may seem odd, given that we have

158 Kennedy, "Justice, Geography and Empire in Aeschylus' "Eumenides"," 36.

followed the victims of the curse on the house of Atreus throughout the trilogy, but the Furies' fate and responsibilities are tied up in the notion of this form of revenge justice, and will need a new purpose in a system of legal justice. So after altering the fabric of justice and relieving the curse, Athena must deal with the Furies who have been displaced in the process.

Just as we follow the doings of those cursed members of the house of Atreus throughout the *Oresteia*, we also sense the work of the Furies, and so we should be similarly invested in them and their future. For the Furies are ever present in the trilogy even if they do not make a physical appearance on stage until the final play.[159] The text first calls attention to the presence of the Furies in the *Agamemnon*. Cassandra tells us that because of the crimes of the past a choir of Furies haunts the house and will be difficult to drive out (1184-1190). This immediately connects the Furies to the enacting of blood-vengeance, and specifically to the curse on the house of Atreus. We learn in the *Choephoroi* that Apollo threatened Orestes that Furies would haunt him if he did not avenge his father's death (283-284), yet we see him mentally plagued by them for murdering his mother (1047-1050). And of course we witness Orestes fleeing from the Furies at the end of that play, and see them pursue him from Delphi to Athens in the *Eumenides*. Once Athena and the Athenians vote to rescue Orestes from their chase, thereby releasing his house from revenge justice, the Furies no longer serve a purpose.

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159 The Furies are mentioned in the Agamemnon at lines 59, 463, 645, 749, 992, 1119, 1190, 1433, 1580 and in the Choephoroi at lines 283, 402, 577, 651.

It is up to Athena to find a way to fit their abilities into the Athenian system of justice, and the presence of the Acropolis calls to mind the *gigantomachy*, the use she finds for the Gorgon's head, and her chthonic qualities that together make her the goddess *par excellence* for defeating the Furies and creating a place for these goddesses of the earth in Athenian society. Athena goes to battle against the Furies before the jury of Athenians using the power of words and persuasion rather than weapons. The Furies consistently claim they will punish Athens for embarrassing them and dissolving their purpose in the results of the trial. Athena fights back by offering the Furies sacrifices on behalf of childbirth and marriage rites (835-836) as well as a sacred home close to that of Erechtheus, an Athenian hero-king (854-857). She only threatens the Furies with the sort of violence the Acropolis depicts in her dealings with monstrous creatures like the giants when she reminds them “I alone of the gods know the keys to the chamber in which [Zeus'] thunderbolt is sealed” (827-828), but goes on to demand that they be persuaded by her words (829-830), which they are by line 916.

Aeschylus is unclear as to exactly which spirits the Furies become in this transition into Athenian life, if they are renamed at all. Scholars such as William Whallon have suggested that the Furies were transformed into the *Semnai Theai* that dwelt in a cave under the Areopagos, and had associations with its court.[160] This seems unlikely because the *Semnai Theai* lived under the Areopagos, and the text at 854-857 specifically locates the Furies' cave near the home of Erechtheus, a location

160 Whallon, Problem and Spectacle: Studies in the *Oresteia* 102.

on the Acropolis.[161] Erechtheus' home most likely referred to the area of the temple of Athena Polias or that just north of it that would one day house the Periklean Erechtheion, a place that was sacred to Erechtheus long before that temple was built there. The Erechtheion sits on the northern part of the Acropolis' summit, and on the north slope there are several caves to which Aeschylus could be referring that contain cult shrines to Pan, Zeus, and Apollo (Plates 16 and 17).[162] What is most significant in all of this is that Athena triumphs over the Furies, convincing them to take a place in the sacrificial community of the *polis*, and the Athenians of the day would know very well the exact location of their new home in relationship to the home of Erechtheus on the Acropolis.

The Destination of Choice: The Acropolis

The Acropolis plays a key role as the destination of the procession at the end of the *Eumenides*. This procession of Athenians completes the Furies' transition into their new role in Athenian society. The details of this procession are as mysterious to scholars as identity of the beneficial beings the Furies become. It is widely thought that the procession at least suggests that of the Panathenaia that honored Athena as the patron goddess of Athens, the procession which was later depicted in the Parthenon

161 For a general idea of the distance between the Acropolis and the Areopagos, see Plate 12.

162 Lloyd-Jones and Brown argue that the Furies' new home must be on the slope of the Acropolis, and so they cannot be the *Semnai Theai*. In a discussion to lines 1032-48 Brown notes one would not describe a cave beneath the Areopagos as πρός δόμοις Ἐρεχθέως, near the Erechtheion, if standing on the Areopagos. He also argues that it is hard to account for προσπόλοισιν at 1024 if the procession at the end of the play was not going to the Acropolis. A.L. Brown, "Eumenides in Greek Tragedy," The Classical Quarterly 34.2 (1984): 274, Lloyd-Jones, The Eumenides by Aeschylus: With a Translation and Commentary n. to 1005.

frieze.[163] More importantly, the Acropolis was the ending point for the Panathenaiac procession, and as a representation of the Athenians' earthy heritage and their triumph over the barbaric, it is the perfect destination for a procession meant to incorporate the chthonic Furies into Athenian life.

Many processions in ancient Athens were similar and had elements like that of the Panathenaia. However, Weaver seeks a direct connection between the procession of the Panathenaia and that in the play by examining the dates of the Areopagos murder trials and the Panathenaiac festival. He finds that the Panathenaia was held on the 27th-29th days of the lunar month, dates which coincide with the dates of the murder trials on the Areopagos.[164] So Weaver concludes, if the procession in the play was meant to evoke that of a specific festival it would be the Panathenaia.[165] Other festivals also took place during this time of the lunar month, including the Theogamia, the Haloa, and the Plynteria.[166] So including the Furies in a procession that could conjure thoughts of the Panathenaia or other Athenian festival processions brings them into the fabric of the city, and connects their assimilation to Athena. They become part of the civic life established by an Athenian court of law.

The very costumes the Furies wear as they prepare to join the procession display their conformity to Athenian life. Athena calls for the Athenians to dress the

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163 The frieze was constructed c. 443 – 438 BCE.

164 Benjamin H. Weaver, "A Further Allusion in the Eumenides to the Panathenaia," The Classical Quarterly 46.2 (1996): 560.

165 Weaver, "A Further Allusion in the *Eumenides* to the Panathenaia," 560.

166 For further discussion of these festivals see Erika Simon, Festivals of Attica: An Archaeological Commentary (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). Simon, Festivals of Attica: An Archaeological Commentary 46-48.

Furies in scarlet festival robes, φοινικοβάπτοις ἐνδυτοῖς ἐσθήμασι τιμᾶτε (1028-1029). According to Lloyd-Jones, Helen H. Bacon, and Whallon these robes can be likened to the red robes worn by *metics*, or foreign residents, on Athenian festival days and in particular for the Panathenaia.[167] Donning such robes shows the Furies' acceptance of their new role in Athens' sacrificial community, and their status as what Bacon terms "divine metoikoi."[168] But as Whallon explains, the robes symbolize much more than the Furies' new status as divine resident aliens: as neighbors of the goddess and Erechtheus in their cave on the north slope of the Acropolis they wear the red badge of royalty or divinity, and as those spirits who once haunted the house of Tantalus the red robes are a reminder of their bloody past.[169] The red robes mark the Furies with their new Athenian identity. The robes also serve as a reminder of their unchecked, chthonic aspect, a feature that their new home somewhere in the cult caves on the north slope of the Acropolis accentuates.

The *Eumenides* refers to the Acropolis to feature Athens' superior justice system, by calling on its features that display Athena's and the Athenians' abilities to triumph over the monstrous and the barbaric. Athena successfully civilizes the Furies by orchestrating a final procession to the Furies' new home somewhere on the slope of the Acropolis and altering the Furies' attire to fit their new status. This is a symbolic reminder that the goddess and the Athenians spent the final play of the

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167 Lloyd-Jones, The Eumenides by Aeschylus: With a Translation and Commentary n. to 1028, Helen H. Bacon, "The Furies' Homecoming," Classical Philology 96.1 (2001): 54, Whallon, Problem and Spectacle: Studies in the *Oresteia* 103-04.
168 Bacon, "The Furies' Homecoming," 54.
169 Whallon, Problem and Spectacle: Studies in the *Oresteia* 103-04.

Oresteia replacing violent, revenge justice with a new civic form of justice. By absorbing the Furies into Athenian life, Athena guarantees that Athens' civilized form of justice will prevail. Thus the role of the Acropolis in the performance of the *Eumenides* shapes the entire *Oresteia* into a patriotic play that celebrates Athens' superior justice system. Without becoming propagandistic, the *Eumenides* establishes Athena and Athens as the distributors of justice. It establishes Athenian law courts as the pinnacle of justice, and that all others should recognize it as such. In this way, the *Eumenides* captures the spirit of Athens at the height of her imperial power.

V: Identity in Crisis: Mortal Chaos and the Acropolis in Euripides' *Ion*

> It is on the Acropolis that Erichthonios is born, Erechtheus dies, the daughters of Kekrops meet their end, and Kreousa suffers. In the *Ion*, the topography of the Acropolis maps out the tribulations of the entire autochthonous stock.
> (Nicole Loraux, *The Children of Athena*, 220)

The Acropolis lies at the heart of the *Ion*, and embodies all that is tragic in the play. As Nicole Loraux notes in the above quote, the Acropolis is the location of the tragic myths told in the play about the earthborn Athenians, and it is the place where Euripides' character Kreousa suffered at the hands of Apollo. As the audience observed this retelling of Athenian myths from their seats on the Acropolis' south slope, the Acropolis' presence in the Theatre of Dionysos must have constantly reminded them that this play is about Athens even if the action is set in Delphi. The Acropolis, as the location of the earthborn myths and Kreousa's suffering, suggests to the audience that although this play may contain some comedic elements and lighthearted banter, the very serious subject of the fate of Athens is at stake.

This chapter examines how the myths retold in the *Ion* call on the Acropolis' manifestation of Athenian civilization to ground the play's themes of divine order and mortal chaos in the everyday life of contemporary Athens. The play maps the Periklean Acropolis through the retelling of Athenian mythology, and so the presence of the Acropolis in the Theatre of Dionysos stands as a constant reminder that this play is about Athens, her history, and her divine-given superiority and power. Yet, the

Athenians had lived beyond the time of Athenian expansion that Athena foretells at the end of the play. They lived in a time of crisis for their empire, bringing their anxieties and fears with them to the theatre. With these in mind, the play reflects on the uncertainty of Athenian power and its imperial future.

The Acropolis Bridges the Gap: Connecting Athenian Myth with the Athenian Present

The *Ion*'s references to the Acropolis are so numerous and varied that it not only becomes a character in Euripides' play, but the most complex of the dramatic personae. Its role is intertwined with the mythology present in the text, and so ultimately presents the order of the gods and the chaos or danger mortals face when they find themselves playing in the realm of the gods (for or against) through its presentation of Athenian civilization. Such constant attention to the Acropolis allows it to effectively represent the glory of Athena and her *polis* through the myth, history, and memory in its Periklean form that stands in stark contrast to the feelings fear and uncertainty that the current declining conditions in the empire amplified.

By the time of the play's performance, the Acropolis was at the height of its glory that combined Periklean architecture with earlier structures that the Athenians deemed significant to the image of the empire. Hurwit observes that the Parthenon was a treasury, a votive to Athena, and a symbol of Athenian power; that the Acropolis memorialized the Persian sacking by not rebuilding the temples that the Persians razed; and that the Periklean builders called attention to Athens' past, the

foundation on which the empire was built, by preserving parts of the Mycenean wall.[170] The Acropolis housed the partially constructed Erechtheion that when completed would simultaneously represent the autochthonous Athenian rulers as well as Athena (Plates 18 and 19).[171] So in the midst of the Sicilian crisis and the revolt of Athens' allies in the final years of the 5th century BCE, the Periklean Acropolis reminded the Athenians of their god-given imperial mission, maintained the memory of their autochthonous origins, and displayed the immensity of Athenian wealth through its sculpture and structures.

Surely a performance of the *Ion* that called on the presence of the Acropolis in the Theatre of Dionysos allowed it to speak to the triumph of Athenian civilization and their ability to overcome their foes. Yet through the Acropolis' representation of power it must also have brought to mind the frustration and deterioration brought about by the current war on two fronts, against Sparta and Sicily, as well as the growing difficulty with maintaining control over the allies. This dual function of strength and decline in Euripides' play well suits the time of its premiere in Athens, sometime between 413 and 411 BCE, a time in which the fate of Athens took a turn for the worst.

The uncertainty in dating the play's performance has given birth to a spectrum of interpretations. Scholars such as Lesky, who date the play as early as the spring of

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170 Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 157-64.

171 The Erechtheion was under construction at the time of the performance. Construction began in 421 BCE, was halted in 415 during the Sicilian disaster and resumed in 409. Although it was never fully completed, work stopped on the structure in 406 BCE.

413 BCE prior to the tragic defeat at Sicily, focus on its patriotic nature while scholars such as George B. Walsh, who date the play as late as 411 BCE after the disastrous events at Sicily and at the beginning of the allies' revolts, focus on the irony and so provide a more cynical interpretation.[172] Certainly a performance in the spring of 413 BCE, would have called on the Acropolis' themes of Athenian glory with a spirit of hope much more than a performance in 411 BCE, which would use these same themes to enhance a more cynical tone and boost an ironical interpretation of the performance.

Yet, however much Lesky and others may place the focus on the strength of the Athenian empire in an earlier performance date, the fear and uncertainty of Athens' future as a Hellenic powerhouse was likely already in existence as early as 413 BCE. Thucydides records Alcibiades as arguing before the assembly in 415 BCE that not attacking Sicily would: "imperil those [conquests] we have already won," and "if we [the Athenians] cease to rule others, we shall be in danger of being ruled ourselves,"[173] - points that play on the fear of a decaying empire. Such feelings must have heightened by 413 BCE after Athens faced a series of failures against Syracuse, and voted to send reinforcements.[174]

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172 Lesky argues that the play was likely written after Alcibiades tried to fortify Rhion in 418 BCE because the play mentions it at line 1592. He contends that the play has a patriotic nature, and so 412 BCE is the other boundary due to the Ionian revolts. Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry 316. Walsh examines stylistic evidence like meter, and so finds a later dating for the play, after Sicily and during the Ionian revolts. George B. Walsh, "The Rhetoric of Birthright and Race in Euripides' Ion," Hermes 106.2 (1978).

173 Thucydides, 6.18.2-3.

174 The Athenians do not receive aid from Egesta, Rhegium, Messana, Catana, Camarina, or Himera. And they fail to take Hybla. For a full account of the Sicilian expedition see Thucydides, books 6 and 7.

The events later that year surely magnified the fear and uncertainty as the Athenians were decisively defeated in Sicily and forced to surrender, resulting in the execution of the generals and in the imprisonment of nearly 7,000 men in the quarries. If this major loss abroad was not enough to overwhelm the Athenians, Sparta invaded Attica, made their way to Athens, and attacked the forces that remained in the city. Stunned by an unexpected defeat in their homeland, the Athenians watched their worst nightmares about their *polis* come to fruition: some of the Ionian allies revolted; Sparta and Persia allied and aided more revolts against Athens; and the Athenians were persuaded to accept an oligarchical rule in place of their beloved democracy in hopes of earning friendship (and protection) with Persia.[175]

The carnage of the on-going Peloponnesian War with Sparta, the sheer annihilation of the forces in Sicily, and the revolt of the allied cities created a desire for a sense of belonging as a new world order rose from the disorientation and chaos. Like post-World War II Europe or post-9/11 America, Athens needed order and legitimization that no longer actually existed in their crumbling empire. A performance of Euripides' *Ion* in this climate that made use of the Acropolis' presence in the Theatre of Dionysos could amply satisfy the search for roots, a desire to understand the collapsing empire, and a way of comprehending how the Athenians ended up in their current position.

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175 Chios, Teos, Lesbos, and Miletus revolted in the summer of 412 BCE. Thucydides, 6-86.18.2-3.

The Gods Know Best: Divine Order Brings Human Suffering

Euripides' interpretation of the Ion myth maps the Acropolis with the mythology of Athenian heroes as well as the location where the seeds for Apollo's plans were laid in his union with Kreousa. Right away, the play connects the audience to the Acropolis, much more so than the traditional myth as it comes down to us in Hesiod. Hesiod tells us only that Kreousa bore sons to the Euboian Xuthous: Achaeus, Ion, and Diomede.[176] In the prologue to the play, Hermes informs us that Ion is the outcome of Kreousa's union with the god Apollo rather than with a non-Athenian mortal. He gives a rather lighthearted account, given their traumatic nature, of the events leading up to the play: Kreousa's rape and the exposure of her child, telling us that these events took place on the Long Rocks on the north face of the Acropolis at lines 11-12.[177] So right from the beginning the foundation is laid for the Acropolis as a place where divine order manifests itself.

Euripides' choice to locate Ion's birth and abandonment in a cave on the Acropolis as well as his decision to provide Ion with an immortal father rather than a non-Athenian one displays the importance of Athens' chthonic origins. Such details bring to mind the myth of the earthborn Erechthonios' birth. As Anne Pippin Burnett points out, Hermes focuses on Ion’s abandonment in a chest and rescue from a cave in the earth – the aspects of Apollo’s plan that make Ion, as nearly as possible, another

176 Hesiod, Catalogue of Women, 10.
177 Ida Thallon Hill identifies the Long Rocks as the entire north face of the Acropolis. See Ida T. Hill, The Ancient City of Athens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

Erechthonios who rose from the earth to become a great Athenian ruler.[178] The mythology of the autochthonous Athenian heritage and the earthborn Erecthonius were closely associated with the Acropolis' Long Rocks that Hermes mentions and were later honored in the Periklean Erechtheion which was under construction at the time of the performance (Plates 18 and 19). So the presence of the Acropolis provides a basis for the celebratory nature of Hermes' prologue that through Apollo's plan, the earthborn lineage of Athenians will not be diluted by the blood of a foreigner like Xuthous, but will successfully rule in Athens.

However, Hermes glosses over the inherent tragedy of Kreousa's rape and Ion's exposure to make the point that Apollo provided for his child by sending Hermes to deliver the abandoned infant to the temple where the Priestess took him in and raised him (28-49). To emphasize that Apollo's plan will endure he reveals that an oracle will reveal to Xuthous that Ion is his son and "through this Ion will enter the house of his mother Kreousa, and she will recognize him. So Apollo's union with Kreousa will be kept secret, but the child will receive what is due him" (71-73). Significantly, Hermes focuses on the positive outcome of the past events, but he tells us nothing of the suffering Kreousa must have endured in her rape, the birth of her child, and the years following Ion's exposure in this lengthy description.

For all his planning, Apollo has failed to understand the sufferings of mortals. Kreousa's entrance at line 247 shifts the focus for the first time in the play from the

178 Anne Pippin Burnett, Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 105.

benevolence of the gods to the fact that Kreousa's part in Apollo's plan, and for that matter the part of Athenian royalty in any immortals' plans, has been anything but pleasant. The chorus introduces Kreousa prior to her arrival at the temple by directly linking her to Athena by means of the Acropolis. When Ion asks of what house they are servants, the chorus replies that the lineage of their mistress "shares one house with Athena" (234-236). Kreousa later confirms that she is Erechtheus' daughter, and thus part of the family of earthborn Athenians. Again the text seems to refer to the Erechtheion, which when completed would honor both Erechtheus and Athena Polias (Plates 18 and 19).[179]

Kreousa's close connection with the Acropolis and Athena suggests that she should fit with the theme of divine order called forth from Hermes' references to the Acropolis, but instead Kreousa seeks answers that will resolve her pain, and so serves as the catalyst of the play. She is the one in whom, as Loraux puts it "all the threads are tied together."[180] The Acropolis, as the symbolic center of Athenian civilization, links Athena and Kreousa. Yet they present contrasting themes: while Athena represents divine order in Athens, Kreousa represents the suffering faced by mortals who find themselves tied up in the affairs of the gods. Layering onto Hermes' prologue, Kreousa maps the Acropolis with myths of the suffering of Athenian

179 Hurwit admits to legitimate concerns of identifying the Erechtheion's Karyatid porch as the location for honoring Athena Polias, but argues that there is no reason to dismiss this traditional theory. Hurwit, The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present 202. The idea of Erechtheus and Athena sharing a space can be traced back to Homer in the Odyssey 7.80-1 and the Illiad 2.546-51.

180 Nicole Loraux, "Kreousa the Autochthon: A Study in Euripides' *Ion*," Nothing to Do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context, eds. John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 168.

royalty for the sake of divine order. After establishing that Kreousa as a descendant of the earthborn Athenian royalty, Ion prompts Kreousa to confirm the myths of Erecthonius' birth, Erechtheus' sacrifice of his children, and Erechtheus' death. Kreousa then links these ancestral myths to her own suffering by recounting her personal tragedy at the hands of a god.

Knowing Apollo's lack of perception for the desperation of human suffering, the myth of Erechthonios that Kreousa tells foreshadows the potential disaster of Apollo's plan to reunite Kreousa with Ion in a way that could cause each to seek personal vengeance. According to Kreousa, Athena placed the earthborn baby Erechthonios in a chest guarded by snakes, and gave it to the Athenian king Kekrop's daughters with the order not to open it (271-272). Naturally, two of the three daughters were overwhelmed with curiosity, apparently unaccounted for by the goddess, and opened the chest.[181] They were driven insane, and in their madness σκόπελον ἥμαξαν πέτρας, "spattered their blood on the rocky peak" (274).The rocky peak referred to the cliffs of the Acropolis, an area familiar to the Athenians and marked by the cave of Aglauros on the eastern slope of the Acropolis, below which the audience likely passed as they made their way to the theatre along the *peripatos* (Plate 19).[182] For the first time in the play, the Acropolis embodies the suffering of mortals who tamper with divine will.

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181 Herse and Agluaros opened the chest. A shrine honoring them was positioned below the north wall and connected to the Arrhephoria. Pandrosos did not look inside and so was honored with a shrine on the Acropolis.

182 The *peripatos* was a road that ran around the base of the Acropolis.

The myth of Kekrops' daughters may reveal the dangers of thwarting the plans of the gods, but the next myths Kreousa tells mar the purity of divine order that the Acropolis has so far come to represent. Kreousa hints at stories of Erechtheus that involve more atrocities faced by Athenian mortals on behalf of the gods. The difference is that these myths reveal that mortals can also suffer when they follow the commands of the gods. Ion asks if Erechtheus did indeed sacrifice his daughters, to which Kreousa replies that he sacrificed them for the sake of Athens. The Athenians would know that in the myth an oracle told Erechtheus that the city could only be saved from the invaders by the sacrifice of noble virgins. So Erechtheus sacrificed his own daughters. Kreousa necessarily explains that as a daughter of Erechtheus she was not sacrificed because she was still a baby in her mother's arms (277-280). Ion then inquires about Erechtheus' death, which Kreousa confirms was at "the blow of the sea god's trident" (282). Ion contributes that his body lies in an honored place called the Long Rocks (283), the very place where Hermes said Apollo raped Kreousa.

Erechtheus' grave on the Long Rocks directly connects the mythological past of Kreousa's ancestors with her present suffering. The Acropolis as the location of the Long Rocks becomes part of what Christian Wolff terms: "a drama in the interaction of what is immediate and human with the remote and divine."[183] When Ion asks about Erechtheus' resting place Kreousa reveals that she knows of a disgraceful deed committed in that place, of course, and as the audience knows, secretly referring to

183 Christian Wolff, "The Design and Myth in Euripides' *Ion*," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 69 (1965): 179.

her own rape (281-288). But unlike Hermes' celebratory account of the god-willed events, Kreousa describes her personal suffering through the guise of a friend: how she hid her pregnancy from her father, exposed the child after birth, and could not find a trace of the child when she returned to the place where she exposed him (338-352). Apollo's divine plan that began with rape on the Acropolis has left the mortals involved in his scheme miserable.

Following Kreousa's accounts of Athenian suffering at the hands of the gods, the chorus acknowledges the Acropolis at 492-494 through the cave of Pan, the Long Rocks, and the cliffs (Plates 17 and 19). These references are all places familiar to the Athenian audience, and reiterate the tragedy for the Athenian royalty. When combined with the choral description of violent rape and exposure in an Acropolis cave, they further bridge Kreousa's tragedy to those of her ancestors. This relationship suggests that the action of the play may include more suffering for any mortals who find themselves caught up in the plans of a god, especially if the mortals choose to resist divine will. The foreboding bestowed on the scene by the Acropolis' associations intensifies the final line of the ode: "Neither in story at my loom nor in song have I heard it told that children from the gods ever meant for mortals a share of blessing" (508-509).

The myths of the Athenian royalty and Kreousa's private disgrace and pain inscribe the Acropolis with the suffering of the autochthonous Athenians in their involvements with the gods. The Acropolis personifies the old axiom "damned if you

do, damned if you don't" when dealing with immortals and their divine plans. After the play reflects on these myths, the Acropolis cannot emanate solely the idea of divine order. It must also stand for the suffering faced by mortals when the gods ensure the completion of their plans without accounting for the concerns of those with whose lives they tamper.

The Humans Take Control: Mortal Chaos Ensues

The Acropolis portends the utter chaos that Ion and Kreousa will cause as they counter Apollo's plan through the chorus' description of sculptural scenes at Delphi that ghost sculptural scenes or events on the Acropolis. As they compare the wonders at Delphi to those at Athens, the chorus communicates to the audience that the world of the play is an everyday world in which they liken the sights they see to those they know from home.[184] The first sculpture the chorus describes is of Herakles slaying the hydra, a scene that, according to Shirley A. Barlow, the chorus of women could have embroidered on the *peplos* for the Panathenaia.[185] A similar scene of Herakles fighting the triton was the subject of the pediment sculpture on the temple of Athena Polias, the ruins of which were still present on the Acropolis (Plates 18 and 20). The description of such a Heraklean adventure calls to mind the trials he faced due to Hera's jealousy towards his mother, and Zeus' lover, Alcmene. Herakles, as Ion does

184 R. F. Willetts, "Action and Character in the Ion of Euripides," The Journal of Hellenic Studies 93 (1973): 208. Vincent J. Rosivach, "Earthborns and Olympians: The Parodos of the *Ion*," The Classical Quarterly 27.2 (1977): 293.

185 Shirley A. Barlow, The Imagery of Euripides: A Study in the Dramatic Use of Pictorial Language (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1971).

in the play, suffered because his father was a god and his mother a mortal.

Most significantly, the chorus describes a sculptural representation of the *gigantomachy*, the battle in which the gods triumph over the earthborn giants, at great length. The *gigantomachy* is ever-present on the Acropolis from east metopes of the Parthenon to the ruins of the ancient temple of Athena Polias. Of course this sculpture features Athena fighting the earthborn giants, but it also depicts Dionysos, Herakles, Apollo, and Hermes who are all mentioned in the *Ion* (Plate 21). It is difficult to imagine that the chorus' particular references to the *gigantomachy* would not have brought to mind those same scenes represented on the Acropolis (Plate 21). That Kreousa is a member of the lineage of earthborn Athenians connects her to the chorus' earlier description of the *gigantomachy* in the *parodos.* In this mythological battle the giants dare to fight the Olympian gods. Significantly Vincent J. Rosivach and Karelisa Hartigan point out that the giants are, like Kreousa and Ion, of an earthborn race, and that the gods destroy these earthborns.[186] Read in this light, the reference to the *gigantomachy* foreshadows the trouble that Kreousa and Ion will create for themselves when Kreousa attempts to thwart Apollo's gift of an heir to Xuthous by poisoning Ion, and he retaliates ironically on behalf of the god. Unfortunately, the description of these scenes provides little hope of survival for earthborns who dare to oppose the gods.

Therefore, the descriptions of the *gigantomachy* add great suspense to the first

186 Karelisa Hartigan, Ambiguity and Self-Deception: The Apollo and Artemis Plays of Euripides (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991) 72. Rosivach, "Earthborns and Olympians: The Parodos of the *Ion*," 287.

hint that Kreousa dares to receive a secret oracle about her "friend's" exposed child (362). Ion opposes her plan, arguing that the god will not prophesy what he desires to keep hidden, and that Apollo must be ashamed of his deed on the Acropolis (365-367). Ion warns her: μὴ ᾽ξέλεγχέ νιν, "do not convict him" (367). Ion fears that Apollo may punish anyone who dares to accuse the god of rape in his own temple. For he believes that one should not go against the will of the gods nor ask questions that oppose the will of the gods (370-377), which he ironically does after Kreousa makes her move against Apollo by attempting to poison Ion.

After Ion sets Apollo's plan into motion by accepting Xuthous as his father, he foreshadows the chaos that encapsulates the rest of the play. All the while the Acropolis haunts his words with the tragic fates of those who have previously attempted to work against the will of the gods. Ion explains to Xuthous that Kreousa will hate him for being Xuthous' son, and look bitterly on Xuthous' joy at having a son while she remains childless (607-620). Little does he know just how quickly this hatred will peak, and how easily the chorus will outrage Kreousa with their news that she will never "suckle children at her breast," but that Apollo has given Xuthous a long-lost son (760-799).

Given all that Kreousa has suffered, it is quite easy for her elderly servant to convince her that Xuthous has betrayed her, and is attempting to usurp the throne of the Erechtheid line by providing his own heir (808-831). Such a speech prompts Kreousa to reveal to her servants her rape and childbirth in the cave of Pan on the

north face of the Acropolis (Plates 17 and 19) to her servants (859-966). For the first time in the play, the audience gets the full story of the rape complete with the extreme misery, shame, and long-lasting tragedy that Kreousa experienced. Apollo's plan caused deep injury that has festered into action against his divine plan for Athens and the earthborn Athenians. The Acropolis, as the location for these events, exemplifies Kreousa's personal tragedy and justifies her desire for revenge, but simultaneously haunts Kreousa's plan to murder Ion with a mythological record that recalls the dangers of thwarting the desires of the gods.

Kreousa's murder plot further links the *gigantomachy,* and thus the Acropolis, to herself and her earthborn lineage. According to Kreousa, the earth bore the Gorgon to aid her children the giants in their battle against the gods, but Athena killed the Gorgon and wears the pelt on her armor (989-995). Athena later gave the earthborn Erechthonios golden chains that contain two drops of blood from the Gorgon, one which heals and the other which kills (1001-1007). It is the murderous drop of this *pharmakon* that Kreousa gives to her servant to poison Ion. With great irony, Kreousa unwittingly plans to use the blood of an earthborn to kill a member of her own earthborn family.

Kreousa's meddling temporarily turns divine order into chaos. Of course she will draw the anger of Apollo by attempting to thwart his plan, which as far as she knows is to provide Xuthous an heir, but as Burnett reminds us, she also has the favor of Athena who gave her family the poison that will aid her.[187] The Acropolis

187 Burnett, Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal 115.

accentuates the conflicting divine anger and divine favor present in this moment. It yet again evokes thoughts of the *gigantomachy*, the death of Kekrop's daughters after they opened the chest, and the death of Erechtheus by Poseidon's trident – all which depict the hazards of provoking the gods. Yet at the same time, the Acropolis summons the idea of divine favor through its function as a votive to Athena, particularly through the Parthenon and the Erechtheion that was being constructed to honor both Athena and the Erechtheid line. The gods must restore order to this melodramatic situation, but the connotations of the Acropolis leave one with the question: Will Apollo successfully punish Kreousa for opposing his plan or will Athena protect the Erechtheid who bears her divine gift and dared to use it?

Apollo's wrath does not descend on Kreousa, nor does he restore order until the situation reaches the point of impending matricide and impiety. Apollo intervenes to prevent Ion's murder, but the enraged Ion sends the already chaotic situation spiraling further out of control as he seeks revenge. With the mortals of this play acting on their own will, and in direct opposition to Apollo's the Acropolis becomes a silent warning that in the past the gods have not tolerated such behavior. Yet Apollo interjects at the last possible moment through his priestess. She prevents Ion from committing murder at the altar to his own father by telling him: “Be not this way. You leave the temple to go to your homeland. . . come to Athens with clean hands and good omens” (1331-1333).

To reestablish order, the priestess presents the basket in which she found Ion

as proof of his Athenian heritage. The basket and its contents causes a recognition of mother and son that should restore divine order to the play. As Loraux indicates, the basket contains signs of the mother and Athenian legitimacy,[188] but more specifically it connects Ion to Kreousa, to the earthborn Erechthonios, and so to the Acropolis. Kreousa sees the basket and immediately tells Ion that this was the basket in which she exposed her child in the cave of Kekrops and the Long Rocks years ago (1398-1400). Kreousa also identifies an unfinished weaving with a Gorgon in the middle and serpents on the fringe that she worked on as a child (1417). This cloth links the basket to Kreousa. Its Gorgon design and snake pattern were popular in Athens, and hints that the child in this basket was of Athenian parentage. The next item from the basket provides undeniable proof of Ion's heritage:

> Snakes, Athena's golden gift to my ancient family.
> She tells us to dress our children in these,
> in imitation of old Erechthonios. . .
> a necklace for the newborn child to wear. . . (1427-1431).

The golden snakes are a symbol of the earthborn Athenians. Only a child of the ancient line of Erechthonios would have been adorned in such a way.

This piece of evidence draws a parallel between Ion and Erecthonius that has been present throughout the play. According to Donald J. Mastronarde, Euripides compares Ion to Erechthonios through their similar exposures at birth and Ion's reference to the Earth as his mother at 589-590.[189] Rosivach expands this comparison:

188 Loraux, "Kreousa the Autochthon: A Study in Euripides' *Ion*," 171 .
189 Donald J. Mastronarde, "Iconography and Imagery in Euripides' "Ion"," California Studies in Classical Antiquity 8 (1975): 167.

"Conception and birth in a cave, i.e. underground, befit Ion as a true member of Athens' chthonic royal line." That is also where Kreousa exposed Ion and from where he was rescued and "resurrected in a new birth from the earth" by Hermes and taken to Delphi.[190] In the words of Kreousa:

> Erechtheus is young again!
> The house of the earthborn race no longer looks on the night
> but sees again in the light of the sun! (1465-1467)[191]

It seems that Apollo has not only restored order, he has also revealed the missing heir to the Erechtheid line. Kreousa's autochthonous line will live and rule in Athens for another generation.

One would think that these objects, which so closely connect Ion to Kreousa and Athens, would be sufficient evidence for Ion to accept Kreousa as his mother. However, he asks for her to identify a third thing. Kreousa adorned the baby Ion with a wreath of olive leaves taken from the olive tree that ἣν πρῶτ᾽ Ἀθάνας σκόπελος ἐξηνέγκατο, "Athena's peak first produced" (1434). This reference must refer to the sacred olive tree on the Acropolis, the tree that the Persians cut down, but according to Herodotus sprouted a foot-long shoot overnight.[192] The still green olive leaves of this wreath unquestionably associates Ion with Kreousa, the Acropolis, and Athena. It is only after Kreousa discloses this patriotic symbol of Athenian strength and hope,[193]

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190 Rosivach, "Earthborns and Olympians: The Parodos of the *Ion*," 289.

191 The relationship of Erechthonios and Erectheus is confusing at best. Sometimes they even seem to be the same individual in Athenian mythology. However, Euripides clearly makes Erechtheus the father of Kreousa and a descendant of Erechthonios.

192 Herodotus, 8.55.

193 Dora C. Pozzi, "The Polis in Crisis," Myth and the Polis, eds. Dora C. Pozzi and John M. Wickersham (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

which survived even the Persian sacking of the Acropolis, that Ion is willing to embrace Kreousa as his mother. Wolff correctly identifies that it is at this point, the highest point of intensity, the moment of recognition that the past is fulfilled and the story of the lost child and Kreousa's suffering draws to its close.[194] In this context, the Acropolis once again implies that amidst the mortal chaos, divine order prevails. Perhaps in the larger context of the bleak times in which the Athenian audience lived, this moment gave hope for the power of Athenian civilization and its place at the heart of divine order amidst the chaos of Athens' failing efforts in the war.

A *Dea ex Machina* To the Rescue: Athena Returns the Athenians to Civilization

The concept of Athenian civilization lies somewhere in the struggle between the gods and the mortals that the Acropolis comes to represent in the performance of the *Ion*. The complex set of myths and images that make up Athenian civilization have a presence in the *Ion* from the very beginning. References to dirty deeds on the Long Rocks, in the cult caves on the north face of the Acropolis (caves of Pan, Apollo, and Zeus), and above the cave of Aglauros present the chthonic origins of the Athenian rulers (Plates 16, 17, and 19). This dark display of the Athenians' earthy beginnings seems in conflict with the grand, marble structures of the Periklean building program, like the Parthenon, that represent Athena and Athenian power. The Erechtheion, under construction at the time of the play fuses the earthy, snake-like beginnings of the Athenians with the glory of the Athenian empire through Athen's

194 Wolff, "The Design and Myth in Euripides' *Ion*," 186.

patron goddess Athena.

One must remember that the Acropolis as a location where the chthonic origins of the Athenians served as a base for the grandiosity of marble architecture was real to the audience of Athenians and part of daily life in Athens. The cave of Pan sits on the north slope of the Acropolis just above the *peripatos,* where it overlooks the *agora*. It was a familiar sight to the Athenians passing below its summit. It is even possible that many of the Athenians passed beneath this cave (and also the caves of Apollo and Zeus) on their way to the Theatre of Dionysos on the south slope of the Acropolis (Plates 16 and 19). The architecture and sculpture on the Acropolis was just as real and familiar to the Athenians. The Athenians knew the scenes of the *gigantomachy* present on the Acropolis as well as other scenes that depict the uncivilized fighting the Greeks, particularly Attic Greeks. Sculptures depicted the battles between the centaurs and the Lapiths, the Amazons and the Athenians, and the Greeks and the Trojans, which Rhodes speculates could certainly have added significance in light of the struggle between the Athenians and those quintessential barbarians: the Persians.[195] The themes of the earthborn versus the gods and the barbarian versus the civilized are poignant themes found in this sculpture, the very same themes that the *Ion* addresses.

The description of the fabrics that make up Ion's celebratory tent draws attention to the Acropolis' familiar representation of what it is to be Athenian. Euripides shrouds Ion, as the personified future of Athens, in iconography of

195 Rhodes, Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis 92-93.

Athenian civilization through the tent Ion constructs to house the celebration of his transition from a temple boy at Delphi to Athenian royalty as Xuthous' son. As a display of Athenian civilization, the Acropolis enhances the nostalgic affect these tapestries must have held as they reminded the audience of Athenian achievements (real or mythological).

The first description surrounds Ion with the famous mythology of the battle with the Amazons. On top of the tent Ion placed a covering of garments dedicated by Herakles that were spoils from the Amazons (1143). This choice of covering recalls that the Athenian king Theseus accompanied Herakles on his quest against the Amazons. Theseus took the Amazon queen Hippolyta home with him, and so sparked the Amazonomachy. The Amazons attacked Athens to reclaim their queen, likely storming the Acropolis itself, but were defeated by the Athenians. A depiction of this battle appears on the west metopes of the Parthenon. Just as in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, the reference to the Amazonomachy triumphs Athens' success over the uncivilized Amazons, and so displays Athens' superiority.

The second description deals not with the mythological past, but with recent history that certainly symbolized Athens' greatness. Euripides has Ion hang barbarian tapestries for the walls of the tent that include ἐυηρέτμους ναῦς ἀντίας Ἕλληνίσιν, "well-oared ships facing those of the Greeks" (1160) imagery that brings to mind the Athenian-led victory at Salamis that Aeschylus recalls in his *Persians* as the beginning of Athens' rise to power. These tapestries also call on the Acropolis as a

memorial to the Persian wars. Although the Athenians initially evacuated their city, and allowed the Persian king Xerxes to take control of the Acropolis, they were able to defeat the Persians and retake their *polis*. Temples like the ancient temple of Athenian Polias (the *Archaios Naos*) were left in their ruined states to remember the impiety of the Persians, but other reminders of the Persian occupation, like the column drums and other debris used to hastily reconstruct the north wall, displayed that Athens ultimately triumphed over her foe.[196] These fabrics display the great achievements of the Athenians against barbarian peoples.

After two descriptions of Athenian triumph over their enemies, the final description of the tent fabrics brings the Acropolis' chthonic meanings into play. This tapestry accentuates Ion's identity as a descendant of the earthborn Athenians and kings of Athens. Near the door he placed an Athenian dedication of "Kekrops, winding himself in coils, standing next to his daughters" (1163-1165), emphasizing Kekrop's snake-like appearance: a physicalization of the Athenians' earthy origins. The depiction of Kekrops and his daughters as part of Ion's celebration along with the Acropolis' reminder of the tragic deaths of these daughters unites the themes of divine order and mortal chaos found in the Acropolis' display of Athenian civilization. As Froma I. Zeitlin observes, all the scenes

> represent some form of combat between opposing forces of civilisation and savagery. . . . the portrayal of Kekrops as a hybrid of mixed form implies that the line between civilisation and savagery may be less

196 See the chapter on the Persians for a full explanation of the Acropolis' role as a memory machine for the Persian sacking and occupation of Athens as well as the "Athenian-led" victory at Salamis.

solid than one might have supposed.[197]

This scene amplifies the easy slip from civilization into to savagery seen when the mortals find divine order intolerable, and cause chaos by taking matters into their own hands. At least Kreousa fails to murder Ion; Ion fails to murder Kreousa, and neither are punished by Apollo as the Acropolis reminds us that Kekrops daughters were when they disobeyed a god.

Although Apollo restores order by sending his priestess to stop Ion from killing Kreousa and having her reveal the basket so essential in identifying Ion as an Athenian, he is not able to tie up all the loose ends. Ion accepts Kreousa as his mother, but he questions if Apollo is truly his father. Ion still has the anxiety about the future that, as Kevin Lee explores, caused Ion and Kreousa to obstruct Apollo's plan in the first place.[198] When the contents of the basket reveal that Kreousa is his mother, Ion's prayer for an Athenian mother is answered. However his father cannot be Xuthous, so his legitimacy as an Athenian citizen could still be questioned. Kreousa swears by Athena that Apollo is Ion's father and not a mortal lover, but Ion needs a *deus ex machina* to confirm her words (1528-1548). He expects to receive an answer from Apollo at the temple, but it is not surprising that the god does not appear to answer for his deeds. After all the discussion of Athens and the constant references to the Acropolis, which constantly glorifies Athena, it should also come as no surprise

197 Froma I. Zeitlin, "Mysteries of Identity and Designs of the Self in Euripides' *Ion*," Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society 35 (1989): 167.

198 Kevin Lee, "Shifts of Mood and Concepts of Time in Euripides' *Ion*," Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond, ed. M.S. Silk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 95.

that Athena will perform this duty in his place.

After all, the chorus establishes that Athena must make an appearance in this play when they ask the goddess to bring the blessing of children to Kreousa to continue the endangered Erechtheid line (465-71), and thus civilization as they know it, in their first choral ode. They immediately call on Athena, whom they describe as one who was "brought to birth from Zeus' forehead" (455-457). This description brings to mind the scene of Athena's birth that was portrayed in larger-than-life sculpture on the east pediment of the Parthenon. It is possible that if the audience had turned to look up at the Acropolis' summit, they could have seen the tops of Athena's and Zeus' enormous heads rising above the south wall of the Acropolis. The chorus' cry to Athena and the reference to Athena's birth reminds the audience that the play is about the future of Athens even if it takes place at Delphi, and that naturally the goddess must play a role.

So it should come as no surprise that Athena will come, *dea ex machina*, to Delphi to complete Ion's transition from Delphic temple boy to his place at the head of Athenian civilization as an heir of Erechthonios. Athena's appearance completes Ion's transition from Delphic temple boy to his place in Athenian society. Felix Martin Wasserman goes as far as to say that with her appearance "the scene becomes Athens," and that the two worlds of the human and divine meet in Athena's appearance.[199] I would add that these worlds come together on stage in the presence

199 Felix Martin Wasserman, "Divine Violence and Providence in Euripides' Ion," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association 71 (1940): 600.

of the Acropolis that has been shown throughout the play as a place where the human and the divine interact. Apollo and Delphi no longer have roles to play in this performance, leaving Athens as the focal point at the end of the play. Apollo has restored order on his part; Kreousa and Ion are reunited. Thus, the divine order represented by the Acropolis has been reestablished, and more suffering by the mortals prevented.

This leaves Athena to deal directly with the very complicated issue of Ion's citizenship due to his autochthonous heritage and the strict Athenian citizenship laws, a legal issue reflected in the conflicting elements of chthonic mythology and imperial greatness found on the Acropolis. Continuing the pattern of dark deceit that is so prevalent in this play, Athena commands Kreousa and Ion to keep Ion's divine father a secret. Xuthous must remain the unsuspecting cuckold. He must never know that Ion is not his son, nor that Ion is legitimately Kreousa's child by Apollo. There are practical reasons for keeping Ion's true identity a secret. Francis M. Dunn notes:

> If Ion forces Apollo to acknowledge him as his son, he will lose his inheritance in Athens, since by law it must pass to Xuthous and his heirs. By allowing the false oracle to stand, and by leaving Xuthous in the dark, Apollo and Creusa circumvent the law and pass the inheritance on to Ion.[200]

So Ion would at least collect his rightful inheritance as an autochthonous Athenian even if he was not so recognized by the *polis*. But if, as Charles Hignett suggests, the Periklean citizenship law of 451/50 BCE had been revised to include legitimate

200 Francis M. Dunn, "The Battle of the Sexes in Euripides' *Ion*," Ramus 12 (1990): 140.

marriage with Euboians,[201] then Ion would seem to have the correct parentage, with Xuthous posing as his father, to not only claim his rightful inheritance, but also his Athenian citizenship.

Conclusions

Athena ends the play with a celebration of the Athenian empire by revealing that Ion will be renowned in Hellas (1575). His sons will give their names to the land and the people who inhabit the Acropolis (1576-1577). The children of these people will come to dwell in the island cities of the Cyclades and the coastal cities of the mainland and give strength to Athens. They will live in the plains of both Asia and Europe, and will be called Ionians (1581-1589). Stanley E. Hoffer feels that Athena exaggerates Athens' role in her description of Ionian colonization in a way that reflects the mystification and justification used to promote Athens' imperialism.[202] Hesiod's account of the myth records that Xuthous was Ion's father, and emphasizes the non-Athenian nature of the migration to Ionia, but the play, enhanced by the Acropolis as a display of Athenian civilization, follows the Athenian pretense "that it was merely taking a leading role as mother-city of the Ionian peoples."[203]

After justifying the Athenian empire, Athena also presents the superiority of Athens. After prophesying Ion's future greatness, Athena reveals that Kreousa and Xuthous will have children named Dorus and Achaeus, who will also be leaders of

201 Charles Hignett, A History of the Athenian Constitution (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970) 343.
202 Stanley E. Hoffer, "Violence, Culture, and the Workings of Ideology in Euripides' "Ion"," Classical Antiquity 15.2 (1996): 313.
203 Hoffer, "Violence, Culture, and the Workings of Ideology in Euripides' "Ion"."

other Hellenic lands (1589-1594). Again, this revelation departs from other extant versions of the myth.[204] By making the Ionians half brothers with the Dorians and the Achaeans, Euripides effectively combines panhellenism with Attic superiority that stems from Ion's divine father.[205] Ion and Kreousa welcome this divine order that will prove so successful for Athens and their lineage. The chorus confirms that all will be well for those who worship the gods. For as the play has shown, the noble will get their just rewards in the end.

Despite the return to the divine order represented by the Acropolis, there remains some sense of irony and tragedy at the end of the play. George Gellie observes: "Apollo gives Athenians divine ancestry, Creusa gives them autochthonous origins. With these credentials the contemporary audience find themselves admitted to an exclusive club."[206] But even with such a prestigious identity so closely linked to the gods, the audience had lived beyond the age of Athenian power that Athena foretold. They lived in a time of uncertainty, and were witnessing the decay of their empire, due to their own arrogant actions. So the final scene successfully identifies the themes of divine order and mortal chaos with the current state of Athens that the Acropolis exemplifies. The final words of the chorus leave the audience to question the recent events affecting their own civilization.

204 There has been much scholarly debate on what was included in the traditional myth of Ion. Lesky and Conacher postulate that Apollo's role as father was likely traditional because such innovation was not typical in tragic adaptations of mythology. However neither can find a trace of Xuthous and Kreousa as Doros and Achaeus's parents prior to Euripides. Lesky, Greek Tragic Poetry 317. D.J. Conacher, Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme and Structure (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) 271.

205 Wasserman, "Divine Violence and Providence in Euripides' Ion," 595.

206 George Gellie, "Apollo in the *Ion*," Ramus 13 (1984): 98.

> Oh, Apollo son of Zeus and Leto, farewell. Anyone whose house is hard pressed by troubles should worship the gods and be confident: in the end the noble receive their just reward. But the base, as befits their nature, will never prosper (1620-1623).

Will the divine intervene and end the chaos in the contemporary Athenian world? And furthermore, will the divine order in the Hellenic world continue to include an Athenian empire?

VI. Conclusion

The point of this study of the relationship between the Theatre of Dionysos and the Acropolis has been to understand the way in which the theatre's location on the slope of the Acropolis influenced performances. I am particularly interested in how the semiotics of the Acropolis contributed to the meaning of tragic performances that called on its presence within the theatre space through textual references. Furthermore, the three case studies included in this dissertation span the length of the 5th century BCE, and so provide insight as to how the meaning of the Acropolis shifted as it functioned in the plays to reflect the current state of Athenian power as the empire rose and later declined. I have addressed these issues in passing during the course of this study, but would like to present these observations together conclusively.

In the case of Aeschylus' *Persians*, the Acropolis serves a dual function in its role as a war memorial. Performed in 472 BCE, only eight years after the Persian occupation of Athens, the play itself pays tribute to the battle of Salamis as the beginning of Athens' rise to power in the Delian League, but references to the Acropolis remind the audience that the Persians once invaded their own *polis.* The Persians had sacked the temples and other structures present on the Acropolis' summit, on the slope of which the audience sat to watch the performance. The duality of the Acropolis in this play lies in its simultaneous presentation of the absence of structures that were destroyed by the Persians alongside the reconstruction of

structures like the north wall that displayed the use of rubble from the invasion. The audience was familiar with this view of the Acropolis, and a textual reminder that they were watching this play about the Persian defeat on the slope of their own Acropolis that the Persians wrecked would necessarily dredge up the memories of both the Persian occupation and the Athenian reclamation of it.

As a memory machine, the Acropolis provided physical proof that the Athenians had ultimately prevailed, and driven the Persians out of their city. The strength and power of Athens was in her men, but Aeschylus does not let the audience forget that the gods played a major role in Athenian victory over the Persians. The Acropolis physically complements Darius' warning that the Persians behaved impiously by razing temples and altars when they invaded Hellas. For this reason, the Persians had lost the favor of the gods, and so the gods had aligned with Athens. The gods had given the Athenians the power to defeat the Persian army.

That the gods had granted the Athenians the power to overcome the Persians justifies Athens' recently acquired leadership in the Delian League. Not only does Darius reveal that the gods abandoned the Persians for their acts of savagery, but the chorus recalls the good old days when the Persians controlled the Ionian lands. The specific locations that they name are those very places that had revolted with the help of Athens, and all were members of the Delian League at the time of the performance. This detail establishes Athens as the new leading force in the Mediterranean, and it is a force that rules with the favor of the gods.

This exchange of subjugated lands places Athens in parallel with Persia, allowing the Acropolis to serve as a warning to the rising Athenian power. While the Acropolis as a war memorial reminds viewers that the Athenians did defeat the Persians, and so are legitimate leaders in the Delian League, it also warns against the dangers of excessive pride that come with such a position of power. It was on the Acropolis after all that the Persians felt so mighty as to raze and burn the Temple of Athena Polias, the patron goddess of Athens. Through the symbol of the Acropolis, the fall of Persian power equates the rise of Athenian power and so, the two are set in parallel. The Acropolis speaks out from its lofty position behind the audience, warning Athens that its fate could easily become the fate of Persia. So the Acropolis as a memorial of the Persian invasion enhances the play's contrasting messages of Athenian triumph, justification of Athenian leadership, and the dangers of wielding such power.

Aeschylus' *Eumenides* also calls on the Acropolis to represent Athenian power through its sculptural and architectural display of Athenian triumph over the uncivilized. The play was performed in 458 BCE, at the height of Athenian power. Unlike the *Persians*, the *Eumenides* bears no warning for the expanding empire. Rather it presents Athens as the city par excellence for bringing justice to its friends. The Acropolis functions in two forms in this play: as the early classical Acropolis that was contemporary to the time of the performance and as the archaic Acropolis that is suggested as the location of Orestes' plea to Athena. Together, these forms of the

Acropolis present Athena's triumph over the monstrous and the Athenians' victory over the barbarian.

The Acropolis aids in making Athena and Athens the perfect choice of goddess and location for freeing Orestes from the Furies. The archaic Acropolis suggested on stage supports the choice for Athena to civilize the Furies because it calls to mind its pedimental sculpture of Athena fighting the giant that once stood on the Temple of Athena Polias, a scene from the gigantomachy that was represented in many places on the Acropolis. The early classical Acropolis bears a message of Athenian triumph over barbarism through its function as a memorial to the Persian wars. This justifies the role of a democratic Athenian jury in permanently ridding Orestes of the monstrous Furies, who once civilized by Athena, will take a role in the Athenian legal system. Athena's choice for an Athenian jury specifically hands the power to establish what is just to the Athenians, those imperialists who are capable of bringing civilized justice to other Greek cities, as they do for Argos in the play.

Given the Acropolis' role in the play, it is fitting that the Furies will dwell in a cave near the home of Erechtheus. This description seems to imply somewhere near the area of the Periklean Erechtheion on the north side of the Acropolis summit. The area had been sacred long before the temple was built there. Because the Erechtheion overlooks the north slope of the Acropolis, it seems likely that the cave was somewhere on this north slope where many cult caves, including those to Pan, Apollo, and Zeus, were located. If the cave was on the slope of the Acropolis, and certainly

the Athenians must have known the place well for there to be such little description, the Acropolis as a representation of Athenian power, has gained a new example of the Athenian empire's ability to bring civilization, this time in the form of justice, to the barbaric.

Euripides' *Ion* takes a different approach to making use of the Acropolis' representation of Athenian power. By the time of the play's production sometime around 411 BCE, the state of the Athenian empire had radically changed due to its defeat at Sicily and against the Spartans. As in the *Eumenides*, the Acropolis presents the concept of civilization. However, in this play the identification of civilization lies not in the hands of an Athenian jury, but somewhere in the struggle between the gods and the mortals, which the Acropolis comes to represent within the plot of the *Ion*.

The *Ion* maps the Periklean Acropolis through the retelling of Athenian mythology, and so the presence of the Acropolis in the Theatre of Dionysos stands as a constant reminder that although this play is set in Delphi, it is about Athens, her history, and her divine-given superiority and power. Yet, it shows the darker side of possessing the favor of the gods. The story of Kreousa's rape and the myths of the autochthonous Athenians consistently present the suffering of mortals at the hands of the gods. These stories are each set on the Acropolis: the cave of Pan, the Long Rocks, and the cave of Aglauros. Such locations were familiar sites that the play associates with Athenian suffering for the sake of divine plans.

In contrast to the suffering caused by divine will, the Acropolis also represents

the chaos caused by earthborn mortals when they oppose the gods. References to the *gigantomachy,* an ever-present theme of Acropolis sculpture, foreshadows the trouble that Kreousa and Ion will create for themselves when Kreousa attempts to thwart Apollo's gift of an heir to Xuthous, and Ion retaliates. In this mythological battle the earthborn giants dare to battle the Olympian gods, and are defeated. The Acropolis could provide no better warning for earthborns who dare to oppose the gods than its many sculptural depictions of scenes from this battle.

In such an Athenocentric play it is only appropriate that Athena should appear to provide the future outcome of Apollo's plan to provide the earthborn Athenians with Ion as their heir. It is suitable that Athena should reveal Ion's great deeds for Athens, and celebrate the greatness of Athenian civilization. The Acropolis in its Periklean form underscores Athena's message of Athens' future power, but underneath its grand architecture and glorious sculptures, it echoes the suffering inherent in the plans of the divine as well as the chaos mortals cause when they struggle against the gods. Thus it symbolizes the uncertainty of the times in which it was performed when Athens was a shell of its former glory and immersed in the chaos of its dissolving empire.

As I have attempted to show in these case studies, the role of the Acropolis differs from play to play, but all the while maintains an overarching representation of Athenian power. The semiotics of the Acropolis locations, architecture, and sculpture were brought into the performance of the tragedies through textual references in order

to enhance the themes of the play by contributing contrasting meanings or otherwise interacting with the text. Such interplay between the mythological world of the play with a present Athenian structure provided the performance with a contemporary element that permitted the themes of the mythological plots to speak to the current concerns of Athens. Such a discussion of the conditions of the polis fits with the nature of the City Dionysia, and the atmosphere set by the pre-performance ceremonies. Thus it is fitting that the semiotic offerings of the Acropolis allowed the tragic performances in the Theatre of Dionysos to resonate with the spirit of the times.

Appendix A: A Note on Comedy: The Function of the Acropolis in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*

Although this dissertation focuses on the role of the Acropolis in some of the tragedies, it seems prudent to at least briefly examine comedy for any clues that the Acropolis sometimes played a role in the performance of this genre as well. Unfortunately, it is even more difficult to ascertain which comedies were performed in the Theatre of Dionysos than it is for the tragedies due to the phrase ἐν τῷ Ληναίῳ, at the Lenaion, that is used in texts from the 5th and 4th centuries BCE to describe the plays performed at the Lenaia festival. This term could simply mean that these plays were performed during the time of this festival, or as such as N.W. Slater points out, could refer to the performance space, possibly a temporary theatre erected for the festival.[207]

Despite the question of location, the performance of comedy often included verses, staging techniques, and special effects characteristic to tragedy with parodic effect, like dangling Socrates in a basket from the *mechane* that was used primarily for the entrances of gods in tragedy.[208] In a similar manner comedy may also have in some way incorporated the role that we have seen the Acropolis play in the tragedies examined in this volume. Particularly, this seems to be the case with Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* in which the *skene* is transformed into the Propylaia, or gates, of the Acropolis (Plates 19 and 22). It is on this play that this appendix focuses, for how

207 N.W. Slater, "The Lenaean Theatre," Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik 66 (1986).
208 See Aristophanes' Clouds, 215-220.

could one write a dissertation on the effect of the semiotic connotations of the Acropolis on performance in ancient Athens without examining the only extant comedy that is set almost entirely on the Acropolis, even if it is one of those Lenaia plays for which the performance location is unclear?

We must consider two hypotheses when examining the role the Acropolis may have played in the first performance of the *Lysistrata*. First we can make the conjecture that by 411 BCE[209] when the performance took place, the plays performed at the Lenaia festival may have been performed in the readily available Theatre of Dionysos, as Douglas M. MacDowell suggests.[210] If this is the case, then the presence of the Acropolis in the theatre space would have been mirrored in the *Lysistrata* by using the *skene* to represent the entryway to its summit. In this way the web of meanings associated with the Acropolis could easily play in the performance from the moment in which Lysistrata reveals that the women are going to "occupy the Acropolis today" (175-179). By the time the chorus of old men enters to take back the Acropolis at 254 and the old women appear, presumably on the roof of the *skene*, to defend their position on the Acropolis at 319, this play has become as much about the Acropolis as is Euripides' *Ion.* This play had been performed no earlier than 413 BCE, and so could have inspired Aristophanes to write a play featuring the Acropolis.

209 Hypothesis I to the Lysistrata states that the play was performed during the archonship of Kallias (412/11BCE).

210 MacDowell provides a comprehensive survey of the conversation on the location of the Lenaia performances. He concludes that it is unlikely that a makeshift theatre space would have been used after the Theatre of Dionysos was available, and so "it is probably better to accept that the Theatre of Dionysos was used but the phrase 'at the Lenaion' had become conventional and so continued in use even when no longer true literally." Douglas M. MacDowell, Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 7-8.

Yet, we must acknowledge that the *Lysistrata* may not have been performed in the Theatre of Dionysos, but rather in a temporary theatre specially constructed for the Lenaia festival. If the *Lysistrata* was not performed in the Theatre of Dionysos on the south slope of the Acropolis, then the Acropolis is no longer a contributor to the performance space, and may not have even been visible in the distance to the audience members. However, Aristophanes creates such a focus on the Acropolis by turning the *skene* into its gates and making it a greatly desired location, that it does not seem necessary for the actual Acropolis to have a presence within the theatre space for its meanings to play a role in this performance. The prominence of the Acropolis in the *Lysistrata* almost seems a nod to the use of the Acropolis' meanings in tragic performance much like the quoted verses of Euripides or the pointed uses of staging devices like the *mechane*. If Aristophanes recognized the role of the Acropolis in the tragedies that reference it, he seems here to have created his own Acropolis on stage as a poor substitute for having the actual one present in the theatre. Creating an on-stage Acropolis effectively gives the absent structure a presence within the performance space, a presence to which the audience would be accustomed from their experience with tragic performance as this dissertation has discussed. This pseudo-presence allows the meanings associated with the Acropolis to function in the performance of the *Lysistrata* in the same way as they do in the tragedies without the performance taking place in the shadow of the Acropolis rock.

The Acropolis seems to play a somewhat more direct role in comedy than it

does in the tragedies. As I have shown throughout this dissertation, the general function of the Acropolis' presence is to make the mythological story that is the plot of tragedy relevant to Athenians at the time of the performance. Certainly references to the Acropolis in the comedies sets the play in contemporary times, but the Athenian audience already expected comedy to be set in the present day just as they expected tragedy to take place in the mythical long ago or far away. Without needing to remind the audience of the mythical and historical events that took place on the Acropolis as does the *Persians* and the *Ion*, or bringing attention to its archaic features as found in the *Eumenides* in order to establish the presence of the Acropolis, the *Lysistrata* can quickly make use of the symbolic power of the Acropolis by simply mentioning it as part of the play's *agon*. By taking place in the vicinity of the Periklean Propylaia the play uses the Acropolis as a visual representations of the heart of Athenian power, and proceeds to shake up that power when the women seize the Acropolis.

The women successfully taking over the Acropolis is significant in two ways to a discussion of the role of the Acropolis in this play. First it embraces the parodic nature in which comedy often incorporates the language and staging devices used in tragic performance. As MacDowell reminds us, the Athenian men had successfully resisted such appropriations of their fortress against the Spartans in 508/7 BCE and against the Persians at Marathon in 490 BCE.[211] That the rock could be taken successfully by a group of elderly women, and held successfully held by Lysistrata and her band seems ludicrous, but very seriously points to the fragility of Athenian

211 MacDowell, Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays 234.

power at the time of the play's performance. This leads to the second significance: by taking the Acropolis, the women have control of Athens. Such an act, witnessed by an audience who certainly had heard the stories of the Persian invasion in 480 BCE and perhaps knew Aeschylus' *Persians*, becomes an act against the city, and thus an act against the democracy.

Yet this act against the *polis* is not without an interest in the well-being of the city, and placing the focus on the Acropolis effectively turns Lysistrata into the revered priestess of Athena Polias. As MacDowell and Sommerstein note, Lysistrata's name is similar to that of the priestess at the time, Lysimache, and have similar meanings that could denote an attempt by Aristophanes at linking the two.[212] Lysistrata is a combination of the verb λύω (in its noun form: λυσις), to loosen, dissolve, or bring to an end, and the word στρατός, army. Lysimache is a combination of the same verb with μάχη, battle. So Lysistrata means the "dissolver of armies", and Lysimache the "dissolver of battles". The textual similarity certainly connects Lysistrata with the priestess, especially once Lysistrata takes her place on the Acropolis, the place where, as MacDowell points out, the priestess of Athena Polias would have authority.[213] With this in mind, the Lysistrata that speaks from the

212 MacDowell, Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays 241, Alan H. Sommerstein, Talking About Laughter: And Other Studies in Greek Comedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 234. Pliny tells us that a statue was made of the priestess of Athena Polias, name Lysimache, who was priestess for nearly 60 years in his Natural History 34.76. IG 223453 has been identified as the base of this statue, and belongs to the first half of the 4th century BCE. Connelly provides a thorough discussion of the passage in Pliny. Joan Breton Connelly, Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 130-31.

213 MacDowell, Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays 242. Sommerstein argues that Lysistrata not only transforms into the priestess of Athena Polias but into the goddess herself. Sommerstein, Talking About Laughter: And Other Studies in Greek Comedy 234.

on-stage Acropolis becomes much more than an ordinary Athenian woman. She is a force acting on behalf of the goddess and thus the *polis*.

Yet for all her symbolic connections with Athena while in the presence of the Acropolis' Propylaia, Lysistrata's power is only a temporary power. Unlike Praxagora, the female protagonist in the *Ecclesiazusae*, Lysistrata never rouses the women to permanently take over the government, and do things in their own way. Rather she asks the women "If I could make a plan to end the war, would you be willing to join me?" (111-112). The realignment of power is only for the purposes of attaining peace with Sparta. And peace with Sparta is essential for the continuance of the Athenian empire, an empire that could, as Sommerstein notes, continue to rule in Greece in a hegemony with Sparta.[214]

Such a performance of displaced power acting on behalf of the city accentuates the Acropolis' symbolic greatness of imperial Athens. At the first performance of the *Lysistrata*, thoughts of the currently disastrous war against Sparta juxtaposed with the play's message of peace for the sake of the empire that is led by a figure that directly relates to the city's patron goddess, and plays out in front of a representation of the Acropolis that stands for the greatness of the empire must have raised the question to the audience of Athenians: Could peace with Sparta return Athens to any semblance of its former glory?

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214 Sommerstein, Talking About Laughter: And Other Studies in Greek Comedy 210.

Appendix B: Images

Plate 1: The Acropolis at night from Lykavittos Hill
Photo by the author, 2006

Plate 2: Telephoto view of the Theatre of Dionysos from the summit of the Acropolis
Photo by the author, 2010

Plate 3: View of the south slope of the Acropolis with the Theatre of Dionysos and the South Wall taken from the Dionysos precinct
Photo by the author, 2010

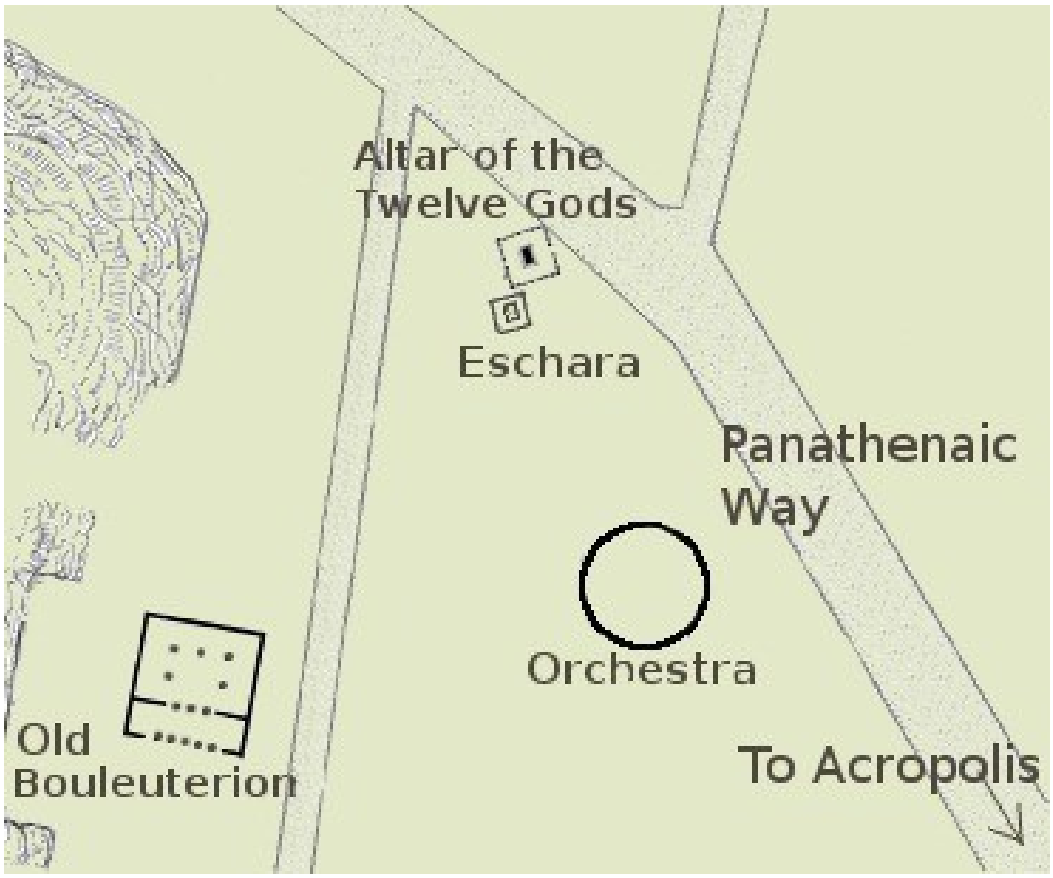

Plate 4: The Athenian agora in the late 6th/early 5th century; location of the *orchestra* according to Travlos, see Travlos 1971, Plate 29.
Plan by the author, 2011

Plate 5: Looking up the south slope of the Acropolis from the *theatron* of the Theatre of Dionysos
Photo by the author, 2010

Plate 6: Column drums in the North Wall of the Acropolis
Photo by the author, 2010

Plate 7: South wall of the Acropolis
Photo by the author, 2008

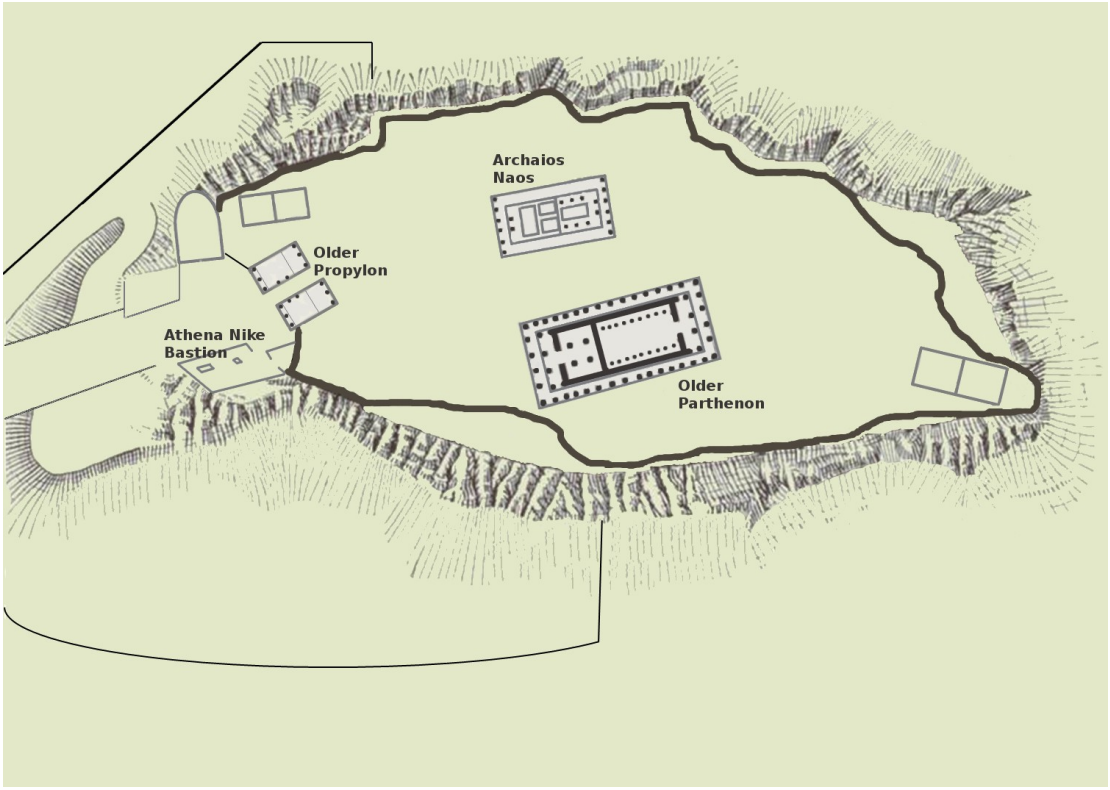

Plate 8: The Acropolis in 480 BCE prior to the Persian Invasion
Map by the author, 2011

Plate 9: Examples of Palladia statues

Top: Bronze statuettes of Athena Promachos, early to middle 5th century BCE; possibly votives of the Athena Polias cult statue; Acropolis Museum
Photo courtesy of John Younger
Bottom left: Athena as the Palladion around whom the sack of Troy occurs, circa 490-480 BCE; west pediment of the Temple of Aphaia, Aigina
Photo courtesy of John Younger
Bottom right: Sack of Troy with Cassandra (at the top) clutching the palladion, circa 515 BCE; large kylix by Onesimos in the Villa Giulia Museum, Rome
Photo courtesy of John Younger

Plate 10: The eastern bay of Salamis where the naval battle between the Greeks and Persians occurred in 480 BCE
Map by the author, 2010

Plate 11: The Athenian empire circa 430 BCE at its final extent. In Aeschylus' time, the empire would have been much smaller.
Map by the author, 2010

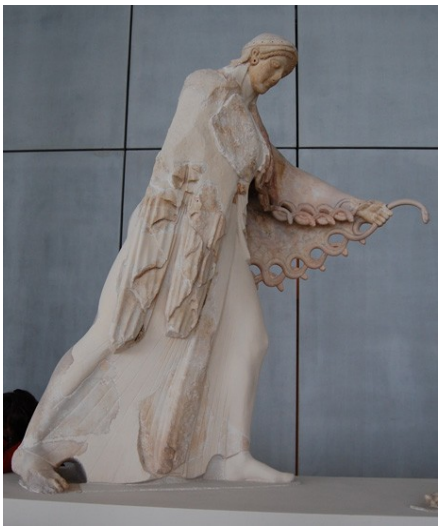

Plate 12: Athena leads the gigantomachy from circa 525 BCE; (east?) pediment of the Hekatompedon; Acropolis Museum
Photos courtesy of John Younger

Plate 13: Athena wearing the gorgon aegis, circa 530 BCE; fragment of a black-figure plaque by the Amasis Painter; Acropolis Museum
Photo courtesy of John Younger

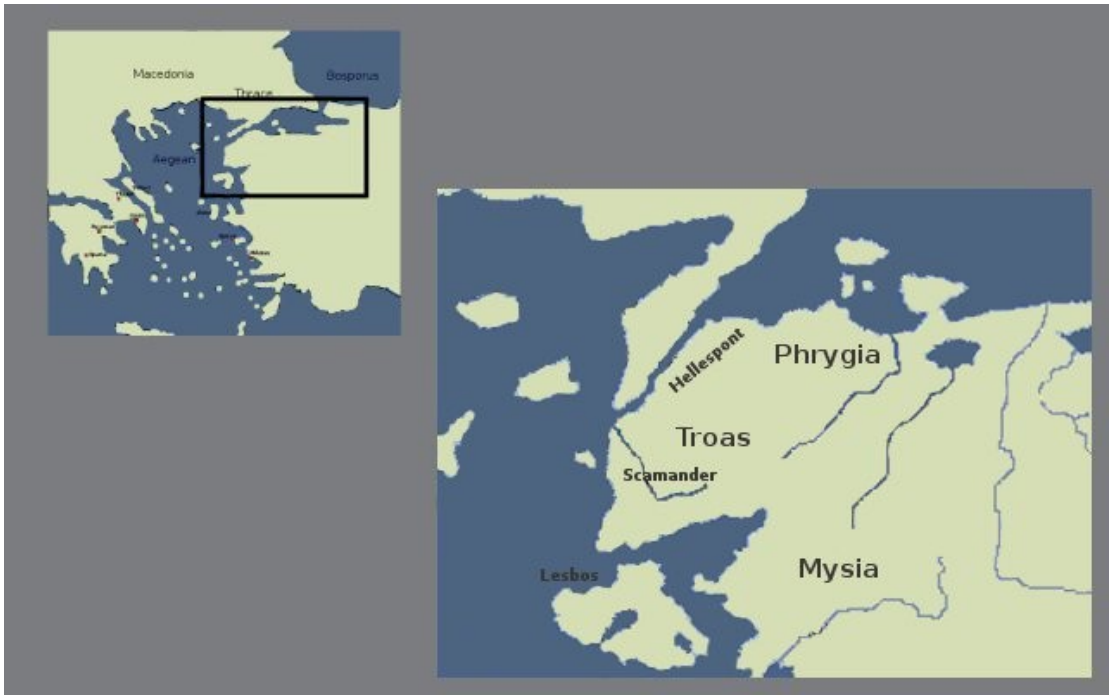

Plate 14: The Troad and the area around the Scamander River
Map by the author, 2010

Plate 15: The relationship of the Areopagos to the Acropolis; approximate location of the ruins of the Archaios Naos marked in blue; possible locations of the Areopagos court marked in pink. Locations for the Areopagos court taken from the work of Robert W. Wallace in *The Areopagos Council, to 307 B.C.*
Map by the author, 2011

Plate 16: Caves of Pan, Apollo, and Zeus on the north slope of the Acropolis, looking up from the *peripatos*
Photo by the author, 2010

Plate 17: Cave of Pan on the north slope of the Acropolis
Photos courtesy of Brian Bondari, 2010

Plate 18: The Erechtheion and the ruins of the Old Temple of Athena Polias
Photo by the author, 2010

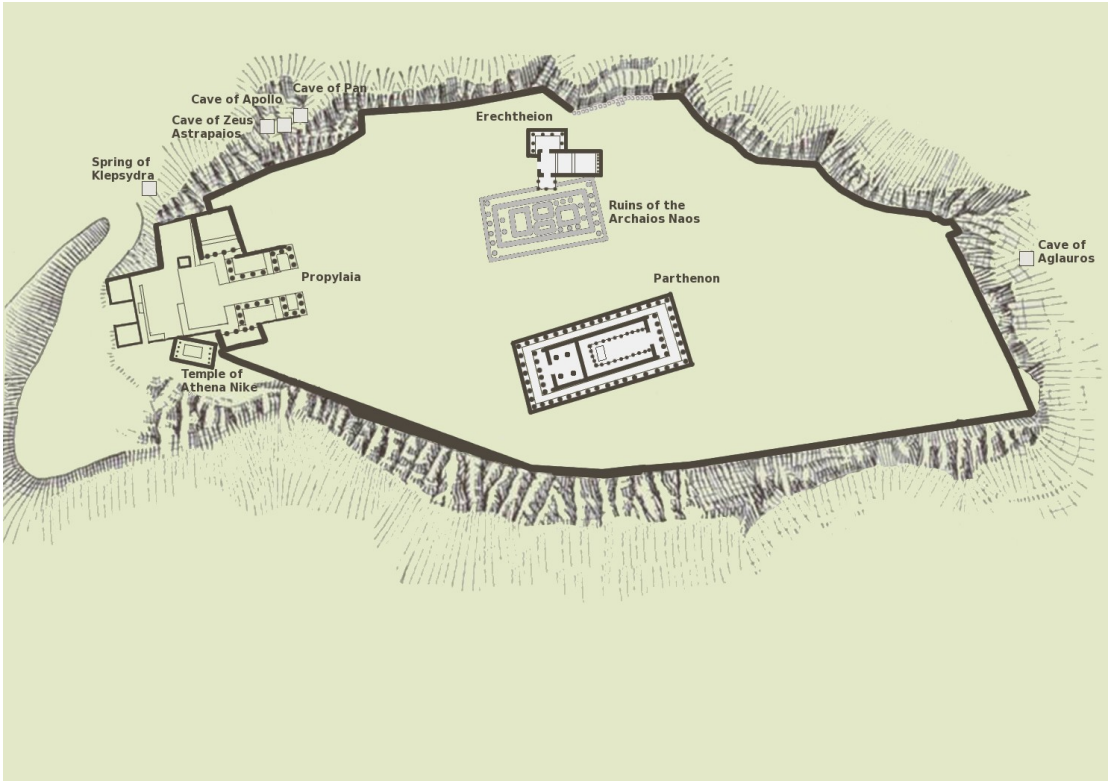

Plate 19: The Acropolis at the end of the 5th century BCE
Map by the author, 2011

Plate 20: Herakles wrestles the triton, circa 550 BCE; (east?) pediment of the Old Temple to Athena Polias (the Archaios Naos); Acropolis Museum
Photos courtesy of John Younger

Plate 21: East metopes from the Parthenon that depict scenes from the Gigantomachy that the Chorus describes in Euripdes' *Ion*; Acropolis
From top to bottom: (E1) Hermes, (E2) Dionysos and the panther, (E4) Athena Nike, (E6) Poseidon, and (E9) Apollo
Photos courtesy of John Younger

Plate 22: The Propylaia of the Athenian Acropolis
Photos by the Author, 2008

Appendix C: An Index of Acropolis References in the Dramas of the 5th Century BCE[215]

The Acropolis Rock/Hill

Acropolis				
	τὴν ἀκρόπολιν	176	*Lys.*	Ar.
	τὴν ἀκρόπολιν	179	*Lys.*	Ar.
	τὴν ἀκρόπολιν	241	*Lys.*	Ar.
	ἀκρόπολιν ἐμὰν	263	*Lys.*	Ar.
	μεγαλόπετρον ἄβατον			
	ἀκρόπολιν ἱερὸν τέμενος	482-3	*Lys.*	Ar.
high-towered citadel	ὑψίπυργον ἀντεπύργωσαν	688	*Eum.*	
Aesch.				
holy hill	ὄχθοις ἱεροῖς	800-2	*Tro.*	Eur.
Kekrops' blissful hill	ὄχθον Κεκροπίας εὐδαίμονα	1289	*El.*	Eur.
my hill	ἐμοῖς σκοπέλοισι	871	*Ion*	Eur.
on the windy hill	ἀνεμόεντι δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὄχθῳ	777-83	*Heracl.*	Eur.
Pallas' fortress	πόλισμα Παλλάδος	1323	HF	Eur.
Pallas' rock	πέτρας Παλλάδος	11-12	*Ion*	Eur.
	πέτραν παρ᾽ αὐτὴν Παλλάδος	30	*Hipp.*	Eur.

Locations/Places on the Acropolis

the Acropolis caves				
	ἄντροισιν	288	*Ion*	Eur.
	εἰς ἄντρου	892	*Ion*	Eur.
	πρόσβορρον ἄντρον	937	*Ion*	Eur.
	κατ᾽ ἄντρον	949	*Ion*	Eur.
Athena's mansion	ἰαχήσατε δ᾽ οὐρανῷ			
	καὶ παρὰ θρόνον ἀρχέταν			
	γλαυκᾶς τ᾽ ἐν Ἀθάνας	752-754	*Heracl.*	Eur.
Athena Nike Bastion	δέσποινα Νίκη	317	*Lys.*	Ar.
defense walls	ἔρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές	349	*Pers.*	
	Aesch.			
home of Erechtheus				
	Παλλάδι σύνοικα τρόφιμα μέλα-			
	θρα τῶν ἐμῶν τυράννων	235-6	*Ion*	Eur.
	δόμοις Ἐρεχθέως	855	*Eum.*	
	Aesch.			

215 I have used the standard abbreviations to indicate playwrights and plays in this index. See the table following the index for full explanation.

Kekrops' cliffs/cave				
	Κεκροπίας πέτρας	936-7	*Ion*	Eur.
	Κέκροπος ἐς ἄντρα	1400	*Ion*	Eur.
Long Rocks/northern cliffs				
	προσβόρρους πέτρας	11	*Ion*	Eur.
	πέτρας	274	*Ion*	Eur.
	Μακραὶ δὲ χῶρός	283	*Ion*	Eur.
	πέτρα μυχώδεσι Μακραῖς	493-4	*Ion*	Eur.
	Μακρὰς	936-7	*Ion*	Eur.
	Μακρὰς πετρηρεφεῖς	1400	*Ion*	Eur.
Odeion of Perikles	ἐν ᾠδείῳ	1109	*Vesp.*	Ar.
Opisthodomos				
	τὸν ὀπισθόδομον	1193	*Plut.*	Ar.
	τὠργύριον τῶβυσσον ᾗ πὰρ τᾷ σιῷ	174	*Lys.*	Ar.
Shrine/Cave of Pan				
	ὦ Πανὸς θακήματα καὶ παραυλίζουσα πέτρα μυχώδεσι Μακραῖς	492-4	*Ion*	Eur.
	ὦ Πάν, τοῖς σοῖσιν ἐν ἄντροις	501-2	*Ion*	Eur.
	Πανὸς ἄδυτα καὶ βωμοὶ πέλας	938	*Ion*	Eur.
	τὸ τοῦ Πανός	721	*Lys.*	Ar.
	τὸ τοῦ Πανός	911	*Lys.*	Ar.
Shrine to Aglauros	ἵνα χοροὺς στείβουσι ποδοῖν Ἀγλαύρου κόραι τρίγονοι στάδια χλοερὰ πρὸ Παλλάδος ναῶν	495-8	*Ion*	Eur.
Shrine to Aprhodite	κατόψιον γῆς τῆσδε ναὸν Κύπριδος ἐγκαθίσατο	30-31	*Hipp.*	Eur.
Spring of Klepsydra	τῇ Κλεψύδρᾳ	913	*Lys.*	Ar.
Temple of Athena Polias				
	Παλλάδος ναῶν	497-8	*Ion*	Eur.
	πρόσειμι δῶμα καὶ βρέτας τὸ σόν, θεά	242	*Eum.*	Aesch.

Temple of Asclepius

εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ	411	*Plut.*	Ar.
εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ	621	*Plut.*	Ar.

Events/Mythology Associated with the Acropolis

Acropolis location from which the sight of lightning was a sign to send an envoy to Delphi to receive prophecies

τιμᾷ σφε Πύθιος ἀστραπαί τε Πύθιαι.	285	*Ion*	Eur.

dancing the night before the Panathenaiac Procession

ἐπεί σοι πολύθυτος ἀεὶ τιμὰ κραίνεται, οὐδὲ λά- θει μηνῶν φθινὰς ἀμέρα, νέων τ᾽ ἀοιδαὶ χορῶν τε μολπαί. ἀνεμόεντι δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὄχθῳ ὀλολύγματα παννυχίοις ὑπὸ παρ- θένων ἰαχεῖ ποδῶν κρότοισιν	777-83	*Heracl.*	Eur.

Erechtheus daughters' sacrificed for victory

κόπῳ παρεῖμαι γοῦν Ἐρεχθειδῶν ἄπο δεῦρ᾽ ἐκκομισθεὶς τῆς πάροιθεν ἡμέρας: κἀκεῖ γὰρ ἦν τις πόλεμος Εὐμόλπου δορός, οὗ καλλινίκους Κεκροπίδας ἔθηκ᾽ ἐγώ:	852-5	*Phoen.*	Eur.

Kekrops' daughters leap to their deaths

τοιγὰρ θανοῦσαι σκόπελον ᾕμαξαν πέτρας.	274	*Ion*	Eur.

Persian sacking

θεοὶ πόλιν σῴζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς	347	*Pers.* Aesch.	
οἳ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ᾽ οὐ θεῶν βρέτη ᾐδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς: βωμοὶ δ᾽ ἄιστοι, δαιμόνων θ᾽ ἱδρύματα πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανέστραπται βάθρων.	809-12	*Pers.* Aesch.	
ἡνίκ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ ὁ βάρβαρος, τῷ καπνῷ τύφων ἅπασαν τὴν πόλιν καὶ πυρπολῶν	1079-80	*Vesp.*	Ar.

Scenes Depicted in Sculpture on the Acropolis

the Amazonomachy

τὰς δ᾽ Ἀμαζόνας σκόπει, ἃς Μίκων ἔγραψ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἵππων μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν	678-8	Lys.	Ar.

Athena's birth			
ἐμὰν Ἀθάναν, ἱκετεύω, Προμηθεῖ Τιτᾶνι λοχευ- θεῖσαν κατ᾽ ἀκροτάτας κορυφᾶς Διός	454-58	*Ion*	Eur.
the Gigantomachy			
φόνιον δ᾽ ὥστε γίγαντ᾽ ἀντίπαλον θεοῖς	543-4	*Bacch.*	Eur.
γηγενῆ μάχην	5	*Cyc.*	Eur.
ἐν οἷς βεβηκὼς τοῖσι γῆς βλαστήμασιν Γίγασι πλευροῖς πτήν᾽ ἐναρμόσας βέλη τὸν καλλίνικον μετὰ θεῶν ἐκώμασεν	178-80	*HF*	Eur.
ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ὅδε γόνος ὁ πολύπονος, <ὃς> ἐπὶ δόρυ γιγαντοφόνον ἦλθεν σὺν θεοῖ- σι Φλεγραῖον ἐς πεδίον ἀσπιστάς.	1192-4	*HF*	Eur.
ποίους ποτ᾽ ἢ λέοντας ἢ τρισωμάτους Τυφῶνας ἢ Γίγαντας ἢ τετρασκελῆ κενταυροπληθῆ πόλεμον οὐκ ἐξήνυσα;	1271-3	*HF*	Eur.
Γιγάντων	206-7	*Ion*	Eur.
λεύσσω Παλλάδ᾽, ἐμὰν θεόν. τί γάρ; κεραυνὸν ἀμφίπυρον ὄβριμον ἐν Διὸς ἐκηβόλοισι χερσίν; ὁρῶ: τὸν δάϊον Μίμαντα πυρὶ καταιθαλοῖ. καὶ Βρόμιος ἄλλον ἀπολέμοι- σι κισσίνοισι βάκτροις ἐναίρει Γᾶς τέκνων ὁ Βακχεύς.	211-18	*Ion*	Eur.
γηγενῆ μάχην	987-8	*Ion*	Eur.
μὰ τὴν παρασπίζουσαν ἄρμασίν ποτε Νίκην Ἀθηνᾶν Ζηνὶ γηγενεῖς ἔπι	1529-30	*Ion*	Eur.

<u>Objects/People Associated with the Acropolis</u>

Arrhephoroi			
ἑπτὰ μὲν ἔτη γεγῶσ᾽ εὐθὺς ἠρρηφόρουν	642	*Lys.*	Ar.
Athena's ancient olive-wood image			
Ἀθήνας Παλλάδος σεμνὸν βρέτας	1254	*El.*	Eur.
παλαιὸν ἄγκαθεν λαβὼν βρέτας Aesch.	79-80	*Eum.*	
βρέτας τὸ σόν, θεά Aesch.	242	*Eum.*	
περὶ βρέτει πλεχθεὶς θεᾶς ἀμβρότου	259	*Eum.*	

Aesch.			
βρέτας τε τοὐμὸν τῷδ᾽ ἐφημένῳ ξένῳ	409	*Eum.*	
Aesch.			
βρέτας τόδε	439-40	*Eum.*	
Aesch.			
βρέτας	446	*Eum.*	
Aesch.			
ἄγιον ἔχειν βρέτας	262	*Lys.*	Ar.
Athena's olive tree			
ἵν᾽ ἐλαίας πρῶτον ἔδειξε κλάδον γλαυκᾶς Ἀθάνα	801-802	*Tro.*	Eur.
στέφανον ἐλαίας ἀμφέθηκά σοι τότε,			
ἣν πρῶτ᾽ Ἀθάνα σκόπελον εἰσηνέγκατο	1433-6	*Ion.*	Eur.
Athena Promachos Statue			
μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐ σύ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἢ χαλκίον			
ἔχειν τι φαίνει κοῖλον: εἴσομαι δ᾽ ἐγώ.			
ὦ καταγέλαστ᾽ ἔχουσα τὴν ἱερὰν κυνῆν			
κυεῖν ἔφασκες	749-752	*Lys.*	Ar.
chryselephantine statue of Athena in the Parthenon			
ὅσον δ᾽ ἔχει τὸν χρυσόν, ὥσπερ παρθένος.	670	*Av.*	Ar.
Ἀλλαντοπώλης			
ἐγὼ δὲ μυστίλας μεμυστιλημένας			
ὑπὸ τῆς θεοῦ τῇ χειρὶ τηλεφαντίνῃ.			
Δῆμος			
ὡς μέγαν ἄρ᾽ εἶχες ὦ πότνια τὸν δάκτυλον.			
Κλέων			
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔτνος γε πίσινον εὔχρων καὶ καλόν:			
ἐτόρυνε δ᾽ αὖθ᾽ ἡ Παλλὰς ἡ Πυλαιμάχος.			
Ἀλλαντοπώλης			
ὦ Δῆμ᾽ ἐναργῶς ἡ θεός σ᾽ ἐπισκοπεῖ,			
καὶ νῦν ὑπερέχει σου χύτραν ζωμοῦ πλέαν.			
Δῆμος			
οἴει γὰρ οἰκεῖσθ᾽ ἂν ἔτι τήνδε τὴν πόλιν,			
εἰ μὴ φανερῶς ἡμῶν ὑπερεῖχε τὴν χύτραν;	1168-76	*Eq.*	Ar.
ἐφ᾽ οἵσπερ ὦ χρυσολόφα			
πολιοῦχε σὰς ἔσχον ἕδρας.	344-5	*Lys.*	Ar.
Erechtheus			
Ἐρεχθειδῶν	852-5	*Phoen.*	Eur.
Ἐρεχθειδῶν πόλιν	1166	*HF*	Eur.
πόλις καὶ γαῖ᾽ Ἐρεχθέως	1094-5	*Hipp.*	Eur.
Ἐρεχθεΐδαι τὸ παλαιὸν ὄλβιοι	824	*Med.*	Eur.
γαῖαν εἶμι τὴν Ἐρεχθέως	1384	*Med.*	Eur.

the giant snake that guarded the Acropolis			
ὄφιν εἶδον τὸν οἰκουρόν	759	*Lys.*	Ar.
Kekrops			
Κεκροπίδας	852-5	*Phoen.*	Eur.
παλαιᾶς Κεκροπίας <τ'> οἰκήτορας	658	*Supp.*	Eur.
Pandrosos			
τὴν Πάνδροσον	439	*Lys.*	Ar.

Abbreviations

Aesch.	Aeschylus	
Ag.	*Agamemnon*	*Agamemnon*
Cho.	*Choephoroe*	*Libation Bearers*
Eum.	*Eumenides*	*Eumenides*
Pers.	*Persae*	*Persians*
PV	*Prometheus Vinctus*	*Prometheus Bound*
Sept.	*Septem contra Thebas*	*Seven Against Thebes*
Supp.	*Supplices*	*Suppliants*
Ar.	Aristophanes	
Ach.	*Acharnenses*	*Acharnians*
Av.	*Aves*	*Birds*
Eccl.	*Ecclesiazusae*	*Assembly Women*
Eq.	*Equites*	*Knights*
Lys.	*Lysistrata*	*Lysistrata*
Nub.	*Nubes*	*Clouds*
Pax	*Pax*	*Peace*
Plut.	*Plutus*	*Wealth*
Ran.	*Ranae*	*Frogs*
Thesm.	*Thesmophoriazusae*	*Thesmophoriazusae*
Vesp.	*Vespae*	*Wasps*

Eur.	Euripides	
Alc.	*Alcestis*	*Alcestis*
Andr.	*Andromache*	*Andromache*
Bacch.	*Bacchae*	*Bacchae*
Cyc.	*Cyclops*	*Cyclops*
El.	*Electra*	*Electra*
Hec.	*Hecuba*	*Hecuba*
Hel.	*Helena*	*Helen*
Heracl.	*Heraclidae*	*Children of Herakles*
HF	*Hercules furens*	*Herakles*
Hipp.	*Hippolytus*	*Hippolytus*
IA	*Iphigenia Aulidensis*	*Iphigeneia in Aulis*
IT	*Iphigenia Taurica*	*Iphigeneia in Tauris*
Med.	*Medea*	*Medea*
Or.	*Orestes*	*Orestes*
Phoen.	*Phoenissae*	*Phoenician Women*
Rhes.	*Rhesus*	*Rhesus*
Supp.	*Supplices*	*Suppliants*
Tro.	*Troades*	*Trojan Women*

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