

RHESUS REVISITED:
THE CASE FOR A FOURTH-CENTURY MACEDONIAN CONTEXT*

Abstract: A number of individual passages in *Rhesus*, a tragedy whose attribution to Euripides has repeatedly been questioned, evince extensive familiarity with institutions and mentalities prevalent in fourth-century Macedonia. The paper argues that *Rhesus* was composed and produced for a Macedonian performance context, probably between the late 350s and the late 330s BC, by an author who, while familiar with Athenian tragedy and conceivably of Athenian origin, may have lived in the court of Philip II or Alexander III.

It is unlikely that the authenticity and, consequently, the date of *Rhesus* were controversial issues in antiquity, although ancient evidence may seem at first sight to suggest otherwise.¹ They have, nonetheless, been a matter of dispute for more than 400 years now, ever since the time of Delrio and Scaliger.² A considerable number of (especially) nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars focused on the play's language, style and metre as the principal criteria by which to decide the issue.³ The question, however, is far from settled. Although stylometric data, if properly interpreted, can offer valuable insights into the problem,⁴ the method I have opted for in this paper is almost exclusively historically oriented. To put it in a nutshell, I shall be arguing that both the overall mentality that seems to inform *Rhesus* and a considerable number of individual passages in it are consistent with the hypothesis that the play was conceived, composed and produced not for an Athenian but for a Macedonian performance context, probably between the late 350s and the late 330s BC, by an author who, while familiar with Athenian tragedy, may have lived in the court of Philip II or Alexander III.

I hasten to stress that my paper is by no means a latter-day attempt to revive the long-discredited methods of, for example, Grégoire and Goossens, who reduced *Rhesus* to a political allegory in which Rhesus stood for the Thracian king Sitalkes, Hector represented the Athenian

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¹ According to one of the *Hypotheseis* to the play (Hyp. b, 23–24 Diggle), there were 'certain' (ἐνίοι) ancient scholars who believed *Rhesus* to be spurious 'because it rather evinces the marks of Sophoclean style' (τὸν γὰρ Σοφοκλείου μᾶλλον ὑποφαίνειν χαρακτῆρα). This was evidence enough for A. Lesky (*Greek Tragic Poetry*, transl. M. Dillon (New Haven 1983) 397) to proclaim that 'the debate over the play's authenticity was already heated in antiquity'. However, there is no evidence that any ancient scholar of note ever doubted the authenticity of *Rhesus*: cf., for example, Dionysodorus *apud* Σ *Rhesus* 508 (339.14 Schwartz); Crates and Parmeniscus *apud* Σ *Rhesus* 528 (340.5, 11, 17, 23 Schwartz).

² See M.A. Del Rio (Delrio), *Syntagma tragoediae latinae in tres partes distinctum* (Antwerp 1593) I 22; J.J. Scaliger, *M. Manlii Astronomicum* (Leiden 1600) 6–8.

³ Notably G. Hermann, 'De Rheso tragoedia dissertatio', *Opuscula* vol. III (Leipzig 1828; repr. Hildesheim 1970) 262–310; C.G. Spengler, 'De Rheso tragoedia

pars prior', *Programm. Gymn. Düren* (Düren 1857) 1–23; F. Hagenbach, *De Rheso tragoedia* (diss. Basel 1863); O. Menzer, *De Rheso tragoedia* (diss. Berlin 1867); P. Albert, *De Rheso tragoedia* (diss. Halle 1876) 33–40; L. Eysert, 'Rhesus im Lichte des euripideischen Sprachgebrauches', *Jahresb. d. kais. kön. Staats-Ober-Gymn. in Böhm.-Leipa* (Böhm.-Leipa 1891) 3–36; L. Eysert, 'Rhesus im Lichte des euripideischen Sprachgebrauches: II. Theil (Voces Euripidae)', *Jahresb. d. kais. kön. Staats-Ober-Gymn. in Böhm.-Leipa* (Böhm.-Leipa 1893) 3–40; J.C. Rolfe, 'The tragedy *Rhesus*', *HSPH* 4 (1893) 61–97; A.C. Pearson, 'The *Rhesus*', *CR* 35 (1921) 52–61, esp. 57–58; W. Ritchie, *The Authenticity of the Rhesus of Euripides* (Cambridge 1964) 141–344; E. Fraenkel (review of Ritchie), *Gnomon* 37 (1965) 228–41.

⁴ Thus, as Fraenkel (n. 3) was the first to point out, it is not the sheer number of, for example, ἄπαξ εἰρημένα or of quotations from fifth-century tragedy found in *Rhesus* that decides the authenticity issue; it is rather the use the *Rhesus* author makes of such elements. Whoever wrote *Rhesus* is prone to sew together 'purple passages', i.e., 'flashy' words, eye-catching turns of phrase, pompous expressions etc., filched directly from Euripidean, Aeschylean and (more rarely) Sophoclean plays, in a manner unparalleled in fifth-century tragedy.

polity at large and one of the play's central motifs (that of the belated and volatile Thracian ally) was meant to dramatize the political situation in Athens, especially its uneasy relations with Sitalkes, sometime between 429 and 424 BC.⁵ Nor am I inclined to consider arguments which, although critical of Grégoire and Goossens, proceed nonetheless along the same crudely historicizing lines.⁶ Although once fashionable, the interpretation of Athenian tragedy as a more or less faithful (if 'allegorical') reflection of historical issues has now fallen into disrepute, and with good reason.⁷ For it can hardly be more than a futile *jeu d'esprit*, not only obtuse to the specificity of any given play as a self-contained structure, but also insensitive to the fundamental reluctance of Athenian tragedy to disrupt, through the intrusion of contemporary considerations, the illusion of a remote, mythical past.⁸ Rather than indulging in the idle past-time of trying to match *Rhesus*' characters to historical personalities,⁹ I shall attempt to situate the play in mid-fourth-century Macedon by showing that it is in many respects an apt and significant manifestation of Macedonian identity and ideology, and a remarkable reflection of the historical conditions, the institutions, the mentalities and even the material culture that obtained in the northern regions of the Greek peninsula around the middle of the fourth century BC.

There is of course no *single* conclusive piece of evidence to support my contention that *Rhesus* is a Macedonian play, and so my argument will of necessity be a cumulative one, as any argument regarding the authenticity of *Rhesus* must be. Mine has at least the merit of exploring new ground and of drawing attention to an all but neglected aspect of the history of Greek drama. For it is only recently that we have begun to glimpse the crucial role Macedon must have played in raising tragedy, especially Euripidean tragedy, to the level of an internationally prestigious medium. A seminal contribution in this respect has been made by Martin Revermann:¹⁰ marshalling an impressive array of literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence, Revermann has shown that the Macedonian kings acted as 'catalysts, amplifying and disseminating certain tendencies'¹¹ already obtaining in the contextualization of Greek tragedy. At the same time, they fostered a peculiar interplay between tragedy, especially Euripidean tragedy, and Macedonian ideology, with a special focus on such issues as Macedon's cultural self-assurance and Hellenic (or Hellenized) identity. In my paper, which partially draws on the insights I offered (without knowledge of Revermann's argument) in an earlier publication,¹² I propose to explore the question whether we cannot perhaps better appreciate *Rhesus* and help resolve its notorious diffi-

⁵ See R. Goossens, 'La date du Rhésos', *AC* 1 (1932) 93–134; H. Grégoire, 'L'authenticité du «Rhésos» d'Euripide', *AC* 2 (1933) 91–133. *Contra* T. Sinko ('De causae Rhesi novissima defensione', *AC* 3 (1934) 223–29, 411–29), who argued that *Rhesus* contains allusions to the troubled relationship between Cersebleptes and Athens. Grégoire and Goossens retaliated in their 'Sitalkès et Athènes dans le «Rhésos» d'Euripide', *AC* 3 (1934) 431–46. The Goossens / Grégoire thesis was essentially taken up by E. Delebecque (*Euripide et la guerre du Péloponnèse* (Paris 1951) 110–28), who diverged only insofar as he considered *Rhesus* to be a pro-satyrical drama produced in the context of the same trilogy as *Hippolytus* in 428.

⁶ Thus, for example, Sinko (n. 5) and V. Iliescu, 'Zeitgeschichtliche Bezüge im *Rhesos*', *Klio* 58 (1976) 367–76 (here 374–76). The latter challenged the Rhesus ~ Sitalkes equation, and suggested that Rhesus was rather an allegory for the Thracian king Kotys I (regn. 384/383–359 BC), which according to Iliescu fixed the play firmly in the fourth century.

⁷ See in this respect the seminal remarks of V. Ehrenberg, *Sophocles and Pericles* (Oxford 1954) 3 with nn. 1–3; G. Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester 1955) 58–69, 78–80, 91.

⁸ Cf. in this respect M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie: Erläuterungen* (Göttingen 1954) 187.

⁹ Regrettably, I did myself indulge in this unprofitable practice in V. Liapis, 'They Do It with Mirrors: the mystery of the two *Rhesus* plays', in D.I. Jacob and E. Papazoglou (eds), *Θυμέλη: Μελέτες χαρισμένες στον Καθηγητή Ν. Χ. Χουρμουζιάδη* (Heraklion 2004) 159–88, esp. 177–82, where I toyed with the idea that Hector 'stands for' Philip II, while Rhesus 'stands for' Cersebleptes, king of Thrace, and that the animosity between the two characters in the play is meant to reflect the tense relations between the two historical persons.

¹⁰ See M. Revermann, 'Euripides, tragedy and Macedon: some conditions of reception', *ICS* 24/25 (1999/2000) 451–67.

¹¹ Quotation from Revermann (n. 10) 461.

¹² Liapis (n. 9).

culties by situating the play in the context of Macedon's struggle for cultural, as well as political and military, ascendancy around (and after) the middle of the fourth century BC. By doing so I hope to show, if anything, that we are only beginning to scratch the surface of what promises to be an extremely fascinating and fruitful field of study.

I. MACEDONIAN TERMS AND INSTITUTIONS IN *RHESUS*

In this section I shall explore evidence suggesting that whoever wrote *Rhesus* did so with a Macedonian audience in mind, and that a number of passages in the play are best made sense of as allusions, conscious or not, to distinctly Macedonian terms and institutions.

*The peltē and peltasts*¹³

A careful examination of the shape and function of the πέλιτη used by Rhesus and his Thracian army yields surprising results with regard to the question of the play's authenticity. As is well known, the *peltē* was considered a standard feature of Thracian military gear from at least the time of the Persian Wars: together with lances and small daggers, *peltai* are the only items of weaponry mentioned by Herodotus in his description of the Thracian contingent in Xerxes' army (7.75.1). Some 50 years later, in 431 BC, the Athenians could expect the Thracian king Sitalkes to send 'a Thracian army of horsemen and peltasts' (στρατιᾶν Θρακικῶν ... ἵππέων τε καὶ πελταστῶν, Thucydides 2.29.5). Euripidean drama also regularly associates the *peltē* with Thrace (*Alc.* 498; *Erechth.* fr. 369.4 Kannicht), and in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 563 'a Thracian brandishing his *peltē*' is described as a familiar sight in Athens (cf. also *Ar.*, *Ach.* 160), an impression confirmed by the numerous Attic vase-paintings depicting Thracian peltasts.¹⁴

It will come as no surprise, then, that Thracian warriors in *Rhesus* are invariably given *peltai* as their main defensive weapon. When, for instance, in *Rhesus* 409–10 Hector describes his feats against Rhesus' Thracian opponents, he lays particular emphasis upon the fact that his onrush 'shattered their *peltai*':

Θρηκῶν ἀρίστοις ἐμπεσῶν κατὰ στόμα
ἔρρηξα πέλιτην ...

Charging against the best of the Thracians, face to face, I shattered their *peltai*¹⁵

¹³ In this section I take up and expand on arguments I first used, in a slightly different form, in Liapis (n. 9) 165–68.

¹⁴ See A.M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (Baltimore 2nd 1999) 78–79; also F. Lissarrague, *L'autre guerrier: archers, peltastes, cavaliers dans l'imagerie attique* (Paris and Rome 1990) 151–89, with special emphasis on the iconographic marginality of peltasts. For Greek views on Thracian mercenary peltasts see the detailed discussion in J.G.P. Best, *Thracian Peltasts and their Influence on Greek Warfare* (Groningen 1969) 126–33.

¹⁵ Most editors (and LSJ s.v. I.2) take πέλιτη in this passage as a collective designation of 'ranks of peltasts', on the analogy of, for example, the prosaic ἡ ἵππος = 'the cavalry'. However, nowhere else is πέλιτη thus used: in all its other instances it has its usual meaning of 'shield' (on E., *Alc.* 498 see Dale); cf. esp. Luc. *DMort.* 12(14).2 where τὴν Θετταλὴν ἵππον is juxtaposed to τὸ Μαντινέων πελταστικόν (not πέλιτη). What is

more, ἡ ἵππος etc. refer to a specific section of the army as opposed to other sections (for example, the infantry); here, however, πέλιτη, if used collectively, would have to refer to the *entire* Thracian army, since no other defensive weapon is ever envisaged for the Thracians in this play (cf. *Rhesus* 311, 487). What Hector means here is that he shattered the actual shields of the Thracian champions he fought with; so already F. Vater (ed.), *Euripidis Rhesus cum scholiis antiquis* (Berlin 1837) 173. After all, as pointed out already by R. Morstadt (*Beitrag zur Kritik der dem Euripides zugeschriebenen Tragödie Rhesos* (Heidelberg 1827) 24 n. 1) ἔρρηξα πέλιτην is a conscious epicism, modelled on ῥῆξε σάκος (*Il.* 20.268, 21.165), a phrase used in connection with shattering an opponent's shield with one's lance. For the distributive singular πέλιτην (instead of πέλιται) cf., for example, Thuc. 3.22.3 φιλοὶ δώδεκα ξὺν ξιφιδίῳ καὶ θώρακι; R. Kühner and B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache* II.1 (Hannover and Leipzig 3rd 1898) 14–15.

However, the *peltai* borne by the Thracians in *Rhesus* do not seem to be the small, light, crescent- or round-shaped shields known from vase-paintings; nor are these *peltai* used for the peripheral, marginal operations with which fifth-century Athenians usually associated this kind of weapon. Rather, the *peltē* seems here to assume the central role of the hoplite shield, as is obvious from *Rhesus* 485–87, where Hector proposes to Rhesus several possible positions for his army to hold during the battle:

ἀλλ' εἴτε λαιὸν εἴτε δεξιὸν κέρασ
εἴτ' ἐν μέσοισι συμμαχοῖς πάρεστί σοι
πέλτην ἐρεῖσαι καὶ καταστῆσαι στρατόν.

Now, you can rest your shield and position your army either in the left or in the right wing, or in the middle of the allied army.

Hector is proposing arrangements for the Thracian army's position *in the battlefield*; their sleeping quarters in the camp will be the object of different arrangements (*Rhesus* 519–20). Thus, when Rhesus is asked to specify where he wishes to 'rest his shield' (πέλτην ἐρεῖσαι), he is required to choose the specific battlefield position he desires to fight from.¹⁶ In this context, the choice of verb is significant: on the battlefield, soldiers will need to 'rest', ἐρεῖσαι, their shield on the ground or on their shoulders,¹⁷ but this is unnecessary (and, indeed, near-impossible) when the shield is as small and light as the *peltē* generally known to have been borne by Thracians. Clearly, the *peltē* envisaged in *Rhesus* 487 is a shield large enough to be used, much like the hoplite shield, as a main defensive weapon. Now, there is literary and archaeological evidence suggesting that the distinctly Macedonian small shield, which is explicitly designated as πέλτη already in late-fourth-century inscriptions,¹⁸ was ca. 62cm in diameter on average,¹⁹ and could even reach a diameter of up to 76cm.²⁰ Thus, it was larger than its well-known Thracian counterpart, but still small enough by comparison to the common Greek hoplite shield (80–

¹⁶ For a similar choice of right, centre or left, *cf.*, albeit in a different context, *Il.* 13.307–09 'where do you wish to attack the enemy? ἢ ἐπὶ δεξιόφιν παντός στρατοῦ, ἢ ἀνὰ μέσους, ἢ ἦ' ἐπ' ἀριστερόφιν.'

¹⁷ See V.D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York 1989) 65–69.

¹⁸ See *IG* 2/3 ii¹ 1473.9–10, 1487.96–97, 1490.30–31, cited by K. Liampi, *Der makedonische Schild* (Bonn 1998) 3.

¹⁹ See *imprimis* M.M. Markle III, 'The Macedonian sarissa, spear, and related armor,' *AJA* 81 (1977) 323–39, here 326 with nn. 19, 20. The main literary testimony on the diameter of the Macedonian shield is *Ascl. Tact.* 5, 1 (11, 6–7 Poznanski), who describes it as ὀκταπάλαιστος, i.e. eight palms (61.66cm) in diameter: see W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War I* (Berkeley 1971) 150; and Poznanski's note *ad loc.* (42–43).

²⁰ Macedonian shields found at Dion and at Veghora (Florina) are 73.6cm and 65.6cm in diameter respectively; on the Dion shield (probably belonging to Demetrios Poliorketes), see D. Pantermalis in *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* 13 (1999) 417–19 ~ *Μύρτος: Μνήμη Ιουλίας Βοκοτοπούλου* (Thessaloniki 2000) xviii–xxii; on the

Veghora shield (perhaps from the time of Antigonos Gonatas), see P. Adam-Veleni in *Ancient Macedonia: Fifth International Symposium*, vol. 1 (1993) 19 (noting that the shield's apparent diameter of 73.6cm must be significantly reduced when its curvature is taken into account). Of particular importance are also the life-size sculptured shields found on monuments. Such monuments include: an early third century ἡρώιον at Yannitsa (4.5km Northwest of ancient Pella), with its shield measuring 62cm in diameter (see P. Chrysostomou in *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* 12 (1998) 345); a monument erected in Beroia shortly after 297 BC, whose shields are 73–76cm in diameter (see M.M. Markle, 'A shield monument from Veria and the chronology of Macedonian shield types', *Hesperia* 68 (1999) 219–54, here 222, 223, 227); finally, a mid-second-century tomb at Spilià (Eordaia), whose façade features two sculptured shields measuring 72cm and 69cm in diameter (see G. Karamitrou-Mentesidhi in *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* 1 (1987) 30). *Cf.* also Liampi (n. 18) 4–5. On the discrepancy between the literary evidence and the archaeological record on this point, see Pritchett (n. 19) 145–47, 150. *Cf.* Liapis (n. 9) 166–67.

100cm)²¹ to justify its somewhat catachrestic designation as πέλιτη. That such *peltai* were used as the main defensive weapon in the Macedonian army at least as early as the reign of Alexander the Great is intimated by Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander 2* (= *Moralia* 327b):

εἰ δὲ μὴ Πτολεμαῖος ὑπερέσχε τὴν πέλιτην [...] ἔδει τάφον Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν βάρβαρον ἐκείνην καὶ ἀνώνυμον κώμην γενέσθαι.

If Ptolemy had not held his *peltē* over my [sc. Alexander's] body, ..., that barbarous and anonymous town would have been Alexander's tomb.

Obviously, Ptolemy's *peltē* must have been sufficiently large to protect Alexander, and indeed save his life. At the same time, the Macedonian *peltē* was not too cumbersome to carry on one's shoulder, as Plutarch implies in *Life of Paulus Aemilius* (19.2): ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Μακεδόνων τάς τε πέλιτας ἐξ ὤμου περισπασάντων..., 'since the other Macedonians too had taken off the *peltai* from around their shoulders'. It is no doubt significant that this is exactly how Rhesus is described as carrying his own *peltē* in *Rhesus* 305: πέλιτη δ' ἐπ' ὤμων χρυσοκόλλητοις τύποις ἰέλαμπε ..., 'on his shoulders gleamed his shield, soldered with golden blazons'.²²

Further, it is significant that Rhesus' *peltē* in *Rhesus* 383–84 is equipped with πόρπακες, and with a string of bells which 'clanged out boastfully' (κλύε καὶ κόμπους κωδωνοκρότους ἰπαρὰ πορπάκων κελαδοῦντας). Now, the *porpax* was a bronze strip in the interior of the hoplite shield with a loop in its middle through which the left forearm was passed; a leather thong (the ἀντιλαβή) at the shield's right end provided a grip for the left hand.²³ In the fifth century BC, the ἀντιλαβή developed into a long strap running around the shield, along the rim's interior, held in place by a series of studs; it was to the ἀντιλαβή that decorative tassels were attached,²⁴ and this is surely where the bells on Rhesus' shield would have been fastened. That the shield of Rhesus has a πόρπαξ, and presumably also an ἀντιλαβή, which basically served to support the weight of the large hoplite shield, is an additional indication that it is not envisaged as a small Thracian *peltē* but as the larger Macedonian one.

A further point of contact between peltasts in *Rhesus* and in the Macedonian army is their function as integral parts of the army rather than as peripheral units. As is well known, before Macedonian supremacy, peltasts were employed merely 'as supplements to regular hoplite-forces and especially to counter enemy superiority in cavalry'.²⁵ Even Iphicrates' reformed peltasts, for all their improved equipment and arms, remained essentially a skirmishing and ambushing force, i.e., what we would nowadays call guerrilla troops, not fit for a great pitched battle, and thus distinct from the ordinary hoplite phalanx.²⁶ However, peltast fighting must have started to become a more integral part of Macedonian military tactics already in the time of Archelaus, who

²¹ For bibliography and discussion see Pritchett (n. 19) 146–47; cf. H.L. Lorimer, 'The hoplite phalanx with special reference to the poems of Archilochus and Tyrtaeus', *ABSA* 42 (1947) 76–138, esp. 76–77, n. 3. Shields of the hoplite type were also used in the Macedonian army until ca. 300 BC: Markle (n. 20) 244.

²² Although χρυσοκόλλητος occurs only in the interpolated E. *Ph.* 2 (but χρυσοκόλλος does occur in S. *fr.* 378.3 Radt, E. *fr.* 587 Kannicht), it is an apposite term for shield blazons, which were separately constructed sheets of beaten metal, often decorated with engravings, and fixed (here by means of golden bolts) on the outer surface of the shield: cf. A. *Th.* 539–42 with Hutchinson *ad* 541f.; Snodgrass (n. 14) 54–55, 96. For blazons and

other decorative motifs on Macedonian shields in particular, see Liampi (n. 18) 27–41, with tables 33–39.

²³ Snodgrass (n. 14) 53. For the discomfort involved therein see however Hanson (n. 17) 65–69.

²⁴ Snodgrass (n. 14) 95.

²⁵ Quotation from M.M. Sage, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook* (London and New York 1996) xx.

²⁶ See *imprimis* Best (n. 14) 85–97 for a detailed account of the guerrilla operations of Iphicrates' peltasts; indeed Best (n. 14, 102–10) went so far as to claim that 'Iphicratean reform' may be a misnomer, since 'the Iphicratean peltast appears to be nothing more than a variant of already existing Thracian peltasts' (104), and to have never been involved in pitched battle. On

‘needed differently trained infantrymen for the Balkan theatre’, and so ‘began the training of infantrymen’ on the standards set by the Thracian peltast.²⁷ With regard to this process of integration, G.T. Griffith has made the important remark that

In spite of their social origins and background (that of peltasts) and in spite of the similarity of some of their arms and equipment to the peltast’s, *it seems more useful to call them* [sc. the Macedonian phalanx] *semi-hoplites* than to write (for example) ‘The phalanx of these Macedonian peltasts constituted the core of the armies of Philip and Alexander’, a remark perceptive of origins and connections with the past, but obtuse in its indifference to Philip’s own problems and the future for which he planned. *It was hoplites’ work, not peltasts’, that he had in mind for these people*.²⁸

The text of *Rhesus* makes it clear that its *peltē*-bearing Thracians are anything but a skirmishing force; on the contrary, they seem to function as heavy infantry in Rhesus’ army, where they are supplemented by cavalry, archers and light-armed troops (ὄχλος γυμνής):

πολλοὶ μὲν ἵππηϊς, πολλὰ πελταστῶν τέλη,
πολλοὶ δ’ ἀτράκτων τοξόται, πολὺς δ’ ὄχλος
γυμνῆς ἀμαρτῆι, Θρηκίαν ἔχων στολήν

There were many horsemen, many troops of peltasts, many shooters of arrows, and along with them a great crowd of light-armed soldiers in Thracian gear (*Rhesus* 311–13).

Tellingly, the troops of peltasts (πελταστῶν τέλη) are here *distinguished* from the light troops (ὄχλος γυμνής): they clearly fight as a regular *quasi*-hoplite contingent, not as a guerrilla or commando unit. Thus, it cannot be said that the *Rhesus* author is simply projecting onto Rhesus’ peltasts the *modus operandi* of the Thracian peltasts, those marginal units with which he must have been familiar, especially if he was an Athenian. One may usefully contrast the situation in *Rhesus* with a passage from a genuine Euripidean play, namely *Bacchae* 781–83, where peltasts (πέλτας ... ὅσοι πάλλουσι) are, conversely, distinguished from the *regular* hoplites (ἀσπιδηφόρους); at the time of the *Bacchae*, that is, peltasts were still thought of as marginal, peripheral units. And in a fragment from Euripides’ *Meleagros* (fr. 530.1 Kannicht), Telamon is given a *peltē* as his defensive weapon, somewhat surprisingly since he is not a Thracian, but wholly appropriately for the un-hoplitic activity he is engaged in, namely a hunt. A most important consideration in this respect is that the word *πελτασταί*, which we have encountered in *Rhesus* 311, does not occur as a technical term before Thucydides 2.29.5 (quoted above, page 73), and may well have entered Athenian vocabulary during the Peloponnesian War.²⁹ This certainly weakens the position of those defenders of *Rhesus*’ authenticity, and most notably Ritchie (n. 3) 358, who want the play to have been a work of Euripides’ *youth*.

Iphicrates’ peltasts as essentially a skirmishing force, see also W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War II* (Berkeley 1974) 124; cf. F.E. Adcock, *The Greek and Macedonian Art of War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1957) 21–22. Even the small number of scholars who realize that the peltasts mentioned in *Rhesus* are no longer the marginal troops they were in fifth-century Athens tend to see in them an echo of Iphicrates’ reforms rather than of Macedon’s ascendancy: cf., for example, Menzer (n. 3) 52–53; W. Nöldeke, *De Rhesi fabulae aetate et forma* (Schwerin 1877) 13; Iliescu (n. 6) 368, n. 30, 369, n. 34.

²⁷ Quotation from Hammond in N.G.L. Hammond and G.T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia II* (Oxford 1979) 148. Cf. also J.R. Ellis in *The Cambridge Ancient*

*History VI*² (Cambridge 1994) 735: ‘The Macedonian infantry soldier [...], more closely akin to the Thracian peltast, faced relatively less expense than the hoplite in fitting himself out: his shield was appreciably smaller...’. On the all-important role of peltasts in the Macedonian army, especially in the period after Alexander, see R.M. Errington, *A History of Macedonia*, trsl. C. Errington (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1990) 245; cf. also Hammond in N.G.L. Hammond and F.W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia III* (Oxford 1988) 541–42.

²⁸ Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 424. Emphasis added. The text quoted by Griffith is from Best (n. 14) 142.

²⁹ This was pointed out already by Menzer (n. 3) 53.

*The king's hypaspists*³⁰

The hypothesis that *Rhesus* was composed in fourth-century Macedonia, conceivably in the court of Philip II or Alexander III, is also compatible with the occurrence of yet another distinctly Macedonian technical term at the very outset of the play. The chorus, which consists of Trojan soldiers on guard duty, enter the orchestra looking for the king's personal guards, to whom they refer as ὑπασπιστᾶι βασιλέως (*Rhesus* 1–3):

βῆθι πρὸς εὐνάς τὰς Ἑκτορέους·
 τίς ὑπασπιστῶν ἄγρυπνος βασιλέως
 ἢ τευχοφόρων;

Go to the place where Hector sleeps! Which of the king's squires / hypaspists or men-in-armour is awake?

The literal meaning of ὑπασπιστής, normally found in the singular in this sense, is 'shield-bearer, esquire': it is so used in, for example, Herodotus 5.111, Euripides' *Phoenissae* 1213,³¹ or Xenophon's *Anabasis* 4.2.20 (cf. also ὑπασπιστήρ in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* 182)³² to signify retainers to officers, even to well-to-do private soldiers, charged with such menial tasks as carrying arms, armour, provisions etc.³³ However, the *collocation* ὑπασπιστᾶι βασιλέως inevitably recalls a Macedonian technical term, ὑπασπιστᾶι οἱ βασιλικοί, which designated the Foot Guardsmen associated with the Macedonian king.³⁴ The Macedonian sense of the term, which, as has been suggested, may have been 'a genuinely Macedonian contribution to the etymology',³⁵ would be especially welcome here; otherwise τευχοφόρων will be tautological. This Macedonian corps, which consisted of 3,000 men,³⁶ seems to have been an important fighting force already during the reign of Philip II.³⁷ Now, Greek sources contemporary with Philip, albeit fully acquainted with the πεζέταιροι of the Macedonian phalanx, are totally silent on the ὑπασπιστᾶι; this probably suggests³⁸ that the corps was, at the time, too recent an innovation to be taken into account by anyone not intimately familiar with the Macedonian military milieu. This is consistent with two alternative assumptions regarding the date of *Rhesus*: either the author of the play was a contemporary of Philip II who had direct knowledge of the Macedonian military and may well have lived in Philip's court; or he was active sometime after Philip, when the ὑπασπιστᾶι would have been better known to Greeks outside Macedon. At any rate, as will emerge in the following sections of this chapter, it is unlikely that the author was later than Alexander the Great.

Eysert (n. 3) 3–40 (esp. 32–33) and Goossens (n. 5) 99 tried unconvincingly to underplay the importance of this piece of lexical evidence. This is not to say, of course, that the Greeks were unfamiliar with *peltasts* as such before the Peloponnesian War: see Best (n. 14) 3–16 for evidence suggesting a familiarity with Thracian peltasts already from the mid-sixth century onwards. For peltasts in the Peloponnesian War see again Best (n. 14) 17–35.

³⁰ The argument of this section was first put forth in a less developed form in Liapis (n. 9) 170–71.

³¹ 'Squire' or even 'subordinate but fighting comrade'; see Mastronarde *ad loc.*

³² Cf. Hermann (n. 3) 292.

³³ See Hanson (n. 17) 61–63; H. Van Wees, *Greek Warfare* (London 2004) 68–71.

³⁴ Cf. J. Kalléris, *Les anciens Macédoniens I* (Athens 1954) 271: 'le terme "ὑπασπιστᾶι" se rencontre uniquement en Macédoine, dans le sens technique de "corps militaire des hypaspistes"'. The

term occurs in, for example, Arr., *An.* 1.8.4 and 5.13.4. On ὑπασπιστᾶι being identical with ὑπασπιστᾶι οἱ βασιλικοί, see especially W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great II: Sources and Studies* (Cambridge 1948) 148–50, 191–92. On the special association of the ὑπασπιστᾶι, evidently as bodyguards, with the Macedonian king, cf. Plut., *Alex.* 51.6; Tarn (*op. cit.*) 140; Errington (n. 27) 244; N.G.L. Hammond, *Collected Studies II* (Amsterdam 1993) 182; R.D. Milns, 'The hypaspists of Alexander III: some problems', *Historia* 20 (1971) 186–95, esp. 187.

³⁵ Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 415.

³⁶ On the number of the ὑπασπιστᾶι, see Tarn (n. 34) 149–50; Milns (n. 34) 188–91.

³⁷ 'Perhaps anytime after 356' (R.D. Milns, 'Philip II and the hypaspists', *Historia* 16 (1967) 509–12, esp. 511), or 'in the latter part at least of the reign of Philip' (Hammond (n. 34) 187).

³⁸ As Milns (n. 37) 511–12 has plausibly argued.

The king's company of friends

Early in the play, when the chorus urge Hector to take measures in view of the unwonted nocturnal activity in the Greek camp, they ask him to send his 'friends' to his 'own cavalry company' and order that the horses be harnessed (*Rhesus* 26–27):

πέμπε φίλους ἰέναι ποτὶ σὸν λόχον,
ἀρμόσατε ψαλίοις ἵππους.³⁹

Send your friends to your own cavalry company, fit the curbs to the horses' [mouths]!

It is unclear why Hector should be asked, in so vague a manner, to send his 'friends', rather than, for example, a specific officer, to alert 'his own' company. Moreover, it is unclear what it is that makes this particular company Hector's 'own' (σὸν λόχον is strongly possessive): there is nothing else in the play to suggest that Hector may have had his own personal company to command, nor does anything in the *Iliad* suggest this idea.

One is again tempted to speculate that this is a reflection of Macedonian military institutions. Since a fairly early time, the Macedonian heavy cavalry went by the name of ἑταῖροι, 'Companions', sometimes also called φίλοι.⁴⁰ The Macedonian ἑταῖροι or φίλοι, apparently like Hector's own φίλοι in *Rhesus* 26, held high offices in the army command.⁴¹ Now, a select corps of 300 royal ἑταῖροι formed the 'King's Squadron' (ἴλη ἢ βασιλική), a cavalry division especially attached to the Macedonian king, and sometimes called 'King's Squadron of the Companions'.⁴² Hector is to have 'his own' cavalry company (λόχος) summoned, as the Macedonian king might have summoned his personal cavalry squadron; the summoning will be done by Hector's 'friends' (φίλοι), as the Macedonian king would have used his Companions (ἑταῖροι or φίλοι) in any operation involving the cavalry.

Establishing a date for the institution of 'the King's Companions' has proved a most vexed problem, especially since our only source, Anaximenes of Lampsakos (*FGrH* 72 F 4), unhelpfully attributes it to a certain 'Alexander' without further specification. This Alexander has been variously identified with Alexander I,⁴³ with Alexander II,⁴⁴ and with Alexander the Great.⁴⁵ More radically, Cawkwell⁴⁶ argued that 'Alexander' in the Anaximenes of Lampakos fragment, as quoted by the lexicographer Harpocration, is simply a mistake for 'Philip II'. At any rate, the King's Companions cannot be later than Alexander the Great, and may even have been instituted somewhat earlier.

³⁹ That λόχος here denotes a cavalry company may be deduced, precisely, from the immediately ensuing injunction to harness the horses (27). For λόχος = 'equestrian unit', cf. A., *Th.* 56 with 60–61, 80 (cf. 42 λοχαγέται).

⁴⁰ Cf. esp. Theopomp. *Hist.*, *FGrH* 115 F 225; Arr., *An.* 1.25.4–5; Curtius 6.7.17; N.G.L. Hammond, *The Macedonian State: Origins, Institutions and History* (Oxford 1989) 54, 140–42, 238–39; M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Macedonian Institutions under the Kings*, vol. I (Athens 1996) 286–88.

⁴¹ See Hammond in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 159; Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 397 with n. 3.

⁴² For ἴλη ἢ βασιλική as an élite corps, cf.

especially Arr., *An.* 3.11.8; Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 408–10; A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1988) 261; J.R. Ellis, *Philip II and Macedonian Imperialism* (London 1976) 54. *Contra* Tarn (n. 34) 139 who speculates, improbably, that the King's Squadron was formed from the lesser nobility.

⁴³ A. Momigliano, *Filippo il Macedone* (Florence 1934) 8–10.

⁴⁴ F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* vol. IIc, p. 107; Hammond (n. 40) 98.

⁴⁵ Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 705–09; Hatzopoulos (n. 40) 269.

⁴⁶ G. Cawkwell, *Philip of Macedon* (London 1978) 31–32.

The ‘monarchs’ of the light troops

In the same context of military emergency, the chorus urge Hector to alert ‘the captains of the light troops’: ποῦ δὲ γυμνήτων μόναρχοι ... ; (*Rhesus* 31). Now, γυμνήτων μόναρχοι is a unique expression: apart from the fact that γυμνής (*cf.* also *Rhesus* 313) occurs only once more in Classical tragedy (Euripides’ *Phoenissae* 1147), μόναρχοι, which ought normally to mean ‘monarchs’,⁴⁷ seems to suggest that the light-troop units (slingers, javelin-throwers, etc.) had a single captain each. In that case, they cannot have been more than a few hundreds strong, at most. This is consistent with Macedonian practice: Macedonian light infantry comprised apparently small forces, ‘to be thought of in hundreds of men not in thousands’.⁴⁸

The Macedonian soldiers’ ἰσηγορία

An exceptional feature of the play’s chorus is their unusually rambunctious character, which goes well beyond what one expects of a usual tragic chorus. They give military advice, in an especially assertive manner, to their own commander-in-chief (*Rhesus* 23–33, 76–77) and are boisterous enough to criticize him openly (*Rhesus* 131–32).⁴⁹ This is wholly unparalleled in Greek tragedy: choruses of soldiers are expected to show nothing less than complete and unquestioning discipline to their commanders.⁵⁰ The attitude of the *Rhesus* chorus is also hard to explain in dramatic terms: their restiveness, as opposed to the docility of the choruses of *Ajax* or *Philoctetes* (*cf.* n. 50), seems to serve no dramatic purpose, other than a display of pointless, short-lived excitement.

One wonders if this could perhaps be a reflection of the play’s Macedonian milieu. In the Macedonian army, each and every soldier, albeit under iron military discipline, had traditionally as much of a right to express his opinion as the king himself (ἰσηγορία).⁵¹ By assuming that *Rhesus* reflects the right of ἰσηγορία obtaining in the Macedonian army, we may throw new light on Hector’s deference to ‘public opinion’ in this play. Otherwise, Hector’s attitude would be explicable only as a sign of extremely weak leadership,⁵² but this seems incompatible with the braggadocio, overbearing imperiousness and even abrasiveness he displays elsewhere in the play, as when he threatens the guards with such extreme punishments as lashing or decapitation (*Rhesus* 816–19). It is especially to be noted that, when Hector admits that his plan to launch an all-out night attack against the Greeks was ill-conceived, he presents his change of mind not so much as a point scored for the prudent Aeneas, who was after all the one to point out the hazards of such an enterprise, but rather as a concession to what he deems to be the prevailing feeling among the soldiery (*Rhesus* 137):

νικᾶις, ἐπειδὴ πᾶσιν ἀνδάνει τάδε.

you [sc. Aeneas] carry it, since all are of this mind.

⁴⁷ The point has already been made by Hermann (n. 32) 291.

⁴⁸ Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 431.

⁴⁹ *Cf.* already C.D. Beck, *Exercitatio critica de Rheso suppositio Euripidis dramate* (Leipzig 1780) 6–7, 24.

⁵⁰ *Cf.* especially S., *Aj.* 349–50, 481–84; *Ph.* 135–43. True, in E., *Hel.* 1553 a sailor does criticize his king, but (a) he is not a chorus-member and (b) the king is a buffoon who fails to command respect even amongst his

servants (*Hel.* 1627–38).

⁵¹ For the term see Plb. 5.27.6; *cf.* Hammond in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 161.

⁵² Thus, for example, L.C. Valckenaer, *Diatribae in Euripidis perditorum dramatum reliquias* (Leiden 1767) 100; G. Björck, ‘The authenticity of *Rhesus*’, *Eranos* 55 (1957) 7–17, esp. 14. H. Strohm, ‘Beobachtungen zum “Rhesos”’, *Hermes* 87 (1959) 257–74, esp. 269–70, sees Hector as passive and paralysed.

If the chorus sometimes go overboard in their criticisms of Hector (*Rhesus* 132 ‘a general exercising his power in an unsafe manner is not to my liking’), this may be no more than a Greek author’s botched attempt to give dramatic expression to a military attitude he was no doubt unfamiliar with, and thus likely to try to render in as striking terms as possible.

II. TROJANS AND MACEDONIANS

At least since the time of Alexander the Great, if not earlier, Troy and the Trojan War were firmly embedded in Macedonian ideology. As is well known from both literary and pictorial sources, Alexander aggressively promoted himself as ‘the new Achilles’.⁵³ An emblematic gesture in this respect was his visit to Ilium (334 BC), where he sacrificed to Athena Ilios,⁵⁴ paid homage to Achilles’s tomb and had Hephaestion do the same to Patroclus’ tomb,⁵⁵ thereby establishing an unmistakable analogy between the mythic pair of lovers and their Macedonian counterpart. An earlier sacrifice to Protesilaus in his sanctuary at Elaiou (i.e., before crossing over to the Troad) was meant to ensure that Alexander’s landing in Asia would be more fortunate than Protesilaus’.⁵⁶ Indeed, Alexander was the first to leap on Asian soil in full armour after casting his spear from the ship into Trojan ground: he thus made a point not only of succeeding where Protesilaus had failed but also of claiming Asia as spear-won territory.⁵⁷ In the same connection, he showed himself ostentatiously benevolent towards the Ilians, with whom he claimed common ancestry through his mother’s Molossian blood: Andromache, once queen among the Molossians, was thus made into Alexander’s own ancestor.⁵⁸ Further, Strabo informs us, Alexander gave the Ilians’ settlement the title of city, declared it free and exempt from tribute, adorned the sanctuary of Athena Ilios with offerings and promised to reconstruct and beautify it.⁵⁹ During the same visit, Alexander also sacrificed to Priam as an act of atonement for the Trojan king’s murder by Alexander’s ancestor Neoptolemus.⁶⁰ The political symbolism of Alexander’s actions in the Troad should be obvious. Owing to its strategic location, the Troad provided, as it were, a port of entry to Asia, which was Alexander’s next military target in 334 BC.⁶¹ By appropriating Troy’s legendary epic past, Alexander was granting both legitimacy and grandeur to the vast enterprise he was about to undertake.

As has been pointed out by A.B. Bosworth and A. Erskine among others,⁶² Alexander carefully avoided taking sides either with the Achaeans or with the Trojans, because he was evidently anxious to evoke and appropriate the whole Trojan War era. Thus, his emulation of Achilles went hand-in-hand with his claim of kinship with the Trojans and his promise to reconstruct Troy. In light of almost 150 years of anti-Trojan propaganda, in which the Trojans had been

⁵³ See especially A.F. Stewart, *Faces of Power* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1993) 80–86; A. Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome* (Oxford 2001) 229.

⁵⁴ Arr., *An.* 1.11.7; D. S. 17.18.1; Plut., *Alex.* 15.7.

⁵⁵ Plut., *Alex.* 15.8; Arr., *An.* 1.12.1 οἱ δὲ ὅτι καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλέως ἄρα τάφον ἐστεφάνωσεν. Ἡφαιστίωνα δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι τοῦ Πατρόκλου τὸν τάφον ἐστεφάνωσε.

⁵⁶ Thus Arr., *An.* 1.11.5 καὶ ὁ νοῦς τῆς θυσίας ἦν ἐπιτυχεστέραν οἱ γενέσθαι ἢ Πρωτεσιλάω τὴν ἀπόβασιν.

⁵⁷ Arr., *An.* 1.11.7; D. S. 17.17.2; Justin. 11.5.10–11. Cf. Bosworth (n. 42) 38 with n. 35.

⁵⁸ Str. 13.1.27 (594C., III.562.27–564.29 Radt) κατὰ τε δὴ τὸν τοῦ ποιητοῦ ζῆλον καὶ κατὰ τὴν συγγένειαν τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν Αἰακιδῶν τῶν ἐν Μολοττοῖς βασιλευσάντων, παρ’ οἷς καὶ τὴν

Ἀνδρομάχην ἱστοροῦσι βασιλεῦσαι, τὴν Ἐκτορος γενομένην γυναῖκα, ἐφιλοφρονεῖτο πρὸς τοὺς Ἰλιέας ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος. Cf. Hammond (n. 40) 206 with n. 2; Bosworth (n. 42) 39, 281.

⁵⁹ Str. 13.1.26 (593C., III.560.19–25 Radt), though it seems unlikely that this happened *after* the battle at Granicus as Strabo claims (μετὰ τὴν ἐπὶ Γρανίκῳ νίκην).

⁶⁰ Arr., *An.* 1.11.8; cf. Erskine (n. 53) 228 with n. 15. For depictions of Neoptolemus on Macedonian artefacts, though of a much later date (second/first century BC), see *Ancient Macedonia* (Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens 1988) 364, no. 325, 371, no. 334.

⁶¹ On the political and ritual significance of Alexander’s focus on the Troad, see further Erskine (n. 53) 227–28.

⁶² Bosworth (n. 42) 39; Erskine (n. 53) 228–29.

assimilated to the ‘Phrygians’ (a term carrying strong connotations of effeminacy and servility),⁶³ cast as pathetic victims or depicted as the mythical precursors of the Persians (and of the Oriental enemy in general),⁶⁴ Alexander’s gesture ushered in a whole new era, one in which Troy and the entire epic past were to feature prominently in Macedonian official ideology. In Erskine’s epigrammatic formulation, ‘Alexander’s visit focuses not on the subjugation of the Trojans, but instead on heroes, reconciliation, and renewal’.⁶⁵ True, Alexander’s emulation of Protesilaus’ leap onto Trojan soil was an aggressive gesture if there ever was one. But the rites of reconciliation Alexander performed in the Troad were just as important and meaningful as his (as yet symbolic) conquest of Asian territory: by constructing an epic past in which the enmity between Greeks and Trojans was no longer in the forefront, Alexander appropriated the Trojan War as a paragon of heroic valour more than anything else. He thus was able to straddle both sides, as Erskine puts it, in order to justify his rule in both spheres, Europe and Asia,⁶⁶ by shrouding his expedition in the halo of an idealized heroic past.⁶⁷

Significantly, *Rhesus* contains details of plot and structure which, though perfectly intelligible on their own, seem to acquire additional resonance when interpreted as allusions to and symbolic affirmations of Macedonia’s links with Troy. One such detail is the prominent role assigned to Aeneas in *Rhesus*. Aeneas makes no appearance in the *Doloneia*, and his entry in *Rhesus* 87 may well be a novelty. Although in the *Iliad* (20.158–292) Aeneas shows unmatched prowess in standing against Achilles, and even inspires dread in him, it is not as a valiant warrior that he enters the stage in *Rhesus*; on the contrary, he advises *against* venturing into the Greek lines to avoid, *inter alia*, the risk of encountering, precisely, Achilles. In *Rhesus*, Aeneas is first and foremost a judicious counsellor offering salutary warning (105–30). Moreover, he is among the very few characters in *Rhesus* to be given no outstanding flaws, not even the harmless, if annoying, bragging of a Hector or a Rhesus. This is achieved, among other means, by a subtle manipulation of the traditional myth: the power-struggle between Aeneas and Priam alluded to in *Iliad* 13.459–61⁶⁸ and 20.179–85, 306–08 has been totally suppressed in *Rhesus*, even though the confrontation between Hector and Aeneas in the first episode provided a good opportunity for introducing an allusion to the latter’s strained relations with the house of Priam.⁶⁹ If avoidance of this potentially damaging theme was a conscious choice on the author’s part, then perhaps he intended to cast in as glorious a light as possible the man who was by some accounts a mythical ancestor of certain Macedonians, had crossed the Balkan range on his way from Troy to Italy and had founded a number of cities in the region named Aenus or Aeneia after him, east of the Thermaic Gulf.⁷⁰ Considering now that, despite the judicious advice he offers, Aeneas is far from

⁶³ Phrygia is geographically quite distinct from the Troad and Homer rightly keeps the two peoples apart, but their identification becomes current by Aeschylus’ time (E. Hall, ‘When did the Trojans turn into Phrygians? Alcaeus 42.15’, *ZPE* 73 (1988) 15–18), and is standard especially in late Euripides (for example, *Andr.* 592, *IA* 71, esp. *Or.* 485, 1110–11, 1351, 1369–529).

⁶⁴ For the paradigmatic antithesis ‘freedom-loving Greece’ / ‘servile Asia’, of which the Trojan War was the paradigm *par excellence*, see Isocr. 4.158; C. Willink (ed.), *Euripides Orestes* (Oxford 1986) xlv; E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989) 101, 110 with nn. 29–31, 164–65, 193–94, 196–97; K. DeVries, ‘The nearly other: the Attic vision of Phrygians and Lydians’ in B. Cohen (ed.), *Not the Classical Ideal* (Leiden 2000) 339–56; Erskine (n. 53) 61–92, esp. 73–74, 87–90.

⁶⁵ Erskine (n. 53) 229.

⁶⁶ Erskine (n. 53) 230.

⁶⁷ In Liapis (n. 9) 179–80, I argued that the enormous importance Alexander seems to have attached to the Troad as a cardinal locus in the *Symbolik* of his long-term policies may have owed something to his father’s ambitions, which probably went well beyond dominance in Greece. This seems likely enough, but cannot be proved for lack of sufficient evidence; at any rate, the point is immaterial for my argument.

⁶⁸ Cf. Janko *ad loc.*

⁶⁹ On the rivalry between the Priamids and the family of Aeneas, especially insofar as the former are destined to perish whereas the latter survive, see further M.J. Anderson, *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford 1997) 62–69.

⁷⁰ See N.G.L. Hammond, *A History of Macedonia I* (Oxford 1972) 187, 301–02; Hammond in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 25; Erskine (n. 53) 93–98, 153–54 with discussion of coins of Aeneia bearing images of

indispensable to the plot (there is no reason why a less excited Hector could not have thought of sending someone to spy on the Greeks, as Aeneas suggests),⁷¹ one is tempted to assume that the author of *Rhesus* was intent on having Aeneas appear on stage, and at an important turning-point at that, so as to implicate in his play, in terms that are as flattering as possible, a personage of central importance in Macedonian legend.

III. RHESUS: FROM MACEDON TO ALEXANDRIA

There should be nothing extraordinary *per se* in the suggestion that *Rhesus* may have been intended for performance in Macedon. Recent research, notably by Easterling, Allan and especially Taplin, has shown that as early as Aeschylus' time, and on a fairly significant scale from the last half of the fifth century onwards, Athenian playwrights could envisage reperformances or even premières in venues outside Athens. We know that Euripides wrote *Archelaus* for performance in the court of the Macedonian king of that name.⁷² The *epodos* to the second stasimon of his *Bacchae* (560–75), with its elaborate evocation of Macedonian locations, may have been intended as a nod to a potential Macedonian audience.⁷³ It is even conceivable that there were plays, already in the fifth century, whose *primary* audience was non-Athenian. A case in point may be Euripides' *Andromache*, whose date, according to the ancient scholion to 445 (II 284.20–21 Schwartz), was impossible to establish, 'because it was not performed in Athens' (οὐ δεδίδακται γὰρ Ἀθήνησιν).⁷⁴ In general, scholars are increasingly recognizing that Athenian tragedies are by no means exclusively Athenocentric. On the contrary, as Taplin points out, they are often set in non-Athenian locales, they habitually contain a modicum of praise for or interest in landscapes, legends or events associated with places outside Athens, and they seem programmatically generous about other cities and restrainedly proud about their own. In a word, they seem to be contributing to 'an attempt to establish tragedy as a panhellenic [...] art-form rather than a local art-form'.⁷⁵

Aeneas, on which see also B.V. Head, *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Macedonia, etc.* (London 1879) 41–42; and (with literary sources) W. Baege, *De Macedonum sacris* (diss. Halle 1913) 203–04.

⁷¹ The point was already made by U. von Wilamowitz, 'Lesefrüchte', *Hermes* 61 (1926) 277–303 (287) = *Kleine Schriften* IV (Berlin 1962) 414. Certain critics insisted that Aeneas' advice is in fact at the root of Trojan misfortune: for if Hector had launched the night attack Aeneas manages to dissuade him from, Odysseus and Diomedes would never have had the opportunity to kill Rhesus. See notably Strohm (n. 52) 258–59; M. Fantuzzi, 'The myths of Dolon and Rhesus from Homer to the "Homeric/Cyclic" tragedy *Rhesus*', in F. Montanari and A. Rengakos (eds), *La poésie épique grecque* (Entretiens Hardt 52) (Vandœuvres-Geneva 2006) 135–76, esp. 148–49; cf. M. Fantuzzi, 'La Doloneia del *Reso* come luogo dell' errore e dell' incertezza', in M. Vetta and C. Catenacci (eds), *I luoghi e la poesia nella Grecia antica* (Alessandria 2006) 241–63, esp. 246. But the play never encourages us, even implicitly, to think along these lines: had it been so important for the outcome of the action, Aeneas' responsibility would have been more clearly pointed out.

⁷² See A. Harder, *Euripides' Kresphontes and Archelaos* (Leiden 1985) esp. 126–31.

⁷³ See P.E. Easterling, 'Euripides outside Athens: a

speculative note', *ICIS* 19 (1994) 73–80, esp. 77–79. Cf. also W. Allan, *The 'Andromache' and Euripidean Tragedy* (Oxford 2000) 149–60. By far the most detailed, as well as brilliantly argued, case for an early spread of Athenian tragedy outside Attica through (re)performance is O. Taplin, 'Spreading the word through performance', in S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (eds), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge 1999) 33–57, esp. 42 on Euripides in Macedon.

⁷⁴ Allan (n. 73) 150–51 argues that *Andr.* was in fact produced in Athens because, as he maintains, the mention of Callimachus (*fr.* 451 Pfeiffer) in the same scholion suggests that Athenian didascalic records were available for that play. But the scholiast cites Callimachus on a point ('Callimachus says that the tragedy [the *Andr.*] was ascribed to Democrates') for which information might well have been obtained from non-didascalic sources, for example, from manuscripts of the play claiming Democrates as its author. More importantly, the fact that the scholiast had access to Callimachus but was still unable to establish the play's date with any certainty suggests, precisely, that didascalic information on its première was lacking, in all likelihood owing to the reason the scholiast himself evokes, namely that *Andr.* was not produced in Athens.

⁷⁵ Taplin (n. 73) 48–52, quotation from (n. 73) 51.

What is extraordinary about *Rhesus* is that, whatever panhellenic aspirations it may have harboured, its primary concern is clearly to assert ‘barbarian’ identity as a legitimate component of tragic discourse, rather than as a mere foil bringing out the centrality (praiseworthy or not) of the Greek characters, as was conventionally the case in fifth-century tragedy (cf. above, pages 80–81). Far from being, as usual, the victims of Greek aggression, ‘barbarians’ and Trojans in particular are represented in *Rhesus* as fighters worthy of respect, who can seriously challenge the Greek aggressors. In a far cry from its pejorative connotations in fifth-century tragedy,⁷⁶ βάρβαρος in *Rhesus* denotes a status one can take seriously and even be proud of. Thus Rhesus is accused of failing his fellow barbarians (*Rhesus* 404–05), as a Greek might be accused of failing Greece; Hector is suspected of trying to hoodwink a fellow barbarian (*Rhesus* 833–34); etc. Such a ‘barbarian-friendly’ attitude is wholly unprecedented even in tragedies that are otherwise sympathetic to non-Greeks.⁷⁷ True, the play does not enact a wholesale pulverization of Greek valour. After all, it is the Greeks who finally carry the day since they succeed in killing Dolon and the redoubtable (*Rhesus* 598–605) Rhesus, even though they are all too ready to admit defeat and scuttle back to their camp empty handed when they fail to locate Hector (*Rhesus* 582–84, 595–607). Even Hector himself has to acknowledge the Greeks as worthy opponents: ‘it is not so easy to ravage with the spear the regions around Argos and the pastures of Hellas’ (*Rhesus* 477–78). Moreover, one has to admit that, as a rule, the play directs anti-Greek animus specifically against Odysseus (for example, *Rhesus* 498–517, 708–21) rather than against the Greeks at large. Still, Hector’s moderate praise of Greek valour is immediately qualified by an assertion that he is still able to crush the Greeks (*Rhesus* 480): κοῦ μεμφόμεσθά γ’, ἀλλ’ ἄδην ἐλεύνομεν, ‘we can’t complain, we have been laying on them well enough’.⁷⁸ More importantly, it is surely significant that *Rhesus*’ mood is distinctly anti-Greek where it matters, namely in the climactic exodos, where a grief-stricken Muse, in a context of emotional outpouring and violent cursing, lashes out not only against the Greeks but also against Athena herself (938–49). This is a far cry from fifth-century tragedy, where Athens’ patron goddess is represented as invariably venerable and awe-inspiring, sometimes (as in *Ajax* or *Troades*) aloof and imperious, but always above violent criticism of the kind we find in the concluding scene of *Rhesus*. For all the play’s pretence at equidistance, *Rhesus* eventually tips the balance in favour of the Trojan cause by inspiring strong disapproval of Greek duplicity and of Athena’s callous ingratitude.

Peculiarities such as these are best explained, it seems to me, by the hypothesis that *Rhesus* was produced before an audience wary of Athens, and of Greece as a whole. We have seen that internal evidence encourages the assumption of a Macedonian context for *Rhesus*, but it seems unlikely that this context could have been, say, the court of Archelaus II, who did host Athenian tragedians such as Agathon and Euripides, since Archelaus fostered amicable relations with Athens, even though he was in a position to call the tune given that Macedonia was crucial for Athens’ ship-timber supply, and Athenian power was declining after Syracuse.⁷⁹ A more promising candidate would be Philip II, given his strikingly assertive attitude towards Athens,

⁷⁶ Hall (n. 64) 121–33, 160–65 and *passim*.

⁷⁷ For instance, in E., *Tr.* even Trojan characters use βάρβαρος (764, 973) in the depreciatory way one expects from an author such as Euripides whose viewpoint is fundamentally Greek-centred: *Tr.* 764 ὦ βάρβαρ’ ἐξευρόντες Ἕλληνας κακά, a line spoken by Andromache; *Tr.* 973 ὥσθ’ ἡ μὲν Ἄργος βαρβάροις ἀπημπόλα, a line spoken by Hecuba. And in *IT* 1174, a barbarian king expresses disgust at a heinous crime: οὐδ’ ἐν βαρβάροις ἔτλη τις ἄν.

⁷⁸ The ancient scholia *ad loc.* (338.6–10 Schwartz) explain: ‘we do not make light of our enemies (καὶ οὐκ

ἐκφραυλίζομεν αὐτούς) but do our best to drive them away’. This is untenable, although adopted by several editors: μέφομαι does not mean ‘depreciate’ (ἐκφραυλίζω) but ‘blame, censure’. For μέφομαι used absolutely (‘find fault, complain’), cf. A., *Su.* 137 οὐδέ μέφομαι (with Friis Johansen and Whittle *ad loc.*); E., *Med.* 558 ἄλις γὰρ οἱ γεγῶτες [sc. παῖδες] οὐδέ μέφομαι; *Hel.* 637 οὐκ ἐμέμφθην ‘I have no fault to find’ (thus rightly Dale, *pace* Kannicht).

⁷⁹ See Hammond in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 137–39.

abetted by well-known military feats and by Macedon's spectacular rise to power under his reign. Indeed, Hector's mixture of mild praise for Greece with strong assertiveness against it (*cf.* above, page 83) is eerily reminiscent of Philip's carrot-and-stick policy toward Athens, which combined deft and ruthless military action with diplomatic display of goodwill, so that the alarm and despondency caused by the former were usually balanced and tempered by the latter.⁸⁰ It is also possible to associate *Rhesus* with Alexander III, although his reign did not involve major confrontations with Athens or with the rest of the mainland Greek cities.

If *Rhesus* was not composed primarily for an Athenian performance context, and was presumably never performed in Athens, then the following question suggests itself: can we produce a convincing motive for the substitution of the genuine, Euripidean *Rhesus* by the evidently spurious play that has come down to us? And can we make any precise suggestions as to the machinery by which such substitution could have been practically effected? There is no easy answer to these questions, and it is onto this difficulty that advocates of the authenticity of *Rhesus* have sometimes latched all too eagerly, as if it were a fatal objection against the spuriousness theory.⁸¹ The obvious flaw of their line of argument is that, were it to be applied as a universal standard for determining the authenticity of any ancient literary work, almost no ancient text could ever be pronounced spurious, since it seldom happens that either an adequate motive can be supplied or a substitution method pointed to. For instance, can anyone explain how the Alexandrians came to possess two plays entitled *Women of Aetna* (Αἰτναῖαι), both claiming to be the work of Aeschylus?⁸² Or can anyone point to the doubtless serious reasons for which Aristophanes of Byzantium held no less than seven, or perhaps as many as seventeen, dramas from the Sophoclean *corpus* to be spurious?⁸³ Finally, in a case that has a lot in common with *Rhesus*, can anyone reveal the machinery by which the tetralogy consisting of *Peirithous*, *Rhadamanthys*, *Tennes* and the satyr-play *Sisyphus* came to be attributed to Euripides, when there are considerable arguments in favour of positing Critias as its author (*TrGF* 43 F 1–14 (*Pir.*), 15–18 (*Rhad.*), 19 (*Sis.*) Snell)?⁸⁴ And even if the tetralogy is not by Critias, as recent scholars tend to affirm,⁸⁵ the very fact that its attribution was open to question is in itself evidence that not all authorship problems could have been resolved in Alexandria or even before, in the *Didascaliae*.

⁸⁰ Thus, the crushing defeat of Olynthus in 348 BC, in spite of the significant military assistance the Olynthians had received from Athens, was followed by Philip's unwavering willingness to use diplomacy rather than force in his dealings with Athens (even as he launched harassing operations against Athenian advanced bases!), and finally to negotiate the terms of what came to be known as the 'Peace of Philocrates' (346 BC); see Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 329–47. Similarly, ten years later, in the aftermath of Chaeronea (338 BC), Philip refrained from turning his triumph into an opportunity to crush Athens, as he certainly could have. Instead, he returned to the Athenians the bones of their dead soldiers, released hundreds of prisoners without ransom and proposed a peace treaty on more lenient terms than most would have dared to hope: see further Griffith in Hammond and Griffith (n. 27) 604–15.

⁸¹ For example, W. Ridgeway, 'Euripides in Macedon', *CQ* 20 (1926) 1–19, here 15–16; W. Ridgeway, 'Rejoinder', *CQ* 20 (1926) 81; C.B. Sneller, *De Rheso tragoedia*, (diss. Utrecht, Amsterdam 1949) 94–95 with n. 1.

⁸² The catalogue of Aeschylus' dramas found in the

MSS (test. 78 1d, 2a Radt) mentions an Αἰτναῖαι γυνήσιοι and an Αἰτναῖαι νόθοι.

⁸³ Arist. Byz., *fr.* 385 Slater = Soph. test. 1, 76–77 Radt.

⁸⁴ See *Peirithous* test. ii Kannicht, and *cf.* Pearson (n. 3) 61. For the argument that the tetralogy is by Critias, see principally U. von Wilamowitz, *Analecta Euripidea* (Berlin 1875) 161–72.

⁸⁵ See, for example, A. Dihle, 'Das Satyrspiel "Sisyphos"', *Hermes* 105 (1977) 28–42 (with polemical doxography at 29, n. 2); A. Dihle, 'Philosophie und Tradition im 5. Jahrhundert v. C.', in *Wegweisende Antike: Zur Aktualität humanistischer Bildung* (Humanistische Bildung Beiheft 1) (Stuttgart 1986) 13–24, esp. 16–17 with nn. 16–17. Against the spuriousness theory ('the grounds for denying the Euripidean authorship of the *Peirithous* are grossly inadequate'), see also D.F. Sutton, *Two Lost Plays of Euripides* (New York 1987) 5–81 (quotation from 10); C. Collard, 'The *Pirithous* fragments', in J.A. López Férez (ed.), *De Homero a Libanio* (Madrid 1995) 183–93 = C. Collard, *Tragedy, Euripides and Euripideans* (Exeter 2007) 56–68 (with a mainly bibliographic 'Endnote 2006' at 67–68).

There must have been plays whose attribution fluctuated between more than one author, in which case editorial decisions in Alexandria must have been, to a certain extent, arbitrary.⁸⁶

When all is said and done, it may be wisest simply to assume that our *Rhesus* was the only play of that name to reach Alexandria, and so it almost inevitably insinuated itself into the Euripidean *corpus*, since the *Didascaliae* already recorded a play by that title as the work of Euripides.⁸⁷ We may even attempt to reconstruct a very approximate timeline for the substitution of the genuine play by the supposititious one we have today. As attested in one of the ancient *Hypotheses* (b Diggle), the ancients knew of two prologues to *Rhesus*, one of which was deemed to be an interpolation by actors (*TrGF* adesp. F 8 I K.-S.). It is clear that the author of the *Hypothesis* did not have direct access to either prologue, or he would not have written πρόλογοι δὲ διττοὶ φέρονται, ‘two prologues are reported (to exist / to have existed)’.⁸⁸ What information he possessed about the two prologues came from his reading of Dicaearchus. He admits as much when he states ὁ γοῦν Δικαίαρχος ἐκτιθεὶς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ Ῥήσου γράφει κατὰ λέξιν οὕτως, ‘Dicaearchus, for one, presenting the plot-summary of *Rhesus*, writes exactly as follows’ (there follows the information on and quotations from the two prologues): γοῦν, which introduces ‘part proof’,⁸⁹ suggests that the author of the *Hypothesis*, or his source, was wholly dependent on Dicaearchus in this matter. Now, Dicaearchus, who was active in the late fourth century (perhaps 330–310 BC), seems still to have had access to the genuine Euripidean play. For he cites (fr. 81 Wehrli = 114 Mirhady) as *Rhesus*’ ἀρχή a line ([E.] fr. 1108 N.² = E. fr. 660a N.²/Snell), which seems to have announced the approach of Dawn and so cannot have belonged to the extant *Rhesus*, which takes place almost entirely at night. The line in question is νῦν εὐσέληνον φέγγος ἢ διφρήλατος, which may be most appositely supplemented by <‘Ἐως διώκει> (Snell) or <‘Ἐως διώκουσ’> (Diggle).⁹⁰ The notion that the Dawn dispels or drives away the stars or the darkness of night is both old and widespread, as is the concept of a chariot-born Dawn.⁹¹ And although the Moon is sometimes imagined as driving a chariot, it would make little sense to supplement διφρήλατος by ‘simply θεά, or some genealogical periphrasis for Selene / Artemis’.⁹² If the genuine *Rhesus* were indeed set in ‘the

⁸⁶ R. Kannicht (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. 5.2: *Euripides* (Göttingen 2004) 659 speculates that for reasons now unknown attribution of the *Peirithous* tetralogy, which was really the work of Critias, fluctuated between Euripides and Critias in the *Didascaliae*, and that it was eventually inserted by the Alexandrians into the Euripidean *corpus*.

⁸⁷ Cf. Nöldeke (n. 26) 14. In Liapis (n. 9) 182–87, I suggested, παίζων οὐδὲν ἤττον ἢ σπουδάζων, that the substitution may have been effected on purpose by someone sufficiently disgruntled with Athens to want to pass off as Euripidean a play which like *Rhesus* displayed anti-Athenian feeling (cf. especially *Rhesus* 938–49). As an obvious candidate I suggested Demetrius of Phaleron, who was both expelled from Athens after its ‘liberation’ by Demetrius Poliorcetes and seems to have played a central role in the founding of the Library of Alexandria. I have since been apprized that Demetrius has been held responsible for yet another forgery, namely the *Hieron* attributed to Xenophon: see K. Lincke, ‘Xenophons Hieron und Demetrios von Phaleron’, *Philologus* 58 (1899) 224–51. Although benevolent readers found it charmingly amusing, my old hypothesis is entirely fanciful, and much less economical than the one adopted here.

⁸⁸ A. Kirchhoff, ‘Das argument zum Rhesos’,

Philologus 7 (1852) 559–64 (563) interprets ‘two prologues are extant’; but this is not what the Greek says.

⁸⁹ Cf. J.D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford 2nd 1950) 451–53.

⁹⁰ Both supplements are based on E., *Ion* 1158. See Kannicht’s app. crit. ad E., *Rhesus* test. i a 8 (*TrGF* 5.2, p. 643); Diggle’s app. crit. to *Rhesus*, ad init. Cf. Liapis (n. 9) 174.

⁹¹ Cf. E., *Ion* 84–85; Verg., *A.* 3.521, 4.6–7, 5.42–43; Ov., *Met.* 2.112–15, 7.100; *Am.* 1.13.27–28; Sen., *Herc. O.* 614; *Oct.* 1–2; see further Diggle on E., *Phaeth.* 66. The concept is evidently of Indo-European origin, cf. *Rgveda* 1.92.5 ‘[Dawn] spreads herself out, driving back the formless black abyss’; *Rgveda* 1.92.11 ‘she pushes aside her sister’; cf. 10.127.3 ‘[Night] has drawn near, pushing aside her sister the day; darkness, too, will give way’ (trsl. W. Doniger). For the Indo-European concept of the Dawn’s chariot (transferred from the Sun’s horses and chariot), see M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford 2007) 222–23, 470.

⁹² Thus D. Mastronarde, review of D. Kovacs (ed.), *Euripides VI: Bacchae, Iphigenia in Aulis, Rhesus* (Loeb Classical Library 495) (Cambridge, Mass. and London 2002), *Electronic Antiquity* 8.1 (2004) 15–30 (17), in the wake of Morstadt (n. 15) 72–74, with corr. on vi–viii.

middle of the night, with ample time for the following events to occur in the dark', as Mastronarde (n. 92) believes, one would expect the speaker to point out that it is *still* (ἔτι) dark (cf., for example, *IA* 6–8 ἄστῆρ ... ἄισσων ἔτι μεσσήρης) rather than that it is *now* (νῦν μὲν) dark. Clearly, νῦν μὲν announces a celestial phenomenon that is about to take place, which in this particular context could only have been imminent daybreak.⁹³ More importantly perhaps, with διφρήλατος referring to Selene or the like, tautology seems unavoidable: 'now the bright light of the moon [is shed by?] the chariot-driven Moon'. Now, if the first prologue is alien to the *Rhesus* we have, then the second prologue (*Hypothesis* b Diggle 34–44 = *TrGF* adesp. F 8 I K.-S.) must follow suit, since it seems to have been cited by Dicaearchus as an alternative opening to the same play.⁹⁴ We must assume, then, that Dicaearchus' information on *Rhesus*' two prologues was intended for the genuine play, and only came to preface our *Rhesus* by mistake, once the original drama was lost.⁹⁵ On the other hand, as early as (probably) the late third century BC, Aristophanes of Byzantium had before him a prologueless *Rhesus*, or he would not have stated that 'the prologue is delivered by the Chorus of Trojan guards' (cf. *Hypothesis* c 52 Diggle). This is, indeed, the case in the *Rhesus* we have, and we may therefore surmise that (barring an exceptional coincidence) the *Rhesus* that Aristophanes was referring to was the play extant today, not the genuine Euripidean drama.

Let us recapitulate. The evidence examined thus far shows that the genuine *Rhesus* must have disappeared some time between the late fourth (Dicaearchus) and the late third (Aristophanes Byzantium) century. Most probably, the Euripidean play never made it to Alexandria, and so it is reasonable to assume that the loss happened relatively early, namely in the first decade or two of the third century at latest, for it was some time in the 280s or 270s that Alexander the Aetolian engaged in revising the text of the scenic poets.⁹⁶ Now, the existence of two prologues shows that the genuine play was performed, perhaps on several occasions, after Euripides' death and adapted by producers accordingly. This means that the genuine *Rhesus* was not only available, but also well known in the fourth century.⁹⁷ It has been argued, notably by Ritchie,⁹⁸ that a supposititious *Rhesus* could not have duped an Athenian audience into taking it for the real thing at a time when the genuine, Euripidean play was still within living memory. However, as we have seen in the course of this paper, the *Rhesus* we have seems to have been composed for a performance context outside Athens; this should be enough to invalidate Ritchie's argument. Moreover, if the Euripidean *Rhesus* was as well established in the tragic repertoire as the existence of two prologues suggests, the same cannot be said for the play we have, since there is no evidence that it was known either to Athenian dramatists active in the fifth century or to scholars writing on tragedy in the fourth century. The notion that the extant *Rhesus* is alluded to in fifth-century dramas has been adequately refuted by Ritchie, whose cogent argumentation need not be repeated here.⁹⁹ As for fourth-century scholarship, a fragment from the *Τραγωδοῦμενα* by Asclepiades of Tragilus, who wrote on Greek tragic myths around the middle of the fourth century,¹⁰⁰ has been

⁹³ Naturally, μὲν would have here its common inceptive function, cf. Denniston (n. 89) 382–83.

⁹⁴ That the information on the second prologue must also have formed part of the same Dicaearchus quotation was argued most recently by V. Liapis, 'An ancient hypothesis to *Rhesus*, and Dicaearchus' *Hypothesis*', *GRBS* 42 (2001) 313–28, esp. 317–20. In that paper, I pointed out that γράφει κατὰ λέξιν οὕτως regularly prefaces extensive quotations; cf. already Kirchhoff (n. 88) 563–64 and especially Ritchie (n. 3) 31.

⁹⁵ Cf. already Hagenbach (n. 3) 14; Liapis (n. 9) 174.

⁹⁶ See R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford 1968) 105–08.

⁹⁷ Cf. on this point A. Matthiae (ed.), *Euripidis tragoediae et fragmenta*, vol. VIII (Leipzig 1824) 4–5; Wilamowitz (n. 71) 285 = 413.

⁹⁸ Ritchie (n. 3) 21–22, 24.

⁹⁹ See Ritchie (n. 3) 2–4.

¹⁰⁰ For Asclepiades' date, see V. Liapis, 'Epicharmus, Asclepiades of Tragilus, and the *Rhesus*: lessons from a lexicographical entry', *ZPE* 143 (2003) 19–22 (21 n. 18).

thought to refer to *Rhesus* 970–73.¹⁰¹ This, however, is far from certain, as I have argued in detail in Liapis (n. 100) 20–22, and the present state of our evidence makes it impossible to determine whether the *Rhesus* we have was available to Asclepiades in the mid-fourth century.

The iconographic record sheds no more light on the problem of *Rhesus*' date; more importantly, it does not necessarily imply that the play we have was already widely known in the mid-fourth century. Of interest here are three mid-fourth-century vases (360–340 BC).¹⁰² In all three of them, the upper register is strewn with figures of Thracian soldiers, asleep or murdered; on two vases, namely the volute craters by the Darius and the Rhesus painters (see n. 102), Rhesus is either explicitly identified or otherwise singled out by means of distinctive accoutrements such as his tiara and beard. As for the vases' lower registers, they consistently depict Odysseus leading off two horses (as in *Il.* 10.482–501 and *Rhesus* 624–26), but are otherwise pictorially varied. Interestingly, the Rhesus painter is the only one to include a significant detail otherwise found only in our *Rhesus*, namely a single Thracian fleeing the massacre scene in alarm: this may be Rhesus' charioteer who, in *Rhesus* 728–876, survives to tell the tale of his master's murder.¹⁰³ However, as Taplin has recently pointed out, the fleeing Thracian on the vase does not seem to be a charioteer, and he is clearly not wounded.¹⁰⁴ And at any rate, our *Rhesus* was not necessarily the text the Rhesus painter had in mind; for all we know he may have been echoing the genuine, Euripidean *Rhesus* (assuming of course that he was illustrating one particular text rather than a generic mythic narrative). Indeed, there is no reason why the fleeing Thracian could not already be part of the genuine play: the single eyewitness who survives to tell the tale of a murder is a well-known motif, especially familiar from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

Moving on to the Darius painter volute crater, one notices a detail which may at first sight suggest a special affinity with our *Rhesus*. On the upper register to the left of the composition, a seated female figure, surely the Muse, Rhesus' mother, looks on dejectedly as the sleeping Rhesus (identified by name) is being approached by Diomedes, sword in hand, under Athena's guidance. This is surely a telescoping of a later scene (*Rhesus* 890–982), in which the Muse laments her dead son.¹⁰⁵ In the lower register of the same vase, just below the seated Muse, one

¹⁰¹ Asclep. Tragil., *FGrHist* 12 F 5 = Hsch. ρ 272 (III 428 Schmidt) = Phot., *Lex.* 486, 18 Porson = *Suda* ρ 143 (IV 291, 28 Adler): ῥησός· ἄρχός, ὃς ἰαίρέσει (θροεῖ Liapis (n. 100) 19–20) τὰ θέσφατα παρ' Ἐπιχάρμῳ (fr. 206 K.-A.). ἦτοι παρὰ τὴν ῥῆσιν εἶρηκεν ἦ, ὡς Ἀσκληπιάδης ἐν Ὡ Τραγωδομένων, ἀριστον αὐτὸν γεγονέναι ἀλήθειαν εἰπεῖν. ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ ἕτερος. The connexion with *Rhesus* 970–73, a passage dwelling on Rhesus' posthumous status as 'prophet of Bacchus' (cf. θέσφατα, 'prophetic utterances', in the Asclep. Tragil. passage), was first suggested by G. Kaibel (ed.), *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. I.1 (Berlin 1899) 128 (app. *ad fr.* 205); cf. also F. Jacoby in *FGrHist* Ia, p. 485; R. Kassel and C. Austin in app. crit. *ad* Epich. fr. 206.

¹⁰² Apulian red-figure volute crater by the Rhesus painter, Staatl. Mus. Berlin V.I. 3157 = *LIMC* VIII.1, 1045 no. 3 (ca. 350 BC); Apulian red-figure situla by the Lycurgus painter, Mus. Naz. Naples 81863 = *LIMC* VIII.1, 1046 no. 6 (ca. 360–350 BC); Apulian red-figure volute crater by the Darius painter, Staatl. Mus. Berlin 1984.39 = *LIMC* VIII.1, 1045-6 no. 4 (ca. 340 BC). On the possibility of theatrical influence on these vases see T.B.L. Webster, *Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play* (*BICS* Suppl. 20) (London 1967) 167; A.D. Trendall and T.B.L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek*

Drama (London 1971) 112–13. On the first and second vases cited above, see also A.D. Trendall and A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia*, vol. I (Oxford 1978) 441, no. 102a, 417–18, no. 18; on the third see A.D. Trendall and A. Cambitoglou, *Second Supplement to the Red-Figured Vases of Apulia*, Part I (*BICS* Suppl. 60) (London 1991) 146, no. 17a. The most up-to-date, detailed and judicious discussion of all three vases is L. Giuliani, 'Rhesus between dream and death: on the relation of image to literature in Apulian vase-painting', *BICS* 41 (1996) 71–86 with pls 14–20, esp. 76–85 with pls 16–20. For criticism of Giuliani see however O. Taplin, *Pots & Plays* (Los Angeles 2007) 165 with n. 21–22.

¹⁰³ The point is missed by Giuliani (n. 102) 79, who oddly asserts that 'a decisive feature of the legend consisted precisely in the fact that none of the Thracians wakes up, none flees...'

¹⁰⁴ Taplin (n. 102) 161.

¹⁰⁵ On the seated figure's identification with the Muse, see Giuliani (n. 102) 81. On telescoping in theatre-inspired vase-paintings of scenes belonging to different parts of a play, cf. O. Taplin, 'The Pictorial Record', in P.E. Easterling (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1997) 69–90, here 88.

sees a horned, beardless young male holding a river's typical iconographic attributes, namely a shell and a reed: this is doubtless the river Strymon, Rhesus' father, referred to no less than seven times in *Rhesus*.¹⁰⁶ Given that among extant sources *Rhesus* is the first to identify Strymon as Rhesus' father, it is tempting to see here yet another echo from the play.¹⁰⁷ However, in the same painting, Athena is prominently present, complete with helmet, aegis and lance, as Diomedes prepares to smite Rhesus. This may be seen as incompatible with our *Rhesus*, in which Athena not only is emphatically absent from the scene of the massacre (she is busy distracting Paris) but also appears, uniquely in extant tragedy, in *Aphrodite's* guise (*Rhesus* 637–74); in this light, the Darius painter's emphasis on Athena's traditional accoutrements strikes a jarring note. And even if this discrepancy between play and painting is attributed to artistic licence, the hypothesis that the vase in question reflects our *Rhesus* depends entirely on the assumption that Rhesus' genealogy as son of Strymon and a Muse is a novelty introduced by whoever wrote our *Rhesus*, rather than being common knowledge already in the fifth or early fourth century, perhaps as a result of the popularity of Euripides' genuine *Rhesus*.

In conclusion, neither literary nor pictorial evidence seems sufficient to warrant the hypothesis that the *Rhesus* which has come down to us was in existence, and well known, in the mid-fourth century BC. Until such evidence comes to light, it seems safer to trust the indications, examined in the course of this paper, which suggest that the *Rhesus* we have was composed some time in the latter half of the fourth century, with a Macedonian audience in mind. If this is correct, then *Rhesus* is the only Greek play surviving in its entirety that not only comes from the fourth century but also from a non-Athenian context.

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¹⁰⁶ *Rhesus* 279, 351, 386, 394, 652, 920, 929. See Giuliani (n. 102) 81; cf. *LIMC* VII.1 (1994) 815, no. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Thus Taplin (n. 102) 163–65 with n. 129.