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PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION IN GREEK DRAMA¹

Summary: The contribution deals with the relations of Attic tragedy and its public according to Aristophanes's "Frogs". First there is evidence that the Greek tragic playwrights address their audience. The fictitious competition then, arranged in "Frogs" between Aeschylus and Euripides in the underworld, displays the requirements of tragic poetry. Notwithstanding their poetic and political differences the rivals of that agon agree with each other on the communicative function of tragedy. Aristophanes proves the great and free attitude which Attic tragedy, engaging for the benefit of the polis, took to its world and its public.

Key words: Attic tragedy, public, Aristophanes, *Frogs*, Aeschylus, Euripides, polis.

Who looks at the classical philology of to-day, is confronted with an extensive field of most different activities. Modern classical philology tries to deal with the vastness of ancient life from the first beginnings till to the reception of antiquity in modern times, applying the traditional methods and a considerable amount of new efforts. In view of the different approaches it is not astonishing that a consensus often fails. The spirit of contradiction proves to be rather productive. Therefore central issues remain unsolved to a large extent, regardless of some reconciliations.

A sphere in which the opinions widely differ is especially Attic tragedy. At first there are controversies and antinomies relating to the total phenomenon of tragic poetry, but also to numerous individual problems. A remarkable instance is the relation of Greek tragedy to its public.

O. Taplin argues "that Greek tragedy is through and through political, in the sense that it is much concerned with the life of men and women within society, the polis"² – not at all a very new recognition in classical philology. But oddly enough he

¹ Abridged and likewise supplemented version of the paper *Die attische Tragödie und ihr Publikum*. Nach den „Fröschen“ des Aristophanes, *Aevum Antiquum* 10, 1997, 109–25. The abridged version was read on 3. 4. 1997 in the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, Department of Classical Studies.

² O. TAPLIN, Fifth-Century Tragedy and Comedy: a *synkrisis*, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106, 1986, 163–74, especially 167. Cf. also the abridged, but with smaller addenda supplied version of this article: *Die Welt des Spiels und die Welt des Zuschauers in der Tragödie und Komödie des 5. Jahrhunderts*, *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* N. F. 12, 1986, 57–71.

draws a line between “stage” and “auditorium”.³ As O. Taplin maintains, the public of a tragedy – distinct from comedy – would never be “addressed or directly alluded to”.⁴ Whosoever reckons with “particular topical incursions” into the auditorium has to admit “that they are cryptic”.⁵

The way of such reflections was continued by D. Bain,⁶ although he seems to have conceded some restrictions of the common thesis which consists in separating play and spectators. As he observes, the prologues of Euripides, however, give the impression that there is a communication between actor and audience.⁷ But for D. Bain the notion of an addressee is not relevant.⁸ As an example he adduces Euripides, *Orestes* 128–9 – for him “the best candidate”.⁹ Here Electra gives her opinion on Helena who has just left the stage after a dispute with Electra. On the stage the ill Orestes is lying, now already the sixth day (39), collapsed under the murder of his mother Clytemnestra. As a mark of mourning for her sister Clytemnestra who was killed by Orestes – in order to take revenge on the murdered Agamemnon –, as a mark of mourning Helena cropped her “hair”, as she pretends (113). In her offering (cf. 96) in honour of the dead sister Helena proceeded with the utmost caution, lest she should affect adversely the splendour of her curls. Perhaps Helena parted with a single lock (cf. 96). At any rate she cut her hair at the very top (128) – scarcely a loss of her beauty. Electra sees through the motive of vanity and cries (128–9): “Look indeed, how she has cut her hair at the very top preserving her beauty.”

ἴδετε γὰρ ἄκρας ὥς ἀπέθριπεν τρίχας,
σφζουσα κάλλος.¹⁰

It might be quite natural, yes, it seems to be near at hand that Electra addresses the spectators in the theatre. Not so D. Bain who explains Electra’s exclamation to be “another way of saying ‘look at that!’”, without involving an addressee.¹¹

C. W. Willink also disregards here any concrete addressee. He submits the idea of a so-called “general address”, directed “to the world at large”.¹² It is obvious that the abstract artificiality of the interpretation gives rise to “some doubt”.¹³ Only M. L. West abandons to interpret Euripides, *Orestes* 128–9 in an implausible manner. In the present case, as he has it, “it seems pedantic to deny” that the address is to the audience¹⁴. So an uncomplicated opinion is recovered, a view which was already taken

³ O. TAPLIN, *Fifth-Century Tragedy and Comedy* (cf. note 2), 167.

⁴ *Ibid.* 166.

⁵ *Ibid.* 167.

⁶ D. BAIN, *Some Reflections on the Illusion in Greek Tragedy*, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 34, 1987: *Essays on Greek Drama*, edited by B. GREDLEY, 1–14.

⁷ *Ibid.* 2.

⁸ *Ibid.* 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Euripidis fabulae*, edidit J. DIGGLE, tomus 3, Oxford 1994.

¹¹ D. BAIN (cf. note 6), 3.

¹² *Euripides, Orestes*. With introduction and commentary by C. W. WILLINK, Oxford 1989 (first published 1986), on 128–9 (p. 102).

¹³ D. BAIN (cf. note 6), 5.

¹⁴ *Euripides, Orestes*, edited with translation and commentary by M. L. WEST, Warminster 1987, on 128.

in former times by W. Schadewaldt¹⁵ and A. Lesky.¹⁶ Corresponding to this instance some other passages in Euripides's "Orestes" seem to be directed to the public.¹⁷

But that applies to a considerable number of texts in Greek tragedy on the whole.¹⁸ The beginning of Aeschylus's "Septem contra Thebas" is an outstanding evidence that proves more strikingly the public appeal Attic theatre had. Here King Eteocles speaks in arranging the defence of the city against a hostile army. He addresses the citizens calling them "Cadmus citizens" (1). The setting of the play is evidently Thebes, if its mythic founder is named. The first three verses may be quoted:

"Cadmus citizens! Obligated is to say the essential
whosoever guards public affairs on the ship of the state
being at the helm, not permitting the eyes to fall asleep."

Κάδμου πολῖται, χρὴ λέγειν τὰ καίρια,
ὅστις φυλάσσει πρῶτος ἐν πρύμνῃ πόλεως
οἴακα νομῶν, βλέφαρα μὴ κοιμῶν ὕπνῳ (1–3).

Although the address runs word for word Κάδμου πολῖται, "Cadmus citizens", that is citizens of Thebes, already from the first verses poetic signals start which are appropriate to evoke in the spectators, sitting in the theatre of Dionysus in Athens, associations with their own conditions: There is the polis, their very own, and how the polis is to be conducted and saved (cf. 1–3). It refers to fundamental matters of

¹⁵ W. SCHADEWALDT, *Monolog und Selbstgespräch. Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der griechischen Tragödie*, Berlin 1926 (Neue philologische Untersuchungen 2), 10.

¹⁶ A. LESKY, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*, 3rd edition Göttingen 1972, 460 note 312.

¹⁷ Cf. 804. 976–8. 1682–3. Cf. H. KUCH, Publikumsansprache im „Orest“ des Euripides (forthcoming).

¹⁸ About drama and public cf. already A. ROEMER, Über den litterarisch-aesthetischen Bildungsstand des attischen Theaterpublikums, *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-philologische Klasse* 22, 1905, 1–96. Further V. MARTIN, Euripide et Ménandre face à leur public, in: *Euripide. Sept exposés et discussions* par J. C. KAMERBEEK, A. RIVIER, H. DILLER, A. LESKY, R. P. WINNINGTON-INGRAM, G. ZUNTZ, V. MARTIN, Genève 1960 (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 6), 243–72; discussions 273–83. E. RECHENBERG, *Beobachtungen über das Verhältnis der Alten attischen Komödie zu ihrem Publikum*, Berlin 1966 (Dissertationes Berolinenses 2). E. RECHENBERG, Die Athener als Publikum der attischen Alten Komödie, in: *Das Theater und sein Publikum*, Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977 (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Publikumsforschung 5) (Sitzungsberichte 327), 124–31. St. JEDRKIEWIZ, Teatro attico e comunicazione di massa: ipotesi di ricerca, *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* n. s. 42, 3 (71), 1992, 7–24. Arguing for "audience awareness in the ancient theatre in general" Chr. DEDOUSSI, Greek Drama and Its Spectators: Conventions and Relationships, in: *Stage Directions. Essays in Ancient Drama in Honour of E. W. Handley*, edited by A. GRIFFITHS, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, School of Advanced Study, 1995 (BICS, Supplement 66), 123–32, citation 128 note 25. Chr. DEDOUSSI, in: *Acta. First Panhellenic and International Conference on Ancient Greek Literature* (23–26 May 1994), Athens 1997, 373–84. S. GOLDHILL, The audience of Athenian tragedy, in: *The Cambridge Companion of Greek Tragedy*, edited by P. E. EASTERLING, Cambridge 1997, 54–68. A. H. SOMMERSTEIN, The Theatre Audience, the Demos, and the Suppliants of Aeschylus, in: *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, edited by Chr. PELLING, Oxford 1997, 63–79. A. H. SOMMERSTEIN, The theatre audience and the Demos, in: J. A. LÓPEZ FEREZ (ed.), *La comedia griega y su influencia en la literatura española*, Madrid 1998, 43–62. F. DE MARTINO, Il teatro 'dell' obbligo', in: *El teatro, una política*, a cura de K. ANDRESEN, J. Vicente BAÑULS i F. DE MARTINO, Bari 1999, 101–34.

fact, at all events for citizens of a polis democracy who are used for a while to participate in organizing and, indeed, controlling the city-state. So they can identify themselves with the duties Eteocles is confronted with on stage. The text suggests that such conceptions are intended by the poet. In the very beginning of “Septem” a sort of dialogue starts apparently between drama and audience.¹⁹

Therewith the interpretation has advanced to a central problem, the interplay between the poet and his recipients. About the methods of the ancient tragedians there is significant evidence, in principle known, but not sufficiently taken into account for the intentions tragic poetry had. These testimonies cannot be disregarded, because they come from a sovereign insider with deep insights into the tragic genre, from Aristophanes. In his “Frogs”, performed in 405, the chorus sings, in a manner of certainty: ἐπ’ ἀγαθῷ μὲν τοῖς πολίταις (1487), “for the benefit of the citizens”. An activity with this effect is expected from Aeschylus, when he – in “Frogs”, after the spectacular tragic competition in Hades – victoriously returns home (1486), that is to Athens.

Aristophanes had taken the liberty of arranging a contest in the underworld. Here Aeschylus, dead for nearly fifty years († 456/55), and the just, approximately one year ago, deceased Euripides († 407/06) compete with each other. When this literary comedy was performed at the Lenaia, that is January/February of 405, the down-fall of Athens in the Peloponnesian War began to loom – even before the decisive defeat of Aigospotamoi in midsummer 405. In the presence of the threatening disaster no question was more topical than the rescue of the polis. Aristophanes had the ingenious idea to take up this subject for the comic stage. He presented a rescuer with his Aeschylus, the victor in the underworld contest. Perhaps the impression of the moving danger gave an edge to the profile of the arguments. At any rate Euripides’s death (407/06), a short while before the performance, may have initiated the poetic discussions about the art of tragedy, as they are held in “Frogs” through two tragedians who stood, with Sophocles, at the top of the tragic genre. In the fictitious competition Aeschylus and Euripides undertake, there are significant statements about the effects produced by tragic poetry. It seems to be remarkable that basic issues of tragedy are reflected by the medium of comedy.

It would be tempting to inquire into the splendid literary comedy and to appreciate “Frogs” with its sparkling wit, its humour, the author’s keen insight included and his aesthetic and political criticism. But the theme of the present inquiry demands to focus on problems of communication, especially on the relation between poet and public.

The competition proper in the underworld has just begun, there a component arises no theatre can dispense with: the spectators (909: τοὺς θεατάς). Here Euripides is speaking, at first not about his own poetry, attacking, however, his rival Aeschylus. He reproaches the older poet for being a “boaster and deceiver” (909: ἀλαζῶν καὶ φένας) and having deluded the public (910: ἐξηπάτα). By his boast (919: ἀλαζονείας) Aeschylus should have aimed to put a great strain on the spectator (ibid.: ὁ θεατής)

¹⁹ H. KUCH, Die Ansprache des Eteokles. Zu Aischylos, Sieben gegen Theben 1–38, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32, 1989, 217–23.

who might have a long wait until a character on stage, Niobe, will begin speaking (cf. 919–20). In this passage Euripides strikes a blow at Phrynichus, too. This tragedian, a representative of the old generation, should have made the spectators block-heads (910: μώρους) what is no compliment and explains at the same time the relatively favourable circumstances under which Aeschylus may have been able to delude the public made stupid by Phrynichus.

Being in full swing Euripides continues attacking. Once more he brings the public into the play, now turning against the Aeschylean diction. There be “oxpower words, a dozen” (924: ῥήματ’ ἄν βόεια δώδεκ’) which give a menacing and (bull-) necked impression (cf. 925: ὀφρῦς ἔχουντα καὶ λόφους), “enormous, rather ghostly” words (ibid.: δεῖν’ ἅττα μορμορωπά). We are told that this style of the older rival be incomprehensible to the spectators (cf. 926: ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις) – a scathing criticism about a playwright who has endeavoured to achieve communication. Aeschylus should have said nothing clear, no σαφές (cf. 927: σαφές δ’ ἄν εἶπεν οὐδὲ ἔν),²⁰ but it was clearness, σαφήνεια, the historical Euripides set a high value on.²¹

Euripides contacts afresh the spectators when demonstrating his own poetic art. He underlines his “democratic” way of proceeding (cf. 952: δημοκρατικὸν ... ἔδρων). This conception of democracy seems to reach beyond the δῆμος, in so far as he permits on the stage the liberty of speaking to the woman (949–50) and the slave (cf. 949). But Dionysus rejects that (952–3). Euripides, however, advances a new fact in pointing, apparently with a corresponding gesture, at the public assembled in the theatre: “These men, I have taught them to speak” (954: τούτουσὶ λαλεῖν ἐδίδαξα). Then, with a bold stroke, he cancels the distance between stage and auditorium: He integrates himself within the community of citizens and spectators for whom he composed: “I brought the own conditions on the stage”, that is the conditions of the polis Athens, “which we have, in which we live” (959: οἰκεῖα πράγματ’ εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ’, οἷς ζύνομεν). The “we” joins poet and public. The tragedian continues: Should I have tried to deceive the spectators – approximately that thought may be presumed²² –, “I would have been shown up by them” (960: ἐξ ὧν γ’ ἄν ἐξηλεγχομένη). “For these”, the spectators, “well-informed, would have criticized my art” (960–1): ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὗτοι / ἤλεγχον ἄν μου τὴν τέχνην). The poet Euripides sees himself in alliance with his critical recipients who repeatedly occur in the text, not by chance (954, 960, 962, 972; cf. also 909, 919, 926).

In characterizing his poetry Euripides stresses from the first the contrast to Aeschylus (cf. 937). It would be fascinating to observe further the image Euripides promotes of himself (cf. 937–47) – here, however, it is to be mentioned only in a word that the younger dramatist “slenderized” (cf. 941: ὕσχανα) the tragedy in dispensing the pressing weight which was characteristic of Aeschylus’s work (cf. 940–1). In the context – not without self-irony – the new substance is expressed, when Euripides declares: “I gave a juice of chatterings” to the tragedy, “filtering it from books”

²⁰ Cf. also 930.

²¹ W. LUDWIG, *Sapheneia. Ein Beitrag zur Formkunst im Spätwerk des Euripides*, Diss. Tübingen 1954.

²² *Aristophanes, Frogs*, edited with introduction and commentary by K. DOVER, Oxford 1993, on 960 (p. 312).

(943: *χυλὸν διδοὺς στωμυλμάτων ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν*). The intellectual feature of the Euripidean tragedy, founded on rationality and criticism, is abundant with facets to such degree that it is variously presented with wit in the following (cf. 956–8. 961–3. 971–9).

Whenever in the underworld agon of “Frogs” till now relations to the audience came to light, they had individual character, in so far as they were confined in each case to Aeschylus or to Euripides, thus to a single dramatist. At the moment as Aeschylus engages in the competition (1006), principles of the tragic poetry come up. Here the older tragedian puts the decisive question, and the younger one gives the decisive answer. Aeschylus asks: “Why is it necessary to admire a poet?” (1008: *τίνος οὐνεκα χρὴ θαυμάζειν ἄνδρα ποητήν*). Euripides replies: “On account of his poetic dexterity and instruction and because we make the men in the cities better” (1009–10: *δεξιότητος καὶ νουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν*). This answer, in the form of a climax, consists of three elements. To admire a poet, of course a tragedian, depends first on his poetic skill which makes a poet a poet (*δεξιότης*). Such a *ποιητὴς δεξιός*, a genuine poet, was required by Dionysus at the start of “Frogs” (71), after the poetic masters could not be found among those still alive.

The second cause to be admired as a poet consists in his influence on the public. The text has *νουθεσία*, not easy to translate: “Instruction” or perhaps “admonition” may be suitable. Presumably the poetic initiatives are meant, the advices which come from the poet, and that is a wide spectrum. In which direction that poetic impact shall tend, shows the third cause to admire a poet: “because we make the men in the cities better” (1009–10). This statement, the final element of the climax, is the culmination of the Euripidean answer. The *νουθεσία*, the “instruction”, as function of the tragic poetry, is realized for the benefit of the citizens.

In that momentous answer the universal style must not be overlooked. Uttering *ποιοῦμεν* (1009), “we make”, Euripides uses the first person plural: we. He does not confine himself to his own strategy of action, but formulates, including his rival Aeschylus, the task of the tragic genre: “to make better” the citizens (cf. 1009–10), as it is said in a very modest, nearly too plain manner. Essentially that can aim at affording useful insights and more penetrating into the own world, in order to act accordingly in the cities, not to mention the mental inspiration, the problematicizing and the ethical improvement.

These reflections may be confirmed by a second statement that is of comparable consequence to the tragic poetry (1054–6). Beforehand, however, the competitors continue quarrelling with each other, and it is not astonishing that the spectators are anew involved. Aeschylus reproaches his younger opponent for having made the citizens not better, but just worse (cf. 1010–1). It is, however, the Euripidean poetry which the older tragedian censures, not the principal task of the tragic genre. Not later than now we have to point to a factor which contributes to the pungent life of the piece. The real spectators must have long since recognized themselves in the continually cited and humorously described public within “Frogs”. So the Athenians sitting in the theatre of Dionysus are integrated into the comic play. They are now faced

with a harsh criticism, when Aeschylus complains about the social change from the Marathon time to the fin du siècle. The men, once noble, are now depraved (cf. 1013–7).

The following discussion about the didactic element of poetry leads to the already announced second central statement about the tragic drama. Aeschylus declares in generalizing the task of tragic art:

“For the boys
have a teacher who explains, but the adults have poets.
Absolutely, to be sure, we have to show the useful.”

τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν
ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ' ἡβῶσι ποιηταί.
πάνυ δὲ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς (1054–6).

The communicative function of tragedy, with marked didactics²³ as at the end of the piece (1502: παιδευσον), cannot be exposed more pronouncedly. It aims obviously at instructing the citizens in the broadest sense: at showing, making up, it aims at revealing perspectives, with all their implications, at inspiring mental efforts, in a word: at making advices.²⁴

Like Euripides before (1009–10), Aeschylus, too, uses the we-form. That is of importance. Both of them are united as representatives of the tragic genre, and about the principal communicative requirements there is neither dissent nor contradiction – notwithstanding the differences of the poetic individualities. They are obliged to “say

²³ Cf. L. RADERMACHER, *Aristophanes' 'Frösche'*. Einleitung, Text und Kommentar, 2. Auflage von W. KRAUS, Wien 1954 (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 198, 4), 289 on 1006 ff.: “Der Dichter ist Lehrer seines Volkes. Allein schon der Umstand, daß Euripides in dieser Auffassung mit Aeschylus vollkommen einig ist, zwingt zu dem Schlusse, daß der Satz im 5. Jahrhundert allgemeine Geltung hatte.” Cf. *Aristophanes, Frogs*. Edited with Introduction, Revised Text, Commentary and Index by W. B. STANFORD, Bristol 1991 (reprint of the 2nd edition 1963), on 1054–5. *Aristophanes, Frogs*, edited with introduction and commentary by K. DOVER (cf. note 22), 12–6. *Frogs*, edited with translation and notes by A. H. SOMMERSTEIN, Warminster 1996 (The Comedies of Aristophanes, volume 9), 15–6, 244 (on 1009–10), 250 (on 1053–6). To this problem field cf. further J. GREGORY, *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians*, Ann Arbor 1991, 185. S. GOLDHILL, The audience of Athenian tragedy (cf. note 18), 66–7 (“Teaching the city”). Cf. in this connection the marked dictum of A. H. SOMMERSTEIN, The Theatre Audience, the Demos, and the Suppliants of Aeschylus (cf. note 18), 79: “... as Phrynichos had done before him, Aeschylus was using tragedy as a political weapon ...” H. KUCH, Die attische Tragödie und ihr Publikum (cf. note 1), especially 113, 117–9, 121–5. F. DE MARTINO, Il teatro ‘dell’ obbligo’ (cf. note 18), especially 101–5, 112–21. – Differently E.-R. SCHWINGE, *Griechische Tragödie und zeitgenössische Rezeption: Aristophanes und Gorgias. Zur Frage einer angemessenen Tragödiendeutung*, Göttingen 1997 (Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften e. V., Hamburg, 15, 1997, 2). J.-U. SCHMIDT, Die Einheit der ‘Frösche’ des Aristophanes – demokratische Erziehung und ‘moderne’ Dichtung in der Kritik, *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* N. F. 22, 1998, 73–100, far-reaching dispensations with *Frogs* 1009–10 and 1054–6.

²⁴ With evidence about the – in principle same – function of the Attic comedy in the fifth century cf. H. KUCH, *Aristophanes' Frogs and the Ethos of Tragedy*, *Sileno* 19, 1993, 131–41, especially 136–9. D. M. MACDOWELL, *Aristophanes and Athens. An Introduction to the Plays*, Oxford 1995, 3–5, 355–6. O. TAPLIN, Comedy and the Tragic, in: *Tragedy and the Tragic. Greek Theatre and Beyond*, edited by M. S. SILK, Oxford 1996, 188–202, especially 198. F. DE MARTINO, Il teatro ‘dell’ obbligo’ (cf. note 18), 116–21.

the useful” (1056: χρηστὰ λέγειν) (cf. 1057).²⁵ But about the real use the opinions differ, the older tragedian taking a more traditional view, his younger rival a rather modern one.

In the following, as it was to be expected, the struggle goes on. Dionysus, god of theatre and in the underworld competition the judge, will not decide in favour of one of them (cf. 1411–3). Ultimately he sees a chance to settle the contest. The rivals are requested to stand the test in the main issue of their genre. Dionysus promises: “Which of you then is about to give a useful advice to the polis, this one I am resolved to take along” (1420–1: ὁπότερος οὖν ἂν τῇ πόλει παραινέσειν / μέλλῃ τι χρηστόν, τοῦτον ἄξειν μοι δοκῶ), to take along, of course, as victor from Hades to Athens. At first either is asked for his opinion about Alcibiades (1422–3), the enfant terrible in the Athenian controlling group. Because the answers do not bring a decision, the two poets, then, are challenged to give still another view (1435), their view on the rescue, the σωτηρία, of the polis (cf. 1436) – at the Lenaia of 405 the fundamental problem. Here Aeschylus succeeds in being victorious. Considering the relations of a tragedian and the public, however, the model is important which Aristophanes has arranged in “Frogs”. The playwrights are confronted in the end with the basic issue of the polis when “Frogs” was performed. According to the communicative principles of the tragic art they comply with their obligation to the polis and make suggestions to rescue the city.²⁶ It seems to be reasonable that here the tragedians cannot present a complete drama, but as characters in “Frogs” have to give statements.

The modern philology uses to ascribe to the Attic tragedy an affirmative function, admitting sometimes as a counterpart at least the criticism the tragedy advances.²⁷ A dualism, however, does not do justice to the phenomenon of tragic poetry.²⁸ Aristophanes requires a wider horizon. He reveals explicitly and implicitly

²⁵ Cf. also M. CASEVITZ, *Autour de XPHΣTOΣ chez Aristophane*, in: *Aristophane: la langue, la scène, la cité. Actes du colloque de Toulouse*, 17–19 mars 1994, édités par P. THIERCY et M. MENU, Bari 1997 (le Rane, Studi 20), 445–55.

²⁶ P. VON MÖLLENDORFF, *Grundlagen einer Ästhetik der Alten Komödie. Untersuchungen zu Aristophanes und Michail Bachtin*, Tübingen 1995 (Classica Monacensia 9), 262–6, pleads for a polyphonic mixtum compositum in the message of “Frogs”.

²⁷ Cf. B. EFFE, *Das Bild der Frau in Sophocles’ ,Trachinierinnen’: Zur kommunikativen Funktion der attischen Tragödie*, in: G. BINDER, K. EHLICH (Hg.), *Kommunikation durch Zeichen und Wort*, Trier 1995 (Stätten und Formen der Kommunikation im Altertum 4) (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium [= BAC] 23), 229–46, especially 230 and 242. G. BINDER, B. EFFE (Hg.), *Affirmation und Kritik. Zur politischen Funktion von Kunst und Literatur im Altertum*, Trier 1995 (BAC 20). B. EFFE, *Das Theater als politische Anstalt: Aristophanes’ ,Ritter’ und Euripides’ ,Schutzflehende’*, in: G. BINDER, B. EFFE (Hg.), *Das antike Theater. Aspekte seiner Geschichte, Rezeption und Aktualität*, Trier 1998 (BAC 33), 49–64.

²⁸ Cf. also the reflections of Chr. MEIER, *Die politische Kunst der griechischen Tragödie*, München 1988. New and his own ways goes M. HÖSE, *Drama und Gesellschaft. Studien zur dramatischen Produktion in Athen am Ende des 5. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1995 (Drama, Beiheft 3). The opinion “naiv-optimistisch” (188) on Frogs 1009–10: ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, misses, however, the insights of an Aristophanes. With a polyvalent understanding of function N. T. CROALLY, *Euripidean Polemic. The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy*, Cambridge 1994, 256. Any suggestions should be welcomed which may care to discuss the functions of Greek drama and to continue previous approaches. J. GRIFFIN, *The social function of Attic tragedy*, *The Classi-*

a great and free attitude the tragedy took towards its world and its public, great in the consciousness of its responsibility and free in the variety and flexibility of the view. In the fifth century the Greek tragedians have made proposals in the public of the theatre “for the benefit of the citizens” (cf. 1487: ἐπ’ ἀγαθῷ μὲν τοῖς πολίταις), as the chorus sings in “Frogs”. In that respect Attic theatre is engaging theatre. It felt bound to take part, with its means, in shaping the life of the polis.

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cal Quarterly n. s. 48, 1998, 39–61, agrees that literature “is not to be disconnected from society and history” (54), and nobody will disagree with him on the harrowing elements of tragedy he convincingly reveals (56–61). On this basis he concludes: “Tragedy is, rather, to be seen as providing a uniquely vivid and piercingly pleasurable enactment of human suffering” (60). Putting emphasis on “that special tragic pleasure” (*ibid.*) J. GRIFFIN tries to disqualify the different ideas of several “historicizing and collectivist scholars” (55) – censured are English, American, Italian, and German scholars – who attempt to explain functions of Attic tragedy by applying, besides the texts, the historical and literary conditions. Cf. further R. SEAFORD, The social function of Attic tragedy: a response to Jasper Griffin, *ibid.*, 50, 2000, 30–44. In a rather Platonic view J. HOLZHAUSEN, *Paideia oder Paidia. Aristoteles und Aristophanes zur Wirkung der griechischen Tragödie*. Stuttgart 2000, 33–52, endeavours to give a new interpretation to the testimonies embodied in “*Frogs*” for the function of tragedy, but he admits after all the “Intentionen der Dichter” (52).

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