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INTRODUCTION: AESCHYLUS AT PLAY

LYNDSAY COO AND ANNA UHLIG

For a fifth-century Athenian who regularly attended the tragic productions mounted at the City Dionysia each spring, there will have been few theatrical roles more familiar than that of the satyr chorus. Whatever identities the chorus may have assumed in the preceding three tragedies, the end of the day would find these citizen-performers transformed into satyrs—the mythical creatures, half-horse, half-man, who served and celebrated Dionysus and whose presence was the defining feature of each playwright's final submission to the tragic competition: a satyr drama. We know very little about the origins of the so-called 'three-plus-one' format, which paired three more serious, 'tragic' plays with a ribald and zany final flourish. However, although the process of the disassociation of satyr drama and tragedy seems to have started already in the fifth century BC, the three-plus-one structure continued to form the backbone of the tragic competition at the City Dionysia well into the fourth century.¹ Thus, not only was the dramatic carnality of the satyr chorus an important component of theatrical performance in fifth-century Athens, but satyr drama itself was an integral part of the playwright's business. If, as seems likely, exceptions to the three-plus-one format were relatively rare at the City Dionysia in the fifth century,² we should calculate that around one quarter of the output of any 'tragedian' working in this period was in fact satyric.³ This relatively uncontroversial observation, when taken seriously, carries far-reaching and destabilizing implications not only for our definition of classical tragedy, but also for our understanding of the styles, range, and concerns of its practitioners.

Aeschylus' satyr dramas are fundamentally comparable to those of other dramatists of the fifth century BC, such as Sophocles and Euripides. As far as we can tell, all examples from this period are structured around the same core figures: a chorus of satyrs and their father Silenus. The majority of known satyr dramas are predicated on a marriage of satyric irreverence and established mythical tradition. The plays introduce their raucous Dionysiac chorus into episodes that are well-known from more sober accounts—such as the arrival of Danae and the infant Perseus on the island of Seriphus in Aeschylus' *Diktyoulokoï*, or baby Hermes' theft of Apollo's cattle in Sophocles' *Ichneutai*—with predictably amusing consequences. In the famous formulation of François Lissarrague, which it has become *de rigueur* to quote in studies of the genre, the 'recipe' for the satyr play is: 'take one myth, add satyrs, observe the result'.⁴

Within the basic parameters of the genre, there are, however, certain features that distinguish the satyr plays of Aeschylus from those of other fifth-century playwrights. Some of these differences are inherent in the texts themselves and some have come about from their

¹ Easterling 1997: 40. The City Dionysia underwent a substantial restructuring in 386 BC with the introduction of a performance of 'old tragedy', and the didascalic inscription *IG II² 2320* shows that by at least 341 BC the festival had come to include just one satyr play, produced non-competitively and unattached to a tragic trilogy.

² On the sole attested exception to the 'three-plus-one' format, Euripides' pro-satyric *Alkestis* (438 BC), see e.g. Slater 2005.

³ This is precisely what we find in the case of Aeschylus. Allowing for the possibility of some alternative titles, we know of c. seventy-eight plays of his, of which twenty are certainly or probably satyric: see Sommerstein 2010a: 10–13. The (somewhat less clear) ratios reflected in what we know of Sophocles and Euripides are outlined in the respective introductory discussions in Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidensticker 1999 (KPS).

⁴ Lissarrague 1990a: 236.

histories of transmission. For modern scholars, any study of Aeschylean satyr drama means a real engagement with the thorny question of how to think about highly fragmentary texts. Fortune handed us the entire script of Euripides' satyric *Cyclops*, and a papyrus containing around half of Sophocles' *Ichneutai* was discovered in the rubbish dumps of Oxyrhynchus in the late nineteenth century; but even the best-preserved fragments of Aeschylus' satyr dramas, such as *Diktyoulkoi* and *Theoroi/Isthmiastai*, come to under a hundred lines apiece. Although additional light can be shed on some of his plays through cautious recourse to the evidence of ancient vase painting, there is reason to be sceptical of straightforward correspondence between these quite distinct forms.⁵ As a result, even basic questions about plot and *dramatis personae* can remain uncertain when it comes to Aeschylean satyr drama, foreclosing many avenues of traditional scholarly inquiry. Interpretive strategies must, therefore, adapt to the nature of the texts at hand and chart a course between caution and imagination: it is necessary both to acknowledge the limitations of our evidence and yet to be willing to think about these fragments as something more than frustrating jigsaw pieces.

The relative paucity of Aeschylean satyr drama available to the modern scholar is counterbalanced to some degree by the relationship that seems to have existed between his tragedies and satyr plays. Whereas Sophocles and Euripides appear regularly to have used the three-plus-one format to produce four thematically distinct (or only loosely connected) dramatic compositions, Aeschylus often—although not always—seems to have joined his four dramas to tell a unified, complex, and tightly woven story.⁶ This unusual link between compositions across the full span of the tetralogy means that some of Aeschylus' own tragic works can be examined in order to aid our understanding of his satyr dramas. It is, of course, easiest for us to perceive this in the case of our sole surviving connected trilogy, the *Oresteia*, where the three tragedies (*Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, *Eumenides*) may shed light on the extremely fragmentary concluding drama, *Proteus*. But this relationship between Aeschylus' satyr drama and tragedy can yield fruitful avenues for exploration even in other less well-preserved instances.⁷

Aeschylus' concern in maintaining a close link between satyr drama and tragedy may also reflect the development of dramatic forms in fifth-century Athens. We cannot date any Aeschylean satyr drama to earlier than 472 BC (the satyric *Prometheus*),⁸ but it is possible that some of our fragments were composed in the early years of the playwright's career, when the three-plus-one format of the City Dionysia may still have been relatively new. Although vase imagery suggests that satyr choruses comprised a significant facet of choral celebration at Athens from at least the mid-sixth century BC onwards,⁹ it may be that the dramatic form produced alongside tragedy at the City Dionysia only came into fashion around the turn of the century—that is, at the same time that Aeschylus began composing for the festival competitions.¹⁰ Without more evidence, no firm conclusions can be drawn. Nevertheless, while Aeschylus' satyr dramas may represent an early stage of the form, it would be a mistake to view them as lacking sophistication or polish.

The notion that Aeschylus' compositions epitomize satyr drama in its highest form is not commonly voiced by contemporary scholars, who can, after all, only extrapolate from

⁵ Claims of a strong correlation between ancient vase painting and satyr play are exemplified by Brommer 1959 and Simon 1982; on the need for caution, see Lissarrague 1990a. See further Nelson 2016: 78–79 with n. 16.

⁶ See, however, Yoon 2016, who cautions against positing too high a frequency of connected tetralogies in the Aeschylean corpus.

⁷ For an interpretation of the relationship between Aeschylus' tragedies and satyr plays within the tetralogy, see Coe, this issue. On Aeschylus' association with connected tetralogies and the role that this may have played in his ancient reception, see Touyz, this issue.

⁸ On the date and title of the drama, see the discussion at Sommerstein 2010a: 227–28.

⁹ See Hedreen 2007, with bibliography.

¹⁰ On the possible origins of satyr drama, see Lämmle 2013: 99–107, with bibliography.

fragmentary evidence. In fact, for modern scholars the genre tends to be most closely linked with Euripides: the survival of his *Cyclops*, our only fully preserved satyr play, along with his pro-satyr *Alceste* (a drama without a chorus of satyrs, but produced in the fourth slot of the tetralogy), has led to this perceived connection. However, for ancient critics it seems to have been Aeschylus who was most readily associated with the art of satyr play. In the second century AD, Pausanias could assert Aeschylus' primacy even over two generations of a family that could lay claim to an intimate connection with the genre, Aristias and his father Pratinas—the latter being the supposed originator of satyr drama (2.13.6–7 = Aesch. T 125b):

ἐνταῦθά ἐστι καὶ Ἀριστίου μνῆμα τοῦ Πρατίνου· τούτῳ τῷ Ἀριστίᾳ σάτυροι καὶ Πρατίνῳ τῷ πατρί εἰσι πεποιημένοι πλὴν τῶν Αἰχύλου δοκιμώτατοι.

Here [*sc.* in Phlius] there is also a monument to Aristias the son of Pratinas. The satyr plays of this Aristias and of his father Pratinas are the most highly esteemed except for those of Aeschylus.¹¹

Similarly, Diogenes Laertius (probably writing in the third century AD), in the course of reporting the alleged preferences of the fourth/third century BC philosopher Menedemus, echoes this claim that Aeschylus was the foremost name in satyr play (2.133 = Aesch. T 125a):

μάλιστα δὲ πάντων Ὅμηρῳ προσεῖχεν· εἶτα καὶ τοῖς μελικοῖς· ἔπειτα Σοφοκλεῖ, καὶ δὴ καὶ Ἀχαιῷ, ὧπερ καὶ τὸ δευτερεῖον ἐν τοῖς Σατύροις, Αἰσχύλῳ δὲ τὸ πρωτεῖον ἀπεδίδον.

He [Menedemus] devoted himself to Homer above all, and then to the melic poets. And after these to Sophocles and also to Achaëus, to whom he assigned second place in satyr play, assigning the first place to Aeschylus.

These writers attest to the endurance of Aeschylus' reputation as satyr-playwright *par excellence*, with Diogenes projecting this judgement back already to the time of Menedemus. Furthermore, both assessments are articulated in the course of descriptions that are themselves not directly related to Aeschylus: the Phlian monument to Aristias in the case of Pausanias, and Diogenes' account of the philosopher's literary tastes. This offhand character suggests that such a view would have been readily recognizable to educated readers of the Roman period; Aeschylus' pre-eminence in satyr drama was a settled fact, acknowledged even when the man himself was not the immediate topic of discussion.¹² Yet the brevity of these mentions also deprives us of any deeper insight into the motivations for this apparent critical consensus. The testimonia offer a fleeting glance of an Aeschylus who rarely appears in modern scholarship—a dramatist whose name was almost synonymous with satyr play. But the casual nature of these assertions also calls attention to the many challenges that attend modern attempts to flesh out a portrait of the playwright with whom they appear to have been so familiar.

While this ancient estimation has long been recognized, modern scholars were, until less than a century ago, mostly in the dark as to how Aeschylus had earned this prestige. Prior to the first publication of Aeschylean satyr papyri in 1933 (PSI 1209, two fragments of *Diktyoulokoî*), it had been almost impossible to analyse any aspect of his satyr style in a

¹¹ Translations are by the editors.

¹² See further Touyz, this issue, on the ancient reception of Aeschylus as a satyr-playwright.

meaningful way. Many of the titles of Aeschylus' satyr plays were already known from book fragments and testimonia; and although these were often sufficient to indicate in broad terms the area of myth that the play will have treated (e.g. *Amymone*, *Sphinx*, *Circe*, *Cercyon*), the fragments themselves are few, rarely run to more than a couple of lines, and preserve no instance of dramatic dialogue or interaction between characters. The ancient acknowledgement of Aeschylus' brilliance as satyr-playwright thus sat uneasily alongside modern scholars' almost total lack of understanding of the basis for this reputation. The publication between 1941 and 1952 of the extensive papyrus fragments from Oxyrhynchus, which vastly increased our knowledge of *Diktyoulkoi*, *Theoroi/Isthmiastai*, the satyric *Prometheus*, the probably satyric *Glaucus the Sea God*, and the enigmatic '*Dike play*' (whose genre is unclear), thus created a branch of Aeschylean scholarship virtually *ex novo*, finally offering us a glimpse of the writer so praised by Menedemus and Pausanias.

The discovery of these texts prompted a certain re-adjustment in the scholarly evaluation of a playwright whose (tragic) style had been characterized and pastiched since antiquity as archaic, difficult, and austere. As Howe, writing in 1959, put it, with the publication of the papyri it was 'as though, after possessing only a half dozen of only the tragedies of Shakespeare, we had found a small portion of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*' (1959: 150). The fragment of *Diktyoulkoi* published in 1941 (*P.Oxy.* 2161 = Aesch. fr. 47a) was greeted with particular delight and was characterized as both charming and illustrative of the qualities that had helped to establish Aeschylus' ancient reputation for mastery in the genre. One of the earliest responses to these startling finds, Eduard Fraenkel's 1942 address to the British Academy (entitled 'Aeschylus: new texts and old problems') described the scene in *Diktyoulkoi* in which Silenus and the satyrs sing to and interact with the infant Perseus as 'one of the loveliest pieces of Greek poetry';¹³ and while later analyses helped to draw out the less innocent side of the satyrs' lyrics—which culminate in a predatory sexual fantasy about the baby's mother, Danae—they similarly praised the poetry as fresh, charming, and authentic.¹⁴ Some even took these lines as proof of Aeschylus' own genuine affection for children and thus viewed the satyr plays as offering a glimpse of a different side of him, not just as playwright but as human being, as Howe rhapsodized:

That he [Aeschylus] loved and knew infants intimately has always been manifest from the Nurse's speech in the *Choephoroi*. But here we have Aeschylus at play with one, and thereby our knowledge of the range of his humanity becomes complete: the hand that held the spear at Marathon, and the scales of justice in the *Oresteia*, was also held out to dandle a child.¹⁵

As these early responses make clear, modern scholarly assessments of Aeschylus' satyric works have been informed from the outset, and in fundamental ways, by our knowledge of his better preserved tragic compositions. Yet it is also fair to say that, until

¹³ Fraenkel 1942: 241.

¹⁴ See e.g. Setti 1948: 30–31. Werre-de Haas, in the first full-scale commentary on *Diktyoulkoi*, describes the lyrics at fr. 47a.802–20 as a 'very charming passage' (1961: 62), although she later notes that, as the satyrs' true object (*i.e.* sexual intercourse with Danae) becomes clear, '[t]he fairy-tale atmosphere of the infant is exchanged for colder reality' (65). For Ussher, the hallmarks of Aeschylean satyr play as manifested in *Diktyoulkoi* are 'speech of a simple dignity, without loss of Aeschylean grandeur, and lyrics of a clarity and purity unknown in *Ichneutai* and *Cyclops*' (1977: 299), while Goins calls Silenus' song 'a delightful piece of loveable hypocrisy that would have been suitable for John Falstaff' (1997: 205). For a reading of the satyrs as unusually menacing in *Diktyoulkoi*, see O'Sullivan, this issue.

¹⁵ Howe 1959: 163. Cf. the earlier response of Fraenkel 1942: 243: 'Aeschylus turning topics of the nursery to a song of purest poetry and enchanting melodiousness! Such sympathy with a child's early life might have been expected from the poet who wrote the scene of the nurse in the *Choephoroe*'.

relatively recently, scholarship on his satyr plays (like that on the Aeschylean fragments in general) has remained somewhat isolated from that on his extant tragedies, and has been sidelined even in wider ranging studies that purport to offer overviews of Aeschylus' dramatic output.¹⁶ The years immediately following the publication of the papyrus fragments saw the appearance of much scholarship on the texts themselves. However, this tended to be in the form of papyrological notes, critical editions, and specialized studies of satyr play and the origins and history of the genre; while extremely important, these interventions had relatively little impact on the mainstream of Aeschylean literary scholarship, which remained focused on his extant tragedies.¹⁷ The relationship between satyr play and tragedy is hardly a straightforward one, and scholars may rightly disagree as to whether the fourth play of the City Dionysia programme should be treated 'next to, subordinate to, but not completely eclipsed by, tragedy', as Mark Griffith has recently asserted,¹⁸ or 'as a *culmination* of each tragedian's competitive entry', in the more forceful formulation of Pat Easterling.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it is unarguably the case that any representation of Aeschylus as a dramatic poet is rendered even more partial than necessary without some discussion of his satyric works.

There are, happily, indications that a more holistic perspective has emerged in scholarship over the past few decades.²⁰ In part, this is due to the increased availability of good and accessible critical editions of the texts: alongside the completion of the magisterial series *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (TrGF) (1971–2004), the appearance in 1999 of Ralf Krumeich, Nikolaus Pechstein, and Bernd Seidensticker's edited volume *Das griechische Satyrspiel* (KPS) has provided an invaluable resource by collecting together all the significant satyric fragments with explanatory commentary. In 2003 Paolo Cipolla published a critical edition with commentary of the satyric fragments of the so-called 'minor' playwrights; Patrick O'Sullivan and Christopher Collard's volume in the Aris and Phillips series (2013) includes not just Euripides' *Cyclops* but also other major fragments of satyr play with translation and notes; and, most recently, Emanuele Dettori (2016) has produced a comprehensive linguistic commentary on the fragments of *Diktyoulkoi*.

The twenty-first century has welcomed several major publications on satyr drama that offer sophisticated new perspectives from which to approach the genre, including Voelke 2001, Lämmle 2013, Shaw 2014, and the edited volumes by Harrison 2005 and Griffith 2015 (the latter a collection of essays originally published between 2002 and 2010). These works have all added in important ways to our understanding of Aeschylus; Mark Griffith, in particular, has offered innovative readings of both *Proteus* and *Diktyoulkoi* as part of his wider enquiries into the genre of satyr play.²¹ Alan Sommerstein devoted a chapter to satyr drama, as well as discussing individual satyr plays at numerous other points, in his important monograph *Aeschylean Tragedy* (1996; rev. 2nd edn 2010); and his 2008 Loeb edition of the

¹⁶ To cite just two examples from well-known series: the *Oxford Readings* edited collection on Aeschylus includes only one essay with any sustained discussion of his satyr plays (Gantz 2007; orig. Gantz 1980, on the tetralogy); similarly, the recent Entretiens Hardt volume on Aeschylus contains one contribution that mentions satyr play in relation to the tetralogy (Podlecki 2009), but has no full chapter, or any extended literary discussion, devoted to the genre.

¹⁷ The bibliography on Aeschylean satyr play compiled by Yzquier 2001b, while not comprehensive, is representative; it also illustrates how Anglophone scholarship on satyr drama (at least until the extensive contributions of Dana F. Sutton) was slow to catch up with the output of scholars working in French, German, Italian, and Polish. Notable works from this period include Campo 1940, Guggisberg 1947, and Steffen 1952; after this, see e.g. Chourmouziades 1974, Sutton 1980, and Seaford 1984. A number of important studies from Casaubon onwards are collected in Seidensticker 1989.

¹⁸ Griffith 2015: 13.

¹⁹ Easterling 1997: 38.

²⁰ For an overview of recent developments in the study of satyr play, discussed in relation to scholarly trends, see Griffith 2015: 1–13.

²¹ Griffith 2002, 2005 (repr. in Griffith 2015).

Aeschylean fragments has done much to make the texts more accessible to an Anglophone audience. Likewise, the recent *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aeschylus*, edited by Rebecca Futo Kennedy (2018), includes discussion of satyr drama in George Harrison's chapter on the playwright's Roman reception. These works form part of a broader wave of interest that has seen a raft of excellent publications dedicated not only to the intricacies of satyr play, but also to the dialogue between this genre and other dramatic forms. Satyr drama is increasingly working its way into scholarship whose primary stated area of focus is tragedy and comedy, as demonstrated most recently by the inclusion of significant discussions of satyr play in Marshall 2014 (on the relationship between Aeschylus' *Proteus* and Euripides' *Helen*), Nelson 2016 (situating satyr play within the matrix of tragedy and comedy), and Sells 2019 (on 'parasatyrism' in old comedy).

Our issue is intended as a further contribution to this growing critical interest in the genre and in Aeschylus as satyr-dramatist. However, it also strives to exemplify a larger point about the way that such texts can and should be integrated into the enquiries that are current in scholarship on ancient theatre. The satyr plays of Aeschylus fall into two different categories of neglect: they are all fragmentary, and they belong to a literary form that has often been dismissed as trivial and has until relatively recently languished in the shadow of its more prestigious companion genre, tragedy. And yet it is indisputably true that the smuttiest fragment of *Diktyoulkoi* is no less 'Aeschylean' than the loftiest passages of the *Agamemnon*; and if our aim is to use the tools of literary enquiry to explore and understand the complexities of his work, we must overcome any squeamishness about applying these interpretative strategies to texts that are incomplete or do not resemble the 'Aeschylus' to whom we are accustomed. In this sense, we hope that the impact of this issue will extend beyond our contributors' discussion of individual plays by giving added momentum to the increasing recognition of fragmentary satyr play, its interpretative challenges and opportunities, and the central place it deserves within theatre scholarship.

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The idea for this themed issue originated in an informal Aeschylean satyr play reading group held at the University of Cambridge in 2013. Several of the papers published here (Coo, Lämmle, O'Sullivan, Thomas) were first presented at the conference 'Aeschylus at play: satyr drama and the idea of tragedy', organized by Anna Uhlig at UC Davis in April 2014 and generously funded by the Classics Program there. In putting together this collection, we have aimed for a balance between the small- and large-scale: our contributors address interpretations of individual plays (O'Sullivan on *Diktyoulkoi*, Thomas on *Theoroi/Isthmiastai*); engage in thematic discussions that encompass several Aeschylean dramas (Coo on the connected tetralogy, Uhlig on slavery); undertake wider ranging analysis of the genre as a whole, with special attention given to Aeschylus (Lämmle on the satyric chorus); and explore the longer story of the tradition of Aeschylus' satyric work in antiquity (Touyz). The approaches and perspectives that emerge are varied: where more than one contributor has discussed the same play, we have made no attempt to impose any coherence of interpretation. We believe that the texts of satyr drama are, like those of its sister genre tragedy, capable of provoking and accommodating multiple literary interpretations and that scholars should be mindful of, but not deterred by, the evident challenges involved in working with such fragmentary material. Given the fact that no Aeschylean satyr play survives in full and that the majority consist only of a title and handful of words, many of the arguments and interpretations put forward here are necessarily speculative. This is a feature of working with such material and our contributors do not constantly apologize for this; we

believe that such approaches can also prompt scholars to ask fresh questions of these texts and point to new avenues for future research.

Lyndsay Coe addresses a central interpretative issue in the study of the genre: the question of the satyr play's relationship to the tragedies with which it was co-produced. Aeschylus' practice of writing thematically connected tetralogies suggests that a meaningful dynamic existed between the tragedies and satyr play. Coe draws attention to a distinctive aspect of the playwright's handling of chronology in these, whereby the satyr play takes the audience 'backwards' in time to a mythological episode that occurred either before or within the time frame of the tragic trilogy, often resurrecting characters from those preceding plays. Her discussion analyses this dynamic in terms of its emotional resonance for the audience and suggests that the reappearance of tragic themes and characters in the apparently light-hearted context of the satyr play could have encouraged a nostalgic response. This in turn calls into question the traditional interpretation of the ostensible 'happy endings' of satyr drama and develops a new framework for thinking about the tonal positioning of the satyr play within the tetralogy.

Rebecca Lämmle examines the representation of *choreia*—the song and dance of a choral collective—within satyr drama as a whole, with special reference to the testimony of Aeschylus' satyric *Prometheus*. Although satyr play is, by definition, more dependent on choral features owing to the essential role played by its recurrent chorus of dancing satyrs, it consistently represents choral expression as in some way aberrant or impractical. The chorus are prohibited from singing and dancing, or are chastened for doing so, or they deny the fact of their own *choreia* even as they are enacting it. Lämmle shows how the satyrs' problematic *choreia* addresses the tension between their (extra-dramatic) identity as a Dionysiac *thiasos* and the unusual (dramatic) roles that individual plays require them to assume, and she argues that these expressions of choral identity may be viewed as reflections of stages in the development of the theatrical genres. In Lämmle's expansive reading, the precariousness of satyric *choreia* can thus be understood in broader terms as 'a form of negotiation of the role of chorality in drama'.

Patrick O'Sullivan proposes a new interpretation of one of the best preserved of Aeschylus' satyr plays, *Diktyoulokoï*, in which the satyrs and their father Silenus, having rescued Danae and her infant son Perseus from the sea, make unwanted sexual advances towards the baby's mother. Their actions have previously been interpreted as harmless fun, given the standard convention of the genre that sees the satyrs repeatedly fail in their attempts at erotic exploits. O'Sullivan argues instead that this scene should be viewed in a more negative light and that the satyrs in *Diktyoulokoï*, through the subversion of their customary roles as caregivers to infants, assume an unusually menacing identity. Aeschylus thus draws on one of the familiar tropes of the genre—the defeat of a monstrous 'ogre' figure—but subverts it, so that the satyrs themselves become the danger that must be overcome within the play. O'Sullivan's discussion expands our understanding of the dramatic roles that the satyrs could assume.

Oliver Thomas sets out a detailed reading of *Theoroi/Isthmiastai* in relation to the themes of representation and novelty. In this play the satyr chorus have abandoned the service of their master Dionysus and run away to the Isthmus, where they have entered athletic training; Dionysus, having pursued them, appears and offers them threatening (and, in the fragment, unidentified) 'new toys'. Thomas follows other scholars in arguing that these objects are javelins, but offers the novel proposal that they are meant as equipment for the satyrs to perform the *pyrrhikhe*, an armed dance, thereby neatly reconciling their old identity as a dancing chorus with their new one as an athletic troupe. Thomas further explores the fragments' language of innovation and novelty and shows how Aeschylus' striking representation of mimesis in this play—in which the satyrs carry portrait images of

themselves—reflects back on the choreuts who are acting the roles of satyrs, so that we find ‘humans role-playing satyrs trying to role-play human behaviour’.

Anna Uhlig explores the thematization of the satyrs’ proverbial slave status with specific reference to Aeschylean satyr play. A survey of the fragments reveals only one explicit mention of the satyrs’ slavery, suggesting a contrast to the relatively more frequent references in the extant satyr plays of Sophocles and Euripides. Uhlig argues that the chorus’ servitude is nonetheless obliquely figured in many of the Aeschylean passages that remain to us, situating these often enigmatic fragments within the broader historical framework of fifth-century Athenian slavery. At the same time, she argues that Aeschylus’ reticence around the subject of slavery in his satyric works continues a disposition already in evidence in his tragic compositions, which manifest a similarly muted discourse around lower-class enslavement.

Paul Touyz offers a study of the ancient reception of Aeschylean satyr play from the fifth century BC through to the Roman period, exploring the post-première fortunes of these works both within the theatre and in ancient critical discourse. He details possible allusions to Aeschylus’ satyric works by his comic and tragic successors and, surveying the evidence for the re-performance of Aeschylean satyr plays, argues that it is likely that they were re-staged in the classical period and probably later, both on their own and within revivals of connected tetralogies. The popularity of Aeschylean satyr plays within the critical tradition serves as a prompt to explore the diverse ways in which ancient scholars approached the legacy of classical Athenian drama. Touyz argues that, despite its relative insignificance in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, satyr play remained an important strand of scholarly discourse throughout antiquity and that Aeschylus’ prominence within this is owed in large part to his preference for writing connected tetralogies, as well as his associations with the early development of tragedy.

Taken together, these studies offer a range of fresh perspectives for the study of individual Aeschylean satyr plays, his satyric practice more widely, and the genre as a whole. As well as contributing to the current flourishing of scholarship on satyr drama, we hope that this issue will encourage the development of new directions of enquiry and that, if nothing else, we have at least followed the principle articulated in Aeschylus’ satyric *Prometheus* of ‘staying silent when necessary, and saying what is right for the occasion’ (σιγῶν θ’ ὅπου δεῖ καὶ λέγων τὰ καίρια, fr. 208).

Throughout, the abbreviation KPS refers to R. Krumeich, N. Pechstein, and B. Seidensticker (eds), *Das griechische Satyrspiel* (Darmstadt 1999). References to the titles of plays have not been standardized across the issue; so, for example, our contributors may refer to the same work as *Ichneutai*, *Ichneutae*, or *Trackers*. Unless stated otherwise, all references to fragments of tragedy and satyr play follow the numbering used in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (TrGF) (Göttingen 1971–2004).²²

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²² We are fortunate to have benefitted from the guidance of numerous expert readers in preparing this issue. We would like to thank all those who agreed to act as anonymous reviewers and the *BICS* editor Liz Potter for generously giving their time and advice.