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This surviving unified trilogy allows the reader to experience the development of these three-part stories and to observe the common strands of information and enlightenment winding throughout. Each play would have built support and framework for the others. However, even though we have all three plays of this trilogy, the satyr play *Proteus* is lost, as it would have been a type of comic epilogue to finish the *Oresteia*. To get fair winds to sail for Troy, Agamemnon was forced to sacrifice his own daughter, Iphigenia. Offending the gods, either by attempting to deceive them into eating the flesh of his son, Pelops, or by endeavouring to plunder nectar and ambrosia from the gods, Tantalus was punished in the Underworld by being eternally inflicted with a raging hunger and thirst. An attempted rape of the girl by Myrtilus ensued, and when Pelops threw him from a cliff, he cursed Pelops. The hereditary nature of the curse resulted in the killing of children by their parents and vice versa, a destroying of the whole family from within. The very first lines themselves are a signal, setting a sombre, ominous tone to the scene: The Chorus consists of elderly men who were too old ten years ago to make war on Troy, but now impart perhaps the most critical information in the play in their back-story: Agamemnon is put in an unbearable position. He is protector of his household, therefore to kill his daughter goes against his moral obligation. He is caught in an inescapable situation. Fate is suffocating him and no matter what his choice, there will be appalling consequences. His words are seeped in agony: What of these things goes now without disaster? How shall I fail my ships and lose my faith of battle? For them to urge such sacrifice of innocent blood angrily, for their wrath is great it is right. May all be well yet. In spite of her heart-rending pleas, the men who have known her since she was a child, lift her upon the altar. Although the audience witnesses the poignancy of the preparation of her sacrifice, we are left to imagine her terrible fate. A Herald arrives confirming the victory of the Greeks, and proclaiming the return of their king, Agamemnon. His wife professes overwhelming joy at his homecoming, and in an ironic twist, the Herald is impressed with the truth and majesty of her words. Clytemnestra source Wikiart Agamemnon arrives in regal impressiveness, riding in a chariot with Cassandra, the prophetess and princess of Troy by his side, his winnings from the spoils of the war. Clytemnestra greets him with overblown and excessive oratory, spreading purple carpets for him to walk on. The king denounces such delicate pomp, yet walks on them anyway, unwittingly proclaiming a rather chilly illustration of his own character and a whisper of his fate: Call that man only blest who has in sweet tranquillity brought his life to close. If I could only act as such, my hope is good. The trampling and "crushing" of the purple carpets symbolize his trampling and crushing of all that is delicate and beautiful: Iphigenia, Troy and soon, Cassandra. Cassandra source Wikimedia Commons Clytemnestra attempts to invite Cassandra inside, but she silently resists until Clytemnestra gives up and enters herself, leaving Cassandra alone with the Chorus. Finally, the girl speaks, but the words flowing from her lips are laments and apocalyptic premonitions. She relates her own story, and also begins to offer vague prophecies of calamity and death, revealing the cause of the melancholy and impending doom which blankets the city in spite of the return of its king. Her last words are pregnant with eerie foreshadowing: That room within reeks with blood like a slaughterhouse Clytemnestra source Wikiart Suddenly Agamemnon cries out: The Chorus, while still bewildered, finally agrees that judgement between them is unclear and revisits the cause of the war with Troy: She and Aegisthus will be able to reign in peace and benevolence. The altercation does not diminish as the play ends. The next play in the trilogy is *The Libations Bearers*, and we get a hint of one of its characters in this play, when Clytemnestra mentions that she has sent their son, Orestes, away to safety when there were rumours of unrest in Argos. In the second play, Orestes returns. The Funeral Procession of Agamemnon Louis Jean Desprez source Wikimedia Commons Greek scholars bring out a number of interesting points in this first play that would not be apparent to a modern audience. The Greek spectators would have been expecting

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Cassandra to remain silent and have Clytemnestra draw her out, a common strategy in Greek theatre. The fact that Cassandra actually speaks would have astounded onlookers, therefore making her speeches and presence much more powerful. They also highlight the masculinity of Clytemnestra, noting the Greek words she uses to describe herself as being very masculine references to a Greek audience. While near the end of the play, she attempts to reclaim her sex as woman, the male images of power, vengeance, murder and ruthlessness still remain. Hubris in Greek does not simply mean pride but instead indicates wanton violence motivated by pride. Both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra suffer this poisonous quality. The plot is only the packaging; the real story is born of the intrigues, the capriciousness of the gods, internal struggle, personal sacrifice and vengeance. How the plot unfolds is secondary to performance, an intense and acute penetration into the soul of man.

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Chapter 2 : Aeschylus - Ancient Greece - Classical Literature

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Life[edit] A marble relief of a poet, perhaps Sophocles Sophocles, the son of Sophilus, was a wealthy member of the rural deme small community of Hippeios Colonus in Attica , which was to become a setting for one of his plays, and he was probably born there. Instead of following the usual custom of choosing judges by lot, the archon asked Cimon and the other strategoi present to decide the victor of the contest. Plutarch further contends that following this loss Aeschylus soon left for Sicily. For this, he was given the posthumous epithet Dexion receiver by the Athenians. The most famous is the suggestion that he died from the strain of trying to recite a long sentence from his *Antigone* without pausing to take a breath. Another account suggests he choked while eating grapes at the Anthesteria festival in Athens. A third holds that he died of happiness after winning his final victory at the City Dionysia. In that work, a character named Myrtilus, in a lengthy banquet speech claims that Ion of Chios writes in his book *Encounters*, that Sophocles loved boys as much as Euripides loved women. Myrtilus also repeats an anecdote reportedly told by Ion of Chios that involves Sophocles flirting with a serving boy at a symposium. It was not until after the death of the old master Aeschylus in BC that Sophocles became the pre-eminent playwright in Athens. Of the others, *Electra* shows stylistic similarities to these two plays, which suggests that it was probably written in the latter part of his career. All three plays concern the fate of Thebes during and after the reign of King Oedipus. Not only are the Theban plays not a true trilogy three plays presented as a continuous narrative but they are not even an intentional series and contain some inconsistencies among them. His family is fated to be doomed for three generations. In *Oedipus Rex* , Oedipus is the protagonist. Oedipus meets a man at a crossroads accompanied by servants; Oedipus and the man fight, and Oedipus kills the man who was his father, Laius, although neither knew at the time. He becomes the ruler of Thebes after solving the riddle of the sphinx and in the process, marries the widowed queen, his mother Jocasta. Thus the stage is set for horror. When the truth comes out, following from another true but confusing prophecy from Delphi, Jocasta commits suicide, Oedipus blinds himself and leaves Thebes. At the end of the play, order is restored. This restoration is seen when Creon, brother of Jocasta, becomes king, and also when Oedipus, before going off to exile, asks Creon to take care of his children. Oedipus dies and strife begins between his sons Polyneices and Eteocles. The king of the land, Creon, has forbidden the burial of Polyneices for he was a traitor to the city. Antigone decides to bury his body and face the consequences of her actions. Creon sentences her to death. Eventually, Creon is convinced to free Antigone from her punishment, but his decision comes too late and Antigone commits suicide. Her suicide triggers the suicide of two others close to King Creon: Nor were they composed as a trilogy “ a group of plays to be performed together, but are the remaining parts of three different groups of plays. As a result, there are some inconsistencies: In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles attempts to work these inconsistencies into a coherent whole: Ismene explains that, in light of their tainted family lineage, her brothers were at first willing to cede the throne to Creon. In addition to being in a clearly more powerful position in *Oedipus at Colonus*, Eteocles and Polynices are also culpable: Despite their enmity toward him, Odysseus persuades the kings Menelaus and Agamemnon to grant Ajax a proper burial. Upon learning the truth, Deianeira commits suicide. Philoctetes retells the story of Philoctetes , an archer who had been abandoned on Lemnos by the rest of the Greek fleet while on the way to Troy. Fragmentary plays[edit] Although the list of over titles of plays associated with Sophocles are known and presented below, [29] little is known of the precise dating of most of them. The convention on writing plays for the Greek festivals was to submit them in tetralogies of three tragedies along with one satyr play. Along with the unknown dating of the vast majority of over play titles, it is also largely unknown how the plays were grouped. Fragments of *Ichneutae Tracking Satyrs* were discovered in Egypt in The tragedy tells the story of the second siege of Thebes.

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Chapter 3 : Classical Carousel: The Oresteia ~ The Libation Bearers by Aeschylus

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His tragedies, exemplified by such seminal works as Prometheus Bound and the Oresteia trilogy, are widely praised as thoughtful and profoundly moving translations of tremendous feelings into the sublime language of poetry. Unfortunately, only seven plays of Aeschylus have survived intact. Not far from the growing city of Athens, Eleusis was sacred to the two goddesses of grain, Demeter and her daughter Persephone. It was also the center for the Eleusinian Mysteries, a principal mystery religion in ancient Greece. Here Peisistratus instituted an annual festival, the Great or City Dionysia, which included public performances where songs and dances by a chorus alternated with solo recitations by a poet. In each performance, poet and chorus explored themes from the Greek myths. Before the end of the century the satyr play, a mythological farce, was added to the festival, and tragedians competed for a prize for the best play. Aeschylus began competing in, but did not win his first victory at the City Dionysia until The success he enjoyed as a playwright for most of the fifth century was won after years of failure. Aeschylus married and had two sons, Euphorion and Euaeon, both of whom became tragic poets. The Battle of Marathon When Aeschylus was a young man, the armies of the Persian Empire—based in the region now known as Iran—were advancing across the city-states of Greece toward Athens. The Persians had already conquered regions to the east of Attica—where Athens and Eleusis were located—and with the superior numbers of the Persian forces, many were expecting all of Greece to become yet another territory of the Persian Empire. Aeschylus, along with thousands of other Greeks, gathered at the Plain of Marathon on the eastern coast of Attica to fend off the Persian army. Ancient sources state that the Persian soldiers were anywhere from two hundred thousand to six hundred thousand in number, though modern estimates have been much lower. The Greek forces were certainly outnumbered; however, through skillful maneuvering on the battlefield, they drove the Persian armies back to the sea with only about two hundred soldiers lost. The battle was considered a decisive victory for the Greeks, and it inspired Aeschylus to write a play titled Persians. Ancient authors thought it significant that Eleusis, where Aeschylus was born, was the religious center for the Eleusinian Mysteries, a mystery religion of great importance in ancient Greece. This religion was one that prohibited its followers from revealing its teachings and its rituals. In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle relates that Aeschylus was impeached for revealing the secrets of the Mysteries but pleaded ignorance. His plays confirm the idea that his religious commitments were Olympian and Hellenic, not local. According to Heracleides of Pontus, a pupil of Aristotle, the playwright was alleged to have revealed secrets of the Mysteries in his play Prometheus Bound; the audience of the play tried to stone Aeschylus, and the playwright took refuge. Aeschylus was later acquitted. Ion of Chios, a younger tragedian, recorded in his Visits that he watched a boxing match at the Isthmian Games with Aeschylus, and that one boxer received a terrible blow that made the crowd roar. Works in Literary Context Given that Aeschylus wrote during the formative period of Greek theater and that no older dramas have survived, it is difficult to assess just how important Aeschylus was to the development of Greek tragedies for his contemporaries. Further, his continuing influence on composers and playwrights up to and including the twentieth century vindicates the important role attributed to Aeschylus in the development not only of tragedies but also of opera. His Innovations Although Aeschylus is the first playwright whose work has survived, he was not the first Athenian playwright. Much can never be resolved about the origins and earliest form of Greek tragedy, but it is widely accepted that tragedies were first performed at the festival of the Great Dionysia in about bce. This was several years before Aeschylus was born. What form such tragedies took is also largely a matter of conjecture but Aristotle was later to credit Aeschylus with introducing a second actor. Aristotle goes on to state that Sophocles was the originator of the third actor and Aeschylus has clearly accepted the development by the time of the Oresteia in bce. The importance of using more than one actor in a play may not be

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immediately apparent, but consider the effects one can achieve with multiple actors on stage at the same time. With only a single actor, a character can only have as his or her audience the chorus or the actual audience in attendance. However, when a playwright adds additional actors to a play, he or she is able to show the interaction between characters in order to attain higher levels of irony and tension, as audiences will inevitably be forced to evaluate the goodness or badness of each character. When a third character is added to a play, the possibilities continue to expand, for with three actors it is possible, for instance, for one to be hiding and listening to the other two without their knowing it. Consider the famous scene from Hamlet in which Hamlet is speaking with his mother in her bedroom while Polonius listens in. Because Aeschylus was writing for the Greek theater in its formative stages, he is also credited with having introduced many features that became associated with the traditional Greek theater. Among these were the rich costumes, decorated cothurni a kind of footwear, solemn dances, and possibly elaborate stage machinery. Greek playwright whose most famous works focus on the life of Oedipus, including Oedipus Rex and Antigone. Persian king who attempted to assert his rule over Athens in bce. His attempt was soundly thwarted. Persian king and successor of Darius. Like his predecessor, Xerxes tried to invade Greece. Last king of Rome. Upon his deposition, Rome turned into a republic, by many accounts the first of its kind, with elected officials, rather than dictators chosen based on their ancestry. Not only was Pythagoras important in introducing mathematics as a subject of study, his work, including the Pythagorean Theorem, is still a cornerstone of modern mathematics. Gautama Siddhartha "bce: A spiritual leader in India better known simply as the Buddha. Chinese philosopher and writer whose wisdom can be found codified in the Analects. Legacy The ninety plays that Aeschylus wrote were performed frequently after his death, and the tragic drama remained a living tradition in the hands of his successors, Sophocles and Euripides. Tragedy also exerted a decisive influence on the development of literary criticism: Later, imitations of Greek tragedy written in the first century ce by the Roman playwright Seneca exerted a powerful influence on the development of European theater during the Renaissance. He also later commissioned Aeschylus to write Aetnean Women to celebrate the refounding of the city of Etna. In other words, Aeschylus did not labor in obscurity but was honored by the critics of his time. Persians Aeschylus uses in this play, although not for the first time, two actors in addition to the chorus and its leader. The original addition of a second actor in the Greek theater was attributed to Aeschylus by Aristotle, who had made a survey of early drama for his Poetics. The second actor, by increasing opportunities for contrast and conflict, was essential for the development from choral performance to drama. The play builds from suspense to resolution. The emotions range from fear to pity. Greek literary critics from Gorgias to Aristotle saw this range of emotions as typical of tragedy. When the play was first performed at the Dionysia in bce, it won first prize. Oresteia includes the plays Agamemnon, Libation Bearers, and Eumenides, and the lost satyr play Proteus. Its themes are presented with a power of poetry and a theatrical verve and creativity that are unprecedented. The chorus of the Furies in Eumenides was remembered for generations. These four plays of Aeschylus are the first plays that were written for the set on which tragedy was performed for the rest of the fifth century. Arrogance has long been one of the key subjects of literature and art. Here are some other works that have hubris as their focus: Moby-Dick, a novel by Herman Melville. Absalom, Absalom, a novel by William Faulkner. Thomas Sutpen attempts to create a dynasty for himself in this Southern gothic novel. Citizen Kane, a film by Orson Welles. Welles wrote, directed, and starred in this film about the rise of fictional publishing magnate Charles Foster Kane. Responses to Literature In classical as well as contemporary literature, hubris is a common theme. Can you think of a figure from the real world who exhibits hubris? Who is this person? In what ways does he or she exhibit hubris? Take one of the scenes in which a number of characters are present and crucial to the effect of the scene. Because little is known for certain about ancient figures, what we do know about them often comes in the form of stories based on some small, known fact about the figure. In order to understand how biographical fiction works, do a little research on a historical figure and then write a scene in which this figure interacts with his mother. Make sure to utilize some of the facts that you know about the figure. What are some of the key differences? What are some of the key similarities? Cambridge

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University Press, Oxford University Press, New Haven , Conn.: Yale University Press, A Study in Language and Structure. Center for Hellenic Studies, A Collection of Critical Essays. The Creator of Tragedy. An Essay on the Meaning of Aeschylus. University of North Carolina Press, The Art of Aeschylus. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Musical Design in Aeschylean Theater. University Press of New England , Johns Hopkins University Press, Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

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Chapter 4 : Aeschylus | Greek dramatist | calendrierdelascience.com

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The Thymele [1] arranged to represent the tomb of Darius. Enter a procession of Persian Elders forming the Chorus. This drama, founded upon the Persian War, and produced only seven years after its termination B. It exhibits, moreover, the same principles of dramatic art, and the same conceptions respecting the divine government which characterise the purely imaginative productions of the "warrior-bard. About eighty years before the battle of Salamis fought B. Within this comparatively brief interval they had brought under subjection not only the native peoples of Asia, but also large areas of Europe and Africa. Their ambition expanded with their conquests, till, at length, they aspired to universal dominion. During the expedition of Xerxes the tributaries of the Persian king were virtually slaves, working under the lash, and driven on to the charge in battle with the scourge. The profound humiliation of the subject peoples is forcibly depicted by the Chorus, in the ode wherein they lament the overthrow of the Persian power v. Meanwhile, in the heart of Hellas, a new phase of political life had been developed; Athens had thrown off the yoke of her tyrants, the Pisistratids, and the world saw, for the first time, a state composed of free and equal citizens. The revolution of Kleisthenes had established the principles of free speech and equal law, while as yet this new-born liberty had not degenerated into licence. Adverting to the Athenian constitution at the time when the Persians made their attack on Hellas, Plato says, "Reverence was then our queen and mistress, and made us willing to live in obedience to the laws. His son Xerxes undertook to avenge the disaster which had befallen the Persian arms: Well might the contemporary world be overawed by the spectacle of so prodigious an armament, and regard the cause of Hellenic independence as desperate. The victory of Salamis shattered the power of the barbarians, and changed the destiny of the world. Thus he habitually composed groups of three connected plays, which gave full scope for the development of thought and work. In the same manner Herodotus has based his history upon the notion of a primeval enmity subsisting between the Hellenes and the nations of the East. This was rendered possible by the remoteness of Persia, which was selected as the scene of the drama; by the gorgeous splendour which surrounded Oriental life; by the vastness of the armies assembled under the sceptre of the great king, together with the strangeness of the barbaric physiognomy and costume. It has been remarked by Welcker that in this passage allusion is obviously made to something which had been brought before the minds of the spectators in the previous drama, and this hypothesis is confirmed by the prophetic character of Phineus, from whom the first member of the trilogy derives its name. There are other versions of the story which, notwithstanding some discrepancies as to the genealogy of Phineus, and the circumstances of his blindness, agree in investing him with the prophetic character, and in bringing him into connection with the Argonauts, the grand national adventurers of Hellas. Phineus, according to the ancient legend, was delivered from the Harpies by the Boreades; [6] and it is related by Apollonius xi. In accordance with the spirit of the age, which linked together the successive conflicts between Europe and Asia, the expedition of the Argonauts, with that of the Hellenes against Ilium, is associated, by Herodotus, with the Persian war: It might therefore excite surprise that, in treating so momentous a subject as the Persian war, he should have contented himself with celebrating the battle of Salamis alone, which, however glorious for Athens, left the fate of Hellas still undecided. This would be brought home with peculiar force to the Athenians who, only ten months after the retreat of Xerxes, had been obliged to migrate a second time to Salamis, while Athens became once more the head-quarters of their dreaded foe. This prophecy alone would suggest the probability of some reference being made to this important victory in the third member of the trilogy, the Glaukos Potnieus. According to popular tradition Glaukos was a fisherman, who became a marine demigod by eating of the divine life-giving herb sown by Kronos: His approach was anticipated by the fishermen, by whom he was held in peculiar veneration, who also offered sacrifice and prayers to avert the threatened woe. It is mentioned by Pausanias ix. According

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to Welcker, the extant fragments of this drama seem to indicate that Glaukos describes a voyage which he made from Anhedon to Sicily. In the neighbourhood of this city was fought the battle of Himera, on which occasion the Sicilian Hellenes repulsed the Carthaginian invaders, whose attack took place simultaneously with that of Xerxes upon Hellas. The plastic art of the Hellenes illustrates their tendency to regard the successive victories of Hellas over Oriental barbarism as phases of the great struggle between the higher and lower elements of civilization, which formed so prominent a feature in their mythology. This conception has found artistic expression in the beautiful painting on the so-called Darius vase, "on which the celestial deities are represented as consoling the terrified Hellas in face of the threatening purposes and preparations of the mighty king of Asia. The Satyric drama, which invariably followed the trilogy, was a relic of the original dithyrambic chorus sung at the festival of Dionysos by groups of Satyrs who followed the chariot of the vintage-god; it was probably intended to relieve the serious impression produced by the tragedy, and to furnish amusement to the populace. Welcker has shown that we must distinguish between "Prometheus the fire-bringer," and "Prometheus the fire-kindler;" the latter being the title of the Satyric drama in question, which he maintains had reference to the establishment of the Promethea, the torch-race, at Athens, an artisan festival of which Prometheus was regarded as the founder. The kindling of the sacred fire might well be hailed as the symbol not only of victory, but also of the brighter day which had just dawned for the Hellenic race; while the association of the poorer classes, by the introduction of their favourite festival, would impart to the drama a peculiarly popular character, and render it the appropriate expression of the national enthusiasm.

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Chapter 5 : Sophocles - Wikipedia

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His family was rich, and his father, Euphorion, was a member of the Eupatridae , the ancient nobility of Attica. The god ordered him to write the first tragedies. Aeschylus, and his brother Cynegirus, joined the army from Athens and fought against the Persians at the Battle of Marathon. This battle, which stopped Darius, was celebrated across the city-states of Greece. This play won first prize at the Dionysia. This was the religious cult of Demeter , and based in his home town of Eleusis. Members were sworn under the penalty of death not to say anything about the Mysteries to anyone. Later, Aeschylus said he did not know that he had shown any of the secrets. He was saved from death only because of his brave service in the Persian Wars. Later life[change change source] Aeschylus made two trips to Sicily in the s BC. He was invited by Hieron , tyrant of Syracuse , a big Greek city on the east side of the island. On one of these trips he wrote The Women of Aetna, in honor of the city founded by Hieron. He also restaged his Persians. It is said that he was killed by a tortoise which fell out of the sky after it was dropped by an eagle. This story is probably only a legend. Only six tragedies have survived intact: There is also the play Prometheus Bound , but this was probably written by someone else. All of the surviving plays won first prize at the City Dionysia. One book, the Alexandrian Life of Aeschylus, said that he won the first prize at the City Dionysia 13 times. Oresteia a series of three plays BC Agamemnon.

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Chapter 6 : Aeschylus | Define Aeschylus at calendrierdelascience.com

"Revised and expanded from the original [ed.] edited by Burns Mantle and John Gassner." Includes bibliographies v. 1. World drama from Aeschylus to Turgenevv.

Later Greek chroniclers believed that Aeschylus was 35 years old in bc when he participated in the Battle of Marathon , in which the Athenians first repelled the Persians; if this is true it would place his birth in bc. Every year at this festival, each of three dramatists would produce three tragedies, which either could be unconnected in plot sequence or could have a connecting theme. This trilogy was followed by a satyr play , which was a kind of lighthearted burlesque. Aeschylus is recorded as having participated in this competition, probably for the first time, in bc. He won his first victory in the theatre in the spring of bc. In the meantime, he had fought and possibly been wounded at Marathon , and Aeschylus singled out his participation in this battle years later for mention on the verse epitaph he wrote for himself. In the Persians again invaded Greece, and once again Aeschylus saw service, fighting at the battles of Artemisium and Salamis. His responses to the Persian invasion found expression in his play Persians, the earliest of his works to survive. This play was produced in the competition of the spring of bc and won first prize. Aeschylus recouped the loss with victory in the next year , with his Oedipus trilogy of which the third play, Seven Against Thebes, survives. After producing the masterpiece among his extant works, the Oresteia trilogy, in , Aeschylus went to Sicily again. A ludicrous story that he was killed when an eagle dropped a tortoise on his bald pate was presumably fabricated by a later comic writer. At Gela he was accorded a public funeral, with sacrifices and dramatic performances held at his grave, which subsequently became a place of pilgrimage for writers. Only seven tragedies have survived entire. One account, perhaps based on the official lists, assigns Aeschylus 13 first prizes, or victories; this would mean that well over half of his plays won, since sets of four plays rather than separate ones were judged. One of them, Euphorion , won first prize in his own right in bc over Sophocles and Euripides. Previous to him, Greek drama was limited to one actor who became known as the protagonist, meaning first actor, once others were added and a chorus engaged in a largely static recitation. The chorus was a group of actors who responded to and commented on the main action of a play with song, dance, and recitation. The actor could assume different roles by changing masks and costumes, but he was limited to engaging in dialogue only with the chorus. He made good use of stage settings and stage machinery , and some of his works were noted for their spectacular scenic effects. He also designed costumes, trained his choruses in their songs and dances, and probably acted in most of his own plays, this being the usual practice among Greek dramatists. His plays are of lasting literary value in their majestic and compelling lyrical language, in the intricate architecture of their plots, and in the universal themes which they explore so honestly. He makes bold use of compound epithets, metaphors , and figurative turns of speech, but this rich language is firmly harnessed to the dramatic action rather than used as mere decoration. It is characteristic of Aeschylus to sustain an image or group of images throughout a play; the ship of state in Seven Against Thebes, the birds of prey in Suppliants, the snare in Agamemnon. More generally, Aeschylus deploys throughout a play or trilogy of plays several leading motifs that are often associated with a particular word or group of words. In the Oresteia, for example, such themes as wrath, mastery, persuasion, and the contrasts of light and darkness, of dirge and triumphal song, run throughout the trilogy. This sort of dramatic orchestration as applied to careful plot construction enabled Aeschylus to give Greek drama a more truly artistic and intellectual form. Aeschylean tragedy deals with the plights, decisions, and fates of individuals with whom the destiny of the community or state is closely bound up; in turn, both individual and community stand in close relation to the gods. Aeschylus and his Greek contemporaries believed that the gods begrudged human greatness and sent infatuation on a man at the height of his success, thus bringing him to disaster. In this scheme of things, divine jealousy and eternal justice formed the common fabric of a moral order of which Zeus , supreme among the gods, was the guardian. But the unjust are not always punished in their lifetime; it is upon their descendants

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that justice may fall. It was this tradition of belief in a just Zeus and in hereditary guilt that Aeschylus received, and which is evinced in many of his plays. The simplest illustration of this is in *Persians*, in which Xerxes and his invading Persians are punished for their own offenses. But in a play such as *Agamemnon*, the issues of just punishment and moral responsibility, of human innocence and guilt, of individual freedom versus evil heredity and divine compulsion are more complex and less easily disentangled, thus presenting contradictions which still baffle the human intellect. Finally, to Aeschylus, divine justice uses human motives to carry out its decrees. Chief among these motives is the desire for vengeance, which was basic to the ancient Greek scheme of values. In the one complete extant trilogy, the *Oresteia*, this notion of vengeance or retaliation is dominant. Retaliation is a motive of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, and Orestes. But significantly, the chain of retaliatory murder that pursues Agamemnon and his family ends not by a perfect balance of blood guilt, not by a further perpetuation of violence, but rather through reconciliation and the rule of law as established by Athena and the Athenian courts of justice. Aeschylus is almost unequalled in writing tragedy that, for all its power of depicting evil and the fear and consequences of evil, ends, as in the *Oresteia*, in joy and reconciliation. Living at a time when the Greek people still truly felt themselves surrounded by the gods, Aeschylus nevertheless had a capacity for detached and general thought, which was typically Greek and which enabled him to treat the fundamental problem of evil with singular honesty and success. The plays *Persians* One of a trilogy of unconnected tragedies presented in bc, *Persians* Greek *Persai* is unique among surviving tragedies in that it dramatizes recent history rather than events from the distant age of mythical heroes. The play treats the decisive repulse of the Persians from Greece in 480, in particular their defeat at the Battle of Salamis. The play is set in the Persian capital, where a messenger brings news to the Persian queen of the disaster at Salamis. *Persians* Learn about *Persians*, a play by Aeschylus. The first play seems to have shown how Laius, king of Thebes, had a son despite the prohibition of the oracle of the god Apollo. In the second play it appears that that son, Oedipus, killed his father and laid a curse on his own two sons, Eteocles and Polyneices. Eteocles assigns defenders to each of six of the seven gates of Thebes; but he insists on fighting at the seventh gate, where his opponent will be Polyneices. *Suppliants* This is the first and only surviving play of a trilogy probably put on in 472. But there is now evidence that the trilogy of which *Suppliants* formed a part was produced in competition with Sophocles, who is first known to have competed in 470. *Oresteia* The *Oresteia* trilogy consists of three closely connected plays, all extant, that were presented in bc. In *Agamemnon* the great Greek king of that name returns triumphant from the siege of Troy, along with his concubine, the Trojan prophetess Cassandra, only to be humiliated and murdered by his fiercely vengeful wife, Clytemnestra. Many regard this play as one of the greatest Greek tragedies. At the start of this play Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who was sent abroad as a child, returns as a man to take vengeance upon his mother and her lover for their murder of his father. He is reunited with his sister Electra, and together they invoke the aid of the dead Agamemnon in their plans. At this point the chain of vengeance seems interminable. At the command of the Delphic oracle, Orestes journeys to Athens to stand trial for his matricide. There the goddess Athena organizes a trial with a jury of citizens. The Furies are his accusers, while Apollo defends him. The trilogy thus ends with the cycle of retributive bloodshed ended and supplanted by the rule of law and the justice of the state. After refusing to reveal his secret, Prometheus is cast into the underworld for further torture. The most striking and controversial aspect of the play is its depiction of Zeus as a tyrant. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

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Classical Greek Tragedy, Part 1 I. The Data, or the Depressing Lack Thereof Although Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides emerge from history as the great names associated with Greek tragedy, there were scores of other dramatists who achieved renown over the course of classical antiquity. The triumphs of many playwrights at the Dionysia are recorded on inscriptions and in other sources. Despite so narrow a slice of history, occasionally a glimpse of the larger pool of writing talent at work in the day drifts into view, for instance, the late fifth-century tragedian Agathon. While no play of his survives entire, several other Greek authors mention him, including the philosophers Aristotle and Plato and the comic poet Aristophanes. According to Aristotle Poetics 9, for instance, Agathon "invented plots," by which Aristotle must mean that he devised the first dramas based on original storylines, i. Worse yet, even the dramatic output of the surviving trio is not particularly well accounted for. It is rather ironic to note, then, that in antiquity Aeschylus was almost as well known for his satyr plays as his tragedies, a reputation that endured for centuries. To wit, a Roman mosaic created half a millennium after the Classical Age depicts Aeschylus directing not a tragedy but a satyr play. Likewise, the Roman poet Horace mentions Eupolis and Cratinus, two famous playwrights of Old Comedy, in the same breath with their contemporary and rival Aristophanes, which suggests Horace held all three in relatively equal esteem. This litany of loss serves as a serious reminder that our picture of classical drama is far from complete, making reconstruction a difficult but inevitable aspect of dealing with theatre in this age. While fragments of text and the occasional anecdote may shed a ray of light here and there, all but nothing can be confirmed from credible historical sources. Our best information about early drama comes, in fact, not from plays as such but from inscriptions, the official notices of the Athenian state. This type of evidence is called epigraphical "written on" because the records were carved onto stone plaques, usually marble, and posted in public places. For drama, the most informative of the inscriptions are the Athenian victory lists, a catalogue of playwrights and producers—and later, performers—who won first prize at the City Dionysia annually. From these lists not only emerge many names of Greek playwrights and choregoi who would otherwise have passed from memory entirely, but these inscriptions also shed light on the evolution of theatre and drama in ancient Athens. For instance, the victory lists document the rise of actors by indicating the period when they began to be awarded prizes. If these accounts were complete, the information given there would be among the best primary evidence available for drama in the Classical Age. Unfortunately they are not. Another epigraphical source providing important information about fifth-century theatre is the Parian Marble. This monumental inscription—it is six feet, seven inches high, and two feet, three inches wide—was found on the Aegean island of Paros, hence its name. Its text is a purported history of Greece, but it focuses mainly on Athens with a clear bias toward glorifying the Athenians. Though it dates to around BCE which is well after the Classical Age, many of the data cited on the Parian Marble can be corroborated elsewhere and so in general it seems fairly reliable. Given such data, we can piece together a rough outline of the course of early fifth-century tragedy. One of the first playwrights to appear in the historical record is Choerilus, in fact, little more than a name to which but one play title has been attached Alope. About Pratinas, another playwright of roughly the same period, all that is known is he composed both tragedies and satyr plays see Chapter 8. This play deserves mention if for nothing else than that it is the first Western drama for which there exists specific information about the production. For instance, its subject revolved around recent history, not myth, making it also the earliest known historical drama. This tragedy, no doubt, focused on the sorrows of the defeated Persians but was staged, according to one source, in a remarkably modern manner. If our source can be trusted, the play opened with a servant relating to the audience the recent defeat of the Persians as he went around the stage arranging chairs for nobles at a council meeting. He, too, lays out the scene for the

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audience at the outset of the play. It seems unlikely, if not impossible, for all those early tragedians to have restricted themselves to presenting only male characters in their plays. Nor is there any real reason that they should have. More likely, Phrynichus was the first playwright to focus on female characters, which would in this case tie him to Euripides who was also known for creating memorable stage women. All in all, Phrynichus was admired and imitated for at least two generations after his lifetime. That man was, of course, Aeschylus. Though not among the rich, he came from good Athenian stock and was apparently well-educated. His brother Cynegirus is reported to have died there. Aeschylus is said to have died in Sicily, presumably on tour since the Greeks who lived there admired his work, or so some sources relate. Confirmation of this comes from the title of one of his tragedies, *The Women of Etna*, which appears to have been written primarily for a Sicilian viewership. It would have been infeasible for him to enter the competition at the Dionysia often enough between and his death in to generate that many plays. Thus, for at least some portion of his early career he must have gone without winning at the Dionysia. In other words, his popularity was ultimately very great but probably came neither quickly nor easily. Aeschylean Drama The reason for such a rough road to success but also his enduring presence on the Athenian stage centered, no doubt, around his well-documented ingenuity as a poet, playwright and technician of theatre. A great experimenter with all aspects of drama, Aeschylus was renowned for creating spectacular effects on stage. In the middle of his play *The Suppliants*, for example, he has a second chorus of men break onto the stage and attempt to abduct the principal chorus of women. Our text today records only cries and shrieks—it reads literally "o! To judge from the extant plays, Aeschylus also enjoyed creating and solving dramatic challenges. For instance, in *Prometheus Bound* the central character, the rebellious titan Prometheus who in Greek myth brought fire down to humankind, is nailed to a rock in the first scene of the play and from there never moves until the end of the show. Leave it to Aeschylus to conceive of a drama in which the hero does not—nay, cannot! His reason for choosing a tale like this is not as easy to pin down as its title character, however. Perhaps he wanted more time to work with the chorus and execute innovative dances and songs for them, so he froze the leading actor himself? It would certainly have saved him a considerable amount of time blocking the show. Aeschylus was also famous for his "silent" characters like Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, as we noted in the previous chapter. Such bold finesse is not inappropriate for the man whom Aristotle credits with having "invented" dialogue. A play based on recent history, it stands out as the only Greek tragedy extant which does not take its subject matter from myth. A bold and creative play, nevertheless, but nothing as audacious as Aeschylus would go on to produce in the last years of his life, and so though he was around fifty-years-old when he composed *Persae*, it seems safe to say he had clearly not yet hit his stride. That is, the *Oresteia* is the one surviving instance of three tragedies which were originally designed to be performed together at the Dionysia. The collocation of this triad of plays into a "trilogy" is the result of modern conflation. In the first play, *Agamemnon*, the title character meets his wife Clytemnestra after a ten-year absence and almost immediately upon his arrival she murders him in revenge for his sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia when he left for the war a decade earlier. Orestes flees to Athens where the gods put him on trial for murder. With Apollo acting as his defense attorney and Athena as judge, Orestes wins acquittal, though at the end of the play the Furies are given some measure of satisfaction not with blood but by being made "honorary citizens" of Athens called "metics," resident foreigners who were allowed to live in Athens. His writing style is hardly less daring than his stagecraft. They could not believe a sober person was able to concoct such fantastical turns of phrase. More extreme still, near the end of the same play, after Clytemnestra has murdered her husband helpless and naked in his bath, Aeschylus presents her standing in triumph over the dead Agamemnon. An endless cloak, as if for fishes, I put around him, a wealthy weight of fabric, evil; I strike him twice, and with two groans He relaxes his limbs, and once he fell, A third blow I dedicate, to the Zeus of Hell, Savior of the dead, a prayerful gift of thanks. To her, his destruction is rebirth, his murder her bounty. For one miraculous moment, life is death, and blood fertility, as this remorseless "Lady Macbeth" revels with no sense of guilt whatsoever in being caught red-handed. Such fanciful stories accreted naturally around the great tragedians and point, if not to any literal truth, to the abiding popularity and pre-eminence of classical

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drama in the ancient world. Later we will see why there are a mere seven, but first we must look at his great heir—and briefly also his most significant rival—Sophocles.

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Chapter 8 : ENGL - World Drama:Aeschylus-Turgenev - Acalog ACMSâ,,ç

The Community College of Baltimore County has more than degree and certificate programs, with courses offered at six convenient locations throughout Baltimore County and online.

Here is my own soil that I walk. I have come home; and by this mounded gravebank I invoke my sire to hear, to listen Sadly, in the only surviving manuscript of *The Libation Bearers* brought to Florence in the 15th century, the opening speech is damaged and there are number of missing lines, the number of which can only be guessed an estimate is 80 lines. However, other lines survive in works of other authors: As Orestes lays a lock of his hair on the tomb to honour his dead father, a Chorus of women, dressed all in black, hurry towards the grave. As they approach, Orestes and his companion, Pylades, hide themselves and he recognizes his sister, Electra, among the mourners. The crime committed far exceeds any reparation. How can she complete the task in true principle? How can she give her father prayers from his own murderer? Should she simply pour the libations into the ground? In a fascinating exchange, the Chorus acts as a teacher or mentor, instructing Electra in almost a Socratic way, encouraging her to pray for retribution and the return of Orestes. Can good come out of evil? Reaching the tomb, Electra is astonished to discover the lock of hair, then she finds footprints, and finally Orestes comes out of concealment. However, his presence is met with doubt by his sister, yet after convincing her of his identity, she gives him all her familial love. After praying to Zeus, Orestes recounts the oracle at Delphi and his order of vengeance, however he admits that even if Apollo would not persuade him to revenge, his own personal desires would ensure the act, dismissing both Clytaemestra and Aegisthus as "women". With the chorus spurring them on to action, Orestes orders Electra to keep secret his arrival and to go inside, whereupon he leaves with Pylades to find Aegisthus and kill him. Cilissa, guided by the Chorus, takes a message to Aegisthus that he needs not his bodyguard while meeting the stanger, allowing Orestes his moment of revenge. As a servant careens through the door, calling a riddle about the living killing the dead, Clytaemestra arrives and with the courage of a man, calls for an ax. And in a gross re-enactment of the death of Agamemnon and Cassandra, Orestes is shown standing over the bodies of his mother and her lover, a further echo of the curse blanketing the house of Atreus. Though victorious, he feels the evil in his deed. Since Apollo had counselled his actions, he will go to him as a suppliant to beg his advice: I am a charioteer whose course is wrenched outside the track, for I am beaten, my rebellious senses bolt with me headlong and the fear against my heart is ready for the singing and dance of wrath. But while I hold some grip still on my wits I go an outcast wanderer from this land, and leave behind, in life, in death, the name of what I did. Orestes rushes out in torment and the chorus laments, wondering what will happen to the family of Atreus. All the questions of revenge and justice and murder and duty are woven with a skillful needle throughout the drama, weaving a tapestry that at times can be alternately poignant, terrifying, suspenseful or appalling. Setting Electra, a princess of Argos, among captive slaves is very effective. In effect, she is a slave as well, impotent in her ability to do anything about the situation. Essentially, by placing her among the women, they are made allies in their mental battle against her mother, Clytaemestra, and Aegisthus. Apollo has threatened Orestes with madness if he does not avenge his father, yet the Furies promise the same fate if he does. His dilemma is identical to that of his father. With blood justice comes the duty of killing but the process is always cyclical and the avenger often does not escape his own fate. As to the limitations of this type of justice, Aeschylus makes them obvious. De Offerstrijd Tussen Orestes en Pylades Pieter Lastman source Wikimedia Commons I noticed either a "cataloguing" or a "sandwiching" of themes or issues within this play. There are a couple of issues in this play that readers might like to be aware of. The scene where Clytaemestra is pleading with Orestes and bares her breast to him, is not in the original play, and merely an addition by some overexuberant revisionist fond of gratuitous additions. I also noticed a few non-scholarly commentaries that mention that women in this play are portrayed as "weak" and their place in the home is disparaged and devalued. In fact, in ancient Greece there were two important roles that both sexes fulfilled and, unlike modern

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times, there was no crossing over between the two. The concluding third play of the trilogy is called The Eumenides.

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Adding a second actor and reducing the chorus from 50 to 12, Aeschylus laid the foundation for an aesthetics of drama that was to influence subsequent plays for well over 2, years. Tragedy, it Tragedy, it.