THE DISTRIBUTION OF MESSENGER ROLES IN GREEK TRAGEDY

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IN

FIFTH-CENTURY GREEK TRAGEDY

By

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ABSTRACT

In fifth-century Greek tragedy the role of the Messenger was to announce to the audience and to the other performers news of events which could not be shown on stage. Often an anonymous slave, the Messenger usually delivered only a tenth of the spoken lines in a tragedy. However, iconographical evidence suggests that by the fourth century the Messenger had evolved into one of the most important figures in the play. Since the wearing of masks and full-length costumes in Greek tragedy allowed the same actor to play several different parts in a single play, it is important to examine the way in which these roles may have been distributed among actors in extant fifth-century tragedies. This thesis considers how the Messenger role may have been combined with major character roles to create a grouping of parts which would have proved substantive enough to fulfil the expectations and demands of a leading actor. By examining the texts, I have shown that in all of Euripides' dramas that have a clearly defined messenger role, it is possible to arrange the distribution of parts so that a principal actor had the opportunity, in the Messenger speech, to re-enact in a very dramatic way the actions of the heroic figure he had portrayed earlier, often quoting his words. This creates a metatheatrical linkage or resonance between the noble role and the 'mirror role' represented by the Messenger figure, by which the actor was able to draw attention to his dramatic skills. The development of this linkage between the heroic role and the Messenger role in Euripides would have made the latter a desirable part for a leading actor to take, and hence, over time, would have enhanced the importance of the Messenger to become a central figure in Greek tragedy.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

The Figure of the Messenger in Literature and Art

Since the time when Peisistratus formally established the performances of the epic rhapsodes[1], and probably long before that, Greek audiences had delighted in epic and elegiac narrative. By means of this technique, a complete scene could be dramatically outlined before the listeners, providing them with such a graphic and lively description of some spectacular incident that they would be able to conjure up for themselves a vivid picture of events.

This narrative function of both entertaining and stirring up the emotions of the listener, whilst delivering a dramatic account, was most likely received into theatrical productions from the epic tradition of poetic narrative. However, in the theatre, the use of narrative found particular application in the description of incidents not observable by the audience, either because this was not feasible or because the events described were not deemed appropriate for performance before an audience.

In Attic drama, such descriptions were most often given by one or more messengers, although, on occasion, events were also announced in prologues and elaborated by means of stichomythia. Thus, characters in the drama, acting as narrators, set out for the audience and the actors on stage a chronological sequence of events, in

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[1]M. L. West, *Euripides' Orestes*, (Warminster, 1987), 14.

speeches which included plenty of vivid physical detail (for example, the description of the battle scene in Aeschylus' *Persians* ll. 353-514).

Although the messenger speech began as an account of events which had taken place off-stage, in time it developed into an elaborate *tour de force* which could provide a challenging role for a leading actor[2]. The messenger speech came to represent a traditional element in the work of all three major tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. However, it is in the work of Euripides in particular that the messenger speech shows its greatest development. Given that a messenger speech was included in every one of Euripides' extant works (except *Trojan Women*), and that his later dramas often contained two, it may be deduced that the messenger speech was a theatrical device much enjoyed by Euripides' audience.

Euripides' development of the messenger speech is marked by the extreme vividness of many of the speeches, in which he employs techniques such as the Historic Present tense[3] and quoted speech[4]. In addition, very physical actions on an individual level, such as fighting, killing or dying are typically described. This emphasis on individual dramatic action contrasts, for example, with the messenger speech from *Persians* mentioned above, where the focus is on the defeat of Xerxes' army as a whole.

Messenger speeches are usually delivered by an anonymous slave. In addition to

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[2]Plutarch, *Life of Lysander* 23, 446D.

[3]I. J. F. De Jong, *Narrative in Drama: The Art of the Euripidean Messenger Speech*, (Leiden, 1991), 45.

[4]De Jong (*supra* n. 3), 131.

the 'generic' messenger figure, some of the more important types of messenger are the Old Man (who may be a Paidagogos), the Herdsman, the Herald, the House Slave, and the Nurse. Less frequently, a messenger may be of sufficient stature to be named (e.g Talthybius in *Hecuba*). Finally, aristocratic characters sometimes make speeches which convey a message (e.g. Heracles in *Alcestis*, ll. 837-860).

One indication of the popularity of messenger speeches is the noticeable frequency with which scenes from such speeches are depicted on vases. In particular, more than half of the depictions of Euripidean plays illustrate messenger speeches[5]. An examination of fourth-century paintings on a group of 49 South Italian vases led Green[6] to argue for the increasing importance of the Messenger figure in the dramas of Euripides. Green observed that recognisable scenes from fifth-century drama were used as the subject matter in the fourth-century vase paintings, sometimes involving a Paidagogos or Messenger as part of the scene (e.g. *Alcestis*). However, he identified other vase paintings of similar age in which the Messenger was the lone figure. Based on similarities of their demeanor and dress, Green argued that these 'lone' Paidagogoi-Messengers were also representing dramatic figures, and hence that the figure of the Messenger had become sufficiently important in drama for him to become the focus of attention.

By the fourth century, acting had become a highly skilled profession with the

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[5]A. D. Trendall and T. B. L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama*, (London, 1971), 3-47.

[6]J. R. Green, "Messengers from the Tragic stage", *BICS* 41 (1996), 17-34.

power and prestige of the actors increasing rapidly[7]. There is also evidence from this period that some actors specialised in certain types of roles for which they were particularly suited; for example Theodorus specialised in the role of Antigone[8]. If the Messenger role became a focus of attention in the drama, this might imply that a Principal Actor would consider the part to be sufficiently interesting to be a role to be sought after[9]. If this were so, then the increasing importance of the Messenger figure might have gone hand-in-hand with the rising prominence of the principal actors of the day. One reason why this linkage might be important is that generic roles (such as the Messenger) would allow a greater focus on the identity of the actor, compared to the playing of heroic roles which would tend to be dominated by the identities of the heroic characters themselves.

However, it is not yet clear how far the roots of these trends might go back into the fifth century. In particular, a critical question is how the role of the Messenger could undergo transition from a minor supporting role to a principal or major role in late fifth-century tragedy. The mechanism which could allow this transition from minor to major role is the habit in fifth-century tragedy of assigning multiple parts in the play to a single actor. As will be seen, this procedure probably had an initial utilitarian basis, allowing one, two or three actors to play a larger number of characters. However, several recent

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[7]E. Csapo and W. J. Slater, *The Context of Ancient Drama*, (Ann Arbor, 1995), 223.

[8]Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy* 247.

[9]D. Lanza, "Le regole del giuoco scenico nell'Atene antica", *Mondo Classico: Percorsi Possibili* (1985), 114.

authors[10] have suggested that the playing of multiple parts by each actor also allowed the possibility of meta-theatrical resonances between these different parts. If one actor played the part of an aristocratic or heroic character and a Messenger (for example) then the messenger part may be said to have been piggy-backed on the heroic or aristocratic part. However, development by Euripides of very vivid messenger speeches, enhanced by meta-theatrical links to the actors' other parts, might have allowed the Messenger figure to gradually gain in stature at the expense of the aristocratic or heroic characters in the play.

My objective in this thesis is to examine the work of the fifth-century dramatists to see whether some of these processes may be identified, based on evidence from a study of the texts themselves. Although a certain amount of work has been undertaken on various aspects of the messenger speech, (summarised by De Jong[11]) little attention has been paid to the relationship between the role of the Messenger and other roles played by a leading actor in the same play. It is, therefore, to a consideration of the assignment of roles in tragedy that we now turn.

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[10]M. Damen, "Actor and Character in Greek Tragedy", *Theatre Journal* 41 (1989); C. W. Marshall, "The Rule of Three Actors in Practice", *Text and Presentation* 15 (1994), 53-61; M. Ringer, *Electra and the Empty Urn: Metatheater and Role Playing in Sophocles*, (Chapel Hill, 1998).

[11]De Jong (*supra* n. 3), vii.

CHAPTER 2

Acting Roles in Greek Tragedy

2.1. The Development of the Role of the Actor

The origin of Greek tragedy as we know it can be traced to the middle of the sixth century, when the poet Thespis took the initiative in distancing a single actor from the Chorus in order that he could reply to their odes, ostensibly to give the chorus a break[12]. By this means, Thespis created the role of the actor as an individual, a role which he himself played in his own dramas[13]. Subsequently, in the late sixth century, the competition for tragic poets was instituted as part of the City Dionysia, and it was this competition which led to the writing of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in the fifth century.

The poets in the early days of ancient theatre, so Aristotle tells us, performed in their own plays[14]. This is confirmed in the *Life of Sophocles*[15], where we learn that Sophocles was the first poet to abandon acting in his own work. This strongly suggests that Aeschylus was himself acting in early extant dramas such as the *Persians*, and

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[12]Diogenes Laertes 3.56.

[13]Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 29.6.

[14]Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403b18-23.

[15]*Life of Sophocles* 4.

possibly in all of his extant dramas. Before the end of Sophocles' acting career, he had performed in several of his own works, achieving much acclaim for his playing of the kithara in his drama, *Thamyras*[16], and for his energetic ballwork in *Nausicaa*[17].

Aristotle[18] claimed that Aeschylus increased the number of (speaking) actors from one to two, while Sophocles increased the number of actors to three. Whether or not these attributions by Aristotle are correct, the evidence from the plays themselves is that Aeschylus' early dramas could be performed by two speaking actors, whereas his later plays (such as the *Oresteia*), and the earliest surviving plays of Sophocles, require three actors. On the other hand, none of the extant fifth-century tragedies required more than three speaking actors, if we exclude the occasional small parts of children, and the possibility of small extra roles in Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus*. This last case will be discussed in detail below.

Following his introduction of a second actor, Aeschylus is noted to have used Kleandros as his assistant, adding Mynniskos of Chalkis when three speaking actors were required[19]. Sophocles too is recorded as having used specific actors in his dramas, in particular, Tlepolemos,[20] and for having been mindful of his actors' characters when

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[16]*Life of Sophocles* 5; Athenaeus, *Deip*. vol.1, i. 20f.

[17]Athenaeus, *Deip*.vol.1, i. 20f; Eustathius, *Od*.1553.63.

[18]Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449a 2-25.

[19]*Life of Aeschylus* 15.

[20]Scholion to Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1267.

composing his plays.[21]

A prize for tragic acting was introduced into the City Dionysia in 449 BC and at the Lenaea in c. 442 BC. Only the principal actor was eligible to win the prize, and the second and third actors were therefore clearly his supporting cast. In later times, these supporting players were even known to deliberately understate their own acting performances in order to allow the principal actor to stand out better, and thus have a better chance of winning the prize in his capacity as leader of the troupe[22].

Pickard-Cambridge[23] suggests that the principal actor may have been termed the 'Protagonist' from the earliest appearance of this role. There is no inscriptional evidence for this; however, a third-century AD source[24] suggests that the term Protagonist is used to imply starring actor and Deuteragonist implies his assistant. The term Tritagonist had been used more or less as a term of abuse, meaning 'third rate' since the fourth century BC[25], which may imply that the other two terms were in use around the same date.

The introduction of the acting prize undoubtedly influenced the choice of actors for each play. For example, the introduction of the prize could have caused Sophocles to retire as principal actor in his own plays in order to choose a Protagonist with a stronger

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[21] *Life of Sophocles* 6.

[22]Cicero, *Against Q. Caecilius Niger* 48

[23]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1968), 133.

[24]Plotinus, iii, 2.17.

[25]Csapo and Slater (*supra* n. 7), 223.

voice who would have a better chance of winning.

The employment of professional actors chosen by the poet continued until the State took over the allotment of actors to the poets. However, only the principal actor was allotted by the Archon to the poet. This actor was then responsible for recruiting the second and third actors as his assistants. Some scholars have suggested[26] that the allotment of the Protagonist to the poet by the State was associated with the introduction of the prize for acting in 449 BC. However, there is no actual evidence for this. Since the allotment of actors is accompanied by the right of the previous year's winner to compete[27], this suggests a highly regulated scheme, which would probably have taken years to develop. Therefore, it seems much more likely that the assignment of the protagonist to the poet was introduced in the early fourth century. This is supported by the claim of Jouan[28] that occasional cases of poets also functioning as actors are attested as late as 380 BC.

The final stage in the process of evolution described above, probably in the mid-fourth century, was the selection of three Protagonists, each of whom acted in one play of each poet, on three consecutive days. This gave each poet an equal chance of winning the dramatist's prize. It also saved the strain on the actor's voice by spreading his

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[26]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 93; A. D. Fitton Brown, *Greek Plays as First Productions*, (Leicester, 1970), 5.

[27]Hesychius, *Lexicon* 85 νέμησις ὑποκριτῶν. This mentions that the actor who won the prize was entitled to go forward to the next year's festival.

[28]F. Jouan, "Réflexions sur le rôle du protagoniste tragique", in: *Théâtre et spectacles dans l'antiquité, Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, Travaux du Centre de Recherche, Strasbourg, Nov. 1981*, (Leiden, 1983), 65.

performance over several days, thus improving his own chance of giving a strong performance in the competition.

2.2. The Distribution of Roles Between Actors

There is such widespread agreement on the restriction of the number of speaking actors to three in Greek tragedy that this axiom has been labelled the 'three actor rule', even by those attempting (unsuccessfully) to discredit it[29]. Csapo and Slater suggest that the convention of limiting the number of speaking actors to three is likely to have been the result of the inauguration of a prize for acting at the Dionysia in 449 BC and subsequently at the Lenaea around 442 BC rather than a consequence of "any single poet's overweening influence or a sudden general recognition of drama's ordained nature"[30]. They find that such a regulation could have resulted from a desire to have a competition which was not only equitable but which also afforded the poet the best possible opportunity to showcase the talents of his leading actor.

Since the number of acting parts in Greek tragedies is almost invariably more than three, it follows that a single actor often (but not always) played more than one part, and may have played as many as four or even five parts in a single play. This device was made possible by the wearing of masks and costumes, which served to conceal the appearance of the actor and to give distinction to the different parts he played. Sometimes

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[29]K. Rees, *The So-Called Rule of Three Actors in the Classical Greek Drama*, (diss., Univ.Chicago, 1908).

[30]Csapo and Slater (*supra* n. 7), 222.

the demands of the plot called for an actor to change mask and costume quite quickly or even very quickly (a 'lightning change'). The question of how quickly an actor could perform such a change in individual circumstances is a subject of debate and argument that will be examined in detail later.

Another subject of controversy is the question of whether (in addition to the assignment of multiple parts to one actor) it was necessary to split a single part amongst more than one actor. This procedure is usually called 'role splitting', but there is disagreement as to whether it was a rare or common practice. The only extant fifth-century tragedy which appears to require role-splitting is *Oedipus Coloneus*. However, it has been argued (see below) that even in this play it is possible to avoid major splitting of roles if a fourth (semi-mute) actor is introduced.

The *Persians* provides an example of a case where role-splitting could have been adopted, but was clearly eschewed by the poet. Assuming that Aeschylus himself was playing Xerxes, and wished also to play Atossa, he could have allowed his assistant (who earlier in the drama played the parts of the Messenger and the Ghost of Darius) to come on at the end of the play as Xerxes in order to stage a meeting between the two principals. The fact that he chose not to could have been for several reasons, but it seems likely that an important one was the desire not to diminish the role of Xerxes by sharing it between two actors. The sharing of roles in this play will be discussed further in Chapter 3, based on the entry/exit line diagram in the Appendix.

Most modern critics seem to believe that role-splitting was something that was

avoided if possible. However, Sifakis attributes this "aversion to role-splitting"[31] to "a tacit assumption that an actor identifies with his role" and that "modern drama has accustomed us to characterization based on psychological analysis of unique individuals". He asserts that ancient acting was not based on psychology and illusion. However, this appears to be an extreme position, since all acting, whether ancient or modern, may be said to be dependent upon the actor creating an easily identifiable character and thus successfully drawing the audience into the emotions of the piece. The oft-quoted example of Polos using his dead son's ashes in Orestes' urn in order to enhance his emotional performance would seem to contradict this view[32]. Role- splitting might therefore jeopardise the unity of a character and thus threaten to destroy the integrity of the role created by the actor.

A third area of controversy is the question of whether the roles in a play would have been divided up so as to equalize, as far as possible, their distribution between the actors, or whether an uneven distribution was either allowed or sought after. Pavloskis speaks of the necessity for the author to "divide the play equitably among the actors"[33] before establishing the assignment of roles. Marshall[34] however considers this notion of equal stage time to be "often invoked but probably misguided". He argues that although

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[31]G. M. Sifakis, "The One-actor Rule in Greek Tragedy", in A. Griffiths, *Stage Directions- Essays in Honour of E. W. Handley*, (London, 1995), 20.

[32]Aulus Gellius 6.5.

[33]Z. Pavlovskis, "The Voice of the Actor in Greek Tragedy", *C W* 71, (1977), 114.

[34]Marshall (*supra* n. 10), 53.

it is possible to divide up some dramas in a fairly even distribution of parts, that no playwright would consider such an assignment unless it increased his chance of success in the dramatic competition. Furthermore, evidence from ancient sources tends not to support this idea of actors having equal stage time[35], pointing instead to a hierarchy of Protagonist-Deuteragonist-Tritagonist. Whereas the principal actor would undertake the most dramatically demanding (and rewarding) parts, the tritagonist would cover the 'bit' parts, while the Second actor would undertake supporting roles which although solid parts were not equivalent to the 'star' roles played by the protagonist.

A final question which must be addressed is whether there was indeed for each play a fixed, if unwritten, formula for distributing the roles, or whether role distribution was done on an *ad hoc* basis. It is important to remember firstly that the tragedies were written primarily for a single performance at the Dionysia; not, as in the modern theatre for repeat performances. Therefore, we can say that the performance by the play-wright was definitive. After the death of Aeschylus, his plays were recognised to be of such stature that special dispensation was given to allow them to be re-performed at the Dionysia[36]. However, we know that Mynniskos, who had been trained by Aeschylus, was still active many years after the poet's death[37], so that we may assume that he could have faithfully continued the role distributions chosen by his great mentor. Regarding the

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[35]For example, Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy* 247 and Plutarch, *Precepts for Governing the State* 816*ff*.

[36]Philostratus, *Life of Apollodorus* vi. II.

[37]P. Ghiron-Bistagne, *Recherches sur les acteurs dans la Grèce antique*, (Paris, 1976), 143.

distribution of roles during the fourth-century repeat performances of Euripides' works we can argue that by this time the importance of the Messenger figure was sufficiently well-established as to be self-evident. Hence, it is concluded that in seeking to assign roles to the actors, we can assume that the distribution of roles was something that the poet considered in the structure of his play, and that we therefore can attempt to recover the original role distribution intended by the poet.

2.3. The Importance of the Voice of the Actor

Along with gesture and movement, the importance of the voice for an actor's success has long been recognised. A rigorous training would have prepared actors to deliver speeches, either accompanied by music (recitative), unaccompanied, or in song. There is evidence that the ability to adapt their voices to these different techniques was the standard to which the successful wished to attain. Thus Aristotle asserts that those actors who used their voices well were winning almost all the prizes in the competitions.[38]

A subject of major importance concerns the ability of the audience to recognise the voice of an actor as he performed the different parts assigned to him. The existence of a prize for acting presupposes that the judges at least could recognise the Protagonist in his different roles. The fact that the actors were presented, unmasked, to the audience at the *proagon*[39] would probably help any members of the audience who were less familiar

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[38]Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403b31-35.

[39]Scholion on Aeschines in *Ctes.* 67.

with the actors to likewise be able to distinguish these actors in their different roles during the subsequent plays. When ancient sources record the audiences' appreciation of the tricks of a particular actor's voice, or their mockery of another actor's verbal lapse, they suggest that the audience was able to identify these actors, under their masks, by the distinctiveness of their voice[40]. However, there is disagreement amongst modern scholars as to the ramifications of this aspect of Greek acting.

Sifakis agrees that the audience could recognise the voice of a Protagonist in his different guises, but argues that the Protagonist could also share some of his character roles with other actors without risk of the audience becoming confused about the identity of these characters. He even argues that the audience would appreciate the splitting of roles in this way. However, most other scholars disagree with this view. For example, Rees claims that 'It is quite impossible for two actors to play the same role in the same manner, spirit, and with a like voice.'[41]. Similarly, Pavloskis argues that an actor could disfigure his voice, such as by singing in a falsetto, but could only partially camouflage it[42]. She argues that modern radio broadcasts represent a useful analogy of the speech of masked actors. Despite the large number of modern performers, the audience can usually recognise the voice of a singer over the radio. In view of the relatively small number of

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[40]e.g. Parmenon was famous for imitating animal noises (Plutarch, *de aud. poet.* 18 c); Hegelochus was mocked in Aristophanes' *Frogs* l. 303 and schol. to Euripides' *Orestes* l. 279 for a verbal slip.

[41]Rees (*supra* n. 29), 46.

[42]Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 113.

actors involved in the Festival of Dionysus in the fifth century[43], the ancient audience would have found the voices of the actors quite distinctive.

Fitton Brown also suggests that modern radio drama is a useful analogy for the speech of masked actors[44]. He notes that the radio presenters are careful when introducing a new character because of the danger that the audience might not identify this new character. He suggests that because of the wearing of masks, there is a similar danger in Greek tragedy. The audience may recognise the voice of the actor, but not be sure which character he is playing. It is generally argued that a theatre audience will recognise the speaking actor because he makes gestures as he speaks, but nevertheless the danger of non-recognition of the character remains and the play-wright must be careful in his assignment of roles not to exacerbate the danger. The combination of multiple roles and role-splitting would increase such risks, and this would be a reason why needless role-splitting was avoided.

An audience, tuned in to a particular actor's voice as he portrays one part, would I believe have difficulty in accepting the voice of another actor who picked up the same part at a later point in the play. This could prove confusing and might break the illusion for them in an undesirable manner as they become aware of a different voice. It is reasonable to maintain *a priori* that a poet would not risk destroying the theatrical illusion if by judicious distribution of roles the problem could be circumvented.

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[43]Jouan (*supra* n. 28), 66. Jouan estimates the number of professional tragic actors in Athens before the end of the fifth century to be scarcely more than 20.

[44]Fitton Brown (*supra* n. 26), 12.

2.4. Metatheatre and Role Playing in Greek Tragedy

If the audience could recognise the voice of a Protagonist as he played different roles, would the poet make use of this recognition to draw attention to the relationships between these roles? Hermann[45] argued that the audience was able to penetrate the disguise of the character being acted (such as a Messenger) and discern the 'ghost' of the other characters portrayed by the same actor. Flickinger[46] mocked this view of 'overzealous classicists' that the necessity for an actor to play multiple roles could be used by the poet as a vehicle for theatrical expression. However, Pavloskis[47] and Damen[48] agree with the view of Hermann that the poet could make use of the distinctiveness of the voice, along with the playing of multiple roles, to create ironic associations or connections between characters in the play.

An ironic association is one that involves the highlighting of some kind of contrast or contradiction. A simple example is provided by the roles of Atossa and Xerxes in Aeschylus' *Persians*. These two characters share both similarities and differences as mother and son in their expression of grief, and by playing both parts himself (as seems likely) Aeschylus is focussing the attention of the audience on the similarities and differences between these characters.

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[45]C. F. Hermann, *Disputatio de Distributione Personarum inter Histriones in Tragoediis Graecis*, (Marburg, 1840), 32-34.

[46]R. C. Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and Its Drama*, (Chicago,1918), 174.

[47]Pavloskis (*supra* n. 33), 40.

[48]Damen (*supra* n. 10), 321.

There are several other examples (especially in Sophocles) of potential ironic associations between characters played by the same actor. The parts of Deianeira and Heracles in *Trachiniae* provide a good example. However, there can be cases of theatrical linkage between characters that are not necessarily ironic. The creation of such effects in a play might be covered by the term Metatheatre.

The term metatheatre is a relatively recent expression coined in the 1960's by the literary critic Abel, in his book, *Metatheatre: a New View of Dramatic Form* [49]. Subsequently, Segal[50] discussed "metatragedy" in relation to the Theatre of Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, and more recently, Ringer has studied metatheatre in Greek tragedy, particularly in the works of Sophocles[51]. Ringer discusses several different types of metatheatrical techniques in Sophocles, but our interest here is restricted to the effect termed Role Playing[52].

The aspect of Role Playing with which we are concerned here occurs when one actor plays two parts in such a way that the audience is potentially made aware of the theatricality of the situation and the skill of the actor. Examples are the actor playing both Clytemnestra and Orestes in Sophocles' *Electra*, and the actor who plays both Ajax and Teucer in *Ajax*.

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[49]L. Abel, *Metatheatre: a New View of Dramatic Form*, (New York,1963).

[50]C. Segal, *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae*, (Princeton, 1982), 215-271.

[51]M. Ringer (*supra* n. 10).

[52]F. I. Zeitlin, "The Closet of Masks: Role-Playing and Myth-Making in the *Orestes* of Euripides", *Ramus* 9 (1980), 55-56.

In this thesis I will focus on one particular type of role-playing metatheatre, in which resonances are generated at the performance level between heroic/aristocratic characters and the figure of the Messenger. This type of role playing may be expected to enhance the appreciation of the skill of the actor by enabling the audience to compare and contrast the playing of the roles.

CHAPTER 3

Examination of the plays

To explore the distribution of acting roles in fifth-century Greek tragedy, and the significance this has for the importance of the Messenger figure, I have made a brief survey of the 31 surviving tragedies. Although the main focus of this study is on the messenger speeches of Euripides, I will demonstrate that it is essential to view these speeches within the context of the earlier dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Each survey includes a table showing my proposed distribution of actors' roles and examines the justification for this distribution. The complete listing of the actors' stage entrances and exits by line number, upon which the analysis is based, is included as an Appendix. The work of each tragedian is examined in estimated chronological order, as far as the dates of first performance can be deduced.

3.1. Aeschylus

Aeschylus lived from 525 to 456 BC, and is believed to have written around ninety plays, of which only seven survive. His first success in the City Dionysia was in 485 BC, whereas the *Persians* (472 BC) represents his first extant play. His later work may overlap temporally with Sophocles' *Ajax*, but not with any of the extant plays of Euripides. Furthermore, Aeschylus died before the introduction of the prize for acting in

449 BC.

***Persians* (472 BC)**

Aeschylus' *Persians*, first performed in 472 BC, is set in the Persian capital of Susa in the palace of King Xerxes. Dealing as it does with the aftermath of the Persians' defeat by the Greek forces at Salamis, the *Persians* is unique in extant Greek drama in dealing with the recent past. It is the oldest complete Greek tragedy remaining and as such provides us with an opportunity to observe how the assignment of parts was managed early in the fifth century.

In this play Atossa is on stage for most of the first 850 lines, so the Messenger and Darius must both be played by a second actor. The Messenger, who is the character with the largest number of spoken lines, delivers an eye-witness account of the disastrous naval battle between the Greeks and the Persians. In several major speeches, he gives a panoramic description of the battle, cataloguing the names of the fallen Persian commanders and describing the destruction of the Persian fleet. He describes a tragic scene in which the waters of Salamis were awash with the bodies of the Persians. The Messenger and the Ghost of Darius have little in common, but they both fulfil a similar function in bringing knowledge or insight into the events unfolding.

Xerxes could in principle be played by the same actor as Darius and the Messenger, but in this case there would be no reason for Atossa to go off stage before the appearance of Xerxes. Therefore, it is suggested that the parts of Atossa and Xerxes were played by the same actor. The portrayal of Atossa, mother of the King, when coupled

with the part of Xerxes her son, would provide a substantial combination of roles for an actor specially gifted in singing[53]. At the same time, the fact of having both roles played by the same actor would heighten the ironic contrast between the two characters. For example, Atossa makes a magnificent first entrance, whereas Xerxes comes on stage in "rags".

Atossa and Xerxes are the two principal tragic figures of the play, both of whom have very emotional roles that might be appropriate for the skills of the Principal Actor, perhaps Aeschylus himself. Although this combination of roles results in this performer having less lines than Actor 2, the precise number of lines given to an actor is of less account than the dramatic importance of the parts he plays. The suggested division of roles between the two actors is therefore shown below.

Persians: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		
Role 1		Atossa	173	Messenger	206	
Role 2		Xerxes	68	Darius	125	
Total	1077	Actor 1	241	Actor 2	331	Chorus 505

***Seven Against Thebes* (467 BC)**

After Oedipus had blinded himself in remorse for killing his father and marrying his mother, his sons mistreated him so that he cursed them, declaring that they should divide their inheritance by the sword. The drama is seen from the point of view of the city of Thebes, with Eteocles, Oedipus' son, defending it against an attack led by his brother Polyneices.

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[53]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 138.

The Scout Messenger plays a major role in the play as he brings three successive reports on the progress of the siege. In his first message, he describes how he observed the seven champions of the attacking force drawing lots to determine who should attack each gate of the city. When the Messenger returns 300 lines later, he gives seven speeches in which he describes the appearance of the champions leading the attack on each gate. Finally, during his third appearance (ll. 793-821) the Messenger describes briefly how all seven attacks were repulsed, but that the two brothers have killed one-another at the seventh gate. The appearance of each of the seven attacking champions is described in great detail by the Messenger, but the deaths of Eteocles and Polyneices are reported tersely and dispassionately.

Seven Against Thebes: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Eteocles	268	Messenger	197	Herald	27	
Role 2		Antigone	46	Ismene	23			
Total	1084	Actor 1	314	Actor 2	220	Actor 3	27	Ch 523

For most of this drama only two actors are necessary[54]. In the arrangement shown above, it is assumed that Actor 1 would take the part of Eteocles since he is the tragic hero of the story. He also comes on stage first and has the greatest number of lines. The role of the Scout Messenger must then be played by Actor 2. After both of these characters have left the stage, Antigone and Ismene come on near the end of the play. Antigone is probably played by Actor 1, since she takes the lead in the antiphonal dirge. While Antigone and Ismene are on stage, (l.1010) a Herald appears to announce the decision of the Council regarding the burial arrangements for Eteocles and Polyneices.

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[54]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 139.

Another actor is required to take this role but it is generally regarded that this scene was a later addition to the play[55].

***Suppliants* (463 BC ?)**

The plot of the *Suppliants* concerns the escape of the fifty daughters of Danaus from a forced marriage with the sons of Aegyptus, their father's brother. Under threat from their uncle the girls flee to Argos to seek protection from Pelasgus, king of that country.

Only two actors are required for this work in which Actor 1 was the most likely choice for the role of King Pelasgus who plays the important part as rescuer of the Suppliant Maidens. The part of Danaus must then be portrayed by Actor 2 in this scheme. If there are only two actors, the part of the Egyptian Herald must also have been taken by the Second actor. This arrangement is implied by the fact that Danaus disappears at l. 775 to fetch assistance but does not himself reappear. Instead, the same actor is presumed to return as the Egyptian Herald at l. 824 and exits at l. 954 in order to assume the mask and costume of Danaus and re-enter at l. 980.

Suppliants :Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		
Role 1	King	214	Danaus	160	
Role 2			Herald	32	
Total	Actor 1	214	Actor 2	192	Chorus 667

The old practice of a dialogue between the chorus and actor is very evident in this work, notably in the Chorus' arrival, the opening choral passage and the first exchange

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[55]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 139.

with their father, which takes up about a quarter of the drama. The simple structure of the drama is further emphasised by the manner in which King Pelasgus addresses the Chorus of maidens first, before turning to King Danaus, their father. Despite the fact that two actors are required in this play, they rarely address one another. Danaus, although present during King Pelasgus' conversation with the Chorus at ll. 234-523, nevertheless is silent for most of this period. We are reminded of his presence only by the Chorus drawing attention to him at l.320 and by King Pelasgus turning to him and addressing him at l.480 before he replies at l.490. In fact the only occasion when there is a dialogue between two actors is found at ll.911-958 when King Pelasgus is involved in a lively altercation with the Egyptian Herald. This Herald does not deliver a message at all. Rather he states his intention (l. 930) of taking a message back to Egypt regarding the refusal of the King to allow the abduction of the Suppliants.

The *Oresteia*: *Agamemnon* (458 BC)

The *Agamemnon* is the first play of the only surviving trilogy in Greek drama and was first presented at the Great Dionysia in 458 BC. The drama revolves around the homecoming of King Agamemnon after an absence of ten years in which he has been leader of the Greek forces in their war against Troy. The news of the end of the war, brought to the Queen by the Watchman, is the signal which Clytemnestra has been awaiting to put into action her plan to murder Agamemnon.

At 1,673 lines the *Agamemnon* is over 50 percent longer than any other surviving work of Aeschylus. Although the play is entitled *Agamemnon* and the action is centred

around his impending arrival and subsequent death, the character of Agamemnon has only 84 lines of dialogue. A possible distribution of the roles is indicated below.

Agamemnon: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Clytemnestra	338	Watchman	39	Cassandra	178	
Role 2				Herald	128	Aegisthus	64	
Role 3				Agamemnon	84			
Total	1673	Actor 1	338	Actor 2	251	Actor 3	242	Ch 842

In this scheme, the leading actor takes on the role of Clytemnestra who has by far the longest individual part. This role requires a skilled actor capable of drawing out from the part the strong-willed and ruthless character traits of a woman who exhibits, in this play, more manly characteristics than either of the two men with whom she is involved. In particular, the scene in which Clytemnestra skilfully entices her husband to walk on the red carpet as he enters the palace, demands an actor who is well able to express the manipulative powers of the queen.

Another two actors are necessary to allow Clytemnestra, Agamemnon and Cassandra to be on stage at the same time, at ll.782-974. However, the distribution of parts between the second and third actors is not well constrained. Since Agamemnon is the tragic hero of the play, and has the title role, it seems most likely that he would be played by the Second actor. The role of Cassandra is interesting because this is the earliest evidence of the use of three actors in a tragedy. Cassandra is silent on stage for the first 300 lines of her appearance, which might lead the audience to expect that she was a κωφὸν πρόσωπον. Thus, her opening wail "ὀτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ.ᾦπολλον ᾦπολλον" could be expected to have an electrifying effect on the audience. Nevertheless, this cry (l.

1072) begins nearly two thirds of the way through the play, which is therefore consistent with the assignment of this role to the new Third Actor. It is appropriate also that the despised Aegisthus, described by the Chorus as a 'woman' is played by the actor who has already played Cassandra.

Pavlovskis[56] has suggested that if one actor played both Agamemnon and Aegisthus, their similar relationship as 'husbands' to Clytemnestra would give the audience an ironic satisfaction when hearing the similar voice. However, I suggest that this type of role playing might actually distract from the main focus of the play, which is the treachery of the act of murder. Despite his small number of spoken lines, Agamemnon is the tragic hero of the play, as its title suggests, whereas Aegisthus is the despised usurper. Therefore, such a comparison might be unattractive to the audience.

The Herald has three speeches in this play (ll. 503-537, 551-582 and 636-680), the first of which is an exhortation to the populace to greet Agamemnon as a returning hero, while the second seems designed to evoke sympathy for the hardships of the war, implying perhaps that Agamemnon has suffered these same hardships. The use of the first person closely links the figure of the Messenger to these sufferings, making them more personal. If the same actor played the Herald and Agamemnon, then the combination of these parts would introduce metatheatrical touches. The identification of Agamemnon with the Watchman, who looks forward to welcoming Agamemnon and shaking his hand, and with the Herald, who describes his hardships, would strengthen the impression of Agamemnon as a hero returning from the sufferings of war, and hence would evoke

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[56]Z. Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 115.

increased sympathy for him from the audience. This would then make his brutal murder all the more poignant.

The Libation Bearers

The *Libation Bearers* forms the second part of the *Oresteia* trilogy, and describes the return of Orestes to avenge his father's death. Orestes leaves an offering of hair at Agamemnon's tomb which is discovered by Electra and her servants. By means of this, and other signs, the brother and sister are re-united. Together they plot revenge on Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and carry out their murderous plan. The play ends with Orestes running off-stage, tormented by the Erinyes, who have been stirred up by the bloody murder of his mother.

In the *Libation Bearers*, three actors would be required to portray the parts. The arrangement suggested below has Actor 1 take the part of Orestes, who clearly has the largest individual role. Electra has the second largest role, and her interaction with Orestes is an important aspect of the play. Therefore she is presumably played by actor 2. The other five roles are all small, and their distribution is poorly constrained. The most likely scheme is based on grouping similar character types together: Orestes and Aegisthus for Actor 1, Electra and Clytemnestra for Actor 2 and the parts of the Nurse, the Servant and Pylades for Actor 3. Under any three actor scheme, a quick change is unavoidable between the departure of the Servant and his reappearance as either Pylades or Orestes. Therefore, some commentators have suggested a fourth actor to play Pylades

who has only three lines in the drama[57]. However, the exit of the Servant is followed by the opening of the palace door, which could be quite a lengthy process. In addition, there is more time for the change if the Servant plays Pylades rather than Orestes, because Pylades does not speak until ten lines after Orestes comes on stage. This would allow the entrance of Pylades to be slightly delayed. Bearing in mind these factors, this does not have to be a lightning change, and therefore does not require a fourth actor.

Libation Bearers: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Orestes	331	Electra	170	Nurse	40	
Role 2		Aegisthus	15	Clytemnestra	48	Servant	12	
Role3						Pylades	3	
Total	1076	Actor 1	346	Actor 2	218	Actor 3	55	Ch 457

Pavlovskis[58] suggests that the part of Aegisthus was played by the Third actor, who also plays the Servant. However, this creates a challenge, because Aegisthus cries out from within the palace as he is murdered (l. 869), five lines before the Servant appears and laments Aegisthus' death in a brief 'messenger speech'. To have the same actor who has just cried out in death then reappear as the Servant immediately afterwards is to risk breaking the dramatic illusion in a way that would not be desirable - since the audience has barely seen the servant on stage earlier (l. 657), it might suggest that Aegisthus had just risen from the dead in a way that would jeopardise the whole tragedy.

Assuming the playwright only has three speaking actors, the dead Aegisthus has to re-emerge as one of the other three characters. The question faced by the playwright is

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[57]K. Rees (*supra* n. 29), 43.

[58]Z. Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 115.

how to deal with this challenge. Rather than try to conceal the 'recycling' of the actor, he can draw attention to it in order to create a meaningful irony. Thus, when he comes on stage to confront his mother with the body of Aegisthus, whom he has just killed, Orestes says "this man has had enough" (τῷδε δ'ἀρκούντως ἔχει, line 892), as if to say, I've had enough of playing him, now I'm playing Orestes! The introduction of a moment of comedy into the tragedy will have the effect of further heightening the dramatic tension, when Orestes kills his mother soon afterwards.

The Eumenides

The *Eumenides* forms the third part of the *Oresteia* trilogy and was staged at the same performance as *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*. The plot revolves around the Furies' pursuit of Orestes for his act of matricide. Although the scene opens at the temple of Apollo at Delphi, where Orestes is taking refuge, it changes to Athens where Orestes is taken for judgement of his crime. There Athena intervenes and casts her vote in favour of Orestes' release. The play ends with the Furies having been convinced by Athena to take on a new role as guardians of Athens.

In this play, three actors are required, since Athena, Apollo and Orestes are all on stage together. Athena has the largest number of lines, and is probably played by Actor 1, perhaps with Apollo played by Actor 2 and Orestes by Actor 3, as shown below. The role of the Pythian prophetess may have been an additional part taken by Actor 1 both for the character's early appearance and for the dramatic strength of the role. Furthermore, if the role of Apollo were taken by Actor 2 and that of Orestes by Actor 3, then Actor 1 would

also have played the Ghost of Clytemnestra, as all three actors are on at the same time at various points in the play. Hermes, who is addressed at l. 89 by Apollo, does not speak and would therefore have been played by a mute. As suggested by Pavlovskis[59], the playing of Clytemnestra's Ghost and Athena by the same actor presents a contrast which parallels and complements the contrast in the Chorus between their appearance as the Erinyes and the Eumenides.

Eumenides: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Pythia	63	Apollo	141	Orestes	103	
Role 2		Clytemnestra	40					
Role 3		Athena	250					
Total	1047	Actor 1	353	Actor 2	141	Actor 3	103	Ch 450

***Prometheus Bound* (date unknown but probably late)**

The action of *Prometheus Bound* takes place in the mountains of Scythia to which Prometheus has been brought to be punished for defying Zeus and stealing fire to give to men. A number of visitors turn up to talk with Prometheus and offer advice on how he might mend his ways and repent of his actions. The last in a succession of visitors is Hermes whose admonitions are ignored by a defiant Prometheus, who at the end of the play is engulfed by an earthquake.

Apart from the opening scene when Power and Force, Hephaestus and Prometheus enter together, the rest of the play could be acted by only two actors. Although 4 actors are required for this scene, only three had speaking parts, as Force is taken by a mute. The part of Prometheus would almost certainly have been taken by

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[59]Z. Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 116.

Actor 1 who has over half of the drama's lines. Walton points out that if we are to consider the number of lines this character speaks, in relation to the length of the play, he becomes "by far the wordiest character in Aeschylus"[60]. Given that Actor 1 has a long part with a great deal of speaking, the Second actor would probably pick up the succession of other characters who visit Prometheus. An even distribution of lines between the second and third actors is not necessarily desirable from an artistic point of view.

Prometheus Bound: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Prometheus	550	Power	48	Hephaestus	39	
Role 2				Oceanus	55			
Role 3				Io	127			
Role 4				Hermes	71			
Total	1093	Actor 1	550	Actor 2	301	Actor 3	39	Ch 203

It is also notable that the role of the Chorus in this work is reduced to less than 20 percent of the total, compared to the 60 percent allotted the Chorus in the *Suppliants* and compared to the 45 percent overall average for Aeschylus' works. This reduction in the number of lines assigned to the Chorus is only one of a list of new features introduced in this drama, others being the first recognizable use of the *ekkuklema* and *mechane* and special dance effects[61]. These features point to a late date for this play, which may not in fact be attributable to Aeschylus.

Some commentators have preferred a two-actor scheme in which Prometheus was

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[60]J. M. Walton, *Living Greek Theatre*, (Westport Connecticut, 1987), p.52.

[61]J. M. Walton (*supra* n. 60), 51.

represented in the first scene by a wooden puppet of some sort[62]. This view proposes that after the actor playing the part of Hephaestus goes off at l. 81 he manoeuvres himself behind the puppet form within the space of 6 lines and then speaks as Prometheus. Those who hold with this view also suggest that a dramatic pause might be necessary to allow for a smooth transition. However, Power commands in line 59 that Prometheus be bound tightly because he is adept at escape. This would hardly be a credible remark about a lifeless puppet.

The closest approach to a Messenger figure in this play is Hermes, about whom Prometheus says (l. 1040) "the message that this fellow has spoken so noisily is no news to me". The 'message' in question (ll. 944-952, 1008-1035) consists of a threat of what will happen to Prometheus if he doesn't reveal the nature of a secret danger that threatens the authority of Zeus. The threatened punishment is described in dramatic fashion, and will involve an attack on Prometheus by an eagle, who will feast on his liver. The content of the 'message' is therefore vivid, but does not involve the Messenger himself as a witness or a participant in the threatened action.

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[62] R. C. Flickinger (*supra* n. 46), 166; A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 139.

3.2. Sophocles

Sophocles began entering his plays in the dramatic competitions during the time in which Aeschylus was still competing. Sadly, nothing remains of his early dramas other than titles. Although most of his plays are difficult to date, there is good evidence that *Antigone* was first performed between 442 and 441 BC because a scholiast reports that Sophocles was appointed a general in 440 BC on the strength of this play's popularity[63]. The only other play for which there is a secure date of production is *Oedipus at Colonus*, which was produced posthumously in 401 BC by the grandson of the poet, also called Sophocles.

The date of Sophocles' *Ajax* is a matter of dispute. Storr[64] gives the order of Sophocles' plays as *Antigone-Electra-Ajax-Oedipus Rex-Trachiniae-Philoctetes-Oedipus Coloneus*. However, Bieber[65] suggests that *Ajax* is the earliest preserved play, and that this is suggested by the imperfect nature of the dialogue between the three actors. An early date has also been posited by Walton[66] who finds that it is likely to be no later than 443 BC. Consequently, I will begin my brief examination of the role distribution in Sophocles' plays by examining his *Ajax* and *Antigone* in that order.

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[63]J. M. Walton (*supra*. n. 60), 65.

[64]F. Storr, *Sophocles*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, (Cambridge, Mass., 1912), xiii.

[65]M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater*, (Princeton, 1961), 29.

[66]J. M. Walton (*supra*. n. 60), 67.

Ajax (date unknown - early?)

After the death of Achilles, Ajax had expected to be given his armour, but instead it was given by Agamemnon and Menelaus to Odysseus as the better arguer. Ajax vows to be avenged but is deluded by Athena into attacking a herd of cows and sheep whom he believes to be Greeks. When Ajax returns to his senses and realises what he has done he is inconsolable. After speaking with his son Eurysaces, he leaves for the seaside. Tecmessa, Ajax's concubine, goes in search of him and discovers him by the shore, pierced through by his own sword. The final section of the play revolves around a debate over what is to be done with Ajax's body. The issue is resolved by the return of Odysseus who argues persuasively for the body of Ajax to receive proper burial honours.

In this play the role distribution is poorly constrained. Actor 1 would probably combine the role of Ajax with that of Teucer, and the parts of Odysseus and Tecmessa would probably be taken by Actor 2. Since in the last scene of the play all three actors are needed for other roles, Tecmessa's part, when she re-appears at l. 1171, would have been played by a κωφὸν πρόσωπον. This would explain her silence in the latter part of the play. This distribution of roles is in agreement with those assigned by Pickard-Cambridge. The parts taken by the Third actor probably included Athena and Agamemnon, but he might also have played Menelaus and the Messenger.

Ringer[67] suggests that the part of Menelaus would be given to the Second actor, on the grounds that it balances the 'pro-Ajax' part of Tecmessa with an 'anti-Ajax role'. However, I suggest that this is not the kind of irony that Sophocles would have wanted to

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[67]M. Ringer (*supra*. n. 10), 47.

evoke in this play. When Tecmessa leaves the stage at l. 989, her sorrow over the loss of her husband is eloquently continued by Teucer, only to be interrupted by the appearance of their 'enemy' Menelaus. To have the actor who played Tecmessa return after less than 60 lines as the despised Menelaus would have been more insulting than challenging to the audience because Menelaus was a detested figure. The speeches that Menelaus makes in this play would fully evoke these feelings of repulsion in the audience, which are vindicated when Teucer finally drives Menelaus from the stage with the words "Begone then, for to me it is the worst thing to listen to the trivial words of a foolish man" (ll. 1161-2).

By giving the roles of Athena, Agamemnon and Menelaus to the Third actor, as suggested by Pavlovskis[68], Sophocles would have allowed all of the 'anti-Ajax' parts to be played by the same actor. However, if the Messenger role were also to be assigned to the tritagonist, this would give him a greater proportion of the total spoken lines (19 %) than almost any other fifth-century tragedy. An alternative possibility is that Actor 1 could have portrayed the Messenger, as shown in the scheme below (following Pavlovskis).

At l. 719 the Messenger enters to report that Teucer has arrived and has been roughly treated. He also relates the prophecy given by Calchas concerning Ajax and quotes the seer's words to Teucer concerning his brother's safety. In the course of his speech, the Messenger also relates the advice given Ajax by his father when he first left home, urging him to seek victory with the help of the gods. Ajax's arrogant response to

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[68]Z. Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 116.

his father (l. 767) is quoted by the Messenger as well as his haughty words to Athena (l. 771).

Ajax: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Ajax	287	Odysseus	83	Athena	75	
Role 2		Teucer	214	Tecmessa	209	Menelaus	63	
Role 3		Messenger	67			Agamemnon	61	
Total	1420	Actor 1	568	Actor 2	292	Actor 3	199	Ch 361

The Messenger exits at l. 802 and, if he were also playing Ajax, would have to re-appear after a change of mask and costume at l. 814. This is a brief period of time for a costume change but might perhaps be possible because of the unusual major change of setting at this point from tent scene to lonely shoreline. If the same actor did play both Ajax and the Messenger[69], there would be a strong sense of the ironic in the Messenger's reporting and mimicking the very words spoken by Ajax which occasioned his downfall.

If *Ajax* is indeed the earliest preserved Sophoclean drama, and if the First actor played the Messenger, then we could say that this is the first example of this ironic development in the messenger speech. Ringer argues that there are several other situations in this play that make use of irony to heighten the dramatic intensity of the play. For example, by having Teucer and Ajax played by the same actor, Sophocles achieves dramatic irony when Teucer sees Ajax's body and says (l. 1001) "now, by seeing him, I am myself destroyed".

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[69]Z. Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 117.

***Antigone* (442-41 BC)**

Because it is the only fairly securely dated play from the lifetime of Sophocles, *Antigone* provides the most important source of evidence about Sophocles' influence on the development of acting roles. Notably, this play was first performed before any of the extant plays of Euripides, so it must be considered as potentially influential on the corpus of known work by Euripides.

In this play the plot revolves around the actions of Antigone, daughter of Oedipus, who is sentenced to death for burying her brother Polyneices, contrary to the wishes of Creon. Creon's judgement on this matter is challenged unsuccessfully by his son Haemon and by Antigone. Creon is later moved by the appeal of Teiresias and reverses his decision but finds that he is too late to prevent the suicides of both Antigone and Haemon and also Eurydice, his own wife, who takes her own life on hearing about the fate of the young couple. The play ends on a note of bitterness, with Creon regretting the consequences of his actions.

Pickard-Cambridge[70] adopts what he calls the 'natural assumption' that Creon, with the longest part (358 lines) was played by the principal actor. This part could only be combined with that of Eurydice. He suggests that the actor who played Ismene must also have played the Guard and that the part of Antigone may have been combined with that of Haemon. The other parts, Teiresias and the two Messengers could have been split between the last two actors. This scheme is shown in the table below.

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[70]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 141.

Conventional distribution of roles in *Antigone* (Pickard Cambridge)
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Creon	358	Antigone	216	Ismene	60	
Role 2		Eurydice	9	Haemon	65	Guard	112	
Role 3				Teiresias	76	Messenger 2	14	
Role 4				Messenger 1	82			
Total	1353	Actor 1	367	Actor 2	439	Actor 3	186	Ch 361

An objection to the arrangement of Creon as protagonist comes from the diatribe of Demosthenes[71], in which he claims that Aeschines, a 'tritagonist', had often played the part of Creon in *Antigone*. Fitton Brown[72] argues that it is inconceivable that Demosthenes would call Creon the tritagonist if he were actually the protagonist as such a blatant lie would be self-defeating. This leads to a second distribution of parts in which Antigone is played by the 'protagonist' and Creon by the tritagonist, looking something like the distribution shown below.

A similar scheme is preferred by Ringer[73], although he does not specifically propose that Antigone and Teiresias are played by the protagonist and Creon by the tritagonist. Ringer suggests that the guard is a pseudo-messenger, bearing bad news. This status puts him in contention with Creon, and is used to begin the process of constraining Creon's domination of the stage. Ringer also suggests that the self-interrogation speech of the Guard (ll. 225-231) offers comic relief from the tension in the play, and may prefigure the slave character in Plautus. However, we should emphasise the word 'prefigure'. This

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[71]Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy* XIX 247.

[72]A. D. Fitton Brown (*supra* n. 26), 9.

[73]M. Ringer (*supra* n. 10), 71.

concept of the witty slave is only glimpsed in *Antigone*, and is far from developed at this early stage.

Alternative distribution of roles in *Antigone* (Fitton Brown)
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Antigone	216	Ismene	60	Creon	358	
Role 2		Teiresias	76	Guard	112			
Role 3		Messenger 1	82	Haemon	65			
Role 4				Eurydice	9			
Role 5				Messenger 2	14			
Total	1353	Actor 1	374	Actor 2	260	Actor 3	358	Ch 361

However, Todd[74] differs in his assignment of roles, suggesting that the part of Creon was actually given to the Second actor, a role which Aeschines had also taken, but not always with acclaimed success. Todd suggests that associating the role of the Second actor with the Third actor was a misrepresentation that Demosthenes might very likely have used, since any refutation by Aeschines would simply draw attention to the fact that Aeschines was not a particularly distinguished actor. This kind of deception would be typical of Demosthenes, since external evidence shows that he did lie about Aeschines' military record.

The distribution of parts shown in the final version (below) is based on the arguments of Todd[75]. This distribution gives the part of Antigone to the First actor, along with four other parts which are small in themselves but would nevertheless present a challenge for the principal actor. For example, both Messenger parts describe dramatic suicides that would have offered a challenging opportunity for demonstrating the actor's

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[74]O. J. Todd, "Τριταγωνιστής: A Reconsideration", *CQ*. XXXII (1937), 30-38.

[75]O. J. Todd (*supra* n. 74), 35.

skill. This arrangement also yields a better distribution of lines between the three actors, with the most lines given to the principal actor and the least to the Third actor. This is consistent with the fact that this play was first staged around 442 BC, after the introduction of the prize for the principal actor.

Alternative distribution of roles in *Antigone* (after Todd)
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Antigone	216	Creon	358	Ismene	60	
Role 2		Haemon	65			Guard	112	
Role 3		Teiresias	76			Eurydice	9	
Role 4		Messenger 1	82					
Role 5		Messenger 2	14					
Total	1353	Actor 1	453	Actor 2	358	Actor 3	181	Ch 361

Notwithstanding the differences between the two role distributions shown above, a common feature is that the same actor plays the part of the First messenger and both Antigone and Haemon. This is significant because this Messenger gives a dramatic account of the suicides of Antigone and Haemon (ll. 1192-1243). His speech is full of dramatic action, beginning with a description of the hasty arrival at the bridal chamber become- a- tomb. The Messenger then describes the dead body of Antigone, with the noose of linen which had hung her by the neck, and Haemon clasping his dead bride. He also describes Creon's groaning reaction to the sight of his son, and the son lashing out at his father with a sword, only to turn it on himself in an act of suicide, driving the sword through his side, as, with his dying gasp, he clung to the dead body of Antigone. The drama of these speeches is further heightened by metatheatrical resonance when the actor playing the Messenger has previously played the two characters whose dramatic suicides he is describing.

To put this messenger speech into perspective, we must first look backwards and compare it with the earlier messenger speeches in Aeschylus, full of solemnity and pathos, but almost completely lacking in dramatic action. We can then look forward to the messenger speeches of Euripides and see similar dramatic action in nearly every one of his plays, some of which seem to be as much thrillers as tragedies.

***Oedipus the King* (429-25 BC ?)**

Laius, King of Thebes, was warned by an oracle that the son his wife Iocaste bore would kill him and marry his mother, Iocaste. In order to prevent this happening, the child was left to die on Mount Cithaeron, with his feet pinned together. However, the boy, Oedipus, was rescued and lived with Polybus, King of Corinth. As a young man, Oedipus consulted the oracle at Delphi concerning his true parentage and received the same prophecy as had his real father. Fleeing from Corinth, Oedipus later arrived at Thebes where he was proclaimed king and married Iocaste, thus unknowingly fulfilling the prophecy he had earlier received.

When the play opens, Oedipus is seeking the cause of the plague which is devastating the city. Gradually the awful realisation dawns on Oedipus that he is in fact responsible for the unlawful act which has brought disaster to Thebes. Iocaste realises the grim truth before Oedipus does and leaves to take her own life. When Oedipus discovers Iocaste's body, in his despair, he blinds himself using the brooches from her robe. After greeting his daughters, Antigone and Ismene, Oedipus is sent away from Thebes into exile.

The title role in this play is not shared with any other characters, and, being the entire focus of the play, must clearly be played by the First Actor. The parts of the Priest, Iocaste and the Herdsman are also linked together, as are Creon and the First Messenger. Ringer[76] suggests that these roles are played by Actor 2 and Actor 3 respectively, as shown below. The parts of Teiresias and the Second Messenger could be played by either the second or third actor. Ringer suggests a linkage between Teiresias, the Priest and Iocaste. This avoids the need for the portrayal of Creon to be interrupted by the appearance of Teiresias. In contrast, Ringer allots the Second messenger to the Third Actor in order to balance the roles of deuteragonist and tritagonist. However, this argument seems spurious, since the Third Actor was normally given the weakest parts.

Oedipus the King: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Oedipus	668	Priest	52	Creon	130	
Role 2				Teiresias	76	Messenger 1	56	
Role 3				Iocaste	120			
Role 4				Herdsman	27			
Role 5				Messenger 2	70			
Total	1530	Actor 1	668	Actor 2	345	Actor 3	186	Ch 331

On the other hand, metatheatrical resonance would be created if the Second Messenger were played by the Second Actor and reported on the death of Iocaste. In this dramatic speech, the Messenger quotes both Iocaste's and Oedipus' words and mimes the act of Oedipus blinding himself. However, we may presume that Sophocles was not interested in developing the idea of the protagonist also playing the Messenger who reports on the self mutilation, or he would have arranged the entrances and exits of his

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[76]M. Ringer (*supra* n. 10), 82.

actors to achieve this effect. It is possible that he chose not to develop this linkage because it might distract from the main focus of the play, which is the downfall of Oedipus.

Sophocles' *Electra* (420 - 410 BC?)

This is a play of great dramatic tension, deception and dramatic irony, focussed on the persons of Orestes and Clytemnestra. Near the beginning of the play, Orestes, in disguise, carries an urn which supposedly contains his own ashes. The deception is strengthened by the elaborate and dramatic messenger speech of the Paidagogos, who tells Clytemnestra of the supposed death of Orestes in a chariot race. This messenger speech is unusual in being a complete fabrication. Later, great dramatic tension and irony are focussed on the scene where Aegisthus turns back the sheets on the corpse he is shown, expecting to see Orestes, only to discover the body of his wife Clytemnestra.

The part of Electra involves great emotional tension, and at 655 lines, is one of the largest single roles in fifth-century drama. It must clearly be played by the First Actor, while the part of her sister Chrysothemis could be played by either of the second or third actors (the second seems most likely). The other four speaking parts in the play must be grouped in two pairs: Orestes and Clytemnestra; and Aegisthus and the Paidagogos. The lack of a fourth speaking actor is implied by Pylades' silence throughout the play.

The part of Aegisthus must surely be played by Actor 3. He is the archetypal example of the despised tyrant with a small and ungracious part in the play. (It has been

said that the part of the tyrant was always played by the Tritagonist[77].) It then follows that the Paidagogos must also be played by the Third Actor, despite the dramatic qualities of the messenger speech. The Second Actor then plays Orestes and Clytemnestra. Again there is great dramatic irony here, with Orestes essentially killing himself as he is played by the same actor who plays his mother. Since he is his mother's own flesh and blood, he is indeed killing himself. This is demonstrated by the scene where Orestes appears from the inner chamber after the matricide. Just moments earlier, the audience has heard the voice of the actor from inside the chamber, expressing the pleas of Clytemnestra to her son as she is murdered (ll. 1405-17). Then only eight lines later, in the response to Electra's question 'How have you done, Orestes?' the actor who just voiced Clytemnestra's dying words answers with the words 'All within is well if Apollo's oracle spoke well.' This denial, as it were, of the shocking nature of the deed, serves to suppress the anguish of the act and may have the effect of transferring this anguish onto the audience themselves. Since the guilt of the matricide is not atoned for in the play, the audience must bear it themselves.

Electra: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Electra	655	Orestes	160	Paidagogos	148	
Role 2				Chrysothemis	156	Aegisthus	34	
Role 3				Clytemnestra	115			
Total	1510	Actor 1	655	Actor 2	431	Actor 3	182	Ch 242

[77]Demosthenes, *On the False Embassy* 247.

***Women of Trachis* (date unknown)**

Deianeira has awaited the return of her husband Heracles for some fifteen months. Lichas, Heracles' herald, arrives accompanied by a group of captive girls, among whom is Iole. After he is cross-examined by Deianeira, Lichas admits that Heracles is in love with Iole. In an attempt to win back her husband's love, Deianeira sends a robe to Heracles, smeared with what she believes to be a love potion. Too late, she discovers that the potion was a death-curse and, heart-broken at the outcome of her action, kills herself with a sword. As Heracles is carried home dying, he gives instructions to his son Hyllus to burn him on a pyre on Mount Oeta and to take Iole as his wife. The play ends with Hyllus' reluctant compliance with his father's wishes.

It is generally believed that in this drama the roles of Heracles and Deianeira are played by the First Actor. Hyllus and Lichas must be played by the same actor, probably the Second, which leaves the Third Actor to play the Nurse, Messenger and Old Man (whose part is very weak). Hyllus and the Nurse are the real dramatic messengers, describing respectively the poisoning of Heracles and the suicide of Deianeira. The role of the Messenger is principally to contradict the false report given by the Herald, Lichas. Ringer[78] discusses in detail the ironic relationship between Heracles and Deianeira, both played by the same actor. For example, Deianeira kills herself with the sword in a manly way, whereas Heracles appears in an emasculated form, "moaning and crying like a girl" (ll. 1070-75). This ironic comparison between the two roles would help to alleviate the

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[78]M. Ringer (*supra* n. 10), 52.

difficulties, most felt by Rees[79], of having the super-hero and the woman played by the same actor. Hyllus and the Nurse (as messengers) are not directly involved in the meta-theatrical irony because they are played by the second and third actors respectively.

Women of Trachis: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Deianeira	372	Hyllus	170	Nurse	77	
Role 2		Heracles	211	Lichas	111	Messenger	73	
Role 3						Old man	15	
Total	1278	Actor 1	583	Actor 2	281	Actor 3	165	Ch 249

***Philoctetes* (409 BC)**

This play revolves around the attempts made by Odysseus, with the aid of Neoptolemus, to persuade the wounded Philoctetes to accompany him to Troy, which will never be captured without the bow bequeathed to Philoctetes by Heracles.

Neoptolemus, accompanied by a Chorus of sailors, meets with Philoctetes and begins to win his confidence. When Neoptolemus prepares to leave, Philoctetes begs to accompany him. As they are setting out, a sailor, disguised as a merchant, appears and reports that Odysseus wants to capture Philoctetes. He also relates the prophecy that Troy will not fall without Philoctetes' help. Suddenly, Philoctetes is seized with a painful spasm and entrusts the bow to the care of Neoptolemus. When Philoctetes recovers, Neoptolemus refuses to return the bow and confesses to the plot which had been hatched by Odysseus. Odysseus emerges from his hiding place at this point, and a confrontation ensues between Philoctetes and Odysseus. After this incident, Neoptolemus and Odysseus leave for the ship, bow in hand. Thinking better of his actions, Neoptolemus

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[79]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 141.

returns to the cave, apologizes to Philoctetes and returns the bow to him. Refusing further entreaties to accompany Neoptolemus to Troy and help the Greeks out of goodwill, Philoctetes only yields when Heracles appears *ex machina* and bids him do so. Thus the play ends in reconciliation and in fulfilment of the oracle.

In the distribution of parts shown here, Philoctetes is assigned to Actor 1, Neoptolemus to Actor 2 and Odysseus to Actor 3. This scheme (e.g. Ringer[80]) is preferable to that offered by Pickard-Cambridge[81] which has the part of Neoptolemus assigned to Actor 1. Philoctetes is the more tragic and heroic figure in this play not only because of his infirmity and loneliness but also because of the deception which he suffers at the hand of his friend Neoptolemus. In addition he has the bulk of the lines assigned to him, 622 as compared to 364 to Neoptolemus. Since the Sailor and Heracles are on stage with Philoctetes and Neoptolemus they must be played by the Third Actor who also plays Odysseus.

Philoctetes: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Philoctetes	622	Neoptolemus	364	Odysseus	159	
Role 2						Sailor	57	
Role 3						Heracles	39	
Total	1471	Actor 1	622	Actor 2	364	Actor 3	255	Ch 230

In this play, the sailor (disguised as a Merchant) is the most obvious messenger figure, describing himself as such in l. 564. However, his speech concerns the scheme hatched by the Greeks against Neoptolemus, and is therefore intended to be deceptive

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[80]M. Ringer (*supra* n. 10), 122.

[81]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 141.

rather than dramatic in nature. Ringer[82] draws attention to the irony which is introduced by having the Merchant played by the same actor who plays Odysseus. For example, Neoptolemus asks the Merchant (l. 568) why Odysseus has not come himself, whereas in fact the Merchant 'is' Odysseus, in that both are played by the same actor.

In contrast to the deception speech of the 'Messenger', a speech which is in some ways closer to a dramatic messenger speech is given by Neoptolemus in ll. 343-390, when he tells of the taking of the arms of Achilles by Odysseus. Here, irony arises from the fact that, although the content of this speech is true, it is part of a false message scripted by Odysseus himself.

Oedipus at Colonus (produced posthumously)

Oedipus, blind and in exile, wanders for years with his daughter Antigone as his guide before he reaches Colonus near Athens. Oedipus sits down in a sacred grove which he senses will be his final resting place. When the Elders of Colonus learn of Oedipus' identity they are horror-stricken and want him to leave. However, they agree to obey King Theseus who grants Oedipus protection. Creon arrives soon afterwards and attempts to carry off Antigone and Oedipus by force to Thebes as an oracle has prophesied that benefits will come to the country where Oedipus dies. Theseus returns in time to rescue Oedipus and drive off Creon. When Polyneices, Oedipus' son, turns up as a suppliant begging his father's forgiveness, Oedipus refuses to believe him and sends him off cursed and disowned. Peals of thunder are heard shortly after this incident and Oedipus

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[82]M. Ringer (*supra* n. 10), 122.

recognises that this is his time to die. Accompanied by his daughters and Theseus he leads the way to the spot where he will meet his mysterious end.

The distribution of parts in *Oedipus at Colonus* has probably provoked more discussion than any other fifth-century tragedy. In a discussion that lasts more than two pages, Pickard-Cambridge[83] suggests that the part of Theseus is split amongst all three actors, arguing that, however inelegant this seems, we cannot adequately judge the sensibilities of the fifth-century audience. However, as Fitton Brown[84] points out, such role-splitting is not a common feature of the extant Greek tragedies. Apart from *Oedipus at Colonus*, the only other play where the splitting of a part has been suggested is Euripides' *Phoenissae*, but in that play such a procedure is not necessary, as will be argued below.

Distribution of roles in *Oedipus at Colonus*: Flickinger, Pickard Cambridge
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Oedipus	607	Antigone	165	Stranger	32	
Role 2		Messenger	89	Theseus	69	Ismene	73	
Role 3		Theseus	17			Theseus	100	
Role 4						Creon	96	
Role 5						Polyneices	123	
Total	1779	Actor 1	713	Actor 2	234	Actor 3	424	Ch 408

A further argument against splitting the part of Theseus comes from the play itself. When Theseus reappears (line 887) after an absence of 200 lines, Oedipus greets him with the words: "Dear friend I recognise the sound of your voice..." It is generally

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[83]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 142-4.

[84]A. D. Fitton-Brown (*supra* n. 26), 11.

agreed that this phrase serves to remind the audience of Oedipus' blindness. However, if this was the point when the part of Theseus was given to a different actor, the false assertion that the character was recognisable from his voice would only serve to draw attention to the short-comings of the casting at this point, and would be self-defeating. If on the other hand, Theseus was still played by the same actor, the calling of attention to his voice would enhance the audience's appreciation of Oedipus' state, because they could imagine themselves recognising Theseus by his voice rather than by his appearance.

Alternative distribution of roles in *Oedipus at Colonus*, revised from Ceadel[85]
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		Actor4
Role 1		Oedipus	607	Stranger	32	Antigone	158	7
Role 2		Messenger	89	Ismene	73	Creon	96	
Role 3				Theseus	186			
Role 4				Polyneices	123			
Total	1779	Actor 1	696	Actor 2	414	Actor 3&4	261	Ch 408

Having gone to considerable lengths (discussed below) to unify the part of Theseus, it is ironic that Ceadel and Fitton Brown both assign the parts of Theseus, the Stranger, Ismene and Polyneices (which all go together, with 414 spoken lines) to Actor 3, and the parts of Antigone and Creon to Actor 2 (total 244 lines). However, I suggest an alternative scheme in which the latter two parts are assigned to Actor 3.

If Theseus is to be played by the same actor throughout (Actor 2 above) then Creon must be played by the Third Actor, but at this point Antigone is still on stage. Thus we are forced to propose that part or all of the part of Antigone is played by a fourth Actor. This appears to break the assertion of Aristotle that tragedy was always restricted

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[85]E. B. Caedel, "The Division of Parts Among the Actors in Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus*", *CQ* XXXV (1941), 146.

to three actors, but Ceadel and Fitton Brown propose a way out of this impasse by suggesting that between lines 720 and 847, when Antigone utters a total of only seven lines, she could be played by an 'essentially mute' actor who is called upon to utter a few lines which are devoid of much character. Precedents for such parts are the children's roles in some plays which probably require a Fourth Actor (see below).

Given this arrangement, the remaining problem is to identify the point in the play when the semi-mute Actor 4 replaces Actor 3 in playing Antigone. Both Ceadel and Fitton Brown suggest that Antigone goes off stage with Ismene at line 509. However, this is hardly reasonable in the light of Ismene's departing words "I go, and you, Antigone, meanwhile must guard our father." A much less obtrusive occasion for the exit of Antigone is with Theseus at line 667. At this point, the emphasis is quite different, since the parting words of Theseus are "My name, though I be distant, protects you from harm". Thus the emphasis is now on Theseus rather than Antigone as the protector of Oedipus.

A suitable point for the re-appearance of Antigone (as the semi-mute) is precisely at the point when she next speaks (line 720), since she is warning Oedipus of the approach of Creon, something she is best able to do if she comes on stage from the same direction from which he will shortly appear. Her breathless appearance in front of Creon will then camouflage the different voice of the semi-mute actor.

A final point of discussion concerns the playing of the part of Ismene at different points in the play. Her first appearance is a speaking part, attributed to the Second Actor above. However, when she reappears from lines 1099 to 1555 she is completely silent. As Pickard-Cambridge points out, this provides a persuasive argument for the non-

availability of a fourth speaking actor. If such an actor was available to Sophocles, he surely would not have kept Ismene silent for the entire 455 lines that she spends in her second appearance on stage. On the other hand, the third appearance of Ismene does bring forth a few lines of speech (ll. 1689-1692, 1716-20), and a dialogue from 1724 to 1736. Ceadel suggests that at this point the part of Ismene was again taken by a semi-mute actor, in order to allow her to remain on stage after Theseus appears at line 1751. However, there is an opportunity for Ismene to leave the stage at line 1738, so that the actor can return 13 lines later as Theseus, accompanied by a mute as Ismene. Theseus can then address the two sisters together, but only Antigone sings in reply.

The long messenger speech near the end of the play has been described as one of the most sublime creations of Greek tragedy[86]. The Messenger describes how Oedipus made preparations for a libation, and recalls his tender words to his daughters and his admonishments to Theseus to care for them after his death. Then he describes how all except Theseus were sent away, after which Oedipus disappeared from sight in a mysterious and extraordinary fashion.

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[86]G. Norwood, *Greek Tragedy*, (New York, 1960), 185.

3.3. Euripides

Euripides achieved his first success in 441 BC, approximately when Sophocles' *Antigone* was first performed, and thereafter both playwrights worked concurrently until around 405 BC. Since nineteen of Euripides' dramas remain, we have a more satisfactory sampling of his work than for either Aeschylus or Sophocles. This allows us to make generalisations with somewhat greater confidence. However, we will begin by examining each play individually.

Alcestis (438 BC)

The *Alcestis*, Euripides' earliest surviving play, tells the story of a wife who dies in place of her husband. Apollo had asked the Fates to allow someone to die on Admetus' behalf so that he might live in the future for as long as he had already lived. When Admetus' parents are unwilling to take his place, Alcestis, his wife, offers to die for him. Some time after her death Heracles turns up at their home and is offered hospitality by Admetus. Heracles is shocked to learn from one of the servants that the person for whom the household is mourning is Alcestis and he sets off for her tomb to rescue her from Death. Victorious in his battle, he brings in the veiled figure of Alcestis and restores her to her husband Admetus.

Dale has argued that the *Alcestis* was performed by only two actors, one of whom had a singing voice[87]. Since Euripides, unusually, presented the *Alcestis* in place of a

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[87]A. M. Dale, *Euripides' Alcestis*, (Oxford, 1954), xix.

satyr play at the end of a tetralogy, she suggested that the normal practice of using two actors in satyr plays might have been carried over to the tragedy. Pickard-Cambridge[88] also offers a two-actor scheme in which Actor 1 could have played Apollo, Alcestis, Heracles and Pheres, while Actor 2 portrayed Death, the Servant and Admetus. This option does however have a drawback. When the Chorus and Admetus depart in procession at l. 746, the stage would have to remain empty until the same actor had time to change into the mask and costume of the Servant before re-appearing. This is possible; however a more pleasing arrangement is achieved if a scheme incorporating three actors is considered.

Pickard-Cambridge suggests that if three actors were used, the most likely distribution would involve combining the parts of Apollo and Admetus for one actor and Alcestis, Pheres and Heracles for a second actor. He suggests that a third actor might then play Death and the Servant. Following his normal approach, Pickard-Cambridge does not attempt to determine an order of precedence between these three roles, but it seems clear that the Death-Servant role (totalling only 61 lines) would be assigned to Actor Three. However, the only part that the Third Actor needs to play in order to facilitate the flow of the plot is the Servant. This argument is strengthened by an examination of the dramatic content of the other part in question (Death).

After the Prologue delivered by Apollo, Death makes his dramatic arrival at l. 23, demanding to know why Apollo should still be present at the home of Admetus. This seems to be a more appropriate entrance for a leading actor rather than the Third Actor.

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[88]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 145.

This arrangement would also introduce dramatic irony by having the same actor who plays Death leading Alcestis, whom he also plays, to her doom. The audience would later enjoy the further irony of the same actor, in his role of Heracles, rescuing Alcestis from the clutches of Death and restoring her to her husband and family.

It is not possible to say with any certainty which groups of parts in the *Alcestis* were played by the first and second actors. This is because the title role has a relatively small number of spoken lines (77) compared with Admetus, who has 338 lines. However, the combination of the parts of Death-Alcestis-Heracles-Pheres has more heroic and dramatic scope than Apollo-Admetus. Thus Alcestis is clearly heroic, whereas Admetus is neither tragic nor heroic. He is pathetic (in a modern sense) but not full of pathos. Therefore, in the distribution of roles outlined below, it is suggested that the roles of Death, the Maid, Alcestis, Heracles and Pheres are taken by the First Actor. The combination of these parts would provide this actor with 412 lines, as compared to 386 lines for Actor 2 who would play Apollo and Admetus. The part of the maid will now be discussed.

Alcestis: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		Child
Role 1	Death	28	Apollo	48	Servant	41	20
Role 2	Maid	65	Admetus	338			
Role 3	Alcestis	77					
Role 4	Heracles	182					
Role 5	Pheres	60					
Total	Actor 1	412	Actor 2	386	Actor 3	41	Ch 304

The speech given by the Maid (l. 134ff) has been called a "surrogate Messenger-

Speech"[89]. However, unlike many of Euripides' other Messenger speeches, the Maid delivers her account early in the play. In her main speech of 47 lines the Maid quotes the prayer of Alcestis on behalf of her children. Alcestis' dying wish is that her children may live long and happy lives and not die an untimely death, like their mother (ll.162-169). After describing how Alcestis visited the altars in her home and decorated them with garlands, showing no emotion at her impending death, the Maid tells how Alcestis finally broke down and wept at the sight of her marriage bed and charged the bed as instrumental in her forthcoming destruction. The Maid describes Alcestis' dramatic stumbling from the bed and her wandering around her home, only to return time and again to throw herself on her bed in floods of tears. In these lines too, the Maid gives a tender portrayal of Alcestis' fond farewells to her children and her kind words to each of her servants (ll.176-182).

Pickard-Cambridge does not comment on the role of the Maid, which could be played by any of the three actors. However, if the role of the Maid were played by the leading actor then linkage is created between these roles when the Maid quotes the words of Alcestis, who is played by the same actor. However, the linkage does not lead to noticeable metatheatrical resonance because the speech by the Maid precedes the first appearance of Alcestis. In other words, the audience is not aware of the linkage until later in the play, which greatly lessens its impact.

During his second appearance on stage Heracles too may be construed as delivering a type of messenger speech (ll. 837-860) in which he describes his plans to

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[89]C. Collard, *Euripides' Supplices* Vol.II, (Groningen, 1975), 274.

rescue Alcestis from death. Rather than describing actions which have already taken place, this 'Messenger speech' looks to the future, addressing events which are about to happen. He gives an action-packed account of how he will ambush and overpower Death and thus force him to release Alcestis. The irony of the same actor, now portraying Heracles, who had earlier played Death, wrestling and defeating 'himself' would be much enjoyed by an audience already aware that this same leading actor was also playing the role of Alcestis, the lady over whom the battle took place.

***Medea* (431 BC)**

Euripides' *Medea* describes how the tragic heroine Medea punishes her husband Jason for his unfaithfulness to her. She takes her revenge by orchestrating the death of his new wife, her father (Creon) and Jason's own children. The death of Creon's daughter is brought about by a poisoned robe which Medea sends her sons to deliver to the princess as an apparent goodwill gesture to demonstrate that she has now come to terms with Jason's decision to take another wife.

The words of Jason, by which he persuades the princess to accept the robe from his sons are quoted by the Messenger, as are the cries of Creon upon discovering his dead daughter. The speech which the Messenger delivers varies greatly in pace and dramatic depth, ranging from an account of the princess parading proudly in her splendid robe and admiring her appearance, to the grisly details of the agonising deaths of both the princess and her father. This speech affords many opportunities for an actor to demonstrate the widest possible range of his skills, and would give the Messenger numerous mimetic

possibilities.

In his discussion on the assignment of parts in the *Medea*, Page has described the play as "requiring only two actors"[90]. He argues that although all Euripides' other extant tragedies require three actors, a two-actor structure in the *Medea* could have been modelled on an older drama, such as the *Medea* by Neophron. Pickard-Cambridge[91] also tentatively suggests a two-actor structure which would require Actor 1 to play the Paidagogos (ll.49-91) and Medea (from line 95), while Actor 2 played the Nurse, Creon, Jason, Aegeus and the second appearance of the Paidagogos (ll.1002-20). This arrangement requires the Paidagogos to leave the stage before Medea herself speaks from off stage (l. 95). Although an actor might have been able to make a speedy voice transition from Paidagogos to Medea, the text suggests strongly that the Paidagogos is still around until l.110, when he makes a hasty exit with the children at the command of the Nurse.

Pickard-Cambridge offers an alternative scheme which could be performed by three actors, whereby Actor 1 would portray Medea, Actor 2, the Nurse, and Actor 3, the Paidagogos. The other parts could be assigned to either Actor 2 or 3. However, in keeping with the distribution of parts in other plays, it seems likely that the most challenging of the supporting roles would all be played by Actor 2, with Actor 3 merely acting as "fill-in". Hence, I suggest that Creon, Jason and the Messenger were all played by Actor 2.

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[90]D. L. Page, Euripides' *Medea*, (Oxford, 1938), xxxi.

[91]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 145.

Medea: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Medea	561	Nurse	131	Paidagogos	36	
Role 2			Creon	41	Aegeus	45	
Role 3			Jason	201			
Role 4			Messenger	103			
Total	Actor 1	561	Actor 2	476	Actor 3	81	Ch 297

In his description of the arrival of Medea's sons at the palace with the gifts for the princess, the Messenger quotes Jason's words of censure to his new wife who initially spurns the gifts. Jason urges her to receive the presents and cancel the exile planned for the children. The Messenger's report proceeds from a lively account of the princess's delight in wearing her new robe and crown to a gruesome description of her futile attempts to rid herself of the poisoned presents which burned and gnawed at her flesh. When the news of his daughter's horrible death is brought to Creon, he rushes to the scene and clasps his child in his arms. The Messenger relates how the old man's plea to die with his daughter(l.1120) is realised when Creon is unable to separate himself from the body of his dead daughter as the poison spreads to his own person. If Actor 2 were to play the role of the Messenger it would afford him an opportunity to give a dramatic rendition of the death of a character he has played earlier, namely, Creon. It would afford this important actor a chance to reprise briefly the role of Jason, a part also assigned to him in the drama. These are excellent examples of metatheatical linkage, which enhance the importance of the Messenger figure in this play.

***Children of Heracles* (430 BC?[92])**

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[92]J. Wilkins, *Euripides' Heraclidae*, (Oxford, 1993), xxxiv.

During his life, Heracles had been compelled by Hera to carry out for Eurystheus, King of Argos, the twelve labours for which he is renowned. After Heracles' death, Eurystheus transferred his persecution to Heracles' children. When Euripides' drama opens, the children are taking refuge, as suppliants, at Marathon, near Athens, under the protection of Iolaus, their father's friend.

The Herald of Eurystheus arrives and attacks Iolaus as he attempts to protect the children from being dragged off to Argos. The resulting commotion then attracts the attention of Demophon, son of Theseus and now King of Athens. Demophon sides with Iolaus in the dispute and both sides prepare for war. However, as the price of victory, the oracles have demanded the death of a young girl and no resolution to the dilemma is found until Macaria, Heracles' daughter volunteers to be the victim.

Iolaus, even although he is advanced in years, goes off to war, and during the ensuing battle miraculously regains his youth, and in his renewed vigour is able to take Eurystheus prisoner. Alcmena, mother of Heracles, reviles Eurystheus when he is brought back as a captive and demands the right to put him to death. In spite of the protests of the Chorus, the play ends with Eurystheus being led off to his death at the command of Alcmena.

The Loeb edition of this play[93] seems to have mixed up the roles of the Servant and Messenger, since Eurystheus is led in at the end of the play (l. 928) by a "Messenger", who nevertheless does not give a message. On the other hand, a long

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[93]A. S. Way, *Euripides*, Loeb Classical Library, vols. 1-4, (Cambridge, Mass., 1912), 253.

messenger speech (l. 784-866) is given by a Servant of Alcmena. The later "Messenger" who brings in the captive Eurystheus is probably the same as the "Servant of Hyllus"[94]. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Eurystheus' captor claims to have been sent by Hyllus and Iolaus. If we accept the identity of the servant proposed by Wilkins then it is possible for Actor 1 to give the messenger speech.

This speech brings good news about the defeat of the enemy to Alcmena, including word of the miraculous transformation of Iolaus from old man to vigorous youth. The Messenger recounts Hyllus' words of encouragement to the troops and his challenge to the enemy. He also recalls the exhortations of Demophon, King of Athens, to rally his troops to the aid of Hyllus. When the battle appears to have reached a stalemate, a miraculous event turns the tide. Elderly Iolaus begs to be pulled up into a chariot, whereupon he grasps the reins and races after Eurystheus, praying to Zeus and Hera to make him young again for one day. Wonderfully, his prayer is answered, and in his renewed strength, Iolaus overtakes and captures Eurystheus. Since, Iolaus, Eurystheus and the Servant are all played by Actor 1 in this arrangement, metatheatrical resonance is created when Actor 1, as the Servant, recounts the battle between the other two roles he also plays.

It might be thought that to have the same actor play the hero and the enemy in this scheme would raise other less desirable resonances between these characters. However, when Eurystheus appears at the end of the play he is to some degree a reformed character. He says that he had no personal animosity against the Athenians, but was driven to attack

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[94]J. Wilkins (*supra* n. 92), 152.

them by Heaven.

Children of Heracles Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Iolaus	302	Herald	83	Demophon	103	
Role 2	Messenger	84	Macaria	82	Servant	49	
Role 3	Eurystheus	54	Alcmena	88			
Total	Actor 1	440	Actor 2	253	Actor 3	152	Ch 210

***Hippolytus* (428 BC)**

Central to the theme of Hippolytus is a wife who becomes sexually obsessed with a younger man. The youth in question is Phaedra's stepson Hippolytus whose mother was an Amazon. Aphrodite tells us in the prologue that Phaedra has been suffering from this passion for some time, from before the time Phaedra and Theseus left Athens (24-40). However, her love is unrequited by Hippolytus who has devoted himself to Artemis alone. A cry from within the house tells that, in the face of this rejection, Phaedra has hanged herself. However, when Theseus returns, he finds a message on her wrist in which she falsely accuses Hippolytus of raping her. Hippolytus insists on his innocence, but is banished and cursed by his father.

Hippolytus has barely left the stage when a Messenger enters to report a disastrous chariot accident which has left Hippolytus seriously wounded. The Messenger quotes Hippolytus' own words, spoken to his friends by the sea-shore, as he prepared to go into exile in obedience to his father. The Messenger also recounts Hippolytus' prayer to Zeus that his father may in time realise his innocence. However, as they passed along a remote sea shore on their way into exile, a blood-curdling sound was heard, and a monstrous bull came surging from the waves, terrifying the horses. As they bolted in panic, Hippolytus

became tangled in the reins of his horse and his head was dashed against the rocks, causing him to be fatally injured. The faltering words of Hippolytus about his father's curse are repeated by the Messenger, before he ends his account by stating his belief in Hippolytus' righteous character.

The distribution of roles in this play is very uncertain, but the scheme of Pickard-Cambridge[95] seems as likely as any (see below). The title role of Hippolytus has the largest number of lines, and is probably played by Actor 1, with Phaedra and Theseus played by Actor 2. This distribution gives the Deuteragonist more lines than the Protagonist, but the parts played by the Deuteragonist have less focus, and may therefore be less satisfying. The Nurse and Servant are then attributed to Actor 3.

Hippolytus: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Hippolytus	274	Aphrodite	57	Servant	18	
Role 2	Messenger	97	Phaedra	188	Nurse	219	
Role 3			Theseus	192	Artemis	93	
Total	Actor 1	371	Actor 2	437	Actor 3	330	Ch 328

The Messenger can best be played by Actor 1[96], which would be most interesting since he is reporting the fatal accident suffered by his own character, Hippolytus. The metatheatrical resonance created by the role playing would enhance the drama of the Messenger speech, making it a fitting complement to the final appearance of Hippolytus, when his dying words bring the play to a tragic conclusion.

***Hecuba* (ca. 425 BC)**

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[95]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 145.

[96]Z. Pavlovskis (*supra* n. 33), 121.

After the fall of Troy, Hecuba, wife of King Priam, was taken prisoner, along with her daughter, Polyxena. The play opens with Hecuba and Polyxena waiting to find out what will happen to them. The ghost of Hecuba's son, Polydorus, appears, and reveals that Polyxena's life has been claimed by the Ghost of Achilles. The death of Polyxena later that day is described by the Herald, Talthybius, who reports that the Greeks were so impressed by her courage in the face of death that they almost decided to release her. A maid comes in, accompanying a covered corpse which is assumed to be Polyxena. However, when Hecuba pulls back the cover, she discovers the body of her son Polydorus, who has been treacherously murdered by Polymestor, to whom he had been sent for safety. When Polymestor himself appears, feigning friendship, he is lured into the women's tent where his sons are killed, and his own eyes are gouged out. He emerges to foretell a violent death for Hecuba and Agamemnon.

This is another play where role distributions are poorly constrained. Pickard-Cambridge[97] has proposed that in this play Actor 1 may play Hecuba, Actor 2 Polyxena and Agamemnon and Actor 3 Odysseus, the Maid and Polymestor. The Messenger (Talthybius) and Polydorus' phantom could be played by either Actor 2 or Actor 3.

Various lines of evidence tend to support the assignment of the role of Hecuba to the leading actor in this play: she has the title role of the drama; she is a tragic and heroic figure (for example she avenges the murder of her son); she has the greatest number of spoken lines (483); she has few long silences relative to the lengthy period she is on stage. However the roles which Pickard-Cambridge assigns to Actor 2 do not fully

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[97]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 145.

exploit the dramatic opportunities available in the tragedy. These opportunities involve 3 dramatic linkages: between Polydorus and the Maid, between Polyxena and Talthybius, and between Polydorus and Polymestor. Hence, I propose the alternative distribution of roles shown below.

If Actor 2 plays the part of Polydorus' phantom in the Prologue, this would allow him to announce to the audience the details of his own death at the hands of his father's treacherous friend, Polymestor. If Actor 2 subsequently portrays the role of the Maid, this same actor then has the opportunity of once more reporting his own death, but on this second occasion to Hecuba (l. 688). Further, if the role of Polymestor is also taken by Actor 2, the actor has the opportunity of portraying his own murderer! Polymestor's dramatic entrance from the women's tent after he has been blinded by Hecuba would provide a challenging part, worthy of a leading actor. The monody delivered by Polymestor, has been described by Mossman as a '*dramatischer Höhepunkt*'[98], striking, not only because it is sung by a male character but also for its dramatic qualities. This speech is both a pseudo-messenger speech and the first speech of an agon. In an emotionally charged scene, Polymestor gives a striking account, in stichomythia, of his own sufferings. Agamemnon, however, judges in favour of Hecuba, against Polymestor, silencing him when he (Polymestor) prophesies Agamemnon's death.

If Actor 2 also takes the parts of Polyxena and Talthybius, this recreates a pattern we have seen in other plays. In this instance, Polyxena, daughter of Hecuba, has been chosen by the Greeks to be offered as a sacrifice at the tomb of Achilles, in the hopes of

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[98]J. Mossman, *Wild Justice: A Study of Euripides' Hecuba*, (Oxford, 1995), 66.

gaining favourable winds for their journey home. Such a role offers the actor an opportunity to display the range of his ability, encompassing as it does the heroic and courageous spirit of a young woman who would rather die free than live a slave and the pathos of a child separated from her loving parent. If we accept that in addition to the role of Polyxena, Actor 2 also plays the part of Talthybius, we can see that this messenger is once more given the opportunity to report, in animated fashion, the words of his principal character.

Revised distribution of roles in *Hecuba*
Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Hecuba	483	Polydorus' G.	58	Odysseus	57	
Role 2			Polyxena	94	Agamemnon	99	
Role 3			Talthybius	85			
Role 4			Maid	16			
Role 5			Polymestor	170			
Total	Actor 1	483	Actor 2	423	Actor 3	156	Ch 233

Talthybius, the herald of the Greeks, comes to Hecuba to advise her that Polyxena is dead and she may carry out the burial rites for her daughter. At Hecuba's request, Talthybius proceeds to recount, in a vivid manner, the details of the libations offered by Achilles' son. He also quotes Polyxena's heroic and stirring speech expressing her readiness to die in freedom rather than in slavery. (l. 546). Talthybius further records Polyxena's final courageous words to her executioner as she bares her breast to receive the blow from his sword (l. 563). By re-iterating the dramatic words spoken earlier by his principal character, Actor 2 is allowed additional opportunities to exploit the dramatic potential of his role.

***Andromache* (430 - 419 BC)**

In the aftermath of Troy, Andromache, widow of Hector, was given to Neoptolemus as his wife. They lived in harmony for ten years, until Neoptolemus married Hermione. Neoptolemus journeyed to Delphi, and in his absence, Hermione prepared to kill Andromache and her son. They took refuge at Thetis' altar awaiting the arrival of Peleus to rescue them. When Hermione's plot failed, she went off with Orestes, and planned the death of Neoptolemus. The success of this scheme is reported by the Messenger.

Although the distribution of parts in Euripides' *Andromache* is uncertain, a case may be made for the roles to be assigned as detailed in the chart below. It is fairly clear that the First Actor plays Andromache, since it is the title role and has by far the largest number of spoken lines. If Actor 2 plays Peleus, then Actor 3 must play Menelaus, as all three are on stage at the same time (l.497-746). In support of this arrangement, the lament which Peleus gives over the corpse of Neoptolemus (ll.1173-1225) has been called by one commentator[99] "the emotional climax of the play". It would seem appropriate, therefore, that such a dramatic part would be played by the Second rather than the Third Actor.

Andromache: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Andromache	309	Hermione	147	Maid	21	
Role 2	Orestes	68	Peleus	192	Menelaus	129	
Role 3	Messenger	88			Nurse	38	
Role 4					Thetis	42	
Total	Actor 1	465	Actor 2	339	Actor 3	230	Ch 244

The Messenger in *Andromache* could be played by any of the three actors.

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[99]M. Lloyd, *Euripides' Andromache*, (Warminster, 1994), 4.

However, if he is assigned to Actor 1, this allows the same actor who plays Orestes to give a vivid description of the fatal attack on Neoptolemus which Orestes himself has orchestrated and been involved in. Although the Protagonist does not on this occasion describe the details of his own death, in his role as Messenger he does quote the evil, slanderous words of Orestes. In this speech, Orestes is questioning Neoptolemus' intentions in visiting the shrine, claiming that his purpose is to steal from the temple rather than make amends for his past sins. It would be expected that the audience would appreciate the irony of having the actor imitate himself when, as the Messenger, he recounts the words of Orestes, one of his major characters. This effect would be emphasised by the fact that there is a gap of only 60 lines between the exit of Orestes and the entrance of the Messenger.

The *Suppliants* (ca. 420 BC)

The *Suppliants* is set at Eleusis, where King Adrastus, and the mothers of the seven dead chiefs who went against Thebes, have come to petition for the right to bury their sons' bodies. A message is sent to King Theseus, who agrees to lead an army against Thebes. The play describes the successful completion of their mission.

Pickard-Cambridge has suggested that in this play one actor plays Adrastus, a second Theseus, and a third, the combination of Aethra, the Theban Herald, and Athena[100]. Several factors suggest that Theseus would be played by the Principal Actor, and Adrastus by the Deuteragonist. Adrastus is a weak character (ll. 135, 160, 158) over

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[100]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 145.

whom Theseus asserts his higher status by commanding him to be silent, and not to usurp Theseus' right to the initial response to the Theban Herald (l. 513). Apart from this single outburst in line 512, Adrastus remains silent on stage for 471 lines (l. 263-734). In contrast, Theseus is portrayed in a much more positive light as showing respect to his parents (l. 362), and as an avenger of wrongs (l. 341). He shows wisdom in his wish to resolve the conflict in the first instance by diplomatic means, but he also shows courage in his determination to achieve justice by his willingness to fight if words fail (l. 347). Finally the Chorus acknowledges him as a Hero-King (l. 367).

The function of the Messenger in this play is to bring news of Theseus' great victory over the Thebans. He gives a vivid and animated eye-witness account (l. 684) of the heroism of Theseus in the heat of the battle (ll. 710-720). In particular he describes Theseus' handling of his weapons, including the tossing of his flaming shield, mowing down the enemy with his club, and the twirling throw of the deadly mace.

Suppliants Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Theseus	326	Adrastus	188	Aethra	86	
Role 2	Messenger	102	Evadne	54	Theban herald	75	
Role 3					Iphis	59	
Role 4					Athena	44	
Total	Actor 1	428	Actor 2	242	Actor 3	264	Ch 267

If we accept the arrangement proposed above, that Theseus is played by Actor 1, then the Messenger could be played by either Actor 1 or 3. If the Messenger leaves the stage at line 772, as can be inferred by the words of Adrastus (ἀλλ' ἴεν), then he has 26 lines in which to change and re-enter as Theseus. If Actor 1 does indeed play the Messenger, then he is afforded another opportunity to report on the exploits of his

principal role. This includes quoting Theseus' own valiant exhortations to his men at the height of the battle. The audience might be expected to recognise the voice of the protagonist and appreciate the metatheatrical resonance.

The *Madness of Heracles* (ca. 418 BC)

In this play, Heracles returns home from his final labour just in time to rescue his family from death at the hands of Lycus, King of Thebes. However, Iris instructs Madness to afflict Heracles, at Hera's command, whereupon Heracles kills his own wife and children, before lapsing into a coma. The gory details of the attack are reported by a Messenger, after which Heracles returns to sanity. On learning of his terrible act, he is led away inconsolable.

Pickard-Cambridge has proposed that in this play one actor plays Amphitryon, a second plays Megara and Theseus, and a third plays Heracles and Lycus[101]. Heracles is clearly the Tragic Hero in this drama, driven by Hera to kill his wife and children in a frenzied attack. It would therefore seem most appropriate for the Protagonist to play this role, which is a much more dramatic part than that of Amphitryon. In terms of the number of lines spoken by each character there is little difference. Amphitryon has 299 lines to say, while Heracles has 277. If we accept the suggestion that Actor 1 plays Heracles, then the role of Amphitryon could have been played by Actor 2, leaving Actor 3 to play Megara and Theseus. The minor roles of Iris and Lyssa could have been distributed between Actors 2 and 3.

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[101]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 146.

In the first speech he gives, Lycus makes light of the labours which Heracles has undertaken. He further suggests that Heracles is not as brave as he is reputed to be since he fights with a bow instead of entering into hand to hand combat. The audience doubtless would appreciate the irony of Lycus debunking the hero, knowing as they might that later in the tragedy the same actor would also be playing the hero, Heracles, whom he is defaming in this speech.

Any of the three actors could have played the Messenger in this play. Pickard-Cambridge[102] suggests that this role was most likely to have been played by the same actor who plays Theseus (his Actor 2), but could also have been played by the actor who plays Amphitryon (his Actor 1). However, it is also possible that the Messenger is played by the same actor who plays Heracles and Lycus. This would involve a fairly rapid change between the exit of the Messenger (l. 1015) and the appearance of Heracles asleep in the palace after its doors are thrown open to reveal the scene within (l. 1031). Heracles is in fact found bound to the palace's pillars; however, the act of unbolting and throwing open the palace doors could have taken some amount of time after the Chorus has finished singing in line 1030. This would then allow extra time for the actor to change his costume and be bound to the pillars.

If we are to accept that Heracles is played by Actor 1, and that the Messenger is also played by the same actor, another interesting, ironic situation emerges. The Messenger appears in order to reveal to both the Chorus and audience the tragic news of Heracles' madness and the frenzied attack he has made upon his wife and children. In his

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[102]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 146.

dramatic report the Messenger quotes Heracles' demented words as he imagines himself charging against Eurystheus. In addition to mimicking the voice of Heracles, the Messenger gives a dramatic rendition of Megara shrieking at Heracles and also of Amphitryon's pleas to his son to desist. Finally the Messenger portrays the distraught cries of Heracles' second son as he supplicates his father, begging him not to kill him.

If indeed Actor 1 does play the Messenger then he is given the opportunity of reporting on the actions of his principal role in a very dramatic and animated fashion. Not only does he quote Heracles' words as he rages in a murderous frenzy but he also is afforded the opportunity of enhancing his role by the dramatic portrayal of the cries of Amphitryon, Megara and Heracles' son.

Madness of Heracles: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Lycus	65	Amphitryon	299	Megara	146	
Role 2	Heracles	277	Iris	23	Lyssa	29	
Role 3	Messenger	100			Theseus	90	
Total	Actor 1	442	Actor 2	322	Actor 3	265	Ch 399

The *Electra* (ca. 415-413 BC)

In Euripides' version of this story, Electra has been married off to a peasant, with whom she lives in an un-consummated relationship. When at last Orestes returns to obtain his revenge, Electra does not recognise him, but the Old Paidagogos does correctly identify him. The group of four then plots the murder of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. The Messenger reports on how Orestes kills Aegisthus during a ritual offering, and Clytemnestra is then tricked into Electra's house, where Electra and Orestes kill their mother together. The Dioscuri appear at the end of the play to pronounce their fate.

In this version of *Electra* it seems likely that Electra is played by Actor 1 and Orestes by Actor 2. The Paidagogos plays a significant part, being involved in the recognition debate and in the plot to kill Clytemnestra. Nevertheless, he is played by Actor 3, since Electra and Orestes are on stage at the same time as he is. The choice of the actor to play the Messenger is more open. He can be played by Actor 2 or 3, but Actor 2 seems more interesting. By this means the audience would recognise that the actor who re-enacts Aegisthus' murder by Orestes is the same actor who plays Orestes.

As the Messenger enters, he brings news to Electra of Orestes' triumph over Aegisthus. He tells how Orestes and Pylades were invited into the palace, and how Aegisthus asked Orestes to join him in preparations for a sacrifice. Aegisthus grows uneasy because the entrails present an ill omen, but before he can discern the threat, Orestes strikes him fatally through the spine as he bends over the carcass. The Messenger concludes his account with a description of Pylades and Orestes defending themselves in a fight with the royal servants, before Orestes is recognised as the rightful heir, and feasted. The Messenger quotes the words of Orestes twice, as well as those of Aegisthus. A moment of great dramatic tension occurs when Aegisthus offers the blade to Orestes, to kill the sacrificial animal, who turns out to be himself.

Electra: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Electra	467	Orestes	220	Peasant	90	
Role 2			Messenger	91	Paidagogos	89	
Role 3					Clytemnestra	75	
Role 4					Castor	86	
Total	Actor 1	467	Actor 2	311	Actor 3	340	Ch 241

The *Trojan Women* (415 BC)

After the fall of Troy, Hecuba and the other Trojan Women wait to hear of their fate, which the Greeks are debating. The Greek Herald, Talthybius, arrives and announces that Cassandra has been given to Agamemnon as concubine, that Polyxena has been sacrificed, that Andromache has been awarded to Neoptolemus, and that Hecuba will be the slave of Odysseus. Talthybius returns later to report the decision that Astyanax will be thrown from the city wall, but Andromache resists giving him up. When Menelaus appears, an agon ensues between Helen and Hecuba regarding the question of who is primarily to blame for provoking the war. Menelaus accepts Hecuba's innocence, but defers Helen's punishment. At his third appearance, Talthybius escorts the body of Astyanax on his father's shield and makes arrangements with Hecuba for the burial. Finally, at his fourth appearance, Talthybius gives the orders for Troy to be set on fire, before Hecuba and the Chorus of Trojan Women are led away.

Hecuba is clearly the principal role in this play, since she is on stage from beginning to end, and has the largest number of spoken lines. The parts of Cassandra and Andromache must be played by a Second Actor, probably the Deuteragonist, because their speeches have more drama than those of Talthybius, who is played by a Third Actor. The parts of Poseidon and Athena, on the one hand, and Helen and Menelaus on the other must be distributed between actors two and three. Possibly Poseidon and Helen are grouped with the Trojan parts and Athena and Menelaus with Talthybius the Greek, as shown in the table.

As can be seen from the above description, the role of the Herald Talthybius in

this play is very different from the typical Euripidean messenger. There is no dramatic messenger speech, no vivid description of violent action, and there is no role playing involving the Herald. Instead, the marks of this play seem to be static intense emotion, and the Herald Talthybius is personally involved in the emotional tension and the action of the play. Thus, for example, he himself washes the body of Astyanax and digs the grave (ll. 1152-54), and he sheds tears of sorrow for Andromache, mother of Astyanax (l. 1131).

Trojan Women: Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Hecuba	436	Poseidon	72	Athena	25	
Role 2				Cassandra	125	Talthybius	124	
Role 3				Andromache	124	Menelaus	49	
Role 4				Helen	62			
Total	1332	Actor 1	436	Actor 2	383	Actor 3	198	Ch 315

***Helen* (412 BC)**

Euripides' *Helen* is set in Egypt, where the 'real' Helen has been living for the duration of the Trojan war. Teucer arrives and tells Helen, who is warding off advances from Theoclymenus, that it is possible that Menelaus has been lost at sea. However, Menelaus promptly arrives, and is surprised to see a woman who looks like Helen emerge from the palace, since he left a phantom Helen in a cave. After a complicated exchange between them, Helen and Menelaus are reunited as husband and wife and then plan their escape. Menelaus, pretending to be a sailor from his own ship, brings news to Theoclymenus of his own supposed death, whereupon Helen persuades Theoclymenus that in order to marry him she must first carry out mourning rites for Menelaus at sea. The

story of their subsequent escape is told by a Messenger who is one of Theoclymenus' servants. Finally, Castor and Pollux appear to appease Theoclymenus for the loss of Helen.

In this play it seems likely that the title role of Helen, with the largest number of lines, is played by Actor 1 and Menelaus by Actor 2. The part of Teucer could also have been portrayed by Actor 2. This arrangement would allow Teucer to foreshadow the appearance of Menelaus and to report the loss at sea of Menelaus and his crew. The part of the First Messenger, an old sailor who brings news to Menelaus of Helen's disappearance from the cave, must be taken by the Third Actor, as there are already two principal actors with speaking parts present on stage.

Helen: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Helen	584	Teucer	57	Portress	28	
Role 2	Castor	39	Menelaus	334	Old Sailor	65	
Role 3			Messenger	101	Theonoe	61	
Role 4			Pollux	39	Theoclym.	136	
Total	Actor 1	623	Actor 2	531	Actor 3	290	Ch 278

The choice of the actor to play the Second Messenger (Theoclymenus' servant) is more interesting. If this part was played by the Second Actor, who also plays Menelaus, then metatheatrical resonance would be generated when he tells of Helen's rescue by Menelaus. The account given by this Messenger is much more dramatic than the earlier speech by the Old Sailor.

The Messenger begins his report by describing how Menelaus had earlier brought news of his own death. Thus we have an account given by the same actor who plays Menelaus, of Menelaus giving a report of his own death (l.1521). Theoclymenus, eager to

know the details of how he has been duped, affords the Messenger the opportunity to develop the story, and thereby exploit the dramatic possibilities of his role. The Messenger then quotes Menelaus as he recounts how he pretended that the shipwrecked Greek crew were strangers. He even mimics Menelaus asking if the crew would be willing to assist in burying Atreus' son! (l.1545) Once more the Messenger quotes Menelaus as he, with sword drawn, urges his men to hoist the bull, which was to have been offered for his own funeral rites, on board ship.(l. 1560) Again the shouts of Menelaus are imitated by the Messenger as the King gives orders to the sea captain and then rushes to the prow of the ship to cut the bull's throat. Menelaus' prayer to Poseidon for safe passage is reported, as is his rallying cry to his men to attack the Egyptians. The Messenger completes his animated account with a report of the bloody battle which ensued and news of the fugitives' successful escape.

***Iphigeneia in Tauris* (ca. 412 BC)**

The pretext of this play is that Orestes has been directed to the land of the Taurians to recover a statue of Artemis which fell out of heaven into the land of the Taurians, and to return it to Athens. He is accompanied in this enterprise by his friend Pylades. The main focus of "live action" in the play is a recognition scene between Orestes and Iphigeneia. However, the greatest dramatic intensity takes place as "reported action" in the messenger speeches.

In this play we might expect that Actor 1 would play the title role of Iphigeneia, since this is the observable pattern in most of Euripides' other extant plays. However,

there are good reasons why this pattern might be reversed in this play, with the leading actor taking on the role of Orestes. Walton[103] emphasises the importance of dramatic action in this play by calling it a "splendid adventure story". The focus of this action is in the person of Orestes, as portrayed in two dramatic messenger speeches.

Both of the messenger speeches in this play report very vivid physical action by Orestes. The first is given by a Herdsman who rushes on stage in a state of amazement, having seen two men wade ashore from the sea, one of whom then made a frenzied attack on his herd of cattle. The fact that the young man was frothing at the mouth, waving his hand as if insane, and calling on Pylades to save him from his Mother's Furies, makes it plain to the audience that the stranger being described is Orestes. The account of Orestes' vicious stabbing of the herd of cows is followed by a vivid report of the herdsmen's attempts to defend themselves from this onslaught. Aided by farmers who have been summoned to help, the herdsmen attack the now calm and composed Orestes with a barrage of sticks and rocks. Orestes, realising that he is surrounded, shouts to Pylades to fight with him to the death. The Herdsman concludes his lively account by describing how the young man and his friend were finally overcome and taken as prisoners to King Thoas.

The prisoners are brought before Iphigeneia, high priestess of Artemis, who is responsible for sacrificing foreigners. In the course of her asking Pylades to take a message to Argos, the true identities of Pylades and Orestes are revealed and they plot their escape. In denouncing Orestes as a matricide, Iphigeneia insists to King Thoas that

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[103]J. M. Walton (*supra* n. 60), 147.

Orestes and the statue of Artemis must be purified at sea. He agrees, facilitating their escape.

The Second messenger, a servant of Thoas, arrives soon afterwards with dramatic news. He gives a vivid account of how a struggle occurred around the penteconter in which Pylades and Orestes were trying to escape, and how Thoas' men tried to prevent Iphigeneia boarding the ship, in spite of their being punched and showered with rocks. In the midst of this struggle, Orestes strode through the waves, hoisted his sister over his shoulder, climbed up the ladder onto the deck and carried Iphigeneia to safety. The Messenger finishes his striking tale by describing how the fugitives' boat is floundering on the rocks, and urges the King to seize the opportunity of capturing both the son and daughter of the King of Argos. However, Athena arrives to calm the situation and permit the escape of Orestes, Iphigeneia, and the Chorus of slaves.

Regarding the distribution of the messenger speeches amongst the three actors, it is clear that the Herdsman cannot be played by the actor who portrays Iphigeneia, since they are on stage together. We can also say with a fair degree of certainty that such a dramatic role would not be awarded to the Third Actor. Hence, it follows that the actor who plays Orestes also portrays the Herdsman, with his vivid account of Orestes' madness. This fits the pattern that we have seen elsewhere, whereby a Messenger "acts out" the principal role of the same actor.

The Second Messenger could be played by any of the three actors, but since he also describes dramatic action by Orestes, and also quotes Orestes' own words, the role would have by far the most poignancy if it were played by the actor who plays Orestes.

Iphigeneia in Tauris: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Orestes	287	Iphigeneia	537	Pylades	69	
Role 2	Herdsman	93	Athena	44	Thoas	69	
Role 3	Messenger	120					
Total	Actor 1	500	Actor 2	581	Actor 3	138	Ch 280

If we now accept that these three roles were played by one actor, then together they constitute a dramatic challenge appropriate to the skills of the leading actor of the play. A comparison of the total lines of speech by each actor (see Appendix) reveals that this combination of roles has slightly fewer lines than Iphigeneia, but on the other hand, Orestes' longest silence on stage (ll. 869-908) is only half as long as Iphigeneia's (ll. 260-341).

I conclude that in this play, the roles offering the greatest challenge to a leading actor are the two messenger speeches, and since they describe dramatic action by Orestes, they increase the importance of his own role to the point where he can become the Protagonist. This is exemplified by the moment reported in the second messenger speech, when Orestes rescues Iphigeneia by throwing her over his left shoulder as he climbs the ladder to safety.

The *Phoenician Women* (ca. 410 BC)

The story concerns the downfall of the House of Thebes following the revelation of Oedipus' true identity and his descent from the throne. His sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, cursed by Oedipus to divide their inheritance by the sword because of their lack of concern for their father, engage in combat over the city.

In this play the roles may be assigned in several different ways. As Mastronarde[104] has indicated, "There is no single narrowly defined event or single person as focus." It is this multiplicity of characters, together with the brevity of their appearances, which weakens the roles and makes the distribution of the parts especially problematical in this drama. Pickard-Cambridge and others, drawing from the scholiasts, have suggested that the same actor played both Iocaste and Antigone, since both have long arias to sing[105]. The scholiast proposes that the appearance of the Paidagogos 15 lines before Antigone (ll. 88-103) served the function of providing time for the actor to change costume. This gives rise to the standard distribution of parts shown in the first table, following Craik[106].

This distribution gives the two Messenger parts, plus Eteocles, Teiresias and Oedipus to one actor (probably the Second Actor). However, Craik also offers another arrangement where the Messenger roles are assigned to two different actors. A problem for all of these part distributions is that they require Antigone to be played by two different actors, which would be unusual, since the only extant fifth century tragedy which absolutely requires the splitting of roles is Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, produced posthumously. In addition, Craik observes that these arrangements still require all three actors to perform singing parts, since Antigone, Oedipus and Creon are all on stage together at the end of the play and all have singing parts.

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[104]D. J. Mastronarde, *Euripides' Phoenissae*, (Cambridge, 1994), 10.

[105]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 147.

[106]E. Craik, *Euripides' Phoenician Women*, (Warminster, 1988), 46.

Standard distribution of roles in The *Phoenician Women* (Craik)
Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Iocaste	281	Eteocles	120	Paidagogos	51	
Role 2	Antigone (1)	210	Teiresias	98	Polyneices	135	
Role 3	Menoeceus	38	Messenger 1	172	Creon	150	
Role 4			Messenger 2	127	Antigone (2)	10	
Role 5			Oedipus	80			
Total	Actor 1	529	Actor 2	597	Actor 3	346	Ch 294

Given the requirement that all three actors should be able to sing in the *Phoenician Women*, there ceases to be a major benefit in having Iocaste and Antigone performed by the same actor. Furthermore if the roles of Iocaste and Antigone are separated, this avoids the problem of a quick change of costume and also avoids having to have Antigone played by two different actors. If the roles of Antigone and Iocaste are separated then an alternative arrangement of parts is possible, as shown in the second table. The basis of this scheme is that the distribution of roles is not based on the requirements of singing ability but on the opportunity afforded a principal actor of the most dramatic parts. He could then select assistants who were capable of singing the necessary arias.

Alternative distribution of roles in The *Phoenician Women*
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Paidagogos	51	Iocaste	281	Antigone	220	
Role 2		Polyneices	135	Creon	150	Eteocles	120	
Role 3		Teiresias	98			Menoeceus	38	
Role 4		Messenger 1	172					
Role 5		Messenger 2	127					
Role 6		Oedipus	80					
Total	1766	Actor 1	663	Actor 2	431	Actor 3	378	Ch 294

The alternative distribution of roles also shown here gives the parts of Iocaste and

Creon (brother and sister) to one actor, and also groups their sad children Antigone and Menoeceus together. It gives the Protagonist six roles, the greatest number of any of the proposed role distributions. However, this is not unreasonable, since each of the characters only appears once. Because of this fact, and the length of the play (at 1766 lines, Euripides' longest), there is never a gap of less than 50 lines between each appearance of the Principal Actor. Hence the very fact of having the Principal Actor play these six parts in succession gives the play a focus which can be accentuated by metatheatrical links between the characters, and in the absence of a strong principal character, the Messenger roles become the dramatic highlights of the play.

The First Messenger (l. 1067) calls on Iocaste at the palace to bring news of the battle being waged over Thebes. He gives a vivid account of the attack of the seven captains against the city, which includes a dramatic rendition of Polyneices' words to his men. The Messenger recounts the fury and noise of the battle as well as the tragic loss of life that resulted from the onslaught. Pressed by Iocaste to give further details of her sons, the Messenger reluctantly tells of Eteocles' challenge to meet his brother in mortal combat to settle finally the dispute over their inheritance. A challenge which Polyneices accepts. The Messenger urges Iocaste to attempt to dissuade them from this potentially disastrous course of action.

When the Second Messenger appears at l. 1331, he enters with news of the saddest kind, bringing word to Creon of the deaths of Eteocles, Polyneices and Iocaste. He gives an eye-witness account of the fight between the brothers, quoting the words of both Polyneices' prayer and Eteocles' prayer for victory. The Messenger vividly

describes the first blow struck by Polyneices when Eteocles lowers his guard, and Eteocles' subsequent and apparently fatal attack on his brother. He recounts how, as Eteocles bends over his brother to plunder his body, Polyneices plunges his sword into his brother's heart.

To his account of the fight between the two princes, the Messenger adds the description of the death of Iocaste, who arrives too late to alter the course of events. We are told that as he lies dying, Eteocles reaches out to his mother but is unable to say anything. Polyneices, however, has his dying words to his mother and sister Antigone quoted by the Messenger. On the death of her sons, Iocaste seizes a sword, and in her grief takes her own life. The unhappy news brought by the Messenger is somewhat tempered by his final words of victory in the battle for Thebes.

If the role of Messenger 1 is played by Actor 1, who also plays Polyneices, this affords the same actor the opportunity to re-enact his earlier role of Polyneices as he rushes on the Fountain Gate (l. 1123) and to quote his own words of encouragement to his troops (l. 1144). In addition, if the role of Messenger 2 is also taken by Actor 1, the actor is able to reprise his role of Polyneices by giving an account of his prayer to Hera (l. 1365) as well as a most dramatic account of his own dying words (l. 1443).

If Actor 1 includes the part of the Paidagogos in his repertoire, an additional opportunity for irony is developed. He tells Antigone that Polyneices is coming, not feebly, like himself, but as a conquering hero (l. 112). Later, (l. 158) Antigone asks the Paidagogos where Polyneices is, which is ironic since he is , in a sense, standing right beside her.

Even although the Paidagogos is a relatively minor role in the play, if he is played by Actor 1, it allows this actor to make an early appearance, as he would otherwise not appear until l. 261. The importance of an early appearance is illustrated by the reputation of the actor Theodorus who apparently insisted on taking the part of the character who appeared first, thinking that he would thereby gain the sympathy of the audience[107]. Although Iocaste is first to appear on stage in the *Phoenissae*, the appearance of Actor 1 as the Paidagogos and then Polyneices, is particularly important in gaining the audience's sympathy for Polyneices over Eteocles.

***Orestes* (408 BC)**

The play opens with Orestes unconscious on a bed, experiencing fits of madness as a consequence of killing his mother. When he has regained his composure, he sets off with Pylades to defend himself in the Assembly. A Messenger, who happens to be Orestes' Paidagogos, brings the news that both Electra and Orestes have been condemned to death by the Argives. Because Menelaus has refused to help defend them, Pylades suggests to Orestes and Electra that they murder Helen, in the hope that this will so please the Argives that they will be pardoned. Helen's screams are heard inside the palace, and a Phrygian slave escapes to tell the Chorus of Helen's murder. Orestes and Electra are about to burn down the palace when Apollo appears, accompanied by Helen who is to be transported to be among the gods. The play ends as he gives Orestes instructions as to how to be purified for the matricide.

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[107]Aristotle, *Politics* vii 1336b28.

It is fairly certain that the title role of Orestes was played by the Principal Actor. If Actor 2 plays Electra then Actor 3 must play Pylades, since all three characters are on stage from lines 1012-1245. It is probable that Actor 2 plays Menelaus, since there are only seven to nine lines of speech by Orestes between Menelaus' exit at line 717 and Pylades' appearance at 725. Although a lightning change of mask and costume might be possible in this short time it may be unnecessary by a judicial distribution of parts. It then follows that the Third Actor also plays Helen, Tyndareus and Apollo, a role distribution which is well established[108].

There are reasonable grounds for suggesting that the Paidagogos is played by Actor 1, although this cannot be proven. This would generate metatheatrical resonance when the Paidagogos re-enacts Orestes' defence in front of the Assembly, including a ten line quote of Orestes' speech.

Conventional distribution of roles in *Orestes* (West)
Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Orestes	450	Electra	370	Helen	37	
Role 2	Paidagogos	96	Menelaus	147	Tyndareos	89	
Role 3			Phrygian	138	Pylades	110	
Role 4					Hermione	10	
Role 5					Apollo	52	
Total	Actor 1	546	Actor 2	655	Actor 3	298	Ch 194

The role of the Phrygian is more problematical. West argued that since Electra and the Phrygian both involve virtuoso singing, they are both played by Actor 2. However, this gives Actor 2 100 more spoken lines than Actor 1, and also raises a technical

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[108]e.g. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), p.147; M. L. West (*supra* n. 1), 38.

difficulty, since after Electra enters the house at line 1352 there are only 15 lines before the Phrygian must appear on the roof in Eastern dress. This is only half the time normally thought to be necessary for a costume change[109], and furthermore, the Phrygian must appear scrambling down from the roof. There is one precedent for such a 'lightning change' in fifth-century tragedy, in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, where an actor has 10 lines of dialogue to change (lines 889-899). However, in this case the other two actors remain on stage, so there is no alternative to a 'lightning change' if the requirements of the plot are to be met. In the *Orestes*, the necessity for such a change rests on the need for virtuoso singing in both the Electra and Phrygian roles, however, this is not a conclusive reason.

In the table below, the alternative scheme is presented with the Phrygian played by Actor 3. In this case, when the Phrygian describes the murder of Helen, there will be a metatheatrical resonance if he imitates her shrieks and mimes the beating of her arm on her bosom, the clutching of her head, the attempt to escape in sandalled hurrying feet, and finally the bending backward of her head by Orestes (ll. 1465-73)

Another modification shown in the table below is the arrangement whereby Hermione is played by Actor 1. This avoids the need for Helen to emerge as Hermione (l. 1313) only 12 lines after she has uttered the death-shrieks of Helen, a metatheatrical resonance that would be unwelcome. On the other hand, as Actor 1, the statement regarding Orestes and Electra (l. 1319) 'you who are my blood and kin' would be a truism, because this actor also plays Orestes. A few lines later, Hermione and Orestes

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[109]M. Damen (*supra* n. 10), 319.

speak one after the other from within the palace. However, these two voices would be readily distinguishable if Hermione was spoken in falsetto.

One more comment can be made about this segment where Helen and Hermione are attacked within the palace. The presence of Electra outside the palace during this time allows Electra to mime the murder going on within in order to heighten the drama. Thus, immediately following Helen's death cries, Electra is saying "Stab her- slay her- destroy", doubtless while imitating the stabbing action with her hands.

Revised distribution of roles in *Orestes*
Summary of spoken lines

		Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1		Orestes	450	Electra	370	Helen	37	
Role 2		Paidagogos	96	Menelaus	147	Tyndareos	89	
Role 3		Hermione	10			Pylades	110	
Role 4						Phrygian	138	
Role 5						Apollo	52	
Total	1693	Actor 1	556	Actor 2	517	Actor 3	426	Ch 194

***Ion* (ca. 408 BC)**

Creusa has been raped by Apollo and subsequently given birth to a son whom she abandoned in the cave where the attack took place. Later Creusa marries Xuthus, a soldier who had served the Athenians well in war. Unfortunately their marriage is childless, and in an attempt to help their situation they decide to visit Delphi. Here they encounter a young man, Ion, who is the temple servant. He has been raised in the temple as his parentage is unknown. Xuthus is informed that Ion is his child, a son he fathered before his marriage to Creusa. When Creusa is made aware of the situation she presumes Apollo has permitted the child she bore him to die while allowing the son of her husband

and another woman to survive and be reared in the temple.

The upsetting discovery of the illegitimate son is further fuelled by the Paidagogos, who suggests that Xuthus has in mind to expel Creusa from her home and hand over the inheritance of the house of Erectheus to Ion (ll. 808-11). Taking advantage of the long-standing close relationship which the Paidagogos has with his mistress, (ll. 730-4), he urges Creusa to murder both her husband and his illegitimate son and actually offers to stab the young man himself. (ll. 844-56)

His mistress, disregarding his admonitions, sings a long lament about her sorrowful plight (ll. 859-973). The Paidagogos, however, persistent and particularly protective of the house of Erectheus, exhorts Creusa once again to act to save her ancestral heritage. Although she is able to resist some of the Paidagogos' ideas and eschews setting fire to Apollo's temple (l. 975) and murdering her husband (l. 977), Creusa does finally submit to an attempt on Ion's life and supplies the poison with which the attempt will be made. The Paidagogos is subsequently tortured to obtain the name of his mistress (l. 1214) and Creusa barely manages to escape Ion's revenge by taking refuge at the altar. When the Priestess gives Ion the box by which he may identify his mother, Creusa recognizes the tokens contained in it and a reconciliation between mother and son is achieved. Athena subsequently appears to convince Ion that Apollo is indeed his father and that all has come to a satisfactory conclusion.

Pickard-Cambridge has proposed that in this play Actor 1 plays Ion, Actor 2 Creusa and Hermes and Actor 3 plays Xuthus, Pythia and Athena[110]. The Paidagogos and

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[110]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 146.

the Servant of Creusa could be played by either Actor 1 or Actor 3. If, however, Actor 1 played both the Paidagogos and the Servant of Creusa,, in addition to his role of Ion, this would afford him dramatic opportunities, not only to instigate the attempted murder of Ion, but also to deliver the news of the failed attack. Earlier in the play Xuthus has acknowledged Ion as his son, but at line 616 Ion expresses his anxiety concerning the possibility of a hostile reception by Creusa. He cautions that women have often taken revenge on their husbands (or on men) by means of an attack by weapons or deadly poison. This claim accurately foreshadows the attempt which the Paidagogos will make on Ion's own life when he suggests to Creusa that she either stab or poison her husband and his new-found son, and acting on her behalf proceeds to introduce a drop of deadly venom into Ion's drink at a banquet. If the role of the Paidagogos is also played by the same actor who plays Ion, the situation takes on an ironic tone.

In addition, if the part of Creusa's servant, who rushes in with the news of the failed murder attempt is also played by Actor 1, then a further opportunity for irony is developed. Delivering a vivid and animated account of the events which took place at the banquet, the Servant quotes the words of the Paidagogos (who was played by the same actor), when he urges that larger drinking cups be brought to replace small ones (ll.1178-1180), presumably in the hopes that when Ion and the other guests were drunk, he could carry out his task successfully. The Servant also gives a dramatic rendition of the agonising death of a dove, which by chance had sipped the wine Ion had emptied out onto the floor from his own bowl when he had observed an inauspicious omen. He continues his vivid account by recounting both Ion's actions and words in response to this attempt

on his life (l.1209). He describes how Ion freed his limbs from his cloak and leapt over the table, demanding to know at whose instigation the Paidagogos had made this attempt on his life (ll.1210-1212). The Servant reports the torturing of the Paidagogos and the revelation that it was Creusa who plotted Ion's death. Finally, he recounts Ion's appeal to the Pythian nobles to have Creusa punished by death. Thus, by having the Servant report on the actions of the two other roles played by the same actor, Euripides can create and exploit a double irony.

Ion: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Ion	467	Hermes	81	Xuthus	73	
Role 2	Paidagogos	134	Creusa	366	Pythia	32	
Role 3	Servant	115			Athena	56	
Total	Actor 1	716	Actor 2	447	Actor 3	161	Ch 298

The *Bacchae* (Posthumous: ca. 406 BC)

The *Bacchae* tells the story of the arrival of Dionysus at Thebes, determined to take revenge on the city which has rejected him. Pentheus, the king, is angry that his mother and aunts have been driven in a frenzy into the mountains to perform Bacchic rites. When Pentheus comes out of his palace, which has been destroyed in an earthquake at the command of Dionysus, he is met by the First Messenger, a herdsman, who tells him of the miraculous and wild activities carried out by the women in the hills. Tricked by Dionysus into accompanying him to spy on the rites, Pentheus in a deranged state, dressed as a woman, departs for the hills. There he is torn limb from limb by his mother and aunts at the bidding of Dionysus, in revenge for Pentheus' refusal to accept Dionysus as a god.

When the Second Messenger arrives at l.1023, bearing news of Pentheus' death, he proceeds to describe for the Chorus the events which led up to his master's death. He quotes Pentheus' fatal words in which he requests a better view of the proceedings and quotes Agave's command to her fellow maenads to uproot the tree on which Pentheus is sitting. The messenger goes on to quote Pentheus' pathetic and unsuccessful appeal to his mother to desist from her frenzied attack. The startlingly graphic slaughter of Pentheus, by the women, is then described by the Messenger, who begins to take his leave at l.1145 before the arrival of Agave.

In his discussion on the possible distribution of roles in the *Bacchae*, Pickard-Cambridge has suggested that the parts of Dionysus and Teiresias were probably assigned to one actor, while the parts of Pentheus and Agave were taken by a second actor. This would leave the Third Actor to play Cadmus, the Servant and the First Messenger. The part of the Second Messenger could have been played by any of the actors[111].

However, if the actor who plays Pentheus and Agave also plays the Second Messenger, an interesting arrangement emerges in which a leading actor, who also plays a messenger role, is permitted to report on his own death in a very dramatic fashion, a pattern we have observed in previous studies. This combination of roles would have a total of 398 spoken lines, 58 more than the actor who plays Dionysus and Teiresias. Based on this factor, and the dramatic combination of parts in the Pentheus-Agave-Messenger role, it seems reasonable to suggest that this role was actually played by the Principal Actor, with Actor 2 taking the parts of Dionysus and Teiresias. Actor 3's role

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[111]A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (*supra* n. 23), 147.

would remain unchanged.

This distribution of roles, in which Actor 1 plays Pentheus, Agave and the Second Messenger, would allow a leading actor an opportunity to demonstrate his skills in a variety of parts. Although the Messenger does not have many lines in which to change into the mask and costume of Agave, since he begins to leave at l.1148 and makes his return at l. 1168, a speedy change would have been possible. This is in keeping with Damen's suggestion that thirty lines was a reasonable period of time in which to make a 'dignified' change of costume and mask[112]. Since the Chorus would perhaps have taken time to re-position themselves for their dance and since Agave is noted to have made her entry in a rush in a frenzied state, a few less lines for the actor's re-appearance would be feasible.

When the Second Messenger recounts the events leading to Pentheus' death at the hands of Agave, the audience could be expected to appreciate the irony of the actor imitating himself both as Agave and as Pentheus.

Bacchae: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Pentheus	183	Dionysus	243	Cadmus	129	
Role 2	Agave	94	Teiresias	97	Servant	17	
Role 3	Messenger 2	121			Messenger 1	109	
Total	Actor 1	398	Actor 2	340	Actor 3	255	Ch 399

***Iphigeneia in Aulis* (Posthumous, ca. 406 BC)**

Iphigeneia in Aulis opens with the Greek fleet becalmed at Aulis on the coast of Boeotia. Unfavourable winds have prevented Agamemnon and his force from sailing to

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[112]M. Damen (*supra* n. 10), 319.

Troy to win back Helen. When Calchas, the seer, is consulted, he advises Agamemnon that Artemis has caused the contrary winds and will only be appeased by the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigeneia. Agamemnon writes to Clytemnestra instructing her to bring Iphigeneia with her to Aulis on the pretext that Achilles intends to marry her. This plan to deceive Clytemnestra into bringing Iphigeneia to the camp was devised by Odysseus without Achilles' knowledge. Agamemnon, although regretting his action, realises that the army will not allow him to back down and jeopardise the successful outcome of the expedition. A Messenger then gives a brief report to the effect that Clytemnestra has arrived. When she meets Achilles she is shocked to discover that he knows nothing of a planned marriage to her daughter. Soon the truth emerges and Iphigeneia bravely determines to go to her death.

In a passage which some scholars have considered as a later addition[113], a Second Messenger arrives to give an account of the miraculous outcome of the sacrifice. He quotes the speech by Iphigeneia where she bravely accepts her destiny in order to save the expedition, and offers her neck voluntarily to the sword. He also describes the mysterious disappearance of Iphigeneia, after the sword blow to the neck was clearly heard, and the miraculous appearance of a slain deer in her place. Agamemnon returns to confirm to Clytemnestra the truth of this report and to announce the fleet's imminent departure for Troy.

It seems fairly clear that the First Actor takes the role of Agamemnon in this play and adds to it the part of Achilles. When Agamemnon exits at l.750 and re-appears at

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[113]J. M. Walton (*supra* n. 60), 164.

l.800 in the role of Achilles, the audience could be expected to respond to his opening words as he demands to know the whereabouts of Agamemnon. As regards the distribution of the other parts, it is suggested that the roles of Menelaus and Clytemnestra could be portrayed by the Third Actor with Actor 2 undertaking the remaining parts of the Old Man, Iphigeneia and both Messengers. If the Second Actor plays both Iphigeneia and the Second Messenger then resonance would be generated when the Messenger quotes her words and mimics her gestures.

Iphigeneia in Aulis: Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Agamemnon	314	Old man	75	Menelaus	103	
Role 2	Achilles	162	Messenger1	26	Clytemnestra	274	
Role 3			Iphigeneia	224			
Role 4			Messenger2	83			
Total	Actor 1	476	Actor 2	408	Actor 3	377	Ch 368

CHAPTER 4: Synthesis

By reviewing the 31 extant tragedies of the fifth century BC, which we have examined in the previous chapter, I hope to show how the figure of the Messenger could have been enhanced by the use of metatheatrical role playing, which arose from the three-actor rule. Of the three great tragedians, Sophocles had the longest active career, spanning sixty years from his first success to *Philoctetes*, the last work produced during his lifetime. Because of his longevity, Sophocles' work spans the whole corpus of Euripides, along with the later work of Aeschylus. In the following analysis, I will compare the styles of Messenger speeches of all the plays of the three tragedians, and I will examine the significance of any possible role playing involving the Messenger in each of these plays.

Aeschylus

In the surviving work of Aeschylus, the distribution of roles seems to be based on the functionality of the characters. For example, in the *Persians*, one actor plays both Atossa and Xerxes, both of whom have important singing roles involving grief-stricken laments. On the other hand, the other actor combines the parts of the Messenger from the battle-field and the Ghost of Darius, both of whom function as different kinds of messenger figures.

The most elaborate examples of messenger speeches in Aeschylus are provided by

his two earliest extant dramas, the *Persians* and *Seven Against Thebes*. Considering that these plays come from the period when tragedies were still dominated by the Chorus, who have nearly 50% of the spoken lines of these two works, the Messenger roles in both plays are very substantial, comprising respectively 19 and 18% of the spoken lines.

The Messenger figures in these two plays give vivid descriptions which allow the audience to conjure up a picture in their minds of the scene being portrayed. The description of the battle of Salamis in *Persians* provides a good example. The Messenger acts like a television cameraman, capturing a series of shots of the battle, sometimes a vast panorama, sometimes an intimate close-up of one aspect of the action[114]. The described scenes are full of action, but the Messenger himself is somewhat detached from the action, separated from it by a 'transparent window'.

In *Seven Against Thebes* the Messenger provides a similar series of pictures, but these almost have the form of 'Hollywood set pieces'. The description of the seven champions involves creating a series of images, each of which displays great spectacle and pageantry. These seven champions do indeed comprise the title 'roles' of the play, so these scenes are really the central focus of the drama.

In *Prometheus Bound*, the 'messenger speech' by Hermes provides another, albeit short illustration of the style of messenger speech which Aeschylus uses. The speech is very vivid, as it describes the predicted attack by an eagle on chained-up Prometheus. However, there is no scope for the actor who plays Hermes to become physically

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[114]J. Barrett, "Narrative and the Messenger in Aeschylus' *Persians*". *AJP* 116, (1995), 539-57.

involved in the presentation of the message. The 'semi-human' figure of Prometheus is a passive agent in the physical attack upon him. The active agent is an eagle, who cannot be effectively mimed by the actor. Hence, it is not easy for the actor to physically convey the actions in his message, and he is largely confined to describing them in words.

Of the remaining four plays by Aeschylus, including the *Oresteia*, only *Agamemnon* has a messenger speech of major significance. In this play the function of the Messenger is to pave the way, as it were, for the return of Agamemnon, the conquering hero of the Trojan war. The messenger gives three speeches whose length seems designed to give an impression of the duration of the war, and whose content seems designed to evoke sympathy for Agamemnon before his brutal murder. If the same actor played the Herald and Agamemnon then the combination of these parts would represent the first role playing resonance in the extant tragedies involving a Messenger figure. However, the order of appearance of the Messenger and other characters played by the same actor has critical importance for the development of metatheatrical resonance.

Taplin has pointed out, that the effect generated by repetition of scenes is only evident in the second occurrence of a situation in the 'mirror scene'[115]. Analogous rules apply to the development of metatheatrical resonance between two roles played by an actor. The resonance is only apparent when the actor plays what might be called the 'mirror role'. In the *Agamemnon*, the Messenger appears first and Agamemnon second, so that the resonance is only generated when Agamemnon appears. Therefore the effect is to

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[115]O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, (London, 1978), 123.

focus attention on Agamemnon as the suffering hero, not on the figure of the Messenger. We will see that in later examples of role playing, where the messenger figure appears after his major character, the effect is quite different.

Sophocles

One of the most consistent characteristics of Sophoclean drama is the use of metatheatrical role playing to heighten the emotional or moral tension between characters in his tragedies. Good examples are provided by Heracles and Deianeira (*Trachiniae*), Orestes and Clytemnestra (*Electra*), Ajax and Teucer (*Ajax*), and Odysseus and the Merchant (*Philoctetes*). Most of Sophocles' extant plays have one or more Messenger figures, but the use of the Messenger in Sophocles is somewhat variable. One of his more common devices is the lying Messenger. This character is very clearly represented by the Paidagogos in *Electra*, the Herald Lichas in *Trachiniae*, and the Merchant in *Philoctetes*.

Several of Sophocles' plays use what we might call a 'Dramatic Messenger' who reports on the death of other characters in a very vivid manner. Examples are the Messengers in *Antigone*, who describe the suicides of Antigone, Haemon and Iocaste; the Second Messenger in *Oedipus the King*, who describes the suicide of Iocaste, as well as the self-mutilation of Oedipus; Hyllus and the Nurse in *Trachiniae*, who describe the death throes of Heracles and the suicide of Deianeira; and finally the Messenger in *Oedipus at Colonus* who describes the mysterious death of Oedipus.

In three of Sophocles' plays there are possible examples of the intensification of the dramatic role of a Messenger by the use of metatheatrical resonance. The first of these is in *Ajax*, where the Messenger reports the words of Calchas, who quotes a

conversation between Ajax and his father, in which Ajax displayed the hubris which occasioned his downfall. Since the Messenger is almost certainly played by the same actor who, less than thirty lines earlier, had played Ajax, the role of the Messenger would be enhanced by his quoting of Ajax's words in the voice of Ajax.

Antigone, Sophocles' first relatively well-dated play, provides a more powerful opportunity for metatheatrical intensification of the role of the Messenger. The speech of the First Messenger gives a vividly dramatic account of the suicides of Antigone and Haemon, which almost seems to demand that the Messenger enact the strangled Antigone with a linen noose around her neck (l. 1222), and the moment when Haemon drove his sword through his side, clasping the dead body of Antigone to himself with his dying gasps (ll. 1235-39). The intensity of the acting would have been heightened by the irony that the actor describing these dramatic suicides was the same actor who had just previously played these characters. Thus, the actor was truly acting out the death of his own characters.

Finally, in Sophocles' posthumous play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, there is even stronger evidence that the same actor played Oedipus and the Messenger, since the other two actors are committed to playing other roles at this point in the play. This messenger speech of some eighty lines presents the dying words of Oedipus to his daughters, and has been described by Norwood as 'Sophocles' greatest achievement', representing the 'culmination in Greek of whatever miracles human language can compass in exciting awe and delight'[116]. This speech would represent a truly memorable culmination to the part

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[116]G. Norwood (*supra* n. 86), 185.

played by the Principal Actor, and the metatheatrical quotation of Oedipus' word and gestures, would, to quote Diego Lanza, almost represent 'la magica apoteosi'[117] of the role of Oedipus.

Euripides

In contrast to Sophocles' varied use of the Messenger figure (sometimes scheming, sometimes active, sometimes using metatheatrical techniques), a survey of the plays of Euripides shows a surprisingly consistent pattern. Of the 17 extant tragedies, only one, the *Trojan Women* has no messenger speech as such. In this play, the Greek Herald, Talthybius, is involved in the drama rather than reporting on it. This play seems to be characterised by intense 'static' emotion, more in the style of Aeschylus than the other Euripidean plays.

The remaining tragedies all have a messenger speech which gives a vivid description of some kind of dramatic action. In eleven cases out of sixteen the messenger speech describes the death or death-throes of a noble figure, most commonly in the form of murder. Three of these murders involve Orestes, who kills Aegisthus and Helen by the sword (in *Electra* and *Orestes* respectively), and who incites a mob to stone Neoptolemus in *Andromache*. In the fourth murder, Creon and his daughter die from a poisoned robe at the hand of Medea.

Three messenger speeches describe dramatic examples of human sacrifice in which the female victim bravely accepts her destiny. In two of these cases, the sacrifice is

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[117]D. Lanza (*supra* n. 9), 114.

demanded by the gods in order to obtain favourable winds. For example, the Messenger in *Iphigeneia in Aulis* describes the dramatic moments when Iphigeneia offers her neck for the sacrifice, but disappears after the sound of the blow is heard, only to be replaced by a fatally-wounded deer. Similarly, in *Hecuba*, Talthybius describes the dramatic moment when Polyxena was sacrificed on the tomb of Achilles. In a dramatic speech, she asks them to release their hold on her before she is sacrificed so that as the daughter of a king she may die free rather than as a slave. Finally, in *Alcestis*, the heroine agreed to die in order that her husband Admetus might enjoy prolonged life. In this play the Maid gives a dramatic messenger speech describing Alcestis' farewells to her children and servants, followed by an account of Alcestis' grief as she flings herself on her bed.

Two plays have very dramatic messenger speeches which describe the frenzied attacks of Heracles on his wife and children, and of Agave on her son Pentheus. On the other hand, the messenger speech in *Hippolytus* describes how the hero dies as a result of the curse from his father. He falls from his chariot as it is attacked by the bull of Poseidon and crushes his head against a rock. Finally, the messenger speech in *Phoenician Women* describes how Eteocles and Polyneices kill one another in single combat.

Of the other five plays with dramatic messenger speeches, those in *Helen* and *Iphigeneia in Tauris* describe dramatic escapes, after the rescues by Menelaus and Orestes respectively. Two others describe heroism in battle, involving a rejuvenated Iolaus in *Children of Heracles* and King Theseus in the *Suppliants*. Finally, the messenger speech in *Ion* describes the attempted murder of *Ion* by poisoning. The speech describes how Ion was warned against drinking a cup of wine by a bad omen, so that he

poured the offering out on the ground. The Messenger then describes the dramatic death-throes of a dove which sipped from a puddle of the poisoned wine on the ground.

Development with Time

Set against the consistently dramatic style of the Euripidean messenger speeches, we do see a development in these speeches over time, from the early examples of his extant plays to the later ones. From about 412 BC onwards, starting with *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, there is a fairly consistent pattern of having two dramatic messenger speeches in each play. In the *Iphigeneia*, the first messenger speech, near the beginning of the play, contains the very vivid account of a frenzied attack by the demented Orestes on a herd of cattle. Believing the herd to be the Erinyes, 'Orestes drew his sword and like a lion, rushed in among the cows, striking them and piercing their ribs'. The Second Messenger speech, at the end of the play, describes the dramatic escape of Orestes and Pylades, including a fist-fight with Thoas' men and a 'tug-of-war' with Iphigeneia in the middle being pulled from either side.

Two other late plays, each with two dramatic messenger speeches are *Phoenissae* and *Bacchae*. In the *Phoenissae*, the first speech describes several of the battle scenes at the gates of Thebes, whereas the second speech describes the single combat of Polyneices and Eteocles in which both die. In *Bacchae*, the first messenger speech, by a Herdsman, describes the Bacchanalian frenzy in which Pentheus' mother, accompanied by a group of ecstatic women, tore a herd of cows to pieces with their bare hands. The Second Messenger speech describes how Pentheus himself was torn apart by his own crazed

mother, in spite of his desperate pleadings for mercy.

The *Orestes* also has two dramatic Messenger speeches. The first is of a verbal rather than physical nature, as the Paidagogos reports on the trial of Orestes before the Assembly, with four speakers, two in favour of Orestes and two against. It culminates in an emotional plea by Orestes to be allowed to end his own life rather than be stoned in the market place. The second speech describes the shrieking of Helen as she is attacked in the palace by Orestes and Pylades.

Looking back over Euripides' earlier dramas, we can attempt to see how the trend to two dramatic messenger speeches developed. In *Alcestis*, his earliest extant play, the messenger role is taken by a Maid, and (with 65 spoken lines) is shorter than the Messenger roles in his subsequent plays. In approximate chronological order these roles have the following lengths: 103, 84, 97, 85, 102, 88, 100, 91, 101, 120, 127, 138, 115, 83, 121 (in plays with two dramatic speeches, only the length of the second is given).

In addition to a well-defined Messenger figure, several of the early plays have another servant or slave who has a speaking part but does not give a dramatic message. One example is the Servant in *Alcestis*, who gives news of the death of her mistress, but in an undramatic way. Similarly, the Maid in *Hecuba* brings news to the tragic queen, only to be told "this is no news to me". On a somewhat more dramatic level, the Paidagogos in *Electra* brings news of a fresh sacrifice on Agamemnon's grave, and the old Sailor in *Helen* brings news of the phantom Helen's disappearance from her cave. A final example of a lesser Messenger figure is the Nurse in *Andromache*, who tells briefly of Hermione's attempt to kill herself. Thus we can see that the development of two very

dramatic messenger speeches in each of the late plays of Euripides was preceded by a gradual development in this direction.

Mimesis

In all of the dramatic messenger speeches of Euripides there are moderate or extensive opportunities for the Messenger to mimic the action which he is reporting. Since most of these speeches describe violent actions, we can summarise the mimetic opportunities into two categories, according to whether the messenger might mimic the actions of an assailant or a victim. Occasionally there are opportunities for both.

The messenger speech in the *Suppliants* provides a good example of the opportunity to mimic the actions of an assailant. This speech describes the pivotal role played by King Theseus in the battle to recover the bodies of the slain champions from Thebes. The Messenger describes how the king charged forwards, 'tossing high his flaming shield', and then a little later 'seized the fearful mace, and sling-wise swung it around, down-mowing and clean-lopping with his club'. All of these actions would invite mimesis by the Messenger as he described them, along with the report of how he (the Messenger) then 'shouted for joy, danced, and clapped my hands' as the Athenian host got the upper hand in the battle.

A very different example of mimetic opportunity comes from the report of Heracles' frenzied killing spree in the *Madness of Heracles*. The Messenger describes how Heracles shot one of his own sons through the heart with his bow, then aimed a bow at his other son, but when that son ran and clasped him by the beard, pleading for his life,

Heracles swung back over his head with a club, bringing it down on his son's head like a forge hammer. His wife then escaped from the room with the third child and barred the door, but Heracles hurled the door-posts down, before slaying both of them with a single arrow. His mad rampage was finally halted when he was struck on the chest by a rock hurled by Athena and collapsed unconscious.

Two other Messenger speeches with great mimetic opportunities are those which report the escapes of Menelaus and Orestes by ship in *Helen* and *Iphigeneia in Tauris* respectively. In the former case the Messenger describes how Menelaus drove the Egyptian sailors off their ship, attacking everywhere with his sword. In the latter play, the Messenger describes how Orestes rescued Iphigeneia from the Taurians, carrying her aboard ship over his shoulder.

A vivid example of an opportunity to mimic the victim in a messenger speech is in the account of the death of the hero in *Hippolytus* (ll. 1200-48). The Messenger describes how the horses of Hippolytus' chariot were filled with wild panic by the bull of Poseidon, and how Hippolytus attempted to control their terror by pulling with all his weight against the reins as they charged about, until he was finally tangled in the reins and dashed against the rocks.

A very different account with mimetic opportunities describes the deaths of Creon and his daughter at the hands of Medea (ll. 1156-1220). The Messenger describes how, on receiving the gifts of crown and robe from Medea, the princess tried them on in front of a mirror, arranging her hair, then rising from her seat, tiptoed down the halls 'with mincing tread of ivory feet'. Next the Messenger describes how she 'suddenly changed colour,

reeling back with trembling limbs, and dropping on a couch so as not to fall on the ground' Then, after temporarily falling into a trance, 'jumping up from her seat she fled, shaking her hair and head this way and that to cast away the crown, but firmly fixed, the gold held fast its grip'.

Role Playing

Because the actor playing a Messenger figure almost invariably has at least one other role in a fifth-century tragedy, this gives the playwright the opportunity to further enhance the Messenger role by metatheatrical resonance. A detailed examination of the distribution of roles in the plays, as discussed in Chapter 3, shows that Euripides enthusiastically took advantage of these opportunities. The typical pattern is that the actor takes on a heroic or aristocratic role, as well as the role of the nameless Messenger. The Messenger then either quotes the noble character's own words or has the opportunity to mimic his actions in a vivid and dramatic style.

In Euripides' earliest extant play (*Alcestis*), the Messenger Figure (in this case the Nurse) appears on stage before the noble character. Because any metatheatrical resonance is only recognisable in a 'mirror role', there is no resonance during the Messenger speech itself, and therefore the metatheatrical opportunities are poorly developed. However, in all of the remaining extant tragedies (excluding *Trojan Women*), the Messenger appears on stage after at least one of the noble characters who may be involved in the resonance. In this case, the resonance is focussed on the figure of the Messenger, because he quotes the noble character. I will now briefly review the possible resonances in eleven of the plays,

in approximate chronological order.

In *Medea*, the Messenger quotes the words of Creon as he holds his dying daughter (ll. 1207-10). Both Creon and the Messenger can be played by Actor 2.

In *Heraclidae*, the Messenger (a servant of Alcmena) can mimic the actions of the rejuvenated Iolaus (ll. 843-62). Both parts can be played by Actor 1.

In *Hippolytus*, the Messenger quotes the words, and can re-enact the actions of Hippolytus in his fatal accident (ll. 1200-48). Both parts can be played by Actor 1.

In *Hecuba*, the Messenger (the Herald, Talthybius) quotes the speech of Polyxena, and can mimic the tearing off of her tunic before her sacrifice (ll. 524-70). Both parts can be played by Actor 2.

In *Andromache*, the Messenger quotes the slander of Orestes against Neoptolemus (ll. 1110-11). Both parts can be played by Actor 1.

In the *Suppliants*, the Messenger quotes the words of Theseus to his men and can mime his actions at the turning point of the battle (ll. 703-19). Both parts can be played by Actor 1.

In the *Madness of Heracles*, the Messenger quotes the words of Heracles and can mime his actions as he kills his family (ll. 931-1007). Both parts can be played by Actor 1.

In *Electra*, the Messenger quotes the words of Orestes to Aegisthus, and can mime Orestes slaying him as he bends to sacrifice (ll. 775-858). Both parts can be played by Actor 2.

In *Helen*, the Messenger quotes the words of Menelaus and can mime his actions during

the fight on the boat (ll. 1530-1615). Both parts can be played by Actor 2.

In *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, the Messenger quotes Iphigeneia's speech before her sacrifice, (ll. 1551-1560). Both parts can be played by Actor 2.

In the *Bacchae*, the Second Messenger reports on the frenzied dismemberment of Pentheus by his own mother. The Messenger quotes the words of Pentheus as he begs his mother Agave to spare him, while she yet tears him limb from limb with her bare hands. Both parts can be played by Actor 1.

At this point it is worth noting another metatheatrical feature of the messenger speeches in three of the above plays; *Medea*, *Andromache*, and *Electra*. In these three plays, the Messenger 'breathes life' into a character who is not otherwise present in the cast list by quoting their words or miming their actions, only in order to then 'kill' that character. The opportunities for mimicking the actions of Creon's daughter in *Medea* have already been discussed; similarly the Messenger in *Andromache* has the opportunity of re-enacting the actions of Neoptolemus as he tries in vain to defend himself against the mob led by Orestes. Finally, the Messenger in *Electra* quotes the words of Aegisthus, and has the opportunity to mimic his actions as he prepares the ritual of sacrifice- a ceremony where he himself will be the offering.

The remaining four plays of Euripides from the later period (412-408 BC) are notable because of the double opportunities they offer for metatheatrical role playing. These are some of the last extant plays staged by Euripides, and it may be significant that they offer the most complex examples of role playing involving the Messenger figure. We

will therefore complete this analysis by examining them in chronological order.

The first type of double resonance involves two different Messengers who both have metatheatrical resonance with the same noble character.

Perhaps the best example is in *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, where two different Messengers report on very dramatic actions by Orestes, with the opportunity to mimic some of those actions, as described above. These messages involve the Taurian herdsman who reports on Orestes' insane attack on his herd of cows, and the Messenger of King Thoas, who reports on the escape of Orestes and Iphigeneia by ship. All three parts can be played by Actor 1, and in this case the two Messenger parts are critical in raising the quality of the role from a deuteragonist-type to one worthy of a protagonist.

A second example of this type, from *Phoenissae*, involves two different Messengers who report on actions and words spoken by Polyneices. All three can be played by Actor 1. The First Messenger reports from the battle at the seven gates of Thebes (ll. 1123-1140), including details of actions by Polyneices in leading one of the attacks. The Second Messenger reports on the single combat between the brothers Polyneices and Eteocles. This speech is one of extreme dramatic tension, as first Polyneices and then Eteocles gain some advantage. The fight then continues evenly for a short time until Eteocles, using a warrior's feint from Thessaly, suddenly surprises Polyneices and plunges his sword through his belly. However, as Eteocles bends over the fatally wounded Polyneices to plunder the body, the latter, with one last effort, plunges his own sword into Eteocles' heart. The Messenger describes how the mother, Iocaste, arrives as Eteocles breathes his last breath. She listens to the dying words of Polyneices

before killing herself by driving her son's sword through her own neck. This scheme, which generates metatheatrical resonance between Polyneices and the Messengers, probably has the effect of gaining some sympathy for Polyneices from the audience, so that they become emotionally involved in the fight, thus further sharpening the tension in the play.

A second type of double metatheatre is seen in Euripides' *Orestes*. In this case two different Messenger figures, one a Paidagogos and the other a Phrygian Slave can have metatheatrical links, each with a separate noble character. Thus the Paidagogos can be involved in role playing of Orestes (Actor 1) and the Phrygian can be involved in role playing of Helen (Actor 3).

A third type of double metatheatre, seen in the *Ion*, is the case where a single Messenger has metatheatrical links with two noble characters. In this play a Servant, as Messenger, quotes the words and actions of Ion after he realises that an attempt has been made to poison him during a thanksgiving feast. He leaps over a table and accosts Creusa's Paidagogos, whom he had seen dispensing the poisoned chalice. The Messenger then quotes the reply of the Paidagogos as he blames his mistress for the attempted crime, even though he himself goaded her into it.

Conclusions

Throughout this analysis a consistent pattern has emerged, initiated in the plays of Sophocles, and developed more fully in Euripides' work. This device, which has been termed metatheatrical resonance, has been identified as a strong possibility in three of

Sophocles' works and in all of Euripides' dramas excepting the *Trojan Women* and *Alcestis*.

Time and again we have identified how a poet's judicious distribution of the parts to his performers could have resulted in an actor who had played a noble or heroic character early in the drama coming back on stage in the role of the Messenger. In this later role, opportunity was provided for the actor to quote vividly the words of his earlier character and often to dramatically re-enact either that same character's death or his involvement in some kind of mortal combat. These metatheatrical linkages appear to have become more prevalent and complex in the last four plays produced in Euripides' lifetime.

When we examine any new point of literary criticism, such as the effect we have termed metatheatrical resonance in this study, we are cautioned to consider carefully whether the evidence supports its existence[118]. We are challenged to show that such a theory is prominently featured in our evidence. On this point, we may, I believe answer yes, since a development has been traced from Sophocles through every one of Euripides' dramas (except for *Trojan Women*) and an increasing use made of the effect in Euripides' last works.

The coherence of the theory may be attested in its consistent appearance in tragedies which by the unspoken rule of three speaking performers could require actors to play several roles in one drama. By the use of mask and full-length costume the actor was empowered to develop a repertoire of parts which crossed barriers both of age and

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[118]O. Taplin (*supra* n. 115), 7.

gender.

The actor's success in creating credible metatheatrical linkages between parts could have been much enhanced by a good voice which was recognised by the audience who were, according to Plutarch[119], well able to recognize a protagonist's voice beneath his mask, whether it be the mask of a hero or a Messenger. We are reminded too by Aristotle[120] that the actors with the good voices were the performers who were winning the prizes. Thus we may presume that a playwright would take every opportunity to increase his own chances of a favourable public response to his work by creating linkages between roles which would accentuate his actors' talents and in turn reflect back their success to the poet himself.

A final condition of acceptance of any new literary theory would take into account whether such a suggestion was purposeful. Various factors would lead us to conclude that the growing importance of the Messenger figure in fifth-century tragic theatre arose as a response to various stimuli. Metatheatrical linkages such as those we have discussed between heroic characters and Messengers would have created additional dramatic exposure for popular actors, increasing both their chance of the prize and at the same time the poet's.

A two-fold goal could have been achieved by this development. Firstly, it would have better accommodated the growing skills and professionalism of the actors by providing them with more challenging and varied assignments. We note especially in the

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[119]Plutarch, *Precepts for Governing the State* 816f.

[120]Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403b31-35.

last four works of Euripides an even more complex development of this metatheatrical linkage.

Secondly, this device seems to have appealed to audiences, who appear to have enjoyed messenger speeches. Therefore, their frequent appearance and increased prominence could have arisen from a "supply and demand" situation. If an audience both enjoyed them and expected to see them, a poet intent on winning a prize would give serious consideration to featuring this role prominently. He might also take advantage of their popularity to try to arrange his actors' parts in such a way as to provide talented actors with opportunities to shine in these especially popular roles. Thus these metatheatrical resonances created between hero and Messenger could have offered to both the tragic actor and his poet exceptional opportunities for success in the dramatic competitions.

In conclusion, therefore, I would argue that Euripides' development of the Messenger speech, both by metatheatrical linkage with major character roles, and by its very dynamic subject matter, can account for the increasing importance of the Messenger Figure in tragic theatre at the end of the fifth century, as demonstrated by Green using fourth-century iconographical evidence.

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APPENDIX

Aeschylus

Possible distribution of roles in *The Persians* (472 BC)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2
150	Atossa	
249		Messenger
514		Messenger (ex)
531	Atossa (ex)	
598	Atossa	
681		Ghost of Darius
842		Darius (ex)
851	Atossa (ex)	
909	Xerxes	
1077	Xerxes (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		
Role 1	Atossa	173	Messenger	206	
Role 2	Xerxes	68	Darius	125	
Total	Actor 1	241	Actor 2	331	Ch 505

Possible distribution of roles in *Seven against Thebes* (467 BC)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3 (later addition?)
1	Eteocles		
39		Messenger scout	
68		Messenger scout (ex)	
77	Eteocles (ex)		
181	Eteocles		
287	Eteocles (ex)		
375	Eteocles	Messenger scout	
652		Messenger scout (ex)	
719	Eteocles (ex)		
793		Messenger scout	
821		Messenger scout (ex)	
957	Antigone	Ismene	
1010			Herald
1059			Herald
1084	Antigone (ex)	Ismene (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Eteocles	268	Messenger	197	Herald	27	
Role 2	Antigone	46	Ismene	23			
Total	Actor 1	314	Actor 2	220	Actor 3	27	Ch 523

Possible distribution of roles in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (463 BC ?)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2
176		Danaus
234	King	
503		Danaus (ex)
523	King (ex)	
600		Danaus
775		Danaus (ex)
824		Herald
911	King	
954		Herald (ex)
974	King (ex)	
980		Danaus
1074		Danaus (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		
Role 1	King	214	Danaus	160	
Role 2			Herald	32	
Total	Actor 1	214	Actor 2	192	Ch 667

Possible distribution of roles in *Agamemnon*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Watchman	
39		Watchman (ex)	
83	Clytemnestra		
503		Herald	
680		Herald	
783		Agamemnon	Cassandra
974	Clytemnestra (ex)	Agamemnon (ex)	
1035	Clytemnestra		
1068	Clytemnestra (ex)		
1330			Cassandra
1343-45		Agamemnon (inside)	
1372	Clytemnestra		
1577			Aegisthus
1673	Clytemnestra		Aegisthus

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Clytemnestra	338	Watchman	39	Cassandra	178	
Role 2			Herald	128	Aegisthus	64	
Role 3			Agamemnon	84			
Total	Actor 1	338	Actor 2	251	Actor 3	242	Ch 842

Possible distribution of roles in *The Libation Bearers*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Orestes		
10		Electra	
584	Orestes (ex)	Electra (ex)	
652	Orestes		
657			Servant, inside
668		Clytemnestra	
718	Orestes (ex)	Clytemnestra (ex)	
732			Nurse
782			Nurse (ex)
838	Aegisthus		
854	Aegisthus (ex)		
869	Aegisthus, inside		
875			Servant
885		Clytemnestra	
887			Servant (ex)
892	Orestes		
897			Pylades
930	Orestes (ex)	Clytemnestra (ex)	Pylades (ex)
972	Orestes		
1062	Orestes (ex)		

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Orestes	331	Electra	170	Nurse	40	
Role 2	Aegisthus	15	Clytemnestra	48	Servant	12	
Role3					Pylades	3	
Total	Actor 1	346	Actor 2	218	Actor 3	55	Ch 457

Possible distribution of roles in *The Eumenides*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Pythia		
64	Pythia (ex)	Apollo	Orestes
94	Clytemnestra's ghost	Apollo (ex)	Orestes (ex)
139	Clytemnestra (ex)		
179		Apollo	
235		Apollo (ex)	Orestes
397	Athena		
489	Athena (ex)		
566	Athena		
573		Apollo	
753		Apollo (ex)	
777			Orestes (ex)
1047	Athena (ex)		

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Pythia	63	Apollo	141	Orestes	103	
Role 2	Clytemnestra	40					
Role 3	Athena	250					
Total	Actor 1	353	Actor 2	141	Actor 3	103	Ch 450

Possible distribution of roles in *Prometheus Bound* (date unknown but probably late)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Prometheus	Power	Hephaestus
81			Hephaestus (ex)
87		Power (ex)	
286		Oceanus	
398		Oceanus (ex)	
561		Io	
886		Io (ex)	
944		Hermes	
1079		Hermes (ex)	
1094	Prometheus (ex)		

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Prometheus	550	Power	48	Hephaestus	39	
Role 2			Oceanus	55			
Role 3			Io	127			
Role 4			Hermes	71			
Total	Actor 1	550	Actor 2	301	Actor 3	39	Ch 203

Sophocles

Possible distribution of roles in *Ajax* (date unknown - early?)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1			Athena
14		Odysseus	
91	Ajax		
117	Ajax (ex)		
134		Odysseus (ex)	Athena (ex)
201		Tecmessa	
339	Ajax (within)		
347	Ajax		
692	Ajax (ex)	Tecmessa (ex)	
719	Messenger		
787		Tecmessa	
802	Messenger (ex)		
813		Tecmessa (ex)	
814	Ajax		
865	Ajax (dies)		
891		Tecmessa	
974	Teucer		
989		Tecmessa (ex)	
1047			Menelaus
1162			Menelaus (ex)
1186	Teucer (ex)		
1222	Teucer		
1225			Agamemnon
1315		Odysseus	
1373			Agamemnon (ex)
1402		Odysseus (ex)	
1421	Teucer (ex)		

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Ajax	287	Odysseus	83	Athena	75	
Role 2	Teucer	214	Tecmessa	209	Menelaus	63	
Role 3	Messenger	67			Agamemnon	61	
Total	Actor 1	568	Actor 2	292	Actor 3	199	Ch 361

Conventional distribution of roles in *Antigone* (442-41 BC)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Antigone	Ismene
99		Antigone (ex)	Ismene (ex)
162	Creon		
223			Guard
326	Creon (ex)		
331?			Guard (ex)
384		Antigone	Guard
387	Creon		
447			Guard (ex)
526			Ismene
580?		Antigone (ex)	Ismene (ex)
625		Haemon	
765		Haemon (ex)	
806		Antigone	
943		Antigone (ex)	
988		Teiresias	
1090		Teiresias (ex)	
1114	Creon (ex)		
1152		1st Messenger	
1183	Eurydice		
1244?	Eurydice (ex)		
1256?	Creon	1st Messenger (ex)	
1282			2nd Messenger
1353	Creon (ex)		2nd Messenger (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Creon	358	Antigone	216	Ismene	60	
Role 2	Eurydice	9	Haemon	65	Guard	112	
Role 3			Teiresias	76	Messenger 2	14	
Role 4			Messenger 1	82			
Total	Actor 1	367	Actor 2	439	Actor 3	186	Ch 361

Alternative distribution of roles in *Antigone* (442-41 BC)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Antigone		Ismene
99	Antigone (ex)		Ismene (ex)
162		Creon	
223			Guard
326		Creon (ex)	
331?			Guard (ex)
384	Antigone		Guard
387		Creon	
447			Guard (ex)
526			Ismene
580?	Antigone (ex)		Ismene (ex)
625	Haemon		
765	Haemon (ex)		
806	Antigone		
943	Antigone (ex)		
988	Teiresias		
1090	Teiresias (ex)		
1114		Creon (ex)	
1152	1st Messenger		
1183			Eurydice
1244?			Eurydice (ex)
1257	1st Messenger (ex)	Creon	
1282	2nd Messenger		
1353	2nd Messenger (ex)	Creon (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Antigone	216	Creon	358	Ismene	60	
Role 2	Haemon	65			Guard	112	
Role 3	Teiresias	76			Eurydice	9	
Role 4	Messenger 1	82					
Role 5	Messenger 2	14					
Total	Actor 1	453	Actor 2	358	Actor 3	181	Ch 361

Possible distribution of roles in *Oedipus the King* (429-25 BC ?)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Oedipus		
14		Priest	
84			Creon
146	Oedipus (ex)		Creon (ex)
150		Priest	
216	Oedipus		
297		Teiresias	
462	Oedipus (ex)	Teiresias (ex)	
512			Creon
532	Oedipus		
634		Iocaste	
678			Creon (ex)
862	Oedipus (ex)	Iocaste (ex)	
911		Iocaste	
924			Messenger 1
950	Oedipus		
1072		Iocaste (ex)	
1118		Herdsman	
1185	Oedipus (ex)	Herdsman (ex?)	Messenger 1 (ex?)
1222		Messenger 2	
1297	Oedipus	Messenger 2 (ex?)	
1416			Creon
1530	Oedipus (ex)		Creon (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Oedipus	668	Priest	52	Creon	130	
Role 2			Teiresias	76	Messenger 1	56	
Role 3			Iocaste	120			
Role 4			Herdsman	27			
Role 5			Messenger 2	70			
Total	Actor 1	668	Actor 2	345	Actor 3	186	Ch 331

Possible distribution of roles in The *Electra* (420 - 410 BC?)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Orestes	Paidagogos
77	Electra (within)		
85	Electra	Orestes (ex)	Paidagogos (ex)
328		Chrysothemis	
471		Chrysothemis (ex)	
515		Clytemnestra	
660			Paidagogos
803		Clytemnestra (ex)	Paidagogos (ex)
871		Chrysothemis	
1059		Chrysothemis (ex)	
1098		Orestes	
1326			Paidagogos
1375		Orestes (ex)	Paidagogos (ex?)
1405-1417		Clytemnestra (within)	
1422		Orestes	
1438		Orestes (ex)	Aegisthus
1465		Orestes	
1510	Electra (ex)	Orestes (ex)	Aegisthus (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Electra	655	Orestes	160	Paidagogos	148	
Role 2			Chrysothemis	156	Aegisthus	34	
Role 3			Clytemnestra	115			
Total	Actor 1	655	Actor 2	431	Actor 3	182	Ch 242

Possible distribution of roles in *Women of Trachis* (date unknown)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Deianeira		Nurse
58		Hyllus	
93		Hyllus (ex)	Nurse (ex?)
178			Messenger
225		Lichas	
334		Lichas (ex)	
391		Lichas	
496	Deianeira (ex)	Lichas (ex)	Messenger (ex)
531	Deianeira		
598		Lichas	
632	Deianeira (ex)	Lichas (ex)	
663	Deianeira		
732		Hyllus	
812	Deianeira (ex)		
820		Hyllus (ex)	
871			Nurse
946			Nurse (ex)
965	Heracles	Hyllus	Old man
1278	Heracles (ex)	Hyllus (ex)	Old man (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Deianeira	372	Hyllus	170	Nurse	77	
Role 2	Heracles	211	Lichas	111	Messenger	73	
Role 3					Old man	15	
Total	Actor 1	583	Actor 2	281	Actor 3	165	Ch 249

Possible distribution of roles in *Philoctetes* (409 BC)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Neoptolemus	Odysseus
134			Odysseus (ex)
220	Philoctetes		
542			Sailor
627			Sailor (ex)
974			Odysseus
1079		Neoptolemus (ex)	Odysseus (ex)
1220	Philoctetes (ex)	Neoptolemus	Odysseus
1262	Philoctetes		Odysseus (ex)
1293			Odysseus
1305			Odysseus (ex)
1408			Heracles
1471	Philoctetes (ex)	Neoptolemus (ex)	Heracles (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Philoctetes	622	Neoptolemus	364	Odysseus	159	
Role 2					Sailor	57	
Role 3					Heracles	39	
Total	Actor 1	622	Actor 2	364	Actor 3	255	Ch 230

Possible distribution of roles in *Oedipus at Colonus*: Flickinger, Pickard Cambridge

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Oedipus	Antigone	
30			Stranger
80			Stranger (ex)
312			Ismene
508			Ismene (ex)
550			Theseus
667			Theseus (ex)
720			
728			Creon
847		Antigone (ex)	
887		Theseus	
1043		Theseus (ex)	Creon (ex)
1098		Antigone	Theseus
1210			Theseus (ex)
1254			Polyneices
1447			Polyneices (ex)
1500			Theseus
1555	Oedipus (ex)	Antigone (ex)	Theseus (ex)
1579	Messenger		
1670	Messenger (ex)	Antigone	Ismene
1751	Theseus		
1779	Theseus (ex)	Antigone (ex)	Ismene (ex)

Alternative distribution of roles in *Oedipus at Colonus*, revised after Ceadel

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3	Actor 4
1	Oedipus		Antigone	
30		Stranger		
80		Stranger (ex)		
312		Ismene		
508		Ismene (ex)		
549		Theseus		
667		Theseus (ex)	Antigone (ex)	
720				Antigone
728			Creon	
847				Antigone (ex)
887		Theseus		
1043		Theseus (ex)	Creon (ex)	
1098		Theseus	Antigone	
1210		Theseus (ex)		
1254		Polyneices		
1447		Polyneices (ex)		
1500		Theseus		
1555	Oedipus (ex)	Theseus (ex)	Antigone (ex)	
1579	Messenger			
1670	Messenger (ex)	Ismene	Antigone	
1736		Ismene (ex)		
1751		Theseus		
1779		Theseus (ex)	Antigone (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		Actor 4
Role 1	Oedipus	607	Stranger	32	Antigone	158	7
Role 2	Messenger	89	Ismene	73	Creon	96	
Role 3			Theseus	186			
Role 4			Polyneices	123			
Total	Actor 1	696	Actor 2	414	Actor 3&4	261	Ch 408

Euripides

Possible distribution of roles in The *Alcestis*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3	Child
1		Apollo		
23	Death			
71		Apollo (ex)		
76	Death (ex)			
134	Maid			
212	Maid (ex)			
243	Alcestis	Admetus		
393	Alcestis (dies)			
395				Eumelus
434	Alcestis (ex)	Admetus (ex)		Eumelus (ex)
476	Heracles			
508		Admetus		
550	Heracles (ex)			
614	Pheres			
733	Pheres (ex)			
746		Admetus (ex)	Servant	
772	Heracles			
860	Heracles (ex)	Admetus	Servant (ex?)	
1007	Heracles			
1153	Heracles (ex)			
1163		Admetus (ex)		

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		Child	
Role 1	Death	28	Apollo	48	Servant	41	Eumelus	20
Role 2	Maid	65	Admetus	338				
Role 3	Alcestis	77						
Role 4	Heracles	182						
Role 5	Pheres	60						
Total	Actor 1	412	Actor 2	386	Actor 3	41	Ch	304

Possible distribution of roles in The *Medea*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Nurse	
48			Paidagogos
95	Medea (off stage)		
110			Paidagogos (ex)
203		Nurse (ex)	
212	Medea (entry)		
270		Creon	
356		Creon (ex)	
446		Jason	
622		Jason (ex)	
662			Aegeus
758			Aegeus (ex)
820		Nurse	
823	Medea (ex)	Nurse (ex)	
843	Medea		
865		Jason	
975		Jason (ex)	
1002			Paidagogos
1020			Paidagogos (ex)
1121		Messenger	
1230		Messenger (ex)	
1250	Medea (ex)		
1292		Jason	
1317	Medea in chariot		
1419	Medea (ex)	Jason (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Medea	561	Nurse	131	Paidagogos	36	
Role 2			Creon	41	Aegeus	45	
Role 3			Jason	201			
Role 4			Messenger	103			
Total	Actor 1	561	Actor 2	476	Actor 3	81	Ch 297

Possible distribution of roles in *Children of Heracles*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Iolaus		
52		Herald (Copreus)	
120			Demophon
287		Herald (ex)	
352			Demophon (ex)
381			Demophon
474		Macaria	
573			Demophon (ex)
601		Macaria (ex)	
630			Servant of Hyllus
646		Alcmena	
699			Servant of Hyllus (ex)
719		Alcmena (ex)	
720			Servant of Hyllus
747	Iolaus (ex)		Servant of Hyllus (ex)
784	Messenger (servant)	Alcmena	
891	Messenger (ex)		
928	Eurystheus		Servant of Hyllus
1052	Eurystheus (ex)		
1054		Alcmena (ex)	Servant of Hyllus (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Iolaus	302	Herald	83	Demophon	103	
Role 2	Messenger	84	Macaria	82	Servant	49	
Role 3	Eurystheus	54	Alcmena	88			
Total	Actor 1	440	Actor 2	253	Actor 3	152	Ch 210

Possible distribution of roles in *Hippolytus*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Aphrodite	
57		Aphrodite (ex)	
58	Hippolytus		Servant
113	Hippolytus (ex)		
120			Servant (ex)
175		Phaedra	Nurse
524			Nurse (ex)
600	Hippolytus		Nurse
668	Hippolytus (ex)		
709			Nurse (ex)
731		Phaedra (ex)	
775		Phaedra (within)	
777-9			Servant (within)
780-1			Servant (within)
786-7			Servant (within)
789		Theseus	
902	Hippolytus		
1089		Theseus (ex)	
1101	Hippolytus (ex)		
1152	Messenger		
1156		Theseus	
1266	Messenger (ex)		
1282			Artemis
1346	Hippolytus		
1439			Artemis (ex)
1466	Hippolytus (ex)	Theseus (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Hippolytus	274	Aphrodite	57	Servant	18	
Role 2	Messenger	97	Phaedra	188	Nurse	219	
Role 3			Theseus	192	Artemis	93	
Total	Actor 1	371	Actor 2	437	Actor 3	330	Ch 328

Possible revised distribution of roles in *Hecuba*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Polydorus' phantom	
54	Hecuba		
58		Polydorus (ex)	
175		Polyxena	
217			Odysseus
377		Polyxena (ex)	Odysseus (ex)
483		Talthybius	
608		Talthybius (ex)	
658		Maid	
701?		Maid (ex)	
724			Agamemnon
904			Agamemnon (ex)
951		Polymestor	
1023	Hecuba (ex)	Polymestor (ex)	
1044	Hecuba		
1055		Polymestor	
1107			Agamemnon
1295	Hecuba (ex)	Polymestor (ex)	Agamemnon (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Hecuba	483	Polydorus	58	Odysseus	57	
Role 2			Polyxena	94	Agamemnon	99	
Role 3			Talthybius	85			
Role 4			Maid	16			
Role 5			Polymestor	170			
Total	Actor 1	483	Actor 2	423	Actor 3	156	Ch 233

Durations of longest silences on stage

Role 1	Hecuba	132	Polydorus	0	Odysseus	56
Role 2			Polyxena	125	Agamemnon	107
Role 3			Talthybius	25		
Role 4			Maid	9?		
Role 5			Polymestor	68		

Possible distribution of roles in The *Andromache*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Andromache		
55			Maid
93			Maid (ex)
146		Hermione	
268		Hermione (ex)	
308			Menelaus
463	Andromache (ex)		Menelaus (ex)
493	Andromache		Menelaus
546		Peleus	
746			Menelaus (ex)
766	Andromache (ex)	Peleus (ex)	
801			Nurse
824		Hermione	
879			Nurse (ex)
881	Orestes		
1008	Orestes (ex)	Hermione (ex)	
1046		Peleus	
1069	Messenger		
1165	Messenger (ex)		
1230			Thetis
1278			Thetis (ex)
1288		Peleus (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Andromache	309	Hermione	147	Maid	21	
Role 2	Orestes	68	Peleus	192	Menelaus	129	
Role 3	Messenger	88			Nurse	38	
Role 4					Thetis	42	
Total	Actor 1	465	Actor 2	339	Actor 3	230	Ch 244

Possible distribution of Roles in *Suppliants*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Adrastus	Aethra
87	Theseus		
364	Theseus (ex)		Aethra (ex)
381	Theseus		
399			Theban Herald
584			Theban Herald (ex)
597	Theseus (ex)		
634	Messenger		
772	Messenger (ex)		
798	Theseus		
954	Theseus (ex)	Adrastus (ex)	
990		Evadne	
1034			Iphis
1071		Evadne (ex)	
1113			Iphis (ex)
1114	Theseus	Adrastus	
1183			Athena
1234	Theseus (ex)	Adrastus (ex)	Athena (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Theseus	326	Adrastus	188	Aethra	86	
Role 2	Messenger	102	Evadne	54	Theban herald	75	
Role 3					Iphis	59	
Role 4					Athena	44	
Total	Actor 1	428	Actor 2	242	Actor 3	264	Ch 267

Possible revised distribution of roles in The *Madness of Heracles*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Amphitryon	Megara
140	Lycus		
335	Lycus (ex)		
338			Megara (ex)
347		Amphitryon (ex)	
451		Amphitryon	Megara
522	Heracles		
636	Heracles (ex)	Amphitryon (ex)	Megara (ex)
700	Lycus	Amphitryon	
725	Lycus (ex)		
733		Amphitryon (ex)	
749	Lycus' voice (inside)		
814		Iris (Above)	Lyssa (above)
873		Iris (ex)	Lyssa (ex)
909	Messenger		
1015	Messenger (ex)		
1031	Heracles (asleep)	Amphitryon	
1087	Heracles (awakes)		
1162			Theseus
1429	Heracles (ex)	Amphitryon (ex)	Theseus (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Lycus	65	Amphitryon	299	Megara	146	
Role 2	Heracles	277	Iris	23	Lyssa	29	
Role 3	Messenger	100			Theseus	90	
Total	Actor 1	442	Actor 2	322	Actor 3	265	Ch 399

Possible distribution of roles in The *Electra*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1			Peasant
54	Electra		
81	Electra (ex)		Peasant (ex)
82		Orestes	
112	Electra		
341			Peasant
400		Orestes (ex)	
431	Electra (ex)		Peasant (ex)
487			Paidagogos
493	Electra		
550		Orestes	
698	Electra (ex)	Orestes (ex)	Paidagogos (ex)
751	Electra		
761		Messenger	
858		Messenger (ex)	
880		Orestes	
987		Orestes (ex)	
988			Clytemnestra
1140			Clytemnestra (ex)
1145	Electra (ex)		
1164			Clytemnestra (inside)
1172	Electra	Orestes	
1232			Castor
1355	Electra (ex)	Orestes (ex)	Castor (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Electra	467	Orestes	220	Peasant	90	
Role 2			Messenger	91	Paidagogos	89	
Role 3					Clytemnestra	75	
Role 4					Castor	86	
Total	Actor 1	467	Actor 2	311	Actor 3	340	Ch 241

Durations of longest silences on stage

Role 1	Electra	91	Orestes	108	Peasant	42
Role 2			Messenger	3	Paidagogos	30
Role 3					Clytemnestra	41
Role 4					Castor	4

Possible distribution of roles in *The Trojan Women*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Hecuba	Poseidon	
48			Athena
97		Poseidon (ex)	Athena (ex)
234			Talthybius
307		Cassandra	
461		Cassandra	Talthybius (ex)
572		Andromache	
708			Talthybius
789		Andromache (ex)	Talthybius (ex)
860			Menelaus
896		Helen	
1059		Helen (ex)	Menelaus (ex)
1122			Talthybius
1155			Talthybius (ex)
1260			Talthybius
1334	Hecuba (ex)		Talthybius (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1		Hecuba	436	Poseidon	72	Athena	25	
Role 2				Cassandra	125	Talthybius	124	
Role 3				Andromache	124	Menelaus	49	
Role 4				Helen	62			
Total	1332	Actor 1	436	Actor 2	383	Actor 3	198	Ch 315

Possible distribution of roles in *Helen*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Helen		
68		Teucer	
163		Teucer (ex)	
385	Helen (ex)	Menelaus	
437			Portress ?
482			Portress (ex)
528	Helen		
597			Old sailor
757			Old sailor (ex)
864			Theonoe
1029			Theonoe (ex)
1106	Helen (ex)		
1164			Theoclymenus
1185	Helen		
1300	Helen (ex)	Menelaus (ex)	Theoclymenus (ex)
1368	Helen		
1389		Menelaus	Theoclymenus
1440			Theoclymenus
1450	Helen (ex)	Menelaus (ex)	
1511		Messenger	Theoclymenus
1618		Messenger (ex)	
1641	Castor	Pollux	
1692	Castor (ex)	Pollux (ex)	Theoclymenus (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Helen	584	Teucer	57	Portress	28	
Role 2	Castor	39	Menelaus	334	Old Sailor	65	
Role 3			Messenger	101	Theonoe	61	
Role 4			Pollux	39	Theoclym.	136	
Total	Actor 1	623	Actor 2	531	Actor 3	290	Ch 278

Durations of longest silences on stage

Role 1	Helen	87	Teucer	7	Portress	2
Role 2	Castor	5	Menelaus	165	Old Sailor	77
Role 3			Messenger	13	Theonoe	103
Role 4			Pollux	5	Theoclym.	94

Possible distribution of roles in *Iphigeneia in Tauris*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Iphigeneia	
66	Orestes	Iphigeneia (ex)	Pylades
122	Orestes (ex)	Iphigeneia	Pylades (ex)
236	Herdsman		
343	Herdsman (ex)		
400		Iphigeneia (ex)	
455	Orestes		Pylades
465		Iphigeneia	
642		Iphigeneia (ex)	
722		Iphigeneia	
1088	Orestes (ex)	Iphigeneia (ex)	Pylades (ex)
1151			Thoas
1155		Iphigeneia	
1235		Iphigeneia (ex)	Thoas (ex)
1283	Messenger		
1306			Thoas
1434		Athena	
1499	Messenger (ex)	Athena (ex)	Thoas (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Orestes	287	Iphigeneia	537	Pylades	69	
Role 2	Herdsman	93	Athena	44	Thoas	69	
Role 3	Messenger	120					
Total	Actor 1	500	Actor 2	581	Actor 3	138	Ch 280

Durations of longest silences on stage

Role 1	Orestes	39	Iphigeneia	81	Pylades	194
Role 2	Herdsman	4	Athena	11	Thoas	94
Role 3	Messenger	<79				

Possible distribution of roles in The *Phoenissae* (Craik)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Iocaste		
88	Iocaste (ex)		Paidagogos
103	Antigone		
201	Antigone (ex)		Paidagogos (ex)
261			Polyneices
301	Iocaste		
446		Eteocles	
624	Iocaste (ex)		
637			Polyneices (ex)
696			Creon
783		Eteocles (ex)	
833	Menoeceus	Teiresias	
959		Teiresias (ex)	
991			Creon (ex)
1019	Menoeceus (ex)		
1067		Messenger 1	
1072	Iocaste		
1270			Antigone (2)
1282	Iocaste (ex)	Messenger 1 (ex)	Antigone (ex)
1310			Creon
1335		Messenger 2	
1479		Messenger 2 (ex)	
1485	Antigone		
1539		Oedipus	
1682			Creon (ex)
1763	Antigone (ex)	Oedipus (ex)	

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Iocaste	281	Eteocles	120	Paidagogos	51		
Role 2	Antigone	210	Teiresias	98	Polyneices	135		
Role 3	Menoeceus	38	Messenger 1	172	Creon	150		
Role 4			Messenger 2	127	Antigone (2)	10		
Role 5			Oedipus	80				
Total	Actor 1	529	Actor 2	597	Actor 3	346	Ch 294	

Alternative distribution of roles in The *Phoenissae*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Iocaste	
88	Paidagogos	Iocaste (ex)	
103			Antigone
201	Paidagogos (ex)		Antigone (ex)
261	Polyneices		
301		Iocaste	
446			Eteocles
624		Iocaste (ex)	
637	Polyneices (ex)		
696		Creon	
783			Eteocles (ex)
833	Teiresias		Menoeceus
959	Teiresias (ex)		
991		Creon (ex)	
1019			Menoeceus (ex)
1067	Messenger 1		
1072		Iocaste	
1270			Antigone
1282	Messenger 1 (ex)	Iocaste (ex)	Antigone (ex)
1310		Creon	
1335	Messenger 2		
1479	Messenger 2 (ex)		
1485			Antigone
1539	Oedipus		
1682		Creon (ex)	
1763	Oedipus (ex)		Antigone (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1		Paidagogos	51	Iocaste	281	Antigone	220	
Role 2		Polyneices	135	Creon	150	Eteocles	120	
Role 3		Teiresias	98			Menoeceus	38	
Role 4		Messenger 1	172					
Role 5		Messenger 2	127					
Role 6		Oedipus	80					
Total	1766	Actor 1	663	Actor 2	431	Actor 3	378	Ch 294

Conventional distribution of roles in *Orestes* (West)

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Orestes	Electra	
71			Helen
125			Helen (ex)
315		Electra (ex)	
356		Menelaus	
470			Tyndareos
629			Tyndareos (ex)
716		Menelaus (ex)	
725			Pylades
806	Orestes (ex)		Pylades (ex)
844		Electra	
852	Paidagogos		
956	Paidagogos (ex)		
1013	Orestes		Pylades
1245	Orestes (ex)		Pylades (ex)
1294			Helen screams (inside)
1301			Helen screams (inside)
1321			Hermione
1345			Hermione (ex)
1347			Hermione (inside)
1348	Orestes (inside)		
1352		Electra (ex)	
1369		Phrygian?	
1503	Orestes		
1526		Phrygian (ex)	
1535	Orestes (ex)		
1554	Orestes	Menelaus	
1625			Apollo
1692	Orestes (ex)	Menelaus (ex)	Apollo (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Orestes	450	Electra	370	Helen	37	
Role 2	Paidagogos	96	Menelaus	147	Tyndareos	89	
Role 3			Phrygian	138	Pylades	110	
Role 4					Hermione	10	
Role 5					Apollo	52	
Total	Actor 1	546	Actor 2	655	Actor 3	298	Ch 194

Alternative distribution of roles in *Orestes*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Orestes	Electra	
71			Helen
125			Helen (ex)
315		Electra (ex)	
356		Menelaus	
470			Tyndareos
629			Tyndareos (ex)
716		Menelaus (ex)	
725			Pylades
806	Orestes (ex)		Pylades (ex)
844		Electra	
852	Paidagogos		
956	Paidagogos (ex)		
1013	Orestes		Pylades
1245	Orestes (ex)		Pylades (ex)
1294			Helen screams (inside)
1301			Helen screams (inside)
1321	Hermione		
1345	Hermione (ex)		
1347	Hermione (inside)		
1348	Orestes (inside)		
1352		Electra (ex)	
1369			Phrygian
1503	Orestes		
1526			Phrygian (ex)
1535	Orestes (ex)		
1554	Orestes	Menelaus	
1625			Apollo
1692	Orestes (ex)	Menelaus (ex)	Apollo (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1		Orestes	450	Electra	370	Helen	37	
Role 2		Paidagogos	96	Menelaus	147	Tyndareos	89	
Role 3		Hermione	10			Pylades	110	
Role 4						Phrygian	138	
Role 5						Apollo	52	
Total	1693	Actor 1	556	Actor 2	517	Actor 3	426	Ch 194

Possible distribution of roles in *Ion*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Hermes?	
81		Hermes (ex)	
82	Ion		
236		Creusa	
400			Xuthus
425			Xuthus (ex)
428		Creusa (ex)	
451	Ion (ex)		
509	Ion		
516			Xuthus
675	Ion (ex)		Xuthus (ex)
724	Paidagogos?	Creusa	
1047	Paidagogos (ex)	Creusa (ex)	
1106	Servant		
1228	Servant (ex)		
1248		Creusa	
1261	Ion		
1320			Pythia
1368			Pythia (ex)
1549			Athena
1622	Ion (ex)	Creusa (ex)	Athena (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

Role 1	Ion	467	Hermes	81	Xuthus	73	
Role 2	Paidagogos	134	Creusa	366	Pythia	32	
Role 3	Servant	115			Athena	56	
Total	Actor 1	716	Actor 2	447	Actor 3	161	Ch 298

Possible distribution of roles in The *Bacchae*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1		Dionysus	
63		Dionysus (ex)	
170		Teiresias	
178			Cadmus
215	Pentheus		
369	Pentheus (ex)	Teiresias (ex)	Cadmus (ex)
432	Pentheus	Dionysus	Servant
517	Pentheus (ex)	Dionysus (ex)	Servant (ex?)
604		Dionysus	
642	Pentheus		
660			Messenger 1
774			Messenger 1 (ex)
846	Pentheus (ex)		
861		Dionysus (ex)	
912		Dionysus	
917	Pentheus		
972	Pentheus (ex)		
976		Dionysus (ex)	
1023	Messenger 2		
1148-52	Messenger 2 (ex)		
1168	Agave		
1216			Cadmus
1329	GAP----------		
1330		Dionysus	
1352		Dionysus (ex)	
1392	Agave (ex)		Cadmus (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Pentheus	183	Dionysus	243	Cadmus	129	
Role 2	Agave	94	Teiresias	97	Servant	17	
Role 3	Messenger 2	121			Messenger 1	109	
Total	Actor 1	398	Actor 2	340	Actor 3	255	Ch 399

Possible distribution of roles in *Iphigeneia in Aulis*

Line	Actor 1	Actor 2	Actor 3
1	Agamemnon	Old Man	
160		Old Man (ex)	
163	Agamemnon (ex)		
302		Old Man	Menelaus
317	Agamemnon		
319		Old Man (ex)	
414		Messenger1	
441		Messenger (ex)	
542	Agamemnon (ex)		Menelaus (ex)
597		Iphigeneia	Clytemnestra
630	Agamemnon		
685		Iphigeneia (ex)	
741			Clytemnestra (ex)
750	Agamemnon (ex)		
800	Achilles		
818			Clytemnestra
863		Old Man	
895		Old Man (ex?)	
1035	Achilles (ex)		Clytemnestra (ex)
1097			Clytemnestra
1105	Agamemnon		
1119		Iphigeneia	
1275	Agamemnon (ex)		
1346	Achilles		
1432	Achilles (ex)		
1465			Clytemnestra (enters tent)
1509		Iphigeneia (ex)	
1531		Messenger2	
1532			Clytemnestra (emerges from tent)
1612		Messenger (ex)	
1620	Agamemnon		
1629	Agamemnon (ex)		Clytemnestra (ex)

Summary of spoken lines

	Actor 1		Actor 2		Actor 3		
Role 1	Agamemnon	314	Old man	75	Menelaus	103	
Role 2	Achilles	162	Messenger1	26	Clytemnestra	274	
Role 3			Iphigeneia	224			
Role 4			Messenger2	83			
Total	Actor 1	476	Actor 2	408	Actor 3	377	Ch 368