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**Heralds** In contrast to a MESSENGER, whose primary function is to report OFF-STAGE events almost always as a disinterested eyewitness, heralds in tragedy convey the words and carry out the commands of a king or other powerful figure to whose service they are connected. Heralds appear as characters in eight extant tragedies. In three of them, the herald is given a name: LICHAS in SOPHOCLES' *WOMEN OF TRACHIS* and TALTHYBIUS in EURIPIDES' *HECUBA* and *Trojan Women*. Unnamed heralds appear in AESCHYLUS' *SEVEN AGAINST THEBES*, *SUPPLIANTS*, and *AGAMEMNON*, and EURIPIDES' *SUPPLIANTS* and *CHILDREN OF HERACLES* (see also UNNAMED CHARACTERS). Three provisos must be mentioned. First, the Herald in *Seven Against Thebes* appears only in the interpolated final scene. Second, the *Children of Heracles* Herald is traditionally known as COPREUS but his name appears nowhere in the tragedy's text and so he is treated as anonymous. Third, other heralds appear as SILENT CHARACTERS in three plays – AESCHYLUS' *EUMENIDES* (566), SOPHOCLES' *AJAX* (1047, 1115), and EURIPIDES' *Suppliants* (381–94) – but as supernumeraries they are not included in this catalogue. Also of note but outside this volume's scope is that AESCHYLUS wrote a SATYR PLAY called *Heralds* (*Kērykes* Radt TrGF vol. 3 F 108–13).

The basic function of a herald, in Greek literature as well as in real life, was to speak in the place of a person of higher rank, especially a monarch but occasionally a political council. Like a Muse-inspired bard, the herald derived his authority from speaking not simply on behalf of the king but, at least under a pretense, with the king's words (Barrett 2002: 58–60). His function also had a religious dimension. It has been argued that the pre-Homeric herald had an association with ritual song and assisted the king in religious ceremony (Mondi 1978). Even though these ritual functions had been lost long before the fifth century, the herald retained his sanctity, as evidenced by his physical inviolability (cf. Eur. *Heracl.* 271–3; Hdt. 7.133–4). Also, he relies upon Hermes as his patron god (Aesch. *Supp.* 920, *Ag.* 514–15; Soph. *Trach.* 620). To judge from historical sources, however, his political function varied through the course of the fifth century. Although a herald could serve merely as a sort of public crier (Hdt. 1.60, 1.196), Herodotus usually portrays heralds as powerful international ambassadors (e.g., 3.121, among very many examples) or as agents working to effect revolts (e.g., 3.61–3, 5.70). Herodotus can even attribute a herald's direct speech to his monarch (e.g., 1.206, 6.97). In all cases, it is clear that the herald is an influential person acting on behalf of some powerful political figure. Herodotus, though, can also represent heralds merely as messengers, the function that becomes the primary heraldic task throughout

Thucydides (e.g., Hdt. 4.167, 7.119; Thuc. 1.29, 2.6).

In tragedy, as in the historical texts, heralds most often wield authority and carry out an assigned task on behalf of an absent monarch. (In *Seven Against Thebes*, the Herald speaks not for a king but for “the people’s council,” 1006.) THESEUS’ address to the silent ATHENIAN Herald in Euripides’ *Suppliants* (381–94) gives us some idea how the playwright imagined a monarch commissioning his herald: he relates a speech to be repeated verbatim and then he authorizes the herald to threaten war if the addressee is uncooperative. Such instructions are played out in the SUPPLIANT plays (Aeschylus’ *Suppliants*, Euripides’ *Suppliants* and *Children of Heracles*), where each Herald is sent by a foreign king to instruct the local king not to assist the suppliants. Similarly, Talthybius in *Hecuba* says he was sent by AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS to fetch HECUBA for POLYXENA’S FUNERAL (508–10). No tragic herald speaks his superior’s words verbatim, but most more or less explicitly rely on their superiors’ authority to justify their commands. The *Children of Heracles* Herald, for example, states, “Eurystheus, lord of Mycenae, sends me to lead these children away” (136–7). The *Agamemnon* Herald is the only one who does not explain why he was sent (see below). Such reliance on the superior’s authority extends to first-person commands. The *Seven Against Thebes* Herald can say “I forbid it” to keep ANTIGONE from trying to bury POLYNEICES (1053; cf. Eur. *Tro.* 1260) when it is clearly the people’s council that has forbidden the burial. The Herald in Euripides’ *Suppliants* also says “I forbid,” but he adds, “I and the whole Theban people” (467), thereby demonstrating the polis’s unity. The Herald in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* can even talk about the DANAÏDS as “my” property, meaning Aegyptus’ property (918). The *Children of Heracles* Herald does the same (266), even though he earlier referred to the CHILDREN as “belonging to Eurystheus” (68, 105). Among all the heralds, only Talthybius of *Trojan Women* and LICHAS of *Women of Trachis* seem to act genuinely on their own initiative: Talthybius by treating the CAPTIVE women SYMPATHETICALLY and advising them (e.g., 732–9; cf. Sullivan 2007) and Lichas by trying to hide Iole’s identity from DEIANEIRA (479–83).

Most of the heralds have dramatic purposes that closely mirror their purposes within the world of the play. They function as the primary on-stage antagonists to the various suppliant groups and their helpers, and (in *Seven Against Thebes*) to Antigone, just as, within the world of the plays, their superiors intend them to oppose the suppliants, their sponsors and Antigone. When Talthybius in *Trojan Women* and Lichas in *Women of Trachis* overstep their superiors’ authority, they likewise take on new dramatic functions. Talthybius becomes the on-stage surrogate for the AUDIENCE’S sympathy toward the captive women. He also ensures that Astyanax receives a proper funeral and thus enables the tragedy’s final LAMENTATION scene. Lichas, after he reveals HERACLES’ true motivation for sacking OECHALIA and capturing Iole, inadvertently becomes the cause of Heracles’ DEATH, as well as the cause of his own death. Taking on additional dramatic functions is a trait shared by the ARGIVE Herald in

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. He serves as an advance party to announce the HOMECOMING of Agamemnon, and functions more like a messenger than an authoritative lieutenant. (Compare Talthybius in *Hecuba*. He arrives with a clear purpose but spends most of his stage time narrating Polyxena's death. His speech is a typical messenger-speech, following the conventions so closely that almost any anonymous soldier witnessing the events could have delivered it. He does not exceed his superior's authority, as the other heralds discussed in this paragraph, but changes dramatic functions.) The *Agamemnon* Herald's dramatic function exceeds the messenger's work that we imagine Agamemnon intended. He delivers his message but, in narrating the sea STORM and the disappearance of MENELAUS, he deepens the atmosphere of doom surrounding Agamemnon's return, even as he seeks to shape the future social MEMORY of the Trojan War and Agamemnon's actions (cf. Scodel 2008). By using a herald instead of a regular messenger, Aeschylus creates an expectation that we are about to hear words based in Agamemnon's authority, but he undercuts that expectation by having the herald say too much and thus exceeding his master's authority.

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**Servants** There are 14 characters in extant tragedy called simply “servant” (*oiketēs*, *therapōn*, or *therapaina*). Two are called *oiketēs*, “household servant.” They both appear in AESCHYLUS’ *CHOEPHOROI*, and may in fact be the same character. When differentiated, the servant at *Cho* . 657 is usually translated DOORMAN. The remaining male servants are called *therapōn*, “manservant” and the female servants are called *therapaina*, “maidservant.” There are three maidservants. They appear in EURIPIDES’ *ALCESTIS*, *ANDROMACHE*, and *HECUBA*. The nine menservants appear in Euripides’ *Alcestis*, *BACCHAE*, *HELEN* (two: one Greek and one EGYPTIAN), *CHILDREN OF HERACLES*, *HIPPOLYTUS*, *ION*, *PHOENICIAN WOMEN*; and SOPHOCLES’ *OEDIPUS TYRANNUS*. These titles are often modern editors’ insertions into the texts for the sake of filling out the *dramatis personae*; readers and audiences should not put too much stock in them. In any case, the servile status of these characters is clear and, like all servile and lower-class characters in tragedy, none of the servants bears a personal name. (The one possible exception among servile characters is CILISSA in *Choephoroi* whose moniker could be considered an ETHNIC epithet or a personal name; see also UNNAMED CHARACTERS.)

Servants in tragedy often function as sources of information for the main characters. Sometimes the information is incidental to the plot but seems primarily expository for the audience’s sake. In *Phoenician Women*, for instance, the Manservant escorts ANTIGONE to where she can observe the invading ARGIVE army and he names each of the captains for her. In *Alcestis*, the Maidservant tells the CHORUS about ALCESTIS’ indoor actions as she prepares for DEATH. In Euripides’ *Ion*, the Manservant plays the MESSENGER’s role in narrating the failed murder plot against ION. Other plays, though, give servants informational roles that are central to the plot. In *Choephoroi*, the second Servant warns CLYTEMNESTRA that ORESTES is in the house. The *Alcestis* Manservant informs HERACLES that Alcestis has died. The *Helen* Greek Manservant tells MENELAUS about the disappearance of the phantom HELEN. Most notably, in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the Manservant’s words bring about the tragedy’s climax, as he proves that OEDIPUS was the murderer of Laius.

Besides these basic plot functions, servants frequently articulate and enact a tragedy’s central moral framework. Excluded from the aristocratic WEALTH and power of the genre’s royal families and therefore excluded from the moral difficulties that descend upon tragic protagonists, servants are free to express clear moral perspectives. To put it another way, tragedies create an ideological world in which power and wealth pose perilous threats to their possessors. Conversely, powerless SLAVES lack clear moral agency of their own insofar as their fortunes are determined solely and wholly by their masters’ actions and afflictions. They accordingly live free from the moral peril inherent in their masters’ situations, and so, since they have no chance to err, the playwrights are able to give them strong moral perspectives, even if such moral clarity usually comes at the price of being unable to act upon it. The moral stances articulated by tragedy’s

servants are consistently aligned with the typical morality of their masters, an upper-class morality that values, among other virtues, SELF-CONTROL, PIETY, JUSTICE, LOYALTY to friends, and hostility to enemies. Tragedy does not offer insight into historical attitudes or values of lower-class or servile inhabitants of Greece (see also CLASS: NOBLE AND COMMON).

A few of the menservants manage to defy the odds and put their upright morals into action. Euripides' *Helen* is paradigmatic. At the end of this play, when Helen and Menelaus have deceived the Egyptian king THEOCLYMENUS and have escaped his court, Theoclymenus begins uttering threats against his PROPHETIC sister, THEONOE, who abetted their escape. Before he can rush into the house to attack her, though, the play's Egyptian Manservant interposes himself (1627). (The manuscript tradition gives this role to the Chorus, but recent editors are certainly right to see a servant's action here.) The argument that follows reverses the roles of master and slave. It highlights the Manservant's bravery in claiming moral superiority over his master, culminating in his claim that Theoclymenus' right to mastery is invalid if he fails to act with piety and justice (1638; see also COURAGE). The subsequent intervention by CASTOR, the *DEUS EX MACHINA*, confirms the Manservant's moral rectitude. Similarly, in *Children of Heracles*, the Manservant attempts to prevent ALCMENE from killing the captured EURYSTHEUS because the ATHENIANS, in whose land Alcmena and her grandchildren are dwelling, do not permit the execution of prisoners of war (961–6). He fails in his attempt, but only because Eurystheus himself prophesies that his corpse, if venerated, will benefit the Athenians (1026–44) and the Athenians, represented by the Chorus, acquiesce in his death (1053–5).

The *Children of Heracles* Manservant's bold words are surprising because he had, moments earlier, commented how "pleasurable" it is "to see an enemy suffer misfortune" (940). It is a line that sets the terms for the debate that follows, whether Eurystheus' current suffering is sufficient for the penalty that justice demands. Setting the moral terms for a scene or even an entire tragedy is a servant's more common ethical function, far more common than taking action. For example, in the prologue of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, the Manservant tries to warn HIPPOLYTUS about the risk he takes in honoring ARTEMIS at the expense of APHRODITE. He quotes proverbial wisdom that it is better to "hate what is arrogant" (93), using a word (*semnos*) whose moral connotations – "arrogant" or "revered"? – are in dispute throughout the play. When Hippolytus ignores his advice, the Manservant PRAYS to Aphrodite to forgive the young man but he also advises her that gods should be wiser than mortals (114–20; see also AGE: OLD AND YOUNG). In his words to both Hippolytus and Aphrodite, he sets the stage for some of the central questions of the play: What rights does one have to exclude oneself from society, its conventions and its religion? What is morality in a world of capricious gods? (See also GODS' ROLE/GODS AND MORTALS.) The articulation of such clear moral frameworks is common among tragedy's servants. To name just three more,

the Manservant in *Phoenician Women* says that the invading Argive army has justice on its side (154–5) and the second Servant in *Choephoroi* likewise says that Clytemnestra's death will be just (884), while the Greek Manservant in *Helen* laments the changeability of the gods and speaks the commonplace that no one can be assured of HAPPINESS (711–19).

Tragedy's Maidservants perform a similar ethical function, but EURIPIDES (the only playwright whose extant plays feature maidservants) uses them not only to create moral frameworks but also to create strong sympathy for the women they serve by demonstrating the women's virtuousness. The Maidservant in *Andromache* is a source of information for the title character when she reports that Menelaus and HERMIONE plan to MURDER ANDROMACHE'S SON by NEOPTOLEMUS (68–9). Just as much dramatic work is done, though, in her first three lines, where she addresses Andromache as "mistress" (*despoina*) because, she says, that was the title she used back in TROY (56–8). Her words allow Andromache to respond by calling the Maidservant "dearest fellow slave" (64). The conversation thus makes vivid the new social order and Andromache's place in it. As a lowly slave, Andromache can now be seen as possessing that clear moral perspective that is characteristic of tragedy's slaves. Like her own former servant, she SUFFERS at the capricious whims of her masters while she herself appears free from all blemish. The Maidservant's presence and dialogue cement the AUDIENCE'S sympathy for Andromache. Similar sympathy-inducing maidservants are found in *Hecuba* and *Alcestis*. The *Hecuba* Maidservant brings in POLYDORUS' corpse and expresses PITY for HECUBA, whom she too addresses as "mistress" (*despoina*, 668). If one of Hecuba's own slaves can look upon her with unquestioning pity, so too should the audience. (On pity as an EMOTION that requires one to assume a superior position to the piteous, see Konstan 2001: 50.) Likewise, the Maidservant in *Alcestis* narrates Alcestis' last moments in her house before she sacrifices herself on behalf of her HUSBAND, ADMETUS. She highlights Alcestis' pious attention to Hestia (162–9) and her concern for the household slaves (192–5; see also SELF-SACRIFICE). Her messenger speech is focalized completely through Alcestis, whom she calls the "best" of women (152; cf. Barrett 2002: 81–3; de Jong 1991: 7; see also NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO GREEK TRAGEDY). Like the other SYMPATHETIC maidservants, she sets the play's moral framework by clearly marking her mistress as virtuous and piteous.

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**Unnamed Characters** Nearly all extant tragedies have at least one unnamed character among their *dramatis personae*. The only exceptions are AESCHYLUS' \**PROMETHEUS BOUND* and EURIPIDES' *TROJAN WOMEN*. In the remaining 30 tragedies, there are approximately 77 characters who lack personal names, a group that has received little scholarly attention for this distinctive feature. (For partial studies, see Capomacchia 1999 and Moreau 1998; Yoon 2012 arrived too late for consideration here.) AESCHYLUS has 12 nameless characters across six plays. SOPHOCLES has 15 across seven plays. EURIPIDES has the highest rate of unnamed characters, with 50 across 17 plays. These numbers do not take the tragic fragments into account. Although the existence of numerous such characters is evident from the fragments, the context is never sufficient to inform the questions posed here. Nor do the numbers include CHORUSES, all of whom are nameless.

The sum total of unnamed characters must remain approximate due to a few uncertain cases. Provisionally included are: the SERVANT introduced at Aesch. *Cho.* 875, who may be the same character as the play's DOORMAN; the MESSENGER in AESCHYLUS' *SEVEN AGAINST THEBES* who may be the same as the SCOUT; the Second Messenger in SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE*, who may be the same as the First Messenger; and the sons of the Seven in EURIPIDES' *SUPPLIANTS*, who perhaps should be considered a secondary Chorus. Five more borderline characters are also included: the NURSE from AESCHYLUS' *CHOEPHOROI*, addressed by the Chorus as CILISSA, whose moniker should perhaps be regarded as an ethnic epithet rather than a personal name, like the PHRYGIAN in EURIPIDES' *ORESTES* (though cf. Garvie 1986 on *Cho.* 730–82); two characters, the HERALD in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* and the Second Messenger in EURIPIDES' *IPHIGENIA AT AULIS*, who appear only in their plays' interpolated final scenes; and the two appearances of the PYTHIA, in AESCHYLUS' *EUMENIDES* and EURIPIDES' *ION*, who in both plays is called merely PRIESTESS, not Pythia and certainly not by a personal name. On the other side, the number does not include the Captain at Aesch. *Ag.* 1651, whose existence is conjectured by some editors, nor SILENT CHARACTERS such as the ATHENIAN herald addressed by THESEUS at Eur. *Suppl.* 381–94 or the Jurors in Aesch. *Eum.* 674–5.

Tragedy's unnamed characters range from major players to bit parts. The largest role is PHAEDRA's Nurse, who has 220 lines in EURIPIDES' *HIPPOLYTUS*. The smallest is the Doorman at Aesch. *Cho.* 657, with just one line. Most nameless characters appear in a single scene or in two consecutive scenes, but a few are present on stage throughout their plays. Among these are not only Phaedra's Nurse, but also the QUEEN in AESCHYLUS' *PERSIANS*, the TUTOR in EURIPIDES' *MEDEA* and most notably the Tutor in SOPHOCLES' *ELECTRA*, who has the play's first lines and is still present 150 lines from the end.

Most anonymous characters inhabit one of a small handful of role types. Their behaviors and identities derive primarily from their social functions or plot functions. There are 26 characters called Messengers (either *angelos* or *exangelos*). They appear in:

Aeschylus' *Persians* and *Seven Against Thebes*; EURIPIDES' *ANDROMACHE*, *BACCHAE* (two messengers), *CHILDREN OF HERACLES*, *ELECTRA*, *HELEN*, *HERACLES*, *Hippolytus*, *Iphigenia at Aulis* (two messengers, the second only in the interpolated ending), *IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURIANS*, *Medea*, *Orestes*, *PHOENICIAN WOMEN* (two messengers), \**RHESUS*, and *Suppliants*; and SOPHOCLES' *AJAX*, *Antigone* (two messengers, possibly the same character), *OEDIPUS AT COLONUS*, *OEDIPUS TYRANNUS* (two messengers), and *WOMEN OF TRACHIS*. Thirteen are called Servants (*therapaina*, *therapōn* or *oiketēs*) in: Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*; EURIPIDES' *ALCESTIS* (two), *Andromache*, *Bacchae*, *Children of Heracles*, *HECUBA*, *Helen* (two), *Hippolytus*, *Ion*, and *Phoenician Women*; and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. There are five Heralds (*kēryx*) (AESCHYLUS' *AGAMEMNON*, *Seven Against Thebes* (only in the interpolated ending) and *SUPPLIANTS*; Euripides' *Children of Heracles* and *Suppliants*), two Tutors (*paidagōgos*) (Euripides' *Medea*; Sophocles' *Electra*), five CHILDREN (*pais*) (Euripides' *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Medea* (two), and *Suppliants*, counting these last, the sons of the Seven, as a single character because they speak with a single voice), four OLD MEN (*presbus* or *presbutēs*) (Euripides' *Electra*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*; Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*), five Nurses (*trophos*) (Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*; Euripides' *Andromache*, *Hippolytus*, *Medea*; Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*), and two GUARDS (*phylax*) (Sophocles' *Antigone*; Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, often called WATCHMAN in English).

In addition to the 62 unnamed characters mentioned in the previous paragraph, the following 15 characters also lack personal names: the CHARIOTEER in Euripides' \**Rhesus*, the Doorman in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, the FARMER in Euripides' *Electra*, the HERDSMAN in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, the Maiden in Euripides' *Children of Heracles*, the MUSE in Euripides' \**Rhesus*, the OLD WOMAN in Euripides' *Helen*, the Phrygian in Euripides' *Orestes*, the PRIEST in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the Priestess (Pythia) in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and in Euripides' *Ion*, the Queen in Aeschylus' *Persians*, the Scouts in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* and in SOPHOCLES' *PHILOCTETES* (see MERCHANT/TRADER), and the ATHENIAN STRANGER in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Titles, of course, are not certain guides to function. For example, the Phrygian in Euripides' *Orestes* serves as a messenger, as does the Greek Servant in Euripides' *Helen*. Still, most of the characters do fall into very recognizable types, which strongly impact their plot functions, to be discussed below. Most of the anonymous characters, as is evident from their character types, are of lowly, especially servile, status, though this is hardly the rule: the Queen in Aeschylus' *Persians*, the Maiden in Euripides' *Children of Heracles* (see also MACARIA), and all tragic children are of aristocratic birth. A few others do not fit neatly into a common role type, but are nonetheless drawn according to the same stock character patterns. Thus the Farmer (*autourgos*) in Euripides' *Electra* is the only farmer in tragedy but shares with the previous character types an identity grounded in his CLASS and PROFESSION. So too the Athenian Stranger, who welcomes OEDIPUS to COLONUS in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (called a *xenos*), the Charioteer in



Euripides' \* *Rhesus* (*hēniochos*), and the Priest in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (*hiereus*). The strangest such character is the Muse, RHESUS' MOTHER, who appears as the *DEA EX MACHINA* at the end of Euripides' \**Rhesus*. Mythical tradition does not otherwise give Rhesus a mother, and there is no indication in the play which of the nine Muses the playwright has selected to be the mother. Rather, she seems to be merely a generic Muse, suitable to sing a beautiful LAMENTATION over her slain son, just as ELECTRA's HUSBAND is a generic farmer.

While most anonymous characters do not have traditional identities, the playwrights do clearly individualize many of them within the limits of their character types. Many of them have clearly defined relationships to other characters and have vivid pasts. For example, the Messenger in Euripides' *Suppliants* is a servant of Capaneus captured during the siege of THEBES but freed by Theseus' army. The Nurse in Euripides' *Medea* belongs to MEDEA and traveled with her from COLCHIS. The Tutor in Sophocles' *Electra* was the only LOYAL servant in AGAMEMNON's house at the time of the latter's death (see also MURDER). Beyond their domestic affiliations, many anonymous characters have strongly delineated personalities. The Watchman in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* comes across as a jubilant yet cautious celebrator of Agamemnon's return. The Nurse in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* provides a few moments of HUMOR at the center of the ORESTEIA TRILOGY when she laments the vanity of her efforts to raise the infant ORESTES. The Charioteer in Euripides' \**Rhesus* is the paradigmatic unreliable narrator. He stumbles so incompetently through his messenger speech that he fails even to narrate the moment of Rhesus' death. Perhaps the best-known example of anonymous CHARACTERIZATION is the Guard in Sophocles' *Antigone* whose almost comic reluctance to face CREON is represented by his mock-heroic conversation with his own soul (227–30). For every lightly sketched character, such as the relatively colorless Messengers of Sophocles' *Ajax* or Euripides' *Andromache*, there is a nameless character who seems a fully rounded creation of the playwright.

Several of the nameless characters have at least some claim to a name beyond their types. This is clearest for the Queen in Aeschylus' *Persians*, whose historical name ATOSSA is never used in the script. A few are individuals with names elsewhere in mythical traditions; their traditional names are sometimes included in the tragic manuscript tradition, but are not used in characters' spoken words (see also TRANSMISSION OF TEXT). The Herald in Euripides' *Children of Heracles* is called Copreus in *Iliad* 15.639; likewise the Maiden in the same play is called Macaria, though probably only in later tradition. (Curiously, MENOECEUS in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* who, like the Maiden in *Children of Heracles*, plays the role of the voluntary SELF-SACRIFICE, is named in the script even though he is probably also a Euripidean creation.) The Cilician Nurse in *Choephoroi*, credited with tending to the infant Orestes, is named Arsinoe in Pindar, *Pyth.* 11.17 and Laodameia in a fragment of Pherecydes. The children in tragedy are nameless, although various authorities tell us that ALCESTIS' son was

Eumelus, one of Medea's sons was Mermeros, ANDROMACHE's son by NEOPTOLEMUS was Molossus, and the sons of the Seven against Thebes included DIOMEDES, Sthenelus, Alcmaeon, Amphilocheus, and Thersandros. Finally, Laius' Servant who carried the infant Oedipus away for exposure and who later acknowledges his action in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is named Euphorbus on a red-figure amphora now in Paris (see also CHILD MURDER).

Anonymous characters exist for some specific reason, either to bring a perspective to the stage that cannot be represented by the traditional characters or to move the plot forward. Moving the plot forward is a less common feature of anonymous characters. The many Messengers report events that take place OFF STAGE (see also NEWS AND RUMOR), but they themselves are not normally participants in the plot's events. That is, they report the actions of the play's protagonist or antagonist or their helpers or their hinderers. They themselves do not typically help or hinder the play's main action. (Messenger speeches, of course, have significant functions beyond the plot, functions well studied but beyond the scope of this brief article. See Barrett 2002; de Jong 1991; Stefanis 1997.) Likewise, non-messengers such as the Old Man in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* and the Watchman in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* do nothing that moves the plays' main action along. They provide information or atmosphere but not action.

Contrast a typical Messenger, such as the one in Aeschylus' *Persians*, to the Messenger in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* who at first only reports the arrangement of the Theban and ARGIVE warriors at the gates of Thebes and the initial fighting that has favored the Thebans. Unlike most Messengers, he remains on stage because JOCASTA requests more information which he is reluctant to provide. By succumbing to her request and telling her of the imminent single combat between ETEOCLES and POLYNEICES (1217–63), he takes on a significant plot function. His words stir Jocasta to action, and she travels to the city walls where she finds her sons in their death throes and slaughters herself over their bodies. Likewise, the Messenger in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* asks why Oedipus is afraid to see Merope, which leads to the revelation that Polybus and Merope were not Oedipus' true parents and thus to the unraveling of the mystery of Laius' murder, to Jocasta's SUICIDE, and to Oedipus' BLINDING. Non-messengers have a higher likelihood of advancing the plot. The Guard in Sophocles' *Antigone* arrests the heroine and thus subjects her to Creon's PUNISHMENT. The Nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus* reveals Phaedra's SECRET LOVE to HIPPOLYTUS. The Priestess in Euripides' *Ion* provides the tokens so that ION and CREUSA recognize one another (see also RECOGNITION). Various other characters act as advisers to their play's protagonist or antagonist. Thus the Servant in Euripides' *Alcestis* causes HERACLES to reconsider his behavior and the Nurse in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* advises DEIANEIRA to send HYLLUS in search of Heracles.

Beyond plot functions, anonymous characters often shape a tragedy's moral

framework, either explicitly through gnomic statements or implicitly through the contrast between the aristocratic characters of traditional myth and the lower-class anonymous characters. Moralizing generalizations are by no means confined to anonymous characters, but they do seem to come more easily to the mouths of the nameless because they exist in a more generic reality than the traditional characters. Several characters reflect on the impermanence of good fortune, including the Messenger in Euripides' *Medea* (1224–30), the Queen in Aeschylus' *Persians* (163–72), the Nurse in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* (943–6), and the Greek Servant in Euripides' *Helen* (726–33). Others praise moderation in human action, including the Second Messenger in Euripides' *Bacchae* (1150–2), the Nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (250–66), and the Nurse in Euripides' *Medea* (119–30). Still others criticize the gods' capriciousness, including the Messenger in Euripides' *Andromache* (1161–5) and the Servant in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (114–20; see also GODS' ROLE/GODS AND MORTALS). Also in a moralistic vein, many nameless characters of humble origins provide virtuous paradigms in contrast to the hubristic aristocratic men and women who inhabit tragedy. Being servile or low born, they are immune from the archaic distrust of WEALTH and power that so infuses Attic tragedy. The clearest example is the Farmer in Euripides' *Electra* whose simple goodness throws into relief both Electra's whining petulance and CLYTEMNESTRA'S REPUTATION for haughtiness (see also *HYBRIS*). Some even go so far as to criticize their betters. HERMIONE'S Nurse in Euripides' *Andromache* criticizes her mistress's excessiveness in attacking Andromache (866–8). The Old Man in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* urges Agamemnon to live up to the responsibilities that come with his aristocratic power (20). The First Messenger in Sophocles' *Antigone* condemns Creon as guilty of the deaths of Antigone and HAEMON. The Scout in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* criticizes Capaneus as a boaster (425–9) and Tydeus as excessively raging (380). In contrast, a handful of anonymous characters construct the tragedy's moral universe through negative examples, highlighting the protagonists' virtuous stances. Thus, the Heralds in Euripides' *Suppliants* and Aeschylus' *Suppliants* take on the evil characteristics of their masters and thereby foreground the goodness of Theseus and PELASGUS, respectively.

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