

# Two Studies on Ezekiel the Tragedian

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## I. Was the *Exagoge* Intended for Production?

**D**ID EZEKIEL write the *Exagoge* for the stage or for readers?<sup>1</sup> Although scholars have their opinions on the question, few have attempted to buttress their views by any examination or analysis.<sup>2</sup> Can any substantial conclusions be reached?

First, can Ezekiel have conceived of a tragedy meant for readers rather than for stage-production? In other words, was there such a genre in the Greek world? The question of *Lesedramen* among the Greeks revolves almost entirely around a passage in Aristotle (*Rhet.* III 12 1413b) in which he includes Chaeremon the tragic poet among *οἱ ἀναγνωστικοί*. These words have often, even to the

<sup>1</sup> I shall also take note of the middle ground between staging and reading, a public recitation. One could even imagine a recitation with different speakers taking the various parts, as in our performances of opera ‘concert-style’ or in presentations of Shaw’s *Don Juan in Hell* from *Man and Superman*. However, the fundamental question raised by the *Exagoge* is whether the play was intended for the stage. The distinction between *Lese-* and *Rezitationsdrama* is of far less importance in this case.

<sup>2</sup> Those who have held, in one degree or another, for a *Lesedrama* include: J. Geffcken, *NJbb* 29 (1912) 602 (“natürlich”); B. A. Müller, *PhilWoch* 54 (1934) 702; O. Weinreich in *Genethliakon W. Schmid* (Stuttgart 1929) 337f; G. Bernhardt, *Grundriss der griechischen Litteratur*<sup>3</sup> II.2 (Halle 1880) 76; G. Dindorf, *Eusebii Caesariensis Opera* I (Leipzig 1867) xxv (with some hesitation); J. Wieneke, *Ezechielis Judaei Poetae Alexandrini Fabulae Quae Inscibitur Exagoge Fragmenta* (Diss. Münster 1931) 118f; B. Snell, *Szenen aus griechischen Dramen* (Berlin 1971) 175f (though he does not exclude the possibility of staging); C. R. Holladay, *SocBiblLit* 1976 *Seminar Papers* (Missoula 1976) 452; O. Zwierlein, *Die Rezitationsdramen Senecas* (Meisenheim am Glan 1966) 138ff; M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture* (New York 1959) 100; H. Lloyd-Jones, *CR* 87 (1973) 193; R. Marcus in L. Finkelstein, *The Jews*<sup>3</sup> (New York 1960) 1099; N. Walter, *Neue Beitr. Ges. Alt. Welt* 1 (1964) 373; G. G. Bilezikian, *The Liberated Gospel* (Grand Rapids 1977) 44. Those who, in one degree or another, think it was intended for staging (or was suitable for staging) include: E. R. Goodenough, *By Light Light* (New Haven 1935) 291; M. Freyhan, *Jahrb-JüdGesLit* 31 (1938) 73; C. Kraus, *RivIC* 96 (1968) 170; G. M. Sifakis, *Studies in the History of Hellenistic Drama* (London 1967) 123; Christ-Schmid-Stählin II.1 608; E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*<sup>4</sup> III (Leipzig 1909) 502 (though he also speaks of readers); I. Trencsényi-Waldapfel, *ActaO* 2 (1952) 162f; Y. Gutman, *The Beginnings of Jewish-Hellenistic Literature* II (Jerusalem 1963) 67–69; A. Kappelmacher, *WS* 44 (1924–25) 83f; D. Bazzell, *Zur Geschichte des historischen Dramas im Altertum* (Zürich 1932) 15; K. Kuiper, *Mnemosyne* n.s. 28 (1900) 270–73; R. Petsch, *NJbbWj* 1 (1925) 806; C. Magnin, *Journal des Savants* (1848) 200; F. Momigliano, *Nuova Rassegna* 1 (1893) 314.

present, been taken to mean that there was a class of tragedians who wrote dramas for reading, not for production.<sup>3</sup> Crusius effectively argued that this was a misunderstanding and that Aristotle's words are a stylistic judgement, *i.e.*, these writers' works are particularly suitable for reading.<sup>4</sup> His position has recently been gaining its deserved acceptance.<sup>5</sup> As Pfeiffer has written,<sup>6</sup> "Aristotle even distinguished certain plays which were particularly suitable for reading. . . . But it is a mistake to think that there were poets who wrote their plays only for reading."<sup>7</sup> To my knowledge, the strongest argument for Crusius' interpretation of Aristotle has not been pointed out; it is from Aristotle himself.<sup>8</sup> At *Poetics* 1450a7ff Aristotle writes that there are six parts to *every* tragedy and one is *ᾠδὴ*. This suggests that Aristotle knew nothing of tragedies not meant for the stage.<sup>9</sup> There is then no evidence from Aristotle that the concept of *Lesedramen* existed in classical antiquity.

Dover has revived the view that Aristophanes circulated for reading an incompletely revised second edition of the *Clouds*. The evidence does not seem to me to support such a conclusion.<sup>10</sup> But even if it did, this would not affect the question whether an ancient Greek dramatist would have *written* a play primarily for readers (after-the-fact revision—and partial at that—might be a different matter). As for Athenaeus' reference to comedies of the fifth-century poets Metagenes and Nicophon, *ἀδίδακτά ἐστι* (270A), we may simply want to dismiss his testimony as unreliable, as Taplin does.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, it is by no means obvious, within the

<sup>3</sup> See F. G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien* (Bonn 1841) 1082ff.

<sup>4</sup> In *Festschrift T. Gomperz* (Vienna 1902) 381–87.

<sup>5</sup> See, *e.g.*, A. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*<sup>2</sup> (ed. T. B. L. Webster, Oxford 1962) 54 and n.3; C. Collard, *JHS* 90 (1970) 22ff.

<sup>6</sup> R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford 1968) 28f.

<sup>7</sup> P. Venini, *Dioniso* n.s. 16 (1953) 14, still believes in Hellenistic dramas for readers only. But see now O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 13 n.1.

<sup>8</sup> I. Bywater, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry* (Oxford 1909) 355f, seemed to realize this, but he never points to the directly relevant text. I follow the generally accepted interpretation of *Poetics* 1450a7ff.

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle's observation at 1450b18ff, that the tragic effect (*δύναμις*) is possible without performance and actors, is further support. The implication is that plays were *intended* to be performed.

<sup>10</sup> K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes, Clouds* (Oxford 1968) lxxx–xcviii. The view espoused by Dover had already been discussed and rejected by Th. Kock in his edition of *Clouds, Ausgewählte Komödien*<sup>4</sup> I (Berlin 1894) 25ff. Athenaeus' remarks at 374A–B suggest that failed plays were routinely revised in the hope of more successful production. One immediately thinks of Euripides' two *Hippolytus* plays. For recent disagreement with Dover, see Taplin (*supra* n.7).

<sup>11</sup> *Supra* n.7. The playwright is Nicophon, not Nicophon as Taplin has it.

context of Athenaeus' observations, that *ἀδίδακτα* means 'not meant for performance' or 'not performable', *i.e.*, intended for reading. The word may mean simply 'unperformed'.

Hellenistic philosophers, especially the Cynics and in particular Diogenes (*TrGF* I no. 88), wrote tragedies. Many authorities hold them to have been pure *Lesedramen*, calculated to spread abroad their philosophical dogma in a pleasing guise.<sup>12</sup> Leaving aside the fact that we are not even certain that Diogenes of Sinope wrote the tragedies attributed to him, we know very little about the plays themselves. The fragments are few and not revealing, nor do we have much external testimony about them. On what basis are we to conclude that they were not intended for production? To my knowledge only one scholar has discussed this question, and it is apparently on his authority that others maintain the *Lesedrama* notion for Diogenes. A. Meineke argued<sup>13</sup> this on the basis of passages in Clement (*Strom.* 2.20) and Julian (7.210c–d, 212a). Yet these passages do no more than vilify the tragedies of Diogenes, and Meineke's arguments amount simply to the assertion that such plays were not worthy of the tragic stage.<sup>14</sup> Thus, while it is possible that the Cynic dramas were not intended for stage performance, no evidence for this has been adduced.

There is some evidence for the recitation of tragedies in the early Empire and many scholars believe that Seneca's plays are *Lese-* or *Rezitationsdramen*,<sup>15</sup> but in the absence of all other evidence it is best not to take this as reflecting the existence of a Hellenistic Greek *Lese-* or *Rezitationsdrama*.

There is then no real evidence for the concept of such dramatic literature in the ancient Greek world nor any substantial evidence for specific examples of such works. Absence of evidence, however, is not proof: there may have been such 'closet-dramas'. And even if there were not, this is not irrefragable evidence for Ezekiel, who could himself have conceived the notion of such a drama. In the case of recitation, he could have been influenced by the familiar role of public recitation in Jewish religious and liturgical services.

<sup>12</sup> See, *e.g.*, A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*<sup>3</sup> (Göttingen 1972) 530f, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*<sup>2</sup> (Bern 1963) 719; K. von Fritz in *OCD*<sup>2</sup> *s.v.* "Diogenes (2)."

<sup>13</sup> *Athenaei Deipnosophistae* IV (Leipzig 1867) 305–07.

<sup>14</sup> Zwielerin (*supra* n.2) 134–37 simply repeats Meineke's views.

<sup>15</sup> See, *e.g.*, Th. Birt, "Was hat Seneca mit seinen Tragödien gewollt?" *NJbb* 27 (1911) 336–64, and Zwielerin (*supra* n.2).

Some scholars believe that IV *Maccabees* was intended for oral recitation on a solemn occasion with religious connections.<sup>16</sup>

One further aspect of the problem must be addressed, namely the Jewish attitude toward the theatre (*i.e.*, the place, not the literature).<sup>17</sup> The Rabbis strongly disapproved of—indeed, utterly scorned—the theatre and considered it a place of idolatry and baseness. Rabbi Nehunia's prayer of thanks is characteristic (Jer. Tal. *Berakhot* 7d), "I thank you, Lord, for giving me my lot among those who sit in the study-halls and synagogues and not among those in the theatres and circuses."<sup>18</sup> Josephus (*AJ* 15.267ff) observes that Herod departed from native customs and introduced foreign practices into Palestine by which he corrupted the old way of life. Among his examples he includes Herod's erection of a theatre and amphitheatre, both alien to Jewish custom. The Rabbis had strong feelings about the theatre both because they saw it as a corrupting influence likely to occupy Jews' attention instead of traditional pursuits and also because the theatre was sometimes used as a place in which to mock the Jews.<sup>19</sup> The intensity of the Rabbis' hostility may however suggest that many Jews did in fact frequent the theatre. If we may credit their testimony, the Church fathers are also witness to this.<sup>20</sup> But, as Feldman has pointed out,<sup>21</sup> the attitude seems to have been quite different in Alexandria, where Philo was a regular spectator at the theatre (*Ebr.* 177).<sup>22</sup> Both Philo and the *Letter of Aristeas* suggest, however, that attendance at the theatre should be selective and guided by moral considerations. *Aristeas* (284) approves attendance at the theatre for performances done with respectability and moderation. Philo attended the performance of tragedies (*Probus* 141) but scorned shows of mimes and dancers and those who watched

<sup>16</sup> See M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (New York 1953) 103ff.

<sup>17</sup> On the general subject, see S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie* III (Leipzig 1912) 116–21; J. Bergmann, *Jüdische Apologetik im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin 1908) 16–20; L. H. Feldman, *Jewish Social Stud.* 22 (1960) 226f. More recently, A. Kasher, *American Journal of Ancient History* 1 (1976) 154ff.

<sup>18</sup> See too, *e.g.*, *Tosefta Avodah Zarah* 2.5, *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* p.385 (Mandelbaum), *Gen. Rab.* 67.3. More references at Krauss (*supra* n.17).

<sup>19</sup> See *Lamentations Rab.* introd. 17 (Buber p.14); H. Box, *Philonis Alexandrini in Flaccum* (London 1939) 92; E. M. Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden 1961) 321f.

<sup>20</sup> Socrates *HE* 7.13 (Migne, *PG* 67.761), Augustine, *Serm.* 9.3 (Migne, *PL* 38.77).

<sup>21</sup> *Supra* n.17: 226.

<sup>22</sup> An inscription from Miletus (*CIJ* II 748) indicates that there was a section in the theatre for practicing Jews; for discussion see E. Gabba, *Iscrizioni greche e latine per lo studio della Bibbia* (Turin 1958) 109f.

them (*Moses* 2.211). Thus there is no evidence to suggest that the Alexandrian Jewish community would have disapproved of a respectable tragedy presented in the theatre.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the practice of dramatizing one's history would not have been alien to Jews within their ritual: consider the first-fruits rite at *Deut.* 26.3ff. Injunctions such as *Exod.* 12.26f, 13.14ff, and *Deut.* 6.20ff might have inspired dramatized rituals at Passover, and consequently one may well believe that the still-preserved custom of Oriental Jewish communities to act out scenes of the Exodus at the Passover meal—a kind of limited dramatic parallel to the *Exagoge*—is of remote antiquity.<sup>24</sup>

Internal evidence (in particular the nature of the Biblical exegesis and the polemic) suggests that Ezekiel intended the *Exagoge* for both a Jewish and non-Jewish audience. This in itself supports the probability of public performance in the theatre, for the poet's expectation of a non-Jewish audience seems more reasonable if there was to be a public production than if the play were intended to circulate in written form.<sup>25</sup> Where and under what conditions would the play have been presented? Wolfson believed<sup>26</sup> that there may have existed a Jewish dramatic organization which sponsored such events.<sup>27</sup> Gutman, who believes that Ezekiel lived in Cyrenaica, thinks that two inscriptions demonstrate the existence of a Jewish amphitheatre in Berenice in the first century B.C. and that it could have been the site of the production of the *Exagoge*.<sup>28</sup> This Jewish amphitheatre in Berenice leads Sifakis to conjecture that there may have been a Jewish theatre in Alexandria.<sup>29</sup> Of the production of drama in an amphitheatre I know no example, though it need not be impossible.<sup>30</sup> But both Gutman and Sifakis inexplicably ignore Caputo's argument<sup>31</sup> that there was no Jewish

<sup>23</sup> In Rome we hear of Jewish actors and poets: Martial 7.82, 11.94. It was through a Jewish actor that Josephus met Poppaea (*Vita* 16). See H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia 1960) 234.

<sup>24</sup> Compare F. Momigliano's view of the production of the *Exagoge* as part of the Passover celebration in Jerusalem (*supra* n.2).

<sup>25</sup> Support for this view can be found in the discussion of the goals of Hellenistic Jewish literature by V. Tcherikover, *Eos* 48.3 (1956) 171ff.

<sup>26</sup> H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* I (Cambridge [Mass.] 1947) 81.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. M. Hengel, *Juden, Griechen und Barbaren* (Stuttgart 1976) 135.

<sup>28</sup> Gutman (*supra* n.2). J. and G. Roux, *REG* 62 (1949) 281–96 (*SEG* XVI 931).

<sup>29</sup> *Supra* n.2.

<sup>30</sup> But the acoustical problems would, it seems, have been serious. At all events, it is hard to be certain exactly what kind of building was implied by the word ἀμφιθέατρον at that time. See S. Applebaum, *Greeks and Jews in Ancient Cyrene* (Jerusalem 1969) 141–43.

<sup>31</sup> G. Caputo in *Anthemon: scritti di archeologia e di antichità classiche in onore di Carlo Anti* (Florence 1955) 283–85, that this was simply the civic amphitheatre.

amphitheatre in Berenice.<sup>32</sup> Thus, there is no certain evidence for the existence of a Jewish amphitheatre or theatre anywhere.<sup>33</sup>

We do not know enough about the procedures leading to the production of a tragedy in the theatre in Hellenistic Egypt to make any substantial hypotheses,<sup>34</sup> but there seems no reason why the *Exagoge* could not have been presented in the municipal theatre of Alexandria. That the Greeks would have been interested in Jewish *exotica* is reasonable speculation.<sup>35</sup> According to Philo (*Moses* 2.41), many non-Jews attended the annual festival on Pharos to celebrate the translation of the Scriptures into Greek. At all events, the possibilities for makeshift accommodations are many. The Romans, we do well to remember, maintained a flourishing drama for about two centuries without a permanent theatre building (55 B.C.).

Only Gutman, Kuiper, and Zwierlein have sought to argue from the play itself.<sup>36</sup> Kuiper asserted that because Ezekiel's style is so different from that of Aristotle's *ἀναγνωστικοί*, he could not have written the play for readers. He also pointed out the implications of verses 101f, an argument to which we shall return. Gutman added that had the *Exagoge* been intended merely for recitation, Ezekiel would have described the plagues and the crossing of the sea in greater detail and first hand.

In contrast, Zwierlein argued that Ezekiel's violations of the unities of time and place so strongly trespass the norms of classical drama that his play could not have been intended for the stage. This, however, is not argument, merely unsubstantiated assertion. The *Exagoge* is not, after all, classical drama, and we should recall the anomalies of the *Eumenides* or *Ajax*, or Aeschylus' *Aitnai*.

<sup>32</sup> Inexplicably because Gutman (68) refers to the Roberts' account of Caputo at *Bull. épigr.* 1955, 278, while Sifakis refers directly to Caputo's article. Applebaum (*supra* n.30) 141 says that Robert believes the building a Jewish amphitheatre. It is not at all clear to me that Robert holds this opinion. See L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris 1940) 34 n.1 and *Bull.épigr.* 1951, 246. Gabba (*supra* n.22) discusses the two inscriptions (62–67) and concludes (especially 64f) that there is no Jewish amphitheatre here.

<sup>33</sup> Applebaum (*supra* n.30) 141 adheres to the view that the building was a Jewish amphitheatre.

<sup>34</sup> We do know that the Dionysiac Artisans existed in Alexandria, but our knowledge of how they functioned is minimal. See P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I (Oxford 1972) 618f. Theocritus 15 offers an interesting and vivid description of a palace performance, though no drama is involved. For a discussion of the staging of dramatic excerpts in Egypt, see E. Turner, *AntCl* 32 (1963) 120ff.

<sup>35</sup> See Trencsényi-Waldapfel (*supra* n.2) 163.

<sup>36</sup> For references see *supra* n.2.

Zwierlein also notes that Ezekiel is tied to the Biblical text and wanted to present his material in dramatic dress “ohne dass er . . . die ordnende Hand bewiese, die ein geschlossenes Ganzes mit lebendiger Bühnenwirkung gestalten könnte”—which I presume Zwierlein would then consider a manifestation of sacrilege. But we do not know enough of Ezekiel to make this sort of judgement. Finally, Zwierlein argues that the bush scene would have been virtually impossible on stage. The miraculous fire was technologically unfeasible, as were the miracles of the rod and the hand: to ask the spectator to tolerate so many dramatic illusions is too much to believe. The argument is faulty on two counts. First, it is hazardous to dogmatize about what stage tricks the Greeks could and could not achieve (consider the ‘earthquakes’ in *Prometheus Bound* and *Bacchae*).<sup>37</sup> Second, and more important, Zwierlein ignores the force of convention. As Hadas once said in a different context, “We cannot realize how large a part convention plays in drama until we come upon the drama of other peoples . . . whose drama employs conventions different from ours.”<sup>38</sup> We do not know what could pass on the Hellenistic stage that would not suit our norms. The very fact that Moses describes what is happening to the bush, his rod, and his hand may have sufficed, whether the audience could actually see these things happening or not. If the audience is conditioned to believe that what an actor on stage describes as happening *is* happening, then so be it.<sup>39</sup> As in modern pantomime, if one adopts the convention, even without the aid of words, one can ‘see’ objects on stage that are not there and events that are not happening.

Wieneke believed that nothing in the play was unstageable, but felt that the necessary scene changes could not have been effected without a curtain, and consequently the play must have been meant for reading.<sup>40</sup> But could there have been a curtain? Gutman assumed that there was. Pickard-Cambridge writes, “That there was a substantial curtain in late Hellenistic and Roman theatres and

<sup>37</sup> “The *skene* cannot crumble . . . but when the chorus say that it does, then, by all the rules of conventional drama, the audience must accept that it does”: so P. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1962) 125, discussing the earthquake in the *Hercules Furens*.

<sup>38</sup> *AJP* 60 (1939) 220.

<sup>39</sup> As Arnott (*supra* n.37) 123 puts it, “A thing can either be described or shown, and there is no need to do both.” Further good observations on the power of convention and the spoken word at A. M. Dale, *WS* 69 (1956) 96–106.

<sup>40</sup> *Supra* n.2. Snell (*supra* n.2) seems in fundamental agreement.

special provision made for it in the stage buildings, admits of no doubt.”<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, to my knowledge there is no evidence for a curtain in the Hellenistic stage.<sup>42</sup> This does not mean that it is impossible for Ezekiel to have had one, but it places the burden of proof on those who would argue that he did. This question, however, may be regarded as immaterial, for the power of convention is such that scene-changes could have been accomplished on a curtainless stage in the full presence of the audience.

Is there anything in the play itself that points decisively in one direction or the other? Probably not. Kuiper argued that verses 101f make no sense unless the play is staged:

*ιδεῖν γὰρ ὄψιν τὴν ἐμὴν ἀμήχανον  
θνητὸν γεγῶτα.*

These verses explain why no divine character steps out on stage and speaks, but only a voice is heard. This has some cogency, yet Ezekiel might have written these verses even in a text meant only for recitation or reading. For without such a disclaimer the reader might assume that God does appear visibly to Moses, an inference which would have antagonized many Jews and misled non-Jews.

I would offer here a last suggestion. The language of the text may occasionally indicate actual production. At 243–46 the scouts tell Moses of their discovery of Elim:

*κράτιστε Μωσῆ, πρό(σ)σχες, οἶον εὔρομεν  
τόπον πρὸς αὐτῇ τῆδέ γ' εὐαεῖ νάπη.  
ἔστιν γάρ, ὡς που καὶ σὺ τυγχάνεις ὁρῶν,  
ἐκεῖ*

The abundance of local adverbs and pronouns is suited for the stage, and *ἐκεῖ* certainly suggests that the scout points. Further, *ὡς που καὶ σὺ τυγχάνεις ὁρῶν* seems little more than ‘not far off’. It takes on point if the address is also to the audience whose attention is now directed to a different part of the stage. When the daughters of Raguel enter, Moses declares *ὁρῶ δὲ ταύτας ἐπὶ τὰ παρθένους τινάς* (59). The sentence could do readily without *ταύτας* or with some participle in its place. Its presence would seem to suggest that the audience can also see them entering. A similar argument might be brought to bear on the pronouns at 67 (*τῶδε*),

<sup>41</sup> *The Theatre of Dionysus at Athens* (Oxford 1946) 130 n.1.

<sup>42</sup> See the discussion by A. Müller, *Die griechischen Bühnenalterthümer, Lehrbuch der griechischen Antiquitäten* III.2 (Freiburg 1886) 168–70, which remains valid.

90 (τόδε), and 120 (τοῦτο), though perhaps less cogently. Granted, nothing precludes the possibility that Ezekiel so wrote even for a reading (or listening) audience. But one would wonder why: there was no reason for a poet whose intention and practice it was to write for a reading (listening) audience to maintain and incorporate stylistic features especially suitable for visual presentation.

Nothing in this question is decisive, but since the norm of dramatic composition was for stage production and no cogent arguments to the contrary have been adduced for the *Exagoge*, we will do well to assume for the present that the play was intended for the stage.<sup>43</sup>

## II. Moses and *Oedipus Coloneus*

Ezekiel's *Exagoge* displays a wide familiarity with the tragedians of the fifth century and a "full knowledge of tragic . . . usage."<sup>44</sup> In his commentary on the play, Wieneke has pointed out many echoes of Sophocles, including of *Oedipus Coloneus*.<sup>45</sup> Here I wish to remark further parallels and to discuss why the OC may have made a significant impression on Ezekiel.

Throughout the *Exagoge* one detects parallels to the OC. At the outset Moses is introduced as a murderer in flight, arriving in a strange land. So too Oedipus arriving in Athens at the start of the OC (*cf.*, *e.g.*, *πλανῶμαι* of Moses [58], *πλανάτας* of Oedipus [124]). The description of the utopia of Elim (243ff) shows some resemblance to the idyllic picture of Colonus (668–93). In the account of the Passover celebration (152ff, especially 175ff) there are similarities to the instructions for the purification ritual at OC 469ff: the use of *ὅταν* with the subjunctive to denote the completion of one stage of the ritual (*Exag.* 184, OC 471, 482); the abundance of participles delineating the actions of the performers (*Exag.* 172, 175, 179, 180, 182, 185, OC 470, 475, 477, 484); the final *λαβών* at both *Exag.* 175 and OC 475, in the one of taking a lamb (or cow), in the other of taking the wool of a lamb; the infinitives for imperatives (*Exag.* 186, OC 477, 481, 484); the order to take an

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of theatre production as late as the second century A.D., see M. Kokolakis, *Platon* 12 (1960) 67–106.

<sup>44</sup> Fraser (*supra* n.34) 708.

<sup>45</sup> Wieneke (*supra* n.2) *passim*. Needless to say, certainty in this kind of study is rendered all the more difficult by the loss of most Greek tragedy.

item in one's hands (*Exag.* 185, *OC* 470), followed by an aorist form of *θιγγάνω*.

The flashes of lightning near the end of *OC* (1460f, 1466) call to mind *Exag.* 234f, ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ δὲ φέγγος ὡς πυρὸς μέγα ὄφθη τι ἡμῖν. The phrase ἀελίου δυσμᾶν occurs at *OC* 1245 shortly after Sophocles describes a man beset by troubles as smitten by waves; Ezekiel writes ἥλιος δυσμαῖς προσῆν (217) shortly before reporting the drowning of the Egyptians.

The scene of the burning bush in particular contains many possible echoes of the *OC*. I note several parallels (including some which in and of themselves could be coincidence): *τρίτος* at verse end for the third of a series (*Exag.* 105, *OC* 8); the call to deity to be ἴλαος (*Exag.* 124, *OC* 1480, both preceded by *ἰδοῦ*);<sup>46</sup> the command ἐπίσχες (*Exag.* 96, *OC* 856);<sup>47</sup> the imperative σήμαινε (*Exag.* 109, *OC* 51); *πίστις*, *ἀπιστία*, and *βλαστάνω* occur in one short passage (*Exag.* 91–95) and also in the single verse *OC* 611; *βασιλέως ἐναντίον* (*Exag.* 115) and *τῶνδ' ἐναντίον* (*OC* 1002), both in the context of speaking before other people—there is not a single example in Aeschylus or Euripides of *ἐναντίον* immediately preceded by the genitive at verse end, as here in both *OC* and *Exagoge*.

God cheers Moses, *θάρασησον ὦ παῖ* (100). Two verses in the *OC* (1104, 1112) have the identical line-structure, ὦ παῖ preceded by an initial trisyllabic imperative, a pattern which occurs but once in Aeschylus (*Cho.* 896) and never in Euripides.<sup>48</sup> The divine word to men is τὸ θεῖον . . . στόμα at *OC* 603, ὁ . . . θεῖος λόγος at *Exag.* 99. In each case of trespass (*Exag.* 96f, *OC* 36f) the imperative (“go away,” “do not approach”) is accompanied by a *πρίν* clause (in different ways since the one imperative is positive, the other negative).

Why would Ezekiel have seen special significance in the *OC*?<sup>49</sup> I suggest that he may have perceived in Sophocles' play a kind of

<sup>46</sup> But *cf.* Eur. *IT* 271; Nauck<sup>2</sup> *adesp.* 164; *UPZ* I 81 col. ii.19–20.

<sup>47</sup> But *cf.* Aesch. *Cho.* 896, *PV* 697, and Euripides *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> Snell, in his edition of the fragments of the *Exagoge* (*TrGF* I no.128), has noticed the very same phrase in a dramatic fragment at *P.Oxy.* XXXVI 2746.1. Whether this is influence or coincidence is impossible to say. Indeed, we are not even certain of the date of the original. The brief passage does not seem to show any other affinities with the *Exagoge*.

<sup>49</sup> I leave aside such trivial considerations as that Ezekiel could have been attracted to the *OC* by the pejorative comments on the perverse *mores* of the Egyptians (337ff) or that the instruction to pour the libation while facing east (477) may have interested him because of the Jewish custom to face east (*i.e.*, toward Jerusalem—which is indeed almost directly east of Alexandria) during liturgical ritual.

Greek paradigm for the Biblical events in which he was interested. The mysterious sense of intimacy between Oedipus and the divine forces, the picture of a man who is in some sense chosen by deity, a theme that is nowhere so dominant and moving in extant Greek tragedy as it is in the OC, might have suggested a sort of relationship like that between Moses and God depicted in the Bible. Both Moses and Oedipus are murderers in exile who are destined to bring benefits to a particular nation, to the Jews who will be liberated from slavery and to the Athenians who shall not fall before their Theban enemies (OC 1533ff). In each case, exile from one's native land is under divine guidance (OC 98) and will ultimately bring catastrophe on the erstwhile homeland.

In the opening scene of the OC Ezekiel would have seen a doublet of Moses' encounter at the bush. Almost immediately after Oedipus seats himself on a rock, a stranger rushes up and orders him to leave, for he is treading on ground holy and inviolate,

*πρὶν νῦν τὰ πλείον' ἱστορεῖν, ἐκ τῆσδ' ἔδρας  
ἔξελθ' · ἔχεις γὰρ χῶρον οὐχ ἄγνόν πατεῖν.*

Here are God's words to Moses when the latter approaches the bush (*Exodus* 3.5): *μη ἐγγίσῃς ὧδε· λῦσαι τὸ ὑπόδημα ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν σου· ὁ γὰρ τόπος, ἐν ᾧ σὺ ἕστηκας, γῆ ἁγία ἐστίν.* The sacred area into which Oedipus stumbles is *ἄβατος* (167, cf. 675). The bush at *Exodus* 3.2 is *βάτος*. Whether the translators of the Bible deliberately chose *βάτος* as a euphemistic designation for that which was not *βατός* we do not know. But Ezekiel would have been sensitive to the interesting choice of words here in the Septuagint and the OC.<sup>50</sup>

Colonus' sacred area is inhabited by *ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς Τιτὰν Προμηθεύς* (55f), the bush in Sinai is kindled by a miraculous fire. The Eumenides who occupy the grove show traits akin to those usual in the Jewish view of deity: these are gods whose name one is reluctant to recite (*ᾧς τρέμομεν λέγειν*, 128) and whose shrines people pass without looking (131), just as Moses in the Septuagint turns his head away to avoid looking (*Exodus* 3.6). In the great hymn to Athens the olive is described in miraculous terms, such as Ezekiel found in *Exodus'* description of the burning bush. It is called *φύτευμ' ἀχείρωτον αὐτοποιόν* (698), adjectives which suit the

<sup>50</sup> Philo plays on *βάτος/βατός* at *Fuga* 161–62 and perhaps at *QE* 2.45. Similarly, Josephus may be playing on the words at *AJ* 2.265–66. Christian writers also did. See Lampe s.v. *ἄβατος*.

miraculous bush.<sup>51</sup> Sophocles uses a participle of *βλαστάνω* to describe the olive (697), as Ezekiel does for the bush (93).

Ezekiel must have been impressed by the nearly mystical scene of Oedipus' death. In a passage perhaps unique in this respect in Greek tragedy, an unseen divinity calls upon the hero (1626–28):

καλεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν πολλὰ πολλαχῆ θεός·  
ὦ οὗτος οὗτος, Οἰδίπους, τί μέλλομεν  
χωρεῖν; πάλαι δὴ τὰπὸ σοῦ βραδύνεται.

The peculiar repetition in the divine call *ὦ οὗτος οὗτος Οἰδίπους* is almost Biblical in tone, like God's call at *Exodus* 3.4, *Μωσῆ, Μωσῆ*.

One final suggestion. If Ezekiel did perceive a kinship between the trespass by Moses on the holy ground at Sinai and that by Oedipus at Colonus, it is then conceivable that Ezekiel's scene began in a way similar to the opening of the *OC*. There may have been a monologue by Moses in which he wonders where he has now come and what the nature of the place is (so Oedipus at 1ff).<sup>52</sup> This would also accord with some post-Biblical accounts in which Moses brings the sheep to a place where no one had ever been before.<sup>53</sup>

In short, Ezekiel may have seen the *Oedipus Coloneus* as a Greek dramatic exemplar for Moses' exile from his native land, his encounter with divinity on sacred ground, and his future role as benefactor of the nation.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> On the assumption that Ezekiel took the first to mean 'unconquerable', as it is usually understood.

<sup>52</sup> The possibility of some such monologue has been noted by Snell (*supra* n.2) 174.

<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., *Jos. AJ* 2.267.

<sup>54</sup> I am indebted to the journal's anonymous referees for helpful suggestions.