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Timotheus of Miletus' *Persae*, 150-161: Entwining Greek with Asian Speech

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The linguistic repertoire of Anatolia during the Achaemenid Era (6th-4th centuries BCE) included many varieties: the dominators' languages, old Persian and Aramaic; the epichoric languages, one of which was Phrygian; and Greek, whose penetration into the intermediate zone between the western coast and the Anatolian hinterland was promoted by the Achaemenid administration (Asheri 1983: 15-17). In this multilingual context, the scene represented by Timotheus of Miletus in his nome *Persae* (late 5th century BCE) is not implausible. In one of the direct speeches describing the Battle of Salamis (480 BCE), the poet gives the floor to a Phrygian soldier from Kelainai, engaged in the Persian army. In 150-161 Page (= 162-173 Wilamowitz), the Phrygian soldier begs his Greek aggressor to spare his life, speaking in broken Greek.

Through his attempt to reproduce the overall effect of the Phrygian soldier's imperfect knowledge of Greek, Timotheus connects himself to a tradition already established by Ancient Comedy (cf. *Ar.*, *Ach.*100, 104; *Av.* 1615, 1628-1629, 1678-1679; *Thesm.* 1001-1007, 1083-1135, 1176-1201, 1210-1225). Several studies have been devoted to these passages, including from a sociolinguistic point of view (Brixhe 1988, 2012; Willi 2003: 198-225), but this has never been done before for Timotheus' Phrygian soldier's speech.

In order to assess Timotheus' degree of *mimesis*, I will carry out a linguistic analysis of 150-161, using conceptual tools elaborated in modern sociolinguistics. The incomplete linguistic competence of a non-native speaker in a target language is known as a linguistic register called *broken language* (Ferguson&DeBose 1977), which can be easily imitated by a native speaker through a register called *secondary foreigner talk* (Hinnenkamp 1982: 40-41). In a literary context, this *secondary foreigner talk* is a very precise technique that aims to obtain different effects, according to the author's needs (Traugott&Pratt, 1980: 358-397).

Commentators (among the most recent ones: Janssen 1984; Hordern 2002; Sevieri 2011; Lambin 2013) have often focused on the "grammatical mistakes" present in the Phrygian's speech, considering their analysis as an end in itself. However, it seems much more interesting to situate these deviations from the norm of Greek language in the framework of *secondary foreigner talk*, in order to understand the strategies used by Timotheus to reproduce in a credible way the type of Greek spoken by the Phrygian soldier, including in the light of the latest knowledge of Phrygian language.

The Phrygian soldier speaks an Ionic dialectal variety (150, κῶς; 151, 155, αὔτις; 158, κεῖσε; 151, οὐδαμ' (ά); the sigmatic variant of the aorist of ἄγω, ἤξει in 153, comparable with ἄξει, *Antiph.*, 5, 46, is probably an Anatolian Greek variant), but his Greek is still at a beginner's level. His incomplete linguistic competence is suggested by the lexical repetitions, by the multiplication of pronominal forms, by the asyndeton, by the association of prepositions with incorrect cases and by the active verbal forms

constructed artificially for *media tantum*, such as ἔπομαι (ἔπω, 150), ἔρχομαι (ἔλθω, 151; ἔρχω, 155), μάχομαι (μαχέσ’(αι); 155), κάθημαι (κάθω, 156).

A word really comparable to a form known from Paleo-Phrygian inscriptions is Ἄρτιμις in 160, whose vocalism *e > i* (≠ Ion. Ἄρτεμις) is comparable to *artimitos* of the Vezirhan stele (Brixhe 2004: 42-67, B-05, line 3). A more subtle form of exoticism is created by the enumeration of the cities of the Persian empire, Κελαιναί (141), Σάρδι, Σοῦσα (158), and Ἀγβάτανα (159), which is even supposed to reproduce a Persian pronunciation, and by the evocation of the cult of Artemis at Ephesus (161), which finds confirmation in inscriptions as well as in indirect sources. However, Timotheus chose to use a very moderate *secondary foreigner talk* to characterize his Phrygian soldier, in order to avoid all the most extreme phonological traits that would make his character sink into comedy (cf., e.g., the lack of aspiration in the Greek unvoiced aspirated consonants).

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