**When virgins travel by sea: marriage and landscapes in Aeschylus’ *Suppliant Women.***

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The *parodos* of the *Suppliant Women* (1-175) is structured on the description of a sea voyage and of specific landscapes mentioned in words, but not represented on scene. A closer analysis of the ways navigation and natural elements are referred to allows to go back to hints of social and religious practices associated to seafaring and marriage in V b.C, as well as to recognize the profile of specific divinities like Hera and Zeus *Teleioi,* whose action is alluded to, but not directly expressed in the text.

My observations will focus on the strategies of verbalizing landscape, trying to bring up divine actions on natural elements, navigation, and on the contacts between the Greeks of classical period and the sea. Indeed, nature is where the Greeks recognized the presence of the gods and where they settled divine manifestations. For this reason, landscapes turn to be a good field to investigate religious thought of V b. C.

The *Suppliants* is set in Argos, where the role of Hera is central both in cult and in the mythological background of the *polis.* In fact, the Danaids are the descendants of Io, priestess of Hera in Argos, and of Zeus. Hera in the *Suppliants* is not only the goddess of the *telos gamou,** i.e. of marriage as a legitimate institution, but she also has an acknowledged power over navigation and seafaring, attested both in literary sources and in archaeological evidences. One of the most mysterious and interesting findings in the *Heraia* are some small models of ship and *oikos,* which have been interpreted as a perfect synthesis of Hera’s divine prerogatives. This maritime power of the goddess produces another kind of *telos:* the favourable conclusion of sea voyage. This is a key point to interpret the parodos of the *Suppliants* in a new perspective, which connects religious notions, natural elements, and the experience of the Greeks who attended tragic performances. Besides, the legendary traditions of an important *polis* like Argos play an important role in the analysis of second landscape, completely opposite to the sea, the meadow where the Danaids emphatically recall their mythical past. The analysis of these two landscapes will provide a more complete account of Hera’s prerogatives.

The aim of this presentation is to show how the spectators of Attic drama were deeply influenced by their own social and religious experience of natural elements and landscapes. In fact, dramatic descriptions of nature are conveyed to the audience according to shared notions and competences, like seafaring, where ritual habits, divine powers, and every-day practice of landscapes are horizontally crossed.

By enhancing the religious components inherent to sea and to other landscapes where the Danaids move, I will try to show how their uncompromising hostility towards sexuality and marriage is, from the very beginning of the play, destined to be normalized according to the divine *telos* (resolution) prescribed by goddesses like Hera and Aphrodite to all the girls of the *polis.*