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**Biographical Representations of Euripides.**  
**Some Examples of their Development from Classical Antiquity to**  
**Byzantium**

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
at Durham University in Accordance with the Requirements  
for the Degree of a Doctor in Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Ranja Knöbl 2008

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**Biographical Representations of Euripides.  
Some Examples of their Development from Classical Antiquity to Byzantium**

Ranja Knöbl 2008

**Abstract**

This thesis analyses the most significant biographical representations of Euripides in antiquity, covering depictions of Euripides in Greek comedy, an imaginary dialogue of late Hellenistic origin, selected Hellenistic epigrams, a late imperial novel in letters, a passage in Gellius' *Attic Nights*, the anonymous *Genos Euripidou*, and the *Suda* lexicon. In chapter 1, I explore the representation of Euripides in Greek comedy, both in the extant plays of Aristophanes and in selected fragments from Old and Middle Comedy. I argue that the fourth century BC witnessed a major transformation in the representation of Euripides, as discussions about the work become detached from discussions about the author. This claim is supported by my findings in chapters 2 and 3, which discuss Hellenistic accounts of the life of Euripides in a group of Hellenistic epigrams and in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*: representations of Euripides now mirror the processes of canonisation. In chapter 4, I contend that the narrative function and coherence of the pseudo-Euripidean letters have not received the scholarly attention they deserve. I am proposing a new way of looking at these letters in the literary and philosophical context of the Second Sophistic. In chapter 5, I identify the depiction of Euripides in Gellius' *Attic Nights*, the anonymous *Genos Euripidou*, and the *Suda* lexicon, and propose a new appreciation of these later attestations of a biographical interest in Euripides. In the conclusion I give a synopsis of my results and an outlook on the questions raised by my thesis. I argue that a re-assessment of the much neglected ancient sources concerning the life of Euripides contributes to a better understanding of the ancient mechanisms of reception and canonization of Euripides and his work.

## **Acknowledgements**

Any errors and mistakes in this thesis are entirely my own. For inspiration, academic advice, and generous sharing of their expertise, I wish to thank Peter Bing, Patrick Finglass, Martin Hose, Mary Lefkowitz, Peter von Möllendorff, Luke Pitcher, P.J. Rhodes, Ralph Rosen, Elizabeth Scharffenberger, Stefan Schorn, Ineke Sluiter, and Oliver Taplin. Most thanks are of course owed to my supervisor Barbara Graziosi for her enthusiasm and patience while this study was evolving. For moral support and practical help I would like to thank St. John's College Durham, Lilian Brandtstaetter, Judith Glaesser, Helmut Hofbauer, Oliver Lobschat, Katja Mellmann, Edward Rendell, and Steven Sykes.

## List of Abbreviations

- A.-B. Colin Austin and Giuseppe Bastianini (eds.), *Poseidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia*, Milan: Edizione Università Facoltà di Lettere, Economia e Diritto 2002.
- DK Herman Diels and Walter Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker I-III*, Berlin: Weidmann<sup>6</sup> 1951-2.
- FGrHist *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker I-III*, ed. Felix Jacoby, Leiden: Brill 1923-1958.
- IG *Inscriptiones Graecae*, ed. by Preußische (Berlin-Brandenburgische) Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), Berlin: Georg Reimer 1873 - .<sup>2</sup>1913 -,<sup>3</sup>1983 - .
- K.-A. Rudolf Kassel and Colin Austin (eds.), *Poetae Comici Graeci I-VIII*, Berlin: de Gruyter 1983-2001.
- Kannicht Richard Kannicht (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*. Vol. 5.1 and 5.2, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Rupprecht 2004.
- Kovacs David Kovacs, *Euripidea*, Leiden: Brill 1994.
- LGPN II M.J. Osborne and S.G. Byrne (eds.), *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names, vol. II: Attica*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1994.
- LSJ H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. Stuart Jones (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon*. With Revised supplement, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996.
- Nauck<sup>2</sup> Augustus Nauck (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, Leipzig: Teubner<sup>2</sup>1889.
- Pfeiffer Rudolf Pfeiffer (ed.), *Callimachus*. 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press 1949-53.
- RE *Paulys Realencyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Neue Bearbeitung von G. Wissowa, W. Kroll and K. Ziegler, Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller 1893 - .
- SH *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, ed. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Peter Parsons, Berlin: de Gruyter 1993.
- Suda *Suda lexicon I-V*, ed. by Ada Adler, Leipzig: Teubner 1923-1935.
- TrGrF *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, eds. Bruno Snell, Rudolf Kannicht and Stephan Radt, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Rupprecht 1971 - .

## **Introduction**

This thesis deals with biographical representations of Euripides from the classical period to the Roman Empire and beyond. Investigating how the poet and his work were seen by different writers and communities, it aims to shed light on the ancient reception of Euripides, but also to show – and this is new – how biographical representations of Euripides change in the course of time and how they reflect different stages in the reception and canonization of Euripides.

A biographical focus on Euripides offers the unique opportunity to trace the evolution of the biographical representations of a Greek poet, not only because we have more biographical material about his life than about any other Greek poet – with the possible exception of Homer – but also because biographical representations of Euripides can be dated to different centuries, which enables the chronological approach I adopt in this thesis. In the course of my discussion, I explore the nature of eight different forms of ancient representations of Euripides in their cultural and historical context, suggest ways of thinking about their possible functions, and discuss their significance as evidence for the reception of Euripides, and for the evolution of his biography in antiquity.

I proceed chronologically, and my analysis of these eight instances of ancient biographical representations of Euripides is organised in five chapters. Chapter I covers two different forms of biographical representations in the fifth and fourth century BC, the depiction of Euripides in three extant plays by Aristophanes (*Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazousae*, and *Frogs*) and in

selected fragments from lost comedies by Aristophanes and others. Chapter 2 analyses the depiction of Euripides in Hellenistic poetry, while chapter 3 discusses the portrayal of the tragedian in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*. A discussion of the pseudo-Euripidean letters in chapter 4 is followed by the examination of three biographical narratives of Euripides from a third-person perspective in chapter 5, a passage in Gellius' *Attic Nights*, three different narratives called the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry on Euripides.

### **Methodological starting-points**

Classical scholars have recently begun to appreciate biographical representations of ancient poets for what they can tell us about the societies that produced them.<sup>1</sup> A starting point for this new development was offered by Mary Lefkowitz, who exposed the fictionality of ancient biographical narratives about Greek poets.<sup>2</sup> Lefkowitz' conclusion was that the ancient literary accounts of the lives of Greek poets were disappointing and, because of their fictionality, of little historical value – a conclusion which, I believe, is too reductive.

In more recent years, Lefkowitz' view has been modified, as the emphasis on the study of literature as an aspect of society as well as an increased interest in the readers and receptions of literary texts make the biographical representations of ancient poets seem more valuable and central to the study of ancient literature than Lefkowitz had argued. We now assume that ancient anecdotes and biographical representations of canonized authors can tell us a lot about historical audiences and the history of the reception and

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<sup>1</sup> Graziosi (2002) was the first to examine the early reception of Homer under this new agenda of appreciating the ancient biographical material about poets.

<sup>2</sup> Lefkowitz (1981).

canonization of specific poets in antiquity.<sup>3</sup> This appreciation of the ancient biographical material about poets parallels some important developments in the study of Greek biographical writing more generally. Christopher Pelling, for example, has convincingly shown how a critical approach to what at first sight seem to be questionable sources can in fact broaden our understanding of ancient authors and audiences.<sup>4</sup>

Pelling and others showed that the narrative strategies involved in ancient biographical writings are sophisticated and full of allusions to other genres and traditions. This observation suggests that the biographical narratives about Euripides too may have capitalised to a large extent on other forms of literature. In fact, the biographical tradition concerning Euripides benefited from the quotability and popularity of lines from Euripidean tragedy – and also from the quotability and popularity of Aristophanic comedy and anecdotal narratives that were created in the course of the biographical tradition of Euripides.<sup>5</sup>

Since much of the biographical material about Euripides was narrated in literary forms which have, in past decades, been regarded as less respectable and worthwhile than canonical Greek literature, the current re-evaluation of biographical depictions of ancient poets is just an example of wider shifts in the study of ancient literature. A new historical interest in the anecdote and the sub-literary, as well as the wish to find out more about ancient reading habits and modes of reception all contribute to the appreciation of the previously neglected material of biographical narratives about Greek poets. The impact of reception studies, and hence also of ancient reception

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<sup>3</sup> As Kawalko Roselli (2005: 3) observed: 'Biographic anecdotes may not be good history, but their fictional value speaks to contemporary cultural beliefs.'

<sup>4</sup> See Pelling (1979), Pelling (1980) and Pelling (1990a).

<sup>5</sup> On the tradability of biographical narratives, see Möller (2004: 27).

studies, clearly changed modern studies of literary criticism and the history of Greek literature: Andrew Ford's study *The origins of Literary Criticism*, for instance, is, as its sub-title *Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece* already suggests, an attempt to combine cultural studies with an analysis of the evolution of poetic theory in classical Athens.<sup>6</sup>

A further general consideration helps to explain my interest in ancient portrayals of Euripides. The survival of Euripides' tragedies is no longer seen as the unavoidable consequence of their superior aesthetic quality.<sup>7</sup> It crucially depends on decisions made – generation after generation – by those who contributed to their preservation. We therefore need to ask: what did people, across the centuries, make of Euripides' plays? And what did Euripides mean to them? My thesis aims to answer the latter question and, in so doing, contributes, I hope, to the overall understanding of the reception, canonization, and success of Euripidean poetry.

In my study of the biographical representations of Euripides in antiquity, I take as a further starting point what Pierre Bourdieu called the *illusion biographique*. This 'biographical illusion' is characterised by what he calls 'the not insignificant presupposition that life is a history [...] a *cursus*, a passage, a voyage, a directed journey [...]'.<sup>8</sup> In brief, the general assumption underlying Bourdieu's approach is that we adhere to an illusion if we perceive lives (our own or those of others) as coherent narratives with a linear structure. Both the result and the cause of such a perception of human lives is, according to Bourdieu, an illusion which is 'always at least partially motivated by the

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<sup>6</sup> See Ford (2002).

<sup>7</sup> While Hölscher (1987: 237) still assumed that the superior quality of the work of the three tragedians was the main cause for their canonization in Hellenistic times, Most (1990: 54-8) reminds us that the process of selection of authors and their works at Alexandria was by no means a 'natural' one.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu (2002: 297).

concern to give meaning, to rationalize, to show the inherent logic'.<sup>9</sup> My contention is that similarly motivated intentions to create meaning are already at work in ancient biographical writings. The wish to rationalize these writings, on the other hand, strikes me as a modern phenomenon: as the disappointment of Mary Lefkowitz and others shows, the logic of ancient biographical representations of Euripides may not always be identical with our expectations of biography.<sup>10</sup>

How, then, do we perceive authors, and how did readers and writers in antiquity perceive and depict them? 'Poets are immortal through the immortality of their *œuvre*': this is how Kerkhecker recently summarised the vast field of ancient texts about poets, the legacy of their work and ancient claims to fame prior to Hellenistic poetry.<sup>11</sup> While this statement neatly describes the position towards literature as we find it in early lyric poetry, the statement can, I think, not be the last word on the biographical depictions of ancient authors.

In order to understand the legacy of a poet like Euripides and in order to understand, above all, what he meant to authors and audiences throughout antiquity, we need to consider the representation of the poet, and not just the quality and popularity of his work. Indeed the relationship between author and work, as conceptualised in antiquity, poses many questions. We might wonder: why did ancient readers want to draw a direct connection between a poet and his work? Secondly, how does the survival and untiring popularity ('immortality') of a corpus of texts (the '*œuvre*') affect the representation of its author? And thirdly, are we, when we draw connections

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<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu (2000: 298).

<sup>10</sup> Great disappointment with the ancient sources is expressed in Lefkowitz (1981: 136) and resonates through most of secondary literature on ancient biographical writings.

<sup>11</sup> Kerkhecker (1999: 12).

between authors and works, heirs to an ancient way of viewing poets and poetry, or are we in fact projecting modern concepts of individuality, originality, and the status of literature back into antiquity?<sup>12</sup>

It is, I think, worth keeping in mind that we, too, participate in a long-standing history of reception and interpretation, and that the relationship between the life and the work of an author – ancient or modern – is far more complex than some scholars seem to believe. The process of canon formation as it took place at Alexandria, Rome, and Byzantium is only one of many possibilities of selecting and categorizing authors and literatures from the past. The Hellenistic model merely proved historically, and possibly: politically, to be the most influential one. The exclusion of contemporary literature and the limitation of the selected individuals who made it into the list (οἱ ἐγκριθέντες) to poets from the past was a successful format.<sup>13</sup>

The seemingly trivial fact that individual authors, and not just texts detached from the conditions of their production and reception, constantly initiate and redefine the process of canon formation has been persistently underrated for several decades in the study of canonization and literary history.<sup>14</sup> Only recently have scholars started to take seriously the importance of authors and their depiction. As Detlev Schöttker rightly observes, it is the interest in images, and images of poets especially, which keeps literature alive and which eventually contributes to the process of selection and canonization:

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<sup>12</sup> For a good account of ancient conceptions of author and work, and the many questions they raise for modern readers, see Graziosi (2006: 158-74).

<sup>13</sup> On the exclusion of all living poets from the Alexandrian canon, see Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.54. On the canonization of a whole historical period at Alexandria, its consequences for all subsequent education, and the political implications of such a process, see Most (1990: 54-6). For a reconstruction of the process of selecting the ἐγκριθέντες, see Pfeiffer (1968: 206-8) and Schmidt (1987: 247-48).

<sup>14</sup> Most (1990: 56) only mentions the phenomenon in passing, while commenting on a curious historical *paradoxon*: 'Even Euripides' noncanonical alphabet plays, which survived by chance, are the works of a canonical author.'

Canons are based on a memorizing principle, at whose centre we do not find works but authors – authors in whose lives posterity is just as interested as in their works. Canons are not formed by the superiority of literary masterpieces against weaker texts but by the survival of images of authors of remarkable literary achievements in the memory of later generations. Studies on the origins and functions of canon formation therefore need to be separated from literary works and turn to the images authors and their fans create in order to put themselves, or their poetic idols, into dialogue with posterity.<sup>15</sup>

This is certainly true for the study of ancient literature. My contention is that the biographical representations of Euripides by other writers of various cultural and historical backgrounds within antiquity can give us some ideas not only about how these writers perceived Euripides but also about how they fashioned themselves as participants in an ongoing process of literary inheritance.

### **Sources and scope**

There is no complete and coherent biography of Euripides from antiquity that we can attribute to a specific author. Instead, we have several different narrative accounts of Euripides which depict aspects of his life as different writers in different centuries imagined them. And contrary to what most modern writers on the ancient biographical representations of Euripides suggest, there is no such thing as a straightforward transmission of narrative patterns that were established in earlier sources and simply repeated over the centuries. Certain traditions of anecdotal material, allusions to, and quotations from, earlier narratives do of course exist, but they always introduce

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<sup>15</sup> 'Der Kanon basiert also auf einem memorialen Prinzip, in dessen Mittelpunkt nicht Werke, sondern Autoren stehen, für deren Lebensweise sich die Nachwelt genauso interessiert wie für deren Werke. Der Kanon wird nicht dadurch konstituiert, daß sich literarisch bedeutende Werke gegenüber den weniger bedeutenden durchsetzen, sondern dadurch, daß sich Bilder von Autoren mit bedeutenden literarischen Leistungen im Gedächtnis der Nachwelt festsetzen. Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Funktion des Kanons müßten sich deshalb deutlicher als bisher von den Werken lösen und sich jenen Bildern zuwenden, die Autoren bzw. ihre Anhänger in die Welt setzen, um sich bzw. ihr Vorbild in ein dauerhaftes Gespräch mit der Nachwelt zu bringen.' (Schöttker 2003: 62)

characteristic alterations to the literary heritage and create their own depiction of Euripides. Even when stories are repeated verbatim, century after century, we still have to ask why this is so: a conservative tradition requires explanation just as much as any perceived innovations. For example: it is true that the Hellenistic biographies of Euripides draw heavily from Old Comedy, but they do not simply copy the narrative strategies of Old Comedy and we still need to ask why they chose to take up narrative elements from Old Comedy, given that they are not trying to amuse audiences in the theatre of Dionysus. Investigations into the motivation of later authors to step into the biographical tradition of depicting Euripides are, I think, crucial if we want to understand the mechanisms at work in the reception and canonization of Euripidean tragedy.

The biographical representations of Euripides in antiquity are by no means homogenous, nor do they follow a pattern or agenda entirely set by the first representations of Euripides in Old Comedy.<sup>16</sup> The texts I analyse in this thesis belong to different historical and cultural contexts, follow their own narrative logic, and often play with the biographical conventions they inherit from earlier accounts. Mary Lefkowitz especially expressed her disappointment with the ancient biographies of Greek poets.<sup>17</sup> However, a close reading of the biographical representations in the texts studied in this thesis shows that there is no need to be ‘disappointed’ by ancient representations of Euripides. On the contrary, the texts under scrutiny in this study can not only shed light on ancient perspectives on the life of Euripides,

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<sup>16</sup> In their analysis of the fictionality of biographical accounts of ancient poets, both Fairweather (1974) and Lefkowitz (1981) argued that the biographical representations of Euripides in antiquity were univocally informed by Aristophanes’ depiction of Euripides and by features taken from Euripidean tragedy.

<sup>17</sup> See n. 10 above.

they also contribute considerably to our understanding of how ‘classical’ authors were conceived and received within antiquity. In other words, while the highly anecdotal material about Euripides’ life from antiquity may seem to be material from the fringes of literary production, it can in fact serve as a keyhole into the mechanisms of reception and canonization in antiquity.

My analysis starts with biographical representations of Euripides in fifth century Athens, during his own lifetime and immediately after his death (chapter 1). After a discussion of material from the fourth century BC (chapter 1) I move on to biographical depictions of Euripides as they were produced in Hellenistic Alexandria (chapters 2 and 3), to a classroom exercise which was probably produced in the Second Sophistic (chapter 4) and finally to Aulus Gellius, the *Genos Euripidou* and the Byzantine *Suda* lexicon (chapter 5). In the course of the centuries covered in my study, the audiences of texts which narrate the life of Euripides changed to an enormous degree, and so, in turn, did the functions of the texts under scrutiny. I therefore dedicate a whole section in each chapter to the possible functions of the texts in question and their contribution to the biographical tradition of Euripides.

Here I can only give a brief outline of the historical and cultural changes which took place as the texts I analyse in this thesis were produced. In the mutual inspiration of Euripidean tragedy and Aristophanic comedy we encounter a ‘superimposition of conflicting fictions’ (to use Muecke’s term)<sup>18</sup> which resonates throughout the history of biographical representations of Euripides. In Aristophanes, by way of metonymy, Euripides becomes a character on stage, who speaks for, and represents, Euripidean tragedy as a whole – a development which is reversed in the fourth and third century BC,

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<sup>18</sup> See Muecke (1977: 61). See also Goldhill (1991: 193).

when the texts of Euripides are separated from their author and new biographical narratives start to introduce new standards of literary appreciation.

And yet, the congruity between the author and his work, which is presented to the audience of the theatre in a comic fashion, is not exclusive to the comic stage. It is taken up by Hellenistic authors, who comment on previous parodies of Euripides. The close reading of biographical representations of Euripides in Old and Middle Comedy in chapter 1 illustrates their status as fore-runners of the ancient biographical tradition, and of some aesthetic principles of Hellenistic literary criticism. References to fourth-century historians in later biographical representations of Euripides, discussed in chapter 5, support my assumption that the fourth century BC was a major turning-point in the history of the reception of Euripides.

Martin Revermann has recently pointed out the complexities of the process which transformed Euripides from *skandalon* to classic.<sup>19</sup> After Euripides' work had met with little acclaim and much ridicule by fellow-poets during his own life-time, he developed into one of the most widely read Greek poet in the centuries to follow. Critical work on his tragedies had begun as early as the fourth century BC, and by the end of the third century BC Aristophanes of Byzantium had finished an edition of the 'Complete Works' of Euripides.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Revermann (1999/2000: 453). Rosen (2008: 28) overestimates, I think, the contribution of Aristophanes and the fandom of Euripides, when he asks the rhetorical question: 'If there were no Aristophanes, would Euripides [...] have become the 'classic' that he eventually did?' Rosen also turns a blind eye on some later historical developments which favoured the reception and canonization of Euripidean tragedy, although the main proposition in his statement is of course correct, when he claims that 'without the consistent 'feedback loop' [...] that comic paratragedy provided *for* tragedy, the canon of tragic poets, and their individual status within it, might very well have evolved rather differently.' (2008: 28).

<sup>20</sup> On the significance of such a corpus of texts as a foundation for all subsequent scholarly activities at Alexandria, see Carrara (2007: 253), for the historical context of the reception of Euripidean tragedy in antiquity, see Barthold (1864: 4-5) and Tischer (2006: 224-225).

It was in the fourth century BC that major changes in the biographical depiction of Euripides took place. While Euripides' life and work seem inseparably intertwined in the depiction of Euripides in Old Comedy, the picture changes in the fourth century BC, as the work and the life of Euripides are dissociated from each other. First reactions to this process can, as I argue in chapter 3, already be observed in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*. After the conquests of Alexander the Great, fundamental questions evolved about what it might mean to be Greek. Geographical displacement as well as the claiming of foreign territories mark the Hellenistic period. These geopolitical developments make the connection with the classical past both important and precarious, and the cultural identity of scholars, poets, and audiences of Greek texts in Hellenistic times is mediated through Greek learning, culture, and – ultimately – institutions such as the Library, to which Euripidean tragedy perhaps owes its survival.

In Hellenistic times, the untiring engagement of the scholars and poets at Alexandria eventually resulted in the selection and canonization of texts from the Greek past we still treasure today. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the notion of poetic legacy and individual fame are particularly frequent in the Hellenistic genre of fictitious *epitymbia* on classical poets. Chapter 2 illustrates how Euripides features in several fictitious *epitymbia* which form biographical representations of the poet in their own right.<sup>21</sup>

We know that most of the crucial decisions about selecting individual authors and specific works must have been made already in the late fifth and early fourth century BC, while the process of selection and

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<sup>21</sup> Most (1990: 55) even attributes a symbolic function to the phenomenon: 'Hellenistic literature as a whole is an epitaph on all Greek literature that preceded it: it is typical that one of the favorite genres of Hellenistic poetry is the fictional funerary epigram for a distinguished earlier writer.'

canonization of certain works and authors who represented Athens or, in the case of Euripides, Athens and Macedonia, must have started in fourth-century oratory and historiography. This process reached its climax in the systematising efforts of the Alexandrian scholars and poets of the third century BC. The much-cited *Pinakes* by Callimachus possibly represent a key indicator of the mechanisms and procedures involved in such an enormous task, and would certainly provide us with some important clues about the approaches of Alexandrian scholars to previous literature. However, frustratingly little has survived of this catalogue which seems to have played an important part in the survival of so many works from antiquity.<sup>22</sup>

The literary and scholarly activity of the Alexandrian poets is a central point of reference for any study of the principles and mechanisms of reception and canonization. The evidence we have from Hellenistic times for the life of Euripides seems not only to have facilitated the continuous interest in the tragedian but also to have set the stage for all later representations of his life. Moreover, the geographical interests of the Hellenistic poets and scholars, which reflect their political preferences and affiliations, had a major impact on the way in which Euripides, and especially his death, were depicted. In my discussion of material from Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic times in chapters 2 to 5 I show how important geographically encoded interests are for our

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<sup>22</sup> More than a mere list of works and their authors, the monumental bibliographical encyclopaedia of 120 book rolls by Callimachus entailed biographical information as well as evaluations of the authenticity of selected works, as well as *incipits* and line-counts. We have some indicative fragments of it, which are accessible as Callimachus frs. 429-453 Pfeiffer: ΠΙΝΑΚΕΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΠΑΣΗ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΙ ΔΙΑΛΛΑΜΨ-ΑΝΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΩΝ ΣΥΝΕΓΡΑΨΑΝ ΕΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΙΣ Κ ΚΑΙ Ρ ('Pinakes of all Those Eminent in Literature and of Their Writings, in 120 Books') and frs. 454-456 Pfeiffer: ΠΙΝΑΞ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΓΡΑΦΗ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΧΡΟΝΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΠ ΑΡΧΗΣ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΩΝ ('Pinax and Register of the Dramatic Poets in Order from the Beginning'), which seem to stem from a table of the dramatic poets of possibly Peripatetic origin. Both groups of fragments are only known to us through a citation in the *Suda* lexicon.

understanding not only of the mechanisms of biographical representation, but also of the dynamics of selection and canonization in antiquity.

In Hellenistic times, poetic judgements and standards are reinforced not for their own sake but for aims that were specifically Hellenistic and shaped by the interests of the individual authors and their audiences. The Hellenistic age, which was marked by the end of Athenian autonomy and the beginning of the monarchic rule of the Macedonian court and the Ptolemies, was an age of change and transition.<sup>23</sup> Throughout my thesis, I suggest that there is a strong link between the depiction of Euripides' death in Macedonia and questions of selection and canonization: As the Hellenistic representations of Euripides zoom in on the death of the tragedian in Macedonia, we are offered a glimpse on the dynamics of reception and canonization in the late third century BC. Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* and the *Genos Euripidou* are of special interest in this context, as they help us compare the focus of pre-Hellenistic depictions of Euripides with those of Hellenistic and Byzantine times.

It is well known that the educational context, too, played a major role in the transmission of Euripidean tragedy and fostered the survival of the tragedies to a major degree. Plutarch's famous remark that Alexander civilized Asia through the spread of Greek literature is supported by scattered material on stone and papyrus.<sup>24</sup> A good example of what more elaborate school

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<sup>23</sup> As the world of the Greek *poleis* came to an end, Greece was to be ruled by the Macedonian kings from the dynasty of Antagonids, Asia was under the monarchy of the Seleucids and Egypt was governed by the Ptolemies. This enormous re-mapping of the political and cultural landscape of the ancient world possible favoured the emergence of biography in its own right; see Sonnabend (2003: 222).

<sup>24</sup> See Plutarch, *Moralia* 328 d: ἀλλ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐξημεροῦντος Ὅμηρος ἦν ἀνάγνωσμα, καὶ Περσῶν καὶ Σουσιανῶν καὶ Γεδρωσίων παῖδες τὰς Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίας ἤδον. ('But when Alexander was civilizing Asia, Homer was commonly read, and the children of the Persians, the Susianians, and the Gedrosians learnt to sing the tragedies of Euripides as well as those of Sophocles.')

exercises may have looked like can be seen in the collection of five letters which were written anonymously in the second century BC, which I analyse in chapter 4 of this thesis. The letters cast Euripides as a Cynico-Stoic philosopher – a presentation which perhaps gives us some information about their possible historical context and function. The letters are crucial to my study as they not only indicate an important shift in the focus of biographical representations of Euripides but also support Schöttker’s observation that authors are at the centre of the process of canon formation. Moreover, the pseudo-Euripidean letters broaden Schöttker’s perspective as they remind us that the process of canonization is a dynamic process: once established, canons fuel interest in authors whose biographical representations then continue to flourish.

A considerable quantity of the reception of Euripidean tragedy, and, as a consequence, a considerable share in the interest in his person, are also owed to the important role Euripidean tragedy played in the classrooms of the third and second century BC which echoed it. The famous *Straßburg Papyrus*, for example, represents a ‘Book of Euripides-Songs’.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the *Hibeh Papyrus* could perhaps be a piece of evidence for a much discussed reception of Euripidean poetry which took place outside of the classroom and far from all rhetorical exercise and scholarly endeavours, and which was independent of the re-performance of the entire plays.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the historical situation may have looked like, both documents attest to the vivid interest in Euripidean poetry for pleasure as well as education and rhetorical training.

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<sup>25</sup> See Hose (2008a: 307).

<sup>26</sup> See already Zuntz (1965: 259): ‘The Italian vases, and the titles of tragedies translated by Roman *scaenici* yield more substantial but necessarily limited information; while papyri can show that certain plays were read but not that they were acted – and others not.’

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the ancient testimonies about Euripides' life seem equally motivated by a wish to delight, to entertain, and to pay tribute to the great tragedian. This wish is manifest in the earliest text examples I analyse in this thesis, which are taken from fifth- and fourth-century Attic Comedy, but it is also discernible in Hellenistic poetry and prose, in the pseudo-Euripidean letters from the Second Sophistic, analysed in chapter 4 of this thesis, in Gellius' chapter on Euripides' life in the *Attic Nights*, analysed in chapter 5, and even in the largely adapted and epitomized versions of the biographical representation of Euripides in narratives which can best be described as attempts to preserve the wisdom of the pagan past in an encyclopaedic form, such as the *Genos Euripidou* and the entry on Euripides in the Byzantine *Suda* lexicon, also analysed in chapter 5. These later accounts of biographical narratives about Euripides are especially intriguing as the different parts of the *Genos Euripidou* as well as the *Suda* entry on Euripides can be understood as echoes of previous biographical representations of Euripides.

My detailed examination of the ways in which Euripides was portrayed in different centuries is only a microcosm reflecting scattered splinters of the grand historical changes I have outlined above. By looking at the way in which the biographical representations of Euripides change according to their historical and social context, we see a reflection of the wider evolution of Greek culture, and we witness how and why ancient authors chose to establish Euripides as a cultural icon at different points in the manifestation and reception of that culture. I have been selective in the sources I discuss as I do not take on board every instance in ancient Greek literature where Euripides' name appears but rather focus on what seem to me the most

significant stages in the development of his biographical representation in antiquity.

ὦ σχέτλιε, περιόψει με δὴ τεθνηκότα;  
'Cruel! Will you ignore me when I'm dead?  
(Euripides to Dionysus, *Frogs* 1476)

## 1

### **Euripides in Comedy**

The appearance of Euripides in Old Comedy is probably the best-known part in the history of biographical representations of the tragedian. Modern audiences still enjoy watching performances of Aristophanes' *Frogs* or his *Thesmophoriazousae*, and scholars working on the reception of Euripides in antiquity will always have to return to the sources of Old Comedy for an adequate understanding of later developments. However, this does not mean that all later depictions of Euripides depend solely on his depiction in Old Comedy or are mere repercussions of the way in which Aristophanes chose to characterise the tragedian on the comic stage. I start with the representation of Euripides on stage, not because I believe that it determined all later depictions of the tragedian, but because it proved to be influential over many centuries and was an important factor in the later development of Euripides' biographical portrayals.

In this chapter, I want to suggest a reading of the Aristophanic Euripides as the personification of his plays. Euripides is presented in Aristophanes as the impersonation of his poetry, which is metonymically labelled 'Euripides' and acts like a character. In *Acharnians* the character called Euripides is the only representative of 'new poetry' impersonated on stage for a short scene only, whereas in *Thesmophoriazousae* Euripides is joined by Agathon as another representative and spokesman of new poetry. In *Frogs*, finally, the art of poetry as a whole is at stake, as personifications

of both 'old' and 'new' tragedy in the characters of Aeschylus and Euripides are brought on stage.<sup>17</sup> As we shall see in this chapter, biographical representations of Euripides are used by the comedians to make judgements about his work.

I wish to draw attention to a function of biographical representations of Euripides in Old Comedy which has only recently been studied in more detail,<sup>18</sup> namely its contribution not only to the biographical tradition of Euripides but, perhaps more importantly, also to the process of the selection, reception, and canonization of his work.

And *vice versa*, Old Comedy was so influential for the biographical tradition of Euripides because of its contribution to stylistic theory and literary criticism. The work of the scholars and poets in Hellenistic Alexandria is perhaps the most important moment of transition in the reception and canonization of classical Greek authors. A recent study of the depiction and theory of the arts in Hellenistic epigrams highlights the close connection between the aesthetic ideals of the Hellenistic poets at Alexandria and the criteria of poetic judgement in the Athenian comedy of the fifth and fourth century BC.<sup>19</sup> It is no coincidence, I think, that Euripides features large in both Athenian comedy and Hellenistic poetry. For a better understanding of the biographical representations of Euripides and the canonization of his work, it is vital to analyse his depiction in both Athenian

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<sup>17</sup> While Newiger claims that the personification of τέχνη is the leading metaphor of *Frogs* (Newiger 1975: 130-2), I believe that instead two more specific personifications are brought on stage, namely the personification of Euripidean tragedy in the character called Euripides and the personification of Aeschylean tragedy in the character called Aeschylus.

<sup>18</sup> Rosen (2008) analyses the contribution of the Aristophanic Euripides, and the Aristophanic audience, to the canonization of Euripidean tragedy.

<sup>19</sup> See Prioux (2007). For previous accounts of Aristophanes' influence on Hellenistic criticism and the predominance of Aristophanes as a result of the work of the Alexandrian scholars see Pfeiffer (1968: 242), O'Sullivan (1992), and Cameron (1995: 328-31).

comedy and Hellenistic literature – which is what I do in my first three chapters.

Old Comedy seems to have introduced a specific repertoire of poetological imagery and key-words such as λεπτότης to Greek literature which Hellenistic writers took up and transformed for their own purposes. The poetological imagery and vocabulary established by Aristophanes is closely connected to his reaction to Euripidean tragedy and the depiction of Euripides in his comedies. This suggests that the poetological vocabulary of Greek stylistic theory is closely linked to, and probably even derives from, the ancient biographical representations of Euripides.

My focus in this chapter is on the depiction of Euripides in Old and Middle Comedy, as they seem to have been an influential starting-point for the ancient biographical tradition on Euripides and the evolution of biographical portrayals in Hellenistic times. Before analysing selected passages about Euripides from Greek comedies from the fifth and fourth centuries BC, I explore the wider field of the comic derision of Euripides, and discuss Aristophanes' particular interest in the tragedian (section 1).

The psychological realism which is so characteristic for Euripidean drama seems to have been challenging and stimulating for both Old Comedy and the Hellenistic poets. With this in mind, and after a brief introduction to the dynamics of presenting the comic hero in Old Comedy (section 2), I discuss the portrayal of Euripides in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae* (section 3), *Acharnians* (section 4) and *Frogs* (section 5). My discussion of selected fragments from Greek comedies in section 6 illustrates some of the changes the portrayal of Euripides underwent in the

fourth century BC, as the comic depiction of his personality gives way to the depiction of characters who quote lines of his plays and seem overly fond of the poet. Two concluding sections argue for the importance of stylistic theory (section 7) and realism (section 8) in the process of imitating and commemorating Euripides and Euripidean drama in comedies of the fifth and fourth century BC.

### **1. *Euripidaristophanizein* and Calling a Spade a Spade**

In Old Comedy, Euripides is represented by a set of features which were regarded as the epitome of the style of his tragedies.<sup>20</sup> Aristophanes of course knew that jokes about Euripides would be successful, and perhaps more appealing to his audience than jokes about any other poet. While Euripides' plays were by no means the most popular tragedies in Athens, the popularity of Euripides as a target for ridicule not only with Aristophanes but also with other poets of Old Comedy suggests that sayings and anecdotes about Euripides probably circulated as early as the last decade of the fifth century BC.<sup>21</sup>

The origins of the ancient interest in Euripides and Euripidean tragedy are to be found in his own lifetime and in his hometown Athens. Aristophanes engages with Euripides and Euripidean drama more than any other comedian of his time. Indeed so much so, that his fellow-comedians could crack jokes about Aristophanes' obsession with Euripides. Aristophanes' particular interest in Euripides has perhaps contributed to the fact that the ancient biographical evidence is richer in the case of Euripides

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<sup>20</sup> For a similar process, see Hose (1995: 41-2) on Socrates' and Cleon's turning into abbreviations of the principles they represent.

<sup>21</sup> Gentili (1979: 18) [= 1977: 8 = 2006: 39].

than in the case of any other Greek poet, with the possible exception of Homer.

When a wider fascination with Euripides and his work emerged in the late fifth century BC, comedians immediately started to comment on the phenomenon. As a result, we not only have copious texts that make fun of Euripides, but also a few texts which make fun of comedians who imitate and ridicule Euripides. In other words, we have sources which testify to the persiflage of Euripidean comedy as well as texts which can best be described as the persiflage of that persiflage.

A possible reason for Euripides' popularity with the comic poets can be found in the provocation his plays aimed to cause aesthetically as well as politically, for instance through the depiction of weak rulers and rhetorically well-versed women in *Medea*, *Trojan Women* and other plays. Euripidean tragedy dared to question established social and political norms and to challenge established poetic conventions of the genre. It depicted its characters in a shockingly new way: irrationally passionate in their emotions, feeble in their resolutions and deceitful in speech. As a result, Euripides must have appeared as the perfect figure onto which to project the threatening effects of a distorted reality which many spectators may have felt in Athens during the last years of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, the realism of Euripidean tragedy brought the effects of his plays close to those usually achieved by comedy.<sup>23</sup> As Euripides came

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<sup>22</sup> For a concise account of the historical background, see Hose (2008: 17-29).

<sup>23</sup> Benefitting from Froma Zeitlin (1981), Angus Bowie exemplified this phenomenon for the case of *Thesmophoriazousae*. See Bowie (1993: 217-227) for a lucid analysis of Euripides' transgression onto the comic stage and into the female sphere. For surveys of the field of transgression between Euripides and Aristophanes see also Winnington-Ingram (1969), Knox (1970), Seidensticker (1982) and Taplin (1986).

dangerously close to Aristophanes' own art, he became more and more part of it. Aristophanes seems to have taken revenge on his colleague by integrating whole passages of Euripidean tragedy and mocking the tragedian in several plays.

Both Aristophanes and Euripides perhaps chose to offer ambiguous solutions in their plays. And Aristophanes explicitly sets his art against that of Euripides in several of the surviving plays. The comedian and the tragedian, it seems, were not only interdependent but also very close in their approach to the depiction of contemporary Athens and their dramatic techniques. As Hubbard pointed out, Aristophanic and Euripidean drama not only mirror each other linguistically, but they use a similar way of communicating their issues through 'lower mimetic', that is, by bringing down their heroes to a level closer to the 'reality of the audience' than the one that used to be appropriate for theatre performances with earlier dramatists.<sup>24</sup> Euripidean drama, not unlike *Frogs*, demands the alert and critical perception of both art and politics from its spectators, as Aristophanes himself points out in his characterisation of the tragic poet.<sup>25</sup>

This symbiotic relationship between Aristophanes and Euripides became so close that it was commented on already in antiquity. The *scholion* on Plato's *Apology* 19c gives us the appropriate expression for the phenomenon, an expression which was coined by Cratinus: Aristophanes imitated Euripides to such a degree that Cratinus could speak of it as *euripidaristophanizein*. Arethas, a pupil of Photius and bibliophile

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<sup>24</sup> Hubbard (1991: 44).

<sup>25</sup> See also Pucci (1998: 88-89) who stresses the empowerment of the audience to create meaning as a special strength of Aristophanes' plays.

commentator on the classical authors who lived in the ninth century AD, writes in the *scholion* on Plato *Apol.* 19c:<sup>26</sup>

Ἄριστοφάνης [...] ἐκωμωδεῖτο δ' ἐπὶ τῷ σκώπτειν μὲν  
Εὐριπίδην, μιμεῖσθαι δ' αὐτόν. Κρατῖνος·

τίς δε σὺ; κομψός τις ἔροιτο θεατῆς·  
ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων.

καὶ αὐτὸς δ' ἐξομολογεῖτο Σκηναῖς καταλαμβανοῦσαις·

χρῶμαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ στόματος τῷ στρογγύλῳ  
τούς νοῦς δ' ἀγοραίους ἦττον ἢ κείνος ποιῶ  
(Ar. test. 3 K.-A)

Aristophanes [...] was ridiculed for mocking Euripides, but he also imitated him. Cratinus says:

'Who are you?' some clever theatre-goer may ask.  
'A weaver of subtle words, a chaser of little sayings,  
a Euripidaristophaniser'

And he even admits the charge himself in his *Women Claiming Tent-Sites*, where he says:

'I use the well-rounded language of his style but the attitudes I produce are less vulgar than his.'

(translation Kovacs 1994: 113, and Olson 2007: 429, adapted)

One aspect in this short passage deserves our special attention: Arethas distinguishes between imitation and derision. Aristophanes is said not only to have made fun of Euripides but also to have imitated him. By imitation, then, we should perhaps understand an imitation in style, which is different from sheer caricature.

Unlike caricature, imitation not so much describes the depiction of the poet in an unsuitable and ridiculous way, but rather the mimicking of the style and language of his poetry. While caricature is at work in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, in which Euripides is depicted in rags, the imitation of his poetry resonates through *Frogs* and parts of the *Thesmophoriazousae*. Almost from its beginning to its ending,

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<sup>26</sup> For further information about Arethas, see Tinnefeld (1977) and Wilson (1983: 120-35).

*Thesmophoriazousae* consists of literary echoes, cross-dressing, and plays within the play.<sup>27</sup>

As we know from the rich textual evidence, Euripides' way of using the Greek language must have been unusual in depicting 'low' characters and 'low' language on the tragic stage. The socio-linguistic debate which evolved in the late fifth century BC was, as far as we can gauge from the extant material, to a considerable degree organised around the spatial opposition of the city and the countryside. Any refinement that may have expressed itself in the rhetorically well-educated language used in court-rooms and on the agora was counterbalanced by an exploitation of more rustic tones on the comic stage.

The use of such rustic words and ways of depicting the world provided comic authors with several advantages. First, it facilitated the appeal of the play for the audience of the theatre.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, it supported the creation of 'anti-heroes' modelled on Athenian poets, politicians and philosophers, and of 'heroes' modelled on peasants and countrymen. Finally, it enabled literary allusions and discussions about different styles.

Euripides, as we shall see, proved to be an especially rewarding target for such an enterprise as his tragedies were well-known enough to serve as a point of reference for the audience.<sup>29</sup> He also seems to have been an especially rewarding target for derision as he introduced innovations, both musical and literary, to the Athenian stage. The refined and innovative

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<sup>27</sup> For more detailed discussions of *Thesmophoriazousae*, and its relation to Euripidean tragedy, see Miller (1946: 171-82), Hansen (1976: 165-85), Bobrick (1997: 177-197), Habash (1997:19-40), Nieddu (2004: 331-60), and Völke (2004: 117-138).

<sup>28</sup> On the audience of Old Comedy, see Harriott (1962: 1-8), Silk (1990: 150-173) and Slater (1999: 351-368).

<sup>29</sup> Rosen recently summed up the socio-historical dynamics of this phenomenon by pointing out that Aristophanes and his colleagues 'needed to draw on what would resonate with their audience.' (Rosen 2008: 47).

plots and phrases as well as the simplicity and realism of Euripidean tragedy could have contributed to Euripides' popularity in Old and Middle comedy. Recent scholarship has shown in detail what enormous creative impact Euripidean innovations had on Old Comedy.<sup>30</sup>

I now turn to the derision of realism and the opposition of the city and the country-side in Old Comedy. We cannot tell who the speaker in the following text is, nor can we know who the addressee might be or in which context it was spoken. However, the line gives us the first instance of an expression that will prove to be of central importance in the stylistic theory of Hellenistic scholars and poets and is taken from the sphere of non-urban life. It neatly sums up the approach to *mimesis* as it is put into practice in realistic poetry.

Aristophanes fr.927 K.-A.:

ἄγροικός εἰμι· τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγω.

I am a countryman and call a spade a spade.

The fragment, listed by Kassel and Austin under the *Dubia Aristophanea*, is transmitted in Lucian's *Zeus the Tragedian* 32, where Hercules exclaims: οὐκοῦν ἄκουσον, ὦ Ζεῦ, μετὰ παρρησίας· ἐγὼ γάρ, ὡς ὁ κωμικός ἔφη, ἄγροικός εἰμι· τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγω ('Well, hear me frankly, Zeus, for, as the comic poet puts it, 'I am a countryman and call a spade a spade.'). Later sources for the phrase τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγω as a proverb for the simple and unpretentious use of language (as in the English expression 'to call a spade a spade'), seem to convey that the expression was common knowledge among educated people at least from Lucian onwards.

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<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Bierl (2002: 7-21).

What interests me in the context of this study is the fact that Euripides was, according to the material as we have it, depicted both as rustic and as ‘too refined’, and both aspects of this portrayal of Euripides seem to be at work also in Aristophanes fr.927 K.-A. Interestingly, a passage in Ps.-Plutarch almost seems to be an ancient commentary on the the fragment. It mentions Macedonia as a point of reference for the saying ([Plut.] *Reg. et Imp. Apophth.* 178 b):

τῶν δὲ περὶ Λασθένην τὸν Ὀλύνθιον ἐγκαλοῦντων καὶ ἀγανακτοῦντων, ὅτι προδότας αὐτοὺς ἐνιοὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Φίλιππον ἀποκαλοῦσι, σκαιοὺς ἔφη φύσει καὶ ἀγροίκους εἶναι Μακεδόνας τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγοντας.

When some of the men surrounding Lasthenes of Olynthus angrily complained that some of the men surrounding Philip had called them traitors, Philip replied that the Macedonians were naturally gauche and rustic people who call a spade a spade.

(translation Henderson 2007: 525, adapted)

Tzetzes reports the same anecdote in his *Chiliades* 8.556:

ὡς πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀντέλεξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀστείως, ἐκ κωμῶδίας δεξιῶς εἰπὼν Ἀριστοφάνους· οἱ Μακεδόνες ἀμαθεῖς, σκάφην φασὶ τὴν σκάφην, τουτέστιν ὡσπερ ἔχουσι τὰ πράγματα καλοῦσιν. ὑμᾶς προδότας ὄντας δὲ προδότας καὶ καλοῦσιν.

As the king wittily replied to them, cleverly quoting from a comedy by Aristophanes: ‘The Macedonians are stupid and uneducated, they call a spade a spade; in other words, they call things what they are. You are traitors, so that’s what they call you.’<sup>31</sup>

(translation Henderson 2007: 525-7, adapted)

A satisfying reconstruction of the semantic context of Aristophanes fr. 927 K.-A. remains impossible for us. Perhaps it was originally used to

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<sup>31</sup> For the origins of the saying ‘to call a spade a spade’ and its tradition in Greek and Latin literature, see Metzger (1937/8).

characterise a rustic on stage. Perhaps this was even done through the use of proverbial language.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, we cannot establish whether or not later readers of these passages had Euripides and his alleged exile to Macedonia on their minds while reading them, or which other reasons may have contributed to the connection of the proverbial expression with Macedonia rather than any other non-Athenian region which may have been the home of many *metoikoi* in antiquity.<sup>33</sup>

The opposition of urban *versus* rustic has, of course, a long-standing tradition in Greek literature. Most notably, the term ‘rustic’ (ἄγροικος) stands in stark contrast to education, wit and freedom – values which are supposed to be at home only in the *polis* and to be the privilege of the sophisticated Athenian male citizen. The character of the un-educated simpleton from the countryside is perhaps one of the earliest characters in Greek comedy and becomes visible for us in the earliest Greek type of comedy, the Sicilian comedy of the early fifth century BC by Epicharmus.<sup>34</sup> Epicharmus’ farmer ἄγροστῆνος is considered the prototype of the many ἄγροικοι to follow in New Comedy.<sup>35</sup> The character of the urban and sophisticated individual, on the other hand, had its heyday in the late fifth and early fourth century BC.

Mockery of philosophers and other intellectuals seems to be a stock feature of the comic stage just as the mockery of the rustic simpleton.

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<sup>32</sup> I owe this point to Christopher Pelling. Indeed the saying entailed in Aristophanes fr. 927 K.-A. could well have been a more widely used proverbial expression than Tzetzes’ interpretation of the passage in ps.-Plutarch may suggest.

<sup>33</sup> A comedy by Strattis, who was a contemporary of Aristophanes, was entitled Μακεδόνες (‘The Macedonians’) and perhaps featured Agathon at the court of King Archelaus; see the introduction to fr.27 K.-A., and Strattis test.1 K.-A. (=Suda σ1178).

<sup>34</sup> For the tradition of the ἄγροικος in Greek Comedy and its further development in Middle and New Comedy, see Konstantakos (2005).

<sup>35</sup> See Schmid (1929: 642), Kerkhof (2001: 129) and Stark (2004: 147).

In the depiction of intellectuals on the comic stage of the fifth century BC, the model of the rustic simpleton serves as an important foil to the educated Athenian. We know, for instance, that Epicharmus made extensive use of the derision of several of the Sophists.<sup>36</sup> He was probably not the only one to do so: comedians of the last thirty years of the fifth century BC had a special interest in this kind of mockery, nourished by the arrival and increasing influence of the sophistic movement in Athens.

When Socrates is called a beggar in one of the fragments ascribed to Eupolis (fr.386 K.-A.), he embodies the model of the poor and parasitic philosopher as Protagoras does in the play *Kolakes*, or as Pythagoreans do in plays by later comedians.<sup>37</sup> Just like the philosophers, poets, too, belong to the social group of good-for-nothings (ἀργοί) in Greek Comedy.<sup>38</sup> Several passages in Old Comedy convey that poets, at least such ‘useless’ poets like dithyrambists and tragedians, and philosophers such as Socrates or Pythagoras, only pretend to spend their time musing (i.e. in σχολή) but are in fact simply lazy (i.e. ἀ(ε)ργοί).<sup>39</sup>

Jokes about the notorious intellectual Euripides must have been common currency in the Athenian public in the 420s BC. This is apparent from Aristophanes’ declaration in form of a *praeteritio* from the mouth of one of the characters at the beginning of *Wasps* (*Wasps* 54-66):

Φέρε νῦν, κατείπω τοῖς θεαταῖς τὸν λόγον,  
 ὀλίγ’ ἄτθ’ ὑπειπὼν πρῶτον αὐτοῖσιν ταδί, 55  
 μηδὲν παρ’ ἡμῶν προσδοκᾶν λίαν μέγα,  
 μηδ’ αὖ γέλωτα Μεγαρόθεν κεκλεμμένον.

<sup>36</sup> See Wüst (1949-50: 362) Kraus (1984: 232-3) and Stark (2004: 149).

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, the report of Alexis’ play *Ταραντῖνοι* in Diog. Laert. VIII 37 = Cratinus the younger fr.7 K.-A. οἱ Πυθαγορίζοντες in Antiphanes, Aristophon’s *Πυθαγορίστης* (Athen. IV 161e and Diog. Laert. VIII 38 = Aristophon frs.9-12 K.-A.).

<sup>38</sup> See Zimmermann (1998: 262-5) and Stark (2004: 150-1).

<sup>39</sup> Compare Euripides’ first words from inside his house in *Thesm.* 407, where he claims that he has no σχολή.

ἡμῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστ' οὔτε κάρυ' ἐκ φορμίδος  
 δούλω διαρριπτοῦντε τοῖς θεωμένοις,  
 οὔθ' Ἡρακλῆς τὸ δεῖπνον ἐξαπατώμενος, 60  
 οὔδ' αὔθις ἀνασελγαινόμενος Εὐριπίδης ·  
 οὔδ' εἰ Κλέων γ' ἔλαμψε τῆς τύχης χάριν,  
 αὔθις τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα μυττωτεύσομεν,  
 ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν λογίδιον γνώμην ἔχον,  
 ὑμῶν μὲν αὐτῶν οὐχὶ δεξιώτερον, 65  
 κωμωδίας δὲ φορτικῆς σοφώτερον.

Come on now, let me explain the plot to the audience.  
 But first by way of introduction I'll say these few words to them. 55  
 They shouldn't expect anything too grand from us,  
 nor, on the other hand, some laughter stolen from Megara.  
 We haven't got a pair of slaves scattering nuts  
 from little baskets among the spectators,  
 nor a Heracles being cheated of his dinner, 60  
 nor yet an Euripides being wantonly abused once more;  
 nor again, if Cleon had the pure luck to make himself shine,  
 shall we be making mincemeat out of the same man a second time.  
 No, we've got a simple story with a point,  
 no brainier than you are yourselves, 65  
 but cleverer than vulgar comedy.

(translation Sommerstein 1983: 11, slightly adapted)

To announce that he has something new to say, Aristophanes asks his audience to expect the unexpected and new this time, that is: *not* to expect Euripides, 'once again taking outrageous abuse' (οὔδ' αὔθις ἀνασελγαινόμενος Εὐριπίδης, line 61).<sup>40</sup> Typically for the comic hero, Euripides can be laughed at because he represents, as we will see in the discussion of the texts to follow, a negative foil for the characters on stage.

In our passage from the *Wasps*, Aristophanes claims that he will, for a change, *not* talk about Euripides. As a general rule, however, – and the frequency of this phenomenon on the Athenian comic stage in the late fifth century BC can be easily deduced from our passage – Euripides seems to have been singled out from other tragedians of his time and made the

<sup>40</sup> The agenda 'expect the unexpected' can be said to be almost *per definition* Euripidean. Hence, Aristophanes may well have played with the characteristically twisted Euripidean play with spectators' expectations in the above passage. For the literary strategy of the unexpected in Euripidean tragedy, see Hose (2000).

target of derision in the sphere of literary production just as Cleon was the target of derision in the sphere of politics. The material I have considered in this section suggests that Euripides was singled out for special attention (and abuse) in Aristophanes' comedy. The extant plays of Aristophanes – which are only a small proportion of his *oeuvre* – show us in some detail how Euripides was portrayed by Aristophanes, and how that portrayal evolved in the course of time.

## 2. Comedy and the comic hero

As early as 425 BC, a whole scene in a play by Aristophanes was devoted to Euripides in *Acharnians* and a decade later, in *Thesmophoriazousae*, scene after scene – even within the scope of our reduced possibilities of tracing all textual allusions – seems to have been composed almost entirely out of lines from Euripidean tragedies. *Frogs*, the last Aristophanic play I shall discuss, provides the starting point for all later biographical writings about Euripides. It was performed not long after the death of the tragedian, and it is the first ancient text to depict the dead Euripides. As Glenn Most points out, the canonicity of Euripides is central to *Frogs*: 'Only because Euripides is dead can he become canonical; only if he becomes canonical if he survives his death can the city's life be prolonged.'<sup>41</sup>

It is not necessary here to explore all the details of the possible effects and functions of derision in Old Comedy.<sup>42</sup> Instead, I analyse possible functions of the depiction of Euripides in Old Comedy as a starting

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<sup>41</sup> Most (1990: 52).

<sup>42</sup> For a lucid discussion of different forms of the Aristophanic hero and possible models of identification and derision for the individual spectator, see Hose (1995: 40-1).

point for a study of later depictions of the poet.<sup>43</sup> This task is in itself difficult. Simon Goldhill has been especially critical of attempts to attach ideological features to characters on the comic stage.<sup>44</sup> He showed for the character of Dicaeopolis that the simultaneous reactions of empathy and repulsion Dicaeopolis inspires in the modern reader frustrate any effort to interpret Dicaeopolis as a consistent figure with an ideological identity, let alone a political statement by Aristophanes.<sup>45</sup> Rather, so Goldhill, the portrayals of Dicaeopolis, Strepsiades, Socrates and Euripides reflect reactions to political developments in Aristophanes' time. The picture is similarly complex when trying to pinpoint the meaning of 'Euripides' in Aristophanes' work.

### **3. *Thesmophoriazousae***

In *Thesmophoriazousae*, first produced 411 BC, we have a play completely devoted to the portrayal of Euripides and his art.<sup>46</sup> Euripides appears as a comic hero, playing 'himself'. In addition to that, the specific style of Euripidean poetry, most notably his use of the dramatic genre, is put centre-stage and expressed in terms of gender trouble.<sup>47</sup> As a result, the generic –

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<sup>43</sup> On the relationship between Athenian drama and the Athenian audience in the case of tragedy, see Wiles (1997). Wiles' study shows how tragedy alters the sense of the audience as a collective and how 'comedy draws life from deconstructing the world of tragedy.' (Wiles 1997: 208).

<sup>44</sup> See Goldhill (1991: 167-222). On the blurring of several social groups in the character of Dicaeopolis, see Davidson (1997: 233).

<sup>45</sup> On the difficulties to deduce any political statements from Old Comedy, see Goldhill (1991: 194-5) and Fisher (1993: 43-47).

<sup>46</sup> For my purpose, I will leave the political implications aside. I am, however, fully aware that they are crucial for a full apprehension of the play. Hose (1995: 84-8) showed that the comedy is more than an exercise in ridiculing of Euripides.

<sup>47</sup> See Sommerstein (1994: 4): '*Thesmophoriazousae* [...] is not a political play and never was designed to be. It is a drama about drama and about gender, built around a myth that seems to have been firmly established in popular consciousness: that he [i.e. Euripides] was a hater and slanderer of women.'

which in the case of ancient *genera* also means stylistic – flaws of Euripidean tragedy are expressed as a lack of manliness.

The depiction of Euripides in *Thesmophoriazousae* is complex. Not only do the character of Euripides and the charges against him seem to blur with the portrayal of Agathon as just another representative of the ‘new poets’ in this play, it is also next to impossible for us to know how the ancient audience would have perceived passages in which Aristophanes parrots Euripidean tragedy. On this hermeneutic difficulty which remains a problem of any modern approach to Aristophanes and Old Comedy more generally, Whitman rightly observed that ‘The Aristophanic Euripides is a wonderful invention, an image [...] to be constantly revised and refined throughout the comedian’s lifetime, a man of straw meticulously set up, and uproariously knocked down.’<sup>48</sup>

The most notable and exceedingly emphasised feature of the character called Euripides in Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazousae* is his presentation as the poet who corrupted the Athenian women. Aristophanes chose to let the women themselves articulate the main accusations against Euripides. They accuse him of causing husbands to distrust their wives sexually (*Thesm.* 392-400a) as well as in economic matters (*Thesm.* 400b-404). Further, the women at the Thesmophoria accuse Euripides of damaging religion by persuading men that there are no gods (450-52).<sup>49</sup>

Yet, the misrepresentation which the women at the Thesmophoria object to is not exclusively concerned with the representation of female

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<sup>48</sup> Whitman (1964: 63-4).

<sup>49</sup> The charge of atheism is, however, not further developed against Euripides in *Thesm.* as it has been against Socrates in *Clouds* 247-8, 379-381, 423-4, 819-31, 1468-74 and 1506-9. On the alleged charge of atheism against Euripides, see Lefkowitz (1987).

characters in Euripidean tragedy. Rather, their complaint is broader: women are described, humiliated and belittled as ‘trouble and sources of trouble’.<sup>50</sup>

At the beginning of the first speech in lines 383-8, Euripides is accused of having insulted the Athenian representatives of the female sex.

Γύνη Α φιλοτιμία μὲν οὐδεμία μὰ τῷ θεῷ  
λέξουσ’ ἀνέστην, ὦ γυναῖκες; ἀλλὰ γὰρ  
βαρέως φέρω τάλαινα πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον  
προπηλακιζόμενας ὀρώσ’ ὑμᾶς ὑπὸ  
Εὐριπίδου τοῦ τῆς λαχανοπωλητρίας  
καὶ πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖ’ ἀκουούσας κακά. 385

Female A  
By the Twain, it is not from any feeling of ambition  
that I have risen to speak to you, ladies. But because  
I have been vexed already for a long time  
when I saw you insulted by  
Euripides the son of that vegetable-seller  
and subjected to many evil accusations. 385

(translation Henderson 2000: 507, adapted)

These allegations are taken up again at the very end of the speech by the second speaker in lines 455-6, which present the overall claim against Euripides in a nutshell:

Γύνη Β ἄγρια γὰρ ἡμᾶς, ὦ γυναῖκες, δρᾷ κακά,  
ἅτ’ ἐν ἀγρίοισι τοῖς λαχάνοις αὐτὸς τραφεῖς. 455

Female B  
wild are his attacks against us, ladies, since he himself  
was raised among wild herbs.

(translation Henderson 2000: 513, adapted)

As presented by Aristophanes, the women of Athens accuse Euripides of a poetic depiction which is just too close to their actual behaviour, and they force him to swear an oath that he will never depict them ‘like that’ again in his plays.<sup>51</sup> According to Aristophanes, the women of Athens sense a threat

<sup>50</sup> Austin and Olson (2004: liii).

<sup>51</sup> The pun that Euripides of course ‘cannot’ swear, but only make a ‘formal offer’ to the other party as in 1160-63, because in his analysis of the world heart and tongue are separated from each other (275-6), is based on a common knowledge of expression of this thought in *Hipp.* 612, *Melanippe the Wise* fr.487 and probably other plays by Euripides;

to their freedom and prefer not to be given a voice on stage if it might destabilize the good old order of things at home and in the *polis*. Thus, Aristophanes puts the wish to be taken off stage into the women's mouths, not without deriding all the semi-females like Agathon, Euripides and the 'new poets' on the way. As a result, there is an overlap of the ridicule of the new poets and the ridicule of women.<sup>52</sup>

The vegetables mentioned in both of my examples (*Thesmophoriazousae* 455-6 and 387) should, I believe, be read as a poetic metaphor rather than an allusion to the profession of Euripides' mother.<sup>53</sup> The climate in which these lines, and 455-6 especially, are spoken, is one highly charged with sexual, and sexist, allusions and innuendos. The lines immediately following 455-6 allude to prostitution.<sup>54</sup>

In 387, we have perhaps the only textual passage which could back up a theory about Euripides' mother being derided as a vegetable-seller in Old Comedy and/or Athens at the time the *Thesmophoriazousae* were first put on stage.<sup>55</sup> The context of prostitution for the term λαχανοπωλητρία could further have been provided by explicit gestures just before and after 387 and in both cases the 'wildness' of the agrarian products would refer to the sexual wildness of women at the Thesmophoria.

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that Euripides swears 'by Ether' (272) rather than 'by Zeus' is another indicator of his 'airiness'.

<sup>52</sup> Outbursts against women (ψόγοι γυναικῶν) have a longstanding tradition in Greek literature, and the perhaps distorted and exaggerated versions of it on the stage of Old Comedy are echoes of an old *topos*. In Aristophanes, they also contain a notion of paratragedy, as they revive the famous tirades in which Euripides has Hippolytus blame Zeus for the existence of women in Eur. *Hipp.* 616-24.

<sup>53</sup> Pace Olson, who still quotes *Th.*387; *Eq.*19; *Th.*456 and *Ra.*840 as evidence that Aristophanes '[...] routinely refers to her as a vegetable-vendor' (Olson 2002: 196).

<sup>54</sup> See Ruck (1975: 17), not mentioned in Sommerstein's commentary.

<sup>55</sup> Olson (2004: 177) infers historical facts about the generation before Euripides' mother from this passage: '[...] the most likely conclusion is that the father of Euripides' mother grew or traded vegetables on a wholesale level.'

The term used to describe the ‘wildness’ of Euripides and his tragedies, ἄγριος, is not only used by Euripides in *Frogs* to accuse Aeschylus of creating primitive, uncivilized characters,<sup>56</sup> but is used in *Thesmophoriazousae* 455 to describe the wild nature of the ‘wrongs’ (κακά) Euripides himself has allegedly done to the Athenian women. It is worth noting that the urban model is by no means univocally preferred to the rustic model. In fact, both types get their share of derision and, in accordance with the social reality of most spectators in the audience, rural life and customs are even – although perhaps ironically – idealised in Aristophanes.<sup>57</sup> We are in the case of the *Thesmophoriazousae*, as in the case of most other plays and fragments from lost plays by Aristophanes, confronted with a highly sophisticated play with texts and stereotypes.<sup>58</sup>

Euripides appears as effeminate and plotting unhelpful plans in the background of the action of the play, while his relative Mnesilochus has to endure the consequences of Euripides’ plans. Agathon’s quotation of the Chamaeleontic dictum (‘as a poet is, so he lets speak the characters in his plays’)<sup>59</sup> – a dictum I discuss below – is exemplified in Euripides: he gives such ‘wild’ lines to the female characters in his tragedies that even the women at the Thesmophoria complain about him. To conclude, in *Thesmophoriazousae* Euripides appears as the metonymical representation

<sup>56</sup> See Ar. *Ran.* 837: ἄνθρωπον ἀγριοποιὸν ἀύθαδόστομον (‘Arrogant, wanton savage that he is’).

<sup>57</sup> See Ehrenberg (1968: 95) and Hose (1995: 35 n. 33).

<sup>58</sup> Goldhill (1990: 167-222) illustrates how in Aristophanes especially, a mixing and matching of the available literary repertoire looms large.

<sup>59</sup> Chamaeleon fr. 40 Wehrli, quoted by Agathon in *Thesm.* 149-50: ἄ δ’ αὐτὸς τραγωδοποιὸς ἐποίει, ταῦτα τοῖς ἥρωσι περιέθηκε. The tragic poet attributes to his heroes what he did himself. (see also Aristophanes fr.694 K.-A.).

of his plays and is depicted as a 'schemer and victim',<sup>60</sup> both misogynist and effeminate.

#### 4. *Acharnians*

In *Acharnians* 393-489 (= Kovacs T 70), the depiction of Euripides dominates a complete scene of the comedy. Whereas Dicaeopolis is the play's 'comic hero', Euripides supplies him with the latest fashion in dramatic speech. The first mention of Euripides' name is closely connected with fear and ridicule.

More terrifying than the encounter with Euripides, however, is the fact that Dicaeopolis will have to face the Athenian public in the theatre. And he will make a speech in which the Peloponnesian War will be likened to the Trojan War and which will show Pericles' strategy in the face of the Peloponnesian invasion to be a political failure.<sup>61</sup> Hence, Dicaeopolis needs courage because he is going to deliver a 'Euripidean' critique of the Peloponnesian War and because he is just about to undergo a change of his 'public identity', and has to change his language and costume in order to do so. The first two lines of the passage convey an important idea about Euripides: his criticism of Athenian politics is potentially dangerous. This is followed by a second characteristic, his sophistication. Dicaeopolis' question whether Euripides is at home is followed by a phrase articulated in the oxymoronic style of Gorgias which seems to have been perceived as a

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<sup>60</sup> Russo (1994: 191).

<sup>61</sup> Pericles' politics had been ridiculed in comedy on several occasions, see, for instance, Hermippus fr.74 K.-A. and Heath (1990: 147) and Vickers (1990: 60) on a possible similar instance in Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*. For the depiction of Pericles in Old Comedy more generally, see Schwarze (1971: 6-24) and Vickers (1997), with further bibliography. For the Trojan aspects of *Telephus*, see Heath (1987b).

favourite of Euripides: he is at home and not at home, an aphoristic statement supposed to convey a *gnome* (line 396).<sup>62</sup>

Since Dicaeopolis does not get the joke, Euripides' servant is willing to give him one of several possible interpretations of the sophistic 'yes and no': Euripides' νοῦς is not at home, but he himself is: a brief and, of course, comically distorted abstract of Anaxagoras' philosophy, which is transferred from the realm of the physical and metaphysical design of the cosmos to the simple anthropology and epistemology of everyday life.<sup>63</sup>

The separation of the key word νοῦς from its original meaning enables the comic poet to suggest a surreal separation of self and mind. According to Plato (see *Hippias Maior* 283 and *Phaedo* 97b) and Plutarch's account (see *Pericles* 4.6), Anaxagoras was simply called 'The Mind' (Νοῦς) by his contemporaries. It is worth noting that the whole passage covering the parody of Euripides' *Telephus* is 'framed' by the word νοῦς. In an ironic twist, νοῦς refers to Anaxagoras and his influence on Euripides and Euripidean tragedy, and as a metonymical description of the absent body of the tragedian, it refers to the mind and literary genius of Euripides as well as to the poet as a corporeal person.

While Euripides' mind is 'out' and busy gathering material ('verselets') Euripides himself spends his time inside his house and produces tragedies.<sup>64</sup> Four characteristics of Euripides are communicated by

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<sup>62</sup> For examples in Euripides' own plays, see *Alc.* 521 'she lives and lives not', *IT* 512 'I am in a sort of voluntary-involuntary exile', *Ph.* 272 'I trust and mistrust my mother' and the notorious use of opposite meanings and expressions (ἐναντιοσμήματα) in Euripidean drama. That such figures of speech must have been aped quite commonly in ancient comedy is also clear from a passage preserved in Plato fr.166 K.-A.

<sup>63</sup> For an overview of Anaxagoras' philosophy, see Teodorsson (1982: 23-4). On Anaxagoras' νοῦς, see Laks (1993: 19-38) and Curd (2006: 44-7).

<sup>64</sup> I translate the term ἀναβάδην as conveying both possible meanings simultaneously, describing Euripides as both lazy ('with his feet up') and effeminate ('upstairs') – as the

the description of Euripides' way of writing: plagiarism and eclecticism (ξυλλέγων), a taste for short sayings (ἐπύλλια),<sup>65</sup> oddity (ὁ νοῦς μὲν ἔξω [...], αὐτὸς δ' ἔνδον) and laziness (ἀνοβάδην). The attribution of plagiarism and eclecticism seems closely connected with the political development of democracy in Athens. As Andrew Ford observed:

In the democracy, the trend was increasingly against the old and, once decontextualized, obscure lyric songs and toward the collections of metrically simple but clever 'little sayings' of Euripides, himself seen as a collector of sayings' (*stōmuliosullektadē*).<sup>66</sup>

To these features we can add two more. As Dicaeopolis replies in lines 400b-401, Euripides is praised as thrice-blest, and it is observed that 'his very slave' is adapting to the latest fashion and plays his role cleverly (σοφῶς).<sup>67</sup>

The words convey several stereotypical judgments about Euripides' art: the exaggerated pathos of his language (ὦ τρισμακάριος), and the cliché mockery regarding his σοφία.<sup>68</sup> In 407, finally, Euripides enters the stage. His first words are astonishing: like Socrates in his

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upper part of the οἶκος used to be the sphere of the female inhabitants in classical Athens. For a similar image of the mind as separated from the rest of an individual, see E. *Ion* 251 'Although I was there, I must have left my mind back home'. See also Sommerstein's commentary on the passage (Sommerstein 1994: 173).

<sup>65</sup> The ἐπύλλια are also mentioned in *Peace* 532, where Hermes points out to Trygaeus that Theoria does not take pleasure in a 'poet of law-court speeches' such as Euripides, and in *Frogs* 942, where the shortcomings of Aeschylus' poetry are contrasted with the lighter, more polished style of Euripides.

<sup>66</sup> Ford (2002: 207).

<sup>67</sup> Note that the vocabulary here used for the slave's reply is explicitly theatrical: ὑποκρίνεται, i.e. quite literally 'he interprets' (like an actor would interpret a character). See also *Wasps* 53 and Starkie (1909: 89).

<sup>68</sup> That the Euripidean concept of σοφία is in fact a rather complex and ambiguous concept has been recently shown by Origa (2007). The ubiquity of σοφία, and its products, wise sayings, probably helped Euripidean tragedy to survive over the ages and also secured the untiring interest in the life of Euripides while lines from his tragedies had a second career in anecdotes, quotations, *florilegia* and *gnomologiai*.

‘Thinkery’, the *phrontisterion*, the poet is too busy to be bothered with visitors.<sup>69</sup>

Euripides’ remark that he has no time (407) is followed by a joke about the *ekkyklêma* as a favourite prop and dramaturgic solution of Euripidean theatre and therefore also of Aristophanic ridicule (408a). This rather hectic beginning of the scene is followed by the spatial play on ‘upstairs’ and ‘downstairs’, or ‘feet up’ and ‘feet down’. The *ekkyklêma*-joke implies the notion of a ‘coming down’ stylistically and intellectually which is followed by a mock-tragic exchange about possibility and necessity (408b-c) and by several interesting features of ‘Euripides’: his wailing reluctance (409), his linguistic haughtiness (410b), and his penchant for the unexpected, i.e. turning things upside-down, the idleness of his intellectuality (410c). Further comical remarks are made about the lame result of his wit (411),<sup>70</sup> the pitiable appearance (413-415) and long speeches (416) of Euripidean characters, and their exaggerated sense of disaster (417). Euripides’ play *Telephus* clearly is the target of derision in this passage.<sup>71</sup>

The main concern of Dicaeopolis in his scene with Euripides seems to be his wish to get the wondrous props from Euripides, including

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<sup>69</sup> See *Nub.* 221-5 for Socrates, and *Pl. Prot.* 314d, where the *topos* of business is equally used to describe a feature of sophistic self-fashioning.

<sup>70</sup> That Euripides brought lame characters on stage (e.g. Bellerophon) is also witnessed by the remark of Trygaios’ son in *Peace* 146-8: ἐκείνο τήρει, μὴ σφαλῆς καταρρυῆς | ἐντεῦθεν, εἶτα χωλὸς ὢν Εὐριπίδῃ | λόγον παράσχεις καὶ Τραγωδία γένη. ‘Watch out that you don’t slip and fall down from there then, when you are lame, you will provide Euripides with a plot and become a tragedy.’ (= T 74 Kovacs, translation by David Kovacs). See also Aristophanes fr.694 K.-A. with Raines (1935: 202) and Muecke (1977: 63). In *Frogs* 846 Euripides is simply referred to by Aeschylus as ‘the maker of lame people’ (ὁ χλωποποιός).

<sup>71</sup> For a reconstruction of the play, see Preiser (2000) and Jouan (2002); for *Telephus* and its Aristophanic parody see Webster (1967: 43-8); Rau (1967) 42-50; Heath (1987). Cropp (1995); Preiser (2000: 71-97); Jouan (2002) 91-132 and Aguilar (2003) and Austin/Olson (2004: lvi-lviii); for *Telephus* and Euripides in this scene, see Preiser (2000: 178-83) and McGlew (2002: 78-82).

the Phrygian cap, a stock-attribute for Barbarians. As an icon of Euripidean stagecraft the cap illustrates the detachment of Euripidean dramatic art and the crude realism of comedy. The Phrygian cap is mentioned just before Dicaeopolis sets out to visit Euripides. After it is made clear that the stock of desperate creatures in rags is immense in Euripidean drama, Dicaeopolis goes on to tease Euripides even more and ask for some ‘typically Euripidean’ props from him: not only the see-through rags but also Telephus’ ‘invisibility cap’ and props such as a beggar’s staff (448),<sup>72</sup> a ‘little wicker-basket with a hole burnt through it by a lamp’ (453), a ‘tiny cup with the broken lid’ (459), ‘a little jar that is plugged with a sponge’ (463) and ‘an extra bunch of peppermint’ (469) are in Dicaeopolis’ possession.

Thus disguised as the Euripidean character of Telephus, Dicaeopolis braces himself for defence. In the Euripidean play named after him, Telephus was a spy on other characters who tried to convince his audience of his innocence and his ‘Greekness’. Dicaeopolis, on the other hand, fails to pretend he is innocent and instead accumulates props which symbolise his non-Greekness while dismantling Euripides to the point where the dramatist loses his temper and harshly sends him away.<sup>73</sup>

Two lines spoken by Euripides are especially interesting: his exclamation ‘Man, you’ll take away the tragedy from me!’ (ἄνθρωπ’, ἀφαιρήσει με τὴν τραγωδίαν) in line 464 and the dramatic expression ‘You’ll be my death!’ in line 470 (ἀπολεῖς μ’). Both lines indicate that the character called ‘Euripides’ can be read as a personification of Euripidean

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<sup>72</sup> For the contrast of the beggar (πτωχός) and the ‘useful citizen’ (πολίτης χρηστός) in *Acharnians*, see Dicaeopolis’ dialogue with Lamachus *Ach.* 593-5.

<sup>73</sup> See lines 450, 456, 458, 460, 464 and Euripides’ last words in 480.

tragedy. The exclamation by Euripides in line 464 is in fact ambiguous in the Greek original: it can be translated as ‘Man, you’ll take away the tragedy [i.e. the play *Telephus*] from me!’, or as ‘Man, you’ll take away tragedy [i.e. my tragic art] from me!’ The expression ‘You’ll be my death!’ (ἀπολεῖς μ’) in line 470 later became a characteristic expression of Menander’s misanthropic hero *Dyscolus*<sup>74</sup> and is followed by the concluding summary of the defeat with the words ‘There you go. Departed are my stage effects.’ (ἰδοῦ σοι. φροῦδά μοι τὰ δράματα.).

In this passage, Euripides refers to himself in two different ways. First, the play *Telephus* is handed over to Dicaeopolis. Secondly, by using the term ‘tragedy’ in the expression ‘you take away tragedy from me’ Euripides refers to his profession as a tragedian. The use of an author’s name to refer both to himself and to his work seems to have been a source of delight also for the audiences of other texts. Aelian reports an anecdote about Agathon: As a well-meaning critic offered Agathon to take away the impressive splendour of rhetorically refined *antitheseis* from his tragedies, Agathon is said to have replied:

ἀλλὰ σύ γε, γενναῖε, λέληθας σεαυτὸν τὸν  
Ἀγάθωνα ἐκ τοῦ Ἀγάθωνος ἀφανίζων.

Why, noble creature, you seem not to see that you  
would be robbing Agathon of all the Agathon.<sup>75</sup>

To conclude, there is more than mere ‘paratragedy’ at stake in Dicaeopolis’ metamorphosis into the Euripidean hero *Telephus*.<sup>76</sup> Aristophanes seems to explore the limits of theatre and presents the realism of Euripides in a

<sup>74</sup> See Men. *Dysc.* 412.

<sup>75</sup> Ael. *Var. Hist.* 14.13. For a more detailed discussion of the passage, and the depiction of Agathon by Aristophanes, see Rhys Roberts (1900).

<sup>76</sup> On the phenomenon of paratragedy in Aristophanic comedy, Rau (1967) is still of fundamental importance.

grotesque hyper-realistic distortion. Not only does Aristophanes play with the game of illusions and identities (and in this outwits the author of such plays as *Helen* or *Telephus*), the comic poet also handles the question of generic difference and personal distinction with humour and ease.

Aristophanes' hero seems to dress himself as a 'Euripidean hero' in an act of self-conscious meta-theatre. As a result, Dicaeopolis becomes more and more Euripidean in the course of the play, as he literally incorporates Euripidean art and is shown to be 'drinking down Euripides' (καταπιὼν Εὐριπίδην, line 484).<sup>77</sup> Costume in *Acharnians*, therefore, is more than the meta-poetic device of 'See-Through Rags'.<sup>78</sup> It serves both as a way of clothing the just-citizen-turned-beggar Dicaeopolis and as a metonymic summary of the allegedly beggarly art of Euripidean drama. In addition to that, the term beggar (πτωχός) was in Old Comedy also regularly used to describe Socrates and his students, as Aristophanes fr.506 K.-A. and Eupolis fr.386 K.-A. illustrate.

Euripides, it seems, and Dicaeopolis with him, have turned into the beggar put on stage in his own dramas. Similarly, perhaps, to the notorious painter Pauson whom the *Suda* lexicon calls Pauson πτωχότερος, Euripides is depicted as realistically as he depicted others. The early reception of Euripides' play *Telephus* in Aristophanic comedy suggests that the beggarly state of Euripides' characters invited comedians to draw conclusions about the quality of Euripides' plays. Perhaps this relationship

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<sup>77</sup> The imagery is echoed in Lucian's *Zeus the Opera Singer*, as Hera mockingly remarks she 'swallowed Euripides whole' (τὸν Εὐριπίδην ὅλον καταπεπώκαμεν) to be able to play up to her husband (Luc. *Jup. Trag.* 2).

<sup>78</sup> Thus the title of chapter 17 in Reckford (1987); I do not agree with Reckford and Hubbard (1991), however, that the game with illusions played in the *Telephus*-scene finally unmasks Aristophanes as the author (Reckford 1987: 175) or serves as a platform for the *persona* of the comic poet (Hubbard 1991: 58-9).

between Euripidean characters and the quality of his plays was also symbolised by the props used in the *Telephus* scene.<sup>79</sup>

Euripides' laziness and the beggarly condition of his characters seem the special focus of *Acharnians*. Euripides' bookishness, however, and the notion that he may be able to provide others with solutions to politically tricky situations, also occurs in the only extant Aristophanic comedy which was put on stage after Euripides' death.

### 5. *Frogs*

In *Frogs* for the first time in the biographical tradition, we encounter the dead Euripides, as Dionysus descends to the Underworld to let Euripides and Aeschylus compete for a public duty – the Euripidean σώζειν runs like a *leitmotif* through the play:<sup>80</sup> the city of Athens, we are told, is in need of help. The process of selection and canonization is well captured in the play. Glenn Most states with respect to *Frogs*: 'It would be hard to imagine a better symbol for the relationship between canonization and mortality than this descent to the Underworld.'<sup>81</sup> The testimony of *Frogs* is therefore of paramount importance for the making of what will later become the 'main tradition' and *communis opinio* about Euripides and Euripidean drama. The comedy depicts some of the mechanisms of the agonistic impetus of literary production for the Athenian stage, and its conception of 'Euripides' is

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<sup>79</sup> The connection between the disguise of Telephus, as borrowed by Dicacopolis, and Euripidean art, is explored even further by C.W. Macleod (1974: 221-22 and 1980: 6). Macleod attractively argues that both costume and cap could have been presented as scrolls, so that they would look like the manuscripts of a play. Although this reading is highly attractive, Macleod's suggestion remains speculative and has no support from the text or the *scholia*. The term σπάργαλα ('wrappings'), on which Macleod's argument mainly rests, is not exclusively related to books and the imagery and wit of the scene can be explained easily without assuming the presence of scrolls on the comic stage.

<sup>80</sup> The word σώζειν ('to rescue') is exploited in *Frogs* 382, 386, 738, 1127, 1152, 1419, 1433, 1436, 1448, 1450, 1458, 1501, 1517.

<sup>81</sup> Most (1990: 51).

central for the reception of Euripides and his plays within antiquity and beyond. Even from the scarce evidence we have for the ‘rivals’ of Aristophanes, some conclusions about common elements of their comedies can be drawn.<sup>82</sup>

The poetic *agôn* between Aeschylus and Euripides in *Frogs* is an elaborate showdown of literary criticism and both ‘Euripides’ and ‘Aeschylus’ transport and embody different political views, while the play as a whole is a quest for rescue for the city of Athens.<sup>83</sup> The clichés the weighing scene communicated about the art of Euripidean and Aeschylean poetry are – not least because of their graphic depiction – memorable: whereas Aeschylus is serious, impressive and ‘heavy’, Euripides seems too refined and light.

In *Frogs*, Dionysus is sent into Hades by the ‘longing’ (πόθος) for Euripides, created by Euripides’ play *Andromeda*.<sup>84</sup> The god of the theatre seems to favour Euripides over Aeschylus but finally decides to take Aeschylus, not Euripides, back from Hades to Athens. The discrepancy between the original preference of Euripides over Aeschylus and Dionysus’ later decision for Aeschylus has repeatedly be seen as an inconsistency and difficulty of *Frogs*.<sup>85</sup> I will come back to Dionysus’ decision later.

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<sup>82</sup> On the problematic notion of the rivalry between Aristophanes and his colleagues, and our meagre knowledge about it, see Ruffell (2002) who concedes: ‘The rivalry between comic poets remains one of the great gaps in our understanding of Old Comedy.’ (2002: 138). On Aristophanes and other comedians of Old and Middle Comedy more generally, see Heath (1990) and the contributions in Harvey/Wilkins (2000).

<sup>83</sup> See Hubbard (1991: 214-19), Dover (1993: 69-76), Hose (1995: 169-82) and Bobrick (1997: 192).

<sup>84</sup> In this section, I refer to the Greek text after Dover (1993) unless otherwise stated. For the frame of the *Andromeda* parody as the perfect setting to create the comic subject of things foreign and strange, see Zimmermann (2005: 153-55).

<sup>85</sup> Dionysus’ decision has received ample discussion, see most importantly Radermacher (1953 [1921]: 339-48); Fraenkel (1962: 163-188); Erbse (1975); Hooker (1980); Dover (1993: 19-20); Lada-Richards (1999: 217-23), Paulsen (2000) and Hose (2008: 9-16).

The *agôn* between Euripides and Aeschylus in Aristophanes' *Frogs* showcases more than the mere opposition of two different concepts of language, aesthetics and moral values. The first standard by which the poets are judged is their degree of creativity. Dionysus searches for a productive, or 'fertile', poet (γόνιμος, line 96). The metaphor seems to recall references to Euripides' work almost in terms of a biological derivation, a terminology that will occur elsewhere in the biographical tradition.<sup>86</sup> Euripides' slave Cephisophon, for example, is not only said to have collaborated with Euripides in the production of his plays but also to have collaborated with Euripides' wife in committing adultery – an act that is depicted as having motivated Euripides' production of *Hippolytus* and other plays.<sup>87</sup> With due caution, this allegation could perhaps be interpreted as an example for a metaphor of the work of a poet as his child.<sup>88</sup>

Assuming that Sophocles is probably content where he is and that Agathon no longer lives in Athens, Dionysus decides that Euripides is the tragedian who meets the requirements of 'noble speech' (γενναῖον ῥῆμα, line 97), which his copious imitators do not possess. Euripides' language is said to be innovative and adventurous (παρακεκινδυμευμένον, line 99). Yet, measured by the standards of Aeschylean drama, Euripides' language falls short of the moral requirements of exhortation and education. Aeschylus suggests that his poetry 'strengthens and unites the men in

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<sup>86</sup> The expression of Euripides' productivity in biological terms seems also at stake in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* as well as in the anonymously transmitted *Genos Euripidou*. For a full discussion of these texts see chapters 3 and 5 below.

<sup>87</sup> See my discussion of Aristophanes fr.596 K.-A. on p. 55 below.

<sup>88</sup> A famous example of this metaphor is the representation of texts as children in Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium*, Pl. *Symp.* 210a.

action' (lines 1015-16), while Euripides' idea of language seems to be quite different, as he acts as a spokesman for democracy and peace.

Politically, Euripides seems to represent a position opposed to that of Aeschylus. His 'democratic art' (952) functions throughout the contest as a corollary to Aeschylus' outrageous accusations that Euripides 'reduced tragedy to the level of the mob'.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, Aristophanes again draws on an already existing pattern: in the *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi* as in *Peace*, which alludes to it, two main issues are at stake, the rejection of war poetry and the praise of peace.<sup>90</sup>

The attribution of the adjectives 'wisely' (σοφῶς) and 'clearly' (σαφῶς) to the Euripides and Sophocles in line 1434 (ὁ μὲν σοφῶς γὰρ εἶπεν, ὁ δ' ἕτερος σαφῶς, 'One speaks wisely, the other clearly') has been subject to much debate. I do not follow the standard reading of the lines, which attributes 'wisely' to Euripides' and his aphorism and 'clearly' to Aeschylus' narrative,<sup>91</sup> as Dionysus is shown to deride both Aeschylus and Euripides for their alleged command of language and wisdom. Thus both terms are, I think, applicable to both poets, as they are used in a highly ironical manner by Dionysus and ridicule the 'uselessness' of the art of tragedy for the actual concerns of ordinary people. In fact, both terms could have been attributed to the tragedians in the conventional way (wisdom attributed to Aeschylus, clarity attributed to Euripides) as well as in the form

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<sup>89</sup> I do not agree with Lada-Richard (1999: 223-31) who claims that Dionysus himself allies with Aeschylus from the prologue onwards, thus foreshadowing his final decision of the *agôn*. Nor can I find evidence in the text for Sommerstein's notion that Aeschylus is granted a 'divine status' at the end of the play (Sommerstein 1996, quoted with approval by Lada-Richards 1999: 327 n.5).

<sup>90</sup> See Richardson (1981: 2-5) and Graziosi (2001: 60).

<sup>91</sup> See Dover (1993: 372); rather, Dionysus is mocking both poets equally, thus emphasising his inability to judge.

of an inversion of the conventional pattern if we assume irony at play in their pronunciation on stage.

In a final suggestion of how to rescue the city, Euripides describes an absurdly mock-military attack of the enemy with vinegar (1437-41), whereas Aeschylus raises a laugh of Dionysus by mentioning honest, capable and patriotic people (1446-8) and good old wealth (1463-5). Like salt, vinegar is in Old Comedy regularly mentioned to express the quality of poetry.<sup>92</sup>

As so often in comedy, we should perhaps assume several innuendos for the imagery of vinegar. Euripides suggests to attack the enemy with vinegar. What does this mean? It could, of course, mean the inundation of the citizens with bad poetry. But it could also, in a line with the tradition of vinegar and ‘an acidic heart’ as used by Theognis, mean the use explicit words against the enemy, which is in keeping with his character. Images from cooking, wine-making, and the production of honey have a long history as vehicles for judgements about the quality of poetry and speech. In fact, the imagery of cooking and recipes which was so popular with the comic poets in the fifth and fourth century BC will turn up again in my next chapter, as Satyrus quotes a passage from Aristophanes (fr.\*595 K.-A.), which would otherwise have been lost and is of great interest for our discussion of the ancient biographical tradition on Euripides.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Vinegar is, for instance, mentioned in Anaxandrides’ Πρωτεσίλαος (see frs.42 and 58 K.-A.), Antiphanes’ Λευκάδιος (fr.140,3 K.-A.), Anaxippus’ ‘The Ashamed’ (Ἐγκαλυπτόμενος. fr.1,7 K.-A.) and in a comedy by Philemo (fr.113, 3 K.-A.).

<sup>93</sup> Food, cookery, and eating habits of the culturally ‘Other’ seem to form a cross-cultural and transhistorically consistent source of delight and mockery in the street-wise and jokingly disrespectful use of language. See, for instance, the tradition of the Japanese to call the Koreans ‘garlic-eaters’, the French reference to the British as ‘roastbeef’, and the British tradition of calling the French ‘frogs’ and the Germans ‘Krauts’.

δὲ Σοφοκλέα λαβῶν,  
παπ' Αἰσχύλου [ ] ὅσον [ ] εσθ', ὅλον  
Εὐριπίδην, πρὸς τοῖσι δ' ἐμβαλεῖν ἄλας,  
μεμνημένος δ' ὅπως ἄλαςκαὶ μὴ λάλας.  
(B) εἰκόασιν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι τῶν ἀντιδι δασκόντων αὐτῶ,  
καθάπερ  
εἶπας. ἀτὰρ σιναμῶρος γε κἀνταῦθα πάλιν ὁ  
κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος ἐπέδακεν τὸν Εὐριπίδην.

'take ... Sophocles,  
some Aeschylus ... as much..., all of  
Euripides, and add some salt,  
keep in mind, however, salt, not talk.' (Aristophanes fr. \*595  
K.-A.)

(Speaker B) Again, these seem to be the words of one of his  
rivals in the tragic contest. But here, too, the comedian bites  
greedily at Euripides.

The passage could have been part of a comedy by Aristophanes but we do not know which one.<sup>94</sup> It is intriguing, as it contains a recipe on how to prepare the perfect 'stew' of Greek tragedy for the audience (Aristophanes fr.\*595 K.-A.): "take ... Sophocles, some Aeschylus ... as much..., all of Euripides and add some salt, keep in mind, however (μεμνημένος δ'): salt, not talk." The discussion of a (mock-)recipe might imply a hint (by either the author or his main speaker) to the sphere of cooking and household management, which in Athenian drama had explicit female connotations just like the sphere of chatter and too much talking: λαλία is not only a term commonly used with respect to Euripides but often describes the 'talkativeness of women'.

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<sup>94</sup> Kassel and Austin classify it as F 959 of the *fabulae incertae*; Kuiper (1913: 241) suggests that fr. XVI could have belonged to the comedy *Geryades*, which is not unlikely since the play dealt with literature and literary criticism about poets; most probably, it contained several instances of the metaphorical description of poetry as a dish (cf. Aristophanes F 158 K.-A. and 162 K.-A.). It remains, however, difficult to identify the original context of the passage with any certainty. Both literary criticism and the metaphorical use of food were not uncommon features of the comic stage at the time. For an overview of the topic of literary criticism in Old Comedy see Dover (1993: 25-7), for passages in Old Comedy that referred to poetry as a dish see Schorn (2004: 316 n.731).

For our purpose to analyse the characterisation of Euripides in the text, the passage not only helps visualising the scaling of the three great tragedians (evoking, of course, the weighing scene in *Frogs*), it is also perfectly Aristophanic in expressing a proposition about literature, and Athenian tragedy especially, in terms of cooking. Furthermore, it represents the popularity of the Greek tragedians' work in the Hellenistic period: all of Euripides was popular with the audience (and received the widest geographical spread), whereas Sophoclean and Aeschylean tragedy seems to have been far less popular in post-classical times.<sup>95</sup> However, all three 'big' Athenian playwrights or the stories of their tragedies respectively seem to contain enough spice and flavour for our speaker: only a little salt needs to be added.

The pun on ἄλας and λάλας cannot be captured in translation but could suggest that 'all of Euripides' already contains enough talk – on this the text would be in accordance with the biographical tradition up to Satyrus. The association of λαλία with Euripides is a running gag on the stage of Old Comedy and a topical feature in the biographical tradition.<sup>96</sup> Hunt and Schorn

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<sup>95</sup> Fairweather (1984: 369 n.204) seems to interpret 'all of Euripides' as criticising Euripides' copying of the other two poets. I think her reading does not hit the crucial point of Euripides' popularity with the audience and that a combination of come Aeschylus, some Sophocles and all of Euripides surely would not have been necessary if Euripidean drama already contained most of the other two types of drama. Her line of thought seems unnecessarily complicated for an adequate reading of the passage.

<sup>96</sup> λαλία is presented as characteristic feature of Euripidean poetry in *Frogs* 91, 815, 915, 954 and 1069; equally in Aristophanes F 392 K.-A.(=*Diog.Laert.* 2.18) and Plut. *de aud.* 45 B. Dover (1993: 22) neatly illustrates the actual semantics of the term, also with respect to its later usage in the course of the fourth century. At the very heart of its semantic dimension, λαλία denotes talk rather than chatter, especially "talking where action would more appropriate [...] or talking out of turn when prompt and silent compliance is needed" (Dover 1993: 22). Both descriptions fit to the sense in which λαλία is used as a standard reproach against both women quite generally and characters (both male and female) in Euripidean drama, commonly contrasts with the silent characters in Aeschylean tragedy (cf. for example *Frogs* 916-7). However, the accusation of λαλία in *Frogs* has also another layer of connotation: it refers sarcastically to the sophistic movement and the tendency in the education and self-fashioning of Aristophanes' contemporaries (and the younger

here take λαλία to stress the general ‘lack of substance’ of Euripidean tragedy, as all of Euripides is used but only some parts of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Of course λαλία as one of the main features applied to Euripidean tragedy, in this passage as well as in other assessments of Euripidean tragedy in antiquity, also carries connotations of linguistic plainness and a rather conversational style, which is based on everyday language.<sup>97</sup> The term for salt (ἄλς) on the other hand, is known to have served as a metaphorical expression of literary criticism in antiquity.<sup>98</sup> In most cases, it describes the intellectual wit or the crucial point of literary products such as tragedy: literary texts which were considered ‘saltless’ simply lacked wit and were considered to present pointless narratives. Hunt and Schorn therefore conclude that Euripidean tragedy is not only criticised for being insubstantial but also for being without any wit.<sup>99</sup> I conclude the following: salt is explicitly added to the dish which with ‘all of Euripides’ seems already to contain enough talk. Euripides thus stands metonymically for his poetry and is part of a joke on standards of literary criticism, which might be modelled of earlier examples from Old Comedy and clearly exposes him as an important figure for later generations, poets and audiences alike.

In comparison with the earlier plays *Acharnians* and *Thesmophoriazousae*, *Frogs* seems to have a more serious political agenda.

An important element of Euripidean story-telling, salvation (σωτηρία) is

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generation especially) to talk about anything in a rhetorically styled way (cf. for example *Frogs* 1069-73 or *Clouds* 930-1 and 1052-4).

<sup>97</sup> Cf., for instance, the famous passages in *Frogs*, where the λαλία of the characters in Euripidean tragedy is contrasted to the grave silences of Aeschylus (*Ran.* 917) and Euripides confessed on the comic stage that he taught people to λαλεῖν (*Ran.* 954).

<sup>98</sup> For salt as a *terminus technicus* of literary criticism in LSJ s.v. ἄλς (A) IV.

<sup>99</sup> Hunt (1912: 179) explains ‘all of Euripides’ as follows: „i.e. you will want the whole in order to extract a flavour.“ Schorn (2004: 315) similarly believes that Euripidean poetry is thus said to be without substance and that the need of all of Euripides suggests that his tragedies were considered as rather lacking salt (i.e. wit) by the speaker in the comic text.

the central theme from beginning to end.<sup>100</sup> The centrality and urgency of σωτηρία also helps to understand the need for both Euripides and Aeschylus. The need for Euripides is expressed in the design of *Frogs*, which draws extensively on Euripidean ‘rescue plays’, most of all on *Andromeda*. Bravery and ‘Marathonian values’ as symbolised in the character of Aeschylus and the outcome of the *agôn*. Thus, although the ‘idea’ of σωτηρία, for which Dionysus longs so much, stems from Euripidean drama, the god of the theatre has to ‘change his mind’ and favour the ‘practical’ need for Aeschylean martial morals at the outcome of the contest between the two dramatists.

The difficulties many interpreters have had with the outcome of the *agôn* of Aeschylus and Euripides are perhaps to do with the fact that the winner of the *agôn* is neither of the two tragedians but Aristophanes himself. Not tragedy makes the best remedy for the current state of Athens but comedy. With the outcome of *Frogs*, we are left almost in *aporia*. However, one of many possible conclusions for the audience could be to assume that the tragic poets only repeat themselves – even beyond their actual death (which attests to the posthumous popularity of their plays), whereas the comic poet enjoys the liberty of folly and invention. As the context of *Frogs* is one of laughter and ridicule, Dionysus’ decision to bring back Aeschylus as a solution for the city’s actual problems must have been hilarious for the spectators in the theatre of Dionysus and not, as some modern interpreters want to make us believe, a problematic inconsistency.

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<sup>100</sup> See Kenneth Dover’s remark ‘Given the treatment of Euripides in earlier plays (notably *Thesmophoriazousae*, but also *Acharnians*, and incidentally *Clouds*), an enthusiasm for Euripides instantly establishes Dionysus as a target of humour (Dover 1993: 38-41); an enthusiasm for Sophocles would not have had that effect.’ (Dover 1993: 9).

## 6. Euripides in the Comic Fragments

So far, we have seen how Aristophanes uses the depiction of Euripides in his plays to express judgements about Euripidean tragedy. In *Thesmophoriazousae* as well as in *Acharnians* and *Frogs* Euripides embodies the features ascribed to his poetry: he is represented as talkative, effeminate, and lightweight. In *Acharnians*, he is reclusive and only reluctantly helps Dicaeopolis turn into a beggar modelled on his play *Telephus*, in *Thesmophoriazousae*, he plots rescue-plans and lets his relative Mnesilochus conduct them.

However, already in *Frogs* the representation of Euripides changes: he is defeated by Aeschylus in a contest of mutual mockery and poetic teasing, and both Aeschylus and Euripides are depicted through quotable lines and songs rather than costumes and the interaction with other characters. This tendency towards abstraction becomes even more prevalent in the course of the fourth century, as we will see in this final section of the current chapter. Most of the fragments in this section stem from quotations in later prose writings such as Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* or the anonymous *Genos Euripidou*. The textual history of these fragments attests to the widespread interest in Euripides on the Greek comic stage of the classical and post-classical period.

I have concentrated on fragments from the fifth and fourth century BC which mention the name of Euripides. They can be classified into three different groups. The first group contains fragments in which Euripides is portrayed in a negative way. This portrayal is in close connection with his work, as Euripides is ridiculed as a poet who received

help in the production of his tragedies from his slave Cephisophon (Aristophanes fr. 596), or Socrates (Aristophanes fr. 392; Callias fr. 15 and Teleclides fr. 41). Perhaps inspired by such depictions, another fragment (Theopompus fr. 35 K.-A.) depicts Euripides as parasite, and this depiction seems an early example of what later becomes a stock character in New Comedy.

The second group contains fragments in which Euripides is judged by what he says in his tragedies (Phileidippes fr. 18 K.-A. and Nicostratus fr. 29 K.-A.), and in which the usefulness of Euripides' work is discussed (Antiphanes fr. 111 and Diphilus fr. 74 K.-A.). The third group, finally, entails attestations of a 'fandom'<sup>101</sup> of Euripides and its ridicule on the comic stage of the fourth century (Philemo frs. 118, 130, and 153 K.-A.). I organise the comic fragments in these three groups rather than chronologically to facilitate the discussion of their representation of Euripides. This is not to say, of course, that no insight is to be gained about chronological developments in these representations. On the contrary, as my discussion of the fragments will show, there seems to have been a major shift in viewing and depicting Euripides and his work in the transition from the fifth to the fourth century BC.

The main development in this period seems to be the increasing use of Euripides, and Euripidean tragedy, as a starting point for discussions about other things. In fragments from fourth century comedies, Euripides is less and less frequently depicted as a character in his own right as he was in Aristophanes. In other words, Euripides as a character is no longer needed

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<sup>101</sup> The term was coined by Rosen (2008) to describe the earliest reception of Euripides which fostered the untiring interest in Euripidean tragedy and eventually led to the popularity of his plays in later centuries.

as a point of reference for discussions about his work. Rather than embodying his own plays and the features of the texts and characters he had created, Euripides appears in the fragments of Old and Middle Comedy as the author of texts which serve as a point of reference for jokes, quotations, and wordplays.

Discussions about Euripidean tragedy seem to have entered the everyday use of language as lines from Euripides' plays take on a life of their own and gain a gnomic status. As we will see in the course of this section, the comic fragments reflect especially well how the transition from Aristophanes to Hellenistic times fortified the mechanisms of reception by which Euripides became a 'classic'.

Personal attacks against Euripides, or rather, the jokes made in Old Comedy by insinuating a connection between the characters in his plays and his private life, all convey the assumption that there is a direct analogy between poet and work, as it is summed up in the equation 'Like poet, like work' put into Agathon's mouth by Aristophanes in *Thesmophoriazousae* 149-50.<sup>102</sup> This equation is not necessarily a doctrine seriously subscribed to by the comic poets.<sup>103</sup> It is also ascribed to Solon in the *Athenaion Politeia*. Solon's *dictum* that speech is a mirror of deeds (τὸν μὲν λόγον εἶδωλον εἶναι τῶν ἔργων, Diog. Laert. 1.58) originally referred to decision-makers in politics and their public speeches.

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<sup>102</sup> χρῆ γὰρ ποιητὴν ἄνδρα πρὸς τὰ δράματα | ἃ δεῖ ποιεῖν, πρὸς ταῦτα τοὺς τρόπους ἔχειν. ('To be a poet, a man must suit his behaviour to the requirements of his plays', translation Henderson 2000: 477).

<sup>103</sup> For attempts to interpret the dictum as representing an actual claim in the tradition of ancient literary criticism, see Raines (1935: 35), Möller (2000), and Möller (2004). Agathon's words in *Thesm.* 149-50 are best understood as a parody of a dictum. See Kassel (1991: 367) and Möller (2000: 95). Muecke (1984) presents a more nuanced approach to Agathon's representation in Aristophanes.

I start with examples of alleged co-authorship in Old Comedy. The following text, Aristophanes fr.596 K.-A., is probably our earliest evidence for the mention of Cephisophon:

Κηφισοφῶν ἄριστε καὶ μελάντατε,  
σύ γὰρ συνέζης ὡς τὰ πόλλ' Εὐριπίδηι  
καὶ συνεποίεις, ὡς φασι, τὴν μελωδίαν

Cephisophon, best and blackest,  
you lived for the most part with Euripides  
and helped him compose his arias, they say

(translation Henderson 2007: 411, adapted)

It is quoted in *Vit. Eur.* 6 p.6, 2 Schw. (= 136 Westermann; codd. VGQHW):

εἶχεν οἰκογενὲς μειράκιον ὀνόματι  
Κηφισοφῶντα. πρὸς τοῦτον ἐφώρασε τὴν  
οἰκείαν γυναῖκα ἀτακτοῦσαν. τὸ μὲν οὖν  
πρῶτον ἀπέτρεπεν ἀμαρτάνειν, ἐπεὶ δ' οὐκ  
ἔπειθε, κατέλιπεν αὐτῷ τὴν γυναῖκα  
βουλομένου αὐτὴν ἔχειν τοῦ Κηφισοφῶντος.  
λέγει οὖν καὶ ὁ Ἀριστοφάνης: [fr.596 K.-A.].

He had a homebred slave called Cephisophon,  
with whom he caught his own wife betraying  
him. At first he tried to make her mend her ways,  
but then he failed and gave the woman to him,  
since Cephisophon was willing to take her.  
Aristophanes, too, therefore says: [fr.596 K.-A.]:

(translation Henderson 2007: 411, adapted)

The collaboration between Euripides and his slaves is not only characterized by poetic collaboration but by yet another feature concerning their co-produced plays: that of promiscuity and adultery.

Cephisophon's identity and the precise function of mentioning his name in the extant material cannot be determined. His appearance in the ancient biographical tradition about Euripides is often – in antiquity and modern times alike – understood as reference to a historical figure, but this is ultimately far from certain. Clearly, the joke is about co-authorship above

all, and with the participation of a slave in such an enterprise seems apposite. Socrates, too, is said to have had his share in the compositions of some poets. Another fragment ascribed to Aristophanes seems to draw on the topic of poetic collaboration in the production of Euripidean tragedies.

Aristophanes fr.392 K.-A.:

Εὐριπίδη δ' ὁ τὰς τραγωδίας ποιῶν  
τὰς περιλαλούσας οὗτός ἐστι, τὰς σοφάς

this is the man who composes for Euripides,  
his very chatty, clever tragedies.

(translation Henderson 2007: 301)

This fragment, regarded as having been part of the first version of *Clouds* by both Kock and Kassel-Austin, is transmitted in Diogenes Laertius' report of Socrates and in two fragments ascribed to Teleclides.<sup>104</sup> Thus, it seems as if the typical allegations brought forward against Euripides' slave Cephisophon elsewhere, are here attributed to Socrates. Socrates is described as feeding Euripides material, so that as a result Euripidean tragedy contains sophistic thoughts. We can watch an astonishing consolidation of the alleged collaboration of Socrates and Euripides in the *Genos Euripidou* (*Vit Eur.* 1, 11 Schw.) which cites Teleclides to illustrate the point:

καὶ Σωκράτης αὐτῷ δοκεῖ δὲ [ὁ φιλόσοφος] καὶ  
Μνησίλοχος συμπεποιηκέναι τινά, ὡς φησι  
Τηλεκλείδης [fr.41 K.-A.]:

Μνησίλοχός ἐστ' ἐκεῖνος <ὅς> φρύγει τι δρᾶμα καινὸν  
Εὐριπίδη, καὶ Σωκράτης τὰ φρύγαν' ὑποτίθησιν.

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<sup>104</sup> Diog. Laert. 2.18 [Socrates] ἐδόκει δὲ συμποεῖν Εὐριπίδῃ ὅθεν Μνησίλοχος οὕτω φησί: [Telecl. frs.39 and 40 K.-A.] [...] καὶ πάλιν: Εὐριπίδης σωκρατογόμφους. ('he [Socrates] seems to have collaborated with Euripides; therefore Mnesilochus says: [...] and again: Euripides is patched up by Socrates.')

It is thought that Socrates and Mnesilochus were collaborators with him in some of his works, as Teleclides says:

That man there is Mnesilochus, who is roasting up a new play for Euripides, and Socrates is laying the firewood.

Mnesilochus was well-known to anyone who was familiar with Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*. In it, Mnesilochus is introduced to the life of Euripides as his 'kinsman'. In the second half of the comedy, he suffers rather unpleasant misadventures as a result of his attempt to carry out Euripidean rescue operations. And Mnesilochus swaps roles with Euripides half way through the play, as he becomes the focal point of the comic action and an alternative author of Euripidean plotting. Like Cephisophon and Socrates, Mnesilochus is thus traditionally depicted as a potential collaborator of Euripides.<sup>105</sup>

Euripides' connection with Socrates, on the other hand, draws attention not so much to any family relations involved in the production of his plays and the creation of his plots, but to the traces of sophistic thought in Euripidean tragedy.<sup>106</sup> The effect of this double-entendre is twofold: within the limited space of only two lines, Teleclides manages to capitalise on both, a reference to any family concerns and a reference to the philosophical undercurrents in Euripidean drama.

As a result, the remark preserved in fr.41 K.-A. recalls several of Aristophanes' plays – *Thesmophoriazousae* as well as *Acharnians*, *Frogs*,

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<sup>105</sup> Rosen seems the first scholar to have observed the link between Mnesilochus and the Chamaeleontic method as displayed by Agathon in *Thesmophoriazousae*, and he rightly states that 'it is significant that the Inlaw seeks biographical information from Agathon himself.' (2008: 43).

<sup>106</sup> See Lefkowitz (2007: 103) for a discussion of the jokes regarding Socrates' influence on Euripides.

*Knights* and *Clouds*. In *Knights*, lines 15-19 seem to be the most explicit charge against Euripides as a sophist and Euripidean tragedy as an almost Socratic and sophistic art of conceit and cleverness, as one slave says to the other that he talks ‘as cleverly as Euripides’ (κομψευριπικῶς, line 17) to which the other slave retorts with yet another reference to Euripidean tragedy: ‘Do not be-chevril me!’ (μὴ μοί γε, μὴ μοί, μὴ διασκανδικίσης, line 19). In *Clouds*, the notorious passage shows Socrates’ prospective student Pheidippides beating his father because he does not praise ‘Euripides most wise’ (οὐκουν δικαίως, ὅστις οὐκ Εὐριπίδην ἐπαινεῖς ; ‘So wasn’t I right to do so to one who won’t praise Euripides, a man of genius?, line 1377-8, translation Sommerstein 1982: 143).

Diogenes Laertius quotes in 2.18 passages about Euripidean drama from comedies which are lost to us but were thought to illustrate the collaboration (συμποεῖν) of Euripides and Socrates, and they remind us of the famous expression which describes Euripides as a σωκρατογόμενος (Teleclides fr. 42 K.-A.):

Εὐριπίδας σωκρατογόμενος  
Euripides, the Socrates-fasteners

Diogenes Laertius quotes Callias fr.15 K.-A., where Euripides concedes that the wisdom of his lines is actually Socrates’, not his own merit:

(A.) τί δὴ σὺ σεμνὴ καὶ φρονεῖς οὕτω μέγα;  
(B.) ἔξεστι γὰρ μοι· Σωκράτης γὰρ αἴτιος

(A.) Why are you so haughty and so proud?  
(B.) Because I can be! For Socrates is responsible.

(translation Olson 2007: 445)

Poetic collaboration between Euripides and someone else was also the source of laughter in a comedy by Antiphanes. The plethora of ‘helpers’ testifies to the fact that Euripides was productive but also to the perception that his plays contained un-poetic, in the case of Cephisophon and Socrates: perhaps slavish-sounding and philosophic passages and expressions.

Euripides was thus imagined as dependent on the helping hands of others, a reputation which in the fourth century BC earned him a place among many anonymous representatives in the genre of ‘jokes about parasites’. Already in a fragment from the turn to the fourth century, Euripides seems to have been depicted as a parasite. In a passage from the lost comedy *Odysseus* (fr. 35 K.-A.), Theopompus has one of his characters say:

Εὐριπίδου τᾶριστον, οὐ κακῶς ἔχον,  
τᾶλλότρια δειπνεῖν τὸν καλῶς εὐδαίμονα

A Euripidean breakfast, not a bad thing,  
to have someone else’s meal: quite fortunate!

To get the joke of this line, it is important to know that the expression ‘to have someone else’s meal’ (τᾶλλότρια δειπνεῖν) was a common way of describing parasites in Old Comedy (see, for instance, Aristophanes *Wealth* 890 or Eubulus fr.72 K.-A.).<sup>107</sup> On a similar line as the depiction of Euripides as an anti-hero and parasite is his representation in a fragment

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<sup>107</sup> Apparently, Euripides also starred in Diphilus’ comedy *The Parasite* (Παράσιτος), see Diphilus fr.60, 1 K.-A. It is worth noting that the seemingly harmless oil-flask (λήκυθιον), which iteratively occurs in the *agôn* between Aeschylus and Euripides in *Frogs*, carries connotations of parsitism. This can be concluded from ancient commentaries on a passage in Aristophanes’ *Δαιταλῆς* (‘The Banqueters’), which runs: οὐδ’ ἐστὶν αὐτῇ στεγγίς οὐδὲ λήκυθος (‘she has neither an oil-scraper nor an oil-flask’, fr.214 K.-A.). Of both the oil-scraper and the oil-flask Pollux says in 10.62 that they were the *insignia* of parasites (τοῖς δὲ παρασίτοις πρόσεστι καὶ στεγγίς καὶ λήκυθος, ‘and to the parasites belonged oil-scraper and oil-flask’; see also Plaut. *Stich.* 230 *Pers.* 123 *cynicum esse egentem oportet parasitum probe: ampullam, strigilem [...] habeat.*). The oil-flask also reoccurs in Diogenes’ letter *ep.* 1.1. This is of special interest for my analysis of the pseudo-Euripidean letters, in which Euripides is modelled as a Cynic (see chapter 4 below).

from a fourth-century comedy, in which Philippides might have used Euripides as an *exemplum*

Philippides fr.18 K.-A.:

ὅταν ἀτυχεῖν σοι συμπέσῃ τι, δέσποτα,  
Εὐριπίδου μνήσθητι, καὶ ράϊων ἔσῃ·  
οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πάντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ.  
εἶναι δ' ὑπόλαβε καὶ σὲ τῶν πολλῶν ἕνα

whenever you happen to experience a misfortune,  
master, remember Euripides, and you will feel better:  
'for there is no man who is perfectly fortunate'  
so assume that you are too one of the many

The link between Euripides and a sceptical world view is also made by Nicostratus. Euripides must have featured as a character or just been quoted in a comedy by Nicostratus, preserved in Stobaeus (IV 41, 48; Nicostratus fr.29 K.-A.):

‘οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πάντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ.’  
νῆ τὴν Ἀθηναῖν συντόμως γε, φίλτατε  
Εὐριπίδη, τὸν βίον ἔθηκας εἰς στίχον

'there is no such man who is perfectly fortunate'  
By Athena! Succinctly spoken, best Euripides,  
you have put life into a single line!

The fragment illustrates two things especially well. First, it demonstrates how Euripidean tragedy was seen in the fourth century BC. Secondly, it gives us a clue as to why Euripidean tragedies more than any other tragedies from classical time proved so extremely popular in subsequent centuries.

It is thanks to the presence of succinct quotable *gnomai* in the speeches of Euripidean characters as well as in some choral passages that Euripidean tragedy could be exploited and quoted by later authors as well as the 'common man'.<sup>108</sup> In fact, the use of passages from Euripidean tragedies

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<sup>108</sup> Lardinois (2001) illustrates how *gnomai* were until the fourth century BC part of a living tradition in which the performance of the sayings helped 'coin' traditional *formulae* and typical themes of wisdom literature. For the circulation of Euripidean *gnomai* in the classroom see Criboire (2001: 200-201).

in the form of little *gnomai* by characters in Middle Comedy suggests that these *gnomai* had made it into everyday vocabulary.<sup>109</sup> Among many other factors, this could have ensured their survival over the centuries, even without specific connections to actual re-performances of the plays.

It is precisely this culturally influential power of the *gnomai* which not only shaped the perception of Euripides' plays and the preservation of passages from them in later centuries but also considerably influenced the ancient biographical tradition of their author. In Nicostratus fr.29 K.-A., we could see how these *gnomai* were used and re-used on the comic stage. In fact we can assume that they also circulated beyond the comic stage, as a look at fourth century oratory and rhetorical theory shows.<sup>110</sup> It was popular, and seems to have been common practice, to open a speech with a line from Euripides.<sup>111</sup>

I now turn to the illustration of the process of transformation in the depiction of Euripides as outlined above. In comedies of the fourth century BC, Euripides is no longer part of the plays as a character in his own right. Instead, characters on stage take everyday situations as a starting-point to talk about him and his work. A fragment from Diphilus' comedy 'The Couple or, The Lamp' (Συνωρίς ἢ Λύχνος) is an excellent example of this new form of 'talking about Euripides' in fourth century comedy and gives us a fresh insight into the ubiquity of Euripidean tragedy at the time.

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<sup>109</sup> This is not to deny, of course, that *gnomai* also have crucial functions for an understanding of their respective narrative context. Stenger (2004) has recently shown that *gnomai* are important guides to the audience in how to understand Bacchylides' poetry.

<sup>110</sup> Aeschines in his *in Tim.* 151 re-affirms the image of Euripides as the 'philosopher of the Greek poets' (ὁ τοίνυν οὐδένοσ ἦττον σοφὸς τῶν ποιητῶν Εὐριπίδης), and Quintilian and Athenaeus seem to echo this account. See Quintilian 10.1.68 who calls Euripides *sententiis densus*, and Athenaeus IV. 158e who calls him 'this philosopher of the stage' (ὁ σκηνικὸς οὗτος φιλόσοφος). For the reception of Euripidean tragedy in Greek rhetorical theory, see Castelli (2001).

<sup>111</sup> See, for instance, the evidence in López Cruces (2005: 161).

The fragment shows a young man (marked as speaker ‘A’ and probably a parasite) in conversation with the courtesan Synoris, the title character of the play (speaker ‘B’). They are throwing dice while chatting about Euripides.

Diphilus fr. 74 K.-A:

(A.) ἄριστ' ἀπαλλάττεις ἐπὶ τούτου τοῦ κύβου.  
 (B.) ἀστεῖος εἶ. δραχμὴν ὑπόθεσ. (A.) κεῖται πάλαι.  
 (B.) πῶς ἂν βάλοιμ' Εὐριπίδην; (A.) οὐκ ἂν ποτε  
 Εὐριπίδης γυναῖκα σώσει'. οὐχ ὄραϊς  
 ἐν ταῖς τραγωιδίαισιν αὐτὰς ὡς στυγεῖ; 5  
 τοὺς δὲ παρασίτους ἠγάπα. λέγει γέ τοι;  
 'ἄνηρ γὰρ ὅστις εὐ βίον κεκτημένος  
 μὴ τοῦλάχιστον τρεῖς ἀσυμβόλους τρέφει,  
 ὄλοιτο, νόστου μὴ ποτ' εἰς πάτραν τυχών.'  
 (B.) πόθεν ἐστὶ ταῦτα, πρὸς θεῶν; (A.) τί δέ σοι μέλει; 10  
 οὐ γὰρ τὸ δρᾶμα, τὸν δὲ νοῦν σκοπούμεθα.

(A.) You deliver wonderfully as far as this throw goes.  
 (B.) You are so urban! Did you put a drachma? (A.) It's been lying there for a while (B.) If only I could throw a Euripides now! (A.) Euripides would never rescue a woman. Don't you see that in his tragedies he hates them? But he loved parasites! At least he says: 'Any rich man who does not feed at the very least three people who do not contribute to the expenses of the meal shall perish and never return to his fatherland!' (B.) Where are these lines taken from, by the gods? (A.) What does it matter to you? It is not the play we are examining but the attitude behind it.

(translation Olson 2007: 439, slightly adapted)

'Euripides' was the name of a successful throw of dice in antiquity, which could have been named either after the famous tragedian or after the fourth-century politician. Pollux 9.101 reports that in games of ἀστράγαλοι ('knuckle-bones') a throw which totalled 40 was called 'Euripides'. If the same throw was also played with ordinary dice, at least 7 dice would have to be thrown at the same time. In which case, to throw a Euripides would mean to throw five 6s and two dice of 5 – a very good throw indeed.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> See Olson (2007: 180) for details about the game depicted in Diphilus fr.74 K.-A.

Following the ancient explanation by Pollux but freely conjecturing the origin of its name, *LSJ* explains 'Εὐριπίδης' as 'a cast of 40 of the dice, from one Euripides who held office with the Forty at Athens.' Where the name of this cast originally comes from is, however, not as undisputed as the *LSJ* entry would make us believe.

In fact, the fragment from Diphilus' comedy illustrates neatly how prolifically the name of Euripides can be used. Probably exploiting a pun on εὖ ῥίπτω, speaker A provokes the courtesan as he creates a double-entendre by transferring the name of this game to the name of the tragedian Euripides to initiate not only a teasing discussion about Euripides' alleged misogyny but also to introduce Euripides as a propagator of parasitism.

Dice, and games of dice, seem to have been a popular device on the comic stage, not only for Diphilus but already in the fifth century.<sup>113</sup> However, in contrast to previous depictions of gamblers and games of dice on the comic stage, in the fourth century the setting is exploited as a platform for remarks about Euripidean drama and useful or entertaining quotations from his plays.

From more general conversations about Euripidean tragedy we move on to expressions of great enthusiasm about his plays on the comic stage, the 'fandom' identified by Ralph Rosen for the reception of Euripides. A fragment from a comedy by Philemo offers a compelling window on the enthusiasm in the reception of Euripides after Aristophanes:

Philemo fr. 153 K.-A.:

Εὐριπίδης πού φησιν, οὗτος ὃς μόνος δύναται λέγειν  
Euripides, he once said, you are the only one who can speak.

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<sup>113</sup> See Pherecrates fr. 127 K.-A.

The fragment illustrates the popularity of Euripidean tragedy with the writers of the fourth century, and gives us a first glimpse at the emergence of a Euripides-mania that seems to have been ridiculed on the comic stage of the fourth century BC. It is preserved in fr. 39 VII of Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* and its emphasis on the Euripidean use of language rather than its musicality or plots (as ridiculed *ad nauseam* by the poets of Old Comedy) is symptomatic for a shifting focus in other poets' interest in Euripides between the fifth and the fourth century BC: the interest moves from Euripides as personification of his plays to an independent appreciation of his work and, as a result, a depiction of the poet as separate from his plays.

In another play, Philemo seems to make fun of the 'Euripides-Mania' which derived from the ongoing interest in Euripides some of his contemporaries must have displayed:<sup>114</sup>

Philemo fr.118 K.-A.:

εἰ ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν οἱ τεθνηκότες  
αἴσθησιν εἶχον, ἄνδρες, ὡς φασὶν τινες,  
ἀπηξάμην ἂν ὥστ' ἰδεῖν Εὐριπίδην

if it were true that the dead have perception,  
as some maintain, then, gentlemen, I would kill  
myself to see Euripides

The speaker of these lines could have alluded to Euripides the politician rather than Euripides the tragedian. However, the fragment is quoted in the *Genos Euripidou* (6, p.6,14 Schwartz) and in the *Anthologia Palatina* (AP 9.450) and attests to an obsession with Euripides and Euripidean drama in the fourth century which is also indicated by the fact that there was a whole

<sup>114</sup> We know, for example, that Axionicus wrote a comedy entitled Φιλευριπίδης (*The Euripides-Fan*) and that lovers of Euripidean tragedy played a central role in a comedy by Philemo (see my discussion of Philemo fr.118 K.-A. below and Kassel's commentary on Axionicus fr.3 K.-A. from his play Φιλευριπίδης: 'Euripides amatores depingit'). For a comparison of Aristophanes of the metatheatrical passages in Axionicus see Nesselrath (1990: 245-7).

play in which the protagonist is represented as a ‘fan of Euripides’. We have two fragments of the comedy Φιλευριπίδης by Axionicus. One of the fragments mentions the tragedian’s explicitness.

Axionicus fr.3 K.-A.:

οὕτω γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῖς μέλεσι τοῖς Εὐριπίδου  
ἄμφω νοσοῦσιν, ὥστε τᾶλλ’ αὐτοῖς δοκεῖν  
εἶναι μέλη γιγγραντὰ καὶ κακὸν μέγα  
for so passionate are both about the songs of Euripides  
that it seems to them that other songs  
are composed for the scannel pipes and a big evil

The protagonist of the play *The Euripides-Fan* was probably a buffoon on stage who loved Euripidean tragedy while he could not stand any other tragedians for the terrible sound of the music that accompanied their lines. A statement which seems to present us with the inversion of the derision of the new music in Euripidean tragedy. And perhaps ironically ran along similar lines as those earlier mockeries. Roselli recently argued that Axionicus’ play could have mocked the great demand for Euripides by the fourth-century theatre audience.<sup>115</sup> This seems not implausible: we have ample evidence from various sources which attests to Euripides’ immense popularity in the fourth century BC.<sup>116</sup>

## 7. Stylistic Theory and the comic portrayal of Euripides in Old Comedy

The question which arises from the depiction of Euripides in Old Comedy so far is: do we have to read him as a character on the comic stage called

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<sup>115</sup> Roselli (2005: 1-2, and 2 n.2).

<sup>116</sup> Diphilus fr. 60 K.-A, a fragment from his comedy *The Parasite*, also seems to attest to this popularity, as it shows a parasite quoting comically shortened and distorted *gnomai* from Euripidean tragedy. The passage from the play was preserved in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae* (Athen. 10.422). For the geographical spread of actors who specialised in Euripides, see Hall (2007: 272); on the popularity of *Medea*, *Orestes*, and *Telephus* outside of Athens, see Hall (2007: 275-6), on the subsequent disappearance of the more Athenian-focussed tragedies *Erechtheus* and *Suppliant Women*, see Hall (2007: 278).

Euripides or as the portrayal of Euripidean art? Or, possibly, as a combination of both?

Personification in antiquity has been researched most notably in two areas: the personifications of daily life phenomena as gods and goddesses, i.e. in the area of cult, ritual and religion, and in personifications as they appear in the visual arts, i.e. on vase-paintings, statues and mosaics. There is a great variety of personified characters at work in the extant texts of Old Comedy, but scholars have never compared the depiction of the Demos, Wealth or Poverty in Aristophanes to that of Euripides and Socrates. Or, when they did so, the difference was generally reduced to the dichotomy 'personification of abstracts' v. 'depiction of contemporaries'.<sup>117</sup>

First, however, it is necessary to make some distinctions. While *Ethopoiia*, the representation of a person's character,<sup>118</sup> is at work in early epic and historiography as well as in the biographical tradition from Plutarch onwards, *Prosopopoiia* creates a character that is non-existent, such as Proof (ἔλεγχος), who appears as a character in Menander, or the Just and the Unjust Logos in Aristophanes.<sup>119</sup>

Yet, 'Euripides' on stage is not only about the character of the person or the playwright called Euripides, but also about the character of his plays and their effects on the Athenian audience. 'Euripides' thus seems to be a personification of a certain type of drama, neither quite following the rules of *Ethopoiia* nor that of *Prosopopoiia*. Perhaps Aristophanes'

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<sup>117</sup> Newiger (1975) famously claimed that there are no allegories on the Aristophanic stage but rather incorporated metaphors.

<sup>118</sup> On which see Gill (1996).

<sup>119</sup> See Hermogenes' definition of *ethopoiia* and *prosopopoiia* (*Progymnasmata* 9.1-7 ed. Rabe) and Stafford's account of the ancient treatment of personification in the first chapter of her book (Stafford 2000: 1-44).

innovative depiction of ‘Euripides’ could best be labelled *Poietopoiia*, as it contains the *poietēs* Euripides as well as the *poiesis* ‘à la Euripide’.

The lack of manliness as we have seen it in *Acharnians* and *Thesmophoriazousae* seems to convey a feature of Euripides that equals his art: it is un-heroic and effeminate, overly refined and too realistic. These features are also ascribed to Agathon and other representatives of new forms of tragedy. The different ways in which Euripidean drama challenged the Athenian audience, it seems, become features of the poet himself, as literary criticism finds its way into the public domain through the comic stage.

The fact that the character of Euripides on the Athenian stage *de facto* incorporates the work of Euripides is extraordinary. Less so, because he thus becomes a personification of a certain kind of literature (i.e. ‘Euripidean drama’) – just like we find personifications of *Tragedy*, *Comedy* and even *Stage* itself as characters in Ancient Greek texts and vase-paintings,<sup>120</sup> but strikingly so as this incorporation of literary texts for the first time in ancient literature becomes a ‘body of texts’.

Unfortunately, we do not have enough extant material to make a strong case for this phenomenon or any ancient descriptions of a poet’s incorporation of his work apart from Euripides’ incorporation of his plays in the comedies of Aristophanes. However, it is not entirely unlikely that there were other evocations of the μέλη of previous authors in material that is now lost to us.

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<sup>120</sup> On Comedy as a character, see Cratinus, *Prytine* fr.180 K.-A. (=Schol. Ar. *Eq.* 400). On the phenomenon that the Greek poets become in the biographical tradition almost allegories of the genres within which they were productive, see Farrell (2002: 31).



The passage is transmitted in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (10.446a-b). There, it is part of a joking exchange of passages about drinking and drunkards between Ulpian and his fellow-drinkers. For our analysis of the dynamics of the depiction of Euripides on the comic stage of the fourth century BC it is of central importance as it shows (a) the popularity of the mention of Euripides and Euripidean verses in the comedies of that period, (b) the auto-referential consciousness of the mocking authors within the dynamics of comic derision and (c) the ubiquity of anecdotes about Euripides ὁ φιλόξεινος already in the fourth century BC.

The proverb which speaker A alludes to in this passage is mentioned by Aristotle in *Rhetoric* 1371 a 28 and occurs in Euripides' *Orestes* 234 as μεταβολὴ πάντων γλυκύ ('change from all is sweet'). It is important to note that we have the earliest example of a biographical remark about Euripides as a 'lover of foreigners' (φιλόξεινος) – a feature of Euripides which becomes a central interest in later biographical representations.<sup>122</sup> The first depiction of biographical details and biographical debate, which starts immediately after Euripides' death, will build the foundation for all later narratives about Euripides. At the same time, it should be clear from this chapter that these early instances of biographical writing follow certain principles and paradigms of their historical and generic context, just as later texts will have their own time frames and points of reference.

The well-attested realism of Euripidean tragedy seems to have been mirrored throughout the biographical tradition. And while it is true for

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<sup>122</sup> See my discussion of the topos on p. 169 below.

*Frogs* that ‘One of the play’s recurrent themes is the effect of tragedy on ‘real life’’,<sup>123</sup> the same principle proved to be the case for the later authors of the biographical tradition of Euripides. The drastic realism in the Euripidean depiction of characters like Medea, Creusa, or Heracles, in other words, seems to resonate in the graphic representation of the poet Euripides.

While in *Frogs* and *Thesmophoriazousae* the effects of Euripidean tragedy on ‘real life’ are in fact ridiculed, the effects of this ridicule seem to survive over the centuries and transfer and transform the ridicule of Euripidean drama from a comical context on stage into the description of the off-stage life of the tragedian. Stock features of ridiculing Euripides, such as λαλία and λεπτότης are appreciated as qualities of Euripidean tragedy and become positive qualities at least from Hellenistic times onwards.

In contrast to later depictions of Euripides, the tragedian is described not only as effeminate and unmanly but also as potentially dangerous for society (stirring up the women and annoying the men) and generally a rather useless ‘typical intellectual’ (most explicitly so in the description of his laziness in *Acharnians*). The effect of mirroring characteristic properties of an art form into the *persona* of the artist himself found ample support from respective theoretical claims about the interaction between the work and life of a poet, as the examples of Chamaeleon, passages in Aristophanes and the *dictum* by Solon in the *Athenaion Politeia* show.

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<sup>123</sup> Bassi (2003: 45).

My contention is that the idea of a poet featuring as the personification of the weaknesses of his poetry and the embodiment of a text corpus is not exclusive to Aristophanes, and a look at Strattis fr.21 K.-A. seems to confirm this. Sometimes the metaphorical and metonymical constructions are more complex than the most common examples. The use of the cast of dice called 'Euripides' as a starting point for a conversation about the tragedian and his merits seems more abstract than the embodiment of his work and person by an actor.

Any conclusive account of Aristophanes has to remain incomplete and tentative. Even if we consider the Chamaeleontic method as already in use in the late fifth century, we still cannot know whether Aristophanes depicts it as his own, whether he refers to contemporary colleagues in approval or in ridicule, whether, in other words, he wants to get involved in the biographical debate at all or rather present it as an impossible task. The wish 'not to make mincemeat of the same man twice' (αὐθις τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα μυττωτεύσομεν), expressed at the beginning of *Wasps*,<sup>124</sup> reminds us of the extra-ordinary role of Euripides within the Aristophanic oeuvre, but also of the extreme variety in his depiction. What I hope to have highlighted in this chapter, are some recurrent themes and underlying concerns in the depiction of Euripides on the comic stage.

Euripides is not merely depicted as one of many intellectuals of fifth-century Athens in Old Comedy. Rather, he seems to have been singled out and attacked in more detail than any other poet or philosopher of his time. The attempt to mock the unsophisticated ways of the characters of

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<sup>124</sup> See my discussion of the passage on pp. 28-9 above.

Euripidean plays is accompanied by a mimicking of their realism in Aristophanic comedy to such a degree that Aristophanes could be said to be εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων.

Many aspects of the comic Euripides, including his alleged misanthropic character, play a major role in the depiction of the poet in later centuries, especially in the pseudo-Euripidean letters. With the Hellenistic interest in the stylistic theory of Old Comedy, Euripides' λαλία and λεπτότης are taken up in the biographical representation of Euripides by Hellenistic writers. To return to the quotation at the very beginning of this chapter: Euripides was – unlike many of his colleagues whose tragedies may have seen more victories than the plays by Euripides – *not* ignored by the god of the theatre after his death.

In this chapter, I have identified the depiction of Euripides in Greek Comedy as an influential starting-point for to the ancient biographical tradition of Euripides, and as the foundation for some aesthetic principles of Hellenistic literature. I have discussed the evidence for Aristophanes' preoccupation with Euripides as well as the early reception of Euripidean drama and the echoes of its style and characteristics in Old Comedy. My analysis of selected fragments from other comedies suggested that the portrayal of Euripides underwent notable changes in the fourth century BC.

I argued for the importance of stylistic theory and realism in the early mimesis and commemoration of Euripides and Euripidean drama by comedians in the fifth and fourth century BC. It could be observed that Euripides no longer seems to feature as a character on the comic stage as his

plays become canonized. I illustrated this phenomenon in the discussion of a comic fragment which seems to convey a comparison between different forms of tragedy in a 'recipe for the perfect tragedy'. The ubiquity of conversations about Euripides in connection with quotations from his tragedies was exemplified in a discussion of the scene of the dice players in Diphilus' *Synoris*.

### **Euripides in Hellenistic poetry**

In the previous chapter, I have outlined the importance of the depiction of Euripides in Old and Middle Comedy for our understanding of all later biographical narratives about the tragedian. I have shown how central Euripides is for the construction of a stereotypical *κωμωδούμενος* and how he served as the depiction of the prototypical intellectual on the stage of Old Comedy. However, I have also shown that this stereotype is by no means rigid and persistent. In fact, it could be shown that already in the fourth century, the depiction of Euripides underwent a major transformation.

As his plays become increasingly canonized, Euripides no longer featured as a character in its own right on the comic stage. Instead, his work was summarised in, and could be recalled through, the mere mentioning of his name. This is especially explicit in fragments which seem to entail a comparison between different types of tragedy, such as the ‘recipe for the perfect tragedy’ by Aristophanes, or in fragments which illustrate the ubiquity of conversations about Euripides and quotations from his tragedies, as in the scene of the dice players discussing Euripides in Diphilus’ *Synoris*. The process of canonization continues to influence the shaping of the biographical tradition in the third century BC, as Euripides plays a major role in the imagination of Hellenistic writers. He is now a key figure in the construction of the classical past, and his poetry is central to the

Hellenistic curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Euripides becomes one of the most widely read and performed authors of the time. We have every reason to believe that literally everybody who went through school education in the Greek-speaking Hellenistic world was familiar with Euripidean poetry. Therefore, a broad public interest in Euripides could be expected by any writer who intended to write about the tragedian, and we have enough evidence to believe that several authors in Hellenistic times and subsequent centuries decided to do so.

In this chapter, I want to move from Athens to Alexandria and take a look at some shorter texts which express the fascination of Hellenistic poets and scholars with Euripides: these fill the gap between Satyrus and Old and Middle Comedy, and help us explain through what routes and processes the interest in the classical poets was kept alive. The material under discussion in this chapter has until now been neglected in discussions of ancient biographical representations of Euripides. An analysis of the poems will help us gain a better understanding of the historical dimension of the ancient biographical representations of Euripides, and their development in the Hellenistic period.<sup>2</sup> The poems, which all mention the tragedian explicitly, broaden our view of the Hellenistic interest in biographies of classical poets and indicate a sharp awareness of the mechanisms of reception and commemoration by their authors.

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<sup>1</sup> For Euripides in the classroom, see Morgan (1998: 69-89) and Criboire (2001: 98-9).

<sup>2</sup> Some of the texts in this chapter have been discussed in different contexts, but neither Ippolito (1999), nor Schorn (2004) or Compton (2005) mention the poems and their role in the biographical tradition. Kovacs (1994) gives some of the texts but has no commentary. *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (= Bing and Bruss 2007) offers a chapter on Hellenistic Epigrams on poets; however, its author discusses Hellenistic epigrams on the iambic poets, not the tragic poets, of ancient Greece (see Rosen 2007a). Similarly, Fantuzzi's contribution to the volume (Fantuzzi 2007) discusses the depiction of Thespis, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Hellenistic dramatists but does not mention Euripides.

In the course of this chapter, I give a brief introduction to the cultural and historical context of the poems (section 1) before analysing selected poems in a close reading. In section 2, I outline their Macedonian concerns and Panhellenic interest. Section 3 looks at the use of established biographical conventions in the Hellenistic poems of Euripides, while section 4 sets my observations regarding biographical conventions in the depiction of Euripides against a famous example of autobiographical poetry by Poseidippus, which provides us with an interesting example of a response to the developments in biographical representations of classical and archaic poets. A brief concluding section (section 5) asks for more attention to be paid to the contribution of Hellenistic poetry to the ancient biographical representations of Euripides.

### **1. The Cultural and Historical Context**

At the beginning of the third century BC, we can watch the development of an explicit focus on the classical poets as representatives of the Athenian cultural heritage. In the case of Euripides, the geographical spread of the reception of Euripidean tragedy as well as the popularity of his texts in classroom exercises is well attested and allows us to get a clear picture of the reception of his plays in later antiquity.<sup>3</sup>

It is worthwhile looking at the different contexts in which the biographical narratives of Euripides were written and re-written. In Hellenistic poetry, the space dedicated to Euripides rather than his poetry changes as

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<sup>3</sup> Epigrams on famous men from the Athenian past were probably also used at school. See Wißmann (2002: 215-30) for a full discussion of the phenomenon. For recitations in the classroom, see Ford (2003: 24-30).

commemoration itself becomes a topic of poetic reflection. The awareness of the mechanisms of biographical writing and the selection processes in the judgement of earlier literature increase as Hellenistic poets re-create the past, reflect on the possibilities of biographical writings and stress the importance of their own merits.

It can generally be said that the biographical narratives about Euripides are in the third century BC marked by an interesting shift of focus in the representation of the poet, as his death, tomb, and commemoration are at the centre of literary depictions. In addition to this shift of focus, the choice of genre seems interesting. In all but one instance, at which Euripides turns up in Hermesianax' famous mock-elegy, the Hellenistic poems about Euripides are all set in the form of epigrams.<sup>4</sup>

The Alexandrians famously re-defined the possibilities of the epigram and introduced heroes and anti-heroes in a new form of realism in their poems.<sup>5</sup> As a genre, the epigram allows for sophisticated and highly allusive messages in a condensed form. More often than not, one of the many layers of meaning in Hellenistic epigrams is ironical or even satirical. The choice of the epigram for the depiction of Euripides in Hellenistic times seems apposite. This is especially true if we consider that some important roots of Hellenistic aesthetic principles are to be found in comedy, as I have pointed out in chapter 1 of this thesis.

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<sup>4</sup> The genre boundaries between epigram and elegy are notoriously protean. For a full discussion of the problem, see Gentili (1968: 36-45), Gutzwiller (1998: 4-5 and 116-17), and Thomas (1998: 205-7). A good example of the fuzzy boundaries is Poseidippus' so-called 'scal' poem (*SH* 705), which Gow and Page (1965: 544) classify as 'perhaps elegy rather than epigram.'

<sup>5</sup> In my use of the term realism, I follow Zanker (1987). Realism in the depiction of heroes and anti-heroes in Hellenistic poetry stands of course also in the iambographic tradition, see Degani (1993), Rosen (2007a: 473-76), and Rosen (2007b).

The choice of genre has two major consequences for our texts. First, epigrammatic conventions were deeply rooted in epigraphic conventions. As a result, literary epigrams display a preference for the three main topics already featuring in the earliest Greek inscriptions and present in the ‘prehistory’ of the genre: the expression of love and affection, dedication of objects and the context of death and epitaphs.<sup>6</sup> These seemingly diverse fields of interest all have one common denominator. They are fields in which the writer of the poem seeks to spread the *kleos* of an individual – either of the beloved, of a god or goddess or of a deceased person, and, last but not least: of the authors of these short texts themselves.<sup>7</sup> Thus, a certain tendency towards both ‘heroisation’ and self-reference seems to be part of the conventions of the genre.

Secondly, the original scarcity of space on stones, vases or clay tablets fostered the density of thought so characteristic of the epigram. This economical and careful compression of language and thought implies another phenomenon which seems a common trait in texts of the genre. The expression of seemingly antithetical positions or ideas is a characteristic feature of epigrams. This tendency towards ambivalence and surprise also plays an important role in the discussion of Euripides’ life. In fact, it echoes the ambiguity towards the tragedian which is already obvious in Aristophanes’ treatment of the playwright.<sup>8</sup> We will see in the discussion of the poems that the epigrams about Euripides, set in what Fantuzzi

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<sup>6</sup> On the development of the epigrams and the ‘prehistory’ of the genre, see Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 283-349; especially 283-91).

<sup>7</sup> The last case is most obvious in inscriptions of the type ‘x made me’, but is also present in any donation in a dedicatory and funerary context; see Day (1989), (1994) and (2000); Depew (2000) and Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 291).

<sup>8</sup> See Sens (2007: 373-6) on the phenomenon of ambiguity in Hellenistic epigrams.

and Hunter call ‘perhaps the most topical genre of all Greek poetry’,<sup>9</sup> interact creatively both with the tradition of their own form and with the tradition of biography.

The epigrams which mention Euripides are preserved in Book 7 of the *Anthologia Palatina*. The book is dedicated to *epitymbia* and contains poems that can be dated to the period spanning from the third to the middle of the first century BC. Unlike other epigrams of the same sub-category, however, the poems concerning Euripides focus on the circumstances of his death rather than focussing on characteristic features or great achievements of the deceased in his lifetime.

The notorious Athenian misanthrope Timon, for instance, is depicted in the same book of the *Anthology* quite differently. Like most epigrams, the epigrams concerning Timon create the illusion that Timon actually speaks to the reader of the epigram. Timon characterises himself by way of asking the reader to pass by (*AP* 7.136) or not to wish him well but rather disappear quickly (*AP* 7. 318). Another epigram about the legendary misanthrope sends a warning to Cerberus, and readers are told that aggressive Timon (Τίμων ἄγριος) bites like a dog even in the Underworld (*AP* 7. 319).<sup>10</sup> The grumpy man even curses the reader

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<sup>9</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 292).

<sup>10</sup> καὶ νέκυσ ὦν Τίμων ἄγριος· σὺ δέ γ' ὦ Πυλαοῖωρὲ | Πλούτωνος, τάρβει, Κέρβερε, μή σε δάκη. ('Even as he is dead, Timon is aggressive; watch out, Pylaorus gate-keeper of Pluto, Cerberus, that he does not bite you!'). Of course we cannot be entirely sure that the Timon addressed in these epigrams was the legendary Timon of fifth-century Athens. We know, for instance, that a poet and philosopher called Timon lived in the third century BC and might have been the target of these lines by his fellow-poets. There seems to have been a confusion of the two already in antiquity. See Photiadès (1959: 320-1 with notes) for the references.

of the fictional epitaph, claiming his territory and reinforcing his reputation by challenging posterity to put a spell on him (*AP* 7.320).<sup>11</sup>

Unlike the fictionally self-referential epitaphs by Timon, however, the poems concerning Euripides do not, as it was common in *epitymbia*, suggest a dialogue between a tombstone and the reader who takes up the role of the allegedly uninformed passer-by.<sup>12</sup> Instead of impersonating Euripides, the poets of our texts chose to address him directly and the reader of their poems becomes a witness of the conversation between the playwright from classical Athens and the Hellenistic commentator on Euripides and his legacy.

Despite their individual differences – on which I say more in the following section – all of the poems in this chapter have one preoccupation in common: the death of Euripides and the survival of his fame. Two explanations for this preoccupation come to mind. First, one could argue that this line of thought is not a Hellenistic invention. The poems by Pindar and Sappho for example, often distinguish explicitly between the mortal athlete, woman or writer on the one hand and the immortal fame of the athletes' reputation or the woman's beauty and the author's immortal poetry on the other hand.

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<sup>11</sup> ὄξεϊαι πάντα περὶ τὸν τάφον εἰσὶν ἄκανθαι | καὶ σκόλοpes; βλάψεις τοὺς πόδας, ἢν προσίης. | Τίμων μισάνθρωπος ἐνοικέω. ἀλλὰ πάρελθε. | οἰμῶζειν εἶπας πολλά, πάρελθε μόνον. ('Sharp thistles and thorns are all around the tomb: you will hurt your feet if you go near it. I, Timon the misanthrope, dwell here. Better be on your way after you have pronounced many curses on my head – just be on your way.'). The imagery of the thorn-bush seems to be inspired by Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, where Timon is described as 'a vagabond who had his face surrounded by unapproachable thorn-bushes' (ἀβάτοισιν ἐν σκόλοισι τὰ πρόσωπα περιειργμένως, *Lys.* 806).

<sup>12</sup> On the popularity of the 'talking inscriptions' in Greek epigrams and their forerunners in epigraphic conventions see Burzachechi (1962: 3-5); Raubitschek (1968a: 1-4); Svenbro (1993: 26-43); Bing (1998: 21-43); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 306-338), Meyer (2005: 18; 71-2), Petrović (2005: 30-42), Meyer (2007: 191-9) and Zanker (2007: 241-2).

To a certain degree, then, the basic pattern of the mortality of the individual versus the immortality of the text is a feature through which Hellenistic poetry refers to earlier Greek poetry. The second possible explanation for the Hellenistic writers' preoccupation with the death of Euripides is a structural one. All but one of the poems are composed in the form of epigrams.<sup>13</sup> The subject of the death of the author hence could be motivated by generic conventions. Equally, the elegiac form chosen by Hermesianax for his treatment of the love lives of famous Greek poets, and by Poseidippus for his depiction of his own death, seems to suit the needs of the authors' poetic enterprises. For the depiction of the death of Euripides in Hellenistic epigrams generic motivations were surely at play.

A third reason why the death of the poet features so prominently in Hellenistic poetry could be the increased popularity of the cult of poets in the period. In Hellenistic times, partly as a result of enormous political and social changes, and the cultural changes that came with them, individuals receive public portrayals in the form of representations in stone or on coins. Statues of Greek poets were, for example, found in the *Serapeion* of Memphis, a cult site where probably the patron god of poetry was venerated.<sup>14</sup> Generally speaking, it seems plausible to assume that epigrams on famous poets and the portrayal of poets from the past evolved in a socio-historical context which was considerably influenced

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<sup>13</sup> The form of elegy chosen by Poseidippus for this enterprise seems appropriate for the topic. The other example that does not fit into the formal category of the epigram is the mock-elegy by Hermesianax. It is interesting to note that the poem by Hermesianax tells the love stories for several of the most famous poets but only in one case, as Kobiliri (1998: 162) and Matthews (2003: 285) rightly point out, narrates the story of the death of the poet: in the case of Euripides.

<sup>14</sup> See Lauer-Picard (1955: 1-47) and Thompson (1988: 27-9 and 212-65). The most famous example is perhaps the bronze statue Ptolemy Philadelphus erected for his tutor, the allegedly first scholar-poet and great model for Callimachus and his generation, Philitas of Cos. On the statue of Philitas and its echoes in Hellenistic poetry, and the fragmentary poems by Poseidippus and Hermesianax especially, see Angiò (2002: 18-219, Gutzwiller (2007: 30) and Prioux (2007: 20-5).

by the cultural politics of the Ptolemies and the self-fashioning of the Hellenistic courts. A cultural politics, it seems, which favoured authors from the Greek past, nurtured their iconographical representation in the arts and inspired an interest in anecdotal and biographical material in literature.

We are well informed about the cult surrounding the sixth century poet Archilochus of Paros. Diskin Clay has systematically evaluated the evidence regarding the cult of Archilochus in antiquity and his study created the need for a new perspective on the cult of poets in ancient Greece.<sup>15</sup> In what seems to have been the first attested cult of a poet as *hero*, the hero-cult of Archilochus could have origins as early as the late sixth century BC. It flourished in the early third century BC, and continued long afterwards with the greatest quantity of evidence of cult concentrating in the second century AD.<sup>16</sup>

We also have ample evidence for the cult of other poets – among them Homer, Hesiod, the Athenian tragedians, Solon, Simonides, Mimnerus and Orpheus – even if we do not have any early traces of a ‘*Homereion*’ or an ‘*Euripideion*’ as we have it in the case of the Parian poet.<sup>17</sup> The scene changes remarkably in Hellenistic times, and we hear of a *Homereion* and of the famous cave of Euripides on Salamis in ancient sources.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that around the same

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<sup>15</sup> Clay (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Clay (2004: 4). See Lefkowitz’ conclusion about the ancient biographies of Euripides (‘Stories of his [i.e. Euripides’] early recognition and versatility, the magnitude of his accomplishments, his isolation, exile, and death suggest that in the fourth century at least he was regarded as something of a hero.’, Lefkowitz (1981: 102).

<sup>17</sup> For the *Archilocheion* of Paros, see Kontoleon (1964: 52), Rossi (2001: 94-5 and 327-8) and Clay (2004). A *Homereion* at Smyrna is mentioned by Strabo (14.1.37), a *Homereion* at Alexandria was commissioned by Ptolemy Philopater and is mentioned by Aelian (*VH* 13.22).

<sup>18</sup> Aelian reports in *Var. Hist.* 13.22 that the *Homereion* at Alexandria featured a ‘splendid seated Homer’ in its centre surrounded by all the cities which claimed Homer their own. On the cave of Euripides, see my discussion on pp. 276-79 and 290 below.

time some form of 'tourism' established itself to these monuments and places that became even stronger points of reference for the Greek cultural memory from Hellenistic times onwards.

In a recent paper, Peter Bing showed how such a cult may have been long established when Hermippus referred to it in his biography of Euripides. The legendary story of the acquisition of Euripides' stylus, writing tablet and lyre by Dionysius of Sicily, which is transmitted in the anonymous *Genos Euripidou*, without any doubt attests to the fact that Euripides had the status of a 'celebrity' already in the fourth century BC.<sup>19</sup> The most prominent features of the cult of Greek poets seem to have been the recognition of their godlike character through divine inspiration, a manifestation of the cult in the dedication of statues and the mention of, and visits to, their tombs.<sup>20</sup> We can see both the attestation of divine inspiration, and a preoccupation with the death and the tomb of the poet in the textual evidence on Euripides from Hellenistic times, in the fictional dialogue about Euripides by Satyrus as well as in Hellenistic epigrams. Contrary to earlier description of poets and their special status in society at earlier times, however, the cult of the poets in Hellenistic times gains a new dimension: it becomes a literary *topos*.

In the case of Euripides, a new dimension is added to the cult of poets in Hellenistic times and is motivated by two tendencies: first, the tendency to exploit the commemoration and cult of the poet Euripides to a maximum degree.

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<sup>19</sup> See Bing (forthcoming) and my discussion of the report in chapter 5, pp. 166-68 below.

<sup>20</sup> On the cult of poets in Hellenistic times, see Bing (1993), Bolmarcich (2002: 81-2) and Clay (2004: 6). For a good analysis of the phenomenon of tomb-cult in the third and second centuries BC, however without any mention of the cult or even the reported tombs and cenotaphs of classical poets, see Alcock (1991).

Secondly, the tendency to put the importance of the classical past into perspective by introducing the Hellenistic position.

In the broader context of the biographical tradition on Euripides, the texts from Hellenistic times present themselves like a filter to tradition. They filter and transform the biographical tradition but at the same time reinforce the accounts from earlier centuries. This process can best be illustrated by the mechanisms of commemoration and individualisation. Hellenistic accounts reinforce the glory of Euripides while at the same time subverting his glorification. The highly reflective literature of the Hellenistic period makes it possible for us to observe a critique of the pejorative accounts of Euripides as they survived in comedy and in the anecdotal material up to Hellenistic times. As a result, ridiculing tendencies that formed most of the earlier biographical tradition on Euripides are exposed and questioned from the Hellenistic period onwards, while the tendency to immortalise the poet as a hero from the past flourishes.

The *Genos Euripidou*, for instance, reports of a cult of Euripides in connection with his tomb. We can evaluate this account as the reflection of an increased spread of poet worship. Cults of poets may well have been practised in antiquity, probably already in the fourth century BC.<sup>21</sup> Without any doubt there have been cults surrounding the tombs of other individuals from the classical past.<sup>22</sup> However, we do not know whether a cult of Euripides was more widespread in Macedonia than in mainland Greece. A passage from the *Genos Euripidou*, claiming to contain information by the Hellenistic biographer

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<sup>21</sup> See Clay (2004: 94-5).

<sup>22</sup> See the evidence in Alcock (1991: 450-67).

Hermippus about the tragedian, illustrates a possible reflection of such cults, even though it suggests the idea of a cult rather than referring to actual cultic practices.<sup>23</sup>

The cult of famous people in antiquity in most cases consists of a permanent material element of commemoration – such as a cenotaph or a statue – and a quasi-permanent narrative of commemoration, such as an epigram, an anecdote or even a saying. In addition to that, literary forms of commemoration often tend to have some form of bizarre twist or paradoxical element to themselves, which guarantees that the protagonist is singled out among other possible heroes.<sup>24</sup> In her seminal book on the *Lives* of the Greek poets, Mary Lefkowitz claims that in the course of the biographical tradition on Euripides, his weaknesses received more and more emphasis.<sup>25</sup> This rather general judgement is, however, not in accordance with the historical context of the evidence we have from the third and second century BC. On the contrary: there is a distinct wish to glorify the poet as he becomes canonical and the expressions of that wish are subsequently reflected in his biographical representations.

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<sup>23</sup> See my discussion of the text on pp.166-68 below.

<sup>24</sup> See Emily Kearns' definition of the hero-cult in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*: 'Concepts of heroes were as variable as their cult, if not more so. [...] The traditions of their lives, deaths, and actions after death [...] usually contain some element of singularity or paradox.' (Kenney 1996: 694).

<sup>25</sup> Lefkowitz (1981: 88). Lefkowitz gives the explanation that they do so 'in order to make the poet's achievements seem more comprehensible and accessible.' However, I doubt that the comprehensibility and accessibility of Euripides for the general audience were most prominent on the mind of the ancient authors.

## 2. Macedonian Concerns and Panhellenic Interests

The text I want to start with is an anonymous epigram on the fame of

Euripides (*AP* 7.46 = Kovacs T 97 = Kannicht T 235):

Οὐ σὸν μνῆμα τόδ' ἔστ', Εὐριπίδη, ἀλλὰ σὺ τοῦδε·  
τῆ σῆ γὰρ δόξῃ μνῆμα τόδ' ἀμπέχεται.

This here is not your memorial, Euripides, but you are its memorial:  
since this memorial is surrounded by your fame.

These two seemingly simple and straightforward lines play in a succinct way with affirmation and negation, suspense and surprise. In accordance with the generic convention, the text openly refers to a tomb by way of highlighting μνῆμα τόδε. Mentioned at the very beginning of the poem in form of a negation (οὐ σὸν μνῆμα τόδ' ἔστ', line 1), the point of reference for the whole text is taken up again at the end of the poem (μνῆμα τόδ', line 2), where it is expressed in the positive, mirrored against the first appearance of the word both semantically (by way of inversion) and rhetorically (by way of a chiasmic opposition to the first instance). These two instances of μνῆμα – one negative, one positive – set a frame around the appellation of Euripides, whose name is especially highlighted by its central position in the opening line and by the frame created with the double-reference to his tomb. It befits the perfect structure of the poem that this circle surrounding the name of Euripides is optically, rhetorically and semantically closed off by the verb 'surrounded' (ἀμπέχεται, line 2), the last word of the poem.

But there is yet another twist to the text which offers the attentive reader entertainment and surprise. The narrative voice states that not here, in the text or

the imaginary tomb, but rather somewhere else, namely: in the immaterial and far-travelling manifestations of fame (δόξη, line 2), one has to look for the things that matter most and that will survive over the centuries and therefore shape a man's true μνήμα. This line of thought in the text not only contrasts monument and memory or rather: monument and text – as it suggests that texts are the superior medium when it comes to storing memory –, it also goes beyond its own textual scope by undermining the double-meaning of τόδε in line 1, as it steps back from the actual text of the epigram on the imaginary tomb and refers to the invisible sphere – and, one is tempted to add: 'the magic' – of fame. The future fate of the poem and what it relates to, however, are out of reach for its author.

They are also out of reach for the reader. δόξα, as we know it from the Presocratics and from Pindar, has no place and no time.<sup>26</sup> It is geographically unlimited and, once it is in the world, unimpeded with regard to time. As fame 'surrounds' Euripides wherever his name travels (line 4), isolated points of reference such as the text of this epigram can only refer to the broader context but never actually substitute for the true monument of fame which is to be found in the poet's work.

And, of course, οὐ σὸν μνήμα τόδ' ἔστ' also plays with the literary, non-inscriptional character of the epigram: Euripides' monument is not present as we read the poem. In fact, Euripides was famous exactly for not having a proper grave, a legendary disgrace the very beginning of this epigram may be referring to. The disgrace of dying unburied often finds its expression in ancient Greek texts in

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<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, Pindar *Nem.* 6.85, with Leslie Kurke's study of Pindars' 'Economy of *Kleos*' (Kurke 1991: 15-82, esp. 16-20) and Thomas (2007: 163).

the form of rather drastic imageries of dogs, or birds, which are dishonouring the dead body. The beginning of the *Iliad* is perhaps the most famous example. A grave inscription from the third or fourth century AD (*IG II/III<sup>2</sup> 13168*) further attests to the continuous tradition of the *topos* throughout antiquity. Its text warns the passer-by to respect the grave-stone, and threatens the readers that they will die unburied and be devoured by the dogs in case they do not obey the request. The entire text runs: [μ]ὴ κίνει λίθον | [ἐ]κ γαίης, ἄνθρω[π]ε πανοῦργε, | μή σ' ἄταφον, τ[λ]ῆμον, κύνες ἐ[λ]κήσωσι θανό[ν]τα. ('Do not remove this stone from the soil, wicked human being, so that you yourself will not remain unburied and that dogs won't pull apart your corpse.').

Whereas in the biographical tradition Euripides' fate seems to be torn apart and eaten by dogs because he had no tomb, our text in *AP* 7.46 makes up for the lack of a proper burial by denying the need for a geographically defined place for Euripides altogether. While other epigrams stress, in accordance with the biographical tradition, the 'homelessness' of Euripides' remains by implication of his scattered bones (the *membra disiecta* of his body as well as his work), this poem expresses the desire to overcome physical restraints and places Euripides' true heritage somewhere else.

The final negation of the importance of the tomb, and hence the burial and the person, can be read as a negation of the importance of a biographical interest in the poet. Much more rewarding, it seems, than an interest in Euripides' life is an interest in his poetic achievements. The statement refers the reader not only to Euripides' work but also to the contribution of the actual poem. By way of establishing the text as the only relevant μνήμα, then, the anonymous author of

our poem affiliates himself with Euripides' positive δόξα through the epigram: he simultaneously contributes to and participates in Euripides' fame.

New and different from archaic accounts of fame, therefore, and Pindar's references to it especially, is the fact that the *topos* of far-travelling fame is played out with a biographical spin and a high awareness of the mechanisms of commemoration and canonization. That is, the focus is not so much on athletic or poetic achievements and their acknowledgement by a social group but rather on two uniquely Hellenistic aspects: on a general interest in setting standards of priority for the adequate commemoration of a poet from the past, and a personal interest in the process of reception and canonization of classical authors.

The poem neatly illustrates the subversion of the concept of the μνῆμα and at the same time adds to the idea of the μνῆμα a new point of reference. Fame (δόξα) is the cultural heritage of the poet, and there is no need for a fixed point of reference such as an (imagined) stone, tomb, statue or any other form of material with which the text could possibly be connected. The anaphoric use of the monument (μνῆμα) at the beginning and the end of the poem (and at a similar distance from the beginning and the end of the text), the central position of the name of Euripides and the significant last word of the poem, ἀμπέχεται, give us a good key for the interpretation of the text.

All three features draw attention to the fact that the poetry of text 1 is 'surrounded', i.e. supported by the ubiquity (and, as we know: the popularity) of Euripidean poetry at the time. The position of the name of Euripides, which is set in the vocative and clearly distinguished from the rest of the text, emphasises this poetic and cultural influence of Euripides even more. Euripides is at the centre of

the poem and thus also at the centre of the epigrammatist's own work. Ironically, therefore, the famous playwright is surrounded by the new text, whereas actually the text claims that it is 'surrounded by Euripides' fame', as it points to the ubiquity and popularity of Euripidean drama in Hellenistic times.

The interchangeable position of Euripidean poetry (surrounded by the Hellenistic text) and the anonymous author's own text (surrounded by, and in its function as a *μνῆμα* dependent on, the fame of Euripides) points the attentive reader to several issues at stake in the poem. First, it shows the extreme dependency of Hellenistic poetry on the work (and fame) of earlier Greek poets. Secondly, it illustrates the remarkable will and ability of Hellenistic poets to innovate despite the burden of the cultural heritage that came down to them from the classical past. And boldly so, as, thirdly, the poet, without revealing his identity to us, sets his own very small work of poetry against the poetry of Euripides, as the *oxymoron* entailed in the final word *ἀμπέχεται* suggests.

In fact, the final word of the epigram is in important ways the key to the interpretation of the two-line poem. The point is however already made at the end of the first line, where the anonymous author of our text explains that he is not inferior, i.e. dependent on Euripides, by saying 'this is not your *μνῆμα*' and claims that rather *vice versa* the enduring fame of Euripides' work will be equally dependent on later poets: the playwright becomes master to his own, the younger poet's text ('but you are the *μνῆμα* of this text here'). Line 2, it seems, only serves to soften this bold first statement by giving the explanation of a causal connection between Euripides' fame and the writer's own poetry, as it suggests that, after all,

the text currently produced (and using Euripides) is ‘surrounded by’, i.e. dependent on the fame of Euripides, too.

The observations we can make in a close reading of the poem thus point to a high awareness of the rank of Euripidean poetry in the cultural heritage from classical times and, by stressing the importance of the monument (μνῆμα) as the medium of commemoration and acknowledgement of poetic achievements, point to the possibility of a cult of the poet. The epigram marks a historical point in the biographical tradition of Euripides. It flourishes at a time where material means of commemoration such as statues, monuments, cenotaphs and coins become more and more important. The mechanisms of material and immaterial commemoration are expressed in a nutshell, as the epigram suggests – if only within a literary fiction. Any fixed form of commemoration for Euripides is rendered redundant as the deictic ‘this here’, τόδε, points to both the imaginary tombstone and the text of the epigram itself. Thus, the epigrammatist invents a win-win situation for himself and Euripides: the anonymous poet contributes to the corpus of Hellenistic references to Euripides and the connection of his poem with the name of Euripides grants his text recognition and trans-historical relevance.

Another anonymously transmitted poem offers a variation on the theme of the ubiquitous fame of Euripides (*AP* 7.47 = Kovacs T 98 = Kannicht T 236, I print the Greek after Kovacs):

Ἄπασ' Ἀχαιῖς μνῆμα σόν <γ>, Εὐριπίδη  
οὔκουν ἄφωνος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τλαλητέος.

All of Greece is your memorial, Euripides,  
because you are not without a voice but indeed  
quite talkative (?).

The text as it is transmitted confronts us with the problem of an incomprehensible last word (λαλητέος), and several scholars have tried their hands at possible emendations. I would like to address the textual situation and offer an outline of possible solutions to it before embarking on an interpretation of the poem. The following alternative readings to the transmitted form λαλητέος have been suggested: Jacoby read λαλητικός, Reiske emended to λαλεῖ σε πᾶς, Schmidt thought of λαλεῖ νεκρός, Lloyd-Jones gives λαλίστατος - albeit *dubitanter*. Both λαλητέος and λαλίστατος are problematic as they present rather unusual forms of the verb 'to chat' (λαλέω).

All that can be said with any certainty is that it is highly likely that with the last word the poet plays on a semantically antithetical construction with the adjective ἄφρωνος in the same line. This is suggested by the conjunctions of strong contrast (οὐκ οὖν and ἀλλὰ καὶ) but also indicated by the ascription of λαλία 'chattiness' to Euripides in biographical representations from Old Comedy onwards.<sup>27</sup>

Suggestions like λαλεῖ νεκρός (Schmidt) refer exclusively to Euripides. They can be justified if we take a closer look at the first two words of the poem, ἄπασ' Ἀχαΐς, which seems a prelude to the narrative of ubiquitous fame and to the play of words. The contrast would then focus on the appellation of Euripides in allusion to re-performances as well as the classroom, where passages from his plays had to be learnt by rote and created the audible presence of his poetry.<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, *Frogs* 954 and 1069 and p. 154 below.

<sup>28</sup> Bing (forthcoming) stresses the significance of musical performances of extracts of Euripidean drama in this context. For such recitals of individual passages in a musical performance at the time of the production of the epigram see, for instance, Plutarch's account of the events at the court of

distinctive feature of Euripides and Euripidean tragedy, λαλία, as expressed in οὔκουν ἄφωνος, would then be further emphasised by an explanation which is in keeping with the genre of the *epitymbion* and creates a reference to μνήμα.

We can, of course, also assume that the word which would have to follow λάλ- might refer exclusively to ἅπασ' Ἀχαιίς. For example, it is possible that the end of the poem took up the geographical dimension of its beginning and did so by locating the typically Euripidean chatter in the Greek landscape quite generally, for instance by referring to something as ubiquitous as the air or the sun. Another possibility is to look for an emendation that connects λαλεῖν with 'all of Greece' as well as 'Euripides'. In correspondence to ἄφωνος, then, the word we are looking for might need to be grammatically ambivalent to match the ability of ἄφωνος and to refer to both the feminine 'all of Greece' (ἅπασ' Ἀχαιίς, line 1) and to Euripides (Εὐριπίδη, line 1).

Despite the textual difficulties, one feature of the poem stands out: *AP* 7.47 illustrates the geographical spread of Euripidean poetry so typical for Hellenistic times by way of playing with a feature of the poet taken from Old Comedy, the poet's chatty voice, whatever the original text of line 2. The anonymous poet witnesses the cultural context of his own time and assesses his own contribution to the reception of Euripides: the voice of Euripides and Euripidean tragedy, the poem seems to say, is not confined to fifth-century Athens

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Pella in Alexander's time (Plut. *Alex.* 50.8-9). Alexander was also known for his fondness of scenic competitions and performances of choral songs and tragedies (see Plut. *Alex.* 29 and *Mor.* 334c). The most famous example of a performance of Euripidean tragedy at the court of Alexander is probably the description of a festive evening in Athenaeus which is depicted as culminating in the recitation of a long passage from *Andromeda* by the emperor himself (*Athen.* 537d). In fact, Alexander was in antiquity said to have been so fond of Euripidean tragedies that he even took them on his expeditions (Plut. *Alex.* 8.3) – perhaps yet another aspect of the geographically enormous reach of Euripidean tragedy.

or the lifetime of the tragedian. In fact, by being ageless and stretching beyond his death it can be called truly ‘immortal’. Euripidean tragedy thus immortalises Euripides, and all of Greece participates in his immortalisation, as his tragedies are re-performed and learned by heart throughout the Greek-speaking world.

The geographical ubiquity of Euripidean poetry is also the point of reference for an epigram on the fame of Euripides ascribed to Thucydides (*AP* 7.45 = Kannicht T 232; I print the Greek after Kannicht). Denys Page dates the poem to the early fourth century but we cannot be entirely certain when it was composed.<sup>29</sup>

Μνήμα μὲν Ἑλλάδος ἅπασ’ Εὐριπίδου· ὅστέα δ’ ἴσχει	1
γῆ Μακεδῶν, ἧπερ δέξατο τέρμα βίου·	
πατρὶς δ’ Ἑλλάδος Ἑλλάς, Ἀθηναί. πλεῖστα δὲ Μούσαις	
τέρψας ἐκ πολλῶν καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἔχει.	4

All of Greece is the memorial of Euripides; but his bones holds the Macedonian soil in which he was accepted at the end of his life; His fatherland, however, is the Greece of Greece, Athens. He delighted the Muses enormously and holds the praise of many.

Together with the previous two epigrams, *AP* 7.46 and *AP*.47, we seem to have with this poem a group of epigrams which offer variations on the theme of ‘all of Greece is your tomb, Euripides’. Whereas in our first example the grandiose claim is in stark contrast to the limited space of the text, here, as in *AP* 7.47, it is boldly spelled out as a general statement: ‘All of Greece is the memorial of Euripides’ (μνήμα μὲν Ἑλλάδος ἅπασ’ Εὐριπίδου, line 1). Unlike our previous texts, however, the Panhellenic fame of Euripides is not contrasted with the textual reality of the poem. Instead, the text evokes a distant land by mentioning the final resting place of Euripides’ bones in ‘the Macedonian soil’ (γῆ Μακεδῶν, line 2). The

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<sup>29</sup> Page (1981: 307).

geographical dimension of ‘all of Greece’ (line 1) and ‘his fatherland, the Greece of Greece, Athens’ (line 3) is, it seems, set against the imagery of the Macedonian territory.

A possible motivation for setting Athens and Macedonia in such striking contrast could be an attempt to defend the cultural significance of Athens over Macedonia. It is noteworthy that Macedonia, unlike Athens, is plainly referred to in terms of its territory rather than by using the name of any location inhabited by human beings or famous for a local cult. Greece, and Athens especially, the poem seems to say, holds the claim for Euripides’ δόξα by providing him with a memorial. Macedonia, on the other hand, merely holds Euripides’ bones.

What is perhaps more striking, and would certainly have caught the eye of the Hellenistic readers of the poem, is the fact that the message underlying the epigram is put in a nutshell through the combination of the first and the last word of the poem: with μνήμα ἔχει, ‘he has a memorial’, the short and witty poem attracts the eye of the attentive reader. The poem thus emphasises the status of Euripides as a national hero with a proper μνήμα, who was not just torn to pieces in distant Macedonia. The tragedian has a μνήμα, and because of his outstanding legacy in Greece and the Greek-speaking world, he even has two μνήματα, a grave in Macedonia and a cenotaph in Athens.

The epigram is transmitted with the remark φασὶ κεραυνωθῆναι ἀμφοτέρω μνημεῖα. (‘They say that both monuments have been struck by lightning.’ *Genos Euripidou*, T 1.19 Kovacs). Thus both Euripides and the poem before our eyes are sanctified not only by the retrospective ascription of an ancient authority such as Thucydides or Timotheus but by the lightning of Zeus. In keeping

with the general Panhellenic scope of the poem is the report that both Euripides' actual tomb and his cenotaph in Athens had been struck by lightning.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most famous passage about thunder and lightning in Hellenistic literature is the prologue of Callimachus *Aetia*.<sup>31</sup> There, Homer is equalled to Zeus, while Homeric poetry, or rather: cyclic poetry in the style of Homer, is rejected as preposterous and bombastic.<sup>32</sup> Ivana Petrovič has recently illuminated the narrative function of mentioning Zeus in Hellenistic poetry. In her detailed and lucid discussion of the net of allusions that surrounds the codified evocation of Homer, Zeus, and the Telchines in Callimachus' *Aetia* fr.1 (where the lovely song of the cicadas is contrasted with the horrible screams of the ass in lines 29-30), and *Iambus* 6 (where perhaps the speed of the hare was contrasted with the tortoise)<sup>33</sup>, Petrovič argues for an allegorical reading of the statue of Zeus as a typically Hellenistic representation of Homeric poetry.<sup>34</sup> The close followers of Homeric poetry are in Callimachus notoriously ridiculed as uninventive, frigid, and overly cautious.

On a political level, the poem could be read as a comment on the Macedonian geopolitical claims in comparison with the cultural inheritance from

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<sup>30</sup> Plutarch takes the story even further and adds some dramatic detail: in *Lycurgus* 31.5, he reports that the tomb of Euripides was struck by lightning as his bones were being transferred to Athens.

<sup>31</sup> Callimachus fr. 1.19-20 Pfeiffer.

<sup>32</sup> For the equation of Homer with Zeus, see Bulloch (1985: 19), Asper (1997: 196) and Petrovič (2006: 19-23).

<sup>33</sup> The surviving text is too lacunose to say anything with certainty; for an interpretation and possible reconstructions, see Kerkhecker (1999: 145-179). There seems an identification of god and statue at the centre of the poem.

<sup>34</sup> See Petrovič (2006: 22-3). See Prioux (2007: 99-113) for an analysis of how the *Reply to the Telchines* tackles questions of literary canonization and takes up the famous *agôn* of Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, especially her claim that 'inversant le critère de Dionysos, Callimaque accorde la préférence à l'œuvre la plus légère.' (2007: 99).

classical Athens.<sup>35</sup> If this assumption is correct, the author of the epigram could have paid his tribute to the importance of Macedonia for the reception and transmission of Euripidean tragedy and at the same time inscribed his own contribution to the cultural claims of Athens into the poem that praises Euripides.

The passage introducing the epigram claims that it was inscribed on a cenotaph in Athens.<sup>36</sup> The *Genos Euripidou* therefore perhaps takes up the impulse of *AP* 7.45 of 'hellenising' and 'historising' the poem by re-locating it to fifth-century Athens.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, we have no other source which could support the claim of a cenotaph of Euripides in Athens made by the *Genos Euripidou*. However, the question whether such a cenotaph *de facto* existed or not is in my view less interesting than the fact that it is mentioned in the *Genos Euripidou* as if to counterbalance geographically and politically the weight of commemoration of the poet in Macedonia. Equally intriguing is the display of an epigram in the text that is said to have actually (and quite differently from other Hellenistic examples of the genre) been inscribed on it. Thus, the fiction of Hellenistic commemoration is in the literary manifestation of the *Genos Euripidou* lifted up into non-fiction and

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<sup>35</sup> Such a strategy is of course not confined to Macedonia and her political interests. See, for instance, *SH* 979 (addressed to Ptolemy IV Philopator) for an epigram that illustrates the close link between the political interests of the Ptolemies and the cult of Homer, and other 'great poets of the Greek past' at Alexandria. On the institution of the cult of Homer in Alexandria and its political implications, see Petrovič (2006: 20-3).

<sup>36</sup> The passage introducing the quotation reads: ἐτελεύτησεν δέ, ὡς φησι Φιλόχορος, ὑπὲρ τὸ ὄντων γεγονώς, ὡς δὲ Ἐρατοσθένης οὐκ, καὶ ἐτάφη ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ. κενοτάφιον δὲ αὐτοῦ Ἀθηναίων ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐπίγραμμα ἐπεγράψατο Θουκυδίδου τοῦ ἱστοριογράφου ποιήσαντος ἢ Τιμοθέου τοῦ μελοποιῦ: ('He died, as Philochorus says, at the age of over 70 years; according to Eratosthenes at 75, and he was buried in Macedonia. Yet he also had a cenotaph in Athens and written on it was an epigram that had been written by Thucydides the historian or Timotheos the lyric poet:').

<sup>37</sup> Sauzeau (1998: 88) links the tendency of the poem to reclaim Euripides for Athens with the fact that Euripides, like Aeschylus died 'in exile': 'Il s'agit évidemment de récupérer pour la plus grande gloire d'Athènes le tombeau du génie mort en exil.'

consolidated by mentioning two likely Athenian authors of the epigram, Thucydides and Timotheus of Miletus.

The report that both the actual tomb in Macedonia and the cenotaph in Athens had been struck by lightning neatly transforms the Hellenistic triple lightning mentioned by Bianor of Bithynia in the following epigram (*AP* 7.49 = Kovacs T 99 = Kannicht T 237; I print the Greek after Kovacs) into a politically and geographically balanced distribution of supernatural sanctification. The poem by Bianor has the following version of the story:

Ἄ Μακέτις σε κέκευθε τάφου κόνις, ἀλλὰ πυρωθεὶς	1
Ζανὶ κεραυνεῖω γαίαν ἀπηχθίασας:	
τρὶς γὰρ ἐπαστράψας, Εὐριπίδῃ, ἐκ Διὸς αἰθήρ	
ἤγνισ[ε] ἐς ἀθανάταν σῆμα τόδ' ἱστορίαν.	4

The Macedonian dust of your tomb covers you, but fire-struck by Zeus the Thunderer you have freed yourself of the earth: for three times has the air lightened up from Zeus, Euripides, and sanctified this tomb for immortal history.

A pattern which seems familiar is the auto-referential tag at the very end of the epigram. 'This tomb' (σῆμα τόδ') is the point of reference for the 'imperishable story' of Euripides (ἀθανάταν ἱστορίαν, line 4) as it unfolds over the centuries.<sup>38</sup> The 'imperishable story', in which the poem has its share, stands in sharp contrast to the Macedonian dust (Ἄ Μακέτις κόνις, line 1) at the beginning of the poem. The evocation of ἱστορία could, perhaps, even be a reference to the epigram ascribed to Thucydides.

Unlike the Macedonian dust, the ἱστορία presented here is neither far away nor volatile and exposed to the forces of nature such as rain or wind, but

<sup>38</sup> For the semantic dimensions of σῆμα, see Nagy (1990: 215-17) and Bing (2002: 50-52). For the famous σῆμα in the two, possibly autobiographically motivated, epigrams by Callimachus, *Ep.* 21 and *Ep.* 35, see Meyer (1995: 170-8).

instead preserved by the very same forces which conventionally destroy rather than preserve. It is intriguing that Bianor, of whom we know not much more than that he lived in Alexandria in the third century BC, in fact calls his account of the tomb of Euripides in Macedonia part of a *ἱστορία*. Possibly Bianor stepped into a tradition which had been created by the author of our previous example and other Hellenistic poets, and which is echoed in the ascription of *AP* 7.45 to Thucydides, a tradition which was aware of the historical burden of the past as well as of its own capacity to recreate it and to play, perhaps ironically, with connotations of historical certification and the validity of stories about great poets of the past.

In our epigram, however, the scenario seems not to be a Callimachean. Rather, conversely, the sanctification of Euripides' tomb with double lightning seems to signal that the tragedian can be sure not only of the divine approval of his tomb in Macedonia and his cenotaph in Athens but also of the canonization of his work as truly worthy of being measured against Homeric poetry, or, at least, as being a worthy heir to the Homeric tradition.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the poem even reflects an early response to the reception of Euripides in Macedonia. As such, the double lightning could perhaps comment on Euripides' outstanding popularity outside of Athens as unsubtle, exaggerated and producing a lot of noise.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Petrović (2006: 19): 'Homer is the mirror-image of Zeus, since he himself is also a patron god from whom inspiration flows.' It is important to keep in mind that not only epic poets but all great writers from the Greek past seem to have been praised as Homer's heirs in the process of selection and canonisation from Hellenistic times onwards. The list of Greek authors compared with Homer includes Herodotus, Stesichorus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Pindar, and Thucydides. See (Cameron 1995: 275) and Petrović (2006: 23).

<sup>40</sup> On Callimachus' refusal to produce the thundering noise of pompous poetry, see Asper (1997: 196) and Petrović (2006: 25). Asper stresses the semantic tension of the thundering in Callimachus' reply to the Telchines in its obscure ability to describe both an apologetic and a polemic gesture.

More speculative is the consideration whether the first word of the poem, ἄ Μακέτις, could have raised expectations of a love-story, as the female adjective could also refer to a Macedonian girl.<sup>41</sup> The theme of ‘Euripides and the women’, which is so topical in the biographical tradition on the poet, has not surfaced in our examples from Hellenistic poetry so far. However, as we will see in the discussion of a passage in Hermesianax’ famous mock-elegy (fr. 7 Powell) below, the story of ‘Euripides and the Macedonian woman’ was by no means neglected by the Hellenistic poets. Rather, it seems, they chose to declare it as unimportant and uninteresting, so as to stress their interest in the work of the poet rather than his life, and in the texts of his tragedies rather than in their reception by Aristophanes.

If, therefore, ἄ Μακέτις should have evoked the expectation of a love-story, Bianor only used it to display his ability to build up suspense and subvert the expectations of his readers. Not the burning passion for a Macedonian girl, as Hermesianax reports it, but the burning of divine lightning makes Euripides’ story an imperishable one. On a different level, Bianor could even have inserted an allusion to the events at the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus.<sup>42</sup> As the story of Philadelphus’ Macedonian *hetaira* is so impeccably documented and must have had quite an impact on his contemporaries, Bianor may have used ἄ Μακέτις as a quasi-sensationalist opening to a poem which, in effect, was ‘only’ about Euripides.

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<sup>41</sup> A Macedonian girl is, for instance, subject of a funerary epigram by Poseidippus (AB 44) on a girl called Νικώ who, ‘since Fate led the servant of Dionysus’ (ἐπιειδή Μοί]ρα Διονύσοιο θεραπέυην [... ] ἤγαγεν, reconstruction and translation Bremmer 2006: 37), fell from the Bassaric mountains. Her accidental death caused public grief in Pella, if Bremmer’s reconstruction of the Greek is correct. Perhaps she was a popular young actress (at least that is how I understand her to have been a ‘slave of Dionysus’) and Bianor wanted to allude to the event with the opening words of his poem. For the local colouring of the vocabulary of Poseidippus AP 44. see Bremmer (2006: 38-40).

<sup>42</sup> See Cameron (1995: 244-5).

In fact, one wonders if Bianor's choice of words at the beginning of *AP* 7.49 perhaps comments on the enormous influence of Macedonia for both biographical representations of Euripides and the cultural politics of Alexandria.

The opening of the poem could thus have had the function of an 'advertising sign' or perhaps even that of a label to an edition of Euripidean poetry, not unlike [Theocritus] *Ep.*25 with its incipit ἄλλος ὁ Χῖος.<sup>43</sup> Euripides' connection with Macedonia is also played out in an epigram on the death of Euripides ascribed to Ion of Chios (*AP* 7.43 = Kovacs T 96 = Kannicht T 233). The ascription of this and the following epigram (*AP* 7.44) to an eminent Greek poet from the past such as Ion of Chios is not unusual. This is how Fantuzzi and Hunter describe the popular Hellenistic practice:

The large number of epigrams referring to characters of events of the sixth and fifth centuries, some of which may be ancient but many of which are clearly Hellenistic compositions falsely attributed to Simonides, Plato, Anacreon, and a host of other authors whose interest in the epigram is otherwise unattested (Sappho, Bacchylides, Empedocles etc.), shows that the custom of anonymity continued to be observed for a long time, and gave rise to the Hellenistic practice of assigning anonymous poems to great figures of the past.<sup>44</sup>

Ion of Chios may have appeared as an especially apt choice, as his talent in several genres seems to have impressed the Hellenistic poets.<sup>45</sup> However, I am aware of the fact that the ascription of the epigram to Ion of Chios is anachronistic. On a merely factual level, the authorship of an epigram on Euripides' death by Ion of Chios is

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<sup>43</sup> On advertising signs in Hellenistic epigrams, see Rossi (2001: 251-3). Rossi (2001: 343-47) was the first to assume that *AP* 9.205 could have had the function of a label of an edition of the complete works of Theocritus, while Wilamowitz argued that the reference to Chios creates a link to Homer. The ancient *scholia*, however, seem already to have assumed the distinction of Theocritus of Samos from Theocritus of Chios behind the tag; see Koster and Holwerda (1954: 151).

<sup>44</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 289).

<sup>45</sup> Callimachus gives Ion as a model for his own poetic practise in *Iambus* 13, in which he displays his fondness of *polyeideia*. It is also worth noting that Ps.-Longinus seems to have treated Bacchylides and Ion as Hellenistic poets *avant la lettre*.





The poem combines several motifs and narrative strategies we have encountered elsewhere. It presents Euripides as the ‘nightingale of the stage’ and as ‘the glory of all Greece’ (line 3) as well as a ‘servant of the Pierian Muses’ (line 6). It thus pays respect to Euripides’ literary achievements and to the tragedian’s presence both in Athens and in Macedonia. Pieria is the last word of the epigram as it is created as the last place in the biographical representation of Euripides.

The closeness of Euripides to the Pierian Muses is also stressed in his depiction as servant to the Muses, from where his honourable death and burial in Macedonia (lines 5-6) are constructed. This fairly conventional way of praising the poet is contrasted with a shocking death: a ‘fate full of tears (δακρυόεις πότμος, line 1) is said to have caught the poet, as he is said to have ‘fallen prey to wolf-killing dogs’ (line 2). While the expression δεῖπνον ἔθεντο κύνες (line 2) probably refers to the famous opening passage in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 1.4) the specifically Euripidean is soon pointed out as well: he was ‘the honey-voiced nightingale of the stage’ (line 3), and is labelled (in stark contrast to the death away from his home) as ‘Athens’ glory’ (κόσμον Ἀθηνῶν, line 3) and described as the poet ‘who mixed the charms of the Muses with wisdom’ (τὸν σοφίη Μουσέων μιξάμενον χάριτα, line 4).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The image of the nightingale is topical. In his biographical sketch of Socrates, Diogenes Laertius has Euripides call Socrates the ‘nightingale of the Muses’ (see Diog. Laert. 2.44). However, we do not know whether or not this anecdote reflects an awareness of the biographical tradition of Euripides in Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes claims Euripides expressed his sentiment after Socrates’ trial but that is of course chronologically impossible. On the poetic dimension of the imagery of the nightingale, see Männlein-Robert (2007: 202-209). Männlein-Robert especially stresses the immateriality represented by the bird’s song, which is opposed to the material origins of the well-established genre of the literary epigram. For the imagery of the nightingale as opposed to the crow and raven, see Asper (1997: 200-1). For the Hellenistic poets’ delight in pushing the possible connotations and literary references of the nightingale to the limit, see Puelma (2006: 62 and 74).

As the concept of wisdom points to Athens and Euripides' fame in Athens as σοφώτατος, the mentioning of the charms of the Muses provides the verbal means to overcome the geographical distance to Macedonia, home of the Muses where the playwright is said to dwell now (lines 5-6). The poem not only shows the emergence of a cult of canonized poets in Hellenistic times, it also plays with the geographical points of reference in the biographical representations of Euripides, elegantly connecting them with positive and honouring pictures, and avoiding any pejorative associations with Euripides or his poetry as they could well arise from the tales surrounding his disgraceful death.

Instead of keeping silence over the biographical narrative of the death of the poet by dogs, however, the author of our text seems to have chosen to strengthen the positive aspects of the poet's poetic achievements and the geographical spread of his fame, making him an important figure in the public life of Athens as well as Macedonia. The imagery of the nightingale further could entail a reference to Hesiod's famous fable of the hawk and the nightingale in *Works and Days*. As such, it would portray Euripides, perhaps, as the precious poet who dared to challenge someone like Aristophanes and who is held captive by the greedy Macedonian king. It is worth quoting the fable in full, as our anonymous Hellenistic poet seems to have drawn from it to a considerable extend. I print the Greek after West (1978).

<p> νῦν δ' αἶνον βασιλεῦσ' ἔρέω φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς·  ᾧ δ' ἴρηξ προσέειπεν ἀηδόνα ποικιλόδειρον,  ὑψι μάλ' ἐν νεφέεσσι φέρων ὀνύχεσσι μεμαρπώς·  ἦ δ' ἔλεόν, γναμπτοῖσι πεπαρμένη ἀμφ' ὀνύχεσσι,  μύρετο· τὴν δ' ὅ γ' ἐπικρατέως πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν·  “δαιμονίη, τί λέληκας; ἔχει νῦν σε πολλὸν ἀρείων,  τῆ δ' εἷς ἢ σ' ἂν ἐγὼ περ ἄγω καὶ αἰδὸν εὐῶσαν;  δειπνον δ', αἶ κ' ἐθέλω ποιήσομαι ἢ ἐμεθήσω  ἄφρων δ', ὅς κ' ἐθέλη πρὸς κρείσσονας ἀντιφερίζειν· </p>	<p>205</p> <p>210</p>
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νίκης τε στέρεται πρὸς τ' αἰσχεσιν ἄλγεα πάσχει."  
 ὡς ἔφατ' ὠκυπέτης ἰρηξ, τανυσίπτερος ὄρνις.  
 ᾧ Πέρση, σὺ δ' ἄκουε Δίκης μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε·  
 ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ, οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλός  
 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρῦθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
 ἐγκύρσας Ἀτησιν· ὁδὸς δ' ἑτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
 κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια· δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
 ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα· παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω.

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Now I will tell a fable to the kings, although they already know it is true themselves. Thus the hawk addressed the speckle-necked nightingale, as he carried her high up into the clouds, keeping her snatched in his talons. She was weeping piteously, pierced by his curved talons; he addressed her haughtily: "Strange one, why do you scream? Now one who is much superior holds you. You will go wherever I myself carry you, if I see fit, or I shall let you go. Foolish is he who sees fit to set himself up against those who are better; he both loses the victory and suffers pain in addition to the disgrace. Thus spoke the swift-winged hawk, the long-winged bird. O Perses, listen to *Dike* and do not support violence. For violence is evil for a wretched mortal; not even a good man can bear it easily, but he is weighed down by it when he has met with calamities. By the other way is the better road to [travel on and to] reach just things.

(translation Tandy and Neal 1996: 75)

Dalfen argued that the fable of the hawk and the nightingale, which Hesiod had probably received from the Near East, reflects traces of a literary *agôn* and that, if we take the fable seriously, the text contains a warning against the ὕβρις of stretching out into fields which are beyond one's competence.<sup>50</sup> Dalfen's reading of Hesiod's fable receives additional support if we read an allusion to the pattern behind Hesiod's fable in the evocation of the nightingale of *AP* 7.44. While Hesiod's poem reminds the audience of the supremacy of δίκη over human standards, the consequences of ignoring one's limits are expressed in the graphic imagery of σπαραγμός and δίκη κυνῶν in the case of the Hellenistic text.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Dalfen (1994/5: 174-7). For a synopsis of the varying interpretations of the fable, see Lonsdale (1989).

<sup>51</sup> The allegedly Macedonian proverb of the dogs' justice (δίκη κυνῶν) which is also mentioned in fr.39 XXI of Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*, may well have been known to the author of *AP* 7.44. Especially so, as the Alexandrian scholar-poets were notoriously fond of local *curiosa*, anecdotes, and proverbs. Even if the Macedonian proverb of the dogs' justice is not explicitly called by name, therefore, it may have contributed to the author's choice of juxtaposing the peaceful nightingale with the not-so-peaceful death of Euripides. After all, 'interest in semantic dissonance' (Bing 2003:

Euripides is not only remembered as the Panhellenic star who happened to die in foreign territory. In fact, his achievements are connected with an explicit warning in another epigram, in which a Hellenistic poet by the name of Archimedes gives advice to the upcoming poets of his own time (*AP* 7.50 = Kovacs T 89 = Kannicht T 239; I print the Greek after Kovacs):

Τὴν Εὐριπίδεω μῆτ' ἔρχεο μῆτ' ἐπιβάλλου,	1
δύσβατον ἀνθρώποις οἶμον, ἀοιδοθέτα·	
λείη μὲν γὰρ ἰδεῖν καὶ ἐπίτροχος, ἣν δέ τις αὐτήν	
εἰσβαίνει, χαλεποῦ τρηχυτέρη σκόλοπος.	
ἣν δὲ τὰ Μηδείης Αἰητίδος ἄκρα χαράξης,	5
ἀμνήμων κείσῃ νέρθεν ἕα στεφάνους.	

Maker of songs, do not walk upon the road of Euripides,  
 think not on that, a path hard for mortals to tread.  
 For while it is smooth and easy in appearance,  
 if someone walks it, it is rougher than harsh thorn.  
 If you in your scribbling touch the fringes of the story of Medea,  
 Aetes' daughter, you will lie below without a name. Leave these  
 garlands alone.

(translation Kovacs 1994: 121)

The tribute here is perhaps paid to Euripides as a composer of choral songs, as the imitator addressed in line 2 is called a 'maker of songs' (ἀοιδοθέτης) rather than a producer of dialogue and dramatic plots. The quality of Euripidean lyrics is further exemplified as seemingly smooth and easy (line 3) but in fact very hard to compose (line 4). The much hated thorn, which also occurs in the epigram of the legendary

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336) is genuinely Hellenistic. And the key to a deeper understanding to the text could perhaps have been woven into the poem for the well-educated reader by the *poeta doctus*. If my reading of the imagery of the nightingale in *AP* 7.44 is correct, the bridge between these seemingly mutual exclusive spheres would be provided by the reader's knowledge of Hesiod's fable – for us the oldest text in which a nightingale is mentioned at all, and the first extant example in Greek literature of a fable with animals. The nightingale seems an especially appropriate bird for the Hellenistic programme of education and poetic mastery, as the variety of the nightingale's song is emphasised already in Homer; see, for instance, *Od.* 19.521, where the nightingale is characterized as ἣ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν. 'which pours out its song with all its trills and shifting notes', translation Dunbar (1995: 463).

Athenian misanthrope Timon,<sup>52</sup> is transformed by Archimedes to describe the unique place of Euripides in the history of Greek literature – independent of the location of his actual or imaginary tomb. ‘Rougher than harsh thorn’ is not the site surrounding the tomb of the playwright but the route a poet would have to take in his artistic development in order to produce such poetry.

What is more, anyone who should try to imitate the poetry of Euripides will, according to Archimedes, face the fiercest of sanctions: he or she will die ‘without a name’ and unremembered (ἀμνήμων, line 6). It seems probable that the author of this epigram could have reacted against a tendency of his contemporaries to appropriate and exploit Euripides for their own poetry. The warning not to follow in the footsteps of an established poet is of course in itself an established trope. Pindaric and Callimachean in nature, it normally warns later poets to keep away from the well-trodden paths of others, and Homer especially.<sup>53</sup> It is with this background in mind, I think, that we can best understand the full scope of Archimedes’ advice to young poets to ‘leave these garlands alone’.<sup>54</sup>

Many forms of appropriation and imitation were at play in the literature of the Hellenistic age. A remarkable example of imitation, wit and inventiveness is the mock love-elegy by Hermesianax about the alleged passions of great poets from the past in the form of grotesquely distorted pseudo-biographical mini-tales. The fragment of a ‘Catalogue of Loves’ from the elegy *Leontion* narrates in 98 verses

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<sup>52</sup> See *AP* 7.320 and n. 11 on p. 80 above.

<sup>53</sup> For the metaphorical imagery of the ‘road’ in Greek poetry, see Asper (1997: 79-100).

<sup>54</sup> Fantuzzi (2006: 85) suggests that the last distichon of the epigram, and the thought behind it, could have been inspired by Callimachus.

some stories with a surprising spin about the (elsewhere unknown) loves of Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, Sophocles and others.

The stories are given in chronological order and generic pairings: Homer and Hesiod represent epic, Alcaeus and Anacreon lyric poetry, Sophocles and Euripides tragedy.<sup>55</sup> Homer, for example, is said to have fallen in love with Penelope while Hesiod is said to have composed his *Catalogue of Women* for a girl called *Heoie*, whom he seemingly addresses in the *Catalogue*.<sup>56</sup> This sketchy summary of two of the stories related in the fragment already give us an idea about the general style and aim of the narrative presented by Hermesianax. It is clear that the anecdotes about the Greek poets' love lives were invented for a specific, presumably well-educated and well-read, audience. The fragment also contains a passage on Euripides and his alleged love for a Macedonian girl. The passage concerning Euripides runs as follows (fr.7.61-8 Powell = Kovacs T 64 = Kannicht T 106 A; I print the Greek after Kovacs):

Φημὶ δὲ κάκεϊνον τὸν αἰεὶ πεφυλαγμένον ἄνδρα	1
καὶ πάντων μῖσος κτώμενον ἔξ ὀνύχων	
πάσας ἀμφὶ γυναῖκας, ὑπὸ σκολιοῖο τυπέντα	
τόξου νυκτερινᾶς οὐκ ἀποθέσθ' ὀδύνας·	
ἀλλὰ Μακεδονίων πάσας κατενίσσατο λαύρας	5
Αἰγῶν μεθέπων Ἀρχέλεω ταμίην,	
εἰσόκε <δῆ> δαίμων Εὐριπίδη εὔρετ' ὄλεθρον	
† Ἀρριβίου† στυγνῶν ἀντιάσαντι κυνῶν.	

Yet I say that even he, a man who was always on his guard and, if anybody, full of hate beyond measure against anybody female, was struck by the crooked bow and could not get rid of nightly waves of passion; but he went down all the alleys of Macedonian Aegae in

<sup>55</sup> Sophocles and Euripides are followed by Philoxenos and Philitas before the text switches to three philosophers (Pythagoras, Socrates and Aristippus) and the fragment breaks off.

<sup>56</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the verses on Homer and Hesiod, see Bing (1993: 628-31) and Caspers (2006: 22-5).

search of Archelaus' servant girl, until fate found an end for Euripides as he was confronted with the hateful dogs of Arrhibius.<sup>57</sup>

Unlike any of the other love-stories in the fragment, the story about Euripides is connected with a report about his death. Some of the features we already encountered in *AP* 7.49 (= Kovacs T 99) and *AP* 7.44 (= Kovacs T 63) are further developed in the poem. We meet Euripides as 'a man who is always on his guard' (αἰεὶ πεφυλαγμένον ἄνδρα), thoroughly hates 'anyone female' (πάσας γυναικας), yet fell in love and suffered sleepless nights.

We learn that the poet's insomnia resulted in a deadly accident, as the old poet chases one of King Archelaus' slave girls but then 'fate' puts an end to this disgraceful behaviour by sending killer dogs after him in the alleys of Aegae. As we shall see, the version Hermesianax presents of the circumstances of Euripides' death differs from the account we have in Satyrus, where the poet's deadly encounter with the Macedonian dogs is described as an accident.

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<sup>57</sup> Several suggestions have been made for the beginning of line 8. Kobiliri (1998: 18) and Caspers (2006: 32) read with the text transmitted by the manuscripts ἀμφὶ βίου, Matthews (2003: 286) emends to ἀντὶ βίου. It is, however, difficult to construct ἀμφὶ βίου together with ἀντιάσαντα in the sense of 'for his life', as Kobiliri herself concedes (Kobiliri 1998: 176). The text printed above follows Headlam's suggestion of Ἄρριβίου, who followed Hermann's assumption that the corrupt ἀμφὶ βίου probably hides the name of the owner of the dogs. Ἄρριβίου is given by most editors of the text, see Powell (1970) and Kovacs (1994). Behind this suggestion lies the assumption that the mentioning of the name Arrhibius in the version of Euripides' life given in the *Suda* (s.v. Εὐριπίδου) could refer to earlier sources, probably from the times of the height of philological and scholarly activity in Hellenistic Alexandria. The *Suda* entry explains the death of Euripides as a result of a plot by two rival poets at the court of King Archelaus, Arrhibius of Macedonia and Crateuas of Thessaly, who allegedly bribed a king's servant to release the king's dogs against Euripides. For a full discussion of the *Suda* entry on the life of Euripides see pp.258-63 and 293-302 below. Matthews (2003: 286) argues that 'The role of Arrhibius in this story hardly suggests that the deadly hounds could be called 'the dogs of Arrhibius'.' We have little which offers critical footing but it is, I think, entirely probable that such a story already circulated in Hellenistic times and that Hermesianax could refer to it in an abbreviated fashion by calling the dogs 'the dogs of Arrhibius'.

With the introduction of the first person (φημί δέ only occurs in the verses about Euripides and the passage about Hesiod), Hermesianax clearly stresses the novelty of what he has to say. And he does so rather confidently. As Kobiliri and Bing have convincingly shown, Hermesianax presents us with a highly stylised combination of novel tales, mocking commentary on contemporary biographical practice, and verbal echoes of the poets whose loves he describes.

The poem is not only highly elaborate and detailed in its description of the tragic course of Euripides' last moments, it is also highly allusive in pointing to several features we already know from earlier sources in the biographical tradition of Euripides. The well-attested stereotype of Euripides' misogyny is, for example, preserved in Aristophanes and the tragic death by being torn apart by dogs seems to have circulated at least since Satyrus. Hermesianax' text is the earliest example which narrates the *sparagmos* of Euripides by dogs in some detail.<sup>58</sup> *Sparagmos* was, of course, in Greek mythology the typical fate of enemies of the gods, and enemies of Dionysus especially. As in the case of the other poets treated in Hermesianax' elegy, a close connection between the poet and his work seems to have appealed especially to the author. Modern scholars have argued that the death of Euripides through a *sparagmos* by dogs should rather be read as a *sparagmos* by women.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that Hermesianax mentions dogs only in the passages on Euripides and on Orpheus. This could indicate that Hermesianax wanted his readers to notice a link between the outstanding tragedian and the mythical (and tragic) figure of the proto-poet Orpheus.

<sup>59</sup> See, for instance, Cameron (1995: 319); Caspers (2006: 33) even claims that the κύνες in Hermesianax' narrative are a 'metonymic designation' for prostitutes.

His representation of Euripides could reflect Hermesianax' ironic attitude towards the conventions of writing (about) Greek poetry.<sup>60</sup> We will see in the discussion of the example of an immediate reaction to Hermesianax in the poem by Adaeus that this close connection of man and work – and the biographical distortions resulting from it – was by no means welcomed by everybody. Hermesianax not only invites his readers to match the unspecified δαίμων of line 7, who is said to be responsible for Euripides' fate, with Dionysus, who is referred to as δαίμων several times in the *Bacchae*,<sup>61</sup> he also invites them to decode the double-meaning of the στυγνὰί κύνες. These could recall the maenads who killed Pentheus and who are referred to as κύνες by Agaue several times in Euripides' *Bacchae*.<sup>62</sup>

I would like to suggest that Hermesianax' poem contributes something new and original to the biographical tradition about Euripides' death. The 'hateful dogs' Euripides allegedly had to face could, I think, also represent critics.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the dogs that are so pertinent throughout the biographical tradition from Hellenistic times onwards, perhaps do not dismember Euripides the poet so much as his work. This metaphorical interpretation of the dogs that tore apart Euripides gains further support from the fact that dogs are used by the Latin satirists who

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<sup>60</sup> Peter Bing was the first to argue that Hermesianax' *Leontion* was a ridiculing response to the increasing interest in poets' lives among the Peripatetic biographers, see Bing (1993: 619-631). On the difficulty of reading the mock-elegy without any sense of humour, see Bing (2003: 341).

<sup>61</sup> See *Ba.* 22; 219; and *passim*.

<sup>62</sup> The maenads are called dogs by Agaue for instance at *Ba.* 731-2 and 922.

<sup>63</sup> The imagery already underlies the Cynic idea of polemic in previous centuries. See, for instance, the self-fashioning of Antisthenes and Diogenes Laertius' famous quotation of *AP* 7.115 on the Cynic: τὸν βίον ἦσθα κύων. Ἀντίσθενης, ὧδε πεφυκῶς | ὥστε δακεῖν κραδίην ρήμασιν, οὐ στόμασιν; | ἀλλ' ἔθανες φθισικός, ταχ' ἐρεῖ τις ἴσως; τί δὲ τοῦτο; | πάντως εἰς Ἄϊδην δεῖ τιν' ὄδηγόν ἔχειν. ('You lived your life as a dog. Antisthenes, born to bite the heart with speeches not with the mouth. But now you are really dead, as one could perhaps be quick to say. – Why bother? A guide to the Underworld is always needed.', *Diog. Laert.* 6.19). See also already the early use of δακνεῖν in Aeschylus' *Persians* (συμφορᾶ δάκνει, *A.Pers.* 846).

draw on Hellenistic poetry as a symbol of envy and often stand for critics who are characterised by their biting and barking.<sup>64</sup>

The Hellenistic fashion of describing critics as dogs can also be seen in two further texts. In his *Hymn to Artemis*, Callimachus not only counts the dogs, he even groups them by breed and colour and divides them into two larger groups, according to their performance (that is: their hunting skills).<sup>65</sup> In the course of the narrative, it becomes clear that some of the dogs mentioned by Callimachus are so fierce that they try to destroy even victims as strong as lions who will, if still alive, be ‘dragged to the pen’.<sup>66</sup> The scenario described by Callimachus gives us a faint idea of how harsh the mutual criticism of the Hellenistic poets may have been, and even suggests that an open attack on a literary work was sometimes answered by a written response.

Another example from the Callimachean oeuvre in which critics seem to be described as dogs, can be found in an extant passage of book 3 of the *Aetia* (fr. 75.1-49 Pfeiffer). In this passage, Callimachus narrates the story of Acontius and Cydippe – a narrative which seems to have been very influential on Roman poetry (witness its echoes in Virgil, Propertius, and Ovid), and is basically a story about lovesickness).<sup>67</sup> The surviving text describes the bride’s father’s unsuccessful attempts to arrange his daughter’s wedding, and the narrative is interrupted with

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<sup>64</sup> See Dickie (1981: 201-2) and Muecke (1985: 121 n.17).

<sup>65</sup> See Call. *h.3.* 117-47. We have later evidence for this meaning in Satyrus’ *Bios Euripidou*, where one of the speakers comments on the alleged collaboration of Cephisophon ‘πάλιν ὁ κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος ἐπέδακνεν τὸν Εὐριπίδην’ (‘and again the comedian undertakes some mischievous backbiting with Euripides’, fr.39 XVI).

<sup>66</sup> Henrichs (1993b: 137). The passage in question runs οἱ ῥα λέοντας | αὐτοὺς αὖ ἐρύοντες, ὅτε δρᾶξαντο δεράων. | εἶλκον ἔτι ζώοντας ἐπ’ αὐλίον (‘which pulled down proper lions when they clutched their throats and dragged them, still living, to the stable’, Call. *h.3.* 91-3).

<sup>67</sup> See Virgil, *Eclogue* 2 and 10; Propertius 1.18; Ovid, *Heroides* 20-21. It is generally assumed that Callimachus provided the model for the story.

the words κύον, κύον, ἴσχεο, λαιδρὲ | θυμέ, σὺ γ' ἀείση καὶ τὰ περ οὐχ  
όσίη ('dog, dog, my shameless soul, you would sing even of what is not lawful',  
lines 4-5).<sup>68</sup> Thus, the speaker of the poem addresses himself with the word 'dog'  
as he plays with the literary as well as philosophical connotations of the word, in  
other words with the mask of being his own critic.

There is further the possibility that Hellenistic poets, who were known  
for the delight they took in word games and riddles of all sorts, may have engaged  
in a play on words, as they attested Euripides a death by *sparagmos*, although this  
suggestion is more speculative.

However, we know that tombs were often decorated with dogs who  
either guarded the dead or symbolised the aristocratic origin of the deceased and  
his delight in game and hunting. On the basis of such a tomb – be it imaginary or  
real – and the inscription of the name of Euripides on it, Hellenistic poets could  
then have constructed their very own tale of Euripides as inspired by a play on the  
components of his name, εὐ and \*ῥιπ-.<sup>69</sup> Should the Hellenistic poets have  
imagined Euripides' tomb as decorated by dogs, this decoration could have  
communicated two affiliations of the tragedian: his connection with Macedonia  
and the royal court of Pella on the one hand, and the association of his tragedies  
with Cynicism. The association of Euripides with Cynicism seems to refer us back  
to the mockery of Euripides' hyper-realism on the comic stage as we have it in the  
earliest biographical representations of the poet. It becomes especially prevalent

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<sup>68</sup> Translation Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 61).

<sup>69</sup> See Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 328-30) for 'puzzles and speculations' surrounding the  
decorations of, and inscriptions on, ancient tombs, and the possibility that they may give us a clue  
for understanding some of the riddles in Hellenistic epigrams. *AP* 7.422 and 427, discussed in  
Hunter and Fantuzzi (2004: 331-2 and 335) illustrate neatly how ancient readers of tomb deco-  
rations tried to make sense of them.

in the biographical representation of Euripides at the time of the so-called Second Sophistic, as we shall see in the analysis of the pseudo-Euripidean letters.

A further possible reference in Hermesianax' elegy needs to be pointed out. In keeping with the biographical tradition, Sophocles is depicted as a pious man and 'good lover' by Hermesianax. The story of Euripides' wild and cruel death seems to highlight once more the contrast between the two tragedians. Caspers argues that this contrast of the two playwrights is the main objective of the passage on Sophocles and Euripides and stresses the antithetical depiction of their religious and their sexual attitudes.<sup>70</sup> However, I think the situation is more complicated than that. As Bing persuasively suggests, Hermesianax' account of the loves of famous poets and philosophers in form of 'alternative' versions of their biographies could have had the purpose of mocking the biographical accounts of Hermesianax' contemporaries, most notably of Chamaeleon.<sup>71</sup>

Hellenistic epigrams took up two main traditions, short poetry as in dedicatory or epitaphic inscriptions, and love poetry as in shorter lyric poetry and erotic elegy. Hermesianax dressed his mock-account of mini-biographies in one of these predecessors of the epigrammatic genre. Thus, instead of answering the claims of his colleagues in an epigram, Hermesianax chose to recur to one of the literary forerunners of the popular genre which, of course, also suited the contents

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<sup>70</sup> Caspers (2006). I do not agree with Casper's assumption that the heterosexual desire assigned to Sophocles is regarded as morally superior by Hermesianax and therefore depicted as 'rewarded accordingly' by the gods. Caspers bases his claim on the observation that the grammatical gender of τῆς in line 66 is ambiguous and therefore the biological sex of the object of Euripides' desire it refers to, is deliberately left ambiguous by Hermesianax. This could well be the case and may have been invented by Hermesianax to invite his readers to an *Ergänzungsspiel* – an extremely popular device of Hellenistic poetry. On the Hellenistic taste for *Ergänzungsspiel*, see Bing (1995), who coined the expression, and Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 299).

<sup>71</sup> See Bing (1993: 627-31).



Euripides – and thus as part of the literary tradition that shaped the fame of the playwright. Hence, the word ἐμβόζ would contrast not only tragedy and comedy but also material and immaterial commemoration in the forms of tomb and performances respectively.

With this text, Adaeus explicitly refers to Hermesianax and refutes Hermesianax' colourful version of Euripides' death. Adaeus opens his poem by denying the allegations made by Hermesianax in fr. 7 Powell ('Neither dogs killed you ... nor some sting of passion for a woman', line 1). In reply to Hermesianax' fancy version of biography, Adaeus presents a dry account of the most likely facts. Not dogs or a certain passion or women are to be blamed as reasons for the death of Euripides, but the plainest of explanations: the mere fact that there is a biological death after life which follows the natural process of aging ('Hades and Old Age', line 3). According to Adaeus, this natural process only is to be regarded as the actual reasons for Euripides' death, and any assumption of a secret passion of the poet for a woman should be refuted on the basis of factual improbability ('Euripides would never do such a thing as he was a complete stranger to this kind of behaviour', line 2).

Instead of such stories, Adaeus puts an emphasis on Macedonia as the place where Euripides 'now rests' (line 4), and thus refers to the corpse and not to the alleged past of Euripides or any stories surrounding it. By mentioning Euripides' tomb instead of the way he died (line 5), the preference for the present rather than the past and the concrete rather than the fantastic is clearly emphasised, while the role of Macedonia is re-assessed as Euripides is said to be highly

esteemed at the court of Archelaus (line 4) and not, as Hermesianax' text suggests, driven to strange passions and killed by the royal hounds.

The preference of the actual over the imaginary is further promoted by two more aspects. First, Adaeus gives his own, new version of the story yet another twist as he introduces a first-person voice who simply denies that this (τοῦτον) – the reality of the Hellenistic text – should be Euripides' τάφος (σοὶ δ' οὐ τοῦτον ἐγὼ τίθεμαι τάφον, line 5): the deictic reference to the text as well as the imaginary tomb gives the denial an especially paradoxical and strong effect. This is in stark contrast to Hermesianax' understanding of his poem, who, as we have seen above, proudly stresses the superiority of his story over any previous ones.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, and also in contrast to the narrative by Hermesianax, the material monument of the tomb or the immaterial contexts of possible love-stories are no longer of interest for Adaeus.

Instead, Euripides' poetry is put centre-stage at the very centre of the epigram by reference to the 'stages of Dionysus' (lines 5 to 7) and the theatres where Euripides' plays are performed (line 7). Adaeus' position in the biographical tradition is clear: not only are the biographical conventions and principles at work in most of the earlier accounts disregarded, but they are answered with prosaically dry explanations unparalleled in the extant testimonies, and with a direct turn – as in other epigrams – to Euripides (see the appellation in

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<sup>74</sup> This is of course not to say that Hermesianax claims his elegy to be more important than the works of the poets he covers in it; the precise nature of his claim is in any case impossible to assess, as his ironic and highly allusive tone and diction reveal only very little about his own position. Be that as it may, we can say with some certainty that Hermesianax' claim does not seem to try to foreground the relevance of the earlier poets over his own.

line 1) and his work (lines 5 to 7). The last line of the poem offers another contrast to earlier accounts of Euripides and recall *AP* 7.46.

It seems apposite to finish this section with a comparison of Hermesianax' and Adaeus' approach to the biographical tradition on Euripides. For Hermesianax, Euripides is a canonized hero from the past. As a consequence, he is depicted in heroic as well as un-heroic ways: the tragicomic end of his life is prosaic for a normal human being but modelled on the pattern of unusual deaths several legendary figures were said to have faced in antiquity. The text by Adaeus, on the other hand, responds to these traditions by exposing them. In his poem, the main question concerns not so much the relation between author and work but rather a return to the textual reality of the plays as the only accessible point of reference for later generations. Once again, life and work are constructed by analogy and difference. This brings us to the third section of this chapter and my analysis of the reactions by Hellenistic poets to biographical conventions in their poems about Euripides.

### **3. Biographical conventions in Hellenistic poems about Euripides**

We can identify two conventions of biographical writing in the ancient biographical representations of Euripides which seem to run through all biographical narratives about ancient poets: (1) The principle of analogy and inference, and (2) The principle of ridicule and inversion. In scholarship on Greek biographical writing, both principles have been judged as inferior ways of

representation and have often been conflated with each other.<sup>75</sup> However, these conventions were transformed in accordance with the respective needs and interests of different genres, authors and audiences throughout antiquity.

In the case of Hellenistic epigrams, the principle of analogy and inference as well as the principle of ridicule and inversion are twisted in a way which is characteristic for the period. In reaction to the patterns of thought and representation established by the authors of classical Athens, Hellenistic scholars and poets chose to use the sophisticated conceits their readers would enjoy unpacking. At the same time, Hellenistic authors communicate with each other in ways not unlike the ways in which Aristophanes and Euripides do in their works – which could be one of the reasons for the preference of Euripides over other tragedians in the depictions of Hellenistic epigrams.

The communicative structure of the biographical accounts in Hellenistic epigrams is therefore never a one-way scenario. As Hellenistic poets make use of their classical predecessors, they do so in public not only in order to take a stance towards, and comment on, the past but also in order to present a specific narrative to their readers, communicate with their colleagues and comment on their own poetic production. The Euripides passage in Hermesianax' *Leontion* is a good example for the twists and turns that can be added to as harmless a principle as the idea that an author's character can be inferred from his work. The logic of ridicule and inversion counterbalances the positive reception of an author's work with ridiculing tendencies about him as an individual. This principle seems to be at work in the depiction of the un-heroic death of Euripides. At the same time, both

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<sup>75</sup> This seems especially the case in Lefkowitz (1981) and Ippolito (1999).

the tendency to draw conclusions by analogy and the tendency to ridicule are challenged in Hellenistic times, as the poem by Adaeus illustrates quite memorably.

Adaeus not only reacts against the play with fact and fiction as it was carried out on the comic stage and in later biographical representations of Euripides. He also explicitly objects to the narrative of Hermesianax. As a result, Adaeus' poem not only corrects Hermesianax' version of the death of the playwright but it re-establishes Euripides as an author and rescues his work as the true and only reliable memory and connection to his life's achievements for later generations. Both Hermesianax and Adaeus clearly display diverging understandings of how the past should be commemorated and how a poet like Euripides should be depicted.

In the final section of this chapter, I analyse a poem by Poseidippus which provides us with a remarkably explicit illustration of the self-fashioning and literary technique of Hellenistic poets, and allows us to draw conclusions about the possible motivations that Hellenistic poets may have had for depicting the lives of their Athenian forerunners. The text suggests that the Hellenistic poets subverted the two principles outlined in this section also in autobiographical narratives.

#### **4. Poseidippus and the Hellenistic Self-Representation of Poets**

I finish with a poem by Poseidippus on his own death and afterlife, because it attractively illustrates how images of the ancient poets are matched and mirrored in the self-representation of poets active in the Hellenistic period. Poseidippus, a

poet active in Egypt in the 280s and 270s,<sup>76</sup> expresses in an extant poem his views on old age, reading and fame (*SH* 705). The poem is preserved inscribed on wax on two wooden tablets from the 1st century AD which were found in Egypt. I print the Greek text after Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (1983).

Εἶ τι καλόν, Μοῦσαι πολιήτιδες, ἢ παρὰ Φοίβου χρυσολύρεω καθαροῖς οὐασιν ἐκλιῦτε	1
Παρνησοῦ νιφόεντος ἀνά πτυχίαις ἢ παρ' Ὀλύμπου Βάκχῳ τὰς τρι<ε>τεῖς ἀρχόμεναι θυμέλαις,	5
νῦν δὲ Ποσειδίππῳ στυγερόν συναείσατε γῆρας γραψάμεναι δέλτων ἐν χρυσεαῖς σελισιν.	
λιμπάνετε σκοπιάς, Ἑλικωνίδες, εἰς δὲ τὰ Θήβης τείχεα Πιπ[ ] . . . ς βαίνετε . . . ἀλαδεις	
κεῖ σὺ Ποσ<ε>ίδιππὸν ποτ' ἐφίλαο, Κύνθιε, Λητοῦς υ. . . . .	10
[ ]	
†φημητινιφιεντοικεια† τοῦ Παρίου. τοῖν ἐκχρήσ<α>ις τε καὶ ἐξ ἀδύτων καναχήσαις φωνὴν ἀθα<νά>την, ὦ ἄνα, καὶ κατ' ἐμοῦ,	15
ὄφρα με τιμήσωσι Μακεδόνες οἱ ἐπὶ νήσων οἱ τ' Ἀσίης πάσης γε<ί>τονες ἠϊόνος.	
Πελλαῖον γένος ἄμον' εἰμι δὲ βίβλον ἐλίσσων †ἀμφω† λαοφόρῳ κείμενος εἰν ἀγορῆι	
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν Παρ<ί>η δὸς ἀηδόνι λυγρόν ἐφ. [ ] νάμα κατὰ γληνέων δάκρυα κεινὰ χέω [ ]	20
καὶ στενάχων, δι' ἐμὸν δὲ φίλον στόμα [ ] [ ]	
[ ]	
μηδὲ τις οὖν χεῦαι δάκρυον. αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γῆρα μυστικὸν οἶμον ἐπὶ Ῥαδάμανθυν ἰκοίμην	25
δήμῳ καὶ λαῷ παντὶ ποθεινὸς ἔων, ἀσκήπων ἐν ποσσὶ καὶ ὀρθοεπὴς ἀν' ὄμιλον καὶ λείπων τέκνοις δῶμα καὶ ὄλβον ἐμόν.	
Muses of my city, if you have heard with pure ears, either from Apollo with the golden lyre who dwells on the glens of Parnassos or from Olympus, as you initiate the festival of Bacchus recurring every three years, join now Poseidippus in a song of hateful Old Age.	1 5
Inscribe it in the golden pages of your writing tablets. Leave your peaks, Muses of Helikon. Come to the walls of Thebes.	
[ ]	
And you, son of Leto, Apollo, Lord of Kynthos, you too once loved Poseidippus	10
[ ]	
[ ]	
†you who proclaimed the renown† of the Parian. This was your oracle and echo from your chamber is the the immortal voice, my lord, give me such an immortal response as you gave him so the people of Macedonia might show me honour,	15
those of the islands and those neighbouring all the coast of Asia.	

<sup>76</sup> For the cultural context, see Bing (1988: 15).

I am from Pella and this is my wish: that I may rest  
 reading a book roll placed in the marketplace with its crowds.  
 But shed a sorrowful stream of mourning for the nightingale of Paros,  
 with tears streaming down from the eyes! 20  
 I groaning, while through my own mouth  
 [ ]  
 [ ]  
 Let no one then shed a tear. For I might well join  
 in my old age the mystic's way and come to Rhadamanthus, 25  
 I, an object of longing for my city and for every people.  
 I need no staff, but walk erect and speak rightly in the crowd.  
 To my children I bequeath my home and wealth.

(translation Clay 2004, adapted)

Because of its self-reflexive and apparently autobiographical styling the poem has famously been named the 'seal' of Poseidippus,<sup>77</sup> In the course of the narrative, Poseidippus creates his own presentation in literature instead of leaving the task to others. We cannot be entirely sure about the full spectrum of possible allusions to other poems, but picturing himself as an old man, the voice of the epigram may have taken up a poetic tradition which is also reflected in Callimachus' famous *Reply to the Telchines*, in which the narrator pictures himself as an old man. Poseidippus' poem is thus without any doubt important for our understanding of the representation and self-representation of poets in Hellenistic times. It also illustrates the Hellenistic interest in everyday situations.<sup>78</sup> However, my main focus here is on the representation of the poet and his legacy in the poem.

In their role as scholars and historians of Greek literature, the Hellenistic poets were able to recreate the past and reflect on the possibilities of cataloguing and classifying texts as well as the possibilities of poetic self-fashioning. They

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<sup>77</sup> It is the generally accepted title of the poem in scholarship today and goes back to the discussion of the poem by Lloyd-Jones (1963). The poem can be classified either as a long epigram or as an elegy, which is reflected in the title it is given by Lloyd-Jones and Parsons in the *Supplementum Hellenisticum* ('epigramma vel elegia: poematum σφραγίς).

<sup>78</sup> For the Hellenistic interest in everyday situations and their description, see, for instance, Titchener (1999: 156).

were in a position to make what seem to us crucial decisions for the Greek tradition of biographical (and autobiographical) writing.<sup>79</sup> As most biographical writing accompanied the texts that were to be scrutinized, catalogued and selected, it was the perfect time for the confident poet and scholar to stress his own poetic merits, which is exactly what Poseidippus does in his poem.

The elegy has usually been ascribed to a certain Poseidippus of Thebes.<sup>80</sup> This was mainly because scholars were hesitant to include a stylistically inferior text in the *œuvre* of Poseidippus. However, the work of Lloyd-Jones and Barigazzi persuasively showed that the elegy can be best understood as part of the *œuvre* of Poseidippus of Pella. It has been described as a *σφραγίς* ('seal') by Lloyd-Jones and as a will ('testamento') by Barigazzi. However, the text has never been fully explored as a poem playing with the conventions of biography and poetry in a response to Ptolemaic cultural politics.<sup>81</sup>

First of all, Poseidippus appeals to the Muses. Not without boldness, he addresses them as the Muses of his native city (line 1) and in the typical cletic mode asks a favour of them: they are asked to come and join him in the making of this poem, especially as he is burdened with old age (*στυγερὸν γῆρας*, line 5).<sup>82</sup> It has been noted before by commentators that Pieria is not quite Pella, but the author of the text seems to be generous with the geography of Macedonia. In any case,

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<sup>79</sup> See Blum (1977: 357-8).

<sup>80</sup> Poseidippus of Thebes seems to have been, as later research revealed, an invention of classical scholarship. For his existence in antiquity scholars had no other evidence than this poem – the identity of such a poet was inferred from line 7 of the elegy which, as Heitsch (1963), Lloyd-Jones (1963) and Barigazzi (1968) have shown, could refer to Thebes in Egypt as well as to Thebes in Boeotia.

<sup>81</sup> For detailed studies of the cultural politics of the Ptolemies, and Poseidippus' role in it, see Koenen (1993), Thompson (2003) and Thompson (2005).

<sup>82</sup> On the vast topic of the cletic mode, see, for instance, Mähler (1963), Kambylis (1965).

the association with Pieria is the classical route for the Hellenistic poet, especially the poet who would see himself as standing in the Callimachean tradition. Pella, on the other hand, is both the native city of Poseidippus, the author of this elegy, and the main point of reference for his poem.<sup>83</sup>

The speaker of the poem further asks the Muses to leave Mount Helicon (possibly a tribute, but also a farewell, to the poetry of Hesiod) and come to Thebes (possibly a tribute to the immortal praise-poet Pindar).<sup>84</sup> It is worth noting how very different Poseidippus' approach is from that of some of other poets studied in this chapter. In *A.P.* 7.44 (= Kovacs T 63 = Kovacs T 234), for instance, Euripides is depicted as a servant to the Muses in Pieria. Poseidippus' words, on the other hand, insinuate a scenario in which the Muses act as his servants, helping him, it seems, mainly because of his old age.

The speaker of the autobiographical poem requests additional support from Apollo (line 9) which, by way of using a *topos* of the cult of poets, perhaps alludes to other poets of the Greek past – most of all to Archilochus. In line 14, which is structurally at the heart of the poem, Poseidippus boldly asks for public

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<sup>83</sup> On the Muses as an especially elaborate narrative device in Callimachean poetry, see Harder (1988: 1-14).

<sup>84</sup> Of course the allusion could just as well be to Egyptian Thebes, or even a poet associated with it. There can be no final certainty on the question but the well-established connection of Callimachus with Pindar may have added to Poseidippus' choice of place here. On Callimachus' strong link with Pindar, and its contribution to the self-definition of the 'new poets' of Hellenistic poetry, see Parsons (1993: 169): 'Callimachus' relation to Pindar is indeed one paradigm of the Hellenistic transformation of the past; βασιὰ ἐν μακροῖσι ποικίλλειν (Pindar *Pyth.* 9.7) might characterize the new poetry as a whole. Not to travel on Homer's well-worn wagon road, to pluck the fine flower of poetry (*Pae.* 7b11-2, *Isthm.* 7.18-9) – these are Pindaric images which recur in the prologue of the *Aetia* and in the epilogue of the *Hymn to Apollo*: the knowing reader is transported in ideology as well as in details to that remote and sumptuous past.' For Callimachus' indebtedness to Pindar, see also Fuhrer (1992: 33-5 and 252-61).

honours in Macedonia and eternal fame in all of Greece (lines 16-17).<sup>85</sup> He then pictures himself in the shape of a cult-statue, holding a book roll and being surrounded by the crowds in the local market-place (lines 18-19).<sup>86</sup> And Archilochus, the famous, and by later generations much-honoured ‘nightingale of Paros’ (Παρίη [...] ἀηδόνη, line 19) is promptly evoked, as the speaker, in an unmistakably explicit fashion, mocks the cult of the poet and asks for a public mourning for the Parian.

Contrasting rituals of mourning with more lively ones in lines 20-7, and alluding to some conventions of erotic poetry, the author then imagines himself as a ‘subject of longing’ for both his city and every other place who ‘does not need a staff but walks erect’ (line 27). Unlike the ‘Parian nightingale’, Poseidippus wishes not to be commemorated by later generations with much groaning and the shedding of melodramatic tears (lines 19-21). In which way he wishes to be commemorated instead is unfortunately lost to us, as the next two lines of the poem (lines 22-23) are missing exactly at the point where he might have told us as much.

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<sup>85</sup> I do not agree with Dickie (1998: 70) that ‘what honours Poseidippus has in mind from the Macedonians and those on the islands is unclear.’ In my reading, Poseidippus succeeds in creating a poetic persiflage of the Panhellenic claims in the cult of the poets of the Greek past precisely by evoking the geographical spread of the imperialistic cultural politics of the Ptolemies.

<sup>86</sup> The imagery is informed by other descriptions of bronze-statues as portrayals by Hellenistic epigrammatists. Poseidippus’ portrayal of Philitas of Cos, transmitted on the Milan papyrus *Vogliano* VIII 309, has received special attention and has led to stimulating discussions in this context. For the central importance of the poem, see Gutzwiller (2005: 314-5): ‘The key epigram, in which all the elements defining the aesthetic preferences of the Ptolemies and their artists coalesce, is the one about the statue of Philitas.’ For the text see Clay (2004: 146-7), for recent discussions see Sens (2005), Stewart (2005) and Prioux (2007). Poseidippus used the imagery of stone-masonry and statues to refer metaphorically to the production of poetry. His collection of epigrams about different styles in the representation of statues, the so-called *andriantopoiika* might even have been structured in the form of a history of different styles; see Prioux (2007: 110-13) on this last point.

However, from what follows this blank, we can surmise that Poseidippus instead wished to be remembered in a joyful and slightly more sophisticated manner, as the remaining lines of the poem are constructed in an elaborate and playful way. After asking the readers of the poem ‘Let no one then shed a tear’ (μηδὲ τις οὖν χεῦται δάκρυον, line 24), the speaker suggests that he ‘might well join the mystic’s way’ (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ | γήρᾳ μυστικὸν οἶμον ἐπὶ Ῥαδάμανθυν ἰκοίμην, lines 24-5) before he finally dismisses not only the exaggerations of outward signs of grief but also the outward signs of initiation, such as the notorious staff, crooked posture, and confused speech of the mystics (‘I need no staff, but walk erect and speak rightly in the crowd’, ἀσκήπων ἐν ποσσὶ καὶ ὀρθοεπῆς ἄν’ ὄμιλον, line 27), not without mocking once more the quasi-religious and quasi-erotic devotion that is publicly shown for selected individuals, such as the Greek poets from the past, or members of the royal family still alive (‘I, an object of longing for my city and for every people’, δῆμῳ καὶ λαῷ παντὶ ποθεινὸς ἐὼν line 26).<sup>87</sup>

The speaker of our poem clearly does not think too highly of the public display of such honours and the cultural politics they stand for. Instead, he ends his elegy with the poignant news that his prime concern is not his native city but leaving his wealth to his children (‘To my children I bequeath my home and wealth’, καὶ λείπων τέκνοις δῶμα καὶ ὄλβον ἐμόν line 28). The verbal play with his ‘children’ and his ‘childlessness’, which I will explain in the following

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<sup>87</sup> I disagree with Dickie (1998: 66-75) who interprets *SH* 705 literally and argues that the elegy expresses Poseidippus’ ‘devotion to the mysteries’ (1998: 76); see also his claim on the same page that ‘Poseidippus in particular gives us an insight into what initiation into the mysteries might mean to a man.’

paragraphs, could even suggest that the speaker of the poem either does not wish to tell us or does actually not plan to leave his possessions to anybody.<sup>88</sup>

In these last lines of the elegy as before, Poseidippus consciously plays with the conventions of contemporary fashions among epigrammatists. The word ἀσκήπων ('without a staff', line 27) in fact seems to recall another type of poems. In *AP* 7.732, Theodoridas says about a certain deceased Cinesias: ὦνιχευ ἔτ' ἀσκήπων, Κινησία, Ἑρμόλα υἱέ, | ἐκτίσων Ἄϊδη χρεῖτος ὀφειλόμενον | γήρα ἔτ' ἄρτια πάντα φέρων· χρήστην δὲ δίκαιον | εὐρών σε στέργει παντοβίης Ἀχέρων. ('You were still without a staff, as you went down to Hades, Cinesias, son of Hermolaus, to pay him your debts. Unimpaired were your limbs still in spite of your age; and finding you a honest debtor all-subduing Acheron was content with you.').

Possibly Poseidippus intended to ridicule both the petty concerns of an orderly and timely settlement of outstanding arrears to death, and the requisites and rituals of cult and ritual initiation. But he does not refer to his work as the traditional warranty for posthumous fame or an extension of his own thoughts. Instead, he turns to more practical questions of inheritance and to his children.

The participle κείμενος in line 17 of *SH* 705, which Poseidippus chose to express the erection of his statue in the market-place, is in fact borrowed from the vocabulary of *epithymia*. Poseidippus may well have played with the language of talking about the deceased and with the metaphorical use of the word

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<sup>88</sup> This observation, based on the lexical analysis I explicate in the paragraphs below, stands in stark contrast to Dickie's conclusion. See Dickie (1998: 77): 'Did we not have Poseidippus' personal testament we would not have known of the blessings in this life that the mysteries in the Hellenistic Period promised: an initiate could look forward to a hale and hearty old age, material prosperity and the prospect of leaving sons behind him to whom to pass that prosperity on.'

‘staff’ in his poem. As the speaker of *SH* 705 stresses that, despite his old age, he does not need a staff and hence, if we read the metaphorical meaning of ἀσκήπων along with its literate meaning, as many of Poseidippus’ Hellenistic readers may well have done, the narrative suggests that the voice creating its own biographical narrative in the poem although childless wishes to leave his wealth to his children, create a paradoxical riddle full of verbal and textual allusions.<sup>89</sup>

What are we to make of Poseidippus’ poem and how does it relate to the debate about the laws and limits of biographical writing in Hellenistic epigrams? I would like to suggest the following: the conventional principles of biographical writings – the idea of an equation of life and work, and the need to contrast the work with a certain type of biographical narrative – are brought to a limit not only by Adaeus, but by Poseidippus, too.

What Adaeus’ and Poseidippus’ texts have in common is their awareness of the literary conventions and traditions and their preference for a ‘realistic’, down-to earth, and slightly ironic approach to the issues at stake, which they present in a highly sophisticated way and yet with a clear dislike for embellishments such as the tears shed for Archilochus in Poseidippus’ elegy, or the tacky love-story by Hermesianax which seems taken up by Adaeus. Both Adaeus and Poseidippus seem to allude to the fascination with death and old age which seems to have shaped Hellenistic art and literature.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> With this remarkable ending, Poseidippus seems to imitate (if not to outwit) the stylistic ideals set by Callimachus. For the typically refined closures of Callimachean poetry, see, for instance, Köhnken (1973), Bing (1988: 17-19), and Sens (2007: 381). On Callimachus’ strong interest in paradoxography, see Pfeiffer (1968: 134-5), Fraser (1972: l. 770-1), and Krevans (2004: 175-6).

<sup>90</sup> In art, old age is for the first time realistically depicted from the third century onwards; in literature, we also have an example concerning Euripides: lyrical passages on old age from Euripidean tragedies were, for instance, arranged on the famous Hibeh Papyrus *PHib.* 179.

Still, there is a difference between Adaeus and Poseidippus. Whereas Adaeus puts the work of another poet from the past (Euripides) centre-stage, Poseidippus seems to emphasise the contribution of his own poetry along with that of his predecessors. He even belittles the time-honoured poets from the past, as he illustrates that outward expressions of heroism, initiation and ‘fandom’ do not really matter. What matters is the text of the poet as we have it before our eyes. For that, we do not need a staff, we just have to overcome our interpretative blindness, as Poseidippus invites us to engage with a form of poetry which may be old but is by no means rusty or blind. With this additional twist of the autobiographical perspective, Poseidippus contributes to the discourse of fame and commemoration in Hellenistic poetry. Perhaps he even reacted to the fashion of statues of canonized authors while participating in a long-standing tradition of poetic fame.<sup>91</sup> As Poseidippus was drawn from his native Pella to the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, his own biography seems to entail the movement that dominates most biographical representations of Euripides from Hellenistic times onwards.

### **5. Contribution to the biographical tradition**

The analysis of selected poems from the Hellenistic period has illustrated that Euripides served as an important point of reference for the Hellenistic poets. This makes the Hellenistic poets participating parties in the biographical tradition of Euripides and contributes significantly to our understanding of the ancient

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<sup>91</sup> Lycurgus’ commission of statues of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in 330 BC, as recorded in the pseudo-Plutarchean *Lives of the Ten Orators* ([Plut.] *Mor.* 841-2) is perhaps the most famous historical example. For Poseidippus, however, compare especially his reaction to depictions of Anacreon and Philitas as discussed by Prioux (2007: 19-74).

representations of Euripides. While Euripides and his poetry were ridiculed and discussed in detail in the depictions of the tragedians on the comic stage, the representations of Euripides in Hellenistic poems convey both the Hellenistic poets' own interest in commemoration and canonization, and their informed knowledge of the biographical writings of their predecessors. While they could assume such an informed knowledge also for some groups of their readership, e.g. for their fellow-poets, this means not at all that the poems were produced for, or even received and enjoyed by only a small group of educated insiders. On the contrary, the poems also reflect the interest of the age more generally, as especially the combination of local concerns, Panhellenic, and quintessentially Macedonian, interests illustrates.

The vivid interest in the poets of the past in Hellenistic times can be seen in the extensive engagement with them in the literature of the time, and the literary form of the epigram especially. Epigrams about Hipponax and Archilochus, for instance, or epigrams about Sappho as 'the tenth Muse' illustrate both the ongoing process of selection and canonization and the fact that debates about precisely this process, and its subjects, were in the air at the time.<sup>92</sup>

A wider audience would perhaps also take pleasure in the fictional setting and elaborate word-plays of Poseidippus' so-called 'seal', a poem which illustrates not only the wide interest in biographies of poets at the time but also attests to a well-established cult of Greek poets of the past. With *SH* 705, Poseidippus, arguably one of Callimachus' famous Telchines, clearly takes up the

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<sup>92</sup> On Archilochus and Hipponax in Hellenistic Epigrams, see Rosen (2007a), for Sappho as the 'tenth Muse' in Hellenistic epigrams, see *AP* 7.16, Gosetti-Murrayjohn (2006), and Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani (2007: 441-2).

ironic tradition of autobiographical references to a poet's old age, for which Callimachus famously set an influential example with the repeated references to his old age in the *Aetia* prologue.<sup>93</sup> Thus, Poseidippus takes up Callimachean poetics and at the same time expands it to relate immediately to the cultural developments surrounding the production of his poetry.

In this chapter, I have argued that selected Hellenistic epigrams contain important biographical representations of Euripides and often challenge us to adjust and modify our preconceptions and reading conventions. The nine surviving poems from the Hellenistic period which explicitly address Euripides and discuss the legacy of his poetry show different degrees and forms of reflection on biographical representations of Euripides. The epigrams investigate in particular the balance between local (Macedonian) traditions and Panhellenic fame.

They also exploit and subvert biographical conventions, as they were established on the comic stage, according to which an author either resembles his work or, occasionally, is a trivial and common-place version of it. By taking into account a poem by Poseidippus, I further argued that the representation of classical poets in Hellenistic poetry is paralleled by the autobiographical self-fashioning of the Hellenistic poets themselves. This analysis of an autobiographical rather than biographical narrative by a Hellenistic poet allows us to better understand the

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<sup>93</sup> See Callimachus fr. 1, 6; 33-6; 38; for a detailed discussion of Callimachus' self-fashioning as *senex*, see Cameron (1995: 174-83). There is also a strong lexical link between *SH* 705 and the *Aetia* prologue by Callimachus, for example in the choice of the epithet given to Apollo. For a detailed account of the repercussions and words and motifs from Callimachus' *Aetia* prologue in Poseidippus' so-called 'seal', see Cameron (1995: 183-4).

aesthetic ideals and political interests of the Hellenistic poets, which in turn may help us to identify their impact on later biographical representations of Euripides.

### Euripides in Hellenistic Prose

The Hellenistic period was, as we have seen in the previous chapter, marked by a prolific interest in biographies about poets from the Greek past. However, most of the texts that were probably produced in this context are unfortunately lost to us. The case of Euripides is different: it is only in his case that we have a piece of Hellenistic biography, the *Bios Euripidou* by Satyrus which came down to us on papyrus fragments from the second century AD. Philochorus, Hermippus, Hieronymus of Rhodes, Lucian, Dio of Prusa, and Plutarch are all known to have written about Euripides, although we often have little more than a brief reference to Euripides in their work.<sup>1</sup> We do, however, have a substantial piece of biographical prose about Euripides, dating from the late third or early second century BC. The *Bios Euripidou* by Satyrus of Callatis was first edited at the beginning of the twentieth century and has permanently changed the way scholars think about ancient Greek biography. The text is preserved in fragments on the Papyrus *POxy.1176*.

Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* changed the way scholars think about Greek biography in several respects. First, it changed the way they imagined the form of ancient biographies as the *Bios Euripidou* was the first example of an ancient biography in the form of a dialogue. Secondly, the unusually lively and

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<sup>1</sup> For Philochorus, see Kovacs T16 and Tischer (2006: 236-37); for Hermippus, see Bollansée (1999: 223); Hieronymus of Rhodius is quoted by Athenaeus (*Athen.* 13.5, 557e = T90 Kovacs; 13.81, 603e and 13.82, 604d = T54 Kovacs); for Lucian, see his account of the Abderites' performance of Euripides' *Andromeda* in *How to Write History* (Kovacs T 93); for Dio of Prusa see the relevant passage in Kovacs (= Kovacs T 88); for Plutarch, see Kovacs T 7, T 26, T 30, 44, T 45, T 47, T49, T 50, T55, T 57, T 62, T 85, T 92 and T 95. On the support of the 'classicizing' tendencies in Macedonia in the writings of Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Arrian, and Aristides, see Asirvatham (2000).

polyphonic development of the narrative in the *Bios Euripidou* was considered 'untypical' for biographical prose. Thirdly, the author of *Bios Euripidou* used a biographical method which differed from the expectations of readers used to the modern examples of the genre.

Despite its fragmentary state, and the difficulties it poses for our understanding of the text, the *Bios Euripidou* is of central relevance for our understanding of the phenomenon of ancient biographical writings, as it opens a window onto the otherwise mostly lost Hellenistic biographies of writers. In this chapter, I offer a detailed reading of the *Bios Euripidou* in which I show that the unusual form of the *Bios Euripidou* perhaps needs to be appreciated afresh.

A modern preconception I challenge in this chapter is that of Satyrus' lack of sophistication. Scholars have in the past often stressed how 'careless' Satyrus was in the composition of the *Bios Euripidou*.<sup>2</sup> The main reasons for this judgement seem to lie in the way the material is presented by writers like Satyrus or Hermippus. Satyrus' and Hermippus' display of obscure, unusual and 'populist' pieces of information rather than 'coherent stories' remains puzzling to most contemporary scholars and even suggests a lack of method to some.<sup>3</sup>

Like Hermippus, Satyrus has in antiquity been widely used as a collection of source material by later writers.<sup>4</sup> Modern remarks about the quality of Satyrus' contribution to the history of literary biography are often

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<sup>2</sup> Expressions of serious concern about the literary quality of Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* can be found in Lefkowitz (1981), West (1974), and Frickenschmidt (1997: 158-9), who calls Satyrus' method 'unbekümmert' and 'sorglos'.

<sup>3</sup> See RE VIII.1 s.v. Hermippos (1913: 847-8) and West (1968: 546); against this assumption, see Frey (1921: 47-51), Lefkowitz (1984: 339-43) and Schorn (2004: 44-9).

<sup>4</sup> This is apparent from the way Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus used Hermippus but also from the introductory passages of later writings, such as the Γένος Εὐριπίδου; see RE VIII.1 s.v. Hermippos (1913: 851).

founded on ancient judgements about the style of Satyrus' work. Contrary to these tacit assumptions, I argue in my analysis of the *Bios Euripidou* that Satyrus' contribution to the biographical tradition of Euripides can be read as a witty and highly allusive piece of literature which lacks neither method nor coherence. As I tried to show in the course of the previous chapter, a close reading of the Hellenistic epigrams suggests that their audiences were very likely familiar with Euripidean poetry as well as with stereotypical anecdotes surrounding the figure of Euripides, mostly derived from Old Comedy, and, possibly, the biographical tradition which may have evolved in the context of peripatetic teaching and research. The same can be assumed for Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*.

In the course of this chapter, I explore questions concerning the historical background of the *Bios Euripidou* (section 1) before discussing the form of the text (section 2), its distribution to the speakers involved (section 3), the development of the narrative (sections 4 and 5) and the possible function of the dialogue (section 6). I then discuss the role of Socrates in the text (section 7), before giving a brief outline of Satyrus' use of literary sources and the use of legal language in the *Bios Euripidou* (section 8). In the penultimate section (section 9), I suggest a reading of the *Bios Euripidou* which connects the thematic fields with the narrative technique of the text as identified in the previous sections, while the last section of this chapter (section 10) discusses the description of Euripides in Macedonia. In my interpretation of the *Bios Euripidou*, I concentrate on a discussion of the fragments that follow the unfortunately very corrupt beginning preserved in frs.1-37 Schorn. I will not

discuss issues of textual criticism unless they affect my interpretation of the text.<sup>5</sup> I quote the Greek from the edition by Schorn.<sup>6</sup>

## 1. The Cultural and Historical Background

As far as we can tell, Satyrus probably conceptualized the *Bios Euripidou* as part of a collection on the lives of famous Greek poets, philosophers and statesmen from the classical past.<sup>7</sup> The text is composed in the form of a dialogue between two or three speakers.<sup>8</sup> The choice of this form provided Satyrus with several advantages. First, it connects his text to the tradition of the philosophical dialogue, most notably the Socratic dialogues. Secondly, it enables Satyrus to imitate the debates on questions of biography as they were carried out in Peripatetic circles of the time.<sup>9</sup>

Thirdly, the text can be seen as a formal imitation of the discourse staged in Attic drama, especially the rhetoric and realism Euripidean drama was so famous for.<sup>10</sup> The full implications of the echoes of dramatic rhetoric in

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<sup>5</sup> The fragments as edited by Arrighetti are only a part of Book 6 of Satyrus' *Lives* and Arrighetti seems not to have consulted the original papyrus throughout; West (1966) and Gallo (1967) provide the reader with important annotations to Arrighetti's edition.

<sup>6</sup> For a full discussion of the transmission and layout of the text see Schorn (2004: 63-75). For the edition of the fragments of the *Bios Euripidou*, see Schorn (2004: 86-113).

<sup>7</sup> For an exhaustive analysis of the cultural and historical background of Satyrus and the *Life of Euripides*, see Schorn (2004: 3-63). That the *Life of Euripides* was one of several biographical sketches by Satyrus can be inferred from the subtitle on its papyrus running: Σατύρου βίων ἀναγραφῆς σ' Αἰσχύλου, Σοφοκλέους, Εὐριπίδου ('Book Six of Satyrus' *Collection of Lives*. [The Lives] of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides'; T 3a Schorn) and from evidence of other biographies by Satyrus in Athenaeus, Diogenes Laertius and Hieronymus (see T 3b-f and T 4 Schorn).

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the distribution of the text and the number of speakers, see section 3 below.

<sup>9</sup> Leo suspects a formal resonance of the Peripatetic dialogue in the tradition of Aristotle's *On the Poets* (Περὶ ποιητῶν); see Leo (1912: 274-6). For a more detailed comparison of the Aristotelian dialogue form with the *Bios Euripidou*, see Schorn (2004: 35-6). For the Aristotelian dialogue more generally, see Hirzel (1895: 272-308) and Laurenti (1987: 55-73).

<sup>10</sup> For the dramatic rhetoric in Euripides and its appreciation in the reception of Euripidean drama see Schorn (2004: 182-3 with ns. 158-61); for accounts of the phenomenon in antiquity see Pl. *Gorgias* 502 d (ἢ οὐ ῥητορεύειν δοκοῦσί σοι οἱ ποιηταὶ ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις ('or don't you think the poets in the theatres seem to talk like orators?' – ironically, the question itself is phrased in a highly stylised fashion); see also Aristotle's remarks in *Rhetoric* 1404 b 24-5 and *Poetics* 1450b 7-8.

Satyrus have not been discussed by scholarship until now. Only two scholars point to it in passing. Hunt mentions the possibility with respect to fr.39VII: ‘The principle of ἀναγνωρισμός at any rate is to be found in Homer as well as an approximation to dramatic dialogue [...].’<sup>11</sup> Of course, the dialogue form can generally be said to be particularly suited to discuss the work of a character people disagreed and argued about. And Mary Lefkowitz observed that the *Bios*, with its dialogic form, its use of female interlocutors and, to some extent, its choice of vocabulary, is not far from Euripides’ own words and comic poetry.<sup>12</sup> My analysis of the method of *paramimesis* in the *Bios Euripidou* illustrates that this is true to a far larger extent than has been recognized to date.

## 2. Satyrus’ *Bios Euripidou*: The beginning of the narrative

In the multi-perspective and dialogic structure of the *Bios Euripidou*, Satyrus develops a picture of Euripides which is intertwined with a discussion of his plays. A lot of the original text is missing, but there could well have been a separate part dedicated to the work and the dramatic technique of the playwright, as lines 9-10 of fr.8 II show: κατὰ μὲν οὖν τὴν τέχνην ἀνὴρ τοιοῦτος. (‘In his art, however, he was just such a man’). At several instances, the character of Euripides is directly compared with that of his art; at other instances, as we shall see, the situation is more complicated.<sup>13</sup> Of great interest

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<sup>11</sup> Hunt (1912: 176).

<sup>12</sup> See Lefkowitz (1984: 342) for the mirroring of dramatic realism in the *Bios Euripidou*. In this context, it is also worth quoting the excellent observation by Mary Lefkowitz (Lefkowitz 1981: 98) on the biographical tradition as a whole: ‘In emphasising Euripides’ ineptitude and human failings, the biographers appear to be working in a tradition of narrative realism that began in the fifth century in the plays of Euripides himself.’

<sup>13</sup> For the direct comparison, see fr.8 II 20 Schorn: ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μέγας ἦν σχεδὸν ὡς ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασιν (‘And in addition to that, he was of a great soul, almost as he is in his poetry.’)

in this context is, I think, the text of fr.1 of the *Bios*. The readable part of it runs:

ἀλλαχῆ. πόλλ' ἐρρητορίζε[ν ἐν] τοῖς λόγοις [ὄν]  
λογικὸς [καὶ] παραμιμή[σασ]θαι [ ] τ νυ [ ] [ ]καὶς  
δυ[να]τὸς απ [...]

somewhere else. He often talked according to the rules of rhetoric in his speeches, in a rational fashion and able to imitate [...]

This passage supports the main argument of my chapter that Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* imitates conversations about Euripides' life rather than adding a new version of old stories to Greek literature. The practice of *paramimesis*, which – as I argue in this chapter – is that of the *Bios Euripidou* itself, is mentioned by name relatively early in the text. In a way, the passage of the first fragment of the *Bios* refers not only to Euripides, while it describes his method as reported by one of the speakers of the *Bios Euripidou*, but also to Satyrus, by way of announcing the 'programme' of his *Bios Euripidou*.

The second extant fragment of the *Bios* (fr.2) contains another possible reference to Satyrus' own text, this time with a hint to its prospective audience:

εἴη ἂν [τῷι ὄ]ντι Ἑλλη[νος] καὶ εὐαγώ[γου] πρὸς  
τὸ δέ[ον φιλ]ηκοῖα.

but the due willingness to listen should be characteristic for a Greek and one who is truly eager to learn, should it not?<sup>14</sup>

The need to listen carefully is of course topical in Greek literature, especially in texts of philosophical instruction. It is stressed in the Presocratic forms of the *Lehrgedicht* as well as in Pythagorean teachings and Platonic dialogue. In

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<sup>14</sup> I translate the sentence as a question tag to underline my interpretation and make it more readable in the English translation. Schorn interprets the fragment differently, and infers a general 'disapproval of innovations' from the text, which I find unconvincing and unhelpful for the understanding of the *Bios* as a whole (see his comment on the fragment: 'Fr 2 1 berichtet vielleicht von zeitgenössischer Kritik an Innovationen.' (Schorn 2004: 182).

Platonic dialogue, the need to listen carefully is frequently and repeatedly stressed for both the interlocutors of Socrates and for the readers.<sup>15</sup>

This parallel has gone unnoticed in modern scholarship on the *Bios Euripidou*. Arrighetti merely notes for fr.2 (with a comparison of fr.39 II 15) that there must have been a change of speakers, the new speaker voicing a criticism of the Athenians' lack of appreciation of Euripides. Schorn adds 'Es scheint sich um eine der üblichen simplen Reflexionen dieser Person zu handeln.'<sup>16</sup> But fr.2 reveals, I think, more than that. In forensic speeches as in philosophical and didactic poetry and prose, the call for careful listening served to catch the attention of the listeners.<sup>17</sup> In comedy, which, as several scholars have pointed out, the *Bios Euripidou* is immensely indebted to, a remark of this sort makes sure the audience will be attentive enough to get the jokes as well as the double meanings.<sup>18</sup> As we shall see, the relationship between Euripides, Old Comedy and oratory is even made the subject of the conversation in the course of the *Bios Euripidou* in columns V-VIII of its main fragment, fr.39.

Yet another message to the reader could be hidden in the text of fr.8 II. The fragment displays a version of the *dictum* 'life imitates art', albeit with a twist:

[...] καὶ [ἠῶξ]εν καὶ ἐ[τε]λείωσεν ὥστε τοῖς μέτ' αὐτὸν ὑπερβολὴν μὴ λιπεῖν; κατὰ μὲν οὖν [τ]ὴν τέχνην [ἀ]νὴρ τοιοῦτος. διὸ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης ἐπιθυμεῖ τὴν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ μετρῆσαι δι' ἧς τὰ [...]τα ῥήματα' [...]ήχετο'. ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν [ψυ]χὴν μέγας [ἦν] σχεδὸν [ὡς] ἐν τοῖς [ποιή]μασιν;

<sup>15</sup> See already Lewis (1921: 144) who characterized Satyrus as 'a writer who continues the formal dialogue of Plato and Xenophon'. It is necessary to keep in mind, however, that already in Plato the form of the dialogue is used as an effective epideictic tool to expose grand claims, semi-educated cluelessness, wrong argumentation and empty rhetoric. The complexity and intertextual challenge of the Platonic dialogue can also be expressed in terms of genre. On the inter-generic nature of the Platonic dialogue, see Nightingale (1995).

<sup>16</sup> 'The sentence seems to be one of the simplistic remarks which are so characteristic of this speaker.' (Schorn 2004: 185).

<sup>17</sup> This is also the case in speeches which were actually composed to be read rather than held in court.

<sup>18</sup> For Satyrus' debt to Old Comedy, see Gallo (1967: 135-6), Lefkowitz (1981: 110 and 164-9) and Schorn (2004: 43-6).

[προσ]εμάχε[το γ]άρ, ὥσπερ [προ]ειρήκα[μ]εν, ἐν τ[ῶ]ι ἀγῶνι  
μᾶλ[λο]ν [π]ρὸς [...].

[...] and he developed further and perfected so that nobody writing after him was left with the possibility to supersede him. Therefore, Aristophanes wants to measure his language in “[...] through it [...] words [...]” [fr.656 K.-A.]. And in addition to that, he was of a great soul, almost as he is in his poetry; because he fought, as I said earlier, in the contests more against [...].

Not only does Satyrus here point to the idea of development and perfection in literature as a means of protection against possible imitators at a later point in the history of literary production, the text also mentions possible rivals, critics or other people who present a hardship for the individual artist already in his own lifetime.<sup>19</sup> The ascription of perfection to Euripidean tragedy is especially poignant. It clearly contradicts the tradition, according to which – at least since Aristotle’s *Poetics* – Sophocles, and not Euripides, was considered to be the tragedian who perfected the genre.<sup>20</sup> The modification of the concept of perfection in Attic tragedy could point to a general preference for Euripides by Satyrus as well as the prospective readers of the *Bios Euripidou*.<sup>21</sup> The competition with other writers was, of course, a common feature of Greek literature in the fifth century as well as in Hellenistic times.

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<sup>19</sup> I understand the terminology of the *agôn* and the ‘fighting’ (προσεμάχετο) as a reference to the context of literature and the performance of poetry, such as Euripidean tragedy. This may be especially apt since what our sentence explains with the particle γάρ points to Euripides’ μεγαλοψυχία (‘magnanimity’) is said to correlate directly with the magnanimity of his poetry. The use of the term points to Satyrus’ Peripatetic education but also, perhaps, to an evocation of Socrates: for support of the latter, see Howland (2002: 27): ‘According to Aristotle, the true *megalopsuchos* is Socrates.’ The full impact of the *exemplum fictum* of Socrates in Satyrus’ *Bios Euripidou* will become more obvious in my discussion of the *exemplum Socratis* in section 7 below. Interestingly, the model of μεγαλοψυχία is later taken up again in the pseudo-Euripidean letters of the second century AD.

<sup>20</sup> See Ar. *Poet.* 1449 a 14-24. The tendency is probably older and can also be found in the *scholia*, which are much more critical of Euripides than of Aeschylus or Sophocles. See the evidence in Elsperger (1907), Lord (1908) and Papadopoulou (1999).

<sup>21</sup> Satyrus’ strikingly positive attitude towards the tragedian is noted by Gallo (1967: 140), who talks about Satyrus’ use of Aristophanic passages ‘in senso fileuripideo’, and by Schorn on several instances, see, for instance, Schorn (2004: 187) on fr.8 ll.

In what follows after fr.8, all we can say for certain is that fr.9 contains a quotation of *Odyssey* 14.463-6; the passage is a *locus classicus* for pointing out the consequences of the consumption of too much wine and its quotation perhaps illustrated a speaker's comparison of Euripides with Aeschylus. Perhaps it was linked with Euripides' aversion against exuberant symposia and easy jokes.<sup>22</sup> A connection between fr.9 and the line in Alexander Aetolus can, of course, not be assumed without much speculation. We also know that character or the depiction of character was debated in the *Bios Euripidou*, although too much of the original text is missing to say anything more specific about this. ἦθος is mentioned in both fr.10 I and fr.11 I; fr.10 I further mentions 'accusation' (κατηγοροῦντα), while fr.11 I names Achilles and Neoptolemus.

It is possible that the text quoted examples from epic poetry which illustrated a statement about character, characterisation, criticism and dealing with criticisms or even the display of character when dealing with criticism.<sup>23</sup> It is further likely that the characteristics of a good poet may have been laid out in frs.13-33. The remaining fragments are frustratingly lacunose. All we can say with any certainty is that fr.16 I quotes Plato's *Phaedrus* 245a 6-8 and fr. 22 mentions a chorus. However, I leave these much damaged fragments of the *Bios Euripidou* aside in my discussion of Satyrus' contribution to the biographical tradition of Euripides in order to avoid excessive speculation.

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<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, a verse in Alexander Aetolus: μισογέλωσ καὶ τωθάζειν οὐδὲ παρ' οἶνον μεμαθηκώς, 'He [sc. Euripides] hated laughter and did not even know how to crack jokes over a glass of wine' (Alex. Act. fr.7.3 Powell = Gell. 15.20.8).

<sup>23</sup> Schorn interprets these initial fragments of the *Bios Euripidou* differently and suggests that they may have contained a discussion of individual characters in Euripidean tragedy (see Schorn 2004: 182 and 191-2). I think it is too early in the narrative for a discussion of individual characters in Euripidean plays, if they were discussed in the course of the *Bios Euripidou* at all. A more general display of the depiction of character in Greek literature before Satyrus, or even an illustration of 'how to deal with criticism' seems much more likely at this point in the narrative.

### 3. The Dialogue Form

Most of the text of the *Bios Euripidou* as we have it is a conversation between two or three people on the life and work of Euripides. A main speaker seems to lead the conversation, while additional voices participating in the dialogue can be discerned to belong to somebody addressed as 'Eucleia' and somebody called Diodora. Passages given to the main speaker are indicated by the letter 'A', while passages given to the voices interrupting his narrative are indicated by the letter 'B' on the papyrus. Speaker B appears to be called Eucleia at some, and Diodora at other instances.

In his edition of the *Bios Euripidou*, Schorn prefers to call Diodora 'Diodor[-]', which implies that this character could be a man (while we would presume that Diodora was female). Strictly speaking, the gender of the speaker cannot be defined with any certainty since the last syllable of the name has not survived the damage of the fragment.<sup>24</sup> The remaining text provides us with some evidence which supports the identification of Diodor[-] as Diodora, and therefore female. Mary Lefkowitz also assumes that the second speaker should be imagined as female and argues for Diodora, as do Gerstinger, who calls her 'Lady Diodora', Kovacs and Ippolito.<sup>25</sup> The dialogue form of the *Bios Euripidou* can be inferred from fr.39 III, where the main speaker addresses Diodora:

... (B) καὶ [δὴ] κα[ὶ] τὸ μηδ[έν]α τῶν ἀστῶ[ν] με[τε]ωρίζειν [ὑπὲρ  
τῶ] μέτρ[ιον] μηδὲ τύραν[νον] ποεῖν καὶ [ἀστ]οῖς φαύλοισ μὴ  
διδόναι πάροδον πρὸς τὰ ἔντιμα. μέγιστον γὰρ ἔλκος πόλεως  
κακὸς ῥήτωρ δημαγωγὸς πέρα[ι]τῆς ἀξίας παραγόμενος. (A)

<sup>24</sup> The name only turns up twice in the extant text of the *Bios Euripidou*. At both instances the ending of the name is missing.

<sup>25</sup> See Lefkowitz (1984: 341), Gerstinger (1916: 61 n.1), Kovacs (1994: 19; 23), and Ippolito (1999: 37). Lefkowitz (1984: 342) even speculates about the possibility of a female main speaker, which would make the *Bios Euripidou* a dialogue among women about Euripides – an attractive possibility in view of *Thesmophoriazousae* and the biographical tradition of Euripides more generally.

ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Διοδώρ], καὶ περὶ τῆς κοινῆς τῶν Ἀθηναίων  
ἀβουλίας καὶ ἀμελείας...

... and so not to elevate any of the citizens beyond what is appropriate and also not to create a tyrant nor to give the lesser citizens any access to honours ... since the biggest burden for a city was an evil demagogue who as a speaker could divert from the limits given by his moral value; but, dear Diodor[-], with respect to the ill-advisedness of the Athenians ...

and from fr.39 XIV, where speaker B is addressed as 'Eucleia':

(B) ... γυναῖκα δ[ ] Ὑστάσπ[ ] [ ] αἰ γὰρ [ ] θῆναι [...][ ] τι [ ]  
α τ [ἀν]δρὸς [π]ρὸς αὐτὴν ὡς φαρμάτ[τ]οι φίλτροις [τ]ὸν  
Ὑστάσπην. μεταπεμψαμένη δὴ τὴν ἄνθρωπον ὅτ' εἶδεν  
εἰσιούσης τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος, 'χαῖρε,' φησὶν, 'γύναι·  
ψευδεῖς ἄρ' ἦ[σ]αν αἱ [δια]βολαί· σὺ γὰρ [εν] τῷ πρ[ο]σώπῳ  
τῷ σῶ[ι] καὶ τοῖς ὀ[φ]θαλμοῖς ἔχεις τὰ φάρμακα.' (A) εὖ γ', ὦ  
κρατίστη πασῶν καὶ τῷ ὄντι Εὐκλεία, δι[ό]τι τὰ τοιαῦτα  
τῶν ἡθῶν καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔξεις κα [ ]

... a woman ... because...against her for poisoning Hystaspe with aphrodisiaca. So they sent her to see her walk in, all tall and beautiful and say 'greetings to you, woman, the accusations were lies; for you have filters on your face and on your eyes.' Well spoken, mightiest of all and true Eucleia, because you have such character traits through what record and ...

If we only had the first example (fr.39 III), one could argue that it is not univocally clear whether or not the extract reflects a dialogue rather than any other form of written prose which involves addressing a person directly – forms of prose such as, for example, letter writing. However, the second example (fr.39 XIV) makes it clear that we are supposed to imagine a live conversation between speaker A and speaker B.<sup>26</sup> The text was understood as a dialogue already in antiquity. This can be inferred from the fact that *Pap.Oxy.1176* has the speakers marked as 'A' and 'B'. B, indicating a second speaker, appears first in fr.2 I, then again, together with speaker A, throughout fr. 39.

The question now is whether or not there is a third speaker in the extant text. It has been suggested in modern scholarship that Eucleia should be understood as a second name for Diodora, and the division of the text into

passages given to speaker A and speaker B indicates that scholars in antiquity, or at least the scribe of *Pap.Oxy* 1176, thought the same.<sup>27</sup> I think that it makes perfect sense to assume that the dialogue takes place between the main speaker (speaker A) and Diodora (speaker B), who is (probably ironically and only at one instance) called Eucleia by the main speaker.

It seems possible to reconstruct not just the speakers but also – at least to an extent – their characterisation. All of the instances in which the text is marked with ‘B’ seem to contain sceptical or modifying comments. And conversely, wherever the text changes into a questioning or modifying tone, the scribe of *Pap.Oxy*.1176 marked that change with the letter ‘B’. The phenomenon of a questioning and modification of the main narrative through remarks by speaker B has been noted for single passages, or stated in quite general terms for the whole narrative.<sup>28</sup> I would like to analyse the phenomenon in more detail. It seems that the various forms of interruption by speaker B can be divided into three categories: comment, judgement and specification. Generally speaking, passages where speaker B has her turn are marked by a change from statements phrased in an almost apodictic indicative to remarks set in suggestive or hypothetical modes, such as modifications or questions. For example, as speaker A introduces quotations such as

τοὺς μείζονα βλ[έ]ποντας ἀ[ν]θρώπων θεούς  
[fr. 1007c Nauck<sup>2</sup> = Kannicht 2004: 981]

the gods see greater things than human beings (fr.39 II),  
speaker B comments:

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<sup>26</sup> Note, for instance, speaker A’s comment ‘well spoken, Eucleia’.

<sup>27</sup> For the suggestion that Eucleia should be understood as Diodora’s second name, and that this fact perhaps even communicate an ironic hint by the main speaker, see Gerstinger (1921: 61 n.1) and Arrighetti (1964: 133-4). Another possibility that has been suggested is to assume Diodorus as a second speaker and Eucleia as the third and only female voice in the narrative; for this view, see Hunt (1912: 178-9) and Leo (1912: 276).

<sup>28</sup> See Schorn’s comment on some of the passages quoted in this section and, more generally and without further specification of the role of the different speakers. Lefkowitz’s suggestion

εἴη ἂν ἡ τοιαύτη ὑπόνοια περὶ θεῶν [Σω]κρατική

this kind of thought about the gods could well be Socratic.  
(fr.39 II)

As the main speaker ventures into an interpretation of the choral songs in Euripidean poetry (fr. 39 XVIII) or is about to tell the story of Euripides' death (fr. 39 XX), speaker B presses the main speaker for more precision with

πῶς οὖν, πῶς λέγουσιν]

How then? What is it they say? (fr.39 XVIII)

and

κομψώ[τε]ρα φαίνε[ι μοι] λέγειν ἢπε[ρ] ἀληθινώτερα

cleverly put rather than truly spoken.  
(fr.39 XX).

Speaker A lectures about Euripidean poetry that

πρὸς ὅλον δὲ τὸ φύλον διετέλει μαχόμενος ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασιν

he kept fighting the entire female sex in his poetic writings;  
(fr.39 XIII),

while speaker B seems to lose her temper and expresses her disagreement with speaker A's version of the story with the words

νῆ γελοίως γε

But that's ridiculous! (fr.39 XIII).

These examples illustrate that the passages given to speaker B modify what has been said immediately before, and that they comment on the 'main text' of speaker A, while speaker A appears as rather dogmatic and is often disrespectful of his hearer.

In the following, I list the relevant passages where speaker B interrupts the main narrative in accordance with the categories I found reflected in the different forms of interruption. I underline the words that made me allocate each passage to its category.

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that 'Satyrus contrives to have his interlocutors question the meaning and value of their sources

(a) comment:

(a) 'λάθραι δὲ τοῦ[τ]ων δρωμένων τίνας φοβῆι· (b) 'τοὺς μείζονα βλ[έ]ποντας ἀνθρώπων θεούς.' (Eur. fr.1007c Nauck<sup>2</sup> [= Kannicht 2004: 981] **B.** εἶη ἄν ἡ τοιαύτη ὑπόνοια περὶ θεῶν [Σω]κρατική τῷ γὰρ ὄντι τὰ θνητοῖς ἀόρατα τοῖς ἀθανάτοις εὐκάτοπτα; καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ [ ] ο τύραννον

... '(a) if you do it in secret, who are you afraid of? (b) the gods who 'see more than human beings do'; **B.** this kind of thought about the gods could well be Socratic; because in fact the things that are invisible to mortals can be easily watched by immortals; **A.** And equally, tyranny and .... (fr.39 II)

**A.** (...) οὐχὶ τοῦτον τῶν τρόπων, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τῆι πονηρίᾳ [προ]σχωμέθα, [ὅτ]ε τῶι μάλισθ' ὅς] ἄν λέγη[ι] πιστεύομεν λεγόντις οὐ πονηρὰ ] δεχρω[ ] κάπειτα τῆς ἐκκλησιαῖς κατηγορεῖ ἕκαστος] ἡμῶν, ἧς ἕκαστος] αὐτὸς ἦν. (Com. Adesp. fr.1024 K.-A.) **B.** πολλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν κωμικῶν ποιητῶν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἅμα ἀσπηρῶς λέγεται καὶ πολιτικῶς. **A.** πῶς γὰρ οὐ; πάλιν γοῦν ὁ Εὐριπίδης εὖ μάλα πρὸς ἀλκὴν καὶ εὐψυχίαν παρακαλεῖ τοὺς νέους, ὑποβάλλων αὐτοῖς ὁρμὰς λακωνικὰς καὶ θυμοποιῶν τὸ πλήθος οὕτως: "κτίσασθ' ἐν ὑ[σ]τέροισιν εὐ[κ]λειαν χρόνοις] ἅπασαν ἀντλή[σαν]τες ἡμέραν [πόν]ον ψ[υ]χαῖς [...]. [fr.1007d Nauck<sup>2</sup> = Kannicht 2004: 982]

... not in such a way, but it is the simplicity of somebody else we use and him we believe most if he says something, even if we don't speak the same way but just use it, and as a result every one of us accuses the congregation of which everybody is himself a part; **B.** Many things are, quite fittingly, said also by the comic poets, seriously as well as politically: **A.** Why should they not? Again, therefore, Euripides intensely exhorts the younger generation to strength and courage in that he shows them the vigour of the Spartans and enforces the spirits of the crowd in the following way: 'Acquire fame for the times to come, tolerating pain on any single day, ... in the souls ...' (fr.39 IV)

(.....) ἐξῆρχεν τὰς μελωιδίας, ἢ οὐκ ἀκούεις ὅτι καὶ τοῦ τ' ἔσθ' ὅ] φη[σιν] ἀντίος;] **B.** πῶς οὐν; **A.** [Ζ]ηνὶ συμμείξων ὁρμᾶν λέγω[ν] μεταφορικῶς ἐμφαίνει τὸν μόναρχον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σ[υ]ναύξων ἀνδρὸς τὴν ὑπεροχὴν. **B.** κομψώτε[ρ]α φαίνε[ι] μοι] λέγειν ἢ περ] ἀληθινώτερα – **A.** ἅπερ ἔστιν ὡς θέλεις ἐκδέχεσθαι. μετελθὼν δ' οὐν κατεγήρασε ἐν Μακεδονίαι μαλ' ἐντίμως ἀγόμενος παρὰ τῷ δυνάστηι τὰ τε λοιπὰ], καὶ δὴ καὶ μνημονεύεται ὅτι ...

...he began his melodies, or do you not know that this is what he also says himself? **B.** How then? **A.** In that he says 'mixing my effort

with Zeus' he metaphorically points out the king, but also increases the man's superiority; **B.** cleverly put rather than truly spoken; **A.** whatever it is, you can sort out for yourself if you want; but after he had gone away, he began to grow old in Macedonia and lived as a very honoured man with the ruler for the rest of his life and it is also said that... (fr.39 XVIII)

(b) judgement:

**A.** (...) τὸ ἀδίκημ' ἐν[ε]γκών, ὡς μ[νη]μονεύουσι, τῆν μὲν ἀνθ[ρ]ωπον ἐκέλευσεν τῷ νεανίσκῳ συνοικεῖν, ἐπειδήπερ αὐ[τ]ῆ προ[ε]ίλετο, 'ἵνα μ[ὴ] τήν] ἐμὴν οὕ[τ]ος ἔχη', φησί, 'ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τήν τούτου δίκαιον γάρ, ἄνπερ βούλωμαι.' πρὸς ὅλον δὲ τὸ φύλον δι[ι]ετέλει μαχόμενος ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασιν. **B.** νῆ γελοῖως γε· τί γάρ ἄν τις εὐλογώτερο[ν] διὰ τὴν φθαρεῖσαν ψέγοι τὰς γυναῖκας ἢ διὰ τὸν φθείραντα τοὺς ἄνδρας; ἐπεὶ τ[ὰς] γε κακίας καὶ τὰς ἀρετάς, καθάπερ ἔλεγ<ε>ν ὁ Σω<κρ>άτης, τὰς αὐτάς [ἐν] ἀμφοῖν ἔσ[τιν] εὐρεῖν· σ[κο]πεῖν δ' ἄξι[ον]

... containing things unjust, as they say, he told her to be together with the young man whenever she wanted to 'so that, he said, this man would not have my wife, but that I would have his wife; because it is just if I want her.' He kept fighting the entire female sex in his poetic writings; **B.** But that's ridiculous! For why should it be more sensible to blame the women of seduction than to blame the men of seducing? Yet after the vices and the virtues, as I said, are [...] it is possible to find the very same in both of them. It is however worth considering ... (fr.39 XIII)

**B.** (...) μαχε[ί]ν τέως ἐκράτησαν τῶν ἐναντίων· κατ' ἐμὲ μὲν [γ]ὰρ τοῦτο θε[τ]τέον τὸ νίκημα τῶν γυναικῶν. οἱ μὲν γάρ ἄνδρες ὅσον ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἠττῶντο. **A.** ἴ[σ]ως, ὦ Διοδώρ[α], πλὴν ταῦτα μὲν συνηγορήσθω ταῖς γ[υ]ναιξίν. ἐπανάγωμεν δὲ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν Εὐριπίδην. ἐκεῖνος γάρ ἅμα μὲν προσοχθίσας τῷ ἐπιχωρίῳ φθόνῳ τῶν πολιτῶν ἅμα δὲ ἀχθόμενος ἐπὶ τῷ συννέμεσθαι πολλ[ά]κις Ἀκέστο[ρι] καὶ Δοριλαῳ [καὶ] Μορσίμῳ [καὶ] Μελανθίῳ (TrGF DID 18) **B.** [πρὸς τοῦ Διός, τίν]ων ὀνόμα[τα] λέγεις; ἢ ποιητάς; **A.** ποιη[ταί] γ', οἱ ν[ ]

... to fight until he was stronger than his opponents; in my view, this actually states his victory over the women; because, as to the men: they are weaker [anyway]; **A.** Maybe, dear Diodora, except for the fact that this also needs to be said of the women; but let's return to Euripides; for he at the same time exposed himself to the hatred of his fellow-citizens and suffered from being repeatedly compared to Acestor, Dorilaus, Morsimus and Melanthius; **B.** Heavens! Whose names are you talking about? Are they poets at all? **A.** They certainly are poets and ... (fr.39 XV)

(c) specification:

A. (.....) ἔχε[ι] τὸ στόμα καὶ [καθ' ὑπερβολήν δυσῶδες] ὁ δ' ὑπολαβών,] οὐκ εἰφ[η]μήσεις,' εἶπεν, 'ὦ παῖ; ποῖον δὲ στόμα τοιοῦτ[ο] γέγονεν, ἢ γένοιτ' ἂν ἥδιον, δι' οὗ γε δὴ τοιαῦτα μέλη τε καὶ ἔπη διαπορεύεται.' B. ὁμοιος οὗτος, καθάπερ εἶρ<η>κας, δαιμ[ον]ίως ἐντετι[μ]α κότι πρὸς τὸν ποιητήν. A. ζῶντι μὲν δὴ ταῦθ' ὑπῆρξεν Εὐριπίδῃ τελευτῆς δὲ μάλα δυσχεροῦς καὶ ἰδίας ἔτυχεν, ὡς οἱ λόγοι τε καὶ γεράτατοι μυθολο[γ]οῦσι Μακεδ[ό]νων. B. πῶς λέγ[ουσιν] A. ἔστιν ἐν [Μακεδονία]...

...he had a ... mouth; and a man ... said: 'You don't talk nicely. But then how can you have a breath like this or, does it not get sweeter by the fact that such songs and words come out of it?' B. Similarly this one, even though he had said that, was enormously impressed by the poet; A. so, these things did Euripides during his lifetime; the ending of which, however, was very unfortunate and peculiar, according to what the learned and oldest of the Macedonians narrate; B. What is it they say? A. There is [in Macedonia] .... (fr.39 XX)

As we can see from the examples above, speaker A is often interrupted by sceptical remarks or comments uttered by speaker B. At a first glance, therefore, we might think of a typical classroom situation, where we have a conversation between teacher and pupil, divided into the part of the intellectually superior main speaker and the part of the impatient and intellectually inferior pupil who keeps interrupting the teacher – a role play repeatedly depicted in Old Comedy and Socratic dialogues.

However, we should stop and think twice before we too readily read the *Bios Euripidou* as a reflection of 'the typical classroom situation'. From the perspective of the side of production of literature, we can imagine two different scenarios which can motivate an author's choice of the dialogue form for the *Bios Euripidou*. First, the dialogue form could express a Peripatetic interest in biography and a (perhaps Peripatetic) preference for dialogic presentation.

Furthermore, by mimicking a Socratic dialogue in a post-Aristotelian era, an author could refer to both the Platonic and the Aristotelian tradition.<sup>29</sup>

Secondly, the *Bios Euripidou* could have been composed in the form of a dialogue to emphasise its subject matter (the biography of Euripides) and to imitate not only the philosophical but also the dramatic dialogues of fifth-century tragedy and comedy. My contention is that Satyrus chose the dialogue form for specific literary aims. Through this method, Satyrus allows his main speaker to lay out a narrative, while speaker B, a woman named Diodora, modifies and specifies the sentences uttered by the main speaker.<sup>30</sup>

Apparently, the *Bios Euripidou* presents its readers with a rather unusual narrative setting even though it may at first glance appear to be in accordance with the traditional classroom situation.<sup>31</sup> Echoes of educational scenarios can be found in Socratic dialogue as well as in imitations of sophistic debates and exercises in argumentation on the stage of Athenian drama. It seems especially likely that the participation of a woman in the dialogue echoes the special place of women in Euripidean tragedy. As a corollary, we seem to have a combination of both the dramatic and the didactic dialogue. And the roles of the interlocutors are by no means as traditional or clear-cut as most modern interpreters would have it.

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Lefkowitz recently observed that the *Bios Euripidou* could perhaps display some traces of mock-Platonism. See Lefkowitz (2007: 105). For the possibility of a slightly ironic colouring of the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole, see already Frey (1921: 51).

<sup>30</sup> Schorn (2004: 241) calls this technique Diodora's 'Nachtragsstil', and claims that it illustrates the emotional nature of her utterances. The tone of Diodora's remarks is difficult to judge but, as they seem to stand in the philosophical tradition of the Socratic dialogues, I would prefer to call her passion for the subject matter vivid and interested rather than 'emotional'. The way in which her remarks cut into the main narrative are not, for example, irrational in any way – which is, however, what Schorn's characterisation of her 'Emotionalität der Ausführungen' suggests.

<sup>31</sup> See already Lefkowitz (1984: 341): 'The use of the dialogue form may in itself have suggested to the audience that they were listening to historical fiction or *eikasia*; we might compare how Xenophon uses dialogue to re-create Socrates' conversation [...]'.

In a modification to what is commonly assumed, I interpret the narrative of the *Bios Euripidou* as a reflection modelled on traditional patterns of intellectual debate while simultaneously subverting the didactic claims of such debates and exposing some of the traditional beliefs about biographical accounts. To put my contention to the test, I now analyse the distribution of the text and the characterisation of the speakers that follows from it.

#### **4. Satyrus' characterisation of the speakers**

I have argued above that there are good reasons to assume that the *Bios Euripidou* constitutes a conversation between two speakers. In fact, some problems in the distribution of lines disappear if we suppose two speakers whereas they seem unsolvable if we suppose three speakers.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, none of the scholars who assume three speakers in the *Bios Euripidou* make an effort to explain why we do not have any indication for a speaker C in the extant passages. All scholars who assume three interlocutors in the *Bios Euripidou* do so on grounds that speaker B is addressed as a 'true Eucleia' in fr.39 XIV.

Schorn claims that speaker A must be imagined as the superior and more knowledgeable speaker, and refers to certain stereotypes about male and female styles of communication in order to strengthen his claim that speaker A must be a man. He argues, for instance, that A has to be a male speaker, because he talks decently and objectively – which, besides its problematic assertion about gendered speech, is simply not true for the narrative of speaker A – whereas speaker B is said to be characterised by a passionate empathy with

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<sup>32</sup> See Schorn's display of the problem in a table, and his remark that a problem in the distribution of the text does not occur if we assume two speakers instead of three ('Gehört man von zwei Gesprächspartnern aus, bestehen diese Schwierigkeiten nicht.', Schorn 2004: 303).

the women at the Thesmophoria and several 'emotional outbursts'.<sup>33</sup> Schorn's position is coherent with that of Leo and Arrighetti who also assume a male main speaker. Arrighetti even suggests that the main speaker represents the voice of Satyrus ('l'autore stesso').<sup>34</sup>

Mary Lefkowitz, on the other hand, argues that several female speakers and perhaps female speakers only, were involved in the conversation of the *Bios Euripidou*.<sup>35</sup> Like Lewis and Gerstinger before her, Lefkowitz assumes that Diodora and Eucleia are two different characters, whereas Arrighetti, West and Schorn concede that Diodora could theoretically be identical with Eucleia, and perhaps be either nick-named Eucleia in the text or, less likely, have Eucleia as a middle name.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, we know from later archaeological sources of a 'cult of Eucleia' near the theatre at Aegae in Macedonia.<sup>37</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood even locates the premiere of *Archelaus* there. In the play, Archelaus must have been assimilated to a quasi-Heracleian hero who is characterised by courage and hard work.<sup>38</sup> I would like to propose that

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<sup>33</sup> Schorn (2004: 32-3).

<sup>34</sup> Leo (1912: 276); Arrighetti (1964: 34).

<sup>35</sup> See Lefkowitz (1984: 340-2). Unfortunately, we have no proof for an all-female conversation, and Lefkowitz does not illustrate her suggestion with convincing examples from the text but states that by using the dialogue form, Satyrus would have aimed to amuse his audience while also alluding to the Aristophanic tradition of talking about Euripides.

<sup>36</sup> However, Schorn (2004: 303) assumes three speakers, following Hunt (1912: 126) and Leo (1912: 276). Gerstinger (1916: 61 n.1) assumes two speakers only and argues that Eucleia is Diodora's nick-name in the context of the passage and possibly modelled on the figure of Artemis Eucleia, the 'goddess of reputation'. Speaker A, according to Gerstinger, attributed the nick-name to Diodora ironically as she was trying to rescue the reputation of the female sex. Arrighetti (1964: 134) also assumes that Diodora is called Eucleia in the passage. The possibility of a middle name for a Greek woman in third century Egypt seems unlikely. Although middle names were quite common at the time among Egyptians (they often added a Greek middle name to their native first names), they were not in use by the Greeks in Egypt until much later; for details on this issue see West (1966: 559) and the material in Schorn (2004: 34 n.146).

<sup>37</sup> For the cult of Artemis Eucleia in Macedonia, see Wernecke (1896: 1385 and 1408). For ancient literary sources about the cult, which also seems to have taken place in Athens and Thebes, see S. *OT* 161, Plut. *Arist.* 20, Paus. 1.14.5 and Paus. 9.17.1. In fifth-century Athens, women used to swear oaths on Artemis Eucleia. See, for instance, S. *El.* 626 and 1239, Eur. *Med.* 160, Ar. *Lys.* 435 and 922, *Thesm.* 517 and *Eccl.* 84.

<sup>38</sup> See Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 41-5) for evidence. That Euripides wrote the play as a favour to his host is first mentioned in the *Genos Euripidou*.

the appearance of the name in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* could allude to the cult of Artemis Eucleia in Macedonia.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, we can gain a deeper understanding of the subtlety and learnedness of the *Bios Euripidou*, if we assume that Satyrus alluded to Macedonia and the cult of Eucleia by including the name in his fictional conversation about the life of Euripides.<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, Satyrus perhaps simply uses the name Eucleia as a play on words. Speaker A says to Diodora after she quoted a passage from a lost (probably Euripidean) tragedy:

εὖ γ', ὦ κρατίστη πασῶν καὶ τῷ ὄντι Εὐκλεία, δι[ό]τ[ι] τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ἠθῶν καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔχεις [...].

Well done, mightiest of all women and a true Eucleia, for having correctly reported these aspects of character and for recalling [...].

The explicit use of the modifying 'a true' (τῷ ὄντι) in front of the name Eucleia indicates, I think, that we are not supposed to take Eucleia for a new character in the conversation.<sup>41</sup> And, as the subject matter of the conversation is, among other things, the truthfulness of biographical accounts, this remark about the 'true Eucleia' by the main speaker seems especially poignant: τῷ ὄντι could in this context perhaps even point to the cult of Artemis Eucleia in Macedonia.<sup>42</sup> A colourful example supporting the presence of two speakers in the narrative is given in fr.39 XV:

**B.** μαχεῖ[ι]ν τέως ἐκράτησαν τῶν ἐναντίων· κατ' ἐμὲ μὲν [γ]ὰρ τοῦτο θε[τ]έρον τὸ νίκημα τῶν γυναικῶν. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρες ὅσον ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἠτῶντο. **A** ἴ[σ]ως, ὦ Διοδώρ, πλὴν ταῦτα μὲν συνηγορήσθω ταῖς γ[υ]ναιξίν. ἐπανάγωμεν δὲ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν Εὐριπίδην. ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ἅμα μὲν προσοχθίσας τῷ ἐπιχωρίῳ φθόνῳ τῶν πολιτῶν ἅμα δὲ ἀχθόμενος ἐπὶ τῷ

<sup>39</sup> The fact that in Euripides' *Hippolytus* 1299 the goddess herself mentions the idea of εὐκλεία might further support my assumption that Eucleia refers to Artemis.

<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, none of the modern commentators seem to have made a connection between the cult of Eucleia in Macedonia and the appearance of her name in the *Bios Euripidou*.

<sup>41</sup> Schorn (2004: 34) argues that the phrase τῷ ὄντι ('really, truly') suggests that the person addressed must actually have been called Eucleia.

<sup>42</sup> For a full discussion of the function of Macedonia in the biographical tradition of Euripides and the *Bios Euripidou* especially, see section 10 below.

συννέμεσθαι πολλ[ά]κις Ἄκεστο[ρι] καὶ Δοριλάωι [καὶ] Μορσίμωι [καὶ] Μελανθίωι (TrGF DID 18) **B.** [πρὸς τοῦ Διός, [τίν]ων ὀνόμα[τα] λέγεις; ἢ ποι[ητά]ς; **A.** ποιη[ται γ'] , οἷ ν [ ]

... to fight until he was stronger than his opponents; in my view, this actually states the victory of the women; because, as far as it was in their power, the men were defeated. **A.** Perhaps, my dear Diodor[-], this could be also said in defence of the women. But let us return to Euripides; for he at the same time exposed himself to the hatred of his fellow-citizens and suffered from being repeatedly compared to Acestor, Dorilaus, Morsimus and Melanthius; **B.** Heavens! Whose names are you talking about? Are they poets at all? **A.** They certainly are poets and ...

It is worth noting that the speaker marked by the letter ‘B’ and identified by her partner in conversation as Diodora, is given the part about ‘Euripides and the women’. It seems that speaker B is to be imagined as female and I will show further below that it makes good sense to assume this for the understanding of the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole. To come back to the characterisation of its speakers: the speaker addressed by ‘A’ confidently expresses her opinion on a battle between men and women (‘in my view, this states the victory of the women; because, as far as it was in their power, the men were defeated.’) whereas speaker A who modifies her statement (‘Perhaps, my dear Diodor[-], but this could be also said in defence of the women’), seems to govern the course of the conversation (‘but let’s return to Euripides’) and to show off his knowledge about Euripides (‘for he at the same time exposed himself to the hatred of his fellow-citizens and suffered from being repeatedly compared to Acestor, Dorilaus, Morsimus and Melanthius’), which seems not to interest Diodora much, as she exclaims: ‘Heavens! Whose names are you talking about? Are they poets at all?’

Interestingly, this remark renders Diodora superior to her partner in conversation. Whereas speaker A consistently draws on the biographical

tradition, Diodora has the courage to question it. Her question, ‘Who are you talking about? Are they poets at all?’ could be seen as an ironic remark to emphasise the insignificance of any ‘rivals’ of Euripides as well as a Socratic presentation of pretended ignorance. We have seen in the analysis of fr.39 XV that it makes sense to assume that speaker B should be imagined as female. The following text (fr.39 XVI), the ‘recipe passage’ we already encountered in the chapter 1, supports my assumption:

δὲ Σοφοκλ[έα] λαβών,  
παρ’ Αἰσχύλου ν[ ] ἢ ὅσον [ ] εσθ’, ὅλον  
Εὐριπίδην, πρὸς τοῖσι δ’ ἐμβαλεῖν ἄλας,  
μεμνημένος δ’ ὅπως ἄλας καὶ μὴ λάλας.  
(B) εἰκόασιν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι τῶν [ἀντι]δι δασκόντων αὐτῶ,  
καθάπερ εἶπας. ἀτ[ἀ]ρ σιναμῶρος γε κἀνταῦθα πάλιν ὁ  
κωμω[ι]δοδιδάσκαλος ἐπέδακ[ε]ν τὸν Εὐρ[ι]πίδην.

‘take ... Sophocles,  
some Aeschylus ... as much..., all of  
Euripides, and add some salt,  
keep in mind, however, salt, not talk.’ (Aristophanes fr. \*595 K.-A.)  
(B) But this is wantonly mischievous and the comedian managed to  
bite Euripides once again. (fr.39 XVI)

The passage is intriguing. It contains a (mock) recipe for the preparation of the perfect ‘stew’ of Greek tragedy for the audience. The discussion might imply a reference (either by the author or his main speaker) to the sphere of cooking and household management which has female connotations. Likewise, λαλία is not only a term commonly used with respect to Euripides but often also describes the chattiness of birds or women as well as – in the words of the anti-Sophistic writer Plato – the chat which introduces a dialectical debate (cf. Pl. *Euthd.* 287 d) or the sugared words of a deceiver (cf. Pl. *Phil.* 110).<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Hunt and Schorn take λαλία to stress the general ‘lack of substance’ of Euripidean tragedy, as all of Euripides is used but only some parts of Aeschylus and Sophocles. λαλία is used to describe Euripidean tragedy, in this passage as well as in other assessments of Euripidean tragedy in antiquity, and carries connotations of linguistic plainness and a rather conversational style, which is based on everyday language. The term for salt (ἄλας) on the other hand, is known

## 5. The Dynamics of the Narrative

Modern scholars tend to characterise the distribution of the information between speaker A and speaker B as a conversation between teacher and pupil.<sup>44</sup> However, this is not quite the case. While it is true that speaker A generally corrects the statements uttered by B or leads back to the main topic, he cannot generally be said to have the stronger position or more authority than speaker B. This becomes especially evident as A tries to suggest an author-based interpretation of Euripidean poetry. Not only does his interpretation fail to have any effect on his partner in conversation, his method, too, is unmasked by B as unconvincing and fanciful. As a result, A decides to continue without further explanations of the conclusion speaker B found unconvincing:

(A) [...] ἐξῆρχεν τὰς μελω[ιδία]ς, ἢ οὐκ ἀ[κούει]ς ὅτι κα[ὶ τοῦτ'] ἔσ[θ' ὅ] φη[σιν] αὐτ[ός]; (B) πῶς οὖν; (A) [Ζ]ηνὶ συμμειζῶν ὁμᾶν λέγω[ν] μεταφορικῶς ἐμφαίνει τὸν μόναρχον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σ[υ]ναύξων τὰνδρὸς τὴν ὑπεροχὴν. (B) κομψώτε[ρ]α φαίνε[ι] μο[ι] λέγειν ἢ πε[ρ] ἀληθινώτερα – (A) ἄπερ ἔστιν ὡς θέλεις ἐκδέχεσθαι. μετελθὼν δ' οὖν κατεγήρασε ἐν Μακεδνίαι μαλ' ἐντίμως ἀγόμενος παρὰ τῷ δυνάστηι τὰ τε λοιπ[ά], καὶ δὴ καὶ μν[η]μονεύε[ται ὅ]τι [...].

(A) [...] he introduced the choral songs; or do you not understand that this is exactly what he says himself? (B) What do you mean? (A) By saying he gets on his way to be with Zeus he metaphorically points to the monarch, praising the power of the man. (B) Celebrially put rather than truly spoken – (A) See it as you may. Well, he went away and spent his last years in Macedonia, where he was highly esteemed by the ruler in several respects. And therefore it is also said that [...].<sup>45</sup>

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to have served as a metaphorical expression of literary criticism in antiquity; see *LSJ* s.v. ἄλς (A) IV. A good example of its humorous use can be found in Strato fr.1 K.-A., which is translated and discussed by Bing (2003: 343-6). In most cases, ἄλς describes the wit of literary products such as tragedy. The idea of salt as an aphrodisiac and fertiliser seems also to have circulated in antiquity. Traces of it can be found, for instance, in Aristotle's *History of Animals* 574 a 8 and 596 a 25. As salt is explicitly added to the dish, the exhortation to add some salt could imply a joke about spicing up the text of the tragedians with sexual innuendoes.

<sup>44</sup> See Lord (1908: 147), Leo (1912: 276) and Schorn (2004: 32).

<sup>45</sup> Fr.39 XVIII. Lefkowitz (1984: 340) interprets the passage differently, as she assumes Diodora's πῶς οὖν to be an expression of ignorance rather than impatience ('Diodora doesn't understand and asks in return, 'how then does he say it?'). However, Lefkowitz also observes that 'Diodora isn't convinced' by the interpretation undertaken by speaker A.

Several aspects of this passage are crucial for our understanding of the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole. It is likely, and has been suggested by Schorn, that the text of this fragment refers to a choral ode from a tragedy by Euripides which is now lost.<sup>46</sup> Secondly, two standards of quality and scrutiny are introduced by speaker B as she comments on the author-based interpretation of Euripidean poetry and the somewhat adventurous creation of a connection between a choral ode and events in the life of its author as presented by speaker A. Thirdly, speaker A is depicted as a weak partner when it comes to discussing literature according to the standards introduced by speaker B: he quickly tries to escape a possible new frame of communication or new rules of valid argumentation, and instead continues his narrative, as he keeps to the anecdotes of the biographical tradition on Euripides.

The standards of interpretation introduced by speaker B – especially her dichotomic distinction between fiction and truthfulness – remain in the mind of the attentive reader, while the efforts made by speaker A to avoid having to comply with them do not fail to make an impression on the reader either. In the course of the brief exchange of sentences between A and B, we cannot help noticing the stark contrast between their approaches to Euripides and the interpretation of Euripidean poetry. What is more, it becomes obvious that A's practice of a biographical reading of Euripidean poetry is both ridiculous and unfruitful. Failing to lead anywhere, this practice puts its representative into an utterly awkward position. A's answer to B's objection

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<sup>46</sup> See Schorn (2004: 325).

begins with a remark which signals that he is offended and does not wish any criticism or intellectual debate of his method.<sup>47</sup>

For the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole, the three aspects of this passage – the failure of A’s biographical method, A’s reluctance to accept standards of argumentation other than his own, and A’s exposure as the less convincing speaker – all illustrate Satyrus’ attitude towards the method of inference which was so popular in the biographical tradition on Euripides at the time. In modern scholarship, the distribution of the text between A and B is often said to be unbalanced and the dialogue itself to reflect a ‘typical’ teacher-pupil relationship between the two speakers, with speaker A as the (male) main voice as the teacher and speaker B as a possibly female voice who listens to speaker A’s exposition of the life and work of Euripides.

It remains difficult to make any final judgements about the original distribution of the text and the balance of the contributions of the speakers. Even for the text as we have it, we can only in a third of the fragments actually ascribe the lines to either A or B with any certainty. It is therefore impossible to say anything about the distribution of the passages in the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole. Moreover, the implications of the respective parts of the speakers are by no means as clear-cut as commentators would like them to be. As we have seen in fr.39 XVIII, speaker A cannot necessarily be called more eloquent or more knowledgeable than speaker B. In my reading, his narrative displays familiarity with a common tendency in ancient biographical writings which is not necessarily superior to other approaches. On the contrary, as I will show, the part of speaker A as the ‘expert’ of Euripides and Euripidean tragedy is

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<sup>47</sup> His remark ‘See it as you may.’ (ἄπερ ἔστιν ὡς θέλεις) expresses utter disrespect for the other person’s point of view (one does not even have to listen to the other party’s arguments to use it) and denies Diodora any further discussion on the issue raised.

drastically ridiculed in his implicit characterisation. This is evident even from the few fragments of the *Bios Euripidou* as we have them today.

There are two more passages in the extant text which illustrate the ignorance of speaker A and his rhetorical weakness: frs.39 XVI and XX. In both cases, speaker B comments on the sources A uses. In the first case, B questions the intermingling of tragedy and comedy in the formation of anecdotes about the tragic poets:

εοίκασιν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι τῶν ἀ[ντι]διδασκόντων αὐτῶ[ι],  
καθάπερ εἶπας. ἀτὰρ σιναμώρως γε κἀνταῦθα πάλιν ὁ  
κωμω[ι]διδάσκαλος ἐπέδακ[ε]ν τὸν Εὐρ[ι]πίδην.

These seem to be the words of one of his rivals in the tragic contest, as you said. But again, the comedian managed to bite Euripides.

In the second case, B interrupts A to state that the person quoted by A seems to have held Euripides in great honours:

ὅμοιος οὗτος, καθάπερ εἶρ<η>κας, δαίμων[ι]ως  
ἐντετι[μ]ακότι πρὸς τὸν ποιητήν.  
He seems to be like somebody who, as you said, held the poet in  
great honours.

The constructive attitude of speaker B towards speaker A shows speaker B as somebody who is trying to broaden speaker A's perspective by taking the broader context of his source of information into account. This open approach is counter-balanced by the sheer ignorance with which A answers B's remarks. Without any sign of appreciation, A simply continues his narration in both cases. It is this ignorance of the other position which most characterises A as a bad communicator. In my view, the assumption that A should be in the role of a teacher needs to be questioned. It may further be appropriate to ask ourselves why speaker A is represented as an incompetent speaker.

## 6. Function of the text: Imitating the classroom situation?

Typical for a classroom situation is fr.39 XIX, where A expresses his approval of B's comment with the words 'Not badly said.' (οὐ κακῶς εἴρηκας). However, we can hardly characterise speaker A as a good pedagogue. As we have seen in the previous sections, speaker A seems reluctant to pay respect to any remarks which present a derailment from his own course. This can be seen, for example, in fr.39 XV, where he says:

ἴ[σ]ως, ὃ Διοδώρ[α], πλὴν ταῦτα μὲν συνηγορήσθω ταῖς γ[υ]ναίξιν. ἐπανάγωμεν δ[έ] πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν Εὐριπίδην.

Perhaps, Diodor[-], this could be also said in defence of the women. But let us return to Euripides.

In fr.39 IV, the roles of A and B seem equally at odds with the assumption of a conventional teacher-pupil relationship. The sentence

πολλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν κωμικῶν ποιητῶν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἅμα αὐστηρῶς λέγεται καὶ πολιτικῶς

many things are, it seems, also said by the comedians in a serious and political fashion.

is answered by A's

πῶς γὰρ οὔ; πάλιν γοῦν ὁ μὲν Εὐριπίδης ...  
Of course. Anyway, Euripides ...

Although affirming speaker B's statement, speaker A quickly returns to his original subject matter, Euripides, while Diodora quotes Chamaeleon in her remark

παρὰ δὲ τοῖς κωμικοῖς ἢ περὶ τῶν τραγικῶν ἀπόκειται πίστις

'Trustworthy information about the tragedians can be found in the comedians'<sup>48</sup>.

Speaker B takes Chamaeleon's *dictum* and slightly transforms it. In fact, what is trustworthiness in Chamaeleon's account becomes everything but

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<sup>48</sup> Chamaeleon fr.41 Wehrli.

trustworthy in Diodora's appropriation of it. This shift is not without significance. 'Many things', as she points out, 'are said by the comedians in a serious and political manner'. Diodora's remark urges us to ask a series of questions, of which the following three are perhaps the most pertinent: (1) Many things are said by the comedians, but are they all necessarily true?; (2) Many things are said by the comedians in a serious and political manner, but does that mean we should take them (or politics, for that matter) seriously?; and (3) Many things are said by the comedians in a serious way so as to enforce the comic effect of their plays but also to make a political statement.<sup>49</sup>

By pointing out the importance of Old Comedy and claiming that 'Many things are said by the comedians in a serious and political manner', Diodora expresses the need for the audience to take comedy and politics seriously, whereas Chamaeleon famously used Old Comedy to exploit it for evidence in his biographical endeavours. Diodora's alteration of Chamaeleon's *dictum* is small but effective, as she introduces the topic of trustworthiness (πίστις) to the conversation. Once more, Diodora seems to be more aware of the traditions and problems of Greek biographical writing than speaker A, who chooses to ignore her remark. When speaker A refers to Chamaeleon and the Chamaeleontic method, on the other hand, he simply repeats what is common knowledge, and quotes from Aristophanes the famous passage 'As he lets his characters talk, so is he himself.' (οἷα μὲν ποιεῖ λέγειν τοῖος ἐστίν).<sup>50</sup>

In modifying speaker A's statements, Diodora makes such interjections as, εἴη ἂν τῷ ὄντι Ἕλληνας ('if in fact he was Greek', fr.2 I),

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<sup>49</sup> Evidence from the comic poets was viewed as unreliable by many ancient authors, as it represented an exaggerated distortion of facts and characters. See, for instance, Aelius Aristides' *Against Plato* and Polybius 12.13.3 (= *FGrH* 566 f 35b).

<sup>50</sup> On the Chamaeleontic method, see Godolphin (1932), Arrighetti (1987: 141-80), Schorn (2006: 41-3), and my discussion in chapter 1 above.

εἴη ἂν ἡ τοιαύτη ὑπόνοια περὶ θεῶν [Σω]κρατική ('this kind of thought about the gods could well be Socratic, fr.39 II), and especially the more drastic νὴ γελοίως γε ('But that's ridiculous!', fr.39 XIII) and κομψότερα φαίνε[ι μοι] λέγειν ἤπε[ρ] ἀληθινώτερα ('cleverly put rather than truly spoken this seems to me', fr.39 XVIII). These comments show Diodora as a considerate, well educated and critical woman. She is certainly not inferior to speaker A, nor are her remarks inferior to his contributions to the narrative.

On the contrary, it seems to me that Diodora's remarks serve to point out the weaknesses and shortcomings of the principles put into action by the main speaker. All in all, speaker A displays a certain kind of knowledge which he presents in the form of accumulated information about the life of Euripides, filtered only, it seems, by an eagerly adopted method of interpretation which mainly follows metaphorical readings of the plays of Euripides.<sup>51</sup>

### **7. The Role of Euripides and the *Exemplum Socratis***

The apparent play on the trustworthiness of interpretative authority in our text not only stands in the biographical tradition of Chamaeleon and Hermippus but also in that of the Socratic dialogues. Some parts of the dialogue between A and B have a distinctly Socratic dynamic, as they undercut preconceptions and challenge the allegedly 'stronger position' represented by speaker A. The connection of the *Bios Euripidou* with Socratic dialogues and the Socratic method becomes particularly evident as Diodora explicitly mentions Socrates. For example, in her conversation with speaker A about the treatment of women

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<sup>51</sup> Frey (1921: 51) calls the narrative of the *Bios Euripidou* free from all dignified lecturing ('frei von aller dozierender Würde') and observes the ironic colouring in the characterisation of the speakers. When Frey (1921: 47) observes that the majority of Satyrus' evidence is third- or second-hand, however, he misses, I think, the point that not all of Satyrus' evidence is

in Euripidean tragedy in fr.39 XIII, Diodora introduces Socrates to support her argument:

τί γὰρ ἄν τις εὐλογώτερο[ν] διὰ τὴν φθαρῆσαν ψέγοι τὰς γυναῖκας ἢ διὰ τὸν φθείραντα τοὺς ἄνδρας; ἐπεὶ τ[ά]ς γε κακίας καὶ τὰς ἀρετάς, καθάπερ ἔλεγ<ε>ν ὁ Σω<κρ>άτης, τὰς αὐτὰς [ἐν] ἀμφοῖν ἔσ[τιν] εὐρεῖν

Why should it be more reasonable to accuse the women of the temptation? Why not accuse the men of being tempted? The same virtues and vices can be found in both sexes, as Socrates said [...]

The reference to Socrates for an argument about the equal distribution of virtues and vices in both sexes seems conventional at first sight. However, Diodora actually seems to use Socrates' position to underline that the identification of culprit or victim should not be prejudged on the basis of sex.

The reversal of conventional perceptions of justice is reminiscent of Sophistic forms of argumentation. But rather than talking about the difficulties to identify victim and perpetrator, Diodora proclaims a radical re-evaluation of the roles involved in temptation and the judgement of a verdict such as adultery.<sup>52</sup> Socrates appears at two further instances in the extant text, both times in discussions of Euripides and Euripidean poetry. In fr.39 I, Euripides is said to have 'admired Socrates above all others'. What speaker A demonstrates in this passage is an inference about the life of Euripides from his work, as is the case in fr.39 XIII, where Diodora protests against his metaphorical interpretation of Euripidean drama and the deduction of biographical facts from lines in literature.

Diodora's treatment of the biographical material seems opposed to that of speaker A. As she mentions Socrates in her judgment about Euripidean

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necessarily third- or second-hand but that Satyrus in his narrative presents someone (speaker A) who uses such evidence in his speculations about the life of Euripides.

<sup>52</sup> Schorn (2004: 305-6) fails to see this aspect of her speech, as he is convinced that Diodora states the equality of men and women. He generally assumes that Diodora's position is in accordance with a Socratic attitude.

poetry, she refrains from the temptation of the biographical fallacy (at least as far as our textual evidence goes), and instead uses her background knowledge to make a statement about Euripidean poetry, and Euripidean poetry only. She avoids making inferences about Euripides' life, and instead carefully states that 'such an idea of the gods could well be Socratic.' (εἴη ἂν ἡ τοιαύτη ὑπόνοια περὶ θεῶν Σωκρατική).

To conclude, it seems that the example of Socrates is used in two different ways in the extant passages of the *Bios Euripidou*. Speaker A seems to refer to Socrates within the frame of his general method, and to draw conclusions about the relationship between Socrates and Euripides from passages in Euripidean poetry, while speaker B points to the passages as examples of possible reflections of Socratic thought in Euripidean drama.

## **8. Display of the sources and the use of legal language**

An analysis of Satyrus' use and display of his sources through the characters in the narrative complements my interpretation of the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole and give us some ideas about its possible function. The passages discussed in the previous sections illustrated the employment of source material by Satyrus and the presentation of the source material by the speakers of the conversation. The discussion of Euripides' exile in Macedonia and speculations about possible motivations for it, as they can be found in the last third of the extant fragments, are especially interesting with respect to Satyrus' treatment and presentation of his source-material. The 'Macedonian question' and possible answers to it are therefore embedded in my analysis of Satyrus' use of sources and analysed in more detail in section 10 below.

Fr.39 XVII deals with the opposition of Euripides and ‘the people’ and touches on envy as a possible explanation for the derision of the playwright in Old Comedy. The fragment starts in the middle of a quotation from Euripides’ play *Ino* which is answered by a mocking and apparently vulgar line, most probably from Old Comedy. The passage runs:

ὅπου ποτ’ οἰκεῖ σώματος λαχὼν μέρος, ἐν χερσὶν ἢ σπλάγχνοισιν ἢ παρ’ ὄμματα. [Eur. fr.403 3-4 Nauck<sup>2</sup> = Kannicht 2004: 446], προσυπέθηκεν τούτοις χλευαστικῶς: “ὅπαι καθεύδουσ’ ἅ κύων τὰν ῥῖν’ ἔχει.” [Anon.com.dor. fr.4 K.-A.] οὗτο[ι] μὲν οὖν, ὅπερ εἶπα, πρὸς τὴν τῶν πολλῶν ἐπολιτεύοντο χάριν. ἐκεῖνος γε μὴν καθάπερ διαμαρτυρίαν θέμενος ἀπέπατο τὰς Ἀθήνας.

.... ‘in whichever part of the body (envy) is situated, in the hands, the entrails or the eyes’, he adds the following lines in a mocking fashion: ‘Where the female dog has her snout when she’s asleep.’ [...]. These people behaved in accordance with what suited the masses. He, however, said goodbye to Athens and objected as if in *diamartyria*.

In what follows, speaker B rightly asks: ‘which *diamartyria*?’ (ποῖαν ταύτην;) and speaker A replies to her question, in his usual method of using the poetry of Euripides to talk about his life:

(A) ἐν τῷιδε κατακεχωρισμένην τῷι στασίμωι·  
 χρύσειαι δὴ μοι πτέρυγες περὶ Νώτῳι  
 καὶ τὰ Σειρήνων πτερόεντα πέδιλ’ ἀρμόζεται,  
 βάσομαι δ’ ἄν’ αἰθέρα πουλὺν ἀερθεῖς  
 Ζηνὶ συμμείξων [Eur. fr.911 Nauck<sup>2</sup> = Kannicht 2004: 918]

‘(A) One that is given her report in the following stasimon: “Already are the golden wings on my back and the winged sandals of the Sirens are fitted around my feet. I will up high further into the sky to be with Zeus...”’

As in fr.39 XV, speaker A is characterised implicitly by the way in which he draws logical conclusions about the life of Euripides through interpreting passages of his poetry. And, as in fr.39 XV, his method is exposed as ridiculous. Speaker A’s eagerness to voice the correct approach to Euripidean poetry are contrasted with the unsubtle ways in which he jumps to conclusions.

As we have explored the details of Diodora's wit and eloquence, it is worth analysing the rhetoric of speaker A in more detail.

Throughout the extant material, speaker A repeatedly uses juridical language. In fr.39 XV, he mentions the 'defence' of the women (ταῦτα μὲν συνηγορήσθω ταῖς γυναῖξίν); in fr.39 XVII he speculates that Euripides was using the method of *diamartyria* to leave Athens (καθάπερ διαμαρτυρίαν θέμενος ἀπείπατο τὰς Ἀθήνας). Schorn explains the meaning of *diamartyria* in its original legal context. There, the term apparently denoted a process in hereditary law, where the right to claim property could be refused if the claiming party was not entitled to the inheritance of property. *Diamartyria* functioned in these cases as a statutory declaration. While we cannot assess for certain with which intention Satyrus chose to give to speaker A idiomatic expressions taken from the language of law and courtroom debates, we can state that both in column XV and in column XVII of fr.39 Satyrus used legal terminology from the spheres of defence cases and hereditary law. It seems plausible to assume that Satyrus gave these expressions to speaker A in order to communicate something beyond their original legal field of application.

Satyrus employs legal language in the *Bios Euripidou* to emphasise two aspects of the narrative: the aspect of apology, given that arguments are a common feature of most biographical narratives, and the aspect of literary heritage. My assumption is that the legal language Satyrus uses in his depiction of a conversation about the life and work of Euripides was understood metaphorically. In the next section, I will show how the language of defence cases and hereditary law is used by Satyrus to stress the aspects of apologetic reasoning and (literary) heritage in the narrative of speaker A.

## 9. Collecting and recollecting, witnessing and trustworthiness

Satyrus has the two speakers of his dialogue collect and recollect exemplary texts from the Greek past. As they discuss Euripidean tragedy, they seem to engage in a lengthy display of different forms of creating a biographical narrative about the playwright. In this penultimate section of my chapter on Satyrus, I explore how Satyrus makes the readers of his *Bios Euripidou* think about different ways of remembering the past and understanding the dynamics of biographical narration. It may be helpful to broaden our perspective by including another piece of Hellenistic biographical narration about Euripides in our considerations of the literary strategies behind such narratives.

One of the biographers working at the same time as Satyrus was Hermippus of Smyrna. Both Hermippus and Satyrus ingeniously reinvented the Greek past in their works. Hermippus produced many biographies of Greek individuals from the past. He probably also wrote a biography of Euripides. The following report seems to allude to such a biography by Hermippus:

λέγει δὲ καὶ Ἑρμίππος Διονύσιον τὸν Σικελίας τύραννον μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν τοῦ Εὐριπίδου τάλαντον τοῖς κληρονόμοις αὐτοῦ πέμψαντα λαβεῖν τὸ ψαλτήριον καὶ τὴν δέλτον καὶ τὸ γραφεῖον. ἄπερ ἰδόντα κελεῦσαι τοὺς φέροντας ἐν τῷ Μουσῶν ἱερῷ ἀναθεῖναι ἐπιγράψαντα τοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ Εὐριπίδου ὀνόμασι· διὸ καὶ ξενοφιλότατον κεκλήσθαι φασὶ διὰ τὸ μάλιστα ὑπὸ ξένων φιλεῖσθαι· ὑπὸ γὰρ Ἀθηναίων ἐφθονεῖτο.

And Hermippus says that Dionysius of Sicily sent a talent to the heirs of Euripides and took the harp, the writing tablet and the stylus. After he had seen them, however, he ordered the people who had brought them to put them up in the temple of the Muses after he had written his own and Euripides' name on them. It is for this reason that Euripides is called 'most beloved by strangers', because he was greatly loved by foreigners, whereas he was envied by the Athenians.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The text is reported in the *Genos Euripidou (Vita Euripidis* p.5 Schwartz = T A1 III 4 Kannicht); for a critical edition with commentary, see Bollansée (1999: 98-100 and 223). Bagordo (1998: 32) remarks that the text could point to the existence of a (now lost) Peripatetic biography of Euripides.

The anecdote illustrates well what distances Hellenistic accounts of Euripides' life from earlier texts in the biographical tradition. Hermippus gives his audience the story of a trade of the poetic instruments (lyre, writing tablet and stylus) from the Greek mainland to Sicily. Thus, the instruments are transferred from Athenian democracy to the court of the tyrant Dionysius I. This sets Euripides in relation to his colleague Sophocles who is called φιλαθηναϊότατος in an ancient biographical narrative.<sup>54</sup> The story narrated here demonstrates not only a high awareness of the biographical tradition and of how the 'poetic heritage shifts to a new place'<sup>55</sup>, but it also contrasts two political systems, democracy and monarchy, and allows the latter to appropriate the cultural heritage of the former.

Interestingly, and fittingly for the Hellenistic perspective, the trading of Euripides' writing instruments is set at a time after the death of Euripides. And, equally characteristic for the period, Hermippus is the first author to mention and explain Euripides' alleged φιλοξενία in some detail. The epithet ξενόφιλος which is used to describe the tragedian perhaps entails an expression of the effects of Euripidean tragedy as mirrored against Euripides' own φιλοξενία.

The adjective used by Hermippus could provide an alternative to φιλόξεινος,<sup>56</sup> and entails a passive rather than an active meaning. ξενόφιλος, it seems, sums up Hermippus' charitable attitude of non-Athenians (ξένοι) towards Euripides. The φιλοξενία of Euripidean tragedy thus expresses, *inter*

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<sup>54</sup> The Σοφοκλέους γένος καὶ βίος states: οὕτω δὲ φιλαθηναϊότατος ἦν ὥστε πολλῶν βασιλέων μεταπεμπομένων αὐτὸν οὐκ ἠθέλησε τὴν πατρίδα καταλιπεῖν. ('He was so extremely fond of Athens that despite many kings' sending for him he did not want to leave his native city'; T AI 37-8 Kannicht).

<sup>55</sup> See Peter Bing (forthcoming).

<sup>56</sup> We have, however, to keep in mind that the adjective used by Hermippus is a *hapax* and that we therefore cannot be absolutely sure how the term was used and understood in antiquity.

*alia*, its scope with regard to its immediate reception, i.e. its appreciation by non-Athenian audiences.<sup>57</sup>

Both the alleged trade of Euripides' writing instruments and the epithet ξενόφιλος put an emphasis on the poet's unusual popularity outside Athens. As he is a ξενόφιλος, Euripides' work seems to be loved by non-Athenians. Though unappreciated at home, as the biographical tradition has it, the tragedian was adored by foreigners, be they Sicilian or Macedonian. This sets Euripides in one line with Homer and Sappho who were represented as 'most appreciated abroad' in Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic biographical narratives.

The popularity of Euripides outside of Athens seems to have become a *topos* from Hellenistic times onwards and is illustrated by an anecdote set in the time of the Sicilian expedition. We have a version of it in fr.39 XIX of the *Bios Euripidou*. The anecdote describes how the misery of Greek prisoners was ended because they knew some verses of Euripides by heart and made such an impression on their capturers that their lives were spared.

The message presented is threefold: first, Athens failed to realise the cultural and political importance of Euripidean tragedy. And Athens, secondly, shamefully neglected him (her own son), while the Macedonian and Sicilian public treated him with respect and honoured him; thirdly, neglecting or belittling Euripides can be a fatal error, as 'knowing your Euripides' can, at times, save your life. Therefore, recollection and the knowledge of Euripidean poetry is not only important for the creation of Greek cultural identity in

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<sup>57</sup> See Easterling (1994) and (1997), Revermann (1999-2000) and Allen (2001).

Hellenistic times but, according to the anecdote, had already been so for the captives back in the fifth century BC.<sup>58</sup>

In my analysis of the presentation of the sources in the *Bios Euripidou*, I hope to have shown the emphasis Diodora seems to put on the reliability and authenticity of the account of Euripides' death, most explicitly perhaps in her remark κομψώτερα φαίνε[ι μοι] λέγειν ἢπε[ρ] ἀληθινώτερα ('cleverly put rather than truly spoken, fr.39 XVIII). Two more aspects are important in this context and deserve our attention: the words μαρτυρεῖν ('witnessing') and μνημονεύειν ('commemorating') are linguistically exploited by Satyrus throughout the *Bios Euripidou* and could be semantically meaningful for our understanding of the narrative as a whole<sup>59</sup>.

Witnesses, witnessing and the keeping of records and anecdotes are repeatedly referred to in the extant passages of the *Bios Euripidou*. The mention of *diamartyria* in fr.39 XVII fits neatly to the repeated occurrence of the words μαρτυρεῖν and μάρτυρες. In fr.39 VII, μαρτυρεῖν is mentioned with regard to Philemon, who is said to 'witness' something for Euripides.

Philemon, who was notorious for his enthusiasm for Euripides (which might actually be a projection of the exclamations by characters in his comedies onto himself), is quoted in the *Bios Euripidou* by speaker A as someone who has attested to a phenomenon in a likely fashion (μαρτυρεῖ δ' αὐτῶι καὶ τοῦτ' εἰκότως ὁ Φιλήμων ἐνθαυθί).<sup>60</sup> The juxtaposition of the sober term μαρτυρεῖ and the exaggerated enthusiasm for Euripides Philemon

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<sup>58</sup> There are, of course, much earlier examples of the topos in Greek literature. The ability of poetry to move, and calm down potentially dangerous strangers, is at least as old as the story of Odysseus' telling of tales on the island of the Phaeacians.

<sup>59</sup> See my discussion of the legal language in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* on pp. 163-5 above.

<sup>60</sup> The judgement of Philemon as 'Euripides-enthusiast' is probably based on exclamations of characters in his own plays, most likely by exaggerated caricatures of people who were enthralled by Euripidean poetry in Philemon's own lifetime. The most famous example is

stands for strikes us as odd, as does the employment of *diamartyria* in the context of fr.39 XVII.

It can be seen from the passages discussed above that Satyrus seems to make use of legal language, and especially the term μαρτυρεῖν, to describe the trustworthiness of comedy as a source for biographical speculation. On several occasions, the reliability of speaker A is undermined as he is shown to summon comedy as a witness for his own case, the construction of a biography of Euripides from his interpretation of Euripidean tragedy and Aristophanic comedy. The exploitation of the terms of witnessing in the narrative of the *Bios Euripidou*, together with the words μνῆμα and μνημεύειν, has, I think, a distinctive semantic function in the narrative of the *Bios Euripidou*. Both terms allow Satyrus to distance himself from his text, as he places the words into the mouth of speaker A. The debate surrounding the recollection of the Greek past and its conservation in μνήματα seems to be at the core of Satyrus' fictional conversation. And Satyrus' contribution to the biographical tradition on Euripides receives a distinctly Hellenistic flavour with this exploitation of μαρτυρεῖν if we consider that Callimachus famously summed up his activity as a poet as ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν αἰίδω ('I sing nothing that is unattested', Call. fr. 612), which could be read as a summary of the intense dialogue between poetic texts that was at stake in this period, as Doris Meyer and Martin Hose have recently pointed out.<sup>61</sup>

As we saw in an earlier discussion of fr.39 XVIII, speaker B is given the voice of a position opposed to that of speaker A. Diodora exposes the faultiness of approaches to literature and biography such as the one taken by

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Philemon fr.118 K.-A., which is preserved in the *Genos*; see my discussion of the fragment in the previous chapter.

speaker A at several points. As we can see in Satyrus' use of the verb in ὡς μνημονεύουσι ('as they record', fr. 39 XIII), μνημονεύειν is used explicitly with respect to Satyrus' own creation of the past with the help of anecdotal material.<sup>62</sup>

A good example for this use of μνημονεύειν is Satyrus' characterisation of speaker A's blindness to the faults in his own method. As speaker A praises Diodora by calling her a true Eucleia in fr. 39 XIV, he compliments her on her knowledge of Euripidean tragedy with the words: 'it is fantastic that you remember these character traits' (εὔ γ' [...] τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ἡθῶν καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔχεις). The verb μνημονεύειν, which seems like a *terminus technicus* of the method exposed by speaker A, is also used in fr.39 XVI. Here, it appears to express the wish to modify the common tradition, as the interlocutor and the reader are asked to keep in mind a certain version of speaker A's story (μεμνημένος δ').

There might be another pun hidden on a different level of the narrative of the *Bios Euripidou*. We know from ancient sources that the μαρτυρία παλαιῶν represented a fixed part of the ideal structure of a speech as taught in the curricula of general education. It is perfectly possible that Satyrus could not only presuppose knowledge of this element of the 'ideal

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<sup>61</sup> Meyer (2005) and Hose (2008a: 295). On the difficulty of reconstructing the frame of reference of the famous *dictum*, see Bing (1988: 36).

<sup>62</sup> In keeping with the dominant perspective on ancient biographies by modern scholars, Wehrli complains that Satyrus gives us a (distorted) picture of Euripides and does not seem to appreciate the fictional portrayal of individuals who discuss Euripides as we encounter it in the *Bios Euripidou*. Rather than acknowledging the open form of the fictional dialogue and the critical comments on biographical interpretations it entails, Wehrli denies Satyrus any interest in historical reliability. See Wehrli (1973: 208), and similarly Arrighetti (1964: 23). The use of μνημονεύειν in the *Bios Euripidou* could also be standing in the tradition of an interest in ἀπομνημονεύματα which characterise the Greek biographical tradition more generally.

speech' in his audience but perhaps even play on it and present them with an elaborate mockery of this practice.<sup>63</sup>

In an analysis of the interdependence of the biographical tradition and the *scholia* of ancient authors, Ute Tischer rightly observed that in the case of Satyrus as in the *scholia* on the plays of Euripides only very short passages and extracts seem to have been taken into account by the commentators.<sup>64</sup> I would like to develop this observation further and to combine it with the result of my findings in chapter 1 of this thesis. My assumption is that the lack of interest in the plays as a whole which is so apparent in the *scholia* on the plays of Euripides is mimicked and ridiculed in the fictional character of speaker A as a comically distorted representative of the Hellenistic art of biographical interpretations. As a contemporary of the creator of the edition of the 'Complete Works of Euripides', which was probably finished around 200 BC by Aristophanes of Byzantium,<sup>65</sup> Satyrus as well as the readers of his *Bios Euripidou* must have been highly aware of the dangers and pitfalls of editing and interpreting an author whose work and life had invited controversial reactions already in his own lifetime.

Friedrich Nietzsche famously declared that Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* needs to be understood as a response, or ἀντιγραφὴ, to the lives of the poets that circulated at the time, such as the βίοι by Hermippus.<sup>66</sup> We know, of course, far too little about the writings by Hermippus and other biographers of his time to be able to make such a claim with any certainty. However, my close

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<sup>63</sup> See, for instance, the parts of an ideal speech as described by Hermogenes and Apophthionius.

<sup>64</sup> Tischer (2006: 239). Tischer's observation seems to chime in with the fact that Euripidean *gnomai* were probably collected from at least Hellenistic times onwards. See Funke (1965/6: 241-5), Most (2003: 141-47), Pernigotti (2003: 97-8), and my discussion of the *gnomai* on pp. 60-1 above.

<sup>65</sup> See Musso (1980: 41) and Kovacs (1994a: 13).

<sup>66</sup> Nietzsche (1869: 193). For a brief discussion of this remark, see Bagordo (1998: 32).

reading of Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* has, I hope, shown that some passages may well have been of a rather ironic, or even polemical nature, and that he could have reacted to some established ways of interpreting Euripides and creating biographical narratives about him.

The historical distance Hellenistic writers had to bridge to fifth-century Athens seems to have been expressed also in geographical terms. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that we frequently hear of authors' travels and sojourns at foreign courts in this period. Euripides' alleged sojourn at the court of King Archelaus in Macedonia especially seems to have occupied the imagination of many readers, in antiquity as well as in modern times. The concluding section of this chapter is therefore dedicated to a critical assessment of the 'Macedonian narrative' in the biographical tradition of Euripides as it occurs in the *Bios Euripidou*.

## **10. Euripides in Macedonia**

Apart from the Hellenistic epigrams which feature Euripides, Satyrus is the earliest source to inform us about Euripides' stay at the court of King Archelaus in Macedonia. The question of whether or not Euripides had actually been to Macedonia can perhaps never be answered with any certainty. For all we can see from the biographical sources, Euripides' sojourn at the royal court of Pella is not mentioned anywhere before the third century BC. Apart from references in the biographical tradition from Hellenistic times onwards, the lost play *Archelaus* seems to prove the playwright's connection with Macedonia and the court of Archelaus. Fortunately, we have some evidence about the play from antiquity: the title of the play *Archelaus* is mentioned in both of the surviving lists of Euripides' plays (*IG* xiv 1152 and *IG* ii/iii<sup>2</sup> 2363). Further

evidence is in two pieces of papyrus, with fragments of the play of unknown origin dating back to the late third century BC (*PHamb.* 118a and *POxy.* 3419).<sup>67</sup>

However, we have very little information about the story-line and the date of the play. The lines attributed to the tragedy contain mainly gnomic statements about the uselessness of material wealth, τύχη, noble birth, the success of the clever and energetic and the opposition of wealth and true virtue and piety – all of which are very much along the lines of the popular philosophy presented in the pseudo-Euripidean letters.<sup>68</sup> Regarding the date and setting of the first performance of the tragedy, the account of one of its modern editors, Annette Harder, is equally frustrating:<sup>69</sup> Harder's argument is based on material from the biographical tradition of Euripides and we have no details about the context of the play outside of the biographical tradition of Euripides.

The late and rather unreliable evidence of the *Genos* does of course not rule out the historical possibility that Euripides wrote a tragedy entitled *Archelaus* to celebrate the founder of the Macedonian dynasty. However, this possibility does not prove that Euripides stayed in Macedonia during the last years of his life. Whenever we are trying to argue for or against Euripides' sojourn in Macedonia, and the production of some tragedies there, we are, it seems, caught in a vicious circle. Harder, for instance, addresses the openness of the Macedonian question by pointing out that the *Archelaus* and the pro-

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<sup>67</sup> *PHamb.* 118a contains twenty-five damaged lines which have been identified as Euripidean because the rest of the papyrus contains fragments from prologues of Euripidean plays. *Pap.Oxy.* 2363 has sixteen severely damaged lines which were identified through the analogy of lines 8-9 on the papyrus and fr. 245 Nauck<sup>2</sup> [= Kannicht 2004: 324].

<sup>68</sup> See Nauck<sup>2</sup> 233, 237, 240, 252 [= Kannicht 2004: 320-23 and 326]. The passage thought to be a part of the prologue of the play (Nauck<sup>2</sup> 228 [= Kannicht 2004: 315-6] and *PHamb.* 118a) contains a genealogy of the Macedonian royal family which covers eleven generations.

<sup>69</sup> See Harder (1985: 125): 'The main piece of evidence for the dating of the *Archelaos* is test. I ἐκεῖθεν δὲ εἰς Μακεδονίαν παρὰ Ἀρχέλαον γένόμενον διέτριψε (sc. Euripides) καὶ

Macedonian mood in Athens at the time could have contributed to the notion of Euripides' exile in Macedonia and his friendship with Archelaus.<sup>70</sup>

Taking Lefkowitz's scepticism to the extreme, Scott Scullion has recently argued that we should altogether disbelieve the story of Euripides' exile and death in Macedonia.<sup>71</sup> The main argument for his radical position is based on the fact that Euripides' exile in Macedonia is never mentioned by Aristophanes, especially not in *Frogs*, which was presumably put on stage just after Euripides had died. Scullion's argument loses much of its strength, I think, if we take into account that there is no evidence that actual events in the lives of ancient poets (let alone all of them) made it onto the stage of Old Comedy. For all we know, Aeschylus and Euripides may in *Frogs* simply represent embodiments of their poetry and, perhaps, stand for opposing political concepts. However, whether the real Euripides or the real Aeschylus went to Macedonia or Sicily is a different question entirely.

Following ancient commentators, some scholars believe that *Frogs* 1206-8 actually preserves the opening lines of Euripides' *Archelaus*.<sup>72</sup> And yet, not only is such a reading highly problematic, but such a reference would also be a rather arcane allusion to Euripides' exile and ancient commentators may be mistaken on the same grounds as modern commentators. More can be made of the fact that an anonymous actor of the third century BC won victories with

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χαριζόμενος αὐτῷ δράμα ὁμώνυμος ἔγραψε from which it appears that Euripides wrote this play during his stay in Macedonia, thereby 'pleasing' his host Archelaos of Macedonia.'

<sup>70</sup> Harder (1985: 125 n.1).

<sup>71</sup> See Lefkowitz (1981: 88-104) for the first expression of doubt about the date of *Bacchae* and the story of the Macedonian exile; see Scullion (2003) for new arguments, especially the argument that Euripides' death in Macedonia is not attested anywhere before the early third century BC.

<sup>72</sup> See *Schol. Ar. Frogs* 1206-8 (= Eur. Fr.846). However, the *scholion* itself notes that no such lines existed in Euripides (i.e. in the Alexandrian edition of his work). Gibert (2004: 350-1) rightly argues that *Frogs* 1177-1247 should be understood as targeting the alleged mannerism of Euripidean prologues which launch directly into genealogy rather than the opening lines of *Archelaus*.

recitations of the *Archelaus* at Argos and Dodona, which illustrates the popularity of the play in the third century BC.<sup>73</sup>

If we wanted to support Scullion's case that 'the Macedonian story is an ancient invention',<sup>74</sup> we would have to close our eyes to several considerations. As Harder and Hose have shown, our lack of knowledge to the contrary makes it impossible to rule out the idea of the production of the *Archelaus* in Macedonia altogether: the ubiquitous narratives of poets at royal courts do not necessarily make them a-historical inventions.<sup>75</sup> It is striking that in later centuries the association of poets with kings and tyrants, and their sojourn at royal courts had become so stereotypical that Pausanias speculates about the reasons why Homer and Hesiod failed to attend a royal court.<sup>76</sup> On a rather superficial level of comparison, it could seem that Euripides' alleged death in Macedonia was modelled on Aeschylus' death in Sicily.<sup>77</sup> Equally, as Euripides' *Bacchae* evoke the Macedonian landscape, Aeschylus' *Persians* describes the river Axion as the Persian army's retreat is described.<sup>78</sup> And yet, there are good reasons to believe in Euripides' stay at the court of Pella and his connection with Macedonia.

I would never go so far as some scholars who try to read traces of the presence of Euripides into the remains of a Greek theatre at Pella.<sup>79</sup> However, it seems perfectly possible that Euripides was one of Archelaus' many illustrious guests at Pella, just as his colleagues Agathon, Timotheus or Choerilus are said

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<sup>73</sup> On this, see Revermann (1999/2000: 462-5).

<sup>74</sup> Scullion (2003: 395).

<sup>75</sup> See Harder (1985: 125 n.1) and Hose (1995:143-4).

<sup>76</sup> Pausanias 1.2.2-3.

<sup>77</sup> Lefkowitz (1981: 81) was the first to voice this suspicion.

<sup>78</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 409-11 and 565-75; Aesch. *Pers.* 493. For a critical assessment of such 'geographising readings' of Greek tragedy, see Edith Hall's warnings against the misleading logic of a 'poeticised cartography' (Hall 1987).

<sup>79</sup> Polacco (1986) provides a modern example of such a method of approach.

to have been. More importantly, Macedonia seems beyond any doubt to have played an important role in the transmission of Euripidean drama.

For a prehistory of Macedonia in the Athenian imagination, it may be instructive to take a look at the depiction of Macedonia in Old Comedy. The characteristics associated with Macedonia and Macedonian politics were not very positive. We have, for instance, a passage of Hermippus' *Φορμοφόροι*, a comedy probably dating from 426/5, which praises Athens as an international trading centre that attracts goods from all around the Mediterranean. As the specific exports of every country are being exemplified, the speaker lists the lies of King Perdiccas II as the most characteristic of all Macedonian exports:

καὶ παρὰ Σιτάλκου ψώραν Λακεδαιμονίοισι,  
καὶ παρὰ Περδίκκου ψεύδη ναυσὶν πάνυ πολλαῖς<sup>80</sup>

and from Sitalkes itch for the Spartans  
and from Perdiccas lies in a great number of ships

We know from Thucydides that Perdiccas changed sides seven times during the Peloponnesian War.<sup>81</sup> We have, of course, to be very careful as to whether a political joke can be transferred to a different context. However, it is remarkable that we have resonances of the alleged Macedonian characteristics of treachery and deceit in yet another Attic comedy. In an extant fragment, Antiphanes refers explicitly to Philip II and his unfulfilled promise regarding Amphipolis, again associating anything Macedonian with lying.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to that, other comic fragments indicate that Athenians who favoured the Macedonian monarch or were in exchange with the king

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<sup>80</sup> Hermippus fr.63.7-8 K.-A. For a detailed treatment of the fragment see Wilkins (1997) and Gilula (2000).

<sup>81</sup> Perdiccas' movements are described in Thuk. I.57-62; II 29.6, 80.7, 93-102; IV.124-8; V.80.2, 83.4 and VI 7.3.

<sup>82</sup> Antiphanes fr.122 K.-A.

were depicted as lampoons on the comic stage.<sup>83</sup> Of course, the crucial question remains whether the association of Macedonia with the ‘export of lies’ was transmitted into the third century BC. But national stereotypes can be stubborn and often survive centuries without changing much. If some of the Athenian and Alexandrian stereotypes about Macedonia and the Macedonians did find their way into third-century literature, then, Satyrus and other Hellenistic writers would have been able to re-activate, transform and play on these negative associations with Macedonia in the historical context of a new political situation.

In fourth-century Attic historiography Macedonia regularly stood for moral decay, cultural decline and anything barbarous. The reasons for this portrayal of Macedonia and Macedonians in the fourth century BC were many and complex but we know from Diodorus’ quotation of Lycurgus’ speech that the subjugation of the Athenians to the Macedonians must have been a painful and humiliating experience.<sup>84</sup>

Several answers are possible and necessary in order to come to terms with the ‘Macedonian question’. First, and most importantly, it seems certain that Macedonia played a crucial role in the transmission of Euripidean tragedy and was at least responsible for the enormous popularity of the plays in the fourth century and later on. On the other hand, a connection of Euripidean tragedy with Macedonia could have worked in favour of the political interests of subsequent Macedonian Empires, especially as Euripidean poetry was a

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<sup>83</sup> Webster (1953: 44-7) lists the individuals in question. Nesselrath (1997: 276-7) adds Demosthenes, Hypereides and the pro-Macedonian politician Callimedon.

<sup>84</sup> For Theopompus’ reaction to ‘Philip’s Conquest of Europe’, see Flower (1993: 116-135). Theopompus will in the biographical tradition of Euripides later be quoted by Gellius. For the possible meaning of Gellius’ quotation of Theopompus, see my discussion in chapter 5. on pp.266-69 below.

fixed part of the Greek curriculum.<sup>85</sup> Any association with Euripides would then strengthen the political, cultural and moral claims of the beneficiary who claimed it, not only locally but throughout the Greek-speaking world.

The political dimension of references and allusions to Macedonia are difficult to judge. The Athenian public of the fifth century BC was not always in favour of Macedonia; the negative image of Macedonia in Athens probably continued, or had a revival in the fourth and third century BC, not only because Athens increasingly lost her influence and power in the Mediterranean to Macedonia but also because of Macedonian interventions in Athenian 'home affairs'. One such example of political and cultural intervention can be found in the last decades of the fourth century, as the funds for going to the theatre were stopped. This well-known development often serves historians of theatre studies to explain the social background of New Comedy and the general shift towards a more 'leisured' and urban audience.

Between 322 and 307 BC, the Macedonian-supported governments in Athens imposed a property qualification for participation in public life – first of twenty, then of ten, *minae*. This charge, which 'may have resulted in some alienation of the weaker and poorer classes from great public occasions such as the Dionysiac festivals'<sup>86</sup> could perhaps have led 'the general public' (or their spokesmen) to the assumption that theatre performances – and this may have meant *inter alia* the performance of Euripidean theatre – had been 'lost' to Macedonia.

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<sup>85</sup> Euripidean tragedy had to be learnt by heart as part of the standard curriculum in Hellenistic times. Callimachus (*AP* 6.310 = 26 *GP*) depicts the pupils' constant recitations of *Bacchae* in the classroom (citing *Bacch.* 494), voiced by a tragic mask of Dionysus which hangs in their schoolroom and is bored by their recitations of Euripides. For a full discussion of the epigram see Fantuzzi (2007: 481-3). For Euripides in the ancient curriculum, see Criboire (2001: 98-9).

<sup>86</sup> Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 413).

It is this loss of Euripidean tragedy to Macedonia which enables us to speculate about a possible metaphorical dimension of the death of Euripides in Macedonia, as it is fully played out in Hellenistic poetry and prose. We have no evidence for it before the third century BC. The fact that Euripides' death is from our earliest sources onwards almost always related in connection with some form of love- or crime-story further allows us to speculate about its roots.

In Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*, speaker A relates the last years of Euripides in Macedonia. In this context, speaker A mentions 'the oldest of the Macedonians' in column XX. The emphasis is on Macedonia as well as the old and honoured source speaker A pretends to have consulted:

(A) ζῶντι μὲν δὴ ταῦθ' ὑπῆρξεν Εὐριπίδῃ· τελευτῆς δὲ μάλ᾽ αὖ δυσχεροῦς καὶ ἰδίας ἔτυχεν, ὡς οἱ λόγιοι τε καὶ γεραίτατοι μυθολο[γ]οῦσι Μακεδ[ό]νων.

(A) So this is what happened when he was still alive. But the end of his life was very bad and extraordinary, as the story tellers and the oldest of the Macedonians spin the yarns.

Once more he is interrupted by Diodora, which creates even more suspense for the reader. Regrettably, our fragment breaks off as speaker A continues:

(B) πῶς λέγουσιν; (A) ἔστ[ι]ν ἐν [Μακεδονίαι]...

(B) What do they say? (A) In Macedonia there is...

The emphasis placed on the Macedonian storytellers in column XX is striking. In particular, the verb used to express their testifying of the story is not the generally more neutral λέγω but μυθολογέω, which means 'to tell a mythic tale, 'fabulously report'.<sup>87</sup> Adding to the atmosphere of a legendary story with connotations of a fairy tale character is also the emphasised double qualification of the story's origin: it is not only narrated by the 'story tellers' (λόγιοι) but also by 'the oldest' (γεραίτατοι) of the Macedonians. Peter

Parsons, although not entirely convinced that the *Bios Euripidou* as a whole could have entailed a critical spirit, in his description of the cultural and literary landscape of the Greek-speaking world of Hellenistic poetry suggests that

[...] the Borgesian art of source-deception flourishes: Euhemerus does not expect us to believe in his Panchaic inscription, or Satyrus in the λόγοι τε καὶ γεραιτάτοι Μακεδόνων whom he cites for Euripides' death.<sup>88</sup>

Parsons' observations support my impression of Satyrus' narrative strategies and his use of sources, as I read the *Bios Euripidou* as a highly elaborate piece of meta-commentary on the biographical tradition of Euripides.

In column XXI, speaker A continues to present the details of the circumstances of the death of Euripides, not without sealing it with a confirmation of its reliability and authenticity: ὅθεν ἔτι καὶ νῦν λέγεσθαί φασιν τὴν παροιμίαν ἐν τοῖς Μακεδόσιν ὡς “ἔστι καὶ κυνὸς δίκη” (‘Therefore’, he concludes, ‘there is still this saying in Macedonia today, “There is also a dog’s justice”’). In adding this extra information of local knowledge, speaker A makes sure that the incredible story of the poet’s death is perceived as true and that his report is authentic rather than anecdotal. In adding the local Macedonian tradition of the saying to the story, speaker A’s narrative shows typical signs of the Hellenistic fashion of creating the Greek past by adding signals for the authenticity and antiquity of an account.<sup>89</sup> On another level, the mention of a Macedonian proverb could have alluded to, or

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<sup>87</sup> See LSJ s.v. μυθολογέω.

<sup>88</sup> Parsons (1993b: 162-3).

<sup>89</sup> The aesthetic principle of Callimachus and his colleagues can broadly be described by a paradox: while their poetry aimed to be innovative and delightful for other *poetae docti*, they at the same time busied themselves with detailed research on all sorts of antiquities, which suggest a principle that could be called ‘old is good’ and seems to have been a general tendency of the creation of a collective Greek identity outside of Greece in Hellenistic times.

perhaps even parodied, the Peripatetic and Hellenistic research into proverbs and local sayings.<sup>90</sup>

The story A actually tells is equally intriguing, as it is the first evidence we have of the legend. In column XXI, speaker A explains the death of Euripides as a result of a series of unlucky coincidences. It is worth quoting the column in full:

χρό[νωι δ' ὕ]στερ[ον] ὁ μ[ὲν] Εὐρι[πίδ]η[ς] ἔτυ[χε]ν ἀ[π]ω[τέ]ρω τῆς πόλεως ἐν ἄλσει τινὶ καθ' αὐτὸν ἐρημαζόμενος, ὁ δ' Ἀρχέλαος ἐπὶ κυνηγίαν ἐξήκει. γενόμενοι δ' ἔξω τῶν πυλῶν οἱ θηρευταὶ λύσαντες τοὺς σκύλακας προαφῆκαν, αὐτοῖ δ' ἀπελείποντο κατόπιν. ἐπιτυχόντες οὖν οἱ κύνες τῷ Εὐριπίδῃ μονουμένῳ διέφθειραν αὐτόν, οἱ δ' ἐπιπαρεγενήθησαν ὕστερον ὅθεν ἔτι καὶ νῦν λέγεσθαί φασιν [τ]ὴν παροιμί[α]ν ἐν τοῖς Μα[κ]εδόσιν ὡς “ἔ[στι] καὶ κυνὸς [δ]ί[κη]”.

Some time later, Euripides happened to be alone in a grove some distance away from the city, as Archelaus went out hunting. When the huntsmen had left the gates of the city behind, they let loose their hounds and sent them ahead, while they themselves were left behind. And when the dogs encountered Euripides, who was unaccompanied, they killed him. The others, however, came to the scene when it was already too late. Therefore there is still this saying in Macedonia today, “There is also a dog’s justice”.

(translation Kovacs 1994: 27, adapted)

Modern scholars have tried to identify the sources of the story of Euripides’ death narrated by speaker A, but the origins of it remain in the dark for us. It has been suggested that oral traditions of it could have been kept by the Macedonian storytellers mentioned by speaker A and that Aristotle knew about them, so that Satyrus had access to the information through the Peripatetic tradition.<sup>91</sup> It has especially puzzled interpreters that the reference to the ‘oldest Macedonians’ would make no chronological sense in Satyrus’ time and age,

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<sup>90</sup> Schorn (2004: 341) acknowledges the vicinity and possible influence of Peripatetic research into proverbs but does not consider the possibility of a parody. For the Peripatetic interest in proverbs see Wehrli (1969: 68).

<sup>91</sup> This is the argument of Tripodi (1998: 37- 51).

and hence point to a source dating at least to the second half of the fourth century BC.<sup>92</sup>

However, the mention of Macedonian sources and the allegedly Macedonian saying by speaker A do not automatically imply that there must have been such storytellers or even proverbs in either the fourth century BC or in Satyrus' time. Nor do we necessarily have to conclude that Satyrus was trying to achieve the best possible coherence in what he let speaker A say. Rather, the exaggerated triple mention of 'guarantees of authenticity' in A's narrative should make us sceptical, as his tale could be a narrative device which is used to characterise speaker A and to make a comment on his method.

Modern scholars display a strong desire to identify the historical reality behind the story itself. They try to date the fictional setting of the dialogue in accordance with a possible origin of the Macedonian storytellers,<sup>93</sup> to explain the difficulty of identifying the storytellers' historical background as a 'mistake' made by Satyrus,<sup>94</sup> or even as Satyrus' mischievous attempt to 'mislead' his readers.<sup>95</sup> My contention is that Satyrus knew very well what he was doing when he created speaker A, and that his aim was not to mislead his audience but to make them appreciate the imitation of a common argumentative practice as exposed in the words of the main speaker of his *Bios Euripidou*.<sup>96</sup> The only other example of a version of this legend of Euripides'

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<sup>92</sup> See Gerstinger (1916: 70-71), Arrighetti (1964: 149) and Schorn (2004: 338).

<sup>93</sup> Schorn (2004: 31) organises his argument for a setting of the dialogue at the end of the fourth century BC around the Macedonian sources mentioned in fr.39 XXI and is rather critical about Satyrus' accuracy and diligence, with the general assumption that Satyrus may have taken over certain bits from his sources rather sloppily.

<sup>94</sup> Schorn (2004: 338) suggests that the phrasing of the *λόγιοι* and *γεραΐτατοι Μακεδόνων* could be a 'Lapsus' by Satyrus.

<sup>95</sup> See Frey (1921: 37) and West (1974: 282-3).

<sup>96</sup> On the popularity of anecdotes and legends for supporting historical arguments in antiquity, see Saller (1980).

death is the passage on Euripides in Hermesianax highly ironic mock-elegy on the deaths of Greek poets.<sup>97</sup>

The legend that Euripides was killed by dogs while his host Archelaus was out hunting was most probably informed not so much by Macedonian accounts of the event but by the legendary death of Actaeon in the mountains of Cithaeron. The story is reported in Euripides' *Bacchae* and describes Actaeon dying by being torn apart (*sparagmos*), the typical fate for an impious individual. According to the legend, Actaeon was torn apart by his own dogs for provoking Artemis by not taking her powers seriously enough.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, as well as being informed by Euripides' own poetry, the tragedian's legendary and shocking death could also have been informed by another source, namely the repeated allegations of atheism against Euripides.<sup>99</sup>

At least two points are beyond any doubt. First, Euripides' death is from Hellenistic time onwards set in Macedonia. Secondly, the circumstances of the tragedian's death can be described as extraordinary and, perhaps, tragic.<sup>100</sup> Another aspect may have influenced the formation of the legend of Euripides' disgraceful death. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the expression 'dogs' (κύνες) could in everyday language stand for the worst possible cast in a game of dice. As we have seen, there was also a throw of dice

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<sup>97</sup> See my discussion of the poem on pp.109-12 above.

<sup>98</sup> Another reason why the pun on Eucleia in fr.39 XIV could allude to the cult of Artemis Eucleia in Macedonia.

<sup>99</sup> Lefkowitz (1987: 162) clearly sees the story of Actaeon as a model in that respect, as does Sauzeau (1998: 85). Earlier discussion of the legends tend to interpret the death of Euripides as modelled on the death of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, see Nestle (1889: 135) and Lefkowitz 1981: 103-4); the *sparagmos* by women seems to be a later development in the tradition. Sauzeau (1998: 86 n.92) points to the similarity of Euripides' fate with that of Orpheus; in later sources, Lucian and Heraclitus are also said to have been torn apart by dogs. See *Suda* s.v. Λυκτιανός for Lucian and *Suda* s.v. Ἡρώκλειτος for Heraclitus. An alleged *sparagmos* of Crassus is reported by Plutarch (Plut. *Crass.* 33).

<sup>100</sup> I do not agree with Schorn that Satyrus' version of Euripides' death can be called harmless. (Schorn 2004: 335). On the contrary, I think that Satyrus had speaker A report the most shocking and unlikely of all stories for the death of the poet – not without, of course, providing his account with a seal of authenticity through a connection with alleged Macedonian sources.

called 'Euripides' which possibly provided the inspiration for a discussion of Euripides and his work in Middle Comedy.<sup>101</sup> With the popularity of quasi-philosophical reflections on 'fate' in the Hellenistic period and subsequent centuries, it is possible that the metaphor of the dice – and the direction of a *cursus vitae* as 'the way the dice falls' – also found its way into ancient representations of Euripides and may have been common currency for Hellenistic writers and audiences.<sup>102</sup>

With regard to Satyrus' sources, I think what we can say with some certainty is that he used several sources for several purposes. For the death of Euripides, Satyrus chose to have one of his speakers mention old Macedonian sources, possibly referring to some local anecdotes and other material in the oral tradition. Speaker A, who claims the authority of these sources, is throughout the dialogue characterised as unreliable and stubbornly principled in his method of interpretation. It is up to the readers to draw their conclusions about the quality of what speaker A has to tell.

The *Bios Euripidou* and Hermesianax' notorious love-elegy are the first evidence we have for the story of the *sparagmos* of Euripides, a death which recalls the deaths of Hippolytus and Pentheus, Orpheus and Actaeon.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See my discussion of Diphilus fr.74 K.-A. on pp. 62-3 above.

<sup>102</sup> For the imagery of the *cursus vitae* see, famously, Eur. *Hel.* 1666. The imagery of the dice as a metaphor for the fate of man seems to have occurred already in Euripides, *Suppl.* 330 (ἄλλα βλήματ' ἐν κύβοις βαλεῖν). In the biographical tradition, the *locus classicus* for the imagery of the dice is the expression in Plu. *Caes.* 32. 6: τέλος δὲ μετὰ θυμοῦ τινοῦ ὥσπερ ἄφεις ἑαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ λογισμοῦ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον, καὶ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ κοινὸν τοῖς εἰς τύχας ἐμβαίνουσιν ἀπόρους καὶ τόλμας προοίμιον ὑπειπὼν, "Ἀνερίφθω κύβος," ὥρμησε πρὸς τὴν διάβασιν. ('But finally, with a certain passion, as if abandoning calculation and casting himself upon the future, and uttering the phrase with which men usually prelude their plunge into desperate and daring fortunes. "Let the die be cast", he hastened to cross the river'). A related imagery and expression is used in Plu. *Cor.* 3: ἔσχατον κύβον ἀφιέναι ('to try one's luck for the last time').

<sup>103</sup> The similarity of Euripides' death as described in biographical representations of the poet from Hellenistic times with the mythical death of Orpheus could have motivated the juxtaposition of Euripides and Orpheus in a papyrus from an ancient gnomological anthology. See Bastianini (2005) on Euripides and Orpheus in the text of PSI XV 1476. Bastianini does not draw any conclusions about the history of reception and transmission of Euripidean tragedy from his observations, nor does he take the biographical material on Euripides into account.

It is worth noting that Aristophanes apparently knew nothing of the cruel death of Euripides described in the *Bios Euripidou* and in Hellenistic poetry, and that Old Comedy, as far as we can tell, never mentioned Euripides' stay in Macedonia. In the next chapter, I show how the story of Euripides' death is eliminated from the biographical representation of the tragedian altogether as he is made the narrative voice of a fictional correspondence in which he looks back on the biographical gossip that emerged about him in fifth-century Athens.

In this chapter, I have outlined the method by which Satyrus creates a fictional dialogue between two unequal speakers which not only challenges the tradition of fictional dialogues but also exposes biographical approaches to the interpretation of literature as reductive and naïve.

I have shown that the characterisation of the two speakers (and of Diodora especially) is in need of a critical re-assessment. I have also shown, however, that recent scholarship on the *Bios Euripidou* has contributed considerably to our understanding of the ancient biographies of Euripides and that the interpretation of Satyrus' text is central for our appreciation of Hellenistic epigrams as well as later accounts of the life of Euripides. A close reading of text passages given to speaker A and B of the dialogue illustrated how Satyrus successfully employs the technique of *paramimesis* in his biographical account of Euripides, as he has the interlocutors of the conversation not only imitate the language and style of Euripidean drama but also that of the typical classroom situation of philosophical discourse, and the

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Other than 'orphic' material, the papyrus also contains lines from Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Menander and the comedians Philemon and Antiphanes.

construction of a biography of Euripides from interpretations of his plays and the lyrical passages of the chorus especially.

In the next chapter, I explore how the developments of the biographical depiction of Euripides are reflected in the genre of letter-writing. While a similarly high degree of poetic self-awareness and educated playing with conventions can be expected, we will discover how the concept of *paideia* in the period of the so-called Second Sophistic differs remarkably from the understanding of learnedness in Hellenistic times.

### **Euripides Author of Letters**

I have shown in the previous chapters how biographical narratives about Euripides were created in Old and Middle Comedy, Hellenistic poetry and Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*. By the time of the early Roman Empire, biographical narratives about Euripides were explored in yet another genre, the epistolary genre. In a collection of five letters, the playwright is depicted from two new and additional perspectives. Euripides' life appears as the subject matter of a written correspondence, and the playwright features as the author of this correspondence.

This makes the correspondence, which reads like a unilateral conversation, an unimpeded imaginary monologue by Euripides. Within the biographical tradition, this is a remarkable shift of perspective. Strictly speaking, we are dealing with a piece of imaginary autobiography in the case of the pseudo-Euripidean letters. In the course of the narrative, the dramatist writes to king Archelaus of Macedonia, to Sophocles and to his slave Cephisophon. The letters reveal information about Euripides' motives for going to Macedonia and give insight into his attitude towards the king as well as his friends and enemies back home in Athens.

In their attempt to explain the poet's decision to go to Macedonia, the letters seem to display a distinctive feature of fictional letters by authors from classical Athens: just like the letters ascribed to Plato, for instance, the texts seem to take sides with the poet who left Athens to pay a visit to a monarch outside of

mainland Greece. However, in the case of the letters ascribed to Euripides the apologetic tendency is not the main focus of the texts. Nor are misogynist slander or pejorative jokes about Euripides' private life of any interest to the writer of these letters. Instead, geography and the mechanisms of reception and canonization seem to be their main preoccupations. This is remarkable both when compared to other fictional letters and within the biographical tradition concerning Euripides. Unlike any earlier or later narratives about Euripides and his life, the pseudo-Euripidean letters take their readers away from the dialectic of slander and apology and instead let them embark on an imaginary journey from the literary past of Athens to Chios and Macedonia and to the literary present of imperial Rome. The importance of imaginary spaces for the construction of cultural identities through recapturing the literary past is perhaps the most prominent feature in this context, while the literary genre chosen for the narrative is a reflection of a specific literary tradition of recreating the past.

The popularity of fictional letters in the first centuries AD could have been one of the main reasons for the choice of the genre on the part of the anonymous author (or authors). Fictional letters alleged to have been written by celebrities from the classical past seem to have been a popular genre in the late Hellenistic and Roman imperial period.<sup>1</sup> The prime concern of this era was with the reconstruction of the classical Greek past. Thus, the choice of the letter as the medium of literary invention may have been attractive for a specific reason: letters seem to convey an intriguing air of immediacy and authenticity. This seems especially effective in the construction of a fictional autobiography.

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<sup>1</sup> See Speyer (1971: 32-3) and Rosenmeyer (2006: 97-8).

In the pseudo-Euripidean letters, the impression of immediacy and authenticity is created for the reader in two ways: in the creation of a timeless connection between the narrative and the reader and in the creation of a (mock-) historical construction of companionship for the reader. The letters convey a sense of confidentiality between sender and receiver of the messages that unites the reader with the exchange of ideas of two people: the reader is, so to speak, participating in a conversation long past. The letters also imitate a live conversation and create the illusion of contemporary companionship for the reader, as the interception of private documents creates the illusion of witnessing what was the case.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of this chapter, I show how this last feature makes fictional letters especially well-suited for communicating a biographical narrative. After a brief look at the cultural and historical context of the letters in section 1, I focus on the transmitted material and discuss the letters in the order in which they are presented in the manuscripts (section 2). After this first analysis of the texts, I explore the importance of space and location for the narrative (section 3) and the possible function of the letters at the time of their production (section 4) before

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<sup>2</sup> On the letter as suggestion of a real conversation and its typical features in contrast to the dialogue, see Hirzel (1895: 305-8). Hirzel claims that the letter is a further development of the dialogue form which distances the dialogue from reality and gives way to fantasy, imagination and literary puns, created less for scholarly debate than for the idle delight of its audience, which was clearly favoured by the Cynics (see Hirzel 1895: 337). On the collection of fictional letters attributed to the early Cynics and other sages, see Malherbe (1994) and Müseler (1997). Tudeer (1921) was the first to date the pseudo-Euripidean letters, 'this rather curious department in ancient literary life' (Tudeer 1921: 4), to the second century AD, basing his estimation on a meticulous stylistic and linguistic examination of their language. Modern scholarship has up to now been unable to date them more precisely. On the character of the genre of the literary letter in Hellenistic times, see Hirzel (1895: 272-351) and Stirewalt (1993). On the Cynic movement in antiquity, see Döring (1985) and Desmond (2006); on the influence of Greek Cynicism in Imperial Rome, see Billerbeck (1991: 147-366). The scattered quotations of the many dialogues, tragedies, comedies, letters and poems attributed to Crates, Diogenes and the early Cynics can be found in Giannantoni (1983-5).

discussing their contribution to the ancient biographical tradition about Euripides (section 5).

## 1. The Cultural and Historical Context

In the second century AD Euripides did not only feature in letters, but also, for example, in a treatise by the grammarian Telephus of Pergamon entitled *Lives of Tragedians and Comedians* (Βίοι τραγικῶν καὶ κωμικῶν).<sup>3</sup> However, I will not discuss the possible nature of this and other lost texts in this chapter, because we simply know too little about them. Our most significant evidence from the period comes in the form of five pseudo-Euripidean letters.

The production of pseudo-historical and pseudonymous letters has its roots in the rhetorical character sketches of well-known heroes or stock personality types (*ethopoiia*) which from Hellenistic times onwards formed a vital part of classroom exercises (*progymnasmata*).<sup>4</sup> Forged letters often seem to be variations on the rhetorical trope of *ethopoiia*. The period of the Second Sophistic (roughly speaking the second century AD) was especially prolific in the production of letters in which later compositions were passed off as classical.<sup>5</sup> Typical for letters produced at this time is the depiction of an encounter between an intellectual and a ruler from the Greek past, in which ideas of personal virtue and good governance are explored.<sup>6</sup> The form of the letter allows a considerable amount of stylistic

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<sup>3</sup> *FGrHist* III B 505 T1. For a brief discussion, see Bagordo (1998: 69). Unfortunately, the title is all we have of the work. It came down to us in the *Suda* lexicon (*Suda* τ 495 s.v. Τήλεφος).

<sup>4</sup> See Morgan (1998), Costa (2001: xi-xiii), Kennedy (2003) and Rosenmeyer (2006: 29-30).

<sup>5</sup> See Costa (2001: xiii-xiv), Trapp (2003: 32), Rosenmeyer (2006: 97-103) and Morello/Morrison (2007: 3-7). On the significance of the Second Sophistic for the creation of the Greek past see Bowie (1970/74); Anderson (1993), Swain (1996: 17-131) and Whitmarsh (2001: 1-38).

<sup>6</sup> The best known examples of the depiction of such encounters can be found in the writings of Dio Chrystostom, Plutarch, Aelius Aristides, Marcus Aurelius and Seneca.

freedom in prose composition and offers the possibility of imitating both the style and the character of the individual in question. All of these factors probably contribute to the appeal of forged letters to the authors and audiences of the Second Sophistic.<sup>7</sup> The collection of the pseudo-Euripidean letters can be dated to the first or second century AD.<sup>8</sup> However, it seems most likely that they were produced in the late second century AD.<sup>9</sup> The author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters is unknown to us but must have been a philosophically and rhetorically well-educated individual who had familiarised himself with previous biographical representations of Euripides.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to its generic appeal to writers of the Second Sophistic, the composition of literary letters stands in the tradition of the Epicurean and Cynic movements. It was especially popular at the time of the second phase of Cynicism in the Roman Empire, and we can identify cynic authors of fictional letters who were renowned in antiquity for their literary skills and their sharp wit, such as Crates or his pupil Menippus.<sup>11</sup> In their letters, as in other texts from the same context, the Cynics' representation of reality is marked by conceit and ambiguous humour, the *σπουδαιογέλοιον*.<sup>12</sup> As part of the general revival of Cynicism in the

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<sup>7</sup> On the popularity of these letters see most recently Rosenmeyer (2006: 7): 'So many of these pseudonymous texts have survived from antiquity that we can safely assume an eager reading public.'

<sup>8</sup> On the difficulty to identify the exact date, see Gößwein (1975: 6-30).

<sup>9</sup> See Gößwein (1975: 29) and Jouan (1983: 194) who adds that the place of their production must have been 'la société cultivée d'une grande cité de l'Empire Romain, Athènes, ou mieux encore Rome.'

<sup>10</sup> See Gößwein (1975: 29-30) and Jouan (1983: 188-90) who calls the author of the letters a 'sophiste anonyme' (190). For an excellent account of the most likely cultural and historical context at the time of the production of the letters, see Jouan (1983: 188 and 194).

<sup>11</sup> See Branham/Goulet-Cazé (1996: 9-11).

<sup>12</sup> Menippus, one of the most influential Hellenistic authors, is (possibly as the most distinctive representative of serio-comic writings) even called *spoudaiogeloios* ('seriocomic') by Strabo (Strabo 16.2.29 c 759).

Roman Empire, fictional letters re-emerged as an important medium of popular philosophy. Less rhetorical than the *chreia*, which had its origins in philosophical teachings and served as something useful to remember in everyday life (i.e. something χρηστόν, hence its name), and with the same dramatic possibilities as the dialogue, the medium of fictional letters was used to entertain educated audiences and further the popularity of certain topics, stereotypes or individuals.<sup>13</sup>

The *chreia* is characteristically a very short saying which, for instance, sums up the line of thought of a famous philosopher or writer.<sup>14</sup> We have an example of such a saying about Diogenes. As the tradition was perfectly aware of his status as a controversial and contradictory character, he is said to have entered the theatre when everybody else was leaving. Asked what he was doing, he is said to have answered ‘This is what I practise doing all my life.’<sup>15</sup> Generally speaking, the *chreia* is often about general observations which, in connection with the example of a famous person, express the usefulness of setting priorities in life. Its brevity makes the *chreia*, like the *gnome* and the *apophthegma*, easy to remember

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<sup>13</sup> The *chreia* probably turned from an exercise in the classroom into a companion in everyday life. Originating in the questions and answers of the educational context of the *progymnasmata*, it later found its way into collections of sayings, similar to the *gnomai* (‘wise sayings’), the *apophthegmata* (‘utterances’) and the *apomnemonemata* (‘reminiscences’). Unlike the *gnome*, however, the *chreia* covered remarks and actions that were ascribed to a certain person. On the development of the *chreia*, see von Wartensleben (1901: 1-16; 138-42), Hollerbach (1964: 74-81), Hock/O’Neil (1986: 3-60), Fauser (1987: 1994) and Stenger (2006: 212-15). The *chreia* originated most probably in the Socratic circle and became in later centuries an exceedingly popular form for expressing the wit and wisdom of philosophers, intellectuals and politicians. In antiquity, the *chreia* was defined as ‘a concise reminiscence appositely attributed to a certain character’ (*Aphthonius* 23).

<sup>14</sup> It is remarkable, but could of course be a result of the many coincidences involved in the transmission of ancient literature, that the oldest definition of the *chreia* can be found in a letter (Seneca, *Ep.* 33.7). See Stenger (2006: 212) for a recent discussion of the passage.

<sup>15</sup> The legend is narrated in *Diog. Laert.* 6.64. The *chreia* seems to have reflected a mini-dramatisation of a typical situation. The collection of Cynic *chreiai* in Diogenes Laertius presents some typical scenes for the Cynic *chreia*, such as ‘When Diogenes was reproached’, ‘Diogenes meets a philosopher’, ‘Diogenes meets a ruler’ or ‘Diogenes and dogs’. On the relation between Diogenes’ rhetoric and the Cynic *bios* tradition see Branham (1996). On Diogenes’ *chreiai* in the school curriculum, see Hock/O’Neil (1986) and Kindstrand (1986).

and enhances its quotability, while its abstract nature helps to increase the spread of the *chreia* and its social function to sanction as *communis opinio* what originally may have been the idea of an individual or a small group.<sup>16</sup>

Biographical narratives about great thinkers from the classical past were one of the topics ancient readers of *chreiai* were interested in. The difference between the fictional letters and the *chreia* can best be illustrated by an example. We have a snippet of ‘biographical’ information regarding Euripides in the form of a *chreia*. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a small ostrakon (8 x 7cm) was discovered in Elephantine in Egypt. It dates to the middle of the second century A.D. and contains a single complete *chreia* which mentions Euripides. The text contrasts the organising force of good counsel with the principle of mere chance, a dialectic which is also present in the rhetoric of Euripidean tragedy:

Εὐριπίδης ὁ  
τῶν τραγωδιῶν  
ποιητῆς εἶπεν τύ-  
χη τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώ-  
πων πράγματα,  
οὐκ εὐβουλία.

Euripides, the  
writer of tragedies, said:  
“Chance, not good counsel,  
directs human affairs.”

(translation: Hock/O’Neil 2002)

The ascription of the saying to Euripides is interesting and seems to be a result of the great popularity of the poet among teachers at the time.<sup>17</sup> Widely attested elsewhere and originally taken from a tragedy by Chaerephon entitled *Achilles*

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<sup>16</sup> See Stenger (2006: 215-15).

<sup>17</sup> On the popularity of Euripides in Roman education, see Bonner (1977: 173) and Criboire (1996: 164-5).

*Thersitoctonus*, the *chreia* gives a λόγος in the most condensed form, not unlike a *gnome*.<sup>18</sup> The universal claim of the remark is strengthened by the addition of a well-known individual, in this case the tragedian Euripides. The authorship of Euripides seems perfectly plausible, as the dynamics behind human actions, and the seemingly irrational decisions and developments between individuals are explored in most, if not all, plays by Euripides. Chance (τύχη) is the keyword in this *chreia* which sets Euripides apart from the other two great tragedians and makes him both a forerunner of Menander and a spokesman of Hellenistic philosophy.<sup>19</sup> The *chreia* perhaps reflects Euripides' reputation for controversy and amorality, for which he was often contrasted with his older colleagues Aeschylus and Sophocles. There seems to be a link between Old Comedy, the iambographic tradition, and Cynicism, and the pseudo-Euripidean letters seem to play with several clichés and *topoi* about Euripides that were established on the comic stage of the late fifth century BC, as the detailed discussion of the texts will show.

As is well known, Cynicism defined itself as 'a shortcut to virtue',<sup>20</sup> as opposed to the long road which requires time and the laborious, repeated and often life-long study of theoretical texts, as both the Platonic Academy and the

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<sup>18</sup> The sentiment occurs in Menander, *Aspis* 411, Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 5.9.25; Plutarch, *De fort.* 97 c; Libanius, *Orat.* 25.11.

<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that the destabilising energy of τύχη was regarded as the expression of Hellenistic political, social and economic conditions in a nutshell in antiquity. With regard to the Cynics, some see τύχη as the Hellenistic evil against which Cynic philosophers set their concept of a minimalist lifestyle. For Cynicism and its popularity, see Desmond (2006: 7-25). On the Hellenistic cult of τύχη, see Green (1990: 396-413) and Goulet-Cazé (1996: 55-6). The subject of τύχη seems also a predominant interest in the selection of sayings for ancient *gnomologiai*, see Barns (1950: 137).

<sup>20</sup> Allegedly the definition given by the Stoic Apollodorus, as reported in Diog. Laert. VI. 104 and VII. 122.

Aristotelian tradition of the Peripatus required it from their students. In contrast to the latter, all Cynicism required was ἄσκησις, exercise and steady practice. By exercising the will, the Cynics sought freedom from emotional turmoil in ἀπάθεια (calmness) and freedom from social restraints in παρρησία (freedom of speech) and αὐτάρκεια (self-sufficiency), declaring themselves as ἄοικοι (without a home) and κοσμοπολιται (citizens of the universe).<sup>21</sup> The Cynics moved away from the intellectual model of the philosopher and instead idealised knowledge from experience and the down-to-earth sage.<sup>22</sup>

As we shall see shortly, Euripides resembles both the intellectual and the Cynic sage, in our collection of letters. This is also true for the depiction of his religious beliefs in the letters. Like other intellectuals from classical Athens, Euripides displays a certain belief in the powers of the divine towards which he expresses his gratitude. On the other hand, we also encounter Euripides as the *enfant terrible* of Greek literature which Old Comedy made of him.

Not unlike Old Comedy or Euripidean tragedy, the Cynics liked to question and expose the values of the culture and society surrounding them. This made them adopt the social position of outcasts. It is, of course, important to keep in mind that Cynicism was in the Roman Empire already conflated with Stoicism. In fact so much so that at this period ‘Stoic and Cynic philosophers were

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<sup>21</sup> On the phenomenon of Cynic cosmopolitanism, see Moles (1996). It is important to note that the ‘homelessness’ and wanderings of the Cynics, and the early Cynics especially, does not necessarily mean they did not have a home-base to which they could return and refer. For cosmopolitanism as a topical concept of exile literature see Whitmarsh (2001: 145-8). For the function of cosmopolitanism in a different literary context, see Opsomer (2002) who points out that the opinions about cosmopolitanism expressed in Plutarch’s *On Exile* are a ‘curious blend’ (Opsomer 2002: 286) of Stoic and Platonic ideas.

<sup>22</sup> For the *topos* of the sage poet and his less clever patron in Greek literature before the pseudo-Euripidean letters, see Gentili (1988: 155-6).

practically indistinguishable'.<sup>23</sup> Cynics could be imagined as provocative and as sages at the same time.

Euripides shares many affinities with the view of the sage. Παρρησία especially, the boldness of being out-spoken, was associated with Euripides more than with any other tragedian.<sup>24</sup> The Cynics, and especially the Cynics of the first period of Cynicism, exercised their outspokenness in public. Thus, they transferred a political into a moral right and presented it publicly. The lifestyle of the Cynics in public and their ruthless outspokenness probably gave them their name ('dog-like'). According to some ancient anecdotes, Antisthenes or, in other versions Diogenes, was compared to a dog because of his dog-like behaviour, shamelessly indifferent to most social norms and living in public like dogs. But there are not only Cynic influences in the pseudo-Euripidean letters.

At least three different philosophical schools of education are played out in the pseudo-Euripidean letters. The figure of Euripides as it had been established over the centuries seems to have provided the ideal canvas for the projection of Stoic as well as Cynic and Epicurean ideals.<sup>25</sup> Euripides comes close to the Cynic ideal as a person unafraid of speaking his mind to his friends, thus exercising παρρησία in a private context, for example when talking to his colleague

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<sup>23</sup> Dudley (1937: 137). See also Goulet-Cazé (2003). For the reception of Cynicism at Rome see the studies of Billerbeck (1982), Goulet-Cazé (1990), Goulet and Goulet-Cazé (1993) and Griffin (1996).

<sup>24</sup> On the image of Euripides' outspokenness as reflected in earlier biographical narratives, see chapters 1 and 2 above. Conventionally, it seems, exile was associated with the loss of free speech. In the pseudo-Euripidean letters, however, the character of Euripides seems not to have suffered a loss of παρρησία but rather to have won a new freedom and kept his παρρησία. The loss of παρρησία in exile is topical in earlier Greek literature. See, for instance, Theognis fr. 177, and the discussion by Mueller-Goldingen (1985: 84-5).

<sup>25</sup> On the closeness of Euripidean and Epicurean thought see also Clem. Alex., *Strom.* 4.634. For the popularity of *gnomai* and ethical lessons from Euripidean tragedy with the Stoa, see Funke (1965-6: 240) and Kuch (1978: 196).

Sophocles or his slave Cephisophon. He reminds us of a Stoic as he points to a community of selected friends which seems to resemble the Stoic idea of friendship.<sup>26</sup> As a proto-Epicurean, Euripides is depicted in friendly dialogue with the ruler of Macedonia, King Archelaus, against whom he exercises *παρρησία* as a good friend would.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, the regent of Macedonia does not need any advice from Euripides. Rather, Euripides represents *παρρησία* in his attitude both toward the king and towards his own slave and his colleague Sophocles. Euripides is, therefore, depicted as a good friend in both the Cynic and the Epicurean sense of the word.<sup>28</sup>

Exile, too, seems to be a topic which is characteristic of the Second Sophistic. So much so that the theme of exile becomes a literary topic of the period.<sup>29</sup> The motif of abandoning one's *πατρίδα* was, of course, a popular motif in Greek literature from its earliest beginnings. Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar refer to it.<sup>30</sup> More importantly perhaps, the theme of exile is omnipresent in Greek tragedy, and Euripidean tragedy especially.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> On the Stoic idea of friendship see Lesses (1993) and Konstan (1997: 113-14).

<sup>27</sup> Euripides and Epicurus also seem to share the preference of realism over superstition and idealistic metaphysics. In the *Kyriai Doxai*, most notably, the voice of Epicurus is as simple, straightforward and sober as the language and diction of Euripidean tragedy is in comparison with Sophoclean and Aeschylean drama. This stylistic phenomenon of the works of both authors could have led the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters to blurring some features in the characters of the men behind these works. In other words: it could have led to the idea to depict Euripides as some sort of Epicurean character.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, *Kyriai Doxai* 27 (= *SV* 13): 'Of the things with which wisdom furnishes itself for bliss, by far the greatest is the possession of *philia*.' (Ὅν ἡ σοφία παρασκευάζεται εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου βίου μακαριότητα πολὺ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἡ τῆς φιλίας κτῆσις.)

<sup>29</sup> See Whitmarsh (2001) ch. 3, and his 'Exile and Identity in the Second Sophistic' in Goldhill (2001), 269-305. On the exile of Dio Chryostomus, see Moles (1978).

<sup>30</sup> See *Od.* 18.257 and 23.120, *Hes. Sc. I, Pi. Fr.* 52d29. The theme of expatriation seems to have formed an essential part in the ancient biographical representations not only of earlier poets but of

An important point of reference for the situation of the exiled tragedian Euripides in the pseudo-Euripidean letters is the Macedonia narrative as it was inherited from Hellenistic sources. But as Euripides is portrayed as writing from there, another tradition is blended into the narrative patterns that were already established by earlier writers. It is the tradition of travel writing which Momigliano identified as an early form of ancient autobiography.<sup>32</sup> It is not impossible that the pseudo-Euripidean letters drew on both the tradition of writing from exile and the tradition of travel writing, as well as the biographical tradition on Euripides from previous centuries. Further insight into the intellectual context of the letters and, especially, their reception, can be gained by investigating the company they keep in the manuscript tradition.

It is remarkable and perhaps even ‘telling’, as Gößwein put it, that the letters are transmitted separately from Euripides’ tragedies.<sup>33</sup> The letters can be found in 33 different manuscripts, dating from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century AD. They are always transmitted together and in the same order as I present them here. The *Harleianus* 5635, *Ambrosianus* 319 and *Tauriensis* from the fifteenth century have letters 1-3 only but the set is complete in all other manuscripts. The main manuscript for the letters, *Mutinensis* 54 has two versions of the collection of pseudo-Euripidean letters, one giving letters 1-3 only, the other

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the Athenian tragedians as well. It probably served to underline the Panhellenic importance of the work of these poets. Sophocles seems to be an exception to that rule.

<sup>31</sup> For the theme of exile in Greek tragedy see Bordaue (1992), Tzanetou (1997) and Grethlein (1999).

<sup>32</sup> See Momigliano (1993: 28-30).

<sup>33</sup> See Gößwein (1975: 28 n.107); there is a passage from *Hecuba* in the manuscript *Parisinus Graecus* 2755. It is, however, the only example of the pseudo-Euripidean letters and Euripidean plays being grouped together in the textual transmission.

one giving letters 1-5 – a phenomenon which attests to the appearance of letters 1-3 only in earlier transmissions.

Unlike many other letters supposed to be written by famous men from the past, the pseudo-Euripidean letters were regarded as forgeries already in antiquity. It is remarkable, but in line with the completely separate transmission of the texts, that none of the letters contains any allusions to, or passages of, Euripidean tragedy. The letters are in almost all of the medieval manuscripts accompanied by other fictional letters. In most cases these are several of the following letters: the letters ascribed to Phalaris, Pythagoras, Anacharsis, Chion, Hippocrates, Democritus, Heraclitus, Apollonius of Tyana, the Pythagoreans, Musionus, Diogenes, Crates, Plato, Philipp, Alexander, Brutus, Mithridates, Julian, Amasis, Dionysius Antiochius, Theophylactus, Nicias, Artaxerxes, Pausanias, Synesius, Lysis, Socrates and Aeschines.

Two manuscripts of the pseudo-Euripidean letters seem to deserve special attention: in the manuscript *Ambrosianus* 991 the letters are (at least from what we can say about the material as we have it) not presented in the company of other fictional letters but instead combined with Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*. The manuscript contains Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae* and *Lysistrata* and quotes a sentence from the fifth of the pseudo-Euripidean letters in the prologue to the *Thesmophoriazousae*.<sup>34</sup> The sentence is taken from Euripides' letter to Cephisophon and was perhaps used as a

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<sup>34</sup> The quoted sentence runs ἴσθι μέντοι μηδὲν μᾶλλον ἡμῖν ὧν νῦν Ἀγάθων ἢ Μέσατος λέγει μέλον ἢ τῶν Ἀριστοφάνους φληναφημάτων οἷσθ' ἄ ποτε μέλον ('know, however, that we care no more now about what Agathon or Mesatus say than you know we once used to care about Aristophanes' rubbish'; translation Costa 2001: 85, adapted).

commentary – allegedly made by Euripides – on the description of Agathon by Aristophanes. Thus, paradoxically, the Aristophanic text which forms a crucial part of the biographical tradition on Euripides became a source of disagreement for later readers of Greek tragedy and Greek comedy who may have encountered the passage only in the context of biographical writings. In an attempt to rescue the tragedian’s reputation, later developments in the biographical tradition, such as the pseudo-Euripidean letters, seem to have been used to ‘correct’ the errors of Aristophanes. It is this later use of the letters rather than their actual structure and composition which could make them appear apologetic. The second manuscript which deserves our attention is the *Cantabrigiensis* Dd. IV 16.<sup>35</sup> In it, the pseudo-Euripidean letters appear in the company of extracts from philosophical works, which attests to the popularity of Euripidean tragedy and biographical accounts of Euripides with editors of *gnomologiai* and other collections of ‘wise sayings’.

As we just saw, the pseudo-Euripidean letters were nearly always in the company of fictional letters ascribed to other famous writers, politicians and philosophers from the Greek past, sometimes mixed with excerpts from philosophical works (as in the case of the *Cantabrigiensis* Dd. IV 16). A biography of Aratus, composed in the third century AD by a certain Achilles – perhaps Achilles Tatius – is the only source from antiquity which mentions the pseudo-Euripidean letters and speculates about the possible author. However, the *Vita Arati* does not help us to identify the author of our letters, as was already

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<sup>35</sup> For details see *A catalogue of the manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, Vol. I, Cambridge 1856. 219.

pointed out by Gößwein.<sup>36</sup> What we have, then, is a tradition that is independent of the manuscript transmission of Euripides's plays, which suggests that he was regarded as a sage or philosopher whose life and letters were of interest to the reader.

## 2. The letters

The five letters to and from Euripides are a fictional account of what could have gone through the tragedian's mind during his last few months at Athens and while he stayed at the court of King Archelaus. They build a story line, as my following analysis shows. Letters 1-4 are written from Athens (to Archelaus in Pella and Sophocles in Athens), letter 5 is written from Pella to Athens, addressing Euripides' slave Cephisophon.

The fictional account of Euripides' thoughts takes up the assumption that Euripides spent the last years of his life in Macedonia. The arrangement of the letters thus seems informed by the biographical tradition. The content and focus of the narrative, however, are new, as Euripides' visit to the court of Pella is modelled in the form of an autobiographical account of a philosopher writing about (letters 1-4) and from (letter 5) his exile.

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<sup>36</sup> See Gößwein's discussion about the possible authorship ('Spekulationen zum Autor', Gößwein 1975: 6-9). For a comprehensive list of the manuscripts, their textual relationship to each other, their stemma and a list of editions see his section 'Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte', pp. 29-67. Jouan (1983: 187) seems certain that the author or the *Vita Arati* is not the same as Achilles Tatius. For critical comments on Gößwein's reconstruction of the textual history see Jouan (1983: 188-190).

### Letter 1: Euripides to Archelaus

The letter begins with a *captatio benevolentiae*, designed to make an impression on the fictional addressee King Archelaus and the reader. However, the *captatio benevolentiae* is more than a rhetorical device in this letter. It is not merely a phrase of politeness and introduction but establishes the ethical superiority of Euripides from the very beginning of the narrative, establishing ‘Euripides’ as a modest and considerate person of integrity. With this *coup*, the narrative reacts to the biographical tradition in two ways. It answers the allegations that Euripides’ main motivation for his exile to Macedonia was the luxury and convenience of the royal court of Macedonia and at the same time avoids any form of apologetic reasoning.

Suspicions that Euripides’ main motivation for going to Macedonia must have been the convenience of the life as an artist at the court of Pella are already voiced in Satyrus fr.39 XVIII: ‘he went off and spent his old age in Macedonia, enjoying very high honours with the king.’ (μετελθὼν δ’ οὖν κατεγήρασε ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ μάλ’ ἐντίμως ἀγόμενος παρὰ τῷ δυνάστη). The notion of ‘honours’ granted to Euripides, be they material or not, also surfaces in later biographical representations of the playwright.<sup>37</sup> The prosperity of Macedonia at the time can be inferred from the fact that King Archelaus was honoured by the

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<sup>37</sup> See *Vita Eur.* 11: ‘he enjoyed great success’ (μάλᾳ <εὔ> ἔπραττε); Suda, s.v. ‘Euripides’ E 3695.8: ‘there he passed his life enjoying the highest honour’ (παρ’ ᾧ διήγεν τῆς ἀκρας ἀπολαύων τιμῆς); Thomas Magister (T3.12 Kovacs): ‘he was splendidly received and highly favoured and thought deserving of the greatest honour.’ (καὶ δεχθεὶς ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ κάλλιστα καὶ φιλοτιμηθεὶς μεγίστης ἡξιοῦτο τιμῆς).

Athenians as a friend and benefactor (πρόξενος καὶ εὐεργέτης) in 406.<sup>38</sup> Several historical periods, which were all important for the reception of Euripidean tragedy and the evolution of the biographical narratives about the poet seem anachronistically combined in the pseudo-Euripidean letters. The use of the buzzwords ‘friend’ (πρόξενος) and ‘benefactor’ (εὐεργέτης) could link the narrative of the pseudo-Euripidean letters to Macedonia at the time of King Archelaus that was so crucial for the transmission of Euripidean tragedy. Perhaps Archelaus is retrospectively modelled on the Ptolemaic ideal and propaganda of the king as benefactor.<sup>39</sup>

Secondly, the apologetic impetus which is so characteristic for biographical and autobiographical accounts in fictional letters is met by the plain and seemingly innocent self-characterisation of the playwright as a wise man. Euripides is portrayed as considerate, noble, and uninterested in money, caring for the freedom and happiness of others, as respectful towards the king and amiable and self-reliant with his friends. Ancient discussions of the question whether or not one needs friends when one is fortunate and happy, almost always quote a line from Euripides’ *Orestes* (*Or.* 667: ὅταν δ’ ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῶ, τί δεῖ φίλων; ‘if one is happy, who needs friends?’) as the main point of reference.<sup>40</sup> In brief, Euripides is represented as the perfect philosopher who engages with the world

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<sup>38</sup> See IG I<sup>2</sup> 105 which honours the king as ὡς ὄντι ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ [καὶ προθύμῳ] ποεῖν ὅτι δύναται ἀγαθόν. For a reconstruction of the decree, see Meiggs/Lewis (1989: 227-80). For possible political motives behind this strategy of generosity towards the arts, and especially the patronage of Athenian poets, see Borza (1995: 129-30) and Revermann (2000: 460-62).

<sup>39</sup> For the Ptolemaic motif of the king as benefactor, see Bringmann (1993: 7-24) and Koenen (1993: 25-95).

<sup>40</sup> So, for instance, in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN* 1169 b 8) and in Plutarch’s *Moralia* (cf. *How to tell a flatterer from a friend* 68e). On the impact of such lines from Euripidean tragedy on later Greek literature, see Schläpfer (1950: 48-9). The line has of course also been used to illustrate Euripides’ alleged misanthropy. It enjoyed considerable popularity in the gnomological tradition.

politically but at the same time prefers to keep away from any harassment over property and money. This is in stark contrast with earlier accounts where the modest means of the poet were perhaps lampooned on the comic stage. We might think of the repeated jokes about the occupation of Euripides' mother as a vegetable seller in this context.

The representation of Euripides in the pseudo-Euripidean letters is also in contrast with the idea of the 'philosopher of the stage' which was associated with Euripides throughout antiquity.<sup>41</sup> As the philosopher of the stage, Euripides stood for useful sayings and advice both in fifth- and fourth-century drama and in the gnomological tradition. In the pseudo-Euripidean letters, too, the modesty of the tragedian becomes a starting point for an analysis of the relationship between a wise man and a king. The contrast between the modest poet and the rich monarch could reflect the popular wisdom circulating at the time that 'it is true wealth to be pious towards the god' (τάδ' ἐστὶ χρήματ', ἣν τις εὐσεβῆι θεόν, see *Archelaus* fr. 252 Nauck<sup>2</sup> [= Kannicht 2004: 326], transmitted in *Orion Flor.* III.1).<sup>42</sup>

With the first words of the narrative, τὸ μὲν ἀργύριον ἀνεπέμψαμέν σοι πάλιν ('we send you the money back'), the author can be sure to have caught the audience's attention from the start: the text contradicts the *topos* of the unequal relationship between patron and poet and instead presents Euripides as an independent individual from the very beginning. In fact, it presents him as a proto-

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<sup>41</sup> See, for instance, Vitruvius *De arch.* 8.16 (*Euripides, auditor Anaxagorae, quem philosophum Athenienses scaenicum appellaverunt*), Athenaeus 13.11.561 a, and Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.70.1 (= T 22 Kovacs).

<sup>42</sup> On the standard association of tyranny and excessive wealth see O'Neil (1986: 28-9). On Archelaus' 'enviable reputation for wealth', see Archibald (2000: 212-3). It is worth noting that in Euripides' *Suppliants* tyrants are wise men (σοφοί) through the friendship with the wise. For an analysis of the *topos*, see Rankin (1983).

Cynic figure. It is worth noting that cynic letters tend to start with a remark about wealth, or rather: the avoidance of and freedom from wealth and property.<sup>43</sup> By turning down the royal gift, Euripides acts like Diogenes, Crates and Metrocles before him.<sup>44</sup> My thesis of the creation of a close connection of Euripides, and Euripidean tragedy, with Cynicism is supported by an aetiological narrative about Crates: Diogenes Laertius reports that the motivation for Crates to become a Cynic was caused by his sight of the beggar Telephus in the theatre (Diog. Laert. 5.87).<sup>45</sup>

In his study of *The Greek Praise of Poverty*, William Desmond showed how indicative the refusal of money is for the earlier Cynics:

[...] the renunciation of wealth serves almost as a rite of initiation into the Cynics' world. It remains their prime task ever afterward, as they mock the rich for their *hubris*, the poor for their petty materialism, and everyone for the greed and self-interest that ruins higher goods like friendship, virtue, and clarity of mind.<sup>46</sup>

The prominent feature of money in the pseudo-Euripidean letters is intriguing as it is never a topic in any other biographical representations of Euripides, even though most biographical sources seem to agree that Euripides had a good life at the court of Pella.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See, for instance, Diogenes *Ep.* 9 and Crates *Ep.* 8 (the texts can be found in Malherbe 1977). For the assumption that Euripides did not think very highly of wealth and riches, see Sat. fr.38 II (= Plut. *Mor.* 36 c) and Schorn's commentary on the passage: 'Das Lied variiert einige Lieblingsthemen des Euripides: das Streben nach Freundschaft mit sittlich guten Menschen, das Lob des sich Mühens (πόνος), verbunden mit dem Lob von Tüchtigkeit (ἀρετή) und der Kritik am Reichtum.' (Schorn 2004: 221).

<sup>44</sup> A wise man's rejection of an offer by a king seems to have been a *topos* of Cynic narrative. The most recent acknowledgement of this phenomenon can be found in Desmond (2006: 166-67).

<sup>45</sup> Rau (1967: 20 n.3) rightly observes on this point in the reception of Euripidean tragedy: 'Wie Odysseus ist Telephus Vorbild für die Kyniker.'

<sup>46</sup> Desmond (2006: 17).

<sup>47</sup> See *Genos* p.2, 9-10 ed. Schwartz; *Suda* 468, 25-6 ed. Adler; Satyros fr.39 XVIII, 25-28. The topic of money seems, however, ubiquitous in other biographical literature. See, for instance, Zadorojnyi (2006: 270-77) on the 'haunting topic' (270) of money in the depiction of Simonides and Themistocles in Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles*. For the problematic relationship of Stoic philosophers with money, see Fuhrer (2000).

We know from other epistolary material of the time that money was a popular issue in fictional letters, especially in correspondence with a ruler.<sup>48</sup> Gößwein mentions an anecdote according to which Xenocrates refused a gift of fifty talents offered by Alexander the Great. However, whereas Euripides refuses the whole sum of fifty talents offered by Archelaus, Xenocrates kept 3,000 drachmae for himself. In addition to that, the depiction of Euripides could have been influenced by an anecdote reflected in Aristotle and Aelian which describes why Socrates refused to follow the alleged invitation to the royal court at Pella: Socrates, according to Aristotle, despised the people who accepted the invitation, because it was an act of *hybris*.<sup>49</sup> Aelian even has Socrates claim that fewer and fewer Athenians were willing to attend the royal court at Pella, the new capital of Macedonia, and that Archelaus consequently had to lure artists and philosophers to his court with money.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps the author of our letters wants us to imagine that Euripides went to Pella despite the fact that he was not interested in the money offered by the Macedonian king. In line 3 of the first letter, Euripides mentions the Macedonian messenger Amphias by name. The name not only means ‘sour wine’ but also turns up in Demosthenes’ speech 45, where he carries the nickname ‘Cephisophon’s in-law’ (ὁ Κηφισοφῶντος κηδεστής). I do not see why Gößwein maintains that the name is here used with this association ‘maybe without the author’s conscious

<sup>48</sup> See Holzberg (1994: 14 and 52).

<sup>49</sup> ὕβριν γὰρ ἔφη εἶναι τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι ἀμύνασθαι ὁμοίως εὖ παθόντα ὥσπερ καὶ κακῶς (*Rh.* 1398a 24).

<sup>50</sup> δι’ αὐτὸν δὲ Ἀρχέλαον μηδένα εἰς Μακεδόνας στέλλεσθαι, ἐὰν μὴ τινα ἀναπίσει χρήμασι καὶ δελεάσει, ὑφ’ ὧν οὐκ ἂν αἰρεθῆναι τὸν σπουδαῖον (‘But no one travelled to Macedonia purely on Archelaus’ account, unless he persuaded someone with financial inducements and enticed him in ways that a serious person would not yield to’, *VH* 14.17. translation Wilson (1997: 465))

intention'.<sup>51</sup> Rather, the play with names that would be familiar to readers and writers educated in the context of the Second Sophistic clearly shows that the pseudo-Euripidean letters were intended for such an audience and were probably written as a diatribic exercise by someone who was well-read in the literature of classical Athens and trained in rhetoric. The author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters and his audience more likely than not knew their Aristophanes and their Demosthenes well.<sup>52</sup>

Possibly the five different letters in our collection were even composed to give examples of five different types of letter-writing. Such stylistic exercises were extremely popular from the second century AD onwards. Later accounts of ancient epistolary theory, such as the definition of letter types in a treatise attributed to Libanius, give evidence of the sophisticated approach towards the rhetorical exercise of letter-writing in antiquity.<sup>53</sup> In his refusal of the royal gesture of generosity and support, Euripides opens up further areas of philosophical interest. In explaining why he refused to take the money sent to him by the Macedonian king, he argues that he did not refuse the gift to show off any sort of μεγαλοφροσύνη or to indulge in 'vanity' (δόξα κενή).

It is worth noting that κενοδοξία plays an important role at the beginning not only of the narrative of the pseudo-Euripidean letters but also of

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<sup>51</sup> '[...] dem Autor vielleicht nicht bewußt' (Gößwein 1975: 88).

<sup>52</sup> It is also likely that they knew their Euripides quite well and were familiar with most of his plays at least in excerpts which contained the most memorable and popular lines. For the high frequency of such excerpts especially in Imperial times, and the general preference for gnostic lines from tragedies by Euripides, see Pernigotti (2003: 99).

<sup>53</sup> *De forma epistulari*, a text from late antiquity, dating to the second half of the fifth century. The treatise survived in two versions, one of which is attributed to Libanius, the other one to Proclus. It is a practical guide to letter-writing as well as a 'work of literary taxonomy' (Stirewalt 1993: 323-4) which presents forty-one categories of letters, including their definitions and some model letters.

Lucian's *True Story*. In the relevant passage, the narrative voice of the *True Story* underscores the fictionality of the story he is going to unfold as he stresses: 'Therefore, as I myself, thanks to my vanity (κενοδοξία), was eager to hand something down to posterity, [...] and as I had nothing true to tell, not having had any adventures of significance, I took to lying.' I think it is right to say that κενοδοξία is a key-term in Lucian's *True History* where Lucian, employing the philosophically coded term and renewing its connotations, presents an ironic remark about the difficulties of inventing a man's 'adventures' and the poetic licence that necessarily comes with it. This special take on the term κενοδοξία may have been familiar to the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters, to their ancient readership, or to both.<sup>54</sup>

The comment is remarkable and could be read as a criticism of the vain pretentiousness displayed by popular philosophers who pride themselves on standing in the Cynic tradition. Quite unlike such preposterous heirs of Cynic thought, and despite a written encouragement to accept the money, Euripides stresses his and his friends' self-sufficiency (τὸ αὐτάρκες ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς φίλοις) and points out that their humble life-style does not lack anything, even though it provides much less financial security than the gift sent to him by the Macedonian king would have guaranteed. 'Euripides' points out that an additional advantage of the more modest life is that possessions can be more easily guarded (ἡμῖν ἢ φυλακὴ ῥαδία).

On this note, Euripides turns to the main subject of his letter, a plea for the liberation of two young men Archelaus held captive at Pella. His request

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<sup>54</sup> On Lucian's reception of Greek tragedy, see Karavas (2005).

suggests at least two thoughts. First, we are puzzled by the ‘deal’ Euripides is trying to secure with the Macedonian emperor: not only does the playwright refuse to accept the king’s gift, he even suggests that instead the king should release two prisoners. Surely, this is not how other artists would behave towards their patrons or benefactors. In placing his request, Euripides seems to act like a politically active philosopher rather than a ‘mere’ poet.<sup>55</sup> Secondly, Euripides’ request reminds us of a request Euripides allegedly made to the Syracusans. Aristotle alludes to it in his *Rhetoric*. This is what the scholia say on the passage:

Εὐριπίδης πρὸς τοὺς Συρακοσίους πρέσβυς ἀποσταλείς καὶ περὶ εἰρήνης καὶ φιλίας δεόμενος, ὡς ἐκεῖνοι ἀνένευον, εἶπεν· ἔδει, ἄνδρες Συρακόσιοι, εἰ καὶ διὰ μηδὲν ἄλλο, ἀλλὰ γε διὰ τὸ ἄρτι ὑμῶν δέεσθαι, αἰσχύνεσθαι ἡμᾶς ὡς θαυμάζοντας.

Euripides was sent as an ambassador to the Syracusans to request peace and friendship, and when they said no, he replied, ‘You ought to be ashamed, Gentlemen of Syracuse, to refuse us because we admire you; and if it is for no other reason: it is only now that we are asking something of you.’<sup>56</sup>

The passage is important for the understanding of the first pseudo-Euripidean letter. We can assume with some certainty that the educated audience as well as the author of the letter were familiar with most if not all of Aristotle’s work. They were certainly familiar with his *Rhetoric*. If, therefore, a request is made by Euripides to the Macedonian king in the first letter of our collection, it could have reminded some readers of the *exemplum* Euripides stands for in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* 1384 b 13-17.

<sup>55</sup> This is especially in contrast with the depiction of Euripides as the typically intellectual ἀπράγμων in Aristophanes, most explicitly in the so-called ‘Euripides-scene’ of *Acharnians*; see my discussion of the scene on pp.36-3 above.

<sup>56</sup> See Arist. *Rhet.* 1384 b 13-7 and *scholia ad loc.* However, the medieval scholiast is probably not to be trusted and the Euripides mentioned in Aristotle could be Euripides the father of Xenophon (see Thuc. 2.70 and 79), not the famous tragedian.

Euripides' answer to the ambassadors turning down his request for peace is said to be an example of good rhetoric by Aristotle.<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere, the story of Euripides and the Syracusans has a different focus. In his *Life of Nicias*, Plutarch reports that Euripides rescued several captive soldiers of the Sicilian expedition from slavery through his poetry, a tale that first appears in fr. 39 XIX of Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*. In it, the story goes that 'large numbers' of Athenian soldiers owed their lives to 'the poems of Euripides'. Apparently, the captives who were able to recite some Euripidean poetry (συχνούς αὐτῶν ἀνασωθῆναι διὰ τῶν Εὐριπίδου ποιμάτων), were allowed to leave after they had 'taught it to the sons of their captors', which, in turn, is narrated as a proof of Sicily's admiration for Euripides and his good reputation outside of Athens, especially in Macedonia and Sicily.<sup>58</sup>

But what does the teaching of Euripidean poetry to the next generation and to children outside of Athens stand for? As an image, it describes the spread of Euripidean poetry outside of Athens in the early fourth century BC. As an anecdote it works well in the classroom: it shows how education can be useful and enviable in the most desperate circumstances. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that we do not hear of the event (which would indeed have been quite remarkable if it had taken place as described in the *Bios*) in any of the sources closer to the events of the Sicilian expedition. The anecdote of the teaching of Euripidean poetry by Athenians on the island of Sicily is important as a means of describing

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<sup>57</sup> The passage explicitly says that Euripides' reply was a good one: διὸ εὖ ἔχει[ν] ἢ τοῦ Εὐριπίδου ἀπόκρισις πρὸς τοὺς Συρακοσίους ('Therefore, Euripides' answer to the Syracusians was a good one').

<sup>58</sup> See my discussion of the passage on p. 168 above.

the early reception of Euripidean poetry. Its fashioning as a miraculous rescue story in which the knowledge of Euripidean poetry helped to save lives of captive soldiers is a witty device in a witty dialogue of the late third century BC. It combines the allusion to – maybe even a joke about – the Euripidean technique of ‘rescue’ (jokes had in antiquity been cracked about it as early as in Aristophanes) with a semi-serious remark on *paideia* and its useful function in a fictional scenario that runs along the lines of the didactic phrase ‘see what a solid knowledge of some Euripidean poetry by heart can do for you!’.<sup>59</sup>

Both the depiction of Euripides as a good rhetorician and the description of the usefulness of his poetry are geographically set in Sicily. One of them certainly, the other one probably alluded to the Sicilian expedition, thus creating an atmosphere of historical authenticity to the ancient reader.<sup>60</sup> In addition to that, the story is a good example of the gradual growth of biographical information from kernels. As later readers, we can then see the story unfold from the time of the Sicilian expedition through Satyrus down to the pseudo-Euripidean letters and Plutarch. But let us return to our text: The captives at Pella are captives outside of Athens. Euripides tries to rescue them just as he (through his poetry!) has rescued captives before. The wording of the letter suggests that Euripides had asked for their liberation before (‘we wrote to you before and pleaded’); his argumentation, however, seems rather bold: ‘they seem not to be guilty of wrong-doing, or at any

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<sup>59</sup> In a way, forged letters provide the perfect medium for didactic messages, as they create a body of work and a legendary *persona*, such as ‘Euripides’, or ‘Socrates’ to transmit their information. See Morello/Morrison (2008: ix-x) for the phenomenon. For recent discussions of the Euripides-crazed captors, see Ford (2003: 33) and Rosen (2008: 30).

<sup>60</sup> This is not to deny the much older tradition of mythical stories about the usefulness of poetry. Orpheus’ performances aboard the Argo, for instance, are a central motif in the narrative about Orpheus, the proto-poet, in Apollonius. The usefulness of song and poetry is also played out in the Odysey and in uncountable other poems after it.

rate it seems they will do no more harm if they are free', he writes, displaying his opinion on the guilt of the captives as well as proposing an interesting model of social control, which seems to see imprisonment as a measure of precaution rather than punishment.

Euripides appeals to the king not only rationally but also emotionally and mentions the father of the imprisoned men. Asking Archelaus to show mercy, he reminds the king of the captives' noble character and mentions the fact that their father sought asylum in Athens and now begs Euripides to free his sons. Interestingly, we find a similar constellation in Demosthenes: Philip II of Macedonia wins Demosthenes' approval by granting Satyrus' request for the restoration of two innocent captives.<sup>61</sup> The possible juxtaposition of Euripides and Demosthenes is especially poignant as Demosthenes was – quite unlike his colleague Aeschines – known to be decisively anti-Macedonian and pro-Athenian. The indirect comparison of Euripides with Demosthenes could hence entail an attempt to write against allegations that Euripides was univocally pro-Macedonian and perhaps even anti-democratic. In an astonishing final remark, however, Euripides states that he even 'expects' the king to act nobly and pardon the captives, asking him not to act any less nobly than the captives' father assumes he will act towards Euripides. This is where the *captatio benevolentiae* of the Athenian playwright at the beginning of the pseudo-Euripidean letters has come full circle.

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<sup>61</sup> The incident is reported by Aeschines (II.156); the two captives in question seem to be two virgin daughters of Apollophanes. The coincidence of the parallel structure of both stories is striking. Again, we may justly assume that the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters had read Aeschines' speeches and may have been inspired by their cases for his depiction of the correspondence between Euripides and some of his contemporaries.

## Letter 2: Euripides to Sophocles

Tackling the issue of misfortune (συμφορά), the second letter continues the discussion of ethical questions that mattered to audiences influenced by Cynic, Epicurean and Stoic thought. The question of ‘how to react to a friend’s misfortune’, which is answered by the letter, was one of many practical questions addressed by popular philosophy. It combined the question of the many different faces of fate in an individual’s life and questions about the function and value of friendship, and is reflected in Cicero’s *Letters to His Friends* and many texts in this tradition. Another key phrase of popular Epicurean philosophy, which appears in the letter is ‘divine providence’ (θεοῦ πρόνοια), which is said to have been responsible for the miraculous rescue of Sophocles from shipwreck.

The discussion of the misfortune that Sophocles had allegedly suffered is set in an interesting and unusual context: it took place as Sophocles travelled from Athens to Chios. In the course of his journey homewards, Sophocles is said to have suffered shipwreck and to have lost his plays. This report could ultimately stem from an ancient source that stands in close connection both with Chios and with biographical details about Sophocles. Ion of Chios, notorious for the self-fashioning as a close acquaintance of the famous men of his time in his *Spells of Residence* (Ἐπιδημῖαι), could perhaps have been the source for the story underlying the second pseudo-Euripidean letter.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> We know of the title of the Ἐπιδημῖαι only through Athenaeus (see III 93a and 107a, and, in connection with Sophocles, XIII 603c). The Ἐπιδημῖαι were consulted by Plutarch for biographical details, as in the case of the life of Aeschylus (see his *Progress in Virtue* 8). Martin West (1985: 75) describes the form of the Ἐπιδημῖαι as ‘another pioneering work in terms of literary genre. Neither biography nor dialogue, it had something to do with the origins of both.’ And, what seems important for our context of the story of Sophocles’ shipwreck: ‘Ion is interested in outstanding Athenians he has met, some of them during his visits to Athens, others during their

Ion's source of inspiration for the legend of Sophocles' shipwreck may even be found in the Sophoclean œuvre itself. In fact, one of the most famous passages about delivery from a storm at sea in antiquity stems from a play by Sophocles which is unfortunately lost to us.<sup>63</sup> The play could already have been lost to the readers of the second century AD, although the shipwreck passage itself may have been available and famous, in which case the story of the loss of Sophocles' plays in a sea-storm could have had a doubly entertaining effect for the educated reader. The alleged fate of a shipwreck reminds us, and surely reminded the ancient audience, of somebody else's fate. Epicurus, too, was said to have barely escaped with his life when his ship suffered shipwreck on its way to Lampsacus.

According to that story, Epicurus was considered to be closely connected with Lampsacus in antiquity. Strabo even called him 'a somehow Lampsacian character' (τρόπον τινὰ Λαμψακηνόν, 13.1.19), a description that might (humorously or not) allude to the legend of Epicurus' shipwreck on the way to Lampsacus. Especially so as Plutarch considers that the event had a lasting effect on the attitude and character of the philosopher. To Plutarch, Epicurus' moral doctrines stood in striking contrast with the events of his life. Plutarch, of

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visits abroad. [...] He seems regularly to have described the *circumstances* of the meeting.' (1985: 75, my emphasis). The text of Ion's *Epidemiai* (=FGrHist 392 F 4-7) is available in frs 100-112 of Leurini's edition of Ion's writings (Leurini 1992: 140-158). For recent discussions of the *Epidemiai*, see Huxley (1965) and Bagordo (1998) and the contribution of Jennings/Katsaros (2007).

<sup>63</sup> See fr. 636 Radt. For the fact that this passage was much imitated, see Radt *ad loc.*, Otto (1890: 329) s.v. *naufragium*, and Fowler (2002: 28-29). Cicero quotes the passage in a letter to Atticus (2.7.4), and Seneca uses it in *Ep.* 88.7, as does Plutarch in his *On Fate* (Plut. *de fort.* 97 f).

course, exploited this alleged contrast for his own argument (most notably in his treatise *It is impossible to live pleasantly in the manner of Epicurus*).<sup>64</sup>

In a way, Plutarch constructed the ‘unforeseen events’ in Epicurus’ life as opposing Epicurus’ moral doctrine of the possibility of hope and confident expectation. However, because Epicurus apparently survived the shipwreck, Plutarch could equally have used the legend to stress the validity and coherence of Epicurus’ theory. The case of Epicurus’ near-shipwreck and especially its exact function and meaning in the biographical tradition of the philosopher are still very much debated.<sup>65</sup> For our understanding of the collection of pseudo-Euripidean letters, it is instructive to compare the alleged shipwreck of Sophocles as constructed in letter 2 of our collection with the alleged shipwreck of Epicurus as we can trace it in Plutarch. Perhaps we can even read a stylistic commentary in Sophocles’ near-shipwreck and the insinuation of an analogy with a similar story in the biographical narratives about Epicurus.

The *angst* of suffering shipwreck is of course nothing unusual in the imagination of a sea-faring people. In the first centuries AD, however, the metaphor of suffering shipwreck seems to have had additional implications. As Blumenberg famously explored, the idea of suffering shipwreck was a well-established philosophical *topos* in Greek thought and became something of a *Daseinsmetapher* by the time of Aristippus and Epicurus.<sup>66</sup> Both Epicurus and

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<sup>64</sup> Plut. *Moralia* 1086c-1107c. As a Platonist, Plutarch is often polemical against Stoics and Epicureans but his relationship to contemporary philosophical schools is complicated. For some illuminating accounts of the situation, see Jones (1916), Froidefrond (1987), Dillon (1988), Boys-Stones (1997) and Alexiou (1998). On Plutarch’s familiarity with Stoic and Epicurean writings see also St. Gerard Mitchell (1968: 165-6).

<sup>65</sup> For a comprehensive account of the debate see Clay (1998: 200-206).

<sup>66</sup> See Blumenberg (1997: 9-12).

Sophocles are said to have suffered shipwreck when they were on their way from their native cities (Mytilene and Athens respectively) to the place outside their native context where they had strong personal and professional links (Lampsacus and Chios respectively). It was well-known in antiquity that Epicurus had founded a school in Lampsacus before returning to Athens in 306 BC and that Sophocles visited Chios several times on his way between Athens and Lesbos almost 60 years earlier.

At least one of Sophocles' visits to Chios has been the object of Ion of Chios' description of an encounter with the playwright. We have the legend of a symposium they attended together in Ion 392 F 6 (= fr.104 Leurini): 'Without any force', Ion reports, 'Sophocles could get a young man to kiss him without even having to interrupt his witty conversation'.<sup>67</sup> Ion of Chios seems to have served as a figure of contrast and comparison to the three great Attic tragedians in ancient anecdotes. A fragment by Ion (Ion 392 F 22 (= Leurini \*108, transmitted in Plut. *De prof. in virt.* 79e) pictures the author as sitting next to Aeschylus while watching a boxing match and has Aeschylus say as one of the boxers is knocked down: 'See what training does for you! The one that's knocked down keeps quiet, and only the spectators cry out.'<sup>68</sup>

In relation to Euripides, Ion is only mentioned once, as he wins the third prize at the Dionysia of 428 while Euripides is victorious with the *Hippolytus*. However, Ion's alleged ἀθηνοφιλία make him, like Sophocles, a counterpoint of

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<sup>67</sup> As the narrative context is that of the symposium, the passage survived in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* (Athen. 13.603-5). Zepernick (1921) demonstrates the care and precision Athenaeus used when quoting other texts.

<sup>68</sup> See West (1985: 72) for the possible context of this incident in Ion's biography.

Euripides the φιλόξενος.<sup>69</sup> All three anecdotes seem to communicate stories of victory and defeat, probably hinting at the poetic competition between the main characters. It is interesting to note that Ion, who must have been an innovator in several genres, is depicted as inferior to Sophocles in *On the Sublime* 33.5. Similarly, the question ‘Would you rather be Ion of Chios or Sophocles?’ is part of a series of questions, which isolate two representatives of a genre, thus contrasting Homer with Apollonius, Bacchylides with Pindar and Ion with Sophocles.

Without denying that there always was a real danger of shipwreck for anybody who travelled overseas in antiquity, I would like to argue that the event of the shipwreck of a famous thinker effectively emphasises the contrast between the individual of extraordinary reputation and the uniform hold of fate on all human beings, ordinary and extraordinary alike. The miraculous and narrow escape from an unfortunate death is typical for a famous writer’s biography.<sup>70</sup>

A third figure one might think of in connection with Sophocles’ shipwreck is the narrative of Eupolis’ shipwreck. Unfortunately, we cannot be certain about the origins of the story. However, an entry in the *Suda* lexicon reports that the comic poet suffered shipwreck in the Hellespont while participating in the war against the Spartans. The consequences drawn from this by the author of the *Suda* entry are intriguing (*Suda* ε 3657 = Eupolis *test.* I K.-A.):

καὶ ἀπέθανε ναυαγῆσας κατὰ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ἐν τῷ πρὸς  
Λακεδαιμονίους πολέμῳ· καὶ ἐκ τούτου ἐκωλύθη στρατεύεσθαι  
ποιητὴν.

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<sup>69</sup> On Ion’s alleged ἀθηνοφιλία, see Blanshard (2007: 171-75).

<sup>70</sup> This is true for Sophocles and Epicurus but also for the ancient biographical tradition on Horace and Terentius. According to the *Vita Terentii*, Terentius was on his way to Greece for new scripts when on his way back to Italy he lost them all.

He died as he suffered shipwreck in the Hellespont on his way to the war against the Spartans; and this is why poets were prevented from serving in the army.

There is yet another twist in the story of Sophocles' shipwreck: a considerable quantity of his plays are said to have been lost in the event. Euripides calls the loss enormous (δεινή) but assures his colleague that the damage the Greek public has experienced by the loss of Sophocles' plays could surely be 'reversed easily' (ῥαδίως ἐπανορθωθήσεται) as long as the author of the plays was still alive. In addition to that, the legend of a near-shipwreck of a famous thinker highlights something else: the dependency of his writings on his existence. This might seem a trivial observation at first sight. Its full scope becomes clear if we consider that the assumption as it seems to underlie the story of Sophocles' loss of all his plays is constructed in contrast to the Platonic belief that (a) written texts have a life of their own, quite independently from their authors and (b) are therefore of less value than oral teaching, dialectical debate and live discussion.

In the case of Sophocles, the survival of Sophocles is good for Greece, because it grants the survival of his plays or, at least, the possibility of a reconstruction of the plays he lost in the course of the shipwreck. This might be one possible meaning underlying the narrative. The Epicurean doctrine of ἀταραξία suggests a metaphorical reading of stories narrating shipwreck and may have its roots in a shipwreck the philosopher suffered on a trip to Lampsacus,<sup>71</sup> Sophocles' survival as a live warranty for the survival of his 'lost' plays (i.e. the plays lost at a shipwreck on his way to Chios) is clearly a humorous take on the

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<sup>71</sup> Clay (1998a: 195-6) argues that the concept of ἀταραξία had its roots in the experience of the shipwreck as suffered by Epicurus in his life.

philological hopes and worries about the survival of Attic drama by later generations. Especially so, as Chios could further entail the connotations of Homeric poetry as well as excellent wine.<sup>72</sup>

In the second part of his letter to Sophocles, Euripides goes on to give his senior colleague some advice regarding his health ('allow your body some rest and come back home without any haste') before assuring the dramatist that everything is fine back home and giving his greetings to some communal friends. Two aspects in Euripides' regard for his colleague Sophocles strike me as remarkable. First, Euripides' concern about Sophocles' health seems especially funny if we keep the legendary Sophoclean connection with Chios in mind. It seems the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters is here alluding to Aristophanes' congenial rhyme

ὑγείαν καὶ σωτηρίαν  
αὐτοῖσι καὶ Χιοῖσι

health and rescue  
for themselves as for the Chians.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> For the standard connection of Chios with Homer, see Graziosi (2002: 210-28). The mentioning of Chios in letter 2 could thus even hearken back to two classical instances of Homer's connection with Chios, Simonides fr. 19 West, and the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 172. For the association of Chios with excellent wine in antiquity, see Blanshard (2007: 172) and Stevens (2007: 244-5). Chian wine was a much appreciated prize for outstanding performances at tragic competitions and was allegedly given to the Athenians by Ion of Chios after his victory at a dramatic festival. See T12 Leurini (= TrGF 19 T 3): ὁ δὲ Χίος Ἴων τραγωδίαν νικήσας Ἀθήνεσιν ἐκάστω τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἔδωκε Χίον κέραμιον ('when Ion of Chios had won with a tragedy at Athens, he presented a flask of Chian wine to each of the Athenians'). See Stevens (2007: 262-4) for a recent discussion of the passage. For the possibility that extreme isolation was expressed in Simonides' Salamis poem, see Rutherford (2001: 37-8), who adds the *caveat*: 'Simonides' Salamis poem is, however, much disputed, and we still have too little extant material to say anything about it with any certainty.'

<sup>73</sup> *Birds* 878-9. Pisthetaerus' immediate reaction is equally entertaining: Χιοῖσιν ἥσθην πανταχοῦ προσκειμένοις – 'I like the way the Chians get tacked on everywhere', as Sommerstein (1987: 111) translates. The joke in Aristophanes alludes to Chios' delayed joining of the allies to Athens in 414 BC. From then on, both Chios and the Methymnaeans of Lesbos enjoyed the special status of autonomous allies because of their self-effacing loyalty to Athens – another point of reference which might perhaps allude to Sophocles' famous loyalty towards Athens as it was constructed in the ancient biographical tradition on Sophocles. And these autonomous allies contributed not money but ships, which contributes another layer of irony to the story of Sophocles' shipwreck.– In

which, as Barron remarked with respect to their political dimension, ‘must have seemed even grimmer in retrospect than it did at the time’.<sup>74</sup>

Secondly, it is interesting to observe the emphasis which is put on the reduction of speed, as Euripides advises Sophocles twice to make sure he returns without any haste (‘See to it that you make your journey back safely rather than speedily!’, σκόπει δ’, ὅπως ἀσφαλεστέραν ἢ ταχύτεραν ποιήσαιο τὴν ἐπάνοδον, and: ‘come back home without any haste’, ἡσυχῇ ἐπάνιθι). Again, this is quite in contrast with other forged letters, which often stress the urge to make haste, a feature which is comically distorted in the pseudo-Hippocratic letters to Democritus. The general wish of letter-writers that their correspondents may act with speed stands in a tradition that not only includes the pseudo-Hippocratic letters but also the letters of Phalaris.<sup>75</sup> It is most graphically expressed at the beginning of Ovid’s *Heroides*, where the Penelope addresses her husband Odysseus with the words *nil mihi rescribas attinet: ipse veni!* (‘writing back is pointless: come yourself!’).<sup>76</sup>

We will never quite know what sort of actions we should imagine behind the sentence ‘And know that at home everything is fine and what you have

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the original political context σωτηρία would have had the meaning of ‘protection’, or: ‘safety from all harm’.

<sup>74</sup> Barron (1986: 102); Barron refers to the political dimension of the joke in Aristophanes and not to the pseudo-Euripidean letters. In the pseudo-Euripidean letters the tone is playful rather than grim.

<sup>75</sup> See the first line in Ps.-Phalaris’ *Ep.* 39: καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν φίλοις ἐπέσταλκα διὰ ταχέων ἐλθεῖν εἰς Ἀκράγαντα, καὶ σοῦ δέομαι παραγενέσθαι πρὸ Ὀλυμπίων. (‘I have written to all my other friends to come quickly to Acragas, so I beg you too to be there before the festival of Olympian Zeus.’, translation Trapp 2003: 87).

<sup>76</sup> Translation by Grant Showerman (in Goold 1986: 11). The passage did perhaps – but of course this is mere speculation – also refer ironically to the fact that Theopompus’ *magnum opus*, the *Philippica*, was delayed by the production of his *Letters from Chios*. For an estimation of the timeline of Theopompus’ productivity and the delay of the publication of the *Philippica*, see Lane Fox (1986: 119).

asked for has been carried out.’ (καὶ τὰ οἴκοι ἴσθι κατὰ νοῦν καὶ ὅσα ἐπέστειλας ἐπιτελῆ ὄντα). The words apparently refer to arrangements between the two playwrights which suggest that they were on friendly terms. What is more, the close relationship between Euripides and Sophocles, atmospherically evoked by the fact that Sophocles asked Euripides to take care of his home, neatly dovetails with the last letter of our collection, which portrays yet another close friendship, that of Euripides and Cephisophon.

#### Letters 3 and 4: Euripides to Archelaus

Centred around the story of the ‘Old man from Pella’ and his two sons, letter 3 displays an exuberant praise of both Archelaus and Euripides. It suggests a scene of public admiration for the absent Macedonian king in the city of Athens, granting him fame (δόξα) and even admiration (οὐδείς ὅστις οὐκ ἠγάσθη τέ σου τῆς φιλανθρωπίας) from the people of Athens who witnessed the reunion of the father and his sons. This is in striking contrast with the tradition found elsewhere. In a description by Praxiphanes the king is ἄδοξος ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον.<sup>77</sup>

In return for his efforts and his repeated plea to Archelaus, which we saw in the first letter, Euripides also receives public honours, generously sharing them with the city of Athens that produces such citizens as himself (καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν τῶν Ἀθηναίων, ὅτι τοιούτους πολίτας τρέφει). In the second part of his letter, Euripides mentions how many more details he could give of the wonderful effects Archelaus’ philanthropic deed will have on himself as well as

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<sup>77</sup> The original text presented Archelaus as an ignorant host in dialogue with Plato the comic poet, Agathon, Choerilus, Melanippides and Thucydides. Only one fragment is preserved of it in Marcellinus’ *Life of Thucydides* (*Vit. Thuc.* 29).

others. Equally obliged to the king as the old man from Pella and his sons, Euripides expresses his sincerest thanks and congratulates the monarch on not having disappointed anybody's hopes in his benevolence and philanthropy.

Continuing where Letter 3 ended, Euripides' next letter to Archelaus keeps praising the Macedonian king and presents him as the ideal ruler. Moving from the specific and more recent case of the amnesty Archelaus granted to the sons of the old man of Pella, Euripides describes the king's untiring efforts as a fantastic patron of young talents from abroad, especially in the arts, and especially of avant-garde literature and teaching. As in the previous letter, Euripides didactically points out how much good will derives for the king in return for his good deeds towards others.

While the letter begins with the playwright's assessment of the good which King Archelaus has done for him (πρὸς ἐμέ) and other talented and worthy men (καὶ πρὸς ἑτέρους ἐπιεικεῖς τε καὶ σπουδῆς ἀξίους πολλούς), it closes with an observation of the fact that King Archelaus will be loved by his friends (στέργεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων), and that his status as a royal monarch will be no hindrance to that love (τὸ δὲ ὄνομα μηδὲν ἀντιπράσσειν τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως). The movement of the letter goes from a personal acknowledgement of the king's benevolence (the *captatio benevolentiae*), via the immortal value of good deeds from a philosophical perspective (the *admonitio*), to the conclusion that because of his benefaction for the arts and his interest in innovative thinkers rather than flatterers, King Archelaus can be sure to be loved by his friends (the *conclusio*).

Three features typical for the doctrines of popular philosophy can be identified: (1) the ideal of good behaviour in a wider social context

(πολιτεύεσθαι καλῶς) as exercised by the king, (2) the importance of character (τρόπος) and the training of one's character in deeds of benefaction (εὐπραξία) and (3) the importance of benevolence (φιλανθρωπία) and friendship (φιλία) for the ultimate aim of true happiness (μακαρισμός). With its treatment of these three core philosophical issues, the Macedonian narrative comes to an end. After Euripides' initial plea for amnesty in letter 1 and his expressions of gratitude towards the king for having granted it in letter 3, Euripides expands on the humane and benevolent character of the Macedonian king for the audience of his letter, depicting the court at Pella as the centre which attracted and supported the cultural and intellectual avant-garde of his time.

Emphasising the minor importance of the financial support in comparison with the freedom, wealth and pleasure of the production of poetry, Euripides ties the letter back to the beginning of the correspondence. From its very beginning, the collection of letters responds to the allegations that Euripides' main motive for his exile in Macedonia was the luxury and convenience of the royal court of Macedonia. The story which began with his refusal to accept money ends with an emphasis on the importance of something quite immaterial, namely 'being loved by one's friends' (στέργεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων) – a core issue in Hellenistic popular philosophy.<sup>78</sup>

It has recently been argued that the emphasis on the respect and grace towards Archelaus by Euripides in the fourth as well as in the first and the third of the pseudo-Euripidean letters suggests that the collection was polemically

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<sup>78</sup> On the importance of the protection, comfort and spiritual freedom which only true friendship can provide in the context of Epicurean tranquillity and peace of mind (ἀταραξία), see Mitsis (1988: 51-8).

modelled on the letters ascribed to Plato.<sup>79</sup> Two main features common to the Platonic as well as the pseudo-Euripidean letters mentioned in this context are (1) their apologetic impetus and (2) the recurrent theme of a relationship between a man of letters and a rich and mighty ruler. Besides these two rather general similarities, some scholars maintain that the fifth letter in the pseudo-Euripidean collection seems structurally and thematically close to Plato's seventh letter.<sup>80</sup> Yet, this a rather strong claim would need more support from the text. Plato condemns Euripides' friendship with Archelaus in *Rep.* 568 a 8 - d 3, and it has been argued that the passage in Plato provides a point of reference for the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters – a claim I do not find very convincing.<sup>81</sup>

More useful than an investigation into possible connections of the letters with those ascribed to Plato seems a close reading of the text of the letters themselves. The fourth letter contains, as noted above, several allusions to philosophical key-terms and stock-issues of the time. It touches on the prime importance of charity (εὖ ποεῖν) and illustrates its rank as the first virtue for a sovereign in a long passage dedicated to the topic.<sup>82</sup> Holzberg rightly observed that the long treatise on charity (εὖ ποεῖν) in the fourth letter appears as a supplement to the gratitude Euripides should show towards Archelaus and as such carries

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<sup>79</sup> See Holzberg (1994: 14).

<sup>80</sup> Holzberg (1994: 14).

<sup>81</sup> Holzberg (1994: 14): 'Es liegt nahe zu vermuten, daß der unbekannte Autor der Ἐπίστολαι Εὐριπίδου seinen Briefschreiber indirekt gegen den Platon der Ἐπίστολαι Πλάτωνος polemisieren lassen wollte, und diese Vermutung wird durch eine Stelle in Platons Staat gestützt: Dort wird dem Euripides Tyrannenfreundschaft vorgeworfen [...].' When Plato condemns the friendship of poets and tyrants in *Rep.* 568 a 8 - d 3, his condemnation of the frequent phenomenon rests on his general attack on poetry and poets in the passage and pays no special attention to Euripides or the court of Pella.

<sup>82</sup> See *Ep.* 4, 2-76.

unusually strong didactic overtones.<sup>83</sup> In fact, the dramatist seems distressed by the sovereign's wish for 'conventional compensation' in the form of a poetic work dedicated to the king.<sup>84</sup>

#### Letter 5: Euripides to Cephisophon

The fifth letter is perhaps the most intriguing in the whole set of pseudo-Euripidean letters. As the longest and most detailed text in the collection, it is different from letters 1-4 in style, tone and layout. Euripides writes to his slave Cephisophon in Athens to tell him about his arrival and reception in Macedonia. He then discusses allegations made by ill-meaning individuals in Athens who are spreading gossip about him and urges Cephisophon to ignore these people.

The most remarkable aspects of this letter are (a) the setting of the letter in Macedonia, (b) its confidential and friendly tone, and (c) Euripides' advice to Cephisophon to ignore any gossip that circulates about him and to pay no attention to the people who spread it. In contrast to letters 1-4, letter 5 is clearly apologetic, perhaps because Euripides is now writing from Macedonia. Euripides starts with a description of his health and the swiftness of his journey to Macedonia before he describes his arrival at the court of Pella, the generosity of the king and his time with Cleito, 'a friend and colleague'. This reminds us of the second letter in the collection of pseudo-Euripidean letters, where Euripides is concerned about Sophocles' health rather than his work: 'take care, however, that you make your

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<sup>83</sup> Holzberg (1994: 15).

<sup>84</sup> See *Ep.5*, 12-18; Holzberg (1994: 16 n.33) notes that of the sentence vividly illustrates the opulence of the king's pushing of his wish and, through it, the discomfort and unease Euripides seems to experience.

return journey with more safety than speed' (ἀσφαλεστέραν ἢ ταχυτέραν ποιήσαιο τὴν ἐπάνοδον).<sup>85</sup>

Göbwein suggests that we encounter here a 'reminiscence used associatively' and points out that there was a Macedonian athlete called Cleito in 328 BC<sup>86</sup>. More likely than the association with an athlete who was said to have been active in Macedonia a century after Euripides' career in Athens, however, seems the possibility that the author of our letter again plays with the available information about Euripides. The *Genos*, the *Suda* article and Thomas Magister report the biographical claim that the name of Euripides' mother was Cleito – taking up additional information about Euripides' mother as given in the *scholia* on Aristophanes *Acharnians* 457. It is therefore possible that 'Cleito' was given as the name of Euripides' mother – perhaps jokingly so – already at a time predating our letters and as such was known to the author of the letters.

Secondly, it was well known in antiquity that Alexander the Great had a high-ranking officer, confidant, and (possibly) lover called Cleitus with whom he used to quarrel often.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters could have introduced Cleito as Euripides' 'friend' to the biographical tradition to

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<sup>85</sup> The concern with a wise man's health must have been a running gag, or at least a favourite way of counter-balancing too much seriousness. See, for instance, Horace's self-fashioning in *Ep.* 1.1.106-8: *Ad summam, sapiens uno minor est Iove, dives, liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum, praecipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est.* (To sum up: the wise man is second only to Jove. He is rich, free, honoured, handsome, hence: the king of kings. But above all he is healthy, unless troubled by a nasty cold.)

<sup>86</sup> Göbwein (1975: 90).

<sup>87</sup> He was the brother of Alexander's nurse Lanike. To distinguish him from Cleitus the infantry commander, Plutarch calls him Κλεῖτος ὁ μέλας. On Cleitus and his murder, see Hamilton (1969: 41 and 139-145). For an analysis of Plutarch's dramatic technique in narrating the 'traumatic episode of Cleitus', see Mossman (1995: 219-21). On the dramatic narrative setting of Cleitus' death in Plutarch's version of the story see also Carney (1981: 155-60) who assumes that 'the death of Clitus had political repercussions, both short term and long' (1981: 158) and calls the event 'a Macedonian domestic tragedy' (1981: 160).

allude ironically to Plutarch. In his *Alexander*, Plutarch narrates how Cleitus in yet another quarrel with Alexander took recourse to an unusual weapon and threw a pointed quotation from Euripides at Alexander.<sup>88</sup>

The mention of a ‘friend’ of Euripides called Cleito in our text is a sign that the author of the letter could have intended to either ‘correct’, or simply alter any claim about the name of Euripides’ mother. Rather, the point of mentioning such a friend of Euripides could lie in the fact that Alexander, too, had a friend called Cleito. Letter 5 mentions the name no fewer than four times.<sup>89</sup> It is impossible to identify the exact point of reference of the name ‘Cleito’ or to reconstruct its precise connotations. What we can say with some certainty is that within the biographical tradition of Euripides the name is apparently used of two different characters close to Euripides – and perhaps with an ironic or ‘corrective’ twist in the case of the pseudo-Euripidean letters.

Most intriguingly, however, Euripides mentions some friends at home who appear to have a share in his living and possessions. This seems a stirringly novel depiction of Euripides. Whereas in the biographical tradition and other accounts predating the letters Euripides is consistently described as a man who preferred to be undisturbed, he now seems to entertain a circle of friends modelled on the Epicurean κῆπος. On a more general level, it adds tension and contrast to

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<sup>88</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 51.8. The quotation from Euripides was taken from *Andromache* and ran ὄμοι καθ’ Ἑλλάδ’ ὡς κακῶς νομίζεται (‘Things have come to a pretty pass in Greece’, *Andr.* 693). Alexander’s answer to this was deadly: he killed Cleitus on the spot and this killing was later believed to have initiated the deterioration of Alexander’s political endeavours. Humbert (1991: 171) noted a remarkable detail of Plutarch’s narrative: Alexander, normally talking in standard Greek, is described as reacting to Cleitus’ outburst in Macedonian (Μακεδονιστὶ καλῶν τοὺς ὑπασπιστάς, Plut. *Alex.* 51.2) – a change in Alexander’s diction which Plutarch describes as ‘a sign of great distress’ (τοῦτο δ’ ἦν μεγάλου θορύβου σύμβολον, *ibid.*), thus contrasting the emotionality of the Macedonian with the Greek the statesman used when perfectly composed.

<sup>89</sup> In lines 9, 12, 52 and 62 of letter 5.

the narrative: both the reported behaviour of Cleito towards Euripides and Euripides' allusion to his friends point to a community of friends around the tragic poet and, as mentioned above, stand in striking contrast to the biographical tradition which – from Old Comedy to the *Suda* – univocally depicts Euripides as a misanthrope.

This departure from the biographical tradition seems not only remarkable within the biographical tradition of Euripides but also when viewed within the ancient traditions of depicting solitary misanthropes. This tradition, which probably originates in the legendary fifth-century figure of Timon of Athens, was consolidated in the fourth century BC with the appearance of the comically distorted representation of the misanthropic man on the comic stage in Menander's *Dyscolus*.<sup>90</sup> It then had a productive history of reception in antiquity. The fact that we still have so much ancient evidence of the stock character of the misanthrope could be owed to the fact that its transmission seems to have been fostered by rhetorical exercises.<sup>91</sup> We have traces of Menander's *Dyscolus* in the fictional correspondence between Cnemon and Callipide in Aelian's *Rustic Letters* (Ael. *Ep. Rust.* 13-16), in Lucian's *Timon* (Luc. *Dial.* 5) and in Libanius' rhetorical exercises of Cnemon and Timon (Liban. *Declam.* 26 and 27). The

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<sup>90</sup> See Photiadès (1959: 305 and 313). Interestingly, the fourth century seems also to be the period of transition in which the misanthrope's longing for a solitary life is in Menander's model of Cnemon combined with typical traits of cynicism, a development which is later taken up by Aelian and Libanius.

<sup>91</sup> That Timon was a popular character in forged letters produced in the classrooms of the Second Sophistic as well as in much later centuries can be seen from the fact that the sixth Platonic letter claims that Plato approved of Timon's misanthropy. Olympiodorus, writing in the fourth century AD, in a further variation on narrative traditions even claims that Timon did not enjoy his solitude in the desert quite as much as the company of Plato. Βίος Πλάτωνος· καὶ μόνῳ τῷ Πλάτῳ ἐνθαῦτα (ἐν ἐρημίᾳ) Τίμων ὁ μισάνθρωπος συνῆν, ὅς δυσκόλως ἔχων εἰς ἅπαντας πάνυ εὐμενῶς ἤνεγκε τὴν Πλάτωνος συνουσίαν. ('Plato's *Life*: and only with Plato did Timon the misanthropist convene in his isolation; Timon who was so grumpy against everyone was completely well-disposed in Plato's company', Olympiod. 4.15 West).

depiction of Euripides as a friendly old man and a Cynico-Stoic philosopher, therefore, must have struck the ancient reader as extraordinary in two respects – with respect to other biographical representations of Euripides and with respect to the usual exploitation of the type of the misanthrope in other texts which were influenced by the rhetorical tradition.<sup>92</sup>

Euripides complains about being forced to produce poetry ‘the usual way’ and fears the duties that may arise in return for too many gifts and too much food – a remark which refers us back to Euripides’ reluctance to accept any material expressions of Archelaus’ generosity in the first letter. Letter 5 stands in a certain tension with the first letter, however, as Euripides now seems to have accepted some of the gifts offered by Archelaus and claims to be writing ‘on his usual themes’ as a ‘repayment’ to the king.

Euripides then refers to a previous correspondence with Cephisophon which seems to have entailed gossip from Athens. Euripides ensures that any accusations brought forward against him because of his emigration to Macedonia should be refuted. In the process, he ominously refers to information which remains secret to the reader as he asks Cephisophon to tell worthy inquirers ‘what he knows’ (ἄπερ οἴσθα, line 30). This somewhat cryptic remark could perhaps allude to the biographical dynamics to constantly create new versions and embellish existing stories. The reader is made to feel curiosity about unknown details, and then warned about the dangers of making assumptions and being ignorant.

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<sup>92</sup> Whereas Lucian’s *Timon* is a caricature of Cynicism taken to the extreme, the depiction of Euripides as a Cynic philosopher reads like a response to such mocking representations of the Cynic philosopher.

The remaining sentences of the fifth letter are apologetic. Taking what he said at the beginning of the letter, the tragedian explains once more that material goods do not interest him: 'But then, how could anyone reasonably believe that I would find riches attractive at my time of life', Euripides declares that he did not accumulate any riches when they were 'readily available' to him. And he gives a second reason for not accepting any material gifts: it would have been absurd to accumulate a lot of money only 'to die in a foreign land and leave even more wealth to Archelaus.'<sup>93</sup> This summary of reasons and a reaffirmation that money was not Euripides' motivation to leave Athens finishes the second section of the letter.

In the last part of the letter, Euripides mentions his friend Cleito, discusses death in exile and advises his slave on how to answer people who are eager to slander. The fictional playwright emphasises that he could not possibly be called inconsistent or feeble, as he has always had a friendly attitude towards everyone and claims the only exception to this general truth was his more difficult relationship with his colleague Sophocles. The last lines of the text comment on Euripides' relation with Sophocles before Euripides bids Cephisophon farewell. He reminds Cephisophon of the fact that rumours are spread by those who profit from them but who will in the end pay the price, and asks him to keep up the correspondence, not without warning Cephisophon to keep in mind that not all people are worth attention and consideration.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> English translation according to Costa (2001: 85-6).

<sup>94</sup> This passage especially recalls Epicurus' use of letters as a means to correct the distorted presentation of himself and his teachings by ill-meaning opponents.

The letter provides the attentive reader with important statements from the very beginning: first, the explicit mention of his physical health sets Euripides in contrast to Sophocles as he is depicted in the second letter, where Sophocles is imagined by Euripides to have suffered a cold and awful distress from the shipwreck (letter 2, lines 12-15).<sup>95</sup> The immediate and direct route to Pella also sets the imagery used in this letter in contrast to that of other novels in letters of the time: Hippocrates in his exchange of letters with Democritus stresses the delay and complication of his departure, and Plato, too, seems to have had a strenuous journey to Sicily.<sup>96</sup>

The legendary generosity of the Macedonian king towards Euripides is described in more detail by Aristotle and Plutarch. In 531e Plutarch narrates an anecdote from the court of Pella.<sup>97</sup> According to the story given there, king Archelaus was asked for a golden cup by a greedy guest and handed the cup to Euripides instead of the other man, stressing the great value of modesty as represented by Euripides. The king is said to have addressed the greedy guest with the following words: ‘you who are experienced in asking and not getting it, but he gets it even though he did not ask.’ (σὺ μὲν αἰτεῖν ἐπιτήδειος εἶ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνειν, οὗτος δὲ λαμβάνειν καὶ μὴ αἰτῶν). The passage seems to combine the information about Archelaus’ generosity and Euripides’ explicit refusal to accept any money from the king as described in the first letter of our collection.

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<sup>95</sup> Thus, the author of the letter provides more than a mere hint to Sophocles’ old age, as Gößwein comments on line 3 of the letter (Gößwein 1975: 114).

<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that Wieland in his *History of the Abderite People* has Euripides go on a detour to Abdera on his way to Pella. Thus, the fictional character of Euripides not only stands in the tradition of other famous letter writers of Greek antiquity, he also shares with them the satirical heritage of later receptions.

<sup>97</sup> The same anecdote is given in the pseudo-Plutarchan passage *Mor.* 177a.

I contend that the first as well as the second, third and fourth letter and their contribution to the self-fashioning of the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters are closely linked with the concluding fifth letter. The connective structure of the letters is stressed alongside the good relationships of Euripides with Archelaus, Sophocles and Cephisophon. The fifth letter also reveals the apologetic impetus the previous letters were hiding and shows that the tragic poet cultivated close friendships with some of his fellow countrymen. In brief, the last letter refers the reader back to the complete series of the first to the fourth letter and not only to the second letter and the way Euripides was depicted there.<sup>98</sup> In addition to that, the fifth letter confidently displays the originality of its approach to the biographical tradition.

The originality and, indeed, wittiness, of the letter and the collection as a whole is clearly stressed from the first line of the fifth letter, as Euripides addresses his slave Cephisophon, who in the biographical tradition figured as some sort of rival and/or collaborator in both professional and private matters, as ‘my dear Cephisophon’ (ὦ βέλτιστε Κηφισοφῶν). As we have seen at the very end of the last of our letters, Cephisophon features in them as Euripides’ closest confidant. The pseudo-Euripidean letters thus not only take up the allegations of earlier biographical accounts in which Cephisophon was described as ‘his master’s voice’ and collaborator, it even surpasses them, as Cephisophon is made responsible for the public image of Euripides by the playwright. The slave who by

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<sup>98</sup> Holzberg (1994: 16) sees a more linear movement from the second to the last letter of the collection and claims that the second letter has, *inter alia*, the narrative function of preparing the reader for the last letter.

Gößwein is described as the ‘notorious factotum of the household’<sup>99</sup> and who was said to have had an affair with Euripides’ wife, is presented as Euripides’ best friend.<sup>100</sup> This is a fine narrative *coup*, as the tragedian’s ‘second voice’ already familiar from other biographical sources thus becomes honoured with the role of addressee and privileged audience of Euripides’ own testimony about his life.

A second field in which the author of our letters masters his genuine approach to the biographical tradition is his depiction of the relationship between Euripides and Sophocles. As we saw above, the fifth letter takes up the contrast between Sophocles and Euripides as already established in the second letter by stressing once more – as in the first letter – Euripides’ good health in line 2 of the fifth letter and contrasting him with the image of Sophocles in the second letter. The narrative becomes more explicit in contrasting the two tragedians and challenging the biographical tradition: as Euripides writes to Cephisophon about Sophocles, he introduces him as exceptional among his friends and colleagues: ‘Towards him alone it is known that I have perhaps not always been consistent in my feelings.’<sup>101</sup> And Euripides continues to explain ‘I have never disliked him, I have always admired him, but I have not always felt the same degree of affection for him.’<sup>102</sup> And he gives the reasons for the varying degrees of affection over the years: ‘Occasionally, I have regarded him with suspicion, thinking him to be too

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<sup>99</sup> Gößwein (1975: 113) claims that biographical allegations about the infidelity of Euripides’ wife and her relationship with Cephisophon are an invention by Satyrus.

<sup>100</sup> Gößwein (1975: 114) interprets this *novum* in the tradition as a matter of tact and historical sensitivity: ‘Daß unser Autor den Tenor dieser Anekdoten, die ihm zweifellos bekannt waren [...] nicht übernimmt, sondern Euripides und Kephisophon gute Freunde sein läßt, ehrt ihn; spricht es doch sowohl für seinen Takt wie auch – viele Jahrhunderte vor der modernen Forschung – für sein historisches Gespür.’

<sup>101</sup> Translation Costa (2001: 88).

<sup>102</sup> Translation Costa (2001: 88).

ambitious; but once he was prepared to give up our quarrel I welcomed him whole-heartedly as a friend. From that time we have felt, and shall continue to feel, affection for each other.’<sup>103</sup>

This very personal account of Euripides’ feelings for his colleague Sophocles is unique in the biographical tradition of both Euripides and Sophocles. All we know from other sources is the alleged grief Sophocles famously displayed in public in Athens at a *Proagōn* after Euripides’ death. Costa remarks in his commentary to the fifth letter that ‘our author takes the reasonable view that, at least in their later years, Euripides and Sophocles were on friendly terms.’<sup>104</sup> However, the second pseudo-Euripidean letter is the only other text besides the fifth letter of the collection which attest to such a friendship between the two playwrights. The ‘well-attested story’ of Sophocles’ public grief for Euripides allegedly supporting Costa’s conclusion is in fact not attested before the *Genos Euripidou*.<sup>105</sup>

I would like to suggest a new reading of Euripides’ description of Sophocles’ ambitiousness: the fact that Euripides in our letter refers to Sophocles as ‘rather ambitious’ (φιλοτιμότερον, line 79) does not, I think, only refer to Sophocles’ ‘obvious willingness to take on public duties’.<sup>106</sup> As the comparative form reflects a certain degree of disparagement, Euripides is once more depicted as modelled on the Epicurean and Cynic ideal. It seems to me that this

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<sup>103</sup> Translation Costa (2001: 88-9).

<sup>104</sup> Costa (2001: 173).

<sup>105</sup> See T 1.20 Kovacs: λέγουσι δὲ καὶ Σοφοκλέα ἀκούσαντα ὅτι ἐτελεύτησεν αὐτὸν μὲν ἱματίῳ φαιῷ προελθεῖν, τὸν δὲ χορὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς ἀστεφανώτους εἰσαγαγεῖν ἐν τῷ προαγῶνι καὶ δακρῦσαι τὸν δῆμον. (‘They also say that Sophocles, on hearing of his death, went forth dressed in a black cloak and that he brought his chorus and his actors into the *proagon* without garlands and that the people wept.’, translation Kovacs 1994: 5).

<sup>106</sup> Costa (2001: 174), echoing Gößwein (1975: 128-9).

interpretation of the use of φιλοτιμότερος connects better with the rest of the narrative than Costa's psychologically motivated assumption that Euripides is 'supposed to be admitting to a touch of jealousy or suspicion at these activities.'<sup>107</sup> In fact, the dislike for φιλοτιμία is not confined to Euripides or the biographical assumptions surrounding Euripides and Sophocles. Rather, it seems to have been an almost topical tendency in the Greek literature of the early Roman Empire, and especially in the literature about (and by) writers in exile.<sup>108</sup> ADD PHOEN.

Sophocles is in ancient biographical accounts usually described as representing the well-balanced style and well-organised hierarchy of moral values, which stands in stark contrast to the conventional depiction of Euripides in the biographical tradition.<sup>109</sup> In the pseudo-Euripidean letters, however, Sophocles seems out of balance, while Euripides appears as the wise and balanced character. Euripides is described and depicted as turning away from the passions of public life in favour of private *ataraxia* among his friends. He is shown as a man displaying the Epicurean virtues of tranquillity, gentleness and courtesy (γαλήνη, ἐπιείκεια and δεξιότης) – features normally ascribed to Sophocles.

Especially δεξιότης seems to have been Sophocles' characteristic attribute in the biographical tradition from Aristophanes onwards. For Sophocles' δεξιότης see already Phrynichus fr. 32 K.-A. (= fr. 31 K.): μάκαρ Σοφοκλέης, ὃς

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<sup>107</sup> Costa (2001: 174).

<sup>108</sup> See, for instance, the quotation of Euripides' Iocasta on the pernicious nature of φιλοτιμία (Eur. *Phoen.* 531-5) in Favorinus' *On Exile*, which dates to the mid-second century AD. Iocasta's comment on φιλοτιμία is also quoted with approval by Dio Chrysostom (*Dio Chr.* 17.8). Similarly, Plutarch's account of Themistocles in his *Life of Themistocles* is critical of the politician's φιλοτιμία as the main motivation for his actions. See Frazier (1988) and Zadorojnyi (2006: 262) for a full discussion of the phenomenon.

<sup>109</sup> For the striking contrast between the presentation of Sophocles and Euripides in the biographical tradition, see Stevens (1956: 89), Storey (1998: 109-10) and Roselli (2005: 34-36).

πολὺν χρόνον βιοῦς | ἀπέθανεν εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ καὶ δεξιός· | πολλὰς  
ποιήσας καὶ καλὰς τραγωιδίας | καλῶς ἔτελεύτησ', οὐδὲν ὑπομείνας  
κακόν. ('blessed Sophocles, who died after a long life as a happy and civilised  
man: having beautifully crafted many tragedies he died a good death without any  
suffering'). However, it should be noted that the use of δεξιότης is not always  
univocal, especially not in passages taken from comedies, where the term may  
have been applied ironically.<sup>110</sup> The salient point in the pseudo-Euripidean letters  
seems to be that in their narrative Euripides now outwits and out-moralizes  
Sophocles, the poet who was traditionally regarded as a sage (σοφός), although the  
δεξιότης of Euripides is already attested in *Frogs*, where Dionysus finds Euripides  
a suitable candidate in his search for a δεξιός poet<sup>111</sup>.

Jouan argues that the pseudo-Euripidean letters were composed  
antithetically to the biographical tradition. Especially the depiction of Sophocles  
and Euripides seems to run against the 'rivalry' between the two poets which  
occurs in other sources.<sup>112</sup> Jouan tried to show that Sophocles is in the pseudo-  
Euripidean letters presented as somebody who had to live with the ill-will of  
certain individuals and with malicious attacks, just like Euripides. Jouan's  
observations are important and have not yet received enough attention. However, I  
think Jouan fails to appreciate the full philosophical scope of the letters. As I tried

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<sup>110</sup> A passage from Strattis' Ἀνθρωπορέστης, preserved in the *scholia* on Euripides' *Orestes* 279 (l p. 126, 23 Schw.) is a good example for such a blurring of meanings and, perhaps, an ironic use of the term, as Euripidean drama is called δεξιότατον in it (Strattis fr. 1, 2 K.-A.).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. also *Clouds* 548 for the connection of δεξιότης with cleverness.

<sup>112</sup> Jouan (1993: 193): 'Les biographies présentent en effet Euripide et Sophocle comme deux figures antithétiques, l'un incarnant l'homme asocial, l'autre le bon citoyen. Euripide était détesté de tous, Sophocle était universellement aimé: si Euripide était un mauvais citoyen, désireux d'abandonner Athènes, Sophocle avait l'esprit tellement civique qu'aucun roi ne pût lui faire abandonner sa patrie.'

to show in my analysis of the letters, Euripides is contrasted with Sophocles in a new way exactly because he can now claim the virtues formerly known to be Sophoclean. This surprisingly new twist in the biographical depiction of both poets is only possible because Euripides is modelled on a mixture of Stoico-Epicurean philosopher and Cynic wise man.

Apart from a new representation of Euripides' relationship with Sophocles and Cephisophon, a third field of innovation is entered by our author in his description of Agathon. In the biographical tradition predating the letters, Agathon is known as somebody who was ridiculed on the stage of Old comedy alongside Euripides and was perhaps therefore also alleged to have left Athens for the court of King Archelaus. In the last letter of our collection, however, Agathon appears to be among the people back home in Athens who slander Euripides unduly. It is difficult to interpret this alteration of the biographical tradition.<sup>113</sup>

What we can say with some certainty is that the depiction of Agathon in the pseudo-Euripidean letters runs contrary to all previous accounts of Agathon and Euripides.<sup>114</sup> However, we do not know the reasons the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters might have had to depict Agathon the way he did. Perhaps the fact that Agathon is now turned into one of Euripides' enemies is one of the ways in which the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters wished to distance himself

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<sup>113</sup> Bentley considered it unthinkable that Agathon should appear among Euripides' critics and used this passage, among other 'inconsistencies', as an argument to prove that the letters had been written by a forger with little talent (Bentley 1697: 559-63). Gößwein (1975: 117) even suggests (with J. Barnes, *Euripidis opera*, Cambridge 1694, p.xxix) that the Agathon mentioned in our letter must have been 'a different Agathon'.

<sup>114</sup> In later accounts, the friendship of the two tragedians is even depicted as a love-affair between Agathon and Euripides (see Plut. *Mor.* 177a-b and 770 c; Aelian *VH* 2.21 and 13.4).

from the previous tradition. Maybe he wished to surprise or even to please his audience by doing so.

Displaying a solid rhetorical education, the author of the letters even goes to the trouble of having Euripides refute every possible motivation for leaving Athens and presents his readers with seven counter-arguments against common assumptions about Euripides' journey to Macedonia, structured as descending from three main arguments: (a) old age, (b) earlier possibilities to get in touch with Archelaus, and (c) even if he had stayed in Athens he could have reached these alleged goals had he wanted to (*ep.5*, lines 33-77).

The argument runs as follows: (a) at Euripides' advanced age, the accumulation of wealth does not make much sense; (b) he could have left for Macedonia much earlier in his life had he wished to do so; (c) even if he accepted any gifts from the king, he would never keep them. Under (a) we can subsume the argument that Euripides was not inclined to die on foreign ground (lines 45-6) and to leave even more wealth to Archelaus (lines 46-7); under (b) that he would have needed riches only for his mother's sake and only in her lifetime (lines 37-43) and that he had all the necessary connections to approach the king and ask him for favours in terms of either power or money while he was still in Athens – but that this sort of influence was not at all what he was after (lines 61-77); and under (c) Euripides' joke about not intending to become a governor in the deepest province (lines 33-7), his claim that he would not want to damage his reputation (lines 43-5) and that he would be sharing whatever he received from Archelaus with his friends, as the passage suggests that he sends presents from the royal palace with the letter (lines 48-56).

The ending of the letter is also highly original. After the description of his relationship with Sophocles, Euripides adds a few interesting sentences which seem to be addressed to the reader as well as Cephisophon. 'I misled those people who have often stirred up suspicions between us so that they can win some advantage out of our enmity by cultivating one or the other of us. Even now, Cephisophon, I know that these are the people who are spreading the rumours about me.'<sup>115</sup> Euripides' message to his slave that he has 'misled' (literally 'we have misled', διαβεβλήμεθα, 71)<sup>116</sup> people who spread false allegations about him can, I think, be read as a message from the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters to his readers. The writer seems aware of the fact that the gossip about Euripides will continue ('Even now, Cephisophon'). Thus, it seems that the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters warns certain biographers to keep their fingers from gossip and ill-meaning rumours and suggests that the spread of mockery and wrong allegations will backfire on its initiators ('they will not only get nowhere but come to grief themselves').<sup>117</sup> This is remarkable, as the author of the letter seems to transfer a principle conventionally used in the biographical tradition for

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<sup>115</sup> Translation Costa (2001: 89).

<sup>116</sup> Translation Costa (2001: 89), adapted. Costa translates 'I have outwitted'. On the difficulty to translate διαβάλλειν into English, see Pelling (2007a: 183-5), on the semantic possibilities of the word, see Chadwick (1996: 87-94).

<sup>117</sup> The problem of public denunciation is not exclusive to the reality or literature of the Second Sophistic. See, for instance, the first lines of Lucian's treatise *Slander*. *On not being quick to put faith in it* (Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ραδίως πιστεύειν διαβολῆς): 'A really terrible thing is ignorance, a cause of many woes to humanity; for it envelops things in a fog, so to speak, obscures the truth and overshadows each man's life.' It almost seems as if the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters envisaged a portrayal of Euripides which would have the poet remove the 'fog' which was produced by the slander of the biographical tradition and reveal the truth about his integrity.

the depiction of poets in order to attack the biographers and initiators of such stories.<sup>118</sup>

If my conclusions are correct, the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters would have ‘outwitted’ most other biographers of Euripides. Interestingly, the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters hands the authority for his writing not only to Euripides but also to Euripides’ alleged collaborator Cephisophon. It thus makes sense that he chose to use the first person plural for ‘outwitted’. Euripides finally addresses his slave and co-author with the words: ‘Still, you do well in writing to us about these things, as you think they matter to us. But though you do well in so writing, I must say that you are doing us harm in offering a reply to people who don’t deserve it.’<sup>119</sup> Again, Euripides and Cephisophon share a knowledge which we as readers of their fictional correspondence do not share with them. We do not know what exactly the nature of ‘these things’ (περὶ τούτων, line 92) is. But there is more to this gap of silence: as the author of the letters himself reminds us, ‘people who don’t deserve it’ will not get a ‘reply’. We learn that ‘these things’ do not matter to Euripides and that they, therefore, should not interest us as readers either.<sup>120</sup>

In my understanding of the collection of letters as a whole, and the last letter as a key to its narrative especially, the possibilities of biography are explored

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<sup>118</sup> For the principle ‘*talis oratio – qualis vita*’, which enjoyed enormous popularity among ancient biographers, see Müller (2003).

<sup>119</sup> *Ep.* 5, lines 91-5.

<sup>120</sup> The Greek has the first person plural: ‘they do not interest *us* [my emphasis]’. Unfortunately neither Göbwein (1975) nor Kovacs (1994) or Costa (2001) pay respect to this subtlety in their translations, as they simply translate every first person plural as a first person singular, assuming perhaps that this would add to the coherence of Euripides’ voice in the narrative because Euripides uses the first person plural to refer to himself only in the first as well as the fifth letter (see καὶ ἀφικόμεθα εἰς Μακεδονίαν, *Ep.* 1 and εὖ ποιεῖς περὶ τούτων ἡμῖν γράφων, *Ep.* 5).

to their ultimate limits and the limitations of any biographical text by the subject of the biographical narrative, Euripides himself. An alternative to the common biographical tradition about Euripides, the pseudo-Euripidean letters have come full circle from their surprising start in the first letter to their unconventional ending. The open question with which Euripides and the author of the letters leave us is whether or not we as readers of a much later generation deserve a reply to our questions about the life of the poet.<sup>121</sup>

The most remarkable difference of the pseudo-Euripidean letters to previous accounts of the biographical tradition, finally, is perhaps their silence over any allegations concerning Euripides' alleged femininity, his misogyny, his feminism, or his private life more generally. In Satyrus, as in Hellenistic poetry, these issues were at the centre of the biographers' attention and were played out in a highly innovative reaction to the anecdotes about Euripides as they had transpired through the jokes of Old Comedy. In Roman times, it seems, these themes are no longer of interest.

### **3. Imaginary spaces and the organisation of the letters**

The pseudo-Euripidean letters take up the generic conventions of capturing a moment of departure and change. The letters ascribed to Aeschines and Themistocles, for example, start with their writers' journey into exile, the letters ascribed to Chion of Heracleia commence with Chion's departure to Athens and the beginning of the collection of Platonic letters is marked by Plato's turning

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<sup>121</sup> I think it is remarkable and has unjustly gone unnoticed until now that ἀξίως, the very last word of the letter, and therefore: all five letters.

away from Dionysius II and Syracuse. Similarly, the letters alleged to be written by Euripides set in as Euripides is turning away from Athens, ready to leave his native city for Macedonia and the court of King Archelaus.

My contention is that the biographical issues discussed in the letters are based on a macro-structure which in the biographical tradition on Euripides reflects a geographical movement from Athens to Macedonia and Chios and back to Macedonia and Athens again. This movement seems due to a structural feature which is perhaps unique to the pseudo-Euripidean letters, the structural frame of imaginary spaces. As my interpretation of the letters has revealed, I regard the pseudo-Euripidean letters as a coherent piece of narrative rather than a collection of different letters by several authors. The journey undertaken in the letters conveys important information to their readers. In fact, the imaginary journey from Athens to Macedonia and Chios has a key function in the narrative of the novel and takes the reader on a highly allusive *tour d'horizon*.

The first letter of our collection is set in Athens at a time when Euripides still seems to have had only little contact with the King of Macedonia. The second letter portrays Euripides as a compassionate friend of his older colleague Sophocles and refers to the island of Chios as a place which is closely connected with the survival of Sophoclean poetry. Gößwein understands the mention of Sophocles' plays literally. Bentley famously remarked that the letter must be forged because Sophocles would hardly have taken his plays on a journey as a general while Gößwein tried to argue for the likelihood of such an event.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> '[...] wir wissen durch Ion von Chios, daß Sophokles sein Amt nicht sehr ernst nahm und sogar von Perikles mild getadelt wurde. [...] Es wäre also theoretisch schon denkbar, daß Sophokles

The third and fourth letter then take the reader to Macedonia and show a fully grown friendship between Euripides and the King Archelaus. The fifth letter finally depicts the poet at the court in Pella, fed up with Athens and as an advisor to his slave. The construction of the plot in the five letters has puzzled modern scholars. Gößwein argues that the second letter does not fit into the story-line of the rest of the narrative and speculated whether it was inserted into the collection at a later point.<sup>123</sup> Although the second letter seems different from the letters surrounding it, the second and the fifth letter refer to each other just as letters 1, 3 and 4 do.<sup>124</sup> And, more importantly, the narrative as a whole makes perfect sense if we read it as a coherent story which runs from letter 1 to letter 5.

The letters purported to be written by Euripides from the court of Pella put a special focus on a geographical region of extraordinary importance for the transmission of Euripidean drama and probably even for the production of Euripides' last plays. As I have already suggested, Macedonia played a major part in the process of the production, performance, reception and preservation of Euripides' oeuvre. Leaving aside the complicated process of what Revermann calls the '*disiecta membra poetae* phenomenon',<sup>125</sup> there seems to have been a

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selbst während der gesamten samischen Expedition an Tragödien gearbeitet hätte.' (Gößwein 1975: 93-4).

<sup>123</sup> Gößwein (1975: 20-1 and 29).

<sup>124</sup> As already Jouan suggests (Jouan 1983: 190). Interestingly, Bentley, too, seems to assume a certain degree of narrative coherence of the collection as we have it, as he (even as he claims that 'without doubt there were formerly more of them' (Bentley 1697: 114-15) gives a description and analysis of *Ep.* 1 (Bentley 1697: 123-126), *Ep.* 2 (Bentley 1697: 126-7) and *Ep.* 5 (Bentley 1697: 127-33), which are the cornerstones for the plot of the narrative in the collection.

<sup>125</sup> Revermann (2000: 434).

connection between Euripides' popularity and Macedonia from the early fourth century BC onwards to the time of the Second Sophistic.<sup>126</sup>

That Euripides should be a key representative of Athenian culture not only for Archelaus but also for later Macedonian leaders such as Philip and Alexander surely helped the survival of his plays.<sup>127</sup> The familiarity of Alexander with Euripidean drama was legendary in antiquity and provided the material for several historiographical and biographical anecdotes.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps the most famous and impressive is a scene from the last symposium, which I have already discussed. It is said to have been held before the death of Alexander. Athenaeus reports how Alexander got up amidst the celebrations to recite his favourite tragedian:

αὐτὸς ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἐπεισόδιόν τι  
μνημονεύσας ἐκ τῆς Εὐριπίδου Ἀνδρομέδας  
ἠγωνίσαστο καὶ τὸν ἄκρατον προθύμως  
προπίνων καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἠνάγκαζεν.<sup>129</sup>

Alexander himself recited in the competition a passage from Euripides' *Andromeda*, eagerly drank the unmixed wine and compelled the others to do the same.

(Athenaeus *Deipnosophistai* 537 d)

For an understanding of the possible propagandist dimension of the pseudo-Euripidean letters, the reports of performances of *Archelaus* provide us with some

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<sup>126</sup> On the importance of Macedonia for the production and reception of New Comedy as well as, perhaps, Middle Comedy, see Major (1997).

<sup>127</sup> For a discussion of the imagination of Alexander the Great in the Second Sophistic as both a historical link to the Greek cultural past and an 'ahistorical analogy to the Roman imperialist', see Asirvatham (2000: 1).

<sup>128</sup> For a discussion of the material see Bosworth (1996: 142-6) and Revermann (2000: 455-6).

<sup>129</sup> *Athen.* 537d. Bosworth (1996:144) shows how the recitation could have had politically motivated and lists several parallels between the dramatic situation in the *Andromeda* and the historical circumstances in the summer of 323 BC. However, to which extent this anecdote illustrates the reception of Euripidean poetry at the Macedonian court in the fourth century remains highly speculative. As Judith Mossman reminds us (Mossman 1988: 89), many of the literary quotations in these sources are mainly inserted to produce a specific literary effect.

interesting background information. The precise context and aim of these performances is the subject of speculation. The play itself was, as far as we can reconstruct its plot and design, a tribute to the king of Macedonia through the establishment of a genealogical myth. The play was possibly fed into the biographical tradition on Euripides through Macedonian sources, which could be one of the reasons why the story of Euripides in Macedonia is never mentioned in earlier material that was produced for the Athenian stage.

Unfortunately, the play *Archelaus* is almost lost to us, but even in its fragmentary state it is of high value for our understanding of the relevance of Macedonian cultural politics for the performance, preservation and transmission of Euripidean theatre, and possibly for the emphasis on Macedonia in the pseudo-Euripidean letters and other biographical material. Almost all fragments of the play show a great preoccupation with wealth, or rather: the difference between being wealthy and being wise, which is an old commonplace of Greek thought. The connection between wealth and unmanliness, or cowardice, is equally ubiquitous in Greek literature from the depiction of Paris in the *Iliad* to passages in Euripides (for instance at *Phoenissae* 597) and Aristophanes (for instance at *Wealth* 202-3).

However, the scenario which the fragments of *Archelaus* suggest seems especially close to the picture of the ‘wise Cynic man’ Euripides at the court of King Archelaus. Key words of Stoic and Cynic thought like εὐδοξία (good reputation), εὐανδρία (manliness), and ἐλευθερία (freedom) run through the *Archelaus* and seem to build the only sensible alternative to tyranny and riches. Good reputation, manliness and freedom, especially freedom of speech are, as we

have seen, also core issues of the pseudo-Euripidean letters. Unfortunately, an essay by the Cynic philosopher Antisthenes with the title *Archelaus or, On Kingship* is lost to us as is the Euripidean play *Archelaus*.<sup>130</sup> It is perfectly possible, but can of course not be verified in any way, that the treatise by the Cynic philosopher as well as the lost play could have influenced the author of our letters.<sup>131</sup>

#### 4. The Function of the Texts

In the shaping of ancient biographies of famous people, forged letters play an important role. The assumption held by most scholars today is that most of the letters ascribed to the 'big names' of Greek history and literature were produced in order to compensate for the lack of biographical material about the individuals in question. The letters ascribed to Plato seem to be the last resort for defenders of the authenticity of such letters. The struggles over their status are fought much more fiercely than that over the status of any other Greek letters. This seems to be mostly because of the philosophical and political claims connected with them but nevertheless shows the longing for authentic, or even just mock-authentic

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<sup>130</sup> For the title Ἀρχέλαος ἢ περὶ βασιλείας see *Diog. Laert.* 6, 18. We only have one instance, at which its anti-Gorgian tendency is reported (*Athen.* 5, 220d: ὁ δ' Ἀρχέλαος Γοργίου τοῦ ῥήτορος καταδρομὴν περιέχει). For reconstructions of the play *Archelaus*, see Schmid-Stählin (1940: 626-8); Harder (1985); Jouan/Van Looy (1998: 276-307); Collard/Cropp/Gibert (2004: 330-62). For a discussion of its relevance as valid evidence for Euripides' stay in Macedonia see pp.173-5 above.

<sup>131</sup> See already Gößwein (1975: 27) who argues that the possibility of inspiration taken from the treatise *Archelaus or, On kingship* cannot be denied. Gößwein even suggests that the collection of pseudo-Euripidean letters could contain some slightly rephrased fragments of the treatise (see Gößwein 1975: 28) – a hypothesis that can hardly be proved one way or the other, as he concedes himself.

biographical information about ancient authors.<sup>132</sup> In this chapter, I have challenged the assumption which often results from such a perspective, namely that the ancient readers ignored the question of authenticity because of their longing for biographical information about Euripides.<sup>133</sup>

The creation of an illusion of authenticity was a typical feature of forged letters and must have been accepted as a generic trope by ancient readers. Especially during the period of the Second Sophistic, the letters to and from famous men from the past were a popular genre, because they played with common literary knowledge and presented information about the classical past in a very enjoyable and lively manner.<sup>134</sup> As a result, ancient readers who were familiar with the lives of ancient poets, politicians and philosophers, enjoyed not so much *what* was narrated but *how* the story was told. This allowed for the suspense of finding out what new information about their subjects the letters might contain.<sup>135</sup>

The pseudo-Euripidean letters are more than a mere 'charming curiosity',<sup>136</sup> and enable us to witness an intriguing take on the ancient biographical representations of Euripides. They are an interesting example of how biographical representations meet the epistolary genre of popular philosophy. As the tragedian

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<sup>132</sup> The latest discussion of this problem can be found in Isnardi Parente (2002). For the anecdotes surrounding Plato's life, see Swift Riginos (1976), Isnardi Parente (1985) and Morgan (1998: 130).

<sup>133</sup> See Gößwein (1975: 3).

<sup>134</sup> See Swain (1996: 1-131) for an account of the wide knowledge of the classics handed down to the audiences of that period. Swain offers a good outline of how Hellenistic and Imperial schooling must have influenced the modes of perception of literary texts from the classical past as well as the preferences of selected models of interpretation. On the classicising educational programme for Greeks and non-Greeks in the second century AD, see also Zadorojnyi (2002).

<sup>135</sup> See Holzberg (1994: 73) for a discussion of the ancient audience's expectations regarding forged literary letters.

<sup>136</sup> Gößwein (1975: 30).

becomes the author of letters addressed to people from his own time, he appears as the director of a commentary on the construction of his own life.

In this focal context, the tension between authenticity and narrative construction inherent in any biography becomes perhaps more evident than in any other genre. As the voice of the pseudo-Euripidean letters, 'Euripides' puts several stereotypes about himself, such as his relationship with King Archelaus, Sophocles and Cephisophon, or his motives for going to Macedonia, quite literally into perspective. At the same time, the setting of the letters constantly reminds us of the fact that the past is being created before our eyes and that the Euripides speaking to us here is approximately 600 years younger than the Euripides he is writing about and lending his voice to.

In the pseudo-Euripidean letters, the relationship between Euripides and the Macedonian King Archelaus is for the first time animated in a set of narrative texts that self-consciously exploit the *topos* of 'friendship between tyrant and wise man', even though the tyrant, ironically, does not appear to be tyrannical at all but rather acts as a humane and benevolent sovereign. The role of the tyrant, strongly emphasised in other sources that describe Archelaus and Macedonia, is thus substituted by the role of the 'philanthropic ruler.'<sup>137</sup>

The second letter of the collection has a special status, just like the last one: both of them are not addressed to Archelaus and both of them deal with the poet's life in Athens and his profession as a playwright rather than with his life at the court of Pella. However, it could be shown that letter 2 and letter 5 refer to each other and belong to the collection as a whole. The narrative of the letters is

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<sup>137</sup> See *Ep.* 1, 9-11 and 15 ff., and *Ep.* 4, 9-13; 36-43 and 61 ff.

carefully arranged and highly stylised: the first and last letter give the frame for the 'spatial' design of the narrative, whereas at the same time they reflect how the collection is divided into letters concerning political-philosophical issues (letters 1, 3 and 4) and letters concerning personal and poetic issues (letters 2 and 5). Thus, the connection between the first, the second, and the last letter guarantees not only a closed composition of the whole collection but also provides the links to its inner structure and coherence.

The fact that the second letter interrupts the narrative that started with letter 1 led interpreters to the assumption that it was 'forged' (Bentley) or added into the corpus at a later stage (Gößwein).<sup>138</sup> Yet, the position of the letter is ideal, if we consider its function within the narrative of the collection. The second letter first and foremost serves to slow down the series of events that was triggered off by the first letter.

We have seen that the political-philosophical letters are modelled on popular Cynicism. The philosophical *topos* of shipwreck or near-shipwreck, the metaphor of the agitated sea for inner turmoil and loss of the soul's natural γαλήνη, is referred to in the second letter. The letter can thus be read as an example of narrating Cynic and Epicurean ideals in the form of a story. Not the material loss of Sophocles' plays is of interest but the survival of their author. Quite practically, the letter seems to give advice to someone who has suffered

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<sup>138</sup> Gößwein (1975: 16) argues for the 'in-authenticity' of the letter by suggesting that its grammar and vocabulary stem from the second and third century BC; on p.18 he claims that two 'peculiarities' make *Ep.2* different from the rest of the collection: (a) its completely different contents ('inhaltliche Isolierung') and (b) its awkward position ('die merkwürdige Position des Briefes [...] an der die Handschriften einmütig festhalten'). Since I believe that the manuscripts stuck to the order of the letters with good reason, I hope that my analysis of the letters will increase the willingness of scholars to read *Ep.2*. as an integral part of the collection rather than as a strange intruder.

turmoil and provides an example of a certain type of letter ('advice for a friend in distress'), just as the letters to Archelaus are examples of advice to a ruler and the letter to Cephisophon shows how to express one's disapproval in a letter. In contrast to the tradition of Sophocles as the solemn and considerate Athenian, the narrative voice of the pseudo-Euripidean letters depicts Sophocles not only as a victim to calamity but also as a poet leaving Athens for Chios (why else, we wonder, would he have all his plays with him on the ship?).

The third and fourth letters are letters of thanks and advice from Euripides to King Archelaus, while the fifth letter unfolds as a typical letter of personal defence. Striking and dense as the first, the second and the fourth letter, it exploits the themes and connotations given in the previous correspondence to the fullest in that it boldly admits forgery, stresses the confidential and private atmosphere both at the court of Archelaus and between Euripides and Sophocles, and reaffirms (perhaps ironically) the apologetic impetus of letter-writing. The fifth letter hence contains the function of the whole collection in a nutshell.

Holzberg defined the depiction of the relationship of an intellectual with a man of political power as the main function and aim of the pseudo-Euripidean letters. However, his definition neglects several important peculiarities of the pseudo-Euripidean letters, most importantly their function for a rhetorically educated audience and their contribution to the shaping of the ancient biographical tradition on Euripides.<sup>139</sup> The crucial point which all interpreters of the pseudo-Euripidean letters appear to have missed so far is, to my impression, the degree of

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<sup>139</sup> Holzberg (1994: 13): 'Das zentrale Thema des irgendwann im 1./2. Jahrhundert n.Chr. entstandenen Buches Ἐπιστολαὶ Εὐριπίδου ist wie in dem Buch Ἐπιστολαὶ Πλάτωνος das Verhältnis einer geistigen Persönlichkeit [...] zu einem Machthaber.'

self-awareness evident in the text. Not only does the narrative relate to previous biographical representations of Euripides, it also scrutinizes the mechanisms of biographical writing on a more general level. At the very end of the narrative and in a final remark to his slave Cephisophon, Euripides, as commentator on his own biography, informs us that he is aware of the biographical nonsense that is being produced about his *persona* even after he has left Athens (and, for us as the readers of the letters, even several hundred years after his death). The ultimate answer of 'Euripides' to his enemies and self-made biographers is clear: they deserve no answer, no explanation, and no details about the life of the poet and the possible motives for his movements in Athens or elsewhere.

A close reading of letters 2 and 5 can uncover just how much the texts play not only with generic conventions but also with the knowledge and expectations of its ancient audience. Constructed around an alleged turning point in the life of Euripides, the letters open the imaginary stage for a discussion about humanity, authorship, authenticity and intellectual heritage. As the reader travels with the letters to the imaginary spaces of Athens, Macedonia and Chios, the entire life story of Euripides and his alleged connections with the Macedonian court is (re-)constructed. And so is the story of the literary past and present: with Euripides, we envisage Athens at the end of the fifth century BC, with his letters to Archelaus we travel to Macedonia as a seemingly timeless place which blurs into the image of a barbarian centre for the patronage of avant-garde art production; while with Chios and Sophocles' alleged shipwreck and loss of his plays, neatly tucked into the main narrative of Euripides, the novel challenges the stereotypes of biographical writing, literary history and canonization.

Putting the process of writing centre stage, the letters also take their readers on an imaginary journey of educated wit. So, for example, in the final words of the last letter, where Euripides instructs his slave Cephisophon on how to deal with biographical inquiries by nosy people back in Athens ('but even though you do well to write, I have to say that you would do us wrong if you replied on these issues to people who don't deserve an answer'). But the narrative is not mainly about the process of writing and the intertextual allusions it constantly creates. On the contrary, the letters force their readers to question stories of cultural inheritance and literary repercussions as they had become common at the time of the Roman Empire. They also offer philosophical reflection in the tradition of popular Cynic writing. Against the wide-spread opinion that Cynic epistles merely served as classroom exercises for students and teachers, Klauck defined the aim of Cynic epistles as 'propagating the ideal of the Cynic life'<sup>140</sup> and summarised the situation in which the ancient audiences of such letters would have found themselves as follows:

[...] in our letters there can be no talk of forgery in the strict sense. The authors do not intend to pull the wool over the eyes of their audience, nor would the readers have been so easily deceived. The authors and readers share a common knowledge of the traditional anecdotal material about the Cynics and of the rhetorical technique of the *prosopopoiia*, which could be adapted to letters. One can therefore regard the production and reading of the Cynic epistles as a kind of serious game that was played with the full consent of all the players – serious to the extent that it aimed at finding a successful plan for life, which kept the game going.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Klauck (2006: 179).

<sup>141</sup> Klauck (2006: 181).

It is precisely this conspiracy between author and reader which also keeps the game of the pseudo-Euripidean letters interesting and going. As I have argued above, I maintain that the production of the pseudo-Euripidean letters was influenced by the production of Cynic letters, and, more generally, by the circulation of certain ideas from popular philosophy at the time. For a full appreciation of the pseudo-Euripidean letters we must keep in mind just how wide-spread ideas of Cynic, Stoic and Epicurean thought had become by the time of the Second Sophistic.<sup>142</sup>

The pseudo-Euripidean letters take up several motifs typical of letters at the time of the Second Sophistic. To begin with, there must have been a certain interest in producing model letters for different types of correspondence. Secondly, the author of the collection could be sure that his letters would fill some of the gaps the biographical tradition had left blank. Thirdly, he could introduce his own viewpoint both on Euripides and on the biographical tradition predating his letters by slightly changing the conventional version of topical themes. Fourthly, the letters could provide moral teaching in a entertaining way. They relate to several traditions of philosophical writing, and among them is without any doubt the tradition of consolatory literature, which often borrowed from Euripides' *Phoenissae*, the play most quoted in Plutarch, and from the imagery of shipwreck as it occurs throughout Greek poetry.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> See Trapp (2003:30) who characterises the special case of the Cynic phenomenon as follows: 'The authors of these letters were probably *not* practising Cynics, but rather individuals interested in using such colourful characters as a good way of putting across non-materialist values in a striking way.'

<sup>143</sup> For the consolatory tradition and its literary models in the imperial discourse of exile and displacement, see Fantham (2007) and Nesselrath (2007). For Plutarch's quotations of Euripidean tragedy, see St. Gerard Mitchell (1968).

With these advantages on his side, the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters had a rich repertoire to draw from and could be sure of an attentive audience that eagerly awaited the outcome of his work. The pseudo-Euripidean letters may, at first sight, seem like a meaningless rhetorical classroom exercise. Set against the backdrop of the biographical tradition of Euripides, however, their full literary value becomes visible and the narrative of the collection as a whole seems to be coherent. The letters do not repeat one another, their order could not be reversed, and the contribution of the second letter to the narrative of the collection as a whole is central.

### **5. Contribution to the Biographical Tradition**

The author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters breaks with the literary tradition before him in several ways. He presents, first, an inversion of previous biographical representations of Euripides and restores the playwright as a high-minded, considerate, and serious man, rather than following, if only ironically so, the way in which Euripides was depicted in Old Comedy.

Secondly, the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters exposes the general tendency of biographical writings to draw conclusions, if only implicitly, from Euripidean tragedy. Euripides' parody of philosophical claims especially could have inspired the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters. As a result, the pseudo-Euripidean letters represent excellent evidence against the claim by modern scholars that the biographical tradition merely echoed consistent features which were created in Old Comedy.

Apart from the identification of the narrative function of imaginary spaces and the creation of 'authenticity' in the pseudo-Euripidean letters, the most important observation of this chapter is perhaps that there is no continuous tradition of slander against Euripides which is taken up in all ancient representations of the poet. Especially Lefkowitz' assumption that the biographical representations of Euripides became more spiteful as his work was more and more worshipped, is in need of modification.<sup>144</sup>

The way Euripides anticipates what the 'future' biographical traditions about him are likely to say seems pre-modelled in a letter by Phalaris. In *Ep.*78, Phalaris anticipates the objection of Stesichorus, to whom he is writing and ironically praises him in a similar way to that in which Euripides praises his slave Cephisophon. 'You have been careful not to write in praise of the men of your own times'<sup>145</sup>, pseudo-Phalaris not unlike the author of the pseudo-Euripidean letters seems to advertise his awareness of what the tradition already says about him by tweaking it. In a way, the voice of pseudo-Euripides seems almost modelled on that of pseudo-Phalaris, who presented himself as similarly unrepentant and seems in [Phalaris] *Ep.*66 'a man of stern, self-conscious virtue, determined to rise above the misunderstandings and slanders of his contemporaries.'<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Mary Lefkowitz assumes a general development of deterioration for the ancient biographical representations of Greek poets over the centuries and seems to see the culmination of this process in the *Genos Eurpidou*, for which she argues that 'His [i.e. Euripides'] life has been sufficiently unpleasant that readers can be content that they have not accomplished as much as he. By emphasising that he wrote his dramas in reaction to particular events, the *Vita* represents Euripides' achievement as a process requiring no special talent other than emotions like anger or fear. His gifts become at once accessible and comprehensible.' Lefkowitz (1981: 101-2)

<sup>145</sup> Translation Trapp (2003: 143)

<sup>146</sup> Trapp (2003: 29).

In this chapter, I have argued that the representation of Euripides in the pseudo-Euripidean letters is distinctively characteristic of the Second Sophistic in that it shows the Attic playwright as a Stoico-Cynic sage in conversation with a foreign ruler.

The material considered in this chapter illustrates one of the main contentions in this thesis: that the biographical tradition was flexible and adaptable – Euripides could be presented in the guise of a philosopher, if that suited the context of the representation. He was famous, iconic even, but open to radically different interpretations and representations.

### **Euripides in Handbooks**

In this final chapter, I examine yet another form of capturing biographical information about Euripides in antiquity and the Byzantine period. Texts as diverse as a passage in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, dating from the second century AD, the entry 'Euripides' in the *Suda* lexicon, and a Byzantine compilation called the *Genos Euripidou* have one important feature in common: they all convey not only an untiring interest in the life of the tragedian but also a literary interest in condensing available biographical information about Euripides' life into a prose narrative presented from a third person perspective. Surprisingly for the modern reader, these late accounts of Euripides are the first extant biographical narratives from a third person narrator's point of view.

This has several consequences for our interpretation of the biographical representations of Euripides. We have reasons to assume that as well as in their form, in their function, too, the texts I analyse in this chapter differ from any of the texts examined so far. Secondly, the condensed form of the passage on Euripides in Gellius' *Attic Nights* as well as similar versions of Euripides' life in the *Genos Euripidou* and the short summary in the *Suda* lexicon allow us to gain an understanding of the reception and interpretation of previous biographical accounts by their authors.

These later accounts of the life of Euripides give us a vague idea of how much more biographical, legendary, and anecdotal material must have been available to their authors than what we have today. I am therefore going to use

the *Attic Nights*, the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry on Euripides not only for an analysis of the texts in their own right but also in order to explore what would be lost to us had we not these later reports of Euripides' life. A comparison with our extant sources and the material discussed in the previous chapters further illuminates their narrative refinement and richness in allusion, a quality of these texts that has largely gone unnoticed in scholarship as the subsidiary nature of these 'texts of accretion' seems to have hindered their full appreciation as narrative compositions of a different kind.

Gellius' treatment of historiographical authorities from the Greek past is especially revealing in this context and helps us to understand not only how Gellius perceived the vogue for classical education in the society surrounding him but also how he estimated the reading habits of his contemporaries and his own contribution to a well-rounded classical education. In fact, Gellius' treatment of his sources might even tell us why he chose to write a biographical sketch about Euripides rather than any other canonized poet from the Greek past. Thus, my discussion of Gellius' *Attic Nights*, the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry also sheds some light on the process of reception and canonization in Rome and Byzantium.

As in the previous chapters, my examination of the last three milestones in the ancient biographical tradition of Euripides has three main points of reference and interest. After a brief introduction to the respective cultural and historical context (section 1) and some comments on the actual texts (section 2), I discuss the possible function of the texts (sections 3 and 4) and, finally, their contribution to the biographical representations of Euripides (section 5). In the case of the *Genos Euripidou*, Ingemar Düring's

characterisation of the ancient *Vita Marciana* on the life of Aristotle seems to pinpoint the problem and the challenge of the *Genos Euripidou*:

The stratification of our *Vita* is comparable to that of an old settlement where people have lived during many hundred years. I do not think that we can speak of an 'author' of the *Vita* and of 'sources', from which he has compiled it.<sup>1</sup>

The *Genos Euripidou*, too, is as a collective product of several generations. And it will be illuminating to take a closer look at its different parts.

### 1. The Cultural and Historical Contexts

As we could see in the previous chapter, the details of the literary biography of Euripides transmitted in form of jokes, anecdotes, and mock-conversations, were by the time of the Roman Empire readily available to anyone who wished to write an imaginary correspondence between Euripides and some of his contemporaries. They were equally available to another author of the same time, Aulus Gellius, the author who chose to embed the story of Euripides in his *opus magnum*, the *Attic Nights*.<sup>2</sup> The Roman society Gellius wrote for was shaped, and defined itself, by the standards of a Greco-Roman *paideia* which was part of a general, politically motivated, longing for the Athenian past.<sup>3</sup>

Gellius' writing doubtlessly stands in the tradition of the Roman Empire in trying to achieve literary immortality by re-visiting the Greek past and its authors. Instead of praising their own literary skills, the authors of Gellius' time often resort to praising the 'good old times', and through their praise of them participate in the revived importance and glory of the past. The concept of praising others in order to ensure they are not forgotten seems to be

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<sup>1</sup> Düring (1957: 118).

<sup>2</sup> On the overall satirical mode of *Noctes Atticae*, see Keulen (2004), Vogt-Spira (2007) and Keulen (2009). For the political context of the time, see Berthold (1996: 508-12), and Pausch (2004: 196-7).

almost the inversion of the mockery of Euripides so prominent in the earliest biographical representations.

Ridiculing the influential poet in order to participate in his cultural impact, as exercised by Aristophanes, is no longer replaced by a semi-serious portrayal of how other people depict Euripides, as it is exercised in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*. Instead, similar to the depiction of Euripides in the pseudo-Euripidean letters, the influential poet is praised and presented as an ideal. In a society which was greatly influenced by the concept of the *cursus honorum*, Gellius uses historical characters and events as useful *exempla* for the present.<sup>4</sup> As Gellius dedicates a whole chapter (15.20) of the *Noctes Atticae* to Euripides,<sup>5</sup> he erects a biographical monument for the tragedian which he did not erect for any other Greek poet.

The *Genos Euripidou* is a rather different document. It was shaped and compiled by several hands and represents the result of centuries of revision, re-ordering, and rewriting of the biographical tradition on Euripides. Despite its multi-layered history, the text seems not to have been harmonised or polished. But the addition of snippets of information, without the removal of other parts, is not necessarily owed to negligence. It may partly be owed to the conventions of the genre of a γένος, which, not unlike other explanatory genres such as *scholia* or *glossai*, follows other principles than a coherent prose narrative. In contrast to most other texts that have come down to us from antiquity, we have not only the surface and final result of a long and complicated process of reception, transmission and editing, but a stratified

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<sup>3</sup> For the cult of the past in Gellius' work see Anderson (1993: 11-12), Vessey (1994), Korenjak (1998), Whitmarsh (2001a: 167-8), and Pausch (2004: 9-29).

<sup>4</sup> On the impact of the *cursus honorum* on the literary scene in Rome, see Farrell (2002: 34-5) and Pausch (2004: 9-29); on the phenomenon of the *claros viros colere* see Pausch (2004: 24-9).

object with origins in several centuries, not unlike the image of an archaeological site evoked in the quotation by Düring.

The *Genos Euripidou* presents us with three different versions of Euripides' life, which, at different stages of the evolution of the text, must have seemed worth preserving. This tells us something important about how the contributors to the *Genos Euripidou* approached their own work. They were not in the business of replacing or erasing but rather participated in an open process of production and added what they considered as important to a larger narrative. The last and most recent part of the *Genos Euripidou* could have been compiled around the same time as, or even later than, the *Suda* entry, whereas its first and oldest parts date back to Alexandrian times, when short abstracts of the lives of Greek poets were added to the editions of their plays.

The *Suda* entry on Euripides (E 3695 s.v. Εὐριπίδης)<sup>6</sup> tells a different story. Like the youngest part of the *Genos Euripidou*, it was composed roughly at the same period in which the famous miniscule codex evolved, from which all extant medieval manuscripts of Euripides' plays descend and which contained copious variant readings and glosses. The interest in Euripides and his plays was again a scholarly one.<sup>7</sup> The account of the life of Euripides in the *Suda* lexicon is different both from the story narrated by Gellius, and from the accounts of the *Genos Euripidou*, although it contains some elements of both.

However, the *Suda* entry also reveals information which cannot be found in any of the earlier sources for the life of Euripides. One piece of additional information regards the parents of Euripides and their possible roots

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<sup>5</sup> [= Kovacs T 5 = Kannicht T 2].

<sup>6</sup> [= Kovacs T 2 = Kannicht T 1].

in Boeotia, another one concerns the details of Euripides' unfortunate death in Macedonia, yet another one his attitude towards Anaxagoras. Both the *Suda* entry and the *Genos Euripidou* were intended as useful summaries about the tragedian for the readers of his tragedies. Written in the form of handbook entries, the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry seem less literary than the passage concerning Euripides in Gellius' highly ironic *Attic Nights*. And yet, as my analysis of the texts shows, they have their own strategies of displaying new twists to the biographical representation of Euripides.

## 2. The life of Euripides in Gellius' *Attic Nights*

I start with an analysis of the brief passage on the life of Euripides in Gellius' *Attic Nights*. This Antonine collection of 'useful information' was composed in a sophisticated and entertaining style typical of the genre. It offers a variety of *aide-mémoires* on topics as varied as history, medicine, law, literature, rhetoric and philosophy, which represented Rome's self-fashioning in the mirror of the learning, entertainment and culture of classical Athens.<sup>8</sup> According to its possibly ironic preface, the twenty different books of the *Attic Nights* aimed to serve the educated reader as a *compendium* of useful topics for conversation.<sup>9</sup>

Gellius offers the readers of the *Attic Nights* a glimpse into his writing process and points them to its semi-serious nature. In the preface, he quotes and comments on Aristophanes' *Frogs* and states that the transformation of his notes into the work now presented to the reader was

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<sup>7</sup> On the scholarly endeavours at Byzantium to take up the work of the Hellenistic scholars on canonized Greek authors, see Zuntz (1965: 261) and Hunger (1991: 138).

<sup>8</sup> See the preface of *Attic Nights*, where Gellius – in a *captatio benevolentiae* typical of the genre – states that his notes are loose and unorganised, because they should mainly serve the readers 'to support their memory' (*ad subsidium memoriae*, Gell. *pr.* 2-3). See Pausch (2004: 160) for Gellius' ironical 'Bekanntnis zum Dilettantismus' and his use of diminutives when referring to his *Attic Nights*.

<sup>9</sup> For the historical context of the Roman 'Konversationskultur', see Pausch (2004: 150-63).

begun by a 'playful production of these comments' (*commentationes hasce ludere ac facere*, Gell. pr.4). This certainly suggests a ludic element in the production of the *Attic Nights*. Furthermore, it also reveals their author's hope for a similar disposition in the audience of his work.<sup>10</sup> Gellius seems serious, however, in his aim to present the reader with items of information which are 'enjoyable to read, educative to know or useful to remember' (*quod sit aut voluptati legere aut cultui legisse aut usui memisse*, Gell. pr.11-12) and which represents a shortcut to the route of honourable learning (*honestae eruditionis*, Gell. pr.12 ).

Having already inserted some Euripidean lines in earlier chapters of the *Attic Nights*, Gellius ventures to present a short version of the purported life of the tragedian in chapter 20 of book 15.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, the passage contains no record of Euripides' work, which is instead mentioned briefly in a synopsis of classical Athens in book 17. In chapter 20 of book 15, by contrast, Gellius offers a *tour de force* through the currently available information about Euripides' life and career, and he presents it in a new way.

The Lemma preceding the actual chapter runs: *notata quaedam de Euripidis poetae genere, vita, moribus; deque eiusdem fine vitae* ('Some remarks on the family origin of the poet Euripides, his life and his character; besides that, on the end of his life'). With this announcement, the Gellius seems to cover what has been identified as the typical traits of ancient

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<sup>10</sup> See Gellius' claim in the preface that he followed the random order of his notes in order to reflect the disparity of his subjects (*rerum disparilitas*, Gell. pr.3). For a more general discussion of the composition and purpose of the *Attic Nights*, see Holford-Strevens (2003: 27-47). Similar to Gellius' pretended modesty is the younger Pliny's claim to present everything 'as it came to hand' (*Ep.*1.1.1) or the deliberately unsystematic structure of Cicero's *De oratore*. On the commonplace of spontaneity in the presentation of material in the *Attic Nights*, see Holford-Strevens (2003: 34 n.44) who even calls it a *lex generis*.

<sup>11</sup> On these quotations from Euripidean tragedy, which seem not to have interested Gellius in their original context, see Holford-Strevens (2003: 235).

biography by modern scholars and must have had a certain appeal already in antiquity.<sup>12</sup>

And yet, the actual text of the passage comes as a surprise: Gellius mentions neither a date (or place) for the birth of the poet nor does he make much of Euripides' legendary mother. He does not mention the tragedian's plays or the date of his death.<sup>13</sup> Only some vague information is given about the date of Euripides' birth in connection with other famous Athenians in chapter 21 of book 17, where Euripides is mentioned alongside Sophocles, Hippocrates, Democritus and Socrates as one of the 'eminent Athenians' at the time of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>14</sup>

The passage is interesting as it tells us how the 'common reader' (and writer) in second-century AD Rome imagined the glorious past of ancient Greece. It is worth taking a closer look at the names selected by Gellius to represent the '*nobiles celebresque*' of the time. Sophocles and Euripides represent the theatre (and literature) of the age, Hippocrates, Democritus and Socrates are chosen as representatives of the field of medicine and philosophy respectively. At a first glance, Gellius' selection seems unproblematic, if not obvious. However, it is so only from a modern perspective, and with Gellius we are already witnessing a crucial stage in the formation of that perspective. We know from Old Comedy and other sources that both Euripides and

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<sup>12</sup> For the modern concept of biography as a narrative 'from the cradle to the grave', see Momigliano (1993: 22-3). For the appeal to the ancient audience and the advertising character of *lemmata* in *Attic Night*, see Maselli (1993: 20-39).

<sup>13</sup> Both Euripides' birth and his work are mentioned in a later chapter (17.21.42) in connection with Menander. Pausch (2004: 182) does not comment on the lack of geographical information but emphasises the lack of a date and stresses the contrast with other biographical evidence for Euripides such as the entry on the *Marmor Parium* or the *Suda* entry. Pausch explains this lack of important information with the 'subsidiary character' of the *Attic Nights*.

<sup>14</sup> Gell. 17.21.18: *inter haec tempora nobiles celebresque erant Sophocles ac deinde Euripides tragici poetae et Hippocrates medicus et philosophus Democritus, quibus Socrates Atheniensis natu quidem posterior fuit, sed quibusdam temporibus isdem vixerunt.* ('At this time, the noble and famous men of the day were the tragic poets Sophocles, and, after him, Euripides, the

Hippocrates had equally well-known colleagues in their fields; the same holds true for Sophocles, Socrates and Democritus. What, then, influenced Gellius' choice? And why does he not mention representatives of other forms of literature, such as comedy or lyric, besides the tragedians Sophocles and Euripides?

These questions can perhaps only be answered if we bear in mind what Gellius was reading. It is astonishing, and by no means necessary, that Hippocrates and Democritus are mentioned together. Why Democritus and not, for instance, Anaxagoras? An answer to this question could be that Gellius, in his preparation for the *Attic Nights*, had read the exchange of letters between Hippocrates and Democritus, which survived in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*. Sophocles, on the other hand, serves Gellius as a point of reference for ancient wisdom as he calls him the 'wisest of all poets' (*prudenterisimus poetarum*, 12.11.6). Gellius' description of Euripides focuses on the youth of the tragedian. Chapter 20 in book 15 of the *Attic Nights* starts with an account of Euripides' parents, and it starts with the quotation of a Greek historian of questionable reputation:

*Euripidi poetae matrem Theopompus agrestia olera  
vendentem victum quaesisse dicit. Patri autem eius  
nato illo [...]*

Theopompus says that the mother of Euripides the  
poet earned her living by selling vegetables.  
However, at his birth his father [...]

In a combination of reporting the information he had inherited from previous writers on Euripides' life and introducing his own narrative, Gellius elegantly skips the whole discussion about whether or not Euripides' mother earned her living by selling vegetables. Instead, the social and generic background of

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medical doctor Hippocrates and the philosopher Democritus; Socrates was born slightly after these Athenians but they lived in the same epoch.')

Euripides are rooted in paternal care and prophecy.<sup>15</sup> With the choice of the name ‘Theopompus’ as his alleged source, Gellius places a commentary not only on the biographical tradition of Euripides (and those interested in it) but also on the interests of his contemporaries in Greek historiography.

We know that in Roman times the most widely read Greek historian was Theopompus. Allegedly a pupil of Isocrates, but originally from Chios, he was known to have been ‘exiled from everywhere’. And yet, Theopompus managed to secure himself a place at the Ptolemaic court. His work included *Letters from Chios*, a *Panegyric on Philip*, *Advice for Alexander*, an *Invective against Plato and his School*, and the *Philippica* – a Macedonian (cum universal) history which had Philip of Macedon at its centre and also included observations on geographical, ethnographical, religious, and cultural phenomena, *thaumasia* and anecdotal *memorabilia* – in short, exactly the mix of little snippets of information which suited the taste of the Antonine readers, especially as Theopompus’ style was apparently highly elaborate and polished, and the contents of his writings were delightful and diverse.

However, Theopompus’ obsession with details and his at times rather uncritical lack of refinement met with much ridicule by other writers.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Pausch claims that the ‘low social status’ of Euripides’ mother is especially emphasised by Gellius (see Pausch 2004: 183). This interpretation is part of Pausch’s general reading of the *Attic Nights* as an exemplary guide to social success for self-made *nobiles* in the second century BC. Pausch even criticises Gellius for not mentioning the social status of Euripides’ father, especially as he is mentioned together with Euripides’ mother (‘Gellius dagegen kommt auf die soziale Stellung des anschließend und in enger syntaktischer Anbindung erwähnten Vaters überhaupt nicht zu sprechen’, Pausch (1994: 183)). Like other interpreters before him, Pausch does not seem to consider the emphasis put on the father at the beginning of the second sentence (*Patri autem*).

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, Philostratus’ rather low opinion of Theopompus in his *Lives of the Sophists* (*Vit.Soph.* 1.17.4). Ps.-Longinus famously made fun of Theopompus’ description of a list of gifts sent to the Persian king, complaining of the historian’s tedious bathos and quoting examples of ‘triviality of expression’ (μικρότης τῶν ὀνομάτων) from Theopompus’ work (*De subl.* 43). Duris of Samos does not seem to have liked Theopompus’ style much either. According to the entry on Theopompus in Photius’ *Library*, Duris criticised both Ephorus and Theopompus for their lack of literary sophistication: Ἐφορος δὲ καὶ Θεόπομπος τῶν γενομένων πλεῖστον ἀπελείφθησαν. οὔτε γὰρ μιμήσεως μετέλαβον οὔδεμίας οὔτε ἡδονῆς ἐν τῷ φράσαι. αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ γράφειν μόνον ἐπεμελήθησαν. (Ephorus and

The fact that Gellius quotes Theopompus at the opening of his chapter on Euripides is, I think, not accidental. Rather, Gellius could be sure of the full attention of his readership by placing the name of the popular historian almost like a buzz-word at the very beginning of his biographical sketch of Euripides. At the same time, Gellius could hope that the more educated of his readers might also associate Theopompus with the topic of exile, as Theopompus had gained such a notorious reputation as the historian who was ‘exiled from everywhere’, or with Macedonia and Macedonian history and historiography, or even with the Ptolemaic court at which, arguably, the anecdotes about Euripides’ death in Macedonia were invented, trafficked, and stabilised for posterity.

Secondly, Theopompus was famous for his pedantic collection of information rather than edifying insights, broad travels and ambition to report as much as possible from autopsy – a method which is ridiculed later on in the passage about Euripides by Gellius. Clearly, the author of the *Attic Nights* distances himself from Theopompus’ historical approach while at the same time capitalising on his knowledge of it and imitating, for instance, Theopompus’ versatility as a writer. Thirdly, and perhaps as a concession to his less knowledgeable and/or less historically interested readers, Gellius perhaps speculated that the mentioning of ‘Theopompus’ as a source without adding ‘the historian’ or ‘from Chios’ might evoke associations with Theopompus the Athenian who was active as a comedian at the turn of the fifth to the fourth century BC. This second association with the name of Theopompus as his source is more speculative. However, since the setting of the narrative is fifth-

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Theopompus fell by far short of the events. They achieved no *mimesis* or delight in their presentation, but cultivated the mere writing only.’; *FGrH* 76 F 1). For a discussion of the passage, see Gray (1987: 476-81).

century Athens, and since the allegations that Euripides' mother was a vegetable-seller only occur in fifth-century comedy, the suggestion that he may be dealing with a double-encoding of the name Theopompus at the beginning of Gellius' passage on Euripides is perhaps not wholly unfounded.

Another consideration further supports my assumption that already the beginning of Gellius' passage on Euripides may be satirical: Gellius quotes Theopompus at two further points in the *Attic Nights*, but not much to the advantage of the historian.<sup>17</sup> The mention of Theopompus at the opening of Gellius' biographical sketch of Euripides is therefore deliberate and entails a comment on the reading habits of his contemporaries and has satirical overtones. All in all, it is interesting to note that – independently from the possible associations with the name of Theopompus – Gellius seems not prepared to report in his own voice any of the allegations made by Old Comedy against Euripides, even though he obviously had access to this sort of information. One possible reason for that may be Gellius' narrative strategy of letting the reader find out for themselves how much ancient sources are to be trusted.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Theopompus is mentioned at *NA* 10.18.6, 15.20.1 (our passage), and 16.15.1. In Book 10, he is mentioned as competing in an *agôn* in eloquence with Theodectes, Naucrates and 'There are even those who report that Isocrates himself competed with them' (*sunt etiam qui Isocratem ipsum cum his certavisse memoriae mandaverint*). Apparently, the legendary competition was taken at face value already in antiquity, as the contributor to the *Suda* lexicon wonders if Theopompus could really be called victorious if the authorities were divided between Theodectes and Theopompus. Flower (1994: 57) continues this line of thought, which I think misses the point of Gellius' narrative as well as the *Suda* entry, when he explains that 'The confusion of the later sources is probably due to the fact there actually had been two prizes, one for oratory and one for tragedy' (Flower 1994: 57 n.47). In Gellius 16.15.1, Theopompus is quoted as an authority for entirely incredible stories: 'Theophrastus, most expert of philosophers, declares that in Paphlagonia all the partridges have two hearts, Theopompus, that in Bisaltia the hares have two livers each' (*Theophrastus, philosophorum peritissimus, omnes in Paphlagonia perdices bina corda habere dicit. Theopompus in Bisaltia lepores bina iecora*) – hardly a serious statement if we consider the pun on 'bi-' in the passage with *Bisaltia* and *bina*. On Gellius' source-criticism more generally, see Holford-Strevens (1988: 47-58).

<sup>18</sup> The questionable reputation of Theopompus as a historian seems to have put his writings in the proximity of the comedian already in antiquity. Connor (1968: 102-3) sums up the situation: 'The themes of the two [The *Philippica* by Theopompus and Old Comedy] are strikingly similar. Bribery, thievery, personal corruption and bad ancestry are their common

Surprisingly for modern readers, and perhaps equally so for the ancient audience, Gellius starts his own, third-person account of the life of Euripides with Euripides' father, of whom we hear nothing in earlier biographical representations of the tragedian.<sup>19</sup> The third-person narrative begins with the report of a horoscope which was given to Euripides' father at Euripides' birth about his son's later career. Hardly trustworthy anecdotes about Euripides' mother are thus juxtaposed with an account that is legitimised by the authority of a horoscope:

*Patri autem eius nato illo responsum est a Chaldaeis eum puerum, cum adolevisset, victorem in certaminibus fore; id ei puero fatum esse.*

However, at his birth his father was told by the Chaldeans that his son would, once he had grown up, be victorious in competitions, since that was going to be the fate of the boy.

The atmosphere created here is almost exotic, and the mention of the Chaldeans as the first authority on what was to become of Euripides certainly remarkable. In order to understand this new element in the biographical representation of Euripides, it is important to recall that by the time of Gellius' *Attic Nights*, astrological birth charts had been extremely popular with the Romans.<sup>20</sup> A repercussion of this popularity may be entailed in Cato's humorous advice that a slave and farm-manager should not consult the Chaldeans (*R. Rustic.* 1.5.4). Astrology was held in high esteem among the Roman nobility.

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interest. Extract the dialogue and theater from Aristophanes, change a few names and many a passage would fit directly into Theopompus' digression.'

<sup>19</sup> The *jeu d'esprit* played by Gellius here is reinforced by his self-fashioning in the *prooemium* of the *Attic Nights* as a father writing the book for his children.

<sup>20</sup> On the Chaldeans as the authority on astrology, see Liebeschuetz (1979: 260), Tassignon (2000: 19-35), and Mastrocinque (2007: 379-384), on the popularity of astrology in Rome, and the reflection of the phenomenon in Roman literature, see Liebeschuetz (1979: 119-26). The epithet *Χαλδαῖος*/Chaldaeus was later given as a title of honour to Greeks and Romans who had studied at one of the Babylonian schools. As such, the title almost served as a brand which

Of course any reader of the *Attic Nights* knew that Euripides was not the name of a famous Attic athlete but that of a famous Attic tragedian. When Euripides' father thus misinterprets the prophecy about his son's future career, the good reputation of the Chaldean oracles, and the question of the usefulness of oracles more generally, are at stake. Gellius seems to play not only on the popularity of Theopompus' writings but also on that of superstition and astrology.<sup>21</sup> The default prophecy given to Euripides' father helps us to decode Gellius' comment on the popular practice of projecting the future. The passage about Euripides' time as an athlete seems to matter to Gellius for several reasons. Some of them can be surmised from the text itself.

*Pater interpretatus atletam debere esse roborato exercitatioque filii sui corpore Olympiam certaturum eum inter atletas pueros deduxit. Ac primo quidem in certamen per ambiguam aetatem receptus non est, post Eleusino et Theseo certamine pugnavit et coronatus est.*

His father understanding this to mean that he should be an athlete and, after his son's body had been strengthened and trained, took him to compete with the young athletes at Olympia. However, he was at first not admitted to the contest because his age fitted into neither of the categories, but later he fought at the Eleusinian and Thesean games and won a crown.

There are several possible reasons why Gellius presents the story about Euripides' early career the way he does. First, the unusual start to an account of Euripides' life might reflect Gellius' wish to entertain and surprise his readers

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was created by the adherents of the Babylonian schools to distinguish themselves from charlatans and imitators. See Tassignon (2000: 31).

<sup>21</sup> Holford-Strevens does not think the element we find here can be Gellian and even assumes Gellius made an anachronistic mistake: 'The oracle that in the ancient *Vita* [...] foretold victory in contests for Euripides had been transmuted before reaching Gellius into an astrological prediction impossible (as he did not know) for fifth-century Athens.' (2003: 287-8). It is worth noting, however, that Gellius presents a comical depiction of Favorinus' declamation on astrology in *NA* 14.1, to my knowledge the only other passage in the *Attic Nights* at which Gellius refers to astrology at all. This seems especially striking as Favorinus was notorious for

by way of inserting a likely, but as yet unheard of, version of Euripides' occupation before becoming a tragedian. Alternatively, the insertion of the story could have been used to produce some suspense as the 'main stories' of the mini-*Vita*, namely Euripides' career as a poet and his fate in Macedonia, are delayed. Or again, the passage might reveal a narrative strategy that makes a story more convincing by embellishing it with a prophetic authority and contrasting it with unlikely, perhaps even unworthy, accounts of Euripides' background as represented by the mention of the alleged occupation of his mother.<sup>22</sup>

Whatever the reasons for Gellius' decision to mention Euripides' father and the alleged horoscope may have been, the story of the brilliant 'athlete by mistake' illustrates the imperial Roman ideal of life-long learning, self-improvement and the potentials of a 'second career', implicit in the cultural concept of the Second Sophistic.<sup>23</sup> That said, we should take a closer look at how the seemingly unimportant information about the father's wrong interpretation of the horoscope is linked to his son's future career. Not only did Euripides' father misinterpret the prediction, but, it seems, Euripides was either too young or already too old for the competitions at 'Ephesus or Thebes' when his father took him there – an example of ἀκαρία which has almost comical features and makes Euripides' father look like the notoriously clumsy father Xuthos in Euripides' *Ion*. Thus, the consultation of the Chaldeans by Euripides' father directed Euripides into the wrong field of activity which turned out to be not a very timely one.

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his ability to praise 'things without honour' (*infames materiae*, as Gellius calls them in *NA* 17.12).

<sup>22</sup> See Roselli (2005: 1-7) for the centrality of the topic of Euripides' mother in the ancient biographical tradition of the tragedian.

<sup>23</sup> See Pausch (2004: 9-21).

We know from other sources that the posthumous modelling of Greek poets and philosophers as quasi-heroes sometimes makes use of the feature of predictions. In the case of a late fifth-century rhetorician Alcidas, an epigram preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* (AP 14.113) addresses Alcidas' father and insinuates that the Delphic oracle foretold Alcidas' glorious future as a 'singer'. Such a prophecy could perhaps be called 'direct', as it explains the choice of career and an individual's outstanding success in it. Rather different from this sort of 'direct' prophecy, which allows viewing later events in a linear development, Gellius makes use of 'indirect' prophecy in the passage about Euripides, which gives the horoscope of a victorious future but does not allow us to re-construct a linear development from the prophecy to later developments.

This has two implications: that of a mistake in recognising talent and that of a delayed career as a tragedian doubly emphasised through the story of his outstanding talent in another field of *paideia*, the field of athletics.<sup>24</sup> It is in this context noteworthy to keep in mind that the verb ἐγκρίνειν which describes the act of inclusion in the catalogues (πίνακες) in the process of reception and canonization at Alexandria, originally derives from the field of athletics where it was used to describe the athletes who were admitted to a contest upon examination. Whether or not Gellius had associations with Alexandria and the complicated process of selection and canonization of classical authors on his mind when he constructed Euripides as a successful athlete is of course an open question.

What is striking here is Gellius' long discussion of Euripides as we never encounter him elsewhere in biographical representations: Euripides

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<sup>24</sup> For the significance of athletics in Roman *paideia* see König (2005: 1-21).

before he was the well-known tragedian. This choice fits well with the general narrative frame of the *Attic Nights* but also with the cultural context of its production in a society which put a strong emphasis on education, including discussions of the role of parents in the ideal education of young Romans, and the physical and mental benefits of physical education more generally. Gellius' general programme of furnishing useful stories for educated conversation benefits considerably from that social frame, and is part of it irrespective of whether or not we want to understand some tendencies in the *Attic Nights* as ironic. *Pace* Lefkowitz, therefore, the social contexts in which the biographical narratives about Euripides were produced in antiquity matter considerably for our understanding of their structure and possible meaning.

In contrasting Euripides' career as an athlete with his later profession, Gellius leads the reader from the passage which covers the playwright's boyhood and early education to that of his intellectual influences and the beginnings as a tragedian. Gellius makes it explicit that the intellectual, not the physical, is going to be the field in which Euripides will be truly successful:

*Mox a corporis cura ad excolendi animi studium transgressus auditor fuit physici Anaxagorae et Prodicis rhetoris, in morali autem philosophia Socratis. Tragoediam scribere natus annos duodeviginti adortus est.*

Soon he moved from exercising his body to the study of how to cultivate one's soul and was a student of the physicist Anaxagoras and the orator Prodicus, while in moral philosophy he was a student of Socrates. He started to write tragedy when he was eighteen years old.

In this passage, we are reminded of the fact that Euripides was still very young when he started his career as a tragedian. This emphasis on Euripides' tender age is combined with the information that Euripides was a student of Socrates

as well as of Anaxagoras and Prodicus. And it almost seems as if Gellius describes an educational curriculum with a clear hierarchy and agreed indicators of progress. As such, the narrative echoes the culture of consultancy and advice-seeking which was so ubiquitous in Gellius' time and which told young Romans to train first the body, then the mind.

Both in literary and in archaeological testimonies, we can observe a certain preoccupation with athletics which seems to have been distinctive for the upper classes. Van Nijf recently described the phenomenon with the following words: 'Epitaphs for young notables, which presented them as a classy combination of brawn and brain, summed up a widespread cultural ideal.'<sup>25</sup> This seems a genuinely Roman ideal, while a look back to the cultural context of Macedonian self-fashioning shows that even a successful celebrity like Alexander the Great was allegedly contemptuous of athletic competitions, just as Euripides was in earlier biographical representations.<sup>26</sup> In the third section of the text, Gellius moves on to report what has been said about Euripides as an adult, how he died and was commemorated.

*Philochorus refert in insula Salamine speluncam esse taetram et horridam, quam nos vidimus, in qua Euripides tragoedias scriptitarit. Mulieres fere omnes in maiorem modum exosus fuisse dicitur, sive quod natura abhorruit a mulierum coetu sive quod duas simul uxores habuerat, cum id decreto ab Atheniensibus facto ius esset, quarum matrimonii pertaedeat. Eius odii in mulieres Aristophanes quoque meminit ἐν ταῖς προτέραις Θεσμοφοριαζούσαις in his versibus :*

νῦν οὖν ἀπάσαισιν παραινῶ καὶ λέγω  
τοῦτον κολάσαι τὸν ἄνδρα πολλῶν οὔνεκα.

<sup>25</sup> Van Nijf (2004: 222).

<sup>26</sup> See Brown (1977: 76-88). For Euripides' alleged attack on the athletes in his poetry, an allegation which was perhaps founded on a long speech against athletes in his play *Autolycus* (fr. 282 N<sup>3</sup>), see Marcovich (1977: 123-29). Athenaeus ascribes the passage to Euripides who is said to have been inspired by Xenophanes (see his attack on the Olympian winners in frs.B2 1-22 D-K). Marcovic seems convinced that the text is by Euripides and calls it 'Euripides' diatribe against the athletes' (Marcovic 1990: 126).

ἄγρια γὰρ ἡμᾶς, ὦ γυναῖκες, δρᾷ κακὰ  
ἄτ' ἐν ἀγρίοισι τοῖς λαχάνοις αὐτὸς τραφεῖς.

Philochorus has it that there is a dark and horrible cave on the island of Salamis, which we have seen, and in which Euripides wrote his tragedies. He is said to have hated all women to a great degree, be it because he abhorred by nature to be with them sexually or be it because he had two wives at the same time, which was actually lawful among the Athenians, and simply overtired of his married life with them. His hatred of women is also mentioned by Aristophanes in the earlier *Thesmophoriazousae* in the following verses:

Now therefore I advise all of you and tell you  
to punish this man for a lot of reasons.  
for wild are the wrongs he commits against us, my  
dear women, as he himself grew up among wild  
vegetables.

Gellius ascribes the report of Euripides' cave on Salamis to Philochorus. The legend of Euripides' cave on Salamis is not found in the extant text of the *Bios Euripidou* but it may have been in passages of it which are now lost to us. The factual existence of such a cave on Salamis, and its use by Euripides as a place to retreat and write is not entirely impossible. On the other hand, its narrative fabrication could also have been motivated by the famous synchronism of Euripides' birth with the battle of Salamis.<sup>27</sup>

What seems interesting in this context is that if we only look at the synchronism and the alleged cave, the function of the narrative element of Salamis seems to have changed. Whereas the *conspectus* of Euripides' birth with the battle of Salamis, that is to say: the legend that he was born on the day of the battle of Salamis, emphasises Euripides' place on the timeline of important events in the cultural memory of Athens and Athenians, the variation

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<sup>27</sup> Which probably dates back at least to Plutarch. On the synchronism of Euripides' date of birth and death, see Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 8.1.1 and the discussion in Teodorsson (1996: 151-2). On the ancient historians' taste for synchronisms more generally, see Jacoby (1902: 254). The synchronism of Euripides' birth on the day of the battle of Salamis is sometimes paired with a

of this legend which places the poet in a cave on the island creates a picture of the past which is of an entirely different kind. Euripides suddenly not only appears as the reclusive hermit but, perhaps more importantly, as a non-Athenian, and as someone who prefers to work, as it were, outside of Athens.<sup>28</sup>

It remains an open question whether by ascribing of the legend of Euripides' cave to a certain Philochorus Gellius refers us to the fourth-century historian, a fifth-century comedian or yet somebody else by the same name.<sup>29</sup> It seems likeliest, however, that Gellius, and his readers, had not the comedian but the peripatetically educated Atthidographer on his mind when he wrote his biographical passage about Euripides. The description of the cave on Salamis is undoubtedly the description which could easily be associated with one of the politically and historically famous places in Attica. More importantly, perhaps, Gellius' ascription – be it correct or not – could have been influenced by the fact that Philochorus had written a study *On the foundation of Salamis* (Σαλαμῖνος κτίσις) as well as on the Attic tragedians.<sup>30</sup>

Cunningly, Gellius inserts a phrase to present his autopsy of the cave to the reader. The remark 'which we have seen' (*quam nos vidimus*) has been taken at face value by most modern interpreters of the text. Recent scholarship has shown, however, that narrative devices such as the mention of autopsy in

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significant event on the day of his death: Euripides is said to have died on the day Dionysius I. became monarch over Sicily, ἄμα τῆς τύχης, as Timaeus *FGrHist* 566 F 105 has it.

<sup>28</sup> This could also have a political dimension. For an earlier example of claiming Salamis for Athens, see Arist. *Rhet.* 1375b 26-30 and the discussion in Graziosi (2002: 228-9).

<sup>29</sup> Kovacs (1994: 27 n.4) expresses doubts about the likelihood of the second but does not offer any argumentative support for his assumption that Aulus Gellius quotes Philochorus the historian.

<sup>30</sup> For the titles of Philochorus' writings, see T1 *FGrHist* (= Costa T1 = *Suda* Φ441). Philochorus' studies *On the plots of Sophocles* (Περὶ τῶν Σοφοκλέους μύθων) and *On Euripides* (Περὶ Εὐριπίδου) are unfortunately lost to us, as is his work on Salamis. A report of Philochorus' refutation of the comedians' allegations against Euripides that his mother was a vegetable-seller, is preserved in the *Suda* lexicon s.v. Εὐριπίδης.

Gellius are likely to have ironic connotations.<sup>31</sup> Pausch, while conceding that the mention of autopsy might just be a literary strategy of verification,<sup>32</sup> suggests that the notion of a *Bildungsreise* evoked by Gellius refers to an important phenomenon of the time and as such gives a covert advice to his readers. In Pausch's reading, Gellius uses the mention of his autopsy as an *exemplum* of a socially successful way of dropping one's travel experience in conversation. This is a challenging reading but at other instances Gellius ridicules less elegant ways of boasting about one's education, and marks them as a beginner's mistake.<sup>33</sup>

There is yet another dimension to Gellius' use of autopsy in the Euripides-chapter of his *Attic Nights*. In Lucian's *How to write History*, with which Gellius may well have been familiar, the feature of autopsy is used to mark the discontinuous and mock-historical way of transmitting information about the past. Gellius seems to use the remark about his autopsy in the *Attic Nights* in a similar way.<sup>34</sup> If my reading of the passage is correct, the seemingly harmless remark 'which we have seen' (*quam nos vidimus*, 15.20.5) could offer a key to a more subtle and ironic mode of the text which was guaranteed to prove entertaining to the educated reader who knew his Lucian and was familiar with the problem of autopsy in Greek historiographical narrative.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See Keulen's short but instructive section on 'autopsy and fiction' (Keulen 2004: 239-40) and Keulen (2009). For the *topos* of autopsy in mock-historical and satirical literature – a good example is Lucian's *True Story* 26 –, see Möllendorff (2000: 53-4). For Euripides' questioning of the value of autopsy reports in *Suppliant Women*, see Marincola (1997: 68).

<sup>32</sup> Pausch (2004: 185) argues that such an autopsy could be 'imaginary' as well as 'real'.

<sup>33</sup> The passages are listed in Pausch (2004: 186 n.219).

<sup>34</sup> As Schepens (Schepens 1980: 19) has observed, by the time of Lucian the concept of autopsy has become a cliché of historiography that could no longer be taken seriously. On the strategy of 'not-history' in the biographies of Suetonius, see Wallace-Hadrill's discussion 'Between lives and history' (1983: 8-10).

<sup>35</sup> See Vessey (1994) for an appreciation of the subtlety and intelligent entertainment in Gellius' *Attic Nights*. Two points emphasised by Vessey should especially be borne in mind when reading Gellius: (1) 'Gellius rarely, if ever, neglected style' (Vessey 1994: 1890) and (2) 'The 'Attic Nights' are not conducive to the acquisition of a 'smattering' of knowledge. While keeping the reader awake and amused, they instil and exemplify a discipline, engender thought.'

The picture of the lonely poet composing tragedies in a cave on Salamis is followed by a description of Euripides' alleged misogyny, also mentioned in Satyrus. Unfortunately, Gellius does not give us any information about his sources, but – not unlike Satyrus in the *Bios Euripidou* – merely refers to them with a *'dicitur'* ('it is said'). Attempting to give an explanation for the rumour, Gellius seems to draw once more from unspecified sources. In his *'sive quod [...] sive quod'* ('be it because [...] or be it because [...]'), he supplies his readers with two possible explanations without actually giving preference to either of them. Typical of Gellius' method is the verification of an element by reference to some 'hard facts' outside the literary world, such as the cave he has seen or a law he can refer to, as in his description of the alleged bigamy of Euripides. With his remark 'which was actually lawful among the Athenians' (*cum id decreto ab Atheniensibus facto ius esset*, 15.20.6) Gellius (perhaps ironically) introduces a legal explanation for the two wives of Euripides, which in later sources (in the first section of the *Genos Euripidou* and in the *Suda*) were said to have been cases of serial monogamy rather than simultaneous marriages.

Gellius probably altered the less spectacular version of Euripides' re-marrying into a narration of bigamy for reasons of entertainment, perhaps for the entertainment of the legal expert. He continues:

*Alexander autem Aetolus hos de Euripide versus composuit:*

ὁ δ' Ἀναξαγόρου τρόφιμος χαίου στρυφνός μὲν ἔμοιγε  
προσειπεῖν  
καὶ μισογέλωσ καὶ τωθάζειν οὐδὲ παρ' οἶνον μεμαθηκώς,  
ἀλλ' ὅ τι γράψειεν ἅπαν μέλιτος καὶ Σειρήνων ἐπεπνεύκει.

*Is, cum in Macedonia apud Archelaum regem esset utereturque eo rex familiariter, rediens nocte ab eius cena canibus a quodam aemulo*

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displace ignorance and raise doubts about received ideas.' (Vessey 1994: 1894). The latter is an important warning for those who want to classify Gellius simply as a typical second century writer interested in 'educating' his readers by way of providing them with easily available knowledge.

*immissis dilaceratus est, et ex his vulneribus mors secuta est. Sepulchrum autem eius et memoriam Macedones eo dignati sunt honore, ut in gloriae quoque loco praedicarent· οὐποτε σὸν μνήμα, Εὐριπίδες, ὄλοιτό πον,<sup>36</sup> quod egregius poeta morte obita sepultus in eorum terra foret. Quamobrem cum legati ad eos ab Atheniensibus missi petissent, ut ossa Athenas in terram illius patriam permitterent transferri, maximo consensu Macedones in ea re deneganda perstiterunt.*

But Alexander Aetolus composed the following verses about Euripides:

He who is fed and nourished by Anaxagoras for my taste talks with a sour breath, doesn't like to laugh and does not know how to jest - not even over a glass of wine. But whatever he wrote, it had all the fragrance of honey and Sirens.

He, however, when he was in Macedonia at the court of King Archelaus, and the king treated him in a very friendly way, was returning one night from the king's dinner and was torn into pieces by the dogs that were set on him by some rival. And from these wounds followed his death. But his tomb and memory the Macedonians so kept in honour that they have – as if on the tomb – a saying there: “never, Euripides, shall your memory perish in any way”, since an outstanding poet had been buried in their land after his death. When then ambassadors, sent to them by the Athenians, asked for permission that the bones should be transferred to Athens into his native land, the Macedonians unanimously agreed that the request should be refused.

There are several possible reasons why Gellius should have chosen Alexander Aetolus as a reference, why he chose to quote him explicitly rather than anonymously, and why he chose to put this quotation near the end of his passage about Euripides.

First, the mention of the name of Alexander Aetolus implied for the educated reader a fairly transparent allusion to both Satyrus and the Ptolemies. Alexander Aetolus, a Hellenistic scholar and tragedian, was the son of Satyrus (so the *Suda* informs us) and spent some time at the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, where he was commissioned with the arrangement of tragedies and satyr-plays.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Kovacs (1994: 28 n.4) adds: fort. οὐποτε <μη> σὸν μνήμ', Εὐριπίδη, <ἐνθάδ'> ὄληται.

<sup>37</sup> See *Suda* α 1127 and, for Alexander's professional engagement, *Vita Arati* 2.323.6-8 *Maass* (= T 1 and T 4 *Magnelli*) and Tzetzes' *De comoed.* 1.1-7.22-3 *Koster* (= T 7 *Magnelli*). We know of Aetolus' background mainly through Athenaeus. He also allegedly wrote a piece on Patroclus' youth. Apparently he presented himself as an authority on Euripides to his contemporaries, probably created the first edition of Euripides' tragedies (see Carrara 2007: 251) and was possibly also in charge of the alphabetical ordering of the plays by Euripides (see

Secondly, Alexander Aetolus' *Muses* comprised a selection of literary master-pieces.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, quoting Alexander Aetolus could have served Gellius as a model for his own writing, and dropping his name could evoke the notion of literary excellence in connection with Euripides. Aetolus' account ties Euripides' alleged misogyny and secluded life as a hermit back to Euripides' education and training with Anaxagoras. The passage suggests that Euripides did not like to laugh and had a sour breath (a feature already mentioned in Satyrus, fr.39 XX, which was probably used to describe the sour manner Euripides acquired by mingling with the 'wrong' people).<sup>39</sup> It further suggests that Gellius is convinced of the divine status of Euripides' poetry, however unsociable Euripides' behaviour may have been.<sup>40</sup>

Gellius' use of sources is interesting and has kept scholars busy over several decades. The lines he attributes here to Alexander Aetolus are elsewhere attributed to Aristophanes. Holford-Strevens assumes that Gellius used second-hand material rather uncritically and may have inherited a mistaken attribution of the lines to Alexander Aetolus from his source.<sup>41</sup> However, Lloyd-Jones has shown that Gellius probably had access to a full

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Carrara 2007: 254). As such, Alexander Aetolus could have been a key figure for the transmission of Euripidean poetry both at the court of Pella and at Alexandria.

<sup>38</sup> For a brief discussion of the *Muses* and its possible contents, see Magnelli (1999: 21-3); for the fragments, see F 4-9 Magnelli (1999: 92-95) and his commentary (1999: 188-247). The passage quoted in Gellius 15.20.8 is F 7 Magnelli.

<sup>39</sup> The graphic description of Euripides as μισογέλως makes use of a 'hapax assoluto' (Magnelli 1999: 299) which could be equally well-placed in a text by Aristophanes as in one by Alexander Aetolus. On Euripides' alleged sour breath which is probably a metonymical expression of the *verba acerba* in his tragedies, see fr.158 K.-A.; for the honey of the sirens in Alexander Aetolus' verses, see Arrighetti (1964: 143-5), Lloyd-Jones (1994: 376).

<sup>40</sup> See Gellius' introduction of the imagery of honey. Like most of his readers, Gellius was aware of the far-reaching tradition of this imagery. Honey appears as 'heavenly dew' in Arist. *Hist. an.* 553 b 29-30. As the nectar of poets and an infallible indicator for poetic talent sanctified by the immortals honey is also a key element in the biographical tradition on Pindar and Homer: see, for instance, the report that a bee built a honeycomb in Pindar's mouth when he was still a boy and had fallen asleep on Mount Helicon (*Vit. Pind.* fr. 16-9) – a story also told of Plato (see Riginos 1976 §3) – or the description of a bronze statue of Homer from late antiquity which claims that 'a Pierian bee wandered about his divine mouth, producing a dripping honeycomb' (*AP* 3.42-3).

<sup>41</sup> Holford-Strevens (1988: 115).

biographical narrative about Euripides, possibly the one written by Satyrus. He thinks the lines have been ascribed to Alexander Aetolus by accident and are in fact taken from Aristophanes. Kock also published the quotation as Ar. fr. 676 b.<sup>42</sup>

Rudolf Kassel assumed that the name Alexander Aetolus meant nothing to the Byzantine scribe who then, in the *Genos Euripidou*, changed the name into Aristophanes,<sup>43</sup> while Magnelli (1999: 223 n.241) suggests as ‘una soluzione di comodo’ the possibility that the lines may have been by Aristophanes originally, and as such found their way into the *Genos Euripidou*, while Aristophanes could have been quoted by Alexander Aetolus and that this quotation then found its way through him into Gellius’ *Attic Nights*.<sup>44</sup>

It seems to me that the solutions suggested to resolve the discrepancy between the quotation in Gellius and the attribution of the lines to Aristophanes in the *Genos Euripidou* might benefit from yet another consideration, namely that of the possible audiences of both texts and hence the possible allusions behind the texts which quote the passage. While Gellius has, as I have shown above, a literary interest in evoking Satyrus and the court poets of the Ptolemies by quoting Alexander Aetolus, the *Genos Euripidou*, as part of its general agenda to quote and refute the allegations made against Euripides by the comedians, attributes the lines to Aristophanes, so as to measure its own account against that of Euripides’ contemporary.<sup>45</sup>

The image of the Sirens hints at two other issues. It hints at the fact that Euripides was often defeated in contest, just as the Sirens were by the

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<sup>42</sup> Lloyd-Jones (1994: 375-6).

<sup>43</sup> Kassel (1983: 54-5).

<sup>44</sup> Magnelli (1999: 223 n.241).

Muses.<sup>46</sup> And it refers to the topic of death.<sup>47</sup> As a result, the sweetness of Euripides' poetry is elegantly and almost tragicomically linked with his tragic death, which, according to Gellius who does not specify his sources any further, took place after a dinner with the Macedonian king. The notion of Euripides' death and the everlasting glory of Euripides' poetry dates of course back to Hellenistic strands in the biographical tradition on Euripides.

Euripides' legendary death was a stock feature of the biographical tradition by the time of the Second Sophistic. However, the legend that the dogs 'were set on him by some rival' seems to be original to the text of Gellius, as does the detailed description of how the Macedonians worshipped the poet and even kept a saying in memory of this worship in their language. The description of the ambassadors sent by the Athenians and humiliated by the Macedonians equally turns up only in this text. The rival who sent the fierce and deadly dogs against Euripides is specified in a later source, where Apostolius has it that a slave of Archelaus by the name of Promerus initiated the murder of Euripides.<sup>48</sup> This version of the story may have been motivated by several ancient sources, one of which could be a passage in Plutarch running:

Ἀρχέλαος αἰτηθεὶς παρὰ πότον ποτήρον χρυσοῦν ὑπὸ  
τινος τῶν συνήθων οὐ μὴν ἐπεικῶν ἐκέλευσεν  
Εὐριπίδῃ τὸν παῖδα δοῦναι· θαυμάσαντος δὲ τοῦ  
ἀνθρώπου, 'σὺ μὲν γάρ', εἶπεν, 'αἰτεῖν, οὗτος δὲ  
λαμβάνειν ἄξιός ἐστι καὶ μὴ αἰτῶν'.<sup>49</sup>

When at a wine-party Archelaus was asked for a gold cup by one of the guests, who was unreasonable, he gave orders to his guest to hand the cup to Euripides and as the slave was

<sup>45</sup> For a full discussion of the linguistic and metrical arguments that could made the lines Aristophanic rather than Hellenistic, see Magnelli (1999: 224-7) who unlike Lloyd-Jones is not convinced that the text has to be Aristophanic.

<sup>46</sup> See *Ap. Rhod. Arg.* 4.909-15 and Pollard (1952: 60-3).

<sup>47</sup> For the traditional connection of the Sirens with death, see Buschor (1944), Hofstetter (1990), Bäbler (2001) and Wunderlich (2007).

<sup>48</sup> *Apostolius* 14.83 *Paroemiogr. Gr.* (Leutsch ii 624) = Kovacs T 65.

<sup>49</sup> [Plut.] *Regum et imper. Apothegm.* 177 a (= Kovacs T 62)

taken by surprise said [to the guest]: “You are worthy to ask for it, but he is worthy to receive it, even without having asked for it.”

Gellius’ choice of introducing Alexander Aetolus as a source he places in his own text was, as I have shown above, a deliberate and appropriate one. With Alexander Aetolus, Gellius not only created a connection to Satyrus and the *Bios Euripidou* but also to the Ptolemies and the reception and canonization of Euripidean tragedy in Hellenistic times. And, as Marco Fantuzzi has recently shown, Alexander Aetolus perfectly embodies the Hellenistic period as an age of transition, which may further have contributed to Gellius’ choice of Alexander Aetolus.<sup>50</sup>

### **3. The *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry on Euripides**

The title of the *Attic Nights* was, as Gellius himself tells us, chosen to highlight the context of their production and to make its readers think of the midnight oil of many nights spent in the course of writing them. But what are the connotations behind the title of the *Genos Euripidou*? Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff argued that the title γένος characterises a literary project of less ambition than a βίος and jokingly called his own sketch of the life of Euripides ‘a γένος Εὐριπίδου only’.<sup>51</sup> However, this assumption has not gone unchallenged, and we have no solid evidence that ancient biographers preferred one title over the other, or that a γένος was seen as a work of less depth and seriousness than a βίος. As a matter of fact, the full title given by Byzantine scholars to the *Genos Euripidou* runs: Γένος Εὐριπίδου καὶ βίος.

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<sup>50</sup> Fantuzzi (2000: 122).

<sup>51</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1867: 1-2).

In *Frogs* 946, Dionysus jokingly refers to the γένος of Euripides.<sup>52</sup> By using the buzz-word γένος he may be referring not only to the lengthy genealogies of the prologues in Euripidean tragedy parodied a few lines later but also to much comic derision of the tragedian, his ‘private life’, that is: the jokes about his mother and the allegations concerning his wife and his slave Cephisophon. At the same time, the buzz-word γένος also seems to refer to the γένος of Euripidean tragedy.

The choice of the title *Genos Euripidou* for a collection of biographical sketches of the poet can draw on both traditions, as the readers of such biographical sketches about Euripides were undoubtedly familiar with Aristophanes and the usual allegations against Euripides concerning his life and the style of his tragedies. The title *Genos Euripidou*, then, could perhaps be called a ‘mock-title’. We have to keep in mind, however, that the title Γένος Εὐριπίδου is not as such in any way unusual for a biographical treatise. We know, for example, that Carystius wrote a Γένος Σοφοκλέους καὶ βίος.<sup>53</sup>

The text of the *Genos Euripidou* can be divided into three parts. The first part (1-20 Kovacs = IA+IB Kannicht ) gives a summary of Euripides’ life in a chronological fashion, the second part (21-31 Kovacs = II Kannicht) elaborates the story of Euripides’ death with the help of anecdotes and quotations, and the final part (32-38 Kovacs = III Kannicht) includes criticism

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<sup>52</sup>The line is spoken as an interruption of a little speech by Euripides, in which he discusses the reformation of the genre (γένος) of tragedy. Euripides describes the genre of tragedy as an obese woman, who is in urgent need of medical advice. It is not unlikely that by the imagery evoked the ‘meagreness’ or even ‘slavish thinness’ of Euripidean tragedy [i.e. its style] are ridiculed in contrast to the bombast of Aeschylean tragedy. Some interpreters even claim that Euripides’ mother represents Euripides’ origins and hence also the γένος of his tragedies. See Fornaro (1979: 22): ‘la madre è anche [...] il γένος (nascimento e natura) dell’uomo e perciò del poeta.’ – an interpretation I do not find very convincing. The palimpsest-like, unorthodox and seemingly chaotic structure of many Euripidean plots, however, may have been echoed in the structure of the *Genos*. It was certainly echoed in the allegations made against Euripides with regard to his private life. On the dynamics of which see Fornaro (1979: 18-23) who sums up the development of the metaphor of the mother of Euripides as ‘prima metafora clinica, poi metafora sessuale.’ (1979: 21).

of Euripides' work, mainly concerning the prologues of Euripidean tragedies.<sup>54</sup> While the first and second part seem influenced by Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* and draw on some of the material which is also used by Gellius, the last part of the *Genos Euripidou* seems to have used predominantly the information on Euripides provided by Old Comedy and the Hellenistic epigrams.

The first part of Euripides' origins and life expands the narrative we already found in Gellius. Euripides' father is now said to be a shopkeeper (κάπηλος) by the name of Mnesarchides, married to a vegetable-seller by the name of Cleito, who we already know from the pseudo-Euripidean letters. This information is partly repeated in the *Suda* lexicon. However, the author of the *Suda* entry refuses to accept the tradition that Euripides' mother was a vegetable-seller, and quotes Philochorus – almost as a counter-quotation to Gellius' citation of Theopompus – to prove it wrong (Kovacs T 2.2 = Kannicht T 3.1):

Οὐκ ἀληθὲς δέ, ὡς λαχανόπωλις ἦν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ· καὶ γὰρ τῶν σφόδρα εὐγενῶν ἐτύγχανεν, ὡς ἀποδείκνυσι Φιλόχορος [FGrHist 328 F 218]

'It is not true that his mother was a vegetable-seller. In fact, she happened to belong to a very noble family, as Philochorus demonstrates.

The first part of the *Genos Euripidou* then explains allegations about collaboration concerning Euripides' work and gives the names of Mnesilochus, Socrates, Cephisophon and Timocrates of Argos as supposed candidates for poetic collaboration. It also gives an account of other achievements and positions held by Euripides. These include his career as a painter, the fact that

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<sup>53</sup> See Bagordo (1998: 57).

<sup>54</sup> This explains how Delcourt (1933: 272) could come to the conclusion that 'l'auteur de la notice *Genos III* paraît avoir eu de l'esprit critique.'

his pictures were on exhibition in Megara, and the rumours that he held custody at a sacred site of Apollo Zosterius and was a πρόξευος of Magnesia.

The first part of the *Genos Euripidou* counts Euripides' artistic achievements as 92 plays, of which 78 are said to have survived and three to be apocryphal, and, again quoting Philochorus, has the playwright die at the age of 70, but also quotes Eratosthenes for an alternative calculation (75 years).<sup>55</sup> It then mentions Euripides' burial in Macedonia, his cenotaph in Athens and the epigram alleged to have been written by either Thucydides or Timotheus, reports that both Euripides' grave and his cenotaph were struck by lightning and that Sophocles was said to have showed himself and the chorus of his play publicly in mourning at a *proagôn* in Athens as he heard of Euripides' death.<sup>56</sup>

The second part of the *Genos Euripidou* seems a condensed version of the biographical information about Euripides presented in the first section and resembles the school-exercise of a summary. After stating the origins of the poet ('son of Mnesarchides, Athenian')<sup>57</sup>, it refers the most common anecdotes as well as short comments on their origins. A sentence about the fifth-century comedians and the fact that they made fun of Euripides by calling his mother a vegetable-seller is followed by a brief survey of other information about Euripides regarding his career.<sup>58</sup>

The report of Euripides' educational background is followed by two interesting comments. On the consequences of the philosophical influences on

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<sup>55</sup> On the importance of Alexandria and the Ptolemies for the transmission of the work of Philochorus, see Costa (2007: 5-6).

<sup>56</sup> A similar version of this story is given in the *Gnomologium Vaticanum*: Σοφοκλῆς ὁ τῶν τραγωδιῶν ποιητῆς ἀκούσας Εὐριπίδην ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ τεθνηκέναι εἶπεν ἄπώλετο ἡ ἐμῶν ποιημάτων ἀκόνη. ('The tragedian Sophocles said, when he heard that Euripides had died in Macedonia: 'I have lost the whetstone for my compositions.').

<sup>57</sup> Εὐριπίδης Μνησαρχίδου Ἀθηναῖος, Test. IB.1 Kannicht.

<sup>58</sup> 'They say that he was first a painter, and that he was educated by the philosophers Archelaus and Anaxagoras before dedicating his time completely to the production of tragedies.' (φασὶ

Euripides, the author of our passage in the *Genos Euripidou* writes: ‘This was to his disadvantage, as much as it was an advantage for Sophocles’.<sup>59</sup> With respect to the popularity of Euripides with the comic poets, he remarks: ‘The comic poets attacked him without any mercy because they were jealous of him’. Euripides’ move to Macedonia is explained with the words: ‘Being above all these things, he left for Macedonia’. The third part of the *Genos Euripidou* narrates the poet’s death in Macedonia in a rather unexcited, and un-sensational manner: ‘and there he was killed by the king’s dogs as he returned home rather late one night.’

After this one sentence about Euripides’ move to, and death in, Macedonia, the author of the passage dedicates the remaining half of the mini-biography to Euripides’ work, lists his victories, peculiarities of his style, and gives the number of plays written as ‘92, of which 67 survive and three are spurious’. We can note that the number of surviving plays has diminished from 78 (as mentioned in the first section of the *Genos Euripidou*) to 67. It therefore seems apt to assume that the third part of the *Genos Euripidou* is significantly younger than the first part.

The second part of the *Genos* does not mention Euripides’ poetic achievements at all but seems far more interested in the gossip surrounding his death and the allegations made against him by the comedians. Delcourt noted that the second part of the *Genos* shows a significant proximity to the account of Euripides’ life as we find it in Satyrus’ *Bios Euripidou*. As a result of her analysis she comes to the conclusion that the interpretation of the material presented in both accounts is different. The presentation of Euripides’ life,

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δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ ζωγράφον γένεσθαι καὶ δείκνυσθαι αὐτοῦ πινάκια ἐν Μεγάροις, Test. IA.4 Kannicht).

Delcourt writes, is ‘plus sarcastique dans le *Genos*, plus admirative dans Satyrus’.<sup>60</sup> I have two objections against Delcourt’s interpretation. First, my analysis of Satyrus’ *Bios Euripidou* has shown that the approach of this dialogic text can hardly be called ‘admirative’. More importantly, however, I think that the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* is not sarcastic but rather sensationalist and tailored to the tastes of audiences of popular literature. Perhaps, therefore, the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* had originally been composed for an audience in the Second Sophistic.

The comparison with earlier biographical representations of Euripides shows that the author of the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* seems to have embellished the story about Euripides’ death by adding sensationalist details such as the Molossian dogs and Euripides’ alleged enemies to the inherited kernel of the narrative.<sup>61</sup> The fact that Molossian dogs allegedly functioned as watch-dogs for the sleeping rooms of females in antiquity perhaps motivated the choice of the writer of the second section.<sup>62</sup>

The main focus of the third section is on gossip and anything extraordinary and sensationalist: the passage starts out with Euripides’ death (‘He died in the following manner’)<sup>63</sup> and reports the event in great detail, not without mentioning a Thracian custom of sacrificing and eating dogs – an act which, allegedly, Archelaus fined with a talent. As some Thracian culprits were

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<sup>59</sup> διὸ παρὰ τοσοῦτον αὐτὸν ἔβλαπτε τοῦτο ὅσον ὠφέλει τὸν Σοφοκλέα, Test. IB2 Kannicht.

<sup>60</sup> Delcourt (1933: 287).

<sup>61</sup> The Molossian dogs were in antiquity well known for their ferocity and said to have been descended from Cerberus. See Merlen (1971: 39) for the Molossian dogs in ancient literature, see, for instance, Horace’s *Epode* 6 and Diog. Laert. 6.55.

<sup>62</sup> See Orth (1910: 2548) for the use of Molossian dogs as watch-dogs over females. The Molossian dog turns up in another snippet which attests to the conflation of anecdotes. It is preserved in Diogenes Laertius 4.20 and claims (with regard to a certain Polemon who was fond of Sophoclean tragedy): κύων τις ἐδόκει συμποεῖν Μολοττικός (‘A molossian mastiff seemed to help him write’).

<sup>63</sup> ἔτελεύτησε δὲ τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον, Test. IB.1 Kannicht.

unable to pay the fine, they asked Euripides to convince the king that they needed to be forgiven. The story reminds us of Euripides' alleged intervention on behalf of two culprits as reported in the pseudo-Euripidean letters. The death of the playwright is in this middle section of the *Genos* narrated in the following manner: Euripides is said to have waited for Archelaus in the forest outside the gates of the city, when he was attacked and devoured by the king's dogs. As the dogs were the offspring of a dog that had been killed by the Thracians, the event is explained as the origin of the Macedonian saying 'a dog's justice' – a saying we already saw mentioned in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*.<sup>64</sup>

The second section of the *Genos* then continues to narrate the story of Euripides' cave on Salamis. The cave is used as a starting point to explain some of the poet's character traits as well as features of his tragedies: '[...] in which he lived to stay away from the masses', 'This is why the majority of his similes is taken from the sea', 'He was pensive, serious and an enemy to laughter.'<sup>65</sup> An expression quoted from Alexander Aetolus by Gellius reappears as a remark by Aristophanes, and events in Euripides' private life are connected with the plots of his tragedies, which culminates in the observation that 'as he discovered that his second wife was even less faithful than the first one had been, he continued to slander the women in his plays even worse.'<sup>66</sup>

This remarkable interpretation of the interaction between life and work leads the author of the second section of the *Genos Euripides* again to Euripides' death. The women, he narrates, decided to kill him while he was in

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<sup>64</sup> See pp. 181-85 above for a detailed discussion.

<sup>65</sup> ἐκεῖσε διημερεύειν φεύγοντα τὸν ὄχλον. ὅθεν καὶ ἐκ θαλάσσης λαμβάνει τὰς πλείους τῶν ὁμοιώσεων. συθπρωπὸς δὲ καὶ σύννους καὶ αὐστηρὸς ἐφαίνετο καὶ μισόγελως, Test II.1 Kannicht.

<sup>66</sup> λέγουσι δὲ αὐτὸν γήμαντα τὴν Μνησιλόχου θυγατέρα Χοιρίλην καὶ νοήσαντα τὴν ἀκολασίαν αὐτῆς γράψαι πρῶτον τὸ δράμα τὸν Ἴπολυτον, Test. III.2. Kannicht.

his cave, writing his tragedies. The mention of the tragedies, then, leads our author to Cephisophon and his supposed share in the artistic production of his master. This is immediately followed by the anecdote of Dionysius' purchase of Euripides' harp, table and pen. The story is instructive, as it contributes to our understanding of ruler cults and the cult of poets in the cultural contexts of literary patronage. But it also provides us with important insights into the connections between the cult of poets and the selection and transmission of canonized text by the scholars and poets of Hellenistic times. The biographical interest of these scholar-poets and their audiences probably played a major role in this complex process of reception and canonization.<sup>67</sup> The second part of the *Genos Euripidou* ends with the famous quotation from Philemon ('if the dead really have senses, I would hang myself to see Euripides'), which is explained as an expression of Philemon's love for Euripides.

Interestingly, the number of Euripides' plays is not mentioned in the second part of the *Genos Euripidou*. In fact, the author of this part of the narrative, who seems so interested in Euripides' legendary death and Dionysius' acquisition of his writing instruments only refers to Euripides' work as he describes the poet as composing similes taken from the imagery of the sea in his cave on Salamis, and as he describes his private afflictions as the alleged motivation to write a certain line in the play *Hippolytus*. Hence, the focus of the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* is entirely on Euripides the man as almost separate from his work, while the first and last part of the *Genos* display a certain historical interest in Euripides, and go beyond the 'romanticising' approach of the second part by establishing historical dates (the

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<sup>67</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the story about Dionysius I. see pp. 167-69 above.

archonship of Calliades (T 1.2) and Callias in the first part (T 1. 15 Kovacs), which is repeated in the third part (T1.36 Kovacs).

The third part of the *Genos Euripidou* resembles the first part by placing Euripides' first appearance as a tragedian in the archonship of Callias. By not repeating the historical fixation of Euripides' birth at the time of Callidas and the battle of Salamis, as the first part of the *Genos* has it, the third part of the *Genos Euripidou* proves more critical than its predecessor. We can perhaps say that the synchronism of the birth of Euripides with the battle of Salamis seemed attractive to the author and the audience at the time the first part was produced, while it was less so for the author and audience at the time the last part of the *Genos* was produced.

It seems likely that a connection of Euripides' birth with the battle of Salamis in the first part of the *Genos* was politically motivated, in other words the author of the first part perhaps tried to make sure the tragedian would be connected with an historically important date in the collective memory of Athens in the mind of his readers. This seems no longer to have been of interest for either the author of the second nor the author of the third part of the *Genos*. Rather, the political interest seems to have shifted from an Athenocentric view to a perspective which includes *Magna Grecia* and Macedonia (in the second part) and a perspective that seems almost politically and geographically neutral as it focuses on Euripides' work. This movement from an Athenocentric perspective on Euripides and his work to a Panhellenic account of his life and, finally, a geographically detached sketch of some characteristics of his work mirrors on a microscopic level the development of the biographical representation of Euripides more generally: after the metonymic synopsis of Euripides and his work in the depictions of Old and Middle Comedy, the

interest of the Hellenistic accounts shifted entirely towards the life and the death of Euripides as an outstanding individual, while later accounts, starting, perhaps, already with Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* around 200 BC, discuss the qualities of his plays separately from his plays.

Euripides' birth is connected with the battle of Salamis in both the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry. The *Suda* lexicon explains Euripides' movement from the teachings of Anaxagoras to the production of tragedies as a result of the poet's realisation of the 'dangers' of Sophistic education (ἰδὼν ὑποστάντα κινδύνους δι' ἅπερ εἰσῆξε δόγματα). Unique to the *Suda* entry on Euripides is the suggestion that Euripides' parents were asylum-seekers from Boeotia (Εὐριπίδης Μνησαρχίδου καὶ Κλειτοῦς, οἱ φεύγοντες εἰς Βοιωτίαν μετώκησαν), a detail which could have been invented either to explain the preoccupation with the topic of exile and social exclusion in Euripidean tragedies, or to stress the wide appeal of Euripidean tragedy or for yet another reason entirely.<sup>68</sup> Before the *Suda* entry continues to narrate more details about Macedonia and the circumstances of Euripides' death, it describes Euripides' melancholic character, his secluded life and misogyny, and his first and second marriage. Euripides' death is described in the *Suda* as the result of a conspiracy of the Macedonian Arrhibius and the Thessalian Crateuas, who are said to have been jealous fellow-poets at the court of King Archelaus and to have induced one of the king's slaves to murder Euripides with the help of the royal hounds.

The *Suda* also gives alternative readings for the murder of Euripides, such as being murdered by angry women because he was in love with either a

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<sup>68</sup> The possible sources for this statement could have been Nicolaus of Damascus whose ὁ Εὐριπίδου πατήρ, Βοιωτὸς ὢν τὸ γένος is quoted in Stobaeus' *Florilegium* (Stob. *Flor.* 2.187.17); see Daub (1881: 261).

lover of Archelaus of the name Craterus or, according to others, with someone else's wife. Euripides' age at his death is calculated as 75 years and the transfer of his bones to Pella is mentioned, before the lexicon entry ends with an account of the number of his tragedies (92, of which 77 survive), victories (5, of which one with *Bacchae*, which is said to have been produced posthumously by his nephew) and gives the complete stretch of his artistic productivity as running over 22 years.

#### 4. The Function of the texts

In Gellius' passage on Euripides, several genres, intentions, and narrative techniques are combined with each other. Gellius could assume that the audience of his *Attic Nights* would be familiar with the anecdotes about Euripides and his work, as well as with the structure of historical and biographical narratives and the *chreia*. However, Gellius' narrative goes far beyond any classroom exercise and handbook information, as he challenges his readers to receive the presented material attentively and critically.<sup>69</sup>

Knowledge about the tragic poet Euripides may have served some of the readers of the *Attic Nights* as a useful tool in light conversation and a mark of distinction, wit and education in encounters with *docti* and *nobiles*.<sup>70</sup> However, my contention is that this effect of the *Attic Nights*, and the Euripides passage in particular, is not their only function. Current research on the writings of Gellius suggests, rather, that Gellius' *Attic Nights* go far beyond any other educated and educating prose account of the past in that period. In fact, a close reading of the text shows that the Roman miscellanist chose what

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<sup>69</sup> This has already been noted by Pausch (2004: 169). On the importance of the *chreia* as a model for Gellius see Pausch (2004: 168-70).

<sup>70</sup> See Pausch (2004: 160-1) for a similar observation in this context.

he wanted to include in his narrative of the *Attic Nights* very carefully and that he selected the ways in which he wanted to present literary material to his audience with a highly ironic and satirical agenda on his mind.

The function of the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry, are different. The three sections of the *Genos Euripidou* convey three different ways of telling the story of Euripides' life, while the *Suda* entry comments on previous accounts and refutes the common notion that Euripides' mother was of low origin. But the anonymous contributors to the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry also add some new twists to the transmitted anecdotes about Euripides' life.

And their choice of sources seems revealing. The *Genos Euripidou* names Philochorus, possibly its main source, Eratosthenes' *Chronographia* and the writings of Hermippus of Smyrna. All of these sources are Hellenistic, which supports my contention that the main transformation of biographical representations of Euripides took place in the late fourth and third century BC. It also supports my assumption that the 'Macedonian narrative' regarding Euripides' last years and his death in Macedonia rather than Athens, took its final shape in Hellenistic times and was from Hellenistic times onward treated as an integral part of the biographical tradition.

Contributors to the *Genos Euripidou* and the lexicon entry of the *Suda* repeat, supplement, and condense the information available to them. But although the *Suda* lexicon was compiled only a thousand years ago, its ancient editors could probably still draw on biographical information about Euripides from many more sources than we can today. In the case of Euripides we are perhaps luckier than in other cases, but it can generally be assumed that a

considerable amount of the information that was still accessible at Byzantium is now lost.<sup>71</sup>

The *Genos Euripidou* can perhaps be read as an illustration of the continuous interest in adding information about Euripides, and as a reflection of the shifting perspectives in this interest, while the *Suda* entry represents a condensed form of information as it was thought practical and as befits the nature of a lexicon.

About the possible motives behind the production of the *Genos Euripidou* we can only speculate. We know, however, that it served as an introduction to Euripides and was transmitted with outlines of the plots of his plays, the so-called *hypotheseis*.<sup>72</sup> Not unlike the *hypotheseis* to his plays, the biographical representations of Euripides seem in the *Genos Euripidou* and in the *Suda* entry to have undergone constant change, and, finally, a process of abridgement, expansion and fusion, losing some precious accounts of the erudition but acquiring new details which were regarded as relevant by successive readers.

Both the *Genos Euripidou* and the *Suda* entry enable us to gauge how much is lost about ancient representations of Euripides. As they stand in dialogue with earlier material on the life of Euripides, these two texts serve as important corollaries to the texts discussed in chapters 1 to 4 of this thesis. The *Genos Euripidou* is, after all, the ‘document le plus complete’<sup>73</sup> we have about Euripides. And the fact that the *Suda* entry is our only source for the information that Euripides’ parents were exiled from Boeotia supports Herbert

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<sup>71</sup> On the problems surrounding the possible sources of the *Suda*, see Adler (1931: 706-10).

<sup>72</sup> On the *hypotheseis* to the plays of Euripides, the so-called *Tales from Euripides*, see van Rossum-Steenbeek’s important remark: ‘[...] all types of *hypp.* seem to have been written in addition to the texts of the plays, but we cannot exclude the possibility that the narrative *hypp.*

Hunger's assumption about the function of the lexicon as an *instrumentum studiorum* which aimed to offer more (and different) forms of information than other lexica at the time.<sup>74</sup>

## 5. Contribution to the biographical tradition

It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of Gellius and the *Genos Euripidou* for the ancient biographical tradition about Euripides. Gellius' decision to narrate the story of Euripides' parents and the 'career not followed' are, as far as we can see, unique to his text. Gellius' contention that he has seen the cave of Euripides with his own eyes also seems original to his work, and can perhaps be read as a remark on previous accounts of this cave as well as an ironical comment on the rhetorical use of 'autopsy' in ancient historiography.<sup>75</sup> Gellius, it seems, both parodies and manipulates modes of ancient biographical convention. This suggests that the Roman readers of his *Attic Nights* may have enjoyed an innovative approach to material with which they were, at least partly, already familiar with.

Gellius probably knew that a biographical sketch of Euripides would be well-received by his audience, since the tragedian was, after Homer, the second-most popular author in school and a popular author for the recitation of lyrical passages. Thus, the legendary material about Euripides, and his father's misinterpreting the real talents and future of his son, may have been of particular interest to his (real or imaginary) readers – especially so as Gellius in

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formed a convenient collection which enabled certain readers to obtain the desired knowledge without having to consult or read the original tragedies.' (1998: 52).

<sup>73</sup> Sauzeau (1998: 64 n.13).

<sup>74</sup> See Hunger (1991: 137).

<sup>75</sup> Anderson (1994: 1850-1) regards Gellius' comment on the cave as his only 'original' contribution to the biographical tradition of Euripides. Pausch (2004: 185-6) interprets the remark as an allusion to contemporary forms of the acquisition of information about the past,

the *prooemium* claims to have written the *Attic Nights* as a delightful ‘compendium of useful information’ for his children.

The contribution and motivation of the *Genos Euripidou*, which was transmitted together with the Euripidean tragedies, and the entry on Euripides in the Byzantine *Suda* lexicon, are by their very nature different from the contribution and motivation of the passage about Euripides in Gellius’ *Attic Nights*. All we can say with any certainty in the case of the *Genos Euripidou* is that its oldest layer must date back to the third, or perhaps even the fourth century BC and that the younger second and third part were probably composed in the period of the Second Sophistic and in Byzantine times. This rather pared-down account provides us with valuable information about the transmission of the interest in Euripides in post-Hellenistic times. In addition to that, the scope of the *Genos Euripidou* may tell us something about a shift in the interest of ancient readers of Euripidean tragedy.

The *Genos Euripidou* was perhaps even used for ‘biographising’ interpretations of the tragedies in Roman times.<sup>76</sup> Unlike the authors of earlier representations of Euripides, the anonymous authors of the *Genos Euripidou* seem not interested in sorting and critically assessing the biographical information about Euripides that was available to them. Equally in contrast to earlier accounts of Euripides’ life seems the interest of the *Genos Euripidou* in providing information about the physical features of Euripides. While Gellius shows no interest in Euripides’ features at all, the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* lengthily reports his moles, his beard, and his melancholic

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especially the popularity of the *grand tour* through Greece with the educated and financially independent Romans of the second century AD.

<sup>76</sup> Korenjak (2003) illustrates the enormous popularity of such a method and illustrates its dynamics for the case of Bucolic literature.

disposition.<sup>77</sup> Euripides' famous cave, as the ideal dwelling place of a poet with such a disposition, is mentioned by Gellius as well as in the *Genos* and the *Suda* entry. And the information about Euripides' cave is already part of the fictional dialogue about Euripides by Satyrus. Scholars are looking for Euripides' cave on Salamis even today.<sup>78</sup>

Euripides' cave on the island of Salamis had, I think, different functions at different stages of the biographical tradition. While in Satyrus we have not enough extant material to speculate about the possible function of a reference to the cave, one of the authors of the *Genos Euripidou* takes up the Cynic influence that pervades in the pseudo-Euripidean letters and uses Euripides' alleged cave on Salamis to illustrate the playwright's misanthropy. Aulus Gellius, on the other hand, uses the cave, and his claim to have seen it, to place a comment on the value of narratives of autopsy in his biographical representation of Euripides. And the idea of Euripides' cave on Salamis still fascinates scholars, as recent fieldwork and publications about a cave on Salamis illustrate. Similar to Demosthenes' legendary underground study, which Plutarch refers to in chapter 7 of his *Life of Demosthenes*, Euripides' cave provides the imagination with an imagery that sums up characteristic features later generations wishes to ascribe to the poet, and which enforce the myth of the gifted and hard-working writer.

How keen scholars are even today to place Euripides in a cave on Salamis, can be seen from the latest report of the ongoing archaeological excavations at the south tip of Salamis, opposite the island of Aegina. The report reads as follows:

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<sup>77</sup> Holford-Strevens (1997: 95-6) was the first to discover this 'blind spot' in Gellius' writings.

This cave, judging by the ancient literary sources (Philochorus, Satyros, the Anonymous Biographer of Euripides, and Aulus Gellius, Roman author of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ct AD) [...] can be identified with the famous retreat of Euripides, where he used to withdraw and write his dramatic plays. The coastal location of the cave ... in combination with its shape and general atmosphere, agrees, as no other site on the island, with the description of the cave of Euripides in the above-mentioned sources.<sup>79</sup>

The conclusion of this archaeological report that the cave in question ‘must’ be the cave of Euripides rests on two sorts of evidence. The evidence of the literary sources seems to have been used by the archaeologists in circular reasoning. Taking the (by no means univocal) words of Aulus Gellius, the *Genos Euripidou* and Satyrus at face value, the excavators saw in a cave on Salamis the cave of Euripides, and referred what they had found in it back to the literary sources of the ancient biographical tradition on Euripides. Secondly, archaeologists base their ascription of the cave to Euripides on the cullet of a vase which shows an inscription of the letters ‘ΕΥΡΙΠΠΙ-’, spelled, so the reading of the excavator, with two ‘Π’s. While Euripides was a common name in classical antiquity and thereafter (in fact, it still is today), the excavators seem unafraid of proclaiming the cultural significance of the cullet:

The inscription is of dedicatory or commemorative nature, and must be dated to the R period (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Ct AD). It seems that during this period the cave, clearly known from the local tradition, had become a place of pilgrimage in honour of the great tragic poet (cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, XV.20.5).

It is almost ironic that the excavator quote Aulus Gellius in their identification of Euripides’ cave, because it is Gellius who appears to be making his readers aware of drawing conclusion from too literal readings of ancient sources. Gellius’ description of Euripides’ behaviour as a husband is a good example of his attempts to encourage his readers to be critical of narrative

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<sup>78</sup> Some modern scholars try to connect the existence of a cave on Salamis with the biographical information about Euripides from antiquity. See Blackman (1997-8: 16-7), Lolos (1997: 4-6) and (2000: 9-65).

<sup>79</sup> Blackman (1997-8: 16).

accounts from the past. Both the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* and the entry in the *Suda* lexicon seem to enjoy accusations against Euripides concerning his alleged misogyny and adultery. Gellius, on the other hand, tries to rationalise, perhaps ironically so, the report of Euripides' remarriage by explaining them as simultaneous (and in accordance with the law at the time) rather than consecutive marriages. Gellius concludes his passage about Euripides and the women with a quotation from *Thesmophorizousae* – a narrative strategy which could have served as a signpost for the reader not to take any of his previous statements, especially his explanation of Euripides' two wives, too seriously.<sup>80</sup>

Unlike previous or later authors, Gellius chose not to narrate the end of Euripides' life in much detail. Especially his silence over the Macedonian saying which allegedly derived from it, has puzzled scholars, as it seems not in line with the antiquarian interests otherwise attested for Gellius' time and age. Gellius' narrative instead ends with the refusal of the Macedonians to return Euripides' bones to Athens, an ending which seems clever and well-designed rather than 'abrupt'.<sup>81</sup> By contrast, the authors of the *Genos*, and the author of the second part of the *Genos* especially, seem to delight in the minute description of Euripides' death just as they take delight in the description of Euripides' love affairs and of his physical features. A possible function of such a text could have been originally an educated resource describing the typical features of a famous historical character.

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<sup>80</sup> It is worth noting that Satyrus seems to have employed quotations from Old Comedy in a similar fashion. Gellius' concluding quotation could therefore be understood as a reference to Satyrus and the light-hearted tradition of writing biography and commenting on 'biographising' ways of interpreting Euripidean drama, and perhaps even literature more generally. See my discussion on pp. 154-56 and pp. 165-66 above for further details on this.

<sup>81</sup> Pausch (2004: 188) seems unhappy with what he calls an abrupt ending which is 'even more surprising than the unusual beginning of the passage'.

All in all, the narrative strategy of the *Genos Euripidou* seems less focused than that of the Euripides-passage in Gellius' *Attic Nights* or the lexicon-entry of the *Suda*. This greater flexibility and variety may be owed to the fact that the *Genos* was composed by several different authors and probably evolved over several centuries. The conditions for the production of the *Genos Euripidou*, therefore, may have been less orderly and systematic than that of other texts. The *Genos Euripidou* is (perhaps not unlike Euripidean tragedy) less unrefined and less sensational than the harsh criticisms in the history of its reception have us believe. I do not share Mary Lefkowitz' observations that 'duplication and inconsistency suggest that the *Vita* has undergone a long and deteriorating process of condensation'.<sup>82</sup> I hope to have shown instead that the three entirely different parts of the *Genos* can be understood as echoes of previous biographical representations of Euripides and as such reflect different stages in the biographical tradition of the playwright. All in all, I think modern interpreters of ancient texts should be careful when ascribing a process of 'inference and simplification' to textual material that may be more refined and more challenging than it may seem at first sight.<sup>83</sup>

In this final chapter of my thesis, I illustrated some of the aspects in which the account of Euripides in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* is characteristic for its time as well as its author, and suggested a new reading of the passage which is in line with recent appreciations of Gellius as a satirical writer.

In a critical close reading and reassessment of the *Genos Euripidou*, I argued for the possibility of a stylistic intention behind its unusual form and

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<sup>82</sup> Lefkowitz (1981: 8).

<sup>83</sup> See Lefkowitz (1981: 89) who claims 'a similar process of inference and simplification' for almost all the material she analyses.

its seemingly conventional title. I suggested that the different styles in different sections could reflect a mimicking of earlier biographical accounts of Euripides, even if we cannot be sure when and where the different sections were composed or connected with each other.

The analysis of the biographical entry on Euripides in the Byzantine *Suda* lexicon illustrated how the restrictions of the genre of a lexicon may lend themselves to a more conservative approach towards the presentation of information which quotes authorities only in an affirmative fashion and is never spiteful or satirical in tone or style. This consolidating and authoritative manner of presenting biographical information is however not unique to the *Suda* lexicon. The *Genos Euripidou*, which may have had a similar function as the entry on Euripides in the *Suda*, shows a comparable way of presentation in the concluding part of the *Genos* which gives a sketch of Euripides' life but generally tries to avoid all the gossip surrounding his family background and his death in Macedonia. All three texts discussed in this chapter testify to an untiring interest in Euripides and his tragedies beyond the confines of the 'classroom' and other institutions of education and scholarship.

## Conclusion

In my thesis, I have investigated how, when, and why Euripides became a subject of ancient biographical representations. I have traced the developments of the biographical portrayals of Euripides from Aristophanes to the scholars of Byzantium and have shown how those portrayals changed in time and were affected by the concerns, interests, preoccupations, and cultural heritage of those who created and read them.

In chapter 1, I showed how the poets of Old Comedy used representations of Euripides in order to discuss, criticise, and ridicule his poetry. Already within Old Comedy, however, it is possible to detect a shift from representations of Euripides as a scandalous newcomer to assumptions that his poetry is well known and, we may say, proto-canonical.

I then argued that the biographical representation of Euripides in antiquity underwent a major transformation in the fourth and third century BC. This transformation away from the representation of the playwright as an embodiment of his work to accounts that depicted the life of Euripides separately from his work enabled Hellenistic authors to model Euripides according to their own interests and those of the societies in which they lived. While Aristophanes used mainly euripidean tragedy, and his very own tweaked versions of it, to depict Euripides, later authors do not follow this strategy at all. The Hellenistic epigrams on the death of Euripides, the debate about Euripides' life and work in Satyrus'

*Bios Euripidou*, the pseudo-Euripidean letters and the biographical sketch of Euripides in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* are all good examples of the adaptability of biographical information about Euripides in post-classical accounts. The educational context of rhetoric and philosophy seems to have been especially conducive to the imitation of poets from the Greek past. We do not know how Euripides was read by different philosophical schools but we know that philosophers in Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic times modelled their writings on the style of famous Greek poets from the past.

This process of appropriation and assimilation, which was, as we have seen in the course of this thesis, by no means confined to Hellenistic poetry, seems to have established Euripides as a 'classical' author to which different generations could easily relate. And, interestingly, it seems that this process is mirrored in the narrative strategies of *paramimesis* in both Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* and the much later pseudo-Euripidean letters. We know too little about the context of the production of the *Bios Euripidou* to attribute to it an undisputed place in the history of Greek literature. It is possible, however, that Satyrus reacted against biographical interpretations of poetry as well as the sensationalism and obsession with paradoxical narratives which was, as we could observe in chapter 2 of this thesis, prevalent in Hellenistic representations of Euripides.<sup>1</sup> The depiction of Euripides in other texts, too, such as in fifth- and fourth-century comedies and Hellenistic poetry, is echoed in the dialogue between speaker A and Diodora. I

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<sup>1</sup> Possibly Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou* was even directed against his colleague Hermippus to whom Momigliano attests an obsession with death, paradoxical narrative, and sensationalism; see Momigliano (1993: 79). However, the evidence is too meagre for us to allow for speculations on this point.

have drawn attention to the role of Diodora in the dialogue because she seems to me to question some of the inferences made by the other speaker. This is suggestive and provocative, not least because of her gender: in the biographical tradition Euripides' relationship with women was traditionally problematic.

In the pseudo-Euripidean letters the eagerness to appropriate 'wise sayings' from Euripides is matched and mirrored by a *paramimesis* of Cynico-Stoic writings. Euripides is depicted, in these forged letters, as a proto-philosopher who shapes and remodels the biographical tradition about his person and, we may say, 'bites back'. In Gellius' *Attic Nights*, the *Genos Euripidou*, and the *Suda* entry, on the other hand, the man and his work seem reunited, although the second part of the *Genos Euripidou* seems an echo of the Hellenistic interest in a more sensationalist account of Euripides' life.

Two principles of biographical writing could be identified in the course of this dissertation. The principle of analogy and inference ('like author, like work') and the principle of ridicule and inversion ('The author is actually quite unlike his work'). Both of these principles are at play in the Hellenistic poems and both of them are challenged and taken to extremes by Hellenistic poets. The epigrams display what Peter Bing called the 'memorializing impulse':<sup>2</sup> they show a great antiquarian interest in Euripides while at the same time attesting to the cultural importance of Macedonia at the time. The pseudo-Euripidean letters turn several features of the biographical representation of Euripides upside-down: the negative description of Euripidean tragedy as poor, which in Old Comedy was an insult, now becomes a virtue of the poet. Poverty and modesty, the classic

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<sup>2</sup> Bing (1993: 620).

preconditions for the philosophic life of the Cynics, becomes a virtue that is contrasted with the less virtuous and luxurious life of the Macedonian king Archelaus. The complexity, subtle psychology and, often, bitterness, of Euripidean drama is also taken up by Aulus Gellius, whose account of Euripides in the *Attic Nights* entails some satirical remarks and comments on the society in which he lives.

What we witness, then, is a complex interaction between biographical representations of Euripides and wider trends in his ancient reception. Rather than assuming a linear development of the biographical tradition which systematically ‘down-sized’ the Athenian playwright,<sup>3</sup> we can take the biographical tradition as an important aspect of the reception of Euripides. It reflects his transition from being ‘the “stepchild” of the classical period’ to winning the ‘undying plaudits’ of later generations.<sup>4</sup> An enormous process of change and transformation of biographical representations of Euripides was at work in the material covered in my thesis. And, once the detachment of the poet from his work became more pronounced, the biographical material was ready to be used in a wide range of contexts and for different purposes.

Perhaps there was something in the nature of Euripidean tragedy itself which made the biographical tradition concerning Euripides so susceptible to new influences. With the inclusion of Sophistic rhetoric, proverbial expressions, and the display of complicated philosophical, psychological, and political positions in extremely condensed and pointed ways, Euripidean tragedy provided a home for

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<sup>3</sup> See Lefkowitz (1981: 88).

<sup>4</sup> Micheli (1987: 128).

many diverse attitudes and a language to express those attitudes which proved to be extremely influential. This extreme diversity and richness of Euripidean tragedy is perhaps one of the reasons for its enormous popularity in such different centuries and cultural contexts as the ones covered in my study. The main principles of creativity and innovation – opposition, negation, and re-arrangement, are all embedded in Euripidean tragedy, and they are all taken up by the biographical tradition of Euripides, in Hellenistic epigrams as well as in Satyrus' *Bios Euripidou*, the anonymous pseudo-Euripidean letters, Gellius' chapter in his *Attic Nights*, the three different version of Euripides' life in the *Genos Euripidou*, and the *Suda*.

The material I have discussed is heterogeneous and, at times, difficult to interpret. What I hope to have shown is that the biographical representations of Euripides in antiquity participated in a continuous tradition while serving very different functions. Readers of Euripides inherited an image of the poet and then changed and adapted it to suit their own cultural needs. Because evidence about other poets is lost, or remains difficult to date, a study of Euripides is essential if we want to understand the changes and continuities in biographical narratives about the Greek poets. This in itself seems to be a sufficient reason for paying close attention to the ancient depiction of Euripides, and its development in the course of time. But I also hope that the material I have considered can help us to question Barthes' famous dictum that 'the birth of the reader must be at the expense of the death of the author'.<sup>5</sup> I hope, rather, to have shown that authors

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<sup>5</sup> Barthes (2002: 7).

such as Euripides are re-created by each new generation of readers, and so is an interest in their lives.

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\* indicates *non vidi*

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