Evidence for Lost Dramatic Hypotheses

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P RIOR TO Virgilio Masciadri's recent study of Euripides' *Second Autolycus*,[1] on the basis of Hyginus' *Fabula* 201 the *consensus omnium* had been that the play dealt with Sisyphus' discovery that his cattle were being stolen. Thanks to a clever ruse, he found that Autolycus was the guilty party, and seduced (or even raped) Autolycus' daughter Anticlea by way of revenge. But Masciadri points out that Johannes Tzetzes (*Chil.* 8.435–53) preserves evidence for a different plot:[2]

435 ‘Ερμοῦ παῖς ὁ Αὐτόλυκος, πατήρ τε τοῦ Λαέρτου.
πάππος τοῦ ’Οδυσσέως τε, πένης δ’ ὑπάρχων ἄγαν.
ἐκ τοῦ ‘Ερμοῦ χαρίζεται τὴν κλεπτικὴν τὴν τέχνην,
. . .
κλέπτων καὶ γὰρ μετήμειβεν ἄλλα διδοὺς ἀντ’ ἄλλων.
ἐδόκουν δ’ οἱ λάμβαντες τὰ σφῶν λαμβάνειν πάλιν
445 οὐκ ἠπατῆσθαι τούτῳ τε καὶ ἕτερα λαμβάνειν.
ἵππον γὰρ κλέπτων ἄριστον ὄνον τῶν ψωριώντων
διδοὺς ἐποίει δόκησιν ἐκεῖνον δεδωκέναι.
καὶ κόρην νύμφην νεαρὰν κλέπτων, ἐδίδου πάλιν
ἢ σειληνὸν ἢ σάτυρον, γερόντιον σαπρόν τι
450 σιμόν, νωδόν, καὶ φαλακρόν, μυξῶδες, τῶν δυσμόρφων.
καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐνόμιζε τοῦτον ὡς θυγατέρα.
ἐν Αὐτολύκῳ δράματι σατυρικῷ τὰ πάντα
ὁ Εὐριπίδης ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τούτου γράφει.

Evidently, therefore, we are to imagine a play in which Autolycus'

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[1] V. Masciadri, "Autolykos und der Silen," *MusHelv* 44 (1987) 1–7. Nothing in what Masciadri writes invalidates the proposition that Athenaeus' testimony (413c) for two Euripidean satyr plays about Autolycus ought to be respected. And, *pace* Masciadri's statement, in *The Greek Satyr Play* (Meisenheim am Glan 1980) 59f n.28 I did not argue that the *First Autolycus* explicitly parodied the pancratium victory of the boy Autolycus in 422 B.C. (which indeed would be foreign to the spirit of classical satyr play). Its subject may have been that favorite satyric character, Heracles, teaching Autolycus wrestling (Ps.-Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.4.9). However, like Eupolis' *Autolycus*, the play may have been written that year as an oblique allusion to the boy's victory. If tragedies could reflect contemporary events, why exclude the possibility that satyr plays could have done the same?
[2] Lines 438–42 constitute a digression and need not be quoted here.

victim thought he was receiving—perhaps after her theft, possibly involving sexual assault—his daughter, but was actually receiving a raddled old transvestite-Silenus. Sexual assault, theft, deception, and fraud are frequent satyric themes, and artistic and possibly literary evidence exists for satyrs posing as women.[3] The situation would obviously be rich in comic possibilities.

In the course of his discussion, Masciadri points to the remarkably exact physical description in lines 449f, curiously in contrast with Tzetzes' rather vague descriptions of satyrs elsewhere: in his *Prologue to Lycophron* he writes ἡ σατυρικὴ (*sc.* ποίησις) δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν σατύρων ἐκλήθη τῶν εὑρόντων αὐτὴν ἤτοι γεωργῶν καὶ εὐτελῶν ἀνθρώπων, and in a scholium to Aristophanes he goes so far as to define a satyr ἐστι δὲ καὶ ζῷον.[4] σιμός and φαλακρός are words found in satyr play to describe satyrs and Silenus (for the former *cf.* Kannicht/Snell, *TrGF* adesp. 675.3; for the latter Aesch. *Dict.* 788, Soph. fr.171 R. and *Ichn.* 368; Eur. *Cyc.* 227); γερόντιον σαπρόν is a phrase redolent of comedy (*e.g.* Ar. *Pax* 698), as is νωδός (Ar. *Ach.* 715, *Plut.* 266). For that matter, δύσμορφος is a word found in Euripides (*Hel.* 1204, frr.790, 842 N.²), and μυξῶδες appears in Sophocles (fr.687a). So it looks very much as if Tzetzes is providing verbal echoes of the play.

All of this commands confidence. But an obvious question arises: how did Tzetzes come into possession of information that was, as far as we know, previously unattested? Considering and rejecting other possibilities, Masciadri suggests an answer.[5]

Dies alles lässt kaum einen anderen Schluss zu als den, dass die Selbstzeugnisse glaubhaft sind, dass eben Tzetzes noch auf einen Euripides-Kodex gestossen ist, der mittlerweile—wahrscheinlich im Jahr 1204—verlorenging. Man darf an den Fall des Eustathios erinnern, der in derselben Zeit auf den Kodex mit den alphabetischen Stücken steiss und verschiedentlich verhüllt darauf anspielt; der Inhalt jenes Kodex allerdings wurde uns durch eine einzige Abschrift gerettet.

Obviously this suggestion, one with momentous consequences for

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[3] For vase-paintings showing transvestite-satyrs, *cf.* F. Brommer, *Satyrspiele*² (Berlin 1959) nos. 118 and 118A. In view of the inevitable presence of transvestitism in the play, it is possible that in Ion of Chios' *Omphale* the satyric crew was introduced as serving-girls of Omphale, fellow-slaves to Heracles (*cf.* W. Steffen, *De Graecorum fabulis satyricis* [Warsaw 1979] 70).

[4] N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London 1983) 238f, suggests that the manuscript of Euripides' alphabetical plays may have turned up in Byzantium rather than Thessalonica, as has usually been thought. Nevertheless, in view of Tzetzes' vagueness about satyr play it would seem impossible to argue that he had read *Cyclops*.

[5] *Supra* n.1: 6.

ideas of the textual transmission of Euripidean drama, requires closer examination, the purpose of the present paper.

The case of the *Second Autolycus* is not unique. If this is one instance in which Tzetzes is able to summarize the plot of a lost Euripidean play for which no earlier such evidence is preserved, on two other occasions he was able to do the same thing. In his treatise *On Comedy*[6] he outlines the plot of a second Euripidean satyr play, *Syleus*. Here too there is one element that looks as if it could be a quotation from the play. Heracles is described by the phrase ὁ τεχνικώτατος γεωργός, words that scan as part of a trochaic tetrameter. The context in which Tzetzes describes *Syleus* is illuminating. He wishes to retract a previous statement, made in his *Prologue to Lycophron*, to the effect that a satyr play is merely a tragedy with a happy ending.[7] Verbal parallels prove that he acquired this misinformation from the Second Hypothesis to Euripides' *Alcestis*.[8] Surely Tzetzes was enabled to correct his mistake precisely because he became acquainted with the contents of these two Euripidean plays, and so was able to form a sounder impression of the nature of the satyric genre.

In his scholia on *Chiliades* 4.912 and Aristophanes *Ran.* 142a[9] Tzetzes also gives a partial account of the tragedy *Peirithous* commonly (and doubtless rightly) attributed to Euripides in antiquity.[10] He informs us that in this play, contrary to the usual mythological account, Heracles rescues both Theseus and Peirithous from the Underworld (usually Peirithous is said to have been left behind). He also reports a scene in which Theseus furnishes Heracles with a detailed description of the Underworld. The circumstantial detail of his statements shows that Tzetzes had reliable knowledge of the play's contents.

With the possible exception of Hyginus' *Fabula* 79, no ancient account of the contents of *Peirithous* exists. Yet we have a second, fuller, Byzantine account of the play provided by Johannes Logothetes in his commentary on Hermogenes, published in 1908 by Hugo Rabe.[11] In

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[6] Printed by W. J. W. Koster, *Scholia in Aristophanem* I.1a (Groningen 1975) 35.62ff.

[7] This same retraction is made in a scholium on line 93 of his own Περὶ διαφορᾶς ποιητῶν (Kaibel *CGF* I).

[8] D. F. Sutton, "Supposed Evidence that Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes* were Prosatyric," *RStCL* 21 (1973) 117–21.

[9] Texts of these passages and of Logothetes' description of the play (see *infra*) are given by Snell, *TrGF* I 171ff.

[10] For this play and the question of its authorship *cf.* D. F. Sutton, *Two Lost Plays of Euripides* (Bern/New York 1987) 1–106.

[11] *RhM* 63 (1908) 127–51; for *Peirithous* see 144f, for *Melanippe* 145f, for *Sthenoboea* 146–48. Parallel hypotheses to *Melanippe* and *Peirithous* (including abbrevi-

addition to a plot summary, Logothetes quotes sixteen lines from the play, in which the underworldly porter Aeacus asks Heracles who he is, and the hero identifies himself and explains his mission.

In the same work Logothetes also gives the plot-outlines of two further Euripidean tragedies, *Melanippe the Wise* and *Sthenoboea*. In the case of the former, he quotes twenty-two lines specifically stated to be from the prologue, which clearly are the first lines of the play. From the latter he quotes thirty-one lines of a *rhesis* (which also looks like a typical Euripidean prologue speech) by Bellerophon.[12]

Masciadri raises a genuine question that becomes all the more material when the testimony for *Melanippe the Wise, Peirithous, Sthenoboea,* and *Syleus* are brought into the picture: how did these Byzantines come into information about these lost plays? How were they able to quote passages from some if not all of these plays which do not appear in earlier extant sources? If he had wished to press his argument that plays by Euripides other than those now extant survived as late as the twelfth century, he could have alleged all this evidence in support of his idea.[13] But this theory would entirely overturn the common understanding of the textual transmission of Euripidean tragedy set forth by Turyn, Zuntz, and others. Save for those plays preserved as members of the Selection, the only organizational principle for Euripidean codices is alphabetical order, and the titles of our extant plays from the alphabetical collection represent a very limited portion of the whole (titles in E-, H-, I-, and K-). On the other hand, the titles of the plays summarized by Tzetzes and Logothetes span the greater part of the alphabet. It seems, therefore, that we would be required to believe that the great majority of Euripidean plays survived at least down to the twelfth century. The implausibility of this

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ated versions of the same quotations) are given by Gregory of Corinth in his commentary on the same author. The relative and absolute dates of these authors are unknown, and so no sure pronouncement can be made about their relationship to each other. Since Gregory gives shorter forms of the quotations from Euripides, the possibility that Logothetes copied from him can be excluded. However, Rabe pointed out that at some points Gregory is more copious than Logothetes, which also seems to rule out the reverse possibility. Presumably, therefore, the two writers are indebted to a common source.

[12] But (despite the statement of Snell at *TrGF* I 172) it is far from self-evident that Logothetes' *Peirithous* quotation represents the first lines of that play, or even that it comes from the prologue: *cf.* Sutton (*supra* n.10) 33f, 95f, for a discussion of the difficulties involved with this view.

[13] But he would have been ill-advised if he had chosen to cite Tzetzes' outline of Sophocles' *Tereus* in his scholium *ad* Hes. *Op.* 566. Narrative and verbal parallels suggest that this account is indebted to Σ *ad* Ar. *Av.* 212, which in turn follows the Hypothesis preserved in *P.Oxy.* XLII 3013.

idea requires no expatiation. For this reason, an alternative explanation of the visible facts would be welcome.

Prefaced to many of our extant plays are introductory hypotheses. While some of these provide facts about the circumstances of the play's production, literary antecedents, bits of literary criticism, and other miscellaneous information, the primary business of most hypotheses is to provide a brief synopsis of the play's action. But if hypotheses can precede the plays they describe, as they do in our MS. tradition, they can also be assembled into a series and published as a kind of ancient equivalent of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. That this was done is shown by a series of hypotheses to the plays of Sophocles and Euripides represented by a surprisingly large number of papyri, a series that modern scholarship has dubbed the *Tales of Euripides*.[14] The frequency with which it appears in papyri indicates the popularity of this collection. These plot-outlines were interesting and easy to read, may have been useful for schoolteachers, and when assembled in a series would constitute a sort of mythological handbook.[15]

The suggestion therefore deserves to be made that the source employed by Tzetzes and Logothetes was not an otherwise unattested batch of surviving Euripidean plays, but a collection of hypotheses somewhat similar to the *Tales* series.

In the case of Logothetes, this suggestion is especially plausible. Each of his three descriptions adheres to the same format. Like the hypotheses in the *Tales* series, each plot-summary is introduced by the same formula, in this case the words "here is the hypothesis." The plot is then outlined, and at the end of the passage a substantial quotation from the play is given. To be sure, in the *Tales* series all that is quoted for each play is the first line, whether or not a coherent syntactical unit, either to help the reader identify the play or as some sort of guarantee of authenticity. In the hypotheses of the MS. tradition, it is rare to find quotations of the play being summarized (short

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[14] The title was conferred by G. Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester 1955) Ch. 6. The distinctive characteristic of this set is the so-called ἀρχή, the first line of the play quoted at the beginning of each Hypothesis. Now that Sophoclean ones written in the same format are turning up (*cf. P.Oxy.* LI 3653), we shall henceforth have to speak of the *Tales of Sophocles and Euripides*. According to M. W. Haslam, *GRBS* 16 (1975) 150-56, these were by Dicaearchus of Messene; but *cf.* J. Rusten's rejoinder at *GRBS* 23 (1982) 357-67, and W. Luppe, *Aristoteles Werk und Wirkung* I (Berlin 1985) 610-12.

[15] The idea of compiling a mythological handbook by assembling information from the tragic poets (and thus invoking their authority for the information included) is an old one, going back at least as far as the *Tragoedoumenon* of Asclepiades of Tragilus, a pupil of Isocrates (*FGrHist* 12).

quotations are found in the hypothesis to Sophocles' *Ajax* and the second hypothesis to Aristophanes' *Birds*). But if we were to imagine a set of Euripidean hypotheses essentially similar to other attested representatives of the genre but containing one extensive quotation per play, this would be a sufficient explanation of Logothetes' ability to furnish both plots and quotations.

A similar suggestion can be made to explain Tzetzes' ability to summarize Euripidean plots and perhaps also to quote from two of the plays in question. To be sure, there exists the difficulty that the facts he reports about *Peirithous* do not duplicate those given by Logothetes. Are we therefore to think that two such hypotheses-sets survived? A more economical explanation would be that both Byzantines were relying on the same set, that Lothetes' summary was an abridgement of his source, so that Tzetzes happened to furnish details omitted by Logothetes.

The suggestion offered here is of course conjectural. Yet to the extent that plausibility and economy are criteria for selection, this theory is vastly more acceptable than the idea of a number of otherwise unattested Euripidean plays surviving down to the eleventh century.[16]

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[16] The anonymous referee raises the possibility that a separate collection of Euripidean satyr plays survived to be read by Tzetzes. Admittedly, such a possibility cannot be excluded entirely, and the reviewer is right to point to Tzetzes' familiarity with Hipponax as an example of his ability to come up with obscure literary information. But (a) there is no evidence that satyr plays by any given author were collected and published separately during any period, and in view of limited interest in the satyric genre, especially in later antiquity, such a possibility seems unlikely; and (b) this would fail to account for Tzetzes' knowledge of *Peirithous*.