Rivalry between Centre and Periphery in the Theatre Industry of the Fourth Century BC

Part 1 (lecture): The Social, Political and Economic Dimension

Part 2 (seminar/focus item): The Ideological Dimension

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Friday September 22 2023, 1- 4 pm
Collaborative Digital Research Space (CDRS), UTM
Maanjiwe Nendamowinan #3230

The seminar session will begin at 1:10.

This is an in-person event, but there is online access as well:
Link: https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/83223416234
Meeting ID: 832 2341 6234
Passcode: 849441

Abstract

The first half of the lecture offers an overview of the rate and character of the expansion of the theatre industry in the fifth and fourth centuries BC from Athens to the rest of Greece (and beyond). The second half offers a variety of evidence for fierce competition for performers in the fourth century that led to major structural changes adopted by the Athenian Dionysia to minimise damage in the event of no-shows. Some of this expansion fits easily into a classic centre-periphery model, but with a reversal of some vectors of influence when, in the fourth century, the periphery begins to exert pressure on the centre.

Focus Item (attached below)

The seminar will examine the ideological dimension of the competition of festivals for limited resources. Athens felt a need to bolster the prestige of its festival by promulgating myths of the Attic invention of drama and Dionysian music generally. Several other cities staked their own claims and disputed the prestige of origins. We have not many traces of this debate, which reached a high degree of intensity in the 330s BC, but more than generally recognised. Three important texts will be precirculated, then, at the seminar, placed into historical context before being opened to discussion. The material throws light on the discursive context of an interurban competition that created many of the myths about the origins of drama that still dominate many histories of the early theatre in modern scholarship.
Rivalry between the Centre and Periphery of the Theatre Industry in the Fourth Century BC:

PART 2: The Ideological Dimension

FOCUS ITEM 1: The Debate over Origins

Aristotle Poetics 1448a28-b1. Date: 330s. Text after Tarán:

{où}n καὶ δράματα καλείονται τινες αὐτά φαίνονται, ὅτι μιμούνται δρώντας, διὸ καὶ ἀντιποιοῦνται τὰς τὰς τραγῳδίας καὶ τὰς κωμῳδίας οἱ Δωριές - τῆς μὲν γάρ κωμῳδίας οἱ Μεγαρεῖς οἱ τε ἔνταθα ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς παρ' αὐτῶς δημοκρατίας γενομένης καὶ οἱ ἐκ Σικελίας, ἔκειθεν γάρ ἢ Ἔπιχαρμος ὁ ποιητὴς πολλῷ πρότερος ἢν Χιωνίδου καὶ Μάγνητος· καὶ τῆς τραγῳδίας ἐννοοὶ τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ - ποιούμενοι τὰ ὀνόματα σημεῖον αὐτοῦ μὲν γάρ κώμας τὰς περιοικίδες καλείοντας φαίνον, Αθηναίοις δὲ δήμους, ὡς κωμῳδεῖς οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ κωμαίειν λεξάμενας ἀλλὰ τῇ κάτα κώμας πλάνη ἄτιμαζομένους ἢ τὸ ἰστος· καὶ τὸ ποιεῖν αὐτοῦ μὲν δράν, Αθηναίοιος δὲ πράττειν προσαγορεύειν. 

That is why some say they are also called dramas (dramata), because they imitate men in action (dronτas). And, for this reason, the Dorians make rival claims both to tragedy and to comedy – in the case of comedy the Megarians here, on the ground that it came into being at the time of their democracy, and those from Sicily, because the poet Epicharmos, who was much earlier than Chionides or Magnes, came from there. In addition, some of the Peloponnesians claim tragedy – they use the names as evidence. They say they call their outlying settlements ‘villages’ (komai), whereas the Athenians call them ‘demes’ (demoi), supposing that comedians (komoidoi) are not named from carousing (komazein), but from the wandering about the villages of men who have been slighted from the city. Also for ‘doing’ they say dram, while the Athenians say pratein.


tὸ παλαιὸν ἐν ταῖς κώμαις ἄδικομενοι τινες ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Αθήναις ποιητῶν καὶ θέλοντες ἔλεγχεν αὐτοὺς κατήμενα 5 ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ νικότο καθευδοντῶν πάντων παρίστασεν παρὰ τὰς ἁγίας ἔλεγον ἀνωνύμως τὰς βλαβάς, ἃς ἐπαιχοῦν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν. τοιοῦτα λέγοντες ἐνταθὴ μὲν τὰς τὰς καὶ τὰς ποιῶν τοιούτων γεωργῶν καὶ ὡς μετρίας βλαβῶς ἀπείρων αὐτοῖς, ὡστε τῶν γείτονῶν αὐτῶς ἡμέρας γενομένης πρὸς ἀλλήλους λέγειν, ἀ νῦκτωρ παρὰ τῶν γεωργῶν ἴκουσαν, ἐπουείδιστον δὲ ἢ ἐκ τούτῳ τὸ ἄδικομεν, ὡστε καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἄδικομενῶν τὸ τοιοῦτο διορθώσεως γέγονα αὐτοῖς αὐτοῦν αἰσχυνομένοις τὴν ὑβρίν: ὡδὲ τὸς τῆς πόλεως ἐδοξέων ἐπὶ ἀγαθῷ γεγονότα τὸ ἐγχέρισμα τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἀναζητήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἠγάκασαν καὶ ἐπὶ θέατρο τούτῳ ποιεῖν. οἱ δὲ δειλιόντες τούτῳ ποιεῖν ἐμφάνος τρύγα περιχρίστες τὰς ἐμφάνες ὅμεις 15 ὡτὸς εἰσήγας δὲ ὅποις κάτω μᾶλλον τῶν ἄδικομενῶν ἐλεγχομένως ἐπὶ θέατρο συστολὴ τῶν ἄδικων ἐγένετο. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἢ μὴς ἐκ τούτῳ μεγάλης ἀπήλαυαν ὥραλειας, ποιητὰς ἐταξαν ἐπί τούτῳ κωμῳδεῖν, οὔς ἀν βούλονταί ἀκολουθοῖν, πρῶτον οὖν Σουσαρίων χρῆσις οἱ τῆς ἐμέτρου κωμῳδίας γέγονα ἀρχηγὸς· οὐ τὰ μὲν ποιητὰς λήθη κατευναίθη, δύο δὲ ἢ τρῖς ἵσιμοι 20 ἐπὶ μνημή φέρονται τούτῳ· εἰσὶ δὲ οὕτω ἀκούεις λέξει· Σουσαρίων λέγει τάδε· κακὸν γνώσκει, ἀλλ’ ὁμιλοῖ, διημόται, οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκεῖν ὀικίαν ἀνευ κακοῦ.
Long ago in the villages (komai) some men who were wronged by the citizens in Athens and wishing to expose them went down in the city and when at night all were sleeping they presented themselves in the streets and began without mentioning names to describe the harms which they suffered at their hands, saying this: ‘Here lives someone who is doing this and that to some of the farmers and inflicting no small harm upon them.’ As a result the listening neighbours when day came discussed with one another the things they heard from the farmers during the night. This became a cause of reproach to the wrongdoer, with the result that this kind of action became the cause of atonement by many of the wrongdoers when they felt shame for their arrogant behaviour. As a result the people of the city decided that the enterprise of the country people had brought a benefit and they sought them out and forced them to do this in the theatre. The latter, afraid to do this openly, covered their faces with wine lees (tryges), and entered the theatre in this way. And so, as a result, as more and more of the wrongdoers were exposed in the theatre, there was a cessation of injustices. As the city had enjoyed a great benefit from this, they thereafter ordered poets to compose mockeries (or ‘comedies’) against whomever they wished with impunity. So a certain Susarion first became the founder of versified comedy. His poems have by chance been consigned to oblivion, but two or three iambic verses of his are transmitted in memory. They are: ‘Oyez the saying! So speaks Susarion: Women are an evil thing, but nonetheless, demesmen, it is not possible to have a home without evil.’ Once the thing had a start many comic composers arose to expose those who led wicked lives and delighted in wrongdoing. And from that time they conferred a public benefit on the constitution of Athens.

FOCUS ITEMS 2: Traces of Phanodemus' Account of the Origins of Dionysian Music

Philocharus Atthis, FGrH 328 5b (= Athen. 2.7, 38c-d), 5a (= Athen. 15.48, 693d-e). Date: 270s. Text: Jacoby.

Φιλόχορος δὲ φησιν Ἀμφικτύων τοῦ Ἀθηναίων βασιλέα μαθόντα παρὰ Διονύσου τὴν τοῦ οἶνου κράσιν πρῶτον κεράσαι. διό καὶ ὤρθως γενέσθαι τοῦς ἀνθρώπους οὔτω πίνοντας, πρότερον ύπὸ τοῦ ἀκράτου καιμπτομένους, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἰδρύσασθαι βωμὸν Ὀρθοῦ Διονύσου ἐν τοῖς τῶν ὕμρων ἱερῶν αὐταί γὰρ καὶ τὸν τῆς ἀμπέλου καρπὸν ἐκτρέφουσι, πλησίον δ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς Νύμφαις βωμὸν ἔβειμεν, ὑπόνυμα τοῖς χρωμένοις τῆς κράσεως ποιοῦμενος, καὶ γὰρ Διονύσου τροφοὶ αἱ Νύμφαι λέγονται. καὶ ἰδίωμα έθετο προσφέρεσθαι μετὰ τὰ σιτία <πάνω> ἀκρατοῦ μόνον δόσον γενέσθαι, δείγμα τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ Ἁγαθοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἦδη κεκραμένων, ὅποτε ἑκάστος βούλεται: προσεπιλέγειν δὲ τούτω τὸ τοῦ Δίος Σωτήρος ὄνομα διδαχῆς καὶ μυήμῆς ἔνεκα τῶν πινόντων, ὅτι οὕτω πίνοντες ἄσφαλῶς σωζόμενοι.

Φιλόχορος δ᾽ ἐν δευτέρῳ Ἀθθίδοι καὶ θέσιγιον φησθέ τότε προσφέρεσθαι μετὰ τὰ σιτία πάνω ἀκρατόν μὲν δόσον γενέσθαι καὶ δείγμα τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ Ἁγαθοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἦδη κεκραμένον, διὸ καὶ τροφοῦ τοῦ Διονύσου τὰς νύμφας ὄνομασθήναι.
Philochorus says that Amphictyon the King of Athens first learned from Dionysus how to mix wine with water. Drinking in this way men therefore stood upright, when formerly they were bent over by drinking unmixed wine, and as a result they founded the altar of Upright Dionysus in the Sanctuary of the Seasons – the Seasons because they foster the fruit of the vine. Near it he (Amphictyon) also built an altar to the nymphs, thus creating a memorial to serve as a reminder to those who consume wine. Indeed the nymphs are called 'the nurses of Dionysus'. And he established the ritual that all partake of no more than a taste of unmixed wine after a meal, a sign of the power of the Good God, but thereafter each could partake of as much mixed wine as he wished. And they also gave it (viz. the wine) the name of 'Zeus the Preserver' as a lesson and reminder to drinkers that only by drinking safely in this way would they be saved.

Philochorus in the second book of the Atthis says that a ritual was then established that all partake after a meal of no more unmixed wine than offers a taste and demonstration of the power of the Good God, and after that it is mixed. Because of this the nymphs are called 'the nurses of Dionysus'.

Phanodemus *FGrH* 325 F 12 (= Athen. 11.465a). Date: 330s. Text: close to Jones *BNJ*.

Φανόδημος δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἱερὸν φησὶ τοῦ ἐν Λίμναις Διόνυσου τὸ γλυκὸς φέροντας τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐκ τῶν πίθων τῷ θεῷ κηρύναι, εἶτ’ αὐτοὺς προσφέτασαν ὅθεν καὶ Λιμναιοὺς κληθήσει πόντον Διόνυσον, ὅτι μιχθέν τὸ γλυκὸς τῷ ὕδατι τότε πρώτον ἐπώθη κεκραμένον· διόπερ ὀνομασθήσει τὰς πηγὰς νύμφας καὶ τηθήνας τοῦ Διόνυσου, ὅτι τὸν οἶνον αὐξάνει τὸ ὕδωρ κηρύσσον, ἡσθέντες οὖν τῇ κράσει ἐν ὑδάις ἐμελποῦν τὸν Διόνυσον, χορεύοντες καὶ ἀνακαλοῦντες Εὐάνθη καὶ Διθυράμβον καὶ Βάκχευταν καὶ Βρόμιον.

Phanodemus says that the Athenians, carrying the new wine from the pithoi to the temple of Dionysus in the Marshes, mixed it for the god and then began to partake of it themselves. For this reason, Dionysus also acquired the name 'Limnaios' ('in the Marshes'), because then, after they had mingled the new wine with the water, mixed wine was drunk for the first time. The springs were named 'nymphs' and 'nurses of Dionysus' because water brings increase to the wine when mixed with it. And so, overjoyed by the mixed wine, they began to celebrate Dionysus in songs while dancing in choruses and invoking (Dionysus as) Euanthes and Dithyrambos and Bakcheutas and Bromios.