THE CITIZENSHIP OF THE THEATRE-MAKERS IN ATHENS

The great dramatists of fifth-century Athens created their dramas mainly for performance in their own city. During the last twenty years, it has been a clear trend of research to emphasize the fact that the plays were written for a certain environment and occasion – the Dionysiac festivals in Athens – and for a certain public. At the end of the seventies and in the eighties, the interest of many scholars was directed to the performance of the plays[1]. It was not enough to read the plays as literature, as earlier research had mainly done; one wanted to capture the performative aspects of the play, to understand how they were presented to the public and how the public, who were well versed in the conventions of their theatre, reacted to the performance.

During the nineties, the interest of the research in Greek drama has shifted more to the social aspects of theatre. Theatre is seen as an essential part of the Athenian *polis*, and the political significance of the theatre festival – both for the foreign and domestic policy of Athens – is emphasized[2]. Many representatives of Athens' allies as well as guests from all over the Hellenic world were present at the great Dionysia of Athens, and the festival was a good opportunity to show off the economic, military and cultural power of Athens. The ceremonies which took place in connection with this festival reflect such a political intention: honours were present-

[1] Two books by Oliver Taplin were especially influential, The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: Observations on the Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances, Oxford 1977, and Greek Tragedy in Action, London 1978. Cf. e.g. D. Seale, Vision and Stagecraft in Sophocles, London 1982; M.R. Halleran, Stagecraft in Euripides, London & Sydney 1985; M. Kaimio, Physical Contact in Greek Tragedy: A Study of Stage Conventions, Helsinki 1988; P.D. Arnott, Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre, London & New York 1989.

[2] This aspect is in the forefront e.g. in many recent collections of essays: J.J. Winkler & F.I. Zeitlin (eds.), Nothing to Do with Dionysus? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context, Princeton 1990 (in the following: Nothing to Do with Dionysus?); S. Halliwell, J. Henderson, A. Sommerstein & B. Zimmermann (eds.), Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis, Bari 1993 (in the following: Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis); R. Scodel (ed.), Theater and Society in the Classical World, Ann Arbor 1993; R. Osborne & S. Hornblower (eds.), Ritual, Finance, Politics: Festschrift D.M. Lewis, Oxford 1994 (in the following: Ritual, Finance, Politics); C. Pelling (ed.), Greek Tragedy and the Historian, Oxford 1997; P.E. Easterling (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy, Cambridge 1997 (in the following: Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy). J.R. Green, Theatre in Ancient Greek Society, London 1994, lays special emphasis on the archaeological material as a reflection of the social context.

ed to citizens and guests of merit, tax money paid by Athens' allies was put on show, and the sons of citizens fallen in battle who had reached adult age were paraded in their new military armour provided by the state. Besides impressing the foreign guests, the festival corroborated the solidarity and national pride of the Athenian citizens[3]. The religious and political aspects of the festival were tightly linked together: the occasion was a Dionysiac cult festival celebrated by the common effort of the city[4]. In connection with this social approach, theatre is seen as a medium of influence and education, its function being to strengthen the *polis* and to maintain its prevailing order and values. This effect was attained also by exposing the public to wild crimes and violent passions in tragedies and to uninhibited abuse and indecency in comedies, as these traits serve to strengthen the self-identification of the public and their integration into their *polis* by emphasizing the otherness of the dramatic world and the status of liminality represented by it in the lives of the spectators.

I fully agree that it is right and useful to emphasize the social and political character of the Greek theatre, but I cannot help feeling that occasionally one has gone too far in this direction, or at least that the strong political emphasis may hide some other essential aspects from view. For instance, in the recent Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy (see n. 1), Paul Cartledge writes (18, referring to the Great Dionysia): "These actors had to be citizens since they were considered to be performing a properly civic function". Edith Hall writes (95): "The relationship between the Athenian tragic poet and his audience was, formally, that of political equals. – The texts were mediated through performance by agents likewise sharing Athenian citizenship: the chorus-members, actors, and sponsors"; she notes as an exception only metics as *choregoi* in the Lenaia. Simon Goldhill states, almost as a slogan (54, with original italics): "... to be in an audience is above all *to play the role of democratic citizen*" and emphasizes (344) "the fact that tragedy is written by citizens – adult, enfranchised males – performed by citizens, and watched almost exclusively by citizens". I think that these statements are exaggerated and some of them directly misleading. As is made clear in passing by other authors in the same book[5], tragic playwrights were not always Athenian citizens, nor were all the performers.

[3] See especially S. Goldhill, The Great Dionysia and civic ideology, in: Nothing to Do with Dionysus? 97–129 (an earlier version of this paper in: JHS 107, 1987, 58–76).

[4] See especially P.E. Easterling, Tragedy and ritual: "Cry 'Woe, woe', but may the good prevail", in: Métis 3, 1988, 87–109; J. Aronen, Notes on Athenian drama as ritual myth-telling within the cult of Dionysus, in: Arctos 26, 1992, 19–37; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, Something to do with Athens: tragedy and ritual, in: Ritual, Finance, Politics, 269–290; P.E. Easterling, A show for Dionysus, in: The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy, 36–53.

[5] P. Cartledge mentions several tragic poets who came from outside Athens (4), and P.E. Easterling mentions clearly that "there was no ban on foreign playwrights or actors" (213). See also M. Ostwald, Athens as a cultural centre, in: The Cambridge Ancient History,

I think it is worthwhile to ask to what extent the theatre-makers in Athens were Athenian citizens, and what were the prevailing rules and customs in this respect. By 'theatre-makers' I mean all those people who took an active part in producing and performing a play in theatre: the poets, the actors, the members of the chorus and the *choregos* or the man who was responsible for the costs of the chorus. In this paper, I shall not discuss the musicians involved in the performance nor the extras often used as mute assistants. Nor shall I discuss the interesting question of the composition of the audience[6]. I shall discuss mainly the theatre of the fifth century BC, when the three great tragedians and Aristophanes were active, because this is the period in which theatre was an influential part of the *polis*. During the following centuries, dramatic performances acquired enormous popularity in the Greek world – theatres were built in every Greek city, the performance of plays was no longer confined to Dionysiac festivals, and guilds of itinerant performing artists were formed. In the cultural environment which subsequently developed the social function of theatre was naturally different from that found in the fifth-century city state of Athens.

During the fifth century, Athenian democracy and the notion of Athenian citizenship underwent remarkable changes. Just before the turn of the century (508/7) the political reform attributed to Kleisthenes took place: the citizens were divided into ten tribes, *phylai*, all of which included demes from different regions of Athens. At the moment of the creation of the system, the deme and thus also the tribe was determined by the place of residence, but afterwards, both the tribe and the deme were inherited from father to son; change of domicile had no effect in this respect. The division of the people into tribes played an important role in the festival of the Great Dionysia: competitions of dithyrambs were organized between the tribes, and in the dramatic competitions the judges were selected from the candidates set up by the tribes. Possibly also the seating of the audience in the theatre was organized on a tribal basis[7].

In the first half of the fifth century it was a prerequisite for Athenian citizenship that one's father was an Athenian citizen; the mother could be the daughter of a metic, or she could come from anywhere outside Athens. The system underwent a

vol. V[2], Cambridge 1992, 306–369, who emphasizes that tragedy "never closed its doors to foreigners wishing to compete in the tragic contests at the City Dionysia" (324).

[6] We know that there were many foreign guests present at the festival of the Great Dionysia, but the problem of whether women formed part of the audience is still under debate. See A.J. Podlecki, Could women attend the theater in ancient Athens? A collection of testimonia, in: Ancient World 21, 1990, 27–43; J. Henderson, Women and the Athenian dramatic festivals, in: TAPhA 121, 1991, 133–147; S. Goldhill, Representing democracy: women at the Great Dionysia, in: Ritual, Finance, Politics, 347–369.

[7] See A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, The Dramatic Festivals of Athens, 2nd edn rev. J. Gould & D.M. Lewis, Oxford 1968 (in the following: Pickard-Cambridge, DFA), 270; J.J. Winkler, in: Nothing to Do with Dionysus? 39–41.

radical reform in 451/50, in the time of Perikles: from then on, only a child whose parents were both of Athenian descent could be accepted as an Athenian. It seems that the strict law of Perikles governing citizenship was temporarily ignored during the final phase of the Peloponnesian war, since it was again reintroduced in its earlier form in 403/2, with the condition that those accepted as citizens before the new law did not lose their citizenship, although they did not fulfil the stricter requirements[8].

Persons not entitled to inherited citizenship could be granted Athenian citizenship by a special decision made by the Athenian people. In the fifth century, such decisions could be made for the benefit of certain groups of people[9]. Foreign individuals, who had distinguished themselves by their services to the city-state of Athens, could be rewarded by honorary citizenship. This custom, however, became more frequent only later, after the law enacted ca. 370 BC, according to which the assembly could grant honorary citizenship on the basis of ἀνδραγαθία, 'manly virtue'[10].

In the following, I shall view the question of the citizenship of the theatre-makers in Athens, discussing first the choruses, then the actors and finally the poets.

Choruses

There was a great demand for choristers in the Great Dionysia. In the competition of dithyrambs, ten choruses of fifty persons, a total of 1000 choristers, competed in two classes: men and boys. For tragedy, fifteen singers for each of the three competing poets were needed, that is 45 choristers; for comedy, 24 singers for each of the five competing poets, that is 120 choristers. That makes 1165 choristers for the Great Dionysia every year. And there were other festivals, too, where choristers were needed: the Lenaia festival in honour of Dionysus with competitions for tragedy and comedy, and the Thargelia in honour of Apollo with competitions for dithyrambs. The *choregoi* for the dithyrambs were chosen by the tribes, and they were probably chosen from among the members of the tribes, and thus were citizens. The *choregoi* for the tragedies and comedies were chosen by the eponymous archon for the Dionysia, the 'King' archon for the Lenaia. In most cases, they were certainly citizens. But there was considerable wealth among the metics, and Lysias

[8] See C. Patterson, Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451–50 B.C., Salem, N.H. 1981, 140–145.

[9] For instance the Plataeans were granted honorary citizenship as allies of Athens (Thuc. 3, 55,3; 63,2) and in the final phase of the Peloponnesian war everybody who volunteered for service in the navy was granted citizenship, as there was a glaring shortage of oarsmen in the navy (Ar. Ran. 33–34; 190–192; 693–694; Hellanikos, FGrHist 323a F 25).

[10] See D.M. MacDowell, The Law in Classical Athens, London 1978, 72–73. He emphasizes that the granting of citizenship never became a routine matter, but required a regulated process of decision.

tells in the speech *Against Eratosthenes* (12, 20), which he delivered himself, how he and his brother Polemarchos, the heirs of a wealthy manufacturer of arms with the status of resident alien, had duly executed all duties of *choregia* required of them. Resident aliens could thus act as *choregoi* at least in some occasions. A scholion on Aristophanes (Plut. 953) gives information about this: "An alien was not allowed to act as a chorister in the City Dionysia ... but this was possible in the Lenaia, since (there) even resident aliens could act as *choregoi*." Thus apparently at the Dionysia only an Athenian citizen could act as *choregos*, while at the Lenaia the rules were more lenient, allowing also resident aliens to act as *choregoi*[11]. This might reflect the different character of the festivals. In the City Dionysia, there were plenty of foreign guests in the audience, and the ceremonies connected with the festival had a clearly political message, as has been pointed out. The Lenaia on the other hand were celebrated in the middle of winter, when rough seas did not allow foreign guests to sail into Athens, and the festival was regarded as an inside event, with no guests present to hear what was being said, as Aristophanes mentions in the *Acharnians* (504–505).

The scholion cited above also reveals that the singers in the chorus had to be citizens at the Dionysia, but in the Lenaia also resident aliens could take part in choral performance. The emphasis paid on the citizenship of choristers is understandable in connection with the competitions of dithyrambs, since these competitions were organized so that the tribes (consisting of citizens) competed with each other. But it is evident that choral performance as such was apparently considered to be closely connected with the ideology and life of the *polis*. Choral performance is by nature a social act, where the individual acts as a part of a group. This was reflected both in the outward expression of the chorus, the members singing and dancing together, and in the words sung. In the life of the ancient Greeks, choral singing and dancing was practised especially on occasions which emphasized community feeling. It was an essential part of the religious ceremonies of the city, it formed a part of military training, and it transmitted traditional values and knowledge of domestic history. Choral singing was especially connected with initiatory rites, by which young people were transferred from their former life as children to adult members of the community[12]. Thus it is understandable that in Athens, where

[11] The inscription Agora I 7168, ed. T. Leslie Shear jr., in: Hesperia 40, 1971, 256–257 = H.J. Mette, Urkunden dramatischer Aufführungen in Griechenland, Berlin & New York 1977 (in the following: Mette), II A 3, 4 mentions Sosikrates χαλκοπώλης, apparently a metic, as the *choregos* for comedies at the Lenaia in the beginning of the fourth century. For the choice of the *choregoi* in general, see D.M. MacDowell, Athenian Laws about Choruses, in: Symposion 1982: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte, Cologne & Vienna 1989, 65–69 (in the following: MacDowell, Choruses). A monograph on *choregia* by P.J. Wilson is forthcoming (Tragedy and Democracy: the Athenian Choregia, Cambridge).

[12] See especially C. Calame, Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Functions (transl. by D. Collins & J. Orion), Lanham, Boulder, New York & London 1997, 207–263.

pure hereditary citizenship was especially valued and guarded, the choral performances of the festivals were reserved for citizens only. The less strict rules of the Lenaia form an interesting exception, though unfortunately, we know very little about the character of the Lenaia festival.

As regards the composition of the dramatic choruses of the Dionysia, the political character has been emphasized even more strongly by John J. Winkler, who suggested in his paper "The ephebes' song: tragoidia and polis"[13] that the dramatic choruses were composed of Athenian youths aged between 18 and 20 years who were serving as *epheboi*, that is doing a kind of military service. Thus, dancing in the dramatic choruses would have been part of their military training. This theory has been criticized mainly on the basis that we do not have evidence for the ephebic institution providing a regular military training until the fourth century (ca. 335). Moreover, we have evidence that the choristers used in theatre performances were exempted from military service[14]. If the choristers had been chosen from the group of young men doing their military service, it is difficult to see why they would have been exempted from military service to be able to do this. Even if Winkler's theory seems to be untenable, it is perfectly natural that especially young men were needed in the dramatic choruses. The task was physically demanding: the same chorus sang and danced through three tragedies and a satyr play, all of which took several hours. On the other hand, it seems that both practical considerations and artistic interest would have been badly overshadowed by political ideology if only 18–20 years old youths doing their military training could be chosen to dance in a chorus. Such an arrangement would have clearly left out the most talented singers and dancers of more advanced age, since after having gathered dramatic experience over a period of one or two years, they would no longer be available at 21. However, experienced and accomplished dancers and singers were surely very much wanted by the *choregoi*, since their participation could greatly contribute to the success of the play in the competition. It is likely that in Athens during the fifth century, a group of skilled amateurs was formed, who performed in the dramatic choruses year after year and who were especially sought after by the *choregoi*.

The Athenian citizenship of the dramatic choruses at the Dionysia was protected by law. Such choral laws have been examined by Douglas M. MacDowell[15], to whom I am mostly indebted for the following. The *choregos* might wish to include into his chorus an especially gifted singer of dancer who was not an Athenian citi-

[13] In: Nothing to Do with Dionysus? 20–62.

[14] Dem. 21,15; 39,16, both pertaining to the year 349/8. On this subject, see MacDowell, Choruses 70–72. Winkler emphasizes the similarity of the rectangular formation of the tragic choruses and the movement of hoplites (Nothing to Do with Dionysus? 50–52). D. Wiles has recently questioned the traditional view of the rectangular tragic chorus (D. Wiles, Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning, Cambridge 1997, 89–90, 93, 95–96).

[15] See MacDowell, Choruses 72–77.

zen, and this could be stopped by law (Andoc. 4, 20; Dem. 21, 56. 59). If somebody noticed – perhaps in the preliminary occasion called the *proagon* – that there was in the chorus which was about to perform a member whom he suspected to be a non-citizen, he could first examine him, and then he could demand that the chorister be excluded (ἐξάγειν was apparently the verb used by law). The chorister had to give up performing at once, and the matter was then examined by the archon after the festival. It is interesting that the person wishing to examine an alien chorus member was liable to a small fine, and if he demanded the immediate exclusion of a chorister, he had to pay a thousand drachmas (Dem. 21, 56) – which naturally was ultimately paid by the *choregos* who had violated the law by engaging an alien into his chorus. Apparently the purpose of the fines was to deter false accusations: a rival choregos might have tried to disturb the concentration and artistic performance by introducing suspicions about the citizenship of the best performers.

Not only aliens, ξένοι, were unfit to perform in a chorus, but also Athenian citizens who had been sentenced and punished with ἀτιμία, loss of citizen's rights. Demosthenes tells an example in his speech *Against Meidias* (21, 58–59). A very experienced teacher of choruses, named Sannion, had been found guilty of avoiding his military service and in consequence he had lost his citizenship. Soon afterwards, however, he was again engaged as chorus teacher by a *choregos* – apparently the professional skill of Sannion outweighed his crime. He must have taken part in the performance, too – otherwise the offence might have passed unnoticed. Perhaps he acted as the chorus-leader, as MacDowell suggests[16]. Demosthenes tells (21, 59) that "at first the competing producers were indignant and said they would put a stop to it. But when the theatre was full, and they saw the crowd assembled for the contest, they shrank from it; they let it go, no one laid a finger on him."[17] MacDowell points out that in this case, when the culprit was a disfranchised Athenian citizen, the procedure was more conspicuous than in the case of an alien performing: the accuser had to go personally to the culprit, physically lay hands on him and arrest him (ἀπαγωγή)[18]. It is interesting to note that apparently even rival *choregoi* felt that an undisturbed festival spirit was more important than the fact that a performer in the chorus lacked the required legal justification.

Actors

The chorus was an important part of the drama performance, but the actors were at least as important for the success of the drama. Did the Athenians require that the actors should be Athenian citizens in order to be allowed to make their appearance

[16] MacDowell, Choruses 73.

[17] Transl. by D.M. MacDowell, Demosthenes: Against Meidias (Oration 21), Oxford 1990, 123.

[18] MacDowell, Choruses 72–74. Cf. the case of Aristeides referred to by Demosthenes 21, 60.

in this prominent task in front of the mass audience consisting mainly of citizens? This question is often passed by with a summary remark consistent with the idea held by the writer about theatre as an institution. In the new volume The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy, for instance, Paul Cartledge, emphasizing the highly considered position of Greek actors when compared with the contemptible social status of Roman actors, remarks (18) that these actors had to be citizens, since they were considered to be performing a properly civil function. On the other hand, Paulette Ghiron-Bistagne in her book about Greek actors states equally categorically that it is wrong to suppose that even the guilds of professional actors formed in the third century required specific citizenship of a specific city. So, the Athenian guild did not require that its members should be Athenians. She points out that the actors are mentioned in the name of the guild as 'the artists acting in Athens', οἱ ἐν Ἀθήναις τεχνῖται, not as 'Athenian artists'[19]. It should also be noted that such guilds could make contracts with different cities or confederations of states; they acted as independent corporations, not as a part of certain city[20].

In this paper, however, I am mainly concerned with the period before these guilds were organized. In the early phase of Greek drama, when only one actor was used beside the chorus, the poet himself undertook the task of acting (Arist. Rhet. 1403b23–24), and this usage continued when a second actor was added to the cast. Thus, Aeschylus acted in his own production of the tragedy the *Persians* in 472. Two actors were required in this drama, and Aeschylus probably acted the role of the Queen Mother Atossa and, at the end of the drama, the part of the defeated King Xerxes. The other actor played the roles of the Messenger and the Ghost of King Dareios. Sophocles, too, acted on stage in the beginning of his career, at least in the 460s, though he later gave up acting (Vita Soph. 4. 5). In the middle of the fifth century, it was common to have three actors, and in the Great Dionysia a contest of actors was established (ca. 449), with a special prize for the best of the three performing protagonists.

Thus, with regard to the early phase of drama, the question of the citizenship of the actor is connected with the question of the citizenship of the poet, to which I shall return later. From the period when the poets began to engage separate actors, we have very little evidence about the origin of the actors. Quite a few names of fifth-century actors have been preserved in inscriptions in the form of various lists recording the victories achieved in the dramatic contests, but the name of the Athenian deme or other domicile of poets or actors is never mentioned. This may be significant in the sense that it possibly conveys the message that the origin of the ar-

[19] P. Ghiron-Bistagne, Recherches sur les acteurs dans la Grèce antique, Paris 1976 (in the following: Ghiron-Bistagne, Recherches), 174–175. She opposes J.M. Sifakis, who states that "the Dionysiac association is shown by all relevant documents to have consisted of Athenian citizens exclusively", in: Studies in the History of Hellenistic Drama, London 1967, 143.

[20] E.g. Pickard-Cambridge, DFA 308 nr. 3; 314 nr. 9; 316 nr. 11.

tist was not important. It may be noted that in the so-called Fasti (IG II/III^2 2318 = Mette[21] I), the names of the *choregoi* are given with their demotic, but this is not the case with poets and actors. At least in the first half of the fifth century, the poets themselves chose their co-actors, and we know that certain actors appeared repeatedly in the plays of certain poets[22]. In such a relationship, the citizenship hardly was the most significant factor. Later on, the archon distributed the actors by lot to the three chosen poets. We do not know when this system was introduced, nor how the actors were chosen for the lottery, except that the winner of the preceding year's actor's prize was included as a matter of course[23].

About half of the fifth-century actors known to us are identified as Athenian citizens in one source or another – admittedly often late sources, such as the Suda. About the other half, no information is available, but we can surmise with some probability that most of them were also Athenian citizens. A successful acting career surely presupposed a long familiarity with the Athenian theatrical tradition. It was impossible to learn the necessary skills elsewhere than in Athens, and even in Athens it was common that theatre-makers came from families who had been involved with theatre for several generations. Some families produced tragic poets and actors, others comic poets and actors[24]. People with such a long history of living in Athens were either Athenian citizens or metics (it can hardly be thought that slaves could have performed as actors in the Dionysia). It is usually assumed that citizens were in Athens much more numerous than metics, and this makes the Athenian citizenship of actors even more probable. On the other hand, we know that aliens could play an important role in Athenian cultural life – both aliens temporarily settled in Athens, as the famous sophists of the fifth century, and resident aliens living permanently in Athens for generations, such as the family of the logographer Lysias, whose father Kephalos and brother Polemarchos figure as speakers in Plato's dialogue the *Republic*.

If the appearance of a non-citizen as an actor at the Great Dionysia was not explicitly forbidden by law, it may have been that when actors were chosen, talent weighed more than social status, and thus at least from time to time a gifted alien could be seen on the stage. We have one clear example from the fifth century. In his later years, Aeschylus often used an actor named Mynniskos, who is said by the sources to be from Chalkis[25]. Probably he was originally from the Euboean Chalkis

[21] See above n. 11.

[22] See M. Kaimio, The protagonist in Greek tragedy, in: Arctos 27, 1993, 21–22.

[23] See Kaimio, ibid. 23–24; N.W. Slater, The idea of the actor, in: Nothing to Do With Dionysus? 391.

[24] See D.F. Sutton, The theatrical families of Athens, in: AJPh 108, 1987, 9–26.

[25] Plato Com. frg. 175 in: R. Kassell & C. Austin, Poetae comici Graeci, Berlin & New York 1983 – (in the following: PCG) = Athen. 8, 344d; Vita Aesch. 15 = Page p. 333 ll. 12–13. Mynniskos is nr. 1757 in the prosopography of Dionysiac artists by I.E. Stephanis, Dionysiakoi technitai, Heraclion 1988 (in the following: Stephanis, DT).

and had settled in Athens as a resident alien. It is apparent that Mynniskos performed in the Athenian theatre over a long period of time. Aeschylus died in 456, at which time Mynniskos had already often acted in his plays – perhaps for instance in his *Oresteia* in 458. The name of Mynniskos appears as the third name in the chronological list of victorious actors (IG II/III^2 2325, 4 = Mette V A 2 col. 1, 4), and since the contest of actors was probably introduced in 449 (or 447), it surely refers to the same person. But we find Mynniskos as the victorious actor also in the Dionysia of 422 (IG II/III^2 2318, 119 = Mette I col. 8, 21), when he must have been between 50 and 60 years of age. As Aristoteles in the *Poetics* mentions that an actor named Mynniskos criticized the younger generation of actors for their modern monkey-like style of acting (*Poet.* 1461b34–35), it seems probable that this really was the same Mynniskos as the long-standing actor. Mynniskos is not a common name. It may be that this name can be supplemented in the list of victorious actors at the Lenaia, too, giving him three victories in the 420s (IG II/III^2 2325, 252 = Mette V D 2 col. 1, 6). In the inscription, only the end of the name *-os* is visible. Be this as it may, Mynniskos' career seems to prove that the fact that he came from Chalkis did not form an obstacle to his appearance as actor in the Dionysia or the Lenaia.

In the fourth century, actors were increasingly valued and popular – too much so for some. Aristotle remarks in the *Art of Rhetoric* (1403b31–33) that in his time, actors count for more than poets. When theatre performances spread from Athens throughout the Greek world, many more actors were needed in a much wider area. The great stars of the fourth century stage led international lives. They moved around the known world enjoying a certain inviolability on account of their profession. Apparently certain privileges were granted to them. The earliest written evidence of the professional guilds of the Artists of Dionysus is from the beginning of the third century, and the privileges given to them were later confirmed by the Roman emperors. The Macedonian kings Philip and Alexander the Great liked to invite many famous acting stars to their grandiose theatre festivals.

Among these fourth century stars, there were several non-Athenian actors, for instance Aristodemos from Metapontion and Neoptolemos from Skyros[26], who often performed in the court of Philip and received great honours and large sums of

[26] Stephanis, DT 332; 1797. Other fourth century tragic actors of foreign birth were Archias of Thurioi (Stephanis, DT 439), who won both at the Dionysia (IG II/III^2 2419 = Mette V E, 5) and the Lenaia (IG II/III^2 2325, 277 = Mette V D 2 col. 3, 9), Polos of Aigina (Stephanis, DT 2187), Timotheos of Zakynthos (Stephanis, DT 2416); comic actors Aristodemos (Stephanis, DT 333), either from Boeotian Skaphai (so S.N. Koumanoudis, RevPhil 35, 1961, 99) or Locrian Skarphe or Skarpheia (so A.W. Gow & F.H. Sandbach, Menander. A Commentary, Oxford 1973, 129), Lykon of Skarpheia (Stephanis, DT 1567), Satyros of Olynthos (Stephanis, DT 2235); tragic or comic actor Hippokles of Kilikia (Stephanis, DT 1281). We could add Hippasos of Ambrakia and Kritias of Kleonai (Stephanis, DT 1280; 1506), mentioned by Alkiphron, Epist. 3, 12; even if these actors may be fictitious, Alkiphron meant to paint a picture resembling fourth century society, and thus the fact that he mentions two actors of foreign origin is not without significance.

money from him. Since they had good relations with Philip, they acted as mediators in the negotiations between Athens and Philip. In his speech *On the Peace* (5, 6–8) Demosthenes reproaches the Athenians for listening in important matters to Neoptolemos rather than to himself, simply because Neoptolemos was a famous actor. Aischines, the opponent of Demosthenes, describes in his speech *On the Embassy* (2, 19) how in Athens Aristodemos was chosen to be one of the ten ambassadors sent to negotiate with Philip.

Such references are often seen to prove that Aristodemos and Neoptolemos had been granted honorary citizenship of Athens[27] – otherwise they could not have been trusted with such important political tasks. I am not so sure of this – as a parallel one could refer to some occasions in the Hellenistic age when non-Athenian philosophers were used as members of political embassies[28].

It is true, however, that in the fourth century, honorary citizenship could be granted to private non-Athenian individuals for their outstanding merits, and this custom became later more common. A concrete example of such an honour granted to a comedian is found in the memorial of a family from Sinope, found in Attica between Daphni and Pireus (IG II/III^2 10321). Here we find men of three generations: the grandfather Diodoros I of Sinope (Σινωπεύς), his son Dion of Sinope, and the sons of the latter, Diphilos of Sinope (the famous comic poet) and Diodoros II – with the demotic Σημαχίδης. Thus, a member of the third generation of this family of foreign origin had been granted Athenian citizenship and accepted into the deme Semachidai. This Diodoros was perhaps both a comic poet and a comic actor[29].

[27] For instance Stephanis, DT 332; 1797 mentions them as having Athenian citizenship along with their original citizenship; Ghiron-Bistagne mentions them as Athenians with a question-mark in her prosopography (Recherches 312 and 345), but remarks on Aristodemos in connection with the passage of Aischines that he certainly at that time had acquired Athenian citizenship (156); as an argument she mentions the terms διοικοῦντα ... καὶ πρυτανεύοντα referring to Aristodemos' activity, saying that they can hardly be understood figuratively. But cf. Isocr. 4, 121, where the same verbs must be understood figuratively, as they refer to the Persian King meddling in Greek affairs.

[28] Xenokrates of Chalkedon, a metic, was sent by Athens to Antipater in 322; Prytanis of Karystos had served as an ambassador to Antigonos Doson ca. 266/5, when a honorary decree was erected to him in the Agora (SEG XXV 106); Karneades of Kyrene, Kritolaos of Phaselis and Diogenes of Babylon were sent to Rome in 155. Karneades had acquired Athenian citizenship, while nothing is known of the social status of the other two – probably they were at least metics (see D. Kienast, RE Suppl. 13, 527). The role of Hellenistic philosophers as ambassadors has been recently discussed by T. Korhonen in: J. Frösén (ed.), Early Hellenistic Athens: Symptoms of a Change, Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens vol. 6, Helsinki 1997, 40–54.

[29] Cf. Prosopographia Attica 3959, RE Suppl. X 139, Ghiron-Bistagne, Recherches 320, who supposes that Diodoros started his career as a comic actor and turned later to writing comedies (146–147). Diodoros of Athens appeared as a comic actor in Delos in 284 (IG XI 105 = Mette II D 1a, 21), came second and third with his plays at the Lenaia in 284 (IG II/III^2 2319 = Mette III C 2, 14, 16) and probably won once in the Lenaia (IG II/III^2

It is thus understandable – even if it is not certain – if the great actors Aristodemos and Neoptolemos had been granted honorary citizenship. But this does not prove that only Athenian citizens were allowed to appear as actors in the dramatic festivals of Athens. On the contrary, I think that it proves precisely the opposite – that non-Athenian actors could and did perform on the Athenian stage. If these men were granted Athenian citizenship in return for their outstanding artistic merits in the Athenian theatre, they must have had a successful career on the Athenian stage before they were made Athenian citizens.

Thus, although in the fifth and still in the fourth century the majority of actors were probably Athenian citizens, talented non-Athenian actors were not prevented from performing in the festivals by any legislation, as was the case with the chorus members.

Poets

What about poets? We have more information about their social status than about actors. The majority of dramatic poets were Athenian citizens; Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, for instance, all belonged to Athenian families which produced tragic poets and actors over a period of several generations. Contemporary sources seldom give information about the citizenship, but it is sometimes mentioned by later sources, such as the scholiasts or the Suda. How reliable they are in such matters, we have no way of knowing. According to the sources, we can mention the following fifth-century tragic poets, who were certainly not Athenian citizens:

Pratinas and his son Aristias (TrGF[30] 4.9) were, according to Pausanias (2, 13, 6 = TrGF 4 T 7), along with Aeschylus the most famous authors of satyr plays. Pratinas won a victory in the Dionysia in 499 (TrGF 4 T 1), and thirty years later, in 467, Aristias came second when he produced his father's plays (TrGF 9 T 1). Pausanias mentions that in the agora of their home town Phlius, which was situated in the northern Peloponnesos near Nemea, there was a memorial to Aristias (2, 13, 6). Thus, the poets seem to have been well-known and appreciated both in their home town and in Athens.

Aristarchos from Arcadian Tegea and Archaios from Eretria are mentioned by Suda as winners, probably in the Dionysia (TrGF 14 T 1. 20 T 1). They produced tragedies in the second half of the fifth century, when the citizenship laws of Perikles were in force.

2325 = Mette V C 1 col. 6, 12). But see the warning in PCG V 26: "sed in tanta Diodororum frequentia certi quid sit explorari nequit."

[30] B. Snell, Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta, vol. I Didascaliae, catalogi, testimonia et fragmenta tragicorum minorum, 1st edn corrected and augmented by R. Kannicht, Göttingen 1986.

Ion from Chios (TrGF 19) began producing tragedies in the middle of the fifth century. He received the third prize (that is, was the loser) in the Dionysia in 428, when Euripides won one of his rare victories with the trilogy containing the *Hippolytus* (19 T 5). The Chian origin of Ion is clear from many sources; for instance his contemporary Aristophanes mentions this in his comedy the *Peace* (835).

Akestor was often ridiculed by the comedians as 'Sakas' or 'Mysios' because of his origin. He began his career about 435. We have no information about his possible victories, but we do know he produced plays in the same festivals as Euripides, since the Hellenistic biographer Satyros gives as one of the reasons for Euripides' moving to Macedonia in his old days that he was disgusted at having to appear together with such bad poets as Akestor[31].

This list of probably non-Athenian tragic poets is not very long when compared with the total of tragic poets of the fifth century, which includes forty-nine names known to us (TrGF vol. I p. VI)[32]. However, it clearly shows that there were no restrictions forbidding the participation of a non-Athenian tragic poet in the contest of the Great Dionysia or Lenaia. In the fourth century, the number of foreign tragic poets increases[33]. The non-Athenian origin of the poet was not commented on in the sources with astonishment or disapproval except in connection with one man, Akestor. This case is interesting with regard to the question of citizenship.

Akestor is constantly ridiculed by contemporary comedians because of his origin – not only as a non-Athenian, but as a non-Greek, that is a barbarian, as his nicknames Sakas and Mysios show. The references, however, seem to prove that he wanted to be an Athenian citizen and finally succeeded in his aim – which, however, did not put a stop to the references to his foreign origin. Douglas MacDowell has suggested that he may have been the son of an Athenian father and a Mysian mother, having the social status of a metic, and that he managed to get himself reg-

[31] Satyros, Vita Eur. in P.Oxy. IX 1176 fr. 39 col. 15, 20.

[32] Spintharos of Herakleia (TrGF 40) possibly belongs to the end of the fourth century (cf. Snell in TrGF vol. I p. 168 and 40 T 3). He is probably not the same person whom Aristophanes derides as a Phrygian in Av. 762. It is not sure whether Aristophanes' Spintharos was a tragedian at all; for different possibilities of identification see N. Dunbar, Aristophanes: Birds, Oxford 1995, 471. – Hippias of Elis (TrGF 42) is the famous sophist. The only mention of his activity as a tragic poet is from Plat. Hipp. min. 368C, where Sokrates recounts the boasting of Hippias about his achievements in all the arts. We do not know whether he ever produced his tragedies in Athens.

[33] Among the 45 fourth-century tragedians listed by Snell in TrGF, the following are mentioned as foreigners in the sources (known victories in Athens mentioned): Empedokles of Akragas (TrGF 50), Apollodoros of Tarsos (64; probably 5 victories in the Lenaia, T 2), Theodektes of Phaselis (72; 7 victories in the Dionysia, T 3), Dionysios of Syracuse (76; the tyrant; victory in the Lenaia in 367; was granted Athenian citizenship, T 1), Polyidos of Selymbria (78; known as a dithyrambic poet), Achaios II of Syracuse (79; 1 victory at the Lenaia, T 2), Diogenes of Sinope (88), Philiskos of Aigina (89), Python of Katane or Byzantion (91), Sosiphanes of Syracuse (92), Herakleides of Pontos (93), Phanostratos of Halikarnassos (94).

istered as an Athenian citizen and a member of a deme in the final phase of the Peloponnesian war, when the citizenship law of Perikles was temporarily less strictly observed[34]. In Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1221, produced in 422, his son (or possibly he himself, depending on the text chosen)[35] is stamped as an 'alien': 1219 αὐλητρὶς ἐνεφύσησεν. οἱ δὲ συμπόται / εἰσὶν Θέωρος, Αἰσχίνης, Φᾶνος, Κλέων, / ξένος τις ἕτερος πρὸς κεφαλῆς, Ἀκέστορος. In Aristophanes' *Birds* in 414 the speaker complains that Akestor, 'Sakas', tries to force his way into the city although he is not a citizen (Av. 31–32). From the last decade of the fifth century, however, we have a fragment of the comedian Metagenes (frg. 14), where the speaker bemoans the fact that such doubtful creatures as the Mysian Sakas and the bastard of Kallias are now Athenian citizens. Even though Akestor acquired citizenship, the comic poets did not stop ridiculing him. As a matter of fact, the reconfirmation of the Periclean law of citizenship in 403/2 could have given renewed emphasis to such jokes, since at that time there was surely much talk around the city about the justification of the citizenships recently granted.

But why was just Akestor such a popular butt for the comedians' jokes? Barbarian origin as such was a common abuse, and it is typical of Attic comedy that when a person is once ridiculed for something, similar jokes seem to accumulate to brand him with a permanent label, regardless of whether the joke has any resemblance to the truth or not[36]. But why was the foreign origin of a tragedian on everyone's tongue, if he probably was a metic born and bred in Athens? Perhaps we can use two other passages of comedy to explain this. In Eupolis' Κόλακες, from the year 421, the chorus is formed of flatterers or parasites. They describe their lifestyle (frg. 172) emphazising how important it is to behave in a proper manner at a dinner party, so that the host will not throw them out: frg. 172, 14 οἶδα δ' Ἀκέστορ' αὐτὸ τὸν στιγματίαν παθόντα· / σκῶμμα γὰρ εἶπ' ἀσελγές, εἶτ' αὐτὸν ὁ παῖς θύραζε / ἐξαγαγὼν ἔχοντα κλοιὸν παρέδωκεν Οἰνεῖ. 'I know that that happened to the blackguard (or tattooed) Akestor; for he uttered an outrageous jest, and the slave led him out of the door – with a collar on – and handed him over to Oineus.' This can hardly be a straightforward reference to Akestor's bad behaviour

[34] Akestor's citizenship is discussed by D. MacDowell, Foreign birth and Athenian citizenship in Aristophanes, in: Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis 365–367 (in the following: MacDowell, Foreign birth).

[35] I prefer the reading above, giving the sense 'another foreigner at your head, the son of Akestor' (so also the scholiast in RV), to πρὸς κεφαλῆς Ἀκέστορος 'at Akestor's head'. As MacDowell points out (Foreign birth, 366; cf. also his commentary on Aristophanes' *Wasps*, Oxford 1971, ad loc.) the foreigner needs a name, as the other persons are named, too. Moreover, if at the party were both Akestor and an unnamed foreigner at his head, there would be – Philokleon included – seven symposiasts altogether. Six would be a better imaginary number for a small party, presumably with three couches. We can only guess why the son of Akestor is mentioned here. Perhaps he was known as an eager follower of Kleon, suitable also because offering the possibility of making a thrust at the well known tragedian.

[36] Cf. S. Halliwell, Aristophanic satire, in: The Yearbook of English Studies 1984, 10.

at a party – a mere bad jest could not result in handing the person over to magistrates for punishment, which apparently is the meaning here, whatever the interpretation of the name Oineus should be[37]. Noteworthy is also the abusive word στιγματίας. στίζω and its cognates are often used in comedy referring to a slave who has been tattooed as a punishment[38], but it could also refer to a barbarian origin, as the Thracians and other people living in the area of the Black Sea were noted for tattooing themselves for decoration. The notions of a barbarian habit and a punishment could also be blended together. The sentence could perhaps be interpreted that Akestor had tried to pass himself off as an Athenian citizen and had been thrown out of the party, that is, from the circle of citizens. We can note that the verb ἐξάγειν is used here, and this was the verb used in the law which ordered the exclusion of non-Athenian citizens from the chorus in the Dionysia festival[39].

In another fragment, the comedian Kallias ridicules Akestor (Πεδῆται, ca. 430?, frg. 17): 'The choruses hate Sakas, too.' Of course this could merely mean

[37] A parallel expression is suggested by Koerte in Eupolis 99, 112 παράδοτ' Οἰ[νεῖ ταχύ. T. Kock, Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta I, Leipzig 1880, 302, suggests a reference to the eponymous hero of the *phyle* Oineis, perhaps to a statue of the hero standing near the βάραθρον, which was situated in the deme of Keiriadai (cf. J. Bekker, Anecdota Graeca I, Berlin 1814, 219, 8 s.v. βάραθρον); but Keiriadai was part of Hippothontis, not Oineis. W. Headlam in his commentary to Herodas, Cambridge 1966, 243, compares our passage to Herod. 5, 32 πρὸς Ἕρμωνα and interprets the name as a reference to the henchman.

[38] Eupolis frg. 277; Ar. Av. 760–761; Ran. 1511; Men. Sam. 323; metaphorically Ar. Vesp. 1296. C.P. Jones, Stigma: tattooing and branding, in: JRS 77, 1987, 139–155, emphasizes that στίζειν, στίγμα in the Greek world denotes tattooing, not branding. On references to tattooing in comedy, see 147–148, on decorative tattooing practised by barbarians, 145–146. He points out that the Greeks generally found tattooing degradating and tended to interpret it as a punitive measure (145). στιγματίας is in Ar. Lys. 331 and Hermippos frg. 63, 19 paired with δοῦλος, -η, apparently denoting the worst possible position in society, a slave tattooed for punishment. In Eupolis frg. 276, 2 it seems to refer not to the social position, but to the outward appearance of a person, like the other words in the context (blind, humpbacked, red-haired, twisted) and thus it may refer to tattooing in general, as an ugly and barbarian feature, not necessarily to a punishment.

[39] Cf. above p. 49. – The expression θύραζε is used also in the sense 'out from the stage of theatre' in Ar. Ach. 1222, when the wounded Lamachos exclaims θύραζέ μ' ἐξενέγκατ' εἰς τοῦ Πιττάλου. I suspect that there is also an extended metaphor taken from the world of theatre in Ar. Plut. 951–957, where the fleeing sycophant is taunted with a reference to a very poor man warming himself in a public bath. In 953, he is presented as a chorus leader: ἔπειτ' ἐκεῖ κορυφαῖος ἑστηκὼς θέρου, and in 955, he is thrown out: ἀλλ' ὁ βαλανεὺς ἕλξει θύραζ' αὐτὸν λαβὼν τῶν ὀρχιπέδων, since the bath-keeper notices at once that the man is of a bad sort, 957 ἔστ' ἐκείνου τοῦ πονηροῦ κόμματος. The associations awakened by the reference to the chorus leader could be sustained by the continuation, which under its overt meaning – especially in a theatre performance – easily calls to mind the unpleasant disqualification of chorus members. Moreover, τῶν ὀρχιπέδων could be chosen to attain comical effect in a typically Aristophanean way – by using a word whose beginning creates expectations or associations to another word: it could have a sub-reference to ὀρχήστρα, ὀρχεῖσθαι.

that Akestor was such a bad poet that the choruses hated him[40], but could another suggestion be made? Perhaps Akestor had caused a scandal by trying to perform in a tragic chorus[41] – perhaps in his own tragedy, having trained his chorus himself and wishing to take part in the performance as the chorus-leader, like Sannion whom I discussed earlier – and somebody had raised the objection prescribed by the law and required that he should be excluded (ἐξάγειν) from the chorus. As we have seen, this was considered an unpleasant and sensational occurrence. If this occurred in connection with a well-known tragic poet, it would be easy to understand that the sensation tempted the comedians to allude to it in the context of the theatre festival, and Akestor could thus have acquired the permanent label of barbarian. If my speculation is at all on the right track, this label does not reflect the attitude that a barbarian origin as such would have been deprecated in a tragic poet, but is linked with his attempt to perform in the chorus, which was allowed only for Athenian citizens.

Among the comic poets active in the fifth century, there are very few indeed whom we know to be other than Athenian citizens. Of the playwrights known by name, about half are certainly Athenians, while there is no indication of the citizenship of the other half. It is very likely that the majority of them, too, were Athenians. There is one example of foreign citizenship, though: Hegemon, a very popular comic poet, nicknamed Φακῆ, 'Lentil Soup', came from Thasos[42]. Could it be that the strongly political and topical character of the Old Attic Comedy was the reason for the lack of non-Athenian dramatists in the contests of comedy? The writing of such a comedy required that the author knew the inside trends, problems and gossip of Athenian cultural and political life very well. A metic who had long resided in Athens could probably be as well acquainted with such matters as an Athenian citizen, but it may be that the social status of metic could still form a mental restraint, more strongly felt in connection with producing a comedy than a tragedy. We know that even the young Aristophanes, although he was a citizen, did not produce his first comedies under his own name, but used another man as the *didaskalos* of his plays. One could surmise that it may have been hard for a metic to dare to present such blatant abuse of well-known and influential persons as was usual in comedy, even though it would not have been legally forbidden for metics to appear as comic poets.

However, when we look at the comic poets of the fourth century, we do find some authors who were clearly not Athenian citizens: Anaxandrides of Rhodes,

[40] This seems to be the explanation of the scholiast to Ar. Av. 31: εἰς δὲ τὴν ποίησιν αὐτὸν κεχλευάκασιν Καλλίας καὶ Κράτινος.

[41] At this time, Akestor must have been fairly young – perhaps around thirty, if his adult son is mentioned in Ar. *Vesp.* 1221 (year 422). He probably began his career as a tragic writer in the thirties (first references in comedy to him are ca. 430) and was active during the last Athenian years of Euripides (cf. above p. 55).

[42] See PCG V 546 T 1; 4.

Herakleides of Pontos, Alexis of Thurioi, Apollodoros of Gela, and the famous Diphilos of Sinope, whose family I have already discussed earlier. The increasing number of non-Athenian comic poets may be due both to the changing nature of comedy, political content giving way to other interests, and to the vigorous spread of theatre outside Athens.

Speaking of poets, it is instructive to take a look at the third kind of poetry contest included in the program of the Dionysia, namely the dithyramb, although it is not a dramatic genre. As I mentioned earlier, the yearly number of dithyrambic poems performed in Athens was quite large, the most important festivals being the Dionysia and the Thargelia. In the following, I shall not discuss the poets of these festivals separately; in most cases, we have no way of knowing where a certain poem was performed, and it is, moreover, very likely that most poets performed in both festivals during their careers. In any case, in both festivals the contests of dithyrambs were held between the ten Athenian tribes, and in both, the singers of the choruses must be Athenian citizens.

The dithyramb is often seen as a lyric which is very strongly connected with the *polis*. Bernhard Zimmermann characterizes the fifth-century dithyramb as „die Polis-Gattung par excellence", which „in der Polis eine eminent wichtige politische, religiöse, sozialische und erzieherische Funktion ausübte"[43]. With regard to this strongly political function, it is surprising that the number of non-Athenian poets is remarkably higher among the composers of dithyrambs than among the dramatic poets. We know some Athenian dithyrambic poets – for instance Kinesias flying around Cloud-Cuckoo-Land in Aristophanes' *Birds* (1373–1409) – but in the sixth and fifth century, there are more foreign poets than Athenians and those of uncertain origin taken together[44]. It is perhaps not so surprising that there are many foreign poets producing dithyrambs in the early years of the Dionysiac festival in the sixth century, seeing that this genre of poetry was itself of foreign origin – the first dithyrambs are attributed to Arion of Methymna, who was active in Sikyon. The first dithyrambic poet who won the Athenian contest was Lasos of Hermione (from Achaia; between 548–5). The same trend can be seen in the first half of the fifth century. The Dionysiac victories of the two poets named Simonides of Keos

[43] Bernhard Zimmermann, Dithyrambos: Geschichte einer Gattung, Göttingen 1992, 9.

[44] In the prosopography od D.F. Sutton, Dithyrambographi Graeci, Munich & Zurich 1989, there are among the 35 poets dated to the sixth, fifth, or fifth/fourth century, 21 poets of foreign origin (following the name, I mention the number of Sutton's prosopography): Arion of Methymna (1), Lasos of Hermione (2), Hypodikos of Chalkis (3), Ibykos of Rhegion (4), Melanippides I of Melos (6), Simonides I of Keos (7), Bakchiadas of Sikyon (10), Simonides II of Keos (11), Praxilla of Sikyon (14), Bakchylides of Keos (15), Pindar of Thebes (16), Diagoras of Melos (17), Melanippides II of Melos (18), Ion of Chios (19), Kleomenes of Rhegion (21), Phrynis of Mytilene (23), Hippias of Elis (24), Likymnios of Chios (29), Timotheos of Miletos (33), Philoxenos of Kythera (34), Telestes of Selinus (36). The testimonia connected with dithyrambic poets are now also collected in G. Ieranò, Il ditirambo di Dioniso: le testimonianze antiche, Pisa & Rome 1997.

are securely dated (489/8, 477/6), and Pindar of Thebes won in 495. Victories in Athens are attested also for Hypodikos of Chalkis (510/8, the first contest) and Melanippides I of Melos (494)[45]. In the second half of the fifth century, when the strict Periclean citizenship law was established, we find poets from Melos, Chios, Rhegion, Mytilene, Kythera and so on, including the great modernist, Timotheos of Miletos. Probably many of them participated in the Athenian contests, although only one non-Athenian winner is attested, Telestes of Selinus (401)[46].

It is characteristic of dithyramb that the occasion and place of the performance is referred to in the poem, and that the central myth is somehow connected with the host city[47]. In one of his dithyrambs, Pindar praised Athens (frg. 76): "O Athens, splendid and violet-crowned city, the bulwark of Hellas ..." Referring to this poem, Aristophanes mocked his public, that with flattery, one could persuade them to anything; one had only to say to them the words 'splendid' and 'violet-crowned', and they sit with bottoms transfixed (Ar. *Ach.* 636–638). Apparently it did not matter to the Athenians that this genre, which had such an important role in the life of the polis, was favoured by non-Athenian poets and that the words guiding the morals of the citizens and encouraging the solidarity of the polis came from the brains of, say, a Milesian or a Rhodian poet.

There may be at least two natural reasons behind this attitude. Firstly, there was a great demand for dithyrambic poets. For the Dionysia festival alone, twenty dithyrambs were needed every year. Perhaps there simply were not enough good poets in Athens – and the poets had to be good in order to be able to win the contest. The demand for poems is probably one reason for the greater proportion of foreign dithyrambic poets than is found among dramatic poets. Secondly – and this holds true with regard to both dithyrambs and dramas – it was an ancient custom in Greece that gifted singers toured different cities. Especially kings and rulers liked to invite artists to their courts. A good poet was welcome to sing his songs, whatever his home town might be. Many of the tyrants reigning in the sixth century were great patrons of poets – Periander in Corinth, Kleisthenes in Sikyon, Peisistratos in

[45] For a list of attested victories, see Sutton, Dithyrambographi Graeci appendix III, 123–125.

[46] In the fourth century, the same tendency is continued. Of the 25 fourth-century dithyrambic poets listed by Sutton, 13 are of foreign origin (after the number of Sutton, attested Athenian victories are mentioned): Polyidos of Selymbria (37; Dionysia 380); Oiniades of Thebes (38); Stesichoros II of Himera (41; Dionysia 368); Polyzelos of Thebes (43; Thargelia 362); Hegemon of Phleia (44; Thargelia 358); Antiphilos of Megara (45; Thargelia 356); Korinnos of Opuntia (46; Thargelia 351); Pheidias of Opuntia (47; Thargelia 348; an Opuntian, who may be either Korinnos or Pheidias, won a victory in the Dionysia in 326; another possibility is Moiragenes I of Opuntia (62), winner in the Dionysia in the early third century); Anaxandrides of Kameiros (50); Epikuros of Sikyon (52; Thargelia 343); Charilaos of Lokroi (56; Dionysia 327); Pamphilos of Hagnos (57; Dionysia 322); Karkidamos of Sotion (58; Dionysia 319).

[47] See Zimmermann, Dithyrambos 7; 16–17; 139.

Athens, Polykrates in Samos. Later rulers, like Hieron in Sicily and Archelaos in Macedonia, followed this tradition. It is natural that it was followed in the Dionysiac festival organized by Peisistratos, too. The best poets were crowned as victors there; if they were Athenian citizens, then Athens was proud of them, but the quality of the poetry was the most important thing, regardless of whether the poetry was imported or not. Poetry was exported, too. The citizens of Athens did not hesitate to offer their poetic gifts in the service of foreign sponsors. Aeschylus travelled twice during his life to Hieron's court in Syracuse and not only to perform his tragedies there, for at Hieron's request he wrote a play for the festival held for the newly-formed city of Aitne (*The Women of Aitne*). Both Euripides and Agathon moved to Macedonia to the court of Archelaos, and Euripides composed a play with Archelaos' ancestor as the hero.

This tradition helps to understand why the Athenians did not restrict the appearance of foreign poets in their festivals. And since the poet in the early days of drama himself performed the roles in his play, it was natural that the same freedom came to be attached to the other actors of the plays, too. The developing professionalism of actors and the spreading of theatrical performances from Athens to other parts of the Greek world confirmed this traditional trend. The emergence of artistic excellence depended partly on the free participation of the best poets and actors, regardless of their citizenship.

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