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EURIPIDES AND MACEDON, OR THE SILENCE OF THE *FROGS*

In the case of Euripides, as in those of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and other famous authors of the archaic and classical periods, the ancient biographers eked out the few facts available to them with quantities of often extravagant invention.[1] The railleries of comic drama; stories concocted out of scenes or even verses in the tragedians' work; free invention and elaboration of free invention: all find a place in the biographical 'tradition'. Considerable headway has been made against ancient biographical fiction in the last two or three decades, but fiction is not always obvious fiction, and it is likely that some apparently plausible, still generally credited ancient stories are in fact inventions. I shall argue here that Euripides' 'exile' and death at the court of King Archelaus of Macedon is one of these.

In her discussion of the biograpical traditions about Euripides, Lefkowitz expressed doubt about both the date of *Bacchae* and the story of the Macedonian exile, but her brief statement was unpersuasive and no one seems to have accepted her suggestion.[2] In a recent discussion, Hose notes that poets did commonly visit the courts of kings and tyrants and says: 'Daher ist nicht nur ein analoges Verhalten des Euripides nicht per se unglaubwürdig, vielmehr muß angesichts der Bezeugung des Makedonien-Aufenthalts die Beweislast denen aufgebürdet werden, die den Aufenthalt in Abrede stellen.' 'Es scheint sicher', he goes on, less cautiously, to conclude, 'daß Euripides 408 Athen verließ und nach Makedonien ging.'[3] Given the nature of ancient biography and the severe limitations of our evidence in general, we ought normally to approach the lives of the poets in the expectation not so much of proof or certainty as of a balance of probabilities; it might indeed be argued that it is precisely thinking in terms of proof that has led modern scholars to be insufficiently sceptical of the plausible stories that

[1] A complete collection of the testimonia to Euripides' life and work will appear in the fifth volume of *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, under preparation by Richard Kannicht. In what follows I refer by number to the very full selection of testimonia in David Kovacs, *Euripidea* (Leiden, 1994). U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's chapter on Euripides' life in his *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (Berlin, 1907), 1–43, is the classic comprehensive treatment, but is insufficiently critical on certain points: see especially Jacoby, *FGrHist* IIIb Suppl., *ad* Philochorus 328 F 218–19; Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London, 1981), 88–104, an important but sometimes incautious corrective. David Kovacs's treatment of the life in the introduction to the first volume of his Loeb edition of Euripides (Cambridge, MA, 1994), 1–21, is in many ways an advance on Wilamowitz's, but does not wholly supersede it (e.g. Kovacs 5–6 neglects the most important evidence for the dating of Euripides' birth, that of Philochorus).

[2] Lefkowitz (n. 1), 103–4; the evidence for the date of *Bacchae* in the scholion on *Frogs* 67 is based not as Lefkowitz claims 'on the biography' but on the official Athenian records compiled in Aristotle's *Didascaliae*, from which derive the scholiast's information that the producer was Euripides' son of the same name and that the plays won first prize. Lefkowitz's very brief suggestion about the exile is founded on general scepticism rather than detailed argument, and is lamed by this confusion between didascalic and biographical tradition; it has been rejected, pending further evidence or better arguments, by Annette Harder, *Euripides' Kresphontes and Archelaos. Mnemos.* Suppl. 87 (Leiden, 1985), 125, n. 1; Martin Hose, *Drama und Gesellschaft: Studien zur dramatischen Produktion in Athen am Ende des 5. Jahrhunderts. Drama* Beiheft 3 (Stuttgart, 1995), 143–4.

[3] Hose (n. 2), 144, 146. In both passages, Hose goes on to say that the reasons for Euripides' departure to Macedon are a matter of speculation.

stand alongside the more fantastic in the ancient tradition.[4] On this particular matter, however, we have in Aristophanes' *Frogs* a neglected but excellent control on the biographical tradition, and a fairly compelling case can be made for rejecting the ancient story as invention.

It will be helpful to begin by making two important points through a discussion of some basic problems in Euripidean biography. The first point, nowadays widely accepted, is that ancient writers were often very bold indeed in biographical invention; the second, connected with the first but generally unrecognized, is that they were boldly inventive not only when solid biographical information was wholly lacking but also, and not seldom, in ignorance or defiance of available, soberly established fact.[5]

The most readily available item of biographical information about Euripides, connected with Aristophanes' *Frogs*, was that he had died in 407/6 B.C., though the chronographer Apollodorus brought even this date forward a year in order to synchronize his death with that of Sophocles.[6] Other genuine dates were available in works of reference, such as Aristotle's *Didascaliae*, based on the official records of the Athenian dramatic festivals. Those among later writers who used such works—many were either unable or felt no inclination to do so—gleaned from them a few further facts about the tragedians' lives, as for example that Euripides first participated in a dramatic competition in 455 and won his first victory in 441.[7] The facts were, however, few and dry, and biographical invention began very early; the third-century B.C. scholar-biographer Satyrus already knows most of the best stories we find retailed or elaborated in the later lives and in writers such as Plutarch. Even those more narrowly concerned with chronology early began to schematize, synchronize, and invent, and the Parian Marble, inscribed in or soon after 264/3, already manifests the results of such methodology.[8] On a standard Hellenistic view a man's *akme* is his fortieth year and should correspond to the first victory of a tragedian; calculation on this basis would put Euripides' birth in 482/1, close enough to encourage the Marble's synchronism between his birth and Aeschylus' first victory in 485/4.[9] Later tradition, probably following Eratosthenes, preferred more wide-ranging synchronism, and so put Euripides' birth in 480/79,[10] when Aeschylus was said to have fought in the battle of Salamis and

[4] In this sense Lefkowitz's (n. 1) recommendation of general scepticism has been a helpful corrective.

[5] Cf. S. Scullion, 'Tragic dates', *CQ* 52 (2002), 81–101 at 84–5.

[6] Apollod. Athen. *FGrHist* 244 F 35 *apud* Diod. 13.103.4 = T 68 Kovacs.

[7] Our didascalic evidence is set out conveniently in R. Kannicht's revision of Bruno Snell, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* I (Göttingen, 1986), 3–52; the Euripidean date-attestations also at T 1.15, 1.36, 5.5 Kovacs (first competition), 25 Kovacs (first victory).

[8] *FGrHist* 239 A with Jacoby's notes; see also F. Jacoby, *Das Marmor Parium* (Berlin, 1904). The tragic entries that concern us here are also gathered by Snell (n. 7), 49–50. In the first part of his book *The* Chronicle *of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Lewisburg and London, 1979), Alden A. Mosshammer well discusses the difficulties presented by chronographic sources, but he proceeds in the second part to overconfident and often rather arbitrary treatment of tragic dates (305–19).

[9] *FGrHist* 239 A 50 = T 6 Kovacs; the age at death given in the notice of the death, *FGrHist* 239 A 63 = T 67 Kovacs, would produce a slightly earlier birth-year, but the synchronism with Aeschylus' first victory is clearly the chronographer's primary datum. The coincidence that Aeschylus died in the year of Euripides' first competition no doubt enhanced the appeal of this further synchronism.

[10] T 1.2, 1.8, 2.3, 3.2, 7, 8 Kovacs; at *Vit. Eur.* 3.3–4 Schwartz = T 1.17 Kovacs = *FGrHist* 241 F 12 Eratosthenes is quoted for an age at death of seventy-five, which points to a synchronism of the birth with the battle of Salamis.

Sophocles to have led the chorus that sang the victory paean.[11] The author of the *Life of Euripides*, followed by Plutarch, elaborated this synchronism, claiming that the poet was born on the very day of the battle.[12] The notion that Euripides was born on Salamis, as also the story that he later kept a cave there to do his writing in, can confidently be regarded as further elaborations of the synchronism of his birth with the battle.[13]

These synchronisms suggest that Euripides' actual year of birth was unknown, and this is confirmed by the statement attributed in the *Life of Euripides* to the Atthidographer Philochorus, who wrote a book about Euripides, that the poet died 'aged more than seventy'.[14] Wilamowitz concluded that Philochorus estimated this age by adding to the fifty years between the well-attested dates of first competition and death twenty years representing a minimum age at first competition.[15] We cannot improve on Philochorus' estimate, though the synchronistic dates of the Parian chronicler and Eratosthenes are still often retailed.[16]

It was also Philochorus who established that Euripides' mother was not, as the comic poets had it, a hawker of vegetables, but well-born,[17] and probably he who preserved the information that the poet's father was an Athenian citizen of the deme Phlya, with which Euripides had religious associations[18] and where he may have been born. The many colourful stories about Euripides (and his parents and wives) in the tradition, including those that contradicted, or more probably simply ignored, Philochorus' researches, are some certainly and the rest very probably the product of methods other than his, and unworthy of anything other than aggressive suspicion.[19]

The fact that Philochorus' work on Euripides failed to prevent or prevail against the

[11] Aeschylus: Radt, *TrGF* III, 39–40; Sophocles: *Vit. Soph.* 3 = Radt, *TrGF* IV T 1.17–19; Athen. 1.20e = T 28.3–4 Radt.

[12] *Vit. Eur.* 2.5–6 Schwartz = T 1.8 Kovacs; Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 8.1.1, 717c = T 7; also *Suda* ε 3695 Adler s.v. *Εὐριπίδης* = T 2.3; cf. *Cimon* 8.7, where Plutarch or his source turns Sophocles' first victory into his first competition: see Scullion (n. 5), 88–90.

[13] Born at Salamis: T 1.2, 3.2 Kovacs, *IG* XIV.1207; Cave: T 1.22, 4.12, 5.5 Kovacs; cf. Jacoby (n. 1). A cave on the southern tip of Salamis in which were found in 1996 fragments of a late fifth-century scyphos inscribed *ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔ-* in script of the second or third century A.D. (D. Blackman, *AR* 44 [1998], 16–17) must be the 'cave of Euripides' Aulus Gellius toured at that period (see n. 19). Such a tourist attraction could be, and the evidence suggests that this one was, a commercial venture inspired by (and located in general accordance with) later biographical tradition (cf. n. 48); assumption of a genuine 'local tradition' going back to the fifth century is unnecessary, and in this case implausible.

[14] *Vit. Eur.* 3.3 Schwartz = *FGrHist* 328 F 220 = T 1.17 Kovacs.

[15] Wilamowitz (n. 1), 3.

[16] For example, to cite the most recent examples I have encountered, the programme booklet for the National Theatre of Greece 2002 production of *Iphigeneia at Aulis* gives the Parian chronicler's birth-year (p. 74), that for Sir Peter Hall's 2002 production of *Bacchae* in Epidaurus '*c.* 480' (p. 50) and '485–480' (p. 64); both give Salamis as the place of birth. Kovacs, in the Loeb edition (n. 1), 6 concludes that because the Marble gives the correct year of death 'it may be telling the truth about his birth as well', but the fact that the chronicler reproduces some correct dates does not support an assumption that any other date he offers is reliable, and he is here clearly generating a date by synchronism, the Athenian specialist Philochorus' estimate being a reliable indication that the year of birth was unknown.

[17] T 2.2 Kovacs = *FGrHist* 328 F 218, with Jacoby ad loc. This is stock comic badinage: see e.g. H. Swoboda, *RE* 11.1 (1921), 792 s.v. 'Kleophon'.

[18] Theophrastus fr. 119 Wimmer *apud* Athen. 10.24, 424ef = T 12 Kovacs (with which cf. Harpocration s.v. *Φλυέα* = T 11 Kovacs) may well have derived his information from Philochorus' work on Euripides: see Wilamowitz (n. 1), 5–6, n. 8, Jacoby *ad FGrHist* 328 F 218 and 219.

[19] Gellius 15.20 (= T 5.5 Kovacs) cites Philochorus (*FGrHist* 328 F 219) as authority for the

biographical fantasies establishes our second point. Modern scholars often operate on the assumption that ancient writers would not retail stories that might, as they put it, be 'easily exposed' as false by some document or authoritative work, but there is really no more justification for this assumption than there would be for supposing today that subjection of the latest twaddle about some celebrity to a thorough refutation in one of the responsible broadsheets would be bound to shame an embarrassed tabloid press into silence. Those who generated fantastic stories about Euripides' life were not simply filling a vacuum but happily ignoring such sober researches as Philochorus'.

It is with such considerations in mind that we ought to approach the reports of Euripides' death at the court of Archelaus, for which he is supposed to have abandoned Athens soon after the production of *Orestes* in 408. We have a great deal of 'evidence' for these events, but none of it is earlier than the early third century B.C., and the frequent attestation of the story means that it was widely disseminated, not that it is true. In this case, the argument from the silence of earlier sources is more powerful than such arguments normally are, since we have in Aristophanes' *Frogs* a contemporary source directly and extensively concerned with Euripides' demise that knows nothing of a Macedonian 'exile' or death. Early in the play Aristophanes makes Dionysus joke that the tragic poet Agathon has abandoned him and gone off to Macedon (83–5 with the scholion on 85), but there is no indication, however slight or glancing, that Euripides himself had died there or even been there.[20] Euripides participates fully in the discussion of the situation of 'our' city, and there is no hint that this is in any way inappropriate;[21] the play lends itself naturally to the conclusion that Euripides died in Athens still fully involved in Athenian life.[22]

existence of the cave on Salamis (cf. n. 13). It is possible that Gellius has confused citations in the source (probably several removes from Philochorus) he was using, or that Philochorus took up a critical position on the story of the cave (as he did on that of the vegetable-seller mother) which later writers overlooked or deliberately ignored. As author of an early book on Euripides, Philochorus' was also an impressive name to cite as a source for stories about the poet, independently perhaps of his attitude to or even knowledge of the story in question. It is however possible that Philochorus, who is also said e.g. to have taken the view that in *Ixion* Euripides was alluding to the death of Protagoras (Diog. Laert. 9.55), accepted or at any rate passed on stories he had no specific grounds for doubting.

[20] Dover and Sommerstein in their notes ad loc. suggest that *Frogs* 952–3, where Dionysus warns Euripides off the topic of democracy, may be an allusion to the poet's emigration to the court of Archelaus, but there is no reference to Macedon or Archelaus and so the passage is not independent evidence for the story in the biographical tradition; such an allusion would also be both unheralded and unclear (or pointlessly coy). It is more natural to connect the lines with Euripides' portrayal elsewhere in *Frogs* as a πανοῦργος (80) and the favourite poet of a δῆμος consisting of τῶν πανούργων (779–81, cf. 771–8, 1010–11, 1014–15). Verses 952–3 are probably a straightforward anticipation of their immediate sequel, where Euripides claims to have taught the Athenians λαλεῖν (954, cf. 91, 1069) and λεπτῶν τε κανόνων εἰσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς, | νοεῖν, ὁρᾶν, ξυνιέναι, στρέφειν ἔδραν, τεχνάζειν, | κάχ' ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα (956–8, cf. 774–6, 892–4); this association with the sophistical and demagogic aspects of democracy (cf. also 1071–3; 1083–6, where as a result of Euripides' plays, claims Aeschylus, ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν | ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη | καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων | ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον ἀεί) is topped when Euripides then claims as his students Clitophon and Theramenes (967), both shifty time-servers who first supported and then opposed the Four Hundred. On these political aspects of *Frogs*, cf. Hose (n. 2), 169–84, esp. 177–81.

[21] *Frogs* 1083, cf. e.g. 1009–10, 1420–3, 1501; Euripides does not himself say 'our', but the only natural reading of such passages is that 'the city' or 'our city' is that of Dionysus, Aeschylus, and Euripides equally (and equally unproblematically). It is hard to imagine a Euripides who had abandoned Athens for Macedon being given 1427–9: μισῶ πολίτην, ὅστις ὠφελεῖν πάτραν | βραδὺς φανεῖται, μεγάλα δὲ βλάπτειν ταχύς, | καὶ πόριμον αὑτῷ, τῇ πόλει δ' ἀμήχανον.

[22] A referee suggests it might be argued that 'Aristophanes does not want to characterize

Those inclined to credit the stories in circulation a century later that Euripides had abandoned Athens for Macedon, or had at any rate died there, need to account for Aristophanes' complete silence on the topic, his failure to mention in the case of the central character Euripides a sojourn among the Macedonians such as he alludes to lightly and by the way in the case of Agathon. If the poet had really 'deserted' Athens, it seems unlikely that Aristophanes would have conceived *Frogs* in just the way he did, with Euripides figuring as a potential saviour of the city. Perhaps, however, he did choose to cast a deserter in that role, or perhaps Euripides just happened to die in Macedon while on a visit there to produce *Archelaus*; in either case, it would seem incredible that Aristophanes could have resisted the splendid comic opportunities thus offered him, and unaccountable why he should have done so. Did some wholly uncharacteristic kind of *pietas*[23] prevent the comedian dressing Euripides in a barbaric get-up or indulging in a little dialect-humour? No joke about 'Macedonian' Euripides, the lackey of Archelaus, when the comedian is railing against alien influence and aliens in Athens (678–82, 730–3)? When the poets cast round for judges (805–10), Aeschylus rejecting the Athenians as crooks and the rest as incompetent, no nomination by Euripides of the Macedonians? No stage-Macedonian divinities among those invoked by Euripides (888–94)? No dig from Aeschylus that Euripides ought to understand about exiles 'arriving' and 'returning' when the opening lines of *Choephori* are being interpreted (1155–69)? Nothing about the courts of autocratic kings when Dionysus warns Euripides off the topic of democracy (952–3)? When Aeschylus claims that Euripides gathers the honey of his song from everywhere (1301–3), no mention of Macedonian sources? Nowhere a word of reproach nor a touch of pathos about Euripides' death so far from Athens?

The later tradition cannot weigh heavily against the silence of the *Frogs*, and is in any case readily accounted for on the assumption that it is almost totally false. It is worth adding that the Parian Marble, which if not wholly reliable is at any rate a far more sober source than the biographical tradition, includes in its death notice for Aeschylus the information that he died in Sicily, but has nothing similar to report in the case of Euripides.[24] This coheres with the natural reading of *Frogs* and so tends to confirm the conclusion that the tragedian died in Athens. Two passages in *Bacchae* are sometimes taken to support the assumption that the play was written in Macedonia, but they show at most that the play may have been written with eventual performance

Euripides as a deserter to tyranny if one of his aims is to have the playwright as a (comically) viable contender for returning to the living to save Athens', but such an argument would surely be something of a rearguard action, as it seems to get the thing the wrong way round: if Euripides was really a deserter to tyranny (a fact no amount of discreet silence on Aristophanes' part could disguise from the audience), he would surely cease *ipso facto* to be a viable contender for saving Athens. (That 'saving the city' is what is at stake is suggested by e.g. 1418–19, 1500–2.) It is however possible that Euripides merely visited Macedon to produce *Archelaus*, which would not amount to 'desertion' of Athens.

[23] Some may think of Lamachus, who is portrayed as a *miles gloriosus* in *Acharnians* but comes in for praise at *Thesm.* 841 and *Frogs* 1039; between 424 (*Ach.*) and 411 (*Thesm.*), however, there intervened Lamachus' courageous death in battle in 414 (Thuc. 6.101), which explains Aristophanes' change of tone in a perfectly comprehensible way; if the Macedonian story were true, Euripides would by contrast have blotted his copybook in his final years. There is certainly no reason to believe that Aristophanes followed the precept *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, as the rough handling of Euripides in *Frogs* on non-Macedonian matters amply indicates: see above all, perhaps, 1491–9, hard condemnation as a sour final word on the tragedian.

[24] *FGrHist* 239 A 59 (Aeschylus), A 63 (Euripides).

in Macedonia in mind.[25] At 409–11 the chorus include 'Pieria, seat of the Muses' among places where they might find refuge, and at 565–75 they imagine Dionysus coming to Pieria and crossing the Macedonian rivers Axios and Ludias on the way, coming, that is, from the east, presumably from their Lydian homeland. Dionysus' connection with the Muses and Pieria is well-established, and mention of Axios and Ludias is perfectly natural in the context; Aeschylus had similarly mentioned the Axios when describing the Persian army's retreat.[26]

Perhaps the Macedonian rivers were lingering in Euripides' mind from his work on *Archelaus*. This play about the namesake of the Macedonian king who commissioned it from Euripides is doubtless the ground on which an elaborate growth of invention was later to flourish. Archelaus gave the Macedonian court a cultural boost by bringing well-known Greek writers such as Agathon there, but he surely also commissioned writers who, if they came to Macedon at all, did so only to supervise the production of their work. We have some evidence for commissions of this sort: Aeschylus went to Sicily in the late 470s to produce his festival play *Women of Aetna* for the refoundation of the city by Hiero, and Euripides, whose plays seem to have been well-known in Sicily during his lifetime, may have written *Melanippe Captive* for production in Herakleia in South Italy and, we are told, never produced *Andromache* at Athens, and so may have written it for some other city.[27] Euripides then may simply have sent off to Macedon the script of *Archelaus* (together with those of *Temenos* and *Temenidai* if Zielinski's conjecture that these plays formed a trilogy is correct[28]), perhaps entrusting its production there to his nephew or son Euripides, who we are told later supervised the posthumous productions of *Bacchae*, *Alcmaeon at Corinth*, and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*.[29] It is also possible that the poet went to Macedon to supervise the production himself. In either event, it seems certain on the basis of *Frogs* that he was back in Athens at the time of his death.

It is remarkable that the prologue of *Archelaus* and a line from *Temenidai* figure among the tragic parodies in *Frogs*;[30] not only is this fast work indeed if those plays

[25] E. R. Dodds, *Euripides: Bacchae* (Oxford, 1960²), xl already concluded that the play was 'surely meant for Athenian ears', though both he and Jeanne Roux, *Euripide: Les Bacchantes* 1 (Paris, 1970) assumed that it was written in Macedon and in their own way elaborated the ancient fiction. 'It is as if', says Dodds, 'the renewed contact with nature in the wild country of Macedonia, and his re-imagining there of the old miracle-story, had released some spring in the aged poet's mind, re-establishing a contact with hidden sources of power which he had lost in the self-conscious, over-intellectualized environment of late-fifth-century Athens . . .' (xlvii); Roux 9–10 is even more imaginative. Scholars are more cautious nowadays, but these commentaries, especially Dodds's, are still very influential.

[26] Aesch. *Pers.* 493.

[27] *Vit. Aesch.* 8–10 (*TrGF* III Test. A.27–36); Euripidean productions in Sicily: O. Taplin, *Comic Angels* (Oxford, 1993), 16–17, 22–23; *Melanippe*: C. Collard, M. J. Cropp, and K. H. Lee, *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays* I (Warminster, 1995), 245; *Andromache*: scholion on line 445, cf. Stevens in the introduction to his edition, 19–21. See in general P. E. Easterling, 'Euripides outside Athens: a speculative note', *ICS* 19 (1994), 73–80.

[28] Th. Zielinski, *Tragodumenon libri tres* (Cracow, 1925), 236. The newer papyrus fragments of *Archelaus* are edited together with the book fragments by C. Austin, *Nova Fragmenta Euripidea in Papyris Reperta* (Berlin, 1968), 11–21, and by Harder (n. 2).

[29] Σ Aristoph. *Frogs* 67 = *TrGF* I DID C 22 = T 40 Kovacs; nephew only at Suda ε 3695 Adler s.v. *Εὐριπίδης* = T 2.12 Kovacs.

[30] *Frogs* 1206–8 and 1338 with scholia. A different prologue attributed to *Archelaus* (fr. 228 Nauck² = fr. 1 Austin) in later authors is probably the work of a Hellenistic adaptor or scholar (so Dover and similarly Sommerstein *ad Frogs* 1206–8) who included in it an explanation of the Nile's flooding that intrigued him and who was unaware that tragic trimeters nowhere admit the genitive in *-οιο* (as in his line 3).

were first produced in Macedon little more than a year earlier (are we to imagine Euripides immediately sending the final scripts to Athens for copying and sale?), but it seems very odd that Aristophanes should parody plays his audience had never heard.[31] This constitutes a second strong argument from *Frogs* for concluding that the Macedonian story is an ancient invention. On the standard metrical criteria, *Archelaus* (as also *Temenos* and *Temenidai*) belongs late in Euripides' career, after 414 and probably after 411.[32] It is perfectly possible and must seem probable that Archelaus commissioned the play earlier on in his reign, which began in 413, and that Euripides had subsequently produced it at Athens or on the deme-circuit in time for it to be familiar to Aristophanes and his audience in 405.

These are likely to be the facts of the matter, and they are such as to lead almost inevitably to the later inventions. Ancient biographers were fascinated by the travels of tragedians, and developed a method of accounting for them by assuming that trips abroad were prompted by some catastrophe or indignity the poet suffered at Athens. Thus, Aeschylus' travels to Sicily were accounted for either as flight from Athens when the *ikria* or wooden theatre-seating collapsed while a play of his was being performed, or as a result of the humiliation of being defeated either in a tragic contest by the young Sophocles, or in a contest for an elegy on the dead of Marathon by Simonides. These stories are not only invented but come to us in harness with gross neglect or misunderstanding of earlier sources and of chronology;[33] they are meant to account for the fact of Aeschylus' visit to and death at the court of Hiero in Sicily, which the tradition confuses with the trip to produce *Women of Aetna* in the 470s. The ancient biographers' interest in the travel theme is manifest again in the *Life of Sophocles*, where it is approvingly noted that the poet refused all of the numerous invitations he received to royal courts.[34] Sophocles here appears in his standard role as model of happy success and patriotism, beloved of his people; as there was no contrasting tradition of an embittered Euripides abandoning the Athens that treated him with contempt, the biographers had to and did invent one. They invented it on the basis of what was for them far better than average evidence, the existence of *Archelaus*, and by the schematizing method, analogous with synchronism, of conforming the end of Euripides' life to the Aeschylean model and inventing equally silly reasons for his departure from Athens. Thus arose, in ancient times, the stories that Euripides left the city because 'it hurt him as much as it helped Sophocles' that he held himself aloof from οἱ πολλοί and lacked proper theatrical ambition, or because of the hostility of the comic poets, or because his wife's infidelities caused him to be mocked, and, in modern times, the notions that he 'was pessimistic about the chances of Athens to survive the war', or was upset at the failure of *Orestes*, or in general 'a disappointed man . . . relatively unsuccessful as a dramatist', or that 'his outspoken criticisms of demagogy and of power-politics must have made him many enemies'.[35] Such are the

[31] The extensive parody of *Andromeda* and *Helen*, produced in 412, in *Thesmophoriazusae* of 411 is a very different matter on both counts.

[32] Martin Cropp and Gordon Fick, *Resolutions and Chronology in Euripides: The Fragmentary Tragedies*. *BICS* Suppl. 43 (London, 1985), 76–7.

[33] Suda αι 357 Adler s.v. Αἰσχύλος = T 2.7–9 Radt, cf. π 2230 s.v. Πρατίνας (see S. Scullion, *Three Studies in Athenian Dramaturgy* [Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994], 52–65, esp. 64–5); *Vit. Aesch.* 8 = T 1.8 Radt, Plut. *Cimon* 8.8; see Scullion (n. 5), 84–5, 88–9.

[34] *Vit Soph.* 10 = T 1.10 Radt.

[35] Aloofness and mockery of comedians: Satyrus, *Life of Euripides*, *POxy.* 1176 fr. 39 XVII = T 4.21 Kovacs, *Vit. Eur.* 3.18–4.2 Schwartz = T 1.34–5 Kovacs; wife's infidelities: Thomas Magister T 3.12 Kovacs; 'pessimistic' about Athens: J. M. Bremer, 'Poets and their patrons', in

consequences of Aeschylus' and Euripides' attempts to pick up a little extra income abroad. Some more sympathetic writer put it about that Sophocles led Athens in mourning Euripides' death, but even this story is perhaps meant primarily for praise of Sophocles.[36] In the second century A.D., in connection with Euripides, Pausanias offers a disquisition on poets who lived with kings which goes down to the early third century B.C. and includes speculation on why Hesiod and Homer failed to do so.[37] This, then, was a well-established theme of literary biography. The model of Aeschylus' death abroad, the ideas that Euripides was unsociable and that he had woman-troubles, the fact that he was a favourite butt of the comic poets, and above all the existence of *Archelaus* itself were, in combination, more than sufficient to produce the tale of his self-imposed exile and death in Macedon.

By the second half of the fourth century, Aristotle already knows a story that places Euripides in Macedon: Decamnichus was provoked to rebel against Archelaus when the latter handed him over to Euripides to be whipped for having said that the poet had foul breath.[38] Decamnichus must have had a very slow fuse: Euripides was dead by 407/6 but Archelaus was assassinated only in 399. In this section of the *Politics*, Aristotle is gathering examples of motivations for the overthrow of monarchs, and eight lines on from the story involving Euripides he makes a comment about another such story that probably expresses his general attitude toward the fanciful tales he was very fond of and is retailing here: '. . . if what the story-tellers (οἱ μυθολογοῦντες) say is true; but if it is not true of that man [Sardanapallus] it might be true of another'.[39] Surely, then, Aristotle attests only to the existence of such stories as anecdotes, not to their historical accuracy; in any event, the story of Decamnichus is on chronological and general grounds a fairly obvious fiction. It is a common but unsafe assumption that the inventions (breath-insult, flagellation, revenge) in such stories must be based on some such underlying fact as that Euripides really was present in Macedon. The poet may have gone to Macedon (*c.* 410) to produce *Archelaus*, but this story should not be treated as historical evidence that he did so; its existence can be otherwise accounted for.

Collections of anecdotes (*apophthegmata* or *gnomai*) had long existed, and it is probable that a stock of stories associated with highbrow visitors to the semi-barbarian court of Archelaus had been generated and collected: the bad-breath story exists in two other versions, and a later collection of *apophthegmata* that comes down under the name of Plutarch includes two further anecdotes placing Euripides at the court of Archelaus, one of which also involves Agathon.[40] Aristotle is doubtless

H. Hofmann (ed.), *Fragmenta Dramatica* (Göttingen, 1991), 39–60 at 43 (who also guesses, surely rightly, that Euripides expected hefty remuneration from Archelaus); *Orestes*: Wilhelm Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* 1.3 (Munich, 1940), 626–7; 'disappointed man' and 'outspoken criticisms': Dodds (n. 25), xxxix. For the notion of Euripides' disappointment at his lack of dramatic success, cf. Albin Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen, 1972[3]), 278–9; Joachim Latacz, *Einführung in die griechische Tragödie* (Göttingen, 1993), 254–5; but C. Collard, *Euripides. G&R* Survey 14 (Oxford, 1981), 1 notes that Euripides was being granted a chorus with increasing frequency toward the end of his career.

[36] *Vit. Eur.* 3.11–4 Schwartz = T 1.20 Kovacs.

[37] Paus. 1.2.2–3; more on this passage below.

[38] *Politics* 1311b30–34 = T 61 Kovacs; a little earlier (1311b6–20) Aristotle names two other assassins, whose motives are erotic.

[39] On Aristotle's predilection for such gossipy tales, see e.g. A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, MA, 1993[2]), 68–9.

[40] On collections of anecdotes, see e.g. Momigliano (n. 39), 72–3. The other versions of the bad-breath anecdote are in Satyrus' *Life of Euripides*, *POxy.* 1176 fr. 39 XX = T 4.22 Kovacs and

drawing on such collections of anecdotes in the *Politics*, and that Euripides had written an *Archelaus* commissioned by the king would in itself be a sufficient prompt for the generation of the anecdotes, whether the poet had or had not in fact gone to Macedon. These and similar stories were generated during the fourth century, the first great period of intellectual and literary biography, which was prosecuted with highly fanciful methods from the start. Aristotle's younger contemporary Aristoxenus produced lives of philosophers, and Chamaeleon in the next generation lives of poets, that were full of invention based through a sort of biographical free-association on the writers' works (and in the case of fifth-century writers on passages in comedy).[41]

A sense of the methods employed by such biographers may be obtained from a poem of the early third century by Hermesianax, which is the first source to inform us that Euripides died in Macedon. The tragedian, Hermesianax avers, was full of hatred against all women, but nevertheless succumbed to Aphrodite's arrow and prowled the back alleys of Aegae in search of Archelaus' serving-woman until a *daimon* found out death for him when he ran up against the hounds of Arrhibios.[42] According to the *Suda*'s article on Euripides, Arrhibaios (*sic*, but surely the same person) was a Macedonian poet hostile to Euripides who bribed a servant to set the royal hounds on him.[43] In other versions of this popular story the royal hounds were taking a revenge of their own, or the poet stumbled on a pack of commoner-hounds.[44] The death-by-dog motif is an invention: it is telling that the earliest version we have, that of Hermesianax, is in its inclusion of an angry Aphrodite typologically the closest to the obvious source-myth, Actaeon's destruction by his own hounds for an offence against Artemis, a myth cited as a warning to Pentheus at *Bacchae* 337–40 (cf. 1291). Hermesianax' emphasis on Euripides' hatred of women is based on Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, the plot of which is incorporated as an episode in the life also by Satyrus.[45] When we read elsewhere in Hermesianax' poem that Hesiod suffered the pangs of love for the maiden *'Hoίη*, named after the introductory verbal formula in his *Catalogue of Women*, and Homer for the Ithacan maiden Penelope, that Alcaeus pined for Sappho but had a rival in Anacreon, who lived a century later, and that Sophocles sang his love for Theoris, which is based on a single phrase in one of his choral odes, our notion that we are not dealing here with a reliable source of literary history is amply confirmed.[46]

This story and variations on it were henceforth the received tradition, appearing in

in *Vit. Eur.* 5.20–22 Schwartz = T 1.28 Kovacs, where it is combined with a motif from verses on Euripides of the third-century editor of tragedy Alexander of Aetolia, fr. 7 Powell = Aul. Gell. 15.20 = T 5.8 Kovacs. [Plut.] *Reg. et Imper. Apothegm.* (Archelaus 1) 177A = T 62 Kovacs has Archelaus giving a golden cup to Euripides rather than to the man who had asked for it. The story of Euripides and Agathon is in [Plut.] *Reg. et Imper. Apothegm.* (Archelaus 3) 177A = T 55 Kovacs (cf. Ael. *VH* 2.21 = T 56).

[41] C. B. R. Pelling's article 'Biography, Greek' in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*[3] is an excellent summary guide; see also his article 'Chamaeleon'.

[42] Hermesianax fr. 7.61–8 Powell = Athen. 597b = T 64 Kovacs.

[43] *Suda* ε 3695 Adler = T 2.9 Kovacs, which offers as an alternative the story that he was torn apart by women as he made his way by night to Archelaus' *ἐρώμενος* or Nicodicus' wife.

[44] Royal hounds: Satyrus, *Life of Euripides*, *POxy.* 1176 fr. 39 XXI–XXII = T 4.22–3 Kovacs, which seems to tell much the same story as *Vit. Eur.* 4.12–22 Schwartz = T 1.21 Kovacs; Aul. Gell. 15.20 = T 5.9 Kovacs summarizes a version of this story. Commoner-hounds: Apollod. Athen. *FGrHist* 244 F 35 *apud* Diod. 13.103.4 = T 68 Kovacs.

[45] Satyrus, *Life of Euripides*, *POxy.* 1176 fr. 39 X–XII = T 4.13–14 Kovacs.

[46] Hesiod: Hermesianax 7.21–6 Powell; Homer: 7.27–34; Alcaeus et al.: 7.47–56; Sophocles: 7.57–60, cf. *TrGF* IV F 765 Radt.

Satyrus' late third- or early second-century *Life of Euripides*, in the second-century chronographer Apollodorus of Athens, and in the anonymous *Life*, Plutarch, Aulus Gellius, the *Suda*, and Thomas Magister.[47] We have also nine epigrams for Euripides in the *Palatine Anthology*, all of which assume a Macedonian burial. Two of these specify the location of the grave as Pieria or Pella in Pieria, but Plutarch and Ammianus locate the grave at the other end of the Macedonian realm in Arethusa; no doubt there were eventually tourist-tempting 'graves' in both places.[48] One of the nine epigrams in the anthology is attributed to Thucydides the historian or Timotheus the lyric poet, and the *Vita* tells us that it was inscribed on a cenotaph at Athens; Page regarded this epigram as authentic, citing by way of confirmation Pausanias' report of a cenotaph in Athens in the second century A.D.[49]

This report is the one piece of evidence for a burial outside Athens that gives one pause, but it too is readily accounted for. In the biographical tradition, the location of the graves of a number of famous fifth-century Greeks was a matter of dispute.[50] Herodotus, for example, was said to have been buried in Thurii or in Athens or to have died in Pella.[51] The scholars, in other words, had no idea where he was buried, and certainly did not undertake to find out by scouring likely graveyards. Those who write on these matters often seem unaware that settling them by research in cemeteries would have been practically impossible. Quite apart from the fading of epitaphs, the reuse of monuments and the filling over of older cemetery layers to create new ones, the sheer number of graves and graveyards was so vast (an 'Athenian', for example, might be buried in one of the demes) that searching for some one marker will have been a hopeless task. This of course meant also, and at least as importantly, that no biographer need worry about being 'refuted' by a gravestone. Thus, though Pausanias saw in Athens a grave of Thucydides, of whatever date, with an epitaph, Timaeus had claimed a century after the historian's death that he was buried in Italy, and the biographical tradition knew also of a grave in Thrace and a secret one in Athens. This last is based on Thucydides' report that Themistocles' relations claimed to have brought his bones home and buried them secretly in Attica, 'since it was not permissible to bury him as one banished for treason', a phrase transferred by the biographer to the historian's own case.[52] This is typical of the methods of the Hellenistic biographers; they were working in an entirely 'armchair' genre, and since they plainly did not fear

[47] T 4.20, 22–3; 68; 1.17–8, 21; 62, 95; 5.9; 2.8–10; 3.12–4 Kovacs.

[48] *Anth. Pal.* 7.43–51. Pieria: 7.43, Pella: 7.44; Arethusa: Plut. *Lyc.* 31.5, 59bc = T 95 Kovacs, Amm. Marc. 27.4.8. Aulus Gellius (T 5.5 Kovacs) toured the cave on Salamis, and it is clear from Pausanias that tour-guides did a brisk business everywhere.

[49] *Anth. Pal.* 7.45 = T 1.18 Kovacs; Paus. 1.2.2. D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1981), 307–8: 'Though Pausanias says nothing about an inscription, it is reasonable to accept the *Life*'s assertion that the present epitaph was on the monument; falsehood on such a matter in such a place would be too easily exposed' (307). The 'easy-exposure' argument is almost always fallacious when applied to such traditions as these. Satyrus, for example, was born in Kallatis in the Euxine region, spent some time in Alexandria, and settled in Oxyrhynchus; only a small proportion of his readers would be in any position to collate his work against documents or monuments in Athens, and he surely expected few or none to be any more inclined to do so than he was himself. A man anxious about the possibility of refutation from documentary sources would not have published anything remotely resembling Satyrus' *Life*, and after all, as we have seen above, even Philochorus had been unable to prevail against the biographical fictions.

[50] See in general F. Pfister, *Der Reliquienkult im Altertum. RGVV* 5.1 (Giessen, 1909), 230–8.

[51] Suda η 536 Adler s.v. *Ἡρόδοτος*; Σ Ar. *Clouds* 331; Anecd. Ox. 3.350 Cramer; Marc. *Vit. Thuc.* 17; Steph. Byz. s.v. *Θούριοι* gives an epitaph.

[52] Paus. 1.23.9; Timaeus and Thrace: Marc. *Vit. Thuc.* 31–3; Secret: Marc. *Vit. Thuc.* 55, cf. Thuc. 1.138.5–6.

being caught out by readers in patent deduction of life from work, they can hardly have felt the slightest concern about gravestones.

Those who later wished to erect monuments to worthies of the glorious Athenian past were similarly untroubled by potential counter-evidence in cemeteries. This is probably what happened in the case of Thucydides, and was certainly so in that of Themistocles. As well as reporting the story of the secret grave, Thucydides tells us that there was a monument to Themistocles in the *agora* of Magnesia on Maeander, where he died in 459;[53] his grave, then, was either there or at the secret location in Attica, perhaps in or near his deme of Phrearrhioi in the south. Pausanias, however, reports a prominent tomb of Themistocles on the Acte peninsula at Piraeus, 'for it is said that the Athenians repented of their treatment of Themistocles, and his relations brought his bones from Magnesia'.[54] What happened in this case could hardly be clearer: sometime in the fourth century the Athenians, desiring to reclaim the Themistoclean glory, erected a monumental tomb (without remains), and the story in Thucydides was at some point adapted to support rather than refute the new reality.

Pausanias, then, no doubt did see some sort of monument to Euripides. It may well have been a cenotaph, though the fact that Pausanias immediately proceeds to a full survey of poets who went to royal courts makes it clear that a cenotaph was what his reading[55] led him to *expect* to see. It is precisely when Pausanias is using written sources that he is at his least trustworthy, and so it is not completely out of the question that he was looking at Euripides' tomb. If it really was a cenotaph or a 'memorial', it surely owed its existence, as the tomb of Themistocles did, to nostalgia for the past, and was built by a generation that took for granted the undisputed biographical tradition that Euripides had died in Macedon. The counter-evidence of *Frogs*, a dog failing to bark in the night, was not noticed, and the tragedian's real grave, in Phlya perhaps, was by then covered over or simply forgotten.

Page says of the epigram alleged to have graced Pausanias' cenotaph: 'It was not known who composed the epitaph, which was of course unsigned. A famous Athenian name was needed, and some guessed it might be Thucydides, others Timotheos the friend of Euripides.'[56] Thucydides is a very unlikely guess for the author of a piece of verse, and must in fact have been chosen, as Timotheus surely was, as a fellow-exile of Euripides in the north.[57] Of course it makes no historical sense that a fellow-exile should have been commissioned to produce an epigram for Athens, but it is perfectly natural that a writer fascinated by the theme of famous exiles should light on these names. Despite the ministrations of scholarly rationality, the essentially fanciful nature of the tradition keeps showing through.

Euripides, in sum, very probably died in Athens, and we can safely suspend belief in the Macedonian story and all the invention and speculation, ancient and modern, based upon it. The story of the Macedonian 'exile' and death is, however, a staple of Euripidean studies, often figuring at the beginning of modern sketches of the poet's life as the most interesting biographical information we have, but also perhaps as

[53] Thuc., ibid.

[54] Paus. 1.1.2, cf. Arist. *HA* 569b, Diod. Perieg. *apud* Plut. *Them.* 32.

[55] Certainly in the first instance the same *bioi* as still prefaced mediaeval editions of the authors; see Wilamowitz (n. 57), 15–16 with n. 2.

[56] Page (n. 49), 307.

[57] Timotheus at the court of Archelaus (Plut. *Mor.* 334b, Steph. Byz. s.v. *Μίλητος*), Thucydides in Thrace, though there may well have been a tradition that the historian too visited Archelaus: see Marc. *Vit. Thuc.* 30 and U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Die Thukydideslegende', *Hermes* 12 (1877), 326–67 = *Kleine Schriften* 3 (Berlin, 1969), 1–40.

suiting very well both a tendency to see Euripides as something of a malcontent and other evidence for a crisis in Athenian life at the end of the fifth century. There will perhaps be corresponding resistance to regarding the story as possibly or probably an ancient biographical fiction, but the burden of the argument surely ought to shift to those still inclined to accept it as secure fact. They will need to account satisfactorily both for Aristophanes' parody of *Archelaus* and for his failure to connect Euripides with Macedon in *Frogs*, in which he subjects the tragedian to teasing, mockery, and criticism on all manner of personal, poetic, and political grounds while meticulously avoiding, not to say vigorously suppressing, just this one obvious—surely inescapable—topic. Those who accept the 'desertion' version of the story will have to explain in addition the comedian's strange procedure in presenting a poet who had abandoned his city—πόριμον αὑτῷ, τῇ πόλει δ' ἀμήχανον (1429), as Euripides himself is made to say of Alcibiades—as a suitable candidate to be its saviour.[58]

Worcester College, Oxford SCOTT SCULLION
scott.scullion@worcester.oxford.ac.uk

[58] Cf. n. 22. I am grateful to *CQ*'s referee and to Christopher Collard, who will be much missed as editor, for their helpful suggestions.