

Satyr play in Byzantium: the case of Eustathius of Thessalonica

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Abstract

It is well-known that both direct and indirect tradition of classical texts were not as generous in preserving satyr plays as were towards Greek tragedies. Nonetheless, byzantine scholars have often shown much interest in this theatrical form. For instance, John Tzetzes boasted of reading satyr plays, and it was argued with some support that his contemporary Eustathius knew almost one satyr play, Euripides' *Cyclops*, belonging to the so-called "alphabetical plays". In his *Homeric Commentaries* we can find two quotations (*Cycl.* 104, 136) and one generic reference to this euripidean satyr play. In addition, Eustathius quotes a fragment of the lost *Syleus* (fr. 693 Kn.) and it is noticeable that, in comparison with the other witnesses of this short passage, he transmits a more complete text. An inquiry into the Patriarch's way of citing classical texts and his usage of other indirect sources (particularly Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*) can raise doubts about a direct knowledge of satyr plays. The aim of the paper is to re-examine the remaining traces of this literary genre in Eustathius' works in order to establish whether quotations and references can be considered indisputable pieces of evidence of his reading texts.

Handout

SATYR PLAY IN BYZANTIUM:

THE CASE OF EUSTATHIUS OF THESSALONICA

1) Eur. *Cycl.* 104 οἶδ' ἄνδρα, κρόταλον δριμύ, Σισύφου γένος

I know the man, the wheedling chatterer, Sisyphus' son

Od. III 20 ψεῦδος δ' οὐκ ἐρέει· μάλα γὰρ πεπνυμένος ἐστί

He will not lie, because he is very wise

Eust. *ad Od.* III 20 (I 110,43-I 111,1 Stallbaum): ιστέον δὲ ὅτι τὸν Ὅμερικῶς εἰρημένον λόγον ὃς τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ ἐνταῦθα προσπλάττεται, καὶ ὁ συνετὸς Νέστωρ ἀπαραποιήτως ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς ἐρεῖ τῷ Τηλεμάχῳ, εἰς Μενελάου στέλλων αὐτόν. Δηλοῦντος τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ὡς οὐδὲν διαφέρει Ἀθηνᾶν εἰπεῖν καὶ φρόνησιν καὶ ἄνδρα φρόνιμον, ταυτόν δ' εἰπεῖν, πεπνυμένον, καὶ πυκινόν. ἔτι δὲ καὶ δριμύν. Εὐριπίδης γὰρ ἐπὶ συνετοῦ εἶρηκε τὸ δριμύ ὡς λέγει Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ γραμματικός.

It must be taken into account that also the clever Nestor will address the same Homeric speech, here elaborated by Athena, to Telemachus in the following verses, when he sends him to Menelaus. This way the poet demonstrates that no difference exists between saying Athena

and saying phronesis, as between saying a man is phronimos, pepnymenos and pykinos. The same for drimys. Indeed Euripides employed drimys for synetos, as Aristophanes the grammarian says.

2) Eur. *Cycl.* 136 καὶ τυρὸς ὀπίας ἔστι καὶ βοὸς γάλα

And there is curdled cheese and also cow's milk

Od. IV 88 τυροῦ καὶ κρειῶν οὐδὲ γλυκεροῖο γάλακτος

of cheese or of meat or of sweet milk

Eust. *ad Od.* IV 88 (I 151,4f. Stallbaum): ἐν δὲ τοῖς τοῦ Ἀθηναίου φέρεται καὶ ὅτι ὀπίας τυρὸς παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ, ὁ δριμύς, ὁ πηγνύμενος ὁπῶ συκῆς τῷ εἰρημένῳ, οἶον «καὶ τυρὸς ὀπίας ἐστὶ καὶ Διὸς γάλα».

In Athenaeus' work it is said that in Euripides we find ὀπίας τυρός, the sour (cheese), curdled with the fig juice, in this passage: «and there is curdled cheese and also Zeus' milk».

Athen. XIV 658c: Εὐριπίδης δ' ἐν Κύκλωπι ὀπίαν καλεῖ τυρὸν τὸν δριμύν, τὸν πηγνύμενον τῷ τῆς συκῆς ὁπῶ· «καὶ τυρὸς ὀπίας ἐστὶ καὶ Διὸς γάλα». 2

Euripides in *Cyclops* calls ὀπίας τυρὸς the sour cheese, curdled with the fig juice: «and there is curdled cheese and also Zeus' milk».

3) Eur. *Syl. fr.* 693 Kn.

(HP.) <× – ∪ – ×> εἶα δῆ, φίλον ξύλον,

ἔγειρέ μοι σεαυτὸ καὶ γίγνου θρασύ

Testimm.: 1-2 Ioann. Philop. Acc. p. 25,5 Dindorf; Et. Gen. (B) s.v. εἶα ; Et. M. 294,25 s.v. εἶα ; Eust. *ad Il.* I 302 (I 168,1 Valk) | 1 cfr. Hesych. τ 1626 H.-C. s.v. τύλον | 2 Ap. Dysc. Pron. 140 (p. 73,16 Schneider); cfr. Luc. Asin. 5; Suet. Ner. 49.

693 1 εἶα Eust. : οἶα err. Et. Gen. (B) : εἶα Ioann. Philop., Et. M. | φίλον Eust., omm. cett. testt., del. Nauck || 2 ἔγειρέ μοι Ap. Dysc. (parte codd.), Et. M. (M) : ἄγειρέ μοι Et. M. (cett. codd.) : εγειραι Ap. Dysc. (parte codd.) : ἐγειραι Ioann. Philop. : ἔκτεινέ μοι Eust., Et. Gen. (B) | σεαυτό Ap. Dysc., Ioann. Philop., Eust. : σεαυτόν Et. Gen. (B) : σεαυτῶ Et. M. | γίνου Eust., Et. Gen. (B) | δρασύ Et. Gen. (B)

(Her.) <× – ∪ – ×> come on, my dear club,

wake up and be bold

Il. I 302 εἰ δ' ἄγε μὴν πείρησαι, ἵνα γνῶωσι καὶ οἷδε

come, just try, so that these too may know

Eust. *ad Il.* I 302 (I 168,1 Valk): Φέρει δὲ καὶ χρῆσιν τῆς λέξεως κειμένην, φησί, παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ ἐν Σολεῖ1 ταύτην «εἶα δὴ, φίλον ξύλον, ἔκτεινέ μοι σεαυτὸ καὶ γίνου θρασύ».

1 Probable mistake to be emended with Συλεῖ.

According to him (scil. Choeroboscus) the expression is employed this way – so he says – in Euripides' Syleus «come on, my dear club, stretch yourself and be bold».

Hesych. τ 1626 H.-C. s.v. τύλον· τὸ αἰδοῖον. Οἱ δὲ ξύλον.

Eur. *Syl. fr.* 694 Kn

βαυβῶμεν εἰσελθόντες· ἀπόμορξαι σέθεν / τὰ δάκρυα

let's go in and cuddle up! Wipe away your tears

Crat. *Plut. fr.* 171,63s. K.-A. ἔγειρε, θυμέ, γλῶ[τταν εὐ-]/κέραστον ὀρθουμένην

Adesp. com. fr. 1063,2s. K.-A. ὥστ' ἔγειρ', ἔγειρε δὴ / [νῦν σε]αυτὸν μὴ παρέργως.

4) Il. XXIII 261 ἡδὲ γυναῖκας ἐϋζώνους πολιόν τε σίδηρον

and fair-girdled women and grey iron

Eust. *ad Il.* XXIII 261 (IV 723,5-11 Valk): Τοιοῦτοι δέ, ὡς εἰκός, καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν ἡρώων. Οὐκοῦν Εὐριπίδου εἰπόντος τὸ «κακῶν γὰρ (v.l. γε) ὄντων μυρίων καθ' Ἑλλάδα, οὐδὲν κάκιόν ἐστιν ἀθλητῶν γένους» (Eur. *Autol. fr.* 282,1f. Kn.), καὶ κατασκευάσαντος τὴν γνώμην καλῶς 3

εἰς πλάτος, ἑτέρου δὲ τινος φαμένου, ὡς τὰ τῶν ἀθλητῶν οὐ πιαίνει μυχοὺς πόλεως, κεῖται παρὰ τῇ Ἀθηναίῳ τό· οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, οἱ γοῦν Ἕλληνες οὐκ ἦσαν αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀθληταί, ἀλλὰ καὶ μαχηταί ἄριστοι καὶ δεξιοὶ ἀθλεῖν, ὅτε καιρός.

Also other heroes, as it seems, are of such a nature. So, having Euripides said «of countless bad thing existing throughout Greece none is worse than athletes as a breed», and having well elaborated the sentence, and having someone else said that the breed of athletes does not enrich the innermost parts of the city, in Athenaeus we find this: even though that is the way things are, Greeks were not athletes for this, but excellent warriors and capable of contending, when it was time.