S. Douglas Olson

Traces of a Genre: Euripides and other Tragic Poets in Athenaeus of Naucratis

Abstract: Tragedy is not cited often by the dinner guests in Athenaeus’ Deipnosophists, at least in comparison to 5th- and 4th-century Athenian comedy, which they quote or allude to thousands of times. This paper considers the character and content of Athenaeus’ testimonia and fragments of Euripides and the other tragic poets: What sort of material do we have from this source? And what would Euripides’ poetry in particular look like if we knew it only through the Deipnosophists? Building on this and more synthetically, the paper asks why Athenaeus (or Athenaeus’ sources) chose to cite the tragic poets; what it was about these texts that did and did not interest him (or them); and what the disparity with the handling of the comic poets suggests about the Hellenistic and Roman-era reception of such material. The first two main sections of the paper are devoted to the testimonia, the third and fourth sections to the fragments and Athenaeus’ handling of them.

My topic in this paper is the vision of Euripides preserved and presented in the Deipnosophists of Athenaeus of Naucratis. I nonetheless begin – I trust, somewhat unexpectedly – with some brief observations regarding the so-called Attic Middle Comedy, which is to say comedy between the death of Aristophanes in the early 380s BC and the appearance of Menander on the theatrical scene in the mid-310s. Middle Comedy – a dubious category in any case – is conventionally regarded as constructed mostly out of typical characters (e.g. prostitutes, soldiers, gluttons, braggart cooks and flatterers), all participating in utterly conventional scenes, many of them involving banquets and dinner parties, and full of long catalogues of food, especially fish.¹ On this view – fully supported by our sources – the plays featured jolly, clumsy, fundamentally apotitical humor, and while we might abstractly regret the lack of any complete texts, no great damage would appear to have been done by the loss of them, and we understand the authors in question well enough for our purposes. The fact that we have no complete Middle Comedies, however, means that we are fundamentally hemmed in by our sources, and above all else by Athenaeus, from whom a large portion of this material comes, and who is deeply interested in prostitutes, gluttons, braggart cooks and flatterers, on the one hand, and in dinner parties, symposia and catalogues of food, especially fish, on the other, but who displays very little concern with politics or with the plots of the plays he quotes piece-meal. Put another way, Athenian Middle Comedy looks the way it does to us not because of what it was in and of itself, but because of the interests of the sources that preserve

¹ For an overview, see Nesselrath 1990.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110677072-011
scattered bits and pieces of the texts for us." This is a fundamental problem in comedy studies: what we have in the standard editions of the fragments is a patently unrepresentative sample of the originals that interest us, and as a consequence we have little hope of ever really understanding them, forcing us to look for different and potentially more productive questions to address to the fragments.

I have begun with Middle Comedy because the genre provides a useful context within which to attempt to assess the place that Euripides and the other tragic poets occupy in the *Deipnosophists*. Athenaeus quotes Euripides over 70 times, and some of the fragments are both long and interesting, the best example being fr. 282 Kannicht (on the worthlessness of athletes for the city that honors and supports them, from the satyr play *Autolykos*). But tragedy is valued no more “for itself” in Athenaeus than Middle Comedy is, and it is in fact quoted in the same consistently tendentious fashion. This paper has two interrelated goals: first, to examine how Euripides is treated by source-texts within the *Deipnosophists*, which is to say, in 4th- and 3rd-century BC testimonia that mention or make use of him (thus “Who is Euripides and to what purposes is he put in the primary Hellenistic-era sources Athenaeus preserves?”); and second, to consider how Euripides was handled in the ancient tradition of learned argument and citation of which the *Deipnosophists* is a part (thus “To what use do later secondary sources put the texts of the tragedies, and how were they read – or not read – by Hellenistic and Roman-period scholars?”). In both cases, I rely on comparison with Athenaeus’ reception of Aeschylus and Sophocles, on the one hand, and of Aristophanes and Eupolis, on the other, to bring out peculiarities in the treatment of Euripides. But first a bit of background.

Athenaeus is supposed to have been from Naucratis, in Egypt, and to have composed a *History of the Kings of Syria* (FGrH 166 F 1). The only work that survives by him, however, is the *Deipnosophists* – generally translated “Doctors at Dinner” or “Learned Banqueters” – which appears to date to around the year 200 of our era. The *Deipnosophists* presents itself as a verbatim account of a long and lavish dinner party – actually a series of dinner parties – held in Rome at the house of a wealthy Roman named Larensius and attended by a crowd of expatriate Greek intellectuals, who comment on the food and entertainment by quoting passages from an enormous number and variety of ancient texts, the vast majority of which would otherwise be lost to us. Athenaeus’ sources for this material are obscure. But it seems unlikely that

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2 For careful discussion of cognate problems having to do with prose fragments preserved in Athenaeus, see Lenfant 2007.
3 For further discussion of these issues, see Olson 2017 (14–21, with specific reference to Eupolis).
4 See the list in n. 7 below.
5 On all these questions, see also Collard 1969, and much more recently the exhaustive study of Cipolla 2006, esp. 112–118, on differences in Athenaeus’ handling of Euripides as opposed to Aeschylus and Sophocles, and on what can be said regarding his sources.
6 For what little is known or can be surmised of the historical Athenaeus, his social and political status, and the conditions in which he was working, see in general Braund 2000.
he has personally read and excerpted e.g. the hundreds of Athenian comedies his characters quote, and far more probable that he is instead working with (or perhaps in many cases simply appropriating material from) other secondary work that preceded him. Put another way, the \textit{Deipnosophists} is probably best conceived of as a composite document, an edited collection of sources, many of which were themselves only versions of even older collections of sources, all with their own particular interests and working methods. Athenaeus’ general concern is with physical luxury and with everything physical luxury involves, from fish, to sex, to perfume to musical entertainment. The text appears to have no clear and obvious point to make and offers no grand, summary conclusion. Instead, it represents itself as a long, unfocussed discussion stretching over many days or weeks and featuring contributions from numerous voices (both characters and texts) that often disagree pointedly with one another.\footnote{For attempts – not altogether convincing – to read Athenaeus as a literary artist carefully reshaping his sources rather than merely excerpting mechanically from them, Wilkins 2008; Paulas 2012.}

1 Athenaeus on Aeschylus and Sophocles

There were scores of 5\textsuperscript{th}-century Athenian tragic poets, even if we today know almost nothing of them, including in most cases their names. But one would not guess this from Athenaeus, and the first point that should be made regarding the treatment of the tragedians generally in the \textit{Deipnosophists} is that a critical and historical veil of some sort seems already to have descended by this time, and that the text appears to exist in a world in which there are only three great tragic authors (Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides) and a small, shallow pool of \textit{minores} quoted on rare occasion. The contrast with comedy (about which I say more below) is striking. Large numbers of 5\textsuperscript{th}- and 4\textsuperscript{th}-century comic poets are quoted by Athenaeus, often repeatedly and often at length. Tragedy and comedy are thus handled very differently in the \textit{Deipnosophists}, a point to which I return at the end of this discussion.

Of the three “great tragic poets” as they are represented in Athenaeus (i.e. in testimonia, as opposed to via quotation of the plays themselves), Aeschylus’ most significant role seems to be as a figure in Athenian theatrical history: he was responsible for improving costuming and producing dance innovations (1,21d–f), making him a foundational artistic figure; he is linked to the famous dancer Telestes (1,22a); he first brought drunks onstage (10,428f, cf. 1,17f), setting the course not just for other tragic poets but for the comedians as well; his statue stands in the Theater as a sort of touchstone against which to evaluate later, inevitably lesser figures (1,19e); and his work, by his own estimation, is eternal (8,347e). The plays are allegedly known, even if the references to them are mostly general rather than specific (esp. 9,402c, on Aeschylus’ supposed use of Sicilian vocabulary), and even if some-
one can say that he would rather roast fish than read or watch one (3,95b), which
might merely mark the speaker as a low-brow character. But what is striking is
that Aeschylus himself – as a person and a personality – is absent from the Deipno-
sophists except in the characterization of him as a “philosopher” impervious to ordi-
nary human suffering (8,347e), which actually makes him less real rather than more,
and in his supposed funerary epigram (14,627c–d), which coordinates him with the
Battle of Marathon, which was remembered as one of the most brilliant moments
of Athenian history, but in which Aeschylus as an individual is again absent, serving
merely as a symbol of Greek and especially Athenian virtue. Aeschylus in the testi-
monia in Athenaeus is thus a culturally important figure, a classic. Even the criticism
Sophocles supposedly levels against him admits this, while nonetheless criticizing
him (1,22a–b): Aeschylus is brilliant, and if he achieves his brilliance unself-con-
sciously (thus Sophocles), that does not count against the basic evaluation of his
work. But Aeschylus in the Deipnosophists is not funny or clever (indeed, he barely
speaks); he is not quoted, used or argued with by others; and he has no youth, no
physical form, no tastes or inclinations, and no truly personal adventures. Other
than at Marathon, Athenaeus’ Aeschylus exists only in the Theater, and he seems
much closer to Homer, and to eternity, than to real life. Indeed, his one potentially
edgy, problematic accomplishment is to have mentioned the erotic nature of Achil-
leus’ love for Patroclus (13,601a–b), and that, we are led to believe, is in the first in-
stance an appeal to epic.

Sophocles – like Euripides, discussed in the next section – is a richer and more
problematic character in Athenaeus. Like Aeschylus, the Sophocles of the Deipno-
sophists is embedded in the theatrical tradition, but in a different way. Just as Aeschy-
lus is said to have served his audience tragedies that resembled steaks cut from Hom-
er’s banquet (8,347e), so too Sophocles was allegedly fond of the Epic Cycle, to the
extent that he wrote entire plays based on it (7,277e). He is also remembered for hav-
ing served as a dancer in his own Thamyris and Nausicaa (1,20e–f), and is said to
have shared with Aeschylus the distinction of having brought the Homeric suitors on-
stage in a drunken and disorderly state (1,17f) and of having referred to pederastic
love affairs in his tragedies (13,601a–b). Unlike Aeschylus, however, Sophocles is
credited by Athenaeus with no dramatic innovations of any sort and is instead em-
bedded in a long series of rivalries and quarrels with other famous or notorious fig-
ures, all male, with whom he stands in contrast, not always to his own advantage,
emerging as in many ways a strikingly “real” and vivid character. Thus Sophocles
criticized Aeschylus for writing well but doing so unthinkingly (1,22a–b); he has a
mocking exchange with Euripides about sexual behavior (13,604d–f), and com-
ments caustically at another point that while Euripides expressed dislike for

8 “The grove at Marathon could describe the might that won me a fine reputation, / as could the
long-haired Mede who came to know it.” (FGE 478–479)
9 For a general study of what survives of Sophocles in Athenaeus, see Marchiori 2003.
10 See further below p. 201.
women in his tragedies, he was fond of them in bed (13,557e); he is accused of having taken the plot of *Oedipus the King* from Callias’ *Literal Tragedy* (a wild and ludicrous charge, but one that was made by someone and is passed on by Athenaeus) (7,276a); he is remembered for having been denied a chorus by the annual archon in a year when the allegedly contemptible Gnesippus received one (in a comic fragment that nominally defends Sophocles from ill-treatment, but that actually says nothing positive about anyone involved in the incident) (14,638f); he quarrels with a school-teacher who considers himself an expert on poetry (13,604a–c) and describes an earlier dispute with Pericles regarding his abilities as a general (13,604d); and he is defended from a supposed attack by Plato in the *Republic* (11,506d).

The Sophocles of the *Deipnosophists* is thus in an important sense “of this world”, and unlike the almost exclusively “literary” Aeschylus, he also has a life-history: as a boy he is said to have danced in public in Athens, in association with the naval victory at Salamis (1,20e–f), balancing Aeschylus’ association with Marathon; as an adult he traveled to Chios and served as a general on or around Lesbos (13,603e–f); and as an old man, he became impotent (12,510b). Above all else, in fact, Athenaeus’ Sophocles has a body, and not just a physical body but a specifically sexual body. Indeed, the two most substantial anecdotes regarding Sophocles in the *Deipnosophists* both have to do with his pederastic tastes, the first being a story about how he took a boy prostitute outside the city walls to have sex, after which the boy walked off with Sophocles’ robe (which had been covering them), leaving Sophocles with the boy’s robe (which was smaller, and which they had been lying on), all of which led Euripides to comment that he had slept with the same boy, but had only paid his normal fee, whereas Sophocles had been made a fool of, to which Sophocles responded with a pair of elegiac couplets apparently accusing Euripides of adultery (13,604d–f). The second anecdote is a detailed account by Ion of Chios (FGrH 392 F 6) of a visit Sophocles is supposed to have made to Eretria, in which the tragedian showed himself to be deeply versed in archaic poetry and a master strategist, in that he managed to fool a slave-boy into giving him a kiss, as part of what we today would regard as an incident of sexual harassment, but that is obviously supposed to be read as sophisticated and amusing. The story ends with Sophocles set once again in contrast with another famous man, in this case Pericles, who Sophocles claims accused him of being a good poet but an inadequate general, a charge his outmaneuvering of the slave-boy serves to refute (13,603e–4d). But Sophocles also has heterosexual inclinations in Athenaeus, being said at two points (13,592a–b, 598c–d), including in Hermesianax, to have been in love in his old age with a courtesan named Theoris (another silly story, based on the fact that the word *theoris* appeared in one of his plays); and he ultimately comments that being set free from sexual desire, via a loss of the ability to perform in bed, is like escaping slavery (12,510b).

Athenaeus’ Sophocles is thus very much alive, and the anecdotes regarding him represent him as witty, learned and intelligent; as corporally immersed in the world; and even as political (since Ion’s story about the visit to Eretria is presented as hav-
ing happened in the course of Sophocles’ service as general, and the fragment includes asides about his behavior as an Athenian citizen). What Sophocles does not appear to be is popular, which sets him very much in contrast to Euripides.

2 Athenaeus on Euripides

Unlike Athenaeus’ Aeschylus or even his Sophocles, the Euripides of the Deipnosophists is awarded no formative place in the history of tragic drama. Thus there are no comments on his theatrical innovations or even on particular tendencies in his plays. Euripides is part of the history of tragedy, in the sense that he too has a place in the Theater, which is debased later on by the addition of a statue of a puppeteer (1,19a), and in that his plays are referenced as the subject of scholarly work (4,134c) and his tendencies as a poet evaluated in relation to those of Sophocles (14,652d; cf. 4,184d). But that Euripides changed tragedy, as opposed to coming to embody it, is never said. Like Athenaeus’ Sophocles, his Euripides has a limited personal past (he is said at 10,424e to have poured wine in Athens as an aristocratic boy), a house (13,582c–d) and possessions (1,3a, on his book-collection). Athenaeus’ Euripides also has a sexual body, albeit an almost exclusively heterosexual one (13,557e, 603e, 604e–f), and the same fragment of Hermesianax that describes Sophocles’ supposed longing for Theoris also tells how Euripides was torn to pieces by wild dogs as he trolled back alleys in Macedon, by implication looking for women (13,598d–e). In addition, the Euripides of the Deipnosophists too is involved with other famous 5th-century characters, not just with Sophocles (13,604e–f) but also with the poet Callias, whose Literal Tragedy is said to have provided the model for the choral sections and the plot of Medea (7,276a; 10,453e); with Thucydides, of whose epigram regarding the playwright only two unhelpful words are quoted (5,187d); and with Alcibiades, for whom Euripides is supposed to have composed a victory ode (1,3d).¹¹ What most effectively distinguishes Euripides from Aeschylus and Sophocles in the anecdotes and testimonia preserved in Athenaeus, however, is that, unlike them, Euripides and his poetry are loved, hated, quoted and used, and not exclusively by respectable persons. Thus in Antiphanes fr. 111, a sexually dubious character dancing about unashamedly is described as “the guy who explains Heracleitus to everyone, the only person to make sense of [the tragic poet] Theodectas’ art, and the author of summaries of Euripides” (the latter apparently being a depraved taste that might nonetheless find a larger than average audience) (4,134c); in Antiphanes fr. 205, someone eager to have a good time nominally quotes Euripides as calling wine “the limb-strengthened” — although he goes on to admit that it may not be Euripides who said this after all, but who cares? (10,446a–b); in Diphilus fr. 74, a

¹¹ Note also the mysterious epigram on a family that died after eating poisonous mushrooms (FGE 560–563 ap. 2,61a–c).
particular throw of the dice is said to have the nickname “a Euripides”, with Euripides himself then supposedly quoted as favoring parasites (6,247a–b); Axionicus is said to have composed a play entitled *The Man Who Loved Euripides*, which included a passage mentioning two persons described as wild about his tragedies (4,175b); Hermesianax describes Euripides in much darker terms as the man “who had secured universal dislike as a result of [something or other] regarding all women” (13,598d–e); and Macho offers a wonderful anecdote about Euripides’ interaction with the courtesan Lais, who spoke to him impudently and turned a line of his own poetry back on him (13,582c–d).

3 Athenaeus’ Fragments of Aristophanes, Eupolis, Aeschylus and Sophocles

The picture presented above is to some extent an artificial construct, in the sense that there is no reason to think that Athenaeus intended to produce a unified portrait of Euripides to be set in contrast with his implicit portraits of Aeschylus and Sophocles. The contrasts are nonetheless striking. Aeschylus: the great, non-corporeal figure of the past; fundamentally inaccessible; a part of history but not of life. Sophocles: deeply emerged in Athenian life; a constant “other”; familiar and respected, but seemingly neither loved nor hated; and corporally real. And Euripides: perhaps less physically “alive” than Sophocles, but far more literarily and culturally significant, for good or for bad, in the 4th century and later on, if not necessarily in his own time. What remains to be discussed are the fragments and citations of the preserved plays themselves, to which I now turn. I rely here once again on contrasts, and to make those contrasts sharper, I offer some additional brief initial comments about comedy, in this case regarding Athenaeus’ handing of the two greatest Athenian comic playwrights of the 420s and 410s BC, Aristophanes and his today lesser-known contemporary Eupolis.

Aristophanes and Eupolis were a generation younger than Euripides, but became two of the three “canonical” comic poets in the Hellenistic age, the other being Cratinus (who must have been more or less Euripides’ contemporary, although he died probably in the late 420s BC). What we learn of Aristophanes as a person or a cultural and literary figure in Athenaeus is that he appeared in Plato’s *Symposium* (5,192a–b, 219b) and that he supposedly wrote his plays drunk (10,429a). What we learn of Eupolis in Athenaeus is … nothing. In striking contrast to Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, in other words, Aristophanes and Eupolis as human beings – and the same is true of the other comic poets – are of almost no interest to Athenaeus or (apparently) his sources. As for the comedies themselves, Aristophanes wrote about 40 plays, from which the *Deipnosophists* contains approximately 189 quotations, for an average of around 4.5 citations per play. Eupolis wrote about 14 plays, from which the *Deipnosophists* contains 52 quotations, for an average of around 3.5 citations per
play. As will become apparent in a moment, these figures are strikingly higher than the corresponding numbers for tragedy. In addition, every one of Aristophanes’ preserved plays is cited by Athenaeus, *Knights* 14 times, *Acharnians* 11. More than 80% of the other comedies are cited as well, and this is a minimum figure, since some fragments for which we have no title probably come from one or more of the apparently uncited 20%. At least 12 of Eupolis’ comedies are cited by Athenaeus as well – again approximately 80% of the total number – and one of the absentee, *New Moons*, was lost already in antiquity and seems never to have made its way to Alexandria, while the others may well be represented by one or more of the fragments without play title. Comedy, in other words, is of deep, broad interest to Athenaeus, even if the comedians themselves are not. These figures are important because the situation with tragedy is markedly different.

To begin once again with Aeschylus and Sophocles: Aeschylus is cited 43 times in Athenaeus (including two citations of the pseudonymous *Prometheus Bound*).\(^{12}\) 25 titles are associated with these citations, while 13 fragments lack titles. Aeschylus is generally said to have composed between 70 and 90 tragedies, so the fragments with play title come from one-quarter to one-third of the corpus, although that figure is again a minimum, since some of the other plays are probably represented among the fragments lacking titles. This is at any event only about one-third, or at best one-half, of the rate at which the comedies of Aristophanes and Eupolis are cited. There is no prejudice in favor of the complete plays preserved for us, among which, in addition to the *PV*, only the *Agamemnon* is quoted. One would expect satyr play to represent one out of every four quotations (since there was one satyr play per tetralogy, and Aeschylus staged plays only at the City Dionysia) – or perhaps less, if satyr plays were on average shorter than tragedies, offering fewer lines to quote. In fact, nine Aeschylean satyr plays or likely satyr plays are quoted in the *Deipnosophists* (*Amymone, Theoroi, Ixion, Kabeiroi, Lycurgus, Ostologoi, Proteus, Sphinx, Phorkides*), so satyr play is over-represented in the sample. Of the plays Athenaeus quotes, 19 are quoted one time, 5 two times (*Heliades, Myrmidones, Ostologoi, Perrhaibides, Proteus*), and none more than that. Once again, the problem of the fragments without play title has the potential to throw this count off, but probably not by much, and two of the six plays cited twice are satyr plays (*Ostologoi, Proteus*), heightening the extent of their over-representation. The fundamental point is thus that not only are individual Aeschylean tragedies much less likely to be cited by Athenaeus than individual comedies of Aristophanes or Eupolis are, but the number of citations per title is also markedly lower. Indeed, the most common number of quotations from an individual Aeschylean tragedy in the *Deipnosophists* is zero. One Athenaean fragment of Aeschylus is also known from Herodian (fr. 211), and another from Sto-

\(^{12}\) *Ag.* 284; *Prom.* 293 – 294, 816 – 818; fr. 2a; 14; 44; 44; 57,6; 69; 79; 91; 95; 116; 124; 135; 139,4; 146; 179; 179,4; 180; 182; 184 – 185; 202; 210 – 211; 235; 257 – 258; 261; 264; 285; 306 – 314; 393; 406; 424. See Cipolla 2006. 120 – 121, where an expanded version of the same information is presented in tabular form, along with references to other ancient authorities who preserve the citations.
bæus (fr.* 393) – which is to say that there is little overlap with the rest of the indirect tradition.

The figures for Sophocles are similar. Athenaeus cites Sophocles 72 or 73 times, from 42 plays. Assuming that Sophocles wrote 100 – 120 plays, the citations in the *Deipnosophists* are thus drawn from approximately 30 – 40% of the corpus (although this figure would once again likely increase if we could assign the 13 or 14 fragments that lack play titles to specific tragedies). Sophocles was competing at both the City Dionysia and the Lenaea, where there were no satyr plays, so we ought to expect satyr plays to represent perhaps one in six of the titles cited by Athenaeus (so eight or nine plays). But at least 15 and perhaps as many as 17 Sophoclean satyr plays or likely satyr plays are cited (Amykos, Amphiaroas, Achilleos Erastai, Epitainarioi, Eris, Ichneutai, Kamikoi, Kedalion, Krisis, Pandora, Salmostheuses, Syndeipnoi, Typhanistai, Hybris, Phenixus and the unidentified plays from which fr. 735 and 756 come), meaning that satyr play is again heavily over-represented, as is also true for Aeschylus; and satyr play is also prominent among the plays cited two – or in this case, sometimes three – times (Amykos, Ichneutai, Kamikoi, Syndeipnoi). Most of the Sophoclean plays that Athenaeus cites, on the other hand, are quoted only once, although a better way of putting that is again that, as in the case of Aeschylus, the majority of Sophocles’ plays are not cited at all, and almost all those cited in the *Deipnosophists* are cited a single time. A handful of the Sophoclean fragments in Athenaeus are also preserved in the remains of the lexicographic tradition on which Athenaeus appears to have been drawing in various ways. With those figures and observations as background, I turn to Euripides.

## 4 Athenaeus’ Fragments of Euripides and Conclusions

Euripides’ plays are cited 73 times in Athenaeus – exactly the same number of times as Sophocles – with words or lines drawn from 32 different plays, or about one-third of the corpus of 95 or so, including 13 of the 19 tragedies fully preserved for us.15

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13 Ai. 1297; Ant. 714, 1165 – 1166; El. 61; OT 4 – 5, 332 – 333; Trach. 781 – 782; frs. 12; 19; 28; 111 – 112; 121; 127; 137; 154; 181; 185; 198a; 199; 238 – 239; 241; 277; 307; 314, 281 – 282; 318; 323 – 324; 329; 345; 348; 361; 378; 395, 1 – 2; 412; 450; 473 – 474; 483; 502 – 503; 537; 549; 563 – 565; 606; 609 – 610; 644; 660; 666; 671; 675; 712; 718; 735; 754; 756 – 766; 1032; fr. dub. 1122. See Cipolla 2006, 122 – 124, where an expanded version of the same information is presented in tabular form, along with references to other ancient authorities who preserve the citations.

14 Frs. 19 (Hesychius); 127 (Photius); 238 – 239 (Photius); 241 (Pollux); 323 (Photius = *Suda*); 395, 1 – 2 (Photius = *Synagoge*); 502 (Harpocrates); 503 (Hesychius, et al.); 606 (Pollux); 609 (Pollux). One fragment is also found in Stobaeus (fr. 12).

15 Cyc. 136, 394, 410, 534; Med. 193, 332, 1385; Hipp. 3 – 6, 219, 317, 436, 612; Andr. 265, 369, 448; Suppl. 861 – 866, 864; HF 348 – 349, 678 – 679, 929; Tro. 1, 1173 – 1177; IT 535; lon 195; Ph. 460 – 461, 1485; Or. 37,
There are nonetheless some intriguing initial differences from the figures for the other two tragic playwrights. First, satyr play is not over-represented in the citations of Euripides in Athenaeus, with only four satyr plays or likely satyr plays (Cyclops, Autolykos I, Eurystheus, Skiron) out of the total of 32 titles, actually somewhat less than one might expect on average. Second, there are more quotations per play for Euripides than for Sophocles: 73 quotations from 32 plays in Euripides, as opposed to the same 72 or 73 quotations, but spread over 42 plays in Sophocles, and 43 quotations spread over 25 plays in Aeschylus. Third, some of the known Euripidean plays are quoted three to five times apiece in Athenaeus (Hippolytus, Andromache, Heracles, Bacchae), considerably more than any individual play in either Sophocles or Aeschylus. Most of this, however, is mere appearance, and the fact is that all three tragedians are probably handled in similar ways in the Deipnosophists, even if certain features of the evidence tend to obscure that conclusion, and this ultimately leads to very interesting conclusions.

Because we have 19 plays supposedly by Euripides, first of all, as opposed to 7 apiece supposedly by Sophocles and Aeschylus, we can recognize many quotations of the poet in Athenaeus that would otherwise be regarded as tragic adespota, and we are also able to attribute many quotations that, without this information, would lack play titles.\(^\text{16}\) If we remove this information – which is to say, if we pretend that we know no more of Hippolytus or Cyclops than we do of Aeolus or Melanippe the Wise – the number of plays by Euripides seemingly cited in Athenaeus decreases to 28 from 32; the number of quotations from the tragedies decreases to 59 from 73; and the number of fragments given to Euripides but without a play-title increases to 16 from 10. To this readjustment must be added another factor, which is the much larger number of fragments of Euripides that lack play-titles or even the poet’s name in the Deipnosophists, but that are anthologized elsewhere (mostly in Stobaeus) and assigned there to Euripides\(^\text{17}\) or given a play title they lack in Athenaeus.\(^\text{18}\) If we also imagine away this extra information – which once more distorts our view of Euripides, as opposed to Aeschylus and Sophocles, in Athenaeus – we would have only 21 plays (vs. 32, or 28), and only 55 fragments (vs. 73, or 59) and 25 unattributed fragments (vs. 10, or 16).

The point of these figures is that if we had fewer complete plays and anthology citations of Euripides, he would look much like Aeschylus and Sophocles do in Athen-
naeus. Put the other way around: if we had more complete plays and anthology citations of Aeschylus and Sophocles, they would probably look more like Euripides in this regard: a thin scattering of fragments and quotations, spread out over less than half the corpus, with a few plays perhaps cited three or four times, but most of them cited only once or not at all. More directly stated, tragedy seems (despite initial appearances) to be treated in a generally even-handed way in the Deipnosophists, except that Euripides is often cited more carelessly than Aeschylus and Sophocles, and more of those careless citations overlap with material collected elsewhere. To integrate that conclusion with a point made above in regard to the anecdotes and testimonia: for certain purposes, Athenaeus and Athenaeus’ characters, and probably the entire scholarly tradition that Athenaeus represents, seem to find Euripides more useful or more interesting to quote or play with than Sophocles and Aeschylus. Euripides is a wordsmith and a thinker, and there is a dimension to him the other tragedians lack, even if they are cited at more or less the same rate and in more or less the same fashion. But why does Athenaeus cite these authors at all? And what do these citations tell us of 5th-century tragedy (or what would they tell us, if this was all we had of the genre)? Here I return to the point with which I began, regarding Middle Comedy.

If all we had of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were the fragments preserved in Athenaeus, we would have virtually no knowledge of the plays themselves. We would know nothing of the characters or of their motivations and concerns; nothing of the plots or action except what the titles themselves tell us; and nothing of the authors’ political or social intentions and the like. Among the almost 200 quotations from the three tragic poets in the Deipnosophists are a handful used as tropes to introduce a speech, change the subject, attack another speaker, or the like. The overwhelming majority of the quotations, however, are mentions of musical instruments, fish or birds; descriptions of eating, drinking or physical luxury of some other sort; or instances of the use of a rare form of a word. Athenaeus’ handling of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides is thus virtually identical to his handling of comedy—and especially, at least from our perspective, of Middle Comedy, for which we have no complete texts to serve as a control on the material quoted in the Deipnosophists. The plays have been carefully sifted, but for purposes that have nothing to do with tragedy itself and everything to do with various Hellenistic and Roman-era cultural and literary projects: studies of ancient dance and music, for example; catalogues of drinking vessels, sea-creatures and cakes; and essays on the relative degree of luxury in the “ancient” and “modern” worlds. Athenaeus or his sources therefore favor comedy over tragedy primarily because comedy contains more mentions of fish and banquets, for example, while satyr play is over-represented in Aeschylus and Sophocles in particular because satyr play too tends more strongly toward such material than tragedy does.¹ And if the Euripidean material in the Deipnosophists is not slanted

¹ Cf. Cipolla 2006. 91–2, esp. 92: “Si può inoltre affermare che il ricorrere nel dramma satiresco di
toward satyr play to the same extent, that is most likely because Euripides’ poetry is
generally more colloquial and down-to-earth than that of Aeschylus and Sophocles
(as the comic character Euripides himself says at Ar. Ra. 948 – 50, 959 – 60), so that
more such words and objects were available in the tragedies themselves. We must
be grateful to Athenaeus for what he has preserved for us of the 5th-century tragedi-
ans, and of Euripides in particular. It is nonetheless the case that these are emphati-
cally Athenaean fragments, and that we do best to read them in that light and
through that lens.

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referimenti a oggetti d’uso quotidiano, express colloquiali e tematiche gastronomiche, si conciliava
perfettamente con la cornice narrativa della cena e delle discussioni sulle portate e sugli intratteni-
menti di vario genere (musica, danza, giochi, etere, ecc.)."