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‘(Un)Masking the πόλις: The Pre-Play Ceremonies of the Athenian Great Dionysia as Theatrical Performances?’

Nothing to Do with the Theatre?

‘The shows in the ancient theatre did not only consist of theatrical and other artistic performances. A large variety of other activities, including ritual actions, took place both on the occasion of thymelic and musical competitions and in context of other celebrations. [. . .] Theatre rituals were perhaps not meant to be spectacles; perhaps the theatre was chosen as their setting only because of the advantages it offered in a practical sense (acoustics, seats, large gatherings of people). But the choice of this particular setting, i.e. the space of *thea* (the watching of spectacles), sooner or later had consequences for the form of the rituals themselves’.¹ The word (as well as the concept of) *theatre* did not include only dramatic performances, but rather it held together everything that took place in the *orchestra*. Angelos Chaniotis’ assessment sets forth the position that I am going to develop in this chapter regarding the theatrical dimension of the Athenian Great Dionysia’s pre-play ceremonies. Unlike Chaniotis, I will focus on the most important period for the Greek theatre and the origins of its pre-play ceremonies: fifth century BC in Athens. It was there that the ritual space of the ceremonies seemingly coincided with the theatrical space of drama for the first time, thus expanding a theatrical programme which would have provided the audience with a mixed set of civic/religious rituals and dramatic performances within the same venue. Such a coincidence in the *orchestra* invites us to consider the audience perception of and reaction to the spectacle as a whole: for, once having taken their seats, a heterogeneous public attended both performances, the pre-play ceremonies *and* the dramatic plays. Did the spectators consider all of these performances a holistic and coherent set? What made the pre-play ceremonies suitable to the theatrical context (along with its spaces and conventions)? As far as the evidence goes, and despite the importance of this set of problems, no attempt to ask or to answer such questions has been made.

¹ Chaniotis (2007) 48.

The Athenian Great Dionysia² was undoubtedly one of the city's most important dramatic festivals. Between the 11th and 14th of Elaphebolion, it could entertain up to 15,000–20,000 spectators per day. Along with dramatic performances, the festival also included other ceremonies: some were performed in the days preceding the dramatic performances, such as the transport of the statue of Dionysos from Eleutherae to Athens (εἰσαγωγή ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσχάρας), the religious procession with sacrifices and offerings to Dionysos (πομπή), the festival banquet (κῶμος), and the *proagon* (a kind of introduction to the dramatic representation of the following days);³ others – those we are going to consider here – were performed immediately⁴ before the plays: the libations to Dionysos poured by the ten generals, the war-orphans' parade, the display of the allies' tributes and the proclamations of honours and crowns to the benefactors of the city; another took place after the performances, i.e. the post-festival assembly. Although much has been said in the past 30–35 years about the socio-political value of such ceremonies and about the critical/unifying character of the Great Dionysia, scholarly attention to the ceremonies has not included any theatrical analysis. Indeed, a closer look at this uncharted aspect of pre-play ceremonies can show that, although less religious and processional than the εἰσαγωγή, πομπή and κῶμος, they included processions and fixed gestures/movements. And 'processional ritual shares with theatrical performances – performances *par excellence* – an explicitly declared emphasis on viewing: processions as well as theatre (θέατρον) (along with a number of other occasions) are 'viewing occasions', 'spectacles', θεωρία, θέα'.⁵ It may not be a coincidence that Simon Goldhill, throughout his analysis of the four pre-play ceremonies, uses the term 'ceremonies/ceremonials' along with the term 'rituals',⁶ for these did have a set of performative rules, just as ritual/processional and theatrical performances did. There was a consciousness of performance, and it is surprising that the well-known debate of Goldhill, Griffin, Rhodes, and Carter⁷ on the pre-play ceremonies' socio-political value never brought this aspect to the fore.

² For a complete description and collection of sources on the Athenian dramatic festival see Pickard-Cambridge (²1968 [1953]) 57–125 and Csapo/Slater (1995).

³ For an overview and analysis of rituals and processions at the Dionysia, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1994) and Cole, S. G. (1993).

⁴ We do not know how 'immediately' after the pre-play ceremonies the first plays began. There might have been some change of setting on the stage and perhaps some movement among the spectators as well.

⁵ Kavoulaki (1999) 294.

⁶ See Goldhill (1987) 62 (= [1990] 104) (tributes); 64 (= [1990] 106) (orphans); 74 (= [1990] 123) (festival in general); (2000) 45 (crowns).

⁷ See Goldhill (1987 = 1990) (2000); Griffin (1998); Rhodes (2003), and Carter (2004).

‘Where we might construe tragedy as ritual, or insist that drama is political, or claim the theatre primarily as an aesthetic phenomenon, or theorize performance as “playing the Other”’, Rush Rehm points out, ‘the Athenians experienced a theatrical continuum that incorporated sacred, secular, civic, artistic, and natural realms’.⁸ It is precisely in the name of this ‘theatrical continuum’ that visualising the pre-play ceremonies is fundamental, and it is from their consideration as real performances in action that we can deduce several details about their *mise en scène*. Hence, before stating that ‘the Dionysia’s pre-play ceremonies [. . .] were a very graphic (re)performance of the Athenian democracy’s civic ideology’⁹ (and, consequently, moving from the ideological abstract into the performative concrete), let us consider the pre-play ceremonies’ performance *qua* visual performance. To be fair, I am not introducing new materials here: in terms of the number of sources, the pre-play ceremonies remain – as they were twenty to thirty years ago – sparsely attested. It goes without saying that the reconstruction of the theatrical staging of the pre-play ceremonies remains problematic due to the lack of sufficiently detailed information from direct sources. Therefore, this chapter outlines more what *might have happened* on stage rather than what *really happened*. Yet this is a matter of methodology and approach: the pre-play ceremonies and their sources need to be considered and analysed from an alternative, new perspective, i.e. from a scenic point of view.

To the central point: why should we consider the four pre-play ceremonies as theatrical performances, or at least as ceremonies with elements of theatricality? (i) First, because they were performed in the *orchestra* of the theatre, when the whole audience had already taken its seats. (ii) As a second (and more technical) argument, the ceremonies necessarily had specific performers who manipulated specific objects and made carefully choreographed movements (probably not accompanied by music as in dramatic performances); hence, they had a defined set of rules to follow, just like dramatic plays did. If we follow (as I do) Oliver Taplin’s description and analysis of Greek tragedy in action,¹⁰ we notice that the pre-play ceremonies, just like tragedy, had exits and entrances, actions and gestures, objects, tableaux and silences, and (seemingly) scenic sequences. Furthermore, the direct sources which attest to the pre-play ceremonies present several verbs which undoubtedly indicate actions pointing to

⁸ Rehm (2002) 45.

⁹ Hesk (2007) 73.

¹⁰ See Taplin (2003 [1978]). See also Ley (2007) for a detailed analysis of the theatrical playing space. For the stagecraft of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, see Taplin (1977); Seale (1982), and Halleran (1985).

theatrical movements and gestures on stage. These include:¹¹ ἀναγορεύειν ('to proclaim publicly'), ἀναλέγειν ('to collect'), ἀνείρειν ('to announce/proclaim'), ἀπέρχεσθαι ('to go away/depart from'), διαίρειν ('to divide'), εἰσφέρειν ('to carry/bring'), ἐπιδεικνύναι ('to exhibit'), καλεῖν ('to call'), κηρύσσειν ('to announce'),¹² λέγειν ('to speak'), παρεισάγειν ('to bring forward/introduce'), παρέρχεσθαι ('to come to/arrive at'), ποιεῖν ('to do'), προέρχεσθαι ('to go forward/advance'), στεφανοῦν ('to crown'). (iii) Thirdly, although it is not known whether the dramatic performances took place *immediately* after the ceremonies, we can imagine that the stage was partially 'dressed' for the first play. It follows that the ceremonies took place within a stage which probably had some decorations and buildings/painted walls.¹³ Hence, there is the possibility that the pre-play ceremonies, whether intentionally or not, found themselves set in a real theatrical scene.¹⁴ (iv) Lastly – and this is the most suggestive point: it has often been argued that the playwrights were accustomed to challenge¹⁵ Athenian ideology and contemporary political views through their plays (in this way playwrights can be seen as 'social critics'); it has also been shown how Athenian (democratic, civic or imperialistic) ideology was displayed through the four pre-play ceremonies of the Dionysia, and how 'the sense of tension between the texts of tragedy and the ideology of the city'¹⁶ existed. But, in order to investigate such a relationship

11 For a specific 'grammar' of gestures in Athenian tragedy, see Telò (2002a) and (2002b). See also Capponi in this volume.

12 Specifically concerning announcement scenes in Athenian tragedy, see, e.g., Di Gregorio (1967); Hamilton (1978), and Poe (1992).

13 As for the σκηνογραφία, as Di Benedetto/Medda (1997) 17 warned, 'si resta nel campo dell'ipotetico'. Wilson, P. (2000) 87 n. 170 and 171 provides some useful references.

14 However, the compelling argument of Mastronarde (1990) 253 should be kept in mind: 'at a single City Dionysia festival the skene building had to serve some 15 to 17 plays of three separate genres, and I suggest that there would be some hesitation to build any very elaborate *ad hoc* structure for one play, and, accordingly, a preference for light, movable panels and accessories that need not to continue to be present to create a distraction during another play (whether one's own, a rival's, or a play in a separate competition)'. In that case, it would have been easy to set up the stage soon after the pre-play ceremonies.

15 Of course, such a view is not held by all scholars. The bond between politics and tragedy (see Saïd [1998] and Carter [2007] 21–63 for an overview of multiple approaches to 'tragic politics') is not considered, for example, by Griffin (1998); (1999), and Heath (1987); (2006). Over-taking such a dichotomy, Finglass (2005) 208 (specifically in relation to Sophocles' *Electra*) has stated that 'if we rid our minds both of the idea that tragedy must have everything to do with the *polis*, and of the idea that tragedy must have nothing to do with the *polis*, we can at last begin to appreciate the significance which the *polis* really plays in an individual drama such as Sophocles' *Electra*'.

16 Goldhill (1987) 69 (= [1990] 115).

between pre-play ceremonies and tragedy, why cannot we think of (before and/or in parallel with the ideological abstract) a *concrete* relationship, i.e. a visual and theatrical similarity between the two sets of performances? In other words, if the performance of the pre-play ceremonies reaffirmed specific social/ideological norms while tragedies subverted them, it must follow that tragic performances dramatised and re-performed in some way the pre-play ceremonies on stage to confer a new value upon them. My belief is that such an ideological tension did exist, but my present concern is to point out that before ideology there was a performance in action which implied, let us say, a 'theatrical tension/contest': indeed, within Athenian drama we find many passages which resemble the pre-play ceremonies. If dramatic performances really (and concretely) re-staged the pre-play ceremonies, this can provide us with many details about the visual and dynamic aspects of the pre-play ceremonies.

As Taplin states, 'the play is realized, finds its finished state, in the theatre',¹⁷ but the same can be said for the pre-play ceremonies. As far as we know, none of the four (with some reservations regarding the libations to Dionysos) were performed elsewhere during the fifth century BC in Athens: the theatre was the ultimate realisation for this set of rituals. This testifies the unavoidable 'challenge' which came to happen exclusively in the *orchestra* during the festival: the theatre rituals had to compete (not officially) against actors and playwrights, and consequently they had to adapt to the theatrical context (and contest) to provide the spectators with a similarly (if not equally) lavish show. It follows that generals, heralds, ambassadors and war-orphans (i.e. all representatives and members of the *polis*) involved in the pre-play ceremonies found themselves to be *performers* on stage. As such, it is our task now to unveil and focus on the identity, movements and gestures of the performers of each of the four pre-play ceremonies, relying on the one hand on the direct sources which attest explicitly to the pre-play ceremonies, and on the other hand on the allusions/re-stagings of the ceremonies which can be found within dramatic texts¹⁸ (these will be a sort of supplementary *scholia* to the performance of the ceremonies). The overall consideration of literary, oratory, historical and epigraphic testimonies will (a) allow us to reconstruct and visualise (at least in a comprehensible way) how the ceremonies were staged in the theatre, and (b) provide a full set of data for future and more specific investigations.

¹⁷ Taplin (2003 [1978]) 1. See also Taplin in this volume.

¹⁸ I use texts and translations from the LCL editions: Sommerstein (2008a); (2008b); (2008c) for Aeschylus; Lloyd-Jones (1994a); (1994b) for Sophocles; Kovacs (1994); (1995); (1998); (1999); (2002a); (2002b) for Euripides; Henderson (1998); (2000); (2002) for Aristophanes.

The Libations to Dionysos

A brief preliminary clarification needs to be made before analysing the ceremonies, and it concerns the programme of the festival: no testimony tells us the precise order of the pre-play ceremonies at all. The order in which I analyse the pre-play ceremonies here results from the following hypothesis and attempted reconstruction. Relying on some inscriptions which attest to public proclamations of honours, one notices that some epigraphic texts state that proclamations used to take place *μετὰ τὰς σπονδάς*, i.e. ‘after the libations’.¹⁹ This suggests that proclamations were preceded by libations. However – relying on the context described by Plut. *Cim.* 8.8–9 who, as we will see shortly, attests to the ten generals’ libations – it seems that, when libations were poured, the dramatic festival had recently started and spectators had just been seated. Moreover, since libations were often considered opening rituals, this should lead us to look at libations as the first pre-play ceremony to be performed, followed by the proclamation of honours, and then – relying on the sequence given by Isoc. 8.82–84, as we will read later – the display of the tributes and, lastly, the war-orphans’ parade. This seems the most plausible scenario. To further problematise the situation there is the fact that we do not even know on which day the ceremonies were performed: again, as the libations (along with sacrifices) were opening rituals which served to purify the theatre, a performance on the first day of the performances would appear sensible. Although there is no concrete proof of this, we would hardly expect a performance of the ceremonies taking place in the middle of the competition or on the last day of the festival, or even a separate celebration for each ceremony on different days.²⁰ Therefore, I am inclined to consider the

19 Few Athenian inscriptions show that announcements of crowns were made ‘after the libations’ (though not at the Dionysia nor from the fifth century BC): *IG* II² 1263; *IG* II² 1273; *IG* II² 1282; *IG* II² 1297; *MDAI(A)* 66 (1941) 228.4; *IG* II² 1325. Conversely, several non-Athenian inscriptions (beyond the fourth century BC) denote announcements of crowns after libations at the local Dionysia, e.g.: *Tit. Calymnii* 64 (face B); *Magnesia* 32; *Priene* 16; 33; 35; 39; 51; 66; *IK Laodikeia am Lykos* 5; *SEG* 26.677; 48.1110; 48.1112; 53.860; 53.861; 53.862; *IG* IV².1 66; *IK Knidos I* 74.9–15.

20 While Goldhill has never dealt with the issue related to their temporal concurrence, Carter (2004) 9 has concluded that ‘on the question of whether the four ceremonies took place annually in the fifth century, then, we have a yes (sc. the libations), two maybes (sc. the display of the tributes and the war-orphans’ parade) and a no (sc. the proclamations of honours)’. However, there are some doubts about the libations to Dionysos in 468 BC: if we aim to test the frequency and the occurrence of the ceremony, we can only rely on Plutarch – as Carter does – and his *τὰς νενομισμένας σπονδάς* (‘the customary libations’), and all those inscriptions which attest to the proclamations of honours in the theatre *μετὰ τὰς σπονδάς* (‘after the libations’).

pre-play ceremonies as opening performances – in the order described above – which took place on the first day of theatrical performances in the *orchestra*, i.e. the 11th of Elaphebolion.

Let us turn now to the first pre-play ceremony. The only literary testimony of the libations to Dionysos in the theatre is Plutarch's *Life of Cimon* (8.8–9), which says that in 469/468 BC the archon Apsephion κριτὰς μὲν οὐκ ἐκλήρωσε τοῦ ἀγῶνος, ὥς δὲ Κίμων μετὰ τῶν συστρατῆγων παρελθὼν εἰς τὸ θέατρον ἐποιήσατο τῷ θεῷ τὰς νενομισμένας σπονδάς, οὐκ ἐφήκεν αὐτοὺς ἀπελθεῖν, ἀλλ' ὀρκώσας ἡνάγκασε καθίσαι καὶ κρίναι δέκα ὄντας, ἀπὸ φυλῆς μιᾶς ἕκαστον ('did not appoint by lot the judges of the agon; but when Cimon, coming to the theatre together with the generals, made the customary libations to the god, he did not let them go away, but he forced them to sit and judge after they had sworn: they were ten, one for each tribe').²¹ Thus, what did the ten generals do? Generally speaking, 'a libation is a ritual outpouring of liquids. Libations were part of all sacrifices but could also be performed as independent rituals. The common terms for the rituals are *spondai* and *choai*. The former term is most frequent and referred to a controlled outpouring of a small amount of liquid for the Olympian gods by the help of a jug and a phiale. *Choai* were poured out entirely and were used for libations to the gods of the underworld, the heroes and the dead. Regular animal sacrifices were concluded with a libation of wine and water over the fire on the altar, but every invocation or prayer to the gods or heroes was accompanied by libations. Unmixed wine, milk, oil, and honey were less frequently used and seem to have marked particular parts of the ritual or specific traits in the recipient. [. . .] Before any meal some wine would be

However likely it is that libations in honour of Dionysos might have occurred during the Great Dionysia in the theatre of Dionysos, we have no clear evidence to confirm that libations took place *annually* throughout the fifth century BC. The display of the tributes and the war orphans' parade took place during the fifth century BC only (the former approximately between 453 BC and 404 BC [or rather 413 BC]). Moreover, it is likely that – given that the display occurred exclusively during the period of the Athenian empire – the war-orphans' parade, which seems to have archaic origins, was much older than the display of the tributes, so that the two pre-play ceremonies did not always take place together. We can be sure that both ceremonies were no longer performed during Isocrates' and Aeschines' time. Finally, we have only three attestations of public proclamations of honours during the very late fifth century BC: 410/409, 405/404 and 403/402 BC (to be sure, the display of the tributes was no longer celebrated in 403/402 BC). Besides these two cases in which three pre-play ceremonies out of four were performed together, there is no occasion in which we are sure that the four pre-play ceremonies were celebrated all together at the same Great Dionysia.

21 My translation. Against the credibility and chronology of Plutarch's anecdote see Scullion (2002a) 87–90.

poured out, while at symposia three libations were performed at the start. Journeys, sea voyages, and departure for battle were accompanied by libations. Oaths, contracts, and truces were concluded with libations, and the term *spondai*²² eventually came to mean a peace treaty'.²³ From this comprehensive description, we need to move to the context of the libations in Dionysos' honour and, even more specifically, of those performed during the Dionysia. Offerings and sacrifices to Dionysos were common in Athens (as well as all over the Greek world), both during the Dionysia and at many other festive and religious occasions.²⁴ Libations were usually a part of a broader set of rituals which could include prayers, oaths, processions, and sacrifices. It seems, however, that sacrifices and parades in honour of Dionysos were much more common (and attested) than libations, which could also occur independently. This is the case in Plutarch's passage, since we face there an isolated libation without any sacrifice. The libations Plutarch is talking about were an independent ritual aimed at purifying²⁵ the theatre and opening the dramatic performances.

It goes without saying that, because Dionysos was the god of wine, wine libations in his honour were always included in Dionysiac festivals²⁶ (certainly during the *Pithoigia* and *Choes* at the Dionysiac festival of the Anthesteria, where tastings of wine and drinking competitions took place).²⁷ The usual libations to Dionysos thus consisted of pouring wine²⁸ in his honour and, if we consider the

²² See Karavites (1984). In *Ar. Ach.* 178–203 Dikaiopolis and Amphitheus play on the double meaning of σπονδή, as truce and libation (see Olson [2002] 86–87 and 127). See also Burkert (1985) 71. For the relationship between oaths, truces and libations, see Sommerstein/Bayliss (2013) 151–155; 241–244 (cf., e.g., *Eur. Phoen.* 1240–1241).

²³ Ekroth (2012) 4051–4052. See also Burkert (1985) 70–73 (and 54–66 for animal sacrifices), Simon (2004) 239–245, and Patton (2009) 27–99 (although Patton deals more specifically with libations made by the gods).

²⁴ See Evans (2010) 170–207. For libations during a private occasion cf. *Hes. Op.* 338, Antipho 1.18–20, and *Pl. Symp.* 176a. Herodotus (6.57) says that pouring libations was a prerogative of the kings of the Spartiatai (cf. also *Xen. Ages.* 3.1). Cf. also *Hdt.* 7.223, where Xerxes pours libations (although *Hdt.* 1.132 says that Persians did not pour libations; but cf. *Xen. Cyr.* 2.3.1; 3.3.40; 4.1.6; 6.4.1).

²⁵ In the same way, the Pnyx, before the meetings of the Assembly, was purified with offerings and sacrifices, perhaps made by the herald or the *prytaneis* (cf., e.g., *Aeschin.* 1.23).

²⁶ For an analysis of Dionysiac rituals, see Obbink (1993) 65–86. For an overview and detailed analysis of rituals and processions at the Dionysia, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1994) and Cole, S. G. (1993).

²⁷ Cf. *Plut. Mor.* 655e. For an analysis of the Anthesteria, see Pickard-Cambridge (²1968 [1953]) 1–25; Burkert (1985) 237–242, and Parker, R. (2005) 290–316.

²⁸ Plutarch does not say that it was wine, we can only suppose that it was. In *Soph. OC* 469–484, we read of a libation with honey and water. Phanodemus (*FGrH* 325 F 12) says that

performance in action, we are not faced with a difficult case. If we rely on Plutarch's passage, the opening scene was chaired by the archon; next, the ten generals all arrived together in the theatre, near the altar, and made libations. We can assume that they took the stage with their elegant clothes, which were also not unknown in dramatic performances: generals might have their armour or a long *chiton* with (or without) a *himation* (probably all white),²⁹ whilst priests had purple garments, gold crowns and rings.³⁰ Considering the high status of the performers, it was undoubtedly a polished ritual. But when we seek further information from our direct source, we are disappointed, because no further details are provided by Plutarch. Here we can turn to Athenian tragedy, which, thanks to its stock libation-scenes,³¹ can provide us with useful details about the ceremony. Indeed, here we see that both *spondai* for the gods above and *choai* for the gods below, along with heroes and the dead, were staged in Athenian drama. Unfortunately, we do not have long dramatic passages specifically related to *spondai*. Here and there we find references to *spondai* during banquets (especially in comedy), but overall – given that in tragedy there are more sacrifices and mourning scenes than libations for the gods above – *choai* scenes prevail. Two major (non-*spondai*) scenes which can help in understanding a libation in performance are Aesch. *Cho.* 84–99, in which Electra and the Chorus pour *choai* over Agamemnon's tomb, and Soph. *OC* 466–492, where the Chorus guides Oedipus into the καθαρμοῦς ritual. These two scenes are also important because they include a real-to-life instruction from the Chorus to the lead character about how to make a libation (Aesch. *Cho.* 118 and Soph. *OC* 468).

The first passage is interesting insofar as the Chorus enters from the *skene* with vases (*oinochoai* or *hydriae*) full of liquids (Aesch. *Cho.* 15) to pour out over the central altar, representing Agamemnon's tomb: the entrance of the dozen libation bearers from an *eisodos* is a surprising parallel to the entrance of the ten generals in the theatre towards the altar in the *orchestra*. Electra is asking the Chorus what she needs to do to perform a libation in a proper and pious way. The first interesting point concerns the words to be used: Electra asks

libations were made with must and water, whilst Philochorus with unmixed wine (*FGrH* 328 F 5a) or wine mixed with water (*FGrH* 328 F 5b). See Graf (1980). For a brief overview of the usage and function of wine in Greece, see Frontisi-Ducroux/Lissarrague (1988).

29 For ancient Greek garments, see Lee, M. (2015) 89–126.

30 See Jones (1999) (especially 248–249; see *ibid.* for a collection of sources about colours and clothings in Greek processions). For a detailed analysis of Greek dress in social context, see Lee, M. (2015) 198–229. A c. 470 BC *kylix* of the Villa Giulia painter (The Metropolitan Museum of Art 1979.11.15) shows a woman pouring a libation with a (seemingly purple) mantle. For few artistic examples of Greek processions, see also Neils (1996b) 178–182.

31 See Jouanna (1992a) and (1992b).

whether she must speak a specific sentence while pouring out the liquids or if the ritual must be completed in silence, throwing away the jars and without looking round (87–99). The Chorus suggests she pronounce solemn/good words for friends (109) and evoke an avenger for enemies (121). It goes without saying that the ten generals did not pronounce any of these words, but they could have performed libations in silence and/or accompanied the act of pouring with prayers or religious words to Dionysos.³² As for the custom of pouring liquids and walking away without looking round, Garvie mentions several parallels and says that ‘in general the precaution is taken against the possibility of angering a malignant, and often chthonic, power by observing his reception of the offerings’.³³ Since the libations poured by the ten generals was meant to be a purificatory ritual, it is likely that they took that ‘precaution’ too.

On the other hand, the Chorus of Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* explains how to perform a libation on the occasion of a cathartic sacrifice. In *OC* the Chorus invites Oedipus to purify the soil of the Erinyes’ shrine, and, as a first act, he must wash his hands with the water contained in the vessels (469–470). Next, he must crown the edges of some cups close to the altar, and pour out the libations whilst standing up and looking East (since West was the direction of death and horrible creatures) (472–473; 475; 477). Finally, after having poured out the liquids three times (479), Oedipus must put nine olive twigs on the ground and pray with an imperceptible volume of voice (483–484). As in Aeschylus’ passage, Oedipus must walk away without looking round. Now, these rituals could be similar to libations in general³⁴ (those poured by the ten generals too), as we are dealing with offerings to gods (though gods of the underworld require *choai*, not *spondai*). The detail about the hand-washing³⁵ might have really taken place in the pre-play ceremony: this implies the presence of vessels full of water in the centre of the *orchestra*, ready to be used by the generals. The gestures of pouring the whole liquid, crowning the cups with wool, and putting olive twigs on the ground, do not belong to the practice of *spondai*: rather, they were included during *choai* and supplication scenes/procedures. However, it is likely that a final prayer/invocation (probably whispered) was delivered by the performers.³⁶

³² Cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 149.

³³ Garvie (1986) 70–71.

³⁴ For direct and indirect allusions to ‘sacred actions’ (such as libations, dances, processions, sacrifices, etc.) related to religious festivals in Euripidean drama, see Taddei (2020).

³⁵ For which cf. also, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 9.174–176.

³⁶ As Burkert (1985) 71 points out, ‘invocation and prayer are inseparable from libation’ (see *ibid.* 73–75 for an analysis of prayer in Greek religion).

Further dramatic passages testify to the variety of libations scenes, whether they were *spondai*, *choai* or purificatory rituals. After all, *spondai* and *choai*, generally speaking, were both gestures of pouring liquid in order to honour someone and purify a place: they are only different with regard to their addressees. In much the same way, the verb σπένδειν, ‘make a drink-offering’ or ‘pour a libation’,³⁷ was used both for *spondai* and *choai*,³⁸ as in Aesch. *Ag.* 1395,³⁹ Soph. *Phil.* 1032–1033, and Eur. *Bacch.* 313 (throughout the whole tragedy we read of Dionysian rites, libations and banquets,⁴⁰ performed by characters with ivy-crowns on their heads: cf. *ibid.* 81; 177; 253; 341–342; 376–377; 383–384; 702–703; cf. also Ar. *Eq.* 221; *Thesm.* 793 and *Pax* 1319). Expressions used to denote the pouring of a libation could also include ἐγγεῖν τὴν σπονδὴν (Ar. *Pax* 1102 and 1105 [during a sacrifice]) and λείβειν τὰς σπονδὰς or ὑπολείβειν (Aesch. *Ag.* 69–71). The theatrical act of pouring libations was usually accompanied by prayers and hymns, as in Aesch. *Supp.* 980–982 and *Pers.* 522–524. In Eur. *Hec.* 527–529 Talthybios tells Hecuba that Neoptolemus, during the sacrifice of Polyxena in front of Achilles’ tomb, took and raised a golden cup (δέπας πάγχρυσον),⁴¹ poured the libations (χοάς)⁴² with the whole crowd in silence (529–533; libations in silence also in Eur. *Ion* 1194–1195⁴³ and Ar. *Pax* 431–435), and that after his words, the crowd started to pray (542).⁴⁴

37 We find also the verb χέω as in Aesch. *Pers.* 219–220, where libations are accompanied by a prayer.

38 Also, the term λοιβαί (‘drink-offerings’) could refer indifferently both to *spondai* and *choai* (cf. Soph. *El.* 269–270).

39 See Medda (2017) 330–331.

40 Crowns and cups are mentioned in Soph. *Aj.* 1199–1200 (κυλίκων): see Finglass (2011) 474 for parallels of *symposia* with garlands and *kylikes*, and Konstantakos (2005) for *symposia* in Greek comedy. Heracles, in Eur. *Alc.* 1015–1016, regrets having crowned himself and poured libations (here, unexpectedly, in the middle form: see Parker, L. [2007] 254) while Admetus was suffering for his wife. Crowns were brought during banquets also in Eur. *El.* 496 (conversely, we read of libations with crowns on a tomb in *ibid.* 1321–1322).

41 Gregory (1999) 110 notes that here ‘narrative attention focuses on the libation vessel as emblematic of a prayer or pledge. [Cf. *Il.* 16.225–27; *Od.* 15.148–49; Pind. *Ol.* 7.1–5; *Pyth.* 4.193, and *Isthm.* 6.40]’.

42 See Battezzato (2018) 145 for comment on and parallels to Neoptolemus’ libations.

43 For the Bibline wine see West (1978) 306.

44 In Soph. *Phil.* 8–9, Odysseus says that, due to Philoctetes’ shouts, they could not perform libations and sacrifices in silence (as the custom required). As Schein (2013) 119 comments, “‘ritual silence’ (εὐφημία) was required to ensure that an offering would be auspicious and acceptable to the god, and *Od.* goes on to claim that *Phil.*’s sounds (11 βοῶν, στενάζων) were inauspicious (cf. 10 δυσφημίας)’. Since here libations and sacrifices are mentioned together, Jebb (1890) 7 comments with good reason: ‘the sacrifice regularly preceded the libation (cp. *Il.* 1.462); [. . .]. At a sacrifice, all present were first sprinkled with consecrated water, then silence

The quoted passages draw our attention toward the objects used during libations, and Euripides provides some evidence: even if not within a religious libation, in Eur. *Cyc.* 556 the Cyclops orders Silenus to pour wine – contained in a wineskin, ἄσκόν (510; also in Eur. *El.* 511–512), and a bowl (545: τὸν κρατῆρ') – into a cup (σκύφον);⁴⁵ we have seen above that in Eur. *Hec.* 527–529 Neoptolemus, in his capacity as ἐπιστάτης and ἱερεὺς at Polyxena's sacrifice (cf. *ibid.* 224), uses a golden goblet; during Xouthos' banquet in Euripides' *Ion* we read of golden cups (1175: χρυσέων τ' ἐκπωμάτων),⁴⁶ jars (1179: οἶνηρά τεύχη), silver and golden *phialai* (1181–1182: ἀργυρηλάτους / χρυσέας τε φιάλας), and bowls (1192: κρατῆρα) which were filled with water and wine (1194–1195); while performing *choai* for the dead in Eur. *IT* 159–166, Iphigenia uses a mixing-bowl, perhaps made of gold (167–168: πάγχρυσον / τεύχος), including milk, wine and honey.⁴⁷ Such a mixture of ingredients was called *πελανός*, and it was an offering to the gods and the dead generally made of meal, honey and oil: in addition to Aesch. *Cho.* 92, we find this type of offering in Aesch. *Pers.* 202–204,⁴⁸ Eur. *Hel.* 1333–1334, Eur. *Ion* 226–228⁴⁹ and 706–708, and Eur. *Tr.* 1063.

Dramatic libations indeed made for a scene rich in gestures, movements and objects, and thanks to the combination of the sources considered so far, we can reconstruct the scene. Similarly to actors entering the stage to perform their roles, the performers of the pre-play libations had to come into the *orchestra* either from the *eisodoi* or (if they were already seated) from the first row of seats, intentionally reserved for Athenian state officials and priests. They moved towards the centre of the *orchestra* (near the θυμέλη), called by the archon. It is likely that the performers, as Euripides and Aristophanes suggest, wore ivy or golden crowns: also, we have a fragmentary cup from Athens' acropolis (Athens Acr. 434 [ARV² 330.5] and Paris Louvre G 133) in which a bearded and crowned man is pouring a

was proclaimed, and then the offering began: Ar. *Av.* 958 αὐθις σὺ περιχώρει λαβὼν τὴν χέρνιβα. / εὐφημί' ἔστω. XP. Μὴ κατάρξῃ τοῦ τραγού'.

⁴⁵ While drinking, Silenus puts a crown upon Polyphemos' head (Eur. *Cyc.* 558–559). See Seaford (1984) 203 and O'Sullivan/Collard (2013) 197 for some parallels attesting the wearing of wreaths during weddings and *symposia*.

⁴⁶ We find golden cups and plates also in Ar. *Pax* 423–425. In Soph. *Ant.* 430–431 the guardian tells Creon that Antigone poured out a threefold libation over her brothers' tomb from a bronze cup/jug containing mead, water, and wine.

⁴⁷ See Parker, L. (2016) 92–93 for a useful comment on this passage.

⁴⁸ See Garvie (2009) 122–123.

⁴⁹ On this mixture here see Martin (2018) 195.

libation from a *phiale* (either during a banquet or a public sacrifice).⁵⁰ Once they reached the *orchestra*, the performers washed their hands and – relying on Euripides’ *Hecuba* and *Ion* and Aristophanes’ *Peace* – might have taken a vessel and poured the liquid into several (golden or silver) cups or *phialai*. All these objects could be either on a table, as Ar. *Pax* 1059 suggests, or on the ground as with the vessels full of water in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus*. It is likely that the performers raised the cups, whispered a prayer to Dionysos – while the audience was silent, being this a custom, as Odysseus in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* and the servant in Euripides’ *Ion* maintain – and then poured the liquid (wine, perhaps mixed with water, is most probable) on the ground either directly or from the *oinochoe/hydria* through *phialai* (as represented in the *lekythos* Carlsruhe 234): since *spondai* consisted in pouring a few drops of liquids, we can be quite sure that the small amount of liquid was poured out from/through smaller containers, such as cups or *phialai*. Since the usual number for libations was three, the generals might have poured out a few drops of wine three times and then drunk from the cups. We do not know the divine addressees of the performers’ prayers and libations: if we assume that there were three libations (including prayers), we might hypothesise that the first was dedicated to Hestia, the second to Dionysos as god of the theatre, and the last to Zeus *Soter* or Athena.⁵¹

If the procession and ritual of the generals’ libations can be deduced thanks to dramatic parallels, there is a detail in staging these libations which will remain unresolved: who brought the vessels/jars with liquids on (and then removed from) stage?⁵² As it has been noticed with regard to Aeschylus’ *Libations Bearers*, ‘part of the presumed awkwardness of bringing libations onstage in this

50 See Lissarrague (1995) 128–129. It seems that the *phiale* could have different dimensions: during libations, a flat *phiale* was used; in Hom. *Il.* 23.243, a golden *phiale* is used to contain Patroclus’ bones; in Pl. *Smp.* 223c, Agathon, Aristophanes and Socrates are drinking from a large *phiale*, akin to a cup.

51 In *h.Hom.* 29.4–6 we read that during banquets the first and the last libation were dedicated to Hestia. See also Finglass (2007) 180 and Olson (2012) 318–319 for literary occurrences of Hestia as the first addressee during libations and sacrifices. Lee, K. (1997) 286, commenting on Eur. *Ion* 1192 ff. (where the Servant describes Ion’s libation to the god), says that ‘three libations were made: to Zeus Olympios and the Olympian gods; to the Heroes; to Zeus *Soter* (cf. schol. Plato *Phileb.* 66d)’ and that the singular ‘god’ ‘may be used loosely for Zeus Olympios standing for all the Olympians as a group’. Conversely, Martin (2018) 444 thinks that ‘the most plausible god to receive Ion’s libation is Apollo, as the god to whom libations were poured at the start of a symposium could apparently be freely chosen’.

52 To bring libations: Soph. *El.* 434; Eur. *Or.* 96 (Helen comes out from the palace carrying herself libations [106 and 113: see Willink {1986} 99] and she pours them on a tomb. Cf. also *ibid.* 472; 1187); Ar. *Pax* 1059.

way is that after this the chorus never leaves the performance area. As a result, their props also remain present throughout the play'.⁵³ As for the libations to Dionysos, we have three possibilities, each of which implies the presence of further figures: (a) the vessels containing liquids were already on a table (carried on by someone before the ceremony); once they made the libations, the generals left the vessels near the altar which thus remained there during the following ceremonies; (b) unidentified figures arrived (or were already present) in the *orchestra* carrying on the vessels with liquids, who gave them to the generals and then took them off stage; (c) the ten generals arrived in the *orchestra* bringing the vessels, they poured the libations and then went away (with or without the vessels; in the latter case, someone would have taken the vessels at the end either of the ceremony or of all the pre-play ceremonies). At any rate, an entrance (either of the generals or of unknown figures) with libations in hand would have created a proper procession of *spondophoroi* in theatrical fashion. Equally, leaving the vessels near the altar throughout the celebration of the other pre-play ceremonies would have reinforced the ritualistic and religious value of the whole performance.

Once they had poured the libations, the generals either walked away (probably without looking round), taking their seats in the first row, or left the theatre altogether, as it would have happened in Plutarch's passage if the archon had not appointed them as judges. This could be the first theatrical 'sketch' that spectators watched: a brief and solemn procedure which would have reminded the audience of many tragic and comic characters who poured libations on stage, following a common performative pattern and creating a tableau of 'pictorial impression'.⁵⁴

The Public Proclamations of Honours

The second pre-play ceremony might have taken place μετὰ τὰς σπονδὰς: the archon left the stage and a herald (unless already present) replaced him to announce the name(s) of the benefactor(s) of the city, conferring honours/crowns on them. About this ceremony, two initial clarifications should be made. First of

⁵³ Marshall (2017) 32.

⁵⁴ By tableaux Taplin (²2003 [1978]) 101 means 'those places where there is not only a lack of dramatic movement, but also some or all of the visual constituents of a scene are held still for a longer or shorter time in a combination which captures or epitomizes a particular state of affairs'.

all, before public proclamations at the Dionysia became a common practice (approximately from the second half of the fourth century BC onwards), we only have four Athenian attestations of public proclamations of honours in the theatre: *IG* I³ 102 (410/409 BC), *IG* I³ 125 (405/404 BC), *IG* II² 2/*SEG* 32.38 (403/402 BC or 382/381 BC), and *IG* II² 20 p. 656 (394/393 BC).⁵⁵ Given this situation, it is hard to argue that most Athenian tragedies before 410/409 BC alluded to and/or re-staged public conferrals of crowns in the theatre.⁵⁶ Secondly, no evidence can confirm that non-Athenian honorands were in Athens at the time of the proclamation. To be sure, Athenian honorands were in Athens at the time of the proclamation, but Athenian public proclamations for Athenians began only from the second half of the fourth century BC (and, regularly, from the first half of the third century BC) onwards.⁵⁷

Bearing this in mind, let us take the honours paid to Thrasybulus (*IG* I³ 102) as an *exemplum* so that we can visualise in part what happened in the *orchestra*. At ll. 6–11 we read that Thrasybulus must be praised for his services and entitled to a gold crown, καὶ [ἀνείτ]/έν τὸν κέρυκα Διονυσίων ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι ἡὼν ἑν/[εκα αὐτὸν ἡο δῆμος ἐστεφάνουσ]ε (12–14: ‘and [sc. the herald] announce at the tragedy competition of the Dionysia the reason why the people crowned him’).⁵⁸ The decree – the complete version of which includes honours for other 7/8 foreigners – dates to the spring of 409 BC (thus, just before the Dionysia) and was proposed first in the Council and then in the Assembly. In the second part of the decree, we read (30–32) that Thrasybulus and the others [καὶ ἔγκτεσι]ν εἶναι αὐτοῖς ὅπερ / Ἀθηναίοις, [καὶ γεπέδο]ν καὶ οἰκίας, καὶ οἴκεσ/ιν Ἀθήνεσι (‘are to have the same right to own property that the Athenians have, both a plot of land and houses, and to dwell at Athens’). As Osborne and Rhodes point out, these honours are particular because the honorands ‘seem generally expected to remain in Athens

⁵⁵ See Giannotti (2021 forthcoming) for a more detailed discussion of these four testimonies.

⁵⁶ Despite this, I do believe that Greek tragedy mirrors the formulaic language of contemporary honorific decrees (and this will be argued in two forthcoming papers of mine). Also, fr. 241 Kn. from Euripides’ *Archelaos* (staged between 408 and 406 BC) includes a crowning for the homonymous hero (and this might have something to do with the missing conferral of crowns in the honorific decree, *IG* I³ 117, for the contemporary King Archelaus I). The fact remains that, if before 410/409 BC crownings had usually taken place in the Assembly and/or Council, playwrights might have been aware at least of that early way of conferring honours and crowns.

⁵⁷ And it became an argument of debate as [Eur.] *Rh.* 161–194 shows: see Fantuzzi (2016). See Domingo Gygax (2006) for a re-evaluation of Plutarch’s testimony (*Alc.* 33.2) about the crowning (in the Piraeus and Assembly) of Alcibiades. See *ibid.* (especially 490–492) for early crownings of Athenian citizens in Athens (though not in the theatre).

⁵⁸ See Osborne/Rhodes (2017) 498–505.

(and in the case of Agoratus, at least, did):⁵⁹ keeping clarification no. 2 above in place, could it be that οἴκεσιν indicates an exceptional case in which the honorands were currently in Athens for the public proclamation and invited to remain after that? It is a plausible idea, especially for one further reason. When talking about the honours for Thrasybulus in 410/409 BC, we need to consider, as Julia Shear does, that the Dionysia of 409 BC ‘must have been a particularly charged affair’:⁶⁰ the pre-play ceremonies (and the Great Dionysia in general) were enriched by a further ceremony, the oath of Demophantos – seemingly a pre-pre-play ceremony celebrated on the 9th of Elaphebolion (πρὸ Διονυσίων) in the *agora*⁶¹ – on which the Athenians, deme by deme, swore to kill anyone who would have tried to overthrow democracy and establish tyranny, imitating thus the two great tyrant-slayers Harmodios and Aristogeiton. On such a great occasion of democratic feeling, the presence of Thrasybulus and his comrades, the oligarch-slayers, would undoubtedly have further enhanced the importance of the festival and its collective democratic celebrations. It is a mystery whether the Athenians took advantage of this occasion to ensure that Thrasybulus was present along with the other honorands at the Dionysia or not. Unfortunately, we have no evidence for that.

The text of the honorific decree does not provide us with many visual details: it only shows that a herald was in the theatre and had to give the announcement. We do not know what words were spoken precisely, but it is likely that the herald⁶² did not read the decree (the current restored, yet still incomplete, version of which is already 47 lines long): the herald might have explained to the audience the reasons for the conferral of crowns, perhaps following a text provided by the Assembly and/or the Council: as Wilson describes it, ‘the event is thus to be no mere report, but a live performance, complete with a script for a herald to deliver that voices the will of the *dēmos*’.⁶³ If only Thrasybulus had been in the theatre, the audience would have attended a crowning in real theatrical fashion. Like a foreign character in exotic clothes, he might have taken the

⁵⁹ Osborne/Rhodes (2017) 505. As for Agoratus staying in Athens, cf. Lys. 13.

⁶⁰ Shear (2007) 156. Shear (along with Wilson, P. [2009]) puts much emphasis on the strong democratic character of the 409 BC Great Dionysia. For a discussion of the formulaic language of early Athenian honorific decrees (including those stipulating a public proclamation) and their (supposed) democratic value, see Giannotti (2020).

⁶¹ But see Canevaro/Harris (2012), who have successfully challenged the date and authenticity of the text of decree of Demophantos contained in Andoc. 1.96–98.

⁶² In Aesch. Ag. 493–494 we read that the Chorus sees the arrival of a herald with a crowned head. While Fraenkel (1950) 250–251, considering parallels of wreathed characters in tragedy, does not manage to provide a ‘cogent explanation’ for the wreathed herald, Sommerstein (2008b) 56 n. 102 states that ‘this should mean that he brings good news’.

⁶³ Wilson, P. (2009) 12.

stage to receive his prize and to be celebrated in front of a heterogenous audience, entering from one of the two *eisodoi* or *skene* doors (if they were already set up) – perhaps the farthest one, which in drama represented an arrival from a distant *polis*.

Again, we can turn to Athenian drama to add and resolve detail, though the genre is not rich in crowning-scenes: we find some Athenian and non-Athenian characters who took the stage with golden, ivy, or laurel crowns, or, more generally, bearing gifts⁶⁴ and rewards to deliver, confer, or receive, but tragedy is not full of political crownings which might have resembled the real practice. In effect, we have more crowns than crownings. For example, Euripides' *Medea* presents several scenes in which gifts and crowns are mentioned in relation to Medea's plan, when she gives her sons a cloak and a crown (786: λεπτόν τε πέπλον καὶ πλόκον χρυσήλατον ['a finely woven gown and a diadem of beaten gold']) as gifts (784 and 947: δῶρ'; 789: δωρήματα) to deliver to Creon's daughter. However, both the entrance of the children who are carrying the gifts and the physical delivery are off-stage scenes and are only described by the Chorus (977–984). The self-crowning scene, too, is described (1156–1166) by the Messenger: χρουσοῦν τε θεῖσα στέφανον ἀμφὶ βοστρύχοις (1160: 'and setting the gold crown about her locks'). Thus, we can only imagine the gestures and movements of the act of putting (τιθέναι) a crown on Glauce's head. Conversely, in Soph. *OT* 82–83 the priest describes Creon taking the stage with an ivy crown on his head (κάρα πολυστεφής), whilst in Eur. *Hipp.* 73–74 we see Hippolytus, who crowns the head of Artemis' statue,⁶⁵ and Theseus, who enters with a wreath on his head and then tears it off (806–807: αἰαῖ· τί δῆτα τοῖσδ' ἀνέστεμμαι κάρα / πλεκτοῖσι φύλλοις, δυστυχῆς θεωρὸς ὤν; ['Oh! Oh! Why then is my head crowned with these plaited leaves since my mission to the oracle has ended in disaster?']). A few further testimonies are Eur. *Andr.* 147–153, where Hermione enters the stage with a golden diadem, and Eur. *Bacch.* 81–82; 177; 253 and 313, where those who honour Dionysos are always crowned with ivy crowns. Much more interesting are Eur. *El.* 854–855, with Orestes crowned by the servants of the palace for having killed Aegisthus (στέφουσι δ' εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα / χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες. [. . .] ['immediately with rejoicing and shouts of joy they garlanded your brother's head']; cf. also *ibid.* 862; 872), and especially *ibid.* 880–889, where we have Orestes' and Pylades' crowning by Electra, whose

⁶⁴ Honours and benefactions were indeed considered 'gifts'. Cf., e.g., Lys. 21.11; Isoc. 18.66; Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.8; Aeschin. 3.236; Dem. 19.35; Diod. Sic. 11.27.3; 20.11.1; Plut. *Mor.* 850b–1f; *IG* II³ 298; *IG* II² 682.

⁶⁵ Cf. also *ibid.* 82–83.

wording could have recalled the official formulae pronounced in the Assembly/Council and/or theatre:

ὦ καλλίνικε, πατὴρ ἐκ νικηφόρου (880)
 γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίου μάχης,
 δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρύχων ἀνδήματα.
 ἦκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμῶν
 ἀγῶν' ἐς οἴκους ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανῶν
 Αἴγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κάμὸν ὤλεσεν. (885)
 σύ τ', ὦ παρασπίστ', ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου
 παίδευμα Πυλάδῃ, στέφανον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
 δέχου· φέρῃ γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῷδ' ἴσον μέρος
 ἀγῶνος· αἰεὶ δ' εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι

(EL.) O Orestes, glorious in victory, son of the man who won the prize of victory in the war at Troy, accept this garland for the tresses of your hair! You have come home: you have run no futile furlong but have destroyed your enemy Aegisthus, who killed your father and mine! (*She garlands Orestes' head.*) And you, Pylades, his companion in arms, nursing of a man most god-fearing, accept a garland from my hand! For you win from this contest a prize equal to his. Ever may I see you both in prosperity!

(*She garlands Pylades' head.*)

Further 'tragic crowns' can be found at Eur. *Phoen.* 856–857, when Teiresias enters with a golden crown received from the Athenians as 'concrétisation de son succès',⁶⁶ and also in E. *Tr.* 353–354 where a frenzied Cassandra asks Hecuba to crown her.

As a matter of fact, we are not provided with full details, but rather we can recognize a few stereotypical situations in which crowns and crownings are involved: when a character took the stage with a crown on his/her head that person did so to convey happiness, euphoria or glory and victory; a character could take the stage without a crown and later receive it (δέχεσθαι) as a gift/reward for his/her efforts; the conferrer would put (τιθέναι) the wreath on the conferee's head and made a specific speech articulating the conferee's merits. It is hard to move beyond such a vague outline, both because of the meagre evidence and the fact that, after all, a crowning was not a complicated procedure. However, there is a dramatic passage that is worthy of consideration due to its *visual* resemblance to public crownings. This time it comes from a comedy: Aristophanes' *Birds* (1271–1276). Here, Peisetaerus and Euelpides are told by a bird-herald that humans now love birds and their city, and because of this esteem, Peisetaerus receives a crown from 'all the people':

⁶⁶ Amiech (2004) 439.

(KH.) ὦ Πεισέταιρ', ὦ μακάρι', ὦ σοφώτατε,
 ὦ κλεινότατ', ὦ σοφώτατ', ὦ γλαφυρώτατε,
 ὦ τρισμακάρι', ὦ – κατακέλευσον.

(PE.) τί σὺ λέγεις;

(KH.) στεφάνῳ σε χρυσῷ τῷδε σοφίας οὐνεκα
 στεφανοῦσι καὶ τιμῶσιν οἱ πάντες λεῷ.

(1275)

(PE.) δέχομαι. τί δ' οὕτως οἱ λεῷ τιμῶσί με;

(HE.) Hail Peisetaerus, Hail the Blest One, Hail the Most Wise, Hail the Most Illustrious, Hail the Most Wise, Hail the Most Slick, Hail the Triple Blest, Hail the – just give me my cue!

(PE.) What's your message? (HE.) With this crown of gold all the people recognize and reward you for your wisdom. (PE.) I accept it. But why do the people honor me this way?

The bird-herald will then exhaustively explain all of Peisetaerus' merits. These lines are crucial to our investigation as they allow us to visualise the scene more clearly. Considering that Aristophanes' *Birds* was staged in 414 BC, i.e. before the first public proclamation of honour and (seemingly) the first conferral of a crown for an Athenian citizen (i.e. Alcibiades in 407 BC), and that the early crownings seem to be attested only in Hdt. 8.124.2 (where crowns are given by Spartans to Eurybiadas and Themistocles) and Thuc. 4.121.1 (crown given by the city of Scione to Brasidas),⁶⁷ Dunbar is right in pointing out that 'we cannot tell whether the audience would now think of Peisetaerus as an Athenian being signally honoured for his σοφία by his fellow-citizens or as an eminent member of a foreign (bird) city being honoured by Athens, [. . .]'.⁶⁸ As a matter of fact, this scene was a re-staging⁶⁹ of a real conferral of crowns (which could happen in the Assembly and/or Council), first announced by a herald who, integrating the Aristophanic version, might have 1) publicly introduced the honorand (with vocatives and epithets), 2) praised his person on behalf of the conferring city/cities/people,⁷⁰ 3) conferred a crown on him, and 4) explained the reasons for his

⁶⁷ The euergetic system, along with its exchange of favours and rewards, was already operating between the end of the sixth century and early fifth century BC. Cf. Hdt. 1.54; 8.85.3; 8.136; Thuc. 1.129.3; 1.136; Plut. *Them.* 24; *I. Cret.* IV 64; *Syll.*³ 4; *IG XII Suppl.* 549; *IG IX.2* 257. See more exhaustively Domingo Gygax (2016).

⁶⁸ Dunbar (1995) 635.

⁶⁹ To be sure, also due to the comic context, we cannot be totally confident of its faithfulness. However, Zanetto/Del Corno (1987) 281 describe it: 'una trasposizione scenica di una prassi reale'.

⁷⁰ Dunbar (1995) 635 says that 'οἱ πάντες λεῷ was part of a traditional herald's proclamation at Athens, δεῦρ' ἴτ', ὦ π. λ., popularly ascribed to Theseus when calling a general assembly after his συνοικισμός of Attica (Plut. *Thes.* 25)'. Further parallels in Ar. *Eq.* 163 (here Sommerstein [1997 {1981}] quotes Hom. *Il.* 4.90–91 as parallel), *Pax* 297–298, and *Ran.* 219; 676.

crowning. Therefore, Aristophanes' *Birds* seem to be an outstanding case which definitely has something to do with the real practice.

Now that we have a more precise idea of what might have happened in the *orchestra*, we can note that the staging of such a ceremony did not require any special or complicated objects or movement. Moreover, if the honorand was not in Athens at the time of the proclamation, the scene would be simple: the herald, once having entered the centre of the *orchestra*, simply pronounced the name and origins of the honorand and read the text that stated the reasons for the crowning. It goes without saying that, if the honorand was in Athens, the crowning scene would have been magnificent: the entrance of the honorand either from the *eisodoi* or from his honorary seat, and the physical conferral of the crown, would have been a spectacle worthy of being staged. In this way, Athens utilised the stage to praise its benefactors ostentatiously and theatrically, and I tend to believe that when the practice became regular and fixed, the honorands were indeed present at the festival.

How was the third spectacular ceremony introduced within our sequence? We must assume another procession coming from the *eisodoi*, one involving more people who, this time, gave something to Athens (without receiving anything in return). Indeed, the scenic continuity was guaranteed by the herald, who remained in the *orchestra* and had the duty of introducing the representatives of the allied cities which were bringing their annual tribute to the Delian League's treasure.

The Display of the Tributes

When Athens led the fifth-century BC Delian League, spectators at the Dionysia attended another important pre-play ceremony: the display of the tributes from those cities allied with Athens. As in the case of the libations to Dionysos in the theatre, we have scarce testimony⁷¹ of the display of the tributes, for two principle

⁷¹ Conversely, for the Athenian empire we have many literary and epigraphic sources (see, e.g., Low [2017] for a useful overview). For a collection and analysis of documents of the tributes see Meritt (1937) and Mattingly (1996). See also Osborne (2000). The epigraphical evidence comes from the so-called *Lapis Primus* and *Lapis Secundus* (IG I³ 259–290), which record the annual lists of tributes paid by the allied cities from 454/453 to 432/431 BC (see Osborne/Rhodes [2017] 94–109; for payment at the time of the Dionysia see *ibid.* 300–307 and 322–329). However, we know from Thucydides that Athens started to ask for contributions (initially the sum of tribute was 460 talents) from 478/477 BC – that is, when the Athenians became leaders of the alliance against Persia (cf. Thuc. 1.96 and Plut. *Arist.* 24.4. Diod. Sic. 11.47.1 records 560

reasons: firstly, the practice was enacted only during the period of the fifth-century BC Delian League;⁷² secondly, it seems that this practice was exclusively Athenian,⁷³ so that we do not have evidence from external cities. Our evidence for the public celebration at the Dionysia is given by the *scholion* to Ar. *Ach.* 504 (εἰς τὰ Διονύσια ἐτέτακτο Ἀθήναζε κομίζειν τὰς πόλεις τοὺς φόρους, ὡς Εὐπολὶς φησιν ἐν Πόλεσιν [‘it was decided that the cities had to bring their tributes to Athens at the Dionysia, as Eupolis says in his *Cities*’]), which refers to that passage of Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* (502–506) which explains us that these ceremonies were celebrated only during the Great Dionysia,⁷⁴ while at the Lenaia no allies or foreigners were present in the theatre.

Conversely, a more detailed explanation of the ceremony can be found in Isocrates (8.82–83), who says:

οὕτω γὰρ ἀκριβῶς εὗρισκον ἐξ ὧν ἄνθρωποι μάλιστα ἂν μισηθεῖεν, ὥστ’ ἐψηφίσαντο τὸ περιγιγνόμενον τῶν φόρων ἀργύριον διελόντες κατὰ τάλαντον εἰς τὴν ὀρχήστραν τοῖς Διονυσίοις εἰσφέρειν ἐπειδὴν πληρὲς ἦ τὸ θέατρον· καὶ ταῦτ’ ἐποιοῦν καὶ παρειαῖον τοὺς παῖδας τῶν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τετελευτηκότων, ἀμφοτέροις ἐπιδεικνύοντες, τοῖς μὲν συμμάχοις τὰς τιμὰς τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῶν ὑπὸ μισθωτῶν εἰσφερομένας, τοῖς δ’ ἄλλοις Ἑλλήσι τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ὀρφανῶν καὶ τὰς συμφορὰς τὰς διὰ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ταύτην γιγνομένας.

For so scrupulously did they invent reasons to be deeply hated by men, that they voted that the excess of tributes had to be displayed talent by talent and brought onto the *orchestra* at the Dionysia, when the theatre was full of people; they also used to do this: they introduced the sons of those who died during the war, showing off to both the allies the amount of their treasure brought (on the stage) by the salaried men, and to the other Greeks the crowd of the orphans and misfortunes caused by their greed.⁷⁵

talents). It is important to underline the fact that neither the epigraphic evidence nor Thucydides state that the tributes were displayed during the Dionysia (and democracy, although not radical democracy, was already effective in that period). As the treasury was initially based in Delos (until 454 BC), presumably the allies sent their tribute there, and not to Athens: hence, the display of the tributes in Athens cannot have happened until the treasury had been moved. For a concise, but detailed, overview of the Delian League and the collection of the tributes, see Rhodes (2006) 41–51. For an overview of Athenian empire’s structures and ethics, see Low (2007) 233–251, and (2009).

72 The tribute was replaced by a harbour tax in 413 BC (cf. Thuc. 7.28.4), and if it was reinstated later (which is not certain) that happened under the restored democracy of 410 BC.

73 But see Low (2007) 237 n. 62.

74 But cf. *IG II²* 1202 (noticed also by Ceccarelli, P. [2010] 117–118 and 118 n. 58) in which we have an attestation of a proclamation of honours during comic performances in the Attic deme of Aixone.

75 My translation.

The display of the tributes was a glorification of Athens and a public demonstration of its power. The image of the city was strongly present, glorified and displayed during this ceremony. The performance should have been a magnificent celebration in the *orchestra*: the Athenians would have been deeply stirred by civic pride; simultaneously, foreigners might have admired this glorification or, more likely, they resented the pomposity of their tyrannical rulers. As Shear says, ‘for the Athenians, looking at other cities’ wealth brings out their superior status, but, for the allies, looking at their own wealth now in the hands of the Athenians stresses their inferior status’, and ‘in this web of relationships, the power displayed is Athenian power’.⁷⁶ The scene consisted of a parade of ‘salaried men’ who carried talents, in Antony Raubitschek’s opinion, ‘in terracotta vessels or in money bags, each of which contained just one talent’.⁷⁷ Raubitschek even imagined an astonishing (but still plausible) parade of ‘at least five hundred men each carrying one talent of money’, before an audience that ‘could easily estimate the total value of the display’.⁷⁸ We cannot know how many men paraded in the theatre, but each allied city should have had at least one or two delegates who, coming from many cities around the Greek world, would have ‘painted’ the parade with their various clothes. As far as we know, Athens never had more than 190 allied cities paying tribute:⁷⁹ if each city sent one or two delegates with money (either carried by their sole servant or by Athenian servants), we are not far from the number hypothesised by Raubitschek. One by one they were giving Athens a ‘gift’ to recognize and celebrate its power. It is unlikely that the delegates carried the talents into the *orchestra* since Isocrates mention certain obscure ‘salaried men’ who served to bring the tributes into the theatre. Their identity remains uncertain: in Max Laistner’s opinion, comparing Pl. *Plt.* 290a, they were ‘hired servants’;⁸⁰ George Norlin translates ‘hirelings’⁸¹ and argues that they could be either paid servants or paid soldiers (comparing Isoc. 8.79); Terry Papillon translates ‘workers’.⁸² Whether the *misthotai* had to bring a part of the tribute quota or the whole amount, it is improbable that they did so by hand. Just like the *hydriaphoroi*

⁷⁶ Shear (2011) 148 *passim* (focusing specifically on the Dionysia of 409 BC).

⁷⁷ Raubitschek (1941) 359.

⁷⁸ Raubitschek (1941) 358 *passim*. The number of the allies and the amount of the tributes changed every year: see Rhodes (2010) = P.J. Rhodes, *A History of the Classical Greek World. 478-323 BC*. Second Edition, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. For a general overview of Athenian resources during the Peloponnesian War. See also Low (2007) 233–248.

⁷⁹ See Meiggs/Lewis (1988) 199. See also Osborne/Rhodes (2017) 94–109.

⁸⁰ Laistner (1927) 103.

⁸¹ Norlin (1929) 58 n. a.

⁸² Papillon (2004) 153.

and *kanephoroi* during the Panathenaia,⁸³ the servants might have carried the money in *hydriae* on their shoulders. Relying on the sources at hand, we can maintain that there were not important magistrates in the *orchestra*: hence, the hypothesis that the *hellenotamiai* were the officers of this ceremony cannot be claimed. However, as the treasurers were primary figures for the payment procedures of the Delian League, it remains ambiguous why they are not explicitly mentioned nor involved anywhere.

What about the relationship between drama and the public display of the allies' tributes? We have seen how Aristophanes openly referred to the ceremony, testifying to the presence of the allies too. However, there was another comic playwright – quoted by the *scholium ad* Aristophanes – that dealt with the display of the tributes, not by mentioning the ceremony but by re-staging it: Eupolis with his *Cities*. Indeed in his (unfortunately fragmentary) play (dating between the late 420s and 413/412 BC),⁸⁴ Eupolis staged the entrance of the chorus – whose twenty-four members represent several cities which were currently allies of Athens – in a way that reproduced visually the ceremony of the display of the tributes. The fragments which illustrate this are 245; 246 and 247 K.-A.: in these passages, the cities of Tenos, Chios and Cyzicus are presented.⁸⁵ I will not deal here with the political value of Eupolis' *Cities*,⁸⁶ since – as Olson anticipates – 'what attitude the play adopted toward the treatment of the allies is impossible to say, despite the conviction of many modern critics that its guiding purpose must have been to turn away from their cruel handling of their subjects'.⁸⁷ Eupolis' fragments are much more useful here to get at some details about the procession during the display of the tributes. Let us consider the three passages, in which it

83 For a complete analysis of the Panathenaia and the Parthenon frieze, see the contributes in Neils (1996a), especially Neils (1996b) and Harrison (1996). As for the organisation, origins and story of the Panathenaia, see also Parke (1977); Parker, R. (2005), and Sourvinou-Inwood (2011).

84 As for the date of Eupolis' *Cities*, see, e.g., Storey (2003) 216–217 and Olson (2016) 229.

85 Perhaps Amorgos too (cf. fr. 256 K.-A.). Aristophanes' *Babylonians* (about which see Norwood [1930] and Welsh [1983]) might be a good parallel of this episode, since there the comedian criticised Athenian imperialistic rule probably by staging his chorus (which alluded to the condition of the allied cities) as an enslaved mass – perhaps 'redeployed as rowers and marines in the Athenian navy' (Starkey [2013] 506).

86 For which, see Storey (2003) 219–228. We do not know at which festival Eupolis' *Cities* were staged. Storey (2003) 217 does not go too far in saying: 'since allies were present (with their *phoros*) at the Dionysia, such a comic presentation might belong better at the more Athenian festival of the Lenaia [. . .]. On the other hand, since the presentation of the *phoros* was part of the Dionysia, *Poleis* might be appropriate at that festival'.

87 Olson (2016) 228.

seems that two characters are watching and describing the entrance of each *choreutes*:⁸⁸

ν(Α.) Τῆνος αὕτη,
πολλοὺς ἔχουσα σκορπίους ἔχεις τε. (Β.) συκοφάντος
(Α.) This is Tenos,
full of numerous scorpions and vipers. (Β.) Sycophants!

αὕτη Χίος, καλὴ πόλις ()
πέμπει γὰρ ὑμῖν ναῦς μακρὰς ἄνδρας θ' ὅταν δεῖσῃ,
καὶ τᾶλλα πειθαρχεῖ καλῶς, ἅπληκτος ὥσπερ ἵππος
This is Chios, a lovely city ()
for she sends you war-ships and men whenever necessary,
and she's generally nice and obedient, like a horse that requires no blows

(Α.) ἡ δ' ὑστάτη ποῦ'σθ'; (Β.) ἦδε Κύζικος πλέα στατήρων.
(Α.) ἐν τῇδε τοίνυν τῇ πόλει φρουρῶν (ἐγὼ) ποτ' αὐτὸς
γυναῖκ ἐκίνουν κολλύβου καὶ παῖδα καὶ γέροντα,
κάξῃν ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν τὸν κύσθον ἐκκορίζειν

(Α.) Where's the last one? (Β.) This is Cyzicus, full of big coins.
(Α.) Well, I myself once in this city, while on guard-duty,
screwed a woman for half a cent, and a boy and a old man;
and you could 'de-bug' her cunt all day long

Here, each member of Eupolis' multiform chorus individually represents⁸⁹ an allied city of Athens, and the comedian describes the aspect of the feminised cities⁹⁰ and, in the case of Chios, what kind of tribute the city was sending (πέμπειν) to Athens.⁹¹ It goes without saying that, during the real pre-play ceremony, Tenos' representatives did not wear anything resembling scorpions or sycophantic garb, Chios' representatives did not appear dressed like beautiful and submissive women, and Cyzicus' delegates were not dressed like prostitutes. This was just Eupolis' way of describing, perhaps, the Athenians' colonialist conceptions of their allies' status. Conversely, during the pre-play ceremony the

88 Text and translation of Olson (2016). We find this kind of structure (i.e. two characters commenting upon the entrance of the chorus members) also in *Ar. Av.* 263–309.

89 For the individual character of chorus' members in Old Comedy, see Wilson, A. (1977).

90 For the value of the gendered chorus in Eupolis' *Cities*, see Rosen (1997) = Ralph M. Rosen, 'The Gendered Polis in Eupolis' *Cities*', in Gregory W. Dobrov (ed.), *The City as Comedy. Society and Representation in Athenian Drama*, Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 149–176. For a specific analysis of Cyzicus (both in Eupolis *Cities* and Aristophanes' *Peace*) and its feminised character on stage, see Ceccarelli, S. (2018).

91 Given its strength, Chios used to send ships and crews to Athens in place of the tribute quota.

herald might have announced – just as the two characters of Eupolis’ *Cities* – the name of each city (perhaps with a short introduction about the country, or an epithet) and the amount of money brought into the theatre by them. This had to be a pompous scene, worthy of – if we move onto tragic ground – the great entrances of Agamemnon while bringing his prize, Cassandra,⁹² to the stage (Aesch. *Ag.* 950–951: ἐσκόμιξε), or Lichas entering the stage carrying (Soph. *Trach.* 400: ἄγων) Heracles’ women prisoners from Oechalia (Soph. *Trach.* 225–228), or even Andromache who, as a δορὸς γέρας, arrives on stage in chains with her son, Menelaos, and his entourage (Eur. *Andr.* 559–560: ἄγουσι μ’).

In addition to these tragic entrances, Pascale Brillet-Dubois, in analysing Euripides’ *Trojan Women*, suggests that Andromache’s ‘entrée en scène du chariot plein d’objets précieux pouvait rappeler au public athénien et à ses hôtes étrangers l’exposition du tribut des alliés, qui avait lieu lors des Grandes Dionysies avant le concours tragique’:⁹³ – Ἐκάβη, λεύσσεις τήνδ’ Ἀνδρομάχην / ξενικοῖς ἐπ’ ὄχοις πορθμευομένην; / παρὰ δ’ εἰρεσίᾳ μαστῶν ἔπεται / φίλος Ἀστυάναξ, Ἕκτορος ἱνίς. / ποῖ ποτ’ ἀπήνης⁹⁴ νώτοισι φέρη, / δύστηνε γύναι, / πάρεδρος χαλκείος Ἕκτορος ὅπλοις / σκύλοις τε Φρυγῶν δοριθηράτοις, / οἷσιν Ἀχιλλέως παῖς Φθιώτας / στέψει ναοὺς ἀπὸ Τροίας; (Eur. *Tr.* 568–576: ‘Hecuba, do you see Andromache here carried on an enemy wagon? Next to her heaving breast is her beloved Astyanax, Hector’s son. Where are you being taken on the seat of a wagon, poor woman, sitting next to the bronze armor of Hector and the spear-captured spoils of the Phrygians, with which Achilles’ son will deck the temples of Phthia from Troy’s store?’). Hence, Andromache and Astyanax’s entrance was not only a dramatic episode, but also an ideological reversal of the pre-play ceremony: ‘si tel était le cas, le poète chercherait alors à associer le butin des vainqueurs grecs au tribut, symbole de la puissance athénienne. En superposant le spectacle des dépouilles troyennes à celui de la contribution des alliés, il pourrait suggérer que la différence entre empire et conquête est mince, qu’il n’y a qu’un pas de la direction légitime de l’alliance à l’asservissement des

⁹² Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 954–955, where Agamemnon describes Cassandra as a ‘gift from the army’. See Medda (2017) 88. However, Taplin (1977) 305 argues that ‘if Aeschylus had meant that there should be a significantly extravagant show of Agamemnon’s booty,’ – just like Neoptolemus’ booty in Eur. *Tr.* 568 ff. – ‘then there would surely be some indication of it in the words. The entry is triumphal and certainly not mean; but there is no sign of a conspicuous show of wealth’.

⁹³ Brillet-Dubois (2010) 36–37.

⁹⁴ Cf. also Aesch. *Ag.* 1039 and 1070, where Cassandra gets off (ἐκβαίνειν) the chariot. Cf. also Eur. *IA* 145–148; 599–600; 610–611; 613; 616, where Iphigenia, Clytemnestra and Orestes arrive on stage on a chariot with Iphigeneia’s dowry (φερνάς).

alliés'.⁹⁵ Andromache and Astyanax are indeed carried on stage by the Achaeans like a tribute/prize of war on a chariot (Eur. *Tr.* 614: ἀγόμεθα λεία σὺν τέκνῳ· [. . .]) [‘I am carried away as booty with my son’]:⁹⁶ could the allies’ tributes have been carried into the *orchestra* on chariots as well? Brillet-Dubois thinks that this cannot be excluded. Such an argument is attractive, but a large procession of hundreds of people carrying money on multiple chariots (which, consequently, would have needed charioteers too) might have been complicated in terms of staging and space. Andromache’s chariot in Euripides’ *Trojan Women* was coherent with the plot, time and context of the play, and the fact that that scene might refer to the existing display of tributes does not necessarily imply that every facet of the scene was included also in the real practice. Moreover, the silence of Aristophanes and Isocrates on the presence of chariot(s) full of tributes is telling: why should their (disapproving) descriptions have omitted such an important detail, which would have made the ceremony even more monumental, opulent, pompous, and – because of this – open to critique?

Whether on wagons or not, it seems that the display of the tributes needed a heterogeneous parade of performers: heralds, perhaps archons, delegates, soldiers or servants. To be sure, it was more spectacular than the proclamations of honours, and less solemn than the libations to Dionysos. The display of the tributes undoubtedly had an imperialistic grandeur, but such a varied parade conferred an exquisite theatrical value on the ceremony, which could not have been better staged anywhere than the theatre of Dionysos.

The War-Orphans’ Parade

We come to the final stages of our investigation by again relying on the passage of Isocrates quoted above, as it bears witness to the fourth pre-play ceremony celebrated during the Dionysia: the war-orphans parade,⁹⁷ which consisted of

⁹⁵ Brillet-Dubois (2010) 37.

⁹⁶ Cf. also Eur. *Tr.* 577.

⁹⁷ State responsibility for the war-orphans is attested by Thuc. 2.46.1 and Diog. Laert. 1.55, who attributes it to Solon. However, Diogenes is contradicted by Plut. *Sol.* 31.2–5 who says that Peisistratus, on the one hand, preserved much of Solon’s law but, on the other hand, promulgated other laws such as that one which gave support to the war wounded with public expenses. By contrast, Heraclid. Pont. fr. 149 Wehrli (cited by Plutarch in the same passage) argued that it was a law of Solon, and that Peisistratus was only imitating him. The literary evidence for the parade consists of three orators: *P.Hib* i 14a-b (= Lysias, *Against Theozotides*); Isoc. 8.82; Aeschin. 3.154. Cf. also *SEG* 28.46 (the so-called ‘Theozotides’ decree’, on which see

another large procession. Ronald Stroud has described the ceremony as follows: ‘on coming of age the orphans were supplied with a suit of armor by the state and presented to the assembled Athenians and their allies at the Dionysia in a grand ceremony in the *orchestra*. The herald read a proclamation calling out each young man’s name and patronymic and then the orphans were sent away each to his own home’.⁹⁸ However, Isocrates is not the only available source: this time, it is Aeschines who provides the most detailed description of the parade:

Τίς γάρ οὐκ ἂν ἀλγίσειεν ἄνθρωπος Ἑλλήν καὶ παιδευθεὶς ἐλευθερίως ἀναμνησθεὶς ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ ἐκεῖνό γε, εἰ μὴδὲν ἕτερον, ὅτι ταύτῃ ποτὲ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ μελλόντων ὥσπερ νυνὶ τῶν τραγῳδῶν γίγνεσθαι, ὅτ’ εὐνομεῖτο μᾶλλον ἢ πόλις καὶ βελτίοσι προστάταις ἐχρήτο, προελθὼν ὁ κήρυξ καὶ παραστησάμενος τοὺς ὀρφανούς, ὧν οἱ πατέρες ἦσαν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τετελευτηκότες, νεανίσκους πανοπλία κεκοσμημένους, ἐκήρυττε τὸ κάλλιστον κήρυγμα καὶ προτρεπτικώτατον πρὸς ἀρετὴν, ὅτι τούσδε τοὺς νεανίσκους, ὧν οἱ πατέρες ἐτελεύτησαν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ γενόμενοι, μέχρι μὲν ἡβῆς ὁ δῆμος ἔτρεφε, νυνὶ δὲ καθοπλίσας τῇδε τῇ πανοπλίᾳ, ἀφίησιν ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ τρέπεσθαι ἐπὶ τὰ ἑαυτῶν, καὶ καλεῖ εἰς προεδρίαν. Τότε μὲν ταῦτ’ ἐκήρυττεν, ἀλλ’ οὐ νῦν, [. . .].⁹⁹

What Greek with a free man’s education would not feel pain to recall this, if nothing else, that once on this day, when as now the tragedies were about to take place, when the city was better governed and had better champions, the herald would have come forward and, with the orphans whose fathers had died in war beside him, young men decked out in full armor, would make a proclamation, one that brought most honor and was most calculated to inspire courage, that these young men, whose fathers had died in war displaying their valor, were reared to adulthood by the people, who, having equipped them with this hoplite armor, now send them off to their own affairs with their blessing and invite them to a seat of honor. This was the proclamation in those days, but not now, [. . .].⁹⁹

From this passage, we gain some details: in the late fourth century BC the ceremony was already considered old-fashioned and was no longer celebrated; the orphans were already in full armour, and they were not gifted any additional armour during the celebration; there was no drilling in the theatre and no battle

Stroud [1971]; Calabi Limentani [1975]; Matthaiou [2011]; Blok [2015], and Osborne/Rhodes [2017] 464–471). But cf. Arist. *Pol.* 2.1268a6–11, where it appears – though with some doubts from Aristotle himself – that Hippodamus of Miletus, in the second quarter of the fifth century BC *ca.*, was (or claimed to be) the *protos eures* of the support for war-orphans. For a complete overview of civic assistance towards the war-orphans in Thasos and Athens, see now Proietti/Giannotti (2021).

⁹⁸ Stroud (1971) 288–289.

⁹⁹ Translation of Carey (2000).

march,¹⁰⁰ but rather the young men were given an honorary seat in the audience. At a first glance, it is difficult to understand the real political value of the war-orphans' parade. It seems that the ceremony primarily aimed at celebrating the Athenian war dead and their orphan sons: the Dionysia's fame was clear among Greeks and it provided – as it is evident at this point – the best stage to celebrate¹⁰¹ the orphans publicly. Thinking about audience reaction, I believe that the 'external message' (the one addressed to the foreigners among the audience) consisted of a display of strong young Athenian boys as a warning that Athens would always have new soldiers to protect its empire, whereas the 'internal message' (the one addressed to the domestic audience) reassured Athenian citizens that the city would have taken care of its young orphan citizens- and soldiers-to-be. It is clear, at any rate, that Aeschines (in contrast to Isocrates) fondly recalls that civic practice along with the glorious days of Athens.

Also, another important (and slightly earlier) testimony comes from a fragmentary oration of Lysias, *Against Theozotides*. It is from fr. 129 Carey (col. i, ll. 23–47) that we learn the words spoken by the herald: he called the war-orphans by their patronymics and said a) the name of their fathers, and b) that the state would feed them until adulthood. This time we collect a decent amount of information about the movements and announcements in the *orchestra* from our non-dramatic evidence. If we combine together Isocrates', Aeschines', and Lysias' testimonies, we come up with a precise picture of the parade in action. And Athenian tragedy – especially Euripidean tragedy (such as *Heracles*, *Children of Heracles* and *Suppliant Women*, which are purposefully full of deictics which referred to real war-orphans in the *orchestra*) – comes to 'complete' our partial view with its explicit dramatising of the war-orphans' parade.¹⁰² After all, as Gregory Sifakis noted, 'all children in tragedy are in a state of great misfortune, which has struck their parents and thus involves them directly':¹⁰³ this was the same situation experienced by the real war-orphans who had lost their fathers and, consequently, a social and financial basis upon which to rely. More than this: each children's parade in tragedy is related to the loss of the fathers. Consequently, the children's parade that spectators watched

100 A proper battle march was performed during the fourth-century BC ephebes' parade. Although Goldhill talks about war-orphans and ephebes indiscriminately, Dillery (2002) has shown how those two groups were different, and that two ceremonies existed, one for the ephebes and another for the war-orphans.

101 But Dillery (2002) 467, considering Isocrates' passage (8.82–83), argues that 'the emphasis in this passage is very much on the Athenians making ill-advised demonstrations to others, not on the orphans demonstrating anything of their own military prowess'.

102 We find a comic allusion to the war-orphans' parade also in Ar. Av. 1360–1361, when Peisetaerus tells the young 'father beater' that he will fit him to 'with wings like an orphan bird'.

103 Sifakis (1979) 68.

during tragic performances was exactly the same parade they had witnessed a few hours before. In this way, Euripides is of great help because his tragedy is the only one with children as speaking characters, which gives them a preeminent role within the play.

If, on the one hand, Aeschines says that the war-orphans presented themselves in the theatre in full armour, on the other hand Euripides' *Children of Heracles* can give us an idea about what such a ὁπλίτης κόσμος was made of.¹⁰⁴ To be sure, dressing scenes are common in Greek literature and the Euripidean passage includes nothing which we could not surmise, but at least there we have a tragic source confirming our expectations. For in Eur. *Heracl.* 698–699, Iolaos (who is about to become younger) asks the servant to take the suit of armour within the temple, and in the dressing scene¹⁰⁵ we read that that complete armour (720: παντευχίαν) was heavy (723: βάρος), and included a spear (726–728: ὀξύην) and a shield¹⁰⁶ (738: ἀσπίδος). The armour included a helmet, but we do not know whether the war-orphans wore it, or if they just carried it in their hands so that the audience could recognize their faces when the herald called their names. There is the possibility that they entered the theatre with crowns on their heads as in the parade of Heracles' sons in Eur. *HF* 525–526 (κρᾶτας ἐξεστεμμένα). However, this could be related to the funerary context of the scene, given that Amphitryon, Megara and Heracles' sons, thinking that Heracles is dead, dedicate to him a funerary parade while they are waiting to be killed by Lycus. It is interesting to note that this is a wholly reversed war-orphans' parade: Heracles' orphans are not celebrated and helped by the city, but rather are approaching death (329–335); they do not enter the stage in full armour, but rather are described by the Chorus as entering in funerary clothes (442–443: ἀλλ' ἐσορῶ γὰρ τοῦσδε φθιμένων / ἔνδυτ' ἔχοντας ['but look, I see the children here with the finery of the dead upon them]); they are not waiting to be called by a herald, but are waiting to be called by a priest who will slit their throats' (451–453).

At any rate, in *Heracles*, *Children of Heracles* and *Suppliant Women*, the orphans enter onto the stage in parade, always accompanied by a pair of figures: in Eur. *HF* 454–455 Heracles' sons are guided by Megara and Amphitryon (ὦ τέκν', ἀγόμεθα ζευγος οὐ καλὸν νεκρῶν, / ὁμοῦ γέροντες καὶ νέοι καὶ μητέρες ['children, we are led away as an inglorious yoked team of corpses, old men and children and mothers all together!']); in Eur. *Heracl.* 39 Heracles' sons and daughters are guided by Iolaos and Alcmene (δουῖν γέροντοιν δὲ στρατηγεῖται

¹⁰⁴ See Echeverría (2012) for a useful overview of the figure of the Greek hoplite and its sources.

¹⁰⁵ See Allan (2001) 183–189.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. also Ar. *Thesm.* 19.

φυγή ['our flight is being marshalled by a pair of grayheads']); in Eur. *Supp.* 1114 the Argive orphans enter on stage along with Theseus and Adrastus. Such pairs of characters could stand for the *paidagogos*¹⁰⁷ and *kosmetes* who might have led the war-orphans' parade in the theatre. The latter play provides a further example of 'ideological reversal'¹⁰⁸ as the war-orphans, instead of a suit of armour for the future, are given their fathers' ashes in urns to carry on stage (Eur. *Supp.* 1114–1115: τάδε δὲ παίδων ἤδη φθιμένων / ὅστ' ἄ φέρεται. [. . .]) ['they are bringing the bones of our dead children!'],¹⁰⁹ as a token of the past: for, in this fictional parade, the οἶκος is more important than the πόλις.¹¹⁰ Eur. *Supp.* 1165–1182 is particularly interesting because, close to the end of the play, it seems that the Argive orphans' parade has stopped in the centre of the *orchestra*. Theseus explicitly points to the orphans with a deictic¹¹¹ which might have referred to the real war-orphans who were watching the play. James Morwood noticed this feature and stated: 'in a remarkable coup de théâtre, these orphans in the front seats now find themselves represented on stage. This is not only an arresting instance of a civic ceremony directly impinging on a play which it preceded [. . .]; it also adds a powerful tragic charge, especially to the lines where the sons in the play wonder whether they will ever take up their shields to repay their father's murder (1143–1144; 1150), for the orphans in the front seats are dressed in full armour'. He added that 'even if, as of course may well have been the case, the orphans left the theatre at some stage of the festival or took off their armour, the point still stands, since the audience's recollection of the armed boys appearing in the theatre and being led to the front seats in this patriotic ceremony will remain vividly alive'.¹¹² Thus, the king of Athens, by continuously using the second plural, is presenting both to the fictional¹¹³ and to

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Eur. *Med.* 46–47.

¹⁰⁸ See Storey (2008) 80: 'young men in uniform can be a source of pride and provide an upswing of feeling to the play, but some spectators will see only the futility of yet more destruction, another instance of the double-edged theme that operates throughout this drama. The young men honoured in the theatre are now warriors, while the boys in the play have yet to grow up'.

¹⁰⁹ It is not clear whether the orphans had armour and weapons. At 1142–1144 and 1149–1151 the orphans say that they are going to avenge their fathers with their weapons: this might be a reference to the weapons they were carrying on stage.

¹¹⁰ See Rehm (1992) 129.

¹¹¹ Throughout the play the Argive orphans are often indicated via deictics: cf. Eur. *Heracl.* 168; 205; 213; 266; 307; 309; 427; 439; 467; 574–575; 581.

¹¹² Morwood (2007) 231.

¹¹³ As Collard (1975) 408 points out, 'Th. now for the first time addresses Adr. and Cho. together as representatives of their whole city, demanding not personal but political recognition

the real audience the sons of men who died during war, and he is giving the ashes of those war-dead to their sons. The Argive orphans, in return for such a gift, must remember Athens' beneficent deed, repay it in gratitude, and honour the Athenian city. The Athenian war-orphans among the audience would have recognised that ritual performance. It is also likely that the herald would also have pronounced a speech similar to that of Theseus: perhaps he called the orphans, introduced them, stated what the city was giving them, and invited them to 'honour this country' and pass the memory of that day to their future sons. An invocation to Zeus (or to the gods in general)¹¹⁴ might have taken place and closed the speech.

Therefore, the image of the war-orphans' parade one gleans from these sources is quite detailed. The war-orphans came to the *orchestra* from the *eisodoi*. It is unlikely that they were already in their seats wearing the armour, ready to be called. Rather, they entered in full battle dress, i.e., perhaps with an helmet and surely a spear, a shield, and armour: this was the ὀπλίτης κόσμος that Euripides briefly describes in *Children of Heracles*. It is unlikely that the war-orphans (we do not know their number) took to the stage alone. I would rely here on Euripides' scenes which depict one or two figures accompanying them: a pedagogue and/or a trainer who might have led the parade toward the centre of the *orchestra*. In Eur. *Heracl.* 43–44 we are told that only male war-orphans can stay on stage near the altar:¹¹⁵ it is very likely that this was also the case during the real war-orphans' parade, as armour was given only to boys. Moreover, from the passages of Isocrates and Aeschines, nothing is said about female war-orphans. Rather, it is only in a mid-fourth-century BC Thasian decree (included in *SEG* 57.820) that we find mention of female war-orphans.¹¹⁶ During the parade in Euripides' *Heracles*, we have seen that the war-orphans entered with crowned heads: since crowns were often worn during celebrations, it is likely that the real war-orphans had crowns or that the herald crowned their heads after having stated their names and patronymics and having praised the deeds of their fathers. After this military scene (which should have moved

of his service to Argos. In reminding them, his description shades it from a humanitarian into a political undertaking, 1168 ἐγὼ . . . καὶ πόλις'.

114 See Collard (1975) 409 for parallels.

115 As Allan (2001) 136 rightly notes, 'here, as often in tragedy, a fifth-century convention (governing the behaviour of young women) is retrojected into the world of heroic myth (cf. 474–477; *Phoen.* 93–95; 1275–1276; *Or.* 108; for the idea applied to married women, cf. *Andr.* 876–878; *El.* 343–344; *IA* 825–834)'.

116 See Pouilloux (1954), Fournier/Hamon (2007). Thasos' testimony is more detailed even as for male war-orphans as it clearly shows that they were given greaves, armour, dagger, helmet, shield and spear (whose value had to be no less than three minas).

all spectators' feelings and enflamed Athenian civic pride), the war-orphans were guided either by the herald or by the trainer/pedagogue to honorary seats among the audience. Therefore, the war-orphans took their seats, the herald (and whoever was in the *orchestra*) left the stage through one of the *eisodoi* (or remained to watch the plays), and the dramatic festival was ready to begin – or rather, to continue.

Since after this 'scene' the performers became spectators – perhaps the most important spectators, if one follows John Winkler's 'ephebic interpretation' of Athenian tragedy¹¹⁷ – and emotions reached their peak, the war-orphans' parade is the best candidate to be the last pre-play ceremony of the Athenian Great Dionysia. This allows us to sketch a thematic coherence, and in so doing to approach our conclusion: the opening and propitiatory ceremony in Dionysos' honour represented 'archaic' religion in action; the proclamation of honours and the display of tributes celebrated the present and current power of Athens; lastly, the war-orphans' parade celebrated the future of the *polis*, a future that would have been prosperous thanks to the nascent valorous soldiers of Athens. The audience of the Dionysia thus bore witness to a great 'civic' tetralogy performed by members of the *polis*, set in the Athenian *polis*, watched by the Athenian *polis*, and sponsored by the Athenian *polis*. But, after all, was not this equally the case for drama?

Conclusions: The Theatre of the πόλις

Looking back through the pages of my notebook, I returned to a sentence that Professor Taplin pronounced during his talk 'How distinctly framed were the plays in the Greek θέατρον?' which he delivered in Basel: 'the soil of the *orchestra* becomes the soil of somewhere else'. That is precisely what happened, for example, when Orestes faced the Erinyes along with Apollo and Athena, or when Oedipus blinded himself, or even more when Medea appeared on a golden chariot after having killed her sons. The playwrights had to play with their spectators' minds, because not everything could be staged and performed: the most incredible the most incredible facts and actions were projected onto another time, place and dimension, so to speak. Conversely, the pre-play ceremonies of the Great Dionysia had nothing supernatural to cast them into unreal spaces: they were performed in the contemporary city of Athens by real civic representatives, specifically on that occasion. When the performers (active or passive)

117 See Winkler (1985 = 1990).

of the ceremonies entered and exited the *orchestra* from the *eisodoi*, they arrived from Athens and left for Athens: everything and everyone was in and about the city of Athens. Conversely, in Athenian drama, the *eisodoi* and the doors of the *skene*-building served to connect different cities or places. This is not to say that there was a sort of reality vs. fantasy, inasmuch as Greeks believed that their myths had something real and historical. Yet it is undeniable that the pre-play ceremonies were something more concrete and tangible than mythical facts.

Drama and the pre-play ceremonies – though representing opposing events – shared the *orchestra* in common, and on that soil they were both performed, as we have seen, following similar patterns. We can agree that the dramatic ‘what’, ‘when’, and ‘where’ were different from the ceremonial ‘what’, ‘when’, and ‘where’, and that aestheticism was what most differentiated drama and pre-play ceremonies: to the former aestheticism was an end, to the latter it was a means. But it remains the fact that the aesthetic dimension was essential to both. Yet it was above all the ‘how’ that equated the performances: we have seen that they both had processions, performers, gestures, objects, movements, speeches, silences, exits and entrances. The soil of the *orchestra* became the soil of performance in general, where everything could be aesthetically staged and – because of the venue – everything acquired a theatrical dimension. In light of this, the spectators, bearing witness to the space of performance *par excellence*, did expect performances. Whether dramatic or civic or religious, they were all nevertheless performances at heart, with performers and performative rules.

What would spectators and playwrights have thought about the performance of the pre-play ceremonies? While we cannot reproduce those ancients’ thoughts, the data available, though poor, are eloquent enough to demonstrate that there must have been a reason why Athenian drama re-shaped and re-staged the pre-play ceremonies on stage. Playwrights might have recognised the suitability of the pre-play ceremonies to theatrical rules: masked actors, music and dances were added, but the core of the ceremonies remains untouched; We could say that the *signified* (that is, the value of the pre-play ceremonies) changed as it was shifted into a theatrical dimension with theatrical aims and meanings, but the *signifier* (that is, the performance of the ceremonies) did not change at all. Here, spectators might have played an important role as their visual memory should have recalled the pre-play ceremonies and recognised them while being theatrically evoked at that precise moment. Theatre necessarily influenced everything that was performed within its space, and, consequently, everything became part of a single whole. As Od-done Longo – to whom I indirectly owe the title of these modest conclusions – pointed out, the pre-play rituals ‘constituted the immediate framework of the

plays', and, just like 'the community of the plays' *spectators* [. . .] was not distinct from the community of *citizens*',¹¹⁸ we might posit that the community of the pre-play ceremonies' performers was not wholly distinct, in that specific moment, from the community of actors. It goes without saying that the pre-play ceremonies' performers had no masks, were (mostly) magistrates and not *hypokritai*, and had one role (on stage) rather than several. However, it was *performance* in the *theatre* which held those two groups together.

With this, the city – aware of the visibility the theatre would have given to its ceremonies – played its part and provided its audience with a rich programme. After taking their seats, and before watching the dramatic performances, Athenian and non-Athenian spectators of the Great Dionysia knew that they were in for four 'opening acts'. As far as we know, dramatic performances were staged 'immediately' after the pre-play ceremonies and that there was no long pause between the two kinds of performances. Therefore, there was indeed a theatrical continuum. If we had to judge the ceremonies from a theatrical point of view, we might say that they were reminiscent of Aeschylean scenes, with one man always present on stage (most of time, the herald) and a majestic use of exits and entrances. In much the same way, the solemnity of the ceremonies reminds us of both Aeschylean and Sophoclean passages, deep and silent. On the other hand, the variety of characters who gradually came into the *orchestra*, and the objects which were (and were brought) in the *orchestra*, mirror Euripidean and Aristophanic festive and colourful scenes. However, it was not Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides or Aristophanes who were the authors of such performances. This time, the playwright was the *polis*, which, by setting its officers as unmasked actors on its own soil of performance, launched the Great Dionysia by staging its own ritual of civic magnificence in theatrical manner: one further and striking proof of Athenian *θεατρομανία*.

118 Longo (1990) 16.