



N. C. HOURMOUZIADES

1930–2013

ON OCTOBER 19, 2013, N(icolaos) C. Hourmouziades (N. X. Χουρμουζιάδης),¹ Emeritus Professor of Ancient Greek Literature in the University of Thessaloniki (1971–1988), passed away in Thessaloniki, his beloved home city, at the age of 83. He was an eminent Classical scholar, a remarkable theatre producer as well as translator of Euripides and several modern dramatists, and a charismatic teacher in both the literal sense of the word and in the ancient technical sense of *didaskalos* (stage director). In addition to Thessaloniki, he also taught for a limited period of time in the Department of Philology, University of Crete, and for several years after 1988 in theatre arts departments in both the universities of Athens and of Thessaloniki. He served as Chairman of the Board of the National Theatre of Northern Greece from 1974 to 1977, and again, as Chairman or Artistic Director, from 1982 to 1987. He was also a ‘resident’ producer with the *Techné* Experimental Stage of Thessaloniki from roughly 1980 to 2010.

NCH’s two careers, so to say, the academic and the artistic, began to overlap from the mid-nineteen seventies and continued to do so until 1988

1. Chourmouziades according to library catalogues in the U.S. and U.K., Chourmouziadis or Churmuziadis in some German libraries.

when, after his retirement from Philology/Thessaloniki, he devoted himself completely to the theatre. But his love for theatre went a long way back. As a young secondary-school teacher at Anatolia College in Thessaloniki (1955–1965), he was in charge of the Drama Club of the school, and got involved in the study and production of several plays from the international repertory. And when he decided to pursue post-graduate studies abroad, he knew precisely what he wanted to do — to study Classical drama and its theatre production — and where to look for it.

Since the early 1950's T.B.L. Webster, the great specialist in Greek drama at University College London, had initiated a new era in the systematic study of theatre antiquities in connection with dramatic texts.² NCH chose to study at U.C.L. for obvious reasons, and Webster welcomed him and suggested that he examine analytically the works of Euripides as plays created to be performed. NCH immersed himself in this project, which was close to his heart, and in the shortest possible span of two academic years (1961–63) came up with a ground-breaking Ph.D. thesis, which was soon published under the title *Production and Imagination in Euripides. Form and Function of the Scenic Space* (Athens, 1965). With reference to the archaeological evidence for the Theatre of Dionysos at the time of Pericles, NCH examined the “internal evidence” provided by Euripides’ plays, and discussed in detail all parts and architectural features of the scenic space and its reputed stage machinery, in order to determine how the theatre had been used by the playwright. The end result of this careful examination was tantamount to a codification of the conventions of tragic theatre, at least so far as Euripides as a dramatist–producer was concerned. Book reviews followed one another and, despite some occasional quibbles, were consistently applauding.³ Even more remarkable is the fact that forty or fifty years later the book continues to be mentioned as reference work.⁴ This is due, I think, to the fact that NCH

2. His *Greek Theatre Production* was published in 1956, and *Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play* in 1962.

3. See, for instance, S.A. Barlow (*JHS* 86, 1966, 182): “This book is full of interest for students of Greek drama both in the questions it raises and in the clear way in which the evidence is set out and discussed.”; J.A. Davison (*Ant. Class.* 35.1, 1966, 268): “It may be said at once that the results of Dr. Hourmouziadès’s work (...) are a valuable contribution to our understanding of the problems of Greek theatrical production in the second half of the fifth century B.C., and are in every way worthy of their distinguished origins.”; A.D. Fitton Brown (*CR* ns 16.2, 1966, 232–33): “His facts and arguments should be the basis of any future study of Euripidean production. (...) there is much to be learnt from this conscientious and thoughtful book.”

4. See Malcolm Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (Stanford UP, 1987) 65–74, 99, 178; Donald J. Mastrorarde, “Actors on High: The Skene Roof, the Crane, and the Gods

approached his objective as an interpreter of dramatic texts and, in addition, as a budding theatre artist interested in the use of the original ancient theatre and its functional parts.⁵

The same method (σκηνική ἐρμηνεία or “theatrical interpretation,” as he called it) he used time and again in a variety of publications, such as “Μορφές σιωπῆς καὶ προβλήματα λόγου”, *Ἑλληνικά* 21 (1968), or “Sophocles’ *Teireus*”, in J.H. Betts – J.T. Hooker – J.R. Green (eds.), *Studies in Honour of T.B.L. Webster* (v. 1, Bristol, 1986), and above all in his major work on satyr play, *Σατυρικά* (Athens, 1974, repr. 1984).

The *Satyrika* was published in Greek and thus did not attract many reviewers. To be sure, the book did not pass unnoticed,⁶ but the distinguished specialist in Euripides, Herman Van Looy, begins his laudatory review with a statement: “Cette étude importante sur le drame satyrique est divisée en trois chapitres très étendus qui correspondent aux trois phases de l’évolution pendant le v^e siècle. La première phase voit la création et le premier développement du drame satyrique en tant qu’œuvre littéraire et la constitution du mythe qui lui est propre. L’importance croissante du chœur caractérise la seconde phase, tandis que la troisième se distingue par une certaine formalisation et par l’importance qu’y acquiert le héros satyrique, souvent d’origine non-satyrique”; and concludes with a wish: “Je terminerai par un vœu: il faut espérer que l’auteur fasse paraître cette étude intéressante également dans une autre langue pour lui assurer la notoriété qu’elle mérite.”⁷ Van Looy’s wish was not fulfilled, but the interested reader may get an idea of the book’s scope

in Attic Drama,” *Class. Ant.* 9.2 (1990) 248; Charles Segal, “Golden Armor and Servile Robes,” *AJPh* 111.3 (1990) 307; Pär Sandin, *Aeschylus’ Supplikes* (Lund, 2005), 15, 18; George Sampatakakis, “Gestus or Gesture? Greek Theatre Performance,” in Jan Nelis (ed.), *Receptions of Antiquity* (= Festschrift F. Decreus, Gent, 2011) 104–105; Mary C. Stieber, *Euripides and the Language of Craft*, *Mnemosyne Suppl.* 327 (Leiden 2011) 8–10, 36, 51, 57; Richard Buxton, *Myths and Tragedies in Their Ancient Contexts* (Oxford UP, 2013) 149, 202.

5. In play after play, the internal evidence for the (wooden) stage structure, the *logeion* (taken to be a low platform similar to that depicted in many “phlyax” vases and, of course, in the Attic oinochoe, Athens BΣ518, with Perseus dancing, dated to second half of the fifth cent., see <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/22ADD8D8-10C6-4E4A-865D-0BF-7BE3EA394> and Alan Hughes, *Oxf. Journ. of Arch.* 24, 2006, 413–33), the *ekkyklema*, entrance-announcements, supernatural appearances, and so forth, were examined in depth.
6. See, e.g., Bernd Seidensticker, *Das griechische Satyrspiel* (Darmstadt, 1999) 23, n. 110, and “The Satyr Plays of Sophocles,” in A. Markantonatos (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Sophocles* (Leiden, 2012) 232–33.
7. *L’Antiquité Classique* 45.2 (1976) 662, 664.

from NCH's synopsis ("Recapitulation") of *Satyrika*, appended to this obituary in translation.

The author's opus on satyr play appeared in the year that brought about the fall of the seven-year "dictatorship of colonels," and it was not coincidental that NCH was invited to participate in the first Board of the National Theatre of Northern Greece appointed after the country's return to democracy. Thus his professional involvement in the living theatre, initially as a member of the administration and then as stage director, was launched (see the contribution of N. Papandreou to this issue of *Logeion*).

NCH continued to teach in the Department of Philology for another fourteen years, but his research and publications were gradually reorientated to a wider audience that included theatre artists and students of drama schools. *Εὐριπίδης σατυρικός* (Athens, 1986) consists of three important essays on (a) Euripides' disinclination to compose and include a satyr play in all of his tetralogies, and yet his preference for a characteristic type of plot in which a great hero such as Herakles defeats a savage evildoer and brings about the relief of a happy end; (b) the adaptation for the stage of the Homeric narrative about the Cyclops Polyphemos, originally a folktale that had nothing to do with Satyrs, into a satyr play; and (c) how the story of Alcestis was adapted and accepted by the archon responsible for the City Dionysia as a substitute for a satyr play (Herakles this time has to confront Thanatos himself). The essays have no footnotes but the book is equipped with bibliography and index. This is a good specimen of NCH's publications in the later years of his career, representing a high-level popularization of complex subjects, and addressed to a wider public interested in ancient drama and theatre. Included here are 'Ο χορός στο ἀρχαῖο ἐλληνικὸ δρᾶμα ('The Chorus in Ancient Greek Drama', Athens 2010; original version published in 1998), 'Όροι καὶ μετασχηματισμοὶ στὴν ἀρχαία ἐλληνικὴ τραγωδία ('Conditions and Transformations in Ancient Greek Tragedy', Athens, 2003), and the wide-ranging *Θεατρικὲς διαδρομὲς* ('Theatrical Routes', Athens 2003), a collection of papers on ancient and modern drama. To the same period and category belong NCH's translations of eight plays of Euripides (*Electra*, *Andromache*, *Phoenician Women*, *Alcestis*, *Cyclops*, *Orestes*, *Medea*, *Hecuba*), Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, and plays by other dramatists, as well as his *Ἐρωτικὰ ἐπιγράμματα* (a selection from *Anthologia Graeca* with translations and comments, Athens, 1999).

The synopsis of *Satyrika* follows below (it is an essay which is, in a sense, carried over in the introductory chapter of *Εὐριπίδης Σατυρικός* — see the preceding paragraph).

G. M. SIFAKIS

N. C. HOURMOUZIADES, *Σατυρικά* (Athens, 1974, ²1984)
'Recapitulation' (pp. 165–169)



IN EACH of the three chapters of the present work a different phase of the evolution of satyr play is described: In the first phase, the genre is still forming, mainly by the creation of the satyric myth; in the second phase, the dramatic genre functions effectively thanks to the development of the Chorus of Satyrs; in the third, the genre, in order to carry on, resorts to standardizing the satyric hero. These three phases may correspond to three time periods, which coincide with the beginnings, the middle and the last part of the fifth century B.C. We get, however, the impression that the trail of the genre as it progressed was not ascendant.

The unique fragment of Pratinas, the “father” of satyr play, leads us to a search period in both content and form. In addition to two remarkable features that strangely remind us of Old Comedy (specifically, the presence of two choruses in a contest situation, and direct reference to contemporary matters), we encounter a very lively Chorus of Satyrs that claims, with a characteristic commitment to the orthodox Dionysian tradition, an absolute domination over theatre space.

If this fragment can be regarded as a specimen of Pratinas' effort to bring back to the dramatic contests the spirit of their patron god, in Aeschylus' fragments we discover an invaluable contribution towards the incorporation of the new dramatic genre in a theatrical universe already dominated by tragedy. The creator of the tragic trilogy, now transforms the satyr play into an integral part of his composition: in the fourth play of a theatrical production he forms a suitable medium in order to bring about a sense of relaxation, comic and optimistic, like an antidote to the experience offered by the presentation of the preceding three tragedies. The intended result is sought by the use of familiar means. The basic factor of cohesion between the tragic and the satyric parts of the composition is the myth: the satyr play draws its subject matter from the same cycle as the tragic trilogy, with an obvious preference, in addition, for the early stages of the mythical story. Cohesion often becomes more substantial, because one of the tragic heroes happens to be the central character in the fourth play; also, because themes, dramatic

situations and specific scenes from the preceding tragedies are recast in a light, occasionally comic, style. Naturally, the presence of Satyrs defines, not only the atmosphere, but also the plot of the play. A basic problem of the poet was, not only that he had to contrive an excuse in order to include the Satyrs in the context of a given myth, but also for placing them in a prominent position. This approach sometimes leads up to a clearly creative operation since it results in a form of dramatic plot that uses the mythical tradition only as a starting-point. Because the Satyrs are poor in mythology of their own — although they have a habitual scenic behaviour —, when they become dramatic persons the poet has to direct his interest at the little known details of traditional myth, and invent deviations and enlargements which multiply the possibilities of taking advantage of the satyric crowd. However, the possibilities are not limitless, since the nature of Satyrs allows only a fairly restricted kind of behaviour, which determines the choice of subjects. Thus, an early preference, e.g., for sexual stories and the use of *terateia* (marvel tales) has been observed. Yet, Aeschylus singled out from the nature of Satyrs the comic element in particular, and thus poses a problem of integrating serious persons from the trilogy with Satyrs. The result is not assimilation but coexistence: the tragic heroes are not integrated into the satyr play; as carriers of elements of the mythical tradition they keep their independence, and occasionally this lack of association or connection becomes a source of comic objectives. Quite early, though, make their appearance certain “satyric” persons besides Satyrs, one of the earliest being Silenus. Together with myth and its characters, satyr play also borrows from the realm of tragedy some elements of form. With regard to structure, the two genres can hardly be distinguished, although in the younger of the two a brevity of extent, a characteristic simplicity in the development of plot, and a fluidity of limits between the dialogic and the lyric parts are noted, as a result of the drastic presence of the Chorus.

The remains of Sophocles’ satyr plays allow us to see his adept use of the satyric Chorus in the context of a suitable mythical framework. A number of *topoi* have now been established and are repeated in regard to both content and form. Among the former, stands out the theme of slavery of the Satyrs who serve, away from their god, a cruel master and look forward to the time of their deliverance. This condition not only imparts a dramatic interest to the followers of Dionysos, but also determines a kind of behaviour, which already embraces the basic characteristics of the comic slave. Still, this is not the only or the commonest feature of the Chorus. Satyrs often appear in the scenic area to carry out a very specific activity — e.g., to perform a manual chore — intrinsic to a basic theme of the myth. As a rule, their entrance is

motivated rather than random, and their participation in the action is forceful and varied. The Chorus participates in lengthy dialogic parts, not only through its leader, but also through individual chorus members, and communicates, by means of movement, the performance of specific actions, even in non-lyric parts of the play which do not presuppose the use of music; and this may occasionally take place in instances of dramatic discourse that do not fully cover the Chorus's involvement. Mimic movement, coinciding with "mute" points in a play, as well as dancing, which sometimes has a "programmatic" character, necessitate the division of the Chorus into sections much smaller than the two semi-choruses, often perhaps into individual dancers, and thus sanctions ample use of improvisation. Very often the reactions of the Satyrs are instigated by their contact with an element alien to their experiences: the discovery, for instance, of a new object, which can pass through the phase of a puzzle and reach an aetiological conclusion; or a person's unexpected appearance which intensifies the atmosphere of folktale and provides an element of surprise.

In these cases, the position of Silenus is remarkable as he begins to become obligatory: he always appears as a member of the satyric family — as a matter of fact, he is the father of the Satyrs of the Chorus and their typical and official representative. But while he is dramatically undifferentiated from the members of the satyric group, he performs a very different function from them in terms of stage action. Basically, he is not a "lyrical" person, so to speak, and thus he neither sings nor dances. This differentiation is indicated by a characteristic detachment from the Chorus: Silenus' first appearance takes place before or, in any case, apart from the Satyrs; he is charged with the supervision of various manual-labour tasks that they have to perform; he often comes into conflict with them. In general, he does not seem to belong to the genetic elements of satyr play; he is secondary to the origins of the genre, and his appearance coincides with the addition of the second actor and the shift of weight from the chorus to the dramatic characters.

To this shift, precisely, is due the standardization, up to a point, of the satyric hero who does not originate in the satyric family, but has several of its characteristics. In the lost work of Euripides the favoured character in this "satyrization" process is Herakles, who appears in order to convey the necessary heroic-satyric dimension even to myths unrelated to him. The same hero, who has already had a career in both the older satyr play and in the contemporary comedy, although he belongs to the "good" characters of the play, nevertheless relates, as to his scenic behaviour, to other typical "satyric" persons, specifically various evildoers whom he confronts and eventually defeats. A feature common to all of them — including Cyclops, who represents

the most complete specimen of this character type — is the comical element which comes from the exaggeration in the way they express themselves and their mistaken assessment and reaction to certain given situations. Especially the presence of Herakles is always combined with the theme of a contest in which a misleading relationship between two opponents is initially spotlighted: the “good” hero appears to be under the authority of a much more powerful enemy; thus he identifies with the group of Satyrs, who also experience similar conditions. This relationship is finally overturned by means of a recognition. The crucial moment of this process coincides with a feast (in two stages, initially off-stage and then on stage), where the hero manifests his most characteristic qualities: voraciousness and love of wine. In this framework the critical encounter of the two opponents is shown, and the recognition of the hero and punishment of the evildoer are prepared. Other persons who might hinder this punishment gain the leniency and protection of the hero. Sometimes one of them may be a woman; more often they are the Satyrs themselves or Silenus. Even more remarkable than the coincidence of scenic behaviour between the “good” satyric hero and his “bad” opponents is the identification of the satyric and comic person, which is again observed in the case of Herakles. The hero appears with almost the same characteristics in Old Comedy: he engages in the same gluttonous activities, he is treated identically by the other characters, he becomes the target of similar jests. This lack of a rigid dividing line between two dissimilar dramatic genres, which may go back to very old pre-dramatic origins, is strengthened by the observation that other “satyric” persons, also, have their counterparts in comic types. This overlapping of boundaries which, if it is not intentional, is certainly exploited by Euripides, finally leads to the decline of satyr play, as it does, in a corresponding plane, to the decline of tragedy, as well.

