

The Long Twilight of Ancient Theatre and Drama

Only once in the history of theatre can we observe how it comes to an end. Of course there are cases when it was stopped by force, as English theatre was by the Puritans or – as we shall see – Cretan theatre by the Turks. But in the present case we see an eventual closure of public theatres, along with a dissolution in the forms and functions of the theatre, as well as changes in the institutions that produced it. These artistic and institutional changes were hastened, in turn, by fundamental changes in political administration. Not surprisingly these changes also coincide with significant alterations in the expectations and habits of the spectators. In essence we are witnessing a change in the Greek cultural profile as a whole, with what we might consider a degeneration of aesthetics and values – a degeneration reflecting factors such as a changing worldview and the development of a different form of civic life. The contraction of the theatre's interests from the topical and political to the family sphere and individual happiness, as reflected in comedy's transition from Aristophanes to Menander, is characteristic of a fundamental change in mentality that accompanies the theatre's eventual 'decline and fall'.

Although the hostile attitude of the church in the first centuries AD functioned as a decisive catalyst, the process of dissolution and changing performative genres had already begun long before. So although we may divide the process of disintegration and change into a period before Christ and a period after, in the end it was not Christianity which put an end to ancient theatre. The changes that occurred, the abandonment of the *agon* and *choregia* and the rise of international, cosmopolitan professionals in particular, had already occurred in the pre-Christian period. These initial changes coincide with profound historical and political changes from polis to empire, from democracy to monarchy, and – with regard to performances – from Athens to nearly everywhere.

Given the vast bibliography on the subject it is not the goal of this chapter to recount the whole history of ancient theatre and drama, nor

to provide every piece of evidence which might serve as the basis for the present scenario. Its function is simply to highlight some important aspects of the process which resulted in significant changes in classical theatre and drama from the Hellenistic period onward, and to provide an introduction to the main genres of performative activity on the stage.¹

The process begins during the late fourth and early third centuries BC: significant events from this period which demonstrate ongoing changes during the Hellenistic period² begin with Athens' abolition of the private *choregia*, the system used for financing amateur performances at the Great Dionysia, at the end of the fourth century.³ Then by 293/1 we have the death of Menander; and with his death New Comedy loses its most prominent representative. Although we have ample evidence for poets and dramatists long after his time (his Roman imitators in particular), Menander would be admired for his moral sentiments and comic characters throughout Late Antiquity.⁴ Meanwhile, not only were provincial theatres built in many cities throughout the Greek world during the fourth century BC, Alexander's successors built theatres in brand-new Greek urban centres throughout his empire. Theatrical festivals were now organized on diverse occasions, and by the late fourth century the Dionysiakoi Technitai, 'Artists' or, better, 'Artisans of Dionysos', professional organizations of actors, musicians, dancers, etc., were created.⁵ Through them a sort of repertory theatre was created, consisting of classic dramas and new productions. But the choruses are restricted or abolished altogether and the theatre's connections with the Dionysus cult, through a combination of Hellenistic syncretism and respect for localized deities, become looser and are no longer exclusive. As a result festivals devoted to other cults take place in the theatre, which no longer hosts dramatic festivals exclusively.

During this period we also see the development of blurred genres, with theatre performances now given on political and historical occasions, for weddings, etc. The dissemination of theatre in the time of Alexander the Great reached as far as Iran and Babylon,⁶ but itinerant ensembles mainly played the classical repertoire (e.g., Euripides).⁷ Apparently, most *demoi* did

¹ For the changes in dramatic production and the expansion, diversity and vitality of the theatre in the fourth century see now Csapo/Goette/Green/Wilson 2014.

² The Hellenistic period is conventionally defined as the time span between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the death of Cleopatra in 30 BC, or even later.

³ Wilson 2000 (318/7), Wilson/Csapo 2009, 2012 (304).

⁴ Nervegna (2011).

⁵ Sifakis 1967: 19 ff., 99–105, 136 ff., but mostly Le Guen 1995, 1997, 2001, 2004, and the studies of Aneziri 2003, 2007, 2009.

⁶ Tarn 1968: 632, Mallwitz 1957.

⁷ Webster 1954.

not have the ability to pay the *chorodidaskalos* for an amateur chorus and for its months-long rehearsals, so we should seriously consider the possibility of the elimination of the *chorika*,⁸ as it was practised in later years. The end of this process of devolution, from more sophisticated forms to more popular or primitive, saw the dissolution of full-length drama into separate scenes played with virtuosity in different genres,⁹ and the increased awareness of the inherent theatricality or even performativity of everyday life.

The Dissolution of the Dionysiac Framework and the Scholarly Tradition of Texts

Culturally speaking the Hellenistic period is one of secularization and religious syncretism; intellectually it is a time of academic research, the systematic collection and cataloguing of data, the creation of lexica and encyclopedias – in other words the creation of a world of scholarly erudition.¹⁰ The dramatic texts of the Attic tragedians, Aristophanes and even Menander were carefully copied, studied, commented, edited, transmitted through the school tradition, and for some time were even recited in theatre performances.¹¹ But educated and intellectual spectators who enjoyed more cultivated forms of entertainment were not the majority in the theatre, and as a result we also see the emergence of new, more popular and less demanding shows. Ancient drama and theatre were on the way to becoming academic traditions practised in reading rooms, a topic for erudite disputes and classes in schools, academies and universities far from the public stage; this involved a context quite distinct from the traditional one that had existed between actors and spectators. It can be found as a literary remnant, as parodies in mime; its mythological topics were now danced in pantomime, and there are also intertextual hints in Seneca's tragedies. Ancient drama becomes part of a common Greek education system, a symbol of the cultural tradition and one of the highlights of the Classical past that could not (or would not) be achieved anymore. The consciousness of *epigonism*, and lamentations for the 'decline and fall' of the genre, are characteristic features of the Hellenistic era and of Byzantium.¹² But

⁸ Blume 1984: 80.

⁹ Gentilini 1979, chap. 1.

¹⁰ A detailed overview by Schneider 1969.

¹¹ Easterling 1997.

¹² Consider for example (Pseudo-) Longinus' discussion in *On the Sublime* 41.1–12. Contrary to some Roman critics, who claimed that the loss of democracy is to blame, he placed the blame squarely on the ages' obsession with wealth and fame (AWW).

thanks to the conservative policy of preserving the Classical past, the outstanding texts of ancient theatre were saved from oblivion.

This academic environment is one part of the now-divided world of drama and theatre in Hellenistic times. The other part has nothing to do with the silence of libraries and the dust of archives, let alone the painstaking procedure of copying, studying and commentary. It takes place instead in the full light of the sun and in front of huge audiences; only this time, it is for pleasure and entertainment.¹³ The religious framework is not abandoned entirely, but this is now professional show business. In contrast to the literary status of Hellenistic drama, which is ‘increasingly marked as a literary product’ like Lycophron’s ‘Alexandria’,¹⁴ stage performances are now of high *niveau*, professionally executed, emphasizing a more realistic style of acting in addition to the traditional declamation of dramatic poetry, singing and dancing of amateur choruses. This change is aesthetically fundamental. Not surprisingly, theatre scholars are far more interested than philologists in this performance industry.¹⁵ As Jane Lightfoot pointed out, the connection with the cult of Dionysus was not lost entirely, as is indicated in the title of the privileged associations of stage performers and their hybrid festivals; it was more superficial, however, and Dionysus now shared billing with many other cults, including ruler cults, in which the monarch used the festival for self-display.¹⁶

There is plenty of epigraphic evidence for the different organizations of Dionysiakoi *technitai*,¹⁷ and the private *choregos* is replaced by the *agonothetes* who now uses public funds to pay for contracts with these associations. Essential for understanding this form of show business is the fact that these professional groups toured around the Greek-speaking world in search of work and negotiated contracts with cities, sponsors and rulers, organizing and performing any sort of festivities requested. These guilds had many privileges and were led by priests of Dionysus; in negotiations over contracts and payment the associations were treated as equal and trustworthy partners.¹⁸ As artists their members had a professional reputation; they had nothing to do with the mime actors. Their degree of artistic

¹³ Webb 2008a.

¹⁴ Fantuzzi/Hunter 2004: 434 (on drama 405–43).

¹⁵ The loss of texts should be considered as significant, mainly for the tragedy. But there is a large body of evidence relating to the *technitai* of Dionysus: inscriptions, *didaskaliai*, *fasti*, as well as correspondence between cities about the festivals (Lightfoot 2002: 209).

¹⁶ Chaniotis 1995, 2003, 2007.

¹⁷ See the relevant inscriptions in the monumental work of Stefanis 1988.

¹⁸ Details in Aneziri 2003, 2007, 2009.

specialization was quite high, and among the names of *technitai* preserved in epigraphic sources, there is not a single woman.¹⁹

Most significant of all was the gradual dissolution of private subsidies,²⁰ as well as the competition of individual poets and amateur choruses – a fact which would have altered the dynamics of the spectators' response. The suspense was no longer which poet or chorus would win the prize, but which guild would prevail in competition. There is ample epigraphic evidence for the rivalry among associations of *technitai*; still, the professionalization of performers does not seem to have affected the continuation of the festivals' religious status; the 'vocabulary of piety and the ritual remain'. Many festivals were established to honour the epiphany of other gods and were called *thysiai* (sacrifices): they featured processions, the singing of hymns, public prayers and ended with sacrifices in the theatre. The city and its surroundings were still considered holy and inviolable during the festivities, and ambassadors likewise had the sacred status of *theoroi* as in classical times. So, on the one hand, the language of piety in these inscriptions should not be interpreted as mere hypocritical devotion or calculated propaganda.²¹ On the other hand, certain festivals were merely a demonstration of royal power in which the name of Dionysus is joined with that of the monarch.²² At any rate the public character and function of the theatre, the self-display of the community as a cohesive group conferring honours on the performers, is preserved; the polis remains the centre of the event, however conceived.

Popular Theatre in the Hellenistic World

By contrast the actors and performers of the most popular forms of theatrical entertainment, the mimes and pantomimes, were usually not members of the Dionysiakoi *technitai*. Because of their humble station, it is difficult to draw clear distinctions in the legal and canonical status of these two genres.²³ Mime in particular is a highly elusive concept, and may in fact be

¹⁹ Designations include singers, instrumentalists, actors, dramatic poets, masque-makers and suppliers of costumes etc. The 'low-brow' performers including mimes, conjurers, tight-rope walkers and dancers are not shown as members of guilds in the Hellenistic period (Lightfoot 2002: 212).

²⁰ As a practical matter, funding for festivals depended on the solvency of the benefactor's estate; and this was by no means guaranteed. Among the agonistic inscriptions found in Aphrodisias in Caria, we have notices from imperial *curatores* (financial officers) dictating when games could and could not be held during the Antonine period, when the Roman Empire's fortunes were at their height (Rouché 1993: 164–5) (AWW).

²¹ Lightfoot 2002: 215.

²² Habicht 1970: 149 f.

²³ See the Greek and Latin texts published by Wiseman 2008.

a sort of heuristic construction of modern scholars, a catch-all term under which is subsumed everything that does not fit into the classical categories of tragedy, comedy and satyr play. It covers a whole spectrum of ancient performances, from solo singing and declamation to tight-rope walking, to short farces played by small companies of actors.²⁴ There may not even be significant differences between Roman and Hellenistic mime;²⁵ Plautus, after all, was heavily influenced by the Hellenistic mime.²⁶

Mime

There are few specific definitions of mime: descriptions from Diomedes (μίμος ἔστι μίμησις βίου τὰ τε συγκεχωρημένα καὶ ἀσυγχώρητα περιέχων – ‘Mime is the imitation of life, including both the excusable and the inexcusable’)²⁷ to modern scholars such as Fantham (‘a narrative entertainment in the media of speech, song and dance’)²⁸ avoid referring to the specific topics performed.²⁹ This is related to the paucity of direct sources: only a few fragments referring to mime from the fifth century BC to AD 691/2 (the Council *in Trullo*) are extant.³⁰ Taken together with indirect information (Athenaeus, the *Satyrical* of Petronius, the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the attacks and condemnations of the Greek Church Fathers, the *Συνηγορία μίμων* of Choricius of Gaza) there is scant evidence for a genre known for its great variety. For this reason the existing bibliography should be read with caution.³¹ The first really consistent work with concrete results was Wiemken’s monograph, in which he underlined the improvisational character of mime performance as a legacy of ancient folk theatre, analyzing mostly Egyptian material from Oxyrhynchus.³² Since then many studies have added new material, and in-depth research has served generally to widen the horizon of mime criticism without completely solving

²⁴ Hunter 2002: 196.

²⁵ See the conclusion of Maxwell 1993: 62; in examining extant epigraphy, ‘I believe this documentary evidence does show that the movement of mimes was generally from east to west and not vice versa, and is thus an important complement to the literary sources, which imply the same thing’. See also Zanni 2010: 454 ff., Edwards 1997.

²⁶ Marshall 2006: 7 ff., Benz 1999.

²⁷ Reich 1903: 263 ff, Koett 1904: 47.

²⁸ Fantham 1989: 154.

²⁹ Insufficient is also Wüst 1932: 1720 and the thematic categories named by Reich 1903: biological (mimesis of life), mythological and christological mime.

³⁰ Maxwell 1993.

³¹ This holds mainly for older literature, but not exclusively.

³² Wiemken 1972 (based on his dissertation in 1957), see also 1979. See also the following subchapter ‘Theatrical Mime (Oxyrhynchos Papyri)’.

the problem of its definition. The title of a chapter in Anne Berland-Bajard's book on aquatic mime in Rome is characteristic: 'Les spectacles aquatiques et les genres théâtraux: la pantomime, le mime, mimes dansés et hydromimes'.³³

If we take as a guide one of our indirect sources, Athenaeus (c. AD 200), there were *homeristai*, private readings and recitations of Homer with singing and acting;³⁴ there were also solo performers such as *hilarōidoi*, *simōidoi*, *magōidoi*, *lysiōidoi*,³⁵ not to mention the explicitly sexual *iōnikologoi* and *kinaidologoi*.³⁶ These specific categories are usually subsumed under the term 'lyrical mime'³⁷ and are distinct from the dialogical prose mime.³⁸ But these solo performances were also acted out on stage, and we get a rough idea of such a performance from the *Fragmentum Grenfellianum* (second century BC), in which a woman (most likely played by a man) complains bitterly that she has been abandoned by her lover.³⁹ Similar texts can be written in dialogue for more than one actor and show the influence of New Comedy.⁴⁰

These fragments, put together by Cunningham with the *Mimiambos* of Herodas, raise the question of whether there was a separate *mimus* drama, with its own date of creation and its own relationship to New Comedy. In a fragment from the peripatetic philosopher and theorist of music Aristoxenos (fourth century BC) he speaks about mimes performing a topic that has even been played before in comedy.⁴¹ On a *lychnia* (lamp) from the end of the third century, three 'mimologoi' are depicted playing the 'hypothesis' of 'Hecyra', the well-known 'mother in law' of New Comedy.⁴² Plutarch also addresses the genres or 'hypotheses' of mime, dividing them into *paignia* (short plays) and *dramata* δυσχορήγητα (long and complex play with many actors, hence 'hard to get a *choregia* for').⁴³ But we can only

³³ Berland-Bajard 2006: 135–48.

³⁴ Athen. *Deipn.* XIV.620a–621f, see Husson 1993.

³⁵ Maas 1927, Hunter 1995. 'Such performers scandalise by their absence of decorum and taste, but the hypothesized relation with "formal drama" sheds important light not only upon mime itself, but also upon elite attitudes to it. Whatever the exact nature of this relationship, such performances are perceived a "perversion" of classical drama' (Hunter 2002: 197).

³⁶ Tsitsiridis 2014.

³⁷ Wüst 1932: 1732–3, Chaniotis 1990: 91, 100, Maxwell 1993: 24–53.

³⁸ Wiemken 1972: 21–8.

³⁹ Hunter 1996: 7–10. For other similar papyrus fragments Cunningham 1987: 36–61.

⁴⁰ Cunningham 1987: no 2 and 3. See Hunter 2002: 197–8.

⁴¹ Aristoxenos frgm. 110 Wehrli (Athen. *Deipn.* XIV 621 C). See Tsitsiridis 2011.

⁴² Maxwell 1993: 215–9 with the older controversial bibliography.

⁴³ *Symposiaka* VII 8.712 A; see also Πότερα τῶν ζῶων φρονιμώτερα 973 A, where he speaks about μίμω πλοκῆν ἔχοντι δραματικὴν καὶ πολυπρόσωπον (a mime having a dramatic content with many persons). Discussion in Tsitsiridis 2011.

guess what these plays may have looked like. The only texts that allow us to get some idea of plot and performance are the *Mimiambes* of Herodas (c. 270–260 BC) and the two plays from Oxyrhynchos papyrus 413 (AD first or second century). But they are very different: Herodas' seven (or eight) short dialogues are, by virtue of their sophisticated language, obviously a literary product; by contrast the later plays, *Χαρίτιον* and *Μοιχεύτρια* are conceived as scripts intended for performance by a troupe of mimes, in front of a large audience in an important city of northern Egypt.

Literary Mime (Herodas, Mimiambes)

The achievements of the Hellenistic period in drama are not insignificant, as the text tradition indicates; but there is a growing gap between literary production and live theatre. Dramatic elements or even dialogical forms of communication can be found in different literary genres, philosophy most notably. The increasing popularity of mime theatre in the last centuries before Christ had also some reflections in poetry, as in the second, fourteenth, and fifteenth *Idylls* of Theocritus⁴⁴ and the *Mimiambes* of Herodas. Scholars had hoped that literary mime might shed some light on theatrical mime; this is why Rusten and Cunningham recently edited the *Characters* of Theophrastus, the *Mimiambes* of Herodas, the fragments of Sophron and the Egypt material on mime together in the same volume.⁴⁵

The question of cross-fertilization of genres is complicated because hybridity, 'blurred genres' (Clifford Geertz) and syncretism are the rule in the world of Hellenistic art. Formal conventions are relaxed, traditions are mixed in various combinations, and this leads to an aesthetic synthesis of previously distinct art forms. The results are complex; there are no longer just one level of aesthetic expression and one dimension of interpretation. Even the *mimiambes*, with their Realism and focus on everyday subjects, are written in a sophisticated language and with delicate humour designed for reception by an educated audience. Meanwhile theatrical mime with its vulgarisms and frank scatological and sexual innuendo is performed professionally and appreciated by lower class families and intellectuals alike. So the intriguing idea that literary mime might have enriched the scarce evidence for improvised theatrical mime was in the end misleading; the influence was most likely the other way around.

⁴⁴ Ławińska-Tyszkowska 1967 with French summary and further bibliography.

⁴⁵ Rusten/Cunningham 2002.

There is no doubt that the texts closest to theatrical performance are the seven (or eight) *Mimiamb*s of Herodas (third century BC, ev. 270–60). Discovered in 1891 and edited and translated numerous times,⁴⁶ the short dialogues have stimulated scholars' imaginations and challenged the interpretative competence of many. In the beginning, they were seen mostly as 'Buchpoesie' written for solo declamation, and some scholars even had difficulty admitting that one actor could imitate the voices and gestures of two or three characters.⁴⁷ It was in 1979 that the Italian scholar Giuseppe Mastromarco presented an argument, convincing at first sight, in favour of a fully staged theatrical performance for these pieces.⁴⁸ But there are also many arguments against this theory, mostly concerning the lack of notes for blocking and stage business – the presence or absence of characters, exits and entrances, stage blocking, whether characters actually communicated with each other – questions which conventionally are determined within the dramatic text.⁴⁹

It is not by chance that these folkloric scenes from the urban lower classes were often examined together with the bucolic *Idylls* of Theocritus (especially the dialogues),⁵⁰ because they share the same characteristics of a pseudo-dramatic structure. All of them contain dialogue, but both space and stage business remain undefined even if they were intended for scenic production.⁵¹ This is quite clear from the very beginning of *Mimiamb* I, where the entrance of the old procuress Gyllis into the house of Metricha and a door opened by the female slave Thrassa cause a series of unsolved problems: who is doing what, what can be heard by whom and who is standing (or sitting) where in the room?⁵² The changes of speakers, within

⁴⁶ The first edition was Kenyon 1891, one of the last Zanker 2009 (with English translation). The most widely used editions are Cunningham 1971, 1987 and Rusten/Cunningham 2002 (esp. 179–283).

⁴⁷ Initially the chief theories were that they were for solo recitation or private reading. For the declamation of just one mime see Legrand 1898: 414 f. and especially Legrand 1902. The theory that they were plays was forcefully rejected by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1899 (1962: 50 'Gott verzeihe es denen, die sich das wirklich gespielt denken'). As Cunningham noted, 'in more recent times a consensus seemed to have been achieved, to the effect that the poems were intended to be recited by one person, perhaps the poet himself (rather than to be read or to be acted by a company), before a selected audience' (I. C. Cunningham, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 101, 1981, 161 f., review of Mastromarco 1979). For more on this controversy see Puchner 1993.

⁴⁸ Mastromarco 1979. His arguments are more fully elaborated in Mastromarco 1984, synopsis 1991.

⁴⁹ Puchner 1993, 1995: 13–50, 2012: 15–40. See also Simon 1991: 14.

⁵⁰ Girard 1893, Cherfils 1908, Stanzel 1998, 2010, Ypsilanti 2006, Kutzko 2008.

⁵¹ For nonverbal scenic action see Bettenworth 2006; for its relationship with theatrical mime see Esposito 2010; for improvisation and their similarity with comic scenes in Plautus see Benz/Stärk/Vogt-Spira 1995: 139–225; for possible influences on Plautus see Marshall 2006: 7–12.

⁵² See also Specchia 1952. For the figure of the procuress see Debidour 2007. The dialogue has been compared with a similar one in *Idyll* II by Theocritus, the topos of praise of the ptolemaic court in *Idyll* XIV 57–70 and XV 46–50 (Simon 1991: 52 ff.). See also Stern 1981.

a single verse, are marked with underlines or *paragraphoi* but this system is not consistent and often leads to problems determining who is speaking what. The uncertainty about which character speaks is complicated by different readings of the text itself.

Analysis of the others reveal similar problems: Mimiamb II is a scene at the court of justice: the procurer and homosexual Battaros is trying to convince the judges that the young prostitute under his protection, Myrtale, has been raped but this is not at all clear at the beginning. Not until verse 65 does he ask the girl to show to the tribunal the signs of violation on intimate points of her (presumably attractive) body,⁵³ but it is unclear whether she was present during the first part of the scene. Only two lines in the whole scene are not spoken by Battaros.⁵⁴ Mimiamb III is about the punishment of the lazy pupil Kottalos at school, where his mother, Metrotime, has a similar long monologue followed by his teacher Lampriskos.⁵⁵

In Mimiamb IV two women are sacrificing a cock in the temple of Asclepius, proceeding into the temple hall and admiring the statues in a very naïve manner.⁵⁶ Here it is unclear what exactly is going on, because the 'stage space' is unfolding, as the ladies are going from art work to art work and commenting on the natural likeness and authenticity of sculptures and paintings.⁵⁷

Mimiamb V has been compared with the adultery mime in OxyP 413:⁵⁸ the lascivious housewife Bitinna punishes her slave Gastron, because now that he is engaged to another female slave, he is not willing to satisfy her desires anymore. After a struggle, and after the slaves have bound him with ropes and taken him outside to be whipped, Bittina orders them back inside to punish him otherwise. Here again the stage action is entirely unclear (who is on-stage, who is off-stage, who is doing what exactly): we see the action through the eyes of the outrageous housewife.⁵⁹

⁵³ It was assumed that this strip-tease was a trick by Battaros to get the judges on his side (Housman 1922).

⁵⁴ Most of the Mimiamb have this monologic structure. Real dialogues are met only in IV and VI. For the theatricality of Greek court speeches see Hall 1995, 2006: 353–92, about prostitutes in Herodas Günter 2008, about femals in general Finnegan 1992.

⁵⁵ See also Mogensen 1977.

⁵⁶ The whole scene reminds one vividly of Theocrit XV 80–83 (Simon 1991: 59 ff., Skinner 2001, Zanker 2006).

⁵⁷ Männlein-Robert 2006.

⁵⁸ Simon 1991: 25 ff.

⁵⁹ For the problems and inconsistencies of the action see Fountoulakis 2007, 2007a, also Schulze 1982, Gerber 1978, Veneroni 1972. About the sadism of the scene see Hose 2009.

Mimiamb VI has some structural affinities with I: it concerns two women visiting each other and the confidential conversation between them. The subject in this case is a leather phallus, manufactured by the shoemaker Kerdon, the protagonist in VII.⁶⁰ The problems with defining the scenic actions are similar, with the female slave carrying in a chair, wiping off the dust etc.; concrete scenic actions are obviously not the author's chief concern.⁶¹ The sales scene in Mimiamb VII is similar, with Kerdon showing shoes to two ladies while two slaves help him (carrying chairs, wiping off the dust, finding pairs of shoes etc.), praising his own merchandise,⁶² with the customers then bargaining over the price. But the sales monologue of Kerdon is dominant.⁶³

As theatrical performances these short studies of everyday behaviour among lower-class urbanites, lasting not much more than 100 iambic verses each, might have less entertainment value because there is no real plot. Aside from the fact that no clear scenic action is established, the spoken text in some cases is largely monologic in structure and presents the story through the eyes of the protagonist in a sort of 'inner monologue'. The sophisticated language of the poems here is decorated with rare vocabulary that functions as kind of *Verfremdungseffekt*.⁶⁴ Some scholars have spoken about the 'verismo trap' in interpretation.⁶⁵ The sardonic realism⁶⁶ of brutality, violence, greediness, profiteering and sexuality is presented with a distancing humour and in a language that is most likely alien to the urban folk milieu. This poetry is addressed to an educated audience, able to appreciate the calculated difference between plot and style. Mastromarco spoke about 'elite theatre', but the text itself points in the direction of skilled declamation by a solo mime.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, Herodas does use a host of standard *topoi* from theatrical mime: adultery, sexual jealousy, sexual puns, prostitution, punishment by beating, scolding of slaves, and temple scenes with priests, etc. As the titles of these poems indicate, their relationship with mime theatre is close and stereotypic plot elements are used consciously.⁶⁸ Herodas seems to be playing around with the incommensurability of genres.

⁶⁰ Kutzko 2006.

⁶¹ See Mastromarco 1976/77, Leone 1951, 1955.

⁶² For the lascivious puns see Sumler 2010.

⁶³ Mimiamb VIII is a dream narration in the first person; for this reason it was omitted in Mastromarco 1984. See Herzog 1924, Knox 1925.

⁶⁴ Schmidt 1968, Bo 1962, Ussher 1980.

⁶⁵ Arnott 1971: 125 note 1 against Smotrić 1966.

⁶⁶ Simon 1991: 123 ff.

⁶⁷ See also Wiemken 1972: 22.

⁶⁸ Puchner 2007.

Theatrical Mime (Oxyrhynchos Papyri)

To get a better idea what theatrical mime was about, two extant texts, found in a papyrus in the Upper Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchos (OxyP 413), *Charition*, a sketch or persiflage most likely inspired by the Euripidean tragedy *Iphigenia in Taurus*, and an adultery mime conventionally called *Moicheutria*,⁶⁹ are illustrative. The condition of the two text fragments written on the same papyrus is problematic and has given rise to discussions about the nature and function of these texts. Nevertheless, there is some consensus that they were most likely written for stage production. Thanks to Wiemken's brilliant monograph in 1972 (based on his 1957 dissertation) there is a sound basis for discussions on the details of performance. Because of the bad condition of the papyrus and the common, koine language of the first or second century AD in which they were written, these texts are not often edited and translated;⁷⁰ there is no poetry, only blunt realism. They do not inspire the delicate smile of an educated audience but bursts of laughter from average people one might find in a provincial urban centre.⁷¹

Oxyrhynchos was in imperial times an important trade town about ten miles west of the Nile, with a bilingual population of around fifteen thousand (Egyptians, Greeks, and possibly others).⁷² It also had a theatre of considerable size, seating more than eleven thousand spectators;⁷³ which would have been essential because the *Charition* mime requires two choruses, musicians, musical instruments, a temple and a *mimicum naufragium*, most likely a kind of a prop ship that could appear to pull away. As far as the genre of song and music is concerned, it resembles some sort of opera or comic operetta, as Reich put it.⁷⁴ The text is full of signs

⁶⁹ Both mime plays were named after their protagonists by Crusius 1904 (in 1910: 99 he added for the second play *Ἡ ἑρόδουλος*). In English scholarship the second one is called usually 'adultery mime' (Reynolds 1946), Wiemken 1972 gave it the title after the main plot 'Giftmischermimus'.

⁷⁰ For translation, together with the description of the papyrus and introduction see Grenfell/Hunt 1903, Andreassi 2001a, Gammacurta 2006. For 'Charition' see Santelia 1991.

⁷¹ On audience reactions see Esposito 2002.

⁷² Alston 2002: 331–3, Turner 1952, Krüger 1990: 67–9 and mostly Parsons 2007. In Byzantine times the population was considered to be more than thirty thousand inhabitants (Fichman 1971).

⁷³ The *koilon* was 121,79 m and the *skene* 61,09 x 6,50 m (Flinders Petrie 1925: 14, Krüger 1990: 125–30, Sear 2006: 300 f.).

⁷⁴ Reich 1925 and Tsitsiridis 2011 compare it with vaudeville, while other scholars use terms such as farce and music hall (Sudhaus 1906: 269–70). Hall 2010 prefers 'burlesque'. Comparisons with Mozart's 'Die Entführung aus dem Serail', Rossini's 'Italian Girl in Algiers' and other 'escape operas' (i.e., a Christian girl in the hand of Muslim Turks) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are in my opinion just a play on parallel situations (see E. Fantham (1993) in *Classical Review* 43: 168, review of Santelia 1991, Hall 2010: 399).

and marks for drums, cymbals and other instruments⁷⁵ but also has cues for exits and entrances; hence it is what is called *un document théâtrale de nature technique*⁷⁶ or *Regie-Entwurf*⁷⁷ – a ‘performance outline’ or a prompt book.⁷⁸ Wiemken argues convincingly that the rest of the text should be improvized by the actors.⁷⁹

Charition, is a persiflage drawn perhaps from *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, one of Euripides’ most popular ‘escape tragedies’ (together with *Helen* and *Andromeda*).⁸⁰ Here the subject is not domestic matters or adultery, but the daring flight of Iphigenia from the barbarian land of the Taurians, with the characters speaking in a sort of Indian dialect. The dramatis personae are ‘A’, Charition; ‘B’, her slave, in the central part of the fool; ‘Γ’, Charition’s brother; and several other roles designated similarly by Greek letters.⁸¹ The model for this play is doubtless Euripides,⁸² with echoes of the Polyphemus episode in *Odyssey* book 9, a popular subject for satyr drama.⁸³ The escape-from-barbarians topos is also evident in Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazusae* (411), and is also found in book 3 of the *Ephesian Tale* by Xenophon of Ephesus.⁸⁴ It is difficult to say what the impact of this archetypal colonial encounter, not to mention the ever-popular shipwreck stories, might have been and how spectators might have reacted to this spectacular show.⁸⁵ It is also an open question whether the barbarian, pseudo-Indian dialect featured here was intelligible to the audience, whether it reproduced some sort of existing dialect from India, or whether it was nonsense designed to sound like a foreign language.⁸⁶

Wiemken has suggested that the second text on the same papyrus, the adultery mime play *Moicheutria*, was played in the Oxyrhynchos theatre by the same mime troupe, consisting of seven members with the *archimimus* playing the *stupidus* and other stereotypical roles distinguishable in the

⁷⁵ See Skulimowska 1966.

⁷⁶ Rostrup 1915: 79.

⁷⁷ Wiemken 1972: 75–6.

⁷⁸ See also Puchner 2007.

⁷⁹ Wiemken 1972. This opinion is repeated i.e. by W. D. Furley, ‘Mimos’, *Der Neue Pauly* 8 (2000) 203. Contra Santelia 1991 (full length play) and Tsitsiridis 2011 (extract of a written play).

⁸⁰ Wright 2005, Hall 2006: ch. 6.

⁸¹ For the tradition of designating stage characters with letters of the Greek alphabet in the manuscripts of Terence see Wahl 1974. For a detailed plot summary see Hall 2010: 395 ff.

⁸² Santelia 1991: 12–34.

⁸³ Crusius 1904, Winter 1906: 24–8.

⁸⁴ It was considered by Little (1938: 211) to be closer to *Charition* than the Euripidean escape tragedy. For possible sources see also Knoke 1908.

⁸⁵ Actually, some of the tragedies of Euripides were played in the Oxyrhynchos theatre in the original (Krüger 1990: 257, in general Pertusi 1959).

⁸⁶ As suggested already by Hultzsich 1904. See Hall 2010: conclusion (with more bibliography).

two plays.⁸⁷ But these two mime dramas are very different: the adultery mime has no choruses, no music, no spectacular scenic action, and guides us through the familiar world of domestic quarrels, erotic jealousy and affairs with house slaves – very similar to the plot of Herodas' *Mimiamb V*.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the text has been the subject of several studies for other reasons.⁸⁹ Here the signs and marks in the text may be linked to stage business and action, or may indicate pauses; in the end it remains open to interpretation.

The text is structured in a different manner: after a lacuna of thirty-seven lines (and seven more which are difficult to read) we may distinguish seven entrances and one scene and at least five different intrigues.⁹⁰ The action centres on a lustful Mistress of the house (*kyria*), her favoured slave Aesopus and his lover Apollonia, among others. The Mistress, jealous when Aesopus refuses her advances, orders the lovers murdered – only to break into lamentations when Aesopus is taken in apparently dead. The lamentations break off when she is consoled by another slave, Malacus.⁹¹ Together she and Malacus plot to kill the entire household, beginning with her husband. Other intrigues ensue and when her husband is taken out, apparently dead, the Mistress pretends to mourn him⁹² but is interrupted by Malacus, who mourns him with abusive words. The Old Man then rises in fury, and in the dénouement it turns out that Aesopus and Apollonia were both unharmed. The play probably concluded with a song, perhaps referring to the Mistress' punishment.⁹³

The text has no indications which character speaks which lines. If, as proposed convincingly by Tsitsiridis, the lamentation is delivered by the Mistress and not a slave, then the entire text is a 'side' or role excerpt for the part of the *archimima* (she speaks eighty of eighty-eight lines).⁹⁴ Papyrus material from Oxyrhynchos include other examples of actor

⁸⁷ Wiemken 1972: 173–83.

⁸⁸ Andreassi 2001a: 32 f., 2002: 33–46. For similarities with the *Vita Aesopi* see Andreassi 2001, with the *Metamorph.* of Apuleius (X 2–12) Wiemken 1972: 139 ff., Andreassi 1997, with Xenophon of Ephesus (*Ephesiaka* III 12 – IV 1–4) Andreassi 2002: 39–44.

⁸⁹ Edited by Grenfell/Hunt 1903, Crusius 1904, Wiemken 1972: 81–8, Cunningham 1987 and Andreassi 2001a, Gammacurta 2006. See also Lyngby 1928, Andreassi 1997, 2001, 2002.

⁹⁰ The division into seven entrances and one scene as well as the reconstruction of the plot are according Tsitsiridis 2011: 189–91.

⁹¹ The accent is on the first syllable *Μάλακος*, which is linked to the effeminate term *μαλακός* (Andreassi 2000).

⁹² All editors attribute the lamentation to Spinther and the Parasite; Tsitsiridis assigns it convincingly to Mistress.

⁹³ This is assumed by Manteuffel 1930.

⁹⁴ Tsitsiridis 2011.

copies for separate parts in dramatic works.⁹⁵ But this indicates that there was a written mime drama, as appears to be the case with *Charition* as well. There are good arguments for the existence of elaborate mime dramas which were written down on papyri and presumably stored in libraries. The papyri attest that improvisation may have had a more limited role and does account for the mime drama as a whole. The *Moicheutria* from Oxyrhynchos, then, appears to be a role excerpt from a full-length mime drama with several plots revolving around the adultery of a ruthless, egocentric, sexually unrestrained housewife; her old husband and a wide variety of slaves. It features criminal behaviour, brutal punishment, and multiple attempted murders. As other text fragments show, these are standard elements in theatrical mime.⁹⁶

In addition to these, Tsitsiridis lists intrigues, arguments, sex, eating and drinking, stereotyped roles, with dramaturgical features such as repetition, condensed stage time and very quickly developing plots, presumably performed with expressive gestures and an intensely physical acting style. Small wonder, then, that the Greek Church Fathers were outraged by the immorality and vulgarity of mime plots,⁹⁷ in addition to the erotic lasciviousness of pantomime. Popular theatre in Hellenistic times was not for the faint of heart, it seems.

Pantomime

One of the most fascinating theatrical entertainments of Late Antiquity was the dance pantomime, long underestimated in its cultural influence and for years of little interest to academics.⁹⁸ As a result there is a significant dividing line between older research and more recent efforts.⁹⁹ The mimetic dance of the *cheirosophistae* ('skilled hands'), usually lascivious and erotic in character and emphasizing the movement of the hands, was not just an elite form but was popular among all classes of society. A single masqued dancer is all that is required to perform, through movement alone, stories usually taken from tragedy or mythology, to the accompaniment of a

⁹⁵ For a role excerpt of Admetos with thirty verses from 'Alcestis' see Marshall 2004, where other examples are listed as well.

⁹⁶ See Bing 2002, Esposito 2005.

⁹⁷ On the motif of adultery in mime see Reynolds 1946, McKeown 1979: 71–6, Kehoe 1969: 97–119, 1984: 89–106. See also *P.Lond.* 1984, *P.Berol.* 13876, analysed by Wiemken 1972: 111–34, the narration of Apuleius (*Metamorph.* X 2–12) and a *passus* of Juvenal (VI 41 ff.) (*ibid.* 139–48).

⁹⁸ On pantomime as 'a Lost chord of Ancient Culture' see the introduction in Hall/Wyles 2008: 1 ff., esp. the conclusion (37).

⁹⁹ Hall/Wyles 2008 (Wyles, Wiseman, Jory, Hunt, Zimmermann, Zanobi, Hall, Lada-Richards, Schlapbach) with the older bibliography.

chorus which sang popular songs as a sort of libretto explaining the content of the play. But it appears there may have been significant differences between dinner entertainment and public performances in the theatre.¹⁰⁰ All we have are indirect sources; not a single song of the accompanying chorus has been saved.¹⁰¹ But the show must have been impressive, with the dancer's identity shifting continually from one role to another. 'The costume in its beauty, feminine seductiveness, and transcendental quality symbolized and represented the central characteristics of the art form itself'.¹⁰²

As mentioned previously, it is difficult to distinguish the legal and canonical status of pantomime from mime and other stage spectacles; it is equally difficult to divide pantomime between the Hellenistic and Roman schools.¹⁰³ Indirect sources on pantomime include masques and inscriptions, while descriptions in literature like Lucian's *Περί ὀρχήσεως* and Libanius' later defence indicate that the pantomime had a stronger appeal to intellectuals than mime.¹⁰⁴ Epigraphic evidence for the *pantomimos* seems to begin in the mid-third century BC, with inscriptions becoming more numerous in the first century BC; after that Bathyllus and Pylades (both from the East) reformed the mimetic dance in Rome and took it to its full development.¹⁰⁵ It has been noted that Seneca, given the loose dramaturgical structure of his tragedies, was considerably influenced by pantomime.¹⁰⁶ The literary evidence shows us that pantomime played an important role in the social and aesthetic life of Late Antiquity: the mute, masqued dancer with neutral facial expression, the beautifully costumed body with its erotic movements, was an incarnation of theatrical corporality¹⁰⁷ and offered an internationally recognized 'language' of 'silent eloquence' – a fitting genre for the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the Roman Empire. The pantomime's highly expressive dances treated traditional

¹⁰⁰ Jory 2008: 168.

¹⁰¹ Edith Hall has published a Latin poem of 124 hexameters about Alcestis (see also Lebek 1983, Parsons 1983) that could have functioned ultimately as a libretto for pantomime (Hall/Wyles 2008: 404–12 with English translation, according to Marcovich 1988).

¹⁰² Wyles 2008: 86.

¹⁰³ Wiseman 2008, Maxwell 1993.

¹⁰⁴ Most essential are the studies of John Jory: on the pantomime masques 1996, 2002, on literary evidence 1981, for assistants 1998 for the preservation of the tradition of tragedy 2004. For Lucian see Kokolakis 1959, Branham 1989, for Libanius R. Foerster, vol. IV. Leipzig 1908, 420–98, English translation Molloy 1996.

¹⁰⁵ It is not their invention (Robert 1930; see also Lightfoot 2000, 2002). More details in Jory 2002: 240 f.

¹⁰⁶ Zanobi 2008, Zimmermann 2008, Hunt 2008.

¹⁰⁷ On corporality in ancient Greek theatre Griffith 1998.

cultural subjects and drew from a cultural heritage reaching back to antiquity.

As Lada Richards has put it:

Popular with all levels of society, pantomime became a sizzling melting pot of social identity construction. Even on the basis of our fragmentary evidence, pantomime begs to be envisaged as the vibrant, ever colourful terrain where competing models of individuality could be explored, cultural configurations (especially of gender and desire) fashioned and contested, and important negotiations between elite and popular culture played out . . . Pantomime quickened the pace of culture formations and shaped aesthetic sensibilities, moral categories and modes of understanding of the self and others in ways we have only very recently begun to reassess. Even the mere 'idea' of the pantomime dancer, with its attendant connotations of disorder and licentiousness, eroticism and riotous passion as well as its intoxicating play with multiple identities thrillingly fused into a single protean body, proved polarizing with respect to issues at the very heart of Graeco-Roman culture.¹⁰⁸

The literary evidence for pantomime begins with Xenophon's *Symposium* and its description of a dinner pantomime of an erotic encounter between Dionysus and Ariadne, which was so exciting that all the attendees mounted their horses to go home to their wives as quickly as possible.¹⁰⁹ From the first century BC onwards this admired dance form spread throughout the Roman Empire, as the inscriptions in the theatre of Priene show,¹¹⁰ as well as the testimonies of Plutarch¹¹¹ and Apuleius.¹¹² But the most detailed account is found in Lucian, a Hellenized Syrian rhetor (c. AD 129–190), whose his treatise *Περὶ ὀρχήσεως* (On dancing) is a key source for the genre.¹¹³ On the talents of these dancers 'with speaking hands' he wrote: 'He could imitate even the liquidity of water and the sharpness of fire in the liveliness of his movement; yes, the fierceness of a lion, the rage of a leopard, the quivering of a tree, and in a word whatever he wished'.¹¹⁴ He recounts how a

¹⁰⁸ Lada-Richards 2008: 313.

¹⁰⁹ X. *Smp.* 9.3–7, Hall/Wyles 2008: 378–80 (testimony [T] 1). See also *Greek Anthology* 11.195 (third century BC) (*ibid.* 380).

¹¹⁰ Robert 1930: 114 f., Hall/Wyles 2008: 380 f. (T 3)

¹¹¹ (AD 46–120) *Sympotic Questions* 7.8.3 (= *Moralia* 711e–f) Hall/Wyles 2008: 384 (T 11).

¹¹² Circa AD 123–180, *Metamorphoses* (= *The Golden Ass*) 10.30–4. See May 2008 and Hall/Wyles 2008, 386–90 (T 15)

¹¹³ Schlapbach 2008, Kokolakis 1959, Branham 1989, Vesterinen 2003, etc.

¹¹⁴ Hall/Wyles 2008: 390 (T 16) according to the translation of A. M. Harmon, *Lucian*, vol. IV ed. Lieb), London/Cambridge, MA 1925. See also T 17–24 (*ibid.*, 390–6), among them the topics of tragedy (T 17, *On Dancing* 31, Hall/Wyles 2008: 390 f.), Demetrius shouting: "You seem to me to be talking with your very hands!" (T 20, *On Dancing* 63).

Barbarian from Pontus visited Nero, 'and among other entertainments saw the dancer perform so vividly that although he could not follow what was being sung – he was but half hellenised, as it happened – he understood everything'.¹¹⁵ With five different masques, 'the dancer undertakes to present and enact characters and emotions, introducing now a lover and now an angry person, one man afflicted with madness, another with grief, and all this within fixed bounds'.¹¹⁶ He reports the critical reaction of the people of Antioch to dancers they did not appreciate,¹¹⁷ as well as the case of the pantomime who overdid his mimicry while dancing Ajax, and went crazy.¹¹⁸ Lucian is an invaluable source for details about the show.

The famous Bathylus and Pylades are also mentioned by Athenaeus,¹¹⁹ and another source of information is Libanius, a rhetor from Antioch in the fourth century AD.¹²⁰ In his Orations he not only gives an interesting explanation of its origins – that pantomime developed at a time when the poetic *agon* had declined, as a kind of instruction for the illiterate in tragedy¹²¹ – but also admires the aesthetic authenticity of the presentation of gods like 'living statues'.¹²² He admires the pantomime's vivid art of metamorphosis as well: Mind you, the possibility of each of the actions being accurately observed has been taken away by the speed of their body repeatedly undergoing a change to whatever you like. Each one of them is almost Proteus the Egyptian. You would say through the wand of Athena, which transforms the shape of Odysseus, they take on every guise; old men, young men, the humble, the mighty, the dejected, the elated, servants, masters'.¹²³

Pantomime was still alive in Syria at the beginning of the sixth century AD, if Bishop Jacob of Sarugh's *Homilies on the Spectacles of the Theatre* (c. AD 500) reflect contemporary practice and are not just formulaic

¹¹⁵ *On Dancing* 64, Hall/Wyles 2008: 392 (T 20).

¹¹⁶ *On Dancing* 66 and 67, Hall/Wyles 2008: 392 and 393 (T 21 and 22).

¹¹⁷ *On Dancing* 76, Hall/Wyles 2008: 393 f. (T 23).

¹¹⁸ *On Dancing* 83–4, Hall/Wyles 2008: 394–6 (T 24).

¹¹⁹ Athenaeus (second–early third century) *Deipnosophists* 1.20d–e (Hall/Wyles 2008: 396, T 26).

¹²⁰ R. Foerster, vol. IV. Leipzig 1908, 420–98, translation Molloy 1996.

¹²¹ 'So, up to the point where the race of tragic poets was in bloom, they continued to come into the theatres as universal teachers of the people. But when, on the one hand, tragic poets dwindled and, on the other hand, only the very rich could participate in the instruction offered in the schools of art and poetry, while the majority of the people were deprived of education, some god took pity on the lack of education of the many and, to redress the balance, introduced pantomime as a kind of instruction of the masses in the deeds of old' (*Oration* 64.112, Hall/Wyles 2008: 396, T 27).

¹²² 'And further, if looking at statues of gods makes men more self-disciplined by sight, the dancer allows you to see portrayals of them all on the stage, not representing them in stone, but rendering them in himself, so that even the top sculptor would yield the first places to dancers in a judgement of beauty in this respect' (*Oration* 64.116, Hall/Wyles 2008: 397 f., T 28)

¹²³ *Oration* 64.117, Hall/Wyles 2008: 398 (T 29).

condemnations of pagan and idolatrous shows – a common occurrence in Byzantine times.¹²⁴ But before addressing the fate of theatre and dramatic texts during the Byzantine millennium we should have a closer look at another phenomenon, characteristic of the Hellenistic age: the awareness of the inherent theatricality of public life. As discussed previously, this was the era that witnessed the dissolution of aesthetic forms, changes in the context for religious festivals, as well as the creation of new (imperial) contexts for a variety of performances. There was also a marked decline in original dramatic productions and an increased reliance on revivals of a much-admired canon, now promoted as a cultural heritage. These changes gave way to a widespread diffusion of theatrical practices, whether in terms of scenic design or ‘dramatic’ behaviour, into the public sphere, creating a sense of generic ‘theatricality’ in a now-multiethnic and cosmopolitan society – a quality of social interaction that has recently become the focus of numerous theatre studies.¹²⁵

The Theatricality of Everyday Life

An art historian once remarked, ‘The theater in all ages has always served to provide a reflection of, or analogue of life, but in the Hellenistic period one gets the impression that life was sometimes seen as a reflection of the theater’.¹²⁶ Theatricality, loosely defined, is the effort to manipulate an observer’s impressions – usually for the benefit of the ‘actor’. This definition includes other more historically rooted phenomena such as the degradation of fully vested citizens to spectators of public life, particularly in the Diadoch kingdoms under the generals who succeeded Alexander the Great, and who ruled with only the semblance of democracy. The founding of theatres in many cities and the creation of new public festivals with theatrical spectacles¹²⁷ featuring professional actors transformed citizens into spectators of public affairs and public figures into actors, who were expected to perform professionally according to the expectations of the audience.¹²⁸ Reality and theatre were increasingly confused; witness Nero, who used actors in the audience¹²⁹ or performed real executions on stage

¹²⁴ Hall/Wyles 2008: 412–9 (T 41). See the next chapter.

¹²⁵ Postlewait/Davis 2003, Kotte 2005: 217–312 (2010), Balme 2008: 89–95, Fischer-Lichte 1995, 2004, 2008, 2010: 219–42, Puchner 2011: 133–59.

¹²⁶ Pollitt 1986: 4.

¹²⁷ Chandezon 2000, Köhler 1996.

¹²⁸ Essential on this topic are the studies of Chaniotis 1997, 2003, 2007, 2009; for Rome see Dupont 1985, 2003.

¹²⁹ Bartsch 1994.

as part of a fictional play.¹³⁰ In Christian times martyrdom was sometimes a staged spectacle for a public audience.¹³¹ In the public sphere, actors' training was vital for students of rhetoric, and as advocates the graduates of rhetoric schools used this training in the courts.¹³² The private lives of rulers were a carefully staged sequence of scenes, in order to create the desired impression and enhance the public image of qualified and popular leaders.¹³³

Although theatres were used for different purposes even in classical times, by the Hellenistic age they now hosted a wide variety of events from musical competitions and concerts to speeches by itinerant scholars, nuptial festivities, etc. In the theatre of Delos in 145 BC a young prodigy demonstrated his admirable abilities in both speech and song.¹³⁴ Religious rituals were still performed on the theatre's *thymele*, but now the orchestra also hosted *symposia*. Judicial proceedings were held in the theatre, as well as citizens' assemblies and conventions of the demos.¹³⁵ During these events imperial announcements were made, people were honoured and candidates for *prohedria* (who were accorded a seat of honour in the same theatre) were elected. Festive entry processions of honourable city leaders and institutions were a vital part of the spectacle. In this way, public affairs were conducted in a fashion that was just as spectacular as the theatre shows themselves.

'Theatricality' was also the primary mode of public rhetorical declamations (*hypocrisis, actio, pronuntiatio*): not only were the tones and modalities of the voice controlled and regulated but also gestures, facial expression (eyes and eyebrows, lips, even the wings of the nose) and general body language (head, neck, shoulders, steps). Extant rhetorical guidelines offer a detailed code of behaviour, complete with exterior signs for all occasions; public figures should be familiar, in a jovial mood and high spirits, while the accused should appear at court in rags and tatters in order to arouse pity and sympathy in the jury. Likewise political speeches or defences at court had to follow an elaborate dramaturgy with special attention to highlights, surprises, as well as the climax of the argument. Diplomatic decisions and votes were carefully 'staged' texts, designed to give the desired impression of the addressee to the addressed. Statues of dignitaries were 'staged'

¹³⁰ Coleman 1990.

¹³¹ Potter 1993.

¹³² Slater 1995.

¹³³ Schmitt 1991.

¹³⁴ Kremmydas/*Tempest* 2013: 136.

¹³⁵ Kolb 1981, 1989.

as well, designed to give the impression of self-control, self-awareness, decisiveness and even self-sacrifice on behalf of the citizens.

In the case of rulers and monarchs the persona of familiarity had to be balanced with a remoteness appropriate to their god-like status. The Hellenistic Diadoch Kingdoms were usually military states but with a democratic façade; accordingly rules of behaviour for the privileged classes were cultivated with care. Even the apotheosis of a ruler had a careful *mise-en-scène*,¹³⁶ his public appearances, often made in the theatre, were meticulously staged and acted,¹³⁷ and court ceremonies were themselves a sort of ‘theatre’. Without doubt the most ‘theatrical’ king of this period was Demetrios Poliorketes (337/6 BC–283/2 BC), the unsuccessful besieger of Rhodes (305–4 BC).¹³⁸

‘Hypocritical’ behaviour is evident not only in the case of ruler cults but also in other cult ceremonies: sacrifices and processions, festivities, oracles and augury, whether performed by priests or laity. Theatrical modes of piety include *hikesia*, or humbleness; the pretence of incapacity; the debasement of the supplicant to the status of a slave; the simulated appearance of a god. All this was carefully staged so as to be truly spectacular; but with this calculated show of piety arises the spectre of secularism. With this sort of secularization via spectacle, the ceremony is not so much addressed to the gods as to the spectators themselves.¹³⁹ Another element is the concept of ‘life-as-drama’ or the ‘world-as-stage’, as delineated in the philosophy and historiography of the Hellenistic period, especially in Epictetus and Polybius (second century BC), where history is seen in terms of tragedy.¹⁴⁰ This Hellenistic idea of a world theatre would have a long *Nachleben* in Byzantium and the Western Renaissance, hence its prominence in the works of Shakespeare and Lope de Vega; it can also be linked to the semantic shifts of ancient theatrical terminology in Christian literature,¹⁴¹ a topic we will analyze in more detail in Chapter 2.

So how did ancient theatre and drama come to an end? In the epigonic phases of ancient theatre during the last centuries BC, the popular forms of mime and pantomime emerged as serious competition for traditional forms of theatre, a phenomenon which persisted at least into the third and fourth centuries AD.¹⁴² So although the architecture of the theatre

¹³⁶ Buraselis/Aneziri 2004, Bremmer 1991.

¹³⁷ Gebhard 1988, 1996.

¹³⁸ Chaniotis 2009: III ff.

¹³⁹ Chaniotis 2009: 141–70.

¹⁴⁰ Walbank 1955, 1960, 1957–79. For Epictet Kokolakis 1960, 1976.

¹⁴¹ Especially Puchner 2006: 93–105.

¹⁴² Nervegna 2007, 2014, 2014a, Barnes 1996.

building was in evidence throughout the Hellenistic and Roman Empires, the 'architecture' of the drama was dissolved and merged with other genres. The subtle philosophy of tragedy and the sarcastic social criticism of comedy yielded to a certain tendency towards lasciviousness, vulgarity and farce designed for urban, lower-class audiences. Only the mystery of masked dancers in pantomime kept the grandeur of tragedy's cultural heritage in the public consciousness.

There were theatres throughout the Greek-speaking world, and with the rise of the Roman Empire, *theatromania* moved further outside the theatre and into society and public life in general. Parallel to this, extant texts of ancient dramas were cultivated mainly for their language and poesy; they were used both in scholarship and in the school tradition, studied, copied, taught and critiqued, to be passed down to the Late Roman and Byzantine Empires, and beyond.¹⁴³ Such was the state of affairs when Christianity appeared; a radically different worldview distinct from Hellenistic syncretism and polytheism, it was radically opposed to the theatricality of Hellenistic and Roman culture. In the light of divine revelation and the knowledge of truth, any *hypocrisis* (play-acting) was rejected as blasphemous. Christianity would put its own stamp on a process of dissolution that had started long before; but the closure of public theatres would not occur straightway.

Scholarship and Further Readings

A good overview of recent developments in research on Greek theatre of the fourth century is Csapo, E. / H. R. Boette / J. R. Green / P. Wilson 2014. For the scanty evidence on Hellenistic drama see Sifakis 1967, Xanthakis-Karamanos 1993, Easterling/Miles 1999, Ghiron-Bistagne 1974, Lesky 1953 (*Gyges* drama).

The scholarship on Dionysiakoi *technitai* as a basic exponent of Hellenistic show business is not that extensive. The collection of inscriptions and prosopography by Stefanis 1988 is of fundamental importance, but see also in connection with the specialization of the stage professions Chaniotis 1990. A good overview of later show business can be found in Webb 2008a; basic are also the monographs of Le Guen 1995, 1997, 2001, 2004, and the studies of Aneziri 2003, 2007, 2009. See further Ghiron-Bistagne 1976: 163–71, 179–91, 205–6, more specifically Pöhlmann 1997

¹⁴³ Müller 1909, Irmischer 1973, 1981, Marciniak 2003, 2004, 2004a, 2009.

and Longo 1990; in a more general way Schneider 1969: II 237–71; and from the older bibliography Lüders 1873, Poland 1934, and Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 279–305. For a broader context see also the influential book of Winkler/Zeitlin 1990. For dramatic performances in the third and fourth centuries AD see Nervegna 2014, 2014a and Barnes 1996.

Mime The older bibliography on mime should be treated with caution. Essential was Reich 1903, but his work contains many misinterpretations; see subsequently Müller 1909, Friedländer 1920: II 124–34, Wüst 1932, Guarducci 1929, Corbato 1947, Bonaria 1955/6, 1959, 1965, Vretska 1969. There is a whole series of recent studies on mime: on pictorial graffiti in Ephesus Roueché 2002, on mime and circus factions Cameron 1976, on mime in Syria in the sixth century AD Cramer 1980, on females in mime Webb 2002, on scenic masques at the *propylon* of Sebasteion at Aphrodisias Jory 2002 and Chaisemartin 2006, 2007, on mime and prostitution Edwards 1997, on private performances at dinners Jones 1991, on baptism and crucifixion in mimic parody Panayotakis 1997. See also, mostly for Rome, McKeown 1979 on elegy and mime, Fantham 1989 on mime as a missing link in Roman literary history, Csapo/Slater 1995: 369–78 in the context of ancient drama, Leppin 1992 for *histriones*, Puppini 1988 on anonymous mime, Cicu 1988 on the structure of mime performance, Zucchelli 1995 on the Latin terminology of mime, Dupont 1985 on actors and acting in Rome (2003: 361–70 specifically on mime), Rieks 1978 on mime and *atellana*, Beacham 1999 about the public audiences, Gianotti 1993, 1996 on different spectacles. These studies are very different in scope, quality and methodology. Ploritis 1990 is a sort of ‘apologia mimorum’ as ‘alternative theatre’ in antiquity.

Literary Mime Concerning the bibliography on the *Mimiamb*s of Herodas see ‘Herodas – A Hellenistic Bibliography’ <http://sites.google.com/site/hellenisticbibliography/hellenistic/herodas>; for an older bibliography see J. Sitzler *Jahresberichte über die Fortschritte der Classischen Altertumswissenschaften* 75 (1893) 157–200, 92 (1899) 52–104, 104 (1900) 102–4, 133 (1907) 152–9, 174 (1919) 80–9, 191 (1922) 46; for the state of research see Specchia 1979 and Arnott 1995. For scholarship see also Mandilaras 1986: 277–96, Cunningham 1987: XIII–XXV and Mastromarco 1984: 5–19. Editions: Kenyon 1891, J. A. Nairn, Oxford 1904 (Paris 1960), Cunningham 1971, 1987, Rusten/Cunningham 2002: 179–283, Gammacurta 2006, Zanker 2009 (with English translation); German translation by O. Crusius, *Die Mimiamben des Herondas*, Göttingen 1893 (1926), French by P. Groeneboom, *Les mimiambes d’Hérodas I–VI*, Groningen 1922, English in Herodas, *The Mimes and Fragment* with

notes by W. Headlam, edited by A. D. Knox, Cambridge 1922, an Italian by N. Terzaghi, *Eroda. I Mimiambi*, Torino 1925, another French one by L. Laloy, *Hérodas. Mimes*, Paris 1928, another German one by K. and U. Treu, *Menander. Herondas*, Berlin/Weimar 1980, etc.

Theatrical Mime The most important recent scholarship is Wiemken 1972, Webb 2008a: 95–138 and Tsitsiridis 2011; for *Moicheutria* Hall 2010. Editions: Grenfell/Hunt 1903, more recently Andreassi 2001a with Italian translation and Gammacurta 2006. For *Charition* see Santelia 1991. As is apparent here, there is a great deal of room for further investigation.

Pantomime For older research see Grysar 1834, Latte 1913, Grassi 1920, Robert 1930, Kyriakidis 1934, Weinreich 1948, Wüst 1949, Rotolo 1957, Bonaria 1955–6, 1959, 1965. A more recent wave of research begins with the study of Robinson 1979 on Lucian; there are essential contributions on specific aspects of imperial pantomime by Jory 1981, 1996, 1998, 2002, 2004; Branham 1989 on Lucian; there are also studies on pantomime and mime by Gianotti 1991, 1993, 1996, with the archeological evidence presented by Roueché 1993, 2002; on a feminine actress Traina 1994, on the pantomime in Rome Garelli-François 1995; about Libanius on the dancers Molloy 1996; see also Naerebout 1997, Bernstein 1998, Lightfoot 2000, 2002, Webb 2002; on female dancers, Bergmann/Kondoleon 2000, Vesterinen 2003; on Lucian, Cairns 2005, and Hall/Wyles 2008, which covers a wide spectrum of important, focused studies (Wyles, Wiseman, Jory, Hunt, Zimmermann, Zanobi, Hall, Lada-Richards, Schlapbach). See also Dupont 1985, 2003: 486–98.

On the theatricality of public life in the Hellenistic age, the studies of Chanotiot 1997, 2003, 2007 and 2009 are absolutely essential.

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