

## 4 | The Tragedians of Heraclea and Comedians of Sinope

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Our understanding of the theatre and performance culture of the Greeks living around the Black Sea in antiquity has long suffered on account of the uneven and lacunose nature of the evidence. The great Greek cities of the southern coast, situated along what is now the northern coast of Turkey, are no exception. Although it is impossible to believe that there was no theatrical culture in these communities, the archaeological evidence is very limited before the Roman period. This chapter therefore collects and assesses the not insubstantial literary testimony for two of these cities, Sinope and Heraclea Pontica, which enjoyed lively cultural contacts with Athens and are associated by Greek authors from as early as the fifth century BC with comedy and tragedy respectively.

Almost exactly half-way along the 850-mile coast, curving eastwards from Istanbul to Turkey's border with Georgia, lies Sinope. This city was probably founded in the seventh or even the eighth century BC by Milesians to serve 'as a strategic staging ground for the founding and control of colonies stretching along the south Pontic coast from Kytorus to Trapezus and beyond'.<sup>1</sup> It is situated on a projecting peninsula, on the northern side of a rampart of richly forested mountains, and enjoys a fine double harbour. The people of Sinope believed that their city had been founded either by an Amazon, perhaps a drunken one since they believed the Thracian word for drunkards was *sanapai* (Hecataeus 1 *FgrH* F34), or by Autolycus, who joined the voyage of the Argo at Sinope. He was sometimes said to have arrived in Sinope with Heracles on the pre-Argonautic expedition against the Amazons; more often he was said to be a mixed-race son of the Greek Phrixus and Aetes' Colchian daughter Chalciopé.<sup>2</sup>

When Xenophon's remaining troops reached Sinope at the beginning of the fourth century BC, it was already a substantial city with a large fleet and

<sup>1</sup> Doonan (2011) 175, with the map on 176.

<sup>2</sup> For the legend that Autolycus arrived in Sinope because he had joined the expedition against the Amazons, see the iambic *Periegesis at Nicomedem Regem* by Pseudo-Scymnus lines 986–97 in Diller (1952), Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* 2.955, Strabo 12.546, Braund (2011a) 161–8. For the tradition that he was a son of Phrixus and Chalciopé, see Hyginus *Fab.* 14. For further discussion, see especially Drews (1976) 23–4.

three colonies of its own to its east (*Anabasis* 4.8.22, 5.3.2, 5.4–8). Its mythology had already received attention in the archaic poet Eumelus' *Korinthiaka* as well as in Hecataeus; Isocrates composed a Sinopic Oration;<sup>3</sup> Aristotle or one of his students wrote a history of its constitution (Aristotle fr. 599). The renowned Milesian cult of Apollo Delphinios and his guild of singers, the Molpoi, seem to have had a branch in operation there as they did at Olbia;<sup>4</sup> there is archaeological evidence of the worship of Dionysus.<sup>5</sup> By the time of Strabo (12.545) and Diodorus (14.31) Sinope was regarded as indisputably the greatest city on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

Sinope's intellectual culture was highly developed by the Hellenistic period; it produced one of the seven famous Alexandrian editions of Homer.<sup>6</sup> But the primary association of the city was with mockery and cynical humour: even that foundation story concerning the inebriated Amazon suggests a comical perspective on aetiology. One of the earlier modern scholars to attempt a history of Sinope was David Moore Robinson, an eminent American archaeologist who liked to lecture on Apollonius' *Argonautica* but was most famous for excavating Olynthus in Chalkidiki.<sup>7</sup> He diagnosed the humorous outlook of Sinope's inhabitants as a natural response of colonial frontiersmen to 'life at the limit line of civilization': scornful humour was 'Sinope's peculiar talent, the only talent of which she gives any great literary evidence', and which could only come 'to flower when transplanted to the favouring soil of Athens.'<sup>8</sup>

The city's most renowned figure of the classical or any other period was Diogenes, an early champion of Cynic philosophy, and noted humorist. In his study of another important Black Sea thinker, Bion of Borysthene, Kindstrand has noted the similarities between comedy and Cynicism: unrestricted liberty of speech, marked humour and satire, a *spoudogeloion* fusion of serious content with jocular expression, and an interest in topics and expressions of an earthy and bodily nature.<sup>9</sup> Marcus Aurelius perceives Cynic thought to have been the successor of Old Comedy (11.6). Diogenes' self-consciously comic performativity both in his public persona and his statements has recently been explored by Bosman.<sup>10</sup> The use of bold speech, which Diogenes regarded as 'the most beautiful thing among

<sup>3</sup> See the anonymous *Life of Isocrates* drawn from the preface to the Scholia as printed in Dindorf (1852), paragraph 14. There is an English translation of this text by Brian Donovan available at <http://faculty.bemidjistate.edu/bdonovan/vitaisoc.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Jones (1988). <sup>5</sup> Baratt (2011) 36, fig. 3. <sup>6</sup> Sandys (1903) 132.

<sup>7</sup> Thomson de Grummond (1996) 963–4, s.v. 'Robinson, David Moore'.

<sup>8</sup> Robinson (1906) 258–9. <sup>9</sup> Kindstrand (1976) 47–8. <sup>10</sup> Bosman (2006).

people' (D.L. 6.69) is reminiscent of the frankness of Old Comedy politically and in terms of attacks on well-known individuals. The comic dimension of Cynicism appears more clearly if it is seen primarily as a literary rather than a philosophical phenomenon; its texts and attitudes had a considerable influence on the evolution of several literary genres in antiquity.<sup>11</sup> But the theatrical dimension of the numerous anecdotes about Diogenes' public appearances and displays – the 'sage as showman'<sup>12</sup> – must be understood in the context of the fourth-century comic aesthetic. Raising a laugh by marching into the Academy with a plucked chicken, walking the streets with a lantern in the daylight to look for an honest man, throwing away crockery to imitate the slurping of dogs, asking Alexander to stop blocking the sun, or even trampling on Plato's carpets, like the hubristic Agamemnon of Aeschylus, but in order to point out the vainglory of Plato (D.L. 6.2.26) – all these scripted episodes share a self-conscious staginess in which the personality of the witty ascetic makes him the protagonist in a social performance 'event'.

Diogenes was held to have evolved his Cynic moral system partly in reaction to the dubious financial activities of his father, a wealthy banker of Sinope who was involved in a counterfeit coinage scandal (D.L. 6.2.20). We have no definite information, sadly, as to whether his public comic performances began in the streets, storage jars and marketplaces of Sinope before he migrated to Athens. Braund has pointed out that large *pithoi* of coarse pottery, of the type in which Diogenes was said to like to make his home, have been found in abundance at Sinope, which as a lively mercantile centre required such vessels in order to trade in and store wine and olive oil.<sup>13</sup> And the association of Sinope with the snarling, caustic humour of early Cynicism is not irrelevant to a study of ancient Black Sea performance culture: one of Diogenes' reported ripostes actually uses Cynic and possibly self-referential 'Sinopic' humour in order to imply that Sinope was an undesirable backwater: when a detractor commented on the undesirability of Sinope as a fatherland, and stressed that Diogenes' former compatriots had exiled him, he is said to have responded: 'And I condemned them to stay where they were!'<sup>14</sup>

There is also some tenuous evidence that Diogenes composed some tragedies. His namesake Diogenes Laertius (6.12) preserves the titles of seven – *Helen*, *Thyestes*, *Heracles*, *Achilles*, *Medea*, *Chrysippus* and *Oedipus* – but even as he cites them, reports that several earlier scholars have

<sup>11</sup> Branham (1996); Döring (1993).

<sup>12</sup> Bosman (2006) 95–6.

<sup>13</sup> Braund (2011a) 14 and 15, fig. 2.

<sup>14</sup> D.L. 6.2.49; see Braund (2011a) 14.

disputed that Diogenes wrote them. The most interesting aspect of the tradition is the information preserved by the same author that the Cynic philosopher's *Thyestes* explored the theory 'that in bread there was meat, and in vegetables there was bread, and so there were some particles of all other bodies in everything, communicating by invisible passages and evaporating' (6.6–7). A play that included both a man eating his own children and this avant-garde belief would have risked introducing an inappropriately absurdist, even comic, tone.

It may not be entirely coincidental, therefore, that the other dramatic authors from ancient Sinope, of whom there is any evidence, are all comedians rather than tragedians. One Sinopean who wrote New Comedies, perhaps including one entitled *The Consensus-Achievers* (*Homōnumoi*), was named Dionysius.<sup>15</sup> A man known as Diodorus *Sinōpeus* was a dramatist who participated in the comic contests at Delos in 384 and 280 BC and was also awarded second *and* third places at the Athenian Lenaia in 288 BC with plays sensationally entitled *Corpse* and *Madman*.<sup>16</sup> This Diodorus seems to have been the brother of by far the most famous Sinopean man of the theatre, Diphilus (342–291? BC), an approximate contemporary of Menander;<sup>17</sup> if so, then we have evidence from Sinope not only of the presence of theatrical writers but perhaps of a well-established theatrical family, especially since Diphilus was both a comic poet and a comic actor. He was a major figure in his medium, in antiquity regarded as one of the best dramatists of Menander's generation, and his comedies were performed not only at Athens but all the way across the Greek world in the western colony of Messina.<sup>18</sup>

He was famous enough to be lampooned at some length by other comic writers, especially in regards to a supposed relationship with a prostitute named Gnathaena (see Athenaeus 13.579E–580A). He was a daring author, happy to compose a comedy in which Sappho anachronistically consorted with Hipponax, and others including mythological burlesque of such figures as Heracles; such themes, usually associated with Middle Comedy, seem in Diphilus to have sat comfortably alongside other plays about the types of 'realistic', contemporary pimps, prostitutes and adventurers normally associated with New Comedy. Like Menander, Diphilus left an important legacy in providing the original Greek versions of several

<sup>15</sup> Robinson (1906) 271–2.    <sup>16</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 2325; Robinson (1906) 270–1.

<sup>17</sup> See the tombstone in Smyrna which implies they are both sons of the same father, Dion: *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1032, with Rusten (2011) 660.

<sup>18</sup> Handley (1997) 194–6; Dearden (2012) 273.

important Roman comedies which *have* survived. His *Klēroumenoi* (*Men Casting Lots*), for example, underlies Plautus' brilliant comedy *Casina* (of which see lines 32–3, *Diphilus/haec graece scripsit*).<sup>19</sup> This in turn proved a seminal influence on Shakespearean comedy, and so this comedian from ancient Sinope is still informing theatrical performances enjoyed today.<sup>20</sup>

In Diphilus' case, moreover, some of the titles and fragments of his prolific output are indeed suggestive in terms of his awareness of the Black Sea and reveal a capacity for comedies about real historical figures from the not too distant past or even the immediate present: his *Amastris* apparently concerned the wife of a notorious tyrant of Heraclea Pontica, Dionysius, whom she married in 322 BC (fr. 9 K-A = Strabo 12.3.10, p. 544); we shall meet Dionysius again later, since he is linked with performances of tragedy in his city and was also satirised in a comedy by Menander. Another comedy by Diphilus perhaps reveals an interest in the Persian Empire derived from his youthful experiences, since it was called *Tithraustes* (fr. 81 K-A), the name of a Persian satrap for several years in the early fourth century. He had murdered Tissaphernes on the order of Artaxerxes II. Owing to scanty historical records, little is known of the man or his activities or what Diphilus might have made of them.<sup>21</sup>

These comedies may show that one of Diphilus' specialisms was making fun of Black Sea history, and even current Pontic events, in front of an Athenian audience. Other comedies by Diphilus with Black Sea themes may have included his *Hekate* and certainly included *The Olive-Guardians*. This was set in the sanctuary of Brauron, for a character apostrophised Artemis as the 'superintendent' of the locality, and as the 'maiden archer goddess, born of Leto and Zeus, as the tragedians relate' (fr. 29 K-A).<sup>22</sup> It is hard to imagine a more resounding reference to Euripides' famous play set on the coast of the Crimea, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which was one of the most popular of all tragedies in the fourth century BC, and illustrated on a large number of vases found in South Italy.<sup>23</sup> Euripides is also quoted admiringly in a fragment of Diphilus' *Parasite*.<sup>24</sup> Diphilus' *Peliades* must have featured Medea, the Colchian murderess who persuaded the daughters of Pelias to

<sup>19</sup> See MacCary (1973). <sup>20</sup> Traill (2011); Forsythe (1920).

<sup>21</sup> He was sent out from Susa to replace Tissaphernes in 395 BC, and, after arresting his predecessor, executed him. To remove the threat to his satrapy posed by the Spartan army of Agesilaus, Tithraustes persuaded Agesilaus to march north into the satrapy of Pharnabazus, and provided him with money for the march. Xenophon also states that it was Tithraustes who dispatched Timocrates of Rhodes to Greece to stir up opposition to Sparta (*Hell.* 3.5.1).

<sup>22</sup> See Rusten (2011) 664–5. <sup>23</sup> See Chapter 15 and Hall (2013), especially ch. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Rusten (2011) fr. 60.

attempt to rejuvenate their father, with disastrous results (fr. 64 K-A). The character who delivered a long speech in his fragmentary *Painter* (*Zōgraphos*) described a man who has sailed into port from Byzantium in search of a good time and young male prostitutes.<sup>25</sup> The speaker of a fragment from another of his comedies, *Heracles* (fr. 45 K-A), is a man from Miletus (the city which founded Sinope). Diphilus also referred at least once to the city of Amisos, which lies to the east of Sinope on the Pontic coast (fr. 127 K-A = *Phot. Berol.* s.v. 'Amisos').

The evidence for theatrical activities in Heraclea Pontica, situated about 180 miles east of Byzantium in Bithynia, is rather different. Heraclea was founded by Megarians in the mid-sixth century, apparently with a constitution including democratic elements.<sup>26</sup> Aristotle says that the democracy was soon overthrown (*Pol.* 5.1304b31–4). Although a local mythography and history of Heraclea, which included several traditions concerning Heracles and the voyage of the Argo, was written by the late fifth century, the author being Herodorus,<sup>27</sup> early performance culture is more difficult to pin down. Little of it is heard in our sources until the scattered references to a local tragedian with the peculiar name of Spintharos. The flimsiness of the ground we are here treading may be indicated by the need for us to begin the evidence for Spintharos with the Byzantine encyclopedia known as the *Suda*, but its entry under his name is at least straightforward: 'Spintharos was an Heracliot. He was a tragedian and wrote *Heracles on Fire* (Περικαϊόμενος Ἡρακλῆς) and *Semele Thunderstruck* (Σεμέλη κεραυνουμένη). Spintharos was satirised by the comic poets for being a barbarian and a Phrygian'.<sup>28</sup>

That this tragedian's name means 'spark', as in a spark of fire, seems almost too appropriate for a dramatist whose few attested titles include two involving incendiary activity, raising the question of whether *Spintharos* was in fact a nickname. This suspicion is given some support by a remark in the *Life of Heraclides Ponticus* contained in the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius (who may himself have been a native of Bithynia). Heraclides was an eminent student of Plato and a mathematician, but originally came from Heraclea Pontica. He is said in this biography both to have plagiarised other authors' works and to have been misled by the plagiarism of others. A notorious case, apparently, was the plagiarism of Sophocles by a tragedian called variously Dionysius and Spintharos (5.92):

<sup>25</sup> Fr. 42 in Rusten (2011) 66–7, quoted by Athenaeus 7.291F.

<sup>27</sup> Burstein (1974a) 2.

<sup>26</sup> Robinson (1997) 111–12.

<sup>28</sup> *Suda* s.v. Spintharos = T1 *TgrF*.

Again, Dionysius the Turncoat (or ‘The Spark’/Spintharos, according to some), when he wrote the *Parthenopaeus*, entitled it a play of Sophocles; and Heraclides was so credulous that in one of his own works drew upon this forged play as Sophoclean evidence.<sup>29</sup>

The alternative name for Dionysius, Spintharos, has been inserted into the text at some stage in its transmission, but presumably by a scholar with an independent source of information. It gives us a third title for a play, *Parthenopaeus*, by Spintharos, as well as a second proper name. And in another of Diogenes Laertius’ lives, we are told that this Dionysius, who came from Heraclea, received the epithet *Turncoat* because he turned his back on Stoicism after being inflicted with an eye disease (*Life of Zeno*, D.L. 7.1.37).

We also have some idea of when Spintharos was authoring his plays and when he was producing them in Athens, where Laches said that any ambitious playwright would automatically want to have his shows put on (Plato, *Laches* 183a–b). During the second half of the fifth century BC, as Burstein says, geography ‘requires us to assume that both Pericles and the later Athenian settlers stopped at Heraclea during their voyages’, and Heraclea must have welcomed Athenian trade.<sup>30</sup> In Aristophanes’ *Birds*, produced in 414 BC, Spintharos is the butt of one of the jokes. Several times in *Birds* there are puns on the idea that birdsong is somehow equivalent to speaking a barbarian language, or Greek with a barbarian accent (e.g. 199).<sup>31</sup> In the parabasis, however, the birds extend an invitation to the spectators to join them in Cloudcuckooland, where even if they are slaves or foreigners they will be welcomed and receive a new bird identity. Spintharos, as a Bithynian, is said to come from Phrygia: ‘And if any of you happens to be just as Phrygian as Spintharos, among us you would be the Phrygian bird, the goldfinch, of the race of Philemon’ (762–3 = T 2a *TgrF*).<sup>32</sup>

Spintharos’ plays, produced at Athens, may have been written in Heraclea but were plainly not written in the Phrygian language. Given the lack of actual fragments, it is impossible to ask whether there was anything notably non-Attic about the language or dialect of this tragedian, who

<sup>29</sup> A variant of the same story that Heraclides was misled about the Sophoclean authorship of a particular work is to be found in the *Suda* s.v. ‘akrostic’.

<sup>30</sup> Burstein (1974a) 31–5. <sup>31</sup> See Hall (forthcoming a).

<sup>32</sup> Since Heraclea Pontica was founded from and retained ties with Megara, it is possible that a reference to Spintharos underlies the joke in *Peace* 609, where Pericles is said to have precipitated the Megarian decree by throwing ‘a little spark’ (ἐμβρολῶν σπινοθήρα μικρόν) on the fire.

came from a Doric-speaking city, like the ground-breaking (because Doricising) tragic poet Rhinthon of Syracuse.<sup>33</sup> The themes on which Spintharos wrote plays nevertheless included *Heracles*, the hero most closely associated with his city of provenance (*Suda* s.v. Spintharos 4 = T1 *TgrF*), even if the incident dramatised was likely to be Oeta in the Greek mainland where Heracles' funeral pyre was lit. The play may have covered similar ground to Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*.

Heraclea Pontica, therefore, produced a tragedian famous enough for Aristophanes to assume his audience's familiarity with him. Spintharos may or may not have produced any plays in his home town. But in the fourth century there were dramatic productions staged there, according to the local historian Memnon, part of whose *History of Heraclea* is paraphrased by Photius (*FgrH* 434, 1–3); the performances were organised by the tyrant Dionysius whom we have met above. He was the son of Clearchus and the fourth man in his family to govern Heraclea:<sup>34</sup>

Clearchus was the first to attempt to make himself tyrant of the city. Clearchus had received an education in philosophy in Athens; he was one of the pupils of Plato, and for four years he had been a pupil of the rhetorician Isocrates. . . He ruthlessly destroyed those he attacked, not only amongst his own people but whenever he perceived a threat elsewhere. However he was the first of those who were called tyrants to establish a library. . . Satyrus the brother of Clearchus took over the government, acting as guardian of the tyrant's sons, Timotheus and Dionysius. . . Timotheus took over the government and reformed it to a milder and more democratic regime, so that his subjects no longer called him a tyrant, but a benefactor and saviour . . . so that when he died he was much missed, and his death aroused grief mixed with longing. His brother Dionysius cremated his body magnificently, pouring out tears from his eyes and groans from his heart. He held horse races in his honour; and not only horse races, but theatrical and choral and gymnastic contests. He held some of the contests immediately and others, yet more splendid, later on.<sup>35</sup>

Memnon, who is from Heraclea Pontica himself, is unequivocal that the funeral games for Timotheus in 338 BC included impressive theatrical and choral *agōnes*, performed on at least two separate occasions.

It would be fascinating to know whether the plays which were performed either at his son Timotheus' funeral games, or at the 'splendid'

<sup>33</sup> Taplin (2012) 226–7. <sup>34</sup> On Memnon, see especially the remarks of Burstein (1974a) 3–4.

<sup>35</sup> Transl. A. Smith at [www.attalus.org/translate/memnon1.html](http://www.attalus.org/translate/memnon1.html).



subsequent events, addressed myths of particular relevance to Clearchus, his dynasty, and its legitimacy as the hereditary ruling family. Monoson has recently argued that another, somewhat earlier tyrant called Dionysius with a pedagogic link to Plato, Dionysius I of Syracuse, systematically used tragedy to promote and legitimise his regime.<sup>36</sup> This was certainly the case with some of the tragedies staged by and for tyrants outside Athens earlier and elsewhere in the Greek world, for example Aeschylus' *Women of Etna*, written and performed for Hieron of Syracuse (*Life of Aeschylus* 18). Euripides occasionally wrote dramas to be performed away from Athens, such as his *Andromache*, probably composed for performance in honour of the King of the Molossians.<sup>37</sup> Once Archelaus had succeeded the far less culturally aspirant Perdicas II of Macedon in 413 BC, Euripides also wrote plays about the Macedonian monarchy, which had strong links with the god Dionysus.<sup>38</sup>

Memnon provides further details about the tyrant Clearchus which are also interesting from the perspective of performance culture:

But he turned out to be truly savage and bloodthirsty towards his subjects, and reached the peak of arrogance, so that he called himself the son of Zeus, and tinged his face with unnatural dyes, adorning it in all kinds of different ways to make it appear glistening or ruddy to those who saw him; and varied his clothing to appear fearsome or elegant. This was not his only vice; he showed no gratitude to his benefactors, was extremely violent, and ventured to carry out the most appalling deeds.<sup>39</sup>

Rich youths from such Black Sea city-states who studied in Athens will have had tales to tell back home of the finest theatrical productions of all at the drama competitions during Athenian festivals of Dionysus. The tyrant's fondness for theatrical effects is suggested by the extravagant costumes and make-up reminiscent of the legend of Salmoneus, King of Elis, who impersonated Zeus.<sup>40</sup> They also recall Peisthetairos in Aristophanes' *Birds*, who wrests sovereignty and even thunderbolts from Zeus on appointment as Tyrant of Cloudcuckooland, which is also a realm, in Thrace to the north of mainland Greece, inhabited by barbarians.<sup>41</sup> And

<sup>36</sup> Monoson (2012).

<sup>37</sup> On *Andromache*, see Hall (1989) 180–1 and nn. 70, 74; more generally, see Taplin (1999).

<sup>38</sup> See Hall (1989) 180–1; Revermann (1999–2000); Moloney (2003).

<sup>39</sup> *FgrH* 434, transl. A. Smith at [www.attalus.org/translate/memnon1.html](http://www.attalus.org/translate/memnon1.html).

<sup>40</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.9.7; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 61, 239; Strabo viii, p. 356; Manilius, *Astronom.* 5, 91; Vergil, *Aeneid* vi, 585; Diodorus Siculus 6.6.4–5 and 6.7.1–3.

<sup>41</sup> See Hall (forthcoming a).

the idea that Dionysius created a library in Heraclea Pontica, whether for his private use or as a civic benefaction, even if not strictly speaking true, says something about the historical tradition of intellectual culture in the city as perceived by Memnon: it is also reminiscent of Xenophon's remark that books were regularly recovered from wrecked ships by the Thracians of the Salmydessus coastline (*Anabasis* 7.5.13–14), the stretch of coastline linking modern Turkey and Bulgaria which the chorus of *Iphigenia in Tauris* recalls as unusually dangerous (421–38) and where several famous plays about Phineus and the harpies were set (see Wyles, this volume).<sup>42</sup>

The availability of books and a lively intellectual culture as early as the fourth century in Heraclea Pontica is, however, most strongly implied by the careers of Aristotle's Peripatetic student Chamaeleon (c. 350 to c. 275 BC) and of the somewhat older astronomer, philosopher and polymath Heraclides. Chamaeleon specialised in the history of poets and poetry; besides studies of Homer and Anacreon, his treatises included an *On Satyrs* (or *On Satyr Plays*), *On Thespis*, *On Aeschylus*, *On Comedy* and/or *On Old Comedy* (which included an important discussion of comic dancing).<sup>43</sup>

Heraclides was a much more distinguished intellectual than Chamaeleon, and he too had gravitated towards Aristotle's school after being chiefly interested in Pythagoreanism and Platonic philosophy as a younger man (D.L., *Life of Heraclides* 5.6.86). Born in about 368 BC, and studying in Athens, he lost the vote which in 339 BC decided Speusippus' successor as head of the Academy. He returned to Heraclea, where he probably lived for another twenty-five years.<sup>44</sup> He is said to have taught reading and writing.<sup>45</sup> Amongst the eighty-seven works attributed to him, most of which concerned ethics and natural science, there are a few on rhetoric and grammar and a handful on *mousikē*. The last category includes three books *On Passages in Euripides and Sophocles* and one *On the Three Tragic Poets*.

Of Heraclides' writings on the tragedians little remains, but what there is suggests an approach encompassing biography, elucidation of obscure references and etymologies in the plays, and the provision of plot summaries. One fragment of his work *On Homer* contains a biographical tale about Aeschylus: he was at risk of being killed when actually on stage

<sup>42</sup> Hall (2013) 48–50.      <sup>43</sup> Athenaeus, xiv, 628; ix, 374; Diogenes Laërtius, v, 6. § 92.

<sup>44</sup> Schütrumpf et al. (2008) 3; *Suda* s.v. Heraclides; Philodemus, *History of the Philosophers*, *PHerc.* 1021 col. VI.41–VII.10.

<sup>45</sup> Philodemus, *History of the Philosophers*, *PHerc.* 1021 col. IX.1–X.14.

(*epi skēnēs*) because he had revealed some of the secrets of the mysteries, and took refuge at the altar of Dionysus:

After the members of the Areopagus summoned him, informing him that he first needed to be tried, it was believed he was brought before the court and had been acquitted, the judges letting him go mostly on account of things he had done at the Battle of Marathon. For his brother Cynegirus had his hands cut off, and he himself sustained many injuries and was brought back on a litter. The epigram on his tomb also bears witness to these deeds.<sup>46</sup>

A biographical interest in the tragedians is also implied by a fragment where Heraclides seems to have said that Aeschylus' descendant, the tragedian Astydamas, was honoured with a bronze statue; the philosopher apparently supported this claim with a quotation from Euripides' *Telephus*.<sup>47</sup> Heraclides also offers an opinion on the true identity of Rhesus' mother, an unnamed 'Muse' in the Euripidean tragedy; Heraclides said she was Euterpe.<sup>48</sup> One ethnographic fragment implies that Heraclides used both Sophocles and Aristophanes in a discussion of whether the Cimmerians were also known as Cerberians and where exactly they were situated in relation to the Black Sea.<sup>49</sup> The content of one of the tragic treatises is implied in a fragment of a comedy by Heraclides' contemporary Antiphanes. An intellectual who is almost certainly meant to be Heraclides is mocked for dancing during a dinner party, despite being such a learned man 'who explains Heraclitus to everyone, who has alone discovered the art of Theodectas (a fourth-century tragedian), who composes the summaries of Euripides'.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps his mistaken belief that Spintharos' *Parthenopaeus* was the work of Sophocles was expressed in one of these treatises. But, like the implied reader of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Heraclides also wrote tragedies himself, according to Diogenes Laertius (5.92), although rather than putting his own name on them he claimed they were works by Thespis. The same source also happens to let us know that there was a physical theatre at Heraclea in the fourth century in which Heraclides was crowned (ἀντίκα

<sup>46</sup> Anon., *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* 3.2 = Heraclides fr. 97 Schütrumpf.

<sup>47</sup> D.L. 2.43–4 = Heraclides fr. 98 Schütrumpf.

<sup>48</sup> Schol. Eur. *Rhes.* 346 = Heraclides fr. 111 Schütrumpf.

<sup>49</sup> Aelius Herodianus and Ps.-Herodotians, *On Orthography* = Heraclides fr. 138 Schütrumpf. On the problem of the Black Sea 'Cimmerians' and their identity, see now Ivantchik (2011).

<sup>50</sup> Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 4.12.134B–C = Antiphanes fr. 111 *Poetae Comici Graeci* = Heraclides fr. 146 Schütrumpf.

γὰρ ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ στεφανούμενος); Philodemus, in his *History of the Philosophers*, said Heraclides actually died in the theatre. He tripped in the auditorium, shattering his skull on a step.<sup>51</sup>

The tragic fall and demise in the theatre of Heraclea may be an apocryphal tradition, but it reveals how closely Heraclides was identified with performance culture in the ancient imagination. Nor is there anything inherently unlikely about the existence of a literary culture in fourth-century Heraclea which included imitations and even forgeries of works by canonical writers. It is further supported by Diogenes Laertius' interesting discussion of Heraclides' experiments in his treatises with dramatic dialogue form. He was not, of course, the first philosopher to use dialogue. Plato had pioneered the form and Aristotle also used it in his exoteric works aimed at the general reading public.<sup>52</sup> But there seems to have been something about Heraclides' dialogues which specifically imitated the dramatic styles of different theatrical genres depending on their subject matter. *On Pleasure* and *On Temperance* were composed 'comically' (*kōmikōs*), whereas *On Those in Hades*, *On Piety* and *On Authority* were written 'tragically' (*tragikōs*).

Some of the fragments of Heraclides are indeed suggestive about the pathos or humour of his ethical works. Strabo paraphrases a sad story he told in *On Piety* about the flooding of Helike in the Peloponnese and the deaths of many of its citizens.<sup>53</sup> In his work *On Pleasure* he told the potentially amusing tale of Phanon, an exceptionally handsome man manufactured by Prometheus; Zeus fell in love with Phanon and was tricked into granting him immortality.<sup>54</sup> Another humorous story in *On Pleasure* concerned the Athenian Thrasyllus who became mad and decided that every single ship that arrived at Peiraeus belonged to him; he registered them all in his own accounts. Once cured of madness, he said that in that delusion he had been far happier than at any time he could remember in his life when sane.<sup>55</sup> And our loss in the non-survival of this versatile Heraclides' intriguing works is made more painful by the tradition that everything he wrote was variegated, elevated in diction and capable of charming the reader's mind.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Schütrumpf et al. (2008). <sup>52</sup> See Hall (2019) and Hall (forthcoming b).

<sup>53</sup> Strabo 8.7.2 – Heraclides fr. 26A Schütrumpf.

<sup>54</sup> Hyginus, *Astronomy* 2.42.1 = Heraclides fr. 38B Schütrumpf.

<sup>55</sup> Athenaeus *Deipn.* 12.81.554E–F = Heraclides fr. 40 Schütrumpf.

<sup>56</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, V.13.89.

One last interesting connection of Heraclea Pontica with late fourth- or early third-century theatre is that it seems to have been the setting of an important comedy by Menander which pilloried the very tyrant Dionysius who staged plays in honour of his brother, and whose wife Amestris was lampooned in a comedy by Diphilus of Sinope (see p. 49). The tyranny of Clearchus and his successors had produced a powerful lobby of dissident Heracleot exiles who became an important bargaining chip during the wars of Alexander's successors, during which Dionysius supported Antigonos. It seems probable that Cassander attempted to revive the exiles' hopes 'in order to intimidate Dionysius'.<sup>57</sup> This is a plausible explanation of Menander's *Halieis (Fishermen)* on the theme of the Heracleot exiles. The fragments are slight, but enough to show that the tyrant was portrayed vituperatively as fat, corrupt and decadent and that the play was actually set in Heraclea.<sup>58</sup>

Heraclea certainly enjoyed a developed theatrical culture in later antiquity; see, for example, the tombstone of Krispos, the famous pantomime dancer from Egyptian Alexandria, who died before he reached the age of 30 after winning a first prize for 'rhythmical' tragedy (a standard alternative term for 'pantomime' dancing<sup>59</sup>) at an unspecified competition. He seems to have died suddenly at Heraclea while on tour in the late second or early third century AD. The 19-line epitaph is in the Sotadean metre, which is sometimes associated with the gender fluidity of pantomime dancers.<sup>60</sup> It is inscribed on a white marble monument, complete with a miniature temple and Corinthian columns, now to be seen in the courtyard of the museum at Ereğli. The last part (lines 11–19) reads:

What mortal left his name here having already prematurely exhausted the body? Krispos, dead citizen of Alexandria, that area of rich grain on the Nile, is hidden under this sign, he who won a first prize for rhythmic tragedy. The world, marvelling at and extolling the graceful movements of his hands, saw the golden flower of its own theatres. His shining grace the year short of three decades unexpectedly extinguished.<sup>61</sup>

We can compare this tombstone with the civic honours which Heraclea conferred on the *biologos* ('actor from life') Flavius Alexandros Oxeadas of Nicomedia, although he was still alive.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Burstein (1974a) 77.    <sup>58</sup> Burstein (1974a) 77.    <sup>59</sup> Hall (2008a) 6.

<sup>60</sup> Zanobi (2014) 27–9.    <sup>61</sup> No. 9 in Jonnes and Ameling (1994), first reported in Şahin (1975).

<sup>62</sup> Stephanis (1988) no. 1956; cf. Dana (2011), *passim*.

In the case of these two great ancient Black Sea cities, identifying and reconstructing a theatrical culture requires painstaking work with fragments of ancient authors, supplemented by a very few inscriptions. But in combination, these few lines, words and phrases suggest a lively enjoyment of theatre which not only has distinctive Black Sea characteristics, especially in the choice of subject matter, but which differs qualitatively between different cities. Sinope was always associated with Cynic humour on account of Diogenes, her most famous scion, but she also produced two brothers who wrote comedies. One of them, Diphilus, was Menander's main rival, and his Black Sea origins seem to have affected his choice of mythical and historical content as well as realistic detail. Heraclea Pontica produced a moderately famous tragedian contemporary with Aristophanes, certainly possessed a physical theatre and witnessed performances of tragedy by the 330s BC. She also produced at least two fourth-century intellectuals who were experts on theatrical texts and authors; one of them, Heraclides, also wrote tragedies and developed dialogue forms which owed much to the style of tragedy and comedy respectively. And an intriguing find has been that the very tyrant who staged tragedies in the 330s, Dionysius, was (along with his wife) lampooned in New Comedies at Athens. Theatre became an international industry in the fourth century BC, and Athens remained its undisputed centre. But the evidence accumulated here proves that the presence of the southern Black Sea coast in the Greeks' shared thinking about theatre must on no account continue to be underestimated.