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Jonathan MacLellan

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**A City of Laughter:
Assessing Tarentine Comedy from the Fourth
Century to the Roman Stage**

by

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Report

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For my grandfather, Jim MacLellan

A Man of Science, Skill, and Ability

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Any and all errors, typographical or otherwise, are entirely my own.

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Following the publication of Trendall's *Phlyax Vases*, the history of comedic theatre in Magna Graecia received a great amount of scholarly attention, culminating in such important works as Taplin's *Comic Angels*, Green's *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society* and most recently Bosher's dissertation, *Theater on the Periphery*. This work is, in many ways, a supplement to their collective research, and assesses the literary and material evidence for the development of comedy in the Apulian city of Tarentum. The analysis of textual evidence will begin by investigating Tarentine interactions with Attic theatre in the beginning of the fourth century and leading to the influence of its comic tradition on the early stages of Republican Rome through the works of Rhinthon and Livius Andronicus. An assessment of the Roman historiographical treatment of Greek theatrical influence and the vibrant Bacchic cult practices observed in the festivals of Tarentum will round out discussion of literary and textual evidence

A general overview of fourth century comedic iconography production will begin the section on material culture. In this context, some notable individual pieces adduced by Taplin and Green will be addressed before other iconographic material from Tarentine coinage and other sources will be presented. The conclusion from this body of evidence affirms a vibrant and independent tradition of comedic theatre in Tarentum that was at once amalgamative through its interactions with the festivals of the Hellenistic period and conceptually autochthonic for the Tarentines themselves.

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I. Introduction and Background

The history of comedy in Southern Italy and Sicily has been a source of difficulty for scholars for over a century. As aptly summarized by N.J. Lowe, the subject “has something of the quality of early hominin archaeology: a vast and complex family tree that must somehow be reconstructed from a few cupfuls of random bone fragments from widely separate geological eras” (2007: 83-4). Accordingly, its scholarship has in large part centered on the origins and diffusion of particular genres: in many cases mainland Greek predecessors and Roman beneficiaries of these regional phenomena have been sought in an effort to complete the family tree that Lowe describes. Yet, in the development of the hominin species as in that of comedy, these attributions are only sufficient as far as providing a preliminary model. Most recently, scholars have begun to discover an array of possible amalgamations and anachronistic occurrences of forms once thought older or more rudimentary, such that even the definitions which once bound genres with terms such as “Old”, “Middle” and “New” Comedy have been rendered at best dubious and, at worst, obsolete.¹

With these terms under question, then, the scholar who seeks to understand and define a unique cultural phenomenon in Magna Graecia must do without the application of a faulty template that plots the performance traditions of the region in a line from the Attic festivals of the late Classical period to the early stages of Republican Rome. Instead, evidence for comedic authorship and performance must first be addressed at a more local level and understood in the context of the individual *poleis* of Southern Italy

¹ cf. Lever (1954) and esp. Dobrov, ed. (1995) *Beyond Aristophanes* (along with Sidwell’s review in *CR* 47 (1997)) for a collection of such observations.

and Sicily. To this end, a survey of the material, historical and literary evidence of comedic theater will be made for Tarentum, a city known in particular for its mass production of comedic iconography, and the home of the enigmatic and innovative *Phlyax* author Rhinthon, as well as the more celebrated Roman poet Livius Andronicus.

I will first consider literary evidence, beginning with the question of whether the explicitly topical comedies of *Aristophanes* could have been re-performed in front of a non-Athenian audience. Here, Revermann's recent contributions in his *Comic Business* will be explored, noting first where the poet of Old Comedy gives internal evidence for his ability to produce his plays in venues other than Athens and then revisiting Revermann's influential suggestion that the Spartan hymn at the close of *Lysistrata* may be evidence for reading the play as a later revision made to suit a Tarentine audience. A study of the fragments of Rhinthon will follow, along with accompanying testimony by his ancient commentators, in an effort to shed light on his mysterious form of *hilarotragoidia* and what conclusions may be reached on such evidence. In addition, this study will investigate ancient commentary that attests to his debatable influence on comedy in Republican Rome, focusing in particular on the scholarly debate surrounding his possible influence on Plautus' *Amphitruo*.

The contribution of Livius Andronicus to the development of Roman theatre will follow, focusing in particular on his Tarentine origin and its implications for his work in Rome. This will also illuminate the theatrical life of his city in the late 4th to early third century, when its artists and iconography were at their height in production. A survey of Tarentum as a comic *topos* in the works of early Roman comedy will show how the poets

established it as a literary City of Comedy for Roman audiences. Rounding out this study of textual evidence will be an appraisal of Roman historical treatments of the development of comedic theater in the republic and the subjugation of Tarentum and the Italiote League in the Pyrrhic War, where a noted historiographical bias against Greek cultural influence (particularly from Tarentum's robust Dionysian cult) – which may be understood in the context of the Bacchanalian Conspiracy of 186 – will be checked against those commentaries which identify inroads made by Rhinthon and Livius Andronicus into Roman Comedy.

Given the paucity of fragments from Rhinthon and the specific attribution of Livius Andronicus' works to his career in Rome, studies of comedy in Tarentum, and in Magna Graecia at large, have depended on the relatively immense production of comedic vase paintings with depictions of actors engaging in various burlesque performances. For this study, a general assessment of iconography attributed to Apulia, most of which seems to have been produced at Tarentum itself, will give a sense of the development of costumes, characters and subject material from the late Classical period until the period of Roman conquest, with comparative glances at developments in other parts of the Mediterranean. Following this, a study of a few particular pieces in light of this trend will be made in an effort to introduce a new methodology which views these well-known works first in a local context before attributing them to particular genres or external influences.

Before beginning with the study, a review of scholarship on theatrical performance in Magna Graecia, and in particular on its material evidence, is needed.

Prior to the publication of Taplin's *Comic Angels*, the majority of scholars followed Trendall's conclusion in his publication of the *Phlyax Vases*, where he asserts that his collected depictions of grotesque actors with padded costumes were evidence for a more vulgar type of comedy performed in the late 5th and 4th centuries in Magna Graecia. Venturing further, he connected the collection with the shadowy genre of *Phlyax* comedy, for which ancient sources are substantial in number but short on detail. Despite this difficulty, the conclusion was widely accepted and the vases were accepted to be depictions of *Phlyax* comedy in action, such that even Bieber dedicated a large part of her *History of Greek and Roman Theater* to the native Southern Italian farce.²

The chief opponent to this view has been Taplin, whose *Comic Angels* has swayed scholarly opinion to the early conclusions of T.B.L. Webster – namely, that the large collection of comedic vases to be found in Southern Italy depicts not local farce but rather Athenian Old Comedy in re-performance. In his study, he notes in particular that many of the vases in fact predate the works of Rhinthon, the attested *archêgos* of *Phlyax* comedy, and in some cases bear a strong resemblance to the plays of Aristophanes and Attic comedy. One other vase even has inscribed dialogue between characters written in Attic dialect, a piece which will receive due attention later. This seminal study has since received widespread support, most notably by Csapo, Revermann and (with some alterations) Green.³

For all these works have contributed in the way we understand the theater of Southern Italy and its interaction with the Attic poets and festivals, they have

² Bieber 1961: 129-46

³ Csapo 1986; Taplin 1987, 1990 and 1993; Revermann 2006; Green 2006.

nevertheless left us an unfinished picture of performance culture in Magna Graecia and Tarentum in particular. If we are to accept that these comedies were reproduced in the West, presumably with some adaptations to readjust their topicality for a foreign audience, at what point would we consider such emendations to undercut its identity as “Athenian”? Would such identification be made by the Tarentine audience, accustomed to performances which lacked the topicality that was so much a part of the viewing experience in Athens? Can a play be classed with Attic Old Comedy (generic bounds which are in and of themselves debatable) with a diminished role of the chorus in these performances abroad, when the reduction and eventual disappearance of this performative element is considered a marker of the transition from Old to New Comedy?

As much as the scholarship of Taplin and his supporters has opened our eyes to the possible interactions between the ‘peripheral’ theater of the West and that of Attica, we are still left to explain why this iconography occurs so frequently – and much more so – in Southern Italy and Sicily than it does in Attica by the mid to late fourth century. An Athenocentric core-periphery model (in line with Plato)⁴ – which argues for a transplantation of Athenian Old Comedy in the West that is identifiable in the material record – is unable to answer these questions satisfactorily. It needlessly divorces the remarkably voluminous production of this local ware from the context of the origin of their manufacture and all too casually dismisses the connection by ancient commentators of distinct comedic styles to the regions of Southern Italy. In place of this template, it is

⁴ Plat. *Laches* 183a-b.

better to consider the evidence in a more local context before attributing any influence to the development of the textual and material evidence for comedic theater.

Kathryn Bosher's recent dissertation on the social and political history of theater in Sicily has answered this call by providing a sound methodology for understanding the traditions of a theater that is both amalgamative and conceptually autochthonic. Her detailed research has revealed a vibrant development of theater under the reigns of tyrants such as Dionysius I (himself a victorious dramatist at the Lenaea at Athens) and his successors, where the building of performance spaces and the progression of comedy under Epicharmus and those in his wake are best understood in the context of the island's local tyrannical agenda. Most notably to her credit, she does not approach the alternate extreme of addressing the local production in a vacuum (i.e. without considering interactions with mainland Greece and the Italian peninsula) but instead simply begins her work at the smaller local level and expands outward to indicate a performance culture that is in a more dialectical relationship with those of other Mediterranean *poleis* – where instead of envisioning a single ripple effect spreading to the rest of the Greek world, we should instead picture a confluence and assortment of ripples emanating from every *polis*.

It is my hope to further Bosher's work in the case of Tarentum and suggest that the city (benefitting from its location on the coast of Southern Italy) developed a distinct tradition of comedic performance from a coalescence of influences from throughout the Mediterranean. Under Rhinthon, one of these forms came to be recognized as *hilarotragoidia*, a form of meta-theatrical humor that specifically targeted tragic treatments of mythological material and which quite likely borrowed from the earlier

burlesque farce seen on the so-called *Phlyax Vases*. Elements of his, and the city's, brand of comedy persisted until Rome's conquest and enslavement of the population at the end of the Pyrrhic War. The subsequent influence of Rhinthon's and Livius Andronicus' works in Republican Roman theater, along with the city's later treatment in Roman comedy, cemented its identity as a comically vulgar topos with both a real influence in the early authors of Roman comedy and a unique literary status as a comedic city.

II. Textual Evidence

Tarentum and Attic Old Comedy

Despite Dover's assertion that "We lack evidence that any Aristophanes play was ever performed after its author's lifetime, and I shall be surprised if evidence to that effect ever presents itself",⁵ there is enough internal evidence in the comedies to reject this argument. When the chorus leader proclaims in the parabasis of the *Frogs*, "I thought you worthy to be the first to have a taste of my comedies" (522-3: τῶν ἐμῶν κωμωιδιῶν / πρώτους ἤξιώσ' ἀναγεῦσ' ὑμᾶς), it is clear that the poet privileged Athens with the debut of his play, suggesting that the choice of venue was his and that the play could (and in all likelihood *would*, given the emphasis of πρώτους at the opening of line 533) be re-performed thereafter.⁶ The geographic and temporal extent to which comedians could reproduce their plays, however, is still undetermined, and Dover's skepticism in face of such evidence is therefore worth some consideration.

Our surviving textual evidence, including testimonia on the lives of the poets, seems to argue for a wider spread of works by individual tragedians as opposed to comedians in the 5th century.⁷ The works of Aristophanes are often more *explicitly* topical

⁵ Dover, K.J. (1989) *The Greeks and Their Legacy*, ii, p.199 [Quote found: Taplin, 99].

⁶ Revermann 2006: 68

⁷ Some of the more prominent examples: We are told in an anonymous *Life of Aeschylus* that he spent the final years of his life in Gela, while those familiar with Plutarch's *Life of Nicias* will recognize the story of Athenian prisoners at Syracuse securing their release by reciting strains composed by Euripides, who is also alleged to have spent time in the court of Macedon (Schol. *Frogs* 85; Paus. 1.2.2). The argument of Laches in the eponymous Platonic dialogue (183a-b) states that a more successful tragedian would opt to perform in Athens rather than ἔξωθεν κύκλῳ περὶ τὴν Ἀττικὴν κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας πόλεις ("in the other cities just outside around Athens in a circle"). This, however, seems to be a more conservative summary than the above evidence allows, and as he does not address the extent of comedic influence and diffusion, this brief aside is best taken with a grain of salt for this study. Wilson (2007) brings more material evidence to light that also gives us an interesting look into how Aeschylus and other major figures may have had a significant impact on the culture of competitive performance in Classical era Sicily.

than those of contemporary tragedians: the political class and other major public figures at Athens were often on the receiving end of his bitter satire (one need only think of Cleon, Socrates and Euripides among other figureheads), and one can reasonably conclude that much of this humor would be lost on audiences on or outside the periphery of Athenian social influence – or those which were more resistant to Attic culture. A more conservative conclusion, perhaps in line with Plato (see n.7), might argue that the Attic Rural Dionysia were the alternative venues of choice for a poet whose works depended upon an audience familiar with the figures and institutions subject to his mocking disapproval. However, one might still find it incongruous that tragedians, despite writing material that would be more easily accessible to wider audiences, would have a greater privilege of traveling with their work while comedic greats like Aristophanes would be left behind in Attica.

In answer to this lack of textual evidence, however, Revermann's study of comedic dramaturgy in *Comic Business* includes a section which treats the authenticity of the ending to Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, concluding that the hymn to the Spartan Athena Chalkioikos was not part of the original production but rather an emendation made in order to reproduce the play at Taras. Because of its large-scale production of comedic vases and its status as a Spartan colony, the city is seen to be a perfect candidate for Aristophanic reproduction and would explain why the play's *exodos* has such a Spartan color to it. For Revermann, the "pressures of self-assertion" for the sole Spartan colony in Magna Graecia and the "[celebration of] Panhellenic peace and the (new) Spartan closure would make perfect sense: together they articulate not only the city's Greekness but also

the proud heritage of being the offshoot of the city which at the end of the play Athens is forced to seek peace from” (Revermann 2006: 258).

A question must be raised here: if one reads this play as a celebration of Panhellenism, why is there an issue with placing the production of the play – as it is – in Athens? Certainly, Aristophanes did not shy away from staging other Greeks speaking in dialect in *Acharnians*,⁸ and if an appeal for peace is being made through a reinforcement of common “Greekness” (the Spartan does, after all, recount the heroics of Spartans and Athenians against the Persian threat at Artemision and Thermopylai in 1247-72), is it not just as fitting, if not more so, that the Spartan hymn would be performed before the Athenian audience during a civic festival? If not, would such intentions not ring hollow if they were capped with only a celebration of the Athenian patron at the Athenian festival or the Spartan patron at Taras?⁹

The argument is focused at the start of the play’s *exodos*, where Lysistrata commands her Spartan counterpart, “Now you show us a new song for a new song” (1295: πρόφαινε δὴ σὺ μούσαν ἐπὶ νέᾳ νέαν) The former “new song”, as Sommerstein and Henderson both point out, must be the first ode in lines 1247-92, where the Laconian Muse (Μῶαν, 1250) is invoked the first time before being recalled for the second song: “Leaving lovely Taygetus again, come quickly, Laconian Muse, to us” (1296-7: Ταύγετον αὖτ’ ἐραννὸν ἐκλιπῶά / Μῶα μόλε Λάκαινα πρεπτὸν ἄμιν). The explicit connection between the two Spartan songs leaves no room to suppose, per Sommerstein

⁸ For summary, cf. Colvin 1999 ch.4 on the use of Boeotian and Megarian dialect in the play.

⁹ Henderson: “It is natural that Ar. wanted the novelty-act (not an Athenian) to perform the final song, and the spirit of reconciliation is the more memorably expressed by having a Spartan orchestrate the exit...” (1987: 218).

and Revermann, that the chorus sang an Athenian hymn in between (Sommerstein 1990: 223; Revermann 2006: 255). Moreover, there is simply no textual evidence to support the loss of a counterbalancing Athenian antistrophe to the Spartan hymn of 1279-94, despite Wilamowitz and Revermann's treatment of the "Athena Problem".¹⁰ The latter, arguing that "...in a competitive performance context in (still) democratic Athens a playwright ought to be concerned with creating a counterbalance of some description to the closural dominance of the enemy's song" (Revermann 2006: 256), assigns the poet too much obligation to show reverence, and may have confused the world of contemporary Athens with the one that is the setting of Aristophanes' play. On stage, in their very hymns, the Spartans are expressly *not* the enemy of Athens, but instead the former allies who were joint victors against the Persian menace (1248-72). It is hard to imagine that the Athenians would find offense with a chorus singing a hymn to its native cult by the play's end when only 40 lines earlier it fondly recalled the great Athenian naval victory at Artemisium (1250-3).

Ultimately, Revermann's argument that pro-Spartan sentiments in the play and in the Athenian audience of 411 were less extensive than most suppose – even though an eventual oligarchic takeover promptly brought a peace agreement with Sparta and an end to conflict¹¹ – is unsubstantiated. So too is his conclusion that "*some* inbuilt closural emphasis on Athens is sorely missing..." (2006: 256; emphasis his), as well as his following question of "*where* would the ending make sense?" (2006: 258; emphasis his). While it is indeed inarguable that something must have followed the Spartan's invocation

¹⁰ Revermann 2006: 255; Wilamowitz 1964: 198-9.

¹¹ Thuc. 8.70.2, 90.2, 63.4.

at 1296-1321, there is no need to supply an Athenian counterbalance to Spartan prominence at play's end – or to remove the play's production from Athens and transplant it to a Spartan venue – to fulfill a message of reconciliation. Rather, it is quite reasonable to conclude that Aristophanes wanted the reconciliation to be made between this Spartan chorus and the Athenian audience for whom he produced this play, and certainly did not need to parade Athenians on stage to dilute or divert the intent of his *exodos*.

In the case of Tarentum, then, no textual evidence in the plays or later ancient commentaries will allow us to identify *conclusively* the spread of Athenian comedy to the colony in the period of Aristophanes and the other poets of what we would identify as Attic Old Comedy. We are simply left with the knowledge that these plays would indeed be re-performed after their first production and could be performed in venues other than Athens. However, as these are unspecified, and given the greater topicality of Aristophanes' earlier works, we are left with the troubling and unsatisfying conservative conclusion that limits the extent of his and others' diffusion to the neighboring theaters of Attica until more substantial evidence comes to light.

In his later works, however, Aristophanes began to write works that forsook the political humor seen in the *Wasps* and *Acharnians* and instead targeted figures more widely recognizable to a possibly Panhellenic audience. *Thesmophoriazusae* (411 B.C.E.) and *Frogs* (405 B.C.E.) primarily treat the works of tragedians, especially Euripides, who were known far beyond Athens, with only scant references to general hardship in Athens. The latest of his surviving plays, *Wealth* (388 B.C.E.), is almost completely removed

from his earlier topical humor and instead presents the efforts of a master and his clever slave to escape poverty. The possibility for re-performance abroad is far greater for these plays than earlier productions, and Taplin's *Würzburg Telephos* provides the most compelling piece of evidence for a single play's (*Thesmophoriazusae*) performance in Magna Graecia. Yet even this piece, as we will see, has important divergences from the text of the play and suggests that, if indeed Aristophanes' later works were re-performed in Southern Italy, it was not without alterations and adjustments for the local venue.

Rhinton

Moving from the discussion of external origins to the Tarentine authors themselves, none have been so widely attested yet survive in so few fragments as the mysterious Rhinton, the alleged *archêgos* of the still more enigmatic *Phlyax* comedy. The Suda entry on his life and work (s.v. Ῥίνθων) reads that he was a Ταραντίνος κωμικός, ἀρχηγὸς τῆς καλουμένης ἱλαροτραγωδίας ὃ ἔστι φλυακογραφία, υἱὸς δὲ ἦν κεραμέως, καὶ γέγονεν ἐπὶ τοῦ πρώτου Πτολεμαίου [ca. 323-285]¹² (δράματα δὲ αὐτοῦ κωμικὰ τραγικὰ λή). Though he is definitively termed a comic poet at the very beginning of the entry, the remainder of the entry shows that this was simply not enough to convey the nature of his performances. Indeed, rather than a run-of-the-mill poet, he is an *archêgos* – an inventor, or at least an innovator – of a type of performance called *hilarotragoidia*, which, as we will see, has some conspicuous ties to the *tragicomoedia* of Plautus and the *Amphitruo*. This genre is expounded twice more in the entry: on the one hand it is the art of “writing *phlyakes*”, on the other his *dramata* are

¹² Völker 1887: 2.

comic treatments of the ambiguous τραγικά.¹³ The definition seems to do little to show how Rhinthon was any sort of innovator – there are, after all, numerous examples of Aristophanes taking the tragic poets of his day to task, most notably and frequently Euripides. The innovation, then, perhaps lies in large part with the art of *phlyakographia*.

Stephanus of Byzantium (s.v. Τάρας) gives us more details on the *Phlyax* genre in the context of Rhinthon's work, simply stating that "The Tarentine Rhinthon metarhythmized that-which-is-tragic into something humorous." (καὶ Ῥινθων Ταραντίνος φλύαξ τὰ τραγικὰ μεταρρυθμίζων ἐς τὸ γελοῖον.) Once again, emphasis is placed on the poet's ability to convert elements of tragedy into something humorous or comical, yet the word used to designate this conversion, μεταρρυθμίζων, suggests a more specialized method of parody that is tied to meter or rhythm – to "metarhythmize" *ta tragika* into *to geloion*, creating not a burlesque of mythological material but rather of tragic portrayals of these myths. Nossis' epitaph on the poet further emphasizes the tragic element of his plays:

Καὶ καπυρὸν γελάσας παραμείβεο καὶ φίλον εἰπὼν
ῥῆμ' ἐπ' ἐμοί· Ῥινθων εἶμ' ὁ Συρακόσιος,
Μουσάων ὀλίγη τις ἀηδονίς· ἀλλὰ φλυάκων
ἐκ τραγικῶν ἴδιον κίσσον ἔδρεψάμεθα
(Anthol. Pal. VII 414)

Laugh, and loudly. Then pass by, saying a kind word

¹³Stewart 1958: 367 n.64: Plat. *Phaed.* 269A uses the word substantively to mean "tragedies", though it may elsewhere mean "lines of tragedy" as the singular *to tragikon* meaning a specific line or sentence in a tragedy.

¹⁴Sosibius (via Athenaeus XIV 621ff). likens the *phlyax* genre to Spartan δεικηλισταί, yet Pickard-Cambridge noted that the latter presented "such scenes as the advent of the itinerant musician with his nostrums, the detection of the orchard-robber, or the thief who stole meat after the feast – all of them characters in the real life of the times." (*DTC* p.195) Since Rhinthon's plays seem to strictly follow mythological plots and tragic portrayals thereof, the connection is uncertain at best, perhaps an effort to closely tie the Dorian settlements of Southern Italy and Sicily with Sparta.

over me. I am Rhinthon of Syracuse,
a small nightingale of the Muses, but from my *phlyax*
tragedies I plucked for myself a personal ivy crown.
(adapted from Skinner, M. *Nossis Thēlyglōssos*)¹⁵

The prevailing opinion is that he is here considered Syracusan after the place of his birth,¹⁶ yet his theatrical career flourished later in Tarentum, as attested by all other sources. The Tarentine dialect of his fragments, as noted by Hesychius, confirms the latter. More important here, however, is the joining of *phlyakōn* with *tragikōn* in the final line where he plucks an ivy for his theatrical accomplishments. Nowhere is he called a *kōmikos*, nor does his work have anything to do with *to geloion*. Instead, Nossis' short description of Rhinthon's work only manages to distinguish itself from *ta tragika* by employing *phlyakes*, an art which we may understand as transforming that-which-is-identifiable-as-tragic into that-which-is-identifiable-as-humorous.¹⁷ Though at times we will see scenes in Aristophanes which approach this treatment of tragic poetry,¹⁸ his plays never exclusively target the depiction of mythological figures by the tragic poets, whereas the titles of Rhinthon's plays bear this distinction out.

For the term *phlyax* itself, our earliest source comes from Sosibius through Athenaeus, who defines the genre as an Italian phenomenon much akin to the Spartan *deikelistai*:

τοῦ δὲ εἵδους τῶν δεικλιστῶν πολλὰ κατὰ τόπους εἰςὶ προσηγορίαι.
Σικυῶνιοι μὲν γὰρ φαλλοφόρους αὐτοὺς καλοῦσιν, ἄλλοι

¹⁵ from Pomeroy, ed. *Women's History & Ancient History*; UNC 1991.

¹⁶ cf. Völker 1887: 2 for summary.

¹⁷ Todisco 1990: 122.

¹⁸ cf., e.g. the parabasis of *Acharnians*, where Dicaeopolis parodies the speech of Euripides' *Telephos* at the altar.

δ' αὐτοκαβδάλους, οἱ δε φλύακας, ὥς ' Ἰταλοί·
(Athen. 14.621.f = FGrH 595 F 7) [emphasis mine]

There are many titles by location of a type of *deikēlistai*: The Sicyonians, for example, call them phallus carriers, others call them improvisers, **and some call them *phlyakes* like the Italians.**

The *deikēlistai* were understood by Sosibius to be performers of a more vulgar form of comedy, such that one would mimic certain recognizable characters “in simple speech” (Athen. 14.621d: ἐν εὐτελεῖ τῇ λέξει). On the performers themselves, he states that they were otherwise known as “prop-makers” (Athen. 14.621e: σκευοποιούς) and “mimickers” (Athen. 14.621.e: μιμητάς). The connection of comedy’s origins to Doric farce is also made by Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448a28), though Rusten has recently concluded that “[this claim] is an agglomeration of different arguments that are mutually exclusive” (2006: 40).¹⁹ Too little survives in fragments or other testimonia to securely connect these art forms with that of Rhinthon’s *hilarotragoidia*, and though his costuming may have maintained some elements of earlier Dorian burlesques, his method and his humor, as we will see, can hardly be dismissed as unsophisticated or even vulgar.

Webster (1952) noted that, from the end of the 5th century to the mid-fourth century, we have a large collection of titles which suggest mythological plots and characters.²⁰ From 400-350 B.C.E. he counts 41 out of 108 plays with such titles, yet in the second half this drops significantly to just 9 out of 89 plays dated from 350-320

¹⁹ cf. esp. Rusten for a summary of Aristotle’s argument: “*Either* comedy was born during a time of democracy in the Greek city of Megara, *or else* it was invented by Epicharmus in the Sicilian city of Megara, *or else* *kōmōidia* was from “village” (*kōmē*, which is supposed non-Attic), since its first performers were from cities and performed in villages (i.e., not in either city of Megara; this last argument seems to be Doric in general, not merely Megarian)” (2006: 40 n.13; emphasis Rusten’s).

²⁰ He also notes, correctly, that “this evidence has to be used with care” (1952: 23).

B.C.E. The vast majority of these earlier mythological plays, from what can be gathered, are “translations of heroic characters into low life interspersed in earlier times with political satire” (1952: 23). Nesselrath points to the frequency of θεῶν γοναί plots which had “something of a Janus-like quality: while searching for new themes, their poets looked back into the past and found stories already present in pre-classical literature” (1995: 12). The body of literature in question was the Homeric Hymns, the earliest surviving poetic treatments of these stories, and these were accessible to a Pan-Hellenic audience even in a comedic adaptation (1995: 11).

We are told between Stephanus of Byzantium and the Suda that Rhinthon wrote 38 plays in his lifetime, but only nine of those titles remain. Seven of these (*Amphitruo*, *Heracles*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Iphigenia at Tauris*, *Telephos*, and *Orestes*) strongly suggest that he parodied the works of Euripides, who as we know was familiar to the Sicilians by the end of the fourth century (see n.7). His attested *Iobates* was a tragedy of Sophocles²¹ and the *Doulomeleagros* possibly related to the *Dulorestes* of Pacuvius or the *Meleagron* of Philetaerus.²² Whereas the works of Aristophanes and the comic poets of Athens in the 5th century seemed to aim their parodies at the city of Athens with its ills and shortcomings, composing original plots and characters to convey their messages, Rhinthon’s work seems to be fixed squarely on parodying the tragic treatment of mythology in a way that would limit his plots to the original tragedies and treatments thereof, resulting in his attested innovation of *hilaro-tragoidia* – “hilarious tragedies”.

²¹ TrGF IV p.268; Kassel-Austin 2001: 263.

²² Kassel-Austin 2001: 262.

As mentioned, these *testimonia* to the comedic style of Rhinthon are more numerous and telling than the actual fragments of his plays, yet the surviving exchange from his *Orestes* is quite illuminating:

A. ὥς σὲ Διόνυσος αὐτός ἐξώλη θείῃ
B. Ἴππωνάκτος τὸ μέτρον· A. οὐδέν μοι μέλει
(Rhinthon fr. 1; Völker (1887) p.37)

A. May Dionysus himself absolutely destroy you!
B. That's the Hipponactean meter! B. I don't care!

The humor is strikingly meta-theatrical and self-aware. The first actor's attempt at laying a dramatic curse on his counterpart is not undone by any action in an imaginative setting but rather by a slip in his meter,²³ the error of a tragic actor, not a mythological character. Rhinthon's dramatic illusion is two-fold, a play-within-a-play where the humor is based on the character's shortcomings as a tragic actor as opposed to an illusory event behind the 'fourth wall'. This type of humor must have required a theatre-savvy audience from which it could draw on its experiences in theater, expecting at the very least an acquaintance with meter to understand that Speaker A had slipped up. Though the title is shared with Euripides' tragedy, these lines seem to reflect none of those in his *Orestes*, so one should hesitate to draw too strong a connection between the two. The play is certainly no comedic copy of the Athenian original (the use of Tarentine dialect should be evidence enough) yet it is probable that the motifs of the Euripidean performance were subject to parody with a license for Rhinthon's personal touch.

²³ The second-to-last syllable of the line, the first of θείῃ, is drawn out and creates a colliamb from the iambic trimeter. (Fontaine 2007: 230; Gigante 1970: 18).

The surviving line of the *Iphigenia at Tauris* does not provide as sure an insight into Rhinthon's humor, though Gigante reads in it a jest about the original tragedy's costuming:²⁴

ἔχωσα καινὸν φαινόλαν κάπαρτίαν (Rhinthon fr. 7; Völker 1887: 39)

I have a little tunic and must adjust it. (adapted from Gigante 1970: 18)

If true, the joke seems to be poking fun at the noted hallmark of shabbily-dressed heroes in Euripides' plays, though I would argue that there isn't enough to connect this fragment textually with the original. Nowhere in the tragedy does any character make any note of clothing. Thus if it is a parody of Euripides, it must have been an explicitly visual one for which we can gather no evidence. However, the speaker's reference to a "short tunic"²⁵ and the need to adjust it (presumably out of modesty) quite strongly suggests the costuming found on many of the *Phlyax* vases of the fourth and early third centuries, in which genitalia are regularly exposed beneath the hem of a short *chiton*. Rhinthon thus appears to be retaining elements of earlier comedy which were performed in his city in the same period during which Menander's more modest comedies flourished in Athens. For all he may have borrowed from Aristophanes' earlier jabs at Euripides and the exposed phallic costuming of the archaic and early classical periods, Rhinthon seems to have retained some crudity with his clever theatrical humor.

Rhinthon in Roman Comedy

²⁴ Gigante 1970: 18.

²⁵ Suda s.v. φαινόλης· χιτωνίσκος. οἱ δὲ παλαιοὶ ἔφεστρίδα (καὶ κλίνεται εἰς ου); Zonaras s.v. φαινόλης· χιτῶν ἱερατικός. οἱ δὲ παλαιοὶ ἔφεστρίδα.

Rhinton's influence on Roman comedy is noted by a few later scholars though also curiously omitted by others. John Lydus, in recording the origins of Roman theater (ca. 550 A.D.), distinguished seven divisions of comedy: the *palliata* (παλλιᾶταν), *togata* (τογάταν), Atellan (Ατελλάνην), *tabernaria* (ταβερναρίαν), *Rhinthonica* (Ῥινθωνικήν), *planipedaria* (πλανιπεδαρίαν), and *mima* (μιμικήν). He does little to elaborate on a definition of Rhinthonic Comedy, only going so far as to say that it is ἑξωτική. In his following paragraph, he notes Rhinton's special influence on Roman comedy: the poet, along with Sciras and Blaisos and ἄλλους τῶν μυθηγόρων, is specially designated as a καθηγήτη ("instructor" or "expert") who supposedly was the first to write comedies in hexameter. From these, he argues, Lucilius was the first to satirize Roman heroic epics in hexameters while the σατυρικοί utilized the χαρακτήρα of Eupolis and Cratinus in Rhinton's chosen meter, eventually developing an invective to the genre which gave birth to Roman satire (σατυρικήν...κωμωδίαν).²⁷

Without any hexameters in the surviving fragments, Lydus' assertion should be treated with caution, as more sources on Rhinton's body of work attest to a unique farcical treatment of tragedy which is supported by the discernible iambic trimeter in the few surviving lines. The possibility may very well remain that other quotations of single words by grammarians, who were primarily interested in his dialect,²⁸ may have come

²⁶ Lydus I.40: Osann. 1. s. p.75 reads ἑξαμετρική in line with the following paragraph on Rhinton's alleged use of the meter; Welcker's correction of ἑξοδική should be rejected as Lydus specifically defines Atellan comedy as that of ἑξοδιάρων only a few lines before.

²⁷ *Ibid* I.41.

²⁸ cf. discussion on Rhinton's use of πανός in his *Amphitruo* per Athen.3.111 and Hesych, s.v. πάνεια or that of his use of κράββατον in the *Telephos* per Poll. 10.35. The majority of fragments, apart from those noted, come in only one or two words from which any meter is impossible to determine.

from hexametrical lines, but hard evidence is lacking outside of Lydus' argument. Furthermore, in the *Orestes* fragment, the first speaker begins by evoking a trope of great tragic gravitas, a curse. This is not undone by any action in the plot, but rather his own expressly theatrical error when he slips up in his meter. The blunt interruption by his counterpart, consisting of only half a line, is a simple and humorous counterbalance to the speaker's intended diatribe in the traditional trimeter. If hexametrical epic, either written or in recitation, were the butt of any of Rhinthon's jokes, the evidence is completely lost to us.

Nevertheless, Lydus' distinction of a Rhinthonic genre in Latin comedy echoes arguments from other commentaries by literary historians. The earliest mention of the *comoedia Rhinthonica* is made by Caesius Bassus, who lists it along with tragedy, praetexta, comedy, tabernaria, Atellan and Mime, though he offers no further definition.²⁹ Important here is his distinction of the genre from both tragedy and comedy, perhaps a reinforcement that Rhinthon's ἱλαροτραγωδία treated both serious and humorous material, even changing the former to the latter.

Aelius Donatus' fourth century *De Comoedia* is the first to make the same seven divisions (which he calls *species*) as we see in Lydus' work, though like Bassus he does not define or address the nature of *Rhinthonica* in any detail. His contemporary Euanthius, in the *De Fabula* (itself attached to Donatus' commentaries on Terence), makes use of the same list (though he terms them *genera*), and while he offers less than Lydus in details, he curiously defines the Rhinthonic genre as *ab auctoris nomine* and

²⁹ Caes. Bass. *De Metr.* 2672 P.

dates it, along with the other six genres, *after* Greek New Comedy. That each of these distinguish a *comoedia Rhinthonica* from other Greek comedy styles in the Roman theater suggests that it had a style distinct from Attic comedy; furthermore, Euanthius' dating of the genre after New Comedy (itself dubious) suggests that the genre was understood to have had a chronological development independent of any overriding influence from the region, thereby discouraging an Athenocentric model for the genre's growth. While it is initially unsurprising that Euanthius would then note that the genre is eponymous for the one who developed it, it nevertheless indicates that his fourth century C.E. readers might have fully appreciated and understood this definition through a first-hand knowledge of Rhinthon's works themselves. Even if there was no robust survival of Rhinthonic plays in performance, though, Donatus and Euanthius would most certainly be relying on a scholarly tradition dating back to the early Republic whose grammarians noted the Tarantine's special influence on Roman comedy.

Modern scholarship has maintained a healthy skepticism toward the claims of these commentators, but nowhere has it been stronger than in the question whether Rhinthon's attested *Amphitruo* (for which we only have the play's title) was an inspiration and influence to Plautus when writing his own version of the comedy. This skepticism, however, has often stemmed from the assumption that, however one would define or characterize Rhinthon's work, it must have been too crude to have influenced Plautus' "elevated" style. In this vein, Griffith's reading of Lydus' seven divisions of comedy understands the list as hierarchical, and that "For what his evidence is worth he mentions Rhinthonica after Atellana and before 'tabernariae' and 'planipedariae', which

suggests scanty literary pretensions” (1962: 53 n.3). Yet nowhere does Lydus express any intentions to distinguish a hierarchy of forms, nor indeed does he give us enough details about the genres, let alone *Rhinthonica*, for modern readers to make these questionable judgments on their own. Still more troubling is Griffith’s assertion that the “delicate tone and ample scale” of Plautus’ *Amphitruo* must necessarily be far-removed from the Tarentine’s style. This of course overlooks the quite clever meta-theatrical humor in the *Orestes* fragment, which even Taplin notes is “hardly made for backwoods theater” (Taplin 1993: 51). Even further, if the Rhinthonic plays did indeed have a shabby character in production, a conclusion typically drawn from a dubious connection between Trendall’s vases and the author’s works, one would do well to recall the telling fragment from Caecilius Statius: “There is often wisdom even beneath a dirty little robe” (Caec. *fr.* 255: *saepe est etiam sub palliolo sordido sapientia*).

Griffith’s final argument – that Plautus’ use of the word *tragicomoedia* and Mercury’s promise to convert the tragedy into comedy disqualifies any influence from Rhinthon³⁰ – seems to ignore completely the contrary testimony from the Suda, Nossis and Stephanus of Byzantium. Indeed, the definition of the Tarentine’s comedy as ἱλαροτραγωδία seems as viable a parallel as any to the Latin *tragicomoedia*, and his attested ability to “metarhythmize that-which-is-tragic into something humorous” seems to anticipate the modification that Mercury is about to perform for the audience he addresses in the Plautine prologue. Indeed, this self-consciously meta-theatrical humor is

³⁰ Plaut. *Amph.* 52ff.

perhaps the most striking similarity between Mercury's monologue and the *Orestes* fragment.

Nevertheless, the groundless assumption that Rhinthon's comedy was little more than an unsophisticated folk performance has been pervasive, particularly in studies of the Plautine *Amphitruo* attempting to separate the play from a crude predecessor. Galinsky's examination of Scipionic themes in the play even went so far as to conclude:

...both notices about Rhinthon [i.e. Suda and Stephanus Byzantius] explicitly associate him with the *phlyax*; i.e. even if he was the *archêgos* in transforming *ta tragika* into something humorous, the spirit of the finished product was still akin to Doric folk drama and raucous slapstick farce. The *Amphitruo* is removed from this kind of comedy by a gap that cannot be bridged over by the term "Exalted Rhinthonica" (Galinsky 1966: 207-8).

Though Galinsky does make the cogent point elsewhere that *ta tragika* in Stephanus of Byzantium's account does not necessarily mean that Rhinthon turned full "tragedies" into something humorous, it is hard to imagine that, if Rhinthon instead turned the "tragic elements" (or other more general translation) of a play into something humorous, the audience would have seen anything greatly different than we initially suspected.³¹ Further, if we insist on divorcing the word *tragika* from the specific tragic works themselves, we are still left to explain the correspondence between the titles of

³¹ cf. n.13 above. If we were to read *ta tragika* as a plural meaning "lines of tragedy", it would suggest a compelling relation with Mercury's claim that he will transform the *Amphitruo* from tragedy to comedy *ut sit omnibus isdem vorsibus* (Plaut. *Amph.* 55), where Plautus modifies the Tarantine's panache for "metarrhythmizing" tragic meters into comic into a work which portrays itself as comic in character despite restricting itself to tragic meter. Still, one could just as well argue that a summation of "tragic lines" could well be taken to mean the tragedy itself.

Rhinthon's and Euripides' works, one which reinforces the notion that he specifically had the tragedian (and his works) in his sights.³²

Livius Andronicus and Tarentum in the Third Century

The earliest source to place Livius Andronicus' birth at Tarentum was Cicero, who relied on Atticus' account that the poet was enslaved after a Roman victory and in 240 BCE gave the first production of Greek plays in translation before a Roman audience at the *Ludi Romani*.³³ This conclusion has held tentative favor among modern researchers.³⁴ For a Greek slave with such demonstrated literary talent, it is reasonable to conclude with Jerome that he served as a tutor in the house of Livius Salinator, where his exercises led to his translation of the *Odyssey* into Latin as well as the writing of tragedies based on the Trojan cycle (e.g. *Equus Troianus*, *Achilles*, *Aegisthus*).³⁵ His familiarity with such a broad range of material and his consequent ability to stage no doubt benefitted from his experience in the theatrical life of Tarentum prior to capture, and much of this likely occurred with the Artists of Dionysus.³⁶ By the early third

³² Stewart 1958: 388 also notes, as above, the connection of Rhinthon's work with tragedy as made by Nossis et al. during a period in which the works of comedians were already distinguished, thus reinforcing the playwright's adherence to a quasi-tragic element in his works.

³³ Cic. *Brut.* 72. The date is resolved after rejecting Accius' argument for dating L's first production in 197, which would have made him arrive later than Plautus and Terence.

³⁴ Mattingly (1957) maintains the later dating but too casually dismisses the role of innovator assigned to L by Horace, Livy and Cicero that would be incompatible with an early second century arrival (von Albrecht 1997: 112 n.1; Gruen 1990: 80-1). Nevertheless, the dating is far from secure, not the least because Cicero seems to have had no secure annals by which to reference his conclusions and is essentially relying on Atticus, whose sources are murky to us (Mattingly 1957: 160). Whether the date of 240 is secure or not, it is more important that L. retained a traditional status as an early innovator in Roman theater across a broad range of commentaries (Gruen 1990: 85).

³⁵ Jerome, *Chron.* Olymp. 148.2; Gruen finds this questionable and argues that Jerome's conclusion "may rest on no more than an inference from late Republican practices" (1990: 82), yet Suetonius also records that L was an instructor at home and in public (*De Gramm.* 1) and the poet did adopt the name of Livius from his former master.

³⁶ Jory 1970: 228.

century, theater festivals across the Mediterranean had become increasingly Panhellenic in character, welcoming competitors and artists from abroad whose work had become increasingly professional and prompted the formation of these standard guilds at major cities.

This, of course, not only explains Andronicus' own familiarity with such a great volume of literature but speaks to the development of a theatrical life which had become more integrated at Tarentum. While artists and works from abroad were doubtless given stage for performance at the city's theater, Tarentine artists such as Dracon and Heraclitus (who were victorious actors at the Delphic festival in 259 and 257 respectively)³⁷ made a name for themselves and their home during the third century. As Brauer convincingly argues in noting their accomplishments, "Taras's successful competition in stage productions in the older Greek areas during this period indicates not only the far-spread character of Hellenistic culture but also the importance of Taras as a center for theater" (1986: 114). It comes as no surprise, then, that in this period comedic iconography from Apulia reaches its peak in production relative to the rest of the Greek world, producing a staggering majority of vase depictions, figurines and other representations of the comedic stage in the material record. Theater, and comedy in particular, was a major Tarentine export by the end of the century, and its artists were gradually coming to be recognized by audiences across the Mediterranean, including the Republican Roman audiences.

³⁷ Wuilleumier 1939: 613; Collitz-Bechtel, *G.D.I.* 2564, l.50; 2566, l.46.

Tarentum as Topos in Roman Comedy

Even more than the Tarentine authors themselves, the city of Tarentum itself appears to have been a recurring feature in early Roman comedy. In the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, the city is used as a setting of comic action: while visiting the market at Tarentum, where at the same time some games were being held, one of the brothers becomes separated from his father and kidnapped by an Epidamnian, after which the father died from grief at the city.³⁸ In addition, we know that the comedian Naevius wrote a play entitled *Tarentilla* or “The Tarentine Whore”. Beare asserts that “the play was no doubt translated from the Greek”, referring specifically to the attested Ταράντινοι of Alexis of Thuri (1964: 37). Though this does suggest a precedence for comedic treatment of the city and its inhabitants dating back to the fourth century as far away as Athens, one which gives further context to the references found in Plautus above, we know too little of the Greek play to draw any conclusive parallels with the scanty fragments of Naevius’ work. Without boldly suggesting a plot reconstruction, it seems likely from its most substantial fragment that the title character would fit the mold of a Plautine *mala meretrix*:

Quasi pila
in choro ludens datatim dat se et communem facit.
Alii adnutat, alii adnictat, alium amat alium tenet.
Alibi manus est occupata, alii peruellit pedem;
anulum dat alii spectandum, a labris alium inuocat,
cum alio cantat, at tamen alii suo dat digito litteras.
(Naevius, *Tarentilla* fr. 74-79; Warmington, ed.)³⁹

³⁸ Plaut. *Men.* 27-36; The scenario is retold at 1112-13 by the formerly kidnapped Menaechmus.

³⁹ George, Lisa R. *Review: William S. Anderson, Barbarian Play: Plautus' Roman Comedy*; *BMCR* 1994.1.15.

As though she were playing as a ball in a dancing ring, passed around, she gives herself and makes herself common to all. She nods to one, winks at another, loves another, and holds still another. Her hand is busy in another place, and she pulls at another's foot. To one she gives a ring to look at, and with her lips calls another, and though she sings to one, she nevertheless gives a message to another with her finger.

In addition to the play's possible setting in Tarentum,⁴⁰ its title suggests that there may have been certain comedic connotations derived by the audience for the city, where a play about a lower-class *meretrix* could expectedly take place. Indeed, the title does not require the explicit term of *meretrix* to describe the lady in question, but simply employs the diminutive toponym. That Naevius directly associates such a character of base standing yet sure comedic stock and moral debauchery with the southern colony confirms what Beare identifies as “an unmistakable Italian flavour” (1964: 36).

In two more fragments, the peregrinations of the pair of young men are directly equated with debauchery as seen in the *Tarentilla* herself. In the first, a speaker asks where the two youths come from as they waste their fathers' wealth: “Where do these two young men live, who waste this wealth abroad that was their fathers' before?”

⁴⁰ von Albrecht maintains that “...the setting cannot have been in Tarentum, since there the description ‘Tarentilla’ would have had no particular distinctive value.” (1997: 125) I would counter that, so long as there were non-Tarentines in the play, the distinction is perfectly justifiable even in the setting of Tarentum, where an emphasis on the character's local origins within the comedic setting may very well have served a pejorative purpose. Compare the fragments of *The Soothsayer*: A. *Quis heri apud te?* B. *Praenestini et Lanuvini hospites.* A. *Suopte utrosque decuit acceptos cibo, alteris inanem volvulam madidam dari, alteris nuces in proclivi profundier.* (“A. Who dined with you yesterday? B. Guests from Praeneste and Lanuvium. A. It would have been just the thing to have both parties entertained with their favorite fare: to the one you should have given a little sow's belly, drawn and boiled, while for the other you should have spilt out nuts at downhill speed!”) (transl. Warmington, ed. *Remains of Old Latin*; Beare 1964: 37) Though the guests are from cities other than the host's, the emphasis on their origins serves not just to identify their origins but rather to lead into the correspondent's punch-line on their characteristic diets. Although contrasting examples may be found in Plautus' *Poenulus* and *Persa*, which are set in neither Carthage nor Persia, or Terence's *Andria* which is not in Andros, the emphasis on the young men's debauchery in their wanderings, coupled with the portrayal of the *Tarentilla* that relates to these debaucheries, reinforces the setting of the play at Tarentum.

(*Tarentilla* fr. 80-1: ...*Ubi isti duo adulescentes habent / qui hic ante parta patria peregre prodigunt?*); the second fragment appears to be a scene of reckoning with one of the fathers, who order them to return from Tarentum and go back to a virtuous life: “First that you return to good character, that you go away from idleness, and that you honor the homes and land of your fathers rather than disgraces abroad” (*Ibid.* fr. 90-1: *Primum ad virtutem ut redeatis, abeat ab ignavia, / domos patris patriam ut colatis potius quam peregri probra*) The two travelers, who have made a trip to Tarentum, have encountered this *meretrix* and squandered their wealth before being called home. The connotation of Tarentum as a seedy city is one reflected in the *Menaechmi* above, and the money-swindling ways of the *Tarentilla* herself no doubt finds parallels with that of Tarentine farmers selling wool-less sheep in the *Truculentus*. This is more than just a nod to the comically vulgar character that the audiences of Republican Rome saw in Tarentine culture, but even further sets the city as a conceptually debauched foil to that of a morally grounded Rome which was victorious over the city in the Pyrrhic and Punic wars.

Roman Theatrical Historians and Bacchus

This polarity does much to explain the absence of the *Rhinthonica* as a distinct genre in both Livy’s⁴¹ and Horace’s⁴² assessments of the development of Roman theater, where Greek – and by implication, Tarentine – influence is omitted or at least disparaged. Lowe’s reading of Livy notes that the historian may have programmatically eliminated

⁴¹ Livy ii.7; cf. also Valerius Maximus ii.4.4, which follows this same account.

⁴² Horace, *Epistles* ii.1.139-63.

any suggestion of Greek influence on the art of his country (2006: 81-2).⁴³ According to the historian, Etruscan dancers were introduced in an effort to mitigate a plague during the consulship of C. Sulpicius Peticus and C. Licinius Stolo (ca. 365/4 B.C.E.), which were novel to the militaristic nation that was accustomed to gladiatorial entertainment. Following this, these dancers were imitated by young men, who added improvised jests with their coordinated movements, while the professionals came to be called *histriones* (from the Etruscan *ister* for “actor”). These improvised performances began to take on more formal structure as *saturae*, with accompanying pipe music. Livius Andronicus was the first to create a play with a plot as well as mimed parts for actors accompanied by professional singers. From here, the more refined and professional form of Livius’ theater parted ways with the improvised farces of the youths, while the *fabula Atellana* came into vogue as plays of *exodia*, though they were never allowed to be performed by professional actors but instead were left to the young Atellans. From this summary Livy is supposed to have shown the origin of theatrical art in order to show how it has come from wholesome origins to an all-too-popular craze in his city.

Against this account, Lowe notes several probable anachronisms and fallacies: the youthful improvisations of Etruscan dancing “is probably a projection back from the widely attested rural improvisations known as Fescennine verses”; there is no evidence

⁴³ Cf. Beare: “Nevertheless Livy himself indicates that he is writing with a moral purpose, namely to show from what limited and wholesome beginnings the dramatic art has reached the intolerable vogue it possesses in his own day. He therefore emphasizes the native, amateur element and makes the professional and foreign element as small as possible” (1964: 17). The moral purpose is explicitly clear from the end of his passage, where he notes the development of the excessive craze with theater as a negative one. I would not, however, group together his treatment of professional elements (which are recorded as those from the contributions of Livius Andronicus that diverge from the improvisational farce of the youths) with foreign elements (which, apart from the Etruscan dances, are altogether omitted).

for the existence of musical *saturnae*; Livius Andronicus' translations of Greek works into Latin performances are unmentioned, while the argument for his invention of mimed *cantica* would be inconsistent with the sung parts of Plautus' plays; and finally, the divergence of professional and amateur strands of performance seems as if it could be recast in terms of Greek versus Italian forms of theater: The native Atellan *exodia* and improvised dances of the youths are set apart from the staged plays of Livius Andronicus with its professional actors who, by law, could not be citizens (Lowe 2007: 82-3). His conclusions in light of these are sound:

What is clear from all this is that, even in the age of Cicero, the early history of Roman drama was the subject of deep chronological confusion and cultural contestation; that the traditions of literary tragedy and comedy were understood to have grown up in a complex multicultural environment of Etruscan, Greek, Oscan and Latin performance traditions; and that considerable cultural energy was invested in attempting to assert the Italic over the Greek elements in the archaeology of those traditions (2007: 83).

Viewed in context with his treatment of the Greeks and their culture in the rest of his work, Livy's omission of Greek cultural influence becomes less surprising: Special emphasis is placed on the unruly nature of the Bacchic religion that flourished in Southern Italy and persisted as a form of cultural resistance to Roman authority even after the republic's conquest of the Italiote League. In addition, the suppression of the Bacchanalian revolt in Rome and the severe curtailing of the cult's celebration within the city also fall in line with the development of the empire as a nation which, for Livy, owes little to Greek influence. Tarentum – a city in which the major theatrical festival was celebrated in honor of Dionysus – along with fellow Greek cities, was not credited with

any significant theatrical inroads, even when its own Livius Andronicus was widely credited with some of Roman theatre's greater innovations.

The well-known passage from Horace's epistle to Augustus bears striking similarities to Livy's account, though it does at least acknowledge Greek influence on the dramatic arts in Rome. Here his tool is a vitiation of past authors rather than a complete omission of their place in history. Beginning with a *reductio ad absurdum*, he quips:

Si, quia Graiorum sunt antiquissima quaeque
scripta uel optima, Romani pensantur eadem
scriptores trutina, non est quod multa loquamur:
nihil intra est oleam, nil extra est in nuce duri;
venimus ad summum fortunae: pingimus atque
psallimus et luctamur Achiuis doctius unctis (Horace *Epist.* II 28-33).

If, because the most ancient writings of the Greeks are indeed the best, Roman writers are to be weighed on the same scale, there is not much we can say: nothing hard is inside an olive nor on the outside of a nut; we have come to the peak of success: we paint, sing and wrestle more skillfully than the oiled Greeks.

Though much of the epistle is a complaint against undue antiquarian tastes of his day, a clear ethnic conflict is expressed as well: he notes that the *scripta antiquissima* are specifically *Graiorum* and might be weighed against the *Romani scriptores* on the same scale. Then, he proclaims victory not just for the artists of his day, but more specifically those of Rome over the Greeks (32-33). Having set this linear measure from the antiquarian Greeks to the modern apex of Roman artistry, he curiously ties old Republican poets in line with the Greeks, as they are simply famous for being dead and posthumously canonized: Ennius is supposed to be an *alter Homerus* who "seems to regard lightly anything that happens to his promises and Pythagorean dreams" (51-2:

leviter curare videtur quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea);⁴⁴ Naevius inexplicably remains in the people's memories, since "every old poem is so sacred" (53-4: *adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema*); and even Plautus is disparagingly thought to "rush to the model of the Sicilian Epicharmus" (58: *ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi*). The real blame for this injustice, he argues, lies squarely with the general populace:

Interdum uolgus rectum uidet, est ubi peccat.
 Si ueteres ita miratur laudatque poetas
 ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet, errat;
 si quaedam nimis antique, si pleraque dure
 dicere credit eos, ignaue multa fatetur,
 et sapit et mecum facit et Ioue iudicat aequo (*Ibid.* 63-8).

Sometimes the rabble sees rightly, sometimes they make a mistake. If it marvels and praises the old poets such that it prefers nothing else nor compares anything to them, it errs. But if the rabble believes that they say some things in too old a fashion, or most things too harshly, or admit they say many things ignobly, then it has sense, agrees with me, and reasons at a Jovian level.

Horace's preceding description of the popular theatrical revival of these older artists (60-3) argues directly against Livy's questionable chronology and omission of Greek influence, yet both authors seem to share a noticeable disdain for the persistence of Greek art in the Roman artistic scene. While Livy chooses to ignore this altogether in favor of crafting a fanciful autochthonous theater, Horace simply dismisses it as something belonging to the common rabble which is incapable of valuing these works on any criteria other than age. In either case, their accounts must be taken as primarily

⁴⁴ On Ennius as the 'Other (Roman) Homer', cf. Brink: "In view of Virgil, also the Second and Roman Homer, this status can scarcely be thought Augustan. Nevertheless the verse must reflect some contemporary taste, however outmoded. For that is the point of H's rebuttal" (1982: 92).

argumentative with an eye toward extolling a Roman art which is sufficient in its own right and hardly dependent on the Greeks or their works for any refinement.

Contacts with Rome

In the case of Tarentum, a similar characterization of the theatrical and Dionysian culture of the colony is easily discernible in the accounts of Roman historians. One of the most well-known anecdotes from the fall of Tarentum in the Pyrrhic war relates the visit of the Roman Legate Lucius Postumius during the city's celebration of its Dionysia festival. Upon arriving at the theater, where a great portion of the citizen body is assembled after watching performances, the legate's terms for surrender are heard in public assembly.⁴⁵ The unruly response of the Tarentines, which varies by account from the crowd singing mockery in meter to specifically targeting the strange accents of the visiting Romans for the audience's amusement, marks a stark contrast with the sobriety and cordiality of the Roman conquerors. After he persists in offering his terms, one of the men in the audience (in Dionysius' account he is identified as a certain Philonides, who earned the nickname Κοτύλη or "Little cup" for his perpetual drunkenness)⁴⁶ approaches the legate, lifts his garments, and in a scene reminiscent of crude theatrical burlesque soils the Roman's fine robe to the uproarious amusement of his fellow countrymen. It is this act, according to all accounts, that seals the fate for the hapless Tarentines,⁴⁷ as the legate prophetically declares that the stain of his robe would be "washed out with their blood" (Dion.Hal. 19.5.4-5).

⁴⁵ Val.Max.2.2.5 explains here that such public assemblies in theaters were *ut est consuetudino Graecae* ("per the Greek custom").

⁴⁶ Dion.Hal.19.5.2.

⁴⁷ Polyb. 1.6.5.

The humorous story reads like a folk tale and carries many of the same preconceptions of Greek culture as those which color the commentaries of Horace and Livy and which other scholars sought to apply in critiquing the commentaries of John Lydus and others who noted an influx of *comoedia Rhinthonica*. It is particularly notable that the Tarentines show resistance to Roman sobriety in the confines of their theater through a ribald comedic spectacle, which to the historians seems to be the cultural well-spring of their vulgar riposte.⁴⁸

The dichotomy of Tarentine licentiousness and sound Roman virtue is also borne out in Livy's account of the Bacchanalian conspiracy in 186. The record of Sp. Postumius Albinus' speech emphasizes that the corrosive element which threatened the religious foundations of Rome was a foreign one:⁴⁹

Quotiens hoc partum avorumque aetate negotium est magistratibus datum uti sacra externa fieri vetarent, sacrificulos vatesque foro circo urbe prohiberent, vaticinos libros conquirerent comburerentque, omnem disciplinam sacrificandi praeterquam more Romano abolerent. Iudicabant enim prudentissimi viri omnis divini humanique iuris nihil aeque dissolvendae religionis esse, quam ubi non patrio sed externo ritu sacrificaretur (Livy 39.16.8-9; emphasis mine).

How often in the times of your fathers and grandfathers has the task been assigned to the magistrates of forbidding all **foreign rites and ceremonies**, prohibiting hedge-priests and diviners from entering either the Forum, the Circus, or the City, seeking out and burning all books of pretended prophecies, **and abolishing every sacrificial ritual except what was accordant with Roman usage!** Those men were masters of all human and divine love, and they believed that **nothing tended so much to destroy religion as the performance of sacrificial rites, not after**

⁴⁸ Willeumier: "L'annalistique ancienne s'est plu à décrier et à grosser cette scène tragic-comique, *en opposant la dignité austère des Romains à l'orgueil licencieux des Grecs*" (1939: 104; emphasis mine). cf. Plato *Laws* 637b, where the Spartan Megillus similarly characterizes the actions of the Tarentines at their Dionysia: "...just as I once saw on the wagons among you, I also witnessed the entire city drunk at the Dionysia among our colonizers in Tarentum." (...ὥσπερ ἐν ἀμάξαις εἰδὼν ποτε παρ' ὑμῖν ἐγώ, καὶ ἐν Τάραντι δὲ παρὰ τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἀποίκοις πᾶσαν ἑθεασάμην τὴν πόλιν περὶ τὰ Διονύσια μεθύουσας.).

⁴⁹ Gruen 1990: 35-6.

the manner of our fathers, but in fashions imported from abroad (transl. Roberts 1905).

In response to this threat, whether real or perceived,⁵⁰ a *senatus consultum* officially banned the Bacchanalian religion forever, first at Rome then throughout Italy,⁵¹ with exceptions only given with a design to secure state control over the cult.⁵² In 184, a later Lucius Postumius, praetor of the Tarentine province, carried out a *quaestio* of his territory in pursuant to the peninsula-wide ban. His efforts consisted of disbanding *magnas pastorum coniurationes* in the Apulian countryside and carrying out sentences both on his own authority and by sending other criminals to the senate in Rome for judgment.⁵³ Tarentine resistance to the initial *senatus consultum* and these later measures persisted for a few years more until, in 182-1, Lucius Durroneius (praetor of the Apulian province) carried out yet another *quaestio* against the *residua semina* of the Bacchanalia.⁵⁴

The affair gave sanction to the Roman senate for establishing greater municipal control in parts of Italy where Pyrrhus and Hannibal had once established their bases of power.⁵⁵ This largely centered on Tarentum, which as hegemon of the Italiote league, and

⁵⁰ Gruen 1990: 34-78 *passim* for a succinct appraisal of scholarly debate.

⁵¹ Livy 39.18.7-8: *...ut omnia Bacchanalia Romae primum, deinde per totam Italiam diruerent.*

⁵² *Ibid.* 39.18.8-9: Specifically, ancient altars or images were preserved, and individuals could plead with the city praetor for exception (who would consult the senate). If granted, meetings could be attended by no more than 100 with no more than 5 participating in the sacrifice, while collections of common money and a presiding chief priest were both prohibited from the ceremony. The restriction of size, the dictation of hierarchy and infrastructure in the ceremony, and the required oversight of the local Roman authority reinforces the notion that the senate saw the cult and its meetings as a clear political danger.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 39.41.6-7; An insurrection of slaves in Apulia, consisting mainly of shepherds who allegedly endangered public roads and pastures, was suppressed by the same Postumius around the same period, resulting in 7000 convictions, many resulting in execution (39.29.8-9).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 40.19.9-10.

⁵⁵ Gruen 1990: 43; See also 60: “[Livy’s] narrative needs to be taken seriously – not as a characterization of the Bacchic cult, but as a campaign to justify its suppression”.

with a large harbor and connections to Sicily and the rest of Magna Graecia, continually made political demonstrations of autonomy against Roman influence on the Italian peninsula. This resistance was also shown in the persistent gatherings of shepherds and other Bacchic cult members who continued to practice and oppose Roman control despite the numerous *quaestiones* (see above, n.53-4). As a result, Republican stereotypes had characterized the cult as an entity of violence, wantonness and senseless fear – all opposites to standard Roman virtues – and these are no better shown than in the plays of Plautus.⁵⁶ As Gruen rightly concludes, “Stereotypes count. They represent popular impression, and they demonstrate that the dramatist could assume immediate understanding (however distorted) on the part of his audience” (1990: 50-1). How, then, do we reconcile this Roman rejection of the cult after seeing such close connections between the theatres of Republican Rome and Tarentum, where the Dionysian festival and worship served as strong markers for civic identity?

According to an account by Festus, the Artists of Dionysus were given official sanction by Rome in 206, a few decades after the date given for Livius Andronicus’ first production at the *Ludi Romani*, and the group once explicitly devoted to the god of theatre and viticulture in Southern Italy and elsewhere *adtributa est ei in Aventino aedis Minervae* (Festus, 446 L).⁵⁷ In this instance one can discern a paradigm for Rome’s appropriation and translation of Hellenistic culture into its own infrastructure, adjusting

⁵⁶*Ibid.* p. 50: Plaut. *Miles* 1016 notes the secretive nature of the cult, *Casina* 979 its wanton revelry, *Aul.* 408-13 its violent nature, *Bacch.* 53 its propensity to instill terror in its followers, while *Bacch.* 371-2, *Men.* 828-41, and *Amph.* 702-5 accentuate the cult’s general irrationality.

⁵⁷ ap. Jory 1970: 226; Attempts to connect this adoption of the Artists of Dionysus with the *collegium poetarum* (which included Accius and met at the temple of Hercules of the Muses in the Campus Martius) have fallen short of definitive proof (cf. Gruen 1990: 89).

the performing guild to suit its own traditional and “respectable” deity of crafts and tradesmen.⁵⁸ Gruen also points to the appropriation of Cybele’s enshrinement in 191 and the Roman claim of liberating the Greeks from Antiochus III and concludes, “This hardly forms the prelude to an anti-Hellenic campaign” (1990: 56).

On the other hand, it does not give us a prelude to a wholesale acceptance of Hellenic culture either. By banning the Bacchic religion with strictly controlled exceptions, giving a little-known slave from Tarentum the opportunity to perform *translated* Greek plays at a major festival soon after victory in the First Punic War, and adopting the Artists of Dionysus under the authority of a traditional Roman cult, the Romans did not so much embrace the Dionysian and theatrical culture of Southern Italy and Tarentum, but rather shaped it to fit their mold. It is no wonder, then, that the accounts of Livy and Horace do so much to diminish the influence of Greek culture into an art which, for all intents and purposes, was conceptually held as Roman once appropriated. Only in the writings of later commentators do we find scholars recording distinct elements of Rhinthon’s “hilarious tragedies” in Roman comedy (either evident from their own viewings or from the scholarly tradition of earlier grammarians), works which arose from the development of Panhellenic theatrical festivals that also made possible the broad literary prowess of a younger Livius Andronicus.

⁵⁸ Gruen 1990: 88; Jory 1970: 229-30.

III. Material Evidence

General Statistics

The most recent comprehensive collection of material culture reflecting comedic performance is still found in the third volume of Green's *Monuments Illustrating Old and Middle Comedy*, which records the dating, origin of manufacture, and (where available) provenience of the surviving vase paintings, terracotta figurines and other memorabilia. In order to assemble a general picture of Tarentine and Apulian production of this iconography relative to the rest of the Greek world, one may count the number of pieces recorded from each quarter-century period and thereby calculate each region's volume of production by percentage. The results, shown in Figure A, demonstrate a remarkable rise in Apulian (and thereby Tarentine)⁵⁹ manufacture over the course of the fourth century, leading from the period in which Aristophanes wrote some of his late comedies in Athens through the end of the century and the *floruit* of Rhinthon at Tarentum and Menander in Athens.⁶⁰

The column to the left, showing the calculations for pieces dating from 400-375 B.C.E. (*MMC* period ii), illustrates a minimal diffusion of material, nearly all of which is produced at Athens (84.12%). Apulian pieces, which constitute the second-highest portion of production (6.35%), include the earliest of the *Phlyax Vases* recorded by

⁵⁹ cf. Neugebauer 1939: 420ff for conclusions on centering production at Tarentum. The relative size of the urban area of Tarentum and the celebration of the Dionysia at its theater center both the material production and theatrical performances of the depictions at the city.

⁶⁰ An ideal supplement to these calculations would be a comparative study of the proportion which comedic iconography contributes to all material production by region, in order to understand its relative importance to each center's production and thereby gauge the popular interest in the performances. While such figures might be calculable from Beazley, Trendall et al. on vase production, they would skew the material study in *MMC*³, which accounts for multiple materials (such as terracotta and bronze figurines). Furthermore, the lack of a comprehensive publication of these other materials currently hinders such an assessment.

Trendall. Among these are the famous *New York Goose Play*,⁶¹ a piece depicting a comic Zeus and Dionysus before the window of a possible Alcmena,⁶² and a host of vases which depict comedic actors both in evidently mythological and seemingly everyday settings.⁶³ The diversity of fabrics is also much greater in Athens, where we find a collection of bronzes and terracotta figurines depicting stock characters from common settings in addition to two vases in which we find female chorus members and costumed men with phalloi standing with an *aulētēs*.⁶⁴

On the one hand, the relatively enormous production in Attica during this period strongly supports Webster and Taplin's arguments in seeking Attic precedents for the later rise in Apulian *Phlyax* vases. No other region in this period seems to have enough of a production and export of comedic iconography to act as an external catalyst for Tarentine artistic manufacture, and the aforementioned bell-krater with phallic-costumed men and the *aulētēs* is recorded as being found in Southern Italy.⁶⁵ The record of the vase's provenience is imprecise beyond this point and should thus be treated tenuously in relation to comedic development at Tarentum. Nevertheless it demonstrates that there was, at some level, an export market from Athens to Magna Graecia for comedic iconography that does not seem to have been reciprocal based on our surviving evidence.

⁶¹ New York 24.97.104; *PhV* 84.

⁶² Taranto 121613; *PhV* 61.

⁶³ Mythological scenes include a scene with the Death of Priam (Berlin F 3045 = *PhV* 21) and one with Heracles bringing Cecropes to Eurystheus (Biscari 735 = *PhV* 25); Among the more everyday scenes include a nondescript "Phlyax warrior" (Heidelberg 25.03 = *PhV* 146) and "Dancing phlyax" (Hope 224 = *PhV* 93), as well as a piece showing an old man with a slave carrying a pack (*Bari* 2795 = *PhV* 74).

⁶⁴ Female chorus members found in Heidelberg B 134 = Bieber fig.208; Costumed men with phalloi near an *aulētēs* found on S. Agata dei Goto, coll. Mustilli = *MMC*³ AV 15.

⁶⁵ *MMC*³ AV 15 (p.61).

In the next quarter century (375-350 B.C.E.; *MMC*³ period iii) the production began to swing gradually toward Apulia, where the proportion of manufacture became far more substantial (18.06%) while that of Attica accounted for significantly less than before (54.42%). More remarkably, the diffusion of production is much more extensive in this period, as we begin to see for the first time comedic iconography manufactured in Cyprus, Sicily, Paestum and even as far away as Asia Minor. As Green points out, in this pivotal period many of the comic poets we at first recognize as Athenian originally came from far afield at this time – Alexis from Thurii, Antiphanes and Anaxandrides from Rhodes, and Philemon possibly from Syracuse. This is, he rightfully concludes, “a sign of the importance of Athens in the theatrical world and at the same time evidence of the increasingly Greek as opposed to simply Athenian nature of the medium” (Green 1994: 67-8).

It is this period in which the earliest known Attic piece is found to have been imported to Tarentum, a single terracotta of Heracles standing cross-legged with his club, lionskin, bow and quiver.⁶⁶ So, too, we see the earliest comedic terracotta made in Apulia, an unidentifiable figurine of a man holding a cloak with his legs missing.⁶⁷ The majority of Trendall’s *Phlyax Vases* were produced in this quarter-century, most of which include comical mythological scenes (particularly of Heracles),⁶⁸ and one fascinating, yet sadly lost, piece which depicted a *phlyax* actor riding a fish, a comedic treatment of the

⁶⁶ Trieste 650 = *MMC*³ AT 26 K.

⁶⁷ Trieste; *MMC*³ TT 1 = *MMC*² 44, TT 1.

⁶⁸ A sampling of the mythological scenes: Bari 3899 = *IGD* iv, 26 = *PhV* 18 (Birth of Helen); S. Agata dei Goti ex coll. Rainone = *PhV* 59 (a possible parody of Antigone) and Bari 2970 = *PhV* 17 (Visit to Zeus Ammon). Scenes with Heracles: Berlin F 3046 = *PhV* 22; Leningrad inv. 299 = *PhV* 31 (portraying Heracles, Zeus and Iolaos); *PhV* 41 (Heracles reclining between two *phlyakes*); London F 99 = *PhV* 110 (Heracles with a club and dish); Taranto 56048 = *PhV* 122 (Eurystheus, Heracles and an elderly *phlyax*).

hero Taras riding a dolphin (Fig.G). This particular piece's remarkable correlation to images of Taras on the colony's fourth century coinage is proof positive that the Tarentines had begun making comedic parodies of familiar native material.⁶⁹

Between 350-325 B.C.E. (*MMC*³ period iv), the rate of production at Tarentum and Southern Italy surpassed Athens completely. Sicilian products constituted the majority of this period (33.78%), followed by Apulia (21.62%) and Attica (18.24%). The export of Apulian pieces was particularly widespread, and modern scholars have discovered such works in Crete,⁷⁰ Northern Italy,⁷¹ Sicily,⁷² and a thorough general distribution of pieces throughout Apulia. Here again, remnants of a single piece which may be Attic have been discovered in Tarentum, though the connection is far from conclusive and is certainly no basis for an argument of Attic comedic influence in the material record of Apulia during this period.⁷³ The widespread exportation of Tarentine ware seems to show a shift of focus from depictions of identifiable scenes of performance to more generic paintings and recreations of stock characters and comedic masks in the

⁶⁹ Tischbein IV 57 = *PhV* 144 = Bieber fig.496; Trendall (1967) argues that, as the actor is riding a fish as opposed to a dolphin, we ought to consider the subject of non-Italian origin (per *PhV* 9 = Bieber fig. 210, an Attic polychrome Oenochoe which depicts a man rowing a fish). I, in line with Bieber, understand the vase to rather be a parody of the original Taras – the fish is no more a dolphin than the actor is a cult hero, but are belittling representations of their counterparts in familiar iconography (see below on Tarentine coinage featuring Taras and Dionysus on the dolphin).

⁷⁰ Athens 2277 = *MMC*³ TV 15a

⁷¹ London 65.1 – 3.45 = *MMC*³ TT 2 (terracotta figurine depicting actor with short chiton, crossed legs and a looped phallos).

⁷² An Oenochoe fragment (*MMC*³ TV 14d) of Tarentine origin was found in the Phoenician colony of Motya, possibly by the Painter of Lecce; A similar oenochoe which is said to be from Sicily was purchased in the Cologne market (Kunsthau am Museum Auction Cat. 57, no.45, pl.18 = *MMC*³ TV 14c) though it is uncertain how much we can trust this anonymous source as paraphrased by Green.

⁷³ Trieste 447 = *MMC*³ AT 116f These are argued to be pieces of a common figuring showing a woman raising her veil with one hand, the other on her hip, and boasting a comically ornate hairstyle. As it is missing the head, an arm, both feet and the right leg, however, the connection to the Attic stock depiction is very dubious (cf. *MMC*³ p.127).

figurines and vase paintings. While the *Phlyax Vases* of this period continue to depict scenes from actual performance in an effort to elicit the viewer's recognition, they are noticeably detached from any mythological tales or tropes that would be immediately recognizable to the modern scholar.

By the end of the fourth century, in the period following 325 (*MMC*³ period v), Apulia had become the greatest producer of comedic iconography in the Mediterranean by far, with its workshops accounting for nearly half (47.41%) of all discovered materials manufactured at the time, while Athens accounts for a distant second (14.07%). The terracotta figurines still largely depict characters dressed in *himatia* which only come down to their thighs,⁷⁴ though none of these have exposed or exaggerated phalli per the *Phlyax* vase depictions of the early half of the fourth century. The majority of the vases in production at this time began to depict more abstract three-quarter or frontal masks, quite detached from a specific production and more abstractly representative of the art form itself. This trend seems to find one of its earliest precedents in a red-figure bell-krater from the early part of the century (Fig. B) depicting a large head of Dionysus from which grapes are being harvested by a *phlyax* actor and a satyr. I heartily agree with Green and Edith Hall that the vase is surely celebrating the art of comedic performance itself and “how Dionysos’s gift of theater and the conduct of his ministry *by actors* have ... found an instantly recognizable iconography” (Hall 1997: 156).

The distribution of Apulian ware in this period appears to have been largely confined to its own region, though a few corresponding pieces have been uncovered in

⁷⁴ New York 09.221.33 = *MMC*³ TT 11 depicts a man carrying a wineskin and holding his other hand to his mouth; cf. also *MMC*³ TT 10 = Bieber fig. 272.

sites as far afield as Aenus (Southeastern Thrace, modern Enez)⁷⁵ and Alexandria.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, all the pieces that have been found at the city of Tarentum itself are of local production. No longer were the Tarentines importers of comedic iconography at the end of the fourth century and thereafter. Instead, they had become the chief exporters with a market of appreciative consumers that covered a wide range of the Mediterranean. The remarkable production volume and diffusion of materials in this period was only ever outdone by artists in early fourth century Attica, yet nowhere is there to be found a parallel for Tarentum's steady crescendo in relative iconographic influence over the course of a century. This last point in particular is a testament to the vibrancy and influence of its comedic tradition in venues both local and abroad.

Set in this briefly summarized general context then, we should revisit the analyses of Taplin's noteworthy pieces in *Comic Angels* and his ultimate argument that they reflect Athenian comedy in re-performance rather than a native comic tradition in the fourth century. Then, important pieces discussed in Green's *The Persistent Phallos* will be reviewed in an effort to understand more fully the development of late Classical and Hellenistic comedic iconography. After this, a glance at some of the Dionysian and general theatrical iconography related to expressions of Tarentine identity in material culture will give us a suitable perspective that acknowledges the conceptually local tradition that Tarentines created for their theatre and comedy.

⁷⁵ Oxford 1871.91 (V 487) = *MMC*³ TV 27c.

⁷⁶ Athens N.M. coll. Benachi 1739 = *MMC*³ TV 21d (partially preserved); Alexandria 25999 = *MMC*³ TV 28g (Serapeion).

New York Goose Play

The piece dubbed “The New York Goose Play” by Taplin (Fig. C) is the most compelling of these comedic vases, an Apulian Red Figure calyx-crater from the Tarporley Painter dated to the early fourth century (*MMC* period i). It is a centerpiece to his argument in connecting Trendall’s collection with Attic Old Comedy due to the notable occurrence of spoken lines that emanate from the actors’ mouths. On the far right, an older woman crouches on a raised platform with baskets by her side as a dead goose lies with its head dangling over the edge. In the center stands an old man twisted in a *contraposto* and sporting the recognizable comedic costume with padded stomach and exposed phallus. To his left stands a young man who is remarkably proportional by comparison, displaying less “comic ugliness”⁷⁷ as he returns the glance of the older character.

What separates this piece from all other comedic vase paintings is the inclusion of three inscribed lines written in Attic trimeters, which appear to flow from the mouths of the painted characters themselves. They suggest a scene in which the old man is a thief being apprehended. While he’s caught in his buffoonish pirouette, he exclaims ΚΑΤΕΔΗΣ’ ΑΝΩ ΤΩ ΧΕΙΡΕ (“[He or she] has bound my hands above”).⁷⁸ The old woman to the right calls out ΕΓΩ ΓΑΡ’ ΕΞΩ (“I will hand [him] over”). Taken together, the depiction and inscription demonstrates that the old man, already in a pose that

⁷⁷ cf. Revermann 2006: 145-59: “‘Ugly’ (αἰσχρόν)...is a key term in Aristotle’s definition of comedy (*Poetics* Ch.5 beginning), and while comedy as a whole is ‘representation of inferiors’ (μίμησις τῶν φαυλοτέρων) the comic mask in particular is singled out for its ugliness and distortion without a sign of pain (*Poetics* 1449^a 35-7: οἷον εὐθύς τὸ γελοῖον πρόσωπον αἰσχρόν τι καὶ διεστραμμένον ἀνευ ὀδύνης) ... [Comedy’s] pervasive ugliness distinguishes the genre from tragedy and, less sharply, satyr play, which combines the ugliness of the satyr chorus with the tragic dignity of actors” (2006: 147).

⁷⁸ Translation adapted from Taplin 1993: 31; Alternatively, the text could read “I will hold him”.

suggests that he is the ἀλαζών of the plot, may well be caught in the act of theft or lewd depravity against the woman in a scene reminiscent of *Wasps* 1388ff. Observing the staff in the young man's hand on the left, Taplin argues that he may be a figure of the law here to punish the old man, despite being labeled a ΤΡΑΓΟΙΔΟΣ.⁷⁹ Not much can be made of his speech (ΝΟΡΑΡΕΤΤΕΒΛΟ), partially due to the wear of age on the lettering, but one might guess that it amounts to asking the criminal to “come quietly”.

The occurrence of Attic dialect in Apulian Red Figure vases is not at all uncommon. Apart from the “New York Goose Play”, it appears on vases when identifying characters on the vase, much like the ΤΡΑΓΟΙΔΟΣ above or on depictions of mythological scenes.⁸⁰ All in all, there are 51 pieces with inscriptions to be found in Trendall's *Red Figure Vases of Apulia*,⁸¹ in which the dialects are a general mix of Attic and Doric. Only in this one piece, however, do we find an inscription of metrical lines intending to represent spoken theatrical dialogue. In a study of potters' signatures and like incisions on Attic vases, Cohen argues that “These inscriptions were not random graffiti but an intentionally executed feature of the design, which certainly enhanced the iconography of the representations in accord with classic Greek tradition and perhaps also the local market value of the vessels” (1991: 85). If so, one must wonder why the Tarporley painter, or for that matter any other painter in Tarentum or indeed the Greek world, never took advantage of such a premium for recording spoken dialogue in the

⁷⁹ Taplin 1993: 31.

⁸⁰ cf. *RVA* p.iii for Trendall's summary; cf. *RVA* 2.6 (ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ and Ι[Ζ]ΕΥΣ), 18.4 (ΠΕΡΙΘΟΟΣ, ΛΑΟΔΑΜΕΙΑ, and ΘΗΣΕΥΣ identified) and 18.39 (ΠΑΤΡΟΚΛΟΥ ΤΑΦΟΣ labeled) for examples of vases with principal characters and setting identified in Attic dialect.

⁸¹ The total was reached by counting examples from his introduction (p. iii) and the index of inscriptions (p. 1286).

plays to embrace their market value. One also wonders why, if the lines are indeed an “intentionally executed feature of the design”, they come in as an apparent afterthought in production: It is one thing to label characters or to briefly label one’s authorship (something the Tarporley painter never did), but if these lines were part of the painter’s original plan for the piece, he certainly did a poor job in making room for them, as the dramatically sloping words of the ἀλαζών just manage to fit between himself and the ΤΡΑΓΟΙΔΟΣ.

Because the lines etched in this piece are entirely unique among the Tarporley Painter’s collection, not to mention all theatrical vase paintings from any region or period, they should raise appropriate concern for their authenticity vis-à-vis the original composition. So, too, should the fact that that they were scratched into the glazed surface after the vase had been fired, meaning that the actors were originally painted without dialogue, just as with all of the other *Phlyax Vases*. Since we see little evidence of the Tarporley Painter’s literacy at this time, they are therefore unlikely to be his addition and thus should be considered the work of a clever graffitist.⁸² We must therefore refrain from considering these lines as the artist’s accurate metrical recording of the staged performance.

Nevertheless, the graffitist’s use of Attic dialect confirms that it was recognizable in a performance setting in early fourth century Tarentum, whether or not it occurred in a specific performance as suggested on the vase. This may, however, be more easily explained by the widely attested spread of Attic tragedy to Southern Italy. The inclusion

⁸² Cohen approaches this alternative with reservations: “Perhaps these unusual incised inscriptions reflect the wishes of a commissioning patron who had produced such plays” (1991: 85).

of a “Tragedian” on the left suggests that the humor is meta-theatrical, even para-tragic. Such humor, even in Attic dialect, may no more belong to Attic Old Comedy (per Taplin) than it would to what many consider to be New Comedy or even the pre-Rhinthonic (which is to say, for our purposes, pre-literary) farces of Tarentum. Since the diffusion of Attic tragedy to the West is so widely attested, what precludes the possibility that the Tarentine theatre might have cleverly taken Attic poets to task by portraying them using their foreign dialect? Such an interpretation would both support its use in performance (it would certainly distinguish the Attic characters for farcical treatment) and also explain the apparent gibberish coming from the mouth of the Tragedian, which could simply be a Tarentine joke on Athenian speech.⁸³

Würzburg Telephos

A second piece, the *Würzburg Telephos* (Fig. D) received great attention even before Taplin’s lengthy discussion in *Comic Angels*. It is an Apulian calyx crater from the first quarter of the fourth century that depicts a comedic parody of Telephos holding the baby Orestes hostage over the altar. The majority of scholars hold that a parody of Euripides’ *Telephos* is most likely at hand, but debate continues as to whether one can identify a specific comedian’s touch (in this case Aristophanes in *Thesmophoriazusae*). In fact, the case is further complicated since we know of several parodies of *Telephos* from

⁸³ Compare to *Acharnians* 100, when Aristophanes has the Persian ambassador utter the incomprehensible line: ἰαρταμὰν ἐξάρξαν ἀπισσόνα σάρτα. Note too that in recording the Tarentine mockery of Lucius Postumius at the Dionysia, Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes that the audience listened to Postumius “[to see] if the characters of the Greek dialect would be said by him in strict accuracy and then laughed, became annoyed with his truculence, called him a Barbarian, and at last were driving him out of the theatre” (Dion. Hal. 19.5.1: εἴ τι μὴ κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβέστατον τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς διαλέκτου χαρακτῆρα ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ λέγοιτο παρατηροῦντες ἐγέλων, καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἀνατάσεις ἐτραχύνοντο καὶ βάρβαρον ἀπεκάλουν καὶ τελευτῶντες ἐξέβαλλον ἐκ τοῦ θεάτρου).

our extant textual sources, most notably in the *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Acharnians*.⁸⁴ It is worth noting, as well, that while a cross-dressing male character appears with a booted wine skin in his left hand,⁸⁵ we are still missing the firewood that the attendants place around the altar (*Thesm.* 728, 739). If this is, in fact, a depiction of an Aristophanic reproduction or adaptation, there are many possible explanations: the painter could simply have forgotten, or intentionally omitted, these markers (it may have been difficult to show the wood strewn around the complicated depiction of the altar), or perhaps the local reproduction required adjustments or omissions of props based on their availability at the venue. Short of understanding the piece as depicting a true-to-form re-production of the Attic original, Aristophanes' play still provides the strongest literary source for the depiction, and this is no doubt our strongest piece of evidence for re-performance of Aristophanes' plays in Southern Italy.

While the divergences are outweighed by the strong parallels to the Aristophanic text, we must still explain the absence of comedic choruses in these pieces, as with all the *Phlyax Vases* and the general comedic iconography of Tarentum. The strongest reason must be the rise of the Hellenistic *Artists of Dionysus*, whose troupes typically included

⁸⁴ Csapo 1986: 379 n.2 lists others: a satyr play by Sophocles, a comedy by the Sicilian Deinolochus and Rhinthon's parody. None of these are viable candidates for this piece's depiction, however: Rhinthon's comedy comes nearly a century after the creation of the piece and there is nothing on the vase to suggest that the production was a satyr play. Deinolochus remains a possibility, as he wrote his comedies before the production of this piece and, much like Rhinthon, appears to have been influenced by tragedy, having written a *Medea* in addition to the *Telephos*. However, the scant fragments do not allow us to conclude with any certainty that the play depicted was his.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Thesm.* 733-5: The 'baby' which Euripides' relative holds happens to be a wine skin with "Persian boots" (Περσικάς).

three actors, a trainer or manager and a musician.⁸⁶ It is surely no coincidence that these are the figures most frequently shown in the Southern Italian iconography. These can be found from Taplin's "Comic Angels" piece which shows a set of *choregoi*,⁸⁷ to a piece discussed by Green which includes an *aulētēs* who maintains a naturalistic appearance in contrast to the two male *phlyakes* on stage.⁸⁸ Choruses, being too expensive a commodity to transport to the different festivals, were provided by the cities hosting the festivals much in the way the City Dionysia at Athens provided a chorus and sufficient funds to those honored with the chance to compete each year. While Athenian poets may have been able to rely on a consistent chorus that may have been intimately familiar with their material and the political humor that pervades much of Aristophanes' earlier work, the same could not be expected of choruses at other major festivals in Delphi, Delos or any of the competitions in Southern Italy. The successful guild, then, would have been able to rely on its core of comedic actors in any competition and must have surely steered away from topical humor that would be limited to one or a few centers of competition. This goes a long way toward explaining the shift away from the older comedies of Attic poets in the late 5th century to the generally mythological or meta-theatrical humor found in the poets of Middle Comedy and the *hilarotragoidiai* of Rhinthon in the late 4th and early 3rd

⁸⁶ Brauer 1986: 114; Le Guen II 2001: 41-6 goes into some of the difficulties which obstruct scholars from obtaining too specific a model for the structure of these troupes, but in her following table of accounted artist names and their specialties (2001: 46-63) those directly related to choruses are by and large *didaskaloi* who are likely to have been employed to rehearse the local groups in the troupe's repertoire.

⁸⁷ New York, Fleischman coll. F93 = *RVA* supp. ii p.7-8.

⁸⁸ Melbourne, D 14/1973 = Green 2006 fig. 6.

centuries.⁸⁹ It is a movement of the art from local expression to a Pan-Hellenic phenomenon that is seen in other forms of art and poetry at different periods in the Greek world.⁹⁰ The comedic tradition at Tarentum, then, was inescapably amalgamative to the extent that it gave performance space to these travelling guilds, which could re-perform a wide array of works from different poets across the Mediterranean, creating what Green noted as an “increasingly Greek” medium.

Yet as we have seen in the successful exploits of Dracon and Heraclitus, there was much opportunity for an individual city to win renown in these Panhellenic festivals. Even if the art form and its genres had largely become amalgamative through the use of the Hellenistic guilds, the Tarentines reflected in their iconography a unique sense of civic expression and pride in the medium of comedy, as we see in the city’s coinage below. Two more pieces that indicate an autonomous comedic tradition are adduced by Green in *Persistent Phallos*. They are two reliefs from Apulian black-glazed gutti which, according to him, must date from 320 at the earliest (Figures E and F).⁹¹ What identifies these as performance figures are their padded costumes, with dangling phalli and grotesque masks. The first, Figure E, depicts a comic Heracles with a club and some sort of shoulder garment attached going to his right with what appears to be a pot in his hand. Figure F is considered by some to be a representation of Dicaeopolis in his famous stand-

⁸⁹ Slater 1995 recasts the transition as one from non-illusory performance in Old Comedy to an apolitical illusion in New Comedy, influenced by the demands placed on poets to cater to an international audience with works which could be received favorably in many different venues.

⁹⁰ On a sound and encompassing view of “relative” Pan-Hellenism, cf. Nagy (1982) *Pindar’s Homer* 53, where he distinguishes the Pan-Hellenization of Homeric and Hesiodic poetry of the 8th century from that of the Theognid elegy in the 6th century. We may thus see this Pan-Hellenization of comedy in the same light, as a process which happens later than the diffusion of these earlier forms but nevertheless follows the same basic model.

⁹¹ Green 2006: 156.

off with the soldiers in *Acharnians*, a scene strongly parodying the *Telephos*. The character is in a kneeling pose by a makeshift altar (compare to Fig. B) and holds a container that could be the coal basket substituting for the baby Orestes. The limited detail that this craftsman can achieve in this relief compared to the vase painters makes the iconography of this piece much more difficult to identify securely. Still less can we attribute it to any specific comedic treatment of *Telephos*: is the object in his left hand a coal basket or some other container? Is he, in fact, kneeling on a chopping block or another comedic substitute for the altar?

As Green 2006 cogently notes, the survival of this more lewd iconography with exaggerated phalloi seems to indicate a strong memory of the older performance styles that were present in the fifth and early-fourth centuries during the production of the majority of *phlyax* depictions. This may very well be the result of the preservation of the earlier paintings themselves, from which later artists copied for perhaps “old fashioned” tastes. This can be no more proven, however, than a survival of the performance styles themselves, for which we may credit Rhinthon and others in his wake (per Bieber),⁹² as he is the most widely attested author at the time of these pieces’ manufacture. Although Taplin is hasty in arguing that shared knowledge of a specific production between painter and purchaser is necessary, I do believe that at some level there must be a shared understanding of performance style in order to explain a large part of the resulting iconography. At some level, the late fourth century purchasers had an appetite for depictions of the burlesque style of these padded dancers and their comedies, which is

⁹² Bieber: “The parody of tragedy *was given its literary form* in Magna Graecia by Rhinthon of Syracuse about 300 B.C.” (1961: 129; emphasis mine).

best explained by a first-hand viewing of their performances. Thus, while Athenian comedy had moved to more modest comedies in the wake of Menander, the Tarentines maintained an appreciation for more ‘old-fashioned’ visual parody of tragic figures, which greatly enlightens us about the visual production of Rhinthon’s unique creations of “hilarious tragedies”.

Tarentine Coinage and Theatrical Identity Revisited

Beyond this taste for more old-fashioned burlesque, the Tarentines did much to distinguish their comedic and theatrical heritage in their material record. The depiction of a *phlyax* actor riding a fish (Fig. G; see above, p. 41) parodies the local myth of their dolphin-riding hero, Taras, the mythical founder of the city. Its pose and positioning bears an uncanny resemblance to the vast collection of Tarentine coins featured from all periods depicting the dolphin-riding hero in action (Fig. H-I). Without any more of the picture known from the vase, it is impossible to tell whether it intended to represent an actual performance or a visual parody of the familiar icon from common coinage and civic identity. The latter would go to great lengths to explain the simultaneous use of comedic masks that appear on early third century coinage beneath Taras and the dolphin (Fig. J), suggesting that comedic theater had become a marker for communal identity and a phenomenon that was conceptually autochthonous.

Though Bacchus himself never appeared on Tarentine coinage, many markers of his religion were identifiable even through other figures. A notably plump Iacchos (Fig. K), son of Dionysus and Persephone (both important chthonic deities in the region of Magna Graecia) often substituted for the lean and trim Taras as the dolphin rider on

coinage, and is typically seen carrying grapes or other symbols of the local cult.⁹³ This strong connection between the theatre, the Bacchic cult and civic identity does much to explain later historiographical associations of the religion with the city by Livy and others, who saw both the cult and the vibrant theatrical tradition of the city, present in their material culture, as signs of political resistance to Roman expansion after the Bacchic conspiracy.

⁹³ Brauer 1986: 89; Willeumier 1939: 500-1; The cult was also closely associated with the afterlife, and in many cases Dionysus himself was assimilated with Hades in Southern Italy Brauer 1986: 206; On a similar conflation as evident in the tombs of nearby Metapontum, cf. Carter 1998: 595

IV. Conclusions

Returning to Lowe's analogy of a "family tree" for comedy in the West, it is my belief that we will not find, nor should we expect, such a model which plots Tarentine theatre on a line that runs between the Athenian and Roman stages. Though they may have understated the influence of the *fabula Rhinthonica* in Roman comedy, Plautine scholars are fundamentally right in arguing against a fruitless *Quellenforschung* which seeks to complete such a linear progression of generic influence. In a similar vein, we must espouse an approach that addresses the dialectical relationship between each *polis* and its particular tastes and influence in the studies of 'transitional' Greek drama across the Mediterranean.

In the special case of Tarentum, this critique may be applied to both the unique literary material of Rhinthon and Livius Andronicus and the immense collection of the so-called *Phlyax Vases*. While Taplin et al. have certainly developed a beneficial methodology which helps us to discern possible connections of Tarentine stage productions with Athenian counterparts, this is only useful insofar as one applies it to gain more general knowledge of Greek or Southern Italian dramaturgy. Attempts to identify the performances depicted not only as Athenian "Old Comedy" but even in some cases as replications of Aristophanic production have overlooked certain key departures within these vases from the texts themselves. As a result, we still cannot find sufficient evidence within the plays themselves to confirm their diffusion, with minor alterations at most, to Magna Graecia. With regard to the material evidence, Taplin and Webster's theory that these depictions are of Attic Old Comedy reproduced in Tarentum is *truer* the

earlier one looks in fourth century material culture and the later one looks in the Aristophanic corpus. Where these two perspectives overlap is where we will find the strongest evidence (such as the *Würzburg Telephos*) of such diffusion from Attica – at a point when Aristophanes and his contemporaries began to produce plays of less politically (and more artistically) topical humor that would be more conducive to re-performance abroad (such as the *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Frogs*), and the diffusion of comedic iconography from Attica was at its greatest relative volume of production (as demonstrated in Fig. A).

Yet what was in the early fourth century a ripple effect largely emanating from Athens soon became a wholly Greek phenomenon, and the comedic traditions of Tarentum and Magna Graecia found their own voice in the commotion of an art form that quickly began to move toward a more general “Middle” Comedy in Athens and other Panhellenic venues. Tarentine humor itself quickly found its niche in the comedic treatment of familiar mythology and their tragic performances in festivals across the Mediterranean, and its own artists gained much renown as they contributed to the city’s comedic oeuvre. In short order, Tarentum’s contributions to the development of comedy both at home and abroad reached an incredible peak by the end of the fourth century and gave precedence to the later literary influence of Livius Andronicus and fellow *semigraeci* on the burgeoning theatre of Republican Rome. If the comic producers of Athens did indeed bring their material to the West, there was certainly room enough for the Tarentines to adapt it to their own specifications, as Revermann suspects with the *Lysistrata*. Taplin and Webster are thus correct inasmuch as they sense a diffusion of art

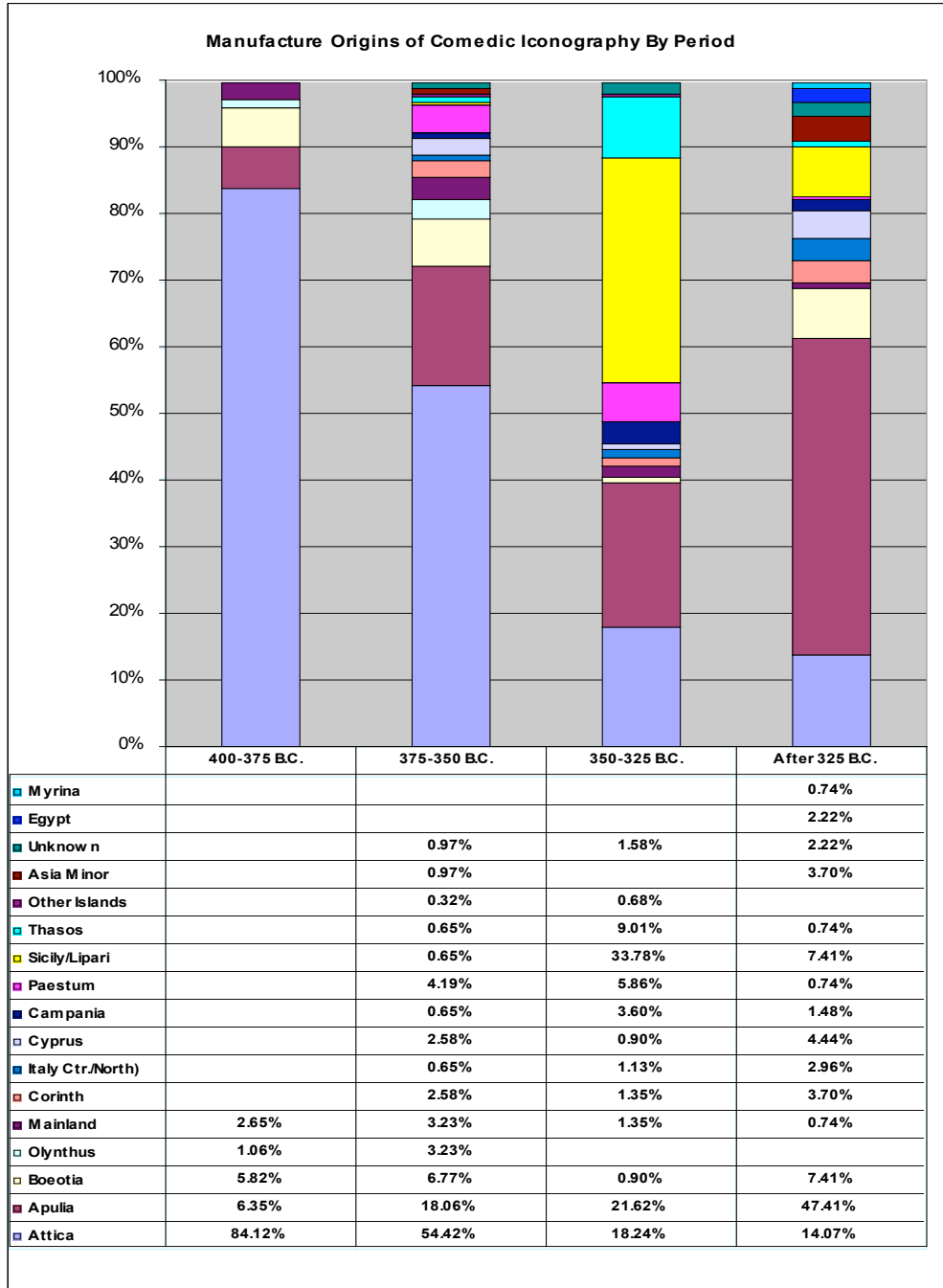
from Athens to Tarentum, but in considering the products “Attic Old Comedy” they overlook a host of complications. It is doubtful that what we consider “Old Comedy” persisted as a genre through the late plays of Aristophanes (which were radically different from his earlier corpus);⁹⁴ moreover, the evidence does not support the conclusion that they were exported at such a great volume and with such great influence that the Tarentines considered these productions to be conceptually Athenian.

Indeed, if the later iconography is any indication, the Tarentines by no means saw this as the spread of Attic art to their city but rather a medium that became entirely their own. Roman artists and historians likewise developed a theatrical tradition that had both obvious contacts with the performances of Magna Graecia while developing their own strain of *togata* and *palliata*, though their keenest commentators were able to detect the inroads made by Rhinthon and others from the south onto their stages. Today’s scholarship on the history of Greek and Roman drama must begin to account for these nuances, building both on the influential work of Taplin, Webster et al. who continue to fill out Lowe’s preliminary “family tree” as well as of Bosher, Dobrov and those who have rightly come to improve these models and challenge the traditionally held generic and topical bounds of comedy and theatre in general. With a keen eye to both demands, one can illuminate how the Tarentines and other communities made an amalgamative art form their very own.

⁹⁴ Dobrov: “As an older man, on the other hand, Aristophanes was part of a vital and complex literary scene that abandoned the fashions of the late fifth century” (1995: xii). This deserves nuanced consideration in light of other late plays, such as *Lysistrata* of 411 and *Ecclesiazusae* of ca. 390, which maintain some political topicality. The frequency in Aristophanes’ later corpus of artistically (or non-) topical plays such as *Frogs*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Peace*, and *Wealth* is indicative of his movement toward more generally accessible humor for all theatre audiences.

Figures

A. Relative Production (by Manufacture Origin) of Comedic Iconography



Source: Monuments Illustrating Old and Middle Comedy, Vol. III

B. Comic Actors with Dionysus



Cleveland 89.73 = Green 1994: fig. 3.23

C. New York Goose Play



New York 24.97.104 (Fletcher Fund, 1924) = Taplin 1993: fig. 10.2 = *PhV* 84

D. Würzburg Telephos



Würzburg, H 5697 = Taplin 1993: fig. 11.4

E. Hercules on Black Glaze Gutti



Naples Stg 368t = Green 2006: fig. 11

F. Telephos on Black Glaze Gutti



Naples Stg 368 = Green 2006: fig. 12

G. Phlyax Actor Riding a Fish (Lost Vase)



Tischbein IV 57 = *PhV* 144 = Bieber fig.496

H. Taras on Silver Didrachm



Brauer 1986: Pl. 30 (c.334-31 B.C.E.)

I. Taras on Silver Stater



Brauer 1986: Pl. 33 (c.334-30 B.C.E.)

J. Comedic Mask on Silver Didrachm



Brauer 1986: Pl. 52 (c.272-235 B.C.E.)

K. Iacchos on Silver Didrachm



Brauer 1986: Pl. 48 (c.281-272 B.C.E.)

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Vita

Jonathan MacLellan was born in Waukegan, Illinois on April 4, 1985, the son of James Francis MacLellan, Jr. and Kathleen Roche MacLellan. After completing his work at Boston College High School, Boston, Massachusetts, in 2003, he entered Fordham University's College at Lincoln Center in New York, New York. During the spring of 2006 he attended the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with departmental honors in Classics from Fordham University in May, 2007. In August, 2007, he entered the Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin.

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