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Marios Skempis

- 1 Bacchylides' relation to the Epic Cycle is an issue under-appreciated in the study of classical scholarship, the more so since modern *Standardwerke* such as Martin West's *The Epic Cycle* and Marco Fantuzzi and Christos Tsagalis' *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Reception: A Companion* are unwilling to engage in discussions about the Cycle's impact on this poet.¹ A look at the surviving *Dithyrambs* in particular shows that Bacchylides appropriates the Epic Cycle more thoroughly than one expects: Bacchylides 15 reworks the *Cypria's* Request for Helen's Return (arg. 10 W); Bacchylides 16 alludes to Creophylus' Sack of Oechalia; Bacchylides 17 and 18 are instantiations of mythical episodes plausibly excerpted from an archaic *Theseid*; Bacchylides 19 opens and ends its mythical section with a circular mannerism that echoes the *Thebaid's* incipit (fr. 1 W); Bacchylides 20 focuses on Marpessa, a minor figure from the Meleager story in *Iliad* 9; Bacchylides 23 has the story of Cassandra inspired by the Sack of Ilion (args. 1; 3 W); in Bacchylides 25, the story of Meleager refers to Heracles, who must have featured in the *Minyas* next to residents of Hades (frs. 3–7 W); Bacchylides 27 glimpses into Chiron's relationship to Achilles, which is founded ahead of the Trojan War according to the *Cypria* (fr. 4 W). The plethora of examples encourages an extensive treatment of the topic, which is not my intention in this article. What I intend to do is to consider the end of the Io story in Bacchylides 19 with a view to how the dithyrambic poet shapes his narrative with respect to the Epic Cycle.²
- 2 The story of Io' release from Argus and union with Zeus at the Nile ends with a macro-genealogy of Dionysus (B. 19.37–51):

he tried to make his way from Asia to Europe.⁷ What started out as friendship with Lycurgus the ruler of Thrace ended up in a conflict that tagged the Thracian king an opponent of the cult of Dionysus, who fought against the Bacchants (D. S. 3.65.4–7). The framing reference to Europe tells of how Cadmus the son of Phoenician Agenor was commissioned to fetch the girl, who was kidnapped by Zeus. His search led Cadmus to Boeotia where he settled, married Harmonia, and begot Semele, Ino, Autonoe, Agaue, and Polydorus.⁸ The story of Cadmus' quest for Europe⁹ gives rise to the story of how Semele was struck by lightning in her union with Zeus. The offspring of this union, Dionysus, was taken care of by Zeus, who entrusted the baby-boy to the nymphs of Nyse, which is located between Phoenicia and the Nile, through Hermes' intervention (D. S. 4.2.1–5). The Europe frame of Diodorus is reflected in the *Europa* of Eumelus that deals with her romance with Zeus (fr. 26 W), one generational gradation before the birth of Dionysus, and with the Lycurgus episode (fr. 27 W), which signifies Dionysus' tense relation to the spatiality of Europe.¹⁰

- 8 Diodorus' account about the connection between Cadmus and Dionysus is genealogically construed. The Europe frame does not hinge on Dionysus himself, but extends to him by drawing on the genealogical link of Cadmus and Dionysus. The closing section of Bacchylides 19 is in keeping with the genealogical connection of Cadmus and Dionysus. With a view to the genealogical tripartition of Dionysus in Diodorus, the end of Bacchylides 19 is aware of the two (out of three) genealogical variants for Dionysus. These variants are genealogically concatenated in rationalizing manner that creates generational coherence.¹¹ The macro-genealogical emphasis that Bacchylides lays on Io and Dionysus, is further bolstered by the gadfly motif, which features in the Io story (19.40 ο[ίστροπλάξ] and is suggested by the way the Lycurgus episode, also a gadfly story (fr. 27 W μύωπι, θεηλάτῳ μάστιγι), dramatizes the limitations of choruses sacred to Dionysus (19.51 καὶ χορῶν στεφαν[αφόρων ἄνακτα¹² ~ fr. 27 W ἀνὰ πᾶσαν ἔφερετο τὴν γῆν χορεύων καὶ τελετὰς ποιούμενος, καὶ τιμῶν τυγχάνων προηγείτο πάντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων).¹³

- 9 Concerning *Quellenforschung*, I want to make two points, one about Diodorus' relation to Eumelus and a second about the impact of Eumelus on Bacchylides 19:

1. Diodorus' account of Dionysus refers to the Titanomachy (3.74.6), the theme of a poem traditionally ascribed to Eumelus.¹⁴ Scholia D on Homer's *Iliad* (6.131) attest that the Lycurgus episode, which Diodorus mentions in what I have termed Europe frame, is recounted in the *Europa* of Eumelus. The birth of Dionysus, which springs out of the genealogical link with Cadmus in Diodorus' Europe frame (4.2.1–3), ought to have been part of Eumelus' *Europa*, a genealogical poem that narrated the events after Zeus' union with Europe.
2. The arrangement of Dionysus' ancestry in genealogical sequence,¹⁵ which the closing section of Bacchylides 19 ventures (19.41 φέρουσα παῖδ[α; 19.48 Σεμέλ[αν φύτευσεν; 19.50 τίκτε<ν> Διόνυσον), is plausibly based on Eumelus' *Europa* for the following reasons: (a) the nuclear story of bovine Io in the opening Epaphus-entry is one of prosecution by a gadfly just as Dionysus is pursued by a gadfly in the Lycurgus episode; (b) the Agenorid cue in the Cadmus-entry (19.46) shows a tendency toward acknowledging the genealogical environment in which Europe, a figure similar to Io in terms of the bovine idiom¹⁶ and the point of reference in the *Europa* (fr. 26 W), is situated; (c) the Dionysus-entry stresses the capacity of the god to rouse Bacchants and preside over their dances, two features that the *Europa* presents *e negativo* (fr. 27 W).

- 10 Considering that Eumelus' *Europa* has a genealogical tinge, Bacchylides' predilection to end the Io story in a way that points to the Agenorid stemma and its own ancestry, is a noticeable thematic affinity: the dithyrambic narrative recounts Dionysus' birth (19.50) in a context that echoes the Lycurgus episode (19.49–51) just as the summary of the Lycurgus episode attributed to Eumelus' *Europa* opens with an acknowledgement of Dionysus' descent from Zeus and Semele¹⁷—this means that the *Europa* must have narrated both Dionysus' birth, in tune with the Agenorid stemma, and his adventure with Lycurgus. These two episodes constitute the Asian cycle of Dionysus before he enters the Greek world.
- 11 One may hasten to ask why it is important to recuperate a set of allusions to Eumelus' *Europa* in a dithyrambic poem such as Bacchylides 19,¹⁸ which does not extol, but closes with Dionysus. Instead of treading the usual path of choosing a Dionysiac plotline, Bacchylides innovates by investing on para-Dionysiac thematics.¹⁹ Eumelus' *Europa* serves this goal in a twofold way, through the genealogically conditioned birth of Dionysus and the Lycurgus episode, and departs from Europe's union with Zeus, a story parallel to that of Io.

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NOTES

1. West (2013, 45). Fantuzzi & Tsagalis (2015) devote no chapter to the Cycle's influence on Bacchylides; for a quibble, see Skempis (2016, 224).
2. Here I follow West (2002, 109) in his belief that the *Titanomachy*, the *Corinthiaca*, and the *Europa* of Eumelus formed a "Corinthian Epic Cycle", and I treat the latter epic as part and parcel of the Epic Cycle.
3. Maehler (1997, 260–1) finds no fault with this.
4. The tripartition is situational because later on Diodorus mentions a fourth genealogy of Dionysus the offspring of Zeus and Persephone (4.4.1). See also D. S. 3.64.1.

5. According to Hall (1992, 187), “there may have existed a whole [...] mythical tradition about Io’s descendants”.
6. In Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*, Ἰναχίδας Διόνυσος (47.482) may imply the genealogical macro-sequence that Bacchylides outlines. Note that, according to Debiasi (2015, 69–150), the *Dionysiaca* include several allusions to Eumelus.
7. For the Lycurgus episode in Eumelus, see Tsagalis (2008, 1, 6, 18, 28), Tsagalis (2017, 141–4), Bernabé (2010; 2013a). Lycurgus’ encounter with Dionysus is told in the *Iliad* (6.130–40): see Carpenter (1993, 197–8), Rondot (2001), Tsagalis (2008, 2–13), Tsagalis (2012, 248–51), Bernabé (2010), Topper (2015, 153–8).
8. This stemma must have been part of Eumelus’ *Europa*. See Debiasi (2015, 86–7), Tsagalis (2017, 134).
9. The consultation of the Delphic oracle by Cadmus during this quest may well be the theme of fr. 28 W. See Lecomte (1998, 74), West (2002, 127).
10. On *Europa* in general, see Huxley (1969, 75–6), Lecomte (1998), West (2002, 126–8), West (2003, 29–31), Debiasi (2004, 24–6), Debiasi (2015, 76–80), Tsagalis (2017, 132–6).
11. ἀσφαλέστατον ‘firm, safe from error’ (19.38) conveys the sense of rationalization to which Bacchylides subjects Dionysus’ macro-descent from Io.
12. The line is supplemented by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1898, 143) and accepted by all modern editors.
13. It may be so that scholarship on dithyramb neglects the general character of the utterance and tends to set it in the context of dithyramb performance (the choruses of Dionysus being circular choruses that perform the dithyramb).
14. Cf. D’Alessio (2015, 209, n. 48).
15. For Dionysiac features in Eumelus’ *Europa*, see Untersteiner (1951–2), Bernabé (2013a) and (2013b, 54–7).
16. On the bovine element in the *Europa*, see Untersteiner (1951–2).
17. Schol D. in *Il.* 6.131 (= fr. 27 W) Διόνυσος ὁ Διὸς καὶ Σεμέλης παῖς [...]. The very same phrasing that enciphers the narrative rendition of Dionysus’ birth (otherwise the name Dionysus would have sufficed), is found in the Geneva Scholia on the *Iliad* (6.130 οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ Δρύαντος] Διόνυσος ὁ Διὸς καὶ Σεμέλης — πεποιηκῶς Εὐμηλος), which does not go on to refer to the Lycurgus episode.
18. For the use of material (the daughters of Asopus) already treated by Eumelus in Bacchylides 9, see Bowra (1938, 216–9), Olivieri (2007), West (2002, 126).
19. The Egyptianizing contexts of Io’s destination, the Nile, and Dionysus’ birth at Nyse show how the two stories weld together in a dithyrambic narrative.

ABSTRACTS

I argue that in the end of Bacchylides 19 the genealogy of Dionysus echoes the *Europa* of Eumelus. My argument is an example for how para-Dionysiac theme works in Bacchylides’ dithyramb.

J’affirme qu’à la fin de Bacchylide 19 la généalogie de Dionysos reprend l’*Europa* d’Eumélos. Mon argument est un exemple de comment le thème para-dionysiaque fonctionne dans le dithyrambe de Bacchylide.

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