

Aelianus N.A. 14.6: ἔοικε δὲ ἄρα τῷ θηρίῳ τούτῳ [sc. λυγκί] μαρτυρεῖν
καὶ Εὐριπίδης τὸ ἀπρόσωπον οὖν ὅταν πού λέγῃ
ἦκει δ' ἐπ' ὤμοις ἢ σὺς φέρων βάρος
ἢ τὴν ἄμορφον λύγκα, δύστοκον δάκος.

Aelianus' Euripidean fragment (863 Nauck) quoted above has yet to be assigned conclusively to a specific play. Augusto Mancini tentatively ascribed these lines to the satyric *Syleus*, suggesting that they were the chorus' announcement of Syleus' return from hunting. Mancini compared the fragment with Silenus' warning of Polyphemus' entrance in the *Cyclops* (193)¹). Although I shall argue that fr. 863 N. is indeed satyric, the evidence to assign it to the *Syleus* is far from convincing. The focus of these lines is not upon the terrifying entrance of an ogre, like Syleus or Polyphemus, but wonder at the unusual beast being carried by someone coming on stage. I would suggest that this passage is a description of Heracles, carrying the monstrous Cerberus out of the Underworld in Euripides' satyric *Eurystheus*. Such a description would not only be appropriate to the plot of the *Eurystheus*, but would conform with a common motif in satyric drama, the "rising form" or "fieldmouse"²).

Even from the meager remains of satyric drama that we possess it is clear that the satyr playwrights were very fond of causing beings to emerge suddenly onto the stage, thereby eliciting fear and wonder on the part of the satyr chorus. The prototype of these "fieldmouse" scenes is found in Aeschylus' treatment of Sisyphus. Aeschylus wrote at least one satyr play in which the wily rogue escapes from Hades through trickery³). On either one or two occasions a speaker, probably one of the satyrs, sees Sisyphus emerging from Hades and wonders at the strange sight. Is it "a giant fieldmouse" or an "Aetnaian beetle" (ἄρουραῖος

1) Il dramma satirico greco (Pisa, 1895), p. 33. For an analysis of the probable plot of the *Syleus*, see D. F. Sutton, *The Greek Satyr Play* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1980), pp. 66–67.

2) Several scholars have commented on this motif. See Ernst Buschor, *Feldmäuse*, SB München 1 (1937) 1–34; Peter Guggisberg, *Das Satyrspiel* (Zürich, 1947), pp. 72–74; Irmgard Fischer, *Typische Motive im Satyrspiel* (Göttingen, 1958), pp. 53–59; Robert Ussher, *The Other Aeschylus*, *Maia* 29–30 (1977–78) 18–19.

3) Three titles were given in antiquity for Aeschylus' Sisyphus play(s), *Sisyphus*, *Sisyphus Drapetes*, and *Sisyphus Petrocyclistes*. Although most scholars have assumed that these all refer to a single drama, Sutton (note 1 above), pp. 27–28, has argued convincingly that there were two Sisyphus plays. For the opposing viewpoint see, e.g., Victor Steffen, *Studia satyrica I* (Posen, 1934), pp. 4–5.

σμίηνθος ὑπερφυῆς fr. 227 Radt (= 380 Mette), Αἰτναῖος κάνθαρος 233 R. (= 385 M.)? Scholars have plausibly suggested a similarly marvelous emergence of Cyllene from her cave in Sophocles' satyric *Ichneutae* (211)⁴). Several vase paintings that depict Pandora arising magically from the earth may have found their source in Sophocles' satyr play *Pandora*⁵). A variation upon the sudden appearance of an unknown being is found in Aeschylus' satyric *Dictyulci*, which dramatized Dictys' rescue of Danae and the infant Perseus from their chest floating off the shore of Seriphos. As he hauls up the chest in his net, he suspects that he has caught some type of sea monster⁶):

τί φῶ τόδ' εἶναι; πότερα . [
 φάλαιναν ἢ ζύγαιναν ἢ κ. [

(fr. 46a, 8–9 Radt)

The Euripidean fragment quoted by Aelianus is remarkably similar to the “fieldmouse” passages cited above. The *Eurystheus*, which dramatized Heracles' abduction of Cerberus, would have been the most likely of the Euripidean satyr plays to have contained such a scene⁷). What little we know of these “fieldmouse” fragments suggests that the audience would have expected such an epiphany, as Heracles emerged from Hades with Cerberus on his back.

I suggest that the setting for fragment 863 N. is as follows. The speaker, probably Silenus or one of the satyrs, sees a man, Heracles, at a distance carrying a beast, Cerberus, that defies description. It is a terrifying and curious creature that looks somewhat like a boar or a misshapen lynx. Though we might ask why the speaker does not describe Heracles' burden simply as a vicious dog, we should remember that Cerberus was portrayed in art and literature in a variety of monstrous forms⁸). Moreover, we should expect the satyrs to give a confused and enigmatic description, comically concealing the true nature of the beast that frightens them.

Although we cannot be sure that fr. 863 N. does refer to Heracles and Cerberus, the description it provides is very appropriate to them. Moreover, the “fieldmouse” motif that the fragment evidently represents would have been expected of the *Eurystheus* alone of the nine satyr plays that Euripides authored.

4) See Jane Harrison, Sophocles' *Ichneutae* Col. IX. 1–7 and the δρώμενον of Kyllene and the Satyrs, in *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgway* (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 136–52, who gives an explanation of how “fieldmouse” scenes would have been staged in the *Ichneutae* and other plays. See also Fischer (note 2 above), p. 55; Ussher, *Sophocles' Ichneutae as a Satyr-Play*, *Hermathena* 118 (1974) 134–35.

5) See Frank Brommer, *Satyrspiele*² (Berlin, 1959), pp. 15–17; Fischer (note 2 above), pp. 56–57.

6) Text is from Stefan Radt, ed., *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* 3 (Göttingen, 1985), p. 163. Radt cites various suggestions for supplementing the text in his apparatus.

7) For the titles and plots of the Euripidean satyr plays, including *Eurystheus*, see Victor Steffen, *The Satyr-Dramas of Euripides*, *Eos* 59 (1971) 203–26; Sutton (note 1 above), pp. 59–94. Steffen (p. 220) notes that “Cerberus brought to earth by Heracles must have produced fear as well as mirth among the satyrs. . . .”

8) On the various representations of Cerberus in art and literature, see the articles s.v. “Kerberos” in *RE* 21 (1921) 271–75 and Roscher's *Lexikon* 2 (1890–94) 1119–35.

Given these two important points, the *Eurystheus* certainly seems to be the most likely source of fr. 863 N.⁹).

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9) I am grateful to the Editor for helpful suggestions.