INTRODUCTION

I. DIONYSIUS' DATE

Virtually nothing can be said about the person of Dionysius. Because his fragments share several expressions and elements of diction with Oppian's *Halieutica* (composed *c.* 177–80 CE), and a papyrus of his *Gigantias* (P.Oxy. 2815) is securely assigned to the second century CE, it has been inferred that Oppian was the imitator of Dionysius rather than the other way round, and that Dionysius lived prior to the middle of the second century CE.[1] The *terminus ante quem* may be pushed a little further back in view of *Bass.* frr. 39–40, written on a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus originally assigned to the late first or early second century CE. If this palaeographical dating is correct, Dionysius' *floruit* could not postdate the turn of the second century, so as to allow time for his work to find its way to Oxyrhynchus by the end of the first quarter of the second century at the latest. Recently, however, a slightly later redating of the papyrus to the mid to late second century has been proposed, making it inconclusive testimony.[2] There is no precise indication in the poems of a *terminus post quem*, except for the imitation of some expressions of Nicander, who probably lived in the second century BCE.[3] In the present state of the evidence, Dionysius could have flourished either at the end of the Hellenistic period or in the early Imperial period. Agosti (2001) 136–42 sees in the sensationally macabre contents of *Bass.* fr. 33v, with its suggestion of human sacrifice and cannibalism, a reflection of the literary tastes of

[1] So Livrea (1973) 14.
[2] Acerbi and Del Corso (2014) 62 with n. 81; see further below, Section IX.
[3] See e.g. *Bass.* fr. 12.5 ~ *Th.* 398, fr. 12.4–6 ~ *Th.* 168–71, fr. 38r.3 ~ *Th.* 150, fr. 39.8 ~ *Th.* 471, fr. dub. 42 ~ *Al.* 174. The date of Nicander, however, is controversial, and some prefer to place him in the third century BCE; for the *status quaestionis* see Overduin (2015) 4–12.

the Imperial age.[4] From this perspective, it might be preferable to anchor Dionysius in the first century of our era rather than earlier, but this must naturally remain an impressionistic argument. *Bass.* fr. 28* may suggest a date after the reign of Vespasian (69–79 CE), depending on how its relation to Paus. 8.29.3–4 is interpreted (see commentary).

II. ANCIENT FORTUNES

To judge from the find of two papyri of Dionysius in Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 2815, 2818 + 5103) and the significant number of specific echoes of his work in the poems of the Oppiani and Quintus of Smyrna, Dionysius' poetry was widely read and well received in the Imperial period. The papyrus codex P.Lond. Lit. 40, the latest and most extensive manuscript of Dionysius, shows that the *Bassarica* and *Gigantias* were still circulating in the late fourth or early fifth century CE. Later in the fifth century, Nonnus' extensive reliance on the *Bassarica* as a model for his *Dionysiaca* implies that he had direct access to the poem (see below, Section v). By the age of Justinian (527–65), Stephanus of Byzantium was still quoting the *Bassarica* and *Gigantias* in numerous entries of his geographical dictionary, especially for toponyms relating to India (see below, Section iv). It is possible that Stephanus knew Dionysius only at second hand through an intermediate source, but a couple of seemingly direct echoes of Dionysius in Musaeus, a poet who probably flourished in the late fifth or early sixth century CE, suggest that his poems could still have been directly available to Stephanus.[5] Dionysius'

[4] Comparing for example the subject matter of Juvenal's *Satire* 15, Lollianus' *Phoinikika* (especially fr. B1 Stephens-Winkler), Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* 3.15, Cassius Dio 68.32, and other texts. For the 'obsession' with images of dismemberment, mutilation, and amputation of the human body in Latin Neronian literature, see Most (1992); cf. ibid. 414–15 nn. 48, 53 for further bibliography on cruelty in Latin literature of the first century CE.

[5] *Bass.* fr. 19(b).8 ἄφθιτος … ἠώς ~ Musae. 3 ἄφθιτος ἠώς; *Gig.* fr. 45v.16 μίσγετο δ' ἠέρι πόντ̣[ος ~ Musae. 315 αἰθέρι μίσγετο πόντος. The second

influence can also be felt in other Late Antique poetry, especially in the Orphic *Argonautica* and *Lithica* (both of uncertain date) and possibly in Triphiodorus.[6]

Dionysius' work, however, and even his reputation as a distinct poet did not survive into the Middle Ages. Nonnus' monumental account of the Indian expedition of Dionysus no doubt eclipsed his predecessor and hastened his fall into oblivion.[7] The Byzantine versions of the life of Dionysius Periegetes (T 1 (a)–(c)), whose common source probably dates from Late Antiquity, reveal that various poems by men named 'Dionysius', including the *Bassarica*, became attributed to the more famous Periegetes (*fl.* 117–38 CE), although some critics continued to consider the *Bassarica* spurious because of its 'roughness' and assigned it instead to a certain Dionysius of Samos.[8] It is not inconceivable that even Nonnus and Stephanus did not distinguish the author of the *Bassarica* and *Gigantias* from Dionysius Periegetes, although this seems to me unlikely in the case of such a discerning and learned poet as Nonnus. Aesthetic judgement aside, modern scholars have generally maintained the distinctness of our author from Dionysius Periegetes on stylistic

correspondence was first noted by Wifstrand (1930) 104. On the date of Musaeus, see Kost (1971) 15–17, who argues for a date roughly between 470 and 510. For traces of Stephanus' first-hand citation of some grammatical and technical works, see Fraser (2009) 288–91. Billerbeck (2008) 310–11, 314 argues that Stephanus had direct access to now-lost works of the Hellenistic poets Rhianus, Nicander, and Demosthenes of Bithynia.

[6] For the possible echoes of Dionysius in the poetic works mentioned in this paragraph, see the references in the 'Index locorum'. On the date of the Orphic *Argonautica* and *Lithica*, cf. Whitby (1994) 130 n. 9.

[7] Cf. Passow (1835) 251 n.*: 'hinc fortasse contigit Nonno, Dionysii imitatori, dum duritiem sedulo vitaret, dulcedini studeret, *Bassaricorum* opus cito ex hominum memoria deturbare, eorumque in locum *Dionysiaca* sua sufficere.'

[8] It is unclear whether the τραχύτης denounced by the ancient critics relates to the style of the poem or its 'rough' contents (cf. especially *Bass.* fr. 33v); cf. Agosti (2001) 136. In Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *De compositione verborum* of the late first century BCE, τραχύς and related words refer principally to the sound quality of certain letters and syllables or their combinations; cf. Rhys Roberts (1910) 329 s.v. τραχύτης.

grounds.[9] A poet named Dionysius of Samos is not known from other sources, unless ancient scholars arbitrarily assigned the *Bassarica* to the Hellenistic cyclographer of the same name (*FGrH* 15).[10]

III. MODERN (MIS)FORTUNES

Because of the piecemeal manner in which Dionysius' fragments have been published over the years, a brief editorial and critical history will be useful and will help place the present edition in context.

(a) The geographical fragments

The first editor systematically to identify and collect the fragments of the *Bassarica* in Stephanus of Byzantium's lexicon was Gottfried Bernhardy, who published them as an appendix to an introductory essay on Dionysius Periegetes in his *Geographi Graeci Minores*.[11] He was followed by Heinrich Düntzer in his collection of fragments of Hellenistic and Imperial epic poetry, who also included the less numerous fragments surviving from the *Gigantias*.[12] These two scholars selected mostly entries which explicitly mention Dionysius' poems, although Bernhardy

[9] See Whitby (1994) 123–5 with 148 n. 232, 149 nn. 240 (feminine caesura: 86.66% in our Dionysius against 65% in Dionysius Periegetes; for slightly updated figures see below, Section VIII), 242; cf. Bernhardy (1828) 507–8, Mommsen (1895) 202–3 (unjustifiably severe as Livrea (1973) 42–3 shows), Hollis (1970) 151, Livrea (1973) 10, Bowie (1990) 79.

[10] In Suda δ 1181 this Samian Dionysius is himself apparently confused with Dionysius Periegetes, since an οἰκουμένης περιήγησις is attributed to him; for other confusions of various Dionysii in the Suda, see Rusten (1982) 82 n. 27. For the record, I have searched for agonistic poets named 'Dionysius' in Stephanis (1988), but none is described as an ἐποποιός or ἐπῶν ποιητής. On the various Dionysii represented in the *Greek Anthology*, see *HE* II 231 (none from Samos).

[11] Bernhardy (1828) 515–17. He refers to the fragments from the *Gigantias* on p. 508.

[12] Düntzer (1842) 88–91.

hinted dismissively at '(other) remains lurking in Stephanus'.[13] But even the entries explicitly citing Dionysius' *Bassarica* were in fact incomplete: Bernhardy accidentally missed the entry for Βραικοί – a fateful omission perpetuated in all subsequent editions except Düntzer's – while Düntzer inexplicably left out the entries for Τεγηςςός and Ὑδάρκαι. Carl Müller in the second volume of his *Geographi Graeci Minores* (1861) had the merit of collecting not only those entries in Stephanus which explicitly mention or cite Dionysius, but also those which refer to Dionysus' Indian expedition or places otherwise known only from Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (on these valid criteria, see below, Section IV).[14] Later editions unfortunately did not follow Müller's example. Ernst Heitsch (1963) included only entries in which verses are quoted,[15] while Enrico Livrea (1973) did not admit entries almost certainly attributable to the *Bassarica* despite the fact that they do not cite Dionysius explicitly.[16] It was Pierre Chuvin's seminal work on the geography of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* that put these fragments back under the spotlight, since Nonnus made heavy use of the catalogue of troops in the *Bassarica*;[17] these fragments were conveniently collected in an appendix to an article by Francis Vian.[18] The present edition includes most of these fragments reasonably attributable to the *Bassarica*, except two from among the entries qualified by Vian as *valde dubia*

[13] Bernhardy (1828) 515: 'Nonni cultoribus, ut et versus emendatiores componant et reliquias apud Stephanum latitantes (quo pertinent eius observationes vv. Βλέμυες, Γήρεια, Γίγωνος, Ζάβιοι, Πράσιοι, cf. Eustath. ad 606) diligenter indagent, libens permitto, qui bonas horas in istis nugis nolim conterere.'

[14] Müller (1861) xxvii–xxviii.

[15] A decision criticized in the review by West (1963a) 169.

[16] Criticized by Chuvin (1975) 280 in his review: 'Il est regrettable que l'auteur n'ait pas jugé bon de citer, au moins comme *fragmenta dubia*, tous les passages où Étienne de Byzance nomme Dériade et la guerre des Indes … Il semble en effet qu'Ét. Byz. doive à Dionysios toutes ses connaissances sur le sujet, alors que Nonnos aurait disposé d'autres sources.'

[17] Chuvin (1991).

[18] Vian (1998) 76–8. Vian labels them *fragmenta dubia*, but this qualification implies more uncertainty than is perhaps warranted.

(see below, Section IV), as well as the long-overlooked entry for Βραισοί.

(b) The papyrus fragments

Dionysius' poetry would have remained in darker shadows had it not been for the papyrological discoveries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first and most important was that of a fragmentary papyrus codex of unknown provenance, the future P.Lond.Lit. 40, which found its way to the British Museum in April 1893 via the antiquities market. In 1902 Frederick Kenyon published only the verso of the largest fragment (*Bass.* fr. 33v) in a *Festschrift* for H. van Herwerden and cautiously suggested Dionysius as a likely candidate for authorship;[19] from the other fragments he only reported some notable personal names and words.[20] In the following year Arthur Ludwich (1903) reprinted the large fragment with supplements of his own, most of them rather fanciful.[21] It was not until 1924 that H. J. M. Milne published the remaining fragments and an improved version of *Bass.* fr. 33v in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, but prefaced only by a brief introduction and without a diplomatic transcript, translation, or commentary. In the same issue of the journal, the editors fortunately invited Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to comment on the new fragments, which he did with characteristic insight, though without access to the original or a facsimile for verification of his suggested supplements and corrections.[22] Milne had complained that '[i]n spite of the additional material for forming a judgement the author

[19] Kenyon (1902) 141. The first brief notice on the papyrus appeared in 1898 in the catalogue at the front of P.Lond. II (p. xxvi, inv. 273); cf. also Kenyon (1902/3) 40.

[20] Kenyon (1902) 142.

[21] Cf. also the notices by Crönert (1903) and Bell (1910) with a few corrections and suggestions, both supporting the attribution to Dionysius.

[22] Milne (1924), Wilamowitz (1924). In 1927 a smallish facsimile of *Bass.* fr. 33v appeared as Plate I in P.Lond.Lit., the only image of the papyrus ever to have been published.

still refuses to disclose his identity';[23] but thanks to the publication of the additional fragments, Rudolf Keydell (1929) and Albert Wifstrand (1930; cf. 1931) independently confirmed Dionysius' authorship by recognizing in *Bass.* fr. 33r.4 a verse quoted by Stephanus of Byzantium from Book 18 of the *Bassarica.*

Wilamowitz (1924), and in his footsteps Friedrich Hiller (1924), saw that a number of fragments of P.Lond.Lit. 40 were completely unrelated to the theme of Dionysus' war with Deriades and might derive from a different poem narrating Heracles' return from Ilion. Keydell (1932) confirmed this hunch when he recognized in these fragments Dionysius' *Gigantias* (frr. 45–54); it followed that the codex must have contained two different poems by Dionysius.[24] There was a slow trickle of brief critical contributions in the next two decades.[25] A small third-century papyrus fragment from the Vienna collection was dubiously assigned to the *Gigantias*,[26] but there is no compelling ground for this attribution.[27] In 1941 *Bass.* fr. 33v was reprinted with a couple of new suggestions and for the first time translated into English by Denys Page in the third volume of the Loeb *Select Papyri.*[28]

After the Second World War Dionysius' poetry resurfaced in Heitsch's collection of the fragmentary Greek poets of the Imperial period (*GDRK* XIX).[29] For the first time some of the geographical fragments from Stephanus of Byzantium were

[23] Milne (1924) 3.
[24] The attribution of these fragments to the *Gigantias* is based solely on their content and not on a verbal correspondence between the papyrus and a quotation by Stephanus of Byzantium as in the case of *Bass.* fr. 33r.4.
[25] Morel (1930); Maas (1930); Keydell (1931) 83–4; Orth (1932); Wifstrand (1933) 178–80; Keydell (1935/6) 6–8, (1941) 7–8.
[26] Hiller von Gaertringen *apud* Oellacher (1939) = fr. dub. 83 L. (not included in my edition); cf. Körte (1941). The papyrus is P.Vindob. inv. G 29805 (M–P^3 1791, LDAB 794, TM 59690).
[27] See most recently Miguélez Cavero (2008) 38–9.
[28] Page (1941) 536–41 no. 134. A German translation appeared in T. von Scheffer, *Die Dionysiaka von Nonnos* (Munich 1927–33) II cxxvii ff., but it was not available to me.
[29] Heitsch (1963) 60–77; cf. the review by West (1963a) 169–70.

edited together with the papyrus fragments. This edition, however, was far from satisfactory, for Heitsch not only omitted several fragments in Stephanus (see above), but mostly reprinted Milne's text of P.Lond.Lit. 40, incorporating some of the suggestions made in the intervening time but without reinspecting the papyrus or making significant improvements to the text.

The main papyrological addition to Dionysius' poetic remains was the publication by Edgar Lobel in 1971 of a number of small fragments of a second-century papyrus roll from Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. XXXVII 2815), which he attributed to the *Gigantias* because of the mention of Κελαδώνη (fr. 14.3), a city known to have appeared in the first Book of this poem thanks to an entry in Stephanus of Byzantium (κ 152 Billerbeck).[30] Enrico Livrea (1973) produced the first proper edition of Dionysius' fragments incorporating all the entries of Stephanus explicitly mentioning Dionysius and all the papyrus fragments discovered to date, accompanied by a detailed investigation of the poet's language, a brief commentary on the fragments, an Italian translation, and indexes. Livrea did not directly reinspect the papyri, but had access to a facsimile of P.Lond.Lit. 40 from the British Museum.[31] While the consultation of this facsimile enabled Livrea to make some small corrections, a number of inaccuracies and wrong readings in prior editions remained undetected, which is understandable in view of the papyrus' minute hand and damaged surface in places. Since about the time of Livrea's edition a modest number of studies have appeared, especially on the *Bassarica*.[32] More recently, I have published a

[30] Lobel (1971) 60–77 (with Plates XI–XII). For Viljamaa's doubts about the attribution, see Appendix.

[31] Cf. Livrea (1973).

[32] Hollis (1970) 151–3 on *Bass.* fr. 41; reviews of Livrea (1973) in Chuvin (1975), Viljamaa (1975), Keydell (1976), and Vian (1976b) (cf. also the briefer reviews in Schwartz (1974), Chrétien (1978)); Marcotte (1988) on *Gig.* fr. 45v; Brown (1990) on *Bass.* fr. 33v; Chuvin (1991) on the geographical fragments; Whitby (1994) 123–5 on the metre and style of Dionysius; Livrea (1995a) on *Bass.* fr. 41 *contra* Hollis (1970); Livrea (1995b) on *Bass.* fr. dub. 42; Vian (1998)

new papyrus fragment of the poem (P.Oxy. LXXVII 5103 = *Bass.* fr. 39), written in the same hand as a previously published fragment that ought also to be assigned to the *Bassarica* (*SH* 940 = *Bass.* fr. 40).[33]

The present edition offers an ameliorated text of P.Lond.Lit. 40 with a number of significant corrections and new readings based on a close inspection of the original papyrus in the British Library, supplemented by consultation of high-resolution digital images. Such a comprehensive autoptic reinspection of the papyrus has not been undertaken since Milne's edition of 1924. So as not to burden this book with technical papyrological details like extensive descriptions of traces, I have published and discussed a number of the new readings separately in Benaissa (2013). This edition is also the first to report systematically the original lectional signs of P.Lond.Lit. 40, which were only selectively noted by Milne and Livrea in their apparatuses.

IV. DIONYSIUS' *BASSARICA* AND STEPHANUS OF BYZANTIUM

Besides P.Lond.Lit. 40, our other principal source for the fragments of the *Bassarica* is the geographical lexicon of Stephanus of Byzantium.[34] Stephanus was a publicly appointed

on Nonnus' debt to Dionysius for the figure of Asterios; Agosti (2001) on *Bass.* frr. 33v and 34r; Meliadò (2014) on *Gig.* frr. 6–8, 47–8 and *Bass.* fr. 33. I have excluded from this list works on other subjects in which Dionysius is mentioned only in passing.

[33] The identification of the hands of the two papyri was due to Ben Henry.

[34] Stephanus also mentions or quotes from the first three books of Dionysius' *Gigantias* in five entries of his lexicon; see Appendix. The main edition of Stephanus has been that of Meineke (1849), but it is based on a limited number of manuscripts (including the best one, the fifteenth-century R in Wrocław). A new edition taking into account all the manuscripts is in preparation by Margarethe Billerbeck, of which four volumes containing the entries Α–Υ have appeared so far (as of March 2016). I quote from Billerbeck's edition for these entries and, *faute de mieux*, use Meineke for the others.

grammarian in Constantinople under Justinian I (527–65 CE). His *Ethnica*, comprising originally some fifty books, alphabetically listed various place-names and discussed their linguistic formation and the ethnic adjectives derived from them, with the support of citations from older writers. The aim of the lexicon was not so much scientific as grammatical. Save for some quotations from the original version by Constantinus Porphyrogenitus in the tenth century and the entries between Δυμᾶνες and Δώτιον preserved in a codex of the eleventh century (Coislinianus gr. 228, also known as Seguerianus), the *Ethnica* does not survive intact, but in an abridged version made sometime in the following centuries, possibly already under Justinian.[35] This epitome preserves for the most part only the toponymic lemmata, their geographical designations (e.g. πόλις, νῆσος), their locations, and the ethnics derived from them, sometimes accompanied by the citation of one or more sources. The entries between Δυμᾶνες and Δώτιον that survived unabridged and the quotations of Porphyrogenitus show that Stephanus originally cited several authors per entry and sometimes related mythological, ethnographical, or historical information associated with the toponym.[36] The epitome itself underwent some vicissitudes in its transmission, which resulted in lacunas in places (especially between Κελαίθρα and Κόρακος πέτρα, Λάρισαι and Λῆμνος, Ὀρεστία and Παλική, Ὦδονες and Ὠκαλέα) and in varying degrees of abridgement (Α–Δ and Σ–Ω being less abridged than other entries). The latter feature has led some scholars to infer that the version we have is actually the conflation of two epitomes made on different principles, or is the result of two stages of epitomization.[37]

[35] Cf. Honigmann (1929) 2396.

[36] For a comparison of citations in the Seguerianus and in the epitomized version, see Billerbeck (2008).

[37] Cf. Honigmann (1929) 2376–7. In his commentaries on Homer and Dionysius Periegetes, Eustathius (twelfth century) probably had access to a better version of the epitome than ours; see Knauss (1910), Honigmann (1929) 2393–4.