

This talk will focus on the reading and historical implications of some lines from *P. Oxy. X 1235*, a fragmentary didascalical notice to Menander’s *Imbrioi* that mentions Lachares the Tyrant in the context of the Dionysia of 302/1 BCE. The widespread interpretation that this fragment says that the Dionysia were cancelled that year (or ever) because of Lachares’ tyranny will be seen as the product of a sloppy interpretation; rather the fragment only implies that Lachares blocked Menander’s *Imbrioi* from appearing at the Dionysia of 302/1 BCE, an assertion that is plausible. The lines in question read:

105	ταύτην [ἔγρα]- φεν ἐπὶ Νικοκλέο[υς - -]- τήν καὶ ἑβδομηκοστ[ὴν κάξ]- ἔδωκεν εἰς ἐργασίαν [εἰς] Διονύσια, οὐκ ἐγένετο δ[ὲ διὰ]	This [comedy the <i>Imbrioi</i>] he [Menander] wrote in the archonship of Nikokles (302/1 BCE), his seventy-[? and he] issued it for production [at the] Dionysia, but it didn’t air [because of]
110	Λαχάρην τὸν τύραννο[ν· εἶ]- τα ὑπεκρίνετο Κάλ[λιπ]- πος Ἀθηναῖος.	Lachares “The Tyran[t]”; later] Kallippos the Athenian was lead actor.

Ever since Hunt published this fragmentary papyrus in 1914, it has been claimed that its evidence is uncomfortably incongruous because Lachares could not have been tyrant as early as 302/1 BCE (*cf.* O’Sullivan, *GRBS* 49, 2009, 53-79). While it is true that Lachares could not have been tyrant as early as Nikokles’ archonship in 302/1, it will be argued that within this papyrus the words τὸν τύραννο[ν] are functioning as a proleptic epithet and thus do not mean that Lachares was tyrant *when* he interfered with the production of *Imbrioi* (restorations in lines 110-111 of the participial forms τυραννή-[σαν]|τα by Gronewald, *ZPE* 93, 1992, 20-21, and τυραννε[ύον]|τα by Luppe, *ZPE* 96, 1993, 9-10, will also be rejected).

Furthermore, it has been assumed that this papyrus states that the tyranny of Lachares was responsible for the cancellation of the City Dionysia, which led to the cancellation of the *Imbrioi* (there is considerable body of literature about the date of when the Dionysia were cancelled by Lachares’ tyranny based upon this papyrus; most place this imagined event in the spring of 295 when Demetrios Poliorketes ousted Lachares from Athens – see for example Thonemann, *Oriens et Occidens* 11, 2005, 63-86). But the papyrus does not say that Lachares blocked the Dionysia, rather it implies he blocked only the *Imbrioi* (i.e., the grammatical subject of οὐκ ἐγένετο in line 109 are not the Διονύσια, but the understood referent of the ταύτην in line 105, i.e. the κωμῳδία *Imbrioi*).

While we know precious little about Lachares’ career, Pausanias (1.25.7) informs us he was involved in politics as an ardent member of the democrats before he became Kassander’s new strong man in Athens (*ca.* 298/7?). We also know that in 307/6 Menander was prosecuted by the democrats upon Demetrios of Phaleron’s ouster from Athens (Diog. Laert. 5.79), so it is entirely plausible that in 302/1 Lachares, as a member of the Stratoklean wing of the democratic party, successfully censured Menander.