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# Economics of Athenian Drama: Its Relevance for the Arts in a Small City Today

William J. Baumol

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# THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS

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## ECONOMICS OF ATHENIAN DRAMA: ITS RELEVANCE FOR THE ARTS IN A SMALL CITY TODAY \*

WILLIAM J. BAUMOL

I. The Greek audience, 366. — II. Financing the Greek festival, 370. — III. The magnitude of the financial burden, 373. — IV. Concluding comment: Relevance for contemporary urban planning, 375.

Perhaps our cities have grown too large for efficiency in the supply of services and amenities to their inhabitants. At least this is a hypothesis one encounters fairly frequently in the literature of urban economics. In discussing this view some writers have suggested that even the arts do not need a large metropolis in order to survive. While today activity in the theater is centered in the biggest cities, in New York, in London, and in Paris, it has been suggested that the drama can, under appropriate circumstances, prosper in smaller communities. The case of ancient Athens has more than once been cited as an example.<sup>1</sup> Greek cities were certainly small towns by current standards, and yet the vitality of its drama and

\* I must express my gratitude to the Ford Foundation, whose support of our urban project helped in the completion of this study. I must also thank for their help F. R. B. Godolphin of the Princeton Department of Classics. Law.

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## Abstract

I. The Greek audience, 366.--II. Financing the Greek festival, 370.--III. The magnitude of the financial burden, 373.--IV. Concluding comment: Relevance for contemporary urban planning, 375.

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