

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

**PERFORMING RITUALS
IN
ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY TODAY**

SUBMITTED AS A THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN DRAMA

by

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In

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Signature:

*I dedicate this thesis to
my late father, Panayiotis,
my mother Katerina
and my sweet Moira.*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to display the dynamic role fragmented rituals have in the plot of tragedy. It contends that the tragedians deployed fifth-century ancient Greek religious practices from their cultural milieu as independent objects in their plots. Whether concise or fragmented, enacted or reported, they are modified into dramaturgical tools that move the story forward by effecting chains of reactions and link the past and the present with the aim of enhancing the critical ability of the audiences. These ritual representations in performance are most often either perverted or fail for various reasons.

This thesis contends that this fragmentary re-imagining of cultural practices are an essential part of the tragic texts. However, rituals by nature are complex modes of actions and it seems that they retain much of their purposes, intentions and performativity within the texts. This complexity draws the attention to their individual treatment when they go through the process of translation, the expected reconstruction of the text to fit in the time limit of a performance, the editing and the directorial decisions for their staging.

This research does not call for a 'historically authentic' performance of the rituals within the plays. Indeed, the lack of evidence makes it impossible to articulate with accuracy any elements of those early performances, and it is not the purpose of this thesis. This study strives to establish an analytical basis for understanding the balance between the demands of the play-text of the tragedians and the productions of a director from the perspective of the ritual content. This analysis is a response to a gap in scholarship concerning this aspect of the performative turn in the studies of ancient Greek texts.

This thesis analyses, as far as we can determine, the classical Athenian rituals that were deployed in tragedy and fills in the scholarly gap created by the performative turn with regard to the historical awareness one needs as a tool to perceive the embedded functional role of rituals in tragedy. Their defining role in the story-line is then demonstrated with the textual analysis of rituals in five tragic plays. These plays

are then studied in performance terms through analysis of three productions by the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus. The discussion analyses the extent to which the ritual fragments dramaturgical functions were preserved in the productions, and the effects of their treatment in the experience of the spectator. The textual analysis and the performance analyses both concentrating on the ritual content, reveal the way in which rituals constitute the substrata in tragedy, and as such they require special attention in both a textual analysis and for a text-based production. The concluding discussion analyses the implications of the relationship between rituals and tragedy for contemporary performances, and suggests ways in which one might stage these ritual fragments today for contemporary audiences.

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ACCOMPANYING RECORDED MATERIAL

I. THREE DIGITAL VIDEO TAPES OF THE PERFORMANCES (TH.O.C. ARCHIVES)

DVD 1 - *Trojan Women*

DVD 2 - *Medea*

DVD 3 - *Oresteia*

II. ONE DIGITAL VIDEO TAPE WITH FOLK DANCES AND TWO SCENES FROM
KAROLOS KOUN'S *CHOEPHORI*. (DVD 4)

1. PERFORMANCE - Scene of *Choephoroi* - DH.PE.THE Larrissa, 2009 - 00:01:58
2. PERFORMANCE - Scene of *Choephoroi* - DH.PE.THE Larrissa, 2009 - 00:07:47
3. DANCE - Crete - Anogianos Pidixtos - 00:01:24
4. DANCE - Crete - Kourites - 00:03:42
TV programme "Stin Ygeia Mas", NET, 24/3/2010
5. DANCE - Crete - Pentozali - 00:03:40
6. DANCE - Crete - Pentozali - 00:02:54.
My recording in Chania, Crete, on 10/7/2010. From 00:01:23-00:02:09
7. DANCE - Veroia, Northern Greece - The Dance of Big Knives or Pitsak - 00:02:02
It is a Pontian dance.
8. DANCE - Pontos - Pyrrihios Serra - 00:04:38
9. DANCE - Ipiros - Tsamikos - 00:04:42
10. DANCE - Thessalia - Tsamikos - 00:01:14
11. DANCE - Macedonia - *Gaida* - 00:03:13

III. ONE DIGITAL VIDEO TAPE WITH LAMENTS AND POLYPHONIC SONGS (DVD 5)

1. LAMENT - *Photapsies tis Allis Ochthis*, 902 TV. - 00:05:41. From 00:02:35.
2. LAMENT - *Photapsies tis Allis Ochthis*, 902 TV, 2008 - 00:01:41. From 00:00:35.
3. LAMENT - Ipeiros - Re-enactment of a lament on stage by a dance group - 00:03:06
4. LAMENT - Babourion village, Thesprotia, Greece - Miss Marina - 00:00:27
5. Annual burial custom for the unburied of 1940 - Interesting habit - 00:02:40
6. LAMENT - Maniatiko Unique Recording of a Genuine Awake - 00:02:32
7. LAMENT - Mani - Genuine Lament - 00:03:57. From 1.35.
Sung by Georgia Avgoulea and Evgenia Gianoupoula, over Georgia's aunt grave.
Only the voices are heard.
8. LAMENT & Reenactment of a funeral of a mountain warrior in the 19th century - 00:03:29
9. LAMENT - Pontian - Beginning of a reenactment - 00:00:28
10. LAMENT by Martha Parastatidou - 00:01:01
11. POLYPHONIC SONG - Vlachic Polyphonic Song, Kephavoriso - 3.19
12. POLYPHONIC SONG - *Gianni mou to Mantili sou* - Main Singer Miss Phroso-3.41
13. POLYPHONIC SONG - *Treis kopeles lygeres* - ET1 TV - 3.42

IV. ONE DIGITAL VIDEO (Published by the National TV of Greece)

DVD 6 - Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, was put on by Karolos Koun Art Theatre in 1982.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Cultural location of ancient Greek Drama Performances in Cyprus

There are three major festivals in Cyprus that offer one the opportunity to watch ancient Greek drama: the International Festival KYPRIA, the International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama and the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus. In the 1990s, the Ministry of Education and Culture began the international festival, Kypria, the leading cultural event of Cyprus to promote arts and culture, and ancient drama is often performed as part of this cultural festival each September. In 1990s Cyprus International Theatre Institute (C.I.T.I.), which was founded in 1977 and subsidised by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, established another intercultural dialogue on ancient Greek drama. One of their activities is the International symposium of ancient Greek drama, first organized in 1990 and held uninterruptedly every other year, which was followed by the organization of the annual International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama in 1996 that offers ancient Greek performances from international visiting troupes. However, the most authoritative regular promoter of ancient Greek drama in Cyprus has been the national theatre organisation, the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus (T.H.O.C.). Founded in 1971, T.H.O.C. has taken an ancient Greek drama to the Festival at Epidaurus (Greece) most years since 1980. This national theatre organisation pays the most consistent attention to staging ancient Greek tragedy and comedy in Cyprus today.

All the productions of ancient Greek drama by these organizations are played in the three ancient amphitheatres of Cyprus, Makarios III Amphitheatre in Nicosia, Kourion in the ancient city of Kourion and the ancient Odeon in Paphos.

2. Watching and directing Greek Drama

On my return to Cyprus in 1995, after my MA studies on theatre and film, I started attending productions of ancient Greek drama watching approximately two to four performances every year. I have watched tragedies and comedies using traditional approaches, adaptations of classical texts, to physical and post-modern productions. I

have seen the wheelchairs used on stage, skinned goats carried around, cigarettes burning, and listened to sound tracks ranging from traditional dirges to rock music. Helen Foley's view on the adaptations and the reception of ancient Greek drama that "the range of tragedies performed on the modern stage has recently expanded considerably"¹ is justified if one considers the number of performances of tragedy that are presented every year.

To my surprise, very few of these performances excited me. I was enticed to watch a tragedy but from a simple viewer's perspective, the intellectual and emotional outcome had not been as I had hoped. I felt that I was entitled to understand and learn what an ancient play was about, particularly when it was produced from a culturally authorized preserver of culture such as TH.O.C.

I could not specify the reason at that time, until 1999, when I was hired by TH.O.C to work as an actress in a children's play and a tragedy. I participated in the production of *Oresteia*, directed by Nikos Charalambous, and this participation offered me the unique opportunity to experience the impact of performing at Epidaurus. Being a member of the tragic chorus and going through the whole process of production of a translated text-performance, it heightened my perception and elucidated that vague unsettling feeling that had been built up at the end of most productions I viewed. What was missing was an understanding that the rituals expressed in the play-text play a vital role in the plot of a tragedy, and directorial decisions that ignore the ritual elements were preventing their functional exposition.

This insight was even more heightened when in 2003 I started writing articles on various aspects of drama and performance analysis for the literary magazines *Άνευ (Anev)* and *Ψυχάδι (Psichadi)*. At the same time, I started working as an editor for the theatre column for CYPRUS TIME OUT magazine. My job was concentrated on the performance analysis of current productions and interviews with directors whose plays were being mounted. I will return to the most revealing interview with Stavros

¹ Foley, Helen, "Generic Ambiguity in Modern Productions and New Versions of Greek Tragedy," in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, p. 139.

Tsakiris as it had a great bearing on the development of my thought in Chapter four. Other interviews and reviews offered me the opportunity to widen my perspective regarding the text-as-performed² by playwrights from Europe and America and enhance my focus on rituals in tragedy.

However, the most important influence was my participation at the symposiums of ancient Greek drama organized by the Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute (CCOITI). My constant attendance since 2004 and the contact with academics and theatre practitioners from countries all over the world verified my view that the function of rituals within the structure of tragedy had not been very much discussed by current scholarly research. It was not until the 12th symposium in 2012, with the thematic unity “Wisdom from suffering? Pain, frenzy and their treatment in Ancient Greek Drama”, when I first heard the clear thoughts of Oliver Taplin, Edith Hall and Douglas L. Cairns of the need for balance between the text and the performance; and this encounter was illuminating and elevating. It reinforced my belief that an ancient Greek tragic play-text would benefit from special analysis of the ritual elements so that its narrative might be fully understood on stage.

Meanwhile, I started working as a teacher of drama at high schools for the Ministry of Education. In the school environment, there are many activities a teacher can participate in if he or she wants, such as European programmes, poetic nights, celebrations of national holidays and theatre productions. I was involved in almost all activities related to directing students for various presentations: theatrical performances either for the school only or the Cyprus school theatrical competitions organized by TH.O.C.; a dramatization of the Folk Poem *The Chapman, The Bride of Artas* (*O Pramateftis, To Gefyri tis Artas*) and a scene from the play *Erotokritos* by Vintsentzos Kornaros for the fraternization of two Lyceums in Cyprus and Herakleio, Crete, Greece (2010); three Poetic nights dedicated to the poets Elytes (2007), Ritsos (2009) and the Cypriot poet Monte (2010), which included reading poems, singing

² In the thesis I am going to look at the ritualistic textual basis of the performance of Greek tragedies and for the purposes of this thesis I distinguish between: textually faithful renditions which I call play-texts or script-texts; and text adapted through performance which I call text-performed or text-as-performed.

and dancing of the relevant poets' works using theatrical techniques. In these enactments my main concern was the transfer of the texts on stage and what decisions would enliven them and offer them a distinct aura for an audience.

Even more closely connected to this research was my students' participation in scenes from ancient Greek drama and life that I directed for the opening and closing ceremonies of the European Conference of Ancient Greek Language that takes place in Cyprus every two years. In 2005, with the collaboration of a music teacher and groups of students and I reshaped, adapted and directed a stasimon from *Antigone*, for which two music teachers under the supervision of Ms Maro Skordi composed the music, I reconstructed elements of the ancient Greek wedding ritual from vases and publications on ancient Greek religion. A third scene was based on the practice of ostracism, for which a scene was written based on literary sources with the collaboration of a Greek philologist colleague. All three presentations were presented at the ancient Odeon in Paphos, at the opening ceremony of the Conference. In 2007, under the coordination of the Greek philologist Eftychia Peponidou, I reshaped *Oedipus Tyrannus* for the closing ceremony. During the reconstruction and the cutting down, I paid great attention to the ritual activities and references. I also inserted lines of ancient Greek at various point, because of the nature of the conference where there were many scholars of ancient Greek, which were either repeated in modern Greek, or their meaning was perceived in the replies. The actors and the chorus wore half masks and performed their lines and the ritual elements of the text uninterrupted by the lack of the spacious amphitheatre. The student-musicians occupied the left side of the stage and they played the music on instruments live: the drums, a flute, an earthen pot which was hit with hands and a sieve with dried beans. The conference took place in a big square hotel seminar room in Nicosia, so there was a huge room with chairs which I could move around in order to designate an area as the stage. What was a pleasant surprise for the audience was the placement of the chorus members among the audience at the beginning of the adaptation, who then gradually moved to the stage. The result was rewarding, and the students received many compliments.

Finally, in 2010, with the help of the Greek philologist Maria Konstantinidou, we presented a 25 minute performance with the title *Helen Through Time*. We presented Helen as a caring woman who is a victim of fate, transforming her into a representation of everywoman of her kind. In this case, I composed a new piece inserting elements from Homer's *Iliad*, Euripides' *Helen* and the poem *Eleni* by the poet Giorgos Seferis³ with the help of the Greek philologist Maria Michaelidou. The only ritual I used in this theatrical piece was the supplication: Helen supplicating Priam to allow her to surrender to the Greeks, and then to Menelaus. Again, there were lines in ancient Greek, but in this case they were whispered, following or preceding the modern Greek lines, when I wanted to emphasise the transhistorical impact of her as a character. This performance was presented in an indoor conference room in daylight. These experiences, combined with my ongoing interest in modern and contemporary performance and experience of theatre from diverse cultures, has been part of the background and reflection for this thesis. My school work has offered me the opportunity to put into practice some of the ideas that were hovering in my mind around the notion that ancient texts can be presented in any form a director may wish; however, the ritual activity, especially in tragedy, needs to be maintained because these ritual elements are dramaturgical assets to the story.⁴

3. The Treatment of Rituals in Productions

My experience as a cultural commentator, an educator who practiced expertise in teaching and directing, and an actress, has given me the opportunity to realize that there are sundry ways to put on an ancient play without damaging its structure and its integrated ritual elements. This journey into finding ways to stage ancient drama that

³ Giorgos Seferis was the first Greek to receive the Nobel Prize in 1963. The second one was Odysseas Elytis, who became a Nobel laureate, in 1979.

⁴ Professionally, I was occupied with a variety of jobs. I worked as an assistant director for Theatron Ena; as an actress for TH.O.C., E.THA.L. and TV channels from 1998-2006; as a non-professional director for the Theatre Group of Greek Philologists and the Society of Adouloti Kerynia; as a music producer for the Cyprus Broadcasting Cooperation (2001-2013); and a TV game presenter for MEGA channel (1995). I also participated in many seminars, but the ones related to drama and my research are the ones conducted by the Theatre Education Network of Hellenic Teachers, Athens, Greece [Member of IDEA] in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2009 and in a 2-weeks Theatre Camping on ancient Greek drama organised by the Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute.

would be appropriate for the occasion, the place and the time reaffirmed the view that the genre of fifth century Greek tragedy is imbued with the ritualistic expressions of the religious life of the ancient Greeks.

It seems that rituals are not only deeply rooted in the plays, but they often propel the action. Yet, most of the recent productions I have witnessed did not delve dramaturgically into the text and, consequently, few articulated the 'crying' rituals that consist the core structure in many plays, such as Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* or the *Suppliants* and Euripides *Trojan Women*. Most of the times that Cypriot theatre-goers watch ancient drama, particularly that presented by the culturally significant group TH.O.C., the ritual aspects of the plays are not represented on stage at all; instead, they are rather minimised, altered or entirely omitted by the director, and the translator, without a second thought.

The experience of these absences and the corresponding limitations of the productions led me to the idea for a PhD research. After preliminary research on the scholarship of ancient Greek tragedy in performance, it became evident that although there were many significant studies of tragedy in performance, there were none on Cypriot performances, and none that focused exclusively on the question of how the staging of rituals, or their absence, inflects the meaning of the performed story for contemporary Greek Cypriot audiences.

Oliver Taplin vigorously, though indirectly, champions the importance of the staging of rituals when he discusses the staging of the text in his pioneering book *Greek Tragedy in Action* (1978). Being the instigator of the performative turn in the classical department, he discusses the various ways one can communicate the text-play to the audience. Taplin contends that there is meaning beyond the words and he exemplifies his view with the analysis of the action and gestures, exits and entrances, objects or mirror scenes in the tragic texts. He does that though choosing scenes that are ritualistic in essence, involving the rites of supplication or oath, the various aspects of *miasma*, pollution, or prophecies, among others. Occasionally, he even describes the rite, or offer vital information in order to show how important their staging is, as in the case of Clytaemnestra's appeal for her life in *Choephoroi*. Therefore, he contradicts

himself when he says “rituals are not important” as he mostly focuses on ritualistic scenes to exemplify his various staging concerns. He makes it clear that the mistreatment of the text damages greatly the performance, and the scenes he uses to exemplify his point often contain Ritual elements. David Wiles sees a long standing view on what is called today a performative ‘turn’ that was clarified with Taplin when he writes that

Arthur Pickard-Cambridge’s (pre-war) investigations of the physical conditions of performance led in a logical line of development to work of Taplin, ... who demonstrated that readers of Aeschylean text needed to understand the grammar of performance in order to make aesthetic judgements.⁵

When Peter Arnott, in his *Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre* (1991), refers to the relationship between the actors and the audience, he notes that due to the size of the amphitheatre any facial or small gestures disappear, even without the mask. Big open-air theatres demand

a repertoire of gestures that we would now consider operatic rather than legitimately theatrical, exaggerated by the standards of indoor intimate acting and designed to be clear, meaningful and immediately comprehensible.⁶

Among other expressions of feelings, he mentions the expression of grief, usually by covering over the head or drop the head and look at the ground, the specific gestures of mourning, supplication, prayer, embrace or greetings, all derived from the everyday practice of the ancient Greeks. Arnott, like Taplin before him, also couples rituals in the presentation of tragedy. David Wiles also leads the reader to understand that rituals are inherent in the plot in his *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction* (2000), and acknowledges the importance of rituals when he also briefly describes some of the main rites that are embedded in the context and form of the plays. However, he does not discuss their structural dramaturgical incorporation when producing a tragedy, offers no suggestions for their staging, or comments on them in

⁵ Wiles, David, “Greek and Shakespearean Plays in Performance,” in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, p. 47.

⁶ Arnott, D., Peter, *Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre*. London & New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 62.

relation to the productions he mentions. Some years later Goldhill offers valuable information in his *How to Stage Greek Tragedy Today* (2007). He believes that, before transferring a play to our contemporary moment, it is essential to think about the principles, what tragedy meant and what functions it performed in relation to those performances in the fifth century Athenian cultural milieu. He accepts the difficulties a director faces with staging it and he offers his suggestions on staging space, time, the chorus and the acting in modern productions. However, he does not mention the vital role rituals play in a text-as-performed. It is very clear that the presence of rituals is taken for granted for these prominent scholars when they discuss the staging of tragedy. Nevertheless, when they imply that rituals are crucially interwoven within the story-line of tragedy, and that their omission has a disastrous effect in the staged rendition of the text, they allow for the functional importance of rituals that this thesis pinpoints as a fundamental component of the texts.

There are though two books that offer a significant insight on the importance of rituals in tragedy, with their focus on two rites of passage, wedding and death. The first one is by Rush Rehm who discusses the rite of wedding, as he dubs it 'wedding to death', in his *Marriage to Death* (1994). He does not refer to staging per se, but he proves beyond doubt that the rites of death and funeral intermingle in the plot of tragedy. The second book refers to the staging of mourning and lament in tragedy without any ambiguities. Gail Holst-Warhaft's book *Dangerous Voices* (1995) becomes a solid examination of one of the most important rituals in action from every aspect, and their thematic significance in many tragedies. Her strong emphasis on lament supports the fundamental issue of this thesis, that rituals in tragedies are forms of actions in the plot which need to be activated in order for the tragic plot to unfold as it was 'designed'. As Mary-Kay Gamel acknowledges, modern stagings are often more effective if they do not attempt to reproduce original playing conditions, but 'ritual and religion are crucial to ancient Greek drama, yet rarely included successfully in

subsequent performances.’⁷ Gamel discusses the difficulty that directors encounter when they have ‘no strong ritual tradition’ on which to draw to translate for contemporary audiences.

4. Conventions and Other Parametres

Discussion of staging the text and the rituals is often related to questions of reconstruction, and a desire to remain close to an ancient performance and its conventions, as Gamel exposes. However, the range and diversity of the productions every year in Cyprus indicates that there is great interest in working diverse ways. The conventions of ancient drama are important considerations for this thesis in so much as they help us understand the staging of rituals. Therefore, it would be appropriate to examine the original playing conditions of fifth-century tragic Greek theatre. It must be noted here that the tragic plays are probably not the originals: the question of additions and interpolations for centuries⁸ has been hotly debated, so we assume that there were other original playing conditions and performance aspects of which we are not aware.

What is known is that the dramatic events were part of the festival of the Great Dionysia, which included four rituals.⁹ Therefore, from the participation in the civic ritual practices, the ancient Athenians later watched performances with fragments of rituals the playwrights deployed in their stories. Even Aristotle’s view that the *opsis* (or spectacle) song and dance are less important elements of the drama, as he

⁷ Gamel, Mary-Kay, “Revising ‘Authenticity’ in Staging Ancient Mediterranean Drama,” in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, p. 163.

⁸ Rehm, Rush, “Festivals and audiences in Athens and Rome”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 190.

⁹ Sacrifices and libations, announcements of civic benefactors, parade of tributes, the parade of war orphans: Goldhill, Simon, *Love, Sex and Tragedy: How the Ancients Shape Our Lives*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, pp. 224-225.

believed they do not affect the story-line, he still considered that they mattered¹⁰ in making a Greek performance more interesting for the spectators.¹¹

It is generally accepted that we know almost nothing of what those performances looked like. What Erika Fischer-Lichte defines as the materiality of a performance, meaning the spatiality, corporeality, tonality, is an alien area for us, not only because we are accustomed to a different theatrical experience but because there is little information on how those actors acted, spoke, moved, danced, sang, and very scarce evidence of what the music sounded.¹² Foley suggests that “[w]e cannot reproduce from texts the tone of performances of the original plays.”¹³ Therefore, although unfortunately, all we have access to is the text, it is our responsibility to, at least, let its words reach the stage in a text-performed as clearly as possible; and those words include actions and rituals.

Evidently, historical reconstruction of tragedy is out of reach. We do not speak ancient Greek, and the plays in production today do not have only three men playing the roles, or only men in the chorus. Ancient stage machinery has not been reconstructed for staged use and we do not know much of ancient stage management. The context for performances has radically changed, they are not part of a religious milieu nowadays, and with the advent of electricity they are played at night. The audience does not gather from morning till the sunset to watch three tragedies and a satyr play, the spectators’ configuration is not relevant to the architecture of the amphitheatre which was a representative of the status of the spectators and the city itself,¹⁴ and the

¹⁰ Martin, P., Richard, «Ancient Theatre And Performance Culture”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 36.

¹¹ Wiles, David, “Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Ancient Dramatic Theory”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, 2007, p. 94.

¹² Fischer-Lichte, Erika, “Performance as Event – Reception as Transformation” in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, pp. 31-34.

¹³ Foley, Helen, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 140.

¹⁴ Each block was designated for a different social group based on its socio-political position, age and social status. As MacDonald also notes, the proof that theatre was a serious business for the Athenians is also testified in their location, below the temples. This made attending the theatrical performances a social, civic and religious event: MacDonald Marianne, *The Living Art of Greek Tragedy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003, pp. 2-3.

audiences' responses are not unexpected.¹⁵ Whether being in an amphitheatre or in an in-door theatre, the audience placed in a square or a circle, the story development usually takes place uninterrupted.

Moreover, one musician does not play the double *aulos*, and we know very little about the sound of it. There have been attempts though to revive it or compose something that sounds timeless, as was the inspiration behind the Cyprus music group 'Terpandros'. Mike Georgiou, who constructed most of the ancient Greek strings using similar materials to the ancients, gave concerts exploring possible sounds; the Spanish ensemble Atrium Musicae De Madrid who specialize in all kinds of ancient European music;¹⁶ or Petros Tabouris¹⁷ and Christos Chalaris,¹⁸ are experts in ancient Greek music. On the other hand, the composer Mikis Theodorakis composed his own music for Michalis Kakogiannis filmic versions of three tragedies, which bear antique Greek echoes, and offers the illusion of not here and now. L. M. West's *Ancient Greek Music* (1992) is a good literary source on ancient Greek music for those who would like to pursue this further.

Even more difficult is the revival of the choral odes. As Zariffi points out, the chorus members danced, sang and spoke on stage, but any information about their performance is almost irretrievable. What is known is that the Greeks had a 'dance culture'

in which much of their dancing contributed to processes needed for the coordination, survival, reproduction and prosperity of the community.¹⁹

This feature led Zariffi to suggest when she discusses the chorus performance in relation to the genres of archaic song that:

¹⁵ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 158-9.

¹⁶ Gregorio Paniagua, *Musique De La Grece Antique* (Ancient Greek Music), Harmonia Mundi, 2000. CD.

¹⁷ Petros Tambouris, *Music of Ancient Greece & Music of Greek Antiquity*, FM Records, 2011. CD; Petros Tabouris Ensemble, *Ancient Greek Musical Instruments / Music of Ancient Greece*, Olympus, 2009.

¹⁸ Christodoulos Halaris, *Music of Ancient Greece*, Cultural Action - Emse, 2008. CD. It includes Pindar's First Pythionic Hymn, a chorus from Euripedes' *Orestes*, a chant to Apollo, and a hymn to the Holy Trinity (based on ancient Greek musical theory).

¹⁹ Zariffi, Yana, "Chorus and Dance in the Ancient World", in *The Cambridge companion to Greek and Roman theatre*, ed. by MacDonald, Marianne and Walton J., Michael, 2007, p. 227.

It is extremely likely that generic performance, such as danced wedding-song, contained much that was traditional and typical beyond the words: dance steps, but also other aspects of bodily movement such as speed, vehemence and hand gestures, as well as musical mode, pace, volume and intensity, and rhythm, which was distinguished from metre.²⁰

They had dances for every occasion and dancing permeated all aspects of their life and all kinds of performances.²¹ Even though she writes that the location of similar dances in other cultures nowadays, ancient writings and visual representation or the metre of the choral songs are not enough to restore fully the choreography, body movement, the gestures, the pace or the intensity of their theatrical style,²² this directorial choice could make a difference and offer possible ways for exploration in order to compensate for what is lost. This is extremely significant when rituals are involved. This offers a director an avenue in which to explore and represent the ritualistic moments for the Greek Cypriot audience today.

Of all the tragic conventions, the chorus is the one convention that matters most in staging a tragic text and unfortunately it suffers in staging as will be illustrated in chapter three. Of course, we do not know what the staged appearance of the chorus

²⁰ Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 234.

²¹ Lawler B. Lillian has written two books on dance in theatre and in life, and a lot of journals on various types of dances. They offer an insight and often the posture that would be interesting for the practitioner who is preparing for a production of tragedy: *The Dance of the Ancient Greek Theatre*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1964; *The Dance in Ancient Greece*. London: A. & C. Black, Black, 1964; "Pindar and Some Animal Dances", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 41, No. 3, (jul., 1946), pp. 155-159; "Diplh, dipodia, dipodismos in the Greek Dance", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 76, (1945), pp. 59-73; "Phora, Schema, Deixis in the Greek Dance", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 85, (1954), pp. 148-158; "The 'Lily' in the Dance", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 65, No. 1, (1944), pp. 75-80; "The Dance of the Holy Birds", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 6 (Mar., 1942), pp. 351-361; "The Dance of the Owl and Its Significance in the History of Greek Religion and the Drama", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 70, (1939), pp. 482-502; "The Geranos Dance", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 77, (1946), pp. 112-130.

²² "In restoring, to the limited extend possible, the elements of dance were are assisted by three kinds of evidence ... the survival into our world of smth like this synthesis ... the evidence for dance preserved in ancient writings and visual representations. ... of great interest, but ... limited value for restoring ... the metre in which the words of the choral songs were written. This provides an abstract model of the rhythm of music and dance, ... But ... is very faint. ... Finally, ... the choral songs of tragedy contain elements of genres This enables tragic choral song to evoke a variety of genres. ... music and dance in tragic choral songs should ... be taken together with its evocation of various genres and their traditional context.": Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 233.

looked like, however frequently in modern productions their communal essence is ignored, and so is their role in the story, and most significantly their performance of rites that are so essential in the plot. Contemporary staging usually focuses on the projection of the actor with the chorus members acting like extras supporting them rather than projecting the actual active body of the community.²³ At least Aristotle treated the chorus as an actor a century after the fifth-century tragedy without diminishing its importance in the plot. In all three performances examined in detail in chapter three, the chorus does not enact its most powerful ritualistic scenes whether this involves their functional invocation to the dead (*Choephoroi*), the binding song (*Eumenides*) or the singing of the most important dirges in the play (*Trojan Women*).

Unlike the chorus, a theatre of masks does not seem necessary nowadays. Masks facilitated the ancient performances in sundry ways: they enabled actors to play more roles; helped the audience distinguish age, gender and class; allowed enactment of supernatural beings and so on. Above all masked acting suggests that the ancient audiences were asked to acknowledge the moral choices that the staged figures made rather than to identify them, or with them, as individualised, psychological characters. Most of the Greek performance nowadays use either half masks, or replace it with white paint.

There is also another aspect of masking that is related to acting: it forces actors to focus on the character role and prevents the audience from connecting individual actors to specific roles. The workshops Gregory McCart conducted for fifteen years has proved that masks eliminate casual physical contact between performers and force actors to rid themselves of naturalistic techniques. They also led actors to the *demonstration* of emotion more than creating the illusion of another reality on stage.

The mask demands that actors work at the limit of their vocal and physical energies. After an initial hesitancy, they learn to thrust out their chests, open their shoulders, raise their arms, clench their fists or extend their fingers, adopt an open stance and stride purposefully over the ground. The

²³ See Appendix V for the treatment of the chorus.

outcome is a demonstrative performance that serves as a clearly observable contrast to unmasked acting.²⁴

But McCart notes that often, before actors reach this accomplishment, when they first put on the masks they forgot their lines, they did not know what to do with their hands, they became confused by the removal of the peripheral vision affecting their walking on stage, their voices sounded strange from inside the mask, and their bodies appeared to them too small for the masks. He proved that the disabilities his actors went through were gradually resolved with the creation of a vocabulary of gesture, which Aristotle's writings already attest to. Masked acting requires a different approach that depends on building up a different physical condition to modern acting, a physical approach based on gestures that accompany speech. Even if vase paintings do not display staged drama, they are evidence that gestures were a significant element in tragic performances.

What is more, the ancient Greeks enjoyed open-air performances, and it is customary today in Greece and in Cyprus that they are presented in the ancient amphitheatres as the most suitable places for them following the path Eva Palmer-Sikelianos laid forth.²⁵ However, tragedies may be adjusted for indoor theatres, without affecting the story-development. In which case, the director has to make some decisions regarding certain conventions of tragedy such as for example the number of the chorus. In 2003, TH.O.C. produced the play-text of *Trojan Women* with great success in its experimental stage, which is not more than ten feet by five, under the direction of Giorgos Moyaimis and the set design by Charis Kafkarides.



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²⁴ McCart, Gregory, "Masks in Greek and Roman theatre", in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, 2007, p. 248.

²⁵ See Chapter five.

²⁶ Cyprus Theatre Museum, <<http://www.cyprustheatremuseum.com/>> [Retrieved June 2015].

The performances my students and I prepared for the European Festival of Ancient Greek that take place in Cyprus every two years are another example. The dizzy relationship between the spectators looking down into the centre of the funnel at figures acting was not be possible in this setting, but the issue is not the space within which the plays and ritual elements of the plays are staged.

The central case of my thesis is that a major component of the tragedies is the presence of ritual activities within the plot. Any view of rituals as decorative or aesthetic decisions of the tragedians needs to shift, and we need to build an appreciation of their autonomous and powerful presence as intrinsic in the tragic texts and to recognize that the development of the story very often depends upon them. The action and enactment of these rituals proves to be a key part of the staging of a tragic text. A deeper understanding of the possible evidence for the action of the rituals of fifth century Athens aids our understanding of the tragedies. When these ritual actions are used in the production of staged texts of tragedies they intersect to benefit one another for the better reenactment of the text. What the actors are physically required to do is in the implied stage directions incorporated in the texts. For what is not implied, a director nowadays has to search for information. Combining Aristotle's view that tragedy does not need staging to exist, it can as well be read, with the fifth-century BC notion of theatre, Taplin believes that a great performance of tragedy should balance the word with the enactment:

if we agree that we should respect the author's meaning, then a director should follow the author's instructions, visually and scenically as well as textually.²⁷

5. Choosing the three productions as case studies

In order to explore and demonstrate the importance of staging rituals *as* rituals within the texts, I decided to analyse three tragedies in translation and then review the treatment of the ritual material in the text-performances. However, it would have been impossible to look at a range of performances from different institutions, from

²⁷ Taplin, Oliver, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, London: Methuen, 1978, p.175.

both the governmental institutions, and the commercial organizations. The different financial capabilities and the differing cultural significance of the different theatre companies would have added unnecessary complexity to the analysis. The decision to choose the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus (TH.O.C.) was driven by TH.O.C.'s status as the official representative of Cyprus theatre. TH.O.C. as the culturally authority of drama is officially responsible for maintaining, preserving and developing the theatrical culture, as it sets out in its charter.²⁸ It is rational then to say that when the audience attend a TH.O.C.'s production of a tragedy, signalled by the announcement of the playwright and the original title, they would expect a legitimate performance as faithful to the text as possible, unless released as an adaptation.

The decision to focus on just three productions was in part constrained by the length of the thesis and the lack of taped material. Unfortunately, theatre groups, even governmental ones, are not in the habit of recording their productions. Therefore, among the thirteen productions of ancient drama between 1980 and 2001, only seven were visually recorded, and the quality of most of them is poor. I finally choose three productions having as a criterion their variety of ritualistic scenes as well as a relevant time span between their staging that may reveal any changes in the treatment of the text in performance.

It is worth to note here that TH.O.C. has repeatedly assigned the productions of ancient tragedies to the same director. Between 1980 and 2001, nine out of thirteen tragedies were directed by the same person, Nikos Charalambous,²⁹ not always successfully. It is not the intention of this thesis to criticize the decisions taken by those in office in the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus. Instead, the purpose is to

²⁸ "In accordance with its Founding Law (No. 71/1970) the aims and objectives of THOC are to 'promote the art of theatre in Cyprus and to cultivate a sense of theatre among the people, and to promote artistic relations between the theatre world of Cyprus and that of Greece and other countries'" :<http://www.thoc.org.cy/>

²⁹ Nikos Charalambous, a director and an actor, is a graduate from the Music Academy Arvanitaki, Nicosia, the School of Dramatic Art Theatre Karolos Koun and Directing and Dramaturgical Analysis at the University of Erlangen, Germany. He was the Artistic Director of the theater in Kalamata, Greece, the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus and of Theatron Praxis in Limassol, Cyprus. As a director he has staged around 200 projects in Germany, Greece, Cyprus and for International Festivals. In in the last 25 years he has been directing plays for the Epidaurus Festival: National Theatre of Northern Greece, [<http://www.ntng.gr/default.aspx?lang=en-GB&page=1>]

vocalize the need to modify the direction of thought if this harms understanding of the role of rituals within the text-plays, planned for performances produced for the Epidaurus Festival.

The world of rituals that ‘play’ their own role in tragedies is a strange and fascinating place. Dramatic impact is gained when the reader comes to understand what the ancient spectator knew as part of his cultural heritage.³⁰ Since the nineteenth century, the on-going dialogue on rituals and Greek religion and tragedy has been manifested in thousands of volumes and articles. However, there have not been studies that connect them closely to the plot, defining them as part of a performance, and that studies the impact on a production of their ill-treatment, since the discussion of its staging begun about twenty years ago.

This thesis strives neither to view the rituals as adaptation nor historically authentic, but looks for the balance between the text-play and the text-as-performed. The approach taken for this thesis focuses on understanding the text-play, and the defining role of rituals in the sequence of the scenes. The literary text itself needs to be explored first “Between its first word and its last is contained all that is required to appreciate it as a living, breathing work of art”.³¹ This allows the dramaturgy of the play text to guide the reader to the other social, religious, philosophical and mythical realms, among many others, for its thorough perception.

We cannot be in the place of that original spectator. However, we can explore the possibilities of the insights the various approaches to Greek drama, and the culture that created it, can offer to us as modern readers, spectators or practitioners. Schechner notes that performance is always flexible, able to be modified according to the needs of its audience and the societal changes, without changing the structure.³² Therefore, this thesis has a twofold contribution. Firstly, it is an analysis of the significance of ritual elements to tragedy in text and performance, and an assessment

³⁰ Storey, C., Ian, *A Guide to Ancient Greek Drama*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, p. 31.

³¹ Storey, 2005, p. 3.

³² Schechner, Richard, *Performance Theory*, New York; London: Routledge, 1988, pp. 7, 25.

of the ways in which national Cypriot theatrical culture has attempted to stage those tragic texts. An ancillary purpose, through the appendices, allows this work to be used as a sourcebook for a developed understanding of the ancient Greek rituals that are used in tragedies. The subject-matter of this thesis is that rituals create their own world in the tragedy, which invisibly pilots the story-line. Each ritual bears its own significance for the play, but ultimately they are brought together by the playwright to form a cohesive whole. For these reasons, this thesis consists of five independent, yet inter-connected parts.

The first chapter works as introductory for the discussions in the following chapters before it is expanded in the final chapter. It offers an overview of the scholarly literature around ancient Greek rituals in social life and on the stage and focuses on the debates around the performativity of rituals and their social significance. Scholars have argued over the reasons for the continuity or change in the depiction of rituals, and rituals in social, cultural or religious contexts. For most of them, psycho-cultural factors seem to be the best answer to the question whether ritual practices have continuity, and whether these rituals change with the passing of time or are applied in various ways by the community or the state. This thesis aims to take a deeper look at the rituals' functional operation, it will therefore evoke associations with the importance of the rites in Classical Athens, their dramaturgical significance in the Greek tragedy and consequently in the text-performed productions in theatre. In other words, the rituals, whole, shortened or fragmented, seem to convey the desire for effectiveness within the tragic plot, and where intentions are thwarted or the rites are violated or perverted, their power is depicted as failing. The overall view of the scholarly approaches to rituals in chapter one is focused on specific questions of cultural context and acquires a concrete performative form in the context of fifth-century Athens.

Chapter two draws on scholarly material and offers a brief but interpretive account of the structure and form of those rituals and ritualistic expressions of the daily life of the ancient Greeks that are found in tragedies. This study is complemented with Appendices I, II and III which include the major concepts that sanctioned behaviour

and thought in classical Athens, namely miasma and purification, hubris and piety, divination and the rite of *Pharmakos*. This account will bring to the surface the complex and highly performative social nature of rituals with their own dramaturgy and structures that is used to indicate significant social moments. This chapter is in line with the performative turn which requires historical awareness for the identification of rituals in the tragic texts and their functional power in the plot. Therefore it also fills in the gap in current scholarship offering the reader the necessary background: first to detect those fragments the tragedians used, perceive their role in the narrative and detect the key-ritual that is used as a backbone; and second, for the non-Greek reader this study of rituals can work as a nodal point, offering reflections on how performance frames, or fails to frame, these ritual elements and can assist the reader in exploring corresponding ritualistic equivalents from different cultural contexts. Therefore, to recognise the core of rituals in tragedies, it is essential to understand their function in the ancient Greeks' daily and social life. Fragmented, whole or reported rituals present in the story-line had a corresponding presence in Greek cultural life. This understanding may help immensely in the translation and reconstruction of the play so that the essence of the rituals is preserved in their full power in a production.

Chapter three has two inter-dependent tasks. The first one is the textual analysis from the ritual perspective of five tragedies, *Trojan Women*, *Medea* and the trilogy *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*) which aims to show the rituals, concise or fragmented, reported or performed, that were deployed by the tragedians and their intrinsic functional importance in the story-line of every tragedy. The analysis follows the mode of productions that are then to be analysed in chapter 4, therefore, because only the last scene of *Agamemnon* was staged, the textual discussion of the play is in Appendix IV. To make their continuous presence visible, the rites and ritualistic behaviour will be in **bold** letters. At the same time, with chapter two as a focal point of reference, this analysis will also evince the ritual activities that were deployed by the poets and project were marred in nature and their effect in the dramaturgy of the narratives will be explored. Among the many translations I preferred the translations

by the Loeb Classical Library as they were closer to the ancient texts. When I had doubts that the translation is not accurate I consulted a teacher of ancient Greek language at the school where I work and I have inserted a more accurate translation under the quoted verses.

In Chapter four I undertake an analysis of three text-based performances by the National Theatre of Cyprus and set out to exhibit whether the directors treated the rituals appropriately and whether their autonomous power in the plot is consistent with the performance. This analysis works on two levels: firstly, it allows a comparison and contrast with the textual analysis of rituals in chapter three; and secondly, the reader will be able to verify the stance of this thesis on the role of rituals, that in addition to their textual significance, their performance is vital so that a performance without them is diminished. These analyses are facilitated with the recordings of the first performances from TH.O.C. Following Patrice Pavis' "analysis as reconstruction"³³ I am engaging with the detection of the function of rituals in the context of the performance. The recorded performances are attached to the thesis and their timing is indicated in brackets in the form of 00:00:00.

The general view of this thesis is that, in contrast to Gamel's perspective, by trying to be innovative, many directors fail to present the rituals in tragedies and the productions are thus unsuccessful. Chapter five then turns to the question of how the performative significance of rituals in contemporary performances of ancient Greek tragedy might be sustained. It explores the power of rituals to sustain their social function in time, given that their functional importance in the play text makes their inclusion in contemporary performance of classical Greek tragedy necessary. I question whether the western audience may indeed confront difficulties in their interpretation of ritual elements, and offer some suggestions about aesthetic decisions for their staging, since in staging the plays today we have to serve the fundamental requirements of one ancient cultural source *and* the secondary reality of the 'here and now' for contemporary audiences. I show that folk culture has been one of the

³³ Pavis, Patrice, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance and Film*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003, p. 9.

matrices to which directors have turned, following the impetus of the revival of classical performances at Epidaurus and Delphi as a theatrical venue in the beginning of the 20th century.³⁴ What is more, it has become a popular pattern upon which further aesthetic suggestions that bear the nuances of traditions can be invented, especially in adaptations.

The main focus of this thesis is to spotlight the rituals in tragedies and their staging effect. What is certain is that rituals in tragedies have their own agenda to fulfil. They are not hidden, or concealed in the text. They are there, well described, for everybody to notice. Perhaps because they are so obvious, they are either usually taken for granted or ignored by practitioners. In most cases, their scenic representation in the TH.O.C's productions and significance in the story line is not well-disposed, well-handled or specified clearly.

They are so subtly woven in the play-text that they are usually treated like the rest of the written words. Thereby, the ritual action is usually damaged when the text goes through a process of adaptation. In an effort to make a scene shorter words are carelessly erased, and if a ritual action is included then this removal may result in non-ritualistic scene that converts ancient tragedy into a twentieth century play. The reaction of the Furies, for example, at Orestes' acquittal is eruptive and the repetition of the strophes go along with representing them as getting more and more fearful and dangerous. Leaving only one strophe in the reformed play-text and text-performance would not allow the director to express this live threat on stage.

The question is not to strive for a historically authentic performance, an impossible task, but bring as close as possible the play-text of the tragedians and the productions of a director. This research is not only an asset to a scholarly gap created by the performative turn, but it also address anyone who is interested to view Greek drama from another perspective, that of rituals.

³⁴ Ioannidou, Eleftheria, "Toward a National Heterotopia: Ancient Theaters and the Cultural Politics of Performing Ancient Drama in Modern Greece," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 44, No. 4, (Winter 2010) / Vol. 45, No. 1, Spring 2011, pp. 385-403.

CHAPTER 1

RITUALS AND TRAGEDY

INTRODUCTION

This thesis intends to show that the tragedians deployed ancient Greek rituals and rooted them dramaturgically in the very structure of their plays. It contends that the functional power of these fragmented ritual practices are so deep rooted in the structure of the tragic plays that their omission in a text-based performance affects the conveyance of the story line. Ritual played a significant role in life and on stage during the fifth-century classical Athenian period, and through the texts reveals a mutual yet independent relationship, the medium they share and their functions. To address this inquiry, we need first to examine the notion of rituals and theatre and this journey will offer us an understanding of nature of rituals and their performativity before we can perceive their aesthetic and stylised deployment by the tragedians in the tragic plots.

The field of rituals is under construction as a discipline due to its multi-faceted nature. Ronald Grimes states in the preface of his book *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (1982) that although there is an increased interest in rituals and an interdisciplinary conversation, the absence of common vocabulary may be responsible for the few publications on clearly dominant themes such as the ritual component, type, tradition, discipline, geographical location and historical period. For him Victor Turner was the last theorist who offered a new view in the study of rituals. Therefore, the basic publications that are used in this chapter for the discussion on rituals are Richard Schechner's *Performance Theory* (1988) and *Performance Studies: an Introduction* (2002), Catherine Bell's *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997) and the pioneering book by Eli Rozik *The Roots of Theatre: Rethinking Ritual and Other Theories of Origin* (2002).

I. Discussing the Notion of Rituals

Origins in Ritualisation

The systematic study of ritual is a recent pursuit and it coincided with search for the origin of theatre. The evidence for solid correlation is inadequate. However, scholars like Grimes have suggested that we can infer that the persistence of rituals through time is related with their impact on human beings. Rituals, for Grimes, therefore seem to follow man's evolution.

Ritual is as old as humanity. Perhaps, ... even older, since ethologists ...demonstrated the presence of ritualization behavior among animals.³⁵

This aspect of ritual engages the study of origin to the human needs and suggests an explanation of their power to influence, control and affect human lives.

Man needs miracles ... because he realizes at every stage of his development that the powers of his body and of his mind are limited.³⁶

The question raised here on the kinds of conditions that made rituals so dominant part in man's life may find its answer in that first urge that led to their creation.

Richard Schechner's discussion on ritual³⁷ has taken up this authenticating rhetoric from ethology to suggest that certain drives led early humans to structure rituals and the connection of rituals with their survival, group cohesion and performative form. Darwin's theory of evolution on the biologically driven similarities of behaviour between humans and animals spurred Huxley³⁸ to connect rituals with evolution, an idea that ethologists and sociobiologists developed. It was suggested that, over millions of years, animals ritualised certain behaviour in an effort to help them adapt and survive; to reproduce and pass what is learnt on their genes and then to their descendants; to avoid unnecessary deadly fighting; to fight for or maintain hierarchy;

³⁵ Grimes, Ronald L., *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982, p. xxvii.

³⁶ Rozik quotes Bronislaw Malinowski's view that magic and religion belong to the magico-religious sphere: Rozik, Eli, *The Roots of Theatre: Rethinking Ritual and Other Theories of Origin*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002, p. 7.

³⁷ Schechner, Richard, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp. 50-57.

³⁸ Schechner, 2006, pp. 51, 55.

to gain the right to mate; to protect territory; and to share food.³⁹ Schechner is particularly interested in these aspects of ritualisation that develop, according to him, into postures, movements and calls that gradually acquire a rhythmical and repetitive pattern and develop the display of certain body parts. In the end, the behaviour is restored to its daily use.⁴⁰ S These functions of ritualisation are underpinned by Schechner, who connects animal rituals with human cultures under the ethological umbrella, and views that the exact same functions were carried over to human rituals, only in their case they were endowed with meaning, belief, ideology and cognition, depending on the culture, religion and group. Bell's description of ritualisation rounds up Schechner's analysis when she suggests the concept of social control:

When analyzed as ritualization, acting ritually emerges as a particular cultural strategy of differentiation linked to particular social effects and rooted in a distinctive interplay of a socialized body and the environment it structures.⁴¹

Therefore, this strand of ritual studies is interested in the similarities between animal and human rituals as exaggerated, rhythmical and repetitive movements. In humans, this became inventive display depending on their culture and decorated it with masks and/or makeup, costumes, objects and jewellery, or scarification.⁴² As such complex cultural activity, ritualised acts do not only gradually display theatrical elements, such as dance, music, movement, costume and set design but also draw upon other arts, such as storytelling, sculpture and architecture.⁴³ For Schechner these correlations suggest an evolution from ritual into theatre. Yet for Rozik the idea of the evolution of ritual is sound evidence of not only ritual as an autonomous entity but also of the independence of the other art forms rituals draw upon. Schechner views that because men were more diverse organisms than animals, they eventually developed three categories of rituals, social, religious and aesthetic ones.⁴⁴ It may be thought that shadows of the idea of ritual practices persisted in diverse times and places. For

³⁹ Schechner, 2006, p. 57.

⁴⁰ Schechner, 2006, p. 55.

⁴¹ Bell, M. Catherine, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 7-8.

⁴² Schechner, 2006, pp. 55, 57.

⁴³ Rozik, 2002, p. x.

⁴⁴ Schechner, 2006, pp. 52, 57.

Martin: "It is striking that three of the most important Greek aesthetic and ritual actions [sacrificing and singing and dancing] are thus regarded as forms of creative pleasure."⁴⁵ Therefore, the self-sustained nature of rituals and their value in human life has been regarded by some theorists, like Martin, as enduring and as transferred in the tragic plays at some point in the fifth-century Athens.

Ritual as Performance

The dramatic aspect of rituals was early noticed in the work of Aristotle and his idea of mimesis. Durkheim introduces the category of "imitative rites" followed by Jane Harrison who also viewed ritual as a copy of life "but with a practical end". Burkert underpins this view suggesting that by imitation ordinary secular doings acquire a new religious function.⁴⁶ Rozik and other scholars agree that as modes of actions, rituals imitate real life: "Not all imitations are rituals, but all rituals are imitation of actions".⁴⁷ This is in accord with the ethologists and the exploration of ritualised patterns of behaviour between animals and human beings. This imitation of actions with regard to supernatural beings, gods or the souls of the dead indicate some kind of performance.

As performances, rituals have certain important functions to fulfil and this brings forward the functional structure of a ritual. For Rozik, the functionality of the ritual is closely related to its performativity, not to imply ritual is theatre, but that ritual has a performativity within it. For him, , the functions of ritualisation are connected with the welfare of the group, the clan, the community, the polis and the society in the form of an action with the ultimate purpose to communicate with the divine. Successful outcomes however depended on the performance of a rite as prescribed by all the members of the social group so that it would please the gods and persuade them to offer their assistance to the community or the individual.⁴⁸ Therefore, the successful outcome termed by Schechner as "efficacy" when he discusses the efficacy-

⁴⁵ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 42.

⁴⁶ Rozik, 2002, pp. 12-13, 15.

⁴⁷ Rozik, 2002, p. 13.

⁴⁸ Rozik, 2002, pp. 7, 11.

entertainment braid, I say materialistic or utilitarian, is nothing more than the inherent wish in the rituals for results. Rozik agrees repeating Leach that

Human actions can serve to *do* things, that is, alter the physical state of the world.⁴⁹

Schechner also pinpoints the idea that it does not matter how well the ritual is presented as long as it is performed as prescribed.

In fact, sometimes the lack of theatrical virtuosity adds to the power of a ritual performance by underlining the importance of the action and of the social-sacred role of the ritual performer.⁵⁰

Bell is also in the same line as far as the traditional rituals are concerned:

In some societies and cosmologies correct performance of a ritual made it effective whether you wanted it to be or not.⁵¹

The prescribed steps of a rite do not necessarily include awareness by the participants. Rozik, quoting Lewis, points to the view that it is often not a matter of knowing the meaning of the action, as it “may be clear, or complicated or uncertain, or multiple, or forgotten: but *what* to do is known.”⁵² It is precisely on these ritual manuals that the survival and continuity of rituals depend.

The participation and the performance of the rituals are carried out as the means to communicate with the gods. For Leach, and Rozik seems to agree with him, communication is quintessential and therefore he considers rituals as the language of religion.⁵³ This language is constituted by specified sets of behaviours that are taken out of their ordinary cultural setting and appropriated a religious touch.

Rozik also notices that communication makes it difficult to distinguish a religious from a secular ritual,⁵⁴ but, again, the clarification that communication concerns the effort to contact the invisible world brings religious ritual in focus and saves unnecessary

⁴⁹ Rozik, 2002, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁰ Schechner, 1988, pp. 161, 70.

⁵¹ Bell, M., Catherine, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p. 241.

⁵² Rozik, 2002, p. 10.

⁵³ Rozik, 2002, p. 10, 13-14..

⁵⁴ Rozik, 2002, p. 14.

expansion of the issue. Nevertheless, Rozik is in accord with Leach who believes that communication is vital for the notion of rituals.

Communication can be carried out by language or nonverbal media, such the indexical (e.g. body language) and iconic (e.g., theatre medium).⁵⁵

Therefore, performance matters for the reciprocal nature of ritual, and efficacy requires first and foremost the participation of all the members of the social group.

Ritual as a Mode of Action

What has become a certainty nowadays is that the nature of rituals is extremely complex. The composite nature of rituals is more evident in the variety of fields that first preoccupied anthropologists, historians of religion, sociology, ethnologists or folklorists who used the notion of ritual to interpret issues basic to culture, society, and religion. Bell writes that, after the subversive 1960s which brought considerable changes to university life, the study of ritual attracted new fields such as paleo-historians, intellectual history, philosophy, psychology, sociobiology, and biogenetics, a body of theory in anthropology that brought about a new way of looking at rituals. They started to focus their analysis on ritual "as a 'window' on the cultural dynamics by which people make and remake their worlds".⁵⁶ Grimes mentions that rituals are studied in the fields of liturgics, religious studies, anthropology, drama, psychology, sociology, and folklore, with a few in literature, philosophy, classics, political science, kinesiology, ethology and speech but focuses on the lack of exchange between them.⁵⁷ Rozik follows a different method research in his investigation of the roots of theatre in which he applies additional disciplines such as psychoanalysis, neurology, or neuro-

⁵⁵ Rozik, 2002, p. 16.

⁵⁶ Bell, 1992, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Grimes add this multi-field search for understanding and redefining of rituals has resulted in an interdisciplinary conversation known as "ritual studies". He belongs to that group of theorists who have contributed to ritual theory since Victor Turner and he was the first to point to the need for the establishment of such a field. However, in his preface Grimes, like Catherine Bell, among others, realises that the multi-faceted nature of ritual itself makes its definition as a field difficult for the moment: Grimes, 1982, pp. xiii-xxix.

psychology, sociology, play and game theory, science of religion, mythology, poetics, philosophy of language and linguistics, particularly pragmatics.⁵⁸

This multi-field research vindicates the thought that the involvement of so many different fields in the study of rituals propels their constant redefinition depending on the database of each expertise. What has also become, prominent therefore, Bell notes in the last twenty years is that

ritual has simultaneously become an object, a method, and even something of a style of scholarship.⁵⁹

Therefore, the various definitions of ritual not only reveal their perplexive nature and functions but they also denote it both as an object on its own right and a mode of action.

Victor Turner, the most influential authority in the theory of rituals, summarizes a specific definition of rituals in detail:

ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests. Rituals may be seasonal, hallowing a culturally defined moment of change in the climatic cycle or the inauguration of an activity such as planting, harvesting, or moving from winter to summer pasture; or they may be contingent, held in response to an individual or collective crisis. Contingent rituals may be further subdivided into life-crisis ceremonies, which are performed at birth, puberty, marriage, death, and so on, to demarcate the passage from one phase to another in the individual's life-cycle, and rituals of affliction, which are performed to placate or exorcise preternatural beings or forces believed to have afflicted villagers with illness, bad luck, gynecological troubles, severe physical injuries, and the like. Other classes of rituals include divinatory rituals; ceremonies performed by political authorities to ensure the health and fertility of human beings, animals, and crops in their territories; initiation into priesthoods devoted to certain deities, into religious associations, or into secret societies; and those accompanying the daily offering of food and libations to deities or ancestral spirits or both.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Rozik, 2002, p. xiv.

⁵⁹ Bell, 1992, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Turner, W. Victor, "Symbols in African Ritual", *Science*, New Series, Vol. 179, No. 4078, (1973). pp. 1100.

Turner was the first one who crystalised the notion of rituals as a performance of acts, often aesthetic, since it was first discerned by Durkheim⁶¹ and then Harrison who saw in ritual activities a whole set of performed acts.⁶² He developed van Gennep's three-phase structure of ritual action into a theory of ritual and offered detailed information on their function, purpose, and the various types of the rites. He also brought forward the new perspective that in a ritual what counts most is its enactment.

Rituals as modes of actions include the seeds of performance. Theories that are more recent focus on the performance field of rituals, such as Rozik's working definition of rituals which clearly implicates the choice to involve in its presentation the theatre medium:

performance of an act/action by and for the community, employing various media, with religious or other intentions and purposes, ... in the form of a prescribed and recurrent practice, attaching even growing symbolic meaning, ... From a pragmatic viewpoint, ritual is basically self-referential, like any other real act/action, and subordinates the use of any language/medium, including the possible use of theatre, to its general design.⁶³

For Rozik, rituals as performed acts became formalized practices that were characterized by

colorfulness, solemnity, prescribed behaviour, recurrence, and long-term permanence. Their preestablished acts are obligatory, and transgression is penalized.⁶⁴

It is clear that their formalisation reveals, except their performative variability, their repetitive nature that entails the prescribed steps that had to be followed.

The third definition that relates ritual and performance comes from Schechner who focuses on the actions and the use of rituals from the ethological view.

Rituals are a way people remember. ... memories in action, encoded in actions ... [that] also help people deal with difficult transitions,

⁶¹ Emile Durkheim was the first one who discerned rituals as actions, as performances of a designed series of steps made up of ordinary behaviour: Schechner, 2006, p. 50.

⁶² Rozik, 2002, pp. 7-8.

⁶³ Rozik, 2002, p.17.

⁶⁴ Rozik, 2002, p. 8.

hierarchies, and desires that trouble, exceed, or violate the norms of daily life.⁶⁵

The performance of rituals becomes the polestar that transmits the memory and knowledge of the group acquired by the experiences in the lapse of time and around which the social group live and grow. In this sense, the use of their performative elements in tragedies may also act as referential points for understanding and conveying messages to the fifth century audiences.

Rituals survived because of their prescribed and recurrent performance that was memorised through practice and because of their functions that never ceased to exist.

The Social Functions of Rituals

The performance of rituals introduces the primary social impact of rituals, which Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) articulated as social coherence and unity among the members of a group. Max Gluckman (1911–1975) argued that ritual is the expression of complex social tension that needed to be released so that reaffirmation of solidarity is established. Later, Victor Turner (1920–1983), reviving van Gennep's *Rites of Passage*, treats rituals as social actions predefined by the tradition of a community and its desire to cope with life crisis and entertainment. He terms the participation in the rites that compose the transitional part of the tripartite structure separation-transition-integration as *communitas*, explaining that ephemeral fleeting sense of connection that is produced when the whole group take part in the rites ensuring the passage to another state of life. After the 60s, the rekindled interest in ritual theory enticed many contemporary theorists to see rituals again as forms of collective expression.⁶⁶

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown moved away from the sacred level and focused on the psychological and social level, generalised by him as secondary. This included the “buttressing tradition, reaffirming common beliefs and promoting a sense of

⁶⁵ Schechner, 2006, p. 45.

⁶⁶ Rozik, 2002, pp. 6-8, 11-12.

community and social cohesion, and bestowing legitimisation on social and political order.”⁶⁷ Still though, these functions also seem to be promoted with the group participation.

These functions of ritual seem to embed change. Rituals reflect social and individual behaviour or shape it but as society changes, ritual changes as well although not as fast as societies.

To recapitulate what has been discussed so far, the theorists suggest that rites are the humans’ effort to please, to be listened to and be granted favours by the divine and, to succeed in this, man needed this ancient ‘telephone’ communication. This drive to communicate for efficacious results probably made early man dramatise acts so as to ensure, or increase, the possibilities for successful outcomes. Efficacy required participation for good communication, communication needs the social group’s total devotion to their task; therefore it may be deduced that efficacy depends heavily on the unity and solidarity of the group when transmitting the messages. The desired efficacy that requires proper enactment and participation is also preserved in tragedy, but because they are defined by some kind of violation and they are inappropriately enacted for dramatic reasons and efficacy fails to the great disappointment the characters and the chorus. The communication of ritual activities is also intrinsically in relocated tragedy but the intentions of the performance are not fulfilled and the addressee is now the audience. In this sense, rituals become a specific component in theatre as a medium that uses them to convey its messages and ideology.

Ritual Continuity

The power of ritual as an independent cultural expression is manifested in the way it survives throughout the millenniums. According to Nilsson, rituals have changed or altered as humanity evolved. However, as long as the inner needs of humans remain unchanged their core is also maintained.⁶⁸ Anthropology has always seen rituals as

⁶⁷ Rozik, 2002, p. 11.

⁶⁸ Nilsson, Martin, *The Greek Popular Religion*, New York, 1961.

one of those functional mechanisms by which society was preserved, presumably continuing fairly unchanged from one generation to the next.⁶⁹

Schechner also agrees with the view that rituals may function as the mechanisms that provide people with stability, security and help them make changes in their lives and views permanence as fallacious. He suggests that because society changes, rituals also adapt and change to fit in the new social realities, although they do not stretch to an extent beyond recognition.⁷⁰ This view of rituals seems to contradict Rozik's suggestion that rituals are historical and theatre ahistorical, meaning that rituals are established and at a point they disappear whereas theatre may exist even if it is not used.⁷¹ Rituals have never disappeared; they have experienced changes just like theatre have gone through changes since the fifth-century B.C.

Rozik however suggests that rituals today are not as powerful as previous centuries, although their presence is not indistinct. His view is not so accurate though. Rituals have survived on their own terms, evolving by adapting to new changes and the social needs and requirements. Societies are driven to even 'invent' new ones in the place of others.⁷² Contrary to theatre, they have been continuously active in societies, which show that their power is deeply rooted in the need of humans for rituals. This statement raises the issues of ritual continuity and change. Sutton's significant article⁷³ proves valuable because he tries to offer an analysis on the issue combining recent theories of anthropology with various field-research.

Sutton views that the element of rituals that allows its understanding is the form, something Victor Turner had already implied it when he wrote:

Nevertheless, forms survive through flux, and new ritual items, even new ritual configurations, tend more often to be variants of old themes than radical novelties. Thus it is possible for anthropologists to describe the main features of a ritual system, or rather ritual (successive ritual

⁶⁹ Sutton, David, E., "Ritual, Continuity and Change: Greek Reflections", *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2004, pp. 92.

⁷⁰ Schechner, 1988, p. 75.

⁷¹ Rozik, 2002, p. 27.

⁷² Rozik, 2002, p. xv.

⁷³ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). pp. 91-105.

performances), in those parts of rural Africa where change is occurring slowly.⁷⁴

Form is the performative elements of the rituals: the arrangement, the gestures, and the choreography of the body, what Parkin terms as 'bodily social memory' (body positioning).⁷⁵ What Sutton suggests is that although the basic structure remains unchanged, it seems that it is the *form* that changes conforming to social rules in a recurrent pattern and keeps social memory alive by linking the present to the past. These performative elements also transmit their meaning assisted by ritual objects. Although Sutton does not clarify this, not only the meaning of the form but also of the meaning of the objects may be different.

Continuity of the form, therefore, does not guarantee the same meaning, and the same applies for the symbols. In contrast to the possibility that form bears no memory at all or no meaning, Connerton underpins that it is the performative elements that constitute the message, which may be acquiring different meanings but only within limits. What he may mean is that the new meaning also bears elements, if not all, of the original message of a ritual. Sutton however mediates the two views and suggests that one should look

at how certain *contextually embedded* cultural elements show both change and continuity through time.⁷⁶

To exemplify his suggestion he refers to Panourgia's approach to the Greek custom of *kolliva* which is almost identically linked with the Ancient Greek ritual of *panspermies*. As it will be discussed in chapter four, the form of many Greek practices was employed in Orthodox practices. Sutton does not clarify what *kolliva* or *panspermia* is in his article. For better understanding of the non-Greek, *Kolliva* is a special food made of boiled wheat, almonds, raisins, and pomegranate seeds, prepared for funeral and memorial services everywhere in Greece and in Cyprus. It is prepared by women and it is all distributed after the church liturgy to all congregation as a symbolic action of sharing a meal with the deceased. *Panspermia* was a mixture of food, grains and beans

⁷⁴ Turner, "Symbols in African Ritual", (1972). pp. 1100.

⁷⁵ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). pp. 95.

⁷⁶ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p. 97.

boiled together, along with honey, offered to Hermes Chthonios on behalf of the spirits of the dead on the third day of the ancient Greek festival of *Anthesteria*. The festival was held annually for three days, the eleventh to thirteenth of the month of *Anthesterion*, which corresponds to the full moon of January-February. It is clear in this example that past and present bound together in a ceaseless performance of a custom. It is also obvious that social memory has maintained the original meaning of the rite in ancient Greece.

Sutton's examples also support his view that continuity and/or change in practice and in meaning are understood by the approach of "historical consciousness", which implies the apprehension of the multi-stranded relationship between past and present in the lapse of time. It is also a key tool in the classicists' performative turn, and in the case of tragedy it is vital in identifying the rituals and their importance in the texts.

Sutton's reference to Seremetaki study of the lament in Mani is another field study, which shows the almost identical connection of the ancient Greek lament with the present. He calls approaches like Seremetakis and Panourgias as "existential", in the notion of doing things as they have been done before. The validity of his suggestion is also attested by further evidence. Comparing for example the death rituals or the votive offerings with today's practices in Greece and in Cyprus, we can see that the similarities, usually selfsame, are astonishing. Margaret Alexiou's pioneering work on laments in 1974 offer the opportunity to ascertain the existence of the ancient Greek death-steps. Mourning in rural Greece by other Greek ethnographers confirms a continuation of the custom and highlight the past as a meaningful horizon of the present.

Other ancient Greek rites that were included in the Christian calendar, not practices, are still performed but the ancient meaning is partly disconnected. In rites of fertility such as *Kalogeros* (*Kalogeros*), the Good Monk⁷⁷ in Greece during the Carnival, the form ensures not only the continuity of the rite but also the meaning. However, what has changed is the belief of the contemporary participants in the effectiveness of the

⁷⁷ See Appendix VI.

rite. It is not unsubstantiated to assume that the religious practices still bear some power in the mind of the believers, whereas rites that are part of the folk culture have entered the sphere of entertainment mainly. Thus continuity exists because of the form and the time depth of the ritual symbols and continues to communicate the perception of the world.

A change may also occur to the ritualistic objects of a rite and acquire a new meaning especially when these are isolated from their context. If we look at the ancient symbol of the equilateral cross with its arms bent at right angles in either right-facing, known as swastika, still used in many parts of the world since ancient times, its use by the Nazi in Germany stigmatized the symbol in the Western world. A material object which originally symbolized good, it means 'to be good, all is well', is known to have come to mean the superlative of its opposite. Therefore, Parkin and Comaroffs may be right when they suggest that brand new meanings may replace their previous ones in the cases of symbols which were at a point detached from rites. However, when these are vital props to religious rituals, Sutton's thought is better substantiated when he contends, contrary to Parkin and Comaroffs, that body and material objects cannot be completely devoid of previous meanings when they are vital props to ritual performance. Rather, the material properties of the objects, due to their time depth as well, he supports quoting Fred Myers, make them better bearers of new meanings or other kinds of uses.⁷⁸ It is precisely this time depth that renders an object with a mystical aura, even when it is detached from a rite that is transcended in time.

Continuity thus depends on the ritualistic symbols and form and its inscription on the body, and historical consciousnesses is the tool to understand its continuity. The same process proves an equally valuable tool for understanding the rituals in a tragedy.

What is not mentioned so far is that the idea of continuity is inseparably linked with the desire of the individuals to maintain the ritual. It is likely that one of the reasons the rituals hold an attraction for humans is that they are bonding: they are expressions of social cohesion or social contracts.

⁷⁸ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p. 94.

The need for the social sense of belonging is still active today in the western societies which experience politically, intellectually, artistically, personally, financially, culturally and epistemologically the mighty stress on a daily basis.⁷⁹ These conflicts drive people to search for meaning and as Bell observes:

The freedom that many people feel to improvise rites that draw on a vast spectrum of cultural imagery is itself indicative of a particular understanding of ritual – as a type of psychosocial mechanism unbound and undetermined by any one religious or ritual tradition.⁸⁰

For example, Schechner sees in the increasing unconscious interest in rituals in the twentieth-century artistic movements, a way to satisfy those yearnings.

The question that follows is whether in contemporary Western cultures spectators are able to participate in a production which involves rituals in its plot such as tragedy, especially when these come from another culture. How then is the audience conditioned for what it is about to watch? The answer could lie in the notion of performance, first discussed analytically by Schechner. He believes that the notions of efficacy-entertainment persistently meet, forming ties of various kinds.⁸¹

Performances originated in the need to make things happen and to entertain; to get results and to fool around; to show the way things are and to pass the time; to be transformed into another and to enjoy being oneself; to disappear and to show off; to embody a transcendent other and to be “just me” here-and-now; to be in trance and to be in control; to focus on one’s own group and to broadcast to the largest possible audience; to play in order to satisfy a deep personal, social, or religious need; and to play ... under contract for cash.⁸²

Rituals and theatre belong then to a larger area of performance, to that mode of aesthetic communication with the prospect of being displayed to an audience. Turner also explored the key idea of ritual as performance, and suggested that ritual creates a kind of aesthetic performance.⁸³ It may be thought then that whereas rituals are ‘dressed’ to attract the gods and communicate with them, theatre uses performative

⁷⁹ Schechner, Richard, *The Future of Ritual*. London; New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 259.

⁸⁰ Bell, 1997, p. 24o.

⁸¹ Schechner, 2006, pp. 55, 71.

⁸² Schechner, 1988, p. 72.

⁸³ Rozik, 2002, p. 9.

elements to attract and communicate with people on mundane concerns. Therefore, ritual and theatre as performances still mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories.⁸⁴ Each cultural entity occupies its own private area, performs its functions and enriches the performances of each other.

Their theatrical aspect, their deployment for dramaturgical purposes, seems to have been an attractive issue in the last hundred years. At the turn of the twentieth century, rituals had a great impact on Western theatre and dance. Indian dancing inspired Ruth St Denis (1879-1968) to introduce a revolution in modern dance, a decision that that influenced her partner Ted Shawn and her students and company members Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, among others. The French performance theorist Antonin Artaud changed the destiny of the 20th century western theatre after watching a Balinese ritual dance in Paris in 1931. This tendency, and their power to transcend ordinary events and ritualise them, has attracted the attention of theatre practitioners after the 1960s who diligently experimented with inventing rituals while older rituals from various cultures provided gist for exploration.

Therefore, the presence of rituals in a performance seems to distinguish three kinds of them. The first one is the traditional religious ritual per se that aims to bridge the divine with the mundane world, or the secular rituals. The second type is a ritualized performance, in which rituals are reshaped and combined into aesthetic performances.⁸⁵ In this category, Rozik puts Jerzy Grotowski's 'holy' theatre and Peter Brook's 'sacred' theatre, which imply by their characterisations the effort to transcend their audiences. However, Rozik has a point to attribute their effort with failure:

The attempts of the theatrical avant-garde to reintroduce ...“ritual” in its religious numinous or transcendental sense, [is] indicated by the use of terms such as “holy” (Grotowski) and “sacred” (Peter Brook).... however, avant-garde theatre is unable to *reintroduce* ritual participation into “aesthetic theatre” because it never featured “ritual participation” in the first place. The so-called homemade ritual elements, ... are essentially different from ritual, although, ... they certainly belong in theatre.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Schechner, 1988, p. 22.

⁸⁵ Schechner, 1988, pp. 75-76.

⁸⁶ Rozik, 2002, pp. 26, 340.

As it is discussed earlier, the participation is not the only feature that the 'holy' or 'sacred' theatre does not transform into a ritual. The final category is a text-performance that uses rituals in its narrative for dramaturgical purposes. Tragedy falls in the last category: it is a traditional style that combines various art forms: acting, dancing, and singing and makes use of the codified form of rituals for dramatic purposes only. Therefore, their presence in ancient Greek drama *does not* make it a ritual.

II. Discussing Tragedy

1. Tragedy and Rituals

The concern in this thesis focuses on the performativity of rituals in the structure of tragedies and the enactment of those fragments in the text-performed productions. Therefore, the central part religion and rituals played in the ancient Greeks' life becomes of key importance for understanding the text of a tragedy. This focus has been facilitated by the interest in Greek rituals and religion in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and religious studies that culminated after the mid-1960s. Therefore, the 'Primal Ritual' of the Cambridge School may have never been proven but its impact on the studies on tragedy and ancient Greek life was immense. The rise to the research of various parts that comprise ancient Greek religion includes the rites death, wedding, sacrifice, supplication, oath and many others as chapter two will demonstrate. This also led to the breakthrough of pioneering publications on various aspects of Greek Religion. This turning point is connected with Turner's rediscovery of Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* (1909). His influential comeback affected immensely the anthropological studies on death rituals with his tripartite structure of initiatory rites. Among numerous publications, Donna Kurtz's exceptional *Greek burial customs* (1971) offers a detailed insight of the funeral practice in ancient Greece for the first time which is further supported by Shapiro's article on "The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art" (1991). Walther Burkert reconstructs the rite of sacrifice and concludes that, bloody or bloodless, sacrifice was at the core of every religious act in *The Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual* (1979). Publications on Greek religion mainly by Burkert, Zaidman and Pantel, Mikalson, Garland and Elderkin offer information for the rites of prayers and libations, two rites that accompany all the others. Gould's interest in Greek religion pioneered an article on "Hiketia" (1973) offering a complete picture on supplication, an area that was enriched much later by Fred Naiden's *Supplication* in 2009. On scapeman rituals, Bremmer's "*Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece*" (1983) discusses the rite in depth, whereas McNeil's suggestion to change the term into "scapeman" offers an interesting insight. Robert Parker proposes a detailed analysis of the notion of *Miasma, Pollution and Purification*

(1983) whereas Oath was first explored by Joseph Plescia (1970) and later by Alan Sommerstein and Judith Fletcher's (2007). Finally, Esther Eidonow's *Oracles, Curses, and Risk Among the Ancient Greeks*, (2007) is impressively supplemented by a catalogue of all the defixiones, curses, that archaeologists brought to the surface.

All scholars, who have researched Greek religion, posit that life for the ancient Greeks was structured around the rites as a means to ensure that community feeling and solidarity was guaranteed in the absence of laws and courts.⁸⁷ Moreover, it seems that the primal function of rituals are still manifested in the fifth-century Athens through the structure and form of the rituals, the way Greeks viewed and worshipped their gods and lived their lives come to the foreground for the first time.

Ancient religion pervaded every aspect of collective and individual life. It expressed itself in rituals that treated the gods in human shape as social partners: they received gifts through offerings, praise and promises from prayers, and were invited to common meals through sacrifices. It was not what one believed that counted, but participation in the collective rituals of one's group. This did not preclude personal piety or personal skepticism, even agnosticism, nor did it exclude public debate on the character of the divine powers and their role in the life of the city, the family and each individual.⁸⁸

What all scholars have also managed to verify is that Greek tragedies do indeed contain multiple rituals that were not created by the tragedians. Literary evidence in combination with archaeological findings show that elements of real life rituals or whole ones were used in the tragedies and were dramaturgically deployed in the fictional worlds they depicted. These few researches, among many others, may allow us to infer that this explosion of interest in ancient Greek religion, in connection with more archaeological discoveries, will continue to enlighten the ancient rituals and enrich the area of classical Greek studies.

The fact that the structure of tragedy is dense with rituals is not a sound reason to suggest that tragedy is a ritual itself. Rozik's theory of roots confutes such sameness and distinguishes theatre and rituals as two different ontological forms - two

⁸⁷ See Appendix II, *Hybris* and Piety.

⁸⁸ Graf, 2007, p. 55.

independent cultural forms of expression that make use of theatrical elements to fulfil different purposes and intentions.⁸⁹ Graf views that rituals do not go deeper into the structure of tragedy to the point that it may be understood as the background of a ritual pattern.⁹⁰ However, this thesis suggests that rituals do indeed go into its structure to the point of making up the backbone of tragedy and function as the locomotors of the plots of the plays. This realisation is significant for a text performance since the fragments of rituals used in Greek tragedy imposes their presence as a key-component in the development of the story.

2. Tragedy as a Socially Transformational Ritual

Tragedy as a medium was the product of intellectual thinking and social structure of the polis. When it had served its purpose, it died out. No wonder then, that tragedy begun, lived and decreased in the social structure of the polis from the years 472 BC, when the Greeks defeated the Persians, to 406 BC when Sophocles and Euripides died and Athens fell to Sparta in 404.⁹¹ This is the reason most companions, guides and other researches on Greek tragedies always connect the first genre of drama to the structure of the polis.

This notion raises the idea of tragedy as a socially transforming tool, which has never been seriously discussed according to Fischer-Lichte,⁹² in three ways: the contest of drama was part of a festival; it used features from the civic institutions specifically the rituals and the debate; and dealt in an indirect way with the fifth-century social life, political situations and decisions and the history of Athens. Theatre competitions were part of the religious milieu of the festival of Great Dionysia, as the classicists have discussed extensively. In this sense, the whole festival was turned into a civic theatre framed by four rituals that projected Athens' grandeur performed before the play competitions.⁹³ These civic events were highlighted with sacrifices and a libation

⁸⁹ Rozik, 2002, pp. 24, 337.

⁹⁰ Graf, 2007, p. 61.

⁹¹ Wiles, David, *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.11.

⁹² Fischer-Lichte, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 38.

⁹³ Goldhill, Simon, *How to Stage Greek Tragedy Today*, Chicago University Press, 2007, pp. 119-123.

of wine, the display of the tribute monies from the Athenians' allies, the announcements of the city benefactors and the honours to war-orphans. They all show off Athens and its ideology, in a manner of appropriateness and supremacy. Hence Hesk's statement, that the socio-political context of tragedy is crucial for its understanding, because it "is completely different to the modern western experience of theatre."⁹⁴

However, both Graf and Hesk note that the world tragedies were depicted in was not harmless at all. Tragedians criticised the audience's social, political and religious environment but they did it acutely by using the myths and the heroic vagueness, where space, time and history clouds the borders.⁹⁵ They confronted and questioned the social, moral, political and ideological dialogue, a task presented in such a way as to be accepted by the audience and its leaders. They praised Athens, but in many cases they blame Athenians, by using mythical non-Athenian families committing their errors. The plays contrast to the presentation of a magnificent and righteous Athens in the framework of a festival, a veiled opposite condition with the exploration of transgression and the flaws of characters that are almost always depicted as having socially and religiously disastrous effects.⁹⁶ In other words, tragedy makes social comments through the worrying relationship between the heroic, yet autocratic, characters and their communities, because their errors are produced by *hubris*.

The transformational quality of tragedy seems to concentrate on being politically didactic for the fifth century audience, offering open-ended social and ethical problems,⁹⁷ usually moral in nature, without preaching, which implies passive acceptance of advice. Didactic is quite close in meaning with teaching, in the sense that one is offered the information, and then he or she is free to make deductions and come to conclusions and decisions out of mental and intellectual procedures. Therefore, tragedy asked questions, exposed tensions and divisions but it never gave any clear

⁹⁴ Hesk, John, "The Socio-political Dimension of Ancient Tragedy", in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, 2007, p. 73; Graf, 2007, p. 59.

⁹⁵ Hesk, 2007, p. 84.

⁹⁶ Hesk, 2007, pp. 73, 77.

⁹⁷ Hesk, 2007, p. 75.

answers or solutions to the problems. This seems to be one technique to enhance the critical ability of the spectators.

Therefore, tragedy itself is a ritual in the sense that in context and in function it drives towards the efficacy that defines rituals: it aims at transforming as well as entertaining the spectators. However, contrary to rituals which strive to affect the participants' world in the divine sphere, theatre does that by challenging the spectators' perception urging them to think about their own world, even with shaking their beliefs.⁹⁸ Tragedy is a genre where transformation, if allowed, is embedded. Turner's social drama, even though he refers to the dramatisations of real conflict,⁹⁹ explains the transformational qualities in tragedy, and Western drama perfectly:

The progression from breach and crisis through redressive action to reintegration/schism is the underlying scheme of the Greek tragedies, the Elizabethan theatre, and modern realist drama.¹⁰⁰

In this spirit, it is no wonder that tragedy and comedy further mirrored the heart of the social and religious institutions of the city-state: the assembly, the council, the court and the religion by drawing on two social institutions - the rhetoric, the art of persuasive speech, *agon*, and the rituals. Tragedy utilized rhetoric by which actual delicate political decisions were negotiated in a theatrical form behind the screen of myth:

it is clear that Athenians came to expect entertainment in court. ... *agon* of words is a regular feature of Old Comedy and frequent in tragedy.¹⁰¹

The incorporated *agon* usually takes place in a ritualistic frame. Then rituals, as part of that greater plan for the salient projection of Athenian ideology, were performed in the frame of the festival and within the plays. The fragmented rituals in the plays, relying on actual forms, offered a familiar reflection and enhanced the emotional response of the audience,

Drama, as representative of human life, reflects the importance of ritual in the lives of Greeks... reflects their complex and often contradictory

⁹⁸ Rozik, 2002, pp. 17, 24, 35, 338.

⁹⁹ Rozik, 2002, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ Schechner, 1988, p. 67.

¹⁰¹ Martin, 2007, pp. 47-49.

thinking and speaking about the gods and heroes who were honoured in the rituals.¹⁰²

Graf notes that the concurrent presence of drama and ritual can shape the understanding of why tragedy, and comedy, thought much of their communal life, conditions, history and institutions of Athens.¹⁰³

In other words, they 'hurt' by choosing a relevant story from their mythic-historical past, combine it with rituals and agon during which they illuminated the pros and cons of each character. Goldhill notes a dangerous tendency among directors who try to make the tragedies offer answers to the problems instead of letting the audience think and decide.¹⁰⁴ Such productions are destined to fail in their purpose of staging a tragedy.

Adapting a play is one way to stage a tragedy, but this research is concerned with questions around a text-performed. When a play-text is mounted, one needs to remember that Greek drama is a "wordy genre".¹⁰⁵ Tragedy belongs to that group of plays that is characterized by Aristotle's plot, the *mythos*, and as such, if one theatre group chooses to put on the text, he or she could get into the flow of the genre, and search for the "twist worlds of difference"¹⁰⁶ following the words spoken at their own setting.

3. Rituals in the plot of Tragedy and on Stage

The ritual activities in the tragic plots vary. David Wiles distinguishes two kinds of ritual in tragedies, the narrated rituals as unseen actions and the explanatory ones.¹⁰⁷ The narrated ritual, or "unseen action", is illustrated in the case of Clytaemnestra when she mentions her offerings to the furies when she demands Orestes' punishment. The explanatory rituals are used to declare the foundation of a rite. *Eumenides* ends with the institution of the court in *Areopagos*, and in *Medea* the title

¹⁰² Graf, 2007, p. 55.

¹⁰³ Graf, 2007, p. 59.

¹⁰⁴ Goldhill, 2007, p.151.

¹⁰⁵ Goldhill, 2007, p.45.

¹⁰⁶ Schechner, 2006, pp. 66-67.

¹⁰⁷ Wiles, D., *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 36-37.

character announces the establishment of a new festival in honour of her sons. However, there are other kinds, too. Ancient Greek stage also refers to complex rituals reported by the messengers, whether because of the restraints of the stage, necromantic rites or sacrifices for example, or because of the conventions that inhibited killings on stage.

More important though for this study are the fragmented ritual practices that are enacted on stage. As rituals allude to real-life ritual gestures and vocabulary they become a tool as adjacent actions supplement one another in tune striving for efficacy. Martin alludes the implication of ritual as the apparent object that furthers the thematic development of a tragedy when he writes, “for suggesting change through an apparently unchanging medium”.¹⁰⁸ Following Leach’s focus on the communicative aspect of tragedy,¹⁰⁹ we could say that rites in tragedies act as tools for expressing or conveying the plot. In all the surviving tragedies, there is one ritual, or ritualised social activity, that frames or carries forward the action. And so,

By studying the way that rituals and ritualized behaviour are built into the tragedies and comedies of the dramatists, we gain a fuller understanding of the multiple levels on which these plays communicated with their audiences.¹¹⁰

Bell states without any ambiguity that they are ‘visible’, “an action ... [can be] traced with clarity”.¹¹¹ For instance, *Medea* moves from wedding to supplication, to oath, to lament, curse and so on. Chapter three will illustrate this factuality in tragedies as the bold marked rites will indicate this movement visibly. Rituals as tools shaped the expectations and perceptions of the audience.¹¹² They acted as a microscope of real life on the ancient stage if we consider the fact that every Greek had an altar in his house and offered prayers, libations and sacrifices on a daily basis.

For the original audience familiar with the significance of these rituals, whether used partially or whole, their perverted treatment was immediately perceivable. Weddings lead to death, supplications are violated, burials are not performed and sacrifice

¹⁰⁸ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 45-46.

¹⁰⁹ Rozik, 2002, p. 14.

¹¹⁰ Storey, 2005, p. 236.

¹¹¹ Bell, 1992, p. xv.

¹¹² Graf, 2007, pp. 60-61.

always means the death of humans as offerings or, quite often, as scapemen or scapewomen.

It is often the so-called concern of a producer that a modern spectator may not respond to another system of beliefs. Storey following this thought believes that there are various approaches to its production, since it is impossible to re-create the ancient Greek theatre experience: we could try to get as close as possible; look for the messages and produce a play in a modern context; or update it to reflect modern concerns. This may be true from one point of view because each one's social environment, family, upbringing and other personal experiences, forms understanding. In such a case "he or she will be less likely to universalize or to project anachronistically modern concerns and attitudes into the texts".¹¹³ However, this is not an excuse to start modernizing and changing all the classical plays because the Greek audience will not understand Shakespeare, Moliere or Chekov, or the English audience will be estranged by Ibsen or tragedy.

Tragedy is still contemporary because it still transcends our political situations. Holst-Warhaft indulges us into the stimulating idea of thinking of tragedy as bearing "western" characteristics, "rationality, a preoccupation with justice, civil thinking, mediation, masculinity".¹¹⁴ Of course, her search is for the female power in tragedies, but she spurs us the idea that these very 'western' characteristics can make tragedy accessible to western audiences exactly as it is no matter how distant the genre may be on stage. This process of thinking in combination with the fact that no matter how many centuries have gone by what troubled humans is still tormenting, allows tragedy to be as it is on stage, a genre of social reason.

The aim is to meet these playwrights, their vision and their world. After all, the audience, or some of them, can have the chance to go through a different kind of transience, that of being transferred for a while into another kind of world, the stage world, and transform mentally and emotionally. Theatre is governed by conventions

¹¹³ Storey, 2005, p. 240.

¹¹⁴ Holst-Warhaft, Gail, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 131.

that allow it to shift. Yet, ancient tragedy remains great because it still does reflect modern worries; therefore updating may not offer anything to a production from this perspective.

CHAPTER 2

THE MANNERS AND THE CUSTOMS
(Daily and Public Life)

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that one of the essential factors that bond a community together is the shared rituals. As Zaidman and Schmidt say, beyond the specific religious significance of the ritual, rituals

structured both human society internally and its relationships with the surrounding universe. ... These actions serve to organize space and time, to define relations between men and the gods, and to set ... the links which bind them together.”¹¹⁵

Green conjoins rituals with the story-telling suggesting that they both held a community together through the knowledge the members of a community shared:

It is typical of many societies that story-telling ... has the effect of binding those societies or communities together. The common experience these stories represent reinforces the communal aspect of their life. ... One aspect of this communal experience is the history of the community which, ... was often related genealogically to what we would call mythical figures, ... Another vital factor in binding a community together was its shared rituals. ... The Greeks combined both these elements – the telling of stories and the ritual occasions – and developed meetings (often festivals) when the telling of stories became vital element in the proceedings.¹¹⁶

Zaidman’s recorded myths or Green’s view on story-telling is suggested to have led to the creation of a staged debate through the medium of theatre in the religious milieu of a festival. Yana Zariffi and Richard Martin on the other hand see the origin of tragedy in the genre of archaic song such as the wedding song, the paean or the dithyramb, that provided the matrix for the choral and solo performance in ancient Greek drama.¹¹⁷ Their views are not contradictory though to Green’s and Zaidman and Schmitt’s; they rather complement one another. In this light then, the gatherings to tell stories, in the form of a dance-song, the dithyramb, gradually became the inextricably

¹¹⁵ Zaidman, Bruit, Louise & Pantel, Schmitt, Pauline, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, Trsl. Paul Cartledge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 27.

¹¹⁶ Green, J.R. *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁷ Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 35; Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, 2007, p. 3.

part of religious events in ancient Greece establishing the tragic contests in the fifth century enhancing the social bonds even more. The festival

seems to have been the context for the development of a new kind of dancing chorus. Tragedy ... developed out of dithyramb ... contained in its stasima ... a mixture of mythical narratives and of elements of genres that were now divorce from their traditional functional context.¹¹⁸

Green views that, in the hands of the tragedians, the sung or told distant myths were used to explore social issues of their 5th century democratic life, through the questioning of “the traditional aristocratic views of the gods and heroes.”¹¹⁹ MacDonald agrees with the exploration of the myths and she suggests that although the Greeks enjoyed their myths, they used them to question theological issues.¹²⁰ Zaidman and Pantel concur with them, but concentrate more on the communal aspect of tragic competitions when they says that

The tragic poets ... drew upon the mythical past in order to pit it against the present and, through the medium of the characters on stage, create an occasion for communal, civic debate. Each of their dramas problematized and called into question one or other aspect of the human condition, so that in their hands their heroes of myth ... became instead objects of contestation and the bases for an enquiry into social values¹²¹

The myths however alone could not achieve associations with the present. Green makes an important point about the inclusion of contemporaneous external events, quoting James Redfield, that “in tragedy the contemporary material was used to lead the audience into the reality of the legend”.¹²² In other words, the contemporary external events, as for example local disasters or war victories, were interwoven in the mythical-historical distant past in such a way as to trigger associations with the reality of the ancient Greeks, a view shared by many scholars such as Edith Hall, Helen Foley, Richard Martin or John Hensk. Again though, neither the myths or the events alone would make feasible the connections with the present if it were not for the

¹¹⁸ Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 35.

¹¹⁹ Green, 1994, p. 14.

¹²⁰ MacDonald Marianne, *The Living Art of Greek Tragedy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003, p. xi.

¹²¹ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 144.

¹²² Green, 1994, pp. 10-11.

rituals, the actual link that effected the here-and-then and here-and-now. This suggestion is central to this research which contends that the knowledge of the performance and celebration of rituals and their significance in the social and civic life in ancient Athens is essential for understanding tragedy.

A recent development of thought from Zaidman and Schmitt suggests that rituals developed a new dimension in Greece with the introduction of the alphabet. Writing gave rise to the original Greek characteristic¹²³ of the publication and secularization of the *laws* at the entrances of the sanctuaries and other places; a development that ensured the maintenance of rituals by the public accessibility of the rules.

The observance of rituals was regulated very early on by written enactments. The multiplication of these 'sacred laws', which were inscribed on stone or bronze pillars and displayed at the entrance of temples and in other public places, was one of the characteristic phenomena associated with the emergence of the *polis* form of state in Greece from about 700 onwards.¹²⁴

In other words, the interwoven threads of ritual in social, religious and civic life ensured the practices of ritual observance were sustained and evolved over time. Furthermore, finding one another under these circumstances people created a collective identity and the pride of the group.¹²⁵ Ritual practice then was an important and significant factor in Greek social life in the emerging polis-state in Greece in the beginning of the 8th century, whose structure depended on the idea of citizenship and membership of a family (*Genos*) and the continuation of the family tradition.

The social, political, and religious life of the Athenian citizen ... was ... structured by his membership in his polis, tribe, deme, phratry, genos and family.¹²⁶

This social and civic significance also helps us account for the very high incidence of the representation of ritual practices in Ancient Athenian tragedy of the fifth century.

¹²³ "The publicity constitute one of the distinctively original features of Greek religion, in that it rendered widely accessible to all members of the community what oriental religions, for example treated as the exclusive preserve of a priestly order.": Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 28.

¹²⁴ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 28.

¹²⁵ Green, 1994, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁶ Mikalson, D., Jon, *Athenian Popular Religion*, Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983, p. 83.

Therefore, one of the reasons for exploring the performativity of rituals is the role they played in tragedies, and one of the reasons that rituals make such an extended appearance in tragedies, is the social and civic function they played.

Another relevant issue to this study is the attitude proper of the performance of rituals, which was a fundamental feature in life, as it is in tragedy. This is no other than the concept of piety that framed any ritualistic activity, meaning the reverence that marks all actions taken for the performance of a sacral act.¹²⁷

it was open to each and every citizen, either in his or her own home or in a public sanctuary, to carry out the actions which both demonstrated piety and allowed those who practised them to affirm thereby their shared identity as Greeks (*Hellenes*).¹²⁸

Despite the lack of evidence, Mikalson¹²⁹ has sound reason to suggest that the three tragedians used the views of their audiences:

since many tragic characters express widely held religious beliefs about divine intervention, divination, asylum, oaths, and so forth, we might reasonably think that on occasion poets had their characters share with the audience also the reasoning and attitudes associated with these beliefs.¹³⁰

Piety as a notion controlled any behaviour which involved respect and reverence towards the gods and the fellow citizens, and it was often connected with *hubris*. Greeks regarded the multifaceted *hubris* a serious offence but it became a religious matter when it involved a god, which made the act sacrilegious.¹³¹

Piety's absence then would result in the disruption of the prospective conduct with the gods, would qualify the communication as failed and would inevitably incur divine punishment or retribution, a terrible consequence that hovers over all actions and decision in tragedies.

¹²⁷ See Appendix II, for a discussion on Piety.

¹²⁸ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 46.

¹²⁹ Mikalson, D., Jon, *Honor thy Gods. Popular Religion in Greek Tragedy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991, p. 133-139, 165-203.

¹³⁰ Mikalson, 1991, p. 133.

¹³¹ MacDowel, M., Douglas, "Hybris in Athens", *Greece and Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1976), p. 22; Fisher, N. R. E., "Hybris and Dishonour: I", *Greece and Rome, Second Series*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1976, (1976). p. 178.

Every failure of due observance was thought to provoke divine anger and retribution.¹³²

This discussion illuminates another distinctive feature of the active social function of rituals. Whether domestic or public, they penetrated the life of the Greeks in a way that seems complicated to us.

Everyday private life, no less than public civic life, was rhythmically regulated by all kinds of ritual, so that every moment and every stage of the Greek citizen's existence was intimately imbued with a religious dimension.¹³³

Zaidman therefore draws our attention to an important point:

religion has to deal with the notion of the sacred, but in the world of the Greek cities the opposition between the sacred and the profane ... was either blurred or utterly irrelevant.¹³⁴

This merging makes the attempt to determine what constituted a ritual or ritual form at any given moment in Greece's history difficult, which is even harder because of the variations of worship from place to place:

Rituals were most often organized around a particular cult, and they varied greatly in form from one divinity and the one city to another. From the simplest individual dedication of first-fruits (*aparkhai*) or the pouring of a libation (*sponde*), they were graduated on a sliding scale of complexity that culminated in the grandest civic festivals, which were typically spread out over several days.¹³⁵

Greece consisted of a number of city-kingdoms whose religious diversiform, including rural rites, were eventually introduced to the Athenian religious system and took their place in the annual worship. So although the rituals discussed here are mainly described in terms of their incarnation in Athenian life, the rituals may very well be a result of influences drawn from religious or ritual activity found in other city kingdoms. Partly because of this cultural interlinking of ritual practices, in the rituals that I am exploring below there will be elements that seem to be common more widely in the traditions of Greek religious and social life, recognizable beyond the

¹³² Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 28.

¹³³ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, pp. 27-28.

¹³⁴ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 8.

¹³⁵ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, pp. 3, 28.

Athenian context, with, or without, variations. Nevertheless, the purpose of this thesis is not to question the purity of the rituals, but the acknowledgment of what scholars have deduced so far on their structure and social function so that their dramaturgical power in the story line of the tragedies is illuminated in the next two chapters.

Rituals therefore as complex and highly performative social behaviours, with their own dramaturgy and structures, and used to mark particularly significant social moments, were not entirely static.

In the work that follows, I am drawing and synthesizing scholars who have predominantly pondered on the different expressions of Greek religion commonly practiced in fifth century Athens, as far as it can be deduced from a range of materials. This chapter concentrates on the rituals the tragedians chose to deploy dramaturgically in their plays. As it will be shown, depending on the chosen mythic story, these are the rituals that penetrated their lives. Their main sources are the original literary texts (Homer, Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns*, the lyric poets of the archaic age), the Tragedians, Aristotle and Plato and other literary sources. Then there are the epigraphs and the archaeological finding.¹³⁶ It may be justified to think that tragedy may not be a reliable. However, Mikalson makes an important point when he says that it is included in the sources because the evidence is in accord with the archaeological excavations.¹³⁷ However, new archaeological findings and discoveries of literary texts may invite their reconsideration.

Scholars have examined the components of the rituals beyond the formal component, and we will also explore their other dramatic expression in clothes, objects and behavior, particularly as these are frequently the elements that are made significant within the tragedies that we shall explore.

Further details about other rites that appear in Athenian tragedy during our period are included in appendices. The rite of *Pharmakos* as part of the Thargelia Festival is described Appendix I, the major concepts that sanctioned almost all behavioural

¹³⁶ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, 1992, pp. 16-19.

¹³⁷ Mikalson, 1991.

patterns and thought, specifically miasma and purification, hubris and piety, are in Appendix II and divination is in Appendix III. The reason is their literal or metaphorical connection with tragedy. The *Pharmakos* rite was the symbolical sacrifice of the scapeman rite that represented the new beginning, after *catharsis* is performed, in an effort to bring balance and welfare back to the community. After expelling the scapeman, people returned home without looking back as was the rule of purgative offerings. The spiritual or physical death of the mythic heroes and kings is ever-present in tragedies and requires cleansing, a feature that appears in the faces of Orestes in *Oresteia*, or Oedipus. Another example of the usage of the rite is that reported in the final step of *Choephoroi* when Electra asks the women if she should pour the *choes* and leave without looking back. However, because *Pharmakos* is a complex rite, it needs awareness and perception if one wishes to identify its fragments in a play.

On the other hand, miasma and purification, similar to *hubris* and piety, are not rituals but they fall in the concept of ritualistic behaviour, which controls the dramaturgical development in tragedies. Miasma, *hubris* and piety are interconnected and interrelated in ancient life, and in tragedy, in such a way that they often cannot be studied separately. For instance, murder brings pollution, but it is also an impious behaviour, and hubris against the gods. What pollution brought to the ancient individual was isolation from the social group, a consequence Orestes has to suffer until his redemption. Miasma runs in Agamemnon's family, and the conquerors in *Trojan Women* do impious and hubristic acts when they defile the temples and the dead. In other words, the respect of life, the laws, the customs and the cults controlled social behaviour in its actuality, as well as in the second reality of the stage.

This awareness of the rites will enable the reflection on the significance of those choices and the implications for the development of the plot and narratives of the tragedies.

What will be illuminated in chapter two are the specific purposes and the editorial decisions that tragedians were making when they used fragments of rituals or complete rituals in a brief form that could be staged. More particularly in the next

chapter we will explore some of the different kinds of rituals employed by tragedians, from apparently straight forward rituals such as the wedding, to the more complex and more often reported than staged rituals such as the sacrifice, to the remarkable secret rituals such as invocatory magic that often was performed offstage. On the other hand, we will discover that some rituals such as supplication, prayers and oaths are represented in tragedies in a complete, yet abbreviated, form. This study will also enhance the view that a key-ritual is often used as a backbone in each tragedy endorsing the dramaturgical power in their plots.

The kind of analyses provided here begins with textual traces and draws on scholarly material, however the purpose of this research on rituals is a response to the gap in current scholarship that has followed Oliver Taplin in the performative turn which explores the performed nature of ritual practices as far as we can deduce. We need a keen historical consciousness and knowledge of the ritual practices of fifth century Athens in order to identify the rituals in the play-texts, perceive the fragments the tragedians deployed, and identify their dramaturgical purposes that lie beyond their written representation. Therefore, to understand the core of rituals in tragedies it is essential to understand their function in the ancient Greeks' daily and social life. This fuller realization of ritual practices will underline their presence in the story-line and help us understand the ways in which our translation or a reconstruction of the tragic poems in staging them might allow those rituals to retain their active and resonant role.

Let us now follow the ancient Greeks to their various religious practices

2.A. THE ΓΑΜΟΣ (GAMOS), THE WEDDING RITUAL

*The sweet sounding flute and cithara were mingled and sound of castanets, sweetly the maidens sang a holy song, and a marvelous echo reached the sky*¹³⁸

From the point of a structural anthropologist, the wedding is one of the most important rites of passage¹³⁹ in most cultures, and it is one that plays one of the most significant roles in the ancient Greek tragedies left to us, in the twisted form of a wedding to death. In ancient Greece, there were four different types of marital unions¹⁴⁰: the γάμος (*gamos*), the wedding, the ἐπιδικάζειν (*epidikazein*),¹⁴¹ the sexual relationship between a man and an ἑταίρα (*hetaira*), a high class prostitute,¹⁴² and finally the union between a man and a παλλακίδα (*pallakida*, *pallake*), concubine. The later union resulted when a family did not have enough money for a dowry, so her *kyrios*, her master, gave her to a man as his παλλακίδα (*pallakida*, *pallake*), concubine. A woman could also become a *pallakida* out of her own will by choosing to συνοικεῖν (*synoikein*), cohabit with a man. In tragedies, becoming a concubine was the inevitable fate of beautiful, high class slaves, as we see in the *Trojan Women*. A *pallakida* was usually foreign and her own and her children's ability to inherit

¹³⁸ Sappho, fragment 44, lines 24-27, the *Wedding of Hektor and Andromache*.

¹³⁹ The others are birth, initiation to adulthood and funeral.

¹⁴⁰ They are described by Jennifer Goodall Powers in *Ancient Weddings*, (unpublished MA dissertation, Tufts University, 1996: However, Power falsely considers the three types of pairing as marriages, only on the ground that they were socially accepted.

¹⁴¹ A second marital-type union was a legal procedure called the ἐπιδικάζειν (*epidikazein*). When a man died without a male heir, then his daughter was called ἐπίκληρος (*epikleros*), an heiress. Rehm notes that it was the daughter who continued the line of descent springing from her father because her husband was chosen from the bilateral relatives. She was then compelled by the court to marry the nearest male relative in order to give birth to an heir who would then inherit his grandfather's property and continue the *oikos*. If the female heiress was married, she was forced to divorce. Contrary to the usual custom, the *epikleros* did not move to the groom's house, but the husband went to live with her in the paternal inheritance. However, Rehm notes, an *epidikasia* could be avoided if the father was organised enough to adopt a son before his death: Rehm, Rush, *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴² An *hetaira* did not live with the men she was involved with and they were paid for services which included more than sexual offers. What is noticeable is that these women were allowed an education in politics and philosophy. Therefore they were intelligent, and respected, companions for men, particularly at symposiums where they could participate in the topics discussed, on equal terms with men. There were times when an *hetaira* was involved in a monogamous relationship with a specific man, but she would not live with him. If she did, she would then be considered a *pallake*: Goodall, Jennifer, unpublished MA dissertation, 1996.

changed with time. While by the fifth-century Athenian law regarded children of wives or concubines as equivalent, a Pericles' decree in 451 limited Athenian citizenship to individuals whose both parents were Athenians.¹⁴³ Medea in the title play, written in 431 B.C., deals with the state prior to Pericles' decree. This is the reason she is afraid of her children's safety in case she leaves them behind. Side by side, there were various kinds of illicit or licit liaisons that assured the desired fidelity in the form of oaths.¹⁴⁴ Such marital types are reflected in the pairing of Medea to Jason, Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus or Helen and Paris who sealed their union with oaths as they were either foreigners or still married. The first two types of union and the union secured with oaths are the ones most commonly found in tragedy.

Of all unions only the *gamos* was legally accepted. The wedding ritual is one of the best attested rituals in Greek literature and art. The first literary source is found in Homer¹⁴⁵ although most of our information on wedding is extracted from contemporary drama and vase-painting.¹⁴⁶ Because the tragedians tend to illustrate these marriages as failed, as we shall see in the next chapter, the drama is not the best source for understanding the fuller wedding ritual of the period.

For the description of the wedding ritual, the books of Rehm, Avagiannou and Oakley and Sinos prove valuable¹⁴⁷. Despite Ormand Kirk's¹⁴⁸ criticism that Oakley and Sinos

¹⁴³ Lacey, K., W., *The Family in Classical Greece*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York, 1984, p. 100; Sealey, Raphael. *Women and Law in Classical Greece*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1990, pp. 25-36. During the Peloponnesian War, Athenian citizenship laws were relaxed in order to repopulate the society with males.

¹⁴⁴ Kells, H., J., "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 56, No.3. (1961), p. 170.

¹⁴⁵ Moore, B., Mary, Reviewed Work(s): "The Wedding in Ancient Athens by John H. Oakley; Rebecca Sinos", *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 99, No. 1, (1995), p. 160.

¹⁴⁶ Seaford, Richard, "The Tragic Wedding". *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol., 107, (1987), pp. 106-130; The ritual baths and the adornment of the bride are the most frequent scenes. One of the favourite motives of vase painters is the solemn procession of women carrying the water: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 15; The red-figure artists preferred scenes from the wedding procession of the bride among her friends either before the wedding or on the day after; Moore, "The Wedding in Ancient Athens", (1995). p. 160.

¹⁴⁷ Rehm, 1994; Avagianou, Aphrodite, *Sacret Marriage in the Rituals of Greek Religion*, Bern: Lang, 1991; Oakley and Sinos, 1993.

¹⁴⁸ Ormand, K., Reviewed Work(s): "The Wedding in Ancient Athens by John H. Oakley; Rebecca H. Sinos". *Classical Philology*, Vol. 91, No. 1. (1996). pp. 80-84.

sometimes make assumptions on studying the vases, I do come to agree with Avagianou's statement that

the majority of our evidence ... allows a discussion of each stage of the wedding according to the chronological division of the rite¹⁴⁹

So it is possible to recognize a broad structure of an Athenian wedding ritual, and the elements were probably considered essential to its proper enactment.

The Wedding Procedure¹⁵⁰

Throughout ancient Greece, weddings took place usually in the month *Gamelion* (27 December–25 January), when they celebrated the divine union of Zeus and Hera. The *gamos* was the publicly accepted sexual relationship to establish the family units through legitimate heirs,¹⁵¹ especially male heirs, and guarantee their inheritance and their exercise of citizenship.¹⁵² This was the vital system to ensure the stability of *oἶκος* (*oikos*), the household and its unity,¹⁵³ enhanced by the wife's duties to perform the rituals, especially the funerary ones.¹⁵⁴ Both sexes were obliged to marry, and the laws were very clear on imposing it since its absence risked the continuity of the *polis*, city.¹⁵⁵

Oakley and Sinos point out that the three phases offered by Arnold van Gennep,¹⁵⁶ separation-transition-integration, govern the meaning and functions of all rituals that marks the passage to another stage of life.¹⁵⁷ The change at this turning point of life

¹⁴⁹ Avagianou, 1991, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Oakley H. John & Sinos, H., Rebecca, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, Madison, Wis.; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993, pp. 51-128: A good collection of vases depicting wedding scenes.

¹⁵¹ Oakley & Sinos, 1993, p. 9.

¹⁵² Kells, "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", (1961). p.170.

¹⁵³ Oakley & Sinos, 1993, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ Rehm, 1994, p. 12.

¹⁵⁵ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ Gernet, Louis, *Anthropology of Ancient Greece*. Trans. John Hamilton, S.J., and Blaise Nagy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

¹⁵⁷ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 3.

was most dramatic for the bride.¹⁵⁸ Therefore a set of marital rites focused on the girl's separation from her house, (*οἶκος, oikos*), the transition to a new home, and the integration into her new *oikos* and *kyrios* and her sexual initiation.

The traditional procedure was consisted of three parts: the *Ἐγγύην (eggyen)*, the pledge; the *Ἐκδοσις (ekdosis)*, transfer, giving away, which was the actual wedding consisted of the *Προτέλεια (Proteleia, Proavlia or Progamia)*, the day before the wedding and the *Γάμος (gamos)*, the wedding day; and finally the *Ἐπαύλια (Epavlia)*, the day after the wedding. Of the wedding ritual, the favourite fragments that are used in tragedies come from the *gamos* and the *epavlia*.

Similar to most rituals, each stage of the wedding procedure was celebrated with music, songs and dances. Both men and women danced in separated groups with cheerful steps¹⁵⁹ as suggested by the first evidence that derives from Achilles' shield¹⁶⁰ in the *Illiad* and Euripides *Trojan Women*,¹⁶¹ and is evident in Cassandra's effort to try to dance her wedding songs.

i. Ἐγγύην, the Pledge

The wedding ritual was hallowed through the ceremony of *eggyen*, the pledge. It was more formal than betrothal even though it could be revoked.¹⁶² The *eggyen* could have taken place at any time before the actual wedding, often when the girl was maybe four or five, without necessarily having met the future husband¹⁶³ or having expressed an opinion about it.¹⁶⁴ It was an oral agreement between the *kyrios*, the master, who

¹⁵⁸ She changed from a *παρθένος (parthenos)*, a maiden, to a *νύμφη (nymphe)*, a married woman without children, and then to a *γυνή (gyne)*, an adult woman, when she bore her first child: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 10.

¹⁵⁹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 25.

¹⁶⁰ In Homer's *Iliad*, Book 18, Achilles uses this shield in his fight with Hector. He had lost his own which he had lent to Patroclus, when his friend was killed by Hector and his weapons were taken as loots. His mother Thetis asked the god Hephaestus to make another one for him.

¹⁶¹ In addition, the *lebes gamikon* by the Syriskos Painter of 470 B.C., fig. 54-58 and the black-figure on a *lekythos* by the Amasis Painter, provides the description of the fullest dance scene that has been found so far. The occasion may be uncertain but the type of the vase and the veil a woman holds most possibly suggest a wedding dance: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, pp. 25 and figs. 54-58, 59 on pp. 80-82.

¹⁶² Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", (1987). pp. 106-130.

¹⁶³ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 68.

¹⁶⁴ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 10.

entrusted the bride to the groom, during which they arranged the dowry.¹⁶⁵ Her property was her protection in case of marital termination, because the husband had to give it back. Therefore, Rehm rightly assumes that it was designed to provide safety to the woman.¹⁶⁶ Understanding the levels of obligation and the social significance of these elements of the ritual enactment help us understand what is at stake within the tragedies when such pledges are breached.

This matrimonial agreement is believed to have been sealed with a *χειραψία* (*cheirapsia*), handshake.¹⁶⁷ Oakley presents conclusive evidence in the debate about whether this was part of the rite, quoting an important find a *λουτροφόρος* (*loutrophoros*), a water jug¹⁶⁸, which shows a father and a bridegroom sealing their pledge with a handshake.¹⁶⁹ The handshake as a gesture was also used in social greetings as we can deduce in *Medea*, although its repetitive performance points to its twisted significance towards the end of the play. Brides were married around thirteen to fifteen and the groom may have been around thirty.¹⁷⁰ Oakley and Sinos however, using Menander's *Aspis* as a reference, deduce that the age difference was not always so much.¹⁷¹

ii. The Ἐκδοσις, the Transfer

The next step by which the bride was led from her parents' home to that of her husband is the official ceremony that spanned two days full of ritual activities.

¹⁶⁵ The first evidence is offered by Herodotus, in his description of the marriage of Megacles to Agariste, daughter of the tyrant of Sicyon, Cleisthenes: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ Rehm, 1994, p. 11.

¹⁶⁷ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 9; Ormand, Kirk, Reviewed Work(s): *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* by John H. Oakley; Rebecca H. Sinos, *Classical Philology*, Vol. 91, No. 1. (1996), p. 81.

¹⁶⁸ Boston 0.3.802; fig. 1, circa 425 B.C.: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 51.

¹⁶⁹ In the Greek tradition, "*giving your word*", which means promising, to do something, has always been rendered with sacred validity. It is noticeable that a handshaken promise is still in power at remote rural places in Greece, another evidence of the persistence of ritualistic expressions through time. A promise of any kind (wedding, business or simple assurances and so on) has always been sealed with a handshake, thus the expression "*we joined our hands*". The one who breaks it is considered dishonest and loses his social dignity and in many areas, a violation could be the reason for disastrous results, even murder. It is a reason for a vendetta in Crete, especially when engagement promises is concerned.

¹⁷⁰ Lacey, 1984, p. 107.

¹⁷¹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 10.

Προτέλεια, the day before the wedding

The first day, *Proteleia*, began with various preparatory offerings that had two purposes: to bid farewell to their youth, and to placate the gods for protection during the transition at this fragile turning point of their lives and for future happiness.¹⁷²

The majority of the evidence for these dedications comes from epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*.¹⁷³ This is how we learn that the preferable offerings included locks of hairs, clothes and toys dedicated to the virgin Artemis,¹⁷⁴ or to any one of the wedding goddesses, and incense to Aphrodite, to gain her acquiescence for leaving a virgin life¹⁷⁵ If the bride was for some reason unable to perform the *proteleia* then the bride's father or, in some instances her mother, would perform the ritual instead. Avagianou suggests that all the offerings were made only by the bride only, not the groom.¹⁷⁶ Oakley, though, writes that even though there was no need for men for *proteleia*, they possibly followed the steps as a precaution against the gods' anger.¹⁷⁷ Finally, in some places there was the custom of having the bride spending her last night in her father's house with a boy.¹⁷⁸

*The Γάμος*¹⁷⁹, The Wedding Day,

The ceremonial process of the second day is distinctive¹⁸⁰ because of the variety of rituals that constitute it. This private and public diversity offers a selection of choices to the tragedians. The wedding day began with the decoration of the house with olive and laurel leaves and the sacrifices the father or the male guardian made.¹⁸¹ The

¹⁷² The gods of marriage were *Teleios* Zeus, Hera *Teleia*, Artemis, Aphrodite and Peitho (Persuasion), Apollo, Hermes, Demetra: Avagianou, 1991, p. 3; In Athens there were also the Tritopatores, the first couple Ouranos and Ge and the patron goddess Athena: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 11, 12.¹⁷³ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 14.

¹⁷³ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 14.

¹⁷⁴ Avagianou, 1991, p. 3; Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 14.

¹⁷⁵ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 11.

¹⁷⁶ Avagianou, 1991, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 12.

¹⁷⁸ Avagiannou, 1991, p. 4.

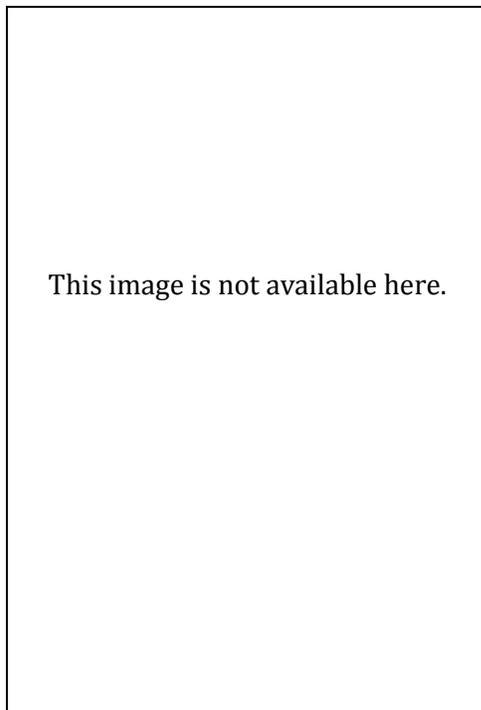
¹⁷⁹ Redfield, James, "Notes on the Greek Wedding", *Arethusa*, Vol. 15, (1982), p. 188: *Gamos* in its primary significance means the sexual act by which the marriage is consummated. It still has the same function, yet it also ended to mean the day of the very wedding ceremony.

¹⁸⁰ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 15.

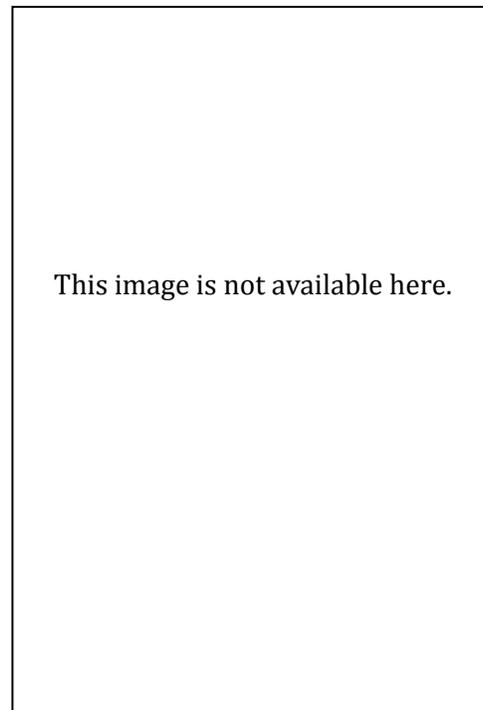
¹⁸¹ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 68.

groom's house was decorated with garlands and branches with wool, just as in the case of the birth of a child, signifying the introduction of a new family member.¹⁸²

Then, the actual wedding began with the *cleansing rites* with water of the bride and the groom¹⁸³. They both had the *λουτρόν νυμφικόν* (*loutron nymphikon*), a purificatory nuptial bath¹⁸⁴ in water brought from a specified source;¹⁸⁵ for the Athenians it was the *Enneakrounos*, the fountain house at the spring *Καλλιρρόη* (*Kalliroe*).¹⁸⁶ A boy usually carried it in a vase called *λουτροφόρος* (*loutrophoros*), a special tall water pots, or *lebes gamikos*, who was also called *loutrophoros*.



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¹⁸² This information comes from the Lexikon of Suda: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 34.

¹⁸³ Oakley and Sinos have in fig. 10-13 a rare example of the grooms pre-wedding ritual baths; also see Stafford, J. E., "A Wedding Scene? Notes on Akropolis 6471". *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 117, (1997), p. 201.

¹⁸⁴ This bath had a similar function to those that preceded initiations into mysteries, or rituals: Avagianou, 1991, p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 15.

¹⁸⁶ Ormand, "The Wedding in Ancient Athens", (1996). p. 81; *Kallirrhoe* was a spring in the bed of Ilissos river southeast of the Akropolis: Zaidman, 1984, p. 68; Each city had its own sacred spring. In Thebes, the water came from the river Ismenon, Avagianou, 1991, p. 6; Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 15.

¹⁸⁷ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1995.45.1>>, [Retrieved on July 2006]; Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 69.

¹⁸⁸ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/256207?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=metope+painter&pos=1>>, [Retrieved on July 2006].

In the case of the girl, it took place in her quarters. The bride was assisted by a *νυμφεύτρια*, *νυμφοστόλος* (*nymphhephtria* or *nymphostolos*), Oakley uses the word *νυμφοκόμος* (*nymphokomos*), similar to a bridesmaid, and adds that she was charged with adorning the bride¹⁸⁹ and made sure that everything was done in the right order.¹⁹⁰ Assisted by the bride's mother and other women, she would preside over the preparations for the meal and sacrifices, and accompany the bride to the banquet hall. His *παράνυμφος* or *πάροχος* (*pananymphos* or *parochos*), a sort of a 'best man' attended the groom.¹⁹¹ In tragedy, this preparation takes place offstage as it is reported in the *Trojan Women* where Cassandra and Helen appear on stage already dressed up as brides. There may be various reason for this decision but three may be important: on practical level, the nakedness would create directorial problems since the actors were male; it was not only time consuming but it also did not offer opportunities for other implications or allusions in the plot; and the tragedians may have preferred scenes which were publicly distinctive of the rite.

As far as the appearance of the wedded-to-be is concerned, Avagianou notes that the sources reveal a distinctive look¹⁹² while Oakley concludes from red-figure vases that "it was the time for the most extravagant adornment of a woman's life",¹⁹³ as Helen's attentive appearance suggests in the *Trojan Women*. The bride perfumed herself and put her dress, rings, necklace, her special sandals called *νυμφίδες* (*nymphides*) and a wedding wreath on, and wore the most important part of the bride's costume over the crown, the veil, with which the bride covered her face. The presence of the veil is absent in tragedies as the twisted wedding rite is not only an illegal union but it also implies the imminent acceptance of the bride. Another important factor is that the tragic wedding often leads to death.

¹⁸⁹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ On the lebes gamikos by the Painter of Athens 1454, the woman on the chair crowns the younger one with the bridal stephane and as Oakley and Sinos points out "she need only be the nympheutria putting the finishing touches to the bride's adornment": Oakley and Sinos, 1993, fig. 28-29, p. 66.

¹⁹¹ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 69.

¹⁹² Avagianou, 1991, p. 7.

¹⁹³ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, pp. 16-21 on which she describes various wedding characteristics: figs. 22, 23, 24-27, 28-29, 86, 40, 86, 30, 31, 32-35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42-43, pp. 63-76..

Although there are no references so far of the colour of the bride's gown, there is a suggestion of the purple colour in Tattius and Sappho.¹⁹⁴

Her dress was violet coloured, according to Sappho, or red according to Achilles Tattius.¹⁹⁵

The groom was dressed in a cloak and a finely woven *himation*. He wore a garland decorated with plants and he was anointed with myrrh¹⁹⁶, the usual perfume for bridegroom kept in *Aryballos* pot.¹⁹⁷

After the preliminary preparations, a feast followed. It would most often be given by the bride's father, by the groom's father, even the groom himself in certain situations or, quite often, by the two families together.¹⁹⁸ The location could be in one of the houses or at a sanctuary as evidence suggest.¹⁹⁹ Whatever the case was, families, friends and relatives who attended it acted as witnesses of the union. The feast was also one of the few public events when women and men were together in the same room although at different tables²⁰⁰ on the two sides of the room.²⁰¹ During the feast, the girl had her face covered with a veil and had by her side the *nymphephtria*, while the groom had his *parochos* next to him.

The wedding meal included, apart from various kinds of meat, the special traditional delicacy made of *σησάμι* (*sesame*), the *sesame* cakes, made of grounded sesame seeds mixed with honey, as they believed that it ensured the couples fertility.²⁰² Ormand agrees that flatbreads women seem to be rolling in the scene on a red-figure *λεκάνη* (*lekanis*)²⁰³ with unambiguous wedding preparations pictures are sesame-cakes.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁴ The time span between the lives of these two writers, Sappho lived sometimes between 630 and 570 B.C. and Tattius lived in the second century A.D., is evidence that it was a long standing tradition: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 16.

¹⁹⁵ Avagianou, 1991, p. 7;

¹⁹⁶ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 16.

¹⁹⁷ Stafford, "A Wedding Scene?", (1997). p. 201.

¹⁹⁸ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 22.

¹⁹⁹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 22.

²⁰⁰ Avagianou, 1991, p. 7.

²⁰¹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p.22.

²⁰² Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 23 and figs. 44-45 on p. 76.

²⁰³ A shallow basin usually with two horizontal handles and fitted with a lid which could be reversed to act as a stemmed plate. There are red-figured examples decorated with scenes of women.

²⁰⁴ Ormand, "The Wedding in Ancient Athens" (1996). p. 81.

The time of the feast is not clear but it must have been daylight as the following procession began when it got dark.

*The Procession*²⁰⁵

The feast was concluded when the bride's father or male guardian delivered her to her husband as he was saying the phrase "I give you this girl for the ploughing of legitimate children".²⁰⁶ Then, the groom grabbed her wrist and they both departed for the bridegroom's house on a cart pulled by mules or oxen whereas on rare occasions the bride travelled on foot, *xamaipous*.²⁰⁷ The procession began with the shout "Get up! Make way! Carry the torch!" to signal for the torches to come and the way to clear as suggested in Aristophanes' *Wasps* and Euripides' *Trojan Women*,²⁰⁸ the same words Cassandra shouts when she tries to celebrate her unwanted wedding. The torches were the special concern of both mothers. The bride's mother lit it from the hearth of her house to illuminate her daughter's way until the groom's mother received her.²⁰⁹ The mother was the *dadouxein*, the carrier of the torch, in a protective role in her daughter's transfer to her new household. Other participants also held torches, played, and sang wedding songs as vase paintings evince men carrying musical instruments. Avagiannou observes that the flames of the torches and the noise of the songs and the sound of music had

an apotropaic function against evil spirits which might harm the vulnerable bride during the procession.²¹⁰

Therefore, it is not unsubstantiated to suggest that the lack of torches could underline an illegitimate union in their actuality,²¹¹ or death in tragedy. This is probably the

²⁰⁵ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 28. The writes provide analytical description of wedding processions on vases on pp. 28-34.

²⁰⁶ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 68; Powers locates the source in Menander's partially play *Perikeiromene* (The Girl with her Hair Cut Short), in Geoffrey W. Arnott, *Menander, volume II*. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996, l. 459: Goodall, Jennifer, unpublished MA dissertation, 1996.

²⁰⁷ Avagianou, 1991, p. 10.

²⁰⁸ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 26, fn 22, p. 136.

²⁰⁹ Figs. 70, 73, 91: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, pp. 88, 90,101.

²¹⁰ Avagianou, 1991, pp. 11-12.

²¹¹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 26.

reason why Hecuba blows out Cassandra's torch in the *Trojan Women* when she extols her wedding to Agamemnon in frenzy.

The arrangement of the procession was prescribed:²¹² first there was the *προηγητής* (*proegetes*), leader of the procession and an *αμφιθαλής* (*amphithales*) boy, a boy with both parents alive, and other *παίδες προπέμποντες* (*paides propempontes*), young boys; the *paroxos* or *paranymphos*, the groom's attendant; the *nymphephetria*, the bride's attendant; other friends of the couple; and possibly the whole city could follow.

Garland suggests that the groom sat in the centre of the cart, the bride on one side and the *pananymphos* on the other.²¹³ Besides the bride, the most significant member was her mother. If the groom was married for the second time, he did not always participate in the wedding procession. Instead, he sent a friend, a *nymphagogos*, a leader of the bride, who led the woman to the bridal chamber, along with the bride's friends and family.²¹⁴ In a twisted way, this cheerful escort become the soldiers in the *Trojan Women* or an individual as it is incarnated in Clytaemnestra's case who leads her husband to his death.

Women carried baskets or vases with roses, violets and fruits in them, and pelt the new-weds during the procession.²¹⁵ They also carried the bride's dowry in baskets and special round boxes (*pyxides*), as can be suggested by vase paintings. The bride is also said to have carried a barley roasting pan or a sieve to signify her willingness to carry on housework.²¹⁶

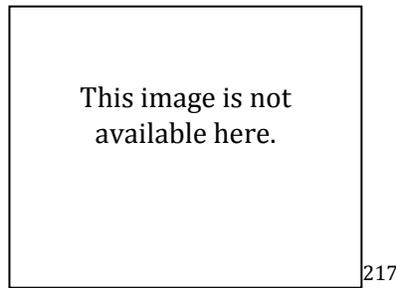
²¹² Avagianou, 1991, pp. 11-12.

²¹³ Garland, 1994, p. 30.

²¹⁴ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, pp. 27-8.

²¹⁵ Avagianou, 1991, pp. 11-12; Avagianou mentions the parallels with other rituals such as the sacrifice and the funeral. She also mentions the parallels with the triumphant homecoming of the victor or the Panhellenic games when they belt the men with flowers and fruit: Avagianou, 1991, pp. 12, 16; Oakley writes that Chariton links this custom with the victors in his prose romance: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 27; Chariton of Aphrodisias (Χαρίτων Ἀφροδισεύς) was the author of the eight-book *Chaereas and Callirhoe* which he opens by naming himself and his city. Recent evidence of fragments of the text on papyri suggests that the novel may have been written between the 1st century A.D. and mid-2nd century A.D. It is the oldest complete ancient prose romance: *The Oxford classical dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996

²¹⁶ Oakley adds another interpretation suggesting that the process of food they symbolise signified the leaving their old lives behind, just as the procession: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 27.



This high-spirited festive atmosphere could lead to improper behaviour so the male escort of the bride, the *paranymphos* or *parochos*, the groom's friend, was especially assigned first with the safety of the bride²¹⁸ and then to make sure that nothing would insult the bride or the groom.

The procession was the most widely represented wedding scene on vase paintings dated from the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. It is intelligible if one considers that the procession was the publicly manifested part of the ceremony.²¹⁹ Consequently, their evidence is invaluable as they fill in the gaps from the literary texts.²²⁰ This vividly festal atmosphere is total contradistinction with its dark representation on stage in the *Trojan Women*.

When the couple reached the threshold of the groom's *Oikos*, house, a *paeon* cry²²¹ arose expressing triumph for the successful end of the vulnerable passage and the imminent 'sacrifice' of the bride.²²² There the groom's mother with a torch in her hand led the couple in and lit the hearth of the house. There, the bride received the *καταχύσματα* (*katachysmata*), throwing things, as she went round the *Hestia*, the hearth.²²³ The rite of *Katachysmata* was possibly consisted of dates, coins, dried fruits, figs and nuts and symbolically aimed at affirming the incorporation of the bride and the future prosperity and fertility of the union with the bearing of legitimate

²¹⁷ Ελληνική Τέχνη, *Αρχαία Αγγεία*, Εκδοτική Αθηνών, 1996, σ. 365. (Greek Art, *Ancient Pots*, Ekdotiki Athenon S.A., Athens, Greece, 1996, p. 365).

²¹⁸ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 27.

²¹⁹ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 28.

²²⁰ Avagianou, 1991, p. 10.

²²¹ It can be compared with the *Ololyge* at the time of the sacrifice: Avagianou, 1991, p. 12.

²²² Avagianou, 1991, p. 12.

²²³ The Greek orthodox reader will undoubtedly identify elements in the orthodox wedding, such as the rite of throwing of rice and rose petals to the couple as it goes around the church's altar three times.

offsprings.²²⁴ If the bride did not receive the quince or the apple at the threshold, she ate it before entering the bridal chamber, accepting in this way her commitment to the new house and her husband. This recalls the myth of Persephone who had to stay in Hades after having eaten just two pomegranate seeds.²²⁵

Then, the newlyweds retired in the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage while the door remain guarded throughout the night by the *θυρωρός* (*thyroros*), a doorkeeper, a friend of the groom. Several pots show a stylized version of the *θάλαμος* (*thalamos*), wedding-chamber, and its decorations and it seems that:²²⁶ the bed was covered with fine fabrics and it was possibly perfumed with myrrh.²²⁷

Introducing herself for the first time, the bride would unveil herself alone, possibly showing by this gesture her consent to the wedding for the first time. Whether the *ἀνακαλυπτήρια* (*anakalupteria*) took place at the feast or in the chamber is not clear. Rehm suggests that most likely the bride unveiled after entering their marriage chamber in their new home.²²⁸ Contrary to that, Oakley and Sinos have a point to suggest that since it could be called upon in a court as evidence of a complete marriage, it must have happened at the end of the feast.²²⁹ Whatever the case, the intercourse marked the end of the transferral of the bride and the consummated marriage was referred as *gamos* from then onwards.

²²⁴ It is worth to mention that the same custom was used for the new borns and new slaves: Zaidman and Pantel, 1984, p. 70; Avagianou, 1991, p. 13; Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 35.

²²⁵ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 35.

²²⁶ The evidence for the decoration of the bridal bed and chamber comes mainly from Hellenistic sources, Avagianou, 1991, p. 13; Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 35.

²²⁷ There was also a second bed in Athens, the *parabustos*, to provide a comfortable sleep if the couple did not spend the night in the same narrow bed. While the chamber was still being prepared, the wedding guests could enter the room and look around until it was time for the door to shut and remain guarded throughout the night by the *θυρωρός* (*thyroros*), a doorkeeper, a friend of the groom. For more details see Oakley and Sinos, 1993, pp. 35-37; The same took place in contemporary weddings in Greece and in Cyprus. It still happens often in rural areas. The house is prepared before the wedding day and on the wedding day guests enter the house of the couple and look around before and after the wedding ceremony.

²²⁸ Rehm, 1994, p. 14.

²²⁹ A different deduction is also offered by the writers stimulated by a fragment of the 6th century philosopher B.C. Pherecydes of Syros that the word *anakalupteria* was actually a gift-robe the groom gave to the bride and that the acceptance of his gift was her consent to their union. That is possibly why the gifts were also called *opteria* or *theorettra*: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 25.

Outside the chamber, the bride's friends sang the *επιθαλάμια* (*epithalamia*), special songs for the occasion and beat on the chamber door, *κτυπία*, to scare away the spirits of the underworld. It is assumed that the purpose of the songs was to reassure the bride was not heard as she made love for the first time and encourage the couple in their attempts to produce a baby boy. The maidens' presence throughout the night also provides comfort to the bride who had to spend her first night with a stranger.²³⁰ Nonetheless, the men and women took the side of their respective friend within the house, celebrating with mockery, ribaldry and possibly dancing.²³¹

iii. The *Ἐπαύλια*, the Day After the Wedding

More epithalamia and other waking songs sung by the maidens who stayed awake all night, *παννυχίς*, and men possibly awakened the couple.²³² This day finalised the transition of the bride to her new status. The *επαυλία* was characterised by more sacrifices and the gifts by friends and the brides' father²³³ who came in a formal procession to present them,²³⁴ evident in a total perverted form in Medea. In the evening, the husband's family gave a final wedding feast.

The wedding was officially acknowledged in the year after during the festivities of *Apaturia*. The husband had to make sacrifices and offer a meal, called *γαμηλία* (*gamelia*), to the members of his clan to whom he introduced his wife and registered his heir or heiress legitimizing in this way his union. Therefore, it is of no surprise that

²³⁰ Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 37.

²³¹ Avagianou, 1991, p. 214; Oakley and Sinos, 1993, p. 37.

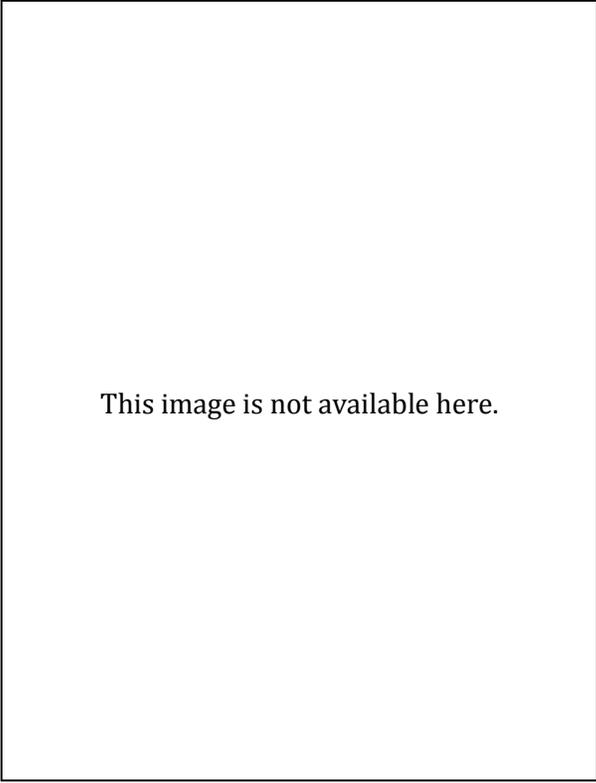
²³² Avagianou, 1991, p. 15.

²³³ The presents from her father were brought in a parade led by a boy in a white-cloak holding a torch, followed by a girl who carried a basket and then more women. These gifts were associated with implements of maintaining her beauty such as combs, myrrh, soap, perfumes, bottles (*alabastra*) and *lekanides* which could hold perfumed unguents or cosmetics. She also received a *kalathos*, a basket for wool-work. The bride could give the groom a *chlanis* as a present, a proof of her ability to wool-work: Oakley and Sinos, 1993, pp. 38-39.

²³⁴ Hague, H., Rebecca, "Ancient Greek Wedding Songs: The Tradition of Praise", *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2/3, Special Dual Theme Issue: Verbal Folklore of Ancient Greece and French Studies in Oral Literature, (1983), p. 132.

the *Apaturia* festival was nine months after the month Gamelion, when most weddings took place.²³⁵ This was the final proof of the completion of the wedding.

Twisted wedding was such a prominent feature in ancient Greek tragedy that it prompted Rehm to characterise it as a 'wedding to death'. The pledge, the decorated bride, the procession, the offering of presents and the wedding songs are some of the preferred scenes the tragedians chose to depict. Among the possible reasons for these choices of what to represent, they were representative of the ritual; they could be treated in the context of the performance; their dramaturgical and theatrical potentials were beyond their context; they offered visibility in the huge amphitheatres; and they could be played by the male actors. Therefore the acknowledgement of the actual wedding ritual allows us to see clearly its perverted use in the plot of the poems.



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²³⁵ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 70.

²³⁶ McNeil, Lynda, "Bridal Cloths, Cover-Ups, and Kharis: The 'Carpet Scene' In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*", *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 52, No. 1, (2005), p. 8.

2.B. BURIAL AND THE AFTER LIFE

Burial was another rite, of passage, that was extensively used on tragic stage. Burial was of momentous importance in an ancient Greek man's life-cycle. It was more than vital for one to receive a proper burial regardless the way of death in order to rest and leave the living untormented. Mikalson observes that "The failure to give burial rites redounded heavily, in tragedy, on the living."²³⁷

The funeral in the Classical period was an entirely domestic affair. The burial of the parents, especially the father, and the preparation for interment by the "proper hands" of the immediate family was the responsibility of the son, an obligation often trespassed to the hands of a woman in tragedy. It was so important, that Athenians without a male heir often adopted a child to ensure that their funeral would receive proper attention.²³⁸

As in the case of wedding, the archaeological evidence supplemented by contemporary art and literary sources that have become known since the 1950s are sufficient to mould a satisfactory account related to death and burial customs. This is what Kurtz,²³⁹ Shapiro²⁴⁰ and Mikalson state:

generally in accord with the occasional evidence from vase paintings and other fifth- and fourth-century literary and archaeological sources.²⁴¹

Since the archaeological findings correspond with the ritualistic features used in tragedy then it is reasonable to suggest that tragedy can be of valuable help in the

²³⁷ Mikalson, 1991, p. 124.

²³⁸ Isaeus quoted in Garland offers a good example: "I, the adopted son, with the aid of my wife ... tended Menekles while he was alive. When he died, I buried him in a manner fitting both to him and myself and set up a fine monument to him and performed the customary rituals on the ninth day and all the other required rituals at the tomb in the finest way I could.": Garland, Robert, *Religion and the Greeks*, London: Bristol Classical Press, 1994, p. 67.

²³⁹ Kurtz, Donna, *Greek Burial Customs*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1971; Garland, 1994; Rehm, 1994, p. 142.

²⁴⁰ Shapiro A., H., in her article "The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art", *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 95, No. 4, (1991), pp. 629-656, studies the development of Athenian funerary iconography from about the middle of the 6th century to the end of 5th. An excellent article with her conclusions on mourning and attendance of the grave.

²⁴¹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 121

reconstruction of the funeral rites, and apply this method to other rituals as well. In the case of the burial rite, his reasoning is more than well founded in *Trojan Women*. Moreover, the research carried out by Alexiou on lament in Peloponnese, Greece, has shown that the performance of funeral has changed very little in the passing of time.

The studies of Kurtz, Garland, Shapiro and Rehm provide all the necessary information for a detailed account on the ancient Greek burial procedure.²⁴² Mikalson and Johnston²⁴³ on the other hand provide us with interesting information on beliefs on death and the afterlife while Daniel Ogden will be the main source for the invocation of dead.

There were two kinds of burial in the classical period: the cremation and the burial of the ashes, the preferable way in the archaic period, and the interment. The choice depended on what the individual or the family preferred.²⁴⁴ Whichever burial chosen, it was of such vital importance to follow the appropriate steps that any omission or negligence was nothing less than an insult to human dignity, a *hubris*.²⁴⁵

A final note goes to the appearance, which is also applied to supplication. The mourners, men and women, had to wear black and men had to cut their hair.²⁴⁶ In certain areas, there was the custom of defiling themselves for a certain period giving their mourning a dramatic expression: the bereaved wore torn or dirty clothes, did not wash themselves and rubbed their heads with earth or ashes.²⁴⁷

²⁴² Kurtz, 1971; Garland, 1994; Shapiro, "The Iconography of Mourning", (1991), pp. 629-656; Rehm, 1994, p. 26.

²⁴³ Mikalson, 1991, p. 121; Johnston, I. Sarah, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1999.

²⁴⁴ Rehm, 1994, p. 26.

²⁴⁵ See Appendix II.

²⁴⁶ Mikalson, 1991, p. 122.

²⁴⁷ "In Iulis on Keos a decreed restricts by law the number of those who may and must defile themselves ... mother, wife, sisters, daughters of the dead man and their daughters, and then not more than five other women. At the end of the prescribed period, they must all purify themselves with a bath by pouring water over their heads; the house too must be purified – sprayed with sea water, smeared with earth, and then swept out. Sacrifice is then to be made on the hearth which has meanwhile been extinguished": Burkert, Walter, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trl. John Raffan, Harvard University Press: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1987, p. 79.

The Burial Process

Death was one of the natural pollutions for the ancient Greeks that needed cleansing.²⁴⁸ So, one of the preliminary preparation of the burial was to bring water from a spring and placed it in a pot at the gates of the dead's house, along with a lock of a mourner's hair.²⁴⁹ Both signs stood for a sign of mourning and a warning of pollution.

The consecutive ritualistic steps of a funeral consist of the rites of *πρόθεσις* (*prothesis*), the laying out, *έκφορά* (*ekphora*), the funeral cortege to the graveyard, and *ταφή* (*taphi*), interment. Danford sees in this van Gennep's tripartite rite of passage a "three-act drama" consisting of the dead body, the soul and the mourners.²⁵⁰

i. The Πρόθεσις (*Prothesis*), the Display of the Dead

The transitional period of *prothesis* between death and the funeral took place at the house of the deceased.²⁵¹ The body was first prepared as the custom dictated: it was washed²⁵², anointed with scented oils, dressed in white and wrapped in a shroud, leaving the face uncovered, and finally crowned and adorned with flowers, ribbons and jewellery.²⁵³ Furthermore, drawing on Plutarch, Kurtz notes that as an added precaution to avoid the gaping of the jaws, "chin straps, *othonai*, were sometimes fitted around the head and lower jaw".²⁵⁴ They also placed an *οβολός* (*obol*), a coin, in the deceased's mouth so that he could pay the *Χάροντα* (*Charonta*), Death, to cross him across *Αχέρωντα* (*Acheronta*), the river in Hades, although Garland notes that it

²⁴⁸ See Appendix II, Miasma and Purification.

²⁴⁹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 121: He draws his information on burial from Euripide's *Aclestis* and *Troades*. He sometimes comes into contrast with the results of the major scholars in this study.

²⁵⁰ Danforth, L., *The Earth Rituals of Rural Greece*, Princeton, N.J.; Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1982, p.34.

²⁵¹ Kurtz, wishing to stress the significance of the house, mentions orator's accounts of "men attempting to remove corpses from the house of death to their own homes to demonstrate that they, not the 'family', were the legitimate heirs": Kurtz, 1971, p. 144.

²⁵² The ritual bath was also performed by those who knew they were about, or could, die. Such examples are Socrates, Alcestis and Oedipus in Tragedies: Kurtz, 1971, p. 149.

²⁵³ Kurtz, 1971, p. 144; Rehm, 1994, p. 22.

²⁵⁴ Kurtz, 1971, p. 144.

was probably a late innovation.²⁵⁵ These tasks were exclusively carried out by female neighbours, relatives or women over the age of sixty,²⁵⁶ so that the close members of the immediate family could devote themselves to their lamentation. However, Mikalson believes that the wife or other close relatives of the deceased participated in the act of the preparation.²⁵⁷ The preparation in tragedy usually takes place by simply bringing adornment to the dead,²⁵⁸ probably for reasons of stage time. The *Trojan Women* can be considered as an exception since lament is its subject matter and the scene takes longer for dramaturgical reasons.

After being prepared in the suitable manner, the corpse was laid out on a plank-like structure with high legs, or a *κλίνη* (*kline*), bed, in the formal reception room of the house for two days.²⁵⁹ His feet had to face the front door²⁶⁰ and the head was elevated by putting a *proskephalaia*, a pillow.²⁶¹ This setting placement enabled the entering men to pay their last respects.²⁶²

As expected, during these visits, the women of the family wailed and sang dirges openly and emotionally.²⁶³ They conventionally stood close to the body especially at the head of the corpse and sometimes a woman cradled his head.²⁶⁴ In the exhibition of the dead on numerous vase-paintings, in Homer's account and in tragedy we can discern the open way of mourning: the women lacerated their cheeks, beat their heads and breasts, pulled their hair with both hands²⁶⁵, and tore their clothes while bewailing.

²⁵⁵ Garland, 1994, p. 68.

²⁵⁶ Kurtz, 1971, p. 144.

²⁵⁷ Mikalson, 1991, p. 121.

²⁵⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 123.

²⁵⁹ It was a way, out of the experiences of thousands of years, to ensure what Rehms observes that "the person was really dead":. Rehm, 1994, p. 22.

²⁶⁰ Garland, 1994, p. 68.

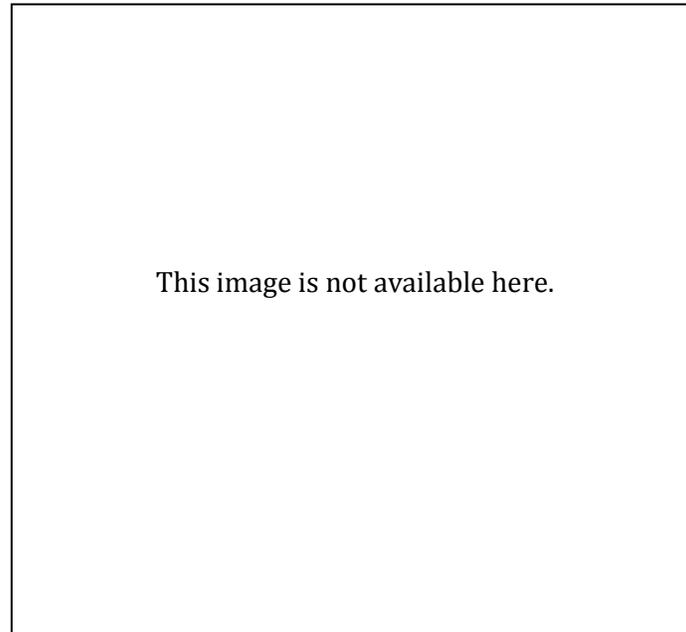
²⁶¹ Kurtz, 1971, p. 144;

²⁶² Kurtz, 1971, p. 144.

²⁶³ A similar reaction is provoked nowadays. Each visitor may make the closest relatives crying more remembering the dead's relationship with him, and asking the dead to look at him or her.

²⁶⁴ Nowadays, the relatives may embrace the dead tenderly, cradle his head or caress it and kiss him or her on the forehead or the cheeks. The spouse may even kiss the lips.

²⁶⁵ Rehm, 1994, p.22; Kurtz, 1971, p. 144.



Prothesis. Black-figure plaque. Metropolitan Museum of Art 54.11.15. (Photo Museum, Rogers funds, 1954)²⁶⁶

Although the females had the central role in a funeral, men had also their codes of behaviour and tasks. From representations, they seem to go in procession as far as the feet of the deceased and pay their respects to the dead with a salutation either with flexed rights arms on or near the head²⁶⁷ or by raising their right hands with palms facing out,

a gesture which men perform on foot and on horse, at the bier and at the grave.²⁶⁸

Shapiro labels this gesture as “valediction”.²⁶⁹ It seems to have been a typical gesture of salutation as Fairbank mentions that the same gesture was also used to salute the gods.²⁷⁰ The purpose of exhibition of the dead was not just to confirm death publicly, but also to allow friends and family to farewell the deceased for the last time.

²⁶⁶ Shapiro, “The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art”, (1991). p. 638; New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000, <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/54.11.5>> [Retrieved October 2006].

²⁶⁷ Rehm, 1994, p.22.

²⁶⁸ Kurtz, 1971, p. 144.

²⁶⁹ Shapiro, “The Iconography of Mourning”, (1991). p. 635.

²⁷⁰ Fairbanks, Arthur, “Attitudes of Worship in Greece”, *The Biblical World*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (1897), pp. 107-8.

ii. The *Ἐκφορά (Ekphora)*, the Transfer of the Dead

After two days of display, the male relatives carried the dead body on the bier it had laid to the burial ground situated outside the walls of the city.²⁷¹ The solemn procession took place at night,²⁷² before the dawn of the third day,²⁷³ although honourable public burials must have been performed in daylight.²⁷⁴ As the dead person passed along the streets, friends and servants saluted the deceased for the last time and made final parting comments.²⁷⁵ Its social significance was so immense that the deprivation of this last duty fortifies Orestes hostile feelings towards his mother and triggers the action in *Choephoroi*. Finally, Rehm refers to the permanent presence of the *αυλητής (avlitis)*, the *aulos* player, on several vases and suggests the possibility of the presence of professional dirge-singers who sang the *threnos* (ritual lamenting song) during the funeral cortege.

Whether the public funeral cortege was solemn or not has been on debate. In Delphi there is a fourth-century B.C. regulation, passed by the phratry of the Labyads:

The corpse shall be transported covered up and in silence. There shall be no stopping on the way, and no lamentations outside the house before reaching the grave. In the case of the previous dead, there shall be no dirge or lamentation over their tombs. Everyone shall go straight back home, apart from those who share the same hearth as the deceased, together with paternal uncles, parents-in-law, descendants and sons-in-law.²⁷⁶

On the other hand, although the representations of *ekphora* are few, Kurtz notes that on a black-figure *kyathos*²⁷⁷ and on another vase like it, the painter depicts the public expression of lamentation during *ekphora*. It seems therefore that the need to put up

²⁷¹ The idea that anything that was a *miasma* (pollution) was to be placed or sent outside the borders of the city in order to keep it away from the living was obvious: See 1.3.A. Miasma.

²⁷² Rehm, 1994, p. 24.

²⁷³ Shapiro, "The Iconography of Mourning", (1991). pp. 629-656: She says that it was in order to avoid calling attention to itself, but it possibly has to do with the pollution death bears: to avoid polluting other citizens.

²⁷⁴ Mikalson, 1991, p. 122.

²⁷⁵ Mikalson, 1991, p. 122.

²⁷⁶ Garland, 1994, p. 68; Zaidman, 1992, p. 75.

²⁷⁷ Black-figure pottery painting, *μελανόμορφα (melanomorpha)*, were especially common between the 7th and 5th centuries B.C. There are though specimens dating as late as the 2nd century BC.

such a rule for a desired behaviour indicates that people expressed their feelings in public, and aloud.

iii. The *Ταφή (Taphi)*, the Burial

When they soberly reached the dead's resting place, they offered preliminary bloodless²⁷⁸ sacrifices.²⁷⁹ They poured *choés*, libations, of milk, honey, and wine²⁸⁰ and then buried the body, or the cinerary urn.²⁸¹ Gifts and offerings were then placed in and around the grave, as became known in excavations,²⁸² which also show a change of the preferred gifts through the centuries:²⁸³

They then covered the grave with earth forming a hillock and erected a marker, which could be a pot or an embossed column, *stelai*, gravestones, with the deceased's name as a memorial.²⁸⁴

After singing a dirge,²⁸⁵ the attendants offered a final libation at the grave, as the cups and pouring vessels found outside graves testify and references in Greek literature, before they returned home.²⁸⁶

Proper preparation and burial and the respect towards the treatment of the body were of such significance in the social structure of fifth-century Athens, that its perversion in tragedy has dreadful repercussions, even death.

²⁷⁸ Kurtz states that Solon prohibited any sacrifices of oxen at the tomb: Kurtz, 1971, p. 145.

²⁷⁹ Rehm, 1994, p. 27.

²⁸⁰ Mikalson, 1991, p. 122.

²⁸¹ "Both practices were popular in classical period, although cremation was preferred in the archaic. In the second case, incineration took place near the tomb and then they collected the ashes in a cloth, put it in a cinerary urn and then buried the pot.": Rehm, 1994, p. 26.

²⁸² "Their quantity, quality and placement give us valuable information and archaeologists can now study the findings and make a lot of deductions on the age, sex, social differences and family groups.": Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, pp. 72, 74.

²⁸³ "In Geometric period, 9th-8th centuries BC ... the dead were often buried with gold jewellery, weapons and other metal objects. ... In Archaic period they usually provided with little more than a cup or a bowl, whereas in the 5th-century Athens, slightly change when the commonest offering was a white-ground *lektyhos* or an oil flask": Garland, 1994, p. 72

²⁸⁴ In the archaic period *stelai*, gravestones, were the most popular, and after being diminished for some decades they appear again by the fifth century B.C. adorned with stone or carved marble: Rehm, 1994, p. 28

²⁸⁵ As depicted on the amphorae of the early archaic period they also danced before returning home: Rehm, 1994, p. 28.

²⁸⁶ Kurtz, 1971, p. 145.

Purificatory Rites

This last libation was purificatory. A dead person was thought to bring pollution to the house and anybody who came into contact with him was affected. It is not unlikely that the cleansing rites with water possibly started at the graveyard before returning home.²⁸⁷ Kurtz mentions the habit of digging a pit to the west of the grave and pouring water and wine accompanied by prayer and identifies this poured water to the deceased as *aponimma*.²⁸⁸

The purificatory rites to drive away the *miasma* of death continued on returning home. They burned incense to cleanse the house and put out the fire in the hearth only to light it again.

The day ended with a *περίδειπνον* (*perideipnon*), a banquet, where there was the funerary speech and they possibly sang songs.²⁸⁹ Kurtz disproves the suggestions that *perideipnon* was a meal taken at the grave using as sources the New Comedy in Hellenistic times. He supports that it was given in the house after the burial as an occasion for the relatives to be together, “wreath themselves and speak of the dead”.²⁹⁰ On leaving the house, all who attended the funeral purified themselves again on leaving the house by sprinkling their heads or washing their hands with the water already placed outside the infected house.²⁹¹ The funeral ended but the family’s obligation towards the dead though did not end then.

²⁸⁷ In various areas in rural Greece nowadays, such as Macedonia, and Cyprus there is still water at the graveyard and people wet or wash their hands before leaving the cemetery. It would be interesting to have the libations bearers do the same thing on exiting.

²⁸⁸ Kurtz explains the ‘*aponimma*’ quoting Atheneus: “a fragment from the *Exegetikon* of the Atthidographer Kleidemos ... in Athens there is a special use of the word *aponimma* to describe a ritual in honour of the dead – *es timen tois nekrois* – and a purification of those who have made offerings to the dead – *enageis*.”: Kurtz quoting Athenaus, 1971, p. 150.

²⁸⁹ Rehm, 1994, p. 28.

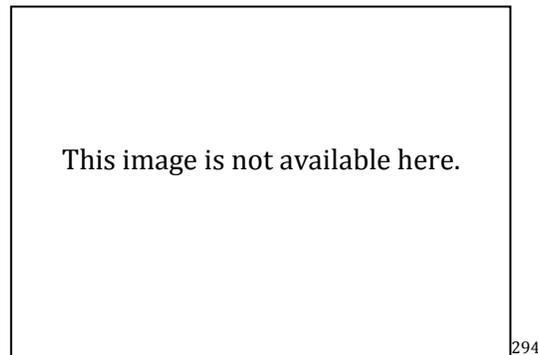
²⁹⁰ Kurtz, 1971, p. 146.

²⁹¹ “For the Greeks water was a primary cathartic element, especially water from the sea since it was considered less susceptible to pollution. In funerary rites purifying waters were important to the dead and to the living”: Kurtz, 1971, p. 149.

Visiting the Grave

In classical Athens, the grave both set the boundaries of the relationship of the dead with the living but it was also an important meeting place. It was the place where the post-burial rites were performed on the third, ninth, and thirtieth day after the burial.²⁹² We do not know much about the third and ninth day but we know that the mourning was completed on the 30th day with the *τριακάδα θυσία* (*triakada thysia*), the sacrifice in 30 days' time.²⁹³

From that point and on, the attendance and care of the tomb was the women's duty. The prevalence of women on funerary urns on white *lekythoi*, confirms their crucial role in attending the dead and the family grave.



Lekythoi

They visited the place to take care of it, honoured the dead or contacted the soul with offerings of *choes*, locks of hair, wreaths, food, jewels (diadems, belts), perfume pots, sacrifices, vessels and alabaster. Women often mourned and decorated the grave with flowers and ribbons.²⁹⁵ The classical gravestones of the classical period usually show the official aspect of mourning:

Typically, a young woman, wife or sister or daughter of the deceased, is accompanied either by a female slave or a male relative, sometimes a baby as well. ... Most often the visitors to the tomb stand quietly, pensive but not grieving or even noticeably sad. This, too, reflects an

²⁹² Garland, 1994, p. 28.

²⁹³ In Sparta it lasted up to 10 days.

²⁹⁴ Ελληνική Τέχνη, *Αρχαία Αγγεία*, 1996, σ. 365. (Greek Art, *Ancient Pots*, p. 365).

²⁹⁵ Shapiro, "The Iconography of Mourning", (1991). p. 652; Rehm, 1994, p. 28.

ideal expressed in Perikles' funeral oration, dignity in the face of death.²⁹⁶

All actions are scenically utilized, in short, in tragedy. However, the dignity expressed in archaeological evidence is far from depicted in tragedy since the perverted customs provoke intense emotions and reactions. In contrast to the classical period, white *lektythoi* exhibit a more private aspect, especially after the 460 B.C.:

They decorated the grave with ribbons and wreaths of celery and then they poured myrrh along with a mixture of honey, milk and wine (*the melikraton*). They also burned dried flowers and ears of corn and broke earthenware pots (a custom that came to our days)²⁹⁷

Because of the necessary tomb visits, it was vital for the grave to be in the homeland as Mikalson infers from the *Trojan Women*,²⁹⁸ where the Trojan dead are blessed for dying on their homeland. The play however is not the only proof. The *Patrios Nomos*, the ancestral custom, by which the victor gave the defeated permission to recover their dead, had very few instances of deviation of the rule in the classical period.²⁹⁹ That is why we observe this persistence of the Athenians to bring their war dead home for burial,³⁰⁰ which matter required the cremation of the bodies so that their ashes could be sent back to Athens.³⁰¹

Overall, all the stages of the burial aimed at honouring the dead. To bury your people was a sign of personal piety. As Mikalson puts it, “to receive them is *τιμή*, to be deprived of them is *ατιμία*”.³⁰² Even if the dead themselves were “nothing” or did not care whether their corpses were disgraced through mutilation, still, there was the deceased’s reputation and memory among the living that needed to be assured,³⁰³ a propelling ritualistic theme in *Oresteia*.

The tomb visits especially implies the belief that there is a connection between the dead and the relatives, which a distant tomb would make it impossible. The dead had

²⁹⁶ Shapiro, “The Iconography of Mourning”, (1991). p. 652.

²⁹⁷ Shapiro, “The Iconography of Mourning”, (1991). p. 653.

²⁹⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 122.

²⁹⁹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 125.

³⁰⁰ Kurtz, 1971, p. 143

³⁰¹ Rehm, 1994, p. 26.

³⁰² Mikalson, 1991, p. 193.

³⁰³ Mikalson, 1991, p. 194.

to be honored with the proper funeral rites and the tomb visits after the funeral were so essential that its denial was considered as one of the greatest penalties as a method of punishment.³⁰⁴ The law denied inhumation to those who were convicted of capital crimes against the state and they were either cast into the ravine or left exposed.³⁰⁵ This condemnation is the ritualistic backbone in Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Seven at Thebes* that drives its characters to the edges.

The Dead and the Afterlife

Mikalson observes that the ancient Greeks were probably not afraid of the dead as no archaeological findings show any signs of belief of their interactive power with the living.³⁰⁶ Therefore, Mikalson wonders what the usage of the burial rites was if the Greek believed that their dead were inactive. He offers two possible purposes of which neither is found in popular sources and only one is attested in tragedy: The first reason concerns the guidance of the souls into Hades, and the removal of the pollution of death from the living.³⁰⁷ If we consider here what *miasma* meant to ancient Greeks,³⁰⁸ then the funerary rites had a significant objective to fulfil. The second purpose was to appease the dead, a source only found in tragedy.

However, the festival of *Anthesteria* during which they propitiated the dead souls who were believed to come to the surface on the third day evince the belief that souls were active.³⁰⁹ Whether they were beware of the souls or not, the ancient Greeks performed their duties diligently to avoid any unexpected consequences as they did for any other religious practice.

³⁰⁴ Except the cases of Marathonomachoi who were elevated to the status of heroes turning their communal tomb as the focal point of veneration. The tradition of herorization was extended to the dead defenders of Greek Freedom against the Persian threat at Thermopylae in 490 and the Athenians on Salamis and at Plateae in 479: Shapiro, "The Iconography of Mourning" (1991). p. 645.

³⁰⁵ Mikalson, 1991, p. 125.

³⁰⁶ "Classical epitaphs, funeral vases, and other popular sources offer no description of the lives of the souls of the common dead in Hades or the sky. ... no expectation of meeting dead relatives or rejoining dead friends. ... no record of any prayer of request to the common dead. ... The vast majority of epitaphs simply list the virtues of the deceased, with no mention of future rewards. ... there is also little to fear ... from the dead.": Mikalson, 1991, p. 121.

³⁰⁷ Mikalson, 1991, p. 123.

³⁰⁸ See Appendix II.

³⁰⁹ Johnston, 1999, p. 135.

For Mikalson, the souls continued to exist in any of the following three categories:³¹⁰ the souls lacked consciousness from earthly suffering; they continued to live in the same way as they did when they were alive; they were not aware of the events on the surface, although heroes acknowledged the *choes* offered to them.

All the elaborated care already discussed in the funerary process and post-burial attention concerned the Ordinary Dead as it was believed that they took pleasure in a non-stop relationship with their living relatives. The dead needed food and drink for their well-being,³¹¹ signified by their absorption when poured, as declared by Electra in *Choephoroi*. However, not everybody died maturely and in his or her bed, therefore burial was modified depending on the circumstances of death:

those who for one reason or another had not had funeral rites and lie unburied (the *ataphoi*), those dying prematurely (*aoroi*) and those who died violent deaths (the *biaiothanatoi*), which included the heroes;³¹²

The manner one had died and the treatment of his body was tightly connected with the belief that the spirit of these dead was unquiet, Johnston calls the souls of these dead 'restless', and could be dangerous if they were not pacified.³¹³ These variations seem to have brought about sundry funerary practices.

The untimely dead such as infants, children and especially unwed people at a marriageable age drew the special sympathy of the Greeks like the figures of Iphigenia, *Antigone*, or even Cassandra. It is possible that infants who died in the first year received abbreviated funerary rites similar to Astyanax in the *Trojan Women* one may think. The unmarried had an indicative marker, a *loutrophoros*, the vase they used to carry the water for the ablution.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ Mikalson, 1991, p. 115.

³¹¹ Odysseus pours libations and makes a blood sacrifice to the Chthonians at the mouth of Hades, in order to draw the dead towards him and speak to them. However, they need to drink blood of the sacrificed animal to speak to him.

³¹² Garland, 1994, p. 75; Dillon, Matthew P.J., "Review: The Unquiet Grave, Restless Dead. *Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* by S. I. Johnston", *The Classical Review*, New Ser., Vol. 50, No. 2. (2000), p. 513; Johnston, 1999, p. 127.

³¹³ Dillon, "Review: The Unquiet Grave, *Restless Dead*", (2000). p. 513.

³¹⁴ Garland, 1994, p. 75.

Most horrific was the interment of a murdered dead. He was buried having his extremities cut off and tied around his neck, known as *μασχαλισμός* (*maschalismos*) in an effort to neutralize the feelings for vengeance and malignancy of the soul. Worse, these dead often did not receive proper funeral.³¹⁵ This kind of dishonour does not seem common in tragedies. From the surviving tragedies, it was deployed only in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, forming the ritualistic background that drives and shapes the action.

The dead may have been believed to be inactive in early Greek belief, yet, they could harm the living through a surviving relative or other powerful divinities,³¹⁶ a belief that continued in the classical period. Only heroes who died gloriously in battlefields had no need to harry their killers.³¹⁷ Except the heroes then, the rest of the categories of the dead were ascribed with the power to persecute the living if they were invoked.³¹⁸ Invocation to the dead in tragedy was often synonymous to despair as we see in the *Trojan Women*. In *Choephoroi* though it seems it performs its actual purpose.

Another kind of invocation was the necromancy, the summoning of the ghosts, best testified in Aeschylus' *Persians*. The rite was identical to the rites of pious tomb attendances and the offering of *libations, choes*: therefore they dug a pit, offered libations of milk, honey, wine, water, and oil, grain and flowers and prayed. In such a case, a person who believed that a ghost pursued him was instructed to perform rituals such as purification, offering the ghost water for washing, a meal and a sacrifice. Various steps of the funeral appear in tragedy; however they are not usually perverted in the same way as the wedding. Possibly because it dealt with the most dignified rite in a man's life and that it dealt with moments of extreme sorrow.

³¹⁵ Garland, 1994, p. 76.

³¹⁶ Johnston, 1999, p. 140.

³¹⁷ Dillon, "Review: The Unquiet Grave, *Restless Dead*", (2000). p. 513; The reason was that they died according to his life and temperament and his posthumous fame was a great consolation. Not only they would harm nobody but it was believed that they maintained their earthly power so in cases of seeking for their help they were invoked by sacrificing a ram or a sheep, both black of colour. Garland mentions that by the fifth century bloody sacrifices were replaced by cake, wine and olive oil as well as colourful sashes which were tied around the grave marker: Garland, 1994, pp. 76-78.

³¹⁸ Felton, D., Reviewed Work: *Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* by Sarah Iles Johnston, *Journal of Philology*, Vol. 122, No. 3, (autumn, 2001), pp. 433-436.

Therefore, the violation that is dramaturgically explored mainly concerns the irreverent denial for proper burial, an act which in tragedy draw death upon the insulters.

2.C. SACRIFICE

The institutionalised aggression and violence that have marked the progress of human society became the heart of every religion that beats at blood.³¹⁹ Its basic concept in the major centres of most ancient civilizations, although diversified, was to communicate with the divine powers and strengthen the bonds among the citizens through the act of offering food.³²⁰

Sacrifice of all kinds was so important that it permeated all aspects of ancient Greeks life. It was considered the most pious act through which they honoured the gods who in return showed their function, their *timi*, honour, with reciprocal actions.³²¹ Similar to other socially important rituals, its presence in tragedy is inevitable in various forms.

What defines rituals in ancient Greece, and sacrifice, is the permanent presence of fire in their lives at every occasion.³²² In ancient Greece any place where fire burned was interwoven with sanctity because it was thought to open a channel of communication between the mortals and the gods, between the sky and the earth through the lit flames: The hearth at houses and at some altars, for example at the altars of Apollo at Delphi, Argos or Kyrene, and at the *Prytaneum*, was always lit. These fires were put out and rekindled only in rites of purifications and new beginnings. Other altars were lit in an impressive ceremony at festivals; and there was rarely a sacrifice without a fire.³²³

³¹⁹ The worshipper experiences the god most powerfully not just in pious conduct or in prayer, song, and dance, but in the deadly blow of axe, the gush of blood and the burning of thigh-pieces: Burkert, Walter, *Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual*, University of California Press, 1979, p. 2.

³²⁰ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 29.

³²¹ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 189, 190; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p.13.

³²² Fire has been an inseparable part of man's life since primordial time. It was the primitive man's weapon against the carnivorous animals and his source of warmth and light at nights and the evil spirits: Burkert, 1987, p. 60.

³²³ Burkert, 1987, p. 61.

As with all the religious expression of the Greeks, lyre and flute players accompanied the offers to the gods with hymns and prayers. The Greeks believed that gods were the donators of the good but at the same time demanded presents.

Sacrifices in ancient Greece were of two kinds, bloody and bloodless, differentiated by the vocabulary that also denoted whether the divinity was celestial or subterranean. The verb *θύειν* (*thyein*), sacrifice, offer consecrated bloody, bloodless or burnt offerings, and votive objects to a celestial god. In contrast, the verb *σφαγιάζειν* (*sphagiazin*), slaughter, indicate an offering to a chthonian god or a hero.³²⁴ Whether in the form of a bloody sacrifice or not, it was an obligation to ensure their ever-going welfare.

Although blood was connected with death, not life as represented in the Olympian gods,³²⁵ a blood sacrifice was the most effective offering to a god. More significantly, it was the core of most rituals as well as the most polymorphous in ancient Greece. For the ancient Greeks it,

is always quite clear: community, *koinonia*. Membership of the community is marked by the washing hands, the encirclement and the communal throwing; an even closer bond is forged through the tasting of the *splachna*.³²⁶

The reconstruction of an animal sacrifice is a difficult task because, like so many areas of ancient Greek life, it was such a common feature that nobody bothered to describe its process, except for occasional records by historians. Nonetheless, the excavated sacrificial calendars and Greek vases have helped to outline its structure.

On vase paintings the white-chalked sides of the altars are always shown splashed with blood in testimony to the sacred work.³²⁷

There are also the literary sources that describe the rite idealistically.³²⁸ Thus, Ogden has a point when he argues that if a scholar is after a more realistic picture of the

³²⁴ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, pp. 32, 37.

³²⁵ McCarthy, J., D., "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 88, No. 2, (1969), pp. 168, 170.

³²⁶ Burkert, 1985, p. 58.

³²⁷ Burkert, 1985, p. 59.

³²⁸ Ogden, Daniel, *A Companion to Greek Religion*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, p.132.

Greek sacrifice he must constantly compare literary presentations with artistic one and whenever possibly the archaeological evidence.³²⁹

Its complex nature and the killing are probably responsible for being only reported in tragedy; violent scenes, especially the ones who included blood were forbidden according to the convention. Like wedding however, it is also further twisted in its dramaturgical treatment in the sense that a human being often replaces the animal and as expected the required compliance is absent. Sacrifice bears also metaphorical meanings: they are not mere offerings or requests to gods but imply the death of the old way of living for a new beginning to come, which often includes the backstage physical death of a living person, as this is materialized in Medea's murder of her two children.

The awareness of the process of the rite is therefore necessary if one wants to detect the implications of the reported sacrifice or its allusions.

Blood Sacrifices

The bloody sacrifice was performed in two different ways, depending on whether it was meant for a celestial goddess or a chthonic god or hero.

In the Greek theology, the Olympian Gods were believed to derive contentment and sustenance from the fumes of the burning bones of the victims during sacrifices.³³⁰ There were chances for sacrifices every month in ancient Attica in a sanctuary either for a family celebration, on behalf of an individual, for a group or the whole city itself, except the month of the *Maimakterion* (November).

Burkert³³¹ Ogden³³² and Lacey³³³ agree that the most detailed description of a sacrifice is in the *Odyssey*, when old Nestor prepares a sacrifice in honour of the

³²⁹ Ogden also believes that scholars are wrong to choose not to distinguish Homeric and post-Homeric evidence despite its evolvement in the classical years into a more elaborated ritual. Both sides however have a point. For example, the beginning of the sacrifice was dramatized in the classical times compared to Homer's age but at the same time it is easy for one to notice that its essence remained unchanged: Ogden, 2006, p.132.

³³⁰ Garland, 1994, p. 12.

³³¹ Burkert, 1985, pp. 3-6.

goddess Athena in his palace at Pylos to welcome Telemachos, Odysseus' son. Thanks to Homer and tragedy, scholars were able to glean information and reconstruct the course of an ordinary Greek sacrifice to the Olympian gods almost in its entirety.³³⁴

i. Θυσία (*Thysia*), Sacrifice

The sacrifice to the Olympians was generally performed at dawn in a very solemn manner³³⁵ at an altar, the indispensable part of a sacred place.³³⁶ In many cases it was formed by the concentration of ashes and stones left after the sacrifices or of stones on which one climbed because the smoke had to be able to reach the skies where the gods lived.³³⁷ This is the reason why a man who sat at an altar as a suppliant could not be harmed in any way.

Sacrificers, Objects, Tools and Receptacles

The *sacrificer* could be the leader of an *oikos* or an expert called μάγειρος (*mageiros*), a cook, or the βούτυπος (*voutypos*), the ox-slayer. In the case of the shrines the sacrificer could be the priest.³³⁸

As far as the tools and pots are concerned, workaday in their use, they became ritualistic once they were used for the sacrifice. The ritualistic instruments included the κάνεον (*kaneon*), a basket with three edges in which the sacrificial knife was concealed, the λουτήριον (*loutirion*), a vessel which contained the cleansing water and the σφαγείον (*sphageion*), the vessel for the collection of the blood.³³⁹

³³² For the analytical description of the sacrifice see Ogden, 2006, pp.135-8.

³³³ All the stages of a sacrifice in this scene by Homer: Lacey, 1984, pp. 31-32.

³³⁴ Burkert, 1987, pp. 3-6; Ogden, 2006, p.135-8.

³³⁵ Garland, 1994, p. 14.

³³⁶ Typical signs of a sanctuary were the water, a tree or grove, and the requisite altar. Some sanctuaries never had a temple: Bremmer, Jan N., *Greek religion*, Oxford: Published for the Classical Association, Oxford University Press, 1994, p.27.

³³⁷ Burkert, 1994, p. 2.

³³⁸ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 30.

³³⁹ Other utensils were the τράπεζα (*trapeza*), a table, which was by the altar where the butcher cut the meat for distribution, the οβελοί (*obeloi*), spits, for spitting the meat and the entrails for cooking and the χύτρα, λέβης (*chytra, lebes*), the cauldron, in which the rest of the meat was boiled before its distribution: Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 33.

The Preparation

The preparation began with *the* choice of the victim. The priest made sure that the animal satisfied all the requirements of “purity”. The most beautiful and healthy animal of the herd were previously carefully checked for blemishes. Even a spot on the fur was a sign of *miasma*, pollution, and this was enough to exclude it from the sacrificial ritual so that they did not offend the deity.³⁴⁰

the victim had to be perfect and undamaged. Admittedly, sacrificial calendars often specify wethers (castrated rams) ... reclassified as “undamaged”.³⁴¹

Undoubtedly, Iphigeneia, Cassandra and Polyxena fit nicely to all the characteristics of the perfect sacrificial victim.

Only domestic animals were good for a sacrifice. Gods were pleased with the warm-blooded ones, perhaps because the warm, running blood could rouse feelings of fear.³⁴² A cow or an ox was the most prestigious of all, whereas poultry was used for the humblest sacrifices.³⁴³ Ogden offers a list of the preferred animals of which, as is of interest to tragedy, the most chosen is the piglet³⁴⁴ when used to cleanse the pollution of an impious act.

³⁴⁰ Garland, 1994, p. 13

³⁴¹ Also, “It was only in Sparta that sacrifices were small and cheap, and even allowed mutilated animals. ... influenced by Spartan ideology. ... too much free meat would softened up the warriors.”: Ogden, 2006, p.134

³⁴² Burkert, 1985, p. 59.

³⁴³ Burkert, 1985, p. 55; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 30.

³⁴⁴ A cow was preferred until the dark ages. After that, small communities and private sacrifices used smaller animals. Possibly, the cow was too valuable to be given away, even to the gods, although it remained the preferred animal. Athenian colonies and allied had to send a sacrificial cow to the Panathenaea. The ox was the most imposing animal of course especially if a bull was offered. Sheep and goats, preferably adult animals, were the predominant sacrificial victims.

Pigs were the next most expensive full-grown sacrificial victim. Yet, except perhaps in Cypriot sanctuaries of Aphrodite, it was not the most popular animal in sacrifice for various reasons: it was kept mainly for its fat and meat, it was a scavenger of human wastes, its rooting and digging habits make it less suitable for densely populated areas and it needed the presence of water and shade, neither of which was available all the time. Piglets were popular for preliminary sacrifices. It was the cheapest animal therefore it was suitable for offerings which were not for consumption and holocausts: Ogden, 2006, pp.133-4; Burkert, 1985, p. 55.

The victims varied in number and value depending on the festival, differed by divinity,³⁴⁵ but also by the sex, colour and age.³⁴⁶ In general, gods preferred male victims and Goddesses female ones although there are notable exceptions such as the sanctuary of Artemis in Kalapodi where bones of bulls were found.³⁴⁷

The chosen animal was adorned with ribbons, garlands round their heads³⁴⁸ and had their horns gilded,³⁴⁹ although possibly, only a wealthy community could afford to gold-plate the horns.³⁵⁰

Sacrificers also prepared for the occasion as customary. They bathed, dressed in clean clothes and adorned themselves by putting on wreaths from twigs.³⁵¹ Ogden has deduced from vases that the “the sacred character of the sacrifice was stressed by the absence of shoes”³⁵² and Burkett mentions the quite often sexual abstinence as a requirement.³⁵³ This decoration and preparation would bring to mind Cassandra’s outer appearance in the *Trojan Women* as her multi-level performance balance between her priesthood, manaedism, wedding and sacrificial motif.

The Procession

By the classical period the beginning of the sacrifice was dramatised. It began with a *πομπή* (*pompe*), a procession, even a small one, which escorted the animal to the altar.³⁵⁴ The people walked rhythmically and sang³⁵⁵ in the accompaniment of a

³⁴⁵ Most gods were pleased with cattle, sheep, and goats except Hestia who received preliminary cheap sacrifices. For example, Athena favoured cows, Demeter pigs, Dionysos piglets, Eileithya, Ares and Hecate dogs, Aphrodite birds, and divinities who were connected with impurity received inedible or cheap animals: Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 30; Bremmer, 1994, p. 41.

³⁴⁶ In the case of the majority state deities, we are talking in terms of huge numbers of cattle. At the Great Dionysia in 333 BC, they sacrificed 240 bulls to Dionysos: Garland, 1994, p. 12:

³⁴⁷ Ogden, 2006, p. 134.

³⁴⁸ Ogden, 2006, p. 134.

³⁴⁹ Garland, 1994, p. 13; Burkert, 1985, p. 56.

³⁵⁰ Ogden, 2006, p. 134.

³⁵¹ Burkert, 1985, p. 56.

³⁵² Ogden, 2006, p. 135.

³⁵³ Burkert, 1979, p. 3.

³⁵⁴ Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Ogden, 2006, p. 136;

³⁵⁵ Burkert, 1979, p. 3.

female or male flutter player. Depending on the occasion, there could have been many of them along with exclusively male players of string instruments.³⁵⁶

The procession was led by a maiden girl called the *κανηφόρος* (*kanephoros*),³⁵⁷ carrier of the basket, with a covered basket on her head. The basket, sometimes of silver or gold-plated, contained the sacrificial knife concealed under barley groats and ribbons and perhaps *pelanos*, a kind of cake.³⁵⁸ They also carried lustral water as well as, often, an incense burner.³⁵⁹ Zaidman mentions the priests and the sacrifices³⁶⁰ and then followed the victim led by male adolescents.³⁶¹ According to the Greek sacrificial ideology, the animal was to follow the processions willingly.³⁶² If it showed signs of resistance, the priest made sure to show compliance at the altar.³⁶³ Finally, the participants followed in a throng. Everybody, irrespectively, had a role to play.

At the Altar. The Beginning of the Thysia

Burkert's reconstruction³⁶⁴ and Odgen's additions illustrate the procedure at the altar. Therefore, when the participants arrived at the altar they stood around it marking out the circular area of action from the other watchers. Odgen noting the

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³⁵⁶ Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Ogden, 2006, p. 135.

³⁵⁷ See Roccas J. Linda, "The Kanephoros and Her Festival Mantle in Greek Art", *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 99, No. 4. (1995), pp. 641-666.

³⁵⁸ Ogden deduces that the knife was probably never shown or implied on vase paintings so as not to disturb the festal atmosphere: Ogden, 2006, p. 136.

³⁵⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 56.

³⁶⁰ Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 35.

³⁶¹ Ogden, 2006, p. 135.

³⁶² "This emphasis goes back to archaic hunting practices, where the hunters pretended that the animal had voluntarily appeared in order to be killed.": Ogden, 2006, p. 135; Burkert mentions of legends of animals which offered themselves for sacrifice: Burkert, 1987, p. 56.

³⁶³ We can see the same habit in the custom of *Anastenarides* (fire-walkers) in Thrace nowadays.

³⁶⁴ Burkert, 1987, p. 56-59.

topography of the ancient temple agrees with Burkert that they must have stood in a semi-circle between the altar and the temple, with the temple at their back.³⁶⁵ The fire at the altar was already lit.

Often a censer is used to impregnate the atmosphere with the scent of the extraordinary, and there is music, usually that of the flute. A water jug must be there as well.³⁶⁶

A sacrificial assistant carried the sacrificial basket and a jug with lustral water around the altar, counterclockwise, in order to mark the sacred realm from the profane.³⁶⁷

in classical times beardless sacrificial assistants can still be seen on the vases with a jug of lustral water in one hand and the sacrificial basket on the other.³⁶⁸

As the actual sacrifice began, the participants purified themselves by washing their hands from an ewer, or, as Burkert had already suggested, they were sprinkled with the lustral water over their heads. Odgen supports the later after examining vase paintings which shows the sacrificer dipping his hands into the jug, then taking a fire-brand from the altar, dipping it in the jug too and sprinkling the participants and the altar and the sacrificial victim. This beginning was called *αρχησθαί* (*archesthai*), the ones who begin, and it was their first communal act.³⁶⁹ In this way, the sacrificial partakers were once more distinguished from the rest of the population.³⁷⁰ At this time, the animal that was also sprinkled became the centre of the people's attention because the jerked movement it made to get rid of the water was interpreted as its consent to be sacrificed.³⁷¹

Then, the priest recited a prayer aloud³⁷² and after a brief silence, it was time for the solemn *ευφημείν*, when the participants threw ungrounded barley grains (*ουλαί*),

³⁶⁵ Ogden, 2006, p. 135.

³⁶⁶ Burkert, 1979, p. 4.

³⁶⁷ Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Ogden, p. 135.

³⁶⁸ Ogden, 2006, p. 136.

³⁶⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Ogden, 2006, p. 135.

³⁷⁰ Ogden, 2006, p. 135

³⁷¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Garland, 1994, p. 13; Ogden, 2006, p. 135.

³⁷² Burkert suggests this took place before the throwing of barley which could be interpreted as a sign of confirmation: Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Athenian vases display the pouring of a libation, while he extends his left hand in a gesture of prayer: Ogden, 2006, p. 138.

(*oulai, oulochytai*) from the basket³⁷³ at the altar, the earth and the animal. So probably when the assistants carried the basket around, the partakers took a handful of grains. The meaning of this act still remains obscure according to Odgen,³⁷⁴ while Burkert connects it with the most ancient agricultural products without commenting on it any further. The washing of hands, the prayer and the grains comprised the second part of the beginning, known as *katarchesthai*.³⁷⁵

The sacrificer cut a few hairs from the animals head with the sacrificial knife and threw them into the fire³⁷⁶ making the victim no longer inviolate. This sequence, called *απαρχησθαί (aparchesthai)* concluded the beginning of the rite and could now proceed with the actual killing.³⁷⁷

Then, the women raise a high piercing cry, *ολολυγή (ololyge)*, during which the victim was quickly stunned with a blow of axe before the officiant opened the artery in the neck with the sacrificial knife.³⁷⁸ Ogden supports Burkert's deduction that the women's scream marked the emotional climax, and he notes that this custom lasted until the Hellenistic times.³⁷⁹ In contrast to its actuality, *ololyge* is used in tragedy at high moments of despair rather than celebration.

The blood needed to be treated with care because it should not run on the ground. It had to hit the altar, the hearth or the sacrificial pit. Small animals were raised over the altar. With big animals, they had their heads turned up so that the blood could spurt skywards and fall on the altar, or, collected it in the *sphageion* and pour it over the altar and against its sides.³⁸⁰

³⁷³ Probably, the basket went around not just to distinguish the participants from the watchers, but also to allow them to take a handful of grains to throw it at this point. Similarly, in orthodox weddings, a little time before the couple is about to go around the altar 3 times, a basket with rice goes around so that the guests can take some to throw it at them while circling following the priest.

³⁷⁴ Ogden, 2006, p. 136.

³⁷⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 56.

³⁷⁶ In an orthodox bapbaticism, the priest cuts some hair from the four sides of the baby's forming a cross.

³⁷⁷ Burkert, 1987, p. 56.

³⁷⁸ Burkert, 1987, p. 56.

³⁷⁹ Ogden, 2006, pp. 136-7.

³⁸⁰ Burkert, 1987, p. 56; Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 35.

The Sharing and Communal Feasting

The sharing of the meal and the communal feasting followed the central action of a sacrifice marked by the *ololyge*. But before that, the animal's inner organs were first the main focus. A seer interpreted the lobes of the liver and then the internal eatable *σπλάχνα* (*splachna*), organs,³⁸¹ were roasted and eaten by the active participants in a communal meal.

Then, almost the entire animal, except a slice from the thighs rolled in a little fat, was distributed to the celebrants.³⁸² The tradition instructed what had to be done with the animal³⁸³, which, not infrequently, had to be completely consumed at the sanctuary.³⁸⁴ The skin was usually offered to the sanctuary insuring its continuity with the purchase of new votive offerings and new victims.³⁸⁵ Towards the end, they poured more libations of wine and burned cakes and when the fire died down, the pleasing feast gradually gave way to everyday life.

Animal sacrifice may vary depending on the local ancestral custom but the pivotal structure was the same: the preparation, the procession, the beginning, the ritualized slaughtering, the shrill cry and the communal meal that followed. Libations were

³⁸¹ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 93-94.

³⁸² Garland, 1994, p. 14.

³⁸³ In the first stage, the gods received full attention. The two thigh-bones (*μηρία*) had the meat removed from them and they were wrapped in a fold of fat. They restored the basic form with the pelvis and the tail and they burned them as an offering to the gods. The idea that gods prefer bones and fat to the meat of the animals derives from the Promethean myth of sacrifices in Hesiod's *Theogonia* (535-617) in which the Titan Prometheus tricks Zeus to choose bones wrapped in fat. This myth was often used in comedy: Burkert, 1985, p. 57; The gods also received other inedible parts, such as the gall bladder and the bile (*choli*): Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 35; Although the sacrifice was in honour of a god, the god received almost nothing, whereas the meat was used for the feasting of the participants. Except the gods' food, the bones, the officiant offered the traditional libation of mixed wine so that the gods, just like the human, had a drink with their food. The alcohol caused the flames to flare up and this was another opportunity of the seer to interpret it as signifying the presence of the divinity. The core is nearly always connected with another human action, namely, eating, the festive meal of those who shared in the sacred: Burkert, 1979, p. 12; After the offering to the gods and the first communal consumption, the cook cut the animal up in portions as equal as possible and the meal could start. Garland suggests that the shared meal was the most important part of the sacrifice as mortals and gods came together: Garland, 1994, p. 14; In Homeric times, meat was distributed depending on the rank and status of the guests and this unequal distribution lasted well into classical times. Ogden writes that in classical times the *mageiros* was entrusted with the task, although problems must have occurred as not all meat could be cut into exactly similar portions: Ogden, 2006, p. 138;

³⁸⁴ Burkert, 1987, p. 57.

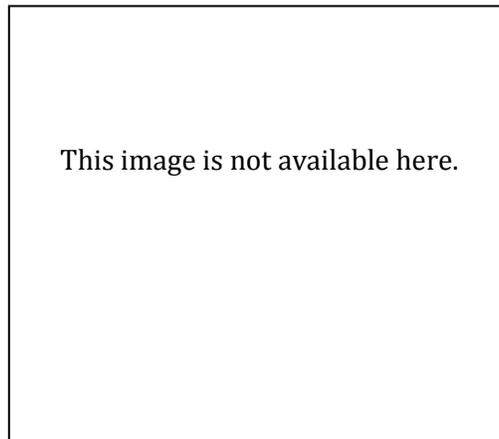
³⁸⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 57; Burkert, 1979, p. 6-7.

indispensable here too, frequently accompanied by vegetable offerings at the beginning and again at the end of the ceremony.³⁸⁶

ii. Holocaust³⁸⁷

The offer to the chthonic gods, heroes³⁸⁸ and dead received an inverted kind of a sacrifice called the Holocaust. Sacrifices of this kind were performed as a post-burial honours to a man.³⁸⁹ There were cases where dead heroes and war dead received blood sacrifices, even in the Classical period. Garland mentions the example of the Athenians who annually sacrificed a black bull to those who had died fighting the Persians at the battle of Plataia in 479 BC.

Contrary to the sacrifices to the heaven, which took place at dawn, holocausts were performed at sunset. The preferred animals were female or castrated of black colour which were slaughtered either over an *εσχάρα* (*eschara*), a lower altar, which looks like an entrance to the lower world or directly on the ground or grave so that their blood would go straight into the soil.



Eleusina Archaeological Site, Eschara

³⁸⁶ Burkert, 1979, p. 12.

³⁸⁷ Garland, 1994, p. 14; Zaidman & Pantel, 1992, p. 37.

³⁸⁸ Evidence in literature show that blood sacrifice in the type of a holocaust was offered only to heroes because of the heroic status of the ghosts: Ogden, Daniel, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 3, 8.

³⁸⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 60.

In a holocaust the whole animal was burnt. Burkert however notes that the rule was not always strict:

there are sacrificial banquets in the cult of the gods who are explicitly called Cthonic, and also in the cult of the dead and especially in the hero cult. ... [however]... there are holocausts even for Zeus. ...for Zeus Polieus, for example, first a piglet is burned, then a bull is slaughtered for the sacrificial meal ³⁹⁰

The wedding to death model which is exemplified in Iphigenia or, I say, the sacrifice to her wedding of Polyxena are two examples of the common application of the sacrificial motif in tragedy.

Bloodless Sacrifices

There were also other kinds of sacrifices described as pure (*hagna thymata*),³⁹¹ because they did not shed any blood,³⁹² the kind of offering Clytaemnestra's ghost reveals she has performed to Erinyes during her mundane life.

One form of a bloodless offering was the libations when the gods accepted fluid offers of wine or milk. The devotee poured them on the altar or on the ground depending on the kind of worship.

Then, all sort of food could be offered to the gods: bread, sweets, cakes, cooked food, fruit, as well as plants, spices or perfumes which were thrown on fire or placed in a sanctuary.

The food was offered in various ways. One way was *τραπεζώματα* (*trapezomata*) in which food was simply placed on holy tables in temples, or at sacred places, as for example at the feet of a statue. Daily domestic sacrifices as well as certain public celebrations often took this form. Other ways required to be burnt or sunk in lakes, springs or the sea.

³⁹⁰ Burkert, 1987, pp. 63-4.

³⁹¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 59.

³⁹² Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, pp. 37-38.

The most rudimentary form of a present was the offering of the first fruit, whether this concerned hunting, fishing, harvesting or farming. These offerings were called *απαρχαί* (*aparchae*), the beginning. The quantity dedicated was one tenth of the production, called *δεκάτη* (*dekati*). The *aparchae* gradually developed the offering of money instead, in which case the amount, the kind and the way of the offer was predetermined. The latter seems to intermingle with the materialization of a prayer into a votive offering. Another bloodless offering for the gods' further pleasure was the incense but it was mainly associated with the cult of Aphrodite and Adonis

to straw a granule of frankincense in flames is the most widespread, simplest, and also cheapest act of offering³⁹³

Incense, especially myrrh and frankincense which is mentioned in a poem by Sappho, was imported by the Greeks around the 700 B.C. and its burner was called the *θυμιατήριον* (*thymiaterion*).³⁹⁴ It is possible though what Burkert suggests, that at the beginning the ancient Greeks used woods and twigs that spread a smell.

Sacrifice in ancient Greek was the best way one showed his reverence to the divine. The nature of sacrifice that varied so much and its often symbolical usage in tragedy sometimes makes its twisted identification difficult.

³⁹³ Burkert, 1987, p. 62.

³⁹⁴ Burkert, 1987, p. 62.

2.D. LIBATIONS

The libation, pouring of liquids, was the most common sacral form of offering to the gods in prehistoric times, especially in the Bronze Age.³⁹⁵ Its widespread use in all rites is probably the reason why in tragedy its performance is often implied. Therefore the awareness of this rite is almost imperative for its detection, as we will see in chapter two.

Although libations were associated with blood and bloodless sacrifices, they could be self-existent as well:³⁹⁶ any calling of the gods required a libation,³⁹⁷ and any libation called for the indispensable reciting of a prayer.³⁹⁸ Therefore, similar to any other effort that aims to contact the divine, their performance was conducted in a very solemn manner, something that makes Elderkin suggest that the drink induced a spiritual presence.³⁹⁹

There were two kinds of libations in ancient Greece, *σπονδή* (*spondae, spondê*) and *χοή* (*choé, choê* or *goé*),⁴⁰⁰ equally represented in tragedies depending on the subject-matter of the play. Xenophanes reports that both kinds of libations begun with a prayer, so that those who poured acted justly.⁴⁰¹ Hesiod defines prayers depending on the god, the incense they had to offer when they wake up and go to bed and many more.⁴⁰²

The evidence on the process is mainly literary, more specifically the banquet libations, although vase paintings are also of great help. As described by Elderkin, our examples of a *spondae* from the literary texts focus on the symposiums during the fifth and fourth centuries and denote further religious elements. The participants had wreaths

³⁹⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 70.

³⁹⁶ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 39.

³⁹⁷ Burkert, 1987, p. 71.

³⁹⁸ Burkert, 1987, p. 71; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40.

³⁹⁹ Elderkin, W., George, Review: "The Banquet-Libations of the Greeks by Delight Tolles", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 66, No. 4. (1945), p. 426.

⁴⁰⁰ Garland, 1994, p. 17.

⁴⁰¹ Elderkin, Review: "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). pp. 425-430.

⁴⁰² Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 39.

on their heads, they used incense before the pouring and sang a *paen* immediately afterwards. Perhaps, they even anointed themselves as we assume from the best literary sources, Aristophanes' comedies.⁴⁰³

The study of the deities to whom it was poured can illuminate the nature of the banquet-libations,⁴⁰⁴ usually reported as in the description of Iphigeneia's sacrifice in *Agamemnon*. At the beginning, there were three kinds of libations and three craters: for Zeus and the Olympians; for the heroes; and the third crater was for Zeus Soter, associated with the domestic cult as the protector of the house. The libation to Zeus Soter and the heroes was poured by all the feasters whereas the sacred drink was consumed individually. Burkert adds that each participant was also able to invoke a god with further libations.⁴⁰⁵

Supplementary to the three gods, the sacred drinks were dedicated to three more deities: *Hygieia*, Health, Hermes as the guardian of the house and, finally, *Agathos Daimon* as the divine agent of good fortune, who received a libation of undiluted wine after each meal.⁴⁰⁶ The quality of *Agathos Daimon* is often perverted as we see in *Agamemnon* where Clytaemnestra blames him for murdering her husband. The cup of *Agathos Daimon*, the most usual as it is concluded from the main source, comedy, is believed to have served a chthonic purpose as in Homer the libation of unmixed wine was used only in the sanction of an oath.⁴⁰⁷ Therefore, Elderkin may have a point when he strongly supports that the meaning of the rite is that of the communion between the living and the dead.

Garland suggests that possibly special cups were exclusively used for each libation⁴⁰⁸ although Burkert believes that it is the type of vessel and the way it was used that distinguish the kind of libation.⁴⁰⁹ Reconstructing from the paintings, they seems to

⁴⁰³ Elderkin, Review: "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). pp. 428-29.

⁴⁰⁴ Elderkin, Review: "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). pp. 425, 427.

⁴⁰⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 71.

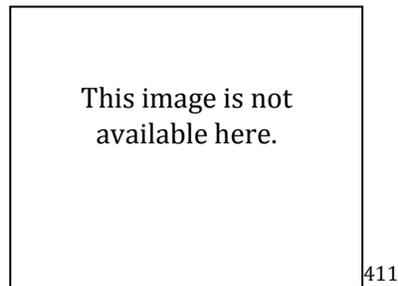
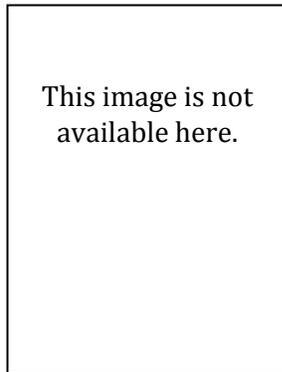
⁴⁰⁶ Elderkin, Review: "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). p. 425; Nilsson, M., New York: Columbia University Press, 1940..

⁴⁰⁷ Elderkin, Review: "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). p. 428.

⁴⁰⁸ Garland, 1994, p. 17.

⁴⁰⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 70.

pour the liquid from an *οινοχόη* (*oinochoe*), a wine-jug, into *φύαλη* (*phiale*), a shallow bowl of canonical shape and then onto an altar or the ground,⁴¹⁰ a useful information on the props when staging a text-play.



The liquids the Greeks used for the libations were of various kinds. The chief ingredients were mixed or unmixed wine, but also, olive oil, honey, milk or water,⁴¹² depending on the invoked god and its place in the macrocosm, in the underground world or in the heavens.⁴¹³

Σπονδές – *Spondae*

Spondae marked the beginning and ending of various actions.⁴¹⁴ The main purpose of a *spondae* was to place familiar actions under the protection of the Olympian gods whom they appealed as witnesses, helpers or companions.⁴¹⁵ As we read Hesiod's instructions in his *Days and Labours* it had various uses: a pious person performed it

⁴¹⁰ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40.

⁴¹¹ Ελληνική Τέχνη, *Αρχαία Αγγεία*, 1996, σ. 365. (Greek Art, *Ancient Pots*, p. 365).

⁴¹² Garland, 1994, p. 17.

⁴¹³ Burkert tries to give an explanation of the use of oil and water. Oil especially is not a drink, yet it was spread over special stones at special places such as crossroads as an offering. These glistening stones, he believes, were used as a demarcation of a central point of religious cult.⁴¹³ Water⁴¹³ on the other hand had various associations, mainly purificatory: it was used at the beginning of sacrifices when they washed their hands; at the grave of unmarried dead symbolizing their posthumous bridal bath, or to quench the deads' thirst; also in purgatory rites immediately after a funeral.; Burkert, 1987, p. 72; Odgen discussing the rite of necromancy says that water was also sprinkled around the pit at the beginning of *choes* as a means to purify the area; he also refers to the use of milk, the colour of which mitigates the darkness in Hades and when it comes to the wine, he points its resemblance to blood, and its possible substitution of the split blood of a sacrificed animal: Ogden, 2001, pp.169-170; Elderkin, Review: "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). p. 426.⁴¹³

⁴¹⁴ *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996, p. 854.

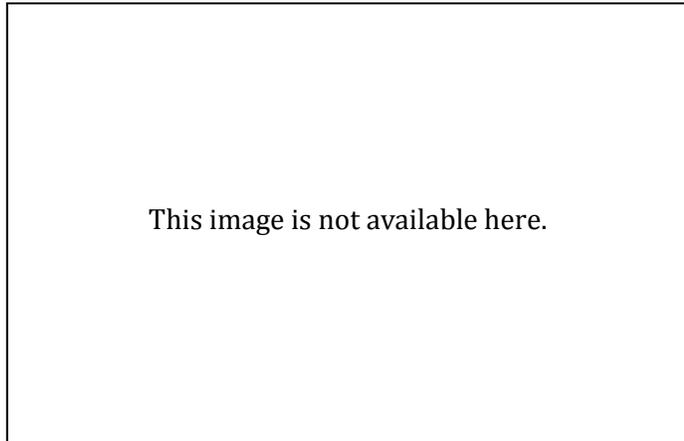
⁴¹⁵ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 39.

after getting up and before going to bed; before leaving the house; before and after a meal; and at the conventions of a symposium or the festivities of a city such as sacrifices. Wine libations had a vital part in sacrifices when they poured wine over the flames to finish the ritual. The slaughtering characterized hostilities whereas the *sponde* ended them.⁴¹⁶ *Spondae* were also poured on arrivals and departures of any kind⁴¹⁷ of which Burkert gives us an example of the embarkment on a voyage:

wine is mixed in kraters and then emptied into the sea from the stern of the ship, amid prayers and vows.⁴¹⁸

Another formulaic departure of an hoplite, a soldier, for war often depicted on Attic vase-paintings in Classical Athens, offer a reconstruction of the possible set procedure of a *spondé*.

An old man and a woman are with him. [an hoplite] The woman is holding a medium-sized pot and a *φιάλη* (*phiale*), a bowl, and she is pouring wine in the shallow cup while praying.⁴¹⁹



The commonplace scene of a departure of the soldier testifies the link that should have existed

between the group, the gods, the house, and the act.⁴²⁰ It also verifies its ubiquitous relation to daily actions allowing in this way its detection in the play-texts.

Sponde was mainly associated with mixed wine, three parts water to one of wine just as the Greeks drank it.⁴²¹ The other liquids were honey, oil, milk and water,⁴²² Zaidman mentions oil too,⁴²³ which could be used depending on the occasion.

⁴¹⁶ Burkert, 1987, p. 71.

⁴¹⁷ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 39.

⁴¹⁸ Burkert, 1987, p. 71.

⁴¹⁹ Garland, 1994, p. 17.

⁴²⁰ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996, p. 854.

⁴²¹ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40.

⁴²² Burkert, 1987, p. 70.

⁴²³ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40.

The pouring of the *spondae* was controlled, meaning that there was a quantity for the gods while the participant(s) shared the remaining of it by drinking one after the other.⁴²⁴ With this offering to the gods and sharing among the mortals, the members of a group strengthened the bonds among them.

Χοές (Choés)

The most detailed source of a *choê* is in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*⁴²⁵ and the invocation/necromancy Odysseus performed to conjure up the dead.⁴²⁶ The word *choe* derives from the verb *χαίειν*, which means "pour in quantity". In contrast to the *sponde*, *choés* were offered to the underworld gods, the dead and the heroes or nature deities such as the Muses, the Nymphs and the Furies.⁴²⁷ Since they often excluded wine, they were known as *νηφάλιες χοές* (*nephalies choes*), sober libations or wineless. They preferred water, oil, milk or honey instead. Occasionally, they were associated with *εναγίσματα* (*enagismata*), that is, offerings of consecrated food deposited on a deceased's tomb.⁴²⁸

In the offering of a *choé*, they dug a small hole in the ground, or a pot with holes was placed on the ground in order for the liquid to go straight to the dead or the chthonian god(s). Then, there was an invocation-prayer to the dead or the god(s) aiming at attracting their attention and, finally, the liquid was poured emptying all of it into the pit.

Drinking it was out of the question.⁴²⁹ As we read in *Choephoroi*, if the liquid was absorbed in the ground, it was a sign that the dead or the deity accepted their offering. This aspect is concisely defined by Burkert's quote of Lycian that "The souls ... are nourished by the libations."⁴³⁰

⁴²⁴ The same applies to Holy Communion in Orthodox Church. The remaining wine must be drunk by the priest.

⁴²⁵ Garland, 1994, p. 17.

⁴²⁶ Burkert, 1987, p. 71.

⁴²⁷ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996.

⁴²⁸ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40.

⁴²⁹ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40.

⁴³⁰ Burkert, 1987, p. 72.

Choes to the dead are similar to necromancy. In the first case they offered libations with a view to propitiate, soothe, in general to establish a bond between the quick and the dead. In the case of necromancy, they poured them to either invoke the infernal powers or gain control of their souls and summon them for various purposes.⁴³¹ *Choes* are closely related to the invocation of the dead in tragedies. The most famous one is the summoning up of the king Darius in the *Persians*. But the invocation of Agamemnon in *Choephoroi* or the women's outburst at the end of the *Trojan Women* is no less impressive. *Choes* were also applied when taking an oath and the practice of the curse or for more sly intentions, the binding spells, both vivid scenes in *Medea*. What is significant is that these offers signify an acknowledgement of the power of the dead.⁴³²

Libations and prayers seem to be omnipresent in all Greek rituals in their effort to communicate with the divine deities, the dead and the heroes for a variety of reasons through formulized steps. The successful outcome of the rite depended on the piety of the individuals; impiety is the reason that cancels the purpose of the rite in tragedy. Libations, similar to all ancient Greek rites, could not exist on their own. They all included the prayer in their had in common is the unquestionable tied with prayers. As such, their presence in the plots of tragedies is unquestionable.

It seems that the historical knowledge of the religion of ancient Athens is vital in reading the tragic text and detecting those rites that are difficult to perceive such as libations. When Aegeus takes his oath in *Medea* for instance, he must be pouring libations at the same time. But this information is not included in the text, therefore awareness could enrich the text-performance in many ways.

⁴³¹ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40; Ogden, 2001, p.169; Felton, D., Reviewed Work: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece by Sarah Iles Johnston, *Journal of Philology*, Vol. 122, No. 3, (2001), pp. 433-436.

⁴³² Burkert, 1987, p. 72.

2.E. PRAYERS

Prayers constituted an inseparable part of all ritual action as a mean to heighten or frame a message and beguile the recipient:

There is no important ritual without prayers, and no important prayer without a ritual.⁴³³

No ritual could exist without the inclusion of a prayer in its process, a fact that explains its recurrent usage from the beginning until the end in tragedies. This give-and-take becomes a prayer when a god as an 'interlocutor' is included in its context.

One interlocutor presses his claim on the other (whether it be recognition, hospitality or protection) by situating it in terms of mutually recognizable and valued information.⁴³⁴

Therefore, the fundamental purpose of prayer was, *and is*, to convey a message as persuasively as possible to the deities.

On several occasions, prayers were accompanied by the suitable hymns and chants⁴³⁵ because the ancient Greeks believed that the gods were not particularly happy to receive prayers alone,⁴³⁶ therefore they used additional measures to make them more benevolent towards the individual or the community. This attitude blends with Ogden and Pulleyn's statement that the function of a prayer is interconnected with that part of the reciprocal system related to *Charis*, another word which is not easily translated to the letter in English. Ogden gives a very clear explanation of the many-sided meaning of it.

On the one hand it expresses the feelings of gratitude felt by humans to the gods ... and on the other hand it means that "grace" or "bounty" which the gods give men. ... In worship the Greeks aimed at generating an atmosphere of reciprocal *charis* ... the gods, in turn, ... grant them

⁴³³ Burkert, 1987, p. 73.

⁴³⁴ Depew, Mary, "Reading Greek Prayers", *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (1997), p. 233.

⁴³⁵ Hymns and chants had other effects as well on human's spirit if we think of the paean intoned, before or after victory: Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 45.

⁴³⁶ However, Ogden agrees with Pulleyn when he suggests that hymns should be distinguished from prayers as they were designed "... by its words, music, dance-steps, and the beauty of its performers to please the god's ear and eye": Pulleyn, Simon, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997; Ogden, 2006, p. 119.

their *charis*, goodwill, which translated into wealth, health and power. ... it is an aesthetic offering to go with other material offerings (animal sacrifice, libations, incense, etc.) designed to secure divine goodwill.⁴³⁷

However, no matter what they do, they always fail in tragedies: the characters and the chorus pray almost for anything that is at stake on stage.

Pulleyn distinguishes two occasions for a prayer: first, when there is a situation that requires it such as plague, drought, before marching into battle, or before embarking on a ship; secondly, in a situation which might be fortuitous.⁴³⁸

Zaidman, on the other hand, following Hesiod's *Days and Labour* as a reference, supports that a prayer penetrated all aspects of life of Ancient Greeks. They prayed at every occasion placing every act of theirs under the protection of the gods:⁴³⁹ they prayed just before a sacrifice started; with a *spondae* at dawn to welcome the day; before a meal or a symposium along with a libation offering; or before a battle when the head of the army prayed to the gods for a successful outcome. Moreover, he mentions the Parliament, where they prayed before the orators made their speeches and then, cursed any law-breakers and traitors' of the motherland.

The function of the prayer therefore was polymorphic: to honour of the Gods and the ancestors, purify, propitiate, fraternize, heal, bring good luck, offer presents (votives) or request for favours.⁴⁴⁰ Therefore a prayer, although not a ritual by nature, was defined with religious, social, cultural and political dimensions, a significant remark because it explains its use in all tragedies where the chorus mainly turns to a prayer in an attempt to change the staged facts of the story.

A prayer could be a spoken or a written request. Connected closely with rituals are the inscribed prayers archaeologists excavated in sanctuaries.⁴⁴¹ Depew suggests that the reason for writing down prayers, dedications on some durable material and votive

⁴³⁷ Furley, William, "Prayers and Hymns", in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. Odgen Daniel, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, p. 119.

⁴³⁸ Furley, 2006, p. 128.

⁴³⁹ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 43.

⁴⁴⁰ Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). p. 229.

⁴⁴¹ Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). pp. 229-230, 251.

offerings was probably the attempt to perform an ongoing function.⁴⁴² However, such inscription was not complete

until people read out the inscription ... producing sounds which in turn produce meaning for their own ears and for anyone in earshot.⁴⁴³

A prayer therefore was heard by the divine, repeated by a passerby so that it was reenacted over and over again and read whenever the god was at his sanctuary, all these in an attempt perhaps to remind the gods of their request and for a successful communication.⁴⁴⁴

Whether now a prayer was fulfilled or not, depended on the piety of the individuals, a belief influenced by philosophy later when it recommended that one should pray and leave the god decide if assistance would be offered.⁴⁴⁵ If they had committed acts of impiety then they upset their relationship with the god and they could have prayed in vain, or it was possible to receive an answer unlike the one they wished. Unanswered or failed because of impiety is a common in tragedy as it will be illustrated in the next chapter. Zaidman states that the epics and the drama made use of more kinds of prayers such as hallowing, supplications, imprecatory or wishes.⁴⁴⁶ As it will become obvious in chapter two, the unanswered prayers leave the characters and the choruses' of the plays discussed disappointed and miserable.

The Structure of a Prayer

Prayers in literary sources give us valuable information on the standard format⁴⁴⁷ of this human-god communication.⁴⁴⁸ A Greek prayer is composed in a tripartite form:

⁴⁴² Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). pp. 229, 237, 239.

⁴⁴³ Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). p. 238.

⁴⁴⁴ She further proposes the belief developed by at least the late Classical period that gods could read.: Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997), pp. 240, 246.

⁴⁴⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 75.

⁴⁴⁶ Eteokles in Aeschylus' *Seven at Thebes*, (252-260); Thukydides, gives in detail the pray they said before the Athenian fleet sails for Sicily. When they said the usual prayers they made libations with golden and silver cups and sang a paen. They finish the libations and sailed away; another example is Aeschylus *Suppliants* and *Choephoraes*: Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, pp. 42-44.

⁴⁴⁷ Garland offers us a concise structure of the tripartite structure of a typical prayer: Garland, 1994, p. 75.

⁴⁴⁸ Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). p. 230.

the invocation, the entreaty, and the sanction,⁴⁴⁹ and it is often in this complete form in tragedy.

The aim of the invocation was to achieve the god's presence or attention. It began with the verb 'Hear' and the name of the deity,⁴⁵⁰ followed by the "second-names" (*epiclesis*) which invoked the specific attributes of the god(s) and finish with the reference of his or her favoured haunts or the places they would come from. The citation of the deity's full cultic title was crucial so as not to address the wrong one. That is why god was also offered the choice "With whatever name it pleases you to be called" in an effort to avoid any mistakes.⁴⁵¹

Oracles and prophets were regularly asked by states and individuals: "To which god(s)?" ... The answer was usually a combination of gods ... Then the worshipper went home and sacrificed and prayed to precisely this combination of powers, stating their names and attributes meticulously.⁴⁵²

The entreaty consisted of the arguments in which the religious person stated, or justified, the reasons why the god(s) should hear him. The establishment of a friendly, albeit strictly reciprocal basis of the request was essential for the outcome of the prayer. Therefore, concentrating on the "I give you so that you give me" they hoped to persuade the deity to return a favour to the human worshipper. This was organised by the worshipper in two ways: first by narrating the gods' mythical deeds in the past; then by recalling of previous sacrifices, "his earlier proofs of friendship" such as the times when the god helped him and what the human did to please him;⁴⁵³ and finally by pinpointing to a present lavish donation, or promises of future offerings in order to encourage the addressee to dispense some of his *charis*. In other words, the petitioner jogged the deity's memory by reminding him the favours the latter had done in the past and cited the services the individual had performed or would perform to honour the deity in the future.

⁴⁴⁹ Zielinski, Thaddeus, *The Religion of Ancient Greece*, Trsl: George Rapall Noyes, London: Humbphrey Milford, 1926, p. 135.

⁴⁵⁰ Burkert, 1987, p. 74.

⁴⁵¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 74, quotes Plato, and Aescylus' Agamemnon. (FN 17, p. 376)

⁴⁵² Furley, 2006, 2006, p. 12.

⁴⁵³ Burkert, 1987, p. 74.

The prayer ended with the request itself, uttered clearly and concisely, and was usually accompanied by further future promises, and a vow.

Attitude

A prayer required an attitude proper depending on the god. To appeal to the Olympians, the ancient Greek stood looking upwards with both arms outstretched to the sky and the palms upturned or posing a libation-bowl. When addressing the gods of the sea, the arms and the hands were extended out to the sea. They also extended their hands towards a cult image in a friendly greeting, a *χαίρε* (*chaire*) or a kiss by raising their hands to their lips the cult image.⁴⁵⁴ A prayer may also included supplicatory gestures. Ogden mentions vase paintings in which

petitioners touching Hermes on the chin as they supplicate him to hear their prayers and perhaps pass it on to the right address on Olympus⁴⁵⁵

When addressed a Chthonic god, one prostrated on the ground⁴⁵⁶ or rather kneel or sit on the ground and hammered the earth with their fists.⁴⁵⁷

Whether fulfilled or not, the petitioner had to materialise any promises made, a point Clytaemnestra makes when she complains to the Erinyes in *Eumenides* of their failed *charis*. Especially in the case of fulfilment, its execution was an irrevocable duty,⁴⁵⁸ which often took the form of a votive offering.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴ Burkert, 1987, p. 75; Fairbanks, "Attitudes of Worship in Greece", (1897), pp. 98-111.

⁴⁵⁵ Furley, 2006, p. 127.

⁴⁵⁶ Garland, 1994, p.75.

⁴⁵⁷ It is also dubious this physical expression by the poets was replaced by the inscribed leads from the fifth century the latest, according to Burkert. This posture was used to invoke the dead and secondly it is not possible to be substituted by the curse which had an entirely different purpose, usually sinister desires: Burkert, 1987, p. 75.

⁴⁵⁸ Burkert, 1987, p. 69.

⁴⁵⁹ It is a common practiced today to offer a votive to the gods.

Votive Offerings, *Αναθήματα (Anathemata)*

Votive offerings were the visualisation of verbal prayers, *εύχεσθαι*, which enabled the prayer to exist even more whenever a human or a divine visitor saw it when at the sanctuary⁴⁶⁰ just like the inscriptions.

could be as small as a figurine or as big as a temple. At the lower end of the scale a humble fisherman would offer a portion of his catch to the gods. At the top end it was customary for a state to make a lavish offering after a victory, which usually consisted of a tithe (known as a *dekate*) from the spoils of battle.⁴⁶¹

As excavations have brought to light, votive statues could range in size from tiny figurines to over-life size figures.⁴⁶² Votive reliefs typically represented both or either devotees who usually carried an animal for a sacrifice and the god(s) accepting them, easily understood by his or her epiphany gesture. Large statues in limestone, marble or bronze probably expressed a special and lasting bond with the relevant deity.⁴⁶³ The most extravagant ones were occasioned by war such as a fixed proportion of the booty won in war, primarily weapons, Or the most renowned artistic monuments of Greece of the Nike of Olympia⁴⁶⁴ and the Nike of Samothrace,⁴⁶⁵ the Winged Victory of Samothrace.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁰ Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). pp. 247-8.

⁴⁶¹ Garland, 1994, p. 16.

⁴⁶² Garland, 1994, p. 63.

⁴⁶³ Burkert, 1987, p. 93.

⁴⁶⁴ The statue depicts a winged woman. An inscription on the base states that the statue was dedicated by the Messenians and the Naupactians for their victory against the Lacedaemonians (Spartans), in the Archidamian (Peloponnesian) war probably in 421 B.C. It is the work of the sculptor Paionios of Mende in Chalkidiki, who also made the acroteria of the Temple of Zeus. Nike, cut from Parian marble, has a height of 2,115m, but with the tips of her (now broken) wings would have reached 3m. In its completed form, the monument with its triangular base (8,81m high) would have stood at the height of 10,92m. giving the impression of Nike triumphantly descending from Olympos. It dates from 421 B.C: Available from <<http://www.olympia-greece.org/museum.html>> [Retrieved February 2015]

⁴⁶⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 69.

⁴⁶⁶ This monument was probably an ex-voto offered by the people of Rhodes in commemoration of a naval victory in the early second century BC.: Available from <<http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/winged-victory-samothrace>> [Retrieved February 2015]

In general, an individual or the state made votive offerings in anticipation or in exchange for a divine favour,⁴⁶⁷ preserving the lines, according to Depew, of human-divine communication open.⁴⁶⁸

Hence the vow was any visible gift, a thing to witness someone's private devotion to a god. Given the reciprocal nature of the relationship with the divine, the giver would expect a gracious present in return.⁴⁶⁹

In other words, they offered their votive to show their deep willing to please for what they were or would be granted or to ensure that what had happened in the past would happen again in the future.⁴⁷⁰

The votive dedications in the form of figurines and statues are very important for our understanding the motivations behind votive art:

a request for intervention; an offering of thanks for requests granted; a manifestation of initiation; a commemoration of some rite of passage. It is likely that statues were dedicated for any or for all of these reasons.⁴⁷¹

The power of the prayer was so strong that not even the famous Sophists in fifth-century Athens were successful in undermining the traditional Olympian deities in the mind of the populace.⁴⁷² The Greeks

never stopped sacrificing or processing to temples, and prayers and hymns were an integral part of sacrifice and processions.⁴⁷³

Prayers were omnipresent in all rituals, as they are evident in tragedy. The chorus in tragedies prays continuously, or includes features of a prayer in almost all the stasima. Each prayer often addresses a different god and wishes for a happier outcome. Their weakness to change the flow of the events is expressed in their ineffectual calling for divine intervention.

⁴⁶⁷ Garland, 1994, p. 16.

⁴⁶⁸ Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers", (1997). p. 250.

⁴⁶⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 93.

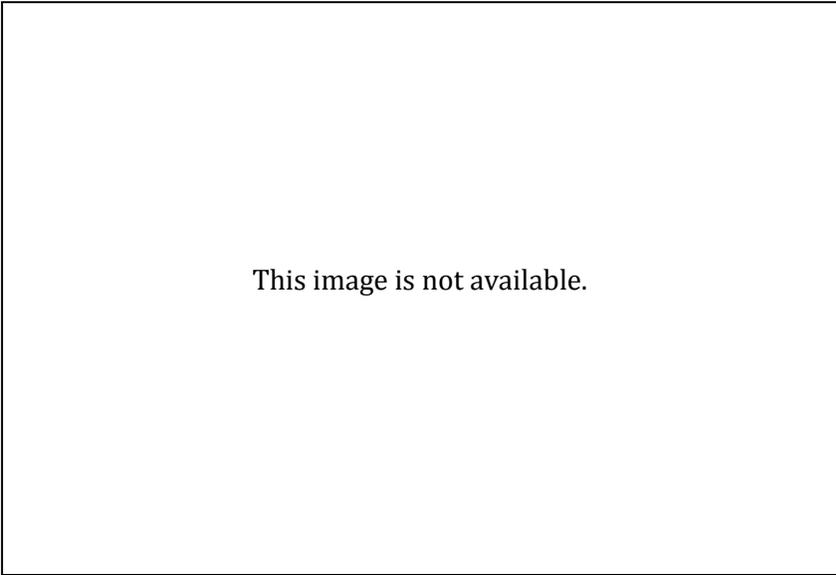
⁴⁷⁰ Garland, 1994, p. 16.

⁴⁷¹ Connelly, Breton, Joan, "Standing before One's God: Votive Sculpture and the Cypriot Religious Tradition", *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 52, No. 4, From Ruins to Riches: CAARI on Cyprus. (1989), p. 212.

⁴⁷² Furley, 2006, p. 117.

⁴⁷³ Furley, 2006, p. 117.

However, they were not only used for open expressions of devotions. They also performed a darker purpose in curses.



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2.F. *ἸΚΕΣΙΑ (HIKESIA), ἸΚΕΤΕΙΑ (HIKETEIA), SUPPLICATION*⁴⁷⁴

Gould carried out the first detailed study on *Hiketeia*, the request for help when threatened,⁴⁷⁵ which in tragedy either fails or it is manipulated for the self-served interests. Researching the outstanding presence of *Hiketeia* as a social and religious institution from Homer to Aeschylus and Euripides' time both in the Greek literature and the historical records, Gould was surprised to see it totally ignored, a remark Buxton also repeats in 2000. He was aware that detailed descriptions are not common in Greek literature, but he proves that there is enough evidence to form a satisfactory description of the ritual, including tragedy.⁴⁷⁶

The calling of supplication as a 'ritual' supported by Gould and Burkert meets Naiden's ambiguity who considers it as a quasilegal practice because

The Assembly became the chief supplicandus and wrote the rules and issued the instructions that formalised supplication⁴⁷⁷

First Gould and then Mikalson⁴⁷⁸ agree that *Hiketeia* has attracted attention for study because of its extension into the political and social institution of *ασυλία*,⁴⁷⁹ (*asylia*), asylum, immunity. In contradistinction, Buxton correctly believes that the concept of the word 'asylum' should not be confused with the specific form of protection afforded by the sanctuaries. He explains that *asylia*⁴⁸⁰ was to guarantee safe contact to those who travelled around crossing city-state boundaries to act in the interest of their home towns.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁴ For a complete treatment on Supplication see also Naiden, S., Fred., *Ancient Supplication*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁴⁷⁵ Gould, John, "HIKETEIA", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 93, (1973), pp. 74-103.

⁴⁷⁶ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). pp. 74-75, 85; Naiden, 2006, p. 159.

⁴⁷⁷ Naiden, 2006, pp. 179, 282.

⁴⁷⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 69.

⁴⁷⁹ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). p. 77.

⁴⁸⁰ "literary translated: 'prohibition against stealing'": Buxton, Richard, *Oxford Reading in Greek Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 138.

⁴⁸¹ Such people were profited envoys, negotiators, artists and athletes, who found themselves outside their local justice. Such protection was effective when it was either previously agreed between the Greek city-states or formally granted to individuals as an honour: Buxton, 2000, p. 158.

The earliest example of Thetis' supplication of Zeus in *Iliad*, and then Aeschylus and Euripides drove Gould to make a distinction between a 'complete' and a 'figurative' supplication, the latter consisting of articulating the wish for protection. He then went on to offer the division of a complete *hiketeia* between a supplication of a person who was in danger, and falls at somebody's feet or grasps an altar of a statue of a god, a common motif in tragedy which is often reported before its enactment on stage, and the plea of a ξένος, (*xenos*), a stranger, an outsider or a guest, who wished to blend in a social group.⁴⁸² The fourth type concerns the request for political rights.

According to Naiden supplication consists of a ceremony that is followed by an act of judgement. The ceremony has four steps:

Supplication falls into two parts: a ceremony and an act of judgement sometimes followed by a pledge ... 3 parts, "approach, gesture, request and judgement and possible pledge comprise the fourth step"⁴⁸³

i. Supplication to a Human being

The first case that Gould describes is the face-to-face supplication. The suppliant displayed total self-abasement through a series of gestures and procedures that aimed to stress his defenselessness and lack of any claim to τιμή (*timi*), honour: the suppliant sat or kneeled in front of the authority, embraced his knees with one hand and touched the chin with the other. Sometimes, he grasped the hands and kissed them.⁴⁸⁴ Another significant aspect is the look of bereavement a suppliant should have had that probably met the requirements of humiliation and critical condition. According to Naiden this has not attracted scholarly attention as he states that "Few scholars notice the prostration and the use of mourning clothes".⁴⁸⁵ This awareness enables one to distinguish between the practice of supplication proper and its perversion on stage in the presence of Helen in the *Trojan Women* for example whose appearance is exquisite.

⁴⁸² Gould's pioneering article fails to distinguish clearly the behaviour of the supplicated towards a suppliant and a ξένος, a foreigner.

⁴⁸³ Naiden, 2006, p. 281: Naiden mentions that Gould's view the fourth step as the occasion of automatic success whereas Burkert suggests that it was unpredictable.

⁴⁸⁴ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). p. 76.

⁴⁸⁵ Naiden, 2006, p. 282.

This physical contact in *hiketeia* obtruded a response in case of unwillingness. The supplicantus then, help the beseecher to get up as a gesture of approval. The physical contact was so important that once the physical contact was lost or broken, the rite lost its full binding force. The social significance of supplication is usually fully enacted in tragedy after the characters or the choruses declare their intentions with the verb “I beg you”, although the purpose is twisted. Understanding further the social significance of the physical contact raises our awareness for the effort the suppliants make to touch the supplicantus, who often tries to avoid it. This is self-evident in Orestes’ effort to avoid his mother touch in the *Choephoroi*, or Menelaus distance from Helen in the *Trojan Women*.

The second kind of plea was the verbal act of supplication which Gould defines as ‘figurative’ explaining that it was

adopted either where the situation requires no more than an intensification of the language of diplomatic appeal ... or where circumstances rule out or make unwise the completed ritual.⁴⁸⁶

The suppliant used language that reflected humiliation upon the speaker while he demonstrated excessive recognition to the *timi*, honour, of the person addressed. It is given that ‘figurative’ *hiketeia* had not the full significance of the act because of the lack of physical contact, therefore it could raise different responses of the person supplicated, without necessarily failing.⁴⁸⁷

ii. Supplication by Contact with an Altar, a deities Statue

The peaceful and quiet feeling one gets when visiting Greek sanctuaries today is not exactly the situation that describe those days. These sacred precincts were obliged to deal with crisis whenever occurred.⁴⁸⁸ One of these crises was the rite of *Hiketeia*. The sanctuary qualified the rite with holiness, and its violation could attract the divine retribution in life, and a severe punishment in tragedy.

⁴⁸⁶ Gould, “HIKETEIA”, (1973). p. 77.

⁴⁸⁷ Naiden, 2006, p. 171.

⁴⁸⁸ Buxton, 2000, p. 179.

Supplication could be in force at any place the presence of the gods was acknowledged, such as the hearths of private houses, images of gods and altars in civic institutions. However, as long as people had time to choose they preferred the sanctuaries where the certain presence of other people around increased their physical safety.⁴⁸⁹

People turn to sanctuaries for protection for many reasons: such as victims of war and civil war, personalities in political life, or criminals who tried to avoid punishment. Interesting are the incidents connected with daily life:

girls turned to sanctuaries for help in order to escape a forced marriage, a woman who became a suppliant because she had left her husband and wanted to reach her lover, orphans were placed under the protection of a guardian by means of action taken by a sanctuary, members of a family who had been cast out tried to bring about a reconciliation with their relatives in the same way, diplomatic missions⁴⁹⁰

However, it was not enough to enter a sanctuary in order to feel protected by immunity. In Athens, the *hiketeia* at altars was set in motion through a fixed set of four steps.

the approach to the altar, the use of a bough or of contact with the altar, the presentation of a request to the community, and a decision by a king or by the community.⁴⁹¹

The individual had to appear openly, first by giving his name⁴⁹² and then by setting forth the reasons for his coming. Anonymity made the person unaccepted in a sacred land. Only then the sanctuary was duty-bound to work towards a solution of the suppliant's problem. This is literally what takes place in *Eumenides*, and another which confirms the need of the historical awareness of Greek religion when staging the ancient Greek tragedy.

Then the person in need kneeled in front of the altar or statue of a deity holding the supplicant branch, a freshly broken-off twig with a strand of wool, the *iketiria*, put his

⁴⁸⁹ Buxton, 2000, p. 169.

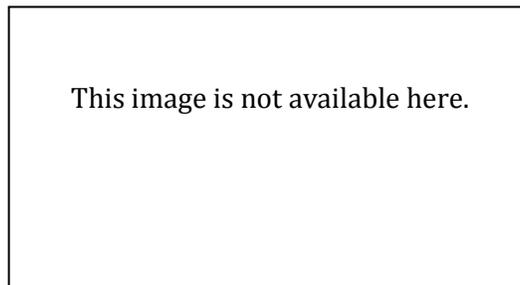
⁴⁹⁰ Buxton, 2000, pp. 155-6, 160.

⁴⁹¹ Naiden, 2006, p. 179.

⁴⁹² Buxton uses as an example the Amphiaraion at Oropos where one had to hang a wooden tablet with his name clearly visible at the entrance. Buxton, 2000, p. 159.

hands around it or held it with one hand whereas the other was stretched towards the hunter with the palm facing up. From that moment on, Buxton notes, “he was no longer an ordinary visitor to the sanctuary”.⁴⁹³ The right of a fugitive to ask for mercy was sacred, especially at an altar where sacrifices were performed.⁴⁹⁴ The *hiketis*, suppliant, immediately became the gods’ “property” and the priests were obliged to help, protect and guard that person:

The altar is an ‘unbreakable shield, stronger than a fortification tower’.⁴⁹⁵



Cassandra supplicating Ajax to one side and Athena to the other. Bartl 57.840, courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom. ⁴⁹⁶

Suppliants must have known this because there was a code of behaviour to exert pressure on hesitant priests. Konstan in his review of Naiden’s book, adds that suppliants usually bolstered their case with reasons. They:

Appeal to reciprocity, threats, kinship ties, fairness or pity, this last a recourse more common among women and children than adult males.⁴⁹⁷

Along with one’s claim for compassion and expressions of humility they threatened to commit suicide on the spot in desperation, a terrible disgrace for the priest himself and the pollution the sanctuary in his care would suffer in such a case.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹³ Buxton, 2000, p. 159.

⁴⁹⁴ Burkert, 1985, p. 59.

⁴⁹⁵ Mikalson, 1991, p. 76.

⁴⁹⁶ Naiden, S., Fred, *Ancient Supplication*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 49.

⁴⁹⁷ Konstan, David, “Review: *Ancient Supplication* by F.S. Naiden”, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006”.

⁴⁹⁸ It was a particularly difficult obligation to handle suppliants for the priests often hovered between their duty in the sanctuary and the fact that they would have to jeopardize the reputation and safety of the sanctuary and the city: “The demand for entry ... could bring about retaliatory measures from the political opponents and expose the sanctuary and/or the town to which it belonged to great danger.”: Buxton, 2000, p. 160; On the other, to cope with requests that could be unjust, impracticable, impious and so forth. This responsibility of the priests was in fact the weak point in the system of sacred

The suppliants occasionally held the image or altar so tightly that it was difficult for someone to detach him or her. According to the religious beliefs of the fifth century Athenians, any attempt to violate this act was unreasonable, unjust and un-Greek.⁴⁹⁹ It was also considered as a direct attack against the power of the gods whose sanctuary or altar was used for protection; or more generally to the power of Zeus *Ἰκέσιος*.⁵⁰⁰ This *hubristic* behaviour was one of the greatest of insults that dishonoured the gods, caused pollution⁵⁰¹ and could draw the god's harsh punishment, which was not always analogous to the insult as we learn in *Agamemnon* about the fate of the Greeks' on their journey back home.

natural catastrophes and military defeats were directly linked to preceding mistreatment of suppliants.⁵⁰²

There were of course cases where this physical contact was tried to be circumvented by a diversity of non-violent ploys so that the removal construed as 'voluntary'.⁵⁰³ Yet, persuasive ways were not the only cases. Ironically, the right of supplication was not violated if the individual left the sanctuary of his own free will, even if blackmailed, threatened, tricked or starved to death. Buxton's remark is more vividly descriptive than Gould's for those cases:

It is blood-curdling to read how suppliants were forcibly driven out of sanctuaries, starved to death in sanctuaries, massacred or burnt to death ... as we can vividly see on vase paintings.⁵⁰⁴

These bitter lessons were the reasons people took refuge to busy sanctuaries. Violent incidents of breaking the rules⁵⁰⁵ though were probably not the rule. After rational elaboration, Buxton states that it was reasonable for the historians to record only

immunity: "... one might easily imagine the social and legal chaos if acceptance of these requests had been automatic. In general, acts of supplication usually provoked crises of indecision and inventions to solve the problem rather than resorting to force. This process could last as far as many days. For this reason, among many others, the infrastructure of the sanctuaries were planned in such a way as to host many people for a long time.": Mikalson, 1991, p. 72.

⁴⁹⁹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 72.

⁵⁰⁰ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). p. 78.

⁵⁰¹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 72.

⁵⁰² Buxton, 2000, p. 162.

⁵⁰³ Gould quotes Herodotus' description of the Corcyrean children in "HIKETEIA" (1973), p. 82.

⁵⁰⁴ Buxton, 2000, p. 160.

⁵⁰⁵ More examples of violent removal of an altar are given in Gould's article in "HIKETEIA" (1973), p. 83.

examples where the law of sacred immunity was disregarded in order to express their disapproval.⁵⁰⁶

iii. Supplication of a *Ξένος (xenos)*, a foreigner, a visitor

Solidarity and unity was all-important of an ancient community. The awareness of the status and position of each of its member functioned as a safety net, otherwise everything was at stake without the protection of their community, families or friends.⁵⁰⁷ Therefore a stranger, being without a role, namely without rights and obligations, had to be acknowledged and accepted by a group in order to 'survive'.

The treatment of guests and hosts or foreign visitors allowed the acceptance of an outsider who

has temporarily opted out of the 'contest system' of social relationships that characterises normal behaviour between non-*φίλοι*.⁵⁰⁸

and wished to blend in a social group.⁵⁰⁹ The acceptance within a group turned the two parties into 'spiritual kins', a bond that became hereditary Gould notes.⁵¹⁰ Thus the *xenia*, based on the guest/host relationship, was religiously institutionalized.⁵¹¹

Although Naiden suggests that the *supplicandus* was free to accept or reject the beseeching,⁵¹² Gould supports otherwise:

The rules of *ξενία* are all but absolute: hospitality must be offered and must be accepted, and once accepted a permanent tie is created.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁶ Buxton, 2000, p. 160.

⁵⁰⁷ "a *xenos* may be either a foreign visitor or ... a citizen of a foreign country with who has established a special friendship through exchanges of gifts, mutual hospitality, and a shared dinner table": Mikalson, 1991, p. 77.

⁵⁰⁸ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). p. 105.

⁵⁰⁹ Gould's pioneering article fails to distinguish clearly the behaviour of the supplicated towards a suppliant and a *ξένος*.

⁵¹⁰ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). pp. 92-3.

⁵¹¹ Mikalson mentions Aeschines reference to Demosthenes who in the fourth century could be charged with irreverence for having tortured and killed a man with whom he had established this tie: Mikalson, 1991, p. 77.

⁵¹² Only when the rejection was supported by reasons, the person who denied a supplication was not punished, even if it was considered a ritual obligation: Konstan, "Review: *Ancient Supplication*" (2006).

⁵¹³ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). p. 91.

Knowing exactly what actions are required in each area of life, it enhanced the sense of control for the things that *had to be* done.

First, the visitor waited at the threshold until he was invited inside the house,⁵¹⁴ just as Orestes was invited in by Clytaemnesstra in *Choephoroi*. Then, the host had to take the suppliant by the hand and raise him, if he was kneeled, to express his acceptance in public. With this gesture he bestowed the requester's lost honour. The following step was to sit stranger next to him. By accepting that, the stranger expressed his consent to this relationship. Then he washed his hands from a bowl before he was offered food and drink. Eating and drinking created a further ritual bond of solidarity between the participants. At the end, they poured libations and then it was the time to talk. In other words, the acts of sitting, eating, drinking and pouring libations were rites of the incorporation of an outsider and the creation of a bond of solidarity.⁵¹⁵ It seems that any kind of disruption, such as a reluctance to follow the steps, could destroy the result of supplication.⁵¹⁶

Although both entreats, *xenia* and supplication, are in essence the same, meaning the request for protection, they have different codes of behavior. Gould noticed that:

In *ξενία* the 'insider' extends his protection, and the honour that such protection conveys, to the stranger. In supplication, the 'outside' enforces a claim to the same honour and protection by a ritual procedure which enacts the total abdication of any such claim.⁵¹⁷

A second difference is the sense of piety. In cases of asylum or supplication, the beseecher was considered as a property of god, therefore when it was transgressed

⁵¹⁴ Pitt-River's distinction of the Andalusian 'honourable' beggar resembles the distant approach of the Homeric *ξένος* (*kseinos*), stranger, "which expresses itself by his standing in the portico of the palace, waiting to be invited to share hospitality". For a more detailed analysis see Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). pp. 88-89.

⁵¹⁵ Gould, "HIKETEIA" (1973). p.79.

⁵¹⁶ The supplicandus had to follow the steps and the supplicated had to respond in a specific way and give his suppliant his disclaimed honour back in order to convert him into a guest. Gould offers the paradigm of Priam reacting negatively to Achilles steps when he went as a suppliant to ask for Hector's body. All the examples of rejected or ignored supplication Gould uses to illustrate this view are from Iliad and Odyssey and they refer to the breaking physical contact or the use of 'figurative' supplication: Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). pp. 79-80.

⁵¹⁷ Gould, "HIKETEIA", (1973). p. 94.

the god was immediately insulted and could act upon it. In contrast the gods in *xenia* were only implicated once they were assigned the protection of a *xenos*.⁵¹⁸

iv. Requesting political rights

The final supplication concerns the case of outcasts such as public slaves, ambassadors, political exiles and so on⁵¹⁹ who were left without any rights outside their own cities.⁵²⁰ The Athenians “prided themselves on the reception and protection of foreign visitors”,⁵²¹ especially when they were victims of injustice in their own countries, an attitude first expressed in tragedy.⁵²²

Several fourth-century inscriptions show that the supplication was made either in the Council or in the Assembly,⁵²³ a practice used by Aeschylus in his *Suppliants* in which the Argive king does not take a decision without consulting his Assembly.⁵²⁴

Zelnick-Abramovitz denotes that supplication must have already been elaborated⁵²⁵ in the 5th century B.C. since it was applied in the classical and Hellenistic periods in institutionalised forms.⁵²⁶ After the fourth century, though there is lack of evidence.⁵²⁷

⁵¹⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 192-3.

⁵¹⁹ Zelnick-Abramovitz, Rachel, “Supplication and Request: Application by Foreigners to the Athenian Polis”, *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series, Vol. 51, Fasc. 5 (1998), p. 554.

⁵²⁰ Despite the lack of detailed sources, the inference from the large number of Attic inscriptions refer to the two methods used by foreigners to apply to the polis were the request (*αίτηση*) and the supplication (*ικετεία*): Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Supplication and Request”, (1998), p. 554.

⁵²¹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 77.

⁵²² For the request, they could either apply themselves or gain access to the polis' institutions with the help of a citizen, who ensured their safety. The Athenian mediators either recommended them in their presence or represented their case in their absence⁵²² and, as in all forms of application, the council voted in the form of a *psephisma*⁵²², after the supplicated performed the rite according to the rules. In this way they received privileges and/or asylum if they were in danger. The relationship between the mediators and the foreigners seems to have been based on reciprocal relations: Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Supplication and Request”, (1998). pp. 560, 564, 571.

⁵²³ “According to Aristotle’s *Constitution of the Athenians*, Assembly had regular meetings to deal with supplications. At that meeting, he explains, whoever so wishes lays the bough of supplication and addresses the demos on any matter he desires, private or public”: Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Supplication and Request”, (1998). p. 563; “Several inscriptions ... show how these supplications proceeded”: Naiden, 2006, p. 173.

⁵²⁴ Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Supplication and Request”, (1998). p. 572.

⁵²⁵ “By procedure I mean the methods used by foreigners to approach the political institutions, the rules established to allow foreigners to request privileges and the form of the decision made in their case”: Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Supplication and Request”, (1998). p. 554.

In tragedy, supplication abounds in both its forms, 'complete' and 'figurative'. The chorus and the characters perform the rite whenever there is a request at issue or their safety is a risk. Once again though, as it is customary in tragedy, it fails, it is not listened or it is manipulated for the benefit of the interest of the characters.

⁵²⁶ Zelnick-Abramovitz, "Supplication and Request", (1998). p. 571; Reports show that it was really put into practice far into the period of Roman rule in Greece: Buxton, 2000, p.163; Mikalson, 1991, p. 73; In Naiden's view, the ceremonial part was also perdurable and he justify his statement with examples: Naiden, 2006, p. 283.

⁵²⁷ Especially on applications made by political exiles, probably due to the political events that put an end to the possibility of application to Athens by political exiles: Zelnick-Abramovitz, "Supplication and Request", (1998). p. 572.

2.G. OATH

Oath had both religious root⁵²⁸ and it was partly connected with what was fair and right.

An oath ... was a statement (assertory) or promise (promissory) strengthened by the invocation of a god as a witness and often with the addition of a curse in case of perjury.⁵²⁹

An oath was taken in many cases but we are interested in those that were explored in tragedy. Therefore, we focus on the oath that was used to seal friendly relationships between individuals and to affirm the relationship between two lovers. Friends took oaths only when the possibility of a betrayal could be at stake.⁵³⁰ The criterion of an oath in many cases was the level of trust and according to the case it acted as a deterrent.⁵³¹ The most common use of the oath, to promise to tell the truth in lawcourts⁵³² to safeguard that one was telling truth.⁵³³

In an effort to increase its solemnity⁵³⁴ or by an act of sympathetic magic⁵³⁵ one could take an oath

in a sacred place, or in the presence of a divine image, or that the swearer by in physical contact with a sacred or cherished object, or that

⁵²⁸ Hesiod's *Days and Labours* presents Oath as a personified entity, the son of *Eridas* (Dispute). He was a daemon who punished the perjurer in cooperation with the *Furies*.

⁵²⁹ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996.

⁵³⁰ Sommerstein, Alan H. and Fletcher, Judith, eds., *Horkos: The Oath in Greek Society*, Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2007, p. 3.

⁵³¹ For example, the oath for a treaty or alliance in an interstate conflict secured further engagement in hostile acts, not to new or future commitments: Caravan, Edquin, "Oath and Contract", in *Horkos*, ed. by Sommerstein and Fletcher, 2007, pp. 75-76.

⁵³² The jurors, the magistrates, the litigants, as well as any officials in a public office swore to sanction their duties ... The witnesses though did not swear perhaps because first they could be prosecuted for lying, and secondly they knew that a third conviction for giving false testimony equalled to the loss of their citizen rights. However, women and slave gave oaths in private because they did not have any rights to lose: Sommerstein and Fletcher, eds., 2007, pp. 3-4;; The only exception in which everybody took an oath was at trials for murder because it was vital to find out the truth: Mikalson, 1983, p.35.

⁵³³ Also, to secure major or minor financial and private contracts between individuals; to seal international or interstate treaties and alliances in which case representatives of each stage often used their names in written records; to acquire the Athenian citizenship: Kells, "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", (1961), fn.14, p.171.

⁵³⁴ Mikalson, 1983, p.37

⁵³⁵ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996.

(s)he perform an action that symbolizes the destruction that will be the wages of perjury.⁵³⁶

Like all rituals, the oath was accompanied by a libation, a *sponde* of unmixed wine, possibly because it served a chthonic purpose as it is hinted in Homer.⁵³⁷ It was *all* poured in the soil; nothing was drunk, whereas at the end they broke the cup on the ground probably as a way of sealing the relation with the powers who would punish the one who broke it.⁵³⁸ As it is already observed, this process is not reported in tragedy, but we may assume it was likely enacted for matters of theatricality in cases of a complete oath on stage.

The Structure of an Oath

According to Callaway an oath, like a prayer and a supplication, was composed of four parts.⁵³⁹ First there was the *Invitation* or the *Calling* of an oath, by which a person either asked or requested an oath. Then, it was the *Call to witness* or *Invocation* by which a deity, force or a significant object⁵⁴⁰ was called to act as a witness of the promise or the assertion and guarantee it. Burkert distinguishes the invoked gods into chthonic, earthly or heavenly powers.⁵⁴¹ The third part of an oath, the *Execution*, describes the actual swearing of the oath. It could be *assertory* by which the individual made a statement about the present or past to show that he or she is telling the truth, and the *promissory* oath that defines future acts.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁶ Sommerstein and Fletcher, eds., 2007, p. 2.

⁵³⁷ Elderkin, (1945), p. 427.

⁵³⁸ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 40; Elderkin, "The Banquet-Libations", (1945). p. 427.

⁵³⁹ Callaway, Cathy, "Perjury and the Unsworn Oath", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), Vol. 123, (1993), pp. 15-16.

⁵⁴⁰ Achilles swears by a sceptre at Illiad: Callaway, "Perjury and the Unsworn Oath" (1993). p. 18.

⁵⁴¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 251; Such a triad of gods for example, could be Helios or Zeus for the sky, Gaia or Demetra for earth and Poseidon for the sea. However, the gods called to witness an oath were numerous, depending on the local cult, and they could be related in sundry ways to the actions, the group or the activity taking place. It is also stated that on casual oaths Greek women often appealed to Artemis and the men to Zeus or Heracles: *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 1996, p.1057;

⁵⁴² Sommerstein and Fletcher, eds., 2007, p. 2.

The last step, the *Conclusion* finished the oath with a preventive curse that specified the punishments they would suffer in case they violated their promise.⁵⁴³ Every oath implied a curse initiated in the beginning with the performative verb 'I swear', but they used the publicly accepted curse for additional safety to secure its performance.⁵⁴⁴ Historical inscriptions and other texts sometimes attest an oath with rewards instead for those who kept their promise.

Blessings are usually concomitant to curses, and seem to function as a balance.⁵⁴⁵

On the whole, an oath was the means to guarantee the truth of a statement or a promise and its validity depended on the execution of all the steps in life only. In tragedy the presence of either of the last two elements was a confirmation of it⁵⁴⁶ without losing any of its validity or seriousness.

Similar to other rites, oath was also dramatized. A private oath was possibly marked with a handshake, where in public or formal oaths people lifted the right hand or both. They could as well touch a sacred item such as the altar or a statue to reinforce it. This is a gesture that could be implied in the performance of tragedy, to accord for example the manlike temperament of Medea. Or, vice versa, the awareness of the social significance of the rite could inspire its staging.

Gods also took oaths, but in order to be valid they had to swear by the Styx and call upon the divinities in Tartarus as witnesses.⁵⁴⁷ This inviolable Stygian oath was the only way to get the truth out of a god as described in Hesiod. In case of perjury, they remained breathless for a year and if they broke it they remained outcast from the councils and feasts of the gods for nine years.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴³ Mikalson, 1983, pp. 35-36: An example of a fully elaborated curse is reported on page 35. It is the oath the Athenians with other members of the international council swore in the early 6th century concerning the sacred land of Delphi. The oath was still effective in the mid-fourth century B.C.

⁵⁴⁴ Sommerstein and Fletcher, eds., 2007, p. 2

⁵⁴⁵ Fletcher, Judith, *Performing Oaths in Classical Greek Drama*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁴⁶ Callaway, "Perjury and the Unsworn Oath", (1993), p. 17.

⁵⁴⁷ Elderkin, "The Banquet-Libations of the Greeks" (1945). p. 427.

⁵⁴⁸ Callaway, "Perjury and the Unsworn Oath", (1993). pp. 20-21.

As far as the breaking of an oath, there is usually confusion between an oath-breaker and a perjurer.⁵⁴⁹ It seems though that if they unintentionally failed to keep their promise then they committed perjury, in which case they were not oath-breakers. Because this contract of an oath was so important, the Greeks paid attention to the wording of the oath in order to ward off divine punishment, especially in case they did not plan to keep it.⁵⁵⁰

It was of utmost importance for an individual to respect and honour the oath itself. Its validity was a public and personal decision between piety and impiety for the Greek ancient society.⁵⁵¹ Failing to keep the oath would draw the divine punishment upon the violator, often the complete destruction of the perjurer and, in extension, on his family.⁵⁵² In *Medea* the breaking of promises in the form of oath that bound up people together in matrimony, activates the curse within and brings about the known horrific effect.

However, Mikalson points something interesting as far as the social attitude is concerned: the idea that the gods do not punish because of the illegal act *per se* but because the promise is broken.

the gods took an interest in human lying, cheating, accepting bribes, giving false testimony, intentionally voting unjustly in a law trial, failing to perform duties as a citizen or government official, or in a host of similar “wrongs”.⁵⁵³

There is no evidence from popular sources that gods were connected if the oath was not kept. However, their punishment would be severe because they were invoked as witnesses:

act spontaneously and on their initiative in ways which are, by human standards, just, unjust, or a problematic combination of the two.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁹ Callaway, “Perjury and the Unsworn Oath”, (1993). p. 19.

⁵⁵⁰ Callaway, “Perjury and the Unsworn Oath”, (1993). p. 20.

⁵⁵¹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 193.

⁵⁵² Mikalson, 1983, pp.31-32, 36: A full curse of the oath the Athenians swore concerning the sacred land in Delphi is cited on p. 35.

⁵⁵³ Mikalson, 1991, p. 86.

⁵⁵⁴ Mikalson, 1991, p. 87.

Overall, the maintenance of the oath was of utmost significance for the ancient Greek society since any private, public or civic activity was in religious force only through the oath.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁵ Mikalson, 1983, p. 38.

2.H. CURSES

*Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*⁵⁵⁶

Curses as practices are not common in tragedies probably because of its secretive character. Nonetheless, it is common for the characters and the chorus to curse verbally people or their fate, so it is helpful to know what the power of curse meant to those people.

There were two kinds of curses in ancient Greece according to Eidinow.⁵⁵⁷ The first type was the popular and respectable conditional curse with the purpose to prevent people from committing civic crimes.⁵⁵⁸ This kind of curses is evident as early as the eighth century B.C. Although conditional curses had a social role to perform, the second type, the binding curses, aimed at “injuring” individuals, physically or spiritually.

Even though Fraser states that the curse is well described in the various departments of Greek literature, he agrees with Edinow that they are best attested in the *κατάδεσμοι* (*katadesmoi*), binding curses, often called *defixiones*⁵⁵⁹ by modern scholars. *Defixiones* are small thin lead sheets inscribed with curses⁵⁶⁰ but in some cases the tablet was formed in the shape of that part of the body it wished to attack. More hideous were the flat tiny figurines.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁶ Fraser, D., A., “The Ancient Curse: Some Analogies”, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 8, (1922), p. 457.

⁵⁵⁷ Eidinow, Esther, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk Among the Ancient Greeks*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 140.

⁵⁵⁸ Garland mentions the historical case of the Alkaioid *genos* “for having massacred the supporters of a revolutionary called Cylon in c. 610 BC ... the curse was still in force nearly two hundred years later ...[in] 431 B.C. the Spartans issued an ultimatum to the Athenians to the effect that they should ‘expel the accursed one’, meaning the Alkmaionid statesman Pericles, if they wished to avert the Peloponnesian War.”: Garland, 1994, p. 75.

⁵⁵⁹ The collection of *katadesmoi* are found at the end of the book by Eidinow: Eidinow, 2007.

⁵⁶⁰ Fraser, “The Ancient Curse”, (1922). p. 456.

⁵⁶¹ Ogden suggest that the figurines originally were used to lay ghosts as the Mycenaean period attests. When the curses developed they adopted them because it was a good indirect way to deal with the referent: Ogden, 2001, p. 185.

or 'voodoo dolls' that have been found, sometimes buried in a tight-fitting boxes resembling miniature coffins.⁵⁶²

The targeted person was cursed in any way they could think of:

The Ara is replete with specific curses. The author "fastens down," to translate literally, not only the person of his (or her) enemy, but not infrequently his relatives as well. He lays his spell upon every member, every limb. He names with extraordinary care every organ of the body, as far as they are known to him, and fairly exhausts the Anatomical Nomenclature of the times.⁵⁶³

The tiny figurines presented a more morbid picture in some cases:

the doll's limbs are bound, its head, feet, or torso distorted. The curse may be written on the doll or inscribed on a surface of the coffin.⁵⁶⁴

After writing the curses for as many people as the individual wished on one lead or a little doll, he pierced with a bronze or iron nail and buried it underground.⁵⁶⁵ Symbolically the piercing was an attempt to make the accursed tablets more efficacious⁵⁶⁶ and reinforce the desired control over the other person's destiny.⁵⁶⁷ The burial on the other hand had two purposes: to make their discovery impossible so that the power of the spell would continue indefinitely; and to prevent the attacked person from reversing the spell.

The best place for the placement of their curse tablets was anywhere that signified direct contact with the night deities and the lower world in general.⁵⁶⁸ Therefore the favourite locations were the cemeteries, preferably placed it in the hand of the dead itself, but they could also burry them in sanctuaries of netherworld deities, or throw them into wells.⁵⁶⁹ Battlefields were also suitable since the restless spirits of the unburied or inadequately buried soldiers could be called into action to the requests of the living, (necromancy).⁵⁷⁰ However, the restless souls were not expected to act.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶² Eidinow, 2007, p. 151.

⁵⁶³ Fraser, "The Ancient Curse", (1922). p. 457.

⁵⁶⁴ Eidinow, 2007, p. 151.

⁵⁶⁵ Eidinow, 2007, p. 140.

⁵⁶⁶ Fraser, "The Ancient Curse", (1922). p. 458.

⁵⁶⁷ Eidinow, 2007, p. 145.

⁵⁶⁸ Fraser, "The Ancient Curse", (1922). p. 458.

⁵⁶⁹ Eidinow, 2007, p. 140.

⁵⁷⁰ Ogden, 2001, p. 12.

Contrary to the prayers, then, they invoked the *chthonian* gods, the divinities belonged to the sphere of death, the Underworld and witchcraft: Hermes *Katochos*, Hermes *Chthonios* (of the earth), Demeter, Persephone, Hekate *Chthonia*, Gaia and the Erinyes, the Furies, the famous old goddesses who avenged crimes. They also bound their victims invoking the heroes or the dead, especially those who had died prematurely or violently.⁵⁷² In later times, a lot of names of exotic demons and gods seem to have added to the list.⁵⁷³

The inscription or the figurine by itself did not have a magical power unless it was accompanied by invocations. This malicious purpose of the curse is responsible for the stealth that characterized the curses. The practice of the binding curses never saw the face of the day and obviously the authors of these curses remained anonymous, too.⁵⁷⁴ This is possibly the reason why Medea performs her magic spell backstage.

The Structure of a Curse

Reading the *defixiones* one can come up with the same linguistic pattern and structure that applied to a prayer. However, there are functional differences.⁵⁷⁵

It usually began with the verb “I bind”, but also “I bind up” or “I immobilize or restrain” by which they identified the targeted persons by mentioning parts of their bodies, their place of work, tools they used, thoughts, hopes, words or deeds of theirs.⁵⁷⁶ The second stage involved a direct or indirect appeal to the relevant infernal power that sometimes seems like an order. They

directly address gods and asks them to act; others only invoke them as witnesses or overseers; other do both simultaneously.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷¹ There were also the sea-god Palaimon, the ‘white goddess’ and Artemis *Strophaia* although they were rarely found in *katadesmoi*: Eidinow, 2007, pp. 148-9.

⁵⁷² There were also the sea-god Palaimon, the ‘white goddess’ and Artemis *Strophaia* although they were rarely found in *katadesmoi*: Eidinow, 2007, pp. 148-9.

⁵⁷³ *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996, p. 414.

⁵⁷⁴ Eidinow, 2007, p. 142.

⁵⁷⁵ Eidinow, 2007, p. 144.

⁵⁷⁶ Eidinow, 2007, p. 144-45.

⁵⁷⁷ Eidinow, 2007, p. 147.

The last stage focused on the inflictions they wished to direct to their victims. The majority of the cases, though, focused on creating weakness, not death to the victim⁵⁷⁸ in opposition to tragedy. Therefore, depending on the desired outcome the curses aimed at attracting love, separating one from a love affair, his personal and professional failure, strike dumb, a rival at a contest (theatrical, musical or athletic) and so on. They also tried to make their spell irrevocable. Eidinow mentions a table on which it is written that no deity would release the curse even if they received sacrifices.⁵⁷⁹

Out of the published Greek *katadesmoi*, Audollent studied their context, vocabulary and formulae and came up with five categories in 1904, which most scholars gravitate when they study the curse tablets. These categories are judicial, theatrical, commercial, love curses and border-area curses, with the later to combine the form of prayers for justice and curse tablets.⁵⁸⁰

The repetitive language, the discovery of hidden storage of written *katadesmoi* or shaped small dolls made by the same hand suggests the existence of sellers and a profitable commerce. The less elaborated style of other tablets, more personal one might say or an amateur approach,⁵⁸¹ possibly come from people that could not afford it or illiterate.

It seems that at the beginning, the Curse was favoured by the lower intellectual strata of society, but over time it attracted members from all parts of society, including women, children, neighbours, husbands, wives, lovers, pimps and sex-workers, soldiers, slaves, politicians, litigants and craftsmen.

Even though, ideally sort of speak, *katadesmoi* would like to be thought as creations of individuals who felt they had the right on their side, they reveal more personal interests, feelings of jealousy and so on, and have nothing to do with legal problems

⁵⁷⁸ Eidinow, 2007, p. 151.

⁵⁷⁹ Eidinow, 2007, p. 151.

⁵⁸⁰ Of them, judicial is the largest in the Classical period, commercial and theatrical are dated from the fifth century B.C., and love curses, which are divided into separation spells that appeared in the 4th century B.C., and 'attraction' ones which intended to bring them together: Eidinow, 2007, p. 154.

⁵⁸¹ Eidinow, 2007, p. 143: Eidinow notes that these archaeological discoveries proves true Plato's description of salesmen in his *Republic*.

and justice⁵⁸² in which case they could as well turned to the judicial system. It should be noted as well, that there is no direct evidence that proves beyond doubt that the practice of cursing was illegal.

Even though curses are not staged, due to their malicious desire, their power is called upon for a person considered responsible for a miserable condition, or even worse, it provokes actions of revenge.

⁵⁸² Eidinow, 2007, p. 145.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to present the social aspect of ancient Greek rituals with the view to link them with their dramaturgical power. When scholars describe the rituals, this is processed from the view of anthropology or sociology in an effort to bring forth the complexity of ancient Greek religion. Like Zaidman they focus on the complexity of ritual behavior that “brought into play the entire functioning of the city and its means of self-representation”⁵⁸³

It is substantiated by now that the ancient Greek daily, private and public life was dense with ritual activities. Yet, their effectiveness depended not only on the proper performance but also on the *εὐσέβεια* (*ephsevia*), piety,⁵⁸⁴ which underlay the motives of the doer. Any indication of impiety and disrespect would result in a failure or denial of the materialization of the request.⁵⁸⁵ This kind of behavior is the primal cause for the downfall of the characters in tragedies.

Piety as a rule meant the respect and honour of any action of a man in relation with his fellow-men, his family, his city-state and society. To act inappropriately resulted in sacrilege.⁵⁸⁶ The first three categories are common issues both to tragedy and popular religion but the fourth is primarily a topic of tragedy and other literary genres.⁵⁸⁷ All violations are punished but some of them are more serious than others, especially those who insult the divine and trespass the human boundaries. Then, they bring *miasma*, pollution, to the fellow citizens and the city and endanger individual and social safety. It seems that, concepts such as impiety, hubris and *miasma* fused in the social structure of the ancient Greeks' life.

However, the Greek Gods were not thin-skinned. People could say insulting things about them, present them on stage or in poetry in an unflattering way without them getting offended easily. They were unconcerned about their representations as

⁵⁸³ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 45.

⁵⁸⁴ See Appendix II for a concise analysis.

⁵⁸⁵ See Appendix II for the notion of Piety and Impiety.

⁵⁸⁶ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, pp. 11, 13.

⁵⁸⁷ Mikalson, 1991, p. 166.

fornicators, cowards, thieves, insatiable, spiteful, vindictive, deceitful, greedy or licentious.⁵⁸⁸ However, once a person acted carelessly and provoked their wrath, there was no repentance and no expiation or forgiveness in the eyes of the gods. This does not mean that the gods are presented as getting angry for nothing. They had sound reasons, but their vengeance violated any human standards of justice and wisdom.⁵⁸⁹ Yet, it is noteworthy that gods were thought to have nothing to do with somebody's actual death. They could cause diseases, rough seas or sufferings of all sorts that resulted in their dying, but not only did were the gods presented as never actually killing a mortal, but they are depicted as far away from any matter of death. If death occurred, it was because of fortune, a daimon or destiny, not divine intervention.⁵⁹⁰ In contrast to actual social and religious beliefs, punishment for impiety, dishonour and *hubris* in tragedy is always death. The impious acts of its noble characters of high stature are even more heinous compared to that of ordinary people. Therefore, chapter one does not only provide the scholars with a synthesis of the rituals and their controlling power within the ancient Greeks' cultural-religious-civic-political actuality but it also allows conjectures of their deployment in tragedy. Historical consciousness of the deep-rooted rituals in ancient Greek life is therefore valuable when a text-based performance is produced. This kind of awareness will project the role of rituals as tools in their own right in the tragic texts that call for their autonomous dramaturgical treatment in a production.

There is still the question raised about the reason for choosing certain fragments from the complex rituals, such as the wedding or the burial. If we follow Green's view that "evidence, both literary and pictorial ... suggests that what people perceived as one of the most exciting things about theatre when it was first being invented was the visual spectacle"⁵⁹¹ we can conclude that any editorial decision would have to serve this effect. The tragedians then had to consider among other elements the distance of the audience from the action. Green also makes the helpful point for this study that the

⁵⁸⁸ Garland, 1994, p. 27.

⁵⁸⁹ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 137-9.

⁵⁹⁰ Mikalson, 1983, p.50.

⁵⁹¹ Green, 1994, p. 17.

Greeks were both aurally and visually aware: “the ancient was used to reading images carefully, whether they were painted, sculpted or live”⁵⁹² This is another point that fortifies the choice of those parts of rituals that could be read quickly from a distance. Therefore visual spectacle necessitated that those fragments of rites that were used could be read instantly, particularly essential if one considers the size of the amphitheatre. In the case of wedding, the wedding songs and dances or the procession are among them. The nuptial bath on the other hand or the decoration of the bride creates some stage problems: its intimacy may not be distinct at a long distance as the actors would have to be very close to the bride, it may not be a clear wedding scene at a first glance, it is time consuming, and it would be difficult for a male actor to be presented naked or even to be dressed or to pour water on stage. One may argue that supplication necessitates close contact as well, but let us not forget that in such case the actor clarifies verbally his intentions first and then performs the rite.

Another explanation for the choice of fragments of rituals that are used may be deduced from McCart’s fifteen years of experimentation with masks, which has proved that masks affect acting and demand a demonstrative performance and the development of vocabulary of gestures, *cheironomia*.⁵⁹³ Therefore we can deduce that distance led to the choice of those parts of a ritual whose mimetic representation could be visibly conveyed to the last row of the big amphitheatres, and were theatrically impressive and representative of the rite. It does not seem to be a choice between their private and public aspect, since for example the preferred scene of the preparation of a deceased was a private matter, as much as a matter of their theatricality and visual identification.

Rituals affected the dramatic illusion and became that vehicle that could persuade the audiences to “forget about the artificiality of the creation and to accept the conventions of the performance”⁵⁹⁴ and descend in the virtual reality offered to them.

⁵⁹² Green, 1994, p. 23.

⁵⁹³ McCart, Gregory, “Masks in Greek and Roman theatre”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 31, 43.

⁵⁹⁴ Green, 1994, p. 27.

Rituals were the means to suggest Hall's virtual future, a seemingly controllable fate. However, in order to perceive their vital part in the plays one need to have some knowledge of their function in the lives of the fifth-century Greeks and their society.

The following chapter aspires to project their role as the steering wheel in the development of the story line. The convergence of the script-analysis and the script-performed introduced by authorities such as Taplin, Wiles, Seaford, Hall and many more requires a delicate process of explication.

CHAPTER 3

THE WORLD OF RITUAL IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAYS

 INTRODUCTION

Whether tragedy evolved out of a rite or not, it is not possible to know. We can only speculate. What we know with certainty is that tragedy perfected its form in the fifth century B.C., possibly because it included in its context the mythic stories, *agon* and rituals, and that this flourishing was inextricably related to rapid social changes that occurred in the last third of the fifth century.

As chapter one has shown, the representations of mythic history in tragedy came from the oral tradition, which Green says⁵⁹⁵ held the community together: it bound the society through common experience and reinforced or reassured with views about life. Tragedy therefore evolved

from a fairly straightforward story-telling or re-enactment of myth-history, to a more complex one in which the motives of human action came under increasing questioning, and, as part of those same issues, the role of the divine powers in determining those motives.⁵⁹⁶

If we extend his thought to the evolution of tragedy in the Classical era, the playwrights seem to combine the elements of the oral tradition and fragments of live rituals in their story-lines, which they presented in huge amphitheatres: a storyteller, that is the tragedian, stood in front of the listeners and told them a story through a representational activity using other people (actors) who also told a story rather than act it out. Therefore, this chapter aims to exemplify the stance that the fifth-century rituals both linked the mythic past to the Classical present, and were the vehicles for the development of the story. This task will be effected with the textual analysis from the ritual perspective of the five tragedies.

The attractive nature of the tragic genre to fifth century Athenians was reinforced with the *ἀγών*, *agon*,⁵⁹⁷ the debate, which is omnipresent in all ancient Greek drama. Meridor supports this view proposed by many scholars and Martin sees behind the

⁵⁹⁵ Green, 1994, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁶ Green, 1994, p. 16.

⁵⁹⁷ Meridor, Ra'anana Creative Rhetoric in Euripides' Troades, Some Notes on Hecuba's Speech *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 50, No.1. (2000), pp.16-29. She offers an interesting example on Hecuba's speech at the Agon with Helen.

ideology of agon the beating heart of city-life and a kind of amusement for the Athenians too.

Drama was framed by the city's institutions – assembly, council, courts. At the heart of democracy was Rhetoric – the art of persuasive speech – omnipresent in the assembly (*ekklesia*), council (*bouli*), courts. Everything was a contest (agon by words). This delicate political negotiation also found its way to the plot of Greek Drama.⁵⁹⁸

For the first time, people were watching people arguing or disputing on several issues that influenced their ordinary lives. It is noticeable though that the representation of these debates often takes place within the frame of a rite. For example, agon is depicted during Helen's, Medea's or Clytaemnestra's supplication in the *Trojan Women*, *Medea* and *Choephoroi* respectively, or the display of the dead in *Agamemnon*. In other cases, agon happens because of the failure of a ritual, such as in the Medea-Jason confrontation on the cancelation of the wedding oaths. This one more evidence that rituals are omnipresent in tragedy and the view that their role is rather functional than decorative is not without reason.

In other words, the tragedians wrote plays using figures from their heroic past and used the art of rhetoric and fragments of rites to launch the past to the present of the ancient Greek audiences:

The characters use political language with fifth century references to let the audience make connections between the mythical world and their own socio-political context.⁵⁹⁹

Eventually then when tragedy was introduced into the festivals, drama became a prestigious social Athenian business. The central socio-religious role ritual activities had in the fifth century Athens was probably responsible for their extensive use in the tragic plays. Therefore, historical awareness of ancient Greek religion sets off a chain of literary reactions that are indispensable for the textual analysis in chapter two as the reader: will recognize and identify the ritual activities and their nuances in the play-texts; will identify their dramaturgical and narrative function within the structure of the play; this recognition will bring forth the importance of their staging,

⁵⁹⁸ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007. p. 5.

⁵⁹⁹ Hensk, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 12,-13.

which is the issue in chapter three; and finally, it will offer the knowledge for the enactment of those rituals that the text offers no information on their representation, because it was probably considered a common knowledge for the audience of that time.

The way the tragedians interwove rituals in the plays is probably one of the reason that, since 1960, scholars has used tragedy as a source in their effort to retrieve and reconstruct rituals, although always in combination with other literary sources and archaeological findings. The rationale that if the burial rites, the supplication or the oath in the texts, among others, are testified by the excavation and other literary texts that were discovered, then it is possible that the Eumenides' binding song or the invocation to the dead also mirrored live practices, is not without reason. This thought offered the classical researchers the missing details for their description.

In this chapter therefore I am going to examine the extensive use of rites and religious expressions in five tragic poems: the *Trojan Women*, *Medea* and the trilogy *Oresteia* and set out to examine the dramaturgical and narrative function of rituals and fragments of rituals within the texts of the fifth century Athenian state.

The textual analysis aims to support the conviction that the tragedians did not use elements of rituals as objects of aesthetic decoration in their plays but that they deployed them and twisted them as tools for their dramatic development. We can see explicit traces of ritual activity in the many oaths, libations, supplications, laments and curse the characters and the choruses perform on stage. Other less obvious impressions of rites within the play texts come through narrations or reported action, but they are no less significant to the dramatic plot for being narrated rather than depicted. These speech acts involve rituals complex by nature, such as the sacrifice, or they inform the reader of the background of the story. As Graf says, even these verbal accounts of "detailed descriptions serve their special ends".⁶⁰⁰ In this light, the flashback of the narrated violations, cancelations or failure of rituals in the prologues

⁶⁰⁰ Graf, Fritz, "Religion and Drama", in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman theatre*, ed. by MacDonald Marianne and Walton J., Michael, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 7.

often provoke the action or explain the characters' reactions in the story-line. Even reported rituals then perform a dramaturgical function as they explain the score on stage and fill in the gaps in the mind of the viewers.

The suggestion that the power of rituals form the substructure of the tragedy is self-evident in the dominant ritual around which each playwright wove the tragedy's action, which is often reported. The failure of these rites haunts the plots, and the characters, as it is evident in the unburied dead that torture the Trojan Women, the non-performed libation for forgiveness in Oresteia that is used as an excuse for more murders or the wedding oath of Medea and Jason. This view is substantiated by the fact that the reported key rituals often take place on stage at some point in the play. In fact, it seems as if the tragedians orchestrated such versions of ritual materialisation on stage for their audience. This observation is evident in all our case studies: the burial of Astyanax or the invocation at the end of the *Trojan Women* fulfils the proper funeral and lamentation the women longed for their dead, the oath that takes place on stage in *Medea* in contrast to the reported cancellation of Jason's wedding oath or the purificatory rite Orestes performs for his murder.

Chapter two therefore aspires to show that the controlling power of rituals within the ancient Greek life is now transferred in the stories the tragic poets told without losing any of their power. But now they obtain another purpose: by being placed in the new context of the play-texts the rituals or ritual fragments are represented as having perverted or failed functional powers, and this failure participate in the unfolding of the story.

Moreover, because each play has a different sort of focus, social, political or both, the tragedians carefully and diligently chose those specific ritual fragments or whole rituals from their actuality that could support the design of the mythic story, and create the desired dramatic illusion to the spectator.

The recognition that rituals have distinctive functions in each play calls for their individual reading. The following discussion will point out that the interpretation of rituals differs, and this inevitably may affect their scenic portrayal whether this is done through a character, the chorus or the set design. For instance, supplication and

oath become an object of manipulation in Euripides' *Medea*, whereas Aeschylus chose to reflect their actuality in *Oresteia*. Since the purpose of the tragedians was to subtly criticize the social and religious institutions, rituals become instruments of tactic in their hands for the issue they tackle with each time.

As part of the process of examining the fragments of ritual presented in the tragedies, there will be references related to acting, or elements of set design implied in the text that contextualize these ritual fragments. Such discussions are inevitable for tragedies that take place at a sanctuary (*Oedipus at Colonus*, *Suppliants*), a tomb (*Choephoroi*), a temple (*Eumenides*), or when the plot revolves around a ritual (*Choephoroi*, *Trojan Women*, *Suppliants*). In these cases, the set design emerges from the texts as very important as Oliver Taplin's *Greek Tragedy in Action* or David Wiles' *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning* demonstrates.

This is why the identification of the leading role rituals play in tragedy presuppose historical knowledge of their function in the fifth century Athens B.C. This awareness, that ritual meaning underlies almost every action in the story, might be developed in the better handling of the translation and the textual reconstruction of the translated text for a text-performed production.. Only in this way the text-play and the text-performed can be seen as merging.

Their functional presence of rituals in only five tragedies enhances the conviction that the power of ritual is not an isolated event and may motivate a different reading of the tragic plays. To make their density visible in the analysis of the texts, the rites or religious expressions will be in **bold** throughout the analysis.

Following the same thought of line, in the reviews of the three productions in chapter three, the reader will be able to verify their dramaturgical importance in their presence or absence in a production. These are all tragedies which were staged by the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus and those productions form the basis of my analysis in the next chapter.

Because I am going to explore the particular productions of these play-texts in chapter three, I am exploring their play-texts in this chapter according to their year of their production by TH.O.C., rather than according to their year of writing.

3.1. THE TROJAN WOMEN⁶⁰¹ (415 B.C.)

The first case study is Euripides' *Trojan Women*, acknowledged nowadays as the "earliest example of European anti-war literature".⁶⁰² This tragic poem has canonised in European literature as:

the first great expression of the spirit of pity for mankind exalted into a moving principle.⁶⁰³

In the background of the tragedy lies the influence of the brutal massacre of Melian people by the Athenians during the Peloponnesian war.⁶⁰⁴ The Melians sent soldiers to the Greek fleet at the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. against the Persians, but they 'sinned' when they chose to remain neutral during the Peloponnesian War. This made the Athenians invade the island in 416 B.C. and the outcome of their reaction was more than monstrous: they slew all the men capable of bearing arms, made slaves of the women and children, and introduced 500 Athenian colonists. Lysander⁶⁰⁵ restored the island to its Dorian possessors, but it never recovered its former prosperity.

Macurdy concurs with Professor Murray that Thucydides' Melian Dialogue is vital to the study of *Troades* and quotes his observations:

when one reads Thucydides' grim record of the action of Athens towards Melos in 416, and then reads in the *Troades* the laments of captive women for husbands slain and children taken from their arms, it appears inevitable that the poet has been passing his judgment on Athens, not Troy, on Alcibiades, not Agamemnon.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰¹ Euripides, *Trojan Women; Iphigenia among the Taurians; Ion*. Edited and translated by David Kovacs. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1999.

⁶⁰² Mead, M. L. "The *Troades* of Euripides", *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 8, No. 23, (1939), p. 102.

⁶⁰³ Macurdy, H., Grace, "The Fifth Book of Thucydides and Three Plays of Euripides", *Classical Review*, Vol. 24, pp. 205-07 (1910). p. 206.

⁶⁰⁴ Thucydides, *The history of the Peloponnesian war*, Book V, trl. Rex Warner, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972, p.400.

⁶⁰⁵ Lysander (died 395 BC, Greek: Λύσανδρος, Lýsandros) was a Spartan General and was the commander of the Spartan fleet in the Hellespont which was victorious against the Athenians at Aegospotami in 405 BC. The following year, he was able to force the Athenian leadership to capitulate, bringing the Peloponnesian War to an end.

⁶⁰⁶ Macurdy, "The Fifth Book of Thucydides", (1910). p. 206.

Macurdy believes that Euripides was certainly not unaffected by such extreme events. However, Mason clarifies that this association does not insinuate at all that he was a journalist of his time.

Though contemporary events must have been much in Euripides' mind, we are not dealing with political propaganda or a 'piece de circumstance' ... To grant less than this is to demote Euripides from the role of tragedian to that of social commentator and pamphleteer.⁶⁰⁷

A great mind like Euripides certainly had feelings of shame and indignation and he definitely had feelings of pity for those his country eliminated when he wrote his play. When Euripides mourned the fall of Troy, the destruction of its temples, the tragic fate of the Priam's dynasty, the humiliation of the wives of the defeated and the ferocious killing of an innocent child, he exposed the winners who became insulters due to their arrogance, cynicism, cowardice and pitiless characters. His blunt descriptions of atrocities and the consequences the innocent go through has "made the Trojan War stand for every war."⁶⁰⁸

He warned his people and us today, against impiety and *hubris*,⁶⁰⁹ the pivotal point of all tragedies. Bearing in mind the concept of impiety in ancient Greeks' mind, who believed that the blame for an injustice could fall upon the whole city-state, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Euripides' dire foreboding must have expressed the worries of his fellow citizens about what the Gods might do in return.⁶¹⁰

It appears that, with his insight, Euripides warned the ancient Athenians about the retribution one should expect once corrupted by power, and this retribution could come when least expected.⁶¹¹ This disquiet is also reflected in the tragic irony of the

⁶⁰⁷ Mason, G., P., "Kassandra", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol.79. (1959). p.87

⁶⁰⁸ Luschig, C.A.E., Euripides' "Trojan Women: All Is Vanity", *The Classical World*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Sep., 1971), (1971). pp. 8-12.

⁶⁰⁹ See Appendix II.

⁶¹⁰ The appalling description in the prologue makes one wonder if it was used as a further warning since the Sicilian expedition (415-413 B.C.) would follow.

⁶¹¹ This does not insinuate at all that he was a journalist of his time. "Though contemporary events must have been much in Euripides' mind, we are not dealing with political propaganda or a 'piece de circumstance' ... To grant less than this is to demote Euripides from the role of tragedian to that of social commentator and pamphleteer": Mason, "Kassandra", (1959). p.87.

play in which the Greeks in Troy are so conceited by their power that they do not even suspect that they will have their share for their brutal impiety :

What is common in both the Trojans' (the vanquished's) and the Greeks' (the victors') attitude is the total ignorance of the divine plan to destroy the Greeks and thus gratify the Trojans.⁶¹²

The Greeks in the play do not also know that the final vindication of *hubris* will not come via the divine form only but also in two Furies in a human form.⁶¹³ Side by side with the indictment of the two gods, who will penalize their arrogance, there is the mortal agent Cassandra, and Helen. Therefore the *spirits of punishment* of the old religion returns back and act by means of three females:

Helen is the second avenging fury; Cassandra called herself one of three (457). ... Athena is the last of the three avenging furies to accompany the Greeks homeward (cf. 457).⁶¹⁴

In the real life situation, therefore, the Melians' Fury was materialized in the immense defeat at the Sicilian expedition, in which the destruction of two hundred ships and thousands of soldiers decimated Athens manpower. Is it a coincidence therefore that the Greeks in the *Trojan Women* had a similar fate as the Greeks in Sicily approximately two years later? It turned out it was not.

The dominating rituals

As a tragedy that portrays war, the victims have been through as much and more than they can bear, therefore any further suffering they go through is pure atrocity, from a ritualistic point. Suter notes that 'the formal structure of lament itself has not been seen as the model for the structure of the whole play'⁶¹⁵and he considers the entire play of the *Trojan Women*, as a long **funeral song** aiming to let the dead rest and placate the gods.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹² Papadopoulou, Thalia. "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour and The ironic Optimism of Euripide's *Troades*", *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series, Vol. 53, Fasc. 5, (2000), p. 515.

⁶¹³ Luschnig, "Trojan Women: All Is Vanity", (1971). p. 8.

⁶¹⁴ Luschnig, "Trojan Women: All Is Vanity" (1971). pp.11-12.

⁶¹⁵ Suter, A., "Lament in Euripides' Trojan Women", *Mnemosyne*, Volume 56, Number 1, 2003, p. 1.

⁶¹⁶ Suter, "Lament in Euripides' Trojan Women", (2003). p. 1.

In this view, he is right to suggest that the ritual form and thus this tragedy could be considered gendered. To prove this suggestion he quotes the number of dirges found in the structure of the tragedy offered by Elinor Wright:

The laments which Wright identifies in the *Trojan Women* include the full lament for the death of Troy (1287-332) which ends the play, and five reduced laments: the first choral ode, which also laments the city of Troy (511-67, 582); Andromache's and Hekabe's joint lament for Hektor (577-607); Andromache's for Astyanax (740-63); Hekabe's for Astyanax (1167-206); and Hekabe and the chorus for Astyanax (1216-59)... These six passages represent a number of the types of lament familiar from Homer and tragedy. There is one ritual lament over a body. The rest are laments for the dead outside of a funeral context; they include a lament for someone already dead, two proleptic laments for an anticipated death, and two laments for the city.⁶¹⁷

The rites then of burial and mourning prevail. As such, lament evidently defines the matrix of the structure of the play and the occasions for various kinds of mourning can be regarded as independent case studies on their own right. Regarding burial, Dyson observes that this real life major concern of the Greeks, whether in peace or at war, is common in all tragedies.⁶¹⁸ Improper burials, or even worse unburied corpses, were a calamity for the soul. The wide-spread belief that the spirit would aimlessly wander restlessly was a tremendous burden for his kin, hence, the torturing pain of the Trojan women.⁶¹⁹

The second ritual that dominates in the *Trojan Women*, and provokes more grieving, is the **wedding**. Seaford is one of the first scholars who dealt with the connection of this rite of passage to the tragedy:

Because the wedding constitutes one of the two or three most fundamental transitions in the life of an individual, the failure to

⁶¹⁷ Suter, "Lament in Euripides' *Trojan Women*", (2003). pp. 5-6: She quotes Elinor Wright from an unpublished PhD dissertation, "The Form of Lament in Greek Tragedy" at University of Pennsylvania dissertation, (1986).

⁶¹⁸ "... in tragedy burial is the major concern of three plays, *Ajax*, *Antigone* and Euripides' *Supplices*, apart from numerous less central treatment elsewhere.": Dyson, M., and Lee, H., K., "The Funeral of Astyanax in Euripides' *Troades*", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 120, (2000), p.17.

⁶¹⁹ Still is so that the souls can rest and the living can continue their lives. This is well attested in cases when the dead bodies are not recovered. The desire to retrieve them, even their bones, so that they can offer them a proper funeral is so strong that it can trouble them for their whole life. This is characteristic in Cyprus of the relatives of the missing persons.

complete the transition is profoundly anomic. This failure, which may occur in many ways, is constantly explored by tragedy.⁶²⁰

Some years later, Rehm see the perversion in this failure of the customs and applies the term *wedding to death*.⁶²¹ As a rule wedding in tragedies results to either a marriage to Hades or to a very sad outcome in the women's lives, the fate of a concubine.⁶²² The pre-wedding sacrifices are often violent and cruel and, instead of the passing from childhood to adulthood, they signify their separation from a settled, sheltered, loving life into an unknown future. The happy wedding songs and the taunting verses are replaced by the funerary cries and lamentations. The deities who are usually called upon to establish the bond that would provide protection for the newly-wedded bride during the transition to her new life are either not called upon or used ironically.

The following analysis will illuminate the backbone of the play as the story develops: the sacrilegious acts the Greeks committed towards the Trojans and the defilement of the gods' properties are always sooner or later paid.

Reading the Play

From the very beginning the god Poseidon introduces us to the woeful mood of the story. Before the ruined walls of ancient Troy, the figure of the god appears in the dim light. He first **laments** for the loss of Troy and its walls which he and Apollo had built, the deserted temples polluted by the bloodshed and the unburied dead by the altars.

The sacred groves are deserted, and the temples
Gods run with blood. (15-17)

Poseidon implies here the denied right of the rituals of **burial** and *hikesia*, supplication. People customarily ran to altars to beg for help as a safe place. During the plunder of Troy and the evident chaos that prevailed in the city, Trojan warriors and the non-combatants seem to have done the same in an effort to live, but the Greeks did not spare their lives. The god laments for the unburied Priam by his hearth,

⁶²⁰ Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", (1987). p. 106.

⁶²¹ Rehm, 1994.

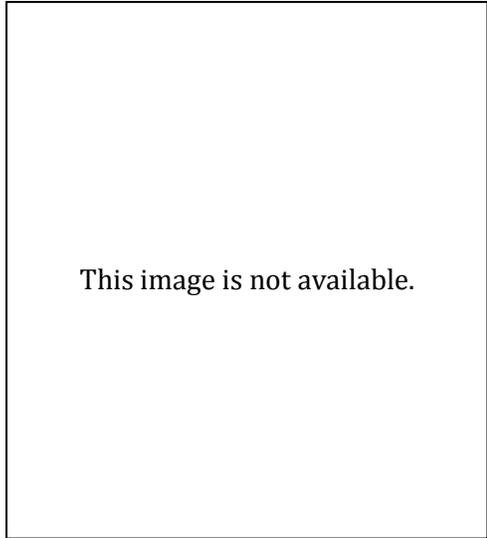
⁶²² See Ch. 2, 2A.

the weeping Hecuba who has seen the extermination of her family, her daughter Polyxena's sacrifice and the priestess Cassandra's allotment to Agamemnon as a victory trophy, a concubine. For this massacre, he blames the goddess Pallas Athena for none of this would have happened if it were not for her support.

At this time, Athena appears incensed by the Greeks for the **desecration** of her temple during the sack of Troy. Poseidon confirms Athena that Little Aias violated Apollo's priestess holy right for the rite of **hikesia**, by forcibly dragging her from her statue and turns Athena against all Greeks for not punishing his impious act:

And he was in no way punished or censured by the Achaeans. (71)

This transgression of the sacred right of a suppliant-fugitive to ask for mercy inside the temples makes Athena put aside her disagreement with Poseidon and conspire with him to punish the Greeks by destroying the Greek ships on their voyage home. It is also evident that the narrated abuse of Cassandra in the prologue is important as she becomes the reason for the Greeks' disastrous repatriation.⁶²³ Therefore, even though the ritual is only described in the play it is vital to the plot because it fires the divine vindication of the Trojans. What is more, Poseidon's lament prepares the reader or spectator for the materialization of further ritualistic breaches and perverted rites that will take place on stage.



The only human seen on stage, in the prisoners' camp, when the play begins is an old woman lying down. Poseidon reveals that it is Hecuba sleeping out of exhaustion after performing a ritual **bemoaning** for the extermination of her family and her country:

Poor Hecuba, if anyone wants to see her, is here, lying
in front of the door, weeping many tears for many reasons. (36-38)

⁶²³ If Cassandra had not been dragged away from the Palladium, a wooden image of the warrior Goddess, or, if the Greeks punished goddess Athena's insult, there could have been no *Odyssey*!

Priam and her sons are dead (41)
Up, unhappy woman! Raise your head and neck from the
ground! This is no longer Troy you see (98-99)

The proud queen, a human wreck now, awakens as the dawn comes to **mourn** again for the annihilation of her nation and her entire family and to perform a ritual **curse** of Helen as the cause. She calls the other women from the huts to join her in the dirge she sings and they rise to echo her cries:

My country is gone, my children, my husband! (107)
Ilium is burning; let us wail aloud!
Like a mother bird to her winged brood
I lead off the song of lamentation (145-7)

The women who come out of the tents to join the Queen in her dirge at her bidding, probably by singing or humming, recall for the spectator the dirge-singers in a real life funeral. The unbearable sorrow leaves her drained of life on the ground unable to even lift her head up:

How I long to roll my back
and spine about, listing now to this side of my body, now to
that as I utter continually my tearful song of woe! This too
is music for those in misfortune, to utter aloud their joyless
troubles. (116-121)

Line 121 is not translated correctly. The word for word translation of “Ἄτας κελαδεῖν ἀχορευτοῦς» (121) is “The song that is never linked with dances”.

In Hecuba’s face we discern all the expressions of mourning, verbally and physically. Her tears surely make her song ill-sounding and dissonant. The chorus sings along embodying the common belief held by fifth century Athenians that mortals’ tears please those who have left the beautiful light and the joys of life as they do not feel so lonely in the afterlife:⁶²⁴

How sweet for those in misfortune are tears, the keening
of lamentations, and the song that has sorrow for its theme! (608-609)

Just like their Queen, the female chorus are unaware of their future. The Greek herald Talthybius arrives and informs the women that they are all allocated to different victors. He then tells Hecuba that Cassandra is given to Agamemnon and Andromache, Hector’s wife, to Neoptolemus, Achilles’ son, as their prize. The Achaean herald

⁶²⁴ Tears were ‘necessary’ in mourning as it was believed that they had the quality to soothe the souls: See chapter 2: Death.

Talthybius carefully avoids a clear answer to her question about her youngest daughter, Polyxena, reassuring her that she is happy as an attendant at Achilles' tomb:

Count your daughter blessed: it is well with her. (268)

It is her fate to be released from trouble. (270)

Achilles' son has won her as a special prize. (274)

When her turn comes and hears that she is given as a slave to Odysseus, the destroyer of Troy, it gives her such heartache that she bursts into **mourning** again:

Ah, ah!

Strike the shorn head! Scratch with your nails
your two cheeks!

Ah me, ah me!

It is my lot to be a slave to a vile and treacherous man (278-282)

From the beginning, therefore, the traditional lament makes evident that the mournful mood is central in the text-play and that any alterations or omissions would require attentive care.

What comes after the women's dirge is Euripides' innovative figure of a crazed Cassandra, the indisputable protagonist in terms of the twisted wedding rites (308-340). Talthybius has orders to take Cassandra as he leaves but before his soldiers fetch her on stage, Cassandra rushes out of her hut, already in a **trance, uplifting a torch** (or two),⁶²⁵ dancing and singing an absurd wedding song for her forthcoming pairing with the king.

an ecstatic wedding song, delivered in a state of possession and trance,
in which the bacchic elements prevail.⁶²⁶

Cassandra should have entered holding the torch(es) in that distinctive manner as a priestess who pays tribute to Apollo only. Instead, she holds them as a bride and, even more out of place, she appears as a maenad follower of Dionysus. Apolline and Bacchic elements were not closely interwoven in ancient life but Papadopoulou offers a plausible reason:

⁶²⁵ If she held two, she would resemble Hekate who usually holds two torches on vase paintings as it is depicted in the illustrations below. Therefore one torch would be for her wedding to Agamemnon and the second for her wedding to Death.

⁶²⁶ Papadopoulou, "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour", (2000). p. 517.

This happens because Apollo is the source of her prophecy, while her 'bacchic' frenzy is the source of her wild power and of the sense of revenge, towards which her whole essence is orientated.⁶²⁷

Papadopoulou's suggestion is testified as Cassandra's role unfolds. Her ecstatic demeanour is more than a shock to her mother. Hecuba, feeling sorry for her daughter's bad fortune, asks her to throw away the symbols of her priesthood that not only do not suit her concubine status but are also unsuitable to her pseudo festal mood:

Cast away, my child, your holy laurel branches,
And from your body strip
The sacred garlands you wear! (256-258)

Cassandra does not hear her mother. Her unnatural behaviour is further accentuated by the **wedding song** she keeps singing to celebrate her union as she waves the torches inappropriately.

Raise it, bring it on, bring a light! I honor, I make gleam
[for you]
(see, see!)
With torch fire this holy place, Lord Hymenaeus!
[Hurray!] Blessed is the bridegroom,
Blessed too am I, to a king's bed
in Argos wedded!
Hymen, O Hymenaeus, Hymen! (307-314)

In a frenzied manner, Cassandra accuses her mother that so absorbed she is with mourning that she does not help her on the most beautiful day of her life. In an actual wedding women would sing her the nuptial songs during her preparation and later at night her mother would hold the torch to light the way for her and all the other participants would sing the nuptial songs.

For you, mother,
in tears and groans [foolishly]
keep lamenting
my dead father and our dear country,
but I at my marriage
set alight this blaze of fire (315-320)

The reversal of the norm⁶²⁸ is noticeable as the bride lights her own torch or torches, leads her wedding dance and sings her own *makarismos*, praise. In her song, she

⁶²⁷ Papadopoulou, "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour", (2000). p. 517.

⁶²⁸ Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", (1987). p. 128

appeals to Hymen and immediately after that to Hecate,⁶²⁹ two gods different in substance.

giving it for gleam, for glare
to you, O Hymenaeus,
and to you, O Hecate,
for a maiden's marriage
as custom ordains! (321-324)

Shout the cry of Hymen
with songs and shouts of blessedness
to the bride! (*ιαχαίς τε νύμφαν*) (335-337)

Hymenaios (Hymen or Hymenaeus) was the god of the wedding hymn sung by the train of the bride as she was led to the house of the groom. If we connect Papadopoulou's thought of the use of the orphic version of the myth,⁶³⁰ and Hecate's identification with the underworld, then it is evident that Cassandra alludes her wedding by invoking Hymeneos, just as she implies her union to Hades by invoking Hecate. Papapoulou's view can be further supported by the number of the torches Cassandra has in her hands. Hymenaios usually holds one torch on vase painting contrary to Hecate who holds two, as it is depicted in the illustration below. Therefore, one torch would signify her wedding to Agamemnon whereas two would symbolise her wedding to death.

⁶²⁹ Hecate appears in a more sinister form in the fifth century. She was the goddess of magic, witchcraft and necromancy, the night, the moon, and the haunting ghosts of the dead issuing forth from the underworld with a train of torch-bearing Lampades, demonic Lamiae, ghosts and hell-hounds. She is described in this capacity as a mighty and formidable divinity, ruling over the souls of the departed and her approach is announced by the whining and howling of dogs. She dwells at crossroads, on tombs, and near the blood of murdered persons. She is the goddess of purifications and expiations, and is accompanied by the Stygian dogs. She is usually depicted holding two torches: *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; Among her other attributes, Hecate was the goddess who accompanied Demeter in the search after Persephone with a torch in her hand. When the latter was found, Hecate remained with her as her attendant and companion. She thus became a deity of the lower world but this notion does not occur till the time of the Greek tragedians, though it is generally current among the later writers. This identification of her with Hades and death is the reason for her invocation by Cassandra: Papadopoulou, "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour", (2000). p. 520.

⁶³⁰ "According to orphic legends Hymenaios was a youth, killed when his house collapsed on his wedding day, and he was later invoked in bridal songs to be propitiated. He is represented in art as a youth carrying a bridal torch": Papadopoulou, "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour" (2000). p. 520.

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We can extend the lit torch(es) to another suggestion: that the young girl also performs both, her funerary cortege and the symbolical illumination of the way through the gloomy passage ways of Hades.

In contrast to Hymenaios' song, Wheeler sees the reflection of the *epithalamium* in this part of *Trojan Women*⁶³¹ during which women sung happily in real life outside the chamber during consummation. Whatever the case, Seaford sees in her performance a subliminal anticipation of her union with Agamemnon coming to the front that raise her as the sole avenger of her family and her inevitable death:

Kassandra is herself of course aware that the destination of the transition is Hades, and that her body will be thrown out *νυμφίου πέλας τάφου*. This does not mean that the (traditional) *μακαρισμός* of the bride is entirely false, for there is a genuine albeit horrific joy at the prospect of the death of her *γαμέτας* that will accompany her own.⁶³²

The next thing she does is to urge the Trojan Women into an exhilarating **dance** to celebrate her wedding and her revenge. Her persistence to get the women to sing and dance vividly creates an upsetting, latent feeling of uneasiness as she sounds mentally deranged while she gives instructions.

⁶³¹ Wheeler, L. A., "Tradition in the Epithalamium", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 51, No. 3, (1930), pp. 205-223.

⁶³² Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", (1987). p. 128.

Lift your foot and shake it, [strike up,] strike up the dance
(Euhan! Euhoi!) (325-326)

She tries to lead the Trojan women into a wedding dance, which then calls it **'holy'**. Euripides' picture of a possessed Cassandra who sings and dances in these three contrasting ways takes shape as she proceeds. It seems to be either, or both, a sacred Apollonic dance or the manic Bacchic dance, which would in extend explain further the strong reluctance of the women to dance. Despite their reluctance, it is possible that the poor women will unwillingly try at times to please her for the sake of her condition.

The dance is holy, [holy]:
Do you, Phoebus, lead it. For crowned with laurels I serve
in your temple. (328-330)

But when she urges her mother to join the 'revelers' and shows her how to dance, things become more frantic.

Dance, mother, dance
lead off and whirl your foot this way
and that, joining with me
in the joyful step! (332-334)

Come, your daughters of Phrygia, with your lovely gowns,
sing for me of the one destined
for my marriage bed,
my husband! (338-341)

There is this intolerable tragic point when Hecuba can do nothing but respond to her daughter's invitation. She calls upon Hephaestus, who holds the torch at weddings, yet, she "envisages the torch as funereal"⁶³³ when she comments that it does not signal a happy passage:

Hepheastus, you bear the torch when mortals marry, but
this gleam you now spread abroad is painful and far re-
moved from our high hopes. (343-345)

Then, unable to watch her daughter being out of control any more, she finally manages to take the torch softly off her hands saying that it is inappropriate to hold a torch in such a frenzied way. Hecuba probably puts the candle out as well. It is not

⁶³³ Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", (1987). p. 128.

clear if she refers to her illegal marriage or her office as a priestess; she possibly refers to both.

Give me the flame! ... You are not
right to carry a torch, mad and frenzied as you are, and you
have not been brought to your senses by your fate, my, child (348-350)

Here there is the chance for Hecuba to hold her daughter in her arms for the last time, as she asks the other women to sing a **dirge** instead of marriage hymns. Her effort though to bring Cassandra back to reality turns out unsuccessful when, unlike real life, she asks her mother to escort her to her groom.

Mother, crown my victorious head and rejoice at my royal
Marriage! Escort me on my way (353-354)

This is the point for Seaford when the Fury-Cassandra's fictitious delight for her union with Agamemnon reveals a horrific, perverted triumph at his forthcoming murder⁶³⁴ by his wife and the impending fatal destruction of the Greeks and Agamemnon.

For I shall kill him and plunder his house, exacting revenge
For my brothers and my father! (359-360)

I shall come to the land of the dead victorious, having sacked!
The house of the Atridae at whose hands we perished! (460-61)

Her overjoyed singing is sharply in contrast with everybody's lamentation, but she knows something the others do not, that she is going to be the avenger of all Trojans. It may be assumed that she rather seems mentally confused; yet, it is possible that she is so overwhelmed with victorious feelings that she cannot control herself.

Cassandra, in a moment of clarity although in a fit, tries to soothe her mother's pain by predicting Agamemnon's murder by the axe. But the vision of her own murder and her abandoned and unburied **body** upsets her. Her death is the required "by-product of her 'victory' over the house of the destroyer of her family and country".⁶³⁵

I shall not sing of the ax
that will enter my neck and that of others (361-362)

Gradually, though, there is a shift in her behavior. Although she is possessed by Apollo Loxias, the god of incomprehensible oracular sayings, her words make sense contrary

⁶³⁴ Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", (1987). p. 128.

⁶³⁵ Meridor, "Euripides' Troades", (1989). p.27.

to Pythia's who talked at random and needed the other priests to interpret her obscure answers.⁶³⁶ She now seems to control her gift as she chooses to talk sensibly.

although I am possessed by the god,
yet to this extent I will step aside from my frenzy. (366-369)

Cassandra comments on the Achaeans' misfortune, unlike the Trojans, to be **buried in a foreign land**, away from their families, without being mourned and shrouded and without a grave, at which close relatives may visit for libations, *choes*. As in real life, to be buried away from one's homeland was a terrible punishment for the soul.

Those whom
Ares slew did not see their children and were not clothes
for burial by the hands of their wives but lie buried in
foreign earth. (376-9)

There is no one who near
their tombs will give the earth an offering of blood... (381-2)

As for the Trojan, in the first place – their greatest
glory - they died on behalf of their country. Those
who were slain by the spear were carried into the house by their
kin and were covered with earth in the land of their fa-
thers, and those who ought to do so dressed them for
burial. Any Phrygians who were not killed in battle lived
day by day with their wives and children, a pleasure the
Greeks were denied. (386-393)

Still, no matter how crystal-clear her premonitions are, Apollo's curse⁶³⁷ is still in force. Neither her mother nor the Chorus believes her:

How happily you smile at your own misfortunes and prophesy,
and yet perhaps you will show that your prophesies are
unreliable. (406-407)

⁶³⁶ For the way a priestess, a basket bearers and handmaidens lived and worked see Connelly, B. Joan, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. Connelly contends the priestesses in ancient Greece played a more significant role than it is generally suggested; See also Appendix II, Divination: Pythia in Delphi functioned in the same way. Oracles are said to be given either in a frenzic way or katatonic one. Pythia talked at random and needed the other priests to explain her obscure answers. Apollo Loxias is a name that defined him as the god of incomprehensible oracular sayings. Whatever the case is, it does not indicate a conscious, balanced person. Moreover, prophesy in ancient Greece was neither about future events in general, as we may assume considering our time, nor an advice.

⁶³⁷ There are two versions of Apollo's punishment. In the first version, the beautiful Cassandra accepted Apollo's offer to give him her love in return for the art of prophecy. Young Cassandra shunned the God who became outrageous and added a twist to his gift. He asked her to give him one last kiss and he spat into her mouth to plant his curse: Noone would believe her, even though she would always speak the truth.

And as she describes what Odysseus will go through on his return to Ithaca, she shivers as she sees again the results of her anticipated marriage to death: her dead body will be maltreated, left unburied and her soul will not rest:

Let me marry my bridegroom in Hades! (445)

And I, when I am cast out as a naked corpse,
shall be given to the wild beasts to tear asunder by the
gullies that flow in winter spate past my bridegroom's
tomb, I, Apollo's servant. (448-450)

After her last vision, one can detect the final marital allusions: Cassandra is about to be taken to the groom's ship, not the house, on foot, not on a cart, in the escort of the soldiers, not her mother, relatives and friends with torches in their hands. The lack of torches signifies once again an illegal union. However, before she exits, she performs her reversed pre-wedding sacrificial offerings, *Proavlia*,⁶³⁸ or are the spectators encouraged to interpret these as her burial offerings? Euripides has informed us so far that as a priestess of Apollo she wears her distinct insignias: special garments, a wreath and garlands as necklaces and that she has the keys of the temple at her waist. We also learn from her mother that the garlands are arranged in a special way. Therefore, now they all watch her remove her priestess' garlands and garments, let the keys of the temple fall off her hands, fix her untidy hair and cease her irregular body movement, leaving herself stripped naked of all the tokens of her priesthood. This is her way of giving up, or offering, her old self to Troy before moving on to her new life, and death. Cassandra leaves for her wedding to death denouncing her priesthood. Her rite of passage, separation-transition-integration will be interrupted as she predicts before her integration in the new household. For there, instead of the mother-in-law throwing them dry fruits and the quince fruit, awaits an embittered wife holding an axe.

O garlands that belong to the god,
I love best, finery of divine inspiration, farewell! (451-452)

The text emits the sense that she makes her way towards Agamemnon's ship with her body straightened, her footsteps steady, and her head **unveiled**. There is no need for the veil a bride wore until her symbolical acceptance with its removal, the

⁶³⁸ See chapter 2: 2B.

apokalypteria. She is ready to board on the ship which stands either for the vehicle to her husband's house or for the boat that crosses the river *Acheron* in Hades. She exits with a final word of comfort to her mother about their enemies' inevitable death and Hecuba breaks down to the ground in grief.

It is evident that Cassandra's scene is the most complicated in the *Trojan Woman*. It compiles twisted wedding allusions in contrast to the genuine lamentation, and the dances and songs swing between the joy of a union, sacredness, frenziedness and a funeral. It is also the most demanding as the lines between trance, possession and reason, death and life, duty and fate are so thin that it requires a thorough handling in performance to clarify the magnificent textual representations of these ritual fragments.

After her daughter's departure, Hecuba is about to **mourn** for more woes when she meets her daughter-in-law as her final hopes of her being are about to be destroyed.

Andromache (*Ἀνδρομάχη*), Hector's wife, is the only person who lived and prospered after the fall of Troy. She fell to Neoptolemus (Pyrrhus), the son of Achilles, after the allotment and now she is being transported to him on a cart, which "might evoke a bride's journey to her new home".⁶³⁹ The cart though, instead of flowers, is 'decorated' with her son Astyanax whom she clasps to her breast, and Hector's shield. We may speculate, in an ironic way, that Astyanax substitutes for the young god of love, *Hymenaios*, who is depicted on vases to escort the wedded-couples holding a torch and bring light and prosperity. Another distorted idea may refer to the soldiers who draw the cart, who can stand for both a wedding escort or a cortege as the last male member of a family will soon wed to his death. The chorus first attracts our attention to the new comer.

Hecuba, do you see Andromache here carried on an enemy wagon? Next to her heaving breast is her beloved Astyanax, Hector's son. Where are you being taken on the seat of a wagon, poor woman, sitting next to the bronze armour of Hector and the spear-captured spoils of the Phrygians (568-574)

⁶³⁹ Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p. 18.

Mother and daughter-in-law are engaged in a moving **dirge** when they meet. They lament about their beloved and the unburied bodies left to be eaten by the vultures and feel sorry for the restless souls. One of the most powerful parts of the lamentation was the tendency to invoke the dead to rise and save them from an unpleasant situation. Andromache, at a moment of despair, **invokes** her husband to rise from

Hades and come to her aid.
Come to me, husband, now - (587)

She wishes to have died like Polyxena, and this is how Hecuba finds out that her youngest daughter was sacrificed on Achilles' grave. Only now does Hecuba understand the meaning of Talthybius' words. On hearing about Polyxena's death the old queen has the ground taken from under her feet and **wail** for her daughter's **unholy sacrifice** to a dead man as a companion.

Alas, my child, for your unhallowed slaughter! Alas, once more more! How painful was your death? (628-630)

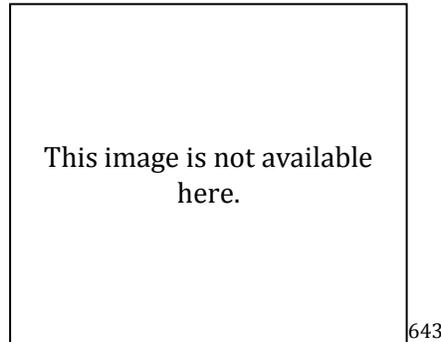
My child, to die is not the same as to be alive. The one is nothing, but in the other there are hopes. (632-633)

Like all described rituals, Polyxena's sacrifice has a multifarious role to perform: first it illustrates Andromache's kind nature and verifies the belief that proper burial soothes the departed soul; then, it forces Hecuba, who despite her sunken morale she stoically stands her fate until now, to realise she is about to mourn for more misfortunes. Most significant though, it fires associations with Iphigenia's sacrifice: Achilles' soul demanded the human sacrifice of Polyxena in order for the winds to blow and allow the ships to sail for Greece.⁶⁴⁰ It is a clear case of Rehm's wedding to death, or is it a sacrifice to her wedding having the wedding and the sacrificial motives intermingled in her case. Her terrestrial death, the twisted wedding procession, is the only way for Polyxena to reach her husband's residence in the Elysian Fields, the afterlife place where heroes rest, and unite with him.⁶⁴¹ She also takes the place of an

⁶⁴⁰ Papadopoulou, "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour", (2000). p. 514.

⁶⁴¹ We learn from the tragedy *Hecuba* more information about the sacrifice. The young girl was sacrificed according to the rules of a bloody sacrifice to a chthonic god. She was unblemished, high-class of origin and she must have accepted her fate, otherwise the sacrifice would have been in vain. She was placed over Achilles' grave, and her blood was left to flow straight in the soil, while the viewers,

animal for a sacrifice at a hero's burial as she fulfills all the features of a perfect victim.⁶⁴² On a vase painting of approximately 550 B.C. in the British Museum, we see a depiction of her sacrifice. Her clothes are all around her so she is fully covered when she dies as is appropriate to a bride, but the major part of the bride's attire, the veil, is missing. On top of that, the way they hold her above the altar clearly indicates her sacrifice to a chthonian god or a hero in which the blood had to run straight to the soil.



Andromache tries to console her mother-in-law that at least she was lucky to receive the most distinctive parts of a **burial**⁶⁴⁴ by her unlike most Trojans:

I covered
her corpse with a garment and mourned for her. (626-627)

Being a maiden, Polyxena deserved to be buried dressed as a bride, yet, this is an impossible luxury at this time in Troy. Thus, the covering stood for the wedding veiling, the only thing that indicates her youth and pre-marital status. Andromache paid her respect to the dead and lamented her as long as she was allowed performing the gestures of mourning such as hitting her breast.

Andromache **curse**s her exquisite reputation as a perfect woman and this makes her lose her heart and **lament** Hector again. Hecuba unable to stand her daughter-in-law's pain finds the courage to boost Andromache's spirit by telling her she has a son to live for, the last hope for the continuation of the lineage of Hector. However, they both do

standing in the form of a semi-circle, ululate (=wail) at the time of the killing. These details seem consistent with the circumstances in *Trojan Women*.

⁶⁴² See "Sacrifice" in Chapter two.

⁶⁴³ Maas, P., "The Aeschylus, Agam. 231 ff., Illustrated", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 1, No. ½, (1951), p. 1.

⁶⁴⁴ Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p.19.

not know that their woes are not over yet. The young boy is surrounded by the death aura. Her grandson, Astyanax is condemned to death by the Greeks for exactly the same reasons she uses to encourage Andromache to keep on living, because he is

a creature whose political and social being is as yet incomplete, ... He bears the marks of his inheritance from his parents and his life is oriented towards a future which, in accordance with the norms of ordinary expectations, awaits him. ... But it is precisely because of his possible heroic aspiration that he is to be killed.⁶⁴⁵

It is clear that Calcha's prophesy⁶⁴⁶ is not the only reason for his death sentence. The Greeks eventually decide to exterminate any future threats the boy stands for and hurl him from the walls. When Talthybius announces this decision, the intolerable pain makes Hecuba collapse once again. The messenger also warns Andromache not to **cast a curse** on the Greeks because then they may not allow her to bury him, so the crying mother curses Helen instead for causing the war. Andromache bursts into a heart-rending **dirge**, embraces him and kisses him before she gives him away to his premature death.

O best beloved, O child most highly honored, you will be
killed by our enemies and leave your mother behind!
O child that my arms have
held when young, so dear to your mother, O sweet fra-
grance of your flesh! It was for nothing, it seems, that this
breast of mine suckled you when you were in swaddling
clothes, and all in vain was my labor and the pain of my
toil! Now, and never again, kiss your mother, fall into my
embrace, put your arms around me and press your lips
against mine! (757-763)

As a common feature in tragedy, the twisted sacrifice and wedding require a human victim. In Andromache's case, the killing of the only remaining link to her past and his burial on the shield takes the place of her **pre-wedding sacrifice** that 'frees' her from her past allowing her to move on to the new one. Dyson suggests that

⁶⁴⁵ Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p. 20.

⁶⁴⁶ After the fall of Troy, the Greek held a session to determine Astyanax's fate. The seer Calchas prophesied that Astyanax would grow up to avenge Troy and his father, Hector. Odysseus used this prediction to persuade everybody to kill the boy.

For Andromache the shield seems ... close to Hector as almost to stand for him, and we may feel that the burial of Hector's son together with his shield signals for her the end of her former marriage ⁶⁴⁷

She eventually covers her head and leaves. In contrast to Cassandra though, Andromache is **veiled** in black denoting her mourning above all, and then her future union with Neoptolemus.

Cover my wretched body and sling me into the ship! It is to
A splendid marriage that I go, having lost my own child! (777-9)

She exits all alone on the cart, escorted towards the ships by the soldiers, her unnatural bridal escort, just like Cassandra's. It is not unlikely to suggest that it brings to mind a firing squad. Both women's exits seem to be taking place in absolute silence. All that is heard of the twisted 'wedding' songs are the soldiers' footsteps and the **mourning** of the women of Troy. The chorus women are full of complaint to the gods who lost any love they had for Troy. At this time, Menelaus comes in looking for Helen. The Greek king is very pleased that he finally has his unfaithful wife in his hands and orders his men to drag her out of her hut. Poseidon has already informed us that she is on the camp in the state of captivity, as she should. Contrary to the tradition that tells that Menelaus was so dazzled when he faced Helen's naked breast that his sword fell off his hands, Euripides presents him as an unbending Spartan who does not bend to her **entreaty**.

Menelaus appearance surprisingly livens up Hecuba who tries to persuade him to kill the mother of all her misery with all her remaining life-force in the *agon* that accompanies Helen's supplication. The only case of virtual *hiketia* in *Trojan Women*, however, is reversed, as Helen is proven to be not a traditional suppliant. In the case of an error, one expressed repentance by following a particular process that included both gestures and etiquette in appearance: one had a neglected appearance, showed fear, cried, wore torn clothes, had the hair cut or shaved, and showed humiliation.

Contrary to the custom, Helen adorns herself and becomes more beautiful than ever in an effort to seduce Menelaus and make him spare her life.⁶⁴⁸ Hecuba uses her

⁶⁴⁷ Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p. 22.

coquettish to convince him that she fakes her supplication, an impious act. She further argues that her behavior shows no regrets for the total destruction she has caused and cautions him not to fall in her trap and let her go unpunished:

And after that have you come out dressed in
finery? Do you look on the same sky as your husband does,
you execrable woman? You ought to have come humbly
dressed in rags, trembling in fear and with shaven head,
showing modesty rather than brazenness over your former misdeeds. (1022 –1028)

Moreover, Helen does not behave humbly in an effort to soften Menelaus' resistance and his determination to kill her. On the contrary, she blames Hecuba for Troy's elimination because she did not pay attention to the **god-sent dream** she saw when she was pregnant with Paris. Dreams as divine messages are always ruinous in tragedies, just as is Clytaemnestra's dream in *Choephoroi*. Even though this type of divination is often a brief reference, their impact to the story is immense. To Hecuba's disappointment, Menelaus also agrees that Priam was also responsible for the destruction to Troy, by not doing as instructed.⁶⁴⁹

Troy's predestined fall at the hands of Hecuba's son Paris, prefigured by
his pregnant mother's dream that she gave birth to a firebrand which
burned Troy to the ground.⁶⁵⁰

Helen's appearance and attitude is what makes Loyd suggest that Helen does indeed feel no remorse.⁶⁵¹ At the end of their agon, Hecuba's fears prove to be right and the woman who was responsible for the death and expatriation of so many people gets away unpunished. As Helen and Menelaus leave, the chorus **curses** Helen to drown on her voyage to Greece and **laments** once again for not being able to bury their dead.

Ah dear husband,
you wander in death
unburied and with no lustral water (1081-1085)

⁶⁴⁸ In the tragedy *Hecuba* we learn that she also has her breast uncovered.

⁶⁴⁹ This is Cassandra's first prediction.

⁶⁵⁰ Meridor, Ra'anana. "Creative Rhetoric in Euripides' *Troades*" *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 50, No. 1. (2000), pp. 16-29.

⁶⁵¹ Lloyd, Michael, "The Helen Scene in Euripides' *Troades*", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 34, No. 2. (1984), p.305.

With Talthybius' entrance with the dead body of Astyanax in his hands though, they have the chance to perform the burial duties their beloved were denied.

The ritual of **burial** as attested in the boy's case follows all the steps of the process although there are significant and marked deviations:

the old buries the young, the coffin is replaced by a shield, the laments deal only with what might have been but never now can come to pass, the customary tending of the grave will be impossible – and part of the tragic effect derives from this disorder, especially in the aspect last mentioned.⁶⁵²

Before handing her son to Talthybius earlier, Andromache gives him the **goodbye kiss**, prior to his death. As a lady faithfully committed to customs and law,⁶⁵³ she supplicates so that her beloved dead receive the attendance he needs. And before she hastily sails with her new 'husband', Talthybius reports, Neoptolemus granted her request not only to bury her son, but also to do so **on his father's shield** instead of taking it as trophy to their new house.⁶⁵⁴

TALTHYBIUS

She begged him also not to bring this
bronze-backed shield, the Achaeans' terror, which this
boy's father used to hold against his side, to the home of
Peleus or to take it into the same chamber where she will
become his bride [the mother of this dead boy,
Andromache, so as to see grief], but to bury the boy in it
instead of a cedar coffin and a stone tomb. (1136-1142)

The connection between the boy and the shield has more connotations than its symbolical association with the pre-wedding sacrifices. Acting as an intermediary, Andromache manages to bring father and son together in the spiritual world. Dyson offers another view related to the boy's second name and his death because of his father's status:

⁶⁵² Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax" (2000), p. 30

⁶⁵³ Andromache seems to be such a strong figure that she even has the appreciation of her enemies. She is so grandeur and full of that powerful feminine modesty that it seems to be difficult for someone to say no to her.

⁶⁵⁴ "Weapons could be furniture, at least in heroic bedrooms: a Trojan soldier lies in his bedroom and his javelin hangs on a peg (Hec. 919-920), and in the bedroom of Iphigeneia as a girl was kept the spear with which Pelops slew Oinomaos (IT 823-826), so there is nothing implausible in the prospect from which she recoils.": Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p.22

the son of Ajax is significantly named after his father's weapon ... the Trojans are said to have given the name Astyanax, 'Lord of the town', to Hector's son Scamandrios, because Hector alone protected Troy ... it is because of his father's role that he has been killed.⁶⁵⁵

Another observation concerns the social standards of the time. As a son, he would inherit his father's shield if he had lived to grow and become a soldier like him. Therefore, this burial also underlies the fact that there will be none to avenge in the future.

the child's end marks the end of whatever that shield and those walls stood for too ... the shield is buried with the child, the child will not grow up, there will be no shield to hold, there will be no revenger⁶⁵⁶

This discussion brings to the foreground the importance of objects and other scenic accessories that bear ritualistic elements. The shield meets Taplin's pioneering discussion on props in *Greek Tragedy in Action*.

As soon as Neoptolemus accepted her supplication, Andromache quickly gave instructions to Talthymbius about her son's burial rite. He was to take the boy's little body to his grandmother who would bury him according to the rules. Therefore, he informs Hecuba that he, himself, has already **washed the wounded body** in Troy's sacred river, Scamander, and instructs the women to decorate the body:

She asked him
to put it into your hands so that with funeral clothes and
garlands you may deck out the corpse as well as you can in
your present circumstances. ...
When you have adorned the body, we for our part will
cover it in earth and then set sail. ...
as I was crossing the Scamander River here, I bathed
the body and washed the blood from its wounds. (1142-1152)

We can only guess why he does so: out of mercy for Hecuba so as not to let her see the body in such a bad condition; out of his own guilt since his fellow country-men show no pity; out of respect for Andromache who seems to have gained everybody's admiration; or because the sooner they finish the earlier they set sail for the motherland, Greece.

⁶⁵⁵ Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p. 26.

⁶⁵⁶ Dyson and Lee, "The Funeral of Astyanax", (2000). p. 26-27

The placement of the shield with the body in front of Hecuba initiates the tenderest scene in the play. It consists of two distinctive parts of real-life funeral: the affectionate treatment of the body and the **dirge**. Her lament bears all the factual elements as Hecuba probably caress the little body. Her mourning becomes more intense when she refers to the boy's little hands that resemble Hector's, her grandson's carefree life and his sweet words to her, and his immature death:

If you
had attained manhood and marriage and godlike kingship
and been killed defending the city, you would have been
blessed, if blessedness lies in any of these things. (1168-1170)

O hands, how sweet is your resemblance to your father's
hands, but now you lie all slackened in your joints!
... it was a cheat when you used to fling yourself
into my bed and say, "Grandmother, I shall cut a great lock
of curls for you and bring gatherings of my agemates to
your tomb and speak loving words of farewell!" For now
you are not burying me but I am burying you, who are young ...
Ah me, those countless kisses, my care
for you, the slumbers we shared, all are gone for nought! (1173-88)

After her first lamentation, she urges the women to **dress the corpse** with what is available in the ruined Troy. The women bring items to adorn the boy and Hecuba decorates the small corpse with finery that he would put on if he grew to wed. She also adorns her son's shield by putting a **garland** on it, which probably stand for her attempt to bury her son as well.

The Phrygian finery you should have put on for your marriage, as you wed the noblest princess of Asia, I put about your body.
And you, beloved shield of Hector, ... receive this garland! (1118-1123)

She finally ties up the wounds with linen stripes, possibly used in place of a shroud. The belief that family reunite in the afterlife is consoling for the old queen.

With constricting bands I shall treat some of your wounds, ...
The others your father will care for in the Under-world. (1236-1238)

Similar to other mourning scenes in other tragedies, the grievous responses of the chorus in between Hecuba's lamentation turn their short duologue into an actual dirge:

Ah, Ah! My heart you have touched, have touched, you who were once in my eyes the city's lord! (1216-1218)

As a bitter object of lamentation the earth shall receive you, my child.
Utter aloud, mother, the groan (1226-1229)

Strike, strike your heads,
moving your hands in rhythm!
Ah me! (1235-1237)

The women possibly stand close to the body, particularly to the head, while Hecuba rocks the dead boy as it is displayed on vase paintings. Until Hecuba finishes there is a little time for the *prothesis*, the exhibition of the dead. Now that the boy's body is laid on his father shield as a coffin and she has time to look at it she collapses at the sight of it. She has no more tears to shed. Eventually, Hecuba hands the body to the Greek messenger.

Pass on, lay ye in a wretched tomb the corpse;
For now it hath the garlands, dues of death. (1246-1247)

This last scene brings a pessimistic closure now that the last male Trojan is perished. The boy has been kissed goodbye and embraced by his mother before death, then he was washed, dressed, mourned and now it is ready for interment according to the customs. As the final scene of the play, it is clear that its enactment is essential since it fires the women to total loss of control.

On Talthybius' exit, the loss of her children and her unburied husband, her country, her allotment to Odysseus, Cassandra's wedding to Agamemnon, the death of Polyxena and finally that of her grandson take their real dimension in Hecuba's mind. Behind her, the fire will eliminate all traces and links of the living with their dead and their native land. Her woes culminate at this sight and Hecuba's courage finally abandons her. She runs to the fire as she calls the other women to follow her and hurl themselves on the pyre of her city:

Come, let us rush into the pyre! It is noblest to die together
with this land of ours as it burns! (1282-1283)

This act of despair connects us with the **funeral**, or **the sacrificial fire**. Troy goes through a cremation and her queen takes the place of one of the favourite items that

are usually buried or burned with the dead. She willingly offers herself to her dead city and wishes to be obliterated along with everything she loves, but 'luckily' she is stopped by the soldiers. This is the last straw for her spirit. Unable to control herself, she falls on the ground and cries, wails and **calls the dead** by beating the ground.

HECUBA

O woe! (Greek: *οτοτοτοτοί*) (1287)

O land, nurse of my children (Greek: *ἰώ*) (1302)

CHORUS

Alas! (Greek: *εε*) (1303)

HECUBA

My children, hear, listen to your mother's voice! (1304)

CHORUS

It is the dead you address with your cry of lament. (1305)

HECUBA

Yet, as I let my aged limbs sink to the ground
and strike the earth with my two hands. (1305-1307)

On seeing their queen collapsing, the women also lose their courage. Their emotional exhaustion draws them to the ground where they also **beat the earth** for their beloved to listen to them and accompany their queen to a dirge (1305-1332).

CHORUS

Taking up your lament I kneels upon the earth
and call up from below
my poor husband. (1308-1310)

Their deeply low-spirited **invocation** in the next seventeen verses really seems to shake the ground. The end comes though after this blast of suppressed emotional ejaculation which mitigates the accumulate pain and suffering in the hearts of the victims, and why not the audience. Without it though, the tension is not relieved.

A trumpet sound interrupts their invocation and it is time for the captive women to board on the ships. As they exit in a **funeral procession**, they sing a long dirge for their enslaved lives.

It is self-evident that the driving force of the *Trojan Women* is the rite of lamentation. All agents are overloaded with sorrow in their own individual way which needs careful designing: Poseidon laments for Troy and his temple yet, as a god, he cannot lament according to the human standards; his divine aura should define his mourning on stage. Cassandra's seemingly happy mood is more than ironic, and the upsetting feeling of her presence should permeate the air the audience breathes. Andromache's weeping brings to mind an ordinary woman who, as a young widow watches her only child depart for his death before her own eyes.

The chorus as well is not inactive, with its unleashed invocative dirge at the end. But Hecuba, who represents human constant mourning, is the most tragic figure of all. From the beginning of the play until the end, the queen is on stage and stands the worst blows of fate with dignity until her morale is completely sunken to the point of trying to die. It is of most importance to escalate and modify her wailing so that when her heart cannot endure any more sufferings, the tremor of her and the chorus' invocation to the dead can penetrate the bodies of the viewers.

Therefore, the play constantly goes through so many intensities that the actors, and the chorus, need to explore and express grief in variable ways so that the audience does not become weary. Burial and funerary rites are the most common experience of extreme pain human beings share worldwide. Because its features are so easily recognized its deprivation, which is translated into their failed or corrupted form in the play, would probably cause feelings of discomfort among the audience. Therefore, the various levels of sorrow would offer them some kind of release.

The analysis of the *Trojan Women* shows that the funerary long dirge forms the substructure of this tragedy from the very beginning. Meridor suggests that mourning is visibly expressed in use of the torches and fire as symbols of catastrophe,⁶⁵⁷ since the play begins and ends with fire images. It is then important to recognize and identify the key ritual of burial and the invocation-lamentation and then the ritual fragments and reported rituals of various funerary steps or the deliberately twisted

⁶⁵⁷ Papadopoulou, "Cassandra's Radiant Vigour", (2000). p. 519.

representations of wedding and supplication in creating the suitable atmosphere and presenting the narrative of a plot, that has ceaselessly been studied since after the end of the World War II.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁸ Meridor, "Euripides' Troades 28-44", (1989). p. 16.

3.2. MEDEA⁶⁵⁹ (441 B.C.)

In the last section we focused on the violated rituals of burial and twisted wedding to emphasize the cruelty the defeated since ever go through when the hubristic behavior of the winner exceeds the human limits. The victorious Greeks show no mercy to the Trojan women who lose anything that can help them stand the misfortunes in life: country, homeland and family. In this play the ritual fragments take us to a new level of understanding: they are manipulated by the title character to ruin the hubristic husband and the tragedy ends with the winner and the loser exchanging places.

What is noticeable is that the burial and funerary steps are also performed in this tragedy without any other insinuations except the actual purpose they had in the Classical life. If this recurrent motif persists in tragedies, then we can infer that death remained a serious matter even if it were for stage, following the ultimate significance it had in the fifth century Greek life.

Medea is a powerful tragedy in which a deserted non-Greek woman sweeps away everything on her departure and leaving nothing behind her but ruins. All the other characters in the play can be regarded as satellites around her, existing just to reinforce her presence as the Other and her Individuality. The Nurse emphasizes Medea's barbaric origin and magical powers from the start when she reminds us that Medea comes from a distant and exotic land. Her oriental individuality though bears the features of the Greek archaic heroic reputation which *timi*, honour, function, if lost, a hero had to regain at any cost for he was nothing without it.⁶⁶⁰ And Medea

⁶⁵⁹ Euripides, *Cyclops; Alcestis; Medea*. Edited and translated by David Kovacs. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1994.

⁶⁶⁰ Barlow suggests that Medea exhibits a heroic character: "Medea shows all the firm resolve and daring associated with these great male heroes: she is concerned with τιμή, 'honour'...; she is concerned at humiliation by her enemies (20, 26, 603, 1354), and determined to go to extreme lengths, including her own death if necessary ... The language she uses is that of ultimate daring and courage ...": Barlow, A., Shirley, "Stereotype and Reversal in Euripides' *Medea*", *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 36, No. 2, (1989), p. 161. See also Boedeker, Deborah, "Euripides' Medea and the Vanity of Logoi", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 86, No. 2, (1991), p. 95: "*Medea responds to Jason's betrayal with a heroic temper ... conscious above all of the dishonor she has suffered*".

has suffered unjustified dishonor and will inflict a bloody retribution upon her enemies. Euripides fashions Medea with the boldness, determination, and passionate intensity characteristic of the hero.⁶⁶¹

No doubt Medea classes herself as a hero who is nothing without *timi*,⁶⁶² or a god-like figure without a function. Naturally, her heroic attitude and her escape in a magic chariot constituted no shock for the fifth-century Athenian audience, not only because of her divine origin,⁶⁶³ but because as Page noted, it

was inclined to attribute to foreigners certain features by which they could be recognised immediately. The women were especially queer and unwomanly: in Egypt, for instance, they went out while the men stayed at home and did the housework. ... Euripides' *Medea* is just such a woman as his audience would expect a foreign princess to be.⁶⁶⁴

The dominating rituals

Similar to all tragedies, the flashback in the prologues usually introduces us to the central violated rites and their aftereffects. In this respect, the **broken wedding oaths** become the propellant for all the action in the *Medea*.

Medea as it was customary for a *xene*, a foreigner, was not **betrothed** by her *kyrios* through *eggye* and we can assume there was no formal dowry either. However, the Golden Fleece she helped Jason steal from her father can be regarded as her wedding present to him. Her grandfather's, the god Sun's, presents of unique beauty, a dazzling woven gown and a golden diadem, can be regarded as the priceless presents for the new couple. Kells and Mueller note that Medea's use of the **oath** to assure fidelity, classes her at the level of the **illegitimate wife** in the Greek society.⁶⁶⁵ Palmer explains:

⁶⁶¹ Tessitore, Aristide, "Euripides' *Medea* and the Problem of Spiritedness", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 4, (1991), p. 590.

⁶⁶² The same reaction had the gods when they were deprived of their honour, their function: See Appendix II.

⁶⁶³ Musurillo, Herbert, "Euripides' *Medea*: A Reconsideration", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 87, No. 1, (1966), p. 69.

⁶⁶⁴ Page, D.L., *Medea*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. xix.

⁶⁶⁵ Kells, "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", (1961), p. 170; Mueller, Melissa, "The Language of Reciprocity in Euripides' *Medea*", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 122, No. 4, (Winter, 2001), p. 486.

In short, legally speaking, Medea could only have been a *pallaké*-, a term used to denote any woman who lived with a man without being his wife through *engúe and ékdosis* or through *epidikasia*.⁶⁶⁶

Medea may have married after her fashion, but in her eyes, and probably in her culture, her own marriage was legal. This is succinctly concise with Burnett's suggestion that their marriage,

took its whole substance from its defining, extraordinary oaths (161-62, 492-98), for it existed outside society as a thing sanctioned only by the gods.⁶⁶⁷

Therefore, her children were stigmatized as *nothoi*, bastards, since one of their parents was a non-Athenian citizen. As *nothoi*, they had no rights in the Athenian society and Jason could not enrol them in his phratry as his descendants. The necessity for legitimate children who would inherit him and arrange his burial was perhaps one of Jason's reasons for marrying Creon's daughter.⁶⁶⁸

Exactly this domestic conflict of interests is the heart of the play: the quarrel between Jason and Medea, the deserted wife and the deserting husband and his wedding to a new wife. This is why the play is classified by some modern critics, such as Burnett, as a *tragedy of revenge*⁶⁶⁹ in which Medea avenges her husband, the ungrateful and impious **oath-breaker**⁶⁷⁰ in her eyes, and the recovery of her honour: no one dishonest to her can survive unscathed.⁶⁷¹ The importance of oath to her, repeatedly mentioned from the beginning of the play, is culminated in its performance on stage. We may assume that the tragedians prepared the audience for its materialisation on stage.

⁶⁶⁶ Palmer, B., Robert, "An Apology for Jason: A Study of Euripides' *Medea*", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 2, (1957), p. 50.

⁶⁶⁷ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). p. 7, 10; Tessitore, "*Medea* and the Problem of Spiritedness", (1991). p. 13.

⁶⁶⁸ The Periclean law of 451/450 B.C. considered children as legitimate only when both parents were Athenian citizens. There were three categories of illegitimate children: when both their parents were slaves, one of the parent was non-citizen or when they were the offsprings of an adulterous union: Palmer, "An Apology for Jason", (1957). p. 50.

⁶⁶⁹ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). pp. 1-24.

⁶⁷⁰ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). p. 13.

⁶⁷¹ Boedeker, "Euripides' *Medea* and the Vanity of Logoi", (1991). p. 95.

Unfortunately, Jason never understood that the oldest doctrine of the oath that stood like the primeval pillar in Medea's world would drive her whole being towards his destruction.

the action is precipitated by Jason's violation of an agreement which he made with Medea⁶⁷²

Her heroic temper, unable to stand shame leads the foreign princess to such extreme feelings that drive her to add her own children

to the holocaust ... because it seems to have replaced the true vengeance act, the killing of Jason.⁶⁷³

Yet, as we will see later on, there are more important issues for this decision of hers at stake than just ill-will. Although Euripides' *Medea* seems to embody few rites at a first glance, the careful reading of the tragedy rebuts the first impression. As the story unfolds, fragments of rites prove to be essential for the dramatic development of the play.

Reading the Play

The play opens with the Nurse's recollection of Medea's travels and adventures on distant lands. This back story shows that Medea's devotedly search for a life of glory with great zeal and her romantic love delineate the past of a **hero**. And now, after committing atrocious crimes on Jason's behalf, even killing her own brother, he has left her for a new wife. The nurse cries for her and wishes Jason had never gone for the Golden Fleece. In short, the prologue introduces us to the driving force of the story, elucidating the type of wedding Medea has and what the **nuptial oaths** mean to her:

NURSE
invokes the mighty assurance of his sworn right hand (20-21)

Medea and Jason's **wedding** was outside the norms of the Athenian society as suggested by Burnett, Flory and Boedeker. The bride offered herself to the groom of

⁶⁷² Flory, Stewart, "Medea's Right Hand: Promises and Revenge", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-), Vol. 108, (1978).p. 69-70.

⁶⁷³ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). p. 7, 10; Tessitore, "Medea and the Problem of Spiritedness", (1991). pp. 593, 595.

her own accord;⁶⁷⁴ they *both* held their **right hands** and **promised** themselves to one another under the power of other goddess⁶⁷⁵ and in the name of her grandfather, the god Helios.

The oaths were almost certainly taken in the name of Helios, and Helios oversees the punishment.⁶⁷⁶

On vase paintings, the groom is depicted to be holding the bride's passive left wrist in his hand. However, Flory presents a different aspect in Medea's case.

Both the handclasp between Jason and Medea and the agreement it represents are extraordinary according to the *mores* of fifth-century Athens. No Athenian woman could enter into such a contract on her own behalf ... The pledges (possibly with a handclasp) attendant upon a betrothal (*εγγύειν*) passed between prospective groom and father-in-law, not between man and woman.⁶⁷⁷

This **handshake**, Flory states, was more than an *eggyen* to marriage. It can be compared to a pact between two parties, like "a political alliance", in which Jason must have sworn a permanent marriage with Medea and she, for her part, must have promised whatever help she could offer Jason, and children.⁶⁷⁸ Burnett's suggestion is succinct when she states that

These two were united as two states might be ...[also] as two members of a secret society might be, bound together by common crimes ... and each sworn to put their common interest over that of kin (cf. 506-8). Any failure of active support, any realignment meant betrayal, unless it was commonly agreed upon (586-87).⁶⁷⁹

Her manly and methodical mind is structured for clear words. She considers their union as a contract between equals, confirmed by their handshake.⁶⁸⁰ Therefore, it is almost certain that she is honest when she says in the their first meeting that she would stand by him and support him silently if he had talked to her first about his plans.

⁶⁷⁴ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). p. 13.

⁶⁷⁵ Boedeker, "Euripides' Medea and the Vanity of Logoi" (1991). p. 95.

⁶⁷⁶ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 68, No. 1, (1973), p. 14.

⁶⁷⁷ Flory, "Medea's Right Hand", (1978). p. 70.

⁶⁷⁸ Cowherd, E., Carrie, "The Ending of the "Medea"", *The Classical World*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (1983), p. 130.

⁶⁷⁹ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). p. 13.

⁶⁸⁰ Mueller, "The Language of Reciprocity", (2001). p. 489: Mueller's discussion on Medea's heroic temperament is quite illuminating.

MEDEA

If you were not a knave, you ought to have gained my consent before making this marriage, not done it behind your family's back. (586-587)

This gesture would further validate their wedding to her eyes, and make her feel like an equal partner; or becomes his *kyrios* trespassing again into a male's duty. But Jason did not want to jeopardize his plans! He was afraid of her and he believed that she would never let him proceed with this marriage.

JASON

Fine support, I think, would you have given to my proposal if I had mentioned the marriage to you (588-589)

After drawing a portrait of a woman who takes the liberty to make her own wedding arrangements herself and her unstoppable temperament, the Nurse introduces us to an opposite picture of hers, a **plaintive** Medea at the backstage. Medea has been inconsolable since Jason left her, she says, and she **curses** the moment she chose Jason over her father, helped him get the Golden Fleece, and had given up her home and family for him. She is crying her heart out lying on the ground facing the earth because her love for Jason has also cost her the loss of every connection with her family and her country.

NURSE

She lies fasting, giving her body up to pain, spending in ceaseless weeping all the hours since she learned that she was wronged by her husband, neither raising her face nor taking her eyes from the ground. She is as deaf to the advice of her friends as a stone or a wave of the sea, saying nothing unless perchance to turn her snow-white neck and weep to herself for her dear father, her country, and her ancestral house. (24-33)

Her **lamentation** though creates contradictory feeling to the Nurse: she certainly feels sorry for her but she insinuates her fear of what this fierce and vengeful woman with a violent heart might react. Sounding like a wild animal in a cage, the Nurse worries that only something unspeakably awful would tranquilize her tempest of anger:

NURSE

Her temper is violent, and she will not put up with bad treatment (I know her) (38-39)

For she is dangerous. I tell you, no one who clashes with her will find it easy to crow in victory. (44-45)

Nobody seems to know better her wild temperament than the Nurse. The Nurse believes that her mistress' temperament may even turn against her own sons. She repeatedly expresses her fear for the children's safety and asks the Tutor to keep them away from her.

When the Tutor enters with the bad news of her banishment, she is more horrified. The worried nurse **curses** Jason for betraying his family and his indifference to his boys' fate and asks the Tutor to keep the children away from Medea.

At that moment, Medea is heard **mourning** for the first time from off stage and now the audience begins to understand the fears of the Nurse. If there were any doubts of the Nurse's truthfulness, Medea voice cancels any hesitations.

(within, sung) Oh, what a wretch am I, how miserable in my sorrows! Ah ah, how I wish I could die! (96-99)

When next she is heard **cursing** Jason, the children, and the whole royal house to ruin, her emotional state becomes clear. The curses she hurls may be nothing but a natural reaction for such an untamed creature but the nurse takes them literally:

MEDEA

O accursed children of a hateful mother, may you perish with your father and the whole house collapse in ruin! (113-115) *aiâi* [Aah!]

(*sung*) May I one day see him and his new bride ground to destruction, and their whole house with them, so terrible are the unprovoked wrongs they dare to commit against me! (163-165)

Then, for the first time in her life, she inveighs against Jason for all her misfortunes.⁶⁸¹

The Nurse is really agitated by her curses. She sends the boys inside and warns them not to go near their mother in the mood she is:

Just as I said, dear children. Your mother is stirring up her feelings, stirring up her anger. Go quickly into the house, and do not come into her sight or approach her, but beware of her fierce nature and the hatefulness of her wilful temper! (98-104)

There is no doubt that Medea has sound reasons to mourn. She is abominable to her country and she has no future to hope for her children and herself. She unexpectedly

⁶⁸¹ Willink, C., "Euripides' Medea 131-213", *Mnemosyne*, Vol. 56, No. 1, 2003, p. 37.

finds herself in an unwanted situation forced to a gloomy prospect for which there is nothing she can do about the forthcoming threat but lament.

MEDEA

(sung) Oh, what sufferings are mine, sufferings that call for loud lamentation! (111-113)

She is heard groaning and spitting accusations against her husband and the royal family as far as the city, a fact that disturbs the citizens and makes the Chorus enter eager to see how she is doing.

CHORUS (Entrance)

I have heard the voice, I have heard the cry, of the unhappy woman of Colchis: is she not yet soothed? Tell me, old woman, for still within my double-gated house I heard her lamentation. It is no joy I feel at this house's misfortunes since I have shared the cup of friendship with it. (131-137)

Her cries and her wish to die are the answer to their inquiry:

MEDEA

(sung) What profit any longer for me in life? Ah, ah! May I find my rest in death and leave behind my hateful life! (143-147)
aiai

The Chorus resents her desire to encounter death and tries to console her, but without any success. She is so absorbed by her unhappiness that she does not listen to them. In Medea's mind, no promise was enough unless it was sanctified with what she considered most sacred to her, the **oath** in the eyes of the gods. Naturally then, Medea loudly cries from the backstage and calls her divine witnesses, first Themis⁶⁸² and then Artemis, to testify the breaking of the oaths she had bound Jason with, and her pain as a result of Jason's betrayal.

(sung) O mighty Themis and my lady Artemis, do you see what I suffer?

I who have bound my accursed husband with mighty oaths? (160-162)

The chorus empathise with her and ask the Nurse to bring her out in an attempt to talk some sense into her. They understand that it was 'natural' for Medea to be

⁶⁸² Themis (Divine Law) was one of brides of Zeus. She bore him six daughters, the three Horai (Seasons) and three Moirai (Fates). Together they represented the establishment of natural law and order. Themis was the goddess of divine law: the primal, unwritten laws governing human conduct which were first established by the gods of heaven: *The Oxford classical dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

unrestrained in her expression of her sorrow, like a **Phrygian or a Mysian dirger**, who above all people were the most 'given to lamentation'.⁶⁸³ What is hard for them to realize is that the feeling of impotence for a person who was a princess in her country is so infuriating that it can turn into upsetting war signs.

CHORUS

I have hear her loud groans, the shrill accusations she utters against her husband who betrayed her bed (205-207)

(*Note:* The translation does not include this first word of the chorus. He writes the translation "loud groans" but it does not correspond to the phonetic association of the word 'λαχάν', which connotes war)

Medea's mourning gradually turns into wrath and wrath is expressed with **curses** in her case to create suspense.

Medea's arsenal includes also the language of blame. Her threats, curses, and bitter laments dominate the prologue and parodos ... Medea's voice is a "cloud of lamentation" which will soon ignite, as her anger increases (106-8). ... but more often she directs her anger against Jason and everyone connected with him ...⁶⁸⁴

Therefore, when Medea finally appears on stage she is expected to look drifted in her grief and anger. Surprisingly though, the person who appears on stage is not convulsed with grief; on the contrary seems to be fully self-possessed. Through her marvelous monologue, Euripides presented Medea as the mouthpiece of all emancipated Greek women and of the state of the alien in a foreign land. The etymology of her name, which means "think",⁶⁸⁵ suggests that Euripides must have had something more to say with this play of art. In fact, she is so much in control that she wittily manages to extract the women's solemn **promise of silence**.

At this point, her high-powered presence in contrast to her excessive mourning at the backstage inevitably raises the primal latent suspicion that everything so far was her design to manipulate the women and obtain their help. Further to this, the fact that she turns her cries into an oriental dirge can be interpreted as her premeditated plan to spin the conditions of retribution she does not know yet; all she is certain of is that

⁶⁸³ Page, *Medea*, 1976, p. xix.

⁶⁸⁴ Boedeker, "Medea and the Vanity of Logoi", (1991). p. 100.

⁶⁸⁵ (μηδεία, μηδέομαι = σκέφτομαι) (*medeia, medeomai = skeftomai (think)*)

she will clear her name. This usually ignored promise of silence, which equals to the validity of an **oath**, is responsible for the non-interference of the women at every step of Medea's revenge and for the delay of their reaction during the unbearable moment when the infanticide takes place at the end of the play.⁶⁸⁶

At that moment, Creon comes to pronounce Medea's exile. In her effort to delay her departure for one day, she turns to the rite of **supplication**. Twice in the play she makes use of the ritual as soon as her efforts to persuade softly for a favour faces denial or hesitation. Therefore, when she meets Creon she first tries to dissuade him gently and let her permanently live in Corinth but he unshakably orders her to leave his city with her two children immediately. Medea alarms Creon and he would definitely rather kill her if he were not afraid of the *miasma* he would drawn upon his city. Therefore, he chooses to exile her instead, condemning her to a certain death outside the border of his city. Her doubly grave position is lamented by the Chorus who foresee the destiny of an outcast, especially a woman who is alienated from everybody.

CHORUS

[Unhappy woman.] Ah ah, crushed by your misfortunes,
where will you turn? What protector of strangers will you
find, what house, what land, to save you from calamity? A
god has cast you, Medea, into a hopeless sea of troubles. (357-363)

Medea then tunes her behavior to pleading for a twenty-four-hour respite in the country in order to prepare her departure properly. So she kneels, takes hold of his hand to establish physical contact and begs him as a suppliant:

Do not, I beg you by your knees and by your newly wedded
daughter! (324)

Although he denies her the right of a suppliant which raises Medea's complaint,

MEDEA

But will you banish me without the regard due a suppliant? (326)
and gets annoyed with her persisting effort,

CREON

Why then are you still applying force and clinging to my hand? (339)

⁶⁸⁶ Fletcher, Judith, "Women and Oaths in Euripides", *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 1, Ancient Theatre (2003), p. 35.

he finally falls for her entreaty, although he will soon prove to be right to feel alarmed for yielding to her beseeching.

Page states that her kneeling in front of Creon, or Aegeus later, is just because oriental people accepted authority without question or that her reaction to false promises is childish.⁶⁸⁷ His suggestion though is rebutted by Medea herself when she confides in the chorus that she knows well the rules of the game for *hikesia* and uses it for her own advantage.⁶⁸⁸

Do you think I would ever have fawned on this man unless I
stood to gain, unless I were plotting? (368-369)

Medea never lets the reader forget that she is a proud princess, a powerful witch, a priestess, and since of divine origin she has gods to protect her. As the story progresses, she unfolds such a multi-faceted personality that nobody expects her to bend her head for anything unless everything is at stake. The reader realizes that the words of the nurses turn pale compared to her appearance on stage. After all, as royalty herself, she was used to *be supplicated*, as Jason himself did when he needed her help to acquire the Golden Fleece.

O right hand of mine, which you often grasped
Together with my knees, how profitless was the suppliant
grasp upon me of a knave (496-497)

After Creon's exit, Medea pulls herself together and starts rising like a fearful Fury. In front of the chorus she ponders various ways to eliminate the royal house.

She wishes she slaughtered them herself but she cannot risk to be caught and be the laughing stock to her enemies. Therefore, with her inborn wisdom of magic and acquired abilities,⁶⁸⁹ she decides to do it in a more cunning way, with poison.

If she takes this
finery and puts it on, she will die a painful death ... with such poison will I
smear these gifts. (783-789)

⁶⁸⁷ Page, 1976, p. xix.

⁶⁸⁸ Boedeker, "Medea and the Vanity of Logoi", (1991). p. 98.

⁶⁸⁹ Medea was born into this magic-filled kingdom. Her mother died giving birth to her, and her older sister nursed her. Her aunt Circe (famous for turning men into pigs in *The Odyssey*) taught her how to call upon the gods to aid her sorcery: *Encyclopaedia Helios*, 1947.

Yet, she knows no Greek city would give her refuge because she would be **polluted** with murder,⁶⁹⁰ so she decides to wait a little longer until she finds a solution. She uses this delay though to exercise her **witchcraft** and poison the presents with the help of Hecate. Themis, the Goddess of Prayers, Artemis, the Treasurer of the Oaths of Zeus, Zeus Horkios, Hecate and Helios are all gradually **invoked** as her witnesses to this disrespect of the divine law of promise. The calling takes place on stage, but the actual performance of the **spell** off stage. Sorcery was a non-Greek practice, but we can deduce that, similar to a curse, it was not publicly accepted, it was characterized by stealth, performed at night, away from the sight of other people and in remote places, as in real life.

MEDEA

By the goddess I worship most of all, my chosen helper
 Hecate, who dwells in the inner chamber of my house,
 none of them shall pain my heart and smile at it! Bitter and
 grievous will I make their union and bitter Creon's mar-
 riage alliance and his banishment of me from the land!
 Come, Medea, spare nothing of the arts you are mistress of
 as you plot and contrive! (395-403)

The women are horrified by her plan but they are also enthralled by her refusal to be wronged by men. Their ode while she is offstage show that they feel powerful and fearless, just like Medea, perhaps for the first time in their lives. What is more, they live vicariously through her and in taking her revenge she avenges the crimes committed against all womankind.

CHORUS

Backward to their sources flow the streams of holy rivers,
 and the order of all things is reversed: men's thoughts have
 become deceitful and their oaths by the gods do not hold
 fast. (410-413)

The magical power of an oath has gone, and Shame is
 no more to be found in wide Hellas: she has taken wing
 to heaven. (439-441)

It would be really tempting to suggest that their incredible ode, especially the first part of it about the reversal of universal balance *is* their amplification to her spell.

⁶⁹⁰ See Miasma and Purification in Appendix II.

As soon as they finish, Jason enters and their confrontation is similar to the fight of two alpha-males for ruling the herd. One after the other the arguments are debated but they come to a dead end. Two remarks characterize their collision. If she were a Greek woman Jason would have divorced her by simply sending her to her father with all her dowry. But she is not; therefore Jason tries to send her away with a money offer. In Mueller's view it is as if he is giving her back her dowry. This offer, if accepted, would verify the dissolution of their **marital *philia***, for which Medea has become abominable to her country.⁶⁹¹ In a further perverted way, Jason seems willing to take the place of her *kyrios*, now he has a new life, who finances her with a 'dowry' for the search of another husband in another place. Medea, unfortunately for him, is too perceptive and sees through him, so she denies his financial support. She is in no way going to let him lower her to the status of illegitimate wife, and, more importantly, let him forget his promises when he needed her.

The second ritualistic reference goes to the use of Aphrodite in one of his arguments. There is this point when he supports that Medea helped him not out of her own free will but under Aphrodite's influence. Now only concubines and slave women turned to Aphrodite for help. So Jason insidiously tries to place her in the status of a concubine. But Medea cannot be easily tricked, if at all, and rejects it with reasons; otherwise all her legal claims from her husband would be cancelled.⁶⁹²

After this first heated meeting the Women of Corinth **invoke** *Kyprida, Aphrodite*, and **pray** to her never to let them feel that passionate disastrous *Eros*, Love. As with most prayers, they finish it with a **curse** against anyone who does not stand by them with love, implying of course Jason, too.

CHORUS

May dread Aphrodite never cast contentious wrath and insatiable quarrelling upon me and madden my heart with love for a stranger's bed! (639-643)

May that man die unloved who cannot honour his friends, unlocking to them his honest mind! To me at any rate he shall never be friend. (659-662)

⁶⁹¹ Mueller, "The Language of Reciprocity", (2001). pp. 476, 478, 480.

⁶⁹² Mueller, "The Language of Reciprocity", (2001). p. 486.

This specific prayer of theirs to Aphrodite acquires great significance if we connect it with Jason's attempts earlier. For only once in the play, it raises the ignored issue of the social status of the female chorus; the fact that the women are more likely to be concubines or slaves instead of legitimate women of Corinth.

Medea is left alone on stage more determined than ever. Jason has instilled her hatred and now his arrogant attitude is the last drop. She has the means, the poisonous presents, but she must find a residence before the accomplishment of her grave plans. And the answer comes when least expected, in the face of Aegeus.

Aegeus passes by on his return to Athens from Delphi. He is childless and wanted to ask the Pythia how to have an heir. The response from the **oracle** was as usual obscure, so he is on his way to meet the king of Troizen, Pittheas, Pelop's son, who is known to have the ability to explain them. His **greeting** in a friendly manner, possibly with his right hand, lightens up the gloomy atmosphere:

Medea, I wish you joy: no one knows a better way than this
to address a friend. (663-664)

After telling her about his visit to Delphi he notices her *now* gloomy and tear-stained face and requests to know the reason. To her relief he also finds Jason's act shameful, and his reaction gives Medea the opportunity to ask for a favour. By referring to her position as a foreign woman with no one and no place to turn to,⁶⁹³ she **implores** him to accept her in Athens:

But I beg you by your beard and by your knees and I
make myself your suppliant: have pity, have pity on an un-
fortunate woman, and do not allow me to be cast into exile
without a friend, but receive me into your land and your
house as a suppliant.(708-713)

So she kneels and touches his knees and his beard. To make her **supplication** effective, she aims at his vulnerable heartstring, reserving a promise of children for the end.

You do not know what a

⁶⁹³ Fletcher, "Women and Oaths in Euripides", (2003). p. 33: Fletcher shows how Medea was so capable of using the rhetorical skill that she manages to persuade everyone to grant her requests that lead her to infanticide.

lucky find you have made of me. I will put an end to your childlessness and cause you to beget children, for I know the medicines to do so. (714-715)

Aegeus seems to respect the right of a suppliant⁶⁹⁴ but it is her **promise** for an heir that provokes his immediate offering of hospitality,⁶⁹⁵ but without her children:

You must go on your own, then, from this land. I wish to be blameless in the eyes of my hosts as well. (727-730)

This second case of Medea's supplication is followed by the request for an **oath**. This is the live proof that it was habitual of her to demand an oath from men to seal their promises to her.⁶⁹⁶ Her obsession on the power of oath-taking also suggests that she does not trust that laws, in this case the law of **hospitality**, are adequate to protect her:⁶⁹⁷

It shall be so. But if you were to give me a promise of this, I would have all I could wish from you. (731-732)

Because the oath is so important to her heroic temperament, one is actually taking place on stage to prove its significance. Following Boedeker's observation that the procedure of the oath-taking is enacted before the audience,⁶⁹⁸ it is as if the onlookers are added to the invoked divine witnesses. As Hall states,

tragedies show crimes being committed and ask their audiences, like judges and juries, to assess the moral issues, attribute blame, and authorise punishment.⁶⁹⁹

The solemn oath in Aegeus' scene forms "the most religious part of the entire play".⁷⁰⁰ The Athenian king is willing to swear after her dictation, to assure Medea's feeling that his commitment is in force and pronounce his punishment in case he breaks it:

⁶⁹⁴ Mueller, "The Language of Reciprocity", (2001). p. 488.

⁶⁹⁵ Hanson, O., De G., J., "The Secret of Medea's Success", *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 12, No. 1, (1965), p. 59.

⁶⁹⁶ For the similarities of the oaths between Jason-Medea and Aegeus-Medea see: Dunkle, "The Aegeus Episode", (1969), p. 99.

⁶⁹⁷ Dunkle, J., Roger, "The Aegeus Episode and the Theme of Euripides' *Medea*", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 100, (1969), p. 98.

⁶⁹⁸ Boedeker, "Euripides' Medea and the Vanity of Logoi", (1991). p. 98.

⁶⁹⁹ Hall, Edith, "Murder and stage history: Medea's State of Mind and Criminal Law", p. 1, Lecture (in German) at the Berlin Nationaltheater, March 2007. < <http://www.edithhall.co.uk/articles> > (Accessed on Sep. 2011).

⁷⁰⁰ Musurillo, "Euripides' *Medea*: A Reconsideration", (1966). p. 59.

I swear by Earth, by the holy light of Helios, and by all the
gods that I will do as I have heard from your lips. (752-753)

The punishment that befalls mortals who are godless. (755)

Only after he swears by the Gods, Medea feels safe that she indeed has a place to go where she will not be banished from or given to her enemies. For the first time in the play, she can relax. She herself admits that on his exits:

For this man, at the very point
where I was most in trouble, has appeared as a harbor for
my plans (768-769)

This much debated Medea-Aegeus⁷⁰¹ encounter reproduces the exchange of *charis*,⁷⁰² what Mueller call the language of reciprocity, that tones in with her ways: it denotes “friendship” which in Medea’s eyes equals to security and insinuates **wedding** features that project her character. Medea, once again, takes the male role of her “*kyrios*” and offers herself to him promising him children, in exchange of her integration at the hearth of his house. Her magical lore is the dowry she offers to the ‘groom’ for her safety,⁷⁰³ just as in the case of Jason back in Colchis.

Her faltering on the means of her revenge ends with Aegeus’ exit. Their encounter fabricates the conditions by which Medea will punish Jason for his betrayal.⁷⁰⁴ What is more, the Athenian king unintentionally suggests to Medea the type of revenge that was most suitable for Jason. Aegeus is the walking proof that a childlessness life causes great suffering to a Greek man⁷⁰⁵ and as such, she extends her plans from

⁷⁰¹ There have been discussions of its use in the tragedy: Dunkle, “The Aegeus Episode”, (1969). pp. 97-107; Naylor, H.Darnley, “The Aegeus Episode, Medea 663-763”, *The Classical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 6 (1909), pp. 189-190; Sfyroeras, Pavlos. “The Ironies of Salvation: The Aigeus Scene in Euripides’ Medea”, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 90, No. 2, (1994 - 1995), pp. 125-142; Tessitore, A., “Medea and the Problem of Spiritedness”, (1991). pp. 587-601; Musurillo, “Euripides’ Medea: A Reconsideration”, (1966). pp. 52-74.

⁷⁰² *Charis*, in the language of fifth-century Greek tragedy, refers to a favor that is done with the expectation that repayment will be made, at some later point in time: Mueller, “The Language of Reciprocity”, (2001). p. 500, 489.

⁷⁰³ Sfyroeras, “The Ironies of Salvation”, (1994-1995). pp. 128-129. However, Sfyroeras is not right when he states that she asks for a refuge only for herself. Aegeus is very clear about accepting her alone without the children.

⁷⁰⁴ Fletcher, “Women and Oaths in Euripides”, (2003). p. 34.

⁷⁰⁵ Dunkle, “The Aegeus Episode”, (1969). p. 106; Hall, “Medea’s Mind and Criminal Law”, p. 9, [Accessed on Sep. 2011]; MacDonald, 2003, p. 100: “The sons are in the image and likeness of their father.”

avenging Creon and his daughter only, to the deprivation of Jason of every chance of future immortality of his blood.⁷⁰⁶

Aegeus teaches her how to employ the day's respite. ... He has hardly left the scene before the mask of injured innocent is put aside, and her voice rings loud with triumph: 'Men love their children: Jason's children must die.'⁷⁰⁷

In their short dialogue the women beg her to abort her revenge but she does not listen to their **supplications**. They must feel really trapped by their promise of silence as all they can do is watch the unforeseen events develop.

Jason returns after her request and Medea pretends she is very sorry for her previous behaviour. Their second meeting includes one religiously sanctioned social gesture and one twisted marital allusion. First, she pretends to show her regret by telling the children to take Jason's **right hand** and greet their father. The children's innocent happiness makes Medea **mourn** them for the first time, while they are alive. Here she takes her chance to ask him to persuade his new wife to allow the boys to stay with them. To show how sorry she is, she sends the divine presents she received on her wedding to the new wife hoping to change her mind, although Jason initially objects to that. By this action, she succeeds what Jason failed to do earlier with her: she takes the place of Jason's *kyrios* and gives him away with *her* presents as his dowry.

With Jason's acceptance, her plan moves to its final form. To Medea's pleasure one after the other, all the parties die, physically or emotionally and there is nobody left to **lament** them. Nonetheless, they all receive some sort of **mourning** prior to their death by the sympathetic Chorus, including Medea. It is the only **dirge** that offers some hope for a posthumous rest:

Now no more can I hope that the children shall live, no more. For already they are walking the road to murder. The bride will accept, will accept, unhappy woman, ruin form of a golden diadem; about her fair hair with her own hand will place the finery of Death. (976-981)

And you, unlucky bridegroom, married into the house

⁷⁰⁶ Naylor, "The Aegeus Episode", (1909). p. 190.

⁷⁰⁷ Page, *Medea*, 1976, p. xviii.

of kings, all unwitting you bring destruction upon your
Children's life and upon your bride a dreadful death (990-994)

Your sorrows next I mourn, unhappy mother of the children (996-997)

Contrary to the sad mood, the tutor and the boys return happily to announce that her presents have fulfilled their destination. Now that her plan is getting to shape, Medea starts wavering between a mother's love and her decision to kill them, and briefly performs a proper **dirge** for their **premature death** now that Jason is not watching. She takes their right hand, hugs the boys tightly, and **laments** for the things she will never have the chance to perform for them as a mother on their wedding day:

before I have the enjoyment of you and see you
happy, before I have tended to your baths and your wives
and marriage beds and held the wedding torches aloft.
How wretched my self-will has made me! It was all in vain (1025-1029)

She then bemoans her lonely old age and her unattended corpse when her time comes:

Truly, many were the hopes that I, poor fool, once had in
you, that you would tend me in my old age, and when I
died, dress me for burial with your own hands, an enviable
lot for mortals. (1031-1035)

Of the things she says, we can deduce two observations: helping the preparation of the groom and his bride was not a Greek custom for a mother-in-law. Moreover, the image of her sons dressing up her dead body is similarly strange, because she ascribes Greek female duties to males, specifically her sons. This is a reversal of the norm, and it may be intended to suggest either that Medea comes from a matriarchal society where men were also involved in a burial or to stress her manly attitude. In this scene, too, Medea reveals her prophetic abilities when in between her dirge she sees the princess' death in a **trance** predisposing the imminent gruesome description of the messenger.

Like mourning, **wedding to death** is more obvious from this point until the end of the play. Every character that crosses the boundaries of Medea-Jason's conjugal union ends up in a deadly net.

As soon as the upset messenger arrives she **calls him a friend**⁷⁰⁸ and asks for a detailed description of their death, although she has envisioned them during her lamentation. So, is it possible that there is another reason apart from Aeschylus' intention to inform his audience? Is it because she takes delight in that, or is it her attempt to postpone for some minutes the killing of her sons?

The first tragic victim is the king's daughter who **weds to a terrible death**.⁷⁰⁹ The princess gives the feeling of a happy but spoilt young girl who has just married the man of her dreams. However, she does not accept Jason's children. Her reaction when she sees them bringing the presents is more than mere dislike.

MESSENGER
 she veiled her eyes and
 turned her white cheek away, disgusted at seeing the children come in. (1147-1149)

The **wedding presents** the new couple received on the *epavlia*, the day after, from friends and relatives were meant to wish them a prosperous life. Medea's presents though serve a more malign purpose. We learn now what kind of magic she has performed earlier. The finely woven gown and the golden diadem are meant to bedazzle the princess and lure her let the children stay in Corinth, a task easily achieved. The young woman filled with enthusiasm puts on the smeared with poison items on as soon as she is left alone in her chamber, and admires herself parading about in her chamber entranced by the way they looked on her.

Quickly though, the poison starts to affect her and after she gets extremely pale she faints. Her slave thought that she was possessed by a god and **ululates**, to praise the god:

⁷⁰⁸ Friendship was religiously sanctioned in ancient Greece such as other social relationships. Hospitality was one way to become a friend with someone. Medea however considers a friend anyone who is on her side. That is why the nurse in the prologue stresses that her friends have nothing to fear contrary to her enemies. Medea herself calls the women of Corinth 'friends' when she manages to get their oath, too. Nevertheless, being always mistrustful, she requires as it is shown sanctioned promises in order to fully trust someone. For the vital role of *philia* in Greek tragedy see: Belfiore, Elizabeth S., *Murder among friends: violations of philia in Greek tragedy*, New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

⁷⁰⁹ Rehm, 1994.

MESSENGER

raised a festal shout to the god, (1171-3)

Musurillo uses the word *ολολυγή* (*ololyge*), the religious cry people raised during the **sacrificial** blow that killed the animal. However, when she sees the foam coming out from her mouth she screams in “**lamentation** and alarm”.⁷¹⁰

until she saw the white foam coming between her
lips and her eyes ... she raised a wail in
answer to her former shout. (1175-1176)

The golden wreath stuck tightly on her head whereas the fine-woven mantle covered up her body and they both burn the poor girl to a wed to death. In a corruptive way, the poisonous mantle became her shroud and the golden wreath the one a maiden-bride was buried with.

MESSENGER

For she was being attacked with a double pain. The
golden circlet about her head shot forth a terrible stream
of consuming fire, and the fine-spun gown, gift of your
sons, was eating into the wretched woman’s white flesh. (1185-1189)

The King rushed into his daughter’s room just in time to see her dreadful death. In his shocking sorrow and terror, he performs the basic **funerary** steps: he embraces his lifeless daughter, kisses her and laments her in tears.

MESSENGER

And at once he groaned aloud and, throwing his arms
about her, kissed her and said, “O unhappy daughter,
which of the gods has destroyed you so shamefully and has
bereft me of you, me, an old man at death’s door? Oh, may
I die with you, my daughter!” (1205-1201)

As with all **laments** of parents in tragedies, and in their actuality, he also cries for his childless old age when there will be nobody to prepare him for burial. The norm is reversed and the old buries the young.

MESSENGER

and has bereft me of you, me, an old man at death’s door? (1209)

(*Note: The translation is inaccurate. He wonders who will bury him now he is childless: “τις τον γέροντα τύμβον ορφανόν σέθεν τίθησιν;”*)

⁷¹⁰ Musurillo, “Euripides’ *Medea*: A Reconsideration”, (1966). p. 71.

Creon's mourning references are important to be sustained in a production; otherwise Jason's downfall will not look as pitiful as it really was for the real Athenians of the time. Nevertheless, Medea's revenge is not complete yet. Creon's wish to die with his daughter is fulfilled as the dress is treacherously spell-bound to kill anyone who touches it. Being trapped in this nightmarish embrace, the king follows his daughter to the grave.

MESSENGER

But when he had ceased
from his wailing and lamenting and wanted to raise up his
aged body to his feet, he was stuck fast to the fine-spun
dress, as ivy clings to laurel-shoots, and a terrible wrestling
ensued. For he wanted to get up again, but she held him
fast and prevented him. And if he used force, he would rip
his aged flesh from his bones....

They lie side by side in death, the daughter and her
old father, a sight to make one weep. (1211-1221)

The messenger's hair-raising account is also central to the ignored destructive importance of the **wedding presents** that sees the light in Mueller's interesting discussion on their meaning.⁷¹¹ Coming from the Golden Fleece, the Sun god gave them to her as a dowry. When Jason accepts the presents, he, without knowing it, acknowledges the legality of their wedding in Medea's eyes. Ironically, the same objects that confirmed her marriage, destroys the second marriage of Jason and dissolve Medea's.⁷¹² As it turns out, it is Medea who ends their union using the same items that sealed it.

There is a second issue that is clearly realized after the Messenger's speech: that the God Helios, being invoked as a **witness** to their wedding **oaths**, is entitled to enforce the punishment on all parties who fail to keep their promises.⁷¹³

The honor of the Sun's line has to be defended against the disrespect of upstarts (406), and he provides the gift that baits the murder trap (954), and then the escape that makes his granddaughter's vengeance perfect in the end.⁷¹⁴

⁷¹¹ Mueller, "The Language of Reciprocity in Euripides", (2001). pp. 471-50.

⁷¹² Mueller, "The Language of Reciprocity", (2001). pp. 490-492.

⁷¹³ See Piety and Impiety in Appendix II.

⁷¹⁴ Burnett, Anne, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 68, No. 1, (1973), p. 14.

King Creon insults the authority of oaths when he offers Jason his daughter, and his daughter seems to forget that Jason has committed himself with oaths to another woman. Therefore, royalty seems “to be a place that has forgotten the sanctity of oaths”,⁷¹⁵ and as such they attract his punishment. The transformation of the wedding presents into instruments of death leaves little doubt about his indirect involvement.⁷¹⁶

Medea exits without saying anything to kill her children. After she had designed her revenge she knew she had no other alternatives one way or the other. If she dragged them to exile with her she would drive them to a certain death.

to be without a city, or friends in any other city, especially for a woman,
was a virtual death sentence.⁷¹⁷

Her exile and its implications are difficult to be conceived by a western audience although the feeling of being completely alone, impotent and of having no one to turn to for help is not so unfamiliar. Then she was aware that if she went to Athens without her children, they would never be physically safe as potential heirs, especially if the princess had children of her own. She also did not trust that their own father would be willing or capable of protecting them against any danger. Finally, she knows well that the citizens of Corinth will even desecrate their graves if they find them in order to avenge their king and his daughter’s murders if she left them behind.

By Hell’s
avenging furies, I shall never leave my children for
my enemies to outrage! (1061)

(Note: The translation ‘Hell’ is not correct. The word ‘Αἴδη’ should be translated into ‘Hades’. It is the actual word which is not equivalent to the Christian ‘Hell’.)

Her decision never to abandon them is in absolute accord with her idiosyncrasy. After all, illegitimate children belonged to their mother in the Athenian society, and as a

⁷¹⁵ Burnett, “Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge”, (1973). p. 15.

⁷¹⁶ Mueller, “The Language of Reciprocity”, (2001). p. 490.

⁷¹⁷ Hall, “Medea's Mind and Criminal Law”, p. 9, (Accessed on Sep. 2011).

mother who consciously believes she has the right of life and death over them, she decides to **wed them to Hades**⁷¹⁸

I who gave them birth shall kill them. (1241)

Therefore, after a lot of struggling and self-debate between maternal tenderness and revenge, Medea finally acts out and offers her sons the underworld as their permanent residence, as her **wedding gift** to them. They will never be in danger from any human interference or vicissitude.⁷¹⁹

I must not, by
lingering, deliver my children for murder to a less kindly
hand (1238-1239)

She has **mourned** them and cried for them when she had second thoughts, took their right hands and embraced them and kissed them. Broadhead suggests that the three farewells offer Medea purification, *κάθαρσις* (*katharsis*), to her maternal emotions so that in the end, they were already gone before their physical death.⁷²⁰

After she exits, the chorus **prays** again. In their first prayer-invocation the women ask the gods to help Medea avenge her wrongdoers. Now that the end has come, the women call the Earth and the Sun for a different outcome⁷²¹ although they know the vanity of their hopes.

The cries of the children from inside must have shocked the women. They think of going inside on hearing their screams, but they are stopped by their vow of silence. Hard as it may be, the women seem to keep their promises better than the men in *Medea*.

This image is not available.

⁷¹⁸ Palmer, "An Apology for Jason", (1957). pp. 51-53.

⁷¹⁹ Segal, Charles, "On the Fifth Stasimon of Euripides' *Medea*", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 118, No. 2, (Summer, 1997), pp. 180.

⁷²⁰ Broadhead, H., "Euripides, *Medea* 1076-7", *The Classical Review*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 3/4, (1952), p. 137.

⁷²¹ Buttrey, "Accident and Design in Euripides' *Medea*", (1958). p. 9; Tessitore, "Euripides' *Medea* and the Problem of Spiritedness", (1991). p. 591.

This final scene of the play incorporates a density of hidden ritualistic allusions and fragments of the burial process. Everything has turned out exactly the way Medea wanted. Only Jason remains but he is an easy prey now. As the play moves to its finale, Jason enters outraged of the murders and seeks to kill Medea, only to be informed by the chorus of what had happened. This leaves him hopeless to Medea's pleasure who appears in her winged chariot high above him in the air with the two bodies on it, resembling to a goddess.⁷²² To Jason's disappointment, his **mourning** for his children's death, his **supplication** to bury them that interchange with accusations and **curses** can only provoke Medea's harsh responses:

JASON

Yes, and you also have grief and are a sharer in my misfortune.

MEDEA

Of course, but the pain is worthwhile if you cannot mock me. (1361-2)

Their intense stichomythia (1318-1414) ends with Jason's defeat. Unfortunately, he is not as 'lucky' as Creon. Medea relentlessly denies him the right to hold his children for the last time and bury them. Considering tragedy as a source for actual rituals, it seems that when children were involved, men probably literally **kissed them goodbye** and held them in their arms as has been performed in the case of Creon, and Medea.

JASON

Allow me to bury these dead children and to mourn them.

MEDEA

Certainly not. (1377-78)

Go home! Bury your wife! (1393-94)

JASON

Alas, how I long for the dear faces of my children, to enfold them in my arms.

(*Note:* The translation is not accurate. In the ancient text he asks to kiss their mouths "*φιλιου χρήζω στόματος παιδων*")

MEDEA

Now you speak to them, now you greet them, when before you thrust them from you.

(*Note:* The word 'greet' is wrong. She mentions the word "*ασπάζη*" which means embrace, enfold.

⁷²² Musurillo, "Euripides' *Medea*: A Reconsideration", (1966). p. 69.

JASON

By the gods, I beg you, let me touch the tender flesh of my children!

MEDEA

It cannot be. Your words are uttered in vain. (1399-1404)

Aegeus' experience has taught Medea well. Her retribution has completely deprived Jason from any future immortality in the Greek society.⁷²³ Medea inveigles to provoke his emotional and spiritual death that will lead to his physical extinction, by murdering the only people who would carry on his line.⁷²⁴ Illegitimate they may be, but they are better than nothing now he has no hope for legitimate ones.⁷²⁵ No woman would accept to marry him with the fear of Medea's retribution.

MEDEA

Your mourning has yet to begin. Wait until you are old! (1396)

She foreshadows His gloomy future she foreshadowed at the beginning of the tragedy is now complete:

But you,
as is fitting, shall die the miserable death of a coward,
struck on the head by a piece of the Argo, having seen the
bitter result of your marriage to me. (1386-1388)

She manages to put him in her shoes: she was supposed to wander aimlessly and die. Now Jason, with his Greek wedding, is stripped off his future: *oikos*, children or friends. All that he is left with is the *θρήνος* (*threnos*), lamentation, for his ruined life. Medea's **curse** at the beginning of the play has finally taken flesh and blood at the end.

There are some more hovering rituals after Medea's ascent to the sky. Now that she has cleared up her past, there is no one left alive to haunt her in the future. However, unfair or premature death, violent deaths especially, needed those special **purificatory rites** the Greeks performed to expiate the vengeful or restless souls and purge the pollution upon the living; otherwise, the *miasma* could affect the family and the generations to come, not to mention the whole society. This is why the Messenger ends his nightmarish account laying emphasis on the belief such brutal murders

⁷²³ Palmer, "An Apology for Jason", (1957). p. 53.

⁷²⁴ Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). p. 22.

⁷²⁵ Palmer, "An Apology for Jason", (1957). p. 53.

cannot go without some sort of repentance to avoid future punishment. That is exactly what Jason threatens her with, unable to believe that his sons are not alive.

They live, alas, as spirits to take vengeance on your crimes! (1371)

But Medea unabashed replies that the gods will let their young souls rest because they know well that he is the instigator. In an act that perfectly suits her character, she takes the two corpses to protect them and bury them properly. If she were Greek, she would perform the traditional cleansing sacrifice of a piglet. Yet, as a non-Greek woman, she chooses to perform a different kind of purgatory rites for their premature deaths, crossing the boundaries of the holy person.

I shall bury them with my own hand, taking
them to the sanctuary of Hera Akraia ... And
I shall enjoin on this land of Sisyphus a solemn festival
and holy rites for all time to come in payment for this un-
holy murder. (1378-1383)

Her announcement of the **establishment of a cult** places her at the same level of power and jurisdiction of a sacred person, a status that she seems to have held in her country. She proves to be more than a prince and a witch, if we consider the fact that only a priest could establish a rite or a festival in ancient Greece.⁷²⁶ More impressively, her triumphant escape stresses more than anything else her new **divine aura**. The *deus ex machina* usually bore a god or was brought by a god's intervention. In this case, it does not contain a divine presence. Extending Rees syllogism,⁷²⁷ it is as if Medea becomes a goddess herself. Tessitore puts it in different words. He believes that Euripides gradually made Medea look more than a mortal man. Especially at the end of the play as she stands far above Jason prophesizing his death, she looks terrible having passed beyond human proportions.⁷²⁸ In this light, Medea the priestess or the divine descendent has the authority to set up a new rite.

The final scene of the play bears a lot of **marital allusions** as well, in particular the **pre-wedding sacrifices** and the **transfer**. The only survivor of the play ascends to the

⁷²⁶ See Appendix II.

⁷²⁷ Rees, B., "Euripides, *Medea*, 1415-19", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 82, No. 2, (1961), pp. 180-81.

⁷²⁸ Tessitore, "Euripides' *Medea* and the Problem of Spiritedness", (1991). pp. 592.

skies in a winged chariot, instead of a cart pulled by mules, can be interpreted as her procession-transition to her new house. It is her wedding to a new beginning in another place, this time in Athens, after she has performed her twisted human **pre-wedding sacrifices** to the gods of marriage by killing Creon, his daughter, her sons and by leaving a futureless Jason.

However, Medea's 'sacrifices' to a new life have started long time ago, when she first fled in the night with her husband, Jason. When they left Colchis after deceiving her father, she also took her young brother *Absyrtus/Absyrtis* with her – other myths say he went after them. To prevent her father from catching them and bringing her back, Medea killed her sibling, chopped his body into pieces and threw it overboard Argo to force her father stop to retrieve his son's body members for a proper burial. This murder not only became Medea's first abhorrent pre-wedding sacrifice but it also banished her from her country forever. Her life in Greece though does not turn out to be what she expected.

Was not Medea a foreign sorceress who betrayed her father, dismembered her brother, murdered old Pelias? Years later, in Corinth, when Jason succumbed again to his passion for adventure with the daughter of the local king, another story of Jason and Medea begins.⁷²⁹

Therefore we may come to think that Jason is either too naïve or rather too confident of her love, not to fear her now that she is forcibly driven to begin a *new* life. Even though Jason remembers to stain her image by recalling her brother's murder in the play, he diligently forgets what Medea is willing to do for the ones she adores.

Not only the humans but everything that is connected to her past is destined to be extinguished by the pre-wedding **sacrificial fire**; or they take the place of the animal in a bloody sacrifice to the Chthonian Gods. Fire has always been ritualistically purifying in its essence. It burns away, literally or spiritually, anything that is transient and imperfect and leaves the soul free and immortal. In *Medea*, it is transformed into a destructive force that cleanses away everything and allows her to be reborn. The fire from the two bodies extends to the palace and it surrenders to the flames. We can only

⁷²⁹ Page, *Medea*, 1976, p. xvii.

imagine how awe-inspiring in the eyes of the ancient audience the scene with Medea taking off to the skies on the golden chariot driven by dragons with the fiery background must have been.

There is a final issue of interest which is usually ignored: that is Euripides' distorted use of the habit of **salutation**. The **right hand** played an important role in the lives of the ancient Greeks. They greeted the statues or signifiers of their gods, other human beings, sent a farewell to a dead person or made an oath by raising their right arm with the hand upright.⁷³⁰ Flory discusses the importance of the use of the right hand in Euripides' *Medea* in his very interesting article.⁷³¹ He extends it to touching that symbolises instead the end of trust, the deceit, the desire to avenge and murder.

First Jason's hand deceived Medea and broke his oath. Then Medea used it to touch first Creon when supplicating for a day's respite and then Aegeus for a refuge. Aegeus on the other hand took his oath by raising his right hand. It is also possible that he raised his hand to salute Medea when he met her (663-664). In her second meeting with Jason, Medea manipulates him by bidding the boys to greet their father:

Greet your father, speak to him and me,
Take his right hand. (895, 899)

When the children return from their ghastly mission at the palace, she asks them to give her their right hands to kiss them and cries for having to kill them:

Give me your right hand to kiss, my children, give them
to me! O hands and lips so dear to me (1071-1072)

Finally, Medea denies Jason the ultimate duty to touch the dead bodies of his sons as a sign of goodbye. It seems that the **hand and its touching**, which should express trust and friendship, bring in the end death and misery.

Euripides was revolutionary in his retelling of Medea's myth. The mental disorder attributed to Medea that leads her to infanticide is only the chorus' opinion. Medea herself offers other explanations: revenge, hopeless future and wrong choice of man.

⁷³⁰ Fairbanks, "Attitudes of Worship in Greece", (1897), pp. 98-111.

⁷³¹ Flory, "Medea's Right Hand", (1978). pp. 69-74.

Burnett offers a further parallelism, with Medea taking the form of an Erinys, a Fury, who punishes all the impious, hubristic, behaviour in order to regain her honour.

when Medea flies off in the end she will have something of the Hesiodic Nemesis (Erg. 200) about her departing figure, as well as something of the look of an erinys.⁷³²

Euripides is not only the father of the psychological drama, but he would deserve to be considered the forerunner of the field of psychology, showing great awareness of the importance of ritual in his own culture.

In the *Medea*, Euripides illustrates how persuasion, oaths, and relationships of supplication and protection comprise a universe of human expectations for trust and open communication among *φίλοι*.⁷³³

Euripides has his heroine use the living and the rituals for her survival, at any cost. Her supplications and Aegeus oath, except her silent mourning for her children, are means to manipulate them and this is probably the reason why they are performed in an almost complete form. This characteristic use of ritual activity in *Medea* is important to be conveyed in a production; otherwise her personality will not be fully exposed.

⁷³² Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge", (1973). pp. 13, 20.

⁷³³ Boedeker, "Euripides' Medea and the Vanity of Logoi", (1991). p. 112.

3.3. ORESTEIA⁷³⁴ – 458 B.C.

Introduction

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is the only surviving tragic trilogy. This unique sample offers us the chance to see the way Aeschylus processed rituals, in three consecutive plays.

The interconnections between marriages and deaths, between wedding motifs and funeral rites, play a crucial role in bringing that perception to its full, and fully problematic, dramatic life.⁷³⁵

The rites are interrelated in the spinning of the web of the trilogy in such a way that each one paves the way for a new meaning. Taplin's mirror scenes⁷³⁶ best explain their function in the trilogy as ritualistic fragments such as the exhibition of the dead bodies at the end of the first two tragedies or the use of fire at the beginning and the end of each tragedy, all corrupted, work to provoke dramaturgical associations and counteractions. What defines the performance of rituals is impiety that leads to sacrilege and the inevitable death to the characters. Narrated, or partially performed all rituals forward the action and predesignate the plot in the next play until the resolution of the story at the end of the third play, the *Eumenides*.

3.3.a. Agamemnon

The dominating rituals

The trilogy begins with *Agamemnon*, in which five major rituals that provide the matrix of the actions: the famous carpet scene; Cassandra's prominent priestess-like presence and her prophetic abilities; the display of the dead Agamemnon and Cassandra followed by Clytaemnestra's obstinate denial to offer proper burial to her husband. Equally important are first the narrated brutal sacrifice of Iphigenia that triggers Clytaemnestra into murder, and the queen's reference of purificatory sacrifices to those souls who died immaturely.

⁷³⁴ Aeschylus, *The Oresteia: Agamemnon, Libation Bearers, Eumenides*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2008.

⁷³⁵ Rehm, 1994, p. 58.

⁷³⁶ Taplin, 1978.

However, the audience watched only the last scene of the play in the production of TH.O.C., the time when Aegisthus and the queen appear at the palace door with the two dead bodies at their feet. This decision was probably taken because it is the improper burial process of Agamemnon that causes more murders in *Choephoroi*. To meet the production, the following analysis will focus on the last scene only. However, in order for the reader to judge the decision of the director and be more acquainted with the interconnection of the rituals in the next two tragedies, the full analysis of the rituals in the text of *Agamemnon* is analysed in Appendix IV.

Reading the Play

The palace doors open and Clytaemnestra, resembling a Fury, triumphantly appears with the two dead bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra at her feet.⁷³⁷ The **public exhibition** of the dead bodies was improper but the rite of *prothesis* was necessary for Clytaemnestra if she wanted to obtain the command of the city-state. What is worse, Agamemnon may have had his twisted preparatory wash alive but his **corpse is now dishonoured** as it is displayed unclean under the bloody stained robe cloak.⁷³⁸

As the queen describes the murder to the elders, she clearly shows that she exceeded the boundaries of piety when she gave him an extra third strike in honour of Zeus of the underworld, connecting it with the third **libation** after at symposiums. Instead of wine though, she used his blood:

I added a third stroke, in thanksgiving to the Zeus
of the underworld, the saviour of the dead, for the fulfilment of my prayers. (1385-1387)

Her repulsion of her husband is so deep that she was willing to **defile** his dead body with a real libation over it,⁷³⁹ if she could, as it was a norm after a sacrifice:

If it were possible to make a really appropriate libation over the corpse (1395)

⁷³⁷ Rehm, 1994, p. 44.

⁷³⁸ Seaford, "The Last Bath of Agamemnon", (1984). p.248.

⁷³⁹ Zeitlin, I., Froma, "Postscript to Sacrificial Imagery in the *Oresteia* (Ag. 1235-37)", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 97, (1966), p. 653.

To the Chorus' disappointment, she is in solid control showing no signs of remorse. The men really worry for the dead king's postmortem fate but subconsciously they know he will not receive a proper **burial**⁷⁴⁰ as befitted to a king and a husband; neither Cassandra. Otherwise they would not have so many questions:

Ió, ió, my king, my king,
How shall I weep for you? (1513-1520)

Who will bury him? Who will sing his lament? (1541)

The queen does not ignore the elders but promptly asserts her authority to deny him a proper burial. She explains clearly that Agamemnon lost his right for posthumous honours long ago when he crossed the limits of **a friend**, a *philos*, to an enemy, *echthros*, when he sacrificed his own daughter, Iphigenia.⁷⁴¹ Her murder, in the eyes of her mother, made him lose his status as the head of the family whose main duty was to protect its members from harm. Her reference to her daughter brings to the focus the connection between the two young women:⁷⁴² poor slaughtered Cassandra becomes Iphigenia's counterpart at the end of the play.⁷⁴³ After all, Clytaemnestra boasts that with her murder she avenged her daughter and blames the curse of the Atreides house for death after death. It is likely that Agamemnon takes the place of the animal in her mind as a perverted **sacrifice** to appease her daughter's soul. Or, as Fletcher suggests, it is the sacrifice she did not performed to guarantee the **oath** she

⁷⁴⁰ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). p. 518.

⁷⁴¹ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). p. 528.

⁷⁴² "By linking Cassandra and Iphigenia, Aeschylus brings together the manifold dames wreaked separately by Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and the audience views their respective fates accordingly.": Rehm, 1994, p. 52.

⁷⁴³ Winnington-Ingram, P., R., "Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1343-71", *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 4, No. ½, (1954), p. 30; Rehm, 1994, p. 50: It is evident that the sacrificial and the wedding motifs mix up to sharpen Cassandra's and Iphigenia's death. Both women are the victims, forced to wed Hades when they were supposed to live with their promised husbands. However, there are more differences in their murders, although Rehm sees these as correspondences. Only their wed to death match. Apart from that, Iphigenia was sacrificed whereas Cassandra was murdered but Iphigenia struggled for her life in contrast to Cassandra who, like a sacrificial victim, consented to her death. Iphigenia dies veiled in a manner of speaking covered with her robes while Cassandra enters the palace to meet her death leaving her veil to fall on the floor. Iphigenia was gagged, Rehm says "like an animal" but animals were not gagged in real life, so that she did not curse her executors, but Cassandra chooses to go inside in silence. There was no way for the prophetess to curse the house, as she knows first that it is already damned, secondly that her death is her revenge for Troy and lastly that she will be avenged in the future.

took to avenger her daughter, something we learn in the next play.⁷⁴⁴ In a more sinister view, it can be regarded as her pre-wedding sacrifices for she can now continue her life with Aegisthus, uninterrupted.

Clytaemnestra strongly believes that she is entitled to his throne. One of her male duties is to **conduct the funerary rites** and arrangements showing that she is now in control, saying sharply that the burial she prepares is more than enough for him.⁷⁴⁵

At our hand
he fell, at our hand he died, and our hand will bury him,
not to the accompaniment of grieving by those outside
the family (1553-1556)

With this announcement of hers, she performs another aberration of the customary rites: she ignores the prohibition of murderers to get involved in the funerals of their victims.

CHORUS
Will *you* dare to do it – after slaying
your own husband, to wail for him
and to perform, without right, a favour that will be no
favour
to his soul, in return for his great deeds?
Who that utters praises over the tomb
of a godlike man, accompanied by tears,
will do that task with sincerity of heart? (1542-1550)

But she is officially in power now. Standing alone on the stage, Clytaemnestra

without any male relative to direct her (Aegisthos has not yet arrived), states that Agamemnon's murderers will bury him, and then proceeds to dictate how the funeral will be performed: there will be no tears of lament from his household.⁷⁴⁶

She who killed him will bury him, but **without any tears**, in other words, without any lamentation. The elders are very disappointed but they are not insolent to the queen, compared to their heated encounter with Aegisthus. The queen enters and intervenes to soothe the tension politely and in absolute self-control announces that as long as Aegisthus **lights her hearth** she will reign with him.

⁷⁴⁴ Fletcher, Judith, "Oath in Oresteia", in *Horkos: The Oath in Greek Society*, ed. by Sommerstein Alan H. and Judith Fletcher, Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2007, p. 105.

⁷⁴⁵ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). pp. 521-2, 528.

⁷⁴⁶ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). p. 521

no fearful apprehension
 stalks my house, so long as the fire upon my
 hearth is kindled by Aegisthus and he remains loyal to me
 as hitherto; (1433-1436)

The hearth in every ancient Greek house symbolised the prosperity of the household and for this reason it was kept lit. Therefore, Clytaemnestra stresses the fact that as long as Aegisthus is by her side, they will both thrive. However, her behavioural pattern projects *her* as the ruler of her household. If we consider the fact that their union was sanctioned by a **wedding oath**,⁷⁴⁷ just like Medea's, Clytaemnestra possibly took the initiative, contrary to the customs, to offer herself to Aegisthus, a fact that makes her the hearth of her household and not Aegisthus.

What they both however do *not* take into account is that the blood on their hands requires **propitiation rites**, although they both commit murder upon their negligence. It is first mentioned on Agamemnon's return when the queen says that soldiers offer purification sacrifices and libations as soon as they returned home from war to protect themselves for the vengeful souls of their victims.

CLYTAEMNESTRA
 If the army should return without having of-
 fended the gods, the pain of the dead would be appeas-
 able, if no unexpected stroke of evil fate occurs. (345-7)

Clytaemnestra indirectly accuses Agamemnon that he has forgotten to pay his due to *her* daughter Iphigenia on his return, something which she herself also denies to do now.

by the
 fulfilled Justice that was due for my child, by Ruin and by
 the Fury, through whose aid I slew this man as hitherto; (1432-1433)

In the same way, when Aegisthus describes the repulsive dinner Atreas offered to his brother Thyestis⁷⁴⁸ he blames Atreas for doing nothing to appease the souls of his brothers. It seems that arrogance runs in the family but then again, he may believe that he is not the one who hit the blows.

⁷⁴⁷ Kells, "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", (1961). p.170.

⁷⁴⁸ Atreas cooked Thyestis' two sons and offered them to him. After he had eaten he told him what kind of meat was.

Having said that, we cannot but think that if Clytaemnestra had not exulted impiously⁷⁴⁹ over the dead bodies and offered Agamemnon a proper funeral, and if she had offered sacrifices to placate the soul and the gods for the double murder, there could be a chance to avoid death later on. This denial for proper burial triggers the action in the next tragedy.

⁷⁴⁹ See Appendix II for Impiety.

3.3.b. *Choepori*, Libation Bearers

Eight years pass by until Orestes attains young manhood and returns to Argos to avenge the death of his father. It is at this point that Aeschylus takes up the story in *The Libation Bearers*.

Agamemnon's disrespectful funeral is verified in *Choepori* in which the king's perverted burial has tormented his children.⁷⁵⁰ We learn therefore that:

- i. Agamemnon's body did not receive preparatory rites such as the closing of the eyes and mouth, bathing, clothing, and adornment.
- ii. He was denied *Prothesis*, although Hame mentions he has had a perverted one by Clytaemnestra who needed the public acknowledgement of his death for the complete transition of power over her hands.
- iii. He was not mourned since she decided to bury him without tears. Further to that, his young son Orestes was not allowed to **farewell his father** and Electra was locked up in the house to prevent her from mourning.
- iv. Agamemnon's *ekphora* was just a simple transport to the burial site without the ceremonial procession of family members, friends or the citizens of Argos, who were forbidden to attend its funeral procession.
- v. His corpse suffered a violent treatment since his extremities were cut off, and fastened around the neck and under the armpits. The ancient Greek murderers customary followed this practice to ensure that the ghost of the murdered person would not pursue and haunt them.⁷⁵¹
- vi. Finally, the customary *prosphagma*, the animal sacrifice, at the tomb is suggested to have taken place before his interment in the human form of Cassandra.

⁷⁵⁰ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). pp. 524-7.

⁷⁵¹ Medea, too, dismembered her brother to delay her father, who stopped to collect her brother's pieces in order to have a proper funeral.

The dominating rituals

The title of the play *Choephoroi*, or Libation Bearers, allows instant associations with the rite of *choes*, which consists half of the play. What prevails then is the bloodless liquid offering to the dead and the performance of a **libation-evocation** of Agamemnon's soul performed in the intense oriental manner by the chorus,⁷⁵²

This tragedy is acknowledged to consist the best literary example of the basic **funereal** rules practiced by the ancient Greeks. It includes:

the mourner's dedicating a lock of hair (226), dressing in black (11), pouring offerings at the tomb (87, 538), dedicating garlands (93), lamenting the dead with wailing (γῶος [*goos*] 322,330, 449, 502) and cries of grief (*kōkutos*, 150), singing the funeral dirge (*thrēnos* 334-53, 342), and striking their bodies and tearing their clothing in grief (22-31, 425-28).⁷⁵³

The libation scene especially (123-151) is generally characterised as the most detailed description of a *choe*,⁷⁵⁴ making it a valuable source in the study of the ancient Greeks' religious life. By nature then, *Choephoroi* is a play that clearly exhibits the traditional belief that a soul needs a proper burial otherwise it is restless.

Reading the Play

The play opens at the tomb of Agamemnon where Orestes, and Pylades by him, makes his **post-burial offerings** for the first time. First he **prays-invokes** Hermes the Soul-carrier first to become his ally, his father to bless him in this task, and Zeus whose will to avenge his father he must obey.

Hermes of the Underworld (1)

And on this grave-mound I make proclamation
to my father to hearken and hear me [an to aid me (4-5)

Zeus, grant that I may avenge the death of my father (18-19)

⁷⁵² "Cissia was the region (corresponding approximately to modern Khuzestan/al-Ahwaz in south-west Iran) in which lay the Persian capital, Susa": Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, Edited and translated by A. Sommerstein, 2008, n. 95, p. 265.

⁷⁵³ Rehm, 1994, p. 52.

⁷⁵⁴ Garland, 1994, p. 17.

After his invocations, Orestes places down two locks of hair as his post-burial offerings at Agamemnon's grave: one for the local river God Inachus thanking him for watching over him all these years, and the other in tribute to his dead father as a sign of mourning. The laying down of his lock may symbolically stand for three actions. The palpable post-funeral offering that connects the dead with the living is one of them,⁷⁵⁵ as a **pre-wedding sacrifice** and as a sign of a **rite of passage**, meaning that he has reached maturity and now he is ready to enter adulthood after the famous murder. The young man feels deeply sad for he was forbidden to pay his last respect to father and **lift his right hand up** goodbye during the funeral procession, the *ekphora*.

a lock of hair to Inachus in recompense
 For my nurture, and this second lock as a
 mourning-tribute [to you]
 for I was not present to grieve for your death, father, or to
 stretch out my hand when your body was carried from the house. (6-9)

Orestes is soon interrupted by the arrival of the chorus and hurries to hide. The black-dressed women, and his sister Electra among them, enter the stage bringing *choes*, *μελίγματα* (*meligmata*), a liquid mixture made of wine, honey and water from Clytaemnestra aiming at soothing the anger of Agamemnon after a dream she saw. The women show all the traditional **signs of mourning** for the unfortunate soul:

I have come from the house, having been sent
 to escort the drink-offerings with rapid beating of
 hands;
 my cheek stands out red with gashes,
 with furrows freshly cut by my nails ...
 the tearing sound of garments rent in grief
 has ruined their linen weave –
 the folds of my robes over my breast, savaged
 by mirthless disaster. (22-31)

When they arrive at the grave, they wait for Electra to begin but she feels that it is beyond her power to pour libations on behalf of her malicious mother. Therefore, she turns to the women to advise her on how to perform the rite. It seems that prayers and *choes* were offered in various ways in the ancient Greek world depending on who

⁷⁵⁵ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). p. 530.

performed them and what the person wanted to achieve. This the reason she wonders whether she should say the usual request for forgiveness, or perform the libation just the way they do it with *katharmata* in **Pharmakos'** ritual:⁷⁵⁶ that would be to pour the liquid, throw away the urn and leave without looking back.

Or
 should I pour them out in silence – a mark of dishonour,
 just as my father perished dishonourably – for the earth to
 drink up, and go, like someone getting rid of the vessel
 used in a purification ritual, throwing the jar away behind
 me without turning my eyes? (96-99).

The chorus relieve her when it tells her to pour them herself and **pray** for a man or daemon to come and punish those who killed Agamemnon. Still, Electra wonders if it is a pious thing to wish for in a prayer, but the Chorus assures her that it is. Eventually she is persuaded to follow their advice and pour them as instructed: first to the Hermes Chthonion asking him to ensure her message reaches her father; then to Gaia, the Earth, who gives birth to all the things only to receive them back; next to her father whom she requests to pity his children's miserable lives and send Orestes to kill the murderers; and finally she curses her mother and her lover. When she finishes, she asks the women to sing the customary **dirge** that accompanied a *choe* and the flowing of the liquid.

the custom is
 for you to adorn them with wailing, uttering a paeon to the
 deceased. (150-151)

At the end of the chorus' lament (154-163), Elektra notices with satisfaction that the Earth absorbs the libations. This was thought to be a confirmation that the soul accepted their offerings:

Now my father has the drink-offerings – the earth has
 swallowed them; (164).

The pouring of libations at the end of her prayers signifies her as the dutiful daughter who begins to demarcate herself from the *oikos* of Clytaemestra. Immediately after that, Electra notices the lock of hair and the clear marks of footprints on the soil and realizes that they both belong to her brother. It was customary in ancient Greece to

⁷⁵⁶ The crowd returned home without looking back at the expelled polluted couple: See Appendix I.

remove shoes⁷⁵⁷ on entering sacral grounds as an act of piety, which act explains why Electra could discern the similarities with hers.

heels and the marks of his tendons, when I measure them, correspond precisely to my own footprints. (209-210)

Eventually the recognition scene takes place and Orestes confides in her that in an **oracle** Apollo has sanctioned him to murder his mother. The god forewarned him that he would suffer the terrible consequences of a **polluted man** in ancient Greece if he fails to obey Zeus divine orders:

And men such as this,
he said, are not permitted to have a share in the mixing-
bowl or in the pouring of a friendly libation: the father's
unseen wrath keeps him away from altars; no one will re-
ceive him as a host or lodge with him as a guest, and
finally he will die, devoid of all respect and devoid of all
friends, cruelly shriveled in a death of total decay. (280-296)

Murder was not a ritual, but as an act of impiety it incurred a prescribed behaviour towards a murderer and special cleansing rites to cast miasma away. Consequently, the Furies would be sent against him and never let him rest: he would not be able to take part in festivities, pour libations, or offer sacrifices and nobody would wish to be under the same roof with him as various misfortunes could afflict them. Being entirely alienated by everybody and everything he would surely die alone. This was a curse for a Greek to whom his friends, his *Oikos* and the City, were equal to survival. It seems that any choice Orestes makes cannot avert his encounter with the Furies. Following Apollo at least, he has the gods to protect him.

The most powerful scene in *Choephoroi* is the complicated prayer-invocation Orestes, Electra, and the Chorus perform in turns around Agamemnon's tomb. This powerful scene can be divided into two parts: the first one that aims to convulse the siblings, and the viewers; and the second part when the desire for pay back slowly takes over.

⁷⁵⁷ Wiles, David, "The Staging of the Recognition Scene in the *Choephoroi*", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 38, No 1 (1988), n. 8, p. 84.

In the first part of the prayer-invocation the Chorus as **wailers** exhibits an unconventional role singing the lead part that cannot go unnoticed. The women, in reality under self-command, skilfully organise their responses so that it brings Orestes and Electra, the bereaved, to that emotional peak where they are so overflow with grief and rage that killing the royal couple seems to be the only remedy.

and for a bloody stroke let the payment be
a bloody stroke. (312-313)

instead of laments at a tomb
the paean may be heard in the royal halls
bringing in the welcome bowl of new-mixed wine. (342-344)

Ahead of the power
of my heart there blows a harsh wind
of anger, or raging hatred. (391-393)

Their manner in coordination with their expressions of wild oriental expression of the **mourning** motif manages to sharpen the pain of the two young people.

CHORUS
I strike myself blows like an Arian and in the manner
of a Cissian wailing woman;
my arms stretch out, hitting and grasping,
beating thick and fast, making many a smirch to
behold,
from above, from high above, and my wretched head
rings with the sound of my battering. (423-428)

It is naturally then, when they hear over and over again about her father's dishonoured funeral, to lose their self-discipline for a while and collapse.

ELECTRA
Ió. Ió, cruel mother
of limitless audacity, it was a cruel funeral

A king, without the presence of his city's people,
without mourning and with no lamentation. (429-433)

After their emotional explosion expressed mainly by Electra, the feeling of sorrow gradually gives way to the desire for revenge. Orestes gets vexed when he learns from the mouth of the Chorus about his father **disgraced burial** in an effort to eliminate the soul's power to avenge.

And-so you may know this- he was mutilated as well;
And the perpetrator was she who buried him thus,
Striving to make his death. (439-441)

This *hubris* gives further rise to their wrath, and the chorus asks the divinities of the underworld to hear the children's prayers for victory. Rightfully then, James Hogan notes that Aeschylus must have designed this **lament**,

to **conjure** the aid of the daimonic powers for the children as they try to reclaim the house for themselves. Their supplication subverts Clytemnestra's attempt to appease the dead and aims to capture the attention and dynamic power of the underworld for their revenge.⁷⁵⁸

By now, the women succeed with their manoeuvre to fortify their anger and confirm support for the coming murder. Being reduced to slave status,⁷⁵⁹ it is easy for them to sympathize with Electra and Orestes and try, in a metaphorical sense, to lash the siblings into the *fury* figures that would avenge for them as well. It makes one wonder whether they all do enter a kind of a **trance state** and act on behalf of Apollo, the oracular god. The structure of the first part undoubtedly gives space for this impression, as Orestes and Electra are emotionally lost until they are recruited under the desire for revenge.

Then in the second part, they pull themselves together for their ultimate target which they express in their quite impressive prayer-invocation (479-509). First, Orestes makes another reference to the active relationship between the souls and the living. If the murdered soul is not vindicated, that is if Orestes does not kill Aegisthus, then it cannot participate at the sacrifices the living offer to them. Next comes Electra, who **promises** her father that, as pre-wedding sacrifices, she will offer him *choes* coming from her inheritance or dowry. Rehm explains this **promise** as another instance which serves to "connect funeral with marriage rituals".⁷⁶⁰ It seems that a daughter or a son probably visited the grave of the diseased parent before getting married. They again ask the Earth and Persephassa, Persephone, to send him up before they remind the soul of the way he was murdered, trying to force his spirit to assist them to avenge his murder, in an amazing combination of ode, dance and singing around the grave mound.

⁷⁵⁸ Hogan, James, *A Commentary on The Complete Greek Tragedies*, University of Chicago Press, 1984.

⁷⁵⁹ Foley, Helen, "Choral Identity in Greek Tragedy", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 98, No. 1, (2003), pp. 1-30.

⁷⁶⁰ Rehm, 1994, p. 52.

The post-burial offerings and the complex lament is the confirmation that Agamemnon's *oikos* is still in force eight years later since its members are able to perform the funerary rites at last.⁷⁶¹

The motif of funeral rituals, both standard and corrupt, surrounding Agamemnon's death has accomplished its purpose in the *Oresteia* and comes to an end after the performance of the *threnos*.⁷⁶²

It is a turning point in the quest for vengeance when everybody calms down and Orestes wonders aloud why Clytemnestra tries to propitiate Agamemnon's ghost after all these years. The chorus explains that she was troubled by a terrible **dream**.⁷⁶³ She saw she gave birth to a snake which sucked blood with its milk when she tried to nurse it. The dream so frightened her as an **omen** of doom that she woke up screaming and made her sent libations to court divine intervention for protection.

Dreams, believed to be messages sent directly from the gods, play an important role in tragedies in which they often predict death. The dream in *Choephoroi* does not only warn Clytemnestra but also gives a sign to Orestes that the gods are backing his actions. Consequently, he interprets it correctly:

I become the serpent and kill her: so this dream declares. (549-550)

This is Orestes final affirmation for his undertaken duty. When the moment comes to kill his mother, he looks back on this dream as the foretelling of what he ought to do.

As soon as the invocation-lamentation is over the actions in the play accelerate towards the end. Orestes, now in charge, asks Electra to go inside the palace and the women of the Chorus to keep quiet for the killings. The women wish Orestes to have the heart of Perseus when he killed the terrible Gorgon, Medusa,⁷⁶⁴ and leaves. Their wish definitely alludes the comparison of Clytemnestra with the snake-haired Medusa.

⁷⁶¹ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). pp. 529, 534.

⁷⁶² Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). pp. 533-34.

⁷⁶³ See Appendix II, Divination.

⁷⁶⁴ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

The unholy act of murder is about to take place at night. The time is evident as soon as the two disguised travellers knock at the door complaining of being left outside at dark.⁷⁶⁵ Night is also the time for the **transitory rituals**, wedding and burial, or for acts that required secrecy, such as curses and murder.

Clytaemnestra comes out of the palace and Orestes, as customary, **identifies** himself as the man who brings bad news for her son. Clytaemnestra shows no signs of mourning. She tells them that despite the terrible news, they will have the **hospitality** they deserve. It seems that the delivery of bad news resulted to the poor treatment of an ancient houseguest. Clytaemnestra orders the slaves to prepare hot baths and soft beds for the visitors and bids the nurse to fetch Aegisthus. In this mirror scene, there is a reverse situation of the custom of the *Agamemnon*: in the first tragedy, a victim is welcomed by his killer, in *Choephoroi* a killer by his victim; the woman deceives the man who returns home, whereas in the second play, the man who comes back deceives the woman who welcomes him.⁷⁶⁶

His biological mother may have been unaffected by his death but in contrast, the nurse who breastfed him and brought him up walks and **mourns** for him as if he were her own son in this only affectionate scene in the play (734-765). Her mourning is interrupted by the chorus, who instructs the Nurse to pass a false message to Aegisthus, that the queen bids him to return to the palace without his bodyguard escort,⁷⁶⁷ trying to secure Orestes' personal safety. The nurse wonders why at first but she accepts to become an implement of vengeance in the end. This interference of the chorus adds up to its function as an accomplice, or a divine representative.

Aegisthus' murder eventually takes place interrupting the chorus' **prayer** to Zeus with his blood curdling cry from inside.

⁷⁶⁵ According to the custom of hospitality, strangers waited outside a house until they are invited in.: See chapter one, Supplication.

⁷⁶⁶ Lebeck, Anne, "The First Stasimon of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*: Myth and Mirror Image", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Jul., 1967), p. 182.

⁷⁶⁷ Bacon, H., Helen, "The Furies' Homecoming", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 96, No. 1., Jan., (2001). p. 53.

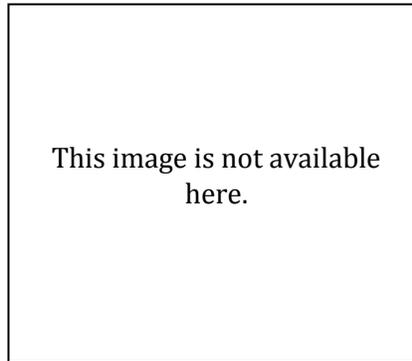
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Clytaemnestra, who comes out to see what is going on alarmed by the slave's cries, immediately understands that her end is close when she hears him say:

The dead are killing the living, I tell you (886).

She orders him to fetch the axe but Orestes is there already. After a brief exchange in which she explains why she killed Agamemnon, she **supplicates** for her life showing her breast. It is almost certain that Orestes avoids the trap of the physical contact in her beseech because of its subsequent responsibilities. However, she is his mother and Orestes' heart softens for a moment. He turns to Pylades for advice who speaks for the only time in the play to instruct him to kill her. She reminds him again that she is the one nurtured him when he was an infant and how much she wants to grow old with him but in vain. When the queen realises that her supplication fails and changes her attitude and warns Orestes of the punishment of *her* hounds. Before they go inside the palace she acknowledges the failure of her libations to her dead husband and see in Orestes' face the snake she nourished in her **dream**.

It looks as though I am making a useless living dirge to a tomb (926).



Copper plate representing Orestes murdering Clytaemnestra, 570 B.C.
Olympia, Archaeological Museum M77. ΥΠΠΟ/ΤΑΠ.⁷⁶⁸

During the murder inside, the chorus sings about Justice that finally comes to the house of Agamemnon. Just then, the palace door opens and Orestes appears with two dead bodies at his feet, reflecting Clytemnestra's at the end of *Agamemnon*.

In both plays an adulterous couple lies wedded in death, while the murderer projects onto their corpses an image of sexual union that motivated (at least in part) the act of vengeance.⁷⁶⁹

However, Orestes does not share the same attitude for his crime as his mother. At the beginning, like her before, he justifies his double murder as he presents the bloody cloth of his father and the net he was trapped in loudly and steadily. Regardless though the divine plan, he is filled with remorse and guilt in his heart for the **pollution** of the ancestral sin is transferred on him.

By killing the former pair, Orestes took on him the μιάσμα, becoming μιάστωρ himself.⁷⁷⁰

At this point, he starts showing signs of derangement and the reader perceives that the pollution starts to affect his mind. He feels he loses his senses.

my mind is almost out of
control and carrying me along half-overpowered, and Ter-
ror is near my heart, ready to sing and to dance to Wrath's
Tune (1024-5)

⁷⁶⁸ Yialouros, A. and Olympia N., *Olympia: A Guidebook of the Museum and the Sanctuary*, Athens Publishers, Athens, 1995, p. 78.

⁷⁶⁹ Rehm, 1994, p. 54.

⁷⁷⁰ Georgantzoglou, Nikolaos, "A Note on μιάστωρ (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 177)", *Mnemosyne*, Vol. LV, Fasc. 6, 2202, p. 720.

He tries to recover by announcing the need to go to Delphi to **purify** himself of the murder he has just committed. He decides therefore to perform the rituals his father and mother did not after their killings. He gets ready to leave as a **suppliant**, holding a branch with wool on it, the typical symbol of supplication, thinking of his obscure future until he finds Apollo's promised cleansing.

And now see me, how, accoutered with this wreathed
olive-branch, I will go as a suppliant to Loxia's domain (1034-5)

The search for Apollo's promised cleansing is the prelude for the last play of the trilogy which begins at the holy temple of Apollo at Delphi.

But just before he leaves, little by little he reveals his insanity during which he desperately repeats the reasons for his action. The power of the *miasma*, increases its effect, as he is the only one who suddenly sees his mother's repulsive female hounds showing up in the space:

Ah, ah! I see these hideous women looking like Gorgons –
clad in dark-grey tunics and thickly wreathed with ser-
pents! Ii can't stay her! (1048-1050)

He seems to suffocate at their presence as he watches them gradually fill in the area. In terror and despair, he rushes out of the scene haunted by these terrible creatures as the Chorus wishes him protection and luck and wonders how revenge will finally end.

The play ends leaving a disheartened aura in the air. The **hearth fire** Clytaemnestra mentions is associated now with the altar fire at Delphi that symbolizes the salvation⁷⁷¹ and the prospect of the beginning of a new life.

⁷⁷¹ Gantz, "The Fires of the Oresteia", (1977), p. 37.

3.3.c. *Eumenides*

The dominating rituals

Eumenides brings a closure to the ancestral crimes and peace back to Argos. Orestes' adventures end well with the staged procession that celebrates the establishment of a new court and of a new cult. His reported efforts to effect purification are the axis of the play. Everything that befalls him is to clean himself from the *miasma*. The story line, includes the Furies' binding song a fact, Eidinow suggests, that makes *Eumenides* unique in supplying us with an example of the first known **binding curse**, used to curse a particular part of the body, spirit of mind of a person.⁷⁷² These rituals compose the matrix upon which the action unfolds.

Reading the Play

The play begins with information on the preliminary process of divination. The scenic milieu moves to Delphi where the Pythia,⁷⁷³ the priestess of Apollo, is about to perform her daily business at the temple of the god. As was customary, she sends a proper prayer addressing the gods who have prophesied from this shrine before she enters the temple to attend her duties: the Mother Earth, Gaia⁷⁷⁴ and then her daughter Themis⁷⁷⁵ who then gave the temple to her sister Phoebé.⁷⁷⁶ Phoebé later passed the sacred spot over to her grandson Apollo as a birthday present. Zeus then gave his son the ability to prophesize and appointed him as his fourth Diviner, his spokesman, thus the surname Loxias.⁷⁷⁷ Significant is her awareness in her prayer

⁷⁷² Eidinow, 2007, pp. 140-1.

⁷⁷³ The temple once was controlled by a monstrous python snake which was shot dead by Apollo's arrows. He was thereafter known as 'Pythian Apollo' and the priestess who lived in the temple and formed a link to Apollo, was in turn called the 'Pythia'.

⁷⁷⁴ Gaia was the mother of all the Gods and the people. She was attributed with prophetic abilities as the fumes the Pythia breathed came from that sacred gap on which the tripod was placed.

⁷⁷⁵ The daughter of Uranus and Mother Earth; sister of Phoebé; Greek goddess of Divine Justice. Themis owned the temple at Delphi after Mother Earth gave it to her. Themis gave it to her sister, Phoebé, who eventually gave the temple to her grandson, Apollo.

⁷⁷⁶ Daughter of Uranus and Mother Earth; sister of Themis; grandmother of Apollo; Greek goddess of the Moon. Phoebé eventually gave the temple at Delphi to Apollo, god of truth, light, and prophesy.

⁷⁷⁷ The Pythia also honours other gods in her prayer: Athena Pronaea the goddess of wisdom who offers the insight she needs to see into the future for all advice she may give. She is called Pronaea

that she is merely a receptive vessel through which Apollo speaks, an acknowledgement Cassandra makes, too.

for I prophesy as the god guides me. (35)

After her formal calling, she invites the people to enter the temple for Apollo's oracles as it was the custom, by lot.

And if any Greeks are
present, let them approach in an order determined by lot,
as is the custom. (31-32)

In the suspenseful scene that follows, the old⁷⁷⁸ Prophetess enters the temples only to exit almost at once in fright, even running on her hands unable to stand, of what she has seen. The old woman strives to describe exactly what she experienced within the temple, probably breathlessly.

First, she saw a man seated silently at the *omphalos* holding the symbol of supplication and a sword in his bloody hands. Vase paintings on the scene at Delphi also illustrate the weapon they used to kill the animal. Therefore, she sees the sprinkled blood of a sacrificed piglet on Orestes' hands coming from a performed purification rite,⁷⁷⁹ and the weapon he used for the murder planted in the earth.

The planting of the guilty weapon in the earth was doubtless part of the regular procedure; ... Evidence from Apollonius' *Argonautica* (4.685-717, especially 696-9) confirms that the posture in which Orestes sits at the *omphalos* (40-45) is designed to alert others to the nature of the deed for which he requires cleansing. The suppliant sits with a sword and casts down his eyes because he is not allowed to speak until cleansed.⁷⁸⁰

because her temple was before (-πρo) the temple of Apollo; The Korykeia's nymphs, who lived in cave is at the foot of Parnassus mountain. It took its name from the nymph Korykia and it was the sacred place of the god Pan and the nymphs; also Bromius, another name for Dionysus, Bromious rules Delphi in the fall and winter, sharing the Temple of Apollo as his home during these months. The Pythia only gives prophecies during the spring and summer for this reason. She finishes her calling with the stream of Pleisthus, Poseidon and Zeus, the almighty of the gods.

⁷⁷⁸ Diodoros mentions that Pythia used to be a young woman. When the Spartan Echekrates fell in love with a beautiful priestess it was decided that only women over 50 would serve the Oracle. See ch.1 for more.

⁷⁷⁹ Lorimer, L., H., "Note on Eumenides 41-2", *The Classical Review*, Vol.35, No.7/8, (1921), p.143.

⁷⁸⁰ Lorimer, "Note on Eumenides 41-2", (1921). p.143.

In this scene, Pythia's clairvoyance is manifested in the vision of the terrifying gorgon-like female creatures she has never seen before, who are sleeping upon the thrones in front of him:

I won't call them
women, but Gorgons; but then I can't liken their form to
that of Gorgons either. I did once see before now, in a
painting, female creatures robbing Phineus of his dinner;
these ones, though, it is plain to see, don't have wings,
and they're black and utterly nauseating. They're pumping
out snores that one doesn't dare come near, and drip-
ing a loathsome drip from their eyes. And their attire is
one that it's not proper to bring either before the images of
the gods or under the roofs of men. (48-56)

The fact that the priestess does not know who they are emphatically marks them out “cosmic outcasts, unknown to the Olympian and mortals”.⁷⁸¹ That is why she feels that only Apollo himself is appropriate to deal with these supernatural beings. What is more, Pythia's testimony of their presence and her detailed description connects the reader with the end of *Choephoroi* and proves that Orestes is not distraught when he mentions their presence.⁷⁸² However, what the Pythia does not see is the god she serves and Hermes,⁷⁸³ who are standing before the young man.

The temple doors opens and we are now able to discern Orestes kneeling by the navel stone and the *Erinyes* sleeping with their bodies sprawled haphazardly. The Furies lethargy may be evidence that purification has affected them⁷⁸⁴ but the cleansing sacrifice alone was not enough to get rid of them. It is apparent that Orestes will have to practice more rites to wash the *miasma* away.

This is the reason Apollo instructs the matricide to go to the temple of Pallas Athena as a suppliant,⁷⁸⁵ beg for her help in dispelling the Furies forever. Apollo warns Orestes that the Furies will keep on following him and then asks Hermes to watch over him on his harsh journey to Athena's temple:

⁷⁸¹ Bacon, “The Furies' Homecoming”, (2001). p. 53.

⁷⁸² Sidwell, Keith, “Purification and Pollution in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*”, *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol.46, No.1, (1996), p.54.

⁷⁸³ The messenger of the gods as well as the one who leads the souls to Hades. Apollo sends Hermes to protect Orestes from the Furies as he journeys to Athens.

⁷⁸⁴ Sidwell, “Purification and Pollution”, (1996). p. 54.

⁷⁸⁵ The Temple located on the Acropolis rock in central Athens dedicated to Athena, goddess of wisdom.

For they will drive you right
through the length of the mainland, as you go ever forward
over the land you tread in your wanderings, and
over the water to sea-girt cities. (74-77)

His journey to Delphi has matured Orestes who has learned a lot through suffering,⁷⁸⁶ as his way over sea and land must have been long and difficult according to Apollo. However, his travelling to Athens must become smoother now that he is half-purified. As soon as the characters depart, the *eidolon*, spectrum, of Clytaemnestra appears, furious of Orestes' escaped. She **bemoans** her fate as she is cursed by all the dead in Hades as no one cares for her being killed by her son.

I am unceasingly
taunted among the shades because of those I killed, and I
wander disgraced; (95-98).

This condition transmits the belief that the souls maintain their mortal behaviour after death. Another notion is that a soul needed to be accepted by the other spirits in the underworld otherwise it would wander around in disgrace.⁷⁸⁷ The restless soul of the queen blames the Furies for not tormenting Orestes in the name of the old law of retribution after all the *nephalia meligmata*, **modest sacrifices**, she burnt for them at nights, their special time, when she was alive.

You have licked up a very great amount indeed of my offerings – wineless drink-offerings, sober gifts of propitiation, and I have also sacrificed solemn nocturnal feasts at a hearth of fire, at a time shared with none of the gods. (106-109)

By the 'hearth of fire' Clytaemnestra means the *eschara*, a hole on the ground, used for sacrifices to Chthonic gods.⁷⁸⁸ The queen does not know that the give and take reciprocity system of offerings between the mortals and the dead has failed in her case because of the interference of the Olympian gods.

Clytaemnestra taunts and frowns upon them as they start waking from their slumber, whining and moaning⁷⁸⁹ aloud in response to her words, saying that their voices fear

⁷⁸⁶ Kramer, R., Frank, "The Altar of Right: Reality and Power in Aeschylus", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 1, (1960), p. 36.

⁷⁸⁷ See Ch. 1.

⁷⁸⁸ Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. 2008, n. 26, p. 369.

⁷⁸⁹ These instructions are in the text.

no one because Orestes has already escaped. After much prodding, the Furies continue to cry out monstrous sounds and sleepwalk dreaming of changing Orestes, even after the ghost leaves.

Get him, get him, get him, get him. See there! (130).

When they are finally awake and fully conscious of the situation they howl at losing their hunted beast.

Iou, iou, popax!

[*second voice*] Ah, how much have I suffered, and for nothing.

[*main voice*] we have suffered something very painful – oh, popoi! -

[*second voice*] He's slipped out of the net – the beast is gone! (143-147)

Feeling deceived, because Apollo made them sleep, they accuse the young god of **defiling** the holiness of his temple because he has accepted a murderer in the inner sanctum of it. At this moment, Apollo reappears and a heated argument follows. The Furies feeling their honour belittled in the new divine system for he has annulled the ancient laws, they passionately defend their function to avenge crimes of matricide. Apollo, more than ill-mannered to them but with equal force, contends that the wedding oaths are above everything and threatens to shoot them with his golden bow and arrow unless they leave his temple. The old goddesses of revenge may leave furiously but not without promising to haunt his protégé till the end.

I will never, never let that man go. (225)

I shall hunt him down! (231)

This persistence of theirs emphasizes further the question on the effectiveness of the **purification rite**. Orestes' hands still have blood on them possibly because the Erinyes' pursue has some sense of true in it.⁷⁹⁰ Although they cannot fully possess him, he cannot entirely be unbound until he is acquitted.

Apollo and the Erinyes take separate ways to Athens, to have their dispute over the fate of Orestes settled there. The set change in split seconds, from the interior of Apollo's temple to the interior of Athena's on the Acropolis of Athens; a change

⁷⁹⁰ Sidwell, "Purification and Pollution", (1996). p. 45.

“unparalleled in surviving tragedies”.⁷⁹¹ Orestes first enters and takes the **suppliant** position by kneeling and embracing her statue and requesting for her help. Supplication required ‘clean hands’ in ancient Greece and Orestes declares he has, as none of all the people he has contacted was even the slightest harmed by his *miasma*:

Be kind and receive this wanderer – not a suppliant for purification nor one with unclean hands, but weakened now and wrong away in the homes of other men and by journeying in their company. (235-239).

This conviction strengthens him to confront the Furies who, hot on his trail, arrive frantically searching for him sniffing his scent like dogs. On their tenacious command to give them his "red blood" for killing his mother, Orestes responds with confidence now his journey to Athens has also taught him many ways of purification, *katharsis*.

the pollution of matricide has been washed out: at the hearth of the god Phoebus, when it was still fresh, it was expelled by means of the purification-sacrifice of a young pig. (281-283).

Yet, he is not so certain of his cleansing as to leave the safety of his position. Like the excavated inscriptions on the curse tablets,⁷⁹² the Furies **curse** Orestes to be unable to speak in court and they get ready to bewitch him into their tight grasp with their song: drain away all the blood in his veins; and end him up a shadow of himself.

And over the sacrificial victim
this is my song: insanity,
derangement, the mind-destroying
chant of the Furies
that binds the mind, sung
to no lyre, a song to shrivel men up!
Destiny
spun for us in perpetuity:
for those mortals to whom there happen
wanton murders of kinsfolk,
to dog their footsteps (328-338)

Therefore, it is not groundless to suggest that there were magical spells or curses in the form of songs that were danced in a special way. This thought is exemplified in this unique of its kind **binding song** which seems to incorporate a quite mobile dance

⁷⁹¹ MacDonald Marianne, 2003, p. 17.

⁷⁹² Eidinow, 2007, p. 141.

characterised by peculiar bouncing dancing steps as they exhort one another to perform them.

for I give a great leap
and then bring down my foot
from above with a heavy crash,
a leg to trip even a runner
at full stretch and cause unendurable ruin. (372-376)

It was believed that their spell could affect the polluted men tremendously. The condemned seem to experience such mental confusion that they eventually lost the sense of time and their mind.

But when he falls, he does not know this, because the
injury has taken away his wits:
such is the dark cloud of pollution that hovers over
the man, (377-380)

Their dissonance, the jumping and the noise of their feet hitting the ground, and the twice-repeated incantation in between all these, must have created a chaotic atmosphere on stage. This turmoil is not possible to have taken place in a linear, rectangular, triangular, or any other neat shape. As such, it would be an intriguing task to any modern practitioner to present the Furies' effort to dominate Orestes in a suffocating circling stage. Fitton sets the circular formation of a circle as a distinctive characteristic of the imageless dance, which expresses desire for possession or incorporation.⁷⁹³ In the same line, Davidson also suggests that it is difficult to imagine the binding song not circular especially if one pays attention to the hints in the text.⁷⁹⁴ Similarly, Foley's reconsideration on choral dance supports that there are texts instructing the circular formation or processions in Greek tragedy in contrast to the lines on paintings, such as Aeschylus' *Eumenides* in which the Furies try to possess Orestes.⁷⁹⁵

In between their lines, they inform us about their role in the divine system which extends to the haunting of the dead, not only the living, and give us a hint on their attire. They mention that they never participate at the symposiums of the gods

⁷⁹³ Fitton, W., J., "Greek Dance", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 23, No. 2, (1973), p. 262.

⁷⁹⁴ Davidson, F., J., "The Circle and the Tragic Chorus", *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 33, No. 1, (1986), p. 42.

⁷⁹⁵ Foley, "Choral Identity in Greek Tragedy", (2003), pp. 9-10.

dressed in white, the colour of a celestial celebration. Without any doubt, they are filled with pride and self esteem even now that their place in the chain of gods is in jeopardy.

I have an ancient privilege, nor am I without honour (393-394)

However, it seems clear that after his purification their binding song cannot make Orestes fully lose control.⁷⁹⁶ Before its completion though, their spell is interrupted by Athena's arrival from Troy in full battle armour, where she received the **votive offerings** the Greek commanders had offered her there. She is curious to see there the deities that no celestial god has ever seen before and her lines confirm that they are in the margin of the human and godly system of worlds.

You resemble no race of begotten beings,
neither among the goddesses who are beheld by gods, nor
is your appearance similar to that of mortals (410-412)

According to the habit, one had to **identify** himself or herself on entering a shrine or requesting a meeting with someone. Likewise, Athena demands first to know who they are and then the reason for their dispute. The Furies introduce themselves as «*Αραί*», the Curses, inform her of their task in the macrocosm and microcosm and indicate that Orestes is the man they currently pursue because of his matricide.

Orestes then gives his name and family line and assures Athena that he has absolved off the blood on his hands according to the *ἀφθογγον νόμον*, (*aphthoggon nomon*), not spoken, unwritten laws: he had not spoken to anybody and had performed the required animal sacrifices and baths in running waters.

It is the law that a man who has committed homicide
must not speak until blood has dripped over him from the
slaughter of a young sucking beast at the hands of a man
who can cleanse blood-pollution. I have long since been
purified in this way at other houses, both my animal vic-
tims and by flowing streams. (448-452)

He then tells his side of the story before he trusts his fate to Athena and, like the Furies earlier, states that he will also accept her decision, whether it is for better or worse.

⁷⁹⁶ Bacon, "The Furies' Homecoming", (2001). p. 55.

Pondering the Furies and Orestes' statements, Athena acknowledges his rights, but also the power of the Furies. The decision of the goddess of Wisdom is based on the awareness that no matter what the Furies **promise**, they will not keep their word if Orestes goes free, and will certainly bring destruction and sickness to Athens. She finally passes her judgement to a group of men, establishing a human court. Athena's hesitation to deal with the trial herself is another evidence of

the difficulty of choosing between the claims of the children of Night and those of the family of Zeus. For both embodied the causal principle of moral law - that action breeds reaction in its own image⁷⁹⁷

She is proven right, because as soon as she leaves, the chorus of *Erinyes* sing the first **lamentation** in the *Eumenides*, sensing that their status is at stake (558-565). However, it is not a representative dirge because it is threatening in nature. The primordial goddesses express their eschatological visions for mankind if the fear of punishment is gone, which were in reality the beliefs of the fifth-century Athenian society: respect human life, the parents and the guests (545-547). They cry-warn that in case Orestes goes free (490-498, 508-512, 517-525) the universal imbalance and injustice will rule. What is worse, a murdered person will die “*ἄκλαυστος*», **unwept**, a disaster for the after death welfare of the soul (558-565).

Athena returns to her temple on the Acropolis in the accompaniment of twelve human jurors who will make a decision after both sides are heard. She will act both as the judge and a facilitator. She orders her Herald⁷⁹⁸ to sound the Tyrrhenian salpinx⁷⁹⁹ for the court to begin. Edgar believes that Athena literally imitates the sound of the trumpet at the first performance.⁸⁰⁰ As the trumpet sounds, Apollo suddenly appears ready to testify on Orestes' behalf and urges Athena to proceed with the trial. Athena

⁷⁹⁷ Kramer, “The Altar of Right”, (1960). pp. 36-7.

⁷⁹⁸ A messenger who blows his trumpet loudly to get the Athenians' attention, as the first court trial is beginning on the Acropolis in Athens.

⁷⁹⁹ “A scholiast on the Iliad tells us that Athena had herself been credited with the invention of one type of salpinx, 28 and we also know that she was actually worshipped under the title of “Athena Salpinx” at Argos where the salpinx, evidently, was also specifically “Tyrrhenian.” The Greek Anthology provides additional evidence on Athena and the salpinx in the form of several epigrams dedicating such instruments to her: Egan, B., Rory, “The Assonance of Athena and the Sound of the Salpinx: *Eumenides* 566-571”, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3, (1979), pp. 211.

⁸⁰⁰ Egan, “The Assonance of Athena and the Sound of the Salpinx”, (1979). pp. 203-21.

then reminds the citizens to have in mind the **oath** they took for fair trials. It is possible therefore that either the citizens took an oath before their entrance, or take one on stage, assigning the audience the role of witnesses. In the last case, a director could have the option to stage it.

The trial finishes as expected in favour of Orestes, thanks to Athena's vote, and he takes an **oath** that Argos shall forever be an ally of Athens against any enemy that has his eye on it. This is the first enacted oath in the trilogy, if the juries do not take theirs on stage. *Δίκη* (*Dike*), justice, in the archaic times was based on the reciprocity system and the *horkos* was made to guarantee that. Now in *Eumenides*, oath is used to safeguard justice in a civilised *δίκη* (*dike*), trial, thus it becomes an essential part of the new civic jurisprudence of a homicide court.⁸⁰¹ Oaths once bound people to violent acts for retribution, now commit them to an unbiased process according to the laws of the city for a fair trial.

Orestes exits with Apollo leaving behind him the Furies outraged by the verdict. As expected, what naturally comes next is Athena's effort to pacify the Furies. For almost a hundred lines, they are so absorbed in spitting and repeating threats that four times they pay no attention to Athena's offer. The real problem though is related to piety. The *Erinyes* have lost the function, *timi*, and they cannot exist without.⁸⁰² So, what the audience watched was the unrestrained reactions of a group of goddesses who were deprived of their worship and the efforts of Athena to ensure them that their function will only be substituted with something equally great.

The *chorikon* does not involve any ritual per se, but features of **laments, curses** and threats compose their explosive reaction before they finally begin to listen to Athena's **promises** of ritual honour. Aeschylus has them repeat each stanza of theirs twice, to illustrate their persistence out of spite. Therefore, it is important to have a look at the structure of this scene, so that we can better evaluate its importance in a production:

⁸⁰¹ Fletcher, eds., Sommerstein and Fletcher, 2007, pp. 107-9.

⁸⁰² See Appendix II, Piety, iv) Individual towards God.

- Furies (778-792): They **cry** for the ancient laws that have now passed to the hands of the younger gods. They feel **dishonoured**, mocked by the gods, and ridiculed by the humans. They are ranting and raving, and they **promise** to bring deadly drought to the city of Athens.
- Athena (793-807): She urges them not to unleash their anger because it was Zeus who spared Orestes from punishment. She offers them to share her throne and altars under the earth in Athens, assuring them of the respect people will have for them.
- Furies (808-822): They repeat their last speech verbatim (778-792), giving no sign of listening to her words.
- Athena (823-836): Unshaken, the goddess patiently continues the effort to reason them using various methods. Now she reminds them, warns them actually, that as the sole god who knows the location of the keys to Zeus' case of thunderbolts she is powerful, now she promises that the **ritual** people will honour them with rituals if they agree to change will be great.
- Furies (837-843): So consumed they are with anger that they spit more threats. They do not believe her anyway, and they **lament** for their fate as outcasts and their denied ancient rights.
- Athena (846-869): Athena does not lay the arms down. She notes that the key to earn back the lost prestige, **honour, function**, they long for so much is to forgive, rather than wreaking an endless wave of destruction across the land. Honour can be regarded as a reported ritual because they embrace rituals such as sacrifices, prayer and libations. She knows that a deity without *timi* ceases to exist and she keeps reassuring them for another kind of honour. If the Furies come to Athens as beneficiaries, as great goddesses who preserve peace and do good, protecting the country from the threat of civil war, then their days will be rich and beautiful.
- Furies (870-880): They repeat lines 837-845, and along with that their threats and disbelief and anger about their status as outcasts.
- Athena (881-891): Athena politely keeps on assuring them that they are not dishonoured and her offer will give them a different kind of glory in which they will not be despised and feared as they are now.

The Furies express their disappointment through mourning and cursing while a standing figure tries calmly to mediate the anger for the loss of their honour in an intense frenzy scene. It is also evident that they react physically as well, possibly

performing some of the steps of their binding song combining outrage and intense gestures of mourning.

Athena's wise tactic finally pays back. At long last, the Furies accept her offer and cast away their dark powers in favour of their new responsibility. She knows what tortures the furies most, so each time she speaks she begins with the phrase, "You are not **dishonoured**", meaning rituals will be offered to them. She is kind to them and shows respect to their powers but above all, she gives them the choice to rule with her and receive rites. This is manipulative of Athena because if they turn her offer down then their concern for justice will not permit them to inflict the place they could have stayed and be honoured.⁸⁰³ Their wrath eventually starts growing less, and they suddenly pay attention to her words in lines 881-891, looking upon her more favourably.

To seal their agreement they offer to **pray**, and after Athena's advice they put a long **positive spell** on the city, bless it and **promise** to keep the land safe and prosperous (937-1002). The tone of the Furies' voices changes to one of gentleness. They have officially accepted their new status and they **transform** into the Benevolent Ones ready to serve the common good now. This transformation vanquishes any lasting connection with their serpent image.

However, Eumenides also declare that they forbid any murder between men, stating that the high laws of the land shall punish any criminals by using the court system Athena has established. These words of theirs verify Rehm's suggestion that the Furies accept Athena's offer because they are actually allowed to remain "essentially unchanged".⁸⁰⁴ Therefore, what actually brought about the Furies' consent is the realisation that the essence of their function will in reality continue unaltered.

The last part the trilogy ends with the preparation for the ritual **procession** that would lead the Eumenides to their golden thrones beneath the city of Athens. It is also a fact that the last part of *Eumenides* that takes one fourth of the play manifests the

⁸⁰³ Wilson, Cleveland, Pearl, "Note on *Eumenides* 881-91", *Classical Philology*, Vol.42, No.2. (1947), pp.122-123.

⁸⁰⁴ Rehm, 1994, p. 57.

close connection with the **Panathenaic** procession in honour of Athena: its form, the murder trials that took place during the festival and the behaviour of people during the procession. Sommerstein states that the form the procession has is identical in structure to the ancient Greek real life procession of the festival:

Torch-bearers; Athena; her cultic house-hold, led by the priestess, together with the sacrificial animal(s); the Areopaggus Council, led by the herald and the trumpeter; the Furies, now the Semnai Theai.⁸⁰⁵

We read therefore that after Athena returns the salutation,

You to rejoice! (1003)

she forms a second chorus made up of the women who serve her. She will go before them accompanied by the *προπομποί* (*proprompoi*), escorts, who would light the way with the sacred light.

Then she asks the citizens to line up together in a long parade that will lead the way for the ‘*μετοίκους*’, *metoikoi*, immigrants, settlers.

And you, children of Cranaus
who dwell in this city, lead the way for these
immigrants; (1010-1011)

The comparison of the Eumenides to the Metics is palpable. *Metoikoi* were not Athenian citizens but enjoyed certain privileges, such as the participation in the Panathenaea during which they wore red clothes and carried the baskets for the sacrifices.⁸⁰⁶

People of Cecrops, honour
them with special robes dyed with purple (1028-9)

So the ex-Furies new red clothes exhibit their status as divine outsiders.⁸⁰⁷

In an operatic finale they sing a song of blessing ... robed in red instead of black, proceed to their new abode with a ceremonial escort of torch-bearing, singing Athenians.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁵ Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. 2008, n:198, p. 482.

⁸⁰⁶ Headlam, Walter, “The Last Scene of the Eumenides”, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 26, (1906), p. 273; Weaver, H., Benjamin, “A Further Allusion in the Eumenides to the Panathenaia”, *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol.46, No.2, (1996), p.559.

⁸⁰⁷ Bacon, “The Furies’ Homecoming”, (2001). p. 54.

Headlam on the other hand believes that *φοινικούν* (*phinikoun*), crimson, is actually the colour that belongs to Erinyes as it is likely to be

more appropriate ... to Infernal Deities; its use in lustral and magic ceremonies is well known.⁸⁰⁹

The next association with the Festival was Orestes' **murder trial**. The murder trials were held on the Areopagus in historical Athens in the same lunar month with the Panathenaia.

the twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, and twenty-ninth days of the month were *ημέρες αποφράδας* (accursed days) ... devoted to trials of especially violent crimes. During these sombre days, the *Σεμναί* played an active role of the kind that Aeschylus has given the Furies in the play.⁸¹⁰

Eumenides, the Benevolent Deities, the *Σεμναί* (*Semnae*), seem to have played an important role during the accursed days. On the one hand, the trials lasted for three days, as the number of the traditional number of Furies and each day was allocated to one of them. On the other hand, those acquitted of murder performed sacrifices to honour and thank them.

There is one last thing to say about the reflection of the great Panathenaic procession in Aeschylus tragedy. The text includes instructions on **behavioural response** probably depending on the occasion.⁸¹¹ Therefore they may walk with reverence,

Speak fair people of the land. (1035) (Ευφραμείτε δεν, χωρίται.)

Speak fair, all you masses! (1039) (Ευφραμείτε δε πανδαμεί.)

or “accompany their chanting with **ululations**”⁸¹² (1043, 1047). It definitely brings to mind the women's *όλολύγματα* of the Panathenaic *παννυχίς*⁸¹³ with its torch-race and its paeans.

⁸⁰⁸ Bacon, “The Furies’ Homecoming”, (2001). p. 48.

⁸⁰⁹ Headlam, “The Last Scene of the Eumenides”, (1906). pp. 270, 272: His explanation that some suggestions of the black colour have probably been deduced from vase paintings which had only black, white, purple and the natural colour of the ware has a point.

⁸¹⁰ Weaver, “Allusion in the *Eumenides* to the Panathenaia”, (1996). p.560-561.

⁸¹¹ Similarly, on Easter Friday, there is the funeral procession of Jesus’ epitaph, better depicted in villages today. The procession starts at the church and passes by every corner of the village. During the circumambulation the *psaltes*, chanters, say the lines of the psalms aloud for the crowd to repeat. This ends when the return back to the church.

The celebration that takes place *onstage* in the finale is for the installation of the Furies in a new home. All the elements of the traditional victory feast are present – Athena’s proclamation of a victory (Eum. 974-75, 1009), and, in the closing stanzas, the chorus’ victory cry (Eum. 1043 and 1047) and their announcement of the animal sacrifices (Eum. 1006, 1037) and of the libations of wine (Eum. 1044) that are the prelude to feasting.⁸¹⁴

What is not mentioned in the play, is the offering of a **libation** first noted by Verrall in 1884.⁸¹⁵ As it was traditional, a libation was offered at the departure of a procession. It is not unlikely then, that before the solemn procession exited the stage, this last ritual of the trilogy was represented on stage in the light of the torches and the brief song of the *propompoi*, escorts.

Without doubt, Aeschylus’ procession at the end of *Eumenides* was meant to evoke the procession in honour of Athena.⁸¹⁶ As the procession of people and gods walk towards the cave, all of the Athenian women **praise** the Eumenides aloud.

Come on your way, your great, honour-loving,
childless children of Night, with our friendly escort.
Speak fair, people of the land! (1033-1035)

Oresteia is the last case study of the way rituals operate in a play. The importance of this study lies in the reconstruction the three plays went through that damaged the implicit interconnection of the ritual fragments. If one reads Appendix IV, then rituals will obtain a more functional meaning. Another issue goes to the burial which in this play too maintains their actual meaning. It may be safe to assume them, that this specific rite was treated by the tragedians in a different way than the other kinds of fragments which could either keep their social function or twisted into other uses.

⁸¹² The translation is inaccurate. The ancient text says “ολολύξατε νυν επί μολπαίς”, which is not correctly transferred in English as “Now raise a cry of triumph to crown our song”. “Accompany their chanting with ululations” is more accurate.

⁸¹³ Headlam, “The Last Scene of the Eumenides”. (1906). p. 274.

⁸¹⁴ Bacon, “The Furies’ Homecoming”, (2001). p. 52.

⁸¹⁵ Verrall, W., A., “The Trumpet of the Areopagos and the Libation-Ritual of the Eumenides”, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol.5. (1884), pp.167.

⁸¹⁶ Weaver, “Allusion in the *Eumenides* to the Panathenaia”, (1996). p.560-561.

CONCLUSION

The textual analysis of the tragedies in this chapter offers two conspicuous conclusions. In the first place, the reader is able now to compare and contrast the differences between rituals ancient Greeks performed in their actuality, as these are described in chapter one, and the unconventional way they were deployed by the tragedians: whether staged or narrated they are perverted or failed. In the second place, the three case-studies raise the issue of the multi-functional power of rituals within the story. Their most important functions are threefold: they connect the there-and-then with here-and-now; propel the action; and move the story forward among others

The tragedians used rituals to link the historical/mythical past and the socio-political context of the ancient Greeks with the purpose to shape their expectations and perception of their contemporary reality.⁸¹⁷ Graf's view that this tactic provided awareness is more than true, as the distant past allowed objective associations. This critical ability is in accord with Aristotle's view that the audience should relate with the characters, not identify with them. Richard Green also agrees with this aspect when he refers to Euripides's tragedy without referring to the familiarity their rituals offered:

Because the experience was at second hand, it was comparatively painless, but because it involved the actions of their own ancestors and because the audience was convinced by what it was on stage in the performance of a tragedy to a greater degree than we are, it was real enough.⁸¹⁸

Martin extends this suggestion to the whole civic festival when he says that it "counter balance by the darker tragedies to come".⁸¹⁹ Hesk sees in the poets' focus on "the errors and arrogance of mythical kings as a mirror-opposite of Athens".⁸²⁰ He says that fifth-century Athenian audiences:

⁸¹⁷ Graf, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 7, 9.

⁸¹⁸ Green, 1994, p. 11.

⁸¹⁹ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 5.

⁸²⁰ Hesk, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 14.

rarely watched a play that did not unsettle their senses of social and political well-being. Despite pre-play ceremonies that exhibited Athens' institutions, ideology and democracy the plays present a more troubled picture of their honor-loving heroic individuals and their communities.⁸²¹

Theatre, Hall writes, reveals the truth. It "can never masquerade as the truth because it is masquerade."⁸²² This is even more applied to rituals in tragedy as they also convey the truths behind their distorted performances. If we follow her thought further, rituals therefore act like "visual glues" and activate the connection between the mythical past and the audience's socio-political context by offering a sense of continuity.

Directly or indirectly, all scholars agree then that rituals were part of the ancient stage and that they were used to criticize the realities of the socio-political system of ancient Athens. Rites in drama were stylized and their theatrical versions suggest change through an unchanging medium. Dramaturgically, they are misplaced out of their ordinary process to provide the substructure that induced appropriation to the audience. Therefore, Graf agrees that characters invoke the gods in prayers, oaths, libations, laments, libations, complex rituals are reported, or as Wiles prefers to say are narrated, that a play could be entirely at a sanctuary, or that a play could get its title from a rite, all in an effort to enhance audience awareness and response. What this thesis also contends is that characters do not only perform or report rituals in a larger socio-religious context, but that these fragment of rites become the driving wheel of the actions of the characters and the chorus and forward the action: they interrelate and interconnect the events, they culminate the story-line and they round off the story towards an end in a perpetual circle.

Medea is one example that illustrates this in-built active role of rituals. All the rites intersect with one another to weave the net for Medea's revenge: Jason's broken

⁸²¹ Hesk, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 12,-13.

⁸²² Hall, Edith, "Towards a Theory of Performance Reception" in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, p.24.

wedding oaths; the chorus promise of silence; her supplications to Creon and Aegeus; Aegeus oath to protect her; the bewitched wedding presents that sentence to death the princess along with Creon a little later; and Medea's establishment of a festival. And before that the lamentation for a loss all characters end up performing, even Medea. A second example is Agamemnon in the title play whose improper burial triggers the action in *Choephoroi*. The king receives non-traditional rites because he was still alive. In short, Clytaemnestra bathes her live husband, murders him and then offers Cassandra as a type of *prosphagma*, a sacrifice, clothes him in a net, perverts the rite of *prothesis* exhibiting the body in public, takes control of his funeral rites, prohibits lamentation, and finally mutilates the body and buries it in such a way that his spirit never rests.⁸²³

It is undoubtedly a hard task to try and go through the density of rituals, the symbols, the subtext and the intertext of a tragedy. However, this is a key position for the rediscovery of classical drama as a live performance, inspired by Taplin's work with the Performative turn that offers a new way to treat action in ancient drama.⁸²⁴ Wiles' view is that "a performance does not simply render a text ... it iterates, constitutes and gives cultural authority to a text."⁸²⁵ Hall sees a "dialectical relationship between read as texts or texts as performed" and concludes that "neither script-alone or script-as-performed is superior to each other. They are merely different."⁸²⁶ Simon Perris defines it as a 'Textual twist' and supports as well that theory and practice, in our case the text and its staging, interact, inform and influence one another.⁸²⁷ The subject of research is the balance between a text-play and a text-performed, in our case including the ritual perspective. Aristotle, Martin says, "might be thought as the

⁸²³ Hame, "All in the Family" (2004). pp. 521 and 531.

⁸²⁴ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 1.

⁸²⁵ Wiles, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 53.

⁸²⁶ Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p.12.

⁸²⁷ Perris Simon, "Performance Reception and the 'Textual Twist'", in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, p. 181.

progenitor of this approach” since he first supported that reading a play is also an aesthetic experience.⁸²⁸ Perris is in accord with this aspect as he argues that

reading a theatrical text is also a performative activity in which ... the reader ‘directs’ ... a visualized performance by way of the reading experience ... either activity constitutes a valid aesthetic experience.⁸²⁹

Often ignored though, the quest for a balance between a text and a performance calls for requires knowledge of the ancient Greek religion. Wiles, Goldhill, Hall, or Perris among many supporters of the performative turn see in the historical awareness the perspective to link the past and the present through the knowledge and understanding of the cultural milieu the fifth-century B.C. Athens. Historical consciousness can provide both the continuity of rites in one country and an awareness of the cultural differences between nations. This is an answer to Martin’s question on how we can recover a “native sense” of social action, because awareness of cultural differences alone cannot be of help. In the inevitable dismembering of the text, what Fischer-Lichte calls ‘*sparagmos*’ or sacrifice that even unabridged texts go through,⁸³⁰ the classical knowledge is central. As the text is first transformed, and then incorporated in a performance, this elaboration of the text is essential so that the ritual dynamic is not ruined. This presence of rites is perhaps what Perris implies when he says that there are clues inside, outside or beyond the text that need understanding for a good performance.⁸³¹ Martin is more helpful when he says that our aim as interpreters is:

to pursue the relationship between staged plays and other forms of social action to show how ‘actions’ outside theatre enriches the understanding of the action (drama) which constitute ancient drama.⁸³²

This thesis focuses on a text-performance that uses rituals in its plot. Therefore, when Perris favours the performative turn and calls for “a reappraisal of the literary

⁸²⁸ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 1,

⁸²⁹ Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 187-89.

⁸³⁰ Fischer-Lichte, ed. by Hall and Harrop 2010, pp. 34-35.

⁸³¹ Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 181.

⁸³² Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 1.

dynamics of theatrical texts”,⁸³³ it is important that this reappraisal includes the functional and dramaturgical power of rituals as autonomous entities.

Therefore, the acknowledgment of the pivotal presence of rituals and their textual instructions, will direct careful alterations, reshapings and/or omissions in the process of translation that do not damage a text-based performance. How essential rituals are in the development of the story as dramaturgical tools is what the next chapter wishes to display.

⁸³³ Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 188.

CHAPTER 4

THE REPRESENTATION OF RITUALS
IN THE PRODUCTIONS OF TRAGEDIES

 INTRODUCTION

The stance of this research is that a text-performance is the visual product of a written work of art, and as such it relies heavily upon the meaning it transmits. This takes us back to Aristotle's view that reading drama can be a pleasing aesthetic experience as well, revived nowadays under the umbrella of performative turn which shifts the focus to the collaboration between reading and performance. Without ignoring their autonomous function, Hall proposes that "neither 'script-alone' nor 'script-as-performed' is superior to the other: it is merely *difference*."⁸³⁴ The idea of 'difference' is underscored by Perris who considers reading and spectating as distinct aesthetic experiences.⁸³⁵ Although scholars do not "privilege 'reading' theatre as a performative sign-system",⁸³⁶ it is exactly this view that launches this research: that reading a tragic text is an autonomous activity that is characterised by a specific dynamic produced by the words that can affect the director's perception.⁸³⁷ This reading triggers the imagination, forms visual images and offers key ideas for staging. In the case of classical drama, "textual evidence is most often the best means of engaging with performances",⁸³⁸ for the simple reason that words are all we have in our hands.

This thesis suggests that rituals are the umbilical cord that unifies the story in a text-performed production. It also contends that the translator and the director have the power to shape, enhance, and project or to belittle and eliminate the significance of the dramaturgical function of rituals on the stage. Therefore, this chapter will examine the staging of ritualistic scenes in three productions by the Theatrical Organisation of

⁸³⁴ Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 24.

⁸³⁵ Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 184.

⁸³⁷ "Indeed, I would argue that reading a theatrical text is also a performative activity in which the reader 'directs' (that is, cognitively instantiates a visualized perfo by way of the reading experience.;" and "... the performative turn supports a subsequent ... reappraisal of the literary dynamics of theatrical texts": Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 187-8.

⁸³⁷ "Indeed, I would argue that reading a theatrical text is also a performative activity in which the reader 'directs' (that is, cognitively instantiates a visualized perfo by way of the reading experience.;" and "... the performative turn supports a subsequent ... reappraisal of the literary dynamics of theatrical texts": Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 187-8.

⁸³⁸ Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 182; Fischer-Lichte, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 30.

Cyprus, planned for the festival of Epidaurus in Greece, and the amphitheatres in Nicosia and Kourion in Cyprus.

References to acting may seem beside our point but Hall's perception on roles allow us to extend their significance and suggest that as long as acting plays a part the revelation of the rituals on stage, reference to it is imperative.⁸³⁹ Some commentators have considered costume irrelevant. Graham Ley may have a point to suggest that "Costume in tragedy is rarely used to provide a specific focus for the actions", however, he acknowledges that it carries messages, as for example in the cases of wedding garments or mourning clothes.⁸⁴⁰ Gamel's observation, that costume is one of the first sign systems in a performance that offers the first identification of a character on stage,⁸⁴¹ accommodates better the purpose of this chapter when it is related to ritual acts, such as the attire of priestess Cassandra, or Helen's appearance in supplication which is contrast to the norm in its actuality.

Objects on the other hands are admitted to be more functional in ancient Greek tragic performance. Oliver Taplin is the first one who has drawn the focus to material objects in his extensive discussion in *Tragedy in Action*. Graham Ley, in turn with Taplin, also suggests that "selected properties and elements of costume carry immense significance."⁸⁴² Their suggestion is exemplified in Medea's presents, Cassandra's symbols of priesthood, Orestes' lock of hair, Agamemnon's boots and the carpet in *Agamemnon*. Taplin has pointed to the view that a tragedy may even cling to an object throughout the play, as it is illustrated in Philoctetes' bow. Therefore, objects are important considerations when they are relevant to rituals or ritualistic actions.

The same concern needs to be given to set design. In the case studies examined here, *Choephoroi* is not only titled after a rite, but it also takes place at a tomb for most of the play. Therefore, the set design of a tragedy may require a particular treatment when it

⁸³⁹ "Greatly performed roles leave the stage and enter the imaginative cast of a culture.": Hall, 2010, p. 16.

⁸⁴⁰ Ley, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 278.

⁸⁴¹ "Costume is a key index to the theatrical and cultural statement made by a performance ... and as such, ... deserves special attention": Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 171.

⁸⁴² Ley, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 275.

is set in a shrine, a sacred area, or a hallowed item, as the statue in the temple of the goddess Athena in *Eumenides*.

In other words, if we paraphrase Fischer-Lichte's materiality of a performance,⁸⁴³ in relation to rituals it can be suggested that both text-rituals and performed-rituals incorporate corporeal, spatial and tonal, meaning textual, qualities, which requires editorial and directorial actions to support them on stage.

The following analyses aim to offer the reader an idea of what actual happened on stage, to explore in what way the rituals and ritual fragments were enlivened in performance, and whether or not their staging maintained their dramaturgical purpose. Therefore, for the first time, the performance analyses will be carried out from the ritualistic perspective, corresponding to the textual analyses in chapter two.

From this, the reader can infer whether they were assets to the performance or whether their treatment defaced the substance of the performance itself. Our sources of reference for the evaluation of the productions in this chapter draws on the deeper understanding of the rites and the sanctioned social behavior that fifth century Greeks practiced in their lives as we explored in chapter one, and the manner in which the rituals and ritual fragments were used in the translated tragedies in chapter two.

In the case studies that follow the actors and most chorus members were drawn from the regular staff of the TH.O.C. The contributors were also most often assigned productions for Epidaurus. The pictures of the productions are my snapshots from the recorded productions and the stage directions I give in the analyses - right, left and so on - are made from the viewer's perspective.

⁸⁴³ Fischer-Lichte, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 31-34.

4.1. THE TROJAN WOMEN

4.1. A. The Basic Production Details

The *Trojan Woman* was one of the first productions of the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus for the Festival of Epidaurus under the direction of Nikos Charalambous,⁸⁴⁴ eight years after the Turkish invasion. The translation of the ancient text by the classicist Kostis Kolotas⁸⁴⁵ seems quite faithful to the ancient text but the final scene of the original, at least the ones we consider originals after 300 B.C.,⁸⁴⁶ was cut off. The tragedy was performed for twelve nights at Epidaurus, from 18 June 1982, and it was watched by 2,497 people. The set and costume design was by Giorgos Ziakas. Ziakas has been a painter but most of the people remember him as one of the greatest set and costume designers in theatre and film since 1960. It is worth to mention here that the costumes of the performance were made by the women from the Tsiakkileri Refugee Camp and Androula Psalti was responsible for the macramé that distinguishes the costumes of this production.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴⁴ Nikos Charalambous, who directed the tragedy, is an actor himself. He has been The Artistic Director in many Governmental Organisations in Cyprus and in Greece and has directed for great festival and Theatres.

⁸⁴⁵ Kostas Kolotas was a teacher, a researcher, a commentator of Ancient Greek Literature, a translator and a playwright. He was the major translator of Aeschylus in Cyprus and his translations and plays have seen the stage in Cyprus and in Greece. He was a member of the councils of Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (*P.I.K.*), and TH.O.C. Prior to his death in 2010, he told me he was planning to publish his Aeschylus' translations in the near future. Unfortunately, all his translations are now unpublished but can be retrieved from the TH.O.C's archive.

⁸⁴⁶ In the fourth century, the most popular plays were revived but they were "vulnerable to adaptations and additions ... Around 300 B.C. the Athenian politician Lycurgus prescribed that copies of the texts of the plays should be deposited in official archives, and that future performances should conform to these texts": MacDonald Marianne, *The Living Art of Greek Tragedy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003, p. 5.

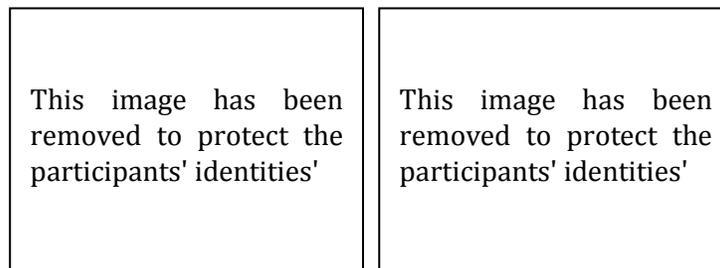
⁸⁴⁷ Other production details: The music was written by the Greek-Cypriot composer Michalis Christodoulides, well-known for his interest in traditional music. Masks were made by Antonis Katsaris. The movement was taught by Ariana Oikonomou an interactive artist, dancer, performer, choreographer, of Echo Arts Living Arts Centre. Arianna has taught and performed in England, Germany, Greece, Holland, Sweden, Armenia, Portugal and Egypt. Her solo performance "In a dark time the eye begins to see" at the 5th European Dance Festival won for Cyprus the 1st prize at the Choreographic Platform 2002.

The actors belonged to the artistic personnel of TH.O.C. By appearance they took part Kostas Demetriou (Poseidon), Tzeni Gaitanopoulou (Athena), Despoina Bebedeli (Hecuba), Stelios Kafkarides (Thalymbios), Lenia Sorokou (Kassandra), Alkistis Pavlidiou (Andromache), Eftichios Poullaides (Menelaus), Maria Micha (Helen), Kynthia Pavlidou (Astyanaktas).

What is particularly noteworthy in this production is the directorial decision for two choral groups: the first is a large group which is mostly inactive or act as stage assistants at the back stage and the second one, which consisted, of only five women which represent the actual tragic chorus. For better understanding, I should note here that when I say 'chorus' I refer to the members that are at the back of the orchestra. The term 'women' goes to the chorus members that are always near Hecuba.⁸⁴⁸

The *Trojan Women* has been characterized as a long poetic dirge. The Greeks show no lenience towards all male and female survivors of Troy or its gods. Therefore, war, destruction, death and lamentation are the basic information all contributors had in mind when they prepared the aesthetics of a performance.

4.1. B. The Design Concept (*mise-en-scène*)



Just before the opening we can barely distinguish the scenery in the dim light which reminds us of a refugee camp. Accumulated bags of sand or stones along the back of the orchestra form a wall which separates the camp from the battle field and Troy's walls. On the back right side of the space there is a cart, a few metres in front of it

The chorus leaders were Andriani Maleni, Sandra Stavrinidou and Rea Frangofinou . The chorus also consisted of 7 Troajan Women. These were Florentia Demetriou, Annita Santoninaiou, Eliana Chalkia, Vaso Papacharalambous, Androulla Irakleous, Elli Kyriakidou and Ioanna Siafkalli. The rest of the chorus were: Andreas Mousouliotis, Eftichios Poullaides, Lenia Sorokou, Alkistis Pavlidou, Maria Micha, Andros Kritikos, Leandros Panayiotides, Varnavas Kyriazis, Kyriakos Efthymiou, Lea Maleni, Giorgos Papageorgiou, Aleksis Demetriou. As we see male actors were added in the female chorus of the play.

⁸⁴⁸ These two parts of the choruses are distinguished by their positioning, their involvement in the action and the colour of their clothes.

there are accumulated jars of various sizes and opposite these, on the left, there is a big earthenware jar. In the centre of the stage there are a few low pedestals.

The setting has nothing to do with the ancient *skene*. It is a contemporary reproduction of a war area, after bombing, clearly declared by the sacks at the back usually used to prevent the debris of a bomb from injuring non-combatants. The scene seems stripped of any life and its colour and texture suggests heartache, frustration and lack of bright prospects for the survivors. It is the perfect place to mourn and lament.

The costumes on the other hand may remind us of a familiar past, but they reflect neither the status nor the origin of all the characters. The macramé knots on all costumes that imply a 'hand-made' eastern era that perplexes the identification.⁸⁴⁹ One of the important things the costume designer has to keep in mind is the presence of two distinct cultures in the tragedy.

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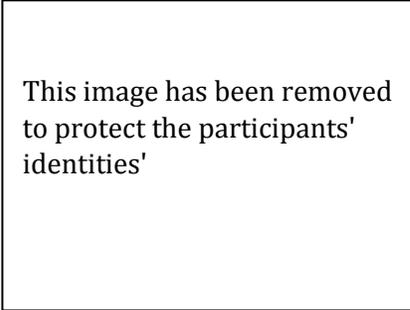
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Hecuba and her five escorts wear body-fitting simple dresses of a similar design with thick horizontal stripes of brown, grey and black colour and a dark headband that covers the upper part of the mask that indicates their mournful mood. The chorus is in similar tight woollen costumes of lighter colour. Although they all look of non-Greek origin, Hecuba's costume offers the audience no indication of her royal status on top of her mourning. This lowering of her to the same social level as the other Trojan women has a disadvantage: the audience loses the point the play is making, that the suffering and the destiny of the so-called 'untouchable' elite accentuate the fact that no one is

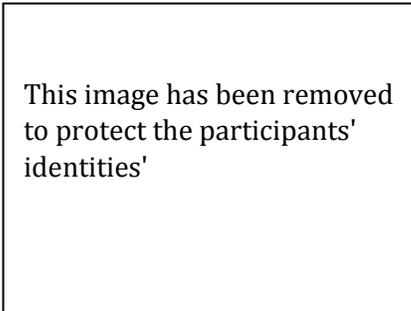
⁸⁴⁹ The masks is concerned, all the actors wore half masks that covered the upper part of all actors giving the impression of baldness. They are white in colour except the messenger's which is golden.

safe if there is not respect for human life. The similarity of their costumes seems to be an effort to unify the chorus and the women, however this visual effect is not enough to complement to the directorial division of any kind as far as their shared origin and functions is concerned.



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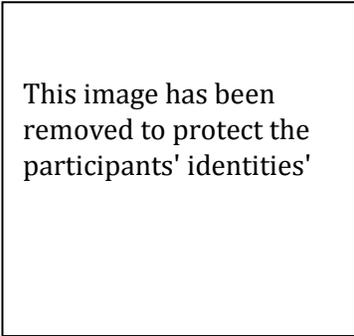
Similarly, the messenger's costume is quite impressive but it has nothing to do with the Greek culture he comes from or at least anything Greek to distinguish him for the cultural background of the defeated. He is dressed in a long black dress with white diamond designs, long wide sleeves and a white cloth attached to each shoulder creating the image of a cloak. His mask is decorated with a macramé design that resembles the Jamaican hair as the hair-like thread design falls to his waist at the back and chest at the front. Therefore until he speaks, he is not immediately identified as one of the Greek conquerors who provoke more sadness and lament every time he enters.



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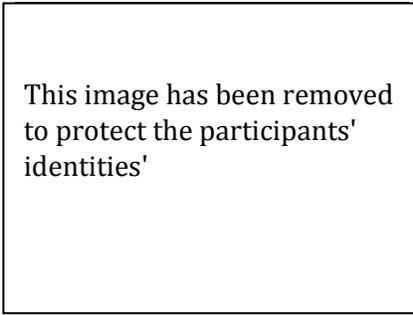
Having said this, the white rich costumes of Poseidon and Athena's suggest successfully their divine origin. They are decorated with a detailed macramé around the neck and the chest and in combination with the masks the two gods seem rich and of high class origin.

Of all the costumes, only three are compatible to rituals: that of Andromache's, of priestess Cassandra's and Helen's which alludes to wedding.



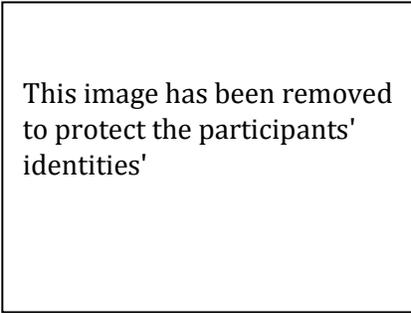
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Andromache's long white dress and the black long hooded cape on top, in its simplicity, indicate her high status and denote both her unwanted wedding and mourning, although not her Trojan culture.



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Cassandra's white long dress has an embroidered piece on top of it (macramé) that covers all of the front part of the body. A second yellow macramé piece of cloth is attached to the wrists and the back of her mask all the way to the ground so that it looks web-like when she extends her arms, especially spectacular from the back. Her white half mask covers her forehead and is decorated with white olive leaves to show her quality as Apollo's prophetess. Her costume declares her foreign origin and its gives the impression of an unworldly attire implying her identity as a seer in an uncomplicated manner, but there is no inclusion of the wreath, the garlands of her priesthood and the temple key mentioned in the text.



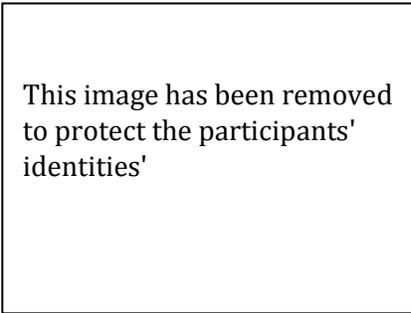
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The wedding allusions are more than transparent in Helen's costume although the spectators watched only her back. She is dressed on stage in an extremely long white dress with a train at the back. The sleeves cover the hands completely and reach to the ground covering a big area around her giving the impression of a cape. The right sleeve is decorated with two wide yellowish stripes sewn along the right hand. Helen had her hair decorated with a crimson fillet made of macramé knots and stripes of various lengths, two of which reach her waist.

However, as a general observation, although the costumes seem to match at first glance and create a then-and-now illusion, they are not always representative of the characters, their relations and origin, nor do they assist the spectators in catching the allusions to and the resonances of rituals and ritual fragments.

4.1. C. The *Trojan Women*: The Rituals – the Performance and the Criticism

The play is the sad story of women who suffers the consequences of war, with their queen still about to go through further misfortunes. The prime ritualistic mover of the plot is exactly her great sufferings.



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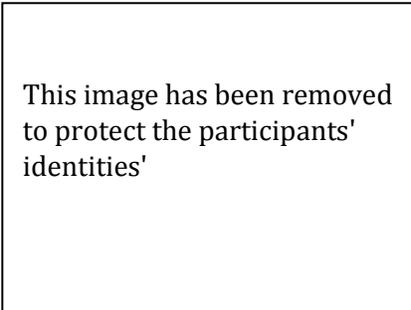
The lights turn down and sad music intermingles with the sound effects of crickets to indicate night time. Human figures sing to the tune while they slowly gather in the middle of the stage from various directions around something. The turning off of the lights for three times is the cue for the chorus to light their candles and illuminate two people in their centre. The chorus dress them in cloaks as they sing sadly and then they step on a small pedestal. When the singing of the chorus becomes a long sound (it reminds of Indian humming) the gods are given their masks. Only now it is clarified that it is two divinities that accept the chorus' treatment. They hold them with stretched arms for a while, as if showing them off, and then put them on in the dim light and Poseidon and Athena are ready for their scene.

The chorus gradually stops its humming, and enlarges the circles for the two figures to be visible in the dim light. The two gods declaim their lines slowly with a heavy voice in an effort to show their divine origin. Then, the chorus spreads in the orchestra and moves around holding the lit candles during Poseidon's report on the defeat Troy. When Athena asks for his help to punish the Greeks for defiling her temple, the chorus members lie on the floor one by one. On Poseidon's acceptance the chorus falls on the ground. The Gods slowly begin to depart following opposite directions, from the two back exits of the stage (00:05:11-00:14:00). On his way out, Poseidon describes the way he will punish the Greeks, when a scream is heard over his last word and the lights of the candles are blown off. (00:14:00).

Undoubtedly, the text and the performance share nothing in visual terms. In the first place, the gods and the mortals are not in contact. Then their placement does not give the impression that the two gods are observing everything from a higher place. Their panoramic view of Troy and the camp outside the city is erased by their inadequate placement on a pedestal in the middle of the orchestra. Moreover, the added wedding allusion may be quite impressive indeed but no matter how engaging the beginning of the performance is, it is totally irrelevant to the text. In the first place, Athena has always been the virgin goddess of war and wisdom and the divine niece and uncle are rather rivals who meet to bridge their differences. In the second place, having in mind her divine status the suggestion that these two are a couple would equal to a sacrilege in ancient Greece.

What is more important is that, their mood in the prologue does not meet their textual disposition. Poseidon's mournful attitude for the city he used to be under his protection is absent. His description of the ruins of his city, Troy, the dead, Polyxena's sacrifice, the unburied king Priam by his own hearth, and Hecuba's misfortunes, his annoyance and displeasure when Athena appears and their following dispute are left out. The two mighty Gods are both discontent with the Greeks' impiety, each for his own reasons, and they put their differences aside to make a pact to punish them by disrupting their voyage home: Poseidon for the fall of his Troy and Athena for the defilement of her temple by the seizing of Cassandra. The reconstruction of the text inevitably leaves the basic matter of the scene unexpressed on stage. Not only do the included lines in the production communicate no images to the audience, but also the little they do say is delivered in such a dull way as if the Gods are not emotionally involved at all. In their effort to convey greatness, they refuted the divine anger the text emits. As a result, the spectator was not acquainted with what has happened, how serious the gods take impiety and what the play is going to be about, which after all is the significance of the prologue in a tragedy.

The final irregularity on staging concerns the point when Athena requests help and Poseidon immediately announces his willingness to vindicate the Greeks and his plans to effect it. The chorus first falls in its knees and then lies on the ground one by one as if disappointed before a mourning yell is heard. This reaction does not fit to women who have their chance for justification after having ineffably suffered from the Greeks. One would rather expect the chorus to straighten their bodies in anticipation and shout out a victorious yell, a ululation, for their future vindication instead. This discrepancy certainly creates some feelings of confusion.



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Then, Hecuba, folded on the ground by the big jar on the right, laments in prose about her future and the fate of Troy (00:16:15) in the sounds of the recorded music. She gets up as she cries and puts on a black shawl. The chorus moves to the back of the orchestra and stand in a line along the accumulated bags with their back to the audience. As the queen mourns four women go to her and squat on her right and left in pairs. A fifth lady offers Hecuba a candle and sits in front of her forming a semi-circle. They show their grief from time to time through gestures of lamentation, such as holding their heads, shaking it from right to left, crossing their arms and hold their shoulders, or holding their belly as if they have a stomachache as they talk about their losses (00:16:15-20:23).

This first picture of Hecuba's mourning, one of the many to come for the audience, is important as it introduces us to the subject matter of the tragedy, the tormented queen who tries hard to retain her royal dignity and stamina. However, she does not lament first and then calls the women to join her in a dirge. Therefore, the absence of her first proper sung lament and the presence of only five women, already on stage, who form mourning postures in slow motion, may offer a beautiful scenic painting in the production but it does not convey the powerful tension. The entrance of twelve or fifteen women from various parts of the stage, and their joining in the queen's lamentation would be more effective emotionally, not to mention the more powerful image of the suffering women.

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The messenger enters from the back centre of the stage and Hecuba stands up. The five women take still positions such as holding the head or sitting on the knees that signal fear and danger (00:20:23). At that moment, Hecuba blows out the candle as the Chorus slowly forms a circle on the left side of the orchestra. On hearing that Hecuba is given to Odysseus the women stand up and hold the queen who only falls in

their arms unable to stand up before they urge her to express the traditional signs of mourning (00:20:23-24:30), as.

We read that on hearing she is allotted to Odysseus, the queen herself explodes into a plaintive expression of traditional mourning. On stage, though it is actually the ladies who tell her to mourn as customary but in any case she only falls in their arms to show her shock while *they* express their grief for her traditionally. This is a typical reaction of the character of Hecuba in this production as she always seems to either fall on the ground or in the women's arms whenever she mourns, and leaves the ladies the task of mourning.

After the first bad news, it is time for Cassandra to come on stage and perform the longest scene in the play, and the most complicated to elaborate for stage. Hecuba seems to pull herself together at her daughter's weird entrance (00:26:48-36:20).

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When Talthybius tells them to fetch Cassandra for Agamemnon, her voice is first heard loudly from within the circle the chorus has already formed on the left (00:26:48-00:36:20). We realize that the purpose of the circle was to operate like a curtain that hid the backstage preparation. She orders the women to lift up their lit torches for the wedding. She then comes forward to the centre of the orchestra in a raving way and, holding a torch, she walks here and there telling everybody how happy they should all be with this wedding of hers to Agamemnon. Hecuba goes to her daughter and embraces her trying to calm her down. However, Cassandra finishes her speech prolonging the final vowel and falls on her knees in her mother's arms.

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She recovers, recognizes her mother for a moment who holds her protectively, and remembers the loss of her father and her destroyed country. Hecuba kneels and struggles to get the holy torch from her but in vain. She remains crouched on the ground listening to her daughter's raving speech about her forthcoming wedding to Agamemnon and Apollo as she walks again around in the centre. With a cry Cassandra falls on the ground at the end of her lines and Hecuba finally manages to get the torch off her hands. As she holds a collapsed Cassandra in her arms she asks the women to sing a dirge for Troy (00:26:48-00:36:20).

The chorus is sat facing the audience, with lit torches, and they vocalise the sound "*Ovi-ovi- Ovi*". When the music stops Cassandra, still in her mother's arms, promises that she will avenge Troy's destruction with her wedding. Then she suddenly leaves her arms, stands up and predicts the axe-murder. Hecuba stays submissively kneeled at her feet. The women begin their lament and Cassandra at her position crosses her hands above her head as long as it lasts. While singing Hecuba stretches her hands and touches the yellow mantle of her daughter. Over the song, Cassandra is heard referring to Helen's responsibility for Troy's destruction.

Then, in the sounds of the music, she moves to her mother's right side. Hecuba grasps her right hand and holds it tenderly. Cassandra tells them not to be sorry for she will avenge her country with her wedding and the women sing again. She then falls again in her mother's arms and explains how lucky the dead Trojans are compared to the Greeks for having been buried properly. She gets up and finishes her speech by lifting her hands up victoriously for the bad fate of the Greeks.

Hecuba approaches, takes her hand and kisses it but Cassandra tells her to stop. She asks her again not be sad and she repeats that she will retaliate for all the Trojan with this wedding.

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The messenger at the centre of the orchestra warns her that she would be punished for all the things she has said if it were not for her mental state. On his words, she starts walking backwards towards him, staring at her mother. Her mother, unable to leave her hand she follows her stooping. When the messenger finishes his remarks, the two women separate their hands with difficulty and Cassandra leans backwards on the messenger having the posture of a crucified person (00:39:40). In the sounds of a flute Hecuba returns to the jar and Cassandra, as soon as she prophesies her mother's and Odysseus' fate, she turns her back to the audience and follows the messenger off the stage slowly. On her way out from the left, and among the chorus who is still there, she lifts her mask upwards, and as it is attached on the yellow shawl it creates a tall, odd, supernatural figure before disappearing among the chorus members (00:36:20).

The review of this scene shows that the most startling and ritualistically complex scene in the *Trojan Women* is almost nonexistent in this production. The absence of all the rituals in the performance reduces the epic quality of the text to personal psychology. This is at odds with the other performative signs of the production in its aesthetic style.

In the first place, the wedding allusions and her priesthood are not staged at all. In the text, her wedding is responsible for her instability for they create three different emotions: despair because it is so inappropriate for a priestess; fear for she knows it will lead to her death; and triumph because she will become the avenger of her fellow citizens. This is obvious the moment Cassandra rushes out of the tent with a wreath on her head. She is clearly under the influence of Apollo and Dionysus and lifting one or two torches up high she sings, or tries to sing, her own *makarismos*, probably in a trance. Her psychological instability is culminated in the play-text with her obsession

to force the unwilling women to dance her wedding dance, which turns out to be sacred. When she asks her mother to join them and then tries to show them how to dance it becomes even more nauseating. Her fixation is sickening especially when she clearly mixes three distinctive types of dances: a wedding dance, the sacred dance of her priestess-hood and that of a Dionysus' maenad. It seems that unconsciously she alternates their steps throughout her scene.

Therefore, Cassandra's appearance in this production is really below the expectations. Her deranged demeanour is not clear, her moody swings are not at all discernible and she shows no signs of Bacchic and Apollonic transcendence as she is simply turned into an unhappy young girl. The mindlessly quick steps right and left, her irregular movements, the occasional falls on her knees or the vague colouring of her voice undermines her fragile, yet powerful, presence. More to that, her continuous tendency to fall into her mother's arms and stay there for long is clearly incompatible with her unrestrained urge to move and dance and sing. Every time she recovers she falls in her mother's arms and each time Cassandra loses her mind, Hecuba takes her right hand. This hyperkinetic woman who struggles between her love for life, death and revenge, between consciousness and transience, who mourns for the loss of his country and family, who is in the end strong enough to exit solemnly but unrelenting to her future is scenically eliminated. The only gesture that looks meaningful and tender, is when Hecuba takes and kisses her hand as Cassandra walks backwards to the Messenger. This kiss has a double meaning either as a goodbye to a wedded daughter or to a dead one.

In the second place, her exit is in direct contrast with the text. Euripides' Cassandra becomes fully aware of her situation and consciously accepts her destiny, but not without vexation as it is expressed in her pre-wedding sacrifices: she removes her priesthood clothes; allows the keys to fall from her hands; possibly the garlands; fixes her untidy hair; and exits as calmly as she has never been before, unveiled. In the production she did not wear the symbols of her priesthood and goes veiled to Agamemnon. She also does something else which not only has nothing to do with the story but fails to create equivalent meaning as a performance image: she lifts her mask

high above creating a strange towering creature with a very long neck. It looks impressive, and unearthly, but unfortunately it is incompatible to the story line. Rather than a transcendent creature, the text is designed here to imply that everyone should be enchanted by Cassandra in the most demanding and upsetting scene in the play, in the sense that the audience do not know what she will do next. She symbolizes at this point the need for empathy for her state, for poor Hecuba and to inculcate in the audience a feeling of great discomfort for what is happening to the Trojans.

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The women's lament signals Andromache's entrance. She is on a cart at the back right stage with her young boy Astyanax, Hector's shield and two spears (00:39:00). Hecuba approaches her walking backwards until she reaches the cart where she takes Andromache's hands. There they mourn about their losses without moving (00:46:00-00:46:43) except when the queen kneels when she hears of Polyxena's sacrifice on Achilles's tomb and Andromache's basic burial steps. Out of pain Hecuba gets up moaning, makes a few steps backwards and falls on the ladies hands lamenting her daughter (00:48:59).

Hecuba then takes her grandson to the centre and play with him with a ball (00:51:14) during Andromache's lament for her past happy life with Hector until she goes to Andromache to encourage her to live for the sake of Astyanax, the future of Troy. At this point, the messenger enters and moves towards the boy who cautiously regresses slowly to the audience (00:55:00). On hearing the Greeks' decision to hurl the last Trojan royal child from the wall of Troy and his advice to accept her fate without cursing the Achaeans, Andromache leans on the cart. He then takes the boy in his arms with tenderness and exits followed by a member of the chorus with a torch.

After Andromache's lamenting monologue for her son (00:58:32) she quietly covers her head with the black hood and exits almost unnoticed during the *Chorikon* that follows (00:59:35).

During the *Chorikon* that follows Andromache's exit the chorus slowly gather on the right-side of the orchestra and comment on various subjects such as *eros* that provoked all this disaster.

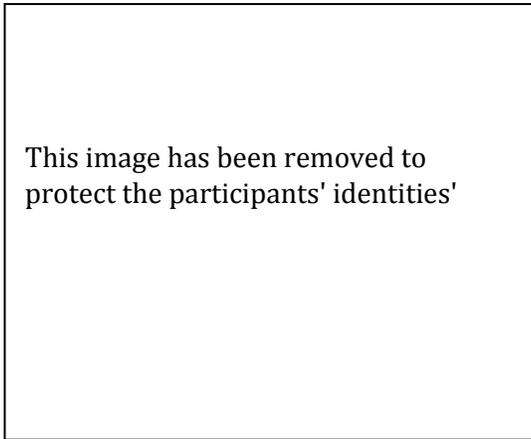
After Cassandra's twisted wedding-sacrificial scene, this is the second long dirge in the text. Both, Andromache and Hecuba mourn, either individually or together: Andromache at the beginning; Hecuba and Andromache when they come close to one another; Hecuba on Polyxena's sacrifice; Andromache about her future; Andromache for her son's imminent murder. Andromache cries, expresses her distress, complaint and tender love and farewells her son before she gives him away to his death. It is possible that she embraces him tightly and kisses him goodbye as customary. However, none of this is exploited on stage.

Andromache's solid position remains the same throughout her scene no matter what. She only leans on the cart as an act of despair instead of losing her heart as it would be expected from a mother who is about to ruthlessly lose her only child. Above all, she does not hold her only child and mourn before she gives him away. She simply expresses her loss after his exit by just covering her head with the black hood, and exits almost unnoticed as soon as Talthybius leaves.

What is also odd here is Hecuba's non-participation in the tragic scene of Astynanax. The text does not instruct us here but is it really possible not to have shown any signs of a wail on hearing about the loss of the last descendant of her family? She could at least look petrified, which would connect her with the burial later on.

There are also some wedding allusions in the play-text which are vaguely illustrated on stage. Andromache entrance and exit on a cart were not materialised on stage. The cart has been on stage as part of the basic set design at the back of the orchestra, so while it seems to allude to this symbolic ritual, its fixed location effaces the possibility of Andromache being drawn in, as the brides in ancient Greece.

The final inconsistency is Andromache's discreet exit on foot, which does not retain its wedding allusion. This happened in actual life when people could not afford it, but this was not the case for the well-off citizen or a princess who is about to wed one of the army leaders. What the director might have done was to turn some of the male members of the chorus at the back into soldiers who would draw the cart to her new life, just as they were used for the transformation of Cassandra and the ensuing scene of Helen's. In this way, it would convey its wedding allusion, and the audience would expect the next unexpected suffering.



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Hecuba goes in front of the right jar and Menelaus takes his place at the back centre stage. Three chorus members come to the centre of the orchestra, one of whom, Helen, is dressed (01:02:40) in a white and yellow cloak which resembles a wedding dress by the other two in the eyes of the audience this time. The wreath on her head at the end completes the picture (01:02:40). Helen remains knee-deep at the same spot throughout her scene facing Menelaus and having her back to the audience. Menelaus announces his decision to take her back home but agrees to hear Helen's defense at Hecuba's request. At his decision the chorus sits down during the *agon*.

After moving dizzily around her spot as if not knowing how to begin, Hecuba starts wandering erratically, while refuting Helen's arguments with short pauses and movements (01:12:00 – 01:12:51).

During her speech, there is this moment when the director has Hecuba stop in front of Helen, touch her head, kneel to embrace her and caress her hair while talking with pain in her voice (01:13:18-01:14:22). When Hecuba reminds her of the times she could stop the war, she holds her

tightly from the shoulders in silence for a few seconds before standing in front of her and opens her arms in question to continue with a harder voice (01:13:18-01:14:22). She prompts Menelaus to slaughter her as an example for any woman who defies her wedding oaths and then returns to her initial post by the jar and support herself by holding onto a woman's shoulder.

Helen begs for her life but Hecuba intervenes to ask Menelaus not to betray his companions who have died for her. Menelaus orders his soldiers to take her to the ships and Hecuba pleads him not to get on the same ship with her and Menelaus responds positively this time, Then, Helen gets up, goes in front of him, lifts her hands up in supplication and kneels without saying anything, as the chorus conceal her to let her exit, before it turns to the audience as soon as Menelaus finishes his speech (01:16:55).

A monotonous undertone singing starts, that reminds us of the church liturgy, and this continues till the end of the *chorikon*. (1.17.30 -1.19.06) At the reference of the inextinguishable holy light, one woman moves a few steps to the right of the group, stands and turns to them sidelong holding the torch. They complain that Hera has forgotten all their offerings and sacrifices for the sake of the Achaeans. The 'dancers' move slowly and change positions at various moments.

Now the ladies go to Hecuba, who is kneeled touching her head on the ground and holding her head with her two hands in an action of despair around the jar. The chorus also moves into a straight line, whereas Menelaus leaves the stage discretely.

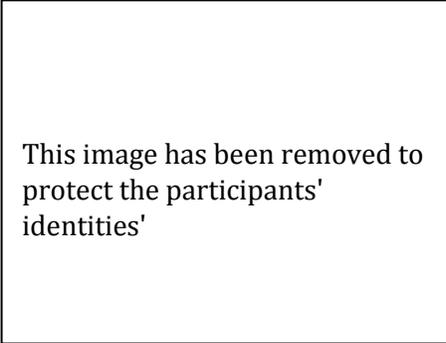
In Helen's scene, we distinguish the wedding features and the rite of supplication. The text emits the feeling that she has been preparing for the meeting with Menelaus as if everything around her is peaceful and serene. Therefore, it is a good directorial idea to show Helen's dressing in her long white dress on stage. In this way, the wedding allusions are illuminated and the coquetry they accuse her of is, as expected, in direct contrast with the grey setting and melancholia of the atmosphere. Clytaemnestra's divine sister may expect to supplicate, but she is well aware that it is her enchanting look, which she also knows how to use very well, that will save her. Contrary to the custom that required a mournful look therefore, she exerts herself to prepare, adorn

herself and comb her hair so that she has all the assets to mollify Menelaus and let her live.⁸⁵⁰ But this is where the similarities with the text stop.

Her staged attitude is irrelevant to that creature that seems to have control of herself and over the others, uses persuasive arguments to defend herself wittingly and finally confronts Hecuba by looking at her in the eyes. In the production, she sounds unconvincing and unconcerned of her fate. When it is time to supplicate, she rather beseeches like a captive soldier: she goes near him, lifts her hands and kneels submissively. What is more, she says nothing and there is no response on behalf of Menelaus. She does not look at all like the woman who adjusts the rite to serve her plans and supplicates with confidence of her femininity. Another irregularity is her concealed, quiet exit without the escort of soldiers according to Menelaus orders which again damages another wedding allusion of the bride's transfer.

On the other hand, Hecuba's desire to touch Helen's head and hair and embrace her with tenderness during the performance is inexplicable. Is Helen's god-like beauty still so captivating that Hecuba herself is trapped for a moment forgetting her misery? Or is it a twisted farewell to a bride? It is difficult to interpret her gestures in any case, especially when the queen blames her for the destruction of her entire world.

Helen's scene in the text is the only optimistic moment in the play, meaning it is future oriented. Therefore, it needs to be spirited and emit a desire for life, especially because it comes into direct contrast with the most heartbreaking scene of the *Trojan Women*, the ensuing funeral of Astyanax.



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⁸⁵⁰ In public life, the repentant used to neglect his appearance, express fear, cry, tear his clothes, cut the hair or shave but above all, the individual showed humility. See Supplication in chapter one for more.

A recorded cry prompts the chorus to announce the coming of Astyanax's dead body. At the Messenger's entrance, carrying the boy's corpse on the shield, Hecuba runs towards him but halfway she falls on the ground unable to stand. The queen gets up with great difficulty and upright her body with spasmodic movements. She steps backwards, makes a circle around him from the inner part of the stage, then stumbles on the ladies who were still sitting and asks them to get up.

The messenger instructs them to prepare the boy as quickly as possible because they are to sail very soon. The queen tells the women to carry the shield close to the earthenware jar as she steps backwards. The messenger withdraws sidelong and turns his back to the women but the queen runs and in front of him asking for the reason they feared a little boy. Then, she joins the ladies who have already sat around the boy and held her head (01:23:02)

She mourns her grandson and in the end she covers the body with her black shawl. She tells her grandson that all he has left now is his father's shield. She lifts up an olive-wreath and asks the shield to accept her offering along with his dead son and help him transfer to Hades (01:23:29-01:26:50).

The ladies carry the shield to the messenger singing a dirge and Hecuba takes the messenger's hand to support herself. Then, he exits in the sounds of the recorded music.

What prevails in this scene is Astyanax's preparation for burial at such tender age and Hecuba's extreme mourning at the sight of the small corpse that is in total counterview with the performance. All we watch at Talthybius' entrance is Hecuba's unsuccessful effort to run towards the messenger because she falls on the ground midway, possibly to show she grieves. Hecuba's first impulses to embrace the small corpse, kiss it and sing a dirge shifts to the ladies in the production. They are the ones who, after her bid, take the body, sit by it and hold his head, yet without expressing any mourning.

Then, she does not ask the ladies to decorate the corpse or cover it with that Phrygian finery that he would have on if he lived to marry, or attend his wounds with linen. She only replaces the wedding veil with her black shawl, instead of white, the colour of the

wedding gown ancient Greeks used for young and unmarried people.⁸⁵¹ The omission of the preparation scene does not allow a real dirge to evolve out of the short duologue she has with the women, and naturally it does not provoke more tears to Hecuba at her grandson's final display of his body. The scene simply ends when the women carry the shield to the messenger in lamentation and, how strange, Hecuba takes the Messenger's hand to support herself, or to console, or to stop from taking the boy away; it is not clear. Everybody expresses suffering by staying still or saying so.

The absence of the ritualistic scenes found in the text ruin the display of the last straw to Hecuba's strength that brings her emotional downfall. The play-text was modified by cutting out the most upsetting scenes to that extend that there is not much left after Talthybius takes the boy and exit to bury him.

The women sing a lament as they walk towards various spots on stage, make circles or look around at various positions as if they are waiting for something. They finally go off stage slowly and in silence whereas Hecuba is left lying in the middle of the orchestra with her arms open on the side before the lights go out. (01:28:56-01:32:28)

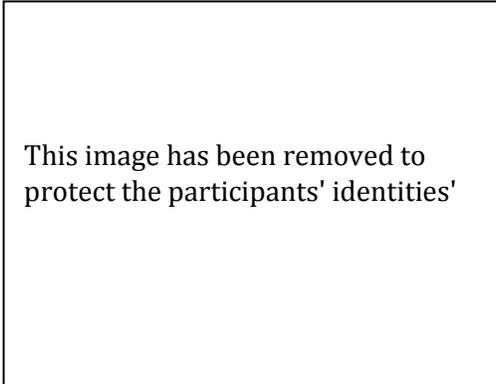
It seems that the final tremendous explosion of feelings in the context of the text is excluded. As Hecuba watches her last hope for life exiting for its interment and Troy in flames at the back, the Queen finally collapses. The funerary fire that is eliminating everything and everybody in a creepy atmosphere seems to be the only consolation for her and tries to run towards it and throw herself in it, only to be stopped. Seeing their queen losing her heart the women have no one to hold onto and they fall on the ground helplessly. There they perform their frenzy invocation-lament to their dead husbands, in a real frenzied scene.

⁸⁵¹ Even today, in Cyprus and in Greece, a man is usually buried in his formal suit or favourite clothes and a woman is buried in a new or her favourite dress. If the man or the woman is unmarried then they are often dressed in clothes that resemble the wedding ones. In the case of an army or police officers they are buried in their uniform. Only old women are often seen in black or dark dresses, whereas for old men suits are preferred, just as the clothes they usually wear at an old age. The custom varies but in general the dead person as a rule is never buried in black possibly because, according to the Orthodox Church, the soul goes to a better place.

It is more than evident, that the removal of the last scene of the *Trojan Women* is disastrous to the dramaturgical effect of the play. It could have been a shocking experience to watch fifteen women falling on the ground and start hammering the earth with deafening calls and cries and tears and shouts in an upsetting blast of feelings. And then, after their culminating burst, they might exit in a funeral procession, heading for the ships, only in their case they would lament nobody else but themselves, probably also performing the lamentation gestures.

This procession of tired, hopeless women would be the final shock for the audience. But there was no funerary procession in the production since, unconventionally, the women exited individually from different directions. More strangely, after all they have been through, they left the queen on the ground back alone in the middle of the orchestra, in the dim light.

It has been obvious in chapter two that the mourning in the *Trojan Women* is orchestrated in such a way as to bring the articulation of woe to a culmination at the end. In this production, the absence of the power of rituals impoverished the effects and decreased the built-up agony of the defeated. There was no “what else might happen to these poor women” hovering in the air.



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3.2. MEDEA

4.2. A. The Basic Production Details

Euripides' *Medea* was directed by Diagoras Chronopoulos⁸⁵² in 1984. Minos Volanakis⁸⁵³ translation follows the ancient text but there has been a major reconstruction on the prologue and the first episode to such extent that it did not favour the balance between a script-text and the script-performed. Most of the lines of the nurse were given to Medea changing in this way their character analysis on stage. Its opening night was the 14 June 1984 and it played for seven nights in the amphitheatres in Greece and in Cyprus.⁸⁵⁴

4.2. B. The Design Concept

The first impression one gets at a glimpse, is that the whole concept of set and costume designs looks antiquated. The scenery covers all the orchestra. The stage is made up of two big circular areas, the smaller on top of the biggest. The outer circle forms a step of about eighty centimetres width which one climbs up to enter the upper stage, the main acting area. This upper area which seems to take the place of

⁸⁵² Diagoras Chronopoulos has been at the post of the artistic director at the National Theatre of Northern Greece and at Karolos Koun's *Art Theatre (To Theatro Technis)*, in Greece.

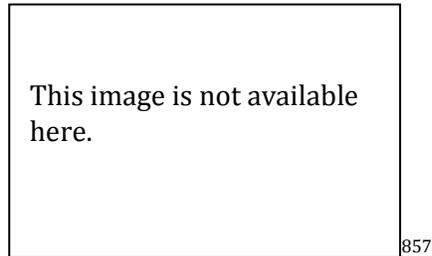
⁸⁵³ Minos Volanakis teaches and directs at Karolos Koun's Drama School *The Art Theatre*, in Athens. He was the first one who directed plays by Theotokas, Ibsen and Beckett in Greece. In 1954, he studied drama in England. He directed and translated works of ancient Greek poets into English for theatres in the United States and England. He also devised ancient drama such as "An Evening of Free Greek Music and Drama" in Royal Albert Hall, in London, under the title, in 1970, with Irene Papa and John P. Ryan.

⁸⁵⁴ Other production details:

The choreography was taught by the Greek-Cypriot dancer Ersi Pitta. Born in Egypt, she studied in France and then in New York History of Art and Dance. She is a founding member of the European Centre for Choreography based in France, People's Experimental Theatre and the Centre for Research on Ancient Drama and Art group "Imeros-Intervention", in Athens. Since 2003 she has run a research program on the choreography in the ancient drama sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture.

The leading actors by appearance are: Despoina Bempedeli (Nurse), Andreas Moustras (Tutor), Tzeni Gaitanopoulou (Medea), Fedros Stasinou (Creon), Stelios Kafkarides (Jason), Eftichios Poulaides (Aegeus) and Spyros Stavriniadis (Messenger). The chorus leaders were Annita Santorinaiou (A' Choryphea), Alkistis Pavlidou (Choryphea) and Lenia Sorokou. The rest of the chorus consisted of Medea Channa, Andriani Maleni, Sandra Mpilika, Androula Herakleous, Pitsa Antoniadou, Sophia Muaimi and the dancers Argiro Toumazou, Anthi Koumoushi and Eleni Konnari. Lea Maleni and Kynthia Pavlidou were Medea's children.

the ancient *skene* is designed after the Disc of Phaestos.⁸⁵⁵ Dionysis Photopoulos⁸⁵⁶ chose the ancient artefact as his distinctive mark in the scenery and that is why the painted ground follows the coiling shape of the Disc decorated with its ideograms.



Its spiral printed signs lead to an invisible hole in the centre which is only noticed when the actors make use it, either to retrieve something out it or as an altar. Even then though, it blends so well with the black and white designs that it remains undistinguishable. The black centre occupies that spot in the orchestra where the altar used to be in the ancient Greek theatre. This structure covers the largest part of the actual theatre orchestra leaving approximately a two metres space around it for the chorus.

This evaluation brings us to the first appreciation of the set design, that it is significantly fallacious. Although impressive, the outstanding feature of the Cretan

⁸⁵⁵ In 1908, Luigi Pernier, a member of the Italian Archaeological mission on Crete, excavated in a crypt beneath the floor of Royal chamber of the palace of Phaestos the Phaestos disc, one of the most mysterious objects of all time. It is dated back to the late second millennium BC. of the Minoan Civilisation and its dating is connected with the time just before Pheastos' overnight destruction from a tidal wave linked to the tremendous eruption of the volcano in Thera, Santorini today. It is a round clay tablet of a medium-size, with both faces covered with carved signs. The Since the day the disc was discovered, its decipherment has been one of the most complex and intriguing riddles in the history of archaeology. Professional and amateur archaeologists, linguists, anthropologists and even astronomers alike have been grappled with it, providing their own theorems for the disc's interpretation or intended function. Apart from the resemblance of some 'glyphs' with Linear A and Egyptian hieroglyphs, the origin of the language is uncertain and incomparable to other known scripts. Nowadays, it is displayed at the Heraklion museum in Crete, Greece.

⁸⁵⁶ Dionysis Photopoulos designed the set and costume designs. Dionysis Photopoulos was born in Kalamata, Peloponese, in 1943 and studied at the National School of Art in Athens. After 40 years of work he has designed the set and the costumes for more than 450 plays and films. He recently admitted in an interview for the newspaper *To Bema* On Line, 1 August 2010, that 400 works of his were in collaboration with untalented people, or he made set designs either for money or for a friend. However, having done 50 great jobs, considering 10 of them as his best, he is satisfied with the proportion.

⁸⁵⁷ Heraklion Archaeological Museum, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/4/eh41.jsp?obj_id=7844 [Accessed June 2015].

Faestos Disc is entirely irrelevant to the location of the story, Corinth, and its ritualistic culture.

At the back, there is a long hanging piece of cloth of about five metres long and four metres wide. It has the drawing of a huge sun on the upper part and a split at the bottom that brings to mind the opening of the tent. A more daring suggestion is its resemblance to vagina as the actors who use it go inside or coming out so slowly that they give the impression of childbirth.

Although the setting proves quite functional as the story unfolds, there are more drawbacks in relation to the context and the spatial relationship of the actors. The episodes take place on the five-metre in diameter upper area, taking the place of the ancient stage, and the chorus parts are restricted to the two-metre width of orchestra and on occasions on the one-metre width first step. This separation of the episodes and the *chorika* then brings forward the second comment on the set design.

The upper stage, being occupied only by two or three characters, gives the sense of void. More importantly, it alienates Medea from the chorus when the need is often otherwise. For example, according to the text, the chorus is very sympathetic towards Medea and it continuously empathises with her performing their rituals: they pray for her, take an oath, stand by her during the invocation or beseech her to let the children live. Yet, apart from the Nurse, in this production the women never approach or connect physically with the foreign princess.

As with the deceitful usage of the Cretan symbol, costumes⁸⁵⁸ also denote nothing of the actual cultural setting of the story or Medea's cultural and social background. Even if the setting were correct, Medea's costume would be in contrast with the Minoan civilisation which has been notorious for its elegant elaborated clothes and the fine hair style. Medea's whole appearance is that of a wild uncivilized foreigner. She is wearing a long fur black coat with a tail. Its wide long sleeves are hemmed with white fur along their sides so that it creates an effect when she opens her arms. It is open at

⁸⁵⁸ It is an old recording and of poor quality. The Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus has no photographs of that performance so the basic colours of the costumes are under question. The costumes of Creon, Aegeus and Jason are not clearly visible.

the front from the chest to the feet and when she moves around her red costume underneath made by a loose, close-fitting blouse and trousers that slightly wrinkles at the bottom can be visible. Her impressive white half-mask is extended above her forehead creating a bald area on which, long to the back black feathers are attached to it. On the sides, it is decorated with white long piece of fur, like a fox's tail, that reaches the shoulders. The first thought that comes to your mind is the headband worn by the chiefs of the American Indian tribes.

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However, because she has been living with Greeks and in Greece for almost twenty year and her adaptive nature, the text implies she tried to adapt to the Greek way of life for the sake of her husband and her children Moreover, there is the issue of her manipulative nature as well: the text suggests that she would not be able to manipulate others so effectively if she did not blend into the social context. On the other hand of course, now she is furious about her life falling apart, she could wear distinctive clothes of her motherland and her royal origin. Even in this case, Colchis was a far from being characterised as savage. There may be a point to suggest that the proud Medea would be well decorated, and the wedding allusions in the text may allow some costume indexes to that ritual. The same observation is applied to the Nurse's costume as well.

She also wears a similar long brownish fur coat and a whitish loose, close fitting costume underneath. At the lower part of her trousers, one can discern three white rows of laces sawn. She also has a white half mask that covers the whole forehead but

⁸⁵⁹ Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus, <<http://www.thoc.org.cy/>>, [Retrieved July 2010].

she has thick, white, rasta-like hair attached on it. The hair is long to her waist and as she moves they usually fall in front of her face underlining her foreign origin and emitting the aura of an outcast witch. Her attire seems to be rather a mixture of African, American-Indian and Jamaican characteristics, something which is ill-assorted to the Greek environment she works. She is a slave who lives in Greece under Jason's authority and expenses, therefore a simple Greek costume would probably be more suitable. The resemblance of her costume to Medea's that places both of them of the same origin is another oddity.

The Chorus' dresses bring to mind the statues of the Caryatids on the Acropolis. The dresses are long and white with long sleeves and they are consisted of two pieces. A head cover is sown on it and it conceals the whole head. On top of this, they wear a long tunic, rich in pleats, that covers the whole body.

As a general observation, despite the fact that all male costumes and the chorus' remind us of classical Greece, they are in contradiction with the Cretan civilization the Phaestos' disc indicates. The setting and the costumes therefore may be in a way functional, but they are not in line with the story.

4.2. C. *Medea*: The Rituals – the Performance and the Criticism

As all tragedies are defined by a dominant ritual so is *Medea*. The plot revolves around the cancelling of a wedding oath to her, which the title character takes as a personal insult. Any other rite is at her disposal whenever she wants to manipulate human beings for her own benefit.

The production opens with mystical recorded sounds in the dark and then we hear the sound of the sticks hit together. When the knock of the sticks becomes faster, the central area is gradually lit. A kneeling woman with open arms is seen in front of the black centre of the Phaestos disc with open arms. This person wobbles right and left, sings to the music and hits the ground with her hands as she stares into a gap. The sound effect fades out and her humming takes its place before she starts talking in a harsh, chocking voice.

The nurse recounts her mistress' life, cursing her fatal meeting with Jason and the breaking of his wedding oaths. She informs us of Medea's wild temperament and of how dangerous she can be when she is in despair like now. While doing that, she slowly takes out of the hole a necklace, a diadem and a knife which she places among some other items on a tray. She gets up to fall on the ground in front of the black hole and hits quickly the ground before she sees the children coming from the right entrance.

The beginning of a play is often half of the story. The production damages the presence of the sympathetic and protective Nurse by offering the false impression of an old witch performing a spell. Her wild attire and the very long Rasta-like hair attached on her mask enhance the idea of witchcraft of a savage person,⁸⁶⁰ instead of the textual caring nurse. Further to the sorceress image, her squeaky voice gives the false impression that she rather dislikes her mistress, or even worse that she hates her, even though she curses Jason for his dishonesty.

Apart from the erroneous incantation that seems to originate in wilder lands, and does not really exist in the text, the importance of the nurse's role is damaged in the prologue. The reconstruction of the text in which her account on Medea be spoken by Medea herself removed from the Nurse her actual purpose on stage which is to introduce us to the background of the story and sketch out a fearless female, who takes the rite of oath so seriously that she is ready to kill if needed.

As soon as the boys come on stage with the tutor they start playing with a necklace, a diadem and a knife the nurse gives them on a tray. When the tutor (00:09:00) announces the king's decision to exile Medea, the nurse asks him to guard them from their mother. At that point, Medea's cry is heard and the nurse pushes them gently through the slit of cloth out of the stage. She goes to the centre again and mourns for Medea being betrayed (00:11:48).

⁸⁶⁰ She wears a long brownish fur coat and a whitish loose, close fitting costume underneath. At the lower part of her trousers, one can discern three white rows of laces sewn. She has a white half mask that covers the whole forehead on which thick, white, rasta-like hair are attached. The hair is long to her waist and as she moves they usually fall in front of her face underlining her foreign origin and emitting the aura of an outcast witch. Her attire seems to be a mixture of African, American-Indian and Jamaican characteristics, something which is ill-assorted and offers nothing to the performance.

The Chorus enters at a slow rhythmic pace, and covers the orchestra having their hands on the side or open, wanting to know more about her psychological condition for her wailing is heard up to the city. When Medea's second cry is heard, briefly cursing this time, the Nurse starts hitting the sticks quickly and walking on her knees around the centre (00:14:00). At that time, the Chorus slowly kneels around the stage in a circular row and the nurse prostrates with her face towards the ground at the back left side of the stage as Medea is seen coming out of the tent so slowly as if she is born.

Medea goes as far as the centre telling her life-story and there she kneels, crosses her hands above her head, and wishes to die (00:16:52). From that spot, she talks about the woman's poor place in a male's world during which the chorus kneels or sits without being noticed by the audience. At the end of it she extracts the desired promise of silence and to stand by her no matter what.

What happens on stage is in total contradistinction to the text in various ways. The restriction of her backstage mourning to two brief cries is not only impossible to illustrate her fury and lament for her fate but it also cancels the image of a wronged woman with unpredictable reactions. What the text implies that hovers in the air is her backstage lament in the distinctive manner of a Phrygian or a Mysian mourner, so wild that would affect everybody on stage, and in the auditorium. In tragedy characters often lament for their misfortunes, not necessarily for death, and Medea is not an exception. It is possible though, based on her fiery and intellectual mind, that even her lamentation was designed so as to move the women and extract their promise of silence.

What is worse, she performs her vocal off stage collapse in her interaction with the women who express no worry or anxiety since their entrance. It seems inconsistent with her character to let them see her humiliated and on her knees before she ensures their promise of silence which would prevent them from any future attempts to interfere in her plans. In the production it seems that the promise of silence is given out of pity, not because they are persuaded by her reason, and pre-planned design, in her monologue on women's low social status.

The nurse's reactions are also incomprehensible. Hitting the sticks when she talks about her mistress or hear her scream does not make sense as she is not agitated to the extent of confusion in the text. Her non-Greek submissive lying on the ground on Medea's appearance is also without a cause. This gesture of total servitude does fit to a person who is certain that Medea never hurts her friends, not to mention her possibly Greek origin. The same applies to the kneeling of the women of Corinth; until now there is no indication that they slaves, a condition that would justify their gestures.

We can conclude here that in this introductory part of the play the script-text and the script-performed do not endorse one another.

After Medea's twisted encounter with the nurse and the chorus the first complete ritual, her supplication to Creon, takes place.

When Medea guarantees the women's promise, Creon comes on stage with two soldiers and stay on the right upper stage. The two followers on both his sides sit on one knee so that the king puts his hands on their heads before he commands Medea to leave the country immediately. She changes her behaviour and becomes more co-operative. She gets up, moves to the left, makes a semi circle and stands opposite him on the other side asking for the reason of her exile. When he expresses his fears for his daughter's safety, Medea goes towards him to the centre protesting for all the rumours against her and prostrates in compliance saying that she remains silent in front of his power (00:23:06). When she realises that Creon is not convinced to let her stay for one more day she approaches him to supplicate by lying down completely a few feet away from him (00:24.33). Creon finally grants her the favour but in a domineering way expressing his fear for regretting it before he leaves following the two soldiers (00:26:32).

Bearing in mind the actual rite, it is justifiable to comment on the mistaken physical aspect of supplication. It is evident that what is said is overturned in the production. Therefore, although Creon himself reveals that she clings to his hand, she beseeches *only* by prostrating a few feet away from him instead of kneeling, avoiding the necessary physical contact of the text.

Then, his arrogant and authoritarian behavior throughout the scene creates doubts. At the beginning, there is room for being domineering but then, his behaviour had to be

toned down when she supplicates as this suits better the behavioural etiquette of the individual who is begged. After all, he seems to be in doubt for his decision in the text-play. There is therefore absolutely no conformity between the text-performance and the play-text in which Medea meets Creon on her feet as an equal, not kneeling, confronts him with arguments looking at him, not prostrated, tries to soothe his fears he has for her, and only when her persuasion has no effect she turns to proper supplication. There is no way a woman who takes pride in herself to stay subdued throughout the scene. However her beseech also serves to highlight her character as she confesses below that she would never kneel unless she has something to gain.

On Creon's exit, Medea slowly stands up. She covers the stage rhythmically as she declares among others that she would have never kneeled if there was nothing to gain. She stops at the centre, brings her hands together and stretches her fingers above the black hole to invoke Hecate as her witness of the violation of oaths and her support to destroy Jason and the royal family in a loud voice full of anger and despair. The women encourage her to avenge herself, being a master of magic, and then support her with their singing.

She crouches down in front of the black hole with her face down till the end of the *chorikon* in which the women side with Medea for having lost her homeland, and then her husband. In this beautiful *ode*, the women rhythmically rotate with open arms singing about the loss of the divine balance and claim honour for the female gender via Medea (30.30-32.40). As soon as they finish, Jason enters to find them sat with straight backs.

In the play-text, when Creon leaves, Medea informs the women that she decides to poison the royal family now she has time. There is still though the matter of a safe haven. In any case, she invokes Hecate and then prepares her spell while the chorus sings a fantastic ode clearly taking her side. It is a beautiful scene full of thrill and suspense through which we have the chance to see Medea the woman figuratively raising above the ground for the first time, the second being literally in the last scene of the tragedy. Her inner strength and her confidence in her powers can be fully exhibited here.

Therefore, it is clear that her despair in the production has no place in this invocatory scene as well as her folding in front of the black hole during the *chorikon*. At this point the role of Medea is written to have continued actions connected with her spell during the ode. Although Aeschylus utilised only the beginning of the spell, the prayer, a director can today turn to sources and display more parts of it: the pouring of a libation and the request after her calling of the gods; the final libation to seal the deal; or by having Medea concentrating on the hole as she was standing still. Following the text, Medea could leave the stage to perform her magic in secret away from the mortal eyes as this was the custom, as we have seen in chapter one.

Regarding the staging of the chorus, while it was designed to be impressively sweet and lovely, it eventually appeared to be disconnected from the centre of their focus. In the text it is the moment when Medea performs her magic spell that the women experience the overpowering feeling of pride and power of their gender through her. So, their controlled rebellion against the suppression of the women could have been more affirmative, even threatening at times. But most importantly, the first part of this magnificent ode could have been utilised by a director as part of Medea's spell, implicating everybody in a magical practice.

As soon as they cry out aloud "Honour to the female genre", Jason enters quickly from the right entrance for his first heated meeting with Medea who sits up and covers her eyes with one hand. It seems they exchange positions during their encounter: the one who argues walks about the stage, as the other stays down at the hole. There is also a time when Jason's reply Medea on the right of the stage where she falls on the ground with her face down, and stays there for a while when he responds to her arguments.

During his speech, three chorus members slowly stand up and walk among those sitting as if thinking about his points of view. As expected, Medea retort to all his arguments walking about and around him as he stays sitting.

When their confrontation comes to a dead end Jason exits angrily feeling he has done all his best leaving her prostrated in front of the black hole. Medea's spits a curse on his wedding as he exits, but he does

not hear her last prediction-warning that he is about to lose two women with his Greek wedding (00:34:50-00:37:35).

Their dialogue follows the text and it does not seem to bear any ritualistic elements. However, historical awareness offers the detection of two concealed wedding allusions that are significant to the plot, when Jason tries to cancel their wedding twice. He first offers her financial support to leave, like her guardian, which Medea cleverly denies as it equals to the cancelation of their wedding. Then, later he supports that Aphrodite made Medea help him, the goddess' concubines used to addressed, which again she cancelled with her arguments. Their contention finishes with her curse by which foresees her murders.

However, this magnificent meeting of polemizing minds, this picture of two warriors in the boxing ring, was stained by their physical behaviour on stage. She kneels each time she hears his accusations, stays like this during his caustic criticism and prostrates herself when he exits the stage. This attitude does not characterise her temper as she would have never let Jason see her bended.

Their scene ignites the sung chorus' prayer to Aphrodite on the disastrous passion Eros can evoke in a man's life as soon as he leaves.

They kneel and ask Aphrodite for a harmonical life with their husbands and her protection from the irrational passion for a man who does not honour his oaths. Then, their song turns into a curse for anyone who causes such woes as Medea's and asks for a lonely death to any oath-breaker. Taking Medea's side, they imprecate Jason to die unloved and without any friends since he did not honour his oaths. The kneeling women change various positions such as swinging their bodies from time to time, and getting up for a moment only to sit again in a slow rhythm until Aegeus' entrance from the right entrance. The king waits until the chorus finishes and then greets Medea with open arms (00:46:20-00:48:03).

This prayer to Aphrodite ode embodies intense emotions and ends with a strong curse at Jason which insinuates the outcome of Medea's plan. Deductively then, it can be suggested that the women express Medea's intense feelings with this song, too. Yet, their slow motion and soft mood is not in accord with the fear or the tension of the

curse the women express on stage. This prayer is important for another reason; following Jason's reference to the goddess, it is the first time that is suggested that the women may rather be slaves than prominent citizens of Corinth.

Before their song is finished, Aegeus is seen at the back stage waiting for his turn to come. He greets Medea without any gestures from that spot as she comes a little forward. When she realises he takes her side, Medea begs him to show mercy to an unfortunate woman and accept her in his country. He is at the back right of the circle and she slowly goes to him diagonally with stretched arms to supplicate. On her way, she implores him, she says, by his grey hair and by touching his knees before lying in front of his feet without any physical contact. She promises him children and on hearing this he goes around her stretched body to the front left side of the stage with open arms. He returns the promise to help her as long as she manages to step foot on his land alone.

She sits up to listen to his offer and in contentment she stands up. Nevertheless, as her temperament dictates, Medea requires an oath to ensure he will materialize his promise (00:51:00-00:53:00). Good-natured Aegeus is more than willing to do that for a child he wants more than anything else in life. So, at the front centre of the stage, he kneels facing the audience, opens his arms and asks her for instructions. She tells him to swear to the Dark Earth, the Bright Sun and all the race of the gods that he will protect her in any way he can as long as he lives. She stands behind him having her arms in a right angle while he utters his oath and the curse at the end. Then, he leaves quietly without saying anything else from the left entrance as the women wishes him safe journey back home. (00:53:00-00:55:00)

The script-text and the performance-text bear no striking differences but once again the staging blunders. First, Aegeus' waiting at the back stage until the ode is finished is odd; as all entering characters do. Then he greets Medea in a friendly way without raising his right hand. During their well-disposed stichomythia, they both keep distances as they move circularly on the edge of the stage until it is time for Medea to plead for his hospitality. This physical distance is unnatural for two well-intentioned people. The way to indicate the approach of friendship would have been to move closer to Medea as soon as they established their amity.

Just as in her meeting with Creon, on approaching him with stretched arms to supplicate, she just lies in front of his feet without establishing the physical contact she announces. Even if we accept the fact that the director took into account her origin from Colchis, in which perhaps people entreated in this way, it might have been clearer to make use of the traditional enactment of supplication in the Greek context in order to ensure its potential energy.

The taking of an oath was religiously empowered for the ancient Greeks and its failure would attract the gods' punishment. The text offers no information on their body posture but if we turn to the ancient Greek customary ways, Aegeus would have stood upwards to address the god Sun and change to a downward inclination when he called the Earth underground. This would also have acted as a visual marker for audiences, whereas kneeling alone with open arms neither summons the resonance of the ritual enactment, nor carries a resonance of oath taking in contemporary symbolic terms. As an additional effect that would suit Medea's character, they could have used the handshake to seal their agreement. This would enhance her manly character and heroic temperament and define her as the sole master of herself. This is another case when knowledge of ancient Greek religion proves vital for the performance.

After Aegeus' departure Medea reveals her full plan thrilled of her forthcoming revenge to the women who kneel in terror. They then get up and try to change her decision to no effect. What she does is to forgive their boldness to express their opposition.

To the accompaniment of the recorded music and the singing of the ancient lines, they beg her by her knees not to kill her children. The supplication takes place with Medea on stage whereas the chorus line up in a semi circle on the orchestra as they entreat her.

The third stasimon is also the third case of supplication which goes unobserved in the performance. It is an interrupted plea because Medea denies their request setting the boundaries of their relationship for the first time in the play, as she knows very well that they are bound by their oath of silence. However, once again, the position of the actors ruins the ritual completely. Having the women spread on the orchestra and Medea in the centre of the upper stage does not help at all to establish the necessary

suppliant-supplicandus physical relationship. Moreover, their promise plays an important part in the enactment of the rite because the women really seem to suffocate for not being able to act out, another important element that is lost in the transmission.

On Jason's second entrance (01:07:00), with the nurse following him, a friendly Medea is trying to persuade him that she has come to her senses and has decided to leave children with him. The nurse brings the children on stage and Medea asks them to greet their father by taking his right hand. They run to him and he picks them up in his arms while she quietly mourns to herself. Being satisfied with the turning of the events, Jason wonders why she cries, only to hear her cunning excuses which he believes. Medea then cancels Jason's objections and finally convinces him that her presents will lure the new wife to let the children stay in Corinth. He believes her cunning excuses and leaves from the right entrance followed by his boys with the presents in their little hands.

Medea's plan is getting into its final phase. Although what is uttered follows the text, the salutation is not staged accordingly. Jason takes them in his arms and ignores their right hand, indicative in *Medea* as it is connected with the betrayal of oaths, and the farewell to death. Not clarified are also her tears, her first mourning, at the sight of her happy children in their father's arms.

The boys' exit signals the beginning of a genuine dirge, the fourth stasimon, performed as Medea is kneeled in front of the black hole. The women lament for the coming end of everybody including Medea who is willing to kill her offsprings for a wedding bed. Six chorus members, slowly and rhythmically, get on the first step of the stage and start pulling red stripes of red cloths. The others are spread in the orchestra around it. They step down carrying the cloths, and in pairs they hold it stretched.

Bound by their oath, all the women can do now is to sing a dirge for everybody who are about to die. It is a real joy to watch the women rhythmically spread on the orchestra in pairs holding the red cloths. Yet, it bears no relevance to the function of a dirge. The spectator neither saw nor heard any lamentation for the imminent dead. The fact that this is the only moment when all characters in the tragedy receive their

proper funerary dirge prior to their death goes unnoticed. It could have been a calm dirge, but even so it could bear signs of inner stress and torture, and perhaps some gestures of mourning, which the women's emotional idleness does not show.

The mourning also indicates the beginning of the end. From this point until the end of the play, all characters either die or weep over a loss that reverses their lives. Only Medea's future is not obliterated.

The Tutor returns with the boys and informs Medea happily that her presents were accepted. The women kneel at the central part of the orchestra, at various places, having the red stripes of cloths on the ground. The Tutor notices Medea's tears but she avoids a straight answer. She sends him inside to prepare them for the night and she struggles between killing them or not.

Medea mourns for her children and a life without them in a real life's replica of a dirge. She shows her hesitation by walking here and there until she finally falls on the ground on the right front side of the orchestra stretching her hands to express pain. She 'sees' the result of her presents and has the desire to look at her children for one last time. She goes to the left centre and drops on her knees until the children come and kneel in front of her. She kisses their right hands as a farewell sign tenderly and then hugs them in despair before telling the nurse to take them inside quickly (01:15:00).

The Chorus states that it is better to be "*Ateknos*", childless, than going through the pain of losing a child. That is how the chorus leader begins the *chorikon* while she stays at the centre during the singing of another lament.

In this episode Medea's hesitation, lamentation, farewell to the boys and telepathic abilities are all in view. It is one of the few scenes in the production that allows the inner rhythm of the play to be enacted, especially her struggle between motherhood and her unfathomable hatred, and her pre-funeral goodbye of her children. But some performative blemishes are evident. As she laments mentioning their liveliness, their unfulfilled future wedding and her unattended funeral, she shows no gestures of mourning, not to mention that by the generally calm way she speaks, moves or acts, she leaves unprocessed her inner struggle for her infanticide and her enormous pain.

Significant in her lamentation are the signs of her priesthood, when she sees the results of her presents in a controlled trance. However, neither this nor her pleasure out of it and the bitterness for what she is about to do were clearly conveyed to the viewers.

The audience though learns all the hair-rising details of the death of the princess and the king from the upset messenger's report. We are also informed that the princess did not die unlamented and received her final kiss from her father, unlike the king who died alone. Medea's pre-wedding sacrifices can now take place and enters her house despite the last desperate plea of the chorus. Her exit though in the performance is almost comical (01:30:00). There was no reason for a determined person who hurries to commit a crime before changing her mind to exit in such a slow dramatic tempo, with her hands crossed above her head.

As she exits the women start rotating and climb on the upper stage for the first time holding the red cloth. There they spread moving their bodies and shaking the cloths. Without being judgmental they sing a prayer against the murder and compare Medea to Io.⁸⁶¹ They end up making circles with their bodies and line up at the back of the stage as the killing takes place. "Io" is repeatedly sung raising the tone of their voices at the end, and when the music of an organ is played out of tune along with the word "Help", a bright blinding glare comes out of the hole and covers everything for seconds as a cry is heard (01:32:00).

In the text, the women in despair pray for an unexpected rescue of the boys, but the cries of the children fail them. They must be really high-wrought then as they are prevented by their oath from rushing inside and stop the bloodshed. However, even though the ode does not coincide with the text, it is one of the most beautiful dances in the production as well as the most coordinated with the textual mood that culminated

⁸⁶¹ *Ἰνώ*, Ino, was sister of Semele who gave birth to Dionysus and the second wife of the Minyan king Athamas, thus the stepmother of Phrixus and Helle. On escaping on a ram, Helle fell off the ram into the Hellespont (which was named after her, meaning *Sea of Helle*) and drowned. Phrixos arrived save in Colchis where he sacrificed the ram and offer its golden fleece to Aetes. Ino brought up her nephew Dionysos provoking Hera's jealousy. Hera made Adama go insane and to escape him Ino threw herself into the sea with her son Melicertes: *The Oxford dictionary of classical myth and religion*, 2003.

with the cry and the bright light. This thrilling high-pitched “Ooo” the moment of the killing can stand for the *‘ololygme’*, the cry at the moment of the sacrifice of an animal.

It is time for Jason’s ultimate defeat. The back scenery is lit and Medea’s figure is seen on the cloth, huge in size, surrounded by a red light. Her hands are open as if she is holding bridles (01:35:00). Jason’s first reaction is to walk about on stage in anger until he learns about his children’s murder. Then he kneels to confront Medea facing the spectators, having her huge shadow at his back. Jason will keep this posture till the end of the play no matter what, opening or folding his arms depending on what he says. His attempts to bury his children meet Medea’s refusal. When she announces that she will establish a festival to honour her children she leaves, longing for the day when she will hear of his miserable death.

During their conflict, the chorus moves forward, gets down and stands on the first step. When Medea’s lit figure is off, Jason stays dimly lit in the centre. He stands up to complain to Zeus for his fate and then sits helplessly again. The last comments of the chorus bring the tragedy to the end.

As customary, the text dictates a very different response to its re-enactment. In the text, Jason enters in a hurry to save his children from the relatives of Creon only to find out they are dead. He then tries to find Medea and kill her but she has already ascended to the skies with the bodies of her sons leaving Jason deserted, wretched and futureless. While she hovers, they duel with words but it is obvious that Medea has the supremacy. All he can do is to wait for his end.

Unquestionably, the performance fails to add to the last scene the aura of death, despair and triumph that dominates. In the first place, the whole scene takes place having Jason at the same position painlessly simplistic as if he has not just lost a wife, a throne and his two boys, the heirs of his line and his future as a Greek citizen, because of a woman.

Undoubtedly, his position with Medea at his back creates a further disturbing factor. In the text, he is stressed, confused, desperate, furious, and miserable in his fight for his rights as a father, but how can a man do that without looking the other person in the eyes? So Jason demands and begs Medea to allow him to kiss his boys goodbye and

then to bury them, he mourns, threatens or curses her with the furies, always facing her denial to console him, always on his knees and with his arms spread on his sides. The confrontation of the two ex-lovers in their final stichomythia is so powerful that it is inconceivable to be expressed with such immobility from one spot only with his back to her. As a result, the magnitude of the characters also fails to be materialised on stage.

It is of a question that although most rituals were performed, the production did not transmit the majesty of the plot and the characters' outline. The answer may lie in the textual swift, which requires the balance between the text and the performance. We have no information on how the ancient Greek actors spoke, moved, danced or sang. But if we paraphrase Zariffi's aspect when she discusses the convention of the tragic chorus,⁸⁶² the text has a musical rhythm that conveys pace and various levels of intensity that needs to be discovered and transferred on stage. Only in this way the actors will make their semiotic bodies convincing so that their phenomenal bodies would "generate bodies of energy therefore when spectators sense their mental and physical force, they experience the actor's presence."⁸⁶³ This is also projected on rituals, which this thesis contends are the backbone in a tragedy. Mere presentation of the rituals is not enough. Medea's supplications have different intentions and her quiet mourning for her children's loss cannot be performed in the same way as her wild lamentation behind the curtain. The chorus' prayer during Medea's invocation is more intense than the prayer to Aphrodite. And their supplication to spare their lives seems to be agonizing. Unless the dynamics behind the power of the words is explored, and then uttered and materialized in movement by each dramatic figure, the power of rituals as the driving wheel of the tragic plot will affect its presentation.

⁸⁶² Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 234-5.

⁸⁶³ Fischer-Lichte, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 18.

3.3. ORESTEIA

4.3. A. The Basic Production Details

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* was directed by Nikos Charalambous, who also attended the movement and choreography, in 1999. The translation of the ancient text was processed by the classicist Kostis Kolotas.⁸⁶⁴

This production was an extremely difficult and puzzling task as it was reconstructed to fit in a two-hour performance. The length of the production brings to the front two issues: first, the attention a reconstruction requires so that the important elements in the development of the plot and the illustration of the characters are included; and second, the involvement of a specialist in Greek religion from the beginning of its design, and in the production team. The presence of such expertise is important especially when the director may go to further reformations during the rehearsals of ancient drama. Unfortunately, the potential to utilize Kostis Kolotas's wide knowledge of ancient Greek culture for the benefit of the production is not the case here. The results such absence will be emerge as the review unfolds.

⁸⁶⁴ Production details: Theodoros Antoniou, a distinguished contemporary composer of international fame, composed the music of the production. He has more than 150 compositions published by Baerenreiter and Gunmar and his music is being played by many orchestras worldwide. He has proved to be equally worthy with his teacher Gianni Christou (1926 –1970) who has affected him greatly as far as the ancient Greek music is concerned. Antoniou used some of the ideas of Gianni Christou's unfinished *Oresteia* for the performance of TH.O.C. The movement and choreography were under the attention of Nikos Charalambous with the help of the Greek actress Vana Rambota. The set and costume designer was Giorgos Ziakas. The masks were made by Ntina Parali, born in Bristol, who has been living in Athens since 1984 where she works as a mask maker for the Greek theatre.

The actors were: Tzeni Gaitanopoulou (Clytaemnestra). Stelios Kafkarides (Aegisthus), Varnavas Kyriazis (Orestes), Neoklis Neokleous (Pylades), Annita Santorinaeou (Electra-Prophetess-Athena) who shared the role of Prophet-Athena with Alkistis Pavlidou, the great Lenia Sorokou (Nurse), Demetris Ksistras (the slave) and Giorgos Mouaimis (Apollo). The Procession Escorts were Stavros Louras, Andreas Tsouris, Achilleas Gramatikopoulos and Neoklis Neokleous .

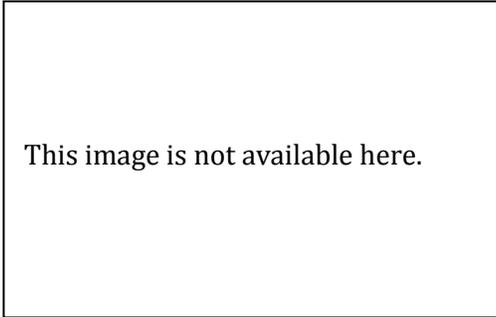
The chorus consisted of 21 actresses-dancers and almost half of them were hired for the needs of the performance. The chorus leaders were Lenia Sorokou, Alkisti Pavlidou and Popi Avraam. There were: Elena Papadopoulou, Christina Pavlidou, Zoi Kyprianou, Elena Christophi, Lea Maleni, Androula Irakleous, Medea Channa, Vana Rabota, Fotini Demetriou, Andia Katsouri, Elena Demetriou, Annita Terzi, Yianna Lefkati, Irini Konstantinou, Anthi Antoniadou, Christina Karagianni, Nansia Movide and Agni Tsagaridou.

4.3. B. The Design Concept (mise-en-scène)

Giorgos Ziakas, the stage-designer, successfully simulated an ancient scene with the three entrances in connection with modern elements.

There was a long building about two and a half metres high along the orchestra, at the place where the ancient *skene* used to be. A sloping platform in the middle divided the long structure in two parts, with two openings in each one. At the upper part of the platform there was a high structure which was made of the ground door and a loft with an opening too. The wooden walls on both sides of the loft divided the roof of the building. On the whole, the upper part took the form of the ancient secluded divine area, the *theologeion*, where Gods appear to talk to the mortals.

The platform started from the ground door and met the ground towards the front centre of the orchestra. In one sense, the immobile platform reminded of the ancient *ekkyklema* and created a mystical sensation among the audience. This central opening created the sense of ascending into the ground. On the upper left and right of the platform, there were also two invisible narrow pathways.

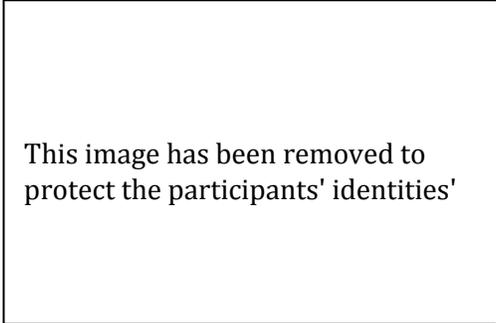


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The setting looked impressive in its simplicity in the dim light. Ziakas managed to illuminate the past in the present time. There were not extravagances or useless areas. The various possibilities of entrances and the other areas were all exploited as the play unfolded. The only misuse goes to *theologeion* which was used by people as well.

Nonetheless, there were two drawbacks that affected the enactment of rituals. The first omission concerns the absence of a fixed designated area of Agamemnon's grave in *Choephoroi*. The vague spot at the upper part of the platform could easily be positioned by the actors but they either had their backs to it, possibly to allow the

audience to watch them, or ignored the spot. The simple option of transferring it to the bottom of the platform would resolve all misconceptions. The second problem concerns the absence of Apollo's temple in *Eumenides* in which Orestes' supplication took place which staging decisions could also resolve.



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The ancient setting was reflected in almost all of the costumes, except Electra's. She wore a long red sleeveless shiny dress which seemed to clash with the style of the rest of the costumes. Its red colour stuck out in contrast to her mourning mood and her psychological condition, and its shiny material was a dissonance among the other outdated costumes.

The attire of the chorus (women-slaves in *Choephoroi*, Furies (*Erinyes*) in *Eumenides*) was the most complicated one. The chorus in *Choephoroi* wore simple long black stretchy dresses with very long sleeves that were tucked; they held long black shawls and had white half masks on. The costume served both for the mournful mood and the transformational purposes of the third tragedy since it was designed to fold and unfold.⁸⁶⁵

The music and singing for the *chorika* supported the action and the chorus presence on and off stage, although not always the implied tempo of the scenes. For instance, it was too fast for the entrance of the lamented libation bearers whereas the slow tune in the 'leftovers' of the binding song did not match with the textual rage. Although the

⁸⁶⁵ When the chorus turned into the Furies at the end of *Choephoroi*, they only pulled the neck cloth over the faces to cover them and the sleeves to form loose long arms stuck on the sides. The black faceless head and the armless body created the image of a snake. Before entering in *Eumenides*, the chorus had another long black cloth over the head which could be held. Towards the end of the trilogy, the last transformation was repeated with the addition of yellow and white shawls over the heads to signify their good-natured conversion.

chorus sung alive, many singing parts were also recorded. A rare attempt was practised here by the musician, to have four vocal voices (quartet), instead of the usual two or three singing voices. The outcome was successful although it was extremely difficult for the chorus to learn these musical compositions, to sing in ancient Greek and dance at the same time. The rest of the music and sound effects was offered mystical ancient echoes in their simplicity. The composer Theodoros Antoniou proposed a mixture of nature sounds, trembling voices and drums which gave the performance the necessary components of threat, mourning, sorrow, divine and redemption.

4.3. C. General Observations on the Reconstruction of the *Oresteia*

Translating an ancient text is already a given danger, if one is undertaking a straightforward translation, as there is an inevitable struggle to transmit something of the text's meanings. However, translation is a required process as the average audience does not understand ancient Greek. The translocation therefore of an ancient text to a new linguistic environment requires a lot of consideration and research in Greek religion.

A second remark goes to the reformation of the trilogy. It is generally accepted that lines may be chosen to be left out or others to be shortened to adjust the performance to the usual time limitation which is up to two hours performance. As long as the subject matter of the text, the ritualistic references that forward the action and the portrayal of the characters remain intact such reconstruction is not unacceptable. Yet, this kind of 're-writing' is not the case with the THOC's *Oresteia* which ended up with a damaged structure and denatured ritualistic vehicles of action, and the disorientation of the chorus status.

To begin with the title *Oresteia*, is misleading. The spectators mainly watched the recomposed last scene of *Agamemnon*, when Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus appear on stage with the hint of the dead bodies at their feet, an adaptation of *Choephoroi* with an unintelligible invocatory ritual and a thoughtless reformation of *Eumenides* with all its rituals literally deleted. Therefore, the title itself does not meet the requirements of

the trilogy. The term 'version' or 'adaptation' would rather be a more honest term to use for this staged representation.

Secondly, the three parts of the trilogy share certain ritualistic features that are either repeated or used to propel the action in the next tragedy. The reconstruction destroyed the artistic vertebrae of the trilogy, something that affected the effectiveness of the performance. So the rites that were not preserved in the production are the following:

- i) First of all, *fire* is an important symbol as each tragedy ends and begins with it. It is in the dark that the most horrible things happen, until the end of *Eumenides* where fire stands for the new honours the former furies shall have in their new identity as protectors of Athenians' prosperity. As Gantz notes

Apparently Aischylos does not wish the point to be missed since he tells us four times that the Furies are led to their new home by a torchlight procession.⁸⁶⁶

The image of light and dark reflects the mood that exists in the actions and rites in the trilogy. Therefore, the fire symbol loses its meaning by isolating it only at the end of *Eumenides*.

- ii) The *Furies* are omnipresent in the trilogy, either as invisible threats or physical entities with the power to put the wrong-doers under their binding spell. Their role in the divine system of justice as powerful primordial spirits that haunt people who violate the laws of life was totally unexploited. If Athena's persuasion had no results they had the power to endanger the Argive community and their descendants. Therefore, their representation as only loathed and outmoded primitive creatures that unjustly pursue Orestes is more than unfair. Although it does not compensate for the damage, it should be mentioned that there were a few revealing lines on their true divine nature included in the translation, which became fewer after the first rehearsals. However, these lines were in ancient Greek, therefore they effect nothing if we

⁸⁶⁶ Gantz, "The Fires of the Oresteia", (1977), p. 38

consider that almost all spectators nowadays do not understand the language of the tragedians. This makes even more urgent the task of their somatic representation in order to help audiences understand what was important in their textual nature.

- iii) *Disrobing* is another ritualistic act that was unexploited in the first two plays. It is said that nudity was part of initiations, but Aeschylus used it to show the loss of an attribute. *All the* characters, except Aegisthus, remove a piece of clothing on stage before going through the palace door to meet their death. Agamemnon has his boots removed, Cassandra casts to the ground the insignia of her priesthood (her robe and garland), and Clytaemnestra in *Choephoroi* drops her upper part of her robe to reveal her breast. Griffith points out that disrobing signals first the change in the individual's features and *then it recalls* the dead body which is stripped naked before covering it with the shroud.

Most explicit is Cassandra's loss of prophecy. In Iphigeneia's case it is her loss of the marriageability on the pretext of which the Greeks brought her to Aulis ... In Agamemnon's case it is his power ... In Clytaemnestra's case it is her mannish nature (cf. *Ag.* 1 I), for now she reveals herself as a woman. ... At the end of the trilogy ... the Eumenides surrender their primary character-trait, their fury, and enter a new status below the earth (*Eum.* 916, 1023, 10368); for them also this act involves a change of clothing (*Eum.* 1028-9).⁸⁶⁷

In contradistinction, the disrobing of Eumenides is not deadly. As they are transformed into the Benevolent Ones they offer their power to the Athenians for a better life. Therefore, the textual and performed omission three out of four disrobing prevent the spectators from discerning the associations.

- iv) The final point concerns the rituals that reflect the disruptions in the social order, and vice versa. In *Oresteia* it is witnessed in the corrupted ritual of sacrifice and feasting.⁸⁶⁸ In the first two plays, what we see is the unavailing effort to perform that proper sacrifice that would put an end to the *miasma* of

⁸⁶⁷ Griffith, "Disrobing in the Oresteia", (1988), pp.553-554.

⁸⁶⁸ Bacon, "The Furies' Homecoming", (2001), pp. 48-49.

the forefathers,⁸⁶⁹ which eventually comes to a closure in the *Eumenides*. What also characterises the “sacrifices” in *Oresteia* is that they all celebrated a homecoming, Agamemnon’s and Orestes’.

This reflection implies that such disruption of the continuity of the plot in the reconstruction, intentionally or unintentionally, misshaped and belied the perception of the audience beforehand. The absence of the repeated ritualistic allusions however is even more significant as it will be shown below. Let us now see in what way the production was staged and examine whether the remaining rituals bloomed on stage as they were supposed to.

⁸⁶⁹ The human sacrifices first began with Thyestes’ children and then Iphigenia’s proliferated from generation to generation and endangered the unity of the whole. They are both mentioned in the final scene of *Agamemnon*.

4.3. C. *Oresteia: The Rituals - the Performance*⁸⁷⁰ and *the Criticism*

3.3. C.i. *Agamemnon*

In the dark, a *monotonous sound* is heard and two figures, in the central *upper door*, dressed in *similar royal attires* are lit by *a spotlight*. It is Clytaemnestra with Aegisthus a few steps behind her leaning on the right side of the door (00:00:00-00:08:35).

Clytaemnestra, pointing at a dark spot where the dead Agamemnon and Cassandra are supposed to lie, asks the audience to look at them and explains her reasons for the murder. Aegisthus, now by her side, recounts his brothers' cooking for Atreus' foul dinner. He raises his voice when he repeats his father's curse and lifts his hands towards the supposed dead bodies. (00:07:26)

They put their arms around one another and Clytaemnestra declares (00:08:15) they will be safe from now on as long as Aegisthus lights the fire of her hearth. After she wishes their murders would put an end to the *miasma*, they look at one another and enter the palace, with the queen leading the way.

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An expert can immediately verify the omission of all the ritualistic references in Agamemnon's finale. In any translated text, *Agamemnon's* end is characterized by: the queen's *hubristic*, impious, behaviour to his dead body which is expressed in her sickening desire to pour a third banquet libation over it; the perverted *prosthesis* by which she could claim his office and continue her life; and her denial of a proper burial as suited to a husband, a father and a leader of a state. She informs the upset elders that her dead husband is to receive no preparation, no mourning, no funeral

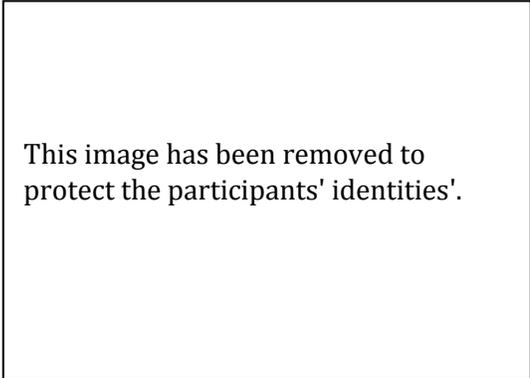
⁸⁷⁰ Entrances and exits are given from the ACTOR'S position on the stage.

procession and no proper burial rites. She firmly, but calmly, copes with the old men's resentment leaving them no space to oppose her openly. Their cautious and wary demeanour changes when an arrogant and domineering Aegisthus comes on stage after Clytaemnestra's exit and manage to vex him until the queen appears again. In full self-controlled, unyielding yet polite to the chorus, Clytaemnestra manages to appease the spirits promising Aegisthus that as long as he lights her hearth, her *oikos* will be safe for ever. It is obvious that she is in control. This powerful creature, excellent in the mastery to control the elders and Aegisthus is not there. Above all, her obstinacy *not* to lament Agamemnon or offer him a proper interment is of paramount significance as it fires the action in the next play.

The wildest dream of the illicit couple has finally come true but there they are on stage underreporting their success with no passion, no energy, no vigor or excitement. It is not absurd to support that their royal status is eliminated to two ordinary people who happened to be talking about their committed crime. This last scene could at least provide the necessary coherence and cognitive skills to the spectator to intellectually sketch the outline of their characters and link to what is to come. We can safely conclude that the frivolous decision of the total omission of *Agamemnon* undeniably destroys the trilogy. Certain scenes, although shortened, would have helped to retain the ritualistic substrata of the plays and allow associations with the other two plays: the fire signals that begin and end the trilogy; the description of Iphigenia's violent sacrifice by her father that first signaled the final countdown for Troy and cancels Agamemnon's life insurance, for example. Also crucial to understanding the coherence of the narrative across texts is Agamemnon's insolent walking on the red carpet as this is the prelude of his death, and finally, Cassandra's scene in which we watch in action the astonishing Pythic and Bacchic manner of a prophetess under possession. She is the one who links the past-present-future events, namely the ancestral murders, the haunted bloody present and the future to come.

3.3. C.ii. Choephoroi

Aeschylus begins his story in *Choephoroi* seven years after the murder of Agamemnon at the tomb of Agamemnon in Argos.



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In the music sound Orestes, holding a sword and a lock of hair, and Pylades, with a wreath on his head, enter the stage from the right entrance holding their swords. When Orestes comes in front of the platform, he throws his sword on the ground at the sight of grave up in the platform and the music stops. He then turns to the audience, kneels and stretches his hands on his side to invoke Hermes Chthonios. After his prayer he runs to his father's grave. Pylades follows him slowly but firmly until Orestes turns to him, holds him from his shoulder with one hand exhibiting the lock of hair with the other.

They walk downward while he talks to his father's soul. When they reach the bottom of the platform, Orestes throws the lock on the ground and runs back to the grave to state that he has never lamented him in the proper way.

In the text, Orestes and Pylades return in secret from exile and go to his father's grave. There, Orestes cuts off two locks of his hair and dedicates one to the local river Inachus as a sign of maturity and the second as a post-burial offering to his father. He then laments for his father's unkingly death and for not being allowed to attend his funeral. The dramaturgical analysis presents Orestes acting out of total respect, just as the sources on Greek vases suggest on attending the grave. Honouring a father's grave seems to have been a sacred moment, especially when a son had never had the chance to perform his last farewell. Therefore, even if one might be full of rage, it does not change the fact that controlled emotion and reverence were expected to predominate

in the behaviour of a Greek man on a burial ground. Having said all these, Orestes's staged post-burial behaviour away from the grave in the production is beyond understanding. The second irregularity goes to the open-display and throwing away of his lock, not locks, of hair which the ritual demands should be placed with respect. The last inconsistency is the snappish throwing of his sword. An ancient Greek law against slander included the throwing away a shield. Such an accusation would destroy a man's status as a soldier and his presence in the community.⁸⁷¹ A sword or a shield stood like a pillar in a man's life in ancient Greece: it was an inseparable part of manhood; and it was often inherited from father to son signifying the continuation of family honour and line. For Orestes, it also represents justice for his father. Therefore, his act equals to nothing else but impiety, *hubris*, and dishonour to the dead he so much cries for. Without essence, and rather confusing, was also the invocation to Hermes Chthonios, the soul carrier. Kneeling with his back to the centre of his attention, the grave, looking upwards to the audience, instead of the ground where the Chthonian gods reside, and finally invoking the gods only verbally are inconsiderate decisions. Two arms spread sideward are not only inefficient, but does not agree with the text and the sources on ancient Greek invocation.

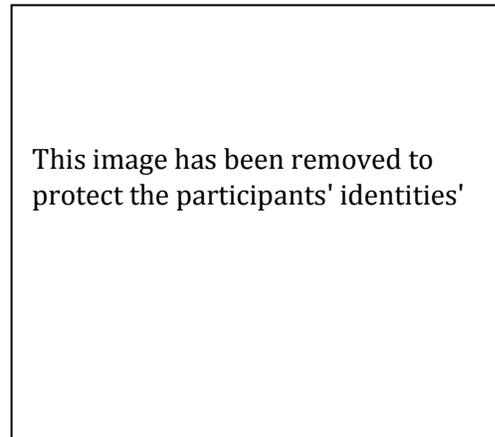
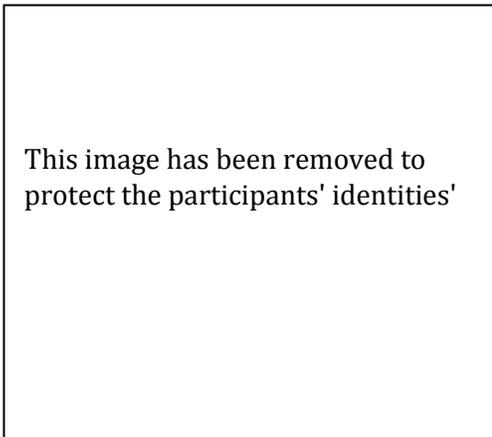
This remark raises the final discrepancy of his lamentation. It is an extremely sensitive moment and inwardly intense. Orestes is not expected to lament like a woman of that time, but as the custom instructed for men, there was still the expectation of an extremely dignified manner. Yet this outpouring of anger at the grave, expressed vocally and physically by jumpy and spasmodic movements does not suit the ceremonial visit.

The only person that seems to move according to his character is Pylades, Orestes' silent companion. His identity in the text is ambiguous as Pylades could be Apollo identified from his wreath, Orestes' friend, or even Orestes himself. As the story line develops, it seems that his role is always to be at the right spot to watch over Orestes, prevent him from an action, prompt him to proceed to one and/or suggest at times

⁸⁷¹ Fisher, N.R.E., *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992, p.93.

that he even becomes him for split seconds. We also get the impression that he is in general invisible to Electra and the chorus. The text offers no information of his presence therefore it can be said that this is an inspiring directorial idea.

Orestes' scene is followed by the title scene in *Choepori* which will be discussed in three parts: the entrance of the libation bearers first, Electra's pouring of the *choes*, and the prayer-invocation.



The music and the singing of “*ialtos*” make both men stop any movement (00:09:35). When they see the women approaching to pour *choes*, Orestes goes to the front centre stage.

The entrance of the chorus is quite impressive when on hearing the word ‘*ialtos*’ coming from the backstage in different tones of voices the spectators watch black dressed women dashing through the four entrances of the set filling up the orchestra. They run, stop, making circles around their bodies waving and flapping their mantles above their heads (00:10:00) until they gather on the platform, in front of Agamemnon’s grave to perform the *chorikon* in ancient Greek. Their lament is expressed with rapid gestures of despair, veiling and unveiling their faces with the mantles or lifting and lowering their bodies and hands in coordination with the music. Electra is seen standing at the entrance of the platform having her arms stretched on the wall and watching them. They all eventually cover their faces with the black cloth and gradually spread on the platform when the *chorikon* changes mood. From fast and painful it becomes aggressive by stamping their feet one step forward as if attacking, and going backwards (00:11:00).

In the end, with a long sound they remove their mantles, throw them on the ground, stretch their hands upward and they speak about

Clytaemnestra's murder falling on the ground one after the other (00:11:50). At the line "*the right is lost*" they get up to sing and speak while forming a triangle. When the singing becomes a monotonous sound, and the line "*The horrible mourning freezes my soul*" is heard, the music stops and they all run down into the orchestra where they spread (0:13:17).

It is indeed an impressive and breath-taking entrance. Their cries create an atmosphere of incredible anxiety, yet, once again, it bears many inaccuracies. The basic element of the scene, solemnity, is not there. Contrary to the text then, the manner the women enter the stage is distorted in three ways. They are too energetic, they carry no items for the *choes* and they show none of the traditional signs of mourning as directed in the text. More than that, they enter without that person in their company whom they should escort, Electra, who was standing watching them from another entrance, all this time in her red sleeveless shiny dress, another antithesis which contrasts the mournful mood.

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Electra comes forward from the platform door and like Orestes, she is restless too. She walks around and about the platform non-stop, making various gestures (holding her head, stretching hands, holding tightly her dress) as the women suggest her what to say in her prayer during the pouring of the *choes* (00:14:13).

At the chorus line "*an eye for an eye*", she pauses for a few seconds, and then, she walks in endless circles somewhere in front of the grave as she prays to the gods of the Hades to help her. Her hands are open on the both sides, her fingers are stretched and she looks down (00:15:13).

As she prays for Orestes' homecoming, she stands with her back to the grave facing the audience. She then lies on the ground with her face down, palms on the ground and arms in right angle before she exhorts the ladies to sing a dirge as she was pouring the imaginary liquid, which they do.

The Chorus laments without moving (00:16:27-00:17:15). When they finish, Electra gets up on her knees, opens her arms in request and notices that the earth '*has drunk*' the offerings.

If we compare this representation of the scene with the textual description, it is easy to realise how the most informative literary source of a libation is harmed in staging. First, there is not the required connection between the Electra and the chorus. Secondly, the centre of their attention, the grave, is not established. Theatrical abstraction may be applied to tragedy successfully as long as the actors set the boundaries in the space.

Then, Electra's unwillingness to offer libations to her father on behalf of her mother-murderer is inarticulate because of her hyper-activeness throughout the scene. In the text, Electra is uncertain. Her guilt for what she is about to perform is evident when she seeks for an honest advice from her companions whether she should just keep her mouth shut or pour them and leave without looking behind, demonstrating the behaviour performed in the expulsion of a scapeman in *Pharmakos*.⁸⁷² The women convince her it is a pious thing to pray for a man or daemon to return home and kill those who killed her father. So she does, confident of her actions after their instructions, and things develop as instructed by the actual custom: she calls the Chthonian gods and her father asking him to bring Orestes back, while she pours the libation three times, and then asks the women to sing a dirge while she waits to see if the earth accepts her offerings. However, nothing was reenacted according to the text.

In the production she prays to the gods of Hades looking anywhere else but the grave or the ground. She then faces the audience when she wishes for Orestes's return and finally she asks the women to lament while she pours the libations. But how can she express piety when a more solemn treatment is needed by the grave contrary to her

⁸⁷² See Appendix I.

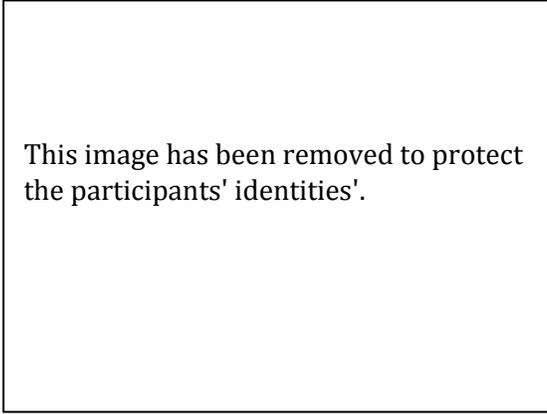
aimless circular wandering? How can the audience watch her pour them when she is lying on the floor facing the ground?

When then she asks the chorus to mourn, the women makes no movements and shows none of the known gestures of mourning, or any other proposed ones, apart from the clapping of the hands above their heads during their lines. Further to that, is it proper for a heartbreaking daughter to join the mourning somehow? Therefore, when she finally notices that the ground has 'drunk' the liquid without a blink at the spot of the grave the viewer is left with a lot of questions. This is the first indication of the power the chorus has to influence the characters and the events. The absence of their participation is probably because the reformed dialogue does not contain this information. The only proper thing Electra does according to the norms in the performance is looking downwards when she prays to the underworld, but this gesture is lost among all this confusion.

Immediately after the *choes*, she sees the lock of hair on the ground. She grasps it and holding it above her head with her two hands she walks quickly upwards and downwards the platform talking non-stop before she eventually places it at the grave. Then, in circles she falls on her knees three times and hits the ground before getting up thrice.

The findings that trigger the recognition scene are not a ritual, but its treatment creates issues of *hubris*. What Electra does on stage, holding the lock high above her head like a trophy, can be defined as impious. The lock as a clear post-burial offering would have never been handled in such an ostentatious and aggressive manner. She looks more like a hunter who has just killed his first animal than a sister who has suspicion that her beloved brother may be somewhere near. A little later, Orestes performs a similar insult when he grasps the lock and holds it in her face in an effort to prove his identity (00:19:51).

After an anguished *Recognition Scene*, the siblings get ready to perform the complex lamentation-prayer-invocation to their father and the gods, the longest scene in *Choephoroi*.



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The chorus slowly stands up whereas Pylades kneels and waits till Electra kneels and embraces her brother by the waist looking at the audience. Then Orestes lifts his arm up and prays for the gods' help (00:20:38). The chorus members asks him to "Hush", making one step forward, lifting their right hand up before returning to their positions slowly.

When he expresses a wish to see Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus in the fire, Pylades runs between the siblings with his back to the audience, and make them stop talking by grasping their hands. Orestes then talks about Loxias' orders and then he and Electra go to the two front sides of the platform as Pylades turns to the audience. When Orestes declares that Zeus's order must not be disobeyed even if one has second thoughts about it the chorus lifts both hands straight forward with a sigh. Pylades kneels again and they all pray to help them go through their plan successfully (00:22:03).

At the reference to the oriental dirge, the women start clapping their hands above their heads rhythmically until the invocation ends. They then lower their hands with the palms outwards and they sing a slow dirge during which Pylades gets up, and the siblings slowly embrace one another. Pylades goes near them, kneels and gets up, and as he is standing up, first Electra kneels facing the audience and then Orestis follow her and hold her by her waist and her hand.

The music stops and the chorus prays for the gods' mediation for a successful outcome. This prayer with a low voice signals the end of the invocation. The two siblings go to the sides of the platform and Pylades comes closer for the next episode to begin (00:28.47).

In this production, Orestes, Electra, and the Chorus do not join their efforts around Agamemnon's tomb for the dirge their father never received as all agents are

interspersed on stage. The siblings' position down the platform facing the audience and having their back to the grave, in combination with the position of the chorus in the orchestra makes it impossible for them to unite in this powerful invocation-lamentation.

The audience therefore, did not watch this long complicated *kommos* in which the women fortify and control Orestes and Electra towards murder. In the invocation, the chorus exercises its tremendous power to change the flow of events to the fullest. In turns, the three parts wish destruction to the enemies of Agamemnon until that crucial point in their lamentation when Electra's reference to her father's improper funeral that makes Orestes impatient to kill her. Feeling how much they are egging Orestes on, the Chorus describes his ignominious burial driving Orestes and Electra to the edge. Through its careful and manipulative comments the chorus manages to make the siblings reach that point of emotional stress as to lose their control of feelings and burst in an orchestrated hitting of the ground, loud calls, cries and tears, with possibly the additional help of their oriental mourning. Speaking of which, just the clapping their hands above their heads and kneeling is not illustrative enough at all.

This is the most fascinating scene in the *Choephoroi* and has all the potentials to bewitch the audience. This liberating crescendo, which is the turning point of the tragedy, was so poorly exploited that the spectators unfortunately did not experience the power of the scene.

The next scene is a real relief after the neurotic atmosphere that hovers in the production till now. The rhythm slows down and Orestes learns about Clytaemnestra's terrible dream. Then, he sends Electra inside and Pylades and he disguise as ordinary travellers and stand at the palace door according to the actual custom of hospitality, in which strangers waited at the entrance until they were invited in.

Clytaemnestra's appearance on stage is marked with the discreet sound of a funeral bell which stops after Orestes identifies himself as a messenger of bad news after her request. Despite the announcement of her son's death, she stays indifferent and

assures them that they will receive the appropriate hospitality despite the terrible news. Her attitude is in contrast with Clytaemnestra's pretentious mournful expression in the text, an issue the *trophos*, the nurse, cancels a little later when she calls her tears hypocritical. The nurse is the only person that really mourns for his loss.

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As soon as she enters from the left side, one can tell that she undergoes a lot of suffering. She raised Orestes as her own son and now she has lost him. She falls on her knees in despair for Orestes' death and makes various body movements of mourning: she crossed her hands in her lap, opens them up on the sides in despair, cover her mouth and hold her head and bends when she says she heard of his death. After a pause that expresses her pain, she gets up with difficulty to go to Aegisthus.

Her exit is interrupted by the chorus who tell her to persuade Aegisthos to come without his soldiers and unarmed. She runs out through the right *parodos* as the women start to gather in front of the four exits.

This is one of the most beautifully staged ritualistic scenes. Even though the mother does not mourn her son, Cilissa, his old nurse does. It is an unexpected pleasure to watch the most compassionate touch in the text so artistically performed. Her soliloquy-lamentation has a soul-stirring rhythm that when it reaches its crescendo it also rounds off with her physical exhaustion. She bemoans him from the bottom of her heart and although she does not hit herself, lacerate her cheeks or tear her clothes, she conveys her mourning with simple elaborated movement that express her psychological condition.

After a beautiful sung prayer (00:40:50-43:45), Aegisthus arrives and goes inside the palace to his murder, through the platform door. What naturally comes after that is Clytaemnestra's subsequent supplication for her life.

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When he exits, the chorus performs its ode in a quick and threatening mood (00:44:36-00:45:21). The sound of the drums raises the tension of what is about to happen. At the end, the chorus' cry becomes one with the music and as they both fade, a long male cry is clearly heard makes the chorus exit quickly through the doors.

The cry "Alas" (*Alimono*) is heard and an upset servant rushes out from the platform door asking for help as he goes here and there in the orchestra, until the queen's voice silences him. Then, he exits walking backwards (00:46:55).

The queen dashes through one of the left loft doors, asking for a sword. Orestes rushes out through the right one chasing her, while Pylades exits again. They meet in front of the platform and they walk in a circle like two animals who measure their opponent's strength before attacking. Clytaemnestra retreats to the platform in fear. She tries to leave from the left but Pylades appears there and stops her. Orestes grasps her from the hand and hustles her back to the centre of the platform as Pylades goes to the bottom of the platform with his back to the audience, probably to block the queen's escape.

Clytaemnestra sits on one knee and spreads her hands in supplication asking him to respect the milk she fed him with. At this moment, Pylades suddenly heads for the grave, touches Orestes' shoulder as he passes by him and stands in front of the grave. When Orestes shows hesitation for the murder he stares at him and Pylades speaks for the first time reminding him of Loxia's orders. His words bring Orestes round.

Clytaemnestra tries again to touch his heartstrings. She goes behind him, hugs him from his shoulders and then kneels and takes his right hand when Orestes breaks down on the floor talking to her. When he recovers he pushes her away so hard that she makes some circles around herself before she stops in the middle of her son and Pylades (00:48:28). When she realises that he is determined to kill her, she tries to take his sword but after a brief fight she finds herself lying on the left side of the platform (00:48:40).

Her question at that spot why a mother's curse is not strong enough to stop him, makes him have second thoughts again. The sword falls off his hand, he collapses on his knees and prostrates to her head blaming her for sending him away. She takes him in her arms to console him, but this tender scene is soon over. He rolls over to get his sword and stands up on his previous position pointing the sword at her.

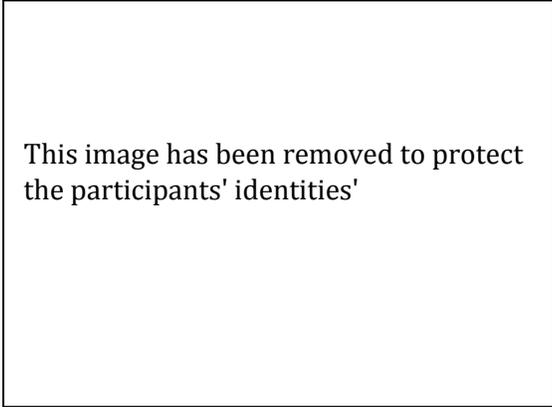
Clytaemnestra sits on her knee and supplicates again leaning her body forward. Her effort to defend herself with a harsh voice for the murder makes her son try to kill her but Pylades quickly stops him in order to withdraw immediately after that to his spot. Clytaemnestra knowing now that it is impossible to change his mind tries to touch his cheek but he steps backwards. She walks to the platform entrance, turns to look them both and goes off stage backwards as she warns her son to be afraid of the Furies. At the door, she states that he is the snake she breastfed and Orestes makes another move to kill her on stage. Once more Pylades is there to prevent him. (00:50:48).

The text-play outlines a well-defined scene. Aegisthus arrives alone and enters the palace. After a blood curdling cry coming from within, a servant rushes onstage shouting the news that Aegisthus has been killed. When Clytemnestra finds out what all the commotion is about, she shouts for someone to bring her the axe. But before her request is carried out Orestes and Pylades come out with their swords drawn. When she realizes she will lose her life she turns to supplication when she shows her breast as a last resort telling him how she nurtured him when he was an infant, and how much she wants to grow old with him. Orestes' reactions are to avoid the grasp of his right hand and turn to Pylades for courage who speaks for the first and only time in the play and orders him to respect Apollo's oracle. Clytemnestra blames the daemon for her acts but when it starts to look like nothing will stop him she threatens

him with the Furies. Before they exit to her death, she names him as the snake of her dream.

The text presents a failed replica of an actual supplication which included kneeling and the expression of humiliation but, the unsuccessful effort to touch the foot, hand or chin of the one in power brings about the queen's death. It is inconceivable that the staged scene received such additions that it becomes offensive as it trespasses the rules of the rite. To begin with, Orestes becomes physically violent towards his mother, a prohibitive behaviour in real life. Secondly, nowhere in their textual stichomythia there is the insinuation that she tries to get his sword. The third and most essential observation goes to their physical contact in supplication. On stage, she touches him, hugs him and gets the chance to go so close to him as to take his right hand, not to mention Orestes' behaviour when he seeks for her arms. If she enacted the ritual expectation of supplication appropriately the logic of the text is that he would have had to consider her demand. Orestes, instead, does something else to a suppliant that would be inexcusable in fifth century Athens as it would have been interpreted as a direct insult the gods: he forcibly pushes her away on the ground. The final remark is the removal of Clytaemnestra's gesture to show her breast in supplicating, as Helen did in the *Trojan Women*. Therefore, the allusion to her dream that immediately connects Orestes with the image of the snake is not utilised in the production, not even verbally. Orestes seems to be in constant doubt: now he pushes her, now he shows his love to his mother, now he let her take him in her arms, now he collapses, prostrates and so on.

Unfortunately, their quick and superfluous movements do not coincide with the formality of the rite of a suppliant or distinguish the reasons for its failure. Instead the added physical contact and violence deform the rite in this extremely long and tiring scene.



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The final scene of the text-play of *Choephoroi* mirrors the one in *Agamemnon*. Like his mother at the end of *Agamemnon* Orestes justifies his murder by showing the robe she entangled her husband. Unlike her though, he takes no pride in his deed. Both the Chorus and Orestes feel some trepidation about what will follow the matricide. At this point there is a change in Orestes. The signs of pollution are obvious in his behaviour. Step-by-step he starts collapsing out of guilt so he turns to the justification of his murder. As the chorus tries to calm him down Orestes alone sees these black dressed gorgon-like monsters with hair of snakes and eyes dripping blood occupying the space around him little by little. He seems affected and horrified by their appearance and in a way we get the feeling that he gradually loses his balance. The chorus sees nothing but when it realises that Orestes is being driven mad they urge him to go to Delphi and be purified of his *miasma*. Orestes crying that these hellbounds are too real to him, he rushes off stage trying to get away from them.

Once again the text-performance is not in balance with the play-text. It is Pylades who carries out the dead body on the platform, whereas Orestes placement at the upper central door holding the symbols of supplication beforehand cancels his exhibition of the dead. (00:53:43). Apart from that, Orestes step-by-step loss of self-control and clarity of mind is displayed without any warning as he chokes out of horror at the presence of the *Erinyes*.

However, there is another false treatment that concerns the presentation of the furies. Even though the transformation on stage by pulling their sleeves while twisting their bodies slowly was interesting (00:56:69), the double identity of the chorus towards

the end of the episode is puzzling. They reply to him as the women of the chorus even after their metamorphosis is completed, and it seems bizarre to watch the Furies wishing him luck on his journey. It saves time to transform on stage but the double identity they acquire on stage was not a wise decision. If, however, the director had only few women change into Furies so that there is consistency with their lines then there would be consistency.

Choepori ends with Orestes running away towards Delphi where he will offer his cleansing sacrifices according to Apollo's instructions.

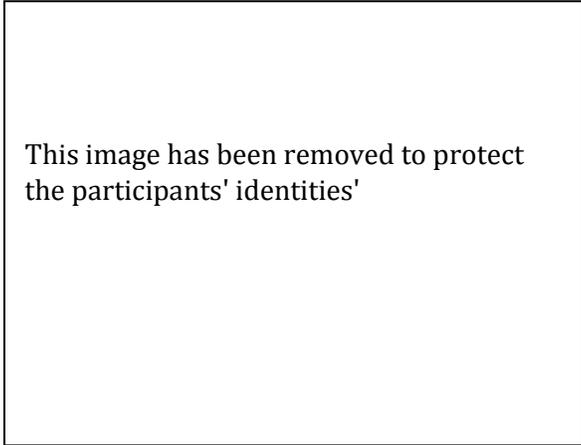
3.3. C.iii. *Eumenides*

Eumenides are characterised by Pythia's prayer, Orestes' supplication and purification, the Furies and their place in the chain of divine beings, their binding song, Orestes' oath and finally the procession that closes the vicious circle of Atreides' miasma.

The play begins when the recorded music stops and the upper central entrance and its sides are lit. A woman sits in the centre in divine clothes, the Pythia, and two more figures are standing on her sides. Without leaving her spot, Pythia tells the story of Apollo and Delphi and invites the people to listen to her predictions by lifting her arms (01:05:00).

In the accompaniment the sound effect of a trembling voice that creates a mystic atmosphere, she describes slowly what she sees in the temple. At this point, Orestes comes out through the platform door stumbling forward until he crawls towards the bottom of the platform, always holding the symbol of supplication. When the prophetess lays his fate on Apollo, she covers her face with her elbows stretched sideward and the sound stops (1:06:25).

The right standing figure speaks and we realise that it is Apollo who advises him what to get to Athens. On hearing him, Orestes sits straight on his knees to lie again when the god refers to the furies.



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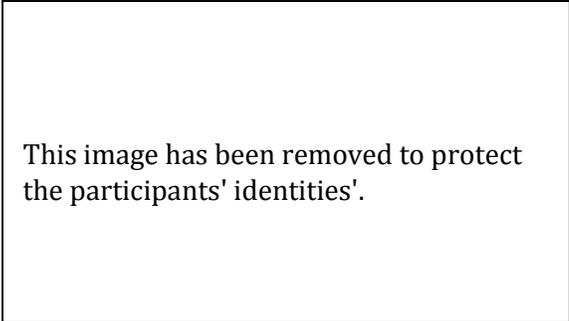
Dramaturgical, by no means the opening of the production does reflect Aeschylus' work of art. It is clear that Pythia is at the wrong place, dressed in a false attire and acts in contrast to her textual presence. What we watched on stage was a dressed like a goddess woman who sits motionless on the *theologeion* with her two followers, what

else could have she been at that specific spot, and slowly describes what she does in a wearisome voice (00:01:05:00). Instead of the customary prayer, she just names the succession of the gods who were worshipped at this temple. Pythia is written as an old woman who wears a simple dress and the symbols of her position in the temple. Thus it takes us some minutes to realise that it is really Pythia speaking, since she is easily mistaken for a goddess.

Secondly, her account at such a slow tempo without any voice modulations is in total contrast with her textual terror and the blood-curdling description of a suppliant, who has just performed a purificatory rite, has an olive branch wrapped with wool and his sword on the navel stone and he is surrounded by unknown appalling drowsy creatures around him in unseemly rags. The scene is written in a way that creates the urge in the spectator to peep inside the temple to see what a suppliant and those creatures that gives Pythia the fright look like, but the temple is not located anywhere.

Only Orestes shuffling entrance from the platform opening holding the *ικετηρία* (*iketeria*), an olive branch, belittles an astonishing scene. Unfortunately, the opening of the production turns out to be languid, uninspired scenes and similarly to many others it does not integrate the ritualistic elements of the text. That is why the scene with Clytaemnestra's spectrum immediately after Pythia's scene is a relief. It allow us to connect with the terrible nature of the Furies for the first time, the beliefs of the life of the dead and the condition of the souls in the thereafter.

Step by step, in the dim light, Clytaemnestra's ghost comes out from the platform door complaining to the Furies that they have ignored her bloodless sacrifices (00:01:08:15) and leave her son go unpunished making her defenceless to other dead's curses. Their drowsy and stuffy voices at the backstage and the appearance of their covered heads at the four openings moving them here and there in a protest, creates a supernatural effect as they seem to be coming from deep in the ground adds up to their supernatural nature (00:01:11:00).



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As soon as Clytaemnestra leaves, we are transferred to Athens in split seconds, without any sign or warning, with Orestes, the Furies and Pythia, now Athena, occupying the same spots in the TH.O.C's production. We realise that Pythia with her two escorts at the upper entrance in the same clothes and using the same tone of voice is now Athena but until she speaks her presence at the top of the set raises questions. *Eumenides* therefore begin with the false unification of two distinctive characters who have nothing in common, Pythia and Athena.

Orestes turns to the goddess, kneels and bends his head as a sign of supplication. On seeing this, the Furies start singing and moving their heads as a protest. They gradually emerge onto the platform and react by making two three steps forward as if attacking, stop and move backwards before repeating the same movement (01:17:00) attacking Orestes verbally. Orestes tries to defend himself by taking the embryo posture and closing his ears in an attempt not to hear them. Then they stop moving and protest to Athena (01:19:00) about Apollo's disrespectful attitude towards them. At the end of their complaint they cover the platform areas, kneel and bend their heads in submission and respect towards Athena who is about to talk to them.

When Athena speaks she requests the deities' identity which they do in one voice as well as what they are after (01:20:41). Orestes gets up and looks up towards the audience. Athena then invites the stranger to speak by identifying himself, first by declaring his name, his generation, his suffering and then to defend himself. While Orestes speaks, the furies move their upper body forward down and up in objection, and when he lays his hopes on Athena, they make a rising sound "Ah!", get up and gather in the area of the platform door.

Watching them, Athena declares her inability to deal with this issue, and decides to find human judges to set up a court. The furies react to her decision by making abrupt movements while they sing (01:25:54) and towards the end, the chorus lie on the sides of the platform for a while, before they get up in twos and cover the platform behind Orestes.

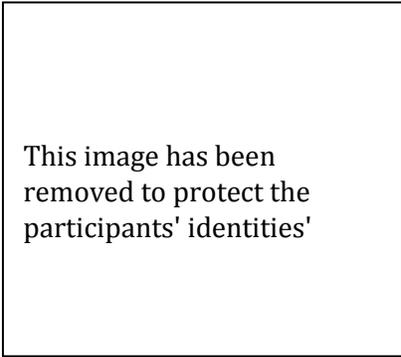
They stay there moving non-stop until the *chorikon* ends when one member curse him to die without any tears shed, "*Aklaftos paei kai chanete*" which is repeated by all the chorus before they cover the platform, sit facing Athena, with their heads bend. At the same time, four people are seen standing at the four doors of the lofts.

Within five minutes from the beginning of the performance, we are at the scene where Athena requests the identities of the Furies and Orestes and not longer after that the story forward straight to the trial scene. The production therefore has swept away another two essential ritualistic scenes of the play, without mentioning the Furies' frenzied hunting of Orestes: Orestes' supplication is insinuated and one of the best references on the structure of a binding song in antiquity, and one of the most smashing scenes in *Eumenides*, is totally cut out.

In the first place, Orestes supplication at Athena's presence is false represented. Sole kneeling and bending the head at a sanctuary with a twig with wool in his hands is less than nothing. As in ancient life, and in the text, grasping the statue or the altar of a god would make it official. If he, at least, touched or held anything that would offer the idea of a sacred spot, it could make a difference.

In the second place, Orestes is not so much intimidated by the Furies now he is sure he is cleaned from the pollution. When they find him supplicating they gradually emerge onto the platform and start making two three steps forward, stop and move backwards before repeating the same movement as if attacking him in the performance (01:17:00). But their hostile back-and-forth movement does not justify such creatures which act like dogs after their prey and their verbal attack can on no account replace the fearful binding song. Nor the embryo position Orestes takes out of fear and close his ears on stage as a reaction meets the demands of the text.

A last irregularity concerns his posture when he identifies himself to Athena (01:20:41), as ancient Greeks used to do at sanctuaries in actual circumstances. Turning his back to the goddess does not only show lack of respect but on representative terms it creates confusion to the spectators.



This image has been removed to protect the participants' identities'

After their identification and the clarification of their dispute Athena establishes the court of *Areios Pagos* and a rather turned down trial begins at once (01:28:15). Things are not so quiet and civilised though according to the text. They show respect to Athena but not subjugation, something which she herself admits when she decides that human jurors must decide upon this. We perceive a rather vibrant scene defined by resentment, shouts and noise.

When finally the decision in favour of Orestes is announced in *spiel*, these hostile creatures weigh down to their knees by disappointment (01:35:04). In other words, the Furies's reaction to his exoneration is simplified to an immovable scene without the extreme reactions the text instructs. Immediately after that, Orestes takes his oath and promises his future alliance to Athens and exits, leaving the Furies to sing a lament.

Music begins and the furies get up to sing a lamentation full of complaint but without really protesting. They only twist their bodies and heads on stage and sing "*Io*". At the end, they turn to Athena with their bodies straight, and their hands stretched towards her (01:38:22-44) and listen to her promises with no reactions (01:38:22-44).

As soon as they hear her offer to rule Athens with her, they turn towards the audience and transform into Eumenides (lift up their long sleeves, let their hands in a prayer position, sit on one knee) during which they want to know what their new residence is like and what should they say in their prayers (01:41:43).

This is what happened in the performance: a misrepresented likely-to-be beautiful ending of the trilogy. What happens in the text is that the Furies may promise to

respect Athena's decision, but they spit threats during the suspense for the verdict. This equals to an impending counterblast, which becomes a reality after Orestes acquittal. Their outrageous reaction continues in the form of a dirge. So lost they are in their fury that they keep repeating their threats over and over again each time Athena, calmly and persistently, makes her offer in different ways, always promising them their honour back. Her insistence proves to be eventually effective, but only when they realise that their power will be maintained do they acquiesce to her offer. They are proud creatures which can only be tamed with difficulty. When they finally accept to offer their positive spell and blessings to keep the land safe they transform.

The same fate with their binding song and their outrageous lament had the procession that decorated all celebrations in ancient Greece, and the establishment of a new cult in Athens at the end of the trilogy. The significance is not that audiences today might be expected to recognise this, but that the audience will find it difficult to interpret the narrative structure of the story without this deeper understanding of the Furies. The director's finale is the last change *Oresteia* underwent.

When it comes to the point when they pray for all the prosperity of the world, they get up – with their hands still at the same position – gather in the centre and start moving out backwards from the platform door (01:42:40). They exit just to enter in a few minutes from the four loft doors, holding lit candles and having their heads covered with a white piece of cloth. The four men that come to the roof by her Athena and the gods talk about the future prosperity of Athens. At Athena's last words the chorus remove the shawls whereas the men urge the audience to look at the beautiful goddesses.

The play ended with everybody at their positions: Without the lights out, with the bow of the actors and the chorus from their positions.

Aeschylus had Athena diligently organize the possession as befitted to goddesses, and lead the Eumenides underground to their new holy residence, as the audience hear of instructions at a procession, now to walk with reverence and quiet, now to chant with ululations.

As a conclusive statement, it is justified to say that the whole ritualistic core essence of the play-text was swept away and what the audience watched was not the *Oresteia*. The analyses of the production of *Oresteia* projects even more the thesis of this

research: that rituals are autonomous objects so deep embedded in the structure of the tragedy that their treatment in a text-performance is a requirement if one wishes the representation of a play in the second reality of the stage. *Oresteia* brings forward another issue though: the treatment of the ancient text needs the collaboration of the expertise in order to find its way in the new language. However, the work of translation is another thesis.

CONCLUSION

It is justified now to conclude that none of the agents in the productions performed the rituals in the text-performances according to their textual significance, even when the texts were close to the original.

It is also safe to support that none of Fischer-Lichte's materiality of a performance, meaning the spatial, bodily and textual qualities⁸⁷³ in relation to rituals were treated on stage. The actors failed to establish vocally or physically their personal and interpersonal relationships with their characters on various levels. In the first place, their movements seem at random most of the time as they are not in accordance with the meaning of their spoken lines and any recognizable embodiment of these lines. This had a great effect on the rituals which were minimised or, worse, they are often altered in such a way that they in effect offer other interpretations. Hecuba does not mourn; her expression of her despair by falling on her knees or in somebody's arms is by no means enough; Cassandra does not wed to her death; Orestes shows disrespect at his father's grave by throwing away his lock of hair and his sword; Electra's endless circling is by no means the appropriate posture for a dignified prayer; and the hair-rising invocation to the dead is absent. If we further take the title character of *Medea*, we know that she is a confident princess who stays self-governed throughout the play⁸⁷⁴ even though she finds herself at a crossroads. Nowhere in the performance was the full power of this fantastic creature admired: her lamentation behind the curtains is absent; the importance of oath in her life is unclear; the performance of the supplications are either distractingly vague or incomplete; her tendency to manipulate rituals and people to her own benefit is obliterated; her lore of witchcraft became insignificant; her invocation is a flat line; and her mourning for her children is not clarified.

Everything on stage acts, even the set design, the costumes and the props when they are tied to rituals. In spatial terms, for example, Orestes and Electra's neurotic steps

⁸⁷³ Fischer-Lichter, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 31-34.

⁸⁷⁴ Boedeker, "Euripides' *Medea* and the Vanity of *Logoi*", (1991). p. 101.

do not designate the position of the grave in *Choephoroi* and this makes the whole action around it ambivalent. On the other hand, Cassandra's symbols of priesthood are not part of her costume so Hecuba's request to remove them was out of place.

Another observation concerns the importance of the chorus in the productions. Not only the 'dance-culture' of the ancient Greeks that became a convention in ancient Greek drama⁸⁷⁵ was not elaborated, but editorial decisions cancelled the propelling function of the rituals choruses perform in the story-line. More than that, they did not enact them with the suitable physical and emotional tension that suits those moments. The synchronised, unhurried changing postures of the *Trojan* chorus at the beginning in no way reflect the real tension of their mourning. The division of the chorus is also dysfunctional, the five women in the orchestra and the large inactive group at the back, because neither the magnitude of sorrow nor their collectiveness is emitted. Both groups of the chorus, in their own way, act rather like extras having as their staged purpose the projection of the actors.

Then, although there is no need for a specialized kind of dance,⁸⁷⁶ the choreography is a sensitive case in *Medea*: the women do not supplicate at all when they beg her to change her mind; and their participation in prayers and invocations are indistinguishable.

In contrast to the other two productions, in *Oresteia*, the choreography was extremely demanding since the dancers had to move and run around a lot, change identities and sing live to the music in ancient Greek. It is supereminence though that the elaboration the trilogy went through deformed the play-text and denuded the function of the chorus from its dramaturgical and functional components, the rituals. For

⁸⁷⁵ Zariffi discusses the social context of the dance and its evolution in ancient Greek drama. "The ancient Greeks ... had ... a *dance culture*, in which much of their dancing contributed to processes needed for the coordination, survival, reproduction and prosperity of the community. These processes or contexts included agriculture, warfare, rites of passage, festivals, celebrations of athletic victory, deliverance and theatre". ... "Tragedy, which developed out of the dithyramb ... contained in its *stasima* ... a mixture of mythical narratives and of elements of genres that were now ... divorced from their traditional functional context": Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 228. 232

⁸⁷⁶ Choruses consisted of supernatural beings for example requires a different approach on their staged presentation. The Furies in *Eumenides*, *Oresteia*, for example, hunt and sniff like dogs, jump up and down while performing their binding song, move around aiming at creating fear and awe and so on.

example, the first void in production was the absence of Agamemnon's carpet scene and Cassandra's transcendental scene. Then, the libation bearers had to be solemn and later extremely controlling in the invocation of the two siblings, in a way assigning to themselves the job of the Furies, is unexploited. And finally, the all-power-threatening nature of the Furies was mainly consisted of spasmodic movements and gestures of the head, hands and torso. The core essence of the play-text was swept away and what the audience watched was not the *Oresteia*.

In general, the chorus' prayers are without essence: their supplications are inexistent; and their participation in the mourning, funerary and invocatory practices is obliterated. In this way, their collectivity as representatives of the ancient Greek society, thus the voice of the viewers then and now, is silenced. Such treatment undoubtedly affects the story line, changes the balances in the play, and prevents the conveyance of the context and its impact on the audience.

According to Zariffi pre-theatrical choral danced songs work different in tragedy:

tragic choruses can move from one genre ... to another ... It is extremely likely that generic performance, such as danced wedding-song, contained much that was traditional and typical beyond the words: dance steps, ... other aspects of bodily movement such as speed, vehemence and hand gestures, as well as musical mode, pace, volume and intensity, and rhythm, which was distinguished from metre. But we cannot know, for they are all lost.⁸⁷⁷

Zariffi's view is also substantiated by the textual analysis in chapter two. It is well outlined in Cassandra's appearance in the *Trojan Women* in which the dances and song genres swift between the wedding, the bacchic and apollonian elements. The choruses in *Choephoroi* and the *Trojan Women* exhibit beyond doubt the bodily movements Zariffi mentions. This is particularly evinced in the binding song of Erinyes, when they instruct one another to a synchronized frenzy dance and song. The imitative nature of the songs, also supported verbally, was left without the instructed treatment.

⁸⁷⁷ Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 234-5.

It is generally accepted that all the information on the ancient Greek performance is lost. Because only words survive, it is difficult to imagine the meaning that was created by the synthesis of the triptych words-music-dance. Restoring it is implausible therefore. However, Zariffi has a point when she suggests that

because ancient writers agree that choral dance was *imitative*, it is worth imagining the performance of tragic song in which the vacuum is filled by elements from a surviving traditional signifying system of bodily movements.⁸⁷⁸

Overall, in all three productions, the indecisive directorial decisions ruined the *mise-en-scène* of rituals. Throughout the performances, the audience kept hearing the announcements of various steps of ritualistic actions, and watched something else. As the story unfolds, it becomes obvious that the audience watched a one-person performance, leaving the actual tragic poems undisturbed on the pages.

When we refer to staged rituals we inevitably refer not only to their presence but also to their enactment. Theatre means actions on stage, and rituals certainly act on stage with the help of their agents, the actors. As Fischer-Lichte says discussing the *somatic* quality of theatre

When the actors perform a process of embodiment they produce their phenomenal body – which brings forth their semiotic body. Phenomenal bodies generate bodies of energy therefore when spectators sense their mental and physical force, they experience the actor's PRESENCE⁸⁷⁹

If the actor's substitution fails, then the second reality ceases to exist, the boundaries between the staged world and reality are not blurred and evidently the audience is not drawn into the "betwixt and between" of a performance.

Auscultation of the stage directions the milieu of the text incorporates, always offer the opportunity to a tragedy, and any play-text, to exist on stage on a deeper level. This discussion brings forward an important issue: that the translation and the elaboration of a text for a performance require historical knowledge of Greek religion. As a result, the collaboration of the director, the translator and a classicist seems

⁸⁷⁸ Zariffi, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 235.

⁸⁷⁹ Fischer-Lichter, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 18.

imperative for the text to swift into another language without losing its power. Only in this way the rituals will retain their autonomous presence in a production.

This gap is basically the reason the performance of the actors gave the aura of an unfinished business. Therefore, the next chapter wishes to focus on the significance of rituals as modes of actions in life and in tragedy and suggested one way to stage them.

CHAPTER 5

PERFORMING RITUALS IN CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCES
OF CLASSICAL GREEK THEATRE
IN CYPRUS AND GREECE

INTRODUCTION

The study on rituals so far has given us the opportunity to illuminate what was probably experienced in the social world of fifth century Athens, what elements of theirs the poets used to effect their ideas and to evoke the power of rituals in the development of the story, as well as a performance analysis of what the modern Cypriot audiences might make of a set of contemporary productions that claim a level of cultural authority, as emerging from the Cypriot national theatre THOC.

To frame the question of the importance of the text-as-read and text-as-performed in assessing the significant role of rituals in ancient Athenian tragedy in this thesis, we turned to prominent scholars who have researched the field of Greek drama in depth and have long acknowledged the importance of rituals in ancient Greek life. Although these publications compose an area with a variety of rich material there has not been a research that thoroughly considers the dramaturgical importance of rituals in the tragic text-play, and that explores a realisation of the implications of the rituals' staging as imperative. The Cypriot theatre's regular performances of Athenian tragedy has offered a never before examined set of case studies through which to explore these questions. My critical investigation of the THOC performances now lead me to a more positive element of the thesis, to a reflection on questions such as "Should rituals be staged?" and "How should they be enacted", which form the main focus in this chapter.

This thought has invited certain speculations that call for answers: What is ritual's dramaturgical function in tragedy? Do they make the genre a ritual? Do they still act as autonomous beings in the dramatic text or blend with the other performative elements to consolidate the action; suggesting, therefore, that they should not be treated as something special? Can the impact on audiences today of representing rituals or ritual fragments share any elements with fifth century Athenian experience, or in what ways is the audience's experience of these ritual fragments different?

As it has been substantiated in chapters one and two and demonstrated in chapter three, rituals were removed from their actuality and were simulated on the ancient

stage turning their functions primarily towards the communicative, yet while indicating their centrality to the development of the story. The analysis of the texts in chapter two, and the reviews of the TH.O.C.'s productions addressed from the ritual aspect suggest that rituals possess a directive power within the structure of a tragedy.

Most of the inquiries set have already been answered in chapters one, two and three. The previous chapters contend that rituals are inherent in tragedy and that if their autonomous nature is not subjected to treatment in relation to its narrative, then there is no tragedy. If the tripartite relation between the mythic story, and the fifth century debate and rituals that compose the structure of tragedy is missing then there is no text. If one element is missing then it becomes a different play. The conventions of tragic drama are not a major concern here, although the chorus need to maintain its collective role. Regardless of the fact that they may sing or dance or speak, the chorus as chorus has a function to perform, and the representation of rituals are included in this functionality. This is evident in the reviewed productions, when it seems that the theatre-goers either watch part of the rites or none of them on stage as they are very often unwisely handled by the director.

I suggest, therefore, that the key to a textually faithful production is the collaboration between the translator, the classicist and the director. They are the ones responsible for identifying and maintaining the power of ritualistic fragments in the plays so that their power is perceived by the audience. It is unreasonable to expect the spectators to have knowledge of ancient Greek religion such that they can codify certain speech acts as rituals. What might be expected though as the objective of any production, is an understanding and perception of the ritual fragments' importance in the story-line. Following this thought, the spectators need not know the ritualistic importance of the oath, the right hand or the kissing goodbye for the ancient Greeks; if they hear in a consecutive order the reported importance of the oaths to Medea by the nurse, then they watch her extract the women's promise, an oath, of silence, listen to her a little later evoking the wedding oaths in her first heated encounter with Jason, watch her asking Aegeus to take an oath and finally watch an oath's re-enactment on stage, it is impossible for the spectators not to perceive the importance of oath in her world.

Therefore, if the translated text does not preserve this repetition, and if the director does not try to stage them appropriately then the audience will not realise their significance in the plot.

I contend therefore that the power of rituals, reported, fragmented or whole, incontestably require their own treatment because they are part of the plotting organism of tragedy. *Why* and *How* they could be enacted in a contemporary milieu in Greece and Cyprus, is the purpose of chapter five. To address these inquiries, it is important first to examine why tragedy still fascinates, and the function of rituals in the text.

These questions forward us to the discussion on ritual continuity and the way rituals affect cultures today. There may be an argument whether rituals still exist and what power they possess in modern societies in the light of the 21st century. If the power of rituals persist in life in any way, then it is not an unfamiliar sense for the spectators, and this realisation may offer a sundry ways to unfold them scenically on the modern stage of tragedy.

 WHY TRAGEDY MATTERS

Theatre became more and more dominant in the ancient world until Aristotle codified the aspect of theatre in six parts for the first time.⁸⁸⁰ It would be useful therefore to see why this medium of drama still attracts the imagination after more than 2,500 years. This may seem irrelevant; however, it is important to remember that any discussion carried out about the production of tragedy is tightly interwoven with the ritual activity in the substructure of this genre. Tragedy still matters because it filters issues that still concern us, and rituals are still part of our lives. It seems that the fifth century structural interconnection somehow persists in time. This thought may be attested in the flourishing of productions of tragedies since the Renaissance, and especially in the turbulent 20th century. The inbuilt ability of tragedy to hurt and criticise and engage the audience emotionally is one of the reasons that led to its rediscovery after the World Wars and makes tragedy still popular.

There is a paradox in the context of the original production of these tragedies, as part of a religious festival designed to display and glorify the state. After the four rituals of the festival of the Great Dionysia⁸⁸¹ and all the manifestation of grandeur, the tragedy and comedy show a world literally ripped apart in which all the state institutions, secular or sacred, values and ideals are either in jeopardy or shattered.

The festival expresses both the norm and the transgression of those ideological values.... Tragedy again and again takes the ideology of the city and exposes its flaws and contradictions.⁸⁸²

The tragedians presented an imperfect, even defective, core self of a society with the help of rituals as part of its backbone, and the portrayal of the rituals stressed again and again the need for reorganization on a social and personal level. Martin's "dark tragedies" that counterbalanced the civic festival,⁸⁸³ may extend the suggestion of this

⁸⁸⁰ David Wiles offers a concise, yet useful, analysis of Aristotle's ancient dramatic theory: Wiles, ed. McDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 92-104.

⁸⁸¹ Sacrifices and libations, announcements of civic benefactors, parade of tributes, the parade of war orphans: Goldhill, 2007, pp. 123, 224-225.

⁸⁸² Goldhill, 2007, pp. 228, 231.

⁸⁸³ Martin, ed. McDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 49.

thesis further and say that the twisting of rituals in the performances were used to intensify this aura of their social comment.

The reason that such performances may have brought about social change is suggested by Schechner's analysis of the power of theatrical transformation that produces:

the displacement of antisocial, injurious, disruptive behaviour by ritualized gestures and displays, and the invention of characters who act out fictional events or real events fictionalized by virtue of their being acted out.⁸⁸⁴

In this reading of the place of tragedy in the Athenian state, tragedy achieves an effect similar to Brecht's epic theatre: the tragedians presented a distorted mirror through the mimesis of real life in the traditional drama, which reflected an unwanted present; or, as Hall puts it, the disguised virtual reality of stage, mimesis, is not a delusion "but an affecting presence,"⁸⁸⁵ effected with the tripartite combination of the distant mythic past and the contemporary agon and rituals.

This is the reason scholars of ancient Greek theatre have suggested that the enduring popularity of Athenian tragedy for contemporary theatre-goers arises because it

has an uncanny ability to transcend the specific and thus reach a profound level of emotional engagement in its audience.⁸⁸⁶

The search for identity and control, the inner need to show mercy, the fear of retribution when one exceeds the human limits, the woman's place in a world made for men, being a stranger in another cultural environment, are some of the everlasting issues that lead to self-questioning through the suffering of the Others, the non-Athenians. This is a special feature of tragedy. Goldhill notes that the message of what a good city should be like⁸⁸⁷ is sent through the distant Otherness – other places than Athens, other times than the present, other people than the Athenians citizens – and through the use of rituals in a way that suggests the consequences for disruptive behaviour. For the original audiences the broken or marred rituals represented in the

⁸⁸⁴ Schechner, 1988, p. 109.

⁸⁸⁵ Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 24.

⁸⁸⁶ Goldhill, 2007, p. 215.

⁸⁸⁷ Goldhill, 2007, p. 228.

play, seemed to concur with the open-ended nature of the plays, offering the paradox that Schechner identified as both representing the state at the same moment as questioning it. Repeatedly, tragedy plunges the knife in the wounds of the state-institutions. The metacommunication is clear: “Watch ... Tragedy is playful. Because what you watch would be painful, if it were real.” But are the questions set really a fiction of our modern days, we are forced to wonder.

Goldhill’s view that tragedy still holds the scepter as the perfected source in its canonical prominence, is evident in the fact that modern dramatists, directors and practitioners in the Western cultural tradition often look back to it for inspiration on how to “veil social tension” through entertainment,⁸⁸⁸ that is to protest, propagandize or criticise political or social conditions. For example, Lothar Muthal’s 1936-*Oresteia* propagandized Hitler as a good leader for the people. On the other hand, Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Les Mouches* in 1943 or Anouilh’s *Antigone* was an undercover criticism of the Nazi conquerors without them ever realizing it. Sartre’s *Les Troyennes* at the Palais de Chaillot in 1965, was used to protest against abuses in Algeria. *Medea* and the *Trojan Women* are the preferred tragedies the Irish use to express their political concerns on stage such as Brendan Kennelly’s *Medea* in 1988.⁸⁸⁹

Foley agrees that the influence of tragedy on social and ethical issues is still evident in modern performances when they focus:

on questions of leadership, on gender conflict ... tensions and confrontation between family and state, of what are now defined as racial issues⁸⁹⁰

In different words, Hall defines the unusual ‘truth value’ of theatre, as that which unveils the truth through masquerade. She supports the idea that the communal character of theatre camouflages the truth only to reveal aspects of actuality.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁸ Goldhill, 2007, p. 217.

⁸⁸⁹ MacDonald, 2003, pp. 25, 27, 155, 174.

⁸⁹⁰ Foley, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 139.

⁸⁹¹ Hall quoting Husserl: “theatre is a disciplined use of the fictionalizing imagination which can discover ... aspects of actuality”: Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 18.

Even radical theatre being non-Aristotelian, non-linear, non-mimetic, non-discursive and so, on may not be so different than tragedy when part of its constitution is to:

hurt feelings, to produce shock and disorientation ... through 'amoral', 'asocial' and seemingly 'cynical' events.⁸⁹²

The focus is on an open-ended and evolving tragic confrontation with communal problems that require responsible reactions, regardless their unmanageability. The fact that tragedy is still susceptible to different interpretations of those collective and individual concerns that preoccupy contemporary audiences, may explain why tragedy still fascinates us.

It is in reading and responding to the continually unsettling and challenging questions set in motion by these plays that Greek tragedy is performed and experienced.⁸⁹³

In other words, we are trying to understand our social place, and in watching the misfortunes of others, the twisted rituals, criticizing their decision-makings, we learn something about ourselves through the ancient technique of drama: substitution by actors and identification of the spectators with the suffering of the actors.⁸⁹⁴ And despite the fact that the characters, the stories and the rituals are remote from present, tragedy remains contemporary, Goldhill would argue, because although they

may seem initially distant, the very distance is actually integral to their power to move audiences deeply.⁸⁹⁵

It seems that the more distant the people of higher social status who go through great sufferings are, such as kings and heroes, the greater the effect of identification is, as these people are thought to exist in the sphere of untouchable. Schechner has a clear view of the effect of the distant past on the spectators:

The "theatrical frame" allows spectators to enjoy deep feelings without feeling compelled either to intervene or to avoid witnessing the actions that arouse those feelings. ... Theater, to be effective, must maintain its double or incomplete presence, as a *here-and-now performance of there-*

⁸⁹² Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 183.

⁸⁹³ Goldhill, Simon, *Reading Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 286.

⁸⁹⁴ "drama was peopled by sons stepping into their fathers' shoes, sisters who became spokespersons for dead brothers, and mothers who murder their husbands in the name of slaughtered daughters": Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 17.

⁸⁹⁵ Goldhill, 2007, p. 215.

and-then events. The gap between “here and now” and “there and then” allows an audience to contemplate the action, and to entertain alternatives.⁸⁹⁶

This is a significant feature which if it is lost in a production it changes the nature of tragedy, which is the required distance so that the audiences have the opportunity to exercise objective criticisms on matters that troubles them.

The suffering everybody can identify with is the quality that made MacDonald state that no drama has ever exceeded the Greek tragedy,⁸⁹⁷ because the issues that tormented those characters can be recognized, no matter how civilized our ‘civilized’ world is. And the participation of rituals in this lasting power to transcend history is not irrelevant.

Goldhill contends that the past, whether an individual past or a shared cultural past, consists of the concurrence of our self-understanding and self-identification, the two essential elements that form the cultural identity which place us in this world. One concept that tragedy considers through the distance, the otherness and the failed rituals is that historical self-understanding is crucial for cultural identity; and every time it is staged it reiterates that self-awareness is still in search. This is the message sent by the fictitious characters who overstep human limits, perform their twisted rites and suffer the fictitious consequences, the bottom line is that they are all too real.

Cultural identity is a psychological quest today, as it was then. Goldhill argues that

A personal, familiar identity, a political identity, a cultural identity, overlap and interplay in each of us,... if you do not work to understand [history], you cannot lead a full life, an adult life, society. History changes who you are, makes you who you are. If you do not know that history, then you cannot really be self-aware.⁸⁹⁸

However, he views that modernity has penetrated all aspects of our lives and anything old is to be cast away, as.

⁸⁹⁶ Schechner, 1988, p. 169.

⁸⁹⁷ Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. xi.

⁸⁹⁸ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 6-7.

Modernity has come to mean amnesia – amnesia about the past, about cultural tradition, about the passions and interests of our own history....⁸⁹⁹

Yet, the future matters only if the past is settled. No matter how much modernity may have severed our cultural links with the past, our past requires an understanding whenever we need to redefine our present and future.⁹⁰⁰ Therefore, knowledge of the classics is essential if we are to find coherence in a production of a classical text, which naturally involves rituals as well.

Hall sees historical awareness from the same angle: as the means to free the human from gazing the past and offer her a chance to look to the future:

This 'future' orientation of drama ... makes the future seem potentially *controllable*, or at least susceptible to intervention. ... Theatre's 'what will happen next?' question suggests the immanent power of the collective to alter the future – a sense conveyed by ancient choruses who want to intervene in domestic violence but are unable to actualize their desire. ... only drama has the potential to enact ... optimistic changes⁹⁰¹

Her suggestion is underpinned by the open endings of the tragedies, as none of the surviving tragedies offers any clear-cut solutions to the enacted issues. Hall argues that this is the moment the spectators perceive the potential future opportunities,⁹⁰² feel they are entitled to take action to control their possible destiny, and are stirred with the urge to act upon them, no matter how feasible or unfeasible this may be.⁹⁰³ This is why spectators never leave the auditorium discouraged after the effect of the tragic text is rounded off with the staging of tragedy and its rituals.

Therefore, historical awareness brings forward self-awareness and self-identification which are the ingredients to effect changes. Once the issue is identified, it may require us to act upon it.

⁸⁹⁹ Goldhill, 2007, p. 2.

⁹⁰⁰ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 2-7, 45-56, 319-321.

⁹⁰¹ Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 24-25.

⁹⁰² Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 25.

⁹⁰³ Foley, 2010, p. 139.

Another notion that open-ended tragedies imply is a kind of an anticipated change through the possible future. All plays strive for a kind of a change, and tragedy is not an exception. Fischer-Lichte though observes that the transformative power of a performance has never been seriously questioned, because it was in a way marginalised after the turn nineteenth century, although she suggests there are nowadays signs of new versions.⁹⁰⁴ Schechner locates the power of drama

in *transformation* – in how people use theatre as a way to experiment with, act out, and ratify change.⁹⁰⁵

Schechner argues that transformation first takes place at the level of staging, and if it is successful then it is transmitted to the spectator.

Traditional theatre, and again I include the avant-garde ... is *transformational*, creating or incarnating in a theatre place what cannot take place anywhere else. ... At all levels theatre includes mechanisms for transformation. At the level of staging ... costumes and masks, exercises and incantations, incense and music, all designed ... to help the performer make her/himself into another person or being ... If the transformation works, individual spectators will experience changes in mood and/or consciousness.⁹⁰⁶

What seems to be fascinating is that to effect transformation, temporarily or permanently, in traditional theatre is Aristotle's mimesis. In other words, the make-believe world on stage requires good acting. Then art takes the seemingly real life experiences and transforms them into familiar 'others' before our eyes.

Art is cooked and life is raw. Making art is the process of transforming raw experience into palatable forms.⁹⁰⁷

Good acting, good mimesis, will transfer the spectator beyond the physical engagement, and into the ritualistic effect of a theatrical performance: the entrance into the state defined by Turner as 'spontaneous communitas',⁹⁰⁸ during the liminal

⁹⁰⁴ Fischer-Lichte, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 35.

⁹⁰⁵ Schechner, 1988, p. 170.

⁹⁰⁶ Schechner, 1988, pp. 166, 170.

⁹⁰⁷ Schechner, 1988, p. 38.

⁹⁰⁸ Schechner, 2006, p. 167; Also, "This kind of feeling occurs during trancing, ritualizing, and mediating, but also when one is taken over by the "crowd spirit" at a sports match.

phase when the spectators feel “betwixt and between”. This is similar to Csikszentmihalyi ‘flow’,⁹⁰⁹ Benjamin’s ‘aura’, understood by Hall as the

quality that makes you feel as though you’re standing right next to the actor, no matter where you’re sitting in the theatre,⁹¹⁰

or Schechner’s transportation, when players or spectators become one with the action.⁹¹¹

People enjoy giving over, surrendering to all-powerful forces, melting into the community, congregation, or crowd.⁹¹²

If it is so, can we even go so far as to interpret a staged performance as the theatrical anti-structure, the liminal phase of “betwixt and between”, the twilight in which any change is impended?

Classical Greek drama reinforces its dramaturgical qualities by using distorted rituals in its structure and makes tragedy matter more: it questions, it hurts, it does not lie, it gives hope for the future and it urges for changes. It also creates cultural identity, imply answers and develop the critical ability of the spectators. Considering all these, historical awareness becomes the tool by which one can identify the rituals in the text, detect their function in the plot and then find a way to represent them on stage. The next section will try to give answers to the query on how these qualities are attained.

Functions of Rituals in Tragedy

It is evident from the previous section that the genre of tragedy had a function to perform and this was succeeded on three more factors: the proto-performance of tragedy, the “pretext”, similar to Stanislavsky’s “subtext”, is firstly the mythic story,⁹¹³ then the agon and finally the rites that are all incorporated in a specific tragedy. All

⁹⁰⁹ Schechner discusses the feeling of flow Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi⁹⁰⁹ studied in the early 1970s ... The term has to what people felt when their consciousness of the outside world disappeared and they merged with what they were doing is “flow”: Schechner, 2006, p. 88.

⁹¹⁰ Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 16.

⁹¹¹ The spectator also feels totally hooked by the action and this transformation in the reality of the play is an extremely rewarding experience as his senses are heightened to the point of perceiving any alterations of the feelings generated by the action on stage.

⁹¹² Schechner, 2006, p. 163.

⁹¹³ Wiles has an illuminating discussion on myths in tragedy in his *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*: 2000, pp. 5-25.

three parts has a role to perform. It seems that imagination, the myths from oral tradition, the logic, expressed with the arguments, and the rituals, the contemporary religion, were webbed in a particular way so that they all formed a tool to materialise the expectations of the tragedians.

The mythic-historical past of the ancient Greeks became the source a variety of narratives for the tragic dramatists who used them to superimpose

the present upon the template of the past. In theory the plays are set in a distant bronze age milieu, but the characters inhabit the mental universe of the audience, and their values are substantially those of the democratic period.... all Greek tragedies [refracted] the past through the present to make old stories generate an infinite number of new meanings.⁹¹⁴

This is how the mythic story offer the necessary distance so that spectators could be objective in their evaluation. David Wiles views that the mythic subject matter:

was introduced into tragedy as a means of generating critical distance ... By transferring immediate political hopes and fears to the world of myth, tragedians encouraged their audience to judge as well as to feel.⁹¹⁵

These myths were in constant flux as the tragic poets “were free to reshape their material in response to new audiences and situations.”⁹¹⁶

Like the mythic story, the ritual performances are deep-rooted in the tragic stories and have a dramaturgical function. Wiles views their overall importance but without specifying their stirring power in the plot and the need for their staging:

The Athenians engaged in a multitude of such rituals, which helped to breed a theatrical imagination. Ritual provided dramatists with a means of exploring complex ideas through scenes of symbolic action.⁹¹⁷

He emphasises though their importance when he considers them as

a vein of symbolism for the dramatist to exploit, drawing on a language of symbols that was part of Greek culture.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁴ Wiles, 2000, pp. 10-11.

⁹¹⁵ Wiles, 2000, p. 10.

⁹¹⁶ Wiles, 2000, p. 12.

⁹¹⁷ Wiles, 2000, p. 29.

⁹¹⁸ Wiles, 2000, p. 36.

But this view reflects only a part of their unique presence in tragedy. Martin agrees with the view that the ancient Greek dramatists used the stylized, theatrical versions of the actual rituals to suggest change through an unchanging medium. In fact:

Dramatically, the misplaced rituals provided a substructure that induces a no doubt familiar mood in the theatre audience; ... modern equivalent ... putting on stage such celebrations as New Orleans Carnival or New Year's Eve parties.⁹¹⁹

The ritualized movements and gestures of rituals, the speech acts for J. L. Austin such as promises, curses, oath-taking, contracts and many more,⁹²⁰ did continue to transmit their action on stage but the importance of their manifestation was replaced with communication⁹²¹ with either no or counter results, transposing their actual efficacy on a different level: the performance of rituals does not attract the attention of the gods because their ultimate address is genuinely dislodged from their primordial function.

Fragments of the fifth-century rituals also became the tool in the hands of the dramatists to subtly converge the legendary myths from their distant historical past with the present time of the fifth-century Athenians. Just as in a film the visual 'glues' things back together⁹²² so do the rites: they consist the theatrical glue that sticks the parts of the story in tragedy together as the story unfolds.⁹²³ What is more to that, the "glue" idea has another significant function within the plot: rituals function as tools that move the story forward and propel action and reactions, a position exemplified by the three case studies in chapters two and three..

These rituals were usually impiously performed for dramaturgical or theatrical effect to allow the audience to draw associations with their reality, and convey messages on

⁹¹⁹ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, pp. 46-47.

⁹²⁰ These speech acts *are* actions as the linguistic philosopher J. L. Austin contend in lectures in 1955: Schechner, 2006, p. 110

⁹²¹ "Both [performance and rituals] depend on the notion of communicative acts directed toward an audience ... both are marked out in some way from ordinary processes of communication": Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 38.

⁹²² Hall, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 20.

⁹²³ See chapter two.

matters that hurt.⁹²⁴ Martin defines the plot of tragedies as “dark” in contrast to the exposition of the greatness of Athens in the religious milieu of the Great Dionysia, but this achievement was sustained through the use of ritual. Martin also views the regular feature of rhetoric, agon, in tragedy as a kind of entertainment for the ancient Athenians, in the same way they were entertained in the assembly (*ekklesia*), the council (*bouli*), or the courts.⁹²⁵ However, as it was transferred on the stage of Epidaurus the debate was often located within a ritual context, proving Wiles’ view that “The ritual environment of a tragedy was part of its meaning.”⁹²⁶

This merging of the past with the present engaged rituals in the living critical tradition of the ancient Greeks. Rituals are potentially a part of what makes a tragedy socially and politically didactic, and this didacticism that implies transformational change through critical thinking is a key part in tragedy. Schechner goes so far in his account of theatrical transformation that he dubs temporary changes as an outcome of entertainment, and more permanent change he calls ritual. Therefore, rituals in the text amplify the spectators’ understanding, rather than their identification. In other words, rituals are used as tools to shape audiences’ perception and expectations⁹²⁷ and provide awareness to judge the characters.

These applications of rituals within tragedy are probably the reason Wiles suggests that rituals “may provide the underlying model for the narrative of a tragedy.”⁹²⁸ Barthes views these properties as still functional when he says that

it is just because of this flagrant difference that we can judge critically an ideological and social state in which we no longer participate and which henceforth appears to us objectively in all its remoteness.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁴ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 49.

⁹²⁵ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 48.

⁹²⁶ Wiles, 2000, p. 35.

⁹²⁷ Graf, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 61.

⁹²⁸ Wiles, 2000, p. 38.

⁹²⁹ Barthes, Roland “Putting on the Greeks” in *New Critical Essays*, Avanstion: Northwestern University Press, 1972, p. 65; If we modify Goldhill’s simile for self-reflection, then a man has two mirrors in front of him, and by looking in them, in the one his past events and in the second his ritualistic present, then the connection he can make would enhance his critical ability is enhanced: Goldhill, Simon, *Who Needs Greek?: Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 297.

Rituals have more dramaturgical functions to perform in tragedy. Wiles points to the fact that the tragic plots often end with the establishment of a rite or an institution,⁹³⁰ such as the Panathenaian procession at the end of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, or a hero cult in *Medea*. More than that, a play can get its title from a rite,⁹³¹ and then be used in the narrative of a tragedy. In the plays the *Libation Bearers* or the *Suppliants* rituals function as the subtext, if we consider the "subtext" as the driving force of a play, or a scene. Finally, the story can take place at a sanctuary, a temple or a tomb as in the tragedies discussed in chapter two.

Rituals can either be performed on the ancient stage or described. Even so, the unseen action bear significance for the plot as has been stressed in earlier discussions and illustrated in chapter two. Wiles pinpoints that what all ritual activities have in common is a degree of perversion of the normal ritual practice⁹³² and this property is what ultimately propels the action in tragedy.

It is a common view among scholars that rituals were indeed part of the ancient stage. The characters and the chorus pray, invoke the gods, take oaths, offer libations, lament, sacrifice or curse, and their failed or perverted performances. This is the reason that a director needs to identify their effectiveness, a realisation that is effective only through historical awareness. This is why their liveliness in the progression of the second order reality of the stage requires that they maintain the performativity they have in the play-text, a position supported by the three case studies in chapters two and three. It is a firm stance of this thesis that insofar as rituals play an active role in the development of the story, they should be treated with care in the staging of any version of the tragic text, except perhaps when the text-play is used as a source for underlying other ideological values or other perspectives or to satisfy other aesthetic approaches and styles.

⁹³⁰ Wiles, 2000, p. 37.

⁹³¹ Graf, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 60.

⁹³² Wiles, 2000, p. 36.

RITUAL CONTINUITY

It seems that tragedy manages to perform its functions with the treatment of the marred ritual activity in its plot. Therefore, the inquiry addressed in this section is whether rituals still play an important role in an audience member's life, and in what way. It is generally accepted that their function still persists, and their adaptive nature in combination with human need make them survive to our days. It is also true that they may not have the same power in religious life, except perhaps the funerals which are still important, probably because a personal loss is involved, but their persistence in social life is unquestionable: enthroning, presidential and ministerial posts, graduations and so on are all put in effect strictly within the boundaries of a ritualistic frame.

Rituals give the impression of an unchanging mode of actions, a tendency that according to Bell, especially for effective and meaningful rituals, lies on the fact that

Most theories of ritual have been rooted in ethnographic observations of oral societies, ... These ritual tradition particularly give the impression ... that they are a matter of deep structures that do not change ... Foreign observers have tended to see unchanging rituals in oral societies⁹³³

Bell displays convincing evidence that, even the most persistent rituals go through changes, even if these are imperceptible.⁹³⁴ However, she observes that in general rituals do endure and resist changing, mainly because they "give the impression of being old and unchanging" and this is the distinctive trait that often protected them from great or superficial alterations.⁹³⁵

Ritual changing does not only occur in the passing of time. It is also manifested at set time periods, as David Wiles explains referring to their changing mode in ancient Greece, too:

⁹³³ Bell, 1997, pp. 210-211.

⁹³⁴ She writes about Christian missionaries and notes that "the ritual life of oral societies can change with as much difficulty and drama as that of any literate society": Bell, 1997, p. 212.

⁹³⁵ Bell, 1997, p. 212.

One of the striking things about Greek ritual is its capacity for innovation. When the Spartans wanted to demoralize a neighbouring state, they smuggled out of that state the bones of a bronze-age warrior whom they claimed to be Orestes, and set up appropriate rituals, just as the Athenians did when they commandeered the bones of 'Theseus'. Any form of political innovation in Athens required a religious correlative ... often glimpsed in Aristophanes:⁹³⁶

Whether rituals change or not, they have always been acknowledged as providing stability to early societies, and helping them to conduct their lives. As it is discussed in the introduction, scholars from ritual studies and theatre studies have examined rituals as ways of enacting, reliving, remembering and passing to the next generation their beliefs, acquired knowledge and experiences; rituals were transpersonal and belonged to the community.

This issue bring forward the question of how the rituals are transmitted creating a link between the past and present. To ensure their effectiveness, Grimes suggest that ritualized behaviour was transmitted through imitation and osmosis.⁹³⁷ Sutton returns to Connerton who

uses the metaphor of sedimentation in speaking of bodily habits as the means by which the past "is sedimented in the body". Connerton is speaking of how past training is sedimented in the individual body, as a means to understand the hegemonic power of collective memory.⁹³⁸

In the same line, from the discipline of theatre studies, one of the key advocates of the study of ritual, Richard Schechner, has argued that imitation and body-to-body learning⁹³⁹ are the vehicles by which customs and mores are constructed and modified from an early age.⁹⁴⁰

However, Bell poses though one important question:

⁹³⁶ Wiles, 2000, p. 30.

⁹³⁷ Grimes, Ronald L., *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982. xvii.

⁹³⁸ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p.100.

⁹³⁹ Schechner, 2006, p. 191.

⁹⁴⁰ Schechner, 2006, p. 131.

it is pertinent to ask if a rite that is well over a thousand years old actually works today in the same way or means the same thing to people that it did when it was new⁹⁴¹

The answer is positive. Her extensive discussion on Christian liturgical history demonstrates that

At times, the structure of central rituals has changed, yet more often the meaning of those rituals have shifted as people looked to them with different concerns and questions⁹⁴²

Sutton clarifies this thought further when he contends that it is the form of rituals and their material objects that survive above all, rather than the structure of a ritual.⁹⁴³ It is evident therefore that the continuity of rituals depends heavily on their adaptive nature through the processes of imitation and embodied learning.

The flexible nature of rituals seems to be embodied in the form and the material objects of rituals who are in essence the carriers of the message. These two comprise the modicum of action, which may either be replaced with new meanings or shift conceptually at different times. Seremetakis and Panurgia agree with this view and Sutton follows their thought when he quotes Seremetakis:

Seremetakis argues that “the archaeological find ... stands in front of everyone in every epoch as a fully living problem. ... The past is as unavoidable as the sea. ... The archaeological object, in its widest sense, acquires another new stratigraphic level each time it enters into the perceptual order of the present” (Seremetakis, 1994: 141). She suggests repeated “exchanges” between the past and the present that occur between the archaeologist/excavator and the object, creating new layers of meaning.⁹⁴⁴

However, the context of ancient Greek rituals is not always lost in Greek and Greek-Cypriot culture. Sutton presents some case studies when the content or the message is not always lost. Through the examples of Nadia Seremetaki’s field study on death rituals in rural Greece and Nena Panurgia’s example of *kolliva*, Sutton proposes continuity not only of practice, but substantially of meaning through the canonization

⁹⁴¹ Bell, 1997, p. 212.

⁹⁴² Bell, 1997, p. 213.

⁹⁴³ Sutton, “Ritual, Continuity and Change”, (2004).

⁹⁴⁴ Sutton, “Ritual, Continuity and Change”, (2004). p. 99.

of these ritual activities in Orthodox Christianity.⁹⁴⁵ Alexiou's research on mourning in rural Mani, Peloponnese, is another field-study that proves the almost unchanged continuity of the structure, the form, and the meaning of the ancient Greek burial that endures today.

Albeit the controversial counterviews regarding the positive or negative role of Orthodoxy in religious and social life, Panurgia's reference to the canonization reflects a very significant issue:⁹⁴⁶ the view that, despite its aggressiveness, Orthodoxy aided the continuity of ancient Greek rituals by canonizing countless performative elements from a variety of ancient Greek rituals, when it constructed its worship services.⁹⁴⁷

The rituals therefore were absorbed, as a whole or partially, changed or maintained their original meaning and function, form and material objects. Thus, it is consistent to suggest that the institution of the church in Greek culture, and possibly in other western cultures too as Bell exemplifies in the Christian liturgical history,⁹⁴⁸ is a major vehicle by which we can examine the endurance and transmission of ritual, under its umbrella it retained ritual form's primal relation with the concept of the divine world.

The adaptive nature of rituals in Orthodox practices is exemplified in many ways. The performative elements of sacrifice were inserted in the christenings and the weddings, such as the cutting of a little hair of the baby or throwing rice and flower petals to the couple during the wedding ceremony for fertility. The priests always use water for the purification rites, and in baptism. The rubric on Sunday morning liturgy is rich with gestures, movements and objects from various ancient Greek rites. For instance, one can identify something akin to the ancient processions taking place. The processions of holy icons or the flower-decorated epitaph of Christ on holy Friday at Easter interestingly follows the basic order of the ancient Greeks' processions with

⁹⁴⁵ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p. 99.

⁹⁴⁶ Christianity occurred and established during the Roman Empire, which was infused with Greek antiquity. In the process it took on the form of the Roman Empire when it became the official religion of the Byzantine Empire. It was then that the new official religion turned against the ancient Greek culture.

⁹⁴⁷ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p. 99.

⁹⁴⁸ Bell, 1997, pp. 212-220; "The history of Christian ritual has numerous instances in which ritual was also reshaped from the top down or from the margin inward": Bell, 1997, p. 213.

the involvement of children as the candle-bearers, the orchestra if there is one, the priests, the holy icon held by men, the psalm chanters and the followers. It is also customary for the following crowd to repeat the phrases the chanter sings at various points. But most important of all, the ancient Greek funerals have survived following the exact same steps: the washing and dressing of the dead, the display, the funeral and the offering of *kolliva*,⁹⁴⁹ as discussed in the introduction, the burial and the libations, the eating after the inhumation, and the visiting of the grave on the third, ninth and fortieth day after the funeral (30th in ancient Greece), and then the third, sixth, ninth and twelfth month. This is a case of an imperceptible change of a seemingly unchanging ritual. Keeping a candle lit for forty days is still imperative, and decorating the grave is a common habit, often with a person's favourite items especially if it concerns a young person.⁹⁵⁰

As Sutton concludes for both Seremetakis and Panourgia, they

see a complex and layered relationship between past and present as key to the creation of a meaningful relationship of continuity for participants in ritual. The desire for continuity on the part of individuals is the grounds on which the possibility of deeper societal continuities are created.⁹⁵¹

The two institutions are so tightly interrelated that it is inevitable for the expert in ancient Greek religion and Orthodox Christian religion to notice the deep-seated connection of human's religious impulses between the first historical evidence of rituals and their time-travel to later Christian days. This idea drives Sutton and the Greek ethnographers to state that historical consciousness is central in conceptualising continuity as changing, in that they see

a complex and layered relationship between past and present as key to the creation of a meaningful relationship of continuity for participants in rituals.⁹⁵²

⁹⁴⁹ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). pp. 97, 99.

⁹⁵⁰ When I visited my father's grave in June 2011, a seventeen-year old girl played a song to her dead boyfriend a little further, his favourite she told me. A mother, who has lost her only son at twenty, decorated his grave with flowers and items from his bedroom.

⁹⁵¹ Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p. 100.

⁹⁵² Sutton, "Ritual, Continuity and Change", (2004). p. 100.

In other words, the enculturation of rituals, that is the gradual acquisition of their form, the material objects and the meaning or content by another culture or religious doctrine, can be perceived only by following their trajectory through the centuries. For the Greek worshippers these practices are commonplace as they are part of their culture, without suggesting that they are consciously aware of the meaning and the purpose of ritual activities. A non-Greek, however, has to delve into the Orthodox practices to see the similarities with ancient Greek religion. This process is significant when it comes to the rituals in tragedy, where Christianity, in connection with archaeological evidence, has a lot of material to lend for their staging.

Except for the form, the continuity between the two interlocutors is also exemplified in spatial terms. The churches,⁹⁵³ big or small, elaborate or simple, have always followed a specific rectangular architectural style since their first influence by the Roman Vasilika, which in turns followed the structure of the Athenian *Vasileios Stoa*;⁹⁵⁴ only instead of housing the god's statue, the church hosts images of the godhead.

⁹⁵³ Many Greek temples in Greece and Cyprus were converted into Christian churches, such as the Parthenon, Erechtheio or Theseion in Athens. Moreover, many old churches were built near or on top of Greek temples, as in Delphi, Eleusis, Epidauros and the island of Delos. The 438 A.D. edict of the emperor Theodosios II, to terminate the operation of all the pagan temples, led to the purification and the sealing of Parthenon too. The condition of the temple was fairly good then, but different of classical times. The most likely scenario for the time of this disaster relates it to the invasion of the Heruli in 267 A.D. when the city seems to have been destroyed by fires. It was later repaired by Julian the Apostate (A.D. 360-363), who was a Roman Emperor from 361 to 363. Julian promulgated an edict to guarantee freedom and equality of all religions before the law in 362, and in this political setting he restored the confiscated Greek temples and shrines, among them the Parthenon: Πουλημένος, Γρηγόρης, *Από τον Χριστιανικό Παρθενώνα στον Λύσαντρο Κανταντζόγλου*, Διήγηση, 2006, σσ. 42-56. (Poulimenos, Gregory, *From the Christian in Parthenon to Lysander Kaftantzogou*, Diigisi, 2006, pp. 42-56); Καλδέλλης, Εμμ., Αντώνιος, *Ο Βυζαντινός Παρθενώνας*, Ψυχογιός, 2013 (Kaldellis, Emm. Antonios, *The Byzantine Parthenon*, Psychogios, 2013). For the conversion of Parthenon see: Freely, John, *Strolling Through Athens: Fourteen Unforgettable Walks through Europe's Oldest City*, London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2004, p. 70.

⁹⁵⁴ The Vasilika is a public building used in ancient Rome as a place for public meetings, trade as well as courts. The Romans received this building type from the ancient Greek *Vasileios Stoa* (Royal Arcade) of Athens, which was named in honor of the king archon. Vasileios Stoa was a rectangular building in which the king-archon of the city-state, assigned this post for a year, was responsible for the religious matters (organization of festivals, wedding ceremonies, sacrifices, torch processions, etc.) as well as for the litigation matters related to worship and *asevias*, contempt. In front of the gallery was the so-called "Orkios Stone," a huge stone on which the ten rulers of the city swore when undertaking their duties. From the 4th century the basilica was adapted to the needs of worship of Christians and it was for centuries the main architectural style church building. This oldest type of Christian church were oblong

Although *Naodomia*, church architecture, is not the concern of this thesis, one cannot ignore the fact that the churches were indirectly influenced by the architectural structure of the ancient Greek temple and, I would argue, the stage and chorus position of the ancient Greek amphitheatre, without implying that the amphitheatre was a holy place.

Consequently, this thought brings forward the issue of continuity in architectural terms. The church is separated into three areas: the holy of the holies, the area where the psalm chanters are and the place where the congregation sits, men and women apart. The holy of the holies (then the *backstage* for the theatre or the *avaton*, the impassable, in the temples) is always situated in the eastern part of the church and the entrance at the west (contrary to the eastern direction of all Greek temples). The altar is now in the centre of the ceremonies and it is placed in this part of the church (it was outside the temple where prayers, invocations and sacrifices were performed). In the holy area the priests perform the preliminary rituals (then the backstage area), such as the invocation to the trinity to sanctify the communion, away from the eyes of the believers, and where only men are allowed in. The holy of the holies is separated from the main area with the *iconostasion*, the church icon screen, with three entrances (an exact replica of the ancient Greek partition between the backstage and *skene* with the three entrances and the *scenery*). The *iconostasion* gives the holy of the holies the character of the *avaton* and becomes the border between the mortals and the divine. The central door is heavily used by the priest when he performs the liturgy. The doors on the sides are mainly used for the taking around the sacred symbols, being carried out through the left door, go around inside the church and return to the holy area through the right one. The icons on the *iconostasion* are usually protected with a glass

buildings divided internally into three, five, seven or nine aisles. It is not unsubstantiated to say that it was also influenced by the Greek temples: Καστριώτης, Παναγιώτης Γ., Τα Μνημεία των Αθηνών: Ιστορική και αρχαιολογική αυτών περιγραφή κατά τας νέας πηγάς και επιγραφάς, Αθήνησι: Εκ του Τυπογραφείου των Νέων Ιδεών, 1893. (Kastriotis, Panagiotis (1893). *Monuments of Athens: Historical and archaeological description of these in the novel springs and inscriptions*, Athinisi: From the Printing Press of New Ideas, 1893, σσ. 191-192); Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965. (Greek edition: MIET, Athens, 1991); David Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture*, New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2005, pp. 89-107; Γκιολές, Νικόλαος, *Παλαιοχριστιανική Τέχνη, Ναοδομία*, Ιδιωτική Έκδοση, 1998. (Gkiolés, Nikólaos, *First Christian Art, Naodomía*, Private Publication, 1998).

behind which one can see the votive offerings people make to the saints asking for a cure or protection or because they have been granted the favour. Along the *iconostasis* there is a long corridor of 1-2 metres width (*skene*) which is the main area of the priest when he comes out during the liturgy. From there, one can climb down two to three steps to the second area (*orchestra*). Here, there are the right and left psalm chanters (*the left and right chorus members*) and bishop's throne elevated above everybody (*theologeion*).

Therefore, to detect the possible connections of the Christian worship services and the ancient Greek rituals historical consciousness constitute a guaranteed and safe path for substantiated results. As Goldhill also states:

without making that journey of understanding we cannot appreciate the genesis of the most basic values that all of us in the society of the West follow and struggle with.⁹⁵⁵

The persistent need for rituals is strikingly evinced in their absence. In that context, new rituals seem to be constructed in their place, older ones may be revisited and reformed, and often take a new meaning,⁹⁵⁶ or even invented in an effort to reestablish unitary bonds. This is what Schechner acknowledges quoting Hobsbaum:

Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices ... which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition⁹⁵⁷

Unification and social control and order were also the reasons that led the ancient Greeks to sanction ordinary behaviour, too, such as salutation or oath taking. Rituals seem to be ready to change direction towards achieving or offering social control, the modulated primordial feeling of social unity.⁹⁵⁸ This explains why it is customary to choose rites which can offer that sense of continuity with the historic past. Ritualized behaviours, ceremonies, and symbols are still a strong means to control the masses, if only one thinks athletic or football events, graduations that mark a passage to another

⁹⁵⁵ Goldhill, 2007, p. 159.

⁹⁵⁶ "the emergence of the idea of a "nation" from the 18th c. onward was buttressed by new rituals enacting national consciousness [such as] Designating and singing a "national anthem", "saluting the flag": Schechner, 2006, p. 73.

⁹⁵⁷ Schechner, 2006, p. 73.

⁹⁵⁸ Bell, 1992, p. 8.

state and so on. Schechner acknowledges the power of sacred and secular rituals of the 21st century to control the populace, and mainstream values when he links Derrida's notion of "writing" with culture:

he means the entire system of "inscribed" power: laws, rituals, traditions, politics, economic relations, science, the military, and the arts ... Inscribed power performs its privileges by means of established authorities – police, courts, the military, priesthood, scientists, teachers, and critics.⁹⁵⁹

Bell exemplifies the tendency to invent rituals with the establishment of the former Soviet Union,⁹⁶⁰ who thought of rituals as the best tool for controlling its people through political indoctrination. Therefore, they assigned the design of rites to local organisations, specifically as a mean to socialise the population and remake their world. However, Bell writes, they encountered difficulties in finding the right balance between "structure and spontaneity, of the ideological and the emotional, or the collective and the personal".⁹⁶¹ Therefore, when they realised that people sought emotional fulfillment in order to participate, they eventually gave more emphasis to the spontaneity.

Bells discusses a sufficient amount of examples in her chapter on *Ritual Change*, from the ritual invention of the international Olympic games, to the rituals in a home setting, or the provision of rituals new age ethos offer for a door-value.⁹⁶² Regarding the later, Grimes has some reasonable objections which Bell quotes:

Ronald Grimes has called attention to the various entrepreneurial groups that providing ritual services ... He finds it problematic when grandiose claims are made for the effectiveness of ritual or when rites are deliberately disconnected from the communities in which they have traditionally been a part.⁹⁶³

So far, what the discussion on ritual continuity, adaptive nature and the tendency to invent brings forward is the inner need of people to cling to rituals:

⁹⁵⁹ Schechner, 2006, pp. 125-6, 62.

⁹⁶⁰ Bell, 1997, pp. 225-229.

⁹⁶¹ Bell, 1997, p. 227.

⁹⁶² Bell, 1997, pp. 331-339.

⁹⁶³ Bell, 1997, p. 240.

The freedom that many people feel to improvise rites that draw on a vast spectrum of cultural imagery is itself indicative of a particular understanding of ritual – as a type of psychosocial mechanism unbound and undetermined by any one religious or ritual tradition.⁹⁶⁴

This psychological and social mechanisms that offer solidarity and safety to a societal group are still powerful. If they were not, then it would be difficult to explain that, instead of resolving social tension or preserving the system,⁹⁶⁵ this well-known practice has often been used with atrocious consequences by dictatorships which have always thrived, “on state ceremony, much of it concocted to suit the needs of a particular regime”.⁹⁶⁶

The ubiquitous dynamics of ritual appropriation are historically complex and politically charged, especially when socially or politically dominant groups appear to be mining the cultural traditions of the less powerful⁹⁶⁷.

Cultures are not unduly compared to palimpsests by Derrida, as they are constantly in want of, or in renegotiation with, secular or sacred rituals; everything is in flux.⁹⁶⁸ Ritual invention Bell suggests make ritual primarily a medium of expression standing against the “long-standing” traditional worship that “worship by which the transcendent collapses the gulf between the human and the divine”.⁹⁶⁹ This notion however seems to be activated since the time of the tragedians. The rituals within the tragedies are mediums of expressions trying to effect their multifunctional role as discussed in the previous sections. One may contradict this view and suggest that as long as they maintained the necessity for a proper performance so that they are effective, they are rituals per se. This is partly true, however the quest for their proper performance is deployed in the frame of a theatrical performance.

an action known to be culturally significant is embedded in another larger cultural act: the drama itself.⁹⁷⁰

⁹⁶⁴ Bell, 1997, p. 240.

⁹⁶⁵ Sutton, “Ritual, Continuity and Change”, (2004). p. 94.

⁹⁶⁶ Schechner, 2006, p. 73.

⁹⁶⁷ Bell, 1997, p. 240.

⁹⁶⁸ Schechner, 2006, p. 127, 72.

⁹⁶⁹ Bell, 1997, p. 241.

⁹⁷⁰ Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 37.

Therefore, only the fact that incomplete, reported or described rituals are used in another context that deprives public from active and spontaneous participation may answer this doubt.

The power of rituals still sustains because of their adaptive nature and even though they give the impression of being immutable, they are always liable to change keeping in step with what the social and political context needs and offers. This nature of theirs is what prompts Bell to take the stance to assert that rituals themselves constitute an autonomous object of analysis with its own potential and dynamics that urge for their own method of analysis.⁹⁷¹

Modern or traditional rituals, social or religious, are so complex in nature and form that they may not be perceived as such. Therefore, it is not fair to expect a spectator to identify them and perceive their importance in the story. This is the translator's and the director's job: to ensure that their importance is treated on stage in such a way as to convey their importance in the story-line.

The fact that rituals are ever-present and inherent in social, private or religious life is the reason that the spectators of a tragic production will be able to identify their meaning and their importance in the tragic play.

Functions of Rituals Today

From the moment we accept the fact that the dramaturgical significance of rituals is explicit within the structure of the story in a tragedy, and their staging, it is natural to wonder about the impact of the antique modes of behaviours on contemporary audiences, and if their meaning would be perceived.

The discussion on ritual continuity leads to some solid conclusions that rituals persist in time, and their need is more than evident when they are invented. This thought allows us to deduce that the ritualistic significance of an action can be, somehow, sensed, detected or identified, depending on the mental and psychological awareness

⁹⁷¹ Bell, 1992. pp. xiv, xv.

of people. This can be effected if the maintenance of the power of rituals in a text-play production is the ultimate task of the director.

It has already suggested that their power was transferred into the secondary reality of the actors, not the fifth-century B.C. audiences, and just like anything else they were expected to 'act their roles', not their actuality in their socioeconomic context. Yet, being parts of their lives, they must have been more awe-inspiring as they could identify with the seriousness of their failed or improper performance of the rites. Furthermore, chapter one has shown that the ancient Greeks were engaged in rituals on a daily basis, therefore not only their dramatic deployment and their symbols were crystal clear to them in Epidaurus but they must have also been part of a continuum, in connection with previous performances with the same title, and expert audiences would surely have been assumed to evaluate the use of rituals in diverse performances accordingly.⁹⁷²

Things are different today, and people are not so occupied with religious obligations, with the possible exclusion of obligations around death. Even so, I do not completely agree with Wiles when he suggests that rituals in ancient Greece allowed "chains of association that a modern audience cannot easily identify".⁹⁷³ This view may not concern the majority of Greek spectators, but what we must have in mind is that we are always referring to a theatrical performance, and as such it bears functional elements that need to be conveyed to the audience, and rituals are among them. As long as all they all play their part in the re-enacted story, then, the audience will be able to perceive their dramaturgical power. However, the spectators need not acknowledge them as rituals, as long as they are allowed to grasp their pivotal role in the staged story-line. Having said that, there may be minor or major differences between the structure of societies and cultures worldwide but weddings, name-giving, votive offering, prayers, oaths, supplication and above all burial still encompass significance to people and consequently allow audience identification, even partially. Violent deaths are still stigmatized and the relatives of a murdered person cannot find

⁹⁷² Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 158.

⁹⁷³ Wiles, 2000, p. 29.

closure until the perpetrator is punished. Missing people are agonisingly looked for and their return awaited.⁹⁷⁴ The recovery of the dead bodies in war is a behaviour pursued wherever possible, and the cancelation of such an action causes anguish to the relatives. Western societies may have become individualist, self-centred and accustomed to atrocities, but maintain an ability to identify injustice. Therefore, understanding the meaning of a ritual speech-act is not difficult. What is more, the instructions of the performed rituals such as funeral, supplication, taking an oath or a curse exclude any misconceptions of their function: they 'tell' you what to do, how to do it, when to do it and to whom to address it. There are indeed crucial rituals that are not so clear, such as Cassandra's wedding or Bacchic mood, and need some research in the field of the classics. Even for these however, guidelines are given through the characters or the chorus that light the way for their staging. Another important point is that, whether performed or reported, their repetitive presence will definitely offer the contemporary audiences the opportunity to perceive their ritualistic significance. Therefore, the instructions on movement and gestures and the repetition of the core rituals can induce understanding.

There are some gestures and signs that are culture-specific and other physical displays that may appear universal but where the meaning may vary from culture to culture. In this context, one might say that rituals may not be understood by people of other cultures. Yet, again, even if the spectators are culturally distant they can still perceive their meaning through their verbal articulation, and then compare and contrast with their culture. Therefore, if Japanese supplicate by prostrating, they will identify with the ancient Greek supplication in which a person kneels and seeks for physical contact. Rituals in tragedy may involve codified acting⁹⁷⁵ but it does not require an expert audience for successful decoding as almost everything is explained within the text. The objective is for the audience to realise their importance.

⁹⁷⁴ One wall on the coffee-shop at the port of the island of Paros, Greece, is covered with photos of missing children from all over the world. There one can see their photos the time they were lost, and what they would look like 10 years later, processed on the computer, A really frustrating sight to view for anyone,

⁹⁷⁵ Schechner, 2006, p. 156.

Therefore, when the oath or the taking of the right hand is repeatedly made of use in the text-play of *Medea*, and then they are performed on stage, few Greeks or non-Greeks would not perceive their functional significance. The case of the right hand for example, needs additionally historical awareness because Medea, Creon, Jason and Aegeus probably salute one another whenever they meet in the customary ancient Greek way, raising their right forearms. Therefore, the deceit, the manipulation or the final goodbye will not be conveyed, if these gestures are omitted, if the children do not salute their father as instructed, and if Medea does not ask her children to give her their right hands. This is why the primary task of a translator is to detect and leave this information in his reconstructed work, the classicist to fill in the gaps and the director to stage them.

This is in accord to what Schechner suggests: that a performance is unsuccessful if it does not satisfy its public or if it does not accomplish the tasks of a performance.⁹⁷⁶ However, what satisfies the audience or what meets the audience's expectations cannot easily be defined, and it is doubtful if it will ever be. What is even truer, as theatre and acting, social life and ordinary behaviour change from one historical period to another,⁹⁷⁷ so do the audiences. Wiles has a point when he says that we cannot completely understand or explain what theatre does to people⁹⁷⁸ and what reactions it provokes. Even in the fifth century they could not predict the audiences' responses as some ancient anecdotal observations inform us on their varied reactions to the form and content.⁹⁷⁹

To my view, problems are raised mostly in modern staging of Greek drama, when directors draw away from the cultural clarity of the tragic text. The universality of the

⁹⁷⁶ Schechner, 2006, p. 208.

⁹⁷⁷ Schechner, 2006, p. 149.

⁹⁷⁸ Wiles, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 54.

⁹⁷⁹ "Athenians wept when ... Phrynichus presented ... the Persian's destruction of Miletus, ... and fined the author. They grumbled when a character expressed an unpopular idea, until the playwright ... stood up and advised them to wait and see what happened to the character. Contradictory speeches in Athenian tragedy and comedy reflect the debates of the assembly and lawcourts, with the audience as jury. Plato reflects the deep connection between theatre and democracy in Athens when he says disdainfully (*katafrontika*): 'Whenever the masses gather in the assembly, in courtrooms, at the theatre ... they voice their approval or disagreement always in excess, producing constant uproar with applause or protest.': Gamel, 2010, pp. 158-9.

elements of a performance is an issue under discussion. We only assume the spectators can decipher the director's staging decisions. However, no director can ever be certain of this.⁹⁸⁰ For example, the Wellington boots in Yael Farber's *Molara* (Oxford Playhouse, June 2007) have layers of meaning which may not all be conceived by unaware spectators: they stand for the workers in the gold mine, and thus summon an iconic cultural reference and evoke the time of Apartheid.⁹⁸¹ Bennet may have a point when she suggests that directors should concentrate less on the spectators' response and more on

the cultural conditions that make theatre and audience's experience of it possible.⁹⁸²

It is impossible to know what goes inside the spectators' minds and what *mise-en-scene* means to them. Each one carries in the auditorium his or her own experiences, state of mood, expectations and so, thus each one potentially receives a performance differently. The task of text-as-performed is the requested balance between the script-alone and the script-performed.

What is true though is that audiences today are used to a variety of spectacles, including the stylized performances, and Gamel's insight may answer the uncertainties that may trouble modern directors as far as the text-performed tragedy:

Spectators are not naïve individuals who live in their shells and know nothing else apart from their culture.⁹⁸³

What spectators always appreciate and they are always fascinated by is the magical ability of the theatre to transport them to other times, other places, other customs, alien rituals and other lives. I contend that Schechner's second reason is more viable: a performance is successful if it is unified, true to itself, the actors transport themselves into the stage world and this transfer is so persuasive that the audience is also drawn into the flow of it. In the case of Greek tragedy, its overall impact is

⁹⁸⁰ Wiles, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 45.

⁹⁸¹ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 176, 177; On p. 179 she writes: "This multi-layered engagement is unlikely to be consciously acknowledged by most audience members and may not even have been intended by Farber."

⁹⁸² Wiles, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 45; Bennett; Susan. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. London & New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 45.

⁹⁸³ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 175-6.

accomplished only if all the components, including rituals, are harmonically united under one cultural source. The following discussion will focus on a proposed way of actualizing this view on stage.

 STAGING THE TEXT AND THE RITUALS

Staging the text is often misinterpreted as a quest for authenticity, in our case the rituals as well. It is true that what we have in our hands are not the original works of art. We know that the most popular tragedies were revived in the 4th century and that they went through additions, changes and alterations for about a hundred years until around 300 B. Then the Athenian politician Lycurgus created the official archives to preserve their structure and ordered for conformation to these texts in the future performances.⁹⁸⁴ Despite the fact that these texts underwent further changes later these rewritten ancient texts are all we have as ‘originals’. Moreover, it is generally accepted that there are no traces of what those ancient performances looked like; therefore, it is admittedly unattainable to replicate a historically authentic tragedy when there is no unmediated access to the past.⁹⁸⁵ However, the use of historical material need not always be interpreted as striving for authenticity because “Authenticity is often taken as simulation of antiquity”.⁹⁸⁶ The question ‘what makes a cultural expression authentic’, set by Appiah and repeated by Gamel, has not a definite answer;⁹⁸⁷ not to mention the view that the notion of authenticity keeps shifting from one generation to the other which is supported by many authorities, such as Wile or Gamel.⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁴ These copies were lent to the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Euergetes I, and passed into the library of Alexandria to form the basis of the critical edition made by the librarian, Aristophanes of Byzantium (ca. 257-180 B.C.). He also affixed prefaces, or *hypotheses*, telling about the subject of the play and production detail. Many details came from Aristotle’s *Didascaliae* and Callimachus’s *Pinakes*. ... The composition of commentary (*scholia*) on the plays begun in the Hellenistic period by scholars such as Aristarchus of Samothrace (?217-145 B.C.) and Didymus (?80-10 B.C.). Further *scholia* were added in the Byzantine period: MacDonald, 2003, pp. 5-6.

⁹⁸⁵ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 159.

⁹⁸⁶ Schechner, 2006, p. 116.

⁹⁸⁷ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 168; On p. 160: Gamel though proposes the alternative term ‘inductive authenticity’, for performances that try to engage the spectators, as the original productions might have done, by using a mixture of familiar and strange, political issues and the sense of a community theatre in an effort to evoke critical and emotional responses.

⁹⁸⁸ Wiles, 2000, p. 179; Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 154.

What I would like to pinpoint is the suggestion that if we simply follow the instructions in the translated texts, then we inevitably recreate a historically resonant ritual:

Let words be heard in their sonority rather than ... what they mean grammatically, let them be perceived as movements.⁹⁸⁹

For the reported rites and other gestures, the classicists, especially those working since the 1960s, have offered enough supporting evidence⁹⁹⁰ that can fill in the gaps, and this is one of the purposes of chapter one. Staging a play-text of tragedy has to go through various steps. The basic one is the translation for a production with the inevitable reconstruction that follows, and finally the first vital directorial decisions that will define the production: unity in staging the place and time, space and concept, and the decisions about the treatment of the Chorus. All these steps need to revolve around the ritualistic activities in the plot.

The first consideration for the staging of rituals concerns the treatment of the play-text. Today, the stage action signifies theatre as a performance genre with variable styles.⁹⁹¹ There may not be a text, the text may be treated either as the key, or the proto-performance of the action, or as the source for a text-performance. As far as the original text is concerned, Schechner's ethical and political questions are one of the problems scholars of performance studies face:

Should one intervene in the interest of "human rights" or respect local cultural autonomy at whatever cost?⁹⁹²

A dramatic text may be so drastically changed to adjust to the audiences' culture and tastes that we deprive our audiences from the right to glance at a different world in the name of modernity or innovation. If we remove anything we consider extraneous,

⁹⁸⁹ Harrop's article was inspired by Antonin Artaud's *Letter on Language* in a 1933: Harrop, 2010, p. 236.

⁹⁹⁰ See Chapter one.

⁹⁹¹ Gamel refers to a vague terminology: productions are called 'realist', 'modernist', experimental, conceptual, deconstructed, revisionist, examples of *Regietheater*, or Eurotrash, directors classified it as 'conservative', liberal or radical... [and]: Quoting Salman Rushdie's mongrelisation: "hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human being, ideas, politics, movies, songs." Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 158, 168.

⁹⁹² Schechner, 2006, p. 21.

as part of this contemporary tendency, what play shall we have?⁹⁹³ If, further, we change the conventions of a classical play, what is the tragedy that we present? There are elements that are shared among cultures, but there are also distinct characteristics that we need to understand, and experience.

McDonald explains that the productions of Greek tragedy are treated in many ways:

Some writers ... [place] emphasis on the text itself and neglect performance or consider performance paramount with little regard to the text. Others try to combine both, but often not knowing the original Greek or ... [having no] practical knowledge. Many write about the physical characteristics of the Greek theater without having visited the sites. ... And there is the pseudo-conflict about fidelity to restaging the original as opposed to creating something new. Some stress the religious aspects and neglect the drama.⁹⁹⁴

This thesis focuses on a performance that wishes to balance MacDonald's distinctions under the umbrella of the performative turn. That is to combine the dramatic text with the performance text, focus on the staging of the rituals in it and consider the knowledge of ancient Greek religion and practical knowledge as an essential ingredient in the staging of it.⁹⁹⁵ Unfortunately however, the last two parameters are usually ignored in a text-performance and as Gamel observes:

Ritual and religion are crucial to ancient Greek drama, yet rarely included successfully in subsequent performances.⁹⁹⁶

The dramaturgical efficacy of the ritualistic actions depends largely on three factors: first on the translator's rendition, then on the reformation of the text, and thirdly, on the director's aesthetic decisions. The damaging omission of the ritual elements in the examined case studies allows the conjecture that their treatment demands more research than it may seem at first. The situational character of rituals, by which they cannot be understood outside their specific context, is sustained in the context of tragedy. Therefore the practitioner first has to identify them, which requires either knowledge of ancient Greek religion or the collaboration with a classicist, and then

⁹⁹³ Attempts for example to rewrite Shakespeare's plays and make action more logical failed to improve the plays: Schechner, 2006, p. 202.

⁹⁹⁴ MacDonald, 2003, p. viv.

⁹⁹⁵ See Appendix V for a detailed suggested process.

⁹⁹⁶ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 163.

analyse their function in the plot before considering their staging. He or she is the one who has the responsibility to convey their theatricality to the spectators.

It is hard work to stage the text of a tragedy since all the parts needs special attention, namely the story and the chorus, and in our case the rituals. When the rituals indicate corporeal requirements, motion and gestures, by which the performer can give rituals shape and motion on stage,⁹⁹⁷ or any other conventions of ancient Greek drama are missing, then the transmission suffers. Therefore, if the incorporated vibrations of the tragic text can take shape on stage then it can “enrich our experience and understanding of ancient drama, indeed any drama, in performance.”⁹⁹⁸

Understanding tragedy therefore signifies the recognition of the rituals as tools in the structure in the play-text. However, their operational power is generally not fully acknowledged and their rhythm and influence in the action are not always treated clearly in Greek performances. There have not been thorough discussions on their staging, but there is one imperative requirement when rituals are treated: one needs to remember that each play has its own cosmos of rituals and one has to be very well acquainted with this. For example, in *Antigone*, Haemon spits in his father’s face and draws his sword. Spitting at someone in ancient Greece meant interruption of any social relations. Thus Haemon first disrupts the father-son relation and then he has the right to draw his sword at him. The right hand in *Medea* symbolises the trust, the deception and the farewell. If a director does not find the hidden meaning behind these ritualistic behavioural patterns, then he will not be able to interpret the play, understand it and then use this knowledge to help the actors under his direction. In TH.O.C.’s production of *Oresteia*, Orestes threw his lock of hair, and the sword on the orchestra before stepping on the platform, what an insult, Electra’s libations were offered verbally, and again nowhere specific, the prayer-invocation was performed with Orestes and Electra having their backs to an unmarked grave. Against the text, they invoked their father without the physical connection with the spot he was buried; they called the chthonic powers who dwell in the depths of the earth looking upwards,

⁹⁹⁷ Harrop, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 232-4.

⁹⁹⁸ Harrop, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 239.

to the Olympians; and gestures of mourning were not performed damaging the core religious moments of the play were destroyed. Therefore, without any recourse to antiquity not only classical reception would be something else⁹⁹⁹ but, if we expand this thought to rituals, then their power may vanish all together affecting their efficacy in the play.

To recapitulate the issue raised in this thesis: first, that rituals play a very special role that needs to be maintained in a text-performance; then that the cultural milieu of a play-text should be deeply considered before any adjustments or reformations aimed at a successful production are made; and finally that tragedy is not to be estranged from its textual source.

The second consideration of a text-performance concerns the cultural milieu of the text. Gamel particularises Barthes' queries on the production of ancient drama:

Are the Greek plays to be performed as of their own time or as of ours?
Should we reconstruct or transpose? Emphasise resemblances or differences?¹⁰⁰⁰

As Turner states, all dramatic texts emit cultures:

Cultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves
in their ritual and theatrical performances¹⁰⁰¹

This has made me wonder of how we can learn about other cultures, especially in our multi-national world, if we do not stage their uniqueness. This treatment of the text brings forward Taplin's original work who contends that a director can make his appropriate aesthetic judgements as long as we wish to know one another better by entering one another's performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies.¹⁰⁰² To my view, this is the beauty of polysemy. Life would be dull without all the colours and environmental systems, natural or not. Therefore, this thesis is in accordance with Schechner's following statement:

⁹⁹⁹ Perris, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, pp. 182-183.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 153.

¹⁰⁰¹ Schechner, 2006, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰² Wiles, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 47.

One must always respect cultural, historical and individual differences. These differences give works their particular heft, tone, and flavours.¹⁰⁰³

The choice of one cultural source, will result to the unity of place and time, space and concept. Despite the fact that I am in favour of sustaining the culture of any dramatic text, I cannot ignore the fact that it invites translocation to other environments. Greek tragedy especially favours such treatments. Elie Antoine Lahoud's¹⁰⁰⁴ production is a proof that a play can successfully be transferred into another cultural setting whilst retaining its original power, as long as the innate prerequisites of the genre are followed: tragedy should be clear, coherent and simple, letting the words speak for themselves; clarity needs a unified coordination among what constitutes a performance, including the rituals, the setting, the costumes, the movement, the music and the singing; and finally all the elements require such treatment as to compose a symphony. These prerequisites could be effective only if all the components that constitute a performance come from the same cultural source. Lahoud chose *Seven at Thebes* because he says:

There is logic in choosing it if one considers the Lebanese war. The play is about two brothers killing one another because they could not understand one another. Driven by ambition, arrogance and stubbornness they incurred pain, death and mourning for the citizens and their family.

He elaborated the text in Arabic and minimized it to fit a one-hour performance, but he admits that one should be extremely careful so that the final text includes all the essentials. He said he reduced the length of most rituals, even though omitted those few that would not affect the story-line or the character development.

He picked out of his best qualified students-actors of the National Lebanese University of Art–Drama Department and followed the tragedians example: he not only directed it but he also taught the choreography after choosing steps and movements from folk dances and selected pieces from the folk Lebanese music and songs that would be appropriate for the various moods in the play, focusing on the famous traditional

¹⁰⁰³ Schechner, 2006, p. 203.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Stage Director and Head of the Theatre Department of the Lebanese University of Beirut, Lebanon. I interviewed him during the three-day Symposium on Ancient Greek Drama, Paphos, 2004.

singers Fayrouz and Siriak. His wife designed the costumes by combining the Lebanese and Phoenician traditional features. He asked her to make them in such a way as to look ancient but, somehow, timeless. The only genuine traditional echoes were the hats, which were clearly copied from Phoenician drawings, and the wine red colour of the costumes. Lahoud says that he spent most of his time on the preliminary work, researching for material. He calls himself a 'pragmatic director' because he visualized everything prior to rehearsals.

If you know what you want from your actors and what acting abilities they should acquire, then you save time, it is less stressful and you are ready to answer any questions they may have for the play or their characters. That is why we rehearsed for 4 weeks, 2-3 times every week for 2 hours. Each play imposes restrictions and rules that are sensed by the actors, students in my case, after a while. This is even truer for tragedy.

In his staging everything echoed the Lebanese folk culture he comes from and the result of the performance of *Seven at Thebes* was outstanding.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, this material often contradicted the Greek customary ways. Contrary to the Greek mourning for example, the Lebanese people celebrate when someone dies, just like a wedding. Therefore he used clapping and snaking movements in a combination of slow and fast tempo to express tragic lamentation so that his people could identify with lament. The chorus was technically perfected in its detail. The five women of the chorus danced their sorrow, and moved their bodies, heads and arms in such synchronized and plastic movements that they mesmerized the audience in time with the recorded sounds. Even their fingers had a role to perform. For instance, at one point in the performance, trying to cast away bad omens, the chorus sang their ode with their bodies directed to the front, their head to the side, their arms spread aside as if blocking the reality or exorcising the bad omen. Then they circled on the spot in the sound of music changing into postures of agony, and all these in absolute synchronization. As a spectator, I was taken aback at the beginning by the language and the different cultural customs, as mourning in Greek culture is expressed with

¹⁰⁰⁵ The performance took part in the Festival of High Schools that takes place in Cyprus every two years: Cyprus International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama, Paphos, 2004.

tears and sorrow. Soon though I found myself completely absorbed by what was enacted and I was able to recognize and identify with Lebanese culture.

What he wanted to prove with this experiment of is was “to show that by changing the cultural source tragedy can becomes everybody’s”. Lahood effected unity of place and time, space and concept by elaborating the set, the costumes, the music and the choreography from one cultural source, Lebanese, and by sustaining a simplicity in the acting. However, there is not one fixed way to stage a tragic text. Instead of Lahood’s cultural shift, there can be a time shift, which the example of Euripides’ *Bacchae* can serve as an example..

*Bacchae*¹⁰⁰⁶ was going to open the festival of Maroneia,¹⁰⁰⁷ at the heart of Thrace. The director Tasos Rantzos¹⁰⁰⁸ took the first vital decision around which he would plan his production, his space and time: the inhabitants of a village in a remote area in Thrace come together once every three years at a designated spot to re-enact the myth of the *Bacchae*, the female cult followers of Dionysus. Thrace in Northern Greece is one of the Greek rural areas that still sticks to tradition, so he could use material from the

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Bacchae* by Euripides, National Theatre of Northern Greece. Modern Greek translation: Yorgos Himonas, Direction: Tasos Ratzos, Directing supervision: Nikitas Tsakiroglou, Set & Costumes design: Evagelia Kirkine, Music: Kostas Vomvolos, Choreography: Konstantinos Gerardos, Assistant director: Korina Haritou, Assistant set & costumes designer: Evi Kambouraki, Assistant choreographer: Eleni Gioura, Dramaturg: Dimitra Mitta, Instruction of Greek traditional dance: Yorgos Likessas, Production co-ordinator: Elias Kotopoulos, Stage manager: Thodoros Tsalouchidis, Cast: Areti Agelou, Iordanis Aivazoglou, Vassilis Vassilakis (Kadmos), Apostolos Bacharidis (Servant), Paola Milona, Ioanna Payataki (Agavi), Fani Panagiotidou, Erato Pissi, Kostas Santas (Tiresias), Thalia Skarlatou, Eva Sofronidou, Christos Sougaris (Pentheus), Christos Tantalakis (Messenger B), Stratos Tzortzoglou (Dionysus), Anny Tsolakidou, Yannis Harissis (Messenger A), Marina Hatzioannou. Song: Roula Manissanou, Musicians: Sakis Laios (clarinet), Nektaria Liaskou (accordion), Dimitris Panagoulas (percussion)

¹⁰⁰⁷ Maroneia is a village in the Rhodope Prefecture 29 km southeast of Komotini, Thrace. It is situated on the slope of mount Ismaros near the ancient town, which was by the sea. The inhabitants moved there in the 17th century because of pirates. In Homer's time Maronia was the home of Marona, priest of Apollo. It was famous for its vineyards and mythology says that Odysseys used the famous Maroneitiko wine to get the Cyclops drunk and escape. The ‘Polyphemus cave’, the Maroneia Cave, which is situated there, too, is a protected archaeological site. It is closed to the general public and only scientific groups are allowed to access for research. It is of 350m length and of approximately 15-20m width. Inside the cave are stalactites and stalagmites and rare forms of fauna. Archaeological excavations have bring to light pottery showing that the cave was inhabited in the Neolithic period .

¹⁰⁰⁸ Tasos Rantzos, Director at the National Theatre of Northern Greece. He was one of my instructors at Teaching drama methodology, for the acquirement of the Teaching Certificate at the University of Cyprus (Sep. 2008-May 2009). I had a long discussion with him after I had watched his production of *Bacchae* in 2009, when I noticed that he had put into practice a lot of my directorial suggestions in this thesis.

Thracian manners and customs that survives to our days. The time he decided was 1970s, when customs were more intense and upon this idea he builds up everything else. It is important the choice of the place to have strong folk tradition for the unity effect. For six months, he observed anything and everything that was happening in Northern Greece which he thought could be related to *Bacchae*. He attended the rite of *Anastenarides* (firewalkers)¹⁰⁰⁹ and he tried to interpret the phenomenon of not getting burned. He looked for Dionysian celebrations during the *Apokreos* (Carnival). What he concluded as a practitioner was that Thrace has kept alive ancient Dionysiac rites disguised under Christianity. He also watched videos with old recordings and rituals in other areas of the world such as Bali. He believes that other cultures with rituals that are still parts of daily lives can offer a researcher a deeper understanding for the reasons for their existence. A director, Rantzos says, has to understand the play to its core if he wants to guide the actors and the other participants to a successful outcome. He commented on his preliminary research and said that

Bacchae can be compared to a mental labyrinth. I got in first, I got lost, I got out, then I got lost again. A director has to get lost in the words so that he can guide his actors to the exit whenever they get lost.

It is evident that drawing upon the chosen sources can turn out to be time-consuming and this may dissuade one from entering this process.

These two examples of cultural and time shift may offer an answer to the question “how can rituals look on stage nowadays?” Although there is not a single truth, folk culture can be both an excellent option and an inspirational guidance for other scenic decisions. This suggestion responds to Gamel’s query on how a production can be ‘clear’ and ‘unified’.¹⁰¹⁰ It is often thought that the lack of information on the physical and choreographic aspects of ancient tragic performances allow modern writers and directors to make use of their imagination and create, or re-create, these texts.¹⁰¹¹ However, Martin suggests that awareness of cultural differences can help in the

¹⁰⁰⁹ See Appendix V.

¹⁰¹⁰ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 165.

¹⁰¹¹ Harrop, Stephe, “Physical Performance and the Languages of Translation” in *Theorising Performance: Greek drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, ed. by Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, London: Duckworth, 2010, p. 233. CHECK PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

recovery of the native sense¹⁰¹² and this can offer more appropriate solutions to the staging of tragedy. On the other hand, irresponsible decisions that involve an amalgam of styles, costumes, or the movement of the chorus, as Barthes states,¹⁰¹³ is probably “because the producers have no strong ritual tradition on which to draw”.¹⁰¹⁴ In their effort then to create a ritualistic ambiance they mix elements from different cultures, or even invent gestures or movement, often unsubstantiated forgetting that tragedy reflects only a major one, like most classical or modern plays. The insertion of various cultural elements would only disorientate the spectators. Wiles also views that

We have lost all sense of ritual and ceremony ... so the artist sometimes attempts to find new rituals with only his imagination as his source ... The result is rarely convincing¹⁰¹⁵

The search for the cultural elements with which to stage a tragedy draws both on knowledge of the ritual elements in tragedies, and a detailed understanding of the chosen cultural milieu.

Using Folk Tradition and Culture in Staging Tragedy and Rituals

In the West, theatre directors of the past have looked for performative elements in Christianity and in the folk tradition, in order to create an aesthetic mise-en-scene that communicates some of the ritual force implicit in the use of rituals in tragedies. For these directors, folk cultures meet one essential convention of Greek drama: they are by nature rooted in the traditions of the here-and-now and there-and-then of the western, and any, audience. They offer the allusion, and illusion, of that alien, distant past that permits voyeurism instead of identification with the characters.

Combining material from Greek folk traditions and customs in an effort to revive the interest in the Greek drama and its timeless values has been a tendency for decades, beginning with Max Reinhardt's staging of Gilbert Murray's translation of Sophocles

¹⁰¹² Martin, ed. by MacDonald and Walton, 2007, p. 37.

¹⁰¹³ Barthes, Roland, “Putting on the Greeks”, *New Critical Essays*, Avanstion: Northwestern University Press, p. 65.

¹⁰¹⁴ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 163.

¹⁰¹⁵ Wiles, 2000, p. 26.

Oedipus Rex in Germany in 1911,¹⁰¹⁶ and gathering full force through the work of Eva-Palmer Sikelianos.¹⁰¹⁷ Together with her husband, the Greek poet and playwright Aggelos Sikelianos,¹⁰¹⁸ the first twentieth-century Greek poet candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949, Eva-Palmer revived the Delphic Festival in 1927 hoping to bring back the enlightenment ideas of peace and harmony in Greece and beyond.¹⁰¹⁹ Eva-Palmer was dedicated to ancient drama. She reclaimed the Greek amphitheatres as the natural place of the performances of ancient Greek tragedy. It was through her investigations and her popularisation of the amphitheatres, that she re-discovered that the environment of the amphitheatre influences the voice and movement of the performers, and her way of working led to laying the basis for many of the aesthetics of open-air performances of ancient Greek drama. Her pioneering performance *Prometheus* was set at the top of an artificial rock formation where the title character was confined to the rock with his hands splayed like Christ on the cross, wishing to create a figure of multi-layered myth. She also reintroduced the mask and had her chorus wear them. The chorus played in profile because she believed that the circle of the theatre had ritualistic nuances so she designed her choreography around the circle. She also studied the vase painting and sculptures and re-created movements from Greek images, and she used ancient Greek costumes which she wove on traditional looms. Because she believed that there was continuity between ancient and Greek orthodox traditions, she asked for the help of a specialist in Byzantine

¹⁰¹⁶ MacDonald, 2003, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰¹⁷ Παπαγεωργίου, Κ. Αθ., *Εύα Παλμερ-Σικελιανού και Άγγελος Σικελιανός – Δελφικές Γιορτές*, Εκδόσεις Παπαδήμα, 1998 (Papageorgiou, Ath., *Eva Palmer-Sikelianou and Aggelos Sikelianos – Delphic Events*, Papadima Publications, 1998).

¹⁰¹⁸ Angelos Sikelianos (1884–1951) was a Greek lyric poet and playwright. He wrote on national history, religious symbolism, and universal harmony in poems such as *The Light-Shadowed*, *Prologue to Life*, *Mother of God*, and *Delphic Utterance*. His plays include *Sibylla*, *Daedalus in Crete*, *Christ in Rome*, *The Death of Digenis*, and *Asklepius*.

¹⁰¹⁹“Central to their vision was the power of theatre to unite an audience in a single emotion. Theatre was seen as the total art form which brings together into harmony all the faculties of man, Poetry, Music, Dancing, Acting, Architecture, Painting and Sculpture.

The festival included a banquet with folk music and an exhibition of folk art to signal links b/w ancient Greece and pre-industrial Greek culture. In the ancient stadium they organized classical military dancing and a completion in the pentathlon. The festival ended with a ritual performance, based on Delphic tradition, in which Apollo killed the sacred python with his bow. ... Sikelianos played Apollo and Eva interpreted the python as Dionysos, ... wanted the performer to find a style drawn from oriental dancing. She also paid for all tickets and transport. She spent all her money on her dream Delphic project”: Wiles, 2000, pp. 183-189.

music, the church music.¹⁰²⁰ She pursued simplicity with few musicians at places where they could see the dancers, which she achieved later in the second Delphic revival of 1930, with *The Suppliants*. If it were not for Eva Palmer, there would not be any festivals of ancient Greek drama today in Epidaurus, Delphi, Syracuse and elsewhere.

Eva Palmer-Sikelianow started a movement evident in the productions of the Greek pioneering directors Rondiris and Solomos.¹⁰²¹ Her influence is still witnessed in a lot of productions of tragedies today in which elements from the neo-Greek traditions of folk dance and song are often used in an attempt to put on performances responsible to the original texts and which reference a recreation of the ancient Greek life. Such an attempt however is not an easy task. The use of the folk and historical material should be at the service of the text, its meanings, the rituals and effects. If the primary purpose is to to strike its modern audience as 'strange' then tragedy again fails.¹⁰²²

Folk music especially has been used by most productions since the official beginning of the Epidaurus Festival¹⁰²³ of ancient Greek drama. Brown discusses the performances of the Greek National Theatre company in New York in 1952 by Rondiris and Solomos who chose folk dance and song for their productions.¹⁰²⁴ The music from a folk tradition is as important as all the other elements for the enactment. Some decades later, the use of Balkan music by Katie Mitchell in the *Phoenissae* by the

¹⁰²⁰ Artemis Leontis, 'Eva Palmer's Distinctive Greek Journey' in *Women Writing Greece*, eds. Vassiliki Kolocotroni and Efterpi Mitsi, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.

¹⁰²¹ Brown, Russel, John, "Ancient Tragedy in Modern Greece", *The Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4. (1965). p. 111.

¹⁰²² "A production which fits this category is the 1985 New York Gr Drama Company *Medea* directed by Peter Steadman in which actors in masks and chitons spoke Greek in pitch accents. One male actor ... played all the secondary roles ... the chorus sang as they embodied choreography inspired by Greek vase painting, accompanied by music tonally similar to ancient Gr music, played on an oboe ... similar to *aulos*." : Gamel, 2010, p. 159.

¹⁰²³ It was discovered archaeologist P. Kavadias, under the auspices of the Athens Archaeological Society during the period 1870-1926. After the Delphic project in 1927, 1930 by the couple Sikelianos who inspired the festival, the first performance was in 1938. It was *Sophocles' Electra* starring Katina Paxinou and Eleni Papadakis. The World War II stopped the performances until the early 50's, when the theater was restored. In 1955 the festival began again and continues till today.

¹⁰²⁴ Brown, "Ancient Tragedy in Modern Greece", (1965). p. 111.

Royal Shakespeare Company, 1995, contributed to its success. This reveals the important issue already mentioned,¹⁰²⁵ that,

Music for tragedy needs some rooting in a social form outside the theatre; it should respond to the wide range of expressiveness a chorus displays; it has to be adapted to the role of the chorus: a collective chorus needs music that comes from a sense of that collective.¹⁰²⁶

Folk music, songs, dances, and costumes, have a luring inner rhythm that offers familiarity and scenic unity to the Greek audiences. However, the popularity of folk culture is a favourable source in the west, too. There have been productions with huge impact that prove that people enjoy performances bearing traditional elements. Artaud for example was moved by Balinese dance-drama in 1913 in Paris, although he could not decipher the symbolic gestures and the signs of the dancers.¹⁰²⁷ Wiles has some point when he observes that Artaud would probably be touched by a Greek tragedy if time capsule would transport an ancient performance to the present. Who wouldn't be after all? Much later, the success of three modern versions of tragedy vindicates the inner power of folk music to stir the souls.¹⁰²⁸ Lee Breuer's production of *Gospel at Colonus*, in 1985,¹⁰²⁹ was a success because of the unity the gospel tradition offered to the production despite its faults.¹⁰³⁰ After watching it twice, Gamel comments on that unique "communal emotional response from the racially mixed theatre audience". The central role music played in this production led Gamel concludes that

¹⁰²⁵ Goldhill, 2007, p. 68.

¹⁰²⁶ Goldhill, 2007, p. 69.

¹⁰²⁷ Wiles, 2000, p. 26.

¹⁰²⁸ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 58-69.

¹⁰²⁹ Goldhill, 2007, p. 17.

¹⁰³⁰ "The civic dimensions ... are lost. ... motives and actions are understood in terms of Christian ethics. ... and Oedipus ... rises from the dead! ... [The production was totally Christianised, meaning that] the play becomes a religious service in an African-American Pentecostal church, with the story of Oedipus as the 'lesson', choir as the chorus, and the audience as the congregation. Roles are doubled between actors and singers, with Oedipus acted by the church's main preacher and sung by well-known gospel singers ... The script ... is based on the Fitzgerald translation (deeply cut), with some lines from *King Oedipus* and *Antigone* added. The theatrical techniques ... like those in ancient Greece, are not naturalistic, and the use of a specific, living ... religious and musical tradition provides a structure and conventions familiar event to non-church-goers among the audience. Breuer has stated ... his goal is not fidelity, but emotional + spiritual truth.": Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 163.

A modern production which does not include music and dance is not nominally, expressively, or inductively authentic, yet many studies pay little attention to these aspects¹⁰³¹

Ariane Mnouchkine's version of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, with the title *Les Atrides*, in Paris in the 1990s is said to have influenced the theatrical companies in the next ten years.¹⁰³² It was visually and physically inspired from the Kathakali Indian theatrical tradition which unified movement, music and story in a successful production.¹⁰³³ The same influence informed Katie Mitchell's production of *Phoenissae*, when she used Balkan music, which is similar to the Greek folk music of Northern Greece. This led Goldhill conclude on the Balkan music in connection with the chorus saying that:

This style of music has several advantages. Music for tragedy needs some rooting in a social form outside the theatre; it should respond to the wide range of expressiveness a chorus displays; it has to be adapted to the role of the chorus: a collective chorus needs music that comes from a sense of that collective.¹⁰³⁴

Today the small-scale and close-knit form of the societies of the past are absent from western societies, and there are not strong folk traditions still active for most audiences. Wiles suggests that this lack of sources is probably the main reason that drives directors to experimentation, creating new rituals to substitute for the existing ones, that sometimes leads to unconvincing performances.¹⁰³⁵ As Barthes, cautioned, everything must be "unified and clear, or else irresponsibility creeps in."¹⁰³⁶

The journey into the folk tradition should not be a hindrance for a director. If he cannot make the journey alone, he can give place to the involvement of a classicist, as well as the choreographer and the musician who can pick out, or invent, movements

¹⁰³¹ Gamel, ed. by Hall and Harrop, 2010, p. 164.

¹⁰³² Goldhill, 2007, pp. 68-69.

¹⁰³³ McDonald give the following details of this production in her sections on the Performance tradition of tragedy in the 20th century: "She incorporated elements from Kathakali, Brazilian, Kabuki, and Noh traditions. ... translates into French ... using actors and actresses from various cultures ... The varying accents add to the cultural blur. The music ... of Asiatic and European traditions. ... played on 240 instruments from 41 different countries ... The makeup derives from the Indian tradition, primary Kathakali. Dances come from the various cultures": MacDonald, 2003, pp. 33-34.

¹⁰³⁴ Goldhill, 2007, p. 69.

¹⁰³⁵ Wiles, 2000, p. 26.

¹⁰³⁶ Barthes, 1972, pp. 62, 64-65.

and steps from folk dances. Many directors prefer to go through the search in the realm of the text together with the choreographer, the musician, and other experts. Peter Hall, for instance, prefers to have the musicians present at rehearsals because he has realised that it is

the only way to develop the music is to have a group of musicians in rehearsal with the actors and develop it with a composer actually as we're rehearsing - so that the rhythm of the speech and the rhythm of the verse and the rhythm of the music are one.¹⁰³⁷

These productions also show that cultural unity from one source is not only what the staging of tragedy needs, but that directors often use it in the search to echo that “primal ritual” of the Cambridge anthropologists, to add in other words a ritualistic aura in their productions. In order to access these elements, directors need to acknowledge the fact that a text-based production of tragedy ceases to exist on stage without rituals. This research deals with a director in the service of the text, who also manages to express his or her freedom in its staging, and the spectator eventually receives this vision of the text. Even though it is not possible to know the playwright’s vision we can only try to see it through the lines of words. That is why an essential contribution to a production is a careful translation and reconstruction of the text so that all its elements are maintained in the text and can be ‘actualised’ on stage without affecting the flow of the story.¹⁰³⁸ There are sundry ways to transmit them scenically, whether we are talking about a traditional performance or a contemporary one and it can be a tempting and fulfilling experience for the adventurous director.

Rituals are interwoven in Greek tradition and Orthodox religion. It still vibrates with traditional folk customs, music and dance. Brown in 1965 argued that the traditions of ancient Greek practices did not remain in industrial cities such as Athens. He is right that it is not easy to make performances of ancient Greek tragedy feel familiar modern urban audiences who believe that past belongs to the past, but in this case, although many things have changed since 1965, folk culture is still very much alive in rural Greece of 2012. This is what research from anthropologists, classicists,

¹⁰³⁷ Brown, “Ancient Greek Tragedy on the Stage”, (2003), p. 141.

¹⁰³⁸ Schechner, 1988, p. 40.

ethnologists, or by visitors at specified times of the year testify. If one goes to Thrace on May 21st, for example, he or she will be able to watch the fire walkers, or a visit to Skyros during the Carnival will offer the experience of the rite of the Bellmen on the spot.¹⁰³⁹ If Brown could come to Greece today he would be more than happy to investigate these opportunities.

If an observer is wrong, and behind the familiar marks of urban mass-culture there is indeed a living folk tradition, then the opportunities of the Greeks are indeed great.¹⁰⁴⁰

To achieve communication with those works of art, performative elements drawn from the folk culture and Orthodoxy may offer a director the choice for the results Barthes wishes for:

Performed in its particularity, in its monolithic aspect, progressive in relation to its own past but barbarous in relation to our present, the ancient tragedy concerns us in that it allows us to understand clearly, by all the means of the theatre, that history is plastic, fluid, at the service of men, if only they try to make themselves its master in all lucidity.¹⁰⁴¹

¹⁰³⁹ See Appendix VI.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Brown, "Ancient Tragedy in Modern Greece", (1965). p. 111.

¹⁰⁴¹ Barthes, 1972, p. 66.

CONCLUSION

The defence of rituals in tragedy lies on the theses that tragedies are constructed around rituals in such a way that it is impossible to conceptualize their scenic presentation without them. Therefore, a text-performed tragedy depends, contextually and functionally, on rituals so that the tragic content is communicated to modern audiences. Therefore, the director's task nowadays is to find a way to make a modern production respond to the ancient expectations and work to enhance the dramatic power of the rituals in the classical tragedies.¹⁰⁴²

The reviews on the staging of the ritual activity in classical Greek tragedy produced by the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus are disappointing for many reasons. On one hand, the meaning conveyed in the story line and its various vehicles for the dramatic development, in our case the rites, is usually neglected. They are frequently minimised, altered, or not enacted at all, and when they are included they are rarely effectively represented or reproduced in the contemporary productions. Their absence was noticed long ago when Brown focused on the needs for further experimentation on tragedy: the visual design, the lack of the religious context and the failure to stage the timeless nature of dramas, their ritual density and their objective.¹⁰⁴³

The second observation concerns the bringing together elements from different cultures in the same production which frequently spoils the clarity a production should emit. American-Indian, African or Indian music and costumes for instance may all be used by a director in the same production falsely believing that they suit it because they transmit an exotic aura of tradition. Barthes has the reasonable view that such an amalgam not only spoils the efficacy of tragedy but also confuses the spectators who not only they no longer know what they are watching.¹⁰⁴⁴ The results of such multi-cultural decisions are often perplexity and the loss of cohesion and

¹⁰⁴² Goldhill, 2007, p. 24.

¹⁰⁴³ Brown, "Ancient Tragedy in Modern Greece", (1965). p. 115.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Barthes, 1972, p. 63.

confusion for the watchers. The most effective productions of a tragedy have used ritual material from only one cultural source for the effect of unity and expressiveness. In other cases, directors use contemporary historical events believing that the audience will be more affected in this way. It is true that the spectators do get emotionally upset, but this does not accord with the purpose of the work of the tragedians. The stories took place in other places than Athens, at past times, and involved characters that were not Athenians. We know from Herodotus¹⁰⁴⁵ of an attempt of Phrynichus¹⁰⁴⁶ to chronicle the conquest and plunder of Miletus by the Persians during the Ionian Revolt (499 B.C.–493 B.C.), probably produced shortly after its capture, which harrowed the Athenians so much that the poet was fined with 1,000 drachmas for reminding the audience of recent misfortunes. Herodotus also reports that the whole theatre was moved to tears, resulting in the Athenian forbidding a play on that subject again. As it turns out, the great turmoil in Athens proved that when the wounds are still fresh such a theatrical experience can become traumatic. This experiment failed in ancient Greece with *Miletus' Plunder*, and taught them contemporary woes and painful memories do now allow the spectators' critical ability to evolve. Consequently the tragedians turned to material from their distant mythic-historical past in order to enable people perceive the truths of their lives from past events objectively, keeping them emotionally disconnected from current or recent misfortunes. So when the Australian professor Michael Ewans¹⁰⁴⁷ set his production of *Antigone* in Bosnia in 1996 against this rule he achieved the opposite, as he admitted in a private conversation¹⁰⁴⁸ of ours. Professor Ewans used the contemporary symbols of the two nations in war-conflict. He dressed Antigone as a Bosnian soldier and Creon

¹⁰⁴⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, 6/21.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Phrynichus was one of the earliest of the Greek tragedians and the first poet we know of to have used a historical subject in his tragedy «Μιλῆτου Ἀλωσις» (*Militou Alosis*), "*Miletus' Plunder*". Miletus was a colony of Athens and therefore traditionally was especially dear to the mother city.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Drama Performance Coordinator, School of Drama, Fine Art and Music (Incorporating the Conservatorium), Faculty of Education and Art, The University of Newcastle, Australia. He specializes in translating Greek tragedy and comedy, directing plays and chamber operas, and writing books and articles which explore how operas and dramas work in the theatre.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Our discussion took place at the Cyprus conference of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) on the theme of Sophokles' reception in the twentieth century. He gave a keynote speech on George Enescu's *Oedipe*: International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama, Paphos, Cyprus, 2006.

as a Serbian military officer. His presentation admittedly enhanced the presentation of hatred for audiences, in contrast to the more distanced dealing with difficult material undertaken by the tragedians in their content of the work that seemed designed to make people think of both sides, learn from the past and develop the critical ability to see through events in the future.

The same attempt to make 'relevant' to contemporary audiences through staging contemporary political conflict, occurred in the TH.O.C's production of *Antigone* (2004-5) when the well-known, and respected, Greek director Stavros Tsakiris,¹⁰⁴⁹ decided to put his mark by projecting scenes of the missing persons from the war after Turkish invasion in Cyprus in 1974 at the beginning of the play. This reminded the Greek-Cypriot audience of their unburied and made them cry, not to mention its irrelevance to the theme of the tragedy itself.

Lahoud's experiment and Rantzo's production though stand as the example of the results of bringing in the staging united material. The director needs to work with the translator for faithful conveyance of meaning, preferably with other experts, understand it to its core, decide on the time, place, space and concept, work closely with the musician and the choreographer, think of the chorus' scenic presentation, direct the actors through their search, and above all be alert to see through the play from many perspectives.

To extend Barthes' argument about the chorus, everything on a text-performed tragedy must be of a single nature and effect, and clarity in order to perceive the specificities of a tragic play.¹⁰⁵⁰

It is for this reason that we reject a chaotic production, in which timid and partially honored options, now archaeological and now esthetic, now essentialist (an eternal moral debate) and now exotic (the voodoo

¹⁰⁴⁹ He has trained as a director at the National Theatre Drama School in Athens and continued his training in Germany, America and India. He has directed 65 plays in Greece and abroad and 12 Ancient Tragedies. He has participated in various festivals, such as those of Epidaurus, Berlin, Cairo, Tbilisi, Maastricht, Boutrín, Hamburg, Nicosia, Paphos, Philippi, Thasos, etc. He has been the artistic director of the Municipal District Theatres of Kalamata and Komotini, Greece. In 2003 he founded the Omicron 2 group with the aim of continuing his exploration of experimental methods of approaching and presenting works of Greek and world playwriting.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Barthes, 1972, pp. 64-65.

rite) ultimately manage, by their very vacillation, to rob us of the sentiment of a clear work, defined within and by history, remote as a past which was once ours but which we no longer desire.¹⁰⁵¹

Rituals can simply be defined as every act that aims at bringing people together, tightening human bonds and connecting people with the universe. The richness of our world has so much variety that each culture has developed its own unwritten codes of behaviour to communicate. Therefore a director of a tragedy has basically two options for the production of a translated ancient text-play. One way is to find the parallels and the counterpart experiences of an ancient or a bygone play depending on the stratum of his audience. This requires historical awareness so that not only the textual swift is achieved in a cultural or time shift, but all the components of the plot are enlivened on stage. Or, retain its cultural Greek origin and search for material from the contemporary folk tradition or religion so that his viewers can experience something of the life of another time and place. The issue is the acknowledgement of the power of rituals in the plot and their staging using material from the folk tradition of his choice.

¹⁰⁵¹ Barthes, 1972, p. 66.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to explore the performance of rituals in ancient Greek Tragedy today, with the focus in the Greek and Greek-Cypriot cultural milieu. The study sought to answer five questions: do rituals motivate action in tragedy; in what ways are their functions important in the story-line of tragedy; why did the tragedians use the fragmented rituals in their plots; should we stage them in a text-based performance; and how should we do this today?

This research contends that the ritual practices do have a tremendous role to perform in a text-based performance. If the written ritual functions are not included or treated in a suitable way then the characters are not fully sketched, the chorus' presence is also not clarified, and the propelling of the actions are open to misinterpretation. These facts have an effect on the audiences who are deprived of the opportunity to watch on stage the complete story of a tragedy. This was evident in the reviews of the productions by the TH.O.C. which were rather focused on the dialogue parts and the projection of the individual characters and actors.

This synthesis of ritual elements, with respect to the research question, has not been attended to previously in the form of research focused on the dramaturgical functions in the plot. The existing scholarly material intimates their dynamics and suggests examples of ritual scenes within other significant discussions, not focused on the representation of ritual elements. However, their findings, conclusions and views have proved valuable in this research. The suggestion of this thesis may in return enrich the traditional textual analysis of scholars and encourage a fuller analysis of the dynamics of rituals within classical studies as well.

The scholarship discussed in the first chapter offers drawn from a range of disciplines, established a context for studying rituals as themselves performative and socially active. What seems to be a prevailing suggestion among scholars such as Grimes, Bell and Rozik in the last twenty-five years is that rituals are autonomous elements that have been sustained over time within communities. This view takes a more elaborated form in the passing of time, and in the fifth-century Athens rituals seem to be not only

complete performances but also to have a durable set of socially recognized and memorialised intentions and purposes. The ethological view on the evolution of rituals and their psycho-cultural factors seems to be the best context for understanding rituals continuity, whether these rituals are changing organically with the passing of time or are actively acted upon and developed in various ways by the community or the state. Chapter two offers an analysis of the rituals that are used or referred to in tragedy from scholarly material available so far, and provides the backbone of the historical awareness needed for the identification of rituals in tragedies. These modes of ritual actions, which use performative elements, are transferred in tragedy for dramaturgical purposes, both offering reflections on their social form outside the theatre for the purposes of the plot, and frequently appearing in perverted form: a treatment that signifies that the rituals have become ineffective, and that allows the story to unfold. Through this kind of advanced understanding, following the performative turn in classical scholarship, can we evolve useful ways of working with text-based performance, since it ensures that any kind of reconstruction in the performance will not damage the plotting structure of a tragedy. Until new archaeological findings or new literary sources emerge this is what we have as a framework of scholarly reference.

Therefore, this thesis equips the reader with the necessary background knowledge for perceiving and identifying the rituals and their dramaturgical significance in the tragic text and paves the way for analysing five play-texts from the ritualistic view. Because only parts of rituals are used, knowledge becomes valuable in understanding not only their importance in the text but also elements that are not so clear. For instance, Cassandra's symbols of priesthood are not all mentioned in the play. Additional knowledge of the ritual form may give information on the garlands and the candle, and the key in which case one may choose to add it in the performance. Likewise, it becomes clear that it was customary to raise your right hand to salute the gods, and send a kiss, a gesture that may be included in a production. Therefore, Agamemnon probably salutes the statues at his palace before he walks in it and/or sent them a kiss and Aegeus possibly raises his right hand when he meets Medea. More than that, we

learn that there was no ritual without a prayer and a libation. Therefore, prayers, oaths, invocations and other fragmented rituals in the tragedy may be accompanied by a libation on stage similar to the Greek style, or any other way. These few examples exemplify the view that the acknowledgement of what is known about the structure and the form of contemporaneously existing ritual practices, offers an insight and fills in the gaps in the text, and offers opportunities for their stage treatment. On a secondary level, this chapter can work as a guide of getting to know the basic bibliography of each religious area in ancient Greek culture.

The textual analysis of the ancient Greek practices in five tragic texts, bring to the fore the fact that they are not just decorative and stylised elements; they were explored by the tragedians in sundry ways. In the surviving tragedies their functional power in the developing of the story is unquestionable. It seems that rituals transfer reference to their actual purposes in the story but because they are perverted, manipulated or not virtuously performed they fail. Being dramaturgically dominant, rituals, various forms of pollutions, mainly ancestral crimes, or *hubris* in accessing the human boundaries which are not propitiated, usually consist the backbone of a tragedy; they move the plot forward by provoking the characters' and the choruses' actions and reactions. There are instances of verbal articulation of rituals and reported rituals that may be imperceptible to an unattuned audience, but nevertheless crucial to the storyline. Jason's reference to Aphrodite in his confrontation with Medea and immediately after the chorus' prayer to Aphrodite for example may seem unimportant at first but it bears significance for the plot: Jason tries to debase Medea in the status of a concubine and it implies that the women are slaves, not Corinthian women. This is another example when historical consciousness proves valuable for understanding the actions of a character. Its implications may have been known to the fifth-century audience but it is not the case for today's spectators. However, this is one religious reference that may be thought to be left out without affecting the course of the plot during reconstruction; yet, it does affect the costume design of the chorus and probably explains its intimate relation to Medea. This example is one of those cases that the

modern spectator's perception may be affected without them knowing about the meaning of Jason's manipulative reference to Aphrodite.

In the hope that more tragic texts will be found that will allow comparison and contrast with regard to the rituals in the plot, and their structure in general, rituals seems to possess an important place in the story-line of tragedy.

The textual analysis is followed by the critical investigation of the plays staging by the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus. The chosen recorded productions were offstage over a period of approximately 10-15 years, in an attempt to show possible tendencies in the directors' decisions to include or ignore the present of the fragmented ritual activity. This study is the first scholarly study of ancient Greek tragedies produced by Cyprus's leading national theatre company. The three case studies are explored from the ritual angle for the first time with the aim to exemplify the effects of ritual presence or absence. It has become clear in chapter three that ritual activities can be studied in a text-based performance to include acting, movement in the performance space, the set-design and the costumes if they are related to rituals. Therefore the task of an analyst is more complicated because the re-imagining of rites on stage involves more areas of consideration than the play text-.

The conclusions have shown that the productions set aside the power of rituals and presented performances centred on individual characters. The missing rituals seems to be the ones that enhance the plot, such as the binding song in *Eumenides*, the invocatory dirge at the end of the *Trojan Women* or the prayer-invocation that Orestes, Electra and the chorus perform among others. Therefore, instead of moving the story forward, the production misrepresents the attitude and the function of both the characters and the choruses. It becomes evident therefore that if rituals are missing then the audience watches a different play. This does not mean it is better or worse, it is simply not the tragedy as written, and one might go so far as to argue that this brings into question the extent to which ancient Greek tragedy as a genre is formed by its ritual content.

This analysis shows that the audiences' response depends largely on the collaboration between the translator, the classicist and the director; they are the key factors for the treatment of rituals in a textually faithful performance. However, this does not denote that audiences today can have expectations and reactions similar to those of fifth century Athenians, just as it is not feasible to have a 'historically authentic' performance. Rituals in tragedy as locomotors seem to be characterised by repetition, and therefore their maintenance in the story and their appropriate treatment in performance, will enable understanding of their importance. In fact the religious and social functions of represented rituals might still be resonant with audiences, as the discussion on continuity reveals, and audiences may be able to perceive them as such, but it is not the argument of this thesis that must be expected to decode them.

The examination of rituals in tragedy therefore invites a discussion in chapter five with the aim to epitomize their dramaturgical function in the play-text and the text-based performance and to examine the reasons that tragedy still fascinates and impacts on audiences today. These questions lead us to the discussion on ritual continuity and the way in which rituals affect cultures today. There is undoubtedly a scholarly debate about whether rituals still exist in the same form, or transmit the same meaning, and what power they possess in modern societies. If the power of rituals persists in life in any way, then it is not an unfamiliar sense for the spectators, and this realisation may offer a sundry ways to unfold them scenically on the modern stage of tragedy. In the line with this thought, this thesis further suggests that drawing on material from folk cultures for their staging, a tendency that began at the turn of the 20th century, may remain a successful strategy. And chapter five offers some modes of thinking for doing so, although, of course, this is only one possible strategy among many.

This discussion in depth brings forth the need for more case studies on rituals in the play-texts. Their exploration in future research could extend the premise and evidence of this study, which is to highlight the active and functional role rituals perform in the tragic texts. There are other issues raised by a study of rituals in tragedy. The textual analysis and performance analysis of ritual fragments reveals

their complicated work that might be considered in terms of set and costume design, movement and music – all important elements of ritual performativity. The increasing study of the staging of tragedy is welcome, and it would be enlightening for scholars and practitioners to pay more attention to rituals as locomotors in tragedy.

A final area of further research might be to consider the transformational power of rituals in a play text or a text-based performance. This thought brings into the discussion a different kind of research in the frame of adaptation. It would equally be extremely interesting to see how rituals can preserve their dramaturgical function in various treatments of the tragic text in other genres, or in other presentational or theatrical styles, such as interactive theatre. Research of this kind on how adaptations of ancient tragedy might employ rituals as independent objects, supported in the script, acting, direction, design, music and venue in a different theatrical style would be a stimulating addition to this research.

This thesis set out to illuminate the performance of rituals in ancient Greek Tragedy today. Their importance has been implied but little scholarly research to date has focused on showing that inclusion of ritual fragments were not simply stylistic choices by the ancient playwrights but that they perform a more active role in the plot. That role is of creating a chain of actions and reactions and of converging the past and the present so that tragedy can perform its basic function; to criticise, comment and offer open-ended solutions. Precisely these functions reveal rituals as one of the components that mould the structure of tragedy; the other two are the treatment of the mythic story and the agon. Therefore, in the frame of the performative turn their enactment in a text-based performance is essential. Despite their functional role, they rarely receive the analogous attention in their staging in the Greek or Greek-Cypriot stage. What this thesis has shown is that the prevalence of rituals in the text offers an incredibly intriguing tool in the hands of the researcher or the director to process textually or dramaturgically.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

1. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΣ, *Pharmakos* (= THE HEALER, THE SCAPEMAN)

The Term

The term “scapegoat”, first used by William Tyndale in 1530 for his translation of the Bible,¹⁰⁵² has caused a lot of debate as far as the generalization of its meaning is concerned. Later, the same term was used by Frazer to support his view that all ‘primitive’ religions are based on magic in contrast to the more advanced forms of religion which are based on ethics evaluating religious thought worldwide according to Victorian standards of Christian ethical thinking.¹⁰⁵³ Bradley McLean says that this ‘*parallelomania*’¹⁰⁵⁴ continues to the present today despite the criticism from the anthropologists that other cultural terms should have been adopted for greater precision. Especially for the term ‘*scapegoat*’, ‘*Parallelomania*’ should not be used generically in a research. It should be considered in its own concept, language and cultural milieu.

For McLean, there is no need for ancient texts to propose an alternative term. In Greece, the scapegoat was carefully selected, and the ritual itself

was not a spontaneous, uncontrolled, irrational act of mass aggression; it was deliberate, disciplined and limited in scope for the achievement of definite end.¹⁰⁵⁵

Therefore, McLean suggests the alternative terminology of “**scapeman**” because it describes human beings.¹⁰⁵⁶ He is absolutely right as the word *pharmakos* has a completely different meaning in Greek: it means *κάθαρμα* (*katharma*),¹⁰⁵⁷ meaning the

¹⁰⁵² McLean, Bradley, “On the Revision of Scapegoat Terminology”, *Numen*, Vol. 37, Fasc. 2, (1990), p. 168.

¹⁰⁵³ McLean, “On Scapegoat Terminology”, (1990). p. 169.

¹⁰⁵⁴ It involves the selection and the comparison of elements from different religions without first understanding the original systems in which they function: McLean, “On Scapegoat Terminology” (1990). p. 169.

¹⁰⁵⁵ McLean, “On Scapegoat Terminology”, (1990). p. 169.

¹⁰⁵⁶ McLean, “On Scapegoat Terminology”, (1990). pp. 168-173.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Katharma* (colloquial: cleaner) because they were cleansing the city from pollution. Because they often chose criminals the word *katharma* ended up meaning a ‘bad person’.

healer, the cleanser or the cleaner. Several advantages of the term '*scapeman*', which strengthen my accordance with McLean's proposal, are stated below:

This term would diminish the temptation to colour the analysis of Greek ritual by association with the Jewish scapegoat ritual ... It is free of the confused and value oriented connotations which scholars such as Frazer and Girard have attached to the term 'scapegoat'. ... Most importantly it is able to encompass a broad range of human expulsion rituals whereas the term 'scapegoat', properly speaking, applies only to one instance of this shared paradigm. There I suggest that in the interest of the accuracy and clarity of future scholarship, the term 'scapeman' be adopted in place of 'scapegoat'.¹⁰⁵⁸

Thus, *pharmakos*, *katharma* or scapeman are the three definitions that will be used in this thesis to describe the rite.

The Thargelia Festival¹⁰⁵⁹

The *Pharmakos* ritual was part of the Thargelia Festival in the early summer with the first fruit offering. The 6th century B.C. poet Ipponax from Ephessos is our main source for *pharmakos*.¹⁰⁶⁰ The scapeman ritual is especially attested in ancient Ionia, where whole cities were purified during the festival of Thargelia.¹⁰⁶¹

The two-day festival of Thargelia was celebrated on the 6th of the month Thargelion (24 April-23 May). The first day was the same day Troy fell, so they commemorate that along with the victories at Marathon and Platea. It was on this first same day the scapeman was expelled.

On the second day, they carried around a kind of a May tree and offered the first-fruit as signs of seasonal renewal and choirs of men and boys competed in singing hymns. In Miletus, people consumed undiluted wine and expensive food. The undiluted wine shows the exceptional character of the meal, which was normally with water. This custom possibly had association with the underworld (see 1.2.C. Libations). The

¹⁰⁵⁸ McLean, "On Scapegoat Terminology", (1990). p. 170.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). pp. 318-9.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). p. 300.

¹⁰⁶¹ *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996.

scapeman rite then preceded a day of seasonal renewal, a pattern fully understandable: no new beginning can be expected before *katharsis* is achieved.¹⁰⁶²

The ritual was possibly frequently performed during extreme situations such as plague, famine and drought¹⁰⁶³ in an effort to bring balance back to the clan. Bremmer, however, concludes that sources about Athens are divided.

One group states that in exceptional times, such as a drought or a famine, certain ugly people were selected and sacrificed. Another group states that at the Thargelia, a festival for Apollo, a man with white figs around his neck was expelled from the city as a purification for the men, and another man with black figs for the women.¹⁰⁶⁴

Whatever the case, the elimination of one or two members aimed at saving the whole of the community from destruction. This notion is part of many tragedies on a metaphorical level. Even Orestes is banned in his search for purification.

The process of the Pharmakos rite

Bremmer offers the most detailed process of the *Pharmakos* ritual.¹⁰⁶⁵ A peculiar dichotomy is observed among the preferred victims when the material is studied: the low people such as criminals, slaves, ugly persons, poor and strangers are on the one hand and young men and women, and royal figures are on the other. The low people occur in the historical rites whereas the attractive and aristocratic figures are usually found in the unhistorical times, in the age of the myths. What this variety of *signifiers* has in common according to Bremmer is that they were all placed in the margin of Greek society. However, the people realizing that only a sacrifice of valuable members of the polis would avert a catastrophe, they chose low people and treated them as very important persons.¹⁰⁶⁶ It seems therefore that the selected 'victim' had to be first in intimate contact with all members of the community.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶² Burkert, 1987, p. 83; Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals" (1983). p. 319: Bremmer mentions a hitherto neglected text by Athenaeus which informs us that the Thargelia was the festival of Apollo Delius.

¹⁰⁶³ Harrison, E., Jane, "The Pharmakos", *Folklore*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (1916), pp. 298-299.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). p. 301.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). pp. 313-319.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). p. 301.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Burkert, 1987, p. 83.

The scapeman was led out of the city in a procession started from the public hearth in the *Prytaneion*. They were accompanied by flute players who played a special tune called the 'melody of the wild fig'. Although we do not know much about this melody, the folk music in traditional rituals can be "harmonious and unharmonious".¹⁰⁶⁸ In the case of the scapeman the music could have been unharmonious. I would extend Bremmer's point by saying that they might have used unharmonious music to escort *pharmakos* outside the city and harmonious and happy one at the end of it.

Learning from Plutarch that the cities had special gates for those condemned to death, for purificatory offerings and so on, the scapemen then must have had either their special gate or exit through the purgatory one. Then, they were led around the city in a procession, mainly for cathartic purposes before they were whipped away with squills, twigs of the wild fig tree, thorny trees with black fruit or blood red wigs and other wild plants. The 'wild' origin has troubled the scholars a lot. Taking Rome as a starting point backwards, Bremmer suggests that all of them are unproductive and inedible trees or plants that are situated outside the community, just like the victims.

This circumambulation, which involves the whole community, this encircling, resembles the purifications with water and blood.¹⁰⁶⁹ It also elucidates another definition of the rituals called the *perikathairein*, to purify around, and the scapeman *perikatharma*, the pacificator.¹⁰⁷⁰

In the end, the scapeman was chased over the border by pelting with stones.¹⁰⁷¹ It was essential that everybody took part in it, an act of reconstituting the group. In case someone was aloof this could cause heavy conflicts within the community. People returned home without looking back as was the rule of purgative offerings. This was a typical prohibition for the moments of separation and in case someone did look back it meant s/he still had ties with what was lying behind him. By not looking back the citizens definitely cut through all connections with the scapeman.

The final fate of the victim, whether killed or not, still divides the scholars. In the myths, they die, but the symbolic acts in the rituals often become a reality in the

¹⁰⁶⁸ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). p. 313.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 83.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). p. 314

¹⁰⁷¹ In Athens and Massilia: Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals", (1983). p. 315.

mythical tales. From the historical evidence, as we can see in the examples in Massilia, Adbera or Athens¹⁰⁷² it seems that the scapegoat was expelled not killed.

In brief the whole class assembled, the criminal was stripped naked, pursued with furious cries, be stoned, beaten and finally chased beyond the boundaries.¹⁰⁷³ He was in other words metaphorically sacrificed for the welfare of the community.

Οστρακισμός (Ostrakismos), Ostracism

A Civic Curse

The ritual of *Pharmakos* eventually took a more social form, in the custom of the Attic ostracism. Ostracism was introduced as a political institution at the end of 6th century B.C. Every year, during the 6th deanery there was a vote whether there should be an ostracism or not. The actual procedure took place during the 8th deanery when the Athenians wrote on shells the name of the person they wished to expel for a year because he had collected enough power in his hands to harm the interests of the city or lead him to arrogance.¹⁰⁷⁴ This is a notion that underlies the kings and queens in tragedies who usually pay the price of exceeding the mortal limits.

It resembles the *Pharmakos* in the sense that it was a kind of political and social casting out of the borders of the city. Therefore, there is another element which vindicates the ritual pedestal of ostracism. The *scapeman* of Thargelia was the mean for the therapy of the community. In the same way, the ostracised person was expelled in order to preserve the political stability and welfare of the community. Another similarity is the willingness characterise the 'victims'. As with the scapeman, a citizen was first ritualistically marked and was available to the will of the community. Even though the ritualistic procedure is particularly apparent, the factual relation between ostracism and rituals need more evidence.

¹⁰⁷² In Adbera a poor man was fed royally for a year and then led outside the city walls, walked around the city and in the end he was chased away with stones. In Massilia after a year, they dressed him in sacred vestments, led him around the city in curses and finally chased him away, too. In the sanctuary of Apollo Leukatas they threw off the cliffs into the sea a condemned criminal. However he was provided with wings to lighten his jump and then they tried to fish him out of the water: Burkert, 1987, pp.82-83.

¹⁰⁷³ Harrison, "The Pharmakos", 1916, pp. 298-299.

¹⁰⁷⁴ However, there is enough evidence that ostracism was often used for the elimination of individuals for the sake of personal, judicial or political antagonism. Anonymity was secured in this way, and it became the right method to send away aristocrats than future tyrants from power.

The **means of ostracism**, the shells, also need to be studied more. They become in a way the civic or social *katadesmoi*, curses, for personal, judicial or political antagonism and opposition. Unfortunately, there is evidence that it was used rather for personal benefits than social and the anonymity secured success to personal interests.

APPENDIX II

Classical Greek Sacred Behaviour and Beliefs

All aspect of ancient Greek was controlled by sanctioned rules. Therefore not only rituals but also social and communal life was stabilised by rules. Ancient Greeks knew what they were expected to do at every turning of their lives. In this light, divination, miasma and purification, hubris and piety are not rituals but fall in the concept of ritualistic behaviour.

Many of these practices are found in the tragedies. Miasma is the most significant of all. It necessitate purifications and it is of our major interest the rites one had to perform when polluted by blood, which is very indicative in Orestes' case in the *Eumenides*. Piety is another notion that controlled behaviour which involved respect and reverence towards the gods and the fellow citizens. As such it is often connected with *hybris*. Miasma, Hybris and Piety are interconnected and interrelated as it seems that it is often difficult to separate one from the other. Murder brings pollution, but it is also an impious behaviour, and an hybris against the gods. Divination for example, the behaviour of a priestess in a trance, or the clothes she wore are revealed in Cassandra's staged behaviour in the *Trojan Women* or *Agamemnon*.

1. MIASMA AND PURIFICATION¹⁰⁷⁵

Ritual purity and cleansing are expressed in Greek with the word *hagnos* or *katharos*. Ritual pollution, impurity, is usually designated with the word *miasma*.¹⁰⁷⁶ The Greeks had a highly developed fear of *miasma*, pollution. However, *miasma* is not a simple notion as the forms of pollution seem to have been of a great variety and

¹⁰⁷⁵ For a full treatment on Miasma see Parker, Robert, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983

¹⁰⁷⁶ Stukeley, J., Harold, "Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 67. (1936), p. 289; Bendlin, "Purity and Pollution", ed. Ogden, 2006, p.178.

complexity¹⁰⁷⁷ as it was “constructed in relation to religious and social conventions.”¹⁰⁷⁸

What pollution brought to the ancient individual was isolation from the social group, and as such required purification rituals in order to be part of the community again.¹⁰⁷⁹ In this way, the cleansing of the pollution became interwoven with the sacred. The special priests who handled the rites were called *kathartai* and promised to cure from epidemic and social disagreement.¹⁰⁸⁰

Μίασμα (Miasma), Pollution, Impurity

Pollution was generated by various sources naming the the childbirth, the contact with the dead, sexual intercourse to a limited degree, involuntary or voluntary homicide¹⁰⁸¹ except in war, and sacrilege. Certain diseases, most importantly madness, were occasionally viewed as pollution, while mythology abounds in instances of extreme pollutions such as incest, parricide, and cannibalism.¹⁰⁸² Mental illness especially was believed to be god-sent assigned to purifying priests.¹⁰⁸³ Stucky includes the eating of certain foods and the touching of certain metals.¹⁰⁸⁴ He further points out that impurity seems to have been acquired by bodily change or it was transmitted by contact.¹⁰⁸⁵ As it seems, pollution was the result of impious acts in many cases.

Κάθαρσις (Catharsis), Purification

Purification was applied in very diverse symbolic means in Greek rituals as stated by Burkert.¹⁰⁸⁶ It seems that the only component that could send *miasma* away or place

¹⁰⁷⁷ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Bendlin, Andreas, “Purity and Pollution”, 2006, p.178.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Burkert, 1987.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Burkert, 1987, p. 77; *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996.

¹⁰⁸¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 78; Garland, 1994, p. 38; Kearns, Emily, *Ancient Greek Religion*, Chicheser: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p.102.

¹⁰⁸² *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996.

¹⁰⁸³ Burkert, 1987, p. 80.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Stucky, “Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion”, (1936). p. 298.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Stucky, “Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion”, (1936). pp. 295, 298.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Burkert, 1987, p. 76.

the unclean back into the society again was water, whether this was sea-water, or come from a special spring. Another practice was that of fumigation mainly with sulphur and the rubbing off with mud or bran. The use of the wild plants winnowing fan and the sea onions in the cleansing in *pharmakos* rite is also included in the list. Putting out and rekindling the fire was another symbolic representation of *katharsis*, of a new beginning and the redefinition of the mutual principles as customary in the introduction of the bride or slaves in a household.

Impurities such as natural pollutions, preparatory catharsis or remedial cleansings differed in strength thus the ceremonies required more or less various elaborate forms of catharsis.¹⁰⁸⁷ Natural pollutions, such as birth or death, were obviously not related to religious purity¹⁰⁸⁸ although the individuals connected with it were purified. *Childbirth* brought contamination upon its inhabitants and anyone who simply entered the house. Sacred laws forbade priests to come to contact with women in labour. The house had to be smeared with pitch and the mother stayed indoor for forty days, as long as the lochial period, the pollution, lasted. *Death* was a more serious case of pollution so people who recently were in contact with the dead, were even banned from the precincts of the temples. Everyone else had to purify themselves with water on leaving or returning from a funeral from the bowl of water which was placed outside the house. More than that, priests were not allowed to contact either the dead or the new mother. Sanctuaries were also polluted by birth and death therefore bereaved and new mothers were not allowed to get in until a set amount of days has passed.¹⁰⁸⁹

The preparatory catharsis was determined by cult statutes and unwritten law.¹⁰⁹⁰ For example, any man or animal that took part in a religious ceremony or entered a sacred

¹⁰⁸⁷ Kerns uses various sources, but especially interesting are the later fourth century 'Cyrene Cathartic law': Kearns, 2010, p. 103; Of great interest are also the sources in Parker's pioneering book: Appendix one on "The Cyrene Cathartic Law"; Appendix 3 on entering sacred places; Appendix 6 on the Ritual of Purification from Homocide: Parker, Robert, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Bremmer, 1994, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Kearns, 2010, p. 102.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Stukey, "Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion", (1936). p. 288.

place had to be washed or sprinkled with water beforehand. That is why water was placed at the entrances of sanctuaries. Likewise, any inanimate object used in the rites needed to be washed. Priests made sure that no one and nothing polluted entered the precinct.¹⁰⁹¹ Priests and other officials of a cult were restricted to particular strictness. In Homer, there is a reference to “the ‘pure garments’ and the washing of hands before prayer and sacrifice...”.¹⁰⁹² Precincts, altars, instruments of worship, images of the gods needed to be cleansed as they may have been defiled.

Sexual intercourse was not harmful in its essence. Sexual abstinence was usually enjoined upon the participants and the priests and priestesses, either or both, before and during a festival.¹⁰⁹³ Priestesses often required abstention from sexual activity during their office. However, a few cults, such as the Eleusinian, required from Pythia perpetual celibacy. Any sexual activity was also forbidden in a sanctuary out of respect to the gods.

In many cases, preparatory purification also included a special diet, fasting for a number of days, eating special foods and avoiding any contact with women who had just had a baby or places in mourning.

Impurity was not always the reason for being prohibited to take parts in cults. Men are barred from certain cults, women from others, and foreigners from many. Even in the sacrificial animals cleanness comes second to species. As exemplified by Stukey,

women were not allowed to go beyond the foot of the altar at Olympia, though they must have been pure to have come so far; Men could enter the temple of Core at Megapolis once a year; ... According to a 5th-century inscription from Iulis, those who visited a grave on the third day after the funeral, or at the yearly service to the dead, were clean, but they might not enter a temple on that day.¹⁰⁹⁴

Various events or actions were also cleansed regularly as for example at the Athenian assembly and the Theatre in Athens where before their beginning “ ... special officials,

¹⁰⁹¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 77; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 53.

¹⁰⁹² Burkert, 1987, p. 77.

¹⁰⁹³ Burkert, 1987, p. 78.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Stukey, “Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion”, (1936). pp. 294-5.

... carry piglets around the square, cut their throats, spray the blood over the seats, cut off the genitals and throw them away.”¹⁰⁹⁵

The final form of catharsis was the remedial cleansings which aimed at removing from man or his environment something that may be directly or indirectly harmful to him, his family and the community.¹⁰⁹⁶ In this class falls the urgent call for the purgation of a murderer. The god who presided over purification from blood guilt was Zeus Catharsios, ‘Of Purification’ and Apollo who demanded clean hands, especially from the human blood.¹⁰⁹⁷ On purpose or not, homicide was the first and foremost source of pollution the Greeks were really afraid of,¹⁰⁹⁸ especially when bloodguilt was cast over the next generations.¹⁰⁹⁹ Particularly infectious was the blood shed in the boundaries of the home life and sacred places.¹¹⁰⁰ Human blood affected the murderer as well as those who came in contact with him, and in extension the cult or the whole community. In such cases, the sacrilegious was willingly or unwillingly excluded¹¹⁰¹ by law from purifications, libations, wine-bowls, sanctuaries, sacrifices, contests, the marketplace, and even the city itself.¹¹⁰² The killer had to leave his homeland and find a protector who would be responsible for his purification. During his exile, he was not allowed to put his foot upon the Attic soil.¹¹⁰³ Until this was done, he had to keep silent, talked to by nobody and be accepted at no table if he did not want to get defiled.¹¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁹⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 81.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Stukey, “Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion”, (1936). p. 288.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996, p.1280.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Stukey, “Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion”, (1936). p. 293.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Burkert, 1987, p. 77.

¹¹⁰⁰ Burkert notes that its expiation became very important during the seventh century. The Archaic communities knew what they had to do to drive this pollution away along with the murderer if they did not want to defile themselves as well: Burkert. 1987, p. 77.

¹¹⁰¹ “... the exclusion of a member was a sign of rejection and disgrace. Even such a loose and *ad hoc* (epi toutou) group as prisoners in a jail could exclude a man, for unspeakable acts, from its meals and its sacrifices. (Dinarchus 2.9)”: Mikalson, 1983, p. 88.

¹¹⁰² Mikalson, 1983, p.87.

¹¹⁰³ Visser, Margaret, “Vengeance and Pollution in Classical Athens”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (1984), p. 193.

¹¹⁰⁴ Burkert, 1987, pp. 77, 81.

The purification of a murderer was connected with purification by blood.¹¹⁰⁵ Vase paintings offer us a hint of the procedure the culpable had to go through in order to be accepted back to his community again. Once defiled by blood, the individual should come into contact with blood through a purification sacrifice:

the piglet is held over the head of the person to be purified and the blood must flow directly onto the head of the person to be purified and the blood must flow directly onto the head and hands. Naturally, the blood is then washed off and the regained purity is made outwardly manifest as well.¹¹⁰⁶

However, even after the sacrificial purification one had to stay in exile for a period of time before being re-incorporated back to the community. This particular fact that turns time into an important purifying agent makes Burkert note that the consequences of the murder and the process one had to go through for cleansing, resembles that of the *rite of passage*.¹¹⁰⁷ (*Eum. Orestes*). The murderer puts himself outside his community, with the purificatory rite he is transformed and then he is able to re-integrate again back where he belongs.

The contagiousness of the pollution of blood was also the reason why the ones condemned to death had to take their own life voluntarily by drinking *konion*, hemlock and trials for homicide were held out of doors.¹¹⁰⁸ It is not surprising as well that those trials for convicted exiled persons who wanted to be acquitted took place at the seaside, while the accused defended himself from a boat.¹¹⁰⁹ There is no doubt that the Greeks tried hard to restrict murder.

Whatever the case of pollution was, immediate action had to be taken before it was spread to the entire community. Depending on the *miasma* an ancient Greek had to follow one of the prescriptions for the removal of purity such as water, fumigation, confinement, exclusion or a sacrifice. Therefore, purity was indispensable to anyone

¹¹⁰⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 81.

¹¹⁰⁶ Burkert, 1987, p. 81.

¹¹⁰⁷ *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996.

¹¹⁰⁸ Stukeley, "Purity in Fifth and Fourth Century Religion", (1936). p. 292.

¹¹⁰⁹ Visser, "Vengeance and Pollution", (1984), p, 193.

who wanted to approach the gods, holy things or even his other fellowmen and this could be achieved only through specified rites.

2. ὕβρις, HUBRIS

The concept of the word *Hybris* has not a literal equivalent in English, similar to some other Greek words which denote cultural meaning. This is why it is often used untranslated, even by people who do not know Greek.¹¹¹⁰ In tabloid form, Aristotle's concept of ὕβρις, hubris, the insult, the abuse focuses on that nexus of behavioural concepts that all induce shame and dishonour:¹¹¹¹

an aggressive self-assertiveness and a disregard of divine and human sanctions which imposed limits upon conduct, frequently aggravated by effrontery and insolence.¹¹¹²

Fisher's notion of hubris is more illustrative:

-[it] is in fact virtually co-extensive with that of the concepts to which it is linked, those of honour (time), shame, etc.; areas where there is strong obligation on men to treat others with respect, to honour people, laws, moral codes, or gods, these are the areas where flagrant breaches of the norms are frequently labelled *hybris*.¹¹¹³

In other words respect the people, the laws, the customs and the cults. Like impiety and *miasma* Greeks regarded the multifaceted hubris as a serious offence but not a religious matter, unless a man's action involved a god which made the act sacrilegious.¹¹¹⁴ -

Except Aristotle's *Rhetoric*¹¹¹⁵ there are also three more literary genres as sources: the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, Plato and of course tragedy and comedy which

¹¹¹⁰ MacDowell, M., Douglas, "Hybris in Athens", *Greece and Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1976), p. 14.

¹¹¹¹ Fisher, N. R. E., "Hybris and Dishonour: I", *Greece and Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 23, No. 2, (1976), p. 185.

¹¹¹² Robertson, G., H., "The Hybristês in Homer", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 2, (1955), p. 81.

¹¹¹³ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1976). p 186.

¹¹¹⁴ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). p. 22; Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour: I", (1976). p. 178.

¹¹¹⁵ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). pp. 14-31.; Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour: I", (1976), pp. 177-193.

Fisher discusses more thoroughly in the second part of his article.¹¹¹⁶ There were also the orators.¹¹¹⁷ This probably led Mikalson support that *hubris* against the gods is a *literary conception*. This as it may be, there is also evidence from the courts of the time, not only literary.

Although it was difficult to prove verbal *hubris*, the courts dealt with cases when physical injuries were involved, namely hitting.¹¹¹⁸ As it seems in these cases, it was not violence per se that was tried as the intention to degrade an individual. We must not forget that the ancient Greeks obeyed to written laws as much as to the unwritten laws, traditions, customs, and the so called *thesmos* in the 6th century.¹¹¹⁹ The law may not have defined *hubris* but everybody knew exactly what the word meant. In any case, any behaviour that fell out of the rules was a case for the court.

Thucydides and Plato show that insulting behaviour was quite often in the late fifth- and early fourth century in Athens¹¹²⁰ which was certainly defined by causes and reasons

Causes and Results

The next causes of *hubris* form a group which involves various and variable circumstances of moral or religious importance and, again as a reminder, they involve *hubris* when the aim is the degrading and the humiliation of other individuals. Aristotle's view in his *Rhetoric* is thoroughly discussed by MacDowell¹¹²¹ and Fisher¹¹²² and their accounts on what a man really does to show *hubris* provide us with a complete picture of the instances, causes and the degrees of *hubris* depending on the extent of their interaction.

¹¹¹⁶ Fisher, N. R. E., "Hybris and Dishonour: II", *Greece and Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 26, No. 12, (1979), pp. 32-47.

¹¹¹⁷ Fisher, 1992, p. 86.

¹¹¹⁸ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). pp. 24-25.

¹¹¹⁹ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). p. 26.

¹¹²⁰ Kearns, Emily, *Ancient Greek Religion*, Chicheser: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p.141.

¹¹²¹ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). pp. 16-24.

¹¹²² Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). pp. 184-5.

The first type¹¹²³ of Aristotle's *hubris* is expressed by those who are socially marked out by wealth, birth, beauty or strength.¹¹²⁴ Fisher comments that although modern scholars, including MacDowell, see the wide range of *hybris* they tend to focus on the assault *alone*:

A desire for superiority, for victory, and for honour is regarded by Aristotle as a natural and proper thing for all men; but equally he recognizes that inability to control good fortune or position of superiority is likely to make one a *hybristes*. Classes of people particularly prone to *hybris* are said to be the young and the rich¹¹²⁵

In other words, when they misuse their good fortune and social position and indulge their personal wishes and desires without respecting the wishes and rights of other people, they do so because they believe that

everything can be bought ... that they are the most important people in existence ... buy off trouble by compensation or bribery of officials ... Overconfidence ... is conjunction with *hybris* ... One class of people unable to feel pity ... are those who think themselves exceptionally fortunate ... *Hybrizein* ... indicate an attitude far removed from pity;¹¹²⁶

The second cause of *hubris* is virtually related to any form of illegal behaviour with the purpose to humiliate: fraud, damage, adultery, injury to parents, children, sacrilege, theft, bribery, *συκοφαντία* (*sykophantia*,) slander, proposing illegal decrees, and so on.¹¹²⁷

¹¹²³ The second type of Aristotle's *hybris* includes those acts caused by *kakourgia*, which are mainly committed by the poor, weak, and the dishonoured. Insulting was also when lower class people attempt to assert a position of equality or reduce the status-gap. More explicitly, "Conversely, people in an inferior position are often accused of *hybris* if they attempt merely to assert a position of equality, or reduce the status-gap, verbal freedom ('cheek', 'insolence'), or disobedience on the part of slaves, women, or children, unrest or revolts on the part of organized slaves or helots, disobedience or revolts of citizens against their magistrates or rulers, or of subject cities or countries against imperial powers, are all regularly described as *hybris* ...". To MacDowell's point, Fisher adds that excessive maltreatment, contempt or punishment from kings and officials was also *hybristic*. Free men for example could beat slaves but excessive brutal or contemptuous treatment could be called *Hybristic*: Fisher, N. R. E., "Hybris and Dishonour: I", pp.183-184.

¹¹²⁴ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p. 183.

¹¹²⁵ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p. 181.

¹¹²⁶ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p. 182.

¹¹²⁷ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p. 185.

Wrongdoings within the family when a member of it tried to take advantage of the weaker relatives equalled to despise, hatred and deception instead of love and support. That is why

the Athenian law charged the eponymous archon to protect defenceless members of an *oikos* against anyone who might 'commit' *hybris* or do anything *paranomon* against them.¹¹²⁸

This hate and antagonism between family members is one of the structural themes in tragedies, where the misuse of power over the weaker members is a given fact.

An insult could as well be the deprivation of someone's property whether a family member or not.¹¹²⁹ It also involves the taking someone else's belongings, deny him an earned privilege or prize or stop him from receiving it.¹¹³⁰ That is what Clytaemnestra is also blamed, for she has deprived her son's rightful throne after her murder.

Hybris was also committed when certain types of slander (*kakegoria*) were performed in an attempt to damage one's career or reduce his status either between fellow citizens or family members,¹¹³¹ to hit or injure one's parents or throw away a shield. By the fourth century B.C. these abuses were punished by law.¹¹³²

Hybris explains the invasion by one country of another in an attempt to 'enslave' it, or more generally by the impulse in a people to increase its empire.¹¹³³ It was the major cause of coups d'etat and civil wars, and the humiliating treatment of those in power to their subjects. Yet, it was also committed when one disobeyed his king or other ruler.¹¹³⁴

Moreover, *hubris* was connected with satiety in an excessive or disorderly manner. As such, eating and drinking too much was naturally associated with wealth and riches since not many Greeks had plenty of food and drink.¹¹³⁵ Fisher supports that food

¹¹²⁸ Fisher, 1992, p. 89.

¹¹²⁹ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p. 185.

¹¹³⁰ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). p. 19.

¹¹³¹ Fisher, 1992, p. 94.

¹¹³² Fisher, 1992, p. 93.

¹¹³³ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p.186.

¹¹³⁴ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p.183.

¹¹³⁵ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). p. 16.

should be distinguished from drinking, which is more closely connected to *hubris*. Men who get drunk enjoy beating others up and insulting them. The *hubris*, for example, of the suitors at Odysseus' house was not eating and drinking at his house as the fact that they violated all the rules of hospitality and paid no respect and honour to his house.¹¹³⁶

Then there is the sexual *hubris*.¹¹³⁷ Fisher is a little more explicit on this. Sexual acts against women, girls or boys that brought shame and dishonour on the victim, the whole family and specifically the master of the household could be rape, seduction, forced marriage, or marriage between those of unequal status. He adds that *hybris* was also sometimes used for a homosexual act on the boy, because it damaged his masculinity and morality. That was the reason why boys who prostituted themselves could have been deprived of citizen rights (*atimia*).¹¹³⁸ The seduction of a woman a *kyrios* has for the birth of legitimate children constituted a serious form of disrespect for the laws of the social groups. The adulteress was often divorced, she was forbidden to attend the ritual ceremonies and she was condemned to a life of continuous indignity. The adulterer could have been killed, prosecuted, pay a fine depending on the *kyrios* who was granted by the law the permission to choose his punishment. Rape on the other hand was not as disgraceful as the seduction and the fine was smaller. However, the whole household was disgraced.¹¹³⁹

Indulgence in pleasure and expending energy in a useless manner was also sometimes regarded as insulting. Fisher believes this 'larking about' should be interpreted as hubristic when people were hurt either intentionally or not. The suitors in Odysseus palace for example spent their time throwing discuses and javelins on a level ground which endangered other people's safety. Extending that, it refers to the criminal disregard of the *household* and the society for the sake of pleasure.¹¹⁴⁰

¹¹³⁶ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). pp. 185-6.

¹¹³⁷ MacDowell, "Hybris in Athens", (1976). p. 17.

¹¹³⁸ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). pp. 186-7.

¹¹³⁹ Fisher, 1992, pp. 104-5.

¹¹⁴⁰ Fisher, "Hybris and Dishonour I", (1979). p. 187.

Physical harm in the cases of maltreatment such as hitting, whipping, fighting or committing suicide was *hubristic*. Suicide however was considered an insult only if it was committed in sorrow, shame and/or despair. In this way it is disconnected from the act as a result of pride or arrogance, or setting oneself above the gods.

Another cause was an inappropriate offering to a guest or a host, and a shrine, or to a dead such as the denial for burial.¹¹⁴¹

The last category mentioned by MacDowell is the hubris of “words or noise” or what Pindar calls ‘bold-speaking’. It refers to a person who tries to ridicule someone in various verbal ways. This impolite behaviour, chosen for entertainment on somebody’s expense, places the victim at the position of a slave or a foreigner, although the Athenian law emphatically forbade anyone to treat a slave with *hubris*.¹¹⁴² In many cases the *hubristic* noise of certain animals was imitated to raise laughter.

MacDowell’s concern was with what the Athenians in the classical period meant by *hubris* and how they dealt with it legally. By offering the example of the speech *Against Konon*, in which the middle-aged man was said to gloat over the body of “their battered victim in the manner of a triumphant fighting-cock”,¹¹⁴³ he first concludes that *hubris* is shown when using the noise of certain animals which are by nature aggressive such as horses, donkeys, bulls, snakes, and cocks.¹¹⁴⁴ Even though Fisher¹¹⁴⁵ is dubious about the importance MacDowell gives to the animals, natural forces or plants, he divides them into domesticated and wild ones and suggests their metaphorical interpretation when he focuses on the implied of violent, aggressive and destructive human nature through the use of animals.¹¹⁴⁶ For example, the most

¹¹⁴¹ Fisher, “Hybris and Dishonour I”, (1979). p. 186.

¹¹⁴² MacDowell, “*Hybris in Athens*”, (1976). pp. 20-21, 23-24.

¹¹⁴³ *The Oxford classical dictionary*, 1996.

¹¹⁴⁴ MacDowell, “*Hybris in Athens*”, (1976). p. 15.

¹¹⁴⁵ Fisher, “Hybris and Dishonour I”, (1979). p. 189.

¹¹⁴⁶ Fisher, “Hybris and Dishonour I”, (1979). p. 191. Here, he states he has found only twenty verbal references to animals.

disobedient and stubborn animal, the donkey, could represent a low-class man getting drunk and crudely insulting his betters.¹¹⁴⁷

As a conclusion, *hubris* is doing and saying things at which the victim incurs dishonour out of the mere desire to have pleasure and feel superior. The *hybrizontes* feel they are entitled to do so therefore and that is why the young and the rich fall in this category.¹¹⁴⁸

What characterises tragedy and what real ordinary people believed is that what mattered for *hubris* were the acts. Mortals offend gods by defiling their temples, humiliating captives, by revoking their vows or exhibiting over-confidence so as to walk on a red carpet, in general “thinking thoughts too great for mortals” attracting their inevitable divine punishment, or *nemesis*.¹¹⁴⁹

Legal Retribution

Legal proceedings were usually connected with any acts against individuals and their political rights, and against any damaged or stolen of public or sacred property, not *hubris* against a god.¹¹⁵⁰ Although most of the evidence about written laws only comes from the 4th century, MacDowell suggests that the law about *hubris* is probably dated back to the 6th century when the written law was called *thesmos*. Pericles is said to have told the Athenians to enforce unwritten laws as well as written ones.¹¹⁵¹

Yet, there is hardly any evidence of cases against *hubris* brought to court in Athens¹¹⁵². In the first place, it seems to have been very difficult to prove *hubris* since its features were not clear and, secondly, even if the accused was found guilty the prosecutor would have never availed himself of it since *hubris* was regarded as an offence against the whole community.

¹¹⁴⁷ Fisher, “Hybris and Dishonour I”, (1979). p. 190.

¹¹⁴⁸ MacDowell, “Hybris in Athens”, (1976). p. 27.

¹¹⁴⁹ Fisher, “Hybris and Dishonour: II”, (1979). p. 32.

¹¹⁵⁰ MacDowell, “Hybris in Athens”, (1976). p. 22.

¹¹⁵¹ MacDowell, “Hybris in Athens”, (1976). pp. 25-6.

¹¹⁵² MacDowell, “Hybris in Athens”, (1976). p. 29.

3. ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑ (*Ephsevia*), PIETY - ΑΣΕΒΕΙΑ (*Asebeia*) – IMPIETY

Piety was at the core of religious life of the ancient Athenian. It covered a wide range of acts, but it generally meant the respect of all aspects of daily life connected with the divine as well as the religious mores that defined the relations among the members of a society, in other words, to honour gods and life. Vis-a-vis, impiety, or *asebeia*, was any violations and disrespect for the beliefs and religious procedures that resulted in sacrilege.¹¹⁵³

Mikalson, who considers Plato's *Euthyphro* at the end of the 5th century B.C. and the beginning of the 4th as the most complete evidence of piety of the surviving elements of Archaic piety:

Piety includes punishing murderers and those who steal sacred property; The gods love the holy and pious and hate their opposites; Holiness is a part of justice; Piety is a product of reason; Praying is to ask the gods for something; Sacrificing is to give gifts to the gods; Proper sacrifice and prayer and holiness in general are pleasing ... to them; The gods give prosperity to persons and cities who please them in worship; the others are destroyed.¹¹⁵⁴

Plato's consideration of piety led Mikalson suggest tragedians as the best sources we have on the practice of the outmoded Homeric concepts of piety, the *τιμή* complex, used by the tragedians, was still the basis of classical religion by the average Athenian even though orators, historians even though inscriptions reveal almost nothing. The writer extracts most of his information from the characters' reasons and attitudes in the tragedies. He then proposes that although it is not easy to prove whether the attitudes in tragedy were shared by average Athenians or not, the views all three tragedians used might have been parts of the life of the audience.¹¹⁵⁵

In the evidence we can add the trial records of that time. Due to the multifarious character of impiety it cannot be classified under one title description. The forms of

¹¹⁵³ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, pp. 11, 13.

¹¹⁵⁴ Mikalson, 1991, p. 199.

¹¹⁵⁵ Mikalson, 1991, p. 133-139, 165-203.

asebeia that threatened the community feeling and unity were of so various forms that could only be controlled through civic trials.¹¹⁵⁶

The Concepts of Piety and Impiety

Mikalson connects piety and impiety to other Greek virtues and vices and presents a structure of the concepts based on the frequency they occurred in their social relationship. Very simply, piety can be defined as that communal feeling a social group or individually enjoyed when performing prescribed obligations.¹¹⁵⁷ Henceforth, it included relationships of:

- i) an individual towards another individual (or group of individuals) unrelated by birth,
- ii) an individual towards members of his or her own family,
- iii) an individual towards the city-state,
- iv) an individual towards the gods individually or as a group,

These determinants seem to have formed a consensus informal legal system which is substantiated by the trials in the late fifth and fourth centuries B.C.¹¹⁵⁸

The first three categories are common issues both to tragedy and popular religion but the fourth is primarily a topic of tragedy and other literary genres.

i) Individual towards Individual

The first category includes *ξενία (xenia)*, hospitality, those who supplicate in a sanctuary, oaths and homicide. Violating *xenia* meant dishonouring the host's table, the supervised deity and the *xenos* himself. Gods were not directly involved in *xenia* yet they were called as protectors of *xenoi*.¹¹⁵⁹

The violation of supplication was a straightforward attack against the gods that provoked their exemplary punishment. The gods were personally dishonoured in the

¹¹⁵⁶ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p.12.

¹¹⁵⁷ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p.13.

¹¹⁵⁸ Mikalson, 1983, p. 91.

¹¹⁵⁹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 192: Mikalson's use of the term 'asylum' in the place of supplication is confusing. He does not differentiate the cases of the two rites as Gould did. Yet, one can easily understand that he must definitely refer to the custom of *hiketeia* since he refers to a person who turns to a sanctuary begging for protection.

case of a supplication in a sanctuary, since the beseeched person became the god's property. Therefore, the violation of the sanctuary would definitely bring about punishment.¹¹⁶⁰

The oath was used to regulate behaviour and problems mainly among individuals with no close ties of kinship. This is the reason the oath was a pivotal act of piety as it sanctioned and guaranteed all social, interpersonal and political promises.¹¹⁶¹ To fail to keep an oath was a matter of personal impiety according to popular sources. The defined curse in an oath forces the invoked gods to affect it in order to keep their honour, function, as it is illustrated in *Medea*.

Homicide and its pollution was the prevailing alarming concern of the ancient Greeks, except the killing of *pollemioi* (enemies of war) in battlefield.¹¹⁶² Taking somebody's life was impious because it destroys the most precious gift from the gods, 'life'.¹¹⁶³ The ultimate impious act was the mutilation of the body by a murderer. The belief that a murderer's presence made prayers and sacrifices ineffective made it even more imperative for immediate action as there was the danger to lose divine support and its aftermath.¹¹⁶⁴ That is why he was removed from any social or interpersonal contact. Considering that in a world where people depended on one another he was alone, that was not only a severe punishment but also a matter of survival (see "Miasma").

ii) Individual towards Family¹¹⁶⁵

The expression of piety was closely connected with the family rites:

Honoring one's parents is one of the three main virtues, along with honouring the gods and honouring the "common laws of Greece".¹¹⁶⁶

Piety towards parents was extended to their proper care when they were still alive. The honour to parents, living or dead, involved the gods who oversaw piety and punished the impious who refused to fulfil his duties towards his begetters.

¹¹⁶⁰ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 166, 192.

¹¹⁶¹ Mikalson, 1983, p. 98; Mikalson, 1991, pp. 167, 193.

¹¹⁶² Mikalson, 1991, pp. 168-169.

¹¹⁶³ Mikalson, 1983, p.93

¹¹⁶⁴ Mikalson, 1991, p. 169.

¹¹⁶⁵ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 170-171, 175, 190-193.

¹¹⁶⁶ Mikalson, 1991, p. 171.

The most important family obligation was the funerary rites. The whole process from the treatment of the corpse to the post-funeral tomb cult was an elaborated expression of honour according to the *unwritten laws*.¹¹⁶⁷ Any deprivation or omission of them equalled to disgrace.

There were more religious rules that governed the relationships among the members of a family apart from funeral such as the father was more important than the mother or the brother than the sister, a wife should respect her husband whereas her premarital sex and adultery bring charges of impiety. Religious strictures about sex concerned only the female members of a family. The most heinous crime against family bonds was the kin-killing¹¹⁶⁸, therefore the murderer was to suffer the punishment from the gods, a dominant motif in *Oresteia*.

iii) Individual towards the State

The betrayal of one's home was equal to betraying the gods' homeland's temples, statues, sacred precincts, laws and sacrifices. The traitors in the classical period were not only being impious but also perjurers since they broke their *ephebic* oath in which they swore:

to maintain or enlarge and better the fatherland, to hold in honor the ancestral sanctuaries, to obey the officials and laws, and not to desert comrades-in-arms on battlefield.¹¹⁶⁹

The traitors were not allowed to be buried in their country and their property was confiscated. Their acts were so impure that "The Athenians went so far as to exhume and remove from their country the bones of a traitor."¹¹⁷⁰

¹¹⁶⁷ The unwritten laws shared by all the Greeks referred to the reverence of the gods and the parents and regulated human interrelations. It was immoral to ignore, disdain or disregard the traditions that were said to exist "before the memory of living men". In popular sources, they are referred to simply as *τά νόμιμα*, "the traditions". Being as old as mankind then, their disregard would inevitably brought upon the offender the retribution. To dishonour the dead, a parent, or a *xenos* is to dishonour a tradition honoured by the gods: Mikalson, 1991, p. 195.

¹¹⁶⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 171.

¹¹⁶⁹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 175.

¹¹⁷⁰ Mikalson, 1983, p. 94.

The gods were once more unconcerned with humans' devotion, respect or devotion to fatherland, but intervened because of the breaking of their promise. And this brings us to the fourth category of impiety.

iv) Individual towards God

Evidence from trials in the late fifth and fourth century indicate that impiety included,¹¹⁷¹ as in *hubris*, the establishment of a new cult without the approval of the Ecclesia, the Assembly, the desecration or destruction of sanctuaries, temples, statues, altars or dedications, the theft of sacred property at homeland or in foreign land, the killing of a suppliant, the exposure, belittlement or parody of the Eleusinian Mysteries, or vulgarization a religious revelry.¹¹⁷² That is why when Medea establishes a cult at the end of the play, she gives us the impression that she does not transgress any borders; she exhibits beyond doubt the service of a priestess she had in her country, probably on equal terms with men, just as the goddess Athena at the end of *Oresteia*. The most known instance of sacrilege was the mutilation of the herms,¹¹⁷³ stone pillars, which was believed to protect the city, the private property and the travellers. Finally, actions that resulted to *hybris*, although it is not considered as impiety, were an offence against the gods since a mortal man behaved in a manner that equalled him to a god.

One could think impiously but should keep his thoughts for himself. But the direct provocation of the Gods was inconceivable as this face to face encounter would cause suffering to everybody. The ones who publicly denounced gods and refused to honour them they immediately became the enemies of the state. Nobody wanted to suffer the consequences of the acts of *theomachoi*,¹¹⁷⁴ fighter against gods. These impieties provoked the gods' involvement and brought on the offender various punishments.

¹¹⁷¹ Mikalson, 1983, p. 92.

¹¹⁷² Mikalson, 1983, pp.91-93; Bremmer, 1994, p.5; Garland, 1994, p. 26; Mikalson, 1991, p. 177.

¹¹⁷³ Garland, 1994, p. 25: The herms stood in the streets of Athens and in front of houses to protect private property This mutilation was committed on the eve of the departure of the naval expedition to Sicily in 415 B.C. Therefore, it caused something of a panic and triggered those political purposes that wanted to prevent the expedition.

¹¹⁷⁴ Mikalson, 1991, p. 177: The only known example from real life in the fifth-century Athens was the Melian poet Diagoras who was sentenced to death because he scoffed at the Eleusinian Mysteries.

On the contrary, human *τιμή* (*timi*), honour, piety, towards the gods is exhibited in a diversity of cult acts. Mikalson suggests that honour best describes the relationship between the fifth century Greeks and their gods.¹¹⁷⁵

Honor they gods." Honor, not love, faith, or devotion, was the essential element of Greek piety.¹¹⁷⁶

A god's or a hero's honour is their function and depriving them of their *τιμή* is denying them worship in cult:

In religious terms, ... to "honor" a deity is to "worship" the deity. ... In life and in literature, gods "rejoice" in being worshiped.¹¹⁷⁷

Insulting them by for example mutilating the herms or parodying the Mysteries, denying their worship or offering any kind of sacrifice contrary to the rule was impious.¹¹⁷⁸ Consequently, the deities punished the impious to reassert their honour, *timi*, authority, thus their reason to exist,¹¹⁷⁹ just as *Medea* declare in Euripides. They needed to protect their role as witnesses, not because they are so much interested in the rites themselves. This attitude is spectacularly illustrated in the fact that "the Greek city was perfectly prepared to tolerate unbelief, so long at any rate as it did not give rise to acts of impiety."¹¹⁸⁰ These honours of the gods, called by Mikalson the *τιμαί*, includes sanctuaries, dedications, hymns, dances, libations, rituals, prayers, festivals, and sacrifices.¹¹⁸¹

To sacrifice, pray and preserve the ancestral traditions was reverent. Sacrifice especially was considered the most important pious act through which one honoured the gods, showed gratitude, expected future benefits, and generated a good return

Diagoras may have managed to get away before the sentence was executed but the men in tragedy never escape sever punishments.

¹¹⁷⁵ A god's honour's is best described in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*: Mikalson, Mikalson, 1991, p. 183.

¹¹⁷⁶ Mikalson, 1991, p. 198. pp. 201-202.

¹¹⁷⁷ Mikalson, 1991, p. 188.

¹¹⁷⁸ Kearns, Emily, *Ancient Greek Religion*, Chicheser: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 141-143.

¹¹⁷⁹ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 188-189.

¹¹⁸⁰ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p.12.

¹¹⁸¹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 189.

from the gods' gratitude.¹¹⁸² Its neglect or omission could offer an explanation for one's misfortunes.¹¹⁸³

The god received honour and in returned they showed their function, their *timi*, by rewarding the mortals in the areas of their expertise. The study of this complex system of *τιμή*, made Mikalson believe that *τιμή*

better than any other Greek word, defines the role and status of the gods and the interrelationship of humans and deities.¹¹⁸⁴

However, he thinks that because *timi* is a complex system of a variety of meanings that faith, devotion, love, humility and so on, and it would be a mistake to narrow it down to the meanings of honour and piety.¹¹⁸⁵

Piety was very important to popular religion because it was closely linked with justice. Piety and justice intermingled but still remained distinguished since pious acts belonged to the area of justice. However, not all acts were pious.

Proper worship of the gods is "just". Misbehaviour involving oaths, *xenoi*, those protected by asylum, parents, and burial rites is often termed "unjust" as well as "impious" and "unholy". Yet, a wide range of unjust behaviour, such as lying, stealing, political machinations, and lawbreaking, is never termed impious or unholy.¹¹⁸⁶

In literature and philosophy and in popular religion every impious act was considered as unjust. Yet, the justice of the gods, did not bother the simple man in ancient Greece. Mikalson believes that it was rather a literary and philosophical concern, just like *hubris*. An individual worshipped a god after a rational thinking and decision, made by the mind, the *φρήν* (*fren*), through sacrifices, dedications, hymns and other cult acts. The opposite behaviour brought folly, *hubris* and madness. Even when honour

¹¹⁸² Mikalson, 1991, pp. 189, 190; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p.13.

¹¹⁸³ Mikalson, 1991, p. 189: The fourth-century philosopher Theophrastus wrote that one sacrificed for *τιμή*, gratitude or because he needed good things. Mikalso supports that a sacrifice might have involved any or all three purposes.

¹¹⁸⁴ The study of this complex system of *τιμή*, made Mikalson believe that *τιμή* "better than any other Greek word, defines the role and status of the gods and the interrelationship of humans and deities": Mikalson, 1991, p. 191.

¹¹⁸⁵ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 196-97.

¹¹⁸⁶ Mikalson, 1991, p. 178.

involved humans, dishonouring the unwritten laws was dishonouring the laws or interests of the gods as a group.¹¹⁸⁷ This was the impiety which was punished.

It can be said that impiety is the general terms applied to specify any transgression that shakes the relation of man with his gods, his life and his country. Then, they bring *miasma*, pollution, to the fellow citizens and the city and endanger individual and social safety. Therefore concepts such as impiety, hubris and *miasma* can be seen as interlocked in the social structure of the ancient Greeks' life.

¹¹⁸⁷ Mikalson, 1991, p. 197.

 APPENDIX III

DIVINATION

Classical Greek Sacred Behaviour and Beliefs

The ancient Greeks approached the gods with prayers, libations, sacrifices, festivals, dances and songs among others. But when they wanted a more personal and direct contact they used magic, mystery cults and divination.¹¹⁸⁸

Divination was closely connected with issues concerning religion and war. It is such a complex notion that Mikalson suggests that the Latin rubric of “divination” is unable to explain the special purpose of oracles, priesthood, seers, dreams and omens in the ancient Athenian’s life. Therefore, it is necessary to see the part they played in life so that we can understand how they were employed by the tragedians.¹¹⁸⁹

Everything around the ancient Greek was inspired or given by a god. Fire, agriculture, farming techniques, medical knowledge, rites, philosophy, oracles and poems, love,¹¹⁹⁰ even diseases and hope. For the Greek mentality, there was a god, a nymph or a hero to address behind every little thing in nature. All he or she had to do was to ask a specific god for an advice on a specific issue, an assistance or guidance and if the gods agreed, they would communicate. The replies from the gods were in the form of signs usually in a cryptic form.¹¹⁹¹ Being symbolical, the signs needed interpretation with the help of the god of prediction, Apollo. The disbelief to those signs equaled to the rejection of gods.

However divination was not unconditionally believed.

¹¹⁸⁸ Bonnechere, Pierre, “Divination”, in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. by Daniel Ogden, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, p. 145.

¹¹⁸⁹ Mikalson, 1983, p. 46.

¹¹⁹⁰ Bonnechere, “Divination”, 2006, p. 146.

¹¹⁹¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 111.

From the time of Homer ... Greek thought was divided between unshakeable faith in divination and developing skepticism.¹¹⁹²

The fact that some oracular sanctuaries maintained their dignity for hundreds of years prove that the Greeks did believe in them and in signs.

According to Xenophon divination was achieved in five ways:

at fixed oracular shrines, through dream-interpretation, observation of birds, sacrifice, and 'chance' omens such as a sneeze or an encounter or something said casually at a significant moment.¹¹⁹³

Bonnechere concisely divides divination into two types, the inductive and the inspired. The inductive can take place wherever there is a need in contrast to the inspired who is closely connected to a sanctuary and implies the state of trance.¹¹⁹⁴

Μαντεῖον (Manteion), Oracles

All cults believed that gods can surely be found at their cult place. However, the places where the gods offer predictions, *chresmos*, were the most prestigious ones.¹¹⁹⁵ One of these major oracles were Zeus at Dodona and of Apollo at Delphi.¹¹⁹⁶

Oracles gave answers on a great variety of religious questions. They introduced the sanctity of a new cult or festival; established a priest; validated or changed sacrifices; altered the status of holy lands or other sacred property such as cultivating it or cutting down trees; told people to which god(s) they should pray, sacrifice or give other offerings; advised them on the construction of an altar or a temple when stimulated by a dream, an omen or an oracle; and gave guidance during war-time when required. People consulted them for more private concerns as well: whether they should move; whether someone's impurity was causing the bad weather; the prospect of children or the paternity of them; or on matters about their health, herds

¹¹⁹² Bonnechere, "Divination", 2006, p. 148.

¹¹⁹³ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996.

¹¹⁹⁴ Bonnechere, "Divination", 2006, p. 150.

¹¹⁹⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 114.

¹¹⁹⁶ There were also the Oracle of the Dead at Ephyra from where Odessus is reputed to have descended to Hades, Oracle at Klaros which was founded by Morpsos, Teiresias' grandson, and Apollo oracle at Didyma in Asia Minor: Burkert, 1987, pp.114-116.

or business.¹¹⁹⁷ Although there is little evidence, inscriptions suggest that the state turned to oracles on political or religious affairs such as the beginning of wars or colonization.¹¹⁹⁸

A sanctuary could exist without a temple, but it could not do without an altar. The altar of a hero's shrine was different compared to the gods'. In contrast to the "rectangular, monumental, and with a projecting step or stepped base" of the gods, the heroes', was low and stood directly on the ground.¹¹⁹⁹ This is palpable as the heroes abide was in Hades and the offerings had to go directly into the ground.

Priests and Priestesses

The sanctuaries were usually watched over by the priests and priestesses.¹²⁰⁰ Apart from rare exception, a priest served the male deities and a priestess the female.¹²⁰¹ In the cases of a priestess, the age was often a criterion since "a cult might require a virgin, a married woman, or a post-menopausal woman."¹²⁰² The priests very rarely celibated for life. But they had to keep their purity, *hagneia*, by avoiding any contact with death and women in childbed and occasionally they had to fast or eschew from certain foods.¹²⁰³

Priests and priestesses in sanctuaries were not usually always present, except in cases such as the priest of goddess Athena. In one inscription it is prescribed that the priest had to be at the sanctuary at least ten days in a month.¹²⁰⁴ They spent the rest of their

¹¹⁹⁷ Mikalson, 1983, pp. 42-45.

¹¹⁹⁸ "Of the 34 genuine responses from Delphi in the 5th and 4th centuries, 23 concerned religious matters. 9 dealt with war, expeditions, or other matters of foreign policy. For 2 colonizations is the issue, and 1 is a response to a husband who wants children": Mikalson, 1991, p. 93.

¹¹⁹⁹ Bremmer, 1994, pp. 28-29.

¹²⁰⁰ For the religious officials and their duties such as the caretaker, *neokoros*, who organised the sacrifices, purchased the animal and sold the skin, the sacrifice executors, *hieropoioi*, and state committees, *epimelitai*, *hierotamiai*, who supervised the finances of the sanctuaries see Burkert, 1987, pp.95-96; Zaidman, 1992, pp. 46-49.

¹²⁰¹ Kearns, Emily, *Ancient Greek Religion*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p.245: Dionysos was often served by priestesses and Athena and Artemis by priests.

¹²⁰² Kearns, 2010, p. 246.

¹²⁰³ Burkert, 1987, p. 98.

¹²⁰⁴ Burkert, 1987, p. 96.

time in their private businesses such as making their living for men or, in the case of priestesses, attending their families if they were married.¹²⁰⁵ In the absence of a priest, especially in the smaller sanctuaries the worshippers could perform offerings and sacrifices on themselves.¹²⁰⁶

Although there were hereditary posts for priests and priestesses, other priesthoods were appointed by the political assembly by lot.¹²⁰⁷ A third way that begun from the beginning of the fourth century B.C. in Asia Minor was to purchase priesthood.¹²⁰⁸ On the whole, anyone could become a priest as long as he had the citizenship, he was respectable by the community and he had no physical imperfections.¹²⁰⁹

Being a priest or a priestess was not a way of life. It was a part-time honorary service to a particular god in one specified sanctuary. Their service usually lasted a year, but they could also be appointed for the time period of a festival or for life.¹²¹⁰ The Pythia on Delphi, for example, who spoke the god's words when in trance, was dedicated to the god for life.¹²¹¹ In any case, at the end of their service they had to give accounts.¹²¹²

Their duties included helping in sacrifices by hallowing the victims, saying the prayers, pouring the libations,¹²¹³ killing the animal unless there were sacrificers and putting the god's portion on the altar. When presiding over a sacrifice he was usually given the leg of the animal as an honorary portion, the food on the table next to the altar and the skin.¹²¹⁴ Then, they had to guard the treasures and looked after the god's statue, the buildings and the accoutrements in the precinct, with the help of sacristan(s) (*neokoros*) in large sanctuaries who also acted as an intermediary between the priest and the worshippers. Sacristans did menial jobs as well such as preventing the birds from befouling the statues. They tried to keep the sanctuary

¹²⁰⁵ Kearns, 2010, 2010, p. 244.

¹²⁰⁶ Burkert, 1987, p. 96; Bremmer, 1994, pp. 27-28.

¹²⁰⁷ Burkert connects the families with the specific sanctuaries: Burkert, 1987, p. 96.

¹²⁰⁸ Kearns, 2010, p. 246.

¹²⁰⁹ Burkert, 1987, p.98; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 49.

¹²¹⁰ Burkert, 1987, pp. 95, 97.

¹²¹¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 116.

¹²¹² Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 49.

¹²¹³ Burkert, 1987, p. 95.

¹²¹⁴ Kearns, 2010, 2010, p. 245.

financially well, made sure that no pollution in the form of a person or an object entered the sanctuary and maintained it as a safe place of worship.¹²¹⁵ Finally, some priests had to perform on top a special role, as in the Eleusian Mysteries. However, the absolute control over the sanctuary belonged to the boards of the cities.

Their appearance distinguished their post. The priest had his hair long and a headband, a garland, was dressed in expensive white or purple clothes and wore a special waistband. He also carried a staff. Their appearance was governed by “full self-esteem and an aura of solemnity”, notes Kearns quoting Plato.¹²¹⁶ The priests were so prestigious that they had the front seats of honour reserved in ancient theatres.¹²¹⁷

The priestess on the other hand had the large metal key of the temples as attested on vases,¹²¹⁸ and in tragedies. Bremmer also mentions that on vase paintings the priestess is sometimes dressed identical to the goddess she served, a detail that which makes it difficult to distinguish the deity from the mortal.¹²¹⁹ According to Burkert this resemblance to the gods took place in real life cases as well.¹²²⁰

The priestesses were the ones who gave oracles under the possession of the god, or the inspired divination or *enthusiasmos*. The god possesses his mortal intermediary who reveals the god’s wishes under a transformed consciousness,¹²²¹ but not without any preliminary ritualistic steps, and not necessarily with the use of drugs.¹²²²

¹²¹⁵ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, pp. 50.

¹²¹⁶ Kearns, 2010, p. 254.

¹²¹⁶ Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, pp. 50.

¹²¹⁷ Burkert, 1987, p. 97.

¹²¹⁸ Burkert, 1987, p. 97.

¹²¹⁹ Bremmer, 1994, p. 28.

¹²²⁰ One of the examples he offers is the priestess of Athena at Pallene who appears with helmet and a shield: Burkert, 1987, p. 97.

¹²²¹ Bonnechere, “Divination”, 2006, p. 153.

¹²²² Bonnechere considers the hypothesis of the use of hallucinogenic or psychotropic drugs as “a crutch for our ignorance.” He suggests that the ordeals individuals or prophets went through inevitably led them to change their state of consciousness. I would add here that the use of such substances does not necessary enable one to see the future. I would also point the attentions to various documentaries on primitive tribes by National Geographic, History Channel and BBC who often present the shaman entering the trance state without necessarily the help of drugs. Burkert supports Bonnecher’s statement with convincing examples. He mentions the choruses of maidens on Delos who transfigure their consciousness through songs and dance. He also writes that the Greeks had discovered ecstatic cults among the Phrygians in the northern Asia Minor who got ecstatic with the help of music. The

The experience may rest on natural disposition, acquired technique, or the influence of drugs, but at all event, the individual sees, hears, and experiences things which are not present for the others; he stands in direct contact with a higher being and communicates with gods and spirits.¹²²³

The vocabulary that describes these cases of various kinds and explanations is *entheos*, within is a god, in which the individual speaks in a strange voice or incomprehensibly and makes peculiar body movement.

They could be described as moments where an individual was seized by a prophetic fit, or collections of significant oracles that either emanated, or were claimed to have emanated, from major oracular shrines.¹²²⁴

In this case the god seizes and holds his chosen individual in his power, thus the word *katechei*, possesses. Another word used is *ekstasis*, in which the person transcends his normal behaviour and obeys other subconscious rules. A third notorious word is *mania* that describes the frenzy and madness of the female followers of Dionysus.¹²²⁵ Real life's Pythia in Delphi or literary Cassandra are two perfect examples that illustrate the *enthusiasmos* fully in the expression of the loss of consciousness.

Soothsayers

There were two categories of soothsaying in the 5th century¹²²⁶, before the Persian Wars,¹²²⁷ the *μάντες* (*mantes*), seers and the *Χρησμολόγοι* (*chresmologoi*), chresmologues (oracle-mongers), professional diviners. The seers are usually confused with the *chresmologues*. Aristophanes in his Comedies used both of them but tragedians used only the seers.¹²²⁸

disciplined flute music seems to dissolve at some point into uncontrolled sounds. This again comes to stress my reference to contemporary primitive people who get transcend with the help of continuous drum beating, dance and singing: Bonnechere, "Divination", 2006, p. 154; Burkert, 1987, p. 110.

¹²²³ Burkert, 1987, p. 109.

¹²²⁴ *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1996.

¹²²⁵ Burkert, 1987, pp. 109-110.

¹²²⁶ Mikalson, 1991, p. 92.

¹²²⁷ Nilsson, 1940, p. 127.

¹²²⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 92.

The Chresmologues, oracle-mongers

Chresmologues appeared in the late 6th century B.C.¹²²⁹ and their reputation was questionable. They kept written oracles from old prophets such as Apollo, Orpheus, and Musaeus, and knew by heart. They used them to interpret a personal or a city demand in such a way as to suit the case they dealt with, by intuition or personal instinct.¹²³⁰ This is the reason they disappeared after the disaster in the Sicilian expedition in 413 when they had predicted victory. People realised they were phoney.

Some ... had provided encouragement ... and after the defeat the public turned on them. (Thuc. 1) Chresmologues disappeared from Athenian life, but conventional seers remained, as they do in later plays of Euripides.¹²³¹

The *Manteis*, the Seers

In contradistinction, seers, the diviners, the *manteis*, must have weathered the storm of criticism given that they are recorded to practice their skill in the 4th century, although they were politically exploited.¹²³² The two Athenian generals, Nikias and Xenophon are the basic sources for most of their duties.¹²³³ The *manteis* were not appointed to an official post but they used to work for an individual statesman or any other rich and powerful person. Some of them were prominent citizens, such as Lampon and Hierocles, but they could as well be foreigners or work as freelance.¹²³⁴

All seers were men. Their power to predict was believed to be a god-given gift and this is why their task was hereditary and passed down from generation to generation.¹²³⁵ The seers, combining their charisma with the knowledge of divination,¹²³⁶ followed a set of rules that characterise the mantic art (the *τέχνη μαντική*),¹²³⁷ thereby they

¹²²⁹ Nilsson cites some cases of the appearance of oracles, collections of oracles and their influence on political life; Nilsson, 1940, pp. 127-134.

¹²³⁰ Mikalson, 1983, p. 40; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 52.

¹²³¹ Mikalson, 1991, p. 97.

¹²³² Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 53.

¹²³³ Nikias (c. 470 B.C. – 413 B.C.), Xenophon (c. 430 – 354 B.C.)

¹²³⁴ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 92-93.

¹²³⁵ Burkert, 1987, p. 112.

¹²³⁶ Mikalson, 1983, p. 41.

¹²³⁷ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 93-94.

prophesied, interpreted oracles, inspected and read the liver at sacrifices and at sacrifices before military expeditions and battles and offered explanations after the observations of birds, dreams and omens. This deductive mantic craft is one of three most common methods of the mantic craft Prometheus in Aeschylus' title tragedy claims he gave to men: He says he gave men the in life and tragedy.

ornithoscopy, the observation of the flight of birds; extispicy, the observation of the vital organs, particularly the liver, of sacrificial victims; and empyroscopey, the study of the movements of the flames as they consumed offerings on the altar.¹²³⁸

Omens

Omens belong to the realm of studying the world around and above and coming to conclusions after combining them with live factuality. There were many signs to consider as omens.

The celestial and natural signs in the first place involved Zeus's signs of thunder and lightning, especially from a clear sky, earthquakes and floods from Poseidon, eclipses, the passing of comets the shooting stars, or even a drop of rain.¹²³⁹

Then there was ornithomancy, the bird-reading, by which they interpreted the behaviour of animals and birds, usually of birds of prey. Birds were of particular interest possibly because they live in between the gods and the men.¹²⁴⁰ The seer sat facing the north and observed whether they appeared from right or left, their movements and so on.¹²⁴¹

Another reading, *Hieroscopy*, the examination of entrails of a sacrificed animal, was very influential on everyday life, politics and at battles. This was the prime task of the seers who went along with the army.¹²⁴² The seer did examine the liver's formation

¹²³⁸ Mikalson, 1991, p. 94.

¹²³⁹ Burkert, 1987, p.112; Mikalson, 1991, p.104; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 53; A clear structure is offered by Bonnechere: "Divination", 2006, p. 150.

¹²⁴⁰ Mikalson, 1991, p.104; Zaidman and Pantel, 1992, p. 53; A more analytical structure is offered by Bonnechere, 2006, p. 150.

¹²⁴¹ Burkert, 1987, p. 112.

¹²⁴² Bonnechere, "Divination", 2006, pp. 151-2.

and colour thoroughly¹²⁴³ However, in general, everything was under inspection: did the animal go to the altar willingly; did it die quickly; were the flames clearly quickly up; how did the tail curl and the bladder burst? The latter is called *empyromancy* which interpreted the way the sacrificed parts were burnt on the altar.

These are only few of the many other ways of reading omens. What is significant to highlight though is that genuine diviners never foretold the future or explained divine plans.¹²⁴⁴ In tragedies, mainly the prominent seers Teiresias and Calchas interpret signs. However, their expertise never prevents people from rejecting their advice, often with impiety, as we see it happening in tragedy in various cases.¹²⁴⁵

Dreams, Oniromancy

Oniromancy belongs to the inspired divination through which gods gave signs to men in the form of dreams. Ancient Greeks may have had some doubts about their interpretations but they believed that a god could send a prophetic dream: only their interpretation was under question.¹²⁴⁶ Therefore, the dreams by nature were not false and they expressed something positive.

One type of a dream is when the sleeper sees himself involved in the action of the dream or an event. The symbolic language of the unsolicited dream must then be studied and interpreted.¹²⁴⁷ Clytaemnestra's dream of breast-feeding a snake for which she sent *choes* to Agamemnon's grave is such an example.

Dreams were also connected with healing. Greeks took seriously unsolicited dreams so they went to incubation sanctuaries in the search for a medical cure through a ritualistic procedure. These sanctuaries such as Amphiaraus, Asclepiou and Athena Hygieia, the most widely known, was believed to be under the gods' command. Unlike the god of dreams Apollo, these gods employed dreams to succeed a cure.¹²⁴⁸

¹²⁴³ Burkert, 1987, p. 113.

¹²⁴⁴ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 92-93.

¹²⁴⁵ Bremmer, 1994, p. 8.

¹²⁴⁶ Mikalson, 1983, p. 40.

¹²⁴⁷ Kearns, 2010, p. 94.

¹²⁴⁸ Mikalson, 1991, pp. 101-102.

A final type of a dream was the rare epiphany. Here the deity appeared at the bedside, informed the sleeper that he is dreaming and gave him direct advice.¹²⁴⁹ Epiphanies were rare and valuable if they indeed happened.¹²⁵⁰ However, they were usually part of the mythical realm in stories that deal with institutions of cities or sanctuaries.

It is odd though that the Athenians never presented themselves as even concerned with divination in their private lives. They did use the various ways of divination, but only when they felt incompetent to have control over the issues that troubled them, or they were beyond human comprehension. Court life though presents another view. Mikalson infers from the orations in trials, Xenophon, Aristophanes, Theophrastus and other sources that although they did practice divination it was not publicly accepted and respected. Probably because the oracles were not very clear.

Regardless though its acceptance or rejection, the ancient Greeks did not use divination to know about their future and the oracles never predicted the future. Therefore, divination does not meet the today's desire of man to force a method in order to find his future from unknown spirits. The customary question of an ancient Greek was "Is it more agreeable and better to ...?" shows that all they wanted to know was whether an act was advised to be take place or not.¹²⁵¹ As Mikalson notes, the oracles from Delphi and Dodona in the classical period were clear-cut instructions about what one should or should not do at that particular time.

Real oracles treated ... present time. ... responses to whether one should *now* make war, make peace, perform sacrifices, build temples and altars, get married, and so forth. A person ... learn "what he ought, or ought not, to do... (Xen. *Symp.* 4.47-49).¹²⁵²

Turning to oracles for matters such as plague, infertility of the land, marriage, disease, identity of parents, and childlessness is very common in tragedies. These issues are regarded in the plays as areas of divine intervention therefore there was the need for consultation.¹²⁵³

¹²⁴⁹ Kearns, 2010, p. 95.

¹²⁵⁰ Kearns, 2010, p. 95.

¹²⁵¹ Mikalson, 1983, pp. 42, 47-49.

¹²⁵² Mikalson, 1991, p. 89.

¹²⁵³ Mikalson, 1991, p. 88.

APPENDIX IV

Oresteia

1. *Agamemnon*

The poem begins with the Watchman sitting at the walls of Argos, suffering from fatigue after waiting for ten endless years for a sign of the outcome of the Trojan War.¹²⁵⁴ Just as he **mourns** about his life, he suddenly sees the much desired beacon fires¹²⁵⁵ that will finally free him from his post and will bring along celebrations and the **choral dances**.

The symbol of **fire** begins the third case study of this thesis just like the *Trojan Women*. The difference though is that at first the beacons seem to bring hope for a change. In the process, it will come out that the signals forewarn symbolically the destructive aspects of revenge¹²⁵⁶ and twisted sacrifices.

In no time all, Argos is buzzing with activity. The Chorus, a group of old men, enters in anticipation and gathers in front of the palace door waiting for Clytaemnestra to come out. In their long song they first describe the causes of the Trojan War before they compare Menelaus and Agamemnon with two vultures who wailed a war cry against Priam looking for their lost baby, Helen (49-53).

The Chorus implies Paris violation of Menelaus' **hospitality** and the Greeks' victory over the Trojans as his punishment. Staying and especially sharing a meal at somebody's house instantly made one a member of the family, and this bond was further sealed with the **exchange of presents**. Its abuse was a great insult, *hubris*, towards Zeus *Xenios* as it is attested later in the messenger's description and attracted punishment. When *Paris* violated Menelaus' *philoxenia*, hospitality, running away with his wife, it becomes clear that the two men exchanged the twisted presents of war and destruction.

¹²⁵⁴ Gantz, Nolan, Timothy, "The Fires of the Oresteia", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 97, (1977), p. 28.

¹²⁵⁵ Troy, Lemnos, Mount Athos (northern Greece), Mount Makistros (Euboea), Euripos, Mount Messapion, Plain of Asopos (Boeotia), Mount Kithairon, Saronic Gulf, Argos: (281-316)

¹²⁵⁶ Gantz, "The Fires of the Oresteia", (1977). p. 29.

The Chorus suspects the fall of Troy because the city gives off the sweet-smelling smoke of Clytaemnestra's burnt **bloodless offerings**, and is eager to verify it:

CHORUS

The altars of all the city's protecting gods,
 the gods above and the gods of earth, the gods of the
 doors and the gods of the assembly-place,
 are ablaze with gifts;
 in every place a flame rises up heaven-high,
 medicined by the gentle guileless comfort
 of pure anointing oil,
 a thick-flowing offering from the inner stores of the palace. (88-96).

Clytaemnestra however is not there to confirm their hopes. So they continue their story with the **omen** of the two eagles the prophet of the army saw when Menelaus and Agamemnon were ready to go to war: two eagles, one black and the other one with white tail, feeding on a pregnant hare. Calchas' **bird-reading** was interpreted clearly to the benefit of the Greeks: the eagles are Atreus' sons who will eventually destroy Troy.

The **beacon fires**, the references to an **omen** and the consequent **offerings** for the good news then are the first ritualistic references in *Agamemnon*. Despite the victorious allusions though, they allow hints of alarming premonitions. Soon, the chorus' description of Iphigenia's **unfair sacrifice** is the first change to the seemingly happy atmosphere which definitely unsettles the audience. The Greek ships at Aulis could not sail because the winds did not blow and the prophet Calchas said that Artemis required Iphigenia's sacrifice (201-204). Originally, Agamemnon objected to it and did not want to kill his daughter (206-211). Not much later though, according to the Chorus' opinion, unholy and **impious** air blew in his mind and changed it for the sake of glory.

CHORUS

his mental wind veering in a direction that was impious,
 impure, unholy, from that point
 he turned to a mindset that would stop at nothing; (218-221).

The Chorus describes a violent scene that troubles the reader. She **begged** her father for her life and she beseeched the other army leaders who saw her growing up to spare her tender life. But nobody listened to her **supplications**.

CHORUS

Her pleas, her cries of "father!",
and her maiden years, were set at naught
by the war-loving chieftains. (228-230)

After the leaders had finished the **prayers**, her own father ordered the slaves to grasp her from the ground by force, lift her wrapped in her saffron robes¹²⁵⁷ with all their strength above the altar and close her mouth tightly so that she does not utter any **urses** against her house and worsen the burden of the old curse.

CHORUS

After a prayer, her father told the attendants
to lift her right up over the altar
with all their strength, like a yearling goat,
face down, so that her robes fell around her,
and by putting a guard
on her fair face and lips to restrain
speech that might lay a curse on his house
by force, by the silencing power of a bridle. (231-238)

Even though she was unable to speak, Iphigenia continued to plead for her life with her eyes looking at the chiefs as if trying to remind them that she was the one who sang the paean with her beautiful fresh voice before she poured the third **libation**¹²⁵⁸ during the symposiums her father gave at his house:

CHORUS

As she poured saffron dye towards the ground
she cast on each of her sacrificers a glance darted from
her eye, a glance to stir pity (239-241)

The old men cannot bear to continue their ghastly description which nails the viewer down. This descriptive ritual on a twisted sacrifice is extremely important to the

¹²⁵⁷ Griffith suggests connection with the Cult of Artemis' Brauron: "... the girl shed to (or toward) the ground her dyes of saffron ... These robes, like those of the Furies, have their counterpart in cult: the Bears in the cult of Artemis at Brauron, which was said to have been founded by Iphigenia (Eur. IT 1462-7, Paus. 3.16.7), wore saffron robes and shed them at some point during their service to the goddess (Ar. Lys. 644-5)": Griffith, Drew, R., "Disrobing in the Oresteia", *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol.38, No.2, (1988), p. 552.

¹²⁵⁸ See chapter 1.

development of the story on various levels. In the first place, it is a clear case of a **wedding to death** since Iphigenia is sacrificed after she was deceitfully lured to the Greek army camp on false wedding promises, in some versions of the story to be wedded to Achilles, only to find out that her own father has already promised her to Hades. Then, by elaborating the myth from a new perspective, Aeschylus sought to stress the old *miasma* that runs in the family, impiety and hubris. With regard to her sacrifice, their account comes to contradict the precept that a sacrificial victim had to give its consent; otherwise the gods would not accept the offer. However, it was not unusual for Artemis to accept a girl's life as Furley supports with examples in which unimportant incidents provoke Artemis to accept innocent victims out of vengeance.¹²⁵⁹ All these implications in the reported ritual are clearly deployed to meet Cassandra's sacrificial murder at the end of the play with the effect of "To be continued" in the next two tragedies since Clytaemnestra uses her daughter's death as an excuse for her husband's murder.

Clytaemnestra addresses the men when they finish their account. It seems possible that she could have entered at the time of the recall or a little earlier, in which case she re-lives her daughter's unfair and premature misfortune, an event that surely reinforces her hatred towards Agamemnon. She informs the elders that the fires delivered the news of the fall of Troy and stress the fact that the Greeks have nothing to be afraid of if they were **pious** and respected the gods of Troy.

Any defilement of the holy out of greed for lust and money was regarded as *hubris* towards the celestial onlookers, the city and life itself, and according to the popular beliefs **pollution** would be brought upon themselves and their children. Definitely the queen, as a ruler, knows more than she says and must also insinuate here the seizing of the priestess Cassandra as one of the "holy items", and the impiety and the unfaithfulness of her husband.

CLYTAEMNESTRA

If they act reverently towards the protecting gods of the city and land they have captured, there is

¹²⁵⁹ Furley, D., William, "Motivation in the Parodos of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*", *Classical Philology*, Vol. 81, No. 2. (1986), p. 118.

no risk, you may be sure, that after capturing it they may become victims in their turn. Only let no desire first fall on the army to plunder what they should not, overcome by the prospect of gain; for they have still to return safely home (338-343)

The **herald** that comes immediately after the chorus' **prayer** and praise of Zeus confirms her words as he approaches the Chorus wearing the customary **wreath of olive leaves** on his head, the sign of the good news he brings. The messenger is very careful not to insult the gods (503-519). One way of **honouring the gods** in ancient Greece was to call them by their name before any manifestation of life such as a prayer or a libation, or even bringing good or bad news. So did the Herald. He first praises his motherland's soil, then calls Zeus, Pythios (Apollo) and Hermes, the protector of the messengers, and finally he calls on the statue-gods of the palaces that look towards east. He probably **salutes** their images or **sends them a kiss**, too. Only then he describes the misfortunes the Greeks went through during the ten years of war, Troy's destruction, and the hardships the army suffered because of Troy's **impious** besieging. He finishes his speech with a praise to Zeus and leaves after he informs them of Menelaus unknown fate.

The chorus then blames Paris for he grew to slaughter his livestock and **mourns** for the odd dowry Helen took to the Trojans, the total extinction. One might say that they **wedded to destruction**.

CHORUS
bringing destruction to Ilium instead of a dowry. (406)

The actual procession, the wedding songs and the **dowry** for the newly-wed's new life gave their place to the soldiers, the war cries, the dirges and death. "Helen is a bride who brings death in her wake".¹²⁶⁰ In other words, the chorus through their references on Iphigenia and Helen pave the way for the live example on stage, Cassandra.

Rehm's definition 'marriage to death' is more than clearly illustrated in Agamemnon and Cassandra's arrival.

¹²⁶⁰ Rehm, 1994, p. 43.

their deaths also take the form of a twisted wedding ceremony that leads to the bloodshed of the bride ¹²⁶¹

When Agamemnon arrives, as expected, he **salutes**¹²⁶² all the gods' statues or images he comes across when he enters his city (810-829) by raising his right hand according to the custom, a customary gesture of respect. The **wedding hints** are clearly illustrated in the arrival of the title character. In a standard wedding custom, the groom brought the bride to his parents' home in a cart followed by a torchlight procession. At the threshold the couple were greeted by his mother and afterwards the bride was incorporated in her new *oikos* with *katachysmata*. McNeil¹²⁶³ offers the perverted correspondence which I summarise below.

- i) Agamemnon and Cassandra arrive at the palace in the same chariot (906, 1039, 1054, and 1070). McNeil suggests Cassandra is sitting beside Agamemnon demurely exhibiting a real bride's behaviour as an ironic effect. However, it is more reasonable to think that she rather looks preoccupied, or self-absorbed, out of her upsetting feelings of her forthcoming death.
- ii) They are welcomed by his wife, Clytaemnestra, who awaits them at the entrance to the palace. A perverted reversion is Rehm's suggestion that the queen takes the place of the groom's mother who welcomed her son and her daughter-in-law (855).¹²⁶⁴
- iii) He point is further stressed when Agamemnon asks his legal wife to welcome his concubine as bride into their home just before he enters the palace. The rite of integration, *katakchysmata*, is alluded here. However, Clytaemnestra is not his mother and it is not her duty to incorporate new "brides" in her house. Thus, such a request must have been really insulting to her womanhood, especially when a concubine was possibly housed in another establishment.¹²⁶⁵
- iv) The wedding allusion is also manifested just before Agamemnon walks on the red carpet. Reversing the pre-nuptial fastening of the bride's special sandals, the

¹²⁶¹ Rehm, 1994, p. 43.

¹²⁶² Today, in a similar way, Greek Orthodox Christians make the sign of the cross when they pass by a church.

¹²⁶³ McNeil, Lynda, "Bridal Cloths, Cover-Ups, and Kharis: The 'Carpet Scene' In Aeschylus' Agamemnon", *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 52, No. 1, (2005), pp. 3-4.

¹²⁶⁴ Rehm, 1994, p. 48.

¹²⁶⁵ Kells, H., J., "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", *Classical Philology*, Vol.56, No.3. (1961), fn 13, p.171.

“nymphides”, Agamemnon has his sandals removed because he does not want to desecrate the cloth (943-945).

Each perverted step of the wedding process brings Agamemnon closer to his death. When Clytaemnestra slyly welcomes her husband warmly, she asks him to walk into the house *without* his feet touching the ground and bids her slaves to unroll a special red carpet. This act has two implications: first it seems that Agamemnon is already treated as a dead person whose feet do not touch the ground; and Clytaemnestra deliberately invites Agamemnon to commit *hubris* by elevating himself to the place of a god,¹²⁶⁶ a privilege only the image of the god during the processions of religious festivals enjoyed.

CLYTAEMNESTRA

Let this way forthwith be spread with
crimson, so that Justice may lead him into a home he never
hoped to see. (910-911)

Reverence was everybody's duty, let alone those in the higher social class who should additionally set the example. Therefore, as expected, Agamemnon refuses the honour out of fear of the gods' anger if he overreaches the human limits ... at first,

It is gods, you know, who should
be honoured with such objects; to my mind, for a mortal to
tread on beautiful embroideries cannot be anything but
perilous. (922-924)

but in the end he gives in to her persistence probably to coax her. He knows that pride is a grave sin but still he ventures his safety.

AGAMEMNON

Well, if that's what you want, let someone quickly take off
my shoes ...
and as I walk on these purple-dyed [robes], may no jeal-
ous eye strike me from afar! (944-947)

This audacity of his is to become his final *hybris*, although he is well aware that it is more than difficult to ease the unbending anger of the sacrilegious acts that occurred

¹²⁶⁶ Konishi, Haruo, “Agamemnon's Reasons for Yielding”, *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 110, No. 2 Morell, Scott, Kenneth, “The Fabric of Persuasion: Clytaemnestra, Agamemnon, and the Sea of Garment”, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (1996-1997), pp. 150-1.

in the family line, even if he meets all the ritualistic demands such as sacrifices, libations or bitter tears.

and for anything that requires healing remedies
we shall endeavour to avert the painful effects of the disease,
either by cautery or by judicious use of the knife. (848-850)

It is though ironic that despite his awareness of the burden of his family's *miasma* (the pollution), he dares commits his own adding them on the pile of ancestral crimes, meaning his daughter's unfair sacrifice for which he did not **expiate**, take a priestess as a concubine, or transgress the gods limits walking on the carpet.¹²⁶⁷ Clytaemnestra therefore has many reasons to hold a grudge for her husband's sacrilegious deeds and the self-perpetuating nature of violence in the family as her excuses to carry on her plans.

As Agamemnon walks towards the palace with Clytaemnestra alongside, it is certain that she does not walk on the carpet as the slave women most probably gather the carpet up. Before entering his palace, he salutes the god-protectors of his house (851-853), probably sends them a kiss, out of respect as well as out of fear for walking on the red carpet.

When the couple exits, the old men express with a song the feeling of disquiet they have had since Agamemnon's arrival and the twists that may occur unexpectedly in a man's life. In other words, they increase the spectators' awareness of something terrible to come.

During the whole scene, Cassandra remains silent on the cart. She does not even respond to Clytaemnestra who returns to take her inside for the **initiatory rites**. The

¹²⁶⁷ Actually, the title-character faces doom because he is five times cursed: (1) he bears the guilt of his father in the form of a curse pronounced on Atreas by his brother, Thyestes. (2) he bears his own guilt for sacrificing his daughter, Iphigenia. (3) he exhibited excessive pride on several occasions as commander of the Greek forces. The final straw was his decision about Troy's destiny when he allowed his soldiers to participate in the ruination of Troy's holy places. (4) He also commits adultery with Cassandra, violating Apollo's priestess. (5) Finally, he indulges his own pride by walking in triumph on the tapestries. Following this line of thought, the murder Clytemnestra plans can be alleged as a rightful punishment for his *Hybris*.

queen has already offered her bloodless sacrifices but she has also prepared the lambs for her husband's return.

CLYTAEMNESTRA

The sheep are already standing, ready for slaughter, in front
Of the altar in the very centre of the palace, (1056-1058)

However, both types of sacrifices are twisted as the Queen' intentions do not derive from genuine feelings. Among the other animals, she also prepares two human victims for slaughter. As Gantz notes, "the proper use of sacrifice is impiously perverted to an evil end"¹²⁶⁸ and this is an image strongly applied in *Agamemnon*. It is obvious so far that the both Clytaemnestra and Agamemnon either pretend to execute the rites piously when their aims and purposes are otherwise, such as in the case of Clytaemnestra, or perform them superficially without really living piously, such as Agamemnon.

Annoyed for receiving no reply from Cassandra, Clytaemnestra goes inside leaving her alone with the chorus. The famous Cassandra's scene is central for the plot as the past, the present and the future meet to unfold the story of the trilogy. It is also the most soul-stirring scene in *Agamemnon* for two reasons: the prophetess does not only exhibit the seizing by the god when she is in a trance, , but she also suffers and **mourns** as she visions the long-gone past and the inevitable future, including her own horrendous death that makes her break down at times.

a prophet 'possessed' by Apollo, with a kind of 'second sight' that enables her literally to 'see' both past and future as well as present events as if they were all happening in the present. Such 'multi-temporal' awareness is characteristic of prophets in early Greek literature. ... actually seeing and emotionally responding to exceptionally gruesome and vividly-described events, including her own murder.¹²⁶⁹

The prophetess remains silent for almost 300 lines (782-1071) since her entrance.

When she finally does speak, her first sounds are only cries of pain, grammatically unarticulated, followed by riddling puns and questions.¹²⁷⁰

¹²⁶⁸ Gantz, "The Fires of the Oresteia", (1977). p. 30.

¹²⁶⁹ Schein, "The Cassandra Scene", (1982). p.11.

¹²⁷⁰ Schein, "The Cassandra Scene", (1982). p.13.

After Clytaemnestra's exits, she remains silent for a little more. Cassandra seems to sense the ancestral blood-guilt the moment she arrives at the palace¹²⁷¹ until she cannot bear it anymore and, suddenly, turns her head to the statue of Apollo and bursts into a heart-breaking **lamentation** mixed up with prophetic verses. Four times she calls for him in her raving state (1073, 1077, 1080, 1085), a reactions that upsets the Chorus.

CASSANDRA
Otototoi, popoi, dah!
Apollo! Apollo!

Her non-stop flow of words can be divided into two main parts. In the first part (1072-1172) she mainly senses and feels the past in a raving stage and seems agitated about her future. Then, in the second phase (1173-1330), she handles herself better and repeats everything in more controlled manner.

Therefore, first she hums and haws in a **trance**, upsetting the chorus as it tries to make sense out of her words; she has visions of accumulating images that she tries to pronounce quickly as they pass in front of her eyes;¹²⁷² she talks about the ancestral sin and curse as she senses Atreus' murders and the unholy dinner (1090-1092, 1096-97), and refers to its new sacrificial victim, Agamemnon (1100-1104); she sees Clytemnestra getting ready to move on with her plans and murder Agamemnon in the bath (1107-1108, 1114-1118) and in a few lines later she describes it in detail (1125-1129); she **laments** for herself beforehand because there will be no relative to bring relief to her soul (1136-1139, 1146-1149); She remembers her carefree growing up days by the river Scamander, the river of Troy, and compares it with her future residence by the rivers Kokytos and Acherontas¹²⁷³ (1156-1161); and her raving state ends with the reference to her **sacrificial death** by a double-edged knife (1167-1172).

¹²⁷¹ Furley, "Motivation in the Parodos", (1986). p.113.

¹²⁷² Schein, "The Cassandra Scene", (1982). p.14.

¹²⁷³ In Greek Mythology, there are the two rivers in the realm of Hades. Kokkytos is the river of mourning and Acherontas the river of sorrow. On their shores, necromancies, invocations to the souls (necromancies and *Psykhopompeies* (soul guidance/carrier), took place. On the one hand, Kassandra foresees her doom future and on the other hand, she probably expresses her present two-folded states of mind: Both rivers stand for her sadness and her status as a prophetess. According to Rehm, the

In the second part, she calms down and repeats everything in a controlled manner with minor **oracle** exaltations (1173-1330). Yet, she does **transcend** twice but the difference here is that she is aware of the time she is about to lose her consciousness.

Iou, iou! Oh! Oh! The pain! The terrible agony of true
prophecy is coming over me again, whirling me around
and deranging me in the [fierce storm] of its onset. (1214-1216)

...

Papai! How the fire comes upon me! Ototoi! Apollo the
Wolf-dog! Ah me, ah me, [the pain] ... (1256-1258)
(Note: The ancient exclamations are used transliterated)

What is more in this part is that there are times when Cassandra exceeds the boundaries of a prophetess and acts like a **medium** when she experiences the gruesome events she sees. She tells the Chorus about the malicious voices she hears singing of evil things in the house concerning the beginning of the ancestral crimes, when Thyestes slept with his brother's wife, for which Atreus punished him with a meal of his children.

There is a group of singers
that never leaves this house. They sing in unison, but not
pleasantly, for their words speak of evil. Moreover, this
revel-band drinks human blood ...
... the band of the house's kindred Furies. Besetting the
chambers of the house, they sing a song of the ruinous
folly that first began it all, and one after another they show
their abhorrence of the brother's bed that worked harm
to him who defiled it. (1187-1194)

Cassandra 'sees' now the swarm of Furies who have been creeping in the shadows of the palace ever since, never leaving the place. When the men express their admiration on her abilities, Cassandra tells them of how she tricked the god to get her charisma and that her punishment was to be believed by no one (1202-1213). She probably informs them indirectly that they will not listen to her warning either in an attempt to change their imminent predictable reaction. The chorus members though do not perceive her hint allured by her ability and want to know more about her as they gradually accept her as a great prophetess.

Then, she falls in her **trance** again and like a fury¹²⁷⁴ she sees the murder of Thyestis' boys and smells the blood (1219-1222). The spirits sitting in the house like dream-figures, holding fresh flesh in their hands are so vivid that she cannot separate reality from vision. She then sees Agamemnon's ending and Clytaemnestra's great victorious cry when she kills him. Cassandra compares her to an amphisbaena or Scylla (1233) trying in general to convince the old men of the truth of her words. The Chorus shivers with terror reliving those terrible days but no matter how much she tries to spur the chorus into action when she recovers they do not understand. Or, they prefer not to.

Cassandra's intensity, her peculiarly wide, deep, and temporally extended knowledge, and the directness with which it is expressed, are themselves terrifying. The chorus are unable or unwilling to believe her. She produces in them the combination of respect and only partial understanding, mingled with pity and terror...¹²⁷⁵

The **curse of disbelief** is still in force. First they do not understand, then they do not believe and finally they prefer to ignore her predictions.¹²⁷⁶ However, they gradually grow to respect her but their respect mingles with pity and terror.¹²⁷⁷ When she enters the second trance (1256-1294), she feels the heat of its coming in her head. She sees her own death again and she suddenly gets angry with the god and she throws down her prophetic neck bands and tears her garb, an action actually performed by Apollo himself she says (1264-1270) who can finally collect his debt with her death. The removal of her robes and the god's insignia symbolises her disavowal of him¹²⁷⁸ and her imminent transfer to the realm of Hades. At the same time, this is her **pre-wedding sacrifices** before she walks to her wedding to death. She is ready to leave her mortal life behind consoled by the fact that the son who will avenge his father's murder will in extension avenge hers (1280-1283). This is an important part of her vision: the idea that there is someone to rescue the city, is the prelude for the next tragedy.

¹²⁷⁴ Bacon, "The Furies' Homecoming", (2001). p. 50.

¹²⁷⁵ Schein, "The Cassandra Scene", (1982). p. 12.

¹²⁷⁶ Winnington-Ingram, "Aeschylus, Agamemnon 1343-71", (1954). p. 27.

¹²⁷⁷ Schein, "The Cassandra Scene", (1982). p. 12.

¹²⁷⁸ Griffith, D., "Disrobing in the Oresteia", *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol.38, No.2, (1988), p. 554.

She calms down again and seems ready to accept her own death bravely. Yet, she stops out of fear and repulsion of the smell of the blood she claims is coming from inside (1309).

Ugh, ugh!

(Ancient Greek exclamation: *φῦ, φῦ*. (1307)

The house breathes blood-dripping murder. (1309)

The chorus is puzzled and tries to convince her that it is the smell of sacrifices and the Syrian fragrance (1312), but she knows better than them. Probably in an effort to get courage just before she goes through the doors of the palace, Cassandra considering herself a guest she claims the lives of her killers as her hospitality presents,

I claim this as my guest-right. (1320)

and then she sings a **dirge** for her imminent death for there will be no one to do that for her before she follows her destiny.

Arrival and death, marriage and murder, the portals of the house and the gates of Hades – these are the foci of Cassandra’s inspired perceptions.¹²⁷⁹

Prior to her death as well, it seems that Apollo’s curse is reversed. The men’s last words, show that they are fully aware of what has happened and is about to happen.

Unhappy one, I pity you for the death you have foretold. (1321)

Cassandra is finally believed by someone. It is not unreasonable to suggest that this reverse of the curse is caused by her rejection of the insignia of Apollo. As soon as she denies her priesthood the chorus seems to take her words seriously.

After her long speech Cassandra eventually walks through the palace’s doors, the entrance of Hades in the symbolic world. There she will receive Clytaemnestra’s **integration rituals**, used for new wives, slaves and concubines at the altar of the *oikos*,¹²⁸⁰ and be killed.

CLYTAEMNESTRA

You come along inside too ...

since Zeus ... has enabled you

to share the lustral water of this house, standing round

¹²⁷⁹ Rehm, 1994, p. 49.

¹²⁸⁰ Rehm, 1994, p. 44.

the altar of Zeus Ktesios among many other slaves. (1035-1038)

Seaford points out, an ignored point by the commentators, the reference to the **lustral water**, the *χέρνιβες*, Clytaemnestra used for the newcomers.¹²⁸¹ This lustral water was used to sprinkle the sacrificial victims to obtain their symbolic consent before the killing. The corresponding one for Agamemnon's case is his **final bath**, which Hame believes it has never had the analogous attention as a funeral rite.¹²⁸² A lot earlier though, Seaford likened his bath to a **funeral** rite and the net to a shroud wrapped around the body after being washed.¹²⁸³ Like Cassandra, Agamemnon entered the water willingly. His **final bath** is the water sprinkled on the animal to agree with its death or an inverted **pre-nuptial** ablution. Seaford is the first to relate Agamemnon's **final bath** to the preparation of the body for the burial rite¹²⁸⁴ in contrast to real life. The fifth century Attic male had his body bathed, anointed and dressed by his female relatives before the *prothesis*. The king has also received some sort of a twisted **praise** while being alive. More specifically, when he arrives Clytaemnestra compares him with the living roots of a tree shading the house, a commonplace of the Greek lament from Homer to the present day.¹²⁸⁵ So, the king has received a kind of **lamentation** before he dies too.

After Cassandra enters the palace, the chorus **prays** with a song about how short human life is, even though they are born with silver spoons in their mouths. Their song is interrupted by two consecutive **wailing** cries, as the strikes suggest the lethal hit on the **sacrificed** animal and the **ululation** of the participants to cover the blow. Cassandra's **dowry** has reached her destination, just like Helen's for the Trojans.

The Cassandra scene is significant in *Agamemnon* for other than dramaturgical purposes. It provides the viewers with all the necessary information filling any gaps they may have on the storyline. Then, it exhibits the manner in which a possessed prophetess behaves and provides a deeper understanding on the mental and spiritual

¹²⁸¹ Seaford, Richard, "The Last Bath of Agamemnon", *The Classical Review*, New Series, Vol.34, No.2. (1984), p. 247

¹²⁸² Hame, "All in the Family". (2004). p. 513

¹²⁸³ Seaford, "The Last Bath of Agamemnon", (1984). p.247.

¹²⁸⁴ Seaford, "The Last Bath of Agamemnon", (1984). p.247.

¹²⁸⁵ Seaford, "The Last Bath of Agamemnon", (1984). p.254.

state of an ancient prophetess or pythia. Not to mention how valuable this long scene is on the performative level.

As it is expected the chorus goes into frenzy. Different voices argue on what they should do. One suggests that they should act immediately and others point out that they do not really know what is happening. After vacillating between opinions, they finally resolve to form an exploratory committee to find out the facts but for the moment, they decide to take no action.

The palace doors open and Clytaemnestra, resembling a Fury, triumphantly comes out with the two dead bodies at her feet.¹²⁸⁶ Agamemnon had his wash alive but his **corpse is dishonoured** as it is now dirty with the bloody stained robe cloak thrown over his body.¹²⁸⁷ The public exhibition of the dead bodies was not proper. But this perverted performance of the rite of *prothesis* was necessary for Clytaemnestra because she wanted the people to witness the death so that she could have the power.

Clytaemnestra describes her murder to the elders. She gave him an extra third strike in honour of Zeus of the underworld, connecting it with the third **libation** after a feast. Instead of wine though, she uses his blood. This perverted confusion between the symposium *sponde* and the funereal *choe* shows that she hates her husband so much that she would gladly **defile** his corpse with pouring a real libation,¹²⁸⁸ as it was a norm after a sacrifice:

I added a third stroke, in thanksgiving to the Zeus
of the underworld, the saviour of the dead, for the fulfilment of my prayers. (1385-1387)

If it were possible to make a really appropriate libation over the corpse (1395)

To the Chorus' disappointment she is in solid control, showing no signs of remorse. It is obvious that two souls will have **no proper burials** according to the tradition.¹²⁸⁹

¹²⁸⁶ Rehm, 1994, p. 44.

¹²⁸⁷ Seaford, "The Last Bath of Agamemnon", (1984). p.248.

¹²⁸⁸ Zeitlin, I., Froma, "Postscript to Sacrificial Imagery in the *Oresteia* (Ag. 1235-37)", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 97, (1966), p. 653

¹²⁸⁹ Agamemnon does receive some corrupted preparatory funeral rites but they are non-traditional because he was still alive. In short, Clytaemnestra bathes her live husband, murders him and then offers

The men really worry for the dead king's fate (1389-11496) which it repeats a few lines below.

Ió, ió, my king, my king,
How shall I weep for you? (1513-1520)

Subconsciously, they know the answers about the fundamental issues of his traditional **funeral**¹²⁹⁰ rite such as preparation, lamentation and burial as befit a king and a husband otherwise they would not make so many questions.

Who will bury him? Who will sing his lament? (1541)

Definitely, any of their wishes eliminates Clytaemnestra from this role:

Will *you* dare to do it – after slaying
your own husband, to wail for him
and to perform, without right, a favour that will be no favour
to his soul, in return for his great deeds?
Who that utters praises over the tomb
of a godlike man, accompanied by tears,
will do that task with sincerity of heart?
How shall I weep for you? (1542-1550)

Even so, she is more than reluctant even to pretend that she mourns the husband she has just killed. The Argive elders are aware of the fact that no son, brother, nor any other male relative or friend exists to conduct the rites.

Conversing with Clytaemnestra, only serves to affirm to their fears that their king will **not rest in his grave**. She does not ignore the elders but promptly asserts her authority to determine whether Agamemnon will receive burial or not.

You think this deed is mine? ... (1497)

She denies offering him anything posthumous explaining clearly that Agamemnon has crossed the limits of **a friend**, a *philos*, to an enemy, *echthros*, when he sacrificed their daughter Iphigenia¹²⁹¹ (1526-1529). To her, his merciless killing made him lose his status as the head of the family whose main duty was to protect its members from

Cassandra as a type of *prosphagma*, a sacrifice, clothes him in a net, takes control of his funeral rites, perverts the rite of *prothesis* exhibiting the body in public, prohibits lamentation, mutilates the body, and buries it so that the shade of Agamemnon may suffer punishment. In her mind her husband has been so many times impious that the gods would justify her acts (1397–98): Hame, “All in the Family”, (2004). pp. 52, 531.

¹²⁹⁰ Hame, “All in the Family”, (2004). p. 518.

¹²⁹¹ Hame, “All in the Family”, (2004). p. 528.

harm (1551-1552). Therefore, Clytaemnestra strongly believes that she is entitled to his throne. One of her male duties is to **undertake the funerary rites** and arrangements showing that she is now in control, saying sharply that the burial she prepares is more than enough for him¹²⁹².

At our hand
he fell, at our hand he died, and our hand will bury him,
not to the accompaniment of grieving by those outside
the family (1553-1556)

Doubtless, the burial she plans to offer expresses her vindictiveness. Standing alone on the stage, Clytaemnestra

without any male relative to direct her (Aegisthos has not yet arrived), states that Agamemnon's murderers will bury him, and then proceeds to dictate how the funeral will be performed: there will be no tears of lament from his household.¹²⁹³

She who killed him will bury him, but **without any tears**. Proceeding with the burial, she performs another aberration of the customary rites by ignoring the **prohibition of murderers** getting involved in the funerals of those they have killed.

The elders are very disappointed but they cannot be insolent to the queen. But they are aggressive towards Aegisthus when he appears, too. After his heated argument with the elders, the queen intervenes to soothe the tension addressing the men very politely but in absolute control of the whole situation. She finally leads Aegisthus inside the palace.

Clytaemnestra declares that as long as Aegisthus **lights her hearth** she will reign with him. The hearth in each house was religiously kept on in ancient Greece for the prosperity of the household. Therefore, she stresses the fact that as long as Aegisthus is by her side, they will both thrive. It seems that their illegal union must have been sanctioned by a **wedding oath**¹²⁹⁴ since she is legally married to Agamemnon with the *Eggyen*. However, her oath calling on Justice for her daughter proves that she is the fire in her hearth, not Aegisthus.

¹²⁹² Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). pp. 521-2, 528.

¹²⁹³ Hame, "All in the Family", (2004). p. 521.

¹²⁹⁴ Kells, "Aeschylus *Eumenides* 213-24 and Athenian Marriage", (1961). p. 170.

by the
 fulfilled Justice that was due for my child, by Ruin and by
 the Fury, through whose aid I slew this man, no fearful apprehension
 stalks my house, so long as the fire upon my
 hearth is kindled by Aegisthus and he remains loyal to me
 as hitherto; (1432-1436)

What they both however do *not* take into account is that the murders they have committed in the name of justice brought also blood on their hands which need **propitiation**. Even soldiers offered purification sacrifices and libations as soon as they returned home from war to protect themselves for the vengeful souls of their victims.

CLYTAEMNESTRA
 If the army should return without having of-
 fended the gods, the pain of the dead would be appeas-
 able, if no unexpected stroke of evil fate occurs. (345-7)

Clytaemnestra indirectly accuses Agamemnon that he has forgotten to pay his due to *her* daughter Iphigenia on his return, something which she herself denies to do as well. It is likely that Agamemnon takes the place of the animal in her mind as a perverted **sacrifice** to appease her daughter's soul. Or, as Fletcher suggests, it is the sacrifice she did not performed to guarantee the **oath** she took to avenger her daughter, something we learn in the next play.¹²⁹⁵ It is also possible, that the slaughtered Cassandra becomes Iphigenia's counterpart at the end of the play.¹²⁹⁶ After all, the queen brags that with her murder she avenged Iphigenia and blames the curse of the Atreides house for death after death.¹²⁹⁷

¹²⁹⁵ Fletcher, Judith, "Oath in Oresteia", in *Horkos: The Oath in Greek Society* ed. by Sommerstein Alan H. and Judith Fletcher, Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2007, p. 105.

¹²⁹⁶ Winnington-Ingram, P., R., "Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1343-71", *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 4, No. ½, (1954), p. 30.

¹²⁹⁷ It is evident that the sacrificial and the wedding motifs mix up to sharpen Cassandra's and Iphigenia's death. Both women are the victims, forced to wed Hades when they were supposed to live with their promised husbands. However, there are more differences in their murders, although Rehm sees these as correspondences. Only their wed to death match. Apart from that, Iphigenia was sacrificed whereas Cassandra was murdered but it can be further regarded as Clytaemnestra's pre-wedding sacrifices for she can now continue her life with Aegisthus uninterrupted. Iphigenia struggled for her life in contrast to Cassandra who, like a sacrificial victim, consented to her death. Iphigenia dies veiled in a manner of speaking covered with her robes while Cassandra enters the palace to meet her death leaving her veil to fall on the floor. Iphigenia was gagged, Rehm says "like an animal" but animals were not gagged in real life, so that she did not curse her executors, but Cassandra chooses to go inside in

By linking Cassandra and Iphigenia, Aeschylus brings together the manifold dames wreaked separately by Agamemnon and Klytemnestra, and the **audience** views their respective fates accordingly.¹²⁹⁸

Therefore, Cassandra's actual slaughter becomes literally Iphigenia's counterpart at the end of the play.¹²⁹⁹ The description of her daughter's sacrifice at the beginning of the play finds its reason now.

Aegisthus shares Clytemnestra's feeling towards his cousin and his father. When he talks about the hatred between his uncle Atreus and his father Thyestis (1583-1586), and describes the repulsive dinner of Atreus to his brother, he silently accuses Atreus for doing nothing to appease the souls of his brothers. Father and son have never asked for a sacrificial forgiveness. Arrogance runs in the family and they never take their religious responsibilities seriously.

However, Aegisthus behaviour proves that conceit runs in his blood as well if one considers the fact that he also does not plan to placate the soul and the gods for the double murder. But then again, he may believe that he is not the one who hit the blows.

Having said that, we cannot but think that if she had handled the results of her revenge with care and respect, if she had not committed a *hubris*, there could be a chance to avoid death later on. Presenting the body triumphantly and pouring a libation on the corpse out of exultation is impiety because dead bodies were treated with care and honour. The vicious circle of Yvris and Ati continues non-stop (1541-1542).

This denial for proper burial is the trigger for what follows in the next tragedy.

silence. There was no way for the prophetess to curse the house, as she knows first that it is already damned, secondly that her death is her revenge for Troy and lastly that she will be avenged in the future: Rehm, 1994, p. 50.

¹²⁹⁸ Rehm, 1994, p. 52.

¹²⁹⁹ Winington-Ingram, P., R., "Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1343-71", *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 4, No. ½, (1954), p. 30.

APPENDIX V

Staging Ritual in Time and Space A Suggested Process

The preliminary steps that follows are suggested under the precondition that first a text-performed tragedy is to be mounted, and secondly that he has at least a couple of months for preparation at his disposition. A tragic text-play requires more time for preparation than the usual six to eight weeks for a modern play.¹³⁰⁰ The multi-layered nature of such a production is probably the reason for the very few publications on the staging of tragedy. Having said that, the initial stage for the production of a tragedy will be supported by authorities such as Oliver Taplin, whose final chapter has been inspirational,¹³⁰¹ David Wiles, Simon Goldhill and Peter Arnott,¹³⁰² who all strongly believe that a director should first appropriate the realm of the tragic text before stepping into its production. Therefore this section is also in line with the performative turn in which the text-play and the final text-performed product must be in balance.

The focus of the staging of tragedy lies between two axis: the first one refers to the fact that the poets used their remote historical past combined with their contemporary rituals to project their troubled present; and the second axis to the idea that the material used for a production of a tragedy should derive from one cultural source only to effect unity, in my case from the Greek culture. Therefore, the question nowadays is how a director can fulfil these two requirements when staging a tragedy and its rituals.

¹³⁰⁰ Brockett, "Producing Greek Tragedy", (1961). p. 322.

¹³⁰¹ Taplin, Oliver, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, London: Methuen, 1978, pp. 176-181.

¹³⁰² Arnott, 1991; Wiles, 2000; Wiles, David, "Reading Greek Performance", *Greece & Rome*, 2nd Ser., Vol. 34, No. 2. (1987), pp. 136-151; Goldhill, 2007.

1. Availability of Time for Preparation

Greek tragedies have great difficulties in their staging because they comprise all the performative elements. Each one is demanding in the sense that it requires its own planning and treatment during rehearsals: the treatment of chorus which dances, sings and speaks, the music and choreography, the teaching of the actors and the set and the costume design must all come to blend in a unified result. The productions of the National Theatres of Greece and Cyprus which are in principle meant for the festivals of the big amphitheatres usually have about six months at their disposal for preparation, with the rehearsals to last for up to three months.

2. Involving Other Fields

Considering then the multidimensional peculiarities of the structure of tragedies, a director should be able to cooperate from point zero not only with the translator but also extend his team with other specialties such as a classicist, a historian, an archaeologist, an ethnologist or an anthropologist;¹³⁰³ in short anyone with good knowledge of ancient Greek religion. Oliver Taplin shares the view that a director has to work closely with a classicist. He believes that including him or her in the production team is more than crucial as, no matter how theoretical they may be, and unaware of what works in performance, they know how to translate cultures and between cultures.¹³⁰⁴

The director is presupposed to have some “scholarly knowledge of the ancient theatre”¹³⁰⁵ but it does not qualify him with expertise. Therefore, the involvement of a classicist, for example, in the team means that whenever the director, the choreographer, the musician and the actors come across textual ambiguities there is the expert they can turn to for clarifications on meaning, rituals and so many more.

¹³⁰³ Brockett, “Producing Greek Tragedy”, (1961). p. 155.

¹³⁰⁴ Taplin, Sellars, Stein, Koniordou, (2003). pp. 130-31.

¹³⁰⁵ Cookson, M., G., “On Translating Greek Tragedy”, *The Classical Review*, Vol. 37, No. 7/8 (1923), pp. 147, 148.

This is a crucial decision for a Greek and non-Greek group for it provides information and paves the way for that mystic moment to the actors and the spectators.

3. Translation

The play-text is the primary tool for a production. The ancient Greek may be generally accepted as a live ancient language, according to linguists like Lesky, but it is read, spoken and written by few. Therefore, it may be used for specific purposes such as the anniversary of a festival on ancient drama for instance, selectively in choral odes in a production or for experimental purposes. However, tragedy has almost never been produced in ancient Greek.¹³⁰⁶ Hence the textual comprehension to its minute detail, and rituals, that consists the marrow of a production depends wholly on a translator.

It is not the task of this thesis to delve into the field of translation. In theory, the translator is to reconstruct the ancient text as faithfully as possible into modern Greek, or any other language, and bring together what is being said or implied, what is being done or have happened before. It is easily apprehended that the ancient Greek, or any language, cannot be wholly transferred into another language because the language, the human thought and the living conditions have been evolving along with man and undergone huge changes. For Cookson

language is not a crystallised thing, but a living, sensitive organism, animated by the spirit of the race and of the individual man, adapted to their characteristic purposes, changing as they change, saturated with history. ... between the personality of the tragedian and a page of translation there is interposed, besides twenty centuries of revolution and change, the language of the poet and its metrical laws; next, the mind of the translator; and finally the new vehicle of expression with its appropriate principles of harmony.¹³⁰⁷

¹³⁰⁶ This gave me the following idea. In the symposiums on ancient drama organized by COIITE most of the productions from other countries, in their language, project the translated subtitles in modern Greek on a screen. It would be interesting therefore to see a tragedy in ancient Greek language in a similar way.

¹³⁰⁷ Cookson, M., G., "On Translating Greek Tragedy", *The Classical Review*, Vol. 37, No. 7/8 (1923), p. 147.

Wiles also agrees that distance makes the translator's task difficult from a different perspective:

The translator of a Greek text has to deal with immense cultural distance ... The situation is complicated, in regard to performance, by the fact that supposed experts remain ignorant about vital aspects of the Aeschylean original. First, we don't know what the original sounded like. ... Second, we have little idea how the originals were acted. ... The greatest unsolved mystery is the chorus. ... This leaves us in the predicament that the play has to be reinvented afresh for each performance. It becomes unreasonable to dwell too long on what is "lost" in translation, because we don't know what was there in the first place. The source culture that we seek to honor is always some sort of fabrication.¹³⁰⁸

It is true that we know almost nothing about the original performances, and historical authenticity, unless for experimental reasons, is after all not in quest here. What though seems to be of primal important is the translocation of the action and the meaning of the words and the rituals in the new text-play, and then the balance with the text-performed action.

It is not a matter of time travel back or forward. If we balance Cookson's view that "Theoretically the true aim of translation is to transport us back to the poet, not to bring him closer to our-selves; it is we and not the poet or his work, ... that must undergo an essential change",¹³⁰⁹ and years later Wile's, "reaching for the past can be a way of transcending self-imposed limits that shape what theatre accomplishes in the present",¹³¹⁰ and fact that the classical text-plays still communicates unanswered existential problems as we discussed in chapter five, then it seems that it is up to the director to capture what the original work was like and then offers that pigment of modernity. Wiles relates such freshness of the modern performance to the form, that allows exploration and reinvention, and a language that is in tune with the body.¹³¹¹

After the translation, it is usual the time when the text-play goes under a reconstructive process in which omissions or alterations happen. The issue here is not

¹³⁰⁸ Wiles, David, "Translating Greek Theatre", *Theatre Journal*, Volume 59, No. 3, (2007), p. 365.

¹³⁰⁹ Cookson, "On Translating Greek Tragedy", (1923). p. 146.

¹³¹⁰ Wiles, "Translating Greek Theatre", (2007). p. 366.

¹³¹¹ Wiles, "Translating Greek Theatre", (2007). p. 366.

to destroy the structure of the tragedian's work of art, which includes the rituals as well.

The good translator studies his original as deeply and closely as he can; he has to decide which aspects are the most significant and the most necessary to be conveyed across the linguistic barrier; and then he has to try to do it.¹³¹²

This cutting down of the text is the moment the intervention of a classicist can prove more than valuable for rituals. The joined cooperation of the translator and the classicist, and the director, ensures that what is dissolved comes back together and becomes one again. The translation of a tragedy along with its dramaturgical process is undeniably an extremely demanding task as it: detects the indirect political statement and preserve it; handles the long speeches; renders the multilayered meaning of the verses as palpable as the original; possibly researches further for the intertextuality of the words; detects the rhythm and the musicality; maintains the religious expressions; and gives the choral odes the necessary attention so that the chorus may be performed in many ways,

The lines can be spoken in unison by a chorus; split between the members of the chorus; sung; spoken; "delivered in "singspiel."; danced;¹³¹³

Only such diligent transfer to modern Greek, or any other language, would offer the director, and the actors, the opportunity for a fruitful reading because the final product is coherent: the dialogical parts with their multi-layered meanings retain their power; the chorus have potentials; and the rites are delivered with validity. Unfortunately, what usually happens during the process of translation is that the power of the ancient form, and its ritualistic elements, is often damaged, or worse lost, when adjusting it to communicate with the modern audience.

There is also the issue whether a translator or a classicist can intervene during the rehearsals, or not. The National Theatres of Cyprus usually assign the translation of their production to a classicist who often does a good job. However, he usually has no

¹³¹² Brown, "Ancient Tragedy in Modern Greece", (1965), p. 111; Taplin, 1978, p. 180.

¹³¹² Taplin, 1978, p. 180.

¹³¹³ Goldhill, 2007, p. 172.

say at the rehearsals during which the play may go through further cutbacks to fit the 2-hour performance, often damaging the context and the rituals. For example, the cutting down of the binding song in TH.O.C.'s *Eumenides*, *Oresteia*, and further alterations of their role, made the Furies become featureless and weak, in contrast to their real Aeschylean nature. The active presence of a classicist throughout the rehearsals could have resulted in shortening the odes or the long speeches in the TH.O.C.'s productions without damaging its dramaturgical context.

It seems that *Oresteia* and *Trojan Women* were in sense adapted, if we refer to the adjustments and alterations made to suit certain purposes. However when the final product is not related to its source, then we may assume that it is an adaptation. Hutcheon's three perspectives of adaptation, as a formal entity or product, a process of creation and a process of reception can initiate a critical thinking on the productions in chapter four.¹³¹⁴ What can say here is that structurally, the removal of vital scenes, the cut-off endings, and the absence of the performance or reported rituals, TH.O.C presented another text-play on stage. These changes interrupted the linearity of the plot, therefore the build-up effects which depend on rituals, the characters' purpose and the chorus' function were inexistent. In short, the balance between the text-play and the text-performed was intrinsically reversed.

4. Following the Text

Translation enables careful and thorough reading of the text prior to any decision on the production, similar to any play of any time. But a tragedy requires an insight Shepard seems to possess in the letter he wrote to Richard Schecher in May, 1973:

For me, the reason a play is written is because a writer received a vision which can't be translated in any other way but a play. ... It seems to me that the reason someone wants to put that play together in a production is because they are pulled to its vision. If that's true then it seems they

¹³¹⁴ Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Adaptation*, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 7-8.

should respect the form that vision takes place in and not merely extrapolate its language and invent another which isn't the play.¹³¹⁵

In other words, Shepard directs the attention to the structure and the form of the text-play, meaning the bond and the flesh of a performance of which rituals are inseparable part. When a director manages to materialize the author's vision, including the rituals, then this visible form is his offer to the research of ancient tragedy.

A director then has to understand the play to its core if he wants to guide the actors and the other participants to a successful outcome. Rantzos¹³¹⁶ said for his *Bacchae* that

Bacchae can be compared to a mental labyrinth. I got in first, I got lost, I got out, and then I got lost again. A director has to get lost in the words so that he can guide his actors to the exit whenever they get lost.

Sharp-witted reading leads to the backbone of any play. Each tragedy has a principal dramaturgical idea which in many cases is a ritual: in *Medea* the oath governs the title character's attitude towards life; in the *Trojan Women* it is the lamentation for a lost country and fellow countrymen; *Bacchae* concentrates on people who are rapturous. In other tragedies, the concept of *hubris* of royal people who exceeds human limits hovers, which is often connected with the *miasma* ancestral crimes.¹³¹⁷

Careful reading therefore allows the identification of the crucial ritualistic moments in the plot, among others, and offers the opportunity to a director to make 2,500 years play have a voice again. The next thing a practitioner has to consider is how to achieve the unity of his performance.

5. Unity in Staging

After the umbilicus dramaturgical elaboration of the play-text comes the issue of how can the unity effect be achieved through the staging of the plot and the ritualistic scenes. The practitioner must consider three crucial issues for his production: time

¹³¹⁵ Schechner, 1988. p. 76.

¹³¹⁶ See Chapter four, Staging the text and the rituals.

¹³¹⁷ See Appendix II.

and place, space and concept in relation to the chosen cultural background of his production and the treatment of the chorus.

i. *Place and Time*

The choice of place and time is influenced the folk tradition, the strongest the better, an area has or not. This decision will affect the visual aspect of the production.

Material from one folk culture secures the unity in staging. Lee Breuer's *Gospel at Colonus* in New York in 1985, although a version, and designed for an indoor performance, looked like a gospel service, with a preacher, a choir and a congregation, a familiar tradition in American everyday life. His chorus, dressed in bright coloured African robes, not only did not dance but also took the position of the audience and often directed the audience's response.¹³¹⁸ Part of the success of the performance was the required unison the gospel tradition offered.

Therefore, the practitioner first needs to decide upon the place and time of his text-play so that the search for material for the set design, the music, the songs and choreography, and the mise-en-scene of rituals can begin..

ii. *Space and Concept*

With this decision, the practitioner is free to go on to his next puzzle, the design of the performative space and the concept of his production. There are four elements that describe the ancient theatre: the orchestra, the stage where the focus of the attention was on the central door and the two entrances on the right and left and the orchestra. All tragedies were written and staged between these parameters. Over and above, each play has it internal spatial dynamic which if ignored the effect can be damaging,¹³¹⁹ and inevitably the enactment of rituals too. The importance of the performative space lies in the fact that

Every movement of people, animals, objects, or light and every sound, will change the performative space and produce its spatiality anew.¹³²⁰

¹³¹⁸ Goldhill, 2007, p. 18.

¹³¹⁹ Goldhill, 2007, p. 20.

¹³²⁰ Fischer-Lichte, 2010, p. 32.

To exemplify this issue we can recollect on *Oresteia* in chapter four. The spatial centre of action in *Choephoroi* is the sacred spot of the tomb where vital ritualistic actions take place: it reminds the characters and the audience of Agamemnon's murder; Orestes offers his hair as a funeral offering; Electra offers libations to her father; it brings the brother and sister together through a prayer invocation; and finally, it sets the foundation for the next murder to come, Clytemnestra's. The other focal point is the central door of the palace, the portal to death. In TH.O.C.'s production these two axes were lost: the grave was somewhere on the platform, not clear where, in front of the opening which stood for the palace door; and the actors did not direct the audience's attention to a specific area, as they were moving around placing it at different spots each time they performed their post-burial rituals, libations and invocation of the dead.

In a different way, Deborah Warner's set of *Medea* in an unfinished suburban backyard with toys everywhere and a wading pool, in connection with the five neighbour women, the young and naïve Nurse and the Tutor dressed in modern and casual clothes created a domestic setting in which the "highly sexualized warfare opened the way for a performance that bordered on soap opera."¹³²¹

Any production that does not indicate the symbolic space and movement are doomed to confusion. Even adaptations for smaller theatres will end up ambiguous unless they embrace the formalism of tragedies.¹³²² Goldhill, in different words, is aware that a successful production of a Greek tragedy requires the logic of space written into it.¹³²³

These dramas were written for a specific set of resources which are brilliantly manipulated by the playwrights. The job of a modern director is not to reproduce the conditions of ancient theatre but to see how the modern theatre can respond to the vividly constructed spatial dynamics of the old plays.¹³²⁴

¹³²¹ Foley, 2010, p. 144.

¹³²² Taplin et al, (2003). p. 134.

¹³²³ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 7, 29.

¹³²⁴ Goldhill, 2007, p. 44.

Deborah Warner's production of Euripides' *Medea* (2000-2002) illuminates the importance of the spatial relationships in the text-play with another example. At the end of the tragedy *Medea*, the title character appears triumphantly high above Jason with her two children on a chariot drawn by flying dragons while Jason stays humiliated, lamenting and emotionally destroyed on the ground below. He is unable to touch her, and keeps begging her to let him kiss his boys for the last time. Medea's god-like feature denies him any right and announces the establishment of a rite in honour of her boys. Warner has Medea in a pool on the centre-stage without her sons and Jason at the edge of the pool. So Jason can reach her if only he stretches his arms and when he pleads for their bodies their presence is not indicated anywhere. What is more, her all-powerful nature with her ritualistic act of announcing the constitution of a festival is totally lost. By losing its vertical axis the dynamic of the play, with this stunning ending, is diminished. Their powerful confrontation is replaced by a wooing kind behaviour as Medea flicks water at Jason. Warner's decision on this spatial terms show a Medea that "had not an heroic, magical, or even foreign bone in her body."¹³²⁵ Instead of the winner-defeated sense, Warner has them embraced tightly in the pool struggling between hatred and bitterness.¹³²⁶ Therefore, Goldhill's comment on this decision of her, "Euripides' ... moral chaos, was reduced to an ancient version of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*"¹³²⁷ is more than correct. Or as Foley puts it,

In this case, the intergeneric play enhanced the stage experience, but radically distanced the play from central issues in Euripides' original.¹³²⁸

Therefore, since Warner's production was seen from a different frame that affected the context, it qualifies it as an adaptation.¹³²⁹

On the whole, a director should decide on his place and time and search for the local elements in contemporary life or tradition he would follow. Then the practitioner

¹³²⁵ Foley, 2010, p. 145.

¹³²⁶ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 21-24.

¹³²⁷ Goldhill, 2007, p. 24.

¹³²⁸ Foley, 2010, p. 145.

¹³²⁹ It "was performed in a fashion that produced repeated laughs before concluding with another descent into horror": Foley, 2010, p. 144.

should find the play's space to enhance the dramatic power of his production and the rituals. As already suggested, these decisions bespeak the analytical reading of the script-play and its balance with the script-performed.

iii. Chorus: Staging Collectivity through Ritual

What troubles a practitioner today is the convention of the chorus. What we know of the chorus is that there were 12-15 members, had a *choruphaios*, a leader, shared a collective identity and wore matching costumes and masks. They entered singing and stayed on stage till the end of the performance, except the rare cases when a killing took place on stage. They sang and danced in the accompaniment of *aulos*, often misleading translated by "flute", as it was more likely a double oboe that was said to have a great range of sound and to be hugely expressive (unlike the modern flute).¹³³⁰ As indicated in some translations, the odes are divided into stanzas which point at movement. The stanzas are called *strophe*, when they turned to the right, *antistrophe*, when they turn to the left and *epode*, when they stood still.¹³³¹

The chorus emits that feeling of community ancient Greeks established in their daily lives through politics and religion, the medium of commentary and the notion of authority. Moreover, they honoured their Gods with actual choral performances on traditional myths which strengthened the communal bonds, and reaffirmed the shared knowledge and beliefs. Being part of their lives, the chorus, the collectivity, became part of tragedy. Consequently, the role of the chorus was vital being the mouthpiece of the society, and the audience:

The chorus is a collective body, which mobilizes ... communal wisdom and ... memory. It speaks both as a particular character and with the authority (religious, social, cultural) that comes from its status as a chorus. As a group, it is constantly in significant tension with the individual heroes onstage and their self-commitment. This tension ... is integral to the ideological concerns of tragedy's narratives. The chorus odes act as a hinge between scenes, and guarantee that tragedy is never

¹³³⁰ Goldhill, 2007, p. 46.

¹³³¹ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 46-47.

merely a sad story but always has commentary, reflection, and distance built into its unfolding.¹³³²

What is generally not loudly articulated is the chorus' relation to the ritualistic scenes which abounds in each play as illustrated in chapter two and discussed in chapter five. They perform burials, formal laments and mourning, prayers, supplications, and participate in conjurations and invocations. In Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* they wade in the prayer-invocation with Orestes and Electra. Their collectivity as an authoritarian group dedicated to their self-commitment to infuriate Orestes to the point of killing his mother sticks out. In *Trojan Women* they perform the burial ritual after Hecuba's instruction and in the end the invocation to the dead. In *Medea* they pray, curse and supplicate. In *Eumenides* they hunt Orestes, perform a fearful binding spell and pray for all the best. Therefore, a large part of the production of tragedy needs to deal with its function on stage.

The search to communicate collectivity and ritualistic actions to the spectators is one of the major difficulties a modern director has to overcome. Unless the director finds a way, even for the few members, to speak as a community who has a thing to say, rites to perform and moves the story forward is no chorus; in other words, the concerned individual needs to project the power of their words.¹³³³ There are variable ways to treat a chorus, as long as the director decides upon three crucial aspects of their role:

tracing its sense of identity, its interaction with the actors, the narrative of the ode, and the relation of the odes to the action.¹³³⁴

Quite often, the interdependent relation between the chorus, the actors and the action is often lost when directors, too many times, do not have a strong attitude.

It is possible to break up passages and movement and to give individual members solo parts ... another outgrowth of the director's lack of confidence in his ability to make effective use of the group.¹³³⁵

As a result the episodes are treated in one manner, the choral passages in another, and the two parts are never properly integrated. In this indecisive treatment the rituals

¹³³² Goldhill, 2007, p. 53.

¹³³³ Goldhill, 2007, p. 54.

¹³³⁴ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 78-9.

¹³³⁵ Brockett, "Producing Greek Tragedy", (1961). p. 320.

involved in the narrative and the action odes direct are also lost. That is what mainly happens in all the productions in chapter four. For instance in the *Trojan women*, a play whose even the title declares a group of women, the chorus is turned into shadowy creatures deprived from any mourning and action, because the production brought forth *the* actor, not actors and chorus together.

One thing is certain: tragedy is not about characters conversing on various issues. They all, together, tell a story. The characters tell the chorus, and the chorus often tells the spectators. Sir Peter Hall says

what they feel, what they understand, what their doubts, what their fears are. And that direct communication with the audience, using the audience as part of the actors' world, is central to all Greek plays.¹³³⁶

If a director loses the dynamics the chorus offers in tragedy, then his theatrical event becomes an unfortunate common experience.¹³³⁷ Whatever the treatment a director must have in mind that,

Variety is no doubt desirable, but it may be achieved sufficiently through shifts from group speaking, to chanting, to singing and only where necessary to solo speaking.¹³³⁸

Music and singing, in combination with the movement, defines the chorus voice and physical style in ritualistic scenes too. The Trojan women cannot sing a dirge without any voice fluctuations affected by their pain, and Medea must be really frightening when she calls Hecate to help her with her magic. The Libation Bearers cannot be calm and sweet when boosting Orestes and Electra to commit a murder during the invocation whereas the Furies in Aeschylus *Eumenides* is characterised by that powerful group of crones who are filled with fierce complaint for losing their honour and their function and the the incantation of the “binding song” is the culmination of their existence.

¹³³⁶ Hart et al., “Ancient Greek Tragedy on the Stage”, (2003), p. 140.

¹³³⁷ Goldhill, 2007, pp. 66-67.

¹³³⁸ Brockett, “Producing Greek Tragedy”, (1961), p. 320.

Here, we have song *as* action: the power of world on display. The chorus ... has in itself a religious aspect, and with such songs ... enacts a role that a chorus could have outside the theatre.¹³³⁹

The text instructs that they run, jump, shout, argue, sing and march. It is unlikely to sing their 'binding song' in a soft rhythm and sweet voices. They have then to move and dance wildly and sing or speak with coarse or unearthly voice. Otherwise their primordial persistence and rage cannot be perceived. This unique in Greek literature material on spells, which is not found elsewhere in Greek literature, was not only *not* elaborated in TH.O.C's *Oresteia* but the old Goddesses were turned into passive, motionless, powerless creatures. Consequently, only studious research in the text can reveal their magnificent identity. Therefore, it is of question whether can someone to claim that he or she puts on a tragedy when the odes and the chorus' participation in the development of the story are removed from the main action and act only as decorative figures on stage. The chorus is engaged in the action, the ritualistic scenes which provoke actions and reactions because they are either perverted or fail and they debate, all as a committed group with one identity. *How* can the chorus be then staged in such a way as to achieve collectivity and an expressive voice in its action and rituals and be as invigorating in a contemporary production as it was in ancient Greece? One answer to these two fundamental problems of the tragic chorus is to draw material from one sole cultural source which has roots in the past. This search can also offer the required scenic unity of the production of tragedy. A good example is the *Gospel at Colonus*, in which gospel tradition was utilised. A gospel choir is defined by the traditional hymns it sings, the cultural authority it has inbuilt and plays an important play in maintaining social memory.¹³⁴⁰ The suggestion of one cultural source becomes more transparent if, for example, we imagined the *Trojan Women*, for example, singing gospels when they mourn, being dressed in Chinese clothes, moving like a Spanish dancer and performing Astyanax's burial according to the African tradition. The admixture of various elements creates confusion rather than clarify the performance of the text.

¹³³⁹ Goldhill, 2007, p. 75.

¹³⁴⁰ Goldhill, 2007, p. 56.

The search for material from one cultural source is attempted in Appendix VI with a suggested staging of *Euminides'* "binding song". The discussion on the use of cultural elements in chapter four aims to show that is a feasible area that corresponds to all the demands of the staging rituals and tragedy, or any questions that such a production can reveal.

APPENDIX IV

Greek Sources and Suggested Staging of Eumenides' Binding Song

The purpose of this Appendix is to function as a guide for the staging of tragedy. The 'textual swift' requires historical awareness and in combination with archaeological and literary material it can fulfil a targeted production. The material available in Greek folk culture is inexhaustible, therefore the intention is to present all the available sources, although partially. However, it is adequate to offer a guideline to the concerned mind and illustrate the possible use of Greek material for the staging of tragedy and rituals. The material coming from one cultural source, the one the practitioner chooses, can effect unity in tragedy which is accord with the genre. This is one way of giving a form to the rituals in a tragedy and create a beautiful 'animal' on stage. The presentation of the folk music and songs will be exemplified with references from productions so as to illuminate further the suggestions .

Drawing upon them is definitely time-consuming, a fact that could dissuade one from beginning it. Tasos Rantzos¹³⁴¹ is a directory who basically walked all the way through looking for the unity of his *Bacchae*¹³⁴² with the use of ritualistic elements found in rites performed in northern rural Greece. He admits that such an attempt requires

¹³⁴¹ Tasos Rantzos, Director at the National Theatre of Northern Greece. He was one of my instructors at Teaching drama methodology, for the acquirement of the Teaching Certificate at the University of Cyprus (Sep. 2008-May 2009). I had a long discussion with him after I had watched his production of *Bacchae* in 2009, when I noticed that he had put into practice a lot of my directorial suggestions in this thesis.

¹³⁴² Euripides' *Bacchae*, National Theatre of Northern Greece. Modern Greek translation: Yorgos Himonas, Direction: Tasos Ratzos, Directing supervision: Nikitas Tsakiroglou, Set & Costumes design: Evagelia Kirkine, Music: Kostas Vomvolos, Choreography: Konstantinos Gerardos, Assistant director: Korina Haritou, Assistant set & costumes designer: Evi Kambouraki, Assistant choreographer: Eleni Gioura, Dramaturg: Dimitra Mitta, Instruction of Greek traditional dance: Yorgos Likessas, Production co-ordinator: Elias Kotopoulos, Stage manager: Thodoros Tsalouchidis, Cast: Areti Agelou, Iordanis Aivazoglou, Vassilis Vassilakis (Kadmos), Apostolos Bacharidis (Servant), Paola Milona, Ioanna Payataki (Agavi), Fani Panagiotidou, Erato Pissi, Kostas Santas (Tiresias), Thalia Skarlatou, Eva Sofronidou, Christos Sougaris (Pentheus), Christos Tantalakis (Messenger B), Stratos Tzortzoglou (Dionysus), Anny Tsolakidou, Yannis Harissis (Messenger A), Marina Hatzioannou. Song: Roula Manissanou, Musicians: Sakis Laios (clarinet), Nektaria Liaskou (accordion), Dimitris Panagoulas (percussion)

excellent planning long prior to rehearsals. He directed *Bacchae* in 2008 and the process he followed and the way he treated the ritualistic scenes agrees a lot with the statement of this chapter.

At the end of this presentation I will illustrate my view with a staging proposal of the Furies' 'binding song' of Aeschylus' *Eumendes* using material from the Greek folk tradition. This will more effectively show how much more effective rites could have been if they are enlivened on stage using such material. This written description will be supported by recorded samples indicated in brackets the DVD or CD and the Track number as for example (DVD 2, Tr. 3). But first we should reconsider rituals in tragedies. Using live contemporary folk tradition may have the same effect as in the fifth-century and connect the mythic events with the present of the audience, in this case the Greeks, allowing associations with their lives.

The Greek sources a practitioner can have access to includes: the folk tradition, and more specifically the folk music, songs, dances and costumes; the Greek orthodox liturgy which adopted many features of the ancient Greek religion and life; the archaeological evidence on vase painting or various objects; the existing Greek customs, rituals or revived rites that persist in time; and finally the literary sources..

Most sources of any form *are* easily approachable in Greek culture. First of all, folk music, songs and dancing are in the heart of the Greek life.¹³⁴³ It is still a dance culture. Having lived in Greece for twelve years, from 1983 to 1995, I have attended all sorts of celebrations in rural Greece. At every kind of a social or religious happy event, such as a wedding, a baptism, Christmas day or Easter Day, traditional music is played, sung and danced. Modern songs may be played but the real festivity begins when, depending on the place of origin, folk songs and dances begin.

¹³⁴³ This does not fully apply to the Greek Cypriots. It seems that the political situation and the drive for money and material have eroded customs and the tradition.

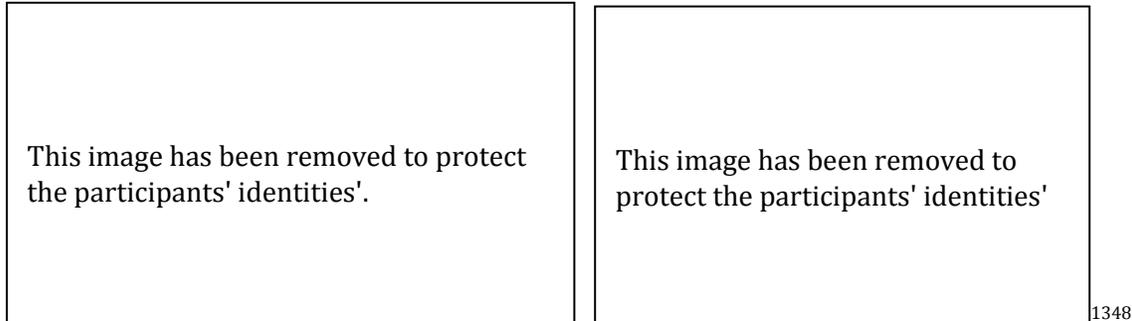
The most popular dance is *Kalamatianos*¹³⁴⁴ and the folk island dance *Ballos*,¹³⁴⁵ both joyous and lively. The Pontian *Pyrrhios* (DVD 4, Track 8) is said to have originated in the ancient Greek war dances, based on its steps and gestures that are as well depicted on vase paintings and pots. Its fast rhythm is extremely exhilarating just like the Cretan *Pentozali* dance (DVD 4 Track 5 and 6) or the most dignified *Tsamikos* from the highland of Epirus (DVD 4 Track 9 and 10). Each area in Greece has numerous local well-known musicians, singers and folk dance groups. Therefore, it is an easily accessed source for anyone to copy steps and body movement for the staging of the mood and the tempo of various ritualistic scenes in a production of tragedy. For example, the modest circular way the dancers make their entrance on stage in *Geranos* dance, holding one another with their hands crossed, can be used for the libation bearers.

Folk dance, music and songs have been long inspirational since Eva Plamer-Sikelianos and her husband Aggelos Sikelianos (see chapter 4). The popularity of folk music and dance is probably one of the reasons why Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* by the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Larissa, (*Δη.Πε.Θε. Λάρισσας, De.Pe.The Larissas*), in 1992 was played with great success in the Epidaurus Festival, in Cyprus and in other parts of Greece. In fact, it was considered to be one of the most interesting stage proposals in ancient tragedy. In 2009 its revival met another great success again under the direction of Kostas Tsianos who both translated the tragedy and designed

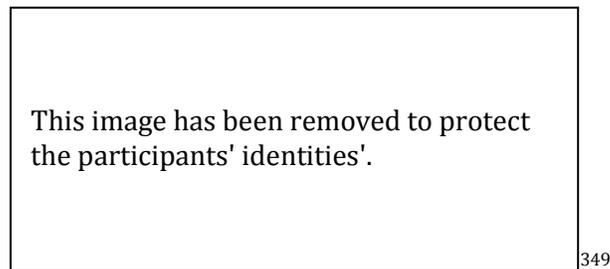
¹³⁴⁴ *Kalamationos*, a type of syrtos dance, is a pan-Hellenic dance always danced in social gatherings such as weddings, baptisms and other happy occasions. In circle, dancers hold hands at shoulder height and maintain a straight posture, a smile on their face and a bounce in their step as they move smoothly. Both men and women have a smooth, flowing movement. The first person in line, the leader, usually extends his right hand to the side holding a handkerchief while the person at the end places it on the hip. It is a simple slow-quick-quick-slow 12 step rhythm, where the steps 1, 4, 7, and 10 are held twice as long. There are variations, usually done on the longer steps, such as dancing backward, turning, footwork variations, knee bends, leaps and slaps, either performed by the leader or simultaneously by the whole group. Occasionally, depending on the dance teacher, the dancers break the line to do partner work (man with woman) and then form the circle again. The leader can change either by his own invitation or by simply by joining the end of the line leaving the second person in the leader's position.

¹³⁴⁵ The *Ballos sirtos* is a couple's dance which performs all the elements of courtship: attraction, flirtation, display of masculine prowess and feminine virtue, pursuit, and rejection followed by eventual capture and surrender.

the choreography.¹³⁴⁶ Folk songs and dances, lamentations, dirges, invocations of the dead, purifications and other forms of the Greek popular and religious expressions found their way in this production.¹³⁴⁷



A recorded scene of this tragedy, the *chorikon*, in which the women are waiting for Orestes to kill his mother makes a good sample (DVD 4, Track 2). While the chorus sings a prayer, they form two facing lines on the left and right of the orchestra, hold hands tight like in *Pyrrhios* dance and make steps forward and backward like the Cretan dance *Pentozali*, as if attacking.



The quick steps and the sudden *Pyrrhian* projection of the arms is used to express their anxiety for the imminent murder of Clytaemnestra look impressive. When the slave comes out screaming for help they form circles with hands stretched on the side at shoulder level like *Syrtaki* dance (the Zorba dance). At the end of the same production when Orestes loses his mind, the Cretan lyre accelerates the rhythm until

¹³⁴⁶ *Choephoroi* by the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Larissa, Ancient Theatre of Phillipon, Kavalla, 19 Jul 2009.

¹³⁴⁷ The exceptional costumes designed by Ioanna Papantoniou have been displayed in many exhibitions in Greece, Europe and America.

¹³⁴⁸ Thessaliko Theatro, <<http://www.thessaliko-theatre.gr/default.asp?contentID=2>>, [Retrieved September, 2013].

¹³⁴⁹ Thessaliko Theatro, <<http://www.thessaliko-theatre.gr/default.asp?contentID=2>>, [Accessed in Sept. 2013].

he rushes off stage. The chorus exit in steady rhythmical steps following Electra during which they clatter the *krotala*, the early Spanish castanets.

As it has been suggested in chapter five, folk music, songs, dances, and costumes, have a luring inner rhythm that offers familiarity, scenic unity, and they are rooted in the traditions of the here and now of the western audience.

Folk songs and dances are of various moods and easy to get at. What is rarer is to have the unique experience of the Polyphonic songs in Epirus and the *Moirologia* (laments) in the southern parts of Greece, particularly in Mani in Peloponnese and in Crete. These two sources which can provide forms of expressing laments in scenes of burial or mourning in tragedies are difficult to obtain on the spot but luckily there are recorded songs from few rare editions, various documentaries and cultural programmes on television, and individual takes which can be of great help. Moreover, because of technology evidence, which was inaccessible unless you travelled to the place of interest, is now possible to view and download on Youtube.

Beginning with the Polyphonic songs,¹³⁵⁰ we must note that we deal with singing without music. The singers are usually self-taught peasants who schooled on the spot. Basically, there are two soloists and a drone group, which can be more than two

¹³⁵⁰ Polyphony as a musical term is identified with two different musicological forms: the classical music and the Folk Polyphony. Folk Polyphony is found in Epirus of Northern Greece, South Albania, South Italy, Corsica, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovakia, South Poland, Ethiopia, Georgia, North Pakistan, north foothills of Himalayas, Indonesia and Taiwan. It is based on the variation of the melodic expression lines of the members of the polyphonic group.

The first soloist (or the taker) (Greek: "πάρτης" (partis) or "σηκωτής" (sikotis), is the voice that sings the main melody. He literally acts as the narrator and leader of the group, singing the main part of the song.

The second soloist (or the turner) (Greek: "γυριστής" (yiristis) answers (or "turns") the taker (Greek: "γυρίζει" (yirizei, turns). Sometimes, instead of the "turner", we find the role of the spinner (Greek: κλώστης (klostis, spinner) who spins the song between the tonic and subtonic of the melody, a technique that reminds the movement of the hand which holds the spindle and spins the thread.

A role that is often, but not always, found is the one of "richtis", who drops (Greek: ρίχνει) the song in the end of the introduction of "partis", by singing an exclamation (e.g. Greek : *αχ ωχ ωχ* (ah oh oh) or , "*άντε βρε*" (ante vre), which is a fourth lower than the tonic of the melody, resting "partis" and uniting its introduction with the entrance of the drone group.

The drone group holds the note. The louder the keeping of the vocal drone, that is the more "*βρονταριά*" (*vrontaria*), the better the song goes, because the rhythm and the vocal base of the song are maintained.: Source: Apeiros, <www.polyphonic.gr>, [Accessed in March 2012].

members. The drone group provide and hold the modal base of the song, in other words, they take the place of the instruments. They are also called the iso keepers group, from the Greek *Isocrates* (ισοκράτης), which means the ones who hold the note on the whole length of a song. The term derives from the Byzantine Greek musical tradition which explains the use of Polyphonic features in the Greek Orthodox liturgy. The polyphonic songs have revived in the last years thanks to the non-profit foundation of 'Apeiros' in 1988, in Polydrosos, Epirus. This organisation offered the first polyphonic song concert in 1999 at the Petra open theatre, a former quarry in Petroupoli, in the north-west of Attica, Athens, which was converted into a theatre at the beginning of the 1980s.¹³⁵¹ Unfortunately, the recorded material from these festivals is not easily acquired as the number of albums is limited.

This rare kind of song cannot exist successfully without the unity of the voice-roles of the polyphonic group. It presupposes the collectiveness of expression, the unwritten hierarchy in the composition of the group and the distribution of the roles in order to round up in a unified result. These same requirements characterize the tragic chorus therefore it makes this ancient form of singing unique for exploration in a production of tragedy. However, it may prove a very difficult task not only because it may be difficult to find composers/musicians that are aware of the tradition of polyphonic songs, although a knowledgeable composer of the quadrphony would be able to work on it, but also to teach it to the actors. Undeniably though, it can be a fascinating and extremely rewarding task. The song *Τρεις κοπέλες λυγερές* (*Treis kopeles lygeres*), *Three slender young ladies*, shown on ET1, the National Greek TV, is an example of how a polyphonic song sounds and how alluring it seems to be for further elaboration in a lamentation, or even a festal occasion with a little work on it (DVD 5, Track 13.).

As far as the professional mourners is concerned evidence is a rarity as they are about to become extinct. Again, TV programmes and other sites on the internet provide extraordinary material for the needs of a tragedy. This is of special importance if one

¹³⁵¹ In the 12th Polyphonic Song Concert, on the 4th June 2011, there were polyphonic groups from Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Georgia.

has in mind that all tragedies incorporate laments in their structure. In a 2008 the programme of *Φωταψίες της Άλλης Όχθης (Photapsies tis Allis Ochthis), Lights on the other Shore*, on 902 TV,¹³⁵² presented two old female mourners who sing a dirge and express signs of mourning (DVD 5, Track 1, 2). On a staged performance of folk songs, a *Moirologi*, a re-enacted lament from Ipeiros reminds us of the tragic chorus (DVD 5, Track 3). In another re-enactment of a Pontian awake¹³⁵³ in Greece, the take shows the gathering of men, women and children in the open, which could be a perfect sample of the entrance of a chorus of the Libation bearers (DVD Track 9). The professional mourner, Mrs Marina from Vavourion in Thersprotia, is asked to sing a dirge but stops after a few seconds because she says she cannot go on. She really does seem emotionally disturbed by the singing (DVD 5, Track 4 and 10). In another genuine wake of Dimitris Alikakos, recorded by his grandson who dedicated this in his memory, one can see the old women sitting around the dead person while his wife is singing a dirge. It is as if the ancient rite of *prothesis* has travelled in time. One woman is touching his forehead and another one is drinking Greek coffee, while others join the wife's dirge from time to time (DVD 5, Track 6). Finally, there is another genuine lament over the grave this time (DVD 5, Track 7 from 1.35). These are just some of the genuine or enacted dirges, but they offer enough material to a musician, a choreographer and a director on singing, body movement and the response from the participants to stage a mourning and a burial ritual, and design the chorus' response to in a tragedy.

¹³⁵² This television station in Greece is supported by the Communist Party of Greece and generally features entertainment programming which is available throughout Greece.

¹³⁵³ Pontos is a historical Greek designation for a region The name Pontos was applied in antiquity by the Greeks who colonized the area. *Pontos Euxeinos (Πόντος Εύξεινος)* comes from the Greek name of the Black Sea and it means 'Hospitable Sea'. It was located on the southern coast of the Black Sea, today northeastern Turkey. Generally it extended from the borders of Colchis (modern Georgia) until well into Paphlagonia in the west. In Greek mythology, it was the country of the Amazons. In Greek mythology, too, Pontos was one of the first born, the divinity of the sea. With the earth goddess Gaia (Earth) they had the most ancient sea-gods. In classical art and myth, he and Thalassa were superseded by Poseidon and Amphitrite.

Except for the folk music, songs and dances, that keep the ancient dance culture alive in the daily lives of the Greeks today, and the laments which few exist in remote areas, there are annual celebrations of ancient Greek rituals that still persist in rural regions of Greece. Many ancient rites have survived in the Christian calendar, when the Church failed to eliminate them. Most important are the rites still carried out in all Greek area on the *Apokries*,¹³⁵⁴ the Carnival, , when people from everywhere are invited by the communities to take part in their celebrations and experience the rituals on the spot. Parades and multifarious rites based on fun, jokes and fires are the basic shared ingredients. What defines these rites is that they all require the participation and eagerness of anyone who is present. The persistence of the human beings to maintain them is the main reason for the survival of their form¹³⁵⁵ which can provide material for the production of tragedy and rituals, especially on movement, music or costumes.¹³⁵⁶

Some of these peculiar ancient customs¹³⁵⁷ are the ‘Kalogeros’ and ‘Koudounatoi’ in Drama, Thrace and Skyros island. Although they are witnessed in different parts of the country, each share common features which denote their possible common root.¹³⁵⁸

¹³⁵⁴ *Apokries*, which means eating no meat or its by-products, the Carnival, is celebrated on the third Sunday of the *Triodion*, the three weeks before the beginning of the Great Lent, which is the 40 days of fasting before Easter Sunday. During the *Apokries*, people dress up and celebrate in the streets of many towns and villages in Greece. The Carnival has its roots in the rituals of ancient Greece in honour of Dionysus, god of wine and festivities. People then disguised as satyrs or wore masks poured into the streets and teased everybody with foul-mouthed and bold and provocative behaviour. The tradition spread throughout the Roman Empire and the New World later. The next day of the Carnival is called the Shrove Monday, when people go out in the fields and eat meatless food showing the beginning of the fasting. With the emergence of Christianity, people may have stopped worshipping the Olympian gods but never stopped celebrating the custom which resulted in inserting it the Christian calendar.

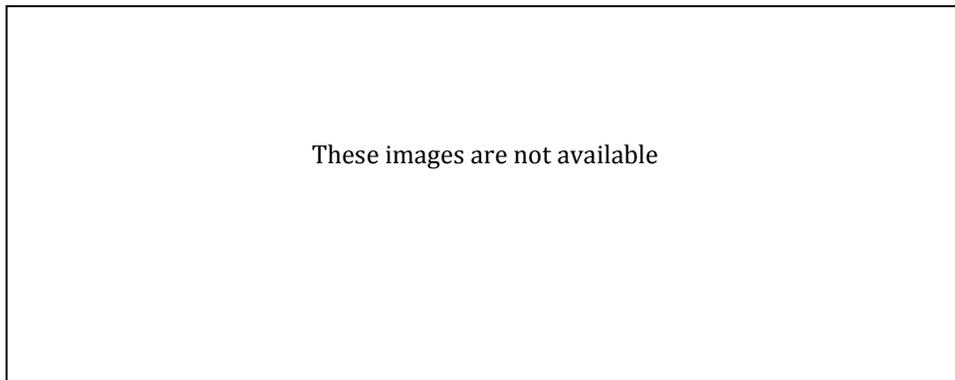
¹³⁵⁵ Sutton, “Ritual, Continuity and Change”, 2004. pp. 97, 100: Society does not change at the same time, everywhere, and this is the reason of the preservation of rituals. The desire to do things as they have been done before moulds the “historical consciousness” of continuity.

¹³⁵⁶ The carnival customs also consist an endless and valuable source for an Aristophanic comedy production.

¹³⁵⁷ See Appendix V for a full description of these rites.

¹³⁵⁸ Some more canrnival rituals are: The People’s Court of Immoral Acts on the island of Karpathos; The “sacrifice of the bull” on the island of Lesbos; The festivities end with the very entertaining “Funeral of the Mask” on the island of Zakynthos; The Female Carnival takes place in In Arta and Preveze; In **Ioannina**, they celebrate the “tzamales”, the big fires, where masked people dance around in two or three rows. This is culminated in the central square of the city where the famous maypole takes place; The lanterns that are lit in various neighbourhoods in Kozani; the rite of Mpampougeroi in Drama; A different kind of “Kalogeros”, monk, in Serres.

Καλόγερος (Kalogeros),¹³⁵⁹ the Good Old Man, also the monk, is celebrated in Thrace, Greece, on Shrove Monday. The man who is Kalogeros is transformed into an animal by dressing in skins, and putting bells in his waist to symbolize fertility. The whole celebration consists of five phases. The last part of the rite definitely reminds of the purificatory rite of *Pharmakos*,¹³⁶⁰ and sacrifice. The instruments, the three-cord lyre and the *daouli*, the drum, may be the instruments in the design of music. Similar to the ladies of the houses who throw a mixture of cereals and pulses to Kalogeros, similar to the bride's incorporation in ancient Greece, Cassandra in the *Trojan Women* can enter the stage throwing away her own *katachysmata*. While she does that, she may be shouting aloud wishes for her forthcoming union, just as Kalogeros sends wishes when they plough, which are repeated by the crowd.



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The rhythmical movement of his escort *Κορέλα (Korela)* who dances around him waving a scarf can be treated for the raving Cassandra when she dances around the messenger or between the women waving a scarf decorated with flowers.

Κουδουνάτοι (koudounatoi), the Bell men, is another rite that takes place on the Sunday of *Apokreos*. It is found in Mesotopos, Lesbos Island and North-East Greece

¹³⁵⁹ Κακούρη, Κατερίνα, *Προϊστορία του Θεάτρου*, Εκδοτική Ελλάδος Α.Ε., 1974, pp.139-143; Μουρραΐς-Βελλούδιος, Θάνος, *Ευγονία και άλλα Τινά*, Εκδόσεις Άγρα, Αθήνα, 1991, σσ. 24-25. In his book there are 120 unique black and white photos taken on the spot during his research in the 50s'.

¹³⁶⁰ See Appendix I.

¹³⁶¹ <<http://www.inskyros.gr/%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%AD%CF%84%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B5%CE%B8%CE%AF%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%85-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%83%CE%BA%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BD/>>, [Retrieved January 2008].

and symbolizes the souls of the dead who have the power to fertilize the land. Whenever the goat-dressed men come at squares or a crossroads they form circles and jump up and down rhythmically until the bells they have on their waists make a coordinated, loud sound. When they do not jump, they hit their *κουτσούδες* (*koutsoudes*), wooden sticks, on the ground, to make mother-earth fertile. The jumping at crossroads, the hitting the ground with their sticks and the necklaces of pearls and shells can be used in Cassandra's appearance and behaviour. The hitting of the ground with a stick could as well be used for some of the oldest Trojan women, when they invoke the dead in the last scene of the *Trojan Women*, or the Libation bearers during their mourning, enriching the variety of mournful gestures. Then, the way of jumping, can be adjusted to suit the Furies either during their binding song or their reaction again Athena.

Except the various rites that take place during *Apokries*, there are many more throughout the years. One of the most impressive *δρώμενα* (*dromena*), rites, things done, is the *Αναστενάρηδες* (*Anastenarides*), the sighers, the fire-walkers, or *Αναστενάρια* (*Anastenaria*), the fire-walkers, that has mostly attracted the attention of ethnographers, folk-scholars and researchers since the nineteenth century. It is still celebrated from the 21-23 May in Northern Greece¹³⁶² on Saint Konstantinos and his mother Eleni day.¹³⁶³ It is a complex three-day ritual that includes a trance dance, a bull sacrifice which resembles the ancient Greek sacrifice, and the fire walk.

The name *Anastenaria*, comes from 'Anastenari', the special icon on which the two saints are depicted. The fire-walkers hold it during the feast and consider it as their inspirer. The description of it goes as follows:

¹³⁶² These are the Thracian villages of Agia Eleni, Kostis and Kerkini at Serres, of Mavrole at Drama and of Langada near Thessaloniki. The communities, which celebrate the *Anastenaria*, are descendants of refugees from Eastern Thrace in the 1920s that settled in the western part of the Northern Greece following the migrations necessitated by the Balkan Wars and by the later exchange of populations in 1923.

¹³⁶³ The ancient ecstatic ritual was adopted in the Christian calendar on Saint Konstantinos and his mother Eleni day after the unsuccessful efforts of the Orthodox Church to stop it.

On the afternoon of the 20th May the initiated male and female *Anastenarides*, gather in the *κονάκι* (*konaki*), a special rectangular building which houses the icons of Saints Constantine and his mother Eleni, the *αμανέτια* (*amanetia*), special sacred kerchief and the instruments. The icons are kept draped with the *σημάδια* (*simadia*), large red kerchiefs, which are believed to possess the power of the icons.

There, they work themselves into a trance-like state through hours of devotional dancing consisted of simple steps in the rhythmical tempo of the lyre and *νταχαρέ* (*ntaxare*), a drum, until the night falls. From time to time, they sing the special songs for Saint Constantine. As the rite progresses in the *konaki*, sighs, exclaims and cries are heard when they feel the 'saint calling'. Holding the icons and the *amanetia*, they dance non-stop till midnight.¹³⁶⁴

The next day, the 21st, the sacrifice of a decorated black bull, mainly with flowers and ribbons, takes place after they dance and incense the animal. A little meat is given to the houses of *Anastenarides* and the rest of it is kept for the feast at night, just as in ancient Greece which the priests took their portion and the rest was distributed for the communal dinner. In the afternoon, the *Anastenarides* start their sacred dance in the *konaki* again while the other villagers prepare the fire in the village square. When it gets dark, the *Anastenarides* come out of the *konaki* in a processional row leaded by the musicians and they dance their way to the fire and round the extremely hot coals in the same steps. Initially they dance barefoot around the hot ashes, but when they feel the gods seizing them, they walk, dance or run across the burning coals holding the icons and the *amanetia*. Sometimes devotees kneel down beside the fire and pound the ashes with the palms of their hands. This fire-walking continues until the ashes are cool. Then they return to the *konaki* where they continue their dance.

This image has been removed to protect the participants' identities'.

On 23 May they conclude with a second dance over the fire, although this one is in private.¹³⁶⁵

¹³⁶⁴ At times, they call a new *anastenari* with it as a witness states: "I felt a power to pull me and I sat to watch the ceremony at the *Anastenarides*' spot. Suddenly, one came and called me with the *amaneti*": Μαυρολεύκη, εφημ. 'Ελευθεροτυπία' 16 Ιαν. '97 (Mavrolefki, 'Elephtherotypia' newspaper, Jan. 16, 1997).

¹³⁶⁵ Kakouri, Katerina, *Διονυσιακά, Ιδεοθέατρον*, σσ. 9-29, 1999. (*Dionysiaka: Aspects of the Popular Thracian Religion of Today*, trans. by Helen Colaclides, G. C. Eleftheroudakis, Athens, 1965.); Μουρραής-Βελλοῦδιος, *Ευγονία και άλλα Τινά*, 1991, σσ. 23-24 (*Mourrais-Velloudios, Eygonia ke all tina*, 1991, pp.

Anastasios Chourmouziades' first reported *Anastenaria* in his book *About Fire-walkers and Other Customs and Superstitions* in 1872 and observed that the modern *Anastenarides* may, in their frenzy, run away with the icons for a period "into the mountains", and that this is expected as an integral part of the sacred ritual. The folklore scholar George Megas¹³⁶⁶ points out the similarities of the worshippers in trance with the Maenads when they run to the mountains holding torches and goaded by the wild music of flutes and drums. Demetris Petropoulos¹³⁶⁷ observed in his book *Folklore Kostis Eastern Thrace* that the god-intoxicated dancers broke away in their joy and ran up towards the mountains. The folklorist, ethnologist and theatre historian Katerina Kakouris' research on rituals¹³⁶⁸, especially *Dionysiaka* in which she describes the rites in rural Greece, also offer valuable material. This admittedly ancient rite is still live in the minds and culture of modern Greek audiences.

Looking into this rite for inspiration is worthwhile. A director can isolate a lot of features and use them where a trance, a lament or a festivity is employed in a tragedy, and comedy. The faces, the outstretched arms and the body movement of the *Anastenarides* when in trance would nicely fit Cassandra either when she feels Apollo within or when she acts under the influence of Dionysus. A suitable adaptation of their sighs, exclams and cries could make everyone shiver either in *Agamemnon's* Cassandra when she feels the god calling, the Trojan women when they lament or the Libation bearers when they sing their dirge. If further we adjust a slower pace of the *Anastenarides'* steps in trance and the sound of the drum, when they come out of the

23-24); "The World is a Stage", Theatre History, a 13-part BBC series, Part 1, with Ronald Harwood, 1987. The New York Times, Review: by John J. O' Connor.

¹³⁶⁶ Megas, Georgios, *Ζητήματα Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας*, (*Issues on Greek Folklore*), 1945 and *Ελληνικαί εορταί και έθιμα της λαϊκής λατρείας* (*Greek celebrations and customs of the folk religion*), 1956.

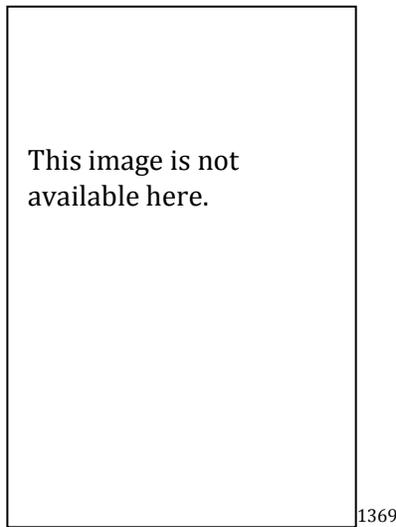
¹³⁶⁷ Πετρόπουλος Δημήτριος, *Λαογραφικά Κωστή Ανατολικής Θράκης*, Αρχείον Θρακικού Λαογραφικού Γλωσσικού Θησαυρού 6, σσ. 225-248, Επιτροπή Θρακών, Αθήναι 1939-40. (Petropoulos, Dimitrios, *Folklore Kostis Eastern Thrace*, Archives of Thracian Treasure Folklore Language 6, pp. 225-248, Commission of the Thracians, Athens 1939-40).

¹³⁶⁸ Κατερίνα Κακούρη, *Προϊστορία του Θεάτρου*, Εκδοτική Ελλάδος Α.Ε., 1974. (Kakouri, Katerina, *Prehistory of Theatre*, Greece Publications, 1974); Κατερίνα Κακούρη, *Προαισθητικές Μορφές Θεάτρου*, Βιβλιοπωλείο «ΕΣΤΙΑΣ», 1946. (Kakouri, Katerina, *Pre-Conscious Forms of Theatre*, ESTIAS Bookshop, 1946); Κατερίνα Κακούρη, *Διονυσιακά, Ιδεοθέατρον*, Αθήνα 1999, (Kakouri, Katerina, *Dionysiaka, Ideotheatron* Publications, Athens, 1999.) IS CITING OK?

konaki in a procession and freeze some of their bodies' postures then the exit of the Trojan women at the end of the play would make a sensation.

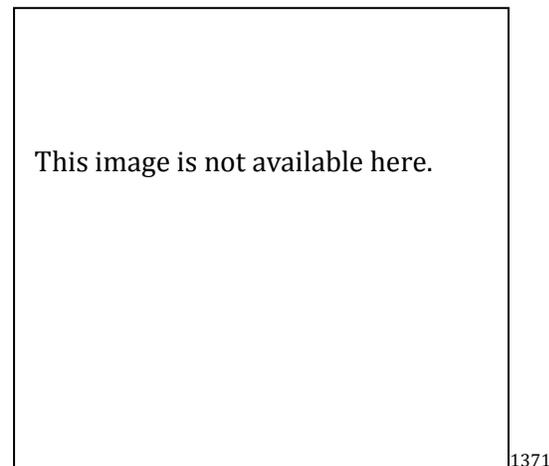
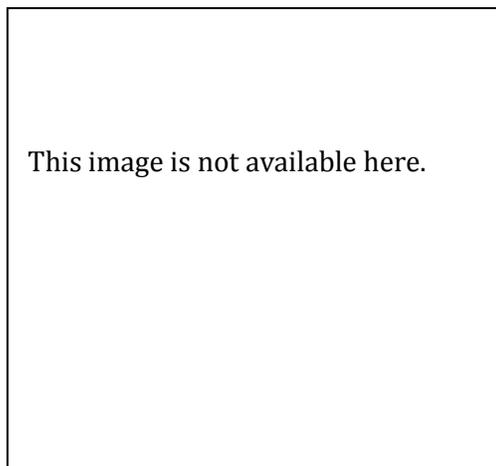
The final cultural location in Greek Orthodox has also been discussed in ritual and continuity in chapter five. What it should be repeated here is that Orthodoxy has inserted elements from the ancient Greek religion in its practices, a fact that makes it one of the most accessible sources for material.

Another vast area one can really get staged ideas from, just like the pioneer Eva Palmer-Sikelianos as we saw in chapter five, is material retrieved from museums, archaeological sites or books on findings. Their usage does not mean that a director takes the archaeological evidence as depictions from actual ancient performances; it is generally accepted that very few paintings are connected with ancient performances. Nor that he or she strives for historical authenticity. However, they can provide ideas for gestures, props and costumes or give ideas for further exploitation. Replicas of objects such as cups, lamp lights, burners, offering vessels and altars can be used in performances either as props or part of the set design; statues and wall paintings display body postures or static movements of a prayer, supplication or a sacrifice; and all these offer further suggestions for costumes and jewellery. Orestes' supplication on the Apulic crater for instance unquestionably provides directions on staging his grasping of the statue or the altar of Athena in *Eumenides*.



Orestes supplicating at Delphi, 380 B.C. Neapole, *Museo Archaeologico Nazionale*.

The priestess' costume, hairstyle and other decorative objects on *Agias Triadas* Sarcophagus could nicely fit Cassandra's priestly appearance in *Agamemnon* or the *Trojan women*. Another proposal for the Priestess in *Eumenides* can come from the painting of another young priestess who offers incense, while approaching the temple of Apollo. Her body positioning and the way she seems to walk could direct the movement of the actor.¹³⁷⁰

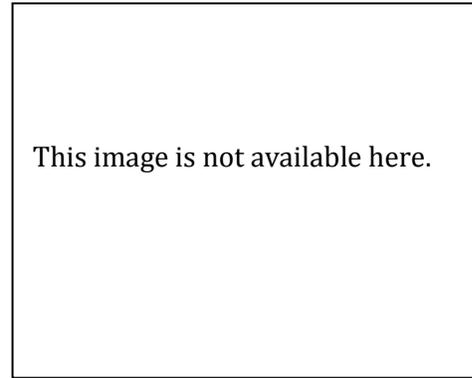
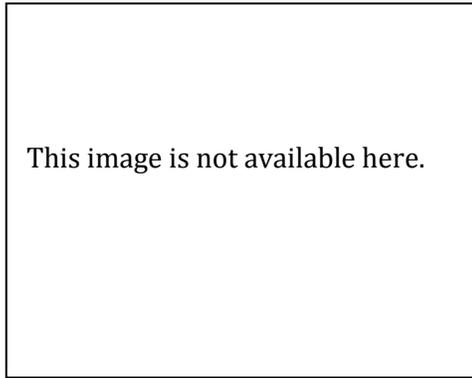


¹³⁶⁹ *Greek Art, Ancient Pots*, Ekdotiki Athenon S.A., Athens, Greece, 1996, pp. 209, 211-12.

¹³⁷⁰ See also: Connelly, B. Joan, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007.

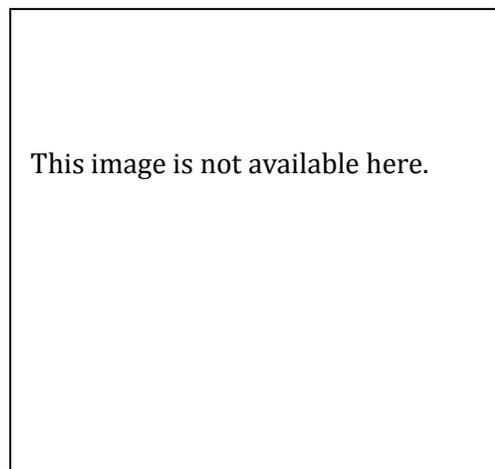
¹³⁷¹ *Greek Art, The Dawn of Greek Art*, Ekdotiki Athenon S.A., Athens, Greece, 1994, pp. 252, 119.

The Cretan vase paintings and the procession of the mourning women who hold their heads, are excellent samples for retrieving grieving gestures for the funerary scenes in Greek tragedy, such as the exit of the Trojan Women, the entrance of *Choephoroi*, or the crying Erinyes in *Eumenides*..



1372

A last example of the use of the archaeological evidence is the statuette below. She salutes the gods by lifting both her arms up with the palms outwardly. Moreover, we know that the greeting of gods or friends was also performed with only the right hand.¹³⁷³ So, Agamemnon can salute the gods of his palace in this way, Medea Aegeus when she sees him, and the Priestess in *Eumenides* might use both her hands before she enters Apollo's temple, or use only one hand if she also holds the incense.



1374

These are only six out of the numerous suggestions archaeological evidence may provide to a practitioner. A lot of them can be found in editions on archaeological pots,

¹³⁷² *History of the Greek Nation*, Vol. A., Ekdotiki Athenon S.A., Athens, Greece, 1971, pp. 318-9.

¹³⁷³ See for more: Fairbanks, "Attitudes of Worship in Greece", (1897). pp. 98-111.

¹³⁷⁴ *The Dawn of Greek Art*, 1994, p. 257.

statues and wall papers,¹³⁷⁵ a happy incident that makes it more than easy today to create images out of them that could intensify the tragic ritualistic events by clarifying their re-enactment.

With no doubt therefore the folk dances, music and songs, the rural laments, the surviving rituals, the Greek orthodox liturgy and excavated findings all constitute sources of endless exploitation of performative elements that can fill in the gaps of the re-creation of pious moments in a production when it is needed.

I would like now to exemplify my point of view with a discussion of a potential staging for a ritualistic scene, the Furies' binding song in *Eumenides*. In brackets I will indicate the number of DVD or CD and the Track number which will offer visual material for my suggestions. This illustration aims at proving the usefulness of the material found around in the Greek rural areas and cities, nowadays.

¹³⁷⁵ *Ancient Pots, The Dawn of Greek Art, or History of the Greek Nation*, all by Athens Publication, and others such as Richard Green's *Images of the Greek Theatre* or Oliver Taplin's *Comic Angels and Other Approaches to Greek Drama through Vase-Paintings* can offer endless ideas for the staging of movement and gestures relate to rituals.

A SUGGESTED STAGING OF THE BINDING SONG IN *EUMENIDES*

It has already been mentioned that the first step in staging a tragic text-play is to go through it thoroughly looking for any clues related to their staging. The performance turn requires a balance between the elaboration of the textual meanings and the text-performed, not the external appearance as such unless it is related to rituals. Therefore, the movements and the gestures will be indicated in latin.

When reading the text in scrutiny, we first learn that the Erinyes *enters the stage sniffing* like dogs looking for their prey. Then they see Orestes supplicating at Athena's altar and *approach him like hungry animals* as if in an ambush. Even though Orestes declares he has purified himself by killing a piglet and *wetted his hands* in its blood, they are so convinced that he will not escape their spell that they *sing* their special song and *perform their dance*. Undoubtedly, their magic spell takes place all around and near him. During their dance they *urge each other to jump high up* and then *forcibly hit the ground*. Being goddesses, the noise of stumping their feet must be horribly loud. We may infer from the text that the music accelerates and their steps become more frantic as they are more and more absorbed in their transience to make their spell effective. We can even feel the rhythm of the scene and infer that they *accelerate their pace towards the end* and that the atmosphere becomes even more *threatening and suffocating*. This information means that as their song comes to an end they probably encircle him creating a wall around him, just like hyenas who are about to attack their prey.

First, we need to consider the relation that governs the characters, it seems quite clear that the Furies hunt Orestes persistently and he in turns tries to escape. They are *aggressive* towards him and they persistently attack him trying to entrap him. The emotions that hover are the strong desire of the ancient divine function of retribution, fear and terror. Then we must decide on their connection to one another on stage and their movements that would show that. It is more than rational to have the women act separately but also in unison as their being is defined by their mutual existential

purpose: to go after murderers and punish them. And Orestes is a murderer. These ancient creatures must have also have a special way of moving.

After this brief textual analysis, we can now proceed to stage the binding song by planning the re-enactment of their movement, dance, music and singing and finally the costumes. Especially for Erinyes, it is appropriate to think about the colour of their voice as they are not ordinary women. This process does not necessarily follow this order as each scene requires its own elaboration.

We begin to think of their body posture as it is the most important 'silent' tool of any character. Even in everyday life body language means a lot, let alone in the theatrical space. Here comes the choreographer's responsibility and his ability to design the movement and the dance of the Furies out of folk dances. This strange group of ancient women could give to the reader the false impression that they are unable to move fast. They are as old as the beginning of life in the universe but as primordial beings born of the divine powers of creation they are not immobile at all. In any case, no matter how slow they may look or move, vitality should stem out of any movement of theirs. After all, their commands in their songs prove the opposite: that their infinite age does not preclude plastic and flexible movements in an increased pace. Further to that, all movement should be directed on expressing persistence and rage. Therefore, for example, imagine them beginning their binding song forming a circle, holding crossed hands as in *Geranos* dance and moving at the beginning slowly but threatening like the entrance in Macedonian *Gaida* dance (DVD1-Tr.11: *Gaida*, 00:04-00:20) in which they enter running slowly in the monotonous sounds of the goat-flute in a snake-like circular movements as they proceed till they form a circle. Here they may break their circle to create confusion before forming it again, not necessarily in a perfect shape. They can also gradually dance faster in a first state of frenzy dissolving and forming again the snake movements and end up with the leaps in the air from time to time (DVD1-Tr.11: *Gaida*, 01:35 – 02:10). When they speak, sing or dance at times of tension, then the movements of their body/shoulders can express anger as well as their timeless age. This entrance can be enriched with moving their crossed hands high up and down and shaking their shoulders to express aggression (DVD1-Tr.

7: Pontian, *The Dance of the Knives* or '*Pitsak*' - 00:20-00:30). Or, the trembling of the shoulders and the stamping feet of *Pyrrhios* or the leaps of *Pentozali* (DVD1-Tr. 5 and 8) can well fit in the binding song of the Furies, especially when they themselves urge one another to jump.

Their dance intends to hypnotize Orestes and drive him to his mental imprisonment. Therefore music needs to be given a lot of thought. Primitive people all over the world use different instruments to play monotonous music at their rituals which usually drive some participants, or all of them, to ecstasy. Since we are looking into Greek culture for clues, we can look for a similar monotonous music that, gradually becomes faster, and can drive the chorus to the seemingly loss of control of feelings, if they can really lose control. However, the musician must have clear in mind that although the Furies look disorganised to a lot of people, the text does not give you the same impression. Therefore the second suggestions goes to making quick steps on the spot, turning around with open palms, looking like a bird in the continuous sounds of *pipiza* (a musical instrumental organ that is like a Scottish pipe) so as to achieve the illusion of the interruption of the train of thoughts on stage (DVD1-Tr. 7: Pontian, *The Dance of the Knives* or '*Pitsak*' - 01:28-01:55).

The role of the musician does not stop here. The way they sing in the sounds of music needs some consideration. Beautiful, synchronised singing seems to be out of place in the case of Erinyes, and is in contrast to any impression we may make of them. The music and the voices must carefully be taught to sound out of tune. Of course there is nothing like 'out of tune' in a staged performance. The purpose is not to drive the spectators to shut their ears and complain about the dreadful composition, in which case such comments might equal to success in the case of the binding song. The song(s) certainly need(s) to be written, taught, and orchestrated in such a way as to sound dissonant, untidy and aggressive. It is not an easy task for 12-25 creatures on stage, or for the musician, to sing differently, sound out of tune but being in reality in absolute coordination. An answer to this quest might be found in the polyphonic songs of the Greek tradition, which are excellent for further process and provide opportunities for various explorations. It is not difficult to realise the performative

potentials of these songs if he or she listens, for example, to the polyphonic song *Gianni mou to manteli sou* (DVD1-Track 12).

The last suggestion refers to the voices of the Furies. Crystal clear voices, sweet and synchronised do not match either their appearance or the purpose of their existence. They should be deep, harsh if possible, as if coming from a deep wail. An interesting example of a staged performance is Koun's realisation of the Erinyes in *Oresteia*.¹³⁷⁶ Koun's perception of them has got interesting elements, concerning their appearance and movement: the masks shows fossilised faces, their upper body is deformed having their arms folded and stretched in front of them, reminding us of a vulture's claws. They move quickly and their steps remind us of a mixture of Pontian and Cretan dances. However, the whole scene lacks the power and the mania with which they try to possess Orestes. More than that, their sweet voices as they perform their binding song, in this production, contrasts with their wild nature and their appearance, and as a result it estranges the viewer (1:01:00-1:04:36).

There is another way to look at Erinyes. According to Brown,¹³⁷⁷ they were not these dreadful features Aeschylus presented in his *Oresteia*. They were rather invisible powers, who were related to nature, not chthonic as Clytaemnestra implies when she says she offered them nocturnal sacrifices. Having this idea in mind then, and being in the search for an innovating solution, a practitioner may imagine the Erinyes beautiful instead of old or ugly and focus on the rest of the dramatic elements – body position, movement, dance, singing – in order to create the chaotic atmosphere of fear of punishment that they transmit.

¹³⁷⁶ Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, was put on by *Karolos Koun Art Theatre* in 1982. The performance was recorded and circulated by the Cultural Videos of the National Television ERT, in June 2010. The main people associated with the performance were: Director: Karolos Koun (1908-1987), Composer: Michalis Christodoulidis, Choreographer: Maria Kynigou-Flamboura, Desinger: Dionyssis Fotopoulos, MASKS: Stauros Bonatsos. Actors: Katia Gerou (Kassandra), Ioannis Karatzogiannis (Aegisthus/Apollo), Lydia Koniordou (Athena), Mimis Kougioumtzis (Orestes), Magia Lymberopoulou (Klytaimnestra), Reni Pittaki (Elektra), Charis Sozos (Pylades), Antonis Theodorakopoulos (Agamemnon), Periklis Karakonstantoglou (Guard/Slave), Giorgos Lazanes (Herald), Olga Damane (Nurse), Vana Partheniadou (Pythia),

¹³⁷⁷ Brown, "The Erinyes in the *Oresteia*: Real Life, the Supernatural, and the Stage", (1983). pp. 13-34.

The suggested elaboration connects the text-read with the text-performed and shows one way of staging the most demanding scene in *Eumenides*. However, removing it because of the difficulties it presents, as the director of TH.O.C's production decided to do, changes the whole aura Aeschylus wanted to transmit.

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