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Eros, Euripides and a Re-evaluation of Greek Sexuality with Particular Reference to *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Andromeda*, *Antigone* and *Helen*

Anastasia-Stavroula Valtadorou

PhD in Classics

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Abstract of Thesis

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Accounts of love and marriage in Euripidean tragedy have formed a consensus that *eros* never has positive effects, but leads only to misfortune (Greek *eros* means sexual longing and thus differs from the English 'love', which connotes affection). This, for example, is the view of Thumiger (2013) in 'Mad *Eros* and Eroticized Madness in Greek Tragedy' or Sanders (2013) in 'Sexual Jealousy and *Eros* in Euripides' *Medea'*. These views go back to Seaford ('The Tragic Wedding', 1987) and give the *impression* that love is presented in the majority of Attic tragedies as a condition for trauma, an amplification of trauma or a trauma in itself. Therefore, the treatment of *eros* in tragedy has been one-sided and partial. This construction of Greek sexuality has begun to be challenged, albeit from the perspective of homoerotic relations (Davidson 2008), and the time is ripe for a re-evaluation of male-female *eros* in Greek tragedy, taking into account not only the totality of the evidence from tragedy, but also that of other genres (such as comedy) and other media (such as vase-painting).

I argue for a more complex picture of *eros* in Greek tragedy, and in Euripides in particular, where it is possible to observe both positive and negative constructions. I focus on three complete and two fragmentary plays (*Alcestis*, *Andromache* and *Helen*; *Antigone* and *Andromeda*). These five tragedies present marital love in a much more positive light than other, more frequently discussed Euripidean plays, where erotic love has devastating effects on characters' lives (e.g. *Medea*). After a chapter outlining the social and theoretical context of Euripidean tragedy, these plays form the backbone of four chapters (one for the fragmentary plays). In order to situate Euripides' plays in their contexts and to present a fuller understanding of Greek tragedy as a genre, I pursue an on-going dialogue with other tragic poets, other genres and other types of evidence for Athenian attitudes; I discuss the representation of marital *eros* in comedy (e.g. *Lysistrata*) and vase-paintings associated with wedding ceremonies. The conclusion draws together the complex nature of Euripidean marriage and tragic marriage in general, and the implications for our understanding of later fifth-century Athenian culture.

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Abstract of Thesis

I apply a multi-layered method based on the findings of literary criticism and anthropology. I explore the ways in which Euripides treats the myths he has inherited from his tradition and why he chooses to depict *eros* both in a negative and positive way. In parallel, I delve into the anthropological aspects of *eros* and its relation to Euripidean marriage, as they reflect Athenian society. Do the dramas in question reflect or contradict our picture of the Greeks' approach towards marital love, as has been formed by Vernant, Sourvinou and Seaford's studies on the Athenian law, myth and ritual? Through the interplay of these literary-critical and anthropological approaches, it will be possible to establish a much more sophisticated understanding of Euripides, Greek tragedy and the culture in which it was performed.

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A quick overview of the surviving Greek dramas may create the impression that sexual passion does not end well in tragedy. Indeed, if we focus our attention on some well-known plays, such as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, and Euripides' *Medea*, it may seem that erotic desire brings only disaster and chaos in the tragic universe. The Aeschylean Clytemnestra kills her husband with the support of her lover, Deianira accidentally kills her spouse, Heracles, in her effort to win his love back, while the abandoned and jealousy-stricken Medea murders the new bride of her husband, Jason, his father-in-law and her own children. Indeed, this is the view often taken by many scholars who focus on some of these negative *exempla*, thus construing erotic love as a cause of ruin in Greek tragedy.

In this study, I explore the representation of tragic *eros* (the Greek word for sexual longing) and argue that it is more multifarious than commonly accepted. It should first be noted that *illicit* desire and/or extramarital sex have a part in tragedies that end with destruction and death; in other cases, it is the contempt characters show towards socially accepted and legitimate forms of *eros* that brings disaster upon them (as happens with e.g. Euripides' Hippolytus). Yet some plays present us with positive examples of *eros* that do not lead to disaster. I shall focus on: 1) Euripides' *Antigone* and *Andromeda,* which present young male characters falling in love with their future brides, and 2) Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Helen*, where married couples (separated by distance or premature death) express their desire towards each other. I shall also examine Euripides' *Andromache,* which constitutes a negative example, in order to pinpoint the reasons why *eros* may end in disaster. My conclusion draws together the complex nature of Euripidean marriage, and tragic marriage in general, and the implications for our understanding of later fifth-century Athenian culture.

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I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Chapter 1 is an extended and revised version of my paper '*Erôs* in Pieces (?): Tragic *Erôs* in Euripides' *Andromeda* and *Antigone*' that appeared in the edited volume *Greek Drama V: Studies in the Theatre of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE* (2020), edited by C.W. Marshall and H. Marshall.

Anastasia-Stavroula Valtadorou

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Prologue

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Introduction. Who is the Boss? Talking About Greek Sexuality, Marriage and Tragedy

This study will focus on the portrayal of heterosexual *eros* in Greek tragedy between couples who are already married or are going to marry in the future.[1] Even though my emphasis will be on exploring the representation of *eros* in five Euripidean plays (*Antigone*, *Andromache, Andromeda*, *Alcestis* and *Helen*), I shall also be referring to the works of the other two great dramatists, while the conclusion will discuss whether there can be any interrelation between the representation of *eros* in the tragic universe and the experience of real-life everyday Athenian couples. Before I start with the investigation of tragic *eros* in Chapter 1, I shall offer a brief overview of the secondary scholarship regarding this topic. I shall first focus on some of the most important studies that investigate the lived experience of Athenian people and, more specifically, their erotic lives. What is the role assigned to passion and affection with regard to the erotic experiences of Athenian married couples? Moreover, how have scholars approached these notions in connection with male-male sex? Second, in this introduction I shall also discuss the ways scholars usually interpret the evidence à propos of *eros* and marriage in Greek tragedy.

I. Athenian Ordinary Couples: Erotic Passion in Marriage and in Paederastic Relations

Two greatly influential monographs were published in the 1970s which defined in many ways the course of classical scholarship: Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women*

[1] In this study, I use the word *eros* to denote sexual longing (without this meaning that affectionate love and emotional commitment are not at work at the same time).

in Classical Antiquity (1975) and Dover's *Greek Homosexuality* (1978).[2] These books are of great interest to this study, since they brought to the fore issues regarding 1) Athenian women's everyday lives and their representation by (almost exclusively male) Greek authors, and 2) the homoerotic relations between Athenian men and their depiction in different media, detailed discussions of which had generally been avoided until that point.[3]

First, Pomeroy's book, coming as an answer to the feminist call for the inclusion of women in history, examines the position of women in Greek society and their representation in literature. According to Pomeroy, the seclusion of Athenian women was tangible,[4] while the uneducated Athenian wife was often considered inferior by her husband.[5] Concerning sexual relations between married couples, Pomeroy claims that:

> the social segregation of the sexes in Classical Athens and the legal stipulations regarding connubial relations could make sex between husband and wife an *obligatory* fact – fulfilled by procreation – rather than an intimate emotional encounter … Thus we may assume that the sexual experience of the *majority* of the Athenian citizen women was not satisfying (my emphasis).[6]

In subsequent years, many scholars, following Pomeroy's, and others', example, examined the social life of Athenian women. In many instances, scholarly opinions were often quite negative. Widespread was the view that Athenian men did not develop any emotional

[2] Throughout I refer to the latest edition of his monograph, published in 2016.
[3] For the change of scholarly attitudes towards sex in the 1970s, see Skinner 2005, 4-8.
[4] See Pomeroy 1975. Pomeroy was not the first to study this topic. Schnurr-Redford 2003 (1996), 23 informs us that one of the first who talked about the 'almost Oriental seclusion' of Athenian women was John Potter (1674-1747), Archbishop of Canterbury. One of the earliest scholars who rightly challenged this view was Gomme 1925. For a mild critique of Gomme's interpretation, see Gould 1980. For a successful, to my mind, refutation of the *topos* of Athenian women's 'almost Oriental seclusion', see Kitto 2003 (1951); Wagner-Hasel 2003 (1996).
[5] See Pomeroy 1975, 74, 79-87.
[6] Pomeroy 1975, 87. This statement must have sometimes been true, esp. in the case of an ἐπίκληρος (lit. 'the woman that goes with the family's possessions'). See (e.g.) Just 1989, 102-103.

bonds with their much younger wives. Additionally, according to many scholars, sexual intercourse within marriage was not considered, in real-life and in ideology, a source of mutual enjoyment, but rather a civic obligation that should result in the reproduction of citizens. In some cases, marital sex was (directly or indirectly) regarded as equal to rape.

To give some notable examples, in his discussion of marriage,[7] Vernant discusses the gap that separates marriage from erotic love and enjoyment, according to the Greek system of ideas and beliefs: 'Erotic pleasure and legitimate marriage are classified as categories of thought which are the more firmly separated from one another … '.[8] In a slightly different vein, Cantarella concludes that the institution of marriage was first connected with love and affection only thanks to the influence of the Christian religion.[9] Comparably, Keuls maintains that marital sex was nothing more than a troublesome obligation that Greek wives were expected to withstand: 'There can be little doubt that citizen women were raised to regard sex as a painful duty, much in the vein of the Victorian counsel to new brides: 'Close your eyes and think of England.''[10] In her interpretation of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Passman directly equates marital sex with rape, thus representing one of the most extreme examples of this scholarly trend: 'In the patriarchal world, erotic desire and marriage are too dangerous to be joint. The implication is that the only proper marriage will be rape, because it *must* be against the desire of the woman (the emphasis in the original).'[11] Goldhill later argues that female desire was standardly connected with destruction and catastrophe in Greek literature,[12] while Harrison, referring to Alexander's decision to marry his sister to a Persian leader and associating it with everyday reality in Athens, argues the following: 'The scale along which sexual relations were

[7] First published in French in 1974, but widely read in 1980, after its first publication in English.
[8] Vernant 1988 (1980), 270, n. 25.
[9] See Cantarella 1987 (1981), 2.
[10] Keuls 1993 (1985) 115.
[11] Passman 1993.
[12] See Goldhill 1995, 149.

judged and controlled … was not one that ran between non-consensual intercourse and romantic, reciprocated love, but between one form of non-consensual intercourse and another.'[13] Last, Dipla has recently maintained that an emotional distance between spouses was possible: 'After all, the notion of marriage based on romantic love and a commonality of interests between the spouses is relatively recent; in arranged marriages it is rather the birth of children that can gradually draw a couple closer.'[14] To conclude, scholars often form negative opinions with regard to Athenian married couples and their erotic experiences. In some cases, female desire is perceived as leading to disaster, while, in others, it does not exist or is not taken into account at all;[15] at the most extreme end of the spectrum, marital sex *per se* constitutes an act of rape.

Dover's book also paved the way for new avenues of investigation. He not only brought into focus the topic of Greek male homosexuality,[16] but was also one of the first scholars who gave (as far as possible) an unbiased account of the matter in question.[17] According to his interpretation, sex between men was common and sometimes even admirable in Athens, provided that the necessary conditions existed and the widely accepted rules were respected. More specifically, Dover argues that in the Greek moral system there was a firm distinction between active and passive roles, given that passivity was condemned and dominance was

[13] Harrison 1997, 197. Most of these studies are reviewed by Robson 2013, 20-24. For other examples of studies that connect female desire with destruction or associate marriage with negative *eros*, see Harris 2015, 299.

[14] Dipla 2017, 136.

[15] Cf. Garland 1990, 228-229, n.*: 'In Athens male indifference to women's sexual needs left the latter with virtually no sexual outlet other than that provided by masturbation.'

[16] After the publication of Dover's book and Foucault's trilogy on sexuality (see below), some scholars have questioned terms such as 'sexuality', 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality', and their usefulness in our effort to understand the erotic lives of the Greeks. See (e.g.) Halperin 1990, 25, 29, 41-53; Arkins 1994. On the scholarly debates about the 'essentialism' and 'constructionism' of sex, see Skinner 2005, 8-10 (with reference to further bibliography). In this study, I conventionally use the terms 'heterosexual', when referring to male-female relations, within or outside marriage, and homosexual, when referring to Greek male-male paederastic relations.

[17] Dover's book has been highly successful, and his work is admired by most scholars today. Nonetheless, Dover himself 2016 (1978), 133, n. 18 alerts his readers that his views can be partial: 'the reader is warned that by the time I had worked halfway through CVA in search of items in any way relevant to Greek homosexuality I was beginning to see penile imagery everywhere'. For a harsh, even personal critique of Dover's book, see Davidson 2007 (cf. also Davidson 2001); yet for a critique of Davidson 2007, see Hubbard 2009.

highly praised.[18] The older lover (ἐραστής) was expected to restlessly court the younger beloved (ἐρώμενος) in every possible way. The παῖς ('boy'), on the other hand, was not supposed to submit to the lover's erotic requests until he was convinced of the latter's good intentions and integrity of character.[19] Yet, even after the erotic 'succumbing' of the ἐρώμενος, there were more conventions to be kept: 1) the sexual act was typically expected to be intercrural (i.e. 'between the thighs'), so that the standing of the future adult citizen would not be harmed, and 2) the ἐρώμενος was not assumed to feel any pleasure or enjoyment during the act.

Dover's views on male homosexual *eros* considerably influenced the course of scholarship, yet certain notions, which he uses with attentiveness, were adopted and, in some instances, oversimplified by some scholars. Michel Foucault, for instance, in his *The History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure* (1984), himself interested in the interrelation between sex, authority and power,[20] understands Greek homosexual bonds as power games between unequal males,[21] while he paints the picture of Athenian marriage as a relationship between an older, dominant man and a younger, passive woman.[22] For him, sexual roles were always markedly distinguished in Greek culture and thought:

> sexual relations – *always* conceived in terms of the model act of penetration, assuming a polarity that opposed activity and passivity – were seen as being of the same type as the relationship between a superior and a subordinate…(my emphasis).[23]

[18] See Dover 2016 (1978), 16, 36, n. 18, 42, n. 8, 52, 53, 67, 84, 105 (with references to primary sources).
[19] Dover's understanding of Greek homosexual relations must have been influenced by Pausanias' speech in Pl. *Smp.* 180c-185c.
[20] See Foucault 1990 (1976).
[21] See Foucault 1992 (1984), 46, 196, 215, 218-222.
[22] Foucault 1992 (1984), 149-150 acknowledges that erotic pleasures must have been an integral part of the Greek marital life.
[23] Foucault 1992 (1984), 215.

Halperin's and Winkler's monographs, both published in 1990, further developed this schematic way of interpreting Greek erotics.[24] These scholars argue that sex was conceived by Athenians as a deeply polarising, hierarchical, even a 'non-relational' act between an active and a submissive pole.[25] For instance, according to Winkler, in Greek society 'The relations of pleasure were *never* perceived as mutual ... (my emphasis).'[26]

Consequently, Pomeroy's and Dover's books, in conjunction with other factors, resulted in the flourishing of scholarship regarding gender, sex and sexuality in ancient Greece. In the following years, numerous studies endeavoured to define the ways and conditions under which erotic relationships were formed.[27] As we shall see in the next section, the standard views of marriage and *eros* in Greek tragedy have, until recently,[28] been similarly negative.

II. Heterosexual Eros *and Tragedy: What a Disaster!*

The negativity associated with real-life everyday women and with Athenian marriage in general is also reflected in the way that marriage is viewed by interpreters of Greek drama.[29] In particular, tragic marriage has tended to be construed by scholars as an ineluctable disaster,[30]

[24] For a harsh (and, at some points, even personal) critique of these books, see Thornton 1991.
[25] See Halperin 1990, 30-38; Winkler 1990, 11, 36-43, 54, 70.
[26] Winkler 1990, 37. Both of them stress that they focus on the socially constructed and accepted norms, recognising that the reality could have been different. See Halperin 1990, 58-59; Winkler 1990, 8, 209. See also Dover 2003, 128.
[27] The bibliography on this topic is enormous. See (e.g.) Peradotto and Sullivan 1984; Zeitlin 1985; Craik 1990; Konstan 1994; Thornton 1997; Sutton 1997/1998; Davidson 1997; Calame 1999 (1992); McClure 2002; Hubbard 2003; Goldhill 2004; Sissa 2008; Davidson 2007; Pellegrini 2009; Sanders 2013a; Sanders, Thumiger, Carey and Lowe 2013.
[28] Some scholars have recently raised doubts about this unilateral way of approaching marital *eros*. As regards tragedy, see Kaimio 2002, 97-103, Fisher 2013, 47-53, Harris 2015; Wright 2017. Concerning real-life Athenians, see Walcot 1987; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 45-47; Stafford 2013, 201-208. My survey extends the approach taken by these scholars.
[29] Some of the material below appears in Valtadorou 2020.
[30] See Fritz 1962, 254; Redfield 1982, 181; Craik 1990, 253; Goff 1990, 29-30, 115; Seaford 1990a; Rabinowitz 1993, *passim*; Belfiore 1998, 151-154; Sanders 2013b, 45-46.

in which positive erotic feelings are not supposed to emerge or, if they do, lead to misfortune. One of the most prominent scholars who associates tragic marriage with disastrous results is Seaford.[31] In his extensive and groundbreaking studies (the influence of which will be evident throughout in this study), Seaford examines the relationship between ritual and myth and comes to the conclusion that in tragedy we encounter the total perversion of ritual. According to him, in the tragic universe, we are witnesses to a profound negativity (associated with marriage and familial bonds),[32] that is expected to be overcome in ritual and everyday life. For Seaford, the recurrent and disturbing tragic deviations from widely accepted norms presuppose the affirmation of the same norms in real-life marriage (as we shall see in the following chapters, Seaford's astute interpretation will actually help us interpret positive representations of *eros* as well).

Rehm also focuses on the negative *exempla* of tragic married couples and discusses the many similarities between marriage and funeral rituals, both in general and as presented in tragedy.[33] In her discussion of rape in drama, Rabinowitz argues for the comparability between normal marital sex and rape.[34] Thumiger, more recently, focuses on tragic *eros*, arguing that erotic desire can only be fathomed as a calamity and a complete failure in tragedy.[35] Her

[31] Cf. Seaford 1984; Seaford 1987; Seaford 1990a; Seaford 1994.
[32] Seaford 1987, *passim*; Seaford 1994, xiv-xix, 301-405 also stresses that in tragedy the irrevocable self-destruction of one royal family proves to be beneficial to the democratic *polis*. More on this below in section 2.4. His view of tragedy is not unwarranted. For the gulf between noble Athenian families and the democratic population, as projected in tragedy, see Griffith 1995; Griffith 1999, 2-3. For a modern equivalent, see the case of Athina Onassis, the granddaughter of the multimillionaire Aristotle Onassis. Athina's divorce from Alvaro Miranda is usually interpreted by Greeks as a fact intrinsically connected with the excessive power and wealth of her family. See (e.g.) the Facebook post of Aristotle Onassis' biographer, who claims that Athina views herself as a character of Greek tragedy, the descendant of a doomed *genos*: http://www.tlife.gr/news/9/Athina-Onasi-Oi-sygklonistikes-apokalypseis-gia-ton-xorismokai-o-fovos-toy-ksafnikoy-thanatoy/0-102828.
[33] See Rehm 1994.
[34] Rabinowitz 2011, 17. See also Rabinowitz 1993, where she focuses on the negative treatment of women in drama.
[35] A thorough critique of this chapter can also be found in Wright 2017.

argument necessarily applies to heterosexual relations, given that surviving dramas refer to sexual passion between men and women, inside or outside of marriage:[36]

> *Erôs* cannot be shared, communicated, compromised, and channelled in diverse, less harmful directions. It is not surprising that it should become the catalyst for both the isolation of the individual from the rest of the community, and of the destructiveness of other paroxysms of self-affirmation.[37]

In this study I intend to show that we risk getting a partial image if we focus only on the negative representations of *eros*. My aim in this study will be twofold. In more general terms, I shall suggest that – as regards Greek erotics as a whole – the data available do not always correspond to the binary schema we have seen earlier. Sometimes 'conflicting (often incompatible) discourses' seem to be present together.[38] Thus, following Boehringer's and Caciagli's argument concerning lyric poetry,[39] I shall argue that erotic relationships between men and women might have been presented by Greek authors as asymmetrical concerning age,[40] but not necessarily as non-reciprocal. In other words, I shall be suggesting that in Greek texts a woman is sometimes conceived as an active agent in the field of love.

This can be based upon the examination of a variety of primary sources. In Lysias' *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*, for instance, Euphiletus refers to his wife's lover, Eratosthenes, as the only person who is to blame for the adultery,[41] thus indirectly introducing his unnamed

[36] Two plays that must have treated paederastic *eros* are the now lost A. *Myrmidons* and S. *The Lovers of Achilles*. I thank Professor Wright for bringing this to my attention.
[37] Thumiger 2013, 40. See also Thumiger 2013, 39, n. 34.
[38] Foxhall 2003, 168.
[39] See Boehringer and Caciagli 2015, 34-45.
[40] See Dover 2016 (1978), 122.
[41] Cf. Lys. 1.4, 1.8, 1.26, 1.49.

wife as a passive victim.[42] However, in his own narrative, it is sometimes implied that his wife is very much in charge of her own erotic life.[43] As Euphiletus recounts the story, when he once came unexpectedly from the fields, she plotted and carried out a cunning scheme so that her lover would not be caught by her husband (1.11–14). In a similar vein, in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, the eponymous character suggests to the women on strike that they do not show their enjoyment of marital sex (*if* they are forced to submit to it), since this will not really satisfy their husbands (163–166).[44] This shows that women were envisaged as actively enjoying marital sex, something also implied by a more conservative writer, such as Xenophon.[45]

Of interest are also the many examples of Athenian vase-paintings associated with wedding ceremonies that depict ordinary couples at the starting point of their married life. More specifically, on many vases, the personified Eros accompanies the bride during her preparations on the wedding day, either during her ceremonial bath or her adornment.[46] Moreover, Eros is often depicted near the couple during their procession from the house of the bride to the house of the groom.[47] To my mind, the frequent appearance of Eros should not be regarded as

[42] Schaps 1977, 329 shows that in Athenian courts women's names were almost never mentioned, with some exceptions: 'disreputable women, opposing women, and dead women'. Here Euphiletus does not mention the name of his wife, despite her infidelity.
[43] See Foxhall 2003, 178.
[44] See also Ar. *Lys*. 99-100, where Lysistrata seems to take for granted that Athenian wives desire the fathers of their children.
[45] Cf. X. *Oec.* 12-13; *Smp*. On the love that men wanted their wives to feel for them, see X. *Hier.* 3.3. See also Sem. 7.86 (West).
[46] See (e.g.) an Attic red-figure lebes gamikos by the Washing Painter in Athens, Nat. Arch. Mus. (inv. 14790, 425-420 B.C), that depicts the adornment of the bride. The bride is presented seated on a stool at the centre. She is fixing her hair, while Eros is presented as assisting her. Cf. a red-figure pyxis in Berlin, Staatliche Mus. (inv. V.I. 3373, 460-450 BC). This vase presents us with the three different stages of wedding preparations. First, Eros flies in front of the bride and decorates her, while holding in his hands a *thymiaterion*. This is followed by a procession of bridal gifts. The last scene shows the bearded groom leading the veiled bride to his house.
[47] See (e.g.) a fragmentary red-figure loutrophoros (Oxford, Ashm. Mus. 1966.888 = *LIMC* Eros 639, 430-420 BC). This vase depicts a wedding procession on foot. Eros floats between the veiled bride and the groom while holding two loutrophoroi in his hands. Eros also turns his head towards the bride, thus focusing his attention to her. The bride seems to meet the gaze of the groom, although, at the same time, she inclines her head slightly downwards. See also an Attic red-figure loutrophoros (London, Brit. Mus., GR 1923.1-18.1, 440-420 BC) that depicts a similar wedding procession. In this loutrophoros, Eros is absent; yet the groom looks affectionately at the bride's eyes, while she returns the look back. A severely fragmentary Attic loutrophoros in Athens, New Acropolis Mus. (NA 1957 Αα 1879, 450-425 BC) is also of interest. Despite its fragmentary condition, it is evident that this vase has wedding associations. On the right side of the groom there is a person holding a torch, thus

insignificant or as the result of artistic convention only. Rather, the recurrent presence of Eros near the newlyweds may reveal a common wish among the members of the Athenian community, i.e. that erotic love and happiness may ensue within the framework of an ordinary Athenian marriage.[48]

Second, I shall maintain that tragic *eros* is a far more complex notion than is usually assumed, and that we can observe *both* positive *and* negative constructions. More specifically, as regards the negative representations, it is evident that the insolent behaviour characters show towards *eros* brings disaster upon them. For instance, some scholars, such as Padel and Cantarella, equate the 'views' of Euripides' Hippolytus with the 'views' of the dramatist and argue that the play as a whole presents erotic love and female sexuality quite negatively.[49] Nevertheless, if we interpret Hippolytus' words and his demeanour in their dramatic context,[50] we can understand that his arrogant attitude towards Aphrodite and his general rejection of erotic love are presented as the things that actually provoke his death: it is thus clear that erotic love is not to be blamed, but rather the (often extreme) ways characters behave towards it.[51] As we shall also see in the following chapters, it is the illicit forms of *eros* and not the positive erotic emotions between married partners that tend to be ruinous (as e.g. in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Sophocles' *Trachiniae*).[52] As regards the positive constructions of tragic *eros*,

indicating that this is a wedding procession on foot. The man is extending his hand towards the person next to him; we can guess that he is the groom holding the hand of the bride in the typical gesture, while looking towards her (or looking her in the eyes?). Eros must have hovered between them, as in other examples. Eros here focuses his attention towards the groom, somehow framing his face with his hands.

[48] This has also been suggested by Oakley and Sinos 1993, 46-47 and Stafford 2013. Cf. more recently, Sabetai 2019, 41.

[49] Cf. Cantarella 1987 (1981), 66-67; Padel 1983, 12.

[50] On this, see Roger 1989, 6.

[51] Cf. (e.g.) Barrett 1964, 171-173, 403; Bushala 1969, 28-29; Köhnken 1972, 185-188; Montanari 1973, 45; Bremer 1975, 275-280; Goff 1990, 86-87, 90, 114-115; Halleran 1991, 118-119; Mitchell 1991, 98-99, 105; Danek 1992, 26-27; Halleran 1995, 39; Cairns 1997; Seaford 2008, 75-76; Kokkini 2013; Valtadorou 2018.

[52] Thus also Harris 2015, 306-307. Trilogies that present the disastrous effects of extramarital *eros* or an extreme opposition to sex and marriage often end with the re-establishment of marriage as an institution. In A. *Ag.* 783-808, an extreme aberration of marriage is on display (Jenkins 1983, 138); Clytemnestra is almost portrayed as the mother of the groom, while eagerly waiting to greet Agamemnon and Cassandra, who come followed by an exuberant parade. Nonetheless, the *Oresteia* ends with a proper re-establishment of marriage by Athena (A. *Eu.*

I intend to show that in some dramas married partners experience, in the present or in the dramatic past, erotic desire for each other, as the evidence of Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Helen* suggests. Lastly, tragic *eros* and its relation to marriage come forth as even more complex notions when the fragments are also studied.[53] In this study, I shall focus my attention on the fragmentary *Antigone* and *Andromeda*, yet I shall also be referring to Aeschylus' *Danaids*, Sophocles' *Oenomaus* and Euripides' *Protesilaus* (among other fragmentary plays).[54] All the above considerations allow me to suggest that positive representations of erotically enjoyable marital relationships can be normative in tragedy as well as in real life.

III. Why Euripides?

Before I begin with the exploration of the fragmentary plays in Chapter 1, I want to highlight that Euripides and his dramatic work have been placed at the centre of this study not without reason. Of course, the reader understands that this choice is, at least in part, based on the personal preferences of the author. However, the fact that *eros* must have been a matter of importance to the dramatist should be considered significant. This is reinforced by Borthwick's table, which underlines the amatory features of Euripides' dramas by comparing his use of erotic words with that of the other two great fifth-century tragedians.[55] Even though the differences between the playwrights are not major, a differentiation can be noted. The word *eros*, for example, is 60% more frequent in Euripides than Sophocles and 150% more frequent

834-6 with Lebeck 1971, 69). It would be reasonable to assume that the same sequence was followed in A. *Danaides* trilogy. In A. *Supp.*, the Danaids have fled from Egypt and travelled to Argos so as to ask for help from their Hellenic ancestors. The reason behind this migration lies in their desire to avoid their wedding to their cousins. Although the people of Argos accept their supplication, they are finally wedded to the Aegyptids by force in the second drama of the trilogy. Again, the third drama possibly ended with an institutionalisation of marriage by Aphrodite herself, as fr. 44 (Radt) implies.

[53] Cf. Cozzoli 2011, 345; Funke 2013, *passim*. Collard 2005 points out that the interrelation between love and marriage in Euripides' plays manifests itself in various ways. For the contrasting representation of married women in E. *Cretan Women* and in *Alc*, two dramas that were produced in the same year, see Collard 2005, 51, 57.

[54] For a comprehensive list, see Wright 2017.

[55] See Borthwick 1997, 365 = Borthwick 2015.

in Euripides than Aeschylus. Moreover, Euripides' interest in *eros* and women, whether positive or negative, was already widely noticed and discussed in antiquity, not only by ancient biographers and scholiasts,[56] but also by his contemporary Aristophanes.[57] I am aware that it may seem odd to take Euripides as representative of the tragic genre, given his well-known generic innovations.[58] However, as we shall see in the following chapters, Euripides' representation of *eros* is actually in line with what we find in the plays and dramas of both Aeschylus and Sophocles.[59]

[56] Kannicht 2004, 97-101 gathers the ancient testimonia that refer to Euripides either as ἐρωτικός and φιλογύνης, or μισογύνης. On the erotic side of Euripides and his work as presented by ancient sources, see also Wright 2017.
[57] See (e.g.) Ar. *Th.* 81-83.
[58] On Euripides as a departure from the norm of tragedy, see Dunn 1996, while for Euripides as 'grandfather of modern comedy', see Segal 1995, 55 (cf. Knox 1979, 250-275, whereas on Aeschylus' borrowing from old comedy, see Herington 1963). Foley 2008, 17, 28, 31 also maintains that Euripides' late dramas cross generic boundaries. For a balanced view about Euripides, see Gibert 2017, 55.
[59] Generally, I agree with scholars who support a more flexible and inclusive definition of tragedy. Cf. (e.g.) Gregory 1999/2000, 73-74; Wright 2005, 22. Mastronarde's 1999/2000, 33-34 comment on the multifarious story patterns in tragedy also applies, to my mind, to the complex portrayal of *eros* in the tragic genre as a whole: 'tragedy had continuously available to it the full range of heroic narratives, including story-patterns of both positive and negative outcome, and allowing tones and overtones of various sorts (including terror, pity, regret, admiration, celebration)'.

Chapter 1. *Eros* and Young Couples in the Tragic Fragments: A Study on Euripides' *Antigone* and *Andromeda*

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on young unmarried couples who fall in love in Euripides' *Antigone* and *Andromeda*:[60] Antigone and Haemon, Andromeda and Perseus. I am interested in exploring two aspects of these relationships: 1) whether there is any importance placed on mutuality, and 2) what is the role assigned to hindrances in these cases of early romance. In particular, in his study of human eroticism, the sexologist Jack Morin notes that towering obstacles and negative emotions, such as anxiety and frustration, actually escalate erotic desire.[61] With this in mind, and after I briefly discuss the dramatic context, I shall explore how heterosexual *eros* is presented in these fragmentary plays, in what ways these young Euripidean characters are portrayed as falling in love, and how these relationships lead to marriage.

1.2. Eros *Revisited: Young People, Love and Common Action in the Euripidean* Antigone

The surviving fragments, in combination with the details given by ancient scholars, provide us with enough information to believe that Euripides must have dealt in his *Antigone* with the same events as Sophocles. The *Hypothesis* of Aristophanes of Byzantium to the Sophoclean play is one of the main sources that contributes to the reconstruction of Euripides' drama and

[60] There is common agreement concerning the production date of E. *Andromeda* due to the Σ Ar. *Ra.* 53. See Webster 1965, 29; Cropp and Fick 1985, 70, 73-74; Gibert 1999/2000, 75; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 142-143; Kannicht 2004, 233; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 128; Galli 2010, 62. Cropp and Fick 1985, 70, 74 and Collard and Cropp 2008a, 159 believe that E. *Antigone* was produced between 420-406 BC, while Webster 1967b, 15 thinks that it was presented between 416-409 BC, probably in 414 BC. Zimmermann 1993, 189-190 maintains that the events narrated might be linked with the political incidents that took place in Athens in 411 BC.
[61] See Morin 1995, *passim*. Cf. Tennov 1999 (1979), 26, 46, 57, 129, 141, 180-183.

probably constitutes one of our most reliable sources:[62] Κεῖται ἡ μυθοποιία καὶ παρὰ Εὐριπίδῃ ἐν Ἀντιγόνῃ. πλὴν ἐκεῖ φωραθεῖσα μετὰ τοῦ Αἵμονος δίδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν. καὶ τέκνον τίκτει τὸν Μαίονα (‘The plot is found also in Euripides in *Antigone*, except that there Antigone is detected in company with Haemon and is joined with him in marriage; and she gives birth to a child, Maion’).[63]

According to Aristophanes, Euripides’ play narrates the same mythological events as Sophocles’, i.e. the interment of Polynices by Antigone and her arrest. If this source is reliable, then it seems likely that the burial of Polynices must have been performed before or during the action of Euripides’ *Antigone*.[64] Yet two striking differences are mentioned here. First, Aristophanes uses the preposition μετά with the genitive, which could mean ‘in common’ or ‘along with’,[65] in order to modify φωραθεῖσα, thereby rendering Haemon an accomplice of the act.[66] Sadly, it is not clear whether they were caught together for the same reason, i.e. the burial, or whether Antigone was the perpetrator of the deed and Haemon was caught along with her, while they were trying to conceal it.[67] Such a role, though impossible to determine, would underline Haemon’s commitment (and affection?) towards Antigone.

Second, we are informed by Aristophanes that, despite the exposure of their non-compliance, Haemon and Antigone will marry and have a son. The phrase πρὸς γάμου

62 Thus (e.g.) Schmid and Stählin 1940, 591; Aélion 1986, 71-73; Jouan and Looy 1998, 193. A different opinion is expressed by Huddilston 1899, 201 and Bates 1930, 220, 222. Regarding the synoptic nature of this *Hypothesis* and the confusion caused by its vagueness, see Mesk 1931, 6-10.
63 All the translations throughout this thesis are from Loeb, apart from some exceptions where I give my own translations. On the summary of Ar. Byz., see Robert 1915, 386; Petersmann 1978, 93, while on Maion as Haemon’s son, see Hom. *Il.* 4.394.
64 See Inglese 1992, 178; Gantz 1993, 521; Ghiron-Bistagne 1993, 256; Zimmermann 1993, 183; Karamanou 2017, 139; Karamanou 2019, 18.
65 See LSJ s.v. II. μετά and genitive.
66 See (e.g.) Paton 1901, 268; Mesk 1931, 3; Schmid and Stählin 1940, 591; Webster 1967b, 181; Dunn 1996, 186; Kannicht 2004, 262; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 157; Funke 2013, 48; Collard 2017, 359; Karamanou 2017, 139; Karamanou 2019, 20.
67 I cannot rule out another possible interpretation, namely that Antigone was caught (φωραθεῖσα) and then given in marriage (δίδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν) to Haemon (μετὰ τοῦ Αἵμονος).

κοινωνίαν ('to a communion of marriage') along with the verb δίδοται ('is given') implies that Antigone is given in formal marriage by her κύριος ('legal guardian'),[68] who in her case is Creon.[69] Therefore, we can conclude that, after discovering their defiance, Creon decides to set them free and marry them to each other. This is (probably) accomplished thanks to the intervention of a god. By reason of fr. 177,[70] it has been suggested that Dionysus acts as a *deus ex machina*,[71] thus saving Antigone's (and Haemon's?) life. This dramatic element is possibly inspired by the fifth stasimon of the Sophoclean *Antigone* (1116–1154),[72] where the elders address Dionysus and ask for his immediate intervention (1149).[73] It is interesting that, according to some traditions, Dionysus is the father of two boys, Oinopion and Staphylus; yet, in contrast to many other gods, he is presented in art as an 'affectionate father figure'.[74] Therefore, the assumption about Dionysus as *deus ex machina* makes perfect sense in the context of Euripides' *Antigone*, given that: 1) Creon must have had a change of heart for good reason, and 2) Dionysus as a loving divine father is the ideal candidate for making this reconciliation between father and son happen. Dionysus must have also been the one who endorsed this marriage and predicted Maion's birth (both mentioned by Aristophanes).

[68] See (e.g.) Paton 1901, 274; Robert 1915, 388; Rose 1930, 40; Mesk 1931, 3; Aélion 1986, 72. For the expression γάμου κοινωνίαν, see LSJ s.v. κοινωνία. On wedding rituals and the role played by the bride's father, see below Chapter 3 and 4.
[69] See Foley 2001, 32.
[70] Through fr. *178, we learn that Dionysus sent the Sphinx to Thebes (with Σ E. *Ph.* 1031), a city that is associated with formidable suffering in tragedy (with Zeitlin 1990b).
[71] This was first suggested by August Boeckh and subsequently accepted by (e.g.) Weil 1889, 330-331; Mesk 1931, 12; Schmid and Stählin 1940, 591; Webster 1967b, 182-183; Aélion 1986, 73; Petersmann 1978, 94; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 52; 1986, 109; Ghiron-Bistagne 1993, 258; Jouan and Looy 1998, 199-201; Bañuls and Morenilla 2008, 106; Karamanou 2017, 140; Karamanou 2019, 22. Paton 1901, 275 agrees that divine intervention is necessary, but insists that this deity 'must be left unnamed'. See Huddilston 1899, 189-190; Zimmermann 1993, 185, n. 325. Robert 1915, 394 argues that Heracles speaks these lines, thus addressing his half-brother, also νόθος son of Zeus, Dionysus.
[72] With Scodel 1982, 39; Karamanou 2017, 135; Karamanou 2019, 23.
[73] On Dionysus' ambiguous 'response' to this prayer, see Cullyer 2005. On this song, see Scullion 1998; Macedo 2011.
[74] Shapiro 2003, 89. Cf. Shapiro 1989, 92-95; bell crater in Ferrara, Mus. Naz. 2738 = *ARV*2 593.41 = *Para* 394 = *LIMC* Oinopion VIII 1. Regarding the cylix by the Triptolemus Painter (Paris, Louvre G 138 = *ARV*2 365, 61), where Dionysus' presence is prominent, Knauer 1996, 234, argues that the depicted men represent a procession of father and sons 'on their way to the celebration of the koureion on the third day of the apatouria, the koureotis'.

The Σ S. *Ant.* 1351 almost repeats Aristophanes' words,[75] giving the impression that the scholiast obtained the relevant information from Aristophanes (NB the repetition of φωραθεῖσα, the noun γάμος and the reference to Αἵμων): Διαφέρει τῆς Εὐριπίδου Ἀντιγόνης ὅτι φωραθεῖσα ἐκείνη διὰ τὸν Αἵμονος ἔρωτα ἐξεδόθη πρὸς γάμον. ἐνταῦθα δὲ τοὐναντίον ('This version deviates from Euripides' *Antigone* on the grounds that, after being caught, she is wedded (to him) thanks to Haemon's *eros*. Here, however, the exact opposite takes place').[76] Here the scholiast directly mentions the *eros* that Haemon feels. He seems also to refer to Antigone as the only agent of the act (φωραθεῖσα ἐκείνη), thus implying that Haemon did not collaborate with her, even though we cannot be sure whether he did this on purpose or for the sake of brevity. Therefore, according to this source, two of the most prominent elements of *Antigone* must have been: 1) the role attributed to heterosexual youthful *eros*, and 2) the happy ending (or better, the absence of a disastrous ending).

In *Fabulae Hygini*, a compilation of short narratives about mythological figures whose author has not been positively pinpointed,[77] a different story is preserved, for which the Euripidean link is under debate.[78] To begin with, it is worth noting that no ancient testimony connects *Fabula* 72 with Euripides' *Antigone*. Some scholars argue for their interrelation, thus hoping to reconstruct the lost drama. Furthermore, this account differs in almost every respect

[75] See Huddilston 1899, 185; Paton 1901, 268; Mesk 1931, 2-3; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 50, n. 5; Kannicht 2004, 262.
[76] See E. *Antigone* T iib 2 (Kannicht) ≈ Σ 1351 S. *Ant.* (Papageorgius). This translation is mine.
[77] See Breen 1991.
[78] The first scholar who connected these texts was Friedrich Welcker, followed by Huddilston 1899; Bates 1930, 220; Scodel 1982, 40-42. The suggestion that this account does not reflect E. *Antigone*, but a later adaptation of the myth, possibly that of Astyd. II is claimed by Séchan 1967, 290; Webster 1967b, 182; Webster 1968, 93-94; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 48-53; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1986, 109-110; Breen 1991, 136-138; Gantz 1993, 521; Zimmermann 1993, 161-188, 272-274; Huys 1997, 18-19; Guidorizzi 2000, 315; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 158. Cf. Paton 1901; Mesk 1931, 12. On Astyd. II, who lived in the 4th century BC, and was even honoured by the Athenians with a statue in the theatre, see *TrGF* Astyd. II T 1-9 and fr. 1e (Snell); Trendall 2016, 96; Wright 2016, 101-105. Huys 1997, *passim* argues that Hyginus' work should not be considered a reflection of the lost Euripidean plays in any case.

from the aforementioned ancient sources.[79] First, Antigone's confederate is not Haemon, but Argia, Polynices' wife,[80] a detail that we do not encounter in any other surviving Greek text.[81] Second, in Hyginus, the illegitimate son of Antigone and Haemon is born in the mountains and returns to Thebes many years later. Third, Heracles has been assigned the task of mediating between Creon and Antigone,[82] although without much success.[83] Last, Hyginus' story ends sadly, given that both Haemon and Antigone die, a fact that raises questions as to whether we can relate this account to *Antigone* or not.[84] The *Fabula* agrees with our other sources only in one respect, namely on the significance assigned to heterosexual youthful *eros*; i.e. the author uses the word *amor* ('erotic desire') in order to describe the motives that led Haemon to disobey his father.

Scholars have moreover tried to connect Hyginus' narration with two Apulian red-figure amphorae, yet the association of these vases with the accounts preserved in Hyginus and Euripides is again tenuous, particularly in the case of the latter. In the first one in Ruvo di Puglia (c. 350s? BC),[85] where the characters are identified by inscriptions, Antigone is presented as a detainee accompanied by a guard. Haemon appears on the left side overwhelmed with agony. Creon is depicted as an old man holding a sceptre, while Ismene observes the

[79] The *Fab.* also presents us with a version that is too long to be considered a reflection of a tragedy (thus Mesk 1931, 4; Huys 1997, 19), i.e. it recounts: 1) Polynices' burial, 2) the parturition of Antigone's child on the Boeotian mountains, and 3) his return to Thebes, at least fifteen years after his birth. Such a timespan hardly corresponds to the time limits of a tragedy, which typically addresses one day's events. Yet this is a fabula and not necessarily the σύστασις τῶν πραγμάτων. Therefore, we cannot be sure whether these events were part of a drama or consisted of a linear summary in the form of a prologue to a drama that followed. For instance, Inglese 1992, 176 argues that the drama to which Hyg. refers perhaps started with Antigone's son returning to Thebes.
[80] For the awkwardness generated by this, see Paton 1901, 274; Petersmann 1978, 83; Zimmermann 1993, 255.
[81] We find this also in Stat. *Theb.* 12.409-428. It can perhaps be assumed that it was not invented by Stat., who often gets inspiration from Greek texts. Furthermore, Hyg. is also influenced by various Greek sources. As a result, we cannot exclude the possibility that some of this information was part of E. *Antigone*.
[82] On Heracles' relationship with Creon, see Zimmermann 1993, 168.
[83] Robert 1915, 382-385 underlines that this feature of the *Fab.* is inconsistent with the common portrayal of Heracles as a καλλίνικος hero. On Heracles as a successful intervener, see (e.g.) E. *Alc.* 1006-1163.
[84] See Robert 1915, 382.
[85] Amphora, Ruvo, Museo Jatta 423 = *LIMC* Antigone I 14* = *RVAp* I 403 41, pl. 142, 4 = Séchan 1967, fig. 85. Cf. Kannicht 2004, 262-263.

scene. In the middle is Heracles with his characteristic lion skin.[86] Behind the ruler stands a boy holding a phiale for religious use, a figure believed to be Maion.[87] Beside him is positioned a middle-aged unidentified woman, perhaps a maidservant or *trophos*.[88] Both the presence of Heracles under a ναΐσκος ('small temple') and of the young boy have allowed scholars to maintain that this vase presents us with a dramatic version used by Hyginus and perhaps attributed to Euripides.[89]

But there are some difficulties in 'reading' this vase as an illustration of the play supposedly used by Hyginus. First, although the principal mythological figures are designated by inscriptions, the boy remains unnamed,[90] along with the other insignificant figures.[91] Second, the boy's sumptuous garment displays some dots and a discreet leafy pattern can be observed on Creon's and Ismene's clothing,[92] whereas Haemon, Antigone and the minor characters, with the exception of the naked Heracles,[93] wear a plain chiton. If we are to accept that the artist has been inspired by the text or the performance of a tragedy[94] and particularly

[86] On how to identify heroes, such as Heracles, in iconography, see Woodford 2003, 15-27.
[87] See Huddilston 1899, 194-197; Robert 1915, 382-385; Bieber 1939, 61-62; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1986, 109; Taplin 2007, 185; Taplin 2010, 32; Krauskopf *LIMC* Antigone I 826. Creon's age is consistent with the *Fab*., in which Maion returns to Thebes as a teenager at a time when Creon must have been old.
[88] Robert 1915, 384; Bieber 1939, 61; Wiles 2008, 153; Galli 2010, 66; Krauskopf *LIMC* Antigone I 826 argue that this woman is Eurydice. To my mind, it is implausible for the artist to depict the queen dressed so plainly in comparison with the king and his niece. We would have been allowed to say that this woman is Eurydice, if we could establish a firm connection between this vase and a fragment in Karlsruher (Bad. Landesmuseum, B 1550 = Beazley *EVP* 144 = *LIMC* Antigone I 16), where the name Eurydice is written. The posture of these figures is similar; but this connection cannot be established, owing to the fragmentary condition of the second vase.
[89] There is agreement regarding the correspondence between this vase and the *Fab*. See Bates 1930, 219; Bieber 1939, 61; Webster 1956, 63; 1968, 93-94; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 48-49; 1986, 109; Huys 1997, 18; Guidorizzi 2000, 316; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 158; Krauskopf *LIMC* Antigone I 826. Huddilston 1898, 178-180 claimed that it is difficult to identify these vases as Euripidean, an assertion that he revised the following year. See Huddilston 1899, 192-197. A Euripidean influence on the vase is supported (e.g.) by Bieber 1939, 60-62; Wiles 2008, 153.
[90] One could counter that by saying: 1) the artist did not inscribe this name due to lack of space, and 2) that he may have chosen to dress him sumptuously in order to depict his royal descent.
[91] Cf. Huddilston 1899, 195; Taplin 2007, 185. The question why the artist has chosen not to label him remains unanswered. Yet this element alone cannot rule out the possibility of this vase being related to the *Fab*., since Antigone's son remains unnamed in the Latin text as well. Besides, a character sometimes remains unidentified, as (e.g.) Glauce, Creon's daughter in E. *Med*.
[92] Robert 1915, 384 notices that this person wears sumptuous clothing, and he suggests that this may be a victory gift ('Siegespreis'). This element has also been noted by Bieber 1939, 61; Zimmermann 1993, 174.
[93] Both Haemon and Heracles are barefoot, a factor that denotes their robust physical strength.
[94] Taplin 2007, 185 argues that this vase points toward tragedy through its costumes and central porch.

one associated with the version preserved in Hyginus, for what reason does he portray Antigone's illegitimate son wearing a garment similar to Ismene's and Creon's, who must have resided a long time in the luxury of the Theban palace? Another unsettling element is the boy's position next to Creon.[95] If he is the (bastard and undesired by Creon) son of Antigone and Haemon, why is he positioned so far away from his parents on this vase? All these observations attest to the difficulty of connecting with certainty this vase with the dramatic version that Hyginus supposedly used and even more so with Euripides.

Another Apulian red-figure vase (originally from Ceglie and now in Berlin, c. 340–320 BC) bears a resemblance to this amphora and has thus been considered a variation of the same type.[96] Heracles, identifiable by the lion skin and the club, stands with his hand raised in front of a seated king who is clad in a sumptuous chiton and listening to him attentively.[97] On the left side stands one armed attendant who keeps a woman under surveillance, while in front of her is a male person,[98] regarded as Maion.[99] Behind the king stands another escort carrying a sword and a spear, while at his right there is a naked man who touches his head in a way which reveals his distress and is thus held to be Haemon.[100] Again, we cannot be sure whether this scene corresponds to the story narrated by Hyginus: the lack of inscribed names dooms any suggestion about the representation of this event to the realm of speculation: this scene may

[95] Huddilston 1899, 195, 197 also discusses this.

[96] Panathenaic amphora in Berlin, Antikensammlungen F 3240 = *LIMC* Antigone I 15 = Séchan 1967, fig. 86.

[97] According to Krauskopf (*LIMC* Antigone I 15 826), both of these amphorae give the impression that the dispute between Antigone and Creon will end happily thanks to Heracles.

[98] Scholars assume that this person is male without explaining why. Nonetheless, some elements might confuse a literary scholar with no archaeological background. This person wears a necklace, a fact that could pose questions about his or her identity and gender. The effeminate posture could also create confusion for the lay viewer. This person is possibly male, given that: 1) the dress does not fully cover his ankles *and* shoulders, in contrast to the common representation of women, 2) men are sometimes depicted as wearing necklaces in art, 3) men can have the same 'effeminate' posture in Greek sculpture (with Sophocles's statue in Bieber 1939, 46), and 4) in vase-paintings of the later fifth and fourth century the distinction between male and female figures is blurred (with Dover 2016 (1978), 72). I thank Professor Judith Barringer for helping me read this vase-painting.

[99] Scholars who think that this is Maion: see (e.g.) Huddilston 1899, 197; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 49; 1986, 109; Krauskopf *LIMC* Antigone I 15 826; Taplin 2007, 186.

[100] On Haemon's emotions as being strongly depicted on these vases, see Galli 2010, 67-68.

depict another episode of Heracles' life or another variation of the Antigone myth that does not have anything to do with Hyginus' account.

Consequently, these vases may perhaps relate to a putative fourth-century or earlier dramatic version supposedly used by Hyginus, but this is difficult to prove, given the discrepancies and uncertainties discussed above. And even if we could demonstrate this relationship, it would not provide us with much information about Euripides' *Antigone*,[101] since its connection with the *Fabula* is open to dispute. Moreover, the poetic inspiration of this vase could be credited to another successful tragedian,[102] such as Astydamas II (whose *Antigone*, which was first produced in 341 BC and does not survive, need not be reflected by Hyginus' summary either).[103] Moreover, we cannot (and should not) be sure that these vases depict any dramas at all. Artistic innovations ought often to be attributed to the painters.[104] It is also possible that sometimes vases illustrate the local performance of a tragedy;[105] i.e. many Southern Italian or Sicilian vase-paintings reflect themes and patterns that became popular after

101 According to Galli 2010, 67, we cannot connect these vases with E. *Antigone* on the basis of the woman's plain dress: 'Antigone appare qui con consuete vesti femminili e non, come sappiamo dalla testimonianza letteraria dell'*Antigone* euripidea, con indosso le vestiti di una baccante.' His argument could have had a basis, if we had knowledge about Antigone's attire. Still, the attribution of fr. 175 (Kannicht) = *P.Oxy*. 3317 (where a woman [Antigone? Antiope?] is dressed as a maenad) is open to dispute. Hughes 1980; Scodel 1982; Kannicht 1992; Zimmerman 1993, 166-169 attribute it to *Antigone*, while Luppe 1981; Diggle 1996, 164; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 158; López Cruces 2011 think that it belongs to E. *Antiop.*, and Xanthakis-Karamanos 1986 rejects the Euripidean authorship altogether. Indeed, we cannot know with certainty whether this papyrus-fragment belongs to E. *Antigone* or *Antiop.* and the similar titles of these plays do not assist us in this case (with Luppe 1981, 29; Jouan and Looy 1998, 197, n. 12). Second, the situation described in *P.Oxy*. 3317 is not decisive for its attribution. The person being ordered to leave this sanctuary could be either Antigone or Dirce, Antiope's torturer (*pace* Scodel 1982; Zimmermann 1993, 165-168). Third, any interrelation made between the above-discussed vases and *P.Oxy*. 3317 regarding Heracles' intervention is not based on solid ground. The legible letters on the papyrus (ηρακ) may refer to Heracles as a character, but Inglese's suggestion 1992, 181-183 that they can constitute a proverbial use of Heracles' name or a toponym, cannot be rejected. Finally, scholars conclude that fr. 175 belongs to E. *Antigone after* associating it with the above-discussed vase-paintings and/or Hyginus' account. See (e.g.) Scodel 1982, 40. In conclusion, the current state of affairs limits any argument about its attribution to the realm of speculation (with Jouan and Looy 1998, 199).

102 For the influence of other dramatists on the Southern-Italian artists, see Trendall 2016, 96.

103 On this dramatist, see above n. 78. On evidence about the first production and victory of his *Antigone*, see Astyd. II T 5 (Snell) = DID A 1, 292; A 2,1; A2a 6. On this *Antigone*, see also Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 48-50; Ghiron-Bistagne 1993, 259-261.

104 Thus Small 2003, 154, 156, 175; Woodford 2003, 115-126; Hart 2010, 3; Lissarrague 2010, 54.

105 With Small 2003, 60, 66.

fourth-century contemporary local re-performances,[106] thus reflecting innovations on the part of local actors and directors and not the original production at the City Dionysia.[107]

Indeed, the suggestion that Hyginus' account does not have much to do with our *Antigone* is also corroborated by frr. 176 and 162a. Fr. 176 conveys an idea widespread in poetry,[108] that death is the boundary line, beyond which there is no point in trying to humiliate an enemy:

> θάνατος γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νείκεων τέλος
> ἔχει˙ μαθεῖν δὲ πᾶσὶν εὐμαρές˙
> τίς γὰρ πετραῖον σκόπελον οὐτάζων δορί
> ὀδύναισι δώσει, τίς δ᾽ ἀτιμάζων νέκυν,
> εἰ μηδὲν αἰσθάνοιντο τῶν παθημάτων; (E. *Antigone* fr. 176)

> Death is the end of their quarrels for men; and this is easy for everyone to understand. For who will inflict pain on a lofty crag by wounding it with a spear, and who on a corpse by dishonouring it, if these felt nothing of what they underwent?

In a play concerning Antigone, a reference to the act of dishonouring a dead body would normally allude to Polynices' unburied corpse.[109] By contrast, in a tragedy analogous to Hyginus' account that deals with Maion's return to Thebes, a remark about defiling a corpse would not make much sense. Therefore, fr. 176 supports Aristophanes' version: the burial of Polynices must have been performed during or before the action of Euripides' *Antigone*.

106 See (e.g.) Revermann 2006, 71; Taplin 2012, 243. On Euripides' popularity in Megale Hellas, see Arist. *Rh.* 1384b.16-17; Plu. *Nic.* 29.3-5; Phillips 1968, 8; Allan 2001; Taplin 2007, 14; Pagano 2010, 240.
107 For histrionic interpolations that were frequent in antiquity, cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1403b; Page 1934; Revermann 2006, 66-95; Taplin 2012; Finglass 2015.
108 See Hom. *Il.* 24.54; A. *Ag.* 1019-1021; S. *Ant.* 1030; *Aj.* 1344-1345.
109 Thus (e.g.) Weil 1889, 329; Webster 1967, 182; Inglese 1992, 180; Karamanou 2017, 139; Karamanou 2019, 18-19.

Similarly, fr. 162a seems to be in agreement with Aristophanes: ἐγὼ γὰρ ἕξω λέκτρ', ἅ τοι καλῶς ἔχειν / δίκαιόν ἐστιν οἷσι συγγηράσομαι ('For I shall have a marriage which it is right should do well, I tell you, with a wife with whom I shall grow old'). The character who speaks underscores his/her entitlement to marry a person of his/her choice with whom it is just to grow old together (συγγηράσομαι). It can thus be assumed that Haemon is here speaking to Creon about his decision to marry the right person for him.[110] Significant is the verb ἕξω. The use of the future tense of ἔχω ('to have') signifies that the wedding to which he aspires will happen in the future. This confirms the reliability of Aristophanes' summary, which refers to their wedding as an event that is about to happen.[111]

Along with this straightforward mention of marriage, we find many direct or indirect references to *eros* in *Antigone*. In fr. 160 there is a reference to a shared experience of some concealed misfortune: νέοι νέοισι συννοσοῦσι τἀφανῆ ('Young people share their invisible diseases with each other').[112] There are at least three possible interpretations of this line. First, it can allude to the passions that all young men share with each other, given that the dative plural νέοισι is in the masculine form. Still, this does not mean that this 'disease' is *necessarily* shared between males, for the adjective νέος is often used in the masculine form to denote youth in general.[113] Therefore, fr. 160 can perhaps refer to the joint performance of burial rites for Polynices by the young betrothed royals, in the same way that συγγηράσομαι in fr. 162a refers to their common aging, since: 1) the word τἀφανῆ ('hidden', 'invisible') may allude to

110 Thus Kannicht 2004, 265; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 163; Funke 2013, 132-133; Karamanou 2017, 139; Karamanou 2019, 20.

111 One may think that this line does not contradict Hyg.: Haemon could decide to marry Antigone in this version as well. Yet we would not expect for Haemon to wait for fifteen or more years to make this demand!

112 Zimmermann 1993, 163 rightly argues that this line must have been uttered by an older person.

113 See LSJ s.v. νέος I 1. Youth must have generally played an important role in E. *Antigone*. Jouan and Looy 1998, 193 suggest that the Chorus consisted of maidens or Theban women. See also Stobaeus' title before his quotation of fr. 162a (4, 22e, 113): ὅτι ἐν γάμοις τας τῶν συναπτομένων ἡλικίας χρή σκοπεῖν ('that in marriage one should consider the ages of those who enter into union').

the secretiveness that encompasses the action,[114] and 2) συννοσοῦσι ('share an illness', 'be a fellow sufferer') may refer to Antigone's and Haemon's common action.

Third, this line may perhaps allude to their *shared* emotions,[115] and in particular to Haemon's decision to carry on this forbidden, and thus covert, deed because of his feelings for Antigone.[116] τἀφανῆ is something that could perhaps refer to an emotion. συννοσέω may also support this line of reasoning: although often used in the literal sense to indicate physical suffering or disease,[117] it sometimes denotes the experience of a metaphorical malady that two or more loved ones suffer jointly.[118] Occasionally, it refers to the shared life of a couple and the difficulties a person is willing to experience together with his/her significant other when he/she suffers. One example is Pseudo-Lucian's *Erotes* (46.15), while another is fr. 545a/909N2, perhaps belonging to Euripides' *Oedipus*,[119] a play known for its positive representation of marriage.[120] Returning to *Antigone*, it is not impossible for συννοσέω to be associated with the shared calamity of Antigone and Haemon, who jointly commit this forbidden act, and in particular it can be linked to their shared emotions. Yet this fragment alone does not provide us with enough evidence to determine whether the involvement of

114 LSJ s.v. ἀφανής (with Kannicht 2004, 264).
115 This is also perhaps supported by the title Stobaeus gives in section 2.33: Ὅτι ἡ ὁμοιότης τῶν τρόπων φιλίαν ἀπεργάζεται ('that the similarity of ways produces love').
116 Thus Karamanou 2017, 139; Karamanou 2019, 20-21. Jouan and Looy 1998, 199 and Bañuls and Morenilla 2008, 99 similarly argue that this line may refer to their love.
117 Cf. Arist. *GA* 784a30; Gal. *Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates* 17b472, 17b855; Plu. *Prae. ger. reip.* 824a3.
118 See E. *IA* 407.
119 Vaio 1964, 52 maintains that this genuine fragment refers to Jocasta's and Oedipus' marriage. Cf. Webster 1967b, 244-245; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 107, 118-119; Kannicht 2004, 577; Collard 2005, 58; Collard 2017, 360. Conversely, Stephanopoulos 2012, Liapis 2014; Finglass 2017a, 17-19 support its inauthenticity.
120 See Bethe 1891, 68-69, n. 40; Robert 1915, 305-331; Vaio 1964; Stephanopoulos 2012; Funke 2013, 73-74; Liapis 2014; Collard 2017, 359; Finglass 2017a.

Haemon in this shared 'disease' comes as a result of his *eros*.[121] However, frr. 161 and 162 direct us towards this conclusion.

In fr. 161 we encounter a reference to *eros* that is equated to madness: ἤρων· τὸ μαίνεσθαι δ' ἄρ' ἦν ἔρως βροτοῖς ('I was (*or* they were?) in love; and that showed that love is madness for mortals'). Pertinent is the verb ἐράω ('to love', 'to be in love with'), which is located at the beginning of the verse and grammatically can be construed as either first person singular or third person plural of the imperfect tense.[122] Hence, the interconnection between love and madness is articulated either by the person who talks, and thus refers to himself and his personal experience of love, or by a third person (the Chorus? Creon? Ismene?) who contemplates the negative outcome that *eros* can have in human affairs.[123] In the first instance, the character who utters these words is (plausibly) Haemon (given that fr. 161 also refers to his love);[124] we could suppose that here Haemon admits that he was complicit in Polynices' burial, motivated by his *eros* for Antigone.[125] However, if ἤρων is a plural form, then this fragment provides us with direct evidence of the mutual feelings between Haemon and Antigone.[126] Unfortunately, the lack of context does not allow us to determine which of the two alternatives is correct.

In all probability, fr. 162 points to the same dramatic context, as it bears a resemblance to fr. 161:

121 For *eros* as disease, see E. *Hipp.* 40, 394, 405, 477, 479, 512, 597, 698, 730, 766, 1306; *Cret.* fr. 472e.12, 20, 35; *Sthen.* fr. 661.6, 20.
122 See Morwood 2001, 74.
123 See Kannicht 2004, 265; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 163. These verses could have been uttered by Creon in an exasperated (or ironic) way.
124 See Webster 1967b, 183; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 51; Ghiron-Bistagne 1993, 258; Kannicht 2004, 265; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 163. Jouan and Looy 1998, 206 translate 'j' étais amoureux', thus taking it as a first person singular.
125 See Schmid and Stählin 1940, 591; Webster 1967b, 183.
126 Collard and Cropp 2008a, 163.

ἀνδρὸς δ᾽ ὁρῶντος εἰς Κύπριν νεανίου

ἀφύλακτος ἡ τήρησις, ὡς κἂν φαῦλος ᾖ

τἄλλ᾽, εἰς ἔρωτα πᾶς ἀνὴρ σοφώτατος.

† ἣν δ᾽ ἂν προσῆται Κύπρις ἥδιστον λαβεῖν †

When a young man looks to Aphrodite, there's no watch can be kept on him; for even if he's bad at other things, every man is very clever in the pursuit of love. + If Aphrodite approves (love? *or* allows love to come), it is very sweet to seize it.

Here the speaker – who could be Creon, the Chorus, a messenger or a guard – almost certainly remarks upon the action undertaken by Haemon and the impossibility of keeping him under surveillance because of his *eros*.[127] The reference to his youth (νεανίας) may bear erotic undertones, given that *eros* is often inspired by, and mostly afflicts, the young.[128] (Similarly, in *Andromeda* fr. 134a also possibly refers to Perseus' youth). As for the phrase εἰς Κύπριν, it can be understood both as the characteristic metonymy for erotic passion and sexual matters in general,[129] *and* as a metaphor for a girl who arouses this passion.[130] Haemon's *eros* for Antigone, an attractive woman, results in an ἀφύλακτος τήρησις. It is his *eros* that makes him resourceful and impels him to assist her. Last, the phrase could perhaps be interpreted as a literal reference to the goddess herself (which I find less likely).

Fr. 177 may also bear some relation to the erotic realm: ὦ παῖ Διώνης, ὡς ἔφυς μέγας θεός, / Διόνυσε, θνητοῖς τ᾽ οὐδαμῶς ὑποστατός ('O son of Dione, Dionysus, how great a god you are, and in no way to be resisted by mortal men'). In the most typical versions of the myth

127 See Webster 1967b, 183; Kannicht 2004, 265; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 163.
128 Cf. (e.g.) Palaephatus *De incredibilis* 2; Chariton *Callirhoe* 4.2.3; Philostr. *Im.* 1.29.2; Zonar. *Epitome* 582, 10; Niketas Eugenianos *Drosilla and Charikles* 7. 56-66.
129 See (e.g.) Σ Vetera Hom. *Il.* 5.330 (Erbse); Ar. *Ec.* 722; Eub. fr. 67 *PCG*; E. *Andr.* 179, 631; *Tr.* 988; *Cret.* fr. 472e.7; *Dictys* fr. 331; *Hippolytus Veiled* fr. 428; Hsch. ε 2966 s.v. ἔνευνοι (Latte).
130 See E. *Tr.* 368-9, where Helen is called a woman and a Cypris.

Dionysus is the son of Semele, daughter of the founder of Thebes, Cadmus.[131] However, he is here apostrophised as son of Dione,[132] who is traditionally the mother of Aphrodite.[133] In a play, where the theme of love must have played an important role, Euripides presents on stage (or refers to) Dionysus as the son of Dione, thus making him a brother to Aphrodite. This association between Dionysus, Dione and *eros* is not unique. For example, in a fifth-century calyx crater,[134] a youthful seated Dionysus receives a flowery garland from a winged Eros,[135] while Dione offers him fruits and vegetables. What is more, wine and erotic love, belonging to the divine spheres of Dionysus and Aphrodite respectively, are closely linked in Greek culture, as is already evident by the inscription on the famous Nestor's cup dated to the 8th century BC (Archeol. Mus. Pithecoussai, inv. 166788).[136] Accordingly, it makes perfect sense that in this *Antigone*, Dionysus, the brother of the goddess of love,[137] not only intervenes and saves this young couple from catastrophe and death, but also ensures their wedding.[138]

Yet, although heterosexual *eros* must have played a significant role in *Antigone*, we cannot be absolutely sure that Haemon's feelings were reciprocated. Is this marriage forced, like the one between Iole and Hyllus in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* or Orestes' and Hermione's in Euripides' *Orestes*? We cannot answer this question with certainty. Still, there is no textual element that leads us to this negative conclusion, nor is this suggested by any reader of the

131 See Hom. *Il.* 14.325; Hes. *Th.* 940-941; B. *Dithyramb* 5.48-50; E. *Ba.* 1-3; Hdt. 2.145; Theoc. *Id.* 26.6; Paus. 3.24.3; D.L. 2.102.
132 See Hsch. β 128 s.v. Βάκχου Διώνης (Latte and Cunningham); Kannicht 2004 on fr. 177; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 169.
133 See (e.g.) Hom. *Il.* 5.370-371; E. *Hel.* 1098; Apollod. 1.13.5; Plotinus *Ennead* 3.5.2; *LIMC* Dione III 7-9.
134 Vienna, Kunsthist. Mus. IV 1024 = *ARV*2 1152, 8 = *LIMC* Dione III 11.
135 On the association between young desirable maidens and flowers, see Chapter 3.2.
136 Thus Hughes 2019, 53-54. On the vast bibliography à propos of this skyphos, see Gaunt 2016, 94, n. 7.
137 In Hsch. β 128 s.v. Βάκχου Διώνης (Latte and Cunningham) we read that in a poem of Praxilla from Sicyon (fr. 6 *PMG*) Aphrodite was Dionysus' mother. Of course, Dionysus was associated with the realm of love anyway. In Ar. *Ra.* 52-54, Dionysus describes the *pothos* he felt when he read E. *Andromeda*.
138 Thus Weil 1889, 331; Zimmermann 1993, 164, 171, 184; Jouan and Looy 1998, 210, n. 26; Karamanou 2017, 140; Karamanou 2019, 22-23.

play, ancient or modern.[139] Moreover, as we have seen, both Aristophanes and the scholiast imply that this *Antigone* has a happy ending. By contrast, Haemon's *eros* in Sophocles is similarly vividly portrayed,[140] yet clearly unreciprocated. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, the eponymous heroine performs burial ceremonies for her brother,[141] while admitting that she would not have done a similar deed for anyone else but him (905–912).[142] By sacrificing her life for the dead Polynices and thus cancelling her prospective marriage with Haemon, she reveals that the former, as a member of her natal family, is her prime concern over the latter.[143]

What is more, the only line that has been regarded as a reference to Haemon on her part is actually assigned by the manuscripts to Ismene: Ὦ φίλταθ' Αἷμων, ὥς σ' ἀτιμάζει πατήρ ('O dearest Haemon, how your father dishonours you', 572).[144] It was Marcus Musurus, the editor of the first printed edition of the text (1502), that attributed it to Antigone and he was followed by Boeckh (1884), Jebb (1888), Pearson (1924), Müller (1967) and Kamerbeek (1978). By contrast, Wolff (1892), Brown (1987), Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990), and Griffith (1999) give this line back to Ismene.[145] The reasons that make this attribution controversial are several

[139] NB, however, modern readers do not have access to the play as a whole, while ancient ones do not usually go into that level of detail.
[140] Thus Aélion 1986, 74. Fritz 1962, 227 argues that *eros* does not motivate Haemon's actions. Yet the fact that Haemon does not openly *discuss* his *eros* (in contrast to his Euripidean counterpart) does not mean that he does not *experience* it. Against Fritz's conclusion, cf. (e.g.) S. *Ant.* 781-800; Ar. Byz. *Hyp.* on S. *Ant.*; Lloyd-Jones 1962, 740; Griffith 1999, 255; Capettini 2019, 413. On S. *Ant.* 781-800 as some sort of perverse hymenaeus for the νύμφη Antigone, see Cairns 2016, 108, while on a similarly deep emotional portrayal of Haemon on the above-discussed vases, see Zimmermann 1993, 175-177; Galli 2010, 67-68.
[141] On Sophocles' innovation regarding Polynices' burial, see Petersmann 1978, 90-91.
[142] On her speech as a rhetorically structured public address, see Cropp 1997.
[143] See Neuburg 1990, 68-76; Seaford 1994, 219; Seaford 2005, 125-126. Antigone also speaks about Polynices in a quasi-incestuous vocabulary. See S. *Ant.* 73 (with Seaford 1990b, 78; Almansi 1991, 80-83; Seaford 1994, 349; Butler 2000, *passim*; Griffith 2005; Mahony 2009, 478; Liapis 2013, 85-86; Valtadorou 2015, 189-190; Cairns 2016, 93-105). This seems to be deliberate, for Antigone is the child of an incestuous relationship and her words evoke the introversion of this ill-fated *oikos*. See Seaford 1990b, 78; Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 20; Seaford 1994, 213, 349-350; Butler 2000; Griffith 2005, 94; Liapis 2013, 85; Valtadorou 2015, 190-191; Cairns 2016, 104-105. In E. *Ph.* 1659, 1671 Antigone again uses similar vocabulary regarding Polynices (with Craik 1988, 264). Moreover, both Sophocles and Euripides start their plays by referring to Oedipus' proverbial sufferings, thus reminding the audience of Antigone's ill-fated *genos*. Cf. S. *Ant.* 1-3; E. *Antigone* fr. 157-158 (that these lines constitute the prologue was proposed by Paton 1901, 270-271 and Lucas 1937 and is now commonly accepted). For Antigone's death as a perverted 'sacrifice' for her *genos*, see Pozzi 1989.
[144] The translation is from Finglass 2017b, slightly modified.
[145] See Finglass 2017b. For the attribution of this line to Ismene, see also Sommerstein 2010, 202-208.

and have been discussed thoroughly by the above-mentioned editors. I personally think that the manuscripts are correct and this line should be attributed to Ismene.[146] First, in lines 565–575 there is a στιχομυθία between Creon and Ismene. As a result, an interruption by Antigone would go against the conventions of Greek drama,[147] and thus makes the attribution to Antigone less likely. Second, the extraordinary show of concern for Haemon tallies better with the mild and caring character of Ismene than with that of Antigone, as the dedicated bride of death.[148] Last, Creon's reference to τὸ σὸν λέχος in 573 can refer to the marriage Ismene has been talking about, i.e. Haemon's and Antigone's betrothal.

If this attribution is accurate, then Antigone does not mention her fiancé's name even once.[149] Ismene notifies the audience about this betrothal (568), while Antigone *never* even acknowledges Haemon's existence. As she grieves for her impending death, she refers to her unfulfilled expectations for a wedding to an unspecified individual, and not to the cancellation of this *existing* engagement (876).[150] Antigone's indifference towards her husband-to-be stands out even more if we bear in mind his unwavering commitment towards her. Not only does he exert himself to save Antigone by trying to persuade his father to spare her life (626–780), but he also commits suicide over her dead body (1240–1241). Still, even at the last occurrence of her name on stage, Sophocles persists in depicting her as somehow untouched and 'unviolated' by her fiancé: it is Haemon who is being *penetrated* by a sword and not her (1231–1239). As Cairns points out, 'Both Antigone and Haemon achieve marriage in Hades, but while Haemon

146 On the implications of this attribution concerning her characterisation, see Sommerstein 2010, 202-208.
147 Thus Mastronarde 1979, 95-96; Sommerstein 2010, 202.
148 See Finglass 2017b.
149 See Craik 1988, 37; Seaford 1990b, 78; Seaford 1994, 349; Griffith 1999, 62; Mahony 2009, 478; Valtadorou 2015, 188.
150 Thus Murnaghan 1986, 206; Valtadorou 2015, 188-191.

is united with Antigone, Antigone is arguably united with Polynices, in a bizarre triangle of love and death.'[151]

It is thus evident that Creon behaves cynically, when he compares Antigone with a replaceable field to be ploughed (569);[152] yet this does not alter the fact that she adopts a similar stance toward husbands and children.[153] Both uncle and niece seem to hold *eros* and marriage in contempt,[154] an attitude which results in her being buried alive (810–813) and him ending up as a living corpse (1165–1167).[155] Only after she comes face to face with the consequences of her actions and appraisals, does Antigone realise that sacrificing marriage is a great price to pay (916–920), that, according to her, is only worth it when it allows one to do one's duty to a brother.[156] Similarly, Creon realises that he cares deeply about marital and blood ties alike, when it is already too late for his son and his wife (1339–1346).[157] As the Chorus sings, the neglect of Aphrodite's power cannot but be ruinous for the characters who defy, hold in contempt or ignore matters that are under her jurisdiction.[158]

In conclusion, *eros* must have played a notable role in Euripides' *Antigone*, a play that must have been set in the aftermath of Polynices' interment. We can say with some confidence

151 Cairns 2016, 106. Differently, Griffith 2005, 121 implies that the consummation of their wedding is achieved through Haemon's bloody suicide.
152 With Griffith 1990, 216: 'the metaphor of the male 'sowing seed' in the female 'furrow' is common [in Greek thought]. But Kreon's matter-of-fact coarseness is repellent'.
153 See Murnaghan 1986; Neuburg 1990, 73; Papadopoulou 2008, 158; Valtadorou 2015, 187-193.
154 On Antigone's renouncement of *eros*, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 21, while on Creon's actions against Eros that render him the latter's victim, see Cerbo 1993, 648. Generally, on Creon's beliefs as having 'much in common with Athenian ideology of the period', see Cropp 1997, 153. Differently, on Antigone's (and Haemon's) perception of *nomos* as reflecting contemporary Athenian principles, see Harris 2006b.
155 See Valtadorou 2015, 186; Cairns 2016, 34-37. On the similarities between Creon's fate and that of the Labdacids, see Liapis 2013.
156 In this case, I do not imply that Antigone regrets her decision to forfeit marriage. She indeed realises the grave ramifications of her sacrifice, yet she also recognises that she could not act otherwise in the present circumstances. On her speech as stressing both Creon's injustice and his inability to behave as a proper uncle, see Foley 2001, 31-33. For Creon as the person in charge of her marriage, see also Patterson 1998, 113.
157 On Creon as a loving father who wants to prevent Menoeceus' sacrifice, see E. *Ph.* 919. This son of Creon is probably the one mentioned in S. *Ant.* 1303 as Megareus.
158 On Aphrodite's invincible power over mortals, see S. *Ant.* 800.

that the character who speaks about himself as being in love is probably Haemon. With regard to this relationship, there is not much information that implies reciprocity, apart from frr. 160 and 161. Still, this relationship is (possibly) presented in a positive way. In contrast to the Sophoclean play, where *eros* is either unreciprocated or neglected, in Euripides, heterosexual *eros* does not lead to destruction and death, but to a (happy?) marriage and progeny.[159] Last, Haemon (possibly) helps Antigone and publicly asserts his love, acting against his father's will. Both the verdict that forbids the burial and the opposition against this relationship by Creon seem to have acted as extra stimulus to the expression, and perhaps experience, of Haemon's erotic feelings.

1.3. The Lover, the Beast and the Grateful Maiden in Euripides' Andromeda

Thanks to the popularity of this Euripidean drama, several ancient sources either preserve some parts of it, especially its beginning,[160] or provide us with valuable information about the plot and the final happy outcome.[161] In particular, the Ethiopian princess is meant to die near the seashore (perhaps because of her mother's insult against Poseidon?).[162] We are almost certain that, instead of the more traditional prologue in spoken iambics, *Andromeda* starts with the title character being bound to a rock and singing monodic anapaests alone in the dark (fr. 114).[163]

159 For the happy ending of E. *Antigone*, see Paton 1901, 275; Webster 1967b, 187; Aélion 1986, 74-75; Inglese 1992, 178; Gantz 1993, 521; Zimmermann 1993, 185-188; Bañuls and Morenilla 2008, 106-108; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 157; Funke 2013, 48; Collard 2017, 355; Karamanou 2017, 139-141; Karamanou 2019, 23-25. For their romance, see (e.g.) Huddilston 1899, 188; Paton 1901, 275; Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980, 55-56; Zimmermann 1993, 171, 186; Bañuls and Morenilla 2008, 99-100, 106-108; Karamanou 2017, 139-141; Karamanou 2019, 15-25.

160 Ar. *Th.* is one of our most invaluable sources. On Aristophanes' parody, see Rau 1967, 65-89; Bubel 1991, 159-169; Mastromarco 2008; Funke 2013, 171-194; Major 2013.

161 On the ancient testimonia, see Bubel 1991, 8-23, 64-70; Klimek-Winter 1993, 60-66, 94-118.

162 There is no reference to the boast in the frr. See Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 138-139. By contrast, we know from Eratosth. *Cat.* 16 (p. 20, 3 Olivieri = 215b7 Maass) that Cassiopia's insult featured in S. *Andromeda*.

163 See Wecklein 1888, 87-88; Müller 1907, 58; Knox 1979, 242-243; Bubel 1991, 15; Klimek-Winter 1993, 58-59; Mastromarco 2008, 182; Marshall 2014, 145, 149. For Andromeda as an unwilling victim, see Marshall 2015, 134. Podlecki 2009 discusses some similarities between the *Prometheia* and *Andromeda*, whose title characters are both presented bound on stage. See also Schmid and Stählin 1940, 518.

Her complete desperation is underlined not only by her loneliness and her total immobility,[164] but also by her inability to sing without hearing her voice echoing in the cliffs (fr. 118).[165] The situation slightly changes when a Chorus of consoling maidens appears and laments her fate along with her (frr. 117, 119, 120, 121, 122).[166] During the first episode Perseus enters the scene, carried by his winged sandals, and notices her beautiful figure, bound to the rocks (frr. 123, 124, 125). He decides to kill the sea monster and then becomes determined to marry her. Although there must have been strong opposition to this prospective wedding (most probably on the part of her parents, Cepheus and Cassiopia),[167] Andromeda remains thankful to her rescuer and follows him to Argos.[168] As with Euripides' *Antigone*, the quarrel between Perseus, Andromeda and her parents is perhaps resolved by a divine agent, Athena, acting as *dea ex machina*.[169]

It is self-evident that *Andromeda* is a play about erotic desire.[170] First, in fr. 125 we bear witness to what is perhaps a unique scene in classical Greek drama: Perseus falling in love

164 Cf. Beverley 1997, 120-121; Marshall 2014, 153.
165 Some scholars claim that Echo is present on stage, such as in Ar. *Th.* See (e.g.) Robert 1878, 18; Major 2013, 401. To my mind, Echo's physical absence would better underline Andromeda's loneliness. Similarly, Petersen 1904, 100; Müller 1907, 56; Webster 1965, 29-30; Rau 1967, 68; Webster 1967b, 194; Bubel 1991, 16-17; Beverley 1997, 121-122; Falcetto 1998, 56-57; Jouan and Looy 1998, 156; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 126; Mastromarco 2008, 186-187; Marshall 2014, 150. Phillips 2015 argues that the answers produced by Echo constitute metrical, not verbal repetitions. I am sceptical about this; Echo should have replied with the same words, otherwise Andromeda would not feel desperately alone. Similarly, Beverley 1997, 122-125.
166 On the ethnic identity of the maidens that constitute the Chorus, see Webster 1965, 30; 1967b, 194; Jouan and Looy 1998, 153.
167 In the versions narrated by Apollodorus and Ovid (among others), Phineus, Andromeda's fiancée, tries to thwart her union with Perseus. Some scholars thus endeavour to reconstruct the plot of E. *Andromeda* through these texts, assuming that Phineus was present in Euripides' play as well. See Wecklein 1888, 90-92; Petersen 1904; Arias 1962, 53; Webster 1965, 32. I think that the evidence is not strong enough to support this claim (with Robert 1878, 19; Müller 1907, 48-51; Klimek-Winter 1993, 57; Gibert 1999/2000, 85, n. 36; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 127).
168 See Eratosth. *Cat.* 17 (p. 21.2 Olivieri = 216 b 20 Maass); Hyg. *Astronomica* II.11.
169 Thus (e.g.) Wecklein 1888, 95; Müller 1907, 63; Schmid and Stählin 1940, 519; Bubel 1991, 61-63; Klimek-Winter 1993, 56; Jouan and Looy 1998, 160; Funke 2013, 178. Marshall 2014, 179-182 maintains that Athena does not appear *ex machina*, drawing attention to the fact that the summary of E. *El.* in *P.Oxy.*5284 omits any reference to the god.
170 See Ar. *Ra.* 52-54. Cf. Müller 1907; Moorton 1987, 435; Walcot 1987, 9; Falcetto 1998, 64; Gibert 1999/2000; Sfyroeras 2008, 303-304; Pagano 2010, 19; Funke 2013, 177; Marshall 2014, 141.

on stage.[171] More specifically, Perseus arrives on stage, probably on the μηχανή (fr. 124), sees the stunning girl bound on the rocks and mistakenly thinks she is a statue:[172]

> ἔα˙ τίν᾽ ὄχθον τόνδ᾽ ὁρῶ περίρρυτον[173]
> ἀφρῶι θαλάσσης; παρθένου δ᾽ εἰκὼ τίνα
> ἐξ αὐτομόρφων λαΐνων τυχισμάτων,
> σοφῆς ἄγαλμα χειρός; (E. *Andromeda* fr. 125)

> Hold – what promontory do I see here, lapped by sea-foam, and what maiden's likeness, a statue carved by an expert hand to her very form in stone?[174]

As we shall see in Chapter 2, young attractive women are often likened to statues in Greek literature, especially by their admirers or lovers. Perseus' reference to Andromeda as a beautiful statue is thus clearly 'tinged with eroticism.'[175] His mention of craftmanship (σοφῆς ἄγαλμα χειρός) also makes one think of similar dramatic moments, where the world of *eros* and workmanship become intertwined. In Sophocles' fragmentary *Oenomaus*, Hippodamia describes the effects that her ardent and reciprocated *eros* for Pelops has by mentioning the precise use of the measuring stick by the skilled workers (fr. 474).[176] As we shall see in Chapter 2, Admetus refers similarly to the work of craftsmen (348), when he introduces the statue he will put on his bed. Last, the god Eros himself is also later described by Perseus as δημιουργός ('maker', 'handicraftsman', fr. 136.3). Returning to fr. 125, we can moreover say that the

[171] See Gibert 1999/2000, 76; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 160; Bañuls and Morenilla 2008, 101; Mastromarco 2008, 178; Sfyroeras 2008, 303; Pagano 2010, 20; Marshall 2015, 136.
[172] Librán Moreno 2016 attributes fr. 700a (Kannicht and Snell) to E. *Andromeda* (also) based on the reference to λιθουργὲς εἰκόνισμα ('rocky image') in line 3.
[173] For the metapoetic uses of this line by Aristophanes and Euripides himself, see Torrance 2013, 295-296.
[174] All the translations are from Collard and Cropp 2008a.
[175] Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 160. On beautiful women as ἀγάλματα, see the discussion in 2.2. For Perseus' ecstatic admiration as portrayed in art, see (e.g.) an Attic red-figure calyx crater in Agrigento (inv. AG 7 = *ARV*2 1017.53 = *Para* 440 = *LIMC* Andromeda I 5).
[176] Hippodamia probably reveals her *eros* in front of a female Chorus and/or a confidante, e.g. her nurse (with Sommerstein and Talboy 2012, 92, 102). On the positive portrayal of *eros* in S. *Oenomaus*, see Walcot 1987, 9; Gibert 1999/2000, 84.

reference to ἀφρὸς θαλάσσης ('sea foam') may recall the ἀναδυομένη Aphrodite, who, according to one mythological version, was born from the sea as a result of Uranus' castration (a fact to which her name itself alludes).[177]

After realising his mistake, Perseus feels pity for Andromeda and attempts to converse with her (frr. 126, 127). Next, he offers to save her life, by asking whether she will be thankful to him (fr. 129): ὦ παρθέν', εἰ σώσαιμί σ', εἴσῃ μοι χάριν; ('Maiden, if I should rescue you, will you show me gratitude?'). Of interest is the noun χάρις ('grace', 'favor', 'gratitude'):[178] despite its broad semantic range, χάρις often has amorous undertones, since, along with its derivatives (e.g. χαρίζεσθαι), it serves to connote sexual acts.[179] Interestingly, the maiden Medea uses the same noun in Sophocles' fragmentary *Women of Colchis*, when she speaks to the young Jason before she assists him: ἦ φῄς ὑπομνὺς ἀνθυπουργῆσαι χάριν; ('Do you swear that you will return one favour for another?', fr. 339).[180] In both cases, a dramatic character (i.e. Perseus, Medea) who has fallen in love with another one, addresses his or her object of desire and asks for a favour in return in a suggestive way. Therefore, the expression χάριν εἰδέναι τινί ('to feel grateful towards someone') in fr. 129 may well have erotic connotations,[181] for it perhaps suggests the continuing exchange of beneficial acts and shared pleasure that is about to commence between Perseus and Andromeda thanks to the former's initiatory χάρις.[182]

[177] See Hes. *Th.* 188-198; *h. Hom. Ven.* 6.1-5; Pl. *Cra.* 406c7-d2; Paus. 2.1.8, 5.11.8; Gal. *On semen* 4.531; Ath. 7.126. On her birth and its (rare) reflection in ritual, see Burkert 1985 (1977), 154-155.
[178] See LSJ s.v. χάρις. Cf. E. *Andromeda* fr. 136. For χάρις in Greek literature, see MacLachlan 1993, *passim*; Fisher 2013.
[179] See Hom. *Il.* 11.243; A. *Ag.* 1206; E. *Hec.* 829-30; Pl. *Phdr.* 254a; Plu. *Mor.* 751d. For χάρις as erotic delight, see E. *IA* 543-57. Charites also are associated with Aphrodite in literature. See (e.g.) Hom. *Il.* 5.338; *Od.* 8.362-366; *h. Hom. Ven.* 5.61; Hes. *Op.* 73; E. *Hel.* 1338-1352; Ar. *Ach.* 988-989; *Pax* 40-41, 456; Paus. 6.24.7; Ath. 15.30. Furthermore, in the manuscript L of E. *Hel.*, Aphrodite is called Χάρις (1006), while in later literature *charis* is also used to designate love potions. See Luc. *Alex.* 5; *Merc. Cond.* 40.
[180] With Lloyd-Jones 1996, 187.
[181] See LSJ s.v. χάρις II.2. For the erotic undertones of χάρις in E. *Andromeda*, see (e.g.) Aélion 1986, 174; Bubel 1991, 132; Klimek-Winter 1993, 215; Funke 2013, 185; Marshall 2015, 136.
[182] For the various kinds of erotic reciprocity, see Fisher 2013, *passim*, esp. 39-43.

Equally significant is the term παρθένος ('maiden', see fr. 127),[183] for it underscores Andromeda's unmarried status and thus her availability as a bride (see also her lament for not having heard the wedding paean in fr. 122, that calls to mind Antigone's grievance in Sophocles: 869, 876, 891).[184]

Thereafter, in fr. 129a, which can be considered as an answer to fr. 129,[185] Andromeda is ready to surrender herself to Perseus: ἄγου δέ μ', ὦ ξεῖν' εἴτε πρόσπολον θέλεις / εἴτε ἄλοχον εἴτε δμωΐδ' … ('Take me with you, stranger, whether you want me as a servant, a wife, or a slave'). Although it is not stated that she has amorous feelings as well,[186] her eagerness to offer herself as a servant, wife or slave is straightforward and perhaps arousing to Perseus (and the viewer). Furthermore, her desire to surrender to Perseus should not be regarded as forced or fully dictated by her current circumstances. Even after her rescue from the beast and release from the bonds, Andromeda chooses to live with Perseus,[187] against her parents' will.[188]

The fact that Perseus is enamoured of Andromeda is also implied by fr. 136, where the speaker – certainly Perseus – prays to the god Eros in order to assist him in his effort. I hold

[183] This word refers to young unmarried women, without necessarily denoting their physical state of virginity. See LSJ s.v. *parthenos*; Calame 1997 (1977), 27 (with more extensive discussion of *partheneia* in Chapter 3).
[184] See Pagano 2010, 227 (with Müller 1907, 55; Schmid and Stählin 1940, 518; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004 on 122 for Andromeda as 'bride of Hades'). Cf. Polyxena's similar grievance in E. *Hec.* 416.
[185] D.L. 4. 29.
[186] Regarding Andromeda's feelings, Klimek-Winter 1993, 220 summarises the view of many scholars: 'ob Andromedas Bereitschaft, sich von Perseus unter der Bedingung der Ehe retten zu lassen, auch von Eros motiviert war, lässt sich nicht sagen, scheint aber zumindest möglich'. Cf. Müller 1907, 52; Bubel 1991, 146; Falcetto 1998, 64, 68-69; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140; Funke 2013, 176-178.
[187] Therefore, even if we accept that Andromeda did not experience any passionate emotions towards Perseus, we can regard her decision to follow him in terms of female agency and independence (with Falcetto 1998, 64, 69; Gibert 1999/2000, 82; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140; Funke 2013, 176, n. 430, 185).
[188] See frr. 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 149, 150, 151 for the dispute between Perseus and her parents.

with the majority of scholars that this invocation probably comes right before the killing of the sea monster:[189]

σὺ δ᾽ ὦ θεῶν τύραννε κἀνθρώπων Ἔρως,
ἢ μὴ δίδασκε τὰ καλὰ φαίνεσθαι καλά,[190]
ἢ τοῖς ἐρῶσιν, ὧν σὺ δημιουργὸς εἶ
μοχθοῦσι μόχθους, εὐτυχῶς συνεκπόνει.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δρῶν τίμιος + θεοῖς + ἔσηι,
μὴ δρῶν δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοῦ διδάσκεσθαι φιλεῖν
ἀφαιρεθήσηι χάριτας, αἷς τιμῶσί σε (E. *Andromeda* fr. 136)

> And you, Eros, tyrant over gods and men – either don't teach us to see beauty in what is beautiful, or help those who are in love to succeed in their efforts as they suffer the toils that you yourself have crafted. If you do this, you will be honoured by gods, but if you do not, even by teaching them how to love, you will be deprived of the gratitude with which they honour you.[191]

Four other fragments are pertinent for our purposes. Frr. 137 and 138 refer to the positive aspects of male-female relationships, implying that *eros* and marriage – when they are directed towards, and undertaken with, the right people – can have positive effects on one's life. In particular, fr. 137 expresses the idea that a noble spouse greatly enhances one's existence: τῶν πλούτων ὅδ᾽ ἄριστος / γενναῖον λέχος εὑρεῖν ('This is the best kind of wealth, to find a noble spouse').[192] This could have been said regarding Perseus, the brave Greek hero and son of Zeus, who proves to be true to his descent. Yet γενναῖον λέχος could perhaps refer to his future bride

189 See the list of Klimek-Winter 1993, 254. Klimek-Winter's suggestion 1993, 253-254, that these verses could have also been uttered before Perseus' confrontation with Andromeda's opposed parents, should not be considered totally unfounded, though.
190 On Eros as teacher, see E. *Hippolytus Veiled* fr. 430; *Sthen.* fr. 663; incertarum fabularum fr. 897 (Kannicht).
191 Here I keep Athenaeus' θεοῖς instead of Dobree's emendation (θνητοῖς) and I have thus adopted the translation of Collard and Cropp 2008a. For instances in tragedy, where gods are pronounced as (dis)honoured by other gods, see A. *Eu.* 721-2, S. *OT* 214-215 (Finglass); E. *Tr.* 49. Cf. Biehl 1989, 114. I also translate τοῦ διδάσκεσθαι as middle. For διδάσκομαι used as middle for gods, see LSJ s.v. διδάσκω; Pl. *Mx.* 238b.
192 Uttered by the Chorus (?) (with Bubel 1991, 80; Klimek-Winter 1993, 81).

as the noble-minded barbarian princess,[193] who follows her Greek rescuer despite her parents' objections (in a way comparable to the devoted wife, Laodamia, whose εὐγενές λῆμα is praised in Euripides' *Protesilaus*, fr. 657).[194] Fr. 138 similarly underscores the benefits of falling in love with good and virtuous people: ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς ἔρωτα πίπτουσιν βροτῶν, / ἐσθλῶν ὅταν τύχωσι τῶν ἐρωμένων, / οὐκ ἔσθ' ὁποίας λείπεται τόδ' ἡδονῆς ('Whenever mortals who have fallen in love find their loved one is virtuous, no joy exceeds the joy of it').[195]

Frr. 138a and 1062 again refer to *eros* and marital relationships, yet their authenticity has been questioned.[196] First, fr. 138a refers to *eros* and its substantial impact on people's decision-making: ἔρωτα δεινὸν ἔχομεν· ἐκ δ' ἐμῶν λόγων / ἑλοῦ τὰ βέλτισθ'· ὡς ἄπιστόν ἐστ' ἔρως / κἀν τῷ κακίστῳ τῶν φρενῶν οἰκεῖν φιλεῖ ('We have a terrible love; but you must choose the best course from rational consideration; for love is unreliable and tends to occupy the poorest part of the mind', fr. 138a). The first person plural ἔχομεν ('we have') suggests that the person talking may well refer to his own experience of *eros*, while at the same time addressing his object of desire. It is tempting to assume that here Perseus is talking to Andromeda;[197] this would provide us with important information regarding the mutual aspects of this relationship (provided that the fragment can be safely attributed to *Andromeda*).[198]

193 See Klimek-Winter 1993, 266. Besides, the other examples quoted in this chapter of Stobaeus 'mostly concern good *wives*' (with Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 166).
194 In Eratosth. *Cat*. 17 it is said that Andromeda followed Perseus εὐγενές τι φρονήσασα ('thinking nobly').
195 These verses express a general meaning, i.e. that erotic love can have positive effects in people's lives, which is the dominant theme of E. *Andromeda*; they can thus be attributed to a number of different characters (Perseus, Andromeda, Chorus, Athena) and to different parts of the play (with Klimek-Winter 1993, 267).
196 See below.
197 Cf. Collard and Cropp 2008a, 149. That this line was probably uttered after the prayer to Eros and the killing of the monster is argued by Pagano 2010, 189. On the alternative option, that these lines are possibly spoken by Cepheus regarding the effect that *eros* has on humans, see Bubel 1991, 80; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 149. Differently, Wecklein 1888, 97 argues that Andromeda is the speaker here.
198 The attribution of fr. 138a to E. *Andromeda* is supported by the codices, yet first questioned by Fritzsche 1838, who was followed by others. On this point, see Bubel 1991, 145; Jouan and Looy 1998, fr. 3, p. 186; Pagano 2010, 188. In the *GDV* volume I referred to this fragment as 'inauthentic', but I am not so sure about this now.

A lemma on the manuscripts MA of Stobaeus (4, 23, 15) informs us that fr. 1062 belongs to a Euripidean play, but does not provide any information about the title: γυναικὶ δ᾽ ὄλβος, ἢν πόσιν στέργοντ᾽ ἔχῃ ('It is true bliss for the woman, if she has a loving husband').[199] Its attribution to Euripides' *Andromeda* was first proposed by Hartung (1844), yet it has not been widely accepted by scholars, apart from some exceptions. This interconnection between male affection (στοργή) and female happiness (ὄλβος) is not unique in tragedy. In Sophocles' *Ajax*, the eponymous hero keeps Tecmessa in a quasi-marital situation because of his feelings (στέρξας ἀνέχει, 'having loved you he persists', i.e. 'he persists in his love for you', 211).[200] As we shall see in Chapter 4, Tecmessa subsequently treats Ajax's dead body with 'uxorial' honour in accordance with the affection she has received. In Greek drama, we also sometimes find female characters longing for the exact male affection that they lack. Deianira's knowledge about Heracles' passionate *eros* for Iole convinces her to use Nessus' drug on the grounds that it will (supposedly) make her husband not feel affection towards any other woman (μήτιν᾽ εἰσιδὼν / στέρξει γυναῖκα κεῖνος ἀντὶ σοῦ πλέον, 'that man will never love any other woman more than you, when he sees her', 576–577).[201] Similarly, as we shall see in Chapter 4, the feminine strife and the ensuing discussion in Euripides' *Andromache* evolve around the bed that a husband is fond of (468, 907). Last, it is sometimes implied that a man's *eros* for a young maiden (ideally) warrants future spousal affection and kindness. In Menander's *Dyskolos*, for instance, Sostratos is clearly passionately in love with Knemon's daughter,[202] yet when he addresses her half-brother's slave, Daos, he talks about his determination to marry her and always be affectionate towards her: ἕτοιμός εἰμι λαμβάνειν / αὐτὴν ἄπροικον πίστιν ἐπιθεὶς διατελεῖν / στέργων ('I am prepared to marry her without a dowry, and I'll swear an oath always to cherish her!', 307–

[199] My translation.
[200] My translation. *Pace* Synodinou 1987, 102-103. Finglass 2009a, 1-5 argues for στέρξασαν ἔχει instead of στέρξας ἀνέχει; the latter γραφή would better underline, according to him, Tecmessa's active role in this relationship.
[201] Again, my translation.
[202] See (e.g.) Men. *Dys*. 50-52, 346-347, 677-678, cf. 788-790.

309).[203] Therefore, if fr. 1062 can be attributed to *Andromeda*, then the focus is here directed towards the eponymous character and her *positive* experience as the future νύμφη of the now passionately enamored Perseus.

Consequently, as the fragments make clear, the theme of youthful heterosexual *eros* must have been an important component of Euripides' fragmentary play that probably ended with celebration and marriage. Perseus clearly falls in love with Andromeda. Although we do not have enough information about the way she feels about him,[204] the longevity and the solidity of this marital bond possibly betray – by implication – its reciprocal character.[205] Besides, as Müller suggests,[206] Andromeda's filial disobedience can remind us of the manner of the Aeschylean Hypermestra, who probably fell in love with Lynceus.[207]

It is interesting that at the end of the fifth century vase-painters dwell considerably more upon the romantic aspect of Perseus' life, i.e. Andromeda's rescue.[208] It is thus often assumed that this change of interest must have something (at least partly) to do with the production of the *Andromeda* plays by Sophocles and Euripides.[209] Scholars tend to agree that vases presenting Andromeda as bound to stakes/poles and escorted by attendants point towards the Sophoclean

203 Klimek-Winter 1993, 91 believes that fr. 1062 is spurious. Kannicht 2004 similarly prints it among the *incertarum fabularum*, while Bubel 1991; Jouan and Looy 1998; Collard and Cropp 2008a do not include it at all in their editions. Pagano 2010, 92 places it under the category of fragments that might relate to this play. See also Pagano 2010, 212.

204 See Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140.

205 For the long history of this marriage, see Hes. fr. 241 Most = fr. 135 MW. On the significance of its durability, see Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140; Ogden 2008, 82. For a contrast with the doomed-to-fail romance between Ariadne and Theseus in E. *Theseus*, see Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 141.

206 See Müller 1907, 53.

207 Cf. A. fr. 44 (Radt); *Pr.* 865-867. Cf. Walcot 1987, 9; Simon 2003.

208 See (e.g.) Woodward 2013 (1937), 83; Woodford 2003, 129.

209 The fragments from Sophocles are few and do not provide much information. Cf. S. *Andromeda* frr. 126-136 (Radt); Marijoan 1968; Aélion 1986, 175-176. But it seems possible that *eros* had fewer significance in his drama than in Euripides' (with Schmid and Stählin 1940, 517-518).

version,[210] while an allusion to Euripides is thought to be implied when a cavelike setting is on display, mostly due to fr. 125.[211]

To give some examples of the vases that have been associated with Euripides, an Attic red-figure calyx-crater by the Pronomos Painter depicts Andromeda bound.[212] Around her there are four bridal chests. On her left side Cepheus is seated and holds a sceptre, while on the other side stands Perseus, wearing a *petasos* and holding a *harpe*. Beside Perseus stands Aphrodite, crowning him with a flowery garland. Hermes, as the god supporting Perseus during his various adventures,[213] is present as well. There is also a maiden in oriental dress (an allusion to the chorus?)[214] and a burning altar. Two iconographical features that underline the amorous aspect of the myth are: 1) the portrayal of Perseus and Andromeda looking into each other's eyes rather affectionately, and 2) the presence of Aphrodite.[215] The association of this vase with a theatrical performance has been made on the basis of the elaborate costumes and the presence of the altar, while a connection to Euripides has been argued due to the presence of Andromeda, Perseus, Cepheus and the specifics of the vase's production, i.e. it was produced at the end of the fifth century in Athens. This information alone makes the connection possible, yet this does not allow us to argue this with certainty.

[210] See Petersen 1904, 105; Webster 1967b, 193; Green 1991, 42-43; Green 1994, 20-22; Green and Handley 1995, 39-40; Taplin 2007, 175; London, Brit. Mus. E 169 = *ARV*[2] 1062 = *LIMC* Andromeda I 3*.
[211] See Robert 1878, 17; Woodward 2013 (1937), 83; Saladino 1979, 107-108; Green 1994, 22; Green and Handley 1995, 40; Pagano 2010, 17.
[212] Berlin, Staatliche Mus. VI 3237 = *ARV*[2] 1336, 1690 = *LIMC* Andromeda I 8 = *LIMC* Aithiopes I 21* = Séchan 1967, fig. 76. On this vase, see Woodward 2013 (1937), 85-86; Webster 1967a, 50; Webster 1967b, 194; Phillips 1968, 7; Trendall and Webster 1971, III.3,10; Klimek-Winter 1993, 64, 108-110; Green 1994, 22-23; Segal 1995, 53; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 139-140; Taplin 2007, 176-177; Pagano 2010, 246-248.
[213] See Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140.
[214] With Trendall and Webster 1971, III.3,10; Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140.
[215] If this vase reflects Euripides, then we should not suppose that Aphrodite was part of the original production (as suggested by e.g. Woodward 2013 (1937), 86; Trendall and Webster 1971, III.3,10; Segal 1995, 53), but should rather comprehend her appearance on the vase 'as an embodiment of the play's erotic theme' (with Collard, Cropp and Gibert 2004, 140). See also Klimek-Winter 1993, 110; Pagano 2010, 248. Indeed, Robert 1878, 15, 18, 20, while discussing surviving wall paintings in Pompeii, concludes that Echo, Cassiopia, and the monster were present on the Euripidean stage, on the grounds that they were all drawn on the wall. Robert's assumptions, esp. about the beast, of course go against the conventions of tragedy (with Pagano 2010, 230). Therefore, as Billing 2008, 241 notes, we have to differentiate between 'the performed theatre and the mythological subject matter'.

On another vase, an Apulian red-figure loutrophoros,[216] Andromeda is tied between two tree-trunks/posts: on her left side there is a seated distressed woman (Cassiopia?), while on her right stands an elderly Cepheus holding a sceptre. On the register below, Perseus is depicted fighting with the sea-monster in the presence of five Nereids, while Aphrodite's son, Eros, crowns him with a wreath and holds a ἴυγξ in his hands.[217] Regarding the theme of *eros*, we can note: 1) the presence of Eros, 2) the depiction of the ἴυγξ (a magic love-wheel), and 3) on the reverse side, the depiction of 'the ideal couple of Dionysus and Ariadne'.[218] An association with Euripides is here even more tenuous, given that this vase was produced in Italy in the third quarter of the fourth century, many years after Euripides' *Andromeda* was first staged (412 BC). All in all, a Euripidean influence cannot be argued with certainty when it comes to the aforementioned vase-paintings. It is probable, however, that these painters, among many others, were inspired by the romantic treatment of the Andromeda myth by Euripides, as it spread by word of mouth and via productions of the play in Attica and Southern Italy.[219]

1.4. Conclusion

The scholar who deals with tragic fragments is often unsure about whether or how to connect the remaining dots. But as Sommerstein maintains, we can always look for the 'governing ideas' of each play.[220] Indeed, as we have seen, one critical feature that characterises both *Antigone* and *Andromeda* is their favourable representation of *eros*. In both cases a young heterosexual couple falls in love. However, the emergence of *eros* does not have deleterious

216 Naples, Nat. Mus. H 3225 (inv. 82266) = *LIMC* Andromeda I 13* = Trendall and Webster 1971 III.3,11 = Séchan 1967, pl. VI. See Woodward 2013 (1937), 86-87; Webster 1967a, 154; Phillips 1968, 10; Trendall and Webster 1971, III.3,11; Barringer 1995, 115-116; Taplin 2007, 179-180.
217 On the ἴυγξ, see Gow 1934; Trendall and Webster 1971, III.3,11; Shapiro 1985; Barringer 1995, 117.
218 Barringer 1995, 117.
219 On the popularity of Euripides, and in particular of his *Andromeda*, inside and outside Athens, see Ar. *Th.* 1010-1127; *Ra.* 52-54; Eun. fr. 48 (Blockley); Athen. 12.537 d-e = *FGrHist* (Jacoby) 127 Nicobule fr. 2; Plu. *Nic.* 29.3-5; Aélion 1986, 176-177; Jouan and Looy 1998, 161-164.
220 Sommerstein 2012, 194.

effects, but, on the contrary, leads to the formation of two long-lasting *oikoi*. Evidently, both Haemon and Perseus fall in love with their future wives. Although the fragments do not specify whether the same applies to the heroines, their consent to marriage seems to be implied. What is more, a severe conflict arises between the young couple and the maiden's guardians in both plays. This dispute is eventually (possibly) resolved by a god, a detail perhaps suggesting that there is no place for *eros* without the more conventional act of family bonding.[221] Furthermore, we have seen that surmounting obstacles (e.g. life-or-death verdicts, strong opposition from parents and other relatives, fights with dangerous life-threatening monsters) make the male characters proclaim (and perhaps even experience) their *eros* in a concrete way, thus verifying Morin's observations based on real-life evidence. Something similar cannot be said about Andromeda and Antigone. Yet, as the Chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone* reminds us, *eros* is mostly visible in the maidens' cheeks (783–784), or the bride's eyes (795–797),[222] not their words. Indeed, an emphasis on what is perceived by the eyes, which the psychologist Dorothy Tennov calls 'the organs of love',[223] is noticeable in both fragmentary plays.[224] In the following chapters, I turn to wives who are already married. As we shall see in detail, positive *exempla* of married female characters convey their strong erotic desire for their husbands, yet (again) they do so in an implicit and discreet way.

221 See E. *Or.* 1638, 1653-1655.
222 Since ἵμερος εὐλέκτρου νύμφας can (also) be taken as possessive (with Griffith 1999 on 795-797).
223 Tennov 1999 (1979), 19. For ancient Greek examples, see Cairns 2011b.
224 Cf. E. *Antigone* fr. 162.1; *Andromeda* fr. 125.1-2, fr. 136.2.

Chapter 2. Marital *Eros*, Devotion and Faithfulness in Euripides' *Alcestis*: Reasons to Live Afresh?

2.1. Introduction

Euripides' *Alcestis* (438 BC) has generated great scholarly interest. One of the issues that has attracted attention is how the marital relationship of Admetus and Alcestis is portrayed. Some scholars argue for the total absence of love between the couple,[225] while others deny erotic but not marital love.[226] Only a few allow for the possibility that *Alcestis* may have something to do with *eros*.[227] In this chapter I argue that both marital and erotic love play a substantial role in *Alcestis*, where marital *eros* is actually celebrated rather than problematised.

We are not, however, brought to this conclusion in a straightforward manner. At the beginning of the drama we get ample hints of the 'failed marriage' motif, which may have led the audience to believe that this fourth-position, non-satyric play is a conventional 'marriage-gone-wrong' drama.[228] First, Alcestis' physical and emotional release on the marriage bed before her death is comparable to the reactions of other tragic wives, whose *eros* proves catastrophic and *oikos*-subverting. For example, in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, when Deianira realises her fatal mistake, she cries on the marriage bed and commits suicide on it (813–891).[229]

[225] See Beye 1959; Smith 1960; Fritz 1962; Sicking 1967; Schwinge 1970; Conacher 1984; Schein 1988; Garland 1990, 237; Dova 2012.

[226] See Burnett 1965; Lesky 1966b; Iakov 2012.

[227] See Paduano 1968; Giolo 1985; Kaimio 2002; Visvardi 2017.

[228] The question of genre concerning E. *Alc.* is frequently discussed in scholarship. Some focus on the elements of the drama they think resemble the satyric genre. See (e.g.) Roisman 2002; Roisman 2005. Marshall 2000 argues that this 'prosatyric' drama was meant to be a political response to a decree in the archonship of Morychides. I agree with Dale 1954, xxi; Hourmouziades 1986, 79; Luschnig 1995, 2; Mignanego 2003, 41, n. 1; Parker 2007, xxiii; Kokkini 2010, 29; Ringer 2016, 35 and Redondo 2018, 398, among others, who regard that E. *Alc.* was meant to be received as a tragedy, despite its fourth position in the tetralogy.

[229] Compare Jocasta's motion towards the νυμφικὰ λέχη and her emotional outburst on the bed before her suicide in S. *OT* 1241-1250.

Similarly, in the later *Medea*, the nurse fears that the love- and jealousy-stricken Medea may kill herself with a sword on the bed (37–41).[230] These scenes, which probably bear traces of a shared topos,[231] underscore the failure of the marital bond to achieve its ends. Second, as we shall see, the maidservant reports that Alcestis performs specific actions in a particular sequence (159–175), which reflects the steps that an Athenian bride (νύμφη) would take on her wedding day (i.e. utterance of prayers, bridal bath, lying down on the marriage bed). The perverse emergence of wedding imagery during the queen's dying day stresses even further the 'failure of marriage' theme, thus further supporting the common association between marriage and death often found in tragedy.[232] Third, it is pertinent that, while on the bed, Alcestis utters a resentful μακαρισμός for Admetus' imaginary second wife (181–182). This sorrowful and ill-timed μακαρισμός for a prospective rival-bride further signifies the tragic undoing of Alcestis' own marriage.[233] Last, this good marriage tragically ends on stage. Their grief-stricken son mourns the annihilation of his parental *oikos* by saying that his parents were married in vain (411–415), while the depths of misfortune later make Admetus wish he had remained unwed (880–882).

However, as the audience soon realises, things end differently in *Alcestis*. In place of death and irreparable disaster, this drama concludes with a symbolic second marriage of the royal couple. Admetus touches, with his right hand, the hand of the unknown veiled woman and, without realising it, he gets his resurrected wife back. In this instance, Euripides has played with his audience's expectations: the negative tendencies of the marriage ritual are tragically

[230] I agree with Seaford 1987 that this frequently excised passage, quoted below in p. 59, is authentic.
[231] See Seaford 1987, 123, n. 169. See also Easterling 1982, 22.
[232] Cassandra, Antigone, Polyxena, Iphigenia, Jason's bride, Creusa and Andromeda (*inter alias*) are portrayed in tragedy as brides of Hades. See S. *Ant*. 814-815, 876, 891, 917-918; E. *Med*. 978-979; *Hec*. 416, 418; *Tr.* 319, 354; *IT* 214-217, 364-371; *IA* 457-464; *Andromeda* fr. 122. Naturally, the most exemplary 'bride of Hades' is Persephone in the *h. Hom. Dem.* 79-80. The bibliography on this topic is vast. See (e.g.) Rose 1925; Guépin 1968, 141, and *passim*; Foley 1982a; Redfield 1982; Jenkins 1983; Armstrong and Ratchford 1985, 7-10; Foley 2019 (1985); Seaford 1987; Rehm 1994; Sabetai 2014, 65; Margariti 2018.
[233] On nuptial μακαρισμοί, see Hague 1983, 134-135, 137.

realised at the beginning of *Alcestis* only to be subverted at the end. Therefore, the homology between marriage and death rituals seems to be stressed here not to represent death as the failure of marriage to achieve its ends, but rather to *recreate* the wedding process in a way that makes death and mourning a remarriage, rather than marriage a form of death.

One may wonder why this is the case in *Alcestis*: is there a reason why this marriage deserves a fresh start? I argue that the existence of ὁμοφροσύνη ('unity of mind and feeling') between these spouses leads to the happy ending.[234] As we shall see, both Admetus and Alcestis show devotion and suggest that, during their married life, they have shared love, warmth and affection, that is now going to be missed dearly. Furthermore, both of them place a notable importance on the marriage bed, while their wedding day and their first sexual union is the only memory they recall (177–178, 915–925). These elements seem to imply that in their marriage both husband and wife have enjoyed a healthy, mutually enjoyable sex life.

Additionally, both of them have remained faithful to each other. It goes without saying that Admetus is not an ideal husband, having let his wife die in his place. Yet Admetus has not had any known extramarital affairs nor does he show any conjugal indifference. He mourns for the end of his marriage and promises not to replace Alcestis with any other living woman (328–333), a promise that he keeps (I take it that Admetus does not accept the veiled woman as a lover or new wife, but as a domestic servant up until Heracles' return).[235] The same idea is expressed by the queen, when she declares that she had the option to remarry, but she rejected it (285–289).

234 This is the translation given in the LSJ.
235 For a discussion of this passage, see below p. 76-77.

I also maintain that Alcestis and Admetus, through death and intense mourning respectively, experience a rite of passage that leads to the regeneration of their marriage. This coming-of-age experience approximates to a second chance given to characters who remain devoted and faithful to their first spouse. This is similar to what we encounter in *Helen*. As we shall see in Chapter 3, Menelaus and Helen – having remained devoted to one another and worked together so as to achieve escape and marital happiness – experience a comparable rite of passage that results in the renewal of their long-endured marriage. In my view, faithfulness and marital devotion play a pivotal role in the positive representation of marriage in these two Euripidean dramas.

Before moving to the next section, let me stress one point. As the second hypothesis of the play informs us, *Alcestis* is the fourth play that Euripides presented in 438 BC after three mythologically unrelated tragedies: *Cretan Women*, *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, *Telephus*.[236] We do not have much information about the other dramas, since they have been preserved only in fragments. Nonetheless, in each of them, several distinct female attitudes towards marriage and/or *eros* are introduced or, in some cases, even take centre stage. I do not wish to argue that different representations of these women constitutes the unifying theme of this tetralogy, as was maintained early on by Schöll.[237] Rather, my intention is to show that during the first performance, the audience would encounter these women's attitudes towards marriage and/or *eros* and thus would judge (consciously or not) Alcestis' behaviour against this background.

236 For the second hypothesis of the play attributed to Ar. Byz., see Dale 1954.
237 See Schöll 1839, 130-137.

The pre-marital affair of the Cretan princess, Aerope, with a slave,[238] and less certainly her post-marital liaison with Thyestes,[239] may have been the subject matter of *Cretan Women*.[240] In *Telephus*, apart from the usual contempt for Helen, here expressed by Agamemnon (fr. 722), the representation of Clytemnestra must have been of interest: the wife of Agamemnon was probably presented as the secret assistant of Telephus (fr. 699). Despite this piece of information, however, the malevolent nature of her involvement is not straightforward,[241] as far as we can tell from the surviving evidence.[242]

If we accept the scholarly hypothesis that *Alcmaeon in Psophis* recounts the events related to the second visit of this hero to Arcadia,[243] we can assume that in this drama three different models of womanly behaviour emerge. We know from Apollodorus and Pausanias that Alcmaeon's second wife, Callirrhoe, convinces him to return to Psophis so as to retrieve the necklace of Harmonia from his first wife, Arsinoe or Alphesiboea.[244] Thus, Callirhoe selfishly endangers the life of her consort in a manner similar to Alcmaeon's mother, Eriphyle, who provides the impetus for the demise of her husband, Amphiaraus.[245] Alcmaeon returns to Psophis intending to deceive his father-in-law, Phegeus (fr. 72), only to be discovered and fall prey to the ambush of the king and his sons.[246] However, in contrast to the daughter of the river-god Achelous, Callirrhoe, Arsinoe/Alphesiboea must have represented a pronounced

[238] This extramarital relationship must have provoked the wrath of her father, Catreus. See T iii a and *v, fr. 460. Compare the contrasting evidence of T iii c.
[239] See T iv; fr. 467.
[240] Cf. frr. 463 and 464 express a negative view towards marrying women in general.
[241] See Heath 1987, 276-277; Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995, 19-20, 44; Del Freo 1996, 206; Collard and Cropp 2008b, 187-188.
[242] *Pace* Hyg. *Fab.* 101.5-7, where it is stated that Clytemnestra advised Telephus to threaten Orestes.
[243] For extensive secondary bibliography, see *TrGF* 5.1 (Kannicht) p. 207.
[244] See T *ii c. We find a mention of her name in S. fr. 880 (unassignable), that was attributed by Welcker to S. *Alcmeon*.
[245] See Hom. *Od.* 11.326-327; Pi. *N.* 9.16; Pl. *R.* 9.590a1-3. This story possibly featured in S. *Epigonoi* and *Eriphyle*. The book-title papyrus fragment *P.Oxy*.84.5409 must refer either to Stesichorus' or Sophocles' *Eriphyle* (with Prodi 2019, 21). On Stesich. *Eriphyle*, see frr. 92-95 (Finglass).
[246] See T *ii d.

model of uxorial affection. Still in love with Alcmaeon,[247] she remains faithful and devoted to him even after his betrayal, notwithstanding the fact that this attitude puts her life in peril. All in all, the first audience of *Alcestis* would (consciously or unconsciously) compare and judge Alcestis' behaviour and her approach towards *eros* against this rich background. With this in mind, we will move to the next section, where I discuss Alcestis' extraordinary uxorial devotion in conjunction with the correspondences between Alcestis' and Admetus' emotions and their strikingly common approach towards their marital relationship.

2.2. The Crucial Correspondences Between the Spouses: Admetus' Erotic Devotion and Alcestis' Passionate Love

In this section I argue that: 1) in many instances, there seems to be a correspondence between Alcestis' and Admetus' emotions and their understanding of their relationship,[248] and 2) in particular, both of them acknowledge the importance of sex in their marriage. One of the most important concepts present in their words is the bed and, accordingly, their sexual life. More specifically, in the first episode, the maidservant conveys that the queen remains detached from her own misfortune and that she does not weep at all, not even during her prayer (173–174). When, however, Alcestis falls upon the marriage bed (175), she cannot restrain her feelings anymore and weeps (176).[249] With her first words, she addresses the bed, thus recalling her first sexual union with Admetus (177–178). In Greek language λέκτρον ('the bed') has a wide semantic range: it may be used metonymically to represent the prospective wedding, the marriage bond, the spouse or the sexual relation between a couple.[250] But Alcestis distinguishes

[247] Thus Dale 1954, vi; Del Freo 1996, 201. Iakov 2012, 46 also talks about Arsinoe's notable fidelity.
[248] On the play's bipartite structure and the correspondences between the two parts, see Castellani 1979.
[249] Dyson 1988, 14 also argues that Alcestis's emotional outbreak portrays the bed as the 'central sanctum' of the house.
[250] D.H. 1.49.2 uses this noun so as to indicate the marital offspring. The same meaning may be in operation in E. *Hel.* 637. λέκτρον, just like λέχος, can also be used for an illicit or extramarital relation. For its wide range of meanings and its metonymic use, see LSJ s.v. λέκτρον.

here in part between the object and her husband (180), as if the object has its own entity and significance:

κἄπειτα θάλαμον ἐσπεσοῦσα καὶ λέχος (175)
ἐνταῦθα δὴ ’δάκρυσε καὶ λέγει τάδε·
Ὦ λέκτρον, ἔνθα παρθένει’ ἔλυσ’ ἐγὼ
κορεύματ’ ἐκ τοῦδ’ ἀνδρός, οὗ θνήισκω πάρος,
χαῖρ’· οὐ γὰρ ἐχθαίρω σ’· ἀπώλεσας δέ με
μόνον· προδοῦναι γάρ σ’ ὀκνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν (180)
θνήισκω. σὲ δ’ ἄλλη τις γυνὴ κεκτήσεται,
σώφρων μὲν οὐκ ἂν μᾶλλον, εὐτυχὴς δ’ ἴσως.
κυνεῖ δὲ προσπίτνουσα,[251] πᾶν δὲ δέμνιον
ὀφθαλμοτέγκτωι δεύεται πλημμυρίδι.

> Then she entered the bedchamber. Here at last she wept and said, ‘O marriage-bed, where I yielded up my virginity to my husband, the man for whose sake I am now dying, farewell! I do not hate you, although it is you alone that cause my death: it is because I shrank from abandoning you and my husband that I now die. Some other woman will possess you, lucky, perhaps, but not more virtuous than I.’ She fell on the bed and kissed it and moistened all the bedclothes with a flood of tears.[252]

The bed comes to the centre of attention later in this episode, when the slave describes how Alcestis tries to regain her composure and leaves the room, but she comes back again and falls afresh upon the bed (188). This emphasis on the bed stresses the importance of the marital bond for the queen – as Alcestis says, it is this relationship that she could not bring herself to betray (180), yet she has to abandon it because of her imminent death. It is implied that the bed also symbolises for Alcestis her sexual relationship with Admetus,[253] which seems to be one

[251] Cf. X. *Cyr*. 6.4.10, where Panthea kisses her husband’s δίφρον.
[252] Loeb translation here slightly adapted.
[253] For this scene as a subtle expression of female sexuality, see also Ringer 2016, 39.

of the positive experiences that she will miss dearly;[254] her emotional recollection of their first sexual union (177–178) and the escalation of her outburst point towards this direction. In particular, the maidservant informs us that Alcestis bursts into tears (183–184) only *after* she thinks of the future owner of her bed (181–182), the imaginary second wife of Admetus (NB the noticeable difference in intensity and volume between ’δάκρυσε in 176 and ὀφθαλμοτέγκτωι πλημμυρίδι in 184). This progression in Alcestis’ outburst denotes escalating sadness and resentment for the loss of this (enjoyable) marital relationship, while also revealing emotions of sexual jealousy for Admetus’ future bedmate.[255]

There are two scenes in Greek tragedy that resemble Alcestis’ reaction. One dramatic character that behaves in a way comparable to Alcestis is Deianira in Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*.[256] In this tragedy, the daughter of Oeneus inadvertently kills her long-awaited husband Heracles (44–45) by sprinkling Nessus’ poison onto his clothes with the honest intention of making him fall in love with her again (553–587).[257] After she realises her mistake (672–722) and learns the news of Heracles’ imminent death (749–812), she leaves the scene in silence (813–814) and commits suicide on her bed (891).

The parallels between Deianira’s suicide and Alcestis’ outburst on the bed have long been noted.[258] First, Heracles’ wife visits the altars of the house (904, cf. *Alcestis* 170–171)

[254] Cf. A. *Pers*. 133-139, where ardent female desire for absent husbands is again expressed through tears on the marriage bed.
[255] On Alcestis’ jealousy, see (e.g.) Drew 1931, 297, n. 6; Dale 1954, xxvi-xxvi; Paduano 1968, 48; Padilla 2000, 194; Pucci 2011, 315. On the fact that sexual jealousy for a rival provokes excessive tears in Greek and Latin literature, see Fögen 2009b; Konstan 2009. For jealousy as a ‘social emotion’ in general, see Damasio 2010.
[256] The date of the play’s first production is unknown.
[257] Both the river god, Achelous, and Heracles desired Deianira when she was a maiden (525-530). For Deianira as clearly an object of desire, see S. *Tr.* 514-516.
[258] Lesky 1976 discusses the differences and similarities between these scenes. For him, Deianira is in a different state of mind than Alcestis: Deianira avoids all the people belonging to the *oikos*, something that denotes her loneliness and isolation. Moreover, Lesky 1976, 220-221 argues that the bed at the centre of attention does not belong to Heracles. Even though Lesky is not wrong to underscore that Deianira is a guest and that Heracles has been away for a long time, in the text both the bedchamber and the bed are described as belonging to Heracles (913, 916).

and changes rooms in a state of agitation (907, cf. *Alcestis* 187). There is also a similarly strong focus on the bed; just like Alcestis, Deianira enters the bedchamber and approaches the bed (912–913). The sight of the bed provokes her emotional outburst, as happened in the case of Alcestis: καὶ δακρύων ῥήξασα θερμὰ νάματα ('Then she broke out in warm streams of tears,' 919, cf. *Alcestis* 183–184).[259] Although Deianira does not refer to her first sexual union with Heracles (as Alcestis does), the erotic element is not absent from Sophocles. As Eleni Papazoglou observes, 'Deianira chooses to kill herself as a female sexual partner (*εὐνάτριαν*, 922)'.[260] She is first portrayed as diligently making the bed of her husband (915–916).[261] As already seen in Homer (*Odyssey* 7.346–347), this is an action performed by a woman before sex.[262] The manner in which Deianira commits suicide also has analogous sensual undertones. Not only does she reveal her *naked* breast (924–926), but she also *pierces* herself with a sword on the bed of Heracles (930–931).[263] The piercing of her naked torso must bring to mind the penetration of the female body during the sexual act,[264] thereby exposing undertones of eroticism. Another similarity between these scenes is that both of them are reported by an attendant belonging to the family, who happened to be in the private sectors of the house and thus became an eyewitness of these intimate moments (cf. *Alcestis*: 141–212, *Trachiniae*: 899–946).

I am not interested in arguing that Sophocles influenced Euripides or *vice versa*, given that there is no scholarly agreement regarding the order of the first production of these plays. But it is crucial to recognise that the reactions of these tragic wives are passionate and bear

[259] The translation is from Jebb 1892.
[260] Papazoglou 2020, 48.
[261] See above n. 258.
[262] See Easterling 1982, 190 on 915-916.
[263] Similar is the scene in Verg. *Aen.* 4.664-666. On this, see Seaford 1987, 123, n. 169; Davies 1991b, 217.
[264] With Lee 2004, 272. For the similar 'penetration' of Haemon's body with a sword in S. *Ant.* 1231-1239, see Cairns 2016, 106. On the flowing of blood in that Sophoclean scene as reminiscent of ejaculation, see Seaford 2017a, 234.

homologous amorous undercurrents. Deianira may not verbally express her *eros* for Heracles while being on the bed, but her behaviour displays erotic passion through other means. Besides, in addition to the narrated suicide, Deianira's amorous feelings are evidenced in other scenes as well.[265] In conclusion, the similarities between these scenes allow us to compare the two women who seem to experience erotic passion for their husbands.

Another dramatic piece that recalls Alcestis' and Deianira's behaviour on the bed is found in the later *Medea* (37–41), in a passage that has been sometimes regarded as an actor's interpolation (not least because of the repetition of the same notion in 38 and 44).[266] Here the nurse, who communicates the disturbed situation in Jason's soon-to-be-annihilated *oikos* (1–45), is afraid that the infuriated Medea may commit suicide on the bed:

> δέδοικα δ' αὐτὴν μή τι βουλεύσηι νέον·
>
> βαρεῖα γὰρ φρήν, οὐδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς
>
> πάσχουσ'· ἐγὦιδα τήνδε, δειμαίνω τέ νιν
>
> μὴ θηκτὸν ὤσηι φάσγανον δι' ἥπατος, (40)
>
> σιγῆι δόμους ἐσβᾶσ' ἵν' ἔστρωται λέχος.

> And I am afraid that she will hatch some sinister plan. For she has a terrible temper and will not put up with bad treatment (I know her), and I fear [40] she may thrust a whetted sword through her vitals, slipping quietly into the house where the bed is spread.

265 S. *Tr.* 539-549, 550-551, 630-632.

266 Line 41 was first deleted by Musgrave 1785, 7 as spurious, while Dindorf 1863, 266 deleted the entire passage 38-43 as a histrionic interpolation. See also the doubts about the authenticity of these lines expressed by Page 1938; Müller 1951; Diggle 1984; Mastronarde 2002; Mossman 2011. Kovacs 2001 (1994, Vol. I), 286 prints only 41 in brackets; Willink 1988, 319-321 also takes 41 as an interpolation, but he defends 38-40 and 42-43. The entire passage, including line 41, is successfully, to my mind, defended by Seaford 1987, 122-123. Cf. the earlier defence of Pratt 1943.

The ‘failure of marriage’ topos is noticeable in all these passages. Deianira’s and Medea’s desire for their husbands has not led to marital happiness.[267] Instead, the common focus on the marriage bed denotes the total failure of the institution of marriage to achieve its ends and the inability of *eros* to put an end to this failure.[268] At this stage of the play, the audience might naturally infer a similar situation for Alcestis: that her marital affection and appropriate marital *eros* were not enough to bring this marriage to a successful conclusion. As in the other two cases, Alcestis’ and Admetus’ marriage is undone at the beginning of the play.

Yet it should be noted that, in contrast to Heracles and Jason, Admetus has remained faithful to his wife. Not only does he not bring a new bride into his well-established *oikos* (note that all these male characters have children with their legitimate partners),[269] but he is also deeply preoccupied with their marriage bed. Admetus uses the same noun (λέκτρον) as Alcestis twice: once when he talks about the statue he will put on their bed (349) and later when he returns from the funeral and realises that his marriage bed will now be empty (925). This fact, in conjunction with other elements discussed below, seems to indicate that there is a correspondence between the thoughts, desires and words of these spouses.

First, in the death scene, Admetus refers to their bed of his own accord and promises to place a statue on it, that will resemble Alcestis. We are meant to infer that he will be kissing, embracing and adoringly addressing this object, as he did with Alcestis. This promise seems to

267 The importance of sex for Medea is repeatedly acknowledged in the play. See E. *Med.* 265, 568-573, 1338, 1367-1369.

268 At the end of S. *Tr.* Hyllus carries on the dynasty, yet he must marry Iole. Rehm 1994 argues that this prospective marriage - that of course lacks *eros* - has the chance to be successful.

269 Cf. S. *Tr.* 61-93, 734-820, 1122-1123; E. *Alc.* 163-169, 189-191, 334, 393-415; E. *Med.* 46-48.

suggest that: 1) the couple has been sharing their bed,[270] 2) a healthy sexual experience was part of their life, and 3) the statue will replace any living woman (348–354):

> σοφῇι δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν
> εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται,
> ὧι προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας (350)
> ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
> δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν·
> ψυχρὰν μέν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως βάρος
> ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἄν.

> An image of you shaped by the hand of skilled craftsmen shall be laid out in my bed. I shall fall into its arms, and as I embrace it and call your name I shall imagine, though I have her not, that I hold my dear wife in my arms, a cold pleasure, to be sure, but thus I shall lighten my soul's heaviness.

The mention of this effigy has been used as evidence to condemn Admetus for perversion. This is because scholars take for granted that: 1) he expresses desire for the object itself, and/or 2) his description alludes to an unnatural form of 'intercourse' he will be having with it.[271] To my mind, this reference (in conjunction with other textual elements) rather suggests that Admetus views Alcestis as his sexually desired partner.[272] First, his intention is to show that Alcestis has been the only object of his desire – and will remain so after her death. His point seems to be that no living woman will take her place on the bed, rather than to express

[270] See Luschnig 1990, 14.
[271] See (e.g.) Stieber 1998; Stieber 1999; Heller 2005, 574. On agalmatophilia from a clinical perspective and Admetus' case as the earliest reference to this pathological condition, see Scobie and Taylor 1975, 50. Bassi 2018, 46 mentions that there is no mention of a 'statue' and thus prefers to describe Admetus' gesture as necrophiliac.
[272] Franco 1984, 136 similarly argues that this motif reinforces the overall importance of the erotic theme in E. *Alc.*, without denoting any perversion. Similarly, Paduano 1968, 83; Paduano 1969, 75-77; Iakov 2012, 111.

desire for the object *per se*. Second, there is no reference to any sexual activity he intends to have with it: his adoration of the statue will consist in caressing it (350–351).

It is significant to remember that, in Greek literature, this kind of information (i.e. desire for or intercourse with statues) is directly communicated to readers.[273] In Euripides' *Protesilaus*, Laodamia has sexual intercourse with the statue of her dead husband,[274] while in Lucian's *Erotes* (15–16) it is recounted how a man ejaculated on the arresting statue of Aphrodite of Knidos, the work of Praxiteles.[275] Similar is the story of the Cypriot sculptor, Pygmalion, who falls in love with his own work of art.[276] These cases are different from Admetus', as the characters have intercourse with, or experience desire for, the statues. Therefore, lack of information should keep us from labelling Admetus as a 'pervert'. Besides, even the act of having sex with a statue is not automatically seen in Greek texts as evidence for classifying someone as degenerate. Although Laodamia's attitude is not normal, her devotion to Protesilaus – which is manifested through her unwillingness to abandon the statue (fr. 655) and her subsequent suicide (fr. 656) – is regarded by an unknown character as commendable and characteristic of a noble-minded woman (fr. 657).

Additionally, desirable women are habitually likened to statues in Greek and Latin texts. This comparison is usually made to underline the attractiveness of their outward appearance.[277] For example, in *Hecuba* the messenger compares the naked torso of Polyxena

[273] For this common human fascination with statues, cf. Gross 2019 (1992); Steiner 2001; Hersey 2006.
[274] See E. *Protesilaus* T *iii a; fr. 655 (with Jouan and Looy 2000, 579). For Protesilaus as a relative of Alcestis, see Luc. *DMort.* 28.3. De Martino 2010, 101 notes this similarity and (oddly, to my mind) argues that kissing and talking to objects is a fetishism of this Thessalian royal family.
[275] For other references to this story, see Val. Max. 8.11.4; Plin. *HN* 36.4.21; Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.57.3; Luc. *Im.* 4. Cf. Philostr. *VA* 6.40. On the use of this and similar stories for the promotion of tourism, see O'Bryhim 2015.
[276] Ov. *Met.* 10.243-297. Ovid must have used Greek sources. See (e.g.) Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.57.3. But this myth must have been recounted in other sources, such as Philostephanus of Cyrene and Posidippus. See Eisner and Sharrock 1991, 157-158, 167 n. 24 (with references to further bibliography).
[277] But not exclusively - see A. *Ag.* 208, where Iphigenia is described as δόμων ἄγαλμα. This metaphor serves to stress the importance of the graceful girl in her paternal *oikos*. Similar is its use in S. *Niobe* fr. 442.8-9.

to a statue (560–561).[278] Moreover, this kind of references often carry amorous connotations presenting the point of view of one person (i.e. the admirer/lover). Still, they do not convey the idea that women and statues/dolls are alike as sex objects, but rather emphasise the strong male desire for the women themselves. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* the smitten Menelaus, deprived of his unfaithful wife, despises the beautiful statues that look like Helen (416–419).[279] Similarly, as we have seen in Chapter 1, in Euripides' *Andromeda* (fr. 125) Perseus mistakes the image he sees among the sea cliffs, Andromeda, for a graceful statue,[280] while in Menander's *Dyskolos*, the enamoured Sostratos stares at Knemon's daughter just as at a statue (677). A comparable case is found in Petronius' *Satyricon* (126), where an attractive girl, Circe, is compared by her admirer, Encolpius, to a Praxitelean statue, yet her beauty surpasses it by far. In the above cases, the lovers direct their ardent desire towards the (often absent) living female bodies and not to any material object. Consequently, while statues often carry erotic undertones in classical texts, references to this imagery do not *necessarily* insinuate sexual activity with statues.

In the case of Admetus, three details should also be taken into account. First, as Admetus realises, the idea of exchanging and substituting one thing for another does not work well in reality. Admetus predicts that he will believe that he is holding his wife (δόξω, 352), but he also recognises that the statue will always be an insufficient substitute, a lifeless imitation that can never replace his wife and will only provide mitigated cold pleasure (ψυχράν … τέρψιν, 353).[281] Second, in order to describe his future embrace of the statue, Admetus uses the same verb as the one that the servant used when she described Alcestis' kissing of the bed

[278] On the eroticism of this scene (at least) on the part of the internal male audience, see Loraux 1987, 58-60.
[279] On these colossi that resemble Helen, see Page 1972 on A. *Ag*. 416; Vernant 2006 (1983), 326; Stieber 1998, 80; Stieber 1999.
[280] For a discussion of this fr., see above p. 40.
[281] On this, see Franco 1984, 134.

(προσπεσοῦμαι in 350; κυνεῖ προσπίτνουσα in 183).[282] Evidently, both spouses (will) have an emotional reaction in response to an object. Yet these emotions are not directed to the objects, but rather to what these objects represent (i.e. the loved and dearly missed spouse). The shared sadness and resentment for the (future) absence of the beloved spouse and the impossibility to replace him/her underscore the loving element of this happy marriage and its present failure. Third, Admetus' reference to the future embrace of the statue also recalls his offstage embrace of Alcestis (201), an image further developed in three Etruscan objects that display a highly emotional embrace between the separating spouses.[283] Again, we realise that there are limitations in exchanging one thing for another: Admetus' anguish for Alcestis' imminent death and his ensuing agonising embrace of her *living* body (reported to us by the maidservant) underline the impossibility of accurately reproducing this sort of affection with a lifeless statue. Therefore, the effigy-motif and its implication that no other living woman will take the queen's place on the bed underline the significance of this marital relationship for Admetus, without bearing any signs of deviance, whilst it also echoes Alcestis' own recourse to the bed.

The importance of the bed for Admetus and his married life in general, which included fulfilling sex on this object, is repeated later in the drama. When Admetus returns from the funeral, he first refers to their wedding night and then realises that his bed will now be empty (915–925, 945; see 925, where Admetus uses the noun λέκτρον). This again shows that: 1) allusions to the bed and their sexual life are dispersed throughout the drama, and 2) Admetus

282 προσπίτνω is the poetic form of προσπίπτω. See LSJ s.v. προσπίτνω. In A.R. *Argon.* 4.26, Medea kisses her maiden bed in her father's *oikos*, so the associations there are different.

283 A volute crater in Paris that belongs in the Alcsti Group (Cab. Méd. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. 918 = Beazley *EVP* 133 = *LIMC* Alkestis I 6), a red-figure skyphos in Boston (inv. 97.372 = Beazley *EVP* 166-167) and a bronze mirror in New York (Metrop. Mus., inv. 96.18.15 = Beazley *EVP* 134 = *LIMC* Alkestis I 7). On these objects, see Bonfante 2010; Pieraccini and Del Chiaro 2014. Apulian vases that depict this scene tend to downplay the spousal emotional connection. See (e.g.) a loutrophoros in Basel, Antikenmuseum inv. S 21 = *LIMC* Alkestis I 5 = Trendall and Webster 1971 III.3.5, where Admetus is standing, while Alcestis is seated embracing her children. Cf. an oinochoe in Firenze, La Pagliaiula, inv. 116 = *RVAp* I 427-428, 68 pl. 158 = *LIMC* Alkestis I 18.

mirrors Alcestis' wording. Intriguing is the realisation that the wedding day and the first sexual union constitutes the *only* memory that they recall from their happy past.[284] It is their wedding day, and not the birth of their children, that both of them remember (177–178, 912–925). This detail further highlights the significance of the erotic element, which is depicted as an integral part of their relationship. As McClure stresses, their portrayal as groom and bride expresses 'the mutual and reciprocal nature of their pact of philia'.[285]

The importance of the erotic element in this marriage is reinforced by Admetus' other remarks about: 1) his future dreams (354–356), 2) the mythical *exemplum* of Orpheus (357–362), and 3) their final union in death (363–368). First, Admetus takes for granted that he will be dreaming of Alcestis, a belief that is straightforwardly erotic, since dreams and desire are often associated in Greek texts. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the abandoned Menelaus dreams of Helen (420–426), while Medea dreams of Jason in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (3.616–632).[286] This applies to homosexual relationships as well: as Artemidorus explains in his *Oneirocritica* (1.1.10), lovers habitually dream of their παιδικά ('beloved youths').[287]

Admetus' juxtaposition with Orpheus also carries erotic overtones. The former says that if he had had the musical skills of the latter, neither Cerberus nor Charon would have stopped him from bringing Alcestis back to the surface (357–362). Here Euripides perhaps alludes to a version that ends well.[288] In most versions of the myth, Orpheus receives (even

284 Luschnig 1995, 15 notes this à propos of Admetus.
285 McClure 2016, 99.
286 See also Theoc. *Id.* 11.22-23 and 20.5 (with Hunter 1999 *ad loc.*).
287 On this passage, see Harris-McCoy 2012.
288 For a discussion of the sources and the probable existence of an early, happy version of the myth, see Bowra 1952; Dronke 1962 (*pace* Sansone 1985, 59). For other references to Orpheus in Euripides, see *Hyps*. fr. 752g.10-14, fr. 759a.98-102; *Cyc*. 646-648; *Med*. 543; *Hipp*. 952-954; *Ba.* 561-564; *IA* 1211-1214; *Rh*. 944, 965-966. On the Orpheus reference in E. *Alc.*, see (e.g.) Dronke 1962, 201-202; Iakov 2012 on 357; Markantonatos 2013, 77-78.

briefly) his wife thanks to his extraordinary talent.[289] Yet Orpheus is also a representative example of a husband who desired his wife.[290] Admetus' comparison to this musician thus deepens the impression we get about the king's passionate love. Of course, as Admetus stresses, he is incapable of such an action. Despite his desire to be a hero, Heracles will be the one bringing Alcestis back to life; Admetus thus imagines himself as a hero of his own story, and in doing so emphasises how much he is not.

Admetus' promise to be inhumed together with Alcestis (365–367) is similarly important in this respect.[291] The act of lying down next to someone has sexual overtones in Greek literature,[292] while the desire to unite with a loved one after death equally suggests passionate affection and commitment. In the *Iliad*, Patroclus wishes for his bones to be put in the same urn as Achilles' (23.83–92), while Haemon's post-mortem union with Antigone in Sophocles' *Antigone* (1240–1241)[293] and Antigone's own desire to lie near the dead Polynices (72–73) are equally tinged with eroticism.[294] In Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, Evadne hopes that her suicide will result in an erotic union with her husband in death (1020–1021).[295] Similarly, in Euripides' *Helen*, the eponymous heroine prefers death and inhumation next to her first spouse instead of remarrying (836–837).[296] In Aeschylus' *Choephori*, we encounter

[289] See (e.g.) Apollod. 1.14-15; Verg. *G.* 4.464-527, esp. 483; Ov. *Met.* 10.1-73; Boethius *De consolatione philosophiae* 3.XII (Moreschini); Planudes on *Boethius* 3, p. 69-71 (Bétant). In A. *Bassarai*, Orpheus also goes down to Hades (= Eratosth. *Cat.* 24). Yet *Bassarai* must have focused on Orpheus' violent killing by the Bassarids and not on his marital relationship.
[290] For Orpheus' story as evidence for the omnipotence of Eros, see Plu. *Amat.* 761e9-761f, whereas for Orpheus as a negative example of a cowardly lover, see Pl. *Smp.* 179d.
[291] Admetus' aspirations for this erotic 'union in death' should be seen as grave, given that, during her burial, he tried to jump into the trench in an Evadne-like way (897-899).
[292] In Archil. fr. 119 (West) = Σ E. *Med.* 679 (Schwartz) there is the same idea of one limb touching the other. Cf. E. *Hec.* 826-827; Theoc. *Id.* 18.89; Paduano 1968, 84-89, esp. 85; Conacher 2004 (1988), 170; O'Higgins 1993, 85; Steiber 1998, 72, 93 n. 6.
[293] Admetus' desire to commit suicide is described by Luschnig 1995, 7 as 'Haemon-like'.
[294] Cf. E. *Ph.* 1659, 1698.
[295] See Loraux 1987, 26; Morwood 2007 on 1007 and 1019-1021. Cf. E. *Supp.* 1070-1071. Evadne commits suicide while wearing formal festive clothing that can be compared to her wedding attire. See E. *Supp.* 1048-1049, 1055, 1059. The Sophoclean Deianira similarly tells the Chorus that she is ready to die with Heracles in the event that her love drugs end up killing him. See S. *Tr.* 719-720.
[296] See also E. *Hel.* 348-359.

the negative *exemplum* of this idea. Orestes ironically says that he will kill Clytemnestra in order for her to be inhumed together with her 'beloved' Aegisthus: φιλεῖς τὸν ἄνδρα; τοιγὰρ ἐν ταὐτῶι τάφωι / κείσηι· θανόντα δ' οὔτι μὴ προδῶις ποτε ('You love the man? In that case you can lie in the same grave – and now he's dead, you'll certainly never betray him', 894–895, cf. 906).

The plethora of images and ideas Admetus refers to therefore shows his attachment to Alcestis and distances him from other indifferent and/or unfaithful tragic husbands, such as Agamemnon, Heracles and Jason. He shows his devotion in many ways that bear signs of *eros*. The erotic component of Admetus' and Alcestis' marriage belongs to the dramatic past, for the characters do not exhibit any sexual emotions onstage. Rather, they allude to the fact that their marriage, now ending tragically, involved a happy, mutually appreciated sexual relationship. This imagery implies that Admetus and Alcestis have been, among other things, happy lovers in the past: hence, Alcestis is going to be missed as a companion, mother and lover. As I am inclined to think, Admetus' erotically coloured language would not necessarily have been regarded as strange by the original audience, who may well have suspected (based on Apollo's words in the prologue) that this now separating couple will be happily reunited soon.

It is important to take into account the fact that the correspondence of emotions and thoughts is not limited to the erotic domain. A mirroring of emotions and reactions is repeated towards the end of the play. When Admetus sees the woman that Heracles has brought with him, he bursts into tears. Her resemblance to Alcestis is painful for him: δοκῶ γὰρ αὐτὴν εἰσορῶν γυναῖχ' ὁρᾶν / ἐμήν· θολοῖ δὲ καρδίαν, ἐκ δ' ὀμμάτων / πηγαὶ κατερρώγασιν ('For when I see her, I think I see my wife. She makes my heart pound, and tears stream from my

eyes,' 1066–1068).[297] His outburst, in front of his friend, may well have feminine connotations, as Segal argues.[298] However, the same metaphor of 'flood of tears' is also used to describe Alcestis' passionate reaction (183–184).[299] These spouses are in different positions: Alcestis sacrificed her life for Admetus, whereas the latter benefits from this sacrifice. Still, the image of tears coming down like streams at the thought of the other spouse again betrays the affection and devotion they share.

Husband and wife agree on another issue: the prospect of remarriage. Admetus' promise not to remarry (328–333) calls to mind Alcestis' rejection of the same option available to her. She could marry whomever she wanted (285), but she did not want to live separated from him: οὐκ ἠθέλησα ζῆν ἀποσπασθεῖσα σοῦ / σὺν παισὶν ὀρφανοῖσιν, οὐδ' ἐφεισάμην / ἥβης, ἔχουσ' ἐν οἷς ἐτερπόμην ἐγώ (287–289, 'But I refused to live torn from your side with orphaned children and did not spare my young life, though I had much in which I took delight.')[300] Alcestis has *first* rejected remarriage, thus deciding to sacrifice her life for Admetus, whereas he rejects the possibility of remarrying only *after* she has decided to die in his place. How can we interpret their like-mindedness?

In order to comprehend the significance of their shared negative approach to remarriage, we need to take the historical background into account. Remarriage was a social phenomenon well attested in fifth-century Athens,[301] to which the audience would have been

[297] NB the use of δοκῶ may make one think back to the statue scene. To my mind, δοκῶ here reveals Admetus' difficulty to trust what he perceives with his senses, since, in the course of this play, he has painfully realised that his wife *cannot* really be replaced or imitated by anyone or anything.
[298] See Segal 1993, 66.
[299] The image of floods of tears is used in relation to extreme sadness or mourning and in love stories. See Hom. *Il.* 9.570, 23.15-16; Hom. *Od.* 7.260, 8.522; E. *HF* 449-450; Opp. *H.* 3.408.
[300] According to Schwinge 1970, 37-39, Alcestis was initially motivated to sacrifice her life by love, but these positive emotions belong to the past.
[301] See (e.g.) Wolff 1944, 47, 61-62; Harrison 1968 38-39; Thompson 1972; Golden 1981, 328-329; Just 1989, 66-68, 74; Hunter 1989.

accustomed. As the sources reveal, there seems to be no Athenian counterpart to the Roman *univira* (much less a male equivalent).[302] The reasons why an Athenian would remarry were several, including marrying after the death of a spouse (regardless of whether the couple had had children or not).[303] We do not have an exact record of how many Athenian widowers and widows remarried, yet it is clear that remarriage was not regarded with suspicion,[304] while growing old alone and unmarried was seen with negativity.[305] Humphreys states that we have evidence for (at least) fifteen widows who remarried,[306] while the sources mention only three or four widowers.[307] This difference in numbers should not surprise us, since, as Golden estimates, in Athens there were twenty percent fewer widowers than widows:[308] this is a natural outcome in a society where men tended to marry in their thirties and were eligible to fight until their late fifties,[309] while women married in their teens.[310] That Athenian husbands did not necessarily approach remarriage with scepticism is also suggested by the fact that, in some cases, the dying husband took care of his wife and arranged for her remarriage. We know that Cleoboule, Demosthenes' mother, and Archippe, the wife of the famous banker, Pasion,[311]

[302] On this ideal, see (e.g.) Catull. 111; Verg. *Aen*. 4.10-29; Prop. 4.11.36; Val. Max. 2.1.3; Claud. *Carmina Minora* 30.146-152. See Williams 1958, 23-26, esp. 23-24 for the epigraphical evidence; Lightman and Zeisel 1977; Olasope 2009. On its opposite, i.e. *multivira*, see TLL, vol. VIII, p. 1603, 56-59. On the real-life practice of remarriage in Rome, esp. after the Augustan legislation, see Glazebrook and Olson 2014, 78-80 (with references to further bibliography).
[303] In Hyp. *Lyc*. 5 we learn that Dioxippus arranged the marriage of his sister, who was a widow. For other widowers and widows who remarry, see (e.g.) Antiph. 1; Lys. 32; D. 27.5; 40.6-7; 45.28; Is. 7.5-7; 9.27. For a fuller list of widows that remarry in the orators, see Hunter 1989.
[304] Hunter 1989, 302-303 discusses the distinct approaches towards remarried widows in classical Athens and medieval Europe.
[305] See D. 45.74; Hyp. *Lyc*. 13; Lys. 13.45; Is. 2.7; 22. Thus Thompson 1972, 223, n. 59.
[306] It seems probable that, as Lacey 1968, 108 states, 'In the choice of their second husband widows were certainly sometimes able to exercise some element of choice.' Cf. (e.g.) the later case of Marcellina in *P.Dura*.30.10.
[307] Humphreys 2018, 214. Hunter's estimation is similar. She locates twenty-five young widows; eighteen of these remarried, yet she labels six of them as 'of uncertain status'. See Hunter 1989, 294, and her appendix on p. 303-305.
[308] Golden 2015, 118.
[309] On the reasons why one would be exempt from the hoplite service, see Christ 2001, 404.
[310] See also Garland 1990, 237.
[311] Pasion gave his wife to his business partner, Phormion. On the cases of the slave-bankers Pasion and Phormion, see Davies *APF* 11672; Hamel 2003, 136-8; *OCD*4 s.v. *Phormion*, s.v. *freedmen/freedwomen*; Kamen 2016, 419-20.

were given to a new husband by their first spouses.[312] In some cases, widowed mothers were separated from their children after remarriage,[313] a fact that could render a second marriage undesirable for a mother. Yet some of them managed to bring their children with them to the *oikos* of the new husband.[314] Widows and widowers could also forsake remarriage due to old age or (very rarely?)[315] for religious reasons (see Demosthenes 59.75, where we learn that the wife of the Athenian βασιλεύς was supposed to be married only once).[316]

Divorce and remarriage were also available options to someone who could not produce legal offspring with their current spouse. In Isaeus' *On the Estate of Menecles*, the speaker recounts how a couple got a divorce because of the husband's inability to beget children (2.7–8). The Euripidean Medea touches on this accepted Athenian practice, when she accuses Jason of abandoning her, even though their marriage has not been sterile. According to her argument, which is deemed fair by the Chorus (1000–1001) and the Athenian king, Aegeus, (695), his behaviour would have been acceptable in the case of childlessness (489–491). Athenian law allowed for a divorce and a subsequent marriage in the case of a married *epikleros* as well,[317] whilst paternal *aphaeresis* could also bring similar results.[318] Last, there were cases of remarriage that arose from consensual divorce (Pericles' case in Plutarch *Pericles* 24.5 is a

312 D. 27.5; 45.28. Yet, despite the desire of Demosthenes' father, Aphobos never actually managed to marry Cleoboule. See D. 27-29.
313 See the case of Diogeiton's daughter in Lys. 32.
314 See Is. 7.5-7; 9.27. See also Hunter 1989.
315 As Parker 1996 (1983), 86-93 argues, in the vast majority of the recorded cases, priests and priestesses were married and were required to refrain from sexual activity only for a small period of time.
316 See also Lacey 1968, 108.
317 For cases of already married *epikleroi*, see Lacey 1968, 141-142; MacDowell 1986 (1978), 96; Just 1989, 96-97, 102, 103; Cohn-Haft 1995, 9-10. Generally, divorce was not easy or honourable for women. See E. *Med.* 236-237; And. 4.14; Plu. *Alc.* 8.2-4. In Anaxandr. fr. 57 PCG, we read that the return of a wife back to the *oikos* of her father brings shame to him as well. Euripides provides a counter opinion in his *Melanipp. Sap. or Capt.* fr. 502, where a potential divorce is projected as a difficult prospect for the husband, when the wife comes from a rich family.
318 See D. 41. 3-4. For a father that tries to convince his daughter get a divorce from her husband, see Men. *Epit.* 160-163, 657-658, 1063-1077.

good example),[319] while the state would also demand divorce in case of female adultery, thus allowing the husband to remarry.[320] For these reasons, we can safely assume that the practice of remarriage was socially accepted.

Returning to *Alcestis*, we should examine on what grounds these spouses reject remarriage for themselves and each other. As we have seen above, Alcestis sacrifices her own life because she does not want to entertain the idea of remarrying. Such an extreme opposition to remarriage was not expected in real-life Athens, where husbands would often die young in the battlefield and widows of reproductive age would feel the social pressure to remarry. Yet this sort of dedication is portrayed in positive terms in the tragic universe, where the quality of dedicating oneself to *one* husband *only* is often condoned.[321] Consequently, although real-life widows would be expected to accept the circumstances and remarry, *in extremis* uxorial dedication is presented in idealistic terms in tragedy, thus communicating to the male audience the long-lasting love and dedication a good wife can show. (And if Plato is right to suggest that women could also attend the theatre,[322] then this would be aimed directly at them as something like advice). In this context, Alcestis' exceptional decision to die, instead of remarrying, would further underline her representation as an ideal wife.

[319] Here I am not referring to Pericles' unofficial union with Aspasia, but to the remarriage of his first wife. Cf. *BGU* IV 1102, 1103, regarding a later consensual real-life divorce and the couple's common agreement to freely remarry in the future. At the beginning of Men. *Dys*. 20-23, we learn that Knemon's wife has left him (without obtaining an official divorce, it seems) and moved to her son's house, because he was so δύσκολος. On this separation, see also O'Bryhim 2019.

[320] D. 54.87. On the different types of divorce, see Cohn-Haft 1995; Noreña 1998.

[321] In E. *Hel.* 836-837, the innocent wife of Menelaus prefers to die instead of betraying her husband. Likewise, in E. *Protesilaus* fr. 655, Laodamia rejects the possibility of betraying the lifeless effigy of her first husband who died prematurely. Again, in E. *Tr.* 665-666, Hector's widow, Andromache, despises the idea of sharing the bed of a new husband (see, however, Hecuba's admonition to accept this fortune in 697-700). In a similar vein, the eponymous character in E. *Or.* praises his relative, Penelope, because she did not remarry. NB the use of the same verb in E. *Or.* (οὐ γὰρ ἐπεγάμει, 589) and in E. *Alc.* (μὴ 'πιγήμῃς, 305).

[322] See Pl. *Grg*. 502d; *Lg*. 817c.

Alcestis is averse to the prospect of Admetus' remarriage for different reasons, i.e. the effects of an evil stepmother on their children (304–319). Ancient spectators would have possibly found her worries about a prospective malicious stepmother credible,[323] given that Greeks had negative ideas about stepmothers.[324] The real-life evidence is rather limited. In Antiphon's *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning*, the speaker holds his stepmother responsible for murdering his father (1.14–19), while in Lysias' *Against Diogeiton* the titular person is accused of depriving his grandchildren of their paternal inheritance (32.7) and instead spending their money on the children of his second wife, the stepmother of his full-grown daughter (32.17). Herodotus also recounts how an evil stepmother convinced her husband to have his own daughter thrown in the sea (4.154), while in his *Laws* Plato similarly advises widowers with children to forsake remarriage on these grounds.[325]

The stepmother motif is a recurrent theme on the Euripidean stage.[326] In *Ion*, Creusa tries to kill her son, Ion, (1015–1228), mistakenly believing that he is her stepson, while in *Melanippe Captive* we encounter a similarly malicious plan from another stepmother.[327] In *Phrixus*, Ino must have planned the demise of her stepchildren, Phrixus and Helle,[328] although she attempts to deny to her husband that stepmothers hate their stepchildren (*Phrixus* A or B fr. 824).[329] In *Hippolytus*, Euripides again plays with the idea that stepmothers hate their stepchildren: the nurse assumes that Phaedra's children *de facto* compete with Hippolytus for the paternal estate (despite his illegitimacy) and that this is something of interest to the queen (304–310). One example of a divine, vengeful stepmother is Hera, who in Euripides' *Heracles*

[323] Similarly, Erbse 1972, 40-41; Swift 2010, 363.
[324] By contrast, the idea of a merciless stepfather was not so popular.
[325] See Pl. *Lg*. 930b Cf. Hes. *Op*. 822-826 (Most); Aesop. *Fable* 32.
[326] On this motif in general, see Watson 1995.
[327] fr. 495 = *P. Berlin* 5514. See Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995, 242.
[328] See E. *Phrixus* A or B fr. **822b.
[329] Ino as an evil stepmother of these twins possibly featured in S. *Athamas* A and B as well.

orchestrates the slaughter of Heracles' wife, Megara, and their children (822–1015).[330] Similarly, in Sophocles' *Tyro* a character states that Tyro's ruthless stepmother, Sidero, was rightly named this way, for she has treated her stepdaughter with cruelty (fr. 658),[331] while Medea perhaps featured as Theseus' evil stepmother in Euripides' and Sophocles' *Aegeus*.[332] Consequently, it is evident that, although in real-life situations young widowers would remarry for practical reasons, the evil stepmother motif was prominent in tragedy and in myth, and thus Alcestis' use of it may have been accepted as tenable.

We should recognise that, in this instance, Alcestis does not discuss the sexual element of Admetus' second marriage that preoccupied her in the first episode.[333] Still, Alcestis' distinct approaches are complementary to each other.[334] The rejection of this 'other woman' is justified based on commonly held knowledge and widespread suspicion against stepmothers, but it is also interwoven with sexual jealousy. Alcestis wants to dispose of the *one* person who will have two functions in her household: this woman will become *both* the wife and bedfellow of her husband (181) *and* the stepmother of her children (304–319).

Additionally, by having Alcestis discuss the stepmother-motif and the safety of their children, Euripides does not dispose his audience negatively towards her. In Athens, men were allowed to have extramarital sexual relations with various people (courtesans, young Athenian boys, female and male slaves, female and male prostitutes). But their wives were not normally expected to voice sexual jealousy publicly and complaints about these relations (provided that

330 For Hera as a malicious stepmother to Dionysus as well, see Pl. *Lg.* 672b4-672b7 = Ath. 10.55.
331 On the myth of Tyro, see Hom. *Od.* 11.235-254; D.S. 4.68.2-3; Apollod. 1.9.8.
332 But the surviving evidence is not firm. See Lloyd-Jones 1996, 19; Collard and Cropp 2008a, 3-5.
333 This is also done for the sake of dramatic economy (with Dale 1954, xxvii; Dyson 1988, 14).
334 Lesky 1966b, 285-286; Lesky 1976, 217 also argues that both scenes should be taken into consideration in order to fully appreciate the portrayal of Alcestis.

the standards of propriety were satisfied).[335] Hence, this may be the reason why Euripides does not present Alcestis as asking Admetus not to remarry by referring to his (future) sexual relations with his future bride. This demand would go against the norms of Athenian society and would have thus stirred male anxieties, given the accepted practice of remarrying (discussed above) and the constant focus on the continuation of Athenian *oikoi*.[336] Indeed, female expression of desire is a separate matter from sexual jealousy, yet the communal restrictions surrounding the demonstration of these emotions were similar in fifth-century Athens.

In Greek tragedy, we only get a glimpse of female desire and not a direct expression of passion – provided that it comes with moderation and within the appropriate frame of reference (i.e. νόμιμος γάμος).[337] In Euripides, we encounter three cases where female desire, not parental recommendation, drives the process of selecting a groom. Again, female desire and competition in the erotic domain are not directly and publicly expressed by female characters. In *Hippolytus*, the Chorus laments that the exile of the eponymous hero brought to an end the contest of maidens for his marriage bed (1139–1141), while in *Iphigenia at Aulis* Achilles states that countless maidens desire to become his bride (959–960; note the hunting metaphor that underscores the *active* character of this female 'erotic pursuit'). In the same play, we learn

335 Still, this does not mean that women did not feel frustration or indignation because of this unjust state of affairs. Cf. And. 4.14; Plu. *Alc.* 8.2-4, for the frustrated public reaction of Alcibiades' wife. On the complaint wives had because their spouses had sex with female slaves, see Ar. *Ec.* 721-724; Lys. 1.12.

336 For the obligation to 'keep the *oikos* alive', see Lacey 1968, 15.

337 In A. *Pers.* 541-545 (cf. 133-139, 287-289), the Chorus laments how young Persian wives leave their beds so as to mourn their dead husbands. Here the Chorus refers to the desire felt by these newlywed women and to their happy sexual life describing their bed as the place where youth delights. In E. *Hec.* 923-926 we find a similar allusion to female desire within a comparable 'failed marriage' situation. The Trojan brides, now widows and captives of the Greek army, sing how they were sprucing themselves up in order to lie in their marriage bed. We are meant to understand that this titivation would have led to an erotic scene if the Greeks had not wreaked havoc in the city (927-934). As the ancient scholiast suggests, the captives probably called their bed φίλια (933), because they united with their husbands on it. See Σ E. *Hec.* 933 (Schwartz). The same gendered distinction is reinforced – and also satirised – in Ar. *Ach.*, where a bride reveals her strong desire for marital sex through her νυμφεύτρια (1056-1057), whereas the bridegroom openly communicates the same desire to Dicaiopolis (1051-1053). For the ideal of moderation concerning marital sexual desire, see E. *Med.* 636; *IA* 543-545.

from Agamemnon that Tyndareus permitted his daughter, Helen, to choose her husband based on her desire: δίδωσ᾽ ἑλέσθαι θυγατρὶ μνηστήρων ἕνα, / ὅποι πνοαὶ φέροιεν Ἀφροδίτης φίλαι ('he allowed his daughter to choose one of the suitors, him to whom the sweet breezes of Aphrodite were carrying her', 68–69).[338] In all three cases we do not get this information from the girls themselves, but there is no ambiguity as to the fact that the maidens have expressed eagerness to become the legal bedfellows of these men.

Only when we come across a departure from the norm do tragic wives exhibit their (illicit or excessive) passion on stage, rather than through allusions (as e.g. Phaedra in Euripides' *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos*, Stheneboea in Euripides' *Stheneboea* and Hermione in Euripides' *Andromache*).[339] The same applies to female characters who experience jealousy. In Euripides' oeuvre, women who represent 'destructive *eros*' discuss sexual jealousy on stage,[340] whereas an exemplary wife, such as Andromache, prides herself on her ability to conceal any signs of jealousy (E. *Andr.* 222–225). Therefore, moderate female desire is normatively endorsed, whereas its illicit or excessive expressions are associated with immodesty, and thus regarded as improper and undesirable, just like sexual jealousy is. To conclude, Alcestis' behaviour on the bed is not introduced as transgressive, since she allows any feelings of sexual jealousy and resentment to be revealed solely in the privacy of her bedchamber. On stage, Euripides presents Alcestis as preventing Admetus' remarriage by invoking the stepmother motif, an argument that the (predominantly male) audience would deem both acceptable and credible. In this way, he reinforces her characterisation as an

338 For a real-life parallel, see Hdt. 6.122 (with Walcot 1987, 12). According to Gibert 2005, 235, Helen's extraordinary freedom in this case is ominous: 'Tyndareus grants Helen's passion too large a part.' Similarly, Garland 1990, 216.

339 On the fragmentary *Hipp.*, see Barrett 1964, 13, 37. For the (possible onstage) revelation of female desire in E. *Sthen.*, see fr. 661, 663, 665.

340 See Hermione in E. *Andr.* 177-180; Clytemnestra in E. *El.* 1030-1034. Cf. S. *Tr.* 539-540.

exceptional wife who, thanks to her devotion and her decent conduct, fully lives up to the Athenian ideal.[341]

In rejecting remarriage, Admetus *both* mirrors Alcestis' earlier decision *and* behaves in an acceptable manner. As we have seen, he endorses Alcestis' request, also giving the impression that he will remain sexually abstinent. Based on the information discussed above, this was not so common in real-life situations. Athenian men were not expected to stay unwedded or celibate after the death of their first wife, for long-term male abstinence was not part of the standard ideology,[342] while in tragedy it is usually female characters who detest the idea of having intercourse with another man (but not exclusively; see Theseus' promise not to remarry in *Hippolytus*: 860–861).[343] However, Admetus constitutes a special case of a 'guilty' spouse who allowed his wife to die in his place. Therefore, his willingness to dismiss remarriage and his allusion to celibacy perhaps serve to balance the emotions of an audience who probably felt unease at the idea of a husband allowing his wife to die in his place. Admetus will not continue living a fulfilling life with someone else but will honour Alcestis' memory with full conscience of her sacrifice, something that may foster a more sympathetic view of him on the part of the audience.

Admetus' determination to keep this promise at the end of the play can be taken as further proof of his spousal devotion. The final episode has created questions regarding the test

[341] In Pl. *Smp.* 179b4-179d1 (cf. 208d), Phaedrus refers to Alcestis as the ideal embodiment of marital love and *eros*: for him she provides proof that lovers (οἱ ἐρῶντες) who offer their lives for their loved ones may belong to either sex.

[342] On sexual *mores* in Athenian society, see Dover 1994 (1974); Dover 2016 (1978); Foucault 1992 (1984); Just 1989, 170-177; Davidson 1997; Dover 2003.

[343] See above n. 321. A distinction between the genders regarding extramarital sex is already found in the epics. In the *Odyssey*, the eponymous hero is portrayed as yearning for his wife and also forsaking immortality, because he wants to return to his homeland and reunite with her. See Hom. *Od.* 5.81-84; 5.151-158; 5.214-224. Still, he has sexual relations with female characters, i.e. the goddess Calypso and the sorceress Circe: 5.153-155; 10.333-347. See also his implicit suitor-like flirt with Nausicaa in Hom. *Od.* 6.149-197. Penelope, however, does not have sex with any of her suitors (this is not to say that she does not charm them with her beauty and her wit for her own purposes).

Heracles puts his host through and many scholars believe that Admetus does not keep his promise – the acceptance of the unrecognised woman into the household (1118) is seen as a betrayal.[344] Yet Admetus' promise to remain unwedded and celibate is not broken.[345] When Heracles tries to convince Admetus to take this woman into the house, the latter repeatedly rejects this possibility (1037–1069, 1098, 1100, 1103–1104). And when he does so, he repeats the promises about chastity and rejection of remarriage he gave to Alcestis.[346] Moreover, the fact that Admetus later yields and takes the veiled woman by the hand does not entail that he intends to marry her or have sex with her. In spite of the wedding imagery of this scene (discussed below), nowhere is it stated that she is accepted as a new wife,[347] whilst Heracles says that he offers her as a servant (1024).[348] Furthermore, Admetus' worries that this woman may excite the desire of young men (1051–1054)[349] do not entail that he is aroused by her.[350] His concern seems to regard the way he will keep her intact for the sake of his male *philos*. After all, Heracles has mentioned that he will take her back after he returns from his eighth ἆθλος (1020–1022). Thus, Admetus' persistence in honouring his wife in this final scene denotes his love and appreciation of her sacrifice. Therefore, it becomes clear that both of them have had a variety of choices, yet they chose to honour each other (both consider any other

[344] See (e.g.) Drew 1931; Smith 1960, 145; Pandiri 1974/1975, 52; Conacher 1984, 73, 81; Conacher 2004 (1988), 39; Halleran 1988, 128-129; Schein 1988, 201; Segal 1993, 62; Murnaghan 1999/2000, 114; Ambrose 2005, 35; Hose 2008, 49; Dova 2012, 181; Torrance 2019, 34.
[345] So Gherchanoc 2006; Swift 2010, 362; Herrero de Jáuregui 2016, 210. See also Hübner 1981, who argues for the interpolation of 1119.
[346] See Hourmouziades 1986, 94-95. Halleran 1982; Halleran 1988, 124 also discusses the similarities between the death and rebirth scenes.
[347] Sissa 1990 (1987), 95-96 and Gherchanoc 2006 are right to stress that (in opposition to the wedding ritual of ἀνακαλυπτήρια) Admetus avoids looking at this woman, thus obviously rejecting her as a 'bride'. Cf. also Slater 2013, 36.
[348] Thus Swift 2010, 362.
[349] It seems to me that verbs that denote 'turning' (and metaphorically evoke images of restlessness and uneasiness?) are used in tragedy to denote illicit forms of sex. See A. *Ag*. 1124; E. *Alc*. 1052; [E.] fr. 1063. On the possible authenticity of this fr., see Scharffenberger 2020.
[350] See (e.g.) Drew 1931, 304-306; Beye 1959, 118; Pandiri 1974/1975; Bradley 1980, 124; Roisman 2005, 79. Stieber 1998, 82-83 also thinks that Admetus experiences lust for this unknown woman, who, according to her, happens to be the statue mentioned before. For the 'statuesque quality' of the resurrected Alcestis, see also Dewar-Watson 2009, 76.

alternative route of action as a betrayal: 180, 1096).[351] Interestingly, this combination of conjugal devotion, sexual faithfulness and renouncement of betrayal is expressed by tragic wives, such as Evadne (1023–1024), Helen (836–837) and Laodamia (fr. 655), while in Aeschylus' *Choephori* (895), Orestes uses the verb προδίδωμι in order to denote Clytemnestra's 'uxorial' devotion to Aegisthus.

Be that as it may, Admetus' and Alcestis' shared negative approach towards *remarriage* does not denote negative feelings towards *marriage*. Alcestis has a clearly positive attitude towards matrimony and its sacredness, as indicated by her prayer to the goddess Hestia (162–169).[352] Hestia is one of the three goddesses who wished to abstain from both erotic relationships and marriage, and was granted that wish by Zeus.[353] Quite paradoxically, in Greek society and thought she came to represent, among other things,[354] the stability and the sanctity of the *oikos* that was perpetuated through lawful marriage.[355] In her invocation to Hestia, Alcestis prays for her children to marry and to live long happy lives.[356] As she makes clear, a good marriage is essential for a happy life (169). Alcestis' positive approach towards marriage is not uncommon among Euripidean drama. Marriage is depicted as something worth wishing

[351] On the frequent use of προδίδωμι between loved ones in Greek tragedy and its nuances, see Rivier 1968. See also S. *Aj*. 587-588; Eurypylus fr. 210.76 = *P.Oxy*.4.1175; E. *Heracl*. 26-30; *Hipp*. 1456; *Andr*. 191; *IT* 716-717; *Hel*. 834.

[352] The fact that the maidservant gives a detailed account of how Alcestis prays to Hestia does not imply that the other gods were not properly worshipped. See E. *Alc*. 132-135; 170-172. Cf. the contrasting version of Apollod. 104-106. Rather, the inclusion of this prayer underlines the importance of the *oikos* and marriage for Alcestis. Furthermore, the centralisation of Hestia is not extraordinary within the context of Greek society, given that the Greeks customarily gave a special place to Hestia and would start their prayers by addressing her first. See E. *Phaëth*. fr. 781.247-250; Ar. *Av*. 865; *V*. 845-846; *Plu*. 395; Pl. *Cra*. 401b1; X. *Cyr*. 1.6.1 (with Sommerstein 1983 on Ar. *V*. 846).

[353] See *h. Hom. Ven*. 21-32. Cf. Corn. *De natura deorum* 52.15.

[354] Hestia equally embodied political stability and communal harmony. On the altar of Hestia erected in the Athenian *boule*, see Aeschin. 2.45; Harp. β 18 s.v. βουλαία (Keaney).

[355] On the differences and similarities between Hermes and Hestia, see Vernant 2006 (1983), 157-196. For the role of Hestia and her link with Alcestis as mother and wife in this play, see Pace 2006; McClure 2016. The ἑστία ('hearth'), located at the centre of the household, was also the place where the guests were cordially accepted and where outsiders (e.g. brides, slaves) were formally incorporated into the household. See Ar. *Plu*. 789, 794. In particular, ἀμφιδρόμια was the ritual during which a newborn child was carried around the hearth and was thus formally accepted into the *oikos* as legitimate. See Ar. *Lys*. 757; Σ Pl. *Tht*. 160e (Greene); LSJ s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια, Ἀμφίδρομος; Burkert 1985 (1977), 255.

[356] For the connection of Hestia with marriage and the wedding rituals, see E. *Phaëth*. fr. 781; Pl. *Lg*. 773a.

for, especially on the part of mothers,[357] while it is again the mothers who mourn when they realise that their children will not marry.[358]

Alcestis' appreciation of marriage as something she hopes her children will achieve must invoke her auspicious attitude towards her own marriage with Admetus. That Alcestis has comprehended marriage as something worth fighting for and thus made an effort to be an excellent wife is a fact acknowledged by all the *dramatis personae*,[359] herself included (324). Besides, her marriage seems to be included in the list of the things she had that caused her delight (ἐτερπόμην, 289). This association of their shared married life with feelings of joy is duplicated by Admetus, when he states that there will be no happiness and pleasure in his life after her death (τέρψιν … βίου, 347). Admetus also feels extreme sadness and frustration for the dissolution of his marriage (880–882): this expression of *pathos* and disappointment towards marriage result from the total failure of his otherwise happy marriage.

2.3. Wedding and Death Associations in Alcestis*: A Rite of Passage for Both*

In the previous section we have seen that there is a pointed analogy in the behaviour and the beliefs of Alcestis and Admetus, especially regarding their marriage. One important element that seems to be connected with, and perhaps paves the way for, their reunion is that they both undergo a symbolic coming-of-age journey. In this section, I argue that Alcestis and Admetus appear to be experiencing a comparable rite of passage that leads to the renewal of their

[357] See E. *Supp.* 1026-1030; *IA* 610, 732, 736. On the celebration of a (tragic) wedding, see E. *Phaëth.* fr. 773.87-120, fr. 781.227-244.
[358] See E. *Med.* 1024-1027; *HF* 476-479.
[359] See E. *Alc.* 83-85, 97, 150-151, 152-155, 200, 235, 241-242, 384, 418, 433, 442, 615, 623-624, 741-742, 824, 880, 899, 993-994, 1083.

marriage.[360] Their experiences are not the same, yet they correspond to the three phases of a rite of passage, according to van Gennep's scheme: separation, liminality and integration.[361]

At the beginning of the drama, Alcestis is a full-grown married woman who, through her promise to offer herself up, is separated from her community and thus placed at a liminal stage between life and death (141, 520).[362] As we shall see in detail, her arrival at the marital bedroom and all her actions that lead up to this point befit an Athenian bride, thus strengthening her presentation as a liminal figure on the threshold of transition. Her subsequent death is not allegorical. But, if we agree with Trammel that the three-day span Heracles mentions (1146) designates the period that the soul was still on earth,[363] we should not see her death as final yet. After her demise and before three days have passed,[364] the soul of Alcestis is still in a transitional state,[365] awaiting to be fully received into the world of the dead.[366] Her reunion with Admetus – in the nuptial-like context discussed below – reinforces her portrayal as a νύμφη who will be restored to normality and incorporated again in society through (re)marriage.[367] Her outward appearance in the final scene also signifies transformation, for veiling often accompanies those in stages of transition.[368]

[360] See Buxton 2003 (1985); Foley 2001, 324-327; Slater 2005, 93-95.
[361] See van Gennep 2010 (1909), *passim*.
[362] See Rabinowitz 1993, 71-72, 77; Beltrametti 2016, 29, 32.
[363] See Trammel 1941, 148-150. For the funeral meals prepared after the third day of death (τρίτα), see Ar. *Lys.* 611-613; Is. 2.36-37. Similar funeral rites are still in place in modern Greece (i.e. τριήμερα, εννιάμερα etc).
[364] On the magic number three, see Thphr. *Char.* 16.2-3; Lease 1919.
[365] For Greek beliefs about the soul being between worlds for some period (even for as long as thirty days), see Garland 2001 (1985), 38-41. Moreover, the dead Alcestis is greeted by the Chorus as a *daimon*, a being considered to be in-between the states of mortality and immortality. See Pl. *Smp.* 202d11-204b6.
[366] Jenkins 1983, 142 argues that 'the bride's status is akin to that of the soul who has departed the world of the living but not yet entered that of the dead'.
[367] Naiden 1998, 84 maintains that Alcestis has not yet fully transitioned to the world of the living in the final episode. She is rather a *phasma* that will be 'made whole two days after the play ends'.
[368] Thus (e.g.) van Gennep 2010 (1909), 168; Buxton 2003 (1985), 171-172; O'Higgins 1993, 92; Perentidis 1993, 11-12; Cairns 2001, 24; Cairns 2002; Mignanego 2003; Gherchanoc 2006; Cairns 2009, 53; Torrance 2019, 57.

Similarly, Admetus is portrayed as an adolescent (or even a *parthenos*)[369] who is about to mature.[370] His reluctance at the prospect of a (re)marriage that represents order, his separation from his natal family, his strong contemplation of his current tragic state of affairs,[371] his attachment to the world of the dead along with his outward appearance (cut hair and black costume) fully accord with the liminal stage.[372] His inability to enter the house after the funeral, due to his extreme sadness,[373] again recalls this transitional stage, for the building itself represents for him married life and thus social order. His abnormal, parthenaic-like status will be overturned with their reunion and restoration to normality. Therefore, Alcestis' rebirth is literal and physically embodied, whereas for Admetus, this passage symbolises his successful reintegration into the social order and his transformation (perhaps denoting a positive growth and purificatory distancing from his problematic past and troublesome acceptance of the sacrifice).[374]

This *rite de passage* that married, mature characters experience in *Alcestis* is not unique in the Euripidean oeuvre, for, as I shall argue, Menelaus and Helen experience a similar symbolic transformation.[375] In *Helen*, there is a handful of passages where Leda's daughter is portrayed as a young παρθένος. As we shall see in the next chapter, through her reunion and symbolic remarriage she will be transformed into a full-grown γυνή and accept her sexuality (once again). Similarly, the shipwrecked Menelaus seems to be physically and mentally transformed after the reunion with Helen and the bath she gives him.[376] Therefore, in both

369 On Admetus' feminisation, see Foley 2019 (1985), 88; Loraux 1987, 29; Segal 1993, 66, 75; Siropoulos 2000, 188; Foley 2001, 330; Slater 2005, 88-89; Slater 2013, 36-37.
370 Regarding Admetus' transition as a symbolic initiation into heroic manhood, see Padilla 2000, 205-206.
371 For the liminal state as a 'state of reflection', see Turner 1967, 105.
372 According to Turner 1967, 96, the initiand is sometimes buried and marked with black colours, thus instantiating the deceased. See also Calame 1997 (1977), 13.
373 See Castellani 1979, 491.
374 For the positive aspects of the transition process, see Turner 1967, 99.
375 For this reason, Foley 2001, 304-306 describes them as *anodos* dramas, a term first coined by Guépin 1968, 142.
376 I shall discuss this idea more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

plays, we note this common movement from separation and death to rebirth, regeneration, (re)marriage.

The symbolic regenerative process that leads to a happy ending in both dramas could perhaps be explained by their supposed generic ‘anomaly’. If we assume, however, that these plays can, and should, be treated as tragedies,[377] there may be another explanation. I suggest that shared marital devotion plays a significant role in this positive outcome, preparing the way for the renewal of marriage. In both dramas, this coming-of-age experience approximates to a *second chance* given to characters who remained devoted to their first spouse. The subtle focus on erotic desire and sexual devotion, present in both plays, is also relevant. Erotically coloured love and sexual devotion, ‘keeping the marriage bed safe’ for the sake of one’s spouse,[378] concretely allow for these reunions to take place. Hence, it is their love for each other and their determination to give priority to their own status as spouses that govern this positive outcome.

How exactly is this rite of passage realised for Admetus and Alcestis and what is its correlation with the marriage and death ritual? The homology between death and marriage ritual have long been noted in the case of *Alcestis*.[379] Yet we can also observe another, relevant kind of homology, i.e. the non-context-specific ‘general homology between dying and mourning as complementary rites of passage’.[380] At the beginning of *Alcestis*, the dying queen is portrayed as a liminal figure who prepares herself for the unavoidable end. Through his intense mourning and his conscious self-segregation, however, the king seems to identify himself with her, thus showing his determination to remain devoted to her even after death. His

[377] Cf. above n. 228.
[378] This expression often occurs in Euripides and refers to a lawful wife. See E. *Hel.* 48, 63-65; *HF* 1372; *IA* 1202-1203. See the exception in *IT* 716-717, where the promise not to betray the marital bed is given by Pylades to Orestes.
[379] See Rehm 1994, 84-96.
[380] Cairns 2009, 51.

approximation to death is important, since in the initiation rituals the experience of ritual death corresponds to, and graphically expresses, ‘the end of a mode of being’.[381] In Admetus’ case, the mode of being that needs to be abandoned when he is ‘reborn’ is the cowardness that characterises his dramatic past. Just like the bride that is reborn in a new role in the wedding ritual, in *Alcestis* Admetus is born anew as a member of this celebrated marriage. The ritual structure and the mythological structure are thus employed in *Alcestis* so as to *celebrate* this faithful marriage, while the negative tendencies of the marriage ritual are realised at first, only to be subverted at the end.

There are three predominant scenes where marriage and death rituals are conflated. First, it has remained largely undiscussed in scholarship that Alcestis is reported by the maidservant as having performed specific actions in a sequence, which reflects the steps that an Athenian bride would take on her wedding day, starting from the preparations at the house of her father until her arrival at the groom’s house and their entrance into the wedding chamber (θάλαμος).[382] Alcestis first washes her body (159–160), just as Athenians would wash the bodies of their dead ones.[383] Therefore, the queen is being portrayed as preparing her own body for the forthcoming funeral.[384] However, bathing was an action ceremonially performed not only in relation to corpses but to prospective brides and grooms as well.[385] Alcestis’ bath thus recalls the preparation of the bride, a scene popular in the Athenian vase market.[386] The mention

381 Eliade 2005 (1958), xiii.
382 To the best of my knowledge, McClure 2016, 90 is the only one who notes that Alcestis’ movements retrace with precision ‘the *progression* of her wedding day’ (my emphasis). McClure does not stress so much the erotic aspects of this progression. For Alcestis as a bride, see also Luschnig 1995, 32-33.
383 See A. *Ch.* 168; S. *OC* 1597-1603; E. *El.* 901; *Hec.* 611, 780; *Ph.* 1667; *IT* 173-174, 703; Str. 16.1.20.8-9; Hsch. χ 440 s.v. χθόνια λουτρά (Hansen and Cunningham); Burkert 1985 (1977), 194.
384 Thus Luschnig 1995, 33; Parker 2007 *ad loc.*; Bassi 2018, 46.
385 See E. *Med.* 1026-1027; *IT* 818-819; Din. fr. 6.1-3; Men. *Sam.* 157, 429-430, 713; Nonn. *D.* 3.89; Phot. λ 407 s.v. λουτρά; λ 411 s.v. λουτροφόρος καὶ λουτροφορεῖν; ν 287 s.v. νυμφικὰ λουτρά; Hsch. ν 719 s.v. νυμφικὰ λουτρά (Latte). See also (e.g.) Wolff 1973, 67; Hague 1988, 33; Garland 1990, 220; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 15-19 (cf. 4-6, 23-24, 45); Rehm 1994, 14; Sabetai 1997, 320-321; Robson 2013, 13; Sabetai 2014, 52.
386 On this, see Oakley and Sinos 1993, 15-16, 57-62.

of water taken from the river (ὕδασι ποταμίοις, 159) reinforces this effect, as fluvial water was thought to increase fecundity and thus used in the nuptial baths.[387]

The second step that Alcestis takes after her bath is to pray for a successful marriage (for her children). Praying to, and sacrificing for, the gods was the standard Greek practice prior to marriage.[388] We know that Athenians used to dedicate one silver drachma to the Uranian Aphrodite, whose temple was situated in the north-west of the ancient Agora. The treasure of the shrine of Aphrodite Urania (New Acropolis Museum, Π 66–67) provides supporting evidence for this:[389] as the inscription on the treasure shows, Aphrodite was considered the most appropriate goddess to provide the newlyweds with fertility and marital happiness. In Euripides' play, it becomes clear that the negative aspects of this ritual prevail: Alcestis is forced to utter these prayers before they are due, calling to mind Sophocles' Antigone who also sings her own untimely ὑμέναιος.

The last gesture that Alcestis makes is to enter the chamber and fall upon the bed. Again, this motion shares associations with a wedding day: the bath of the newlyweds and the prayers for a happy shared life were followed by the first sexual union of the couple on their bed. It goes without saying that this is not an erotic scene, since: 1) Alcestis is alone in the room, and 2) she is on the verge of dying (158). Yet the detail she yields at the point when she reaches the bed is notable. In the normal succession of the events would take place, this would have been the point in the wedding, where the bride united with the groom for the first time. Alcestis herself brings this erotic element to the surface when she describes how she lost her

[387] So Hague 1988, 33; McClure 2016, 88, n. 20. Cf. A. *Supp*. 1026-1029; E. *IT* 818-819; Σ E. *Pho*. 347 (Schwarzt); Eust. *Il.* 4.384; *Anth. Pal.* 9.277. For the river water as cleansing 'the bride of her maidenhood, preparing her symbolically for the sexual act', see Papazoglou 2020, 46. On the ability of water to boost a pregnancy, see *Corp. Herm.* fr. 27.

[388] See E. *IA* 720-721; *Phaëth.* fr. 773.56-58; D.S. 5.73.2.

[389] The inscription reads as follows: 'ΘΗΣΑΥΡΟΣ ΑΠΑΡΧΕΣ Ο ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΕΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑΙ ΠΡΟΤΕΛΕΙΑ ΓΑΜΟΥ'.

maidenhood at this place (177–178). Her tears streaming like unstoppable flowing water (183–184) may also bring to mind this sexual image, since the loss of virginity was associated with the uncontrolled pouring of liquids (blood).[390] Last, it is pertinent that, while on the bed, Alcestis is presented as a young bride, not as a mother, since she does not make any reference to her children. Consequently, the comparability of Alcestis to a bride, considered in connection with the atmosphere of the scene, may allow us to claim that Alcestis is portrayed as a νύμφη dying for her husband.[391]

This connection between nuptial imagery and Alcestis is not unique in Euripides, given that Alcestis is portrayed as a bride in many vase paintings.[392] The erotic element that subtly ensues in Euripides also emerges in an Attic clay red-figure *epinetron* located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens (inv. 1629 = *AVI* 0804 = *ARV*2 1250.34, 1688 = *Para* 469, c. 430–420 BC). The position of Alcestis as a bride near the marriage bed, along with her separation from the other female figures celebrating the *epaulia*, indicates her successful transformation into a sexually mature woman.[393] As Kousser shows, the physical location of this scene on the vase, which was used on a daily basis by women, intensifies the significance

390 See Seaford 2017a, 232-235. For an association of loss of virginity and bleeding, see Longus 3.19.2.
391 Thus Dyson 1988, 15.
392 See (e.g.) a fragmentary loutrophoros by the Methyse Painter in the Acropolis Museum, previously in the Fetiche Tjami NA.57.AA.757 (*ARV*2 632.1 = *LIMC* Alkestis I 2) and a Panathenaic amphora located in the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome (Ca. 530 = *AVI* 3361). Apart from these, however, there are many funerary inscriptions where Alcestis is celebrated as a model for excellent uxorial behaviour. See *IGBulg* I² 222; *IG* XII,7 494; *I.Kourion* 68; *IG* XIV 607; *IGUR* II 322.
393 See Hague 1988, 32, 35; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 40-42, 46, 127-128; Kousser 2004; Rosenzweig 2004, 22-24. McClure 2016, 102-103; *LIMC* Alkestis I 3. The erotic character of this ἐπίνητρον is underscored by the head and the naked bosom of the female figure sculpted at its edge, which the museum archaeologists have interpreted as belonging either to the goddess of erotic love, Aphrodite, or to the protectress of marriage, Nymphe. The official description of the vase is the following: 'Scenes of mythic weddings are depicted on the long sides, while the clay female bust of Aphrodite or Nymph on the curved part of the *epinetron* stands out in beauty.' But, as Kousser argues 2004, 104, this bust may (also) perhaps represent the idealised sexually mature mortal bride.

of this symbolism: 'the culminating figure of Alkestis, at the open door of her marriage chamber, would be directly adjacent to the wearer's pubic area'.[394]

Returning to *Alcestis*, it becomes clear that the scene symbolically portraying Alcestis as a bride testifies to the undoing of her marriage. The audience is meant to infer that the queen had successfully become a γυνή through the processes of marriage and childbirth (as the viewer of the above vase is also meant to infer), yet this is now cancelled due to her premature death. Alcestis will experience a rite of passage, but not the one that brides would normally experience on their wedding day (and night): as another 'bride of Hades', she will pass from the world of the living to that of the dead. Thus, it becomes manifest that at this stage of the drama Alcestis' *eros* has not proved to be enough to secure the success of her marriage; the portrayal of Alcestis – an otherwise idealised bride in pottery – as a dying 'bride' bears witness to the failure of this marriage, demonstrating the tragic inability of 'wedding rites' (that she is reported to perform) to fulfil their desired purpose.

The second scene that recalls wedding imagery in a context of death, loss and mourning is the quarrelling between Admetus and Pheres. After the former repudiates the latter (629–672), Pheres attacks his son for letting Alcestis die in his place: εἶτ' ἐμὴν ἀψυχίαν / λέγεις, γυναικός, ὦ κάκισθ', ἡσσημένος, / ἣ τοῦ καλοῦ σοῦ προύθανεν νεανίου; ('Can you then reproach me for cowardice when you, consummate coward, have been bested by a woman, who died to save you, her fine young husband?,' 698). Pheres' use of καλὸς νεανίας (698) is of interest. καλός has a wide range of context-sensitive meanings, since it can designate moral, social and aesthetic values,[395] while it is also associated with physical appearance.[396] This is

[394] Kousser 2004, 104.
[395] See LSJ s.v. καλός.
[396] In the soil of Attica, many examples of graffiti have been found on walls in the standard form of ὁ παῖς καλός. See *SEG* 45:36; *Agora* XXI C 21; *SEG* 45:36. Some inscriptions differentiate between a man's appearance and

important for our purposes, given that male comeliness is a feature intrinsically linked with grooms in Greek literature.[397] Indeed, the same expression is applied to the newlywed, and newly-dead, Protesilaus in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* (28.3).[398] In Menander's *Aspis*, we find an ironic remark about this notion; in this play, the old and greedy Smikrenes desires to marry his young niece and is thus ridiculed as καλὸς κἀγαθός (311–313). The Sophoclean Deianira also plays with this idea when she sarcastically refers to Heracles as ὁ πιστὸς ἡμῖν κἀγαθὸς καλούμενος (541), although he proved to be anything but a 'faithful' and 'good' husband.[399] Returning to the *Alcestis* passage, this expression seems to relate to the wedding day of Alcestis and Admetus, while the irony lies in the καλός. According to Pheres, Admetus' physical appearance has not served as testimony to his moral stature. Alcestis' high hopes at the beginning of her marriage (similar to the ones that all brides have) were dashed because of the cowardice of this 'fine and handsome' bridegroom. Furthermore, given that *eros* is connected in Greek literature with vision and the positive evaluation of one's outward appearance,[400] Pheres' attribution of this perspective to Alcestis can be taken as an indication that she experienced marital desire as a young bride.[401]

Pheres' ironical words seem to contain some grains of truth, since at this stage of the play Admetus has not proved to be a suitable object of *eros*. His cowardly acceptance of the

his inner world. For instance, the text of the inscription *IG* I³ 1403 reads as follows: Ἀντίνοος καλὸς μὲν ἰδε͂ν, τερπονὸς δὲ πορσσειπε͂ν. Cf. *SEG* 34:42; *SEG* 44:23; *IG* I³ 1403; *MDAI(A)* 67 (1942) 147 322a.

397 On the agreeableness and prowess of the groom and the beauty of the bride, see Sapph. frr. 44, 108, 111, 112 (Voigt); Pi. *O.* 7.1-12; E. *Cret.* fr. 472e.16-17; Theoc. *Id.* 18.34-37. See also Brown 1984; Seaford 1987, 126, n. 199 and 202.

398 This expression, καλὸς νεανίας, is also sometimes used in reference to the beauty of παιδικά (see Pl. *Grg.* 481e4; Plu. *Amat.* 769b6) or to the beauty of young desirable men in general (see Luc. *Syr. D.* 19; *Dearum judicium* 3). A later Romano-Jewish author describes an angel of God in the same terms. See Joseph. *AJ* 5.277.

399 On this expression as a variant of καλὸς κἀγαθός, see Papazoglou 2020, 50. In E. *Cret.* fr. 472e.16-17, Pasiphae refers to the same idea when she says that the bull's body cannot be compared to a groom's (δέμας γ' εὔρυθμον νυμφίου, 'graceful <like a > bridegroom's', Collard and Cropp 2008a, 547).

400 Cf. (e.g.) *h. Hom. Ven.* 84-91; Pl. *Phdr.* 250c8-250e1. The examples are countless. For *charis* as dripping from the eyes of the loved ones, see MacLachlan 1993, 65-67 (with many examples of primary sources). See also above section 1.4.

401 Thus Pattoni 2007, 74-75. I was led to the same conclusion separately.

sacrifice may well restrain the (male) audience from placing him in the esteemed category of καλοὶ κἀγαθοί. Furthermore, it may be true that Admetus' behaviour towards his father (629–740) echoes Alcestis' disappointment over her self-serving parents-in-law (290–292). Yet his over-aggressive stance,[402] along with his determination to renounce his parents and deny them burial (662–664), would make the audience uneasy.[403] Taking care of one's parents and thereafter providing them with funeral rites were considered vital obligations of adult offspring.[404] Last, the servant's disclosure that Alcestis would protect the slaves from her husband (769–771) contributes to this negative depiction, also portraying Admetus as an imperfect master.

Yet the dramatic characters also attribute good qualities to him, thus revealing a considerable tension in his portrayal.[405] Admetus is first admired for his hospitality (568, 809, 830). Hospitality (*xenia*, *xenie*, or *philoxenia*) is an important concept that Athenians did not take lightly. They held this ideal in high esteem and viewed themselves as its exemplary representatives thanks to the generosity they (supposedly) exhibited towards their friends and allies.[406] Inhospitable behaviour, on the other hand, is often viewed in a negative light.[407]

402 See Dyson 1988, 21.
403 Thus Schein 1988, 195-196; Leão 2018.
404 In this way, adult children would return the τροφεῖα they had received in the past. See A. *Eu.* 545-548; *Pr.* 707-709; E. *Med.* 1032-1034; *Supp.* 361-364, 923; *Ph.* 1436-1437; Ar. *Ach.* 676-678; Pl. *Hp. Ma.* 293a7-293a10; X. *Oec.* 19; D. 60.36; D.H. 11.40; D. Chr. *Or.* 33.45. On the relation between parents and children, see Golden 2015 (1990), 68-97. The necessity to respect these moral boundaries is proven by the fact that they were regulated by law. See Arist. *Ath.* 56.6. Cf. the humorous treatment in Ar. *Av.* 1353-1369.
405 For discussions of Admetus' positive characteristics, see Burnett 1965; Lesky 1966b; Scodel 1979; Bergson 1985, 14-19; Buxton 2003 (1985), 181-184; Thury 1988; Stanton 1990.
406 Traces of this propaganda can be mapped out in E. *Supp.* and *Heracl.* On Athenian attitudes towards this ideal, see Swift 2010, 56-57. The importance of hospitality for the Greek self-definition is also underscored in A. *Supp.* 605-624.
407 In A. *Th.* 606 Eteocles links inhospitality with an attitude unmindful of gods, while in S. *Inachus* fr. 269a = *P.Oxy*.23.2369 breaches of hospitality are similarly seen with negativity. In Euripides, inhospitableness is a trait often attributed to barbarians. See E. *Cresphontes* fr. 448a = *P.Oxy*.27.2458 and *P.Mich.* Inv. 6973; *IT* 94-95, 125, 218-219; *Hel.* 155-156, 437-440, 444-445, 468, 476-482, 1176. Inhospitable, barbaric behaviour is possibly alluded to in E. *Alc.* 483-506, when Heracles details his forthcoming labour. According to Diodorus, the man-eating mares of Diomedes were trained to eat the flesh of foreigners (ξένοι). See D.S. 4.15.3. Cf. Apollod. 2.96-97; Philostr. *Im.* 2.25.

Therefore, not only does the dramatically essential[408] reception of Heracles into the palace fail to constitute a breach of Admetus' promise not to revel again (343–347),[409] it also manifests Admetus' αἰδώς.[410] Last, the reception of Heracles mirrors the once generous hospitality provided to Apollo (1–9),[411] reminding us that piety is another virtue that characterises Admetus.[412]

Thus, the rhetoric of blame/praise does not prove helpful when we approach Admetus' complex portrayal. Furthermore, there is an intended ambiguity that surrounds the acceptance of this sacrifice. Euripides puts this point in the dramatic past and focuses on the separation of the couple.[413] Thus, the focus is not so much on Admetus' *initial* decision, but on its adverse results and the desolation he *feels* because of this (poor) decision.[414] Therefore, the fact that Admetus has not behaved as a 'perfect' husband does not mean that he does not love his wife. As Kokkini observes, his presentation as an ordinary man 'places him far closer to the real life experience of ordinary men and so offers a point of identification with the audience'.[415] Besides, apart from Pheres, the *dramatis personae* do not doubt that Admetus feels deep affection for Alcestis, being pronounced the excellent husband of an excellent wife (144). The Chorus recognises that Admetus loves his wife to the ultimate degree (230–232) and Heracles

408 See (e.g.) Bergson 1985, 11; Lloyd 1985, 127.
409 Regarding the overall behaviour of these friends, Konstan 1997, 90 rightly stresses that 'Both [Heracles and Admetus] are behaving according to Aristotle's advice to come unbidden to the aid of friends but shrink from burdening them with one's own griefs (*EN* 9.11. 1171b15-25).'
410 This is recognised by the Chorus, the servant and Heracles. See E. *Alc*. 601, 823, 857.
411 See Burnett 1965. On Apollo's stay in the Thessalian palace, see S. fr. 851.
412 See E. *Alc*. 10, 133-135, 1154-1156. Cf. McClure 2016, 97-98.
413 As Lesky 1925 first showed and the majority of scholars nowadays take for granted, in his *Alc*. Euripides employs popular folktale material by revising it. Whereas in the fairy-tale version of the story, the promise of the bride and her death would have taken place at her wedding day, in Euripides' revised version a long period of time passes before Alcestis dies (even though no particular details nor time spans are given regarding the initial promise). On Euripides' choice to focus on the presentation of the separation, see (e.g.) Beye 1959, 113; Lesky 1966b, 293; Erbse 1972, 37; Lloyd 1985; Kokkini 2010, 40-41; Leão 2018, 6.
414 See Lloyd 1985, 126.
415 Kokkini 2010, 35.

praises him for being a πιστὸς φίλος to her (1095),[416] while Admetus himself declares his love twice (279, 432).

Moreover, even the fact that only Pheres gives voice to this negative perspective *vis-à-vis* Admetus' acceptance of the sacrifice is significant, since on no account is he presented as a virtuous, objective onlooker. First, Admetus' aged father is uninterested in posthumous fame (726). This would be unbefitting a respectable γέρων, for it poses a challenge to the ideological basis of the Greek (male) self-definition. As Thucydides' Pericles highlights (2.35–46), the desire to gain everlasting glory through an honourable death is, or should be, the primary motivating force that drives Athenian soldiers to participate in war. The idea that a reputable death could bring eternal glory is already prominent in the *Iliad*,[417] while, in many Euripidean tragedies, young persons, male or female, decide to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the community, confident that the opposite action would bring them dishonour.[418] Thus, it is unsurprising that Alcestis is puzzled over Pheres' indifferent stance towards honour (292).

Second, Pheres' decision to let his son die instead of sacrificing himself is awkward. Pheres is right to say that there is no law that expects parents to offer their lives for their offspring (682–684). Yet Greeks would abhor the idea of outliving their children. According to Herodotus' Solon (1.30), Tellus the Athenian was the happiest person in the world, as he did not see any of his fine children or grandchildren die; he also met his end while fighting for his country, thus being posthumously honoured by his fellow citizens. In Euripides, there are a

416 This passage has been deemed spurious. See Dale 1954 on 1094-1095; Conacher 2004 (1988), 146-147 and on 1094-1095; Diggle 1984; Parker 2007, 43. Wilamowitz was the first to suggest this deletion, in an unpublished letter. For more on this, see Parker 2007, 269-270. Seeck 2008 at 1093-1096 prints these lines without brackets, supporting their authenticity.

417 Proverbial is the dilemma Achilles finds himself presented with in Hom. *Il.* 9.410-416: whether to fight and die in Troy, thus winning eternal fame, or return to his homeland and live a long happy life.

418 See E. *Heracl.* 503-527; *Hec.* 345-348; *Ph.* 991-1018, 1090-1092, 1310-1314; *IA* 1375-1400. Similarly, in S. *The Demand for Helen's Return* fr. 178, an unknown character prefers to commit suicide by drinking bull's blood instead of gaining δυσφημία ('ill fame').

handful of passages, where an old person (usually a parent or a grandparent) offers to die for his loved ones.[419] In his *Geography* (10.5.6), Strabo relates a similar real-life situation: when Ioulis was besieged by the Athenians, its old inhabitants decided to commit suicide, because they would thus decrease the chances of young people dying of starvation. And when a young person dies before his elderly relatives, such as Neoptolemus in *Andromache* who dies before his grandfather (1073–1075), the Chorus recognises that the latter should have died first: θανεῖν θανεῖν σε, πρέσβυ, χρῆν πάρος τέκνων ('To die, to die before your children did – this would have been right!,' 1208).[420] Pheres' opinion depends upon the set of values he champions. Given that these values are at odds with standard Greek ideology, we cannot be sure that the audience would totally agree with his general stance (his harsh words do seem to carry some truth; see Admetus' repetition of the same accusations later in the play: 954–959).

Furthermore, as Alcestis highlights, in a way similar to Sophocles' Antigone (905–912),[421] she could marry someone else (284–286), whereas Admetus was irreplaceable for his elderly parents (293–294).[422] Their indifference towards their son's irreplaceability and his own reaction to this behaviour are pointed. In Greek ritual and drama, the transition of the bride from her natal household to her marital home is fraught with potential dangers, while any exaggerated behaviour in either direction on the part of the bride tends to prove catastrophic. In Euripides' *Medea* the eponymous heroine is extremely loyal to Jason at the *expense* of her natal (and marital) *oikos*, while, at the opposite end of the spectrum, Hermione in *Andromache* problematically prioritises her paternal *oikos* over her marital household. Again in connection

[419] For a discussion of the cases of Iolaus, Hecuba, Andromache and Amphitryon who offer their own lives in order to save their dependants, see Iakov 2012, 81-82.
[420] In S. *Acrisius* frr. 66 and 67, the eponymous character supports his decision to imprison his daughter, Danaë, and thus avoid death at the hands of his future grandson by asserting his love for life. Yet Acrisius' determination to obstruct his daughter's divine pregnancy (and the birth of the hero, Perseus) would not have been seen as *oikos*-boosting on the part of the original audience.
[421] See Blumenthal 1974.
[422] On the irreplaceability of a blood relative, see Hdt. 3.119.

with young brides, the balance between natal and marital families is often presented as fragile.[423] By contrast, in *Alcestis*, it is Admetus who separates himself from his natal *oikos* in a bride-like manner.[424] However, in this instance, the separation seems to be positively portrayed, providing us with a different way to think about marriage. Admetus attaches himself to the *oikos* he founded with his wife, yet he does not stop caring deeply about his children (i.e. in contrast with his parents, who have proved to be false *philoi*).[425]

Consequently, Pheres' unsympathetic judgment of Admetus as an unworthy groom reveals the complete estrangement between these otherwise natural *philoi*,[426] whilst also creating tension around Admetus' spousal attitude. This tension is never resolved in the play, for nobody else insinuates that Admetus has failed as a husband. Admetus is not portrayed as an exceptionally brave or unflawed character. His weaknesses, however, do not necessarily invoke the absence of love. Despite his flaws, he is presented as loving his wife and genuinely grieving for her death. This does not mean, however, that Pheres' words do not contain some truth; Alcestis' high hopes as a young bride were dashed, since Admetus did not (sadly) behave as an ideal groom is expected to do. Therefore, at this stage of the drama, the negative aspects of the wedding ritual seem to triumphantly prevail.

The wedding and death rituals are again conflated when Admetus returns from the funeral (861–961).[427] Admetus recalls his one-time entrance to this building as a happy groom

[423] See Menelaus' intervention in E. *Andr*. 309-746 and Smikrines' one in Men. *Epit*. 160-163, 656-658, 1063-1077. Cf. Penelope's veiling in Paus. 3.20.10-11 in front of Icarus that constitutes an *aition* for the marriage ceremony.
[424] Thus Rehm 1994, 90-91.
[425] For the entrance of Pheres as a false friend and its parallels in tragedy, see Pattoni 2007.
[426] So Scodel 1979; Leão 2018.
[427] In the same scene, the much-discussed proclamation ἄρτι μανθάνω (940) does not (only) express self-condemnation, but also tragic realisation. Admetus realises Alcestis' importance in his life, a life that now seems unliveable (935-936). The same expression appears in E. *Ba.* 1296, where Agave uses it when she realises that the head she is holding does not belong to a lion, but to her own son. Although Agave is the one who causes Pentheus' death, Dionysus is responsible for the deed she performs. Admetus' realisation is perhaps of a similar nature. We cannot exclude, however, the possibility of this utterance denoting regret for accepting this sacrifice

(so recalling Pheres' ironic reference to him as an unworthy groom?) and explicitly stresses the similarities and yet the fundamental differences between these rituals.[428] On both occasions, it is significant that his entrance to the house occurs with both transition and a drastic alteration of his mode of being. In the past, his entrance symbolised his acquisition of a new status, that of 'husband', while his current solitary passage over the same threshold confirms his new status as a widower (note his difficulty in entering the building).[429] The king also refers to the changed condition of the house, which will now be dirty (946–947). This reference has caused much scholarly anxiety: how is it possible for him to talk about the cleanliness of the floor right after his wife's funeral?[430]

We should first note that Alcestis as a queen would not have cleaned the house, since this duty belonged to the household slaves.[431] So, if Admetus is here concerned with her absence and its impact on the neatness of his *oikos*, he must allude to her supervisory role as overseer of the household. However, another explanation is possible. As Iakov highlights, according to a mourning practice in Greece, a house stays dirty for one year, when the living relatives do not want the soul of the deceased person to depart.[432] If something similar is intended here, then a 'dirty house' amounts to a 'mourning house'.[433] This close association of

and realisation for his current tragic present. Again, in Ar. *Lys.* 1007 (411 BC) Kinesias uses the same expression when he realises that women throughout Greece have decided to abstain from sexual intercourse altogether. The hypothesis that this realisation, humorously imbued with tragic overtones, alludes to E. *Alc.* is attractive, but hard to confirm, given the timespan that separates these dramas.

428 The similarities between the two rituals are many: 1) the cutting of hair (in one case, as a pre-wedding dedication, while in the other, as a sign of mourning), 2) the use of specific garments (in one case, white, in the other black), 3) the use of water and ritual baths (in one case, as a purifying preparation for the celebration and, in the other, as cleansing from the pollution of death), 4) the accompanying of singing (in one case, hymenaeal songs, while, in the other, mourning songs).

429 See E. *Alc*. 861, 911, 941-943. For doors and thresholds as markers of change and their role in the rites of passage and the acquisition of new statues, see van Gennep 2010 (1909), 20-25, 57-61; Douglas 2002 (1966), 141.

430 See (e.g.) Conacher 1984, 80.

431 Cf. E. *Andr.* 164-167; *Phaëth.* fr. 773.54-58.

432 See Iakov 2012, 319-323. This intrinsic interconnection between mourners and filth is not unique. On the welcoming of dirt in the mourning ritual of the Nyakyusa people, see Douglas 2002 (1966), 218.

433 Iakov 2012, 321.

emotion-laden mourning with dirt is already present in the emblematic lamentations of Achilles and Priam in the *Iliad* (18.22–27, 22.414, 24.164–165) and of Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (50).[434] Yet the ritual aspect of uncleanness in *Alcestis* can be taken even further. As Douglas argues, dirt symbolises disorder in ritual language.[435] In all rites of passages, disorder belongs to the states of isolation and liminality; it suffices to mention that initiands usually cover their faces with dirt and mud during the first stages of the rites of passage.[436] Therefore, Admetus' desire to remain in a condition of chaos and disarray (that a dirty and neglected house represents) must symbolise (among other things) his desire to achieve some kind of unity in experience with his wife. In other words, Admetus imagines himself as remaining stuck in this liminal stage between the living and the dead. His suicide, prevented only at the last minute (896–902), his desire to become one with the dead (866–867) and his determination to honour Alcestis until his own demise (1085–1086) further confirm his desire to emulate her experience in death. Therefore, Admetus seems to project this state of liminality and separation to his *oikos*. A clean and tidy house is also a place that awaits friends and guests, so this reference to dirt accords well with Admetus' decision to abstain from happy gatherings (950–953).

That the final scene has matrimonial associations has long been noted, so my discussion will be brief.[437] First, Heracles insists that Admetus will touch, with his right hand, the hand of

[434] On Demeter's 'abstention from washing' and its relation to the Eleusinian mysteries, see West 2003, 8. Mourning and dirt are interconnected in (Greek) ritual practice; yet this does not exclude the fact that the mourner resorts to dirt in his/her spontaneous expression of emotions. On the similar use of the veil in a way that overlaps the ritual and spontaneous expression of emotion, see Cairns 2009, 54.
[435] See Douglas 2002 (1966), 2.
[436] See Turner 1967, 96.
[437] See Buxton 2003 (1985); Foley 2019 (1985), 87-88; Daugherty 1984; Dyson 1988, 23; Halleran 1988; Lusching 1990, 37-39; Segal 1993, 80; Rehm 1994, 84-95; Foley 2001, 305, 324-327; Mignanego 2003, 65; Slater 2005, 94; De Martino 2010, 93; Swift 2010, 362; Iakov 2012, 274-275; McClure 2016, 100. Parker 2007, 275 and Seeck 2008, 203 express their doubts regarding this point.

the unknown woman.[438] This is reminiscent of the gesture χεὶρ ἐπὶ καρπῷ,[439] found in numerous Athenian vases associated with wedding rituals.[440] Moreover, the technical term Heracles uses (εἴσαγ', 1147) makes us think that he acts as Alcestis' κύριος, giving her to Admetus as if to a groom.[441] Not only the fact that Alcestis is veiled,[442] but also her silence contributes to this effect.[443] As we know from literary and material sources, the Athenian bride, veiled during the various wedding ceremonies,[444] probably remained silent as well.[445] Another element that alludes to this imagery is the comeliness and appeal of the (partially) covered woman.[446] Generally, the beauty of the bride is praised in Greek poetry.[447] Admetus here recognises that this woman is young (1050) and that her general form resembles Alcestis (1061–1063). Given that Alcestis was previously described as being the most beautiful (εἶδος … ἐκπρεπεστάτη γυνή, 333), this comparison thus conveys the agreeableness of the veiled

438 See the repetition of χείρ ('hand') and θιγγάνω ('to touch') in E. *Alc*. 1113, 1114, 1115, 1117.
439 Admetus alludes to this gesture when he recalls their wedding day in 917. For its use in real-life marriage ritual, see Jenkins 1983, 140.
440 For some examples, see above p. 17-18.
441 Thus Halleran 1988, 126, n. 14; Rehm 1994, 95; McClure 2016, 101.
442 *Pace* Masaracchia 1992; Beltrametti 2016.
443 Trammel 1941 and Betts 1965 argue that Heracles' explanation about Alcestis' three-day muteness is based on contemporary practices regarding purification and beliefs about the departure of the soul from the body and is thus tenable. The wedding imagery, I suggest, operates more on the symbolic level.
444 On the importance of the bridal veil in the wedding ceremonies, see Toutain 1940; Armstrong and Ratchford 1985; Oakley and Sinos 1993, *passim;* Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 215-258; Gherchanoc 2006; Deschodt 2011. For the association between brides and veils, see (e.g.) A. *Ag*. 1178-1179; E. *Med*. 784-786; *IT* 371-372; Nonn. *D.* 25.12-13; Asterius *Homilies* 6.2.2; Gregorius Nazianzinus *Carmina Moralia* col. 630-631. For veiled brides in vase-painting, cf. two loutrophoroi in Athens, Nat. Arch. Mus., by the Washing Painter (inv. 16279) and the Boreas Painter (inv. 1249) respectively; the loutrophoros in Berlin, Staat. Mus., (inv. F 2372) and the lebes gamikos by the Marsyas Painter in St Petersburg, State Hermitage Mus. (inv. 1475.3) – of course, there are numerous other examples. At some point, the bride unveiled herself in a ritual gesture known as ἀνακαλυπτήρια. We are not sure when this unveiling took place, since the sources employ this term and its derivative verb ἀνακαλύπτομαι variably. See Harp. α 115 s.v. Ἀνακαλυπτύρια (Keaney); Hsch. α 4345 s.v. ἀνακαλυπτήριον (Latte and Cunningham); Phot. α 1502 s.v. Ἀνακαλυπτήρια; Suid. s.v. Ἀνακαλυπτύρια 1888 (Adler). I agree with scholars who surmise that the bride was fully unveiled principally *for* the groom in the wedding chamber. See Pottier and Reinach 1887, 443; Toutain 1940; Hague 1988, 35; Rehm 1994, 142; Cairns 1996, 80-81, n. 21. This does not mean that the ritual gesture did not take place at the bride's house in front of the guests, as ancient sources inform us and as is maintained by (e.g.) Deubner 1900; Mylonas 1945, 564; Oakley 1982; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 25; Perentidis 1993. For the performance of this ritual gesture first in public and then privately, see also Gherchanoc 2006.
445 On the bride's silence, see Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 245, 247; Iakov 2012, 274.
446 Admetus is able to discern these outward qualities, so the veil is somehow diaphanous or, at least, does not cover her entire face in a way similar that the niqab, the Muslim garment of clothing, does. On the bridal veil as short, see Edwards 1984, 61, n. 17, while for its delicateness, see E. *IT* 372. However, this does not mean that Admetus sees the entirety of her face, as Masaracchia 1992, 32-33 and Beltrametti 2016, 17 argue.
447 On the attractiveness of the newlyweds, see above.

woman's shape. Last, the children's absence in the *exodos* strengthens the wedding imagery to a greater extent; Alcestis is clearly reborn as a wife, not a mother.[448] In this case, the emergence of the wedding imagery serves to cancel the negative tendencies of the ritual noticed in the earlier stages of the play. Not only Alcestis, but also Admetus too, seem to have earned this happy ending.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that in *Alcestis*: 1) Euripides plays with the expectations of the audience, given that the positive tendency of marriage, enacted in ritual, prevails in this drama solely at the last minute, and 2) shared marital *eros* and spousal devotion must have something to do with this positive outcome. First, both partners prioritise loyalty to marriage above their natal kin or their children. Alcestis sacrifices her life for Admetus and thus stands as the antipode to the problematic examples of Antigone, the Danaids and other maidens who put their natal kin above all.[449] Likewise, Admetus rejects his parents, promising complete devotion to his wife. Second, Alcestis and Admetus (although in a subtle manner) make clear that sexual desire has played a positive role in their past married life. Alcestis' outburst on the marriage bed, in conjunction with her request to Admetus not to remarry, bear connotations of uxorial devotion and sexual jealousy. Similarly, Admetus uses sexually charged language and imagery (e.g. the dreams, the statue, the co-habitation of their dead bodies after death) in order to convey his devotion, while his promise to remain unwedded and possibly celibate confirms the importance of sex in the orbit of their marriage. To put it another way, his initiative to imply celibacy as a proof for his future devotion, betrays the importance of sex in their marriage – otherwise the matter of abstinence would have been irrelevant and his choice to bring it up

[448] Thus Dyson 1988, 18, 23 n. 16.
[449] See Seaford 2005, who discusses the cases of Niobe, Antigone and Andromeda.

pointless. This strong interrelation between marriage and positive sexuality is further stressed by the fact that the only memory these spouses recall is their wedding day and their first sexual union.

Another aspect of this marriage that contributes to the happy ending is its solidity and durability in drama and myth. As Harris argues regarding *eros* in tragedy, 'Erotic love holds the marriage together and when the husband pays no attention to his wife's desire, the result is tragic.'[450] This seems to be proven by the marital relationship in question. To the best of my knowledge, the Thessalian king has no relationship with other female characters; in myth he is involved in a homosexual relationship with Apollo, yet traces of this romance are not visible in the Euripidean text.[451] Additionally, in *Alcestis* both spouses reject the possibility of remarrying, thus revealing their unwavering commitment to each other. We have also seen that there is a strong correspondence between their utterances and views/outlooks, which is furthered by the comparable experience of a rite of passage that leads from death to renewal, revitalisation and (re)marriage.

However, this positive outcome, i.e. the salvation of the royal couple, goes against what Seaford argues about tragedy and the tension it articulates as a *genre* between the community of the democratic *polis* and the regal family: 'the self-destruction of the ruling family, expressed in the perversion of ritual, ends in benefit … for the whole *polis*'.[452] How can we explain such a contradiction, while considering this marriage in relation to the Thessalian community (and the community of Athenian spectators)? I suggest that, for Euripides, Alcestis'

450 Harris 2015, 309.
451 For the homoerotic relationship between Apollo and Admetus, see Σ E. *Alc*. 1 (Schwartz); Plu. *Num.* 5; *Amat.* 761e5-6; Call. *Ap*. 49. See also Dova 2012, 167-170; Hubbard 2013. According to Plu. *Amat.* 761e, Admetus has a homoerotic relationship with Heracles as well. On Apollo as lover, see also *h. Hom. Ap*. 208-213.
452 Seaford 1994, xix.

story serves as a positive *exemplum* for the *polis*, which is why it does not end with disaster. He seems to say: putting your husband first,[453] that is, sacrificing anything you have for the sake of him, is a commendable form of action. It can even work miracles, such as bringing dead people back to life. Alcestis' conduct is not unique but comparable to other Euripidean heroines like Andromeda, Helen and the Aeschylean Hypermestra – in all of these cases, the behaviour of these sexually mature female characters is not supposed to be seen as transgressive or threatening, exactly because they act in favour of their marital house. The rejection of the paternal *oikos* for the sake of the *oikos* of the (future) husband, or long-lasting devotion towards an existing one, is the deciding factor that contributes to the positive outcome of these dramas, which seem to profess patriarchal and '*oikos*-centred' (but not inevitably misogynistic) values. Therefore, Euripides seems to condone in this play reciprocal heterosexual *eros* only within the bounds of marriage, e.g. erotic desire that is civil, legal, accepted. As we have also seen, Admetus' marital devotion and faithfulness is positively presented. It remains to be seen whether there are other examples of male faithfulness that are condoned in the Euripidean oeuvre.

[453] Thus Murnaghan 1999/2000, 114 translates πρεσβεύουσα in E. *Alc*. 282.

Chapter 3. Euripides' *Helen*, Marriage and the Female Experience of Erotic Desire

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the interrelation between erotic love, sexuality and marriage in Euripides' *Helen*. In this play, the dramatist provides us with an alternative story regarding Helen's culpability for the Trojan War,[454] portraying her as distinctly different from the unsympathetic and blameworthy character we encounter in his other plays.[455] Not only has she been faithful and devoted to Menelaus throughout, but she also longs for him passionately (540). Apart from the obvious transformation that the heroine undergoes, i.e. from unfaithfulness and unrestrained sexuality to marital chastity and devotion, as the play develops this 'new Helen' is presented as experiencing another important transition.[456] She is portrayed as an innocent *parthenos* and a victim of abduction who is brought by Hermes – also known as ψυχοπομπός – to a land of danger and death.[457] However, during the recognition scene with Menelaus, Helen seems to metamorphose from this young, chaste girl into a full-grown woman.

[454] This probably develops the core idea of Stesichorus' earlier *Palinode*. Kelly 2007 argues that Stesichorus blamed and exculpated Helen in the same poem, called *Helen* or *Palinode*. On Stesichorus' poem, see fr. 91a (Finglass) = fr. 192 *PMGF*; Pl. *Phdr.* 242e3-243b8; *Resp.* 9.586c; Isoc. *Helen* 64-66.6. The Hesiodic fr. 298 (Most) = fr. 358 MW, which attributes the invention of Helen's phantom to Hesiod, probably draws upon fr. 19 (Most) = fr. 23a MW of his *Catalogue of Women*. The latter fragment narrates Iphigenia's sacrifice and contains a reference to an εἴδωλον ('phantom', 'likeness'). However, εἴδωλον probably refers to the noun Ἰφιμέδην (Iphigenia), and not to the adjective Ἀργειών[ης] (Helen). On this, see Austin 1999, 100-110.

[455] See E. *Hec.* 264-266, 441-443; *Tr.* 34-35, 357-358, 373, 766-771, 991-997, 1022-1028; 1214-1215; *Or.* 19-20, 56-60, 128-129, 520, 1134-1139, 1302-1310, 1385-1388. On negative comments about her conduct in Euripidean plays where she does not appear as a dramatic character, see *Andr.* 103-104, 248, 454, 602-604; *El.* 213-214, 1027-1029, 1062-1065; *IT* 13-14, 356, 521-526; *Cyc.* 177-187, 280-284; *Telephus* fr. 722. For examples of Helen's negative representation in the work of other poets, see (e.g.) Alc. frr. 42, 283; A. *Ag.* 681-692, 1455-1461, 1464-1471.

[456] Euripides' transformed heroine is called καινὴν Ἑλένην in Ar. *Th.* 850.

[457] On the imagery of the virginal abduction (which alludes to the Persephone myth), see Pippin 1960, 156; Segal 1971, 569; Wolff 1973; Robinson 1979; Juffras 1993; Zweig 1999; Foley 2001, 303-331; Swift 2009; Luppi 2011; Steiner 2011, 299; Murnaghan 2013, 164. On Egypt as the land of death, see below n. 509, while for Hermes as the guide of souls, see D.S. 1.96; Plu. *Amat.* 2.758b.

From that point on, she is presented as a bride (639–641, 722–725)[458] and is repeatedly called *damar* (566, 567, 576, 581, 709, 850, 955, 963, 995, 1438, 1586).[459] As we shall see, Helen's transformation into a bride and a wife symbolises her safe passage from one state to another and ensures the anticipated salvation of Menelaus and herself at the end of the drama.[460]

This transformation can be fully understood when located in the author's cultural milieu and its religious and social context. The transition Helen undergoes reflects established Greek rituals and cult practices. As Calame shows, in Greek culture adolescent girls were expected to transition successfully from puberty into adulthood and marriage.[461] This important transition, often perceived as perilous, did not happen at once, but in stages. In addition to the actual wedding, there was a second rite of passage for the young woman, i.e. the transformation of the bride (νύμφη) into a full woman (γυνή) through sexual experience and child-bearing: it was only the birth of the first child that signified a woman's final admission into adulthood.[462]

Helen's return to the state of παρθενεία ('virginity') and her (second) passage from adolescence into adulthood can also be understood through, and corresponds fully to, van Gennep's description of the initiation process. There is first the sudden break from her family and a return to chaos, for she is abruptly separated from her husband, her daughter, Hermione, and her homeland (the 'separation' stage). Hermes, the god associated with movement, change and transition,[463] has been assigned the role of the intermediary in this case, acting as a bridge

[458] Some of the most important studies that examine Helen's presentation as a *parthenos* and her symbolic transformation to a bride are Zweig 1999; Foley 2001; Swift 2009; Luppi 2011.
[459] The latter is a detail thoroughly discussed by Luppi 2011.
[460] This positive reading is *contra* Hartigan 1981; Wright 2005; Sebo 2014, who argue that E. *Hel*. betrays the author's criticism and/or his deep skepticism about human life and society, the limits of human understanding and the destructiveness of war.
[461] See Calame 1997 (1977), *passim*.
[462] See van Gennep 2010 (1909), 177; Calame 1997 (1977), *passim*; Sissa 1990 (1987); Garland 1990, 200; Sabetai 2014, 56, n. 15; Sabetai 2019, 39.
[463] See Vernant 2006 (1983), 157-196.

that facilitates Helen's 'changing of condition'.[464] Helen is brought to Egypt and positioned in a dangerous liminal state (the 'segregation' or 'marginality' stage). Her condition of quasi-virginity, along with her stay in Egypt, depicted as the land of the dead,[465] is comparable to the dangerous in-between place, in which initiates (and Greek unmarried girls and boys) find themselves.[466] Last comes the incorporation of the individual into the new order (the 'rebirth' stage).[467] Indeed, Helen will be reunited with her sisters-in-law, the Leucippides, and will be re-integrated into the world of adult Spartan women,[468] as the Chorus envisages (1465–1470).[469]

The deathlike phase of betwixt-and-between, described by Victor Turner as 'fruitful darkness',[470] is followed by the (social) rebirth of the individual. Yet this rebirth is crucially connected with instruction in sexuality. This is true not only for the modern societies and indigenous nations studied by social anthropologists,[471] but also for ancient Greece, where the entry of maidens and youths into adulthood was interconnected with sexual initiation. In the case of maidens, this was achieved through their marriage with an older and more experienced

464 van Gennep 2010 (1909), 48.
465 Significantly, the play starts with Helen being positioned near the grave of Proteus and her state of affairs in Egypt takes the form of a social death. Cf. p. 110-111 and n. 509.
466 Both young novices and girls who menstruate for the first time are treated as dead in several societies. See van Gennep 2010 (1909), 67, 75; Turner 1967, 96; Calame 1997 (1977), 13.
467 A passage from death to rebirth, from grief to joy, can be noticed in several rites of passage in Greece concerning not only marriage, but also mystic initiation. On this, see Seaford 2017b, 27.
468 On Leucippides as establishers of choral dances for Aphrodite, see B. fr. 61: ἰοδερκέι τελλόμεναι / Κύπριδι νεοκέλαδον / εὐειδέα χορόν ('For violet-eyed Cypris we establish a beautiful choral dance of new song, and …').
469 Murnaghan 2013, 174 argues that here Helen is presented as a chorus leader and that she will continue to have this role when she arrives in Sparta: 'Her return to her own companions is still in the future, but Helen's restitution to her proper role as chorus leader is already anticipated as the play's chorus reacts to her voice, comes to her side, and answers her song.' In general, this noticeable emphasis in the choral element in E. *Hel*. can remind us of A. *Supp*. In both cases, there is a journey from Egypt to Greece that coincides with marriage and choral integration, while there is a journey from negative to positive views of sexuality as well, as A. fr. 44 (Radt) suggests. On the importance of the choral element and its connection to wedding song in A. *Supp*., see Swift 2010, 279-297; Rawles 2018.
470 Turner 1967, 110.
471 See van Gennep 2010 (1909), 67, 116-145; Eliade 2005 (1958), 3, 24, 128.

man,[472] while in many Greek cities, the introduction of young men to sexuality often took the form of *paiderastia*.[473]

Helen's (second) passage to womanhood is similarly well connected with an initiation into sexuality. Her overcoming of her adolescent-like aversion towards sex and her re-introduction into adult sexual love are discernible: 1) in the way that her behaviour changes during the course of the play, and 2) in the symbolic imagery of the third stasimon (1301–1368). First, during the initial three-quarters of the drama, Helen has a negative approach towards Aphrodite (235–240, 361–365).[474] Yet this attitude towards the goddess and her negative body language towards sexuality (always with regard to a potential sexual encounter with Theoclymenus: 294–297) undergo important changes.[475] After her reunion with Menelaus, she acknowledges that Aphrodite is the sweetest of all gods when she acts in moderation (1102–1106). Moreover, after this point, Helen (once again) gives way to adult love, discarding her previous hesitation. This is most evident in the scene where she offers to provide Menelaus with a well-deserved bath (1296–1300). As scholars have noted, all the *doubles entendres* make us suspect that Helen will provide her long-desired spouse with more pleasures than just a bath.[476]

Second, there is a shift in the way Aphrodite is depicted as well. As Wolff observes, after the first three-quarters of the play, Aphrodite and *eros*, which until then had been

[472] For the wedding as an important threshold of change for women, which affected them in multiple ways, not only psychologically, but also physiologically, see Redfield 1982, 187-188; Robson 2013, 12.
[473] For the institution of pederasty in Athens, see Dover 2016 (1978), *passim*. See also Pl. *Smp.*; Plu. *Amat.* Athenian adolescents could also have sex with male and female prostitutes, slaves and foreign women. For the options men had, see Robson 2013. For the fake abduction of boys by older lovers with the consent of their family in Crete, see Str. 10.4.21 = Heraclid. *Pol.* 3.5; [Plu.] *De liberis educandis* 12a. For a humorous treatment of pederasty in the world of the gods, see Luc. *DDeor.* 8.3.
[474] See Wolff 1973.
[475] Luppi 2011, 13 correctly notes that Helen repeatedly refers to her sexual life in the prologue.
[476] See Pippin 1960, 154; Kaimio 2002, 110. Yet there are more suggestive references of erotic nature in E. *Hel.*, including the mention of καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί (1) and the bull (1555), an animal connected with sexuality. Cf. Burnett 1971, 85; Craik 1990, 261-262.

associated with death and destructiveness, are presented in a more favourable light.[477] This is most obvious in the third stasimon, where we hear about the goddess-mother and how she has overcome her state of mourning thanks to the intervention of Aphrodite, who is now presented as having an evidently beneficial effect. This series of alterations follows the initiation scheme discussed above: it is only after Helen's re-introduction into the adult world that her attitude towards adult love (and Aphrodite) changes. In the same way, Aphrodite is afresh portrayed in the drama as a positive force only *after* Helen's ritual image of adolescence is dispatched.

Helen's successful transition from maidenhood to adulthood through (re)marriage also bespeaks her devotion towards, and immense desire for, her husband, which are presented in a positive light. In contrast to many tragic women, who behave errantly when their husbands are not present (e.g. Clytemnestra, Phaedra, Deianira),[478] Helen has been protecting her husband's honour by denying the advances of Theoclymenus (60–67). Moreover, when Menelaus arrives in Egypt, she hatches the escape plan and puts forwards her stratagem, without criticising his less successful suggestions or challenging his authority as her κύριος (1049–1092).[479] Even the tricked Theoclymenus commends her unwavering spousal commitment (1686–1687).[480] Cunning intelligence, female agency and erotic desire are thus not only not being portrayed as threatening (as e.g. in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*), but they also lead to a positive outcome, since they serve the interests of the marital *oikos* and its head,[481] i.e. the husband.[482] We should not

[477] See Wolff 1973, 62-63.
[478] See Hall 1997, 107-110.
[479] Thus Wolff 1973; Foley 2001; Redondo Moyano 2010, 300-301.
[480] Boedeker 2017, 251 rightly argues that 'Theoclymenus' character, then, appears somewhat more nuanced and less brutal than the audience was led to expect before seeing him in person. Flickers of piety, kindness, and generosity appear, although they are easily effaced by his overwhelming desire to possess Helen, the trait that dominates his persona.' Also, when the *dei ex machina* appear, she continues, 'What he praises, moreover, is the virtue of her mind, not the beauty of her body.' Cf. Grube 1973 (1941), 348-349.
[481] Thus Wolff 1973, 77; Holmberg 1995, 38; Foley 2001, 305.
[482] When the husband is dead, the son is considered the head of the *oikos*. On male children as 'the pillars of the house', see E. *IT* 59; *Or.* 307-310 This concept of husbands/fathers/sons as 'pillars of the house' is still in use in modern Greece. See s.v. *κολώνα* in the *Dictionary of Standard Modern Greek* and in the *Dictionary of Giorgios Katos*.

forget that Helen's spousal behaviour actually contributes to the happy ending of the play.[483] Despite the killing of many barbarian sailors (1595–1612) and the uncertain fate of the Chorus that consists of Greek captive women (191–194),[484] one cannot easily deny that the ending is happy for Helen and Menelaus: favoured by the gods, they will return to their homeland, while Helen alone will be deified (1662–1679). Moreover, had Helen not remained devoted to Menelaus, there would have been no reunion and remarriage to celebrate.

What is thus left unsaid, but perhaps implied, is that women who behave in a way similar to this (i.e. honour their husband, desire him and no one else, successfully use their intelligence and charm *solely* for the sake of their marital *oikos*) will laudably secure happiness for themselves and their husbands.[485] To argue that Helen's respect for (Athenian) social ideals governing marriage might have had an instructive function for the contemporary audience is perhaps not farfetched, especially if we take into account: 1) the well-discussed social value of myth for the Greeks, and 2) the function of fiction/stories in general. As Gottschall argues, along with other scholars who apply a biocultural approach to the study of literature,[486] one of the adaptive function of stories is to help humans navigate through life's problems.[487] Therefore, Euripides' presentation of Helen as an ideally devoted and faithful wife could possibly have had a moralistic and educational scope, serving a social purpose for the Athenian

[483] As I see it, Helen's role is active, for she claims her (sexual) agency. *Pace* Fulkerson 2011, 124, who argues that, in his effort to redeem Helen, Euripides gives her no choice to act freely, and Schmiel 1972 and Jansen 2012, who state that at the end she is treated, and treats herself, as an object.

[484] On some problematic elements at the end of E. *Hel.*, see Lee 1986, 312-313; Wright 2005, *passim*.

[485] Redondo Moyano 2010, 303 argues that Helen constitutes a kind of personification of the feminine ideal according to the Athenian *polis* and its social standards. Cf. Holmberg 1995, 22.

[486] See (*inter alios*) Dissanayake 1990 (1988); Dissanayake 1995 (1992); Dissanayake 2000; Boyd 2010; Easterlin 2012; Cometa 2017. The findings of cognitive neuroscience seem to support this. On the mirror neurons and the way they are activated even when we *read* or *listen* to an account, see Gallese and Cuccio 2015, 13: 'Seeing someone performing an action, like grabbing an object, and listening to or reading the linguistic description of that action lead to a similar motor simulation that activates some of the same regions of our cortical motor system, including those mirror properties, normally activated when we actually perform that action.'

[487] See Gottschall 2012, *passim* and esp. 67. Yet it is not only fiction that fulfils this purpose. For the real-life scenarios and dreams that also assist humans in coping with problems, see Pinker 1997.

polis (this idea is found in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where the tragic poets are envisaged as teachers of the Athenians).

The fact that Euripides presents Helen as the embodiment of the ideal woman and a role model for (Athenian) wives is significant, given her extraordinary relationship with the marriage bond. For, as Worman puts it, Helen is 'simultaneously the archetypical bride and the most illustrious flouter of the marriage bond'.[488] Indeed, she exhibits an ambiguous connection with, and (often almost magical) influence on, marriage and married life in literature and ritual. In the *Iliad*, Helen has betrayed her husband, thus dishonouring the marriage bond. Yet, despite the fact that she blames herself (3.173–176; 6.344–348), other important characters keep a neutral stance towards this: Priam comes to her defence by holding the gods responsible (3.164–165), while Hector also avoids accusing her directly (6.360–362).[489] Similarly, in the *Odyssey*, the re-habilitated Helen narrates a story to Telemachus of how Odysseus entered Troy and was discovered only by her who bathed him and helped him return to his camp (4.247–264).[490] This version rings true just until the point when Menelaus speaks. He recounts how the Argives were hiding inside the Trojan horse; not only did she find out about their trickery, but she also tried to reveal their position to the Trojans by imitating the voices of their long-craved wives (4.271–289). Without, however, considering her problematic relationship with marriage and her deceptive account, Telemachus happily receives a wedding gift from her for his future bride (15.125–130).

488 Worman 2001, 19.
489 Thus Worman 2001, 29; Fulkerson 2011, 116. On the condemnation of this extramarital affair, see (e.g.) Hom. *Il.* 3.40-57, while for a negative judgment regarding Helen, see (e.g.) Hom. *Il.* 19.324-325. On Helen in the epics, see Roisman 2006; Blondell 2013, 53-95; Edmunds 2016; Edmunds 2019.
490 Euripides slightly changes the details of this story and uses it in his *Hec.* 240-250, where the Trojan queen tries to convince Odysseus to spare Polyxena's life, since she has spared his own life in the past.

Helen's exceptional relationship with marriage and her impact on other people's marriages are discernable in later texts as well (i.e. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Theocritus' *Epithalamium*), where her connection with the transition of maidens from adolescence to a marriageable state can be observed.[491] Her influence on coming-of-age girlhood is equally discernible in her role in Spartan religious cults and practices. We know that Helen was worshipped both as a girl at Platanistas and as a goddess and wife of Menelaus in the cult of Therapne,[492] thus encompassing both adolescent girls and adult women in her jurisdiction. Indeed, as Herodotus narrates, the divine Helen bestows extraordinary beauty on a deformed girl, thus rendering her marriageable.[493] Yet Helen's influence on marriage is again ambivalent. This magically granted beauty eventually has negative effects on the girl's marriage, given that the king of Sparta, Ariston, falls in love with her, and takes her from her first husband, Agetos.

Therefore, Euripides seems to imply in this play that even Helen (who is otherwise mythologically connected with the defilement of her own marriage and has the power to divinely advance or destroy the marriage of others) has the choice to behave differently and reject the advances of another man. Every wife can be presented with the opportunity to commit adultery, betray her husband and substitute him with another one. As a matter of fact, women in Greek myth are often presented with these sorts of alternative scenarios and have to make a choice. To give an example, Nauplius, father of Palamedes, takes vengeance on his enemies by trying to convince their wives to commit adultery – Clytemnestra, Meda and Aegiale indeed act upon this proposal.[494] Not even the Homeric Penelope is an exception, since she also has to

[491] In Ar. *Lys.* 1314-1325 and in Theoc. *Id.* 18.22-31, Helen is somehow presented as a χορηγός, the distinctive, beautiful choral leader of a group of girls who are unmarried but physiologically mature and ripe for marriage.
[492] See Alcm. fr. 7 *PMGF*; Isoc. *Helen* 62.1-64.2.; Paus. 3.19.9; Hsch. ε 1992 s.v. Ἑλένεια (Latte); Hsch. θ 335 s.v. Θεραπνατίδεια (Latte). See also Wide 1893, *passim*; Calame 1997 (1977), 195-196. According to West 1975 (followed by Skutsch 1987), Helen resembles an ancient vegetation goddess, daughter of Sun, who disappears and come backs, thus bearing notions of renewal and rebirth.
[493] For the entire episode, see Hdt 6.61.8-62.16.
[494] See Apollod. *Epit.* 6.9; Lyc. *Alex.* 1093-1095, 1216-1225 (with Gantz 1993, 606-608, 695-701; Hornblower 2015 on 1093 and 1217). On Nauplius' other revenge plots, see also Σ E. *Or.* 432 (Schwartz). This story also

choose between marital devotion and faithlessness. Throughout the *Odyssey*, there is some ambiguity regarding her final decision à propos of her marriage with the long-lost Odysseus. Until the end, we are invited to wonder: how will she behave? In fact, the phantom of Agamemnon advises Odysseus not to reveal his identity when he first arrives at Ithaca (11.454–456). So does Athena (13.307–310), thus triggering Odysseus' anxieties about whether Penelope has remained loyal or not to him (13.333–338). The passerby who hears the joyful wedding songs and negatively comments on Penelope's 'new marriage' also gives voice to these doubts (23.149–151). The poet plays at last with this idea in the recognition scene, where Penelope sympathetically refers to Helen (23.218–224).[495] Yet, despite the existence of epichoric traditions, wherein Penelope indeed has extramarital sex,[496] and the poet's possible allusion to them, Homer endorses the paradigm of faithful Penelope. With this in mind, we move to the next section, where I explore the symbolism that Euripides uses in the first half of *Helen* in order to paint the picture of the freshly faithful heroine as an innocent *parthenos* and abductee.

3.2. Euripides' Helen: Like a Virgin Touched for the Very First Time?

The imagery of abduction and virginal rape plays a prominent role throughout, since the image of a maiden who is treacherously seduced, abducted or raped is recalled many times in the play. Helen first speaks about the seduction of her mother, Leda, by Zeus,[497] referring to this *logos*

perhaps featured in S. *Nauplius Sails in* (Καταπλέων). It can be argued that, since καταπλέω means 'to sail back', just like κατέρχομαι means 'to come back', 'to return' (from exile), this drama may have recounted how Nauplius came back from Troy and started convincing the wives of his enemies. On this, see LSJ s.v. κατέρχομαι II and καταπλέω II. Yet the fragments do not allow us to say this with any certainty.

495 On the pertinence of this reference, see Morgan 1991.

496 According to some ancient sources, Penelope gave birth to Pan outside her marriage with Odysseus, while, according to Duris of Samos fr. 21 (Jacoby), she had sex with all the suitors. On this, see Fredricksmeyer 1997, 494-495 (with reference to further bibliography).

497 According to some versions of the myth, Nemesis was Helen's mother. See *Cypria* frr. 10 and 11 (West); Athen. 8.10.8; Lyc. *Alex.* 88-89 (with Hornblower 2015 *ad loc.*); Eust. *Il.* 23.639; Apollod. 3.126.8-127.8. On Nemesis as one of the protectors of marriage, see Sabetai 2014, 62-63.

with some reservation about its truth (18–21, cf. 215–216). She later compares the fate of Leda with that of Callisto and the daughter of Merops. Callisto's union with Zeus and her transformation into an animal (376) again evokes images of abduction and rape.[498] Regarding the daughter of Merops, we are told that she was banned from Artemis' choruses and chased by the goddess (381–383).[499] Although what this woman did is not explicitly stated in the text, it has been suggested that the wrath of Artemis (who is generally associated with the pre-matrimonial period)[500] was provoked by the girl's illicit loss of virginity,[501] as in the case of Callisto, according to some versions of the myth.[502] The abduction imagery is fully exploited in the third stasimon, where we learn about the ἁρπαγὰς δολίους of the unnamed daughter and the destructive rage of her mother (1301–1337), a story that alludes to the myth of Persephone's abduction by Hades and Demeter's subsequent despair.[503] An indirect reference to this theme can also be detected in the mention of the Leucippides, whom, the Chorus envisages, Helen will join in their dances after she returns to Sparta (1465–1470). According to one version of the myth, Leucippus' daughters were abducted by Helen's brothers, became their wives and subsequently received honorary rites in Sparta.[504]

This pattern of violent, sexually tinged snatching and imminent violation is also introduced for the mature Helen. At the beginning of the play she is positioned at the grave of

[498] On the nymph Callisto, see Hes. fr. 115 (Most) = fr. 163 MW; Eumel. fr. 31 (West) = Asius fr. 9 (West) = Apollod. 3.8.2; Pherecyd. fr. 86.1-4. On her rape by Zeus and her subsequent metamorphosis into a bear, see Hes. fr. 115 (Most) = fr. 163 MW; Pherecyd. fr. 86.1-4; Luc. *Salt.* 48.2-3; Eratosth. *Cat.* 1-2 (Pàmias i Massana and Zucker) = p. 1-3, 1-2 (Olivieri) = 181 1 (Maass); Paus. 1.25.1; 8.3.6; Nonn. *D.* 2.122-123.
[499] For Artemis as a distinguished member of a divine female dance group, see *h. Hom. Ap.* 194-199. On group dances as habitually taking place in meadows, Motte 1971, 48-62.
[500] See Calame 1997 (1977), 92.
[501] See Luppi 2011, 16-17.
[502] See Apollod. 3.101.3-5: εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ λέγοντες ὡς Ἄρτεμις αὐτὴν κατετόξευσεν ὅτι τὴν παρθενίαν οὐκ ἐφύλαξεν.
[503] *Pace* Golann 1945, who assumes that if this stasimon refers to Demeter and Persephone, then it is irrelevant to the play's plot. This is why she proposes that Euripides here alludes to Helen and her mother, Nemesis.
[504] Thus Kannicht 1969 on 1465-1467; Wolff 1973, 74. For the different versions regarding Leucippides, cf. *Cypria* fr. 15 (West); Lyc. *Alex.* 546-566 (with Hornblower 2015 on 547); Paus. 2.22.5, 3.12.8, 3.16.1; Theoc. *Id.* 22.137-206; Apollod. 3.14.4. Calame 1997 (1977), 185-187 argues that the Leucippides were venerated as wives at the same time with their husbands. Yet these cult figures were also associated with notions of youthfulness and adolescence.

Proteus, where she takes refuge in order to avoid Theoclymenus' advances (63: θηρᾶ γαμεῖν με, 'hunts after a marriage with me', cf. 60–67).[505] When she later meets Menelaus and (without recognising him) suspects that he will set her forced marriage into motion (550–552) or sexually abuse her himself, Helen again runs towards the grave of Proteus so as to avoid this violation (543–544).[506] In both scenes, she displays the ultimate uxorial σωφροσύνη by honouring her long-lost husband (63–64) and not spoiling his bed (65). The avoidance of any illicit sexual activity manifests her subjective sense of honour and her determination to protect her husband's honour, both of which accord well with Athenian ideals, since the honour (τιμή) of an Athenian citizen was often interconnected with the fidelity of his wife and the chastity of his other female relatives.[507] Yet this fleeing on Helen's part is also comparable to the behaviour of maidens and their persistent, but often futile, avoidance of a sexual encounter in Greek myth and drama,[508] thus bringing to mind connotations of maidenhood and purity which is about to be stolen. Nuances of virginity and its violent deflowering with regard to Helen can also be detected in the comparison of her own lament – about the supposed death of Menelaus – with the cries of a Nymph who experiences rape by the god Pan (185–190).

[505] On Helen's use of this metaphor regarding Theoclymenus, see Allan 2008 on 154-155.
[506] NB the recurrence of the hunting metaphor in 545 (ὅς με θηρᾶται λαβεῖν, 'who is hunting me down') with Craik 1990, 261. As Zeitlin 1986, 126 well argues on a more general plane, 'Male desire is separated culturally from the hunt and war but these are also its metaphors.'
[507] See Cohen 2003, 152. In E. *Or.* 585-590, Orestes underscores the importance of Penelope's ὑγιὲς εὐνατήριον not only for the honour of her husband, but also for her son. It should also be taken into account that in Athens men were expected to treat with honour and respect Athenian women, since they were the daughters, mothers, wives of other citizen men, and any improper behaviour in their presence was considered unacceptable. See (e.g.) Hyp. *Lyc.* 6; D. 21.79. Thus, any case of μοιχεία that involved the wife, the daughter or the sister of any Athenian citizen could be publicly prosecuted by anyone in the *polis* (γραφὴ μοιχείας). As Robson 2013, 99 notes, 'the fact that the state allowed this crime to be prosecuted by anyone who chose to (and not just a wronged *kyrios*) implies that it took a particular interest in exposing *moicheia*'.
[508] Myth: Atalanta (Hes. fr. 48.30-35 Most = fr. 76.4-8 MW; Thgn. 2.1289-1293; S. *OC* 1321-1322), Proitides (Hes. fr. 78 Most = fr. 130 MW; fr. 81 Most = fr. 132 MW; B. 11.40-112), Nemesis (*Cypria* frr. 10 and 11 West); Drama: Danaids (A. *Supp.*); Creusa (E. *Ion* 887-896).

The portrayal of Helen as a quasi-virginal figure along with her association with the abduction motif is reinforced by the representation of Egypt as the land of the dead.[509] In *Helen*, Egypt is connected with the underworld in manifold ways: 1) the play takes place in front of Proteus's grave (60–61, 528, 547, 1165, 1178), 2) Theoclymenus' palace is compared by Teucrus to the house of Plutus (169), a name that can be associated with the god of the underworld, Pluton,[510] 3) Theoclymenus' name itself may bring to mind Klymenos,[511] a sobriquet attributed to Hades,[512] 4) Helen evokes images of the underworld by invoking the chthonic Sirens and Persephone (175), by stating that she feels dead (286) and by considering committing suicide (298), 5) both Menelaus and Helen swear an oath that they will commit suicide so as not to be separated from each other (835–854),[513] 6) Egypt is the place where Menelaus will be claimed to be dead (1050–1065) and where Helen is supposed to perform funeral rites for him (1239–1245), and 7) this is a place of death for all Greek men who set foot on this land, since Theoclymenus, desiring to marry the espoused Helen, eliminates all the Greeks who arrive on the shores of Egypt (151–155, 440, 443–444, 469, 479–480).[514] The representation of Egypt – Helen's current place of residence – as the land of death calls to mind the myth of Persephone (her abduction and her stay in the underworld), thus providing further evidence for Helen's likeness to one of most emblematic figures to experience abduction and rape.

[509] On Egypt's associations with the underworld in E. *Hel.*, see (e.g.) Jesi 1965; Guépin 1968, 128-133; Wolff 1973; Foley 2001, 306, 313; Luppi 2011 12, n. 4; Jansen 2012, 330; Sebo 2014, 155; Ringer 2016, 236.
[510] See Pl. *Crat*. 403a3-5; Wolff 1973, 64, n. 11; Juffras 1993, 46; Sebo 2014, 155. The association of wealth with death is also found in tragedy. See A. *Ag*. 1382; S. *OT* 30 (with Seaford 1984, 252).
[511] Thus Guépin 1968, 131, Segal 1971, 598, n. 111, Wolff 1973, 64, n. 11, Robinson 1979, 166; Foley 2001, 306; Ringer 2016, 237.
[512] Paus. 2.35.4-10.
[513] On the importance of this oath in the appreciation of the characters' honest intentions, emotions and virtues, see Torrance 2009.
[514] On Egypt as the land of death *particularly* for Greek men, see Jesi 1965, 56.

Helen's depiction as a maiden, along with her sojourn in the land of death, may also remind us of the dangers intrinsically linked to female παρθενεία in myth. Maidens in the liminal state between girlhood and womanhood were believed to be untamed,[515] and thus presented as potentially posing a threat to men. Yet the critical transition from virginity to maturity is considered equally threatening to the women themselves. νύμφαι (an ambiguous, 'transitional' term used for the promised bride-to-be, the bride, and the young wife)[516] repeatedly experience death in tragedy right before or after their wedding.[517] Helen's stay in the death-like realm of Egypt can thus be seen as a symbolic 'return' to the dangerous state of παρθενεία and the threats it usually entails, threats that are normally expected to be overcome in ritual and society through the woman's unhampered integration into society by means of marriage, the legitimate experience of sexuality and procreation.

Helen's relationship with maidenhood is further emphasised by her negative approach towards the goddess of erotic desire, Aphrodite, during the first three-quarters of the play.[518] Helen calls Aphrodite πολυκτόνος ('all-murderous'), since she has provoked the killing of many Trojans (235–240). Afterwards Helen accuses the goddess again, for her gifts to Paris have brought streams of blood and tears (361–365). Last, before the implementation of the escape plan, Helen initially addresses Aphrodite in a way that may recall Perseus' reprimanding

[515] See (e.g.) Hom. *Il.* 3.301, 18.432; Hom. *Od.* 3.269; *h. Hom. Cer.* 145; *h. Hom. Ven.* 133; B. 11.82-84; Pi. *P.* 9.6; A. *Ag*. 245; *Supp*. 149; S. *El.* 1239; *OC* 1056; *Niobe* fr. 441a.10; E. *Andr.* 184-185. See also LSJ s.v. πωλοδαμνῶ, ἄδμητος.
[516] Another transitional term with a similarly large semantic campus is τάλις, which is used in order to describe the promised/engaged girl, the bride or a young woman of marriageable status. See (e.g.) S. *Ant.* 629-630; Call. *Aet.* fr. 75; Poll. 3.45; Hsch. τ 85a s.v. τᾶλις (Hansen and Cunningham).
[517] For references to the 'bride of Hades' motif in tragedy, see Chapter 2, n. 232. On the interconnection between marriage and death in Greek literature and ritual practice, see Alexiou and Dronke 1971; Alexiou 1974; Redfield 1982; Jenkins 1983, 142; Armstrong and Ratchford 1985; Seaford 1987; Rehm 1994, 11-42; Seaford 2005; Seaford 2017b.
[518] See Wolff 1973.

prayer to the god Eros in Euripides' *Andromeda* (fr. 136): she reproaches the goddess who has been the instigator of so many evil things (1102–1106).

Helen's unfavourable judgement of Aphrodite's actions is understandable in this dramatic context, given the negative impact that these deeds have had on her life. Equally justified is her aversion towards sexuality, since it is directed towards Theoclymenus and not Menelaus (Menelaus is called by Helen ποθεινός, 'longed for', 'desired' 540).[519] However, Helen's association with virginity, along with her renunciation of Aphrodite and the sexuality she represents – during the first three-quarters of the play – again call to mind the virginal fear and rejection of sex and marriage associated in myth with maidens and nymphs.[520] The story of Atalanta, who is described in Euripides' *Meleager* as μίσημα Κύπριδος ('hated by Aphrodite', fr. 530), is a well-known example of this motif: she avoids marriage until she is deceived by the stratagem of Hippomenes.[521] Another popular example is the fate of the Danaids,[522] who attempt to avoid marriage with their cousins. In both cases these women will eventually experience the power of Aphrodite, albeit in an unbalanced and errant way: Atalanta will feel excessive desire and thus have sex with her husband in a temple, whereas the Danaids, with the exception of Hypermestra, who will experience proper marriage and sex, will be forced to marry the men they will eventually kill.

Last, the association of Helen with coming-of-age beauty and maidenhood is strengthened by her own abduction by Hermes.[523] This kidnapping, a substitution of her

[519] Theoclymenus comments on Helen's erotic feelings for her supposedly lost husband at 1395-1398 (with Kannicht 1969 *ad loc.*; Wolff 1973, 67).
[520] Thus Swift 2009, 420. See the following examples: Echo: Nonn. *D.* 15.389; Arethusa: Paus. 5.7.2; Daphne: Paus. 8.20.1-4; Syrinx: Ant. Lib. 22.4.
[521] On this, see Seaford 1988, 124-5; Gantz 1993, 335-336; Zeitlin 1996, 278; Seaford 2008, 72. In S. fr. 1111, Atalanta is called φίλανδρος, that may denote: 1) her love of 'masculine habits' (LSJ), 2) her fondness for men (Lloyd-Jones 1996, 213), or 3) her affection for her own husband.
[522] See A. *Supp.*; Paus. 4.30.2; Apollod. 2.1.5.
[523] For Hermes as an abductor and violator of Polymele, see Hom. *Il.* 16.181-186.

elopement with Paris,[524] occurs in a blooming meadow where Helen gathers roses in order to dedicate them to the sanctuary of Chalkioikos Athena in Sparta:[525]

> Ἥρα τὸν ὠκύπουν
>
> ἔπεμψε Μαιάδος γόνον: ὅς με χλοερὰ δρεπομέναν
>
> ἔσω πέπλων ῥόδεα πέταλα,
>
> Χαλκίοικον ὡς Ἀθάναν μόλοιμ᾽, ἀναρπάσας δι᾽ αἰθέρος
>
> τάνδε γαῖαν εἰς ἄνολβον (E. *Hel.* 241–246).

> But Hera … sent the swift-footed son of Maia. I was gathering fresh rose leaves in the folds of my robe, so that I might go to the goddess of the Bronze House; he carried me off through the air to this luckless land.

In this passage, Euripides uses imagery that recalls the archetypical seizure scene of Persephone, as recounted in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (1–21). In the *Hymn*, the maiden is snatched by Hades, while she is playing with the full-breasted Okeanides and gathering various flowers in a soft grassy field:[526]

> παίζουσαν κούρῃσι σὺν Ὠκεανοῦ βαθυκόλποις
>
> ἄνθεά τ᾽ αἰνυμένην, ῥόδα καὶ κρόκον ἠδ᾽ ἴα καλὰ
>
> λειμῶν᾽ ἂμ μαλακὸν καὶ ἀγαλλίδας ἠδ᾽ ὑάκινθον
>
> νάρκισσόν θ᾽, ὃν φῦσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρῃ
>
> Γαῖα Διὸς βουλῇσι χαριζομένη Πολυδέκτῃ (*h. Hom. Cer.* 5–9).
>
> As she played with the deep-breasted daughters of Ocean,
>
> plucking flowers in the lush meadow – roses, crocuses,

[524] Thus Segal 1971, 570; Nikolsky 2015, 151.
[525] For the Chalkioikos Athena, see Jessen 1899 s.v. Chalkioikos *RE* Band III, 2.
[526] Persephone later recounts the same events herself. See *h. Hom. Cer.* 417-428.

> and lovely violets, irises and hyacinth and the narcissus,
> which Earth grew as a snare for the flower-faced maiden
> in order to gratify by Zeus's design the Host-to-Many.[527]

Young women are commonly associated with flowers in Greek literature. First, maidens and goddesses associated with female beauty, grace and sexuality (i.e. Aphrodite, the Charites) alike are often linked, and adorned, with garlands.[528] Second, the gathering of flowers is a typically adolescent female activity laden with symbolism.[529] Beautiful and fragrant flowers symbolise 'the beauty of natural growth'.[530] However, as the beauty of a flower is passing,[531] so is the beauty of a maiden, reminding us that both should be plucked *kata kairon* (Pindar fr. 123; Seaford shows that the image of the plucked flower is used negatively in the case of premature and extramarital loss of virginity).[532] But the prevention of this plucking is also seen with negativity. More specifically, the attic marble statue, Phrasiclia,[533] who, as the inscription reveals, will always remain a *kore*, as she died too early, holds in her left hand a closed-up lotus flower.[534] As Stieber notes, 'Like the girl herself, the choicest has been plucked before it could bloom.'[535] Therefore, the flower seems to be used in this case by the sculptor in order to (also) call to mind the sexual experiences that Phrasiclia will never have due to her premature death (according to the Suda lexicon, νύμφη is a word that can be used both for the upper female genitals and the closed-up roses).[536] In a similar vein, a Bulas amphoriskos (inv.

527 The translation of the passages from this *Hymn* are taken from Foley 1993.
528 See (e.g.) Hes. *Op*. 75; *h. Hom. Cer.* 102; *Cypria* frr. 5 and 6 (West). In Pi. *N*. 7.52-53, flowers are used as a metaphor for matters related to Aphrodite, i.e. sexual. On Aphrodite's association with fruits and her fruit festival at Amathus, see S. fr. 847, while on her connection with flowery gardens and garlands, see Motte 1971, 121-146.
529 With Sabetai 2009, 104-105.
530 See MacLachlan 1993, 62 (with references to primary sources).
531 On the maiden, Leonto, who died as soon as she blossomed like a flower, right before her wedding, see *GV* 988 (Peek).
532 See Seaford 1987, 111-112.
533 Athens, Nat. Arch. Mus., inv. 4889, work of Aristion of Paros.
534 On lotus flowers and their connection to sex and the worship of Aphrodite, see Hughes 2019, 66-68, 76.
535 Stieber 2004, 173.
536 See Suid. ν 588 s.v. νύμφαι (Adler).

43746), found in the grave of a young woman (Akraifia, 4th c. BC, n. T.144), depicts 'half-open myrtle flowers', thus making us think that this prematurely dead woman did not perhaps have the chance to properly become a bride or a mother.[537]

It should come as no surprise, then, that Persephone, the maiden *par excellence*, whose face in the *Hymn* looks like a budding flower (8),[538] and her various cults are associated with flower-gathering festivals.[539] Strabo informs us that there are flower festivals dedicated to this goddess in Sicily,[540] where it is considered shameful for women to buy a garland and not to gather flowers themselves.[541] Pollux (1.37) names two of these celebrations (θεογάμια and ἀνθεσφόρια). Based on their names and the myth in question, we can surmise that the flower-picking ritual precedes the divine marriage.[542] The importance of flowers for Persephone's cult is confirmed by the various terracotta flowers and female terracotta figures holding flowers found in her temple at Locri,[543] while her general association with flowers is evident in vase-paintings as well.[544] I shall briefly discuss an Athenian red-figure hydria, today exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Edirne in Turkey (inv. 2009/34 (A) 3255).[545] On the right side of this vase sits Demeter,[546] while in the centre stands a younger woman who holds flowers on

537 See Sabetai 2012, 312.
538 See *h. Hom. Cer.* 66, 108, 177-178. This maiden is also associated with the coming of spring and the blossoming of flowers.
539 See Richardson 1974, 141-142. On the association of Persephone and Demeter with meadows, see Motte 1971, 114-121. Of course, these goddesses were also connected with various plants and fruits in ritual and literature. See Nixon 1995, 85-88, esp. 88, where Nixon argues that the anti-fertility plants linked with them may point towards the important role assigned to a woman's choice in terms of reproduction.
540 Persephone was an important mythological figure for Sicily, for, as Strabo says, its inhabitants thought that she has gathered flowers in their homeland. The tyrant of Syracuse, Agathocles, issued coins that featured the goddess (now in the Art Institute of Chicago, inv. 1922.4908, 310-307 BC). On this, see Gross-Diaz 1994, 53.
541 See Str. 6.256.
542 Thus Guépin 1968, 138.
543 See Sourvinou-Inwood 1978, 109.
544 See (e.g.) the red-figure crater in Wurzburg, Martin von Wagner Mus.: inv. L 535 = *ARV*2 1112.3, 1684, 1703 = *LIMC* Demeter IV 311.
545 This vase was found during a recent excavation of the Su Terazisi Necropolis (2009); to the best of my knowledge, its only publication is Başaran, S., B. Çakan, S. Karwiese, R. Yilmaz and G. Kurap 2011, 158, 167. I am grateful to Professor Kurap and Professor Günsenin of Istanbul University for helping me locate this publication.
546 As identified by the museum archaeologists.

her right hand. On the left side, there is another woman offering to the central figure a flowery garland. This scene recalls the various preparations of the bride. For this reason, I suggest that the younger woman, whom I identify as Kore, is here presented as a bride, while her mother, Demeter, observes her preparation. To conclude, all these pieces of information regarding Persephone, the archetypical bride, help us interpret the maidenly rituals of flower-picking as a symbolic farewell to virginity and acceptance of sexuality on the eve of marriage. (It is interesting to remember that in Byzantium neighbors and bystanders would throw violets and rose petals to the groom and the bride on their way to the church,[547] whereas female flower-gathering rites continued to constitute an important prelude to the wedding celebrations in the early twenty-century Greek countryside.)[548]

Returning to the *Hymn*, of equal importance is the image of the flowering, moist and fragrant meadow. This well-attested and well-discussed literary topos (*locus amoenus*) again combines associations of innocence and latent sexuality.[549] I shall cite one less-discussed example from Dioskorides' poem, because it interestingly combines the images of the blooming meadow *and* the flower-like maiden. In this case, the girl in question, with whom the speaker sexually unites, is not *flower-faced* but *rosy-buttocked*: Δωρίδα τὴν ῥοδόπυγον ὑπὲρ λεχέων διατείνας / ἄνθεσιν ἐν χλοεροῖς ἀθάνατος γέγονα ('Having bedded Doris of the rosy buttocks, I felt immortal amid those verdant flowers', *PA* 5.55.1–2).[550] These images remain popular in the Byzantine novel, where a girl's breasts are compared to apples and her

547 See Talbot Rice 1967, 159. In Byzantium, the olive branch in particular was often treated as a symbol of marriage (with Laiou 1992, 52-53).
548 On this countryside ritual, see Lincoln 1979, 224 (with references to further bibliography).
549 See Hom. *Il.* 14.346-351; Sapph. fr. 2 (Voigt); Ibyc. fr. 286 *PMGF*; Archil. fr. 196a (West); Pl. *Phdr.* 229a-b, 230b-c, 238c-d; S. *OC* 668-689; E. *Ion* 887-90; *Hipp.* 73-78; Mosch. *Europa* 63-71. Cf. (e.g.) Skinner 2005, 49-50; Swift 2009, 432. On gardens as a place where sexual encounters take place, see (e.g.) Motte 1971, *passim*; Hague 1983, 135-136; Calame 2007.
550 Here Loeb translation slightly adapted. For a girl's vulva (and/or vagina) as a flower, see A. *Supp.* 1015.

entire body to a garden.[551] Euripides often manipulates the intricate connotations of this long-lasting topos.[552] In his *Hippolytus*, for instance, the leading character dedicates to Artemis a garland consisting of flowers taken from an untouched meadow, while wishing to remain celibate until the end of his life (73–81). This allusion to the inviolate meadow, associated in poetry with female virginal purity and its inherent eroticism, characterises Hippolytus' σωφροσύνη (achieved through permanent chastity) as problematic, since it is not in accordance with Athenian expectations of manhood.[553] Similarly, in his *Helen* Euripides employs this topos with the intention of subverting the expectations of his audience. Helen, the mythic figure who elopes with Paris,[554] is raped by Theseus,[555] partnered with Achilles,[556] and abducted by many other men,[557] will be abducted by Hermes while she is gathering flowers, but not in order to be raped. This snatching takes place in order to *prevent* Helen from experiencing a (mortal and illegitimate) abduction and sexual violation. Still, the eroticism of this snatching is still apparent (note Helen gathers rose petals and puts them ἔσω πέπλων; this image of an attractive

551 Apple: Niketas Eugenianos *Drosilla and Charikles* 4.275-279; garden: *The Tale of Achilles* 1223-1226. (Similarly, a bride's breasts are equated to lemons in a modern Greek *epithalamion* song from the Grevena area quoted in Kauffmann-Samaras 1985, 18). For earlier texts that present μῆλα as enhancing female desire, see Faraone 1990, while for μῆλα as a metaphor for a girl's bosom in the classical period, see LSJ s.v. μῆλον II. On the use of, and reference to, apples, quinces and pomegranates in wedding rituals in classical Athens, see Detienne 1979 (1977), 41-44; Hague 1983, 135-136. For more examples of the erotically presented gardens in Byzantine novels, see Littlewood 1979; Barber 1992, 6, 11-17. Of course, natural flowery meadows had many nuanced meanings in early Christian culture, since they symbolised (*inter alia*) the lost Eden, paradise, unassumingness, innocence and/or protected virginity (with Lane Fox 2014, *passim*). On gardens as places in pagan cultures where philosophy, spiritual life and poetic inspiration ideally flourish, see Motte 1971, 280-319, 411-429.

552 See also E. *Med*. 835-845 with Mossman 2011 on 836-845.

553 See (e.g.) Bremer 1975; Calame 1997 (1977), 241-242; Garland 1990, 209-210; Cairns 1997; Kokkini 2013; Valtadorou 2018. See also the introduction.

554 See Hom. *Il.* 3.173-176, 24.763-764; Sapph. fr. 16 (Voigt); Alc. fr. 283 (Voigt); E. *El.* 1065; *Tr.* 373; Q.S. 10.395-396.

555 See (e.g.) *Cypria* frr. 12 and 13 (West); Paus. 2.22.6-7 = Stesich. fr. 86 (Finglass) = fr. 191 *PMGF*; Isoc. *Helen* 18; Apollod. 3.10.7; *Epit.* 1.23; Duris of Samos fr. 92 (Jacoby). There are many vases that depict this mythological event. See Shapiro 1992. In a red-figure amphora in Munich (inv. 2309 = *ARV*2 27.4 = *Add*.2 156 = *AVI* 5260 = *LIMC* Helene IV 41), the coming-of-age Helen playfully touches the hair of her abductor. To my mind, the painter, Euthymides, in this way implies her consent. On some vases, Menelaus gets Helen by the hand, thus recalling the marriage-as-abduction theme. See e.g. a red-figure hydria in Munich (Antikensammlungen, Inv. 2425 = *ARV*2 294.65, 1642).

556 In the *Cypria* Arg. 11 (West) it is mentioned that Aphrodite and Thetis arranged for Achilles to meet Helen, an encounter of possibly sensual character.

557 See Σ E. *Or*. 249 (Schwartz) = Stesich. fr. 85 (Finglass) = fr. 223 *PMGF*. For a comprehensive list of Helen's various husbands and lovers, see Kennedy 1986/1987.

woman slightly lifting the folds of her dress so as to store her flowers is again laden with eroticism).

In this episode Hera's role is vital. It is she who decides to create an *eidolon* of Helen (31–34) and places Helen into this condition of quasi-virginity. Her symbolic value as the initiator of Helen's relocation to Egypt and her symbolic re-virginalisation is poignant in many ways.[558] First, Hera's name (acoustically similar to ἀήρ 'mist', 'air') has been interpreted as an allegory of ἀήρ.[559] There may thus be a semantic connection between her name and the *eidolon* of Helen she made out of thin air (32: ἐξηνέμωσε). Second, in Pindar (*Pyth.* 2.21–48) Zeus makes an *eidolon* in the shape of Hera when he becomes aware of Ixion's longing towards his wife. Therefore, links between Hera and the phantom imagery already existed in poetry.[560] Third, Hera's function as the protector of marriage and family fits well with her role as the protector of Helen's fidelity.[561] Although Hera's intervention comes as a result of her spite over Paris' preference for Aphrodite, not her (31), one of the main aims of this divine abduction is to *protect* Helen's marital bed and keep it chaste (48: ἀκέραιον ὡς σῴσαιμι Μενέλεῳ λέχος) or, as Griffith puts it, 'free from adultery'.[562]

Despite the fact that Hera is intrinsically connected in myth, society and religion with the protection of marriage, family relations and children, it is important to keep in mind that she is *not* disconnected from the realm of erotic desire and the eroticism associated with female virginity. Her semantic character is wide, since she oversees not only married women, but also

[558] On the symbolic character of Hera's role in the abduction, see also Swift 2009, 429.
[559] Plu. *De Is. et Os.* 363d7.
[560] Cf. Apollod. *Epit*. 1.20; D.S. 4.69.3-5; D. Chr. *Or.* 4.130.1-4. For other *eidola* in Greek literature, see Hom. *Il.* 5.499-553; Hom. *Od.* 11.601-604; Hes. fr. 19.21 (Most) = 23a.21 (MW); Hes. fr. 298 (Most) = fr. 358 (MW); Verg. *Aen.* 1.657-722.
[561] For Hera as goddess of family, children and marriage, see Plu. *Coniugalia Precaepta* 141e12.
[562] Griffith 2016, 132, 133.

young women at the point when they reach adult status.[563] Already in the *Iliad* there is a salient depiction of the sexually irresistible Hera as a goddess mastering the art of spousal seduction (14.160–351). What is more, we learn from Pausanias that in Sparta there was a xoanon of Aphrodite-Hera, to which mothers sacrificed at the wedding of their daughters (3.13.9). Moreover, Herodianus informs us that there was a sanctuary of Hera under the epiclesis of *Parthenos*,[564] while we know from Plutarch that Hera was abducted by Zeus while she was still a παρθένος (τρεφομένην ἔτι παρθένον ὑπό του Διὸς κλαπῆναι).[565] Last, Pausanias reports that in an area called Nauplia there is a spring where Hera takes a bath every year (probably her xoanon) and becomes a virgin again:

> καὶ λιμένες εἰσὶν ἐν Ναυπλίᾳ καὶ πηγὴ Κάναθος καλουμένη· ἐνταῦθα τὴν Ἥραν φασὶν Ἀργεῖοι κατὰ ἔτος λουμένην παρθένον γίνεσθαι. οὗτος μὲν δή σφισιν ἐκ τελετῆς, ἣν ἄγουσι τῇ Ἥρᾳ, λόγος τῶν ἀπορρήτων ἐστίν (Paus. 2.38.2-3).

> In Nauplia are a sanctuary of Poseidon, harbors, and a spring called Canathus. Here, say the Argives, Hera bathes every year and recovers her maidenhood. This is one of the sayings told as a holy secret at the mysteries which they celebrate in honor of Hera.[566]

Pausanias does not provide us with much information about the rite in question,[567] since the particulars are forbidden to be disseminated (λόγος τῶν ἀπορρήτων).[568] However, Hera's symbolic return to virginity (παρθένον γίνεσθαι) by means of a ritual bath in the spring water alludes to the *locus amoenus* discussed above, where the presence of clean bubbling water and

563 See Calame 1997 (1977), 113-114.
564 *Peri pathon* 3,2. 363 with Calame 1997 (1977), 113.
565 Plu. fr. 157.42.
566 The translation is by Jones, Litt and Ormerod 1918.
567 For a similar bathing of Athena's xoanon, see Call. *Ath.* Cf. LSJ s.v. Πλυντήρια.
568 Similarly, it was forbidden to reveal any details of the Eleusinian mysteries to the uninitiated. See (e.g.) *h. Hom. Cer.* 478-479; Paus. 1.38.7 (with Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 38 and Bowden 2010, 31, 37-38).

moistness intensifies the poetic associations of innocence, ripeness and desirability.[569] The word *parthenos* is a signifier with diverse signifieds in Greek: it may refer to young unmarried women, without necessarily denoting a physical state of virginity.[570] Thus, in this context it may carry connotations of youthfulness and bloom. However, Hera's re-virginalisation may also indicate a supernatural return to the state of *physical* virginity that can be taken multiple times, an image that evokes connotations of renewed female innocence, coming-of-age beauty and latent sexuality, thus rendering Hera the right person for orchestrating Helen's symbolic re-virginalisation in this drama.[571] To conclude, Euripides elaborately portrays Helen as an abducted coming-of-age maiden. Although her abduction is adultery-free, it is not devoid of the eroticism associated with pre-matrimonial virginity and beauty.

3.3. How to Become a Woman: Helen's Encounter with Menelaus

In this section I discuss the most important points, where Helen's symbolic transformation from a *parthenos* into a bride, re-entering the adult world of sexuality, is visible in the text. After Helen and Menelaus have recognised each other (622–626),[572] Menelaus first sings of their first wedding ceremony in Sparta and the happy participation of Helen's brothers in the procession with the torches (639–641).[573] There is again a second mention of the torches, the wedding songs and the chariot (722–725), when the old servant says that he will renew this

569 See Hom. *Il.* 14.307-308; Hom. *Od.* 6.92-100; *h. Hom. Cer.* 7, 14; Ibyc. fr. 286.1-3 *PMGF*; Sapph. frr. 2.5, 96.11-12 (Voigt); E. *Hipp.* 78; E. *Hel.* 1 (with Zweig 1999, 165-166; Kaimio 2002; Swift 2009, 426); Aeschin. *Ep.* 10.3.1-10.5.1.
570 See Calame 1997 (1977), 27; Sissa 1990 (1987), *passim*.
571 We cannot be certain that the Athenian audience was familiar with this Argive ritual. Yet Euripides often refers in his work to rites of other Greek cities (see E. *Med.* 1378-1383, *Hipp.* 1423-1430; cf. Ar. *Lys.* 1296-1321, for reference to Spartan cult practices), therefore some ritual knowledge on the part of the spectators can be assumed.
572 I agree with Willink 1989a that both the recognition scene and the embrace reveal loving emotions between the spouses, *pace* Schmiel 1972 and Jansen 2012.
573 On the torch-bearing rites in weddings, see Sissa 1990 (1987), 98; Rehm 1994, 14. On the perverted or incongruous references to wedding torches in tragedy, see Alexiou and Dronke 1971, 828; Seaford 1987, 121. On the important role of the brother in the wedding rituals of his sister(s), esp. in the absence of the father, see (e.g.) Hyp. *Lyc.* 1.5-6 (with n. 627 and 686).

long-disrupted marriage and sing once again a wedding song for Helen: νῦν ἀνανεοῦμαι τὸν σὸν ὑμέναιον πάλιν ('Now I sing your marriage song once more', 722).[574] This nuptial imagery corresponds to the visual and textual testimony regarding Greek wedding rituals,[575] and – in addition to the straightforward description of Helen as νύμφη ('bride', 725) – invites us to envisage her as a bride who starts over (again) in her transition to maturity and womanhood.[576]

The immediate effects of this re-enacted marriage can be seen in the scene where Helen and Menelaus meet Theonoe (865–1029).[577] Here Theonoe informs Menelaus that Hera now approaches them with a positive mindset: Ἥρα μέν, ἥ σοι δυσμενὴς πάροιθεν ἦν, / νῦν ἐστιν εὔνους κἀς πάτραν σῶσαι θέλει / ξὺν τῇιδ' ('Hera who previously was your enemy, is now your friend and wants to bring you and Helen safely home', 880–882). Hera's positive disposal towards Helen and Menelaus, after the re-enactment of their legitimate union, is not random. As we have seen, erotic love and marital sexuality are within Hera's jurisdiction, a fact alluded to in the Iliadic *Hieros gamos*.[578] Plutarch informs us that Hera continued to be considered γαμήλιος … καὶ νυμφαγωγός ('nuptial … and leader of the bride') in later times.[579] This stress upon her qualities as a νυμφαγωγός reminds us that she prepares the brides-to-be for the beginning of their marriage,[580] their wedding night included. Aphrodite' role in marriage is equally important.[581] We saw in Chapter 2 that the Athenians would (also) pray to her prior to

[574] On wedding songs, see Hom. *Il.* 18.493; Pi. *P.* 3.17; A. *Ag.* 707; E. *Alc.* 922; *IA* 1036. See also Hague 1983; Kauffmann-Samaras 1985; Sissa 1990 (1987), 99; Hague 1988, 36.
[575] Cf. Hom. *Il.* 18.491-496, [Hes.] *Sc.* 273-280; Ar. *Pax* 1316-1317, 1329-1357; Hyp. *Lyc.* 1.5-6.
[576] On the re-enactment of the wedding rites and the symbolic remarriage in this scene, see Pippin 1960, 155; Segal 1971, 581-582; Foley 2019 (1985), 225; Craik 1990, 261; Ringer 2016, 246.
[577] On the precarious position Theonoe finds herself in due to Menelaus' arrival, see Zuntz 1960, 209-210.
[578] See section 3.2. On the ritual celebration of this and other divine unions, see Burkert 1985 (1977), 108-109. On the meadows as common locations for the sexual unions of gods, semi-gods and heroes, see Motte 1971, 207-225, esp. the table on 208-212.
[579] Plu. fr. 157.2. Cf. A. *Eu.* 213-214; Plu. *Coniugalia Precaepta* 141e; Aristid. *Or. To Zeus* 7.16; D. Chr. *Or.* 7.135.
[580] See Magnien 1936; Calame 1997 (1977), 113, 141.
[581] In A. *Supp.* 1034-1035, the Argives who escort the sex-resisting Danaids seem to allude to this: Κύπριδος <δ'> οὐκ ἀμελὴς ἑσμὸς ὅδ' εὔφρων, / δύναται γὰρ Διὸς ἄγχιστα σὺν Ἥραι ('But it is wise not to ignore Cypris; for she holds power very close to Zeus, together with Hera').

marriage. In Euripides' *Phaëthon* (fr. 781.17) and in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Cleitophon* (5.16.4) Aphrodite is called γαμήλιος, whereas Plutarch calls both of these goddesses γαμήλιοι in his *Quaestiones Romanae* (285a), thus underscoring the overlapping between their spheres of influence and their shared importance in marriage. Consequently, it is interesting that, after receiving this information from Theonoe, Helen as a quasi-bride prays to both goddesses before the implementation of the escape plan (1093–1106), thus attempting to reconcile them with herself and each other concerning the future fate of her (re)marriage.

We can detect another point that suggests Helen's symbolic re-passage to adulthood in the scene, where she and Menelaus trick Theoclymenus in order for him to provide them with a ship and the equipment needed to escape (1193–1300). Both Helen and Menelaus contribute to the implementation of the plan, earlier conceived by Helen (813, 817, 825): she convinces Theoclymenus that Menelaus has died (1186–1199, 1209–1215) and that she must perform funeral rites for him at sea (1239–1249), while Menelaus, in disguise as an unknown Greek castaway, persuades Theoclymenus to supply them with swords, food supplies and sailors (1250–1277). Throughout this scene there is continuous tension between what is said and what is meant by the secretly reunited couple (1205, 1215, 1231, 1288–1293). The scene ends with Helen promising (in the presence of Theoclymenus) to give Menelaus, still in disguise, a bath for the sake of her dearest husband:

> ἀλλ', ὦ τάλας, ἔσελθε καὶ λουτρῶν τύχε
>
> ἐσθῆτά τ' ἐξάλλαξον. οὐκ ἐς ἀμβολὰς
>
> εὐεργετήσω σ'· εὐμενέστερον γὰρ ἂν
>
> τῶι φιλτάτωι μοι Μενέλεωι τὰ πρόσφορα
>
> δρώιης ἄν, ἡμῶν τυγχάνων οἵων σε χρή (E. *Hel.* 1296–1300).

> Now go inside, unhappy man, and find the bath, and change your clothes. I will show my kindness to you without delay. For you will perform the due services with more kindly feeling for my dearest Menelaos, if you get from me what you ought to have.

This promised λουτρόν is pivotal in many ways. It first denotes a change in the physical appearance of Menelaus who will now look like the proper king he is (1374–1384).[582] The suggestion that a bath can radically change one's looks is often found in literature. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' shipwrecked appearance in the presence of Nausicaa and the Phaeacian maidens is transformed through bathing, in conjunction with Athena's contribution (6.127–140, 6.210–237). In a similar vein, in Plato's *Symposium*, the notoriously ugly Socrates becomes beautiful (καλός) after he has bathed for the festive occasion of Agathon's victory (174a).

Returning to *Helen*, we should note that the renewed comeliness of the washed Menelaus recalls the image of the groom who is ideally fine and handsome; this point evokes the ritual nuances of the bath, given its use in real-life ceremonial practices. Menelaus' bathing first corresponds to the funeral rites that he would receive as an allegedly dead person,[583] since the washing of the corpse was an integral part of the funeral ritual.[584] Nevertheless, as we have already seen in Chapter 2, the ritual bath (given to the bride and the groom *separately*) was an essential component of the wedding rites.[585] In this respect, it is significant that the water Helen uses is fluvial: πέπλους δ' ἀμείψασ' ἀντὶ ναυφθόρου στολῆς / ἐγώ νιν ἐξήσκησα καὶ λουτροῖς χρόα / ἔδωκα, χρόνια νίπτρα ποταμίας δρόσου ('I took off his shipwrecked clothes and gave him fine new ones, and bathed him, fresh water at last from a stream', 1382–1384). Brides and

[582] Helen's admiration of his newly restored appearance can be spotted later in the play. Lee 1986, 311 argues for the MS reading κλεινός instead of Beck's emendation, καινός, in 1399. He states that '… the words are meant as an expression of admiration for Menelaus and function more as an exclamation than a true vocative.'
[583] See Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 144; Rehm 1994, 22.
[584] See A. *Ch.* 168; S. *OC* 1597-1603; E. *Alc.* 159-160; *Hec.* 611, 780; *El.* 901; *IT* 173-174, 703; *Ph.* 1667; Pl. *Phd.* 115a; Str. 16.1.20.8-9; Hsch. χ 440 s.v. χθόνια λουτρά (Hansen and Cunningham).
[585] See above n. 385 in section 2.3.

grooms used water from the rivers for its fertilising powers.[586] Therefore, Helen's pointed use of river water corroborates the matrimonial associations of this reunion, while also intensifying the sexual symbolism of the bath.

Helen's physical appearance (i.e. her hair, cut short: 1187–1188) also alludes to wedding rituals. The cutting of the hair was part of the standard mourning process.[587] To give an example from the archaeological record, a red-figure loutrophoros in Munich portrays female mourners pulling or touching their inelegantly shorn hair in a *prothesis* scene (Antikensammlungen S66 = *ARV*2 1102.1).[588] Yet the cutting of locks of hair and their consecration to some deity or to some mythical hero/heroine by the maiden on the eve of her wedding was also a standard pre-matrimonial rite in many Greek cities,[589] such as Delos, Athens, Megara and Troizen.[590] In Sparta, the wedding ritual was slightly different, given that Spartan brides have their hair cut very short close to the head (almost shaved?), at the wedding.[591] In any case, this widespread practice underlines the Greek wedding's intrinsic link to death and mourning that is present in *Helen* too.[592] However, as in *Alcestis*, references to death rituals and their similarities to wedding rituals are here evoked in order to celebrate this marriage and not to represent it as a form of death. Therefore, by interpreting Helen's suggestive language within this nuptial-like celebrational context, we can surmise that her

586 On this, again see above 2.3.
587 See (e.g.) E. *Alc*. 101, 512; *Supp*. 972-974; *Or.* 128-129; *Anth. Pal.* VI 276, 277, 280, 281; Poll. 2.29; Alexiou 1974, 8, 27-28, 41; Vernant 2006 (1983), 443, n. 20; Rehm 1994, 22.
588 Except for the female figure located at the feet of the deceased, who seems to touch her chin in a more moderate expression of sadness and grief. On the tearing of hair, see Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 144; Alexiou 1974, 6, 28-29, 33, 91, 96, 163.
589 See Magnien 1936, 121; Calame 1997 (1977), 106-107; Garland 1990, 219.
590 In Athens, the brides-to-be dedicated a lock of their hair at the shrine of the Nymphs. See Rehm 1994, 12. In Delos young maidens consecrated their hair to the daughters of Boreas. See Hdt. 4.34; Call. *Del*. 296-298; Paus. 1.43.4. For a similar rite in Troizen, see E. *Hipp.* 1423; Paus. 2.32.1, while for the ritual in Megara, see Paus. 1.43.4. In many of these cases, the maidens dedicated their hair to a mortal who died unmarried.
591 See Plu. *Lyc.* 15.3-5. Paradiso 1986 rightly observes that the cutting of the Spartan bride's hair corresponded to the separation stage of her wedding as a rite of passage. On the Spartan ceremony, see also Wolff 1973, 67, n. 17; Foley 2001, 312. According to some ancient sources, Spartan women were not allowed to grow their hair long after the wedding (with Cartledge 1981, 101, n. 102).
592 On wedding lamentations, see Alexiou and Dronke 1971; Alexiou 1974; Seaford 1987, 112 and n. 4 and 12; Seaford 2017b, 33. On amorous laments in the Palaiologian romances in Byzantium, see Agapitos 2017.

words and her looks may well make the audience suspect that she will provide her husband with more pleasures than just a bath.[593] This (possibly) implied sex scene recalls the first sexual union of the newlyweds, reminding us that ironically there is a wedding being currently prepared, i.e. that of Helen and Theoclymenus (1231, 1385–1386, 1399, 1407–1408, 1431–1440), a marriage, however, that will never be consummated.

Yet this bathing has further 'context-sensitive' meanings for each of the characters involved. First, Helen takes the initiative and proposes to give her husband this meaning-laden bath. This must entail her dynamic involvement in her own re-enacted marriage.[594] Helen is not a passive observer, but an active agent. And if I am right to suggest that this bath bears sexual overtones, female sexual agency is positively presented in this context, given that Helen's *eros* is implicit and within social boundaries (i.e. marital). Regarding Menelaus, his entrance into the water also has added symbolic importance.[595] As Eliade argues,[596] many ancient and modern religions and cultures, including ancient Greek society, associate the entrance into water with ideas of rebirth and revivification:[597]

> Breaking up all forms, doing away with the past, water possesses this power of purifying, of regenerating, of giving new birth … Water purifies and regenerates because it nullifies the past, and restores even – if only for a moment – the integrity of the dawn of things.

[593] See above n. 476.
[594] Thus Powers 2010, 26.
[595] Thus Segal 1971, 592; Ringer 2016, 249.
[596] Eliade 1996 (1958), 194. On the revivifying role of water, see also Douglas 2002 (1966), 198-199, on its use for purification outside of the mourning house, see Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 146, while on the ritual bath as necessary for religious practice, see Burkert 1985 (1977), 78-79. In Greek myth, there is a tendency to punish unchaste maidens (thus purifying them?) by throwing them into the sea (with McHardy 2008).
[597] On Jesus' death as a form of 'baptism' and on the baptism of Christians as *the* way to join him in his death and resurrection, see Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38; John 3:5; Romans 6:3-4. For the importance of water and of ritual washings in Muslim religion, see Poonawala 1982; Maghen 2007; Esposito 2019. I thank my colleague, Ibrahim Mansour from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), for giving me the references to the Muslim rituals of ablution. Generally, it would be interesting to know whether bathing has ever been evolutionarily significant for humans; e.g. research has shown that birds who have access to bathing perceive threat differently than the ones that do not. On this, see Brilot and Bateson 2012.

This piece of information accords well with the fact that Menelaus experiences a rite of passage, in which death, rebirth and remarriage play important roles. Menelaus is first presumed to be dead (126–132) and then he wishes never to have been born (386–392), while at the end he is deceitfully presented as dead (1196). This fact recalls the liminal stage that Helen finds herself in. Again, through this reunion with his wife, Menelaus symbolically re-integrates into adulthood, just as Helen does.[598] This happens not only in terms of physical appearance (as we have seen, his renewed handsomeness reminds one of the comeliness of the groom), but also of renewed energy, courage and determination.[599] After their reunion, there is a noticeable difference in his bearing, given that he now appears to be vigorous, decisive, and successful: he convinces Theonoe to conceal their plans from her brother (NB Theonoe responds primarily to Menelaus: 1004), tricks Theoclymenus along with Helen (1250–1293), and successfully leads his soldiers into killing the Egyptian men on the boat (1592–1612).

It is true that marriage represented a different kind of rite of passage for men and women in Athenian society. Young brides changed their place of residence and also experienced important physical changes (through their loss of virginity and the first pregnancy). The state of affairs was different for men, since they could participate in the *polis* regardless of their marital status. Moreover, marriage neither affected their living condition (they remained in the same *oikos* after this event) nor their physical condition. Nevertheless, marriage must have symbolised some sort of change in their status too.[600] All in all, the image of Menelaus receiving a regenerating and erotically charged bath from Helen deepens the impression that these spouses experience a rite of passage in unison: Helen moves from virginity to sexual

[598] For marriage as the final stage of the integration process from childhood into manhood, see Hubbard 2013, 101.
[599] Thus also Powers 2010, 26; Redondo Moyano 2010, 298.
[600] Yet marriage was (probably) never compulsory in Athens. The situation was different in Sparta, for 'At least after c. 500 B.C. all Spartan men were obliged by law to marry' (Cartledge 1981, 95).

maturity, whereas Menelaus is reborn in heroic manhood through a remarriage that seems to negate his problematic past as a cuckold.

Apart from its ritual importance, this bathing is crucial within an intertextual context. The original audience would have been familiar with two famous baths given to two heroic husbands: Odysseus and Agamemnon. It has been widely accepted that in his *Helen*, Euripides uses Odysseus as his model for the shipwrecked Menelaus.[601] The bath that the latter receives may therefore recall the bath that the triumphant Odysseus receives before being recognised by Penelope and the re-enactment of their marriage through their sexual union on the marriage bed.[602] In the Homeric text, the bath signifies the change of status and their 'mode of being': after the bath and the recognition scene, the spouses will start anew their marriage life. This new beginning takes place thanks to Penelope's proverbial marital faithfulness and devotion, as happens with Euripides' new Helen.

By contrast, the notorious bath that the Aeschylean Clytemnestra offers to Agamemnon, repeatedly mentioned in the *Oresteia*,[603] does not initiate a new beginning in this disrupted marriage but rather constitutes the main locus of a well-orchestrated and long-awaited murder. As Seaford shows, Clytemnestra perversely offers funeral rites (i.e. a funeral bath) to her living husband before they are due; in addition to this, the washing of his live body actually brings about his death.[604] In the *Odyssey* (4.535, 11.411–415), Agamemnon is killed during a festive meal and, although Euripides must have been familiar with the Homeric intertext, in his *Hecuba* he refers to the Aeschylean version (1281). Thus, Helen's sexually

[601] See Eisner 1980; Walcot 1987, 23-24; Allan 2008, 37.
[602] See Hom. *Od.* 23.153-163, 295-309.
[603] See A. *Ag*. 1109, 1128-1129; *Cho*. 491, 1071; *Eu.* 461, 633-635.
[604] See Seaford 1984, *passim*, esp. 249, 254. Swift 2010, 254 argues that Clytemnestra is also herself 'bathed' with her husband's blood in a perverse allusion to the literary topos of the *locus amoenus*. On the 'tragic topos in which the pouring of blood evokes ejaculation', see Seaford 2017a, 234-235.

charged bath, given to Menelaus in Euripides' eponymous play, is the very opposite of Clytemnestra's notorious deadly bath. In a moment where the naked and unarmed Menelaus is especially vulnerable,[605] this 'new Helen' remains loyal, devoted and caring, in this way also negating her own problematic past as an adulterous and uncaring wife. Therefore, this (possible) allusion to the sexual union and the overall bath imagery (1296–1300) that recalls wedding rituals, taken together with the re-enactment of this marriage (639–641, 722–725) can be interpreted as a re-enactment of Menelaus' and Helen's marital sexual life that will be set against the negative examples of myth and literature and will follow the Homeric ideal of ὁμοφροσύνη (the Iliadic Andromache, another ideal wife, also orders her servants to prepare a hot and relaxing bath for Hector, when he returns from the battle; yet her already dead husband will never receive this bath and he will additionally be deprived from the ritual washing of his dead body for an extended period of time).[606]

A detail that may symbolically represent Helen's coming of age and her entrance into the adult order can also be found in the third stasimon (1301–1368), where the Chorus sings of the abduction of the unnamed girl and the enraged lament of her mother, Demeter (1343).[607] Due to the destructiveness caused by the rage of the latter (1336), Zeus sends the Charites so

[605] A person being bathed is in a vulnerable state *per se*. See Duke 1954, 326; Seaford 1984, 250; Bremmer 1986, 418. In myth, the king of Crete, Minos, is also killed while bathing. On his death in Cocalus' palace in Sicily, see Hdt. 7.170; Apollod. *Epit*. 1.14-15; D.S. 4.79.1-2; [Plu.] *De proverbiis Alexandrinoroum* 14; Paus. 7.4.6; Athen. 1.10e4-6; Ov. *Met*. 8.260-262. Minos' death by Cocalus' daughters, who offered him this fatal bath, may have also been the subject matter of S. *The Men of Camicus*. Boiling water also plays a significant role in the death of the Thessalian king, Pelias. On this, see E. *Peliades* (with Collard and Cropp 2008b, 60-71). For other killings that involved baths and/or boiling water, see Pi. *O*. 1.46-51; Clem. Al. *Protr*. 2.18.1. This idea, à propos of the vulnerability surrounding the bath, survives in later literary works. See (e.g.) the French tragedy *Charlotte Corday* (1850) by François Ponsard, where the title character kills Jean-Paul Maratin in the bathtub (Act IV). The Byzantine emperor, Romanos III Argyros (1028-1034 AD), was also killed in his bathtub on the orders of his wife and empress, Zoe, and her handsome younger lover, Michael. See Psellus *Chronographia* 3.26; John Skylitzes *Synopsis of Byzantine History* 18.390-391. See also Bremmer 1986, 418, who gives four other real-life examples from the fourth century BC until the early medieval times.

[606] On the ritual importance of this never actualised bath and its function in the poem, see Grethlein 2007. On Iliadic heroes and gods receiving a bath after the battle, see Hom. *Il*. 5.905, 10.574-579, 14.5-7 (with Grethlein 2007, 28).

[607] Deo as another name for Demeter. See (e.g.) S. *Ant*. 1121; fr. 754.3.

as to appease her (1339–1349). Aphrodite contributes to this endeavour as well; indeed, her intervention is successful and the hitherto sorrowful mother laughs (1349–1352).[608] How can we make sense of this allusion to the Persephone myth that comes right after the reference to the bath? The Persephone myth and the rape motif, so widespread in mythology and throughout this drama,[609] have been interpreted as a metaphor for women's transition to maturation.[610] In the *Hymn*, it is clear that (after her seizure from the meadow and with Zeus' consent – the father of both Persephone and Helen) Persephone loses her virginity, having become the wife and bedfellow of Hades (343–344).

I argue that notions of female coming-of-age acceptance of sexuality are present in Euripides too.[611] In the *Hymn*, the first person to make the heavy-hearted goddess smile and relax is Iambe: πρίν γ' ὅτε δὴ χλεύῃς μιν Ἰάμβη κέδν' εἰδυῖα / πολλὰ παρασκώπτουσ' ἐτρέψατο πότνιαν ἁγνὴν / μειδῆσαι γελάσαι τε καὶ ἵλαον σχεῖν θυμόν ('until knowing Iambe jested with her and mocking with many a joke moved the holy goddess to smile and laugh and keep a gracious heart', 202–204).[612] Although the sexual nature of these jests is not clearly stated, Iambe's name is associated with the iambic tradition, which is known for its obscenity and ribaldry.[613] In the *Protrepticon* of Clement of Alexandria, who quotes an Orphic passage, the sexually liberated Baubo makes Demeter laugh when she shamelessly exposes her naked body.[614] It thus becomes evident that in all three texts, i.e. the *Homeric Hymn*, *Helen* and the

608 Sebo 2014 argues that we must not assume that Kore ever returns to the world of the living and reunites with her mother. According to her reading, the mother here takes the aulos in order to express her sorrow.
609 On rape in Greek mythology, see Zeitlin 1986.
610 See Lincoln 1979, 223 (with further references to secondary literature).
611 So Swift 2009, 433-435. Weiss 2020, 174-177 has recently added that at this point there is a noticeable movement from lament to other more happy and delightful forms of songs, the Dionysiac music and the music of the Athenian theatre included.
612 Loeb's translation brings out the sexual element more: 'until at last dutiful Iambe with ribaldry and many a jest diverted the holy lady so that she smiled and laughed and became benevolent'.
613 See Foley 1993 on 202-204.
614 See Clem. Al. *Protr*. 2.21: ὣς εἰποῦσα πέπλους ἀνεσύρατο, δεῖξε δὲ πάντα / σώματος οὐδὲ πρέποντα τύπον· παῖς δ' ἦεν Ἴακχος, / χειρί τέ μιν ῥίπτασκε γελῶν Βαυβοῦς ὑπὸ κόλποις· / ἡ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν μείδησε θεά, μείδης' ἐνὶ θυμῷ, / δέξατο δ' αἰόλον ἄγγος, ἐν ᾧ κυκεὼν ἐνέκειτο ('This said, she drew aside her robes, / and showed a sight of shame; child Iacchus was there, / and laughing, plunged his hand below her breasts. / Then smiled the goddess,

Protrepticon, the person that makes Demeter relax and rejoice is related with the realm of erotic love and sexuality. Aphrodite as the goddess representing the erotic element in Euripides is a more decent presence than Clement's Baubo, whose name reminds us of a belly (ἡ βαυβώ) and/or a dildo (ὁ βαυβών),[615] and the *Hymn*'s Iambe. Apart from the goddess of love,[616] the decorous Charites – whom Zeus sends to Demeter in *Helen* – are again connected with the province of marital love.[617] This suggests that Euripides retains the erotic element in his account, yet he prefers to allude to a decent form of eroticism that is better suited to the realm of marriage.

Consequently, in the third stasimon of this drama the imagery of the girl's abduction, together with the earlier fruitless intervention of Artemis and Athena, goddesses associated with virginity, in the liberation of the maiden (1315–1316), and the final loosening/relaxation of Demeter thanks to Aphrodite, may well have a symbolic meaning, as in the other versions.[618] In other words, it may well represent the unnamed girl's unavoidable loss of virginity and coming of age. As Demeter seems to be reconciled with and symbolically accept (her daughter's) sexuality through the liberating intervention of Aphrodite, so from that point on Euripides' Helen, thus far represented as a Persephone figure, will transition to the status of a married woman (NB the next time Helen is present on stage: 1) she could remind the audience of a Spartan bride with her hair cut short, and 2) she herself talks about the 'wedding-night' bath she just gave to Menelaus, 1382–1384).

in her heart she smiled, / and drank the draught from out the glancing cup'. The translation is by Butterworth 2003 (1919).

615 See LSJ s.v. βαυβώ and s.v. βαυβών.

616 *Pace* Pironti 2010, who argues against naming Aphrodite 'goddess of love', given her connection with war and other similar activities.

617 See E. *Hipp.* 1147 (with Bushala 1969; MacLachlan 1993, 5, 44-45, 49, 61, 76, 156; Swift 2009, 432).

618 While commenting on Clement's account, Lincoln 1979, 231 maintains that Demeter's positive reaction to these playful and sex-related jests may indicate her acceptance of Persephone's transformation from a maiden to a woman introduced to sexuality. On the mother's similar acceptance in E. *Hel.*, see Swift 2009, 435.

Helen's passage from quasi-virginity to womanhood through marriage is last alluded in the *deus ex machina* speech.[619] Castor explains to Theoclymenus that he should not punish Theonoe, for Helen was always supposed to re-unite with her husband: ἐν τοῖσι δ' αὐτοῖς δεῖ νιν ἐζεῦχθαι γάμοις / ἐλθεῖν τ' ἐς οἴκους καὶ συνοικῆσαι πόσει ('she must be yoked in the same marriage, return home, and live with her husband', 1654–1655).[620] ἐζεῦχθαι is the infinitive of passive aorist. Aorist infinitives in Greek do not refer to events that happened in the past, but to events that happen once in the present. Castor therefore talks about this reunion as a sort of second marriage with the same husband.[621] It should not escape our attention that this remarriage involves all the ritual passages that a Greek bride was expected to go through: 1) wedding (ἐζευχθαι), 2) change of houses (ἐλθεῖν τ' ἐς οἴκους), and 3) cohabitation with the legitimate partner (συνοικῆσαι πόσει).

One could maintain that the representation of this Helen as sexually attractive, her seductiveness and use of trickery against Theoclymenus bear traces of the 'old Helen'.[622] Yet her re-entry to the adult world and her experience of sexuality would not have been considered threatening to the Spartan community, where she belongs, and the Athenian community of spectators.[623] This experience first takes place within the space of her remarriage to the same man, i.e. her sexual maturation arises in a context of marital fidelity, thus expressing female *sophrosyne*. As the Pythagorean philosopher Theano is reported to have said, a woman should not consider intercourse with her husband impure nor should she approach her spouse and their sexual union with any feeling of shame, a shame that is otherwise essential for her other daily

619 On the epiphanies of Helen's twin brothers in Greek and Roman literature, see Platt 2018.
620 Loeb translation here slightly adapted.
621 Luppi 2011, 20 rightly notes that the verb συνοικέω ('to live with in wedlock' LSJ) is used in regard to Helen's return to Sparta, while her stay in Egypt is described by the more general infinitive κατοικεῖν ('to live').
622 Many scholars notice traces of the 'old Helen' in the text. See (e.g.) Grube 1973 (1941), 338-339; Zuntz 1960, 224; Wolff 1973, 70, 76-77; Juffras 1993; Torrance 2009, 5-6.
623 Similarly: Wolff 1973, 77; Foley 2001, 331.

interactions.[624] Second, Helen's experience of sexuality is implicit and expressed through imagery and covered erotic actions. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the explicit expression of female desire (and not sexuality *per se*) is a typical quality of a 'bad wife'. Last, Helen's desire to reunite with her husband does not go against her father's (initial) will. She first refers to the fact that she was properly given to Menelaus by Tyndareus (568), thus implicitly presenting herself as an obedient and respectful daughter. The unnamed servant who tries to stop the infuriated Theoclymenus from killing his sister also mentions that Helen's (re)marriage well accords with accepted Greek practice: Theoclymenus: κύριος δὲ τῶν ἐμῶν τίς; Servant: ὃς ἔλαβεν πατρὸς πάρα (Theocl.: 'Who has a claim to what is mine?' Serv. 'The man who received her from her father,' 1635). In Helen's case, her reunion with Menelaus is also condoned by her divine father, Zeus.

The importance of the father's role and consent in his daughter's marriage is conspicuous in Greek culture and literature.[625] In Menander's oeuvre, for instance, the blessings of the girl's father are considered necessary,[626] when he is alive and available.[627] Moreover, the relationship between natal and marital households may have sometimes been bumpy, yet there seems to be an important correlation between a woman's behaviour as a daughter and a wife. A σώφρων daughter (who respects her father and acts according to his will) often becomes a wise and admirable wife. To give an example, Alcestis, the devoted wife *par excellence*, is presented in myth as a pious, sensible and thoughtful daughter. Diodorus of Sicily, who writes in the first century BC, recounts how Medea convinces the daughters of Pelias to kill their father and boil his limbs in order to make him young again.[628] In opposition

[624] See D.L. 8.43.
[625] See (e.g.) A. *Cho*. 486-487 (even the dead Agamemnon will play a role in Electra's future wedding); E. *Andr.* 987-988; *El.* 1018; *Supp.* 6; *Or.* 1672; fr. 953.36; Plu. *TG* 4.4.6-7; Ath. 13.35.15-3.
[626] See (e.g.) Men. *Pk*. 1010-1015 (cf. 1024-1026); *Dys*. 304-306, 842-844; *Sam*. 52-53, 726-728.
[627] In case the father is dead or absent, the groom-to-be can approach the girl's brother or her paternal uncle and ask for his permission. See (e.g.) Men. *Aspis* 291-292; *Dys*. 759-760. See also Modrzejewski 1979, 51, 68.
[628] For the entire episode, see D.S. 4.50-52.

to her younger sisters, Alcestis does not take part in this magical ritual thanks to her εὐσέβεια (4.52.2). Although Euripides' much earlier *Peliades* (455 BC) is preserved only in fragments, we can surmise that in this play too Alcestis was possibly set apart from her sisters (see fr. 603, where Pelias may address her).[629] A representative negative mythical *exemplum* is Aerope, who dishonours her father, Catreus, by having sex with a slave and later cheats on her husband, Atreus, with his own brother.[630] All in all, the indirect portrayal of Euripides' Helen as an obedient daughter adds weight to her presentation as an ideal woman. This 'new Helen' behaves well within the social norms and has the ideal qualities that the male spectators would wish for their wife and their daughters.[631]

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that Euripides paints the picture of a new Helen who remains devoted to her husband. Helen's freshly depicted marital devotion and faithfulness seem to dictate the positive outcome of this play. I have also noted that in *Helen*, as in *Alcestis*, spousal devotion is erotically coloured. Helen' emotions for her husband are rather strong, yet this does not lead to disaster and the failure-of-marriage topos, since these feelings are directed towards the right person, i.e. the legitimate partner. This seems to suggest that moderation à propos of marital sexual desire is not a matter of quantity (i.e. how much desire wives feel) but rather of quality.[632] We have also seen that this sort of spousal dedication is exhibited on the part of Menelaus as well. In contrast to other tragic husbands, such as Jason, Agamemnon, and Neoptolemus (about whom I shall say more in Chapter 4), Menelaus does not have any sexual

[629] Thus Collard and Cropp 2008b, 61, 69 on fr. 603.
[630] On Aerope, see Chapter 2.1. Scylla's destructive action against her father, Nisus, driven in later sources by her desire for Minos, similarly constitutes a negative filial *exemplum*. See A. *Ch.* 613-622 (with Sommerstein 2008, *ad loc.*, n. 128); [Verg.] *Ciris*, *passim*; Ov. *Met*. 8.6-151.
[631] On Helen's agency, see Holmberg 1995, 38; Foley 2001, 303-331, esp. 312-313, 317; Powers 2010, 28.
[632] *Pace* Foley 2001, 95: 'The self-control of the proper Greek wife depends on the moderation of erotic feeling for her spouse.' For a similar critique of this argument regarding E. *IA*, see Cairns 2002, n. 47.

relations with other women. As a result, this shared spousal devotion allows both characters to experience a comparable rite of passage. Helen, initially assimilated to a *parthenos*, will re-accept (marital) sexuality and will be reborn as a wife. In a similar vein, after the recognition scene that emanates 'happy *conjugal* sentiment',[633] the renewal of their marriage and the bath Helen gives him, Menelaus will also be symbolically reborn as a vigorous, decisive and well-respected husband. Last, I endeavoured to show that in this play, just as in *Alcestis*, the wedding and death rituals overlap in a way that in fact contribute to the celebration and recreation of this greatly troubled marriage. In *Helen*, contrary to *Alcestis*, the male spouse 'dies' (he is first presumed, and then pretends to, be dead), while the female one 'mourns'.

The similarities between these plays become even more important when we take into account their temporal difference. *Alcestis* is Euripides' earliest surviving drama, produced in 438 BC, while his *Helen* was produced together with *Iphigenia in Tauris* in 412 BC. This seems to imply that we are not dealing with a late fifth-century reappraisal of marital *eros*. Equally important is the topographical difference between these heroines and the cities they are associated with. Alcestis is tied together with Thessaly (Iolcus and Pherai). Helen's ties with Sparta could complicate the picture, because some ancient authors present Sparta in a less favourable light due to the 'liberties' Spartan law gave to women. Aristotle, for example, comments negatively about the fact that Spartan πατρούχοι could have family property available at their disposal (in contrast to the Athenian ἐπίκληροι).[634] As we know from other sources, Spartan law also allowed women to have sex with other citizen men with the permission of their husbands.[635] Although the purpose of this law was the birth of healthy male children to different citizens, it exacerbated Athenian bias against Spartan women (as we shall

[633] Willink 1989a, 47.
[634] Arist. *Pol.* 2.9. 1269a29-1271b19. Cf. Cartledge 1981, 98; Vernant 2006 (1983), 175; Garland 1990, 217. See, however, the doubts of MacDowell 1986 (1978), 96.
[635] See X. *Lac.* 1.7-9; Plu. *Lyc.* 15.12-13; Polyb. 12.6b8 with MacDowell 1986 (1978), 83-85.

see in Chapter 4). In *Helen*, nonetheless, there is no trace of this anti-Spartan bias. As Allan rightly maintains, 'There is no anti-Spartan polemic in the play and the references to Spartan cult and ritual … serve to underline H. and M.'s separation from their homeland and one another.'[636] Consequently, the neutrally presented cities and topographical areas Alcestis and Helen are connected to and their common portrayal as positive marital figures allow us to argue that hinted marital *eros*, sexuality and life-long devotion constitute some of the most important stock qualities of the ideal Greek wife in Euripides' oeuvre.

[636] Allan 2008, 7.

Chapter 4. Marriage, Erotic Love and Devotion in Euripides' *Andromache*: The Loyal Take It All

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters I have maintained that the maidens, Antigone and Andromeda, and the married women, Alcestis and Helen, are portrayed in Euripides' eponymous dramas as positive examples of female desire, love and sexuality. These characters experience desire and love in a manner that does not disrupt accepted social norms, but rather substantiates their devotion to their (future) husbands. As I have argued, rejection of the natal *oikos* in a way that benefits the *oikos* of the future husband (in the case of Antigone and Andromeda), or unwavering devotion towards an already existing one (in the case of Alcestis and Helen), is what dictates the positive outcomes of these plays. These orthodox constructions of female sexuality and marital *eros* – which not only secure the *oikos* but also strengthen the community – entail a happy ending, thus suggesting that marriage and erotic love do not always lead to destruction in Greek tragedy. On the contrary, we find tragic representations of happy marriages and erotically enjoyable marital relationships, when sexual fidelity and lifelong devotion govern these very relations.[637]

In this last chapter I turn to a negative paradigm of a young married wife, Hermione in Euripides' *Andromache*, and I explore the reasons why she represents 'twisted *eros*'. I argue that Hermione serves as a negative *exemplum* for the *polis*, which is why her marriage to Neoptolemus ends disastrously. Not only does she not put her husband first, but she also attaches herself to her natal household in a manner that impairs her own married life. Euripides

[637] For positive outcomes as available story-patterns in Greek tragedy, see also Mastronarde 1999/2000; Wright 2017.

also portrays Hermione as governing her sexuality imprudently, and thus threatening her marriage. This negative example again presupposes and thus confirms the importance of having the same social norms and ideals, i.e. unwavering fidelity and enduring commitment within marriage.

Indeed, there are some positive conjugal examples in *Andromache* that are juxtaposed with Hermione and the other faithless paradigms to which the drama recurs (i.e. Helen and Clytemnestra).[638] The enslaved Andromache remains 'faithful' to her laudable conjugal past, as we find it in the *Iliad*. She is still devoted to her long-dead first husband, Hector, and rewarded at the end of the play with freedom and regal status as the wife of the former Trojan prince and future king of Epirus, Helenus (1243–1245). Albeit now in the position of the 'other woman', Andromache has been coerced to sleep with her new master (38). The marriage of Peleus and Thetis is also presented in a positive manner.[639] Euripides makes the solidity and durability of this marriage stand out by slightly revising the mythical, poetical and pictorial traditions that, by and large, present Thetis as a reluctant bride and the marriage as unsuccessful (in the long term).[640] Nowhere in *Andromache* is there a direct mention of Thetis' struggle and persistent avoidance of her first sexual union with Peleus,[641] while at no point is her current absence from Phthia characterised negatively. Accordingly, Peleus is introduced as Thetis'

[638] See Allan 2000, 30-31.
[639] So Mirto 2012, 49-50. On Thetis' appearance as ironic, see Vellacott 1975, 41. Storey 1989, 21; Storey 2017, 128 also detects some ironic touches in this divine-plus-mortal relationship. For a more pessimistic reading of E. *Andr*. as a whole, see Ferrari 1971, 229; Kyriakou 1997; 2016.
[640] On this struggle, see (e.g.) Pi. *N*. 4.61-65; S. *Troilus* fr. 618; Apollod. 3.13.5; Paus. 5.18.5. The grapple between the polymorphous Thetis and Peleus is often depicted in Greek art, where her unwillingness to submit recalls the standard reluctance of the bride. See *LIMC* Peleus VII 59-198. For erotic pursuits as a 'metaphor for marriage', see Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 77. Indeed, vases that depict this wedding recall the joyful wedding celebrations. See (e.g.) the dinos by Sophilos in the British Museum (London, GR 1971,1101.1). On their wedding party on mount Pelion, see *Cypria* fr. 4 (West) = Σ (D) *Il*. 16.140. On Thetis as an unsatisfied bride because of Peleus' reluctance to be erotically playful and last long in bed, see Ar. *Nub*. 1068-1069.
[641] See also Allan 2000, 35. Of interest is Peleus' description of their first erotic union, which has the air of being a consensual one: καὶ τόνδε θάψας εἶμι Πηλίου πτυχάς, / οὗπερ σὸν εἷλον χερσὶ κάλλιστον δέμας ('and when I have buried this man I shall go to the glens of Pelion where I took your fair form in my arms', 1277-1278); however, αἱρέω may allude to a forceful or passionate grasp, while δέμας is found in many instances in Greek drama, where the erotic element is more or less implicit. See Cassanello 1993 s.v. δέμας.

mortal elderly husband, who, not having been wedded to any other mortal or divine wife,[642] has remained loyal to his first spouse and regards her with great respect (566). He turns to Thetis in his agony at the end of the play (1224–1225) and – thanks to this long-lasting spousal devotion and faithfulness, I argue – receives deified status and resides with her in her father's aquatic palace (1253–1262).[643]

As we shall see, however, the importance of sexual fidelity is stressed even for the absent Neoptolemus, who is also innovatively presented as a positive character.[644] Euripides' Neoptolemus is not the heinous epic cycle killer of Astyanax, Priam and Polyxena;[645] nor has he gone to the shrine of Delphi with impious intentions against Apollo.[646] Yet, as we shall see, the reminder that he should not have shared his house (and bed) with two women (177–180, 466–470, 909) makes one recognise that Achilles' son could have behaved in a wiser manner (e.g. he could have chosen a better wife or could have avoided this, otherwise socially tolerated, co-habitation with his lawful wife, Hermione, his slave, Andromache, and their slave-son,

[642] According to Apollod. 3.13.4, Peleus was married to Polydora before his marriage with Thetis, but this is nowhere alluded to in E. *Andr*.

[643] Mirto points out 2012, 46 that Thetis responds to his lament immediately and concretely. According to Burnett 1971, 153, she is motivated by love. Thetis might have also appeared *ex machina* in S. *Peleus* (with Lloyd-Jones 1996, 253).

[644] For the (strongly metapoetic) positive portrayal of Neoptolemus in E. *Andr*., see Kyriakou 1997, 17-18; Torrance 2005, 50-51; Sommerstein 2006, 20-21; Centanni 2011, 47-48; Cairns 2012, 38; Torrance 2013, 194-195; Des Bouvrie 2018, 129; Torrance 2019, 113. For the radically different presentation of Neoptolemus in other poetic versions, see Sommerstein 2010, 259-275.

[645] On Neoptolemus as Priam's killer, see Pi. *Pae*. 6.100-120; E. *Hec*. 23-24. The evidence for Neoptolemus' murder of Astyanax goes back, at least, to the seventh century and it is not only textual. See (e.g.) the seventh-century relief pithos, located in the Mykonos Museum (Cat. 675). It depicts scenes from the fall of Troy, including a scene of a warrior who throws a boy from the city walls and a woman who tries to prevent him. For this scene as a possible depiction of Neoptolemus' killing of Astyanax in the presence of Andromache, see Shapiro 1994, 163. See also the red-figure cup in Paris, Louvre, G 152 = *ARV*2 369.1 = *Para* 365 = *Add*.2 224 = *AVI* 6490 = *LIMC* Astyanax II 18. On this event, see *Little Iliad* fr. 18 (West) = Paus. 10.25.9. Astyanax's killer is not always Neoptolemus, though. In the *Sack of Ilion* Arg. 4 and fr. 3 (West) Odysseus kills Hector's son. See E. *Tr*. 712-725; Tryph. *Sack of Ilion* 644-646. In Apollod. *Epit*. 5.23 and Hyg. *Fab*. 109 it is plainly stated that the Argives performed the deed, but there is no reference to the action's single perpetrator. On Neoptolemus' role in the killing of Polyxena, see E. *Hec*. 224; the Tyrrhenian neck amphora in London, British Mus. 1897.7-27.2 = *AVI* 4697 = *ABV* 97/27, 683 = *Para* 37 = *Add*2 26 = *LIMC* Polyxene VII 26, while for Demophon and Acamas as her murderers, see *Sack of Ilion* fr. 1 (West).

[646] See E. *Or*. 1656-1657; S. *Hermione* (with Sommerstein 2006, 19); Eust. *Od*. 4.3. For other versions regarding the reasons why Neoptolemus went to Delphi, see Lloyd 2005 (1994), 2. For Neoptolemus as an innocent victim there, see Pi. *N*. 7.31-49, while for a neutral reference to this hero, see Pi. *N*. 4.49-53. For Neoptolemus in Pindar, see Woodbury 1979.

Molossus)[647] and thus perhaps could have saved his life.[648] And with this in mind, I shall begin my discussion by exploring Hermione's attitude on stage.

4.2. Veiling and Unveiling, Covering and Uncovering a Bad Wife

Euripides makes clear that Hermione represents a bad wife or, as Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller put it, 'el antimodelo femenino'.[649] In this section, I focus on five points that endorse her characterisation as an improper and thus contemptible wife for Athenian standards: 1) her attachment to, and prioritisation of, her natal kin, 2) her disregard for Neoptolemus' paternal family, 3) the correspondence between Hermione's behaviour and the disturbing behaviour associated in Euripidean poetry with her parents, 4) her sexual immodesty, expressed through a public discussion about, and endorsement of, sex,[650] her overemotional unveiling and uncovering, and her elopement with Orestes, and 5) her unwarranted determination to kill the slave son of her husband along with his defenceless mother.

During her first appearance on stage, Hermione declares that her opulent dress,[651] veil

[647] One ancient scholiast reports, without further clarification, that E. *Andr.* was produced outside Athens: εἰλικρινῶς δὲ τοὺς τοῦ δράματος χρόνους οὐκ ἔστι λαβεῖν· οὐ δεδίδακται γὰρ Ἀθήνησιν ('it is not possible to absolutely estimate the dates of the play, because it was not produced in Athens', Σ E. *Andr.* 445 Schwartz). Early in the 20th century, Robertson 1923 argued that Euripides produced this play in Molossia as a departing gift to the king, Θάρυψ or Θαρρύπας, who was educated as a child in Athens. For Tharrhypas as the first Molossian king to receive Greek παιδεία, see Plu. *Pyrrh.* 1.4 (with Hammond 1967, 504-508). A first production in Molossia is also favoured by Butrica 2001. Centanni 2011 maintains that E. *Andr.* was first produced at the sanctuary of Dodone in Epirus, a sacred place that was important both for the Molossians and the Macedonians. For the historical reasons why Euripides chose to 'rehabilitate' Neoptolemus, the national hero of the Athenian allies of Molossia and Thessalia, see Cairns 2012, while for E. *Andr.* as a 'pro-Epirote text', see Kittelä 2013, 40. The information provided by the scholium is inconclusive. I thus agree with Allan 2000, 157-158 that a first production at the City Dionysia, that many Thessalians and Molossians attended and then arranged for local re-productions in their home-states, is plausible.

[648] I reached this conclusion independently of Sommerstein 2010, 274.

[649] See the title of their chapter published in 2008. Cf. Battezzato 1999/2000, 359, who sees Hermione as the 'opposite of a 'proper' woman'.

[650] McClure 1999, 162, 195 astutely observes that Hermione discusses her sexual life in front of, and with, men. Indeed, as McClure notes, Orestes is not just a cousin, but 'a former suitor and potential seducer' (195).

[651] For this dress as 'exceptionally luxurious', see Battezzato 1999/2000, 356, while for a thorough discussion, see also Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016.

and jewellery come from rich Sparta, along with a huge dowry. It is these valuable objects endowed to her by her father that – according to her – give her the right to speak freely:

κόσμον μὲν ἀμφὶ κρατὶ χρυσέας χλιδῆς
στολμόν τε χρωτὸς τόνδε ποικίλων πέπλων
οὐ τῶν Ἀχιλλέως οὐδὲ Πηλέως ἀπὸ
δόμων ἀπαρχὰς δεῦρ' ἔχουσ' ἀφικόμην,
ἀλλ' ἐκ Λακαίνης Σπαρτιάτιδος χθονὸς
Μενέλαος ἡμῖν ταῦτα δωρεῖται πατὴρ
πολλοῖς σὺν ἔδνοις, ὥστ' ἐλευθεροστομεῖν (E. *Andr*. 147–153).

> The luxurious gold that adorns my head and neck and the spangled gown that graces my body – I did not bring these here as the first fruits of the house of Achilles or of Peleus: my father Menelaus gave them to me from the city of Sparta together with a large dowry, and therefore I may speak my mind.

The veil and its significance in Greek culture has been extensively explored in modern scholarship.[652] As Cairns has shown, veiling oneself can be taken as a subjective manifestation of female *aidos* and, in particular, of sexual fidelity on the part of a devoted wife.[653] However, he adds, the act of female veiling may carry simultaneously many other different

[652] See Cairns 1996b; Cairns 2002; Llewellyn-Jones 2003; Llewellyn-Jones 2007; Pavlou 2009; Finglass 2009b; Cairns 2011a; Castellaneta 2012; Llewellyn-Jones 2012; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016.

[653] See Cairns 1996b, 154. Cf. Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016, 11. In Men. *Pk*. 311-312, Moschion imagines that his would-be-bride, Glykera, will cover herself out of modesty and embarrassment when she meets him: ἡ μὲν αἰσχυνεῖτ' ἐπειδὰν εἰσίωμεν δηλαδὴ / παρακαλύψ[εταί τ', ἔθος γὰρ τοῦτο ('She'll be embarrassed when we go in, that is clear, / And she'll hide her face, for that's quite normal'). Still, the veil is not the only object associated in tragedy with female devotion. For the importance of the marital bed, see Chapter 2. See also A. *Ag*. 687-691: ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως / ἑλένας ἕλανδρος ἑλέ / πτολις ἐκ τῶν ἁβροτίμων / προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσεν ('For in keeping with that name / she brought hell to ships, to men, to cities / when from her curtains of delicate fabric / she sailed'). The phrase ἐκ τῶν ἁβροτίμων προκαλυμμάτων directs our focus towards the secluded and protected space of the bedroom. These fine and expensive προκαλύμματα are (probably) meant to refer to the curtains that surround the marriage bed (with Sommerstein 2008, 81). The προκαλύμματα – which ideally encompass and gracefully conceal the endorsed marital sexual relations – have now been opened by the wife, the person who ought to keep them safe and 'free from adultery'. On the interesting analogy between the bridal veil and the curtains of the marriage bed, see Sissa 1990 (1987), 96.

connotations.[654] It may evoke other emotions that a woman feels (i.e. grief, sadness, desperation), her determination to cope with these emotions with moderation, and her general claim to τιμή – in other words, her claim to be treated by others with honour and accorded honour by them.[655]

In the case of Hermione, however, the focus on the veil and her garments carries rather negative connotations.[656] The married Hermione follows the conventions of Greek custom and is presented as veiled and thus appropriately covered.[657] Yet Hermione puts her veil and garments to a negative use. The emotion that her gold-adorned, veiled head evokes is (if nothing else) haughtiness and arrogance, while her attitude does not denote her determination to behave with moderation.[658] On the contrary, she brings the internal audience's focus onto these objects only to underline her high social status and thus her superiority over the unfree Andromache.[659] Therefore, in Hermione's case, drawing attention to these materials does not endow her with τιμή, but rather associates her with hubristic and complacent behaviour. For she seems to forget, or to verbally suppress, the former royal status of her interlocutor (who is now veiled with δουλοσύνη, 'slavery', 110)[660] and the changeability of fortune; hence, she treats her opponent with a lack of compassion and understanding. Wyles also argues that her focus on garments and ornaments along with her name itself might have reminded the audience of the eponymous town, Hermione, in the Peloponnese that was renowned for its production of expensive and sumptuous fabrics.[661] Hermione's association with the Peloponnese, and

[654] On veiling as a way to exercise control over women, see Cairns 2011a. Differently, Llewellyn-Jones 2007, 256 argues for the veil as a garment that enables women to leave their homes and move relatively freely.
[655] See Cairns 1996b, 155-156.
[656] See Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016.
[657] See Galt 1931. For the everyday veiling of Spartan married women in particular, see Llewellyn-Jones 2012.
[658] Hermione's focus on her appearance and general behaviour may also conceal desperation, helplessness and insecurity. See Albini 1974, 86; Allan 2000, *passim*; Torrance 2005, 47.
[659] Thus Wyles 2011, 37. Hunger 1952, 373 adds that Hermione shows her superiority over Andromache with the use of μέν (147) … δέ (155).
[660] For the nuanced meanings of this symbolic veiling, see Castellaneta 2012.
[661] See Wyles 2011, 91.

Sparta in particular, adds multiple layers to her characterisation, given that: 1) *Andromache* was performed during the Peloponnesian war,[662] and 2) Athenians of the later fifth century attached negative associations to the female Doric dress.[663]

Additionally, Hermione's reference to her veil, garments and ornaments, instead of revealing her loyalty and devotion to her absent husband,[664] rather demonstrates her independence from him.[665] As she says, Neoptolemus' relatives cannot exercise any control over her, since she has brought a large dowry with her from Sparta. This reference to her own wealth reminds us of premonitions often given against asymmetrical marriages in Greek dramas. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, for example, the Chorus advises mortals to choose their spouse wisely,[666] and not on the basis of high birth and wealth (887–893). Similarly, in Sophocles' fragmentary *Creusa* the (female?) Chorus wishes for a wisely negotiated marriage and moderate wealth (fr. 353). A similar premonition against contracting asymmetrical marriages with the intent of acquiring wealth is also found in the Euripidean *Melanippe Wise or Captive*:

> ὅσοι γαμοῦσι δ᾽ ἢ γένει κρείσσους γάμους
> ἢ πολλὰ χρήματ᾽, οὐκ ἐπίστανται γαμεῖν·
> τὰ τῆς γυναικὸς γὰρ κρατοῦντ᾽ ἐν δώμασιν
> δουλοῖ τὸν ἄνδρα, κοὐκέτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐλεύθερος.
> πλοῦτος δ᾽ ἐπακτὸς ἐκ γυναικείων γάμων
> ἀνόνητος· αἱ γὰρ διαλύσεις <οὐ> ῥᾴδιαι

[662] For the anti-Spartan rhetoric of the play, see Kitto 1950, 229-231; Johnson 1955; Fantham 1986, 268; Hall 1989, 213-215; Pomeroy 2002, 147. There is no surviving didascalic record for E. *Andr.* Based on the metrical evidence and the information given in Σ E. *Andr*. 445 (Schwartz) that it was first presented at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, scholars nowadays assume that the play was produced at some point during the years 427 and 425 BC. On this scholium and its implications regarding the play's chronology, see Allan 2000, 149-160, who presumes that *Andr*. was produced closer to 425 BC.
[663] See Battezzato 1999/2000; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016.
[664] For the absence of the *oikos*' head and its negative effects on the household, see Cox 2000.
[665] Thus (e.g.) Grube 1973 (1941), 200-201; Lloyd 1992, 52.
[666] Even Zeus is not exempt from this rule. See A. *Pr.* 764.

(E. *Melanipp. Sap. or Capt.* fr. 502).[667]

> Men who marry wives above their rank, or marry great wealth, do not know how to make a marriage. The wife's interests prevail in the household and make a slave of the husband, and he is no longer free. Wealth acquired from marriage with a woman is unprofitable; for divorces are (not) easy.

Going against these recommendations, Hermione's undisciplined and boastful speech, sanctioned by herself by reason of her wealth and arising from her commanding position, manifests her κράτος in Neoptolemus' house,[668] a κράτος that is more excessive and blatant than Athenian male ideology desired it to be.[669] Indeed, at the end of *Andromache*, Peleus indirectly criticises Neoptolemus' decision to associate himself with her,[670] advising against asymmetrical marriages and marriages with 'bad women', even if undertaken for the purposes of acquiring a large dowry (1279–1283).[671]

Hermione's reference to the golden accessories encircling her veiled head (147) may have also reminded the audience of the perils usually entailed by the unrestrained attachment of women to riches and external appearance. One representative mythical example of female vanity and excessive fondness for gold is Amphiaraus' wife, Eriphyle, who, in exchange for the necklace of Harmonia, persuaded her husband to join the expedition against Thebes.[672] This is pertinent for Hermione's case, since her mother, Helen, is depicted in Euripides' oeuvre as prone to riches and vanity. In *Trojan Women* Hecuba accuses Helen of following Paris, dazzled

[667] A similar warning is given in E. *Cretan Women*, where men are advised against giving any power or control over to their wives: οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἄνδρα τὸν σοφὸν γυναικὶ χρὴ / δοῦναι χαλινοὺς οὐδ' ἀφέντ' ἐᾶν κρατεῖν ('The wise man should never ease the reins on his wife, nor relax them and let her take control', fr. 463).
[668] I use this noun in allusion to the participle τὰ … κρατοῦντ' in the *Melanipp.* passage.
[669] That Neoptolemus received Hermione along with a large dowry and, therefore, cannot send her away easily is also noted by the nurse in E. *Andr*. 871-873.
[670] On Peleus' constant rebukes to Hermione, see below.
[671] For the authenticity of these lines and their connection to the overall plot, see Steidle 1968, 125-126; Mueller-Goldingen 1987, 226-228; Sommerstein 1988.
[672] See Hom. *Od.* 11.326-327; Pi. *N.* 9.16; Pl. *R.* 590a1-3.

by his barbarous golden robes (991–997),[673] while in *Orestes* Electra rebukes Helen for cutting only the edges of her hair in mourning her sister's death, in this way preserving her beauty and revealing her self-regard (128–129). Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller rightly argue that her luxurious looks may also remind us of the spruced-up appearance of her aunt, Clytemnestra, and the rebuke she receives for this from Electra in Euripides' eponymous play (1060–1075).[674] Hermione's opening lines thus show that even drawing attention to a woman's own veil and garments, an action that may otherwise be associated with female moderation, honour and αἰδώς, has negative associations when put to bad use.

We should not forget that these issues had considerable resonance in contemporary democratic Athens. Before the passage of Pericles' citizenship law in 451/450 BC,[675] aristocratic Athenians would sometimes enter into marriages with rich foreign women in order to increase their wealth and political influence.[676] This tendency triggered anxieties and was often treated with suspicion by the *demos*. More specifically, there are more than 4000 surviving ostraca à propos of the ostracism of Megacles (c. 487/486 BC, i.e. before the passage of the citizenship law), son of Hippocrates from the deme of Alopece.[677] A portion of them refers to aristocratic fashions such as growing one's hair long and breeding horses,[678] while

[673] In E. *Hel.* 927-928, the titular character realises that people think that she has followed Paris to his luxurious Phrygian palace.
[674] See Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller 2012, 256.
[675] See Arist. *Ath.* 26.4; D. 57.30, Σ Ais. 1.39 (= *FGrHist* 77 F2); Is. 8.43; Plu. *Per.* 37; Ath. 577a-b.
[676] See MacDowell 1990. For the importance of dynastic/aristocratic relations and features in tragedy, see Griffith 1995; Griffith 2011, while for the significance of dynastic elements in E. *Andr.*, see Conacher 1967, 166-180.
[677] See Arist. *Ath.* 22.5 (with Rhodes 1981, 274-275). Cf. Shear 1963; Davies 1971, 380; Brenne 2002; Forsdyke 2005, 155-156; Athanassaki 2013.
[678] Horses: T1/ 101-T1/105 (Brenne); Hair: T1/107-108 (Brenne).

others mention his mother,[679] Coisyra, a woman of Eretrian ancestry.[680] Coisyra was proverbially associated with a luxurious lifestyle and satirised for this as late as in the 420s in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (48),[681] a fact that must reveal the popularity, and continuous resonance, of this topic with contemporary audiences.[682] The underlying idea seems to be that a foreign woman who becomes a legitimate wife with the purpose of acquiring more riches, reputation and power may actually corrupt one's progeny, given her commanding role in the household, her pride in her *genos*,[683] and her proclivity for riches and luxury (after the passage of the law, marrying a foreign woman was actually illegal).[684]

Furthermore, Hermione's initial remarks also reveal excessive attachment to her natal family, and her father in particular (152): this attachment to her father's *oikos*, in connection with her contempt for Neoptolemus' *oikos*, suggests Hermione's failure to complete the proper transition from her natal household to her new marital household.[685] This transition, fraught with danger in myth and considered by the Greeks to be of paramount significance, was expected to be completed by all brides in real life. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the role of the father in this process (especially with respect to his freely given consent) was regarded as crucial. In Athens, the girl's father, who was legally considered her κύριος (guardian), was the one who had to give his imprimatur during the process of the ἐγγυή

679 Due to the confusion created by the ancient sources, scholars endeavoured to pinpoint the identity of Coisyra for many years. Shear 1963 (e.g.) maintained that there were three women thus named, one of them being the mother of the ostracised Megacles, whereas Davies 1971, 380 argued that there was only one real-life Coisyra who was this person's wife. After the discovery of the ostraca that bear Coisyra's name in genitive, it became clear that there was (at least) one Coisyra, Megacles' mother (with Berti 2001, 56; Brenne 2002, 112). According to Lavelle 1989, the ostracised Megacles was the son of Coisyra II, daughter of the Eretrian Coisyra I and Pisistratus.

680 See T1/95-100 (Brenne); T1/194 (Brenne); Σ Ar. *Nu*. 46a, 48b (Holwerda); Suid. s.v. ἐγκεκοισυρωμένην 87 (Adler).

681 With Σ Ar. *Nu*. 46a, 48b (Holwerda).

682 Similarly, Athanassaki 2013, 111.

683 On Coisyra as taking pride in her aristocratic heritage, see Hsch. ε 213 s.v. ἐγκεκοισυρωμένη (Latte).

684 I intend to explore elsewhere the state of affairs regarding Pericles' law during the production of E. *Andr*.

685 Similarly, Craik 1979, 63; Rabinowitz 1984, 112; Phillippo 1995, 365; Kyriakou 1997, 11; McClure 1999, 169, 173, 199; Torrance 2005, 49; Papadimitropoulos 2006, 151; Vester 2009, 293; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2014, 393; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016, 8.

(betrothal), while the presence of the future bride was hardly necessary; this paternal approval was highly important for the community but also had legal value.[686] In myth, where negativity and destruction often prevail, it is usually the father who puts obstacles in the way of his daughter's marriage.[687] In these problematic cases, the vigorous opposition of the father goes against the conventions of the community and thus leads to disaster, unless hindered by a god or divinely assisted human agent.[688]

Yet we should not forget that daughters who defy their fathers, rejecting the importance of paternal approval in the process of finding a groom, are not portrayed in myth and tragedy as commendable examples, either. In Chapter 3, I discussed the positive example of Alcestis, who is presented in myth as an obedient daughter *and* an ideal wife, whereas a notorious negative *exemplum* is Medea. In Euripides' eponymous play,[689] it is made clear that the foreign heroine is utterly 'fatherless', because she has betrayed her paternal *oikos*.[690] This alludes to the extra-dramatic mythological events, according to which she killed her brother, Apsyrtus, abandoned her homeland, Colchis, and married Jason against her father's will.[691] Medea's extreme and irreversible alienation from her father's house is also seen as problematic by the Chorus of Corinthian women (442–444). This textual return to Medea's estrangement from her father's *oikos* underscores the predicament in which she finds herself and also recalls the many dangers that the process of transferring a bride from one *oikos* to another generally entails. This recurrence to Medea's filial disobedience and her subsequent troublesome alienation from her

686 See (e.g.) MacDowell 1986 (1978), 86; Modrzejewski 1979; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 9-10; Patterson 1998, 109. As we have seen in section 3.3, in the absence of the father, other relatives could act as the girl's *kyrios*. On the process of ἐγγυή managed by the father or other male relatives, see (e.g.) Hdt. 6.130; Pl. *Lg*. 774e4; Is. 3.39; D. 8.15; 46.18; Men. *Dys*. 759-760; Plu. *Cat. Ma*. 24; Poll. 3.34.

687 See (e.g.) the father-daughter paradigms of Oenomaus and Hippodamia, Acrisius and Danaë, Danaus and his daughters.

688 As Zeitlin 1990a, 107 puts it, in myth and tragedy, there are 'some limitations placed upon paternal power against monopolizing (and curtailing) the destiny of his descendants'.

689 Alonge 2008 argues that E. *Andr.* metapoetically alludes to the earlier E. *Med*; I do not suggest something similar here.

690 See E. *Med*. 31-35, 502-503, 1332.

691 This fact is also underscored in Pi. *O*. 13.53: καὶ τὰν πατρὸς ἀντία Μήδειαν θεμέναν γάμον αὐτᾷ ('and Medea, who in opposition to her father made her own marriage').

ancestral *oikos*, if seen in connection with the disastrous end of her marriage, also strongly advises against marriages that are contracted without the father's consent.[692] Indeed, Medea's passion for Jason, which led her to disobey her father, ends up being catastrophic in Euripides' play.[693] Therefore, neither a bride's extreme alienation from her ancestral house nor her problematic and incomplete integration into the marital house are regarded as condonable in tragedy and myth.

Going back to *Andromache*, Hermione's failure to successfully integrate into her husband's house, implied at the beginning of her first speech, manifests itself in many other instances in the play. First, her father's intervention in Neoptolemus' household during the latter's absence, along with his scheme to kill Andromache and Molossus, is far-fetched and definitely off-limits, as Peleus angrily states (461–462, 581–582). It may be true that in Athens the father of the bride had the legal right to annul the marriage of his daughter (at least before the birth of the first child), if he thought that she was being mistreated by her husband or if there was a disagreement regarding financial issues.[694] Still, he was not allowed to intervene in the internal business and the handling of his son-in-law's chattel slaves, let alone to kill any of the residents of his *oikos*. Therefore, Menelaus' intervention signals how aberrant a character he is and how problematic his relationship with Hermione is (at least by Athenian standards). It should be stressed that in Sparta the state of affairs was different: helots were considered public property and the young Spartans were encouraged to kill them on a yearly basis, while,

[692] Medea is not Greek, let alone Athenian. Therefore, one might suppose that her depiction as a defiant daughter who breaches social norms is irrelevant to the audience. Yet Euripides has chosen to place her in a situation that any Athenian woman could potentially have faced; divorce was possible in Athens and men could marry a younger and/or richer woman (but not a non-Athenian one). For Euripides' consistent choice to cancel out the differences between Greeks and barbarians, see Hall 1989; Torrance 2005, 65; Torrance 2019, 44.

[693] NB, as we have seen in section 2.2., in E. *IA* 68-69, Helen chose her legitimate husband based on her desire, yet this arrangement was set up by her father. In her case, her marriage with Menelaus was almost destroyed by unfaithfulness.

[694] For the role of the father in his daughter's divorce in Athens, see (e.g.) Lacey 1968, 108; Harrison 1968, 30-32; MacDowell 1986 (1978), 88, 266 n. 179; Modrzejewski 1979, 62-63; Just 1989, 33; Cohn-Haft 1995; Foley 2001, 68; Robson 2013, 18-19. See also D. 41.3-4; Men. *Epit*. 657-659, 714-715, 1063-1067. The technical term *aphaeresis*, used in modern scholarship for these cases, is problematised by Rosivach 1984.

as Xenophon informs us, even private slaves, along with other possessions, such as horses, hunting dogs etc., could be borrowed by others whenever there was a need.[695] This noticeable discrepancy between the two cities is perhaps indirectly brought up at this point so as to underscore the important differences between the Athenians and the Spartans.

Second, after her plan to kill Andromache and Molossus fails, Hermione feels that she is hateful to the house of Neoptolemus and the land of Phthia, which are presented as personified entities: δόμοι τ' ἐλαύνειν φθέγμ' ἔχοντες οἵδε με, / μισεῖ τε γαῖα Φθιάς ('For this house seems to take voice and drive me forth, and the land of Phthia hates me', 924–925). The personification of these places and locations again demonstrates how little Hermione has succeeded in viewing Thetidion, Phthia and Thessaly as her home. Last, it is pertinent that she will eventually reunite with her natal family, thanks to the figure of Orestes,[696] who is her first cousin on both sides. This attachment to her natal house, in conjunction with the fact that she is still childless,[697] proves the general awkwardness of her marital situation and her failure to successfully complete her transition to her marital house.[698]

Hermione's dependence on her paternal *oikos* is not counterbalanced by any respect or loyalty she shows towards her husband's relatives. In fact, she shows disregard for the dead Achilles and the aged Peleus (149). This is also corroborated by Andromache,[699] who accuses the Spartan princess of putting Menelaus and Sparta above Achilles and Skyros (209–212; the

[695] See X. *Lac*. 6.3; Plu. *Lyc*. 28; Ath. 14.657b-e; Str. 8.5.4. Cf. MacDowell 1986 (1978), 31-38; Poole 1994, 17 (in reference to E. *Andr*.).

[696] See Kyriakou 1997, 11.

[697] For the importance of male children in tragedy and particularly in E. *Andr*., see Fantham 1986.

[698] As Erbse 1966, 281 puts it, this relationship is an 'Ehe ohne Liebe und Kinder'. Cf. Battezzato 1999/2000, 359; Torrance 2005, 49; Vester 2009, 293.That a daughter was normally expected to dissociate herself from her natal house and integrate herself into the husband's house is a widespread idea found (e.g.) in E. *Danaë* fr. 318: γυνὴ γὰρ ἐξελθοῦσα πατρῴων δόμων /οὐ τῶν τεκόντων ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λέχους· / τὸ δ' ἄρσεν ἕστηκ' ἐν δόμοις ἀεὶ γένος/θεῶν πατρῴων καὶ τάφων τιμάορον ('When a woman has left her ancestral home she belongs not to her parents but to her marriage-bed; but male children stand always in a house to protect ancestral gods and tombs'). See Collard and Cropp 2008a, 324. Comparable is Jocasta's viewpoint that a wise and sensible wife will willingly be her husband's 'slave'. See E. *Oedipus* fr. 545.

[699] Christopoulos 2010, 134 mentions that Andromache has also become a relative of Thetis through Molossus. Her attitude towards Thetis is radically different than Hermione's, though.

island of Skyros is the homeland of Neoptolemus' mother).[700] While Andromache tries to defend herself against Hermione, the former adds that this prioritisation of Hermione's natal house alienates Neoptolemus from her and makes him negatively disposed toward her: ταῦτά τοί σ' ἔχθει πόσις ('It is for this that your husband hates you', 212).[701]

But perhaps even more alarming is Hermione's failure to show any respect towards the shrine and statue of Thetis,[702] which is greatly esteemed by the Phthian people (45–46). In her opening speech, Hermione verbally attacks Andromache, who has taken refuge at Thetis' shrine (42–46), without showing any signs of worry about this irreverent behaviour. At the end of this episode, Hermione moreover pronounces that she has found a device to remove her opponent from this refuge: ἀλλ' ἐγώ σ' ἕδρας / ἐκ τῆσδ' ἑκοῦσαν ἐξαναστήσω τάχα· / τοιόνδ' ἔχω σου δέλεαρ ('Yet I shall soon make you leave this seat willingly: such is the lure I possess to entice you', 262–264). These words show that not only does Hermione not worry that Menelaus will deceive the defenceless slave in order to remove her from this sacred place, but she also envisages herself as the main agent of this deed (note the subject of the two verbs is ἐγώ). Hermione's later realisation that she cannot turn to any divine statue (859) can be construed as a consequence of her own actions. This stance towards Thetis is alarming, for the latter is not only a minor goddess, but Neoptolemus' paternal grandmother as well. Hermione's disregard for her ominously recalls Hippolytus' insistence not to honour Aphrodite (113), which leads to his horrendous death (1201–1254). Consequently, Hermione's prioritisation of her natal household is not counterbalanced by any respect shown towards Neoptolemus' *oikos*, his relatives and the divine protectress of the house, thus foreboding the ultimate failure of this

[700] On Skyros as a rocky and, by implication, a rather poor and humble land, see S. *Ph.* 459-460. On Skyros as one of the islands that did not welcome Leto's delivery of Apollo on its ground, see *h. Hom. Ap.* 35. For Apollo's personal animosity against Neoptolemus, cf. E. *Andr*. 1147-1149; *Or*. 1653; Griffith 2011, 197.
[701] The reference to this animosity probably alludes to the fact that 'Neoptolemus does not frequent his wife's bed.' See Burnett 1971, 138. Cf. Hangard 1978, 71.
[702] So (e.g.) Ferrari 1971, 214; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2014, 396, 398. See Alc. fr. 42 (Voigt), where Hermione's mother is juxtaposed to Thetis.

marital relationship.

What is more, Hermione is made to resemble her relatives closely in moral terms. Generally, Greek authors are fond of presenting one's character as intrinsically linked with that of one's family. This is particularly evident in the work of archaic lyric poets who advocate aristocratic beliefs, such as Pindar and Theognis,[703] while the basic sense of terms such as γενναίος ('true to one's birth or descent'),[704] confirms the same notion. The belief that moral character can be passed on from parents to children is also found in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (235) and in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (727–728), while it is particularly widespread in Euripides' fragmentary poetry.[705] The claim that moral deficiency can be passed on from mother to daughter is something that this dramatist also works with in his surviving *Hippolytus* à propos of the Cretan queen, Pasiphae, and her daughter Phaedra.[706] In Sophocles' *Philoctetes*,[707] the titular character praises the paternally inherited virtue of Neoptolemus (1310–1313),[708] when he thinks that the latter will help him.[709] Last, to give some examples from prose authors, in Andocides' *Against Alcibiades* (34) the speaker continues with the accusations against Alcibiades by arguing that if one examines the latter's kin and their lives (εἰ δεῖ κατά γένος σκοπεῖν), it becomes evident that Alcibiades is as degenerate as his relatives.

703 See Pi. *P*. 8.44; Thgn. 182-191, 535-538. Accordingly, one's athletic (and other) achievements can be celebrated by one's entire *genos*. See Pi. *O*. 8.79-80.

704 See LSL s.v. γενναίος.

705 In E. *Antigone* fr. 166, either Haemon's or Antigone's folly is described as hereditary, passing from father to child. Comparatively, in E. *Alcmeon in Corinth* fr. 75, it is said regarding Amphilochus that the character of a father determines that of his children. Again, in E. *Dictys* fr. 333, we find the notion that a base father cannot beget a noble son, while in E. *Bellerophon* fr. 298 bravery is also taken to be something that can be inherited. The same idea is still popular in modern (Greek) popular morality. See (e.g.) the proverb 'το μήλο κάτω από τη μηλιά θα πέσει', and its English equivalent 'the apple doesn't fall far from the tree'.

706 On Phaedra's failed effort to avoid her mother's adulterous path and the parallel with the Euripidean Hermione, see Reckford 1974, 328, n. 26.

707 In S. *Tyro* fr. 667 the discrepancy that is sometimes found between parents and children confirms the uncertainty that characterises human life: πολλῶν δ' ἐν πολυπληθίᾳ πέλεται / οὔτ' ἀπ' εὐγενέων ἐσθλὸς οὔτ' ἀχρείων / †τὸ λίαν† κακός· βροτῶν δὲ πιστὸν οὐδέν ('Among the multiplicity of the many the descendant of noble men is not always good and that of useless people is not always bad; nothing about mortals can be trusted.')

708 On Neoptolemus' behaviour in Sophocles that shows his true *phusis*, see Nussbaum 1976, 43-47; Blundell 1988.

709 For the pointed use of patronymics in S. *Ph.*, see Phillippo 1995, 358-360. For this Neoptolemus as one of the most sympathetic tragic characters, see Sommerstein 2010, 260.

Similarly, in Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* the vice of avarice is described as συγγενικὸν νόσημα (22, 'congenital disease').

In *Andromache*, a similar point is made by Peleus:

> κἀγὼ μὲν ηὔδων τῶι γαμοῦντι μήτε σοὶ
> κῆδος συνάψαι μήτε δώμασιν λαβεῖν
> κακῆς γυναικὸς πῶλον· ἐκφέρουσι γὰρ
> μητρῶι' ὀνείδη. τοῦτο καὶ σκοπεῖτέ μοι,
> μνηστῆρες, ἐσθλῆς θυγατέρ' ἐκ μητρὸς λαβεῖν (619–623).

> I told Neoptolemus when he was about to marry not to make a marriage alliance with you or take into his house the foal of such a base mother. For such daughters reproduce their mothers' faults. Take heed, suitors, to get the daughter of a good mother!

The bride's *genos* governs her own morality. For this reason, Helen's and Menelaus' daughter cannot be, *ipso facto*, a good wife.[710] Peleus reasserts his belief in this view when he later presents Neoptolemus' marriage as the cause of the latter's death (1186–1192), while at the end of the drama he once more advises suitors to choose their partners carefully and not to get carried away by a bride's higher social position or her riches (1279–1283).[711] All these passages show that Peleus holds his daughter-in-law responsible for Neoptolemus' death; her infamous ancestral *oikos* has played a pivotal role in shaping her moral character negatively.[712]

Hermione's resemblance to her problematic γένος is made evident during the fourth episode. Euripides again draws the attention of the (internal and external) audience to Hermione's veil and garments and associates her with negative behavioural patterns connected

710 Cf. Peleus' attack on Menelaus, whom he addresses as a base man, product of base forefathers: ὦ κάκιστε κἀκ κακῶν (lit. 'base man, product of base men', my translation, 590).
711 On the authenticity of these lines, see above n. 671.
712 For the idea of inherited character in E. *Andr.*, see Phillippo 1995, while for the *nomos*/*physis* antithesis in the play, see Lee 1975.

with her parents.[713] The resemblance between mother and daughter is first underscored by Hermione's decision to throw her upper body garments away in a display of despair (829–832). Hermione first throws her veil away, thus letting her hair loose: ἔρρ᾽ αἰθέριον πλοκαμῶν ἐ / μῶν ἄπο, λεπτόμιτον φάρος ('Leave my head, into the air with you, veil of fine-spun threads!', 830). This unveiling, on one level, reveals Hermione's turbulent emotional state and, in particular, her extreme fear and lack of restraint, which, in the opinion of her nurse, are exaggerated and unwarranted (866–868).

On another level, however, the abandonment of her veil – a material object that accompanied her in her everyday life as a married woman – is laden with symbolism, as Greek poets often use the veil in order to comment on a marital relationship, any changes of its status and/or the emotions that partners have towards this relationship.[714] In the *Iliad* (22.468), Andromache's fallen headscarf symbolises the end of her married life and her new status as a widow.[715] In Sophocles *Ajax*, Tecmessa, (merely?) a δουριάλωτον λέχος (210–211), probably unveils herself (915–919) in order to cover and thus protect the dead Ajax's honour and dignity.[716] She thus acts in stark contrast to Agamemnon's legitimate wife in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, who, as the perpetual negative foil, covers her husband with a piece of cloth in order to kill him.[717] We find a similarly elaborate use of the veil in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, where

713 See Erbse 1966, 289. For the importance of the family background and familial relations in this drama, see Storey 1989; Phillippo 1995, 362; Kyriakou 1997; Papadimitropoulos 2006; Storey 2017.
714 Not exclusively, though; mourning mothers (e.g. Demeter, Thetis, Niobe, Hecuba) suddenly veil or unveil their heads in moments of extreme grief. See (e.g.) Hom. *Il.* 22.406; 24.93-95; *h. Hom. Cer.* 40-42 (cf. 182-183, 198, 219, 360, 374); A. *Niobe* fr. 154a.6-7 (Sommerstein); Ar. *Ra.* 911-920; *Vit. A.* 5-6 (with Sommerstein 2008, 160); a red-figure hydria in Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire (inv. HR 282bis = *LIMC* Niobe VI 13) that presents Niobe poignantly lifting her veil. For tragic unveilings at moments of poignancy, see Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016, 10. On this gesture (also) as an expression of withdrawal and separation from the group, see Cairns 2001, 20-22; Cairns 2011a, 16-20, while as a simultaneous manifestation of self-control, see Cairns 2001, 25; Cairns 2011a, 23.
715 Thus Nagler 1967, 300-301 (cf. 298-299); Nagler 1974, 47-49; Griffin 1980, 2-3; Sissa 1990 (1987), 95; Canevaro 2018, 92-93. On Andromache as a beautiful and desirable bride in the past, see Sapph. fr. 44 (Voigt).
716 Thus Finglass 2009b, 280.
717 On this garment, which was perhaps similar to a net, see (e.g.) A. *Ag*. 1115-1116, 1126; *Cho*. 492-494, 1071; *Eu.* 460, 634-635. Finglass 2015b notes that in some earlier pictorial and later literary sources, this cloth is presented as a robe without openings; he thus argues that this element probably appeared in 'at least one lost work

Phaedra keeps her head veiled (133–134), when she is overwhelmed with *aidos*, desperation and guilt and suddenly abandons it (201–202) when she cannot subdue her extramarital passion anymore (note Phaedra regrets her action soon after and asks to be veiled again in lines 243–245).[718] As a result, the abandonment of the veil on the part of Hermione must symbolise the end of her marriage, while also implicitly underlining her own responsibility for this negative outcome.

However, apart from her hair, the Spartan princess reveals her upper body as well (στέρνα, 'breasts', 832, 833). This goes against Greek custom, since women were substantially covered during their everyday lives. Only in moments of intense grief (during ritualised mourning or spontaneous emotional reactions) do women tear their garments, thus revealing their bosoms.[719] In Aeschylus' *Choephori*, the female Chorus rip their garments in front of their chests so as to express their distress for the death of Agamemnon and their solidarity with Electra (29–31). More often than not, it is the mothers who reveal their breasts in moments of extreme grief and/or emergency. In the *Iliad* (22.79–89), Hecuba uncovers her breasts when she tries to convince Hector not to fight Achilles by reminding him of the τροφεῖα she gave him in the past, a motion later repeated by Geryon's mother, Callirrhoe, in Stesichorus' poem, *Geryoneis* (fr. 17 Finglass).[720] The Aeschylean Clytemnestra again misappropriates this gesture in *Choephori* with the intent of preventing Orestes from killing her (896–899).[721] Returning to Hermione, we must agree with William Allan that this motion is 'unexpectedly

of literature from the archaic or classical period' (2015, 93). On the elaborate use of garments in the *Oresteia*, see Tarkow 1980; Griffith 1988; Lee 2004, 262-269.

718 On a red-figure bell crater, now exhibited in Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, (inv. A 2012-1, Achat 2011), Stheneboea supports her fully covered head with her left hand, in a gesture that conveys desperation and perhaps regret. On the right, her husband, Proitos, appears to give a letter to Bellerophon, who already rides on his winged horse, Pegasus.

719 Still, citizen women would generally avoid this sort of exposure. For the notorious public unveiling of the courtesan, Phryne, see Ath. 13.590d-e.

720 See Davies and Finglass 2014, 278-280.

721 Clytemnestra is generally treated as a bad mother by Orestes, Electra and Chrysothemis in surviving tragedy. See (e.g.) A. *Ch.* 140-141, 190, 421-422, 429-433; *Eu.* 459-461; S. *El.* 273-281, 595-600, 1153-1154, 1193; E. *El.* 60, 164-165; *Or.* 24, 557.

sexy' in this context.[722] Indeed, by adopting this provocative gesture, Hermione acts much like her mother,[723] when she appeased Menelaus' wrath after the end of the Trojan war by revealing her astonishingly beautiful breasts. As we shall see later, Euripides returns to this episode in his *Orestes* (1287), while in *Andromache* Peleus mentions it in his attack against Menelaus (629–630).[724]

Furthermore, with this inappropriate and rather immodest revealing, Hermione seems to validate the accuracy of Peleus' attack against Spartan girls who walk around with their thighs uncovered and their tunics loosened (598).[725] This accusation reflects Athenian prejudices,[726] triggered by their radically different approaches towards women.[727] For instance, on some occasions, female adolescents would exercise naked in front of a male audience in Sparta; in this way, 'nubile Spartans had an opportunity to view the bodies of potential spouses'.[728] This situation would be inconceivable in Athens, where the bride's naked body was supposed to be first seen by the groom *only*, on the wedding night. Therefore, Hermione's public uncovering cannot but excite these Athenian prejudices, showing to the original, negatively disposed audience that this improper reaction is not disconnected from her Spartan

[722] Allan 2000, 100. On this gesture as also revealing her lack of shame, see Lloyd 2005 (1994) on 832; Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 32.
[723] On her resemblance to Helen, which is also underscored through this motion, see Grube 1973 (1941), 213; Craik 1979, 65; Kovacs 1980, 69; McClure 1999, 176; Battezzato 1999/2000, 358; Allan 2000, 177; Papadimitropoulos 2006, 151-152; Chong-Gossard 2008, 87; Christopoulos 2010, 134; Lloyd 2013, 348; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016, 12.
[724] For the otherwise 'maternal associations of *mastos*' in E. *Andr*., see McClure 1999, 180.
[725] See Grube 1973 (1941), 213; McClure 1999, 161, 165-166, 194; Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller 2012, 248; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016, 12.
[726] See Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 18-20.
[727] As we have seen in section 3.4, a childless Spartan citizen could borrow another citizen's wife and thus father a legitimate child. Something like that would be unthinkable in Athens, where this sexual act would be legally considered adultery. Poole 1994, 10 argues that Andromache's attack against Hermione's lust alludes to this Spartan costume. Furthermore, Spartan women had inheritance rights and could manage their own property in contrast to their Athenian counterparts. However, as Cartledge 1981 correctly maintains, Spartan women might have had more freedom and privileges than their Athenians counterparts, yet many restrictions and odd practices (such as the lending of women mentioned above) were imposed on them by the state.
[728] Pomeroy 2002, 34. For Spartan athletic nudity, see Redfield 1977/1978, 153; Battezzato 1999/2000, 354-355; Pomeroy 2002, 25-29, 34. For the possible religious and ritual importance of Spartan nakedness, see den Boer 1954, 220-221. On the exposure of the right breast and shoulder of the Spartan girls at the festival Heraia and its connection with the festival's pre-matrimonial initiation character, see Serwint 1993. In general, for Spartan nakedness as 'situational', see Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 20.

ancestry.[729] We should not forget that in an unattributed Sophoclean fragment the youthful Hermione is described as a girl whose folded tunic reveals her thighs: καὶ τὰν νέορτον, ἇς ἔτ' ἄστολος χιτὼν / θυραῖον ἀμφὶ μηρὸν / πτύσσεται, Ἑρμιόναν ('… and the young one, whose still ungirt tunic falls around the thigh which it reveals, Hermione', fr. 872).

Additionally, it is significant that Hermione will actually desert her husband and follow a new one (987–992), precisely *after* this unveiling of her head and upper body has taken place. Of course, Orestes arrives on stage moments after the accomplishment of this gesture;[730] ergo, these events cannot be linked together in a cause-effect relationship. Hermione's uncovering cannot be seen as a *response* to Orestes' (erotic and other) intentions. Yet the abandonment of the veil, which is connected with female honour, loyalty and marital devotion, followed by the abandonment of the husband's *oikos*, is striking. Equally pertinent is the fact that Hermione is fully aware that Orestes wants her to become his wife (even though he does not say so). On account of this, she states that Menelaus will decide who will be her new husband (987–988). Therefore, through this deed, i.e. intentionally leaving a husband for another one, Hermione again imitates her mother's behaviour,[731] who left her legitimate husband for Paris.

Some scholars have tried to exculpate this dramatic character. Garzya, for example, maintains that Hermione's predicament is the focal point of *Andromache*. According to him, the situation she has been living in is problematic, causing her great suffering. Moreover, she feels genuine remorse for her actions and at the end she is saved from Orestes because she

[729] On the correspondence between being part of a bad family and a bad city in Hermione's case, see Steidle 1968, 127. Craik 1979, 62-63 shows that the adjective Λάκαινα ('Lacedaemonian') that the slave Andromache uses to describe her rival (29) has negative connotations and may well mean 'bitch', a quality associated with Helen (see E. *Andr*. 630). The same adjective occurs in the first line of E. *Scyrians* (T iia.2 = fr. 681a), a drama that must have dealt with Achilles' decision to join the Trojan war and the pregnancy of Deidamia (fr. 682), daughter of Lykomedes and mother of Neoptolemus.

[730] McClure 1999, 159, n. 6 maintains that Euripides might allude to the fact that Orestes has (possibly) seen Hermione taking off her veil and garments, since, as he admits, he has been around for some time.

[731] See Grube 1973 (1941), 208; Boulter 1966, 57; Kyriakou 1997, 14; Battezzato 1999/2000, 358; Storey 2017, 130. Differently, Alonge 2008, 376 argues that Hermione and Helen represent two different types of women: one is a man-eater ('mangiatrice di uomini'), while the other is over-possessive with her own man.

deserves it. Last, Garzya thinks that it is not fear of punishment that motivates her flight, but her great love for Orestes.[732] Similarly, Pagani argues that the fragile Hermione is different from her father;[733] she regrets her actions frankly, while she leaves with Orestes motivated by *eros*.[734] In his commentary, Lloyd also stresses Hermione's panic and distress and the fact that she has honestly regretted her previous actions.[735]

It is difficult to comprehend where evidence to support Hermione's passion for Orestes can be found. As Orestes recognises, while touching on her description of recent events, Hermione fears Neoptolemus' punishment for her unjust actions: συνῆκα· ταρβεῖς τοῖς δεδραμένοις πόσιν ('I see: for what you've done you fear your husband', 919, see also ἐνδίκως, lit. 'justly', on 920). Hermione verifies this realisation by urging him to take her from there immediately (921–923), thus showing that the thought of retribution triggers her flight.[736] Furthermore, any words of remorse and reversal are, as a matter of fact, expressed by the nurse (804–815),[737] who gives a (perhaps) honest but favourable interpretation of Hermione's conduct.[738]

Hermione's agency, moreover, is assumed many times in the play. First, as we have seen, Hermione presents the plot to remove Andromache from Thetis' shrine as her own scheme (262–264).[739] Menelaus substantiates this statement, when he says to the deceived slave that his daughter will decide whether Molossus lives or dies (431–432).[740] Third, Hermione leaves with Orestes of her own free will,[741] without being pressured or deceived by

[732] See Garzya 1951; Garzya 1963, 5-37.
[733] For Hermione in E. *Andr*. as the completely 'innocent party', see also Vellacott 1975, 39.
[734] See Pagani 1968.
[735] See Lloyd 2005 (1994), 4-5, 144. For Hermione's transformation and experience of honest remorse and guilt, cf. Steidle 1968, 123; Ferrari 1971, 227; Sorum 1995, 381; Allan 2000, 114; Chong-Gossard 2008, 91.
[736] With Johnson 1955, 12; Stevens 1971 on 805.
[737] See E. *Andr*. 805, 814, 815.
[738] Thus Cairns 1993, 304-305. See also Cairns 1999, 173.
[739] See above p. 149.
[740] For Andromache as a caring mother on vases, see (e.g.) the Apulian crater, Ruvo, Museo Jatta inv. J 412 = *LIMC* Andromache I 21.
[741] *Contra* Verrall 1905, 21.

anyone. In contrast to Sophocles' titular play, where Hermione (probably) is the innocent recipient of actions rather that their malign agent,[742] Euripides' heroine is an independent actor who takes the initiative and actively determines her own fate. In this respect, she reminds us of the negative *exempla* of Clytemnestra and Helen who act independently of their husbands. Of course, as we have seen, female independence and decisiveness are not denounced as such in the Euripidean oeuvre, but rather the sort of independence that goes against the husband and disastrously affects his *oikos* (e.g. in his *Helen*, the eponymous heroine thinks independently, schemes and arranges an escape plan; yet these actions impact favourably upon her husband's life and can thus be taken positively).

And with this in mind, I shall explore one last dramatic element that largely problematises Hermione's characterisation and weakens interpretations that portray her as innocent or remorseful, i.e. her whereabouts when Orestes announces that he intends to kill Neoptolemus (993–1008). After explaining the current state of affairs in Neoptolemus' *oikos*, Hermione prompts Orestes to leave the palace as soon as possible in fear that either Neoptolemus or Peleus will chase them (989–992). In response to this (993–1008), Orestes announces his plan to kill her husband. He uses the second person (θάρσει, 'have courage', 993; μηδὲν φοβηθῇς, 'do not fear', 994), thus strongly suggesting that he is addressing Hermione, who is still on stage and silently listening to this threat. If we accept that this is the case, then Hermione's behaviour is extremely worrying. She abandons her husband not only

[742] For Sophocles' Hermione as 'badly abused', see Torrance 2019, 113. Sommerstein 2006, 19 also argues that the Sophoclean Hermione probably accepts Orestes' offer to leave with him. Cf. Eust. *Od.* 4.3, where she is presented as the *passive* recipient of actions: Σοφοκλῆς δέ φασιν ἐν Ἑρμιόνῃ ἱστορεῖ, ἐν Τροίᾳ ὄντος ἔτι Μενελάου, ἐκδοθῆναι τὴν Ἑρμιόνην ὑπὸ τοῦ Τυνδάρεω τῷ Ὀρέστῃ. εἶτα ὕστερον ἀφαιρεθεῖσαν αὐτοῦ, ἐκδοθῆναι τῷ Νεοπτολέμῳ κατὰ τὴν ἐν Τροίᾳ ὑπόσχεσιν. αὐτοῦ δὲ Πυθοῖ ἀναιρεθέντος ὑπὸ Μαχαιρέως ὅτε τὸν Ἀπόλλω τινύμενος τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξεδίκει φόνον, ἀποκαταστῆναι αὖθις αὐτὴν τῷ Ὀρέστῃ ('Sophocles, they say, in *Hermione* narrates that while Menelaus was still at Troy, Hermione had been given in marriage by Tyndareos to Orestes, then later taken away from him and given to Neoptolemus, according to the promise [made by Menelaus] at Troy. But when he [Neoptolemus] had been killed at Pytho by Machaereus, when he was trying to avenge the slaying of his father by punishing Apollo, she was restored again to Orestes', trans. by Sommerstein 2006). For Hermione as a kind and submissive maiden in E. *Or.*, see Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller 2012, 244.

in the knowledge that she will acquire a new one, but also fully aware of the fate that awaits the former.[743] To put it in another way, Hermione knowingly leaves with her husband's murderer.[744] This disregard for her husband's fate puts her in a worse category than Helen herself. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (416–419), for instance, the Chorus refers to the predicament in which Menelaus is found after Helen's elopement, a predicament that the latter could have predicted before her departure. Yet not even she elopes with Paris, having the knowledge that this action will lead to her husband's death.

Following Hermione's and Orestes' departure, the Chorus sings about the destruction caused by the Trojan war on both sides (1009–1046, cf. the first stasimon that recounts the destruction brought to the Greeks and the Trojans: 274–308). In both of these stasima, the Chorus alludes to the predicament of widows. In the first stasimon, the Phthian women sing that Greek marital beds would not be empty if the war had not been waged (307), while in the fourth one they recount how numerous Greek women were forced to remarry: ἄλοχοι δ' ἐξέλειπον οἴκους πρὸς ἄλλον εὐνάτορ' ('and wives left their homes to share another bed', 1039–1040).[745] This point is interesting for two reasons. First, the audience is invited to make a comparison between Hermione and Helen and these other women, whose forced remarriages are mentioned after Hermione's voluntary flight with Orestes has taken place. Mother and daughter can be contrasted with these unnamed women, since they have left their husbands' *oikoi* willingly, whereas the others were forced to do so. Second, Helen's affair with Paris as the cause of the Trojan war is the main reason behind the dissolution of these marriages, including Andromache's (103–104). This reminds us that Helen's elopement not only constitutes a bad example for the entire community, but also has tangible negative effects on

743 Again, *contra* Verrall 1905, 21.
744 Similarly: Golder 1983, 124-125; Rabinowitz 1984, 116; Torrance 2005, 49; Papadimitropoulos 2006, 152-153; Alonge 2008, 382.
745 Here I follow Diggle's text, printed in Lloyd's commentary, thus I use the latter's translation. For the nationality of these women, see Campbell 1932, 197-198.

it.[746] Similarly, Hermione's flight with Orestes, which echoes Helen's destructive desertion of Menelaus, may well prelude devastation and disaster; in this case, Neoptolemus' death, which will be announced immediately afterwards (1070–1172). For the abandonment of a legitimate husband cannot but bear negative results, unless it is forced by the circumstances (e.g. Andromache will remarry after the death of her husband).[747] Consequently, all these similarities between Helen and Hermione elaborately confirm the latter's lack of decorum.

In addition, Euripides seems to suggest that the excessive pursuit of pleasure is a trait that characterises Hermione's father as well.[748] Menelaus is vehemently accused by Peleus of attaching too great an importance to sex and he does not seem to be capable of harnessing or rationally controlling his sexual passion (631). As we have seen, the elderly king refers to Helen's gesture of exposing her bosom (629–630) so as to make Menelaus' weakness for his unfaithful yet extremely attractive wife stand out even more.[749] Similarly, in Euripides' *Orestes* the Spartan king is accused by the titular character of being Helen's follower and pawn (742),[750] while later on in the same play we find an indirect reference to the incident of the sword-dropping (1287).[751] Finglass shows that Euripides was possibly aware of another version, found in Stesichorus' *Sack of Troy*, where Helen's stoning by the community of soldiers was prevented by her public disrobing (Σ E. *Or*. 1287 Schwartz = fr. 106 Finglass).[752] By referring to the sword-dropping version in *Andromache*, Euripides touches on the destruction that lust

[746] In E. *Hec*. 650-651 the predicament of Spartan women is depicted as a direct result of Helen's elopement, therefore strongly suggesting that marital misbehaviour can negatively affect the *entire* community. Cf. E. *Or*. 1136.
[747] This may allude to the Athenian reality, where widows often remarried. See the discussion above in 2.2. For Andromache's ability to successfully adapt to new circumstances, see Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2014, 402.
[748] See McClure 1999, 185, 189-190. As Poole 1994, 25-32 shows, Menelaus is not always presented negatively in Euripides' oeuvre. Rather, in E. *IA* and *Hel*., he is cast in a sympathetic light.
[749] That Menelaus likes his wife and is keen on sex is not abnormal. The problem arises from the fact that, according to the version referred to in E. *Andr*., *Hec*. and *Or*., Helen has abandoned him and, even though thousands of Greek and Trojan men have died for her sake, she shows no regret and is ready to seduce him all over again with her proverbial sexual lure.
[750] The emphasis in the Loeb translation.
[751] Cf. Ibyc. fr. 296 *PMGF*.
[752] See Finglass 2018a, 146-151. On the possible personification of the swords in this ancient scholium, see Mastronarde 2017, 17, n. 67.

and weakness for a bad wife can bring to *one* person, i.e. the husband.[753] Consequently, the lack of moderation that characterises this Hermione can be taken to mirror the disagreeable demeanour towards sex and marriage that has been, and continues to be, displayed by both of her parents.

Last, Hermione's mode of sexuality and general demeanour appear even more selfish and excessive if we take into account Andromache's social position. Andromache is not a concubine, i.e. she does not have self-governing relations with men without coercion. Rather, she is a slave, forced to live under the same roof as Neoptolemus, his wife and his other servants.[754] Even though Hermione's outburst does make some sense to us because Andromache resides in the same house with her and has a privileged position in the household,[755] an Athenian audience would have probably thought twice before justifying the Spartan princess's stance altogether.[756]

First, cohabitation between masters and slaves would not have been classified as a rightful cause for killing, especially not the killing of the only (bastard) son of the head of an Athenian *oikos*. Second, sex with male and female slaves was generally tolerated by public opinion in Athens,[757] without this meaning that wives were particularly happy about the situation, though.[758] In Lysias' *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (1.12), for example, the speaker casually refers to his wife's complaints about his sexual exploitation of the female servant, taking for granted that this piece of information would not upset anyone in the audience, in

[753] On Menelaus' blind eroticism ('cieco erotismo'), see Pagani 1968, 204, while on his notorious weakness for Helen, see Allan 2000, 66.
[754] See E. *Andr*. 30, 64-65, 99, 155, 199-202, 931-935.
[755] On Andromache's commanding behaviour, see Torrance 2005.
[756] Differently, Erbse 1966, 294; Pepe 1998, 150 and Pabst 2011, 325 claim that, even though Hermione reacts with hyperbole, her response is justified. On Hermione's exaggerated use of dochmiacs, despite the fact she is not in any real danger, see Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller 2012, 265-267.
[757] For the sexual abuse of slaves, see Wiedemann 1981, 10; Hunt 2017, 106-109. On the limitations imposed on the harsh sexual exploitation of slaves by Athenian law and social norms, see Cohen 2014, 191-194.
[758] For passages that are related esp. to slaves, see Hom. *Il.* 9.447-452; A. *Ag.*; S. *Tr.* 539-540; E. *El.* 1030-1034; Ar. *Pax* 1138-1130; *Ec.* 721-722. On the possibility of having sexual relations with female servants, see Hom. *Od.* 1.433; X. *Oec.* 10.12.

contrast to his wife's illicit love affair with Eratosthenes. Furthermore, despite the fact that this state of affairs favoured exclusively male merriment and fantasies, some tolerance was expected on the part of the wives. An ancient scholar, while discussing Andromache's claim that women feel stronger desire but know how to conceal it (220–221), gives the following interpretation:

> βούλεται δὲ λέγειν ὅτι οὐκ ὀφείλει γυνὴ ἀνδρὸς ἑτέρᾳ γυναικὶ συνομιλοῦντος οὕτως φανερῶς ἀγανακτεῖν ὡς καὶ εἰς μέσον φέρειν αὑτῆς τὸ πάθος, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἰδίᾳ τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἐπιτιμᾶν πειθοῖ τε καὶ κολακείᾳ ἀφιστᾶν αὐτὸν τῆς πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας πτοήσεως (Σ E. *Andr*. 220 Schwartz).
>
> She wants to say that a wife whose husband is having sex with another woman ought not to be so obviously vexed like this and make her own misfortune apparent, but rather to privately admonish him and to dispel his sexual excitement towards other women by using persuasion and flattery (my translation).

The above elucidation may well be an inaccurate one for this line. Andromache might just mean that women experience sexual passion more strongly than men, and nothing more. Still, this sort of advice could have possibly resonated with the first spectators of the play,[759] especially if we take into account Andromache' social status as a chattel slave. Therefore, the original audience would have probably regarded Hermione's attitude towards her husband as, on the one hand, over-possessive and jealous,[760] and, on the other, as exaggerated towards his relations with his slave and their child. Her attitude towards Neoptolemus mirrors not only

[759] Cf. Plu. *Coniugalia Precaepta* 140b. I find it interesting that my grandmother, Stavroula Theodoridou, who was raised in a small village near ancient Pella, once endorsed a similar approach in reference to a friend of hers, whose husband had committed adultery.

[760] See Sorum 1995, 378; Alonge 2008, 376. Kyriakou 2016 adds that this sort of female jealousy is part of Peleus' family history as well, although it remains unmentioned in E. *Andr*. For Peleus' mother, Endeis, and her revenge against Psamathe, see Kyriakou 2016, 152-153 (with references to primary sources).

Menelaus' jealousy of Helen, but also Orestes' own possessive bias towards Hermione herself.

In conclusion, Hermione is portrayed as the opposite of many mythical uxorial *exempla* to which Euripides often refers in his plays, paradigms of wives that show admirable dedication to their husbands, even after death. These examples include Alcestis and Helen in the eponymous plays. Other acclaimed female examples featured in Euripides' oeuvre are Laodamia and Alcyone. As we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2, the former remains devoted to her husband after his death in the fragmentary *Protesilaus*.[761] The latter's story is mentioned by the Chorus in *IT* (1089–1093). Alcyone is a comparable example of a devoted wife, who, though transformed into a sea bird, remains committed to her spouse, Ceyx,[762] even after his (just) death.[763] In *IT*, the Greek women who comprise the Chorus refer to Alcyone's continuous song for her husband (1092) and sing about their own desire for Greece's marketplaces and Artemis Locheia (1096–1097), the goddess connected with birth and puerperium. Interestingly, the Chorus' articulated affinity with Alcyone's lament and unwavering spousal devotion (1094), followed by an expressed (communal) desire for a life back in Greece that includes marriage and children, comes at an advanced stage in the play, when Iphigenia herself has come to accept 'a mode of sexuality which will enrich the community rather than threatening it'.[764]

4.3. Is Neoptolemus at Fault? Male Infidelity and the Stability of the Greek Oikos

An investigation of this tragic marriage would, however, be incomplete if we did not look at the other partner in this relationship. Indeed, as Mossman stresses, Neoptolemus constitutes

761 On this, see sections 1.3 and 2.2.
762 See Luc. *Halc.* 8.9, where Alcyone is commended as an admirable example for her φίλανδρος ἔρως ('husband-loving *eros*').
763 For Ceyx's impious claims, see Apollod. 1.7.4; Ov. *Met.* 11.410-748.
764 Swift 2010, 239-240.

the ‘absent co-focus’ of Euripides’ *Andromache*.[765] In this short section, I argue that Neoptolemus’ attitude within his marriage is equally as unwarranted as his wife’s. He could have been wiser and avoided this severe conflict,[766] although he had the right to act as he did (i.e. he had the right to sleep with his slave and keep both her and his bastard son in his *oikos*). As we shall also see, it is with regard to Neoptolemus’ inappropriate behaviour that the female Chorus wishes for sexual fidelity from both sides, thus setting the tone that marital devotion and sexual fidelity on the part of the husband as well (even if not required) could prove to be advantageous for the outcome of a (tragic) marriage.

During her strife with Hermione, Andromache refers to her past marriage with Hector and stresses the patience, tenderness and understanding with which she treated his bastard children thanks to her own σωφροσύνη and her desire not to embitter him (222–225). This attitude seems to correspond to the above-discussed interpretation given by the ancient scholiast (Σ E. *Andr*. 220 Schwartz) and was the one perhaps expected on the part of wives by Athenian society as a whole. Yet Andromache’s outlook on how marital relations should be formed within an *oikos* does not appear to be unanimously accepted by the rest of the dramatic characters.[767] On the contrary, many of them reserve harsh judgement for extramarital sexual relationships on the part of the husband and their overall negative impact on the peacefulness of the *oikos* (note their disapproval is not directed against meek feminine behaviour, but against male infidelity).[768]

765 Mossman 1996, 149.

766 Cf. Steidle 1968, 128-131, esp. 129, where the author underscores Neoptolemus’ faulty handling of the matter and the fact that he did not consider the inputs of either Orestes or Peleus. On Neoptolemus’ share in fault, see also Ferrari 1971, 222; Papadimitropoulos 2006, 157.

767 Similarly: Rabinowitz 1984, 114; Allan 2000, 269; Pabst 2011, 328. For Andromache as a character who ‘*also* provokes a certain measure of discomfort to a Greek audience’, see Torrance 2005, 48.

768 Pepe 1998, 135 reminds us that, despite the absence of a law, Greek custom dictated that men ought to have only one wife. See (e.g.) Plu. *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1034a8-11. A dubious law, attested only in later sources, may have allowed the illegitimate children of two Athenians to be citizens towards the end of the Peloponnesian war. See D.L. 2.26.7-10; Ath. 556a; Gell. *NA* 15.20.6; MacDowell 1986 (1978), 90. Yet this does not mean that

The first character to take a negative stance towards extramarital affairs is Hermione. She argues that men who want to lead a peaceful life in their household should avoid having sexual relations with two women: οὐδὲ γὰρ καλὸν / δυοῖν γυναικοῖν ἄνδρ’ ἕν’ ἡνίας ἔχειν / ἀλλ’ ἐς μίαν βλέποντες εὐναίαν Κύπριν / στέργουσιν, ὅστις μὴ κακῶς οἰκεῖν θέλῃ (‘For it is also not right for one man to hold the reins of two women. Rather, everyone who wants to live decently is content to look to a single mate for his bed’, 177–180). Her claims are in accordance with her current situation, for she is compelled to live under the same roof as her husband’s (probably former) bed-fellow and their offspring. Of course, Hermione does not exactly meet her own standards, since she will shortly leave with another husband.

Orestes forms exactly the same judgment of Neoptolemus’ attitude when he discusses this issue with Hermione. Orestes has come to Phthia not only to check on her, but also to take her with him (957–966). According to him, λέχος – that is, marriage, marriage-bed, and spouse in one word – is the only thing that can bring misfortune to a woman with no children (904–905). Therefore, he completely sympathises with Hermione. He uses the adjective κακόν (‘bad’, ‘mean, ‘worthless) in order to describe the state of affairs in Neoptolemus’ household, thus reflecting her standpoint in full (909).

However, the same view is endorsed by the female Chorus as well. At the beginning of the third ode, the Chorus sings that they will never endorse the idea of one man having two women as bed fellows:

οὐδέποτε δίδυμα λέκτρ’ ἐπαινέσω βροτῶν

οὐδ’ ἀμφιμάτορας κόρους,[769]

marriage with two women was permitted, but rather that out-of-wedlock children could, under these circumstances, be recognised as legitimate. For the difficulty of connecting this law with E. *Andr*., see Pepe 1998, 145-149. I explore the issues of citizenship, legitimacy and slavery in E. *Andr*. elsewhere.

[769] Sommerstein 1987b argues that ἀμφιμήτωρ should not be translated as ‘by different mothers’ but as one son ‘having two (rival) mothers’. In this way, the adjective does not refer to a situation that may occur in the future, (i.e. when Hermione bears a son), but to the present circumstances. He also maintains that the plural κόρους is used in order to refer to a state of affairs that occurs commonly within all families with δίδυμα λέκτρα.

† ἔριδας † οἴκων δυσμενεῖς τε λύπας·

μίαν μοι στεργέτω πόσις †γάμοις

ἀκοινώνητον ἀνδρὸς † εὐνάν (or ἀμὸς εὐνάν)[770]

> Never shall I praise doubleness of marriage among mortals or sons with two mothers. It is strife and hateful pain for a house. May my husband be content in marriage with a single mate and a bed unshared! (E. *Andr*. 466–470).[771]

Here the Chorus implicitly denounces Neoptolemus' behaviour, which has brought strife and sadness to his *oikos*. À propos of this passage, Kovacs maintains that the Chorus projects an opinion that corresponds to Menelaus' and Hermione's point of view, thus adopting a safe approach towards the matter in question just to 'avoid trouble'.[772] It may be true that the Chorus mirrors Hermione's own perspective by indirectly condemning Neoptolemus' attitude (177–180).[773] Nonetheless, during the same song, the Chorus also expresses condemnatory comments towards Hermione and her decision to kill Andromache and Molossus (486–493).[774] It can thus be assumed that the Chorus conveys their honest opinion about Neoptolemus and Hermione, and it does not hesitate to call attention to the shortcomings that characterise the attitudes of both spouses.

Regarding the above passage, it should be noted that the Chorus advocates fidelity on the man's side as well, regarding their own personal life.[775] Scholars tend to agree that the expression ἀνδρὸς εὐνάν (470), found in the manuscripts and in the ancient scholia,[776] refers

770 Henrik van Herwerden first proposed this emendation, so that the meaning would be more explicit.
771 Cf. E. *Andr*. 123-124, where the Chorus again refers to the δίδυμα λέκτρα in Neoptolemus' *oikos*.
772 Kovacs 1980, 64-65.
773 See Rabinowitz 1984, 114; Pabst 2011, 324-325.
774 Storey 2017, 131 correctly notes that it is the nurse, and not the Chorus, who is in general clearly sympathetic towards Hermione.
775 Kovacs 1980, 101, n. 16.
776 See Stevens 1971, 51.

to a man's bed that here the female speaker wishes to join, unshared by other women.[777] Comparable wishes in favour of legitimate *eros* are often found in Euripidean plays. In *Medea*, where sex and/or sexual passion have been misused by both Jason and Medea, the Chorus, after acknowledging the importance of *eros* (630–631), abhors the idea of having an inappropriate (out-of-wedlock) object of desire: μηδέ ποτ' ἀμφιλόγους ὀργὰς ἀκόρεστά τε νείκη / θυμὸν ἐκπλήξασ' ἑτέροις ἐπὶ λέκτροις / προσβάλοι δεινὰ Κύπρις ('May Aphrodite never cast contentious wrath and insatiate quarrelling upon me and madden my heart with love for a stranger's bed', 638–641). The Chorus' longing for moderate and lawful *eros* in *Hippolytus* (525–529) is similar.[778] Two aspects of these wishes should be noted. First, they are expressed in tragedies, where out-of-marriage sex or sexual longing has a negative impact on the characters' marriages and their lives in general. Second, these strong wishes are expressed by female Choruses, a fact that implies the collective aspect of this wish, while also stressing the yearning on the part of women to experience erotic longing within appropriate limits, i.e. within the confines of marriage; (NB desire to experience lawful *eros* is articulated by male characters as well, see e.g. Bellerophon in Euripides' *Stheneboea* fr. 661.20–25).

Consequently, I hope it has become clear that the negative sentiments expressed by Hermione, Orestes and the Chorus in *Andromache* are related to the reckless use of sex and its negative effects on marriage, and not to sex or sexual passion *per se*. The sexual relationship between Andromache and Neoptolemus may belong to the past, as Andromache says (30),[779] but its results are visible in the dramatic present. Moreover, these negative judgments should be (mainly) directed to the absent Neoptolemus, given that Andromache as a slave has never

777 See Stevens 1971 on 469-470; Collard 1975 on 822-823; Sommerstein 1987a on 718; Lloyd 2005 (1994) on 469-470; Kovacs 1995 (Vol. II), 317. See also A. *Th.* 363-364.
778 See also E. *Theseus* fr. 388 (with Collard and Cropp 2008a, 427).
779 *Pace* Kovacs 1980, 13-18.

consented to this sexual relationship (36).[780] As a result, Neoptolemus as a husband is portrayed in Euripides' *Andromache* as (at least partially) to blame for the adverse situation that prevails in his own household.

4.4. Conclusion

To conclude, Neoptolemus and Hermione, as a married couple, are presented by the dramatist as at fault in the current situation. Both of them have adopted unwise positions towards sex and marriage that have affected their relationship negatively. Hermione's general demeanour as a wife and her exaggerated sexual jealousy are problematic from many perspectives. Neoptolemus' decision to cohabit with his female slave and their child has not proved to be wise either, since their very presence in the *oikos* is the main cause of the conflict in question.[781] Last, there is no mutuality in this marital relationship. Throughout the drama, it is not clear whether Hermione is barren by nature or not. What is evident, however, is that she is undesired by her husband, for he does not frequent her bed. As she herself states, she is hated by him (158). Therefore, in contrast to Menelaus and Admetus, who express love and (implicit) desire for their spouses in *Helen* and *Alcestis* respectively, the absent Neoptolemus does not experience positive emotions and/or sexual longing for his wife.

We should also notice that, in contrast to Neoptolemus and Hermione, the characters that remain faithful to their legitimate partners (i.e. Peleus and Andromache), and thus embody accepted forms of sexuality, will in fact receive a happy ending at the end of *Andromache*.[782]

[780] Pabst 2011, 326 states that Hermione may be right in principle, but she tries to unjustly punish the non-guilty party of this relationship, i.e. Andromache.

[781] As Peleus twice reminds us (619-623, 1190-1192), Neoptolemus' choice of wife was not so wise in the first place. See also Morenilla Talens and Bañuls Oller 2012, 248. For E. *Andr*. as a tragedy that deals with the issues of wisdom and folly, see Boulter 1966; Kyriakou 2016.

[782] Thus Allan 2000, 30-31. This does not apply to all the mythical personas mentioned in the play: although Helen has been unfaithful to Menelaus, Euripides refers to her as being accepted by Menelaus and now residing at the royal house (627-631), thus following the conventional version of the myth.

In both cases, this takes the form of a radical, divinely given fresh start that will put new 'life' into both of them: Peleus will become immortal, while Andromache will be restored as a queen and mother of the future king of Epirus and founder of the tribe and kingdom of the Molossians, Molossus. This accords well with the previously discussed evidence found in *Alcestis* and *Helen*, where characters who have remained devoted to their first spouse are given a second chance through a coming-of-age, rejuvenating experience.

Epilogue

The aim of this study has been to explore the portrayal of heterosexual *eros* in Greek tragedy between couples who are already married or are going to marry in the future. While I have primarily focused on five Euripidean dramas (*Antigone*, *Andromeda*, *Alcestis*, *Andromache* and *Helen*), I have been referring throughout to most plays of the three great tragedians and I have also used the evidence of (new) comedy and vase paintings, when considered necessary or particularly elucidative.

In Chapter 1, I explored young tragic couples at the beginning of their relationship. The emotions expressed by the dramatic characters in question correspond to the state of limerence, as studied by Tennov in the late 1970s.[783] More specifically, the fragments allowed me to argue that Antigone and Haemon, Andromeda and Perseus experience (some sort of) *eros*. Although mutuality is only implied, the surviving evidence suggests that these relationships are formed with the free consent of both partners. What we have also seen is that, in these cases of early romance, the existence of seemingly overpowering obstacles (e.g. strong opposition from parents, relatives or others, struggles with dangerous monsters etc.) actually intensifies the expression of erotic passion and desire, something that corresponds to Morin's observations about the nature of human eroticism and its nuanced workings.[784] Last, we observed that heterosexual youthful *eros* did not, as a matter of fact, guarantee disaster and tragic catastrophe: the marriage bonds of Antigone and Haemon, Andromeda and Perseus were (probably) envisaged and projected as long-lasting in these fragmentary plays.

[783] Tennov 1999 (1979), *passim*.
[784] Morin 1995, *passim*.

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I examined cases of couples in tragedy who are already married. In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed two positive representations of *eros* within the confines of tragic marriage. In these cases, mutuality and erotic desire are more readily observable, especially on the part of the wives. This should not come as a surprise, given that Helen and Alcestis are not virgins, but rather full-grown women who have already had erotic experiences, in contrast to the maidens, Antigone and Andromeda. As we have also seen, the distance created between these married partners (generated by premature death or long separation) intensifies erotic feelings and their expression, while it also provides significant opportunities for personal growth (especially in the case of Menelaus and Admetus). Last, in Chapter 4, I explored a negative *exemplum*, i.e. the failed marital relationship between Hermione and Neoptolemus in Euripides' *Andromache*. What became obvious in this case was that this marriage was not characterised by positive mutual erotic feelings. On the contrary, both spouses have had (or will shortly have) some sort of erotic relationship with a dramatic character who does not constitute their primary sexual partner. I thus suggested that lack of mutual (erotic) love and respect actually dictates the negative outcome of this tragic marriage.

What has thus become clear throughout this study is that *positive* representations of happy marriages and erotically enjoyable relationships are indeed *normative* in Greek dramas. As we have seen throughout these chapters, the same rules apply to both positive and negative representations of *eros* and marriage. In other words, heterosexual tragic *eros* is positively presented *only* when sexual fidelity and lifelong devotion govern the relations in question. At the same time, illicit or immoderate tragic *eros* guarantees a disastrous outcome, thus again validating the same ideals of sexual fidelity and long-lasting marital devotion. For breaches of the rules cannot but presuppose the rules themselves. Therefore, it became evident that Greek tragedies sometimes present us with positive normative *exempla*, similar to the ones we find in

the wedding ritual. (Of course, there is some correspondence between the tragic relationships and positive representations in ritual and real life, yet not a straightforward reflection.) Thus, this study does not reject the findings of studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, which focus on the negative depiction of heterosexual *eros* in tragedy, but rather *complements* them. In particular, Seaford studies the problematic aspects of tragic marriage, arguing that this profound negativity is expected to be overcome in real-life ritual. As we have seen in detail, such negativity is indeed widespread in Greek drama, but *only* when illicit or immoderate forms of *eros* appear.

Two significant elements that also came up in this study were: 1) the topographical difference regarding these heroines and the places they are connected with, and 2) the temporal difference of the plays in question that span from 438 BC until perhaps as late as 406 BC (which is the latest possible production date given by Cropp and Fick *vis-à-vis* the fragmentary *Antigone*).[785] More specifically, Alcestis is tied together with Thessaly (Iolcus and Pherai), Helen has strong ties with Sparta, while Antigone comes from the troubled city of Thebes. Correspondingly, the Ethiopian Andromeda is connected to a Greek hero from Argos, while Andromache is associated with a Greek master with links to Thessalia and Skyros (she herself comes from the Cilician Thebes and was formerly married to the Trojan Hector);[786] although both of them are foreigners, they behave in ways that are quite Greek.[787] As a consequence, the positive portrayal of Alcestis, Helen, Andromache, Antigone and Andromeda as wives or wives-to-be suggests that hinted marital *eros*, female sexuality and/or life-long devotion constitute some of the most important stock qualities of the ideal Greek wife in Euripides'

[785] See above n. 60 in section 1.1.
[786] On Andromache's origins and the killing of her family by Achilles, see Hom. *Il.* 6.413-428.
[787] Of course, in E. *Andr.*, the eponymous character is not Neoptolemus' wife. Nonetheless, she is presented as bearing the characteristics of an ideal Greek wife and will eventually become the wife of Helenus through the divine intervention of Thetis.

oeuvre. To put it another way, these elements seem to be perceived as Panhellenic (with democratic Athens being, of course, the place *par excellence* where heterosexual *eros* is supposed to be good and beneficial both for the individual and the community).[788] The notable temporal difference between these plays also allowed me to maintain that the positive portrayal of female sexual agency and hinted marital *eros* runs through the entire work of Euripides and should not be considered as evidence for (only) a late fifth-century reappraisal of *eros*.

The results of this research may perhaps raise some questions for the reader. To what extent do these positive representations have anything to do with real-life people? How is it possible for Athenian men and women to experience desire for a partner that they have not chosen? Is it conceivable for an Athenian maiden to feel desire for a much older man whom she barely knows and has (almost certainly) not selected herself? The huge divergence between widespread modern practices and these ancient customs may intensify one's uneasiness. In some parts of the worlds, it is nowadays often taken for granted that people can (or should) have several sexual partners before making (*if* ever) a final decision à propos of marriage. This sort of choice – made easier thanks to the relatively recent invention of contraceptive pills and disposable safe-sex condoms – is now even more comfortably exercised through the many widely used dating apps (e.g. Her, Bumble, Tinder, BlackPeopleMeet, Match etc.) that allow users to easily evaluate and thus select potential sexual partners with their mobile devices.

My goal is certainly not to condemn ancient Greek modes of living and defend the above-mentioned contemporary practices (or the opposite), but rather to understand the former. I believe that we can better grasp the workings of real-life heterosexual *eros* in ancient Greece if we take into account: 1) the empirical evidence from the sociology of traditional

[788] See (e.g.) E. *Med*. 835-845.

societies/traditionally minded echelons of society, and 2) some important concepts of human psychology and biology. First, studies that examine empirical evidence relating to currently practiced arranged marriages demonstrate that 'arranged' does not equal 'forced',[789] while the assumption that family-initiated marriages *necessarily* guarantee dissatisfaction can be misleading. Yelsma and Athappily, for example, while comparing American and Indian couples who constitute the focus of their study, conclude that 'women in arranged marriages are more satisfied with their marital relationships than are wives in the United States samples'.[790] Real-life evidence à propos of family-initiated marriages does not pertain to marital satisfaction *only*. As De Munck's research reveals regarding a Sri Lankan Muslim community, arranged marriages do not preclude romantic love as well,[791] a fact that problematises the frequently used dichotomy between 'love marriages' and 'arranged marriages'. Other studies show that extended-family members can help the family-arranged married couple cultivate positive emotions towards each other,[792] while, according to the American Indian psychologist, Monisha Pasupathi, the selection criteria people usually employ in the family-initiated and in the so-called love marriages are not so different if closely examined.[793]

Second, I want to bring the reader's attention to the matter of choice in general and the relativity of its import. In particular, as the study of Iyengar and Lepper shows regarding Anglo-American and Asian-American children, the significance attached to personal choice is culturally specific and varies importantly among different geographical areas, chronological periods and cultures.[794] Last, the very existence of many choices can cause anxiety, a

[789] See Pande 2014 (with references to further bibliography).
[790] Yelsma and Athappily 1988, 49, and *passim*.
[791] See De Munck 1996.
[792] See the discussion of Hortaçsu and Oral 1994, 238.
[793] See Pasupathi 2002, 220-224.
[794] See Iyengar and Lepper 1999.

phenomenon that psychologists call the 'tyranny' or the 'paradox' of choice.[795] When humans are given (too) many options, they may fear that: 1) they may shortly regret the choices they made, and/or 2) they might miss better and more attractive opportunities by making a choice at all. This is applicable to human relations, among other things. Therefore, even if given endless choices regarding sexual partners, satisfaction with one's final choice and happiness cannot be guaranteed (satisfaction with one's choice has of course never been guaranteed, while the constant desire to find the best sexual partner available seems to be evolutionarily rooted).[796]

All in all, I think that we can approach real-life Athenian marriage and *eros* with these concepts in mind, while also taking the sociological aspects of classical Athens into consideration. It is, first, not impossible to imagine that maidens could encounter their future husbands in public religious celebrations or funerals in this tightly knit community. Indeed, the evidence of Menander in this regard is confirmed by the beginning of the liaison between Eratosthenes and Euphiletus' wife in Lysias' *On the Murder of* Eratosthenes, where the funeral of Euphiletus' mother gives Eratosthenes the opportunity to meet his future lover for the first time (1.20).[797] In cases where cousins were married to each other, this sort of acquaintance between future spouses can be safely assumed.[798] This acquaintance or eye contact from a distance could enable maidens to form opinions and thus perhaps express their sentiments regarding a prospective groom to their parents. Moreover, it is not difficult to surmise that, as contemporary evidence suggests, the powerless maidens could perhaps influence and thus indirectly exercise power through their mothers or grandmothers, who must have had greater

[795] See Schwartz 2016 (2004); Salecl 2010.
[796] See Ridley 1994.
[797] On this passage, see more recently, McClure 2020, 102.
[798] On marriage between cousins, see (e.g.) Thompson 1967 (with references to primary sources); MacDowell 1986 (1978), 86; Just 1989, 79-80.

influence in the average Athenian household.[799] Besides, we cannot be sure that an Athenian father would necessarily force his daughter into marrying someone that she had seen in public and utterly disliked.[800]

Furthermore, we should not forget that, as Wasdin puts is, 'the amorous couple is an ideologically charged ideal' in Athens.[801] It is thus not hard to imagine that public discourse and ideals regarding marriage (as presented on vases, among other media) would positively predispose brides towards their husbands.[802] The wedding songs could also have a similar effect regarding the couple's first sexual encounter.[803] Besides, as the sexologist Jack Morin argues, humans have the capacity to *choose* to feel attracted towards someone;[804] if we are expected, and if we thus also want to feel desire towards someone, we can actually train our brains to do so. Therefore, it would be possible for an Athenian woman to experience positive, erotically coloured feelings towards her husband-to-be, especially if she wanted to and was not forced to enter this family-arranged union. All in all, I argue that a young Athenian bride could be happy and satisfied, (e.g.) when married to a presentable older neighbour of hers, a καλὸς νεανίας.

799 See Walcot 1987, 29; Pasupathi 2002, 229.
800 Something similar happened to my grandmother, Stavroula. When she attended the wedding of her first cousin, she unknowingly attracted the attention of a young man from a village nearby. The following day, his mother came to my grandmother's house and officially asked for her hand in marriage. The family initially accepted the proposal, since this man came from an affluent family and he also had a house in Thessaloniki, the biggest city nearby. When, however, my grandmother met him the following day, in the presence of her family, she did not like his behaviour. She revealed her strong negative feelings against this prospective marriage first to her mother and then to her oldest brother. The entire family then decided not to put pressure on her to marry this person. When the unwanted groom learnt about the rejection, he tried to abduct my grandmother. Her parents subsequently sent her to an uncle, and then to another cousin's house, in order to protect her. She eventually married my grandfather, Spiros, whom she met during another festive occasion. Still, this does not mean that forced marriages were not the case, both then and now in rural areas.
801 Wasdin 2018, 9.
802 Thus also Walcot 1987, 15. On the vases associated with wedding ceremonies and the presence of Eros, see the introduction, section II.
803 The wedding songs would often stress the attractive appearance of the bride and the groom. See Sapph. frr. 108, 111, 112, 113, 115 (Voigt). See also Theoc. *Id*. 18.9-15, where the female Chorus playfully sings that his wedding night is not the right time for Menelaus to fall asleep!
804 See Morin 1995, 285-286.

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