A Thematic Commentary on Euripides' *Ion*

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Abstract

In this thesis I interpret Euripides' *Ion* by integrating literary, religious, political, and psychological approaches, and by applying certain modern theories of drama emphasising communication, performance, and the role of the audience. I argue that Euripides exploits the moral ambivalence of divine rape to focus a cluster of problematic contradictions and ambiguities in his audience's attitude to divinity and myth. This issue structures the play's key antitheses: myth/reason, divine/mortal, female/male, religion/politics, force/persuasion, speech/silence, innocence/experience, Delphi/Athens, tragedy/comedy.

Chapter One deals with structures of time and space and the construction of plot. It uses the distinction between the 'theatrical world' and the 'dramatic world' to explore the different modes of explanation applied to the same events by characters on the stage and by spectators in the theatre.

Chapter Two analyses the figures of Ion and Kreousa in terms of the Athenian myth of autochthony. Both characters experience a transition during the play, Ion from adolescence to adulthood, from Delphi to Athens, from private to public, from lack of identity to double parenthood, and Kreousa from hatred of Apollo to piety, from barrenness to motherhood, from fixation upon the past to hopes for the future. Ion's successful resolution of the fundamental tensions of the autochthony myth heals Kreousa and permits Athens to found colonies.

Chapter Three considers multi-faceted Apollo in the *Ion*, the ambiguity of divine favour and the equivocality of oracular responses. Euripides skilfully presents the god from different perspectives and with differing degrees of understanding in what is finally an anthropocentric play, where human emotions overrule the god's plan.

Chapter Four suggests that the interweaving of tragic and comic elements in the play does not lessen its seriousness and concludes that the play cannot be labelled as anything but a tragedy.

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Preface

The last several years have witnessed a sudden and extraordinary rise in the popularity of Euripides. If his plays once tended to be dismissed as decadent, melodramatic, or untragic, they have come increasingly to seem appealing to modern literary tastes and their vision of the world has in certain regards become more and more an uncanny anticipation of our own. During the past two decades Euripides' *Medea*, *Bacchae* and *Trojan Women* have gone beyond the limits of classical scholarship to become important documents in contemporary culture.[1] Moreover, there has been a recent revival of interest in Euripides' latest plays, which were traditionally taken as marking the end of the golden era of classical Greek drama, but nowadays serve as a vehicle expressive of the anxieties of the *fin de siècle* individual and society – in a sense, Euripides' *fin de siècle* seems, disturbingly, to anticipate our own. After an absence from the stage of 150 years, the *Ion* was simultaneously performed

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[1] For instance, there were three productions of the *Medea* in 1986 (London: Gate theatre; Young Vic; Lyric Theatre) and two more in 1992 (London: Almeida Theatre; Bucharest: National Theatre, directed by Andrei Serban and followed by the *Trojan Women* and Sophocles' *Electra*, which comprised his 'Ancient trilogy'). The *Trojan Women* was produced by Annie Castledine and Annabel Arden (Théâtre de Complicité) in 1995 at the National Theatre in London and *The Bacchae* was produced in Peking by the Beijing Opera Actors in 1996.

by two theatre companies in the United Kingdom[2], along with the *Electra*, the *Orestes*, the *I.A.*[3] and the *Phoenissae.*[4]

Not only does the play raise permanent issues in a particularly timely way, it also provides useful material for exploring questions about Greek culture and politics that have become interesting for scholars over the last several years. The present dissertation is intended as a contribution to this growing discussion. It takes up and carries further a number of important studies that have appeared recently. But instead of applying to the play the theories of a particular critic or school of criticism, it attempts to work out an original line of interpretation in constant dialogue with previous scholarship. In particular, it develops further Loraux's insights into the ideology of Athenian autochthony[5], Zeitlin's analysis of Ion's search for his identity[6], the structural analysis of Greek myth[7] and the approach of a number of scholars who have stressed the performance aspect of Greek tragedy. But this dissertation not only builds upon the work of these earlier scholars. It also aims to add new elements to the discussion in two ways: first, by integrating these various approaches with one another, so that literary, religious, political, and psychological aspects can

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[2] London 1994. The first was a production of the *Royal Shakespeare Company*, directed by Nicholas Wright and took place at the Barbican Theatre. The second was an Anglo-Hellenic production of the *Actors' Touring Company*, directed by Nick Philippou and performed in the Lyric Theatre. For a review of these two recent productions of the *Ion*, see Padel, 1996.

[3] London 1995, '*Agamemnon's Children*', directed by Laurence Boswell and performed in the Gate Theatre.

[4] London, 1996, produced by the *Royal Shakespeare Company*, directed by Katie Mitchell and performed in the Barbican Theatre.

[5] 1992a [1981]; 1992b [1981]; 1993 [1981].

[6] 1989; 1994.

[7] Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Turner, 1977; Peradotto, 1977.

supplement one another; and second, by applying certain modern theories of drama emphasising communication and the role of the audience.[8] This is why I have chosen to write not a traditional lemmatic commentary, but a thematic analysis taking the form of a set of interlocking chapters, each of which examines a complex of issues and all of which together should provide a global view of this complex and fascinating play.

As I finish this thesis, I would like to thank all those who have made it possible. Above all, Professor Pat Easterling has accompanied and supported my work from the beginning and has helped me not only in innumerable questions of detail, but also with regard to larger interpretative issues. In the last two years, Professor Glenn Most has been the source of inspiring discussions and valuable criticism; he has read and commented upon my thesis and I am grateful for his encouragement. I would also like to thank Alan Griffiths and Colin Austin who have read earlier drafts of various sections and discussed with me numerous points. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their constant support and encouragement throughout the formative years of my research and writing of the thesis; to them this thesis is gratefully dedicated.

London, September 1996

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[8] Elam, 1980; Pfister, 1988 [1977]; Aston & Savona, 1991.

ΤΟΙΣ ΓΟΝΕΥΣΙ

ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν

Heraclitus fr. B101 D-K

Chapter One

Setting the Scene:
Time, Space and Plot in the *Ion*

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. The Physical Parameters of the Theatre of Dionysos

By around 500 BCE, under Cleisthenes' democracy, dramatic performances had been transferred from the archaic *orchestra* in the *agora* in Athens[1] to the theatre area overlooking the sacred precinct of Dionysos and his archaic temple, on the south-east slope of the Athenian citadel, the *Acropolis*. The shift away from the *agora* was the result of such ideological permutations as the construction of the state in the Acropolis, the institutionalisation of the dramatic performances and the functional separation of politics and market-place. The choice of this specific location to act as host to the dramatic performances of Attic tragedy was based on the potential of the rocky hillside

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[1] On the archaeological evidence of the archaic *orchestra* situated in the Athenian *agora*, see Travlos, 1971: 8 fig.5, 21 fig. 29; Camp, 1986: 46, 89, 183f; on the literary evidence, see Hammond, 1972: 390ff. On the theatre's situation in the centre of the civic space of democratic Athens, see, for instance, Gould, 1985: 8ff.; Goldhill, 1987: 58-76; Pickard-Cambridge, 1988: 58-59; Connor, 1989, 7-32; Ober & Strauss, 1990: 237ff.; Padel, 1990: 336-338; Pozzi, 1991: 126-134; Croally, 1994: 163ff. On the participation of the audience in the production, see Rehm, 1992: 20-30; Winkler, 1990: 20-62, who suggests that *ephebes* had to participate in the choruses in order to fulfill their obligation to the *polis;* on the Athenian Laws about choruses, see MacDowell, 1982; see also Green, 1994: 1-15, who calculates the numbers of the chorusmen, trainers, organisers etc. and concludes that 'a noticeable proportion of the free male population would have been involved' (p. 9f.).

to provide a natural *theatron* , sheltered from the north wind of early spring – the time of year when the City-Dionysia took place – and capable of accommodating an ever-increasing audience.[2]

The local topography makes it easy for us to infer that the slope was the space assigned to the spectators, the *theatron* for the *theatai,* and that the flat area at the bottom of the hill, the area of *theasthai,* functioned as the performing area, the *orchestra,* taking its name after the dancing movements (*orchesis*) of the most permanent body of the early Greek theatre, the chorus.[3] Spectators would look down on the performances set against the

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[2] The theatre seems to have had ample space to hold around ten thousand spectators, though 'despite all that has been written, the size of the audience in the fifth-century Theatre of Dionysus is unknown and probably unknowable' (Green, 1994: 175 n. 24); on the audience capacity of the theatre, see Gallo, 1981. Yet irrespective of the actual number of spectators, already in pictorial art of the archaic period, the significant role assigned to the audience of athletic contests is attested; see Simon, 1982: 4 and n. 10. It would not be surprising, then, if the change of location for the dramatic contests had been dictated by the demands of the audience for a more spacious and better designed natural auditorium. Hammond (1972), who takes seriously the information recorded in *Suda* (s.v. Pratinas) that 'it was while he (i.e. Pratinas) was present that the *ikria* on which the spectators stood collapsed, and it was on that account that a theatre was built for the Athenians' (p. 396), claims that the transfer of the theatre to the Acropolis 'was done for reasons of public safety and not because a new form of theatre was wanted for new types of performance' (p. 404 n. 31). All performances were geared towards the audience and this suggests that the organisers took into consideration the comfort of the spectators and made the appropriate arrangements in their effort to maximise the enjoyment of the spectacle; on the importance laid on the theatre as visual spectacle by both the audience and the playwrights, see Green, 1994: 17-22.

[3] The term *orchestra,* used of the theatre, first appears in Arist. *Probl.* 901b30; cf. also Photius s.v. ὀρχήστρα: 'the name was first used in the Agora, and then in respect to the theatre it was the semi-circle below, where the choruses sang and danced'; see Taplin, 1977: 453 n.1. Gebhard, in her examination of the form of the orchestra in the early Greek theatre (1974: 428-440), concluded that the early form of the auditorium was responsible for the rectilinear form of the orchestra. Pöhlmann (1981: 129-146) has strengthened this assumption by showing that the *prohedriae* of the theatre of Dionysos were placed in a

physical backdrop of the vale of Attica reaching Mt. Hymettos and the sea. Behind them lay the Acropolis, which by the time the *Ion* was performed (c. 412 BCE[4]) comprised, amongst other sacred buildings, the majestic Parthenon (built 447-432 BCE) and most probably the Erechtheum (last quarter of fifth century[5]), an Ionic building, housing cults of Athena, Poseidon and the heroized king Erechtheus.

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straight line, which meant that in the fifth century the cavea and the orchestra must have had a rectilinear form, much like the theatres at Thorikos and Trachones. Hammond goes to the opposite extreme, arguing for a circular orchestra (esp. 1988: 5-9), relying on the archaeological evidence reported by the original excavator Dörpfeld (1896) and re-confirmed by Dinsmoor (1952); see also Gould, 1985: 9-11. Green (1991: 18-20, with good bibliography; also Green & Handley, 1995: 35f.) is unconvinced by Hammond's defence of Dörpfeld's archaeological findings, arguing that the orchestra 'was never as regular as it was made to appear in the drawings' (1991: n. 8); so also Rehm, 1988: 276-78, who supports the view (first argued by Wycherly and Martin; cf. n. 63) that 'the sixth- and fifth- century Greeks acknowledged no established form governing the shape of the orchestra, but developed and adapted their theatres according to local needs and topography' (p. 278).

[4] Owen: xxxvi-xli, argues for an earlier date of 418 or 417 BCE (but cf. Goff's critique, 1988: 49); so Grégoire, 1950: 167-8, Delebecque, 1951, ch. 10; Conacher, 1959: 26-29. On the arguments dating the play between 413-411 BCE, see Wilamowitz, 1926: 24; Ceadel, 1941: 70 and 78; Webster, 1967: 5; Walsh, 1978: 313-15; Collard, 1981: 2; Carter, 1986: 155 n.1; Knox, 1989: 64. See also Cropp & Fick, 1985: 60-61, who argue that based on resolution data (i.e. the frequency of resolutions per 1000 lines and the total number of resolution types found in the plays), *Ion* and *IT* are earlier than *Helen* and *Pho.* and belong between 415 and 412.

[5] On the history of the Erechtheum, see Stevens *et al.*, 1927: 452-456, who argue that due to 'the heavy expenses of the preceding years of war, the commencement of the work may be conjecturally placed as not later than 419 or 418' and that after a short interval following either the outbreak of the Dekelean War (spring 413) or the Sicilian expedition (autumn 413), the temple was completed by around 406 BCE. In ch. iv of this work, all the inscriptional evidence concerning the works on the Ionic temple is listed; reports of the commissioners, who record every item used for the construction of the temple in their receipts, form a safe guide for its dating. See also Travlos, 1971: 213-214 (with useful bibliography), who places the beginning of the works in 421 BCE and their completion in 406 BCE.

1.1.2. The Stage Area

The physical parameters of the theatre of Dionysos were fixed features of the playing area. This is as far as our certainty goes. Any other fixtures added to the performing space of this early theatre are still a matter of debate. Archaeology provides us with little positive evidence, since the surviving remains date from the later period (late fourth century), when the original wooden structures used for the spectators' seats and the stage building were replaced by stone.[6]

Thus, insofar as we must rely on the archaeological evidence, we stand on flimsy ground as regards the dimensions of the fifth-century stage-building, referred to as *skene*[7] (temporary dwelling, tent), its exact position in the orchestra or the exact date when it was first introduced and then used as an artificial backdrop for the dramatic enactment. The most convincing recent approach to this question is a revival of an older theory based upon the internal evidence provided by the plays themselves, as was first argued by Wilamowitz in 1886; according to the findings of this line of inquiry, 'the skene was originally out of sight [i.e. it was placed on the side, outside the orchestra], and [...] was first erected and used as a background building in

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[6] For a good overview of the problems relating to the staging of Greek tragedies and the pitfalls of the evidence on which we must rely in our attempt to reconstruct the original productions of the extant tragedies, see Gould, 1985: 6ff.

[7] This term, in the plural, is first used of the stage-building in Arist. *Peace* 731; see Hourmouziades, 1965: 39f.; Taplin, 1977: 453. Hammond notes that the word σκηνή 'was native to the Agora itself' and he quotes in support the passage *De Corona* 169: 'τοὺς τ' ἐκ τῶν σκηνῶν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀγοράν' (1972: 400).

the years between the *Oresteia* [458 BCE] and the latest of the other four [surviving Aeschylean] plays'.[8]

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[8] See Taplin, 1977: 452-459, with relevant bibliography; here, quotation from p. 458. Hammond (1972), after a thorough examination of the literary tradition and the archaeological evidence, concludes that at the very early stages of the transfer of the dramatic festival from the agora to the theatre of Dionysos, there existed no stage building, but just the flat circular orchestra (see above n. 3) and the natural rock-outcrop at the east side of the orchestra; he too agrees with Wilamowitz on the dating of the skene: 'a radical change in the nature of the theatre was made between the production of *Supplices*, probably in 463 BCE, and that of the Oresteia, in 458 BCE' and he suggests that it was Aeschylus 'who persuaded the people to reconstruct the theatre' (p. 448), and, he adds, 'the choregos and Aeschylus may have provided a stage on the first occasion at their own cost' (n. 119). Such an interpretation of the Aeschylean contribution would explain the remark found in the *Vita Aeschyli* that 'it was Aeschylus who organised the *skene*'; after the change of form of the theatre attributed to Aeschylus, there was only a change of location of the stage building in the Periclean theatre, so there was no need to mention any of Aeschylus' successors in the literary tradition for this minor change of the later theatre (p. 414f.). A different view is put forward by the dramatologists who claim that there is no need to assume the existence of a permanent stage building in the fifth century. Thus, Rehm (1992: 33f.) remarks that 'all extant tragedies can be staged with these basic elements', i.e. 'a wooden façade with a central door' and 'a large, but irregular orchestra' and that 'a wooden backdrop and skene-building are perfectly in keeping with Greek building practices, where [...] stone eventually replaced wood construction' (n. 8). Ley and Ewans (1985), on the other hand, are interested in the question of where the action is taking place and not in that of whether or not there was a permanent or temporary stage-building; in their detailed directions for the staging of the *Hippolytus* and the *Choephori* , they reject the use of the skene as the acting area in favour of the orchestra; they claim that the central point of the performance would be the centre of the orchestra: 'the actor is visually at his most dominant on any point along a line drawn from the centre of the orchestra to the skene door; aurally, without doubt, he is at his most commanding at the centre of the orchestra'. Wiles [as he explained to me in a private discussion - for which I thank him here] claims that there was no three-dimensional stage building in the fifth century, and that all extant tragedies could perfectly well be performed in front of a two-dimensional façade with a central door. See also Padel, who supports the view that 'in the fifth century, the skene was wooden, like most of the spectators' seats. One temporary wood structure balanced the other' (1990: 341).

A series of other controversies relating to the stage resources of the early theatre of Dionysos arose once the interest of scholars became directed towards the performance and performability of the extant plays.[9] I shall only briefly examine here those questions that bear some relevance to the staging of the *Ion*, leaving the more detailed discussion of the verisimilitude of the Delphic topography as it is alluded to in the play for a later part of this chapter, when I shall consider the nature of the Delphic evocations throughout the course of the play (see 1.3.3.)

Once the existence of the skene building situated within the sight of the spectators, at a tangent to the orchestra area, was accepted, scholars debated over the number of doors used as a means for the entry and exit of the actors in the early fifth-century theatre, the possibility of the use of stage-paintings placed against the façade of the stage-building (*skenographia*)[10]

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[9] A well-documented account of the most familiar controversies is offered by Taplin, 1977: 434-451, with the relevant bibliography. On the staging of the Aeschylean plays, see Hammond 1972: 416-441, who argues, *pace* Dörpfeld and Dinsmoor, that a rocky outcrop of 5 metres by 5 metres was left standing in the orchestra of the Aeschylean theatre. Taplin partly adopts Hammond's 'ingenious new theory', arguing, though, that 'the rock was levelled at the same time as the orchestra was reduced and room was made for the skene, that is shortly before the *Oresteia*' (1977: 448-9); in his later article (1988), Hammond argues in support of his theory that 'a real outcrop of rock', which was 'archaeologically possible', was 'essential to the production of *Prometheus Vinctus*' and that 'in five other plays (not *Agamemnon*) such a rock was used to represent a mounded tomb, an acropolis, a lookout place, and the rock of Ares' (p. 31). He also gives a detailed account of the staging of the *Eumenides* as produced by him in 1977 at the University of Wisconsin (p. 22-31), defending his position against Taplin's criticism. Yet, as Rehm in his critique of Hammond's hypothesis (1988: 270, n. 34) remarks, 'that any such outcrop ever existed is questionable, and its height a matter of total conjecture' and he adds that 'the "side-on" staging that results is both unnatural and dramatically ineffective'.

[10] On the coinage of this term, see Hourmouziades, 1965: 39-41. He begins his survey with the attribution of this invention to Sophocles in Arist. *Poet.* 1449a18f., which is the earliest occurrence of the term; yet, on the one hand, this text has been suspected as interpolated

(see Taplin, 1977: 457 n. 4; Brown, 1984: 1-17; contrast Simon, 1982: 44f. n. 84), on the other, it is not quite clear what was actually meant by this term. Hourmouziades remarks that the 'plausible sequence that may have been followed in the various shifts of the skene-connotations' is 'scene building – decorated façade – background – painted panels – scenery' (p. 40). He continues his search by examining the first open reference to skenographia in a theatrical context as attested in Vitruvius (VII praef. 11), according to whom Agatharchos is said to have been responsible for painting the scene building for the Aeschylean tragedies; it is argued that what was really implied by the use of this term here is painting 'in perspective' on movable panels fastened onto the permanent façade. This claim has been further qualified by Padel (1990: 346-54) who suggests that the revolutionary portrayal of the third dimension in painting, attested in vase-paintings as early as 510 BCE and overtaken by mural painting in the second quarter of the fifth century, may have easily found its way into the theatre, where mural three-dimensional painting would have facilitated the creation of illusionary space on the skene façade as the backdrop of the stage action. See also Gould, 1985: 15-22; Simon, 1982: 24, who, commenting on a calyx crater in Würzburg (pl. 10, and reconstruction figs. 3-4), argues that 'The Greeks [...] disguised the simple stage-building with architectural pictures painted in perspective. Such a painting [...] is intended on the Würzburg fragment'. Gould, however, is of the view that scene-painting at the earlier stages (i.e. some time after the 460s and the introduction of the skene), must have been quite simple and that 'the relevance of this painting to the fifth-century Athenian theatre is highly uncertain' (p. 22). Brown, in his influential article, cited above, argues, quite convincingly, against fifth-century scene-painting and Vitruvius' statement (esp. p. 8-14). I find myself in favour of Brown's reading of the evidence. Moreover, it seems to me that precisely the detailed description of the setting of certain tragedies, including the *Ion*, which were formerly used in support of the claim for an elaborate backdrop, would better serve the argument against this hypothesis, in the sense that such detail would have hardly been worth painting, since it could only have been discerned with great difficulty, if at all, by the spectators sitting at a distance from the backdrop; and if it would not have been appreciated by the spectators, it is hard to imagine any reason why anyone would have wished to proceed with such a costly undertaking, when words and stage-props could have had an equally powerful effect upon the audience and evoked the proper atmosphere. Therefore, I would suggest that a simple backdrop with a door would have sufficed as a setting for fifth-century tragedies, especially if one places the focus of the performance towards the centre of the orchestra and not further back.

and the use, location and number of altars,[11] and, finally, the possibility of a raised stage with steps leading up to the acting area (*logeion*) and separating the actors from the chorus assigned to the orchestra.[12]

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[11] The question of whether an altar was a permanent fixture of the early Greek theatre has attracted the interest of many scholars. See, for instance, Gow, 1912: 212-38 (with an etymological discussion), who argues that what was considered to be an altar in honour of Dionysos was actually a hearth; Arnott, 1962: 43-56, who argues for a permanent orchestral altar in honour of Dionysos and a second permanent stage-altar in honour of Apollo Agyieus; a central position for the orchestral altar is advocated by MacDowell (1971: 125), Collard (1975: vol. 1, 15), Dearden (1976: 48), Bond (1981: 61), Rosenmeyer (1982: 57-58). Poe (1989: 116-139, with extensive bibliography), after a careful survey of the relevant archaeological, lexicographical, literary and dramatic evidence, concludes that the *thymele* was not permanently situated in the centre of the orchestra, but that it may have been moved to one side of the orchestra or forward towards the centre; hence, he suggests that it was a movable theatrical property, whose location was determined by the dramatic needs of the individual play. With regard to the theatrical *agyieus*-altar (Pollux 4. 123), Poe argues that 'the frequent mention of Apollo Agyieus and of altars of Apollo makes it clear that the agyieus was a common piece of stage furniture even in the fifth century' (p. 137) and that it must have been used as a conventional sign to denote a house, probably used for the first time in Aesch. *Agam.* 1080f. 'since that is the first extant play to represent the background as a house' (p. 135). On the question of whether there had been more than one altar on the stage, he offers no conclusive answer, since the testimonia do not compel any (see his Appendix A). Yet Rehm (1988: 264-74) rightly claims that 'we have no archaeological evidence for a stage separate from the orchestra, nor for an altar located on it in the fifth century theatre of Dionysos' (p. 265) and that there is 'little evidence that a centrally located orchestra altar was a permanent fixture in fifth century theatres in Attica or in the Northern Peloponnesus' (p. 266); he also explains away the use of the orchestra altar as the ritual focus of the Dionysiac cult, which he locates instead in 'the temple and permanent altar to Dionysos in the southern part of the sanctuary' (p. 267). As for the use of an altar required by over a third of the extant tragedies, he argues that such an altar was situated in the centre of the orchestra area and 'was used as a stage property during performances' (p. 274). A single orchestra altar, I will argue, is also needed for the staging of the *Ion*.

[12] The existence of a *logeion* as a separate elevated acting area in the fifth century theatre is supported by Webster, 1959-60: 501f.; Arnott, 1962: 1-42; Hourmouziades, 1965: 58-74; Dale, 1956: 96, 102; 1969: 259; Hammond, 1972: 400; cf. Pollux 1. 123. At the other

Working again from within the plays themselves, it may be safely assumed that the extant Greek tragedies could very well be performed with a single door.[13] The building to which this door is supposed to give access may be a palace, a noble house, a hut (e.g. Eur. *El.*)[14], a temple (e.g. Eur. *Ion, I.T., Hcld., Suppl.*), or a cave (e.g. Soph. *Phil.*).[15] Bearing in mind that the

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extreme stand scholars who consider the problem from the perspective of the performance, arguing that the success of communication within the nexus of actors-chorus-audience, at this early stage of theatrical development, would have depended upon such practicalities as the acoustics of the theatre, which, since they were quite inadequate, would have encouraged greater proximity between the actors and their audience, if they were to be heard from the last rows of the auditorium, and hence, between the actors and the chorus, since the closer to the centre of the orchestra the actors were, the greater the intensity of their voice. On the acoustics of the theatre of Dionysos, see Hunningher, 1956; see also Ley & Ewans, 1985: 75-84, esp. n. 8; Rehm, 1988; 282, n. 82, 83, and 1994: 34-36, n. 12. For the impossibility of an elevated stage, see Taplin, 1977: 442f.; Rehm, 1988: 279, n. 69. Other scholars believe in the existence of a low platform accessible by one or more steps; see Simon, 1982: 7; Gould, 1985: 12; Garvie, 1986: xliv, n. 104; Poe, 1989: 118 and n. 4; Padel, 1990: 341-42.

[13] See Dale, 1969: 268-69, on Eur. *Alc., Or.,* Aesch. *Cho.* (cf. also 103-18, on Arist. *Eccles., Wasps*); Roux, 1961: 36; Arnott, 1962: 42; Hourmouziades, 1965: 20-25 (he considers the possibility of side-doors in *I.A.* 885f.; *Phaethon*; *Helen* 1165f.; *Hec.* 53; *Tro.* 153f.; cf. p. 50 on side-door in *Andr.*); Taplin, 1977: 439-40; Simon, 1982: 6f., 24-5; Padel, 1990: 354 and n. 71; Ley, 1991: 33; Rehm, 1992: 34 and n. 9. The excess number of doors often depicted on the façade of the stage-building of tragic performances in vase-paintings, is explained away by Simon (1982: 40 n. 19) as a decorative motif. Contrast the arguments for two or three doors in comedy: Newiger, 1965: 238f. and 1979: 450f.; Dover, 1966: 2-17 and 1972: 21-24, 83-84, 106-108, 134-36, 197-98. Garvie argues that, with the exception of the *Choephori*, which required two doors, in his view, 'no surviving tragedy seems to call positively for the use of more than one door', though he finds very attractive Dover's claims for the use of more than one door in comedy (1986, xlvii-liii); so also Hammond, 1972: 438, n. 94.

[14] See Roux, 1961: 26-7, for a list of the seventeen extant tragedies that take place in front of a house.

[15] Presumably, in Soph. *Phil.* only one entrance of the hero's two-mouthed cave was visible to the spectators; see Dale, 1969a: 127.

Theatre of Dionysos was open-air, and that the only covered space within the spectators' field of vision was the skene, with a single door leading to its interior, it is not surprising that the playwrights found in this imaginary space a whole new range of possibilities which they exploited as a figurative expression to convey the tension between the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknown, the manifest and the secret.[16] In the *Ion*, the hidden space of the Delphic temple never becomes exposed to the audience's imagination (let alone to its bodily sight), since no narrative describes the actions of Xouthos, the only dramatic character to go inside the stage-building and come out again in the course of the play[17]. Hence the tension between revealed and concealed remains finally unresolved, inasmuch as the temple interior is never penetrated by the uninitiated on the stage or among the audience[18].

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[16] See Padel, 1990: 354f.

[17] The Pythia, of course, follows the opposite course of exiting into a public space and re-entering into the seclusion of the sacred *adyton*; she comes out at 1320, for a short scene of no more than fifty lines; once her mission is complete, she goes back in again, closing the temple-door permanently behind her. See below 1.3.2., n. 115.

[18] Contrast the prologue of Aesch. *Eum.*, where the Pythia comes out of the temple almost immediately after she goes in and relates to the audience her horrible experience of encountering Orestes, seated as a suppliant on the navel-stone with the hideous Furies sleeping in front of him (34-63). As she exits, the central door opens to reveal Apollo and Orestes who converse in front of the audience (64-93); then, Clytemnestra's ghost appears and addresses the Furies, who are heard to moan from the interior of the temple (93-139). On the controversial questions of the appearance of the Furies and the staging of this part of the *Eumenides*, see Hammond, 1972: 434-441 and 1988: 22-31 (esp. 24f.); Taplin, 1977: 325f., 357f., 365-74; Brown, 1982: 26-30 and cf. also 1983: 13-34; Rehm, 1988: 290- 301; Sommerstein, 1989: 92-93; West, 1990: 264ff. In Eur. *Andr.* 1085-1165, the messenger gives a detailed account of the murder of Neoptolemos inside the Delphic temple. A useful comparison of the representation of the Delphic temple in the three tragedies is offered by Winnington-Ingram, 1976: 483-500.

Regarding the question of the scenic decoration of the *Ion*, it seems quite reasonable to assume that it need not have been more elaborate than the setting of the other extant tragedies. Since there is no indication that the provision of stage furnishings was amongst the duties of the *choregos*[19], it seems likely that such an expenditure would have been the concern of the state. Had the scenic design of the *Ion* been disproportionately expensive, we might perhaps expect such an extravagance to have been alluded to in the contemporary sources. It may be safer to assume that it would have been enough merely to use a painted backdrop in order to create the illusion of a (temple) building.[20] During the opening scenes of the play, an abundance of verbal indications and the addition of other significant stage properties closely linked with the Delphic temple and its god[21] would have given enough clues to stir the audience's imagination so that they could create a mental map of the Delphic sanctuary.

The suppliant scene at 1255f., when Kreousa, admonished by the chorus, seeks refuge at an altar to avoid punishment from Ion, guarantees the use of an altar in the performance of the play. The staging of this scene,

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[19] Pickard-Cambridge, 1988: 90.

[20] Hourmouziades (1965: 43-57) in his effort to prove that all extant tragedies could be performed with the basic decor, a 'remote predecessor' of the '*scaena tragica*' of Vitruvius account (V, vi, 9), reaches the conclusion that the *Ion* is no exception (p. 56). Yet I am not quite in agreement with his interpretation of the individual features of the setting as described in the parodos; I will indicate those points later in this chapter, in the discussion of the relevant passages. For a criticism of Hourmouziades' arguments in favour of scene-painting, see Brown, 1984: 9-10.

[21] In Ion's monody, for instance, the hero carries a broom made of laurel branches and a bow; both objects were associated with Apollo in many vase-paintings. Once Ion has finished with the sweeping, he may have fixed the broom near by the temple, to enhance the association of the stage-building with the Delphic temple.

in conjunction with the numerous references to altars in the play[22], has attracted the interest of many commentators, who have set themselves the task of identifying the various altars in the Delphic sanctuary and locating them on stage. Thus, some scholars have assumed Kreousa's altar to be none other than the great Chian altar which stood before the temple of Apollo at Delphi[23], though I myself doubt that the playwright would have cared to make this connection and think it most unlikely that so specific an association could possibly have been signalled to the audience in this scene without a clear-cut reference in the text. Another scholar has tried to establish that the supplication took place inside the temple, in the *pronaos*, but outside of the inner sanctuary, the *adyton*[24]; this claim fails to acknowledge the dramatic importance of having Kreousa remain outside the temple throughout the whole course of the play, so as to stage in physical terms the clash between herself and Apollo.[25] Another view holds that there

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[22] The words 'θυμέλη' (46, 114, 161, 226f.), 'βωμός' (52, 323, 422, 1255, 1275, 1280, 1306, 1314, 1401, 1403) and 'πυρά' (1258), all refer to altars belonging to the sacred precinct of the Delphic temple. On the question of how realistic the use of these words in the play is, see below section 1.3.3.

[23] Wilamowitz (p. 23) situates the altar at the orchestra; Owen at line 1258, argues for a position for the great altar on the stage – a view that is totally impractical and unconvincing. See also Poe, 1989: 129-130; he argues that the evidence points towards the use of an orchestra altar, but that this cannot be proven with certainty.

[24] Winnington- Ingram, 1976: 497-99. This misconception was a result of the effort to achieve consistency in the use of the word *thymele* in this play, while, at the same time, keeping as close as possible to the actual topography and internal dispositions of the Delphic temple, as they can be inferred from the other two extant tragedies where there is a reference to the temple, i.e. Aesch. *Eum.* and Eur. *Andr.* So also Gow, 1912: 225-230. For a brief discussion of the occurrences of the word *thymele* in the *Ion*, see below section 1.3.3., n. 172.

[25] This clash seems to be eliminated, both verbally and visually, by the end of the play (lines 1609-13), when Kreousa asserts that she no longer resents Apollo for his past behaviour, which now seems to make perfect sense to her, and she expresses her change of heart in

were two altars used in this play, an orchestral altar and a stage one, and that the action oscillates between the two; Kreousa, then, would retire to the altar in the separate acting area.[26]

Now, as has been shown above (nn. 11, 12), it is commonly accepted that there was no high stage in the fifth-century theatre and that even if there were a low wooden platform with a couple of steps, there was still a free commerce between skene and orchestra, actors and chorus. Perhaps we may even follow those scholars who have produced modern stagings of a number of tragedies[27], and who claim that the *Ion* could have been performed with the focus on the middle of the orchestra and not back farther at the skene; such a staging would better conform with the dramatic requirements of the play, emphasising the chasm between Apollo – whose absence is felt throughout the play, and whose temple remains unpenetrated to the uninitiated – and the mortal characters. For these reasons, it seems to me that an interpretation of the suppliant scene that both satisfies the dramatic needs of the play and takes into consideration the restrictions of fifth-century staging would have Kreousa move to the focus of the dramatic action, in the middle of the orchestra area, where there would have stood an altar; she may even have been surrounded by the members of the chorus, in their effort to protect her from Ion's wrath.

In sum, I would argue that the *Ion* most likely was originally performed with a simple decor comprising a single altar, placed somewhere near the middle of the (probably still irregular) orchestra area, a wooden structure,

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physical terms by clasping the ring upon the temple door and bidding the god farewell. See Taplin, 1985: 55. On the question of whether or not the behaviour of the god leaves something to be desired, see below chapter 3.

[26] Arnott, 1962: 44f., 48. See also above n. 11.

[27] I am referring to Rehm, Ley & Ewans, and Wiles, see above n. 8.

whose façade with a single door, placed at the back of the orchestra, would also have served for the quick change of costume of the actors, and whose flat roof would provide the elevated area where Athena was to make her supernatural appearance at the closing of the play[28], and, finally, the two side-entrances (*parodoi* or *eisodoi*). The use of stage props, such as, perhaps, a simple decoration to the altar (cf. 'ξόανα', 1402-3), Ion's laurel broom, bow and arrow, vessels with (holy) water for the purification of the enquirers and the cleansing of the temple yard, and the basket containing Ion's birth tokens, along with the movements, dance, gestures, speech, song and costumes of actors and chorus would, thus, have carried the weight of the original staging. The dramatist would, of course, have exploited all the possibilities of the genre, so as immediately to involve the audience, whereas the spectators, who were thoroughly accustomed to the paucity of set and decor, would have been quick to recreate in their 'mind's eye' the verbal indications amply provided by the dramatic characters and to make them into a coherent mental construct. The playwright's and the audience's cultural and theatrical conditioning constituted the shared system of signs, the language or code, through which the process of communication of ideas between the two parties was achieved. Modern audiences and commentators of Greek tragedies need to create afresh this code-system, and to explore the set of rules that govern it, before they can safely proceed with the interpretation of the dramatic text and its performance. Therefore, our task in this chapter will be to trace and study Euripides' codes and conventions of play construction in an attempt to decipher the text of the *Ion* and to comprehend its internal dramatic logic.

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[28] On divine epiphanies and the claim that the use of the crane-like flying machine to carry the gods belongs to a later period than the fifth century productions, see Taplin, 1977: 440-1, 445; Barrett, 1964, on *Hipp*. 1283.

1.2. Conventions of Dramatic Plot and Time

1.2.1. From story-line to dramatic plot

The distinction between story (*fabula*) and plot (*sjuzet*) was one of the most important contributions of the Russian formalists to the study of prose fiction. When applied to the study of the Greek tragic texts, *fabula* corresponds to the basic story-line of the narrative, abstracted from the primary sources of Greek myth, or, indeed, the collections of Greek myth compiled laboriously by the mythographers from the end of the fifth century BCE onwards, where events are structured in chronological order; *sjuzet* is the particular organisation of the narrative events by the playwright, or the adaptation of the mythic material into a sequence that best serves the exigencies of a theatrical representation.

The *fabula* of the *Ion*, the mythical tradition from which Euripides drew in order to compose the play, is a major section of the pseudo-historical royal Athenian genealogy which could be (and, doubtless, often was) narrated in chronological order. The particular foundation myth of the *Ion* would consist of the events prior to the hero's birth as part of a time-span reaching to his accession to the Athenian throne and his colonisation of Ionia. Euripides' dramatisation of the myth, his *sjuzet,* stages the critical moments prior to the recognition of mother and son in Delphi, placing the actual recognition scene at the crux of his dramatic plot, which he unfolds within the course of a single day, injecting all the necessary information of the *fabula* in carefully measured doses of narrative at key-points of the play, and ending with Athena's prophetic account of the events to come.

Such conversion from story-line to a compressed plot-sequencing is a common feature of any dramatisation of the longer narrative of a novel or

of the chronologically ordered mythical corpus from which the subject-matter of the Euripidean play was extracted.[29] The skill of a playwright is judged by the potential of his play to capture the audience's imagination from its start and to maintain their undiminished interest throughout its course. Euripides is a master of a variety of dramatic techniques with which he lures his audience into the fictional dramatic world, and then supplies them gradually with morsels of information which they have to assemble from the words and actions of the dramatic characters. Yet, since the characters view the dramatic reality from differing vantage points, the spectators can only attain a partial awareness of the events on and off stage and anticipate possible outcomes of the plot; such a combination of partial awareness and anticipatory expectation on the part of the spectators results in moments of suspense of the highest intensity. Euripides' adaptation of 'the story of Ion' offers a striking sample of the playwright's ingenuity.

At the outset of an analysis of the *Ion*, it may seem worthwhile to examine tentatively the reason(s) that may lie behind Euripides' choice of this particular variant of the myth. Ion is the eponymous hero of the Ionians [as Doros of the Dorians and Aiolos of the Aiolians]. Euripides did not invent him as such; our earliest extant mention is found in Hesiod's (or pseudo-Hesiod's) fragmentary *Ehoiai* or *Catalogue of Women*, where Ion is recorded as son of Xouthos (the son of Hellen, the ancestor of the Hellenic people, and brother of Doros and Aiolos) and Kreousa (daughter of the Athenian king Erechtheus), and brother to Achaios and to Diomede.[30] Ion is

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[29] See Pfister, 1988: 196-198; Elam, 1980: 119-20; Aston & Savona, 1991: 20-25.

[30] Hes. frgs. 9 MW; 10a. 21-24 MW. Ion's name does not survive on the papyrus, but it is the most plausible supplement to fit the gap, which is quite small. As for Kreousa's name, only the initial letter K survives, but the emendation is undoubtedly correct. See Gantz, 1993: 167, 233.

likewise the son of Xouthos in Herodotus (7.94; 8.44) and in the prologue of Euripides' lost *Melanippe Sophe*.[31] Yet Euripides in his *Ion* demotes Xouthos to a mere foster father, and replaces him with Apollo as Ion's real divine father. We cannot trace this version before Euripides, but it seems quite reasonable to assume that he can hardly have invented it. It is referred to by Plato in *Euthydemus* 302d, where Apollo is 'πατρῷος' to the Ionians 'διὰ τὴν τοῦ "Ιωνος γένεσιν'; Plato is unlikely to have mentioned a purely Euripidean version.[32] Ion belongs essentially to Athenian political mythology or 'pseudo-history'; naturally, as the Athenians claimed primacy among the Ionian Greeks, he was fitted, not without difficulty, into the scheme of early Athenian kings.[33]

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[31] See Parker, 1987: 205-7 and notes 76-82; Gantz, 1993: 233, 244; Collard (ed.), 1995: 267 (*Mel. S.* 665 a-c M., 8-9).

[32] Most scholars argue against the assumption that this version is a Euripidean innovation, see Wilamowitz: 1-10; Owen: ix-xvii; Grégoire: 155-65; Conacher, 1959: 23-26; Parker, 1987: n. 80; Saxonhouse, 1986: n. 18. About Sophocles' lost *Kreousa* we know very little, and any attempt to identify the story of that play with that of Euripides' *Ion*, or to date the Sophoclean play with respect to the Euripidean, is a mere conjecture. Owen (xiii; cf. also Lucas: 5) places the Sophoclean play after the Euripidean, claiming that the frequent repetition of Kreousa's name in the prologue (at lines 11, 18, 57, 62, 65, 72) signals the unfamiliarity of the audience with the myth. Yet I would argue that one ought not to put so much weight on this repetition, nor to jump to any conclusions based solely on this evidence. Burnett (1962; 1970: 1-6; 1971: 103-107, 122-23) claims that, though the basic mythical frame of the story antedated the Euripidean play, the playwright himself ought to be credited with having drawn attention to the similarities between Ion's, Erichthonios', and Dionysos' birth and infancy, as well as for the gentle treatment of Kreousa, whose only suffering during the years prior to her reunion with her divinely sired son is her spiritual torment and not the physical torture which is usually inflicted upon mortal maidens who bear children to the gods.

[33] See Parker, 1987: 207: 'Euripides duly installs him there, in defiance of tradition, and without explaining how the throne passed back from Ion's line to Erechtheus' normal successor, Pandion'. On the systematisation of the mythical tradition and the fabrication of a continuous line of Athenian kings, see Gantz, 1993: 233-258. It seems likely that the story of

Euripides chose this variant, because he clearly wished to endow Ion with both a divine ancestor, a great asset to the eponymous hero of the Ionians, and an Athenian mother of royal autochthonous blood, thus, also emphasising the relationship between Athens and her Ionian allies; furthermore, according to this account, Doros and Achaios[34] were reduced to a lower status, since they were now only half-brothers to Ion and of inferior, mortal, only half-Athenian blood.[35] The setting of the dramatic action in the precinct of Apollo's temple in Delphi, whether a Euripidean innovation or not[36], furnished the plot, on a more practical level, with an architectural

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the *Ion* existed as a separate tale and that when Hellanikos of Lesbos at the end of the fifth century (soon after 404BCE; Thuc. i.97) and later Atthidographers (after 350 BCE; e.g. Cleidemos, Androtion, Phanodemos, Demon, Melanthios, Philochoros; cf. Paus. 10.15.5) restructured the myths in order to create a unified cycle with an internal chronological coherence matching the chronology of the myths of the rest of Greece, they chose to assign to Ion the role of a general and an immigrant (Hdt. 8.44; Paus. 1.31.3, 2.14.2) and to give the Athenian throne to the legitimate successors of Erechtheus, namely Kekrops II, Pandion II, Aegeus, and Theseus. On Ion as a contradiction-mediating figure in the Athenian autochthonous line, see below 2.1.2. and 2.2.

[34] Interestingly, Xouthos at 64 is called Achaios, whereas at 1592 Achaios is his son (see Owen at line 64). On the Euripidean innovation in the genealogy of Xouthos, see Conacher, 1959: 26.

[35] These features assigned to the Dorians fitted quite well with the contemporary situation, in which the Spartans and their allies (e.g. the Corinthians and Megarians), who were Dorian descendants that had settled in the Peloponnesos, presented the greatest danger to the Athenian empire, with which they had already been at war for more than ten years by the time of the performance of the *Ion*. Yet the fact that there was still a blood relationship between Ion and Doros in this mythic version may be taken as an indirect attempt to promote Pan-Hellenic unity, or, as Owen notes (xl), as a suggestion 'to Dorian states that owing to their origin there was no gross incompatibility in their forming connections with the Athenians'; cf. Lucas: 70.

[36] See Kuntz, 1993: 39 and n. 4.

compound of sacred buildings to which the dramatic characters could conveniently retire, when not needed for the action on stage.[37]

On another level, the superimposition of the realistically portrayed, yet imaginary, Delphic setting onto the actual Athenian landscape immediately around the theatre and the distancing of the precinct of Acropolis into the mythic world of early Athenian pseudo-history, encourage an association between the two places. By the end of the play, Delphi and Athens are established in the minds of the spectators as successive locations in a mythic continuum that leads up to contemporary Athens and Delphi, thereby asserting the profound relationship between the two cities. The playwright also sets upon the colonisation of Ionia the seal of approval of the Delphic oracle, when, in the closing lines of the play, Athena, acting as Apollo's emissary, predicts the founding of Ionia by Ion's descendants; the spectators would certainly have recalled the fundamental role the Delphic oracle played during the years of Greek colonisation, when individuals or city-states sought counsel from it before setting out on their expeditions.[38]

Finally, another more controversial feature of the story, which may have attracted Euripides' dramatic interest above all, was the inherent moral ambivalence of divine rape. As we shall see later (ch. 3), this myth presented him with the opportunity to focus on a cluster of problematic contradictions and ambiguities in the late fifth-century audience's perception of divinity and its attitude to myth. Euripides does not resolve these contradictions in his play: he displays them in all their tension and difficulty, and leaves it up to the Athenian audience to pass final judgement upon them.

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[37] See Hourmouziades, 1965: 111-115.

[38] See Parke and Wormell, 1956: 53-4.

Euripides opens the *Ion* by means of one of his standard techniques, an expository prologue delivered by Hermes, a narrator external to the dramatic action.[39] The divine narrator in his soliloquy provides the relevant story-line information concerning the events prior to the dramatic action and sets the

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[39] All the extant Euripidean prologues delivered by external narrators are actually spoken by deities or supernatural beings: *Alc.* 1-27 (Apollo), *Hipp.* 1-57 (Aphrodite), *Hec.* 1-58 (Polydoros' ghost), *Tro.* 1-47 (Poseidon), *Ion* 1-81 (Hermes). The Euripidean prologues spoken by internal narrators are the following: *Med.* 1-48 (Nurse), *Hcld.* 1-54 (Iolaos), *Andr.* 1-55 (Andromache), *Suppl.* 1-41 (Aethra), *Herc.* 1-59 (Amphitryon), *El.* 1-53 (Farmer), *IT.* 1-66 (Iphigeneia), *Hel.* 1-67 (Helen), *Pho.* 1-87 (Iokaste), *Or.* 1-70 (Elektra), *Bac.* 1-63 (Dionysos). *IA.* is not listed here because the prologue may be corrupt. The closing lines of the expository monologue introduce the audience to the main hero who, occasionally, appears on stage uttering a second prologue in the form of a lyrical monody before the chorus enter, as in Eur. *Hec.* 59-97 and *Ion* 82-183 [cf. *El.* 112f-165, which, though, is Electra's re-entry; the chorus enter at 166 and a *kommos* then follows. Cf. also Soph. *El.* 86-120 (anapaests only), then the chorus enter at 121 and then comes the *kommos*]. More often there is a dialogue between the prologue speaker and another dramatic character (as in *Med.* 49-130; *Hcld.* 55-72; *Andr.* 56-116; *Herc.* 60-106; *Hel.* 68-163; *Or.* 71-139) or between two new characters (as in *Pho.* 88-201). Some variations upon this pattern of prologue structure are also found. Thus, in *Hipp.* 58-120, the protagonist enters singing followed immediately by a chorus of attendants; first, he prays to Artemis and, then engages in a dialogue with an old servant, who praises the graces of Aphrodite; at the end of the dialogue, Hippolytos sends his attendants away, and then withdraws, whereas the old servant is left alone on stage praying to Aphrodite; it is then that a chorus of women, servants of Phaedra's house, enter. In *El.*, first there is a dialogue between the prologue speaker, the farmer, and the protagonist, and then there is a second dialogue between Orestes and Pylades; then, Electra sings her monody and, immediately after, is joined by the chorus. In *IT*, the protagonist delivers the prologue, then she retires and Orestes and Pylades engage in a dialogue, at the end of which the chorus enter. In *Suppl.* and in *Bac.* the prologue is immediately followed by the chorus. In *Tro.*, the prologue speaker Poseidon engages in a dialogue with Athena, but both gods are characters external to the ensuing action, as indeed are Apollo and Thanatos in *Alc.* For a narratological analysis of Euripidean prologues, see Goward, 1994: 41 n. 28.

scene for the unfolding of the ensuing dramatic plot.[40] After formally introducing himself (1-4)[41], Hermes relates to the audience that Apollo violated Kreousa ('βίαι', 10-11), who concealed the story from her father, by the god's own wish ('ἀγνῶς δὲ πατρί, (τῶι θεῶι γὰρ ἦν φίλον)', 14); she subsequently exposed her new-born son in the same cave where she was assaulted (15-18). Next, Hermes supplies information about Apollo's plans of which the fictional protagonists are unaware, namely that the god ordered him to carry the baby from the cave to his oracle at Delphi. There is a development, then, from what one character knows, i.e. Kreousa, but others do not, i.e. that she was raped, to what no character knows, i.e. that the baby was saved; the audience are thereby associated with Kreousa, inasmuch as they do know something, but also with the other, ignorant characters, for compared to the gods the spectators are only mortals who know nothing and can be deceived.

Hermes, by doing Apollo the favour of carrying the baby Ion in his cradle from the 'Μακρᾶς Πέτρας', where it was exposed, to the Delphic temple's steps (38), has completed his mission as Apollo's emissary on the level of the myth-based story (fabula). Yet, on the level of the dramatic plot (sjuzet), he is still needed as a narrator of the events that have led to the dramatic present. In Hermes' narrative, the new agent of Apollo's plan is now his priestess[42], who on her way into the temple catches sight of the baby, overcomes her first impulse to cast the baby outside the sanctuary and

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[40] As Pfister remarks, the key function of this type of prologue 'consists in relieving the internal communication system of the need to transmit expository information' (1988: 91). A secondary, yet equally important function of the Euripidean prologues spoken by divinities (above n. 39) is to provide an ironic context within which the whole plot can be seen.

[41] A common feature of Euripidean prologue-speakers; cf. Arist. Frogs 946.

[42] On the role of the Pythia and the power of Tyche and of the human emotions (e.g. 'οἴκτωι', 47), see ch. 3, esp. 3.2. nn. 20 and 22.

goes on to become his foster mother (48), without either her or the child knowing the identity of his parents (49-51).

The time lapse between Ion's birth and the dramatic present, which would cover Ion's childhood, is only briefly hinted at as a period when Ion played freely around the altars (52-3). In the current dramatic present Ion is said to have reached manhood and to have been assigned a new role in the Delphic sanctuary. He is said to be 'the treasurer of the god and trusty steward of all' (53-5) leading a holy life in the Delphic precinct (55-6). The lens now turns to Kreousa's life since Ion's birth and up to the dramatic present. We are told that she is married to Xouthos, an Achaean prince, and that the couple is childless. For this reason they have now come to consult the oracle (57-67).

Now that he has recounted the prehistory of the play for the audience, Hermes has fulfilled his role as a narrator who is still situated outside the action. And yet, after this report, he passes his personal judgement on the course of the events ('Λοξίας δὲ τὴν τύχην ἐς τοῦτ' ἐλαύνει'[43], 67-68), presenting Apollo as having been in absolute control of the situation. Then, he ventures even further into offering a preview of the events to be dramatised: Xouthos will be given a false oracle that Ion is his son, Kreousa will, supposedly, recognise Ion at her palace in Athens, her relationship to Apollo will remain secret, and her son will have his due, becoming well known in Greece by the name 'Ion, builder of the Asiatic land' (69-75). This programmatic announcement, however, is not infallible, nor totally reliable,

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[43] Tyche is the way things fall out, and, if you believe in the directing powers of the gods (as Hermes naturally does), tyche is the result, i.e. it is 'θεία τύχη' (cf. Pindar, Plato). But the contemporaries of Euripides were not quite so sure; cf. in Thucydides the operation of blind chance. See 3.2. n. 22.

since it does not seem to come straight from Apollo[44]; in the event, the recognition between mother and son will not occur in Athens, as Hermes presumes, but within the actual time-span of the drama, on stage, in Delphi (1020f.).[45]

Euripides is a dramatist capable of the subtlest manoeuvres in withholding vital information from the spectators so as to create suspense, stir their imagination and, in due course, surprise them by his handling of the plot, thus drawing their attention to his directorial competence. The playful treatment of the god[46] covers up any incongruity between his foretelling and the actual dramatisation of the story. Hermes makes a bold dramatic exit into the laurel grove (76), where he will supposedly remain as a silent eavesdropper, 'waiting to learn what has been accomplished by Apollo's will concerning the child', as one would literally translate 'τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι', (77), or, as I would paraphrase it, 'well, I'll go and see what happens, as it unfolds'. By assuming the position of a spectator, Hermes comes into closer contact with the audience; appropriately, in accordance with his mythical functions, he welcomes them into the fictional dramatic world and guides their interest in finding out the outcome of the play.

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[44] Contrast lines 29-36, where Hermes quotes Apollo exactly, acting almost as a 'κῆρυξ', proclaiming Apollo's concern for his child. This role of 'κῆρυξ' is also appropriate at Delphi, where the Pythia proclaims Apollo's oracles to mortals.

[45] On the Euripidean technique of surprising the audience by using 'a little judicious *suggestio falsi* in the prologue' (phrase borrowed from Dodds) see Dalmeyda, 1915: 43-50 and 1919: 121-131; Stuart,1918: 295-306; Hamilton, 1978: 277-302; also, Barrett, 1964: at line 42; Dodds, 1960: at line 52.

[46] On Hermes' self-characterisation as lackey of the gods ('δαιμόνων λάτριν', 4), see below ch. 4 at nn. 13-15. Such a characterisation of him was already a commonplace in fifth-century literature; cf. Aesch. *Prom.* 941 (τρόχιν), 966 and 968 (Hermes' λατρεία to Zeus), 983 (ὑπηρέτην); Soph. *Inachos* 35, 69 (λάτριν).

1.2.2. The Structure of Time[47]

Drama does not take the form of a reflective meditation, but, as its etymology from 'δράω' denotes, it is about doing, it involves action. A theatrical play has a dynamic structure, marked by successive movements from one state of affairs to another. Inextricably linked with the idea of any such process is the concept of time. A dramatist has to articulate the temporal structure of his play by supplying a fictional chronology, within which the series of actions occurs, and by maintaining chronological coherence, in the sense that the events enacted in the present on stage are so arranged that they may be related to past and future scenes within the drama itself or to simultaneous off-stage events, as well as to events belonging to the story-line (*fabula*) of the longer narrative, such as the prehistory of the drama or any predictions referring to the long-term future outside the dramatic plot.

Ancient Greek dramatists tend to represent a single and complete action on stage and to confine the development of the dramatic plots to a single day, though, of course, the origins of the dramatised action are to be found in the remote past, often many generations before the actual dramatic present, while its repercussions will be felt by many more future generations.[48] A determining factor in the selection of the particular single

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[47] For this section I am much indebted to Elam 1980: esp. 117-119; Pfister, 1988: esp. 275-294; Aston & Savona, 1991: esp. 27-31.

[48] Aristotle, in his analysis of tragedy in the Poetics, does not deal with the structure of time as such, but he emphasises the importance of the unity of the represented action, claiming that a tragedy will possess unity if it represents a single action (ch.8). For Aristotle, a tragic plot ought to constitute an organic whole 'possessing a beginning, a middle and an end' (ch. 7), and 'its parts, consisting of the events, should be so constructed that the displacement or removal of any one of them will disturb or disjoint the work's wholeness' (ch. 8). On the

action (extracted from a longer epic narrative) for dramatisation was that it comprised the critical moments that presented a reversal in the fortune of the protagonist and the immediate family. The advance knowledge of an impending crisis, on the part of the spectators, was exploited by the playwrights to reinforce suspense. On the other hand, the limited duration of the actual performance (*Performance Time*) offered a guideline for the expectations of the audience, in so far as the perceptible progress in time connoted a progression towards the resolution of the dramatised conflicts.

In the prologue of the *Ion*, as was stated above (1.2.1.), Hermes relates chronologically the beginning of the scenically represented action to the background events of the *fabula*, and gives the spatio-temporal coordinates of the dramatic present. We may safely infer that the play is set in Delphi, in the mythical period of the Erechtheids in Athens, before the Trojan war (*Historical time*[49]). Ion has reached manhood as a minister in the Delphic temple; Kreousa and Xouthos will arrive on this very day at Delphi to receive an oracle from the god concerning their childlessness (*Time present*

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difference in time scale between epic and tragedy, see *Poet.* 5: 'whereas tragedy strives as far as possible to limit itself to a single day ['ὑπὸ μίαν περίοδον ἡλίου εἶναι ἢ μικρὸν ἐξαλλάττειν'; cf. *Ion* 1516-7: 'ἐν φαειναῖς ἡλίου περιπτυχαῖς'], epic is distinctive in its lack of a temporal limit ['ἀόριστος τῶι χρόνωι']'. On the prescribed size for a tragic plot, see *Poet.* 7: '(tragedy) must have some size, but one which allows it to be perceived all together ('εὐσύνοπτον'), so that plot-structures should be of a length which can be easily held in the memory ('εὐμνημόνευτον')'. In *Poet.* 26, Aristotle concludes his comparison of the epic and tragic genres by asserting the superiority of the latter, on the ground that it achieves 'the aim of its *mimesis* in a shorter scope: the relative compression gives greater pleasure than dilution over a longer period (consider the hypothetical case of someone setting Sophocles' *Oedipus* in as many verses as the *Iliad*)'. Trans. Halliwell, 1987. See also Halliwell's discussion of the relevant passages. On the one-day limit in Greek tragedy, see Gibert, 1995: 67 n. 22.

[49] Term used by Elam (above n. 47) to describe 'the precise counterfactual background to the dramatic representation' (p. 118).

or *discourse time*[50]). We learn later that this is an auspicious day (420-1), which gives great happiness to Xouthos and Ion after their false recognition (562). The chorus wish that Ion may find his death within this day and never set foot in Athens (720). It is also the day the priestess hands over to Ion his birth-tokens, which will reveal to him the identity of his mother (1354). Finally, after the recognition with his mother and Kreousa's detailed account

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[50] The fictional 'here and now' is in constant change on stage. See above n. 47, Elam and Aston & Savona. Elam quotes the American dramatist Thornton Wilder, who says that 'on the stage it is always now'. In the *Ion*, the frequent occurrences of 'νῦν' (thirty instances: 556, 558, 562, 564, 609, 654, 699, 741, 902, 945, 970, 976, 978, 984, 1026, 1039, 1128, 1258, 1341, 1344, 1349, 1355, 1380, 1460, 1508, 1511, 1539, 1601, 1609, 1612) seem to be a constant reminder of the urgency of the present and the pressure it exerts upon the characters to act immediately, without delay. See especially: (a) the false recognition scene between Xouthos and Ion: 'accept your father now' (556); '(dear mother) now, more than ever, I yearn to behold you, whoever you are' (564); (b) the scene where Kreousa and the old paedagogue contrive the plan of their revenge: 'my daughter, let us not keep thinking of our sorrow now' (970; cf. 945); 'Try now what is within your compass and kill your husband' (976); 'now, then, kill the son who has been produced at your expense' (978); 'come, it is for you to contribute something now' (984); 'kill him here now, where you can deny your guilt' (1026); (c) Kreousa's suppliant scene: 'sit now upon the altar' (1258); (d) the scene when Pythia reveals the birth tokens to Ion: 'now I am showing you' (1341); 'take them now and labour to find your mother' (1355); (e) Kreousa's change of heart: 'now I gladly clasp the ring upon his door' (1612). Apart from the adverb 'νῦν', cf. the use of the nouns 'χρόνος' and 'καιρός', the adjective 'χρόνιος' and the adverb 'θᾶσσον', which may also call attention to the pressure of the present situation and the need to resort to immediate action. For instance, when Kreousa says to the old paedagogue that she has already begun savouring the pleasure of Ion's imminent murder ('προλάζυμαι γοῦν τῶι χρόνωι τῆς ἡδονῆς', 1027), the implication is that the Athenian queen can barely wait for the execution of their plan; the sooner Ion dies the more pleasure she will enjoy. Such a demand exerts pressure upon the old paedagogue who is to act as the agent of the murderous plan; wishing to achieve the desired result as soon as possible (cf. 'ὡς θᾶσσον', 1180), the old man manages to entice the feasters into drinking from the goblets he distributes (so as to make sure that Ion receives the one which he will have spiked with poison), under the pretext that if they exchange their small cups for larger ones, they will get into good spirits sooner ('ὡς θᾶσσον ἐλθωσ' οἵδ' ἐς ἡδονὰς φρενῶν', 1180).

of his engendering by Apollo, Ion is so much burdened by this accumulation of new information, which has inundated his quiet temple life all within this one day, that he wonders whether it is indeed possible for a man to learn so much under the light of the sky on a single day (1516-7); perhaps, one might find here also a covert reference to the play's complex structure with the multiple reversals of fortune and closely averted disasters. The temporal arrangement of the dramatised events (*Plot Time*) in a day so packed with emotional fluctuations, was almost too much for Ion to handle; it was the result of Apollo and *Tyche*, we are told, but we know that it was Euripides who devised such an intricate plot.[51]

Once the dramatic plot has been set going, its development is signposted by a series of entrances and exits, a common device at the tragic playwright's disposal.[52] The narrative supplied along with each new entrance forwards the plot and signals a progression in time[53], which is often explicitly pinpointed by the dramatic figures themselves. Xouthos' late arrival is thus emphasised ('χρόνιος ἐλθών', 403). Again just before the end of the play, and after the reversal of fortune in the lives of Ion and Kreousa has been secured, Athena draws attention to divine providence, which may have

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[51] See below ch. 3.

[52] On the significance of exits and entrances in tragedies, see Taplin, 1985: 31-57.

[53] A sense of progress in time is also achieved by the numerous expressions of time that appear in the play. We find references to the past: (a) for a long time: 64, 370, (470), 1394; (b) when the time was ripe: 16, 828, 830; (c) a long time ago: 547, 1425, 1375 (it should have happened, but did not). There are also many references to the present: (a) now is the time: 1341, 1355, 1612; (b) now you see: 558; unless it is time to see (and indeed it is): 1552; (c) until now: 945, 1349; (d) a reversal of fortune occurs now: 1460, 1508, 1612. And, finally, note the many references to the future: (a) from now onwards: 1511, 1601; (b) when the time is ripe: 659, 1582; (c) for a long time (explains Xouthos' absence): 1130.

appeared to have taken a long time to be manifested, but is effective all the same ('χρόνια μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν πως, ἐς τέλος δ' οὐκ ἀσθενῆ', 1615).

By convention, progress in the dramatic plot occurs only within the episodes. The choral odes do not reveal story-line information but comment on it; they may also offer a broader context within which the enacted plot may be placed, so that the audience can gain a deeper insight into the problems faced by the dramatic figures. The passage of time that is dramatically covered by the choral odes varies; in the ode preceding the messenger's arrival, time is allowed for the off-stage events to occur, so that the messenger may report what has happened. A similar function is achieved by the *rheseis*, which, though they may be running concurrently with the dramatic present, do not mark a development in time or plot, but, rather, suspend the dramatic action; more specifically, they serve to give voice to the emotions of the individual characters and justify the motives of their subsequent actions, as is the case with the monodies of Ion (82-183) and Kreousa (859-922) and with Ion's speeches (429-451; 585-647), or to supply information on events that have occurred in the past (Hermes' prologue), or offstage (messenger's speech), or will occur outside the time-span of the play (Athena's speech). The task of mentally constructing the temporal ordering of the dramatised events irrespective of the order in which they are shown or reported (*Chronological time*) is left to the spectators, who are also called upon to appreciate the dramatic value of the *rheseis* and of the choral odes.

1.2.3. Anachronisms

Euripides in his tragedies exploits the consciousness on the part of the audience of the co-existence and interplay between the world of the theatre

(the real 'here and now' of the performance, comprising the stage, set and actors) and the world of the drama (the fictional place, time and characters of the play). In this section, I shall be focusing on the *hermeneutic* differences – the different models of explanation applied to the same events by characters in the world of myth, on the one hand, and spectators in the world of the theatre, on the other. The aspect I have chosen to elucidate is this: the audience live in an increasingly rational world (in which traditional myths are subjected to ever more sceptical scrutiny), but from the prologue onwards are invited to acquiesce in a mythical model, while the play's male characters live in a world of myth but tend to prefer rationalistic explanation; in so doing, the latter reflect contemporary tendencies of the end of the fifth century BCE, formulated mainly by the philosophical movement of the sophistic school and the simultaneous development of rhetoric in the *agora* and the law courts.[54]

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[54] Easterling (1985) has examined how ancient Greek tragedians incorporated the inherited epic mythical tradition into their plays by setting their plays in the heroic past, but at the same time allowed for the obvious connections to be made between the enacted myth and contemporary reality, taking care not to cross the boundary too often or too drastically; there is no mention of books (p. 5), or of the theatre itself (p. 6), or of coined money (p. 6). She concludes that this conventional mythical setting did not restrain the dramatist's imagination but offered them 'a stimulus and a challenge'. While Easterling draws attention to the dramatic convention of avoiding conspicuous anachronisms, Croally (1994: 207-215) examines closely Eur. *Suppl.* in an effort to unearth the function of the overt anachronistic elements which permeate this play. He argues that '*Supplices* with its peculiar temporality, could be said to be taking myth and making it unmythical in order to exemplify the problems of using myths for didactic purposes' (p. 213) and that 'out of that crisis (of myth) new forms of myth and new forms of timelessness (the stock characters and plots of New Comedy) may have emerged' (n. 134). Croally continues with a thorough and sophisticated examination of the *Troades* (pp. 215-258), exposing the distinctive dramatic world of the play, which is 'constructed in a conflation of the mythical and the contemporary, the other-worldly and the (political, rhetorical and ideological) here and now' (p. 234). The distinctiveness of the dramatic world of that play

In the *Ion* quite frequently there is a tension between the evocation, on the one hand, of the dramatic world of Ion and Kreousa as part of a glamorous past and that, on the other, of values, attitudes and styles of reasoning that have to do with the actual present of the spectators, i.e. with contemporary fifth-century attitudes. Sometimes the dramatist stretches this tension to the extreme, making matters difficult for those characters who come from and still live in the heroic past but are judged by other characters whose argumentation derives straight from the day-to-day experience of a fifth-century Athenian.

Of particular interest are the instances in which we are given a mythical account of divine births, erotic pursuits and violent assaults against feminine figures by gods, for divine wedlock is at the core of the *Ion*. It appears from the outset, when Hermes in the first four lines of his opening speech introduces himself as the offspring of Zeus and Maia, currently at the service of the gods (δαιμόνων λάτριν[55]). Shortly after comes the first mention of Kreousa's rape by Apollo (10-11; note 'βίαι'-'perforce'), also the first mention of the earthborn Erichthonios' mythical upbringing by the virgin goddess Athena (20f.), and Xouthos' ancestry (63) as son of Aiolos and grandson of Zeus. Hermes has given the audience in a single block all the information needed about the imaginary place, time, protagonists of the drama and their past history. His account lies wholly within the mythical world.

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is mirrored by the distinctiveness of its didactic function, which is itself the object of Euripides' questioning; because of the complexity of the otherness of the dramatic world, the audience is encouraged to hold 'an ironic attitude to the authority of this particular representation and of representation in general' (p. 255).

[55] On the comic element that may be discerned in Hermes' self-characterisation, see above n. 46 and below ch. 4 at nn. 13-15.

Erichthonios' upbringing is mentioned again (268; 1429), as well as other mythical divine births, such as Athena's birth from Zeus' head (452f.) and Apollo's birth from the Titanis Leto who mated with Zeus (919-22); the Gorgon's birth is a true *parthenogenesis* from Γῆ (988-90); Kreousa is likened to an 'ἔχιδνα' by the furious Ion and referred to as offspring of the river Kephisos (1261) who was transformed into a bull. The myth of Herakles subduing the Amazons, a myth which expresses the archetypal struggle of male against female and the perennial Greek conflict with the barbarian, is alluded to in the messenger speech (1144-5), where the Amazons are said to be the first owners of the tapestries with which Ion decorated his tent. On the tapestries a series of heavenly bodies is depicted, among which is Orion, who is said to be pursuing the Pleiades with his sword ever drawn, a figurative expression (or emblem) of his repetitive violent assaults against female figures (1152-3; cf. 'ξιφήρη', 1258).[56] Ion refers rather disapprovingly to the mythical rapes committed by Zeus, Poseidon and Apollo (445f.).

Kreousa's story is presented in a mythical context at 492-508 by the chorus in lyric language; the women of the chorus conclude by taking up a stance that often appears in tragedy, namely that 'the children of Gods and mortals do not ever come to good' (507-8). Kreousa narrates four more times her rape by Apollo in mythical language: the first time in her dialogue with Ion at 338f; then, when she sings her monody, which is a hymn to Apollo in reverse and makes allusions to the story of Persephone's abduction by Hades (881); then again in her dialogue with Erechtheus' old tutor (936-51); and, finally, in her recognition scene with Ion (1479f). Athena comes at the end of the play to confirm Ion's divine parentage (1560-62; 1595f.).

Yet these mythical narratives are repeatedly challenged by passages

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[56] See Zeitlin, 1989: 175.

which seem to reject the possibility of divine parentage[57]. Thus, the prophetess Pythia in seeing the exposed baby in the basket assumes that it must have been the outcome of an illicit union of a Delphian woman (43f.; cf. 1365f.); Ion supposes that he was the fruit of a woman's wrong (325); when Kreousa reports her story of the rape as that of her imaginary friend, Ion dismisses it and takes it as a cover-up for her violation by some man (338f.). After the false recognition between Ion and Xouthos, Ion asks if his mother was Γῆ Xouthos dismisses this idea by arguing that 'the ground bears no children', in a rationalistic way that strongly challenges one of the fundamental tenets of the myth of Athenian autochthony. His version about Ion's mother is more mundane; he guesses that well before he married Kreousa, in a Bacchic festival at Delphi, he must have raped a Delphian Maenad while he was in a drunken state (540f.). As one scholar has rightly remarked, Xouthos is the character in the play 'farthest from the mythical world'[58]; in this light, one might, perhaps, detect a certain playfulness on the

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[57] For the same technique, cf. Eur. Her., where Lycus (147-8), Amphitryon (339-347) and the chorus (353-4) challenge Herakles' divine paternity from Zeus; on line 353, see Bond, 1981. Helen in Hel. 16-22, 256-61, Andromache in Tro. 766-71 and the chorus in I.A. 793-800, all in their turn express their scepticism about the story of Leda and the swan who traditionally were thought of as Helen's parents. Andromache cannot believe that Helen, who caused the death of many Greeks and Trojans, could have had divine parentage: 'never were you daughter of Zeus, but many fathers, I say, sired you: Vengeance, Envy, Slaughter, Death, all the ills that earth brings forth' (Tro. 766-71, trans. Grene & Lattimore; cf. Iphigeneia in IT. 380-91 and Herakles in Herc. 1341-46). Euripides placed myth under pressure; in his tragedies there is a clear trend towards the demystification of mythical allegories and the humanisation of gods and heroes.

[58] Wolff, 1965: 183. Ruck (1976: 247-51) goes further, suggesting that there is a profoundly antithetical relationship between the dramatic figures of Xouthos and Apollo, i.e. between the surrogate and the real father of Ion; he claims, on the one hand, that a similarity can be traced between Xouthos' name and Apollo's epithet Xanthos and, on the other, that the mortal father has a predominantly chthonic ancestry through his father Aiolos, the north serpentine wind,

part of the playwright, if, in the world of the theatre, the actor who spoke the prologue of the play as Hermes, the mythical god, later doubled not only as Xouthos, the rational mortal, but also as the Pythia and Athena.[59] Later, the paedagogue offers Kreousa his own version of events concerning the begetting of her husband's newly-found son; according to him, Xouthos, in finding that Kreousa was barren, decided to impregnate a slave-girl so as to get an heir for his throne (815f.; 837). Finally, Ion, after his final recognition of his mother Kreousa, takes her aside and questions her about the real identity of his father; he supposes that behind the story of her rape by Apollo she hides a more mundane tale, and he is about to enter the temple in order to question the god himself about his father (1547f.), when Athena's timely appearance thwarts the sacrilege.

This clash of discourse in Euripides is not random: there is a consistent juxtaposition of different perspectives. Such a juxtaposition of the mythical perspective with the contemporary one, in the *Ion*, urges the audience to reflect upon the peculiar parentage of the protagonist: he was

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whose representative is the Delphic Python, an association marking even more clearly his opposition to Olympian Apollo. Though Ruck seems to have searched hard for mythical evidence to substantiate his hypothesis, i.e. the complete antithesis between Ion's two fathers, in the end his whole argument sounds quite far-fetched and of little relevance to the dramatic plot.

[59] Pickard-Cambridge (1988: 146), in the distribution of parts between the three tragic actors, argues that the third actor would certainly have played the roles of Xouthos, the Pythia and Athena, and might also have played Hermes, though the latter may also have been assigned to the second actor, who played Kreousa. Though the question cannot be resolved with certainty due to the lack of relevant evidence, I would argue, for what it is worth, that a more theatrical effect would have been accomplished if the third actor played the roles of all the three emissaries-agents of Apollo, who, along with the ignorant Xouthos, secured the realisation of Apollo's plan. In a sense, one might even go so far as to say that this is the actor who speaks with the voice of the silent Apollo.

the offspring of divine rape, was brought up as an orphan with the priestess as his foster mother and Apollo as his spiritual father, later was led to believe that Xouthos was his father and an unknown Delphian maiden his alleged mother, only to discover that it was Kreousa, Xouthos' legal wife, who was his real mother and Apollo his real father, with Xouthos being reduced to the status of a foster father who was to remain ignorant of Ion's true origins. All these complications were necessary conditions if the Athenian throne was to be bequeathed to a legitimate heir who would combine the best of two worlds, namely Olympian blood via Apollo and the divine protection of the city goddess, as well as autochthonous mortal blood via his mother Kreousa; the convenient silencing of Xouthos guaranteed Ion's smooth accession to the throne (see 2.1.2, 2.2.).

1.3. Constructing the Space

1.3.1. Theatrical Space

By the fifth century, Athenian drama was performed in the specially designated space of the theatre of Dionysos. The physical parameters of this theatre remained unchanged, while its stage area was subject to only gradual minor alterations and additions (stage furnishings, e.g. altar, statues) intended to conform with the demands of individual plays and playwrights, as was discussed in detail earlier (see 1.1). The form of the theatrical space itself provided emphatic spatial expression for the fundamental ideas of the Athenian monocentric polis[60], for it was a microcosm of Greek society, embodying the relationship between, on the one hand, the community as a whole, represented by the audience, and, on the other, the special forum for political action, represented by the stage area, the focal point of the audience's attention.

Assigning to dramatic productions their own clearly demarcated theatrical space meant also establishing a frame to which social meaning accrued.[61] Athenian citizens would arrive and take their seats in the

[60] See De Polignac, 1984: 87-90; Longo, 1990: 12-20. Croally (1994: 163-174) comments on the centrality of the Athenian civic space, which was 'also a well-defined, enclosed space' (p.169), and on the important role space had 'in determining civic, individual and gender identities' in the Greek *polis* (p. 173). See also Loraux, who summarises the arguments of Lévêque & Vernant, and argues that 'in Athens power is located only "in the centre"', 1993: 15; also 42f.

[61] As a counterpart to the Greeks' use of a relatively fixed theatrical space – a practice also taken up in the Elizabethan theatre –, in the twentieth century a trend emerged for freeing the theatre space from all architectural boundaries; so, for instance, the English director Peter Brook claimed that he 'could take any empty space and call it a bare stage' (1968: 10).

auditorium, immediately assuming the role of spectator. They knew they were about to view the representation of a fictional story and not some impromptu event which they just happened to witness; the dramatic world would act upon them in an aesthetic way (as well as religiously, politically, etc., as we shall see in a moment) and not merely in an empirical or quotidian way. This simple cognitive difference assured their physical non-interference with the dramatic action; spectators were aware that they ought not to jump out of their seats and rush to the stage area, physically interacting with the actors in order to prevent an undesired outcome in the enacted series of events. They would attentively witness the performance, oblivious to the theatrical environs irrelevant to the dramatic action; they would allow themselves to be drawn into the fictional dramatic world, and empathise with the fates of the dramatic figures, experiencing the gamut of emotions which the playwright had in store for characters and spectators alike. The set of plays being performed were produced by a playwright whose previous plays members of the audience may well have seen performed in the same location before, whereas the dramatised myth will probably have been the subject of previous representations by different dramatists; memories of this sort along with personal preferences for one or another playwright or actor were among the factors which determined the spectators' immediate response to the play.

The dimension of theatrical experience that I have been emphasising hitherto in this section has been what we might call aesthetic: it is a response to a fictional event whose fictionality may not be predominant in the spectators' consciousness at every moment, but is never entirely suppressed and can be called up at any moment, reminding them that what they are witnessing and participating in so deeply is not an indifferent part of their ordinary lives, but a special, at least partly, independent domain, one

which — unlike ordinary life — is shaped by an artist's will and can be broken off at any moment. But this aesthetic dimension was, of course, then as now, permitted, created, and structured by numerous social mediations which ensured that, even at its most imaginative and idiosyncratic, it possessed a coherent set of intrinsic institutional meanings. If until the last several decades most classical scholars tended to view Greek tragedies as being essentially literary, fictional works, ones much like the Renaissance and modern plays which directly or indirectly hearken back to them, more recent scholarship has come to recognise the fundamentally political and religious dimension of Attic drama.

The scholarship of the last decade has emphasised, on the one hand, that all the Greek tragedies were performed as a public, official offering on the part of the city of Athens to the god Dionysos within the context of his established cult worship, and that it was imbued with religious sentiment in every regard; and, on the other, that, like almost all Greek religion, the Athenian cult of Dionysos was not simply a religious institution, but also a highly political one, and that the Greater Dionysia not only included the dramatic performances of tragedies and comedies (and dithyrambs) that have survived to our days, but also staged a massive patriotic spectacle representing the wealth, ephebic prowess, and military power of Athens, as well as the loyalty and subservience of her tributary allies.[62] These matters are by now too familiar for it to be necessary to linger upon them here. Instead, I should like to point to another, perhaps less well-known, but no less interesting fact, namely, that the explicit indication within the dramatic text of these religious and political contexts for Greek theatre, which for a

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[62] See Goldhill, 1990. Cf. also most of the other articles collected in Winkler & Zeitlin (eds.), 1990, which can be taken as characteristic expressions of this recent approach.

long time was thought by scholars to be excluded from tragedies by some sort of generic law and permitted only in comedies, is in fact no less typical of tragedy than of comedy, though in ways quite different from this latter. Thus, recently a critic has pointed out that choral self-reference, so far from being restricted to the *parabasis* and other moments of comedy in which the dramatic illusion is broken for comic purposes, is also found at particularly critical junctures in tragedy as well, when the straining of the illusion has an effect which is not ludicrous, but deeply disturbing.[63] And another critic has now reminded us that while the traces of the fact that the dramatic poets produced their plays in direct competition with one another take the form of explicit references only in comedy, these traces are none the less evident in the texts of tragedy for the refusal of the tragic poets to criticise one another by name (a license restricted to what we call Old Comedy anyway).[64]

In both of these last regards, self-referentiality and competitiveness, Euripides has always been thought to be more extreme and more innovative than either Aeschylus or Sophocles. Whether or not this is true, it is certainly the case that Euripides can play with great dramatic effectiveness upon the conventionality of the dramatic conventions within which he, like his colleagues, is obliged to work. The theatre of Euripides is a highly self-conscious theatre. This is particularly true of Euripides' late plays, like the *Ion*, and it manifests itself with special clarity in his use of dramatic space, as we shall see in the following section.

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[63] See Henrichs, 1994-95. 'The tragic chorus [...] collectively embodies [the] continuity of ritual performance [...] as a self-conscious performer of the Dionysiac dance in the orchestra and as an active ritual participant in the festival of Dionysos' (p. 69); 'such choruses invite the audience to participate in a more integrated experience, one in which choral performance in the orchestra merges with the more imaginary performance of the rituals of polytheism that take place in the action of each play' (p. 59).

[64] See Seidensticker, 1996.

1.3.2. Dramatic Space

It is in this frame of mind that the spectators welcome the prologue-speaker
of the *Ion*. After introducing himself (1-4), Hermes defines the dramatic
setting as Delphi, the navel of the earth, the seat of Phoibos and his
prophecies (5-7). In one breath, the imaginary place, the oracular god and a
functional representation of his temple supplant the physical surroundings of
the theatre of Dionysos in the audience's imagination; the poet had to lay out
only a few pointers in order to set the scene. In stating the reason for his visit,
the messenger god extends the setting to include Athens, the famous city of
Pallas[65], and the Long Rocks (8-13), where Kreousa bore and exposed
Apollo's son (14-17) in his hollow cradle (18-26), expecting him to die (18;
27). The mythical Athenian past is briefly evoked through the story of
Erichthonios and the Aglaurids (20-26). Apollo's intervention is vividly
represented by a direct quotation of his actual words — this is actually the
only time in the whole play that Apollo's 'presence' is active (though, only
reported), inasmuch as during the rest of the play he will only be acting
offstage. These seven verses (29-36) conveniently provide the particulars of
all the different locations that are relevant to the dramatic premises of the
stage action: 'εἰς αὐτόχθονα κλεινῶν 'Αθηνῶν (οἶσθα γὰρ θεᾶς πόλιν)' (30);
'Δελφῶν [...] χρηστήρια' (33); 'ἐκ κοίλης πέτρας' (the cave, 31); 'ἄγγει

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[65] Introducing Athens as 'οὐκ ἄσημος 'Ελλήνων πόλις' is not only flattering to the city of the
audience, but also relevant to Ion's position or supposed position in the play. Note how the
speaker closely associates place and divinity: Delphi and Phoibos Apollo, Athens and Pallas
Athena.

σπαργάνοισι' (32); 'πρός [...] εἰσόδοις δόμων ἐμῶν' (34).[66] By means of Hermes' simple and unemotional narration[67], the audience begin to construct mentally the group of interrelated locations which constitute the dramatic space of the play.

Before Hermes retires, he announces the entrance of a new character on stage (78-81). The protagonist would probably have entered from one of the side-entrances[68], at the head of a procession, accompanied by a number of Delphian servants ('Δελφοὶ θέραπες', 94), leading the way towards the focal point of the orchestra. In his opening lines Ion marvels at the effect of the morning sunlight first upon the familiar physical surroundings and then upon the architectural complex of the Delphic temple. His description provides the audience with more specific clues about the Delphic topography, encouraging them to localise the dramatic action within the atmosphere of purity and light of Apollo's shrine.[69] The playwright uses

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[66] See Chalkia, 1986: 100-1.

[67] For Hermes' matter-of-fact delivery, see esp. lines 10-27, 49-51.

[68] *Pace* Hourmouziades (1965: 159), who argues that Ion and his group of attendants come out from the central door; to explain away some of the difficulties of such an entrance, he claims that 'we should assume a very slow opening of the double door', so that Ion may have enough time to recite his anapaests. Even if one were to find Hourmouziades' suggestion plausible, how could one explain the fact that, on his interpretation, the attendants exit from the temple, though they have not cleansed themselves beforehand (94-96)? It seems to me that an entrance from the parodos would be free of such inconsistencies, and would also have the added advantage of providing the audience the spectacular visual effect of the procession, which is far more effective theatrically than a slow opening of the temple door would be. During this solemn parade, Ion must have already started reciting the processional anapaests, as he admires the beauty of the Delphic temple and its environs at sunrise (82-88).

[69] For the dazzling effect of light, note the repetition of the words 'λαμπρά' (82), 'λάμπει' (83), 'καταλαμπόμεναι' for Parnassos' mountain peaks (87), 'ἀργυροειδεῖς' for the silvery gleam of the Kastalian waters (95), 'χρυσήρεις' for the Delphic temple (157) and also 'χρυσέων', (146); 'φοινικοφαῆ' (163). For the association of purity and light, see 'ἄβατοι - καταλαμπόμεναι' (86-

the verbal device of the description of a sunrise over the Delphic oracle in order to direct Ion's, and thus the audience's gaze, first towards Parnassos' peaks (or the Phaedriades), the landmark of the Delphic scenery, and then towards the Delphic oracle from where we are told that fumes of myrrh are soaring up (89f.).[70] Inside the stage building, the Pythia[71] is supposed to be sitting upon the tripod, chanting to the Greeks the cries Apollo sings to her ears alone (91-3). The audience is expected to infer, perhaps, that the actual time of the dramatic present is early in the morning (on the seventh of a non-winter month, for the well-informed spectator), and that the sacrifices must have declared the day propitious, since only on such days did the Pythia prophesy.[72] The Pythia has already taken her seat, just as on the day when Hermes left the baby on the temple steps, she was the first to see it. If we compare Ion's description to that of Hermes, the wording is very similar, but the effect is somewhat different; though seemingly more accurate, it is not any more revealing, but merely reiterates general comments about the oracular procedure as it was known throughout Greece. In Hermes' account, Apollo is said to be sitting on the omphalos, chanting to the mortals revelations of what is and what will come to be (5-7). Ion's account adds the Pythia as the human agent who brings forth Apollo's oracles to the Greeks

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7), 'ἀργυροειδεῖς · καθαραῖς' (95-6); note also how Hermes uses the epithet 'λαμπρά' (79) in the closing lines of his soliloquy to refer to Ion sweeping the god's portals and rendering them spotlessly clean; Ion repeats the same adjective in his opening line to indicate the brightness of the Sun's chariot.

[70] Fontenrose, 1978: 199, interprets this reference as a remark on the fragrance of incense that may have reached the consultants' room.

[71] The Pythia is not mentioned in the Homeric Epics, in Hesiod or the Homeric Hymns, but is first referred to in Theognis and then appears in Aesch. *Eum.* and Eur. *Ion* as a dramatic character; see Fontenrose, 1978: 204f.

[72] See Parke & Wormell, 1956 : vol. 1, p. 30 and n. 51.

(91-3); this perspective upon the divine event may, perhaps, be taken as the first in the series of human (mis)interpretations of the god's acts in the play.[73]

Once the procession has reached the centre of the orchestra, Ion orders his attendants to go and cleanse themselves in the Kastalian spring before they approach the oracle.[74] The information about the consultants' ritual lustrations receives much attention; the Delphian attendants are ordered to abstain from uttering ill-omened words, so that they may speak only auspicious words to those who wish to consult the oracle. More specifically, the ritual 'εὐφημία' command (98f.) means to refrain from speech keeping a solemn silence during religious rites, and, once allowed, to speak only well-omened words. This command is given for the benefit of the audience, in the sense that it helps to characterise Ion and associates Apollo's oracle with purity and auspicious words.

Similarly, the presence of the ministers of the temple serves a double purpose. Firstly, it creates a sense of context, of Delphic atmosphere; the audience is supposed to be witnessing the temple servants a short while before the actual consultation process starts and while they are about to prepare themselves by ritual purification in order to receive the first enquirers. Secondly, it provides an opportunity for further information about Ion's tasks as temple servant (cf. 54f.); he is supposed to make sure that whoever enters the sacred shrine has first undergone a physical and mental purification.[75] Ion's position is now further enhanced by the fact that he is

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[73] On the ambiguity of the oracular responses and the differing degrees of understanding attained by the various dramatic characters, see below ch. 3.2.

[74] Ion himself needs no lustral purification (cf. 'ἡμεῖς δέ', 102); he must have already undergone one, earlier in the morning, since he has already fetched sacred water from the spring (146-9).

[75] I take it that 'στείχετε ναούς' (97) means 'enter the temple'.

giving instructions, just as it was already represented visually on stage by the spectacular procession which he led, with his attendants following him and carrying with them all he needed.[76]

The protagonist is left alone on stage to sing his monody while engaged in the work in which he has laboured from childhood, i.e. sweeping clean the portals of the temple with branches of bay and bedewing the floor with sprinkled water. Having performed his tasks of sweeping and sprinkling, Ion would have put aside the pitchers with the holy water and his laurel broom; the former would be used again later (cf. 434-6), but the latter would no longer serve as a stage-prop, though perhaps it might have been placed near the entrance to the temple door to enhance the association between the theatrical space and the dramatic setting of the Delphic temple. Next, the hero lifts his bow and arrows to scare away the visiting birds, following the order of his tasks as described at 102-108. This sequence recurred daily (cf. 122-3); the temple servant starts cleaning at sunrise and the birds appear a little while later, still early in the morning.

Ion seems to be well acquainted with the different species of birds that frequent the temple. In highly figurative language he describes the 'attacks' by an eagle, a swan, and an unidentified mother-bird. Ion's elaborate description with its vivid cameos, probably paired with an appropriate set of mimic gestures and stage movements, would have guided the imagination of the Athenian spectators to picture in their minds the narrated events in

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[76] Ion's helpers must have carried with them the broom and the bow and arrows, which Ion will shortly put to use. Cf. *Hipp.* 58f., where Hippolytos is followed by his servants (52, 109), coming straight from the hunt; the servants may have carried nets, hunting spears or similar hunting gear. See Barrett, 1964: 167f., on the evidence of secondary choruses brought on stage for a single song; yet Ion's attendants would have had enough time to go off-stage (101) and re-enter as members of the chorus (184).

detail. The first bird that visits is identified periphrastically by its properties as Zeus' herald, whose beak surpasses the strength of the other birds, and this can be none other than the eagle[77]; the second bird flying towards the altars is a swan, Apollo's bird (cf. 164-5) with its scarlet feet ('φοινικοφαῆ πόδα', 162) and sweet song ('καλλιφθόγγους ὠιδάς', 169), but it is told to fly away to Delos, Apollo's birth-place.[78] The third bird's description combines elements used in the description of the other two birds: like the eagle, it is also identified by means of a periphrasis, which, in this instance, focuses on its intentions as a mother-bird wishing to built a nest made of straw under the temple's eaves for its young; like the swan, this bird too is told to fly away from the temple to the streams of Alpheos, or in the glen of Isthmos,[79] to rear its brood.

In his effort to keep the birds away from the eaves ('μὴ χρίμπτειν θριγκοῖς', 156), the temple ('μηδ᾽ ἐς χρυσήρεις οἴκους', 157; also 178) and the holy offerings (177)[80], Ion threatens them with his arrows (158; 164-5; 174). Yet both the eagle and the swan have something that should have saved them from his zeal; the eagle is 'Ζηνὸς κῆρυξ' and the swan is a singer ('ἁ φόρμιγξ Φοίβου ἁ σύμμολπος', 164f.) and so should be under the

[77] On the eagle as Zeus' bird, see Hom. *Il.* 24. 310-11; Pind. *Ol.* 13.21, *Isth.* 6.50, *Pyth.* 1. 5-8; Aristoph. *Birds* 515. Cf. also Pind. frg. 54 (Maehler; Paus. 10.16.3; Strab. 9.419) for the story of the two eagles which were released by Zeus at the same moment with equal speed, one from the East and the other from the West and which met at Delphi, the *omphalos* of the earth.

[78] Line 167. Cf. 921 (see below 1.4., n. 206); *IT.* 1103f.

[79] As Owen remarks on 174-5, 'the references are to the temple of Zeus at Olympia on the Alpheus and to the temple and grove of Poseidon at the Isthmus of Corinth'.

[80] On birds as a public nuisance dirtying the cult-statues, see Dunbar, 1995: 350-57, 367. On the reference to 'μηνίσκοι' in Arist. *Birds* 1114-17 and the possibility of head-attributes to protect statues from birds' droppings in archaic Greece, see Ridgeway, 1990.

patronage of the musician god Apollo.[81] Furthermore, Ion could not risk polluting the sacred precinct of Apollo with blood, all the more so with the blood of the gods' agents (180), hence he refrains from shooting the birds (179).[82]

For Ion, the Delphic scenery and sacred sanctuary was a familiar space which he considered as his home (cf. 109-11; 136-40). And since his position in this space did not warrant a detailed description of the scenery in the monody, the dramatist employed the technique of describing the morning sunlight touching the temple's surroundings as a means to supply more information about the dramatic setting of the play. Besides, the main function of this monody was not so much to embellish the dramatic setting, but rather to present it from the perspective of one of its inhabitants (one who will interest us particularly) and, simultaneously, to introduce the protagonist, to outline his role in Delphi, and to present his devotion to Apollo. Pictorial language is best justified if it is used to describe an unfamiliar object or scenery or an intruder into a familiar space. The last is the case of the

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[81] Note also the irony: the bird of Zeus is to be shot with the bow of Apollo, a feat worthy of Herakles. The swan's song is like the lyre of Apollo, but, both the lyre and the bow are attributes of Apollo; if they come into conflict for Ion, in the present context, the bow wins.

[82] For a rather strained semantic interpretation of the bird-motif in the Ion, see Giraud, 1987: esp. 85-88, on the birds of Parnassos. Giraud argues that this scene contains symbolic references to Ion's past, present and future life; the eagle announces his royal destiny, the swan is a stand-in for Apollo the father and Ion's new life and the mother-bird is a stand-in for Kreousa, whereas the nest recalls Ion's cradle through which the recognition (or his re-birth) will take place (p. 88). An alternative interpretation may be that perhaps the attempted shooting of the eagle, Zeus' bird, prefigures the attempted shooting of Xouthos, Zeus' descendant (517f.), whereas a crime against the swan, Apollo's bird, and a crime against the mother-bird might prefigure the attempted shooting of Kreousa at 1250f., when Ion threatens the mother-figure Kreousa with his bow, while at the same time attempting a crime against Apollo, by threatening to shoot the suppliant of the god who has sought refuge to his altar.

incident with the visiting birds in Ion's monody[83], where, indeed, such graphic language is employed that the description amounts almost to an *ekphrasis*, a technique that will be more elaborately applied in the song accompanying the chorus' first appearance.[84]

A chorus of fifteen women, attendants of Kreousa, arrive from Athens ahead of their mistress in order to occupy themselves with sight-seeing at the Delphic sanctuary.[85] They enter from one of the eisodoi[86] and face the

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[83] Perhaps, in passing, one might quote the articulation of the possible modes of interaction between a man, a room and a visitor suggested by the modern playwright Harold Pinter in his notes to the Royal Court Theatre production of *The Room*: 'Given a man in a room and he will sooner or later receive a visitor. A visitor entering the room will enter with intent [...]. The man may leave with the visitor or he may leave alone. The visitor may leave alone or stay in the room alone when the man is gone. Or they may both stay together in the room'; see Scolnicov, 1987: 19f. Taking into consideration that Ion does not live in a conventional room, but in the outdoor spaces of the Delphic precinct, he may receive visitors from outside the precinct or from the inside of the temple or even from the sky, as happens in the case of the visiting birds.

[84] Heffernan (1991) defines *ekphrasis* as 'the verbal representation of graphic representation' (p. 299) to account for its use in literature from classicism to postmodernism. This definition, however, does not allow for the description of the birds in Ion's monody, which would better fall under the category of *pictorialism*, in that it is a description of natural objects 'with the aid of pictorial techniques' rather than a representation of representational art, as is the case with the chorus' description of the Delphic temple. On literary pictorialism, see Hagstrum, 1958: xxi-xxii (criteria for the evaluation of pictorialism), and esp. the chapter on classical antiquity, pp. 3-36. The literary technique of *ekphrasis* coincides with the very beginnings of literature itself. The most prominent early example of this technique, a 'prototype for countless imitations in later poetry', is Homer's description of Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18. 478-607; for a comprehensive and intelligent discussion of epic *ekphrasis*, see Kurman, 1974. The term *ekphrasis* was much more inclusive amongst the rhetoricians of the third and fourth centuries CE and was applied to any description of place, people, animals, circumstances, objects of art and even dreams; see Bartsch, 1989: 3-39.

[85] For the sight-seeing motif, cf. Eur. *Andr.* 1085-87, where Neoptolemos and his attendants are said to have spent three days admiring the treasuries of the Delphic precinct, before they

eastern façade of the Delphic temple.[87] From the entrance into the precinct and up the steep path leading to the sanctuary, any visitor would certainly have noticed the existence of the temple, probably only partly discerned from this distance through the openings between the various sacred buildings of the precinct. By the second curve of the sacred path, the visitor

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proceeded to carry out the business they came to take care of in the Delphic oracle; *IA* 164-302, where the chorus in their entrance song give a long description of the Greek naval force, see Zeitlin, 1994: 157f. In a fragment from Eur. *Hypsipyle* (fr. 764 N^2), the two interlocutors seem to admire the palace façade at Nemea, see Zeitlin, 1994: 147 and n. 24; cf. also the Aeschylean satyr play *Theoroi* or *Isthmiastai* (P. Oxy. 2162; fr. 78a Radt), whose chorus act as spectators of the Isthmian games. Cf. also Theocr. *Idyll* xv 80-86, where two women admire the tapestries. See Herodas, *Mime* 4, where two women at the temple of Asklepios admire the lifelikeness of its sculptures and paintings. Wolff (1965: 179f.) compares the description of the Delphic sanctuary in the parodos of the *Ion* with the description of new places and the motif of gazing in wonder found in the epic tradition, esp. *Odyssey* 5. 63f., 7. 82f. An interesting variation in the case of the chorus' description of the Delphic temple's decoration – which is for them, indeed, a new sight –, is that they seem to notice only the details which relate to their past experience of mythological figures as encountered in Athenian art.

[86] In this play, one of the eisodoi leads to the area north of the temple, such as Parnassos, the Phaedriades, and the Kastalian spring, while the other eisodos leads south towards the valley, the city of Delphi, the sea, Trophonios' oracle and Athens. I would be inclined to suggest that Ion enters from the right to greet the sunrise in the left of the theatre of Dionysos, which would imply that the chorus, Kreousa and Xouthos enter from the left. It is not clear which of the two side-entrances leads to the holy tent and to the place of sacrifice to which Ion and Xouthos retire at the end of the second episode, but it seems beyond doubt that it is different from the one from which Kreousa and the old paedagogue enter at the beginning of the third episode, presumably coming from the altars in the Delphic precinct. On the difficulties in associating the two eisodoi with the various locations of the off-stage area in the *Ion*, see Hourmouziades, 1965: 134-35.

[87] Based on Ion's greeting of the sun in his monody, the stage-setting is to be conceived as the eastern facade of the Delphic temple; yet generations of scholars, after examining the archaeological evidence of the temple, have claimed vigorously that the sculptures described ought to be attributed to the western pediment. For a more detailed analysis of the inconsistency, see below section 1.3.3.

would turn left to face the eastern façade of the temple of Apollo with an altar standing before its entrance. This is, presumably, the dramatic setting of the *Ion* which the spectators are encouraged to reconstruct in their imagination, aided by the chorus' description in their entrance song.

The dramatist directs the audience's gaze towards a selection of the temple's decorative features by means of the chorus' verbal indices. The description reflects the chorus' limited knowledge of art and myth and their small experience of viewing artefacts, alongside another more important characteristic of their dramatic persona, namely, their Athenian origin. Right from the start, their report is explicitly placed within an Athenian frame: 'not only[88] in holy Athens are there courts of the gods with fine pillars and colonnades guarding the streets[89]; but also here by Loxias, Leto's son, there is the beautiful-eyed light of twin faces (or façades)[90'] (184-89).

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[88] For the construction 'οὐκ (ἄρα)... μόνον. (οὐδέ)... ἀλλὰ καί', compare Hesiod *W&D* 11f., Theocr. xiii 1f., Timocreon fr. 3/719. Sousa e Silva (1985-86) compares the implicit praise of Athens and its monuments in the parodos of the *Ion* to Pindar, *Dith*. 4.5 (p. 39).

[89] For a review of the different interpretations of the phrase 'ἀγυιάτιδες θεραπεῖαι', see Koster, 1976: 381 n. 35, who takes the view that it refers to the monuments the chorus would have seen on either side of the Sacred Way. Zeitlin (1994) translates as 'herms to watch the street' (p. 149), but admits that the arguments in favour of any one particular interpretation are inconclusive, and states that 'the essential point lies in the riddling language that hesitates between Hermes (the speaker of the prologue) and Apollo, owner of the site and addressed by Ion' (p. 297 n. 31). If we look closer at this implicit association of Apollo and Hermes, it may be possible to read more into this obscure phrase; its vagueness may conceal an effort on the part of the dramatist to evoke the distinct cults of Apollo and Hermes as protectors both of the streets in Athens and of the sacred precinct of Delphi. Bousquet (1956: 574-78; not listed in Koster) takes the phrase as a reference to the Delphic herms on either side of the temple door, which traditionally bore the well-known Delphic maxims 'μηδὲν ἄγαν' and 'γνῶθι σαυτόν'; he even suggests that they could have been visually represented on stage as part of the décor of the *Ion*. This interpretation is quite attractive, since it brings out the similarities between the Attic *agyieus* and the Delphic herms *propylaioi*, similarities immediately recognised by the chorus, giving them 'le sentiment que l'on n'est point dépaysé en passant

The chorus' gradual advance to the temple can be inferred from the progressive stages of their description. First, they offer a wide-angled view of the temple with its pillared *pronaos*; their visual pleasure is clearly felt in the choice of descriptive adjectives ('εὐκίονες... αὐλαί', 185, 'καλλιβλέφαρον φῶς', 189; cf. 232). Then, their wandering eyes are caught by the individual scenes of mythological figures carved on the pediment.[91] By this stage they

d' Athènes à Delphes' (p. 576). Bousquet, citing archaeological, literary and lexicographical evidence, claims that there is good reason to suppose that there was a cult of Hermes alongside that of Apollo in Delphi; if, additionally, we adopt his suggestion that the 'διδύμων προσώπων καλλιβλέφαροι φῶς' might indeed be a reference to the twin herms of Hermes which stood by the Delphic temple door proclaiming Apollo's maxims, then, it would have been a clever theatrical twist to bring in Hermes to speak the prologue and proclaim Apollo's intentions about Ion, momentarily drawing attention to the herms and then letting them recede after the god's departure. If so, Hermes would be leaving behind him the herms as silent witnesses on stage, while he would, purportedly, hide in the laurel grove to watch the outcome of Apollo's plan (76f.). For a similar 'enlivening' of a god from verbal description to dramatic representation, cf. the development from the description of Athena fighting Enkelados in the pediment (209f.), through the summoning of the goddess by the chorus (452f.) to her physical appearance at the end of the play; see Zeitlin, 1994: 151f.

[90] The phrase 'διδύμωι· προσώπωι· καλλιβλέφαροι· φῶς' is rather vague. See Owen at 188 for a review of some suggested interpretations. Bousquet (1956) takes it as a reference to the two herms *propylaioi* (see above n. 89). Koster (1976:378 and n. 45) rightly contests Karo's suggestion (1909: 212f.) that the phrase may refer to the caryatids of the treasury of the Siphnians, as well as another view which identifies the temple of Athena Pronaia as one of the referents with the Apolline temple being the other, arguing that the adjective 'δίδυμος' might merely refer to the two façades of a single building of which only one will be subsequently described by the chorus; so too Barlow (1971: 22) and Winnington-Ingram (1976: 484 n. 5). See also above n. 89.

[91] That Euripides is envisaging the Alcmaeonid temple (513-505 BCE) in the *Ion* is now generally accepted; see Coste-Messelière, 1931: 26f. The chorus' eyes might have been attracted by the gleaming effect of the morning sunlight upon the marble surface of the pedimental sculptures. Perhaps the reference to the 'καλλιβλέφαρον φῶς' might imply a marble surface; see also Bousquet, 1956: 576, on marble herms. On the use of marble for the eastern pediment and limestone for the rest of the sixth-century Delphic temple, see Koster,

seem to have divided into semi-choruses each engaged in identifying different figures in the panels and pointing them out for the others to see. As they have now drawn closer, the panels begin to resolve themselves into complete narrative scenes. The first choral group point to a scene in which the son of Zeus slays the Lernean Hydra with a golden scimitar, a well-known Heraclean labour (190-3), and the second group identifies the neighbouring figure, who is raising a blazing torch and is about to cauterise the necks of the Hydra, as the warrior Iolaos, Herakles' companion (194-200). Next, there comes a scene of a seated figure on a winged horse subjugating a triple-bodied fire-breathing monster, a group that is left to be easily identified by the audience as the famous labour of the Corinthian hero Bellerophon on Pegasos killing the Chimaira.[92]

At this point all the members of the chorus must have assembled at the centre of the orchestra looking at the temple front.[93] Their eyes embrace

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1976: 374; Tomlinson (1976: 66f.) suggests the use of marble for both pediments. It is possible that the phrase 'ἐν τείχεσσι λαίνοισι' (206-7) may indicate an effort on the part of the dramatist to differentiate between the material used for the central scene of the pediment and the previous scenes, which could have been decorating the metopes; yet there is no archaeological evidence to substantiate this conjecture. It might be better not to take this detail too literally, but rather as a narrative device separating the central scene of the gods' victory over the giants from the two subordinate scenes of the mythical heroes crushing the fearful monsters. It is a common iconographical technique to use frames or pedestals or to increase the scale so as to mark out clearly the gods amongst heroes and mortals; see, for instance, Bérard & Durand, 1989: 25. On the scenes of Heracles - Iolaos - Lernean Hydra (190-200) and Bellerophon - Chimaira (201-4) as part of the metopes, see below n. 177.

[92] Bellerophon on Pegasos attacking the Chimaira was found in Athenian vase-painting before the end of the seventh century BCE; see Brommer, 1960: 220f.

[93] Obviously they would not turn their backs to the audience. Rather, they would stand at an open angle recounting what they were supposedly seeing on the temple's pediment both to each other and to the spectators, matching their words with an appropriate set of movements and gestures evocative of the respective mythological scenes.

a big section of a relief composed of three pairs of figures which they identify as a single pictorial group portraying the Gigantomachy ('κλόνον [...] Γιγάντων', 205-207). A closer examination enables them to disentangle the complex of images into its component figures; they recognise Athena, their city goddess, brandishing her gorgon shield against Enkelados (209-211), Zeus holding the thunderbolt ready to cast it upon the giant Mimas (212-215) and Bromios (Dionysos 'the thunderer') holding the ivy-tipped rods ('βάκτρα'), which his followers usually carry, slaying another of the children of Earth (216-218).

The playwright has arrested the chorus in the act of viewing and offers this spectacle to his audience, inviting them to witness the impact that the grandeur of the Delphic temple has on first-time visitors. The viewers' gaze in this parodos is complementary to the representation of the sanctuary in the prologue, which conveyed to us a vision of the everyday hustle and bustle of the religious centre moments before the arrival of visitors. The chorus' gaze is that of tourists eager to store in their memory, by a kind of inner visual stenography, the temple's elaborate decoration, itself a marker of the importance of the oracular shrine, as a souvenir of their visit to Delphi.[94]

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[94] On art as an aid to memory, see Cicero, *De Oratore* I. 34. 157, where Crassus refers to 'that method of places and images which is taught in the art'. According to Plutarch (*Moralia* 346f.), Simonides the Keian (c. 556-467 BCE) called painting silent poetry and poetry a speaking picture ('τὴν μὲν ζωγραφίαν ποίησις σιωπῶσαν (προσαγορεύει) τὴν δὲ ποίησιν ζωγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν'). The chorus in the parodos of the *Ion* translate from one medium to the other, from art into poetry (and theatrical representation), from image into narrative (and spectacle); the spectators at the receiving end, would, in turn, translate poetry back into art in their minds' eye. For an invaluable discussion of the Greek and Latin sources on 'mnemotechnics', the contribution of images to the enhancement of memory, and the theory of the equation of poetry and painting, see Yates, 1966: 1-49. On ekphrasis in the rhetoric of the Second Sophistic as an aid to memory, see Barthes, 1970.

The chorus' song is an interesting example of visual interpretation.[95] When they are confronted with the sculptural decoration on the pediment, their stock of memories of art-viewing is recalled and tested against what they see; the result is not a meticulous description of the totality of the sculptured figures, but just the labelling of a selection of scenes familiar from Athenian iconography. The chorus' viewing seems to have reached its goal in this simple identification of some of the depicted figures by means of the successful recognition of their conventional attributes, such as Athena's shield, Zeus' thunderbolt and Dionysos' ivy wand.[96]

There is no effort here to appreciate the quality of craftsmanship or the aesthetic value of the artefact, or to reach a more profound understanding of the relationship between the individual panels; other visual aspects such as colour[97], light, form, design are details left unrecorded. The Athenian maidens are content with having shared the recognition of some panels with each other, with having succeeded in 'reading the picture', i.e. in translating the artefact into words, which in this case consists in merely assigning names to the represented figures, as if this were the only response an image can attract. Each question asked by one group (or member) of the chorus is

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[95] Note the frequency with which words of seeing occur paired with adverbs of place and demonstrative pronouns: 'ἰδού. τάιδ' ἄθρησον' (190); 'πρόσιδ' ὅσσοις' (193); 'ὁρῶ. καὶ πέλας [...]' (194); 'τόιδ' ἄθρησον' (201); 'πάνται τοι βλέφαρον διώκω' (205; cf. 189); 'σκέψαι' (206); 'ὧδε δερκόμεθα' (208); 'λεύσσεις' (209); 'λεύσσω' (211); 'ὁρῶ' (214).

[96] On the identification of statues of the gods by means of their customary emblems, cf. Aesch. *Suppl.* 206f.: Danaus admonishes the chorus to seek refuge at the common altar of the gods of the assembly ('ἀγώνιοι θεοί', 189); they invoke Zeus with his bird (212), Apollo, Poseidon with his trident (218-9, though the name of the god is not spelled out), Hermes (219f., probably with his herald's staff; note 'κηρυκευέτω', 220). Cf. also Aesch. *Septem* 95-180, where the chorus pray to the 'βρέτη' of the gods Ares, Zeus, Athena, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Apollo, Hera, Artemis invoked with their attributes.

[97] With the exception of 'χρυσέαις ἅρπαις', 192.

dealt with by another in such a way that when the answer comes the image has no further purpose to serve.

The captioning of a pictorial representation or the denomination of the individual figures is a consistent feature in ekphrastic literature; it is the 'speaking out' (ek-phrasis) of silent art, a release of the narrative compressed in mute painting. This tendency is also attested in Greek vase-paintings, where, after the introduction of the Phoenician alphabet in the eighth century BCE, inscriptions were often added supplying the names of the depicted figures[98], and again in sepulchral epigrams, which identified and commemorated the dead.[99]

The chorus in the parodos of the *Ion* supply exactly the sort of information one would find in an inscription, an epigram or a picture title. Yet

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[98] For the inscriptional evidence on Greek vase-paintings, see the important article by Lissarrague (1992). Since most frequently the pictorial representations of gods and heroes of the epic cycle were identifiable by means of their common attributes, an additional inscription would seem otiose. Indeed, by around the sixth century BCE, the most significant function of these inscriptions was to invite the viewers to 'read the picture' and guide their eyes to follow the course of the represented action. The space allocated to the inscriptions was no longer just below or above the represented figures but often along their side, in the direction of the depicted action; this new arrangement marked a rejection of pictorial stasis and an effort on the part of the painters to animate the figures represented. Then, around 520 BCE, a further innovation occurred: the represented figures themselves were shown in the act of dialogue with each other and spoken words literally came out of their mouths. This short-lived tendency appeared around the time of the theatrical dialogue and disappeared after 450 BCE with the introduction of perspective painting, which marginalised writing as a result of the new conception of space as a continuous whole not to be broken by the insertion of inscriptions. On three-dimensional painting, see Padel, 1990: esp. 346-354. As for Delphi itself, we now know that the figures on the north and east frieze of the treasury house of the Siphnians were identified by name in large and easily legible inscriptions; see Simon (1984) and Brinkmann (1985).

[99] On the association between ekphrasis and sepulchral inscriptions, see Heffernan, 1991: 302f.

their identification of the figures on the pediment of the Delphic temple has seemed wanting to some scholars[100]; the language is plain with few and merely descriptive adjectives. The playwright has deliberately allocated a more elevated style and high-flown language to Ion's monody for the description of mundane tasks and a more ordinary language and every-day style to the chorus' description of the sculptures so as to frustrate the audience's expectations and to offer a more realistic rendering of the chorus' role; clearly, the one who benefits most from the comparison is the temple-servant.[101]

Yet even this unimpressive deciphering of the artefacts has not been an invariably smooth process. The chorus' socially constructed codes of recognition bear the mark of their Athenian origin and daily occupation; they immediately relate the Delphic temple to Athenian buildings (184-89)[102] and one of the individual panels to a myth they have represented in their own weaving (196-200).[103] Another scene poses problems of identification and invites the audience to supply the missing names of the depicted figures (201-4).[104] This difficulty of the chorus in interpreting the artefact contributes to the naturalism of the dramatic scene and the characterisation of the

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[100] See Barlow (1971: 22f.) who examines the reasons behind 'this somewhat pedestrian representation of one of the great cultural sites of Greece' (p. 23); also Sousa e Silva (1985-86): 'A descrição do templo de Apolo, como nos aparece em Ion, é particularmente genérica e superficial' (p. 33).

[101] This is not surprising, as the best poetry is most often assigned to the central dramatic figures; cf. for instance, the crew of Neoptolemos and Philoktetes in the Sophoclean play. The chorus of Athenian maidens have a subordinate role and must not overshadow Ion.

[102] Cf. also how they identify Athena as 'ἐμὰν θεόν' (211).

[103] Cf. Zeitlin, 1994: 153f. and n. 45, on the chorus' weaving and the Gigantomachy woven in the peplos.

[104] Cf. 171f., the unidentified third bird in Ion's monody.

chorus, but also raises the general question of the precarious relationship between the viewer and the meaning of the object.[105]

Indeed, the whole interpretation of the pedimental sculptures leaves much to be desired; the chorus merely list the scenes in paratactic order and do not analyse the rules which govern the juxtaposition of the pictorial triptych of the gigantomachy with the other two scenes, so that they never arrive at the meaning of the whole composition. The responsibility for reaching beneath the paratactic layer of the chorus' description and deciphering its message is left to the audience. It is the spectators, privileged with the knowledge of Apollo's intentions as reported in Hermes' prologue, who need to 'enter the imagery'[106] and figure out for themselves the central theme to which the individual panels are subordinate. The pediment contains a more general message concerning the universal order imposed by the gods and heroes, which could be construed as a covert reference to the outcome of the dramatic plot, and a secondary message about the crushing of a *theomachia*, which constitutes a warning that might specifically be addressed to Kreousa.

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[105] Cf. Virgil's third Eclogue, where the shepherd Menalcas, in his description of the carving on two wooden cups, cannot recall the name of one of the two engraved astronomers; see Hollander, 1988: 210f. The deficiencies in any interpretation of an artefact have been a common *topos* in ekphrastic literature and have also been exploited in painting. Cf. Poussin's *Arcadian Shepherds*, where a group of Arcadians strive to make sense of the words '*et in Arcadia ego*' inscribed upon a tombstone, and its re-working by Reynolds in the Portrait of *Mrs Bouverie and Mrs Crewe*, which depicts the difficulty in reading a picture by offering two ladies pondering upon the meaning of the same sepulchral inscription; see the discussion of these paintings in Beard & Henderson, 1995: 113-121, who review the various interpretations of the phrase '*et in Arcadia ego*' and conclude that it is better taken as 'a motto for [one] to complete and situate in relation to [oneself]' (p. 121).

[106] Phrase borrowed from the homonymous article by Bérard and Durand, 1989.

The spectators' task of decoding the ekphrasis must have been facilitated by the dramatic gestures and movements of the chorus. If indeed there was choreographic identity between strophe and antistrophe[107], the gestures accompanying the description of the last scene of the gigantomachy at the end of the second strophe, in which Dionysos is described as killing a chthonian monster with his ivy wand, must also apply to the announcement of Kreousa's entrance at the end of the second antistrophe.[108] It would then seem that, despite their largely inadequate treatment of the Delphic sculptures, the chorus do manage to offer a preview of some of the most fundamental issues of the play in their song and dance, but, if so, it must be admitted that they themselves remain quite unaware of the wider implications of their own words and movements; the chthonic ancestry of the Athenian princess and her association with serpents, on the one hand[109], and the Dionysiac element, strongly invoked in the course of the play[110], on the other, are all insinuated in the parodos.

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[107] Wiles, in an excerpt from his forthcoming book on tragic space which he has kindly shown me, argues vigorously, against Dale, that 'the metrical identity of strophe and antistrophe means choreographical identity'. This attractive theory, when applied to the parodos of the *Ion*, brings out more clearly the thematic relevance of the different scenes on the Delphic pediment.

[108] Hydra and Chimaira, the children of Echidna, are slain at the end of the first strophe and antistrophe respectively; perhaps then the same combination of gestures would apply to the climax of all the strophes and antistrophes. Note that later, at 1261-65, Ion assimilates Kreousa to Echidna or to a serpent and equates her evil nature with the poisonous blood of the Gorgon. See Rosivach, 1977: 285ff.

[109] Kreousa herself will shortly recount for Ion her chthonic descent from Erechtheus (267-9). Later, she employs the deadly drop of blood taken from the chthonian Gorgon's snakes in her attempt to kill Ion (1015); the recognition tokens she had left in Ion's cradle are reminiscent of her association with the Gorgon and the serpents (1421f.). Few scholars have failed to recognise this association and the darker side of autochthony which Kreousa personifies. See Burnett, 1970: 144-146; Immerwahr, 1972: 285-6; Loraux, 1993: esp. 222-224.

Yet the function of the ekphrasis in the parodos was not only to establish a narrative frame for the dramatic action: primarily, it was a technique for distributing spatial information and creating a Delphic atmosphere. The creation of the sense of space would have been further enhanced by the movements of the figures on stage. For instance, when Ion first appeared in the prologue with his attendants and engaged in his everyday sweeping tasks, the fictional setting came to life. And when he sent his attendants to Kastalia, a contrast was established between the fictional space on stage and off-stage. On the other hand, the lack of verbal communication between the figures on stage would have carried semantic significance related to the spatial organisation of the stage. For example, at first glance it might seem somewhat peculiar that when the chorus were doing their sight-seeing they failed to notice Ion, who was presumably still engaged in his everyday tasks of cleaning the sanctuary; there is no indication in the text that Ion has ever left the stage between the entrance of the chorus and the second antistrophe, when the chorus become aware of his presence and address him. Scholars and scribes have been puzzled by what they perceived as an inadvertence on the part of the chorus and, by implication, on the part of the playwright.[111] Yet there are two arguments in

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Mastronarde comments on the association of Giants, serpents and autochthony (1975: 164-5; 168); Giraud analyses the significance of the bird-motif as a stand-in for the Olympians, Apollo and Delphi and as the counterpart of the snake-motif, which is associated with autochthony, Kreousa and Athens (1987: 83-84).

[110] During the false recognition scene, Ion concludes that he must have been conceived during a Dionysiac festival (553f.); the chorus invoke Dionysos twice in a ritual context (714-17; 1074-86); Kreousa attempts to kill Ion during the course of a Dionysiac feast. On the Dionysiac associations in the *Ion*, see Zeitlin, 1989: 156-158; Pozzi, 1991: 135-144.

[111] Owen found it difficult to account for the fact that 'the chorus, when looking so carefully at the temple-buildings' fail to notice Ion's presence (p. 82); and, perhaps, so did the scribes of

favour of the consistency of this 'split-screen' technique with the chorus' dramatic character; the first is that of 'quasi-realism', namely that the chorus are portrayed as tourists in the Delphic precinct and, quite naturally as ordinary tourists do, they first look upwards and admire the pediment of the temple building before they perceive Ion's presence. The second argument is derived from the grammar of dramatic technique and is based on the principle of 'contact and discontinuity'.[112]

After the setting has been presented so carefully and the audience has been drawn into the fictional world of the drama, the first dialogue of the play marks the transition to the dramatic action via the interaction of the figures on stage. The women of the chorus, having completed the inspection of the scenes portrayed on the temple frieze, perceive Ion's presence 'παρὰ ναόν' (219) and eagerly inquire whether they are allowed to cross the threshold of the sanctuary and examine the holy interior of the temple. The temple gate and the hidden interior suddenly become the focus of attention. Previously Hermes had reported how he left the baby Ion at this very entrance of the temple at Apollo's explicit request (34; cf. 38f.); next, Ion was seen sweeping the same portals of the god's abode. No precise details about the internal spatial divisions of the temple have been supplied[113]; only now, after a selective description of the exterior architectural and sculptural

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the manuscripts LP, who in their effort to overcome the inconsistency, ascribed whole or half lines of the three strophes to Ion: 190, 194, 198, 201, 206.

[112] Phrase borrowed from Mastronarde (1978: 33) who cites this passage, along with Soph. *OT* 151-216, as an example of the 'conventional separateness of the choral space or at least of the choral utterance from persons on stage'. See also Ley and Ewans, who explain similarly the problems of Hippolytos' entry at *Hipp.* 601, where the hero strides on and does not notice Phaidra (1984: 76-77).

[113] It has only twice been reported that inside the temple the god speaks oracles to humans (5-7; 91-93).

details of the temple, the question of what lies behind the façade emerges. It is particularly striking, though, that it is the members of the chorus who pose this question, since according to the well known dramatic convention choruses were not allowed to enter the stage building.[114] Ion's answer is brief and to the point: the doors will not open for viewing to the uninitiated ('οὐ θέμις, ὦ ξέναι', 222). An atmosphere of mystery is created as to what lies beyond these doors.[115]

Ion lists for the chorus the prerequisites for entering the temple: if they have made an offering ('πέλανον') in front of the temple and they wish to consult the god, they may pass 'ἐς θυμέλας'; but without a sacrifice of a sheep, they may not pass 'ἐς μυχόν' (226-229).[116] The playwright is carefully building the fictional space in the minds of the spectators. He has created a sense of locale through the actions and activities of the figures on stage and he has marked the spatial opposition between the exterior and the interior space; now he goes on to give some indications concerning the internal spatial divisions of the temple. Yet he is not prepared to give more details than needed to make the action readable. The only other information provided about the temple's interior is the confirmation of the rumour that it

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[114] It is an example of theatrical self-reference, which calls attention to the playing area as such within the drama, constituting what is otherwise known as 'meta-theatrical space'.

[115] There will be no use of the *ekkyklema* in this play. The hidden interior of the temple is never penetrated. Xouthos comes out, but no narrative covers the consultation inside the temple. Again, when the Pythia comes out of the temple door, no information is divulged about the adyton. The messenger's speech will divert the interest to a second interior, that of the tent, which he describes in detail. Yet, behind the scene there is, in fact, nothing; the mystery is not religious, but theatrical, in the sense that we can believe there is something there, although we know there is nothing.

[116] Many scholars have tried to capture the specific meaning of these words in order to attach them to particular architectural details and in so doing to reconstruct the Delphic temple. Such an attempt seems futile; see below section 1.3.3.

holds within it the navel of the earth, which has the shape of a stone adorned with chaplet garlands and with Gorgons[117] at its sides (222-4). The chorus women evidently feel no need for further details about the adyton; they are content with having admired the exterior of the temple (231).

The representation of the dramatic setting by means of the chorus' verbal description complemented the stage set, transcending the restrictions posed by the paucity of the actual décor. The Athenian maidens presented the Delphic sanctuary from the standpoint of outsiders; their viewpoint was an alternative to Ion's idyllic picture of the locale in his monody.[118] The new entrant, Kreousa, offers yet another perspective on the Delphic setting. Whereas visitors to the temple are usually joyful (245f.), with reactions similar to the chorus' who were 'content to delight their eyes with the outward beauties of the temple' ('ὄμμα τέρψει', 232), Kreousa closes her eyes at the sight of the oracle of Apollo and her cheeks become wet with tears ('ὄμμα συγκλήισασα', 241f.). The Athenian queen is immersed in her past memories (250) and her mind remains still at Athens, though she is

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[117] See Owen at line 224, who cites Aesch. *Eum.* 49 as another passage which identifies the figures on the omphalos as Gorgons, and suggests that this choice 'may be due to the pride of Athenians which liked to associate them [the Gorgons] with their patroness'. See also Loraux, 1993: 223 n. 179; Goff, 1988: 47f. Wiles argues (in his forthcoming book *Tragic Space*) for a deliberate strophic responsion which associates 'the Gorgon at the centre of Athena's shield to Apollo's omphalos at the centre of the world' (209=223).

[118] Barlow (1971) notes that Ion's presentation was not objective, but betrayed his 'idealism and the vulnerability of his innocence' (p. 47). According to Burnett (1971), '[Ion's] monody [...] voices a sense of well-being mixed with ecstasy that is shared by no other creature of the Attic stage' (p. 107); 'The only comparisons are with the brief song of the huntsmen at the beginning of *Hipp.*, and the parodos of *Bacchae*' (n. 7). Ion's monody is balanced by Kreousa's monody later in the play and one cannot fail to notice that Ion's idyllic scenery 'is like a counterpart of the beautiful landscape in which Apollo appeared to Kreousa (887f)' as Wolff rightly remarks (1965: 172).

physically present at Delphi (251).[119] In the ensuing stichomythia Kreousa's identity is recovered together with her family history, which coincides with the origins of the Athenian autochthonous race.

The introduction of the Athenians' legendary past in the form of the myths of Erichthonios and the Kekropids (267-274), and the fates of Kreousa's father, Erechtheus, and her sisters (277-83)[120] would inevitably have evoked the sacred locations and buildings of the Acropolis associated with the commemoration of these Athenian ancestors, i.e. the immediate physical context of the theatre. The off-stage area is extended to include the Acropolis and its surroundings, which in this dramatic moment is to be considered as a location where these legendary events took place in the distant past, whereas later it will be identified as the place where Apollo violated Kreousa and where she subsequently exposed her illegitimate child. When Kreousa first relates the story of her rape by Apollo to the temple servant in the third person, she does not localise the event.[121] It is the chorus in the epode of their first choral ode who associate the cave of Pan, adjoining the Long Rocks below the Acropolis, with the rape of Kreousa's

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[119] Note how Kreousa addresses Ion as 'ξεῖνε' (247), whereas only a few moments ago it was Ion who called the women of the chorus 'ξεῖναι' (222), for they were the visitors who had invaded his space; the Athenian queen is bound up with her own Athenian space in relation to which Ion is considered a foreigner. Again, when Ion questions Kreousa about the Athenian legends he is the 'ξεῖνος' (247, 264, 266, 342, 360); yet, when Kreousa accuses Apollo of having slept with one of her friends, she becomes an intruder into Ion's space and is subsequently addressed as 'ξείνη' (339).

[120] Note how Ion's knowledge of the Athenian myths comes from their visual representations in art ('ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῆι', 269-71) and the oral tradition ('ὡς μεμύθευται', 265; 'λόγος', 275).

[121] Though the audience has heard from Hermes that Apollo seized Kreousa in the Athenian land by the northward cliffs called Makrai (10-13); again, when this place is named in connection with the death of Erechtheus (283f.), Kreousa is agitated, but manages to restrain herself (288) and conceal from Ion the cause of her emotional outburst (286).

alleged friend by Apollo (492f.).[122] Athens will henceforth constitute an elsewhere to which constant reference will be made in an effort to interpret the course of events in the dramatic here and now.

The audience are requested to substitute Delphi for the Athenian Acropolis in the vicinity of the theatre of Dionysos, to make what is near (Acropolis) far (in the dramatic past) and what is far (Delphi) near (in the dramatic present).[123] During the course of the play, the dramatic space as it develops is divided into the visible scenic or 'mimetic' space, which is the eastern face of the Delphic temple, and the 'diegetic' space, which in turn comprises the interior unseen space behind the façade of the temple and the exterior off-stage space with a range of locations such as the physical surroundings (Parnassos, Phaedriades, Kastalia) and sacred buildings in the Delphic precinct (the city of Delphi, the scene of Ion's birthday feast, the altars, treasures and holy vessels), Trophonios' oracle and the Athenian Acropolis.[124]

No analysis of the dramatic space of the *Ion* would be complete without a closer examination of the messenger's report, which includes a long and detailed description of the layout of the holy tent, in which Ion had invited all the city of Delphi to celebrate his new identity as Xouthos' son and heir to the Athenian royal throne and to bid farewell to Delphi (cf. 665) and his childhood life. This is the setting where the old paedagogue, acting under

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[122] Cf. 936-941; 1400; 1479f.

[123] See Loraux, 1993: 195-198.

[124] On the off-stage area in the *Ion*, see Hourmouziades, 1965: 110-15. He rightly observes that the setting of the play is 'a convenient locality' with 'an enormous multiplicity of places to which [the characters] can retire', 'therefore no question of leave-excuse arises nor does any incongruity between space-disposition and time-management occur' (p. 115).

Kreousa's instructions, hopes to poison the illegitimate son of Xouthos before he can ever set foot in Athens and lay claim to the Erechtheid throne.[125]

The messenger enters the stage in search of his noble[126] mistress Kreousa.[127] Urged on by the chorus, he embarks on a long speech to recount in detail that the attempt to poison Ion failed due to divine intervention (1113-18) and that as a result, the rulers of Delphi have now launched a pursuit of Kreousa intending to put her to death by stoning (1111f.; cf. 1250f.). He begins by reporting Xouthos' last instructions to his newly-found son before he departed to visit the Bacchic shrine on the

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[125] Cf. the chorus' prayer at 719f. and Kreousa's instructions to the paedagogue, 1029ff. and esp. 1037-38.

[126] The messenger's report is a subjective rendering of the off-stage events he has witnessed; his choice of adjectives (e.g. 'κλειτήν', 1106), names or direct quotations reveals where his sympathies lie, if he does not say so explicitly. See de Jong, 1991: 81, 86, 95f., 102, 138.

[127] Euripides' tendency to justify the use of common dramatic conventions in the internal communication system is well attested; for instance, entries and exits of characters are carefully planned. On the handling of entrances and exits of characters in the *Ion*, see Hourmouziades, 1965: 114-5. On the apparent discrepancy in the chorus' entry in the *Ion*, see above n. 111. Note how the protagonist bans the chorus from entering the temple (219-21), thus supplying an internal explanation for the convention of the non-entry of the chorus through the stage-door and into the space behind it. The messenger's entry is fully motivated by his loyalty to his mistress and his wish to warn her of the impending death penalty, while his premature report is the result of the chorus' insistent questioning (esp. 1119-21). At 666-67, Xouthos asks the chorus not to disclose to Kreousa his plans, threatening them with death, and thus accounting for the convention of the chorus' non-active involvement in the action; only this time there is a surprise in store for the spectators: the chorus of the *Ion*, the only example in extant tragedy, break the convention and report to their mistress her husband's secret plot, thus contributing to a dramatic shift in the plot. Precisely by motivating a convention, the playwright demonstrates its alternatives and makes it possible to violate it.

mountain[128] and to offer his thanksgiving sacrifices for having seen his son.[129] Xouthos' words, reported in direct speech, provide both a convenient alibi for the father's absence from the son's birthday feast[130] and the introduction of the messenger's speech (1122-1131).

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[128] The offering of sacrifices to Dionysos motivates his intervention to save Ion in the tent, where the poisoned wine is poured to the ground and the dove who tastes it dies in Bacchic convulsions ('κάβάκχευσεν', 1204), screaming unintelligible cries, in a scene of tragic reversal of wine-libation and drunkenness.

[129] On the 5th day after a child's birth, the father carries the newborn baby around the hearth of the house in the festival of Amphidromia (see Deubner, 1952: 374-7); on the 10th day, the child is named by the father, as Ion is by Xouthos at 661. Then, visits from friends and relatives would be paid and presents might be offered to the newborn baby (cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 7-8). These presents may be given any time after the child's birth, on the first occasion that the child is seen by the giver, hence their name 'ὀπτήρια'; in Callim. *Dian.* 74, such gifts are given to a three-year-old child. At 1127, Xouthos celebrates the finding of his son by offering sacrifices to Dionysos, the 'γενέτης θεός', 'in thanksgiving for the sight of his son', 'άντ' ὀπτηρίων'. It seems to me that the sacrifices for the 'ὀπτήρια' (1127) were to stand for those that were due for the 'γενέθλια' (653); I do not think that there is evidence in either passage of the play to settle the question of whether the 'ἀμφιδρόμια' and the 'δεκάτη' were part of the same ceremony or of two different ones; see Owen on line 653 and Denniston (1939) on *El.* 654, for bibliography. On the ritual connotations of the term 'ὀπτήρια', see Zeitlin, 1989:163 and n. 87.

[130] Cf. 663-65, where Xouthos, in person, announced his intentions to give a public feast at the place where he found Ion, so as to mark the beginning of their new life together, and to offer, retrospectively, the customary sacrifices which were due after his son's birth. Cf. also 805-7, where the chorus report to the old paedagogue Xouthos' plan, actually echoing some of his expressions: 'κοινὴν ξυνάψων δαῖτα παιδί' (807) is a variant of 'δαῖτα πρὸς κοινὴν πεσών' (652). They also seem to add more details to it, since they are the first to mention the setting up of the feast inside a sacred tent. Owen argues that such privileged information on the part of the chorus constitutes a Euripidean slip: 'the chorus would not be likely to know [...] that Ion was going to use temple-property' (at 806). Yet the chorus' experience of similar gatherings, where a great number of guests is invited to a sacrificial banquet to celebrate an important event (such as a victory to the Pythian games) or a temporary construction is set up to accommodate visitors to the shrine, would have provided a precedent for Ion's banquet;

It is with Xouthos' charge to Ion to supervise the construction of a well-fitted tent ('ἀμφήρεις... σκηνάς', 1128f.) that the messenger chooses to start building his narrative.[131] Kreousa's servant reconstructs the tent with great care, following Ion's steps; the youth is reported to have marked out with due attention to detail (cf. 'σεμνῶς', 1133) the shape of the ten-thousand-square-feet tent with posts so as to protect it from the rays of the sun at noon and at its setting. The vast size of the tent is explained by Ion's intention to invite all the people of Delphi (1140; 1166f.)[132]; Ion intends to reciprocate to the city of

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see Schmitt-Pantel, 1992: 218. The messenger's report adds Xouthos' direct request to Ion to start the feast without him if he happens to be delayed by the sacrifices. This information was not available to the chorus or to the plotters who expected Xouthos to witness the death of his son (cf. 1031). On Xouthos' departure, Loraux rightly remarks that 'Xouthos leaves the stage because his external status has no place either in the tragic universe or amid the belated rejoicing of Athens' (1993, 207). Schmitt-Pantel elaborates on Xouthos' external status: he is a father who cannot integrate his son into the Athenian royal *oikos* since it is not his, he cannot offer Ion hospitality since he is a *xenos* at Delphi and he cannot participate at the civic banquet for he is not an Athenian citizen; according to her interpretation, there is a fusion of three different types of meal at lines 650-55, namely 'repas de reconnaissance, geste d'hospitalité, banquet civique', which would emphasise all the more Xouthos' 'inaptitute à la commensalité' (1992: 210-11).

[131] For a narratological analysis of Euripidean messenger speeches, see de Jong, 1991; 'the messenger goes back in time not only chronologically but also mentally [cf. 'ἐπεί', 1122; 1177]: he recounts the events very much as he experienced them at the time they took place. In other words, [...] he renounces his *ex eventu* knowledge, the knowledge he had displayed in the introductory dialogues and narrates according to his experiencing focalisation' (p. 34).

[132] The form (square with posts), size (covering an area of approximately a quarter of an acre) and decoration of the tent are quite rare and spectacular and seem to have an exotic connotation which warrants comparison with temporary oriental structures of similar dimensions and function. Note that the patterned tapestries decorating the walls of the tent are called 'βαρβάρων· ὑφάσματα' (1159); cf. Arist. *Frogs* 938, 'Μηδικὰ παραπετάσματα'. In his study of oriental tents (in particular, of the pavilion of Ptolemy II), Studniczka compares Ion's tent to the Persian *apadana* which could accommodate hundreds of guests (1914: 28). On

Delphi the *xenia* he has generously received throughout his childhood
before he sets out for his trip to Athens.[133]

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the banqueting pavilion of Ptolemy Philadelphos as described by Kallixeinos in Athenaios (v.
196-197), see, most recently, Green, 1995: 115-18, and n. 111 for bibliography. Many
scholars believe that the tent described by Herodotos (9. 70; 9. 82) as the one left by Xerxes
to Mardonios after the battle at Salamis, may have found its way to Athens after the battle at
Plataia and may have served as the prototype for the construction of the Odeion, built by
Themistokles (Vitruv. *De arch.* 5.9.1.; or by Perikles as in Plut. *Vit. Per.* 9); see Broneer, 1929-
44: 306ff.; Immerwahr, 1972: 292-93; Zeitlin, 1989: 191 n. 101. It would be very interesting if
indeed the description of the tent by the messenger recalled the Odeion, because it would
be another example of Athenian reminiscences in Delphic territory; note that Schmitt-Pantel
also looks for an association between Ion's tent and a building in the Acropolis complex and
comes up with the Hekatompedon, a temple of Athena situated between the Erechtheum
and the Parthenon which had a side of one hundred feet, the same as Ion's tent (1992: 218-
9). Broneer's theory that Xerxes' tent was the first theatre *skene* is hardly credible or worth
recording, though Immerwahr (1972: 292-93), Zeitlin (1989: 191 n. 101) and Schmitt-Pantel
(1992: 220 n. 16) mention it; see Taplin, 1977: 458 n. 4. Other famous Persian tents were the
one used by Alexander the Great at Susa, probably spoil from Dareios, and the one set up by
Alkibiades at Olympia to celebrate his success (Athenaios, 12.534.d; Plut. *Vit. Alcib.* 12); on
the latter, see Schmitt-Pantel, 1992: 196-201. Immerwahr argues that Ion, when building the
tent with the intention to celebrate his birthday, does not realise that he is following the
customs of oriental leaders, rather than those of Classical Greece, and that in so doing he is
putting himself in danger of showing the kind of arrogance likely to be punished by the gods;
of course, the critic adds, it was Xouthos who had these grandiose ideas in the first place, but
he still finds it ironical that the new birth of Ion as the descendant of Erechtheus may be
perceived as the birth of a new absolute monarch. This view is clearly far-fetched: there is no
evidence in the messenger speech to support it, but there is evidence pointing to the
opposite assumption, as the messenger reports twice that the invitation was open to anyone
who wanted to participate in the banquet (1140; 1167f.), a gesture best taken as a
manifestation of the democratic values of the future Athenian ruler. Note that Xouthos had
asked Ion to summon just his friends to a banquet (cf. 663f.; 1131; cf. also 982), but Ion
invited all the Delphians and visitors to the sanctuary.

[133] Cf. 805. On Ion's status at Delphi and the discourse of *philoxenia,* see Zeitlin, 1989: 168;
177f.

Upon completing the structure of the tent, Ion took charge of its interior decoration. As steward of the god's wealth (cf. 54f.), he had access to the temple's treasury (1141) from which he obtained a selection of sacred tapestries which he hung up on the ceiling, walls and at the entrance of the tent. The messenger holds up the narrative in an effort to convey first to his audience an awareness of the space within which the murderous attempt against Ion took place. The long *ekphrasis* in the messenger speech is better taken as a deliberate narrative device intended to frame the action and exert a space-creating function locating the miraculous reversal of Kreousa's plan in an evocative ritualistic atmosphere, rather than as a pointless delay, 'evidently contrary to dramatic exigency'.[134]

The listeners are encouraged to transport themselves mentally into the tent and to gaze at the wonderful embroidery.[135] The ceiling is covered with a great expanse of drapery depicting the nocturnal sky, a spoil of the Amazons dedicated by Herakles as a votive offering (1143-58). The sides of the tent were decorated with a number of tapestries, the handiwork of barbarians, representing naval battles, beasts and hunting scenes (1158-62) and at the entrance, Ion set up a woven textile portraying Kekrops with his daughters, the offering of an Athenian (1163-65).[136] The messenger is

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[134] Wolff, 1965: 180; so also Burnett, 1962: 96; Hourmouziades, 1965: 114.

[135] See 'θαύματ' ἀνθρώποις ὁρᾶν', 1142; it would seem that this is an invitation to visualise what is verbally described; cf. Hesiod's *Shield of Herakles* 140, 'θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι', a phrase found at the outset of a long description, that of the shield; see also Hom. *Iliad* 5.725, 10.439, 18.83. 18.377, *Od.* 6.306, 7.45, 8.366 etc. The use of numerous words of seeing in the parodos may have also worked to the same effect; see above n. 95.

[136] For an analysis of the iconography of Ion's tent, see Burnett, 1962: 96; Immerwahr, 1972: 291f.; Müller, 1975: 39-44; Mastronarde, 1976: 169; Sousa e Silva, 1985-86: 34-39; Chalkia, 1986: 105-8; Goff, 1988; Zeitlin, 1989: 166-69, 174-77 and 1994: 152-54. On patterned garments, see Burn, 1987: 89-90. For the motif of the circular motion of sun, moon and stars in the sky, cf. Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18. 483-89, where there is also a reference to the

the third in a series of servants to use pictorial language.[137] In fact, the playwright constantly draws on the iconographical motifs common in vase-paintings, sculptures and weaving[138]; Euripides appropriates the sign-system of the visual arts (cf. 'σαφέστατον σημεῖον', 1157), which itself is part of a larger common cultural vocabulary, and employs it to get the picture across to his audience.[139] Yet, as one critic remarks, 'ekphrases can be regarded as scripts for drama, as scenarios'[140] (cf. 'γράμμασιν', 1146) and unless the listeners engage in the process of unravelling the imagery of the tapestries in the tent, they will not appreciate the thematic implications of the iconographical motifs for the whole of the play.

Pleiades, the Hyades, Orion and Arktos; see Hagstrum, 1958: 19-22; Kurman, 1974: 1- 4; Sousa e Silva, 1985-86: 36; Zeitlin, 1989: 172. Cf. also the Blacas Vase in Schefold, 1981: 294.

[137] The chorus (184-218), Ion (265-85; esp. 271) and the messenger, all in turn are presented as art-connoisseurs. Note that the messenger, in particular, seems to be a very competent viewer of artefacts, inasmuch as in his description he identifies over a dozen individual figures and scenes. On the importance of vision as a source of knowledge, see Segal, 1995: 191-95.

[138] The evident examples are the ekphrases in the parodos and the messenger speech, the description of the birds in Ion's monody and the description of the birth tokens, esp. Kreousa's weaving (1417-36); cf. also the reference to the statue of Athena holding the golden spear in the Acropolis ('χρυσολόγχου Παλλάδος', 9; cf. frg. 351 N^2); the stichomythia on the Athenian myths (265-85, esp. 269-71); the first appearance of Ion as 'Apollo's icon', holding a bow and wearing a laurel-wreath; Apollo grasping Kreousa's white wrist (891), as a metaphor commonly associated with abduction scenes in visual arts of the period.

[139] Such language was misconstrued by ancient biographers who argued that Euripides was first a painter and then became a poet (*Genos* 16-17, 116); see Lefkowitz, 1981: 91, 94. Surprisingly, this misinterpretation has found credence among some modern critics; see, for instance, Owen, who at line 163, cites this information as genuine. On Euripides' pictorial language, see Wolff, 1965: 192 n. 21; Barlow, 1971: 9-10, 14-15, 58-59, 95, 136 n. 44; Zeitlin, 1994; Segal, 1995: 208-9.

[140] Kurman, 1974: 13.

Yet the exposé of the embroidered tapestries in the tent is not straightforward; as one critic remarks, 'the "truth" of the tent is a Delphic truth'.[141] Scholars have offered a variety of sophisticated interpretations for the textile backdrops in the tent; all of these offer some contribution to understanding the richness and complexity of this poetic texture. Some critics see the depiction of heaven in the roof and of earth on the walls[142] or the symbolic triumph of civilisation over primitive violence and the reinstatement of divine order.[143] Others see the reproduction of the universe in the three temporal and spatial levels of the tapestries[144] and argue for the function of the tapestries as 'a visible sign of transition' from Delphi to Athens, prefiguring Ion's journey at the end of the play[145]; the theatricality of the tent[146] and the presence of the female implicated in the chosen medium

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[141] Goff, 1988: 51; she continues: 'indeed, most revealing where most unstable'.

[142] See Burnett, 1970: 100.

[143] See Mastronarde, 1975: 169; see also Goff, 1988: 47f., who remarks that the iconography poses the question of 'the place of force within politics, of violence within order' (p. 49).

[144] See Chalkia, 1986: 105-10. With regard to the spatial levels, Chalkia sees the highest heavenly level in the roof, the second level of mortal combats on the walls and the lowest level of death in the action which occurs inside the tent, where the dove is the victim of the poisoned wine intended for Ion. As for the temporal levels, Chalkia finds mythical time and divine serenity in the tapestry of the Amazons, historical time in the battles of Greeks and barbarians on the walls and fictional time in the Athenian tapestry above the door. Chalkia observes that the three spatial levels correspond to three temporal levels in Ion's life, namely his conception in the cave in the past, his childhood in Delphi in the present and his future life in Athens. See also Zeitlin, 1989: 167.

[145] See Zeitlin, 1994: 154; Chalkia, 1986: 109f. Zeitlin also finds a correspondence with the two previous choral odes; see 1989: 168 and pp. 157-8 on lines 714-17 referring to the nocturnal Dionysiac (Thyadic) rites on mount Parnassos, and pp. 161-3 on lines 1078-84 and the mention to the Eleusinian procession.

[146] See, for instance, Wiles in his forthcoming book on tragic space: 'This skene, like the theatrical skene, is a house of illusion. [...] The banquet does not happen at night: rather, the

of artistic expression (namely, weaving) and in some of the depicted scenes[147] are equally stressed. Another prevalent interpretation lays the emphasis on Ion's ritual transition from childhood to adulthood and searches for the relevant information in the events of the tent, where Ion acts as the host of the Delphic people and applies the knowledge of divine omens, which he had acquired as a temple-bred servant among righteous seers, to his great advantage (1189-93); in this line of interpretation, the tapestries of the tent are taken as representations of Ion's transition from ephebic status to Athenian citizenhood.[148] Finally, a critic has unearthed a Delphic ritual

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night sky is depicted on the roof of the tent. Ion is not admitted to Athens, but to a symbolic representation of Athens'. See also ch. 4, text at n. 48, on 'the little piece of theatricality' or 'Old Comedy' performed by Kreousa's paedagogue in the middle of the tent.

[147] See Zeitlin, 1989: 174ff., who takes the concluding lines of the preceding choral ode (1090-1105), where the Athenian maidens voice their wish for a reversal of roles, as the frame to Kreousa's attack against Ion; in her reading of the signs of the woven constellations on the tent's roof, the figure of the Pleiad (the singular is perhaps intentional), the female pursued by the male Orion with his sword ever drawn, is succeeded by the Arktos, 'the javelin-bearing goddess of the full moon who "cleaves the month in two" ', which may be taken as a covert reference to Kreousa's transformation from victim of rape to avenger.

[148] See Goff, 1988: 44ff., who draws attention to the similarities between Herakles and Ion and makes reference to Vidal-Naquet's influential article on the 'Black Hunter' (nn. 8, 10,11). One might also find parallels between Ion's banquet in the tent and the festival of *Apellai* at Delphi or the *Apatouria* at Athens during the course of which the youths are initiated to manhood and admitted into the phratry or citizen body. On the festival of the *Apellai*, see Homolle, 1895: esp. p. 11 (inscription of the Λαβυάδαι, 5th century BCE) and pp. 41-47 (discussion of the festival). Apellon the *ephebos* 'is an epitome of that turning-point in the flower of youth [...] which the *ephebos* has attained and which he also leaves behind with the festival which gains him acceptance to the society of men', Burkert, 1985: 144-45. See also Schmitt-Pantel who considers the *Apellai* at Delphi and the *Apatouria* at Athens (1992: 81-90). At the *Apellai*, the new citizen (young or adopted) offered sacrifice and organised a banquet for the community (p. 83); in the case of the *Apatouria*, the expense of the festival was covered by the *demos*, though the fathers of the initiands might have supplied the sacrificial victims and the wine, in an atmosphere of solidarity which reinforced the strong links

associated with the Delphic foundation myth of the killing of the chthonic Python by the boy Apollo to account for the erection of the temporary tent and the subsequent flight of Ion away from the tent.[149]

No single explanation can fully account for the imagery of the tapestries, but some combination of those suggestions is likely to come closest to a better understanding of the poetic intentions. Most of all the tent is about Ion and the meaning of his being recognised as heir to the Athenian throne; from the perspective of the large-scale dynamic of the play, it is about the relationship between Athens and Delphi in the experience of Ion and Kreousa. With the messenger's description of the interior of the tent this

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between the members of the phratry (who shared the same ancestor) in preparation for the admission of the new members (p. 86). The association between these festivals and Ion's banquet may have enabled the audience to recreate in their minds the right atmosphere for the narrated action of the tent.

[149] Wiles in his forthcoming *Tragic Space*. The information on this Delphic cult comes from Plutarch 418 A-B, who records how a 'παῖς ἀμφιθαλής' wearing a laurel garland was to approach the temporary hut ('ἡ καλιάς'), which was a *mimema* not of the Python's den but 'τυραννικῆς βασιλικῆς οἰκήσεως', overturn the tables inside it, set the hut on fire and run away from it to seek purification in the valley of Tempe. According to Wiles, 'the details of simulated royal wealth, the interrupted feast, the importance of the boy's parentage with a royal mother and a divine father, the garland, and the boy's precipitate flight, all correspond to the action of Euripides' play. Ion throws away his drink, breaks up the banquet and runs from the tent. Kreousa alleges later, in an unexpected metaphor, that Ion tried to set Erechtheus' house on fire. Ion is baffled to know what she means (1293-4), but familiarity with the cult makes everything clear'. Indeed, this is an ingenious interpretation, save for the fact that it is impossible for us to determine how many members of the audience, if any, would have been familiar with this Delphic cult. It seems to me very likely that the spectators would have picked out most of the Athenian references, but when it comes to Delphic ritual the number of spectators who would have made the association must have been very limited. It would be very peculiar for Euripides, who keeps his references to Delphi to the bare essentials needed to make the action readable (see below 1.3.3.), to base such a crucial part of his play on Delphic cult and expect his audience to appreciate the detailed allusions, without alerting them sufficiently.

enclosed space is laid open for the chorus and the spectators, just as within the play it was open to anyone who wished to join the feast, be it the citizens of Delphi or the visitors to the shrine, such as Kreousa's servants including the messenger himself. Recent critics have recorded the similarities between the tent and the Delphic temple.[150] Yet, though in many respects the tent mirrors the temple of Apollo, there is a fundamental difference between the two; the tent is accessible to all, whereas the temple's interior (*adyton*) remains hidden to the uninitiated and maintains its secrecy throughout the play. In fact, all the other interior spaces mentioned in the play are sooner or later opened up except for Apollo's *adyton*[151]; and all of these spaces, when they are eventually uncovered, turn out to contain traces of Athens: the cradle (1417-36), the cave, Kreousa's inner feelings.[152] Athenian material

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[150] See Giraud, 1987: 90 n. 52. Goff (1988: 51 and n. 14) compares the tent with the other 'womb-like enclosures' in the play; Zeitlin (1989: 168) brings out the parallels between the tent, the temple and Pan's cave, following Loraux (1993: 222 and n. 171), who offers also a valuable insight into the motif of uncovering and hiding in the play (p. 230-33 and n. 219); cf. also Chalkia, 1986: 116ff.

[151] Though the adyton remains hidden and inaccessible (see above n. 115), the temple-doors open twice in the course of the play to release information concerning Ion's parentage, and in this sense the temple functions as another womb-like enclosure, see above n. 150. First, Xouthos comes out with the false oracular answer which identifies Ion as his son (517f.); then, the Pythia emerges holding Ion's cradle containing his birth-tokens (1320f.) which leads to the correct recognition of mother and son; this time Ion will discover his descent from the Olympian Apollo, whereas through his conception and birth in the cave his chthonic descent was emphasised as an important element of his identity, and understandably so, if he is to be considered a member of the Athenian royal chthonic line.

[152] At her first entry, Kreousa weeps at the sight of the oracle (241ff.), but she is determined to keep her private thoughts to herself (256f.). In the immediately preceding scene, Ion had secured the secrecy of the temple's *adyton* (222f.). Both Apollo and Kreousa have managed to keep outsiders at a distance. Later, when Kreousa learns about the oracular answer and her husband's plot, she breaks her silence and unburdens her heart of her long-kept pain (859f.).

keeps coming up in the most unlikely places; in the two long ekphrases of the play, both the Apolline temple and the Delphic tent are revealed to bear in their inner heart the mark of Athens.

Thus in this play Euripides not only makes brilliant and original use of the actual physical dimensions of the theatrical space which the dramatic conditions of the theatre of Dionysos put at his disposal. What is more, he invokes the technique of ekphrasis at two crucial points — near the beginning of the play, to indicate the framework within which its action will take place, and then once again at the reported climax of that action — in order both to create within the audience's perception of the play an imaginary space which transcends in locale and in richness of detail anything they could actually see, and to pose the problem of spatiality itself, that is, to remind them that all that they can really see is surfaces but that behind these surfaces act sovereign powers invisible to men: above all the gods, and in the present case above all Apollo. This is the dramatic space and it is directed by the god whose oracle is at Delphi (see ch.3).

Note that though Ion's attitude changes (1546-48), the secrecy of the *adyton* is maintained and Ion is prevented from entering the temple by Athena's timely arrival.

1.3.3. Nature of the Delphic evocations

At first, the *Ion* may strike the reader as a rare example of a Greek tragedy whose dramatic location is elaborately described in its spatial, architectural and pictorial dimensions with a seemingly painstaking attention to detail.[153] The language of the prologue indicates with sufficient clarity that Delphi is the geographical setting of the action and that the Delphic temple is the dramatic setting of the play. From the very beginning the dramatist seems to be interested in portraying with considerable care Delphic topography and the temple's cultic practices. Both Hermes and Ion, when they identify the Delphic temple, refer to the divination taking place inside the building; the divine emissary of Apollo places Phoibos on the omphalos (5-7), and the temple servant refers to the Pythia sitting on the tripod (91-3), a scene commonly depicted on vase-paintings as the pictorial shorthand for the oracular procedure.[154] These representations of the temple supply in a concise form and in very general terms the only information provided in the prologue about the action occurring in the holiest interior of the temple.[155] Later, from occasional references in the play, it becomes clear that if the inquirers have offered due sacrifices to the god, they may enter the temple (226-9[156]; 419-20) and pose their question to the god with the help of the

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[153] See Lee, 1996: 86f.; Arnott, 1996: 112.

[154] See, for instance, Fontenrose, 1978: 205, fig. 2.

[155] Cf. also 'μαντεῖον ἕδραι', 130. Fontenrose, 1978: 204f., rightly argues against the assumption that *Ion* 91-3 is a covert reference to the priestess' mantic frenzy, an allusion to which is found nowhere else in this play.

[156] In the interpretation of this obscure passage, line 228 'καί τι πυθέσθαι χρῄζετε Φοίβου' seems decisive. If the chorus really want to consult the oracle (as Ion supposes for the sake of argument), i.e. if they wish to enter the adyton and hear the Pythia's response to their question, then it is no use telling them that they can go into the outer part of the temple, if

noblest of the Delphians ('Δελφῶν ἀριστῆς', 415), chosen by lot, who sit near the tripod.

Scholars have often cited certain selected passages from the play, such as lines 220-22, 226-29 and 333-35, to support their views about the preliminaries to the oracular consultation and the consultation itself and to determine whether men and women, freeborn and slaves were allowed to seek advice at the oracular centre. When Ion offers his service to Kreousa ('ὡς ὑπουργήσω', 333) and encourages her to share with him the question

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they have previously offered a sacrifice which is less than what is required for a proper oracular response'! Presumably, then, the terms that Ion uses in the μέν-clause are not meant to distinguish critically the actions referred to in that clause from those of the δέ-clause, and the 'πέλανος' is not distinct from the 'μῆλα' to be sacrificed by those requiring an oracle (at least not here, in this passage of Euripides). This conclusion can be strengthened by other considerations; Amandry (1950: 88) argues, on other grounds, that πέλανος 'désigne [...] plus généralement la nature d'une offrande apportée dans certaines conditions à certaines divinités', and that it includes blood-sacrifice. If the 'πέλανος' means the blood sacrifice, this would explain why Xouthos only mentions the latter (*Ion* 419), as does the relevant *Andromache* passage (*Andr.* 1100f.). If this is right, it follows that 'θυμέλαι' here coincides with 'μυχός'. Ion could be distinguishing the terms, and yet still equate the actions of the μέν and δέ clauses. For he might mean: 'if you have made the proper sacrifice - you may go forward into the sacrificial part of the temple (prior to going into the innermost 'μυχός'); but if you have not made it, do not go forward into the inner "μυχός" (of which action your going into the 'θυμέλαι' would be the preliminary)'. However, what is decisive against this rendering is the marked formal contrast between 'πρὸ δόμων' (226) and 'δόμων [...] ἐς μυχόν' (229). If 'πρὸ δόμων' means 'in front of the building', then, 'δόμων [...] ἐς μυχόν' must mean 'into the building itself': i.e. 'μυχός' is being used in the extended sense, here, of the whole *naos*, not in the specific sense of *Eum.* 39, 169, 179; if that is so, then 'θυμέλαι' is doubtless being used in a similar sense. Winnington-Ingram (1976: esp. 492ff.), on the other hand, argues against 'the dubious equation of *thumelai* and *muchos*, of *pelanos* and animal sacrifice and [... the deprivation of] the temple altars (or hearths) of all function in connection with the rites preliminary to enquiry' and suggests that 'the contrast [...] in 226-29 is not between entry and non-entry, but between the *pelanos* giving entry to *thumelai* and the sacrifice of animals giving entry to the *muchos*' (p. 493).

she wants to pose to Apollo, promising that he will see to the rest discreetly

('μάντευμα κρυπτόν', 334; 'ἡμεῖς τἄλλα προξενήσομεν', 335), critics have

offered conflicting reasons as to why Kreousa needs to ask a question

through the mediation of a Delphian minister. The use of the verb 'προξενέω'

in this context has been taken to mean that Ion is offering himself to be

Kreousa's 'πρόξενος' and to forward her question for consultation, because

she, being a woman, was not allowed into the adyton[157]; the fact that the

chorus never enter the temple has been cited as corroborating evidence.

Again, at 725ff., one commentator argues that the old paedagogue is

summoned to act as Kreousa's *proxenos*.[158] Yet there is no indication in the

text to justify the claim that the reason the chorus cannot enter the temple is

that they are women, nor is there any mention at 725ff. of a need to enter the

temple, let alone any difficulty in doing so.[159] At 335, Ion's suggestion that he

should act as Kreousa's proxenos may be due to the fact that Kreousa

wishes to put forward a question on behalf of her (imaginary) absent friend,

in which case the procedure may have been different.[160] On the other hand,

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[157] See Burnett, 1970, at line 335 and cf. also p. 138; Zeitlin, 1989: 157 and n. 46. See also
Yunis, 1988: 128 n. 51.

[158] Owen, 1939, at line 725ff.

[159] Kreousa explicitly says that she has fetched the paedagogue because she wanted to
have a 'φίλος' for moral support (728-732).

[160] See Fontenrose (1978: 216f.) who cites Plut. *Mor.* 385c, where a Delphic law is attested
according to which 'no woman may approach the χρηστήριον, but acknowledges the
difficulties in accepting the application of such a law in Euripides' *Ion*, since at 222, though
initially Ion denies the women of the chorus entrance to the temple, he then relates to them
the preliminaries to the consultation, in a language which clearly implies that if they were to
perform the ritual sacrifices they would be accepted into the 'μυχός' (226-229; see above n.
156). Fontenrose and Owen are in agreement in that all consultants must have needed a
Delphian *proxenos* as a sponsor to introduce them when they wished to consult the oracle,
though not – as Fontenrose emphasises – to ask questions and receive answers for them.

the fact that the women do stay outside the temple may indeed be taken as reflecting a contemporary situation, inasmuch as restrictions of access to different categories of visitors did apply in different temples.[161]

If there is any vagueness or imprecision in the use of the term *proxenos* in the *Ion*, one should bear in mind that the playwright was only aiming to strike a chord and did not intend to give a literal blow-by-blow reproduction of the Delphic cult practices[162]; similarly, the account of Ion's duties in the Delphic temple hardly provides a realistic representation of a temple-servant's religious tasks.[163] Furthermore, it is quite common that terms, such as *proxenos*, for relationships which are not necessarily technical, may mean one thing in the heroic world and another in the contemporary world, and it is difficult to determine with any certainty their exact ideological import.[164]

Owen, quoting *Ion* 551, adds that the *proxenos* would be a public host ['not attached to the service of the citizens of particular states'; contrast Burnett, 1970: 138, who calls the *proxenos* 'the representative of the visitor's own city'], who would undertake 'to lodge and entertain the visitors'; cf. also 1039; *Andr.* 1100; *Hel.* 144f.

[161] See Corbett, 1970: 150f.

[162] For a historical analysis of the institution of the *proxenia* and its relationship to *xenia*, see Herman, 1987: 130-42.

[163] For a review of Ion's tasks in Delphi, see Yunis, 1988: 122ff., who rightly agrees with Börner that 'Ion is a poetic transfiguration which corresponds to nothing in reality' (n. 39).

[164] See, for example, the use of the term 'δάμαρ' in epic and tragic poetry, the term 'χρυσοφύλαξ' in *Ion* 54 (see below n. 167); cf. also Soph. *Aj.* 1071, where Menelaos refers to Ajax as 'ἀνὴρ δημότης', a phrase which in that context means that he is not one of the main leaders, but which has different meanings in Homer and in the contemporary world. See also Easterling, 1985: 6f., who rightly argues that 'the tragedians are doing more than simply reproducing Homeric phrases in a mechanical way: they make variations of their own, with details culled from less distant sources, but always observing a certain heroic vagueness'. Another possibility to be considered is whether the term *proxenos* could be used in a metaphorical sense, perhaps associated with the references to 'τρέφειν' and economic reciprocity between Ion and the god (cf. Yunis, 1988: 123 and n. 41) and the idea of sharing.

Despite the appearance of precision and accuracy of detail, in fact the very same fluidity and vagueness is found in the poet's description of the dramatic space. The interior layout of the temple will remain unclear throughout the play, while the elasticity of the dramatic space will gradually become unmistakable; the Pythia, for instance, inspired on the day of consultation, will step out of the inner sanctuary ('τρίποδα [...] χρηστήριον λιποῦσα', 1320f.), cross some sort of, perhaps, visible barrier ('θριγκοὺς τούσδ' ὑπερβάλλω ποδί', 1321) and hand over to Ion his recognition tokens.[165] As it turns out, the sanctuary is much more inclusive than the temple; much is reported as happening in the temenos, but not in the temple.

To be sure, Euripides does deploy an astonishingly rich and varied vocabulary to describe the various features of the Delphic sanctuary. The temple and sacred precinct are referred to as: 'χρηστήρια' (33), 'ναός-οί' (38, 79, 111, 114, 140, 177), 'μαντεῖον' (42, 66, 69, 130), 'δόμος-οι' (45, 48, 129), 'ἀνάκτορα'[166] (55). Other words refer to particular parts of the exterior of the

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[165] Winnington-Ingram, 1976: 499, remarks that 'there is nothing in the language of the Prophetis to imply that she has left the temple' and argues that the whole scene ought to be imagined as taking place inside the temple, on the ground that the demonstrative pronoun 'θριγκοὺς τούσδ[ε]' is difficult to explain in theatrical terms, the chorus are silent between 1260 and 1510, and Kreousa claims to be 'ἐντὸς ἀδύτων' (1309). Yet, as often mentioned in this section, one should allow for a fluidity of vocabulary and space in the play; when Kreousa uses the word 'ἄδυτα', she does so with a meaning greatly extended by synecdoche to refer to the sacred Delphic precinct. Furthermore, Winnington-Ingram's interpretation would be contrary to the dramatic exigencies of the plot, according to which neither Kreousa nor Ion ever gains access to the god's temple (cf. 365ff.; 413ff.; 1546f.). This view is an interesting example of the kind of misunderstandings which scholars may make if they fail to appreciate Euripides' deliberate vagueness in the handling of the dramatic space.

[166] Chalkia (1986: 113-14, n. 318) remarks that the term 'ἀνάκτορον, -α' appears 15 times in Euripides and describes the temple of a god as an interior space. Roux (1976: 96) argues that the term 'ἀνάκτορον, -α' (and the homeric 'μέγαρον') in religious architecture describes the temples of certain divinities whose cult took place inside the actual building and not outside

temple building: its roof ('ὀρόφους', 89), its eaves ('θριγκοί', 156; 172), its floor ('δάπεδον', 121), the stylobate ('κρηπίδων ἐπι', 38), the entrance of the temple ('εἴσοδοι', 34; 104; 'πυλώματα', 790). References are made to the altars found in the sanctuary where Ion wandered as a boy ('ἀμφὶ βωμίους', 52), to the holy offerings ('ἀναθήματα', 107, 177) and the temple's treasures ('χρυσοφύλακα'[167], 54), to vessels containing holy water ('χρυσέων δ' ἐκ τεύχεων', 146) and to Ion's broom of laurel leaves (103, 112f., 145). There are also allusions to the existence of laurel-trees within the sanctuary[168] and to myrtle groves in the holy precinct ('μυρσίνας', 120). As for the physical surroundings of the sanctuary, the mountain peaks of Parnassos[169] and the sacred waters of the Kastalia spring[170] are selected to represent the Delphic scenery in the prologue.[171]

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around a hypaethral altar as in the majority of Greek religious ceremonies. Yet the two usages of the term in *Ion* seem to refer not to actions that are taking place inside the actual temple, but to actions definitely within the sanctuary. In 55, where Ion is said to have been leading a holy life in the 'ἀνάκτορα' of the god, the term must be taken in the broader sense as shrine or sacred precinct. In 1224, Kreousa is accused of attempting to commit murder inside the god's sanctuary and not inside the temple, since at the time of the assassination attempt Ion was not inside the temple but inside the tent.

[167] Euripides, relying on the audience's knowledge of the Delphic sanctuary's treasures in the sixth and fifth centuries, uses the (anachronistic) term 'χρυσοφύλαξ', letting the spectators colour its significance according to their personal experiences. See above n. 164.

[168] At 76, 80, 103, 112f., 145; cf. 422. Cf. also Eur. *Andr.* 1115, *IT* 1245. See Amandry, 1950: 126-134, for evidence from inscriptions and a discussion of the problems related to the presence of laurel-trees inside the temple; see also Winnington-Ingram, 1976: 489, n. 15.

[169] See 86; at 155 and 1266f. attention is drawn to the height of the mountain. At 714f. and 1127 there are references to the Phaedriades and the Bacchic rites of Dionysos.

[170] At 94f., 145f.; cf. 116f. Cf. also Eur. *IT.* 1257-8; *Pho.* 222-4 and the relevant scholium; schol. at *Or.* 1094. See Amandry, 1950: 135-39; Parke, 1978 devotes his article entirely to an assessment of the evidence on Kastalia found in Pindar, Bacchylides, Herodotus, Sophocles and Euripides, Pausanias, Strabo and Pliny the Elder. He remarks that only in Euripidean

Yet a careful survey of the vocabulary used to describe the Delphic oracle and its cultic practices shows that it is in fact not as straightforward after all as it may seem at first. Many complications arise from a poetic fondness for synecdoche or hypallage – the tendency to call something by the name of something else which is connected with it. There are, for instance, words which in other sources occur with a consistent specific meaning different from that found in the *Ion*; as is only natural, many scholars have thought that their significance within the Delphic context had to be carefully established on the basis of these external parallels, if one were to avoid any misconceptions about the play. One such term is the word 'θυμέλη', which though properly used to denote an altar, in the *Ion* is better taken in an extended sense, meaning the sanctuary as a whole.[172] Another

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plays is the spring associated with the ritual bathing prior to the consultation of the oracle; in all the other sources it is used metonymically for Delphi and its oracle.

[171] With regard to the Delphic fauna, Ion, in the second part of his monody (see above text at nn. 77-82), strives to keep the sanctuary clean of the impurities of three different kinds of bird: the eagle (158-60), the swan (161-170) and a mother-bird, which intends to nest under the temple-eaves (171-78); in the messenger's speech, a flock of doves flies into the tent and drinks from the wine poured onto the ground (1196ff.). Arnott notes that Euripides places legend above 'scientific accuracy', since, though most of the described bird-species may still be found in Delphi, the swan could hardly have chosen the valley of the Pleistos as its natural environment, and is only brought in on account of its set association with Apollo (1996: 115f.).

[172] At 46, 'ὑπέρ τε θυμέλας διορίσαι' must be at least as broad as 'beyond the (boundary of) the temple building', since the infant was already at the door of the temple (i.e. in the *pronaos*, cf. 34), but, perhaps it may be even broader, meaning 'beyond the sanctuary' (ie. presumably the *temenos* or the precinct), in view of 47f. 'θεὸς ξύνεργος ἦν τῶι παιδὶ μὴ 'κπεσεῖν δόμων'; cf. 114, 161, 228. On the references to altars in the play, see above nn. 22, 24; cf. also n. 11, for a review of the bibliographical material and the arguments in favour of a single altar located in the orchestra. Winnington-Ingram in his effort to pinpoint the meaning of this term in the *Ion* concludes, evidently perplexed, that 'the frequency with which the word

term which poses similar problems of interpretation is the word 'γύαλα'[173], which has been taken by some scholars to refer to the holiest interior of the temple; but another view holds that the term is apparently being used here, by synecdoche, for the whole of the Delphic temple.[174] It would seem that Euripides is employing a vocabulary loaded with Delphic resonances; words like omphalos, tripod, laurel tree, Parnassos, Kastalia and, if we accept the suggestions mentioned above, 'γύαλα' and 'θυμέλη' seem to form a group of

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thymele occurs in the early part of this Delphic play is perhaps not unremarkable and may prompt the hazardous speculation that it could be a specifically Delphic term' (1976: 495).

[173] The word occurs four times in the *Ion*, at 76, 220, 233, 245. The most problematic passage for contemporary scholars is the one referring to Hermes' exit into the laurel grove ('ἐς δαφνώδη γύαλα', 76). According to one line of interpretation, Hermes at the end of his prologue speech enters the temple, and moves to its holiest interior where there would have existed a laurel tree; see Legrand, 1901: 60, n.5; Amandry, 1950: 134; Roux, 1976: 117, 124; Winnington-Ingram, 1976: 489 n. 15, 496f.; Chalkia, 1986: 130. Other scholars argue for the delivery of the prologue speech from the *theologeion*, i.e. the roof of the stage-building, and for Hermes' subsequent 'notional' disappearance into the temple, see Hourmouziades, 1965: 158-9; so too Winnington-Ingram, 1976: 496 n. 38. However, it would be more appropriate theatrically for Hermes to enter from one of the *eisodoi* and appear on stage level, closer to the audience with whom he would share his knowledge of the events prior to the dramatic present; the playful treatment of the god (see ch. 4, text at nn. 13ff.) would be contrary to the exigencies of an appearance at the *theologeion*, which is reserved for Athene's appearance at the end of the drama, when she will announce with an authoritative voice the future of the Athenian royal line. It seems most likely that, at the end of the prologue speech, Hermes becomes one of the spectators of the dramatic action, supposedly hiding in a nearby laurel grove, 'waiting to see what happens as it unfolds', rather than entering the temple to find the outcome of Apollo's plan, which, in the first place, the god of the oracle was reluctant to let him know (cf. 'κοὐ λέληθεν, ὡς δοκεῖ', 68). The advantages of such an exit for the theatricality of the play have been examined before, see above 1.2.1., text at n. 46.

[174] Roux (1976: 117) argues that 'γύαλα' is 'la fosse, au fond de la cella, et par métonymie le temple tout entier', and also 'seul le temple de Delphes est appelé de ce nom'. Winnington-Ingram seems to agree when he says: 'The earliest examples seem to be topographical, referring to the position of the Delphic sanctuary in a hollow of Parnassus' (1976: 496).

set associations related to the Delphic setting and cult practice, a typology of Delphi with which the contemporary audience would have been well acquainted.

As for the description of the temple in the parodos of the *Ion*, scholars are unanimous in finding that there is a major discrepancy in the fact that the chorus describe not the eastern pediment of the temple, which they ought to have seen upon entering the orchestra[175], but instead the Gigantomachy, which seems to have been the subject of the western pediment of the Alcmaeonid temple.[176] Furthermore, the chorus describe two more individual scenes, each comprising three figures, which bear no relation to the Gigantomachy at all: the first one portrays Herakles slaying the Lernean Hydra with Iolaos rushing to his aid (190-200), the second shows Bellerophon riding on Pegasos and slaying the Chimaira (201-4). The search for the exact location of these scenes has been inconclusive, but it seems to be beyond doubt that they did not form a part of the pedimental sculptures.[177]

The chorus recognise only three scenes from the Gigantomachy, in which three gods, Athena, Zeus, and Dionysos, defeat their respective

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[175] Ion at his entry greeted the rising sun (82f.), indicating the eastward orientation of the Delphic temple in the background.

[176] On the archaeological findings at Delphi, see Homolle, 1902: 588-95 (also, 1901: 513f.), who cites the description of the pedimental sculptures of the Delphic temple in the parodos of Euripides' *Ion* as a piece of evidence in favour of the claim that the western pediment must have depicted the Gigantomachy; see also Coste-Messelière, 1931: 15-32; Yoshida, 1966: 5; Koster, 1976: 378.

[177] See Koster (1976: 379 and n. 48) who supports the view put forth by Homolle and Wilamowitz that these scenes must be attributed to the metopes; so too Rosivach, 1977: 284; but, Zeitlin (1994: 148f.) notes that 'the two scenes [...] have no known artistic provenance from this site, whether as metopes, paintings or acroteria' (n. 28); cf. also above n. 91.

enemies Enkelados, Mimas, and an anonymous Giant (205-18). Yet this is by no means an exhaustive account of the pedimental figures, nor is it at all an accurate one: in fact the precise angle and distance between Athena and Enkelados makes it impossible for the two figures to have been part of the same scene; on the western pediment there also seem to have been depicted one chariot and three more divine figures which are completely ignored by the chorus.[178] The playwright must have been picking out details from different sides of the pedimental sculptures and metopes, imposing a pattern of his own which would stand in a closer relation to Athenian iconography and, hence, to the kind of artistic lore which would be most familiar to the chorus and of course to his audience as well.

Recent criticism has come to the conclusion that the verisimilitude of the description of the Delphic temple in the parodos of the *Ion* is not primarily determined by iconic fidelity to the architectural monument itself, but, instead, by the thematic interests of the playwright.[179] A closer look at the

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[178] For a well argumented discussion of the inconsistencies and omissions in the Euripidean description, see Koster, 1976: 374-79, who concludes: 'Euripide aurait imaginé une Gigantomachie quelconque, répondant à l'impression générale qu'en avaient les spectateurs' (p. 377).

[179] See above the discussion of the ekphrasis in the parodos, 1.3.2., text at nn. 85ff.; on its thematic relevance to the whole of the play, see esp. text at n. 106. See also Immerwahr, 1972: 285, who notes that the Gigantomachy is at the basis of Athenian civilisation and portrays its triumph over the earthborn creatures; Mastronarde (1975: 166-7) argues that the description of the Gigantomachy with its 'readily recognizable iconographic meaning [of] the taming of the savage offspring of Earth [and the] control of rebellious primitive forces by the representatives of calm and order [are] themes directly relevant to the struggle within the human souls of the principal characters of *Ion*'; Rosivach (1977: 285; 288) concludes that 'these descriptions are [...] a conscious pattern which Euripides has designed to prefigure [...] the triumph of Apollo over Kreousa'. Zeitlin (1994: esp. 150-1) comments that 'by reversing iconographical direction from east to west, so as to give us Athena, Euripides hints at the

lists of architectural and sculptural details of the temple building or at the reports concerning the oracular consultation in the *Ion* would only confirm that behind an illusory appearance of precision, the dramatist is taking pains to maintain a certain degree of vagueness by using an elusive vocabulary which does not so much describe the location denotatively as rather generate a vague but intense feeling about its atmosphere.[180] This strategy is again clearly at work in Ion's monody, in which the lyric vocabulary, rich in compound adjectives, serves to stir the spectators' imagination in order to create the appropriate background before which the play will unfold; we are spared any hard-core information about the consultation procedure and we are given no indication as to where Ion and his attendants have actually come from.[181] So too in Ion's tent, on the one hand, we are given a meticulous account of the embroidered tapestries, but, on the other, the actual meal is described in just two words ('εὐόχθου βορᾶς', 1169).[182] These are good examples of Euripidean selectivity in performing his poetic speech act; only when there is a significant point to be made does the detail

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absence of Apollo and looks ahead to the surprising substitution at the end, when [..] Athena indeed takes the place of Apollo'.

[180] See Hourmouziades (1965: 158) who quotes Pouilloux-Roux (1963: 109 n.2): 'The poet's intention is [...] to convey the appropriate atmosphere of the locality by employing a suggestive vocabulary already established by poetry as well as by oral tradition, rather than to give precise descriptions'.

[181] See above 1.3.2., n. 68; esp. text at n. 74, on the attendants' ritual bathing as part of the oracular procedure.

[182] See Schmitt-Pantel, 1992: 219, who also warns the reader to be wary of taking any particular information concerning the civic banquet at face value: 'le festin d'Ion n'est à l'évidence pas un reportage où tel journaliste à la voix slave reconstituerait dans les moindres détails les gestes d'une cité en liesse. Il est lui aussi un montage de conduites diverses dont il est souvent difficile de reconnaître l'origine. Inutile de se livrer à ce jeu: Euripide a créé ce récit' (p. 220).

suddenly becomes quite specific in order to attract the attention of the audience.

The strenuous efforts of scholars who used to dissect the architectural and sculptural description of the Delphic temple in the parodos of the *Ion* and constantly reinterpreted the individual scenes so as to match them with the archaeological findings are now thought by many more recent critics to have been quite off the mark; so too the strategy of scanning the vocabulary used in the play in the hope of finding evidence related in any precise way to the cultic practices of the temple and reconstructing a functional image of the oracular centre seems to be vitiated by grave methodological problems. Scholars have frequently emphasised the interpretational flaws in any attempt to search for historical truth in a literary text; recent literary criticism has quite rightly endorsed the view that all information needs to be understood within its context and should not be simply extracted from that context, as if it were a nugget of historically accurate fact.[183] Euripides has offered a pastiche of literary, iconographical and mythical Delphi in the *Ion*, which should only be examined through the lens of the play's thematic interests and in relation to its juxtaposition and alternation with the second dramatic setting, Athens.

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[183] See, for instance, Roux, 1961: 'une tragédie grecque n' [est] pas un devis d'architecture' (p. 58); Koster, 1976: 'les descriptions littéraires ne sont pas nécessairement identiques à des photographies instantanées' (p. 379); Arnott wishes to remind the reader that 'dramatists are imaginative creators of lifelike fiction, not recorders of historical fact' (1996: 113).

1.4. The two dramatic settings and the *oikonomia* of the play

A sophisticated association systematically links the two different dramatic settings of the play and is of significant importance for a better understanding of the *oikonomia*[184] of the whole.

In the prologue, once Hermes has identified himself (1-4) and the dramatic setting as the Delphic oracular centre (5-7)[185], he goes on to introduce Athens (8ff.) and to relate the events which preceded the dramatic action, only to take us soon on an imaginary journey back to Delphi, whither he had long ago transported the illegitimate son of the union between Apollo and Kreousa at his brother's request.[186] In the dramatic present, the child who had once been exposed has now grown up to become the treasurer of the god (28-56), whereas Kreousa has remained in Athens and married Xouthos, but, due to their barrenness, she will herself shortly arrive in Delphi to seek advice at the god's oracle (57-67). The prologue-exposition closes with the introduction of the first dramatic character here at Delphi in the present, Ion, who performs his daily tasks as temple-servant and praises his blessed life in the Delphic precinct (129ff.)[187]; his existence in Delphi is

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[184] The term *oikonomia* is used to refer to the organization or management of a poem in the scholia to Hom. *Od.* I. 328. LSJ s.v. οἰκονομία, 3, also cite Diod. Siculus 5.1.; Dion. Halic., *Epistula ad Pompeium* 4, *De compositione verborum* 25; Plutarch, *Moralia* 2.142a. See also Arist. *Poet.* 1453a 29, where Aristotle, towards the end of his discussion on the ideal pattern of tragic plot-structure, concludes that 'ὁ Εὐριπίδης, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖ, ἀλλὰ τραγικώτατός γε τῶν ποιητῶν φαίνεται'.

[185] Inside the temple Apollo gives oracles about 'τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα' (cf. 5-7). Hermes' most accurate knowledge is limited to the prehistory of the drama, whereas concerning the future outcome of the plot he is less certain: 'τὸ κραιθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι', 77.

[186] See above 1.3.2., text at n. 65ff.

[187] See above 1.3.2., text at nn. 68-84.

rooted 'in the almost timeless *now* of service to the god'.[188] A chorus of Kreousa's Athenian attendants enter and marvel at the beauty of the Delphic temple, bringing with them a strong flavour of Athens.[189]

Next, the Athenian princess appears herself and brings along with her her own past experiences and the Athenian legends in a dialogue constructed on the pattern of the previous dialogue between Ion and the chorus, with Kreousa now taking up the leading role[190]; just as before the chorus questioned the truth or falsehood of the myths concerning the Delphic oracle (223-25), now Ion asks the same kinds of questions about the myths of Athens.[191] The references to the Athenian legendary past foreground buildings (such as the Erechtheum and the Parthenon) and

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[188] Lee, 1996: 87.

[189] See above text at nn. 85-117.

[190] Kreousa explains that her tears at the sight of the oracle (241f.) are the result of an old memory (250), for though she is present at Delphi, her mind is still at home (251), see Lee, 1996: 100f.; Loraux, 1993: 196. The ambiguity of her language does not escape Ion's notice, who questions her about her mysterious sorrow (cf. 'ἀνερμήνευτα', 255); Kreousa resumes her self-control and closes the matter (256) without revealing to Ion the cause of her grief. Just as Ion had forbidden the chorus access to the temple's interior (222), so too Kreousa, now in charge of the situation, in forbidding Ion to question her further on the matter refuses him access to her own psychological interior. Ion is content with the first-hand information he is given by the Athenian queen on Athenian legends and he does not try to penetrate her *adyton* (258-63; cf. 230f.).

[191] The mythical emergence of Erichthonios straight from the earth (267-8) and the story of how Athene entrusted him to the Kekropids (269-71) who disobeyed the goddess' order, opened the basket which contained the child, and hurled themselves from the rock (272-74) are all confirmed by Kreousa; so too is the story of Erechtheus sacrificing his daughters (except for Kreousa, who was still a baby and was saved in her mother's arms, 277-80) and being subsequently swallowed by the gaping earth where it was struck by Poseidon's trident in a place called 'Μακραί' (281-83), associated with the worship of Pythian Apollo at Athens (285), but also identified as the place where Kreousa was raped by the god (cf. 10-13; 288; 492f.; 936f.; 1400).

sacred locations (such as the 'Long Rocks' and the cave) in the vicinity of the theatre of Dionysos.[192] Kreousa's interrogation of Ion brings us back to Delphi (309ff.), where Xouthos soon arrives to consult the oracle (401ff.). In the first choral ode, the maidens accompany the Athenian royal couple who seek 'εὐτέκνους [...] χρησμούς' (422f.) and pray to the two virgin goddesses and sisters of Apollo, Athena (452f.) and Artemis (465f.) to come to Delphi and intercede so that the race of Erechtheus may be blessed with offspring (468-71). In the epode the chorus are mentally transported to Pan's cave adjoining the 'Long Rocks' (492ff.); near this place the Aglaurids (or Kekropids) are said to dance in a meadow on the Acropolis in front of the temples of Pallas (i.e. the Parthenon and the Erechtheum) to the tune of Pan's pipes heard from the inside of his cave, where Kreousa's alleged friend is thought to have exposed the child she bore to her divine seducer, Apollo.[193]

So far the Athenian and the Delphic settings have appeared in shifting perspectives, running along parallel lines in the minds of the dramatic characters and the viewers: Hermes justified the present dramatic

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[192] See above text at n. 5 and at nn. 118ff. If Joan Connelly's mythological interpretation of the Parthenon frieze is right and the Parthenon 'was considered to rest atop the tomb of the virgins, the *parthenoi* [the Kekropids], just as the tomb of Erechtheus may have been believed to rest under part of the Erechtheion' (1996: 76), then the references to the Athenian myths would have surely triggered the association with the respective buildings on the Acropolis.

[193] For such an abrupt change of theme and setting in choral odes, cf., for instance, Soph. *El.* 472-515, where the chorus predict the arrival of vengeance ('ἥξει [...] 'Ερινύς', 489-91) but in the epode lament Pelops (504ff.); Eur. *El.* 432-86, where the chorus switch from a reference to Achilles and his shield in the first and second strophe and antistrophe to Clytemnestra in the epode (476ff.); Eur. *Med.* 824-65, where the chorus, after the appearance of Aigeus, sing of Athens in the first strophic pair but go on to criticise Medea's abominable plan in the second. On the particular choice of setting in *Ion* 492ff., see below ch. 4.1, text at nn. 29-32.

setting via the key Athenian setting of the 'Long Rocks' in the prehistory of the drama; and, as much as Ion identified himself *via* his life in Delphi, Kreousa introduced herself *via* her memories of Athens. In the chorus' description in the parodos, they encouraged us to focus upon the similarities between the Athenian and Delphic settings, pushing to the background any existing disparities; yet, in the first choral ode, the wild scenery of Pan's cave in the epode is separated from the Delphic oracle in the strophe, for the former is the setting for the exposure and death of the child of a forced union (501-06), while the latter bears the hope of the Athenian royal line for the birth of a child (458-71).[194]

In the second episode, after the false recognition scene which explores the possibility that a Delphian maiden might have given birth to Ion (550ff.), Ion's short-lived joy at finding his father gives way to reason and he recalls possible consequences of his arrival as Xouthos' heir in the autochthonous city-state of Athens. Ion delivers a long rhesis (585-647) in which, by a detailed contrast between his possible future life in Athens and his life at Delphi, he quite laboriously tries to prove that the latter is superior; although he stands on the threshold between Athens and Delphi, he does not want to cross it, for he prefers to stay where he is, secure in the seclusion of the Delphic temple, away from public life and the responsibilities of adulthood. The dramatic consequence of Ion's speech is the formation of a temporary breach in the imaginary bond between the two dramatic settings

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[194] In the antistrophe, the idea of the lasting happiness and light brought by children to the family is emphasised, see 'ὑπερβαλλούσας [...] εὐδαιμονίας ἀκίνητον ἀφορμάν' (472-74), 'λάμπωσιν ἐν θαλάμοις [...] νεάνιδες ἥβαι' (476f.), whereas in the epode Pan plays his pipes in the darkness of the cave where the unhappy woman ('παρθένος μελέα', 503) exposed her child to die.

which was carefully laid out for us in the preceding action.[195] The multiple future tenses in Xouthos' answer signal his eagerness to abandon the Delphic setting forever and to move to the land of Athens[196], where he expects to find happiness.[197] Ion's reluctant obedience is expressed by a series of conditional phrases (669, 670, 673).

The chorus, in their second ode, look to the future and anticipate disaster; the feelings to which they give voice continue to suggest an imaginary progression towards the locale of Athens. In the epode, the chorus address a prayer to the peaks of Parnassos in which they wish for Ion's death before he ever reaches Athens as a foreign intruder; thereby they make the Athenian setting smoothly replace Delphi in the minds of the audience (cf. 'ἐμὰν πόλιν', 719f.). At the end of the ode, their imaginary journey to the city of Athens in the future time of Ion's intrusion into the Erechtheid palace is paralleled by another mental journey to the past time of

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[195] At the end of Ion's speech, the chorus pass a quick comment (648-49) along much the same lines as their previous comment following immediately after the false recognition scene (566-68). Or, to be more precise, when the interests of Xouthos and his newly-found son, on the one hand, and those of Kreousa and the Erechtheid palace, on the other, split apart, the chorus start to clarify their position, more and more openly taking sides with Kreousa. After they have witnessed the recognition between father and son, though they say that they share with them their happiness ('κοιναὶ ἡμῖν δωμάτων εὐπραξίαι', 566), they also wish that Kreousa and the house of Erechtheus too could share in the good fortune of being blessed with children. Later, at 648, they approve of Ion's speech, on condition that it result in the happiness of their mistress. They are portrayed as constantly preoccupied with their mistress's happiness, in a way that prepares the ground for their outright condemnation of Xouthos' chosen course of action and their prayer for Ion's death in the following choral ode.

[196] Verbs in the future: 655, 656, 659, 665; verbs of movement; 'ἄγων', 654; 'τῆς δ Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς ἄξω', 656; 'Δελφίδ᾽ ἐκλιπεῖν πόλιν', 665.

[197] It is recurrently emphasised that one of Xouthos' supposedly main motives in acting as he does is to live in happiness; see 650, 658, 699. The result of such a preoccupation, we are constantly reminded, is that he does not share a fortune with his wife; see 699, 704, 817f.

Erechtheus' mythical reign in Athens; hence, we seem to be invited to participate with the chorus in this imaginary journey into the dramatic future *via* the mythical past.

In the first line of the third episode, Kreousa picks up the cue of Erechtheus' name, which is still lingering in our minds from the closing line of the ode.[198] Kreousa uses her father's name in her address to the old paedagogue[199], who will now serve as a surrogate for Erechtheus; he comes forth to lend Kreousa moral support (727-732), since her father is dead and he, whom 'she honours as a father'[200] (734), is the next best

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[198] It might perhaps be suggested that the chorus close their ode with the name of Erechtheus not just as a statement of their 'loyalty to the legitimate line' (Burnett, 1970, on line 721), but also because they might possibly have just recognised the paedagogue entering the stage. For another interpretation of the lacuna at the end of the ode, see Zeitlin, 1989: 169f. and n. 61; Zeitlin detects 'a likely correlation between Ion's entry into Athens as a "foreign invasion" and Erechtheus' situation with regard to the war on behalf of Athens against Eleusis'; this idea is in line with her general interpretation of the play as loaded with ritual allusions to the mysteries of Eleusis. Perhaps the two interpretations could be combined into a third one; the chorus women, in a time of danger from foreign invasion of the autochthonous line of the Athenian race, recall Erechtheus' victory against the Athenian enemies (cf. Diggle's suggested reconstruction in his *apparatus criticus* at lines 722-4).

[199] More specifically, she introduces the new character as the 'old man, who served my father Erechtheus long ago when he was still alive' (724-5).

[200] Perhaps the other two translations, supplied as alternatives by Owen (ie. 'I care for you in my father's place' and 'I care for you as my father did'), are meant to co-exist. Kreousa is about to help the old man climb up the steep path that leads to the temple, even though she has the high rank of a 'δέσποινα' (734). Note, also, how the phrase 'παιδαγωγ' [...] πατρός' (725) is echoed in 'ἀντικηδεύω πατρός' (734). It is not merely by chance that Kreousa, in her first utterance in three hundred lines, mentions her father three times in ten lines (725, 733, 734) and ends both the first line and the closing line with the word 'πατρός'. In fact, one can even detect a ring composition in this brief introduction of the paedagogue; the last two lines echo the first pair of lines; in both cases the somewhat complicated structure results in the creation of a strong mental association (or fusion) between the figures of the paedagogue and Erechtheus. Moreover, the chorus' last words, before their first visual contact with the old

substitute.[201] Yet it may well be the case that the only plausible association between Erechtheus and the paedagogue is that he will act as a guardian of the Athenian autochthonous royal line[202]; in fact, it will turn out that he will attempt, in alliance with Kreousa[203], to repeat Erechtheus' sacrifice of a child[204], for motives similar to those of Erechtheus, namely, for the defence of the Erechtheid palace against foreign intrusion (cf. 807-11).

When Kreousa hears from the chorus that she will not have any children (760-1), she is deeply upset; but, when she learns that her husband was granted a son, she collapses under the strain and wishes she could fly away from Greece to the western stars (796-99), as if to break away from the

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tutor, were Ἐρεχθεὺς ἄναξ' (724), whereas the paedagogue addresses Kreousa as 'θύγατερ' (735). Cf. also 763, 925, 942, 970, 998.

[201] But if the paedagogue is a dramatic substitute for Erechtheus, it may be helpful to recapitulate the information we have been given so far about Erechtheus, so that we may comprehend better what the role of the paedagogue is supposed to be. Erechtheus, as a descendant of Erichthonios, was himself also earthborn; he sacrificed his daughters for his country's sake (277-8), sparing only Kreousa, who was still a baby in her mother's arms (279-80); he defended Athens against the foreign invasion (721-4); he perished by the stroke of Poseidon's trident near the Long Rocks, where Kreousa was raped by Apollo (281-2). On Erechtheus, see 10, 260, 277, 433, 469, 546, 568, 724, 725, 810, 1106, 1220, 1293, 1465, 1573; on the Erechtheids, see 24, 1056, 1060. Out of all these references, the only useful information about Erechtheus himself comes from 277-82. See below ch. 2.

[202] The appearance of the paedagogue brings a return to the history of the Athenian royal family. In his first words, he addresses Kreousa as 'worthy of her worthy fathers, who does no shame to her autochthonous ancestors of long ago' (735-7). Indeed, the paedagogue's role in this episode is to make sure that Kreousa remains worthy of her ancestors and avenges Xouthos' offensive behaviour towards the house of the Erechtheids. Knox calls him 'a fierce guardian of the blood purity of the royal line', 1979: 263. On the paedagogue's role, see also Walsh, 1978: 302-8; Saxonhouse, 1986: 268f.

[203] See Loraux, 1993: 208f. and n. 105, for Kreousa as the guardian of the hearth of Erechtheus.

[204] On the theme of sacrifice, see Loraux, 1993: 210 n. 111; Whitman, 1974: 69-103.

confining circle of the two dramatic settings, which only cause her pain.[205]
When, after sixty lines, she finally bursts into a monody (859ff.), she releases
all her pent-up pain and concludes her attack on Apollo by projecting her
hatred for the god onto his birthplace.[206] In the ensuing dialogue[207],

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[205] The dream of escape from the real world by flying away to a peaceful territory is a recurrent
idea in Euripides' plays. It is usually expressed in the lyrical passages as a wish of the chorus:
Hipp. 732-4; *Hel.* 1478f.; *IT* 1137; *Med.* 440; *Ion* 1238. But some characters also have
recourse to this resort, as Kreousa does here: *Andr.* 862 (Hermione); *Her.* 1157f. (Heracles);
Hec. 1099f. (Polymestor); *Med.* 1296f. (Jason refers to Medea); *Hipp.* 1290-93 (Artemis
refers to Theseus). Quite often the characters make 'a double-barrelled wish', as Barrett calls it
(on *Hipp.* 1290-93), that they 'may be either swallowed up in the earth or fly up into the sky';
Barrett cites *Ion* 1238f., *Her.* 1157f., *Hec.* 1099f. *Med.* 1296f., *Phaethon* fr. 781.61f. See
also Assael, 1990, esp. 325-7; she considers Kreousa's wish to be a dream of escape to the
stars of the night, where she expects to find deliverance from pain and peace of mind. Some
scholars have looked for a deeper symbolism in the choice of the western stars; Owen quotes
Wecklein, who claims that 'the west is chosen because in it was the entry to the underworld';
Burnett (at 798) takes Kreousa's wish as a wish for death 'with a hint of immortality' in it; Rehm
(1992, 141) takes it as 'an escape to death'. I should think that as her wish stands, Kreousa
seems merely to be imagining an escape to the farthest possible place, but not necessarily
intending to die; if she had wished for death, it seems to me, she might have well included this
option in a 'double-barrelled wish'; she has quite openly referred to death before (763; cf.
765), so she might well have done the same at 796f. On the other hand, one might suggest
that the imagery recalled here may possibly have carried a further connotation of death, in the
sense that the only way to escape could be through annihilation. Cf. the verbally similar
passage in *O.T.* 178 'ἀκτὰν πρὸς ἐσπέρου θεοῦ', which refers to people dying of the plague;
Jebb in his commentary on that play (1893) cites in comparison Hom. *Od.* 12. 81.

[206] The step from her lost child, who has been stripped of his swaddling clothes, to Delos, the
island which is holy to motherhood and is also Apollo's birthplace, is strikingly powerful. Leto's
'σεμνὰ λοχεύματα' and idyllic birthplace are contrasted with Kreousa's counter-world of pain.
Delos is the island which revealed itself from the bottom of the sea to provide a place where
Leto could give birth; in the hour of her travail her divine seducer, Zeus, created a palm tree
for her. Apollo no longer deserves the love of Delos; the island hates both him and his
attributes (i.e. the laurel-tree). Contrast *Hom. Hymn to Apollo*, 136f.; Callim. *Hymn 4, to Delos,*

Kreousa, urged on by the paedagogue's fervent defence of the rights of the Athenian royal line, conceives a cunning and effective plan (985ff.)[208] to take vengeance for the injustices her divine and mortal lovers had inflicted on her; by the end of this scene, the paedagogue sets out to execute the plan to poison Ion[209] in the tent where Xouthos and his newly-found son are giving a banquet for the city of Delphi (1026; 1031ff.).[210] The chorus sing a prayer

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260-63. See Barlow, 1971: 48 and n. 30, who lists as examples of the use of the motif as a term for praise, IT 1235, HF 687f., Hec. 462; cf. also IT 1098f.

[207] It is a common feature of Greek tragedy for something to be presented first lyrically, then in dialogue: 'ἄνελθέ μοι πάλιν', 933; cf. Pho. 1207, Tro. 61. Here it is natural enough that the paedagogue should want to hear the story with a little more precision, but in effect we thereby gain a second account of the incident, in stichomythia (cf. 330f.).

[208] Kreousa hesitates no longer; she relates a plan she has carefully worked out. Fortunately, she happens to have some poison on her, which she carries on her wrist: 'κἀπὶ καρπῶι... ἐγὼ χερὸς φέρω', 1009; contrast with her white innocent wrist at 891. The source of this poison is another piece of Athenian mythology; it came from the blood of the Gorgon which was created by Ge to help her sons in the battle of the gods and was killed by Athena ('ἣν Φλέγραι Γίγαντες ἔστησαν θεοῖς'; cf. 206f., where the battle in which the gods overcame the giants at Phlegra was examined by the chorus as a work of art; cf. also HF. 1192-1194). Pallas gave it to Erichthonios at his birth (1001; another odd piece of information, like 21f.); he, in turn, gave it to Erechtheus, from whom Kreousa inherited it (1007-9). Actually, it was two drops of blood, one beneficent from the hollow vein of the dying Gorgon (1011), and one deadly from the venom of the Gorgon's snakes (1015), kept separately, of course (1016f.). The paedagogue is pleased with the plan and comments that Kreousa has everything she needs ('ὦ φιλτάτη παῖ, πάντ' ἔχεις ὅσων σε δεῖ', 1018), for, indeed, what more could she want?

[209] All of Kreousa's emotion is directed against the boy; she cannot bear to kill Xouthos for he has been a good husband to her (977). She can take vengeance on the boy, since he has no claim on her, and she can concentrate all her pain and resentment on him with a good conscience. That is, she can choose to kill him because she thinks that, unlike Xouthos, he is not a philos for her. The irony is obvious.

[210] Kreousa suggests that the plan be carried out in Athens, but the paedagogue votes for immediate action at Delphi (1020f.); the Athenian queen agrees, but by taking this decision (on strictly rational grounds), they alter Apollo's plans as described by Hermes in the prologue. Compare line 71f. 'μητρὸς ὡς ἐλθὼν δόμους γνωσθῆι Κρεούσηι' to 1021 'δῶμ' [...] τοὐμὸν

for the success of Kreousa's plan to Einodia, the goddess of the crossways (1048-1105)[211] and shortly afterwards the messenger enters and relates in detail the unsuccessful attempt against Ion in a narrative replete with allusions to Ion's transition to adulthood and Athens (1106-1228).[212]

The conflict of interests between the dramatic characters who defend the rights of the Athenian royal line (Kreousa, the paedagogue, the chorus) and those who stand up for the Delphic oracle (Ion, the Delphians,

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μόληι'; cf. 1027. Kreousa orders the old man to poison Ion in front of the eyes of her husband, once he has completed his sacrifices secretly ('βουθυτεῖ λάθραι πόσις', 1031); she does not know that Xouthos will not be present in the tent, as he has planned to go to Parnassos and offer sacrifices to Dionysos, as one of Ion's 'γενέτας θεούς' (1126, 1130).

[211] Normally Hekate, an uncanny goddess, with strong associations with the underworld, ghosts, and sorcery, cf. *Med.* 395f.; she is often equated with Artemis, but here with Kore, daughter of Demeter (1048). This is a rather recondite piece of theology, which need to be explained from within the context of the ode and, more widely, of the dramatic plot. Euripides introduces the Eleusinian mysteries later in the ode and in this light one can make better sense of the early allusion at the opening of the ode, as Zeitlin remarks (1989: 162). As the same critic has shown, there is an inversion of the Eleusinian mysteries in this ode, for, instead of their invocation as life-giving rituals, the chorus pray for Ion's death; cf. esp. Zeitlin, *op. cit.* n. 77. By the end of the play, the prayer is fulfilled in a paradoxical way: there occurs an ascent (or, more accurately, a rejuvenation: 'ἀνηβᾶι δ' Ἐρεχθεύς', 1465) and not a descent ('εἰ δ' ἀτελὴς θάνατος [...] εἰς ἄλλας βιότου κάτεισι μορφάς', 1061ff., the chorus on Kreousa; cf. 1439-42, Kreousa referring to Ion, 'κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέρων χθονίων μέτα Περσεφόνας τ' ἐδόκουν ναίειν'), though Ion is not dead (cf.1444), but instead acquires his identity and refounds the Athenian royal palace ('δῶμ' ἑστιοῦται', 1464). As for Kreousa, the chorus had predicted that if her plan was not fulfilled ('εἰ δ' ἀτελὴς θάνατος', 1061), she, who comes from a noble palace ('τῶν εὐπατριδᾶν γεγῶσ' οἴκων', 1073), would not bear to live in the bright light ('<ἐν> φαειναῖς... αὐγαῖς', 1071f.) and see strangers as rulers in her home (1069f.); yet, in the end, not only Kreousa, but also her noble palace of the earth-born comes out of darkness ('ὅ τε γηγενέτας δόμος οὐκέτι νύκτα δέρκεται',1466) and sees the brightness of the sun ('ἀελίου δ' ἀναβλέπει λαμπάσιν', 1467).

[212] See above 1.3.2., text at nn. 125-152.

Xouthos[213]) has gradually been becoming evident ever since the false recognition scene (510ff.), followed by Ion's speech (585ff.), the chorus' prayers for Ion's death (676-724; 1048-1105), and the plot against him (esp. 923ff.); the clash finally assumes a physical dimension and is first narrated (esp. 1208ff.; 1222-26) and then visually represented on stage at the crux of the play in the beginning of the fifth episode, when Ion enters in pursuit of Kreousa, sword in hand (cf. 'ξιφήρεις', 1258; cf. 'σφάξαι', 1309) and Kreousa confesses that she has tried to kill him as befits an enemy of her house ('ἔκτεινα σ' ὄντα πολέμιον δόμοις ἐμοῖς', 1291).

At this point Kreousa has already followed the chorus' advice (1255ff.) and offered herself as a suppliant upon the altar of Apollo (1285). It is this act that initiates the bridging of the gap between the opposing parties (and their corresponding dramatic settings) as it figuratively places 'Athens in Delphi's lap'. Ion, imbued with hatred for Kreousa, expresses his frustration at the *nomos* which protects such an evil suppliant (1312ff.), but he is prevented from further blasphemy by the Prophetis who makes a timely appearance (1320). She asserts that he is being cruel on the basis of an error and works to lessen his obsession with paying back evil with evil ('ἀνταπολλύναι', 1328), first by appealing to his mercy for his stepmother (1329)[214] and then by recalling to him his imminent journey to Athens and the importance that he remain pure and secure good omens (1331ff.).[215] The Pythia has come out of the temple not only to bid farewell to her foster child, but also to hand over

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[213] On Xouthos' absence from the final scenes of the play, see above n. 130.

[214] Note that the Pythia had herself shown 'ὠμότης' when she first saw that a woman had abandoned her child at the temple steps, but her sterness gave way to pity for the child: 'οἴκτωι δ' ἀφῆκεν ὠμότητα', 47 ; cf. 'ὠμός ὤν ἁμαρτάνεις', 1327.

[215] Note that Ion employs an argument previously used by the paedagogue (1046-7) and Kreousa (1291), namely that one is entitled to harm his enemies and still retain his purity (1334).

to him the cradle with his swaddling clothes and to urge him to launch a search for his real mother (1355), for the priestess supposes that the god has revealed his father because he has decided to send Ion away from Delphi (1345) and that he wishes her to bestow upon him his birth tokens, which were previously hidden (1353).

Ion promises to comb all of Asia and the lands of Europe for his mother (1356)[216], but, once the Pythia has left the stage, he hesitates to open the cradle for fear of finding out that he is base-born (1380-84). In the end, he plucks up his courage and looks into the cradle, which has remained miraculously intact and untouched by time (1391-94; cf. 1435-6). Kreousa identifies one by one his birth tokens: an unfinished piece of weaving (Kreousa's apprentice-work) depicting the Gorgon and fringed with snakes in the fashion of an *aegis* (1417-25), a golden necklace of dragons for the new-born to wear in imitation of Athena's gift to Erichthonios (1427-31)[217], and an unwithered wreath of the olive tree which Athena planted on the Acropolis (1433-36). The strong Athenian associations of the birth tokens and their immaculate condition seem to have encapsulated Athens' past and to have transferred it into the Delphic present. It is as if the recognition between mother and son, which was frustrated for so long, has finally been completed in a total but temporary suspension of time and place.[218]

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[216] Perhaps here Ion inadvertently hints at his destiny, for, as Athena predicts at the end of the play, Ion's successors will be named after him, inhabit the lands of Asia and Europe and become a glorious race (1585-88).

[217] On Ion's birth and exposure as a repetition of Erichthonios' birth, see Loraux, 1993: 193-95. See also below, ch. 2.1.

[218] See Lee, 1996: 100-103; 'the recognition re-presents the moment of Ion's birth and exposure. The untarnished crib and the green olive-branch tranport us back to the cave of the acropolis so that mother and son, we feel, are reunited where they were parted' (p. 103).

After the recognition scene, mother and son begin to reconstruct the past. Once again Kreousa relates the events leading up to the exposure of her son (1468-1507).[219] Yet Ion is not convinced of the identity of his true father (1520ff.) and he prepares to enter the temple in search of the truth (1546ff.).[220] Athena's appearance *ex machina* restores order, offers an aetiological prediction of the future of the Ionian race (1575-88) and of Kreousa's and Xouthos' common offspring ('κοινὸν γένος', 1589), asserts Apollo's divine providence (1595-1600), and brings together the two dramatic worlds of Athens and Delphi under her *aegis*; the 'ἐπώνυμος' goddess of Athens (1555f.) is a worthy 'ὁδουρός' (1617)[221] for the procession of Ion and Kreousa to her city. Ion, having learnt that, as the son of Apollo, he carries Delphi within his flesh, will continue to preserve his balance between *nomos* and *physis* in Athens (cf. 643-4). In this way he will become an extraordinary ruler for Athens and the whole of Greece (cf. 1573-75).

Thus this play, which is set in the holy precinct of Apollo at Delphi but dramatises centrally important figures in Athenian civic mythology, weaves together the lines of Athens and Delphi in a complicated set of parallels, conflicts, entanglements, and unknottings. Apollo's decision to rescue the exposed baby Ion and to have Hermes transport him to Delphi may be interpreted as a mythical expression for Euripides' decision to set Athenian characters in a Delphic location and thereby to manufacture apparent incompatibilities which could lend themselves to creative tensions and

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[219] At the introduction to her narration of Ion's birth, Kreousa uses a phrase which conveniently encapsulates Ion's status: 'ἄλλοθεν γέγονας, ἄλλοθεν', 1472.

[220] Ion's heart is troubled: 'ὁ θεὸς ἀληθὴς ἢ μάτην μαντεύεται;', 1537. On this passage and the question of truth or falsehood in the play, see Wolff, 1965: 187-90. See also below ch. 3.

[221] Instead of Einodia arriving to lead the way to Hades (cf. 'ὅδωσον', 1051), Athena comes to accompany Ion on his journey to Athens.

satisfying resolutions. To adapt the terminology of Aristotle's *Poetics*,[222] the *desis* which knots together the lines of conflict of the plot sets into potentially violent contrast with one another the line of Athens with that of Delphi, after a beginning which had shadowed the possibility of an amicable parallel between them; and the *lusis* which at the end decisively resolves the conflicts at the same time removes any possibility of tension between Delphi and Athens and guarantees their deep friendship and mutual loyalty forever.

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[222] See Aristotle, *Poetics* 18.1455b 24-33.

Schematic representation of the dramatic structure of the *Ion* with reference to place and time

During the first part of the play (1-509), the two dramatic settings exist in parallel in the minds of the characters; then, the dramatic characters who are associated with the Athenian setting come into conflict with those who stand for Delphi (510-1249); in the end, Athens and Delphi are established as successive, but harmonious locations in a single mythic continuum that leads up to contemporary time (1250-1622).*

Prologue	1-81: Hermes	Delphi - Athens, from past to present
	82-183: Ion's monody	Delphi - dramatic present
Parodos	184-236	Delphi - dramatic present; Athenian resonances
First Episode	237-451	Athens - past and present
First Choral Ode	452-509	Prayer for future of Athenian royal line
Second Episode	510-555	Delphi - false recognition past - Ion's engendering
	585-647: Ion's speech	Comparison of life in Delphi to life in Athens
	648-675	Athens - future
Second Choral Ode	676-724	Prayer for Ion's death at Delphi in the near dramatic future
Third Episode	725-858	Delphi - dramatic present
	859-922: Kreousa's monody	Athens - past
	923-1047	Plan for Ion's murder at Delphi in the near dramatic future
Third Choral Ode	1048-1105	Invocation of vengeance; prayer for successful poisoning of Ion in the near dramatic future
Fourth Episode	1106-1228: Messenger	Description of Delphic tent Athenian resonances
Fourth Choral Ode	1229-1249	Fear for dramatic present at Delphi
Fifth Episode	1250-1319	Delphi - dramatic present
	1320-1368	Delphi - past (Pythia's account of recognition tokens)
	1398-1436	Athens - past (description of recognition tokens)
	1437-1519: Recognition scene	Delphi and Athens merge in the dramatic present
	1520-1548	Athens - past (Ion questions the identity of his father)
	1553-1605	Athena *ex machina*: re-establishes the relationship of Athens and Delphi in past and present and leads safely to the future in Athens
Exodos	1606-1622	Procession towards Athens in the *exo*-dramatic future

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* This scheme differs from the one in the commentary of Burnett (1970: 16), who reads the play as a confirmation of Apollo's providence with three consecutive acts of application (1-675), frustration (676-1105) and restoration (1106-1622) of Apollo's plan.

Chapter Two
The Athenian Foundation Myths and the *Ion*

2.1. Autochthony

2.1.1. Myths of Autochthony

The term 'autochthony' covers a wide range of very disparate kinds of mythic themes. Although *gegenes* and *autochthones* are not synonymous, the latter can be understood as a special case or sub-category of the former. Hence, in order to provide a conceptual context in which both the common and the unique features of the Athenian mythic ideology of autochthony can become clear, it is necessary briefly to indicate these other kinds of myths. They fall into three categories: (a) universal myths; (b) local non-political myths; and (c) local political myths.

(a) The Earth plays an important role in cosmogonies around the world as an ultimate source for all that is. There are many reasons for this cosmological privilege; to name but a few, the earth generates vegetal life directly and animal life indirectly and thereby is ultimately responsible for providing food for human beings; its seasons determine the sense of time, especially in agricultural societies, and hence structure the sacred and profane calendars; it forms the foundation on which humans build their homes and cities; and it is to the earth that in many cultures the bodies of the dead are restored. In the Hesiodic cosmology, for example, Earth (*Gaia*) is the primeval mother of the universe (*Theog.* 116ff.). Amongst her various forms of reproduction and numerous children, Hesiod says that a set of

valiant warriors literally sprang from the ground 'in gleaming armour, holding long spears in their hands' (*Theog.* 186); these were the Giants, whom the Earth conceived from the bloody drops that fell on the ground when Kronos castrated Ouranos.[1]

(b) Another set of *Gegeneis* in armour were born from the ground of Colchis, when Jason, executing the task set him by King Aietes, yoked a pair of fire-breathing bulls, ploughed the ground, sowed the teeth from Kadmos' dragon and overcame in battle the earthborn warriors, all with Medea's help.[2] The Argonautic Gegeneis have no cosmological function; on the other hand, Colchis is not a Greek polis and this myth seems to be essentially literary rather than political in its meaning. Despite the evident differences between this myth and Hesiod's, closer inspection suggests some surprising affinities. Both the births of the Giants and that of the Gegeneis of Colchis were the result of an act of violence, the castration of Ouranos in the former case and Kadmos' killing of the dragon in the latter (though this has been

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[1] The Giants are also mentioned in Homer at *Od.* 7.59, where Eurymedon is said to be their king; cf. also Soph. *Trach.* 1058. Amongst the other products of the violent act of Ouranos' castration are the Erinyes (*Theog.* 185), whose strong chthonic associations are a recurrent motif in mythical narrative, and the Melian Nymphs (*Theog.* 187; cf. also 190ff., the birth of Aphrodite). The latter, in the Hesiodic mythic account of the history of humankind, are associated with the bronze race which Zeus created 'ἐκ μελιᾶν' (*W&D* 145), a phrase which has been taken to mean that this third mortal race sprang either from ash-trees or from the Nymphs of those trees; see West, 1966: 211; 1978: 187. This was a strong, belligerent and violent race covered in brazen armour, who met their deaths engaged in war among themselves (W&D 143-55). Obviously, the bronze warriors were earlier than the members of the human race who came last, after the race of heroes.

[2] Ap. Rhod. *Argonautica* 3.1354-57; cf. the scholium on 3.1372, which suggests that perhaps Apollonius Rhodius took over the story from Eumelus (possibly from his *Korinthiaka*), and that the same story was also found in Sophocles' *Colchian Women* [frg. 341 Radt]. For an analysis of the similarities between the Theban myth of the Spartoi and the Argonautic myth, see Vian, 1963: 164ff.

displaced onto the Colchian land); they both arose from the ground immediately ready to fight a war in defence of the rights of the pre-existing order, of Ouranos against the usurper Kronos and of Aietes against the intruder Jason, respectively. As we shall see in a moment, the Argonaut myth seems to be closely related in some way to the Theban myth of the Spartoi, for in both cases it is the dragon slain by Kadmos whose sown teeth grow into a crop of armed warriors. But it is difficult to interpret the myth beyond this point. For example, whether Hesiod is dependent upon orally transmitted Argonaut legends, or whether the myth of the Colchian Gegeneis in the form in which we possess it has been influenced by Hesiod's epics, or finally whether the two traditions are independent of one another — these are questions that the state of our evidence permits us to pose, but not to resolve.

(c) Greek political mythology, and not only in Athens, tended to find the origins of cities too in Earth.[3] The best known non-Athenian political myth of autochthony belongs to the civic ideology of Thebes. According to Theban legend, a set of fully-grown warriors, the Spartoi ('Sown-men'), sprung from the ground when Kadmos, having gone for water to a local spring, killed the

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[3] Apart from the stories of Athens, Thebes and Aigina, which are discussed here, see Aesch. *Suppl.* 250, where Pelasgos, the king of Argos, identifies himself as the son of the earthborn Palaichthon, a name possibly invented by Aeschylus, according to Rosivach, 1987: 298, nn. 14-15; Appendix on the 'earthborn' Arcadians, pp. 307-8; cf. Aesch. *Septem* 104, where Ares is called *palaichthon* and the discusssion in Vian, 1963: 108. At 8.1.4. Pausanias quotes Asios of Samos, according to whose genealogical poem Pelasgos is the son of Zeus, autochthon and founder of the Pelasgian race; yet the first Argive city was founded by Phoroneus, son of the river Inachos (Paus. 2.15.5). See Paus. 7.18.2 on the foundation of Patrai by the earthborn Eumelos, who is said to have obtained cultivated crops and learnt how to build cities from Triptolemos of Attica; but, cf. the Argive version at 1.14.2. See also 2.12.4 on the origin of Phliasia from the earthborn Aras.

guardian-serpent (an offspring of Ares, according to some variants[4]) and then, on Athena's advice, sowed its teeth. Of the Spartoi only five survived the mutual slaughter, and it was these five who founded the city of Thebes.[5] The Theban myth of origins seems clearly intended to communicate the military qualities of the newly-born city both to its own citizens and to the whole of Greece.[6]

Yet it is not the case that all the earthborn men of Greek legend were armed when they were born, nor did they all have monstrous qualities; another set of *Gegeneis* is found in Aigina, where, according to one variant, when Aiakos reached manhood, Zeus, seeing that his son was depressed at being alone on the island, 'raised humans from the ground'[7] to provide him

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[4] On the ancestry of the dragon see the discussion in Vian, 1963: 106-109, who reviews the variants, with special reference to the scholium at Soph. *Ant.* 126 which makes the dragon the offspring of Ares and the Erinys Tilphoessa; he concludes that 'L'Arès thébain pourrait donc être une ancienne divinité guerrière et chthonienne, parèdre ou époux de la Terre' (p. 109).

[5] Apollod. 3.4.1. At Eur. *Bac.* 996, Pentheus is called the son of the earthborn Echion, one of the five surviving Spartoi, founders of the Theban race; the other four Spartoi were Peloros, Oudaios, Chthonios and Hyperenor. A detailed account of the mythical and iconographical variants of the myth is given by Gantz, 1993: 467-473; also Vian, 1963: 158-71. See also the interpretative analysis of the myth in Buxton, 1994: 184-193, who examines the Theban claim to autochthony and observes that the city 'originates *first* from outside [Kadmos comes from the Orient in search of his sister Europa] and *afterwards* from the earth [the Spartoi]' (p. 192).

[6] Taking into account the military qualities of the autochthonous Thebans, it is hardly coincidental that Menoikeus is chosen to sacrifice himself for Thebes in Euripides' *Pho.* For the salvation of the Theban race, the sacrifice of an autochthonous male, undefiled by marriage substitutes the sacrifice of a virgin; see Loraux, 1987: 41f., n. 33, 'Menoecoeus dies standing up (*Pho.* 1009, 1091), like a warrior (1001-2)' (n. 58). For literary references to the Theban army or the military qualities of the Theban people, see Vian, 1963: esp. 168 nn. 3-4. On the mythic counterparts to the military race of the Thebans, namely the Giants and the Gegeneis of Colchis, the Phlegyans and the Myrmidones, see *ibid.* pp. 168-9.

[7] Paus. 2.29.2; but in Hesiod (frg. 205 MW) it is said that Zeus transformed all the ants into human settlers of both sexes, henceforth known as the Myrmidons.

with company. The inhabitants of this island would eventually become sailors and not warriors, so their myth of origins stressed their inventiveness in sailing rather than in war.[8]

2.1.2. The Athenian claim to Autochthony[9]

In the Athenian foundation myth, the claim to autochthony takes the form of a series of successive stages. In the following discussion I shall compare the Athenian autochthony myth with that of some other city-states of Greece, while briefly considering the kings' list of Athens and the cults on the Acropolis which are associated with the major mythological figures of Athens' foundation, in order to clarify the sophistication and complexity of the Athenian claim to autochthony.

According to Athenian myth, the first Attic king, Kekrops[10], lives at the very beginning of the human race; his *diphyes* body, only half-human with a snake-tail, indicates that he represents a transition from a fully serpentine (i.e. *gegenes*) to a fully human nature.[11] But though his hybrid form conveys his earthborn origin, he is not explicitly associated with autochthony.[12] His

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[8] In the Hesiodic version (see above n. 7), the Aiginetans were credited with the invention of sailing boats.

[9] Loraux's invaluable work on this topic (1993; orig. 1981) has greatly influenced my thinking; see also Saxonhouse, 1986; Rosivach, 1987.

[10] See, for instance, Hdt. 8.44; Thuc. 2.15.1.

[11] On the iconographical representations of Kekrops' hybrid form, see Gantz, 1993: 236 (cf. also n.16), who, however, also cites a cup in Frankfurt (Lieb ST V 7) where Kekrops has human feet. In *Ion* 1163f., Kekrops is portrayed on one of the tapestries in Ion's tent as writhing his coils ('σπείραισιν εἰλίσσοιτ'); cf. Arist. *Wasps* 438 ('Κέκροψ [...] τὰ πρὸς ποδῶν Δρακοντίδη') and Eur. frg. 930 N². See also LIMC VI: 1084-85, s.v. Kekrops.

[12] On the distinction between *autochthones* and *gegeneis*, see Bérard, 1974: 35; he quotes Brelich's formulation: 'se non ogni γηγενής è αὐτόχθων [...], ogni αὐτόχθων è, invece,

reign is associated with the transition to civilisation and order, marked by the founding of the city, the institution of marriage and monogamy, the burial of the dead and the invention of writing; he is also attested as the arbitrator in the contest between Athena and Poseidon over Athens' name and patronage. His tomb is located in the Erechtheion.[13]

Though Kekrops had three daughters (Pandrosos, Herse, Aglauros) and a son (Erysichthon[14]), they all died young and childless. As always, birth from the earth causes difficulties for the continuity of the race; the procreation of future generations, which will go on to reproduce themselves, cannot be accounted for on the basis of such a myth. The eventual birth of Kekrops' successor is described in a complex mythical narrative involving Hephaistos, Athena and Gaia[15]; even the fate of the Kekropids[16] is

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γηγενής' (1958: 138). See also Rosivach, 1987: 'Cecrops, who was said to be earthborn, was never used to symbolize Athenian autochthony' (p.295); on *chthonios, gegenes*, see p. 296 and on *autochthon,* see pp. 297-301.

[13] See Kron, 1976: 84-103; Parker, 1987: 197ff.; Loraux, 1992a: 41, 1993: 25f., s.v. Kekrops.

[14] About Erysichthon little is known, apart from his name, see Apoll. 3.14.2; Paus. 1.2.6; Parker, 1987: 200n.57. See also LIMC IV: 18-21, s.v. Erysichthon II (U. Kron).

[15] For the literary evidence on the birth of Erichthonios, see, for instance, Parker, 1987: 193ff.; Loraux, 1993: 57ff.; on the relevant iconographical evidence, see Kron, 1976: 55-67. See also *Ion* 269-71, where the reference to iconographical representations of Erichthonios' birth ('ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῆι', 271) attests the popularity of this theme in the art of the second half of the fifth century BCE.

[16] On the Kekropids-Aglaurids, see *Ion* 23f., 267-74, 495ff., (on 882-3, see Loraux, 1993; 225n.186); Apoll. 3.14.6; Paus. 1.18.2. On the fate of the Kekropids, see Parker, 1987: 195-7; Brulé, 1987: 28-45 (myth, cult, iconography); Gantz, 1993: 235-39. On iconographical representations of the Kekropids, see LIMC I 1.283-98, 2.210-16 (s.v. Aglauros, Herse, Pandrosos) with addenda at IV 1.932-3, 2.633 (U. Kron); Shapiro, 1995: 39-48, who remarks that in iconography before the fifth century the 'daughters of Kekrops are elusive at best and never explicitly connected with the birth of Erichthonios. It is only after the Persian Wars that this part of the myth is developed' (p. 44).

intertwined with the birth of Erichthonios, the second earthborn king of Athens.[17] The story in brief, according to most variants, was that Hephaistos pursued the virgin goddess Athena and, failing to seduce her, ejaculated onto her thigh; the goddess wiped the semen away with a piece of wool which she threw onto the ground. As a result, Gaia conceived Erichthonios and, when he emerged from the ground, Athena raised him and placed him in a chest which she handed over to the Kekropids, forbidding them to open it. Yet the sisters disobeyed Athena's order and opened the chest; one or two snakes that were guarding the infant popped out and frightened the disobedient sisters, who hurled themselves to their death from the Acropolis.[18]

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[17] In Apoll. 3.14.2, Paus. 1.2.6, the Parian Marble (239 FGrH) and in Kastor's list of Athenian kings (250F4), Erichthonios does not directly succeed Kekrops, but is preceded by the reign of Kranaos, who had three daughters but no sons, followed by the reign of Amphictyon, Kranaos' son-in-law. See Gantz, 1993: 234f., 239.

[18] This version of Erichthonios' birth seems to be followed in *Ion* 267-74; on the guardian snakes, see *Ion* 20-26. According to other variants (see references above n. 16), Athena handed over the chest to Pandrosos and it was her sisters who opened the chest; then, either the snake(s) killed them or Athena drove them mad and they threw themselves from the Acropolis. The story of the Kekropids has been linked with the Arrhephoria, where once a year two young girls of noble origin complete their year-long priestly service on the Acropolis by descending to a cave near the precinct of Aphrodite and Eros, carrying on their heads a covered basket with *arrheta*. They are meant to deposit it there without looking at its contents and then to bring a new basket back to the surface again unopened (Paus. 1.27.3-4). On the Arrhephoria, see Bousquet, 1964; Burkert, 1983: 150-54, 1985:228-9, argues persuasively that the festival is to be understood as a female initiation rite marking the passage to puberty, a theory he first argued in his 1966b article; Simon, 1983: 39-46; Robertson, 1983, is sceptical of Burkert's interpretation and suggests that the festival deals with the feeding of snakes and with divination; Henderson, 1987, at Arist. *Lys.* 641, sides with Burkert, whose interpretation seems by far the more convincing. On the Kekropids' cult on the Acropolis, see Dontas, 1983, who, on the basis of a new inscribed stele found in 1980, was able to correct the old view that the Aglaurion was situated on the long north side of the Acropolis and to establish its

Unlike the myths of origin mentioned above, Erichthonios was born neither already as an adult nor as fully armed[19]; instead, he was still an infant in need of nurture when he was raised from the ground by Athena.[20] This seems to be a significant difference, for in it one can detect an effort to attribute some sort of role to the female, even if it is only a secondary one.[21] Although it remains true that the birth of the child would not have been possible without 'the masculine desire aroused by the Parthenos'[22], nonetheless Athena's decision to save and nurture the child born from Hephaestus' repugnant attempt to rape her is, in its maternal concern on the part of a notorious virgin, somewhat surprising; presumably the needs of civic ideology, in which, in some sense, Athena must have a maternal concern for all Athenians, have led to a modification of her personality in this one story which makes good political, if not psychological sense.

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new location on the eastern part of the Acropolis; Larson, 1995: 39-42; on Aglauros' association with the ephebes, see Merkelbach, 1972.

[19] Though Erechtheus, who has been interpreted as a double for the Athenian autochthonous child, is constantly portrayed in the mythical tradition as fully-grown and in war with neighbouring Eleusis. In the Athenian foundation myth a conscious effort is made to account for the role of the female without diminishing the military qualities of the Athenian race.

[20] Loraux, 1993: 61-4, discusses the gestures of Athena and Erichthonios and argues that the birth in question is not a literal but a 'social birth' and that Erichthonios, as he appears on the vases, 'looks more like a young adolescent' and his transition to Athena's arms 'sanctions the beginning of his education' (p. 62). This interpretation argues for Athena's assumption of a 'paternal role' in Erichthonios' birth, which replicates the ceremony of the Amphidromia, substituting for the father the virgin πολιοῦχος goddess of Athens.

[21] For similar downplaying of the woman's role in childbirth, see Apollo's words in Aesch. Eum. 657-66. On the paradox of the Athenian myth of origins, see Loraux, 1993: ' the same myth marks women with a minus and a 'woman-goddess' with a plus. Autochthonous birth does away with the significance of women's maternity, but attributes to Athena (or to the city, in the discourse of the Kerameikos) the roles of nurse, father and mother' (p. 8).

[22] Loraux, 1993: 18.

Furthermore, since Erichthonios is still an infant and needs to be looked after, he is handed over to the Kekropids who are to act as his *kourotrophoi*. When they fail to fulfill their duty, Athena raises Erichthonios herself in her own sacred precinct; in gratitude for her care for him he later establishes the institution of the Panathenaia to honour the city-goddess.[23] Erichthonios is the king who founds the Athenian *polis* and introduces civic order.[24] In his reign, Athens leaves the mythic realm of prehistory and passes over into human time. While Kekrops was partly snake, Erichthonios is wholly human[25], but he too is born from the Attic soil and is still protected by snakes, a motif indicative of his autochthonous origin[26]; he is also the son of the gods.[27] Athenians seem to have constructed a myth of origins that would allow them to do away with women, but still to claim descent from a female virgin goddess who is made their patron, in other words, to be earthborn and simultaneously to claim divine begetting.

Erichthonios' name and identity have often been interpreted as being interchangeable with Erechtheus', although, in sources earlier than the fifth century, the latter name is more common.[28] Whatever the earlier variants, Euripides makes Erechtheus the descendant of Erichthonios in *Ion* 267 and each of the two mythical figures brings along a distinct set of associations.[29]

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[23] Hellanicos, *FGrH* 323a F2, 324 F2.

[24] See Loraux, 1993: 38-9.

[25] Yet in Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2.13.1-2, Erichthonios is anguiform.

[26] On the association of snakes with the safety of the Athenian city, see Parker, 1987: 196 n. 40.

[27] See Isocr. *Panath.* 124; Eur. *Med.* 824-6.

[28] See Parker, 1987: 200f., who notes that possibly it was the case of 'assimilation followed by re-division of two distinct figures with similar names' (n.61). On Erechtheus and his daughters, see Gantz, 1993: 242-47.

[29] Loraux, 1993: 24, remarks that this Euripidean variant 'does not change his [i.e. Erechtheus'] role as the adult double of the autochthonous child'.

According to the information supplied by this very play, Erichthonios sprang

from the earth ('ἐκ γῆς [...] ἔβλαστεν', 267) and was raised from the ground

by Athena (269-71), who placed him in a casket with two guardian snakes

and entrusted it to the Kekropids (21-24; 271); but the maidens opened the

chest and met their death by casting themselves from the Acropolis' cliffs

(273-4). Around 422/1 BCE, Erechtheus and his daughters were the subject

of an earlier Euripidean play, the *Erechtheus*, now surviving only in

fragments, according to which the Athenian king sacrificed one of his

daughters, as the Delphic oracle ordained, in order to secure victory over the

intruder Eumolpos and his Thracian allies[30]; the other sisters, having sworn

an oath, sacrificed themselves willingly for the salvation of Athens.[31] In the

Ion, Erechtheus is said to have sacrificed all his daughters[32], except

Kreousa, who was still a baby in her mother's arms (277-80)[33], and thereby

to have saved Athens from foreign invasion (cf. 721-24). He was

subsequently swallowed up by a cleft in the ground struck by Poseidon's

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[30] On the Euripidean substitution of Thracian allies for Eleusinian ones, see Parker, 1987: 203f. and n. 68.

[31] For the ancient sources, iconography, relevant bibliography on the myth of Erechtheus and his daughters, and a commentary on Euripides' *Erechtheus*, see Collard (ed.), 1995: 148-94. For the edition of the fragmentary play, see Austin, 1967; 1968. On the Euripidean dramatisation of virgin sacrifice, the (quasi-) voluntary sacrifice of the Erechtheids and the honours granted to them by Athena for their proven nobility, see Loraux, 1987: 43-48. Connelly, in her ingenious reinterpretation of the Parthenon frieze (1996), argues that the impact of the mythical sacrifice of the Erechtheids for the Attic land was such that it was depicted on the east frieze; and, whereas the Kekropids had separate cult-places on the Acropolis, the Erechtheids were commemorated as Parthenoi in the Parthenon which they shared with the goddess Athena. This attractive theory has generated heated discussion, but is still far from being unanimously adopted.

[32] One might detect a slight resentment in Kreousa's report that her father Erechtheus 'dared' to sacrifice her sisters for the Attic soil ('ἔτλη πρὸ γαίας σφάγια παρθένους κτανεῖν', 278).

[33] On the motif of 'arms' in the *Ion*, see Loraux, 1993: 213 n.130.

trident to avenge the death of his son Eumolpos (281-2; cf. *Er.* frg. 370.59-60), at a place identified as 'Μακραί', which Apollo honours with his lightnings (283-5). This outcome once and for all appeases Poseidon, Athena's rival over the patronage of Athens, at the expense of the lives of the Athenian king and his daughter(s). But it means that once again the Athenian throne is desolate.

Most of the later sources name as Erechtheus' successor to the throne Kekrops II, who acts as an intermediary between Erechtheus and Pandion II; the latter is succeeded by Aegeus and, then, by his son Theseus, the famous Athenian hero.[34] Yet Euripides chooses an alternative genealogy in the *Ion*, according to which one of Erechtheus' daughters, Kreousa, was spared from the sacrifice of all of her sisters only to be later raped by Apollo, to whom she bore Ion, and to be married to Xouthos, to whom she bore Doros and Achaios.[35] As the play itself explicitly announces, Ion, the son of Olympian Apollo and of autochthonous Kreousa, will successfully reign over Athens, his name will be famous throughout Greece, Europe and Asia, and his sons will give their names to the four tribes of Attica (73-5; 1573-88).

The successful resolution of the paradoxes and tensions of the Athenian foundation myth in the figure of Ion will be better appreciated if it is measured against the preceding unsuccessful attempts.

Kekrops, Erichthonios/Erechtheus, Ion, were all said to be autochthonous beings, but one detects a gradual tendency towards

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[34] See Parian Marble 239 FGrH (3rd century BCE), Kastor 250F (1st century BCE), Apoll. 3.15.1. For an account of the deeds of these mythical kings of Athens, see Gantz, 1993: 247-57.

[35] See above 1.2.1., esp. text at nn. 30-35.

increasing rationalisation in the way their autochthonous origins were physically portrayed: Kekrops has a snake-tailed body; Erichthonios/ Erechtheus was protected by real snakes in his casket; baby Ion wore golden snake-amulets (24-6; 1427-31). The development from monstrous corporeality to (totemic?) animals to symbolic jewels (still possessed of magical powers) is a remarkable instance of the insistence of the Greek poetic imagination upon limiting the mythic deformation of reality.

In all these cases there is a movement away from the earth of Attica and then back to it: Kekrops is born out of the Attic soil and is later buried in it (in the Erechtheion); Erichthonios is raised out of the ground by Athena and Erechtheus is swallowed by the earth when it is split by the stroke of Poseidon's trident; Ion is transported in his birth-basket by Hermes away from the land of Attica to the Delphic oracle, where he spends his adolescence, and once he reaches manhood he is restored to the Athenian earth in a procession led by Athena.

There is a gradual decrease in the fertility of the Athenian autochthonous line: from Kekrops who had three daughters and a son to Erechtheus with three daughters and no son, to Kreousa and Xouthos with no children. The repeated dead-ends which each effort reaches demand a fresh start each time. After three false starts, once Ion has been recognised by Kreousa and reinstated to his rightful place in the Athenian line, there will occur a gradual increase in fertility: Kreousa will bear two further sons to Xouthos, while Ion himself will have four sons.

The inherent contradiction of autochthony derives from the tension between the ideologically based need, on the one hand, to establish an initial purely male transmission which secures the exclusion of women from the origins of the city and the common-sense knowledge, on the other hand, that children are the product of the union between a male and a female.

Hippolytos was certainly not the only male Greek to have fantasized that human reproduction really is, or really should be, a matter confined to men, from which women should be excluded (*Hipp.* 616-24); but Euripides was surely unusual in the degree to which he was willing to show the folly of such fantasies. In most myths of origins, no effort is made to resolve this contradiction. Only in the mythical births of Erichthonios and Ion is there any concession made for the role of the female in the procreation of the autochthonous child. Oddly, the ancient biographical reports turned Euripides into an enemy of women — oddly, because he turns out in this play too to be one of the few ancient Greek authors willing to give them their due.

2.2. Ion in the *Ion*

2.2.1. Repetition and difference

From the point of view of the Athenian myth of autochthony, the crucial question raised by the figure of Ion in the play Euripides has chosen to name after him is this: why is it Ion who is able to resolve once and for all the fundamental tensions of that myth in a successful way, when the preceding generations had failed to do so and had ended up repeating themselves futilely in a succession of false starts and dead ends? Conceptually, of course, Ion resolves the old autochthony contradiction by being at one and the same time autochthonous and the product of a heterosexual transaction, and thus permits his Athenian heirs to claim that they are the offspring both of Earth (Kreousa's chthonian associations) and of Heaven (Olympian Apollo).[36] But to answer the question in this way is to forget that Euripides has written not a religious treatise but a dramatic play. A truer, because more literary, answer, I would argue, is that in the case of Ion events repeat themselves with a significant difference.

In the preceding section of this chapter we discussed the various versions of the generations that preceded Ion in the mythic prehistory of Athens. In each generation, the contradictions inherent in autochthony had failed to be resolved, in the sense that characters were indeed born, but could not propagate themselves successfully by creating offspring who would continue their lineage into the future. In this sense, both Kekrops and

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[36] Phrasing adapted from Perradotto, 1977: 94, who offers a syntagmatic analysis of the Athenian foundation myth (and the successful resolution to the impasse of autochthony with the birth of Erichthonios), as an alternative analytical method to the Levi-Straussian paradigmatic structural analysis of the Oedipus myth (as outlined in his 1963 article).

Erichthonios/Erechtheus are dead ends. A man who is born from the earth alone, without the intervention of a female human mother, can evidently come into existence; but how can he himself create children?

Euripides uses a series of mythemes familiar to his audience from previous versions of the myth, but he puts them into a different context in this play, one in which they will have a different meaning. No one version of the stories has all these *mythemes*: instead they must be understood structurally, as constitutive elements which have meaning not in isolation from one another but only as parts of a total structure in any one example of which most of them will be present.

Euripides' purpose in structuring his play by means of these repetitions is two-fold. On the one hand, in terms of the ideological conception for which his play is a dramatic vehicle, he wants to show that pure repetition was an *aporia* out of which no path could lead to a viable future, whereas only out of repetition with a significant difference could redemption come about. On the other hand, in terms of the audience who are witnessing his play, this technique creates expectations which it is precisely Euripides' design to frustrate: his spectators think they know what to expect, for they expect an exact repetition of the story patterns with which they are familiar, but the poet surprises them by setting motifs in new contexts and assigning them unexpected consequences. Ultimately, as a result, the audience too should learn not to seek exact repetition of the models and traditions with which they are familiar, but to confront honestly the complexity and ambiguity of reality. In this sense, perhaps, we might say that the *Ion* is a tragedy in which the *anagnorisis* of mother and son is designed to lead to an *anagnorisis* among the spectators.

The basic mythemes with which Euripides is operating here, and the transformations they undergo in the case of Ion, are the following:

• Separation from the earth and return to it: Erichthonios emerges from the earth and Erechtheus is swallowed up by the earth. Ion as a baby is transported away by Hermes from the soil of Attica — indeed, from the very same cave in which he had been conceived — into the foreign land of Delphi, and at the end of the play he will return in triumph to his native country.

• Absence of a mother: No female figure, human or divine, gives birth to either Kekrops or Erichthonios/Erechtheus. And Ion too has no identifiable mother at the beginning of the play, but during its course he will be confronted with a whole set of substitute mothers — the Pythia (321), the anonymous Delphian who had left him on the temple-steps (44; 325), the anonymous Delphic maiden with whom Xouthos supposes he might have had intercourse (550-55)— before finally being introduced to his true mother.

• Snakes: Kekrops is a snake from the waist down; Erichthonios is protected by living snakes in his basket. Ion is identified by tokens including amulet snakes.

• Opening the baby's basket: The Kekropids opened the basket containing the baby Erichthonios, although they had specifically been instructed not to, and they died as a result. But the baby Ion was left by Hermes in front of the temple steps in a half-opened basket at the specific instruction of Apollo so that he could be seen (36-37, 39-40), and was thereby rescued. Prior to the recognition scene, Ion refuses to open the cradle with his recognition tokens (1380-84), but in the end he reconsiders (1385-88) and opens the basket. Furthermore, there is a consistent set of metaphors and dramatic actions of opening and closing in general throughout the play, as we saw in chapter one: for example, Kreousa opens

up her soul in her monody, but the concealed interior of the temple is never opened.[37]

• Care for the rejected child: Although Athena was angered with Hephaistos, she had nonetheless decided to rescue and take care of the child that grew from his seed, Erichthonios. And Ion, although exposed by Kreousa, is rescued and taken care of, first, by Hermes acting under Apollo's orders and then by the Pythia. Ion relates that, having had no mother, he was raised and nourished by the Pythia and the offerings visitors brought to the temple (318-323).[38]

• The care of Athena: Athena had ensured the survival and upbringing of Erichthonios. She now demonstrates her continuing loving concern for the Athenians in the case of Ion.

• Death of women: The Kekropids open the basket of Erichthonios and die as a result; Erechtheus sacrifices his three daughters in order to secure victory over the Eleusinians. Kreousa is threatened with death by Ion and all the Delphians, but is rescued by Apollo's intervention; she will be willing to accept all the spiritual suffering (as contrasted with physical death) which she has experienced in these years, because she will recognise that it has been a small sacrifice for the sake of her city.

• Sterility: Kekrops had three daughters and one son who all died young without offspring; Erichthonios died without children; Erechtheus had three daughters, but no sons, who died young and without bearing children. Xouthos and Kreousa have come to Delphi to inquire into the cause of their barrenness (64-65, 304); they are told that they will both have children (405-

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[37] See above 1.3.2., text at n. 113 and nn. 115, 151, 152. On Kreousa's secret and subsequent opening of her heart, see Gibert, 1995: esp. 173-89; see also below 2.3.2.

[38] On the recurrent references to 'τροφή' in the *Ion*, see Loraux, 1993: 186 n.8; cf. also Zeitlin, 1989: 151 and n. 30.

409) and, in fact, at the end of the play they will leave Delphi both thinking that they have — though with this difference, that Xouthos only thinks that he has found a son, while Kreousa knows that she has. Perhaps it is significant that in the happy outcome, two female virgins — the Pythia and Athena — play a decisive role.

In no single story do all these elements appear in the same order, and only in the story of Ion do they all appear. Hence, on the one hand, Ion's story seems to be a thesaurus of the whole mythic prehistory of Athens, in which all the scattered and sometimes obscure elements in the generations preceding him are finally brought together coherently and illuminate one another. But, on the other hand, the audience is constantly kept on its toes: for the spectators see familiar elements in strange settings and unfamiliar elements in accustomed settings; at the moment that they think that they finally understand what is going on, Euripides surprises them once again by setting his action in a new direction.

2.2.2. Athenians and Foreigners

We may speak of humanisation in the case of the figure of Ion in two dimensions, diachronically and synchronically. Diachronically, he represents a transformation of the mythic non-humanity of preceding generations into a more recognizably historical, human scale. And, synchronically, he stands in the middle between Kreousa's desperate emotionality and Xouthos' superficially rationalistic skepticism and represents a mean of civilised humane concern which he almost violates by wanting to murder Kreousa, but to which he is enabled, by the intervention of Apollo, to return at the end.

Diachronically, the generations preceding Ion are portrayed in this play as being full of creatures many of which were not wholly human and some of which were monsters. Within the race of Ion, Kekrops is half-human and half-snake and was born from the ground. And even when their shape was not monstrous, their actions were often inhuman: Erechtheus, for instance, killed his own daughter(s). But non-humanness was evidently not, in the generations preceding this play, confined to the family of the rulers of Athens. The mythical panels which the chorus admire on the temple of Delphi show the Olympian gods and Greek heroes subduing monstrous enemies (190-218); Kreousa has received from Erichthonios two drops of the Gorgon's blood which were given to him by Athena (999ff.). In the dramatic present, on the other hand, all the monsters seem to have disappeared — when Kreousa is called *Echidna* (1261f.), it is only a metaphor.

Indeed, in the enlightened present of the play, even deeply cherished beliefs of the Athenians concerning their city's mythic prehistory can be held up to skepticism: Xouthos says that the earth bears no children (542), and Ion suggests in one passage that human maidens are not really raped by gods, but use this story as a pretext to cover up their love affairs with mortals (339-41; cf. 1521-27), and, in another, that, if the gods have indeed raped mortal women, they should be required to pay a penalty for their crime as any human offender would be (444-51). The shift from a non-human past to a human present is made strikingly obvious by Euripides' handling of his divine characters: Apollo is never seen by anyone; Hermes is seen only by the audience; and when Athena appears to Ion and Kreousa, these latter are terrified by the eruption of a divine presence into their human world and must be reassured of Athena's kindness and benevolence (1550-54). With

the generation of Ion, we have entered the contemporary historical world: the mythic has been brought up to date.

Synchronically, Ion occupies a middle space between the two extremes represented by Kreousa and Xouthos. The former is self-obsessed in blind passion as a victim, the latter is self-obsessed in superficial rationality as a victor. Only Ion is genuinely concerned with other people's problems and needs at the beginning of the play; Kreousa will come to share his concern, while Xouthos never will.

Ion shows a combination of rational thinking and humanity in his dialogues with Kreousa and Xouthos. When he first meets Kreousa he is concerned about her state of mind, for she approaches the temple of Apollo with tears in her eyes (241f.). In the ensuing stichomythia, a mutual sympathy is soon established ('ὦ τλῆμον', 307; 'ἀντοικτίρομεν', 312; 320) between the motherless child and the childless mother. But, when Kreousa reports the story of her alleged friend, whom, she claims, Apollo raped, allowing the illegitimate child of that union to die, the pious temple servant refutes the allegation (341) and, after a careful investigation of the matter, during which we see his rational thinking at work, he objects to Kreousa's intention to question Apollo about a story the god wishes to keep secret (365). Even after his recognition scene with his mother, his rationality takes over and he shows the same desire to investigate the truth (1521ff.). Yet, during the course of the play, Ion runs the risk of losing his combination of rationality and humanity, for he is tempted to become murderous when Kreousa tries to kill him (1261ff.), and later to doubt Apollo's paternity (1537-8; 1546-48), but in the end he returns to his true self by the intervention of Apollo's agents, Pythia (1320) and Athena (1553ff.).

Xouthos is the 'dupe foreigner', who took Apollo's oracle at face value and was so pleased at finding a son that he did not ask the god about the

identity of the mother his newly found son. It is Ion who first addresses the question and suggests that perhaps his mother was 'γῆ' (542); Xouthos' rationalistic reasoning objects to Ion's mythological interpretation of events and in half a line contests the whole autochthony myth of the Athenian race, claiming that the ground ('πέδον') bears no children. At the end of a passage of vigorous questioning, Ion concludes that he must have been conceived on a day when both of his alleged parents were in a state of intoxicated ecstasy (553-4)[39], but he is still unaware of the identity of his mother, whom he longs more than ever to behold (563ff.). Xouthos is not prepared to waste time on a futile search for Ion's mother (572-5). For him, there are other more pressing matters, such as his son's accession to the Athenian throne (576ff.).

Ion's subsequent reaction is provoked by the control reason exerts over emotion (585-6); although he is pleased at having discovered his father, his emotion is soon restrained by the possible consequences of his arrival as Xouthos' heir in the autochthonous Athenian polis. He begins by contrasting the autochthonous Athenians ('αὐτόχθονας [...] 'Αθήνας οὐκ ἐπείσακτον γένος', 589-90) with his own status as an illegitimate son of a foreigner ('πατρὸς τ' ἐπακτοῦ καὐτὸς ὢν νοθαγενής', 592). He fears that stained with this double stigma, he will be considered an intruder in the land of earth-born Athenians (593-606).

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[39] At the time when Xouthos had participated as a visitor in the torchlight mysteries carried out on the slopes of Mt. Parnassos in honour of Bacchos. These Bacchic mysteries were carried out by the Thyiades, 'a highly respected college of women', every second year and during the winter months when Dionysos was thought of as taking over from Apollo, who retired then to the land of the Hyperboreans. 'The Thyiades [...] wake the Liknites, the Dionysus child in the winnowing basket'; Burkert, 1985, 161f, 224f; Paus. X 4, 2; frg. 752; Lucan V. 73. See also Zeitlin, 1989: 156-8; n. 48, with substantial bibliography on the Thyiades and Dionysos Liknites.

Metics, in a period of war in 5th century Athens, were essential to serve in the army, but they were not to be entrusted with a high-ranking office. Yet, Xouthos, a mercenary of the legendary past – noble, but of foreign origin – who helped Athens to subdue Euboia, was awarded Kreousa, the Athenian princess, as a prize of war and a meed of valour (*Ion* 290-8). Still, he was never fully integrated in the Athenian city-state, but always remained in the marginal state of the foreigner. And yet, he himself seems not to be aware of the limitations of his status; his moral and behavioural code is that of the mercenary-warrior[40], who knows no country and, just like Jason in the *Medea*, wants to secure the status of his house in society, showing no respect for the means used to gain what he wants; he is the 'pure male', whose arrogance violates the sanctity of the household, whereas his foreign status violates the purity of the autochthonous Athenian race.

Xouthos thinks he can fool Kreousa and the Athenians, whereas Ion is deeply sensitive to the difficulties that his arrival in Athens would pose for him. Ion is constantly aware of his foreign status ('πατρός τ' ἐπακτοῦ', 592; 'ἔπηλις ὤν', 607), but, also, feels that he has to take into account the emotions of the childless Kreousa (608; 613); his humane character enables him to see things from Kreousa's vantage point, and he presents the arguments she might have given were she called to comment on the situation. He cannot blame her for hating him, when she, who used to share

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[40] Though 'at Kreousa's hearth, Xouthos is what, in a normal situation, a woman is at the hearth of her husband: an element introduced from outside. Yet, in her own house, he has turned Kreousa into a kind of war-captive, the booty of a victorious warrior'; Loraux, 1993: 203. See Saxonhouse, 1986, *passim*, on the exclusiveness of the autochthony myth and the inadequacy of the male arrogance of Xouthos and Apollo.

her misfortune with Xouthos[41], is now left to bear the bitterness of her fate alone, having no share in her husband's good fortune[42]. This compassionate reaction (618-20) conforms with, and strongly recalls, Ion's earlier response to the story of Kreousa's fictional friend (355).

Even when Ion voices the male fear of the reaction of threatened women who are reported to have slain their husbands or destroyed them with deadly poisons (616-7), he still feels pity ('οἰκτίρω', 618) for Kreousa growing old without a child, in much the same way as he did when he was first informed about the queen's childlessness ('ὦ τλῆμον', 307). What makes Kreousa's childlessness even harder for Ion to digest, is the fact that she is of noble origin and yet so desolate; such a misfortune is not fair ('οὐ [...] ἀξία') for the noble ('πατέρων ἀπ᾽ ἐσθλῶν οὖσ᾽ ', 620)[43].

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[41] Kreousa has been using plural or dual when refering to her childlessness in relation to Xouthos; see line 304 'ἄπαιδες ἐσμέν' and line 406 'ὅπως νῶιν σπέρμα συγκραθήσεται' (also, 748-9); but, when she referred to her relation to Apollo she used a language of 'disjunction', separating herself from her divine seducer (358; 386; also 904; 916; 965). Hermes, in the prologue, uses a language of disjunction when referring either to Kreousa's relation to Apollo (49-50), or to the childlessness of Kreousa and Xouthos (64-5); finally, Kreousa's dual ('νῶιν', 406) is counteracted once again by the dissociation of Kreousa and Xouthos in the report of Trophonios' oracular response ('οὐκ ἄπαιδα με [....] οὐδὲ σ᾽ [...]', 408-9). On Kreousa's peculiar relation to 'the masculine principle', see Loraux, 1993: 216-220.

[42] See the chorus' remark on the lack of sharing in good fortune, 'ἡ μὲν ἔρρει συμφοραῖς, ὁ δ᾽ εὐτυχεῖ' (699). What in Ion's speech is a mild reprimand for Xouthos' lack of consideration for his childless wife, in the paedagogue's interpretation (813f.) turns out to be a calculated reaction on Xouthos' part, who chose not to share Kreousa's unfortunate barrenness and decided to get himself a heir from his union to a slave-girl: 'οὐκ ἔστεργε σοι ὅμοιος εἶναι τῆς τύχης τ᾽ ἴσον φέρειν' (817-8).

[43] It is worth noting that when Ion heard from Kreousa that the royal couple had come to Delphi to inquire about their childlessness (note Kreousa's plural: 'ἄπαιδες ἐσμέν', 304), he focused upon Kreousa's misfortune, as if such a calamity had a greater impact upon her, who is noble and of autochthonous origin (293), than upon Xouthos, about whom he had just learned (290-8) that, though of a good pedigree, he is not of autochthonous origin (on the

Xouthos acknowledges the problems, but he has already contrived a plan to smooth the impact of Ion's arrival at Athens. He intends to introduce Ion to Athens as a sightseer (656), and a guest in his house (654), aiming to avoid distressing his childless wife with his good fortune (657-8).[44] It is interesting, though, that he is not prepared to cancel Ion's entry into the Athenian palace; he will only postpone the revelation of his son's identity for a while, till time is ripe for him to persuade Kreousa to relinquish to Ion the sceptre of this land (659-60).

There is something awkward in Xouthos' promise that in due course he will bring his wife over to his side, so as to leave to his illegitimate son the sceptre of the Athenian land; namely, how could Xouthos the mercenary warrior lay any claim to the throne of the Erechtheid palace for his son begotten by another woman? Xouthos is portrayed as not having any second thoughts about intruding (but, cf. 'οὐ βούλομαι λυπεῖν'); he has done that once already.[45] Only now he ventures even further; he aims at giving to his son something that is his own, yet, he has no authority to pass it on to his own son: 'προσάξομαι δάμαρτ᾽ ἐὰν σε σκῆπτρα τἄμ᾽ ἔχειν χθονός'. The

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meanings of 'εὐγενής', 291, 'ἐγγενής', 293, see Loraux, 1993: 202f., n.77). He concludes that Kreousa, though fortunate in the rest (i.e. her noble origin), is unfortunate (307). Is it, perhaps, because Ion understands that if Kreousa cannot have a heir, then the house of the Erechtheids is doomed? If the thought of 619-20 is seen under the same light, it may be interpreted as something like this: 'it is not fair that barrenness should fall upon a noble line'. Because, how else could we account for the fact that Kreousa is not merely called 'εὐγενής', but, rather, 'the daughter of noble fathers', a periphrasis that brings in, indirectly, the theme of paternal heredity, which is going to be further highlighted in the ensuing episode, when Kreousa is to be presented as the defender of the Erechtheid oikos, contemplating the use of sword or poison to retaliate for her husband's offensive trespassing.

[44] Compare Xouthos' language of disjunction with the language used by the other characters of the play; see above notes 41 (Kreousa); 42 (chorus, old tutor); 43 (Ion); cf. also Xouthos' report of the Trophonios' oracle at 408-9.

[45] cf. lines 813-4; also above n. 40.

actual wording shows that Xouthos is aware of the limitations of his status in the Athenian palace, and yet he is determined to secure for his son the material wealth and the power he deems he is entitled to enjoy, at all costs. He would rather not hurt his wife's feelings, yet, he is prepared to seize the right moment for the promotion of his personal interests.[46]

Xouthos, in an earlier passage, failed to acknowledge the importance of the autochthony myth for the Athenians when he lightly dismissed Ion's question on whether his mother was earth (542). Here, he seems to skim over the complications Ion's arrival at Athens entails, perhaps, because he refuses to acknowledge the application of the myth to the contemporary Athenian polis, and hence the limitations its claims to exclusivity impose.[47] Or, perhaps, he may intend to get Kreousa into the right frame of mind and then persuade her that since there is not heir, why not promote his son, who seems to be the best available solution for the royal family. Once again Euripides is careful to supply accurate information about Xouthos' strategic plans, but leaves his motives unclear, allowing for a range of possibilities for interpreting his actions and his subsequent integration in the Athenian royal line.

From the point of view of the Athenian male spectator, both Kreousa and Xouthos are outsiders, the former as a woman (though she is Athenian), the latter as an Achaean (though he is a man). Ion is in the middle between

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[46] Note how much more active Xouthos' interest is here 'χρόνωι δὲ καιρὸν λαμβάνων προσάξομαι' (659), when compared to his reluctant consent to carry out an investigation in order to find the identity of Ion's mother 'χρόνωι δὲ δόντες ταῦτ' ἴσως εὕροιμεν ἄν' (575). Compare, also, the mood of the verbs; at 659, he uses future indicative first person singular, whereas, at 575, he used aorist optative in first person plural. It is evident that in the former he displays his strong personal interest in achieving his aim, whereas in the latter he is indifferent to the outcome of the search.

[47] cf. above n. 40.

the two, occupying the ideological centre with which the audience are encouraged to identify themselves. From this perspective, both Kreousa and Xouthos can be seen as representing dangers. Kreousa shows the dangers that Athenian men always associated with women: they are irrational, emotional, violent, treacherous, likely to kill, likely to use poison. Kreousa fulfills all these preconceptions during the course of the play, but then at the end gives them the lie. Xouthos shows all the defects Athenian men always associated with foreigners: they are gullible, vain, they want to come and appropriate for themselves Athenian valuables like rule and women. Xouthos seems to fulfill all these preconceptions not only during the course of the play, but also at the end. Athena tells Ion and Kreousa to fool Xouthos (1601-3) and thereby provides a divine sanction for the deception of the foreigner. Yet, nonetheless, Xouthos will be admitted into the Athenian royal line and will have a *koinon genos* with Kreousa (1589ff.). In this way, though Xouthos remains a foreigner, he is integrated into the Athenian future: Athens needs a foreign element if it is to survive.

2.3. Kreousa in the *Ion*

2.3.1. Repetition and Difference

In the following section, I shall suggest that in Kreousa's key dramatic utterance in this play, her monody, the story of the Aglaurids and the ritual of the Arrhephoria are unmistakeably evoked. If this is so, it might seem odd to modern readers that this highly emotional song also should bother to go out of its way to recall some earlier episodes of Athenian mythic prehistory. But Kreousa is not providing objective mythological information, she is not writing a treatise on Greek religion. Instead, like any Athenian, she is trying to understand her own experience in terms of the mythic models provided her by the storehouse of Athenian folk wisdom. As it turns out, her actions will perform a repetition of some of those models — but with a highly significant difference. In that regard, she is like Ion: after all, the two are perfect complements for one another.

The basic *mythemes* employed in the course of Kreousa's monody are the following:

• Female rejection of violent male sexuality: Hephaistos had tried to violate Athena and had ejaculated onto her thigh; in disgust she had wiped off his semen and thrown it onto the ground. And Apollo had violently raped Kreousa while she was picking flowers; she had exposed the product of their union and for many years had continued to hate her divine seducer.

• Breaking the female silence: the chorus broke their silence and revealed the god's oracle and Xouthos' secret plotting to their mistress; Kreousa breaks her long-kept silence in her monody and unleashes an attack against her divine seducer and her husband.

• Female *akratia*: The Kekropids could not resist their curiosity to find out what was hidden in the covered basket Athena had entrusted to them. Kreousa can no longer conceal her rape by Apollo (874), though she was meant to keep silent (869).

• Disobeying Athena: The Kekropids disobeyed Athena and opened the basket containing Erichthonios; Kreousa is overcome by her emotional and spiritual suffering and reveals her secret union with Apollo, but she invokes Athena, perhaps in the hope of reassuring her benevolence.

• Nocturnal associations: The Kekropids opened the basket at night; the Arrephoroi undergo their ritual initiation at night. Kreousa was violated at night in the dark enclosure of the cave and has kept her secret union in darkness (860f.); in her monody she invokes the starry sky of Zeus (870).

Kreousa has a strictly defined sense of justice and of the reciprocal obligation of *charis*, to which she gives expression in her attack upon Apollo in the monody, as we shall see in the next section. But this is a desire for a precise repetition; the lesson she must learn is to accept repetition with difference, if redemption is to come about.

2.3.2. Kreousa's Monody

Kreousa's monody coheres perfectly with her dramatic character and the themes and concerns of the play and serves to advance the dramatic action by preparing for the turn of events that is about to occur; hence, I argue, it repays close examination. Now, though the monody is mistaken ultimately, it is so enthralling that we can hardly resist it. Kreousa appeals to the night, not to the day of Apollo, who she still thinks is her enemy; and as in Mozart's *Magic Flute*, where the Queen of the Night sings an unforgettable aria about

the loss of her child, only later do we realize that she was wrong and we were seduced.

A substantial amount of dramatic time has elapsed since Kreousa's last spoken words (797-799).[48] The dramatist has carefully built up suspense by sufficiently arousing the audience's interest. Kreousa, as she unburdens herself of her long-kept secret, sings one of the most polished Euripidean monodies. The choice of this type of communicative vehicle for transmitting the long-awaited detailed description of the key event of the prehistory of the drama, namely Kreousa's rape by Apollo, has a peculiar semantic complexity. This complexity is the result not just of the monody's orientation towards the listener, be it the old man and the chorus who are present with her and witness this outburst, or Apollo, whom she addresses in his absence in the second part of the song (881f.), or, indeed, the external audience. Rather, it is the result of her song's orientation towards its sender, for it is her own soul that Kreousa addresses at the very beginning of her ode (859). This device of splitting the dramatic character into two different subjects provides a convenient justification for the dramatic convention of making her thoughts public; at the same time, her failure to communicate with the other characters on stage helps maintain in our minds the sense of her total spiritual isolation from her social world as a result of the news she has just received concerning her perpetual childlessness (761-2). And though the claim that such monodies are meant to characterise

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[48] Cf. e.g. Kassandra in *Ag.*, where we expect an outburst after her long silence, indicating the future in passionate language; such a motif is specifically female. On Aeschylean silence, see Taplin, 1972.

psychologically the dramatic figure may be anachronistic[49], since in Greek tragedy, according to Aristotle's analysis, plot is dominant over the presentation of character[50], it would be fair to say that Euripidean monodies make important advances in the understanding of basic concepts of character and motivation and reveal his deep insight into human nature.[51]

The weight of Kreousa's first words, after a dramatic silence lasting sixty lines, is emphasised metrically by a series of long syllables, linguistically by a choice of words alerting the audience to the imminent breaking of her silence – 'πῶς σιγάσω;' is a rhetorical question which looks backwards to her silence hitherto and forwards to the fact that it is about to come to an end – and semantically by a self-apostrophe ('ὦ ψυχά').[52] Kreousa, by addressing her soul, makes it real, gives it a vital dramatic

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[49] Such claims are influenced by modern ideas of character 'as something more diffuse, pervasive and strongly psychological', ideas that 'are matched and, in turn reflect, techniques of characterisation in modern literature, above all in the novel' (Halliwell, 1987: 94).

[50] See Aristotle's *Poetics* 6, where in his evaluative ranking of the constituent parts of tragic drama Aristotle gives supreme importance to the plot-structure: 'μέγιστον δὲ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων σύστασις' (1450a15); characterisation is included for the sake of the action: 'τὰ ἤθη συμπεριλαμβάνουσιν διὰ τὰς πράξεις' (1450a21). Even in the tragedies where there is a central character, it is not the character who will determine the action, but he or she is to be brought into relation with all aspects of the πρᾶξις, if critical justice is to be done to the drama; see Stinton, 1976: 241. One may argue that the fact that Aristotle evidently feels that he has to state explicitly that the plot is more important than the characters probably implies that his claim was meant to refute the argumentation of those who held the opposite view, which by the fourth century may have started gaining ground, as a result perhaps of the fact that individual actors were becoming increasingly popular and influential for the evaluation of a dramatic play.

[51] On Euripides as student of human nature, see Bates, 1930: 117-38; Walcot, 1976: 84 and n. 7; Jaeger, 1939: 34f., who names Euripides as the first psychologist (p. 350); see also Knox in Easterling & Knox (eds.), 1985: 74f.

[52] For similar examples of address to one's soul or heart, cf. Soph. *Trach.* 1259f., Eur. *Med.* 1056-58; see Page's commentary (1978) on *Medea* 1056.

presence; up to this moment she is the only figure who has ever paid any attention to her soul; none of the men or gods in her life seem ever to have cared in the slightest about her true inner feelings and emotions. She was treated as an object of exchange designed to seal the alliance between her father Erechtheus and her foreign husband[53], who helped the Athenians win the war over the Euboeans; she was the reward Xouthos received for his services to Athens.[54] Her body, the body of the king's daughter, was exchanged to secure the safety of the political body of Athens.[55] Her body was used by Apollo to serve a similar function, i.e. for the profit of the polis, by sowing it with his offspring to secure the continuation of the Athenian autochthonous race and the survival of the Erechtheid house. In the former case Kreousa honoured her father's agreement with his ally, for as long as her husband treated her well; she had some understanding for the situation (290f.). In the latter case, she was never given the benefit of knowledge, but kept her bitter intercourse with Apollo secret, doing honour not to the god, but to her father (14, 340) and mother (897, 1489).

Kreousa allowed her soul to be marginalised as long as she had motives for concealment, but now that she senses that she has been betrayed by both her husband and the god, it is only a matter of time before what was driven away to the margin will return to take on a force of its own;

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[53] So in Ovid's *Metam*. VI, 319-424, where Procne is offered by her father Pandion, king of Athens, to the foreigner Tereus, to mark the alliance between the two; see also Iphigeneia who was, supposedly, offered by Agamemnon to Achilles in Eur. *I.A.*

[54] See 59-64; 290-98; esp. 'γάμων Κρεούσης ἀξίωμ' ἐδέξατο' (62); 'φερνάς γε πολέμου καὶ δορὸς γέρας' (298).

[55] For the idea that the body of women is used as a currency of exchange between different groups of men to secure their interconnection, see Levi-Strauss, 1969: esp. 480-496; also, Girard, 1977: 223-249.

this is what Freud would term 'a return of the repressed'.[56] For a moment Kreousa hesitates as to whether she should speak (859) or remain silent (860-1), but the very fact that after a silence of sixty lines she has now spoken these words functions dramatically as a warranty that it will not be long before she will allow her soul to give voice to her emotions, to cry out in public the sufferings of a victimised woman in a world dominated by males who have inhibited her speech so far.[57] Her *aporia* as to whether she should bring to light her dark wooing[58] and put aside her shame will quickly be overcome. She has been silenced so far partly because it was part of her social role as a respectable woman to be silent in public[59], partly because of her inner sense of αἰδώς.[60] Yet now, at the climax of her desperation, she longs for her voice in order to betray her long-kept secret, the tale of her

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[56] See Freud, 1940.

[57] The function of the intoductory question (859) is rhetorically even more complex, because the very fact of uttering it already breaks the silence ; it is almost a performative question.

[58] On the phrase 'σκοτίας εὐνάς' and other examples of the adjective meaning illegitimate offspring, see Biehl at 860f.

[59] See Foley, 1981: 'respectable women were confined to domestic spaces [...] a concept of female virtue and of male honor depended on the respectability, public silence and invisibility of the Athenian wife' (p. 132). Cf. also Thuc. 2.45.2, Pericles' funeral speech, in which he argues that a woman's virtue consists of being talked about as little as possible for good or for ill.

[60] Cf. 'ἄκουε δὴ τὸν μῦθον· ἀλλ' αἰδούμεθα', 336 , when Kreousa is reluctant to relate the tale of her rape as the story of a friend and needs to be prompted by Ion to continue; at 179 it was because of his respect for the god that Ion refrained from killing the birds who dirty the temple: 'κτείνειν δ' ὑμᾶς αἰδοῦμαι'. See also 'αἰδούμεθ' εὐνάς 977 ; 'αἰσχύνεται', 341, for the shame felt towards men; 395-400, Kreousa's request to Ion for silence about her friend's tale, lest her husband get the wrong impression about her ('μή τιν' αἰσχύνην λάβω'), for doing this service in secret for her friend. See Barrett (1964) on *Hipp.* 244, on the meaning of 'αἰδεῖσθαι ‐ αἰσχύνεσθαι'. On women's shame to tell their 'maladie de l' âme', see Segal, 1988: 56, 71 n.12, on *Hipp.* 293-96, with bibliography.

rape, in the hope for justice.[61] And she unleashes her female attack against the males[62] who have betrayed her, by appropriating the language of men, Apollo's own song, reversing it from hymn to curse.[63]

But what is the dramatic significance of Kreousa's monody at this middle point of the play? Is it just a non-actional soliloquy that suspends the πράξις and has a merely reflexive quality soon to be dispensed with in the ensuing action[64], or could it bear a more profound relation to other aspects of the action and instead represent a climax in the narrative texture of the play[65]?

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[61] Phaidra in *Hipp.* 393-97 went through the different courses of action she had considered before arriving at the decision that the best solution was to commit suicide; the first option she turned down was silence and concealment and the second was to fight against her passion. Kreousa considers silence (859) and concealment (860f.), but decides in the end to communicate her misery to the old man and the chorus, perhaps hoping in so doing to fight actively against it; committing suicide is not an option considered by the Athenian queen. The selected course marks a movement from private to public discourse, from enclosure within the soul to disclosure outwards into the open theatrical space.

[62] Euripides in his tragedies likes rescuing women who have been blamed by men by giving them the chance to direct their female speech to males. There is a paradox, though, in this tendency; the vehicle for the expression of the female voice is man's language and is constantly filtered through the dramatist's subjective interpretation of female emotions; the form of the speech is often that of a verbal debate (agon), even if the contestant is absent, and one can often find scattered echoes of court-language, as if the speaker were defending his or her position in front of a judging audience – as indeed is the case in the world of the theatre. Cf. 253-4, 863.

[63] On Kreousa's monody as the reversal of a hymn, see LaRue, 1963: 126-36; Loraux, 1993:191-3, n.33.

[64] See Wolff, 1965: 180f; he sees in Kreousa's monody 'the most striking juxtaposition of detachment and involvement, of the stasis of the description and the pathos of human feelings'. On soliloquies of action and reflection, see Pfister: 1988, 136-7.

[65] See Barlow, 1986: 15f.

The former view fails to do justice to the nexus of thematical and dramatic relationships which are brought into focus in the brief span of this lyrical soliloquy. More specifically, we are invited to hear for the fourth time the story of Kreousa's rape by Apollo[66]; but this time Euripides chooses to present us with a more elaborate account of the actual scene described from the victim's vantage point.[67] We witness Kreousa re-living her nightmarish experience in front of our very eyes. Such repetition and re-enactment contribute to maintaining Kreousa's dramatic identity, conforming with and, indeed, expanding the perspective attached to her figure. Kreousa remains completely immersed in the situation that she hopes to change by speaking; she performs a speech act which will eventually result in the reversal of the direction of violence in the following episode when the murderous attempt against Ion will be made.[68] Hence, I suggest that Kreousa's monody is an actional soliloquy, in the sense that, after it has been delivered, it alters the relationships between the dramatic characters, in much the same way as the

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[66] Kreousa's story is referred to seven times in the course of the play: 8-18, 338-344, 492-508, 881f., 936-951, 1479f., 1560-62, 1595f. We have been told that as a virgin (23, 26, 503-4, etc.) she was violently assaulted by the god (10-11, 437, 445, 506; cf. also 934-45), she suffered her distress in silence and was barren for years, a misery which is all the more unbearable since she has also lost track of the son she bore to Apollo and exposed immediately after his birth. But most of the information about the actual rape scene is given in Kreousa's monody; it may not be coincidental that this version is the central one in the play – even numerically, it is the fourth out of seven versions. On the repetitive accounts of the story of Ion's begetting, see Wolff, 1965: 170f.; Burnett, 1971: 124f., Immerwahr, 1972: 282f.

[67] One might claim that, dramaturgically, this subjective interpretation serves purposes similar to that of conventional messenger speeches, or expository prologue speeches, in that it supplies us with first-hand information about events that have taken place in the prehistory of the drama, or, outside its dramatic space; the form of course is different, the monody being a lyrical exposition loaded with emotional weight, whereas the latter are narrative speeches, where the speakers go to great pains to establish the objectivity of their testimony.

[68] *Pace* Wolff, 1965: 180f. (see above n. 64)

decision of the chorus to inform Kreousa of the Apollonian oracle did. And in so far as the episodes following the prologue dramatised the process by which Kreousa was led to reveal the secret of her soul, I would maintain that this monody represents a narrative climax.

Kreousa's outburst in her monody coheres perfectly with her dramatic character: it manifests her dispositions in her words and prepares the ground for her subsequent actions. Although her actions must be seen as falling under the category of compulsion, as ones in which the initiative lies only partly with her, this fact does not make her any less sympathetic to the audience, who are invited by the detailed account of the divine assault to be drawn into her situation and to feel compassion for what seems to be unjustifiable divine negligence, at least to her (after all, she has not heard Apollo's explicit admission of concern for his child, reported to the spectators by Hermes in the prologue). Both of these actions of hers may be ascribed to her ignorance. But they differ in that the mitigating factors in the first case (the exposure of the baby) are stronger than in the second case (the murderous attempt against Ion), since in the former she is in fact acting under Apollo's instructions whereas in the latter she is acting in ignorance on account of passion, i.e. because of her anger against the god, whom she considers not only responsible for the death of their son and for her subsequent childlessness, but also unfair because instead he gave a son to her husband to whom he owed nothing (912-8). The question of Apollo's fairness is inevitably posed once again[69], when we hear that the god raped

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[69] C.f. also 355, 358, 384f., 436f. Note how the new gods are not defined any more by their power, as the Homeric gods were, but by their kindness to humans. They are still presented as being in control of the world of mortals but also as morally incommensurate with them. Mortals have greater dignity now, yet at the same time greater vulnerability too.

and abandoned the frightened virgin princess, showing no respect for her feelings and no compassion for her suffering (905-915).

This repetitive account of the rape, with its constant emphasis upon the violence of the god and the helplessness of the violated maiden, constitute the means by which the dramatist manipulates the audience's sympathies and arouses their pity[70]. This re-adjustment of the moral terms of the action contributes to the representation of Kreousa's suffering as undeserved and ascribes a considerable amount of responsibility to Apollo. On the other hand, in so far as Kreousa's actions are presented as fully motivated in purely human terms, it is not just the god but also her character which determines her fate[71]. As Heraclitus put it, 'a man's character is his *daimon*'.[72]

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[70] As already noted (see above n. 66), Kreousa's story is narrated by different dramatic figures not less than seven times in this play. It is as if the rape victim were to have a contantly recurring dream of her nightmarish experience. Dunn (1990: 132) remarks that 'the emphasis upon Kreousa's rape as an act of violence is unprecedented in Greek tragedy. Sympathy for the victim is equally rare'. The case usually is that the suffering of the victim is secondary to that done to the father or husband, since rape is primarily an offence against the property of men. One may recall that in the *Ion*, Kreousa had no involvement in the choice of her husband. She was given as 'δορὸς γέρας' (298) to Xouthos, the ally in war of her father. Hence, the preoccupation of both victim and agent of the rape to keep the story hidden first from the father ('λάθραι πατρός', 14, 340, 1596) and later from the husband (1600f). It is, then, highly significant that Euripides chooses to present in this play the story of Kreousa's rape from the victim's vantage point, giving a subtle psychological portrayal of the Athenian princess at the moments right before and during the course of the subsequent years.

[71] Double motivation is a recurrent feature of action both in Homer and in Greek tragedy. Some examples are found in Homer's Iliad 1.188f., 3.383f., 9.629, 9.636, 9.703, 16.849f., 19.86f. 19.137f.; see Janko, 1992: 3-7; Edwards, 1987: 135; Redfield, 1975: 136-143; Lloyd-Jones, 1983: 17f.; Gaskin, 1990. In all of the extant tragedies one can find examples: in the *Ion*, see 47; 1190f; 1271; see Williams, 1993: esp. pp. 21-74; Lesky, 1966. On the Aristotelian ideas on this matter, see Stinton, 1976: esp. 241-252.

[72] Heraclitus, frg. 119 Diels-Kranz.

After the initial introduction in lyric anapaests, Kreousa switches into a regular anapaestic system (862-880). She continues with a series of questions (859-864) considering the best course of action under the current circumstances; only now it becomes all the more evident that she is more and more inclined to reveal her secret. Even though she does not explicitly mention Apollo just yet, it is obvious that he is constantly governing her thoughts, and by the end of this system his own injustice will come to predominate so much over Xouthos' that the following lament in lyric anapaests will not contain even a single direct accusation against Xouthos. The repetition of the participle 'σιγῶσα' (868-9)[73] picks up 859 and rounds off this section. It briefly brings in her feeling of αἰδώς again (861; 395), only this time, when counterpoised with her sufferings, it is made redundant; the mention of her 'τόκους πολυκλαύτους'[74] (869) recalls the recurrent spiritual torment she has suffered over the many years since the birth of her illegitimate child with Apollo. She is still attached to that past, but she is now more eager than ever before to cast off the burden ('ἀπονησαμένη', 875) of these experiences.

Indeed, she is going to 'act a woman's part' (843) and reveal her secret marriage to Apollo, uttering the troubles of her soul, so that she may gain ease[75] (874-5[76]). This decision comes at the end of a long invocation[77]

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[73] C.f. also *Hipp.* 565-8 and 603-4, for an emphatic repetition of σιγῶ.

[74] This was probably the reason why she wept upon seeing Apollo's temple for the first time (246) and this is why she is weeping now (876-7); cf. also 1458-9, where she tells Ion how she wept when she gave him birth and then again when he parted from her arms.

[75] Cf. *Hipp.* 205-6, where the Nurse asks Phaidra to have some patience and the spirit of good breeding, because then it is easier to bear an illness 'ῥᾷον δὲ νόσον [...] οἴσεις' (cf. 'ῥάιων ἔσομαι', *Ion* 875); then, at *Hipp.* 293-6, she tries a better argument ('βελτίω λόγον', 292) on Phaidra in her search for the hidden disease which is eating away her mistress' heart; her advice is to bring her troubles forth to men, to speak, so that a doctor may pronounce

to the pure elements of nature to witness her outburst.[78] Kreousa first calls

upon the 'starry abode of Zeus' in a condensed phrase that encompasses

Zeus, the nocturnal sky and the stars. Next she calls upon Athena as the

goddess of the Attic soil, and especially of the grottoes which witnessed

Kreousa's rape by Apollo, and also as the goddess of lake Tritonis.[79]

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upon the disease; she deems that there is no remedy in silence. Actually, one might say that the outcome of the plot of that play is very much influenced, or even determined, by the Nurse's general viewpoint that when a woman has a problem, it is a matter of asking the right man, in order to come to its solution; this is why she decides to go and speak to Hippolytus. On the dangers of bringing female speech to males in the *Hipp.*, see Segal, 1988: 53f. On the notion of talking as a cure, see Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lives of the ten orators*, 1.833c, where Antiphon the Sophist is said to have opened a *logisterion*, where people could come and talk about their problems; he claims to have been able to cure the grief, through *logos*, after he heard the causes of the sufferings: 'ὅτι δύναται τοὺς λυπουμένους διὰ λόγον θεραπεύειν καὶ πυνθανόμενος τὰς αἰτίας παρεμυθεῖτο τοὺς κάμνοντας'.

[76] Owen notes that the word 'ῥάιων' is a medical term; see also Biehl at 875, who quotes Eustath. *Od.* 1509, 45 'λέγεται δὲ καὶ ῥάιων ὁ ἐκ νόσου ὑγιής'. Medical vocabulary was commonly used to describe psychological troubles; it was perhaps the only way men could describe anxieties of the soul. Kreousa appropriates this vocabulary to describe her situation; she wishes to lift the burden of her chest ('στέρνων', 874) so that her soul may be relieved from pain ('ψυχὴ ἀλγεῖ') and she can find peace ('ῥάων ἔσομαι'); cf. 755, 808.

[77] LaRue (1963: 130) notes the formal peculiarity of this invocation: 'The object of Kreousa's revelation is carefully postponed until after the long breathtaking abjuration which must have been spoken as a type of *pnigos*'.

[78] Traditionally, the elements were the natural allies of the innocent, powerful enough to exact punishment from the guilty, representing 'une justice plus rapide, ou plus clairvoyant, ou plus exigeant que celle des Dieux', Delcourt, 1938: 199.

[79] On Athena's connection with the lake of Tritonis, see Owen and Burnett on 872. If the relevance to this context of the mention of lake Tritonis lies in the fact that the ritual performed there offered one method of a trial of a virgin, then its juxtaposition to the Athenian rocks might be explained by the fact that the rocks were connected with the death of a virgin who twice failed to pass the trial set by the same goddess Athena, the goddess who presides over virginity. Delcourt argues that Euripides is making a covert, but clear, reference here to an ordeal which used to take place at the bank of this lake, where, initially, a maiden had to prove

I would like to propose a reading of this passage based upon the
dramatic logic behind this invocation which comes at such an important crux
of the narrative. Kreousa does not really call upon the deities of nature, but
upon the starry sky and her poliadic goddess Athena. It must be significant
that she calls not upon the Sun, but upon the nocturnal sky of Zeus, even
though she is about to reveal the 'σκοτίας εὐνάς'.[80] Is this invocation
irrelevant to the following invocation of Athena and simply juxtaposed with it,
or is there any possibility that they might be intended to be associated with
one another? Athena is invoked as the goddess not of the whole of the Attic
land but of the specific precinct that is sacred to her and contains the rocky
crags ('ἐπ' ἐμοῖς σκοπέλοισι'[81], 871) to which there are recurrent references
in the play[82].

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her virginity by surviving severe stoning, and later by exposing herself to the physical dangers
of the water of the lake (1938: 200ff.). Loraux accepts this interpretation and extends it even
further both by detecting an early allusion to these trials of virginity at 863, and also by
interpreting Kreousa's invocation to the Tritonian Athena as 'a declaration that she is a virgin
still, intact despite rape – even despite marriage' (1993: 224f.). Loraux uses this reading to
support her more general theory that the cause for Kreousa's barrenness is her incomplete
transition from a state of virginity and her natal family to the state of motherhood and her
conjugal family.

[80] She is invoking her rape: the time (night) and the place (Athena; her rocky crags).

[81] There are more instances of the use of this word in this tragedy than in any other extant
play by Euripides: 273, 724, 1433, 1479, 1578, (715). Cf. two mentions of the word in *Cy.* 43,
62; one in *HF* 639; one in fr. 176.3.

[82] Hermes locates Apollo's encounter with Kreousa 'in the land of the Athenians, by the
northward-facing cliffs, beneath Pallas' hill, which the lords of the Attic land call 'Makrai' (10-
13); it is from this same 'σκόπελος' that the daughters of Kekrops, also known as the Aglaurids,
threw themselves, when they disobeyed Athena's order and opened the casket that
contained the baby Erichthonios and his two guardian snakes (271-4); it is near the 'Makrai', a
place honoured by the Pythian lightnings (285), where Kreousa's father, Erechtheus, was
swallowed up by a cleft in the ground, opened by the stroke of Poseidon's trident (281-3);
Pan's cave adjoins the 'Makrai' and it is in this cave that Kreousa exposed the child she bore to

My proposed reading depends upon a detailed comparison with lines 270-74, which briefly recount the aetiological myth of the nocturnal festival of the Arrhephoria. There we learn that Athena placed the earth-born Erichthonios in a casket and entrusted it to the virgin daughters of Kekrops, to guard it but keep it unseen (272). But they opened the casket of the goddess (273), and died for it, spattering the rocks with their blood ('σκόπελον ἥμαξαν πέτρας', 274). This account is concise, but it contains all the highlights of the myth; other sources specify the time of the day at which this incident took place as night[83] (hence the curiosity of the young girls and the absence of Athena), the manner of the maidens' death (throwing themselves off from the northern cliffs of the Acropolis), and the cause (either their fear upon seeing the guardian snakes that darted out of the casket, or the madness sent upon them by the outraged Athena).

The whole play is a dramatisation of a number of Athenian myths; what Kreousa proposes to do in her monody is to reverse the myth of the

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Apollo, while the Aglaurids were dancing to the tune of Pan's flute, on a meadow on the top of the Acropolis (492-506; see my discussion of these lines in ch. 4); Kreousa places the rape in the cavern facing north in the rock of Kekrops, otherwise known as 'Makrai', and the paedagogue adds to this location Pan's cave (936-41); again, when Kreousa recognises Ion's cradle, she tells him that she exposed him in the cavern of Kekrops by the crags of 'Makrai' (1400); Kreousa lists as the last of Ion's birth tokens a wreath of the olive tree which Athena had planted upon the 'σκόπελος' (1433-36); again, when Kreousa is about to reveal to Ion the identity of his father, she locates the incident of the rape at the rocky crag of Athena, where the olive tree grows, beside the rock of the nightingale (1478-84); when Athena herself speaks the epilogue, she refers to the Athenians as the people who dwell around her rock ('σκόπελον ἐμόν', 1578). It is obvious that if all these incidents are assigned to the sacred vicinity of the 'σκόπελος' this word is used as a metonymy that stands for the whole of the Acropolis hill, Athena's sacred precinct, in much the same way as the 'ὀμφαλός' stands for the sacred vicinity of Apollo's temple in Delphi.

[83] Paus. I, 27,3: 'παραγειομένης δὲ τῇ ἑορτῇ δρῶσι ἐν νυκτὶ τοιάδε'; On the Arrephoria, see Deubner, 1969: 9-17; see also above n. 18.

Kekropids, and in order to do so she requests the benevolence of the night and the goddess Athena. She will no longer hide the deed ('οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος', 874; cf. 860f.), about which she was supposed to keep silent (869), recalling the disobedience of the maidens ('οὐχ ὁρώμενον', 272; 'λῦσαι', 273). It was in darkness that she was assaulted in the cave and in darkness that she kept the assault hidden (860f.), and it was at night that the maidens opened the casket. The reason for both the maidens' crime and Kreousa's decision is female ἀκράτια: the maidens were overcome by curiosity; Kreousa cannot bear the pain in her heart any longer (874f.). The maidens paid with their blood ('ἥιμαξαν', 274); Kreousa with her tears ('στάζουσι κόραι δακρύοισιν ἐμαί', 876).[84] Perhaps there is also a pun between the maidens, 'παρθένους' (273) and the 'κόραι'[85] (876), the pupils of Kreousa's eyes. By means of these analogies and differences, Euripides foregrounds the myth of the Kekropids. Kreousa seems to be repeating with significant difference inherited patterns of action; she asks for Athena's approval and substitutes tears for blood, spiritual torment for physical pain, anguish for death.

Kreousa has stated explicitly her intention of revealing her secret marriage to Apollo, but she has not yet referred to the god openly. At 877 she presents her soul as a victim of the malice of both men and gods, whom she will prove to have been ungrateful traitors to the woman they loved. This is the first introduction to the theme of Apollo's ingratitude towards her, which will be further developed in the following section of her monody. As was mentioned earlier (2.3.1.), Kreousa has a strictly defined sense of justice and

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[84] Note how 'ἥιμαξαν', almost equivalent to the rocks' dripping with blood, ('στάζουσι αἵματι'), corresponds to 'στάζουσι δακρύοισιν', her eyes dripping with tears.

[85] Loraux (1993: 225, n. 186) detects a play in the word, but finds an association with 'ἀγραύλοις κεράεσσιν' (882f.), as a covert reference to the Aglaurids.

of the reciprocal obligation of *charis* — indeed, too strictly defined a sense. We have heard her encouraging the chorus to reveal the secret oracle of Apollo, promising them that if the news is good, they will not be wasting their service ('χάριν') on ungrateful masters (750f.). But now it is she who has not received her due, as she is about to demonstrate in her ensuing lament. She seems to have taken Xouthos' betrayal for granted (864), so she will not deal with it any longer. Instead, it is Apollo's betrayal of her marriage bed which causes her to despair, so now she will launch her attack against him, aiming to prove him a traitor; Xouthos is hardly mentioned at all, and only as a foil for Apollo (912-15).

The discrepancy between the form of the monody and its content is striking.[86] Kreousa uses the god's very status against him; she also uses his attributes to contrast ironically with his behaviour. A further ironic effect may be created by the sequence of long syllables, which is probably connected

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[86] See LaRue, 1963: 127, where there is a list of the elements which conventionally constitute the 'hymnal style' ; see 131-136, for a closer analysis of lines 881-922. On the reversal of the hymn, see also Wassermann, 1940: 591, n.9; Immerwahr, 1972: 283. Burnett (1962: 95-6) claims that Kreousa's 'voice of hatred is sweet' and that her monody is an example of 'the refusal of the singer's language to follow her conscious intent', a claim which fails to acknowledge the conscious ironic effect Kreousa creates with her words; cf. Barlow 1986: 16: 'this is Kreousa's story [...] the description can only be ironic'. For a similar effect, cf. Kassandra's wedding song in Eur. *Tro.* 308-340, followed by a statement of her complete awareness of the situation for which she employs her song (356-360; 403-5), and Hekabe's request to the chorus that they take the flaming marriage torch from Kassandra's hands and replace her marriage song with lamentations (351-2), which would be more appropriate for the situation. Loraux (1984, 191-3) interprets Krousa's monody as an example of the race of women turning male songs against both men and gods and as a fulfilment of the chorus' wish at *Med.* 410-30 (see 1993: 107).

with Delphic ritual and the paian.[87] When Kreousa finally addresses Apollo directly, she introduces him as the god of music who plays not Pan's pipes or Dionysos' aulos, but the kithara, an instrument closely associated with him.[88] At 905, Kreousa returns to the same theme; Apollo is again portrayed as playing his kithara and as singing paians ('κιθάραι κλάζεις / παιᾶνας μέλπων'). In between this ring-composition is placed, in highly evocative poetry, Kreousa's account of her assault by the god, the birth of her son and his presumed death, killed by birds of prey. It is clear that Kreousa intentionally misuses Apollo's sacred hymn, the paian, as a means not for his glorification but for his vilification. She employs his song to tell the tale of her rape; ironically, the song in his honour serves as a means of her resistance against male and divine injustices (877-80) and initiates, simultaneously, a process of demystification of Apollo as a creature with bestial instincts: at 894-6 she attributes her rape to Apollo's lust, a motive shared with uncivilised creatures.

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[87] Cf. Ion's monody, esp. 125-7=140-2; see Burnett's comments (1971) on 125, 906; 1166; Yunis, 1988: 125f., n.43. On the genre of the paian, see Käppel, 1992: esp. 3-86; he lists Eur. Ion 902-907 as testmonium 51 (cf. pp. 47-48); see also Rutherford, 1993 and 1994-95.

[88] On Apollo's music, see Eur. IT. 1128f.; cf. Ion 495f., on Pan's music. Actually, if we compare the passages that refer to Apollo's and Pan's music in the Ion, we find some significant similarities; at 492f. we are given a description of the place, Pan's cave and its vicinity, where Kreousa was raped by Apollo; we are told that outside the cave the Aglaurids dance to the tune of the pipes ('ὑπ' αἰόλας ἰαχᾶς +ὕμνων+', 499-500), which Pan plays inside the very cave where Kreousa bore and exposed the illegitimate son of her forced union with Apollo. At 881f., it is Apollo who plays his kithara which sounds fair songs ('ἀχεῖ / μουσᾶν ὕμνους εὐαχήτους', 884), right before Kreousa gives her account of her rape by the god and again at the end of this account, where the god is portrayed as playing music indifferently, while she was giving birth to their son, who, she presumes, was devoured by predatory birds. Note also the acoustic reference to the Agraulids at 882-3 ('ἀγραύλοις κεράεσσιν'); see Loraux, 1993: 225, n. 186.

Kreousa will no longer play the role of the 'τλήμονες γυναῖκες' (252; cf. 395f.) enduring in silence (868-9) the 'τολμήματα θεῶν' (252-3) and the unfounded accusations of men (398-400); she is determined to obtain the justice that the 'κρατοῦντες' (254) have denied her. Kreousa, by moving from inaction to action, crosses the social boundary of silence to which women are confined by males and thereby poses a threat of subversion of the existing order; if this threat is fulfilled, it will have supplied an adequate justification for male society's fear of a violent retaliation from women. How far exactly Kreousa's outburst against gods and men will take her is still left unclear. The possibility that she might end up joining the list of such fatal female avengers as, for instance, Klytaimestra (Aesch. *Ag.*), the Danaids (Aesch. *Suppl.*), Medea (Eur. *Med.*), Phaidra (Eur. *Hip.*), Agaue (Eur. *Bac.*), or Philomela and Prokne (Ov. *Metam.* VI 424-674)[89], is open, especially since she has not yet responded to the promptings of the old paedagogue, who tells her that she ought to rise to the occasion and follow precisely such a tradition of murderous female vengeance (843-6).[90]

The movement from passivity to activity, from sufferer to avenger, is reflected in the structure of Kreousa's monody. She begins with an elaborate listing of Apollo's musical attributes, postponing her direct address to the god for four lines. The choice of words carefully reproduces elements of the hymnal style, leaving us with a feeling of awe towards the skilful divine musician who makes the inanimate lyre emit such beautiful sounds ('ὕμνους εὐαχήτους'). This is Kreousa's moment of triumph over the god who has reduced her to silence for years. This emergence from silence and dark

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[89] For a discussion of the Philomela-Prokne story, see Hartman, 1970; Joplin, 1991; Segal, 1994.

[90] On the view of the harm female passion can inflict, see Aesch. *Cho.* 585-651, the chorus' prayer to Zeus.

wooing ('σκοτίας [...] εὐνάς', 860-1; cf. 868-9; 874-5) into voice and the light

of truth is the resistance of the mature woman who has realised the power of

the spoken word as a mode of action and is now eager to cast off the burden

of her past experiences and liberate herself from the private grief of the

violated virgin. In this way, in her effort to expose the injustices of men and

gods, she overcomes her training to the role of submission in which culture

has always kept women.

After her direct invocation of Apollo, Kreousa begins to relate the story

of her assault in the same hymnic style. Her description of the god's sudden

epiphany brings out both his violence (891-6) and his image as the

luminous god (887-890) who plays the lyre (881-884; 905-6), an image

which echoes the god's representation in the *Homeric hymn to Apollo* (2-13;

182-206) and in the *Iliad* (1. 44-52; 603f.). As LaRue remarks, in a normal

hymn this part of Kreousa's song would have been taken up by the

hypomnesis, a hymnic element intended to persuade the god to grant the

suppliant the requested favour by reminding him either that he has done so

in the past[91], or that the suppliant has rendered a service to the god in the

past.[92] Kreousa uses a combination of both kinds of hypomnesis; on the one

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[91] LaRue (1963: 131f.) cites Sappho's prayer to Aphrodite (A.1.8). My interpretation differs
from LaRue's in that I take both 881-896 and 897-904 as reversals of hypomneseis and I am
inclined to read more hostile intent into Kreousa's choice of pictorial imagery than LaRue, in
whose words 'the description of her beautiful seducer is doubtlessly apropos; it also fits quite
well into the hymnal style'. Yet for the second passage, she is willing to acknowledge some
hostility in Kreousa's words, when she comments on lines 905-6: 'one understands now that
Kreousa was bitterly cynical when she stated that Apollo plays ὕμνους εὐαχήτους; they can be
no such thing for Kreousa'. LaRue takes only the first passage as a reversal of a hypomnesis
and the second as a 'paternity charge' against Apollo, not worrying about how this charge is
made to fit the normal hymn structure of the monody.

[92] LaRue (1963: 132) cites *Il.* 1.37-42, Chryses' prayer to Apollo. Cf. also *Od.* 9. 528-535,
Polyphemos' prayer to his father Poseidon.

hand, she reminds the god that he had sexual intercourse with her in the past, and, on the other hand, she reminds him that she rendered him a favour by giving birth to their illegitimate child in secret.

The first reminder refers to a divine favour: Apollo, by choosing Kreousa as the bearer of his son, has honoured her with his divine χάρις; but this favour is 'βίαιος'.[93] Kreousa, whose ignorance of the divine plans prevents her from appreciating the nature of this divine favour, intends to use this reminder as a launching board for her attack on Apollo. She tells us how she was picking yellow crocuses[94] and putting them into the folds of her garment at the moment when the god made his sudden appearance, his hair ablaze[95] with gold, like a flash of light (887-890), or like his Pythian lightnings, which were said earlier in the play to be honouring the Long

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[93] Euripides has not missed the opportunity to describe the pain and suffering which close contact with the god can bring. The ambivalence of such a favour with respect to the offspring of the union of mortals with gods was noticed by the chorus at 507-8 (cf. 1541-45, on the need for the god to supply Ion with a mortal father, so as to ensure his rights to the Athenian throne). Cf. Aesch. P. V. 894-906, where the chorus express their fear for the union of mortals with gods and wish that Zeus would not cast an eye upon them (902-3), because otherwise there is no escape from him (905-6), as there was no escape for Io; cf. also Aesch. Ag. 182: 'δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις βίαιος'; Aesch. Ag. 1206: 'ἦν παλαιστὴς κάρτ' ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν', where Kassandra refers to her union with Apollo. The violence of Apollo's assault is repeatedly mentioned; see 10-11, 437, 445; cf. also 506, 939, 941.

[94] I would argue that the beauty of the flowers performs the same kind of aesthetic function here in relation to Apollo as the beauty of the birds in Ion's monody (158f.); the clash comes at 893, where it becomes clear that the god's assault was forced upon an unwilling Kreousa.

[95] Garner (1990: 141), in his search for intertextual allusions in the Ion, notes that one may find in the word 'μαρμαίρων' an echo of Aphrodite's eyes as she appears to Helen in Il. 3. 397. On Apollo's golden hair, cf. Pind. Pyth. 2, 16; Suppl. 975; I.T. 1236; Tro. 253f.; Ar. Birds 216-19 (Biehl, Testimonia). Even if we do not pin down the use of Apollo's image to a specific text, we may still claim that Kreousa is deliberately using such elevated pictorial language only so as to intensify the effect of the subsequent vilification of the god; in Kreousa's mind, Apollo did not live up to his majestic divine status.

Rocks, the place where this incident occurred (285). The playwright delineates in a few lines the emotional experience of the rape victim; the speed and power of the god, whose strong virility[96] easily subdued the unwilling but helpless virgin, whose youth and innocence enhance her weakness.[97]

Kreousa's account of the rape has often been criticised as being too mild a version of an incident whose violence and inherent moral ambivalence receive so much attention in the play.[98] Burnett, a fervent defender of the god's morality, describes the 'voice of Kreousa's hatred' as 'sweet' and the god's seizing of her hand as 'no more violent than the clasping of hands'.[99] Burnett's comment is misleading, for she skims over the significant differences between the gesture of clasping hands and the

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[96] LaRue rightly remarks that 'the entire description of the rape is an aberration from the usual part of a hymn in which the god's *kratos, menos,* or *dynamis* is mentioned. But here the bitter implication is that Apollo has used his sacred *dynamis* to rape her' (1963: 132).

[97] The language is strongly reminiscent of Persephone's abduction by Hades, as has often been noted: Kreousa, like Persephone, was picking flowers right before her abduction, tried to resist the god, who seized her by her white wrist, and she cried to her mother while she was being raped. Cf. *Hom. Hymn to Dem.* 1-32, 417-33; Ovid, *Met.* 5. 391-98; cf. also Kreousa's reference to this myth at 1440-2. See Wassermann, 1940: 590, n.6; LaRue, 1963: 132; Burnett, 1970, at 887 and 1971, 121, n.16; Immerwahr, 1972: 283; Loraux, 1993: 228-30 (with bibliography); Zeitlin, 1989: 159f.; Rehm, 1992: 141f.

[98] For a similar effect see the account of Tess in T. Hardy's *Tess of the D'Ubervilles.* There too poetic language is used for something extremely exploitative and brutal; it is presented as a seduction in an atmosphere of light and in physical surroundings, with no mention of anything crudely physical, in a high-style treatment which maintains a peculiar ambivalence.

[99] Burnett, 1962: 95-6; 1970, at 890 and 891; cf. Wolff, 1965: 181: 'her feeling seems dissolved by the beauty of the images which accompany it'; Hartigan (1991: 80): 'she describes their union in the most gentle terms'; Gellie (1984: 96) : 'If Apollo and his act are so contemptible, why are they described in these glowing terms?'. Contrast Owen, xxiv: 'the touching story of the maiden going out to pick flowers and being surprised by the brutal lechery of the god'; Whitman, 1974: 74, finds this story a case of 'criminal assault'.

'χεῖρ ἐπὶ καρπῶι' motif. The former would normally denote some sort of agreement or even treaty between two equal parties, whereas the latter is a common iconographical motif, indicative of the control one person exerts over another; and when this gesture is used in the visual representation of a god or a man leading a bride by the hand, 'there is a general consensus that it has to do with abduction ritual'[100], as in the case described in *Ion* 891 and in the Persephone myth[101]. Such pictorial vocabulary is traditionally meant to record the unwillingness of the bride to join the groom. Kreousa provides many indications of her unwillingness to submit to Apollo throughout her monody; her account of the rape scene is introduced as Apollo's 'μομφάν' (885), is subsequently made clearer by her fruitless cries to her mother (893) and is completed by her comment on the way Apollo chose to fulfill his pleasure shamelessly ('ἀναιδείαι', 895). Within this context, the phrase 'λευκοῖς δ' ἐμφὺς καρποῖσιν χειρῶν' is to be taken as a visual representation of Kreousa's reluctance to surrender to the god. Such resistance and eventual reluctant transition to a new phase is a characteristic pattern found in many rites of passage, amongst which is the wedding ritual.[102] We may recall that just as Kreousa is now unwilling to go with Apollo, Ion was unwilling to go with Xouthos (644-46); for Ion it meant the transition from adolescence to manhood, for Kreousa it means the transition from virginity to

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[100] See Jenkins,1983: esp. 140-142; at n. 29 he quotes Westermarck: 'Among the Auin, the bridegroom seizes the bride's wrist and almost drags her to his hut', an act that is paralleled in Kreousa's description of her rape, according to which the god seized her by the wrist and led her to the couch within the cave. See also Sourvinou-Inwood, 1988; Rehm, 1994.

[101] As Zeitlin puts it, the Persephone myth 'provides the cultural archetype of marriage as forcible abduction' (1986: 141f.).

[102] The mythological paradigm for the wedding ritual is the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, to which we find a reference at *I.A.* 1036f.; see Foley, 1982: 163; Jenkins, 1983: 140.

womanhood[103], only in her case it is more painful, since she is forced to cross the threshold of virginity abruptly and violently, with no warning or explanation.

The lack of any other explanation for her assault has led Kreousa to assume that the god raped her only to satisfy his lust (896). In her choice of words one can discern a strong tone of reprimand. The god is presented as having led Kreousa to the cave 'ἀναιδείαι' (895)[104]; the choice of this word recalls Kreousa's decision at the beginning of her monody to overcome her 'αἰδώς' and reveal her secret wooing. Certainly there have been allusions to the god's injustice and shameful behaviour before in the play[105], but this is the first time the god is said to have acted against 'αἰδώς'. Yet there is a paradox here: are we to believe that a god can feel 'αἰδώς'?[106]

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[103] See Vernant, 1963..

[104] I disagree with Hartigan's claim (1991, 80) that 'it is ambiguous [...] whether (anaideia) refers to his or her shamelessness'. It seems to me that the poet presents Kreousa clearly accusing Apollo of trampling the flower of her virginity selfishly, without bothering to obtain her consent.

[105] 'ἀδικία': 254, 341, 355; 'αἰσχύνη': 288, 367.

[106] Perhaps the poet has in mind Pindar's Pythian 9, where Apollo, struck by love for Kyrene, turns to the Centaur Chiron for advice, and asks him whether it is permitted for him to lay his hand upon her and pluck the honeyed fruit of love (36-37). The inspired Centaur replied:

'κρυπταὶ κλαΐδες ἐντὶ σοφᾶς Πει-

θοῦς ἱερᾶν φιλοτάτων.

Φοῖβε. καὶ ἐν τε θεοῖς τοῦτο κἀνθρώποις ὁμῶς

αἰδέοντ'. ἀμφανδὸν ἀδείας τυχεῖν τὸ πρῶτον εὐνᾶς' (39-41).

The keys to skilled persuasion in the sacred rites of love are secret, Phoibos: men and gods alike hesitate to go with open pleasure to the bridal bed' (trans. Nisetich, 1980).

Yet Apollo, in Kreousa's report, did not exhibit any similar inhibitions towards the Athenian princess; he showed no αἰδώς for the 'sacred rites of love', openly sought satisfaction for his lust and rendered her no favour.

Kreousa concludes her first reminder to the god with a clear ironic reversal of the traditional hypomnesis. On her lips the beneficial connotations of a χάρις turn sour[107]; the god is accused of depriving her of his χάρις, which he offered instead to Aphrodite, i.e. to his own desire (896).[108] Kreousa's memories of her past continue to haunt her and to block her vision of the present; she is still so immersed in the past that she cannot consider yet any future act of vengeance. As it will turn out, she was wrong in accusing the god, who did indeed render her his favour, since what he had in mind was not so much to achieve bodily pleasure as rather to ensure the continuation of the Erechtheid line and to procure a scion for the Athenian throne.

The second hypomnesis reminds the god of the favour Kreousa has rendered him in the past. The new subject is marked emphatically by the grammatical change from second person singular ('ἦλθες', 887) to first person singular ('τίκτω', 897). Thematically this comes as a continuation of the concluding lines of the first reminder: having recounted her illicit union with the god, Kreousa now relates to him what happened to the child born of that union. According to her account, in fear of her mother[109] she bore the child and exposed him on the wretched bed where she, the wretched one,

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[107] On the occurences of χάρις in the *Ion*, see Wolff, 1965: 178-9.

[108] Yet if taken literally, the same phrase, i.e. 'Κύπριδι χάριν πράσσων', could also refer to the love Aphrodite is said to have traditionally instilled in immortal hearts for mortal lovers, as described in the *Hom. Hymn to Aphrodite* 45-52; cf. also *Ion* 1092-3. For the metaphoric meaning of the favour done to Aphrodite, cf. *Ion* 1103-5: 'πρός δ' Ἀφροδίταν [...] θέμενος χάριν', which refers to Xouthos' union with the alleged mother of his alleged son.

[109] On the fear of the mother, cf. 1489; on the hiding of the event from the father, cf. 14, 340. On the importance of this theme in the play see Loraux, 1993: 218 and n. 154. See also Zeitlin, 1982: 148, who comments on the myth of Demeter-Kore that: 'the initiation of the daughter into the mysteries of sexuality provokes the angry response of the mother which affects the fertility of the land'.

was bitterly assaulted by the cruel god. Kreousa is so much drawn into her retelling of this past story[110] that she seems to be reliving every moment of the story she narrates. In psychological (Freudian) terms, such obsessive return to the primal scene of pain, such repetition - compulsion is the only way to free oneself from a traumatic past.[111] Reexperiencing the rape and the exposure of the baby may help Kreousa recover her identity as a violated virgin and an unfulfilled mother and liberate her from her previous inaction through renewed action; during the course of her outburst, we witness her transformation into an active *theomachos*, who is getting ready to face the present and plan for her future vengeance.

Kreousa concludes her attack by projecting her hatred for Apollo onto his birthplace. The step from her lost child who has been stripped of his swaddling clothes, to Delos, the island which is holy to motherhood and is also Apollo's birthplace, is strikingly powerful. Leto's 'σεμνά λοχεύματα' and idyllic birthplace are contrasted with Kreousa's counter-world of pain. Delos is the island which revealed itself from the bottom of the sea to provide a birthplace for Leto, for whom in the hour of her travail her divine seducer, Zeus, provided a palm tree. Apollo does not deserve anymore the love of Delos[112]; the island hates both him and his attributes (i.e. the laurel-tree).

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[110] Cf. also Iphigeneia who tells the story of her sacrifice at Aulis repeatedly: *IT* 26-30; 354-371; 852-866.

[111] Freud, 1961.

[112] Cf. ch. 1.4., n. 206. Contrast *Hom. Hymn to Apollo*, 136f.; Callim. *Hymn 4, to Delos*, 260-63. See Barlow, 1971: 48 and n. 30, who lists as examples of the use of the motif as a term for praise, *IT* 1235, *HF* 687f., *Hec.* 462; cf. also *IT* 1098f.

2.3.3. Kreousa in Transition

We have seen in the preceding section how Kreousa's monody marks an important step in the transition her character undergoes in the course of this play. She moves in this scene from silence to speech, from victim to aggressor, from speech to action, etc. But in fact Kreousa's character is in a state of flux and transition in many regards, and not only in this scene of the play. She moves from maidenhood to motherhood, from being a fervent opponent of Apollo to being his pious follower, from her fixation with the past to having expectations for the future.

When we see her in this play, Kreousa's most important transition, from maiden to mother — the transition that secures her an important place in the mythology of Athens — is already behind her. But she has performed this transition badly: the baby to whom she gave birth is seemingly dead, she hates the god who violated her rather than accepting the gift of his favour. Perhaps the two features most firmly established by her account in the monody are her willingness to resist Apollo, due to her easily understandable failure to grasp the full implications of the divine grace which has been bestowed upon her – a defect that for a long time will continue to prevent her from recognising the divine providence in events as they unfold –, and her portrayal as a woman of a peculiar kind of courage which arises from fear (898). Earlier this courage led her to commit an 'ἀδίκημα' after her rape by exposing her baby and leaving it to die in order to avoid the shame her unfortunate intercourse with Apollo entailed; later it was further exemplified in the ensuing action in her attempt to kill Ion, as a result of her fear for the elimination of the Athenian autochthonous race, prompted

by the apparent intrusion of her husband's illegitimate son and his usurpation of the Erechtheid throne.[113]

When Kreousa's assassination attempt on Ion fails, the princess is advised by the chorus women to seek asylum from the outraged Ion and his Delphian followers at Apollo's altar (1255, 1258). It is then (1306) that Kreousa as a suppliant becomes entirely dependent on Apollo (1285: ἱερὸν τὸ σῶμα τῶι θεῶι δίδωμ ' ἔχειν'), just as the virgin bride through the marriage rites centred around the hearth of her husband's house becomes entirely dependent on her new master. This action forms, in my opinion, the turning point to Kreousa's 'θεομαχία' against Apollo.[114] It is from this altar that she will rush to embrace Ion, her lost son. By the end of the play, Kreousa's transition from *theomachos* to *theosebes*, from being full of hatred for Apollo (cf. her monody), to recognising the wisdom of Apollo's plan (cf. 1540-45), is visually indicated by her clasping of the ring upon the temple-door before

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[113] The motivation in terms of preserving the purity of the Athenian race and the lengths to which Kreousa and the old man have to go to exact punishment from the intruders have a strong Euripidean flavour of irony since they may be seen as a covert criticism of the Athenians' rigid views about purity of race. Whitman on lines 161-69, which focus on Ion's obsession with the purity of the temple, remarks that 'purity involves bloodshed' (1974: 75), i.e. a crime which pollutes the city. Euripides seems to be pointing out this paradox in his play.

[114] Kreousa, though 'twice-wedded', remained in her natal family and by becoming an *epikleros*, undertook the obligation of the male members of the family to reassure the purity of the race. It is only after she becomes a suppliant at Apollo's altar that she finally leaves the natal hearth and by being attached to her peculiar conjugal house, she is allowed to resume her female identity and become a mother for her 'common' children with Xouthos. See also above 1.4., text before n. 214.

[115] Prior to that, it seems that it was important for her to have re-lived her past experience in her monody – speech has a known psychotherapeutic effect –, but perhaps in this case her dwelling on the past so intensely has not cured her, but misdirected her into mistaken violence.

she departs to Athens (1609-13), a gesture which, perhaps, inverts the involuntary clasping of her hand by Apollo (891).

Kreousa will make her transition from past to future successfully, when she recognises her son and acknowledges the omnipotence of Apollo.[115] Then, she will re-interpret the incident of rape and accept it as a sacrifice for the benefit of the autochthonous Athenian line; Apollo had to use benevolent violence to meet the need of supplying a divine offspring for the Athenian autochthonous race. Kreousa had to learn to accept her past if she were to receive a future; she had to go back and complete her transition[116] through a series of events which repeated her past experience, but with a significant difference. Her sufferings will now turn to permanent blessing, she is told by Athena (1603). A harmony may, at last, preside over the Erechtheid palace; Kreousa breaks away from Γῆ, accepts Apollo's providence and will henceforth be able to produce children with Xouthos ('κοινὸν γένος', 1589).

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[115] Prior to that, it seems that it was important for her to have re-lived her past experience in her monody – speech has a known psychotherapeutic effect –, but perhaps in this case her dwelling on the past so intensely has not cured her, but misdirected her into mistaken violence.

[116] Cf. her unfinished weaving (1419).

2.4. The cure of Athens

The word μητρόπολις does not occur in the *Ion*, but is is difficult to imagine that it was not in the minds of Euripides and of many members of his audience at the end of the play. The word has two meanings, both of which are activated by Athena's address to Ion and Kreousa. The first, in terms of chronological attestations, is 'one's mother-city, mother-country, home'[117]: at the end of the play, Kreousa will return to the city that she has always acknowledged as her home, and Ion discovers that the city which is his only true home is not Delphi, where he was raised, but Athens, where he was born. The definitive return of both figures to the city they had come from provides a harmonious ring structure both for the *fabula* of the play (for Ion's birth is *exodramatic*) and for its *szujet* (which had begun with the successive entrances of four different visitors to Delphi, Hermes, Ion, the chorus, and Kreousa), thereby permitting an emotionally satisfying close to its plot full of turmoil and surprise. Euripides could easily have concluded his play on this note of return, restoration, repetition.

Instead he has chosen to add a second element which surely comes as somewhat of a surprise to the audience: Athena's lengthy prophecy that the descendants of Ion will go on to establish colonies throughout Europe and Asia (1575-87). Athena's mention of colonization recalls the second meaning of μητρόπολις, which first occurs in authors contemporary with or slightly earlier than Euripides: 'mother state, as related to her colonies'.[118] The mother-city to

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[117] LSJ s.v. 2: Pindar, Soph.

[118] LSJ s.v. 1: Aesch, Hdt., Thuc.

which Kreousa and Ion will return will itself become a mother state, not only for the citizens born within its confines, but also for those who belong to the colonies it will now be able to found. In a certain sense, not only Kreousa will be cured of her barrenness: Athens too will become a mother. The cure of Athens will permit her, henceforth, to give birth to colonies.

For in the *Ion* Euripides is taking the framework of myths of ritual transition and building upon it stories of rites of passage undergone not only by Kreousa and Ion, but also by Athens itself. The repetitive failures that had characterised the generations of the race of Erechtheus in the generations before Ion had signalled the limitations not only of the members of one family, but also of the city whose destiny was ineluctably intertwined with them. Trapped in its dogmatic vision of autochthony, Athens too had been barren, in the sense that it had not been able to develop from within itself the forces necessary to project it into a vital future. Euripides shows us in his play that Athens too has evolved: having gone through those unsuccessful attempts it can now not only survive into the future itself, but also initiate colonization and, thereby, set other existences into the world. For colonization for a city is a little like exogamy for a male and childbirth for a woman: it is the movement outwards from oneself which is necessary if the self is to survive not in its doomed individuality, but at least in the deputised form of children.

This movement outwards at the end of the play goes so far that, to a certain degree at least, it is even capable of including Xouthos. For Athena announces to Kreousa that she will have children, a 'κοινὸν γένος', with Xouthos (1589). Athena's point is not only that the outsider can be allowed in and can receive at least a partial justification on the basis of the saved integrity

of the inside. On the contrary, her message, and Euripides', must be stronger: that the outsider must be allowed in if the inside is to be rescued. Thus, when Kreousa wonders how the children of Aiolos could possibly have anything to do with those of Athena (τοῖς Αἰόλου δὲ πῶς μετῆν τῆς Παλλάδος...' 1297)[119], she is mistaken: it is only by the inclusion — limited to be sure, but inclusion nonetheless — of the imported graft of the children of Aiolos that the children of Athena can possibly flourish. Thus the ending of the play does not so much propagate the discourse of exclusion that so many scholars see in it[120]: the outsider can and, indeed, must be incorporated under new terms if the saving difference is to be established within the pattern of repetition. Viewed in this light, the *Ion* is not only 'patriotic' or merely pan-Hellenic: it is also humanistic, in that it sets no clear limits to the scope of its liberal vision. *Mutatis mutandis* we may be reminded of the last book of the *Iliad*, in which the partial, but deeply moving recognition of the common humanity of Achilles and Priam displays something of the same movement outwards. Those scholars who see only the patriotic and xenophobic aspects of the ending of the play seem to be trapped within the perspective of Kreousa: obsessed as she is with purity and interiority, they may not have recognized that the whole point of the play is to move beyond that obsession, to transcend the interior so as to allow in the outsider as well. In fact the play is far more humanistic than modern scholarship has sometimes allowed. Kreousa's mistaken obsession with autochthony has made

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[119] This is an unmistakeable reference to Xouthos, who was first introduced by Kreousa as 'Αἰόλου Διός [...] ἄπο' (292).

[120] See Walsh, 1978; Loraux, 1993: 205ff.; Saxonhouse, 1986 and 1992. But cf. Zeitlin, 1989:177-182, who draws attention to the Euripidean effort to balance the two contradictory Athenian claims to autochthony and philoxenia.

her less than fully human; only when she learns to accept Apollo and Xouthos will she be permitted to accept Ion as well.

We are now in a better position to understand Euripides' purpose in emphasizing the importance of repetitions with a difference. As we saw earlier in this chapter (2.2.1), for the audience of this play such a technique creates expectations which Euripides is at pains to frustrate: just when his spectators expect an exact repetition of familiar motifs, the poet surprises them by placing familiar elements in unfamiliar contexts and assigning them unexpected consequences. Euripides seems to be suggesting that the audience too should learn not to seek the exact repetition of familiar models and traditions, but to confront honestly the complexity and ambiguity of reality. If so, then the cure of Athens will take the form of a cure of Euripides' Athenian audience.

Chapter Three
Apollo in the *Ion*

3.1. The multi-faceted god

Apollo is, at least on the divine level, the absent centre of the *Ion*. In a play in which one god delivers the prologue and another one resolves the crisis from the *mekhane*, Apollo himself never appears and protects his invisibility with jealous rigor. Yet there is not a character in the play who is not obsessed with Apollo in one way or another: as victim, as son, as worshipper, as admirer, as spokeswoman, as enemy, all the human characters define themselves in their relations to the world, to one another, and to themselves above all by the mediation of the god of Delphi. The *Ion* can be viewed, at least in part, as Euripides' meditation upon Apollo — a meditation no less stringent and no less complex than Aeschylus' in his *Oresteia*. If we are to understand the play, we must understand the god both inside and outside the play of which he is and is not part. As we shall see in this section, that is no easy task.

Apollo's worship was widespread in ancient Greece. Burkert, in his traditional genetic analysis, distinguishes at least three components in the prehistory of the god: (a) a Dorian-northwest Greek component, which relates him to the *apellai*, the annual gatherings of the tribal or phratry organization, in which Apellon the *ephebos* stands on the threshold of manhood; (b) a Cretan-Minoan component, which connects the god with the healing hymn and dance, the paian, his subsequent cult hymn; (c) a Syro-Hittite component, which explains his image as an arrow-bearing guardian god. The integration of all these elements into one unified figure is assigned

by Burkert to the power of poetry, which at the same time is placed under Apollo's special protection.[1]

Euripides brings to expression in the *Ion* the totality of these diverse aspects of the god; and he does this, not by making him one of the main characters of the play, as he would do later with Dionysos in the *Bacchae*, but without allowing his Apollo to appear even once on the stage, as a prologue or epilogue figure. Instead, he assigns to Apollo's siblings-emissaries, Hermes and Athena, the roles of opening and closing the play, respectively. This conspicuous absence of the god has received much attention from recent scholars, who have offered a variety of interpretations on the overall meaning of the play.[2] Their reactions stretch along a vertical axis from seeing the play as utterly condemning the god, at the one end, to viewing it as firmly establishing his divine providence, at the other[3]; along a horizontal axis, the play has been read, with Kreousa as centre of attention, as a defence of women's role in society[4] or in the procreation process through critique of the Athenian autochthony myth[5], or with a focus upon the

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[1] 1985: 143-49.

[2] See Loraux, 1993: 198 n. 56: 'Apollo's absence is all the more remarkable since he appears more often in Athenian tragedy than any other god except Athena'. On the appearance of Apollo in tragedy, see Herington, 1963: esp. 62 n.2: 'Apart from the *Eum.*, Athena appears six times in extant plays (Soph. *Aias*, Eur. *Suppl.*, *Ion*, *Tro.*, *I.T.*, *Rhesos*) and almost certainly appeared in the lost *Auge*. Her closest Olympian competitor in this respect is Apollo (Aesch. *Eum.*; Soph. *Ichneutai*; Eur. *Alkestis*, *Orestes*).

[3] For instance, on the defence front see Burnett, 1962; Wassermann, 1940; Lloyd, 1986; on the attack, see Willets, 1973: esp. 207; Conacher, 1967: esp. 269; Sinos, 1982; Hartigan, 1991; Seidensticker, 1982: 239-41; Knox (1979a: 250-74) and Gellie (1984-85) find Apollo's representation to be closer to the gods of comedy.

[4] Loraux, 1993: 184-236; esp. 190.

[5] Saxonhouse, 1986: 252-273; more specifically she sees the play as an attack upon Athenian xenophobia and as a strong criticism of the restrictions of the Athenian autochthony myth. For a discussion of this aspect of the play, see above ch. 2.

ritual aspects of the play and its allusions to mysteries related to the search for identity and the transition from male adolescence to manhood and from female virginity to motherhood ('rites de passage')[6]. Apollo has been accused of violating Kreousa, neglecting his child, inflicting childlessness upon Kreousa, allowing mother and son to come close to killing each other, not informing Kreousa of her son's whereabouts, giving a false oracle to Xouthos, being compelled to change his original plan for the anagnorisis[7], as reported by Hermes in the prologue, and, finally, having to send Athena in the end to settle the unresolved issues of the play and not daring to appear himself, 'lest he should be reproached openly for his old doings' (1556f.), as his very own emissary frankly admits.

In this chapter we shall first examine the various aspects of the multifaceted Apollo as these are looked upon from different vantage points through the eyes of the dramatic figures, who offer a multitude of potential, and often conflicting, interpretations in their effort to come to grips with the god's behaviour and oracle. We shall then consider the reason(s) that might lie behind Euripides' decision to treat the god in this way. Euripides in the *Ion* exploits the moral ambiguity of divine rape in order to work through basic tensions in the late fifth-century Athenian audience's attitude to the traditional stories of Greek religion.[8] It is in this light that the variety of antitheses in the play are to be seen: myth/reason, appearance/reality, divine/mortal, male/female, force/persuasion, speech/silence, religion/politics, innocence/experience, Delphi/Athens, tragedy/comedy. The playwright's intention seems to be to show how these oppositions interact; he seems, though, to have provided an open ending that in failing to supply

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[6] Zeitlin, 1989: 144-197.

[7] Wassermann, 1940: 588.

[8] Cf. above ch. 2.2. for an analysis of Kreousa's monody.

a clear-cut resolution to all the conflicts delegates the ultimate judgement to the audience.

3.2. Oracle and Play

Let us begin by quickly surveying the play, focusing upon the most important allusions or open references to Apollo. The imaginary setting of the drama is Delphi (5), the sacred precinct of Phoibos, who has control over 'that which is and is to be' ('τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα', 7). It immediately becomes clear to the audience that this is a special place, since a deity, Hermes, has appeared in order to communicate to them alone the prehistory of the drama. After they learn that Apollo has violated Kreousa ('βίαι', 10-11), who concealed the story from her father, by the god's own wish ('ἀγνὼς δὲ πατρί, (Τῶι θεῶι γὰρ ἦν φίλον)', 14), Hermes goes on to provide information about Apollo's plans of which the fictional protagonists are unaware, namely, that the god ordered him to carry the baby from the cave to his oracle at Delphi. For the spectators Apollo's concern for his child is well established, since they are privileged in hearing from Hermes' mouth Apollo's actual words according to which he recognises the child as his own and undertakes to educate him after having sent Hermes to rescue him (29-36). By the end of this speech Apollo's dual aspect is already hinted at: his use of violence upon Kreousa, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, his providence for his son Ion.

Ion appears on stage visually as a 'replica' of Apollo, carrying with him a bow and arrows - but also a broom (102-108). In his description of Delphi he makes use of a lyric vocabulary rich in compound adjectives, which encourages the audience to associate purity and light with the Apolline shrine; this language implies divinity and prolongs the presence of

a god after Hermes' exit. The suddenness with which the Dawn rises, driving the night with the stars to flight (82-85), looks back to the suddenness of Apollo's epiphany to Kreousa, and forward to Kreousa's description of the incident of rape in her monody (887f.). The descriptive epithets used are a reminder of Apollo's presence and of his metaphorical association with the Sun-god who sends his blessing to the earth from afar ("Ἥλιος λάμπει κατὰ γῆν', 83).[9] Behind Ion's preoccupation with purity, one might also detect the figure of Apollo as the god of purifications[10] (but since there is not yet any impurity we know of that needs to be purified, this implication may foreshadow the future development of the plot). The second part of the monody, namely the lyric strophe and antistrophe with the refrain (112-43), is meant, both verbally and in its structure, to be perceived as a cult-hymn to Apollo, a paian. When in the refrain (125-27; 141- 43) Ion calls upon Apollo the Paian, he addresses the god's beneficent aspect, as the healer god who brings prosperity, in a highly ritualistic mode. In the final part of the monody, Ion draws his bow and arrows in his effort to put to flight the visiting birds, which mar the holy offerings. Perhaps through Ion's resemblance to his divine father we may be offered here not only a reminder of the guardian Apollo, but also a glimpse of the primitive Apollo who killed the Python.

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[9] On the evidence for Apollo as a sun god, see Burkert, 1985: 148f. and n. 55. On Apollo's association with the sun in the *Ion*, see Burnett, 1962: 102, n.26: 'Although the god and the sun are explicitly identified in the *Phaethon* (Nauck, frg. 781), here in the *Ion* the sun is used merely as a suggestive poetic symbol which can give double significance to lines like 1439-40'; she also quotes lines 41, 82, 1148-9, 1467. Cf. also Owen at 886, 1440. Contrast Loraux, 1993: 198, n. 57, who dismisses Owen's comment as 'amusing' and notes: 'Throughout the play, Helios is identified with Apollo'. Cf. also Zeitlin, 1989: 164; 1994: 150 n. 36.

[10] On Apollo as the god of purifications, see Burkert, 1985: 147f.

In the course of his subsequent stichomythia with Kreousa, Ion, upon hearing that a mortal woman claims to have been violated by his god, reacts quite rationally and points out the difficulty in granting Kreousa the favour of acting as her minister, and challenging the god to reveal his secret affairs (365; 373; 375f.; 378f.); but it is his piety that prevents him from trying to penetrate the hidden domain of the god. Yet when Ion is left alone on stage, in his effort to overcome the disquieting effect Kreousa's reproaches against Apollo had on him, and to comprehend the immoral behaviour of his beloved god, he makes a covert criticism of divine justice in the form of a conditional phrase[11]. Quite frequently Euripidean characters in their effort to reach understanding venture even further to impugn the wisdom of the gods themselves.[12] What makes Ion's criticism strikingly significant is that it comes from the pious temple servant and is directed towards the god he has been serving all his life. Obviously, this is the first time in his life he has been confronted with such a problem and he suddenly becomes rather sceptical about the god's intentions. The implication of this speech may be that Ion is

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[11] 'Supposing', he says and he hastens to add that it will not happen, though he will still use the argument, 'You and Poseidon and Zeus [...] paid damages to men for rape, you would soon empty your temples of their wealth in atoning for the wrongs you do'. Then he accuses the gods of lacking foresight and seeking only their own pleasure and he is led to the conclusion that ' we should not speak ill of men if they but imitate what the gods approve, but those who teach men their examples' (444-451). The criticism of divine justice has been a recurrent theme in this episode. Kreousa at 253-4, and again more openly at 384, accuses Apollo of being unjust; Ion at 355 agrees with Kreousa that the god is unjust to her friend, and at 442, 447, and 449-51 he challenges the god's improper behaviour. On the other hand at 371, Ion defends Apollo when he says that the god would justly ('δικαίως') punish the one who delivers an oracle against the interests of the god and later at 643 he claims that his service to Apollo at Delphi makes him just.

[12] cf. H.F. 339-347, 1087f.; Hipp. 117-120; Bac. 1348; Pho. 86; Tro. 884, 469-471, 1280-1, 65-68; note esp. Bellerephon (frg. 292); 'εἰ θεοὶ τι δρῶσιν αἰσχρόν, οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοί'.

beginning to discover who Apollo really is, in a very complex kind of *anagnorisis* which will scarcely be completed by the end of the play.

The duality so typical of Greek divinity is also presented in the following choral ode, which calls upon Athena and Artemis for their help in assuring the fecundity of the Erechtheid race, for the song insists upon the double-edgedness of divine charis. Divine rape leads to the birth of heroes, but the mortal women who get in such close contact with the god are said to have subsequently suffered great pains because of this encounter. 'Neither in the stories told at our spinning nor in the legend have I heard that the children of gods and mortals ever come to good' are the closing lines to the second retelling of the rape tale (507-9; cf. 1090f.), which also forms the end of the chorus' prayer.

When Xouthos declares that Ion is his son, he claims to have heard this straight from Loxias (531). The use of the epithet 'Loxias', 'the Oblique' for Apollo recalls the god's ambiguous utterances[13] and gives weight to Ion's assumption that Xouthos has misinterpreted an obscure oracular answer ('ἐσφάλης αἴνιγμ᾽ ἀκούσας', 533).[14] Xouthos is so confident about his

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[13] See Burkert, 1985: 148.

[14] To Ion's persistent questioning about his conception, Xouthos cannot supply an immediate answer but seems evidently perplexed (543, cf. 539, 540, 548, 549). The verb 'ἀπαιολᾶι' (549) comes from the components 'ἀπό. αἰόλος' and means to cheat: to perplex, an interesting word in the context of ambiguous oracles. The second component is an adaptation of the proparoxytone 'Αἴολος', the god of the winds, otherwise glossed the Changeable. This word would sound somewhat loaded in the lips of Xouthos, who was first introduced by Kreousa as 'Αἰόλου Διός [...] ἄπο' (292). This is the only occurrence of the word in extant tragedy; the verb 'ἀπαιολέω' is used as an explanation of the noun 'ἀπαιόλη' in the scholium attached to Ar. *Nu.* 1150 (cf. 'ἀπαιόλη' Aesch. fr. 186; Hermann offered this noun as possible reading of Eur. *Hel.* 1056, but Murray reads 'παλαιότης'; 'ἀπαιόλημα' is found in Aesch. *Cho.* 1002, Soph. fr. 1018, Ar. *Nu.* 729). However, the adjective 'αἰόλος' is often found in extant tragedy as in Aesch. *Sup.* 327; Soph. *Ph.* 1157, *Tr.* 12; Eur. *Ion* 499. In *Ion*

intellect, that he finds a misinterpretation of the god's oracle improbable. For him the oracular answer is straightforward; the god told him that the one who meets him as he comes out of the temple is his child[15]. It was a well known fact that the oracular answers were potentially equivocal; Heraclitus' description of Apollo's nature is concise and to the point: 'ὁ ἄναξ οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει, οὐδὲ κρύπτει, ἀλλὰ σημαίνει'[16], he does not say, he does not conceal, but gives signs to be interpreted. The dramatist did not fail to perceive the dramatic possibilities such a divine intervention could offer and he exploits them to their full extent; he gives us only Xouthos' interpretation of the oracle rather than the oracular answer itself, that is, he offers a reaction to what the divine voice 'might have' said and not the actual words of the oracle. The result of this indirect and veiled revelation of Apollo's will is that, on the one hand, the audience is invited to become intrigued by the oracle, on the other hand, the playwright is leaving

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499 is used with the meaning 'changeful, shifting, varied' and refers to the sound that is released from Pan's pipes. How pregnant is this word at Ion 499, describing the varied tune of Pan's pipes, which accompanies the rape? Might the association between 'αἰόλας' at 499 and the verb 'ἀπαιολάω' at 549 be, perhaps, that Apollo now cheats Xouthos just as he had once cheated Kreousa?

[15] To Ion's question whether this child is his by birth or just a gift, Xouthos answers 'δῶρον, ὄντα δ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ' (537). The potential ambiguity of this expression has led some scholars to try to reconstruct the original oracular answer. Owen (p. xx) offers 'οὐκ ἄλλου φύσαντος ἐγώ σοι παῖδα δίδωμι' in hexametre, attempting to leave room for an ambiguity that might show how the god outwitted Xouthos, without openly lying. Hartigan offers the unmetrical 'ὁ συναντῶν σοι ἐξιόντι ἐκ τῶνδε τῶν δόμων / τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς καὶ δῶρόν σου πέφυκε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ' (1991, 76), which, though, is not to be taken as a serious reconstruction. I do not think that there is any point in trying to reconstruct an oracular answer, when the poet himself deliberately avoids providing such information; it seems to me that such an effort probably derives from the scholars' preconception that Euripides would not have openly ascribed a false oracle to Apollo.

[16] Plut. de Pyth. or. 21, p. 404D; Diels- Kranz, 22B 93.

elbow room for dramatic manipulation, in much the same way as in the prologue where he transmitted only Hermes' interpretation of Apollo's plan rather than having Apollo appear in person and dictate an unequivocal plan that would have to be subsequently put in action during the course of the play.

When Ion finally embraces his newly designated father willingly (560), though he had tried to avoid him and even threatened to shoot him with his arrow at the beginning of their encounter, Xouthos is content that his son is now seeing things in the right light ('νῦν ὁρᾷς ἃ χρὴ σ' ὁρᾶν', 558), i.e. from his perspective. Yet Xouthos once again falls into misinterpretation; it is no coincidence that Ion will start his long speech with an expression that refers to how things seen close up are different from what they seem from a distance. The differing angles from which Ion and Xouthos face reality are more insistently focused upon after the false recognition scene, in Ion's speech (585-6; 612-14; 621-23) and in the ensuing dialogue. Xouthos acknowledges the problems laid out carefully in Ion's speech, but he has already contrived a plan to smoothen the impact of Ion's arrival at Athens. He intends to introduce Ion to Athens, purportedly, as a sightseer ('θεατὴν δῆθεν', 656), and entertain him as a guest in his house ('ὡς δὴ ξένον [...] ἐφέστιον', 654).

The use of the word 'θεατής'[17], in the context of the constant interest in different ways of viewing in this play, seems to carry additional weight. We

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[17]The word 'θεατής' is used in extant Euripidean tragedy on three occasions only: *Ion* 301, 656; *Supp.* 652. At 656, Xouthos plans to make Ion 'τῆς [...] Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς [...] θεατήν', i.e. 'a sightseer or a spectator of the Athenian land'; cf. Thuc. II 39, 1. The use of this word suggests that the play is being conscious of its own theatricality. The Athenian audience, as part of the world of the theatre, are foreigners at Delphi and at home in Athens, but, simultaneously, are spectators at a distance of the imaginary Athens of the dramatic world.

may remind ourselves that Hermes, after his prologue speech, retired into the laurel grove and assumed the role of a spectator and silent eavesdropper, waiting to find out whether or not his predictions would be realised. Like the human participants of the action, Hermes, too, has a partial vision of the dramatic reality. The same is true for the Athenian audience, who are constantly given clues about the final outcome of the plot, but never quite know the whole truth until the very end. All these *personae* have different perspectives of vision; and, it is the playwright's shifting from one perspective to the other that aims to offer the true global vision of reality in its full complexity. Mortals are the spectators of the drama of life; simultaneously, they are the agents of the divine plan and suffer from it. Furthermore, even Apollo does not seem to be in absolute control of the action at all times, but needs to make the appropriate adjustments to bring his plan to fulfilment.

The chorus remain alone on stage and sing a choral ode in which they openly side with Kreousa against the two male intruders into the Erechtheid palace. The very first word they utter is 'ὁρῶ', a term loaded with a burden of subjectivity and relativity, coming after the second episode, where Ion has recurrently addressed the problem of the differing assumptions one reaches about reality depending on the distance of the individual vantage-points from the facts in question. In the 'world of the theatre' this word, as it is used here, has a further function; it offers a glance at the events to be dramatised on stage in the following episode.

They proceed by questioning Apollo about the oracle he has proclaimed, and in their effort to interpret it, they indicate yet another perspective from which the events performed on stage may be looked at. As I have just mentioned, this is a stock Euripidean technique, i.e. to invite the audience to look at events from varying perspectives of vision, as a means of

observing the intricacy of reality, and, failing to supply clear-cut answers, perhaps, as a means of instructing the audience about the ambiguity, the doubleness of this reality[18], urging them to carry their own search for truth behind the façade, somewhere in between the conflicting views of the characters on stage. But, there is a further complication to this technique here: Euripides invites the audience to witness the reactions of all the characters on stage to Apollo's oracle; yet this very oracle is false (or, at least, misleading), contrived by Apollo himself to serve his purposes, i.e. to neutralise Xouthos when the time is due for Kreousa's and Apollo's son to take up his royal rights in the Erechtheid palace (69f.).

The repetition of the word 'δόλον' in the first few lines of the choral ode (685, 692) encapsulates the chorus' perplexity towards Apollo's false oracle. Such incredulity strongly recalls Ion's first reaction to Xouthos' claim that, according to the god's oracle, he is his father. Ion, then, asked, firstly, for a witness to verify this claim (532); then, on hearing that this information is based on the god's oracle, he expressed his doubts about Xouthos' ability to interpret the oracle correctly (533; cf. 'Λοξίας', 'the Oblique', 531), and, finally, he carried out a lengthy investigation before he could bring himself, after thirty lines, to accept the validity of the oracle and embrace his newly appointed father (560f). The chorus, on the other hand, firstly suspect that there might be some trickery in the oracular answer (685), and then accuse Ion, the foreigner, of having contrived some deceitful scheme (692). The only character on stage who does not question the authenticity of the oracle, is the all-too-confident Xouthos; his only worry is how to apply it for his best interests, but also without vexing his wife with his good fortune (657f.). What

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[18] On doubleness in seeing in *Bac.*, see Foley, 1980; 129f.; on double-speak in *Or.*, see Zeitlin, 1980: 62f.; see also below ch. 4. 3. for a list of doublets in the *Ion*.

will follow in the next episode is Kreousa's reaction to the oracle, which has been adumbrated in the first lines of the ode.

Upon Kreousa's request the chorus decide, for the first and only time in all extant tragedy, to break their pledge of silence and disobey Xouthos, 'even if they die twice over' (760). In two lines they give her their interpretation of the oracle (761-2); in their minds, Xouthos' blessing with his own illegitimate son implies as a consequence Kreousa's deprivation of offspring. Such a misinterpretation triggers off a whole new plot, which undermines Apollo's initial plan and will almost lead to a fatal misrecognition of mother and son, narrowly averted by a new series of Apolline rescue sub-plots. Throughout this whole scene we feel Apollo's invisible presence. Kreousa has brought the paedagogue to share with her the 'θέσπισμα παίδων' Loxias has proclaimed. The word of the god is the focus of the interest. The paedagogue, proud of his intellect (742) - in much the same way as Xouthos was (533) - will interpret the whole incident as Xouthos' fabrication (825-7). His account is ingenious; in fact, it is very close to Apollo's actual plan, as reported by Hermes in the prologue.[19] He makes only one vital error in his reasoning; he claims not that the god lied, but that it was Xouthos who was lying all along and planning to put the blame on the god, if his plotting was detected (825-7). Yet in point of fact the god did lie;

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[19] Compare 'ἐξεινωμένοι·' (820) to 'λαβὼν· βρέφος [...] ἔνεγκε Δελφῶν τἀμὰ πρὸς χρηστήρια' (31-34); 'Τωι Δελφῶν· δίδωσιν· ἐκτρέφειν·' (820-1) to 'προφῆτις [...] τρέφει νιν λαβοῦσα' (42f.); 'ὁ δ᾽ ἐν θεοῦ δόμοισιν· ἄφετος, ὡς λάθοι. παιδεύεται' (821-2) to 'νέος... ὧν ἀμφὶ βωμίους τροφὰς ἠλᾶτ᾽ ἀθύρων·' (52-3), cf. also 576, 1089; 823=53; 824=64-68; 829=73. Even the report of Ion's name strongly recalls lines 74-5, where Hermes gives Ion's name for the first time in the play. Yet, lines 830-1 are a needless repetition of the child's name, only just mentioned by the chorus at 802; hence, Dindorf deleted lines 830-1 and Diggle brackets them; so did Wilamowitz, on the grounds that they are 'meaningless in context' and that they 'contain the Herodotean use of ana with an accusative of time' (Burnett, ad loc).

actually, in this respect Xouthos and Apollo are very much alike, and the procedure the paedagogue describes is very much like the one Apollo actually adopted, his stratagem for securing for his bastard son his right to the Athenian throne.

The chorus seem convinced by the paedagogue's account; they say that they hate evildoers, who plot injustice and by their craft make it all fair-seeming (832f.). Yet, according to the paedagogue's account, it was Xouthos who was doing the plotting ('κἄπλεκεν πλοκὰς τοιάσδε', 826), whereas, in their previous ode, they had assumed that the reported oracle was the product of Ion's cunning devices, ('πλέκει (Diggle) δόλον τέχναν θ' ὁ παῖς', 692). Ion will later accuse Kreousa of attempting to murder him, by using similar vocabulary ('ἴδεσθε [...] ἐκ τέχνης τέχνην οἵαν ἔπλεξεν', 1279f). It is ironic that from this point onwards, it is Kreousa and the paedagogue who will resort to the use of 'μηχαναῖς' (833) to avenge the injustices suffered (see 'κρυπτὰ μηχανήματα', 1116; 'Κρεούσης [...] μηχανάς', 1216; 'μ' ἔκτεινεν ἧδε μηχαναῖς', 1326). They are, then, becoming evildoers with respect to Ion. Yet, in Athena's account, even Apollo was obliged to use 'μηχαναῖς' (1565) in order to prevent mother and son from killing each other. But if all these characters were using what they considered to be the best means, at the time, in order to achieve their goal, Xouthos cannot be singled out as a villain on the ground that he is using trickery, for that would imply that, since in fact all of these characters are doing so, they too must be villains. Yet the one who has been contriving all these plots all along is Apollo[20], or even better, the playwright, since even Apollo is alleged to have ˙

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[20] In the course of the play Apollo resorts to the use of a series of agents in order to realise his ⸱ plan. His siblings, Hermes and Athena, appear at the beginning and end. He sends his human assistant, the Pythia, to prevent Ion from killing Kreousa (1320f.) and to hand over to him his birth tokens, which have been preserved in a miraculously intact condition. Earlier, he had

had to adopt some amendments to his initial plan, in order to meet the recurrent demands of an ever changing human world (1565). Could it be, perhaps, that the dramatist is drawing our attention to his authorial skill at creating sophisticated plots, and to the fact that he is really in charge of the overall outcome?

In *Iliad* 21, Apollo had refused to take up Poseidon's challenge with these words: 'Shaker of the earth, you would think me hardly sane if I were to fight with you for the sake of wretched mortals, who now like leaves break forth full of fire, feeding on the fruits of the earth, and then waste away heartless. Therefore let us give up this quarrel at once and let the mortals fight their own battles' (21. 461-67). Apollo is the god who acts from afar (*hekatebolos, hekebolos, hekatos*), whose mythic character has enabled Homer to pass an indirect criticism here upon the old epic device whereby the gods influence the course of events by taking sides in mortal conflicts. Euripides, on the other hand, has composed a play in which the mortals' actions are presented as fully motivated in purely human terms and in which it is not just a god, but also their character which determine their fate. To quote Heraclitus once again: a man's character is his *daimon*.[21] As a competent dramatist, he saw the dramatic potential which Apollo's divine lack of comprehension of human troubles might have and turned it to his advantage by presenting his characters' strong emotions as posing hindrances to the god's initial plan and compelling him to make changes (67f.; 1563f.). The dramatist has gone further than Homer did and has not just criticised the old epic device, but has actually reversed it: he has not portrayed the gods shaping events in the world and determining the mortals'

even made use of animals, when he sent a flock of doves into Ion's tent, one of which drank the poisoned wine and died in the place of the god's son (1196-1208).

[21] Heraclitus frg. 119 Diels-Kranz.

course of action, but instead he has shown how human emotions can determine a god's course of action.[22]

3.3. Apollo as director?

Euripides has drawn from the tradition of the artistic, literary, religious and cultic image of Apollo in order to create his complex literary god. Yet he avoids the visual representation of the god who sustains his myth, and presents him only indirectly, juxtaposing the conflicting divine and mortal perspectives. But why would Euripides choose to bring out both aspects of the god (benevolent-malevolent; healer-destroyer; master of concealment and revelation) and both interpretations of his actions (divine providence-divine negligence)? The answer is manifold.

Let us first address the question of the dramatic consequences of this absence of the ambiguous god, starting in reverse by considering what the positive advantages of bringing the god onto the stage might have been. Segal has used the term '*didaskalos*' to describe Athena's role in Sophocles' *Ajax*.[23] Easterling has conveniently summarised the function of

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[22] In the *Ion*, Hermes claims that Apollo was in charge of *tyche* (67-8; cf. 1368). When Kreousa ascribes to *Tyche* her decision to expose her baby and Ion his impulse to murder his mother (1496f.; 1512f.), they seem to be identifying the power of *Tyche* with the power of passionate human emotions, such as fear (1496) and revenge; yet, these emotions cannot be identified with *tyche* as (good or bad) fortune. And if Euripides had wished to resolve the incongruity of Kreousa's and Ion's statement explicitly, he might have assigned that task to one of his rationalist characters; see, for instance, Hecuba's refutation of Helen's claim that it was Aphrodite who was responsible for her crimes (*Tro.* 983-997) and the projection of her crime instead onto her human lust, her longing for beautiful Paris, i.e. her personal responsibility (see also *Ion* 896).

[23] Segal, 1989-90: 398.

the divine epiphanies in Greek tragedy as having the 'capacity to stimulate awareness of the play as play and at the same time to explore the complexities of the links between human and divine'; and, in reference to the *Ion*, she has noted that 'the mysterious ambiguity of Apollo is best conveyed by his absence from the action and use of, as it were, *hypodidaskaloi*.[24]

Yet how far is the directorial function of the *hypodidaskaloi* a successful substitute for Apollo and how far does Apollo himself retain his directorial rights in this play, despite his absence? It seems to me that in fact Apollo's emissaries have no directorial function whatsoever; it is always Apollo who works through them. On the other hand, Apollo himself is kept at such a long distance that his directorial function is limited mainly to events 'ἔξω τοῦ δράματος'. In particular, Hermes is not portrayed as a dignified god: the information he supplies does not bear much weight and turns out not even to be entirely correct; his function is almost reduced to that of a simple narrator of the prehistory of the drama. But neither does Athena's appearance seem to be able to make a serious claim to a primary directorial function: she only comes at the point when all the serious conflicts have already been resolved (i.e. the prevention of the matricide - infanticide) and she seems to function essentially so as to maintain Apollo's distance from the play.

As for the handling of Apollo, it seems to me that Euripides has composed such an anthropocentric play that it is as if he has presented us with a situation in which the unexpected variation of the human emotions of the dramatic characters has a directorial function over the god's plan (at least during the course of the play). In so doing, Euripides calls attention to the play as artifice; for, whereas in the *fabula*, the structure of the myth,

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[24] Easterling, 1993b: 85.

Apollo is directing the action of Ion's return to his home in Athens, in the *sjuzet*, his play, Euripides, the playwright god, uses his dramaturgic prerogative to diminish the authorial right of Apollo, the myth-sustaining god; and, through his innovative recycling of the traditional mythic material, he composes a new version of the story, as viewed from the vantage point of the people who are involved in it. In other words, he creates a fiction, 'whose praxis tends towards the negation of its mythos'[25], but, in the end, through the dramatic device of the *deus ex machina*, his fiction is put back onto track. As Zeitlin puts it, with respect to the *Orestes*, he 'permits the enactment of that fiction and then denies it'[26]; meanwhile, he supplies us with a token of his supreme authorial competence in *mythopoesis*.

Euripides, in his new version of the tale, preserves the traditional mythological setting and offers us a sample of what seems to be the interpenetration of mythology and fifth century psychology. I would suggest that it is only in passing that the dramatist presents his characters criticising the gods and that in fact he is focusing more upon the mortals' responsibility. The play's focus is not on religious criticism, though Apollo's seduction of Kreousa is an act ambiguous in its implications about the god's relation to morality. It is rather a study of the woman who is a victim of supernatural lust and of the male values that restrain her. The emphasis is upon the woman's role in the procreation process, laying open the shortcomings and limitations of the autochthony myth; and, as a result of Apollo's absence, there is more emphasis placed upon Kreousa's maternity than upon Apollo's paternity in this version of the Athenian foundation myth.[27]

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[25] This phrase is borrowed from Zeitlin (1980: 55 n. 11) who, though, refers to Soph. *Phil.*

[26] Zeitlin, 1980: 52.

[27] See Loraux (above n. 4); Saxonhouse (above n. 5), esp. 267, n. 26. See also above, ch. 2.

Finally, what lies behind Euripides' choice to offer different interpretations of the god's behaviour as seen from different perspectives? The dramatist invites the audience to look from a distance at the overall image of Apollo, pointing out to them how in the end all the conflicting views of him expressed in the course of the play by the various dramatic figures are to be taken as complementary to one another. To approximate to a better understanding of the god's nature would entail a consideration of the amalgamation of all the views expressed into one single image of the god, which, of course would retain its ambiguity beyond any logically consistent human interpretation. By restoring the ambiguity of Apollo, Euripides gives a more authentic picture of the god in his contradictory tensions, integrating the three components of his history into one single Pan-Hellenic god.

Such a complex literary figure may perhaps tell us something about his creator, providing us with a glimpse at Euripides' own interpretation of the world. His vision of reality seems to be profoundly dualistic, i.e. a dialectic between what seems and what is, as in the *Helen*[28], or, one might even say, pluralistic: there are many conflicting perspectives and interpretations, and some are demonstrably wrong, but none is certain to be right. What we have is not a dualistic contrast between a single truth and a single falsehood, but a pluralistic exposition of many different points of view; this may constitute perhaps a Euripidean reaction to Athenian democracy. And though the playwright wraps up the story with the dramatic device of Athena *ex machina*, the problems between Apollo and Kreousa are not necessarily dealt with in a definitive and satisfactory way by this, at least superficially, happy ending; the dualism of Apollo has been cut too deeply in the course of the play to be bridged by Athena's complacent reassurance

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[28] See Segal, 1986: 222-267, on the two worlds of Euripides' *Helen*.

about his constant providence during the whole plot. Neither could the double system of causation and morality, divine and mortal be comfortably bridged; the logic of the play is not just there to lead to the happy ending, but it has a thought-provoking function of its own.[29]

It takes a great poet to provide such an unsatisfying and uncomfortable ending. Yet the fact that it is Athena who is brought into this unsatisfactory situation may cut two ways: if the audience give more importance to Athena than to the uncomfortable final situation itself, most spectators will probably tend to believe the story she relates; but if, alternatively, the audience concentrate more upon the uncomfortable situation, they may well end up putting the god's own morality and the Athenian civic ideology into question.

Like his god, the patron of poets, Euripides 'οὐ λέγει, οὐδὲ κρύπτει, ἀλλὰ σημαίνει'. The spectators will draw their own conclusions.

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[29] On the ending of the play, see below ch. 4.3.

Chapter Four
The marriage of tragedy and comedy

Already in antiquity the interweaving of tragic and comic elements in the
Euripidean plays posed a general interpretative problem. For instance, in the
fourth century BCE Aristotle in his *Poetics* finds Euripides 'τραγικώτατος τῶν
ποιητῶν', because by ending his plays 'with affliction' he makes the most tragic
impression.[1] Yet Euripides is also credited with being a predecessor of New
Comedy. Satyros, a peripatetic biographer of the third century BCE, in his *Life of
Euripides* emphasises the indebtedness of New Comedy to the dramatic and
stylistic devices of the poet.[2]

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[1] *Poet.* 13, 1453a 29.

[2] Frg. 39 vii, 8-22, 3rd c. BCE: '[...] or in the reversals of fortune, violations of virgins, substitutions
of children, recognitions by means of rings and necklaces. For these are the things which
comprise the New Comedy, and were brought to perfection by Euripides, Homer being the
starting point in this and in the colloquial arrangement of verses (?)'. On lines 23-27 and the
reference to Homer, see Arrighetti, 1964: 122-4; Wilamowitz objects to Homer being brought in
here and suspects a corruption; but Hunt has no doubt that 'Ομήρου stands in the papyrus.
Menander's indebtedness more specifically to Euripides' *Ion* may be better exemplified by a
fragment of what has been identified as his play *Leucadia*; see Pap. Ox. vol. LX, 42-46, no 4024
and plate III; I would like to thank Dr C. Austin for drawing this new papyrus to my attention and for
providing me with an early copy of it. In this new fragment, P.J. Parsons assumes a dialogue
between the priestess Ζάκορος and child (a girl), perhaps representing the first meeting between
the heroine and the priestess; he then remarks that if frg. 258, a soliloquy in anapaests, is followed
by this scene in the papyrus, 'the structure shows a clear likeness with Euripides' *Ion*, both
dramaturgically (the scenic solo, the sacred place, the fetching of water) and in plot (parent and
child, one a new arrival, one serving the temple - *Leukadia* reversing the age-roles)'. Professor
E.W. Handley in his Hellenic Society Presidential address (4/7/95) has argued that 'the new iambic
piece comes first as the beginning of the play, and the anapaests follow it; the sequence iambic-
anapaests, if so, follows the sequence in the *Ion*, which Menander surely had in mind: the rocky
background is very expressly present in the remains of *Leucadia*, as it is in the *Ion*' (I quote with

The *Ion* has often been felt a problematic play to classify in terms of genre. Scholars have tried to reject or qualify the label 'tragedy', and several have wanted to incorporate the term 'comedy' somewhere in their alternative label.[3] In this chapter I will re-examine the nature and function of the 'comic' elements in the *Ion*, and suggest that what has traditionally been seen as an issue of genre and classification should rather be understood in terms of the internal dynamics of the play.

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thanks from his personal letter of 6/12/94). cf. Katsouris, 1974: 175-205; 1975, 137f.; he sees *Ion* 517f. in the background of Men. *Hiereia.*; so first Körte,1940: 113-115.

[3] See Owen (p. xvii): 'The *Ion* has been generally classified as a romantic play; some have called it a tragi-comedy. [...] It can be grouped with the *I.T.* and *Helen*: all three plays are with exciting incident, and all have a happy ending. [...] All three also, like the *Electra*, [...] contain recognition scenes, and herein Euripides sets the pattern for Menander'; Lucas (p. 1): 'In so far as it ends happily after threat of disaster the *Ion* is a tragi-comedy; in so far as its purpose is to provide a series of thrills, to mystify the audience and hold them in suspence, it is a melodrama. [...] the *Ion* is a hybrid. The form, language, and convention are still appropriate to the old stately tragedy of heroic life, but the spirit is tending towards something which did not yet exist, a contemporary social comedy. Even the ancients [...] saw that the *Ion* was half way to the new Comedy of Menander'. The *Ion* is amongst Burnett's seven Euripidean plays of mixed reversal, the others being *Alc.*; *I.T.*; *Hel.*; *Andr.*; *Her.*; *Or.* See Burnett, 1971 (p. 1): 'Some of the seven [...] have been called the "happy-ending plays", or again, the "tyche plays", and all are usually classed as melodrama [...] they are certainly all non-Aristotelian [...] for these are dramas whose multiple plots revolve in both directions at once, mixing actions of catastrophe with others of favourable fortune [...] the chief characteristic of these dramas is a meeting of conflicting moods'; see also 1970 (p. 7): 'the *Ion* is a play that breaks the first Aristotelian rule, for its action is not single but double; worse still, its two plot streams have opposite tendencies, one following an improvement in fortune, the other a decline'. See Knox, 1979: '*I.T.*, *Helen*, *Ion* [...] are clearly a radical departure from Euripidean tragedy [...] they have been called romantic tragedy, romantic melodrama, tragicomedy, romances, romantic comedy, drames romanesques, Intrigenstücke [...] what everyone would like to call these plays is comedy [...] provided the word 'comedy' is understood in modern, not ancient terms [...] Euripides [...] is the inventor, for the stage, of what we know as comedy'. (p. 250); '*Ion* [...] is full-fledged comedy – a work of genius in which the theatre of Menander [...] stands before us in firm outline' (p. 257).

4.1. Comic elements, elements of comedy

I shall begin by reviewing the range of dramatic motifs and effects that have led
scholars to the classification of the *Ion* as in some sense a 'comic' play, and
then I shall consider how these contribute to the overall tone, meaning, and
dramatic effect, closing by addressing the problems of calling the play anything
but a tragedy.

At the very outset of this discussion, I should like to make the distinction,
following Seidensticker, between the *'elements of comedy'* and the *'comic
elements'* in this play. The latter is taken as 'a general term for the 'laughable'
(τὸ γελοῖον) in its manifestations and tones'. The former stands for 'structural
forms, characters, dramatic situations, motifs, themes, and story patterns which
were already' (i.e. in Old Comedy[4]) 'or were soon to become typical elements of
comedy' [i.e. in Middle and New Comedy]. Such elements are not 'necessarily
comic' when part of the tragic texture.[5]

More specifically in the *Ion* some motifs, which I would consider as
'elements of comedy' are the rape of a virgin (10f., 338, 891, 939, 1494; cf.
1596); rape at a festival (552f.); exposure of an illegitimate child (18, 27, 965,
1494; cf. 1186); lost baby found; substitution of children (Xouthos is duped and
accepts as his son the offspring of Apollo's and Kreousa's union); 'ignorance of
identity' as the cause of the false recognition between Ion and Xouthos[6];

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[4] Mutual borrowing between tragedy and old comedy would be a matter of conversion within
contemporary genres. On the 'infiltration' of tragedy by elements of comedy in later Euripides, see
Taplin 1986: 165f.

[5] Terms as defined in Seidensticker, 1978: 305.

[6] See Knox, in Easterling & Knox (eds.), 1985: esp. 83-5; there he claims that like the
Clytemnestra-Achilles scene, the false recognition scene in the *Ion* 'depends on "agnoia", [...] the
mainspring of New Comedy; in fact, in Men. *Peric.* the goddess Agnoia delivers the prologue'.

incongruous application of rhetoric with comic effect[7]; tension between the world of the myth and contemporary attitudes (5th century attitudes seem to challenge the mythical version of divine births and Athenian autochthony[8]); conversational tone[9]; theatrical self-reference.[10] One should not fail to notice, though, that some of these 'elements of comedy' were also found in the tragic myths. For instance, in Sophocles' O.T., exposure of the child and lost baby found are elements of the prehistory of the drama, whereas 'ignorance of identity' is at the very heart of the play. Perhaps, also, one could go even further, following Satyros,[11] and claim that such elements were part of the heroic epic

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[7] see Goldhill, 1986b: esp. 165f.; 'It is in part by adopting rhetorical postures that Euripides fragments the epic paradigm of character and its understanding' (p. 167); 'these techniques of misapplied rhetoric are, of course, close to the techniques of comedy and result in a generic intermixing often discussed with regard to Euripides' late tragedies' (n. 33).

[8] See above ch. 1.2.3. on anachronisms.

[9] Cf. Stevens, 1976: 66, on *Ion* 517-562: 'This lively passage of dialogue in stichomythia has a flavour of comedy and eight, perhaps nine colloquialisms contribute something to the liveliness and conversational tone of these exchanges'.

[10] On *Orestes*, see Zeitlin, 1980; on *Bacchae,* see Foley, 1980; on *Electra* and *Bacchae*, see Goldhill 1986a: 244-264; see also Taplin 1986, for a comparison between the two genres. In the *Ion*, we may find theatrical self-reference in Hermes' dramatic exit in the prologue (see above ch. 1.3.3., n. 173 and below text and nn. 13-14); he assumes the role of the spectator in the grove, having a peculiarly close bond with the audience, waiting to see whether his predictions will be realised, thus, admitting that he, as well as the audience, may have only a partial vision of reality. As part of the world of the drama Hermes will remain in the grove as a silent eavesdropper, but as a member of the world of the theatre, the actor who plays him is needed to play other roles (probably Xouthos, the Pythia and Athena; see my discussion of the distribution of the acting parts in ch. 1.2.3., n. 59) and therefore he will physically leave the scene. Cf. also 457-464, where the chorus call upon the goddess Athena to fly to 'the land where the altar of Phoibos proclaims his oracles, beside the navel-stone of the earth, by the tripod round which the dancers circle', an expression to be taken perhaps as an example of choral self-reflectiveness and at the same time as looking forward to the time that a joyful dance may welcome an auspicious oracular response.

[11] See above n. 2.

inheritance of stories common to both tragedy and comedy, or even more of folktales and rituals.

Yet it is the 'comic elements' which have formed the main argument of all those scholars who attach a 'comic' label to the play, basing their verdict on the light tone of the play, the avoidance of catastrophe and the comic innuendoes in scenes such as the false recognition scene between Xouthos and Ion.[12] I shall now examine more closely these elements and the co-existence of the tragic and the comic mood in the play.

In the first four opening lines of Hermes' speech in the prologue, the god introduces himself, giving his brief family history and finally labelling himself as 'δαιμόνων λάτριν' (4). This self-characterisation has a 'hint of something not wholly serious effected by the bathetic drop from 'Atlas' to 'lackey' in four lines and three generations'[13]; on the other hand, as Knox remarks, such a characterisation makes Hermes the best possible spokesman 'to explain the situation [...] that involves rape (11), concealment (14) and deceit (71)'.[14] Hermes, by doing Apollo the favour of carrying baby Ion in his cradle from the 'Μακρὰς Πέτρας', where he was exposed, to the Delphic temple's steps (38), fully justifies his role as 'δαιμόνων λάτρις'; at this point his mission is completed. And yet, after his report of the prehistory of the play, he passes his personal judgement on the course of the events (67f.), presenting Apollo as having been in absolute control of the situation; then, he ventures even further into offering a preview of the events to be dramatised (69-75), which is not, however, infallible; the recognition between mother and son will not occur in Athens as Hermes

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[12] See above n. 3.

[13] Burnett, 1970, on line 4.

[14] Knox, 1979: 259. Hermes seems to have been frequently connected with comic elements; even as psychopompos he is more consolatory than tragic; cf. e.g. the Homeric Hymn to Hermes.

presumes, but in Delphi.[15] The playful treatment of the god covers the incongruity between his foretelling and the actual dramatisation of the story. Hermes makes a bold dramatic exit into the laurel grove (76), where he will supposingly remain as a silent eavesdropper,[16] 'waiting to learn what has been accomplished by Apollo's will concerning the child', as one would literally translate 'τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι', (77), or, as I paraphrase it 'well, I'll go and see what happens, as it unfolds'. The playfulness in the treatment of Hermes is a dramatic device employed by the playwright, who manipulates the audience by stirring their interest in finding out the outcome of the play, and in due course, it serves to heighten the suspense and to surprise the spectators with the premature realisation of the recognition between Kreousa and Ion within the actual time-span of the drama, on stage, in Delphi and not at a later date in Athens as predicted by Hermes (1020f.).

Ion appears on stage visually as a 'replica' of Apollo,[17] carrying with him a bow and arrows, but also a broom. We should not forget that he is the son of Apollo, but also a simple temple servant, who comes out with the morning sun to sweep the portals of the temple, stained by bird droppings. Apart from the awkward coupling of these stage props, a slightly teasing tone may lurk in the fact that this monody is the result of Ion's 'thinking aloud' about rather trivial matters (cf. *El.* 54f.); such a mode of speech usually serves as a means for the release of heightened emotions of despair, as in the subsequent tragic monody of Kreousa (859-922).

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[15] See above 1.2.1. text at nn. 43-46.

[16] Of course overhearing scenes do occur in a few other tragedies; see Orestes in Aesch. *Cho.* 212f. and the parody of this scene in *El.* 216f.; Odysseus in *Phil.* 974-82.

[17] Phrase borrowed from Burnett, 1970, on line 82. The similarities between the figures of Ion and Apollo were first noticed by Wasserman, 1940: 601; more recently, see Zeitlin, 1989: 149f., on Ion-Apollo and other family resemblances. Ion's appearance with Apollo's bow may be echoed in the scene of Orestes and his bow in *Or.* 268f.; on the *Orestes* 'scene, see Zeitlin, 1980: 54f.

Few scholars have failed to detect the comic undertones in Ion's apostrophising his broom (112f.); Winnington-Ingram imagines Ion performing 'a broom-dance that mimes the sweeping of the stylobate' (1965, 135); Knox notes the similarities with Electra's entry (*El.* 54f) with her water jug,[18] as well as with Silenos and his iron rake (*Cycl.* 32f.). Aristophanes has not missed the opportunity for ridicule; in *Frogs* (1331-64), Aischylos parodies Euripidean monodies.[19] Yet, in Ion's mind, it seems that working as he does on earth is his way of expressing his reverence and of worshipping Apollo in heaven. The repetition of the verb 'λατρεύω' (123, 129, 152), recalls Hermes' role as 'λάτρις' (4); both are in the service of Apollo; their juxtaposition, it seems to me, instead of marking the major gap between the world of mortals and immortals, somewhat bridges the distance between them, on the Homeric pattern of *Iliad* I.[20] What, however, is potentially comic in all the above cases is that all the characters give us a report of their regular domestic task within the dramatic context of a tragic plot.

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[18] On Euripides' parody of Aesch. *Cho.* 16-18 in this scene, and on other comic elements in the play, see Hammond, 1984: 373-387.

[19] He begins with a 'tragic' address to black night and gives as the reason for the monody his anxiety provoked by an ill-omened dream; then, there is a sudden change to a lighter tone, when he asks the handmaids to light the lamps and warm some water, so that he may wash away the effects of the bad dream (1338-40). This crude coupling of tragic and comic mood would presumably generate laughter amongst the Aristophanic audience. See also *Thesm.* 1065f., for an Aristophanic parody of Andromeda's lament. For some interesting remarks on the Aristophanic parody of Euripidean monodies, see Barlow, 1971: 44-5, and nn. 4-6, 9-13; 1986: 10-13: 'The elevation and solemnity of that cosmic address to Night are set against the trivial incident of petty theft which realizes those premonitions' (1986, 12); see also Stanford's comments in his edition of the *Frogs*, 1958: 184f., and Dover's comments in his edition of the same play,1993: 358-65.

[20] Hom. *Il.* I 536-611, the quarrel between Zeus and Hera may be seen as a reflection of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles.

Again, when birds 'attack' the Delphic temple in order to build their nests,
Ion, who has just cleaned the place, strives to keep the birds away so that they
may not dirty the statues with their droppings! Yet, his 'obsession' with keeping
the sanctuary free from impurities is controlled by his sense of ritual purity,
which later prevents him from committing the impious act of shedding blood in
the sacred precinct ('αἰδοῦμαι', 179f.).

The light tone of the prologue is maintained throughout the parodos. The
chorus are Athenian women, attendants of the Athenian queen, who allowed
them to look around the sanctuary (230f.). Their song contains a poetic
description of selected sculptural details of the Delphic temple; the evocation of
the heroic past sounds somewhat distant on the lips of the Athenian simple folk;
the glamour is lost.[21] This group of handmaidens is the third in the series of
servants from the beginning of the play (Hermes, Ion). Aristophanes in *Frogs*
949f. criticises Euripides for giving humble characters more significant parts[22]
(cf. Eur. *El.* 367-400[23]; Nurse in *Med.* and in *Hipp.*). In this play, as in the *Electra*,
there are two sets of characters[24]; we might distinguish between 'low'
characters, such as Hermes, the Chorus, the old paedagogue, and perhaps
Xouthos (though Xouthos ought, being a king, to be 'high'); and 'high'
characters, such as Kreousa, Athena. Yet, this distinction falls short in respect of

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[21] See above 1.3.2. for an analysis of the parodos.

[22] At *Frogs* 945f., Aeschylus contends that Euripides ought to have died for giving humble
characters more significant parts, but Euripides retorts that what he did was to offer a more
democratic solution.

[23] On the manipulation of contemporary rhetoric see Goldhill, above n. 7.

[24] Cf. Hammond, 1984: 375.

the figure of Ion, which is more problematic and shares characteristics with both groups.[25]

The lighter tone of the play is interrupted by Kreousa's entry. After the announcement of her arrival by the chorus (236), she may be imagined as solemnly advancing towards the centre of the orchestra. While she is not yet in full contact with the characters on stage, Ion has enough time to make his observations on the noble outward appearance of the Athenian queen (237-40); but, his admiration comes abruptly to an end, when, at a closer distance, Ion notices the tears in her eyes. Whereas the usual visitors to the temple are joyful, in much the same way as the chorus women were 'content to delight their eyes with the outward beauties of the temple' ('ὄμμα τέρψει', 232), in marked contrast, Kreousa at the sight of the oracle closes her eyes ('ὄμμα συγκλήισασα', 241f.) and her cheeks are wet with tears. The shift to a more tragic mood becomes apparent. It would be comic, but Kreousa refuses to play with it. All that separates tragedy and comedy is that a woman insists on her suffering in a way that no man would.

Xouthos' arrival somewhat eases the tension, by refocusing the lens upon the oracular answer the royal couple have come to seek. Perhaps a subtle comic touch may be detected in Kreousa's answer to Xouthos' question whether his delay has worried her. She gives a clear-cut answer 'οὐδέν γ·' (404) and then adds in an ambiguous phrase that she has reached a state of anxiety, possibly referring to her own private affairs.

When Ion is left alone on stage, he tries to overcome the disquieting effect Kreousa's last words had on him, by engaging himself in his daily manual task of filling the stoups with holy water, another task that fits awkwardly in the

[25] See Zeitlin, 1980: 55f. on the 'fusion and divergence of categories' in the creation of Euripidean characters: 'Change (metabole) is sweet in everything, says Electra (in Or. 234; 976-81), and we might add, nothing is more changeable than personality'.

tragic texture, due to the contrast 'between the tragic-mythical and the realistic'.[26] But then on a sudden impulse he decides to admonish Phoibos for being so lightheartedly unjust to humans (439f.).[27] A subtle comic touch is possibly detected in his intention to 'teach the god a lesson', to admonish him.[28]

In the first stasimon, the chorus pray for the fecundity of the Erechtheid race and for a successor to the Athenian throne (468-471). Yet in the epode the chorus change theme and setting. They are no longer accompanying in their minds the royal couple who seek an oracle, but they suddenly switch to the wild scenery of Pan's cave where Kreousa's alleged friend is thought to have exposed the fruit of her illegitimate union with Apollo. However, the connection they have made in their minds is quite peculiar, since Kreousa has never mentioned before the cave of Pan as the place of her friend's sexual assault by Apollo.

Why, then, did the chorus, or more precisely the dramatist, make this connection between the maiden's rape and Pan's cave? Pan, one of the 'θεοὶ νεώτατοι' (with Heracles and Dionysos, Hdt. 2.145), started being worshipped in Attica after the battle of Marathon (Hdt. 6.105). His real home, though, is Arcadia. Burnett notes that Euripides, by introducing Pan in this scene, 'brings a breath of Arcadia into his fiction, forcing a touch of the satyresque upon our imagined versions of the erotic encounter between Kreousa and Apollo, and even upon the scene of the child's exposure'.[29]

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[26] Winnington- Ingram, 1969: 132.

[27] See above 3.2., nn. 11-12.

[28] I would not go as far as Gellie in claiming that this speech 'can only be an extension of the initial joke on which the play is based: gods must sin in order to become our ancestors', an argument that follows from his claim that the play is a comedy; Gellie, 1984: 95 and n.11.

[29] Burnett, 1970, on line 492.

Yet this 'touch of the satyresque' is not the only result achieved by Pan's introduction to this myth of the autochthonous origins of the house of the Erechtheids; it fulfils another more serious function. Pan is the god of natural love; or, 'rather of the sudden kind (of love) that strikes one at first sight, the kind mentioned in the prologue' of Menander's *Dyscolos*, which was spoken by the god himself.[30] The god is also associated with merrymaking (Ar. *Thesm.* 978; Men. *Dysc.* 261-3, 407-34; Ar. *Lys.* 911f.), dancing (Soph. *Ajax* 693f.), seduction (Ar. *Lys.* 998) and violent sexuality (Eur. *Hel.* 187-90), the result of which is, usually, an illegitimate union ('Πανός [...] γάμους', Eur. *Hel.* 190). Thus, Pan brings wildness to the heart of the *polis* and offers in his cave a place for the seduction of the Athenian princess by the divine seducer and a place for the exposure and abandonment of the illegitimate child of that union. As Borgeaud notes, 'the grotto, which collects what has been rejected, is also a sacred space where things begin'. Indeed, the cave functions as the chthonic womb and from there Ion is carried to the other well-known 'womb', the navel of the earth at Delphi.[31] The rejected child will in the end be accepted within the boundaries of the city as the autochthonous-Olympian successor to the Athenian throne, 'filling the θαλάμους with light and receiving an inheritance of wealth, which he will in turn bestow on children of his own' (475f.[32]).

Xouthos on seeing Ion utters the affectionate greeting 'ὦ τέκνον, χαῖρ·'. This reaction comes in marked contrast with Xouthos' abrupt dismissal of the temple servant in the previous episode, just before his entrance to the temple (417f.). The change is immediately noticed by Ion, who 'bristles at the stranger's premature effusiveness and suspects his intentions',[33] and thus urges Xouthos

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[30] Photiades, 1958: 105-122; see also, Schäfer, 1968: 28.

[31] For Pan's chthonic powers, see Photiades, 1958: n. 18, 116f.

[32] On the textual problems in this passage see Diggle, 1994: 112f.

[33] Lucas on line 517.

to recover his wits. However, Xouthos ignores the hint and, overcome by emotion, embarks on an even more affectionate approach, asking Ion to let him kiss his hand and fold him in his arms. At this open display of affection, Ion wonders whether a god has deranged the wits of the stranger,[34] who hastens to ask in return how could he be considered insane for not wanting to let go of the person who is the dearest to him in the world. The meaning of Xouthos' peculiar behaviour still evades Ion, who warns him not to touch the emblems of the god that he himself bears.[35] Xouthos, though, forcibly embraces him, and, Ion, breaking away quickly, threatens him with his bow and arrow.[36] Xouthos wonders why Ion avoids recognising the dearest of men ('τὰ φίλτατα'); Ion steadfastly dismisses the question, answering firmly that he is not fond of putting raving strangers in their place, verbally counteracting Xouthos; Ion's 'οὐ φιλῶ φρενοῦν [...] ξένους' neutralises Xouthos' complaint 'τί [...] φεύγεις [...] γνωρίσαι τὰ φίλτατα;'.[37] Xouthos, noticing the rupture in communication, realises that he has to disclose his identity to his suspicious son; he humours Ion's aggressive behaviour, urging him to go ahead and kill him, but he adds that if he does so, he will be the murderer of his own father. Ion, of course, is not prepared at this point for this revelation and takes Xouthos' claim as a joke played on him.

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[34] Compare *Ion* 520 with *Med.* 1129 and also with *Ion* 1402 in the true recognition scene.

[35] Compare *Hel.* 567 ('μὴ θίγηις ἐμῶν πέπλων'); *I.T.* 798f.; *Hipp.* 607.

[36] Just as he did in his monody in order to put the birds to flight and thus keep the temple from being defiled by their droppings. It is again because of the same concern for ritual purity that he picks up the bow, in order to punish the one who has dared to profane Apollo's laurel wreaths, which he himself is wearing, by trying to embrace him by force.

[37] Note that the word 'ξένους' is in the same position as 'φίλτατα' of the previous line.

The comic connotations of this scene have long been noticed by scholars.[38] Already Menander detected its comic flavour, and, in his *Misoumenos* (210-15) shaped the recognition scene in a way recalling the false recognition scene in the *Ion*. In *Mis.*, it is again the father who recognises the child, who, in this case is a daughter. The girl is informed by the nurse about the identity of the man in front of her, and her reaction is 'πατὴρ ἐμός; ποῦ;'; the use of 'ποῦ;' shows incredulity in both passages (*Ion* 528). Only in *Mis.*, Krateia, the girl, as soon as the father calls her 'my child', welcomes the news and greets him 'χαῖρε [...] φίλτατε'; both words used in the greeting are reminiscent of the language used by Xouthos (cf. 517, 'χαῖρ' '; 520, 'τὰ φίλταθ' '; 525, 'τὰ φίλτατα'). Demeas, the girl's father, now calls her 'τέκνον', as Xouthos does in 517.[39] In *Mis.* the recognition scene is brief and without complications between the two relatives, unlike the one in the *Ion* (it takes Ion 45 lines before he greets Xouthos as his father in 561). But, there is some confusion created when the slave Getas enters the scene at the moment father and daughter embrace and mistakes Demeas for Krateia's secret lover, just as Ion mistook Xouthos' advances as being of a homosexual nature.[40]

Although an effort to reconstruct 'the reaction of the audience' is vain, since such an approach ignores the fact that there are different audiences and different reactions and that even within the same audience there is always a

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[38] See Wilamowitz, on 517. Also, Knox, 1979: esp. 260-263; Knox emphasizes the ambiguity of the word 'τέκνον': the word could mean not only 'son', but also simply 'child' or 'boy'. Hartigan notes that "in the 1979 production at Epidauros, Xouthos' seductive 'paidiv mou' received much laughter"; Hartigan, 1991: 76, n.19.

[39] See Hunter, 1985: 133; n.34. He cites *Peric.* 804, 813 as the only other examples of the use of the word 'τέκνον' in New Comedy.

[40] Compare with Helen's misunderstanding of Menelaos' intentions in *Hel.* 541f. (esp. 545: 'ὅς με θηρᾶται λαβεῖν'; cf. 63 on Theoclymenos); cf. also Achilles' misunderstanding of Clytemnestra in *I.A.* 819f.

variety of possible reactions to the events that are performed on stage, there seems to be some indication in the text pointing to a possible reaction of the original Athenian audience, as it was anticipated by the dramatist, during the false recognition scene in question. When Ion in 528 says: 'ταῦτ' οὖν οὐ γέλως κλύειν ἐμοί[41]', it seems to me that the use of the word 'γέλως' in this context, preceded by the negative 'οὐ', may allude to the possibility that the members of the audience might be aware of the lighter tone of the scene – or, at least, aware of its potential for misunderstanding –, which 'must have caused, if not outright laughter, at least a smile'.[42] And now perhaps the dramatist, by making Xouthos reassure Ion that he is not making a fool of him, that there is no laughter ('οὐ', 528), alerts the audience that this is one of the ways of looking at this situation, perhaps in much the same way as Pentheus' scornful laughter at the sight of the two old men dressed as Bacchanals offers one way of looking at the scene in the Bac. (170f.).[43]

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[41] Diggle adopts the reading 'ἐμοί', which appears as a variant in L above the reading 'ἐμοῦ'. Murray, in the previous O.C.T. edition (1913), preferred the original manuscript reading, which he translated as *ludibrium mei*, and, in English, 'is this turning me into a ridicule?' (literally), or, 'do you seek to make a jest of me?' (in Murray's translation of the play, London, 1954). 'ἐμοῦ' would be taken with 'κλύειν' and so directed against Ion in a not quite light-hearted way. 'ἐμοί', on the other hand, would refer to the whole sentence; it would be literally translated as 'is this not ridiculous (absurd) for me to hear?'. Though the original manuscript reading is the 'lectio difficilior', the emended reading seems to render a better meaning. In any case, my argument works well with either reading.

[42] Knox, 1979: 264.

[43] Cf. also Iolaos' scene in *Heraclidae* 630f., where the mocking of the attendant suggests a possible audience reaction. Seidensticker (1978: 314f.) rightly remarks: 'An epic poet can easily indicate the quality of a scene and thus direct the emotional reaction of his audience by introducing a comment into the text: ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνῶρτο γέλως (*Iliad* A 599). A dramatist, however, if he cannot take refuge in stage directions, can only try to suggest the reaction he deems appropriate by employing one of his characters'.

After the false recognition scene, the tone darkens, so I shall not continue with the linear analysis of the play, but I will rather examine selectively those instances in the play where there is a mention of γέλως.[44]

We have seen that at 528 Ion thinks that Xouthos is mocking him, when he claims that he is his father (mild derisive tone); at 600 ('γέλωτ' [...] μωρίαν τε λήψομαι', more hostile) Ion is afraid that, stained with the double stigma of being an illegitimate son and a foreigner, he will be considered an utter nobody; should he, then, aspire to become influential in the political arena, he will be mocked by those who, though men of noble strength, demonstrate a wise passivity and seek no part in the city's affairs. This would be a laughter of public ridicule, of denigration and scorn that would dishonour and isolate him even more.

In Ion's tent, where his birthday feast is held, a playful laughter was aroused amongst the feasters by the old pedagogue's eager bustling about in preparing the water for them to wash their hands and the wine to fill their cups ('πρέσβυς ἐς μέσον πέδον ἔστη, γέλων δ' ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολὺν / πρόθυμα πράσσων', 1171-3). This scene strongly recalls the divine laughter of *Iliad* I. 595-600, where Hephaestos played the role of the wine bearer in the god's symposium, a role customarily allotted to a beautiful young boy.[45]

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[44] According to Halliwell's analysis (1991: 283) there were two kinds of laughter in ancient Greece: (a) playful laughter, which came to be associated with 'lightness of tone; autonomous enjoyment; psychological relaxation; and a shared acceptance [...] of such laughter by all who participate in it'; (b) consequential laughter, 'causing embarrassment or shame, signalling hostility, damaging a reputation, contributing to the defeat of an opponent, delivering public chastisement'.

[45] See Burnett, 1971: 117; Zeitlin, 1989: 172 and n. 117. In *Iliad* I the quarrel between Zeus and Hera and the subsequent comic resolution through Hephaestus' interference are contrasted with the serious quarrel, at the human level, between Achilles and Agamemnon; the playfulness of the scene at Ion's tent is a foil for the secret plotting against Ion's life, and for the serious quarrel between Kreousa and Apollo.

Festivity and laughter are commonly associated in ancient Greek culture in the framework of the symposium, the komos and the civic festival.[46] All three are to be found in Ion's tent, as we shall see. That this is a symposium is clear[47]; there is food ('βορᾶς', 1169f.), drink (1175f.), music ('ἐς αὐλοὺς ἧκον', 1177). There is also a little piece of theatricality on the part of the old man who stands in the middle of the feasters, performs, in its literal sense, a brief comic episode as an entertainer and arouses laughter (1172f.); there is also unbridled behaviour,[48] an ill-omened word uttered by a slave ('βλασφημίαν', 1189). But, one of the prominent features of Old Comedy is indeed obscenity that is neutralised within the context of the civic religious festival. We should not forget that this piece of 'Old Comedy' is a play within the larger tragic play that is being performed in honour of Dionysos. And there is, indeed, divine agency at work behind the failure of the old man's assassination attempt on Ion. The blasphemy is neutralised by the ritualistic emptying of the cups on the ground as a libation to the god (1192-3), and so is the murderous intention of the old man and Kreousa's revenge. Before long, a 'κῶμος πελειῶν' (1197) flies into the tent, making the Bacchic association even more clearly felt. They drink from the libation and, inevitably, the dove that tastes the poisoned wine poured from Ion's cup, shakes in frantic convulsions ('κάβάκχευσεν[49]', 1204), utters

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[46] See Halliwell, 1991: 290f.; esp. n. 45.

[47] In tragedy there are symposia and celebrating, but not actual eating – only when it is tragic, e.g. Thyestes; examples of ordinary food are always excluded.

[48] Such behaviour as a result of intoxicated ecstasy during the nocturnal torchlight Bacchic mysteries on the slopes of Mt. Parnassos, is given as the context within which Ion was allegedly conceived by a Delphic maiden whom Xouthos raped (552f.). One should note the similarities between this story of Ion's engendering according to Xouthos and the scene of Ion's tent: both are nocturnal and involve mysteries; Dionysos plays a crucial role in both.

[49] This word signifies the metaphorical entrance of Dionysus himself onto the stage to perform the περιπέτεια.

unintelligible cries of pain and dies in front of the astonished feasters. Although until now there has been a series of incidents of muffled violence threatened but not carried out,[50] this time, by ricochet, it hits a target, and there is a real victim, a sacred dove of the 'κῶμος πελειῶν'.[51] Finally, there is a civic function carried out in the tent; Ion is passing from one stage to another; he is no longer the carefree temple servant, but he has been acknowledged as a royal person, who will arrive at Athens to take up a new social role as the heir of the kingdom, the ruler of Athens and, later, the founder of the Ionian race, and so the social function of this farewell dinner is to celebrate, and indeed, validate this transition 'from innocence to pan-Hellenic fame (1576)'.[52] This transition is also

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[50] See Wolff, 1965: 169-194; 'Though violence permeates the action, it is subordinate to an apparently providential design' (177); also, Gellie (1984: 97f.) remarks: 'this god must use violence on Kreousa and deception on Xouthos, but he must not in the long run appear to be that kind of god, the brutal and dishonest kind. The same resort to double standards can be seen in the presentation of the human figures in the play [...]. In the middle of the third episode the play turns [...] into violence [...]. We want things to happen, but we do not want them to happen because Kreousa and Ion are really like that [... thus] the people and their projected crimes make no connection'. This avoidance of catastrophe, or, what Knox calls 'hair's breadth escape', is considered to be one of the elements that contribute to the lighter tone of the play and to its labelling as tragicomedy or protocomedy. But in Ion's tent a death does occur, though not of the intended victim, but of a substitute. This is a typical ritual myth: 'animal substituted for designated human victim' (e.g Iphigeneia, Isaac).

[51] Contrast 'man substituted for designated animal' in the other notoriously triumphant *komos* of Dionysos, which returns with Agave holding the head of the sacrificial victim ('κῶμον εὐίου θεοῦ', trans. 'the revel of the god of ecstasy', *Bac.* 1167f.). See Foley, 1980: 119f.; see also Seidensticker, 1979: 181-190.

[52] Taplin, 1979: 52-4; he defends a more serious reading of the play, which is to be found in the 'dark struggles [...] of human feelings', those of Ion and those of Kreousa; Saxonhouse finds the tragic content of the play, in the struggle between the autochthony myth and 'the denial of heterosexual reproduction inherent in the myth' (1986: 267); Loraux observes the conflicts exposed within this 'tragic dramatisation of the autochthony', such as that between feminine and masculine in Kreousa as the 'first "female Athenian" [...] taking up the challenge of that masculine

figuratively represented by means of the 'iconographical journey' depicted upon the fabrics that Ion himself has chosen to decorate the interior of the tent.[53]

As the last topic in the list of comic elements in the play, I should like to briefly discuss the characterisation of Xouthos. What Northrop Frye calls the 'blocking character' in Euripides may be a barbarian (Thoas in *I.T.*; Theoklymenos in *Helen*) or a non-Athenian,[54] as Xouthos in the *Ion*, who fails to acknowledge the importance of the autochthony myth for the Athenian race and intends to foist his allegedly illegitimate son on Kreousa, the sole heiress of the Erechtheid palace. Not surprisingly, in the end the tables are turned against the gullible foreigner. The real mother and her exposed child recognise each other, whereas Xouthos, the intruder, will remain deceived so that his 'δόκησις ἡδέως ἔχηι' (1602). He has been deceived both by Apollo, whose oracle he took at face value, and by Kreousa, who kept her illegitimate child secret for all this time and will carry on doing so according to Athena's instructions.[55] Thus, Xouthos strongly recalls the comic situation, where a man rears a child that is not his own.[56] Could we not, then, see Xouthos as the *'comic father'*, married to Kreousa, the *'tragic mother'*?

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claim to autochthony'; that between the exclusivity of Athenian autochthony and the acceptance of Ion as ruler of Athens, though only marginally Athenian (since he is the illegitimate son of the union with Apollo); she concludes that 'the *Ion* fully deserves to be known as the tragic drama of Athens' (1994; esp. 234-6). Zeitlin finds the seriousness of the play in 'the status of the self's identity in the world and the modes of its revelation' (1989: 145).

[53] See above 1.3. for an analysis of the tapestries in the tent.

[54] See Segal, 1994: 16f.

[55] On Xouthos' role in the play, see above 2.2. text at n 39ff.; 3.2.

[56] Cf. Men. *Epitr.*, where the situation is similar (Murray, 1945); Charisios, like Xouthos, has accepted as his son a child whom he believes to be not the child of his wife, but of another woman (but Pamphile's loyalty contrasts with Kreousa's attempt to murder Ion).

4.2. Comic elements, tragic effect

In the second part of this chapter I shall consider the question of why and how the comic episodes are incorporated into the play's more serious and 'tragic' scenes so as to produce an integrated and satisfying overall effect.

The close of Plato's *Symposium* (223d 3-9), where Socrates in his conversation with Aristophanes and Agathon argues that comedy and tragedy could be written by the same playwright, is widely quoted to account for the comic touches in the later Euripidean plays.[57] Even Aristophanes, in *Frogs* 391f., makes the chorus of initiands claim that a good comedy contains a mixture of seriousness and mockery.

Similarly, it is common in the modern interpretation of this phenomenon to resort to a comparison between the comic incidents in Shakespeare's plays and those in Euripides'. Terms such as 'comic relief'[58] or 'reciprocal intensification'[59] are used to explain the appearance of Aigeus in Eur. *Med.* or Heracles in *Alc.*.[60] Thus, for instance, according to Rossiter's interpretation, the opening of the *Ion* with the lighter tone of Hermes' soliloquy and Ion's monody would belong to the same group as *Othello* and *Lear*, which 'open with bawdy laughter at Iago and Gloucester', where 'relief is not *from* but *for* the serious to come'.[61]

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[57] See Rossiter, 1961: 274f.; Foley, 1980: 125, n. 29; Seidensticker, 1982: 14; Taplin, 1986: 163.

[58] Rossiter, 1961: ch. 14, *passim*; cf. Barnes, 1964; Hadow, 1915.

[59] Seidensticker, 1978: 310 and n. 38, where he refers to Guthke, 1968: 66, who 'defines the tragicomic as the synthetic mixture of the tragic and the comic by which the two reciprocally heighten each other'. Cf. the divine scene of Homer, which is often seen as mere entertainment, but in fact heightens the tragedy of the mortals; see Griffin, 1980; Meltzer, 1990. 265-84.

[60] See also the appearance of the Nurse in Aesch. *Cho.*

[61] Rossiter, 1961: 279.

Perhaps, though, we need not look for parallels only in Shakespearean poetry, for an answer may be found in the Euripidean plays themselves. Quite often Euripidean tragedies show an awareness of the paradox of the theatrical effect, namely the aesthetic pleasure that can be derived from tragic poetry ('joy from lamentation'). A further effect to be attained through poetry is the easing of pain, an idea that is as old as Homer (esp. *Od.* I. 337f.) and Hesiod (*Theog.* 52f.; 98-103) and recurrently appears in Euripidean plays.[62] As for the poet himself in the process of composition ('τόν θ' ὑμνοποιὸν αὐτὸς ἂν τίκτηι μέλη'), if he is to supply aesthetic pleasure through his poetry ('τέρπειν ἂν ἄλλους'), he ought to work in joy ('χαίροντα τίκτειν'); 'ἢν δὲ μὴ πάσχηι τόδε,, οὗτοι δύναιτ' ἂν οἴκοθέν γ' ἀτώμενος, τέρπειν ἂν ἄλλους'[63], as Adrastos argues in *Suppl.* 180-183. This claim, though it comes after a lacuna, seems to be following the train of thought of the previous argument[64], where the implied assumption seems to be that the poor should not feel poorer when looking at the wealthy, but they should learn the love of goods and aim to acquire them, and, similarly, the wealthy should not feel wealthier by seeing the poor, but they should appreciate their wealth and try to retain it. In this way both parties will benefit from the

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[62] Cf. *Hec.* 518-9; *Tro.* 118-21, 472f., 609f.; *Suppl.* 73-82; also *Med.* 190-203, where the Nurse defines the ideal goal of poetry as the healing of grief; she dismisses the poets of old whose songs did not fulfill this condition, since they wrote songs for revels, dinners and banquets, 'τερπναὶ ἀκοαί', and had not discovered how to put an end to men's hateful griefs by means of song; the new element here seems to be the emphasis on the therapeutic power of poetry and not just on the peculiarity of the aesthetic pleasure that is commonly derived from this form of art. See Pucci's analysis of this passage, 1980: 21-58. See also Segal, 1988: 66f. and n. 57.

[63] Translated as 'the poet bringing songs into the world should work in joy. If this is not his mood, he cannot – being inwardly distressed – give pleasure outwardly' by F. Jones, in Grene & Lattimore, Chicago, 1958.

[64] Collard, who does not make this connection between the two passages, is forced to assume a much more serious disruption of the continuity of thought than may be necessary. See Collard, 1975: esp. vol. 2, 154-55, on lines 176-83.

existence of each other, acquiring more noble aims by observation of the other. Similar observations about the duality of reality, often accompanied by suggestions of possible ways for a harmonious integration of contradictory forces in society, are often attested in the extant Euripidean plays.[65] In the *Ion*, the Euripidean preoccupation with the mingling of contrasts is reflected in the play's very plot-construction; the comic and the tragic elements are better interpreted, not if examined separately, but as part of the same theatrical experience. I would argue that Euripides integrates the comic innuendoes into his tragedies not in order to make the tragic seem more tragic, as in 'reciprocal intensification', or, in order to supply relief from the tragic ('comic relief'). The playwright's aim is not simply to incite the audience to make generic considerations of the tragic and comic elements. Rather, these elements provide a means for him to communicate and to enforce the themes to which the play is dedicated: women's role in society and in the procreation process of the autochthony myth, the search for identity and the transition from male adolescence to manhood and from female virginity to motherhood, etc. Euripides, just like Dionysos in the *Bac.*, is the dramatist who controls our theatrical experience, mixing comic and tragic and not revealing the final outcome before the very end of the play.[66] In this light, laughter ceases to be a danger for 'this [i.e. of an effective tragedy] kind of concentrated emotional

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[65] E.g. Eur. *El.* 380-90, Orestes' speech on how to evaluate a character and the farmer's excellence of character; Goldhill, 1986; Arnott, 1981.

[66] '[...] standing back and assuming a position of 'heavenly observation'?', Foley, 1980: 113. Perhaps, though, even Euripides is somehow constrained in that he had to avoid anything felt to be ill-omened. Phrynichos was fined by Athenians 'ὡς ἀναμνήσαντα οἰκήια κακά', Hdt. vi 21-2; see Taplin, 1986: 167, 'that was not the function of tragedy'. Of course, in this play (as in *Alc.*, *Hel.*), we know from the start that things will turn out well, rather than badly, so, it is not a matter of being unpropitious. See also above ch. 3.3., for a discussion on Euripides the dramatist.

sequence'[67], since it is not conceived as a separate unit, that interrupts, stands out and 'spoils' the tragic mood of the play, but rather, in constant interaction with it, acquires its precise function as part of the continuous texture of the play.

Rossiter seems to be pointing in a similar direction, when he acknowledges that 'the total meaning' of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, a play of 'two tones', as he calls it, – 'of the 'serious' and the 'farcical', of high relief and low' – 'is only grasped when the effect of comprehensiveness is reached'. In this play, as in the *Ion*, 'a travesty of the serious action is laid beside it in juxtaposition'; only the order is the opposite of that in the *Ion*; there the tragic scene comes first, only to be parodied later by a mirror comic scene.[68]

4.3. Doublets and doubling, comedy and tragedy

It is a particularly striking feature of the *Ion* that the play is structured on many levels — plot, incident, character, motif, language — in terms of doublets, of which many are in the one case lighter in tone and in the other darker. We saw already in Chapter Two that a key element of the religious and political conception of the play is the repetition of traditional events — not their precise re-enactment, but instead their repetition with a significant difference. If Karl

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[67] Taplin, 1986: 173; at the very beginning of his article he quotes Demetrius (*de eloc.* 169): 'τραγωιδία χάριτας μὲν παραλαμβάνει ἐν πολλοῖς. ὁ δὲ γέλως ἐχθρὸς τραγωιδίας· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπινοήσειεν ἄν τις τραγωιδίαν παίζουσαν. ἐπεὶ σάτυρον γράψει ἀντὶ τραγωιδίας'. See also Seidensticker, 1982: 259 and n. 66, who quotes a schol. in Dion. Thrac. (Kaibel, CGF, vol.ii, 1899: p. 14, lines 45-48, right column): 'τῆς μὲν τραγωιδίας σκοπὸς τὸ εἰς θρῆνον κινῆσαι τοὺς ἀκροατάς. τῆς δὲ κωμωιδίας τὸ εἰς γέλωτα '; Knox, 1979: 264: 'This laugh (i.e. in the Xouthos-Ion scene), even the smile, is something tragedy at its most intense dare not risk'.

[68] E.g. Faustus raising the Devil, followed by the clown Wagner, who does the same only to be comically terrified. Rossiter, 1961: 284f.; also 286-8.

Marx could say that everything in world history occurs twice, once as tragedy and a second time as farce[69], then in this play Euripides seems to reply that in the mythic history of Athens the first occurrence was indeed tragic, but that the second one, by virtue of a slight but fateful change, can become redemptive and therapeutic in tone.

As a conclusion to this last chapter, a brief consideration of the arrangement of doublets in the plot-construction of the *Ion* may enable us to reach a more profound understanding of the function of the constant interplay between the play's apparently conflicting moods.[70] For in the end, the doubling of comic and tragic elements in the *Ion* is only one more example, but a particularly important one, for the plurality of perspective which is typical of the way Euripides sees the world in general. What is reproduced in his plays is actually the world seen through his eyes, reduced in measure to fit into the play's dramatic frame; to quote Friedrich Hölderlin, the poem is 'die Welt in verkleinertem Massstab'.

A list of the more important doublets in the play, most if not all of which differ by being darker or lighter in tone, would include the following examples:

• Hermes and Ion are both Apollo's servants; the former is a 'λάτρις' in heaven and the latter a 'δοῦλος' in the temple of the god at Delphi.

• That Ion has both divine and human blood, Olympian and autochthonous origin, we are told from the outset of the play. But, as often in tragic representations, his double origin is symbolically repeated by his birth

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[69] Marx, 1968: 97.

[70] On mirror-scenes see Taplin, 1979: ch. 8 *passim*; Kaimio, 1988: 35-39, on the recognition scenes; Foley, 1980: 129f., on doubleness in seeing in *Bac.*; Segal, 1971: 553-614, on the two worlds of Euripides' *Helen*; Zeitlin, 1980: 62f., on double-speak in *Orestes*; Other interpretations of the function of the doublets are offered by Wolff, who argues that they convey a sense of the legendary (1965: 172, n. 6, 7), and by Immerwahr, who interprets these repetitions as dramatic devices whose function is to underline the main ironies of the play (1972: 282f.).

and rebirth, first in the cave in the Acropolis, then, in the tent, where his birthday feast is given, and he, once again, escapes death, and celebrates his birth, and, finally, in the temple at Delphi, as the Pythia comes out with the birth tokens.[71] He is also endowed with two fathers, a human foster father and his real divine father (hence, there are two accounts of his birth; cf. Ion's engendering according to Xouthos); and with a foster mother (the Pythia) and a real mother (Kreousa) (cf. also the unknown Delphian maiden in Xouthos' account).

• There are two recognition scenes, with clear verbal and indeed, structural correspondences (a frustrated first attempt, misunderstanding).[72]

• Ion draws his bow and refrains from using it twice; in his monody he threatens to kill the birds and, then, in the false recognition scene he threatens to kill Xouthos.[73]

• Kreousa reports her rape first as the story of a friend (330f.) and then as her own (881f.); Kreousa's tragic monody is contrasted with Ion's lighter monody (82-183).

• The ekphrasis in the parodos corresponds to the ekphrasis in the messenger speech.[74]

• The Pythia's embrace (1363) preludes Kreousa's embrace (1324).

• The Pythia saves Ion from death at 47f. when she steps out of the temple and discovers him as a baby on the temple steps, but she saves him from inflicting death at 1320 when she steps out of the temple and prevents him from killing Kreousa at the altar in front of the temple.

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[71] See Zeitlin, 1980: n. 39: 'The maintenance of identity through repetition of real or symbolic action is a characteristic feature of the economy of tragic representation'.

[72] See above n. 70, esp. Taplin, 136-139; Kaimio.

[73] See above n. 36.

[74] See above ch. 1.3.2.

• Ion twice orders his attendants to seize Kreousa ('λάζυσθε', 1266; 1402); the first time she seeks asylum at the altar, the second she clings to Ion and the cradle.[75]

• The Pythia is a mortal spokesman for Apollo, closely associated with him and of suppressed female sexuality, who brings to the light the truth of Apollo insofar as any human being can; almost immediately thereafter Athena makes her appearance, now a divine spokesman for Apollo, closely associated with him and of suppressed female sexuality, who brings to the light the truth of Apollo as only a god can.

• Apollo never appears on stage, but he sends two emissaries, Hermes in the prologue and Athena in the exodos. There are two images of Apollo that co-exist in the play.[76] These are conveniently expressed by the parallelism between the two monodies. In Ion's monody Apollo is the god who has cared for him all his life, the god he worships; in Kreousa's monody the god is accused of not caring for his child, and it is clear that Kreousa is a *theomachos* (note: 'μισεῖ σ' ά Δᾶλος', 919, seems to be a substitute for her personal hatred). Yet, even within the compass of the single text of Kreousa's monody, both these images co-exist in the language used to describe the scene of rape.[77]

• Finally, and perhaps most striking symbolically, we have the two drops of magically powerful Gorgon's blood which Creousa always wears upon her wrist (1009): one is a deadly poison, while the other wards off disease (1005, 1013-15).

In closing, I would suggest that this arrangement in doublets is not just an artistic device but also, and more profoundly, a way of representing reality; the dramatist seems to want to signal for the audience the co-existence of different

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[75] See Kaimio, 1988: 65.

[76] On Apollo, see ch. 3.

[77] See Barlow, 1971: 48-50; LaRue, 1963: 126-136. See also above 2.3.2.

perspectives of vision (see Ion's speech, 585-6), without supplying a clear-cut answer.[78] And if the dramatist strove to keep matters open to a variety of possible interpretations, it seems to me that the reader too should refrain from attaching labels to this play, - labels of the kind that I quoted at the beginning of this chapter[79] -, since that would result in an oversimplification of a much more complex and troubling play. Labelling the play is overly crude and too cut and dried; the moods and the tones seem to intermingle, rather than existing as separate units; the lighter tone is always in counterpoint with something more sober and there seems to be an intentional undercurrent, of a strategic kind, designed to maintain the interaction between the two, not so much in a relation of 'reciprocal intensification'[80], but as alternative ways of looking at reality from varied vantage points and levels of understanding. The conventional distinction between plays which have a happy ending and those which end with disaster may not be all that strict; the problems emerging from the peculiar nature of the relationship between Apollo and Kreousa are not necessarily dealt with by the happy ending. Any crude label attached to the play, classifying it as anything else besides tragedy, misses the point; the logic of the play, with its doubleness, is not just there in order to lead to the happy ending, but has a thought-provoking function of its own.

Or, to use the language of symbols that Euripides himself supplies us in this very play: Kreousa, in answer to the paedagogue's pedantic question whether she carries the two drops of Gorgon's blood separately or mixed

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[78] See Segal, 1986: 261, on the doubleness in Helen between illusion and reality: 'The point is not that we have to decide between a positive and a negative interpretation but rather that Euripides himself refuses to decide. There is ultimately no total reconciliation between the play's two worlds'.

[79] See above n. 3.

[80] See above n. 59.

together, says that she keeps them apart "for the good does not mingle with evil" (1016-17). Indeed, her decision to use the deadly drop, at this critical juncture in the plot of the play, attempts to set the action off into a tragic, fatal direction rather than into a lighter, more comic one. But her attempt will fail, and Euripides' play, unlike its heroine at this point (later, of course, she will learn), does indeed mingle good with evil. Euripides' world is one in which there are always two drops of blood; and even if the disasters arising from the poisonous one are averted, the doubleness itself implies a plurality and uncertainty of the world to which only the tragic vision can give adequate expression.

Conclusion

We have had more than one occasion in the course of this study to note the ways in which Euripides poses dilemmas to his spectators in all their problematic intensity but leaves it up to them to decide about these issues as they see best. For example, Euripides exposes the limitations of widespread Athenian ideas about the autochthony and purity of their race (see ch. 2). He explores Apollo's morality and responsibility, the ambiguity of divine favour, and the equivocality of oracular responses; he invites his audience to look from a distance at the overall image of Apollo and points out to them how all the conflicting views about him expressed in the course of the play by the various dramatic figures are, in the end, to be taken to be complementary. A better understanding of the god's nature would entail the synthesis of all the views expressed into a single image of the god, which, of course, would retain its ambiguity beyond the logic of any merely human interpretation (see ch. 3). In this light the happy ending is itself more ambiguous than interpreters have been inclined to allow (see ch. 4).

It is, to be sure, a characteristic of many successful dramatic authors that they tend to propose questions to their audiences rather than imposing answers upon them: for in an art form performed publicly before large and diverse groups, the play that triggers a lively debate in (and outside of) the theatrical space is likely to be more popular than one that stifles discussion by insisting upon a single truth; moreover, the competition between the tragic poets at the Festival of Dionysos meant that any author who wanted to carry off the victory was well advised not to alienate large segments of the audience by attempting to show the falsity of some of their cherished beliefs; and finally, the very form of

drama, in which different characters propose their differing views of what is right and proper, and in which the dramatic conflict arises out of the discrepancy between these plausible beliefs, seems peculiarly well suited to laying before the audience the variety of opinions that might be held about any issue and testing them in the crucible of action and circumstance.

But, beyond these features common to the whole poetic genre within which the playwright worked, Euripides in particular seems to have been especially engaged in the provocation of his Athenian audiences. No doubt this is one reason why in his lifetime his theatrical success was so modest — and why it became so enormous after his death. Euripides' plays, at least on the surface, do not give answers: they pose questions. For example, he creates dramatic plots in which the question of the gods is insistently raised, and dramatic characters, under the force of personality and circumstance, give voice to various extreme views on this question; but he leaves it to his spectators to decide which, if any, of these characters is right and what consequences, if any, they are to draw from this decision for their own lives. In the light of this fundamental feature of Euripides' poetic art, many of the debates that have characterized particularly the older phase of the reception of Euripides — was he a believer or an atheist? a mystic or a rationalist? a friend of women or a hater of women? a friend of Athens or a critic of Athens? etc. — seem at best misplaced, at worst simply futile. If, as Aristophanes suggested, the dramatic poet must be a teacher not only of choruses but also of audiences (*Ach.* 656-8; *Frogs* 686-7), then Euripides understands his pedagogical mission as requiring him not to convey particular doctrines, but to teach his audience how to think and to look for the truth that lies beneath the surface, to appreciate its complexity and pluralistic nature.

But this does not mean that one cannot discern in the very way Euripides poses his questions the outlines of the kind of answer he himself would most likely have endorsed. So in the *Ion*, Euripides is ultimately inquiring into the nature of the Athenian civic ideology and the value and limitations of the Athenian achievement. It is no accident that this play is so explicit, thorough, and detailed in its account of early Athenian mythology: for Euripides is not so much reminding his audience of legends that they had forgotten (of course they had not), as rather proposing an agreed version that can serve as a kind of poetic constitution for the future. Euripides is in no doubt that Athens is a very special city and he is convinced that upon its success depend the hopes not only of its own citizens, but also those of all humanity. But the Athens which he believes in is not the bigotted, narrow-minded Athens which he has inherited, and which is represented in different ways by the one-sided obsessions of the characters with which he begins — Xouthos' trivializing rationality, Kreousa's dangerous emotionality, Ion's ingenuous purity — but instead the purer, humanized, more liberal and generous Athens which he represents by means of the intervention of Athena at the end of the play. When Athena calls herself 'benevolent' (1554) and says that Apollo has done all things well (1595), Ion and Kreousa believe her, and so perhaps must we. That these characters can learn to set aside their fears and to recognise their solidarity with one another and even, within certain limits of course, with the outsider Xouthos, is a lesson of humanity whose import was surely not intended to be limited to this play alone or, indeed, to the Theatre of Dionysos alone. Kreousa has come to Delphi to seek a cure for her barrenness, but at the end it is not only she who is healed, but also the city over which, as her very name indicates, her essence is to be the ruler. In the gradually deepening and ultimately overwhelming crisis of the

Peloponnesian War, Euripides is asking how Athens became what it was and what it has to remember about itself if it is to continue to survive.

The Athens that Euripides thinks is worth saving is the one he wants to create himself by using plays like this one to teach the spectators. If his legendary dramatic characters can manage to improve themselves in the course of his plays and to discover, beyond the predictably human defects of misunderstanding, blindness, and self-interest, their deeper shared humanity — if indeed, as Athena promises, even Xouthos and Kreousa will be able to create a κοινὸν γένος (1589) — then perhaps so too, by means of and through these characters, Euripides' troubled real contemporary audience will be able to improve themselves as well. To be sure, choruses always close Greek tragedies with sententious observations that are designed not so much to provide a profound moral wisdom as rather to help the spectators make the difficult transition from the tragic paradigm they have been witnessing to the banalities of the everyday life they must lead, and these final remarks are only rarely tied very closely to the specific text that has preceded them. Still, it is tempting to see in the chorus' final words in the Ion the specific moral legacy Euripides wanted them to take away from this play:

'... ὅτωι δ᾽ ἐλαύνεται

συμφοραῖς οἶκος, σέβοντα δαίμονας θαρσεῖν χρεών·

ἐς τέλος γὰρ οἱ μὲν ἐσθλοὶ τυγχάνουσιν ἀξίων,

οἱ κακοὶ δ᾽, ὥσπερ πεφύκασ᾽, οὔποτ᾽ εὖ πράξειαν ἄν.'

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