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balance. Man's mindless violence, however, affects his social institutions, those fragile defences erected by human reason to protect man from himself. His destructiveness becomes monstrous, in fact, and thus his suffering infinitely greater than that of any animal.

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Tragic *Contaminatio* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:
Procne and Medea; Philomela and Iphigeneia
(6. 424–674); Scylla and Phaedra (8. 19–151)¹

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Ovid's use of tragic sources in his *Metamorphoses* is varied and complex. The principal sources at his disposal were the Latin adaptations of Greek plays by Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius and the original Greek versions of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and others. That Ovid was familiar with, and made extensive use of, the tragic tradition is not in dispute,² but some clarification of how he incorporated this material into the *Metamorphoses* seems appropriate. Basically, Ovid uses tragic sources in two ways: most frequently, he structures his own account of a particular story around the traditional tragic version—in the *Phaethon* (1. 747–2. 339), the *Pentheus* (3. 511–733) and the *Hecuba* (13. 399–575), for instance, the canonical Euripidean treatments form the basis of the

¹ Line numbers pertain to the Teubner edition of W. S. Anderson (Leipzig 1985). The following works will be cited by the author's surname only: J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore 1982); F. P. Bömer, *Ovidius Metamorphosen. Kommentar*, 7 vols. (Heidelberg 1969–86); I. Cazzaniga, *La saga di Itys nella tradizione letteraria e mitografica Greco-Romana*, 2 vols. (Milan 1950–51); H. M. Currie, "Ovid and the Roman Stage," *ANRW II* 31. 4 (1981) 2701–42; B. Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet*² (Cambridge 1970); H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton 1974).

² See Currie; G. D'Anna, "La tragedia latina arcaica nelle Metamorfosi," *Atti del Convegno internazionale Ovidiano II* (Rome 1959) 217–34; S. Jannacone, *La letteratura greco-latina delle Metamorfosi* (Messina 1953); G. Lafaye, *Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide et leurs modèles grecs* (Paris 1904; repr. Hildesheim–New York 1971) 141–59. Ovid wrote a *Medea*, and for it and *Her. 12* used Euripides' play; Jacobson, in his discussion (110, n. 4) of the sources of *Her. 4*, concludes that Ovid "knew and was using both of Euripides' plays (and, just possibly, Sophocles' too)", with reference to Euripides' first and second *Hippolytus* and Sophocles' *Phaedra*. In *Tr. 2. 383–406*, Ovid mentions 25 personages who were the subject of tragedies: it is difficult to believe that he had not read the Greek versions in at least some cases—the lists of titles of plays by the major Roman tragedians do not include an *Aerope*, a *Bellerophon*, or a *Canace*, for example, and the only play apparently mentioned by title is Euripides' *Hippolytus*. The theory that Ovid simply read mythographical summaries or the hypotheses of plays is undermined by the large number of verbal echoes noticed by Bömer, Cazzaniga and other commentators.

Ovidian variations.³ Sometimes, however, Ovid chooses not to retell a very familiar tale in its full form—either because it was hackneyed or because it could not be given a metamorphosis; instead, he focuses briefly on a particular aspect and then transfers other elements of the tale to a different episode somewhere else in the *Metamorphoses*. Thus, we may speak of a kind of *contaminatio*, with parts of one story being woven into another. This happens most noticeably with Medea, the Phaedra and Hippolytus affair, and the House of Atreus saga.

In the case of Medea, for instance, as Otis (172) points out, the heroine is introduced *via* the Argonauts. There is a brief monologue (7. 11–71)⁴ and then the Aeson and Pelias episodes are recounted in some detail, followed by an account of Medea's wanderings. These events were not treated in Euripides' play. The murder of the children, on the other hand, is mentioned only in passing (396 f.). Thus, Ovid avoids telling the well-worn parts of the story of Medea over again.⁵ Instead, he chooses to work them into a different tale altogether: the *Tereus* (6. 401–674).⁶ Significantly, though, the *Tereus* comes just before the *Medea* and the transfer of the child-killing motif through *contaminatio* makes an effective link between the two episodes.⁷

In the *Tereus*, the murder of Itys is described in considerable detail. Also, Procne's mental struggle over whether or not she should kill her son (624 ff.) is reminiscent of Medea's agonized soliloquy at 1042 ff. in the Euripidean play.⁸ The situations of Medea and Procne are indeed similar—a wronged wife gets back at her husband by killing their offspring. Otis (213) sees a difference: Medea kills her children because of Jason's infidelity,

³ For the *Phaethon*, see Otis 389–95; Bömer I. 220–22; the survey (4 ff.) in Diggle's edition of Euripides' *Phaethon* (Cambridge 1970). For the *Pentheus*, see Otis 141; 400 f.; Bömer I. 570 f. For the *Hecuba*, see Bömer VI. 309 f.; P. Venini, "L'Ecuba di Euripide e Ovidio," *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, Classe di Lettere* 85 (1952) 364–77.

⁴ Some variation from the standard version is also achieved here by lightening the tone; the monologue is barely "tragic"—indeed, Otis (173) sees it as facile and parodistic. For a general discussion, see Otis 59–62; 172–73.

⁵ Cf. his own *Medea* and *Her. 12*: see Currie 2702–05; Jacobson 121 f.; P. E. Knox, "Ovid's *Medea* and the Authenticity of *Heroides 12*," *HSCP* 90 (1986) 207–23; F. Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum* (Princeton 1985) 58–71. There are some verbal echoes nonetheless: *Met. 7. 20* and *Med. 1078 f.*; *Met. 7. 53* and *Med. 256, 536 f.*; *Met. 7. 394* and *Med. 1168 ff., 1187 ff.*; and *Met. 7. 396* and *Med. 1236 ff.* (see Bömer *ad loc.*).

⁶ Otis 209–15; 406–10; in fact, the *Tereus* is a patchwork of reminiscences from several tragedies, including Sophocles' and Accius' *Tereus*, Accius' *Atreus* (see below), Euripides' *Bacchae* and Pacuvius' *Pentheus* (see further, Cazzaniga II. 61; 69–72; Bömer III. 117–18; 159–61 (esp. *ad 588, 591–93*)).

⁷ Otis 215–16: Ovid emphasizes the "difference in similarity" between the two stories ("the different motives of the similar child-murders") in order to produce a variation on the same theme. He uses the same technique elsewhere (see below), often to produce irony or parody.

⁸ Otis 213; verbal echoes: Procne's baleful glare at her son (*oculisque tuens inmitibus*, 621) may have been inspired by *Med. 92* (see Bömer *ad loc.*); Cazzaniga (II. 67 f.) also compares *Met. 622 f.* with *Med. 29 f.* and 93.

Procne kills Itys because of Tereus' cruel and libidinous nature. She is disgusted by the thought of their previous intimacy and thus by its product—the child Itys. The son reminds Procne of the father: *a quam es similis patri!* (621 f.). But Ovid probably still has Medea—and her motivation—in mind here: in *Her. 12*, when Medea speaks of her children to Jason she says (191): *et nimium similes tibi sunt . . .* Jacobson (122) notes the use of *nimium* and suggests that "Ovid mirrors in these lines a brilliant psychological insight into Medea's unconscious motivation in murdering her children. When she kills them, she sees herself killing Jason. In them, Jason dies." Thus, the *contaminatio* works well, producing an allusion to another famous child-killing in the Tereus story, and a smooth lead into the treatment of other aspects of the Medea myth immediately afterwards.

While the association of Medea with Procne was part of the literary tradition (it is possible, for instance, that Euripides' *Medea* was influenced by Sophocles' *Tereus*),⁹ Ovid seems to have had a particular interest in the connections between the two stories: in the *Amores* (2. 14. 29–34) we find

Colchida respersam puerorum sanguine culpant,
aque sua caesum matre queruntur Ityn:
utraque saeva parens, sed tristibus utraque causis
iactura socii sanguinis ultra virum.
dicite, quis Tereus, quis vos inritet Iaso
figere sollicita corpora vestra manu?

The blending of the two episodes in the *Metamorphoses*, moreover, goes far beyond the level of mere allusion and reminiscence and may well be the product of Ovidian originality; it is not likely, at any rate, that Sophocles' or Accius' *Tereus*—or, indeed any other tragedy—would have contained such a sustained interweaving of the two tales. In the *Metamorphoses* version of the Tereus story, the *contaminatio* produces a two-layered text, which also interacts on several levels with the *Medea* at the beginning of book 7.

For instance, the barbarian/Greek antithesis—an important theme in Euripides' *Medea* and, no doubt, in the lost *Tereus*—is subjected to some close scrutiny: Tereus' violent behaviour is related to his Thracian, barbarian origin (*Threicius Tereus*, 424; *innata libido*, 458; *barbarus*, 515). He is *crudelis* (534), *ferus* (549) and *saevus* (581). When she is raped, Philomela exclaims *o diris barbare factis! / o crudelis!* (533–34). These words have a somewhat ironic ring in retrospect, however, when Procne and Philomela, the sisters from Athens, wreak their barbaric revenge on Tereus. The similarities of the situations are made very clear: now Procne threatens

⁹ See, for example, I. Cazzaniga, "L'influsso della Medea di Euripide sul Tereo di Sofocle," *RIL* 68 (1935) 433–38, esp. 433–34; W. M. Calder III, "Sophocles, Tereus: A Thracian Tragedy," *Thracia* II, *Academia Litterarum Bulgarica Primus Congressus Studiorum Thraciorum* (Sofia 1974) 87–91. Calder suggests (91) that Sophocles' *Tereus* "certainly has what one may casually call 'Euripidean qualities'" and dates the play before the *Medea*.

to mutilate Tereus' tongue and *membra* with her sword. As Tereus *flagrat* (460), Procne *ardet* (610). The killing of Itys (*furiali caede*, 657) strikingly recalls Tereus' treatment of Philomela in the woods: Procne drags Itys off to a remote part of the house, like a tigress with a fawn, just as Tereus took Philomela into a secluded spot, like a wolf with a lamb or an eagle with a dove; Procne ignores the child's cries of "*mater, mater*" (640), just as Tereus paid no attention to Philomela's pleas to her father and the gods; Procne kills the child with a sword (*ense ferit*, 641) just as Tereus cut out his victim's tongue *ense fero* (557). Philomela then slits Itys' throat (643), an action which also recalls Tereus' crime—when he pulled out his sword, Philomela offered him her throat, hoping for death (543–44). Finally, Procne exhibits *crudelia gaudia* (653) at her triumph over Tereus (himself earlier described as *crudelis*). The implication of all these parallels is that the barbarian/Greek antithesis is of dubious validity. Procne and Philomela, from Athens, are not so different from Thracian Tereus after all. The dissolution of the antithesis produces more irony in the succeeding Medea story, when Medea, twice described as *barbara* (7. 144, 276), refers to her native-land as *barbara tellus* (53). Perhaps it is, in reality, no less *barbara* than her new home.

The conflation of the Medea and Tereus stories also allows Ovid to explore the theme of the manipulation of language. Tereus shares with both Athenian sisters a particular gift for dissembling and using "winning" words. Procne is described as *blandita* (440) when she asks her husband to bring her sister to visit her. Tereus in turn is *facundus* and manages to deceive Pandion. Philomela herself is *blanda* (476) as she persuades her father to let her go. Tereus employs his verbal skills to deceive Procne (563–66) and even Itys uses *blanditiis puerilibus* (626, cf. *blanditias*, 632) on his mother. Procne, finally, tricks Tereus into eating alone. In the *Tereus*, then, language is an instrument not for expressing, but, rather, for covering up true thoughts and intentions. This theme is picked up in the *Medea*: the heroine hides her real feelings as she speaks (171–72) and uses her words to trick the daughters of Pelias (325 ff.).

There are two other instances in the *Metamorphoses* of this kind of tragic *contaminatio* which are somewhat less obvious than the above-mentioned example: they are (1) the appearance of numerous elements from the House of Atreus saga in the *Tereus* and (2) the appropriation of Phaedra's speech of three sexually-charged wishes (*Hippolytus* 208 ff.) to the *Scylla*.

To take the House of Atreus first: the story of Thyestes' feasting on the flesh of his son is mentioned very briefly at 15. 462—obviously Ovid has no desire to offer yet another account of that well-known event. At least not in the original context. Instead, he transfers it to his *Tereus* and the description of the Itys-*cena*. Bömer and other commentators have noted numerous connections between Ovid's account of this banquet and parts of

Accius' *Atreus*¹⁰ and Seneca's *Thyestes*.¹¹ If Seneca drew on Ovid's *Tereus* for his *Thyestes*, the two myths must have been linked in his mind, and this strengthens the case for Ovid's use of Accius' *Atreus* (or the house of Atreus tradition) in his *Tereus*. Whether or not he was the first to make the connection is impossible to tell (Sophocles' *Tereus*, for instance, may well have drawn on his *Thyestes*), but the tales of Thyestes and Tereus do exhibit certain structural and thematic similarities—the father unknowingly eats his child, tricked by a vengeful family-member whom he has outraged by an unlawful act of sexual intercourse. The father ends up eating his own son, and hence, himself, as punishment for his deeds. In each case, the under-evaluation of kinship- and marriage-ties leads to another under-evaluation of kinship-ties: Thyestes seduces Aerope, the wife of his brother Atreus, in revenge for which Atreus makes him eat his own children; Tereus rapes Philomela, the sister of his wife Procne, in revenge for which Procne makes him eat his son Itys.

So much for connections with the Thyestes story. It appears, however, that other elements of the House of Atreus saga are worked into the *Tereus*. In the dozen or so lines before the *Tereus* begins, Ovid mentions an earlier victim of an "atrocious banquet"—Pelops—and refers glancingly to the story of how Tantalus killed his son and served him up on the dinner-table (6. 401–11). This is presumably not coincidental. Rather, we have here a clear link between the Pelops-*cena* and the Itys-*cena*; Ovid is not going to tell the story of Pelops (one which could conceivably provide a metamorphosis) again, but instead gives it the role of an allusion in the *Tereus*. Moreover, the mention of Pelops serves to link the story of Tereus with the House of Atreus right from the beginning.

But there is a third child-murder in the House of Atreus: that of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon. Ovid was undoubtedly familiar with the Euripidean versions of the story. At the beginning of book 12, Ovid tells how Iphigeneia was about to be sacrificed, but was replaced by a stag at the last minute. There are some indications, however, that Ovid has worked the other tradition about Iphigeneia—the Aeschylean one in which she was actually killed by her father—into his *Tereus*. There are pointed references to the Furies at the beginning and end of the episode (*Eumenides*, 430, 431; *viperetas sorores*, 662); these, of course, are not all that significant in themselves, but Ovid's description of the rape of Philomela has several affinities with the sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis. The fates of the two women are somewhat analogous: Philomela is lured away to Thrace by the promise of seeing her sister, Iphigeneia to Aulis by the promise of marriage

¹⁰ Bömer III. 117 f.; *Met.* 645 f. and Fr. 187 W; *Met.* 665 and Fr. 190 W; *Met.* 648 f. and Fr. 181 W. Accius' *Atreus* seems to have dealt with the later parts of the story, including Atreus' revenge on Thyestes.

¹¹ Cazzaniga II. 69–72; Bömer III. 117; *Met.* 6. 618 f. and *Thy.* 269 f.; *Met.* 490 and *Thy.* 272; *Met.* 636 f. and *Thy.* 732; *Met.* 642 and *Thy.* 742; *Met.* 655 f. and *Thy.* 1030. See also H. L. Cleasby, *De Seneca Tragico Ovidii Imitatore* (Diss. Harvard 1907).

to Achilles. In each case, there is a contrast between brutal male violence, coupled with deceit, and defenceless female innocence. In each case, too, the immediate cry for vengeance is purposefully stifled—Iphigeneia's mouth is covered (cf. *Agam.* 234 f.), Philomela's tongue is cut out, 556 f.—but the victim is eventually avenged by the wife of the perpetrator of the crime in the family home.

More specifically, Ovid's comparison of Philomela to a hare caught in the talons of an eagle (516 f.)

non aliter, quam cum pedibus praedator obuncis
deposuit nido leporem Iovis ales in alto

is reminiscent of the omen of the hare torn apart by eagles, which is sent to the Greeks at Aulis in *Agam.* 114–20. In the Aeschylean lines, the hare, at least partially, represents Iphigeneia. In her distress, Philomela calls in vain upon her father (*clamato saepe parente*, 525), just as Agamemnon's daughter did (228). The general description of Philomela's distress (522 ff.) may also owe something to Lucretius' moving account of Iphigeneia's death (1. 92–6):

muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat.
nec miserae prodesse in tali tempore quibat
quod patri princeps donarat nomine regem.
iam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
deductast, . . .

While there are similarities between the stories of Philomela and Iphigeneia,¹² however, the mirror distorts slightly: the situations are somewhat inverted, and it is this inversion of detail which lends a layer of peculiarly Ovidian irony and parody to the *Tereus*. For instance, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter in order to be able to begin his voyage across the sea, while Tereus rapes Philomela after the voyage from Athens: Tereus' triumphant outburst when he gets Philomela on board (*'vicimus! exclamat 'mecum mea vota feruntur,'* 514) is in sharp contrast to Agamemnon's melancholy departure from Aulis.

It is perhaps insufficient here to talk of *contaminatio*, for in the *Tereus*, the House of Atreus saga forms a sustained subtext: not only Atreus and Thyestes, but also Pelops and Tantalus, and Iphigeneia and Agamemnon are recalled.¹³ The stories interact continuously throughout the episode, with

¹² There may have been a tradition linking the two: Tzetzes in his summary of the Tereus and Philomela story (Comm. on Hesiod, *Op.* 566) follows Ovid closely, but puts the rape "at Aulis in Boeotia" (see the text and discussion in Radt, *TGF* vol. 4, 435).

¹³ A. Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* (New York 1984) 70, compares Procne's luring of Tereus to the dinner-table to Clytemnestra's persuading Agamemnon to walk across the tapestries; although there is no direct verbal evidence for such a reminiscence, the presence of the House of Atreus subtext makes such a reading eminently valid: in a sense, Procne functions as a Clytemnestra to Tereus' Agamemnon, avenging the victim of his crime.

each throwing light on the other. Thus Ovid again achieves two things: he avoids having to re-tell a very well-known myth and he gives a multi-layered meaning to the *Tereus*.

Let us now consider the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus, widely known in Euripides' canonical version.¹⁴ Ovid had dealt with the story in *Her.* 4¹⁵ and it is perhaps partly for this reason that in the *Metamorphoses* (15. 479–621) he focuses on the chariot-ride which brings the hero to his death. In his description of the crash, Ovid appears to have the Euripidean messenger-speech in mind,¹⁶ but the other important elements of the Euripidean tragedy—the "*pudor-amor*" conflict, the nurse's disastrous attempts to help and the overwhelming power of the pathological *libido*—are incorporated, again through a sort of *contaminatio*, into other episodes: the *Myrrha*, *Byblis* and *Scylla*.¹⁷ Byblis' struggle between *pudor* and *amor* at 9. 514–16 recalls Phaedra's analysis of her position at Hipp. 375 ff.¹⁸ Indeed, the whole plot is somewhat similar to that of the *Hippolytus*: Byblis is a kind of Phaedra, the victim of a powerful, but unnatural, passion, struggling to resist the urge to give in to it. Her messenger, the servant, is a go-between, like Phaedra's nurse. Caunus plays the part of Hippolytus: he violently rejects Byblis' overtures and the ferocity of his reaction stuns Byblis into a recognition of her folly.

¹⁴ On the influence of Euripides' plays about Phaedra and Hippolytus on Roman literature in general, see B. K. Fenik, *The Influence of Euripides on Virgil's Aeneid* (Diss. Princeton 1960) 152–56.

¹⁵ Ovid seems to have known both of the Euripidean plays called *Hippolytus*: see Jacobson 142–46; also, at *Tr.* 2. 381, the *Hippolytus* is the first play mentioned as dealing with *materiam amoris* (see above, n. 2).

¹⁶ Otis 296 speaks of the "tragic, Euripidean character" of the story; more specifically, there are some linguistic echoes (see Bömer *ad loc.*): *Met.* 516 f. and *Hipp.* 1203 and 1218; *Met.* 517 f. and *Hipp.* 1230; *Met.* 518–21 and *Hipp.* 1219–24; *Met.* 522 f. and *Hipp.* 1232; *Met.* 524 f. and *Hipp.* 1236–39; *Met.* 527 and *Hipp.* 1246.

¹⁷ Otis (205 ff.) includes these, together with the *Tereus* and the *Ceyx and Alcyone* among the "major pathos episodes" of the *Met.* Each story revolves around a pathological and destructive female *libido*, a motif first developed by Euripides and then taken up by the Alexandrians and Roman Neoterics. Otis sees the latter as the primary influence on Ovid's versions, but I am not entirely convinced of this: the choice of subject certainly shows Alexandrian and Neoteric influence (Byblis was treated by Nicaenetus, Aristocritus, Apollonius, Parthenius and Nicander, while Myrrha was the subject of Cinna's *Zmyrna*; some indication of Hellenistic versions of the Scylla story can be gained from the pseudo-Virgilian *Ciris*). But there are also numerous verbal echoes of Euripides' *Hippolytus* in all three stories (see below) and there is ample evidence of Ovid's widespread use of the tragic tradition elsewhere, apparently based on direct reading of Greek plays and the Roman imitations. In other words, Euripidean borrowings in the *Met.* are as much a matter of direct influence as of indirect.

¹⁸ Otis 218–25; linguistic echoes (see Bömer *ad loc.*): *Met.* 497 and *Hipp.* 451 ff.; *Met.* 508 and *Hipp.* 239 ff.; *Met.* 526 and *Hipp.* 183 f.; *Met.* 577 and *Hipp.* 589. Verducci (above, n. 5) 191–97, discusses the connections between Ovid's treatments of Phaedra, Byblis and Myrrha.

Likewise, Myrrha's struggle with her passion (in soliloquy 319–55) and the conflict between *pudor* and *amor* (371 f.) also recalls Phaedra's agonies.¹⁹ Like Phaedra, although at a different stage of the story, Myrrha decides to hang herself as the only way out. As Otis points out (227), the nurse plays a pivotal role in the action. Like Phaedra, Myrrha is initially silent about her feelings, but the nurse gradually wears her down in her determination to find out the truth (*Met.* 389 ff.; *Hipp.* 297 ff., 507 ff.). In both cases, she wants to help: Myrrha's nurse suggests a cure with charms and herbs (395 ff.), Phaedra's something very similar (478 f., 509 f.). The process of revelation is also similar: Myrrha's first hint (401 ff.) is not picked up by the nurse, just as Phaedra's οἶμοι, at the mention of Hippolytus' name (310) is not fully understood by her nurse. Myrrha's outburst as she reaches the limit of her resistance (410–13) recalls Phaedra's words at 327 and 503 f. Finally, each nurse throws herself at her mistress' feet (*Met.* 415 f.; *Hipp.* 326) and the truth comes out, to her scandalized amazement (*Met.* 423 ff.; *Hipp.* 353 ff.). She resolves to help (*Met.* 429 f.; *Hipp.* 521). Myrrha's nurse is temporarily successful in her schemes: the daughter has intercourse with her father; but the end result is the same as in the *Hippolytus*: discovery of the truth by the object of the passion, a furious rejection of incest and the death (transformation, in Myrrha's case) of the protagonist.

Ovid's *Scylla* has several probable sources.²⁰ The *Ciris* indicates that Neoteric poetry is one likely area, but tragedy is another: in the list at *Tr.* 2. 381 ff. Ovid mentions *Scylla* as a tragic character:

impia nec tragicos tetigisset Scylla cothurnos
ni patrum crinem desecuisset amor.²¹

In the *Scylla* episode, the heroine's soliloquy at 8. 44–80 falls squarely into the tradition of the tragic "What shall I do?" speech of the kind uttered by Euripides' *Medea* or *Phaedra*. *Scylla*'s speech, however, seems particularly reminiscent of Phaedra's words at *Hipp.* 208 ff.²² In her delirium, Phaedra expresses her forbidden feelings in a series of three wild wishes to be in the places where Hippolytus is, and to do the things which he does: to lie in the grassy meadow and drink from the dewy spring (208–11), to go hunting in the mountains with a spear (215–22) and to tame horses on the sea-shore (228–31). *Scylla* likewise has three fantasies: to throw herself from a tower into the Cretan camp (39–40), to be taken hostage by Minos (47–48) and to fly down like a bird into the camp to confess her love (51–53). Like Phaedra, *Scylla* has drifted into a fantasy-world of wish-fulfillment.

¹⁹ Otis 226–29; Bömer also notes connections with *Her.* 4 (*Met.* 497 and *Her.* 127 ff.; *Met.* 514 and *Her.* 156; *Met.* 526 and *Her.* 9).

²⁰ See the excellent discussion in Bömer's introduction to the episode.

²¹ A Euripidean play on the subject is a possibility, but no references or fragments survive; Sophocles' *Minos* appears to have dealt with the encounter between Theseus and Minos.

²² See J. Glenn, "The Fantasies of Phaedra: A Psychoanalytic Reading," *CW* 69 (1976) 435–42.

Phaedra's language is pervaded by sexual symbolism: lying under a tree in a meadow and drawing water from a fountain, hunting, and taming horses have obvious sexual connotations. So too with Ovid's description of *Scylla*'s words and thoughts. At 8. 30, for instance, *Scylla* admires Minos' skill with the bow and arrow:

inposito calamo patulos sinuaverat arcus.

Apart from the obvious suggestiveness of the arrow,²³ the verb *sinuaverat* is erotically charged: as Minos bends the bow back, he pulls it into the shape of a *sinus*. Elsewhere Ovid uses this word of the vagina (*Fast.* 5. 256).²⁴ At 36 f., *Scylla* envies Minos' spear and reins because he touches them:

... felix iaculum, quod tangeret ille,
quaeque manu premeret, felicia frena vocabat.

The *iaculum* is clearly a phallic symbol (cf. Phaedra's θεσσαλὸν ὄρπακα and ἐπίλογγον βέλος, 221 f.),²⁵ while the verb *premo* is used of the male role in sexual intercourse.²⁶ The *frena* are suggestive of yoking and subduing horses (cf. Phaedra's πάλους . . . δαμαλιζομένα, 231). Taming horses is a very common sexual metaphor in antiquity;²⁷ we may compare another instance from Ovid: *Her.* 4. 21–24, which, as Glenn notes,²⁸ elaborates on Euripides' implicitly erotic elements:

scilicet ut teneros laedunt iuga prima iuencos,
frenaque vix patitur de grege captus equus,
sic male vixque subit primos rude pectus amores,
sarcinaque haec animo non sedet apta meo.

These lines, coming as they do in *Her.* 4, the letter from Phaedra to Hippolytus, confirm that Ovid had the Euripidean text in mind and this, in turn, strengthens the case for direct imitation of Phaedra's speech in the *Scylla* episode in the *Metamorphoses*.

²³ *Calamus*, literally "reed," is, of course, hollow; the choice of the word here over the other possibilities seems deliberate (the word is somewhat rare in the sense of "arrow": cf. *Met.* 7. 778; *Verg. Aen.* 10. 140). Note also a few lines earlier, *seu caput abiderat cristata casside pennis* (25): Adams says (98) that *cristatus* was used of the penis—in which case, the punning *pennis* at the end of the line takes on an extra significance.

²⁴ See Adams 90–91; cf. the sexual symbolism of the *corneus arcus* at *Am.* 1. 8. 48.

²⁵ Adams 17, 19–22, 74; Glenn 439; it is difficult to believe that there is not also some sexual overtone at *Ars Am.* 3. 736: *iaculo fixa puella tuo est*.

²⁶ Adams 182; he compares Suet., *Cal.* 25. 1: *noli uxorem meam premere*.

²⁷ V. Buchheit, *Studien zum Corpus Priapeorum, Zetemata* 28 (Munich 1962) 104 and n. 6; see Adams 179, 207–08 on *iungo* and *iugum fero*.

²⁸ 441; cf. *Ars Am.* 3. 777–78: *parva vehatur equo: quod erat longissima, numquam / Thebais Hectoreo nupta resedit equo*.

Scylla is most affected when she sees Minos riding his white horse, decked in purple and pulling on the reins (33–36):²⁹

purpureusque albi stratis insignia pictis
terga premebat equi spumantiaque ora regebat,
vix sua, vix sanae virgo Niseia compos
mentis erat . . .

The juxtaposition of the two colours in *purpureusque albi* is highly significant: *albus* is the colour of virginal innocence and *purpureus* symbolizes violence, especially of a sexual kind (note also *premebat*). Hence Scylla's wild excitement when she sees Minos on his white horse: she is thinking of sexual intercourse. The two colours purple and white are associated earlier in the *Met.* (6. 577 f.) in Philomela's tapestry:

purpureasque notas filis intexuit albis,
indicium sceleris

and at 5. 392, where Proserpina

aut violas aut candida lilia capit.

In both cases, the combination of red/purple and white is connected with the act of rape: male aggression against a defenceless female. In Scylla's case, the difference is that she desires to be taken by the aggressor Minos. It is surely not without significance that the lock of hair she cuts from her father's head (79 f.) is coloured *purpura*:

. . . illa beatam
purpura me votique mei factura potentem.

There is also a sustained use of sexual symbolism in Scylla's repeated references to the opening of the gates of the city (41 f., 61 ff., 69 f.).³⁰ At 69 f., she says:

. . . aditus custodia servat,
claustraque portarum genitor tenet.

Thus, at last, Minos is directly linked to the opening of the gates both to the city and to Scylla: once this step has been taken, it is inevitable that she will cut off the purple lock and open the gates, in both senses, to Minos.

The *contaminatio* here is particularly effective, for there is, of course, a genealogical connection between Minos and Phaedra: she is his daughter. The Phaedra and the Scylla stories form a doublet of the kind Ovid

²⁹ Adams 165–66 on riding; Glenn 440–42; E. M. Glenn, *The Metamorphoses: Ovid's Roman Games* (Lanham 1986) 103, notes Scylla's excitement and compares "Shakespeare's Cleopatra yearning to be Antony's horse" (the reference is to *Antony and Cleopatra* 1. 5. 21: "O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony").

³⁰ Cf. Adams 89 on doors.

particularly likes: the stories are characterized by a similar basic plot. In the first, the Cretan Phaedra expresses her passion to Hippolytus, her son by the Athenian king Theseus; he rejects her, she kills herself and he is driven to death by his father. In the second, the Cretan Minos is the object of Scylla's passion, she being the daughter of the Megarian king Nisus; when she betrays her father, Minos rejects her and she is turned into a sea-bird, pursued by her father, now an eagle. Yet, there are also some significant "differences in similarity": Phaedra travels *from* Crete to mainland Greece, where her *libido* has disastrous results for all concerned; Minos returns happily *to* Crete after the fall of Megara—a result of Scylla's passion (disastrous for her and Nisus). There is also plenty of scope for irony: take, for instance, Minos' self-righteous words to Scylla at 99–100:

certe ego non patiar Iovis incunabula, Creten,
qui meus est orbis, tantum contingere monstrum.

To conclude: several highlights of the tragic repertoire—such events as Medea's infanticide, the cooking of Pelops' and Thyestes' children, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the writhings of the love-sick Phaedra—are not re-told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. There are two reasons for this: (1) the stories are too well-known and Ovid is aiming at *variatio* and novelty; (2) even with Ovid's ingenuity it is not possible to manipulate every tale so that it should include a metamorphosis. Nevertheless, these famous scenes *are* worked into the text, through a kind of *contaminatio*: they are transferred to other stories, such as the *Tereus* and the *Scylla*. These episodes thus become particularly rich and complex texts, through the numerous instances of allusion and linguistic echoes, and, moreover, of irony and parody, which are created as the stories interact.

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