appearance in Euripides' *Orestes*[69]. Both deities appear when it seems there is no hope of the plot conforming with traditional myth (Neoptolemos is about to take Philoktetes away from Troy; Orestes, Elektra and the whole Pelopid household are about to be destroyed), and both ensure that the plot is re-attached to tradition. Like many Euripidean gods who appear *ex machina*, Herakles not only halts the current action (1409-1414), but he also gives instructions to the principal characters (1423, 1431-37) and prophesies the future (1424-1430). When we take into account that Sophocles may have written a number of happy-ending tragedies similar in type to Euripidean examples, it is much easier to observe the points which the ending of *Philoktetes* has in common with Euripidean *di ex machina*. Traditionally, it seems scholars have felt the need to examine *Philoktetes* keeping it constantly in their minds that this playwright also wrote *Oedipus Tyrannos* and *Antigone*. The similarities become much more obvious if we consider at the same time that Sophocles wrote *Tyro*.

I hope that this paper has opened up the possibility that Sophocles, like Euripides, wrote happy-ending tragedies. In the process I hope that this has demonstrated some similarities in dramatic style between these two great tragedians. However, I do not wish to suggest that Euripides and Sophocles were similar in every way. They were both masters of the genre and, like all masters, they possessed highly individual styles.

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[69] For a discussion of the criticism of this conclusion see Porter (1994) 254-268.

6

Sophocles' *Tereus* and Euripides' *Medea*[1]

JENNY MARCH

I

Children get killed in several of the Greek myths, and the infanticide *par excellence* is, of course, Medea. In Euripides' tragedy of 431 BC she assumes her canonical form, that of the mother who murders her children in revenge for her husband Jason's desertion. After – and only after – Euripides' play her child-murder becomes a popular theme for vase-paintings[2]. One of the unsettled questions about the play is whether the Medea who deliberately kills her own children was the creation of Euripides himself: Page[3] argued convincingly that this was indeed the case, although certain more recent scholars claim that we owe the innovation to the shadowy figure Neophron[4]. But this debate need not concern us here: what is relevant for our purpose is that it was clearly the *Medea* of Euripides which had great influence on the artistic tradition. The play must have had a tremendous impact on its first audience in 431.

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[1] This paper is a development of one presented in 1999 at the first A. G. Leventis Conference at the University of Edinbugh and since published in the Conference volume, *Word and Image in Ancient Greece* (March 2000). I have necessarily drawn on that earlier material for the first parts of this chapter, and my thanks go to the editors, N. Keith Rutter and Brian A. Sparkes, for permission to rework it here. The vase-paintings to which I refer in what follows are fully illustrated in the *Word and Image* volume (see bibliography, March 2000).

[2] For Medea and her iconography, see esp. M. Schmidt (1992), Sourvinou-Inwood (1997).

[3] Page (1938) xxi-xxxvi.

As for Sophocles' lost *Tereus*, we know that it was produced before 414, because in that year Aristophanes made Tereus, in the form of a hoopoe, a character in his *Birds*, and had him joke about the indignity that Sophocles had inflicted on him by turning him into a bird. Peisetaerus and Euelpides are laughing at Tereus' beak, and he replies (100-1):

> τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται
> ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐμὲ τὸν Τηρέα.

> 'That's the outrageous ,way that Sophocles treats me – Tereus! – in his tragedies.'[5]

We possess what is generally agreed to be the hypothesis of Sophocles' *Tereus* in P.Oxy. 3013 (Parsons 1974). The heading is 'Tereus: the hypothesis', and this is Parsons' translation of the papyrus fragment:

> 'Pandion, the ruler of the Athenians, having (two) daughters, Procne and Philomela, united the elder, Procne, in marriage with Tereus the king of the Thracians, who had by her a son whom he named Itys. As time passed, and Procne wished to see her sister, she asked Tereus to travel to Athens to bring (her back). He, after reaching Athens and receiving the girl from Pandion and making half the return journey, fell in love with the girl. And he disregarded his trust and violated her. But, as a precaution in case she should tell her sister, he cut out the girl's tongue. On arriving in Thrace, and Philomela being unable to speak her misfortune, she revealed it by means of a piece of weaving. When Procne realized the truth, driven mad by jealousy . . . she took Itys and killed him and after cooking him served him up to Tereus. He ate the meal without realizing. The women took to flight and became, one of them a nightingale, one a swallow, and Tereus a hoopoe.'

The birds thereafter sing the songs appropriate to their myth: Tereus continually sings ποῦ ποῦ ('where, where') is Itys?, repeating the last question he asked in human form before he learnt the terrible truth. Tongueless Philomela, the swallow, twitters inarticulately. And Procne, the nightingale, forever sings her son's name in mourning, *Itu*, *Itu*[6].

There are obvious similarities between Euripides' *Medea* and what we know of Sophocles' *Tereus*, and it is usually assumed that Euripides' theme of vengeful child-murder in *Medea* was inspired by Procne's deed in Sophocles. But this need not have been the case, and the influence could well have been the other way around, with Euripides inspiring Sophocles. Let us consider a passage from the *Medea*, where, just after Medea has killed her sons, the Chorus sing (1282-9):

> μίαν δὴ κλύω μίαν τῶν πάρος
> γυναῖκ' ἐν φίλοις χέρα βαλεῖν τέκνοις·
> Ἰνὼ μανεῖσαν ἐκ θεῶν, ὅθ' ἡ Διὸς
> δάμαρ νιν ἐξέπεμψε δωμάτων ἄλῃ·
> πίτνει δ' ἁ τάλαιν' ἐς ἅλμαν φόνῳ
> τέκνων δυσσεβεῖ,
> ἀκτῆς ὑπερτείνασα ποντίας πόδα,
> δυοῖν τε παίδοιν συνθανοῦσ' ἀπόλλυται.

> 'I have heard of one woman, only one of all that have lived, who put her hand to her own children: Ino, made mad by the gods, when the wife of Zeus sent her forth from her home to wander in madness. The unhappy woman fell into the sea through the impious murder of her children; stepping over the sea's edge, she perished with her two sons.'

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[4] E.g. E.A. Thompson (1944), Michelini (1989, with further bibliography). On this issue I agree with Page, and I find approaches to *Medea* such as Buttrey (1958) and McDermott (1989) more enlightening.

[5] That is, by turning him into a bird; or perhaps by turning him from a hawk to a hoopoe: as Alan Sommerstein points out to me, if Sophocles made him a hoopoe, when he had been a hawk (see pp. 146-7 below), this may well have been additional grounds for indignation.

[6] The Roman poets reversed the fates of the two women, with Procne becoming the swallow and Philomela the nightingale, perhaps from false etymology, 'Philomela' being 'song-loving'. The 'Philomel' has become a common poetic epithet for the nightingale.

Usually the tragic Chorus offers two or three mythical exemplars to illustrate the dramatic action. Here they give only one, and indeed they emphasise that there could be only one parallel to Medea's horrific murder: Ino, the one woman, the only one, who put her hand to her own children. Page[7] notes that 'they might have added at least Agave and Procne'. But perhaps, just perhaps, we may take what the Chorus sing at face value. We must ask whether the Chorus *could* have added any other names to that of Ino[8].

There are indeed other child-killing mothers in Greek myths: Althaea caused the death of her son Meleager by burning in the fire the magical brand on which his life depended[9]; but this is not quite comparable with Medea, because Althaea did not directly kill her son with her own hands. Themisto killed her own children, but unintentionally, because she was trying to kill Ino's sons[10]. Harpalyce killed the child she bore to her own father, but this seems to be a very late myth[11]. And the three daughters of Minyas, in one of the Dionysus myths, sacrificed one of their sons to the god: but this was a joint affair, and we cannot be sure how deeply the mother herself was involved in the murder[12]. None of these child-killing mothers forms a suitable parallel to Medea.

We thus return to Agave and Procne, the two other mothers whom Euripides might have chosen to mention, according to Page. But we must eliminate Agave in this context, since she was maddened by Dionysus and tore her son Pentheus to pieces believing him to be a mountain lion, so this was not a deliberate murder in the same way as Medea's. Furthermore

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[7] Page (1938) xx n. 8.

[8] It will be seen from what follows that I disagree with Newton (1985), who believes that Euripides was deliberately suppressing other examples of filicides, especially that of Procne, and goes on to interpret *Medea* 1282-9 accordingly. For an interesting discussion of the legends of Ino and Procne, see Fontenrose (1948).

[9] For Meleager's death by the brand, see Bacchylides 5.93-154; Aesch. *Cho.* 603-12; Apollod. 1.8.2-3.

[10] According to Hyg. *Fab.* 4, Euripides dramatised the story in his lost *Ino.*

[11] We find it in Parthenius (*Er. Path.* 13), first century BC, and in Nonnus (*Dion.* 12.71-5), fifth century AD.

[12] For the daughters of Minyas, see Ant. Lib. *Met.* 10 (and further below, pp. 148-9), and cf. Ovid *Met.* 4.1-415; Plu. *Mor.* 299e-300a.

I have argued elsewhere (March 1989) that Euripides made several innovations to the myth in his *Bacchae*, which was staged after his death in 406; and one of them may well have been to make Agave for the first time the murderer of Pentheus, rather than have him killed by the maenads in general. There is no evidence for her child-murder before the play; and although Pentheus' death occurs a number of times on vase-paintings, nowhere is Agave identified. Indeed, on one vase, a psykter of about 520[13], the maenad rending Pentheus' torso is named Galene.

With Agave, then, eliminated, we are left with Procne, and only Procne. So we must now ask (leaving aside Sophocles' play for the moment) what we know about Procne's myth before the production of *Medea* in 431, and whether in fact Euripides could have added her to Ino as a parallel for Medea. We shall consider both literary and iconographic evidence, while making no assumptions about the prior existence of the myth in the form that we know it.

II

The story of the nightingale first occurs in Homer. The first time that she is named Procne is in the fragments of Sophocles: in Homer she is called simply Aedon, which of course means nightingale and which may or may not be a proper noun. Her story is told in the *Odyssey* (19.518-23), where Penelope likens her sorrows to those of Aedon:

> ὡς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέου κούρη, χλωρηῒς ἀηδών,
> καλὸν ἀείδῃσιν ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο,
> δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πυκινοῖσιν,
> ἥ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν,
> παῖδ' ὀλοφυρομένη Ἴτυλον φίλον, ὅν ποτε χαλκῷ
> κτεῖνε δι' ἀφραδίας, κοῦρον Ζήθοιο ἄνακτος.

'As when the daughter of Pandareos, the greenwood nightingale,
sings out her lovely song when spring is just beginning,

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[13] Attic red-figure psykter by Euphronios, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.221; March (1989) 50 and pl. 4.

> perched in the deep foliage of the trees;
> constantly varying the melody she pours forth her far-echoing song,
> mourning Itylus, son of King Zethus, her own dear child,
> whom once she killed with bronze, unwittingly.'

We learn from the scholia the Theban myth that lies behind this simile, which is also recorded by the fifth-century logographer, Pherecydes (*FGrH* 3 F 124). Aedon was married to Zethus, king of Thebes, and they had only one son. But Aedon so much envied her sister-in-law Niobe's many sons[14] that she tried during the night to kill Niobe's eldest son in his sleep. In the darkness she mistook his bed and killed her own son Itylus. Utterly distraught, she begged the gods to turn her into a bird; so Zeus turned her into the nightingale, who sings out her never-ending sorrow for her dead son.

The myth is illustrated on an Attic kylix, dated about 510-500[15]. The kylix is fragmentary, but the woman is clearly pushing the child backwards on to a bed, rejecting his appeal for pity, and is about to thrust her sword into his throat. Names are inscribed: the woman is ΑΕΔΟΝΑΙ and the child is ΙΤΥΣ. (He is Itylus in Homer and Pherecydes, Itys here and elsewhere: the names seem interchangeable.)

So far, however, we have found only one woman, the nightingale, involved in the myth. There is no sister to become the swallow as in Sophocles' *Tereus*. But there must have been another and earlier myth in which the two women played a part, since it is depicted on a temple metope from Thermon in Aetolia, dated about 630 BC[16]. Two women are shown, one each side of a recumbent child, whose head is just visible. The woman on the right is named Chelidon, the swallow, so we may surely

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[14] The numbers vary: six sons and six daughters according to Homer (*Il.* 24.603-4), seven and seven according to Apollodorus (3.5.6).

[15] Attic red-figure kylix by the Magnoncourt Painter, Munich, Antikensammlungen 2638; Sparkes (1985) 29-31; Touloupa (1994) 527, no. 2; March (2000) 124-6 and Fig. 7.1. A drawing of the reconstructed scene can be found in Harrison (1887) 440 and in Sparkes (1985) 30.

[16] Temple metope from Thermon, Athens, National Museum 13410; Schefold (1966) pl. 20; Touloupa (1994) 527, no. 1; March (2000) 126-7 and Fig. 7.3.

assume that the woman on the left is Aedon, the nightingale. It is not clear exactly what is happening. Some suggest, with the later myth in mind, that the women are preparing for the dreadful feast[17], but the painting in fact gives no evidence of this. Schefold believes that the two women are simply mourning the dead child, and that the Aedon-figure, 'which has suffered more damage, was originally the more prominent due to its somewhat larger build and its more bowed position; she would have been so portrayed as the mother of Itys' and thus as chief mourner in the child's death[18].

As for early literature, Hesiod mentions the swallow in his *Works and Days* (568-9):

> . . . ὀρθογόη Πανδιονὶς ὦρτο χελιδὼν
> ἐς φάος ἀνθρώποις, ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο.

'Pandion's daughter, the early-lamenting swallow, appears to men when spring is just beginning.'

The swallow is also Pandion's daughter in Sappho fr. 135 LP: τί με Πανδίονις ... χελίδω ... . But these two Pandions are by no means necessarily Pandion, the king of Athens, as in Sophocles' play. References to Athens and its royal line are quite rare in the archaic period, and probably a series of separate tales about various figures was formed into a coherent whole only at a relatively late date. There is particular confusion regarding the two kings named Pandion[19]. A fragment from the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, fr. 180 MW, adds further uncertainty. Here it seems that Dardanus (presumably, as elsewhere, the ancestor of the Trojan kings, son of Zeus and the Pleiad Electra) marries the daughter of Broteas and fathers Pandion. Martin West comments: 'This is a quite extraordinary piece of genealogy . . . a mystery.'[20]

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[17] E.g. Touloupa (1994) 527, no. 1.

[18] Schefold (1966) 36.

[19] See March (2000) 127.

[20] M.L. West (1985) 97.

Certainly, however, we cannot conclude that this Pandion is the Athenian Pandion; so neither must we assume that the Pandion of Hesiod and Sappho is simply the Athenian Pandion of the later myth. Indeed, it may be simply another name, a doublet, of the Pandareos of the *Odyssey* myth, just as we have both Itylus and Itys, and just as Homer (*Od.* 11.271) calls Iocaste, the mother of Oedipus, Epicaste.

In another Hesiodic citation, Hes. fr. 312 MW (Aelian *Var. Hist.* 12.20), we read:

> λέγει Ἡσίοδος τὴν ἀηδόνα μόνην ὀρνίθων ἀμελεῖν ὕπνου καὶ διὰ τέλους ἀγρυπνεῖν· τὴν δὲ χελιδόνα οὐκ εἰς τὸ παντελὲς ἀγρυπνεῖν, καὶ ταύτην δὲ ἀπολωλέναι τοῦ ὕπνου τὸ ἥμισυ. τιμωρίαν δὲ ἄρα ταύτην ἐκτίνουσι διὰ τὸ πάθος τὸ ἐν Θρᾴκῃ κατατολμηθὲν τὸ ἐς τὸ δεῖπνον ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἄθεσμον.
>
> 'Hesiod says that only the nightingale among birds has no thought for sleep and is completely wakeful; but that the swallow is not altogether wakeful and loses half her sleep. They pay this penalty because of the sufferings they dared to cause in Thrace at that lawless feast.'

We must note here that only the first part of this, with the accusative and infinitive construction, is Aelian's quotation of what was in Hesiod. The comment about the penalty occurring because of the lawless feast in Thrace could well be his own explanation of the Hesiodic statement, based on his knowledge of later forms of the myth. Thus the nightingale's wakefulness may not be a penalty at all, but due simply to her all-consuming grief, greater than that of the swallow.

The myth occurs briefly in Aeschylus[21]. In the *Agamemnon* (1142-5), he mentions the nightingale, ἀηδών, mourning 'Itys, Itys'. And in *Suppliants* (58-67), we have Tereus named, and the wife of Tereus, the nightingale, ἀηδόνος; and not only the nightingale, but the κιρκηλάτου nightingale, the 'hawk-pursued nightingale'. This suggests that, in Aeschylus's concept of the myth, Tereus was turned, not into a hoopoe, as

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[21] And the lament of the nightingale for Itys becomes a commonplace in later Greek tragedy: e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 629, *El.* 107, 148, Eur. fr. 773, 23-6 Nauck (*Phaethon*), *Rhes.* 545.

later, but into a hawk[22]. This of course makes very good sense, for we know that hawks pursue nightingales, as in Hesiod's famous passage, *Works and Days* 203-212; so a hawk could be seen as the obvious choice for the myth's original metamorphosis, when Tereus pursued the nightingale to punish her for killing their child (65-7).

We might expect more light to be shed on the matter by two fragments of a hydria[23] – painted about 470-460, so probably just after the Aeschylean play – which depict a man's head with a bird perched on top of it. The man is inscribed TEP, so this is presumably Tereus; and the bird on his head suggests a metamorphosis. Unfortunately these fragments are not a lot of help, since it is hardly possible to identify the bird. It is certainly not particularly hawk-like, and perhaps, sizewise and shapewise, looks more like a pigeon than anything else.

Let us now consider the relevant vase-paintings of the child-murder, again taking care not to assume that the myth depicted is necessarily the same as in the familiar plot of Sophocles' *Tereus*. First and foremost we have a famous kylix by Makron, of about 490-480, depicting a young boy with two women, one of whom has a sword[24]. There are no inscriptions, but it has been taken for granted that this cup depicts Procne and Philomela about to kill Itys[25]. A closer examination, however, throws doubt on this interpretation. The woman on the right is generally thought to be the mother, Procne, holding Itys, and the woman on the left Philomela, with sword at her side, about to carry out the murder. She holds her hands high, gesturing with her fingers, supposedly because she has no tongue and cannot speak. But there is a very real problem with this interpretation, because in extant versions of the myth it is never the sister, Philomela, who kills Itys: she is always the victim, raped and mutilated by Tereus, and it is Procne who acts, who does the terrible murder out of anger and revenge for what her husband has done.

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[22] Tereus also becomes a hawk in Hyg. *Fab.* 45. Perhaps Sophocles changed Tereus from hawk to hoopoe because the hoopoe's call, *pou, pou* (see p. 141 above), reflected the highly dramatic part of the play where Tereus asked for his son, not realising that he had just eaten him.

[23] Red-figure hydria by the Altamura Painter, now in Reggio. The fragments have been published by Prange (1989) pl. 37, A 69.

[24] Attic red-figure kylix by Makron, Paris, Louvre G 147; Sparkes (1985) pl. 35; Touloupa (1994) 527, no. 4; March (2000) 130 Fig. 7.4.

[25] In fact I made this kylix one of the illustrations in my *Cassell Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (March 1998:372) with this very caption. But the more I look at the kylix, the more uneasy I become, and the less happy I am that this is the Procne myth as we know it.

If we look at this picture with no preconceptions, we see on the right what is believably a mother, holding her child. To quote Brian Sparkes' clear assessment of the scene: 'the mother lifts the boy from the ground by the upper arms and seems to be moving away to our right'; she is 'holding her child close to her as though to protect him'[26]. Exactly so. As for the woman on the left, with the sword at her side: if we do not assume her tonguelessness, then her gestures seem simply threatening as she reaches out for the child, presumably with intent to murder. So I suggest that this is not a simple illustration of the usual Procne story.

There are two possibilities, the first being that this is a different myth altogether. The only other story that might be depicted here is, I suggest, that of the daughters of Minyas – Leucippe, Arsippe and Alcathoe – who were punished for failing to worship Dionysus. Antoninus Liberalis (*Met.* 10) tells us that the girls preferred to stay indoors weaving instead of going out and joining in the revels with the other women at the Dionysian festival. Dionysus himself appeared to them in the form of a young girl and warned them not to neglect the god, and when they ignored him he turned himself into a bull, a lion and a leopard, while milk and nectar flowed from their looms. The girls were so terrified that they drew lots, and when Leucippe's lot came out they seized her son Hippasus and sacrificed him to Dionysus, then went out to join the maenads.

Antoninus Liberalis is late (second century AD); but he tells us that his story is much earlier, and comes from both Nicander, who is perhaps second century BC, and Corinna, who was traditionally thought to be a contemporary of Pindar. So it is quite plausible that the myth was around in Aeschylus' time; and indeed his lost tragedy *Xantriai*, the 'wool-carders', which seems to have been about the rejection of the worship of

Dionysus, was quite possibly about this particular myth[27]. So if the Makron kylix is an illustration of this myth, then here we have Leucippe trying to protect Hippasos from one of her sisters, who is intent on carrying him off to sacrifice.

The second possibility is that this does indeed depict the Procne myth, but that the story shown is different from the one with which we are most familiar. Here then we would have the sister intent on murder, and the mother unwilling, trying to protect her child. It is just possible that here too there is a connection with maenadism, because Apollodorus happens to mention (3.14.7) that the worship of Dionysus was instituted in Athens in the reign of Pandion. We know that his worship was usually instituted on earth with reluctance, rejection, and the bloodshed of some victim (as in the daughters of Minyas myth, as in the Pentheus myth). So it may be that in the early version of the Procne myth, Itys was in some way a victim to Dionysus[28]. Certainly Ovid (*Met.* 6.587-8) says that the crime was perpetrated when the Thracian women were celebrating the festival of Dionysus, and that the two women disguised themselves as maenads. His story is in many respects the usual Sophoclean version; but the Dionysiac aspect may be an intrusion from an older story[29].

This is, of course, speculation. But we must conclude that there is uncertainty as to exactly what is happening on the Makron kylix, and, this being the case, there is also doubt as to exactly what is shown on a set of kylix fragments of about 500-490 which seem to show a woman killing a child: a savage scene, with behind the child another woman, whose fingers can just be seen curled around the child's right wrist[30]. The child is inscribed Itys. It has been assumed, on the analogy of the Makron kylix, that the figure on the right is the mother holding up her child, and the figure on the left the sister carrying out the murder. But if we allow that there is some doubt about the Makron scene, then there are other possibilities here. Certainly the left-hand woman, let us say Philomela, is the active murderer. But is the right-hand woman, let us say Procne, necessarily helping in the murder, or could she be trying to save the child, to pull him away? Or again, this could be a maenadic scene, and the child a Dionysiac victim. We cannot be sure, with so small a set of fragments, just what is happening, and we must not simply assume that our familiar story lies behind the scene.

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[26] Sparkes (1985) 31.

[27] The *Xantriai* certainly dealt with the rejection of the worship of Dionysus, either by Pentheus or by the daughters of Minyas: see Lloyd-Jones (1963) 435-7; also Radt (1985) 280-7.

[28] Burkert (1983) 179-185 links the early nightingale-myth to Dionysian ritual.

[29] Just as Ovid's version of the Pentheus myth in *Met.* 3.511-733 may well have been influenced, not only by Eur. *Bacch.*, but also by the pre-Euripidean version of the myth: see James (1991-3) with March (1989).

[30] Attic red-figure kylix fragments by Onesimos or the Magnoncourt Painter, Basle, coll. H. Cahn HC 599: Sparkes (1985) 31-3; Touloupa (1996) 527, no. 3; March (2000) 132 Fig. 7.5.

Finally, a column-crater of about 470-460[31] depicts a man on a couch and two women apparently fleeing from him. Beneath the couch is a basket with a child's leg protruding. There are no inscriptions, and one interpretation is that here is Tereus about to pursue Procne and Philomela, having eaten Itys. But there is no certainty that cannibalism was part of the legend before Sophocles; and another possibility is that this depicts a scene from the Thyestes legend, with the remains of his bloody feast beneath him[32]. The Thyestes myth was immensely popular: Sophocles probably wrote at least one tragedy on it; so did Euripides, and so did at least six other tragedians[33].

To summarise, then, what we know from the literary and iconographic evidence for the myth before Euripides presented his *Medea* in 431: we have the names *aedon* and *chelidon*, nightingale and swallow, which may or may not be proper nouns; the swallow at least is the daughter of somebody called Pandion, of uncertain origin. We have a dead child, Itys, son of the nightingale. But we do not know exactly how or why the child's death occurred; nor do we know how actively involved the mother was in that death. We have Tereus, the husband of the nightingale, who seems to have been transformed into a hawk, and who in his bird-form pursues his wife. She perpetually sings in mourning for her dead son. Nothing else is certain.

So in answer to our question as to whether Euripides could have added Procne to Ino as a parallel for Medea, we have to reply that this was by no means necessarily the case – unless, of course, Sophocles' *Tereus* was produced prior to the *Medea*. But since this is deeply uncertain, I suggest that we take Euripides' words at face value, and accept that when the Chorus sing 'I have heard of one woman, only one of all that have lived, who put her hand to her own children: Ino', they do indeed mean what they say: there was no established myth whereby the woman whom Sophocles calls Procne deliberately set out to murder her own child. Thus, I further suggest that Sophocles' *Tereus* was produced later than Euripides' *Medea*.

III

So let us move one step further, speculative though it is. Let us imagine that Sophocles was watching Euripides' *Medea* (as surely he would have been), deeply affected and inspired by the impact of this tremendous play. It became the inspiration for his own tragedy. The Chorus in Euripides sing 'One woman, only one, put her hand to her own children: Ino'. Sophocles would make, after Medea, a third woman do a similar deed.

Medea knows full well the grief she will cause herself by killing her sons, and says to herself, just before she kills them (1246-9):

> καὶ μὴ κακισθῇς μηδ' ἀναμνησθῇς τέκνων
> ὡς φίλταθ', ὡς ἔτικτες· ἀλλὰ τήνδε γε
> λαθοῦ βραχεῖαν ἡμέραν παίδων σέθεν,
> κἄπειτα θρήνει.

'Do not weaken, do not remember how you love your children, how you gave them life. Instead, for this brief day forget your sons – and mourn hereafter.'

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[31] Attic red-figure column-krater, Rome, Villa Giulia 3579; Touloupa (1994) 527, no. 6; March (2000) 133 Fig. 7.6.

[32] Cannibalistic parallels would certainly later be drawn between the legends of Thyestes and Procne. In Seneca's *Thyestes* (275-9), Atreus invokes Procne and Philomela to inspire him. In Ovid's *Fasti* (2.627-30), Atreus and Thyestes, Medea, Ino, and Procne and Philomela are linked.

[33] Lloyd-Jones (1996) 106-7; cf. Plato *Laws* 838c.

So what better myth for Sophocles to choose than that of the nightingale who forever mourns her dead son? – the nightingale, moreover, who, after taking her vengeance, 'lifts her winged body into the air' (*Med.* 1297). He would take the nightingale and the swallow from the earlier myth, giving them the human names of Procne and Philomela and making them sisters. Procne's motive for killing her son would be similar to Medea's jealous desire for revenge on a faithless husband. He would take the robe, that instrument of death in other tragedies – in the *Medea*, in his own *Trachiniae* – and develop the theme, making it, with its woven story of Philomela's sufferings, a means of recognition, revenge and death.

He hears Medea give her, later very famous, speech about the trials of a woman's life, beginning (at 230) 'Of all creatures that have life and thought, we women are the most unfortunate'. He would write along similar lines; and a small fragment of what he wrote remains (fr. 583):

> νῦν δ' οὐδέν εἰμι χωρίς. ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
> ἔβλεψα ταύτῃ τὴν γυναικείαν φύσιν,
> ὥς οὐδέν ἐσμεν. αἳ νέαι μὲν ἐν πατρὸς
> ἥδιστον, οἶμαι, ζῶμεν ἀνθρώπων βίον·
> τερπνῶς γὰρ ἀεὶ παῖδας ἀνοία τρέφει.
> ὅταν δ' ἐς ἥβην ἐξικώμεθ' ἔμφρονες,
> ὠθοῴμεθ' ἔξω καὶ διεμπολώμεθα
> θεῶν πατρῴων τῶν τε φυσάντων ἄπο,
> αἱ μὲν ξένους πρὸς ἄνδρας, αἱ δὲ βαρβάρους,
> αἱ δ' εἰς ἀγηθῆ δώμαθ' , αἱ δ' ἐπίρροθα.
> καὶ ταῦτ', ἐπειδὰν εὐφρόνη ζεύξῃ μία,
> χρεὼν ἐπαινεῖν καὶ δοκεῖν καλῶς ἔχειν.

'Now on my own I am nothing. But I have often regarded the nature of women in this way, that we are nothing. When we are young we live the sweetest of mortal lives, I think, in our father's home; for innocence always raises children in happiness. But when we come of age and have understanding, we are pushed out and sold, far from the gods of our fathers and from our parents, some to foreign husbands, some to barbarians, some to joyless homes, others to abusive ones. And this, once a single night has joined us, we must approve and think to be happiness.'

Sophocles hears Jason at the end of the *Medea* cry (1339-40):

> οὐκ ἔστιν ἥτις τοῦτ' ἂν Ἑλληνὶς γυνὴ
> ἔτλη ποθ' . . .

'No Greek woman would have dared to do this!'

He would have not only a Greek woman, but an Athenian woman committing this terrible murder: Pandion/Pandareos of the early myth becomes Pandion the Athenian king, and the myth is made Athenian – just as Aeschylus brought the Argive Orestes into Athenian myth in his *Eumenides*; just as Euripides introduced Theseus into the Theban myth of the Seven against Thebes in his *Suppliants*; just as Sophocles himself would later bring the Theban Oedipus to Athens in his *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Jason cries to Medea (1330-1):

> ἐκ δόμων σε βαρβάρου τ' ἀπὸ χθονὸς
> Ἕλλην' ἐς οἶκον ἠγόμην . . .

'I brought you from your home in a barbarian land to a Greek house.'

Procne would be, not a barbarian in a Greek land, but an Athenian woman taken to the barbarian land of Thrace[34]. And there, not only would she kill her son, as does Medea, but she would serve him up for her faithless husband to eat.

This has been the story ever since. Small wonder that it prevailed over the earlier myth and became the standard version. And the date of Sophocles' *Tereus*? Probably soon after the *Medea* – let us say, perhaps,

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[34] P.Oxy. 3013, as we have seen, makes Thrace the setting, as does Tzetzes on Hesiod *WD* 566; and fr. 582 of the play mentions the Thracians. Thucydides (2.29.3) claims that Tereus lived, not in Thrace, but in Daulia, a part of Phocis inhabited by Thracians. As Hornblower comments (1991, 287), this digression looks polemical, as though Thucydides were correcting, from superior knowledge, another's verdict – quite possibly that of Sophocles. If *Tereus* was indeed produced soon after *Medea*, Thucydides would have been familiar with it before his exile in 424.

429[35]. A statue dated about 430-420, now in the Acropolis Museum and usually identified as depicting Procne and Itys, may originally have been a dedication on the occasion of a victory in a dramatic competition[36]. It is tempting to think that this occasion was a Sophoclean victory which included *Tereus*.

IV

So let us now move on to the *Tereus* itself. It is not my intention to attempt to reconstruct the play scene by scene[37], but to offer some general thoughts based on the fragments and other material. Since it is quite invalid to impose on Sophocles' play a framework of events and circumstances found in later versions of the myth[38], I shall begin by considering some possible analogies with extant plays of Sophocles, as well as with *Medea*.

In *Tereus* the focus is on two sisters, so we think at once of *Antigone* and *Electra*, where we have the strong and positive sister – Antigone, Electra – contrasted with the weaker, more negative one – Ismene, Chrysothemis. The plot of *Tereus* would seem to demand a similar contrast, given that Philomela was a mutilated victim of aggression. And Procne would have become a typically Sophoclean 'hero', positive,

courageous, determined, deaf to persuasion, praying for revenge and cursing her enemies[39]. Her child had to die because only in that way could she, like Medea, deal her husband the maximum hurt; but because she was a Sophoclean hero, audience sympathy must have remained with her, despite the horror of her deed. She and her sister would have been honoured because of their spirited vengeance on the outrage offered them by Tereus[40].

Again thinking of the *Antigone*: here a sister insists that her dead brother's claims are paramount, beyond even the claims of a husband or child[41]. In *Tereus* a sister demonstrates that her sister's claims are paramount[42], beyond that of a husband, and even to the extent of killing her own child.

But this is the myth of the nightingale, who mourns forever her dead son; and if there is mourning, there must also be grief. So Procne must love her child, and the killing of Itys can be no easy revenge-murder. We know that Sophocles liked to bring children onstage: think of Ajax' son in *Ajax*, Oedipus' daughters in *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Think also of Medea's moving monologue (*Med.* 1021-80), where her agonised indecision about whether or not she can bring herself to kill her sons lifts her child-murder from melodrama to real tragedy: she knows that by giving Jason the maximum pain she is hurting herself even more. Sophocles would have written a scene quite as moving between the anguished mother and the doomed child. Perhaps there is a hint of this in Ovid, where Procne has just decided that her child must die (6. 624-633, Innes' translation):

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[35] For datings of the play by earlier scholars, see Radt (1977) 436. S.P. Mills (1980) draws some interesting parallels between *Medea* and *Tereus*, though working on the assumption that *Tereus* was produced first.

[36] See Robertson (1975) 286-7; also Kiso (1984) 75, Touloupa (1994) 528, no. 11.

[37] Attempts at reconstruction can be found in Calder (1974), Kiso (1984), Sutton (1984), Hourmouziades (1986), Dobrov (1993), and Fitzpatrick (2001). It was only at the Nottingham 'Fragments of Sophocles' Conference that I learnt of David Fitzpatrick's article, then awaiting publication, and found with pleasure that some of his deductions are similar to mine.

[38] Burnett (1998) 180, for instance, stresses the need to forget the 'gorgeous horrors' of Ovid's narrative in *Met.* 6, which, with its panoramic stretches of time and space, can bear no relation to the shape of an Attic tragedy. And see Fitzpatrick (2001) and his scrupulous reservations about the validity of using the version of any later author to reconstruct Sophocles' play; also Curley's comments, this volume.

[39] On the Sophoclean hero, see Knox (1964), esp. 1-61.

[40] It is clear from Demosthenes 60.28 that they were indeed honoured for their deed. Burnett (1998) 109 notes that the sisters could not have been condemned onstage, for they were the heroine sponsors of the Pandionid tribe who would have made up roughly one tenth of the audience.

[41] *Ant.* 904-12; though some doubt the authenticity of the passage.

[42] And perhaps the father's claims too, for the hypothesis notes that Tereus 'did not keep his pledged faith' (P.Oxy. 3013.16), presumably an oath sworn to Pandion. Burnett (1998) 184 n. 25 compares the oath sworn between Oedipus and Theseus at *OC* 1632-4 and 1637, where Theseus swears to take care of Antigone and Ismene.

> 'But when her son came close and greeted her, drawing down her head with his little arms, kissing her and prattling childish endearments, the mother was shaken. Her anger was checked, and against her will tears gathered in her eyes. But as soon as she felt her excessive love for the child weakening her resolution, she turned away from him again to look at her sister's face. As her eyes went from one to the other, she upbraided herself, saying: "Why does one of them speak to me lovingly, while the other has no tongue to speak at all? Why does he call me mother, when she cannot call me sister?"'

There is plenty of drama here, which in Sophocles' hands could have been turned into something quite as powerful as Medea's agonised monologue.

We do not know the gender of the Chorus in *Tereus*: did Sophocles have a female Chorus, sympathising with the protagonist, as in *Trachiniae*, or a male Chorus[43] who would have emphasised her isolation, as in *Antigone*? Certainty is impossible. But it seems most natural to assume that, as in *Medea*, the Chorus was female, sympathising with the protagonist's predicament and willing to be sworn to secrecy in any revenge taken for harm done. Procne must have openly discussed her plans for revenge onstage, and this would have been unlikely in the presence of a hostile male Chorus. Then at the end of the play the sisters would have emerged from the palace, pursued by an enraged Tereus[44], and they would have fled through the orchestra and along one of the eisodoi (or perhaps along both, with the sisters separating). Again, this would have been more easily effected if the Chorus were female. Moreover in fr. 583 Procne seems to be addressing a sympathetic female audience (she repeatedly says 'we'), which is quite plausibly the Chorus; and in fr. 584 she could well be envying the women of the Chorus their life, safe in their own homeland.

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[43] Calder (1974) 88 argues for a male Chorus, and is followed by Kiso (1984) 61 and Dobrov (1993) 199-200; but Fitzpatrick (2001) 94-95 shows that these arguments are not valid.

[44] This moment is probably depicted on an Apulian vase-fragment from Paestum (now in Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen), dated 430-420: Tereus, in stage-costume, bursts from the palace, brandishing what may be a small bone and pursuing two fleeing women. See Bieber (1925), Touloupa (1994) 528, no. 9.

Finally I should like to consider the recognition scene in the play, using chapter 16 of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Aristotle has been talking about recognition by visible signs or tokens, like the cradle in the *Tyro* or Odysseus' scar in the *Odyssey*, which he says creates the least artistic kind of recognition. He goes on (1454b):

> δεύτεραι δὲ αἱ πεποιημέναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ διὸ ἄτεχνοι. οἷον Ὀρέστης ἐν τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ ἀνεγνώρισεν ὅτι Ὀρέστης· ἐκείνη μὲν γὰρ διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, ἐκεῖνος δὲ αὐτὸς λέγει ἃ βούλεται ὁ ποιητὴς ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ μῦθος· διὸ ἐγγύς τι τῆς εἰρημένης ἁμαρτίας ἐστίν, ἐξῆν γὰρ ἂν ἔνια καὶ ἐνεγκεῖν. καὶ ἐν τῷ Σοφοκλέους Τηρεῖ ἡ τῆς κερκίδος φωνή.

> 'Second come those recognitions manufactured by the poet, and inartistic for that reason. As when in the *Iphigeneia* [this must be *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*] Orestes reveals that he is Orestes. She makes herself known by the letter; but Orestes himself says what the poet, not the plot, requires. This, therefore, is near the fault that I just mentioned, for he might as well have brought some tokens as well. Another example is "the voice of the shuttle" in Sophocles' *Tereus*.'

The 'voice of the shuttle' is our fr. 595 of the play, and of course refers to Philomela's weaving.

Throughout the whole of Chapter 16, Aristotle is discussing many examples of the recognitions of persons[45], so we must, I think, assume that he is doing so too when he refers to the *Tereus*. This being the case, the logical inference is that he is likening the recognition of brother and sister in the *Iphigeneia*, by means of the letter, to that of sister and sister in the *Tereus*, by means of the weaving. If so, then Procne and Philomela must have been onstage together when their recognition took place. This in turn means that, in Sophocles, Tereus did not shut Philomela up in a prison after he had ravished her and cut out her tongue, as we find in Ovid's account, but instead he brought the tongueless Philomela home with him.

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[45] Earlier in Chapter 11, he notes in passing that recognitions could be, not only of persons, but of facts or circumstances (1452a); then he continues: 'But the recognition which is most intimately connected with the plot and action is the one described above', i.e. the recognition of persons. He then focuses upon this kind of recognition.

Hourmouziades too argues that this was the case, pointing out that, to keep his vile deed quiet, Tereus needed either to cut out Philomela's tongue, or to shut her away, but he did not need to do both. He goes on to suggest that there was no imprisonment of the girl in Sophocles, only the tongue-cutting; and that Tereus brought Philomela home with him, raped and mutilated, then pretended to Procne that her tonguelessness was an affliction sent by the gods[46]. But in this case Procne would have known her sister as soon as she arrived, so there would have been no need for the kind of recognition scene which Aristotle is discussing in Chapter 16[47].

I suggest, therefore, that on his journey home from Athens Tereus ravished Philomela and cut out her tongue[48], then – as in Antoninus Liberalis's otherwise very different story in *Met.* 11 – he cut the girl's hair and dressed her in slave's clothes, then brought her into the palace as a servant, telling Procne that Philomela was dead. Procne believed him[49] because she did not recognise this servant as her sister – which would have been entirely believable in masked tragedy if Philomela were simply a mute slave, with slave's hair, slave's mask, and slave's clothes. But in a

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[46] Hourmouziades (1986) 135. He is followed in this by Fitzpatrick (2001) 96-97. Burnett (1998) 181 n. 13 shows that Philomela's imprisonment could not have been staged within the conventions of an Attic tragedy. But her unconvincing solution is to have Tereus leave Philomela somewhere along the wayside, then return home claiming that she is dead, while in due course Philomela somehow produces the weaving from a nebulous location in the wilds.

[47] Both Hourmouziades and Fitzpatrick (see n. 46) argue that the piece of weaving leads to a recognition, not of sister and sister, but merely of the true facts of the situation. Hourmouziades would have this happen offstage, Fitzpatrick (with Aristotle in mind) onstage.

[48] This could well have been Sophocles' own innovation to underline Tereus' savagery, for there is no certain evidence for the tongue-cutting prior to his *Tereus*. At Aesch. *Ag.* 1050-2, to speak like a swallow is to use unintelligible barbarian language, not to be unable to speak.

[49] I suggest that soon after this moment we place fr. 583, where Procne laments her new sense of isolation to the sympathetic Chorus: 'Now on my own I am nothing.' The Sophoclean hero typically feels him/herself isolated and alone: see Knox (1964) 32-3.

written story; of course, this lack of recognition would sound far-fetched – and so Ovid later rationalised the narrative by having Philomela incarcerated far from the palace, in order to make his version more plausible. But he also had to include the cutting-out of her tongue because this was by now an unchangeable part of the story, thanks to Sophocles.

In a tragedy, however, Procne's failure to recognise the new servant as her sister would be plausible; and as a servant Philomela would of course have had access to the looms. So she then prepared her 'voice of the shuttle' and in due course brought it to Procne. The piece of weaving would thus have been a vital Sophoclean prop, comparable to the urn in *Electra*, the sword in *Ajax*, and the bow in *Philoctetes*, and it would have led to a moving recognition and reunion between the sisters onstage. And we realise just how moving Sophocles could have made such a scene, when we think of the only full-blown recognition scene in his extant plays, in the *Electra*, when a sister recognises her brother, who also, apparently, has come back from the dead. In *Tereus*, Procne alone would have had to sing lyrics of joy/pain/anger, both for herself and for her mute sister.

The women, of course, must have been alone onstage when their recognition took place. It is sometimes argued that Tereus must have been onstage too, because a Lucanian bell-krater by the Dolon Painter may depict Philomela delivering the weaving to Procne, while a man who may be Tereus and another unidentified man stand by[50]. But this is to misunderstand the way that the vase-painters worked: they often brought together several different moments of a myth, or a play, into one single scene. Consider the famous Sicilian calyx-krater showing a scene from *Oedipus Tyrannus*[51]: the messenger is about to reveal the truth to Oedipus while a horrified Jocasta stands by. Also present are their two daughters, who in fact come onstage only in the last scene of the play. The artist seems to have included them to add poignancy and to act as a reminder of what this moment means for their future. So if the Lucanian bell-krater does indeed depict a scene from *Tereus*, with Philomela bringing the weaving to Procne, then the artist has surely added Tereus as a reminder of the terrible fate which this dramatic moment will bring about for him. His (dramatically implausible) presence onstage during this recognition scene can thus be discounted.

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[50] Paris, Louvre CA 2193, dated 400-370/360. The scene has also been identified as the delivery of the poisoned robe in *Medea*, e.g. by Trendall and Webster (1971) 97, III.3.35. I myself favour this interpretation. The children have delivered their gifts and have left; Creusa (some say this is Procne) is now dressed in the glorious robe and tiara sent by Medea; the maidservant (some say this is Philomela) has in her hands the box which held the tiara (why would Philomela carry a box?), and also the cloak which Creusa has just taken off in order to don her new clothes (some say this cloak is Philomela's weaving, but it is plain, apart from a stripe, and it hardly appears to be a significant part of the scene); Creon (some say this is Tereus) stands by, sceptre in hand: his presence is a reminder that he will soon be dying alongside his daughter; a worried manservant looks on, no doubt the one who will soon report the terrible deaths to Medea.

Another question concerning the recognition scene is whether the piece of weaving told its story in a script (as at Apollod. 3.14.8, γράμματα) or in pictures. A script would seem to be the most convincing option, for pictures could have been understood by the Thracians, while they, being illiterate barbarians[52], could not possibly have read woven words. Thus Tereus may have removed Philomela's tongue, but literacy still gave her the power to 'speak', which demonstrated the victory of Athenian culture over Thracian violence and was an emphatic statement of the superiority of civilised, literate Athens.

The essence of an effective recognition scene is to have the audience know the true facts of the situation, while the people onstage do not – until the recognition actually occurs. So a final important question is: how did Sophocles let his audience know that the servant whom Tereus brought home with him was really Philomela, raped and mutilated by him? Did Tereus give the background in the Prologue (as Deianeira does in *Trachiniae*)? This sounds highly unlikely. Or did Tereus have a servant in his confidence, a male retainer, who could have reported in the Prologue

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[51] Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale 'P. Orsi' 66557, dated 350-325. It is illustrated in Taplin (1993) pl. 6.112 and discussed 27-9. Taplin demonstrates (21-9) that illustrations on vases are not 'scene-specific'.

[52] The Athenians saw the Thracians as stereotypical barbarians: see Hall (1989) 104-5, 126.

what had happened, as the Nurse does in *Medea*? This is perhaps rather more likely, especially as there is some evidence for the presence of another male character from fr. 588, where a man (masculine participle) is urged to tell the truth, perhaps by Procne in her process of discovery[53]. Or was everything, perhaps, explained in dialogue between Tereus and this servant (six out of the seven surviving Sopholean plays begin with dialogue)? Or did a god open the Prologue and make the true facts clear, as Athena opens *Ajax*? This last possibility is perhaps the most attractive. Most critics are agreed that the play ends with the epiphany of some god[54] explaining the metamorphoses of the characters into birds[55]. So the play could have opened with this same god telling of Tereus' deed; or indeed with a different god, just as the action of Euripides' *Ion* is sandwiched between the appearances of Hermes and Athena, or as in his *Hippolytus* (of 428, so of a similar date to *Tereus* if the arguments above are correct) where the action is framed by the epiphanies of Aphrodite and Artemis. If Sophocles introduced two gods into *Tereus*, then perhaps Ares, who was after all Tereus' father, could have told of his son's bloody deed at the beginning of the play, while Athena, with her Athenian connections, would have spelled out the victory of the Athenian women at its end.

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[53] And an unknown man is depicted on the Lucanian bell-krater mentioned above: see p. 159.

[54] Ares is suggested by Calder (1974) 88; Hermes by Kiso (1984) 62-3 and Dobrov (1993) 212; Athena by Burnett (1998) 183 n. 21; Apollo by Fitzpatrick (2001) 99-100.

[55] Dobrov (1993) 196 believes that Tereus appeared onstage in hoopoe-form, but Sophocles would not have brought a bird-man onstage: see Dunbar (1995) 164-5 on Ar. *Birds* 101: 'the spectacle would not be unparalleled . . . but a man-sized hoopoe seems too grotesque for a tragedy.' Burnett (1998) 183 n. 23 notes that the Aristophanic hoopoe is funny because he is the visible embodiment of the tragic poet's (risible) words.

Like Burnett (1998) 183 n. 22, I am loth to accept that fr. 581 belongs to Sophocles' play. Aristotle attributed it (obviously incorrectly) to Aeschylus, while most scholars since Welcker have given it to Sophocles; but it seems unworthy of both authors in sense and style. Perhaps Philocles, the only other tragic poet to write a *Tereus*, was the author: he was, as Fitzpatrick (2001) points out, the nephew of Aeschylus, which might account for Aristotle's error.

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