

KATERINA PHILIPPODES

Scholars are in agreement that Euripides' *Acchus* is the source for the XIth epistle of the *Heroides*. Until the publication of the *hypothese* of this tragedy in 1961, *Acchus* was known to us only from a few fragments and some remarks by ancient authors. Though, however, some scholars, bearing in mind the *hypothese*, made comparative studies on Euripides' play and Ovid's poem, the results of their studies seem to have been underestimated or even completely neglected by others who later wrote on Ovid's *Heroides* XI. F. Verducci,¹ for example, disconnects the Latin poem from its literary tradition and supports the assumption that the letter "unfolds a story of incest" (this idea is pervading the relevant chapter in her book) and that Canace is punished for her incest. For F. Spithöfer too, who favours Verducci's general interpretation of Canace's attitude, Canace's epistle is a letter of "pathologischer Erotik"; he further holds that "das Pathologische des Inzests", among other factors, has compromised Canace's elegiac role. Such interpretations are indebted to extra-textual factors, namely to the critic's ethical notions towards the sensitive theme of incest.²

In this paper I intend to show that *Heroides* XI is not "an incest poem", that Ovid treats Canace's liaison with her brother Macareus as if it were a normal love affair, and that he presents the tragic denouement as the outcome of misfortune and not of moral deviation. First, I shall examine the text of the epistle in order to demonstrate that it does not offer any indication whatsoever that Ovid stigmatizes the relation between sister and brother. Next, I shall com-

1. *Ovid's Love-Shop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum* (Princeton 1985), 210, 219, and 221.

2. *Ovid's Heroides als Elegien* (Zetemata 89, München 1992), 108, and 110.

3. For other scholars who wrote after 1961, like Jacobson and Labarre, see below.

pare this story to Ovid's three other tales of incest (Phaedra's passion (*Her.* IV), the illicit loves of Byblis (*Mel.* IX) and Myrrha (*Mel.* X)) and I shall show that some textual and thematic elements relevant to incest which frequently appear in the other stories, are totally absent from Canace's epistle; whenever Ovid wants to speak against incest (especially in the *Metamorphoses*), he employs specific verbal and/or content material and describes the psychological conflict of the women involved. Finally, taking into consideration the comparative research on Euripides and Ovid I shall attempt to elucidate some lines in Canace's letter which presuppose the Greek model and gain their complete meaning only in relation to it.

First a summary of *Heroides* XI. Canace writes this epistle which she addresses to her brother, Macareus, the moment she is about to kill herself with a sword, succumbing so to the command which her father, Aeolus, gave. She starts narrating all the events which took place and led to the tragic end in their chronological order. She fell in love with Macareus, who was also in love with her. At first she was ignorant of her feelings and her nurse was the first person who understood that the heroine was in love. Soon, Canace became pregnant and her nurse helped her later at childbirth. She bore secretly the child, after Macareus had convinced her of an imminent marriage. However, Aeolus discovered the newly born infant and, therefore, the liaison; in his wrath he commanded the servants to expose his grandson and to hand his daughter a sword in order to commit suicide. Canace laments for her and the baby's fate, rebukes her cruel father and asks Macareus to bury mother and child together.

It is noteworthy that in this elegiac poem of 128 verses³ Canace does not use a single word to blemish her relation with Macareus as abnormal and immoral or at least to question its ethical appropriateness. At this point it is useful to examine the only allusion Canace makes to the incestuous nature of her affair (21-4):

O utinam, Macareu, quae nos commisit in unum,
Venisset leto senior hora meo!

Cur unquam plus me, frater, quam frater amasti,

Et tibi, non debet quod soror esse, fui?

1. I am using the edition of A.P. Palmer, *Ovid's Naxos Heroides. With the Greek Translation of Plautades* (Oxford 1988).

In the first distich Canace expresses an unfulfilled wish: her union with Macareus should come after her death; in the second, she makes rhetorical questions about their mutual love which should have been no more than fraternal. Verducci⁵ considers the second distich as evidence that incest was the reason for Canace's punishment. M. Labate⁶, too, commenting on both distichs characterizes Canace's love "colpevole", although he attempts to read the whole epistle in connection with its Greek prototype. What, however, these lines show, if taken in their context, is Canace's bitterness and disappointment for the dramatic end which Aeolus gave. This is why (with the exception of the four above-quoted lines which imply rebuke of Macareus⁷) Canace's complaints, grief and anger refer not to her lover in sharp contrast to all the other heroines in the collection, but to her father; as H. Jacobson writes "it is almost Aeolus to whom this letter is addressed and around whom it revolves"⁸. In addition, it is highly probable that Canace would have stated the same thoughts which she expresses in the first distich, even in case that her lover had not been Macareus, but someone other than a relative; given the fact that Macareus happens to be her brother, it is expectable of Canace to say in the second distich that he loved her more than a brother should, and that she reciprocated his love⁹. Surely, in the above lines Canace implies that she has had a love affair with her brother; she does not, however, state here or anywhere else in the poem that her doom is ought to the abnormality of the affair.

On the contrary, Canace sees her love affair as normal. In all likelihood two factors may account for this: a) Ovid depicted Canace to be in love with her brother (and not seduced or raped

by him)¹⁰; and b) in opposition to what happens in the other three tales of incest, Canace and Macareus are the only couple whose both members are in love.

Immediately after the only allusion to incest I discussed above, Canace starts to present this mutual and strong love as if it were normal. Thus, she first describes the conventional love symptoms (pallor, thinness, anorexia and sleeplessness), which she had while being very modest and ignorant of such feelings (25-32). Apart from the recurrence of "words expressing [her] ignorance" for the cause of her condition (*nescioquam* (26), *neq. ... poteram mihi reddere carissam* (31), *ne noxam* (32) and of others expressing shyness and inexperience (*dam* (26) instead of *Amorem*, *illud eram* (32) instead of *ama hom.* which were already noted by Jacobson¹¹), we should point out expressions as *ipsa quoque mecum* (25) and *coele lepante* (26), which declare the heroine's voluntary submission to love. The tight bond of the two lovers is manifested by the similar imperative *vive* which both employ: Macareus first, at 59-60, tries to encourage his sister, while in labour, to live: *Et mihi "vive, soror, sum o carissima," anxia / "Vive nec unius corpore pede duos! ..."*; Macareus helps Canace, when the goddess of birth, Lucina, seems to abandon the heroine (59). Later, at 125, Canace herself, before committing the imposed suicide, attempts to console her beloved brother and exhorts him to live after her death: *Vive memores nostri, lacrimasque in cubera iude*. The emphatic position and repetition of the same imperative *vive* in the middle (59-60) and at the end (125) of the poem is not accidental.

In Canace's utterances the intimate relation of the lovers is more clearly demonstrated through the syntactic order of the words in line 126: *Neve reformida corpus amantis amans*. The diaeresis of the pentameter isolates the phrase *amantis amans*. Moreover, the intentional apposition of the two words by the metrical pattern is strengthened by the syntactic relations of *corpus*: *corpus* is the object of *reformida* but it also modifies both *amans* (it is a possible object to *amans*) and *amantem* (since *amantis* is possessive genitive to it). An analogous syntactic linking of words which refer to both lovers appears again in line 58:

10. In Euripides' *Iphigeneia* Macareus either seduced or raped Canace; see discussion in Jacobson (above, note 7), 162-3.

11. Jacobson (above, note 7), 169.

5. Verducci (above, note 1), 224.

6. *La Canace Ovidiana e l'Edo di Euripide*, ANSP 7 (1977), 589-90, note 23.

7. H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton 1974), 163.

8. Jacobson (above, note 7), 166-7.

9. In line 156 of the *Met.* IX the narrator says that Byblis did not love her brother as she should: *non sana ad fratrem, nec qua dabatur, amabat*. As I shall show later, Byblis' incestuous love is seen under a strongly negative light. The semantic content of the verb *dabatur* is defined by the specific context in which the word occurs. So, in Byblis' story *dabatur* refers clearly to a condemnable incest, whereas in Canace's story, where incest is not stigmatized, the same word in line 21 does not acquire any negative connotation.

Peregrinasti pectora nostra tuis, where *pectora nostra* and *[pectantibus] tuis* also represent the intimate relation. On the other hand, Maeareus' strong feelings towards his sister are also disclosed when he addresses her as "*soror a carissima*" (59), while Canace considers herself as *minimam placida soror* (127).

Consequently, Ovid handles the illicit relationship as if it were normal, without being interested in its incestuous aspect. This conclusion will become more obvious if we examine the specific way with which the poet treats negatively his other incestuous stories. Let us begin with Phaedra's epistle (*Her.* IV), a poem which is a *via varia*¹². The heroine is afraid that Hippolytus might have objections to submit to her love, because she is his stepmother: *parvigno videtur colitua nocera* (129); thus, she hurries to reassure him that the base of a possible refusal would be *nomina vana* (130), and that Jupiter's era represents new ethics, since the god is wedded to his sister Juno (131-4). (If Ovid wanted to present Canace's love as incestuous, he could have most appropriately used this mythological paradigm in her letter, even if it is not a *varia*.) Phaedra's hesitation to write the letter (7-10) is probably related to Hippolytus' negative reaction. Furthermore, Phaedra is aware of the fact that her desire for her stepson is prohibited by social imperatives; thus, she characterizes it as *insolita libido* (32) and *culpa* (138, 145, 151), and visualizes the conditions which would permit the development of such an inadmissible liaison; although they will go morally wrong: *licet procrem*, (37), their relationship itself will encourage the two lovers to kiss or embrace each other without arousing anyone's attention (137 ff.)¹³.

In the stories of Byblis (*Met.* IX) and Myrrha (*Met.* X) we can trace more elements which show a negative treatment of the incestuous love by Ovid¹⁴. It is characteristic that the narrator of the tales makes an introduction for each of them, in which he declares

12. Jacobson (above, note 7), 151; Verducci (above, note 1), 193. Except for Phaedra's epistle Verducci also considers Byblis' letter (*Met.* IX 530-63) to be a *via varia* (see additionally note 15).

13. We must note that in this letter incest is only one of the main topics (apart from incest, Phaedra must argue for instance against Hippolytus' attachment to chastity, 87-92, 102, 173-4, and in favour of an exceptional adultery, 17-30).

14. Of course, at the end of the stories, when Ovid narrates the transformation of the two women, he is sympathetic towards these victims of love.

that they must serve as an *exemplum* not to be imitated; especially, in Myrrha's case he is deprecatory of the incestuous union announcing beforehand that he will sing horrible things: *dira canam* (300). After his introduction, the narrator relates the tragic events which entailed the two metamorphoses (Byblis changed into a fountain and Myrrha into a myrrh-tree). Byblis fell in love with her brother, Canace, who, however, as soon as he was informed about his sister's illicit feelings towards him through a letter of hers, repulsed her love full of rage. Myrrha loved her father, Cinyras, who did not suspect her passion. He went to bed with his daughter though, because he was deceived by the nurse; in darkness the nurse had presented Myrrha as a mistress for him. When Cinyras discovered the deception, he tried unsuccessfully to slaughter his daughter.

Both Byblis and Myrrha, before their submission to their furious passion, have fought strongly against it, knowing that it is ethically and socially improper. Ovid (either through the voice of the narrator or of the women in person) expresses their psychological vacillation between *ratio* and *furor*, the ambivalence of their thoughts, their continual efforts to justify or to subdue their feelings. Thus, Byblis tries to resist her "impure desires" (463, 509); she visualizes the fulfilment of them (470 ff.); she employs her rhetoric in order to show that this fulfilment might be acceptable (497 ff.); she writes the letter to her brother after great hesitations (520-9); she confesses to him that she did everything to bring herself to satisfy (*omnia feci ... ut tandem sanior essem*, 541-2); she attempts to persuade her brother that their relationship will help them to enjoy their love undisturbed (557-60); finally, although she is rejected by her brother, she does not give up (585 ff.). Myrrha similarly fights against passion (319-23, 335-55); she argues for the existence of such mating among animals and tribes (323-35); she attempts unsuccessfully to commit suicide, when in front of an impasse (378-87); she discloses her passion to the nurse with great difficulty (387 ff.); she approaches her father's bed (452-62) after ambivalent feelings of expectation (443-5) and many hesitations; and, finally, she believes that she deserves a dire punishment (484-5).

Apart from such an intense psychological conflict of the two women (which is totally missing from Canace's epistle), the stories stem with expressions which mark incest negatively. These expres-

sions consist either of a single word or a periphrasis, usually a combination of a noun and an adjective which connote incest. So, in Byblis' story we trace the following expressions: *perare* (458), *velis* (506), *nefasque* (551, 633), *crimina* (566), *monstra* (657), *spes* ... *obscenas* (468), *obscenae* ... *flammae* (509), *velitae scelerae libidinis* (577), *monstrum exanippe* ... *spem* (638-9). In Myrrha's story words condemning incest are found in even greater number. These words are: *nefas* (307, 322, 352, 404), *crimine* (312), *scelus* (315, 322, 342, 367, 413, 460, 463, 474), *facinus* (448, 474), *diva canam* (300), *faedoque* ... *amori* (319), *spes interdictae* (336), *inopia virgo* (345), *vere* ... *pollae* (352-3), *conculcita velito* (353), *divos* ... *amores* (426), *devoloque corpora* (461), *obsceno* ... *lecho* (465) we must note the syntactic linking of the words in line 465: *accipit obsceno genitor sua viscera lecho genitor* is placed beside *sua viscera* and all this is enveloped by *obsceno* ... *lecho*.

Let us return now to *Heroides* XI. *Sisaronia*, psychological struggle, sentimental ambiguity and vocabulary of moral condemnation do not occur in Canace's letter¹⁵. The heroine never declares that she has done something wrong, blameworthy or unfit to the ethical and social norms. Instead, she considers her love affair natural. It is noteworthy that she accepts Macareus' promise of marriage without questioning it (63).

We have noted the absence from Canace's epistle of all expressions which denote or connote incest, found in abundance in the

other three stories. It is necessary, however, to examine some expressions in Canace's letter which may be taken as implying incest. In lines 101-2 Canace is asking Hymenaeus leave away from *lecho uenula*. One may think that the palace is characterized as *nefandus* which means 'impious, heinous' (*OLD*, s.v.), because of the incestuous love. However, the correct interpretation is different. In the next distich Canace asks Erinyes to bring to her the torches. Labate¹⁶ indicates that the Erinyes, deities who take vengeance for crimes against consanguineous relatives, are chosen here to bring the torches instead of the god of marriage. Thus, we can connect *lecho nefanda* with Erinyes and explain the adjective in the light of Acolus' crimes; in these *lecho* Acolus ordered the forced suicide of his daughter and the exposition of his grandson.

In line 113 the heroine calls her child miserable pledge of a *paupum fausti* ... *amoris*. In the Loeb edition of the *Heroides* G. Showerman translates this phrase as 'inhalloved love', which implies incest. The term, however, means 'at least 'attended by good fortune, fortunate or lucky' love' (*OLD*, s.v. *faustus*, -a, -um 1¹⁷). In this respect Maximus Planudes¹⁸ is correct when he translates *paupum fausti* as 'покуп евδαιμονος'. Canace's love is so characterized, since it had such an unpleasant ending.

Finally, in line 66 Canace relates that she had to conceal her *crimina* from her father's eyes. This word, *crimina*, should not be interpreted as implying incest but may be taken as metaphor for the heroine's infant, the spring of an illicit love affair. This interpretation is corroborated by the context, when the nurse tries to hide the infant away from Acolus (65-9):

... media sedet Acolus aula:
Crimina sunt oculis *subripienda* patris.
 Fringibus infāntem rannisque albensis olivae
 Et levibus vitis seclula celat anus,
 Fictaque sacra facit dicitque precantia verba ...

16. Labate (above, note 6), 585.

17. This specific example is quoted in the lemma.

18. Palmer (above, note 4), 216.

15. Labate (above, note 6), 592, has supported the assumption that the turbid morbidity of an incestuous love has no place in Canace's letter because of the elegant form of the *Heroides*, where the tone is jovial and unprejudiced, whereas such an aspect is appropriate to an epic-tragic level. Thus, he continues, it is not accidental that Byblis' epistle to her brother Caunus is written in the *Metamorphoses* and not in the *Heroides*. I believe, however, that it is not only the literary genre that defines the specific way Ovid treats the incestuous love, but also and mainly the poet's own intentions. For we can easily identify the model of Byblis' letter in the *Heroides*: it is Phaedra's epistle. As Jacobson (above, note 7), 159, note 38, writes: 'Byblis' letter "takes off as has often been noted" [see, for example, E. Paratore, *Influenza delle Heroides sull'episodio di Biblide e Cauno nel L. IX della Metamorfosi ovidiana*, in: *Studi Florentina. I. Romanica abbatia* (Roma 1976), 291-309] "from *Heroides* I. The language is similar, the moral-semantic issues are much the same, there is a seductive letter". I would like to point out that both letters are *suasoriae* and we can find pervasive love in his *Heroides*. In Canace's letter he preferred to put aside the incest dimension by foregrounding other elements of the story, which I summarize at the end of my paper.

A similar use of the word *crimina* is found in line 49. The nurse is speaking there of the 'coming proof' of the clandestine affair, the infant, when Canace is in labour. Such an understanding of these crucial words is based not only on lexical grounds but also on their specific narrative context.

Therefore, in the text of *Heroides* XI incest is not an issue. On the contrary, we have indications which prove that the incestuous love is seen as normal by the two persons involved. So we note that Canace's awareness of her blood relation with Macareus does not prevent her from often calling her lover 'brother' (*frater* 5, 23, *germane* 87) and herself 'sister' (*soror*, 121, 127). This pattern reciprocates Macareus who calls her *soror* (59) and himself *frater* (61). On the contrary, Byblis detests the words which signify her blood relation with Caunus: *iam dominum appellat, iam nomina sanguinis odit, / Byblidi iam maculi, quam se vocat ille sororem* (466-7); cf. "*O ego, vi licet mutato nomine iungi ...*" (487). Byblis clearly avoids to say 'brother' and 'sister': she chooses not to write 'sister' at the beginning of her letter (529), and when she asks a servant to deliver it to Caunus, she adds, after a long pause, the word *fratri*: "*frater has, fidissime, nostro / dixit, et adicit longa post tempore / patri*" (569-70). In Myrrha's tale too, words which signify blood relation are negatively expressed: while Cinyras and Myrrha make love, they address each other as 'father' and 'daughter', because these names were appropriate to their age; in this way their guilt becomes more obvious: *forsitan actibus quoque nomine / filia / dixit / et illa / pater* " *veluti ne nomina desint* (467-8); the nurse also did not dare to say that Myrrha would have sexual intercourse with her father: "*patere tuo / et, non ausa / parente / dicere, conficiat* (429-30). Therefore, it is obvious that in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid as narrator comments on the moral hesitations of his heroes. Given the fact that both Canace and Macareus, in contrast to what happens in the *Metamorphoses*, unreservedly use words which manifest their blood relation, we can safely infer that this relation does not embarrass them and does not hinder their love affair.

But what is Aeolus' attitude to incest? We find no evidence in the text that he condemns incest, even when he discovers the baby. According to Canace's narrative, although the nurse attempted to hide the baby from him, he discovered his grandson through his crying. In an outburst of wrath he shouted all over the palace nei-

ing Canace's *patrem* (79) and cruelly punished mother and child. Thus, from Canace's description we may deduce that the king gets angry because of his discovery of the baby, and consequently of a liaison, in which his daughter is involved with somebody Aeolus does not know. Scholars¹⁹ have wrongly supposed incest to be the cause of Aeolus' punishment. Jacobson²⁰ charges Canace's modesty for the lack of explanation for Aeolus' wrath, and characteristically states for her: "She never recounts why Aeolus gets so angry. Indeed, from her narrative (elliptical, to be sure; 69-88) there seems to be no time (or way) for Aeolus to learn that the father is Macareus, only that Canace has borne a child by someone". No matter how much elliptical the narrative is (and I agree with Jacobson for the rapidity with which the events generally occur and the omission of details), the reason for Aeolus' wrath, as I have above remarked, is given; besides, if the poet intended to mark incest negatively, he would have found the way for his sly heroine to dare to express her shameful feelings. Verducci²¹ on the other hand believes that Canace suppresses Aeolus's reaction to the incestuous union, and observes that "there is no suggestion that the occasion for Aeolus' rage is not incest, but rather, as in the play [i.e. Euripides' *Aeolus*], his daughter's clandestine intercourse". We see, therefore, that scholars are really at a loss, when they try to support their incest theory by giving various explanations for the absence of any outcry against incest in Canace's letter. Their claims are groundless, as they cannot be proved textually. Indicative is Verducci's²² phraseology when referring to Aeolus' command to his daughter to kill herself *ex merito* (96): "Canace seems to take *ex merito* to mean incestuous love"²³. (If I am correct in my interpretation Aeolus believes that Canace deserves punishment for having been involved in a secret love affair.)

19. In *Ovid Recalled* (Bath 1974 [1955]), 99, W.P. Wilkinson had stated that Canace is "doomed to die herself for her incest with her brother Macareus". Paratore above, note 15, 292, paraphrases the contents of the ending of the epistle as "la nascita del figlio della colpa. Fira di Eolo dopo la scoperta dello scandalo e il cimento mortale da cui Canace stessa è oppressa". I later discuss the views of Jacobson and Verducci.

20. Jacobson above, note 7, 168.

21. Verducci above, note 1, 221-2.

22. Verducci above, note 1, 222.

23. From here on all underlining in Verducci's quotations is mine.

Verducci²⁵) makes another assumption referring to Canace's meeting with her nurse which is not supported by Ovid's text. According to Canace's narration, the nurse perceives that the heroine is in love, and the girl admits it (34-6). For Verducci Canace's account is "strictly abbreviated" and the scene is not closed, but if we take into consideration, she argues, the analogous scene in Euripides' *Hippolytus* or in Myrrha's story (*Met. N.*), we can conjecture the development of this scene, too: Canace should confess under the pressure of the nurse that she is in love with her brother and should try to justify her feelings "perhaps defending, perhaps lamenting her incestuous union". Such an assumption not only takes for granted that incest is condemnable to the eyes of both Canace and her nurse, but also depicts a Canace completely different from her characterization by Ovid: throughout her entire letter the heroine neither defends nor laments her love. Furthermore, whenever the nurse appears, either bringing Canace medicines for the unsuccessful attempt at abortion (39-44), or consulting Canace during labour to restrain her cries (49, 52), or trying to hide the baby from Aeolus (66-71), Ovid never states that the baby must be killed or hidden because of incest. Consequently, we have no evidence that the nurse condemns incest. The apparent reason for her attitude (as we have already noted for Aeolus, too) is that the baby exposes the liaison.

There are some other lines in the poem which further disclose the problems inherent to the incest theory. At 61-2, Macareus promises to his sister, while she is in difficult labour, that he will marry her:

"Spes bona det vires: fratris nam nupta futura es;
Illius, de quo mater, et uxor eris."

At 105-6, after Canace has spoken in desperation about her unfulfilled marriage, she addresses her sisters wishing them to have a happy wedding under a better fate:

Nubite felices Parca meliore sorores,
Amisissae memores sed tamen este mei.

24 Verducci above, note 1, 213.

Verducci²⁵) generally assumes that all verses contrary to incest "are veiled in intentional obscurity". Specifically, for the first distich (61-2) she presumes that Macareus has not taken his father's approval to marry Canace but "ambiguously calls his assurance a *spes bona*". When referring to the second distich (105-6) Verducci alleges that when the heroine speaks for the marriages of her sisters "she does so, it seems, merely to heighten the pathos of her own situation" and adds below that Canace "ambiguously" wishes them to marry *Parca meliore*, Jacobson²⁶), on the other hand, believes that both distichs offer a satisfactory meaning. Thus, for the first (61-2), he observes that we "may not go back to Euripides"; therefore, according to Jacobson, Macareus' proposal to his sister is made without his father's consent. For the second distich (105-6) Jacobson states that Canace expresses "a simple wish that her sisters fare better in "marriage" than she has".

Bearing in mind, however, that Latin literature presupposes, imitates and transforms Greek literature, we are obliged to turn to the Greek source of Canace's epistle any time Ovid makes allusions to it. It is, therefore, useful to consider which elements from Euripides' *Iolus* Ovid had taken into consideration, when composing the above quoted lines from Canace's letter.

L.B.L. Webster²⁷), relying on information given by ancient authors and on the *hypothesis* in *P. Oxy.* 2457, reconstructed Euripides' *Iolus*. Some of his conclusions about the plot are of interest here: a) Macareus meets Aeolus and persuades him to marry off his daughters to his sons. Then, a drawing of lots takes place, but Canace's lot falls to someone else other than Macareus. b) Afterwards, Aeolus discovers the baby and sends his daughter a sword. c) Macareus has another meeting with his father, during which he confesses the truth, but although he convinces Aeolus to pardon Canace, it is too late, because she has already committed suicide. Consequently, according to Webster's reconstruction of the play, Aeolus has consented to incestuous marriages, before he reveals the liaison through the discovery of the baby²⁸).

²⁵ Verducci above, note 1, 221-2.

²⁶ Jacobson above, note 7, 161.

²⁷ L. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967), 157-60.

²⁸ Although Palmer above, note 4, 381, wrote his summary of Euripides' play

H. Lloyd-Jones²⁹ was the first to exploit the new information of the *hypothesis* in order to elucidate the "ambiguous" lines in Canace's letter I quoted above. He writes: "Macareus' confidence that he and Canace will one day marry (Ovid l.c., 61-2; cf. 121) is explained, so are the allusions to the imminent marriage of all the sisters at 99-106". Labate's³⁰ interpretation of the lines 61-2 and 105-6 coincides with Lloyd-Jones' remarks; he believes that the development in Euripides' play concerning Macareus' success to convince his father to marry his daughters to his sons and the subsequent unlucky result of the lots "presupposto anche dall' epistola ovidiana". More recently S. Jäkel³¹, examining Ovid's epistle in comparison with the Greek play, refuted Jacobson's interpretation of the lines 61-2: "Up to now scholars have been unable to understand these verses correctly, because they assumed that Macareus went to his father only once". In his reconstruction of Euripides' *Aeolus* Jäkel has showed, like Webster, that Macareus went to Aeolus twice; he rightly states that in lines 61-2 of *Heroides* XI Macareus' encouraging words reflect his successful attempt to persuade his father at their first meeting.

We need to accept that Macareus' words in lines 61-2 are said after Aeolus' consent to the weddings of the Aeolidae, when Canace addresses her father complaining that instead of *materna* and *dolera* he sends her a sword (99-100). Otherwise, this apostrophe as well as the other to *deceptus Iphimachus* (101-2) seem meaningless. We have another indirect indication that Ovid knew that Aeolus permitted intermarriages to happen in his family and he could have exploited this element of the myth in *Heroides* XI. In Byblis' story the girl tries to justify her illicit feelings towards her brother by employing the example of the intermarriages of the Aeolus' progeny: "*At non Aeolidae thalamis immare sorantur*..." (507).

To sum up, Ovid undoubtedly followed Euripides in Aeolus' consent for the intermarriages of his progeny, and for his decision to punish his daughter without knowing the infant's paternity. If Ovid

before the discovery of the *hypothesis* in *P. Oxy.* 2157, he had reached similar conclusions to which he was led by relying on the other ancient sources.

²⁹ *The Ovidianus Papers* 27, *Gnomon* 35 (1963), 413.

³⁰ Labate, above, note 6, 583-4.

³¹ *The Aeolus of Euripides*, *Gr. Beibl.* 3 (1970), 111-2 and note 6.

intended to deviate from his literary model, he would have been forced to manifest his different perspective and would have avoided making any allusions to the prototype, which would undermine his own intentions. On the contrary, Ovid has not opted for any words denoting and/or connoting incest in Canace's letter and has not described negatively the reaction to the incestuous love of any person involved in the story: Canace, Macareus, the nurse and even Aeolus. Ovid is not interested in the moral aspect of this love; what is really important for him to show is a strong but unlucky love, which ended in catastrophe, in Canace's and her baby's death, because of the cruelty of Aeolus. He foregrounds her bitterness towards her father and her sorrow towards her baby. In this way Canace is proved a tragic figure, a real heroine deserving her place in the collection³².

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