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The Emotions of the Victims of Divine Rape in Euripides' Plays

ABSTRACT: In Euripides' extant tragedies and fragments, we encounter eight victims of divine rape: Creusa, Danaë, Antiope, Alope, Auge, Melanippe, Alcmena, and Pasiphaë. In ancient Greek literature, narratives of divine rape have often been sanitised, and the victim's subjective experience and emotional trauma have been obscured or devalued. Although there has been a strong focus on the depictions of divine rape in Greek tragedy in the past, little or no attention has been paid to the expression of the emotions of the women-victims. The fact that Euripides allows his female characters to narrate their experience firsthand aids us in discerning their emotions. By allowing the victims of divine rape to present their version of the facts, Euripides treats in a unique way the divine and human emotional distance; this allows us to observe a more nuanced discussion of divine versus human emotion.

KEYWORDS: Euripides, gods, Greek tragedy, emotions, rape.

1. Divine rape in Euripides

Although in ancient Greece there is no explicit term for what we might call rape¹, the non-appearance of a lexeme does not automatically imply the absence of a conceptual/semantic distinction such an action would have marked.² As many modern scholars have noted, the expressions used to describe sexual assaults of any kind convey the idea of violence and force, such as βιασμός or βία.³ This emphasis on violence leaves open the possibility that at least the residents of classical Athens believed that rape was a painful somatic experience for the victim.⁴ Terms such as ὕβρις and ὕβριζω place emphasis on the sexual dishonouring of the victim within the context of sexual assault and are used to describe the effects on the sufferer and, above all, the societal consequences for the person who has been violated.⁵ It seems that the ancient Greeks believed that a victim of rape had suffered an outrage, an insult, and should

¹ See Cole 1984; Scafuro 1990, p. 128; Omitowaju 2002, pp. 17-21.

² See Lauriola 2022, p. 15.

³ See Omitowaju 2002, pp. 51-71; Lauriola 2022, pp. 16, 22.

⁴ See Gardner 2012, p. 123; Weiberg 2018, p. 19.

⁵ See Omitowaju 2002, pp. 29-50; Lauriola 2022, pp. 20-21.

the victim be a woman, this insult dishonoured her *kyrios*, that is, her husband or her father⁶. Similar terms place further emphasis on the insult to the honour of a woman, such as *αἰσχύνω* ('to shame', 'to dishonour')⁷ and *φθείρω* (in this context, 'to corrupt' the value of the woman within the community).⁸ Other terms are neutral or belong to a language borrowed from the marital context.⁹

Virgins and gods or demigods often meet and mingle in ancient Greek literature. Nonetheless, these encounters between young women and divine creatures are rarely consensual¹⁰; the use of force is sometimes an essential part of the story. Modern scholars have long attempted to describe stories of encounters between gods and young women and have coined various terms to do so, such as "heroic rapes", "heroic abductions", "the girl's tragedy"¹¹, or simply "seductions".¹² In this paper, I prefer the term "divine rapes", one also employed by other scholars¹³, as an umbrella term for all instances of coerced sexual intercourse or non-consensual sexual intercourse between a divine being and a mortal woman. I include cases that entail the use of force, where the absence of consent is evident,¹⁴ as well as ambiguous cases of sexual encounters between mortal women and gods, such as rape in disguise or rape by proxy. I also adopt the premise that, due to cultural expectations or religious piety, engaging in intercourse with a divine being, with or without consent, was not optional for women in Greek myth.

Euripides' treatment of these encounters between gods or demigods and women has been regarded as the source of the rape motif appearing in New Comedy.¹⁵ Nonetheless, New Comedy recasts the motif of rape as a conventionalized narrative

⁶ See Harris 2006, pp. 299, 330; Rabinowitz 2011, p. 11, n. 58; Karamanou 2019, pp. 42-45; Lauriola 2022, p. 21. Gibert 2019, pp. 13, 16 notes that the child is often viewed as a stain to the family's honour.

⁷ In many societies, the honour of the male family members depends on the sexual purity of the women in their family, making it their responsibility to safeguard it. See Wachsmann 2020, pp. 23-25 with bibliography. For honour as a concept tied to female chastity, see Bowman 2006, pp. 21-22. On how ancient Greek and Roman women reacted to the dishonour caused by rape in ancient Greek and Latin literature, see Wachsmann 2020, pp. 30-32, 47-53. Karamanou 2019, p. 42 notes that in Euripidean tragedy, the supposed seduction of these girls is perceived as a disgrace brought upon the *oikos*.

⁸ See Lauriola 2022, p. 21.

⁹ See Karakantza 2004, p. 38.

¹⁰ See Sommerstein 2006, pp. 235-237; Lape 2010, pp. 120-121 with n. 85 for sexual consent in ancient Greek tragedy.

¹¹ See Burkert 1979, pp. 6-7.

¹² See Lefkowitz 1993; cf. Deacy 1997, esp. pp. 44 and 57. See also Lauriola 2022, pp. 2, 61, 62, n. 15.

¹³ See Karakantza 2003, p. 12; 2004, p. 39, n. 42; De Boer 2017.

¹⁴ As Sommerstein 2006, p. 233 argues, the difference between consensual and non-consensual sexual acts was important to the Athenians of the classical age.

¹⁵ See Rosivach 1998, p. 42-45. Pierce regards Euripides' *Ion* as the earliest surviving literary instance of this motif. See Pierce 2017, p. 163.

device that mitigates male culpability through marriage and social reintegration.¹⁶ Euripides treats the same subject differently. In Euripides' extant tragedies and fragments, we encounter eight victims of divine rape: Creusa, Danaë, Antiope, Alope, Auge, Melanippe, Alcmene, and Pasiphaë. The starting point and central focus are the birth, exposure, and rescue of the newborn, his arrival at the threshold of maturity, and his meeting with his biological parents.¹⁷ In ancient Greek literature, narratives of divine rape have often been sanitised, and the victim's subjective experience and emotional trauma have been obscured or devalued.¹⁸ Euripides, however, depicts sexual violence from the perspective of the female victim, thereby creating a female discourse about rape.¹⁹ In his tragedies, we often encounter the following pattern: (1) a virgin has sexual relations with a god or hero; (2) she conceals the deed and her subsequent pregnancy and exposes the newborn infant;²⁰ (3) her father discovers his daughter's sexual activity, or her pregnancy, or her infant; (4) he disbelieves her story of divine impregnation and punishes her, as well as her infant if already born.²¹ In some of these plays, after the disclosure of the daughter's experience, the *kyrios* of the *oikos* often imprisons her, using spatial confinement as a means of reasserting his control over her.²² Keeping their rape a secret is the only way maidens can escape the punishment for their misfortune.²³ Although there has been a strong focus on the depictions of divine rape in Greek tragedy in the past,²⁴ little or no attention has been paid to the expression of the emotions of the women-victims. The fact that Euripides allows his female characters to narrate their experience firsthand aids us in discerning their emotions. Verbal narratives, especially in embodied, dramatic forms, provide ample opportunities for great emotional expression. As we will see, by allowing the victims of divine rape to present their version of the facts, Euripides treats in a unique way the divine and human emotional distance; this allows us to observe a more nuanced discussion of divine versus human emotion. But what,

¹⁶ For rape in New Comedy see, for example, Fantham 1975; Konstan 1995: 141-152; Rosivach 1998; Lape 2001; Pierce 2017; James 2020.

¹⁷ See Gibert 2019, p. 9.

¹⁸ See Lauriola 2022, p. 10. The main forms of trauma are typically identified as threats of death, injury, and sexual assault (American Psychiatric Association 2013). See James 2020, pp. 49-70 and Wise 2020, pp. 71-91 on the female trauma resulting from sexual violence. Herzog 2015 analyses *Ion* using the framework of psychological trauma.

¹⁹ Scafuro 1990, p. 150 regards Creusa's monody in *Ion* as an example of the female perspective on sexual violence in ancient Greece. Swift 2008, p. 96 notes that Euripides in *Ion* presents rape as something dark and problematic.

²⁰ Gibert 2019, pp. 8-9 observes that the story pattern of the demigods who were exposed, rescued and raised in exile or obscurity was sparsely attested in Greek myth before Attic Drama. On this story pattern in Euripides, see also Huys 1995.

²¹ See Scafuro 1990, p. 126.

²² See Seaford 1990, pp. 81, 84; Karamanou 2005, p. 78.

²³ See Karakantza 2004, p. 33, n. 16.

²⁴ See, for example, Kovacs 1987; Scafuro 1990; Karamanou 2003; Karakantza 2004; Rabinowitz 2011; Kearns 2013; Finglass 2020.

then, are the emotions that a victim of divine rape might experience, and how are these emotions performed by the heroines and staged by Euripides?

2. The victims of divine rape and their emotions

According to Herzog, a long line of tragic women was placed into positions of unusual intimacy with the gods and must have struggled to navigate those new roles within both the social and divine spheres. Women could be understood as granted privileged access to the divine but this intimacy could entail broader violent repercussions.²⁵ Euripides stages the divine rapes of the heroines mentioned above as embodied experiences, that is, experiences shaped by the primary ways in which the human organism interacts with and makes sense of its environment.²⁶ The tragedian's focus seems to be the comprehension of these emotions by the audience of these plays. The subjective experiences of these women are described in terms familiar to the audience, in ways that can profoundly affect them. The symptoms of these negative emotions are more intense when these women think of themselves as members of a community. Euripides' staging of the emotions of the victims of divine rape ensures that the audience will be affected as well.

The described experiences of these women are performed narratives. The actors' stage-actions, costumes, and gestures can enhance embodied experiences described in ancient Greek theatre. We only have one self-description of such an action. Although the fragmentary nature of most of these plays prevents us from reaching safe conclusions, we know that at least Creusa sings to reveal her emotional condition; that is, she performs an embodied action. Creusa sheds tears and accompanies this action with an emotion metaphor (876-877). Descriptions of lyric performances and the use of lyric metres also have great affective power and captivate the audience of a theatrical performance.²⁷ In archaic and classical Greece, song and dance were closely linked with other forms of embodied action, including gestures.²⁸ We do not know if all these women, besides Creusa, used lyric metres to express their emotions, but we do know that Auge was a suppliant to Athena's temple. We should safely assume that she performed all the gestures that form part of a supplication ritual. Furthermore, our heroines are caught up in rhetorical debates and must have conducted a series of gestures (hand and bodily gestures and posturing) to accompany their speeches. They must have found ways to regulate their vocal pitch, timbre, and pace to sound more

²⁵ See Herzog 2015, p. 62.

²⁶ See Cairns 2020, p. 120 and introduction (pp. 1-2).

²⁷ See, for example, Meineck 2018, pp. 120-153; Olsen 2020, pp. 2-22, 29-35.

²⁸ See Olsen 2020, p. 7.

convincing.²⁹ These emotions were expressed in a way that must have sounded compelling, especially to a male audience that was familiar with courts.

Recently, Hall argued that there was an epistemic injustice in ancient Greek thought towards women. This epistemic injustice seems to have influenced Euripides' writing.³⁰ Women are believed to be unreliable witnesses and custodians of truth. According to Hall, the ancient reception of Phaedra's act in *Hippolytus* by Aristophanes (*Ran.* 1043-1044) and Plato (*Rep.* 395d-e) is part of a sophisticated discussion of the relationship between art and life.³¹ Men at the age of Euripides had a "gap in collective understanding" or, in other words, "a hermeneutical lacuna" preventing them from adequately accessing the accusations of sexual assault, allegations that the women of classical Athens were not allowed to bring to court.³² According to Hall, Euripides' *Hippolytus* reaffirmed men's beliefs about women's credibility.³³ Hall sees the reception of Euripides' depiction of Phaedra as involved in early Greek philosophical debate. Still, Dutch goes a step further and argues that one of the victims of divine rape, Melanippe, defends herself against epistemic injustice against female speakers and knowers. According to Dutch, the concept of epistemic injustice towards women due to identity prejudice may not have been alien to the ethical culture of classical Athens.³⁴ Both tragedies with Melanippe as a protagonist engage with the view that women suffer ethical-epistemic wrongs due to male prejudice; these women need to be acknowledged as knowers in the name of fair treatment. As Dutch underlines, however, Melanippe was not the only clever and articulate Euripidean woman to have suffered rape, a father's cruelty, or enslavement.³⁵ Our examination confirms this argument and would further suggest that by allowing these women to narrate their experiences and by highlighting their emotions in his own unique manner, Euripides seems to thematise the question of justice and make his audience reflect on contemporary debates. These may not just be female discourses about rape but also female discourses about divine and human justice, morality, epistemology, and the distance between human and divine emotions.

²⁹ On the importance of gestures and vocality in ancient Greek rhetorical speeches, see, e.g., Serafim 2017a, 2017b; Worthington 2017; Gagarin 2024. For the relationship between ancient Greek drama and rhetoric, see Sansone 2012.

³⁰ For the concept of epistemic injustice, see Fricker 2009.

³¹ See Hall 2021, pp. 23-24.

³² Athenian women could not appear as litigants. They were usually represented by their *kyrios*. See, e.g., Schaps 1998, pp. 166; Goldhill 1994, p. 360. For the roles that women could have played in the Athenian justice system, see also Kapparis 2021.

³³ See Hall 2021, p. 26.

³⁴ See Dutch 2024, p. 60.

³⁵ See Dutch 2024, pp. 61-65, 68.

2.1. Creusa: Inhibition of Shame and Silence

The violation of Creusa by Apollo in *Ion* appears to have been an invention on the part of Euripides.³⁶ The only source that mentions Ion's ancestry, Stephanus of Byzantium (s.v. Ἴωνία), does not refer to the nature of the mingling of Apollo and Creusa. In *Ion* appears what has been called the "symbolic topography of stories of rape"³⁷. In her monologue, the heroine herself reveals how she was picking flowers in a blossomed meadow before being taken by Apollo, who makes a symbolic gesture of marriage (χείρ ἐπί καρπῶ) and grabs her by the wrist and leads her to a cave (888-892).³⁸ Creusa's frightened scream and attempt to escape can be taken as signs of a lack of consent (κραυγὰν ὦ μᾶτέρ μ' αὐδῶσαν, 893: "hearing me call on my mother"),³⁹ and other speakers confirm her claims. In the prologue, Hermes speaks of the forced union between Apollo and Creusa employing a term that denotes rape (βία, 11) after the traditional formula of marriage (ἔζευξεν γάμοις, 10) to describe this involuntary union. The same word (βία, 'force') is also used in lines 437-438 by Ion to charge Apollo with violent assaults against women.

Creusa and her attendants enter the stage at 235, and she engages in a dialogue with Ion. It should be noted that, as van Emde Boas has shown, Euripides constructs conversations to shape the characters.⁴⁰ She experiences a physical reaction upon witnessing Apollo's oracle, but her initial emotional reaction is conveyed without words. Instead, Ion articulates her behaviour to the audience: Creusa is crying, her eyes closed and her cheeks wet (lines 241-243).⁴¹ Her reaction is not only unusual but also potentially offensive to the god and his worshippers. For Apollo in particular dislikes sorrow (e.g., *Ion* 639, *Suppl.* 289-290, *IA* 1488-1490).⁴² In the following lines, Creusa herself admits that this sight triggered her sorrow (247-251), sparking a memory of her homeland, and she experiences a flashback, an 'ancient memory' (μνήμην παλαιάν, 250). Nonetheless, she evades explaining this memory and its connection to Apollo's oracle and immediately corrects herself in the subsequent lines of the play (252-254), stating that it is not only herself that has suffered but all

³⁶ The genealogy of Ion differs greatly from his genealogy in early sources such as the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 10a.20-24 M.-W.). See Martin 2018, p. 13-17; Gibert 2019, pp. 4-8.

³⁷ See Karakantza 2004, pp. 32-36.

³⁸ For this gesture see Jenkins 1983, p. 142; Oakley and Sinos 1993, pp. 33, 45, 141.

³⁹ For *Ion*, I use the translation of Potter (in Oates and O'Neil 1938) and the text of Murray 1913. The shouting of a woman at the time of her violation was regarded as important evidence that she was an unwilling participant in the intercourse. See Finglass 2020, p. 108, with more examples.

⁴⁰ See van Emde Boas 2017.

⁴¹ Because the actors wore masks, the tragedians had to make explicit textual references to this emotional expression. See Cairns 2011a for the tragedian's use of various media to stage crying. On the impact of the mask on the text and the presentation of ancient plays, see also Meineck 2011, pp. 113-158.

⁴² See Martin 2018, p. 201.

womankind because of Apollo's shameless acts (τολμήματα) and injustices (ἀδικίαις). As Vyridis underlines, Apollo, a god who was primarily associated with justice in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (*Eum.* 85), is directly accused by Creusa for his injustice.⁴³ This comes at a sharp antithesis with all we know about Apollo. Creusa feels destroyed (δλούμεθα) by the actions of the gods against women in general. Ion wants to make her speak, but she urges him not to ask her anything further, which results in silence (256-257). Finglass argues that many of the tragic victims of rape result in silence on stage and that this behaviour often creates problems in communication.⁴⁴ In *Ion*, silence is a non-verbal clue of Creusa's shame about her rape.⁴⁵

At 336, Creusa begins to narrate the story of a "friend" to Ion,⁴⁶ using a term denoting shame in ancient Greek (αἰδούμεθα, 'but shame prevents me')⁴⁷ and relating a false story about her "friend's" mingling with Apollo using a relatively neutral verb (μιγῆναι, 338). Creusa omits any implications of violence and makes the birth of her "friend's child" the focus of the narrative. At 340, she claims that her "friend" bore a child without the knowledge of her father. Ion shows great disbelief at this and suggests that she had intercourse with a man outside of marriage (341), bringing great shame (οὐκ ἔστιν· ἀνδρὸς ἀδικίαν αἰσχύνεται, 341: "it is not so; she is ashamed of a man's wrong"). Creusa denies this accusation and claims that her wretched "friend" has suffered (342). Ion, instead, focuses on the act of divine rape and states that the woman would have had no choice if a god chose her to be his bedmate, rendering her blameless (343). According to Creusa, however, this mingling with the god had terrible consequences: her "friend" suffered because she had to expose the child, again reverting the focus of the story from the act of rape to the birth of her son. As Martin notes, Creusa focuses on herself and her emotions and not on the fate of her child (342: καὶ πέπονθεν ἄθλια).⁴⁸ As Creusa remarks, Apollo took his pleasure but without the appropriate consequent action of saving the boy (358)⁴⁹. At 364, she characterises her "friend" as a wretched woman and compares her suffering to sickness (νοσεῖ), with Ion finally also blaming Apollo for the rape at 365. At 367, Ion draws attention to

⁴³ See Vyridis 2025, p. 142.

⁴⁴ See Finglass 2020.

⁴⁵ See Scafuro 1990, p. 141.

⁴⁶ Gibert 2019, p. 181 notes the similarities with Melanippe's story of an unmarried girl who had intercourse with a god. See also Scafuro 1990, p. 140.

⁴⁷ In classical times, the terms αἰδώς and αἰσχύνη denoted this emotion. Nonetheless, there was a slight distinction between them. αἰδώς is an inhibitory emotion based on sensitivity to and protectiveness of one's self-image: see Cairns 1993, p. 2. αἰσχύνη, on the other hand, seems to retain both a prospective and a retrospective dimension; that is, both meanings of shame coexist in the term αἰσχύνη in classical Greek: see Konstan 2003, pp. 1040-1041. We can assume that the revelation of the truth will cause Creusa's shame.

⁴⁸ See Martin 2018, p. 226.

⁴⁹ See Martin 2018, p. 228.

shame again, placing emphasis this time on the god's dishonour (*αἰσχύνεται*) for impregnating Creusa's "friend".⁵⁰

He interprets Apollo's absence and silence as a reaction to a shameful act but still warns Creusa not to condemn the go.

Ion believes that Apollo does not wish to speak about this topic and has every right to choose this approach (369-381). This leads to a second attempt on Creusa's part to talk about her rape. Before Xuthus' first entrance, Creusa addresses Apollo by speaking of the god's injustice against her "friend" (line 384); he has not saved his child nor informed her of the son's whereabouts (384-389). Creusa speaks of the gods' iniquity. However, she stops talking about the god's ambiguous injustice⁵¹ and corrects her behaviour (390-391). At 392-400, she suddenly seems satisfied with Ion's proposal to let Apollo conceal what must be hidden and asks for Ion's cooperation and silence regarding the matter in Xuthus' presence. She is concerned that she will be disgraced (*αἰσχύνην*, 395) if her husband learns about her "friend's" misfortune, which should be kept a secret (*σίγα*, 395; *κρυπτά*, 396).

In the second episode, Creusa learns from the Chorus that the oracle proclaimed that Xuthus should be given a son, who turns out to be Ion, and that Creusa will remain childless forever. Her sympathetic old Tutor further ignites her emotions by portraying her husband as a great deceiver and Ion as an intruder in her house, suggesting that both her husband and his son be killed (843-846). Creusa has fallen from grace, as both the Tutor and the Chorus interpret Ion's arrival at her house as denoting a change in her status. The Chorus's choice of words to describe Creusa's future underscores that they consider her to have already lost her honour, but that this could be regained if she takes action as suggested by her Tutor (lines 857-858). Creusa breaks her silence and sings an astrophic monody addressed to Apollo, composed of lyric anapaests, a metre that often provides a sense of a deliberate halting, an "un-flowing" mode of lyric utterance.⁵² This context conveys that Creusa is overburdened by choking emotions that need expression. Even though she previously perceived her silence as a means of winning what she calls 'a contest of virtue' (*πρὸς τίν' ἀγῶνας τιθέμεσθ' ἀρετῆς*; 863) in an effort to retain her status, she is now unable to remain silent (*ὦ ψυχά, πῶς σιγάσω*; 859). Creusa experiences two conflicting emotions: her shame and the urge to speak out. As Martin notes, the anaphoric rhetorical *πῶς* 'how can I' (859, 860) implies that neither speaking nor staying silent

⁵⁰ The reactions of the internal audience of a tragedy to the narratives of the trauma of a heroine are important because this genre situates the survivor's trauma within a sociocultural environment represented onstage by the Chorus and other characters. See on this Weiberg 2018, p. 21.

⁵¹ On the ambiguity of her words, see Scafuro 1990, p. 141.

⁵² See Lourenço 2011, pp. 46-47.

seems possible.⁵³ She can temporarily let go of the shame that prevented her from fully communicating her experience (αἰδοῦς δ' ἀπολειφθῶ; 361).⁵⁴

Creusa starts describing her experience in front of her Tutor and the Chorus, initially still employing neutral words to describe the union with Apollo (γάμος, 868). Her words gradually take on more sinister connotations, with the union now becoming a σκοτίας εὐνάς (860-861). Euripides often employs this adjective to refer to clandestine unions and not a lawful marriage (e.g., *Tro.* 44, 252).⁵⁵ The heroine's silence is broken, and Creusa swears that she will reveal this union (874-875).

In lines 881-906, Creusa narrates her rape in detail and conveys her experience and feelings through the use of sensual language.⁵⁶ Her description aims to captivate the senses of the audience: she refers to Apollo's sight, his touch, her voice, and perhaps the smell of the flowers she was carrying (887-892):

Κρ. ἡλθές μοι χρυσῶ χαιταν
μαρμαίρων, εὖτ' ἐς κόλπους
κρόκεα πέταλα φάρεσιν ἔδρεπον,
ἀνθίζειν χρυσανταυγῇ.
λευκοῖς δ' ἐμφύς καρποῖσιν
χειρῶν εἰς ἄντρου κοίτας.

Cr. You came to me, your hair glittering with gold, when I was plucking into the folds of my robe yellow flowers to bloom with golden light; grasping my white hand in yours, you led me to the bed in the cave.

This is not a faithful account of the events but only part of Creusa's memory of the incident, hence the dream-like quality of the description.⁵⁷ As in other epiphanies, Apollo appears as a dream-like figure, his hair shining like gold. Apollo appeared to Creusa as a flash of light. As Barlow argues, the momentary image of Apollo's beauty contrasts with the brutality of what follows.⁵⁸ Creusa uses a metaphor and describes Apollo's bed as the lair of a wild beast (εἰς ἄντρου κοίτας, 892) inside a cave.⁵⁹ This imagery reflects her perception of her own victimisation as a target of Apollo's predatory behaviour. The heroine aims to prove her innocence using evidence as it would be applied in court, indicating that she screamed for her mother at the moment

⁵³ See Martin 2018, p. 360.

⁵⁴ See also Scafuro 1990, p. 144.

⁵⁵ See LSJ, s.v. σκοτίας.

⁵⁶ See Chong-Gossard 2008, p. 49.

⁵⁷ See Scafuro 1990, p. 145.

⁵⁸ See Barlow 2008, p. 49.

⁵⁹ See LSJ, s.v. κοίτη.

of her abduction (893). Besides, she has already framed this speech within the context of proclaiming her innocence as if in court (see ἀποδείξω, 878).

Subsequently, Creusa faces the repercussions of this rape, bearing a son she then had to abandon because she was afraid of her mother (897-900). Although she changes the subject from rape to childbirth and exposure, she again seizes the opportunity to speak about her union with Apollo, describing that she left the child in his marriage bed, a bed of sorrows (λέχεσι μελέαν μελέοις, 900) where she, the sorrowful and unhappy girl (τὰν δύστανον, 901) had been yoked by the god. She appears unable to forget the physical aspect of their union and keeps mentioning Apollo's role in this divine rape: he was a wicked lover (κακὸς εὐνάτωρ, 912). Her victimhood is stressed by the self-characterisation as suffering in δύστανος, μέλεος, φρίκα, οἶμοι.⁶⁰

The Chorus and Creusa's Tutor have learned the truth for the first time, and the latter asks her to confirm the details of what she has sung in a *stichomythia* between the two (925-965). Following her lyric outburst, Creusa feels again compelled to hide certain aspects of her union with Apollo. Nonetheless, she is truthful about the circumstances of Ion's birth despite her shame (αἰσχύνομαι μέν σ', ὦ γέρον, λέξω δ' ὅμως, 934). Every word she now utters aims to prove that she has been the unwilling victim of Apollo. She strives to demonstrate that she remembers details of the events, for example, the exact location where this took place (οἶσθα Κεκροπίας πέτρας / πρόσβορρον ἄντρον, ἃς Μακρὰς κυκλήσκομεν; 936-937: "You know the cave to the north of the Cecropian rocks, which we call Macrai?"), states that she struggled with 'a dreadful contest' (ἐνταῦθ' ἀγῶνα δεινὸν ἡγωνίσμεθα, 939) against Apollo and underlines that the unhappy union had taken place without her consent: "unwillingly" (ἄκουσα, 941). Both Creusa and the Tutor focus on the aftermath of the rape (947-965) and the secrecy surrounding the birth of her son (νόσον κρυφαίαν ἡνίκ' ἔστενες λάθρα; 944: "you were secretly mourning a hidden disease?"; καὶτ' ἐξέκλεψας πῶς Ἀπόλλωνος γάμους; 946: "And then how did you conceal Apollo's rape?").

The fourth time Creusa speaks about her rape is near the end of the play, during her recognition duet with Ion, composed in dochmiacs (1439-1509).⁶¹ Ion is afraid of being the son of an unmarried girl, and Creusa clarifies that his father is a god (1468-1509). In the exchange that follows, Creusa once again tells the story of her mingling with Apollo, and her language becomes ambiguous. She does not speak directly about Apollo's actions. Her shame returns,⁶² an emotion that makes it difficult for her to communicate the whole truth. She initially tells her son that her union had not been a regular one and that her wedding had included no torches or dancing according to custom (1474-1476). This is not the first time in ancient Greek literature

⁶⁰ See Martin 2018, p. 372.

⁶¹ Most of Creusa's lines are sung and most of Ion's lines are spoken.

⁶² See Scafuro 1990, p. 146.

that a description of rape usurps the language of marriage.⁶³ Ion does not believe Creusa, as he initially did not believe the story of her “friend”,⁶⁴ and Creusa has no choice but to engage in a ritual act. She takes an oath to render her story credible (1477-1485)⁶⁵ and calls upon Athena’s rock, the same place where the rape took place, and the virgin goddess who is invoked as a witness because she is the patron goddess of the polis and of the acropolis where the rape occurred⁶⁶ to the conception of Ion, using lyric metres to swear to the truth of his paternity. Creusa reveals what occurred at this location; that is, Apollo secretly led her to his bed (κρυπτόμενον λέχος ηὔνασθην, 1484: “Led me in secret to his bed”). Creusa uses words that are also employed to describe a formal union between a man and his wife,⁶⁷ and a relatively neutral verb to describe her rape by the god. The secrecy surrounding this act is emphasised (1484: κρυπτόμενον λέχος; 1487: κρύφιον ὠδῖνα). In the following lines, Creusa again makes Ion’s birth and not Apollo’s actions the focus of attention.⁶⁸ Finally, her son rejoices and is proud to be the offspring of a god (1485-1488).

It should be noted that Creusa’s outbursts of shame occur in front of an audience. Her emotions clearly have an embodied nature. Firstly, she cries; that is, Creusa has a somatic reaction in front of Ion (241-243), while in lines 874-875 the heroine does not name her emotions. She feels shame and conveys this using emotion metaphors.⁶⁹ She has a burden (ἐμπόδιον κώλυμα), and something heavy presses on her breast (ὡς στέρνων / ἀπονησαμένη ῥάων ἔσομαι). Creusa’s shame that exists only inside her mind seems to have almost taken a concrete and vivid form; it is an agent that presses on her breast. When she breaks her silence, she declares that the shame that is being lifted from her breasts has a somatic effect: “I will no longer conceal this bed, so that I may cast off this load from my breast and be at ease” (οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος, ὡς στέρνων / ἀπονησαμένη ῥάων ἔσομαι, 874-875). She describes the emotion in terms of a body ache, revealing the physical symptoms of her shame. This symptom, a physical response to an emotional condition, is a metonym for a holistic emotional reaction. The symptom of shame stands for the emotion.

⁶³ See Karakantza 2003, pp. 14-15, 20.

⁶⁴ See Scafuro 1990, p. 146.

⁶⁵ As Chong-Gossard 2008, pp. 50-51 observes, in Euripides’ recognition duets, the woman must convince her male kin of some truth about herself in order for the plot to continue.

⁶⁶ See Chong-Gossard 2008, pp. 50-51.

⁶⁷ See LSJ, s.v. λέχος.

⁶⁸ Scafuro 1990, p. 148 attributes the brevity of this story to the return of Creusa’s shame: “a brief account of a sexual union, abbreviated not by lapse of memory but by the return of shame”.

⁶⁹ For the theory of emotion metaphors, see Lakoff and Johnson 1980; for its application in literature, see Lakoff and Turner 1989. For the application of this theory in classical literature, see Cairns 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2020. For the importance of conceptual metaphors for the study of early Greek psychology, see also Peliccia 1995, pp. 34-35.

Creusa draws the attention of the audience to the fact that she is crying and speaks of her intense suffering and its physical connotations: “Tears fall from my eyes, my soul is in pain” (στάζουσιν κόραι δακρύοισιν ἐμαί, / ψυχὴ δ’ ἀλγεί, 876-877). The verb ἀλγεί emphasises the physical symptoms of the pain experienced by Creusa.⁷⁰ This verb usually describes a somatic pain. Creusa’s ψυχὴ is an entity that stands for the whole living person and can feel pain. This metaphor underlines the somatic aspect of Creusa’s emotional hurt. She has already addressed her ψυχὴ (859) and spoke of her inability to continue to be silent. As Cairns argues, the etymology of ψυχὴ, cognate with ψύχος and ψυχρός, suggests an original reference to the cold breath of death. Nonetheless, even at the earliest traceable stage of its historical development, ψυχὴ is primarily a metaphorical concept. ψυχὴ in Greek poetry is implicated in a vast network of metonymies and metaphors.⁷¹ This network encompasses social and cultural notions of life, personality, death, and post-mortem survival.⁷² By the time of Euripides, ψυχὴ is considered an entity that has undergone metonymic extension from its putative original, minimal, physical meaning. Anger fights Creusa’s shame away and instills in her the courage to unravel her trauma and plot her revenge.

Creusa also describes her fear using a word that has physical connotations (φρίκα).⁷³ Creusa’s φρίκα (φρίκα ματρός, 898) is ignited at the thought of her mother learning about Ion’s birth. Φρίκα or φρίκη, used by Creusa, underlines the somatic aspect of fear. The term refers to an involuntary bodily movement, a physical symptom.⁷⁴ φρίκη is a subjective experience with an external, visible aspect, and it is this external, visible aspect that allows us to relate to that person’s visible shudder. In this case, the physical symptom of fear stands in as a metonym for the emotion.⁷⁵ Creusa shudders at the thought that a member of her family will learn the truth about her condition; that is, she is terrified.

2.2. Danaë and Alcmene: Blame, Fear, and Bribery

Another narrative of divine rape is encountered in Euripides’ fragmentary play, *Danaë*. In his alleged summary of Euripides’ play (*Chronicles* 2.11 Thurn), John Malalas uses the verb φθείρω (φθαρείσαν ὑπὸ Διός) to describe the sexual union between Zeus, who transformed himself into gold, and Danaë, resulting in the birth of

⁷⁰ See Konstan 2006, p. 17.

⁷¹ For a discussion of ψυχὴ as a conceptual metaphor for the human mind, see Zanker 2019, pp. 165-200.

⁷² See Cairns 2014.

⁷³ See Cairns 2016, pp. 2-7.

⁷⁴ See Cairns 2013, 2016, pp. 2-7.

⁷⁵ See Cairns 2013, p. 85.

Perseus. Unfortunately, none of the extant parts of the tragedy concern the act of rape itself.

A part of the *agon* survives, quite possibly a trial-debate with Acrisius as plaintiff and Danaë as defendant. According to Karamanou, the debate may have ended with Acrisius' condemnation of Danaë's illicit motherhood and his possible decision to eliminate Perseus, which may have incited Danaë's plea in fr. 323. Fr. 324 likely marks the beginning of the *agon* and fr. 322, 326, and 325 are probably spoken by Acrisius and come from the same part of the play.⁷⁶ In fr. 320, uttered by Acrisius upon discovering Danaë's impregnation and subsequent childbirth, the king blames women for being difficult to guard.⁷⁷ They all extolled the power of gold over people, a prerequisite for love and marriage, which confirms Acrisius' false assumption about Danaë's "seduction" due to bribery.

Danaë speaks only in fr. 327, 328, and 323, with the first two passages deriving from her counter-speech. The heroine belittles richness and praises prudence, good sense, and the self-control of less privileged people, refuting the previous arguments about the power of money over everything. Additionally, four lines are expressed by the Chorus, who comprises women who support Danaë (fr. 319 and 329). In fr. 329, they state that they admire someone's courage and that "someone" is likely Danaë: "Oh! The noble are everywhere distinguished by an excellent character for courage" (φεῦ· τοῖσι γενναίοισιν ὡς ἀπανταχοῦ πρέπει χαρακτήρ χρηστός εἰς εὐψυχίαν).⁷⁸ We do not know if Danaë confessed to what happened between her and Zeus before, during, or after the debate with her father, or whether something stopped her from doing so.

Alcmene was married to Amphytrion, but would not let her husband consummate their marriage until he had avenged the deaths of her brothers. Amphytrion accomplished this, but upon returning, Zeus had already slept with his wife after disguising himself as her husband. Alcmene became pregnant with Heracles by Zeus and with Iphicles by her husband at the same time. The story of this union is well-known from other sources.⁷⁹ It is almost certain that this encounter is the subject of Euripides' *Alcmene*, in which (fr. 88) we learn that, although Alcmene's divine rape took place within the palace, Zeus may have caused ivy to enclose her chamber while he visited her. This implies that not only did Zeus coerce sexual contact in disguise using guile, but also briefly transformed a civic space into a non-civic space, reflecting the symbolic topography of stories of rape.⁸⁰ The play's plot was set the day after

⁷⁶ See Karamanou 2005, pp. 23, 26, 105-108.

⁷⁷ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 324.

⁷⁸ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 337. I follow the text and the translation of Collard and Cropp.

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 14.323-324, 19.95-99; *Od.* 11.266-268; Hes. *Theog.* 943-944; [Sc.] 1-56 M.-W.; Eur. *Heracl.* 718-719.

⁸⁰ See Karakantza 2004, pp. 32-36.

Zeus' visit to Alcmena.⁸¹ Upon his return, Amphytrion discovers that his wife has slept with someone else and refuses to accept her explanation that she has been deceived and decides to kill her. Alcmena takes refuge at an altar, at which her husband has logs piled in a bid to burn them and force her out. Zeus, however, intervenes by causing a storm to extinguish the fire and save his pregnant lover.⁸² Amphytrion likely learned and accepted the truth through a divine speech at the end of the play. But what about Alcmena's emotions in this fragmentary tragedy?

The drama almost certainly included a dialogue scene between Alcmena and Amphytrion, in which the latter accused Alcmena of taking a bribe to sleep with someone else.⁸³ In fr. 92, 95, and 96, someone extols the power of gold over people. We also hear Alcmena defending herself against her husband's accusations in fr. 88a⁸⁴, where she speaks of fearing for her life, an emotion that arose only after the secret of her rape was revealed:

Ἀλκ. ὁ φόβος, ὅταν τι<ς> σώματος μέλλῃ πέρι
λέγειν καταστὰς εἰς ἀγῶν' ἐναντίον,
τό τε στόμ' εἰς ἐκπληξιν ἀνθρώπων ἄγει
τὸν νοῦν τ' ἀπείργει μὴ λέγειν ἃ βούλεται.
{τῷ μὲν γὰρ ἐνὶ κίνδυνος, ὁ δ' ἀθῶος μένει.}
ὅμως δ' ἀγῶνα τόνδε δεῖ μ' ὑπεκδραμεῖν.
ψυχὴν γὰρ ἄθλα τιθεμένην ἐμὴν ὀρώ.

Alc. When someone is about to speak in defence of his life and has entered into a trial face to face, fear makes him tongue-tied before his audience and hinders his mind from saying what it wants to. {For he is at risk, while his opponent remains unaffected.} Nevertheless, I must get safely through this trial, for I see that in it my own life is at stake.

The imagery Alcmena applies to describe her fear has strong somatic connotations. Fear affects her body and mind by making her tongue-tied and unable to process her thoughts. Alcmena's symptoms of fear are aggravated when she speaks in front of an audience. Alcmena names her emotion using the word φόβος. She does not explicitly mention her φόβος, but describes the fear of someone about to speak in front of an

⁸¹ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 101.

⁸² We can assume Zeus was interested in saving the life of his unborn child.

⁸³ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 102.

⁸⁴ Some scholars attribute this fragment to *Alcmaeon* (e.g., Nauck 1889, 381; van Looy 1964, p. 93; Walker 2020, p. 3). Others, along with Collard and Cropp, attribute it to *Alcmena* (e.g., Matthiae 1829, p. 32; Engelmann 1900, p. 60; Séchan 1967, p. 247).

audience to defend her life, and claims that she belongs to the same category. The young woman's fear has taken a concrete and vivid form and becomes an agent that causes her a series of physical and mental symptoms. Alcmene's fear makes her tongue-tied (τό τε στόμ' εἰς ἔκπληξιν ἀνθρώπων ἄγει) in front of an audience and hinders her from saying what she wants⁸⁵. While φόβος refers to something that scares you and causes you to run away, the term ἔκπληξις has a much stronger bodily effect, since it means 'shock' or 'astonishment'.⁸⁶ Her bodily symptoms stand in metonymically for her emotion. In the surviving lines, we do not hear Alcmene speak about her anger.

It is almost impossible to locate any reference to an embodied emotion in *Danaë* and *Alcmene*. The anger of the heroines, ignited by the accusations of a male relative, which allowed them to have the courage to defend themselves, is never described in detail in the surviving fragments. In fr. 329, it is possible that Danaë has already displayed her courage in front of the Chorus. We do not hear much about Alcmene's shame, but the heroine in fr. 88a refers to her fear that has an embodied nature.

2.3. Antiope and Melanippe: Exposition and Recognition

In *Antiope*, we encounter the story of Zeus and the eponymous heroine. Zeus, disguised as a satyr, impregnates Antiope and, upon discovering this, Nycteus, Antiope's father, wishes to punish his daughter. Antiope runs away to Sikyon, where she marries Epopeus, the king of Sikyon. Lycus, Antiope's uncle, captures Antiope and takes her back to Thebes following Nycteus' suicide. On the way home, she gives birth to Amphion and Zethos at the foot of the mountain Cithaeron and is forced to abandon them. Antiope is given to Dirce, Lycus' tyrannical wife, in Thebes as a house-slave. Eventually, she manages to escape and returns to the site where her sons had been abandoned.

This narrative forms the background of Euripides' *Antiope*, but we are not in a position to know how others have approached the same material, since the most complete accounts of Antiope's story were written much later than Euripides' tragedy (e.g., Clem. Al. *Recognitions* 10.22). Later sources do not conceal the nature of this union, and John Malalas, referring to Euripides' version of Antiope's story, uses a verb that likely connotes rape (*Chronicles* 2.49 Thurn: Ζεὺς εἰς σάτυρον μεταβληθεὶς ἔφθειρε τὴν Ἀντιόπην). The very fact that Zeus chose to disguise himself as a satyr is an indication that this union was not consensual, since satyrs are figures that are not

⁸⁵ Even though the argument is put in masculine terms, we should suppose that she is the speaker, as such generalisations usually are put in masculine terms. See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 107, n. 1.

⁸⁶ See Nagy 2010, pp. 30-34. For a discussion on fear (φόβος), see Konstan 2006, pp. 129-155.

often portrayed as participating in consensual intercourse with women.⁸⁷ Did Antiope ever narrate the story of the conception of her twins?

In fr. 210, part of a *stichomythia* between the twins and Antiope is preserved. Antiope had presumably recounted the story of the birth of her twins and the circumstances of their conception at a previous stage of the action. Most likely, Amphion disbelieved Antiope and remained unconvinced that Zeus had taken the shape of an evil beast (θηρὸς κακούργου σχήματ' ἐκμυμούμενον) to come to her bed secretly.⁸⁸ κακούργος, the term Amphion uses to characterise Zeus, was part of the legal language of Attica and was used to identify a specific category of criminals, including thieves, murderers, and 'adulterers' (μοιχοί).⁸⁹ His words imply that he believes that Antiope has had intercourse with a man and tried to blame Zeus. As Biga argues, what Amphion seems to find difficult to believe is not that a god had sex with a mortal but that he took the shape of a satyr to accomplish what he desired.⁹⁰ Additionally, frs. 206-209 appear to have been part of Antiope's initial effort to convince her twins that she was an unfortunate woman telling the truth, and based on Amphion's answer, we can assume that this included the story of Zeus' metamorphosis. In fr. 207, Antiope relates how she gave birth. Furthermore, fr. 206 may initially have come from the start of Antiope's speech to her twins. Even though we do not witness an *agon* scene, Antiope attempts to speak like an orator and provide facts to her audience. However, one of her sons disbelieves her and is likely to have asked for more proof, to which Antiope replies (τὰ πράγματα).

Antiope also delivers gnomic phrases and generalisations about the human fate during her *stichomythia*. In fr. 209, she extolls the αἰδώς that we must all have and, likely, addresses a member of the female Chorus by presenting herself as part of the human race who experiences suffering and laments the pain of being aware of this misery (frs. 204-205). In the same fragment, there is also a reference to φθόνος. According to the speaker, we must guard ourselves against this emotion. As Biga observes, although the word φθόνος has a variety of meanings, here it can signify the reaction to an excess on the part of humans or the gods.⁹¹ Then, the heroine refers to a specific misfortune, that is, having been made a captive and forced to give birth on the road and thus, to expose her children (fr. 207). These details might have been followed by her story of Zeus' rape, as indicated by the aforementioned reaction of Amphion (fr. 210). To Amphion's disbelief, Antiope responds passively, almost ex-

⁸⁷ See Lauriola 2022, p. 204.

⁸⁸ I follow the text and the translation of Collard and Cropp 2008.

⁸⁹ See Scafuro 1990, p. 137; Lauriola 2022, p. 206, n. 293.

⁹⁰ See Biga 2014, pp. 609-610.

⁹¹ See Biga 2014, p. 603. For the concept of divine envy in Greek religion, see Mikalson 1991, pp. 50-55. On divine φθόνος in archaic poetry, see Lanzillotta 2010.

culpating Zeus, and even tries to rationalise the event according to a prevalent belief at the time, that is, that she and her twins were part of the “unfortunate” portion of humankind.⁹² In the scarce fragments that survive, her emotions do not seem to have an embodied nature. Nonetheless, since Antiope had to defend herself against an audience, we can suppose that she at least should have conducted a series of gestures (hand and bodily gestures and posturing) to accompany her speech.

Melanippe, the daughter of Aeolus, secretly gave birth to the twins Aeolus and Boeotus, whose father was Poseidon.⁹³ She hid them from her father in a barn with cows. Upon their discovery, they were considered monsters that had to be killed. To protect her children, Melanippe confessed to being their mother, and, as a result, her father subsequently locked her up and abandoned the children. Childless Theano, the wife of King Metapontus, found them and passed them off as her children. As soon as Theano had her children, she attempted to eliminate Melanippe’s children to no avail. Aeolus and Boeotus discovered their true origins and freed their mother. In *Melanippe the Wise*, Euripides deals with the first part of this myth and the twins’ rescue from her father. The *Captive Melanippe* focuses on Theano’s planned but failed murder of the twins and the liberation of Melanippe.

In fr. 481 of *Melanippe the Wise*, the heroine delivers the prologue. Ioannes Logothetes, quoting this fragment, attests that Melanippe recounted her union and impregnation by Poseidon and uses a neutral verb to describe this act: *μυγείσα* (“has had intercourse with”).⁹⁴ A rhetorical confrontation between father and daughter using a similar focus to other tragedies is almost all that is left of *Melanippe the Wise*. In fr. 485, it is Melanippe who speaks in the third person, presenting a generalising story about a “friend” and using a word that generally denotes rape: “but if a girl exposed the children because she had been raped and was in fear of her father, will you then commit murder?” (*εἰ δὲ παρθένος φθαρείσα ἐξέθηκε τὰ παιδιά καὶ φοβουμένη τὸν πατέρα, σὺ φόνον δράσεις*). Melanippe’s arguments on behalf of her children were presumably voiced when her father or grandfather ordered her to prepare the infants to be burned as monsters born from cows. At this point, we must assume that she is trying to make the strongest case possible to save the lives of the infants. Nonetheless, we do not know Melanippe’s exact words; she is possibly protesting her innocence in fr. 487 and taking an oath.⁹⁵ According to Montemurro, her *rhetoric* must have been stuffed with philosophical elements.⁹⁶ In fr. 497, which can likely be attributed to

⁹² See Lauriola 2022, pp. 208-209.

⁹³ The language used in other sources, such as Hyginus (*Fab.* 186) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Rhet.* 9.11), hints at the fact that this mingling was not consensual.

⁹⁴ For the *Melanippe* plays, I follow the text and the translation of Collard and Cropp 2008.

⁹⁵ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 570.

⁹⁶ See Montemurro 2019; 2020, p. 6.

Melanippe the Wise, someone appears to advise Aeolus to discipline his daughter for her misconduct, arguing that female malice spreads to other women when it remains unpunished.⁹⁷ It is not necessary to assume, along with Sommerstein, that Melanippe in this tragedy was not presented as an innocent victim of divine rape.⁹⁸ Any woman who was violated was considered guilty, at least to a certain degree. In fr. 494 of *Melanippe the Captive*, an unnamed speaker eloquently defends all womankind. The speaker is likely Melanippe herself, and she may be responding to her son Boeotus, who is perhaps the misogynistic speaker in fr. 498, recalling the hostility of Zethus towards his mother in *Antiope*.⁹⁹ According to Montemurro, the heroine makes a strenuous defence of the role of women in society, claiming that women had a superior moral integrity to men and a privileged place in the management of oracles and the relationship with the divinity.¹⁰⁰ The same applies to both Melanippe plays. No sign of an embodied emotion can be found in the surviving lines. Nonetheless, this woman takes part in debates and also takes an oath.

2.4. Alope and Pasiphaë: Shame, Blame, and Litigation

The basic story of *Alope* is known from Hyginus, who implied that the heroine had been raped (*Fab.* 187). In the guise of a kingfisher, Poseidon mated with Alope, his granddaughter through Cercyon, and from their union, she gave birth to Hippothoon. Alope left the infant out in the open to die of exposure, but a passing mare suckled the child until shepherds found it. Cercyon ordered Alope to be imprisoned and put to death, and that her child be exposed again. Once more, however, the child was found and fed in the same manner as before, and the shepherds called him Hippothoon.

According to Collard and Cropp, Euripides likely focused on Alope's imprisonment and Hippothoon's exposure in his rendition of the myth/in his play. The speakers remain unidentified in most of the surviving fragments, and the fate of the heroine is uncertain in this tragedy. If Alope is the speaker in fr. 106, likely a prologue narrative delivered by the heroine or a Nurse,¹⁰¹ she speaks of having fallen pregnant by the god, 'heavy with god-sown child' (γέμουσαν κύματος θεοσπόρου).¹⁰² In fr. 107, someone explains that Poseidon concealed his identity from Alope (πλήσας δὲ νηδὺν

⁹⁷ Melanippe's behaviour is considered a crime that poses a serious social threat. See Karamanou 2019, p. 42. See also Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 605 for this fragment.

⁹⁸ Sommerstein argues that the heroine was depicted as a fallen woman in *Melanippe the Wise* and as a victim of rape in *Melanippe Captive*. See Sommerstein 2006, pp. 240-241.

⁹⁹ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 589.

¹⁰⁰ See Montemurro 2019, p. 86.

¹⁰¹ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 116.

¹⁰² For *Alope*, I follow the text and the translation of Collard and Cropp 2008.

οὐδ' ὄναρ κατ'εὐφρόνην φίλοις ἔδειξεν αὐτόν, “having filled her womb he [Poseidon] did not show himself to his loved one even as a dream in the night”). This implies that even if Poseidon did not act violently, he used guile and forced Alope into a coerced union. A speaker refers to the Nurse's assistance in fr. 108 using a gnomic phrase.

Even though only scanty fragments of this tragedy remain, the father-daughter confrontation appears to have been one of the climactic points of the dramatic action.¹⁰³ Likely within the context of an *agon*, Cercyon harshly condemns Alope for bringing disgrace upon her family in fr. 109-111.¹⁰⁴ In fr. 109, he blames her for not respecting him (οὐ μὴν σύ γ' ἡμᾶς τοὺς τεκόντας ἠδέεσσω, “yet you showed no respect for us, your own parents”),¹⁰⁵ that is, for her lack of αἰδώς. In fr. 110, Cercyon makes a general statement about children, stating that they should consider it fair to obey their father. This is what Alope did not do. In fr. 111, Cercyon again generalises and comments on the futility of safeguarding a woman's virtue.¹⁰⁶ His words and arguments bring to mind the reaction of Acrisius to what he regarded as Danaë's misconduct in the eponymous play discussed above. Alope should have conducted a series of gestures to accompany her speech, as the other Euripidean heroines did.

Minos claimed the kingship of Crete. To confirm his right to rule, he asked Poseidon for a sign, and the god sent him a snow-white bull from the sea to be sacrificed. Minos sent the bull to his herds and substituted it for another, inferior bull for the sacrifice. Enraged, Poseidon had Aphrodite curse Pasiphaë, his wife, causing her to fall in love with the bull. She persuaded Daedalus to build her an artificial cow, inside which she put herself and mated with the bull. She subsequently gave birth to the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull creature.¹⁰⁷ Modern scholars have called this union a bestial¹⁰⁸ or a divine rape.¹⁰⁹ This act can also be considered rape by proxy: Pasiphaë's lust is god-sent, and the bull is associated with Poseidon. In ancient Greek literature, bulls served as metaphors for fertility and virility,¹¹⁰ and gods metamorphosed into these animals to mate with mortal women. This particular animal is so closely linked to Poseidon that a claim can be made for it to have served as a proxy for the god. This is the story behind Euripides' *Cretans*, a tragedy set in

¹⁰³ See Karamanou 2005, p. 77.

¹⁰⁴ Karamanou 2019, p. 42 notes that Alope's supposed sexual misconduct is perceived as a disgrace brought upon her *oikos*.

¹⁰⁵ The Greek plurals may be singular ‘me’ or ‘your father’. See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 123.

¹⁰⁶ Cercyon considers that Alope's behaviour is a sign of female uncontrolled sexuality. The same is true for Acrisius in *Danaë* fr. 320. See Karamanou 2019, p. 42.

¹⁰⁷ For a reconstruction of this myth see Cozzoli 2001, pp. 11-18.

¹⁰⁸ See Robson 1997, pp. 81, 87.

¹⁰⁹ See Reckford 1974, p. 321.

¹¹⁰ See Lauriola 2022, p. 66 with bibliography. Reckford 1974, p. 320, n. 16 also notes: «The bull symbolism is crucial. Minos himself was begotten by Zeus who carried off Europa as a bull. Already in *The Cretans* the bull may stand for sexuality as against purity».

Minos' palace in Crete, which likely began with the discovery of the Minotaur's birth.¹¹¹

The central episode of this play must have been the confrontation between Minos and Pasiphaë. Pasiphaë's counterattack to Minos' accusations in fr. 427e has been considered a piece of law-court rhetoric, although it remains uncertain whether it belonged to a fully developed *agon*.¹¹² The queen has to defend herself against Minos and the Chorus. As Medda notes, this scene pushes further the limits of female discourse in Euripides' plays. Pasiphaë has to explain why she had sex with an animal.¹¹³ Pasiphaë admits that she had sex with the bull, her main argument being that what happened had been inflicted on her by a god in the form of a kind of madness (9, 21, 25-26, 30). The reason for her madness was a divine attack upon her (9: ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προσβολῆς ἐμηνάμην). As Medda argues, in Greek tragedy, the term *προσβολή* was used to describe a hostile action of a divine being towards a mortal (e.g., Aesch. *Ch.* 283; Aristoph. *Pax* 39-40).¹¹⁴ Hence, the evil done was regrettable, to be sure, but involuntary (10: ἔστι δ' οὐχ ἐκο[ύσ]ιον κακόν), and she should not be blamed. She uses an appeal to *eikos* as proof of her innocence, for what happened makes no sense in rational term.¹¹⁵ According to Cozzoli, her speech might reflect the contemporary philosophical debate on the limits of what could or could not be assigned to *ἐκούσιον*.¹¹⁶ Pasiphaë bases her defence on the fact that the bull could not have attracted her sexually either by his appearance or by the prospect of marriage and children. She dedicates many verses to describe the bull's good looks. It is like the heroine expects that she would be blamed by others for being sexually attracted to the appearance of the bull. It is true that in other Euripidean tragedies heroines, have been blamed for mingling with men because they found them sexually attractive. As Kornarou observes, in *Trojan Women* (987-992), Hecuba accuses Helen of being fascinated by Paris' glittering appearance.¹¹⁷ The heroine then shifts the blame to Minos, stating that Poseidon took revenge on him and that she was afflicted due to her husband's mistake. In doing so, she uses the vocabulary of shame (12: αἰσχίστη νόσῳ; 28: αὐτὸς τὰδ' ἔρξας καὶ καταισχύνας ἐμέ).¹¹⁸ At 28, the heroine blames Minos for 'bringing this shame upon her'. Her shame derives not only from sleeping with the bull but also from the exposure of her secret (27-33). She did the right thing by

¹¹¹ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 530.

¹¹² See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 532, with more bibliography.

¹¹³ See Medda 2020, p. 92.

¹¹⁴ See Medda 2020, p. 94.

¹¹⁵ See Reckford 1974, p. 319.

¹¹⁶ See Cozzoli 2001, pp. 33-35.

¹¹⁷ See Kornarou 2018, p. 99 with note 15.

¹¹⁸ Battezzato 2020, p. 191 notes that, although she does not mention shame as her emotion, there are indications that she condemns her past actions. For the *Cretans*, I use the text and the translation of Collard and Cropp 2008.

keeping this act a secret, as the Chorus advised her to do (2-3)¹¹⁹, and Minos should be blamed for making it public.¹²⁰ As Battezzato notes, after Minos' revelation, Pasiphaë's primary emotion is dishonour.¹²¹ Minos embarrasses her further by revealing her secret, which she had fought hard to keep, and dishonouring her. She also uses a word to describe her current emotional state: she is in pain (ἀλγῶ, 10). Pasiphaë uses the rhetorical device of ἀντικατηγορία (counter-attack), and from being the defendant, she becomes the accuser and blames Minos for his impiety.¹²² As Battezzato argues, Pasiphaë can dissociate herself entirely from her past actions by appealing to divine intervention, the role of her husband, Minos, and an understanding of human morality and motivation that is rooted in hedonistic principles. She also employs evaluative words that make her shame evident regarding her past state of mind and actions. Pasiphaë does not seem to have any memory of the reasons that caused her actions.¹²³ Besides trying to convince her husband in front of an audience, she also addresses the rhetorical questions to herself. She wonders why she acted the way she did. She is a new person, unable to remember or understand what had happened.

At 11-12, Pasiphaë uses an emotion metaphor when she says that her θυμός was defeated by shame: "what did I see in a bull to have my heart eaten away by a most shaming affliction" (ἐς τί γὰρ βοὸς / βλέψας' ἐδήχθην θυμὸν αἰσχίστη νόσῳ). θυμός is a "mental organ". According to Cairns, θυμός is also cognate with the Latin *fumus* and, like ψυχή, can be presented as a kind of breath.¹²⁴ In its most literal sense, θυμός can be thought of as a kind of gas that one can believe in or feel with. θυμός metonymically describes a mental process in terms of a physical process that is supposed to support it. As Cairns notes, θυμός can be much more metaphorical than that, since it is also thought of as a creature that must be tamed or restrained or an opponent to which one can yield.¹²⁵ According to the Hippocratic *corpus*, disease was an outside force generated by the environment (Hippoc. *Hum.* 15).¹²⁶ This terrible shame is presented as an external force, an agent that resides outside Pasiphaë that attacks her body. Pasiphaë's shame literally bites her θυμός, but θυμός is not only a physical organ; it is also considered a living thing with a concrete form. She also uses the verb ἀλγῶ (10)

¹¹⁹ If the Chorus is the speaker of these lines. See Cozzoli 2001, p. 105.

¹²⁰ See Kornarou 2018, p. 100.

¹²¹ See Battezzato 2020, pp. 191-192.

¹²² See Kornarou 2018, p. 100.

¹²³ See Battezzato 2020, pp. 181, 191.

¹²⁴ See Cairns 2014 with examples and bibliography. As Hippocrates regards, when the *pneuma* in the *phrenes/thumos* is 'unclean', it can cause disease: Hippoc. *Hum.* 23-25, *Morb. Sacr.* 7, 16 with discussion in Lloyd 2007.

¹²⁵ See Cairns 2014.

¹²⁶ See the discussion in Craik 2015, pp. 129-134.

to describe the effects of Minos' behaviour. With its physical connotations, Pasiphaë's use of this verb brings to the audience's mind the fact that the queen is an embodied human, living in the same world as them, capable of feeling pain, and not the monster that Minos claims her to be. This is a complex web of metaphors; an emotion becomes a concrete entity that can fight with a vivified and personified physical process. As a result, the heroine feels pain. All these terms express complementary aspects of the same imagery applied to describe the emotional condition of the heroine. Pasiphaë blames Minos, revealing her anger towards him. We do not know if this emotion was described as an embodied experience elsewhere in this tragedy. Still, this emotion allowed the heroine to loosen her tongue and explain what happened to her.

2.5. Auge: Pollution and Apology

Auge was the daughter of Aleus, the king of Tegea in Arcadia, and the virgin priestess of Athena Alea. She was raped by Heracles, her father's guest. When Aleus discovered this, he ordered that Auge be punished. However, the heroine and her son, Telephus, end up in the court of the Mysian king, Teuthras, where Auge becomes the wife (or the adopted daughter) of Teuthras, and Telephus becomes the king's adopted son and heir. In *Auge*, the eponymous character has given birth in a temple. According to the highly fragmented papyrus-*hypothesis*, Auge was raped during a festival in honour of Athena, perhaps while washing her robes at a spring near the temple. It is likely that fr. 265a and 272b derive from Heracles' apology for raping her.¹²⁷ Heracles likely admits to Aleus that his crime had been an injustice against his *oikos* (fr. 272b).¹²⁸ The *hypothesis* may also hint at the existence of the symbolic topography of rape if Auge had been depicted as performing a ritual action and being in a ritualistic environment, notably near water.¹²⁹ We can assume that the play began (like *Alope* and *Melanippe the Wise*) with a prologue speech explaining the rape, the birth and concealment of the child, the resulting pollution, and Aleus' search for its cause.¹³⁰ We do not know what the description of Auge's rape may have entailed or how many times it was presented during the play, but fr. 278 mentions an 'upright horn' that could refer to Heracles' erect penis (κέρας ὄρθιον).¹³¹ We can also be sure that the father-daughter confrontation appears to have been a climactic point in the

¹²⁷ See Collard and Cropp 2008, pp. 261-261.

¹²⁸ See Karamanou 2019, p. 42.

¹²⁹ See Karakantza 2004, pp. 35-36.

¹³⁰ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 260.

¹³¹ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 261. Huys 1989, p. 181; 1995, p. 115 argues that this fragment belongs to the context of Auge's rape. I follow the text and the translation of Collard and Cropp 2008.

dramatic action.¹³² Apart from these sections, there is nothing more to reveal the heroine's emotions.

Auge worries that her secret will be exposed. In fr. 266, she complains to Athena about the pollution, and we should assume that this occurs after the discovery of Telephus (σκύλα μὲν βροτοφθόρα / χαίρεις ὀρώσα καὶ νεκρῶν ἐρείπια, / κοῦ μισὰ σοι ταῦτ' ἐστίν· εἰ δ' ἐγὼ τέκον, / δεινὸν τόδ' ἡγή, "you enjoy looking on spoils stripped from the dead and the wreckage of corpses; these do not pollute you. Yet you think it a dreadful thing if I have given birth?"). She seems infuriated with the goddess. In fr. 271a, Auge talks about her courage and generalises about the courage of every woman when she speaks with her Nurse after discovering her baby.¹³³ Auge should have taken part in a debate. We can assume that she accompanied her speech with suitable gestures to convince her audience.

3. Human emotions vs divine emotions

Rape is not only a violent act confronted by these heroines, but it also carries an ethical dimension. In the analysis of the plays above, it is shown that moral value is often attached to divine rape. Most people condemn these acts and believe that these rapes create a moral stain on the rapist, the woman, and her *kyrios*; that is, her father and/or husband, if not her entire family. Moreover, as Herzog observes, sexual desire between gods and mortals can cause ruptures and violations in the relationship between human and divine.¹³⁴ This moral colouring helps us to uncover the primary emotion experienced by these women: shame. Shame is a moral emotion *par excellence*. Shame is also inextricably tied to honour.¹³⁵ The heroines in these plays, as well as other characters, employ the vocabulary of shame to its fullest extent, as it was commonly used in ancient Greece, to describe this emotion, stemming from their experience of rape and/or the revelation of the truth.¹³⁶ Non-verbal clues, such as silence, miscommunication, and inaction, also communicate shame. The victims of divine rape also use several linguistic devices to distance themselves from these acts. They employ gnomic statements and generalisations concerning either womankind or humankind as distancing techniques to avoid personal commitment to an

¹³² See Karamanou 2005, p. 77.

¹³³ See Collard and Cropp 2008, p. 260.

¹³⁴ See Herzog 2015, p. 6.

¹³⁵ See Cairns 2011b.

¹³⁶ See e.g., *Ion* 288, 336, 395, 934; *Antiope* fr. 209; *Alope* fr. 109; *Cretans* fr. 427e.12 and 28.

utterance, invoke authority, and soften their allegations against the gods.¹³⁷ Both Creusa and Melanippe use a narrative technique to distance themselves from their narratives of their divine rapes. They use the third person and claim to narrate the story of a friend or an anonymous virgin. Antiope rationalises the violence she was subjected to using generalisations. Pasiphaë uses derogatory terms to describe her past acts and disassociates herself from her union with Poseidon's bull. Neither she nor the god should be ashamed. Minos is to be blamed.

The victims of divine rape also exhibit fear. We can assume that at the time of their rape, these women felt a great disturbance knowing that a future evil was near.¹³⁸ Their fear is also linked to the revelation of their union with a god, a disclosure that intensifies their suffering and trauma and compels them to articulate their emotions more clearly. That is, the threat of the revelation of their rape and pregnancy to their family and community. This revelation will bring them dishonour. In her solo song, Creusa sings about the fear she experienced immediately after giving birth to Ion (897-901). In her clash with her husband, Alcmena talks about her fear in front of an audience (fr. 88a). In her confrontation with her father, Melanippe speaks about the fear she felt after giving birth (fr. 485). The victims of divine rape use the traditional terminology associated with fear.¹³⁹

In *Ion* and the fragmentary dramas depicting victims of divine rape, the moment in which the secret of the union between gods and mortals, long concealed, is opened up and made visible to the community, becomes the centre of attention.¹⁴⁰ These women and their familiar environment assign moral value to the event; some confess to feeling diminished. The victims of divine rape must have perceived their violation and impregnation as a loss of their personal honour or the honour of their family, which is a form of social trauma, explaining why shame and fear are the primary emotions they experience. These women fear that their personal or family honour will be undermined and that their relatives will react to their personal loss of honour due to the victim's perceived sexual misconduct. Trauma may also arise from dishonour,¹⁴¹ and, since honour was a highly ranked value in classical society, it follows that reactions to dishonour brought on by rape, even divine rape, may have been equivalent to reactions brought on by combat and any other form of physical assault. These women experience the possibility of humiliation and their perceived

¹³⁷ See *Ion* 252-254; *Danaë* frs. 11-12.; *Alope* frs. 209; *Melanippe the Captive* fr. 494; *Auge* fr. 271a. For *gnomai* (or generalisations) used as distancing techniques in ancient Greek tragedy, see Van Emde Boas 2017, pp. 40-46. For the use of gnomic statements in archaic and classical Greek poetry, cf. Lardinois 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2006.

¹³⁸ See Arist. *Rhet.* 1382a22-25.

¹³⁹ See *Melanippe the Wise* fr. 485: φοβουμένη; *Ion* 897: φόβος; *Alcmena* fr. 88a: ὁ φόβος, ἐκπλήξιν.

¹⁴⁰ See Herzog 2015, p. 30.

¹⁴¹ See Wachsmann 2020.

loss of honour in an intense and traumatic manner. It is not only the sexual violation that causes a series of negative emotions for the victims, but also the public (or less public) exposure of their dark and painful secrets.

The ancient Greek concept of anger is significantly different from the modern one.¹⁴² Greek definitions of anger often associate this emotion with the concept of honour.¹⁴³ We know shame and anger often fuse or co-occur as responses to public humiliation.¹⁴⁴ Anger arises when someone takes offence at something that is not deserved.¹⁴⁵ Anger then appears to overtake these women when faced with the revelation of the truth. They frequently speak about the gods' injustice and denounce their behaviour; they attempt to prove they do not deserve what happened to them. As Aristotle would later theorise, anger was often thought to inspire courage (*Eth. Nic.* 1116b23-30).¹⁴⁶ The honour of these women had been violated, and they attempted to regain it in the course of the dramas. Those who had damaged their honour were initially the ones who violated them and, thereafter, their male relatives. Remarkable displays of heroism and courage were essential for someone to regain their honour. Our heroines use legal language and logical arguments to defend themselves, display courage, and sometimes are praised for this. Anger that inspires courage was considered an essential emotion for civic life and was a tactic that men used in courts of law. Gods and demigods could not be taken to court, and the victims of divine rape could only use their rhetorical skills in their agonistic dialogues with the male members of their families. For some women, taking oaths was the only way to convince others to believe them.¹⁴⁷

The victims of divine rape experience shame, fear, and anger. The concept of honour is also of great importance. The way Euripides stages these emotions, that is, as embodied experiences, ensures the emotional involvement of the audience, as we saw above. But what about the perpetrators? Could they be regarded as honourable? Could the gods experience anything close to the emotions felt and expressed by their victims?

A lot has been written on the depiction of the gods by Euripides.¹⁴⁸ I mostly agree with Lefkowitz who argues that the gods described by the tragedians have the same characteristics as the gods described by early poets, such as Homer and Hesiod. These

¹⁴² See the discussion in Konstan 2006, pp. 41-48.

¹⁴³ See Cairns 2001, p. 23. See [Pl.] *Def.* 415e11; Arist. *Rh.* 1378a30-32, *Top.* 127b30-31, 151a15-16, 156a32-33.

¹⁴⁴ See Cairns 2001, p. 19.

¹⁴⁵ Arist. *Rhet.* 1378a30-32.

¹⁴⁶ Balot 2014, p. 18 regards anger as a "democratic" form of shame. He also argues (pp. 218-242) that courage in classical Athens was presented as informed by practical reasoning about the city's good and by normatively appropriate emotional responses to danger or foreign attack—in particular, rationally informed anger.

¹⁴⁷ See *Ion* 1483-1484; *Melanippe the Wise* fr. 487.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, Nestle 1901; Yunis 1988; Lefkowitz 1989; Mastronarde 2002; Lefkowitz 2016.

gods are by no means perfect and exist to please themselves, not human beings.¹⁴⁹ The divine offenders in Euripides' *Danaë*, *Melanippe*, and *Alope* are absent. They have satisfied themselves, either by using violence or coercion, and have abandoned their mortal concubines and their children. There is no indication that they somehow intervene in the action of the play. Poseidon is not to be blamed in Euripides' *Cretans*, at least according to the heroine. Poseidon did not sleep with Minos' wife and had only the pleasure of taking revenge against the man who offended him. Pasiphaë had to be turned mad and forced to mingle with an animal because her husband enraged a god. In *Antiope*, there are indications that a god could have felt a negative emotion against a mortal (φθόνος). This φθόνος could have been a reaction to an excess on the part of a human or a god. We also know that Hermes, and not their father, Zeus, intervened to stop Amphion and Zethus from killing Lycus, the king of Thebes (fr. 223). Hermes confirms that they are the sons of Zeus and tells them about the honours they will receive in the future. In the same tragedy, most likely Amphion has an 'ontological' problem; he remains unconvinced that Zeus could have taken the shape of a Satyr to have sex with his mother (fr. 210). In *Alcmene*, however, we know that Zeus must have intervened by causing a storm to extinguish the fire about to burn the heroine. We are also aware that Amphitryon likely learned and accepted the truth through a divine speech at the end of the play. Plutarch, in his *Moralia*, quotes two lines and claims that Euripides was the subject of a disturbance for having written at the beginning of his drama *Melanippe the Wise* (fr. 480): "Zeus, whoever Zeus is—for I don't know this except from tradition". Plutarch says that Euripides was awarded another chorus and produced a new version of the play in which he replaced the offensive line with the inoffensive "Zeus, as it is said in truth" (fr. 481.1). As Lefkowitz argues, the first line is probably not historical, and the story was based on a scene in a comedy, because that is where the practice of juxtaposing a line from one play with a line from another began.¹⁵⁰ In *Auge*, Heracles (fr. 272b), the demigod produced by the mingling of Zeus and Alcmene, is the only being of divine origin who tries to excuse his actions and redeem himself. This depiction of Heracles opens a new road to the Athenian dramatists. But what about *Ion*? Apollo never appears but intervenes in the action of the play. The study of the depiction of the emotions of Apollo can provide us with the key to understanding how Euripides could have staged the emotions of the other divine beings encountered in the fragmentary dramas.

In *Ion*, Apollo is described by the humans involved in this story as unjust. According to Ion, Creusa would have had no choice if a god chose her to be his

¹⁴⁹ See Lefkowitz 2016, p. 22.

¹⁵⁰ See Lefkowitz 2016, p. 58.

bedmate, so she is blameless (343). According to Creusa, he is a god who took advantage of her and satisfied his selfish needs without giving her back the favor (τὰ κοινὰ χαίρων οὐ δίκαια δρᾷ μόνος, 358: “unjust to enjoy alone a common right”). It is unjust for him to have shared the *charis* of Creusa and not let her know what happened to her son. He left Creusa and the child without any help. Moreover, the heroine makes clear that she tried to resist the god in every possible way (e.g., 893). Now, he has abandoned both Creusa and his child, since he is not willing to inform the heroine about her children’s whereabouts. At 367, Ion emphasizes the god’s dishonour (αἰσχύνεται) for impregnating Creusa’s “friend”. If Apollo acted like that, Ion feels that the god should be scolded for his behavior (436-439):

Ἴων νουθετητέος δέ μοι
 Φοῖβος, τί πάσχει· παρθένους βία γαμῶν
 προδίδωσι; παῖδας ἐκτεκνούμενος λάθρα
 θνήσκοντας ἀμελεῖ;

Ion Yet must I blame the god, if thus perforce
 He mounts the bed of virgins, and by stealth
 Becomes a father, leaving then his children
 To die, regardless of them.

The young man interprets Apollo’s absence and silence as a reaction to a shameful act but still warns Creusa not to condemn Apollo (439-441). The god should have been ashamed and should have felt fear for the fate of his son and his mother, but he did not and does not. Apollo is not even angry at Creusa, besides being the recipient of her tirade against him after hearing her monody. In this tragedy, mortals are completely unable to interpret Apollo’s true feelings. Only other gods can discern the emotions and the intentions of Creusa’s divine rapist.

In the prologue, Apollo makes Hermes explain what happened before Ion was born and what he wishes to happen next. Hermes declares that the mingling leading to Ion’s birth and exposure happened just because the god wanted it (τῷ θεῷ γὰρ ἦν φίλον, 14: “such was the pleasure of the god”). He also admits that Apollo used force (11). Nonetheless, we learn that all the mortals who believe that Apollo abandoned his son are wrong. Hermes had been ordered to save the exposed child, and Apollo had promised to take care of it for the rest of its life (28-36). This child will be given to Xuthus, Creusa’s husband, because everything was ordered by Apollo (67-75). Apollo, the absent god called upon many times in this tragedy, does not appear as a

deus ex machina at the end of the play. He sends Athena to take care of everything and avert further disaster.

During the course of this play, Athena is not blamed, but we learn from Creusa that although she was present when the heroine was raped by Apollo, she just witnessed the event without intervening (ἴστω Γοργοφόνα, 1478: “be witness, thou by whom the Gorgon died”).¹⁵¹ Athena, as a dea ex machina, stops Ion, who starts marching toward the sanctuary to confront the god and force him to tell the whole truth. Athena explains that Apollo thought it best not to show himself in person lest he be blamed for what happened (ὃς ἐς μὲν ὄψιν σφῶν μολεῖν οὐκ ἤξιου, / μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μόλη, 1557-1558: “unmeet he deems it to show himself before you, lest with blame the past be mentioned”), but sent Athena in his place to tell Ion that he is Ion’s father and Creusa is his mother. Apollo could have been reapproached, but we do not know by whom or why. As other scholars argue, Athena clouds the motive for Apollo’s absence in ambiguity, leaving unsaid who would reproach whom and whether recrimination would be justifie.¹⁵² Athena tells Ion that Apollo brought them together on purpose, to provide Ion with a proper place in a noble house. Apollo had planned for Ion to discover the truth after he went to Athens, but since the plot was discovered, he decided to reveal the secret here to prevent either of them from killing the other (1553-1605). Creusa swears that she will now praise Apollo because he never neglected Ion and now gave her son back (αἰνῶ Φοῖβον οὐκ αἰνοῦσα πρίν, / οὖνεχ’ οὗ ποτ’ ἠμέλησε παιδὸς ἀποδίδωσί μοι, 1609-1610: “Phoebus I praise, before unpraised; my son he now restores, of whom till now I deemed him heedless”). Athena states that the gods may be slow to action, but in the end, they show their strength (1614-1615). A god could choose to please himself and satisfy his desire for a young girl. The other gods, just like Hermes and Athena, could acknowledge the fact that the god used force to entertain himself. Gods, such as Apollo in *Ion*, do not have to excuse themselves and they have every right to choose to avoid confrontation. Nonetheless, the gods provide for their offspring even if mortals fail to immediately grasp their plans. Ion’s fate has been arranged by Apollo. There are also indications, as we saw above, that other divine rapists aided their sons and their mothers (e.g., Zeus in *Antiope* and *Alcmene*). There seems to be an intricate plan behind any divine rape; this is why mortals have to honor the gods.

¹⁵¹ Athena is also blamed by Auge for not tolerating her “polluting” her temple (fr. 266).

¹⁵² See Yunis 1988, pp. 136-137; Martin 2018, p. 368.

4. Conclusions

Euripides depicts sexual violence from the perspective of the female victim, thereby creating a female discourse about rape. In Euripides' plays, the encounters between young women and divine creatures are rarely consensual. The gods or heroes use force or other means to satisfy themselves without caring about the emotions of the young girls. Sometimes, the gods even use the bodies of these women to take revenge on their families. Other divine beings acknowledge that these gods had every right to act as they did. Euripides' treatment of the stories of divine rape is radically different from the rape motif appearing in New Comedy. Emphasis is placed on the display of the emotions of the victims. Male culpability is not mitigated. The mistreated women are allowed to speak and give their own account of their stories. They are also free to express their emotions. These women perceive their divine rapes as a traumatic somatic experience and as a stain to their honour or to the honour of their families. They feel shame, fear, and anger. Moreover, it is exactly because Euripides stages these emotions as embodied experiences that these narratives of divine rape had the ability to deeply affect the audience of these tragedies. Euripides seems to thematise the question of justice and urges his audience reflect on contemporary debates. These may not just be female discourses about rape but also female discourses about divine and human justice, morality, epistemology, and the distance between human and divine emotions.

The brief but memorable intimacy with the divine does not instantly create a significant bond or a privileged relationship between the victims of divine rape and their divine perpetrators. The emotions of the gods towards these events are quite different and cannot be easily discerned. The gods tend to provide for their sons, but they completely neglect their mothers. They do not seem to feel any shame, fear, or anger against these mortal women, even if they sometimes reapproach them for their actions. What characterizes them is their indifference towards their victims. What is not just for mortals is for the gods. Euripides underlines the fact that there is a great distance between human and divine emotions. This distance cannot be bridged by any kind of physical intimacy. Humans, especially the victims of divine rape, are forced to experience intense emotions, but the gods do not feel the same. Mortals are traumatized, but the gods have other plans. Human beings have to suffer, and their divine perpetrators can just look at them from afar.

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