

## Plot-makers in Euripides' *Ion*\*

Vasileios Dimoglidis<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The aim of this paper is to examine the plot-makers in Euripides' *Ion*, focusing in this way on an aspect of the Euripidean metapoetry. *Ion*'s four characters (Apollo, Xuthus, Creusa, and Ion) are transformed into plot-makers, with each of them trying to compose a plot. I have suggested that Apollo is the poet's double, and thus his plot echoes that of Euripides. The fact that, despite various deviations (that is, unsuccessful sub-plots), the plot is redirected every single time to the god's original plot, credits Apollo with the title of a successful theatrical writer (internal playwright), a title that Euripides himself assumes.

**Keywords:** Metapoetry, plot-makers, plot-making, poet's double, Euripides, *Ion*.

## [es] Urdidores de la trama en el *Íón* de Eurípides

**Resumen.** Mi objetivo es examinar los personajes que urden la trama en el *Íón* de Eurípides, centrándome en un aspecto de la metapoética eurípidea. Los cuatro personajes del *Íón* (Apolo, Juto, Creusa e Ion) se convierten en urdidores de la trama, intentando cada uno de ellos componer una trama. Sugiero que Apolo es el doble del poeta, de manera que su trama se hace eco de la de Eurípides. El hecho de que, aun con varias desviaciones (es decir, subtramas sin éxito), la trama es redirigida en cada caso hacia la trama original del dios, acredita a Apolo como un autor teatral de éxito (dramaturgo interno), un título que el propio Eurípides asume.

**Palabras clave:** Metapoética, urdidores de tramas, urdimbre de la trama, doble del poeta, Eurípides, *Ion*.

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Euripides' *Ion* is a largely unknown and controversial play. Its dating is uncertain<sup>2</sup>, and Lesky (1983: 316) dates it between 414 and 413 BC. Still unknown are also

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<sup>1</sup> University of Cincinnati (OH, USA), Department of Classics.  
[dimoglvs@mail.uc.edu](mailto:dimoglvs@mail.uc.edu)

<sup>2</sup> For *Ion*'s dating, see Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1926: 24); Owen (1957: xxxvi-xxxvii); Macurdy (1966: 84-91); Lee (1997: 40); Lesky (1983: 316, 473 n.252 with further bibliography); Zacharia (2003: 3-5); Pellegrino (2004: 28-29); Swift (2008: 28-30); Martin (2010); Martin (2018: 24-32); Gibert (2019: 2-4). Based on Euripides' metrical choices, Burian (in Piero [1996: 3]) dates *Ion* between 412 and 410 BC. Zacharia (2003: 4) dates it to 412 BC.

both the other three plays of the tetralogy<sup>3</sup> with which Euripides participated in the dramatic competition and his counterparts. When it comes to its contents, *Ion* could be described as an unusual play, since it does not belong to those tragedies in which the extravagant human passion dominates (e.g. *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, etc.), and this is maybe the reason why it is seldom staged in modern theater<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, *Ion* has artistic plot and structure, themes and motifs that greatly influenced New Comedy<sup>5</sup>.

Euripides' *Ion* narrates the story of Creusa who is raped by Apollo and gives birth to his son. She exposes her child in a cave to die. Many years later, she comes to Delphi with her husband, Xuthus, to consult the oracle about their childlessness. Xuthus is deceitfully said that Ion is his own son. Creusa tries to kill Ion, but thanks to Apollo's intervention they recognize each other and set out for Athens.

The aim of this paper is to examine Apollo, Xuthus, Creusa, and Ion as plot-makers, as well as the sub-plot each of them tries to compose. The methodological pillars on which my paper rests include the perceptive remarks of Thornburn's (2001) paper. Focusing on the ways in which «Euripides keeps his audience guessing about what will happen in the *Ion*», Thornburn contends that there are four 'micro-dramas' in the *Ion*<sup>6</sup>: (1) Apollo tries to compose a happy ending play, (2) Creusa attempts to create a vengeance drama and (3) a suppliant drama, and (4) Ion is about to produce another drama by becoming *theomachos*. Based on a close textual analysis of Euripides' *Ion*, I shall try to expand further and deeper upon the insightful points of view made by Thornburn, and to link the concept of the 'plot-makers' with Euripidean metapoetics.

By examining *Ion*'s plot-makers, I actually study an aspect of the Euripidean metapoetry<sup>7</sup>. In my interpretative approach, 'metapoetry' is used as an 'umbrella term'<sup>8</sup> including all the aspects revealing Euripides' poetic and theatrical self-consciousness. I shall apply the terms 'metapoetry', 'metatheater'<sup>9</sup>, and 'metadrama' interchangeably, and as metapoetic/metatheatrical I consider the instances in which the tragedy turns to itself, to the terms and conditions of its production, and demon-

<sup>3</sup> Hartung (1843: xii) has stressed that the tetralogy consists of *Ino*, *Erectheus*, *Ion*, and the satyr play *Skiron*. Cf. Starkie (1909: 95 *ad* 434). Ferguson (1969: 112-117) notes that the tragic trilogy might include *Ion*, *Heracles*, and *Alope*, because of their common theme of divine paternity.

<sup>4</sup> Swift (2008: 101, n.4) writes that the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD, [www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk](http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk)) lists 58 performances based on *Ion* between 1754 and 2005. For the possible reasons that *Ion* is not chosen to be staged, see Hartigan (2015: 555-557).

<sup>5</sup> Knox (1970: 68-96) [= Knox (1979: 250-274)] examines the comic elements of Euripides' *El.* and *Ion*, and notes that these plays foreshadow the dramatic elements of the fourth-century comedy. Cf. Segal (1995: 47); Bartonkova (2001-2002: 40); Mastronarde (2010: 6). For *Ion*'s comic moments, see Seidensticker (1982: 211-241).

<sup>6</sup> Thornburn (2001: 222, n.3) stresses that the previous scholarship (Burnett [1962: 101]; Zeitlin [1989: 164-165]) hinted, but not explored, that Creusa and Ion behave like playwrights.

<sup>7</sup> For the Euripidean metapoetry, see for instance Torrance (2013). In my paper, I follow the interpretative approach introduced by Charles Segal (1982) and his monumental «Metatragedy: Art, Illusion, Imitation». Segal moved Abel's (1963) metadramatic reflections on the Elizabethan theater and Shakespeare's drama to the Greek tragedy, and examined the metatheatrical qualities of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Segal's contribution has proved greatly influential in the body of scholarship, and thereon the metatheatrical readings of the ancient Greek and Roman theater are increasing. Thumiger (2009: 9) states that «the concept of 'metatheatre' has raised great interest in recent discussions of Greek tragedy». For a brief overview of the scholarship dealing with ancient Greek theatre's metatheater, see Lada-Richards (2008: 461, n.12).

<sup>8</sup> In her book's introduction, Torrance (2013: 3) notes that the term 'metapoetry' is an 'umbrella term for the multifarious kinds of self-referentiality present in Euripides' *oeuvre* as a whole». Cf. Dobrov (2001: 9) who stresses that the term 'metafiction' comprises both the concept of metatheater and the concept of metadrama.

<sup>9</sup> For a survey of scholarly definitions of the concept of 'metatheater', see Thumiger (2009: 9-11). Cf. Dustagheer & Newman (2018).

strates a self-consciousness of its own theatricality, that is, when it becomes self-referential and reveals the theatrical self-consciousness of the tragic poet<sup>10</sup>. References to the play or the theater itself, the role-playing, plot-makers and sub-plots, intertextuality, metalinguistic comments, and stage directions<sup>11</sup> may have metatheatrical connotations.

As for the plot-makers, a character behaving in a manner reminiscent of the tragic poet<sup>12</sup> turns into a metatheatrical figure that reflects and comments on the role of a tragedian as a scriptwriter. Ringer (1998: 8) has attributed metatheatrical resonance to the cases wherein a theatrical character tends to manipulate or 'script' other characters' behavior, becoming in this way an internal playwright/director-within-the-play and creating a play-within-the-play. In my paper, I shall frequently use the terms 'playwright' and 'plot-maker'. The only distinctive feature between them is that an '(internal) playwright' is actually the 'plot-maker' whose plot is -finally and regardless of any deviations from the original 'script'- successful and fulfilled.

In the play's prologue, after introducing himself, Hermes relates the background of the story. On the north side of the Acropolis, Apollo raped Creusa who exposed the child, to whom she had given birth, to die. Hermes was asked by Apollo to bring the baby to Delphi where he grew up and devoted himself to Apollo's service. Creusa married Xuthus, but they remained childless, and now they have arrived in Delphi to consult the oracle about their childlessness. In his prologue-*rhēsis*, Hermes lets us know that the kingpin of plot making is Apollo. Hermes' utterance ...Λοξίας δὲ τὴν τύχην | ἐξ τοῦτ' ἐλαύνει... (Il.67-68 «It is Loxias who guides fortune to this point») is the first explicit statement of Apollo's role as a plot-maker<sup>13</sup>, and the phrase ἐξ τοῦτ(ο) ties in with Apollo's main script<sup>14</sup>. The use of both γὰρ (l.69) and future tenses (...δῶσει γὰρ εἰσελθόντι μαντεῖον τόδε | Εὐόθῳ τὸν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, καὶ πεφυκέναι | κείνου σφε φήσει..., Il.69-71 «He will give to Xuthus when he enters this oracular shrine his own son and will assert that he is the offspring of that man») clarify the ἐξ τοῦτ(ο). Moreover, the subject of the verbs ἐλαύνει<sup>15</sup> (l.68), κοῦ λέληθεν (l.68<sup>16</sup>),

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Taplin (1986: 164).

<sup>11</sup> Stage directions may have a metatheatrical resonance in the sense that they reflect the poet's interest in his drama's stagecraft. In a rife with stage directions play (either tragic or comic) the poet points out that he has a keen interest in his play's *mise-en-scène*, and he introduces himself as his play's director.

<sup>12</sup> See Frangoulidis (2009: 405). By examining the Nurse in Seneca's *Phaedra* as a plot-maker, Frangoulidis (2009: 402-403) notes that the Nurse turns into a metadramatic figure as long as she devises sub-plots and assigns roles «in a manner that distantly echoes that of Seneca as playwright». Cf. Frangoulidis (1997: 3).

<sup>13</sup> According to Lesky (1983: 317), Apollo's intention of directing events by his influence on human beings is clear in the play's prologue. Apollo «has arranged it so that Creusa can bear her child unnoticed. He has manipulated the Delphic priestess, who was not particularly pleased with the foundling's appearance at the temple's steps, and now he leads Creusa and Xuthus, who undoubtedly had to remain childless for this very purpose, to his sanctuary, so that he can play his trick with the fictitious paternity of Xuthus».

<sup>14</sup> Neitzel (1988: 273) maintains that the phrase ἐξ τοῦτ(ο) refers to future events. Lee (1997: 166 *ad* 67-8) disagrees with Neitzel, and contends that the pronoun τοῦτο refers to the present situation, that is, to Xuthus' and Creusa's arrival in Delphi. I agree with Bezantakos (2004: 111) who argues that the γὰρ of the next line (l.69) introduces the god's plan and connects that plan to the ἐξ τοῦτ(ο). «Thus -writes Bezantakos-, what follows and foresees the future events clarifies the τοῦτο».

<sup>15</sup> The translation of the verb ἐλαύνω as 'to guide' by Owen (1957: 73 *ad* 68), by Lee (1997: 51), and by Gibert (2019: 136 *ad* 67-8) transcribes the metatheatrical resonance of the verb, in contrast to Paley's translation 'puts off' (cited by Owen [1957: 73 *ad* 68]).

<sup>16</sup> For the importance of l.68 to the unity of the whole play, but also for the scholarly problems in defining the subject and object of the verb λέληθεν, see Skiadas (1989: 140). For the syntactical problems of the λέληθεν, Skiadas suggests three possible solutions: (a) to consider the λέληθεν to be an impersonal verb with Apollo be-

δώσει (l.69), φήσει (l.71), and θήσεται (l.75)<sup>17</sup> is Apollo, while the god's script is lucid: Xuthus is about to believe that Ion is his own son, they will go to Athens where Creusa will immediately recognize her son, and Creusa's intercourse with Apollo will be kept clandestine (ll.69-75)<sup>18</sup>.

After narrating the story's background and the play's preview, Hermes announces that he is going to a place full of bays in order to «learn fully what is accomplished in regard to the boy» (ἀλλ' ἐς δαφνώδη γύαλα βήσομαι τάδε, | τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι, ll.76-77). The participle κρανθὲν (l.77 «what is accomplished») signals the irretrievable<sup>19</sup> quality of Apollo's script<sup>20</sup>, and if Apollo is considered to be the agent of the participle, then his authorial omnipotence is corroborated since it is he who reigns over the play's plot<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, the verb κραίνω seals the image of the seer-poet, with both of these qualities (religious and poetic) coalescing in the god's face. In Hermes' sentence ἀλλ' ἐς δαφνώδη γύαλα βήσομαι τάδε (l.76 «but I shall go into this dell of bay trees») the stage direction τάδε, as a sign of spatial *deixis*, may imply that Hermes points to the site where he will stay to watch the play<sup>22</sup>. Hermes turns into internal audience (ὁρῶ < ὁρῶ γὰρ ἐκβαίνοντα Λοξίου γόνον | τὸνδ(ε), ll.78-79) of the performance he prefaced because, in spite of the certainty expressed by his prophetic future tenses, he is interested in the development of the plot, and he may not be so sure about the plot's outcome<sup>23</sup>.

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ing the implicit object, (b) to consider that the subject of the λέληθεν is the noun τύχη (l.67), and (c) to consider Apollo to be the subject of the λέληθεν. Cf. also Lee (1997: 166 *ad* 67-8); Martin (2018: 143 *ad* 68); Gibert (2019: 136 *ad* 67-8). I believe that taking Apollo for the subject of κοῦ λέληθεν underscores the perspective Hermes has for Apollo as plot-maker.

<sup>17</sup> Hermes: Ἴωνα δ' αὐτόν, κτίστωρ Ἀσιάδος χθονός, | ὄνομα κεκληῆσθαι θήσεται καθ' Ἑλλάδα (ll.74-75 «Apollo will bring it about that he is called all over Greece by the name Ion, founder of the settlement in Asia»).

<sup>18</sup> According to Thornburn (2001: 222), the ultimate aims of Apollo's play are several: (a) the recognition between mother and son will take place in Athens (μητρὸς ὡς ἐλθὼν δόμους | γνωσθῇ Κρεοῦση..., ll.71-72), (b) Creusa's union with Apollo will remain secret (...γάμοι τε Λοξίου | κρυπτοὶ γέγονται..., ll.72-73), (c) Ion will receive his due (...παῖς τ' ἔχη τὰ πρόσφορα, l.73). Cf. Gibert (2019: 137 *ad* 69-73).

<sup>19</sup> Martin (2018: 148 *ad* 77) notices that the two meanings of the participle κρανθὲν 'ordain' and 'accomplish' substantially overlap, «since what a god ordains is destined to be fulfilled».

<sup>20</sup> Owen (1957: 74 *ad* 77) suggests that by using the term κρανθὲν (l.77), Hermes refers to what is actually accomplished or shortly to be so. On the other hand, Lee (1997: 168 *ad* 76) notes that the κρανθὲν goes beyond Apollo's wishes. Knox (1979: 259) maintains that Hermes' utterance τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι (l.77) means that «Apollo has planned everything down to the last detail».

<sup>21</sup> The verb κραίνω means, *inter alia*, 'reign over, ordain, govern'. See LSJ<sup>9</sup>, p. 989 s.v. κραίνω.

<sup>22</sup> For the seat Hermes takes, see Halleran (1985: 115) and Gibert (2019: 20). Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1926: 89 *ad* 76) stresses that the pronoun τάδε (l.76) indicates that the γύαλα are actually visible. Cf. Owen (1957: 74 *ad* 76). Lee (1997: 167 *ad* 76) assumes that Hermes exits «behind a panel to one side of the *skene* painted to represent greenery». For Lesky (1983: 473, n.254), the pronoun τάδε «need not mean that the δαφνώδη γύαλα (laurel-wooded dells) were visible (though a paraskenion decorated with laurel is conceivable); an explanatory gesture of the god would suffice». Martin (2018: 147 *ad* 76) believes that the demonstrative pronoun refers to the stage building. Defining Hermes' seat raises problems in terms of its stage performance. Very interesting is Rehm's (1992: 160, n.1) suggestion which highlights the metatheatricality as well: he notes that «in a modern theatre a director might have Hermes exit into the audience and take a seat. Gods as both scene-setters and audience are as old as the *Iliad*, where, for example, Athena and Apollo arrange the single combat between Hector and Ajax and then perch in a nearby tree disguised as birds to watch (ll., 7.17-45, 57-62)». For the metatheatrical resonance of Hermes' exit in the prologue, see Zacharia (1995: 47, n.9), who posits that Hermes «assumes the role of the spectator in the grove, having a peculiarly close bond with the audience, waiting to see whether his predictions will be realised, thus admitting that he, as well as the audience, may have a partial vision of the reality».

<sup>23</sup> «Hermes already knows what has been determined but his interesting in the execution may be a possible hint that Apollo's plan may not be implemented as intended» (Martin [2018: 148 *ad* 77]). Cf. Gibert (2019: 138 *ad* 77). In the utterance τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι (l.77), Zacharia (2003: 12, n.39) sees Hermes'

Apollo's flair for plot-making is also signaled by the characterization συνεργός Hermes attributes to him while describing the rescue of the exposed baby: ...καὶ θεὸς | **συνεργός** ἦν τῷ παιδί μὴ ῥέσσειν δόμων (Il.47-48 «and the god helped to prevent the child from being cast out of the temple»). The compound συνεργός (and especially its second part \*ἔργω) underlines Apollo's significant role in rescuing the exposed baby<sup>24</sup>. Further, Hermes' prologue-*rhēsis* highlights Apollo's generic maneuvers. To be more concrete, by exposing her baby child, Creusa could have created a tragedy (Ion's death), which was finally averted by Apollo's intervention (Il.28-34), and when Ion was transferred to Delphi, Apollo prevented a new tragedy by making Pythia compassionate so that she could salvage and bring Ion up<sup>25</sup>. Apollo's generic maneuvers tie in with the Euripidean generic reflections.

In the first episode, Creusa asks her husband about the response he brings from Trophonius' oracle about their infertility (Il.404-406). Xuthus' answer οὐκ ἤξιωσε τοῦ θεοῦ προλαμβάνειν | μαντεύμαθ'... (Il.407-408 «he did not think it right to anticipate the oracle of the god») implies that Apollo did not let Trophonius<sup>26</sup> expand upon Xuthus' question; Xuthus was only informed that he and his wife would not leave Delphi without a child (Il.408-409). Apollo, on the one hand, ensured his authorial omnipotence<sup>27</sup> over Trophonius in terms of the original plot he (Apollo) set up, and, on the other hand, by using Trophonius in the plan of deceiving Xuthus, he revealed the truth by means of the oracle's ambiguous meaning.

During the second episode, and after the so-called false recognition scene<sup>28</sup> between Xuthus and Ion, the former praises, ignoring that he has been a victim of divine deception, Apollo's role in finding his "son": ὦ τέκνον, ἐς μὲν σὴν ἀνέυρεσιν θεὸς | ὀρθῶς ἔκρανε... (Il.569-570 «my son, in your discovery the god has brought things to a right conclusion»). The verb Xuthus uses (ἔκρανε) finds its verbal equivalent in the participle τὸ κρανθὲν (l.77)<sup>29</sup> used by Hermes in the prologue, and this verbal correspondence highlights the fact that the plot so far follows Apollo's main

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uncertainty of the play's outcome. For Zacharia, the fact that the god retires into the laurels to watch the play implies that his accurate knowledge is limited to the play's present. For a god likely not to reveal the upcoming dramatic complications, see Karamanou (2014: 299).

<sup>24</sup> For this very role of Apollo, see Martin (2018: 138 *ad* 47-8).

<sup>25</sup> For Ion's arrival in Delphi and the transformation of Pythia's attitude (οἶκτο δ' ἀφῆκεν ὀμότητα..., l.47) as Apollo's attempts at averting the tragedy, see Thornburn (2001: 224).

<sup>26</sup> According to a mythic tradition, Trophonius was Apollo and Epicaste's son. For further details of Trophonius' myth and its sources, see Grimal (1986: 444 *s.v.* Trophonius). Cf. Bonnechere (2003).

<sup>27</sup> Apollo's authorial omnipotence is indicated also by the *hyperbaton* τοῦ θεοῦ...μαντεύματα (Il.407-408). For this *hyperbaton* and its resonances, see Martin (2018: 241 *ad* 407). Lee (1997: 203 *ad* 407-8) states that Trophonius' pronouncement aligns with Apollo's oracle. Lee also notes that «oracles were generally 'how to' statements, rather than simply 'that' statements: Xuthus will be told by Apollo precisely how he will go about getting his son, not just that he will get one». For the rhetorical use of *hyperbaton* in the in the Greek literary sentence, see Markovic (2006).

<sup>28</sup> By "false recognition scene" I mean the scene in which two characters recognize each other, being both deceived (here both Xuthus, who believes in Apollo's deceitful oracle, and Ion, who believes Xuthus), and at least one of them (Xuthus in the *Ion*) is never said the truth. In a false recognition scene, there are some elements common with that of the real recognition scenes yet modified to be differentiated from those of the real ones. Taplin (2003: 52) observes that in the *Ion*'s false recognition scene there are neither songs nor lingering endearments, elements that are typical in a real recognition scene. For lack of other false recognition scenes in the extant plays, it is impossible to draw up a typology of the false recognition scenes.

<sup>29</sup> Lee (1997: 223 *ad* 569-70). Lee's (1997: 87) translation «the god has brought things to a right conclusion» seems insightful, while translating the ancient Greek aorist into English present perfect he succeeds in noting that Apollo's role is permanent and not expired, and that the effects of Apollo's plot are still visible in the on-stage present. The most pertinent translation, though, is that of Martin (2018: 288 *ad* 569-70): «Son, the god has



script. The adverb ὁρθῶς seals the laudation of this script and as a term of literary criticism conveys a favorable evaluation of the script's aesthetic quality<sup>30</sup>.

Xuthus suggests that Ion will follow him to Athens, but Ion's objections to this suggestion lead Apollo's script to a dead end<sup>31</sup>. Trying to make Ion relent and thus follow Apollo's script, Xuthus describes a plot he has come up with. Because he understands Creusa's predicament (καὶ γὰρ γυναῖκα τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ βούλομαι | λυπεῖν ἄτεκνον οὖσαν αὐτὸς εὐτυχῶν, Il.657-658), he plans to introduce the young man as a guest visitor and in due time he will find the opportunity to reveal the truth to Creusa<sup>32</sup>:

καὶ νῦν μὲν ὥς δὴ ξένον ἄγων σ' ἐφέστιον  
 δαίπνοισι τέρψω, τῆς δ' Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς  
 ἄξω θεατὴν δῆθεν, ὥς οὐκ ὄντ' ἐμόν.  
 καὶ γὰρ γυναῖκα τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ βούλομαι  
 λυπεῖν ἄτεκνον οὖσαν αὐτὸς εὐτυχῶν.  
 χρόνῳ δὲ καιρὸν λαμβάνων προσάξομαι  
 δάμαρτ' ἔαν σε σκηπτρα τᾶμ' ἔχειν χθονός. (Il.654-660)

And now taking you with me as if you were a friend of the house I shall delight you with the feast, and then to the city of Athens I'll take you, as a sight-seer, of course, and not as my son. For in fact I do not want to cause pain to my wife, childless as she is, while I am fortunate myself. But in time I shall grasp the right moment and induce my wife to allow you to inherit my rule over the country.

The above delineation of the plot that Xuthus plans to fulfil shows his vigorous role by means of personal *deixis*. By only using first singular person verbs (τέρψω 1.655, ἄξω 1.656, οὐ βούλομαι 1.657, προσάξομαι 1.659), Xuthus makes clear that the main and only agent of the (theatrical) action will be Xuthus himself and no one else<sup>33</sup>, while the use of the adverb δῆθεν (1.656) underlines a convention of the ancient Greek theater related to deception and illusion<sup>34</sup>. According to Thornburn (2001: 225), «Xuthus' deception of his wife and his concern with timing also hint at his awareness of the drama that he constructs».

Ion shall be the spectator of the 'play' Xuthus is about to set up (Xuthus: ἄξω θεατὴν..., 1.656). The noun θεατής has a double meaning<sup>35</sup>. On the one hand, it means

correctly directed affairs to your discovery». The verb 'directed' highlights in the clearest and most explicit way Apollo's status as a plot-maker.

<sup>30</sup> For the ambiguity the adverb ὁρθῶς gives to the meaning of the verb κραινῶ, see Martin (2018: 288 *ad* 569-70). Based on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Russell (1981: 91) observes that the term ὁρθότης, when it comes to the poetry, overrides the concept of the moral correctness and underlines the aesthetic quality.

<sup>31</sup> Martin (2018: 306 *ad* 650-67) writes that «the plot, which up to this point has followed the lines of Hermes' prediction, has reached a dead end; Trophonius' oracle seems forgotten and impossible to fulfil». For Ion striving against Apollo's plan when he is reluctant to go to Athens, see Gibert (2019: 11).

<sup>32</sup> In Lesky's (1983: 320) opinion, Euripides illuminates here the grotesque side of the situation: both Xuthus and Apollo (with quite different purposes) hope to find a favorable opportunity in Athens.

<sup>33</sup> It is no coincidence that in Il.654-660 there are only first singular person verbs.

<sup>34</sup> It is very likely that the adverb δῆθεν hints at the acting and pretense (both needed so that a script can be fulfilled) since the actions associated with this adverb end up being supposed (δῆθεν) by means of pretense. Cf. LSJ<sup>9</sup>, p. 384 s.v. δῆθεν.

<sup>35</sup> For the meanings of the noun, see LSJ<sup>9</sup>, p. 787 s.v. θεατής. Rehm (1992: 160, n.4) underlines that the word θεατής «is used for 'theatre spectator'». Perhaps Euripides is reminding the audience that the process of 'looking

‘one who sees or goes to see’ and on the other hand, it means ‘spectator in the theater’. In this case, the two meanings of the term are overlapping since Ion will go to Athens initially as a sightseer<sup>36</sup> of the city and as Xuthus’ guest, but eventually he will become a spectator of the play composed by his “father”<sup>37</sup>. As spectator, the young man shall have the edge over Creusa since he will have been informed of the “play’s” story by Xuthus. Thus, Ion (as internal audience) shares with the external audience of the performance the highest degree of knowledge of storyline’s details since the external audience has been informed about *Ion*’s storyline by Hermes’ account in the prologue.

The young man is finally persuaded to follow his “father” to Athens, and, after Xuthus’ suggestion, to bid his friends farewell before leaving Delphi (Il.663-665). In the third episode (Il.725-1047), Creusa and the Old Man come onstage with the latter expressing his inability to walk and reach the oracle due to his old age. In answering to Creusa’s imperative to follow her (ἔπου νυν ἵχνοσ δ’ ἐκφύλασσ’ ὅπου τίθης, l.741 «keep close to me and watch carefully where you step»), he replies that τὸ τοῦ ποδὸς μὲν βραδύ, τὸ τοῦ δὲ νοῦ ταχύ (l.742 «my feet may be slow, but my mind is nimble»). The contrast μὲν - δὲ is mirroring the contrast between Old Man’s physical weakness (τὸ τοῦ ποδὸς μὲν βραδύ) and his mental vigor (τὸ τοῦ δὲ νοῦ ταχύ). This declared intellectual superiority over any physical shortcomings dictated by his old age foreshadows his powerful role in plot making<sup>38</sup>.

Once the Old Man is informed by the Chorus’ maidens that Xuthus has found his son, he assumes that Creusa’s husband planned everything a long time ago. In his speech, he uses theatrical wording having to do with secrecy, fraud, deception, and plot making<sup>39</sup> –qualities attributed by the Old Man to Xuthus: μεμηχανημένως (l.809<sup>40</sup>), λάθρα (l.816), λάθρα (l.819), ὡς λάθοι (l.822), ἐψεύσατο (l.825), ἀπλεκεν πλοκάς (l.826), and πεπλάσμενον (l.830). The Old Man believes that Xuthus has deceived Creusa, and feeling betrayed and compassionate for Creusa, he suggests that Xuthus must be punished in the same way, but this “punishment” means action that appertains to the typology of a tragic plot/tragedy. He suggests that Creusa should kill both her husband and Ion: ἐκ τῶνδε δεῖ σε δὴ γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν· | ἤ γὰρ ξίφος

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on’ in the theatre also implies looking ‘into’». Griffiths (2017: 238) assumes that the word θεατῆς «draws in the audience of the fifth century, each of whom is a *theatēs*, a ‘viewer’ of the play being staged».

<sup>36</sup> This is how Knox (1979: 263) interprets the word θεατῆς.

<sup>37</sup> Commenting on the noun θεατῆς, Thornburn (2001: 225) states that «Euripides’ word-choice hints at the ‘play’ Xuthus intends to stage in Athens. As a *theates*, Ion will become an audience to Xuthus’ intended drama». Taking his cue from Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Goldhill (1986: 275) writes that the use of the language of sight, and in particular of ‘spectacle’ or ‘theatre’, «draws together once more the deluded action of the drama and the illusions of the performance of the play».

<sup>38</sup> In Old Man’s wording, Lee (1997: 245 *ad* 742) discerns an almost programmatic statement: «the Old Man’s mind is only too quick to urge and plot revenge». Commenting on l.742, Gibert (2019: 239 *ad* 742) observes that «the Old Man might mean either that his mind is *still* quick, or that he has acquired shrewd judgment with age».

<sup>39</sup> Lee (1997: 252 *ad* 809) writes that «prominent in this speech is the language of secrecy, deception and plotting».

<sup>40</sup> For the term μεμηχανημένως as a ‘massive word’ that highlights the verse as a ‘three-word trimeter’, see Markovich (1984: 110-111). Translating this term as «through an artful contrivance», Markovich makes the Old Man believe that Xuthus’ plots had an artistic quality. This is not explicitly indicated by the μεμηχανημένως, but the translation is indeed insightful since I believe that in this passage (Il.808-830) the variation of terms denoting deceit maybe highlight that in the Old Man’s mind, Xuthus was not just someone who plotted against Creusa, but someone who exploited every aspect of deceit which finally makes him an artful deceiver. For Il.808-812 as an example of ‘three-word trimeter’ whose ‘massive words’ contribute to the *ethopoeia* of the Old Man, see Markovich (1984: 111).

λαβοῦσαν ἢ δόλῳ τινί | ἢ φαρμάκοισι σὸν κατακτεῖναι πόσιν | καὶ παῖδα, πρὶν σοὶ θάνατον ἐκ κείνων μολεῖν (Il.843-846 «in view of this, you must act like a woman! [Either with a sword or by means of some plot or poison you must kill your husband and the boy, before you suffer death at their hands]). With this suggestion, he virtually calls on Creusa to come up with a tragedy that will be labeled “woman’s tragedy” (γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν, l.843)<sup>41</sup>. Drawing upon a well-known theatrical tradition, he leads here the audience to a (not to be fulfilled) horizon of expectations that Creusa is about to become a new Medea or a new Phaedra or someone else of the emblematic female figures of the Euripidean tragedy. The main plot he proposes will bring about death (σὸν κατακτεῖναι πόσιν | καὶ παῖδα..., ll.845-846), while for its fulfilment he provides Creusa with three alternatives: either sword (ἢ γὰρ ξίφος), or deceit (ἢ δόλῳ τινί), or poison (ἢ φαρμάκοισι)<sup>42</sup>.

Stating that he wants to assume a dynamic role in whatever his mistress decides on (ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν σοὶ καὶ συνεκπονέειν θέλω | καὶ συμφονεύειν παῖδ(α)..., ll.850-851 «now I am willing to share your efforts to the full and to join in killing the boy»)<sup>43</sup>, he actually asks to carry out Creusa’s tragic plot (συνεκπονέειν, συμφονεύειν). Wanting to share their mistress’ future, the Chorus’ women claim a participatory role in the plot Creusa is called to set up<sup>44</sup>: **κἀγὼ**, φίλη δέσποινα, συμφορὰν<sup>45</sup> θέλω | **κοινομένην** τήνδ’ ἢ θανεῖν ἢ ζῆν καλῶς] (ll.857-858 «I too, my lady, in sharing with you this calamity am willing to die or live with honour»)<sup>46</sup>.

Once Creusa confesses her intercourse with Apollo and the exposure of her baby, the Old Man exhorts her to stop lamenting and take action (μὴ νῦν ἔτ’ οἴκτων, θύγατερ, ἀντεχώμεθα, l.970 «now let us not, daughter, keep clinging to piteous cries»), while she wonders what to do (τί γάρ με χρὴ δρᾶν; ἀπορία τὸ δυστυχεῖν, l.971 «what then must I do? To be unfortunate is to be resourceless»). The wrongdoings (she believes) she has suffered from have led her to an inability to act (ἀπορία), a situation which the Old Man tries to counteract. He himself suggests that Creusa

<sup>41</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1926: 125 ad 836) holds that the Old Man hints at a crime of passion («Mord aus Eifersucht») as that of Medea (Euripides’ *Medea* l.265) or that of Hermione (Euripides’ *Andromache* l.911). Owen (1957: 126 ad 840) interprets the term γυναικεῖον as «with the craft to be expected from a woman». Gibert (2019: 239 ad 742) comments on the Old Man’s utterance γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν by stressing that «the Old Man means that Creusa must meet the threat to her wifely status with violence».

<sup>42</sup> Ll.844-858 have been considered spurious by Murray, Page, Diggle, and recently by Martin. Their authenticity, on the other hand, has been more convincingly claimed by Biehl (1992: 21-22), though he deletes ll.847-849, Burnett (1970: 82 ad 847-849), Matthiessen (1984: 680), and Lee (1997: 255 ad 844-58). Cf. Gibert’s (2019: 249-250, esp. 250) comments.

<sup>43</sup> Meticulous attention should be paid to the first part of the compounds συνεκπονέειν (l.850) and συμφονεύειν (l.851). By using the prefix συν-, the Old Man wishes actually for an equal to that of Creusa role since the συν- used in compound verbs means ‘with, along with, together’ and refers to the concept of cooperation. See LSJ<sup>9</sup>, pp. 1690-1691 s.v. συν D; cf. Lee (1997: 256 ad 850-1). I would beg to disagree with Martin (2018: 358 ad 851) who argues that the preposition συν- is unnecessary and the Old Man sounds as though he wanted to take on the assassination by himself. No matter how much he wishes for an active role in Ion’s murder, the Old Man does never forget that he is a slave of Creusa’s house, and therefore offers his help in a cooperative (συν-) way. Cf. Old Man’s l.986 where he claims to be Creusa’s assistant ἀμφοῖν ἂν εἶην τοῖνδ’ ὑπηρέτης ἐγώ.

<sup>44</sup> In the Chorus’ readiness to take violent action, Rehm (1992: 139) discerns the Euripidean intention of dramatizing the «perverse realization of the idea of mutual co-operation with which the scene began».

<sup>45</sup> The term συμφορὰ here is ambiguous and refers to what is going to happen to Creusa in the future, whether it results in θανεῖν (‘to die’) or in ζῆν καλῶς (‘to live well/ in honor’). In translating the line as «My lady, let me share as well! I too would live or die for you!» and by eliminating the word συμφορὰ, Burnett (1970: 82) succeeds in conceiving this neutrality of the term.

<sup>46</sup> Lee (1997: 256 ad 858) notes that «the Chorus take up the theme of cooperative action from the Old Man [...] in an attempt to offset the exclusion Creusa now feels».



should set up a “vengeance drama”, a tragedy, while providing her with three alternative scripts, each one with a different “target”/enemy.

The first plot proposed by the Old Man is that Creusa should burn Apollo’s temple: *πίμπρη τὰ σεμνὰ Λοξίου χρηστήρια* (l.974 «burn down the proud oracular shrine of Loxias»)<sup>47</sup>. However, she discards this idea, and therefore its “target” Apollo, possibly either because of her reverence for the god or because of the theatrical conventions themselves; an onstage fire would be difficult to be staged. The second script proposed targets Xuthus: *τὰ δυνατὰ νυν τόλμησον, ἄνδρα σὸν κτανεῖν* (l.976 «well then, make a bold attempt at what is possible; kill your husband»). The sense of the *αἰδῶς* (‘shame’), however, functions as a deterrent<sup>48</sup>: *αἰδοῦμεθ’ ἐὺνὰς τὰς τὸθ’ ἡνίκ’ ἐσθλὸς ἦν* (l.977 «I have some respect for our marriage at the time he was up-right»)<sup>49</sup>. The script that Creusa is finally amenable to fulfilling is the third one<sup>50</sup>. The Old Man suggests that she should kill Ion (*νῦν δ’ ἀλλὰ παῖδα τὸν ἐπὶ σοὶ πεφηνότα*, l.978 «then at least kill the child who has shown up to supplant you»), and Creusa seems to be elated at the idea since she at once starts inquiring after this plan’s details (*πῶς; εἰ γὰρ εἴη δυνατόν· ὥς θέλωμί γ’ ἄν*, l.979 «how? If only it were possible it were my dearest wish!»). By accepting Old Man’s suggestion to kill Ion, she is about to create a tragedy that would stir the feelings of *ἔλεον* (‘pity’) and *φόβον* (‘fear’) in the audience, and in this way the tragic effect would be more efficient<sup>51</sup>. Then, Creusa and the Old Man discuss the means of Ion’s murder (ll.979 ff.). The proposal to use sword (*ξίφηφόρους σοὺς ὀπίσασ’ ὁπάονας*, l.980 «by arming your attendants with swords») seems at first to be embraced by Creusa (*στείχοιμ’ ἄν· ἀλλὰ ποῦ γενήσεται τόδε*; l.981 «I would go to it; but where is this to happen?»), but her question *ἀλλὰ ποῦ γενήσεται τόδε*; foreshadows a forthcoming refusal. Once the Old Man suggests that the murder should take place inside the tent where Ion feasts his friends (l.982), Creusa discards the idea of using sword because this murder would be seen by anyone<sup>52</sup> (*ἐπίσημον ὁ φόνος, καὶ τὸ δοῦλον ἀσθενές*, l.983 «murder is conspicuous and slaves make weak support») while she longs for deceit and secrecy (l.985). Creusa’s irresolution annoys the Old Man who now invites her to think something (*ᾧμοι, κακίζῃ· φέρε, σὺ νῦν βούλευέ τι*, l.984 «Ah! You play the coward. Come then, you propose something»). The verb *βουλεύειν* here refers to Creusa’s authorial intention asked by the Old Man. She mentions that she has come up with a plan comprising *δόλον* (‘deceit’) (*καὶ μὴν ἔχω γε δόλια καὶ δραστήρια*, l.985 «well, I do have plan,

<sup>47</sup> For the memories of the Persians burning the Acropolis which the audience might be reminded of by the Old Man’s suggestion of burning Apollo’s temple, see Lee (1997: 269 *ad* 974).

<sup>48</sup> The term *ἐσθλός* may reflect a favorable assessment of Xuthus’ political presence in Athens and underscore Creusa’s political interest. For Lee (1997: 269 *ad* 977), «the word *ἐσθλός* here refers to decency in regard to sexual matters [...] and specifically to the proper behavior of a husband». For the word *ἐσθλός* as a non-innate quality, but as something that is actualized through actions, see Martin (2018: 392 *ad* 977). In general for the *ἐσθλός*, see also Adkins (1972: 12-13, 63).

<sup>49</sup> According to Lesky (1983: 321), in *Ion*, as in *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*, «the first suggestions of the male partner (burning of Apollo’s temple, murder of Xuthus) are rejected as unfeasible or contrary to Aidos». Martin (2018: 392 *ad* 976-7) claims that the *αἰδῶς* is stronger than the anger at Xuthus’ actions.

<sup>50</sup> Creusa does accept the third plot suggested by the Old Man, but modifies it so that it can involve guile (Martin [2018: 390-391 *ad* 970-86]).

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1453b) stresses that the most tragic effect is achieved when the feelings of pity and fear are aroused, as it happens when a *φίλος* (‘friend’ or ‘relative’) tries to kill or kills a *φίλον*. Cf. Diggle (1989: 15, 19). For the difficulties in translating the ancient term *ἔλεος* into English, see Stanford (1983: 23).

<sup>52</sup> Gibert (2019: 273 *ad* 983) writes that «Creusa may fear that protectors or defenders will emerge from the crowd and her accomplices’ physical weakness or disloyalty [...] will come into play».

cunning and effective») and in this way she comes back and responds to the Old Man's proposal to act like a "tragic" woman (ἐκ τῶνδε δεῖ σε δὴ γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν, l.843). At the same time, the term δραστήρια (l.985) hints at the effectiveness of the δόλος Creusa desires in order to succeed in her plot.

The Old Man immediately agrees to assist her in carrying out her plan: ἀμφοῖν ἂν εἶην τοῖνδ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐγώ (l.986 «on both scores you may count on my assistance»). By using the term ὑπὲρ τῆς, the old man dovetails his technical with his dramatic function<sup>53</sup>. As a servant of Erechtheus' house (technical function), he is willing at the same time to serve his mistress in accomplishing her plot (dramatic function). Taking advantage of the Old Man's willingness, Creusa assumes the role of the instigator<sup>54</sup> and entrusts the Old Man with the role of her plan's perpetrator: τούτῳ θανεῖται παῖς· σὺ δ' ὁ κτείνων ἔσῃ (l.1019 «by this means the boy will die; you will be the killer»). This role distribution is at once accepted by the Old Man, who in his utterance ...σὸν λέγειν, τολμᾶν δ' ἐμόν (l.1020 «yours to say; to dare is for me») makes (and embraces) a distinction between Creusa's instigation (λέγειν) and his perpetration (τολμᾶν).

After Creusa and the Old Man have planned Ion's murder, the Chorus' maidens in the third stasimon (ll.1048-1105) invoke Hecate to assist their lady in carrying out her plot. By the onstage action so far, the spectators have realized that Apollo's initial plan delineated by Hermes in the play's prologue has been overthrown, and thus they do not know the outcome of the drama they watch. One possible version of the outcome has been designed by Creusa and could result in Ion's death. However, the Chorus confess that

εἰ δ' ἀτελὴς θάνατος σπουδαί τε δεσποί-  
 νας, ὃ τε καιρὸς ἄπεισι τόλμας,  
 ἃ νῦν ἐλπὶς ἐφαί-  
 νετ', ἢ θηκτὸν ξίφος ἢ  
 λαίμων ἐξάψει βροχὸν ἀμφὶ δειράν (ll.1061-1065).

If my mistress' eager attempt at murder is frustrated, and opportunity passes away for daring, whereby hope just recently appeared, she will take a sharpened sword or fasten a noose to her throat, around her neck.

The metapoetic term ἀτελὴς (l.1061)<sup>55</sup> underlines Chorus' anxiety over the successful accomplishment of the plot Creusa composed<sup>56</sup>. If this plot is not succeeded, then Creusa's inventiveness (...σπουδαί τε δεσποί- | νας..., ll.1061-1062) with the aid

<sup>53</sup> For the distinction between the technical and the dramatic function, see Hourmouziades (1998: 17) focusing on Greek tragic Choruses.

<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, see Gibert (2019: 32) who describes the Old Man as an instigator because «at a moment when the plot nearly stalls, he urges Creusa to pursue revenge». Cf. Pellegrino (2015: 634) who observes that the Old Man is «l'escutore materiale» of Creusa's revenge plot.

<sup>55</sup> The terms τέλος, τελεῖν and their derivatives have often metapoetic resonance; as metapoetic terms, they reflect tragic poet's authorial intention and/or signal the fulfilment of the dramatic action. Cf. the repetition of the term in *Ion*'s last lines: ...ἀεὶ γὰρ οὖν | χρόνια μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν πως, ἐς τέλος δ' οὐκ ἀσθενῇ (ll.1614-1615); ἐς τέλος γὰρ οἱ μὲν ἐσθλοὶ τυγχάνουσιν ἀξίων (l.1621). Gasti (2009: 80) notes that the τέλειος and τελεῖν in ll.970-974 of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (ὅταν δὲ τεύχη Ζεὺς ἀπ' ὀμφακος πικρᾶς | οἶνον, τότε ἦδη ψῦχος ἐν δόμοις πέλει, | ἀνδρὸς τελείου δῶμ' ἐπιστροφωμένου. | Ζεῦ, Ζεῦ τέλειε, τὰς ἐμάς εὐχὰς τέλει· | μέλοι δέ τοι σοὶ τῶν περ ἂν μέλλης τελεῖν) convey the sense of the completion of the play's action.

<sup>56</sup> Owen's (1957: 139 *ad* 1061) translation of ἀτελὴς as «failing in its effect» is very insightful.

of the time (...ὃ τε καιρός..., l.1062) will lead her to new deeds (...τόλμας..., l.1062) or else she will commit suicide (...ἢ θηκτὸν ξίφος ἢ | λαμῶν ἐξάψει βροχὸν ἀμφὶ δειράν, ll.1064-1065) whether through hanging or through sword<sup>57</sup>. Thus, there are three possible outcomes<sup>58</sup>: either (a) Creusa kills Ion, or (b) she initially fails and then she will set up a new plan for Ion's murder, or (c) she totally fails and then she will commit suicide. By playing with the audience's expectations and dramatic suspense, and taking advantage of the inchoate theatricalization of the play's myth<sup>59</sup>, Euripides at the end of the *Ion* leads his audience to the theatrical ἐκπληξίς ('surprise')<sup>60</sup> since he averts all the aforementioned possible outcomes<sup>61</sup> and the play ends with a happy end.

After the third stasimon, a Creusa's servant comes onstage to announce that his lady's plans have been revealed<sup>62</sup>, and now she is being haunted in order to be killed (ll.1111-1112). In the crosstalk between the servant and the Chorus (ll.1106-1121), there are terms having to do with Creusa's plot. More concretely, in Chorus' questions οἶμοι, τί λέξεις; οὔτι πον λελήμεθα | κρυφαῖον ἐς παῖδ' ἐκπορίζουσαι φόνον; (ll.1113-1114 «Ahh, what will you say? I hope that we have not been caught in the act of procuring the death of the boy in secret?») and ὥφθη δὲ πῶς τὰ κρυπτὰ μηχανήματα; (l.1116 «how then did the secret designs come to light?») the terms κρυφαῖον, ἐκπορίζουσαι<sup>63</sup>, and the phrase κρυπτὰ μηχανήματα underline Creusa's authorial inventiveness and deceit<sup>64</sup>. Creusa and Chorus' desire that the deceit be kept secret (ll.1113-1114, l.1116) has been defied by Apollo, whose action and intervention cancelled Creusa's plot, and by extension the resultant tragedy. At the same time, Apollo redirected the play to its initial script ([τὸ μὴ δίκαιον τῆς δίκης ἡσώμενον] | ἐξηῦρεν ὁ θεός, οὐ μίανθῆναι θέλων, ll.1117-1118 «[injustice worsted by justice] they were exposed by the god, not wishing to be polluted»).<sup>65</sup> The messenger's interpretation is framed by his knowledge of the sacred location of the action (οὐ μίανθῆναι θέλων), while the audience, having a more precise basis of understanding, assumes that Apollo is concerned about his initial plot<sup>66</sup>.

The servant recounts the events that took place inside the tent where Ion was celebrating with his friends. While the dinners had their meal and were having a

<sup>57</sup> For hanging and stabbing oneself as the two common tragic ways of suicide in the Greek tragedy, see Martin (2018: 412 *ad* 1061-73). For tragic women's death by sword, see Loraux (1987: 7-8), and by hanging, see Loraux (1987: 13-17).

<sup>58</sup> Martin (2018: 406) believes that «the play's outcome has become unpredictable, and the audience is now presented with two possibilities for the continuation of the play»: Ion's death or Creusa's suicide.

<sup>59</sup> For this issue, see Gibert (2019: 5-6, and n.18) and Dimoglidis (2020: 9-10, where further bibliography).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. also Gibert (2019: 284 *ad* 1061-73) who stresses that «the antistrophe is devoted to the idea that Creusa will commit suicide if her plot fails. This misdirection, combined with the Servant's report of a massive search at 1225-8, allows what actually happens at 1250-60 to come as a surprise».

<sup>61</sup> In any case, every alternative outcome tangles with the tragic realm. Directing finally the play to a happy end, Euripides refutes the (generic) expectations of *Ion*'s audience.

<sup>62</sup> The servant, however, does not narrate the full details of the events. He omits to report that Ion managed to survive, the revelation of Creusa's plan notwithstanding. Such a narrative silence contributes to the maintenance of the dramatic tension and suspense. Cf. Hartigan (1991: 82); Lee (1997: 280 *ad* 1111-8).

<sup>63</sup> Martin (2018: 426 *ad* 1114) holds that by means of the participle ἐκπορίζουσαι the Chorus express their solidarity as if they themselves were involved in the planning or execution of the plot.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. the meanings of these terms: LSJ<sup>9</sup> p. 518 s.v. ἐκπορίζω, p. 1131 s.v. μηχανήμα. Gibert (2019: 292 *ad* 1116) observes that «the language of 'contrivance' occurs here first of Creusa's poison plot».

<sup>65</sup> In Martin's (2018: 422-423, and 450 *ad* 1227) opinion, the servant's conviction that Apollo intervened in order to reveal Creusa's plot is shown in παίδων γὰρ ἐλθοῦσ' εἰς ἔρον Φοῖβον πάρα (l.1227) and especially in the phrase Φοῖβον πάρα, which Martin takes for «an ambiguous formulation full of dramatic irony».

<sup>66</sup> Scodel (2009: 423-424).

good time, the Old Man came in, stood in the middle of the enclosure and ... γέλων δ' ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολλὸν | πρόθυμα πρᾶσσων... (Il.1172-1173 «caused much laughter among the diners with his fussy actions»). This statement indicates that the Old Man composed a comedy<sup>67</sup> (γέλων... πολλὸν «much laughter»)<sup>68</sup>, an out-of-stage θέατρον ἐν θεάτρῳ («play-within-the-play»), in order to conceal the tragedy he intended to cause (Ion's murder). Then, the Old Man refilled the cups, adding poison to that of Ion. When, however, one of the slaves uttered an ill-omened word, Ion took it for a portentous omen and ordered everyone to pour down their wine. A dove drunk Ion's poured wine and died (Il.1177-1210). This dove was sent by Apollo<sup>69</sup> and here functions as a substitute for the *deus ex machina* sent not only to prevent Creusa from killing Ion, but also to signal Apollo's (successive) efforts to redirect the play to his intended happy ending<sup>70</sup>.

In the play's *exodos*, Creusa is being chased by the Delphic authorities in order to be punished since her plans were uncovered. In her desperation, she asks the Chorus' women for help, and they suggest that she should take refuge on the altar<sup>71</sup>: ποῖ δ' ἄν ἄλλοσ' ἢ πῖ βωμόν (l.1255 «where else can you go if not to the altar?»). Creusa wonders about the advantages of such an action (l.1256)<sup>72</sup>, while the Chorus by responding ἰκέτιν οὐ θέμις φονεύειν (l.1256 «it is not right to slay a suppliant») exhort her to play a role-within-the-role, that of the suppliant<sup>73</sup>, so that she can get out of her predicament. Threatening to kill Creusa, Ion «plays 'the villain's role' in a rapidly unfolding suppliant drama, while the Athenian women prompt Creusa to assume the role of siege victim when they direct her to take refuge on Apollo's altar»<sup>74</sup>.

During the intense crosstalk between Creusa and Ion, the latter comments on Creusa's decision to take refuge on the altar and says out: ἴδεσθε τὴν πανούργον, ἐκ τέχνης τέχνην | οἶαν ἐπλεξε... (Il.1279-1280 «look at the villain, how she has woven one trick after another»). The metapoetic connotations of the imagery of weaving in both the ancient Greek and Roman literature have already been tracked down by scholars since a poem is often likened to a woven textile and the poet to its weaver<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> The participle πρᾶσσων (γέλων δ' ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολλὸν | πρόθυμα πρᾶσσων... Il.1172-1173), related to πράττω and πράξις, may underline Old Man's theatrical agency.

<sup>68</sup> The term πολλὸν may hint at the intense comic effect of the Old Man's actions.

<sup>69</sup> In his speech, the servant connects the doves to Apollo since the ones that appeared in Ion's tent Λοξίου ... ἐν δόμοις | ἄτρεστα ναίουσι (Il.1197-1198 «they fly about without fear in Loxias' house»).

<sup>70</sup> Thornburn (2001: 229).

<sup>71</sup> For the alleged number of altars in the *Ion*, see Lee (1997: 292 *ad* 1255-6); Zacharia (2003: 14-15, n.48 with further bibliography).

<sup>72</sup> For Creusa's hesitation in regard to the Chorus' suggestion, see Taplin (2003: 53), who believes that Creusa senses the paradox of such an act: having denounced Apollo and attempted murder on his own ground, how can she now take refuge on his altar? Martin (2018: 461 *ad* 1255) posits that Creusa's hesitation is based on the fact that she «does not believe in the efficacy of the measure for the avoidance of the punishment: she recognises that the law, i.e. the Delphians' decision (1256 νόμος), will ultimately prevail». On the other hand, Gibert (2019: 310 *ad* 1255) stresses that «Creusa's surprising question draws attention to her mistrust of the god and his protection».

<sup>73</sup> According to Lee (1997: 292 *ad* 1255-6), the terms βωμόν (l.1255 'altar') and ἰκέτιν (l.1256 'suppliant') are pointers leading us «to expect a suppliant scene of the kind much favored by Euripides».

<sup>74</sup> Thornburn (2001: 230).

<sup>75</sup> This connection has been observed in Homer (see, for instance, the description of Calypso's song while she is weaving: ... ἢ δ' ἔνδον αἰοιδίους ὅπῃ καλῇ | ἱστὸν ἐποιομένη χρυσεῖη κερκίδ' ὕφαινε [Homer's *Odyssey*, 5.61-62]), lyric poetry and the following literary genres. For this issue, see McIntosh Snyder (1981), who tries to demonstrate that the weaving was closely linked in the Greek mind to ᾄδεν ('singing') and that this link led

By using the term ἔπλεξε, Ion likens Creusa's action to a woven plot<sup>76</sup>, while the *polyptoton* (ἐκ) τέχνης τέχνην (l.1279) underlines Creusa's theatrical dexterity, that is, her flair for plot making<sup>77</sup>. At the same time, the imperative ἴδεσθε<sup>78</sup> used by Ion invites both the internal audience (Ion's attendants and Chorus) and the external<sup>79</sup> to see the visible signs of Creusa's capacity to weave plots; ἴδεσθε invites them, in other words, to consider her taking refuge on the altar as a sign of her theatrical (authorial) quality. Ion's conviction of Creusa's schemes is reiterated in the recognition scene. The image Ion has of Creusa as being a plot-maker does not allow him to believe that she is indeed his mother:

Κρ.: παῖς γ', εἰ τόδ' ἐστὶ τοῖς τεκοῦσι φίλτατον.

Ἴων: παῦσαι πλέκουσα – λήψομαί σ' ἐγὼ – πλοκάς<sup>80</sup> (ll.1409-1410)

Cr.: Yes—dear as a son is, if this is the dearest thing to parents

Ion: Stop weaving your wiles—I'll get a hold on you.

to the Greek lyric poets' use of metaphors derived from the art of weaving to describe their own art as a "web of song". Cf. Fanfani & Harlow & Nosch (2016), and Nagy (2017). For the patterns of weaving and knitting as signs with metapoetic resonances, see Peponi (1995: 145-146). When it comes to the Roman literature, I should mention Arachne's well known story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6.1-145, where weaving a tapestry can be paralleled to composing a story. Pavlock (2009: 4) stresses that scholars have observed that Ovid identifies with Arachne, and her tapestry with Ovid's poem. Cf. Oliensis (2004: esp. 286-296).

<sup>76</sup> Lioliou (2008: 49, and n.125) comments on the imagery of weaving in Homer, and notes that «at a figurative level the loom depicts the mind, and the art of weaving describes the process of inventing and conceiving a plan. Homer uses the verb ὑφαίνω, while the tragic poets use the phrase πλέκω δόλον, μηχανάς and τέχνην. The ὑφαίνειν with the words δόλον, μῆτιν, μῦθον and μῆδεα as object, is similar in meaning to the verb μῆδομαι. The mind is like a loom producing 'woven' thoughts and actions. The whole process of weaving reflects the visual, intellectual processes of the brain, from the conception of a plan to its practical implementation».

<sup>77</sup> Lee (1997: 294 ad 1279-81) notes that the weaving image of ἔπλεξε as well as the *polyptoton* in l.1279 underline Ion's belief that Creusa's refuge on Apollo's temple is «not a last-minute escape-hatch suggested by the Chorus», but something that Creusa has already planned.

<sup>78</sup> Martin (2018: 466 ad 1279) writes that ἴδεσθε «points to something coming into sight. By contrast, ἰδοῦ can also introduce the reaction to a development within a speech addressing a group as well as individuals».

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Gibert (2019: 313 ad 1279-81) who contends that the imperative ἴδεσθε is «probably addressed not so much to Ion's men as to imagined witnesses of Creusa's outrageous ploy -including, implicitly, the spectators».

<sup>80</sup> The ms L gives καλῶς as the last word of the line. This word is accepted by Murray. On the other hand, Diggle, and recently both Martin and Gibert accept the emendation πλοκάς suggested by Jacobs (1790: 179). Martin (2018: 499 ad 1410) also notes that Euripides and his contemporaries always provide an object for πλέκω (cf. Diggle [1981: 115 where further examples]). For Verrall's (1890: 114-115) suggestion of κάλως, instead of καλῶς, and its interpretation, see Owen (1957: 167 ad 1410). In Murray's edition the καλῶς modifies the verb λήψομαι (the line is: παῦσαι πλέκουσα. – λήψομαί σ' ἐγὼ καλῶς, l.1410). For the translational problems of καλῶς arousing here, see Martin (2018: 499 ad 1410). In Diggle, as it is seen, the sentence λήψομαί σ' ἐγὼ is parenthetical. If Jacobs' emendation is accepted, then the internal accusative πλοκάς creates a *figura etymologica* and gives prominence to the metatheatrical quality of the participle πλέκουσα. On the other hand, we could keep L and consider the sentence λήψομαί σ' ἐγὼ to be parenthetical (namely, we keep the line ms L gives, but with a different punctuation from that of Murray). Thus, the line would be: παῦσαι πλέκουσα – λήψομαί σ' ἐγὼ – καλῶς (l.1410). In this case, the καλῶς modifies the participle πλέκουσα, and is a pointer of Ion's evaluation of Creusa's capacity or even of her effectiveness in plot making. The translation of the adverb καλῶς here would be 'successfully' («mit Erfolg», as Kraus [1989: 99 and n.85] has suggested). The adverb καλῶς does not point to Creusa's moral righteousness acknowledged by Ion -all the more so since she tried to kill him- but it does point to her theatrical/authorial/artistic dexterity. Creusa is a successful (καλῶς) plot-maker, and this is why Ion now finds it difficult to believe that she is telling the truth that she is his mother.



The imperative *παῦσαι* signals the development of a new narrative trajectory<sup>81</sup> and the irrevocable cessation of Creusa's authorial control over the play's plot at Ion's behest<sup>82</sup>.

Creusa's "suppliant drama" is about to turn into a tragedy with Ion murdering his own mother and committing at the same time a sacrilege by killing the altar's suppliant. But such a tragedy is averted again by Apollo who sends his own representative, Pythia, on stage<sup>83</sup>. In her first line, the priestess addresses Ion, trying to stop him: *ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ...* (l.1320 «stop, my child!»)<sup>84</sup>. The imperative *ἐπίσχες*<sup>85</sup> signals, as the *παῦσαι* did, the development of a new narrative trajectory, and ties in with Pythia's (and by extension with Apollo's)<sup>86</sup> intention of immediately dissuading Ion from causing a tragedy.

The suppression of Ion's tragedy implies the suppression of Creusa's suppliant drama. «With the Pythia's help, Apollo ends Ion's involvement in the suppliant drama and redirects the play towards a happy ending. The Pythia will prevent Ion from adopting the tragic role of matricide and thus becoming a second Orestes. When Orestes killed his mother, the Furies tormented him. Apollo does not want Ion to suffer in this way»<sup>87</sup>. Creusa's suppliant drama ends as soon as Ion opens his cradle, and Creusa, seeing it, leaves her refuge (*λείψω δὲ βωμὸν τόνδε, καὶ θανεῖν με χρή*, l.1401 «but I shall leave this altar, even if I have to die»).

After mother and son having recognized each other, Ion disbelieves that his father is Apollo, until Athena appears and dispels his doubts. In the play's *exodos*, the *dea ex machina*, Athena, mentions among other things that Apollo, in order to prevent Ion and Creusa from killing each other, *μηχαναῖς ἐρρύσατο* (l.1565 «he rescued you with devices of his own»). The term *μηχαναῖς* refers to the tricks<sup>88</sup> used by Apollo to

<sup>81</sup> For the imperatives *παῦσαι* and *ἐπίσχες* as terms signaling the «development of new narrative trajectories», see Goward (1999: 126-127).

<sup>82</sup> According to Torrance (2013: 27), Creusa's unfinished weaving (*οὐ τέλεον*, l.1419), which is described by Creusa and used as a token in the recognition scene, «reflects the failure of her revenge plot to reach its completion». For Creusa's weavings as an extension of her mind and hands, and thus as the physical means for her revenge, see Karanika (2014: 5).

<sup>83</sup> For Pythia's role in the *Ion*, see Lee (1997: 297-298) and Gibert (2019: 317-318). For the two metatheatrical consequences of Pythia's appearance, that is, (a) Apollo's swift efforts to regain control of his play, and (b) Euripides' efforts to keep the audience guessing, see Thornburn (2001: 231).

<sup>84</sup> The imperative *ἐπίσχες* is prominently placed since it is the first word of the first line of Pythia's speech; moreover, the first of the line's *caesurae* occurs at the end of *ἐπίσχες*.

<sup>85</sup> Lee (1997: 298 *ad* 1320) observes that this imperative is regularly used in Euripides «to interrupt some kind of action in progress». Cf. Burnett (1970: 112 *ad* 1320), who stresses that the *ἐπίσχες* is «a command used elsewhere in tragedy to stop an action which has already been begun».

<sup>86</sup> Martin (2018: 481 *ad* 1320-5) considers Pythia to be Apollo's voice.

<sup>87</sup> Thornburn (2001: 233).

<sup>88</sup> According to Owen (1957: 179 *ad* 1565) the *μηχαναῖς* are (a) the ill-omened word and the arrival of the doves, both preventing Ion's death, and (b) Pythia's appearance preventing Creusa's death. Thornburn (2001: 228) assumes that if the bird's intervention, one of Apollo's *μηχανάς*, is added to the true *deus ex machina* and to the substitute *deus*, then «*Ion* arguably ends with what could be construed as a triple *deus*, unparalleled at the conclusion of a Greek drama». For Thornburn, the three *dei ex machina* are (a) the doves, (b) Pythia, and (c) Athena, all substituting Apollo. Meinel (2015: 229, n.187) writes that if the doves' allusion to Apollo is accepted, then Apollo's precise involvement in Ion's rescue is clarified, and that Athena's utterance *μηχαναῖς ἐρρύσατο* (l.1565) dispels any doubts on Apollo's involvement in both Creusa's and Ion's rescue. A similar term is used by the servant while describing the revelation of Creusa's plot: *ᾧφθη δὲ καὶ κατεῖπ' ἀναγκασθεὶς μόλις | τόλμας Κρεούσης πόματός τε μηχανάς* (ll.1215-1217 «He was found out but only under compulsion did he reluctantly admit to Creusa's daring plot with the drink»).

redirect the plot back to its original script<sup>89</sup>, thus preventing Creusa and Ion's tragedy, while the plural form of the noun indicates that Apollo had to intervene more than once<sup>90</sup>.

After predicting Ion's founding of the future tribes<sup>91</sup>, Athena goes on to make a metadramatic comment by saying that καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε... (I.1595 «now Apollo managed everything excellently»)<sup>92</sup>. This utterance seals Athena's favorable (καλῶς) criticism of Apollo's plot since, despite the sub-plots and deviations from the original script, the desired happy ending has finally been achieved. The adverb καλῶς ('excellently') refers to both the moral and the aesthetic (/artistic) correctness Apollo is credited with. Athena praises<sup>93</sup> Apollo because, on the one hand, he helped Creusa to give birth to their child<sup>94</sup>, rescued and raised Ion<sup>95</sup>, and, on the other hand, he, as a plot-maker, composed an artistic play, in which he, as an adept poet, was always in control of the plot<sup>96</sup>.

The fact that both Ion and Creusa are finally persuaded by Athena is associated with their implicit acceptance of Apollo's authorial omnipotence. Creusa's approval of Apollo (...αἰνῶ Φοῖβον οὐκ αἰνοῦσα πρὶν, I.1609 «I approve of Phoebus, though I did not earlier») underlines the fact that after having benefited from the god's plot

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For the μηχανήν as a mode of deceit (δόλος), see Gasti (1990: 136-137). According to Gasti, the term μηχανή in Electra's utterance ὃ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὃ πολίτιδες, | ὁρᾷτ' Ὀρέστην τόνδε, μηχαναῖσι μὲν | θανόντα, νῦν δὲ μηχαναῖς σεσωσμένον (II.1227-1229) in Sophocles' eponymous play is «a trick, a deception-based invention, and its effectiveness results from the consideration of all the evidence and especially of the time (καιροῦ)» (p.136). Commenting on the Oedipus' utterance μηχανήμα ποικίλον (I.762) in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, Gasti writes that «the μηχανή cannot be regarded as an established technique, but it has to do with the volatile nature of the human spirit and generally human situations» (p.137). For the terms μήτις, τέχνη, μηχανή, φάρμακον, κέρδος and λόγος as synonyms of the deceit (δόλος), see Vernant & Detienne (1974: 23, n.3).

<sup>89</sup> According to Lesky (1983: 323), from I.1565 we are to conclude that Apollo was carefully directing events, firstly with the disturbing word being spoken at the feast, then with the dove being poisoned, and finally with Pythia's appearance.

<sup>90</sup> Zacharia (2003: 137) notes that Apollo had to adapt his plan numerous times during the course of the play.

<sup>91</sup> While *dei ex machina* often establish a cult, Athena in the *Ion* looks into the glorious future of Athens (Lesky [1983: 323]). Thornburn (2000: 49) sees a metatheatrical quality here since he notes that «Athena's appearance breaks through the theatrical illusion and speaks specifically to the audience. It is through Athena's appearance that Euripides reveals to his audience the common heritage of the Ionians, Achaeans, and Dorians with the hope that order between these brothers need not be achieved through violence».

<sup>92</sup> According to Thornburn (2001: 235), «Athena's statement has a ring of literary criticism to it. The *theos*, like the *poiētes*, causes things to be done».

<sup>93</sup> It is no coincidence that Athena's retrospective narrative begins with the story of Creusa giving birth. The earlier fact, that is, Creusa's rape by Apollo, does not belong to καλῶς and this is why it is deliberately unmentioned. Martin (2018: 541 *ad* 1595-1600) believes that Athena's account is not impartial; the rape is suppressed and the period of uncertainty that caused Creusa's sufferings is only mentioned briefly later in I.1604. According to Gibert (2019: 349 *ad* 1595-9), «Athena suppresses what Apollo may still be felt to have done οὐ καλῶς, his rape of Creusa and indifference to her years of suffering».

<sup>94</sup> Athena: ...πρῶτα μὲν | ἄνοσον λοχεύει σ', ὥστε μὴ γνῶναι φίλους (II.1595-1596 «First of all, he delivered you without illness so that your loved ones did not know»).

<sup>95</sup> Athena: ἐπεὶ δ' ἔτικτες τόνδε παῖδα κάπεθον | ἐν σπαργάνοισιν, ἀρπάσαντ' ἐς ἀγκάλας | Ἑρμῆν κελεύει δεῦρο πορβμεῖν βρέφος, | ἔθρεψέ τ' οὐδ' εἰσεν ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον (II.1597-1600 «After you gave birth to this child and exposed him in his baby things, he bade Hermes to pick up the infant in his arms and transport it here, and he saw to its nurture and prevented it from dying»).

<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, Zacharia (2003: 142) is of the opinion that, despite Athena's pronouncement (καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε..., I.1595), «Apollo's grip of the action is imperfect» since human agents, and especially Creusa, «have their own ideas about what should happen». However, I believe that Apollo's authorial aptitude lies exactly in the fact that, human agents' (authorial) ideas notwithstanding, he demonstrated that he is the only successful author (plot-maker) because he managed to suppress the sub-plots the other characters came up with, and redirect the play's action to his original plot.

(she has found her own son), she praises (αἰνῶ) at the same time Apollo's authorial skills. To the extent that Apollo is the poet's double, Athena's comment (καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε, l.1595) amounts to a favorable evaluation of Euripides himself. It is a goddess that expresses this judgement, which means that Euripides seals his authorial, theatrical, and artistic skillfulness with a divine prestige.

While Pythia's imperative ἐπίσχες (l.1320) reflects a metatheatrical order for Ion to stop his tragedy, Athena's imperative addressed to Creusa<sup>97</sup> (νῦν οὖν σιώπα, παῖς ὅδ' ὡς πέφυκε σός, | ἴν' ἡ δόκησις Ξοῦθον ἡδέως ἔχη, ll.1601-1602 «so now keep it a secret that this boy is your son, so that Xuthus may happily retain his delusion») reflects a metatheatrical order for Creusa to take on a lifetime (see the present tense of the verbs σιώπα και ἔχη) role by composing an after-the-play-plot<sup>98</sup>. The reassurance of the happiness of Creusa's house depends on the successful deceit of Xuthus since the course of the play so far has proved that not every plot is certainly successful<sup>99</sup>. Athena's prophetic future tenses<sup>100</sup> adumbrate the successfulness of both the role and the plot Athena suggested. Ll.1601-1602 reflect at the same time the theatrical experience itself. Xuthus will be experiencing what a spectator experiences while watching a theatrical performance, and why not, more specifically, a spectator of *Ion*'s performance: the experience of the (theatrical) illusion (ἡ δόκησις)<sup>101</sup> will lead to the ἡδονήν (ἡδέως), that is, to the delight emerging from the theatrical "product". Athena's imperative σιώπα (l.1601) may also be a Euripidean self-referential comment on the function of the silence in the *Ion*. In keeping with the ordered silence, the characters will avoid a possible tragedy<sup>102</sup>, a tragedy that was almost to be caused when Creusa's Chorus did not keep silent.

To sum up: in this paper, I have suggested that *Ion*'s four characters (Apollo, Xuthus, Creusa, and Ion) are transformed into plot-makers. Apollo tries to redress the wrongdoing against Creusa and his effort turns out to be the principal script (the main plot) of the play he himself tries to compose (internal playwright). The god intends to create a happy-ending plot which is the intended plot of the *Ion* itself. Xu-

<sup>97</sup> This imperative is addressed to Creusa, but implicitly to Ion as well. Mastronarde (2010: 187) believes that «the command is addressed to Creusa, but is more needed by Ion, whose yearning for certainty and truth is a potential cause of embarrassment».

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Gellie (1984: 97), who notes that «Xuthus leaves the play at line 675; from that moment on, what happens to him and his illusions is only the paperwork of plotting».

<sup>99</sup> Commenting on *Ion*'s ll.1601-1605, Dunn (1996: 69) writes that «the blessed fate of Ion and Creusa is contingent upon the successful deception of Xuthus, and if the course of this play has shown anything, it is that plots of deception will not necessarily succeed».

<sup>100</sup> These are the future tenses used by Athena to prophesy the founding of the tribes: ἔσται (l.1575), ἔσονται (l.1578), ἔσται (l.1579), ἐποικήσουσι (l.1582), κατοικήσουσι (l.1586), ἔξουσιν (l.1588), ὕμνηθήσεται (l.1590), ἔσται and κάπσιμανθήσεται (l.1593). I have observed that all the above mentioned verbs are placed, and certainly not by accident, at key points of each line. To be specific, the ἔσται (l.1575) is the first word of the line. At the end of ἔσονται (l.1578), ἔσται (l.1579), ἐποικήσουσι (l.1582), κατοικήσουσι (l.1586), and ἔξουσιν (l.1588) occur the *caesurae*. The verb ὕμνηθήσεται (l.1590) is placed after the line's *caesura*, and in the line's last place. The ἔσται (l.1593) is placed between two *caesurae*. The κάπσιμανθήσεται (l.1593) is placed after the *caesura* and is the last word of the line. Thus, Athena gives prominence to these future tenses because in her mind their verbal content is to be surely accomplished. In a metadramatic way, that would imply that Creusa will follow, to the fullest extent, Athena's "authorial" directions given in ll.1601-602.

<sup>101</sup> Thornburn (2001: 235) translates the δόκησις as 'illusion'. Gibert (2019: 59) writes about Xuthus' «pleasant illusion». On the other hand, Martin (2018: 541 *ad* 1602) believes that it means 'delusion' and the adverb ἡδέως denotes «Xuthus' pleasant delusion, as if he were the grammatical subject».

<sup>102</sup> Thornburn (2001: 236) sees a political dimension here. If the Athenians want to perpetuate their race, then they must discontinue their participation in tragic actions, as the *Ion*'s characters must do.

thus as a “good actor” of Apollo’s “troupe” remains faithful and obedient to the role the god has assigned to him. Wishing to integrate Ion into the royal palace, Xuthus announces that he is going to compose a drama in order to deceive Creusa by presenting his “son” as a guest of their house. The Chorus spoil Apollo’s script though. Once Creusa’s maids confess to their mistress that her husband has found a son and that eventually she herself will remain childless, Creusa is transformed also into a plot-maker attempting to create a tragedy by killing Ion. Due to Apollo’s intervention Creusa’s efforts to create a tragedy become futile. Ion, enraged at Creusa, also attempts to compose a tragedy when he chases his mother to punish her. Once again by Apollo’s intervention, Ion’s tragedy is averted, and the play’s plot is redirected to the god’s first happy ending plot.

I have finally suggested that Apollo is the poet’s double, and thus his plot echoes Euripides’ one. The fact that, in spite of the various deviations (that is, individual unsuccessful sub-plots), the play’s plot is redirected every single time to the god’s original plot, credits Apollo with the title of a successful theatrical writer, the title of playwright, a title that finally assumes Euripides himself.

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