

# Rape and Rape Culture in the Ancient Greek Culture?

*Was rape “really” rape in Ancient Greece?*

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HIS 350 Master Thesis

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UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Spring 2019

## *Abstract*

In this master thesis I discuss how the ancient Greeks evaluated the rape of women, which sexual acts were punished as rape and whether their culture qualifies as rape culture. The topic is examined at five particular levels of inquiry. First, I take a closer look at the modern terms of rape and rape culture. Second, I analyze and compare the representations of rape in myth and art with the contemporary examples of rape culture. Then, I study the ancient Greek view of rape and the legal framework of the crime in ancient Athens and Gortyn on Crete. Finally, I examine the ancient literary pieces which deal with the female experience of rape and articulate the female suffering.

My conclusion is that the ancient Greeks held a contradictory attitude on the matter. They did condemn the rape of their women, but also excused many forms of sexual violence against them. They used several verbal formulations for describing and “conceptually” connecting the act with the word *bia* (violence) or the word *hybris* (insult, outrage). From a legal perspective, an act of rape was understood as an insult against the property and the authority of the male *kyrios* (guardian) of the female victim and not against the victim herself. The female consent or point of view were immaterial. Raped women had access to the legal system only through their *kyrioi*, who decided according to their personal interests whether they would employ the available judicial or self-help remedies.

In contrast, representations of rape in the ancient Greek myths and literature show that the Greeks could understand the female trauma in cases of rape and sympathized with the victims. However, this sympathy did not insinuate a new “trend” in their culture. It did not change the general attitudes towards gender relations, which applauded the masculine sexual aggression and the female sexual passiveness, made sexual violence against women an aspect of life and constructed an environment which trivialized the rape of women by connecting it with more attractive ideas as prowess, courage, power and lust.

## *Acknowledgements*

This master thesis is the result of personal hard work, which would not have been accomplished without the help and support of others. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Ingvar Brandvik Mæhle, who has been generous with his time, support and guidance through each stage of my thesis. He has showed great interest in my project and provided me with insightful comments, valuable material and immense knowledge. Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank Professor Jørgen Christian Meyer, Associate Professor Eivind Heldaas Seland as well as my fellow students for their useful feedback on all my drafts and manuscripts at the weekly seminar in Ancient History. I also owe gratitude to Professor Sissel Undheim and the members of the SKOK institute for reading parts of my thesis, giving me good advices and asking me questions which widened my study from various perspectives. My sincere thanks go also to the University of Bergen, which financially supported my trip to the archeological museums of Athens.

Last, but by no means least, I want to thank my family. I owe a big thank you to my parents who taught me everything I know and gave me the chance to improve myself through all my steps in life. Special thanks go also to my mother in law for unconditionally taking care of my children and, thus, giving me the chance to fulfill this project. I am very grateful to my dear friend Katerina for always being there for me and offering me advice. But the greatest thanks of all goes to my partner and our three children for their outstanding patience, their unfailing support and their continuous encouragement throughout the lonely process of writing this thesis. Kristian, Louiza, Jon and Per, this is for you.

Rita

Bergen, 6 Mai 2019

## *Abbreviations*

### *Ancient Authors*

Aeschl = Aeschylus

Aeschin. = Aeschinus

Appolod. = Pseudo-Appolodorus

Aristot. = Aristotle

Dem. = Demosthenes

Din. = Dinarchus

Eur. = Euripides

Hdt. = Herodotus

Plut. = Plutarch

Xen. = Xenophon

### *Ancient Literature*

Ath. Pol. = Constitution of the Athenians

Epit. = Epitrepones

Lys. = Lysias

Od. = Odyssey

PB = Prometheus Bound

Rh. = Rhetoric

Supp. = The Suppliants

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Research Question and Presentation of the topic

How did the ancient Greeks evaluate the rape of women? Were the acts of rape really a crime in ancient Greece? Based on the representations of rape in the Greek popular culture and the references in the law can we, in any sense, claim that the ancient Greek culture qualifies as rape culture?

Human history is full of incidents of rape. Although this is a common saying, its argumentation is not an easy task. This is because the concept of rape has always been highly variable adapted to the social norms about sexuality and gender roles of each historical era. Social groups in different historical contexts evaluate sexual behavior based on their particular socio-political needs. What people are interested in and how they define their personhood is crucial for identifying the different sexual crimes and explain their wrongfulness.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, the specific sociopolitical interests of every society define what is rape and when or why is punished.

Since rape has followed society's mores, values and orientations, it comes as no surprise that the understanding of the crime has undergone several changes throughout history. For example, we, today, define as rape every sexual intercourse which is obtained by force and without consent. Our society indiscriminately condemns all forms of sexual coercion and places the free consent as the limit of acceptable behavior.

On the other side, the ancient Greeks held behavioral expectations at all similar to ours and designated sexually transgressive activity differently. They did not have a single word for rape, but they described acts that we call rape by using a variety of verbal formulations, usually related to the notions of *bia* (violence) and *hybris* (outrage, insult)<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, the evidence from the Athenian legal speeches shows that there was no specific lawsuit for the crime and rape was actionable under the general prosecutions of *dike biaion* (charge of assault) and *graphe hybreos*.<sup>3</sup> However, what is more important is that the Greeks made distinctions among the acts of rape that we do

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<sup>1</sup>Archard, 2007, p. 391

<sup>2</sup> See Cole, 1984; Carey, 1995; Omitowoju, 2002; Harris, 2006; Herzog, 2015; Scafuro, 2017

<sup>3</sup> See Cole, 1984; Carey, 1995; Omitowoju, 2002; Harris, 2006; Herzog, 2015; Scafuro, 2017



not make<sup>4</sup> and connected the wrong of the crime with the male and family honor, the shame and the status and not with the raped women herself<sup>5</sup>.

Although the Greek historical context is completely different from ours and some scholars mean that there is no topic of rape in ancient Greece,<sup>6</sup> I will make use of this modern term and investigate the representations of such acts in the law and several expressions of the ancient Greek “popular culture”, mainly mythology and literature, in order to answer my research questions. I mean that such an open-minded approach of the past with a bold reading of “rape narratives” in the Greek sources can reveal whether the “different” ancient Greek attitudes towards sexual violence, (rape included), have been carried over to here and now, have subconsciously become a part of our modern reality and at the end of the day seem more familiar than “different”.

## *1.2 The background of the sexual relations in ancient Greece*

The patriarchal structure of the Greek ancient society imposed rigid restrictions on female sexuality and promoted women’s possessiveness as a means of social and sexual control. The ancient Greek social system produced a community where men were sexually free as partakers in the public life, while women faced strict social and sexual limits as keepers of the domestic life. They were early married, without being asked, they were accompanied in public places and their principal duty was related to their reproductive capacity, namely, to produce legitimate heirs. Every important legal decision about a woman’s life laid in the hands of her male guardian, *kyrios*, – usually the father and afterwards the husband -, who operated as her representative agent, a sort of link with the rest of society.<sup>7</sup>

In this social context, men perceived the female sexuality through the lens of family honor and shame. The male honor was associated with the chastity of the women to whom they were related and the female honor was defined through the spectrum of sexual purity.<sup>8</sup> Under these conditions, women’s sexuality was conceptualized as a threat to the social order, a potentially destructive force, which Greek men had to tame and, then, channel through the institution of family to

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<sup>4</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 43; Cohen, 1993, p. 6 talks about a spectrum of coercive and non-coercive conduct potentially regulated by the law, where violence is at the one end, free consent at the other, and a number of gradations of non-consensual and consensual relations lie in between.

<sup>5</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 66, p. 78; Harrison, 1997, p. 188; Omitowaju, 2002, pp. 130-33, p. 230

<sup>6</sup> Harris, 1997, p. 483; Harris, 2006, p. 41

<sup>7</sup> Harrison, 1997, p. 191; Meyer, 2004, p. 20

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, 1991a, 140

reproduction.<sup>9</sup> This social burden in combination with the male fear of failure created hostility towards women whose nature was often portrayed negatively in the Greek literature. For Aristotle, *malakia*, namely softness, weakness, lack of self-control afflicts women's nature (*N.E.* 1150b12-16, *H.A.* 608a35ff), while for Xenophon a good wife is *sofron*, self-controlled, restrained (*Oeconomicus* 7.14).<sup>10</sup> Tragedy and comedy also supported this ideological gender conflict and associate women with death and darkness (*Bacchae*, *Medea* 395-409) or characterize them as *panourges*, deceitful (*Lysistrata*, 11-12).<sup>11</sup>

The contradictory understanding of women's nature and women's theoretical incapacity for free sexual activity out of the official protection of marriage created a landscape which left no room for the female consent. Although we cannot claim that women had no free will and their consent was completely inconsequential<sup>12</sup>, the latter definitely had another weight and validity than today. The female consent did not embody woman's personal autonomy in the form of sexual freedom or right of choice as it does today. It was rather conceived as a theoretical compass which distinguished between different sexual crimes, (e.g. rape from *moicheia*, abduction, or seduction), and, thus, determined whether women deserved to be punished or not<sup>13</sup>. In this sense, the Greeks did recognize the indigenous women's capacity to give or withhold consent, they just did not consider the lack of it as reprehensible.<sup>14</sup> Notions as honor, shame, social status or respectability were considered much more important to them and, therefore, were used as the basic guidelines in establishing sexual crimes. In addition to that, the issue of slavery created a social context which de facto prevented a large number of women to provide any sort of consent. Female slaves were viewed as objects and what really mattered for the Greeks was not their consent but that of their owners.<sup>15</sup>

These sexual peculiarities did not, however, hinder the Greeks to seek for female partners who willingly gave their consent before or during the sexual

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<sup>9</sup> Cohen, 1991a, 141

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, 1991a, 144

<sup>11</sup> Cohen, 1991a, 144

<sup>12</sup> See Harrison, 1997, pp. 191-2 who claims that the belief that women were considered "legal minors", incapable of restraint, who arose feelings of hate co-existed with the belief they can have free will and responsibility in the ancient Greek tradition.

<sup>13</sup> According to Harris, 2006, p. 61 only the woman who allowed herself to be seduced was punished by a certain loss of rights; Carey, 1995, p. 414 also claims that women were treated differently in cases of *moicheia* and rape and notes that "there is no evidence to suggest that a man felt obliged to put aside a wife who had been raped. Nor do we have evidence for any other sanction against the victim."

<sup>14</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 61; However, Omitowoju, 2002, p. 8, disagrees and claims that women were denied both the ability to consent and the right to withhold consent.

<sup>15</sup> Cohen, 1993, 6

encounter. This reality is obvious in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (10.12) where the wealthy farmer Ischomachus, while discussing with Socrates all aspects of household management and family life associates the female consent with the male desire and gratification as following:

καὶ ὄψις δέ, ὅπoταν ἀνταγωνίζηται διακόνῳ καθαρωτέρα οὔσα πρεπόντως τε μᾶλλον ἠμφιεσμένη, κινητικὸν γίγνεται ἄλλως τε καὶ ὅπoταν τὸ ἐκοῦσαν χαρίζεσθαι προσῆ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀναγκαζομένην ὑπηρετεῖν.

*“As for what my wife looks, when there's a decision to be made between her and the slave girl, then when she is less made up and more tastefully dressed, she becomes an object of desire, and especially because she is granting her favors willingly, whereas the slave has no choice but to yield.”*

Xen., *Oeconomicus*, (10.12)<sup>16</sup>

Hence, the sources give us a picture of a society, which demanded from women in relation to sexuality passiveness, restraint and subordination, but at the same time acknowledged their desires and sympathized with their feelings.

### **1.3 Delimitation and Structure**

The issue of rape in the ancient Greek world was multidimensional. This specific offense was general, in the sense that harm of rape affected all social groups as well as both genders. Moreover, it was related to the internal and the external<sup>17</sup> policies of the *polis*, (city state), and afflicted free citizens and slaves. The extent of the topic is so great and multifaceted that it is impossible to be covered by a single master thesis. Therefore, I have chosen to focus only on some aspects of it. In my survey I will look at the Greek views and beliefs towards the rape of free citizen women, in peacetime, in the archaic (c. 8<sup>th</sup> to c. 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) and classical Greece (5<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC). Due to the origin and nature of the extant evidence the ancient Athenian society will be in the center of my research.

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<sup>16</sup> Translated by Harris, 2014, p. 303

<sup>17</sup> Rape was extensively used as a political tool in ancient warfare and its analysis has developed its own discipline.

My master thesis is divided in seven chapters; the introduction, five main chapters and the conclusion. In the first chapter, I discuss my methodological approach, the potential danger of anachronism in my thesis and the challenges I faced during my study. I also present my main primary and secondary sources and the problems of reliability my primary sources appear.

In the third chapter, I provide an overview of the modern concept of rape. I approach the phenomenon by bringing out the modern discourse on the legal definition and the moral wrong of the crime. My second step is to briefly discuss the feminist perspectives on rape, which exerted great influence on people's judgements and led to the modification of rape's traditional legal definition. Afterwards, I present and analyze the sociological concept of rape culture, which was born in the 1970's and pointed out how society's institutions normalized and perpetuated rape. In the end, I note some examples which prove that this culture is all around us and I will comment on the ways we respond to them.

In the fourth chapter I investigate how myths, (which can be perceived as a form of the ancient popular culture together with drama and the law), depicted incidents of rape. I start the chapter by discussing the function of myths within the ancient Greek community. Then I investigate the frequency and the ambivalence of rape in the Greek myths. Finally, in order to find out if examples of rape culture can be detected in Greek mythology, I analyze the artistic representation of the myth of Helen's first abduction by Theseus as it is depicted in the attic-red stamnos by Polygnotos and the mosaic floor from the house of abduction.

In the fifth chapter I am going to exhibit the words that the Greeks used for depicting acts of a rape in a variety of situations and the way they theoretically approached incidents of sexual violence that we interpret as rape. Then, I am going to present how modern scholars explained the main points of the ancient Greek view of rape throughout the years and discuss several aspects of it in relation to our rape culture.

In the sixth chapter I present the legal provisions which had something to say about the offense of rape in ancient Greece and their remedies. Although other Greek cities took action against sexual offences<sup>18</sup>, the law of ancient Athens and Gortyn on

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<sup>18</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 108 cites the penalties in cases of adultery at Locri (an adulterer had his eyes cut out), at Leprium (an adulterer was bound and led through the city for three days and a woman caught in adultery was forced to stand in the agora wearing transparent clothing) and in Pisidia (an adulterer was led around the city on a donkey); Ogden, 1997, pp. 30, 35 mentions that we possess fragmentary information about the treatment of the adulterous in the aforementioned cities and he cites a Plutarch's story that at Aeolian Cyme women taken in adultery were set up on a stone in public view in the market place, before and after being parade about the circuit of the city (rather like a

Crete provide most of our source material. Therefore, I focus my attention only on them. My purpose is to examine what provisions they provided for rape and how they treated women. Therefore, I divide the chapter in two thematic sections.

The first one examines the Athenian legislation on the subject of rape and the legal charges that someone could bring against an alleged rapist. I begin my examination by briefly describing the function of the Athenian legal system as a whole and its available lawsuits. Then I present the remedies against the offense of rape categorized into two basic groups, the judicial and the self-help remedies. Finally, I discuss the different approaches regarding the impacts of rape on the female victims and point out the law's purposes in relation to the crime. The second section discusses the rape provisions of the Gortyn Law Code of Crete and have the same focus. At the end of the chapter I present the conclusion where I make a brief comparison between the two legal systems and discuss their similarities and differences.

In the course of my seventh chapter I will present the Greek literary sources which refer to the female experience of sexual violence. My intention is to explore how the male authors portrayed women's sexual violation and how the other characters of the play reacted to it. Therefore, the main focus of my survey will be on the rape victim's description and on the related response. I am interested in finding out whether the Greeks could imagine what women suffered in cases of rape and whether they were aware that rape's consequences were traumatic for the female victims on a personal level. My remarks will be used in order to answer the interesting questions: "Did they understand the female suffering? Were they interested in it"? My findings can bring the ancient Greek understanding of rape closer to ours. At the end of the chapter I will discuss whether these literary narratives of rape treated women differently in comparison to the aforementioned laws.

In my eighth and last chapter I collect all the findings from the previous chapters and make a central conclusion. In the course of this chapter, I examine identified sources and gaps of documentation regarding the issue of rape in ancient Greece and, then, set it against the modern view of rape as this is expressed through the examples of rape culture. In the end, by discussing whether there is any relationship or continuity between them, I give an answer to my research questions.

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scapegoat?), thus earning the name "donkey-rider" (*onobatis*); the stones upon which the women had been displayed were then regarded as impure and were in need of ritual cleansing.

## *Chapter 2: Methods, Challenges, Sources*

### *2.1 Methodology*

The title of my master thesis already reveals that I attempt a cross cultural and cross temporal investigation of the phenomenon of rape. Therefore, I choose to make a macro-historical and heuristically comparative approach of the topic.<sup>19</sup> I think that this approach serves best my aim, which is to gain a productive insight into the phenomenon of rape by comparison and to make a sort of intellectual transfer based on assumptions about similarities and differences of the phenomenon of rape between the ancient Greek world and the modern times.<sup>20</sup>

During my research, I will treat the female rape as a comparison unit and systematically discuss the particular aspects of it in the cultural domains of Greek myths, law and literature. By reconstructing, as much as possible, the Greek view of rape, I will search for similarities and differences between the ancient Greek attitude towards rape and the corresponding modern attitude, as the latter is expressed through the examples of rape culture. In this respect, my methodology follows Ingvar Mæhle's suggestion in his article "*The 5<sup>th</sup> Century Revival of Sicilian Republicanism and Syracusan Democracy*", to examine the differences and similarities between the acts of rape by putting them in their general cultural context and to seek for their particular characteristics which explained either their continuation or their change over time.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Kocka, 2003, p. 40 specifically defines the heuristically comparative approach as the approach which allows one to identify questions and problems that one has not previously thought about; Laiou, 1993, p. viii also suggests that the comparative approach is particular useful in topics as female consent and sexual relations.

<sup>20</sup> Kocka, 2003, p. 40 who means that all these are expressions of the heuristically comparative approach.

<sup>21</sup> Mæhle, 2018, p. 211

## 2.2 *The problem of vocabulary and the danger of anachronism*

My choice to apply and compare the modern term of rape and the examples of rape culture to sexual violence in the ancient Greece is not an uncontroversial one. There have been discussions concerning whether there is feasible to use the term “rape” in reference to Greek antiquity due to the semantic differentiation – (the Greeks did not have a word corresponding to rape) -. Some scholars mean that by designating the events of the Greek literature as rape may impose anachronistic concept on the evidence and obscure our understanding both of the original meaning of the text and of the Greek attitudes on the subject.<sup>22</sup>

Edward Harris is one of the best advocates of this understanding. He argues that rape was a non-existing topic in ancient Greece and that the use of the word “rape” when analyzing the ancient Greek sources is misguided and anachronistic.<sup>23</sup> He means that the Greeks were unable to conceptualize the moral demerit and the cruelty of the act of rape as we do. Therefore, he suggests that we should examine the Greek attitudes toward sexual violence and find out the particular standards of the Greek evaluation.<sup>24</sup>

Although I took Harris’ view into account<sup>25</sup>, I think that a historical analysis without comparative terms will obscure major functions of the phenomenon. Therefore, my own survey takes another path. I am not treating the topic of sexual violence in ancient Greece as a different thing from our modern concept of rape, but, as I wrote above, I compare them in order to find whether and of what sort continuity there is between them. By using evidence from the sources, I interpret the Greek linguistic flexibility and the lack of clarity positively, namely as a clever Greek effort to soften up the painful rape experience. As Nancy Rabinowitz explains the lack of clarity of definition of rape in ancient Greece could be seen as “the ideological effect of the Greek effort to make rape less problematic by assimilating it to desire.”<sup>26</sup> On this basis, we can assume that the Greeks did not understand rape as we do, or that they

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<sup>22</sup> See Harris, 2006, 41-83; Deacy, 2017 called into question if it is even viable to be using the term “rape”; Lefkowitz, 1993, pp. 17-37 sees no rape at all in the Greek myths; Herzog, 2015, p. 8 writes that Wilamowitz or Anne Pippin Burnett scrupulously avoid naming Apollo in Euripides’ *Ion* as a rapist.

<sup>23</sup> Harris, 1997, pp. 483-496; Harris, 2006, pp. 41-83; He specifies the investigation on the Athenian attitudes because there is more evidence for them.

<sup>24</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 51

<sup>25</sup> Harris, 1997, p. 483 suggests that one should first examine the modern terms of rape and rape culture, then study the sources and at the end consider whether these modern concepts are relevant or helpful in analyzing the ancient evidence.

<sup>26</sup> Rabinowitz, 2011, p. 16; Herzog, 2015, p. 8 also write that ‘the vast number of verbal formulations available for describing rape in the literature can provide nuance and flexibility as well as ambiguity.’

did so, and therefore tried to “beautify” it by connecting it to attractive values like male prowess or sexual impulsiveness.

Moreover, I find the argument of not using the word of rape confusing, in the sense that I cannot distinguish the conceptual difference between sexual violence and rape. When I use the word sexual violence, I immediately picture rape. Therefore, I have no reason to name the subject of my research differently from what I will understand when I read the sources. As Ryan Balot writes ‘a modern observer should be aware of his own thoughts and concepts in order to improve his ability to examine the ancient texts in the light of their own time and to ensure the critical perspective on his way of thinking.’<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Harris’ argument to characterize anachronistic the use of the modern word rape because there was no compatible word in ancient Greece does not appear reasonable, as a broader application of this argument would render all our modern interpretations to anachronistic. Since we do not write in ancient Greek, a large number of the English words we use do not include the same linguistic and cultural experiences as the Greek ones do.

For all these reasons, I will follow Kenneth Dover’s suggestion that “to understand Greek morality it is certainly necessary to become capable of looking at morality through Greek eyes but is necessary also to switch off and become ourselves again whenever we want to know what, if anything, they thought about issues which are important to us”<sup>28</sup> and conduct my survey by utilizing the word that make sense to me, namely that of rape.

Besides, the practice of not reading acts of rape in the ancient Greek sources as such because the ancient Greeks named them differently seems more related to the ideas of certain scholars than the Greek worldview. In a way it expresses their inconvenience to accept the fact that rape was a prominent aspect of life of the ancient world and, therefore, was a common theme in the sources. It also proves what Rachel Herzog noticed in her article about “*Reading Consent Into the Iliad*”, namely that “the modern world has just as many prejudices and misconceptions about sexual violence as the ancient one; sometimes theirs get in the way, but other times ours do.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Balot in his chapter The Broad View within the book “*A companion to Greek & Roman Political thought*”, 2009, 43, while examined the particular and general of the ancient and modern political thought wrote that “if we are not conscious of the impact of our own highly contingent positions as late-modern observes then we will not be able to take the properly self-critical perspective on our own way of writing history” and cited Osborne, 2006, “*When Was the Athenian Democratic Revolution?*”, 14-28 and Herman, 2006, “*Morality and Behavior in Democratic Athens: A Social History*”, pp. 85-101.

<sup>28</sup> Dover, 1974, p. 2

<sup>29</sup> Herzog, 2018



## 2.3 Challenges

While writing this thesis I faced two basic challenges. The first one had to do with the collection of the source material. The topic of rape in ancient Greece has evolved the last years and to find enough material for my master thesis required time and a lot of research. Within the framework of my study, I visited the Acropolis Museum and the National Archeological Museum in Athens where I took, inter alia, the pictures of the attic-red stamnos by Polygnotos with Helen's first abduction by Theseus. These pictures were used in order to analyze the Athenian iconographic style and attitude towards rape. Unfortunately, I had neither time nor opportunity to travel all over Greece and examine other archeological findings that may have been relevant to my thesis. Therefore, I turned to online databases and resources as well as the investigations documented by other scholars in order to gather the rest of my material.

The term "rape culture" first appeared with the release of the documentary film "*Rape Culture*", in 1975. I consider it a privilege and a personal victory that I overcome the challenge to find and buying the rights of using this documentary film with the purpose of embodying it in my thesis.

The second challenge I had to face was related to the differences in the translations of my primary sources. All the primary sources I dealt with during my research were in ancient Greek and they were translated by other scholars in different, and sometimes, contradictory ways. Therefore, I decided to translate many of them myself in order to understand the meaning of their content and have a personal view on what the ancient author wanted to say.

My survey includes as much evidence as it was possible for me to collect during my research from different aspects of the ancient Greek life regarding the Greek view of rape and the standards of Greek evaluation. Although one could argue that the collected material is far from exhaustive, I consider it wide enough to draw general conclusions from my research.

## 2.4 Sources

In my master thesis I include primary and secondary sources which cover a long period of time and are of different type. In the chapters which follow I do not use these sources in chronological order, but I rather focus my attention on their thematic orientation classifying them according to the subject under discussion. Moreover,

some material has been used to a much greater extent than some other, which appears only in the form of a brief allusion or as a comment to another author.

In this section I will discuss only the main works upon which I built my master thesis.

#### **2.4.1 Primary Sources (Literature – Visual Arts – Inscriptions)**

When it comes to primary sources I mostly rely upon the ancient Greek literature and the visual arts. The most important literary works in my thesis are:

(a) The treatise of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. I cite a passage from this source in order to present how the ancient Greeks understood the Greek notion of *hybris* and how they described the mental qualities which made a behavior *hybristic* when it appeared as sexual offense in the Greek antiquity.

(b) The forensic speeches of Lysias I, "*On the murder of Eratosthenes*", Demosthenes, "*Against Aristocrates*", Apollodorus, "*Against Neaira*", Dinarchus, "*Against Demosthenes*" and Aeschines, "*Against Timarchus*". I cite small passages from all these legal texts in the sixth chapter of my thesis because their narratives provide valuable information regarding the Athenian legal framework of rape and the "real" life of this ancient *polis*. What scholars can assume about rape in ancient Athens primarily is based upon these documents.

(c) The classical drama of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Prometheus Bound* and the one of Euripides' *Ion*. I make use of these theatrical plays of classical period in the seventh chapter because they are among the few extant sources which give voice to raped women and describe their rape trauma. The content of these plays essentially differentiates from that of the legal speeches as it reveals a society less hard towards women and more sensitive towards the female suffering.

(d) Menander's *Epitrepontes*. I also cite small passages of this play from the last period of the Attic comedy in the seventh chapter, as it gives a vivid picture of the Athenian family life by slightly portraying through signs and symbols the female pain in cases of rape.

(e) Finally, I repeatedly refer to the work of Herodotus' "*The Histories*" in my thesis. Although his historical accounts might not deal directly with the topic of rape, they offer useful evidence in order to sketch an overview of the Greek concept of rape and of the way women were treated in his time.

My analysis of the relation between the Greek myths and the examples of rape culture in the third chapter is based on visual arts. My pictures of the attic red-figured stamnos representing Helen's first abduction by Theseus, (ca. 430-420 B.C.), and the picture of the mosaic floor from the house of abduction of Helen, (ca. 325-300 B.C.), show how the ancient artists depicted the oral myth of Helen's abduction by Theseus in art, the sexual motifs that they chose to use revealing at the same time society's way to approach the issue of sexual relations with women. Finally, for the analysis of the Law Code of Gortyn I am based on the stone inscription of the mid-fifth century B.C. found in this part of Southern-Crete.

#### ***2.4.2 Secondary Literature***

For the most part of my study I employ secondary literature in the form of historical books, scholarly articles in journals and internet, review articles, encyclopedias, historical websites, blogs, videos I found on YouTube from the speeches of the Conference in 2017 about "*Rape in Antiquity: 20 Years On*" organized by the University of Roehampton in London and the aforementioned documentary film.

Each chapter of my thesis approaches the phenomenon of rape from a different perspective and, therefore, I answer my questions by referring to several scholars. However, some works have worked as basic pillars throughout my survey.

In order to discuss the modern legal definition of rape and the moral wrongness of the crime I mostly use the articles of Scott Andreson "*Conceptualizing Rape as Coerced Sex*" and David Archard "*The Wrong of Rape*". They both help me to put into words my thoughts on the matter. For analyzing the representations of rape in the red-attic stamnos of Polygnotos and the figural mosaic in the house of the abduction of Helen at Pella, I am based on the book of Ada Cohen "*Art in the era of Alexander the Great: Paradigms of Manhood and their cultural traditions*", which provides a lot of interesting visual and written material on the subject.

In order to present the Greek attitudes towards sexual violence and rape as well as the Greek standards of their evaluation, I make use of the article of Edward Harris "*Did rape exist in ancient Greece? Further Reflections on the laws about Sexual Violence*". For describing the Greek vocabulary of rape and the legal sanctions against it in ancient Athens I drew upon the article of Susan Cole "*Greek Sanctions against sexual assault*" and the book of Rosanna Omitowoju "*Rape and the Politics of Consent in Classical Athens*". Especially the latter one was also helpful for explaining the function of female consent

in matters of sexuality and the problematic legal agency of women in Athenian courts. However, for the analysis of The Law Code of Gortyn on Crete I have been greatly benefited by the article of Adele Scafuro *"Greek Sexual Offences and Their Remedies: Honor and the Primacy of Family"* which, additionally, provided a comparative study between the two legal systems under discussion.

In order to shed light to the parts of ancient Greek literature which deal with the female pain and suffering in cases of rape, I employ the article of Adele Scafuro *"Discourses of Sexual Violation in Mythic Accounts and Tragic Versions of 'The Girl's Tragedy'"*. For discussing how the Greek men took into account women's desire, payed attention to their view regarding the sexual encounters and showed their sympathy to their suffering, I take under consideration the article of Edward Harris *"'Yes' and 'No' in Women's Desire"*. For the application of the modern trauma theory as a reading practice in the ancient texts in order to reconstruct aspects of them that are obscured and deal with the victim's experience of sexual violence, I use the abstract and the speech of Erika Weiberg *"Retracing traumatic memories: rape narratives in Aeschylus' Agamemnon and Euripides' Ion"* in the conference of *Rape in Antiquity* in the University of Roehampton.

Finally, for the correlation of the Greek rape with the modern crime through the examples of rape culture, I am based upon the analysis of Nancy Rabinowitz *"Greek Tragedy: A Rape Culture?"*.

## ***2.5 Problems of reliability***

In this section, I choose to discuss only the most important problems one has to deal with when analyzing primary sources them. In the terms of vase painting or art in general, the basic problem lies in the identification of rape-scenes with certainty as their interpretation varies greatly between individuals.

In regards with the use of legal texts as sources for the reconstruction of the Athenian Law and the "real life" in ancient Athens, the main problem is the distortion of the information provided. Most scholars agree that the documents of the Attic orators suffer from subjective interpretations.<sup>30</sup> Since the greatest quality of the Athenian public speaking was to affect other people's feelings and in the case of forensic speeches to persuade the jurors, it comes as no surprise that the orators did

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<sup>30</sup> See Harris, 1990, p. 375; Carey, 1995, p. 407; Cole, 1984, p. 105; Scafuro, 2017, p. 41-2

not follow the letter of the law. The literal rule of statutory interpretation was used in their speeches only when it served the rhetorical strategy of each speech. Otherwise, they made use of paraphrases of laws or they used rhetorical devices, inaccuracies or fallacious inductive arguments in order to adapt concrete provisions as appropriate. Under these circumstances, the degree to which the statements of these speeches really reflected social realities or common attitudes can easily be challenged.

Under these circumstances, the Athenian law appears to us not as a consistent body, but as a fluid system based on personal or common interests.<sup>31</sup> Christopher Carey in his analysis about "*Rape and adultery in Athenian Law*" compares the form of the Athenian legal system to "snapshots".<sup>32</sup> This "snapshot" form increases our incompetence to follow the system's gradual chronological development in detail.<sup>33</sup> The fact that statutes which were produced at different stages appear to us as an integrated design rather than the product of accretion, prevent us to detect the systems' true degree of cohesion.<sup>34</sup> Thus, by missing law's progressive configuration, we are unable to place the specific provisions of law in their correct layout and to understand their proper function.

In addition to our fragmentary and insufficient information, which undoubtedly reinforce our difficulty to reconstruct and understand the distinctions or the nuances of the Athenian Law, we have to face the problem of immaturity and diversity of this Law. The provisions provided to us through the extant texts seem specific in relation to procedural rules or penalties, but it tend not to include the definitions of the crimes against which the law was applicable.<sup>35</sup> The fact that the jurors, who occasional served as judges in the court, interpreted on their own the meaning of relevant terms and their applicability to particular cases<sup>36</sup> solved the problem for the ancient Athenians, but increased the uncertainty for us as modern observers.

Finally, when it comes to literary accounts, (especially tragedy, which has been my main source for investigating the female suffering in cases of rape), we attempt to draw reliable information on the daily life of the Greeks based on imaginary characters in imaginary situations. The sentiments uttered by each character in these plays usually reflect the complexity of the hero/heroine and serve specific dramatic

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<sup>31</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 15-6

<sup>32</sup> Carey, 1995, p. 407

<sup>33</sup> Carey, 1995, p. 407

<sup>34</sup> Carey, 1995, p. 407; Cole, 1984, pp. 107-8 conceptualizes this problem by listing the existing problems with the laws of *moicheia* "adultery" and sexual assault.

<sup>35</sup> Ober, 2006, p. 2

<sup>36</sup> Ober, 2006, p. 2

purposes. By no means they declare what the average Athenian could have felt or accepted in a given circumstance.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, tragedy, as theatrical field, encouraged the presentation of novel ideas and perspectives on behalf of the authors, which the audience members could see as a part of a good spectacle, but did not always share or understand.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, all these plays were written by eloquent free men and may not express the views and the feelings of the whole population.

In this respect, it is naïve to claim that we can discover exactly how the Greeks treated rape and their precise standards of evaluation. We can ask the questions we are interested in, gather as much of the extant evidence as possible and make plausible speculations by reference to our available sources. The subjective knowledge of the legal speeches, literary accounts or visual arts offers us an insight into pieces of a real life we will never be able to reconstruct as a whole. However, it is worthwhile to try to seek for familiar or unfamiliar attitudes and behaviors as practices of the human nature which may evolve, but always maintain some basic features intact. These are our legacies, which remain relevant in the modern world and subconsciously determine our own moral choices.

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<sup>37</sup> Dover, 1974, 16-7

<sup>38</sup> Dover, 1974, 17



## *Chapter 3: Modern Theory*

### *3.1 What is rape today?*

Rape is a felonious behavior with significant importance to law and society. Due to its complicated nature is a common theme in both legal and public discourse. Rape is commonly associated with the lack of consent and the male dominance in gender relations. It is regarded as the sexual activity which is performed by men without the woman's consent. Legally, the issue is more complicated in the sense that the characterization of a sexual act as rape would bring about serious legal penalties. Most jurisdictions today focus on the element of force and criminalize sexual intercourse when it is obtained by force and without consent.<sup>39</sup> This apparent conceptual difference between common belief and law reflects the various theories around the wrongfulness of rape and sketch the ideological background of the long-standing rape-debate regarding the proper legal definition of the crime. The main sides of this debate identify themselves as traditionalists or reformers, accordingly, based on the elements they require in order to conceptualize sex as rape.

On the one hand, the traditionalists perceive as rape the "nonconsensual forced sex", thus, requiring both the elements of non-consent and force (and sometimes they even require the demonstration of "utmost resistance" on the part of the victim).<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the reformers are further divided into two blocs, namely those who conceptualize rape as "nonconsensual sex" and want to omit the element of force<sup>41</sup>, (this is the most common reform view), and those who define rape as "forced sex" and want to eliminate the element of consent<sup>42</sup>. All sides have both strong points and serious weaknesses leading the whole debate to a dead-end. The traditional view suffers from an extensive under-inclusiveness. When force and non-consent co-exist

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<sup>39</sup> The Norwegian Penal Code (Chapter 26) defines as rape the sexual activity which is obtained with through violence or threatening conduct or engages a person who is unconscious or helpless while the sexual act is performed.

<sup>40</sup> West, 2016

<sup>41</sup> Whisnant, 2017 cites Estrich, 1987 who suggests that rape should simply defined as nonconsensual sex with differing degrees of severity depending on whether and how much force and violence are employed.

<sup>42</sup> Whisnant, 2017 cites Mackinnon, 1989a, p. 245, who contends that "Rape should be defined as sex by compulsion, of which physical force is one form. Lack of consent is redundant and should not be a separate element of the crime".



in the definition of rape, sexual acts that are forced but arguably “consensual”, namely their consent is dubious, do not constitute a “guilty act” (e.g. date-rape, marital-rape, sex with prostitutes, each of which have been viewed in the past as inductively or de facto consensual due to the pre-existing relationship between the parts). The same applies to nonconsensual sex when there is no visible force (e.g. cases of rape where the threat of violence is feasible without the use of force).<sup>43</sup>

The dominant reform view is more beneficial compared to the traditional view, but it is not flawless either. The definition of rape as non-consensual sex is so broad that might criminalize sex which is immoral and only in a specific sense non-consensual.<sup>44</sup> Taking non-consent as a legal standard for rape might turn to a crime sex which is obtained with fraud or false pretenses, thus, punishing not only the sexual behavior per se, but also the circumstances around which a woman formed her consent.<sup>45</sup> From this perspective, ‘a non-consent definition of rape carries the risk to overgeneralize as well as to underdescribe the nature of the wrongfulness of the rape-act.’<sup>46</sup> In this way, it might end to legally assimilate immoral activities with sexual impositions which especially harm the body and the soul of the female victim.<sup>47</sup>

On the other side, the problem with the last reform view, (rape is solely “forced sex”), is that either defines narrowly the crime regarding as rape only sex obtained by the use of force or the threatened use of force, (in this way many marital, date or acquaintance rapes where the threat of force is implicit and not explicit are excused in the eyes of the law), or it defines “force” so broadly as to include almost all sex (e.g. all heterosexual sex that is not motivated by the woman’s genuine desire for the man should be regarded as rape).<sup>48</sup>

Undoubtedly the notion of consent is central to the modern definition of rape and it is what basically differentiates desirable sex from rape. The override of consent in the sexual activity derives woman of her power of choice, humiliates her and disrespects her genuine volition. Rape is not merely a deviating expression of sexual desire. It emanates from feelings of power and dominance and it is used as means of women’s objectification.

However, the crime of rape is particularly harmful not only because it is morally injurious and insults the victim’s personality or transgresses common ethical values and codes. Society, public opinion and the law certainly evaluate rape as wrong

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<sup>43</sup> West, 2016

<sup>44</sup> West, 2016 characterizes it more as unwanted.

<sup>45</sup> Anderson, 2015, p. 61

<sup>46</sup> Anderson, 2015, p. 72

<sup>47</sup> Anderson, 2015, pp. 59-70

<sup>48</sup> Primorac, 1999, p. 507; West, 2016

because it damages the female victim's personal autonomy and hurts the intimate parts of her body. Yet, the wrongfulness of rape stems from the fact that it violates the victim's sexual integrity.<sup>49</sup> Sex and sexuality lie at the core of our being, define who we are and express what we feel. Sexuality reflects the innermost part of our self and in many ways gives value to our existence. It is also socially important both for reproductive reasons and human well-being. From this perspective, every violation of sexuality constitutes an invasion of our most private space and seriously damages our self-worth.<sup>50</sup> Rape as behavior could be conceptualized as "a form of soul murder"<sup>51</sup>, which destroys the female victim's self-esteem and gives the indirect meaning that since a woman can be treated as a sexual object, is of diminished or no value.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, what we conceive as wrong in rape is inextricably associated with the human existence and the importance of sex in the human life. Rape harms the victim's sexual existence, (only part of which is her personal autonomy), degrades woman and reinforces her role as powerless sexual object.

### *3.2 Feminist approaches to rape*

The feminist thought questioned the traditional view of rape and changed the legal and popular understanding of the phenomenon. By examining the theoretical process of this change, one can see how the specific linguistic nuances reflect the cultural context of each era. After the 1970's the emergence of the second-wave feminist movement brought the issues of rape, consent and rape culture into public discussion and tied them to the social, sexual, economic and political oppression of woman in the patriarchal society.<sup>53</sup> Apart from "breaking the silence" around rape and making it from a private matter to a public issue, feminists defied the established traditional and sexist views of rape, which, until that point, blamed the female victims for their rape

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<sup>49</sup> Archard, 2007, p. 379

<sup>50</sup> Archard, 2007, p. 388 refers to a psychological study of a rape victim cited in Hilberman, 1976 which characterizes rape as "the ultimate violation of the self ... the invasion of one's inner and most private space".

<sup>51</sup> Archard, 2007, p. 390 cites Henderson's assertion, 1988, p. 225

<sup>52</sup> Archard, 2007, pp. 389-90

<sup>53</sup> Whisnant, 2017 cites Johnson, 2005, pp. 4-15 who defines patriarchy as "a social system in which men disproportionately occupy positions of power and authority, central norms and values are associated with manhood and masculinity (which in turn are defined in terms of dominance and control), and men are the primary focus of attention in most cultural spaces".

and regarded rape-incidents as rare and aberrant behaviors committed by very few men.<sup>54</sup> Instead, they focused their attention on the women's feelings and point of view by redefining the legally protected right which is insulted by the crime. In this sense, rape was not any more a crime against a woman's husband or father but became a crime against the raped woman herself.<sup>55</sup>

The feminist understanding of rape took different forms of expression, which appeared either as liberal or as radical according to their context and their orientation. Liberal feminists saw rape as a gender-neutral assault of the individual autonomy, assimilating it to all the other forms of assault or battery.<sup>56</sup> Susan Brownmiller was the first feminist who offered such an account of rape. In 1975 her controversial, but groundbreaking book *"Against Our Will"* challenged the sexual character and motivation of the crime and identified rape with violence. According to her reasoning:

"From prehistoric time to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men keep all women* in state of fear".<sup>57</sup>

Although Brownmiller explained the phenomenon of rape mostly based on biology, she did notice that women were socially trained to be passive and raped.<sup>58</sup> With this as starting-point, she further analyzed well-known fairy tales, (e.g. the Red Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella), through the lens of femininity's and masculinity's stereotypical image and explained how popular beliefs about sexuality were related to women's rape.<sup>59</sup>

In contrast, radical feminists opposed to rape's individualistic dimension and perceived it as a form of the institutionalized sexism which traditionally facilitated and reinforced the female subjection and oppression in the patriarchal society. They analyzed the phenomenon of rape not as a sporadic deviation but as an entrenched social practice<sup>60</sup>, which was "indigenous, not exceptional, to women's social

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<sup>54</sup> Tsigkris, 1996, p. 161; Whisnant, 2017

<sup>55</sup> Whisnant, 2017 notes that until the recent past rape was regarded as a property crime against a woman's husband or father because were essentially property of men, with their value as property measured by their sexual "purity".

<sup>56</sup> Primorac, 1999, pp. 499-500; Whisnant, 2017

<sup>57</sup> Brownmiller, 1975, p. 15

<sup>58</sup> Brownmiller, 1975, p. 309

<sup>59</sup> Brownmiller, 1975, pp. 309-14

<sup>60</sup> Primorac, 1999, pp. 500-1

condition”<sup>61</sup>, and through which all men in general exercised power<sup>62</sup>. In their point of view they regarded rape as another means of men’s exploitation which controlled the sexual and reproductive use of the female body and, thus, harmed all women as a group.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, they rejected the argument that rape had to do only with violence and stressed the twofold nature of the crime, which inherently embodied both violence and sex.<sup>64</sup>

### 3.3 *The concept of rape culture*

The second wave feminism did not only pave the way for a new social and legal understanding of the phenomenon of rape but also pointed out the role of culture in the forming of a collective consciousness in which rape appeared as an acceptable model of sexual behavior. By showing how popular cultural aspects of modern western society informally taught men and women to normalize rape, feminists demonstrated how some seemingly innocent assumptions could make all of us silent partakers of the female sexual victimization. During this process, the second wave of the feminist movement coined a new concept, that of rape culture<sup>65</sup>, in order to give a name to instances and experiences of everyday life which promoted sexism, rape and violence against women.

The term rape culture was first articulated in a homonymous documentary of 1975, which associated the phenomenon of rape with society’s sociocultural context.<sup>66</sup> Rape crisis workers, prisoners, even a rapist, gave their own explanations about what is rape and talked about how society and mass media influence our sexuality and perpetuate sexist patterns of behavior. In the focus of attention were several classic films<sup>67</sup> which reinforced stereotypical images of aggressive males who violently

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<sup>61</sup> MacKinnon, 1989a, p. 172

<sup>62</sup> Rabinowitz, 2011, p. 2

<sup>63</sup> Whisnant, 2017

<sup>64</sup> The radical feminist Catherine A. MacKinnon in her book, *“Toward a Feminist Theory of the State”*, (1989), p. 134 opposed to the liberal argument that rape is violence by writing that “it fails to answer the rather obvious question, if it is violence not sex, why didn’t he just hit her?”

<sup>65</sup> According to Purdy, 2004 the term “rape culture” is often used to describe the contemporary American culture as a whole.

<sup>66</sup> *Rape culture*, 1975.

<sup>67</sup> As examples of this myth are used the films “Frenzy” of Alfred Hitchcock, “Last Tango in Paris”, “Gone with the wind”, “Straw dogs”, “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance kid”

subordinated passive females, thus, promoting several rape-myths (e.g. when women say no, they mean yes or no matter what women acted like they wanted it to). Advertisements were also a target point due to their practice to depict only the sexual parts of the female body in order to enhance male sex fantasies. Pornography was also criticized as a way to degrade women turning them to simple sex-toys used to satisfy the male-needs.

Within this background, rape was presented as a symptom of society directly connected with the male power and dominance. Two of the most interesting interpretations of rape which were given in the documentary were that of the author and teacher Mary Daly who defined rape as “the physical act which put all women to a stage of siege”<sup>68</sup> and that of the rape education consultant Karla M. Jackson who saw the act of rape as a mechanism of repression used by the power structure “to keep people in their place whatever that place may be...”<sup>69</sup>. Both of them can satisfactorily explain why authorities did not punish marital rape until recently.

A few years later, in 1984, the scholar Dianne Herman used the term of rape culture and claimed that rape will continue to be pervasive as long as sexual violence and dominance are glamorized.<sup>70</sup> In 1993, Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth described rape as a fact of life<sup>71</sup> and conceptualized rape culture as “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm. In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable as death or taxes. This violence however, is neither biologically nor divinely ordained”.<sup>72</sup> Nowadays, rape culture is a very popular term and many scholars make frequent use of it.<sup>73</sup>

According to my opinion, Ann Burnett offers the most accurate explanation of the aforementioned term by saying that “rape culture exists where rape and sexual assault, is a normalized expectation” and recognizes as contributing factors to such a culture hegemonic masculinity, the media, language, politics and rape myths<sup>74</sup>. In her article “Rape Culture” she gives a list with films, series and other television programs

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<sup>68</sup> Rape Culture, 1975

<sup>69</sup> Rape Culture, 1975

<sup>70</sup> Burnett, 2016 cites Dianne Herman, 1984.

<sup>71</sup> Burnett, 2016

<sup>72</sup> See Purdy, 2004; Thacker, 2019, p. 91 cites also Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth, 1993; Johnston, 2017

<sup>73</sup> See Berns 2004; Burnett, 2009; Johnston, 2017; Thacker, 2019

<sup>74</sup> Burnett, 2016

which reinforce the archetype of the male aggressive hunter who violently subordinate the female and demonstrate rape or sexual assault as normality.<sup>75</sup> She also points out the fact, (as the documentary “Rape culture” also did), that the media objectify the human body, eroticize rape and sympathize with the rapists rather than the victims.<sup>76</sup> She does not live aside popular music, lyrics, jokes or quotes which often use misogynistic language, neutralize rape and sometimes even make rape equal to success.<sup>77</sup> In the end, she refers to the long-lasting rape myths (e.g. women say “no”, but they really mean “yes”, women are aroused by sexual violence, women who get raped are promiscuous), by revealing how communication perpetuates false notions that excuse the rapists and minimize the effects of rape on female victims.<sup>78</sup>

Another serious parameter of rape culture is the well-known victim-blaming, which assign responsibility for the rape not on the perpetrator but on the victim. Victim-blaming can take many forms. It can appear as an indication that the victim herself provoked her rape by actions, words, or dress<sup>79</sup> or as a suggestion that the victim could have taken other actions in order to avoid the outcome<sup>80</sup>. In both cases the term victim-blaming refers to behaviors which diminish the rapists' responsibility and hold the victim responsible for her own victimization.<sup>81</sup> Victim-blaming can be definitely seen as an extension of our culture whose attitude is hostile towards women.

In addition to that, it can be understood as a defense mechanism, a common psychological reaction.<sup>82</sup> Rape incidents invalidate the collective behavioral expectations that society has indirectly created. Throughout time and place the social environments affected the human sexuality and created norms which dictated our sexual behavior based on our gender. In order to achieve our conformity to these norms, it provided us with the illusion that as long as we comply with the acceptable

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<sup>75</sup> Burnett, 2016 specifically mentions the teen drama “Reign” which created controversy in late 2014 when it showed a violent rape scene; the tv-series “Law and Order: Special Victims Unit” which was supposed to educate its audience about rape culture, but instead it often portrayed the victims as being at fault; and the movies “Say Anything”, “Crazy Stupid Love”, “The fast and the Furious”, “Neighbors”, “American Pie”, “Hitch”, “The Notebook” and even the Disney movie, “Beauty and the Beast” because they presented assault as a normal part of their story.

<sup>76</sup> Burnett, 2016 offers as evidence for the last the coverage of CNN in the Steubenville rape case.

<sup>77</sup> Burnett, 2016 cites lyrics from the 2013 Robin Thicke song, “Blurred Lines” intone, “I know you want it”; from the song of Rick Ross, in 2013, U.O.E.N.O., rapped, “Put molly all in her champagne, she ain’t even know it. I took her home and I enjoyed that, she ain’t even know it. She also mentions common phrases as “I raped the test” or “We raped the team” to demonstrate how rape is linked to success.

<sup>78</sup> Purdy, 2004; Burnett, 2016

<sup>79</sup> Burnett, 2016

<sup>80</sup> Kayleigh, 2016

<sup>81</sup> Burnett, 2016

<sup>82</sup> Kayleigh, 2016

behavior, nothing bad could happen to us. When hideous incidents as rape take place, this promise of safety is cancelled, making people to look for excuses out of fear for their own insecure situation. Within this background, victim-blaming works reassuringly and prevents people from the difficult process of acknowledging that conformity to social norms, does not keep us always safe.

Rape culture is a clever concept which stresses the necessity to re-educate society about the issue of rape by disclosing how social structures systematically train men to view women as tireless servants of their sexual needs.

### ***3.4 Conclusion***

Rape is defined in various ways according to time, historical period, place and gender. It can be related to sex, to violence or to both. The female consent is the central criterion for the characterization of a heterosexual intercourse as rape and what we punish in this crime is primarily connected to the violation of woman's sexual integrity. Rape harms and insults the existence of woman as autonomous human being and transforms her to a simple sexual object. All these are common assumptions that most of us outwardly embrace and endorse.

However, we all have, more or less, attended social situations which trivialized or supported sexual violence against women. Through jokes, music, films or tv shows we have engaged in common practices which normalize the idea that men are impulsive, unable to control themselves sexually and women may be "asking for" unwanted sex. And although we deny that we accept or promote ideas of that sort, our behavior, subconsciously, ignore or excuse the female sexual coercion, thus, preserving the so-called "rape culture". The beliefs of this culture do not exist in a vacuum and are not idioms of our times. They have been a part of older societies and somehow persist until today. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether the modern consent of rape culture, through its examples, can help us to better understand the different instances of rape in ancient Greece and the Greek views of sexual violence against women.

## Chapter 4: Rape in the Greek Myths

### 4.1 The multiple function of myths

Myths had a multiple function within the ancient Greek society. Their fascinating stories revealed moral truths and provided a sort of “educational” entertainment to ordinary people.<sup>83</sup> On the one hand, Greek myths helped the ancient Greeks to understand the world and gave persuasive answers to life’s big philosophical questions, such as “Who made the world?”, or “Where do we go after death?”.<sup>84</sup>

On the other hand, myths were read as exemplified allegories of the existing social attitudes and expectations and justified the traditional rites and customs.<sup>85</sup> The powerful gods, the fearful heroes and the terrifying monsters did not only captivate the imagination of the audience, but also provided a legitimate background to common practices. The supernatural reality of the mythical stories stabilized general rules of conduct and traditional institutions by giving them the necessary sacred authority<sup>86</sup>.

In addition to that, myths’ oral nature made them a valuable and flexible instrument of argumentation and propaganda<sup>87</sup>. Their various versions in combination with the obscurity of their precise date of emergence demonstrate that myths could be retold with new details in future generations and could be put to different goals in different moment of times.<sup>88</sup> From that point of view, myths constituted clever inventions with hidden beliefs, which could effectively motivate the audience either to adapt or to avoid a certain social behavior. Besides, myths acquired their modern meaning after the advent of rationality or *logos*, but for the ancient Athenians myths were part of their history and as such they were taken seriously.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Robson, 1997, p. 65

<sup>84</sup> History.com Editors, 2018

<sup>85</sup> Robson, 1997, p. 77

<sup>86</sup> James, 1957, p. 477

<sup>87</sup> Bremmer, 1997, p. 9

<sup>88</sup> Bremmer, 1997, p. 16

<sup>89</sup> Bremmer, 1997, p. 16



## 4.2 *The depiction of rape in Greek myths*

### 4.2.1 *The issue of frequency*

After explaining the function of Greek myths in the ancient Greek context, I can go further to investigate whether the common accusations against them for including and justifying brutal sexual violence against women are well founded.

First, I will cope with the issue of frequency. The list with all the Greek mythological rape-victims is indeed too long to be cited here. Therefore, I will briefly mention only some well-known examples as the myth of Europe, who was raped by Zeus, in the form of a beautiful bull, the myth of Leda who was raped by Zeus in the form of a swan, the myth of Antiope, who was also raped by Zeus, disguised as a satyr<sup>90</sup>, the myth of Persephone who was raped by the king of underworld, Hades, and the myth of Medusa who was raped by Poseidon in the temple of Athena.<sup>91</sup>

Consequently, it is not excessive to support that rape was an important part of Greek mythology. However, the larger issue here is not if but why the Greeks myths narrate so often rape events.

Many explanations could lie behind this tendency related to different parameters. The first of them involve the audience. Rape narratives were not standing alone, but they were produced for the ancient Greek audience and had an entertaining role. By using sex and violence, which had always been popular to the public, storytellers and poets might have wanted to win the audience's attention and engagement.<sup>92</sup>

The second could be related to the ritual nature of rape and its religious function.<sup>93</sup> As I mentioned before, myths, through their didactic role and their exemplified allegories, justified traditional rites and explained life's big philosophical questions.<sup>94</sup> From this perspective, rape in myths was used as a ritualistic act of worship. Besides, the mythological rapists were not ordinary men, but gods. Greek gods might have had a human face and directly interfere in the human affairs, but they

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<sup>90</sup> Robson, 1997, p. 83. Only in Ovid and in the scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius Zeus is a satyr. In Apollodorus as in other sources, there is no mention of bestiality.

<sup>91</sup> Robson, 1997, p. 83-6

<sup>92</sup> DukeZhoo, 2019

<sup>93</sup> DukeZhoo, 2019 refers to Burkert, Eliade and Frazer when arguing that there is archaeological evidence of human sacrifice in ancient Europe and other ancient cultures.

<sup>94</sup> Robson, 1997, p. 77; History.com Editors, 2018; DuekZhou, 2019

were evaluated with different standards than the mortals.<sup>95</sup> Hence, when the Greek gods were involved in the picture, they were allowed to use all kind of methods, even bad ones, in order to achieve what they wanted.<sup>96</sup> This was not applied to mortals, who were usually severely punished in cases of rape (e.g. Ajax the Lesser who raped Cassandra in the temple of Athena and was killed by Poseidon<sup>97</sup> or Odysseus' sailor who raped a local women in Temesa, for which he was stoned to death by the inhabitants<sup>98</sup>).

The third might have to do with the emergence of the early Greek humanism, which put the human experience at the center of attention.<sup>99</sup> Homer's *Iliad* was the first literary work which focused on the individual's emotion and experience, and, thus, undermined the divine authority.<sup>100</sup> The Greek and Trojan heroes of this Greek epic poem were portrayed with flaws but also honored for overcoming their weaknesses and achieving their own fascinating humanity.<sup>101</sup> This tradition continued in the other myths and was expressed through the emphasis on human body in visual arts and athleticism.<sup>102</sup>

#### 4.2.2 *The issue of Ambivalence*

The second issue I will deal with is why rape appears so ambivalent in the Greek myths. On the one hand, several Greek myths featured quite prominently rape through idyllic settings and divine participation. For example, Leda's and Europa's abduction by Zeus, have a common pattern: within a beautiful setting, a god abducted and had sexual intercourse with a mortal girl against her will and she gave birth to the god's offspring.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 26

<sup>96</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 26

<sup>97</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* iv. 499 &c.; Chrisholm, 1911, p. 452

<sup>98</sup> (Video 3) *Edward M. Harris: Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017; (Video 6) *Daniel Ogden- The Hero of Temesa: ghosts, monsters and rape*, 2017.

<sup>99</sup> Early Greek Humanism

<sup>100</sup> DuekZhou, 2019; Early Greek Humanism

<sup>101</sup> Early Greek Humanism

<sup>102</sup> Early Greek Humanism

<sup>103</sup> Harris, 2006, pp. 69-71 and Lefkowitz, 1993, pp. 17-37.

The discreet and poetic portrayal of the mythical rapes urged some scholars to interpret them only as abductions or seductions.<sup>104</sup> By invoking either the blurred distinctions between the sexual crimes in ancient Greece or the changing sociocultural standards, they deny that Greek gods engaged in intercourses against the mortal women's will.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, they support that these unions were justified by their lasting consequences both for the women involved and for the civilization in general.<sup>106</sup> Lefkowitz aptly describes the dynamics of the relationship between gods and mortals by saying that "Because gods live forever and know the future, they do not intervene as frequently or as forcefully in human life as human would wish. But at the same time, they are not wholly inhumane or careless of the mortals whose lives they have in some way affected directly, and this concern is nowhere more evident than in their attention (however brief and episodic) to their mortal children and the mortal women whom they chose to be their mothers".<sup>107</sup> Thus, the strong and remarkable children, the importance and the lasting fame are viewed as the god's fair reward for the woman's traumatic experience, (which is abduction, but no rape), and her family's suffering.<sup>108</sup>

However, in my eyes, the denial of reading the mythological rape scenes, as such, contradicts the ancient text itself, (e.g. in Euripides' *Ion* when Creusa utters that the god Apollo raped her she screamed her mother's name in order to express her unwillingness: "εἰς ἄντρου κοίτας κρηνγὰν Ἰὸ μᾶτέρ", you led me to the bed in the cave, hearing me call on my mother). Moreover, the fact that Greek myths include rape scenes does not necessarily diminish their value. We would not read these rapes according to our modern perceptions on the issue, but we should put them in their historical context and read them as a part of the Greek perception about the gods and the way the latter affect all aspects of human life.

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<sup>104</sup> See Lefkowitz, 1993, pp. 19-20 who claims that Greek gods do not rape or abduct mortal women from their father's or husband's home. Rather the women are seduced by gods, usually outside of their homes; and they give their consent, at least initially.

<sup>105</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 33 not only denies the commitment of rape on behalf of the gods but she interprets the female experiences as positive based on the results of these unions. She specifically writes: "But what are the alternatives to marriage for a woman? She cannot be truly independent or self-sufficient but must remain under the protection of a male relative, a father or a brother, in households run by their wives. At least if she has her own home, she might have children who would be loyal to her, defend her in case of trouble, and look after her in her old age. If she was seduced by a god, she would not only have children, but strong and remarkable children, who could save her life, like Tyro's or Antiope's sons; she would also have lasting fame and perhaps a city or colony named for her."

<sup>106</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 21

<sup>107</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 37

<sup>108</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 17, p. 37; Harris, 2006, p. 69 mentions these results without adapting the position that Gods did not rape mortal women.

Thus, the particular Greek understanding, which used different standards of evaluations than ours, explains why on other occasions, rape appears in the Greek myths as wrong. For example, the pretext for the Trojan War was the abduction<sup>109</sup> of Helen from her husband's palace in Sparta by the trojan prince Paris.<sup>110</sup> The Greek historian Herodotus in "*The Histories*" based the whole dissension between the Greeks and the barbarians on the abduction of each other's women.<sup>111</sup> In the very first chapter of his account (Hdt. 1.1-5) he wrote that once the Phoenicians came to Argos and abducted the king's daughter Io, then the Greeks retaliated by taking Europa, the daughter of the king of Tyre, and the princess Medea from Colchis.<sup>112</sup> Afterwards, Paris, the son of the trojan king Priam, abducted Helen from Greece and he thought that he could get away from it. Yet, the Greeks raised an expedition to Troy and destroyed the power of Priam to take revenge for the offense.<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, the answer to this question is that rape was not treated contradictory in the Greek myths. We perceive the treatment as ambivalent or contradictory and this fact has to do with our attitude as readers. All the ancient Greeks did was to evaluate harmful sexual acts with their own standards (as they did with other topics, e.g. slavery) and allow many forms of coercion in sexual relations that we condemn. From this perspective, the label "contradictory" is a just a figure of speech which does not reflect the Greek principles of sexual behavior but our difficulty as modern observers to accept that another society could approach sexuality and gender relations in such a different way.

#### *4.3 Rape myths – rape culture?*

In order to come up with a safer conclusion as to whether the Greek myths were normalizing sexual violence, I will first take the myth of Helen's rape by Theseus, discuss several depictions of it in art and then compare my results to our modern examples of rape culture. Although I might be accused of looking the story outside of the cultural context it came from, I need to discuss possible similarities or differences because there is no other way to answer my key question as I explained in chapter two.

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<sup>109</sup> The abduction was usually followed by rape especially in cases of war see Euripides' Trojan War.

<sup>110</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, 17

<sup>111</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 17

<sup>112</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 55 who also points out that the Greek acts were perceived as a legitimate response to a previous wrong.

<sup>113</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 17; Harris, 2006, p. 55

There are many versions of the myth of Helen's rape by Theseus.<sup>114</sup> Some of them tell that the princess of Sparta, who was in a very early age<sup>115</sup>, was raped either while she had been exercising and dancing naked with other young virgin girls on the banks of the River Eurotas<sup>116</sup> or while she was making a sacrifice to the goddess Artemis<sup>117</sup>. After the rape incident, Theseus carried her off from Sparta and took her to Aphidnae in Attica, where he entrusted her to her mother Aithra.<sup>118</sup> Then, Theseus went to the land of Hades to win Persephone as a bride for his friend Pirithous. In the meanwhile, Dioscuri, the brothers of Helen Castor and Pollux, marched against Aphidnae, took the city, released Helen and returned her to Sparta together with Aithra, whom held as captive.<sup>119</sup>

Isocrates wrote in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC that the king of Athens tried to resist to his ardent desire for Helen but her loveliness was so tempting that "... life was not worth living amid the blessings he already had unless he could enjoy intimacy with her".<sup>120</sup> In addition to that, Isocrates (10.18-19) tried to find another excuse for Theseus' behavior by saying that he had first sought Helen's hand in vain before taking her by force.<sup>121</sup> Yet, despite his individual effort, Theseus' act was perceived as a crime in the eyes of the Greek world and his weakness to restrain his sexual desire was so reprehensible<sup>122</sup> that it was easily used as an excuse by the Spartans to invade Attica<sup>123</sup>.

Although this is undoubtedly a fascinating story, it is also interesting to observe how the myth was represented in iconography over time and in which way ancient artists depicted the human experience of pursuit and rape. I will first present my own photographs from the attic red-figured stamnos in the National Archeological

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<sup>114</sup> For the analysis of the myth see Apollod. E. 1.23; Apollod. 3.10. 7; Hughes, 2013, pp. 49-54; Cohen, p. 45-6; Mitta (*Μήττα*), 2012;

<sup>115</sup> Her age varies between seven and twelve years old see Apollod. E. 1.23; Hughes, 2013, p. 49; Cohen, p. 46

<sup>116</sup> Hughes, 2013, p. 50 mentions the version that Theseus attacked Helen while she was dancing in a religious sanctuary devoted to the goddess Artemis Orthia.

<sup>117</sup> Mitta (*Μήττα*), 2012

<sup>118</sup> Hughes, 2013, p. 51 writes that Theseus locked Helen in the hill-fortress of Aphidnae near Dekeleia; The very story told by Diodorus (4.63) gives the version that Helen was abducted by Theseus and his friend Pirithous. Theseus won her and took her to Aphidnae in Attica. The Athenians did not accept Helen in their city because they were afraid of a war with the Spartans see Mitta (*Μήττα*), 2012.

<sup>119</sup> Apollod. 3.10.7; Apollod. E. 1.23; Hughes, 2013, p. 51, 357 who mentions that there are other versions of the story which say that Helen became pregnant by Theseus and gave birth to a daughter, Iphigeneia, whom she then left with her sister Clytemnestra.

<sup>120</sup> See Hughes, 2013, p. 49 who cites Isocrates, *Encomium of Helen* 10.19 Trans. L. van Hook.

<sup>121</sup> Cohen, cites Shapiro, p. 46

<sup>122</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 47 cites Isocrates (10.21) and Plutarch's narration of the *Life of Theseus* (*Thes.* 29).

<sup>123</sup> Hughes, 2013, p. 51

Museum of Athens and then compare it to the picture from the mosaic floor of the house of abduction of Helen in Pella.



Figure 1: Helen's first abduction by Theseus. Attic red-figured stamnos by Polygnotos. Ca. 430-420 B.C. National Archeological Museum of Athens. Left Side A.

This particular stamnos was probably found in a grave in Marathon and has been used as a funerary urn. It is the work of the painter Polygnotos and depicts Helen's first abduction by Theseus. Over the figures, the inscriptions  $\Theta\epsilon\epsilon\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ , *HELENE*,  $\Pi\epsilon\iota\pi\iota(\Theta)\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\Phi\omicron\iota\beta\alpha$ , once painted in white, are still discernible. The crucial moment of abduction is depicted without obvious signs or acts of violence. The pursuit scene is taking place from the left to the right. The hero, Theseus, is holding spears in his right hand while he is stretching his left arm to grasp Helen's right shoulder. His determined look, which directly faces the pursued figure of Helen, together with the forward direction of his body disclose his intention to snatch Helen and lead her to the chariot. On the other hand, the slightly swivel posture of Helen's figure reveals her



effort to avoid Theseus' grasp. Her gently gesture to lift her himation shows that she flees away. Although she looks back at Theseus, her glance at his hand shows rather annoyance than encouragement. In front of her, to the right, stands ready the charioteer, Pirithous, companion of Theseus, with the one foot in his chariot and the other on the ground, in which they will move away as soon as Theseus brings Helen. All the right, the sister of Helen, Phoiba, is depicted as if she is moving towards Helen, which rather implies her attempt to provide help and raises her right arm, a gesture which could indicate distress while she sees Helen off.<sup>124</sup>



Figure 2: Helen's first abduction by Theseus. Attic red-figured stamnos by Polygnotos. Ca. 430-420 B.C. National Archeological Museum of Athens. Right Side A.

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<sup>124</sup> For the analysis of the stamnos I followed the description of the National Archeological Museum in Athens and the useful comments from the (Video 4): Robin Osborne – *From sexual pursuit to rape: sexual violence in Athenian painted pottery* (2017)

This iconography from the late fifth century B.C. depicts the rape scene in a way which was common at the time. The depicted figures were almost static with complex poses and the artists emphasized on them by inviting the public to contemplate what the figures might be thinking.<sup>125</sup> This style was quite different from the one followed in the case of the mosaic floor in the house of the abduction of Helen found at Pella. The latter mosaic dates to the late fourth century B.C. and depicts the figures involved much more active and aggressive.



Figure 3: Mosaic Floor from the House of Abduction of Helen (ca. 325-300 BC)

© Ephorate of Antiquities of Pella

Although it is heavily damaged, the inscriptions above or beside the figures disclose their identity and the aforementioned subject of the mosaic.<sup>126</sup> The very scene of the abduction is depicted as follows:<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Osborne, 2017, p. 14; (Video 4) Robin Osborne – *From sexual pursuit to rape: sexual violence in Athenian painted pottery*, 2017

<sup>126</sup> Mavrika, 1998, p. 10

<sup>127</sup> For the analysis of the mosaic floor I followed Cohen, 2010, pp. 43-6; Robertson, 1965, 79-80; Mavrika, 1998, pp. 9-15; (Video 3) Edward M. Harris: *Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017



A yellowish-red chariot with four white horses shown in profile is conducted by the charioteer, Phorbas, who looks back at his companion, Theseus, waiting for him to complete the capture of Helen.<sup>128</sup> Theseus is depicted in the process of mounting the chariot, carrying Helen along while looking at her.<sup>129</sup> Helen struggles to escape with her legs off the ground and her both arms stretched to the right in a gesture of despair.<sup>130</sup> Her small size in the mosaic stresses both her young age and the helplessness of her situation.<sup>131</sup> Helen is also depicted nude with a part of her torn himation to flap violently in the air.<sup>132</sup> At the right edge of the mosaic we find a female, named as Deianira.<sup>133</sup> She is fleeing away in distress, her body moving to the right and her head turned left looking Helen in horror.<sup>134</sup> The swivel of her posture captures the poignancy and ambivalence of her position, expressing both her desire to help and her fear for her own situation.<sup>135</sup> The background against which the figures are set has a dark gray-black color and in connection with the light undulating groundline indicates that the scene takes place in a landscape.<sup>136</sup>

Apart from the striking artistic details, what is really interesting in this mosaic is the emotional depiction of the abduction. It gives emphasis to the coercion of the act and the victim's reaction. The female poses express pain and terror pointing out the extent of Helen's sadness and despair.<sup>137</sup> The addition of a second female in the mosaic, highlights the female perspective of the act and guides the viewers to sympathize with Helen.<sup>138</sup> On the other hand, the male actors of the mosaic dispose the basic male characteristics of the Greek heroes. They appear energetic, self-confident and aggressive. Their specific act is supposed to express virility, courage and determination. According to Cohen, "the allure of an abducted woman and the demonstration of masculine prowess through possessing her were widely understood as the most prominent causes of abduction."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 44

<sup>129</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 44

<sup>130</sup> Robertson, 1965, 79-80; Mavrika, 1998, pp. 10; (Video 3) *Edward M. Harris: Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017

<sup>131</sup> Mavrika, 1998, pp. 10; Cohen, 2010, p. 44

<sup>132</sup> Mavrika, 1998, pp. 10; Cohen, 2010, p. 44 notes that the depiction of Helen confirms the lack of love.

<sup>133</sup> Cohen, 2010, pp. 43-64; Robertson, 1965, 79-80; Mavrika, 1998, pp. 9-15; (Video 3) *Edward M. Harris: Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017

<sup>134</sup> Mavrika, 1998, pp. 10; (Video 3) *Edward M. Harris: Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017

<sup>135</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 44

<sup>136</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 43

<sup>137</sup> (Video 3) *Edward M. Harris: Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017; Harris, 2017, pp. 19-20

<sup>138</sup> (Video 3) *Edward M. Harris: Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017; Harris, 2017, pp. 19-20

<sup>139</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 46

It is indisputable that there was an artistic development in the depiction of the scene of abduction, which probably reflect a change in the way the ancient Greeks were approaching sexual relations with women. While the figures were in both cases four with a second woman present and the conveyance of Helen was obtained by a waiting chariot, the illustration of the type of force and of the bodily resistance were essentially different. The painting of the attic stamnos does not depict a straight forward scene of abduction and the focus of attention is on the specific figures and their intentions. The physical violence is absent, the action is “poor” and Helen’s bodily situation could indicate annoyance or a covered resistance, but in no case protest. On the other hand, the depiction of the mosaic floor stresses the violence and the feelings of unexpected and unwanted. Theseus is snatching Helen by physically picking her up in his hands and carrying her off. Helen, whose himation has been torn apart, protests in an expressive pose with outstretched arms calling for her. The whole scene emphasizes the act of pursuit and rape and the depicted figures seem less important as individual heroes but more significant as representative examples of their gender.<sup>140</sup> From this perspective, the artistic representations suggest the appropriate mode of sexual behavior for each gender and reflect a pervasive tension in gender relations.

#### ***4.4 Conclusion***

To me, what matters the most is that the visual depictions of the abduction or rape and the oral myth have similar codes of conduct. In both instances Theseus is featured as the active and aggressive male hero who initiates the act of abduction driven by his superficial and uncontrolled sexual impulse. On the contrary, Helene’s description embodies a static passivity which enhances her vulnerability as the unwilling, surprised victim. Theseus’ misdemeanor consisted an undoubtedly moral wrong which, however, was considered to be triggered by Helen’s irresistible beauty. Moreover, in both cases Helen’s misfortune was interpreted as the fatal result of her removal from home. Thus, the reading of the myth included hidden messages directed to all men and women. On the one side, men could see through the glorious poses and gestures a masculine code of conduct, which allowed all means for the successful

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<sup>140</sup> The analysis is based on (Video 4) *Robin Osborne – From sexual pursuit to rape: sexual violence in Athenian painted pottery*, 2017; Osborne, 2017, p. 14; Cohen, 2010, pp. 43-63

fulfillment of the male sexual desire.<sup>141</sup> On the other side, women were being warned that many dangers lurked for them out of the safe confines of their *oikoi* and without the protection of their *kyrioi*.<sup>142</sup>

If we return to the present in order to answer the last question of this chapter, we will be surprised to notice that our current examples of rape culture do not differ so much from the codes in the visual depictions of Helen's mythological rape. The male sexual aggression, the blaming of feminine beauty and the female insecurity of being alone without manly protection are also symptoms of modern times and parts of the wider sociological concept which we call rape culture. This unpleasant finding leads us to the conclusion that the Greek myths may have been used as tools which normalized sexual violence against women and constructed an environment where rape was a necessary evil in their lives. Moreover, some of these mythical attitudes have been carried over to here and now.

However, before taking a stand on the issue and calling the ancient Greek culture, as a whole, rape culture we should examine other important parameters of the ancient Greek life. In this way, we can have a better understanding of the context of the culture in which these myths were articulated as well as the reasons why their stories justified sexual violence toward women.

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<sup>141</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 61

<sup>142</sup> Cohen, 2010, p. 51

## Chapter 5: The concept of rape in ancient Greece

### 5.1 The most common words for rape in ancient Greece

The English word rape does not have an exact match in the ancient Greek vocabulary.<sup>143</sup> Yet, the absence of a specific word does neither set in question the whole concept nor expunge the conduct itself from the frame of the ancient Greek society. On the contrary, a short survey of the ancient sources brings to light numerous acts of sexual assaults against women that vividly describe what we today call rape. For example, Euripides' tragedy, *Ion*, refers to the rape of Creusa by the god Apollo, (10), Aristophanes alludes to the rape of a wife in his comedy, *Lysistrata*, (223-228) and Menander's plays, (e.g. *Epitrepontes and Samia*), have often as theme the rape of young women.

The descriptions of rape are covered under a great variety of verbs and expressions, which on their own do not always have a sexual hue, but they can denote rape with reference to a certain context. Thus, although primarily they are related to other meanings, such as violence, outrage or shame, they are connected to rape when used in a specific grammatical construction.

The words which define sexual activities similar to rape usually fall into two very wide semantic fields, namely either that of *bia*, (violence or force)<sup>144</sup>, and its cognates or that of *hybris* (insult)<sup>145</sup> and its cognates. The choice of the appropriate word depends on the specific meaning that the author wants to convey in each case. For example, Plato in the *Laws* uses the verb *biazomai* (βιάζομαι) "being forced" in order to describe the act of rape itself, while he chooses the passive tense of *hybrizein* (ὕβριζεν) "to insult" for expressing what the victim has suffered at the hands of the assailant.<sup>146</sup> Hence, factors as the surrounding circumstances of the crime or the direct consequences of it might determine the use of a word at the expense of another. In addition to that, legal or non-legal texts designate the same offense with the use of other types of verbs or expressions, thus, making the description of this particular act even more varied and nuanced.

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<sup>143</sup> Omitowaju, 2002, p. 18; Cole, 1984, p. 98; Harris, 483

<sup>144</sup> See: Cole, 1984, pp. 97-100; Cohen, 1991b, pp. 171-178; Omitowaju, 2002, pp. 17-71

<sup>145</sup> See: MacDowell, 1976, pp. 14-31, N. Fischer, 1976, pp. 177-193; Cohen, 1991b, pp. 171-88 and Omitowaju, 2002, pp. 17-71

<sup>146</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 175; Omitowaju, 2002, p. 54

Susan Cole gives a detailed account of such expressions, while emphasizing on their particular linguistic nuances.<sup>147</sup> Even though her basic claim is that, for the most part and in certain circumstances, the noun *biasmos* (βίασμός), “violence” corresponds to the modern term of rape, when this is followed by a female object in genitive case, she additionally cites the verbs *damazesthai* (δαμάζεσθαι) “being subdued”, *hybrizein* (ὕβριζειν) “to outrage” and *aischinein* (αἰσχύνειν) “to shame”, as manifest labels of the same crime.<sup>148</sup> As Cole notes, the original meaning of the verbs *damazesthai* (being subdued) and *aischinein* (to shame) do not actually designate any sexual activity.<sup>149</sup> The context in which these verbs could mean rape is specific.<sup>150</sup> For instance, the verb *damazesthai* (being subdued) means “assault sexually” when it is followed by a direct female object.<sup>151</sup> Under this condition, the latter denotes “assault sexually” by stressing the use of force and theoretically belongs to the semantic field of violence.<sup>152</sup> On the other side, the verb *aischinein* “to shame” could indicate sexual assault if its object is a female, but in this case the violence of the act is defined only by its effects on the victim.<sup>153</sup> From this point of view, the latter verb seems to belong to the semantic group of *hybris*.

Other expressions or verbs which might have been used in ancient Greece in order to signify the act of rape are the verbs *arpazein* (ἄρπάζειν) “seize, to abduct”<sup>154</sup>, *atimazein* (ἀτιμάζειν) or (ἀτιμᾶν) (insult)<sup>155</sup> or the (slightly) euphemistic expression *aiskhunein biai* “shame by force”<sup>156</sup>. The legal law Code of Gortyn provides a definition of rape based on social criteria. Hence, the expression *kartei oipei* (κάρτει οἴπει) “to have intercourse by force” denotes the rape of a free person<sup>157</sup>, while the expression *kartei damasaito* (κάρτει δαμάσαιτο) “to subdue by force” describes the situation where

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<sup>147</sup> Cole, 1984, pp. 97-99

<sup>148</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 98 actually uses the present middle-passive infinitive of the verb δαμάζομαι, “to subdue” and the present active infinitives of the verbs ὕβριζω, “to outrage”, αἰσχύνω, “to shame” and ἄρπάζω, “to abduct”.

<sup>149</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 98

<sup>150</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 98

<sup>151</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 98

<sup>152</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 98

<sup>153</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 98

<sup>154</sup> Omitowaju, 2002, p. 18, p. 64. However, Cole, 1984, p. 98 argues that the verb *arpazein* (ἄρπάζειν), “to seize”, when used independently with a female direct object, should not be interpreted as rape, but as abduct. She accepts that it can denote the act of rape only in conjunction with the other verbs and when the act of rape is meant by the context.

<sup>155</sup> Harris (1997), p. 483

<sup>156</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 48

<sup>157</sup> Cole, 1985, p. 108; Scafuro, 2017, p. 51;

someone pressures a household slave woman to have intercourse, without necessarily the use of physical force<sup>158</sup>.

The variety of the expressions that signified the act of rape in ancient Greece reveals that the Greeks did not have a single attitude towards all acts of rape, but they made distinctions that seem baffling to us.<sup>159</sup>

## 5.2 Rape described as *bia* (βία) “violence or force”

The problems around the use of the word *bia* (violence or force), and its associated vocabulary, as a descriptive designation of the act of rape in the ancient Greek sources are neither many nor complicated. Usually, it is quite clear when it comes to the sexual arena, that this verb and its derivative noun are used to indicate non-consensual intercourse.<sup>160</sup> Many scholars use the absence or presence of violence to distinguish the crime of rape from the other sexual offences.<sup>161</sup> However, this noun and its related vocabulary can carry a wide array of associations which might cover sexual activities that do not literally refer to physical violence.

In her book *“Rape and the Politics of Consent in Classical Athens”*, Rosanna Omitowoju gives several examples where the use of the word *bia*, and all its related words, does not conceptually refer to actual physical violence.<sup>162</sup> The first one emerges from Herodotus’ Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.80.5). During the discussion of the seven Persians conspirators on the subject of the best government for Persia, Otanes, the democrat supporter, uses the expression *biatai gynaiikas* (βιάται γυναίκας) in order to stress the dangerous power of a tyrant. According to Omitowoju, this expression connotes compulsion with or without the element of physical violence.<sup>163</sup>

The second one comes out in Aeschylus’ tragedy, *“The Suppliants”*, (Aesch. *Supp.* 798), where the fifty Danaids maidens reject a marriage with Aegyptiads based on *bia*. Here the noun is conceived as the force that will compel them into an unwanted

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<sup>158</sup> Scafuro, 2017, pp. 51-2

<sup>159</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 42

<sup>160</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54

<sup>161</sup> Cohen, 1991a, p. 100 mentions that all ancient legal systems distinguish rape and adultery according to the woman’s consent and the man’s use of force. Carey, 1995, p. 408 also points out the absence or presence of violence as the most important discriminator.

<sup>162</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54

<sup>163</sup> Cole, 1985, p. 98 is totally opposed to this view and means that it is the violence that Herodotus’ language stresses at this point.

marriage.<sup>164</sup> The third example is given in Lysias' speech, *On the murder of Eratosthenes*, (Lys. 1.32.2), where the orator uses the noun *bia* (violence) to contrast it with *peitho* (persuasion) and, thus, distinguish the offense of rape from that of seduction.<sup>165</sup>

In her last example, Rosanna Omitowoju refers to *Odyssey* and specifically to the adverb *biaios* (violently), (Od. 22.37), which is used in order to describe the sexual intercourse of the suitors with Odysseus' maidservants. She argues that the reason why Odysseus uses this adverb is not because the suitors used physical violence during the sexual intercourse, but because they acted against his will and violated his right to dispose of the sexual commodities of his female servants.<sup>166</sup> In this way, when it comes to rape, she attaches the word of *bia*, not only to the victim and its body, but also to the person with the authority over the victim.<sup>167</sup>

These examples reveal that *bia's* (violence's) connotation can contrast the denotive value of the word and reveal additional shades of meaning dictated either by usage over time or by specific linguistic purposes. Moreover, the word's unique clarity offers an evaluation of the sexual activity free from any heavy, politically emotive charge<sup>168</sup>, which can presumably facilitate the verification of other important elements during the sexual intercourse, such as the female consent<sup>169</sup>. As Rosanna Omitowoju observes, the notion of *bia* comes forward as the conceptual counterweight of the notion *peitho* (*πειθῶ*) "persuasion", especially when it is related to the means of achieving the sexual intercourse.<sup>170</sup> Thus, its use can simplify the complicated process of identifying a sexual act as rape and open up new perspectives on the study of the crime.

### 5.3 Rape described as *hybris* (ὑβρις) "insult"

The other important term which can include sexual misdemeanors, as rape, is *hybris* (insult).<sup>171</sup> *Hybris* was a basic concept of the Greek worldview in antiquity and

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<sup>164</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54

<sup>165</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54

<sup>166</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 55

<sup>167</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 5455

<sup>168</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54

<sup>169</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54, 67, 71

<sup>170</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 54

<sup>171</sup> See MacDowell, 1976, pp. 14-31, N. Fisher, 1976, pp. 177-93; Cohen, 1991b, pp. 171-88 and Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 29-50

appeared with a wide range of meanings in the ancient sources. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1378b23-5,6,7) defines *hybris* as follow:

«ὁ ὑβρίζων δὲ ὀλιγωρεῖ:

ἔστι γὰρ ὑβρις τὸ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν ἐφ' οἷς αἰσχύνῃ ἔστι τῷ πάσχοντι, μὴ

ἵνα τι γίγνηται αὐτῷ ἄλλο ἢ ὅ τι ἐγένετο, ἀλλ' ὅπως ἤσθη:

οἱ γὰρ ἀντιποιοῦντες οὐχ ὑβρίζουσιν ἀλλὰ τιμωροῦνται.

αἴτιον δὲ τῆς ἡδονῆς τοῖς ὑβρίζουσιν,

ὅτι οἴονται κακῶς δρῶντες αὐτοὶ ὑπερέχειν μᾶλλον

διὸ οἱ νέοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι ὑβρισταί: ὑπερέχειν γὰρ οἴονται ὑβρίζοντες:

ὑβρεως δὲ ἀτιμία,

ὁ δ' ἀτιμάζων ὀλιγωρεῖ: τὸ γὰρ μηδενὸς ἄξιον

οὐδεμίαν ἔχει τιμὴν, οὔτε ἀγαθοῦ οὔτε κακοῦ:

διὸ λέγει ὀργιζόμενος ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς “ἠτίμησεν: ἐλὼν γὰρ ἔχει γέρας αὐτὸς

καὶ “ὡς εἶ τιν' ἀτίμητον μετανάστην,

ὡς διὰ ταῦτα ὀργιζόμενος.»

*“The hybrizon (insulter) too slights: for hybris (insult) is doing and saying things at which the victim incurs shame, not in order that one may achieve anything other than what is done, but simply to get pleasure from it. For those who act in return for something do not hybrizein (insult), they avenge themselves. The cause of the pleasure for hybridontes (those who insult) is that by harming people they think that they themselves are the more superior. That is why the young and the rich are hybristai (given to insults); for they think that, in committing them, they are showing their superiority. Dishonour is characteristic of hybris (insult), and he who dishonours another slights him, since what has no worth, has no honour either as good or bad. Hence Achilles in his wrath exclaims:*

*“He has dishonoured me; since he keeps the prize he has taken for himself” {Iliad 1.356} and he (has treated me) as if I were a wanderer without honour” {Iliad 9. 648= 17.59}*

*As if being angry for those reasons...”*

*(Rh. 1378b23-5,6,7)<sup>172</sup>*

So according to Aristotle, the *hybristic* behavior has particular kind of qualities related to the ideas of shame, dishonor, pleasure and superiority. In the absence of them, the behavior is undoubtedly wrongful and negative, but not *hybristic*. Moreover,

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<sup>172</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, (1378b23-5,6,7) translated by J.H. Freese and the author of this thesis; Fisher, 1976, p. 179



it is interesting to take a look at how Aristotle conceptualizes the *hybris* when it appears as a sexual offence.

In a passage of *Politics*, Aristotle advises the tyrants to avoid two kinds of *hybris*: the bodily punishment of free men and the sexual abuse of boys and girls (*Politics* 1315a15-28). He points out that these *hybristic* acts are dangerous for them because they excite resentment and desire for revenge.<sup>173</sup> Especially tyrant's sexual acts, whether they involve physical violence or not, are for Aristotle an eternal source of insecurity. The imbalance of power between the tyrant and the ordinary people works as a coercive mechanism at the expense of the latter and makes tyrant's sexual relations *hybristic* and potentially capable of encouraging civil disturbance.<sup>174</sup> Only the sexual acts out of passion are safe for the tyrants because the ingredient of passion both embellishes the appearance of *hybris* and softens relatives' or guardians' negative feelings.<sup>175</sup> Hence, Aristotle conceptually links the possession and expression of power with the desire of sex and perceives every sexual act, which arises not from passion, as an *hybristic* act of power and domination.<sup>176</sup>

Subsequently in modern times, many skillful scholars engaged in productive discussions of the word's precise connotation, by recognizing that occurrences of *hybris* appears in the sources with reference to certain forms of sexual violence and rape.<sup>177</sup> Douglas MacDowell is one of the first who tried to define the exact nature of the concept of *hybris* by emphasizing on the attitude of the offender.<sup>178</sup> He defined it as a behavior which "is having energy or power and misusing it self-indulgently".<sup>179</sup> At the same time, he provided a long list of examples from the ancient Greek literature where particular sexual activities "contain" *hybristic* elements.<sup>180</sup>

Nick Fisher also published a detailed study on the subject where he focused his attention on the effects of *hybris* on the victim.<sup>181</sup> MacDowell's argument that what differentiates this offense from others is "the state of mind", offered him a starting point for further analysis. Based on the Aristotelian discussion of the term that was

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<sup>173</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 173

<sup>174</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 33; Cohen, 1991b, p. 174

<sup>175</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 173-4

<sup>176</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 174; Also, Omitowoju, 2002, p. 34 compares Aristotle's link of power and sex with Brownmiller's position that rape is about power and not sex by noting that Brownmiller "genders" the notion of power, while Aristotle "politicizes" it.

<sup>177</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 172

<sup>178</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 99

<sup>179</sup> MacDowell, 1976, p. 30

<sup>180</sup> According to MacDowell, 1976, p. 17, Herodotus', Aristophanes', Plato's, Euripides' and Aeschylus' work include sexual *hybristic* activities.

<sup>181</sup> Fisher, 1976, p. 177

mentioned above<sup>182</sup>, he linked the core of the concept to the ideas of honor, shame, pleasure and superiority<sup>183</sup>. Thus, he defined *hybris* as a behavior intended to produce dishonor and shame to others<sup>184</sup>, when its motive is the pleasure of expressing a sense of superiority, rather than compulsion, need, or desire for wealth<sup>185</sup>. Especially in regard to sexual assaults and rape, Fisher stressed that they constituted *hybris* when their humiliating and aggressive behavior co-existed or overlapped lust.<sup>186</sup>

On the other hand, David Cohen disconnected the *hybristic* sexual acts, which damage the sexual honor or reputation of a person or a family, from the actual physical violence or coercion.<sup>187</sup> To him the term of *hybris* usually conveys intentionally insulting or demeaning behaviors, which dishonor free persons, by enhancing one's position, (namely that of the perpetrator's), at the expense of another's honor and reputation, (namely the victim's family in cases of women).<sup>188</sup>

The above discussion shows that the definition of a behavior as *hybristic*, was an ambiguous and subjective process based on relative terms as status, personal interests and feelings.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, it demanded certain motives which included specific ethical choices.

#### **5.4 The ancient Greek view of rape**

In my opinion the biggest issue with rape in ancient Greece is not that there was no explicit term for the crime, but the complexity of the reasoning around it and the contradictions in the sources. The language, as a cultural product, reflects the underlying ideas and experiences of a particular cultural group and is used to convey the special practices of a society in a particular era.<sup>190</sup> The linguistic variety of the

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<sup>182</sup> Fisher, 1976, p. 179 cites the abovementioned passage of Aristotle's in *Rhetoric*. Cohen, 1991b, p. 173 and p. 186 also refers to the Aristotelian definition of *hybris* (*ὕβρις*) in *Rhetoric*, by defining it in the same way, namely as the conduct which causes harm and disgrace for the pleasure of doing so, not for one's advantage and its motivation is the affirmation of one's superiority.

<sup>183</sup> Fisher, 1976, p. 177, p. 181

<sup>184</sup> Fisher, 1976, p. 177

<sup>185</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 30

<sup>186</sup> Fisher, 1976, p. 186

<sup>187</sup> Cohen, 1991b, pp. 175-7 cites numerous passages in order to prove his point.

<sup>188</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 177

<sup>189</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 32

<sup>190</sup> Leveridge, 2008 cites Hantrais, 1989 who puts forth the idea that the culture is the beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression.

Greeks regarding the definition of rape conceals a range of different conscious and subconscious bias and ideas on the subject. The correlation of these bias and ideas with the crime of rape causes severe interpretive difficulties to us. Therefore, it is important to clarify the main features of the Greek view of rape for illuminating the particular idiosyncrasy of the ancient Greek context.

First, it should be highlighted that the Greeks primarily condemned the rape of the Greek women in peacetime and evaluated such behavior as wrong and unacceptable (e.g. the rape of Phocian women by the Persians is conceived as evil, (Hdt. 8.33), in Herodotus' constitutional debate, the "democrat" Otanes presents rape as a typical characteristic of a tyrant with a negative nuance (Hdt. 3.80.5) and *Ion* in Euripides' homonymous tragedy condemns Apollo's rape of Creusa (436-451)).<sup>191</sup>

However, their disapproval of rape was based on different moral foundations than ours. Based on the general Greek philosophical thought and the legal status of the Greek women<sup>192</sup>, many scholars claim that every act of sexual violence against a woman, (including rape), was legally and socially committed against the husband, father, son or brother of the woman, not against the woman herself.<sup>193</sup> Rape in ancient Greece was perceived as a sort of sexual theft<sup>194</sup> and was condemned as wrong not because it physically violated the autonomy and privacy of the woman, but because it insulted the honor of her family and questioned the authority of her *kyrios* (e.g. the abduction of Helen by Paris was a wrong committed against Menelaus, not an insult against Helen)<sup>195</sup>. From this perspective, the center of attention was on the perpetrator of rape, who, by sexually taking his female victim, was claiming the status and the rights of her *kyrios* without being authorized to do so.<sup>196</sup> Hence, the Greeks punished rape not because they cared about the female victims, but because this particular act undermined the authority and power of the *kyrios*.<sup>197</sup> This interpretation of the Greek view fits perfectly to the case of unmarried virgin girls, whose destroyed chastity by

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<sup>191</sup> Their attitude towards the rape of foreign women in wartime was not condemning. See Homer *Iliad*, Euripides' *Trojan War* and the Greek attitude towards the Trojan women.

<sup>192</sup> Women in Sparta were the exception of the rule.

<sup>193</sup> For the interpretation of the Greek view of rape see Harris, 2006, p. 60-3; Harrison, 1997, p. 188; Omitowaju, 2002, p. 230-31, Arieti, 2017, p. 18; Hartmann, 2006 p. 61 cites Foxhall, 1991, p. 299 who notes that "Rape, seduction, and *moicheia* are therefore not so much offenses against women or – "the husband-wife relationship" as they are offenses against men's authority over their households and against their power to control the sexual activities of household members".

<sup>194</sup> Harrison, 1997, p. 190; Harris, 2006, pp. 60-3; Rindfleisch, 2015, pp. 2-3; Arieti, 2017, p. 18

<sup>195</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 42

<sup>196</sup> Brill's New Pauly; Harris, 2006

<sup>197</sup> Arieti, 2017, p. 18; Harris, 2006, p. 66.

the rape incident diminished their “property value” and their popularity on the marriage market.<sup>198</sup>

However, although this theoretical construction of the Greek view of rape is accurate from a legal perspective, we should bear in mind that there is not always a direct correspondence between legal evidence and social reality. In addition to that, this approach “stumbles” on a number of sources which prove the exact opposite, namely that the idea of coercion and the female consent were not insignificant in ancient Greece. Greek women might have been legally disregarded, but in social life had free will and responsibility for their actions.<sup>199</sup> For example, in Herodotus *Histories*, Mycerinus had intercourse with his daughter against her will. Afterwards, she strangled herself for grief and he buried her in his cow. Then her mother cut the hands of the servants who had betrayed her daughter to her father (Hdt. 2.131.1-2)<sup>200</sup>. Moreover, in Euripides’ *Troïades*, Helen begs for her life claiming that Paris took her by force ... and that he wedded her against her will ... (1. 960-5)<sup>201</sup>; yet Menelaus condemns her leaving his palace and seeking a stranger’s bed willingly (1. 1037-8)<sup>202</sup>

So how do we reconcile these contradictory understandings of women in reference to the Greek attitude towards sexual violence and rape? I think that the best way is to accept what Thomas Harrison suggested, namely that ‘the two contradictory understandings of women coexisted in the Greek social reality’.<sup>203</sup> Women in ancient Greece were legally regarded as parts of the male property handed over from father to husband through marriage, their sexuality was related to the values of family honor and shame and they were taught to be sexually passive and submissive. On the same time and in several social occasions they could have free will, express their desires and consent and take responsibility for their own actions.<sup>204</sup>

The Greek view of rape followed this contradictory social reality. It was a curious amalgam of incompatible ideas which treat women as passive receivers of the

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<sup>198</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 61 cites Porter, 1986, p. 217: “From Old Testament Jewish codes up to feudalism, rape was treated principally as theft, as a property offense, but one perpetrated against *men*. The crime was principally that of stealing or abducting a woman from her rightful proprietors, normally her father or husband. Moreover, in the case of a maiden, rape destroyed her property value on the marriage market, and because defloration polluted, heaped shame in her family”.

<sup>199</sup> Harrison, 1997, p. 191

<sup>200</sup> Herodotus *Histories* translated by A. D. Godley; Harrison, 1997, p. 191

<sup>201</sup> Euripides’ *Troïades* translated by E. P. Coleridge; Harrison, 1997, p. 191 and the author of this thesis.

<sup>202</sup> Euripides’ *Troïades* translated by E. P. Coleridge; Harrison, 1997, p. 191 and the author of this thesis.

<sup>203</sup> Harrison, 1997, pp. 192 writes that women in ancient Greece could be held responsible for their misdeeds, but at the same time held to know no better.

<sup>204</sup> See Harrison, 1997, p. 192

male sexual behavior, but at the same time made room for their desire and showed a wide understanding for their suffering in cases of rape.<sup>205</sup>

### 5.5 Conclusion

The ancient Greeks did not have a single word for the acts that we today call rape. They correlated the offense with the notions of *bia* (violence, force) or *hybris*, (usually insult), and introduced different criteria for its definition. The wrongness of rape was primarily connected with the male authority and power. Rape was treated as a property offense and from this perspective, was legally committed against the male guardians of the female victim. In such a context, only the intent of the perpetrator was crucial for the definition and the punishment of the crime. The female consent and the female point of view were immaterial.

However, hints from the sources show that the Greeks, in several social occasions, took into account the female consent and preferred female willing partners. Moreover, the linguistic and legal association of rape with the notion of *hybris* insinuates that the Greeks understood the ethical choices prior to the act.

Do we find anything familiar in the Greek view? I think that some small aspects of it are still present in our lives. Shame and embarrassment still haunt the rape victims, who feel that they are somehow responsible for their fate. Female sexuality is still provocative and “the good girls” are submissive and sexually passive. In some parts of our world the males avenge their women’s rape. These persistent ideas show how deep are the roots of sexism and why it is difficult for us to change them.

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<sup>205</sup> See chapter 7

## Chapter 6: The Legal Remedies of Rape

### 6.1 The laws and the legal charges for rape

The Athenians, (and the Greeks in general), viewed the rape of their women as an improper, unethical and legally punishable behavior. However, their legal treatment of rape was complicated in relation to the modern way of thinking. The Athenians did not have a specific lawsuit for rape, but its prosecution was covered under the general charges of *bia* or *hybris* (as in the case of definition).<sup>206</sup> The laws that referred to rape did not provide a legal definition of the crime, but they just determined its penalty. Moreover, the Athenian distinction between the different kind of sexual offenses - (rape, *moicheia* and seduction) - was not as clear as in the modern law, in the sense that coercion was not always condemned, neither female consent was a precondition of evaluation regarding the sexual activity.<sup>207</sup> Therefore every incident of rape was evaluated and punished differently according to the context.

At this point and before I begin the enumeration of the Athenian legal charges for rape, I will give a brief overview of the Athenian legal system which did not have the advanced procedures of our modern times. In general, the Athenian legal process has been described as "... as an arena for socially constructive feuding behavior, a public stage on which the elite competed for prestige, and a forum for ongoing communication and negotiation between elite litigants and mass jurors ...".<sup>208</sup> During every procedure two speeches were delivered, one by the prosecutor and one by the defendant who were both private individuals acting on their own behalf.<sup>209</sup>

The suits available in this legal system can be divided into private suits, called *dikai* (δικαί), which could only be brought by the victim or the *kyrios* (κύριος) "guardian", (if the victim was a woman or a minor)<sup>210</sup>, and into public suits, called *graphe* (γραφαί), which could be brought by (*ho*) *boulomenos* (βουλόμενος) "anyone who wished to act", usually an Athenian citizen.<sup>211</sup> The preparatory phase of the trial

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<sup>206</sup> For the Greek sanctions against rape see Cole, 1984, pp. 99-100; Cohen, 1993, pp. 5-16; Ogden, 1997, pp. 25-36; Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 29-71; Harris, 2006, pp. 60-67; Scafuro, 2017, pp. 44-50

<sup>207</sup> Cohen, 1993, p. 5-6

<sup>208</sup> Lanni, 2000, p. 311

<sup>209</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 13 notes that metics and foreign visitors seem to have had the right to bring private suits, *dikai*, but not public ones, *graphe*; Ogden, 1997, p. 27, p. 35

<sup>210</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 13 mentions the exception in cases of murder, which if the attempt against the victim had been successful, the suit could perforce be brought by the victim's next of kin.

<sup>211</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 35; Omitowoju, 2002, p. 14

belonged to the exclusive competence of the litigants who were responsible for investigating the case, organizing witnesses and conducting the case before it came to court.<sup>212</sup> The decision about the guilt or the innocence of the defendant as well as other procedural issues was made by the jury, a panel of judges who had been selected randomly from a pool of Athenian citizens over the age of 30 and were “dedicated amateurs” without legal experience or expertise.<sup>213</sup> These jurors decided about the meaning and applicability of the law itself in each case without actually making law, since the Athenian judicial bodies were not bound by their earlier decisions.<sup>214</sup> The last that could be noticed on the subject is that the above mentioned jurors served as judges in the court only occasionally.<sup>215</sup>

The particularity and sometimes haziness of the Athenian legal system generated considerable confusion among the scholars with respect to the understanding of the Greek attitude towards rape and the subsequent remedy of it. However, as I mentioned above, what seems to be the common denominator of all is that there was no specific lawsuit for rape and the prosecution of the crime was covered under other general charges.<sup>216</sup> Although the circumstances surrounding every specific crime as well as other political and social conditions might have dictated the preference of certain charges at the expense of others, rape was actionable by two categories of prosecution: the first one was the *dike biaon* (δίκη βιαιών) “charge of assault” and the second one was the *graphe hybreos* (γραφὴ ὑβρεως). In addition to that, the *kyrios* (κύριος) “guardian” of the female victim of rape could make use of the Draconian homicide law or law of “justifiable homicide” (Dem. 23.53-4) and kill the rapist, provided that law’s conditions were met. I should clarify here that rape was not investigated and prosecuted by the state, like in modern times, but it was the job of the prosecutor to claim for himself his right to a particular procedure and to a particular penalty<sup>217</sup>.

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<sup>212</sup> Omitwoju, 2002, pp. 14-5; However, Ober, 2006, p. 1 describes a different procedure in cases of public prosecution for religious crimes (*graphe*). There the voluntary prosecutor brought his case before the Basileus (“King-archon”), a lottery-chosen public magistrate, who was responsible for the preliminary investigation.

<sup>213</sup> Ober, 2006, pp. 1-2, 10; Omitwoju, 2002, p. 15 she mentions that the appropriate number of the juries was between 200 and about 2500 selected from the 6000 who had put themselves forward at the beginning of the year to swear the *dikastic* (δικαστικό) oath.

<sup>214</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 373; Ober, 2006, p. 2

<sup>215</sup> Ober, 2006, p. 2

<sup>216</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 99

<sup>217</sup> Omitwoju, 2002, p. 109

## 6.2 Judicial Remedies in Athens

### 6.2.1 *Dike biaion* (Δίκη βιαιῶν) “charge of assault”

Firstly, rape was actionable under the private prosecution for violence, known as *dike biaion*, (charge of assault).<sup>218</sup> It has been claimed that this type of suit was not only restricted in cases of sexual assault<sup>219</sup> and that especially in the early period of the Athenian law had a wider application for violent acts of various sorts<sup>220</sup>. However, the absence of a speech with such a case and hints from other sources<sup>221</sup> indicate that the *dike biaion* was primarily associated with sexual violence<sup>222</sup>. In such a suit, the *kyrios*-guardian of a female who had been raped could bring this charge against the alleged offender.<sup>223</sup> The penalty of this suit was a monetary fine and the damages were paid to the *kyrios*, usually the father or the husband of a married woman when the victim was a female, because of the private nature of the prosecution. According to Scafuro “it is alleged that in Solon’s time, the fine was fixed at 100 *drakhmai* (Plut. *Solon* 23), but in the late fifth or early fourth century, “at double the damages” (Lys. 1. 32), which is more likely to have meant double the penalty that a slave would pay.”<sup>224</sup>

Apart from the fact that the description of rape in ancient Greece linguistically corresponded to the *dike biaion*, since *bia*, violence, was often used to denote the offence<sup>225</sup>, scholars based their assessment that rape could be charged under this *dike* on two sources.<sup>226</sup> The first source is a passage within Lysias’s speech, *On the murder of Eratosthenes*, (Lys. 1.32.1-5):

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<sup>218</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 55

<sup>219</sup> For example, Cole, 1984, p. 99 writes that this charge was used in cases of illegal enslavement as well.

<sup>220</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 55 cites this note of Lipsius, 637-9 by further mentioning that he could identify the *dike biaion* (Δίκη βιαιῶν) in several lost speeches.

<sup>221</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 55 notes that in a speech of Demosthenes (54.17-19) which discusses the various actions for the treatment of personal aggression in a scale of verbal abuse to murder, the *dike biaion* (Δίκη βιαιῶν) is never mentioned.

<sup>222</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 56 based on Aristotles’ (Ath. Pol. 52.2) and Demosthenes’ (Dem. 54.18) passages, claims that the normal procedure in cases of violent attack was the *dikai aikeias*, a suit primarily for assault.

<sup>223</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 99

<sup>224</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 48

<sup>225</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 64

<sup>226</sup> See: Cole, 1984, pp. 101-3; Carey, 1995, pp. 408-9; Omitowoju, 2002, p. 56, pp. 63-4



ἀκούετε, ἄνδρες, ὅτι κελεύει, ἐάν τις ἄνθρωπον  
 ἐλεύθερον ἢ παιῖδα αἰσχύνῃ βία, διπλῆν τὴν  
 βλάβην ὀφείλειν: ἐάν δὲ γυναῖκα, ἐφ' αἷσπερ  
 ἀποκτείνειν ἔξεστιν, ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐνέχεσθαι:  
 οὕτως, ὦ ἄνδρες, τοὺς βιαζομένους ἐλάττονος  
 ζημίας ἀξίους ἡγήσατο εἶναι ἢ τοὺς πείθοντας:  
 τῶν μὲν γὰρ θάνατον κατέγνω, τοῖς δὲ διπλῆν  
 ἐποίησε τὴν βλάβην, ἡγούμενος τοὺς μὲν διαπραττομένους βία ὑπὸ τῶν βιασθέντων  
 μισεῖσθαι,

*“You hear, sirs, how it directs that, if anyone forcibly debauches (shames) a free adult or child, he shall be liable to double damages; while if he so debauches (shames) a woman, in one of the cases where it is permitted to kill him, he is subject to the same rule. Thus, the lawgiver, sirs, considered that those who use force deserve a less penalty than those who use persuasion; for the latter he condemned to death, whereas for the former he doubled the damages.”*

(Lys. 1.32.1-5)<sup>227</sup>

The second source is Plutarch’s *Solon*, 23:

«ὅλως δὲ πλείστην ἔχειν ἀτοπίαν οἱ περὶ τῶν  
 γυναικῶν νόμοι τῷ Σόλωνι δοκοῦσι. μοιχὸν μὲν  
 γὰρ ἀνελεῖν τῷ λαβόντι δέδωκεν: ἐάν δ' ἀρπάσῃ  
 τις ἐλευθέραν γυναῖκα καὶ βιάσῃται, ζημίαν ἑκατὸν δραχμὰς ἔταξε;»

*“But in general Solon’s laws concerning women seem very absurd. For instance, he permitted an adulterer caught in the act to be killed; but if a man committed rape upon a free woman, he was merely to be fined a hundred drachmas;”*

(Plut. Sol. 23.1)<sup>228</sup>

These two passages, although they have linguistic differences which led to several interpretive problems, they both refer to the same law of rape (*dike biaion*) and suggest as penalty a monetary fine.

Their differences lie on the language which was used in order to define the related offense, the scope of the law which was quoted by the authors as well as the

<sup>227</sup> Lysias, *On the murder of Eratosthenes*, (1.32.1-5) translated by W.R.M. Lamb.

<sup>228</sup> Plutarch, *Solon*, 23.1 translated by Bernadotte Perrin and the author of this thesis.

nature of the penalty which was referred. With regard to the first difference, one might notice that Lysias used a more discreet expression *αἰσχύνῃ βία* (shame by force) in relation to Plutarch's brutal verb *βιάσῃται*, (to use force). Nevertheless, both of them focused on the idea of *bia*, (force), while defining the feature of the sexual assault and implied the same crime, that of rape.<sup>229</sup> As concerns the second difference, the law in Lysias' speech seemed wider including, along with the women, free men and children. On the contrary, in Plutarch's text the law was explicitly attached only to women.<sup>230</sup> In respect of the third difference, scholars have suggested several explanations. On the one side, Lipsius and MacDowell justified the apparent inconsistency in the penalty between the two texts by claiming that the law had changed since the time of Solon and that in Solon's version the penalty was fixed by the law, while in Lysias's speech the penalty was assessed in the court.<sup>231</sup> On the other side, Alick Harrison and Susan Cole put forward another assumption. They argued that Lysias had paraphrased part of the law and that the original law in its complete version also defined a fixed penalty.<sup>232</sup>

Finally, Rosanna Omitowoju commented on the reliability of Plutarch as a source on this matter by stressing that since Plutarch's text was later than that of Lysias, he could have based his interpretation on the speech of Lysias.<sup>233</sup>

### 6.2.2 "Graphe hybreos" (Γραφή ὑβρεως)

Secondly, rape, as an act of *hybris*, was actionable under the public prosecution of a *graphe hybreos* (γραφὴ ὑβρεως).<sup>234</sup> The Athenian *polis* tried to regulate all kind of *hybristic* behaviors by using this sort of public prosecution which was a *agon timetos* (τιμητὸς ἀγών)<sup>235</sup>, namely an action where the prosecutor was able to propose any

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<sup>229</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 102

<sup>230</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 102 she concludes that there is no reason to believe that the original form of Plutarch's law referred only to women.

<sup>231</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 102 referred to Lipsius, 259, 435, 639 and MacDowell, 1978, p. 124

<sup>232</sup> Cole, 1984, pp. 102-3

<sup>233</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 64

<sup>234</sup> See; Harris, 1990, p. 373; Cohen (1991b), pp. 171-88; Carey, 1995, p. 410 Ogden, 1997, p. 30; Omitowoju, 2002, p. 29-50. Some scholars have another opinion on the subject as Cole, 1984, p. 99 who claims that the charge of *hubris* was applicable to crimes others than sexual assault and Dover, 1978, p. 36 who also argues that rape would not necessarily make the offender liable to a charge of *hubris*.

<sup>235</sup> Thür, 2006 in *New Brill's Pauly* writes that "in Athens every case was either "non assessible" or "assessible". In the first case the verdict was linked to particular sanction. When the verdict was not

penalty he thought he could get away with, including death<sup>236</sup>. This theoretical possibility is extremely important in our case, because it constitutes the capital punishment available as a means of regulating sexual assaults towards women.<sup>237</sup> The fact that the prosecutor, if he wished, could also propose other milder punishments for the convicted assailant or rapist is immaterial.

Due to its public nature, this charge could be brought by a citizen other than the victim or the victim's *kyrio* in cases of women and children.<sup>238</sup> The open availability of prosecutions for rape and other sexual crimes reveals the *polis*, (state), intense interest in the subject, which is closely connected to the Athenian idea of citizenship.<sup>239</sup> Rape and other sexual assaults were not only crimes against a single victim, but also against the *polis* and its democracy in a sense that they threatened the legitimacy of the citizen descent-group as a whole.<sup>240</sup> Therefore the state attempted to limit any family interests or conveniences, which could have possibly prevented the prosecution of rape<sup>241</sup>, and granted this right to all citizens<sup>242</sup>.

The scholars also disagree about whether it appears an actual case of a *graphe hybreos* regarding rape in the ancient sources. Ogden argues that Dinarchus in his oratory, *Against Demosthenes*, (23) recorded such a *graphe* (γραφή).<sup>243</sup>

«Θεμιστιον δὲ τὸν Ἀφιδναῖον,

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followed by a preset penalty, this was determined through a process, called *timetos agon* where the defendant and the prosecutor suggested a penalty and the jury voted on the most fitting.

<sup>236</sup> See Harris, 1990, p. 373; Ogden, 1997, p. 30; Carey, 1995, p. 412; Omitowoju, 2002, p. 33

<sup>237</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 373; Ogden, 1997, p. 30; Omitowoju, 2002, p. 33

<sup>238</sup> See Cole, 1984, p. 99; Ogden, 1997, pp. 30, 35. However, Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 49-50 includes a woman's guardian, *kyrio*, as a potential prosecutor.

<sup>239</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 35 argues that it also protected the purity of bloodlines in Athens. He cites Hansen's notes in his work *The Athenian democracy in the age of Demosthenes*

<sup>240</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 35 cites Hansen's notes from his work *The Athenian democracy in the age of Demosthenes*, where he also claims that the normal mode of indictment, *εἰσαγγελία*, shows that adultery, (as rape), was considered a crime against democracy, no doubt because it constituted a threat to the purity of the descent group.

<sup>241</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 36 mentions several examples of such conveniences. The husband who, despite the rape, might have wished to live with his wife, the infertile husband who might have wished to have an offspring and a heir in this way or examples of less honorable husbands who might have wished to hold on with their raped or adulterous wife in order not to return her dowry or to profit from her rape or adultery. He also gives as example the *kyrios* of an unmarried raped girl who might have wished to cover up the rape for the shake of the girl's marriage prospects. Ogden also refers to Cohen, (1991a) who in "*Law, sexuality and society*", pp. 129-30 advances as reasons for which a husband might have wished to cover up a rape his own shame or the desire to prostitute his wife.

<sup>242</sup> According to Ogden, 1997, p. 35 the duty to prosecute the sexual crimes was enforced by their interest to protect their own bloodlines and the legitimacy of the citizen descent-group as a whole.

<sup>243</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 30

διότι τὴν Ῥοδίαν κιθαρίστριαν ὕβρισεν Ἐλευσινίοις, θανάτῳ ἐζημιώσατε...»

“You punished with death Themistius of Aphidnae, because he assaulted the Rhodian lyre-player at the Eleusinian festival...”

Din., *Against Demosthenes*, (23)<sup>244</sup>

He claims that Themistius was executed for *hybris* after the rape of a young female musician from Rhodes during the Eleusinian festival.<sup>245</sup> On the contrary, Cole and Cohen do not regard this record as a *graphe hybreos* based on rape. Firstly, Cole argues that neither the verb “dishonored” means here rape or sexual assault nor this suit is a *graphe hybreos*.<sup>246</sup> She further upholds her argument by referring to MacDowell’s comments, who stresses that nothing in Dinarchus’s record imply an act of rape and that the described case was one of *prosbole* (προσβολή) “insult”, because of interference with the religious festival.<sup>247</sup> Secondly, Cohen claims that Dinarchus’ record attributes a prosecution for *hybris*, namely a *graphe hybreos*, but the case is based upon a sexual misconduct other than violent rape.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, Omitowoju makes some important comments on the subject. After mentioning that our evidence regarding the *graphe hybreos* is based not on speeches, but on texts, (legal and non-legal), she notes constitutes just a threat of an alternative form of procedure<sup>249</sup>, she ends up to presents Aeschines's passage from his speech, *Against Timarchus*, (1.14-5), as an example of a *graphe hybreos* based on rape:

«καὶ ποῖον ἄλλον;

τὸν τῆς ὕβρεως, ὃς ἐνὶ κεφαλαίῳ ἅπαντα τὰ τοιαῦτα συλλαβὼν ἔχει:

ἐν ᾧ διαρρηδὴν γέγραπται, ἐάν τις ὕβριζῃ εἰς παῖδα

(ὕβριζει δὲ δὴ πού ὁ μισθούμενος)

ἢ ἄνδρα ἢ γυναικα, ἢ τῶν ἐλευθέρων τινὰ ἢ τῶν δούλων,

ἢ ἐάν παράνομόν τι ποιῇ εἰς τούτων τινά,

γραφὰς ὕβρεως εἶναι πεποίηκεν καὶ τίμημα ἐπέθηκεν,

ὅτι χρὴ παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι.»

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<sup>244</sup> Dinarchus, *Against Demosthenes*, 23 translated by J.O. Burt and the author of this thesis.

<sup>245</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 30

<sup>246</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 104

<sup>247</sup> Cole, 104 refers to MacDowell, *Hybris in Athens*, p. 29

<sup>248</sup> Cohen (1991b), p. 180

<sup>249</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 31

*“And what other law (has been laid down to protect your children)? The one against hybris, which under one heading has brought together absolutely all these sorts of things: in which it is written explicitly that if someone commits hybris against a child ... or a man or a woman, either free or slave, or if he should commit any unlawful act against any of these, it provides prosecutions for hybris and sets down penalty which he should suffer or pay.”*

Aeschin., *Against Timarchus*, (1.14-5)<sup>250</sup>

What is worth noticing is that she admits that there is no direct mention of rape or sexual assault in the passage, but she means that the expression “these sort of things”, could actually include rape.<sup>251</sup>

The *graphe hybreos* should be perceived as a general legal category regulating all kind of insults to honor, including rape, the existence of which is justified by the particular concern of the ancient Greek society for the social values of honor and shame. However, the absence of a technical definition of the offense in the Athenian law left in practice the evaluation of a conduct as *hybristic* to the lay jurors, who represented the *polis* on any given day for a particular case.<sup>252</sup> Since the categories of *hybris* were not legally concrete, but rather appeared as one person’s word against another’s in the court, other parameters influenced the jurors to make their decision to condemn or acquit the defendant. Status, political interests and personal expectations and hatred are only some factors that played a decisive role. The result of this unpredictable subjectivity in the implementation of the law of *hybris* was a presumptive narrowing of the *hybris*’s prosecution, which might have retained its normative weight in the ancient Greek society as idea, but it was general avoid as legal procedure.<sup>253</sup>

### **6.3 Self-help Remedies in Athens**

#### **6.3.1 The Draconian homicide law or law of “justifiable homicide”**

The Draconian homicide law is saved in a fragmentary condition and can be restored with hints from various other sources. Several ancient authors referred to this

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<sup>250</sup> Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, (1.14-5) translated by Omitowaju, 2002, p. 40

<sup>251</sup> Omitowaju, 2002, p. 41

<sup>252</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 179

<sup>253</sup> Cohen, 1991b, p. 180; Omitowaju, 2002, pp. 49-50

law, but the most complete description of it is provided by Demosthenes in his speech *Against Aristocrates* (23.53). There, Demosthenes quotes the Athenian legislation regarding homicide and particularly mentions the provisions of the law about lawful homicide, which run as follow:

“τις ἀποκτείνειν ἐν ἄθλοις ἄκων, ἢ ἐν ὁδῶ καθελῶν ἢ ἐν πολέμῳ ἀγνοήσας, ἢ ἐπὶ δάμαρτι ἢ ἐπὶ μητρὶ ἢ ἐπ’ ἀδελφῆ ἢ ἐπὶ θυγατρὶ, ἢ ἐπὶ παλλακῆ ἢ ἄν ἐπ’ ἐλευθέροις παισὶν ἔχη, τούτων ἔνεκα μὴ φεύγειν κτείναντα.”

*“If a man kills another unintentionally in an athletic contest or overcoming him in a fight on the road or unwittingly in war, or on top of his wife, mother, sister, daughter, or a “pallake”, (concubine), kept for the purpose of bearing free children, on these counts, he is not to be exile.”*

Dem., *Against Aristocrates*, (23.53)<sup>254</sup>

The formulation of the relevant clause is unclear and fails to reveal the nature of the offense to which it refers. This concrete failure created a considerable confusion among scholars on whether the law concerned only adultery or included rape.<sup>255</sup> In the past, some scholars characterized this text as the Athenian adultery law<sup>256</sup>, but lately there is unanimity that the law concerns justifiable homicide.<sup>257</sup> On this basis, scholars also agree that statute’s intention was to exonerate a *kyrios* who killed someone caught in the act of intercourse with a woman under his guardianship<sup>258</sup>. Specific parts of the clause have been the object of a particular semantic analysis in an endless effort to clarify the exact circumstances of the criminal act. For example, the translation of the preposition ἐπὶ, *epi* varies between the idioms “on top of”<sup>259</sup>, “with/at”<sup>260</sup>, “in the act

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<sup>254</sup> Demosthenes, *Against Aristocrates*, (23.53) translated by A. T. Murray and the author of this thesis.

<sup>255</sup> See Harrison’s useful observation in, *The Laws of Athens*, 1968, p. 34 about the failure of the law to distinguish between adultery and rape.

<sup>256</sup> Cohen, 1991a, p. 100 cites Hans Julius Wolff’s, 1968, p. 642 and Lacey’s, 1968, p. 114 reference to it as “the Athenian adultery law”.

<sup>257</sup> See: Cole, 1984, p. 100-1; Harris, 1990, pp. 371-2; Cohen (1991a), pp. 100-5; Carey, 1995, p. 411; Ogden, 1997, p. 26

<sup>258</sup> See: Cole, 1984, pp. 100-3; Harris, 1990, p. 372; Carey, 410

<sup>259</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 372 and Ogden, 1997, p. 26 translate the Greek preposition ἐπὶ as “on top of” and I believe that this is the most accurate translation. Moreover, when someone is on the top of a women many of the other translations come as a natural consequence.

<sup>260</sup> Carey, 1995, p. 409 and Cohen, 1991a, p. 100 translate it as with/at.

of”<sup>261</sup> or just “over”<sup>262</sup> and some scholars even claim that the law was applicable to cases where nudity or actual engagement in intercourse were absent<sup>263</sup>.

In this context, the scope of this certain clause was proven problematic. Although scholars in general terms agree that statute’s purpose was to grant a short of immunity to the murderer connected by kinship, marriage, or a recognized relationship with the insulted free woman<sup>264</sup>, they have different points of view both about the identification of the offender and about the full extent of the law. The modern academic world adopts a broad interpretation and specifies as offender anyone caught in intercourse with a wife, mother, sister, daughter or *pallake* (παλλακίδα) “concubine” both adulterer and rapist.<sup>265</sup> This conceptual extension is of great importance, as it implicitly includes the offense of rape.

The new understanding is grounded in a twofold methodological approach. The first one is the teleological interpretation of the law. As Harrison observes if the law permitted the murder only of the adulterer and not of the rapist, the husband's right of immediate self-help would have been invalid as well as his ability to establish his own satisfaction and in such a way to subsequently prove that his wife had been seduced, not raped.<sup>266</sup>

The second one is the meticulous analysis of the available evidence in light of the law’s purpose. For example, the myth of the first intentional homicide at Athens, which is associated with the god of war, Ares, and the establishment of the council of Areopagus could be used as evidential basis. The plot of the myth seems appropriate for the new theoretical foundation, because it vividly demonstrates how the law worked in practice. When Ares was accused of killing Poseidon’s son, Halirrhothios near the Athenian acropolis, a special court, named Areopagus, was convened in order to hear his case.<sup>267</sup> During the trial, it was disclosed that Halirrhothios was caught in the act of raping Ares' daughter, Alcippe, and for this reason Ares was finally acquitted of Halirrhothios’ murder. As Cole observes, the chronological classification of the myth reveals that by the time this story was invented, the myth already covered

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<sup>261</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 100 interprets the clause as “in the act with”

<sup>262</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 75; p. 91 interprets the clause as over or “in a compromising position with”, which included both seduction and rape.

<sup>263</sup> See Carey, 1995, p. 409 and Omitowoju, 2002, p. 75 who accepted that the presence of a man alone with a decent woman offered a first sight evidence for assuming that illicit sex was intended or in progress, based on the Athenian social attitude, which discouraged the contact between unrelated males and females and limited women in the private sphere

<sup>264</sup> See Cole, 1984, p. 100;

<sup>265</sup> See: Cole, 1984, p. 101; Harris, 1990, p. 372; Carey: 1995, p. 410; Omitowoju, 2002, p. 91

<sup>266</sup> Harrison, 1968, p. 34

<sup>267</sup> Cartwright, 2017

both the offense of rape and the offence of *moicheia*.<sup>268</sup> The fact that the Athenians used the reference of this law in a story meant to glorify their hallowed institution, Areopagus, theoretically confirms the point that the law was also applied to rapists.<sup>269</sup> The opposite case seems unreasonable, since the Athenians would not have included a legal inconsistency in the description of their first judicial gathering ever to take place.<sup>270</sup>

However, the other references of the lawful homicide refer to a different context, thus, arising a number of interpretive issues. The first reference which demonstrates the law's application in an actual case is found in Lysias' speech, "*On the murder of Eratosthenes*". In this oratory, which is a prosecution for homicide, a husband named Euphiletus slew a man (Eratosthenes) whom he found in the act of adultery with his wife.<sup>271</sup> In order to defend his criminal action, Euphiletus used an artful sophistry by reading to the jury only these provisions of the law that linked the lawful homicide exclusively to *moicheia* (Lys. 1.30.1). Although I am going to discuss these speeches' weaknesses regarding the presentation of "facts" while looking at the dynamic between rape and *moicheia*, I should mention here that Euphiletus' narrow interpretation of the law was intentionally used in order to give the impression that the law applied only to the murders of adulterers<sup>272</sup>.

The second reference is encountered in a passage of Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, where he summarizes the same law by quoting three of the four cases of the lawful homicide (*Ath. Pol.* 57.3). His following list of cases where "someone admits homicide but declares it to have been legal (for instance when he has killed a man taken in *moicheia*, adultery, or who in war has killed a fellow citizen in ignorance, or in an athletic contest<sup>273</sup>, is taken by some scholars as proof that this law applied only to *moicheia*. Cole argues that the phrase *moichon labon* (μοιχόν λαβών) in the Aristotelian record restrictively links the law to *moicheia* (μοιχεία)<sup>274</sup> and Cohen is of the same opinion<sup>275</sup>. Harris, on the other side, is unequivocally opposed to such an interpretation and argues that Aristotle's reference of cases is only indicative.<sup>276</sup> Finally, one can point to Plutarch's statement (*Solon* 23), which makes the situation even more complicated. Plutarch seems to attribute the law to Solon while stressing that Solon allowed the man

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<sup>268</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 101

<sup>269</sup> Cole, 1984, 101; Harris, 1990, p. 372

<sup>270</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 101

<sup>271</sup> Cohen, (1991a), p. 101

<sup>272</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 372

<sup>273</sup> Cohen (1991a), p. 101

<sup>274</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 100

<sup>275</sup> Cohen, (1991a), p. 101

<sup>276</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 372



who caught a *moichos* (μοιχός) “adulterer” the right to kill him.<sup>277</sup> Whatever the case, the different interpretation of these references cause further disagreements on the coherence and the function of this law. For example, Harris supports the unified and unchanged nature and operation of the law throughout the years, which covered the murder of both seducers and rapists<sup>278</sup>, while Cole argues that at some time between the original law and the speech of Lysias, another law, one of sexual assault, was introduced, which encouraged the distinction between rape as an act of violence, and *moicheia* as an act of choice, thus, attaching the original law to the crime of *moicheia*<sup>279</sup>.

The latter theoretical skirmishes do not undermine the law’s sociological importance regarding its prescribed punishment. The implicit inclusion of the situation of rape as a mitigating circumstance for homicide and the characterization of the killing of a rapist as a lawful murder, *phonos dikeos* (φόνος δίκαιος)<sup>280</sup>, confirms that the Athenian legislation allowed the sentence of death as a punishment for the crime of rape.<sup>281</sup> The additional fact that Draco’s homicide law was the first and initially the only Athenian law regarding sexual assaults, stresses, even more, its exerted influence on the development of the Athenian rape legislation.<sup>282</sup>

#### ***6.4 The impact of rape on Athenian women***

Scholars disagree as to whether or not the Athenian raped women had to face other consequences than the traumatic experience of rape itself. The Attic Law does not explicitly deal with this issue and there is no direct evidence which suggests a specific treatment of raped women. Therefore, the issue in question is approached in two different ways.

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<sup>277</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 372 refutes that Plutarch attributes the law to Solon, while Ogden, 34 claims that Plutarch misinterprets the law by applying it only to adulterers and not to rapists, just the way Lysias does.

<sup>278</sup> Harris, 1990, p. 372

<sup>279</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 03

<sup>280</sup> According to Hyde, 1918, pp. 334, 339-40 in the cases of lawful murder, the accused, while tried at the Delphinium of Areopagus, could admit the murder as intentional and plead that he had the right to commit it. If his case was proven, no penalty was imposed upon him.

<sup>281</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 26

<sup>282</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 27

The first approach suggests that raped women in Athens had to suffer the same fate as the women involved in *moicheia*, (adultery).<sup>283</sup> This approach constructs its reasoning by comparing between rape and the other sexual offenses and using evidence from forensic speeches<sup>284</sup> or plays of New Comedy<sup>285</sup> related only to *moicheia*. The “Adultery Law”, which is cited in Apollodorus’ prosecution, *Against Neaira* (Dem. 59.87) consists the reasoned justification of this view:

“Νόμος Μοιχείας». Ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἔλη τὸν μοιχόν, μὴ ἐξέστω τῷ ἐλόντι συνοικεῖν τῇ γυναικί: ἐὰν δὲ συνοικῆ, ἄτιμος ἔστω. μηδὲ τῇ γυναικὶ ἐξέστω εἰσιέναι εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ τὰ δημοτελεῖ, ἐφ’ ἧ ἂν μοιχὸς ἀλῶ: ἐὰν δ’ εἰσίη, νηποινεὶ πασχέτω ὅ τι ἂν πάσχη, πλὴν θανάτου.”

*“Law Regarding Moicheia: When he has caught the adulterer, it shall not be lawful for the one who has caught him to continue living with his wife, and if he does so, he shall lose his civil rights and it shall not be lawful for the woman who is taken in adultery to attend public sacrifices; and if she does attend them, she may be made to suffer any punishment whatsoever, short of death, and that with impunity.*

Apollod, *Against Neaira*, (Dem. 59.87)<sup>286</sup>

It describes that married raped wives were divorced by their husbands on the pain of *atimia* (ατιμία)<sup>287</sup> and that all raped women, regardless of whether they were married or not, were permanently barred from the public ceremonies, festivals and temples and if they ignored the bar, they could suffer any punishment, short of death.

The religious exclusion of raped women was explained by the idea that rape caused pollution. This idea is also recorded in Apollodorus’ prosecution, *Against Neaira*, (Dem. 59.86):

“διὰ τοῦτο δ’ ἐποίησεν ὁ νόμος, πλὴν θανάτου, τᾶλλα ὕβρισθεῖσαν αὐτὴν μηδαμοῦ λαβεῖν δίκην, ἵνα μῆμιάσματα μηδ’ ἀσεβήματα γίγνηται ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς”

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<sup>283</sup> See Cole, 1984, pp. 106-7; Ogden, 1997, pp. 30-2. Both refer to Harrison's view in *The Laws of Athens*, (1968). Omitowaju, 2002, pp. 130-33 originally claims that raped woman could be treated in parallel ways as these who had been seduced, but she clarifies that their treatment was based upon the private decision of their *kyrioi*.

<sup>284</sup> Cole, 1984, pp. 106-7 refers to Apollodorus’ speech, *Against Neaira* (Dem. 59. 87) and Aeschines’ speech, *Against Timarchus* (1.183).

<sup>285</sup> Ogden, 1997, pp. 30-2 refers to Menander’s *Epitrepontes*, (894-900).

<sup>286</sup> Demosthenes, (59.87) translated by N. W. Dewitt.

<sup>287</sup> *Atimia* (Ατιμία) was a form of disenfranchisement in classical democratic Athens.

*“It is for this reason that the law has declared that such a woman may suffer any outrage short of death without the right of seeking redress before any tribunal whatsoever, that our sanctuaries may be kept free from all pollution and profanation.”*

Apollod, *Against Neaira*, (Dem. 59. 86)<sup>288</sup>

In this sense, the exclusion was dictated by the *polis*' general interest to protect its sanctuaries from possible ritual pollution and impiety (*μημίασματα* and *ἀσεβήματα*) and it was not related to the women's behavior or guilt.<sup>289</sup> Additional evidence that enhances the previous suppositions may be found in the arguments of Antiphon's *Second Tetralogy*, on the subject of unintentional homicide as well as the play of Menander *Epitrepontes* (894-900)<sup>290</sup>:

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀλιτήριος' πυκνον πάννυ  
ελεγεν τοιοῦτον ἔργον ἐξεργασμένος  
αὐτος γεγονώς τε παιδίου νόθου πατήρ  
οὐκ ἔσχον οὐδ' ἔδωκα συγγνώμης μέρος  
οὐθεν αὐτοχούση ταῦτ' ἐκείνη, βάρβαρος  
ἀνηλεής τε.'

*“For I'm the sinner he kept on saying, having done just such a deed  
I myself, having become the father of an illegitimate child,  
Neither had nor gave a share of compassion  
To her who had suffered the same misfortune. I'm a cruel barbarian”*

Men. *Epit.* (894-900)<sup>291</sup>

Additionally, according to Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, (Aeschin. 1.183) the raped women as the woman caught in the act of *moicheia* would have “worked” as a continuous source of corruptibility, for the other pure women, and they were not allowed to adorn themselves in public.

*“...τὴν γὰρ γυναικῆ ἐφ' ἣ ἂν ἀλῶ μοιχός, οὐκ ἔᾶ κοσμεῖσθαι, οὐδὲ εἰς τὰ δημοτελῆ ἰ  
ἐραεῖσιέναι, ἵνα μὴ τὰς ἀναμαρτήτους τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναμειγνυμένη διαφθείρη: ἐὰν*

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<sup>288</sup> Demosthenes, (59.86) translated by N.W. Dewitt

<sup>289</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 107; Ogden, 1997, p. 32

<sup>290</sup> Ogden, 1997, p. 32

<sup>291</sup> Menander, *Epitrepontes*, (894-900) translated by R. Omitowaju, 2002, p. 177

δ' εἰσὶν ἢ κοσμηταί, τὸν ἐντυχόνα κελεύει καταρρηγνύναι τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ τὸν κόσμον  
ἀφαιρεῖσθαι καὶ τύπτειν, εἰργόμενον  
θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ἀνάπηρον ποιῆσαι, ἀτιμῶν τὴν  
τοιαύτην γυναῖκα καὶ τὸν βίον ἀβίωτον αὐτῇ κατασκευάζων.”

*“For the woman who is taken in the act of adultery he does not allow to adorn herself, nor even to attend the public sacrifices, lest by mingling with innocent women she corrupts them. But if she does attend, or does adorn herself, he commands that any man who meets her shall tear off her garments, strip her of her ornaments, and beat her (only he may not kill or maim her); for the lawgiver seeks to disgrace such a woman and make her life not worth the living.”*

Aeschin., *Against Timarchus*, (1.183)<sup>292</sup>



*Thukydides 6.56 (translated by Mørland): Hipparchos had thus set out to dishonor Harmodius because he had rejected him, and now he did so. The tyrants urged Harmonius' sister, a young girl to come and carry a basket in a certain procession, and then sending her away, saying that they had never invited her in the first place, as she was unworthy of honor.<sup>293</sup> British Museum.*

<sup>292</sup> Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, (1.183) translated by C. D. Adams.

<sup>293</sup> Harvey, 1985, p. 69

If this approach is correct, then rape had devastating results in the life of the female victims. On the one hand, rape would “degrade” Athenian women by dissolving their marriage through no fault of their own. The institution of marriage was their vehicle of a fulfilled life intimately linked both to their personal and sociopolitical destination. Through this institutional arrangement they could transfer the Athenian citizenship and, thus, participate in the political community of the *polis*. Hence, any dissolution of this agreement cancelled their existential and sociopolitical “mission”. On the other hand, rape destroyed the basis of their social life by prohibiting their religious participation.<sup>294</sup> Religion was considered the field where the Athenian women functioned as equal and respectable members of the Athenian *polis* and acquired a sense of community and identity. Finally, the sanction which imposed absence of jewelry or cosmetics, cause an obvious difference in appearance that was designed to demonstrate before the whole *polis*, who woman was respectable and which was not.<sup>295</sup>

Given the fact that rape was an accidental occurrence, that kind of treatment seems very cruel even for the sake of the *polis*’ higher collective interests.<sup>296</sup> Although human and women rights were non-existent notions in the ancient Athens hints from other Greek sources, (e.g. tragedies), prove that emotions as empathy, compassion and *eleos*, (mercy), were important parts of the ancient Greek culture, which cultivated a spirit of tolerance, understanding and sympathy towards all sort of “tragic heroes”, “barbarian enemies” or “women”<sup>297</sup>.

Therefore, other scholars approach the issue differently. They deny that raped women were treated as women who committed *moicheia* or were seduced and support that the first ones were not punished at all.<sup>298</sup> Carey justifies this view based on the meaning of rape in the Greek context. He claims that rape might have involved the loss of honor and humiliation for the Greeks, but it did not compromise the subjective chastity of the victim.<sup>299</sup> On the other side, Harris connects the lenient treatment of raped women with the Athenian’s law main concern and the function of the female consent within it.<sup>300</sup> He claims that what the law protected was the male control over

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<sup>294</sup> Carey, 1995, p. 414; Ogden, 1997, p. 29

<sup>295</sup> Omitowaju, 2002, p. 114.

<sup>296</sup> According to Ogden, 1997, p. 29 these collective interests are to protect the bloodlines, to prevent the state “from the foisting of bastards ...” and to hinder their intrusion to a respectable *oikos*.

<sup>297</sup> See Euripides’ tragedy *Ion*.

<sup>298</sup> See Carey, 1995, p. 414; Harris, 2006, p. 61

<sup>299</sup> Carey, 1995, p. 414

<sup>300</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 61; Harris, 2014, pp. 310 refutes Harrison’s claims 1968, pp. 35-6 by saying that the document found at Dem. 59.87 regarding the law of *moicheia* is fake and that even if it was genuine,

women. Moreover, he argues that the Athenians were aware of the notion of consent in sex and recognized that those acting under compulsion were not responsible for their actions.<sup>301</sup> Therefore, they punished only the women who allowed themselves to be seduced, because only in these cases they had missed control. In order to support his allegations, Harris refers to Xen. *Hiero* (3.4) who writes as follows:

ἐπεὶ ὅταν γε ἀφροδισιασθῆ κατὰ συμφορὰν τινα γυνή, οὐδὲν ἥττον τούτου ἔνεκεν τι μῶσιν αὐτὰς οἱ ἄνδρες, ἐάνπερ ῆ φιλία δοκῆ αὐταῖς ἀκήρατος διαμένειν:

*“although, when a woman’s lapse is the result of some accident (rape), husbands do not honor their wives any less on that account, provided that wives seem to reserve their affection unblemished.”*

(Xen., *Hiero*, 3.4)<sup>302</sup>

Finally, Rosanna Omitowaju provides an interesting interpretation of the passage by arguing that what Xenophon really indicated was the ability of the *kyrios* to evaluate the rape of his wife as he wished.<sup>303</sup>

Personally, I find the second approach more convincing and harmonic with the spirit of the Athenian law. There is no reason to argue by analogy when there is no evidence in the sources. However, I find Cristopher Carey’s argument unconvincing. Given the fact that in the Athenian social context the marriage of young, virgin girls was of high priority, it seems unlikely to me that the Athenians did not consider as important the loss of the female sexual purity. On the contrary, Harris’ allegations are well founded. The patriarchal context of the Athenian *polis* could show understanding and empathy for the traumatized raped women who had not questioned the dominant male authority and power.

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there is no reason to believe that it was also applied to the raped women because the Athenian law recognized that those acting under compulsion were not responsible for their actions.

<sup>301</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 61; Harris, 2014, pp. 310

<sup>302</sup> Xenophon *Xiero* (3.4) translated by E. C. Marchant.

<sup>303</sup> Omitowaju, 2002, p. 131. However, as it was aforementioned, she does not support the second approach.

## 6.5 *The main concern of the law*

From the above presentation, it becomes obvious that the Athenian legal provisions of rape were not supposed to protect the violation of women's rights, but to ensure the male control over the sexual behavior of women.<sup>304</sup> The legal procedures related to this sexual offense secured that the head of the household, could be compensated or avenged for the insulting of his honor and the questioning of his authority over the raped women that he owned. That is to say that the Athenian law regulated what the men of the *polis* were allowed to do without taking under consideration the female consent or point of view.<sup>305</sup> The effects of rape on women were not a matter of legal concern. What was important for the law was to ensure the household's stability by protecting the male authority in it.

These facts literally mean that sexual violence against women was punished only when it was exercised by "unauthorized" men, namely men other than their *kyrioi*, and, thus, threatened the male power in the household.<sup>306</sup> In this sense, the wrong of rape lied not in the absence of the female consent but on the lack of the consent of the woman's *kyrios*.<sup>307</sup> Her protection, when it was legally provided, was not direct and unconditional, but it was depended on her *kyrios'* agreement.<sup>308</sup> This means that it was actually his decision, (dictated by his interests), whether he was going to bring charges against the rapist. Based on the nature of this ancient society, where women served duties connected with their fertility and status and were under the absolute control of their *kyrioi*, some scholars suggested that rape's prosecution was unlikely in ancient Athens.<sup>309</sup> The *kyrioi* of the raped women would rarely be willing to seek a remedy at law and speak publicly about an incident which might jeopardize both their honor and their economic interests.<sup>310</sup>

In this sense, the legal protection of women in ancient Athens was at least inadequate because other interests, as the authority and the honor of their *kyrioi* or their status and their respectability, were prioritized. This make sense in a *polis* where the production of legitimate heirs was the "ultimate" collective good and men had a

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<sup>304</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 61

<sup>305</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 62

<sup>306</sup> Harris, 2006, p.

<sup>307</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 122

<sup>308</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 123

<sup>309</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 116-33; Scafuro, 2017, pp. 55-6. Especially the latter argues for the private settlement of rape.

<sup>310</sup> Both Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 124-6 and Scafuro, 2017, pp. 55-6 discuss this parameter by stressing what it meant for the Athenian women and her *kyrios* not to be able to get married in social and economic terms.

guaranteed role over the sexual activity of all women, (wives, daughters, concubines or mothers), who lived in their *oikos*.<sup>311</sup> However, what we should keep in mind is that the legal formalities of every society do not always correspond to its social reality, and, therefore, the legal oversight of women in ancient Athens might not have implied social devaluation.

### 6.6 *The Law Code of Gortyn on Crete*



*The Law Code of Gortyn. Archeologist Federico Halbherr (1857-1930) at Gortyn, deciphering Gortyn's Law code, probably before c. 1900 (as of 1900, he was involved in other excavations).*

The second ancient Greek city whose rape law is known to a satisfactory extent and can be used for comparative study is Gortyn in southern Crete.<sup>312</sup> The laws of this

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<sup>311</sup> Pomeroy, 1975, pp. 86-7; Harris, 2006, pp. 61-2

<sup>312</sup> See: Willetts, 1967, pp. 1-19; Gagarin, 1982, pp. 129-146; Cole, 1984, pp. 108-9; Harris, 1990, p. 375



city were recorded on a stone inscription of the mid-fifth century B.C., known as the Law Code of Gortyn.<sup>313</sup> However, the designation of this inscription as a code is rather inaccurate.<sup>314</sup> It did not actually consist of a systematic collection of statutes or a body of laws, it just ordered various aspects of social life under the sanction of law.<sup>315</sup> Many scholars point out that the Code contained traces of earlier traditions than its actual date of formulation<sup>316</sup> and further explain that it reflected the attempt of different social groups to retain old practices while promoting new in a period of widespread social and economic change<sup>317</sup>.

The Code was inscribed upon a circular wall which was divided into twelve columns that contain approximately six hundred lines of text and they were about thirty feet in length and five feet in height.<sup>318</sup> The language of the inscription was the Cretan Dorian dialect, the letters belonged to the archaic alphabet and the writing was boustrophedon (*βουστροφηδόν*) “ox-turning”, having alternative lines written from right to left and from left to right.<sup>319</sup>

The part of the inscription which regulated the punishment of rape was that of the second column (II) provisions (2-10). The law began with a list of required fines for the offense of rape, which varied in accordance with the social status of the victim and the offender.<sup>320</sup> Both of them could belong to the free or the non-free part of the population, depending on the situation. Based on the Code, the social stratification of Gortyn was divided in a) “free citizens” *eleuftheroies* (*ἐλεύθεροι/ες*), b) the *apetairoi* (*ἀπέταιροι*) “free people without citizenship”, c) the *douloi/es* (*δοῦλοι/δοῦλες*) “slaves” and d) *woikeus* “serfs” that were originally a class of serfs, between the free people and the slaves, attached to the land, but within this Code the status of them appeared to be the same.<sup>321</sup> A remarkable feature of this law was that it made no gender distinctions, but it treated men and women equally. Hence, the victims of rape could have been both male and female and the compensatory payment was the same regardless their gender.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 108; Harris, 1990, p. 375; However, Gagarin, 1982, pp. 129-30

<sup>314</sup> Willetts, 1967, pp. 8-9; Gagarin, 1982, p. 129

<sup>315</sup> Willetts, 1967, p. 8

<sup>316</sup> See Cole, 1984, p. 108; Willetts, 1967, pp. 8-9; Gagarin, 1982, p. 129

<sup>317</sup> Willetts, 1967, p. 9 describes in detail the social upheavals caused by the rise of the middle class, the development of trade and the introduction of coinage and how the Cretan aristocracies managed to maintain their privileges and keep within limits the development of trade.

<sup>318</sup> Willetts, 1967, pp. 3-4

<sup>319</sup> Willetts, 1967, pp. 4-5

<sup>320</sup> Willetts, 1967, p. 10 claims that the amount of evidence required for conviction was also regulated unequal between the various social classes and in some cases only free men were competent witnesses

<sup>321</sup> Cole 1984, p. 108; Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

<sup>322</sup> Cole, 1984, p.108-9

In this sense, the spirit of the Gortyn Code reflected the elements of the ancient conservative tradition which usually connected legal rights with social status and power, but it also gave the impression that the women in Gortyn might have been more independent or of a higher social status than the women of Athens.<sup>323</sup>

The act of rape against a free person was defined by the expression *kartei oipein* (κάρτει οἴπειν) “to have sexual intercourse by force” (2. 3) and was covered by the general law against rape<sup>324</sup>. Yet, the same act against a household slave woman was rendered by the expression *kartei damasaito* (κάρτει δαμάσαιτο) “to subdue by force” (2. 11-12)<sup>325</sup> and seemed to be a part of another law, namely the law of forcible intercourse.<sup>326</sup> The content of the provisions related to rape were the following:

1. *If a free man rapes (kartei oipein, “to have sexual intercourse by force”) a free person (man or woman), he will pay: one hundred (100) staters (2. 3-4).*
2. *If a slave (rapes) a free man or woman, he will pay double: two hundred (200) staters (2. 5-7).*
3. *If someone rapes an apetairos, he will pay: ten (10) staters (2. 5)*
4. *If a free man rapes a male or a female slave/serf, he will pay: five (5) drachmas (= 2.5 staters) (2. 7-9)<sup>327</sup>*
5. *If a slave/serf rapes a male or a female slave/serf, he will pay: five (5) staters (2. 9-10).*

<sup>328</sup>

The law seemed clear about the definition of rape and the setting of fines<sup>329</sup>, but provided little information about the circumstances surrounded the act of rape, the procedure which should be followed or the beneficiary of the payment<sup>330</sup>. Not to

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<sup>323</sup> Cole, 1984, pp. 108-9; Willetts, 1967, pp. 10-2

<sup>324</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 108; Gagarin, 1982, pp. 131-2; Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

<sup>325</sup> The content of this provision was the following: “If someone should subdue by force a household slave woman, he will pay two staters; but if she has already had intercourse, (he will pay) one obol during the day, but if at night, two obols. And the slave woman is to be the one who swears.” According to Scafuro, 2017, p. 52 the master was excluded from offender and it was his right to use his slave woman as he wishes which was under protection in this case.

<sup>326</sup> Gagarin, 1982, p. 132 comments that no one has plausibly suggested any difference between the two acts; Cole, 1984, p. 108 makes no distinction and cites the two expressions as parts of the same law; Scafuro, 2017, pp. 51-2 claims that the usual phrase for rape is that of *kartei oipei* (κάρτει οἴπει) “to have sexual intercourse by force and the difference between the two is that the expression *kartei damasaito* (κάρτει δαμάσαιτο) “to subdue by force” refers to someone “who pressures a slave to have intercourse though he does not necessarily use physical force”. Another version of hers is that the latter expression is a more delicately nuanced variant for *kartei oipei* (κάρτει οἴπει).

<sup>327</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 108 explains that two drachmas were equal to one stater

<sup>328</sup> Willetts, 1967, p. 10; Cole, 1984, p. 108; Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

<sup>329</sup> Cole, 1984, p. 108

<sup>330</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

mention that some cases of rape (e.g. the rape of an *apetairos* by a slave and vice versa) were not cited at all.<sup>331</sup> The lack of a more complete judiciary framework, (this section did not refer to judges, methods of judgement, pleadings or decisions), led some scholars to claim that these cases were not litigated and that the offense of rape was settled privately, within the boundaries of the family, with the use of a sort of arbitration.<sup>332</sup> Logically, this scenario was easier in cases where the social difference between the offender and the victim was obvious, namely when a free person was the offender and a *apetairos* or slave were the victims.<sup>333</sup> On the contrary, in cases of equal social status between the offender and the victim, an extrajudicial proof of guilt would have been an arduous task with such a vague legal framework.<sup>334</sup>

However, if the assumption that the law envisioned private settlements in cases of rape is correct, then factors as shame, insult of male honor or difficulty in finding a spouse for the female raped victim might have also exercised influence in the Cretan society.

## 6.7 Conclusion

The formal laws of rape in ancient Athens and Gortyn were an amalgam of political interests and practical social customs. Given the fact that these two Greek *poleis*, (city-states), shared some common cultural principles, but were governed in different ways, we can detect in their legal provisions for rape similarities and differences.

On the one hand, the Athenian law did not include a clear-cut definition of the offense and did not recognize a specific lawsuit against it. However, in broad terms, it provided specific judicial remedies for rape. The alleged rapist could either be killed on the spot, according to the letter of the Draconian homicide law, (*Dem. Against Aristocrates*, (23.53)), or be prosecuted under the general charges of *dike biaion*, (charge of assault), or of *graphe hybreos*. In the first case the penalty was a monetary fine and the prosecutor was the guardian, *kyrios*, of the female victim, while in the second case the penalty was proposed by the prosecutor, that could be anyone, and could be also death.

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<sup>331</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

<sup>332</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 51 in these cases the head of the household determined the guilt of the rapist and then demanded the payment as it was described in the law.

<sup>333</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

<sup>334</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

The strict patriarchal framework of the Athenian *polis* was interested in ensuring the production of legitimate heirs. Therefore, provided laws which retained the stability of the *oikos* and protected the male authority in it.<sup>335</sup> The laws with respect to rape regulated the male sexual behavior based on the established interrelationships between men. Women, who had no legal status, were not subjects of autonomous protection and got access to the legal arena through their *kyrioi*<sup>336</sup>. The parameter of status played a role in the Athenian legal system but not in relation to the punishment of the crime itself. It was the prerequisite for the legal protection of the raped woman's *kyrios*. That is to say that the offense of rape was legally condemned only in cases where the victims were free, citizen women. The rape of women who did not belong to this social group was not a matter of legal interest, not even a subject of legal evaluation.

On the other side, the Gortyn Law Code provided a more concrete definition of rape and treated men and women equally based on their status and not on their gender. However, its legal provisions provided only compensatory payments without supplying satisfactory details on circumstances of the act or the beneficiary of payment.<sup>337</sup> The absence of any reference whatsoever to a judge, a method of judgment or pleadings encouraged assumptions which suggest that the authorities of this *polis* basically sought to resolve rape incidents through private settlements.<sup>338</sup>

Whatever the case the two seemingly remoted legal systems might be closer than what they initially look like, in the sense that they were based on a common underlying morality.<sup>339</sup> Shame, male and family honor or female chastity were considered primary values in both societies, which despite the different political organization responded to the offense by following similar moral principles. What it is interesting however, is that both laws neither referred to the effects of rape on women nor dealt with their legal protection. Whether we like it or not women were invisible in the eyes of the Greek law.

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<sup>335</sup> Harris, 2006, pp. 61-3, 78

<sup>336</sup> Omitowoju, 2002, p. 230

<sup>337</sup> Scafuro, 2017, p. 51

<sup>338</sup> See Scafuro, 2017, pp. 51-6; Omitowoju, 2002, pp. 128-30

<sup>339</sup> What I mean with morality here is described by Dover, 1974, p. 1 as the principles, criteria and values which underlie our responses to familiar experiences.



## Chapter 7: Rape in ancient Greek Literature

### 7.1 Euripides' *Ion*

I will start this section by examining a Greek tragedy which broke the usual female silence and vividly portrayed the female experience of rape. In Euripides' *Ion*, the heroine, Creusa, puts aside the shame after her rape and talks of her suffering. The focus of my discussion will be on the language that either Creusa herself or the other characters of the play used to describe her experience and the feelings that these descriptions arose among them and the audience. I will consider these matters while presenting the summary of this complex, but fascinating tragedy.

In the prologue of the play the god Hermes provides all the background information that the audience requires and explains how the god Apollo, years ago, had raped Creusa, the daughter of Erechtheus king of Athens.<sup>340</sup> At this point I have to mention that there are scholars who question whether Creusa was really raped by the god Apollo. Lefkowitz argues that the god did not use force and that the heroine, Creusa, might not have given her consent at first but she did not try to escape from the sexual encounter either and, thus, "cooperated" in her seduction by Apollo.<sup>341</sup> However, such an interpretation contrasts with the linguistic formulation of the ancient text, which, at least, in the prologue clearly talks about force. Hermes' description that:

*"Phoibos placed the yoke of marriage on Creusa by force"*

*"(Φοῖβος ἔζευξεν γάμοις βία Κρέουσαν)"*

Eur., *Ion* (10-11)<sup>342</sup>

explicitly dissolves any suspicion about the nature of the god's union with the heroine. The use of the word *bia* (βία) "violence or force" demonstrates the involuntary nature of this sexual union and, simultaneously, confirms that Creusa was the forced participant of this sexual encounter.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> The synopsis of the play is based upon Scafuro, 1990, pp. 138-40; Harris, 2006, pp. 67-9

<sup>341</sup> Lefkowitz, 27-9. Rabinowitz, 2011, p. 10-2 also describes the tragedy as an oscillation between the scenarios of rape and desire and detects the possibility that Creusa might have felt desire for the strong and powerful god. However, she seems to accept that Creusa had been raped.

<sup>342</sup> Euripides' *Ion* (10-11) translated by the author of this thesis.

<sup>343</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 140; Harris, 2006, p. 67 are of the opinion that Creusa was raped.

Hermes continues his account by informing the audience that Creusa became pregnant and gave birth to a child, whom she exposed in the same cave where she was assaulted by Apollo. Although she expected the child to die, she left certain tokens with him. After the exposure the god Apollo bid Hermes to rescue the child and bring it to his shrine at Delphi to be raised by the priestess. There the child grew up and became the steward and guard of the shrine. Meanwhile, Creusa married Xuthus but they could not have children. Therefore, they went to Delphi to consult Apollo and find a solution about their problem. Creusa arrived first at the temple and talked to the temple-servant, *Ion*, without realizing that he was actually her son. She told him the story of a “friend” of hers, who sought information about the child she once bore after Apollo’s sexual assault.

This is the first time that Creusa narrates her encounter with the god without talking explicitly of rape or involving herself in the incident. Her monologue is a neutral recount of the sexual liaison of her “friend” with the god.<sup>344</sup> Her exact words are:

“One of my friends says that she had intercourse with Apollo”  
(Φοίβω μιγῆναί φησί τις φίλων ἐμῶν) (338)<sup>345</sup>

Some scholars interpret Creusa’s omission to mention her rape as an indication of her attitude towards the whole incident. They explain that she reproaches the god and regrets the encounter not because of her experience of rape, but only because Apollo abandoned her and her son afterwards.<sup>346</sup> Thus, they locate the reason of her sorrow on the god’s ensuing desertion and not on his sexual assault.<sup>347</sup> However, Scafuro’s explanation is more congruous with the ancient text. She argues that Creusa’s silence about the rape is due to her shame based on the word “we are ashamed” (αἰδοῦμεθα)<sup>348</sup> (336).<sup>349</sup> This view does not refute the previous one, but they should be considered cumulatively in the sense that Creusa’s covered with shame charge against the forced union works additionally to her charge that the perpetrator of that union has ignored its consequences.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 141

<sup>345</sup> Euripides’ *Ion* (338) translated by Robert Potter and the author of this thesis.

<sup>346</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 69; Lefkowitz, 1993, pp. 27-8

<sup>347</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 141; Harris; 2006, p. 67-8; Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 28

<sup>348</sup> This is the first plural of the verb αἰδοῦμαι in the indicative mood. Here Creusa talks about herself and her friend and this is why she uses plural.

<sup>349</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 141

<sup>350</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 141

After Creusa's departure from the stage Euripides puts a human male character to question the divine behavior towards mortal female partners and speak of the sexual violence of gods towards them.<sup>351</sup> In *Ion*'s monologue we, for first time, hear a direct accusation against the god's unfair and hypocritical behavior:

Φοῖβος, τί πάσχει: παρθένους βία γαμῶν προδίδωσι;  
παῖδας ἐκτεκνούμενος λάθρα  
θνήσκοντας ἀμελεῖ; μὴ σὺ γ': ἀλλ', ἐπεὶ κρατεῖς, ἀρετὰς δίωκε.  
καὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἂν βροτῶν κακὸς πεφύκη, ζημιούσιν οἱ θεοί.  
πῶς οὖν δίκαιον τοὺς νόμους ὑμᾶς βροτοῖς γράψαντας, αὐτοὺς  
ἀνομίαν ὀφλισκάνειν;  
εἰ δ' — οὐ γὰρ ἔσται, τῷ λόγῳ δὲ χρήσομαι —  
δίκας βιαίων δώσεται ἄνθρωποις γάμων,  
σὺ καὶ Ποσειδῶν Ζεὺς θ' ὃς οὐρανοῦ κρατεῖ, ναοὺς τίνοντες ἀδικίας  
κενώσετε.  
τὰς ἡδονὰς γὰρ τῆς προμηθείας πάρος σπεύδοντες ἀδικεῖτ'.  
οὐκέτ' ἄνθρώπους κακῶς λέγειν δίκαιον, εἰ τὰ τῶν θεῶν  
καλὰ μιμούμεθ', ἀλλὰ τοὺς διδάσκοντας τάδε.

*"But I must give Apollo some advice; what is he about? Does he by force wed virgins and betray them? Does he secretly father children and leave them to die? Do not do so; but, since you have power, seek after virtue. For if any mortal is bad, the gods punish him. How then is it just for you to write laws for mortals, and yourselves incur a charge of lawlessness? If—for it is not so, but I will handle the subject—you pay the penalty to mortals for your forced matings, you and Poseidon, and Zeus, who rules heaven, you will empty your temples paying for your crimes. For you do wrong to go eagerly after your pleasures without thinking. No longer is it right to speak badly of men, if we imitate what the gods think good, but rather of the ones who taught us these things."*

Eur., *Ion*, (436-451)<sup>352</sup>

*Ion*'s language contrasts with Creusa's previous recount. He explicitly talks about rape "by force" βία (437) and "forced matings" βιαίων γάμων (445) although Creusa gave a completely neutral description of her sexual union with the god in the preceding scene. In regard to this deviation, scholars have come up with different explanations.

<sup>351</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 28; Scafuro, 1990, p. 141

<sup>352</sup> Euripides' *Ion* (436-451) translated by Robert Potter and the author of this thesis.



Some critics have seen *Ion* as Euripides' mouthpiece who broadcasts the author's rationalistic views and questions the existence of the gods.<sup>353</sup> In this sense, Euripides deliberately accuses Apollo, Poseidon, and Zeus of injustice and sexual violence in order to emphasize their hypocritical behavior and demean their moral superiority in comparison to men.<sup>354</sup> Others stress Euripides' intention to capture the attention of the audience by emphasizing on the play's main concern, namely that violence lies at the foundation of the city's empire.<sup>355</sup>

For the purposes of my thesis, I will highlight the third point of view which conceives *Ion* as the sensitive listener who senses Creusa's underlying shame and understands her words of sexual union as euphemisms for her rape.<sup>356</sup> From this perspective, *Ion*'s criticism of the gods' sexual misconduct can be conceptualized as an indirect expression of the oppressed female anger, the disclosure of which instinctively evokes the audience's sympathy and compassion.<sup>357</sup> The intensity or the immediacy of the audience's reaction is of little importance in this case since it is almost certain that Creusa's rape would not have ignited the same public outrage as today<sup>358</sup>. What it really matters is the fact that Euripides created a voice to utter the constantly disregarded female indignation.<sup>359</sup>

The play continues with Xuthus arrival which puts an end to *Ion*'s reflection. Xuthus is told by the god that the first person whom he meets on leaving the temple is his son. He encounters *Ion* and claims him as his own son. After some initial disbelief, *Ion* acknowledges Xuthus as his father. The chorus report this information to Creusa, who becomes jealous of his husband's child by another woman. Then, she begins a monologue which is unique in Greek drama. In her despair, she reveals the initial event which hurled her into unhappiness and personally speaks about the god's assault upon her. In the lines 880-906 Creusa gradually raises her voice and describes her rape in detail as following:

ὦ τὰς ἐπταφθόγγου μέλπων κιθάρας ἐνοπᾶν, ἅτ' ἀγραύλοισ  
κέρασιν ἐν ἀψύχοις ἀχειῖ μουσᾶν ὕμνους εὐαχήτους, σοὶ μομφάν, ὦ Λατοῦς παῖ,  
πρὸς τάνδ' αὐγὰν αὐδάσω. ἦλθές μοι χρυσῶ χαίταν μαρμαίρων, εὖτ' ἐς κόλπους

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<sup>353</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 155

<sup>354</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 68 also reads behind these words of *Ion* a reference to the *dike biaion*, the private prosecution in cases of sexual violence.

<sup>355</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 141-2

<sup>356</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 142 refutes this view on the basis that if he had understood Creusa's euphemistic speech in the previous scene, he would not have forgotten it in their later dialogue.

<sup>357</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 142, 155; Harris, 2006, p. 302

<sup>358</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 155

<sup>359</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 155

κρόκεα πέταλα φάρεσιν ἔδρεπον, ἀνθίζειν χρυσανταυγῆ:  
 λευκοῖς δ' ἔμφυς καρποῖσιν χειρῶν εἰς ἄντρου κοίτας κραυγὰν Ὡ μᾶτέρ μ' αὐδῶ  
 σαν θεὸς ὀμεινέτας ἄγες ἀναιδείᾳ Κύπριδι χάριν πράσσω.  
 τίκτω δ' ἄ δύστανός σοι κοῦρον, τὸν φοβίκα ματρὸς εἰς εὐνὰν βάλλω τὰν σάν,  
 ἵνα με λέχεσι μελέαν μελέοις ἐζεύξω τὰν δύστανον.  
 οἴμοι μοι: καὶ νῦν ἔρρει πτανοῖς ἀρπασθεῖς θοίνα παῖς μοι — καὶ σός, τλάμων:  
 σὺ δὲ κιθάρα κλάζεις παιᾶνας μέλπων.

*“O you, who cause a voice to sing from your seven-stringed lyre, a voice that lets lovely-sounding hymns peal forth in the rustic lifeless horn, son of Leto, I will blame you before this light. 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, hearing me call on my mother, god and consort, shamelessly paying homage to Aphrodite. I, the unhappy one, bore you a son, whom in fear of my mother I placed in that bed of yours, where you joined with me, the miserable, the unfortunate one, in unhappy union. Alas! and now my son and yours, oh cruel one, is gone, torn apart, a feast for birds; but you are singing to the lyre, chanting hymns.”*

Eur., *Ion*, (880-906)<sup>360</sup>

Her description is full of lyricism without emphatic or dramatic expressions of violence. It follows the usual narrative pattern of a sexual encounter between a god and a mortal woman where a maiden, away from home, in a meadow, gathering flowers, meets a powerful and attractive god.<sup>361</sup> The idyllic setting together with Creusa's delicate language (e.g. “your hair glittering with gold” *μοι χρυσῶ χαιταν μαρμαίρων*) urged some scholars to detect an active desire for the strong God on Creusa's part<sup>362</sup> or to interpret the whole encounter as an alluring seduction denying the existence of force<sup>363</sup>. Yet, Creusa's expression “hearing me call on my mother” (*κραυγὰν Ὡ μᾶτέρ μ' αὐδῶσαν*) proves beyond doubt the absence of her consent and specifies Apollo's crime as rape.<sup>364</sup> The emotional adjectives *δύστανός* (897), *μελέαν μελέοις* (900) and *δύστανον* (901) reveal Creusa's underlying anger and distress at the memory of the forcible intercourse.<sup>365</sup>

<sup>360</sup> Euripides' *Ion* (880-906) translated by Robert Potter and the author of this thesis.

<sup>361</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 21, p. 27

<sup>362</sup> See Rabinowitz, 2011, p. 11; Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 21, p. 27

<sup>363</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 21 argues that the god did not use force and that the whole act is not rape.

<sup>364</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 157 refers to Burnett, 89-103. Even Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 27 interprets Creusa's call as a lack of consent.

<sup>365</sup> Omitowaju, 2002, p. 18

Creusa's sincere and sensational description of her rape is an Euripidean novelty which sheds the shame and breaks the usual practice of the tragic or mythological heroines to conceal their experiences of sexual violation on stage.<sup>366</sup> Her narrative in a moment of despair looks like a pleasant song with only few signs of anger. Creusa describes her painful memory by using a musical language that soothes the hatred and leaves the listener not with the shocking scenes of a rape, but with Apollo's beauties sounding in his ear.<sup>367</sup> The only obvious harsh note in her tuneful monody is her own cry to her mother (893) that Euripides deliberately uses in order to intensify the tension between Creusa's hidden hard feelings and Apollo's irresistible charm.<sup>368</sup> Hence, her female experience of rape has been portrayed with the attributes of a faded memory. It is depicted stripped of any intense emotional burdens as an isolated and purified incident which aims not to shock, but to generate questions and urge the audience to meditate upon rape's potential effects.<sup>369</sup>

Moreover, this "beautified" approach of Creusa's rape by Apollo reminds us the way that the artists of the same historical period used for depicting mythical stories of rape in vase-painting and monumental sculpture. From this perspective, Euripides' delicate portrayal of Creusa's rape expresses the common attitude and follows the appropriate Athenian model of classical period to talk about sexual relations with women.

Despite of the idyllic representation of rape, Euripides seems to understand Creusa's deep trauma and creates tragic characters who treat her with sympathy and concern for her suffering.<sup>370</sup> The way Euripides treats the rape victim in his tragedy gives the impression that the Greeks could conceive the event of rape as a distressing-experience which emotionally disturbed the female victim causing her angst and shame on a personal human level.<sup>371</sup>

The rest of the play does not directly deal with the issue of the rape but rather shows how the Greeks justified the divine sexual violence and what they thought about the nature of life in general.<sup>372</sup> Creusa's final reunion with her son *Ion* confirms their belief that the divine sexual assaults could be beneficial to the female victims and

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<sup>366</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 150; Gardner, 2013, p. 123

<sup>367</sup> Bunett, 1962, p. 95

<sup>368</sup> Bunett, 1962, pp. 95-6

<sup>369</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 157 refers to Rosenmeyer's analysis of Creusa's rape as an effect of memory, 113

<sup>370</sup> Brunini-Cronin, 2017, p. 22

<sup>371</sup> Brunini-Cronin, 2017, p. 22-3, (Video 3) Edward M. Harris: *Women's Choices, women's suffering*, 2017

<sup>372</sup> Weiber, 2017, p. 33 interprets Creusa's plan to kill *Ion* as a revenge against Apollo, while Harris, 2006, p. 68 notes that Creusa's attempt to kill *Ion* was an expression of jealousy.

their descendants, therefore excused, and might resemble to the nature of human life that includes brief moments of glory, but long intervals of suffering and neglect.<sup>373</sup>

## 7.2 *Aeschylus' Agamemnon*

In Aeschylus' tragedy *Agamemnon*, we find the other woman who speaks of her sexual assault by the god Apollo, Cassandra. This play, which is the first part of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, concerns the return of Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, from the Trojan War, and his eventual death at the hand of his wife, Clytemnestra.<sup>374</sup> It does not really provide information about Cassandra's back-story, whom Agamemnon has brought home as a slave and concubine, but other literal sources<sup>375</sup> report that Cassandra was a prophetess, daughter of King Priam and his wife Hecuba, who was captured and raped by the Greek warrior Ajax at the altar of Athena during the destruction of Troy and ended up as Agamemnon's trophy.<sup>376</sup>

Cassandra is silent for the most part of Aeschylus' tragedy, but when she starts speaking to the chorus, Aeschylus reveals her tragic fate. Her narrative of her encounter with Apollo is brief and puzzling (1202-12).

**Κασσάνδρα:** μάντις μ' Ἀπόλλων τῶδ' ἐπέστησεν τέλει.

**Χορός:** μῶν καὶ θεός περ ἰμέρω πεπληγμένος;

**Κασσάνδρα:** προτοῦ μὲν αἰδῶς ἦν ἐμοὶ λέγειν τάδε.

**Χορός:** ἀβρύνεται γὰρ πᾶς τις εὖ πράσσων πλέον.

**Κασσάνδρα:** ἀλλ' ἦν παλαιστῆς κάρτ' ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν.

**Χορός:** ἦ καὶ τέκνων εἰς ἔργον ἤλθετον νόμῳ;

**Κασσάνδρα:** ξυναινέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην.

**Χορός:** ἤδη τέχναισιν ἐνθέοις ἤρημένη;

**Κασσάνδρα:** ἤδη πολίταις πάντ' ἐθέσπιζον πάθη.

**Χορός:** πῶς δῆτ' ἄνατος ἦσθα Λοξίου κότῳ;

**Κασσάνδρα:** ἔπειθον οὐδέν' οὐδέν, ὡς τὰδ' ἤμπλακον.

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<sup>373</sup> Lefkowitz, 1993, pp. 27-37; Harris, 2006, p. 69

<sup>374</sup> For the synopsis of the play I was based upon Browning, vol 13; Stageagent.com; Shmoop.com, 2019

<sup>375</sup> The ancient Greek literal works which mention Cassandra are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and Hesiod.

<sup>376</sup> Shmoop.com, 2019

*Cassandra: The seer Apollo appointed me to this office.*

*Chorus: Can it be that he, a god, was smitten with desire?*

*Cassandra: Before now I was ashamed to speak of this.*

*Chorus: In prosperity all take on airs.*

*Cassandra: Well then, he was a wrestler who mightily breathed his grace upon me*

*Chorus: Did you go through with it—bear him a child?*

*Cassandra: I promised Loxias but then deceived him.*

*Chorus: Did you already have prophetic skills inspired by the god?*

*Cassandra: I already foretold to the citizens their suffering.*

*Chorus: How did you escape Loxias' anger?*

*Cassandra: Since then no one has believed anything I have uttered.*

Aesch., *Ag.*, (1202-12)<sup>377</sup>

Cassandra discloses how Apollo felt in love with her and promised to give her the gift of prophecy as long as she gave into his desire for her. Then, she confesses having received his gift but refused his love. Finally, she explains that Apollo, furious at being rejected, first raped her and then cursed her, so that no one believed what she foretold.

Cassandra unfolds her story of rape before predicting Agamemnon's murder and her own death. Thus, she releases her emotions and tries to put her traumatic memory into context when she has lost all hope and her shame has gone.<sup>378</sup> Her words "before now I was ashamed to speak of this" (προτοῦ μὲν αἰδῶς ἦν ἐμοὶ λέγειν τάδε) (1204) could explicate her prolonged silence as an expression of her shame.

Her history portrays Apollos' assault with a notional metaphor that evokes the image of a physical contest.<sup>379</sup> The use of the word "wrestler" (παλαιστής) (1206) denotes that there was a struggle between herself and the god<sup>380</sup> and suggests the exercise of sexual violence<sup>381</sup>. The rest of the sentence "who mightily breathed his grace upon me" (κάστ' ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν) can create confusion with regard to the nature of the encounter<sup>382</sup>, but it seems that the veil of ambiguity, which covers her whole speech, is a temperamental trait of her psychological condition that has been

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<sup>377</sup> Aeschylus', *Agamemnon*, (1202-12) translated by Doyle, 2018; Debnar, 2010 and the author of this thesis.

<sup>378</sup> Scafuro, 1990, p. 144;

<sup>379</sup> Debnar, 2010, p. 132; Doyle, 2008, pp. 62-3

<sup>380</sup> Both Scafuro, 1990, p. 156; Debnar, 2010, p. 132 refer to Fraenkel, ad. 1206 who thinks the metaphor is literal and the god sets himself to overpower the maiden, although he believes "it is not merely brute force which is here at work".

<sup>381</sup> Doyle, 2008, pp. 62-3

<sup>382</sup> Debnar, 2010, p. 133

permanently disturbed by her traumatic experience. As Erika Weiberg notes Cassandra exemplifies the survivor whose traumatic memory are so vivid that fail to acquire a cohesive narrative context and convince her listeners.<sup>383</sup> She explains Cassandra's ambiguity on the base of trauma theory.<sup>384</sup> Cassandra cannot reconstruct a coherent narrative of her rape because her painful experience shattered the understanding of herself and her connection with her community.<sup>385</sup>

The long-lasting effect of violence on Cassandra has damaged her so much that she cannot recall any details of her traumatic experience and replies enigmatic even when the chorus wants her to be more specific and directly asks her "did you come as a couple, to the act of producing children as is usual?" (*ἦ καὶ τέκνων εἰς ἔργον ἤλθετον νόμω;*) (1207)<sup>386</sup>. She confesses giving her consent to the god, "but then deceived him" (*ἐψευσάμην*)<sup>387</sup> (1208). Then only thing she reveals is the tremendous consequence of her deception, which was that no one believed her prophecies (1212), without defining what her deception dealt with.<sup>388</sup>

Cassandra's vague description of her rape might also reflect another stereotypical behavior of the rape victims of all times who feel responsible for their rape and cover their shameful experience in order to avoid the blame. Her subsequent hard punishment discloses the usual social practice to treat with skepticism any sort of sexual accusation. Moreover, the diffused doubt of her speech establishes the motif

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<sup>383</sup> Weiberg, 2017, pp. 32-3: She gives this explanation based on the trauma theory which has been used "as a reading practice in the ancient sources in order to recover aspects of the text that are obscured, but still present, such as the victim's experience of sexual violence, as a traumatic, bodily experience with lasting effect on the psyching and relational life." (Video 5) *Erika L. Weiberg – Retracing traumatic memories*, 2017; Herzog, 2015 uses the same theory in her analysis of the rape of Creusa in Euripides' *Ion*.

<sup>384</sup> Weiberg, 2017, p. 32 notes that trauma theory was exemplified by the work of psychiatrist Judith Herman (1992) and the literary theorist Cathy Caruth (1996). A previous study of Herzog, 2015, pp. 6-9, which also discusses trauma theory in the Euripidean tragedy *Ion*, also notes the work of Cathy Caruth (1996) "*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, narrative and History*", but explains that the psychotherapist Laub and the literary theorist Felman (1992) wrote a volume about trauma theory "both manifesting directly in survivors of the Holocaust, and in the context of literature". In addition to that, she mentions that Euripides's *Ion* has been previously read in the light of psychological trauma by Victoria Pedrik and Naomi Weiss.

<sup>385</sup> (Video 5) *Erika L. Weiberg – Retracing traumatic memories*, 2017

<sup>386</sup> Debbar, 2010, p. 133; According to Doyle, 2008, p. 63 the phrase *τέκνων εἰς ἔργον* should be interpreted in conjunction with *ἐψευσάμην* and translated as sexual intercourse rather than children bearing itself.

<sup>387</sup> Doyle, 2008, p. 63 explains that this word has been translated in several ways as I cheated, I lied, I deceived or play Loxias false Scafuro, 1990, p. 144.

<sup>388</sup> Debbar, 2010, p. 133 interprets Cassandra's mysticism in two ways. He argues that Cassandra's deception means that she never had sex with Apollo, at least in any usual, human sense of the act, completely rejecting the rape-scenario. However, he cites the opposite interpretation, namely that the deception consisted of being unfaithful to Apollo or of aborting his child.

of “false accusation of rape” indirectly explaining why women are condemned to a silent victimhood.<sup>389</sup> Cassandra’s assault reinforces the patriarchal archetype of the aggressive male who forcibly submits the passive female.<sup>390</sup> The mysticism and the apparent linguistic fuzziness of her recount, which could have been used by Aeschylus in order to increase the tension and improve the dramaturgy, can also work as foundation stones of the normalization of sexual violence against women, which based on beliefs such as women like “playing hard to get” and desire forcible sexual encounters.<sup>391</sup>

### 7.3 *Menander’s Epitrepontes*

This play mostly follows New Comedy’s frequent rape-plot-pattern where a young Athenian citizen usually rapes a female citizen in the course of a nocturnal festival prior to the comic action.<sup>392</sup> The rape results in the pregnancy of the victim who ends up married to her rapist.<sup>393</sup>

Particularly in *Epitrepontes* Charisios rapes the young citizen woman Pamphile during her participation at the Tauropolia festival. Due to his rape, Pamphile becomes pregnant, conceals the child and exposes it with tokens of recognition. Meanwhile, she marries Charisios who seems unaware both of his act of rape and of his wife’s identity as victim of his sexual assault. Then, he departs on a business trip and, upon his return, he finds about Pamphile’s pregnancy. Charisios abandons his wife because he believes that the child cannot be his, moves to his friend’s house and hires the *hetaira* Habrotonon to console himself. However, the subsequent action reveals the truth, namely that Charisios fathered the child when he raped Pamphile at the Tauropolia festival and they are all happily reconciled.<sup>394</sup>

The common assumption is that Menander’s extant plays depict rape as solely an act of violence without reflecting morally on the issue or enlarging upon the view, the feelings and the reaction of the female victim.<sup>395</sup> Yet, *Epitrepontes* includes symbols, periphrases and a few scenes that articulate the female experience of rape.<sup>396</sup> Early in

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<sup>389</sup> Heller, 2018

<sup>390</sup> Heller, 2018

<sup>391</sup> Rabinowitz, 2011, p. 1

<sup>392</sup> Lape, 2001, p. 79

<sup>393</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 121

<sup>394</sup> For the synopsis of *Epitrepontes* see Pierce, 1997, p. 164; Lape, 2001, p. 80; Gardner, 2013, p. 124

<sup>395</sup> Pierce, 1997, p. 170, 178-9; Lape, 2001, p. 80; Omitowaju, 2002, p. 186

<sup>396</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 123

the play, we hear the conversation between Habrotonon and Charisios' slave, Onesimos, where we learn that she witnessed<sup>397</sup> a girl who had been raped at the Tauropolia night-festival and describes the incident as following (477-9, 487-90):

**ABPOTONON:** πέρυσσι, ναί, Ταυροπο[λίοις π]αισὶν γὰρ, ἔψαλλον κόραις, αὐτ[ή] [θ'ομου συ]νέπαιζον οὐδ' ἐγὼ τότε, οὐπω γὰρ, ἄνδρ' ἠδεῖν τί ἐστι.

**ΟΝΗΣΙΜΟΣ:** καὶ μάλα.

**ABPOTONON:** μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην.

*HABROTONON: Yes, the Tauropolia, last year. I played for some young girls and [shared] their games myself. Nor did I then ... what men are like.*

*ONESIMOS: Yeah, right.*

*HABROTONON: By Aphrodite, I didn't!*

*Men., Epit., (477-9)*

**ABPOTONON:** (κλάουσα ... τίλλουσ' ἑαυτῆς τὰς τρίχας); ... (ταραντῖνον) ... (καλὸν πάνυ καὶ λεπτὸν ...σφόδρα ἀπολωλεκ[υ]ῖ' ὅλον γὰρ ἐγεγόνει ράκος),

*HABROTONON: She was there with us and wandered off. Then all at once she ran up by herself, sobbing and tearing her hair. Gods! Her cloak, so filmy and lovely, was quite ruined, all torn to rags.*

*Men., Epit., (487-90)<sup>398</sup>*

Habrotonon portrays in a realistic and vivid way the condition of Pamphile after her rape.<sup>399</sup> Her description imprints the trauma of the victim in a plausible way by using physical signs and symbols.<sup>400</sup> The fictitious picture of the victim “sobbing and tearing her hair” (κλάουσα ... τίλλουσ' ἑαυτῆς τὰς τρίχας) together with the visual symbol of her cloak (ταραντῖνον), which before was “so filmy and lovely”, (thus stimulating the sense of touch), but ends up “... quite ruined, all torn to rags” (καλὸν πάνυ καὶ λεπτὸν ...σφόδρα ἀπολωλεκ[υ]ῖ' ὅλον γὰρ ἐγεγόνει ράκος) (487-90) are semiotics cleverly employed to depict Pamphile's distress.<sup>401</sup> Habrotonon's narrative

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<sup>397</sup> According to Gardner, 2013, p. 128 proprieties may have dictated that Habrotonon should have been a virgin in order to attend such a rite, even as a hired flute girl, and her virgin status proves that she could have witnessed the event she describes.

<sup>398</sup> Menander *Epitrepontes* (487-90) Pierce, 1997, p. 164; Gardner, 2013, pp. 127-8 who both use the translation of Arnott, 1979.

<sup>399</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 128; Pierce, 1997, p. 164

<sup>400</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 128

<sup>401</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 128



uses an emotive vocabulary which evokes feelings of horror and expresses sincere pity for the victim's misfortune and suffering.<sup>402</sup> Moreover, specific signals in her description not only dramatically represent the violent bodily assault, but also reveal social attitudes related to the crime of rape. For example, Pamphile's torn cloak symbolizes her lost respectable status which she will regain with the happy ending of the play.<sup>403</sup>

Habrotonon's warm feelings towards the victim are opposed to Onesimos' impassiveness and sarcasm, who seems completely apathetic to Pamphile's traumatic experience.<sup>404</sup> This sharp antithesis between the two characters might have reflected the author's intention to show that another woman, namely a person of the same gender, could have better comprehend the pain of such an incident compared to a man.<sup>405</sup>

The second scene in Menander's *Epitrepontes* which deals with the female pain in a case of a sexual assault comes in the middle of the play. Habrotonon have already proposed to the male slave Onesimos to stand in for the citizen-wife-victim of rape Pamphile and show to Charisios the token of recognition, (a ring), in the hopes of getting a confession (511-19).<sup>406</sup> While she rehearses her speech as Pamphile, she confronts, on an imaginary level, the rapist Charisios, thus, allowing the audience to participate in an enthralling scene, which otherwise they would not have been able to see, and arising their attention.<sup>407</sup> Within this background, Habrotonon describes briefly what happened to Pamphile at the Tauropolia in the lines (528-35)<sup>408</sup>:

**ABPOTONON:** “κατέβαλες δέ μ' ὡς σφόδρα ἰμ]άτια δ' οἱ ἀπώλεσ η τάλαιν' ἐγώ,” φή]σω. πρὸ τούτου δ' ἔνδον αὐτὸ βούλομαι λα]βοῦσα κλαῦσαι καὶ φιλῆσαι καὶ πόθεν ἔλα]βεν ἐρωτᾶν τὴν ἔχουσαν.

**ΟΝΗΣΙΜΟΣ:** Ηράκλεις.

**ABPOTONON:** τὸ] πέρασ δὲ πάντων, “παιδίον τοίνυν”, ἐρῶ “ἔσ]τι γεγονός σοι,” καὶ τὸ νῦν εὐρημένον δε]ίξω.

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<sup>402</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 128; Pierce, 1997, p. 165

<sup>403</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 129; Pierce, 1997, p. 179 notes that the detail of the torn cloak symbolizes the rape of a respectable woman and confirms Pamphile's pure and virgin status. However, she does not exclude the possibility that it is an indication of sexual attractiveness and excitement.

<sup>404</sup> Pierce, 1997, p. 165

<sup>405</sup> Pierce, 1997, p. 165

<sup>406</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 129

<sup>407</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 130 refers to Nünlist 2002, 237-43.

<sup>408</sup> Gardner, 2013, pp. 131, 136

**HABROTONON:** “How roughly you forced me down! Oh dear, the dress I spoiled!” I’ll say that. In the house, though, first I’ll take the baby, cry and kiss it, then I’ll ask its minder where she got it.

**ONESIMOS:** Heracles!

**HABROTONON:** And last of all I’ll say. “So, you have got a baby,” and I’ll show the baby that’s just been found.

Men., *Epit.*, (528-535)<sup>409</sup>

Although she gives a concise account of the incident, the dynamic in the sentences indicates the underlying rage and shame of the victim. The use of the verb “force me down” (κατέβαλες)<sup>410</sup> in conjunction with the adverb “roughly” (σφόδρα) portrays a violent sexual encounter which resonates the victim’s despair.<sup>411</sup> Once more, the author mentions the dress as a complex symbol that subconsciously indicates what happened to Pamphile on a social level.

*Epitrepontes* is a light comedy that uses the device of rape as “a courtship practice”, which leads to happy marriages and praises the everyday life of ordinary Athenians.<sup>412</sup> It represents the type of drama which does not leave room for dramatic rape scenes because they could ruin its pleasant mood and atmosphere.<sup>413</sup> Yet, Menander is not frugal in the use of signals (sobs, tears, torn cloaks and dresses) that reveal a complex and materially grounded image of how a woman feels when she is being raped.<sup>414</sup> In addition to that he launches an innovative ruse, a pseudo-victim of a lower social status, the *hetaera* Habrotonon, who works as the mouthpiece of the wealthy citizen rape victim, Pamphile.<sup>415</sup> Through his contrivance, Menander can escape from the social norms which impose to respectable women to cover sexual assaults made upon them and depicts rape as a physical violation that occurs between persons and not between a male person and a piece of property.<sup>416</sup> In this context, Habrotonon’s dramatic rehearsal expresses without scruples the traumatic bodily experience of a female rape victim and gives the possibility to the Athenian audience to imagine the women’s suffering rather than, (or as well as), the act of *hybris* committed by the rapist

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<sup>409</sup> Menander *Epitrepontes* (528-535) Gardner, 2013, pp. 131 who uses the translation of Arnott, 1979.

<sup>410</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 131 cites sexual connotations of the verb κατέβαλες in Menander’s *Georgos* and Epicurus’s *Nat.* 908 in order to refute a flirtatious interpretation.

<sup>411</sup> Gardner, 2013, pp. 131-2

<sup>412</sup> Lape, 2001, pp. 80-1

<sup>413</sup> Pierce, 1997, p. 178

<sup>414</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 135

<sup>415</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 123

<sup>416</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 136

against her male kin.<sup>417</sup> Menander's articulation of the female psychological trauma in *Epitropontes* is so well adapted to the established Athenian norms that can only cause the audience's sympathy and compassion.

#### 7.4 Aeschylus' "Prometheus Bound"



Figure 5: Io transformed into a heifer - Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* - 1930 Delphic Festival autochrome by Maynard Owen Williams.

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<sup>417</sup> Gardner, 2013, p. 123, p. 136

In the *Prometheus Bound*<sup>418</sup> the horned maiden Io<sup>419</sup> describes her unrelieved suffering due to her decision to resist Zeus' rape.<sup>420</sup> When the chorus asks to hear her story, she reveals what happened to her with much sorrow. She recounts that she was haunted by night visions telling her Zeus' passion for her and instructing her to go to the Lerna's meadow so that the god find respite from his longing (lines 645-654). Instead of obeying her dreams, Io informs her father, who sends messengers to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The oracle commands him to drive Io away from his house or face Zeus' wrath. When her father obeyed Apollo's oracle and she left homeless, she immediately turned into a cow constantly stung by a gadfly. Her misery continued as she was forced to wander all over the world, first pursued by the herdsman Argos and then tormented by the sharp-fanged gadfly (655-682).<sup>421</sup>

Io's tragic fate deeply moves the chorus who endorses her decision of rejecting Zeus' advances and shows deep sympathy and compassion for her situation:

ἔα ἔα, ἄπεχε, φεῦ: οὐποτ' οὐποτ' ἠϋχοῦν ὧδε ξένους  
 μολεῖσθαι λόγους εἰς ἀκοὰν ἐμάν, οὐδ' ὧδε δυσθέατα καὶ δύσοιστα  
 πήματα, λύματα, δείματα ἀμφάκει κέντρῳ τύψειν ψυχὰν ἐμάν.  
 ἰὼ ἰὼ μοῖρα μοῖρα, πέφρικ' εἰσιδοῦσα προᾶξιν Ἰοῦς.

*"Oh, ah, go away, alas! Never, oh never, did I dream that words so strange would greet my ears; or that sufferings so grievous to look upon, yes, and so grievous to endure, a tale of outrage, would strike my soul as if with double-pronged goad. Alas, O Fate, O Fate, I shudder to behold the plight that has befallen Io."*

Aesch., *PB*, (687-695)<sup>422</sup>

Chorus's understanding and pity for her plight is also obvious in the following lines:

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<sup>418</sup> The play deals with the titan Prometheus who defied Zeus and gave the fire to humanity. Due to his acts was

<sup>419</sup> Io's myth was popular in ancient Greece and had several versions. She was the daughter of Inachus, (the river god and King of Argos), and Melia (Oceanid nymph). Io was the first priestess of Hera at Argos where Zeus saw her and felt in love with her. In Aeschylus' tragedy Io was probably transformed into a cow by Hera (Prometheus attributes her transformation to Hera's jealousy hatred (line 592) see Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 29, but in other accounts of the myth it was Zeus who transformed her into a white heifer to protect her from Hera's wrath see Encyclopedia.com, 2019

<sup>420</sup> The whole episode between Io and Prometheus covers the biggest part of the tragedy (lines 561-893).

<sup>421</sup> The synopsis of the play is based on the translation of Aeschylus' play by Herbert Weir Smyth and the synopsis of Harris, 2014, p. 301; Lefkowitz, 1993, 29.

<sup>422</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, (687-695) translated by Harris, 2014, 301

μήποτε μήποτέ μ', ὦ πότνιαι Μοῖραι, λεχέων Διὸς  
εὐνάτειραν ἴδοισθε πέλουσαν: μηδὲ πλαθείην γαμέτα τινὶ τῶν ἐξοῦρανου.  
ταρβῶ γὰρ ἀστεργάνορα παρθενίαν εἰσορῶσ' Ἴους ἀμαλαπτομέναν δυσπλάνοισ  
Ἥρας ἀλατεΐαις πόνων.

*"Never, oh never, immortal Fates, may you see me the partner of the bed of Zeus, and may I be wedded to no bridegroom who descends to me from heaven. For I shudder when I behold the loveless maidenhood of Io, cruelly crushed like this by her toilsome wanderings sent by Hera."*  
Aesch., PB, (896-900)<sup>423</sup>

Io's narrative is evocative, emotive and overwhelming. Aeschylus has employed the right rhetorical devices in order to draw the audience's attention and stimulate its senses. He uses a number of symbolic images (the dreams, the frightened girl, the mystery, the oracle, the painful gadfly) which evoke feelings of sympathy, pity and fear to the audience.<sup>424</sup> In addition to that he retells the well-known courtship story of Io and Zeus through Io's subjective perspective.<sup>425</sup> Hence, he gives power to a poor in action scene and makes it more alive and interesting to the audience.<sup>426</sup>

In this context, Aeschylus depicts Io's decision to avoid a forcible sexual encounter with the king of the god's dramatically but without critique or disapproval. He treats the choice of the distressed from the frightening visions girl with understanding and respect. He stages a scene where the chorus acknowledges and honors Io's right of refusal (lines 896-900).<sup>427</sup> This reaction might have just been an "ardent desire" on the part of the author, but it is also possible to reflect a more common social attitude. The fact that Aeschylus portrays a female character who consciously decides not to yield to Zeus' passion indicates that the members of the audience were not that shocked by the idea of a woman who dears to deny a sexual relation with a powerful man. Under this light, Io's decision in *Prometheus Bound* to reject Zeus's love shows that Greek women were able to give or withdraw their consent before or during the sexual encounter.<sup>428</sup> In addition to that it affirms that

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<sup>423</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, (896-900) translated by Lefkowitz, 1993, pp. 29-30

<sup>424</sup> Harris, 2014, p. 301; Borey, 2001

<sup>425</sup> Borey, 2001

<sup>426</sup> Borey, 2001

<sup>427</sup> According to Lefkowitz, 1993, p. 34 in the Greek myths the powerful gods always ask for the woman's consent and honor her right of refusal.

<sup>428</sup> Harris, 2006, p. 61 claims that the female consent was crucial only for the punishment of women in cases of *moicheia* or *seduction*.

Greek males took women's desire or consent into consideration treating them as human beings with free will.<sup>429</sup>

## 7.5 Conclusion

The aforementioned literary narratives give an insight into the ancient Greek life which differs from the letter of the law. They depict a society less rigid towards women and more sensitive to their feelings. They disclose that Greek women retained some of their free will and had a say in some aspects of their lives. Io's refusal in *Prometheus Bound* indicates that the Greeks could show respect to the female decisions concerning the sexual intercourse or think about the women's desire before a sexual encounter. Although the concept of the female consent was closely interwoven with the legal supervision of the *kyrios*, who by and large acted as legal representative, it retained some significance as an unmistakable utterance of the women's volition. Hence, the minimal concern of the law for women in general and their emotional suffering as rape victims in particular, might not represent the whole coin of social reality but just its dark side.

The fact that the above Greek male authors did not disregard in their plays the pain of sexual violence upon the female victims<sup>430</sup> insinuates that women were not only sexual or reproductive objects but active participants of social and sexual relations. Even if we presume that these literary sources do not reflect the exact reality of Greek life and that they constitute figments of poet's imagination, we have to admit that real examples usually work as the best source of inspiration. From this perspective, Euripides', Aeschylus' and Menander's ability to lyrical portray the physical and psychological trauma of rape upon Creusa, Cassandra and Pamphile demonstrates that Greek men were able to conceptualize the lasting effects of this sexual assault on the female body and soul.<sup>431</sup> Moreover, their attitude towards the rape victims, which is not critical but rather kind and compassionate (e.g. Euripides goes so far to question the morality of the rapist-god Apollo), might not have worked only as a rhetorical device of the play, namely to increase the pathos' of the audience, but it can reflect a common attitude towards raped women. In every case, these Greek male authors suggest sympathy for the victims of rape.

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<sup>429</sup> Harris, 2017, p. 20

<sup>430</sup> Brunini-Cronin, 2017, p. 22

<sup>431</sup> Weiberg, 2017, p. 32

The findings of this chapter reveal that the Greek patronizing attitude towards women could also justify empathy towards their rape traumas. The ancient Greeks were not lacking sensitivity and were not indifferent to women's suffering caused by any sort of sexual violence. They merely evaluated differently the concept of sexual violence.

## Chapter 8

### 8.1 Conclusion

As I highlighted in the previous chapters of this thesis, the ancient Greeks did not have a single word for rape. Yet, we saw that rape was present in every aspect of their life, their myths, their laws, their writings and their art.<sup>432</sup> The study of their sociopolitical choice to allow the intrusion of rape into the normative framework of sexual behavior, can help us to reshape our sexual behavior.

The Greeks described rape by using a great variety of expressions, which usually included the surrounded circumstances of the act. Most often, they connected rape with the word *bia* (violence), and its cognates, or the word *hybris* (insult, outrage), and its cognates.<sup>433</sup> Their choice to “entangle” the definition of rape with words of several meanings might not have been random. On the one side, it enabled them to include the ethical choices that the perpetrator made before the act of rape. For example, as I explained in the fifth chapter, when rape was characterized as *hybris*, the behavior of the perpetrator was conceived not as an impulsive sexual reaction, but as a calculated aggression, which intended to dishonor and shame the victim and his family.<sup>434</sup> From this perspective, the ancient Greeks evaluated the intent of the perpetrator as a crucial factor for the understanding of an act as rape.<sup>435</sup>

On the other side, this linguistic flexibility reflected the Greek contradictory view on the subject of rape.<sup>436</sup> During the course of this thesis, we saw that the ancient Greeks condemned the rape of their women, but they accepted many forms of sexual coercion and abuse against them.<sup>437</sup> They could both treat rape as an outlier of society and, at the same time, as an example of male success and prowess.<sup>438</sup> They applauded the female sexual passiveness and subordination, but they enjoyed female willing partners.<sup>439</sup> They considered women as legal minor, but they held them responsible for their sexual misdeeds and punished them severely.<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> See ch. 4, 6 and 7

<sup>433</sup> See ch. 5.1

<sup>434</sup> See ch. 5.3

<sup>435</sup> See ch. 5.4; 5.5; 6.5

<sup>436</sup> See ch. 5.4

<sup>437</sup> See ch. 4.2a; 4.2.b

<sup>438</sup> See ch. 6.1; 6.2.1; 6.2.2; 6.3; 6.3.1; 4.3

<sup>439</sup> See ch. 1.2; 4.3; 4.4; 5.4

<sup>440</sup> See ch. 5.4; 6.4



These contradictions regarding sexual violence, (rape included), prevailed in all aspects of the Greek life but the law. Especially, when it comes to the Athenian Law, the standards of evaluation were not similar to ours. As I explained in the fifth chapter, rape was conceived as a sort of sexual theft, an offense against private property and, therefore, was punished.<sup>441</sup> However, the demerit of rape was evaluated according to different moral standards. It was wrong because it threatened the private property, (a part of which was the raped woman), undermined the male authority in the *oikos*, insulted the family honor, questioned the victim's respectability and reduced her status.<sup>442</sup> When the motive was other than the male sexual lust, the act of rape was treated leniently and sometimes excused through a private settlements.<sup>443</sup>

Women had access to the legal system only through men and in the eyes of the law their consent and their point of view were immaterial. This reality was in accordance with the main concern of the Athenian *polis*, which was to ensure the stability of the *oikos* and, thus, the production of legitimate heirs.<sup>444</sup> Therefore, the Athenian law regulated only the rape of the free, citizen women and did not consider the rape of all the other women as a subject of legal evaluation.

The Law Code of Gortyn on Crete did not make the gender distinctions of the Athenian law, but it was no better for women, in terms of protection.<sup>445</sup> The absence of any specific judicial process regarding the offense poses the scenario of private settlement of rape as more likely. However, in these settlements the family's mediation would have been driven by traditional factors as the shame, the insult of male honor or the difficulty in finding a spouse for the female raped victim and, thus, would not have ensured the protection of the traumatized women.<sup>446</sup>

The misogynistic legal framework was compatible to the wider cultural context of the time, which depicted sexual relations as "personal contests" of the two genders.<sup>447</sup> The prominence and persistence of rape in the popular culture of ancient Greece as well as the violent features of its representation in literature and art could be interpreted as expressions of the tension between the genders.<sup>448</sup> On the one hand, the powerful gods of the myths who chased and raped mortal women and the determined men of the art, who physically snatched defenseless women, depicted the stereotypical

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<sup>441</sup> See ch. 5.4; 5.5

<sup>442</sup> See ch. 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5

<sup>443</sup> See ch. 5.3; 6.5; 6.6; 6.7

<sup>444</sup> See ch. 6.5

<sup>445</sup> See ch. 6.6

<sup>446</sup> See ch. 6.6

<sup>447</sup> See ch. 4.3; 4.4

<sup>448</sup> See ch. 4.3; 4.4

models of the manly Greek prowess.<sup>449</sup> In this sense, they represented the trend of male sexual behavior of the time, which considered sexual impulsive men, who did not take no for an answer, as the ideal model.<sup>450</sup> On the other side, the reluctant or scared women, who, with outstretched arms, cried for help, apparently constituted the “formidable adversary” of the sexual aggressive males and depicted the ideal model of the female behavior.<sup>451</sup> It is likely that male fantasies in ancient Greece were full of women who played hard to get. In that respect, the extent sources of the Greek popular culture, (myths and literature), were merely an imaginary construal which suggested the appropriate way of social and sexual behavior but did not precisely reflect the reality, as our movies do today.

Therefore, as I discussed in the seventh chapter, we find evidence in literature of another type of men, who can conceive rape as a distressing-experience and sympathize with the traumatized female victims.

After all, no matter historical or cultural context, a traumatic human experience retains some main characteristics. The trauma theory, which was exemplified by the work of the psychiatrist Judith Herman (1992) and literary theorist Cathy Caruth (1996)<sup>452</sup>, has begun to be used as a reading practice in ancient texts dealing with experiences of sexual violence, exploits the continuity of the human experience in pain for shedding more light to the obscure or ambivalent aspects of rape narratives.<sup>453</sup> Based on the depictions of some Greek male authors and artists, who provided either directly<sup>454</sup> or indirectly<sup>455</sup>, through signs and symbols, an alternative and more sensitive approach to the female pain and anger, the psychological approach of this theory offers a new frame for recognizing and clarifying the literary sexual experience of rape.<sup>456</sup>

However, the pieces of art and literature that I analyzed in the fourth and seventh chapter respectively, which sympathized with the female suffering and broke the pattern of silence and obscurity on sexual matters are not so many in order for us to claim that they were the rule. Their existence certainly proves that the Greeks could conceptualize the emotional disturbance of the female victims in cases of rape and that

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<sup>449</sup> See ch. 4.3; 4.4

<sup>450</sup> See ch. 4.3; 4.4

<sup>451</sup> See ch. 4.3; 4.4

<sup>452</sup> See ch. 7.2

<sup>453</sup> See ch. 7.2

<sup>454</sup> See ch. 7.1

<sup>455</sup> See ch. 7.3

<sup>456</sup> See ch. 7.1; 7.2; 7.3

the women in ancient Greece experienced similar feelings of angst, despair and shame on a personal level as the rape victims of modern time.<sup>457</sup>

Nevertheless, it does not shutter down the general picture of sexual relations, which, as I stressed in the fourth chapter, was based on the diptych of - male sexual aggression against female sexual passiveness making rape an aspect of women's lives.<sup>458</sup> Not to mention that these ideas were articulated by fluent and gifted men and might not have been openly endorsed by the audience.

In this light, the descriptive "decorum" of rape in Greek myths and literature as well as the ambivalence of its definition could be understood as an attempt of normalizing sexual violence and rape against women in ancient Greece. In addition to that, private settlements as "happily" marriages could also have worked as convenient plot and social devices, which trivialized and resolved the serious consequences of the offense of rape. Finally, the hidden warnings in the art and the myths, which insinuated that women were unsafe away from home and their male *kyrioi* (guardians), were indirect instructions of conduct that intentionally terrified the ancient women in order to follow acceptable patterns of behavior. For all these reasons, I think that it is fair enough to claim that the Greek culture qualifies as rape culture.

Yet, this realization does not diminish the value of the ancient Greek culture as a whole. The interpretation of the Greek attitudes according to modern terms should not disregard the historical context they came from and the different social, economic and geopolitical interests they met. Sexual violence and rape were treated differently by the Greeks because their ancient community had different moral compasses.

In view of this, we can use the familiar sides of the ancient Greek culture on the subject of rape as a means of reflection and debate. Studying why the Greeks conceived the sexual relations antagonistically and how they taught their women to accept violent sexual intercourses as a fact of their lives, we can detect similar beliefs in our culture and change them. Discussing the ethical choices or the underlying assumptions which urged another culture to integrate sexual violence and rape in the acceptable network of sexual relations, might guide us to approach our sexuality more positively.

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<sup>457</sup> See ch. 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4

<sup>458</sup> See ch. 4.3

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### *Films, Videos, Blogs*

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## *Figures*

(Figure 1): Sotiria koutsopetrou (2019) *Helen' first abduction*. National Archeological Museum of Athens, p. 31.

(Figure 2): Sotiria koutsopetrou (2019) *Helen' first abduction*. National Archeological Museum of Athens, p. 32.

(Figure 3): Unknown Photographer and year of publication. *Mosaic floor from the house of the abduction of Helen*. Ministry of Culture and Sports. *odysseus.culture.gr*. [Online] Available at: [http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/eh2562.jsp?obj\\_id=13621&mm\\_id=23446](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/eh2562.jsp?obj_id=13621&mm_id=23446) (Accessed: 26 Apr. 2019), p. 33.

(Figure 4): Ingvar Mæhle (2019). Thucydides 6.56 (trans. Møhland): *Hipparchus had thus set out to dishonor Harmodius, because he had rejected him, and now he did so. The tyrants urged Harmodiu's sister, a young girl, to come and carry a basket in a [certain procession, and then sending her away, saying that they had never invited her in the first place, as she was*



*unworthy of honor.] British Museum. Twitter. Mai 12<sup>st</sup>. Available at: <https://twitter.com/ingvarmaehle/status/1127643299282657281> (Accessed: 14 Mai 2019). p. 61.*

(Figure 5): Unknown photographer and year of publication. *Archeologist Federico Halbherr (1857-1930) at Gortyn, deciphering Gortys Law Code, probably before c. 1900 (as of 1900, he was involved in other excavations). Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gortyn\\_code#/media/File:Federico Halbherr Gortyn.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gortyn_code#/media/File:Federico_Halbherr_Gortyn.jpg) (Accessed: 4 Mar. 2019). p. 65.*

(Figure 5): quattermasspitt (2016) *Io transformed into a heifer – Aeshylus’ Promytheus Bound – 1930 Delphic Festival Autochrome by Maynard Owen Williams. Twitter. July 21<sup>st</sup>. Available at: <https://quattermasspitt.tumblr.com/post/147749815498/io-transformed-into-a-heifer-aeschylus> (Accessed: 6 Mai 2019). p. 84.*