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Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 19

VIOLENCE IN THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL WORLDS

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations	IX
Introduction: <i>Occide, uerbera, ure!</i> What about Violence in Ancient and Medieval Times?	1
Maria Cristina PIMENTEL & Nuno Simões RODRIGUES	

VIOLENCE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

1. The Dawn of Human Violence: A Reading of Posidonius, Lucretius and Sallust.	17
Nicoletta BRUNO	
2. Violence and the Feminine: The Elegiac Woman in Action	43
Arcangela CAFAGNA	
3. Domestic Violence in Roman Imperial Society: Giving Abused Women a Voice	57
Margherita CARUCCI	
4. Duel and Violent Death in Propertius' Elegy 4,10 . . .	75
Irma CICCARELLI	
5. The Wrath of Gods Falls upon Men: The Case of Ancient Arkadia	93
María CRUZ CARDETE	
6. Why Does Zeus Rape? An Evolutionary Psychological Perspective.	103
Susan DEACY	
7. The Motif of <i>verberare puellam</i> in Latin Elegiac Poetry .	117
Rosalba DIMUNDO	

8. Violence as a Manifestation of ‘*pietas*’ 139
Paolo FEDELI
9. Violence in Prayer: God’s “Other Side” in the Book of Psalms. A Literary Approach. 167
Maria FERNANDES
10. The Rhetoric of Violence and Erotic Masochism in the Epistles of Philostratus 181
Rafael J. GALLÉ CEJUDO
11. Another Medea? Violence and Procne’s Family in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 6 197
Nikoletta MANIOTI
12. Violence against Slaves as an Element of Theatre in Plautus 209
Marc MAYER I OLIVÉ
13. Himerius’s Testimony on *mousike* as a Means of Preventing Violence in the Late Antique School of Rhetoric 243
José Guillermo MONTES CALA
14. Violence and Myth: The Creative Violence of Dragon-Slaying in the Ancient and Early Medieval Worlds . . . 259
Daniel OGDEN
15. Death Omens in Aeschylus and Sophocles: Clytaemnestra’s Dream between Blood Revenge and the Struggle for Power 271
Pierpaolo PERONI
16. Viriathus and his Contemporaries as Victims and Perpetrators of Conflict Violence 285
Deborah L. POTTER
17. *Strike, Smite and Terrify*: Reflections on Physical, Ritual and Psychological Violence in Ancient Egypt 295
José das Candeias SALES
18. Blood Feud and Blood Pollution in Archaic and Early Classical Greece. 315
Irene SALVO

19. Violence in Statius' Tydeus: Against Others or against Himself? 331
Carlo SANTINI
20. Pursuit and Ritual on Early South Italian and Sicilian Red-figure Pottery. The Workshop of the Himera Painter and the New Iconographic Compositions of the late 5th Century BC 349
Marco SERINO
21. (Not) Doing Violence to Myth: The Suppression of Force in Pindar 367
Daniel SICKA
22. *Misit Thyesteas preces*: Cursing and Magic in Horace's *Epode 5* 377
Gabriel A. F. SILVA
23. Filicide in the House of Atreus 387
Maria de Fátima SILVA
24. Female Group Violence in Greek Myth: A Case Study on the Lemnian Androctony and the Crime of the Danaids . 405
Nereida VILLAGRA
25. 'Visual' Metaphors of Violence: Representations of Submission on Roman Coins 417
Marco VITALE

VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

26. Violence in the Love Poems of the *Carmina Burana* . . 433
José CARRACEDO FRAGA
27. Violence Reflected: High-Medieval Diplomatic *cautelae* as a Mirror of Society 447
José Manuel DÍAZ DE BUSTAMANTE
28. A Targeted Violence: The Early Years of Venetian Rule in Padua 461
Daniele DIBELLO

29. <i>Divino interime gladio: The Suffering of the Judge in Some Visigothic Passions</i>	473
Ivan Neves FIGUEIRAS	
30. Words, Actions and Controlled Lives. Women and Violence in Medieval Galicia	485
Miguel GARCÍA-FERNÁNDEZ	
31. <i>Oportet te accipere virum et laetari: A Form of Violence in Some Lives of Virgin Saints</i>	499
María Elisa LAGE COTOS	
32. Violence and Conflict in the Portuguese Medieval University: From The Late-Thirteenth to the Early-Sixteenth Century.	513
Armando NORTE & André de Oliveira LEITÃO	
Sources	529
Bibliography	533

ANOTHER MEDEA?
VIOLENCE AND PROCNE'S FAMILY IN OVID'S
METAMORPHOSES 6

Nikoletta MANIOTI

The Colchian princess Medea and the Athenian princess Procne are often juxtaposed in Latin poetry as examples of women who took revenge on their husbands by killing their own children.¹ Their balanced presentation in such passages, however, is in stark contrast to their appearance in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the poet spends no more than 4 lines on Medea's infanticide in Book 7, while assigning almost 90 lines to Procne's in Book 6.² Though Otis briefly highlights a difference in motivation between the two mothers when he argues that Ovid did not wish to repeat in his Medea episode "a motif (the child-murder) almost identical with that of the preceding Tereus-Procne,"³ more recent studies do not reflect on motivation,⁴ and even advance the opposite view. For example, Larmour's influential discussion of myth contamination highlights the similarities in the two tales, but disagrees with Otis, arguing that Procne's motive is the same as Medea's.⁵ This paper picks up Otis' attribution of Procne's motive to her love for Philomela, and consequent outrage at what Tereus did to her,⁶ in order to argue that, *pace* Larmour, the

¹ E.g. Ov. *Am.* 2.14.29-32; *Trist.* 2.1.387-90; ps-Virg. *Culex* 249-53; Stat. *Silu.* 2.1.140-2.

² Medea: *Met.* 7.1-424 (infanticide: 394-7); Procne: 6.424-674 (infanticide: 587-674).

³ Otis 1970, 215.

⁴ Thus Ciappi 1990, 450-55; Newlands 1997, 192-5; as Curley 2003, 187 puts it, "many of the Euripidean elements in [*Met.* 7.394-7] are to be found in the Tereus narrative, which provided the poet with the opportunity to tell the most famous Medea story without actually telling it. From a sequential perspective, a tragic tale of infanticide committed by a woman in a foreign land in retaliation against her husband is told in book 6; there is no need for another in book 7."

⁵ Larmour 1990, 132-3.

⁶ Otis 1970, 216: "Ovid's emphasis is wholly on the cruel, disruptive libido of Tereus and on Procne's affection for her sister. It is not sexual jealousy but

characterisation of the two sisters throughout the episode makes it clear that, although both Medea and Procne resort to the same type of violence, in the case of Procne the dilemma she faces concerns not erotic jealousy but the importance of family bonds.

Let us first examine in detail the similarities between the two myths, by juxtaposing Ovid's Procne tale to Euripides' play as the most extensive account concerning Medea's infanticide. The two women commit the same act of violence to take revenge on their husbands, both of whom are foreign to their wives, and reject them for younger women: Thracian Tereus falls in love with Philomela, a *uirgo* (Ov. *Met.* 6.455, 524) who is accompanied by a nurse (462); Greek Jason falls in love with Creusa who is twice described as "young" (νέα) by a bitter Medea (Eur. *Med.* 967, 970). Moreover, both Jason and Tereus keep this relationship secret from their wives. Jason arranges to marry Creusa without telling Medea, as she herself complains: χρῆν σ', εἴπερ ἦσθα μὴ κακός, πείσαντά με / γαμεῖν γάμον τόνδ', ἀλλὰ μὴ σιγῇ φίλων ("if indeed you were not wicked, you should have persuaded me and then have this marriage, not do it secretly from those who love you," 586-7). Tereus "drags [Philomela] into a tall stable, hidden in ancient woods, and he shuts her in ... there" (*in stabula alta trahit, siluis obscura uetustis, / atque ibi [...] includit*, Ov. *Met.* 6.521-4), and later lies to Procne that her sister is dead (564-5). Medea also kills her rival Creusa and her father Creon; Procne, however, does not harm Philomela, even though both Philomela and the reader who has recognised the pattern established by the myth of Medea expect her to.

Indeed, immediately after her rape, Philomela tells Tereus that she is "due hostile punishment" as she was "made her own sister's rival" (*paelex ego facta sororis, / ... hostis mihi debita poena*,⁷ 537-8). Her

resentment of Tereus' brutal assault on Philomela that makes Procne avenge herself by the child-murder. In the Medea story the motivation is the other way around: she is the 'woman scorned' [...]. It is not what Jason has done to another woman, but what he has done to her which motivates her vengeance."

⁷ *Procne* has been proposed as an emendation for the MSS *poena* (but all emendations are summarily dismissed by Anderson in his 1977 edition). In his 1972 commentary ad 6.537-8 he argues for the preservation of *poena*, in order to avoid redundancy "for any *paelex* is automatically the wife's *hostis*." As it stands, it means that Philomela deserves the punishment of an enemy, which effectively amounts to the same idea as the one conveyed by the phrase *hostis mihi debita Procne*; the

feelings of guilt and fears of punishment are evident also when she is rescued by Procne and led into the palace: Philomela “does not bear to lift her eyes” to look at her sister but “fixes her gaze to the ground,” aware of being, again, “her own sister’s rival” (*non attollere contra / sustinet haec oculos, paelex sibi uisa sororis / delectoque in humum uultu*, 605-7). Thus Philomela sees herself as playing the role of Creusa, with Tereus a “double husband” (*geminus coniunx*, 538) who, like Jason, has taken a second woman to his bed, according to Medea’s accusations (*καὶνὰ δ’ ἐκτήσω λέχη*, Eur. *Med.* 489 “you have obtained a new marriage-bed”). Looking back to her departure from Athens, the reader may find a further confirmation of Philomela’s similarity to Creusa. Philomela’s father, Pandion, entrusts her to Tereus first by using a formula of betrothal (*hanc ego ... do*, Ov. *Met.* 6.496-8),⁸ and then, in a manner highly evocative of marriage, “when he asked for their two right hands as a pledge of faith, they gave them to him and he joined them together” (*utque fide pignus dextras utriusque poposcit / inter seque datas iunxit*, 506-7). Creon was also the one to hold the marriage ceremony between his daughter and Jason, as Medea points out to him: *ἔξέδου κόρην / ὅτω σε θυμὸς ἤγειν* (“you gave your daughter in marriage to the man to whom your heart led you,” Eur. *Med.* 309-10).

But even if the Medea myth is put aside for a moment, a couple of epic models for this episode also offer a reason to expect Procne to feel envy against Philomela. To a certain extent Procne and Philomela can be seen as based on two earlier epic sisters, Dido and Anna in *Aeneid* 4: the setting is certainly the same, with two sisters and a man from abroad who is openly involved with one of them (perhaps the elder). When Dido asks Anna to mediate between her and Aeneas, she points out that Anna enjoys a special relationship with him: *solam nam perfidus ille / te colere, arcanos etiam tibi credere sensus; / sola uiri mollis aditus et tempora noras* (“for only you that faithless man respects, he even entrusts you with his secret feelings; only you know the soft approach to the man and the right time for it,” Verg. *Aen.* 4.421-3). Dido’s words seem tinged with more than a hint of jealousy,⁹ and

interchangeability of *poena* and *Procne* is made clear in Procne’s later description *poenaque in imagine tota est* (*Met.* 6.586).

⁸ Anderson 1972 ad loc.

⁹ See e.g. Barrett (1970) 24.

even though she is not married to Aeneas, this is how she conceives of the nature of their relationship.¹⁰

A much clearer parallel, however, can be found within the Ovidian poem itself: the story of Aglauros and Herse in Book 2 is similar to this episode thematically as well as verbally / stylistically. Both pairs of sisters are Athenian princesses, and the same triangle we encountered in Virgil is reproduced here with Mercury taking the place of the man from abroad. Moreover, the two Ovidian episodes are brought closer by the prominence of visual terms and the use of two similes, one highlighting Herse's and Philomela's near-divine beauty,¹¹ and another describing Mercury's and Tereus' passion by means of fire imagery.¹² Following the prompt to read the two episodes together, we could expect Procne, whom Tereus marries first, to be envious of her sister Philomela, just as Aglauros, whom Mercury approaches first, is infected with envy of her sister Herse.

Ovid's next clue for the attentive reader (or rather his next trap) is the use by Philomela of the phrase "double husband" to describe Tereus. This translation of *geminus coniunx* (*Met.* 6.538) would imply

¹⁰ Cf. also Verg. *Aen.* 4.172 *coniugium uocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam* ("she calls it a marriage, with that name she covered up her guilt").

¹¹ Cf. *quanto splendor quam cetera sidera fulget / Lucifer, et quanto quam Lucifer aurea Phoebe, / tanto uirginibus praestantior omnibus Herse / ibat eratque decus pompae comitumque suarum*, Ov. *Met.* 2.722-5 ("as much brighter Lucifer shines than the other stars, and as much more golden Phoebe than Lucifer, so much more eminently than all the maidens Herse was going, and she was the glory of the procession and of her own companions"), and *ecce uenit magno diues Philomela paratu, / diuinitur forma; quales audire solemus / naidas et dryadas mediis incedere siluis, / si modo des illis cultus similesque paratus*, 6.451-4 ("behold, Philomela comes, rich in great ornament, richer in beauty; such as we are used to hear that the Naiads and the Dryads walk in the middle of the forests, provided that you give them similar clothes and ornaments"); the simile goes back to Nausicaa in *Odyssey* 6 via — crucially — Dido in *Aeneid* 4 and Medea in *Argonautica* 3.

¹² Cf. *non secus exarsit, quam cum Balearica plumbum / funda iacit: uolat illud et incandescit eundo / et, quos non habuit, sub nubibus inuenit ignes*, Ov. *Met.* 2.727-9 ("not differently did [Mercury] catch fire, than when a Balearic sling throws a bullet; it flies and as it goes it becomes red-hot and acquires heat under the clouds that it did not have before"), and *non secus exarsit conspecta uirgine Tereus, / quam si quis canis ignem supponat aristas / aut frondem positasque cremet faenilibus herbas*, 6.455-7 ("not differently did Tereus catch fire when he saw the maiden, than if someone lights up white corn from underneath or burns foliage and grasses stored up in barns").

that Tereus was a “husband of two women,” i.e. both Procne and Philomela.¹³ Ovid would then point to variants of the myth where Tereus tricks Pandion into giving him Philomela in marriage by telling him that Procne is dead.¹⁴ But there is another way to understand the phrase, and that is to take *geminus* in its literal meaning of “twin,” thus activating another variant, in fact, the earliest attested account of the myth where, however, the names of the protagonists are different. This is the version of Homer’s *Odyssey*, in which Penelope talks about the grief of the nightingale and reveals that in its human form as Aedon she accidentally killed her son Itylus (Hom. *Od.* 19.518-23). The scholiast supplies the other names and more information, drawing on 5th century BC historian Pherecydes’ account, according to which the murder was motivated by Aedon’s envy of her sister-in-law Niobe, who had married her husband’s twin brother; she meant to kill Niobe’s child but accidentally killed her own son (*Schol. lia uetera* in Hom. *Od.* 19.518).¹⁵

A final pointer in the direction of envy, which would encourage the viewing of the episode as a reworking of the Medea myth, is the presence of this emotion in what may be Ovid’s main model, Sophocles’ *Tereus*. Confirmation is provided not by the few surviving fragments of the text, but by its hypothesis which mentions Procne as “maddened by excessive jealousy when she found out the truth” (ἐπιγνοῦσα δὲ ἡ Πρόκνη τὴν ἀλήθειαν ζηλοτυπ[ί]α τῆ ἐσχάτῃ / οἰστρηθεῖσα, *P. Oxy.* 3013, ll. 24-6). Any reader aware of tradition and receptive to Ovid’s clues, not least the clearest one in Philomela’s words, would expect Procne to be characterised by envy of her sister, just like Medea was envious of Creusa.

¹³ As *TLL* 6.2.1744.8-9 understands it too: “6, 538 tu -us coniunx (*de Tereo tamquam et Philomelae coniuge*)”.

¹⁴ E.g. ps-Apoll. *Bibl.* 3.193-5, Hyg. *Fab.* 45.

¹⁵ See esp. Ἴτυλον δὲ ἡ μήτηρ Ἀηδῶν ἀποκτείνει διὰ νυκτὸς, δοκοῦσα εἶναι τὸν Ἀμφίονος παῖδα, ζηλοῦσα τὴν τοῦ προειρημένου γυναῖκα, ὅτι ταύτῃ μὲν ἦσαν ἕξ παῖδες, αὐτῇ δὲ δύο. ἐφορμᾷ δὲ ταύτῃ ὁ Ζεὺς ποινήν· ἡ δὲ εὐχεται ὄρνις γενέσθαι, καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτὴν ὁ Ζεὺς ἀηδόνα. θρηνεῖ δὲ αἰεὶ ποτε τὸν Ἴτυλον, ὡς φησι Φερεκύδης (“His mother Aedon [= “Nightingale”] kills Itylus during the night, believing him to be the son of Amphion, as she was jealous of the latter’s wife, who had six children while she herself had two. Zeus stirs up a punishment against her; she wishes to become a bird, and Zeus makes her into a nightingale. She mourns Itylus forever, as Pherecydes says”). It is perhaps not coincidental that the story of Procne in *Met.* 6 follows very soon after the story of Amphion and Niobe.

Further corroboration of this thesis may be sought in the presence of a motif closely linked to envy in the Medea myth, namely violent revenge. At first glance there is a difference between Medea's animosity against three characters in Euripides' play (Creon, Creusa and Jason) as opposed to Procne's single enemy, Tereus. But this can be explained as creative imitation on Ovid's part: he turns the one-against-three structure of the Euripidean plot into a succession of three levels of revenge either using or punishing violence. First, Philomela threatens Tereus that she will exact her revenge by revealing she was raped by him; second, Tereus cuts Philomela's tongue as an answer to her threats; finally, Procne takes revenge on Tereus by killing Itys and feeding him to his father. But what kind of revenge is this, and why is Philomela not punished, if all Ovid does is rework the Medea myth?

The answer to both questions lies in the nature of the relationship between Procne and Philomela. This is revealed by Procne herself in her two consecutive monologues. Initially she ponders on the harm she would inflict on Tereus: she would either set the palace on fire and throw him in it (Ov. *Met.* 6.614-5), "or tear away with a sword his tongue and his eyes and his genitals that snatched away [Philomela's] innocence" (*aut linguam atque oculos et quae tibi membra pudorem / abstulerunt ferro rapiam*, 616-7). Though the rape is clearly prominent here in the direct reference to Tereus' eyes and genitalia, as well as being evoked indirectly through the highly multivalent verb *rapio*, the other harm done to Philomela, namely, the cutting of her tongue, is also evoked both in the reference to the organ itself and in the repetition of the same verb that described the act of Philomela's mutilation, again emphatically placed at the beginning of the line and immediately followed by the weapon used to inflict the violence (*abstulit ense*, 557). Wavering in this earlier monologue, Procne's mind settles on Philomela's mutilation when Itys enters the room and she utters her second speech: *inque uicem spectans ambos 'cur admouet' inquit / 'alter blanditias, rapta silet altera lingua'*¹⁶ / *quam uocat hic*

¹⁶ Until we analyse the line, *rapta* potentially applies to Philomela and evokes her rape; once we do, it becomes clear that it describes her tongue, and retrospectively provides the key for understanding the meaning of *rapio* in the earlier monologue: not "rape" but "tear off," repeating the violent mutilation of an organ rather than assigning a male penetrating role to Procne in her revenge.

matrem, cur non uocat illa sororem?' ("and looking at both of them in turn she says 'Why does one use flatteries while the other is silent with her tongue torn off? Why does she not call sister the woman whom he calls mother?'" 631-3). This is the crime that demands Procne's punishment, no longer (or not so much) sexual violence as mutilation and silencing. If there was a place for envy in the context of the rape, there is no longer such place here, and consequently no punishment for the woman who is cast up now in the role of the rival, not only in her own eyes, but also in the readers' who have picked up Ovid's false clues.

Still Procne could be seen as another Medea for using infanticide as the means by which to exact revenge on her husband; but there are crucial differences. Nowhere does Procne indicate that by killing Itys she is hurting Tereus, or severing their bond in the most irrevocable way, as did Medea to justify her action in Euripides.¹⁷ Procne punishes Tereus for the violence he committed against her sister, and she is able to overcome her maternal instinct much more easily than Medea because there is another bond much more important for Procne, that between her and her sister Philomela.

As was mentioned above, Procne and Philomela are to some extent based on an earlier epic sister pair, namely, the Virgilian Dido and Anna. In examining the latter pair's representation as unanimous sisters, Roberta Strati advanced a model of unanimity characterised by deep affection and identification in feelings, emotions, and thoughts, all of which create a bond that could even go beyond death.¹⁸ The following analysis of the episode of Procne and Philomela shows how this model can also apply to them.

Procne and Philomela share the same desire to see each other at the beginning of the episode; Procne says to Tereus that it would be "the equivalent of a great gift if [she] saw [her] sister" (*magni mihi muneris instar / germanam uidisse*, 443-4), and "because Philomela desires the same thing ... she asks ... that she may go see her sister" (*quid quod idem Philomela cupit ... / ... ut eat uisura sororem / ...*

¹⁷ See Eur. *Med.* 817, 1360, 1370.

¹⁸ Strati 2002, 484: "L'idea di un intimo nodo affettivo, fatto di profonde affinità psichiche, intellettuali, sentimentali, morali, emotive, che coinvolgono fino alle radici stesse della vita, un legame che dovrebbe essere insidiato solo dalla morte e che può giungere a confrontarsi audacemente con essa."

petit, 475-7). In her moment of distress, Philomela cries out to her father, sister, and the gods (*frustra clamato saepe parente, / saepe sorore sua, magnis super omnia diuis*, 525-6), and the importance of her sister in this sequence is emphasised by the possessive adjective which accompanies it, and by the alliteration of *s-* in the first half of line 526. Philomela's enforced pain and silence is mirrored in her sister's empathetic reaction to the message revealing her plight: Procne "is silent; grief restrains her mouth" (*silet; dolor ora repressit*, 653). Finally, as they exact their vengeance, "Procne does not want to disguise her cruel joy" (*dissimulare nequit crudelia gaudia Procne*, 653), and "at no other time would [Philomela] rather be able to speak and declare her joy with deserving words" (*nec tempore maluit ullo / posse loqui et meritis testari gaudia dictis*, 659-60). This emphasis on emotional identification is further stressed by the position of *gaudia* on the fifth foot of each line.

The sisters' actions are indicative of shared intentions, thoughts and feelings. They both use flattery towards men to achieve their purpose of seeing each other, Procne towards her husband (*blandita uiro*, 440), Philomela towards their father Pandion (*patriosque laceratis / blanda tenens umeros*, 475-6). Philomela's similarity to a mourner after the rape (*lugenti similis*, 532) is evoked in Procne's reaction to the false news of her sister's death (*luget non sic lugendae fata sororis*, "she mourns the fate of her sister who ought not to be mourned in such a way," 570), and the narrator makes sure to repeat the verb in polyptoton. Their disregard of death is also comparable, especially as their ulterior motive is to show solidarity to one another. Philomela threatens to reveal the rape (544-8), and then sends a woven message to Procne (576-80) without ever fearing the risks these actions pose to her life; she even bares her throat to Tereus when he unsheathes his sword upon hearing her threats (553-4). For her part, Procne disguises herself as a Bacchant to go in the middle of the night, rescue her sister, and bring her back to the palace (587-600).

Complementing each other's actions offers another indication of their unanimity: when they murder Itys, "Procne strikes [him] with a sword" (*ense ferit Procne*, 641), "Philomela cuts [his] throat with a knife" (*iugulum ferro Philomela resoluit*, 643), and they both "tear apart [his] limbs" (*membra / dilaniant*, 644-5). In the next scene, they join forces to reveal to Tereus the content of his dinner, with Procne

telling him “You have inside you the one you seek” (*intus habes, quem poscis*, 655), while Philomela “with her hair streaming from the infernal slaughter, ... leapt forth and threw Itys’ bloodied head in his father’s face” (*sparsis furiali caede capillis, / prosiluit Ityosque caput ... cruentum / misit in ora patris*, 657-9). Finally, to this identification on various levels, one should add the extensive use of kinship terms in their speeches and throughout the episode,¹⁹ which is indicative of their deep affection for one another.

This characterisation of Procne and Philomela is confirmed and irrevocably fixed at the end of the episode. The narrator describes how all three surviving protagonists turned into birds; he does not, however, reveal which heroine becomes the nightingale and which becomes the swallow, but merely notes “one of them seeks the woods, the other goes under the roof” (*quarum petit altera silvas, / altera tecta subit*, 668-9). Whereas in other works Ovid is clear about which bird each heroine transforms into,²⁰ here the lack of precision has a significant effect: with a nudge to all possible variations of the myth, it also allows the two sisters to be forever interchangeable, taking their unanimity to a more literal level.

But what about Procne’s relationship to Itys? One of the arguments in favour of Procne’s assimilation to Medea is her apostrophe to Itys ‘*a! quam / es similis patri!*’ (“Ah, how much you resemble your father!” 622). Larmour interprets this as giving Procne a psychological reason to kill Itys: he resembles Tereus so much that by killing her son she would feel she is killing her husband, which is what Medea also feels according to her own letter to Jason in Ovid’s *Heroides* (*et nimium similes tibi sunt*, “and they [i.e. the children] resemble you too much,” *Her.* 12.191).²¹ But there is another way to understand these words which, after all, give expression to a motif often found in epic where a heroine talks of an actual or imaginary son who

¹⁹ Use of kinship terms (in various cases): in Procne’s speeches *Ov. Met.* 6.441, 442, 633 (*soror*), 444, 613 (*germana*); in Philomela’s speech 535, 537 (*soror*); in the rest of the episode 476, 502, 526, 570, 604, 606, 610, 630 (*soror*); 523, 564, 582, 598 (*germana*).

²⁰ The various passages are listed in Ciappi 1998, 145, n. 12. He argues that Ovid adopts the version in which Procne becomes the swallow and Philomela the nightingale (147-8).

²¹ Larmour 1990, 133.

resembles his father.²² This relationship between father and son is here extended to cover daughters too: just as Itys is incontestably “the son of Tereus,” the phrase “daughter(s) of Pandion” is used four times in the episode for Procne and Philomela (*Met.* 6.436, 520, 634, 666), and crucially it is by this designation that Procne apostrophises herself at the end of her speech: *cui sis nupta, uide, Pandione nata, marito! / degeneras!* (“Look to what husband you are married, daughter of Pandion! You have become degenerate!” 634-5). If she pities Itys, she will betray her relationship to her father, as the verb she chooses voices her preference for her own *genus*. Thus, her natal family, of which Philomela forms part and, moreover, shares with Procne the same strong bond with their father Pandion, is the one that matters more than any bonds created by marriage, including that to her only child, Itys.²³ Unlike Medea, Procne’s dilemma is aided by her relationship to the other woman in the triangle: Procne punishes her husband for the crime committed against her sister, and her motivation is not envy but sisterly unanimity, which justifies the infanticide in her mind.

To conclude, Procne’s violence against a member of her family (Itys) punishes Tereus’ violence against another member of her family (Philomela). Unlike Medea, she is not motivated by jealousy but by sisterly devotion and unanimity. Procne’s bond to her natal family is stronger than that to the family she acquires through marriage to Tereus, and on that basis, if a parallel were sought among tragic heroines, it would not be Medea but Electra. The daughter of Clytemnestra turns against her mother, thus violating the same bond as Procne, that between mother and child. Electra can overcome her filial affection towards Clytemnestra because the latter has willingly removed herself from her family by entering a new marriage with Aegisthus; for Electra, there is no longer a natal bond between the two.²⁴ Like Procne who overcomes her feelings for Itys because Tereus

²² E.g. Dido: *si quis mihi paruulus aula / luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret*, Verg. *Aen.* 4.328-9 “if only a small Aeneas was playing in my courtyard, who would still carry your likeness in his face”; Argia: *testisque dolorum / natus erit, paruoque torum Polynice fouebo*, Stat. *Theb.* 12.347-8 “the witness of my grief will be our son, and I will keep the marriage bed warm with a small Polynices.”

²³ Visser 1986, 158, mentions Procne and Althaea as two examples of women sacrificing their maternal affection for the sake of their natal families.

²⁴ Aeschylus’ Electra points out that Clytemnestra sold her children “in exchange” for Aegisthus (πεπραμένοι γὰρ νῦν γέ πως ἀλώμεθα / πρὸς τῆς τεκούσης, ἄνδρα δ’

turns against her natal family, Electra goes on to punish Clytemnestra for her violence against the only two people whom Electra considers her own natal family, her father Agamemnon whom Clytemnestra murdered, and her brother Orestes whom she exiled.²⁵ Even though Electra's characterisation in all tragedians relies heavily on her piety as Agamemnon's daughter,²⁶ there is another detail that brings her close to Procne. As Electra's words to Orestes reveal (ὦ φίλτατ', ὦ ποθεινὸν ἤδιστόν τ' ἔχων / τῆς σῆς ἀδελφῆς ὄνομα καὶ ψυχὴν μίαν, Eur. *Or.* 1045-6 "Oh dearest, you who have the desired and sweetest name of your sister and one soul with her"), the love for her brother not only matches in strength and intensity that of Procne for her sister,²⁷ but it is also explicitly characterized by unanimity, the same quality that, as I hope to have shown in this paper, Ovid attributes to his Athenian princesses in *Metamorphoses* 6.

ἀντηλλάξατο / Αἴγισθον, *Choeph.* 132-4 "for we have been banished, sold by the woman who gave us birth, and she took in exchange a husband, Aegisthus"), and that her hatred against them deprives her of the right to be called mother (ἐμὴ δὲ μήτηρ, οὐδαμῶς ἐπώνυμον / φρόνημα παισὶ δύσθεον πεπαμένη, 190-91 "my mother, possessing a godless mind against her children in no way appropriate to her name"). A similar sentiment is expressed by Euripides' heroine, namely that the children born of Clytemnestra's new marriage to Aegisthus have replaced Electra and Orestes (ἢ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμὴ, / ἐξέβαλέ μ' οἴκων, χάριτα τιθεμένη πόσει: / τεκοῦσα δ' ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰγίσθω πάρα / πάρεργ' Ὀρέστην καμὲ ποιεῖται δόμων, *El.* 60-63 "for the all-destructive daughter of Tyndareos, my mother, threw me out of the palace, doing her husband a favour; and bearing other children to Aegisthus, she treats Orestes and me as second-rate in her household"). Electra even generalises, based on her bitter experience with Clytemnestra, that "women love their husbands, not their children" (γυναικες ἀνδρῶν, ὦ ξέν', οὐ παίδων φίλαι, 265).

²⁵ As Euripides' heroine puts it, "what is dearer to me than they?" (τί γὰρ μοι τῶνδ' ἔστι φίλτερον; *El.* 243).

²⁶ E.g. Electra in all three tragedians mourns her dead father as soon as she starts speaking on stage (Aesch. *Choeph.* 87-8, Soph. *El.* 92-5; Eur. *El.* 59). Interestingly, in the following lines Sophocles' Electra compares herself in her constant mourning to "the nightingale, murderer of her child" (τεκνολέτειρ' ὡς τις ἀηδῶν, 107), and identifies with the "moaning bird, distraught with grief, that incessantly laments for Itys, Itys" (ἀλλ' ἐμέ γ' ἄστονέσσο' ἄραρεν φρένας, / ἅ' Ἴτυν, αἰὲν Ἴτυν ὀλοφύρεται, / ὄρνις ἀτυζομένα, 146-9), i.e. with Procne.

²⁷ Electra's feelings for Orestes are also prominent in Aeschylus, where she calls him her "most beloved of mortals" (μοι τοῦ φιλάτου / βροτῶν Ὀρέστου, *Choeph.* 193-4), and her "delightful eyes" (ὦ τερπνὸν ὄμμα, 238), explaining that he is the recipient of her love not only as her brother, but also as her father (now dead), her mother (despised), and her sister Iphigenia (also dead) (238-44).