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Studies in Honour of Guido Avezzù

Edited by Silvia Bigliazzi, Francesco Lupi,
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Contents

Silvia Bigliazzi - Francesco Lupi - Gherardo Ugolini
Πρόλογος / Prologue 9

Part 1 – Τραγῳδία / Tragedy

1. Stephen Halliwell
"We were there too": Philosophers in the Theatre 15

2. Maria Grazia Bonanno
Tutto il mondo (greco) è teatro. Appunti
sulla messa-in-scena greca non solo drammatica 41

3. Vittorio Citti
Una nota inutile ad Aesch. *Suppl.* 950 69

4. Angela M. Andrisano
Le *performances* della Pizia (Aesch. *Eum.* 29-33) 81

5. Pierre Judet de La Combe
Una dialettica regale. Gli argomenti della regina
sulla ricchezza in Aesch. *Pers.* 159-69. 91

6. Liana Lomiento
Osservazioni critico-testuali e metriche su
Aesch. *Eum.* 352-3 = 365-6 107

7. Enrico Medda
Alcune congetture inedite di A.E. Housman
all'*Agamennone* di Eschilo 133

8. Franco Montanari
Mito e poesia: la figura di Clitennestra dall'*Odissea* a Eschilo 147

9. Antonietta Provenza
Un destino paradigmatico.
L'ibrido e la necessità del γάμος nel mito di Io 167

10. Alessandro Grilli
Forme e funzioni della parola magico-sacrale
nei *Sette contro Tebe* 195

11. Giovanni Cerri
Antigone, Ismene e sepoltura di Polinice:
protostoria di un mito 219

12. Renzo Tosi
Creonte e il potere che rivela l'uomo (Soph. *Ant.* 175-7) 237

13. Roberto Nicolai
Perché Edipo è chiamato τύραννος?
Riflessioni sull'*Edipo re* come tragedia del potere 251

14. Seth L. Schein
The Second *Kommos* in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (1081-1217) 277

15. Camillo Neri
Marginalia Colonea 299

16. Francesco Lupi
Minima Sophoclea. Frr. 150, 722, 338 R.^{2} 323

17. Paola Angeli Bernardini
Ecuba, le prigioniere troiane e la presenza del mare
nelle *Troiane* di Euripide 341

18. Adele Teresa Cozzoli
Azione drammatica e metateatro nell'*Oreste* di Euripide 359

19. Jordi Redondo
Alcestis: Pro-Satyric or Simply Romantic Tragedy? 385

20. Marco Zanolla
Tracce di polemica contro il *ploutos*
nell'*Alcmena* di Euripide: frr. 95, 96 e 92 Kn. 403

21. Edward M. Harris
Pollution and Purification in Athenian Law
and in Attic Tragedy: Parallels or Divergences? 419

Part 2 – Κωμῳδία / Comedy

22. Andreas Bagordo
κομψευριπικῶς. Tracce di Euripide socratico-sofistico
nella commedia attica 457

23. Marco Duranti
Due questioni interpretative nelle *Ecclesiazuse*
di Aristofane (vv. 1089-91, 1105-11) 491

24. Giuseppe Mastromarco
Aristofane, *Le donne che occupano le tende*, fr. 488 K.-A. 503

25. Olimpia Imperio
I demagoghi nelle commedie di Aristofane e dei suoi rivali 515

26. Andreas Markantonatos
The Heracles Myth in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*:
The Boeotian and Dicaeopolis Scene (ll. 860-958) 545

27. Piero Totaro
Antiche e nuove esegesi di Aristofane, *Pluto* 168 563

28. Fausto Montana
Lamia nella *Collana* di Menandro (fr. 297 K.-A.) 585

29. Guido Paduano
Un tema della Nea: la verità come perfetto inganno 599

30. Massimo Di Marco
Una probabile eco della parodia comica del *Ciclope*
di Filosseno in Ermesianatte (fr. 7.73-4 Powell) 615

Part 3 – Παράδοσις / Reception

31. Maria Pia Pattoni
Tragic and Paratragic Elements in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* 633

32. Paola Volpe
Il Ciclope: un mostro tra antico e moderno 653

33. Eric Nicholson
Finding Room for Satyrs at the Theatrical Table,
from Ancient to Modern Times 675

34. Francesco Dall'Olio
Oedipus Tyrant? Tyranny and Good Kingship
in Alexander Neville's Translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* 693

35. Silvia Bigliazzi
Euripidean Ambiguities in *Titus Andronicus*:
the Case of Hecuba 719

36. Vayos Liapis
On the Sources of Petros Katsaïtis' *Iphigenia* (1720): Between
Lodovico Dolce, Molière, and the Commedia dell'Arte 747

37. Gherardo Ugolini
Il Genio della tragedia. Antigone nel *Vorspiel* di Hofmannsthal 783

38. Douglas Cairns
Fascism on Stage? Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) 805

39. Avra Sidiropoulou
Negotiating Oblivion: Twenty-First Century Greek
Performances of Ancient Greek Plays 833

40. Martina Treu
'Guidaci a passo di danza'. Cori comici sulla scena 857

41. Adele Scafuro and Hiroshi Notsu
Miyagi's *Antigones* 881

Part 4 – Ἔξω τοῦ θεάτρου / Theatre and Beyond

42. Anton Bierl
Symmachos esso: Theatrical Role-Playing and
Mimesis in Sappho fr. 1 V. 925

43. Walter Lapini
La casa dei belli (Asclepiade *AP* 5.153) 953

44. Mauro Tulli
Plato's κάλλιστον δρᾶμα in Greek Biography 963

45. Simona Brunetti
Il coraggio di tradire per poter tramandare: un allestimento
contemporaneo del *Gysbreght van Aemstel*
di Joost van den Vondel 975

46. Nicola Pasqualicchio
Piano d'evasione: carcere e utopia negli Shakespeare
della Compagnia della Fortezza 1003

47. Sotera Fornaro
Il giovane rapsodo nella Stanza della Segnatura di Raffaello 1025

The Authors 1043

Appendix

Guido Avezzù's Publications (1973-2018) 1079

35

Euripidean Ambiguities in *Titus Andronicus*: the Case of Hecuba

Silvia Bigliazzi

Abstract

It has been remarked that the funeral scene in *Titus Andronicus* 1.1 may be compared to Seneca's *Troades*, a play which, with Erasmus' Latin translation of Euripides' *Hecuba* (1506) and Golding's rendition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1567), contributed to passing down the story of Hecuba to early modern England. Like *Titus*, Seneca's *Troades* includes human sacrifice (of Astyanax and Polyxena), but compared to that (Latinized) Greek myth, human sacrifice in *Titus*' Rome bears deeper consequences symbolically and dramatically. *Titus*'s opening scene reveals a precise intent to connote from the outset the course of the action as a clear response to a crisis of funeral rituals endowed with political connotations within the context of Rome's war with the Goths and the relation between Rome and the barbarians. The Hecuba imagery in 1.1.138-44 legitimizes Tamora's revenge against the Romans, and implicitly likens them to the traitorous and cruel Greeks in the narrative of the destruction of Troy. Tamora-as-Hecuba dismembers and resignifies the Trojan legacy assumed by the play, embodying a story of suffering and fierce revenge which turns that same Trojan myth against Rome within the *translatio imperii* tradition. This article examines the function of Hecuba in *Titus Andronicus*, exploring the many ways in which the Euripidean subtext might have affected the complex shaping of revenge in this possibly co-authored play, following the representation of the crisis of communal rites and Roman *pietas* as figures of contemporary forms of 'wild' and 'excessive' justice.

1. Patterning

We know that *Titus Andronicus* reflects no recorded historical events. As Jonathan Bate put it, the "best way of thinking about the origins of *Titus Andronicu*s is not so much in terms of 'sources'", as of patterns, that is, of "a series of *precedents* in the dramatic repertoire of the period", such as Kyd and Marlowe, and of models "in Shakespeare's reading of the classics" (Shakespeare 2018: 89). Bate singled out "Aeneas, Hecuba, Virginius, Coriolanus

and Seneca's Hippolytus", but gave obvious prominence to "the two exemplary classical stories of rape" (ibid.): that of Philomela, which Shakespeare could find in *Metamorphoses* (book 6), and that of Lucrece, available in both Livius' *Ab urbe condita* (1.57-60) and Ovid's *Fasti* (2.721-812), and which was also to become the subject of his *Rape of Lucrece* (1594).[1] Open reference to Ovid in 4.1.51-8 marks perhaps the "most literary moment" (ibid.) in the play, but Shakespeare's recourse to patterning also suggests other models drawn from ancient drama, rather than poetry or historical writings. Tanya Pollard has recently discussed how the possible impact of Euripides' *Hecuba* upon *Hamlet* within that play's "intertextual web" may point to "Shakespeare's engagement with theatrical performance" precisely in terms of patterning (2012: 1077; see also 2017: 117ff.).[2] With regard to *Titus Andronicus*, I am increasingly inclined to think that a similar theatrical patterning also invests Shakespeare's allusions to Hecuba as a figure for avenging characters in the play in ways that seem to suggest awareness of that Greek theatrical precedent, alongside the Ovidian source and Seneca's *Agamemnon* and *The Trojan Women*.[3] I am also inclined to

1 ". . . Lucrece was praised in *Le Roman de la Rose* and included by Chaucer in his *Legends of Good Women* (fifth tale), which Shakespeare certainly knew. . . . Chaucer referred to 'Ovyd and Titus Lyvius', and these authorities were used by the English poet. It has been proved by Egwig and Baldwin that he probably used an edition of Ovid's *Fasti* with Latin annotations by Paulus Marsus of which there were many reprints from 1508 onwards . . . The dramatist seems to have had before him a copy of Titus Livy's *History of Rome* (chapters LVII-LX)"; a "fairly close version" of it was also available in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566): Bullough 1964: 179. On the relation between Philomela and Lucrece in *The Rape of Lucrece* see Newman 1994.

2 More precisely, Pollard has contended that "Euripides's play offered Shakespeare not only the generic conventions he exploits in *Hamlet* — a pre-existing crime, ghost, delay, deceit, and violence — but also a dramatic model for engaging audiences with tragic affect. In particular, it offered him a tradition of emotionally affecting tragedy that was female-centered, rooted in lament, and culminating in triumphant action: a tradition that he translated, in subtle and complex ways, into a new model of tragedy" (2012: 1077).

3 Penelope Meyers Usher has very recently argued that Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* might also be considered among possible influences on the play either via Peele, as the author of a translation of *Iphigenia*, or in

believe that Euripides' play provides a dramatic subtext conceptually and dramaturgically. Pollard has claimed that "the play's references to Hecuba mark the start of Shakespeare's reflections on her ability to inspire grief and rage in audiences" (2017: 100). Also, *Titus* "complicates the *Spanish Tragedy*'s heroic model of revenge by challenging audiences' abilities to identify comfortably with any of the play's wronged revengers" (ibid.). Beforehand, Emrys Jones had convincingly contended that Euripides' *Hecuba* shows affinity with the dramatic structure of *Titus*, which consists of "two movements of feeling, the first dominated by passionate suffering, the second by purposeful revenge" (1977: 97). What Jones especially emphasized was the way suffering becomes so intensified and intolerable that the insane grief it causes needs the abrupt "relief of aggressive action" (98) – a pattern that can also be found in *Hecuba*. "The moment of change", he remarked, "during which Hecuba and Titus make the decisive move from passivity to activity, is dramatized in each case by a short interval of silent self-communing and withdrawing" (100) – before both of them turn to savage revenge.

In the following pages I will argue that the Greek Hecuba not only suggests dramatic solutions,[4] but also enhances the crisis of rituals dramatized in *Titus* from its outset in ways that the Ovidian one does not. I have discussed elsewhere how political and civic rites in this play undergo a process of degeneration conveyed through images of mutilation of the body politic that go

the light of an "open and fluid" conception "of early modern intertextuality" (2018: n.p.) – on which, in the same volume, see Drakakis 2018: n.p. While not providing new evidence and somewhat overstating the topic of sacrifice (which the play explicitly relates only to the killing of Alarbus), Meyers Usher offers some interesting suggestions, especially regarding the two supplication scenes (1.1 and 3.1). Jones 1977 (esp. 114-15) more convincingly identifies textual echoes of *Iphigenia* in *Julius Caesar* (4.2.30-52, 4.3), stating that "[t]here is no other scene like it in classical drama, Greek or Roman" (110). See also Daniell in Shakespeare 1998: 93.

4 In this respect Jones has pointed out that differently from Ovid, Euripides could provide a "structure . . . that could be imitated and adapted to a modern theatre. The structure of Ovid's episode, on the other hand, is one proper to narrative poetry, not drama" (1977: 103).

along with acts of physical mutilation on stage (Bigliazzi 2018). This process is linked to figures of lopping, hewing, devouring and rituals of homophagy as the outcome of the collapse of civic ceremonies, both political and funerary, leading to Rome's regress to tribal forms of *sparagmos*. Shakespeare and his contemporaries were well aware of the symbolic ritualism inscribed in classical stories of dismemberment that could be found in both Ovid and Seneca.[5] This rituality is used in this play with different purposes, including the dramatization of the mangling of the very idea of Romanity through that of piety, or *pietas*, in which the essence of Romanity itself was claimed to be grounded (ibid.). I will argue that this process focused on the collapse of civil bonds and Roman *pietas* into its opposite, symbolically hinted at by the 'pity/pit' binary as a disquieting potential inscribed in the thematic and dramatic texture of the play,[6] is triggered by savage ceremonies leading up to wild justice. This process is closely linked with the use of the Hecuba story in ways that distance it from its Latin version and more traditional images of female mourning. This is not at odds with Tassi's claim that the enactment of "a new ruthless revenge cycle" is connected with the Philomela "master narrative" Shakespeare found in Ovid (2011a: 100, 102). Tassi has convincingly observed that the image of "handwashing" evoked by Aaron in 2.2. ("Philomel must lose her tongue today" and Tamora's sons will "wash their hands in . . . blood", 43, 45) "suggests Greek rituals of pollution and purification; a virgin is sacrificed, but it is a shameful, dire deed, unhallowed in spirit" (ibid.), uncomparable with the sacrifices of Iphygenia or Polyxena; it is a brutal, per-

5 Famous instances of *sparagmos* well-known to the Elizabethans are contained in Ovid's narration of the stories of Acteon (referred to in *Titus* 2.2.63) and Pentheus in book three of *Metamorphoses*, in Seneca's *Phaedra* (quoted in *Titus* 1.1.635 and 4.1.81-2, and alluded to in 5.3.69-71). Cf. Shakespeare 2018: 29; Miola 1992: 14-18; see 30 on Senecan and Renaissance dramas including the killing of children; on cannibalism in early modern culture cf. Noble 2003.

6 It first emerges in the insistent reference to 'pity' and 'pitilessness' in rituals of sacrifice in Act 1, establishing a metonymic chain that links the monument of the Andronici and the 'pit' in the forest; on this see Bigliazzi 2018.

verted 'sacrifice' that will drive Titus to be revenged "worse than Progne" (5.2.195). My contention is that the ethically ambivalent story of Procne's revenge[7] combines with that of Hecuba in ways that highlight a likewise ambiguous aspect of the Queen of Troy in *Titus* closer to Euripides' version than to Ovid's. In other words, Euripides' Hecuba seems to be the missing link in the construction of a revenge story openly revolving on Ovid's narrative of Philomela and Procne and, less prominently, on Ovid's Hecuba. This is especially interesting if we consider that, as Enterline remarked, "in the schools, Ovid was taught as one of the most 'copious' of authors and his Hecuba (*Metamorphoses* 13) provided an exemplary model for how to use copia to create great emotion" (2004: 25). The possibly Euripidean subtext for Hecuba suggests other, more problematic possibilities inspired by ancient myth, and at the same time opens new perspectives on the shaping of early modern revenge tragedy at a time when "[r]evenge was not yet fully identified with extralegal retaliation, nor was judicial punishment yet fully differentiated from extrajudicial vengeance, but involved a violently lopsided process of trying to get even" (Callaghan and Kyle 2007: 54). My discussion is premised on the consideration that the problematization of justice and revenge in *Titus* is inscribed in a cultural and political context where there was "contiguity between 'wilde justice' and 'justice'", as it "reveals itself plainly enough in actual cases of physical mutilation and in the drama of the period, most especially in revenge tragedy".[8] As Callaghan and Kyle have further elucidated, it was in the "context of the attempts by the Tudor and Stuart state to gain a mo-

7 Ovid's ambivalent position surfaces in his depiction of Procne's preying on Itys as a ferocious "Tyger" butchering "a little Calf that suckes upon a Hynde" (6.806). Not coincidentally, perhaps, Tamora too will be called a "ravishing tiger" (5.3.194). The moral ambiguity of the story's ending is symbolically underlined by the stain of blood on the feathers of the sparrow and the nightingale as the indelible mark of their crime: "And of their murther from their brests not yet the token goth, / For even still yet are stained with bloud the fethers of them both" (847-8). All references to Golding's translation are to Ovid 1904.

8 Callaghan and Kyle 2007: 40; for a fuller discussion of the relation between revenge drama and the judiciary system see ibid.

nopoly over retaliation for injuries and of the ideological struggle to differentiate the state's frequently bloody operations from those of 'wilde justice' that revenge drama becomes one of the most popular genres on the early modern stage" (40). In this respect, Euripides' ambiguous treatment of Hecuba's revenge most likely contributed to the way *Titus* offered a challenging early attempt to question ideas of revenge in drama.

2. Shakespeare's Hecubas

Shakespeare was evidently very interested in Hecuba if references throughout his work score up to fifteen allusions by name and one mention by the title of 'queen of Troy' (Pollard 2012, 2015, 2017). Apart from *Titus* and *Hamlet*, relevant examples include *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), *Coriolanus* (1608-9) and *Cymbeline* (1610-1611). None of them focuses on Hecuba as a figure of suffering, but as a figure of revenge.[9] For Lucrece, Volumnia and Innogen Hecuba clearly embodies immediate, aggressive response "to wrongdoers" (Pollard 2012: 1075), showing little affinity with the Senecan model of the bereaved, suffering mother.[10] When Lucrece famously beholds the painting of the fall of Troy and finds "despairing Hecuba" (1447), she "shapes her sorrow to the beldame's woes" (1458), complaining that the painter "did her wrong, / To give her so much grief and not a tongue" (1462-3); thus, she lends her her own voice, imaginatively avenging her "with [her] knife" by furiously "scratch[ing] out the angry eyes / Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies" (1469-70).[11] In *Coriolanus*, Volumnia

9 These references have often been pointed out. See for example Westney 1984; Tassi 2011a and 2011b; Kenward 2011; Pollard 2012, 2015 and 2017.

10 Seneca's *Troades* has been invoked with regard to Hecuba's curse on the Greeks (cf. Westney 1984: 455). In this regard, Westney has noted that perhaps the clearest mention of Hecuba's curse is contained in Sandy's commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, whose publication in 1617, however, excludes it as a source of Shakespeare's. All the same, Westney remarks, "Sandy probably reflected the work of other commentators in recording a detail about Hecuba that might have been current in the sixteenth century" (1984: 455).

11 All quotations from Shakespeare are from Shakespeare 1989, except for those from *Titus Andronicus*, which are from Shakespeare 2018.

denies importance to motherly love and contrasts Hecuba's breast-feeding image, as a figure of maternal affection (*Iliad* 22), with that of Hector's bleeding forehead as the visible sign of heroic honour – here an incitement for her daughter-in-law to be proud of Coriolanus' fighting against Aufidius (". . . the breasts of Hecuba, / When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier / Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood / At Grecian sword, contemning. . . .", *Coriolanus* 1.3.42-3).[12] Finally, in *Cymbeline* Innogen's mistaking Cloten's beheaded corpse lying next to her for that of Posthumous (a trunk vaguely reminiscent of Priam, *Aeneid* 2.558-9) pushes her to raise an invective, not a lament, in which there resounds Hecuba's vindictive rage: "Pisanio, / All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks, / And mine to boot, be darted on thee" (4.2.314-15).

In *Titus*, the mention of Hecuba likewise reflects an engagement with revenge, yet in a more substantial way, raising radical questions on the nature of 'justice' at the level of both the individual and the family when the community loses its grasp on 'just rule'. The occasion is that of funeral rites. Once the mourning of the dead in Rome regresses to a tribal ceremony involving the sacrifice of the enemy, civility collapses into barbarity and savagery spreads among the Romans and the Goths alike. Radical binarisms are effaced and ethically ambivalent figures of unruly family revenge mirror each other on either side, while Hecuba becomes the ambiguous model of

12 ". . . Hecuba then fell upon her knees, / Stript nak'd her bosom, show'd her breasts, and bad him rev'rence them, / And pity, if ever she had quieted his exclaim, / He would cease hers, and take the town, not tempting the rude field / When all had left it: 'Think,' said she, 'I gave thee life to yield / My life recomfort; thy rich wife shall have no rites of thee, / Nor do thee rites: our tears shall pay thy corse no obsequy, / Being ravish'd from us, Grecian dogs nourish'd with what I nurs'd" (*Iliad* 22.68-75). The quotation is from Chapman's *Iliad* (Homer 2000), but it should be noticed that Chapman's complete edition "with Book 22 was not printed until 1610, suggesting that Shakespeare knew his Homer from sources other than Chapman's translation" (Kenward 2011: 163). As Peyré has recently remarked, "Early on in his career, when composing *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, long before Chapman's *Seaven Books* were published, Shakespeare already showed sustained interest in the Troy story, which he probably alluded to from Virgil and Ovid, from Caxton, or from what had become common knowledge" (2017: 37).

their ‘wild justice’. As Jones remarked, “Tamora [in Act 1] is to Titus what Titus is later to be to her. Later – indeed for most of the play – it will be his turn to play Hecuba” (1977: 104-5).

Hecuba is openly evoked twice, in 1.1.139-41 with regard to Tamora, and in 4.1.19-21 with reference to Lavinia. As Pollard noticed, “it is striking that [Hecuba] appears in sections now widely attributed to George Peele [i.e., 1.1 and 4.1], with whom Shakespeare collaborated on the play” (2015: n.p.).[13] If Peele had a hand in the composition, the hypothesis of a Euripidean patterning would be reinforced, although if Jones’ suggestion that Shakespeare reworked a passage of Euripides’ *Iphigenia* in *Julius Caesar* is correct (see note 3 above), Peele’s intervention would not be necessary to justify allusions to *Hecuba* in *Titus*. In any case, Peele not only translated “one of Euripides’ Iphigenia plays” and was credited as a “privileged ventriloquist for Euripides” (Pollard 2017: 101-2),[14] but he also wrote an epyllion entitled *The Tale of Troy* (printed in 1589) where, somewhat unusually among his contemporaries, he depicted Hecuba as clearly mad with grief for her loss of Priam and Troy:

> My pen, forbear to write of Hecuba,
> That made the sun his glistering chariot stay,
> And raining tears his golden face to hide,
> For ruth of that did after her betide;
> Sith this thrice-wretched lady lived the last,
> Till Fortune’s spite and malice all was past
> And worn, with sorrows, wexen fell and mad:
> (460-6)[15]

13 The collaborative view has long been supported, most authoritatively by Vickers (2002: 148-243). Contrary positions include Bate in Shakespeare 1995, where we read that “the play’s structural unity suggests a single authorial hand” and “computer analysis . . . suggests what literary judgements confirms: that the whole of *Titus* is by a single hand” (82, 83; on Bate see Vickers 2002: 208-10). However, in in his recent recent revised edition of the play (Shakespeare 2018: 121ff.), Bate reconsiders the collaborative hypothesis.

14 “William Gager claimed that, ‘If Euripides lived, he would consider himself indebted to [Peele] – and Hecuba lingered in his imagination as he moved out of the university realm and into London’s commercial literary world” (Pollard 2017: 102).

15 This is the text of the second edition (1604) as printed in Peele 1888:

For the moment, it should be recalled that these two allusions frame a third indirect reference related to Titus in 3.1.264, concerning his reaction to his discovery of the horrific loss of his two sons. If we compare these three occurrences, we notice that Hecuba is not the "exemplary model" traditionally used to arouse compassion, as taught in schools, nor is she connected with a totally positive moral action. On the contrary, she evokes ambivalent avenging instincts bringing about wild chaos within a city morphed into "a wilderness of tigers" (3.1.54).

The first occurrence appears in Demetrius' advice to his mother soon after her appeal for mercy to an umovable Titus: Alarbus will be sacrificed and Demetrius incites Tamora to take revenge on Titus as the Queen of Troy did upon the Thracian king:

DEMETRIUS Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome.
Alarbus goes to rest and we survive
To tremble under Titus' threatening look.
Then, madam, stand resolved, but hope withal
The self-same gods that armed the queen of Troy
With opportunity of sharp revenge
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent
May favour Tamora, the queen of Goths
(When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen),
To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.
(1.1.135-44)

It has been contended, most significantly by Emrys Jones, that this reference with the peculiar mention of Polymestor's tent, although hardly conclusive, could have been inspired by the Latin translation of Euripides (presumably Erasmus' widely circulating 1506 one), because Ovid contains no such detail (1977: 104). More sceptical about the Euripidean source, Jonathan Bate has instead suggested that Shakespeare might have been prompted to write about a tent by the memory of "thentent" ("th'entent") in Golding's translation of *Metamorphoses*:

The cursed murtherer, and desyrde his presence too thentent
Too shew too him a masse of gold (so made shee her pretence),

263. The 1589 first edition has only a few lexical variants.

> Which for her lyttle Polydore was hid not farre from thence.
> (13.660-62)

This hypothesis dates back to 1903, when Robert Root wrote that it is "not inconceivable that [the reading "thent ent" as printed in the revised 1575 edition] should be misread 'the tent,' a substitution which would make good enough sense" (70). I am not so sure that it would make such good sense; soon afterwards the narrator says that the gold was not hid in 'a tent' but in "a secret place" (665; "in secreta venit", 555) where Polymestor is talked into entering in order to find the promised gold – a detail that would dissuade anyone from misreading 'the intent' as 'the tent': why should 'the tent' be then called "a secret place" four lines later? Besides, "thentent" is not an infrequent phrase in Golding's translation (printed as "thinent", it occurs about a hundred lines before, at 557: "Now too thintent I freely may depart"; spelt as "thentent" it reappears in 14.155: "But to thentent through ignorance thou erre not . . ."). Root also suggested that "[i]t is not impossible that the story of Jael and Sisera might have influenced the author's memory" (ibid.).[16] But why should one think about a Biblical model of female revenge in a tent when Hecuba is openly mentioned here?

In whatever form it was consulted, whether in Erasmus' translation or by way of a text based on it, Euripides' *Hecuba* seems to be the alluded subtext in this point, suggesting both a camp as a location and a tent as a secluded place:[17]

> HEC. Serues uelim has, quas extuli pecunias.
> POLY. Ubi nempe? An intra amictum, an abditas habes?
> HEC. Spoliorum aceruo his delitent *tentoriis*.
> POLY. Ubi? Nam hic Pelasgum nautica *tabernacula*.
> HEC. Sunt propria captis foeminis *tentoria*.
> POLY. Tutan satis sunt, intus atque absunt uiri?
> HEC. *Intus* Pelasgum nemo, nos solae sumus.
> Sed *intro* propera, . . .
> (1012-19; emphasis mine)

16 Reference is to Judges 4:21; see also 5: 24-26.

17 The Latin text is that of Erasmus 1506, and the English translation is by Edward Philip Coleridge, in Euripides 1938a. Subsequent quotations are from these editions.

> [Hec. I wish to keep safe the treasure I brought from Troy. // Poly. Where can it be? inside your dress, or have you hidden it? // Hec. It is safe among a heap of spoils within these *tents*. // Poly. Where? This is the station built by the Achaeans to surround their fleet (lit. "These are the *tents* of the Achaeans near their fleet"). // Hec. The captive women have *huts* (lit. "*tents*") of their own. // Poly. It is safe to enter? are there no men about? // Hec. There are no Achaeans *within*; we women are alone. *Enter then the tent* . . . (emphasis mine)]

Can we perhaps perceive a connection between the mentioned tent and Tamora's following preying upon her victim(s) within a wild forest where "never shines the sun" (2.2.96)? Can we agree with Jones' suggestion that, if not "a slip on Shakespeare's part", this change of "tent from Hecuba's to Polymestor's" could have been calculated precisely "in order to invent a new parallel between Hecuba and Tamora" (1977: 104)?[18] Jones further contended that "Just as Hecuba, says Demetrius, revenged herself upon Polymestor in his tent, so Tamora will revenge herself upon the 'barbarous' Roman in his home city" (ibid.). Perhaps the two options are not mutually exclusive and their combination may explain the wild image of Tamora after her Roman preys resembling beastly Hecuba hunting after the Thracian prey. In either case, the detail of the tent (as an equivalent either of the forest or of Rome, or of both), could only be suggested by the Euripidean text (or by any other text derived from it).

It may be anticipated here that Polymestor too is a barbarian for the Greeks, like Hecuba, in fact a traditionally much wilder one, as the Thracians were renowned for their ferocity (Mossman 1995: 185-6). Not coincidentally Tereus was the Thracian king who raped and mangled Philomela. Thus, casting Titus as the barbarous Roman from the point of view of the 'barbarian' mobilizes perspectivism as a major dramatic component. The audience are called on to share in both the Romans' and the Goths' suffering and to feel their avenging impulses before distancing from their

18 Interestingly, Theobald emended "his" to "her". This misreading has apparently proved tenacious: Brodersen 2018 wrongly locates Hecuba's violence on Polymestor in 'his' tent.

brutality. There is no third party on stage to offer impartial judgement. In Euripides, there is a third party instead, Agamemnon, and for him both Hecuba and Polymestor are barbarians, although with a difference.[19] I will return to the implications of this parallel at a later stage.

For the moment, let us consider the second indirect allusion to Hecuba, which significantly occurs at the climax of Titus' inflicted pain, when, in 3.1, instead of seeing his two sons freed in exchange for his severed hand, he receives his hand back together with their two heads. Titus is struck dumb, and when Marcus shows surprise at his silence, he bursts into an anticlimactic grotesque laughter that reverses tragedy into gruesome comedy:

> MARCUS . . . Why art thou still?
> TITUS Ha, ha, ha!
> MARCUS Why dost thou laugh? It fits not with this hour.
> TITUS Why? I have not another tear to shed.
> Besides, this sorrow is an enemy
> And would usurp upon my watery eyes
> And make them blind with tributary tears.
> (3.1.264-70)

If Shakespeare, as Bate suggests, has in mind Ovid ("The Trojane Ladyes shrieked out. But shee [Hecuba] was dumb for sorrow. / The anguish of her hart forclosde as well her speech as eeke / Her teares devowring them within", 13.645-7), it is in order to expand Hecuba's silence and elaborate on the idea of the interruption of lament due to excess of grief. What follows is not mourning but a ritualistic vow to redress wrongdoing (3.1.271-80). Significantly, it is precisely at this point that Titus responds to Tamora's sworn revenge with an identical vow of private justice: "You heavy people, circle me about, / That I may turn me to each one of you / And swear unto my soul to right your wrongs [*They make a vow*] / The

19 Interestingly, this differentiation between various degrees of barbarity, as opposed to the Greeks, is typical of *Hecuba*. In Euripides' *Trojan Women* there is no such contrast, and Andromache goes so far as to call the Greeks barbarous for plotting to kill Astyanax: "O you Hellenes, cunning to devise new forms of cruelty [βάρβαρα κακά, lit. 'of barbaric evils'], / why slay this child who never wronged any?" (764-5, trans. Coleridge in Euripides 1938b).

vow is made . . ." (3.1.277-79). There follows their grotesque procession as they leave the stage, Titus and Marcus bearing the head of the two sons, Lavinia holding Titus' own hand in her mouth, while Lucius is sent away from "proud Rome" (3.1.291) to join the Goths and raise an army "to be revenged on Rome" (301). Thus, the figure of Hecuba punctuates the two moments when both Tamora and Titus progress from mourning to savage private justice.

The last, explicit reference to Hecuba occurs in 4.1, when the boy shows fear of an apparently maddened Lavinia following him everywhere (4.1.2), and compares her to maddened Hecuba:

> My lord, I know not, I, nor can I guess,
> Unless some fit or frenzy do possess her.
> For I have heard my grandsire say full oft
> Extremity of griefs would make men mad,
> And I have read that Hecuba of Troy
> Ran mad for sorrow. That made me to fear,
> Although, my lord, I know my noble aunt
> Loves me as dear as e'er my mother did,
> And would not but in fury fright my youth,
> Which made me down to throw my books and fly,
> Causeless perhaps. . . .
> (4.1.16-26)

It has been observed that in neither Euripides nor Ovid Hecuba is depicted as "madded", as in both her revenge is lucidly contrived and executed (see e.g. Westney 1984: 444). We have already noted that Peele in his epyllion on Troy described Hecuba as "wexen mad" (albeit for Priam's death), which might further suggest his hand (or his influence) in this point. However, it remains unclear from where this idea was derived, although apparently Hecuba was often "referred to [as mad] in English literature before Shakespeare" (Westney 1984: 445). And yet, Westney (ibid.) recalls that the only other reference to her madness before *Titus* was Marlowe's line on "the frantic Queen" in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (2.1.244; perf. 1587-1593; pr. 1594), and, before then, Cooper's mention of the Queen in *Thesaurus* (1565), where she was said to have "finally waxed madde, and did byte and stryke all men that mette, wherefore she was called dogge, and at the laste was hyr selfe kylled with stones by

the Greekes" (J4r). In his turn, Bate suggested a comparison with *Ironside* [4.2] 1477-80, where Hecuba is said to have run "mad for sorrow" because unable to lament for excess of grief ("To dam my eyes were but to drown my heart / like *Hecuba*, the woeful Queen of Troy, / who having no avoidance for her grief, / ran mad for sorrow 'cause she could not weep").[20]

If we look at Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 13 we only find an angry and furious Hecuba, not a mad one ("And therwithall shee armd her selfe and furnisht her with ire: / Wherethrough as soone as that her hart was fully set on fyre, . . . / Now having meynt her teares with wrath) / . . . And beeing sore inflaamd with wrath, caught hold uppon him", 652-70). Her gouging Polymestor'eyes is a brutal act of violence carefully planned and lucidly carried out before she is transformed into a dog:

> . . . [Hecuba] digitos in perfida lumina condit
> expellitque genis oculos (facit ira valentem)
> immergitque manus, foedataque sanguine sonti
> non lumen (neque enim superest), loca luminis haurit.
> (Ovid 2000: 13.561-4)

> [Hecuba] Did in the traytors face bestowe her nayles, and scratched out
> His eyes, her anger gave her hart and made her strong and stout.
> Shee thrust her fingars in as farre as could bee, and did bore
> Not now his eyes (for why his eyes were pulled out before)
> But bothe the places of the eyes berayd with wicked blood.
> (Ovid 1904: 13.673-7)

In Seneca's *Agamemnon* Cassandra alludes to her metamorphosis into "a bedlam bitch", an expression which, compared to the original "circa ruinas rabida latrauit suas" (708; "around the ruined walls madly she raked", Seneca 1968), incorporates a hint at her mental insanity. However, the original refers her madness to a previous time, when she ran desperate around her palace in Troy

20 For other textual similarities between *Ironisde* and *Titus Andronicus*, see Sams 1985: *passim*, esp. 27-40. Also notice the resonance of l. 470 ("ran mad for sorrow 'cause she could not weep") with the above-quoted lines of Ovid 13.645-7 (referred to *Titus* 3.1.264-70) on the breaking of lament caused by grief.

– a detail that Peele retained in his epyllion, and instead Studley erroneously related to Polydorus' death:

> tot illa regum mater et regimen Phrygum
> fecunda in ignes Hecuba fatorum nouas
> experta leges induit uultus feros:
> circa ruinas rabida latrauit suas,
> Troiae superstes, Hectori, Priamo, sibi.
> (Seneca 1968: 705-9)

> That *Hecuba* the mother of so many a pryncely wyght,
> Whose fruitfull Wombe did breede the brand, of fyer blasing bryght:
> Who also bare the swinge in *Troy,* by practise now doth learne,
> New lawes and guise of desteny in bondage to discerne.
> On her shee takath heart of grace with lookes so sterne and wylde,
> And barketh as a bedlem bitch about her strangled chylde
> Deare *Polidor,* the remnaunt left, and onely hope of *Troy,*
> *Hector,* and *Priam* to reuenge, and to restore her ioy.
> (Seneca 1581: 153v)

If we turn to Euripides, her lament for Polydorus is qualified as Dionysian (νόμον / βακχεῖον, 685-6; "cantionem maenadum", 18r), which, as Mossman claims, "could at least suggest dangerous loss of rational control, meaning 'frenzied' or 'inspired', as it does when Hecuba uses it of Cassandra at 676" (1995: 167-8).[21] And yet, Mossman also justly remarks that "[v]ehemence is a characteristic of laments" (168).

Whatever may have suggested mad sorrow here (if not

21 References to the lines of the Greek text are to Battezzato 2018, who has recently noticed that the Dionysian lament is a prelude to the avenging plan. It is formally a lament, but it is narrative in content, as Hecuba relates how Polydorus was entrusted to Polymestor: "sung and recited sections create an alternation between the delivery of information and highly emotional reactions. This scene is unusual in that visual contact with the body of Polydorus becomes a substitute for a verbal announcement of his death. Hecuba addresses her dead son in a lament, asking *him* questions about his death; the servant fills in the details, answering the questions directed to Polydorus. Hecuba's dialogue with her son's body mixes formulas of lament (685n.) and questions which it would be normal to ask of a messenger" (2018: 164, comment on 684-721).

precise lexical occurrences, perhaps the fury of her own bestial revenge), Lavinia, like Tamora, "imitates Hecuba in converting grief to anger and revenge, escalating the passionate action that animates the play" (Pollard 2015: n.p.). What the boy perceives is the potential for her avenging fury which scares him into thinking that she might destroy him, as Hecuba had done with Polymestor's sons. If this is implied in his fear, Ovid was not the direct source, as no mention of the killing of children is made in *Metamorphoses*; yet Euripides' *Hecuba* could have been.

3. What Justice?

But why could Euripides' fingerprint be relevant for a better understanding of the play? The answer is that, compared to Ovid's treatment of Hecuba, Euripides is much more ambiguous, and ambiguity is a fundamental feature of *Titus'* treatment of justice in Rome. There is no doubt that Polymestor is a "cursed murtherer" in Ovid and that Hecuba's fate and final metamorphosis into a dog turns her into the real victim. Ovid is unequivocal in stating that the Trojans, the Greeks and the gods are all moved to compassion for her terrible fate:

> illius Troasque suos hostesque Pelasgos,
> illius fortuna deos quoque moverat omnes,
> sic omnes, ut et ipsa Iovis coniunxque sororque
> eventus Hecubam meruisse negaverit illos.
> (Ovid 2000: 572-5)

> . . . Her fortune moved not
> Her Trojans only, but the Greekes her foes to ruthe: her lot
> Did move even all the Goddes to ruthe: and so effectually,
> That *Hecub* too deserve such end even Juno did denye.
> (Ovid 1904: 685-8)

In this respect Euripides is more problematic. As Christian Billing has convincingly argued, in line with gender-political criticism on Greek female weeping for the dead (Foley 1993; Loraux 1998; Alexiou 2002), *Hecuba* exemplifies how "the formal conventions of Greek tragedy augment the power of female lament because such rhetorical expression acts, in many ways, as a sub-

stitute for violent action" (Billing 2007: 50). It is a surrogate of vengeance channelling female violence into a rite approved by the community, if not excessively disorderly.[22] The transition from complaint to supplication coincides with Hecuba's gesture of turning towards Agamemnon, who has repeatedly invited her to, and to explain what has happened and whose body it is she is weeping for. Turning her face towards him, she ceases chanting as a maenad (νόμον / βακχεῖον) and suddenly transforms into a shrewd orator capable of handling a whole gamut of rhetorical tools and even connecting them, at some point, with a rhetoric of the body, as if her limbs were endowed with voice, and her own voice were multiplied in them (835-40; see Avezzù forthcoming). The shift from self-referential lament to the transitive *actio* of oration aiming at *peithô*, or emotional persuasion, is abrupt and accurately studied, as if a new Hecuba turning her face towards her 'master' prepared herself to master him. That is why she is very attentive to Agamemnon's feedback, as a crafty orator in an assembly or court of justice. It is no surprise that her performance proves successful, at least in so far as Agamemnon, very cautiously, lets her proceed with her vengeance without interfering:

> AGA. Ita fiet: at si nauigare copiis
> Licuisset hoc tibi haud queam largirier:
> Sed quia ferentes nunc negat ventos deus:
> Manendum: et opperiendum erit nobis quoad
> Detur secundus cursus atque commodus.
> Bene vertat autem: quippe pariter omnium
> Et publicitus et singulorum proprie
> Refert malis male evuenire: bonis bene.
> (23^r-v^)

> [AGAMEMNON So shall it be; yet had the host been able to sail, I could not have granted thee this boon; but, as it is, since the god sends forth no favouring breeze, we needs must abide, seeing, as

22 On sixth-century BC limitations of "everything disorderly and excessive in women's festivals, processions (*exodoi*) and funeral rites" (Plutarch, *Solon* 21.5)", see Foley 1993: 103; on parallels with practices of lamentation in early modern England see Goodland 2003 and 2005; see also Bigliazzi forthcoming.

> we do, that sailing cannot be. Good luck to thee! for this is the interest alike of citizen and state, that the wrong-doer be punished and the good man prosper. (898-904)]

Nonetheless, the question itself of vengeance is not uncontroversial. As Mossman has argued, here it could be justifiable on the basis of "Athenian law concerning the murder of slaves", as "it was the duty of the relatives of a murdered slave to urge his master to obtain vengeance by taking legal action" (1995: 183). But the 'master' refuses, letting her "resort to self-help (861ff.)", a fact which in Athens would have produced unpredictable reactions on the part of the citizens (ibid.). On the other hand, Hecuba has no fellow citizens as the "community has vanished", and therefore she is not "bound to refrain from vengeance" for their sake (184). Thus, her action is both legitimate for the evident wrong received, and 'legitimized' by Agamemnon, albeit "self-help" "has the effect of stressing the terrible state of flux in the aftermath of the destruction of Troy", when there is no longer a polis and therefore no stable rule (ibid.).

And yet, although sanctioned by the chief of the Greeks, Hecuba's action is not exempt from moral ambiguity. Her hint at the Lemnian women at 886-7 – infamous for killing all men on the island of Lemnos as a consequence of their husbands' taking Thracian concubines – in response to Agamemnon's scepticism about female capacity to take revenge on their own, lets ideas of ferocity sneak into the scene as a prefiguration of her own savageness in blinding Polymestor (child-killing was not unusual in vengeance). The audience expect to hear about his murder, instead they hear him being tortured first, and then see him horrendously mutilated. What Euripides deploys is Hecuba's animal wildness suddenly subverting the moral meaning of her 'legitimized' revenge.[23] In this respect, the use of the offstage is dramatically very

23 It has often been contended that the play presents two 'tragedies', one revolving around the death of Polyxena, sacrificed according to Greek customs, and the other around that of Polydorus, barbarously murdered for greed. In Nussbaum's view, however, the two parts appear closely linked once we "focus on the question of good character and its stability", as this allows us to "see that the first episode sets forth a view on this issue [related to the respect and/or violation of *nomos*] which the second episode will give us reason to ques-

effective: the audience hear Polymestor's cry, then Hecuba's gloat on what she has done while introducing his entrance onstage as a presenter and director of a piece of theatre of cruelty:

> He. Mox hunc videbis prodeuntem ex aedibus
> Caecum atque caecis lubricantem passibus.
> Pariter duorum liberum cadauera:
> Quos ipsa cum fortissimis Iliadibus
> Ferro peremi. Iamque persoluit mihi
> Poenas. sed (ut vides) foras mouet pedem.
> Verum hinc prosul concessero: ac vitauero
> Ira aestuantem Thraca: et indomitum virum.
> (27r)

> [Hecuba A moment, and you shall see him before the tent, blind, advancing with blind random step; and the bodies of his two children whom I with my brave women of Troy killed; he has paid me the penalty; here he comes from the tent, as you see. I will withdraw out of his path and stand aside from the hot fury of the Thracian, my deadly foe. (1049-55)]

Polymestor's appearance is not a silent spectacle of horror; he moves and speaks, describing himself on all fours while he crawls in the attempt to "gorge on [the women's] flesh and bones" (1071), and make for himself "a wild beasts' meal, inflicting mutilation" (1072), in fear that they may mangle his children as a "feast of blood for dogs" (1077-8). He is reduced to a horrifyingly mauled body, "a signifier of the female attack that has left him blind and heirless" (Billing 2007: 54), replacing the pitiful, mangled carcass of Polydorus, brought off stage at 904. In a crescendo of atrocity pivoting on aural effects coming from the offstage,

tion. At the same time it reveals to us, in the person of Polyxena, features of nobility on account of which it cannot possibly be as stable as Hecuba thinks, features whose violent removal will be the source of Hecuba's degeneration in the play's second half" (2001: 406). For Nussbaum's discussion of Hecuba's savage reaction to Polymestor's violation of the *nomoi* of hospitality and friendship, see chap. 13, "The Betrayal of Convention: a Reading of Euripides' *Hecuba*". A critique of Nussbaum's interpretation of *nomos* as a human construct can be found in Mossman 1995: 182. A recent summary of Nussbaum's position within a broader reception of the play is in Brodersen 2018.

before being shown onstage, Hecuba appears to belong to a ferocious female community responding to the rapacity of yet another barbarian like her with wild justice, in a dispute arbitrated by a Greek. Agamemnon makes their 'otherness' explicit during the trial, when he urges Polymestor to "banish that savage spirit from your heart and plead your cause" (1129-30; βάρβαρον; "barbariem"), and only ratifies an action carried out by another barbarian, in which he has refused to become involved and on which, so to speak, he has turned a blind eye. And yet his verdict is not immune to critique. Dionysus' own prophecy of retribution voiced by Polymestor invests both Agamemnon, whose violent end is predicted,[24] and Hecuba. However we interpret the dog imagery related to the women in the tent (1070-80) and to Hecuba's final announced metamorphosis, ambiguously hinting at bestiality, domesticity, but also at immortality, that final curse is not silenced. As Mossman remarked, "initial support of Hecuba is qualified by the blinding, restored by the subsequent *agōn*, and finally thrown into confusion by the last scene" (1995: 203).

4. Wild Justice

Let us now turn to *Titus* and its connections with Euripides' play. We noticed that in *Hecuba* there are two main dramatic changes, from lament to supplication and from 'legitimate' justice to ferocious, albeit legitimized, justice. In *Titus* this latter shift occurs very early in the play. As often remarked, 1.1 stages the political rite of power on three different levels: up above, with the "*Tribunes and Senators aloft*"; down below (or possibly in the discovery space), with the funeral rite of interment; and on the main stage, with the two brothers' entrance from opposite sides and their rivalry over Lavinia. The sacrifice of the barbarian Alarbus, the eldest and noblest son of Tamora, takes place offstage, while Titus' sacrifice of his youngest son Mutius occurrs onstage. In this complex stage business symbolically exploiting the resources of

24 This brings full circle the irony implied in the previous mention of the Lemnian women.

the multiple stage, the funeral ceremony has a central function. It regards Titus' loss of his sons 'sacrificed' offstage for the cause of Rome against the "barbarous Goths" (1.1.28) and now about to undergo the rite of interment in the monument of the Andronici. Before Titus speaks like a new Priam, whom he resembles as the father of twenty-five valiant sons, half the number of the Trojan king's (1.1.82-84), Q1 contains a dubious passage on Roman sacrificial rites, indicated by Bate within braces:

> MARCUS . . . {and at this day
> To the monument of the Andronici
> Done sacrifice of expiation,
> And slain the noblest prisoner of the Goths}.
> (1.1.35-8)

These lines are in glaring contradiction with the follow-up of the action, since Alarbus has not yet been slain. Perhaps for this reason they are not in Q2. Bate does not omit them in his edition, arguing that "'At this day' could mean 'on the day corresponding to this': i.e., on each of Titus' five returns to Rome, his first action was to slay a prisoner". This would suggest "an anticipation of the slaying of Alarbus, not an inconsistency with it" (Shakespeare 2018: 98).[25] If this were correct, Q1 would hint at human sacrifice as a custom, contrary to Rome's priding itself in not allowing it (135n127). On the other hand, Bate also notes that the slaying of Alarbus might have been an afterthought and, once added, Shakespeare could have forgotten to omit Marcus' earlier lines.[26] If that was the case, this addition should have occurred "during the composition of the first scene", because later in the same scene "Tamora refers back to it ('And make them know what 'tis to let a queen / Kneel in the street and beg for grace in vain', 1.1.459-60)" (Shakespeare 2018: 102-3). Whichever the case, staging human sac-

25 Bate further claims that "This interpretation could be strengthened by emending 'at this day' to 'as this day', or (Jackson conj.) 'at this door' (here at the entrance to the tomb of the Andronici)" (Shakespeare 2018: 98).

26 "That the staging of the sacrifice is an afterthought would certainly account for the omission of Alarbus from the entry. It might suggest that Shakespeare forgot to go back and cross out 35-8" (Shakespeare 2018: 102).

rifice, except for Seneca's *Troades*, was not common, and also in Seneca the context was very different, as Polyxena's was a propitiating sacrifice not unusual in Greek culture, while Astyanax' killing was linked to fear of revenge.[27] Neither of the two motives is adduced by Titus' eldest son, Lucius, for the sacrifice of Alarbus. His argument is that "the shadows [of his brothers should] be not unappeased / Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth" (1.1.103-4). Therefore, the limbs of the eldest of the Goths must be hewn, "*Ad manes fratrum* [to] sacrifice his flesh" (1.1.101),[28] interpreting, before Titus does, the law of retaliation which "religiously" (1.1.127) requires 'brothers for brothers' in a peculiarly brutal way. Lucius does not simply ask for Alarbus' life, but for his dismemberment and vilification. The irony of this word "religiously" is grasped by Tamora who in an aside reverts its meaning into "irreligious piety" (1.1.133), marking the moment when perspectives are suddenly turned around and civility is recognized by the barbarian as being barbarous. This is the very moment when the crisis of funeral rituals and of Roman *pietas* manifests itself: showing excessive, obdurate respect of the *manes* of the Andronici by following a savage retributive logic denounces the cruelty of 'excessive justice' and its turning into wild justice.[29]

27 For a parallel between this initial scene and *Troades*, cf. Miola 1992: 18ff.; Bullough 1957: 26.

28 It has been noted that "The idea of committing murder to appease the shades of the dead, and particularly the use of the phrase *Ad manes fratrum*, recall the Senecan Medea's vision of her dead and dismembered brother Absyrtus, a vision which drives her on to kill her sons: *mihi me relinque et utere hac, frater, manu / quae strinxit ensem. victima manes tuos / placamus ista.* (969-971)": Heavey 2014: n.p.; the parallel between Medea and Tamora, however, remains in many respects unconvincing. The textual allusion rather suggests that possible memories of Seneca could easily be re-adapted as the context required.

29 Callaghan and Kyle connect this first episode with religious questions of retaliation and punishment and of conflation of justice and wilde justice in the spread of different forms and judicial violence in early modern England. In particular, they note that "this killing, the first reprisal at the very beginning of the play, is an act of specifically religious violence whose altar has been the tomb of the Andronici" and "suggests that the play's meditation on justice and reprisal is deeply entrenched in the internecine struggle of

What follows is on record: Demetrius incites Tamora to become a new Hecuba and Lucius re-enters triumphantly announcing the accomplishment of the horrendous rite of dismemberment and the burning of Alarbus' entrails on a sacrificial pyre. On stage, Titus performs the rite of interment and appeasement of his dead sons. The 'other' has been lopped and hewn and burnt for the bodies of young Romans to rest in peace; yet that lopping has othered the Romans from Rome and triggered a process of unruly justice:

> Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doeth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. . . . Public revengers are for the most part fortunate. . . . But in private revengers are not so. Nay rather, vindicative persons live the life of witches, who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate. (Francis Bacon, "On revenge", in Bacon 1999: 10-11)

The sacrifice of Alarbus which no-one opposes, and resembles very much a family business, is in fact an act of wild justice as condemned by Francis Bacon. It sparks off a chain reaction in the name of Hecuba, whose ghost is significantly present at the main turning points of drama: Tamora's beginning her revenge (1.1), Titus' vow for private revenge (3.1), the *anagnorisis* of Demetrius and Chiron's responsibility in the rape and mutilation of Lavinia, and Titus' "mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths" (4.1.93). What we assist to is a progressive coalescing of Titus and Tamora into new versions of Hecubas who out-Hecuba Hecuba: from being assimilated to Priam in the opening scene, in 3.1 Titus himself re-enacts Hecuba's speechless reaction to the horror of the sight of his slain sons and resolves himself to retaliation in ways that he reiterates in 4.1, before performing his revenge as a piece of theatre of cruelty competing with Tamora's

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Christianity in post-Reformation England. . . . This is not, however, to align the play with either Protestant or Catholic ideology, but to say that mutilation and dismemberment had both judicial and religious dimensions" (2007: 47, 49).

own, and, before her, with Hecuba's. In this respect Tamora and Titus get very close to each other, both crossing moral boundaries savagely, in ways that impede the final re-establishment of a neat divide between barbarity and civility. Lucius, the restorer of peace, called up "to knit again / . . . these broken limbs into one body" (5.3.69, 71), is the one who has first lopped and hewn the limbs of the young captive and dismembered ideas of Roman piety, triggering wild justice. He is the one who to the end confirms that the only justice he knows is wild. The two barbarians, after incorporation, will be expelled, tortured and let to be preyed upon by wild animals. Aaron will be "set breast-deep in earth and famish[ed]" (5.3.178); the "ravenous tiger" (5.3.194), Tamora, will be denied any "funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed, / No mournful bell shall ring her burial", but she will be "throw[n] . . . forth to beasts and devoid of prey: / Her life was beastly and devoid of pity, / And being dead, let birds on her take pity" (5.3.195-9). Being thrown out, Bate pinpoints, was "the fate of executed felons in Elizabeth England" (Shakespeare 2018: 318n197). Yet, to what extent is Tamora a felon compared to the barbarised Lucius himself, the initiator of an escalation of physical and symbolical dismemberment of Romanity? He is the one who will end the play on an ironically macabre couplet ("devoid of pity" / "let birds on her take pity", 5.3.198-9), and in Q2 will speak four more lines on justice done ("See justice done on *Aron* the damn'd Moore, / By whom our heuie haps had their beginning / Than afterwards to order well the state, / That like euents that nere it ruinate", 5.3.200-3). Interestingly, in those extra lines Lucius shifts the attention to a point of origin of chaos other than himself and extraneous to Rome and its barbarous sacrifices, but identical with the barbarian's own evil-doing as the primary cause of the dismemberment of the state and its values.

Ovid's story of revengeful Hecuba does not raise such questions, but Euripides' does. And ideas of wild justice as a crucial issue of this early play might have been inspired by the Latinized version of that Greek precedent in terms both of a dramaturgy of cruelty and of the dissolving of binarisms and construction of moral ambiguities. Perhaps not surprisingly the narrative and the ballad with the same subject of *Titus* we have do not contain the episode of the sacrifice of Alarbus setting off the wild reaction of

the queen of Goths and its Roman chain-reaction.[30] There may be a number of reasons for their not having it, but surely Shakespeare (or Shakespeare and Peele) gave it prominence making it the turning point of the play with a 'Hecuba-effect' worthy of Euripides' ambiguities, in fact out-Euripiding Euripides.

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30 The orthodox genetic view is that the narrative came first, followed by the play and the ballad, but a few critics, including Bate (Shakespeare 2018: 82ff.), have suggested that the ballad and the narrative followed the play. On the play's sources see also Bullough 1957.

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