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MIXED CHORUSES AND MARRIAGE SONGS: A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE THIRD STASIMON OF THE *HIPPOLYTOS**

Abstract: This article uses evidence drawn from *hymenaios* and wedding ritual to reach a new interpretation of the third stasimon of the *Hippolytos*, and its rôle in the play. There is longstanding contention about whether a second (male) chorus participates in the ode, singing in antiphony with the existing tragic chorus. Even scholars who accept that a second chorus is present have tended to regard it as an aberration which needs to be explained away, rather than a deliberate choice with poetic significance. I discuss the cultural implications of such a chorus, examining our evidence for real-life mixed choruses, and then applying this to the ode itself. The evidence for mixed choruses suggests they are strongly associated with marriage. Looking more closely at the language and imagery of the ode, there are allusions to the *topoi* of wedding songs and ritual running through it. The ode can use these as a device to trigger deep-rooted responses and associations from the audience, as these motifs are drawn from the cultural tradition which the audience shares. The *topoi* tie in with the theme of marriage and sexuality within the *Hippolytos* as a whole. But while their usual purpose is to set up conventional models and ways of thinking, the way they are deployed in the ode in fact serves to undermine these models, and to put a darker spin on the norms of sexual behaviour. This strand of imagery therefore also provides a filter for interpreting Hippolytos' own attitude towards sexuality, and a guide to how we are meant to respond to it.

THE third stasimon of the *Hippolytos* (1102-50) has long been a crux of interpretation. Firstly, textual evidence suggests the ode is sung by two separate choral groups, one the original tragic chorus (women of Troezen), and the other a group of men. The antiphony of the two choruses here is unique in surviving tragedy. There has therefore been much contention over whether this is plausible, or whether there can be another way of interpreting the text. Secondly, the language and imagery of the third stasimon are confusing in their own right. The ode is a lament for Hippolytos' exile, but its details are strange and do not tie into the story as Euripides tells it. For example, the chorus describes girls vying for Hippolytos' bed (1139-40). This seems bizarre given that his chastity is the main focus of the play, even if we understand it as an allusion to his cult status after his death (1423-30). Similarly, Hippolytos' mother is described as being unfortunate in having given birth to him (1144-5), but this reference comes out of the blue: not only does she have no rôle in the play, but mythological convention is that she is long dead.[1]

In this article I suggest that both these difficulties can be solved by a single answer. The key to the third stasimon is the language of *hymenaios*.[2] I will identify ways in which the themes and *topoi* of wedding poetry run through the ode. I will then examine the evidence for mixed choral performance as a hymeneal motif. And finally I will explore how the hymeneal imagery of the third stasimon fits in with the broader themes of the *Hippolytos*, and argue that the mixed

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[1] *Pace* Meridor (1972), I do not find the reference to the cessation of music problematic. The most obvious interpretation is that it is Hippolytos' own musical performance which will cease in the house, and so it is a general statement about what life in the house will be like without him (just like the absence of horse-training and offerings to Artemis). Musical performance is considered as much a part of young male aristocratic lifestyle as hunting – in fact Hippolytos leads the lyric song for Artemis at the start of the play.

[2] For the purposes of this article, I intend the terms 'epithalamic' and 'hymeneal' simply to mean 'connected with marriage', and to be interchangeable. In fact, I take the genre term *epithalamion* originally to have referred specifically to songs sung outside the house once the bride and groom are inside, and *hymenaios* to be a catch-all term referring to all wedding songs, but the distinction is not relevant here. This follows the interpretation of Muth (1954): '*Hymenaios* ... verhält sich zu *Epithalamion* wie das logische Genus zur Species.'

chorus of the *Hippolytos* is not something which needs to be explained away or apologized for, but a deliberate piece of tragic innovation which ties in with and enhances Euripides' presentation of the myth.[3]

THE THIRD STASIMON: INITIAL THOUGHTS (BACK TO THE MEADOW)

The third stasimon begins with a strophic pair consisting of generalizing *gnomai* and the chorus' hopes for their future, before moving on to Hippolytos' situation. This part of the ode is not directly hymeneal. But the first two stanzas establish a tone of foreboding, which sets us up for the later part of the ode. The language of the *hymenaios* enters the ode in the second section (1120-50), which I give here:

οὐκέτι γὰρ καθαρὰν φρέν' ἔχω, παρὰ δ' ἐλπίδ' ἃ λεύσσω
ἐπεὶ τὸν Ἑλλανίας φανερώτατον ἀστέρ' Ἀθήνας[4]
εἴδομεν εἴδομεν ἐκ πατρὸς ὀργᾶς
ἄλλαν ἐπ' αἶαν ἱέμενον.
ὦ ψάμαθοι πολιήτιδος ἀκτᾶς,
ὦ δρυμὸς ὄρεος ὅθι κυνῶν
ὠκυπόδων μέτα θῆρας ἔναιρεν
Δίκτυνναν ἀμφὶ σεμνάν.

οὐκέτι συζυγίαν πώλων Ἐνετᾶν ἐπιβάσηι
τὸν ἀμφὶ Λίμνας τρόχον κατέχων ποδὶ γυμνάδος ἵππου·
μοῦσα δ' ἄυπνος ὑπ' ἄντυγι χορδᾶν
λήξει πατρῷιον ἀνὰ δόμον·
ἀστέφανοι δὲ κόρας ἀνάπαυλαι
Λατοῦς βαθεῖαν ἀνὰ χλόαν·
νυμφιδία δ' ἀπόλωλε φυγᾶι σᾶι
λέκτρων ἅμιλλα κούραις.

ἐγὼ δὲ σᾶι δυστυχίαι
δάκρυσι διοίσω
πότμον ἄποτμον. ὦ τάλαινα μᾶτερ,
ἔτεκες ἀνόνατα· φεῦ,
μανίω θεοῖσιν.
ἰὼ ἰώ·
συζύγιαι Χάριτες, τί τὸν τάλαν' ἐκ πατρίας γᾶς
οὐδὲν ἄτας αἴτιον
πέμπετε τῶνδ' ἀπ' οἴκων;

'No longer is my mind clear, and what I see is contrary to my hope, since we saw, we saw the brightest star of Greek Athens rushing to another land because of his father's anger. Oh sands of the city's shore, oh mountain thicket where he killed wild beasts with his swift hounds, along with holy Dictynna.

[3] The connection between the mixed chorus and hymeneal language has also been suggested by Burnett (1986) 173-4, though her interpretation of what it conveys is slightly different to what I set out below. In particular, as I shall argue later in this paper, the song does not simply set up the norms of sexual behaviour but does so in a way that makes them worrying.

[4] I give the MSS version for simplicity's sake, though I concur that Ἀθήνας is probably corrupt. For the purposes of my argument here, the reading of this word is not important. See Halleran (1995) on 1122-3 for an outline of the various proposed emendations.

> No longer will you mount your yoked team of Enetic colts and hold your course around the Lake with your trained horses, and your unsleeping music beneath the strings' frame will cease throughout your father's house. Throughout the greenery, the resting places of Leto's daughter will be without garlands, and by your exile the contest among maidens for your bridal bed has been lost.
>
> But I will endure an ill-fated fate in tears for your misfortune. Oh poor mother, you gave birth in vain. Ah, I am mad at the gods. Oh, yoked graces, why do you send this man, who is not at all responsible for his ruin, out of his fatherland, away from this house?'[5]

At first glance, the point of the ode's imagery seems straightforward. In imagining how the house will be different after Hippolytos' departure, the chorus think of activities typical of a young man. The reference to girls vying for him could be explained away on those terms: a natural consequence of having a talented and athletic young man in the house. Similarly, Pindar *Pythian* 9.98-100 describes women watching Telesikrates and wishing for him as a husband or son as a result of his athletic prowess. It is worth bearing in mind that this reference, combined with the marriage theme of the myth in *Pythian* 9, has led to a common interpretation that Telesikrates was actually about to be married.[6]

Admiration and rivalry for the favours of the admired one are associated with marriage. Alkman *fr.* 81 PMGF also describes girls admiring a young man and wishing they could marry him. Conversely, Theokritos' *Epithalamion for Helen* describes Menelaos competing for Helen's bed (18.16-17).[7] Emphasizing how attractive both partners are is a central theme of wedding poetry: Sappho praises her brides for their beauty and her grooms for their physical size, and comments on the desirability of both (*frr.* 108, 111, 112, 113 V). However, in the *Hippolytos*, the reference to the girls is placed directly after the mention of Hippolytos putting garlands on Artemis' resting places. This recalls the scene at the start of the play where Hippolytos brings Artemis a garland from an uncut meadow, and his fierce rejection of Aphrodite and of sexuality when he speaks to the servant immediately afterwards. Thus, the girls in this ode are not just coincidentally problematic but strikingly out of place. It is almost as if they are meant to remind us that praising Hippolytos in the normal terms reserved for a talented young aristocrat is not appropriate.

The allusion to the 'uncut meadow' speech serves to remind us of the light which that speech casts onto Hippolytos' character. The uncut meadow itself is best understood as an allusion to the eroticized *locus amoenus* of pre-tragic poetry.[8] While the meadow itself is a piece of general erotic and poetic imagery rather than a specific *topos* of marriage poetry, its associations are with the time of life leading up to marriage: being linked to a meadow signifies readiness to marry. However, the description sets up a tension between the traditional model (the audience's expectations of how a meadow ought to be in poetry) and the way Hippolytos actually describes his meadow.[9] In particular, Euripides weaves into the speech individual elements which seem designed to trigger the audience's awareness of this model, only to set them at odds with it:

[5] All translations are mine.

[6] E.g. Carey (1981) 102, where he comments that Pindar describes Telesikrates' victory 'in terms designed to suggest the winning of a bride'. Instone (1996) in his introduction to *Pythian* 9 comments that the linking of the marriage motif to Telesikrates' own life was a widely held view by earlier commentators, and even he is prepared to concede that we can tell from the ode Telesikrates 'was admired by local girls and sought after as a husband'.

[7] Also see *Od.* 6.244 where Nausikaa's admiration of Odysseus is expressed by her wish she could marry. Pind. *Pyth.* 10.59 also describes admiration by young girls for young men who are successful athletes.

[8] E.g. *Il.* 14.346-51, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 4-10; Archil. *fr.* 196a W; Sapph. *frr.* 2, 94, 96, 122 V; Ibyc. *fr.* 286 PMGF. For the significance of such meadows in poetry, see Foley (1994) 33-4; Bremer (1975) 268-74

[9] Some commentators (e.g. Barrett (1964) on 73-6) have taken the meadow to be a description of a real or fantasized *temenos* of the goddess. However, to stress this too much risks overlooking the important symbolic undertones of the piece. If there are genuine ritual elements they can perhaps be best understood by analogy with Sapph. *fr.* 2 V, which is a poeticized and symbolic description of a sanctuary of Aphrodite using the traditional language of the eroticized meadow.

σοὶ τόνδε πλεκτρὸν στέφανον ἐξ ἀκηράτου
λειμῶνος, ὦ δέσποινα, κοσμήσας φέρω,
ἔνθ' οὔτε ποιμὴν ἀξιοῖ φέρβειν βοτὰ
οὔτ' ἦλθέ πω σίδηρος, ἀλλ' ἀκήρατον
μέλισσα λειμῶν' ἠρινὴ διέρχεται,
Αἰδὼς δὲ ποταμίαισι κηπεύει δρόσοις. (73-8)

'Mistress, I bring you this woven garland I have made, gathered from an uncut meadow, where no shepherd dares pasture his flocks and where the iron has not yet come – no, an uncut meadow which the bee of spring passes through, and which Respect tends with dewy rivers.'

Hippolytos' meadow possesses many of the features we find in classic descriptions of the lyric *locus amoenus*. For example, the meadow contains flowers, which are plucked to make garlands and it is in the proximity of dewy rivers. Even the epithet ἠρινή is very reminiscent of the language used in descriptions of similar scenes by Sappho and Ibykos.[10] The motif of lack of cultivation is made particularly forcefully, with the repetition of ἀκήρατος, and the explicit veto of shepherd, flocks and ploughing. Here, two normally distinct threads in the pre-tragic poetic tradition are woven together. Normally the meadow and cultivated land act in different ways as symbols, and trigger slightly different associations. Cultivation, and particularly ploughing, is symbolically associated with marriage and sexual maturity, while the meadow is presented as a liminal zone, where sexuality is present in the lush growth, but has not yet been channelled into the social institution of marriage and legitimized procreation. But Hippolytos' vision of the meadow seems to deny the sexual potential implicit in the idea of the meadow, whilst still deploying the imagery that expresses it – an irony that an audience familiar with the tradition would be able to tune into.[11]

A similar effect is achieved with the other things described in the meadow. The bee is set up in opposition to the plough and cultivation, as though it were something that expresses the purity of the wilderness. μέλισσα was indeed a cult title given to some priestesses of Artemis.[12] However, the bee's more common associations are either with married virtue or with love, and later in the *Hippolytos* it becomes the symbol for the power of Aphrodite.[13] Similarly, rivers and dew are traditionally erotic symbols, but here they are introduced only to be described as belonging to Αἰδώς, while the πλεκτὸς στέφανος, often associated with the symposium, or with rural scenes of lovers, is juxtaposed with the purity implicit in ἀκήρατος. Even the word ἀκήρατος itself has mixed resonances, as in Ibykos *fr.* 86 PMGF it is used of the garden which is simultaneously sexual and virginal.

This conflict between the meadow as an erotic and a pure space is brought out more strongly in the next lines of the passage, when Hippolytos bars access to the meadow to all but those who possess σωφροσύνη and says that only they will be able to pick its flowers (79-81). The motif of picking flowers is traditionally associated with the transition to sexual maturity, and in particular with that of Persephone, the κόρη *par excellence*. However, it is already clear from

[10] Sapph. *fr.* 2.10 V, Ibyc. *fr.* 286.1 PMGF.

[11] Ibykos' meadow is described as belonging to the Παρθέναι, and superficially contrasted with the speaker's own violent erotic feelings. However, the meadow is 'virginal' in the sense of sexuality ripe but not yet married rather than sexuality denied, and in fact the erotic is subtly incorporated into Ibykos' description. The language used to characterize the meadow is itself sexual, and the 'leaking' of the erotic into the description of the meadow is what enables the audience to connect the world within the garden with the world outside, even though for the speaker they remain irreconcilable.

[12] Scholiast *ad* Pind. Pyth. 4.106, Aristoph. *Frogs* 1274. See Knox (1952) 28.

[13] *Hipp.* 564. The association of the bee is perhaps partly related to the idea of sting and honey, associated with 'Eros the bittersweet' (e.g. Sapph. *fr.* 130 V, and possibly a more explicit link in *fr.* 146 V); *cf.* Halleran (1991) 115. Equally, in Semon. *fr.* 7 W, the bee represents married virtue and the bee woman is the only good type of wife.

Aphrodite's speech in the prologue, and will become still more so from the scene following this passage, that Hippolytos hates and fears this transition. In his attempt to de-eroticize the world of the meadow, and make it a suitable location for his worship of Artemis, he attempts to transform flower-picking into a chaste and safe activity. Yet while picking flowers seems innocent to the virgins concerned,[14] the audience knows that the fact of the action indicates their readiness to move on to the world of marriage. Hippolytos' attempt to restrict it to those whose purity is permanent would jar with any alert listener.[15] Additionally, the fact that flower-picking is so often a prelude to violence, and in particular rape, introduces an anticipation of danger which is borne out by the ending of the play.[16] Hippolytos' failure to go through the *topos* properly ends in disaster, and his being torn apart actualizes physical violation of the most extreme kind.

From this speech, an audience steeped in the poetic tradition would have been attuned to a strangeness in Hippolytos' description of the meadow. In particular, the way that eroticism and chastity enter into it runs counter to the model set up by the poetic tradition. This sets up the way that Hippolytos' attitude to sexuality is depicted in the play, and affects our response to him. The third stasimon again evokes the tension between traditional expectations and Hippolytos' ideas by contrasting the girls' desire for Hippolytos with his desire for the wilderness and to weave garlands for Artemis.

'NEVER AGAIN': HIPPOLYTOS' APPROPRIATION OF FEMALE HYMENEAL MOTIFS

The mention of girls and garlands in the third stasimon should alert us to Hippolytos' troubled relationship to the normal codes of sexual behaviour and remind us of how this has already been established in the play. The imagery elsewhere in the ode continues to illuminate and expand on this. One final strangeness is therefore worth noting about the uncut meadow, that by identifying with it, Hippolytos is appropriating the language of female sexual transition. The meadow as an erotic space is a distinctly female image – for example, when Ibykos as a male speaker describes it, it is to convey his own exclusion from it. The identification of human fertility with the earth is limited to female fertility. If the wife is the ploughed earth, the husband is by implication the farmer or the plough itself.[17]

More generally, the issues associated with transition to sexual maturity tend to be connected with females. Though men also undergo a transition, there is nothing to parallel the sharp cut-off between *parthenos* and *gunê*, and the ideas associated with male transition are more to do with assuming citizen responsibilities than a total change of status. After all, the *ephebeia* took place well after puberty. This oddity is brought out again in the third stasimon. The language of the chorus not only evokes the language of *hymenaios* but specifically the language associated with the woman. In the poetic codes, Hippolytos has become the bride.

It is in this light that we should re-examine the chorus' rather odd reference to Hippolytos' mother. Meridor suggests that this reference implies mourning: rather than a lament for Hippolytos' exile, the ode becomes a *threnos* for his death.[18] However, while it might be natural for a mother to lament a son's death, the mother's rôle in wedding ritual is also crucial. The separation of the bride from her mother is one of the most striking *topoi* of marriage poetry. It is the poignant culmination of Hesperus' powers in Sappho 104ab V, and echoed in more dra-

[14] See *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 15-16 for Persephone's innocence.

[15] The *locus classicus* is Archil. *fr.* 196a W where the encounter takes place in a meadow, and the imagery associated with the meadow is allowed to creep into that associated with the erotic, thus blurring the boundaries of the metaphors.

[16] For flower-picking and rape, *Hom Hymn Dem.* 4-18; Eur. *Ion* 887-96, *Hel.* 244-9.

[17] *Cf.* the wording of the betrothal ceremony at Men. *Pk.* 435-6 and Luc. *Tim.* 17, where the woman is given ἐπ' ἀρότρωι γνησίων παίδων. The phrasing is generally thought to come from a real marriage ceremony.

[18] Meridor (1972) 235.

matic terms by Catullus (62.20-2). Theokritos also refers to the separation of the bride from her mother when his chorus of girls tease Menelaos that if he is going to go to sleep already he should have left his bride with her mother (18.12-14). We know of the Roman custom of *raptio*, whereby the bridal procession symbolically snatched the bride from her mother.[19] Plutarch's *Lykourgos* (15) provides evidence for a similar 'mock abduction' in Sparta, and Dionysios of Halikarnassos (2.30.5) implies that abduction from the bride's friends and family was probably a motif in wedding ceremonies elsewhere in Greece too. This hypothesis is also backed up by iconographic evidence.[20] The 'threnodic' element in this is one of the range of ways in which marriage is construed as a type of death. This is common in many types of *rites de passage*, and made particularly clear in Greek culture by the story of Persephone, whose marriage is literally a marriage to death.[21]

The emphasis on Hippolytos leaving his home and homeland (1148-50) is also reminiscent of wedding ritual, with its focus on the bride's departure from her home and old life. Just as Helen's companions in Theokritos 18 dwell on the details of Helen's old life as a *parthenos*, and the locations to which the chorus themselves will later return but from which Helen is now separated, here the chorus refer to Hippolytos' old haunts and activities from which he is now debarred. As Hippolytos' departure from his father's home symbolically becomes an *ekdosis* (the departure of the bride from her father's house), the Charites are called upon as his escorts (1148-50). These goddesses have associations with marriage in any case, and the epithet συζύγιαι applied to them here strengthens this connection.[22] The Charites are described as escorting Hippolytus from his house (πέμπετε τῶνδ' ἀπ' οἴκων 1150). The verb πέμπω often has the sense of 'convey home' or 'escort'. It is used in the *Odyssey* of a father sending his daughter to be a bride (4.5), and it is language more suitable for a socially sanctioned procession than for an ignominious departure into exile.[23]

The epode builds up a sense of Hippolytos' wretchedness with series of words referring to his bad luck, and that of others associated with him (δυστυχίαι 1141; ἄποτμον, τάλαινα 1145; τάλαν' 1148). One of the central pieces of wedding ritual was the *makarismos*, where the bridal couple are called 'blessed' for the first time. As Halleran points out, the *makarismos* is often manipulated by tragedy.[24] While marriage itself is often presented as a source of ambiguity and concern for the bride, it is also a cause for joy and celebration; thus the *makarismos* counters the darker strands we also find surrounding wedding poetry. However, whereas the real *makarismos* describes the *ekdosis* as bringing about luck and happiness, its tragic counterpart describes Hippolytos' departure as causing and being caused by misfortune and unhappiness.

Having established these references to *hymenaios*, let us look again at the way Hippolytos is presented when the idea of his departure is introduced at the very start of the second strophe. The

[19] *Cf.* Fest. 364 L; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.15.21. Also see Fedeli (1983) 53.

[20] Sourvinou-Inwood (1973) 17-18 suggests that a similar custom took place at Locri and other Greek states, and Jenkins (1983) suggests abduction as a wedding motif in Athens. Jenkins also notes a fragmentary red figure *skyphos c.* 430 BC (*ARV*2 647, 21; Jenkins fig. 18b) showing Persephone being abducted by Hades and reaching out her arms to Demeter who is pursuing them. Alexiou (1974) 120 gives modern Greek examples of plaintive exchanges between mother and daughter as part of the marriage ritual. The accumulation of this evidence leads me to wonder whether something similar to the *raptio* was in fact also a part of Greek wedding customs. For an anthropological perspective on rites of rape and capture, see van Gennep (1960) 123; Radcliffe-Brown (1951) 20; and see Sourvinou-Inwood (1991) 65-70 for a more general account of violence and abduction representing marriage.

[21] *Cf.* Seaford (1987) 106-7; Rehm (1994) 1-6. See van Gennep (1960) for examples in different cultures.

[22] See the scholiast *ad loc.* Bushala (1969) 23-9 discusses the implications of the epithet and suggests a connection to the wider importance of marriage in the play. Halleran (1991) 120 and Burnett (1986) 173-4 both note the marriage connotations of the address to the Charites here.

[23] I am grateful to Laurel Bowman for this point.

[24] Halleran (1991) 114, where he also suggests an allusion to the *makarismos* at *Hipp.* 525-64. For other cases of a manipulated or parodied *makarismos* in tragedy, he cites Eur. *Alc.* 918-19, *Andr.* 1218, *Suppl.* 995-9, *Hel.* 639-40, *IA* 1076-9, *Phaeth.* 240-4 (Diggle), and *Tro.* 308ff.

chorus call Hippolytos the 'Ἑλλανίας φανερώτατον ἀστέρ' Ἀθήνας (1123). As Halleran notes, while referring to a person as a light (φέγγος or φάος) is reasonably common, calling someone a star is unique in pre-Hellenistic literature.[25] Euripides intends his metaphor to be striking. A *comparison* to a star or other astral body is by no means unique. However, it is often an image used to describe female desirability. The point of the comparison is usually that the desired object eclipses all others (just as Hippolytos here is the brightest of all stars). Thus, Sappho *fr.* 96 V (which may well be about a girl's marriage) describes a girl as being like the moon surpassing the other stars, an image which is also echoed at *fr.* 34 V. Similarly at Alkman *fr.* 1.39-43 PMGF, the fact that Agido is desirable is expressed in a striking metaphor as her 'light'. She is then compared to the light of the sun at the start of a series of images meant to convey how much more attractive she and Hagesichora are than the rest of the girls. We find an equivalent at Alkman *fr.* 3.66-7, where Astymeloisa's exceptional beauty is expressed by comparing her to a star, and like Hippolytos a star that is rushing through the sky. This imagery is not strictly hymeneal. However, it conveys associations of unmarried female desirability which link in to the presentation of Hippolytos as a *parthenos* ripe for marriage rather than the hunter sworn to chastity he actually is.

IS THERE A MIXED CHORUS?

Having established the importance of hymeneal motifs in understanding the third stasimon, we can now turn back to the question of its performance. I shall first briefly explain why I take the mixed chorus interpretation to be correct, following Verrall, Murray and Diggle, amongst others.[26] The hypothesis arises from the alternating genders of the participles by which the chorus refer to themselves (κεύθεν 1105, λεύσσων 1107 (and in some MSS also at 1121), εὐξαμέναι 1111, μεταβαλλομένα 1118). The most straightforward interpretation of this is that the stanzas are sung by people of different genders. Indeed, while the text *can* be emended to give consistent genders, doing so is a fairly difficult process.[27] The scholia allege that the chorus use the masculine because they are speaking as the poet's mouthpiece,[28] but this is unparalleled in tragedy, where the dramatic identity of the chorus is never challenged like this.

A more plausible explanation would be that women speaking in the abstract can use the masculine to refer to themselves, as Wilamowitz argues.[29] But the examples he provides for females using a singular masculine participle to refer to themselves are problematic.[30] Women can use a masculine *plural* to generalize about themselves (a phenomenon which Wilamowitz correctly does not adduce as relevant), but even in this case there is no parallel for the switching of genders within a single ode. To do so would seem bizarre. If women can refer to themselves in the abstract as males, it must depend on the fact that the male participle can be perceived by the listener as 'standard' – i.e. that he will not notice the oddity.[31] Switching between the two forms seems designed to draw attention to this. A Greek audience would find it baffling, particularly

[25] Halleran (1995) on 1123.

[26] The hypothesis was originally set out at Verrall (1889) 1 of the introduction. Murray and Diggle both follow it in their OCTs. Also see Bond (1980), who argues in favour of the mixed chorus. Halleran (1995) on 1102-50 gives an overview of the arguments for and against the mixed chorus interpretation.

[27] Barrett (1964) 369: 'emendation is not easy'.

[28] See Schwartz (1887) on 1102.

[29] von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1891) on 1103.

[30] Barrett (1964) 366-7 outlines the difficulties with them. However, see Kannicht (1969) on *Hel.* 1630.

[31] Similarly, ὁ ἄνθρωπος can be used to refer to mankind generally whereas ἡ ἄνθρωπος is specifically a woman; ὁ ἵππος is the general word for a horse, we find ἡ ἵππος to mean 'mare', and we also sometimes find some kind of qualifier to make the gender apparent, precisely because the noun uses the male form as 'standard' and a horse of either sex could be meant (e.g. θήλεες ἵπποι *Il.* 5.269; ἵπποι θήλειαι 11.680, *Od.* 4.635; ἡ θήλεα ἵππος Hdt 3.86). See LSJ *s.v.* ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος. Moorhouse (1982) 8-10 discusses this in terms of 'marked' and 'unmarked' terms, whereby the masculine indicates non-commitment in terms of gender, but the feminine carries a more specific meaning.

as believing the tragic chorus to be female in any case requires that the listener acclimatize himself not to find it strange to hear male voices referring to themselves as female. So this switching of participles seems *a priori* difficult, as well as being unheard of anywhere else in extant Greek. Assuming the arrival of a second chorus solves the participle problem straightforwardly.

Secondary choruses in tragedy are normally introduced on their appearance into the play.[32] However, Verrall plausibly suggested that the male singers of the third stasimon consisted of the same group of huntsmen who were introduced at the start of the play as an additional chorus (58-71). It is true that the chorus are not re-introduced despite remaining silent for nearly all of the play, but this is less problematic since we already know of their existence. Immediately before the third stasimon, Hippolytos calls on his contemporaries to address him and escort him from the country (1098-9). As Bond points out, the phrasing of this is similar to the formula by which the subsidiary chorus is announced at 58-60.[33] There is no particular reason to believe that the ὀπαδοί of the opening scene need be a different group of people from the ὁμήλικες of 1098.[34] One might imagine that he is meant to be accompanied by this group of his age-mates at all times when he is on-stage.[35] Alternatively, even if they do not attend him while he is at home, they accompany him on all hunting expeditions, and so it is not surprising that they go with him when he leaves the house. I envisage the male chorus leaving the stage after the end of the stasimon, to follow Hippolytos, who has already left.[36] The time between their leaving and the messenger reporting Hippolytos' death is admittedly extremely short, but the timing surrounding tragic odes is always loose and variable, and I do not see strict 'realism' of chronology being a major problem.[37]

A subsidiary chorus *per se* is not unique in tragedy. We find one in the *Phaethon* (227), and the scholiast on *Hippolytos* 58 mentions subsidiary choruses in the *Alexandros* and *Antiope*. We even have examples of other choruses singing in alternation with the main chorus (Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 1123-64; Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women* 1018-74). The mere existence of a subsidiary chorus, even one bound in with the main chorus, should not be an insurmountable problem. It is true that the wholly antiphonal double chorus here is a step beyond this, and it would be deceptive to claim it is not a unique innovation. However, the tragedians were not averse to innovating in order to achieve a dramatic purpose, and I hope to show that the mixed chorus of the *Hippolytos* does precisely that.[38]

The problem becomes more interesting when we examine the evidence we have elsewhere for mixed-sex choral performance, and the implications of this kind of performance. While we have a reasonable number of examples for semi-choruses, only a small fraction of these are of a different gender to the main chorus.[39] Given what we know about the social contexts of the

[32] Taplin (1977) 186 and 230-8.

[33] Bond (1980) 60.

[34] Murray's OCT equates the two, calling both χορὸς κυνηγῶν; *cf.* Bond (1980) 60.

[35] I am grateful to Oliver Taplin for this suggestion.

[36] Another option would be to have the male chorus leave the stage before the end of the stasimon, leaving the female chorus to sing the epode, but I find this less likely. Having half the chorus leave mid-performance would be unique, and would surely damage the performance. While in theory it helps with the chronology problem, in practice the disruptive effect would draw attention to it, as the chorus would be effectively rushed off-stage before we expect them to leave, heightening the sense that the timing does not quite work.

[37] See Taplin (1977) 290-4. As Bond (1980) 62 points out, 'at the very least 1102-50 marks a gap of several hours'.

[38] A parallel would be the chorus' exits at Soph. *Aj.* 814; Eur. *Hel.* 385, *Rhes.* 564 and *Alc.* 746, which break the convention that choruses remain on-stage until the end of the play, in order to allow the characters on-stage genuine solitude for dramatic purposes. Similarly the scene-change at Aesch. *Eum.* 234 breaks the convention that a tragedy is set in one place.

[39] The double chorus at Eur. *Suppl.* 1123-64 is mixed-sex but consists of mothers and children, and as far as we know is not meant to reflect any real life choral grouping. Here in any case the familial relationship is what is important, not the gender difference. The identities and genders of the supplementary choruses at Aesch. *Eum.* 1032-44 and *Suppl.* 1014-73 are disputed. However, Taplin (1977) suggests that both choruses are male: the former consisting of the jurors, and the latter of Argive bodyguards.

Greek chorus, this is not surprising. The most fundamental feature of the chorus is its uniformity – each of its members belongs to the same category. Occasions where more than one chorus is performing are often choral competitions. Here too, categories of competition would have been divided as much by the categorization of the members of the chorus as by the type of song they were performing, just as men's and boys' events were kept separate at athletic competitions. In any case, choruses in competition would have been performing consecutively, not simultaneously.

It therefore seems reasonable to make two general statements about the mixed chorus. Firstly, the concept of mixed choral performance sits very oddly with the cultural assumptions bound up in the concept of a chorus. As such, the connotations it carries must be particularly marked. Secondly, if this is true of mixed choruses in general, Euripides must be aiming to do something special with the mixed chorus in the *Hippolytos,* as he has chosen to introduce a mixed chorus in a context where it is extremely unusual. I shall therefore examine the evidence we have for mixed choruses outside the *Hippolytos*, and suggest the type of associations they would evoke.

SETTING UP THE MIXED CHORUS: MEANINGS AND CONTEXTS

One of the most explicit pieces of testimony on the meanings which mixed-sex choruses convey can be found in Lucian's *On Dance* 12. In this passage he has been discussing how training in dancing can teach important life skills:

> ὅμοια δὲ καὶ οἱ τὸν ὅρμον καλούμενον ὀρχούμενοι ποιοῦσιν. ὁ δὲ ὅρμος ὄρχησίς ἐστιν κοινὴ ἐφήβων τε καὶ παρθένων, παρ' ἕνα χορευόντων καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὅρμωι ἐοικότων· καὶ ἡγεῖται μὲν ὁ ἔφηβος τὰ νεανικὰ ὀρχούμενος καὶ ὅσοις ὕστερον ἐν πολέμωι χρήσεται, ἡ παρθένος δὲ ἕπεται κοσμίως τὸ θῆλυ χορεύειν διδάσκουσα, ὡς εἶναι τὸν ὅρμον ἐκ σωφροσύνης καὶ ἀνδρείας πλεκόμενον.
>
> Something similar is done by those who dance what is called the Necklace. The Necklace is a dance of boys and girls together who move in a row and truly resemble a necklace. The boy leads, dancing the steps of young manhood, and those which he will later use in war; the maiden follows, showing how to do the female dance with decency; and so the necklace is woven out of chastity and manliness.

Combining the sexes in the *hormos* dance expresses the complementing rôles they play in society. Lucian has already suggested that in a sense all dances by young men prepare them for war and express their manliness (8-11). However, the mixing of boys and girls draws attention to gender as a theme in the dance. The very presence of the girls crystallizes the audience's awareness of how they differ from the boys; the difference in their dance steps reflects a wider reality.

Other texts referring to mixed choruses also pick up on the way that they highlight complementing gender rôles. Some link them more directly to the way genders are combined within society – namely marriage. At *Odyssey* 23.130-40, Odysseus wants to cover the noise of killing the suitors, and so tells Penelope to arrange for something that sounds like a wedding feast to be performed. The feature which makes it instantly identifiable as such is that men and women are singing together:

> τοῖσιν δὲ μέγα δῶμα περιστεναχίζετο ποσσὶν
> ἀνδρῶν παιζόντων καλλιζώνων τε γυναικῶν.
> <u>ὧδε</u> δέ τις εἴπεσκε δόμων ἔκτοσθεν ἀκούων·
> 'ἦ μάλα δή τις ἔγημε πολυμνήστην βασίλειαν.' (23.146-9)

> The great hall resounded with the feet of dancing men and beautifully girdled women. And so anyone who heard from outside the house would say, 'Oh, so someone has actually married the much-courted queen.'

Men and women are also portrayed as dancing together on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* (18.590-606). Here the occasion for the dance is not stated. Arguably, it is unlikely to be a wedding itself, given that we have already seen a wedding procession earlier on the shield (18.491-7). However, the epithet applied to the girls (ἀλφεσίβοιαι) refers to dowries, and suggests that there are overtones of marriage to the occasion. The boys and girls are described as dancing ἐπὶ καρπῶι χεῖρας ἔχοντες (594). This presumably reflects the 'χεῖρ' ἐπὶ καρπῶι' gesture when the groom takes the bride by the wrist, which formed part of classical wedding ritual and is often alluded to in literature and art.[40] Gender differences and rôles are also suggested by the way the poet dwells on the appearance of the boys and girls, contrasting male and female clothing, and the knives worn by the boys with the garlands worn by the girls. In the description of the wedding procession in Hesiod's *Shield* 272-9, we find a similar emphasis on how both sexes participate in the songs and festivities. Plato advocates mixed-sex dances as a means of organizing marriage (*Laws* 771e-772a), and the mixed-sex procession in honour of Artemis which Xenophon of Ephesos describes is a means of finding marriage partners (*Ephesiaka* 1.2-3).

A text that actually purports to be a wedding song performed by a mixed-sex chorus is Catullus 62. Catullus is not bound into any one cultural setting, and can pick and choose elements from different Greek and Roman *mores* that appeal to him.[41] The choice of an amoebean style is usually thought to be derived from Greek pastoral poetry, and examples can be found in Theokritos. However, Catullus differs from these pastoral models in that his alternating stanzas are sung by choral groups, rather than two individuals. Thus the alternation refers to different takes on an occasion, rather than the personal relationship between the two speakers. The poem's scenario and the 'stage directions' are imaginary ones – I am not suggesting that Catullus' song was designed to be performed by a real mixed chorus on any particular occasion, or that it was designed to be a direct pastiche of another poem (in the way that, say, poem 51 is directly modelled on Sappho *fr.* 31 V). However, it seems likely that in composing this poem, Catullus knew of and was drawing on a tradition of mixed-sex choruses being associated with weddings. Other details of the poem, such as alternating style and 'capping', are found in other types of Greek poetry, but might also be drawn from this tradition. Naturally this example comes with caveats. Catullus' poem is a crafted art piece written for a sophisticated literate audience, not a direct relic of a performance culture. In fact, Catullus 62 is self-consciously artificial, becoming as much a poem about a performance as simply the text performed. Nevertheless, Catullus chooses to introduce a mixed chorus in a poem which elsewhere echoes the themes and motifs of Greek wedding poetry, and presumably does so for a reason.

In searching for the tradition on which Catullus could be drawing, we find tantalizing hints in Sappho which seem to corroborate this model. *Fr.* 30 V describes the night-long *epithalamion* outside the house on the marriage night. In particular, the poem describes a group of girls and a group of boys (who are specifically the groom's party) as responsible for the festivities. *Fr.* 44, describing the wedding of Hektor and Andromache, describes a slightly different version of mixed singing: adult women (γύναικες) sing a women's ritual cry of *eleleu*, while men sing the male equivalent of *paean*. Again the focus is on the combining of both sexes, while each group nevertheless remains aligned to its own gender rôle.

[40] *Cf.* Rehm (1994) 14-17, 35-6, 39-40, and see figs 2 and 3 for the 'χεῖρ' ἐπὶ καρπῶι' gesture on vases depicting weddings. The symbolism of the gesture is also addressed by Jenkins (1983).

[41] See Godwin (1995) in his introduction to 62 for Roman features, including agricultural detail (marrying vines to trees) and colloquial language. Fedeli (1983) ch.1 examines the mixing of cultural *topoi* in Catullus 61.

More direct linguistic echoes and parallels are found in other epithalamic fragments.[42] Catullus starts his poem with an address to Hesperus, the evening star whose presence symbolizes the journey to the bridal house. The boys' and girls' attitudes to Hesperus are opposite, reflecting their attitude to the marriage itself. The girls' hostility to the star, and their specific accusation that it tears a girl from her mother's embrace (21-2), reflects the pathos implicit in the more understated Sappho *fr.* 104a V, where Hesperus is described as taking a child from her mother. The girls' description of virginity lost as a flower plucked and ruined in a meadow also echoes Sappho *fr.* 105b V, where a hyacinth is described as crushed by shepherds. Equally, the boys' account of agricultural activity as a metaphor for marriage (marrying the vine to the elm) perhaps reflects Sappho's metaphor of the apple and the apple-pickers (*fr.* 105a V). Several scholars have connected the two Sapphic fragments and suggested that they are part of a single poem, possibly sung in amoebean form by two groups.[43] In this case the parallelism with Catullus would be even more precise. In general, the attitude towards marriage expressed by Catullus' girls seems to reflect (in extreme form) some of the ambiguity and fears we find in Sappho's lyrics (for example, *frr.* 107 and 114 V, also amoebean, though probably between solo singers). Similar ambiguity is also expressed in Catullus 61, where despite a much more positive approach to marriage, Hymen is still described as abducting the bride (*rapis,* 3) and as taking her from her mother's lap (58-9).

This is not the place to go into detailed speculation about the meanings of this ambiguity towards marriage or the precise relationship between Catullus and Sappho.[44] What I am attempting to establish is that in composing *epithalamia,* Catullus drew heavily on Sapphic models (as one might expect given that Sappho was famous in antiquity for her *epithalamia*), and that he alludes to Sappho in details of performance as well as themes and verbal echoes.[45] The choice of a mixed amoebean chorus, aligning themselves with the bride and the groom respectively, reflects an earlier poetic tradition which Catullus was aware of.[46] This is certainly not to say that *all* wedding songs would have been composed in this form – indeed, all our evidence suggests the contrary. But the mixed chorus itself would have triggered assumptions of marriage in the minds of an ancient audience. And such a connection is appropriate, since we know that both the bride's and the groom's friends had a rôle to play in the wedding festivities, that men and women both attended the wedding feast, and that marriage ritual itself symbolizes the combining of male and female.[47]

Turning to drama, we find similar themes emerging when we examine the chorus of old men and women in the *Lysistrata*. For most of the play the chorus is divided into two semi-choruses, who enter separately. Until they unite at 1042, they are polarized along gender lines. Their interaction consists of competitive and aggressive banter, often focused on a 'male' or 'female'

[42] *Cf.* Bowra (1961) 223-5, who also links the imagery and themes in Catullus 62 with Sapphic *epithalamia*.

[43] Smyth (1900) 249; Davison (1968) 244. Hunter (1983) also supports the connection on the basis of Longus' adaptation in *Daphnis and Chloe*. See Griffith (1989) for an account of the debate and the various interpretations of the fragments.

[44] See below for more discussion of the separation of the bride from home and family construed as abduction. For general accounts of the anxieties involved in the transition to marriage, see Seaford (1987) 106-7; Jenkins (1983).

[45] For Sappho and wedding songs, *cf.* Himer. *Or.* 9.4; Mich. Ital. *Or. ad Mich. Oxit.*, *Anth. Pal.* 7.407, Demetr. *Eloc.* 132.

[46] The mock-*hymenaios* at Aristoph. *Peace* 1333-54 is amoebean but not mixed-sex. Even so, there is some trace of alignment with bride's or groom's party at 1349-50 where one group praises/teases the bride's "fig", and the other the groom's.

[47] Also see Gernet and Boulanger (1932) 38-40 on mixed dancing and marriage. Euangelos, *Anakalyptomene* (*PCG* 5.184-5, *fr.* 1 = *CAF* 3.376, *ap.* Athenaios 14.644d-f) describes men and women at the wedding feast: both genders are involved, but they sit at separate tables. Similarly, Men. *Dys.* 949 describes women at the wedding feast. On wedding ritual, see Oakley and Sinos (1993).

view. This model of competitive capping followed by resolution follows the pattern set up in Catullus 62, and could be based on the conventions of real life mixed choruses.[48] In addition, much of the banter in *Lysistrata* contains sexual undertones, as the hostility between the two groups is expressed through the sexual tension between them.

The choruses closely echo each other, both in structure and in linguistic detail. For example, at 781-96 the men tell the story of Melanion to demonstrate that men are better off without women. The women rebut this by telling the story of Timon (805-12). *Lys.* 614-705 is also a capping structure. The men strip down to prepare for action, explaining their patriotic loyalty to Athens. The women then do the same, explaining the civic importance of the ritual rôles they perform. They then take it in turns to taunt and threaten each other. Their language is closely related (for example, τῆς θεοῖς ἐχθρᾶς πατάξαι τῆσδε γραὸς τὴν γνάθον 635, versus τῶιδέ γ' ἀψήκτωι πατάξω τῶι κοθόρνωι τὴν γνάθον 657).

Sexual imagery underlies their banter. At 377-8 the women throw water over the men to put out their torches, but describe it as a λουτρὸν νυμφικόν. Both choral groups strip off clothing as the hostility between them increases. This is introduced as a gesture in preparation for fighting, but women stripping naked in front of men would have carried sexual rather than aggressive overtones. The men's insults at 671-6 are sexual ones (χειρουγία 672, ἱππικώτατον 677), and the women's response to this at 694-5 is a sexual threat (ὡς εἰ καὶ μόνον κακῶς ἐρεῖς, ὑπερχολῶ γάρ, / αἰετὸν τίκτοντα κάνθαρός σε μαιεύσομαι).[49]

The choruses unite when the women become reconciled to the men, and make overtures of friendship towards them. This model is also reminiscent of Catullus 62. There, the girls' silence suggests that they have dropped (or at least hidden) their hostility towards marriage, and we are left with the impression of marriage as a unifying rather than divisive force. The language the chorus uses after they unite also contains sexual overtones, playing on double-entendres between the language of feasting and the language of sex.[50]

Finally, we find a parallel in the final scene of Aeschylus' *Supplices*, in the antiphonal song which forms the closing lines of the play (1014-73).[51] The second chorus is traditionally ascribed to a group of maids. However, as Taplin notes, this is problematic in terms of staging, and breaks the conventions of choral entries in Greek drama. The scene works rather better if instead we imagine it sung by a group of Argive bodyguards.[52] Here too, we see hymeneal motifs used in the context of mixed choral singing. Protection of virginity versus the need to marry has been an on-going theme of the play, and this is again picked up in the *exodos*. The Danaids express their dedication to virginity, asking for Artemis' help against Aphrodite (1030-3), while the bodyguards respond by reaffirming the importance of Aphrodite and sexual love (1034-51). The Danaids continue to refuse to accept that marriage is part of the natural order, and express their hope that Zeus will preserve them from it (1052-3), while the men suggest that

[48] Henderson (1987) and Sommerstein (1990) both note the balanced structure of the choral interaction. It is also worth noting that this choral arrangement, like that of the *Hippolytus*, is unique, and seems to have been introduced to fulfil a poetic function in the play. Henderson notes that 'there is no other certain arrangement like this in comedy'.

[49] Sommerstein (1990) suggests that χειρουγία at 673 refers to manual stimulation of the penis, ἱππικώτατον at 676 refers to the sexual position known as 'equestrian', with the woman on top (*cf.* 60, 619, *Wasps* 501-2, *Peace* 899-900). Henderson (1987) on 674-7 notes the sexual innuendo of ναυμαχεῖν and πλεῖν, which also refer to the partner who is on top (*cf.* 59-60, 411, *Frogs* 434). 694-5 refer to a fable where the beetle avenges itself on the eagle by breaking its eggs: both Sommerstein and Henderson suggest a metaphorical use here referring to the testicles.

[50] Sommerstein (1990) on 1061-4 notes the sexual nature of the language. ἔτνος ('pea-soup') suggests vaginal secretions, cf. *Eccl.* 645-7, and *Peace* 716, 885, where ζωμός is used of cunnilingus. δελφάκιον ('piggy') is well-attested slang for the female genitals, cf. *Ach.* 786; Hesych. δ 599; Crat. *fr.* 4 K-A. ἁπαλός is used of women's flesh at line 418 and at *Eccl.* 902; Sappho *fr.* 82 V.

[51] I discuss this passage in more detail in my forthcoming doctoral thesis. See also Seaford (1987) 114-15, who argues convincingly for hymeneal references in the alternating choruses.

[52] See Taplin (1977) 235-7.

marriage is predestined (1054-5). As we have seen elsewhere, the male and female choruses are set in opposition, expressing contrary 'male' and 'female' views, and pick up on each others' language in order to cap it.[53]

Mixed choral performance therefore carries with it associations of marriage, and in particular choruses performing to celebrate a wedding. In the *Hippolytos*, these associations are deliberate and Euripides expects his audience to recognize them. The two problems with the third stasimon that I set up at the start of this article are solved by one answer. The ode is shot through with hymeneal imagery, linked to the theme of marriage elsewhere in the play. And this imagery is given more force because it is performed by a mixed chorus. Viewed in this light, the mixed chorus ceases to be a problem to be explained away, and becomes something central to the themes of the play. In short, it is something worthy of innovation.

Marriage and sexuality are central themes of the *Hippolytos*: it is Hippolytos' and Phaedra's distortions of the idealized norms of sexuality which act as the catalyst for the disastrous action of the play.[54] However, the hymeneal nature of this chorus is more than just another reference to this theme. Euripides draws on the theme of marriage by using imagery and language that do not just evoke marriage, but which allude specifically to the poetic models associated with marriage. He is therefore referring to the very types of poetry and songs which were performed on the wedding day. This type of 'triggering' is a particularly powerful and yet subtle one. By tying the tragic odes into a 'real-life' choral type with which the audience would be familiar, Euripides is able to appeal to their shared cultural assumptions. Thus, the reading of the play that emerges through this imagery is one designed to be rooted in its social and cultural context.

CHALLENGING IDENTITIES: WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THE THIRD STASIMON

The implications that come bundled in with hymeneal performance are deliberately played upon by the mixed chorus of the third stasimon, which contains subtle but clear allusions to the language associated with real-life hymeneal choruses. It remains for us to examine the effects and purpose of these allusions in the broader context of the play.

As we have seen, Hippolytos' appropriation of the language of female sexuality is already suggested by the uncut meadow speech, to which the third stasimon points us back. However, the third stasimon's references to Hippolytos' archetypal male activities also point us back to another moment in the play which suggests the way gender codes and boundaries are becoming blurred. At 198-266, Phaedra's ravings express her desire to be with Hippolytos and to take part in his lifestyle. In particular she refers to wanting to hunt with dogs, wanting to drive Enetic horses around the Limna, and to resting places in the wilderness (ἀναπαυσίμαν 211), all of which are strongly echoed in the third stasimon. The Nurse sees Phaedra's comments as puzzling but very inappropriate – presumably because Phaedra is expressing desires for activities which are unsuitable for women, and so she too is disrupting the gender boundaries of normal society.[55] However, Phaedra's comments also serve to re-eroticize the meadows and the wilderness, and turn it from the pure space Hippolytos envisages into a place where sexual desires can be fulfilled.[56] And Phaedra's 'male' desires counter-balance Hippolytos' portrayal as a *parthenos*, underscoring how each of their attitudes to sexuality are inappropriate and problematic.

[53] Sommerstein (1977) 76 notes this sexual *frisson* in his analysis of the passage, though I think he is wrong to suggest from it that the bodyguards themselves have sexual intentions towards the Danaids.

[54] Halleran (1991) 115-21 argues for the central rôle of marriage in tying together the characters and action of the *Hippolytos*. Also see Segal (1965) 165-221; Segal (1993) 140; Bremer (1975); Walsh (1984) 121-3 for sexuality in the *Hippolytos*.

[55] Hence her comment that Phaedra should drink at the well near the city, where as a married woman she belongs, rather than in the wilderness from which she is precluded and which is a dangerous place for a woman to be. See Goff (1990) 31-4 on the erotic overtones of the scene and on the way it is used to construct gender rôles.

[56] See Halleran on 73-87 and 208-11.

This contention over the meaning of the imagery of the wilderness lies at the heart of the play, and is used to stand for the different attitudes to sexual maturity we find expressed. By the end of the play, the hymeneal imagery of the third stasimon has led us to re-evaluate this imagery. Hippolytos' wilderness seems once again pure by virtue of the fact that it is construed as though it represented the pre-marital activities of the bride. But its purity is expressed by the fact that he can no longer remain within it: there is a parallel in the way Theokritos' chorus contrasts their own girlish activities to Helen's new married life. Hippolytos' meadow has in fact become realigned to the poetic norms of the meadow – a liminal zone where purity can become sexualized, rather than the permanent chastity Hippolytos envisages. Hippolytos may remain sexually chaste, but his exile and violent death are portrayed as the victory of Aphrodite over Artemis.

It is Hippolytos' and Phaedra's inability to behave as the norms of their rôles in society demand, and specifically Hippolytos' inability to become reconciled to adult or male sexuality, that drives the tragic action of the play. Hippolytos' rôle as a hunter has been described as symbolic of his status as a young man who has not yet become integrated into the community – an insightful observation into the way social rituals work within the play.[57] But the strand of imagery I have set out casts a different and complementary light on Hippolytos' sexuality. Through it, he is presented as though he were a female *parthenos* who wants to stay in the wilderness, but as the hunted rather than the hunter.[58] This is a common imagery to apply to unmarried girls, but its application here resonates with Hippolytos' sexual identity in a way that is both surprising and illuminating. The obvious strangeness of applying female motifs to Hippolytos is balanced against the light it casts on his character: Hippolytos is someone who cannot accept the reality of his own sexuality – whose ultimate reconciliation to it is brought about through the actions of unmarried girls rather than boys (1423-30).[59] The use of wedding language in the third stasimon is particularly poignant. The bride's transition to her new married status is construed as difficult and potentially even traumatic, and can be portrayed as a kind of death. However, it is also a transition to a new life in which she will fulfil her rôle in and responsibilities to the community. Hippolytos' position is exactly the opposite. His traumatic and devastating departure from his home is portrayed in terms that suggest a transition to a new life. But it is precisely because Hippolytos is unable to make this transition that he meets with catastrophe.[60]

CONCLUSION

The mixed chorus in the *Hippolytos*, far from being something which needs to be explained away, is in fact central to the themes of the play. By its very nature it alludes to and develops those themes. Mixed choral performance itself comes with automatic associations: a focus on gender rôles, the relationship between male and female, and associations with marriage rituals. These associations are further enhanced by the language the chorus in the *Hippolytos* uses, which ties into the *topoi* of wedding songs that the audience would link to the same occasions with which they would also associate mixed choruses.

[57] Burnett (1986) 167-9; Vidal-Naquet (1968) 60-1 on the meaning of the hunting motif.

[58] *Cf.* the common *topos* of the *parthenos* who rejects sexual attentions and instead is transformed into a wild animal (see Eur. *Hel.* 375-85, where Helen lists some of these *parthenoi* and expresses envy for them).

[59] A male deity's involvement in female transition ritual is unusual in itself. Pausanias 1.43.4 mentions haircutting rites as part of female transitions, but the recipients are female. A counter-example might seem to be the ritual prayer by girls in the Troad to the Skamandros to take their virginity ([Aeschines], *Epist.* 10.3-5). However, in the Skamandros story, Skamandros' masculinity is deliberately sexualized: he is presented as a sexual partner for the girls as they reach maturity. The worship of Hippolytos is a lament, and focuses on his premature death before achieving marriage.

[60] 806-928. See Rehm (1994); Seaford (1987) for detailed analysis.

I would conclude by suggesting that the way Euripides uses these *topoi* is particularly powerful, as it draws directly not just on literary and poetic precedent but on the real-life performance-culture in which Euripides' audience would be steeped. The audience can be aware of the subtext of the ode immediately and without much conscious effort. The force of the comparison must also be significantly stronger than ordinary allusion. As the tragic chorus perform an ode with hymeneal features, they are in some sense *becoming* a hymeneal chorus – the *hymenaios* is not just being alluded to but actually performed.

By allusion to these cultural norms, the chorus is able to portray Hippolytos in the rôle of a female *parthenos* on her wedding day, with its accompanying cultural baggage. The third stasimon draws on what we have already learnt about Hippolytos' character from earlier in the play, and casts it in this hymeneal light, giving us a filter through which to understand Hippolytos' attitude towards sexuality, and the ways in which this becomes relevant within the play.

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